

The Koya

GOVERNMENT OF ORISSA
HARIJAN AND TRIBAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT

CONTENTS

PAGE

Foreword	
Preface	
I. Introduction	.. 1
II. Habitat and Settlement	.. 10
III. Economic and Material Existence	.. 15
IV. Health and Hygienic Condition	.. 32
V. Social Organisation	.. 37
VI. Events of Life	.. 43
VII. The Man and Supernatural	.. 49
VIII. Political Organisation	.. 55
IX. Aesthetic Life	.. 59
X. Developmental Measures	.. 61
Bibliography	

Popular Series on Tribes-5

The Koya

Dr. Ch. P. K. Mohapatra

TRIBAL & HARIJAN RESEARCH-CUM-TRAINING INSTITUTE
BHUBANESWAR-751 003
1992-93

FOREWORD

Being the abode of as many as sixtytwo small and large tribal communities, the State of Orissa occupies a significant place in the ethnographic map of India. Each tribe with its distinctive cultural tradition and life-style contributes substantially to the rich cultural heritage of the State. The tribes of Orissa are now at different stages of socio-cultural integration and socio-economic development, because of the massive developmental measures undertaken by Government. The tribal areas are no longer as inaccessible as they were and the tribal people are more and more coming in contact with their neighbouring communities.

The present publication, which is the fifth one in the popular series on tribes is on the Koya tribe, a numerically small community, who live in the border areas of Koraput district in Malkangiri sub-division adjoining Andhra Pradesh. Like elsewhere, here the tribal life and culture are under going rapid transformation over the years, particularly during the post-independence period under the impact of modernization. Therefore, the main objective behind such publication is to document their traditional society and culture which is richly endowed with colourful dance, music, folklore, art and craft, etc. with a focus on their developmental perspective. While preparing this booklet sufficient care has been taken to present the facts in a simple and lucid manner so that this would generate ideas among the general readers who are interested in knowing about the tribal life and culture in general. The book has been prepared by THRTI and for such endeavour, I record my thanks to the Editor and the Author. It is hoped that more such publications on other tribes will be brought out by the Institute in future.

Bhubaneswar,
October 24, 1992

(D.P. BHATTACHARYA,
Principal Secretary to Government &
Commissioner, Tribal Welfare,
Harijan and Tribal Welfare Department,
Orissa, Bhubaneswar.

PREFACE

The Koya is one of the Dravidian speaking Scheduled Tribes of Orissa mostly found in the Malkangiri sub-division of Koraput district. But their concentration is very high in four blocks, namely Malkangiri, Korkunda, Kalimela and Podia. The total population of the Koya is 87260 constituting 0.33 per cent and 1.47 per cent of the total population and total tribal population of the State (1981), respectively. On the basis of their numerical strength they occupy seventeenth position among the 62 tribes. The percentage of literacy among them although shows an increase over the years, yet it is very low compared to the literacy figure of the total tribal population of the State. Among them the percentage of literacy which was 0.8% during 1961 and 1.2 % during 1971 increased to 5.0% during 1981 Census, as against 13.96% of the total tribal population (1981). The Koyas living north of the sub-divisional headquarters upto Mathili and in south upto Manyemkonda are more primitive than the Southerners living within villages of Mallavoram and Mottu, the southern most point of the sub-division.

The Koya villages are more or less permanent in nature which lie in the midst of forests in patches of clearings. In a Koya village the most conspicuous place is the centrally located dancing ground called 'End Bayul'. A typical Koya house is mud walled, grass thatched and one roomed often partitioned into two rooms with a small verandah in front and a loft inside for storing of food grains.

The Koya who were formerly extensively practising shifting cultivation have now turned out to become settled agriculturists and cattle rearers. Besides, they also resort to hunting and foraging. They grow paddy in their agricultural field and rice is their staple food. They are very fond of non-vegetarian diet. The cattle and buffalo are slaughtered on ceremonial occasions to provide feast to the

assembled guests and relatives. Their favourite alcoholic drink is Mohua liquor which they brew regularly and drink profusely.

In Koya social organization family is the basic elementary unit which apart from being generally nuclear is patrilineal, patrilocal and patripotestal. The society is divided into a number of totemistic exogamous clans which are further sub-divided into sub-clans. They practise both post-pubescent and monogamous marriages. Divorce and remarriage are permitted in their society.

The Koya are polytheists. Their pantheon includes a large number of benevolent and malevolent deities who are worshipped on different occasions by the village priest called, Perma. They also believe in the existence of supreme beings, Deud, the creator is their supreme God and Bhumata, the Mother Earth is their supreme Goddess.

The Koya villages are traditionally self-governed independent political units. They have a well organized traditional panchayat at village level headed by a headman where all the intra-village disputes are settled. Above it there are larger units called '*Mutha Panchayat*' over a group of villages with wide powers which settles the inter-village disputes.

Dance and Music constitute to be an integral part of the Koya aesthetic life. The Koya with their dancing costume look colourful and their dancing performance is considered as a significant tribal dance of Orissa.

The present popular write-up on the Koya has ten chapters. The introductory chapter deals with the geo-physical set-up and historical back ground of the area. The next two chapters give an account of settlement and occupational pattern, food habit and work cycle of the Koya. The chapter on 'Health and Hygiene' gives an account of their health and disease profile. The next four chapters were devoted to the description of their social organization, Events of life, Religious belief and Practices and Political organization. The last

two chapters deal with the Aesthetic life and Developmental measures.

The write-up on the Koya which is fifth one in the series has been prepared by Dr. Ch. P.K.Mohapatra, Ex-Deputy Director of this Institute and for such an endeavour I extend my enormous thanks to him. My thanks are also due to Smt. K. B. Debi, Deputy Director and Shri B.B.Mohanty, Research Officer for extending their help in the process of editing. I thank Shri J.P.Rout, Research Officer for preparing an appropriate map for the volume.

Lastly, it is hoped that like the previous ones of this series the present book on the Koya will cater to the multifarious needs of its readers and this Institute is committed to bring out more and more such publications in future.

Bhubaneswar,
October 24, 1992.

(K.K.MOHANTI)
Editor and Director,
Tribal and Harijan Research-cum-Training
Institute, Bhubaneswar.

INTRODUCTION

The Koyas, one of the Dravidian-speaking tribes of South Orissa, numbering about 87,261 according to 1981 Census are found in Malkangiri district. The area has thick forest cover and has been the home of several tribes, such as the Bondo, Bhumiya, Didayi and Paroja etc. and among them the Koyas constitute the principal tribe. The koyas are widely distributed in the area. However, their concentration is maximum in the southern portion and in some portions in the north extending up to Mathili. There has been considerable migration of the Koyas from Bastar in Madhya Pradesh.

The Malkangiri District is but a vast Jungle with the Eastern Ghats, which has an elevation of 3,000 feet at its eastern boundary. The northern region has an elevation of 800 feet near the foot of the Ghat. From north to south the elevation gradually diminished and the southern-most point has an elevation of 400 feet where the rivers Sileru and Saberi join and flow together with a name 'China Godabari' towards the junction at Komanavaram where they meet river Godabari. The Sileru and Saberi rivers serve as the eastern and western fringe of the territory of the Malkangiri sub-division. The rest of the sub-division is full of forested plains with a number of rocky wooded hills, some of them rising to a considerable height. The sub-division is poor with regard to its forest wealth. There is little good timber and sala trees are found on the ghats and in the northern region Teaks are found.

The southern region is full of trees like *Bassia latifolia*, Kendu, Kusum, Blackberry, etc. However, the rich growth of bamboos are carried to the junction of Sileru and Saberi rivers at Motu and then floated down in the China Godavari and Godavari rivers to reach Rajmahendri town on the banks of Godavari. Unidentified grass, with a height of 10' sometimes covers many square miles of this sub-division which provide good fodder for the good number of cows and bullocks possessed by the Koya of this region.

The district was famous for its wild games. Rare and precious games like bison and wild buffaloes are found in the eastern and western region. Leopards, tigers, wild dogs, chital or spotted deer, sambar, barking deer, bears, wild boars and wolves are found in abundance. The Koyas are good hunters and due to their practice of hunting throughout the year which adds their food economy, the forests are becoming thin of wild games which have been scared away to other regions. Peacocks, wild fowls and other birds are also common in these forests.

The rainfall of this region is about 58". Extreme heat is felt in summer. Due to heavy rainfall the plains become swampy and a breeding place for mosquitoes. Recently, steps have been taken by Government to eradicate malaria.

The south-west monsoon brings heavy rainfall to the area and it is about 157.5 cms annually. But due to the porosity of the soil the water is easily soaked in it and is percolated underground to a considerable depth and that is why few tanks and pools are found in the area.

A pukka road, which is all-weather, joins Jeypore town with Malkangiri, the district headquarters. This road extends upto Motu, the southern-most point where the rivers Sileru and Saberi meet and flow down beyond Motu as a single river, called "China Godavari" and ultimately joins the river Godavari. Mention may be made of river Poteru which cuts this road at a distance of about 17 miles from Malkangiri. This river which has been bridged kept the southern part completely isolated from Malkangiri for about 6 months in a year. The distance covered by this main road from Malkangiri to Motu is about 102 kilometers. A kutcha road has branched off from the Malkangiri-Motu road at the 15th kilometers and runs towards Podia on the western fringe of the district. It takes a turn to the south on the western boundary and forming a semi-circle joins the main road at village, Pusguda lying at a distance of about 73 kilometers from Malkangiri. Another kutcha road has diverged towards the west from Kalimela which is at a distance of 40 kms. from Malkangiri on the main road and has joined the kutcha road near Podia via

Venkatapalam. There is another road of the same type which branches out from Govindapalli at a distance of 50 kilometers north of Malkangiri town and runs towards east reaching Malkangiri via Kalimela. At present all these road mentioned above have been improved as a result of the implementation of Dandakaranya and Kalimela Hydro-electricity Projects.

The district Gazetteer, Koraput, deals thoroughly the ancient history of Jeypore hill country and the then rulers and Zamindars. There are few old temples and monuments which bear the names of the Kings who reigned the area many centuries ago. These monuments also give an account of the Kolarian tribes who were the original settlers and still inhabit the region in hills and forested part. Later on Dravidian tribes, such as the Kondh infiltrated from the North in large number, and due to their interference the vastly forested region was subjected to large scale deforestation. The historical evidence and records of the district could also be traced out from an inscription at Podagoda, near Umarkote and from a few other places.

Malkangiri, which was a Taluk up to 1822, became a sub-division of Koraput district from 1972. According to the early history of the Taluk, one Orjun Mallik who was in charge of the Taluk was killed in an encounter by one Oriya Paika under instruction of Jeypore Raja. Later on he held this Taluk on service tenure basis until recently. They were known as Tata Rajas and they did much for the development of this region. From that period onwards Malkangiri was made the headquarters of the Taluk. During 1879 and 1880 the Taluk witnessed a rebellion called 'Rampa Fitari' and since then the area is more or less peaceful.

With the development of the area particularly due to the Hydro-Electricity project at Balimela and rehabilitation of East Bengal refugees, there has been spectacular increase in the population in Malkangiri sub-division which is evident from the Table—1.

Table—1

POPULATION OF MALKANGIRI DISTRICT

1	2	3	4
Communities	1961	1971	1981
Scheduled Tribe	108,815	153,510	192,034
Scheduled Caste	6,759	41,690	61,376
Other caste	26,381	73,676	31,480
Total	141,955	268,876	284,890

1971

Total population	Scheduled Tribe	Scheduled Caste	Others
268,866	153,510	41,690	73,676

1981

Total population	Scheduled Tribe	Scheduled Caste	Others
334,890	192,034	61,376	31,480

It will be seen that there is a considerable increase in scheduled caste and other caste population during the inter census period. The greater increase in Scheduled Caste population is due to the rehabilitation of the East Bengal refugees who are mostly Scheduled Castes and the increase in general population is due to their migration to the area in search of employment in Balimela Project. The Hydro-electric Project has not attracted the Scheduled tribes very much and the increase shown their population is largely due to their normal growth in 10 years.

However, the density of population according to 1981 census in the sub-division is very low being 56 persons per square Km. as against 169 persons per sq. Km. in the State of Orissa. There are places in the sub-division which records much lower density of population. For example the Motu Tahsil has a lower density of 38 persons per sq. Km. But with the development of the area during the past decade, people from outside have migrated to the area in larger number and have increased the density.

The Koyas are one of the significant tribes of Orissa. Although they are mainly concentrated in Malkangiri sub-division of Koraput district some Koyas also live in other districts of the State. The district-wise distribution of the Koya population is given in table 2.

Table—2

District wise distribution of Koya population

Sl. No.	District	Population 1961			Population 1971			Population 1981		
		Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)
1.	Sambalpur	383	340	43	..	..	..	22	13	9
2.	Sundargarh	..	..	..	2	2	..	26	15	11
3.	Keonjhar	165	95	70	1	1	..	4	..	4
4.	Mayurbhanj	87	40	47	..	..	..	3	1	2
5.	Balasore	89	45	44	..	..	..	5	3	2
6.	Cuttack	..	..	..	..	..	..	9	4	5
7.	Dhenkanal	58	23	35	..	..	..	..	..	..
8.	Phulbani	48	26	22	20	13	7	..	..	..
9.	Bolangir	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
10.	Kalahandi	..	..	..	11	3	8	22	9	13
11.	Koraput	53,590	26,428	27,162	58,912	30,008	28,904	87,052	43,514	43,538
12.	Ganjam	711	355	356	3	1	2	72	39	33
13.	Puri	153	65	88	219	109	110	46	29	17
Orissa		55,284	27,417	27,867	59,168	30,137	29,031	87,261	43,627	43,634

The table 2 shows that almost all the Koyas are found in Koraput district and all of them are confined to Malkangiri sub-division of that district. Of the 7 Blocks of the subdivision they are concentrated in 4 Blocks, namely Malkangiri, Korkunda, Kalimela and Padia. The Koya population in 1961 was 55,248 which increased in 1971 to 59,168 in 1981 it increased to 87,261.

Educationally the Koyas have not developed at all. The level of literacy which was 1.2 per cent during 1971 increased to 5 per cent during 1981.

The northern region of Malkangiri sub-division is inhabited by the Rana and Bhumīya who have become hinduised and speak desia, a corrupt form of Oriya language. Other neighbours of the Koya are the Matia who are settled cultivators. The Bhumīya and Rana are professional wood cutters in the Mathili and Govindapalli areas which are full of teak and other valuable trees. The Bonda inhabit the Eastern Ghats in the north-eastern region of the Taluk and Practically have no connection with the Koya. Their only meeting place is the weekly market at Mathili where a few plain Bondas come for marketing. It is only the Koyas of the northern region who come in contact with the Bondas.

With the Koyas of the southern region live the Muslims, Telgus, Doms, called Valmiki and Boiporia. The Boiporias are a group of fair complexioned Hindi speaking people who have migrated to this region from the adjoining area of Madhya Pradesh and claim to be a professional group of traders. The men folk provide dancing dresses for the Koya 'wadde' or magician and other requirements, and receive goats, paddy and pulses in exchange. Their women folk are seen to sell different types of sweet cakes to the Koyas in exchange of paddy, rice and pulses. These Boiparias are confined to a region within 10 miles south of Malkangiri.

The members of the Koya tribe call themselves "Koya" or "Koitor" meaning people. It is interesting to note that the members of the same tribe inhabiting the adjacent regions of Madhya Pradesh and East Godavari district call themselves as 'Madia' and 'Doria', respectively.

The Gond, says Grigson, where ever he speaks his own language from central India to the eastern Ghats and Hyderabad, calls himself 'Koi' or 'Koitor'. It is obvious, therefore, that the Koyas are a branch of the Gondi speaking people.

The Koya of Malkangiri sub-division, though culturally a homogeneous group, can be divided into two groups. The Koyas living north of the sub-divisional headquarters upto Matteli and in south up to Manyemkonda representing the primitive section of the tribe and the Koyas in villages of Mallavaram and Mottu representing the group which is greatly influenced by Telgu people. Certain differences between these two groups are given below :

The northern Koyas usually wear loin cloth. The southern Koyas who are influenced by the telugus use bigger cloth and sometimes use 'dhoti' covering the portion from waist to knee. Shirts have become common among both types and it is a common thing to see a Koya going to a market or to a festival putting on a shirt with the loin cloth.

The women of these two regions are conspicuously different from one another in their dress style. The southern Koya women are hardly distinguishable from the telugu women. They wear saris in the telugu manner. Blouses and brassiers have become common among young Koya maidens who buy them from the nearby local markets at Mallavaram and Khunta in Madhya Pradesh.

The picture is completely different in the northern region. The Koya women in this region use scanty cloth. They wear a loin cloth covering the portion from waist to knee knotted just below the naval. Generally they do not use a cloth to cover their breasts except when going to a market or a festival. A piece of cloth is loosely wrapped covering one hip and the opposite shoulder over which the necklaces rest. This manner of wearing has become common among the women, but while at work they are found without any cover over upper part of their body.

Most of the Koyas now wear a turban on their head while going for a dance to distant market or to visit kinsmen. One end of the turban is made to hang in front and is brought behind the neck and over the shoulder. The turban is used only by men whereas a brass band is used by women in their head. There are noticeable differences in the use of ornaments between these two groups of Koyas. The necklaces used by the Koya women of northern section are called 'Nedek' or 'Nede' and are of large varieties in size, material and colour. The necklaces of beads are very much liked and are purchased from the local markets. Armlets made of brass and aluminium are used. The ear-lobes are completely covered with rings. The women of the southern region wear very little ornaments except glass bangles which are common among them.

The language spoken by the Koyas belong to the Gondi dialect of the Dravidian group. This dialect also differs among the two groups of the tribes. There has been incorporation of Telugu, Hindi and Oriya words in the language of the southern group and Oriya of the northern group. The Southerners have been much influenced in dress, ornaments and hair-style by the Telugu while the northerners have been relatively less influenced by the Oriyas. In their case there has been rather greater continuity in traditional life style.

HABITAT AND SETTLEMENT

The Koya settlements lie in paths of clearing in the midst of forests. Except a few villages which are situated by the side of roads most villages are approached by narrow footpaths. There is no specific boundary to demarcate a Koya village. But the garden enclosures are the first sign of the location of a village. Sometimes the cluster of "Urskalk" or the menhirs erected in memory of dead ancestors also indicate the existence of a village.

The Koya villages are more or less permanent in nature but there is a tendency to shift the village from place to place. The Koyas have great fear of supernatural powers. The outbreak of epidemics or attack of wild animals or any natural calamity by which the people may suffer loss of lives and property are sufficient reasons for the Koyas to abandon a village site and shift it to another place which might be situated very near or at a little distance from the deserted one. Economic factors also play a part in the shifting of villages. Formerly the Koyas were depending mostly on shifting cultivation (Lankapodsened). When the forests become thin by repeated clearing and burning the village is abandoned and a site near a virgin forest is selected for settlement. But the practice of shifting village is now not in vogue because shifting cultivation is almost given up.

The village site with surrounding land and forest belongs to the founder clan. But there may be in the same village people of other clans from whom wives are taken.

In certain areas a village may have small hamlets which are locally known as 'Guda'. These hamlets are virtually small villages having each its headman and own institutions. For example, the Sikapalli has such a Guda or hamlet called Urmaguda. It has its own separate identity in almost all matters except certain religious festivals which were observed jointly with the villagers of Sikapalli.

When the practice of shifting of villages was in vogue, it was the *Peda*, the headman and *Perma*, the priest who were responsible for

for selecting a site in the month of *Diwali* corresponding to October-November. Some trees are felled and a patch is cleared. The priest takes a handful of rice grains in a leaf-cup in the evening and pours them over the cleared patch of land and chants some prayers addressed to the Earth God. These grains are covered under the leaf-cup and next morning they come to see if ants disturbed the grains. If the grains are found undisturbed the site is taken as a good one suitable for habitation. If the grains are found disturbed the site is abandoned and another site is selected. The houses of a village conform to a shapeless cluster. There are open spaces in between the houses which are used to pen their cattle. This is also same with the Koyas of the southern region although they have been considerably influenced by the Telugus in the matter of house types and settlement pattern.

The number of houses in a Koya village varies from ten to thirty or more not exceeding 100 households. With the change in practice from shifting to settled conditions, the existing villages are getting more densely populated than before. Each family had a single house to live in. When the sons get married the old house is not big enough to accommodate their wives. In such a situation they build separate houses near the old house and live separately with their wives.

The Koya settlement has a central place which is called 'End Bayul' or the dancing ground. This is also wide open space sometimes situated in front of the house of the priest or the headman. But this is not strictly adhered to and the boys and girls dance in places according to their convenience. The village burial ground is always situated at a distance from the village to keep the ghosts and spirits away from the village.

The Houses :

The size of the house often indicates the economic status of the householder. A wealthy man needs a bigger house for storing his grains and household articles whereas a poor man can manage with a small house to accommodate everything within it. Thus there are

houses which have a length of 30 to 40 feet and a breadth of 6 to 15 feet.

The houses are constructed on the basis of cooperative labour. A person who wants to construct a house approaches the villagers to help him. Both men and women extend their helping hand, the former building the structural frame and the latter plastering the walls with mud mixed with cowdung. After the completion of the house the owner kills a pig and distributes pork among the workers. Some portion of the pork is kept for a feast. The workers sit together and partake the feast given by the owner. The houses of the northern Koyas differ from those of the southern Koyas. The walls in the southern region are mostly built of bamboo splits plastered with mud and pole stockades of uniform size. A verandah is provided in front. It is much higher in the south than in the north. In addition, a narrow verandah runs around the house on the remaining three sides. This small verandah is not found in houses in the north. The house is partitioned into two rooms, one which is called 'Wija Lon' or the store-room for grains and the other is *Rana gad* or the kitchen. Generally a loft is provided in the store-room to keep grains and other articles.

The verandah (*arra*) is of much importance to the Koya and in fact, it is the most frequently used place in the entire house. From morning to evening all types of household works are done here by both men and women. Occasionally there may be a fire-place on the verandah where cooking is sometimes done. Ukkad or a basket which hangs from a beam of the roof is used for cradling babies on the verandah. This is a place where the guests are entertained. The front wall used for hanging all sorts of household articles such as bows and arrows, drum, dancing head dress, sickle like knives, flutes, musical horns, etc. These are hung from pegs of deer or Sambar horns or bamboo pegs fixed to the wall. The members of the house also sleep on the verandah in all seasons. The mortar is fixed to the floor in the verandah for husking rice. The surface of the verandah is raised a little higher than the surface of the floor inside the house. Thus the verandah serves as a part and parcel of the house and from

outside looks like an open hall. The whole house is surrounded by a fence made of split bamboos.

There are no windows in the house and therefore the inside is so dark that without a lamp it is difficult to step-in. A door is provided in the wall which partitions the house to pass from one room to the other. The first room is used as kitchen. In one corner of this room water containers and pots containing rice beer are kept.

The roof of the house is thatched with *piri*, a type of jungle grass which is found in abundance in the near by forests. These are collected every year and made to dry before being used for thatching.

Each house has a side shed for pigs and goats. Sometimes these sheds are situated within the fence of the house. Fencing on all sides of a house is a regular feature in the Koya settlements. The wattle work is highly decorative.

Each house has a kitchen garden or *guda* which is situated behind it. It is also fenced on all sides and the crops grown are tobacco, mustard and vegetables like tomato, brinjal and beans. Before the crops are grown the garden is manured with cattle dung and care is taken to fence it all around. Manuring is the work of women and fencing is the work of men.

The trees that are commonly found in a Koya village are *Mahula*, *Salapa*, *Kusum* and *Jamu* which are not felled while clearing a patch of forest either for settlement or for cultivation. *Mahua* liquor and *Salapa* juice are the two important drinks without which the Koyas as they say, cannot survive. Mahua flowers are dried and store in large quantities to be used as food as and when required. In the southern region palm trees are found in abundance and therefore the Koyas depend more on the palm trees for liquor than on Mahua flower and pull on days together without food with a belly full of palm liquor.

In some villages a house which is called *Pikin-Kudma* is constructed for the unmarried young girls to use as a dormitory. The girls gather there during the night for singing and gossiping and they

sleep there together. But this practice is gradually being abandoned, in many villages as *Pikin-Kudma* is not in existence. The girls sleep in the house of a old women or a widow.

In all villages a Chaudi is built to accommodate visiting guests and Government servants. The headman of the village gets it built with the help of the villagers and maintains in good conditions.

ECONOMIC AND MATERIAL EXISTENCE

Information from the older people and old records preserved in the Taluk office reveal that the Koyas of Malkangiri region were originally shifting cultivators. No effort, was made in the past for practising wet cultivation as large tracts of virgin forests were available for shifting cultivation. With the passage of time their economic activities have been influenced by the changes caused by innumerable factors. The increase in population has been responsible for the shrinkage of the area under shifting cultivation. Besides, the Government agencies have been making efforts to wean the Koyas away from shifting cultivation. Large tracts of forests have now been declared as reserved, prohibiting entry fo the public into such areas. All these factors have led the Koyas to practise shifting cultivation in a limited scale and take to wet cultivation on a large scale. The method of cultivation as practised by them is very crude. They lack the technical knowledge and technology required for wet cultivation. As a result they fail to get much yield from the lands in spite of the fact that they are in possession of large tracts of Land.

The Koyas continue to their habit of hunting and gathering which was at a time, not far back, their primary source of livelihood. They are skilled hunters and since the wild games have become scarce now they go out for hunting once in a while. The Koyas are beef eaters.

The Koyas distinguish between three main types of land used for different types of cultivation. Firstly, the low land which can hold water for a long time is called "*Barhia Kuta*". Secondly, the land which is situated on a comparatively higher level and where water can be stored by making small earthen dams is called "*Usk Beda*". The third type is known as "*Elka*" or the slopes full of trees and bushes. The *Elka* lands are used for shifting cultivation.

The Koyas do not have sufficient *Barhia Kuta* lands in their habitat, because most of it is covered under forest and is undulating.

In the earlier dispensation when some one wanted to settle down in a village he had meet the *Peda* or the headman of the village with a pot of *landa* or rice beer as *Bheti*. This was because the headman was granted 'Mustafadri' or the right to collect cess from the villagers by the Raja of Jeypore Estate of which Malkangiri sub-division was a part. The headman used to deposit a fixed amount either in cash or kind in the treasury of the Raja and this practice was being continued till recently, when these were deposited in Government treasury at Malkangiri. The headman was authorised to dispose of any part of the individual holdings in favour of a new comer to the village. Assessment of rent was the exclusive right of the headman and the the amount never exceeded rupees five in cash and one *Puti* or 120 lbs. of paddy per plough used in a single family. The amount of land owned by an individual family depended on its capacity to bring land under cultivation. This was however, within limits of cultivable lands available within the boundary of the village. When asked how much land does a Koya possess, he answers by the number of ploughs he uses to cultivate his land.

In a village not all households have *Elka* or forest lands which are used for shifting cultivation. The reason is that generally the first batch of settlers distributes among themselves all available *Elka* lands leaving little for those who came later.

The implements which the Koyas used for cultivation consists of spade (*Godaal*), axe (*Goel*) and plough (*Nangel*). The ploughs are a rudimentary form and the Koyas make them by themselves. They used to get the axe and spade from the Kamar Koyas who happen to be an occupational group among the Koyas. But today they get them from Oriya Kamaras at the weekly markets. The agricultural implements used by the Koyas are crude and symbolize technological underdevelopment in primary sector.

Manuring of paddy fields is not done by the Koyas in spite of the fact that they have large herds of cattle. The cattle-dung is heaped in the kitchen garden and spread all over for growing tobacco, mustard and other vegetables. After harvesting, paddy straw is left in the paddy fields to dry. When these are sufficiently dried they

are burnt and the ashes are spread all over. Same thing is done in the Swiddens, but in this case ashes of the burnt trees, branches and leaves are used as manure.

Cultivation of land starts with the break of monsoon in mid-June. Until then they do not till the soil and both men and women do the ploughing. Even girls above twelve years of age are also no exception. Sowing of seeds and ploughing are done simultaneously.

The seeds are sometimes made to germinate before sowing. After sowing there is a short gap in the agricultural activities. When the plants grow to a certain height necessary operations for storing water in the paddy fields begin. If a major earthen embankment is needed to store water in any field, the owner of the field solicits the help of the villagers and the work is done on a co-operative basis. The team is provided with 'landa' or rice beer in sufficient quantity and a pig is killed and pork is distributed among the workers.

After the water is stored in the fields which is a major agricultural operation the Koyas wait till the crops begin to ripe. Weeding is never done by the Koyas, and therefore grasses grow wild with the paddy plants and causes the loss of fertility in the fields coupled with diminished return.

When the crops begin to ripe the Koyas take precautionary measures to save them from the depredation of wild animals and birds. All the boys beginning from the age of eight onwards in a family go to watch the fields with their small bows and arrows. The adult members sleep in the field huts at night and produce sound by blowing horn and beating drum to scare away the wild animals.

The Koyas differentiate between the two types of paddy, i.e. the one which ripens earlier and the other which ripens later. The early variety is grown in high lands and the late variety in low lying lands.

No sooner the harvest of small paddy begins in the month of November then the Koyas are found busy day and night in their fields. This is a period when no adult person is found

in the village during the day. Sometimes the whole family is seen in the fields at this time.

Where the field huts are built on the ground the whole family may be found there in day time during the harvesting season. A hearth is provided in the hut to cook food and earthen pots are kept to store food and water. After sunset they return home and sometimes the night meal is cooked in the field hut and brought home to eat at night.

After the reaping is over the paddy is kept in a heap in a particular place cleared for this purpose near the field hut. Paddy is thrashed in this place and collected in baskets made of leaves of the elephant creeper (*Sialti*). The baskets are then carried home where the paddy is emptied from the leaf-baskets and stored in containers made of bamboo splits.

Though rice is staple food of the Koyas, it does not go throughout the year for most of the Koyas. The stock of paddy is sufficient at best for four to five months in a year. This is the reason for which the Koyas make a very economical use of the stock of their paddy. Cooked rice is not eaten always twice a day. In the morning a gruel is made of rice and pulses mixed together and cooked rice is eaten at night. Minor millets, maize and dried *mahul* flowers are substituted for the morning gruel of rice. The Koyas grow millet, maize and pulses in lands which are situated near the village. When the rain comes the Koyas fence these plots of land either with split bamboos or wooden stockades and sow seeds of maize and millet in the months of June and July. These are harvested in the months of November and December.

A variety of pulses such as Mung and Kandul, and such oilseeds are sown in the patches of land which are used for shifting cultivation.

The crops raised are mainly used as food. Ragi is used for making beer and gruel. previously they used to sell their crops except ragi and beans in exchange for daily necessities such as salt, tobacco and clothes.

A chart showing the seasonal activities is given below. The Koya month corresponds to the period from one new moon to the next instead of the period from one full moon to the next as calculated according to the Oriya Calendar.

Koya month	Corresponding Oriya month	English equivalent month	Activities
Pus	Pus-Magh	January	Harvest of late paddy, maize and millets, collection of Piri a kind of grass used for thatching. Attending marriage feasts, and spending time in dancing and singing. Hunting and gathering.
Magh	Magh-Phalgun	February	Collection of 'Piri' and bamboos, observance of Bimud Pandu (worshipping rain god), Hunting and fishing.
Pagul	Phalgun-Chaitra	March	Collection of <i>Mahul</i> and <i>Kendu</i> and other fruits. Hunting. Attending marriage feasts.
Chait	Chaitra-Baisakha	April	Collection of Mahul. Kendu. Fishing and hunting. Attending marriage feasts spending time in dancing and singing. Observance of <i>Idu</i> or <i>Ikk</i> Pandu (New Mahul eating ceremony).
Semiti	Baisakh-Jestha	May	Collection of Mahul and Kendu and other seasonal fruits from the jungle.

			Observance of <i>Bijja Pandu</i> , ceremonial hunting.
Padaman	Jyestha-Asadha	June	Ploughing of fields and sowing ceremony. Fencing of kitchen gardens and other gardens where maize is grown. Clearing and burning of <i>Elka</i> land where <i>Gora</i> (eleusine coracana) and pulses, oil seeds and beans and <i>suan</i> are sown.
Burdabata	Asadha-Srabana	July	Sowing of paddy & rice fields and pulses, <i>Mandia</i> , <i>Suan</i> in <i>Elka</i> lands.
Mund khol	Sraban-Bhadrav	August	Collection of roots and tubers from the jungle, storing of water in the fields wherever necessary and sowing of paddy.
Kani	Bhadrab-Aswin	September	Collection of roots and tubers. Observance of <i>Kurum Pandu</i> or the new <i>Suan</i> eating ceremony. Storing of water in the fields. Hunting and gathering.
Dashera	Aswin-Kartik	October	Collection of roots and tubers. Watching birds and wild animals in the fields. Harvesting of early paddy and observance of <i>Kodta Pandu</i> or new rice eating ceremony. Fishing and storing of water in fields and hunting.

Dewal	Kartik-Margasir	November	Storing of water in the fields. Fishing, and collection of roots and tubers. Harvesting of early paddy and observance of <i>Sikud Pandu</i> or the new bean eating ceremony. Watching birds and wild animals to save crops.
Pand	Margasir-Pus	December	Harvesting of late paddy. Storing of paddy. Harvesting of maize, Suan and pulses and oil seeds. Watching birds and wild animals in the field and works at the field hut for harvesting and storing of paddy.

The Cattle Wealth :

The Koyas of Malkangiri sub-division possess large herds of cows and bullocks and in the southern part of the sub-division the number of cows and bullocks of a family goes upto hundred or more.

In the cattle population generally the cows outnumber the bullocks. The reason is that bullocks are either sold for cash or exchanged for any other necessities such as fishing nets, rugs and bison horns. Grigson in his monograph, *Maria Gonds of Bastar* has written that the Marias whom he called Koyas own large herds of buffaloes. But it is interesting to note that nowhere in the Malkangiri sub-division do the Koyas keep buffaloes.

The Koyas do not have any shed for their cows and bullocks. The open space around or by the side of each house is used for tethering them in one long rope which is tied at one end to the trunk of a tree or a bamboo post that is stuck into the ground. Ten to twelve or more cows and bullocks are tethered in a single long rope. Construction and repairing of large cowsheds to accommodate large herds of cattle is not an easy matter. It requires a lot of labour and

building materials which are in short supply. Therefore throughout the year they keep the cattle in open space.

The animals are let loose in the forests nearby which provide good fodder to them. They graze in the forest and drink water from the streams. No effort is made to feed them at home. Every household allots a boy by rotation to tend cattle of the whole village. Watching is necessary when the crops are standing in the fields. Otherwise they are let loose all other times.

Castration of male calves is done at a much later period when they have already become grown up bulls. The Koyas say that if a calf is castrated earlier it will not have a strong and stout growth. They have their own indigeneous method of castration. There are specialists who undertake this job and the stock man's help is not sought for in this regard.

Whenever the cattle suffer from any diseases such as small-pox on foot and mouth, etc. they seek the help of their shamman who cure them through divination and use of herbal medicines. In such cases also the Koyas do not ask for the help of the stockman.

The Koyas seldom milk their cows. But during rainy season when the grasses are plentifully available and the cattle get sufficient fodder they milk the cows. They say that the calves will die if milking is done frequently. They prepare curd and butter but not ghee as other do.

The Koyas use both cows and bullocks for ploughing their fields in the plains where settled or wet cultivation is practised. But where ploughing is not necessary as in the case of shifting cultivation the cattle are allowed to trod over the field after tree felling and burning of combustible matter into ashes.

In the social field these animals also play an important role. The possession of this wealth gives status to a man in the Koya society. In fact a man becomes wealthy by possessing a large herd of these animals. The man who does not have any cattle is considered low in the social scale. No one can marry without possessing cows and

bullocks because these are invariably included in the bride price that has to be paid to the bride's father. A man who has no cow or bullock has to serve under another man who has a large herd. In return for his service he is given by a cow and a bullock to be paid as bride price at the time of his marriage. It was also gathered that when a man is without any animal of this kind he goes with a pot of landa to one of his relations who obliges him with a few heads of cattle to improve his economic position. This is not a gift giving and the condition is that he has to return the same number of heads of cattle to his benefactor after he has improved his economic condition.

The Koyas were veteran beef eaters in the days gone by. In these days also the practice has not completely been abandoned but they hesitate to admit in the public that they are so. The slaughter of cows and bullocks in the funeral ceremony is a regular feature in the Koya society. When a man dies all his kinsmen are invited to come and see the deadman. The dead body is preserved in the house till all the kinsmen gather and in the meanwhile cows and pigs are slaughtered to feed the visiting relatives. When a menhir is erected in memory of the dead person a cow is slaughtered and its tail is hung on the stone slab.

In nutshell, the animal wealth gives status to a man in the Koya society and enables him to marry and is used as a capital whose productive function is of immense importance. The Koya term for wealth is '*Chom*' or '*Shom*' and when a man is asked as to when he would marry, he replies that when he has got enough '*Chom*' which means cows and bullocks.

Pigs are domesticated in large number by the Koyas because pork is very much relished and therefore constitute an important item in the dietary of the Koyas. On all ceremonial occasions pigs are slaughtered and pork is cooked and served. When a Koya engages some people to do some work for him on the basis of reciprocity he is obliged to feed them and one of the essential items of food served to the team is pork for which one or two pigs are slaughtered.

Collection of roots and fruits constitutes one of the important food seeking activities. In fact, a Koya substantially adds to his store of food through the collection of roots, tubers and fruits from the forest. The most important of these is the Mahua flowers. The period for collection starts from the months of February-March to April-May, about three months a year. Women and children go out in the morning after taking a little gruel and return home with basket full of Mahua flowers. It is estimated that a family collects on an average 300 pounds of Mahua flowers a year. The flowers are dried in the sun to make them suitable for storing and these dried flowers are consumed in the lean period which corresponds to rainy season. Mahua flowers are used not only as food but also as an intoxicating drink. The Koyas prepare a kind of alcoholic beverage by boiling Mahua flowers in their indigenous way. This beverage is called *Surate* or *Uram* and is deep red in colour. All the families prepare it and almost all the family members are in the habit of drinking it. It is as common as the rice beer but due to the limited stock of Mahua flowers all the families cannot afford to drink it throughout the year.

The Koyas also collect the fruit of this tree and extract oil by indigenous method. The Mahua oil is very common among the Koyas who use it as the medium of cooking and in their body and hair. Next in importance is the fruit called *Tumid* (*Kendu*). *Kendu* fruits are ripen at the same time when Mahua flowers are available. Huge quantity of these fruits are collected and eaten in season and stored in dried form to be used in off season at the time of scarcity of food. The dried *Kendu* fruits are soaked in water before eaten. There are several other seasonal fruits which are collected and eaten but not stored. They are *Nendu* (*Jamu*), *Edka* (*Kusum*) and *Marka* (mango) etc.

Collection of roots and tubers from the forests is also important activity of the Koyas. These are not stored but consumed immediately after they are collected. All the types are not available in any one season but in different seasons. Collection of roots begins from the months of May and June and goes on till the months of September and October. Most of the tubers which the Koyas use as food have not only food value but also medicinal value. A systematic nutritional

analysis of these tubers will reveal many valuable information which are not known as yet.

Various types of green leaves are also collected by women from the forests and river banks. These are cooked and eaten as a side dish with gruel and rice. The Koyas also collect the eggs of the red ants which make a good side dish.

There are weekly markets located at convenient places in the Koya country. Both men and women from far off and near by villages visit these market centres to sell whatever surplus agricultural and forest produce they have and buy whatever things they need in their day to day life. As the wants have increased the Koyas visit the markets now a days in greater number and also more new market centres are needed to meet the growing needs of the people.

The immediate needs of the Koyas are salt, cloth, oil, onion, dried fish, molasses and turmeric. Salt is brought by barter. Sometimes peddlers visit the Koya villages to sell small articles and daily necessities to the Koyas at their door steps. The Koyas exchange millet and especially mustard for salt. One *mana* unit of measure made of brass or iron of mustard seeds is exchanged for three *maans* of salt. In case of millet or rice one *mana* of rice or millet, is exchanged for two or three *maanas* of salt. Commodities like cloth, oil, dried fish and molasses are bought on payment of money. The Koya women are fond of different varieties of glass and metal bangles and necklaces of beads. These are sold at the weekly markets by Telugu and *Boipari* women coming from Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. They are also equally attracted towards combs, mirrors, soaps, multi coloured ribbons and such other luxurious articles. They buy these fancy articles on payment of ready cash.

The things which the Koyas sell at the market mainly are chilli, brinjal, mahua, millet, horse-gram, rice, tomato, black and green grams and tobacco leaves. All these thing are sold by Koya women. .

The Koyas do bargain at the time of purchase. But that does not benefit them much as the sellers are more intelligent and cunning, who cheat them in weight and measure.

In spite of these shortcomings the Koyas have by now been stimulated to produce commodities for sale in the market. Emphasis is now being laid more on the garden produce for which there is a demand among those who have come from outside to Malkangiri in search of employment. Towards south of the Koya country where civilised Telugus and men from madhya Pradesh have influenced the Koyas, the money transactions have replaced the transactions by barter. There is a class of people called *Boiparis* who have migrated to the Koya country from the adjoining Bastar state and have now become established in the Koya villages. They carry on business with the Koyas by providing head gear and ceremonial dresses to the Koya magicians. These decorative dresses are purchased by the Koyas at a very high rate sometimes costing more than thirty rupees.

Markets are the place where the Koyas come in contact with the outsiders. The relationship is always commercial except with the Boiparis who also take part in their social activities. The Koyas are always dominated by the others because of their docile nature. The market is also a place where the the Koyas meet their relations living in distant villages.

In the Koya society division of labour is observed along both the lines of age and sex. Small children up to age six or seven are not assigned any work. But as they grow older they take up the roles of adult members of the family. When the boys are of the age of twelve or more they do work like adult members. The girls of this age also do the household works like adult women. But hard work like ploughing, storing of water in the field and going to jungle for hunting are not done by the boys. But they take such works when they attain their adolescent period.

It is noticeable that the Koya women are more labourious and take greater part in difficult agricultural works than man. However such works as tree felling and storing of water donot fall on their shoulder. What is more important is the fact that the women do not share those works in which some technical knowledge is required. Basketry, fencing of gardens and preparation of musical instruments and weapons are some such works which are the monopoly of men.

There is an occupational group among the Koya, that is, the Kamar Koya who specialise in making iron implements like axes, knives and arrow heads. Intermarriage between the Kamar section and other section of the tribe is not allow and the later section considering itself superior do not dine in the house of the former section. However, both the sections live side by side in the same village. For making iron implements they get remuneration from the villagers in kind like paddy and millet. Earthen pots are provided by the Kumbhars who inhabit the region. They bring pots to the markets for sale. These people are not Koya. Pots are exchanged in barter system and sometimes purchased on payment of money.

Another occupational group of the Koya tribe consists of the people called *Musri*. The *Musris* are considered even lower in social status than the Kamar Koyas. The Kumar Koyas do not accept water from the *Musris*. Though they have the same clans as others do and share with them in many cultural traits they donot have marital relations with the superior sections of the tribe. They are an endogamous occupational division like the Kamar koyas. They are not found in all the villages like Kamaras and remain scattered all over the region. They are also very few in number. Their occupation is to make ornaments of brass and alluminium which the Koya women use. They are also paid in kind by their customers.

The standard of living among the Koyas varies from family to family in every village. Some families in a village are wealthier than others and there are people who are also poverty stricken. The latter lack sufficient land and livestock. Those who are poor and below poverty line and have not got means to improve their standard of living are bound to incur debt.

Among the Koyas there are well-to do people who lend money to the poor people of their community. They also approach the Doms who call themselves Walmikis for loan. The Walmikis were untouchable and lived in a hamlet of the village. They are money lenders and whenever the Koyas are in want they advance loan to them and charge heavy interest. Ten *mana* measures of Paddy as principal fetches five *mana* measures of paddy towards interest after a

year. The rate of interest charged is so exorbitant and the accounts maintained by the creditors are so fictitious that once a Koya is caught in the net of the money lending business of the Doms the amount of loan goes on mounting year after year and he goes on repaying the loan through out his life. In some cases the burden of repayment lies on the shoulder of his children after his death and the process goes on in perpetuity.

Credit transactions are noticed between blood and affinal relations. But these are repaid without any interest. If there does not exist any type of relationship the debtor has to pay interest at the rate of half of the principal amount taken per annum. The Koyas incur debt mainly for meeting the expenses of living, marriage ceremony, and funeral rites. They have the practice of giving to the bride's father one male calf and one female calf at the time of marriage. Besides, he has to spend a large sum of money and large quantity of rice for the marriage feast. He has to feed the bride's party who accompany her to the groom's village.

Likewise, when a man's father or any of his family members dies he has to invite all of his relations to see the dead body. He has to provide feast to the villagers and kismen at the time of erecting a menhir. There are other social as well as economic obligations he has to fulfill for which he needs the means and if he lacks them, incurs debt.

The system of employing 'Goti' (bonded slave) is prevalent among the Koyas. The wealthier Koyas often employ them with a view to getting help by way of manual labour. There are certain factors which compel the Koyas to serve as a *Goti*. A poor man having no means to pay the bride-price incurs a loan from a wealthy man whom he serves as a *Goti* in order to clear his debt. Generally a man does not serve as *Goti* in his own village. He finds a rich man outside his village, takes a loan from him and serves him as a *Goti*. One Madkam happens to be the *Goti* of the priest of the village Sikapalli and his younger brother Madkam J is also employed as *Goti* in the house of the elder brother of the same priest named Madkam B. The two brothers went to Assam with their parents leaving their property with

their maternal uncle to look after. When their father died at Assam their mother went away with another person marrying him. The two brothers returned to their village in Bastar and found the property misappropriated completely by their maternal uncle. They could not be helped by their villagers and therefore left the village in search of employment. On the way they begged and in the village Tondapalli a Koya land owner employed them to clear a patch of jungle for him and towards their remuneration paid them two manas of paddy. Later they came to the village Sikapalli and an Oriya from Malkangiri asked them to work for him as his servants. The priest of the village Madkam B told them to stay with him and sent the younger brother to serve in his elder brother's house as Goti. They preferred to stay in the house of Koya and not in the house of Oriya because they were assured that their wages would be paid in a lump sum at the time of their marriage.

Madkam S informed that when a Goti is employed he is assured by his employer to get him married to a Koya girl bearing all the expenses adjustable towards the remuneration of their service. When the employer gets a girl for his Goti he is obliged to serve for another five years after which he is free to move to any place or put up separately building a house for him in the same village. If the Goti wants to go away before the stipulated period he has to pay some amount of paddy and other things like a cow or pig in lieu of compensation to his employer.

The Koyas also employ Goti who ultimately become the La-am or son-in-law. If a man has a daughter or sister he keeps a Goti and after five years of service gives over his daughter or sister in marriage to him.

The relation between the employer and the employed is like the relation between two members of a family. They are never treated differently. They work together and eat together. They have access to all places in the house. The servants also adopt certain terms of address to their employer on the basis of the clan to which he belongs. If he belongs to the same clan he calls his employer as uncle or brother as the case may be or if he belongs to any other clan

he calls either *mama* or any term for affinal relations that may fit the case.

The food of Koya constitute a wide variety. A brief description is given below :

1. Paddy—Paddy is husked and the rice from it is boiled and gruel is made. The Koyas mostly eat *Jawa* or gruel instead of cooked rice as eaten by others.
2. Pulses—Pulses like *Biri*, *Peshli* and *Mung* are also mixed with rice and gruel is made.
3. *Suan* and maize and *Mandia (Gora)* are boiled and gruel is made.
4. The vegetables like pumpkin, gourd, *kerala*, eggfruit are eaten as curry with *Jawa* (gruel) or *Chakur* (Parched rice). *Chakur* is a delicacy for the Koyas. During the harvest when the Koyas have plenty of paddy at their disposal they take *Chakur* two times daily. Otherwise it is eaten once daily in the evening and gruel in the morning.
5. *Idu (Kandul)* is fried with little Mahua oil and eaten. It is eaten at the time of scarcity.
6. *Tumid (Kendu fruit)*—These are collected in large quantities when they are ripen and are stored after being dried in sun to be used during scarcity period.
7. The women folk collect a large variety of wild greens which they call *Kusir* from the fields, jungles and the edges of the water. These greens are cooked and eaten with *Chakur*.
8. Roots collected from the jungle are another important source of food for the Koyas. They are boiled and eaten. Roots are a main stay of the Koyas. Young green shoots of bamboo are also eaten.

9. Fishes or *Kike* are eaten by preparing curry. Various kinds of fish are dried and stored for future use.
10. Fish crabs, snails, tortoise are caught during rainy and other seasons and are eaten after being roasted.
11. Alang or the large sized eggs of red ants are relished by the Koyas. These eggs are ground to paste and curry is prepared. It is eaten as side dish.
12. All types of wild animals and birds except tigers and bears are eaten without hesitation. Pigs, goats and fowls are domesticated in large number to get meat.

The Koyas are very much addicted to liquor. It is not used as they say, as luxury but a necessity without which, they cannot survive. No marriage or religious ceremonies can be performed without liquor.

The most commonly used alcoholic beverage is the *Landa* or rice beer. This is prepared from the fermented rice and is drunk by men, women and children. In marriage ceremonies, *landa* is the principal item which is served to the guests.

Idu Katu or the liquor distilled from Mahul flower has a restricted use and all the Koyas cannot afford to drink it. They also brew another kind of liquor from the *Mahul* by a special method which is called *Suram* or *Uram*. *Suram* is most commonly used by all the Koyas.

Sago-palm juice is also drunk by the Koyas. These trees are individually owned and found in the area not in abundance. The toddy-palm juice is also drunk by the Koyas. To the south of Malkangiri taluk these trees are found in abundance and the Koyas can live for days together on this without taking food.

HEALTH AND HYGIENIC CONDITION

The appearance of the Koya villages at the first sight indicates the callousness of the Koyas towards sanitary conditions. All over the village the sight of uncleanness is the common experience of any new comer to the Koya country. The dungs of pigs, goats and cows lie everywhere in the village and no notice is taken about collecting them. Dogs, pigs and goats frequent the verandah of the house and make it dirty. No serious attention is paid to keep the house clean. The open space in front of the house is used for tethering cattle as a result of which these places become very unclean. There is no drainage system in any of the Koya villages except the natural drainage and therefore the villages become damp and muddy during rains with small pools of dirty water accumulated here and there inside the village. It is only the villages situated on hill-slopes, which are less dirty during rainy season.

The house of a Koya appears like a store house of dirt. The verandah which is an essential part of the house is frequented by pigs, dogs, goats, fowls making it unclean. The inside of a house is comparatively cleaner than the outside. The kitchen is kept clean. Similarly the place where the cooking utensils and liquor containers are kept is also neatly maintained. The insanitary conditions of the northern Koyas do not hold good for the villages of the southern Koyas. The houses and the nearby open space show the people's habit of keeping their surrounding neat and clean. The houses are regularly plastered with cow dung once in a week and neatly swept twice a day. The high verandahs which are also so neatly plastered are kept clean. The open space in front of the house is not used for tethering cattle as is done in the northern region.

The Koyas are equally callous in keeping their body clean. The dress which they wear is dirty and is not washed frequently. The women wash the dirty clothes at long intervals i.e. once or twice a month. They do not hesitate to sit on a dirty place. While taking bath they put off the cloths and get into the water naked. They do not

take pains to wash their body properly nor do, they use oil regularly in their hair. Oil extracted from the mahua seeds is used on the body and in the hair on festive occasions. The Koyas wash their teeth with tooth-sticks and clean with leaves after defecation.

The Koyas use leaf plates and cups for taking their food. They wash their hand and mouth before and after taking meals. They spit wherever they happen to sit. With regard to the bodily cleanliness the southern Koyas seem to be more particular and in many respects behave and act like caste Hindus.

The use of cheap soap has become common among the young boys and girls. These are used on festive occasions while taking bath.

The Koya women fetch water from the Kuta or tanks in which rain water is accumulated. There are large tracts or low lying rice cultivating fields, in one corner of which there happens to be a large pool of water. There is no restriction to get water for drinking purposes from a kuta on the land which belongs to another person. The tanks go dry during summer and the Koyas dig pits in the bed of the tanks to get water. The Koyas also use water from the rivers and rivulets which flow near the Koya villages.

The Koyas face acute scarcity of water during summer. They walk long distances to fetch water wherever it is available and carry water in gourd for their use whenever they go out to distant places. The Koyas do not drink well water because it is stagnant.

The Koyas of the southern region are not like those of the Northern region in this respect. There is a great demand for well water among the Koyas of the Southern region. Both in the morning and in the evening large crowds of Koya women are found near wells to draw water for drinking, bathing and other purposes.

The various types of diseases, which the Koyas suffer from are attributed to either supernatural aggression or sorcery. If people continue to suffer from diseases for a long time they abandon the village and settle in a new site to get rid of the evil look of the

supernatural elements. if a baby does not suckle its mother's breast it is attributed to the evil eye of a spirit. Any natural calamity like the attack of a tiger or a bear is also thought to be caused by the angry spirits of gods.

The Koyas practise divination to appease to deities and cure illness. They have shamans and sorcerers known as Wadde. They are engaged at the time of illness to ward off evil spirits and to perform prescribed divination for curing diseases.

The Koya words for disease is nopu which is distinguished from the wounds, cuts or burns. The same wadde who cures illness which is caused by the evil spirits also cures wounds, cuts etc. by applying herbal medicine. The Koyas narrate the symptoms of their diseases to the wadde who after his own diagnosis, gives medicine and if necessary tackles the problem by magical means. The knowledge is kept secret because the practitioner thinks that his medicines will not be efficacious if secrecy about it is divulged to others. In practice a Koya learns the art from his father and this way the techniques are transmitted from one generation to the next.

1. Dur (burning sensation on legs)—The disease is blown out by divination with the help of a sweeper (*Chhanchuni*) —No medicine is given.
2. Toita (Swelling of foot)—No medicine is given—The disease is blown out by the *Wadde* with the help of *Kasur* (*Chhanchuni*)
3. Daiparab (It is also a type of *Dur* with a biting sensation inside the leg)—The patient suffers from sleepiness and diarrhoea—Herbal medicine from jungle is given.
4. Edek (Fever with shivering and a high temperature on the body)—Medicine procured from the jungle is given.
5. Kank (Burning sensation on the body)—Herbs from the jungle are given. The medicineman blows out the disease by way of divination. Medicine is taken twice daily for one and half days. The disease is cured within three days.

6. Pula (Swelling of body)—Medicine from jungle is given to the patient which is a strong purgative by which swelling comes down gradually. Three doses are given. The medicine is mixed with powdered rice added to small quantity of hot water.
7. Talanota. (Headache)—Herbs from the jungle. If patient requests blowing out, it is done by the medicine man.
8. Potomandita or matia. (Colic pain)—Herbs from jungle.
9. Orgoba (Aching of one side of the forehead)—A nose drop prepared from the juice of some wild plants leaf is applied once and it is cured.
10. Netur Pota (Blood dysentery)—Medicine from jungle is given two times.

Information on the plants or leaves used for a particular type of disease could not be collected as the informant was unwilling to disclose the secret. After much persuasion he agreed to the proposal under certain conditions. The conditions were that the author should observe certain restrictions and should not divulge the secret to anybody. There are a few other diseases which the Koyas described to the author. These are detailed below :

1. Masa Nopu—This is the common Koya disease i.e. the Yaws.
2. Netur dogg—(T.B.) Blood cough. The Koya fear this disease most. *Netur* (blood) , *Dogg* (cough).
3. Rompa dogg—Cold and cough.
4. Parsa Pandto—Eyes, body and stool look like *Kamka* or turmeric-Jaundice.
5. Pandanad—The Koyas say that their children when affected by this, become reduced to skeleton day by day till they die or recover when proper steps are taken.

6. Param nopu—The Koyas say that a person affected by this disease feels acute pain while passing urine which looks like pus.
7. Pidinganad or Jivatindanad—This is a disease which acts like eating the Jiva which means soul. When a person is affected in this disease he always gasps and the disease takes out the soul from within the body of the Koyas.
8. Uhtam—Blood discharge in urine.
9. Edmoitit—Urine looks like 'Kamaka err' turmeric water and is discharged frequently.
10. Kid Nopu—A person affected by this, the Koyas say, gets reduced day by day till the bones become prominent without any flesh in the body.
11. Gajj—Itches.
12. Ahkanad Gajj—Ringworm.

Most of the Koyas suffer from itches and ringworm infections and they are most receptive to allopathic treatment such as application of ointment for such troubles. Persons suffering from smallpox, chicken pox and measles are exclusively treated by the perma or the priest of the village makes offerings to appease the respective goddesses who cause such diseases. Diseased persons are kept aloof from other members of their families till they recover. Certain taboos are also observed in the village. Beating of drums and dancing and singing by women are completely forbidden during this period.

The Koyas have a reputation for curing wounds, cuts and fractures with help of herbal medicine. Wounds caused by the attack of bears, leopards and tigers are easily treated and cured with the application of herbal medicine.

SOCIAL ORGANISATION

A family which is the smallest unit of social grouping is called *lotam* in Koya language. It includes the parents and their children and in a way follows the Hindu joint family system by including the brothers and their wives and their children. In fact, a family consists of the parents, their adult sons, with their wives and children and unmarried sons and daughters. Sometimes the family, also includes the *Olaam* or the son-in-law in house who stays in his father-in-law's house with his wife. As soon as the sons become adult and married they built up their own houses round the parental house to live separately with their wives but the cooking for the whole family is done in one place. If any of the adult son wants to be separated he asks his father to give him some land to cultivate and live separately from the rest of family. This process is gradually becoming common among the Koyas.

Though monogamy is the rule, cases of polygyny are not rare. As the expenses of getting a bride are high the majority of the Koyas cannot afford to marry more than one wife. Usually there may be two considerations for polygynous marriage. One is that they get more helping hand in economic activities and the other is that plural marriages are necessary to meet the sexual needs as in many cases the wives are older in age than the husbands, and become old when the husband is still youthful and vigorous. Besides, a Koya feels himself a man of position and status by marrying more than one wife.

All the unmarried girls above age of ten go to sleep either with their grand parents or any other old woman of the village living alone. The boys above age of ten years also sleep in different places in groups or in a single group if accommodation is available.

All the members of a family co-operate in all types of economic activities along the lines of division of labour.

The father is the chief or head of the family and all authority is vested in him. He directs other members to work and also works himself with them. He owns all the property of the family. He is succeeded by his eldest son to assume the headship of the family. He is the man through whom descent is traced and therefore a Koya family is patrilineal.

The mother trains the daughters and the father trains the sons to work as per the division of labour. When the father becomes old the eldest son takes up responsibility and runs the family.

The Koyas distinguished between two types of kin groups which they call *Kutumān* or the consanguineal kin and *wiwalwand* or the affinal kin. There are five exogamous clans (*Katta*) in the northern Koya society. They are (1) *Kowasi*, (2) *Odi or Sodi*, (3) *Madkam*, (4) *Madi* and (5) *Padiam*. The number of clans is the same among both the southern and northern Koyas. A Koya may marry in any clan other than his own. For example, a Kawasi can take a wife from any of the remaining four clans. The names of the clans vary from the northern region to southern region. Each clan comprises a number of sub-clans. Again the names of the sub-clans are different in both the regions. The list of clans and sub-clans of both the region are given below :

SOUTHERN REGION

CLANS	SUB-CLANS
1. Edukatta	Kawasi, Duber, Emala, Wanzamir, Korsta, Witer.
2. Aidukata	Sodi, Wida, Galir, Gontpontalewar, Gangetlawar, Dagulwar, Pittalwar.
3. Mulkatta	Durwa, Madiam, Tai, Matum, Dharmu, Pondur, Jondor, Joder, Undmir, Kalmu, Turramir.

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| 4. Parengotta | Jalir, Oyemir, Madir, Darer, Pujsemir, Punyem Bogar. |
| 5. Perumboi | Omrrar, Alwa, Bandam, Kurram, Padiam, Wetir, Kanjaru, Kunja, Kokral, Kattam, Ondi, Rova-Kotam. |

NORTHERN REGION

CLANS

SUB-CLANS

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| 1. Kawasi | Korsta, Muskir, Padami, Wanzami, Dir. |
| 2. Sodi | Odi, Wickalore. |
| 3. Madkam | Kalmu. Nupond, dagir, Guisalo, Gondse, Tati, Badse, Bogam, Ponder, gaita, Telsari. |
| 4. Madi | Punyem, Emla, Oyami, Pusami |
| 5. Padiam | Kunjam, Karta, Wati, Rawal, Karrhami, Kartni, Komra. |

Each group believes to have descended from a common ancestor and are identified with their respective totems. The totems for each group are : The clans are totemic and the totems associated with them (referring to totems of Northern clans) are Tortoise (*Emul*) for *Madkam*, Goat (*Meka*) for *Madi* and Buffalo (*Podh*), Bara for *Godi*, *Padian* and *Kowasi*. The members of different clans do not use their respective totems as food.

The Koyas are not always able to name the different sub-clans under each clan. Besides there are many sub-clan names which are of local origin and not found in other regions.

There are mythological stories regarding the origin of clans. The story goes like this. There occurred once a devastating flood which killed all people except a brother and a sister. The name of the

brother was Kawas. Both of them got a gourd and floated over the water. At last they landed in an island and started cultivating the land with the help of digging stick. They grew ragi and other food grains and ate them. Since there was none except them they married each other and seven sons and two daughters were born. The two daughters married the two eldest sons and the children born become the founder of the clans.

The Koya villages comprise different clans as the people of a village do not have any difficulty in finding out girls to marry. In otherwards, marriage within the village is common because of its multi-clan composition.

The kinship terms used for designating various types of kin in the Koya society is interesting. Some kinship terms are given below ;

ENGLISH TERMS

KOYA TERMS

Father

Yamal

Father's father

Dadu

Father's elder brother

Pepi

Father's younger brother

Koka

Father's father's brother

Dadu

Father's sister

Poya

father's sister's daughter (Elder to age)

Yange

Elder brother

Dada

Younger brother

(No term of address) term of reference Tamusk

Mother's father

Tata or Akko

Mother's Elder brother

Mama

Mother's younger brother

Mama

Mother's elder sister

Pedi or Barhiyayo

Mother's younger sister

Kusi or Sudiyayo

Mother's brother's son (Elder to age)

Bato

Mother's brother's son (younger to age)	Erund
Elder sister	Bai
Younger sister	No term of address term of reference Elad.
Mother	Yayo
Father's mother	Bapi or Yappa
Father's elder brother's wife	Barhia Yayo or Pedi
Father's younger brother's wife	Budiyaya or Kusi
Father's father's brother's wife	Bapi
Father's sister's husband	Mama
Father's sister's daughter's husband (Elder to age)	Dada
Father's sister's daughter's husband (Younger to age)	Peka
Elder brother's wife	Yange
Younger brother's wife	Kodiar
Mother's mother	Bhayo or Kakko
Mother's brother's wife	Poya
Mother's elder sister's husband	Pepi
Mother's younger sister's husband	Kaka or Babo
Mother's brother's son's wife (Elder to age)	Bai
Mother's brother's son's wife (younger to age)	No term for address pekin.
Father's sister's son's wife (Elder to age)	Ba
Father's sister's son's wife (Youngereto age)	No term of address Pekir
Elder sister's husband	Bato
Younger sister's husband	Erund

Husband	Mutpal (term of reference)
Wife's younger sister	Erupiki
Wife's elder sister	Podad
Wife's younger brother	Erund
Wife's elder brother	Bato
Wife's father	Mama
Wife	Mute (term of reference)
Wife's younger sister's husband	Peka (term of reference)
Wife's elder sister's husband	Chadu
Wife's younger brother's wife	Piki (term of reference)
Wife's elder brother's wife	Bdai
Wife's mother	Yoya

As observed from the list, the kinship terms are both classificatory and descriptive. One of the common classificatory terms is *Mama* which is used for Mother's brother, Father's sister's husband and wife's father. It shows that cross cousin marriage is prevalent among the Koyas. Another classificatory term is *Poya* which is used for mother's brother's wife and father's sister and mother-in-law. These two terms clearly shows that the custom of marrying mother's brother's daughter and father's sister's daughter is prevalent among the Koyas. Wife's elder brother, father's sister's son (elder to age) and mother's brother's son (elder to age) are addressed by a single term and therefore constitute a single group and their wives also constitute a single group by being given a single classificatory term. The kinship terms shows that parallel cousins form a single group and cannot have marriage relation among themselves.

EVENTS OF LIFE

The Koyas do not understand the physiological phenomena or birth and the co-relation between sexual intercourse and conception. When a woman is conceived, it is thought that God has put the child inside the mother's womb. A pregnant woman carries on her routine work till the expected month of delivery when she is taken to a hut erected behind the main house. Six to seven days after delivery, she returns to her home.

Name giving ceremony is performed a few days after the birth of the child. It is interesting to note that the names of the Koyas are very much limited in number and in a single village several people are found bearing the same name. This may be due to the way in which names are given. A child is put in cradle and some rice is put into the closed palms of the child. The shaman goes on telling names that comes to his mind. When the baby opens the palms and rice is thrown down the name uttered by the shaman at the particular time is given to the baby. Sometimes the practice differs. The shaman makes the baby cry while it is in the cradle. He goes on uttering the names. When the baby sleeps and stops crying the name uttered at that time is given to the baby. The Koyas have a belief in the reincarnation of life. A person is supposed to be reborn as his son's son. As such the name of the grandfather are given to the grandsons.

The Koyas divide the period from the birth of a child to the end of weaning period into seven stages.

- They are :
1. Ukadta Unzit (The period of sleeping in cradle)
 2. Kapmundita (Rolling from one side to the other)
 3. Kudigaitite (To crawl in a sitting position)
 4. Marmindan (To crawl on all fours)
 5. Tagee Duder (To walk with the help of bamboo made frame).

6. Gundu Gundu mirit (Little running)
7. Gati mirit (Running first)

When a child reaches the last mentioned stage he gives up suckling mother's breast and learns to speak and is helped by the mother to know names of things. Till seven years of age the mother takes the entire responsibility and care of a child. Till the end of the weaning period a child is treated with kindness and after that period he is lightly coerced if he is found naughty. The father generally does not beat the daughters when they are above the age of twelve. The mothers generally do not beat the sons when they are above the age of twelve.

Till the age of six neither the boys nor the girls use any cloth to cover their genitals but soon after that the mother teaches both boys and girls the manner of wearing loin cloth covering the genitals. When the girls reach the age of nine or ten they know how to wear their cloths. The boys learn how to make bow and arrow and other things prior to their adolescence. A group of boys play the game of aiming at a particular target and shooting arrow at it. When a boy misses the aim the arrow is taken away by the winner. As a matter of fact the boys in a group go for hunting small birds and in such occasions bow and arrow is mainly used for killing small game.

Marriage or pendul is one of the important social functions in Koya society. It is a necessity because it perpetuates the family generation to generation and satisfies the sexual urge. Moreover, the wife is an indispensable partner in all spheres of life and from a study of the division of labour it becomes evident that a Koya cannot live without a wife in the ordinary day to day life. The Koyas attach little or no importance to the physical beauty of a girl for marrying. The criterion for a coveted wife is her sound health and capability to undertake hard labour in economic as well as social activities. The criterion of a good husband is his ability to do hard work, support the family and augment the cattle wealth.

Freedom in the selection of a spouse is very much limited and it is only the parents who take initiative for marriage negotiations.

Where freedom is exercised by any girl or boy the form of marriage bears a different name. The commonly practised form of marriage is known simply as *Pendul*. The system of marriage in which a boy carries off a girl with the help of his friends while she is in forest or field is known as *Karsu Pendul* or the marriage where compensation has to be paid to the bride's father. The other form where a girl having previous connection with a boy, comes to the boy's house to stay, is called *Lon-udi-wata*. In this case the bride-price which is to be paid to the bride's father is much less than that of other forms of marriage, because she enters the groom's house according to her own will and without the consent of her parents. In the case where a boy carries off a girl he has to obtain directly or indirectly the consent of the girl. Then he tells his father of his motive and if his father gives consent, he brings down the girl to his house with the help of his friends. The bride's father demands compensation amounting to rupees three hundred, one she calf for the girl's maternal uncle, and a piece of cloth for the mother of the girl. Out of rupees three hundred, eighty rupees are given by the bride's father to the villagers because they help him in realizing the compensation from the other party and spend some amount in feasting.

Adult marriage is prevalent among the Koyas. A boy attains maturity when hair grows in his armpit and moustaches come up. Usually these things happen when a boy comes up to the age of twelve to thirteen years. A girl attains adulthood after her puberty. In some cases puberty is attained at the age 14-16 years. Difference in age of maturity between the sexes has a bearing upon the married life of the Koyas. Among the Koyas there are cases of marriage between a girl of elder age group and a boy of younger age group. An older woman's husband who has just reached the age of 12 or 13 years has to wait for some years to enjoy organic pleasure. During this period it is up to her personality to remain either chaste and go astray.

Among the Koyas the parents of the boy go out to look for a bride. When they find one of their choice the father of the boys accompanied by his kinsman and villagers and with a pot of mahua

liquor pays the first visit to the would be bride's father to settle the marriage. If the bride's father agrees to the proposal he drinks the liquor with them or if he does not agree he refuses to drink the liquor. The villagers and kinsman of both the parties selected the day for marriage which takes place always after the harvest is over.

The system of preferential marriage is prevalent among th Koyas. The first preference is mother's sister's daughter. If no cross-cousin is available then a bride is found out from else where and in that case the mother's brother and the father's sister are duly compensated by the boys' parents. The system of sororal union is also common among the Koyas. In this case a man can marry the younger sisters of his wife one after another either after her death or while she is alive. Widow remarriage is also prevalent. A person can marry his elder brother's widow but not the widow of younger brother which is strictly prohibited. Instances are also found of marriage by exchange of sisters.

Adultery on the part of wife results either in divorce or a compensation is demanded from the adulterer. When the wife is divorced she is given a goat, a piece of cloth, ten *mana* units of rice and rupees twelve. The panchayat sits in the village and the woman's father is called and when the matter of divorce is decided she either goes to the man with whom she had connections or goes to her father if the divorce is due to some other reason.

The marriage ceremony lasts for three days. It begins by the ceremonial fetching of water from the nearby water source by the elder brother's wife. She is accompanied by a group of women to do this. They sing songs while bringing water. The water thus fetched is used for bathing the groom. On the second day the same process of fetching water continues. The groom sits on the lap of his elder brother's wife and tamarind and turmeric paste mixed with ghee is smeared on the body of the groom. Water is poured over him and he goes inside to wear a new cloth. Then he is escorted to visit all other families in that village belonging to his own clan where he is bathed by the women folk. Musicians accompany the groom with the beat of drums. A few men are sent by the groom's father to the village

of the bride to fetch her. These people go on invitation from the bride's parents and stay there for the night.

Accompanied by a number of women, friends and relations all singing and dancing the bride arrives at the house of the groom next day. The groom's father sends pots of rice beer to the bride's party when they are half way. On getting the liquor they all drink the rice beer and take rest for a while and then start again. By this time the dancing ground has already become crowded with hundreds of people both male and female dancing. The men wear the bison horn head dress and garment which hangs from waist downwards. The women folk dance to the rhythm of the beating of the drums. It is interesting to note that the villagers from distant places come to dance in the marriage ceremony without being invited. They are given rice beer and Mahul liquor to drink and some rice and pork for cooking. Each group cooks its food and sat before they disperse. The Koyas say that they never go to dance in the marriage ceremony of a person whom they know to be not well-to-do. It is the courtesy of a person not to deny any group or individual to participate if they have come of their own accord. Thus before performing the marriage ceremony a man must be fully prepared to bear all expenses that may be required. Sometimes people incur loan at the time of marriage ceremony to save themselves from humility.

When the bride's party enter the village they slow down their pace and make a halt at every five to six yards. The women around her go on singing. The bride is seen crying and she rests her head on somebody's shoulder. In this way they cover the distance to the groom's house. When they reach near the groom's house a regular struggle ensues between the bride's and groom's party. With much difficulty the girl is snatched away from the bride's party and the mother of the groom washes the feet of the bride and she is given a turmeric mark on her forehead. All the people sit and drink rice beer in leaf cups. The couple then is led to stand in front of the house where water is poured over their head and they are given new clothes to wear. A place by the sides of a stream near the village boundary is selected for the performance of ritual. The bride goes to that place

with the friends and relations of her village. The groom is then taken to that place by the elder brother's wife. The groom and bride sit on the laps of their respective elder brother's wives and take some food while seated. One of the cock's legs is eaten by the groom. He returns to his village to drink rice beer. The girl waits there till evening when she is brought and left in the groom's house. The bride sleeps with her people at the place selected in the groom's house.

Next day in the morning sacred rice beer is given to the couple by the priest of the village. It is first drunk by the bride followed by the groom and then all others present. Till this time the bride is not expected to eat in the house of the groom. In the evening the groom's elder brother's wife catches the bride's hand and leaves her in a room in the groom's house. The couple spend the night there. After a week so the couple visit the bride's parents with a pot of 'landa,' one cock and some *mahul* liquor and spend a few days there and then come back home.

During the marriage ceremony several types of songs are sung by women folk of both the parties. Each song has a specific purpose and is sung at a particular time. For example when the bride's people hand over the girl to the groom by joining their hands the friends of the girl sing obscene songs. When the girl is snatched by the groom's party there is competition in singing songs. A systematic collection of songs will reveal many interesting facts about the customs of the Koyas.

THE MAN AND SUPERNATURAL

The Koyas are well aware of the fact that this world does not belong to the mortals alone. They believe in the existence of invisible supernatural beings superior to man whose shadowy impact the Koyas feel in all spheres of their life. Since these supernatural powers direct and control the course of human life and man's fate is decided upon their favour and disfavour, the Koyas have evolved and organised their own system of beliefs and practices to propitiate these powers and earn their favours, which means happy life and well being without any misfortune, mishaps, crop failure, diseases and the like.

The koyas believe in the existence of the supreme beings. *Deud*, the *Creator* is their Supreme God and *Bhumata* or *Adimata* i. e. the mother Earth is their supreme goddess. The benevolent *Deud* lives above the sky and controls everything over this earth. All the supernatural powers including the Sun, Moon, Rain, Wind etc. are His agents entrusted with certain duties and responsibilities directed towards the welfare of the mankind. The Koyas pay high regard to *Deud* as their father and *Adimata* as their mother who provide food, shelter and for most of their needs selflessly like a loving mother.

The most important God in the Koya pantheon is the *Rain God* called *Bimud*. They worship Him regularly during the annual festival of *Bimud Pandu* to get His blessing which means good rains, food crops, bumper harvest and plenty of food stuffs to sustain them for the whole year. Then there are other territorial Gods namely Sun (*Pardu*), Moon (*Nela*) Wind, thunder (*Merchit*), lightening (*Gurugata*) etc. Sun is the brother and Moon is the sister of the Earth goddess. Although the Koyas do not observe specific rituals dedicated to Sun and Moon, they are held in great respect for their indispensable roles for the very survival of mankind. Sun gives them the bright day light and Moon gives them the cool moonlit night. Appearance of Moon helps them to count the beginning and end of a month.

The solar and lunar eclipses are called *purugundi* and *nelugendi* in Koya language. They explain for the occurrence of the eclipses in a very simple way that the money-lender from whom, the Sun and Moon had taken loan comes to catch them once in a year to recover his dues. Similarly lightening and thunder produced by *Bimud*, the Rain God by striking stones signal the onset of rains. The rain water comes from a big reservoir in the sky.

Their original belief system centres round two cults namely the cult of Earth Goddess and the cult of village Goddess called *Gamma* or *Gudi Mata*. The seat of *Gamma* lies under a Mohul or Tamarind tree inside the village. The deity is represented by a five or six foot long pillar of blackberry wood surrounded by small stone pillars. She is worshipped in all rituals and festivals for protection of the village from all diseases and pestilence as she is supposed to keep constant watch on the village against all calamities.

There are many deities of nature residing in hills, forests and streams. *Lely* is the forest Goddess. She is represented by a piece of stone erected under a *Mohul* tree inside the village. She is worshipped to provide plenty of forest produces, successful hunting pursuits and protection against snake bite and attack of wild animals. *Kad* is the deity in charge of the water source. A small heap of middle sized stone pieces near the stream indicates His seat. There is another water deity called *Dewar Mute* whom the *Koyas* fear most. They pray Her and utter her name while crossing the streams and rivers. *Talush* is the deity residing in the hills adjacent to the village.

At the family level ancestor worship is prevalent among the *Koyas*. Ancestral spirits are called *Gandi*. Their seat lies in one corner of the kitchen inside the house. The household head offers prayer with food and liquor to their forefathers during all important rituals and festivals in order to get their blessings.

At the clan level, mythical ancestors symbolising various clan groups are worshipped by respective clan member. The mythical ancestor is called *Pen* and the person conducting the ritual is called

Pen wadde. Such rituals ensure unity and solidarity of the clan groups.

All kinds of rituals in Koya society are conducted by the male members. Women are not allowed to take part in these activities. Participation of women is limited to a supporting role like washing, cleaning and helping the male members in the arrangements and participating in song and dance during rituals.

The Koyas observe a number of festivals and rituals spread over the year. Some of them are associated with their subsistence activities viz., hunting, food gathering, eating of first fruits and food grains but most of them are linked to agricultural cycle. Besides, there are also specific family and clan rituals performed quite religiously.

Bija Pandu is the most important agricultural festival held in the month of June (Jyesta-Asadha) to worship the Earth Goddess to get a trouble free agricultural season and a good harvest. Towards the end of the summer when scattered clouds are seen in the sky announcing the arrival of monsoon, *Peda*, the village chief fixes a date for the festival in consultation with his co-villagers. The preparations start before a week.

The village folk take bath and wear new clothes on the festive day. The village priest *Perma* or *Pujari* worships the village deity *Gama* sacrificing a chicken there. Then the priest takes the *puja* materials including rice and seeds collected from each household to the sacred place near a *mohul* tree in a piece of communal land kept reserved for this purpose. A white coloured goat is sacrificed there and its blood is mixed with the seeds. At first the priest takes a handful of seeds and sows in his field. Then the villagers follow the suit. The festival is observed for seven days amidst feast and dance. Ripe mango is eaten during this festival. Ceremonial hunting (*Bijaweta*) is done after this festival. Household deities and ancestors are also worshipped by the household head during this festival.

Itt Pandu, the tamarind festival is observed during February-March to commence collection of ripe tamarind which is an important

food item for the Koya. The village priest worships a tamarind tree inside the village offering the sacrifices of eggs and chickens. Similarly the Koyas observe *Ikk Pandu* during March to start collection of *Mohul* flowers. *Tadi Pandu* held in the month of March marks the beginning of collection of *Tadi* i.e. the palm juice which is a favourite drink among the Koyas.

Karta Pandu, the new rice eating ceremony is held during September-October. *Sikud Pandu* or the new bean eating festival is observed in the month of February when the kidney beans (*sikud*) ripens. In the month of *Kandi* (August-September) *Kurum Pandu* is observed when the *Suan* is eaten ceremonially. *Marka Pandu*, the new mango eating ceremony is performed in the month of June-July. In all these new eating festivals the village deity (*Gama*) and ancestral spirits in the households are worshipped by the village priest and household heads respectively. Animal sacrifices are made and the new crop, fruit or vegetable are offered to the deities after which the Koyas eat them.

Bimud Pandu, the worshipping ceremony for the Rain God (*Bimud*) observed during June-July is also a very important festival like *Bija Pandu*. The Koyas believe that the Rain God had married one Koya girl in the past. During this festival they celebrate His marriage ceremony. After worshipping the village deity the village priest performs the marriage ceremony of two wooden pillars or two clay models representing *Bimud* and his bride under a *mohul* tree. The villagers with the priest and the headman gather on the spot. The villagers carry all kinds of crops to the spot. The priest after performing the rituals fills the empty baskets with the crops. An unmatured girl is made to stand between *Peda* (the village headman) and *Perma* (priest). The villagers throw water over them and laugh saying the marriage of Rain God is over today. Then ceremonial dance and song begin.

The Koyas also worship few other Gods and deities installed in other parts of the Koya area. In this connection the stone image of three Gods seated in *Manyemkonda* temple located in *Kalimela* area of *Malkangiri* sub-division deserve mention. A legend says that four

brothers and two sisters who were Gods and Goddesses came to Koya area from South. The brothers were named Kanamraju, Potraju, Balraju and Pedaraju. The names of the sisters were Mariwada Mawoli and Amatali. Balraju, Potraju and Kanamraju stayed at Manyemkonda while others settled in different places. Pedaraju, the eldest brother stayed at Bejanguda village and Masiwada Mawoli established herself at Mariwada village.

The three Gods in Manyemkonda temple are worshipped by the Koyas, other tribal communities and Hindu castes. The festival of worship is held in every three years and the devotees come from far and near spending couple of days on journey. Prior to the commencement of the festival the temple priest goes to the villages to announce the date and collects money and the offerings from the households. On the day of the festival the temple priest conducts the rituals in the temple and the animals offered by the devotees are sacrificed before the Gods.

The Koyas believe that all the Gods are kind and benevolent to the mankind. They always look after the welfare of the plant and animal kingdom. They are displeased when human beings commit wrong or sinful deeds which goes against the human society. The misfortunes and calamities are caused by the anger of the Gods. For example, due to this belief no Koya individual dares to eat new fruits or crops before observing the new eating ceremony in which the fruit or crop is ceremonially offered to the Gods, village deities and the ancestral spirits. If any one breaches this rule, the village community jumps into take corrective action by imposing fine upon the wrong doer and then worshipping the deity to avoid the dangers of calamities to follow the anger of the supernatural beings. On the otherhand such beliefs and practices ensure social discipline and conformity.

On the contrary the ghosts and spirits are considered as malevolent to the human beings. They live in the winds, trees, water and hills waiting for an opportunity to cause harm to the mortals. The deity causing small pox and the spirits called *Tania* and *Mata* belong to this group. The village witch-doctor called *Wadde* deals with these

harmful spirits. He brings some of the spirit under his control by conducting magico-religious rituals and utilizes them to achieve his ends.

In Koya society, Magic and religion are complementary to each other. The Koyas worship their Gods and appease them and get their blessings. When this worship fails to bring them any result they resort to magical practices with the help of *Wadda*. *Wadde* is called upon to perform magical rites to cure diseases, effect smooth delivery of a child and ward off the calamities and epidemic.

POLITICAL ORGANISATION

Leadership, both political and social, revolves round the headman of the village. Even in religious matters he is the first man to take initiative in asking the priest and villagers to perform religious ceremonies on various occasions.

Usually the office of headman is hereditary. After the death of a headman his eldest son becomes the headman of the village, but this is subject to certain conditions. Certain attributes must be fulfilled by the new headman. He must be a good and impartial man. He must be able to voice the difficulties of the villagers before any Government official who visits their village. He must be wise in making decisions in the matter of intra-village disputes. In these days the headman is expected to know Oriya so as to be able to converse with Oriya officers and tradesmen. In every Koya village the headman is invariably a man of wealth. Although the office of headman is succeeded by the eldest son, this principle is not always adhered to. If the eldest son does not satisfy the conditions mentioned above preference is given to the next son if he is found capable. If the headman has no son to succeed him preference is then given to his brother's son. In the absence of any of such relations the priest of the village is selected for succeeding the headman in addition to his office of religious leadership of the village.

The headman of each village settles the disputes that arise within the village in consultation with the village elders. The headman also sits in the 'Kula Panchayat', Panchayat of particular clan, even though he does not belong to that clan. However the members of the Kula or clan can discuss about a disputed matter and are entitled to pass verdict over the matter which concern the clan.

The decision taken the headman is never challenged. If a headman becomes unpopular due to some reason the villagers sit together and discuss about the headman's activities. The headman sits in the meeting and listens to what the people discuss. If he is

abused or deprecated for some reason he tries to rectify himself accordingly. When a new headman is selected a ceremonial function in this connection is performed by the villagers. A new cloth is wrapped on his head like a turban by the priest of the village and he is taken to the village goddess to swear to remain just and good.

Apart from the village as a political unit there is another wider unit which is known as *Mutha Panchayat*. A Mutha Panchayat consists of members who are headman of different villages of a particular area. It consists of five headman of five villages. The Mutha Panchayat is in charge of dealing with cases of inter-village nature.

Next to headman the priest of village who is called *Perma* or *Pujari* assumes immense importance as a leader of the Koya society. He is believed to have the power of communicating with the supernatural beings and as such, he acts as an intermediary between the human beings and the unseen powers. The Koyas depend upon their religious rituals to get relief from the natural calamities which are believed to be caused by angry gods who need to be propitiated. A bumper crop or a successful hunting trip is thought to be due to the blessings of the deities. The priest, as such is the person who is to attend to all the needs of the supernatural beings by way of worshipping or propitiating them with the help of his villagers.

The office of the priest in a village is usually hereditary. In case the priest dies without leaving an heir, a son of his brother is looked for assuming the post. Before becoming a priest a person has to undergo a series of initiation rituals and is asked to observe sexual incontinence. To begin with he learns the techniques from an experienced priest of some other village and as he gains knowledge and experience he becomes the fullfledged priest of the village. The night before the festival day the priest observes sexual incontinence and does not eat food cooked by a female. He has to fast till worship is over and he is the first man to eat after the offerings to God are over. He is invited to eat the new fruits or drink the liquor before the villagers partake them so that the gods feel pleased. At the time of the out break of small pox which is believed by the Koyas to be the Goddess, the priest asks the villagers to observe certain taboos.

Apart from his religious duties he also attends the meeting of village Panchayat and participates in decisions.

The wadde is a magician who occupies an important position in Koya society. A man becomes wadde not because he is supernaturally bestowed with the qualities necessary to become a magician. It is the belief of the Koyas that if matted hair is observed on the head of the child he is destined to become a magician in Koya society. From his childhood he is kept under the special care of his parents and certain taboos are observed with regard to his food habits. From his boyhood he is kept under training to become a magician later on.

Like the priest he also possesses powers to communicate with the supernatural beings. He differs from the priest by being capable of moulding and keeping under control the supernatural beings to achieve success in his endeavour. He can take the help of malevolent spirits to cause harm to any body and as such he is dreaded by the Koyas. On the other hand he is able to drive away the malevolent spirits who causes harm to the Koyas. It is a very common thing in the Koya society to find the magicians chanting magical formula and treating patients. As a matter of fact most of the diseases are believed by the Koyas to be caused by the spirits or angry Gods and therefore, they run to the magicians for immediate help at the time of illness.

As a member of the society he enjoys equal rights with other Koyas in a village. He can marry and lead a life like others in the village. The Koyas usually bear an ambivalent attitude towards him. He is liked as well as dreaded and as such hated. But his services are believed by Koyas to be indispensable.

The *Katwal* helps the headman in his work. He informs the villagers when the village meeting would be held. At the time of religious festivals in a village the *Katwal* goes round the village to call the villagers to gather at the place of worship. When it is necessary to convene inter village gatherings the *Katwal* is sent to other villages as a messenger to inform the people of different villages about the

meeting. When an outsider remains in a Koya village the headman makes arrangement for the guest with the help of *Katwal*.

Settlement of all disputes arising within a village is usually reached by group discussions among the village elders and the headman of the village. In case of incest where a particular clan is involved the *Kula* Panchayat consisting of members from the concerned clan and the headman decide the issue in question. Where a case involved persons of several villages the matter is referred to the *Mutha* Panchayat.

The *Mutha* Panchayat deals with cases of breach of marriage regulation. In case of elopement the aggrieved husband brings the matter before the *Mutha* Panchayat for trial. The members of the *Mutha* Panchayat select a day for deciding the case. Two *Katwals* are sent to catchhold of the culprit who too away the wife of another. On arrival of the culprit he is asked to return the wife of the aggrieved husband. If he denies he is compelled to pay the compensation to the aggrieved husband. Rupees three hundred in cash is usually demanded for such offence out of which rupees two hundred is given to the aggrieved person and the rest is distributed among the members of *Mutha* Panchayat. Apart from the fine, the culprit gives a cock, a pig, one puti of rice and some salt to the aggrieved. After the case is disposed of all present in the Panchayat including the parties concerned gather near a water source, where some food is cooked and all present eat the food.

Cases like adultery, rape, witchcraft and divorce are usually decided by the village Panchayat and when they involve persons of different villages the headman of such villages including the elders of respective villages sit together and decide the case.

AESTHETIC LIFE

Malkangiri sub-division was famous for bamboo jungle. At present, although such forests have been cleared, large tracts are still full of bamboo. The bamboos were being transported to Rajmahendri in Andhra Pradesh through Godavari river which has been joined by estuaries touching this sub-division.

Because of availability of adequate bamboo the Koya are a great adept in bamboo work with amazing skill. If this potentiality is exploited through advance training of Koya youth the area will produce handicrafts of export quality of the type one finds in Assam and Tripura State.

The Koyas observe several festivals throughout the year. music and dance form most important feature of observation of such festivals. The festival *Bijapandu* or sacred seed festival is held in the month of *Chaitra*. The purpose of the festival is to worship *Gudi Mata*, the vilage goddess who bestows good harvest. During the festival the male members of the community go for ceremonial hunting in the forest while the women engage themselves in dance and music in the village. According to the custom no male member can participate in the dance and music with the women folk during this festival. The Koya women dance, sing and play on with the drums till the festival is over. They welcome the men through dance and music when they return from their hunting expedition.

On other occasions both men and women participate in the dance and music. Both married and unmarried can take part in the dance and music. The women hold sticks fitted with *Gujari* (small bells) made of brass and beat the sticks on the ground while dancing rhythmically with the drum beats. The beating of the sticks after the stepping of the dance is the speciality of the Koya dance. The beating of the dancing sticks produce zingling sounds due to fitting of *Gujaris* (bells) on the top of the sticks which is synchronised with the music of the dance. The male participants wear turbans fitted with

with bison horns worn on their heads. They hang very big sized 'DHOLS' (two sided drums) on their necks which are typical and play with them with two hands. The women, with sticks fitted with *Gujaris* stand in line holding each other's waist and dance while striking the ground with the sticks in their hand. They sing one stanza of a song and then start dancing, which may continue for a long time or till the dancers feel tired. The dance first begins with slow steppings and then the speed rises as per the tempo of the drum beating.

The Koya dances are composed of different types of steppings. At first the dancers stand in circle keeping the right leg forward and then begin their dance. The men and women stand face to face and move forward and backward while dancing. Sometimes the women in a row move in slanting direction with simple stepping while the male drummers dance in a circular form. Sometimes they move three steps forward in slanting direction, three steps backward to right direction, three steps backward to left direction, and three steps forward to right direction. The rhythm of the beating of drums matches perfectly with the graceful movements of the dancers. The Koya dances are very artistic. The closing and opening of spiral circles during dancing by the women is very attractive.

The aesthetic value of the songs of the Koyas can be observed from the songs which they sing on ceremonial occasions as well as other social occasions. There are experts among the Koya ladies who compose songs on the spot by looking at a particular object or person etc. During singing of this type of songs the composer leader sings first and the other women follow it.

DEVELOPMENTAL MEASURES

The tribal people in the field of social organisation, economic life, political structure and religious beliefs and practices are so varied that it is not possible to promote their living condition and develop their economic life by a single approach or line of action. Based on these facts a change was brought about in the planning strategy in the beginning of the Fifth Five Year Plan and the concept of tribal sub-plan formed the nodal point of this new strategy of tribal development. The blocks having more than 50 per cent tribal concentration were brought under the ambit of tribal sub-plan which further divided into several operational units called, Integrated Tribal Development Agencies (ITDA). There are 21 such agencies in Orissa covering 9 districts and 118 blocks. Considering the level of primitiveness and development, the areas which were very much undeveloped and inhabited by primitive tribal communities were identified as separate sub-regions and these areas form Micro-Projects which receive special attention. There are 15 such Micro-Projects in the state covering portions of 20 blocks.

Prior to the Fifth Plan the Welfare measures in the Koya area were sporadic and scanty which included opening of a few schools, Grain Golas and Fair Price Shops, supply of reading and writing materials to school children. During the Fifth Plan period a more realistic approach was adopted for the tribal areas of the State by the Government and since then the Integrated Tribal Development Agency, Malkangiri has been functioning in the Koya area of Koraput district. The core economic programmes of the Agency are development of land, agriculture, animal husbandry, horticulture and irrigation. The Koyas are benefitted by all these development programmes.

For want of bullocks and agricultural implements the Koyas face a lot of difficulties to carry on their agricultural operation. The Agency has supplied bullocks and agricultural implement to needy families.

Development of horticulture will strengthen the backbone of the tribals. Some lands have been taken up in Koya area for plantation of

economic species. The plantation has been done in hill slopes. Besides, guava plants, banana suckers have also been supplied free of cost for backyard plantation.

Under the composite land based scheme, small irrigation projects, water harvesting structures, lift irrigation points are taken up for providing irrigation and for improving the moisture regime of the soil. Besides irrigation, the beneficiaries have received assistance for land development, land shapping and agricultural inputs.

Great importance is attached to human resource development and about 66% of Harijan & Tribal Welfare Department Annual Plan is spent on education. In order to reduce the rate of dropout at the primary level, a comprehensive programme of educational development has been drawn up, which includes, construction of 40 seated hostel in case of 78 Gram Panchayats in the I.T.D.A. areas, payment of stipend and boarding charges to all Scheduled Tribe students, provision of nationalized text books etc. Of the 78 Primary schools hostels 67 hostels have been completed before 1st August, 1991 and so far, 65 hostels have become functional in the interior villages. Further 7 villages in the I.T.D.A. area are being developed as model villages by providing medical, drinking water, educational and communication facilities.

The Koyas are drawing water from the hill streams and *nalahs* for bathing and drinking purposes because of lack of protected sources. As a result they frequently suffer from diseases like scabies, diarrhoea and worm infections. The Agency has constructed large number of tube-wells and plan to cover all the villages during the 8th Plan period.

During the 7th Plan period the Koyas haave adopted many innovative schemes for their development. Changes are also perceptible in their socio-cultural spheres and economic life. They are now not only using improved seeds but also have adopted improved techniques of cultivation. Use of chemical fertilizers, rotation of crops, mixed and double cropping with the help of irrigation facilities provided by dugwell on cross bunds have become common among the Koyas.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Grigson, W. & G. M. Hutton 1949 The Maria Gonds of Bastar, Oxford University, London.
- Hussain, S.K.M. 1946 "Koyas" Man in India, Vol, 26, "Man in India" Ranchi.
- 1951 "Koyas" Man in India, Vol. 31, "Man in India" Ranchi.
- Mishra, Bhubanananda. 1958 Koyara Samajika Jibana (Oriya) (Social Life of Koya) Adibasi Vol. II, No.2, Tribal Research Bureau, Bhubaneswar.
- Mishra, N. 1959 Koya Samajare Waderasthana (Oriya) Adibasi. Vol.II No. 3 & 4, Tribal Research Bureau, Bhubaneswar.
- Mohanty, P. K. 1985 Sorcery & Exorcism among the Koyas, News Magazine, H. & T. W. Department, Government of Orissa, Bhubaneswar.
- Mohapatra Ch. P. K. 1969—70 Handbook on Koya, Adibasi, Vol. XI, No. 4, tribal Research Bureau, Bhubaneswar.
- 1963—64 A short note on the shifting cultivation of the

- Koyas, Adibasi, Vol. V,
No. 1, Tribal Research
Bureau, Bhubaneswar.
- 1963—64 "Koya" Adivasi, Vol. V,
No. 3, Tribal research
Bureau, Bhubaneswar.
- 1990 "Koya" in Tribes of Orissa,
H. & T. W. Department,
Government of Orissa, T.
H. R. T. I., Bhubaneswar.
- Murdock, G. P. 1949 Social Structure,
macmillan Comp., New
York
- Nayak, P. K. 1985 Problems of the Koya
under the impact of
rehabilitation of refugees,
News Magazine, Vol. I,
No. 4, H. & T. W.
Department, Government
of Orissa, Bhubaneswar.
- Prasad, R. 1951 "Koya mythology", Eastern
Anthropologist
ethnographic & Folk
Culture Society,
Lukhnow.
- Russell, R. V. & Hira Lai, 1916 Koya, The tribes and
castes of the Central
Provinces of India, Cosmo
Publications, Delhi.
- Sahu, L. N. Koya, Tribes of India,
Bharatiya Adimjati Sevak
Sangha, New Delhi.

Senapati Nilmani &
Sahoo N. K.

1966

Koya, Orissa District
Gazetteers, Koraput,
Revenue Department,
Government of Orissa,
Bhubaneswar.

Thurston, E.

1975

Koya, Koyi, Castes and
Tribes of Southern India,
Vol. IV, Cosmo
Publications, Delhi.