

THE GANDA

A SCHEDULED CASTE WEAVER
COMMUNITY OF WESTERN ORISSA

NITYANANDA PATNAIK
SARAT CHANDRA MOHANTY

TRIBAL & HARIJAN RESEARCH-CUM-TRAINING
INSTITUTE, BHUBANESWAR, ORISSA

THE GANDA
*A Scheduled Caste Weaver Community
of Western Orissa*

**NITYANANDA PATNAIK
SARAT CHANDRA MOHANTY**

**TRIBAL & HARIJAN RESEARCH-CUM-TRAINING
INSTITUTE, BHUBANESWAR, ORISSA**

CONTENTS

	Page
Preface	
Chapter	
I Introduction ..	1
II Ganda and their Habitat ..	18
III Settlement Pattern ..	30
IV Living Conditions ..	37
V Economic Life ..	63
VI Life Cycle ..	110
VII Religious Beliefs and Practices ..	165
VIII Annual Festivals and Rituals ..	193
IX Political Organisation and Social Control ..	204
X Problems, Programmes and Prospects ..	235
Bibliography	
Index	

LIST OF TABLES

1. Population of Major Scheduled Castes in Orissa (Census, 1971)
2. Distribution of Ganda Population in Districts (Census, 1971).
3. Level of Literacy among the Ganda.
4. Kind of Ornaments worn by Ganda Women.
5. Common Diseases and Physical Ailments.
6. Occupational Pattern of the Ganda.
7. Size of Land Holdings possessed by the surveyed Ganda Households.
8. Types of Cultivable Land and Major Crops grown.
9. Varieties of Paddy and Types of Land.
10. Income of the Ganda from various Economic Activities.
11. Division of Labour.
12. Distribution of Ganda Households by Major Occupations and Annual Income Ranges.
13. Economic Status of Ganda Households in different Income Groups (in respect of their household budget income—expenditure—conditions).
14. Distribution of Indebted Households in various Income Groups and Extent of Present Debts.
15. Distribution of Indebted Households as per the Causes of Indebtedness.
16. Annual Calendar of Festivals and Rituals.

PREFACE

The Ganda is a major Scheduled Caste of Orissa. This populous community is spread over the length and breadth of Western Orissa, especially in the districts of Sambalpur and Balangir. In these localities, they have been known as weavers, village watchmen, musicians and messengers. Since their traditional occupation of weaving have been declining with the introduction of mill made cloths, they have been reduced to landless agricultural labourers and some of them have migrated to the urban and industrial settings in search of livelihood. Thus they have become an economically backward and vulnerable community which deserves special attention in respect of their development. Added to their economic backwardness, they suffer from the stigma of untouchability which has been retarding all their efforts for development.

So far, no systematic and complete ethnographic study has been made on this large community. The study on the basis of which this book is written is an exploratory and pioneering work on the socio-cultural and economic life of the Gandas of Western Orissa. The book is meant to serve as a first hand ethnography of the community to help further investigation. Emphasis has been given to present their culture, economy and current problems so as to help the researchers and planners to undertake further investigation and formulate aptitude based and location specific action-plans for their development. Hence, some suggestions are given in the last chapter.

The materials presented in this book are based upon field work which was undertaken in the summer months of 1982 and 1983 among the Gandas of Barpali Block in Sambalpur district. Later, the investigation was extended to the suburbs of Baragarh and Sambalpur township for a comparative assessment of rural and urban groups and cross checking of the data. Because of the limitations of time and available references, it was not possible to cover all the important aspects of the socio-economic life of the

community and extend the investigation to all the important localities of Western Orissa, although in the beginning, it was planned to cover at least one Block area having thick concentration of the target population in each of the five contiguous districts (Sambalpur, Sundargarh, Balangir, Kalahandi, Phulbani) where 98 percent of the Gandas live.

Though it is not possible to mention individually all those who have earned our gratitude by taking active interest and rendering valuable help in this work, we wish to record our deep indebtedness to the Ganda informants in general and the Ganda friends of the village Barangpali in particular. They have not only welcomed us with touching warmth and affection but also provided us with the information we sought for from them. In appreciation of the time and effort they have spared for giving us information, we would like to thank specifically Shri Basudev Mahananda, Shri Tikbachan Mahananda, Shri Kampal Mahananda, Shri Dasarath Mahananda, Shri Rohit Kumbhar, Shri Jaya Mahananda and Shri Raiti Sona of Barangpali ; Shri Abdhut Sona, a centenarian of Sunapali-Nuapada near Sambalpur town ; Shri Hemanta Kumar Dafadar, the wardmember and, the members of the youth club of Ghunghutipada of Sambalpur town.

Many staff members of Barpali Block office have helped us during our field work in the area. In this respect Shri J. Purohit, the Block Development Officer; Shri Bansidhar Sahoo, the Sub-Inspector of Schools ; Shri Uttam Kumar Mohanty, the Welfare Extension Officer deserve our sincere thanks.

The name of Dr. Bhabagrahi Mishra, an eminent anthropologist, writer and social worker of Bhubaneswar needs special mention for the editorial work he has done for this book and offering valuable suggestions in spite of his busy schedule.

Shri Anugraha Narayan Tripathy, Junior Research Officer and Shri Narendra Mohapatra, Investigator of T. H. R. T. I. have been associated with various phases of field work. Shri Jyoti Prakash

Rout, Research Officer and his associate Shri Chandra Kanta Kanhar, Investigator have prepared the maps and illustrations.

Shri Ishwar Chandra Nayak and Prafulla Chandra Sarangi have painstakingly typed and retyped the draft. We are very grateful to all of them.

T. H. R. T. I.
Bhubaneswar-3

NITYANANDA PATNAIK
Director

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Ganda is a large, well-known scheduled caste community of Orissa. The bulk of their population is concentrated in the western part of Orissa comprising districts of Sundargarh, Sambalpur, Balangir, Kalahandi and Phulbani; the highest concentration being in the districts of Balangir and Sambalpur. Eighty-six per cent of the Ganda population live in these two districts. They are found around the growing urban conglomerations and industrial complexes, mainly as rickshaw pullers, factory workers, masons, carpenters, construction workers, petty businessmen, butchers, musicians, etc. In the villages, they are treated as an impure and untouchable caste among the Hindus and other communities. They live in separate wards or hamlets called Ganda *pada* or Ganda *basti* at the outskirts of the main settlement in the multicasite villages.

The rural and peasant community of Western Orissa as also of other parts of the State is conservative and tradition bound. In the caste dominated village communities, the Gandas are treated lowly by the upper castes and are looked down upon as untouchables because of their certain unclean habits and practices such as; eating beef, removing carcasses of the dead animals, carrying death news, etc. The Gandas also serve as *Choukidar* (night watchman), a job of low status and musicians (a job having no stigma of uncleanness). Most of the Gandas living in the rural areas are landless and earn their living from weaving, agricultural labour and other kinds of manual labour.

The earliest ethnological reference about the Ganda is found in Dalton's 'Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal' (1872, 325). He had identified the Ganda as one among the weaving communities :

" We have besides thousands of weavers in the Pans or Panwas, Gandas, Chiks of the Southern Tributary Estates, and the Pans and Panikas of western districts. In feature these people

are Aryan or Hindu rather than Kolarian or Dravidian. Their habits are much alike; repudiating the Hindu restrictions on food, but worshipping Hindu gods and goddesses, and having no peculiar custom which stamp them as of the other races".

Following Dalton's view, Sir H. H. Risley (*The Tribes and Castes of Bengal*, Vol. II, 1891, 155—159) believed that the Gandas are a section of the Pan :

"a low weaving, basket-making, and servile caste scattered under various names (Panwa, Panr, Pab, Panika, Chik, Chik-Barik, Barik, Ganda, Mahato, Sarwasi, Tanti) throughout the north of Orissa and the southern and western parts of Chotanagpur and in the Western Tributary States, they are called Ganda, a name which suggests the possibility of descent of the Gonds, a tribe which in former times appears to have extended further to the east, and to have occupied a more dominant position than is the case at the present day".

After Dalton and Risley, Russel in his "*Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India* (1916, Vol. III, 14—17)" described the Ganda as:

"A servile and impure caste of Chotanagpur and the Uriya Districts In this province the Gandas have become a servile caste of village drudges, acting as watchmen, weavers of coarse cloth and musicians. They are looked on as an impure caste, and are practically in the same position as the Meheras and Chamars of other Districts".

Orissa District Gazetteers, Balangir (1968, 99) holds that the Ganda is a :

"Scheduled Caste of the district who acts as drum beater on the occasion of marriage of other castes. Their subsidiary occupation is manual labour. They purchase drums from the Ghasis and no other caste except the Ghasis accept water and cooked rice from them. Widow marriage and divorce is allowed by them. Brahmans do not officiate

in their religious functions. Dhobas and Bhandaries do not serve them. They procure fuel from the jungle to sell in the market. Some of them have taken to cultivation".

Orissa District Gazetteers, Sambalpur. (1971, 119) gives similar views :

"The Gandasweave coarse clothes and generally acted as village watchman till recently to-day . They also work as professional pipers and drummers and are employed as musicians in marriage ceremonies. Economically they are very backward and also lack in the skill of cultivation. They were regarded as professional thieves due to their backward state both from economic and social point of view".

'Ganda', the caste name is synonymous with certain traditional rural professions that goes side by side with the caste. Weaving is one of them. The Gandas consider themselves to be weavers and claim the status of an artisan caste.

Formerly, the Gandas were weaving coarse cloth to meet the demand of the rural people. Weaving as a cottage industry was one time a substantial source of income for them and the Gandas had no competitors in this field of activities. But no sooner had the modern trade and commerce spread into the rural areas than the rural artisans and traders were badly hit by the introduction of manufactured goods. This state of affairs virtually crippled the Gandas who found no market for their handwoven products when the mill-made clothes, which were more attractive and much cheaper than the coarse handloom clothes, were flooded in the local market. While the mill-made clothes gained popularity among the rural people in general the women-folk of the locality continued to wear the locally made handwoven clothes known as 'Sambalpuri Sari'. Such picturesque textiles were also very popular and in great demand throughout the country and even in foreign countries. Though under such circumstances weaving became no longer a paying concern, many Ganda families continued till today their old occupation of weaving without much improvement in their woven products.

4

There are seven weaver castes in Bolangir and Sambalpur districts namely ; *Kustha, Bhulia, Rangani, Kuli, Dhera Ganda* and *Patra*. The first four of them are designated by a common surname, *Meher* and the first two Meher communities are famous in the country for their handloom textiles with complicated tie-and-dye designs woven into them. These products being of very special type and typical of the Western Orissa did not face any competition with the mill-made clothes.

In the feudal dispensation and during British rule, the Gandas served as village watchman (*Choukidar*). There was a *Ganda Choukidar* in every village and his duties were to patrol the village at night, report the cases of death, birth, suicide, homicide and other law and order problems occurring in the village at the nearest police station, carry messages of birth, death, etc. of clean castes to their relatives, disposed of carcasses of cattle and attend the dignitaries and visiting officials. He used to announce any news concerning the public by the beat of drums and assist the *Gauntia* (village chief) in matters of revenue collection and day to day administration of the village affairs. The *Choukidar* was an important person at the village level in the feudal administration. This office was hereditary, immutable, remunerative and was attached with rent free land (*Ganda-jagiri*) in lieu of the services rendered to the community. A full description of such service tenure land attached to the office of the village *Choukidar* is given in district Gazetteers of Sambalpur and Balangir.

After independence the office of the *Choukidar* along with other village offices were abolished by an enactment of Village Offices (Abolition) Act of 1963 and Village Police (Abolition) Act of 1964. The *jagiri* lands attached to these offices were settled with occupancy rights therein, on fair and equitable rent in favour of the persons holding these lands at that times.

The *Choukidar* are now replaced by 'Home Guards' which is a modernised version of the former office. In most places the Gandas have been recruited as Home Guards because of their hereditary and professional experiences in this service.

The Gandas being a servile caste, were serving the village community as village musicians during ceremonies and festivals. They were professional drummers and pipers playing musical instruments especially during marriage ceremonies. Russel & Lal (1916) mentioning about the Gandas say :

"They sing and dance to the accompaniment of musical instruments. They beat various kinds of drums namely *Timki*, *Nisan*, *Tisa*, *Dafla*, *Shing/baja* and blow a kind of flute called *Sahanai*".

This distinguishing and characteristic profession of the Ganda as the musicians is gradually becoming obsolete like other traditional professions, i. e. weaving and watchmanship which were considered of low social order in the traditional society. As the Gandas are becoming more and more conscious about their social status, they are trying to give up these disrespectful traditional professions and social practices. However, the Ganda musicians living in the urban centres have modernised their profession by organising themselves into sophisticated 'Band Parties'. They perform dances and play music imitating the popular movie traditions during marriage ceremonies and even a good living.

The Gandas in Sambalpur and Balangir district still take pride in their ancestry as a warrior caste and claim that they had constituted the militia of the ex-princely states. In the older days, the male members used to leave their homes to fight battles at distant places. The wives of these warriors used to take out bangles from their hands thinking that their husbands might not return alive and they would live the life of widows. The Ganda used to worship the war Goddess *Durga* and *Mangala* dedicating their weapons to the deities and praying success in the battle. These socio-religious practices are indicative of their warring habits in the past. But supporting historical and literary evidences are not available.

In certain parts of Western Orissa like Bargarh, the Gandas had earned notoriety for their indulgence in anti-social and criminal activities. Russel reported that :

"the Ganda of Sambalpur have strong criminal tendencies which have recently called for special repressive measures".

The District police authorities of Sambalpur are of opinion that incidence of criminal activities and conviction of the Gandas though a little higher in Bargarh area as compared to other areas, is not very alarming today and in most cases they are found to be petty thieves.

Apart from Orissa, the Ganda population is distributed in Madhya Pradesh (formerly Central provinces), Bihar, Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal. Russel mentioned the presence of Ganda population in Chhotnagpur of Bihar, Raipur, Bilaspur and Raigarh of Central provinces, Sambalpur and Kandhamal (Phulbani) district of Orissa. Since the distant past, the Gandas have retained their stronghold in large contiguous territory in the south-eastern part of Central province of British India which they regard as their homeland (This territory is now divided under Madhya Pradesh and Orissa after independence). Later, they migrated to the neighbouring areas adopting new occupations, new caste names, as well as distinct life styles.

Russel observed that :

"In Chhotnagpur, however they (the Ganda) are still in some places recognised as a primitive tribe being generally known here as Pan, Pab or Chik".

All the earlier authorities such as Risley, Dalton and Russel believed that the Gandas bear close racial and cultural affinities with the major caste Pan or Pano which has spread over a large contiguous territory comprising the states of Bengal, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa, under different names, of which, the Ganda is one. Supporting the observation of these authorities, the Gandas of Orissa have much in common, racially, culturally and occupationally, with the Panos and Doms. Although the Ganda, Pano and Dom have now become separate caste groups and each identifies itself as a separate scheduled caste, the Gandas still consider the other two communities as their brother castes. However, the sections of the Pano, Dom and Ganda found in the Kandh territories of Phulbani, Koraput, Kalahandi and Balangir districts are referred as *Kandhria* i. e., a subcaste of the Ganda, because, the *Kandhrias* live with and serve the Kandhs and persue unclean practices like beef-eating, removal of carcasses, accepting

cooked food from the beef-eating Kandhs. They are condemned by the Gandas of Western Orissa, who have already given up such impure and lowly practices. As they say, the sections of the *Kandhria* is composed of the persons and families which were sometimes in the past outcasted or excommunicated from the Ganda community. Hence, social intercourse between the *Kandhria* and other Gandas is absent. But the Panos and Doms, who do not perform these unclean practices are treated at *par* with the Gandas and social alliances with them is not prohibitive.

Risley, in his 'Tribes and Castes of Bengal' (1891, 157) gives a brief account of the outcasted section of Ganda referred as '*Kandhria*', whom he mentioned as a subcaste of 'Pans' called 'patradias' or slaves and menials of the 'Kandhs' and described them as :

".....those Pans who live in the villages of the Kandh tribes, work as weavers and perform for the Kandhs a varieties of servile functions. The group seems also to include the descendants of Pans, who sold themselves as slaves, or were sold as Merias or victims to the Kandhs.....they weave the cloth that the tribe requires and also work as farm labourers cultivating land belonging to Kandhs.....these Pans naturally came to be looked down upon by other Pans who serve Hindus and or live in villages of their own and then come to be ranked as a separate subcaste as regards the slave class alleged to be included in the group. We know that an extensive traffic in children destined for human sacrifice used to go on in the Kandh Country, and that the Pans were the agents.....".

Dalton (1872, 286), gave similar views in this context :

"The agents employed were usually people of the Pan or Panwa class, a low tribe of bastard Hindus who are found diffused amongst the population of all Tributary Mahals, under different denominations, as Pan or Panwas, Chika, Gandas and Panikas. These agents sometimes purchased, but more frequently

kidnapped, the children whom they sold to the Kandhs and they were so debased that they occasionally sold their own offspring, though they know of course, the fate that awaited them".

Risley adds :

"Moreover, a part from the demand for sacrificial purposes, the practice of selling men as agricultural labourers was until a few years ago by no means uncommon in wilder parts of Chhotnagpur Division, where labour is scarce and cash payments are almost unknown. Number of formal bonds have come before me, whereby men sold not only themselves, but also their children for a lumpsum to enable them to marry. There is nothing therefore antecedently improbable in the existence of a slave subcaste among the Pans".

According to Russel

"The above quotation is.....an interesting historical reminiscence of the Pans or Gandas".

Besides Pano, Dom and patradias, there are many other groups having close cultural affinities with the Gandas found in a wide contiguous area comprising parts of Western Orissa, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar which was formerly under the administrative jurisdiction of Central provinces. These groups, though differ from each other in certain respects, are largely occupational. They may be considered to be sections or subcastes of the Ganda community. Among them as reported by Russel, are the *Bajna* or *Bajgiri* of Madhya Pradesh who act as village musicians at feasts and marriage ceremonies; the *Mang*, *Mangai*, *Mangia* or *Mangtiya* of Madhya Pradesh and Orissa who make bamboo mats and screens and their women act as midwives; the *Dholias* who make baskets; the *Nagarchis* who play drums called *Nukkars* and the *Panka* or *Panika* who serve the Chamars and the local community in removing carcasses, skinning the dead animals and carrying the skins and bones of the dead animals. But now in Orissa and Madhya Pradesh, the *Mangan* and *Panika* form separate scheduled caste communities who remain at the

lowest stratum among the untouchable castes. Both the communities are regarded with contempt by the Gandas whose touch even defiles the latter.

Thus spread over a larger area, the Ganda community at present differ culturally, and linguistically from place to place, although claiming as a homogenous community. The difference in culture and economy between widely scattered Ganda groups is so visible that, further exploration may shed light on their origin, ethnicity and racial identity.

Subdivisions

The diverse groups, subdivisions or subcastes amongst this large Ganda community, can be classified into the following four distinct traditional categories, (Orissa District Gazetteers: Sambalpur, 1971, 110).

1. Oriya Ganda .. Those who speak Oriya Language-
2. Laria Ganda .. Those who speak a local tribal dialect-Laria (mostly found in the district of Sundargarh).
3. Kandhria Ganda .. Those who stay with and serve the Kandhs in Phulbani, Kalahandi, and Balangir districts and eat beef.
4. Kabria Ganda .. Those who are Kabir-Panthis and have become strictly vegetarian. They have also given up all the unclean and disrespectful practices and thereby raised their socio-economic status.

This classification is based upon linguistic, cultural, religious, territorial and occupational differentiations and functionally viable today. Among these subcastes, the status of Kandhria Ganda is considered lower and they are looked down upon by the Laria Ganda and the Oriya Ganda for persuing unclean occupations mentioned earlier. Marital and other types of social relationships between the Kandhria and other sections of the Ganda are therefore absent.

The Kandhria Gandas are further distinguished by another traditional occupation of carrying loads across the forest and mountains of the Kandh areas in service of the Kandhs and other castes. Now-a-days, the Kandhria Gandas no longer confine themselves to the Kandh territory, but have migrated to neighbouring areas largely pursuing their traditional practices. Some of them have moved higher up in the social hierarchy by giving up unclean practices and adopting new occupations. At present, application of the label 'Kandhria' does not limit itself to the Gandas of Kandha area, but to other groups of the Ganda who are practising unclean occupations and social habits.

The Oriya Ganda and the Laria Ganda maintain almost an equal social footing. In spite of their linguistic differences, social alliances and correspondences among them are not prohibited. Numerically, they form a large group of people but in their social status they may be considered higher to the Kandhrias.

The Kabria Ganda because of their comparatively puritanical life style behave socially and religiously, like a distinct subcaste. As an endogamous group, they avoid social intercourse with the other Gandas.

Saharia Ganda

Besides the bulk of the Ganda population settled in the rural area, quite a large number of them have migrated to the urban and industrial settings in Sambalpur, Sundargarh and Balangir districts. The Gandas living in the urban area comprise a cross-section, cutting across all the sub-divisions of the larger community. As compared to their counterparts living in the countryside, this group may be distinguished for its heterogenous cultural composition, economic (occupational) diversification and social progress, although they are still backward by the national socio-economic standards. Hence, they take pride to designate themselves and be referred by their rural counterparts as "*Saharia Ganda*".

Most of the Saharia Gandas are immigrants from different neighbouring rural pockets. The important reasons behind this are the situation of age old socio-economic deprivation and drudgery of the people as an untouchable caste in the traditional caste dominated society, gradual

deterioration of traditional productive organisation of the village community, uncertainties of wage and employment in the rural economic sectors, and more particularly, the drought conditions that prevailed in the area till the fifties. On the other hand, the wave of industrialisation and urbanisation set in motion by the British rulers in the dawn of the century and accelerated after independence, contributed to a phenomenal socio-economic change. It affected the rural economy and the inflow of rural folks to the growing urban and industrial centres, who came there in search of better employment opportunities. This situation induced a large number of Ganda families to move into the urban centres.

The process of rural-urban migration have slowly started since the beginning of the century and gathered momentum after the fifties. The study of Ganda wards in and around Sambalpur township reveals that, about eighty-five per cent of the surveyed families remember the time of their migration to this place. The wave of migration took place between the past four generations and the present generation.

Among these families, the majority who constitute sixty per cent of the surveyed families, migrated after fifties during this generation and more than twenty per cent migrated before fifties. The remaining fifteen per cent claim themselves to be the early settlers who fail to trace back the time of their migration.

It is observed that, populous Ganda settlements have sprang up within the slum areas of commercial and industrial townships, growth centres and their suburbs. There are even large slums comprising more than two hundred families. Although, the living conditions in these localities are less than satisfactory, the Gandas living there are happy because the social restrictions and caste barriers are not very rigid and they can avail wider scope for social and economic mobility in the urban society. This is supported by the finding that other upper and lower caste families live with them in the same surroundings.

The urban living Gandas have a number of non-traditional occupations to choose for themselves. Generally, they have taken to such semi-skilled and manual professions as, rickshaw pullers, masons,

carpenters, petty traders, butchers, industrial workers, construction workers, petty contractors, coolies, casual labourers, porters, Government and private employees and the like. Their level of education, enlightenment and the scope of world view is broader than those of their country-living counterparts. By virtue of these new occupations, they are gradually gaining upward social mobility and emerging as a neo-cultural section of the Ganda community.

Their adaptation to the urban environment and changing circumstances, does not affect their social and emotional attachment appreciably with their native people and the places of their origin. Although physically separated, most of them still continue to keep social and economic correspondence with their kith and kins living in the villages. They always prefer to stay with the known or related families and love to be identified by the name of their homeland when they come to the towns. Hence, there are various groups referred as *Titlagarhia* Ganda (those who are from Titlagarh area of Balangir), *Sonepuria* Ganda, *Sambalpuria* Ganda, who generally inhabit separate wards in the urban setting.

Genesis

Considering the linguistic, racial, cultural, territorial and occupational diversities, the overall designation of 'Ganda' may be applicable to a number of distinct communities at various stages of socio-cultural and economic development. This fact of cultural differentiation as described earlier is reflected in different names of the component communities current among themselves and their immediate neighbours.

The origin of the caste is still obscure. There is scanty reference in history and literatures about the Ganda. Considering the similarity between both the terms Ganda and Gond found in the same parts of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa. Risley suggests that, the term 'Ganda' may have been derived from the word "Gond". Russel, based on his observations, denied the affinity between Gond and Ganda. However, the Ganda people claim affinity with the Gonds. The Gonds are a well-known tribe in Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Andhra Pradesh who have gained respectable position among the local communities as kings, warriors, landlords and peasants. The

Gandas speaking about their ancestry suggest that in the distant past, a section of the beef-eating Gonds were making and selling musical instruments, by using hide and were serving as village musicians. Because of these menial and unclean occupations, they were out-casted from the Gond tribe. The outcasted group of Gond musicians formed a separate caste in the Hindu society under the name 'Ganda'.

Legends

The Gandas of Western Orissa narrate many legends about their origin which are more or less similar to those of other untouchable communities, particularly of the *Chamars* of their area, with some textual and contextual variations. The folklores indicate that the Gandas have a highly respectable ancestry. But, as one of their ancestors, one time removed the dead carcass of a cow and took beef, they were looked down upon by the clean castes and became an untouchable caste. Three important legends are reproduced below:

1. Lord *Brahma*, the Creator of this Universe had four sons. Once a cow died in the neighbourhood and Lord *Brahma* asked his sons to remove the carcass and cremate it. After discussions among the brothers it was decided that the youngest would perform this task. The youngest one obeyed his elder brothers and did the work. While cremating the carcass he could not resist the sweet smell of the burning flesh and took a bit of it which was spied by his elder brothers. After the cremation was over, the youngest brother took bath and came back home. But his elder brothers condemned him for his sinful and impure act of eating beef and refused to accept him as one among themselves. Thus he was outcasted by his brothers. The younger brother became the ancestor of the Gandas and the elder brothers constituted upper three divisions of the *Varna* system.

2. In the beginning there were four brothers living in a casteless society. All of them were putting on sacred threads like Brahmins. The youngest brother was a handsome youth of great physical strength. One day, while, walking along a path they noticed the dead carcass of a cow. The elder brothers instructed the youngest one to dispose off the carcass. Since this was considered an unclean job, all the brothers discussed the matter among themselves and arrived at a

decision that the youngest one should put off his sacred thread and do this unclean job. And after finishing the task he would take a purificatory bath and put on the sacred thread. The youngest one obeyed his elders and did exactly as decided. When he returned home after performing the job, his brothers deceived him. Neither they returned his sacred thread, nor allowed him into their household. They forced him to live apart as an outcaste. The latter raised a hue and cry but in vain. His brothers promised to take care of him if he would serve them by undertaking such unclean jobs as sweeping and scavenging. Thereafter the outcasted younger brother came to be known in the name of *Hadipa*, i. e., an untouchable from whom descended the untouchable castes, namely, the Ganda, the Chamar, the Ghasi and the Hadi.

3. Long long ago, when the world was newly created, people were living in a casteless society. There were four brothers born adorned with sacred threads. They were commanding respect of others. Once they found a dead cow beside a path. They voluntarily took up the job of removing the carcass from the path which would have polluted the locality. Before doing so, they put off their sacred threads on the road side. But another group of persons who did not have the sacred threads, stole them away. After disposing off the carcass and taking a purificatory bath, the brothers returned to collect their sacred threads. The persons who had stolen their sacred threads refused to return the threads to them. Instead they condemned the brothers for the unclean deed and forced them to do such unclean works as scavenging and sweeping for them. Thus, the people who had stolen the sacred threads became the Brahmans and those four brothers who performed unclean services became untouchables. All the untouchable castes such as the Ganda, Ghasi, the Chamar and the Hadi are descendants of these four brothers.

These folk traditions however, do not account for the origin of the caste. Rather they describe the cause of their low social status in the Hindu social system which was based upon the concept of purity and pollution of *Karma* (the deeds). Considering the ancient vedic traditions in respect of the lower castes, the Ganda may have started their life as an occupational class on the borders of the ancient Aryan villages. Being primarily non-Aryan, this group has grown up and

expanded over centuries extensively. But the caste today has become so large a group that, it is difficult to say that it has been self-propagating.

Today, the caste is made up of a heterogeneous population. Therefore, one finds in this community, individuals with crude and dark physical features comparable to the aboriginal population at one extreme, and fine and fair features like those of the higher caste Aryans at the other. Hence, there are good reasons to believe that, the caste is not racially pure and homogeneous. Rather it has received large recruitments from higher castes as well as from the aboriginal population through the ages. Russel has mentioned about a brahman youth who has entered into the caste for the love of a Ganda girl in Central Provinces.

Historically speaking, Aryan invasion and conquest of India and consequent subjugation of the tribes one after another had been a recurring phenomenon in the remote past. The flux of rising and falling tribes and clans under repeated foreign and local waves of conquest and the concomitant readjustment of races and clans had been made through a continuous process of social reconstruction. This means that a fixed status of the occupational class of the Ganda might have gone hand in hand with the recurring recruitment of the persons degraded from better positions. In some cases, certain clans and classes unable to maintain their independent identity and status through the changing order had descended to lower social levels.

On the other hand, accession from the lower echelons through successive stages of social mobility was not uncommon. Some tribal people have risen up from lower level and have entered the caste structure. Still the Ganda caste, predominantly retains its non-Aryan character. Further more, environment and food might have played a major role in modifying the physical characteristics of those who have been brought into the caste from the above (Census of India, 1911, Vol. I P 1,383, 384). The basal group has always been large enough to assimilate its recruits to its own standards of temper and character. In the Ganda caste, there has been a close and historically complete contact with Indian village life running very far back. Today also the Gandas occupy a recognised place in the socio-economic system of the contiguous villages of their habitat.

By all definitions, the Ganda is an exterior Hindu Caste (Census Report, United Provinces, 1911, 12). In the Census Report of 1901, some lower castes which fall below the twice born group of Brahmanic traditions are categorised as follows:

1. Those from whom the Brahmans will accept water.
2. Those from whom some of the higher castes will accept water.
3. Those who are not untouchables but from whom the Brahmans will not accept water.
4. Those who are untouchables but do not take beef, whose touch defiles and from whom the higher castes will not accept water.
5. The beef-eating group, unclean, impure and filthy, whose touch defiles.

The Gandas belong to the last category (though now-a-days most of them have become conscious enough to give up this practice). A Ganda occupies an utterly degraded position in the village community and is regarded with loathing and disgust by the higher castes. A higher caste Hindu, especially a Brahman, will not visit a Ganda ward which always lies at the outskirts of the village, unless it is absolutely necessary to do so. The very touch of a Ganda renders it necessary for an orthodox Hindu of higher caste to bathe with all his clothes on.

Russel adds:

"They are considered as impure and are not permitted to draw water from the village well or to enter Hindu temples.

Their touch defiles, and a Hindu will not give anything into the hands of one of the caste while holding it himself, but will throw it down in front of the Ganda, and will take anything from him in the same manner".

Physical features

As regards physical feature, the Ganda people are not different from other Scheduled Castes of Western Orissa. There is no particular racial category to which the bulk of the Ganda population

may fall. In one single settlement, individuals differing from each other in respect of their skin colour, status and facial features may be found. It may be the result of racial intermixture since the time beyond memory. Moreover, the sexual exploitation of the poor Ganda women by the clean castes preferably the landlords were not uncommon in the past, although the Gandas resisted this practice through adoption of socially sanctioned punitive measures.

Sometimes, one observes among the Gandas such physical features as prominent cheekbones, round and broad chin, thinner lips, wide but receding forehead, thicker and wider lower jaw, broad and strong bodily forms with medium height. These mongolo-dravidian features which are mainly found among the Kandhria Ganda of Phulbani, Kalahandi and Bolangir are suggestive of their racial affinity with the aboriginals like the Gond, the Kandh and the Sao:a. However, in a few cases, a massive and rugged type of face different from the above category is found which comes closer to the Austro-Asiatic racial type. This kind of face is distinguished by characteristics like receding forehead, broad nose with bulbous tips and concave nasal profile protruding eyes, wider cheeks, square chin, and massive lower jaw, often showing malar-mandibular prognathism in profile.

Besides the above features, which indicate the racial admixture with aboriginal population, some Gandas show slender and delicate features like oval face, fair skin, thin and straight nose, slim bodily frames like those of the higher castes. This might be the outcome of the interbreeding with the Aryan stock in the past. On the whole the average morphology of the Gandas in general appears to be strong and well built. The people remain slim and trim by their hard work till the old age. Though some elderly men put on weight, it is more usual for men to shrink with the passage of time than to become thin and bony in old age. Many young girls possess fine physique which is beautiful and charming by any standard. Hard work, child bearing, malnutrition, anaemia, sickness and ageing make them lose their youthful grace. But even many middle aged women are found to retain their charm and beauty inspite of hard toil, hazardous life and impoverishment through which they pass all through their life.

CHAPTER II THE GANDA AND THEIR HABITAT

Population

According to 1971 Census the total population of the Ganda in Orissa is estimated to be 325,053. It constitutes about one-tenth of the total Scheduled Caste population of 3,310,854 and 1.5 per cent of the total population of the State, i.e. 21,944,615. In other words, there is one Ganda among every ten Scheduled Caste individuals and every sixty-six individuals of the general population of Orissa. In order of the numerical strength the Ganda comprise the third largest Scheduled Caste group in the State and are placed as such among the seven major Scheduled Caste communities namely, *Pano, Dombo, Ganda, Dhobi, Bauri, Kandara* and *Hadi* population of each group exceeding 100,000. This is given in the following Table-1

TABLE-1
Population of Major Scheduled Castes in Orissa (Census, 1971)

General population	S. C. population	Percentage of S. C. Population to the total general population	Name of the seven major S. C. (in order of numerical strength)	Population of the major S. C.	Remarks
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
21,944,615	3,310,854	15.09	1. Pan or Pano	6,72,627	
			2. Dom, D o m b o, Duria Dom.	3,70,236	
			3. Ganda	3,25,053	1.5 per cent of general population
			4. Dhoba or Dhobi	3,22,216	and 10 per cent of S. C. population of the State.
			5. Bauri	3,03,460	
			6. Kandara or Kandra	2,48,380	
			7. Haddi, Hadi, Hari	1,01,331	

The pattern of distribution of the Ganda population, as given in the Table-2 shows that, they are presented in eleven out of thirteen districts of Orissa. The highest concentration is in the district of Bolangir with 45.48 per cent of the Ganda population. Sambalpur having 40.48 per cent follows Bolangir and ranks second among the districts in this respect. In both the adjacent districts located at the western parts of Orissa. The bulk (86 per cent) of Ganda population live. In each of the districts their population is more than 100,000. The remaining of 12.7 per cent of their

population is scattered in the neighbouring districts such as Boudh-Kandhmals (5.72 per cent), Sundargarh (3.88 per cent), Kalahandi (3.21 per cent), Koraput (1.03 per cent), where their population exceeds 10,000 in each. This data clearly shows that more than ninety-eight per cent of the Ganda is found in the western region of Orissa, which they regard as their 'Motherland', while less than two per cent of them is found in the remaining eight districts. For example, there are 193 persons (0.14 per cent) in Keonjhar district, 165 persons (0.06 per cent) in Dhenkanal district, 5 persons in Cuttack district, 2 persons in Puri district and 1 person in Ganjam district. Hence, the percentage of distribution is very negligible in these districts (each with less than one per cent) and particularly in the last three districts comprising the coastal region of Orissa. The rest of the two neighbouring districts such as Mayurbhanj and Balasore located at the north-eastern parts of the State do not possess any Ganda population.

TABLE-2
Distribution of Ganda population in Districts (1971, Census)

Sl. No.	Name of the district (in order of strength of Ganda population)	General population	Scheduled Caste population	Ganda population	Percentage of total Ganda population
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
1	Bolangir	1,263,657	208,430	1,47,833	45.48
2	Sambalpur	1,844,898	287,998	1,31,595	40.48
3	Boudh-Kandhmals	621,675	117,987	18,580	5.72
4	Sundargarh	1,030,758	82,692	12,596	3.88
5	Kalahandi	1,163,969	199,151	10,430	3.21
6	Koraput	2,043,281	274,115	3,353	1.03
7	Keonjhar	955,514	107,784	193	0.14
8	Dhenkanal	1,293,914	216,887	165	0.06
9	Ganjam	2,293,808	365,284	1	Negligible
10	Puri	2,340,859	316,831	2	Do.
11	Mayurbhanj	1,434,200	103,713		Do.
12	Balasore	1,830,504	338,802		Do.
13	Cuttack	3,827,678	691,180	5	Do.
Total		21,944,615	3,310,854	326,053	100.00

Literacy

The literacy rate among the general population of Orissa is 26.18 per cent. It is 27.12 per cent in Sambalpur district and 12.92 per cent in Bolangir district respectively. Compared to these figures, the literacy among the Ganda is lower. Our data obtained from the survey of the Ganda, inhabiting two adjacent settlements (Adarshpali hamlet of Barangpali village and Remta village) shows that, out of total 395 individuals only 78, i. e., 19.75 per cent are literates. It is higher than the general percentage of literacy of Scheduled Caste population in Sambalpur, Bolangir as well as Orissa which are 16.92, 11.68 and 15.61 per cents respectively. The data has been presented in Table-3.

The data further indicates that, although the male-female sex ratio is nearly equal, the ratio of literates among both the sexes is highly unequal, i. e., roughly 6 : 1. The number of literates among 202 male persons and 193 female persons are 66 and 12 respectively. Thus, the percentage of male literacy is 32.67 which is above those of the Scheduled Caste population of their home district Sambalpur (28.56), Balangir (20.27) and Orissa (25.98). As compared to that of their rate of male literates in the general population in the above three cases (i. e., 40.51, 32.28 and 38.29 respectively) the rate among the Ganda is lower to the first and third and slightly higher to the second.

The level of female literacy, i. e., 6.72 per cent in the total surveyed population, is slightly higher than those of the Scheduled Caste females but lower than those of the females in the general population in both the districts and the State of Orissa. It is so, because of social customs and economic restraints in the Ganda community that do not encourage the education of girls.

As regards the break up of persons according to successive levels of literacy and education among the surveyed group, there are 40 persons (33 males and 7 females) who are barely literates without any level of education, 32 persons (27 males and 5 females) who received primary education, only 6 male persons with secondary education and none with higher and technical education.

The above data is indicative of the fact that though the level of literacy among the Ganda is above that of Scheduled Castes, it is still below the general standards. It shows that Ganda show interest for education but for lack of proper scope under the cultural and economic environment, they lag behind the general population. Because of their social customs, economic backwardness, lack of motivation, resistance of upper Hindu castes to their admission in the public educational institutions for their untouchability, and lack of proper facilities and infrastructures in their home area, their progress in this respect is slow but steady.

TABLE-3
Level of Literacy among the Ganda

Sl. No.	Sex break-up	Level of education among the surveyed Ganda					Total population
		Literates without any level	Primary	Secondary	Higher and technical	Total	
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
1	Male	33	27	6	66	202	
2	Female	7	5	12	193		
	Total	40	32	6	78	395	

Sl. No.	Sex break-up	Percentage to total population	Percentage of literacy in (1971 Census*)					
			Sambalpur district		Balangir district		Orissa	
			S. C.	General	S. C.	General	S. C.	General
(1)	(2)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)
1	Male	32.67	28.56	40.51	20.27	32.28	25.98	38.29
2	Female	6.22	5.18	13.40	2.92	7.48	5.17	13.92
	Total	19.75	16.92	27.12	11.68	19.92	15.61	26.18

* Adopted from Census of India 1971, Orissa, Series-16, Part-1A, General Report, Statements VII 17 & 18. pp. 141-142.

Dialect

Oriya is the mother-tongue of Ganda. Like other people of Western Orissa, the Gandas speak Oriya with the characteristic of regional accent: popularly known as "Sambalpur". The Laria Ganda of Sundargarh district speak the common tribal dialect "Laria" along with Oriya. The Kandhria Ganda of Kondhan tracts of Bolangir, Phulbani and Kalahandi districts are multi-lingual. They invariably speak *Kui* or *Kuvi* (the Kandhi dialect), besides Oriya, and claim themselves to be early settlers. Khunta-Katidars of the area, contemporary to the aboriginal Kandhs.

Ganda Country

The trend of distribution of the Ganda population as described above, supplemented by our observation establishes the fact that the territory of Western Orissa and particularly, that comprising the two adjoining districts, Balangir and Sambalpur is the homeland of the Gandas. Hence, for the purpose of further description, both of these districts may be considered to be the "Ganda Country."

The territory is located between $20^{\circ}9'$ to $22^{\circ}11'$ Northern Latitudes and $82^{\circ}41'$ to $85^{\circ}13'$ Eastern Longitudes. It is bound in the north by Sundargarh district, in the south by the districts Kalahandi and Boudh-Kondhmals, in the east by the district Boudh-Kondhmals (Phulbani) and Dhenkanal and in the west by Kalahandi district and Madhya Pradesh. Its geographical area is 9,886.2 square miles or 26,535.3 square kilometres according to the Census 1961—71 and the local authorities.

The contiguous tract of the Ganda country formed by both the neighbouring districts consists of a wide expanse of fairly open country fringed by forest clad hills as well as a series of low hill-ranges of extremely irregular shape. This territory may be broadly divided into three distinct natural zones. The Central zone, formed by the south-western parts of Sambalpur (Consisting of subdivisions of Sambalpur, Bargarh and Padmapur) and the north-eastern parts of Balangir (Consisting of Sonapur subdivision) is a flat, open and slightly undulating country with isolated small

hills. To the north of this tract, runs the *Barapahar* range of hills. This plain tract begins with the famous *Bargarh* plain which gradually slopes down from the *Barapahar* range, to the *Mahanadi* valley in the east. The elevations of the area varies from 479 feet (146m.) to 750 feet (228-60m.) above sea level. It contains the great river *Mahanadi* and the confluence of many of it's tributaries namely *Danta*, *Jira*, *Ong*, *Tel*, *Suktet* and a number of hill streams and may be called the basin of *Mahandi*. This is a very fertile terrain having light and sandy soil which does not favour the growth of weeds and pests unlike the more fertile black cotton soil and hence, most suitable for rice cultivation. Further, the undulating character affords excellent scope for irrigation reservoirs. After the construction of *Hirkud* Reservoir, this area is well served by a network of canals. This has caused a successful green revolution and this area has become noted as the granary of Western Orissa. Though the area is now devoid of forests, the general land-scape is beautiful as the villages are fringed by groves and orchards. As compared to the neighbouring natural zones, it has thicker concentration of the general population as well as the Ganda population.

The western zone comprising the parts of *Patnagarh* subdivision of *Balangir* and *Padmapur* Subdivisions of *Sambalpur* and *Nawapara* Subdivision of *Kalahandi* is a rugged, isolated, undulating, submontane tract with irregular hill ranges, rocky ridges and deep ravines cut by drainage channels. The hill ranges rise abruptly from the plains and run in various directions. There lies the famous and magnificent *Gandhamardan* a lofty hill range of puranic importance. It forms the natural boundary between *Sambalpur*, *Bolangir* and *Kalahandi* districts at the north-western part. This area is deeply forested with abundant species of bamboo, *Sal*, *Sahaj*, *Piasal Dhara*, teak, and ebony. The main forest area stretches along the common western boundary edging the *Nawapara* Subdivision and then turns to the east running parallel to the *Gandhamardan* range. The crest of the range is a fine plateau, roughly 10 miles (16 Kms.) long with an average height of 3,000 ft. On the northern summit of this range, there is a famous spring which descends to the foot of the hill in fine

waterfalls at the famous shrine of *Nrusimhanath* at Paikmals of Sambalpur which is a sacred place of pilgrimage. On the southern slope a similar stream issues from the crest causing a small picturesque and holy waterfall named *Papanasini* (the remover of sins) at another famous shrine of *Harishankar* which is also a place of pilgrimage in Balangir district.

The third i.e., the north-western zone composed of Rairakhol, Deogarh, Kuchinda and northern parts of Sambalpur and Bargarh Subdivisions of Sambalpur district is a table land with rugged range of hills on the north and east, traversed by hill streams running in all directions. In the eastern sector the plateau rises in Deogarh subdivision to an elevation of 2,000 feet, with sudden and precipitous descent, while in the north the *Barapahar* range (literally, a chain of twelve hills) attains a height of 2,300ft. It forms a compact block covering 16 square miles and throws out a spur of 30 miles long to the south-west. The Rairakhol subdivision contains a series of low hill ranges extending towards the valley of *Mahanadi*.

Geology *

This territory constitutes a part of the peninsular region. It has largely remained a rigid mass of table land and been least affected by inner movements of the earth though some portions of the peninsular India were affected by structural disturbances of vertical nature. The following rock types or geological formations are mainly found in this area.

1. Garnetiferous gnesis and schist
2. Khondalite
3. Alluvium and brown sand
4. Laterite and Lateritic iron ore-usually manganiferous
5. Dome gnesis

* Adopted from (1) Census of India 1961, Orissa, District Census Hand Book-Bolangir—pp—4 & (2) District Census Hand Book, Sambalpur, pp-4 (3) Orissa District Gazetteers Bolangir—pp—8—1968 & Orissa District Gazetteer, Sambalpur—pp-15, 1971, Ed-N. Senapati.

6. Dolerite dyke
7. Pegmatite
8. Sandstone
9. Cuddaph
10. Archaen

(Pre-cambian) — (a) Sedimentary metamorphosed rocks.

(b) Igneous rocks and metamorphosed igneous rocks.

Among the various economic minerals, those found frequently are clay, coal, gold, graphite, iron ore, lead, silver, limestone, mica, ochre, building stones, kansa, manganese, china clay, falseper, quartz, magnetite sand, etc. Availability of diamonds was also reported from the banks of *Mahanadi* at Hirakud. Extensive deposits of limestone, dolomite, manganese, graphite is present in various parts of this area. Alluvial gold is reported from river sands and gravels over the metamorphic rocks.

Flora and Fauna

This area has abundance of vegetations of semi-evergreen type which are commonly found in the moist tropical climate. On the open country, mango groves are invariably found in the village surroundings. Various fruit-bearing trees are also seen in the village outskirts such as *Tentuli* or tamarind (*Tamarinda indica*), *Kaith* (*Feronia elephantum*), *Bair* or wild plum (*Zizyphus jujuba*), *Parus* or jackfruit (*Artocarpus integrefolia*), *jambu* or *Jamun* (*Eugenia jambolana*), *Bahalphal* (*Cordia mixa*), *Limb* or *Neem* (*Melia indica*), *Karanj* (*Pongamia glabra*), *Barkoli* (*Zizyphus jujuba*), *Maya* (*Psidium guava*), *Badhal* (*Anona squamosa*), *Bara* (*F.bengalensis*), *Aswastha* (*F.religiosa*), *Tal* (*Borassus fiabellifer*), *Khajuri* (*Phoenix sylvestris*), *Mohua* (*Bassia latifolia*), *Babul* (*Accacia arabica*), *Harida* (*T. chebula*) and *Bahada* (*T. belerica*).

The avenue plantations generally consists of plants like *Mango*, *Jamun*, *Karanj*, *Aswastha*, *Asoka* (*Polyalthia longifolia*), *Bakam* (*Millingtonia hortensis*), *Chakunda* (*Caessia siamea*), *Siris*

(*Albizia lebbex*) and tamarind. Certain plants having religious importance are planted in the *precincts* of temples and shrines and also found around the village sites. These are *Bel* (*Aegle marmelos*), *Boula* or *Molsuri* (*Mimucops elengi*), *Asoka*, *Krushnachuda* (*Poinciana regia*) etc.

The important flowering plants of this area are *Sunari* or *Amaltas* (*Cassia fistula*), *Ganiani* (*Cochlospermum gossypium*), *Kuthar* or *kanchan* (*Bauhinia variegata*), *Palas* (*Butea fondosa*), *Dhatuli* (*Woodfordia floribunda*), *Sefali* or *Harasingar* (*Nyctanthes arbortristis*), *Kurai* (*Holarrhnea antidysentrica*) and *Madabalita* (*Hiptagemanda blata*).

Among the important economic species, *Sal* (*Shorea robusta*) is found in abundance in association with *Sahaj* (*Terminalia tomentosa*), *Bijasal* (*Petrocarpus marsupium*), *Dhaura* (*Anogeissus latifolia*), *Arjun* (*terminalia arjuna*), *Karla* (*Cleistanthus collinus*), *Jhingan* (*Odina Wodier*), *Kendu* (*Diospyros melanoxylon*), teak (*Teaktona grandis*), *Gambhari* (*Gmelina arborea*), *Sisoo* or rose wood (*Dalbergia latifolia*), *Kusum* (*Scheleisorea trijuga*), *Khari* (*Acacia catechu*), *Siali* (*Bauhinia vahlic*), etc. *Bamboos* (*Dendrocalamus strictus*) are found in plenty in the forests as well as village areas.

Various kinds of grasses grow in this area. The common grasses used as fodder or for thatching are *Dub* (*Cynodon dactylon*), *Mutha* (*Cyperus rotundas*), *Sukala* (*Pollinia argentea*), *Panasi* (*Pollinea eripoda*), *Kaila* (*Andropogon annulatus*), *Kasa* (*Sachharum spontaneum*), *Khas* (*Andropogon squarrosus*), *Tikhari* (*Andropogon* variety), *Sabai* (*Eulatiopsis binata*), *Kanta badhuni* (*Aristida setacca*), *Munja* (*Sachharum munja*), *Khuskhus* (*Vetiveria zizanoides*), *Jhun* (*Imperata arundinacea*), spear grass (*Heteropogon contortus*), lemon grass (*cymbopogen martini*), etc.

As regards the wild life, the Sambalpur and Bolangir was so rich that it was, writes Mr. Dewar in Kings Gazetteer of 1931, "One of the happiest hunting grounds in the Central provinces". Because of indiscriminate poaching, shooting for pleasure and

profit and rapid deforestation, the varieties of species have been vanishing, since past. Now-a-days, the wild animals are hardly found except in the reserved forest areas and sanctuaries namely, Ushakothi, Debrigarh and Sardhapali.

Before the fifties, tigers and other wild animals were a serious menace in the forest areas. Cattle-lifting tigers, man eaters, and predators frequently caused severe loss and casualties to human life, domestic animals and crops. Now, the number of such animals can be counted on the finger tips. Even the panthers who used to prey on the villagers goats, sheeps and dogs have become rare. Bears too are no longer a danger to the travellers and forest dwellers. The stock of *Sambar*, blue-bull, antelope, spotted deer, barking deer (*Kutra*), Indian mouse deer (*Khuranta*), and bison (*Gayala*) has been greatly depleted by sportsmen and hunters.

Besides, there were varieties of other animals such as hyena, jackal, Indian fox, wild dog, jungle cat, palm civet, mangoose, otter, percupine, Indian giant squirrel, hare, common langur, rhesus macaque, crocodile, lizard, cobra, king-cobra, python, kraits and vipers. The common birds were peacock, peafowl, redjungle fowl, grey partridge, black partridge, common quail, hornbill, myna, parrots, doves, pigeons, sparrow, vultures, *Koyal*, king fisher, drongo, etc. most of these species have gradually declined.

Climate

The climate of this area, more or less, conforms with that prevalent in the adjoining districts, i.e. in most parts of Western Orissa. Especially the rugged undulating, hilly regions of Sambalpur district which was formerly under thick vegetative cover, have now become bare by depletion of forests and experience extreme climate as compared to the coastal regions of Orissa.

The summer lasts from March to the middle of June. The temperature begins to rise steadily from the beginning of March till May which is the hottest month of the year with the mean daily maximum temperature at 41.4°C (106.5°F) and the mean daily minimum temperature at 27.8° C (82.0° F). The heat in May and early parts of June prior to the onset of South-West monsoon is

very tiring because, sometimes, the temperature rises upto 47°C (116.6°F). The onset of the monsoon by about mid-June brings some relief from the scorching heat of the summer as with this the temperature drops appreciably. Throughout the monsoon season, the weather generally remains cooler, although sometimes in between spells of rain, the weather tends to become hot and oppressive due to high moisture content of the air. In September, there is a break in the flow of the monsoon and so the day's temperature rises again and continues for sometime.

The monsoon season continues from mid-June to the end of September. The average annual rainfall in Sambalpur and Bolangir is 1527.0 mm (60.11") and 1443.4 mm (56.83") respectively. On the average, there are 67 to 70 rainy days in both the districts. About 90 per cent of the annual rainfall is received in the monsoon. July is the rainiest month of the year. The eastern part of this area which is a hill and forest tract gets more rain than the deforested plains in the middle and western parts comprising the Bargarh area where the rainfall is lowest. It supports the theory that forests attract rain.

Winter starts from November when the temperature decreases progressively and the drop in the night temperature is more rapid. December is the coldest month with mean daily maximum temperature at 28.1°C (55.8°F) and mean daily minimum temperature 12.1°C (53.8°F). Cold winds sometimes affect these districts in association with the passage of western disturbance across Northern India in the cold season when short spells of cold weather occur and the minimum temperature may go down to 4°C or 5°C (40°F).

Relative humidity is high during south-west monsoon and post monsoon season being generally 75 per cent. The air becomes gradually drier thereafter in the winter. Summer is the driest part of the year when the relative humidity are rather low and particularly during afternoon it is below 30 per cent. Winds are generally moderate. Storms and depressions originating in the Bay of Bengal during the monsoon season and in October pass through these districts and cause wide spread heavy rain and strong winds.

Geographically, the major part of the Ganda country lies on the central table land, i.e. the basin of the rivers, *Mahanadi* and *Brahmani*. The northern portion comprising the Kuchinda and Deogarh subdivisions of Sambalpur form a part of the Northern plateau. It is a rugged undulating terrain interspersed with hills and spurs, perennial streams and rivers (especially the great river *Mahanadi* and its tributaries). There are broad valleys chequered with fields alternate with low wooded ridges and narrow ravines here and there, still filled with forest and bamboo growth and stony beds of streams that dry up during the hot season and turn to rushing torrents in the rains.

Even thirty years ago, communication in this country was difficult for these natural barriers. During the monsoon, large areas especially the *Mahanadi* basin and the hill tracts were inaccessible. Following the trend of rapid industrialisation and urbanisation and construction of Hirakud Reservoir and irrigation canals for development of agriculture after the fifties, a network of all weather roads, national and state highways and railways was laid along the length and breadth of this country extending the communication facilities practically to most parts of the country.

In the plains, hills and forests, broad and low valleys, Gandas have long lived in close contact with the Hindu castes and tribal communities (Gond, Binjhal, Saora, Kandha, etc.) of different cultural heritages sometimes sharing one village site and sometimes inhabiting separate hamlets. Despite their longstanding association with the neighbouring communities nowhere has been their caste identity seriously impaired or their distinction obscured. Notwithstanding, whatever social reforms, socio-economic and educational progress they have made so far, the Ganda have culturally remained the same "Ganda" as before.

CHAPTER III

SETTLEMENT PATTERN

The Gandas usually live in multi-caste villages where families belonging to various castes or communities reside in their own wards called the *pada*. Since the Gandas are treated as untouchables their families live in exclusive and compact settlements or hamlets physically segregated from main village, inhabited by the upper castes. The Ganda *padas* are generally located at the outskirts within a short distance from the main village. However, it is observed that in certain places Ganda wards are located in the main village. In Remta village the untouchable lower castes like Chamar, Ghasi and Ganda occupy residential quarters towards one end of the village maintaining their physical and social distance from the upper castes while in the adjacent village Barangpali a large number of Ganda families live in a separate hamlet named "Adarshpali-Gandapada" which is located at a distance of half a kilometer from the main village.

Besides maintaining group identity through their social status, caste distance and physical isolation in the settlement pattern, there is no other distinguishing feature of a Ganda settlement in western Orissa. However, the location of a Ganda settlement is always decided upon one important geo-physical consideration that is the proximity to an independent and dependable water source like *bandha* (village tank), *jhar* (perennial streams), river or rivulet, *bauli* (well) etc. (Being an impure caste, the Ganda are not allowed to use water from the same source used by upper caste people in the village areas. There has been many disputes between the Ganda and other untouchable castes on one side and the more prosperous clean castes on the other in using a common water source, resulting in atrocities. It is observed that most often the Gandas are the victim.

A Ganda settlement has a cluster of houses mostly arranged in rows facing each other and having a common path inbetween. Cart tracks or foot paths from the main village and the neighbouring settlements lead to the site. In some places the houses are located here and there without any symmetrical or order, and linked by byways

and beaten foot paths. The composition of households in a settlement does not always conform to any kind of emotional or kinship ties. However, Gandas prefer to stay with their near and dear kinsmen and sometimes the households of a local kin group are found close together. Brother and his wife, son and his wife and daughter and her husband are the most common neighbours of a Ganda household.

Housing

The Ganda houses are generally of *kutch* type having rectangular shaped small single rooms and roofs composed of split bamboo and thatched with straw or country made tiles. In some Ganda houses there are two rooms; one is smaller measuring 6'8' or 8'10' and the other is bigger in size varying from 8'10' to 11'12'. The smaller room is used as a kitchen-cum-store. In the Ganda settlement of Barangpali village, it was found that seven Ganda houses have each a small inner room varying from 6'X9' to 10'X12' surrounded by a 'L' shaped enclosed outer floor space. One arm of the enclosed 'L' space is used as a store-cum-sleeping place and the other arm is used as a kitchen while the inner room is used as a store-cum-deity room called as *Pitar ghar-Devta ghar* or *Masan ghar*.

The number of rooms and the kind of structures varies from place to place and from house to house. However, a small verandah of variable size 2'4' or by 6'12' is usually provided in front of the house. In the small one roomed house where there is lack of adequate working space for kitchen, a portion at one corner of the verandah enclosed with wattled bamboo, is used for cooking and as dining space.

The absence of window or any alternative arrangement for ventilation is conspicuous in the Ganda houses. In very few cases where the owners of the house are well-to-do and educated the houses are provided with wooden doors and windows. However, some Ganda houses have small circular holes of 4" to 6" diameter in the walls for passage of light and air. In average Ganda houses the number of doors varies from one to three. The doors are smaller in size and roughly fashioned from indigenous materials like wood or bamboo.

A typical Ganda house is a one-roomed structure of smaller dimensions, and the majority of the Ganda households live in this kind of houses. The single room serves all purposes. In cases of the big families having more than three adult members the condition of living in this kind of houses become deplorable since the rooms are smaller enough to accommodate the big family. Yet, they have to live in these houses without making separate arrangements for the privacy of married and unmarried persons, though sometimes, temporary flimsy partitions are provided for married couples. More often the unmarried adult members are obliged to sleep either in the verandahs or the attached 'loomsheds'. For want of space inside the house, cooking, dining, husking, and other household chores are done on the verandah.

Domestic animals such as cattle, goat, sheep etc. are sheltered in a separate shed at the side or rear of the main house. Most of the weaver families have separate loomsheds called *Sal ghar* or *Manga ghar*. The houses of prosperous cultivators are sometimes found having spacious courtyards at the side or rear of the main house with well defined temporary fencing or permanent boundaries.

The Ganda classify their houses upon their geophysical location, kind of roof thatching, and number of storeys. Depending on the direction to which the houses face they are grouped into two categories namely *Ada ghar* and *Jhada ghar*. The *Jhada ghar* is considered to be better than the *Ada ghar* since, south-north is the most ideal direction for a house to face. This helps in getting good cool air during hot summer. Single storied houses are simply called *ghar* and double storied houses are called *Dhaba ghar*. The houses having roofs thatched with grass or straw are known as *Pual ghar* and those with country made tiles are known as *Khapar ghar*. Cottage type houses of poor families with a light thatched roof resting upon the walls without any supporting pillars are called *Ekphuli ghar*.

The construction of a typical Ganda house is simple and cheap. The materials used for the purpose such as bamboo, wood, mud, brick, wooden pole, grass, straw, tile or date palm leaf, string etc. are indigenous and locally available in plenty. The foundation is

shallow and sometimes the houses are constructed from the ground level without any plinth work. The superstructure rests on wooden poles driven in to the ground. The walls are made of mud, sun dried mud brick, locally available stone or often with a bamboo frame plastered with mud. The height of the walls hardly exceeds ten feet from the ground level over which the frame work for the gabled roof is raised upon the support of wooden poles. The roof frame is mostly made of split bamboo and wooden bars. Thatching of roof is made with grass, straw, date palm leaf or country made tiles. Beneath the roof some sort of wooden or bamboo ceiling is occasionally constructed with a view to keep household goods and grain bins.

Some well-to-do Ganda families have double storied houses locally known as '*Dhaba ghar*'. The ground floor of a '*Dhaba ghar*' has a ceiling made of wooden or bamboo poles and mud. The upper storey is comparatively smaller in dimension and lower in height than the ground floor. It has a gabled roof covered with country made tiles. The upper storey mostly serves the purpose of storing grains and other household articles. There is an opening through the ceiling of the ground floor through which one has to enter the upper storey by climbing a ladder.

The floor of the house is levelled by earth-fillings. The walls ceilings and floor are plastered with cowdung and mud for construction and routine maintenance. Due to smaller doors and absence of windows the rooms are poorly ventilated and remain dark even in day light. The cattle sheds and loomsheds are comparatively smaller with thatched roofs. Usually they have no walls or enclosures. The Ganda houses do not have any compound wall or green fencing and as such courtyards are conspicuously absent.

Construction of a new house begins on an auspicious day with a simple ritual. To begin with the construction work the local pundit or astrologer is consulted before hand to find out an auspicious

day and time according to the Hindu Almanac. On that day the head of the household offers prayers to the Gods, deities and ancestral spirits, craving for their blessings for the successful completion of the house construction. Well-to-do families invite their close friends and relatives to participate in this ceremony and the guests are entertained with food and drinks. The construction work begins ritually on the pre-determined auspicious moment with the head of the household planting the first wooden pillar which serves the main prop of the house. This wooden pole is ritually purified by applying vermilion and tying mango leaves around its top. The pole is fixed by the head of the household at the centre of the house site amidst cheers and shouting of the names of Gods and Goddesses from the encircling crowd of friends, relatives, neighbours and well-wishers. Sundried rice, *duba* grass, coconut, banana, and sometimes foods are offered during the worship held at the foot of the pole. Later, the remaining pillars are fixed and construction works of walls, roof, thatching, floor plastering and wood-works are taken up and completed. However, no specific ceremony is observed at the time of occupancy of the new house.

The surveyed data regarding the housing conditions of two Ganda settlements (one of which is an exclusive Ganda hamlet separated from village where upper castes live) consisting a total number of 108 households and having a total population of 395 individuals shows that, 101 families out of 108 possess their own house. The remaining seven households have nothing, which can be called a complete house. Three of these households have arranged their accommodation by adjustment with the households of their friends and relatives for a temporary period, i.e., till they build their own houses. The rest of the four households are miserably managing to stay inside ruined and dilapidated structures having temporary palm leaf thatched roofs, helplessly exposed to the cruelties of nature. In general, the condition of housing of most of the households reflects their poverty. Within their limited resources and financial capacities they fail to build good houses with more and spacious rooms which can last longer. On the other hand, they even fail in routine repair and maintenance of whatever housing structures they possess.

The construction of an ordinary two-roomed Ganda house costs between Rs. 900/- to Rs. 1,200/- which includes the cost of materials like wood, bamboo, country made tiles as well as the wages of skilled labourers. The unskilled labour is provided by the household members which results in substantial savings in the cost of construction. Sometimes friends, relatives, and neighbours extend their help and co-operation causing further reduction of the expenses. It has been observed that a poor family invariably gets help from his neighbours and relatives for construction of a house.

Among the 101 surveyed Ganda houses there are 58 one-roomed houses, 34 two-roomed houses, 7 three-roomed and only 2 four-roomed houses. It shows that majority, i.e. 91 per cent of houses are one-roomed and two-roomed. In the one-roomed house, the single room is used for all purposes. It serves the purpose of living, store, kitchen and dining. Most of these one-roomed houses, i.e., 42 out of 58 have enclosed a corner of the verandah for the purpose of cooking due to want of space inside the house. The two-roomed houses generally have a bigger living-cum-store room and a smaller kitchen shed. Three and four-roomed houses are more elaborate and spacious having separate rooms, for kitchen, living and store. Such houses usually belong to the well-to-do families. In some of these houses the rooms are provided with a ceiling made up of mud and bamboo work and the walls are made up of locally made sun baked bricks.

These houses are small *Kutcha* type having roofs thatched with straw, grass or country made tiles over a bamboo frame-work. There are no windows except small holes in some houses for ventilation. Hence, the houses are dark, swampy and poorly ventilated.

The Ganda families prefer to stay in good houses having at least two rooms. For them two-roomed or more than two-roomed houses are ideal for living. Limitations of space and finance compel most of these poor Ganda families to construct and live in small one-roomed houses.

It has been found that there is no tendency to enclose the house site with any fencing or boundary. The families having cattle and other livestock keep these animals in separate sheds located either at the side or rear end of the main houses. Similarly the weaver families install their looms in separate open sheds adjacent to their living rooms. Only a few of them have fixed the looms inside the main house.

While majority of the houses are single storied, there are only five *Dhaba ghars* (double storied houses) noticed in the villages surveyed. The upper room is generally used as an attic or store room where grains, implements and other less valuable belongings are kept. However, it can be concluded from our observation of different Ganda settlements that, there is no special or traditional style, uniformity or commonness in the settlement and housing pattern of the Ganda.

CHAPTER IV

LIVING CONDITIONS

The Gandas generally live in compact settlements away from the clean caste habitation. Since, they have been treated as impure caste, tradition forbids them for the use of water from the common source. Scarcity of water being a major problem in Western Orissa particularly in rural area, the bulk of Ganda population living there, are the worst sufferers. Most of the good water sources available in the villages are tapped by the influential and prosperous clean caste people for their exclusive use. The Gandas are forced to live in separate settlements, most of which lack provisions of water supply. During summer months, further inadequacy of water supply in certain parts of Western Orissa create problems for the Gandas. In the drought-prone areas like Kuchinda and Padmapur subdivisions of Sambalpur district, this problem seems to be acute. Sometimes, people fetch water for domestic consumption from far off sources, even located at a distance of two to three kilometers.

This was also the case in Bargarh subdivision of Sambalpur which was a drought-prone area due to the dry environment of the undulating upland and deforested dry plains. The rate of rainfall here, is lower than other parts of the district. Following the construction of Hirakud dam, reservoir and extension of a network of canal irrigation system in this area the situation has radically changed resulting in a successful green revolution. Prior to the construction of the dam, the problem of scarcity of water during summer months was very acute in the villages.

The Gandas living in the hamlet of Adarshpali in the main village Barangpali (located near Barpali town) still remember that, they were going to Jogimunda and Rajabandha tanks lying in the neighbouring village of Barpali to take bath and carry water in earthen vessel for their domestic use. The distance between Adarshpali and these tanks is approximately two and half Kms. The adult members of the community and also the children were travelling this distance daily, even during hot summer months.

Since the small children accompanying their parents normally got tired and thirsty on the way the parents used to carry drinking water in a *Gada* (earthen pot) so as to quench the thirsty children enroute.

In the village Barangpali there are four wells for public use. The Ganda and other Harijan castes are not allowed to draw water from these wells as they are for exclusive use of the clean caste people. There has been many cases of disputes in the past between the Ganda and the clean castes of the village over the use of water from the wells. Subsequently, the Gandas were permitted to use one of these wells located at the premises of the village Upper Primary School through the efforts of the village level workers of the American Friends Service Project in Barpali during the the fifties. There is also a shallow pond lying near the Ganda settlement which is used by the Ganda families for bathing, washing clothes, cleaning utensils and bathing cattles. The water from this pond is also used for drinking and cooking purposes. During the summer months, water flowing through the small canal passing nearby is used for miscellaneous domestic purposes while water from the Upper Primary School well is brought for drinking and cooking. Large crowds of Ganda women gather at the well waiting patiently to fill their brass and earthen pots. While waiting for the collection of water they engage themselves in gossiping, exchanging news and discussing the latest scandals.

The Gandas use water mainly from the natural sources like tanks, ponds, streams and rivers. They were less accustomed to the use of water from the well which might be the result of the age old caste restrictions and superstitious beliefs. The Gandas living in the hilly areas depend upon the adjacent perennial streams for water supply. From time immemorial, separate bathing ghats have been provided for the clean castes and the Ganda living in the river side villages and villages having public tanks or reservoirs. These water sources are unprotected and get polluted by unhygienic habits and miscellaneous use of the villagers. They pass excreta on the embankments of the village ponds and in the beds of rivers and streams. Bathing domestic animals in the tanks, rivers and streams is very common in the village area. Moreover, funeral grounds of the villages are situated on the banks of streams

and rivers. After the cremation, the ashes and offerings are mixed with streams. Thus these water sources get contaminated and spreads chronic ailments like cholera, dysentery, influenza, Jaundice, chicken-pox, measles, cold, cough and skin diseases. So the Gandas are physically affected by their habits and the natural environment in which they live.

Besides the major problematic situation of drinking water in the Ganda settlements, it can be said that, in general the Gandas take care of their body, clothing, house and surroundings and keep them neat and clean as compared to their neighbouring lower caste communities. Ganda men and women get up in the early morning and wash their faces and mouths with water. Then they go near water sources like well, tube-well, tank, stream or river with small tooth twigs to clean their teeth and tongues and take bath. Before taking bath, they pass stool in the open either on the banks and embankments of streams, rivers, tanks or in the fields. Passing stool is done atleast once daily preferably in the morning before taking bath or in the evening. But generally most of the people have the habit of defecating twice daily once in the morning and once in the evening. Small children after attaining two years of age usually are given toilet training by their parents and superiors.

Bathing is regularly done atleast once daily and often twice daily especially during hot summer days. There is no fixed time for bathing. But they usually prefer bathing in the morning before going to work or in the afternoon after returning from work but before taking the lunch. During summer months, some people take bath twice in a day, once in the morning and once in the afternoon. In winter, the regularity in daily bathing is not maintained especially by the young children, old and sick people. Oil, soap, etc. are not regularly used for bathing by the male folk, but female folk who can afford, use these oil and soap. Besides, the Ganda women also annoint their body with turmeric paste and take bath particularly during ceremonies and ritual occasions like birth, marriage, menstruation and death. Women get up and

take bath early in the morning usually before the sunrise on festive days like *Sital Sasthi*, *Balram Janma*, *Janmastami*, *Nuakhia Mangala Puja*, *Dussera*, *Pua Jiuntia*, *Bhai Jiuntia*, *Laxmi Puja*, *Pas Punei*, etc. Mustard oil and *til* oil are mainly used for massaging the body prior to bathing. Poor people use a cheap oil extracted out of *Mohua* flower. Devout Gandas following the Brahmanic tradition, pray *Dharmaraj*, the Supreme Sun God and pay homage to other important deities at the beginning or end of the bath.

Miscellaneous cleaning and washing jobs for routine maintenance of interiors and exteriors of the Ganda households are mainly the responsibility of women. Sweeping the inside and outside of house atleast in the morning and in the evening, cleaning utensils, cleaning the animal shed, washing clothings, plastering the walls, floor and courtyards with lime, cowdung and mud for routine maintenance and ritual purification especially during ceremonies, rituals and festive days are mostly attended to, by the women of Ganda household, sometimes with the assistance of children. Most of the Ganda households, except a few, do not have definite garbage pits either in front or back of their houses to throw household dirts and wastes. The household refuse are thrown here and there on either side of the house except the excreta of domestic animals like cowdung which are carefully collected and preserved in a small pit in front or near the house in order to be used as manure and for plastering of the walls and floors. Somtimes, flat and circular disc like cakes are prepared out of fresh cowdung and dried in the sun. These are locally called *Chheni* which are stored in small or large quantities for being used as fuel for domestic cooking. Domestic animals during day time are brought out of their shed by men and tied in front of the house. The left over feeds and drinks given to these animals, their urine and excreta and the household wastes carelessly thrown here and there are sometimes not cleaned properly and regularly and these places often become breeding grounds for flies, mosquitoes and other harmful organisms. Especially during rainy months, these waste matters rot and create filthy and unhygienic disease-prone surroundings.

Clothing, Ornaments and Personal Decoration

The clothings of the Ganda are very simple and economical. There is little variation between persons in this respect, though the differences in social, economic and educational status necessitates difference in the quality and quantity of required clothings.

The Ganda generally use clothings of coarse and cheap variety, restricted almost to the bare necessities. Till about late sixties, they used to wear locally produced handloom fabrics woven by their own caste people or other local weaver castes like Bhulia and Kustha. In recent years, signs of change in clothing habits is noticeable. Some people now use mill-made clothes because these are comparatively cheaper and available in large varieties having attractive colours and designs. However, they still continue to have emotional attachments with the indigenous handloom clothes and even now many of them prefer to put on handloom clothir.gs.

The usual clothings of Ganda men, both young and old consist of coarse and short *dhoties* or coloured *lungis* either handloom or mill-made. Sometimes, small coloured napkins are tied around the loins or folded and hang from the shoulders. Some young persons who are little educated or appears to be modern than their forefathers, occasionally wear modern clothings like trousers, half pants, banions, shirts, vests and towels of cheap quality available in the local markets. Some of them also use slippers while going outside.

Poverty has induced nudity of small and growing children. Children up to four or five years remain naked. School-going boys wear half pants, shirts and occasionally banions and school-going girls wear ready made frocks while those not attending schools wear small handloom or millmade sarees. Many of the girls of growing age are found wearing pieces of torn and wornout clothes discarded by the adult members after long use. Small boys also use tatters of their parents old and torn clothes, the smallest of which is just sufficient to cover their genitals only. The smallest minimum of this kind of clothing is called *Kaupuni*

or *Langoti*, i. e., a piece of cloth atleast eighteen inches long and six inches wide passing through the centre of the things covering the genital and the anus and held above, below the level of navel by a piece of thin string tied around the waist for this purpose.

The usual clothings of Ganda women are coarse and small sarees mostly indigenous handloom fabrics locally called *Kapta* and sometimes cheap millmade fabrics. The normal size of a *Kapta* is $3\frac{1}{2} \times 12$ with *anchals* at both ends. *Kaptas* are very popular among the lower caste working women of this region as these are not only cheap but coarse and strong enough to stand hard. The *anchals* are woven in coloured yarns with different attractive designs and look quite gay. Besides *Kapta*, other locally made handloom sarees of coarse and cheap varieties are used by Ganda women. These handloom sarees usually have floral borders or borders of artistic designs which are about three or four inches wide. Sarees with red coloured border are popular among Ganda women. Conforming to the local and regional traditions the saree is worn by the Ganda women in a distinguished style that the eight inches of the upper portion are held closely together and tied in a rope like fashion, around the waist, just below the navel. So the saree does not reach down to the heels but hangs down little below the knee showing no tendency to flutter in movements. This style though exposes the shapely legs of women has practical advantages and functional utility for the hardworking Ganda women who engage themselves in labourious activities both indoors and outdoors. Aesthetically, it is also commendable as it allows a Ganda belle to expose her well formed calves and shapely legs.

Use of under and upper garments is limited among Ganda women. Now a days, *sayas* (petticoats) and blouses are gradually gaining popularity among them. The fashionable girls of younger generation are showing tastes for better and colourful millmade sarees and garments like blouse, petticoats, handkerchiefs, readymade frocks and panties, etc. Use of footwear is rare among Ganda women.

Seasonal and occasional variation of Ganda clothings is also seen. During hot summer days, male folk normally wear small and light clothings like a short lengthed *dhoti* or napkin just covering the minimum of the lower part of their body, leaving the upper part bare except on certain days such as, ritual and festive days, market days, visit to towns or the relatives. On such occasions they put on a banion, a shirt or atleast a *chadar*. While working under the hot sun men tie a piece of clothing such as a small *chadar* napkin or towel around their head like a turban for relief. On festive occasions, the well-to-do families wear a little better type of clothes. But most of the Ganda families are poor and cannot afford to buy new clothes for these special occasions. As per the prevailing Ganda custom, new clothes should be worn on such festive days as birth rites, puberty rites, marriage ceremony, *Nuakhia*, *Sital*, *Sasthi*, *Karma Puja*, *Dussera*, *Mangala Puja*, *Pus Punej*, *Laxmi Puja*, *Shivaratri*, etc.

Most of the Ganda families lack winter clothings as these are costlier than ordinary clothings and thus beyond their buying capacities. In winter they cover themselves with a sheet of cloth usually an extra *dhoti*, saree or a *chadar*. The poor who cannot even afford this, sleep near the fire place. Now-a-days few well-to-do persons have started using sweaters, sleeveless woolen jackets, shawls and sometimes blankets made of wool or cotton.

No special clothing is used in rainy season. Some people have umbrellas available in the local market. A kind of indigenous umbrella made of bamboo sticks and palm leaves is also used by the Gandas during rainy days.

Footwear and head dress is almost absent among the Gandas excepting a few well-to-do people. Among those who wear footwear, majority use it occasionally and only a few, regularly.

The Ganda wash their own clothes by themselves. Being an untouchable caste they cannot avail the services of *Dhobi*, the traditional village washerman. They use caustic soda or soap for this purpose.

The Ganda women are fond of wearing ornaments. But poverty restricts them to use costly ornaments and also limit the varieties of ornaments used by them. Hence, in their day to day life Ganda women do not wear much ornaments. Only during social and religious ceremonies they adorn themselves with various kinds of ornaments. These ornaments are mostly of cheaper quality and made of the metals like silver, aluminium, brass or an alloy of silver and brass and other cheap materials. Gold ornaments being very costly are rarely seen, except in case of women belonging to well-to-do families. Now-a-days fashionable Ganda women have started using cheaper ornaments made of plastic, beads, glass etc. available in attractive colours and designs in the local markets or bought from the street hawkers.

Men do not use any kind of ornaments except a few who sometimes wear decorative rings on fingers, thin chains around the neck, massive pair of earrings on the earlobe called *Nola* and wristlets called *Bala*. These items are made of metals like silver, aluminium and in some cases gold. According to the Ganda social custom, the last two items i.e. *Bala* and *Nola* should be worn by married men in order to identify their marital status. But now poverty and modernisation have made this custom outdated.

Ganda women wear more than thirty kinds of ornaments for personal decoration. The most commonly used ornaments can be classified according to their place of use in different parts of human body. The classification and description of various kinds of ornaments are given in the following table (Table-4).

The ornaments detailed in Table-4 are the traditional varieties worn by married women. Most of these ornaments are presented to the bride by her parents, relatives and would-be-husband's family at the time of her marriage. Except a few well-to-do families, most Ganda women cannot afford all the varieties of ornaments and wear only minimum kinds available. Hence, in actual practice a married woman should at least wear bangles made of glass, brass, gold or silver and red coloured *Sankha* in her wrists. *Jiuntia*

thread around her neck in stead of necklace, ring or *Rangmudi* in her middle two fingers of left foot and right hand, armlets such as *Bahasuta* and *Bahatada* in her right and left upper arms respectively and black or red coloured *Antasuta* (waist band) around her waist as a sign of her marital status until her husband is alive. Widows have no rights to wear any kind of ornaments.

TABLE-4

Kind of ornaments used by Ganda Women

Parts of human body	Kinds of ornaments worn		Kind of material used	Remarks
	English equivalent term	Local term for different varieties		
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Head	Ornamental Hairpin	<i>Chaunti</i> or <i>Chauntimundi</i>	Silver	Adorns the knot of hairs at the back of the head.
		<i>Mundaphula</i> ..	Do.	
		<i>Gojikathi</i> ..	Do.	
		<i>Panapatra</i> ..	Do.	
Neck	Neck lace/Ornaments for the neck.	<i>Sankhimali</i> ..	Silver/Aluminium	Various other kinds of chains and necklaces also used.
		<i>Phodamali</i> ..	Ditto	
		<i>Khagla</i> ..	Silver	
		<i>Chudimali</i> ..	Silver/Aluminium/Brass.	
		<i>Jhunta</i> ..	Ditto	

Parts of human body	Kinds of ornaments worn		Kind of material used	Remarks
	English equivalent term	Local term for different varieties		
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
		<i>Jiuntia</i>	..	Threads of Black, Yellow, Red Green colour with knots. A ritualized thread worn by children and adults.
Ear	Earrings	<i>Phasia</i>	..	Gold/ Brass/ Silver.
		<i>Nola</i>	..	Ditto
		<i>Gonthia</i>	..	Ditto
		<i>Jhalaka</i>	..	Ditto
Nose	Ornaments for the nose.	<i>Nakdandi</i>	..	Gold/ Silver/ Brass.
		<i>Nakphutki</i>	..	Ditto
		<i>Nakchana</i>	..	Ditto
		<i>Nakphull</i>	..	Ditto

Parts of human body	Kinds of ornaments worn English equivalent term	Local term for different varieties	Kind of material used	Remarks	
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	
Wrist	Wristlets	<i>Kataria</i>	German, Silver (an alloy of silver copper and zinc.)	<i>Katria</i> and <i>Bandaria</i> are most commonly used by married women.	
		<i>Bandaria</i>	Ditto		
		<i>Kaluri</i>	Silver/ Brass/ sometimes Gold.	Ditto	
		<i>Mathi</i>	Ditto		
		<i>Kanklia</i>	Ditto		
		<i>Bala</i>	Ditto		
		Bangles	<i>Churi</i>	Glass/ plastic/ Brass/ sometimes Gold.	Must for married women as a sign of marital status of women whose husband is alive.
				<i>Sankha</i> (Red colour).	<i>Sankha</i> earth/ <i>Lakha</i> and other compounds.

Parts of human body	Kinds of ornaments worn		Kind of material used	Remarks
	English equivalent term	Local term for different varieties		
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Upper Arm	Armlet	<i>Bauti/Bahasuta.</i>	Silver ..	For right arm } must for married women For left arm }
		<i>Bahatada</i> ..	Do.	
Waist	Waistband	<i>Antasuta</i> ..	Black coloured thread sometimes fitted with decorative metallic designs.	Worn by married women.
		<i>Gunchi</i> ..	Silver/Aluminium.	
Heel and feet	Chains and ornaments for the feet	<i>Paunja/Painri</i>	Silver/Alloy of Silver & Brass.	Worn by married women.
Middle two finger of left foot	Finger rings or Mal	<i>Rangmudi</i> ..	Silver/Aluminium.	Ditto
Middle two finger of the right hand	Rings	<i>Mudi</i> ..	Gold/Silver Brass/Iron/alloy of various metals.	Worn by married women.

Besides these traditional varieties, Ganda women have also become fond of using cheap quality modern ornaments available from the local market or street hawkers. Some of the important and common uses are coloured bead necklaces, aluminium or plastic chains for the neck, ordinary and decorative hair band made of aluminium, rubber, plastic, iron and imitation gold.

The Ganda do not show much concern for personal decoration. Neither beauty nor cosmetic consciousness is marked among them. Male folk are more careless than female in this respect. Activities of man concerning personal beauty care and decoration is limited to massaging oil and combing hair after bath regularly and particularly during special occasions, such as while visiting towns, markets, fairs, festivals, marriage ceremonies, dances, friends and relatives, officials, etc. Some young men love to grow long hairs. Older generations used to keep *chuti* (pig tail) or a scalplock but the younger generation has abandoned this hair style.

Though Ganda women are more beauty conscious than the opposite sex, they mostly concentrate their attention upon routine hair dressing and facial make ups as compared to other parts of their body. They usually massage *tii* or mustard oil in the hair and adopt different kinds of traditional and modern hairstyle based on individual tastes and convenience. Their hair dressing is simple and exclusive in style. In most cases single women help themselves in hairstyle. Occasionally the assistance of friends, relatives or elderly ladies are also sought for the purpose.

The grown ups and the elderly ladies prefer to tuck up the hair to form a knob at the back while the younger women coil the plaited hair and fix hair pins. Sometimes younger girls are fond of using coloured ribbons to tie up their hair. The common hairstyle popular among many young ladies is done by parting hair in the middle and combing the two locks straight with little curling or plaiting and finally tucking one tuft into another and turning into a pear shaped knob or bulb inclined to the left at the back of the head. Dressed usually with unscented *tii* oil, the abundance of healthy black hair is a natural gift for Ganda women. It looks

glossy, attractive and is particularly elegant when the knot lies tangentially above their broad and wellformed shoulders. This exquisite hair knob, i.e., *khosa* is then decorated with a variety of hairpins and pegs namely, *Gojikathi*, *Chaunrimundi*, *Munda phula*, *Panapatra* and often with beautiful flowers. A *khosa* is allowed to stand for about three or four days at a stretch. The women folk usually attend to their hairstyle twice a week.

On socio-religious occasions, Ganda women take interest in the decoration of their bodies. They use a kind of red paint known as *Alta* to paint the edges and the upper part of the feet with floral and geometric designs. Nail polish is not popular among them. However, the younger generation is gradually developing fascination towards this. Application of vermilion mark in the centre of the forehead is not in vogue among Ganda married women like the women of upper castes. The Ganda girl puts a vermilion mark on her forehead on her wedding day only.

Ganda women use combs made of plastic or horn. A horn comb is a prized possession. Most of them use cheap plastic combs locally available. A decade ago many Ganda women were dressing their hair with wooden combs. Use of *Kajal* (a home-made collyrium) is popular among them as is the case with higher caste ladies. Some women possess mirrors or looking glasses while the rest manage hair dressing and facial make up without the aid of mirror.

Nature has endowed Ganda men and women with a tailormade body. They maintain it slim and trim by doing manual labour that involves muscular exercise. More often than not, starvation and disease ruins their beautiful physique.

The tradition of 'tattooing' was there among Ganda women till a decade ago. Now-a-days, being objected and discarded by the progressive ladies of younger generation this practice is becoming gradually outdated. However, still many elderly ladies are found with tattoo marks. Formerly, Ganda women were fond of tattooing various types of designs mostly floral or geometric on different parts of their body especially arms, legs, back of the palm, shoulders, upper part of the chest just below the neck, cheek,

chin, tips and wings of nose, forehead and upper part of the feet. Professional ladies called *'Kutni'*, belonging to their own caste or other lower castes who are expert in this art, render their services on payment of remuneration in cash or kinds. Few years back, tattooing was compulsory for married women as it indicated their marital status and therefore grownup girls, shortly before their wedding ceremony were being tattooed.

Use of cosmetics and beauty aids is rare among the Ganda. Male folk are not cosmetic-conscious. However small number of well-to-do educated young men of present generation who are fashionable, are acquainted with talcum powder, scented oil, toilet soap, cold cream, scents, etc. These items are most cherished among Ganda young women these days. But a few of them can really use cosmetics and the bulk of Ganda women rarely get *tii* oil for hair dressing at least twice a week. Their strugglesome living in perpetual poverty has taught them that any want other than bare minimum necessities is a dream of luxury let alone, the desire for cosmetics.

Food Habits

Rice is the staple food of the Ganda. It is considered to be the ideal food of the Ganda and is the largest single item in their daily meals. It is taken throughout the year in whatever quantity it is available. Boiled rice is either taken dry or soaked in cold water. Sometimes items of cooked vegetables, fish or meat are taken with rice, the variety and quantity of which depends on one's economic condition. Rice is so loved by the Ganda that they do not consider even a meat meal as delicious without sufficient rice.

The Gandas are generally poor and many Ganda families do not get two square meals a day. During the harvest period the Gandas manage to get their belly full with atleast two meals consisting of rice and other vegetables. During the period of scarcity they have to satisfy themselves with minimum quantity of rice, wheat, vegetables and other edibles available to them. In the event nothing is available and the rice gruel is the only favourite

substitute. Poor Ganda families usually take cooked rice as the principal meal and rice gruel is used as subsequent meals daily, for most part of the year.

The vegetables, fruits, roots, cereals, pulses, fish, meat etc. consumed by the Ganda are locally available. But only a few well-to-do Ganda families can afford to purchase them. More often than not, their income does not provide them minimum quantity of rice for the family. The households having open space around their houses usually have small kitchen gardens, with plants namely *Papaya*, red peper, guava, lemon, banana, brinjal, ladies fingers, pumpkin, cucumber and the like. The produces of kitchen garden sometimes supplement their diet and sometimes sold out to meet other expenses.

Fish, meat and eggs are great delicacies for the Ganda. On special occasions they enjoy non-vegetarian dishes. The eggs produced by the domesticated poultry birds are consumed raw or boiled with salt. Meat is either purchased for the family or enjoyed in the communal feasts on the occasion of marriage, death rites, *Nuakhia*, *Pus Punei* festivals. Till few years back, the Gandas were in the habit of taking beef. This accounted for their degraded social status as untouchables and the clean castes looked down upon them as unclean and impure. But presently, a consciousness for self respect and vertical mobility is gradually developing among the Gandas that has led them to give up beef-eating. The *Jati Sabha* (Traditional caste council) of the Ganda has strictly banned beef-eating against drastic punitive measures like ostracism and excommunication. Notwithstanding this, some people are very fond of beef and whenever they get opportunity, they take it stealthily.

Most of the Gandas are non-vegetarian and relish meat and fish whenever available. Meat is cooked in various ways. The common preparations are made by deep frying and cooking with oil, salt, water and spices as a curry or by roasting salt, oil and spices. Eggs and fowls are cooked in the similar manner. Fishes are either roasted, fried or cooked with water, oil, salt, chilly, onion, turmeric and other spices as a curry. Dried and salted fish locally called *Sukhua* is also taken by the Gandas.

The non-vegetarian dishes are costly and cannot be had every day. These items are enjoyed on special socio-religious occasions. It is a custom among the Ganda to entertain their guests with non-vegetarian dishes irrespective of their social and economic status. Vegetable preparations may be excluded but omission of non-vegetarian items in the meal is a disrespect to the guests. Since mutton or any other kind of meat is not available at the time of need, mostly domestic fowls are killed and cooked for the guests.

Meats of goats, ducks, sheeps, pigs and wild animals are also eaten by the Gandas. On religious and social festivals, goats, sheeps, fowls and pigs are ritually sacrificed or killed for consumption. Availability of fish varies from place to place. The Gandas living within forest areas occasionally get meats of wild animals like deer, wild boar, *Sambar* (*Cervusnicolor*) barring deer or *Kutra porcupine*, wild pig, wild fowl, etc. These animals are killed in course of watching cropped fields and occasional hunting in groups. The flesh of the animal killed by group hunting is shared among the members. If the quantity of meat is more than that is necessary for the day the surplus quantity is preserved by sun drying and stored in a basket, kept close to the hearth. The dried meat can be preserved for future consumption for a couple of months or more. Almost all the parts of an animal is eaten by the Ganda. Formerly the Gandas were taking the meat of dead animals. Now this abhorrent old practice is banned by their caste council as it tells upon their caste status.

The Gandas are not fond of taking milk or milk products. They usually sale milk in their localities. Now-a-days the progressive Gandas have become aware of the value of milk as a nutritious food and have started taking milk.

Diet Pattern

The diet pattern of the ganda is not systematic and standardised. It varies from household to household, from place to place and from time to time with socio-economic conditions, food habits and availability of food materials. In a feast a Ganda may consume more than a kilogram of rice but in his

house this amount of rice is cooked for three or four persons. An ordinary daily meal of the Ganda consists of cooked rice either dry or soaked with gruel along with water, salt, one or two items of cooked vegetables and often preparations made out of rice gruel and dal. Members of poor families mostly manage their meal with rice and rice gruel, supplemented by a small quantity of chilly, onion, salt and sometimes cooked vegetables. The vegetables and greens purchased and collected from kitchen garden and other sources are usually boiled with little turmeric, mustard, salt and chillies. Use of edible oils for frying and spices like ginger, garlic, cloves, cinamon, onion, etc. are rare and limited to the well-to-do families and also to certain special socio-religious occasions because these are costlier. Vegetables like beans, pumpkins, brinjal, ladies fingers, gourd, *papaya*, potato, green leaves, mushrooms and edible tubers are often cooked with pulses and rice gruel as curry items. Rice gruel is also added to the pulses cooked as *Dal*. Baked and fried food items prepared out of vegetables, cereals, pulses and non-vegetarian stuffs are also taken during festive and ceremonial occasions, feasts and at the time of entertaining family guests.

Groundnut oil is mainly used as a cooking medium as it is cheaper than the mustard and gingerly oil. In forest areas like Rairakhol the poor Ganda families use edible oils pressed from *Til*, *Mohua* or *Sal*. Vegetable ghee is bought from the market on special occasions for preparing good dishes of cakes, sweets, meat and fish. The Gandas of western Orissa are not habituated to the use of mustard oil which is the most common and popular cooking medium in the coastal Orissa. Use of spices as mentioned earlier is rare and limited not only due to the reasons of economy and habit but also because they consider spicy food harmful and hence practically avoided.

The common cooking fuel for the Ganda are *Chheni* (disc like cowdung cakes prepared by women and then sundried) straw, firewood, dry grasses, dry leaves, dried tree branches, weeds and bushes, generally gathered by women and children. Use of coal, kerosene or other cooking fuel is not seen among them.

The Ganda usually take food thrice daily. Many poor families satisfy themselves with one or two meals a day. Having more than three meals daily with the exception of children is rare. Children are given more to eat as they cannot stand hunger and starvation like adults. They usually take four or five times a day which includes their normal quota of food and small shares claimed from the meals of adult members such as their parents.

Meals are taken during morning, noon and evening hours as a matter of daily routine. The morning meal is usually taken between 7-30 A. M. to 9-30 A. M. People go to work and children go to school or play outside after finishing the morning meal and during busy agricultural seasons this is taken in the early hours of morning. The morning food usually consists of *Basi Pakhal* (watered rice prepared in the preceding evening) with chillies, salt, onions or condiments and sometimes *Sag* (boiled edible green leaves). The poor are content with a stomachful of *Basi Peja* (rice-gruel cooked a day before) or *Basi Torani*, which is the local name of the water allowed to stand over a quantity of cooked rice for atleast twelve hours and turning a little sour by the process of fermentation. Sometimes, rice gruel is mixed with *Pakhal* or *Basi Pakhal*, *Basi Peja* is also taken with salt, onion and chilly. Some People also take *Chuda* (purchased or chopped rice) and *Mudhi* (fried rice). Now-a-days the younger generation have gradually started taking 'tea'. It is often taken in the tea stalls at the local markets and hats. Some families also prepare tea at home. It is prepared either without or with little contents of milk and sugar. Ordinaly the Gandas like liquor tea prepared with a small amount of salt and taken with *Chuda* or *Mudhi* as a morning tiffin and sometimes as an evening drink especially during winter. The mid-day meal consists of an adequate quantity of freshly cooked rice with either *Dal*, *Bhaji* (vegetable fry) or vegetable curry. Chillies, tamarind, onion and salt are either taken separately or mixed with curry and condiments. The time of mid-day meal varies between 12 A. M. to 2-30 P. M.

The evening meal is almost same as the mid-day meal. It is taken between 7-30 P. M. to 8-30 P. M.

In between these meals, children are sometimes given *Mudhi*, *Chuda*, *Pakhal*, *Peja* or *Torani*, whenever they feel hungry. Addition of some more food items to the above menu is seen on special occasions. Especially during social and religious festivals, ceremonies and rituals, different kinds of cakes, namely *Arisa*, *Chakel*, *Bhaja Pitha*, *Podo Pitha*, rice porridge, etc. and non-vegetarian dishes are prepared for eating and distributing among friends, relatives and neighbours. These special dishes do not constitute the regular items of the Ganda diet.

During busy agricultural season, those who work in far off fields generally start for the field after finishing the morning meal little earlier than others and carry their mid-day meal with them. Sometimes, they return home earlier to take their lunch and sometimes their wives, sisters or small children carry lunches for them to their work sites.

No specific ritual is associated with food. But certain norms and etiquettes relating to kitchen and dining are followed. The kitchen is a sacred place for the Ganda as it is regarded as the seat of ancestral spirits and *Mahalaxmi*, the beloved goddess of Ganda who grants wealth and fortune. Without her blessings one suffers from acute poverty and misfortune and do not get food to eat. Hence, the purity and sanctity of the kitchen is maintained by observing certain norms and etiquettes. Anybody who is not a member of the family is never allowed to enter into the kitchen of Ganda household. Even menstruating women of the family are denied admission into the kitchen since, they are considered impure and their presence inside the kitchen pollutes the sanctity of the sacred place. Left over food materials of meals taken by family members are either thrown away or preserved somewhere inside the house but never kept inside the kitchen as it causes pollution. Before using the kitchen in the morning and after the kitchen work in the night the kitchen and hearth are cleaned properly. The hearth is cleaned regularly especially during morning hours before commencement of cooking by removing charcoal and ash and purified by plastering it with cowdung. At the end of each cooking session a small quantity of cooked food is thrown into the burning hearth as the first offering

to *Agni Deva* (the God of fire) who resides inside the hearth. Similarly many devout and orthodox Ganda offer a handful of food items to the supernaturals particularly *Mahalaxmi*, *Shiva*, ancestral spirits and evil spirits before taking meals.

Maintenance of cleanliness and purity of the kitchen is the responsibility of women. Women prepare and serve food and clean cooking pots and utensils. Water for miscellaneous domestic use such as washing hands and utensils before and after meals are always kept separately in earthen or metallic vessels outside the kitchen. Only the water required for cooking and drinking are kept inside the kitchen. Cooking is mostly done in earthen pots. These are purchased from the village potters. Some Ganda families possess utensils made of metals like aluminium and brass. Aluminium utensils are gradually gaining popularity among the Ganda because these are cheaper, durable and are not subjected to ritual pollution like earthen pots. Brass utensils are costly. Few well-to-do Ganda families possess brass utensils. Meals are served in brass or aluminium utensils. The Ganda sit down on the floor to take meal. They never sit down upon a mattress or *pidha* (a small rectangular block of wood used as a seat) while taking food. They consider food as a blessing of the goddess *Mahalaxmi* and sitting on a raised seat, and keeping the food on a lower level would cause disrespect to the goddess and displease her. Dining usually takes place on the verandah. After each meal, the utensils are immediately removed for washing and the dining floor is cleaned and purified by plastering with cowdung or often with lime. Women always take care to see that no leftover food or utensils after meal lie inside the house for longer period.

Another important and ideal tradition in respect of dining and serving food in the Ganda household is that one should wash his hands or legs properly before coming to take food and should eat everything served to him leaving nothing but clean the plates behind. Children, old members, sick persons and guests of the family should be served first with the best kind of food available and the head of the household and the housewife should always look to the comforts and satisfaction of the former.

The Gandas have no age or sex restrictions in preparing, handling, serving food or accepting food from a normal person. However, in practice children old and sick individuals, menstruating women, strangers, priests and persons under birth and death pollutions are not allowed to cook and serve food. Food is prepared and served by the women who are free from these pollutions.

The Gandas observe fasting on certain socio-religious occasions such as *Shivaratri*, *Sital Sasthi*, *Dussera*, *Nuakhia*, mortuary rites and in all *Samkranti* and *Amavasya* days. In addition to that women specifically, observe fasts on the festive days namely, *Pua jiuntia*, *Bha-ijiuntia*, *Laxmi Puja*, *Purnima*, *Shivaratri* and *Amavasya*, etc. Non-vegetarian food is tabooed for women in these occasions. The Gandas are the devotees of Lord *Shiva*. In order to propitiate him for his blessings they fast every Monday during morning hours and break fasting and take food only after visiting and worshipping the image of Lord *Shiva* in the village temples. Eating of non-vegetarian food is strictly forbidden for the Ganda men and women particularly on Mondays. *Shivaratri*, *Sital Sasthi* and in all *Amavasya* and *Samkranti* days. Certain food restrictions are also imposed upon pregnant and menstruating women, lactating mothers, old and sick persons, and during birth and death pollutions.

The Gandas are generally very poor and remain half-fed and half-starved for a considerable part of the year. Most often they depend on *Peja* (rice-gruel) or *Basi Torani* and *Sag* (edible green leaves). So the Ganda has imbalanced diet having higher content of carbohydrates, starch and fats, milk products, meat, fish, egg and pulses seldom constitute items of food for them. Though the intake of protein is somehow ensured in smaller quantities from the vegetables they take, the quantity of animal protein is inadequate. Moreover, there is marked absence of protective foods like vitamins and amino acids in their diet. Such an unsatisfactory dietary condition of the Ganda results in undernourishment and malnutrition which causes a number of chronic diseases

and physical deficiencies among the people. The dietary-pattern, disease and the mortality rate of the Ganda need further investigation.

Alcoholic Beverages and Narcotics

There is no social or moral restrictions against drinking in the Ganda community. Both men and women can drink but women do not drink as frequently as men do. Some men drink very often almost daily. It cannot be denied that drinking is one of the important causes of poverty as considerable part of the income is spent on liquor on certain festive days in order to celebrate and enjoy themselves.

Offering of liquor is a part of the social custom of the Ganda. The family guests are freely entertained with alcoholic drinks as a token of goodwill and respect. Liquor-offering enhances the social prestige of the host. This is an important practice during negotiation of marriage between the girl's and the boy's parties, wedding ceremonies and other life-cycle rituals and festive occasions. The traditional Panchayat while deciding the cases of disputes and offences, collects penalty from the concerned parties in forms of cash and/or feast with liquor. Often liquor is used to mitigate quarrels and conflicts. The Ganda believe that drinking together in company is a sign of intimacy and friendship. When two opposing parties drink together, they automatically become friends leaving behind their differences. Liquor is also offered to the Gods, deities, evil spirits and dead ancestors during certain rituals.

The Gandas usually take rice-beer and the liquor extracted from *Mohua* flower. The former is locally called *Kusna* and the latter *Mohul* or *Mohuli*. Besides, they also drink other kinds of country liquors available from the local liquor shops. Especially on weekly market days and ceremonial occasions, the Gandas have frequent liquor shops in their respective localities. They also brew rice-beer or *Mohua* liquor themselves in their own houses if necessary. Though *Kusna* is the most favourite beverage for the Gandas, they consider *Mohuli* as more intoxicating and delightful drink.

The Gandas more or less use certain kinds of narcotics. Tobacco is a popular narcotic among them. It is either chewed with lime or smoked as *Bidi* either self-made or purchased from the market. Use of *Bhanga* (hashish), *Ganja* (hemp), opium, snuff and *Gudakhu* is also noticed among the Gandas.

Health

The Gandas are endowed by nature with a well built physical constitution but not free from deficiencies and ailments. Factors like socio-economic backwardness, lack of education, ignorance, old social customs and beliefs, unhygienic practices, malnutrition and semistarvation cause physical suffering making their life worse. Sometimes, the unclean surrounding around Ganda living quarters become breeding ground for mosquitoes, flies and other harmful organisms and communicates diseases. Besides, the Gandas use polluted water from unprotected sources like tanks, canals, wells, perennial streams and rivers for their domestic consumption. Due to their unhygienic habits, the water of these sources gets contaminated and communicate various diseases.

The general condition of health and disease among the Gandas is not satisfactory. The common physical ailments of the Gandas are described in the following (Table-5) with their local names.

Besides diseases, the Gandas also suffer from certain physical deficiencies. These are noticeable among the children and women in form of anaemia caused by chronic malnutrition and under-nourishment. Due to lack of essential vitamins in the diet, defective eyesight is marked, particularly among the children.

The Gandas have their own reasons to account for their ailments. They believe that all sorts of physical sufferings befall upon human beings as a bad luck and punishment for irregular food and bathing habits; dishonest, immoral and sinful deeds.

Gandas attribute the root cause of diseases to the supernatural agencies. For instance, displeasure of the village deities and ancestral spirits can result in fever. Certain ailments are suspected to be effected by the *Nazar* (Evil Eye), witchcraft, black magic, ghosts and evil spirits, miscarriage, hysteria, anaemia, nausea and vomiting, menstrual and reproductive troubles in women; diarrhoea, fever, stomach and digestive troubles in children; paralysis, mental disorders, digestive and respiratory troubles, headache, tuberculosis, leprosy in men are believed to be caused by the displeasure of supernatural agencies.

For treating diseases the Gandas hardly take the help of the modern medicine and the physicians. The diseases believed to be caused by the supernatural agencies are first detected by observing certain physical symptoms of the victim through the help of the local priests, astrologers, witch doctors and magicians. Divination, rituals, offerings and sometimes animal sacrifices are performed to get immediate relief.

The Gandas suffering from physical ailments usually try to endure it till it subsides automatically or till it is within tolerable limits. When the suffering becomes acute, they seek relief from the traditional herbal medicines. The traditional practioner of indigenous medicines in the villages known as *Vaidya* or *Kabiraj* are relied upon by the Ganda. Many Ganda people still continue to believe that the treatment of *Vaidyas* and witch doctors are more effective than the modern medicine.

The Gandas are less dependent upon the modern medical facilities available in their localities. The facilities are inadequate and the Gandas desiring a quick recovery cannot wait to undergo the complete course of treatment for their diseases. They also neglect to take medicines regularly and hope to get a quick relief after one or two doses of medicines. Further they do not like the dietary restrictions imposed by the modern medicine. Modern medicine is costly for the Ganda family budget and not always accessible to them, who live far off from the urban centres.

TABLE-5

Common Diseases and Physical Ailments

Nature of ailments (1)	Name of the ailment (2)	Local Name (3)
Common	Malaria	<i>Pali jar</i>
	Filaria	<i>Bat jar</i>
	Cold	<i>Thanda Jar</i>
	Cough	<i>Kasha</i>
	Fever	<i>Jar</i>
	Headache	<i>Munda dukha</i>
	Stomach Trouble	<i>Pet dukha</i>
	Skin Diseases	<i>Kachhu, Kundia</i>
	Pneumonia	<i>Bad jar</i>
	Typhoid	<i>Hagar</i>
	Yaws	
	Piles	<i>Arsha</i>
	Influenza	<i>Tin dinia Jar</i>
	Colic Pains	<i>Petmara</i>
For Women	Amenorrhoea	<i>Jhar Jhar</i>
	Heavy menses	<i>Banchhur</i>
	Jaundice or	<i>Kamal</i>
	yellow fever	
	Rheumatism	<i>Bata</i>
Louses and Scabies	<i>Unkund</i>	
For Children	Cold and Cough	<i>Kasa jar</i>
	Diarrhoea	<i>Ajina Jhada</i>
	Measles	<i>Milmila</i>
	Chicken-pox	<i>Sinduri</i>
	Boils	<i>Bhatkhubri</i>

CHAPTER V

ECONOMIC LIFE

Economically, the Gandas are low caste weavers who weave coarse clothes to meet the local needs. They sell most of their woven products at the weekly markets and sometimes move from village to village to sell the clothes. Weaving was their primary occupation supplemented by agricultural wage and allied pursuits.

Now-a-days, the situation has changed to their disfavour. With the introduction of mill-made clothes of finer types in the locality the Ganda weavers lost the market for their coarse clothes and found it difficult to eke out their living. But the other weaving castes were not so much affected as the Ganda weavers were. The other weavers such as the Kustha and the Bhulia weave not only cotton clothes but also tassar clothes and are skilled in tie-and-dye designs which are widely known as Sambalpur tie-and-dye fabrics throughout the country and fetch a high price. Though the Ganda, Kustha and Bhulia weavers live side by side in the same village they do not encroach upon each other's caste prerogatives. One time the Barpali Village Service, an internationally staffed technical assistance project made sincere attempts to induce the Ganda weavers to adopt superior weaving skills and take to the weaving of tassar clothes. But the monopolistic nature of the caste guilds, entry into which is by birth, stood in the way. The Ganda resented to adopt anything other than their own traditional methods of weaving. In such a situation the Ganda had no alternative but to depend upon agricultural labour and daily wage. Thus the number of wage earners increased beyond what was required in the area. Moreover, natural calamities causing drought, flood and crop failure often made the situation worse, adversely affecting these poor landless agricultural labourers by creating a situation of crisis of non-availability of wage labour in the country side. As a result, many Ganda families left their homes and moved to urban and industrial centres in search of employment.

CHAPTER V

ECONOMIC LIFE

Economically, the Gandas are low caste weavers who weave coarse clothes to meet the local needs. They sell most of their woven products at the weekly markets and sometimes move from village to village to sell the clothes. Weaving was their primary occupation supplemented by agricultural wage and allied pursuits.

Now-a-days, the situation has changed to their disfavour. With the introduction of mill-made clothes of finer types in the locality the Ganda weavers lost the market for their coarse clothes and found it difficult to eke out their living. But the other weaving castes were not so much affected as the Ganda weavers were. The other weavers such as the Kustiha and the Bhulia weave not only cotton clothes but also tassar clothes and are skilled in tie-and-dye designs which are widely known as Sambalpur tie-and-dye fabrics throughout the country and fetch a high price. Though the Ganda, Kustiha and Bhulia weavers live side by side in the same village they do not encroach upon each other's caste prerogatives. One time the Barpali Village Service, an internationally staffed technical assistance project made sincere attempts to induce the Ganda weavers to adopt superior weaving skills and take to the weaving of tassar clothes. But the monopolistic nature of the caste guilds, entry into which is by birth, stood in the way. The Ganda resented to adopt anything other than their own traditional methods of weaving. In such a situation the Ganda had no alternative but to depend upon agricultural labour and daily wage. Thus the number of wage earners increased beyond what was required in the area. Moreover, natural calamities causing drought, flood and crop failure often made the situation worse, adversely affecting these poor landless agricultural labourers by creating a situation of crisis of non-availability of wage labour in the country side. As a result, many Ganda families left their homes and moved to urban and industrial centres in search of employment.

There they worked as unskilled labourers, rickshaw pullers, domestic servants, petty traders, and the like, and are known as *Saharia Ganda*.

History of Land Revenue and Land Tenure

The Ganda inhabited areas of Western Orissa, where the Gandas are found in large concentration was formerly under various ex-princely states and *Zamindaries*. During British administration, this tract was being administered as a part of Chhotnagpur till 1860. From 1860 to 1862 it came under the administrative control of the Orissa division of Bengal. At this time, Bengal Rent Act of 1859 was made applicable to this area. This act granted occupancy rights to *Rayats* of particular states and protected them against enhancement of their rents. In 1862, the area was again attached to the Central Provinces. The successive Land Revenue Act of 1881 and Tenancy Act of 1898 of the Central Provinces enforced subsequent to this date was made applicable to this area. These Acts are still governing the substantive and procedural laws relating to land revenue and tenancy in this area, even after independence.

This area was again transferred from the Central Provinces to the Orissa Division of Bengal Presidency in 1905. In 1912 after formation of a separate Bihar Orissa Province, this area was divided between Bihar and Orissa and the Central Provinces-the major part of the Ganda area lying within the territory of the former. The territory of Orissa was created a separate Province in 1936 and the Ganda inhabited territory comprising the districts of Sambalpur, Balangir, Kalahandi and Sundargarh came under the jurisdiction of Orissa.

In the former system of revenue administration, the Sambalpur district was divided into two categories of tracts namely the *Zamindaries* and the *Khalsa*. The *Zamindary* tracts were being administered by concerned *Zamindars* while the lands lying beyond the *Zamindary* and Reserved Forest territories and directly held from the Government were *Khalsa* land.

The *Zamindaries* were well defined estates held under the proprietorship of chiefs called *Zamindars* who were enjoying a princely or feudal status. There were sixteen *Zamindary Estates* in Sambalpur district covering a total area of 1,791 square miles. The origin of *Zamindary* system may be traced back to the ancient times when the tribal chiefs of Gonds and Binjhals have divided the territory among themselves. Historical evidence confirms that this system was in vogue prior to British Occupation.

At that time, *Zamindars* held their proprietary administrative rights over their estates on payment of a small tribute called *Tikoli* and on rendering military services to the then *Rajas* of princely States. During British administration, their proprietary rights were recognised and they continued to enjoy their tenures as before on payment of *Tikoli*. They were further empowered to enforce police administration in their estates in stead of rendering military services. The *Zamindars* appointed *Maufidars* and *Thekedars* who remained in charge of collecting revenues and other levies from the villages placed under their control.

There were various classes of official authorities for revenue administration namely *Gauntia*, *Malguzar*, *Bhogra-Bhogi*, *Malik-makbuza* recognised by the Government in the *Khalsa* area. The *Gauntia* were most powerful and influential village-headmen having proprietary rights over their respective villages. They were responsible for collection of rents from their villages and payment of revenue to the Government. The post of *Gauntia* in the villages carried great social prestige and they had become *de facto* rulers of their villages on payment of a very nominal rent and in return of certain services to the local rulers.

Besides, there were certain class of village servants or village service tenants who were granted rent free *jagiri* lands in lieu of their services to the community. They were *Jhakar* (village priest), *Ganda Choukidar* (village watchman), *Nariha* (water-carrier), *Negi* (clerk), *Kumbhar* (potter), *Lohar* (black-smith), *Bhandari* (barber), *Dhoba* (washerman). Of course, most of these *Jagiri* lands were under the occupation of *Jhakars* and *Ganda Choukidars* as long as they rendered their traditional services.

The above system of land tenure, revenue and administration has been abolished after independence by various Acts. The *Bhogra* lands held by the *Zamindars*, *Gauntias* and the *Jagiri* lands allotted to the village servants like Ganda *Choukidar* and *Jhakar* have been granted to them with occupancy rights on payment of normal rents.

A similar system of Land Tenure, Revenue and Administration prevailing in the district of Balangir prior to independence. The *Zamindar* and the *Gauntia* were the *de facto* administrators of land and collect revenue in their-respective territories. They had acquired their estates on lease as highest bidders on payment of *Nazarana* and *Tikoli* for a certain period of time. Their obligation was to collect rents from *Rayats* or tenants and pay the revenue to the ruler. Besides, they were making other customary payments to the ruler in various occasions, all of which was being levied on their tenants. For their services they were granted rent free *Bhogra* lands.

The *Rayats* or tenants had no clearcut occupancy rights over their land holdings, which was under the disposal of the *Gauntia* and the *Zamindars*, who can evict the *Rayats* from their land at their sweet will. For the purpose of fixing rents the *rayat* lands were grouped under certain categories according to their yield capacity such as *Karia* (cent per cent), *Bhagua* (fifty per cent) *Balita* or *Salati* (twenty five per cent), *Nalita* (12.5 per cent) and *Lita* (6.25 per cent). The *Rayats* in addition to payment of various kinds of rents and dues were also obliged to render *bethi-begari* (unpaid labour) to the *Gauntia*, *Zamindars*, Rulers and other officials as and when called for to do so.

In short, the administration of land and revenue in the pre-independence period were operating through the following important system of tenures under the proprietorship of various kinds of agents commissioned by the rulers.

1. *Zamindari* estates under *Zamindars*.
2. *Kharposhdar* estates under *Kharposhdars*.
3. *Umrahi* Tenures under *Umrahs*.
4. *Thekedari* Tenures under *Thekedars* and *Gauntias*.

5. *Gauntia* Tenures under the *Gauntias* (village chief).
6. *Garhtia* Tenures under the *Garhtias* (the village chief).
7. *Pattadar* and *Sub-Pattadar* Tenures
8. *Maufi* Tenures (for rent free *maufi* villages for certain families called *Maufidars* who rendered certain services to the Rulers and the community-kinds of *Maufi-Debottar*, *Brahmotar*, *Naukaran*, *Khorak-poshak*, *Babuan*, *Sindur Tika*, *Ardha Jama*, *Mrutahpanchak Dan*).
9. *Rayati* Holdings for different class of *Rayati* Tenants as given below:—
 - (a) Occupancy tenants
 - (b) Ordinary tenants
 - (c) Under tenants
 - (d) *Bhogra* tenants
 - (e) *Sikkim Rayats*
 - (f) *Thika* tenants
 - (g) *Maufi* tenants
 - (h) *Jagiri* Tenures for village Service tenants for the various village servants mentioned earlier.
 - (i) Other service tenants

Occupational pattern

A sample survey of 108 Ganda households comprising 234 working population (18-60 years age-group) in Barpali Block of Sambalpur district reveals the following occupational pattern.

Agricultural labour, weaving and cultivation are the three main occupations pursued by the bulk of Ganda population. Of the 234 working persons 171 persons are engaged in agricultural labour, 91 in weaving and 41 in cultivation. The general observation is that agricultural labour including cultivation has become the primary source of livelihood for the majority of the Gandas and the weaving which was formerly their primary occupation has been relegated to the position of secondary occupation.

Economic Pursuits

I. AGRICULTURE

The survey in the 108 Ganda households shows that, about one third of them i. e. 37 households possess land and the remaining two third i.e. 71 households are landless who primarily depend upon wage earning as agricultural labourers for their livelihood. Further, a majority of land owning households (31 out of 37) possess small and marginal land holdings—the size varying between less than 1 acre and 2 acres. The remaining six households possess land above 2.5 acres. The details are presented in the Table-7.

TABLE-7

Size of land Holding Possessed by the Surveyed Ganda Households.

No. of surveyed households.	No. of landless households	No. of land owning households	Distribution of land owning households according to the size of land holdings			
			Less than one acre	1 Ac. to 2.5 Acs.	2.5 Acs. to 5 Acs.	5 Acs. to 10 Acs.
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
108	71	37	15	16	4	2

Types of lands

Taking into account the factors like the location, soil type, fertility, yield, drainage, kinds of crops grown and irrigation facilities

the lands may be classified into several types. The characteristic features of each type of land are given in the Table—8

TABLE-8

Types of Cultivable Land and Major Crops grown

Sl. No.	Name of the principal category of land	Brief description	Sub-categories	Major crops cultivated
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
1	<i>Ata</i>	High and dry-land dependent on rainfall and moisture	<i>Ata Khari</i> <i>Ata Kharipani</i> <i>Ata Kharipani</i> <i>Dofossili</i> <i>Ata Pani</i> <i>Ata Mamuli</i>	<i>Moong</i> <i>Kolatha</i> <i>Arhar</i> <i>Groundnut</i> Potato Paddy
2	<i>Mal Malsaman</i>	Embanked land lying high on slopes.	<i>Mal Samana</i> <i>Mal Samanpani</i> <i>Mal Samanamamuli</i> <i>Malsaman Khari</i> <i>Pani</i> <i>Mal Tikira</i>	Paddy, <i>Masur</i> Paddy Gram Jute, Potato, <i>Til</i> , Wheat, Mustard, Chillies, Summer Vegetables.
3	<i>Berna</i>	A good variety of land lying along the surface drainage and embanked wet land.	<i>Berna Khari</i> <i>Berna Pani</i> <i>Bernakharipani</i> <i>Berna Mamuli</i>	Paddy <i>Chana</i> Mustard Pulses, <i>Dalua</i> Paddy
4	<i>Bahal</i>	The best variety of low lying wet land lying on the main surface drainage and embanked.	<i>Bahal Khari</i> <i>Bahal Kharipani</i> <i>Bahal Mamuli</i> <i>Bahal Jalachar</i>	Paddy Field pea Wheat <i>Chana</i>
5	<i>Bari</i>	A good variety of well manured fertile upland lying around the village site more often at the backyards of houses used as a kitchen garden.	<i>Bari Khari</i> <i>Bari Pani</i> <i>Bari Kharipani</i> <i>Bari Mamuli</i>	Jute Tobacco Red pepper Garlic, Onion Mustard, Wheat, Sugarcane, <i>Moong</i> , other pulses.
6	<i>Bercha</i>	Sugarcane land	<i>Bercha Khari</i> <i>Bercha Mamuli</i>	Sugarcane <i>Moong</i> , <i>Wheat</i>
7	<i>Bagicha</i>	Plots suitable for horticultural plantation of fruit bearing trees.	<i>Bercha Khari</i> <i>Bercha-Sadhar(n)</i>	Horticultural plantation, Lemon Plantation, papaya etc.

Apart from the above categories of land there are certain kind of plots called *Pan Baraj* in which *pan* (betel leaves) are grown. As would be seen from the table 8 the *Ata* and *Mal* are dry lands and the *Berna* and *Bahal* are wet lands. The *Bari*, *Bercha* and *Bagicha* are more fertile than *Ata* and *Mal* uplands because they are either close to the village site or lie in the backyard. Lands located in such place receive water mixed with manure drained from village street. For these reasons the sale value of the uplands is much less than that of the other categories of lands. In 1981 it was ascertained that an acre of *Ata* fetched a price which varied from Rs.4,000/- to Rs.5,000/-. But corresponding value of *Berna* and *Bahal* for the same unit of land was from Rs.12,000/- to Rs.15,000/-.

The *Ata* and *Mal* type of lands generally have coarse sandy soil which is dependent on rainfall and moisture. It is suitable for growing pulses and ground nuts, which are less dependent on moisture and rainfall. The term *Mal* means terraced slopes to arrest surface drainage and soil erosion. The *Berna* and *Bahal* are by far the best and the most fertile lands. These lands mostly comprise soft clay loam. The *Berna* means the land surrounding the bottom of depression while the term *Bahal* denotes the flat land at the bottom of depression or drainage line. Both the types of land due to their locational advantage receive good surface drainage, irrigation and manure and hence, are free from crop failure. The *Bahal* and *Berna* are the best wet lands most suitable for paddy cultivation.

Cropping Pattern

The principal crop grown by the Gandas is paddy. Besides, various kinds of pulses, cereals, oilseeds and vegetables are also cultivated by them according to the suitability of land and agro-climate conditions.

Paddy

Paddy is the staple crop of the Gandas. There are numerous local varieties of paddy cultivated in the area. For this reason there is a proverb "there are as many varieties of paddy as the

names of human beings but one less". Some important varieties of paddy and the types of land in which they are grown are listed in the Table—9

TABLE-9

Varieties of Paddy and Types of Land in which grown

Sl. No.	Types of land	Varieties of Paddy grown
1	<i>Ata</i>	<i>Ata Dhan</i> <i>Kuanriphuli, Shankar, Suria, Sitabhog, Dhobli, Palasphuli, Lakshmi, Kajal.</i>
2	<i>Mal</i>	<i>Mal Dhan</i> <i>Sankesari, S a n b e n t o, Tamdhia, Dahipudina, Badakusuma, Mal, Pathry, Biramoni, Banko, Kuliha, Kalasa, Harisankar, Bad Bunde, San Bunde.</i>
3	<i>Berna</i>	<i>Berna Dhan</i> <i>Raisiri, Bankoo, Suathanti, Dudhkhia, Baulkara, Tamdhia, Magdhi, Gurumatia, China, Jholi.</i>
4	<i>Bahal</i>	<i>Bahal Dhan</i> <i>Haldigundi, Tentulia, Handa, Matia, Batraj, Pathry, Rukminibhoge, Chinamal, Goindi, Rajgoindi, Sunapan, Krishna, Radhaballav, Ratanchuri, Suapakhia, Jilipragi, Kukudibija, Akuli, Magura.</i>

The cultivation of paddy starts before the month of June. The field is ploughed at least once and prepared for sowing before monsoon breaks. The seed is sown by broadcast. However, sometimes the method of transplantation is adopted. If the seeds are sown under dry conditions before the onset of rains it is called *Kardi* sowing. This kind of sowing is feasible in the low lying lands and sandy uplands. The land has to be deeply ploughed by repeated tilling for *Kardi* sowing. The crops ripen earlier by this kind of sowing. However, chances of success depend upon the rains.

The sowing of seeds when the soil is wet after one or two showers of rain is called *Batri*. It commences after the onset of rains and it is practised in *mal* lands.

The *Achara* and *Muka* kinds of sowing are applicable to *Bahal* and *Berna* lands thoroughly drenched by heavy rain.

Bihura means the operation of light ploughing of the paddy fields with standing paddy plants of 6' in height for the purpose of weeding and aerating the soil.

Weeding operation in paddy fields starts after the plants grow to a height of 4" to 6". It usually takes place in the month of July-August.

Ploughing is done prior to sowing in summer months after one or two occasional heavy showers of rain. Such types of paddy as *Kuliha*, *Kalasa*, *Harisankar*, *Bad-bunde* and *Sari-Burho* which are early ripeners are harvested in the month of October-November and thereafter the *Sarad* types of paddy which were late ripener are harvested by the month of November and December.

In the irrigated area the paddy lands are utilised for a second crop, i. e., the *Dalua* paddy. *Pusa*, *Arnapurna*, *Parjatak*, *Kulha*, *Kaling*, *Jaya*, *Padma*, *Taichung*, *Ratna*, *Jagannath* are the names of various kinds of *Dalua* paddy cultivated by the Ganda. These are improved and high-yielding varieties recently adopted by the Ganda.

Besides paddy other cereal crops like wheat, maize, *Jagi* and *suani* are also grown in small scale by the Ganda in the hilly areas of Balangir district.

Pulses

The Ganda grow different kinds of pulses namely, *Biri* (blackgram), *Moong* (green gram), *Kulthi*, *Khesari*, *Chana* and *Arhar*. Except *Biri* which is grown in *Khariff* season, other pulses are *rabi* crops. The land is ploughed two or three times and levelled with a leveller. Four rows are made in the amorphous soil and the manures are applied. Seeds are sown in these rows and then the land is ploughed to cover up the seeds and manure. *Biri* and *Kulthi* are sown in August and harvested in December. *Moong* is sown in September and ripens with *Biri* and *Kulthi*. *Arhar* is sown in June and harvested in February.

Oil seeds

The important oil seeds grown by the Ganda are the sesamum (*Til*), groundnut, castor and mustard. *Til* is the principal oil seed grown by them in large scale. It is usually cultivated in uplands and virgin soils. Groundnut is cultivated as a *Khariff* as well as a *rabi* crop. Castor is grown in small scale and mustard is grown as a *rabi* crop.

Sugarcane

Sugarcane is a major cash crop in the Ganda area, both in Sambalpur and Balangir districts. The *Bercha* fields lying along the river banks are extensively used for sugarcane cultivation. *Tandi*, *Bangla* and *Khari* are the important varieties of sugarcane grown in these areas. Particularly the *Khari* variety is most popular since it needs little irrigation and yields more juice that makes sugar of finer quality. Sugarcane is grown both as a *Khariff* and *rabi* crop. It is generally planted in March-April and harvested in December. Sugarcanes are pressed in bullock driven small cast iron mills either possessed or hired by the cultivators.

Fruits and Vegetables

Fruits and vegetables are grown by the Gandas in small scale in the well-manured irrigated uplands especially in *Bari*, *Bercha* and *Bagicha* type of lands. Some of the vegetables grown by the Gandas are brinjal, potato, cabbage, cauliflower, tomato, sweet potato, pumpkin, ladies finger, arum, onion, garlic and chilly. Potato is grown in winter after harvesting *Khariff* crops.

II. DOMESTICATION OF ANIMAL

The importance of animal husbandry as a gainful or income generating occupation has not yet been felt by the Ganda. However, many Ganda households have kept cattle, goat, sheep and poultry.

Among the 108 Ganda households surveyed, as many as 81 households possess livestock numbering 72 heads of cattle (43 oxen and 29 cows), 7 heads of buffaloes, 38 goats, 15 sheep and 84 poultry birds. The Ganda do not rear pigs because of the dirty habits of the animal and also it is believed that ancestral spirits get angry. Nevertheless, as per the Ganda custom a male pig is sacrificed and the flesh is consumed in a communal feast to appease the dead ancestors during mortuary rites.

In Ganda villages the traditional methods of agriculture are followed by one and all. One finds bullock drawn wooden ploughs and bullock carts are used invariably by the cultivators. In this system cattle and buffaloes as draught animals are naturally in great demand and therefore of great value. It implies that the efficiency in farming of a Ganda household hinges upon its capacity to maintain sturdy plough bullocks for tradition. Some Ganda cultivators use male buffaloes for ploughing but bullocks are their favourite animals for this purpose.

In the study area the general condition of the cattle is poor. The draught cattle are of poor quality. The shortage of good variety of draught animals is a serious handicap to efficient farming for average Ganda peasants, who face a great scarcity of plough bullocks particularly in ploughing seasons. Not all the Ganda cultivators possess bullocks for traction and plough bullocks of good quality are in short supply in the area and not available when needed. Under such circumstances such agricultural operations as ploughing, and levelling suffer a serious set back in busy agricultural seasons which affects ultimately the yield of the crops.

The cost of hiring a pair of bullocks for a day varies from Rs. 4 to Rs. 7. Most of the bullocks used in agriculture are of country variety. A good pair of bullocks costs above Rs. 1,200. These are purchased from local cattle fairs, cattle hats, cattle traders and sometimes from the neighbouring villages. The Gandas

can distinguish a good variety of cattle from a bad variety by certain physical traits. Apart from the commonly marked features like old age and poor health, the bullocks possessing the following traits are not purchased by the Ganda:—

1. The bullock having yellow teeth indicating old age.
2. The bullock having long tail indicating poor strength.
3. The bullock having knotted tail indicating that it may bring misfortune to its owner.
4. The bullock having legs striking against each other at the hoofs while walking.
5. The bullock having black colour, indicating idleness of the animal and misfortune to its owner.
6. The bullock having one curved horn and one straight horn indicating that it may attack and injure its owner and his family members.

Similarly the Gandas look for certain physical characteristics in cows, goats and buffaloes and only after a thorough examination they buy these animals.

The object of rearing cows is seldom for milk. It has been observed that the Ganda families having milch cows do not consume milk. In Barpali area of Sambalpur district the Ganda families were not using milk. Now-a-days they have come to know about the nutritious food value of cow's milk and have started using milk as a food. Still many families sell cow's milk to their neighbours and in the local markets for money. Cows are also given as a customary gift to daughters in marriages. The cows in their dry period are given to other willing persons for maintenance till they bear calf. The second party then uses the milk and keeps the calf for himself and returns the cow to its owner. In case the owner wants to sell away the cow the second party who maintained the cow has the right to have the calf and one third of the sale price of the cow or claim half of the total selling cost of the cow without having the calf. This establishes the custom that ownership and maintenance have equal shares of rights over an animal.

Goats, sheep and poultry birds of local variety are reared by the Ganda for various purposes. They are mainly used as sacrificial animals and are also sold to their neighbours and local traders for cash income. Goat's milk and eggs of poultry birds are consumed as a food and rarely sold.

The cattle and other livestock are of poor quality and of small size. The people do not take proper care of the animals and have no means to give them good food. Moreover they lack the knowledge about improved animal husbandry. The area is almost barren and grass lands are conspicuous by their absence. Naturally the cattle do not get green fodder any time in their life time. After harvest the cattle are let loose to graze the stumps of paddy straw left in the paddy fields. Sometimes stall feeding with chaff of paddy improves their condition and it is confined only to the time of harvesting and threshing of paddy. In many cases old and useless cattle are sold out to the butchers who periodically visit the Ganda villages to buy such cattle.

As compared to other animals the draught bullocks are properly maintained and given better care. Some people in the village have taken up the occupation of taking the cattle of different households for grazing in herds from morning to evening. They are called *Gaizaga* (the person who watches the herds of cattle). For these services, a *Gaizaga* is paid Rs. 2/- to Rs. 3/- per month per animal.

The animals are usually kept in a separate shed called *Gubhal* where they are tethered at night when they return home in the evening after grazing and from the day's toil in the field in the case of plough bullocks. The cow-shed is always built at the back or by the side of the house and never in front of it, lest the animals might stamp upon small children.

There is a common belief among the Gandas that if a cow treads upon a child and a swelling occurs, the cow should be brought before the child and made to smell the place of swelling which will heal up.

The common animal diseases in the area are anthrax, haemorrhagic, rinderpest, foot and mouth diseases, septicaemia, etc. The Ganda generally resort to their traditional herbal and magical cures for these diseases. However, sometimes they seek treatment from local veterinary dispensaries.

In general, the attitude of the Gandas towards their cattle varies from an intense affection to a ritualistic veneration. They worship their cattle during *Rakhi Putnima*. They used to eat beef in the past which they have given up altogether in course of time. Now-a-days, killing a cow or a bullock for beef is condemned as a grave social offence and an unpardonable sin.

III. WEAVING

The Gandas regard weaving as their traditional and hereditary occupation. They weave cheap and coarse clothes and therefore known as "Weavers of coarse clothes", in difference literatures. Sometimes they visit different villages to sell their woven products. But the common practice is to sit at the weekly market with the clothes displayed to the public for sale. The Gandas are considered a Scheduled Caste artisans as weaving is taken to be a craft in spite of the fact that the bulk of the Ganda population has switched over to agriculture, agricultural labour and such other manual works as brick making and masonry. The survey in the study area shows that out of 395 working persons as many as 272 persons are engaged in agriculture and as agricultural labourers and only 79 persons in weaving as their primary occupation.

One point is required to be focussed at this place. Caste in India is one way of organizing production. Entry into caste-guilds is most frequent by birth and therefore the caste occupations are atleast ideally monopolistic in theory. But agriculture, or agricultural labour is something which can freely be taken up by one and all without any caste restrictions.

At one time particularly in pre-British period, the economic organization of caste was viable at the rural level and the rules regulating caste inhibited any exchange or encroachment upon each other's caste occupations. But after the establishment of

British rule, a set of new conditions arose in which many artisans and traders were badly hit by the introduction of manufactured goods and fabrics from external markets. The Ganda is one of such communities which failed to compete with the modern trade and commerce and the finer products it introduced in the rural areas. Finding no other alternative they were forced to take up agriculture, a safety valve allowing entry of all people irrespective of caste and community.

In this sense, agriculture as an economic pursuit cannot be given either a higher position or a lower position in the occupational hierarchy. In the present context, agriculture as an occupation is obviously not superior to weaving. Had it been so, the Gandas who have replaced their caste occupation of weaving with agriculture should have gone up in their social status and no longer treated as untouchables. But in fact this has not been taken place. In other words, with the change in occupation the Gandas who have come much closer to the clean castes of peasant communities atleast in the sense of similar occupations which peasant castes practise, have however, not been given the same status which the clean castes enjoy in the society. The Gandas are found today where they were in the *Varna* system inspite of change in occupation from weaving to agriculture.

In the Ganda area there were seven traditional weaver castes namely Bhulia, Kustha, Dhera, Patra, Rangani, Kuli and Ganda. Their caste surnames are given below.*

Caste	Surname
Bhulia	.. Meher
Kustha	.. Meher
Rangani	.. Meher
Kuli	.. Meher
Dhera	.. Dhera
Patra	.. Patra & many other surnames
Ganda	.. Numerous surnames

* Adibesi, Vol. XIV, No. 1, 1972-73—Status of the Kuli Caste in the districts of Balangir and Sambalpur—Research Report of the Tribal Research Bureau, Orissa by K. M. Mohapatra—pp.—28-29.

It is evident from the above, that four castes namely Bhulia, Kustha, Kuli and Rangani have the same surnames - "Meher". It is indicative of close affinities among these castes in the past though now they constitute separate and endogamous caste groups. Similarly, the Ganda and Pano though have different surnames have matrimonial alliances among themselves and bear close racial and cultural affinities.

These castes specialise in weaving different kinds of clothes by tradition. This differentiation in their respective traditional fields of specialisation among them. Bhulia, Kustha, Rangani, Dhera and Patra weave fabrics of superior quality. The Bhulia specialises in weaving finer and attractive cotton fabrics. The Kustha specialise in producing a type of hand spun silk clothing called *Matha* while the Rangani and Patra specialise in making *Peta* kind of silk saree different from that of *Matha*. But now due to the shortage of raw materials i.e. the tussar cocoons, the Kustha, Patra and Rangani are forced to weave finer cotton fabrics like the Bhulia does. The varieties of handloom clothes produced by these five weaver castes namely, Bhulia, Kustha, Dhera, Rangani and Patra are of very good quality, beautiful and attractive in colours, designs and patterns as well as durable. These are always popular and in good demand not only in the local markets of Western Orissa, but also in the neighbouring areas and therefore sold in a high price. These famous handloom fabrics are least affected by the competition of mill-made clothes in the local markets. Hence, for these five classes of weavers, weaving still remains a flourishing and profitable trade enhancing their socio-economic status.

The Ganda and Kuli weavers make coarse varieties of cotton clothes generally comprising four items such as sarees, *gamucha* (napkins), *Chadar* (sheets), and *Dhoti* (loin clothes). These are worst affected by the competition of mill-made clothes which are comparatively of lighter and finer texture, attractive colours and designs as well as cheaper.

The Ganda weave coarse clothes made out of 16 or 20 count yarn. These yarns are generally purchased from the local markets. Coloured yarns are either purchased or white yarns are dyed by the weavers themselves.

Weaving constitutes a number of successive phases. The yarn is first soaked in water and dried in shade. It is locally called *Tan Kata*. Wrapping is done outside the house as it requires enough open space. During this process the yarn is stretched along its length through *Pania* (comb) in the open space and four knots are tied along the breadth. This act is called *Parmani*. The wrapped yarns are pulped by applying *thir* (rice gruel) with help of a brush. This process is called '*Paien*'. After this, denting and leasing of the yarn (locally known as *Mairi Bandha*) is done. Then the wrapped yarn are drafted and taken to the weaving shed in order to be fed into the loom for weaving.

In the mean time the yarn for the weft (i. e. the yarn woven along the breadth of the cloth in the loom) is wound around the pins and kept ready for weaving. The weaving shed where the handloom apparatus (*Tanta*) is installed does not require much place as the wrapped yarns are wound around a wooden roller and the required length is only released by rotating the roller.

Weaving is a household industry. The activities relating to weaving cannot be done by a single person. The work involves co-operation of the members of the household. The major part of the work is done by the men. Women and children of the household help men in wrapping, boiling, pulping and for winding the yarn in the pin. The main work of weaving by operating the loom is exclusively one by men. There is no taboo for women to weave but it is decidedly an inconvenient work for them. Sometimes grown-up male children are allowed to handle the shuttle for weaving. A survey of 28 Ganda weaver households shows that none of these weavers have received any training in improved weaving techniques, and that all of them have acquired the skill by observation and participation in their family weaving activities. Parents and relatives in the weaver families play a vital role in teaching the craft of weaving to their children.

The Ganda weavers use indigenous and locally made appliances for weaving. The looms are fly-shuttle type locally called *Khat-Khati Tanta*. It costs between Rs. 200 and Rs. 300 in the local markets of Bargarh, Barpali, Remunda, Balangic Mendugalli, Binka, Sonepur and Titilagarh. The loom is installed in an open shed

or inside a spacious room of the household. In the sample survey of 106 Ganda households in the Barpali area it was found that there were 28 weaver households and all of them possessed *Khat-Khat* type of handlooms of their own. Out of the 28 looms, 21 looms were set in open sheds and the remaining (seven) looms inside the house.

The Ganda weavers observe certain rituals for prosperity of their trade. The loom is ritually worshipped on festive occasions like *Rakhi Purnima* and *Dussera*. A *Rakhi* is tied around the loom in *Rakhi Purnima*. The loom, its shed and surroundings are cleaned and the floor is plastered with cowdung for ritual purification and all the activities relating to weaving and operation of the loom are suspended on these festive days.

Except in these festive days, the looms are generally engaged throughout the year. However, during busy agricultural seasons the land owning households suspend weaving, temporarily for some days in order to attend to more pressing agricultural activities. The study reveals that under ideal conditions where the economic factors concerning labour, capital, raw material and market are favourable, a Ganda weaver can produce in a month twenty standard pieces of cloth. But this target is never reached on account of difficulties in getting capital, and raw materials. Marketing is another problem and for this reason many Ganda weavers prefer agriculture and daily wage which ensures immediate return to weaving which they feel is no longer a paying concern. Under these circumstances a fulltime Ganda weaver generally turns out 10 to 12 pieces of standard size clothes per month and in the case of a part time weaver the monthly average production is limited to 2 to 4 pieces of clothes.

A saree of standard size and of coarse variety as produced by the Ganda weavers sells at a price varying between Rs. 60 and Rs. 80 as per current market rates. Excluding the cost of raw material, labour and other items of expenditure for production, a Ganda weaver makes a profit of Rs. 7 to Rs. 23 by selling a saree in the local market. Thus a fulltime Ganda weaver generally earns between Rs. 200 and Rs. 350 per month by producing 12 to 15 pieces of clothes.

It all depends upon the demand in the market for his finished product and at what rate he gets required raw materials and also upon how best he fares in the bargain while selling the goods.

The major problem of the Ganda weavers are related to the four important and indispensable requirements of the industry, i.e. money (capital), materials (raw materials), market and modernization. Most of the Ganda weavers purchase yarn from the local traders who generally belong to the Marwari community. They also sell their finished products to the Marwari wholesale traders. In both the process of transaction the innocent Ganda artisans are exploited. As a result they get a very nominal and marginal profit in spite of their hard labour. Now many Weavers Co-operative Societies are functioning in their area with the objective of protecting the interests of the poor weavers. But the situation of membership of the Ganda weavers in the local Co-operative Societies is not very encouraging. In a sample survey of 28 Ganda weaver households in the Barpali area, it was gathered that, only five weaver households have enrolled themselves as the members of the local co-operative society while the remaining households operate on their own.

The low rate of membership of the Ganda weavers in the local co-operative societies may be attributed to their ignorance, backwardness, low level of literacy and socio-economic discrimination as an untouchable caste. Over and above the Ganda weavers of Barpali area complain that the procedure and the operational aspect of local co-operative society do not encourage them to become members in the society. Even the five Ganda weavers who are the members of local co-operative society are not happy about their membership and feel that their interests are not protected in the co-operative set up.

IV. MANUAL LABOUR

A large section of the Ganda population eke out a living by engaging themselves in different kinds of manual labour. Following the decline of their traditional occupation of weaving, a sizeable bulk of the Ganda population who are mostly landless, poor, unskilled and resourceless, have resorted to hard manual labour both in farm and non-farm activities in order to keep their body and soul together.

Agricultural labour

The most common and the largest single occupation of the Ganda is agricultural labour. The survey shows that out of a total of 234 working persons 107 persons have taken up this occupation as their primary occupation and the remaining 127 as their secondary occupation.

There are two classes of agricultural labourers found in the Ganda area such as casual or daily labourers, locally called *Bhutia* and contractual labourer known as *Guti* or *Halia*. The contractual labourers appointed by the prosperous and well-to-do land owners remain attached to their landlord's house for a specific period of time as per the terms and conditions of the contract. Their wages or remunerations which are determined by the local conditions vary from place to place. The contractual labourers according to their respective conditions of employment may be distinguished into three sub-classes locally known as (1) *Guti* or *Halia*, (2) *Kuthia* and (3) *Khamari*.

The *Guti* or *Halia* is appointed by the land owner on the basis of annual contract. He may serve as a domestic servant, agricultural servant or take up any other work as assigned by his employer. His services are hired for the whole year. However, in actual practice he works for eleven months in a year and is made free for one month. The *Guti* is generally appointed between the end of the agricultural year and the beginning of the following agricultural year between January and March. He merely carries out the directions of the land owner and exercises no power of control or supervision or take any kind of decisions connected with agricultural operations.

The wages and remunerations of the *Guti* varies from place to place. It is a general practice that in order to appoint a *Guti*, the employer advances some money to the *Guti* as earnest money, which the latter is to pay back to his employer without interest at the termination of his service contract. Until the advance is paid back fully and in case he violates this contract the advance money is realised from him with interest charged at the rate of 50% per annum. This contractual payment in advance of earnest money to the *Guti*

is locally called *Bahabandha* and it has the effect of forcing the *Guti* to render his services unbroken throughout the contractual period. In the sample of Ganda households covered in the survey, there was one male *Guti* who was working for a *Kuta* family.

In the pre-independence period the *Guti* in Sambalpur was usually paid monthly wages at the rate of 56 *seers* of paddy plus an annual harvest bonus of 3 *purugs* ($1\frac{1}{2}$ mounds) of paddy at the time of harvest and four pieces of cloth on festive occasions in a year. During hot summer months the *Guti* was getting a piece of cloth to protect his head from the Sun. At the time of crisis and need i.e. on occasion of death, birth and marriage, etc. the *Guti* was advanced interest free loan by his employer which was realised from his harvest bonus. Besides, for each *maden* (harvesting of paddy) operation the *Guti* had to work day and night in alternative shifts and received a bonus of about 30—35 *seers* of paddy. These allowances are called *Pol* and *Liakhia* respectively.

In the Rairakhol area, the *Guti* besides getting prescribed monthly wages in kinds of paddy was rewarded with 8 to 10 mounds of paddy as *Nistar* or *Bartan* (harvest bonus) and three pieces of cloth annually. During thirties, the wages of the *Guti* was enhanced. Alongwith supplementary allowances like *Pol* and *Liakhia* for *maden* operations and four pieces of cloths per annum, his monthly wages included 60—62 *seers* of paddy. An old experienced and faithful *Guti* was also enjoying certain additional privileges. Sometimes, his master used to allot him one or two plots of arable land upto an acre for self cultivation in lieu of the harvest bonus, which enhanced the income of the *Guti* and often enables him to purchase and possess small plots of farm lands.

In Balangir, the average wage rates for a *Guti* or *Halia* prior to independence was in kind of 3 to 4 *Khandi* ($1\frac{1}{2}$ - 2 mounds) of paddy per mensem alongwith the harvest bonus of 3 to 5 Kg. of paddy, for each operation, 2 to 3 pieces of clothes and other supplementary allowances. The *Guti* was also entitled to get a small share of sugarcane, pulses and oilseeds harvested by the landlords. In the present time the wages and service conditions of the *Guti* or *Halia* have been revised and improved. His monthly wage is now about 4 to 5

khandl (2-2½ mounds) of paddy, harvest bonus or *Bartan* is 30 to 40 Kg. of paddy and three to four pieces of cloth, alongwith other allowances. On the closing day of the harvest operation the *Guti* gets some grains from the threshing floor which is known as *Kulapari* or *Bharmuthi*.

The *Guti* works full time for his employer. He works for 8 hours in a day in two shifts i.e. from 7 A. M. to 12 A. M. in the morning and from 3 P. M. to 6 P. M. in the afternoon. During busy seasons he has to work in single long shifts or in short alternative shifts day and night. The relationship between the *Guti* and his employer is not that of a serf and master but both social and economic as well as personal in character. A faithful *Guti* enjoys paternalistic patronage and protection of his master. There are instances of *Gutis* treated like sons by their masters and the poor, landless, unmarried *Gutis* made to get married and be settled with land, house and family by their benevolent masters.

A skilful, faithful and experienced *Guti* is designated as '*Khamari*' who acts as the head or foreman of all other *Gutis* and other kinds of labourers engaged by the land lord. A *Khamari* is thus a superior class of *Guti* enjoying the confidence of his employer by virtue of his loyalty and dedicated service. He, more or less, acts as the manager and executor of the works assigned by his employer and sometimes is empowered to decide the course of action himself. Hence, he enjoys additional privileges in respect of wages, and allowances as compared with the ordinary *Gutis* or *Halias*. During our field work, we came across two old Ganda persons who were formerly working as *Khamaris*. One of them, for his continuous services was given half an acre of arable land at a very nominal price by his former master.

The *Kuthia* is an inferior class of *Guti* engaged for a year either to work as an apprentice *Guti* or for grazing and taking care of the cattle and other livestock owned by the master. Sometimes he assists other *Gutis* in agricultural and domestic works. Generally young or adolescent boys, less efficient adult persons and old men who are not capable of doing hardwork like ploughing, are appointed as *Kuthia*.

Hence, his wages and allowances are usually 25 to 40 per cent less than those of a *Guti*. This differs from place to place and is determined by the local traditions. Payment of wages to a *Kuthia* is decided by negotiation and fixed according to the working potentiality of the candidate. He is usually paid 35 to 50 seers of paddy per month, besides, three pieces of cloth, some amount of paddy as harvest bonus and other additional allowances. In Bargari, Barpali and Rairakhol area, young, unmarried boys are generally preferred for this work who are accommodated in the house of the employer and provided with food and clothing. At the end of the year they are given some paddy during harvest, the amount varying from 5 to 7 mounds. In the sample households which were surveyed there were three *Kuthias*: two of them were adolescent boys aged 14 and 16 respectively and third one an old man of 56 years of age.

A daily or casual labourer who is usually engaged on daily wage basis is called a *Bhutia* or *Mulia*. Unlike the *Guti* he is not bound by any contract or obligation to his employer except for the day he works for wage. He is also not bound to turn up for work everyday. In other words a *Mulia* or *Bhutia* operates independently. Large number of Ganda workers are engaged as *Mulia* in the rural areas. The survey indicates that 173 persons out of a total of 234 working Ganda population, support themselves by wage labour which provides subsistence to a large majority of Ganda population.

The *Bhutias* work either in single or double shifts as per the requirements of their employers. During busy agricultural seasons when the operations like ploughing, transplantation, weeding, and harvesting of crops take place, there is great demand for casual agricultural labourers and higher wages are paid by the land owners to attract them. At this time a male labourer usually gets a daily wage of Rs. 7 to 8 or six to seven seers of paddy and a female labourer gets Rs. 5 to Rs. 5.50. In the case of children, the daily wage is Rs. 3.50 to Rs. 4. In the lean seasons the daily wage for male, female and children workers are Rs. 5 to Rs. 6, Rs. 4 to Rs. 5 and Rs. 3 respectively.

V. NON-FARM ACTIVITIES

Other than the economic activities related to agriculture and weaving, the Ganda also resort to various other pursuits involving unskilled and semi-skilled labour. However, there is no distinct division between the workers with respect to various occupations. The situation of employment in the rural area is flexible and insecure. This leads to occupational mobility of the workers. The weavers, cultivators sometimes take up wage earning through agricultural and non-agricultural labour. In the slack seasons when the Gandas do not find work in agricultural sector, they try to seek employment in non-agricultural sector. They may work under local contractors in construction and maintenance of roads, buildings, bridges, dams and canals in forest and soil conservation operations or may engage themselves in earthwork either inside or outside their villages. Some Ganda workers also engage themselves in semi-skilled works such as brick-making, tile-making, mining and quarrying, transport and carriage, masonry, carpentry, mat-making and small business.

In the sample Ganda house holds, there are only 22 persons engaged in non-farm activities. Ten persons are engaged in brick-making. They work under local contractors on the basis of contractual wages, particularly in summer and winter. During rainy season four of them work in their own lands which they cultivate by their own endeavour and the remaining six persons work as casual agricultural labourers (mulia) to earn wage.

Six persons have taken up different private and public services. There is one postal peon who works in the village post office, one home guard, one forest guard who works outside the village and one watchman-cum-peon in the village Grampanchayat office. Among the remaining two there is one educated youth who is a matriculate and employed as a clerk in a Government office outside the village. The seventh person is a resourceful and enterprising youth. He is a skilled weaver who works as a part time weaving instructor and receives allowances from the Industry Department. He is also a dynamic cultivator who owns a small piece of land of 3.5 acres and cultivates it manually. Besides, he also works as a Community Health Worker in his own village.

There are two rickshaw pullers who own rickshaws through bank loan and operate in their locality, a cycle repair mechanic, a mason, a small businessman and a beggar. The cycle mechanic has learnt his trade by working as an assistant to another mechanic for two years in the adjacent growth centre at Barpali. Now he has set up his own workshop with necessary tools and takes up cycle repairing to earn his livelihood. Due to lack of funds, he does not have a shed and better tools to work more efficiently. The mason manages to find some work either in his own village or outside it in addition to normal agricultural work in his own land. The small trader carries on business of coarse clothes which he buys from the Ganda Weavers and sells in the local weekly markets.

VI. MISCELLANEOUS PERSUITS

In addition to weaving and agricultural activities the Gandas are found doing various other works to supplement their income. Those living near the forest areas collect fruits, roots, leaves, tubers, fire wood and other minor forest produces both for own consumption and also for sale. Those living in the Rairakhol forest area engage themselves in forest labour on a seasonal and part-time basis. On festive occasions like—*Nuakhia*, *Karma Puja* and *Pus Punei* they go out for hunting small games which is their pastime.

Fishing during rainy season is an important part-time and pastime activity in which all people irrespective of age and sex take part. They are fond of catching fish from the nearby tanks, ponds, streams, rivers and canals. Paddy fields are another source from which they also catch fish. Various types of traps namely, *Dhaer* and *Cheuria* and small nets, angling rods and wires are used for catching fish.

In some villages the Ganda boys have formed band parties to play music on hire at the time of ceremonial occasions like birth, marriage, karmapuja etc. and earn quite a handsome income from this. The musicians play on drums namely, *timki*, *Nisan*, *tisa*, *dhol* and also on pipes and flutes. They get paid both in kind in the form of paddy, cloth, food and in cash the amount varying

from place to place according to the local conditions. The village watchman in the earlier dispensation used to come invariably from the Ganda caste. But the Ganda today no longer want to take up the service of watchman as they consider it a work of inferior status and low prestige.

Among other subsidiary activities the midwifery in which some old Ganda women are expert is noteworthy. The Ganda midwife is known as *pilati* and her help is sought at the time of child birth in every house irrespective of caste. She is given food, cloth and some cash for her service and during post-natal period her advice is sought for the well being of the mother and the child.

One of the traditional jobs of the Ganda was to convey message from person to person or village to village. In the past, the village headman used to have with him a village messenger who invariably belonged to the Ganda caste. His duty was to summon people to the public meetings, convened by the headman and convey the people any information pertaining to the village. In some places the traditional Ganda *Choukidar* performed this job in addition to his normal duties.

Occupation- Mobility

The occupational mobility among the Ganda is limited within the scope of the rural economy. Due to their low socio-economic status, poverty, illiteracy, ignorance and social discrimination the Ganda are not properly equipped to take up modern economic pursuits corresponding to the change in the time and circumstances. Hence, they have no other alternative but to follow what their forefathers were doing. In the study area considerable conservatism is marked in the matter of adopting some new occupations. As evident from the occupational pattern and activities discussed earlier, traditional occupations like agriculture, wage-earning and weaving still continues to be their major economic activities

although such activities are not profitable. The Gandas hold the view that a change in the occupation involve risk as well as strain in course of getting used to new kind of activity. Achievement motivation which is the gateway to the adoption of occupational innovation is almost conspicuous by its absence in the Ganda society. As a result, a very small percentage of the Ganda population have changed from their ancestral occupations to such occupations as masonry, rickshaw pulling cycle repairing, brick-making etc. However, our observations made in other places show that caste barriers standing in the way of economic reforms are slowly breaking down with the spread of education and new opportunities.

General Situation of Wage and Employment

The general situation of wage and employment for the Ganda in the rural area is not satisfactory. Majority of the Ganda due to their socio-economic backwardness and limited scope of economic enterprises toil hard to manage a hand-to-mouth subsistence. Conservatism in the matter of choice and change of occupation and larger dependence upon the fewer traditional occupations contribute to the cause of their poverty, under-employment and deprivation. Weaving of coarse handloom fabrics, their traditional craft is no longer remunerative and dependable because there is a decline in demand for such clothes in the locality where much cheaper, finer and attractive mill-made clothes have already penetrated. The canal water flowing from the Hirakud Hydro-Electric Dam Project for irrigation purposes has been of very limited use to the Gandas because of their landlessness in most cases and marginal or small holding in few cases. It was expected that with the availability of water for irrigation purposes the farming of the large land owners would be modernised and the agriculture would no longer remain as seasonal as before and in such a situation the Ganda would be fully employed throughout the year as agricultural labourers and would no longer feel insecure or uncertain in getting work for wage. But in reality the conservatism that exists in the local peasant community continues to hold away and as a result their farming activities remain as traditional.

as ever before and the condition of the Ganda shows no change. The Table-10 gives an idea about the income of the Gandas from various vocations.

TABLE-10

Income of the Ganda from various Economic Activities

Total No. of surveyed population	No. of workers	Kind of activities (Occupations)	Total No. of workers engaged	Average per capita Mandays engagement per year	Average per capita income (in Rs.)
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
408	234	1. Rickshaw pulling	1	286	Rs. 3,210'00
		2. Services ..	7	254	Rs. 2,850'00
		3. Small business ..	1	182	Rs. 2,108'00
		4. Masonry ..	1	159	Rs. 1,820'00
		5. Cycle Repair ..	1	194	Rs. 1,345'00
		6. Animal Husbandry	3	77	Rs. 1,155'00
		7. Begging ..	1	234	Rs. 995'00
		8. Agricultural Labour	173	132	Rs. 795'00
		9. Brick-making ..	10	91	Rs. 654'00
		10. Cultivation ..	48	113	Rs. 482'00
		11. Weaving ..	91	128	Rs. 447'00

The table shows that rickshaw pulling fetches the highest income and weaving the lowest. Our general observation in urban centres like Bargarh, Burla and Sambalpur is that the most of the rickshaw pullers belong to the Ganda caste. One feels inclined to suggest that if autorickshaws could be supplied to them there would certainly be a raise in their present level of income from this source enabling them to raise themselves above the poverty line in a short time.

Division of Labour and Co-operation

In the Ganda society an idler is looked down upon. He does not make a good husband. A man does not want to give his daughter or sister in marriage to an idler. On the other hand, a man seeks for a strong and energetic girl to marry his son so that his daughter-in-law can help her husband in daily toil and hard manual work.

The daily routine of activities starts from very early morning. Both the man and his wife in a Ganda house get up when the cock crows in the morning. They wash their faces and finish their morning ablutions. After breakfast which comprises either tea and puffed rice or rice cooked overnight and kept immersed in water, the man leaves home for work. His wife gets busy in household chores like cleaning the house, courtyard, cattleshed, and cleaning the pots and utensils, fetching water, husking paddy and cooking food. By the time he returns home after work it is noon and sometimes afternoon and he sits down for taking his food. On some days he has to go back to his work in the afternoon and come back in the evening. During harvest he works day and night for a number of days and after the harvest he takes rest for one or two days.

During busy agricultural season all adult members help each other and work together. They work in their field for the whole day either in double shifts or in long single shifts as required. Men plough and level the fields and sow the seeds while women transplant the seedlings and do the weeding. Harvesting is done by both men and women and the children are sent out to collect firewood, dry leaves and cowdung to be used as fuel. In the evening after the day's toil men from different households gather in groups and spend the time in smoking bidi and chit-chatting with one another. During this time women keep themselves busy in cooking meals and attending to other domestic works. Between 7 P. M. and 8 P. M. the people in rural area start taking their meals. Men and young children are given food first and women are the last to take food in every household. After food which is generally over by 8 P. M. the people go to bed.

In the Ganda society both the sexes co-operate each other in their struggle for existence. Most of the work requiring strength, energy and initiative are done by men. It does not mean that women in Ganda society do not do any hardwork. Infact the women are as hard working as men are. However, the common practice is that men attend to outdoor work while women are confined to domestic work and children are given lighter work both in the field as well as at home. In many places Ganda women constitute large labour force in agricultural operations except ploughing and sowing and they work as hard and sometimes harder than men. The Table-11 gives aspect-wise sex division of labour followed by the people in Ganda community.

TABLE-11
Division of Labour

Sl. No.	Nature of work	Major items of work	Sex doing the work	Remarks
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
1.	Household works	1. Construction, repair and maintenance of house.	Men	Women and children operate.
		2. House thatching	Men	Tabooed for women.
		3. Plastering	Women	Never done by men.
		4. Sweeping and cleaning house and washing clothes.	Women assisted by children	Sometimes done by men.
		5. Cleaning the cattle-shed.	Women, Men, children	..
		6. Feeding cattle	Men, Women, children.	..
		7. Cooking and cleaning utensils and serving foods.	Women	Men do at the time of emergency.
		8. Fetching water	Women and children	Rarely done by men.
		9. Marketing	Men and Women	..

Sl. No.	Name of work	Major items of work	Sex doing the work	Remarks
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
		10. Collection of fire-wood, dry leaves, cowdung and preparation of cowdung cakes for fuel.	Women and children	Not done by men
		11. Taking care of children.	Women ..	Men help women
		12. Caring younger Children.	Women and Children	Men help women
		13. Chopping firewood	Men ..	Restricted for women
		14. Husking paddy ..	Women ..	Men & children assist women
		15. Grazing cattle ..	Children ..	Sometimes done by men but restricted for women
		16. Collecting edible fruits, roots, tubers and leaves.	Women and children.	Not done by men
2	Agricultural activities.	1. Ploughing land ..	Men ..	Tabooed for women
		2. Digging, scraping and levelling.	Men ..	Never done by women
		3. Sowing ..	Men ..	Never done by women
		4. Transplantation ..	Men, women and children.	..
		5. Weeding ..	Men, women and children.	..
		6. Debushing ..	Men, women and children	..
		7. Reaping crops ..	Men, women and children.	..
		8. Carrying crops in bundles to the courtyard.	Men, women and children.	..

Sl. No.	Name of work	Major items of work	Sex doing the work	Remarks
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
		9. Harvesting	Men, women and children.	..
		10. Felling down trees	Men	.. Restricted for women.
		11. Watching the cropped field.	Men and children	.. Not done by women.
		12. Storing grains in baskets.	Men	.. Not done by women.
		13. Manuring the field	Men, women and children.	..
		14. Carrying food for men working in the field.	Women and childrep.	..
3	Weaving	1. Purchase or procurement of raw materials (e.g.—thread) & equipments.	Men	.. Not done by women.
		2. Soaking the yarn with water and sundrying (<i>Tankata</i>).	Women	.. Sometimes done by men if necessary.
		3. Wrapping the yarn (<i>Parmani</i>).	Men	.. Assisted by women.
		4. Pulping the yarn with rice gruel (<i>Peja</i>).	Men	.. Assisted by women.
		5. Spinning the yarn in spindles.	Women	.. Not done by men
		6. Denting, leasing and drafting the yarn.	Men	.. Not done by women.
		7. Dyeing	Men	.. Assisted by women.
		8. Feeding the yarn in the loom and weaving by operating the loom.	Men	.. Tabooed for women.
		9. Marketing finished products.	Men	.. Not done by women.

Sl. No.	Nature of work	Major items of work	Sex doing the work	Remarks
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
4	Other Economic Activities.	1. Fishing	Men, women and children	..
		2. Hunting	Men	.. Tabooed for women.
		3. Climbing trees	Men	.. Tabooed for women.
		4. Removing the carcass of dead animals.	Men	.. Tabooed for women.
		5. Brick-making	Men	.. Not done by women.
		6. Masoning and stone-cutting.	Men	.. Not done by women.
		7. Earth work	Men and women	..
		8. Construction of roads, bridges, buildings, etc.	Men and women	..
		9. Cycle repairing	Men	.. Not done by women.
		10. Small business	Men	.. Not done by women.
		11. Mid-wifery	Women	.. Restricted for women.
		12. Rolling <i>Bhis</i>	Women	.. Sometimes done by men and children.
		13. Preparation of leaf-cups and plates.	Women, children	.. Sometimes by men.
		14. Mining and Quarrying activities.	Men and women	..
		15. Engagement in forest, soil conservation, horticulture and other plantations.	Men and women	..
		16. Carrying and heralding messages and performing odd and menial jobs.	Men	.. Never done by women.
		17. Selling and purchasing cattle and other animals.	Men	.. Restricted for women.

Sl. No.	Nature of work	Major items of work	Sex doing the work	Remarks
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
5	Rituals, Ceremonies and Festivals.	1. Worshipping deities	Men and women	Certain deities are worshipped by women not by men & vice versa.
		2. Worshipping ancestors.	Men	.. Tabooed for women.
		3. Sacrifice of animals before deities.	Men	.. Tabooed for women.
		4. Conducting household and communal rituals.	Men	.. Tabooed for women.
		5. Dressing and decorating houses and clothing children.	Women	.. Never done by men.
		6. Preparing and serving food during communal feasts.	Men	.. Restricted for women.
6	Marriage	1. Arrangement and negotiation for the marriage of boys and girls.	Men	.. Not done by women.
		2. Payment of bride price, Attending guests, Treating and feeding guests and relatives.	Men	.. Assisted by women
		3. Preparing the bride for marriage.	Women	.. Never done by men.
7	Birth	1. Care of the expectant mother.	Women	..
		2. Helping the mother in child birth and related activities.	Women	.. Restricted for men.
		3. Beating brass or bell utensil to herald the child birth in the locality.	Men/Women	..
		4. Household duties ...	Women	.. Done by men if there is no other women in the family.

Sl. No.	Nature of work	Major items of work	Sex doing the work	Remarks
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
		5. Offering liquor to male members of the kith and kin to celebrate child birth.	Men	... Restricted for women.
		6. Care of the new born infant.	Women	.. Sometimes by men if necessary.
8	Death	1. Removal, cremation and burial of the corpse.	Men	... Tabooed for women.
		2. Conducting all mortuary rites.	Men	.. Tabooed for women.
		3. Ritual shaving	.. Men	... Women cut their nails.
		4. Throwing out the earthen cooking pots and vessels.	Men	... Not done by women.
		5. Cleaning and washing household clothes, pots, utensils, beds and other assets on the 'Dasah' day.	Women	.. Sometimes assisted by men.
		6. Offering cooked food to the deceased soul.	Men	... Tabooed for women.
9	Recreation, Dance and Music.	1. Participating in communal dance, during <i>Kama Puja, Nua-khia, Holi, etc.</i>	Men and women	..
		2. Singing songs in dance, and other occasions.	Men and women	..
		3. Playing musical instruments.	Men	.. Tabooed for women.
10	Miscellaneous activities.	1. Attending the visiting officials.	Men	..
		2. Attending village panchayat meetings.	Men	.. Women often attend if called for as a party or witness.
		3. Decision making in the traditional panchayat.	Men	... Never by women

The data on the division of labour presented in the above table throws some light on the position of women in the Ganda society. The women due to their practical and physical difficulties find it inconvenient to participate in many outdoor activities. During the period of menstruation and after the child birth up to a period of 21 days the women are considered ritually polluted and debarred from taking part in any ritual activities. Many activities are exclusively done by men and tabooed for women, while there is no taboo or restriction for men to attend to women's work under certain circumstances.

Besides the division of labour, mutual co-operation and reciprocity at the interpersonal, interfamilial and communal levels of life is marked in the Ganda society. A poor Ganda failing to construct or repair or thatch his own house seeks the co-operation of his neighbours and relatives who readily extend their help. Similar co-operation and exchange of labour is also marked during busy agricultural operations like weeding, transplantation and harvesting. During marriage ceremony, neighbours and relatives come forward to extend their help.

Family Budget

As in the case of other communities all the economic pursuits in the Ganda society culminate in earning and spending for the livelihood of the family members. The Ganda do not lead an extravagant life. They derive their earning from weaving, cultivation, agricultural labour and other kinds of skilled and semi-skilled occupations. As described earlier these economic activities neither provide full time employment nor a stable economic footing with an assured amount of income. Agricultural labour has been the major source of income to the majority of the Gandas. Weaving has now become a less paying job than agricultural labour. In fact, the Ganda constitute the lowest income group in the rural community and live from hand to mouth.

The Table-12 gives the distribution of the Ganda households covered in the survey under four income groups. Not all occupations fetch equal income annually. Depending upon the demand

and scope for work, some occupations are more paying and some other are less paying. For this reason the income break up is given for each of the major ten different occupations in the table.

TABLE-12

Distribution of Ganda Households by Major Occupations and Annual Income Ranges

Sl. No.	Primary occupations	Total No. of households depending upon occupations under Col. 2	Total population of the households	No. of households in the income groups of			
				Below Rs. 1,200	Rs. 1,201 to Rs. 3,000	Rs. 3,001 to Rs. 4,500	Above Rs. 4,500
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
1	Cultivation	18	71	..	12	5	1
2	Weaving	20	84	..	14	5	1
3	Agricultural labour.	56	193	2	25	26	3
4	Animal Husbandry	1	3	..	1	..	..
5	Service	6	21	..	..	3	3
6	Cycle Repair	1	3	..	1	..	..
7	Rickshaw pulling.	2	7	..	..	2	..
8	Small-Trade	1	4	..	..	..	1
9	Masonry	1	5	..	..	..	1
10	Begging	2	4	1	1	..	..
	Total	108	395	3	54	41	10

(N. B.—The income shown in the income groups is not from primary sources; but the major part of the income is from primary occupations as mentioned under Col. No. 2 of the Table)

An examination of the data presented in the above table shows that the largest number of households i. e. 56 out of total 108 households having the largest population i. e. 193 out of 395 total population are dependant upon agricultural labour as their primary occupation. In this group 25 households come within the annual income range of Rs. 1,201 to Rs. 3,000 and 26 households within Rs. 3,001 to Rs. 4,500. As regards the concentration of households in different income groups, 50 per cent of the households (54 households) fall in to the income group of Rs. 1,201 to Rs. 3,000 and 40 per cent (41 households) to the next higher income group of Rs. 3,001 to Rs. 4,500. The table shows that as many as 98 households (90.7 per cent) having income below Rs. 4,500 fall below the poverty line. The remaining 9.3 per cent (10 households) which earn more than Rs. 4,500 per annum are obviously above the poverty line. The sources from which they derive such substantial income are agricultural labour and service which account for six households and cultivation, weaving, small business and masonry account for one household in each pursuit.

Contrary to the variations in the annual income of the households, their expenditure pattern more or less follows an uniform trend. A major portion of their income is spent for food. In other words, most of the households coming within the first three income groups spend between 67 per cent and 72 per cent of their income on food. Even the ten households which fall to the highest income group spend on food almost as much these households of lower income groups. Expenditure on food appears to be of the same extent irrespective of the income level while the expenditure on items other than food may increase but it has no correlation with the expenditure level of food.

The other items of expenditure mainly include expenses on clothing, rituals and ceremonies, constructions, repair and maintenance of houses, treatment of diseases, etc. The expenses of the first three items account for 20 per cent to 25 per cent of the household income while that on the last item is negligible.

Another important item of expenditure is fuel and light. But the households spend little, i. e. 3 per cent to 4 per cent of their income on this item. Most of them collect fuel in the shape of dry leaves, branches, bushes, cowdung from their surrounding areas and burn little oil for lighting purposes as most of the members go to bed very early. The expenses on children's education are also negligible as few children of school going age attend school. The poor economic condition of most of the households does not permit them to spare anything for repayment of debts.

Social and religious ceremonies play a dominant role in the daily life of the Ganda. Not a month in a year passes without celebration of socio-religious festivals, rituals or ceremonies. Expenses are regularly incurred on drinking, feasting and performance of rituals. Especially the festivals like *Nuakhia*, *Pus Punei*, and *Karma Puja* and marriage ceremony and mortuary rites demand for larger and additional expenses which often drive the households to indebtedness. Such expenses are conditioned by the economic status of the household.

Clothing as a major item of household expenses comes next to food. However, the regular clothing of the Ganda male, female and children are usually simple, coarse and of cheaper quality. Men wear small loin cloth and women wear full length handloom sarees, which are costlier than the clothes used by men. At the present market price a piece of loin cloth (*Dhoti*) used by men costs Rs. 15 to Rs. 30 while a piece of handloom saree of ordinary type used by women is about Rs. 70. As the Gandas find it very difficult to meet the expenses on local sarees they have already started changing to cheaper mill made sarees costing Rs. 35 to Rs. 50 per piece although by tradition and practice the Ganda women are quite fond of wearing local handloom sarees.

A comparison between income and expenditure shows that majority of the Ganda households run in deficit. The Table 13 gives a detailed picture about the matter.

TABLE-13

*Economic status of Ganda Households in different Income Groups
(in respect of their household budget; income-expenditure conditions)*

Income Groups	Distribution of household according to the nature of their budgets			
	Deficit (Expenses exceed income)	Balanced (Income & expenses equal)	Surplus (Expenses less than Income)	Total
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
1. Below Rs. 1,200	3	..	..	3
2. Rs. 1,201 to Rs. 3,000.	38	16	..	54
3. Rs. 3,001 to Rs. 4,500.	22	17	2	41
4. Above Rs. 4,500	..	6	4	10
5. Total ..	63	39	6	108

The table illustrates that highest number of surveyed households (58.3 per cent) i. e., 63 out of total 108 households have deficit family budgets. Since their expenses exceed the income they try to meet their deficit by incurring loans. All these families belong to the first three lower income groups which is below the poverty line. Moreover, all the three families in the first and the lowest annual income group (below Rs. 1,200/-) come under this group.

There are 39 (36.1 per cent) households having a balanced budget. The remaining small number of 6 (5.6 per cent) households comprising 2 households from the third income group (Rs. 3,001 to Rs. 4,500) and 4 households from the fourth or the highest income group (above Rs. 4,500). This trend of household budgets clearly indicates that deficit increases with lowering of income and the *vice versa*.

Indebtedness

Indebtedness is a chronic economic malady of the Ganda households. As shown in the previous table the majority of households having lower income which is less than Rs. 4,500/- per annum, i.e., below the poverty line are compelled by the necessities of life to incur debts in order to meet their deficits in the household budgets. The following table gives the distribution of indebted households in various income groups and their extent of present debts.

TABLE-14

Distribution of Indebted Households in various Income Groups and Extent of Present Debts

Sl. No.	Income groups (Annual)	Total No. of surveyed households in each group	No. of indebted households	Total amount of present debts (in Rs.)	Average amount of debt per household (in Rs.)
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
1	Below Rs. 1,200	3	2	890.00	440.00
2	Rs. 1,201.00 to Rs. 3,000.00.	54	31	10,168.00	328.00
3	Rs. 3,001.00 to Rs. 4,500.00.	41	14	4,284.00	306.00
4	Above Rs. 4,500	10	..	..	..
Total		108	47	15,332.00	326.20

As evident from the above table all the 47 indebted households (43.5 per cent) out of 108 households are indebted and the total amount of their present debt comes to be Rs. 15,332.00. Thus, the average amount of debt for each indebted household is Rs. 326.00. The amount and extent of debt increases with the lowering of household income and therefore, it is found that 2 out of total households in the first and lowest income group (below Rs. 1,200 per annum) have a debt burden amounting to Rs. 840, i. e., Rs. 440 in average per household which is the highest amount among the individual indebted households belonging to successive income groups. In the 2nd and 3rd i. e., the middle income groups there are 31 and 14 indebted households out of total 54 and 41 households respectively and the average debt per household comes to be Rs. 328 and Rs. 306 respectively. There is no indebtedness in the 4th or the highest income group comprised by 10 households. This establishes the fact that the proportion of indebted households to the total households and the average amount of debt per indebted households is the highest in the lowest income group, this is absent in the last or the highest income group.

This trend of indebtedness corresponds to the condition of household budget and reveals that lower income groups are the worst sufferers from this chronic malady. 70.2 per cent of the indebted households belong to the first two lower income groups. Since, the highest *per capita* household debt is Rs. 450 small loans may be advanced through co-operatives or banking institutions in order to save these indebted families from the clutches of the private money lenders.

A little probe into the major causes of indebtedness of the surveyed Ganda households and its effect on their economy reveals that in most cases loans have been incurred for the following reasons :

1. To meet the deficit in the household consumption needs like food, clothing and other minimum necessities.
2. For investment in the household industry such as weaving.

3. For cultivation and purchase of land.
4. To meet the large expenses for socio-religious rituals and ceremonies like birth, death, marriage and communal festivals, etc.
5. For construction of house.

The following table gives the distribution of indebted households in different income groups in respect of the causes of their indebtedness.

TABLE-15

Distribution of Indebted Households as per the Causes of Indebtedness

Causes of indebtedness	Number of indebted families in the income groups of				Total
	Below 1200	1201 to 3000	3001 to 4500	Above 4500	
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
1. Household Consumption needs.	2	11	2	..	15
2. Investment in household industry like weaving.	..	12	5	..	17
3. Cultivation and purchase of land.	..	3	2	..	5
4. Socio - religious ceremonies and rituals.	..	3	4	..	7
5. Construction of house.	..	2	1	..	3
Total	2	31	14	..	47

It was found during the study that the loans incurred for one purpose are sometimes partly or fully utilised for other purposes. Certain households who obtained loan for the purpose of investment in weaving spent a part of it on food and clothing. There is the case of one household who managed to get a loan amounting to Rs. 300 for purchasing a piece of land. In the meantime an old man died in his family and the loan amount was spent on the death rites.

The major sources of credit from which the Ganda households obtain loan are public agencies such as local co-operative societies, commercial banks and private agencies like local private money lenders. Loans on small amount either in cash or in kind are often received from friends and relatives at the time of need.

A breakup of 47 indebted Ganda households with respect to the sources of credit reveals that 35 households have borrowed from private money lenders while 7 households from public credit agencies. The remaining five households borrowed from their friends and relatives. In other words a majority i. e., 74.4 per cent of indebted households secured loan from local private money lenders and only a small percentage (i. e. 15 per cent) from public agencies. This shows the age old grip of the private money lenders on the Ganda households on the one hand and poor flow of public credit to them on the other.

The hold of private money lenders over the Ganda is traditional and cordial. Being a local man the private lender is well aware of the socio-economic status and credit-worthiness of the Ganda households. So he is prepared to advance loan at any time, especially at the time of necessity without insisting upon sureties, mortgages, or any other formalities, as the public agencies do, and collects the amount at the right time i. e., when the loanee is financially capable to repay. Further there is no rigidity in the terms and conditions of availing and repayment of such loans. Sometimes the private sources agree to advance a second loan even if the first loan has not been fully repaid. On the other hand the formalities and the rigidity of conditions involved in securing and repaying the institutional credit not only baffles the

ignorant Ganda debtors but causes delay also to meet their immediate needs. Therefore, the needy persons find it easier and quicker to get loan from the private sources in order to tide over their immediate crisis.

The private money lenders advance loan both in cash and kind. They charge a high rate of interest (more than 60 per cent per annum) but not securities for short term loans. For large and long term loans securities of movable and immovable properties like land, house, cattle, gold, brass and bell utensils, and other household valuable assets are required. The rate of interest in this case varies between 30 per cent to 40 per cent per annum. As compared to this, the public agencies claim the rate of interest between 10 per cent to 20 per cent for all kinds of loans.

It was found during the study that the main reasons for indebtedness is that most of the Ganda households live on the margin of subsistence and as soon as some unforeseen crisis are encountered, they seek immediate assistance from the local *Sahukars*. Most of the indebted households have never been free from chronic indebtedness. In view of their meagre household income it becomes impossible for them to save and invest their savings in household industry, cultivation or any other profitable venture to augment their earnings.

CHAPTER VI

LIFE CYCLE

The Ganda believes that God has created man. He sends man to the earth for a specific period of time to fulfil his wishes and then pass away leaving his material body behind. Thus man takes birth in a family, lives his stipulated span of mundane life and departs this world by death at last. The course of human life begins with birth and ends in death.

I. CONCEPTION AND BIRTH

The Gandas know that human beings take birth from the mother's womb. The body of flesh, blood and bones with life is produced and developed inside the woman's womb and delivered out causing the birth of an infant.

Conception

The Gandas have rational idea about the mechanism of sex and reproduction. They are well aware of the nexus between sexual act and conception. Sexual union between adult male and female causes conception inside the woman's womb. They equate semen with seed and ovary with fertile land. When seed is properly sown in the fertile land, fertilisation or conception takes place. This results in formation of an embryo of flesh and blood inside the womb. This embryo floats like a fish in the ovarian fluid which converts into flesh and bones in order to give a definite shape. The embryo gradually grows into a foetus. At this time adequate fluid retaintion in the ovary for proper foetal development is ensured by the stoppage of the flow of the menstrual blood and increase of fluid intake of the .conceiving woman. According to their description, initially a ball of flesh is formed with the umbilical cord. Then the head is formed above, the legs below and the whole body takes shape. Life enters into this body after the fourth month and it begins movement inside the womb. Finally after nine months, it comes out of the mother's womb as an infant.

Birth in a Ganda family is always welcomed. The first and foremost motive for marriage i. e. acquiring a bride is to get children. If this does not happen within three years after marriage and temporary or permanent sterility of the female partner is established, the husband is socially permitted to divorce the wife and marry again. He can also acquire second wife without divorcing the first wife. Conversely for husband's sterility, the Ganda woman can obtain separation and get remarried.

The causes of temporary sterility in woman and other mishaps concerning conception and childbirth such as miscarriage, wastage, still-birth, difficult labour and infant mortality are mainly attributed to the supernatural agencies namely, evil eye, witchcraft, black magic, malevolent spirits, and often to the displeasure of the deities and ancestral spirits. In this situation the services of *Ojha* (witch-doctor) *Birtia* (priest), *Pundit* (astrologer) and saints are sought for diagnosing the cause and effecting remedial measures. When such attempts fail, the cause is ascribed to irregular habits and physiological disorders. It is a common belief that a woman suffering from menstrual irregularities and severe pain during her period is not likely to conceive. Temporary and permanent sterility is believed to be caused to either sex who suffered from severe illness. In this case the *Vaidya* or the *Kabiraj* (the local medicine man) are consulted for diagnosis and treatment through administration of herbal medicines. At last a small number of such cases come for treatment in hospitals. Failure in these attempts confirms permanent sterility or barrenness.

Barrenness in women is socially condemned. Barren women are considered inauspicious and to see the face of such a woman while commencing a journey on important business is avoided as it is considered an ill omen. Moreover, barren women are believed to be in possession of harmful and potent occult powers like charms, evil eye and fascination. Hence, their presence inside the household and in socio-religious ceremonies is always avoided.

On the other hand 'motherhood' is socially esteemed. Male and female children are treated at par. It is because a girl brings prestige to her family by her bride price, and a son

supports his parents at old age and continues the family line. But the parents face economic strain to pay the bride price and other expenses for the marriage of the son. Moreover, the grownup sons and daughters are economic assets to the family, as they contribute to the family purse by pursuing various occupations either independently or by the way of assisting their elders and parents.

The desire for having children is so strong that there is practically no attempt to limit the number of children. In spite of this most Ganda parents have one to three children. Physiological deficiencies, diseases, starvation, miscarriage, wastage and infant mortality account for such type of natural family planning. In these days, some advanced and knowledgeable Ganda couples have adopted modern contraceptive measures. Traditional contraceptive practices are also there. These include periodic abstinence, use of herbal medicines and sometimes, magico-religious devices. There are also elderly and experienced Ganda women called *Dhai* or *Bai* or *Pilati* (midwives) who are experts in effecting smooth delivery of the child or abortions. The Gandas seem to have greater reliance upon the efficacy of the treatment of these traditional practitioners than the modern medicine.

The Ganda have certain other beliefs and practices connected with conception and child birth. They firmly believe that conception will not take place without heavenly blessings. There are certain circumstances favourable for conception. Sexual union between the man and wife after the period of enforced abstinence during early morning and evening hours, likely lead to conception. A woman is considered very fertile between ninth and twentieth day of her menstrual cycle and repeated sexual acts in this period is most favourable for conception. Intercourse is forbidden with a fasting woman, menstruating woman, diseased or deformed woman, and a lactating woman. Ganda social norms prescribe that love making should be performed within the privacy of one's own house. Public places, forests, cropped fields, loom sheds, animal sheds and open places should not be used for this

purpose. The conditions in which conception takes place, produce certain good or bad effects upon the would be child and his or her parents. Especially, intercourse in the days of *Amavasya*, *Samkranti*, *Chirkitia* (birth pollution), *Mirkitia* (period of death pollution), solar and lunar eclipses, *Laxmi Puja*, *Mangala Puja*, *Bhal juintia*, *Puajiu ntia*, *Kartik brata* and during mid-night is strictly prohibited as it results in undesirable consequences.

When a woman misses two consecutive periods she suspects that she has conceived. This indication alone is not enough. The elderly and experienced women of the household or neighbourhood guess a woman's pregnancy by observing certain signs and symptoms. The external and noticeable indications are swelling of breasts, increased pigmentation around the nipple and areola; feeling of softness, suppleness, smoothness, soreness and idleness in the body; plump and fatty body, lighter complexion, gaining body weight; swelling and heaviness of feet; increased secretions of saliya in mouth and tendency of spitting out, desire for sex and delicious food, especially those of sour taste, nausea and vomiting; desire to enjoy rest and sleep.

These symptoms manifest during the early phases of pregnancy. After the third month swelling of lower abdomen occurs and this confirms pregnancy.

When a Ganda woman knows that she is carrying, she becomes conscious and observes a number of taboos and restrictions. Most of them are based on ideas of sympathetic magic and the belief that every act of the pregnant mother shall have an influence on the unborn child or on the course of her confinement.

The desires of the pregnant woman begins immediately after conception. These are thought to be the desires of the unborn child and should be granted. Otherwise, the child may die or be deformed or fall under the spell of evil eye and malevolent spirits or even in extreme cases be wasted in miscarriage. Hence as a rule, most of the desires of the pregnant woman for food are to be fulfilled. There are customary practices among the Gandas that the neighbours and relatives of the expectant mother entertain her

with her favourite dishes and on hearing about her impending motherhood her parents send packets of her choicest food items like *pitha* (cakes), sweets, plantain etc. to satisfy her desires during the early phases of pregnancy.

However, there are certain dietary restrictions. The pregnant woman is not allowed to take the kind of food items which are considered harmful to her. In general, purgative and laxative foods are avoided. Items such as oil, fat, curd, fermented and soaked rice and its water and gruel, *Kusna* (rice beer), wine, coconut, etc. which may cause miscarriage are forbidden. Likewise, foods such as vinegar and spices that might affect the child are restricted. Moreover, the pregnant woman should not eat roasted maize or oil seeds. If she does that, the child will be born with large owl-like eyes which is considered inauspicious. She should not eat anything joints or twins like a double banana or some double fruits and tubers, lest she may produce twins. Neither should she eat the flesh of an animal died by disease or accident or ritual slaughter nor should she take the food items offered in the rituals performed in other's household. She is also forbidden to accept food from the strangers.

Besides dietary restrictions, the parturient woman is subjected to a number of taboos and restrictions for the welfare of herself and of the child in her womb. During early phases of pregnancy she should remain active by performing her regular indoor and outdoor activities which involves muscular exercise and will facilitate a smooth and easy delivery. During advanced stage, she should abstain from doing hard work which may cause abortion or difficult labour. Particularly, digging earth, fixing a pole, lifting and carrying heavy objects or pitcherful of water, chopping firewood, husking or pounding grains and tedious long journey should not be undertaken. She is always advised by her elderly women relatives to take proper care of herself and sleep prostrate.

The Gandas believe that a pregnant woman is susceptible to the injurious influences of evil eye, evilspirits, celestial phenomena and other supernatural agencies. The consequences may be disastrous i.e. death, deformity, miscarriage, painful or premature labour etc.

So, appropriate precautionary measures are taken to ward off evil influences. The expectant mother is tabooed against the deeds such as cutting down any growing organism; tying knots, driving nails crossing or trodding upon a leveller, a ladder, a plough, a yoke, a mortar and a pestle, an upturned earthen pot, cat's or horse's stool, a rope with which a horse or a cattle is tied; going alone to lonely places, burial grounds, temples, shrines, ponds and rivers; attending birth, death and communal rituals; wandering alone during night especially after the twilight; going to the places or households where birth, death, miscarriage, epidemics or any other kinds of ritual pollutions have taken place, touching a woman who has had a miscarriage and the like. In general, her freedom of movement and activities is curbed by many taboos and prohibitions. When she goes out she is advised to move in the company of her in laws and other close friends and relatives. Further she is tabooed not to see and touch a corpse, watch a funeral procession and also the smokes and fire rising out of a funeral pyre. The most important taboo is that she must not come out and observe but remain herself confined within her house at the time of occurrence of celestial phenomena such as thunder, lightening, storm and eclipses.

During the time of eclipses, she must not do any work. If she does not remain quiet her child will be deformed. If she eats something during this period her child will be a lunatic. If she uses a needle her child will be born with holes in the skin. Physical exposure to rain, cold and heat is also prohibited. As a precaution against malevolent spiritual forces she is directed not to expose her belly but cover it properly with clothings while moving outdoors.

Sometimes parturient Ganda women are seen wearing ritualized coloured threads around their necks, with lockets, charms, copper coins or herbs. These are also tied around the upper arms or waists. The priests, saints or witch-doctors provide these objects. Further, the pregnant woman is advised to avoid blood and dreadful sights and keep a knife or an object of iron or copper under her pillows at night. The woman and her relatives often pray the deities with promises of offerings and sacrifices to ensure the delivery of the child, safe and sound. The younger Ganda ladies are ignoring most of

these old practices treating them as superstitious and irrational and proclaiming that their unconventional behaviour has done them no harm.

The sexual restrictions during this period are not hard and fast. The Gandas believe that sexual intercourse during the advance stages of pregnancy may be hazardous. Normally intercourse between the pregnant woman and her husband continues upto the sixth or seventh month of pregnancy. As a matter of actual practice, abstinence is observed for two to three months preceding child birth. Sexual relations are resumed after the child is three or four months old although, according to their social norms a man should not sleep with her lactating wife until the child is at least six months old.

The Gandas say that the sex of the child is fixed inside mother's womb once for all and it is inalterable. They adopt various methods to predict the sex of the child. *Brahman Pundits* and astrologers are called in for the purpose. The chance methods of the fortune-tellers are also used. Forecasting is generally made through the observation and analysis of certain physical signs, symptoms and behaviours of the pregnant woman and her husband. For instance, if at the time of conception a man's right nostril twitches the child will be a boy and if the left nostril twitches the child will be a girl. Further, if the conceiving woman likes to sleep on her right side and if her right breast swells more than her left breast a boy will be born. In case these things happen in her left side a female child is expected. Moreover, better health, and less physical suffering of the mother and early delivery indicate to a male child and the opposite of these, to a female child.

The Gandas have fair ideas about the course of growth of the foetus in the mother's womb and the corresponding physical behaviour and symptoms marked with the mother from the beginning to the end. It can be summed up as the paleness of the woman in first month; awareness of the existence of the child, nausea and vomiting in the third month; longing for delicacies after the fourth month. In the first and second month there is no noticeable physical change in the woman; in the third month she feels that the foetus is growing

and her abdomen swells; in the fourth, fifth and sixth months she becomes gradually plump; in the seventh and eighth months she becomes inactive, her belly looks like a pot and she grows pale. In the later stages of pregnancy she develops voracious appetite. At the ninth month she expects the birth of the child.

The Ganda woman continues to do her routine work till the pains of child birth make her inactive.

There have been cases of women who have delivered while working in the field or forest. No amount of relaxation from normal burden of domestic or part time professional work is possible because of the needs of subsistence in day to day life.

Though the exact time of child birth cannot be ascertained with accuracy, normally, their prognosis of it is nearly correct. Appearance of the following indications in the woman foretells that the birth is imminent. These are, swelling of the lower abdomen, increase of the pressure of the belly, feeling of the movement of the baby inside the womb, swelling and loosening of breasts, paleness of the skin and the body, shrinking of the rib cage and remarkable increase in the discharge of ovarian fluid.

Birth

The Ganda treat the child birth as a crisis. Certain arrangements are made beforehand to meet this emergency. The services of elderly women of the household and the neighbourhood are sought before four or five days of the impending labour. Often a traditional midwife called by the Ganda as *Dai* or *Pilati* is called in to take care of the expectant mother. In the Ganda villages there are women who are reputed for their skills in midwifery. The services of one of them is adequate in normal cases of delivery. The *Pilati* accompanied by other elderly women who are experienced in this line attend the expectant mother day and night.

As soon as the labour pain starts and the time of child birth approaches, the woman is confined to a room with her female attendants. Male members and children leave that place. The delivery mostly

takes place in the living room of the house. For want of accommodation no separate arrangement is made for this purpose. The doors and ventilation holes are closed to avoid the breeze which may inflict rheumatic pains in the mother. No male member, children and sick people are allowed to enter into the delivery room. Especially a barren woman, a woman having a miscarriage, a pregnant woman, a woman who is suspected with or a stranger is never let inside this room.

At the time of labour the woman squats upon her heels on the floor. The Gandas believe that this position facilitates smooth and easy delivery. The midwife knows how to set the mother in position and if necessary she massages her belly. Other women help in supporting the mother in the right position. Massage is used when the labour is prolonged.

As soon as the child is born, the mother's face is washed and her hairs are letdown. The umbilical cord of the child is first tied up with a piece of thread and then cut by the midwife just above the thread with the help of a broken tile, or an iron knife, or a sickle and then buried outside the house. Formerly, bamboo blade were being used, but now-a-days safety razor blades made of stainless steel are used for this purpose. The Gandas say that if the part of umbilical cord attached to the body of the infant is not tied up prior to cutting the extra length polluted air may pass into the infant's body through this opening and cause diseases. As a protective measure, a little bit of scum collected from the delivery bed is put in to the end of the umbilical cord. It protects the child against all sorts of physical ailments and evil influences.

The newborn child is often placed upon a winnowing fan or sometimes upon a bed of rice. These are afterwards given to the midwife. The mother and child are washed by the midwife. The midwife massages the child with soft, dry paddy husk and wipes off by rubbing a piece of clean cloth. Subsequently, she massages mustard oil and turmeric paste over the infant's body. Prior to this she sponges the baby by soaking a piece of clean cloth in medicated lukewarm water in which *Basanga* and *Narguna* leaves are boiled. The leaves are of medicinal value and is specially used as preventive

against cold and skin diseases. Then a fire is lighted by burning *chheni* (cowdung cakes) within an earthen pot in the room near the threshold and kept burning throughout the day and night. The midwife warms up the child over this mild fire after the bath. The child is fed by soaking a piece of cloth in a glass of boiled water containing betelnuts and squeezing it into the mouth of the child followed by drops of honey water and diluted milk of the goat or cow. The mother is cleaned by wiping her body with a piece of wet cloth. Then she is wrapped with a sarœ and administered a tonic called *Kasapāni*. It is prepared by boiling *Koltha* (gram), *Juani*, *Sunthi*, *Pipali* and *Chandurchera* with water. This tonic is believed to relieve the mother of her post-delivery pains and body-aches and so used for some more days after the delivery. In addition to that *Vaidya* or *Kaviraj* (the traditional village doctor) is consulted for preventives, curatives and tonics for the mother and the child. He prescribes treatment and provides herbal medicines. The doses for the infant are administered in drops by mixing them with honey water or mother's milk.

As per the Ganda custom, the midwife or one of the elderly woman present inside the delivery room beats a brass plate to herald the first message of birth as soon as it takes place. After bathing the mother and child are administered with herbal medicines and subsequently the child is laid close to the breast of the mother. The mother is given a kind of food which consists of a mixture of rice gruel, molasses and oil. Sometimes a concoction of ginger, grass, coriander, turmeric, garlic and other hot substances is given to the mother as food and preventive against cold and cough. No substantial food is given to the mother for next two days. In some cases the mother receives ordinary food from the family kitchen on the seventh, fourteenth or twenty-first days of child birth.

The Gandas are so exposed to the fear of witchcraft and other diabolical agencies that they observe strict secrecy while burying the umbilical cord of the new born. They take all precautions to prevent the cord coming into the possession of an animal, an evil spirit, a witch or a magician. The site of burial

is watched for seven days. They believe that in case an woman gets and eats it, the child will die and the woman will conceive. If a wizard gets it, the child will be under his spell. If an evil spirit gets it, the child will be possessed.

The mother and child are kept in strict seclusion. No body other than the midwife or elderly women relatives who attend the mother at the time of child birth are allowed to enter in to the room. The period of ritual impurity and confinement varies from place to place. Generally, this is observed for twenty-one days following the date of delivery or till the umbilical cord of the child heals up. The mild-fire is kept burning inside the room for this entire period to warm up the mother and the child.

During the first seven days of birth pollution and confinement, the mother and the child are never left alone. The midwife or an elderly female relative always guards them particularly during night, lest some evil spirit may cause harm. The mother always wears an iron ring and keeps an iron object under her bed during this time. At this time the mother and the child are considered unclean and not allowed to touch anybody or anything, especially, the food of others.

On the 21st day, a ritual is performed to mark the end of the birth pollution in the family. All the old earthen cooking pots are thrown away and food is cooked in new pots. The clothings and beddings of the household and particularly those of the mother and the child are washed. The house is also cleaned and plastered with cowdung and mud. The mother massages her body and the body of her child with mustard oil and turmeric paste. Then both of them take bath in water boiled with *Neem* and *Basanga* leaves and wear new clothes presented by the mother's brother or parents. The mother combs and dresses her hair. She puts *Kajal* in her child's eye and her own. A ritual is performed. All the family members, neighbours, relatives and the midwife gather in the courtyard of the house. A bamboo basket containing one *tambi* of rice (approx-1 kg.), mango leaves, an earthen pot, a brinjal, one *deep* (earthen lamp), a blade of grass and banyan leaves,

is held by the mother in one hand and in her other hand she holds her child. She rotates the basket around her face, legs and belly seven times. The midwife and other elderly women who helped in child birth follow the suit after the mother. The other members present there embrace the child and put coins in his palm.

The maternal uncle or grandfather of the child has the privilege to embrace the child at first. Besides new dress, he also presents rings or chains made of gold, aluminium or silver to the child and holds his feet. After this ritual the relatives, neighbours and the children of the locality are served with cakes and sweets. The midwife receives a new saree, some amount of money, rice, pulses and vegetables for her services.

After the 21st day ritual, the household is free from birth pollution. Particularly the mother and her new born child are no longer considered impure and defiling and their term of confinement is over. The mother can enter the kitchen to cook food and resume her routine household chores and outdoor activities. The child can be held and fondled by other members. But the lactating mother has to observe certain post-natal taboos and prohibitions in respect of her childcare activities, food habits, day-to-day household and outdoor activities and sexual life which are meant for the safety and welfare of herself and her child. As a rule, she avoids taking the kind of foods which are considered harmful for her and her baby. Especially, she is not given hard-to-digest foods; spicy and fatty foods; sour, rotten and left over foods and the foods which are considered 'cold'. During first four or five months of child birth she is given only one substantial meal a day i.e. in the day time. This meal usually consists, cooked soft rice, dal of green gram or *arhar*, noodles of blackgram, *sag* (green leaves), ginger, garlic, cloves etc. She is always served food hot and fresh from the kitchen. In case she feels hungry during evening she is given a small quantity of cooked food. In this period the child is fed with mother's milk through breast-feeding, supplemented by spoon feeding of diluted milk of the goat or cow.

Because of her constant attendance to the new born child, the mother gets little time for hard labour and outdoor activities during first eight months of child birth. However, she manages

to perform her regular household *chores*, usually after the ritual of the 21st day. After the third month she gradually starts moving outdoors. Ideally, sexual abstinence has to be observed for a period of one year from the date of the child birth as the Gandas believe that, sexual intercourse between a lactating mother and her husband may harm the child. But in actual practice sexual relations between husband and wife is resumed after the third month of the child birth or after the reappearance of the menstrual cycle.

First Hair cutting, Ear and Nose Piercing

No ritual is associated with the first hair cutting of the newborn child. Nor there is a specific date or time for this purpose. The Gandassay that it is ideal to perform this on the 21st day purificatory ritual. But it may be deferred to any auspicious day within one year of birth. Often it is performed after the child passes one year of age. In case the first hair cutting of the child could not be performed on the 21st day of birth, the parents consult the *Pundit* (the village astrologer) and fix up an auspicious date for the purpose. On that scheduled date, the *Barik* (the Ganda Barber) is called in to shave the child. The Gandas being an unclean caste cannot avail the services of the traditional village barber who is a clean caste and serves the upper castes only. Hence in most of the Ganda *padas*, there are certain Ganda individuals who have voluntarily taken up this profession for the convenience of their own caste people and for extra income. The *Barik* who shaves the newborn child receives a substantial remuneration from his parents both in form of cash and kind. He is usually paid with a new cloth, two *tambi* (approx. 2kgs.) of rice, one *mana* (approx. $\frac{1}{2}$ kg.) of green gram, a pinch of salt, a spoonful of oil, few pieces of turmeric and Rs. 5 in cash. The hairs shaved from the head the child are carefully collected in a piece of cloth by his father or any male relative and buried in a secret place in order to avoid the evil agencies. Sometimes the hairs are offered to the Gods and deities and thrown into sacred tanks or river streams in the name of the particular God to whom the parents have dedicated this. After this, the child and her parents take bath and then visit a local shrine. Preferably they worship Lord

Shiva in the local temple. If the parents can afford, they purchase new clothings for the child and themselves which are worn after taking the bath. They prepare and enjoy delicious dishes at home on that day. Some Ganda take their children to the local temple and ritually shave their heads there.

The first piercing of the nose and the ear is not compulsory but for those female children whose parents wish to do so. This is either performed on the 21st day of birth or on the day of first hair cutting or on any auspicious day within five years from the date of birth. No specific ritual is associated with this. The mother pierces the child's ears and nose with a new brass, aluminium, steel or silver pin. If another woman performs this, she may be paid Re. 1 in cash and some quantity of rice.

Name-Giving

The new born child is given a name when he is atleast 5 months old. This may be done on the 21st day ritual also. But usually the name giving and first eating of solid food of the child is done on the same auspicious day within one year of the child birth. The date is fixed by the village astrologer. On that day, the maternal uncle and grand-father of the child are invited. They come with presents of new clothings for the mother and the child. The child is held by the mother or maternal uncle or maternal grand parents. Any of these relatives may select for the child a name by which he will be called by every body. Another horoscopic name is selected by the *pundit* which is kept secret in order to safeguard the child by fooling the evil agencies. Then the child is taken by his parents and relatives to the *Shiva* temple to pray for his blessings. At home, the parents and relatives enjoy sweets and good dishes. On this day the child is given solid food, i.e. cooked rice to eat for the first time.

II. CHILD REARING & SOCIALIZATION

Child rearing and socialization are complementary processes. Childhood socialization of the Ganda play a very dominant role in shaping the adult social behaviour of the individual. "Child rearing process generally refers to all interactions between

parents and their children. These interactions include the parent's expression of attitude, values, interests and beliefs as well as their care taking and training behaviour" (Ahmad, 1978)

Infancy

For the first six months of birth, the Ganda child mainly subsists on being breast-fed by the mother which is supplemented by liquid foods like diluted milk of goat or cow, honey, diluted rice gruel and sometimes boiled and diluted arrowroot preparations. After the name-giving ceremony, i.e. within the 6th month to one year of the birth, the child is initiated to take solid food. He is gradually given semi-solid foods namely; over boiled rice, liquid dal, peeled potato and vegetable soups. Until the child is more than one year old he is never given non-vegetarian and other hard-to-digest food items. After one year, he starts eating ordinary cooked food from the family kitchen. However, the Ganda children continue breast feeding until they are two years old.

No routine is followed for feeding the infant under six months. He is breast-fed by the mother whenever he cries. The child is taken into the lap of the mother who leans slightly forward so as to bring the breasts within the reach of the baby. At night, the baby is laid beside the sleeping mother in such a way that he can easily be put to the breasts if he cries.

The baby within six months to eleven months does not cry very often for food. When he is held in mother's arms and feels hungry, he tries to reach her breasts or if he is lying on the ground he grabs her saree and tries to reach up. If these attempts fail or are resisted, he cries. It is very difficult to silence a crying baby unless he is put to mother's breast. When the mother is absent, the attendants of the baby try all sorts of entreaties and threats like beating an utensil, beating the ground, making various sounds, waving various bright coloured objects before his eyes, singing cradle songs, swinging the baby and the like in order to divert the attention of the baby and quiet him. Often the attendant puts his thumb into the baby's mouth to silent him. In case the baby does not stop crying and the mother is not within the reach, other women silence him by offering their breasts.

When a baby cries for a longer period in night and all attempts fail to pacify him, the cause is attributed to an evil spirit known as *Matia Budha*. The Gandas say "*Matia* is making our child weep". Then arrangements are made to satisfy *Matia Budha* with certain food items such as cakes made of paddy husks, freshly cooked and untouched rice, dal, curry and water. These items are kept in separate leaf cups and touched with the body of the crying baby. Then a male relative of the baby, preferably his father, carries these things with a torch during evening hours to a junction of three paths at the outskirts of the village. He puts the leaf cups there on the ground and offers these to the *Matia Budha*. Then he draws three parallel lines on the ground, with the help of his toe uttering the names of *Brahma*, *Vishnu*, *Maheswar* and returns home without looking back. The child is supposed to stop crying after this ritual.

Sometimes it may so happen that the baby may continue crying after this ritual. In that case, the local *Brahman Pundit* who is a practitioner of tantras is contacted. After analysing the case history, the *Pundit* writes down certain tantric verses on a piece of palm leaf or paper which is touched on the head of the baby. The *Pundit* is paid some money or a piece of cloth for his services. If this attempt is not successful to pacify the baby, magical remedies are sought for. Often, the action of 'evil eye', 'fascination' or black magic is suspected and the witch doctors are called in for diagnosis and remedial measures. After failure of all these attempts, they resort to the treatment of village quacks and finally take the baby to the local hospital.

The baby tries to move by crawling when he is between four months to six months old. After the eighth month he is taught to sit down. He moves on all fours after the tenth month. When he is about fourteen months old he tries to stand up and walk slowly. Parents and other members of his family always help in his various successive stages of growth and movements. In learning these things very little progress of the baby is applauded, but over-ambitious attempts are discouraged. Small errors are ignored, grave ones are cautioned, often with punitive measures and atavistic tendencies are rebuked. When the baby starts moving with all fours and then by slow walkings, the parents and his attendants keep watch on him.

At this time, he may eat earth or any harmful thing, or catch hold any harmful object like an insect, sharp instruments, hot pots, or fall down. When he is over two years old, he is cautioned against such notorieties.

Weaning is enforced after the child is two years old. Toilet habits and bladder control are taught to him at this age. Small children under two years are found urinating and defecating here and there. But their elders while deliberately trying to teach them toilet habits take the children outside the houses at regular intervals and make a low whistle. The child understands the sign which means that he should try to urinate or defecate himself then and there. After being acquainted with this training the child develops the habit to cry when he feels bladder pressure and the elders use to respond to this indication by taking him out.

Until the child is three or four years old he usually remains naked. Then he is made to put on loin cloth called *Langoti* or *Koupuni*. Children of well-to-do families wear half pants, banions or napkins. But invariably a red or black thread is tied around the waists of all children from the day of their respective name giving ceremonies.

For the first two years, the child sleeps with his mother. Then he may share bed with his grand parents or older siblings. But in that case his parents remain alert during night to respond to the cries of the child and take him out for urination or defecation.

Childhood

When the child attains three to four years of age, he gradually becomes a member of the Ganda society. He develops reliance upon all the elder members of his community. At this time he is mentally and physically trained to honour and obey his superiors. Conversely, he expects kindness, affection, friendliness and toleration from his fellow members and shows his reaction when he is neglected. Parents try their best within their reach to reduce the hunger and unpleasant experiences of the child. The poor parents may remain hungry but provide whatever food they can afford to their children

whenever they cry or demand for food. Children are brought up within all fondness and affection and rarely scolded, beaten or ill-treated for deviant behaviours.

The formative influences on the very early life of a child are those of the elder's traditions depending upon the child's capacity of receptivity. Observing the child rearing practices by the Samoan, Margaret Mead remarks:

"When it is the question of passing on the sum total of a simple tradition, the only conclusion which it is possible to draw is that any method will do. The forces of imitation are much more potent than any adult technique for exploiting them; the child's receptivity to its surroundings is so much more important that any methods of stimulation that as long as every adult with whom, he comes in contact is saturated with tradition; he cannot escape a similar situation". This remark holds good for the Ganda children.

By the age of three or four the child becomes conscious of his person and physically independent. The boys and girls start wearing some kind of clothings, at least loin clothes. They acquire possession of small things such as small toys and fancy objects. They may be given to eat in separate plates or share food from their parent's and elder's plates.

Gradual growth of selfconsciousness and independence, consequent upon the psychosomatic development of the child, initiates the process of informal and formal education. The child learns to respect the elders. He learns how to speak and how to behave in various social situations. His moral education starts by both precept and punishment. Moral axioms stressing social conduct are repeatedly communicated to him by his elders like "Don't tell lies; it is a sin to tell lie". "Do not hurt a living being; It is a cruel and inhuman deed." In case a child does not behave properly after repeated warning he is punished by slapping him on the face.

The child's technical education also begins at the same time. He learns the work technique of his parents and elders both by immitation and by being taught. He normally receives verbal instructions and practical demonstrations given by his elders. Then he starts imitating and helping his elders as an apprentice. The parents who are weavers teach their children the art of counting threads, pulping, wraping and winding yarns in the spindle and how to operate the loom. After learning this art properly, the small Ganda children are found to be rendering substantial help and assistance to their parents for weaving. Boys in cultivator's families are trained in agricultural practices. They first learn to tie bullocks, feed and water the domestic animals, carry small bundles of crops from the field etc. The girls remain attached to their mothers, sisters and other women relatives to learn domestic works.

Thus the Ganda children become economic assets to their families. The Gandas say,

"if there is no children in the family, the family has no chance of physical survival and if there is no son in the family, there will be nobody to support the parents in their old age. If there is no son, nobody will give them loan, because if the parents cannot pay back the loan during their life time, their sons will be liable to repay the debt of their parents".

Hence sons are treated as economic securities against securing loans.

The Gandas are very explicit in their aims of economic education of their children. The children according to their economic capabilities are classified into two categories as 'industrious' and 'idlers'. An idle child is lazy, insolent, callous and demands food four or five times a day. Whereas an industrious child is always ready to help his parents. But under the circumstances of poverty and deprivation, a lazy child transforms, more often than not, into a resourceful child and there are few idle children found in a Ganda village. Children who are soon to be highly precocious or highly adaptable after their physical emancipation are praised, encouraged

and well cared for. They are guided and encouraged in many ways to become economically more helpful to their families. It has been observed that, children above 12 years of age accompany their parents for wage earning as field labourers or watching the field or collecting firewood.

When a Ganda child is no longer a baby, he enters into a new world different from that in which he lived so far. Here he is treated rather impersonally. He associates with the children of his own age and forms a group like his elders do. Association with the social circle, wider than his own family makes him more and more sociable and develops his personality.

By his birth, a Ganda child automatically enters into a caste, a social situation and a number of social groups, association which determines to a large extent the future course of his life. This situation is inescapable.

The social unit which the child first learns to recognise as his natural sphere is the household consisting his parents, brothers, sisters, other close kins who live under the same roof and share the same kitchen. Here all the primary needs of the child are met and he receives all friendliness, affection, intimacy and co-operation from his fellow members.

Sometimes, a grand parent living in a different household may show a special interest in a grandchild. Therefore, it is not unusual to see small children in company of their grandparents. While parents and other adult members of the household go out for economic activities, the small children are left to the care and attention of their elder brothers, elder sisters and old grandparents who are not working members. But it is most unlikely that a child's maintenance will fall to his grandfather. The playful association of an oldman with a little child, does not often develop into an important economic relationship. On the other hand, the paternal uncle or the maternal uncle is the supporter and the guardian of the child in case of his father's early death.

However, the relationship of the child with his mother's brother is different from that of his father's brother. He lives away from the child in a different village and visits the child's household on certain occasions as an honoured guest. The child also sometimes goes to his uncle's house accompanying his mother or father. The child does not meet his maternal uncle as a matter of daily routine and this very fact seems to endow the mother's brother's nephew relationship with a certain emotional content absent from the relationship between a child and his paternal uncle. As per the kinship usages of the Ganda, the paternal uncle has a paternalistic relationship to his nephew while a kind of mild avoidance relationship is practised between the nephew and the maternal uncle. Showing respect to each other between the nephew and maternal uncle and his wife is reciprocal. It is due to the preference of cross-cousin marriages. The nephew from his childhood regards his maternal uncle and his wife as his perspective in-laws even though, he actually marries elsewhere.

In a narrower sense, the child's household is his home and in a broader sense, the village is his home. Within the social and physical set up of the village he finds an atmosphere of friendliness and toleration. All the other children of his age-group are his playmates. The village and its environs are his playground. Only here the child finds freedom, friendship; love, guidance and safety. These circumstances are available to the Ganda child if he lives in a separate hamlet. While living in a multi-caste village, the child is confronted with the differences in social status. There are upper caste wards and houses into which the Ganda child is not allowed to move because he is an untouchable. He may not be allowed to touch or play with the upper caste children. Sometimes, he encounters unpleasant and humiliating situations because of the depressed socio-economic status of his parents. These experiences undoubtedly have impact upon his psychosomatic developments. As a result, the child becomes conscious of his lowly caste status and often develops an inferiority complex.

In a homogenous Ganda settlement or *Gandapada*, the child grows up among peoples of various age groups. He is amicable to the children who are his equals. Any discrimination against

a child on account of the higher or lower socio-economic status of his parents or his family is unthinkable in such communal set up. Of course, the village headman's son may gain an accession of selfconfidence from his father's position but while playing, herding cattle, or attending schools with other children he is one of them without any special privileges.

The local environment of the village community considerably influences the child's mind. To him his co-villagers are the people who share his wider home. They share common interests, common rituals, common festivals and common values and beliefs. They act in union in many activities, particularly at the time of crisis. In this situation, the growing child realizes that he is not only a member of a family, a *barga* or a kin group but also a member of a village community and a larger community, i.e. the Ganda community.

In this way the Ganda infant slowly grows up to become an adult. The whole traditional cultural complex is slowly and systematically instilled into him by the physical and social environment. The adult members of the community help the child to accomplish an appreciation of the values of the community life. Thus the unique cultural traits of the Ganda continue from generation to generation.

III. PUBERTY

The Ganda boys and girls attain puberty between 12—14 years of age. After this, they are considered as the adult members of their community. But no special rites or ceremonies of initiation into adulthood is held at this time. Particularly, a boy's puberty goes unnoticed. But the case of girls are considered carefully. Signs and changes of womanhood gradually begin to appear in the girls after attaining 10 years of age. Mothers, sisters and female relatives keep careful watch over the girls in prepuberal stage of growth.

The day on which a Ganda girl experiences her first course of menstruation, she reports this to her friends, sisters, sister-in-laws, mother or any member of her own sex in whom she can confide.

Then other relatives come to know about it. This happening is communicated by a phrase that, "the girl's forehead is dirty".

The menstruating girl bears ritual pollution for seven days. She is kept in total seclusion in a dark corner of her house. During this period of her confinement, she tries to hide herself and keep away from her friends and relatives. She leaves her hair unkempt. She particularly avoids the sight of men. She does not touch anybody even her sisters. Even she avoids the shadow of others. She is considered unclean and her touch is defiling at this time.

According to the Ganda custom, the menstruating girl is tabooed against entering into the family kitchen, store and deity rooms and touching anything especially the food materials; performing any household or outdoor work; sleeping on a cot and a soft bed (she must sleep on the ground spreading only dirty and torn clothes if necessary); using oil, soap and cosmetics and taking bath regularly; touching anything used by the male members; going out of the house except for urination and defecation. Under no circumstances, she is allowed to go outside the village. When she goes out of her house she must go in the company of her female relatives. She cannot go out in the evening hours. Particularly she is forbidden to go alone to a tank or pond in the evening, attending any ritual or ceremony, visiting temples and shrines and worshipping deities. Moreover, she is prohibited to take non-vegetarian or any other heat generating diets.

On the seventh or eighth day, she washes everything which she has used or touched during her period of defilement and seclusion. Then she takes bath in the village tank applying earth over her forehead. After this she massages oil on her head and a mixture of oil and turmeric paste over her body and takes bath again. Use of soaps for bathing is being allowed now-a-days. The girl then wears a new saree or at least a clean saree, puts on new bangles, pays respect to her superiors and visits the temple of Lord *Shiva* in the company of her women relatives and friends with a cocoanut, fruits and flowers to worship the God. After returning home, she takes her normal food and resumes her routine activities as she is now free from pollution.

The father or the male relatives of the girl inform their friends, neighbours and relatives about this. There is a phrase to convey this stage i.e., "The girl became a pretty little woman". Sometimes if the father can afford, he entertains his neighbours with liquor.

IV. MARRIAGE

Marriage is the most significant and welcome event in the Ganda life. It serves the Ganda as a passport to adult life and to become a full-fledged member of their society in which bachelors and spinsters having less social prestige are hard to find. It is primarily meant to continue and extend the family line and perpetuate their race.

The Gandas believe that unless a man gets married he cannot have legitimate claim to beget a child and unless he begets a child, especially a son, neither he can get salvation in after-world, nor can he continue ancestral worship and keep the family tie intact. So it is a moral obligation for every Ganda to marry in order to keep the continuity of family bond. But there is also an important biological aspect of marriage that is the gratification of sex. Therefore they consider the permanent provision of a mate to be an indispensable primary need. There are people among them who assert without qualification that a Ganda boy or girl must have a permanent mate. This attitude, strengthened by the general belief that there is no salvation for one who has no male issues makes marriage indispensable.

Bride Price and Economic Aspects of Marriage

Marriage is a very important occasion in the life of the Ganda. Economically, marriage is an occasion of unprecedented give and take, customary exchanges of gifts, feasts and acquisition of a bride thus, adding to the economic assets of the family. Marriage lies at the very root of the family which is the most fundamental and basic unit of the Ganda society. Where marriage to lose any of its utility and viability, the family could scarcely continue to function unimpaired. Since the circulation of valued objects reinforces the whole structure of marriage, it also acts as a guarantee

of the effective functioning of the family and the economic life of the Ganda. There lies the economic importance of a Ganda marriage.

The institution of 'bride wealth' is present among the Gandas. They call it *Kanyamul*. In all cases of normal and socially approved marital alliances, the boy's side makes a customary payment of 'bride price' to the girl's side to finalise the marriage. This kind of payment may be interpreted as a compensation to the girl's side for the loss of the girl who is valued as an important economic asset to her parent's family. On the other hand, the boy's side acquires this asset. The boy himself gets a bride who becomes his life partner and helps him in his struggle for social survival. The 'bride price' also serves as a 'contract' to establish alliance between the kin-groups of the boy and the girl and to make the marriage permanent. Infidelity of either of the partners and misconduct of their parents sometimes causes violation of this contract. In such cases the 'bride price' is treated as a 'security' and the avenged party claims back or forfeits the security as the case may be. This appears to be the most significant economic aspect of the Ganda marriage.

Bride price is paid more or less in almost all types of Ganda marriages with few exceptions. It is negotiated and paid in full before the commencement of the wedding ceremony. In other words, the marriage proposals are finalised by mutual negotiation of bride price between both the parties and final payment of it by the boy's parents and relatives to the girl's parents in presence of the witnesses who are the fellow villagers. Prior to the date of final payment, the parents of the boy and the girl or their representatives visit each other several times and carry on negotiations privately about the amount of money and materials of bride price. When they mutually arrive at a decision they fix up a date for making the actual and ceremonial payment. On that day the boy's father arrives with some elderly men of his village at the bride's house. The party on their arrival is received warmly and entertained with tea and *biris* by the bride's relatives. Then both the parties sit down on the ground in two separate groups facing each other. Mock negotiations to fix up the bride price start. The bride's

side always demand a higher amount while the groom's side request for concessions, and the former thus goes on reducing the amount from time to time. The tug of war between both the groups continues till they mutually settle on a specific amount.

In case the parties stood rigidly on their respective claims failing to arrive at a mutual consensus, the traditional headman and the village elders comprising the caste panchayat of the girl's village are called in to intervene. The *bhadralok*, i. e. the elderly gentlemen of the caste panchayat, decide the matter easily. As they know very well that the amount must have been mutually fixed up by both the parties before hand, they simply ask both the parties to state that amount without further plays. When the prefixed amount is disclosed by either of the parties, the caste panchayat orders the actual payment then and there, before all present there as witness. After the boy's party customarily makes the payment to the girl's father and relatives, either of the parties makes a small payment that varies between minimum of Rs. 11 to Rs. 201 at the maximum, to the headman of the caste panchayat. This is a kind of 'marriage fee' paid to the caste authorities for their intervention in case of future disputes between both the parties. The Gandas call it 'Jati fee'. This money is deposited in the common fund of the village and spent for public rituals and feasts. In addition to that a small amount of money (from Re. 0.50 to Rs. 101) is paid by both the parties in honour of the village deity.

The rate of bride price varies from place to place. Generally the minimum amount of hard cash payment is Rs. 101. The *Jati Sabha* (Caste Council) of the Ganda of Sambalpur has fixed a very nominal amount of Rs. 11 for those who are unable to pay higher amount. Besides cash, bride price also includes payments in kinds i. e. customary gifts of ornaments, bangles, cosmetics and clothings for the bride. At least four pieces of clothings are given by the grooms' side. One saree is for the bride. It is called *bandapana saree*. The bride wears this saree at the time of wedding ritual alongwith the bangles, *sankha* (a kind of red coloured bangles made of lakh worn by married women only), ornaments etc., presented by her parents, relatives and in-laws. Another saree called

as *maisera* is presented to the bride's mother. The bride's brother receives a piece of *dhoti* (loin cloth) called *salabidha*. At the time of marriage ritual, the left palm of the bride and the right palm of the groom are kept over each other and tied with knot called *hastaganthi* by which the union of two hearts is ritualized. At the time of *hastaganthi*, the younger brother of the bride beats at the back of the groom that symbolizes a mock hostility of the younger brother against the groom who is taking away his beloved sister by marriage. For this ceremonial *salabidha* he is presented with a piece of *dhoti* by the groom's side. In case the bride has no brother of her own, anybody standing with her in the relationships of a classificatory younger brother is called to perform the *salabidha* and receive the present. The fourth piece of cloth called *gan chirha* is presented to the headman of the village. In former days the *Gauntia* was receiving this gift. Now-a-days, the ward member of the village is getting this gift as the post of *Gauntia* has been abolished. This is probably given in honour and recognition of his authority in the village so that in case of any further dispute between both the parties, his intervention can be secured.

Besides, cash payments, the customary gifts of clothing, cosmetics, ornaments, etc. of the bride price paid by the groom's side to the bride's parents ordinarily costs between rupees four hundred to one thousand. It is nearly equal to the amount of cash transactions. Well-to-do families pay more money, gifts and sometimes food materials like rice, molasses, pulses, etc. Thus total transaction of money and materials usually costs between rupees six hundred to more than a thousand, which is certainly a major economic bargain for the bride's parents and on the otherhand very taxing upon the groom's side.

Undoubtedly, this economic burden of bride price is very heavy for the average Ganda. The Gandas are a custom-bound and tradition-minded people. Tradition reigns supreme in their social life. They suffer much to keep up their tradition which is true in case of bride price. Brideprice is a large sum that a Ganda pays orreceives in his life. Even debts can be secured in anticipation of it. The Ganda boys work hard to save money for

this purposes. Sometimes they remain bachelors upto the age of 30—35 until, they can earn and gather enough resources to pay the bride price and acquire a bride. Many Ganda boys and their parents incur large debts or sell away their lands, bullocks, grains and other valuable properties to pay for this customary bride price.

Besides the bride price, the groom's side also incur large expenses in feeding the villagers on the occasion of marriage ceremony. On the other hand, the bride's side meets big expenses in giving presents of clothes, ornaments, cosmetics, sweets and household assets and furnitures to the bride and the groom. This tradition is called *Jautuka*. It is of recent origin and borrowed from the dowry system of the upper caste neighbours. The *Jautuka* comprises sarees, dresses, cots, almirahs, suitcases, *bhara*, i.e. packages of sweets, cakes and foodgrains, etc. Economically well-up families give more dowry. Sometimes, the cost of dowry given by the bride's parents exceeds the cost of bride price received by them.

Apart from this, the bride's parents spend a lot to feed the guests on either side twice, i.e. once on the day of final negotiation and payment of bride price and once on the day of marriage. These feasts cost a lot to both the parties. These are the occasions to which the half-starved people look forward anxiously to enjoy delicious food to their heart content. By long standing convention, meat and liquor are served free for all in such feasts and the expenses go up.

In addition to that, customary exchange of gifts and *bharas* (package of sweets, cakes and other food items) takes place between the bride's and the groom's household before and after marriage, specially on festive occasions like *Nuakhia*, *Pus Punei*, *Savitri Amavasya*, *Dussera*, etc. Thus the total expenses of a marriage for each side totals upto thousands of rupees. Hence, there is a common Ganda saying, "a decent marriage costs over a thousand of rupees at the least". Indeed this is a very heavy economic burden for the average Ganda family. Many poor families have been ruined economically for this extravaganza. It

might have its social worth in former days but today its revaluation and reforms should be made in view of the poverty and indebtedness of the Gandas.

To look from the other angle, these are the occasions of enjoyment and social intercourse. The economic framework on which they rest is always in the forefront. They involve a great expenditure and hence, are an incentive to production and saving.

Since marriage exerts great economic strain upon the boy's and the girl's households, their society has made appropriate provisions to ensure that the concerned household do not bear this all alone. The burden is shared by the friends and relatives in both the sides. There are certain customary payments which are reciprocal in character and have a great economic significance in the sense of co-operative financing of some part of marriage expenses. There is a custom that the guests, the relatives and the neighbours who are invited to attend a marriage, put money in a bronze disc which some times amounts to a total of hundreds of rupees. This money is presented to the couple. The relatives particularly, give customary gifts of money and foodgrains called *bhara* causing a further reduction in expenses. Especially, the maternal uncles or grandfathers of the boy and the girl on either side make substantial contribution in forms of money and materials and sometimes, share a major part of the total expenses. These gifts and contributions are a socio-economic motive force which develops more solid relationship between the kith and kin. As per their tradition, an accurate account of the gifts, money and other contributions given by the friends and relatives is maintained by the recipient in such occasions so that he can pay back the same or more than that when such occasions arise at the contributor's household.

The economic transactions of a marriage are customary but not very rigid. When disputes occur between the concerned parties the caste panchayat is called in to settle the issue and the decision of the panchayat in such cases is final and binding upon the concerned parties. In certain deserving cases the panchayat grants relaxations considering the relative economic status and other deciding factors in either side. Eligible Ganda men of depressed economic status

who are unable to bear the economic strains of acquiring a bride always appeal to the caste panchayat for concessions which is favourably granted in needy cases. Otherwise, these deprived men resort to various ways of acquiring mates provided by their tradition in order to bring down the expenses within their own limits. These are described in the following pages.

Rules and Types of Marriage

When a Ganda boy grows into manhood, he becomes self-conscious. He thinks about beautiful girls and takes care of his personal appearance. His parents then know that their son deserves a bride soon.

When the parents and relatives of a Ganda boy of marriageable age seek for a bride, they abide by certain unwritten but customary rules and norms relating to 'selection of a mate'. The Gandas are divided into a number of exogamous decent groups or sects called, *barga*. Members of a *barga* consider themselves to be descendants from a common mythical ancestor. Thus they are related to each other as consanguineal kins and any sexual relationship between them is incestuous and hence, strictly tabooed. That is why the rules of *barga* exogamy is strictly followed and marriage between a boy and a girl of the same *barga* is prohibited.

Besides observing *barga* exogamy, the marriage rules of the Ganda further prescribes that the marrying mates should stand in proper generation to each other. While marriage between members of the same or alternate generation is considered ideal, that is between the members of adjacent generation is considered irregular and improper.

After looking into the factors of generation, the age difference between the boy and the girl is also taken into consideration. It is desirable that the girl should be younger than the boy and the age difference between both of them should be three years atleast.

The Gandas prefer to establish marital alliance with their relations. As per the Ganda marriage customs, they give preference to cross-cousin, levirate and sororate type of marriages over other types of marriages. The most preferable and desirable match for a boy is

his mother's brother's daughter or his brother's wife's younger sister. When such possibilities do not exist, the parents of the boy look for a bride elsewhere.

All these preferential type of marriages are not obligatory or compulsory. The boy and the girl and their parents are free to defer from such alliances. In the Ganda society, the consent of the proposed pair and especially that of the girl is indispensable. It is contrary to their brothers and sisters of upper castes who have less freedom of choice in this regard.

The cross-cousin marriage is called *danapatra*. Marriage between parallel cousins are avoided. The Gandas say that one should preferably marry his mother's brother's daughter or father's sister's daughter but not his mother's sister's daughter. Although no specific taboo or prohibition exists against marrying mother's sister's daughter, this kind of marriage is considered improper and is found in isolated cases.

Village exogamy is not practised by the Ganda. The Ganda settlement consists of households belonging to different *barga* among whom marital alliances are permissible. In very extreme cases, a small settlement may be occupied by the members of one and the same *barga* and in that case, village exogamy is strictly enforced in favour of *barga* exogamy. In general practice, the Gandas choose to select mate from outside one's own village.

Rules of endogamy are observed by various subcastes and subsections of the Ganda. The Oriya Ganda and the Laria Ganda intermarry. The Kabria or the Kabirpanthi Gandas are strictly endogamous as they consider themselves superior to the other sections. The Kandhria Ganda because of their lowly and unclean social habits like beef eating are treated as inferior and looked down upon by other sections of the Ganda. Marital alliances with the Kandhria are therefore, prohibited. However, the cases of marital alliance between the Kandhria and other three subsections of the community are few and far between. A Ganda old man said that he brought for his son a bride without knowing that she is Kandhria.

The Gandas strictly observe caste endogamy. Marrying outside the caste is restricted. When such cases happen, negative social sanctions are switched into action in a socially organised way. Marriage of the either sex in upper castes is not viewed so seriously as it is done in case of marriages with the lower castes. Their traditional caste council takes cognizance of such serious offences.

There are certain relations granted for a boy marrying in a lower caste. After paying a penalty feast to the traditional caste council and undergoing necessary purificatory rituals he may be accepted into the caste again. But a girl committing the same mistake is never excused. She is outcasted for ever. The caste council holds her parents responsible for this and realizes heavy penalty from them in forms of money and a feast. Further, it directs the parents to observe mortuary rites considering their daughter dead and gone. When the daughter visits her parents later, she is not allowed to enter in their house but stay outside and cook her own meals.

Among the Gandas, monogamy is the rule and polygamy is the exception. Economic considerations go in favour of monogamous marriages. However, their society does not object to polygamous marriages when a person has resources to pay the bride price for more than one wife and support the wives along with their children. A man is not ordinarily permitted to accept a second wife, while the first wife is living with him. He can remarry after divorcing his first wife. Under the circumstances of death or sterility or disability of the first wife a man is allowed to marry again. When the first wife is living and the husband wants second marriage, the consent of the first wife is needed without which the marriage is not socially permitted. In such cases, the parents of the second bride claim the bride price at a rate much higher than the prevailing rate. The caste panchayat also collects a fine from the husband.

As a rule, adult marriages are preferred and practised in the Ganda society. The girls are considered fit for marriage after attaining puberty. Normally, the boys marry between eighteen and thirty years of age and girls between fourteen and twenty-four years of age,

In the past, the institution of 'child marriage' was present among the Gandas. Now-a-days, it has been outdated. This kind of marriage is called *phul byaha* or *dola byaha*. In this marriage, the parents of a small boy and a girl both within the age-group of three years to ten years, first propose and decide to perform this marriage. An auspicious date for the wedding is fixed in consultation with the village astrologer, on that day, marriage ceremony is held. The groom's party proceeds to the bride's house in a procession. The parents of the bride present the groom with costly ornaments and clothings. The guests and villagers are entertained in sumptuous feast. After the marriage rituals are over the groom and his party come back to the groom's house. This little bride lives with her parents till she attains puberty. During this time the groom's parents send customary gifts of new sarees, bangles, sweets and cakes for their child daughter-in-law every year especially on the occasions of *Pus Punei* and *Nuakhia* festivals. When the girl attains puberty, again a formal marriage ceremony called *Bandapana* is performed and full amount of bride price is paid to the parents of the bride by the groom's parents. Then the bride leaves her parents and accompanies the groom to live with him. This kind of marriage is very elaborate and expensive. Only few rich people afford this marriage in order to enhance their social prestige.

Russel and Hiralal report about a fictitious marriage that was formerly prevalent among the Gandas of Central Provinces.

"If a girl arrives at maturity without a husband found for her, she is wedded to spear stockup in the courtyard of the house and then given away to anybody who wished to take her."

This kind of marriage is also prevalent among the neighbouring Bhunjia and Gond of northern and southern Orissa. Among the Ganda this has become outdated now.

Levirate type of marriages are preferred and practised in the Ganda society under certain circumstances. As per the tradition, the elder brother can not marry the widow of his deceased younger

brother because with this woman he stands in a relationship of avoidance. But a younger brother has the first claim to marry the widow of his deceased elder brother, if the latter is willing to do so. In case the deceased person had no younger brother, his widow may be given in marriage to anybody of his own village and *barga*, who is his classificatory younger brother. This kind of marriage is called *bhauja bohu byaha*.

This is a socially accepted practice based upon important social and economic considerations. The social reason is that, the Gandas do not like a young and widow daughter-in-law of their family to elope with, marry or indulge in clandestine affairs with an outsider of opposite sex because it brings disgrace to her ex-husband's family. Her remarriage to a close kin of her ex-husband prevents this mishap. Nevertheless, the economic aspect of such kind of marriage is quite significant. That is to say, there is no heavy economic burden of bride price, as it has already been paid during her first marriage to her parents, who can not claim it again for her second marriage to her ex-husband's younger brother. In addition to the exemption from the bride price, the younger brother also inherits all the properties of his deceased elder brother by marrying his widow.

All levirate kind of marriages in the Ganda society are indeed widow marriages. But not all kinds of widow marriages are levirates. Ganda women, widow or unmarried, are free to choose their mates. In case a widow does not want she can refuse to the levirate matrimony and remarry anybody else whom she has choosen. Sometimes, when a suitable match is not available for her for the levirate type of marriage, her in-laws and her own parents and relatives arrange her marriage elsewhere, after knowing her mind and preferences. In this case, neither her own parents nor the parents of her ex-husband claim bride price from her second husband, not even, when she elopes with him disregarding her parents and former in-laws. The Gandas say that they claim a price for the marriage of their daughters but not for their daughter-in-laws.

These economic concessions of the widow marriage, i.e. the exemption from the payment of bride price, gives an opportunity to the poor Ganda men to acquire brides for themselves. Particularly,

a widower avails greater economic benefits by marrying a widow, because to wed a young and virgin girl he has to pay an exorbitant amount of bride price, much higher than the normal marriage rates. Moreover, a young girl or her guardians do not ordinarily prefer the wed lock with a widower.

Under such circumstances, levirate in most cases takes the form of widow marriage, majority of which are solemnised between widows and widowers in the Ganda society. Sexual attachment may be less in such kind of marriages, if the partners are older. But the important and practical benefit derived out of such marriages are the mutual co-operation and companionship for the socio-economic survival, badly needed at an old age. This kind of widow marriage, i.e. the remarriage of an widow to anybody else other than her ex-husband's younger brother or kin is called *randi byaha*.

Widow marriage can takes place when both the parties, i.e. the marrying partners and their parents and relatives are willing. Sometimes, it has been recorded that, young widows elope with their lovers if their guardians do not approve their union and the couple gets their marriage socially approved by paying a penalty feast to their villagers and caste council. The traditional caste panchayat of the Ganda reserves the sole authority to decide and grant such kind of marriages. Hence, in all kinds of widow marriages the recognition and approval of relatives, co-villagers as well as their traditional caste panchayat is most essential. In order to get this approval the groom pays a fine to the panchayat and entertains its members, i.e. the villagers in a sumptuous communal feast with meat and liquor. A case study of widow re-marriage performed in the Ganda village, Barangpali, in which a young widow married a person other than her ex-husband's younger brother shows that, the second husband of the widow paid 30 Kgs. of rice, 5 Kgs. of green gram, and other food stuffs with Rs. 50 for meat and liquor to the caste panchayat for the feast. In addition to that he paid Rs. 5 to be spent in worshipping the village shrine.

In widow marriages, no special or regular rites are performed. The procedure involves simple and formal acceptance of the widow by the man in presence of witnesses including relations from either

side and village elders. The groom entertains everybody with a dinner to celebrate the occasion. The date of marriage is fixed beforehand in consultation with the village astrologer. On that day, the groom goes to the bride's house with his friends and relatives. There he offers presents of clothes, ornaments and a box of vermilion to the bride and puts a vermilion mark on the forehead of the bride. Then the groom and his bride seat upon a piece of cloth or mat. The groom holds the hand of his bride and takes her to his home. The onlookers throw rice, flowers and coins to them. Thus the marriage is solemnized.

Sororate types of marriage have its own limitations. While the marriage of a person with the elder sister of his wife or his elder brother's wife is prohibited, one can preferably marry the younger sisters of the relations without any restriction because the relationship of a man with the former kind of woman is of avoidance and with the latter is of joking. A man is permitted to marry his *sali* (wife's younger sister) under certain circumstances. Rarely, a man marries his *sali* when his first wife is living with him. If he so desires, the man must obtain prior consent of his wife, his *sali* and their parents. But when a man becomes widower having small children and he has a grown up *sali* who herself and their parents are willing for this marriage, then both the parties may decide upon performing this marriage primarily for the sake of the small children left by the first wife. Sometimes, a recalcitrant and unchaste wife may desert his husband and elope with somebody forcing the husband to divorce her. After the divorce is finalised, he or his parents may claim back the bride price from the parents of the wronged woman. Alternatively, the parents of the first wife may propose for the marriage of their younger daughter who is the *sali* of the man, provided she is grown up and willing, in order to avoid repayment of the bride price. In these kinds of marriages, bride price is not paid and the second wife inherits all the belongings and ornaments of the first wife. The marriage is ratified in the caste panchayat by paying a feast. This type of marriage is called *sali byaha*.

Marriage by elopement and love marriage though not very common but are often practised among the Gandas. This kind of marriage result from love affairs between a Ganda boy and a girl. When the boy and the girl want to marry each other but their parents donot

approve this or the boy is not financially capable of paying the amount of bride price claimed by the girl's parents, the boy persuades the girl to elope with him. Both of them flee away to a distant place marry secretly and live like husband and wife for sometime. After a few months the couple returns to their village and surrender themselves before their caste panchayat seeking recognition of their clandestine wed lock. The caste panchayat summons the parents of the couple and influences them to agree to this union. The amount of bride price is either reduced or totally exempted in favour of the boy's side, considering their relative economic condition. But the marriage is formally recognised and the couple is accepted into their caste when the boy's side pays a fine and feast to his caste panchayat. Sometimes, if both the boy's and girl's parents can afford, a formal marriage ceremony is held within feasts and festivities.

Often it so happens that, an unmarried girl develops sexual intimacy with a boy and becomes pregnant. Finding the circumstances unfavourable for their marriage she prefers to elope with her lover, get married secretly and then come back to seek recognition from their caste panchayat. Alternatively, the parents of the pregnant girl may bring the issue to the notice of the caste panchayat. The caste panchayat asks the girl to reveal her lover's name and the name stated by her is taken for granted without any disputes. The parents of the boy is called before the panchayat and pressed for consenting upon the marriage between the boy and the girl. In such cases, after considering the pleas of both the parties the caste panchayat may order part or full payment of the bride price or in extreme cases direct the girl's side to forego the payment when the boy's parents are very poor or if the girl is in an advanced stage of pregnancy and there is nobody other than the boy willing to accept this girl.

In all the cases of love marriages the caste panchayat sees, if the marriage between the boy and the girl is likely to breach the rules of the *barga* exogamy and other marriage customs. In case the marriage violates the established marriage rules, the girl is given in marriage to anybody else who is willing to accept her and the girl's side is asked to forego the bride price. But in all such cases a penalty feast with meat and liquor is collected from the boy's side who

is always held responsible for this sexual offence. The penalty charged by the caste panchayat from the boy's side responsible for violation of *barga* exogamy is higher. Still higher penalty is realized in terms of fine and feast if the girl is pregnant as the caste panchayat takes a serious view of this moral offence. These negative social sanctions of the Ganda community act as a powerful deterrent against breach of established social norms.

Marriage by service or probationary marriages are often found among the Ganda though such cases are few. When a Ganda boy becomes adult his desire for acquiring a bride is so strong that he resorts to various socially accepted alternatives in case he is financially handicapped to pay the bride price and get a wife. One of the alternatives is that a poor Ganda boy may go to the parents of the girl he desired to marry. He may live with them, serve them and help them in their economic pursuits, thereby making substantial contributions to their family income. Thus he pleases her parents and pleads before them for consenting upon the marriage exempting the bride price. If the marriage takes place the boy pays a fine to the caste panchayat to approve his marriage and then he takes his bride to his own house or if both the sides want he may continue to stay with his in-laws. Often a boy serves the girl's parents for years together.

When the boy lives with the girl's parents and inherits their family property after marriage it is called *ghar jamain*. Usually poor or orphan boys and sonless parents resort to this kind of wed lock for reciprocal economic advantages.

Marriage by exchange of brides is also permitted by the Ganda marriage customs. In this arrangement a boy marries a girl from another family and the vice versa and hence no bride price is paid. Incidence of such marriages are less as compared to other types of marriages. Prior approval of the caste panchayat is necessary in this kind of marriage.

Taking into account the relative social significance, the expenses, the kind of ceremony and the place of marriage, the Gandas distinguish between two kinds of marriages namely, *barat* and *kanya uska*. The term *barat* means the groom and his party move to the bride's

place in a grand procession with pomp and ceremony. This kind of marriage ceremony is more prestigious and expensive than others. Only well-to-do families can afford to perform this. The poor people usually go for the alternative called *kanya uska*, which is less expensive. In this kind of ceremony the bride is sent to the groom's place where marriage ritual is performed. Thus both the sides are saved from the high expenses of entertaining a *barat* when the marriage takes place at the bride's place.

The most common and ideal type of marital alliance of the Ganda is the marriage by negotiation and arrangement. In this type the wedding is performed by prior negotiations and payment of the bride price to the bride's party. When parents of an adult boy think of his marriage, they seek for an eligible bride. The parents not only search themselves for girls according to their choice and limitations but also solicit the help of their friends and relatives for the same. After examining the information about various girls they choose one or few of them and engage their close relatives and friends as mediators or go-betweeners to proceed further with the proposal. The middleman meets the father of the girl with the help of his friends or relatives in the girl's village and formally initiates the proposal. Informal dialogues take place between him and the girl, about their parents, their family, their socio-economic status, their circle of relatives and also about the amount of bride price offered by the boy's parents. This discussion usually takes place on festive days, ceremonial occasions, weekly market places, annual fairs, etc., when both the parties are free and relaxing. The middle man invites the girl's father to a liquor shop for a drink. There he puts forth the proposal and discussion takes place.

Then they come back to the girl's house where the girl's mother feeds them in a good dinner. The girl's father consults with his wife about the proposal. If both of them agree, they ask their daughter directly or through her friends or close associates. At this time the girl, if she knows the boy, has seen him and willing to marry him, may convey her consent to her parents. Otherwise, she may refuse or remain silent and reserve her opinion till she sees the boy and is well informed about him. On the other side, the boy may behave in the similar manner.

It is very important to mention here that, in a society like that of the Ganda, where bride price is indispensable in matrimonial alliances, the proposal for marriage is always initiated from the boy's side and the consent of both the marrying partners, i.e., the boy and the girl are the deciding factors in finalising a marriage proposal. A Ganda boy or girl has the liberty to refuse the choice of his or her parents and press them with his or her own choice; otherwise, the incumbent resorts to other means to realise his or her wishes. But by moral consideration the boy or the girl do not like to behave against the wishes of their parents for the fear of social reprobation. Nevertheless, if a girl wants to marry a boy with whom she is in love she can do so by several other means as described earlier. The behaviour of revolt against tradition do not usually occur among the Ganda youth, but with a few exceptions.

Thus the parents of the girl convey their provisional consent upon the proposal to the middleman. He leaves their house next morning after collecting certain accurate and vital information about the girl and their family among which the most important ones are about the girl's date of birth, date of attaining puberty, *barga*, family deities, etc. He delivers all the information to the boy's father. The latter sends the biodata of his boy and the girl to the traditional caste priest called *Birtia* or to the village astrologer to match them and advise whether the union shall be happy. A nominal cash remuneration is paid to the match-maker for his services.

If everything is well and good the boy's parents with their close relatives visit the girl's house with sweets and other gifts on a festive day or an auspicious day scheduled for the purpose, with prior consultation. Sometimes, some elderly men and the boy himself accompany the party.

The girl's parents are informed earlier through relatives and the middleman about the date of visit. Accordingly, the girl's parents welcome the boy's party and give them a mat to sit upon. If they are interested in the proposal they accept the gifts from the boy's parents. Otherwise, they may refuse and boy's parents understand their intention and return home without carrying the

matter further. If the girl's parents accept the gifts from boy's parents, then discussions shall start between both the parties about the bride price and marriage. If necessary, the boy and girl are shown to each other and their consent is finally obtained. The Gandas say that generally good boys and girls do not go against the wishes of their elders.

Then the matter of bride price is finalised between both parties. If at the end, both the parties feel that there is nothing wrong in this proposed matrimonial alliance, they fix up the date for the ceremonial payment of bride price and the date of wedding. After this session the bride's parents entertain their guests with tea, foods and drinks. The boy's parents put on the engagement ring on the finger of their son's would-be bride or gift some money showing their approval.

After that the boy's parents and relatives visit the girl's house several times, if the date of wedding is delayed. The purpose of such interim visits are quite social. That is done to finalise all the details of marriage, strengthen the relationship between both the family and of course, to know if the girl's parents have changed their mind and proceeding in other attractive proposals. Finally, before the date of marriage, the boy's father, uncle, other male relatives and the elder men of the village come to the girl's house to pay the bride price institutionally in presence of their caste brothers. The matter is ritually formalized by breaking a coconut. After the customary payment is performed, girl's parents feed their guests in a dinner in which liquor is also served. The maternal uncle or grandfather of the boy and the girl on either side always take a leading role in all these affairs. In these days the Ganda call this ceremony as *Nirbandha* following the upper caste traditions. Often, the expenses of a *Nirbandha* are shared between both the parties.

Payment of bride price finalises the matrimony once for all. Then preparations are made on either side for the marriage ceremony. Friends and relatives are informed and invited.

On the day before seven days of wedding ceremony, the boy's father, uncle and few male relatives visit the girl's house with customary presents of clothes, ornaments, sarees, bangles and packages of rice, parched rice, black gram, green gram, coconut, molasses and sweets. The party is warmly received by the girl's relatives and all of them sit together to examine the gifts and assess their worth both socially and economically. Then the women of the girl's side dress the girl with the sarees and ornaments presented by her groom's parents. The girl is brought before the groom's party and the latter pays a nominal customary tip of Rs. 10 to Rs. 25 for seeing the girl. The girl bows her head and pays respect to everybody present there. After this session the groom's party are entertained with a feast. Next day they return to their native place. This customary visit is called *bandana* or *pindhani ghar*.

The date of marriage is fixed in an auspicious day according to the *panji*, i.e. the Hindu annual calendar. This is done in consultation with the village astrologer. In actual practice Ganda weddings are generally held after harvest season. The months namely *Magh*, *Phagun* and *Chait* are most favourable for this purpose. The second fortnight of a month especially the 10th day (Dasami) of this fortnight are ideal for wedding. On the other hand the four rainy months from *Sawan* to *Kuanr* or *Kartik*, the dark fortnight of a month. Saturday, Thursday and Tuesday are not considered auspicious for the purpose of wedding.

The wedding ceremony is generally held for two consecutive days. On the preceeding day of actual wedding, *Ganseiba* or *Mangan* function is held in the house of the bride as well as the groom. Seven or five married women on either side (always in odd number-never in even number as, odd numbers are always considered lucky and auspicious) bathe the bride and the bride-groom after massaging turmeric paste and oil. The bride as well as the groom are given new clothes to wear.

The following day is the wedding day. The bride-groom is dressed with his wedding clothes and moves to the bride's house with a big party of his relatives, friends and villagers in a grand procession accompanied by a country band party playing sweet music. When the party reaches the bride's village, they are

cordially received by the bride's friends and relatives. The traditional *Barik* (the barber) or the bride's maternal uncle or one of her male relatives washes the feet of the members of the groom's party and spreads mats to sit on. Tea, tobacco leaves and *bidi* are offered to them. During reception, young boys and girls of both sides hold a competition of singing humorous songs or engage in exchanging jokes.

When the groom first reaches at the doorsteps of the bride's house the *galseka* ceremony is conducted before he enters into the house. In this ceremony a group of seven married women relatives of the bride carry a bamboo basket containing rice, turmeric, flowers of seven different colours, mustard, *til*, seven blades of grass, seven mango leaves, in seven different leaf cups and a *deep* (burning lamp). They stand in front of the groom. Each of them holds the basket in both of her hands and turns it around the face of the groom seven times. Then she warms a mango leaf for sometime over the burning lamp and puts it on the cheeks of the bride-groom on either side. Other women throw rice, turmeric, mustard, *til*, flowers etc. over the head of the groom and then leave him away to enter into the house.

After this ceremony, the bride is bathed again. She then wears her new wedding sarees and ornaments presented by her groom's side. The male relatives of the bride tie seven or nine knots on her saree as well as on the groom's cloth. In these knots, they tie seven kinds of sacred objects namely, betel nut, green gram, *til*, rice, blades of grass, molasses, myrobalan and flowers. The bridegroom is also bathed and given new clothes to wear. A piece of new thread knotted with some mango leaves is tied on his hands. Both the bride and the groom are then taken separately to the *pitar ghar* or *devta ghar* (the deity room) to pay their homage to the deities and ancestral spirits of the bride's family prior to commencement of the wedding ritual.

The wedding ritual is conducted on a *bedi*, a special altar constructed few days before. Four bamboo poles are fixed at the four corners of this altar, around which grasses are tied with threads. Five *kalasa* (earthen pots containing water and mango leaves),

four in four corners and one at the centre of the altar are placed. Four *deeps* (the burning lamps) are also placed at the four corners. A branch of *Mahua* tree is planted at the centre of the altar. Nobody is allowed to touch the altar before the bride and the groom are brought to it.

The couple is led to the altar. They are seated on a specially prepared bamboo basket called *palla* or *karala* and carried by seven married women seven times around the altar during which the couple is fed with *Arisa pitha*. This function is called *ditlaanacha*. Then they are taken inside the house. A little later the couple is again brought to the altar. This time the bride wears another new saree. They are seated upon a new bedsheet or mat facing east wards. The bride usually seats at the right side of the groom. Then *hastaganthi* or *hatganthala* ritual starts. The brother-in-laws, sister-in-laws, uncles, aunts and other relatives of bride (the number of persons should be five, seven or nine) joins the right hand of the groom with the left hand of the bride over an earthen pot and then tie their hands with a piece of thread and some mango leaves, one by one. At this time, the younger brother of the bride fists at the back of the groom which is called *salabidha*. For doing this he is given a new cloth and five rupees by the groom's side. Musicians play music outside the house.

Then the new couple is greeted by everybody present there. The relatives present money and ornaments to the couple. This is also called *bandana* or *bandapana*. Then the couple is led into the house where a brother-in-law, sister-in-law, a younger brother or a younger sister of the bride is called into untie the knot joining the hands of the couple. The person who opens this knot usually claims money, i. e. from Rs. 5/- to Rs. 15/- by the groom's relatives.

After this, the couple takes bath separately and are fed with delicious dishes by the mother and woman relatives of the bride. The guests are entertained with a feast. Drinking and dancing takes place throughout the night in which young boys and girls from both sides take part.

Next morning the bride leaves her parent's home and goes with the groom to his house. At the time of parting, she cries for her separation from her beloved parents, relatives and friends. The

objects of dowry given by her parents to the groom are carried on the bullock carts. A group of male and female friends and relatives of the bride accompany her. At this time, the groom pays Rs. 10/- to Rs. 20/- to the bride's girl friends as a compensation called *sang-chala* for the loss of the mate whom he is taking away as his bride.

Groom's parents receive the couple and their party on their return to the groom's village. The women relatives of the groom conduct the *galseka* ceremony in the similar manner as it was done to the groom at the bride's house. The women also kiss the cheeks of the couple and lead them into the house by holding their hands. They are fed with cakes and sweets and allowed to retire into a room decorated for the purpose.

The relatives accompanying the bride are well treated and well fed by the groom's parents. The party returns to the bride's village on the same day.

After fifteen days of marriage, the girl visits her parent's house and stays with them for about a month. Then she returns to her husband's house with present of sarees and food materials from her parents.

Residence after Marriage

After marriage a Ganda boy and a girl starts their family of procreation. The Gandas prefer to live in nuclear families. Joint families and Extended families are few in number. It is always desirable that a boy and a girl after their marriage should leave their respective families of orientation, i.e. their parent's family and enter into their own family of procreation. But a few Ganda couple start their married life on their own, constituting and inhabiting a separate household and having a dependable means of livelihood. Such a case may be possible in case of a mature man marrying again after being issueless from his first wife or widowed or divorced. However, such cases are exceptional and most spouses begin their marital life in the husband's or in very rare cases wife's family of orientation. In the Ganda society, the family is patrilineal, patriarchal and patrilocal and the majority of the newly wed young couples live for sometime with the husband's parents until they have the courage and means to set up and support an independent household for themselves.

The newly wed couple's stay with the husband's parents and brothers in a joint family, are caused by various factors among which the exigencies of family situation and economic reasons are important. Sometimes, the husband may be the only son of his old and sick parents whom he should support. There may be some difficulties in sharing the properties of the family among brothers or in finding out a suitable site to set up a new household. Changing the locality of residence by the couple sometimes takes place which is mainly motivated by economic reasons. But, by and large, most of the Ganda couple either prefer to stay with the husband's parents or if possible to shift to a new house in the same locality. The boys are so emotionally attached to their paternal household and village that they rarely think of leaving them even after their marriage.

Divorce

Divorce is a socially accepted phenomenon in the Ganda society. Either of the marrying partners are at liberty to divorce the other. The most common causes of divorce are infidelity, unfaithfulness, and indulgence in extra-marital affairs of either of the partners. Sterility of the wife is not a valid reason for divorcing her as the husband may be permitted to accept another wife in such cases. Maladjustment and incompatibilities in the conjugal life and laziness and quarrelsome nature of the husband or the wife forces them to seek dissolution of marriage. Often a woman who is suspected to be a witch or an evil woman is divorced by her husband.

Both the husband and wife have the right to seek divorce. In actual practice it is the husband who initiates the proposal for divorce. If the wife wants this from her own side she may not seek it in a formal way but she does that by leaving her husband and staying with her parents, relatives, friends or lover and forcing her husband to bring the issue before the caste panchayat for divorce.

The cases of divorce are decided by their caste panchayat in presence of both the parties, i.e. the husband, wife and their respective friends and relatives. The panchayat examines the case history and both the sides plead for the reasons for the dissolution of marriage.

When the panchayat realizes that either of the couple do not want to lead their conjugal life any more and press for separation, it approves the divorce.

If the divorce is caused due to the fault of the wife her parents or her new husband have to payback the amount of bride price to her ex-husband in case she marries again. If it is the husband's fault, he is liable to return the articles of dowry he received from the wife's parents at the time of marriage. Apart from this, in all normal cases of divorce the husband gives his wife a new saree and some money (between Rs. 10/ to Rs. 50/) at the time of finalisation of the divorce before the caste-brothers. The caste panchayat collects a nominal fine from both the parties to grant the divorce. Then the man and the woman are free to marry again.

V. DEATH

Death is the most sorrowful and dreadful event in Ganda life. The Ganda thinks that death abruptly puts an end to the mundane human life causing a permanent loss to the near and the dear ones. A normal death takes place when the human body where the immortal soul is sheltered, grows old and a time comes when it ceases functioning further. Then the soul departs the mortal body and the person dies. Naturally, the Gandas believe in the Hindu philosophy that the body is mortal and the soul is immortal.

When a Ganda person dies his male and female relatives wail which indirectly announces death in the locality. The corpse is carried out of the house only by the sons or male relatives, the head facing outside. It is placed outside, on an upturned *Khatia* (cot) with beddings and other clothings used by the deceased. The corpse is completely covered with a new *dhoti*. Then our male relatives or neighbours carry the cot with the corpse to the burial ground followed by others. A male or female member carries a burning stick called *dui bentia* and the earthen cooking pot from the household of the deceased, which he/she throws away outside the boundary of the village. The widow of the deceased accompanied by other women carries some paddy and a *patuli* (earthen pot in a winnowing fan). It is called *Khanda kula*. In the midway between the burial ground and the locality,

households and change clothes. Again, they return to the house of the deceased with a handful of boiled rice with which they feed the grief-stricken members of the dead man's family. This offering of rice is termed as *Mithi bhat*. As per the practice, an incense stick or resin is burned inside the room for ten consecutive days, where the person breathed his last. It is believed to purify the room polluted by the occurrence of death.

In the evening of the day of death, the villagers hold a condolence meeting to mourn the death and they ask the sons or the relatives of the dead person to provide a goat to be consumed by the villagers in a communal feast. The message of death is sent to the distant kins by sending letters through a traditional messenger belonging to Ghasi caste. The relatives on being informed, first take a bath and then come to the house of the deceased to convey their compassion and co-operate to the grief-stricken members. This is called '*Sankholi*.'

The members of the deceaseds family do not cook food for first three days after death. Food for them is cooked in their house by their neighbours who are supposed to be not under the death pollution. The married daughter of the deceased family are also allowed to cook during this time. The members of the family usually take cooked food once in a day, preferably in the late afternoon or in the evening. This meal is called *Kasa bhat* and cooked without salt, turmeric, oil and spices. Eating of non-vegetarian dishes are strictly tabooed. The eldest son of the deceased, first offers a handful of cooked food items in leaf cups to the departed soul at the junction of the road near the settlement and comes back to take his meal. Then other members of the family take this *Kasa bhat*. During these three days the family members bearing death pollution avoid moving outside the house especially during evening hours. These persons and the persons who carried the corpse, sleep on the ground and abstain from sexual intercourse.

Purificatory rites start from the fourth day of death. The traditional barber called *Barik* (Ganda man who has taken up this profession) comes to shave the eldest son of the deceased who had first browns soil over the corpse. This is only a partial shaving of beards.

moustaches and cutting short of head hairs. Then the shaved persons take bath in the nearby pond, first anointing soil over the head and then anointing oil on the body and the head. This act is called *Tel ghar*. After bath, all of them including the kith and kin take part in a feast where non-vegetarian items like meat curry is served and in which male and female sit together to dine. According to the custom, the persons serving food items start distribution from the right side of the line of persons invited to the feast. After all the items are served and before anybody has started eating, the eldest son of the deceased collects in a leaf plate, seven handful of all food items from the leaf plates of seven persons belonging to different *bargas* (totemic groups). It is offered to the dead ancestors at the junction of the road where the earthen cooking pots have been thrown after the death pollution. Then he comes back to sit with the guests enjoying the feast. The food is cooked by the neighbours who are free from the mortuary pollution. After this feast the dead man's family members cook food for themselves using new earthen cooking pots.

This third day ritual, i. e. the *Tel ghar* marks the beginning of the purificatory rites. Socially as well as ritually it is very important because taking non-vegetarian items, shaving and bathing, anointing oil over the body is tabooed for the relatives of the deceased until the *Tel ghar* ritual is performed.

The relatives have a significant role in helping and cooperating in the ritual performance. They come to the house of the deceased with money and food stuffs like cereals, pulses, milk etc., which are used in the ritual and the feast. Sometimes poor families entirely depend upon their relatives to meet all these expenses. This act of cooperation of the relatives at the time of crisis indicates the strong kinship bond in the Ganda community.

The observance of the mortuary pollution and its associated purificatory rites varies from place to place depending upon the local traditions and the economic status of the bereaved family. Generally the period of pollution is ten or eleven days from the date of death. However, the associated rites and other customary

observance continue till the twelfth day. The observance of *Tel ghar* purificatory ritual on the third or fourth day of death is common and compulsory as the family members and the kins folk of the deceased are considered to be provisionally free from pollution. The feast held on this day may be limited to feed the close kins folk and the lineage members of the bereaved family only. A large scale communal feast for the villagers may be postponed till the rituals of the tenth day (*Dasa*) or eleventh day, if the bereaved family has financial disadvantages to arrange for the heavy expenses of this feast. The observances of the tenth and eleventh day mark the end of mortuary rites. The Ganda families incur large expenses for this purpose. More often than not, the economic burden is so heavy that Ganda families sell away their movable and immovable assets and run into debts. Therefore, the customary law provides that a poor family unable to meet the expenses for the 10th day and 11th day purificatory rites and the communal feast may postpone the observance to a convenient date within a year provided it has observed the *Tel ghar* ritual and provisionally free from pollution.

Nevertheless the purificatory rites held on the tenth and eleventh day are important and indispensable. Until the tenth day, the kith and kin of the deceased take food once in a day and before taking food the chief mourner offers in a leaf cup, a morsel of cooked food to the departed soul. On the eleventh day the earthen cooking pots which have been used since the *Tel ghar* ritual are thrown away and new ones are used. The house of the deceased and the kinsmen are cleaned and washed with cowdung. The women clean the clothes with ash, caustic soda or soap. In the meantime, relatives of the deceased arrive with customary gifts of money, rice and vegetables which are used to feed all and meet other demands of mortuary observances.

On the tenth day, the chief mourner (the son, brother or any male relative of the deceased who first put soil over the corpse) alongwith his male relatives and the persons who carried the corpse and accompanied the funeral procession, goes to a nearby pond, river or stream. They sit down there and

the *Barik* (the barber) shaves them one by one starting from the chief mourner. The chief mourner is fully shaved while others only shave their beards, moustaches and trim their hairs. The *Birtia* (the caste Priest who conducts death rituals) then makes a clay model called *pinda* which ritually represents the dead person. Before the chief mourner is shaved, he offers few grains of rice, mustard, til, *Barkoli* leaves, blades of grass, turmeric and drops of country liquor on the model. Cooked foods are also offered. He invokes the deceased by praying:

"Oh, the Kind Dead!
 God has given me birth in your family.
 You have departed leaving us grief-stricken.
 Today, I am offering this *pinda* to you.
 I am also offering another *pinda*,
 To my dead Ancestors and *Dharam Devta*
 Please be good and kind,
 Bless us and forgive my mistakes."

After this, the ritual shaving session starts. The chief mourner collects a handful of his shaved-off hairs, places it on the *pinda*, and sit down turning his back to the *pinda*. The kinsmen present there, throw coins over the *pinda* and the money thus collected is shared between the *Birtia* and *Barik*. The *Barik* collects the *pinda* and distributes the material in seven leaf plates. The chief mourner throws them into water and takes bath. The *Barik* annoints oil over the body of the chief mourner and he bathes again. Other members also take bath. All of them return and change clothes. The chief mourner wears new clothes. The cast-off clothes are given to the *Barik*.

The chief mourner goes to the *Devta ghar* (the deity room) of his house where the *Birtia* conducts another rite in which cooked foods are offered to the deceased through the *pinda* almost in the similar manner as it has been performed at the bathing ghat. Then the chief mourner takes food, followed by the other members of the family and the relatives. After the food items have been served to the family members a little of each item is taken from each leaf plate in a leaf cup and offered to the deceased. Nobody starts eating before this.

In the evening of the eleventh day a grand communal dinner is given to the castemen and the relatives of the deceased. A male goat or pig is sacrificed in honour of the deities, ancestral spirits and the departed soul. Prior to the sacrifice, everybody present there feed rice, green leaves and vegetables to the animal. The meat of the animal is cooked and served with rice to the guests. Country liquor is also served free for all.

The food is cooked in the deceased's family, by using new earthen cooking pots. The cooked food is first offered to the household deities and the ancestral spirits in the *Devta ghar* before anybody touches it. In the night after the communal dinner, a small raised altar is prepared with rice flour in the room where the person died or in the *Devta ghar* of the house. The altar is covered with a new earthen pot called *patuli* and a lighted lamp is placed near it. Then a group of relatives including the chief mourner go near the hearth where the communal feast was cooked. They carry a burning lamp and two pieces of iron rods in order to ward-off evil influences of ghosts and spirits. They draw five circles on the ground near the hearth using the powders of five different coloured substances namely charcoal, brown earth, rice, turmeric and red earth. The chief mourner holds a *pinda* made of a paste of rice flour and all of them invite the spirit of the departed. As they say, the deceased's spirit comes in the shape of an insect and sits on the *pinda*. In case it tries to fly away or cause any disturbance, the party shall solemnly pray before it not to trouble them and they try to please the spirit by offering liquor, tea, fruits, and sweets time and again. Then they will cover the insect and the *pinda* with a piece of new white cloth, beat two iron rods and come back to the room where the altar has been raised. Before entering the room they shout thrice "*Kaun Jage*" (who is there). The persons present inside the room shout back "*Bhim Jage*" (*Bhim* is here). Then the partymen beat the roof of the room thrice with a bamboo pole and enter into the dark room as the lamp burning there goes off at the time of beating the roof. The party lights the lamp again, remove the new cloth from the *pinda* and examine if the insect is still lying there. Then they remove the earthen pot

laid upon the altar and examine the altar to see any marks left on it by the spirit of the deceased. If no mark is found, the conclusion is drawn that for the deceased, the cycle of transmigration has been completed or that the spirit has been 'laid'. Sometimes marks resembling the foot prints of the animals like horses, elephants, birds etc., are found which means the spirit has gone away riding upon the animal whose foot print is found on the altar.

A *tambi* of rice kept in the room before, is measured again. If it measures more it indicates prosperity and good fortune for the family of the deceased and if it measure less then it is considered as a bad luck. When the rice is more than the pre-measured amount, the extra rice is shared among the close kins of the deceased. Even some shares are kept apart for kins who are absent. The absentees may visit the house of the deceased later at their own convenience and receive their share of rice. Then the *pinda* and the rice flour of the small altar are burried in a corner of the room which represents the seat of the deceased, for all ritual purposes of worshipping the ancestor in the future. The place is plastered with cowdung. The earthen pot and the lamp are thrown away outside the village or cast into a stream.

On the twelfth day, a small feast called *Bara Patra* is given to the close kinsmen. Non vegetarian items are served. The *Birtia* and the *Barik* leaves the deceased's household in the morning after receiving their customary remunerations which comprise brass utensils and other fashionable objects used by the deceased, rice and small pieces of gold. Sometimes, if the family is well-to-do, a cow or a calf or a small plot of land is gifted to the *Birtia*. The *Barik* usually receives money, grains and clothes used by the deceased. Food is also given to the sweepers, musicians and other menials who rendered service during mortuary rites.

On the anniversary of the death, the chief mourner conducts *sradha* rituals offering food to the *pindas* of the deadman and other ancestors of his family. Eating non-vegetarian food items

are tabooed on this day. If he can afford, he entertains his kinsmen in a small feast.

The Gandas bury and burn their dead. But there seems to be no fixed rule that determines the matter. Sometimes the poor instead of burning or burying the dead body scorch it on the face and then throw it into streams or rivers. The cost of firewood for burning the corpse is too much for a poor Ganda family and in most cases the corpses are buried. In case of cremation it is preferably done at the beds or banks of the rivers and streams so that the ashes are washed away by the streams. Where there is no river or streams, a small quantity of ashes with few pieces of charred bones are collected in an earthen pot and carried to the nearest available streams and thrown into it's current.

When a person dies of epidemics and other dreadful diseases like cholera, plague, small-pox, leprosy etc., the body is either buried or thrown into a stream. The dead bodies of all persons died of unnatural or abnormal death are disposed of in this manner. Usually no ceremony is observed at the time of disposal of the dead body. Normally no elaborate death pollution is observed in such cases. Mortuary rites are observed for one day at any date after the occurrence of death. If a child under five years of age dies, the body is either buried or thrown into a river and the purificatory rites are observed for one day preferably the 5th or the 7th day of death.

A woman dying while she is pregnant is buried. Round her grave iron nails or pins are driven at four corners. This is done to prevent her ghost from coming out of the grave and causing harm to others. The Gandas believe that persons dying of unnatural or accidental death such as those caused by epidemics, dreadful diseases, pregnancy, accidents, suicide, snake bite, and attack of animals and those dying as bachelors become dreadful ghosts or malevolent spirits. The Gandas believe in rebirth. Everyone has to take rebirth sometimes or other after death and the life in the next birth depends upon the present existence.

CHAPTER VII

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

The Gandas are well aware of the truth that this world does not belong to human beings, other organisms and the objects of nature, however, tangible and perceptible they may be. There are other invisible and superior agencies whose shadowy impact, the Ganda feels, in all the spheres of his life. They may be classed as gods, deities, great saints, ghosts, witches, dead ancestors, totems, occult energies and omens. Since man's fate is decided by the favour or disfavour of these supernatural beings, the Gandas have evolved and organised their own system of beliefs and practices to deal with these agencies through propitiation, precaution or coercion and manipulate them towards worldly ends. This complex, non-material dimension of the Ganda culture is like a coin; religion and magic are the two sides of the same coin.

Religion permeates but magic shadows the Ganda life. There is an unique blend of the sacred and the profane. Religion is a formidable force for development and sustenance of the community life. External expressions of religion as practised by the Ganda connotes that it comprises all the activities characterised by a propitiatory or persuasive attitude. The core of their religion remains as a localised form of Hinduism of the lower castes with traits borrowed from their tribal neighbours and regional varieties of religious traditions.

GANDA PANTHEON

Gods of Higher Religion

The Ganda is polytheist. The range of his religious beliefs and practices begins with primitive notions of animism and reaches up through the worship of nature deities. The group of the gods and deities of higher order revered by the Ganda, are numerous. Most of the gods belong to the Hindu pantheon and are worshipped by the neighbouring Hindu caste. The higher gods are generally referred as *deva*, *devta*, *deo* or *devi*. They are supposed to be the

inhabitant of heaven as conceived by the Hindus. Many of them are nature gods worshipped in different names by the aboriginal communities.

The Hindu religion attaches highest significance upon a Supreme God namely—*Vishnu* or *Bhagawan* or *Narayan* who is said to have thousands of names for address. He is the Creator, Survivor and Destroyer of everything called the Universe. The Gandas worship Him in a hazy fashion. But following the animistic, monotheistic traditions of the tribals they traditionally recognize a nature god, i. e. the Sun, addressed as *Dharmaraj* or *Dharam Devta*, as their Supreme Deity.

Dharam Dev—The Supreme Deity

Like the Juang, Bhuiyan, and other mundari speaking tribes, the Gandas regard *Dharam Devta* (the Sun God) as their Supreme Deity. He is venerated with distinction as the most divine and benevolent god of the *dharma* (righteousness and virtues). He controls the human as well as the supernatural world. He sees and knows all that goes on upon the earth, hell and heaven. He punishes the misconduct against customary morality. He is the supreme being residing in and shining through the luminaries. He reigns supreme over the earth in removing darkness, purging sin, subduing all evils and showering His kindly blessings on the earth and its inhabitants.

There is no fixed routine for worshipping Him. Nor, his images or idols are found to be worshipped. However, in all domestic and communal rituals, the god receives the first prayers. Oaths and ordeals are taken in His name. Following the Brahmanic tradition, the Ganda bows his head and prays before the rising sun in the morning and while taking his bath.

The members of *Taria* and *Bibhar barga* worship *Dharam Dev* as their totemic god or *Ista Devta*, on the day of *Nuakhia* festival with offerings of cooked food. At the time of distress, when other deities fail to help, the Ganda prays the *Dharam Dev* for relief.

Basu mata or *Dhartimata*

Basu mata or *Dhartimate* (the mother earth), is a nature goddess ranked next to the Supreme God *Dharam Devta*. Ganda's faith in the 'mother earth' has very much in common with those of the

neighbouring tribal communities. The Juang and the Bhuiyan, highly regard the couple, the *Dharam Devta* (the Sun God) and the *Basuki mata*, as their Supreme Deities who receive prayers, sacrifices, and offerings on all rituals. However, the *Basuki mata*, is of lesser significance than the *Dharam Devta* to the Ganda.

The use of earth or soil in the name of *Basu mata* in most of the rituals and agricultural festivals is common in the Ganda society. The *Dharti mata* is addressed as mother and she is the substance of all earthly things. She is considered to be the upholder of the human, plants and animals existing on Her surface. The Ganda peasant worships *Dharti mata* and *Mahalaxmi* (the goddess of wealth), on the festival of *Akshaya Tritiya* in the month of *Vaisakh*. He offers cooked food to the deities in the field saying :

"Oh I *Dharmaraj*, *Dharti ma*, *Mahalaxmi ma*,
 May we have plenty of rain,
 And a bumper harvest
 Keep us in prosperity,
 And protect our crops and cattle.
 Shower your blessings and favours
 On us, your children,
 Here is the offering for thee."

A deadman's wife throws a handful of earth over the deadbody before burial. In all purificatory rituals, the sinner bathes applying soil over his forehead and body. Ganda women are tabooed against ploughing or tilling the earth which is exclusively a man's job. *Masan*, a handful of earth which is collected from the burial site representing the deadman is buried in one corner of the house where the *masan* of other dead ancestors of the family is buried. It is worshipped not only in the death rituals but also on all routine ritual occasions when family ancestors are worshipped. Prayers and rituals to the mother earth is performed by men only. In case of offering cooked food to Her, only men cook it and eat it after offering. Women, who impersonate the goddess are tabooed against cooking, touching and eating this food.

The Supreme Triangle

As mentioned earlier the Ganda believes in the Supreme God, the *Vishnu* or *Parameswar* of the Hindu religion. Lord *Parameswar* manifests Himself in the form of a triangle of three acting Supreme Gods namely, *Brahma*, *Visnu* and *Maheswar* in order to discharge the three prime functions as the Creator, the Survivor and the Destroyer of the Universe respectively.

Lord *Vishnu* is worshipped by various names and by His various incarnations named *Ramachandra*, *Nrushimha*, *Srikrishna*, *Jagannath*, etc. inside temples and shrines. The Gandas being an untouchable caste are not allowed into the temple of *Vishnu* which is attended by a Brahmin priest. The Ganda devotees remain outside the temple premises and send their offerings to the god through the higher castes which is accepted. Many festivals and communal dances are annually held for the propitiation of Lord *Vishnu* and His incarnations. *Janmastami*, the birth day of Lord *Krishna* is observed by the Ganda in the month of Bhadrap (August-September) within fasting and festivities. *Ratha Jatra*, the famous 'Car Festival' is held in the month of Asarh, everywhere in the Ganda country with pomp and ceremony, when all the castes, especially the lower castes who cannot enter into the temples, gather to have a free *darsan* of Lord *Jagannath*, being pulled in his *Ratha* (the car). *Phalguna Purnima* and *Holi* festival are held in the month of *Phagun* and *Chait* (March-April) within dance, merriments and festivities in honour of Lord *Krishna*. Various communal dances and songs such as, *Dalkhai*, *Koisabadi*, *Ghoomra* and *Danda nacha* are held during festive occasions, singing the praise, glory and deeds of Lord *Shiva* and *Vishnu* and their incarnations.

Lord *Brahma*, the Creator of the Universe is never worshipped in the temples or shrines. Neither, any specific festival, ritual dances or songs are held in his honour. He is simply remembered and revered by the Gandas in their folk legends about the origin of the caste, as a deified ancestor who had four sons and the Gandas descended from His outcasted fourth son.

Lord *Shiva* or *Mahadev*, the third god of the 'Supreme Trio' of Hindu pantheon is highly honoured as the *Jati Dev* or the 'patron deity' of the Ganda community. He is most accessible and benevolent to them. His phallic image is worshipped in temples in most of the villages. He is the god who grants offsprings; forgives and purifies the sinners and the polluted ones and is the scarer of all evils and devils. The Monday in every week is traditionally observed by the Ganda as a holiday meant for the worship of Lord *Shiva*. The adult Ganda men and women take rest from their routine activities and observe fasting, until they visit the local *Shiva* temple with offerings of cocoanut, molasses, milk, flowers, etc. during morning hours. Fasting and festivities are observed during festivals like *Sivaratri* and *Sital Sasthi* in honour of Lord *Shiva*. In all sorts of sins and ritual pollutions and especially, those caused by death of a cow in the household, death, birth and menstruation; marriage and acceptance of cooked food from the lower caste, solar and lunar eclipses, epidemics and dreadful diseases and the like, the victim is purified after drinking the *paduka pani* (the bath water of the phallic image) of Lord *Shiva*. Lower castes in Western Orissa are more attached to the cult of *Shiva* worship than the higher castes. Influence of the *Shivite* sect, i. e. worshipping of the phallic image of Lord *Shiva* is conspicuously marked among the untouchable castes like the Ganda. There are obvious reasons for the popular acceptance of this sect by the unprivileged lower castes as it opposes Brahmanism. In view of the attachment of the Ganda to *Shiva* and *Shakti* cult, he may be called a *Shivite*.

The Shakti Cult

The worship of 'Mother Goddess' in Her many forms is also popular among the Gandas. Goddess *Durga*, the consort of Lord *Shiva* is known to the Ganda in many of her names such as, *Mahisamardini*, *Bhabani*, *Uma*, *Parvati*, *Shimhabahini*, *Gouri*, etc. She is worshipped with pomp and ceremony in the festival of *Dussehra* or *Durga Puja* in the month of *Ashwin* (September-October), *Sital Sasthi* in the month of June and *Diwali* or *Kalipuja* in the month of *Kartik* (October-November). She is also revered as the *Adya Shakti* or *Adimata*.



turmeric paste have to be sprinkled over the persons and the household objects for purification. Eclipses are also regarded as bad omens. Frequent occurrence of eclipses foretell grave danger and calamities.

Celestial bodies like stars, comets, rainbow, etc. are also revered for their supernatural powers. The advices of Brahman astrologers are sought to know the position and activities of the stars who regulate human destiny and to prescribe remedial measures.

Lord *Ganesh* and goddess *Saraswati*, two Hindu deities are honoured by the Ganda. Lord *Ganesh* is the god of education, knowledge, wisdom and enterprise, *Saraswati*, the goddess of dance, music, fine arts and education receives a similar following. The students worship both of them. But their popularity is more among the higher castes than the Ganda.

Among other important gods those who deserve mention here are *Yama*, the god of death, truth and virtue; *Balaram*, the elder brother of Lord *Krishna*; *Agni*, the god of fire. All of them are borrowed from the Hindu pantheon. Lord *Balaram* who is a god of agriculture, righteousness and a scarer of all evils, is highly revered by the Ganda. The day of *Sraban Purnima* (also known as *Rakhi Punei* or *Gamha Punei*) is observed by the Ganda as the god's birth day. The Gandas fast and worship Him on this day.

Agni is propitiated in all important rituals. The hearth of the household is considered as the sacred seat of *Agni*. After every cooking session and before anybody takes food, a bit of cooked food is thrown in to the burning fire inside the hearth as an offering to the god. The hearth is plastered with sacred cowdung before and after cooking food since, the failure to do this may cause pollution and make the god angry. Most of the magico-religious rites like those connected with marriage, death, birth, ritual pollutions, etc. are conducted before the burning fire (a Brahmanic tradition) addressing the God *Agni* to be an witness to the act.

Minor Deities

Apart from the important deities of higher order, the Ganda believes in a number of benevolent spiritual beings whom he enlists for aid and protection against the evil forces. These spiritual

Mahalaxmi, the consort of Lord *Vishnu* and the goddess who grants wealth, fortune and material prosperity, receives special reverence from the Ganda. Her influence upon a person's destiny is so great, as the Ganda believes that, without Her blessings a person is doomed to lead a miserable life of poverty and squalour. The persons who are successful in their life are said to be born with the blessings of the goddess. The Thursday is regarded as the day of *Mahalaxmi*. All the four Thursdays in the month of *Margasira* (November-December) are specifically meant to be observed as *Mahalaxmi Puja*. Only married women of the Ganda household conduct this ritual.

The Ganda believes in a number of other deities of higher religion who are of lesser significance than those hitherto described. Like Sun God, Moon also receives reverence from the Ganda. The fullmoon days of the Hindu year marks the end of a Hindu month which are celebrated as different festivals like, *Pus Punei*, *Dol Punei*, *Kuanr Punei*, etc. The Moon is addressed as *Chanda* or *Janha* and referred to the children as their *mama* (maternal uncle). However, there is no direct worship of the Moon in Ganda religion.

Since the Sun and the Moon are deified, Solar and Lunar Eclipses are regarded to be the period of crisis and pollution. Many taboos have been imposed against taking or storing cooked food, pregnant women to come out of the house, commencement of a journey or adventure etc., at this time. Taking food within six hours of the commencement of the eclipse is strictly prohibited since food taken within that time cannot be digested fully at the time of eclipse, which may cause severe ritual pollution effecting dreadful diseases, physical deformity and misfortune by the demonic impact of eclipse. All the remaining cooked food of the household must be thrown out before the eclipses. One must have an empty stomach at the time of eclipse. After the eclipse is over, all men and women must take a purificatory bath, and household utensils, assets, etc. should be properly washed to get rid of the pollution. Especially, the earthen cooking pots have to be thrown out. Ritualized water containing leaves of the holy basil plant an

beings who constitute a class by themselves, may be called as 'minor deities'. They are deities of nature, tutelary godlings, holymen, deified heroes and saints.

Among the tutelary godlings, *Hanuman*, a deified giant ape, who is a puranic hero, is highly respected. He is regarded as a principal devotee of Lord *Ramchandra* (a puranic hero and an incarnation of Lord *Vishnu*) a deity of truth, virtue, strength and valour. His stone images smeared with vermilion are worshipped in small temples.

Kartik, another important god of the Hindu pantheon is respected as the eldest son of Lord *Shiva* and goddess *Parvati*. He is described as the military chief of the heaven, the kingdom of Hindu gods and goddesses. He is the presiding God of battle, strength and courage against all evils. The God is popularly called by the name *Kumar*. The month of *Kartik* which is dedicated in His name has been renamed as *Kuanr mas* (the birth month of *Kumar*).

Among the minor female deities the worship of *Sathi Devi*, *Mangala* and *Karamsani* deserve mention. *Sathi Devi* or *Sathi Budhi* is the goddess of fertility and longevity who grants offsprings as well as long life, good health and prosperity to the children. She is worshipped by the mothers on the occasion of the festival, *Puajuntia* held in the month of *Ashwin* (September-October).

Mangala is elevated to the position of the chief female deity of the untouchable castes in different parts of Orissa. The *Gandas* are the staunch devotees of *Mangala*. She is regarded as the mother or the matron deity of the community. She is propitiated by the *Ganda* women twice in a year i.e., on all the four Tuesdays in the month of *Bhadon* and *Chait*.

Like *Mangala*, *Karamsani* (the deity of good fortune) is a tribal deity who is now being worshipped by the Hindu castes of this region. Goddess *Karamsani* is described to be a group of seven divine sisters, whose praise and benevolent deeds are sung in many local folk dances. She is worshipped with feasts and festivities in the month of *Bhadon* or *Bhadrab* by the *Ganda*.

The *Karma Puja* celebrations performed by the lower castes is known as *Desi Karma* which is somewhat different from those of the higher castes. Sometimes, animal sacrifices are offered to Her in fulfilment of wishes and vows. *Karma puja* is observed in the Ganda area as a major communal festival in which a branch of the *Karma* or *Sal* tree is worshipped.

Forest is regarded as a deity. The presiding deity of the forest is known as *Dongar Devta* or *Jhar Devta* and worshipped by the Ganda of Bolangir, Kalahandi and Phulbani districts. This seems to be a trait borrowed from the neighbouring aboriginals. The members belonging to *Jarasingha*, *Patkhanda*, *Budharaja* and *Bir bargas* regard the forest God as their totemic God and propitiate Him on the occasion of *Nuakhia* ceremony by rituals and animal sacrifices. Generally, a goat or a cock is used as the sacrificial animal in this case. The head of the household who is a male member conducts the ritual and sacrifices, except in the *Jarasingha bargas* in which a lady priest performs the rituals.

Among the local deities, *Samlai* or *Samleswari* receives highest reverence from all communities in Western Orissa. She is worshipped in almost every village and household of the Ganda in Sambalpur and Bolangir districts. Lord *Nrushimhanath* whose famous shrine is located in a beautiful temple at Paikmal of Sambalpur is highly revered by the Ganda. This is a place of pilgrimage. A great fair is held on the day of *Nrushingha Chaturdasi* at the temple where thousands of devotees from different places gather. Similarly another *Shivite* shrine *Harishankar* in the Bolangir district is a holy place of pilgrimage for the Ganda.

The Gandas also rever the great religious leaders, i.e., the *Sadhus* (the great saints) or the *Gurus* (the teachers) who preach the religious doctrines of their respective sects and initiate their followers in to their *panths* (sects). They are held in high esteem and are usually obeyed as the prophets. Two of such sects namely the *Kabirpanth* and *Mahima* (Alekha) *dharma* which commonly challenge the dominance of Brahmanic traditions, caste system, untouchability, polytheistic religion, image worship and anima

worship prevalent in the traditional Hindu *dharma* have gained popular acceptance among the untouchable castes of Western Orissa including the Ganda.

The great saint, Kabir (1380—1420 A. D.), the leader of the sect of *Kabirpanth*, was the chief disciple of his guru, saint Ramananda. The latter was a disciple of the saint Ramanuja who founded this sect with his teachings challenging the oppressive Brahmanic traditions in South India. After him, his disciple Ramananda spread this sect in Northern India. Kabir succeeded his teacher Ramananda in popularising and spreading the movement further. The real greatness of Kabir lies in the enormous influence he exercised upon subsequent religious thinking, especially as it has affected the masses, because of his use of vernacular. His attitude towards the caste system drew to him a large following from the lower levels of the society. He preached equality of all men before god and religion and rejected the distinctions of sect, caste and rank, opposing the supremacy of the Brahmans in the Hinduism. His teachings are found in the famous books *Bijak*, *Sukh Nidhan* and *Adi Grantha*. He came from a weaver's family. Hence, most of the lower weaver castes of Sambalpur and Bolangir like the Ganda are his followers.

The followers of this sect called *Kabria*, comprise a small section among the Ganda who pursue a puritanical life style. They maintain their purity and distinction by abstaining from taking meat and liquor and other impure or immoral deeds as well as practising endogamy among themselves.

The *Mahima dharma* or *Alekh dharma* is a local sect started in the later part of the 19th century by the saint *Bhima Bhoi*, who was a blind and non-literate tribal (Kandh) of Rairakhol in Sambalpur district. This new religion gained tremendous popularity in different parts of Orissa. The followers of this sect wear the bark of the *Kumbhi* trees and regard cow as a divine animal. They condemn the caste system although they accept cooked food from all castes and communities. A large number of the Ganda of Sambalpur and Bolangir districts are followers of this sect.

Village Deities

Conforming to the widespread and age old regional tradition of the Hindu and aboriginal communities, each Ganda village has a group of personified spiritual beings who are exclusively local in character and regarded as the guardians or the custodians of the village. They constitute a separate class of deities known as village deities. These deities are lower in rank than those of the higher gods. Although their powers and spheres of activities are limited, they are capable of solving the immediate crisis of the village, granting personal wishes like offsprings, curing incurable ailments etc. Their jurisdiction also extends to ensuing protection to human life, cattle, crops and households against diseases and calamities.

The guardian deities of the Ganda village generally constitute a couple. The male deity who is regarded as the mother of the village is given different names in different localities like *Grampati*, *Gramsiri*, *Thanpati* and the like. Similarly the female deity who is regarded as the mother of the village is known as *Grambati*, *Balipatian* etc.

The *Grampati* and *Grambati* are worshipped not only by the Ganda but by all the Hindu and aboriginal inhabitants of the village. However, the female deity exercises more influence and commands greater respect from the villagers. The seat of the stone images of both the deities generally lies in the open air, sometimes, beneath giant trees like *Bara*, *Aswasth*, or *Mohua*.

As per the longstanding local traditions these guardian village deities are not served by the Brahman priests. In most of the villages, a priest called *Pujari* or *Jhakar*, who may be a tribal or an upper caste or a lower caste like Ganda, is kept in charge of routine attendance of these deities. In some places the traditional village chief *Gauntia* discharges the priestly functions for the mother deity of the village. For example, in the village Barangpali the female deity named *Balipatian* is served by the *Gauntia* who is a *Kulta* (cultivator caste) and the male deity i.e., the *Grampati* is served by the *Jhakar* who belongs to Saora tribe. This service is hereditary, in lieu of which the functionaries were formerly remunerated with rent free *jagiri* (village

Village Deities

Conforming to the widespread and age old regional tradition of the Hindu and aboriginal communities, each Ganda village has a group of personified spiritual beings who are exclusively local in character and regarded as the guardians or the custodians of the village. They constitute a separate class of deities known as village deities. These deities are lower in rank than those of the higher gods. Although their powers and spheres of activities are limited, they are capable of solving the immediate crisis of the village, granting personal wishes like offsprings, curing incurable ailments etc. Their jurisdiction also extends to ensuing protection to human life, cattle, crops and households against diseases and calamities.

The guardian deities of the Ganda village generally constitute a couple. The male deity who is regarded as the mother of the village is given different names in different localities like *Grampati*, *Gramsiri*, *Thanpati* and the like. Similarly the female deity who is regarded as the mother of the village is known as *Grambati*, *Balipatian* etc.

The *Grampati* and *Grambati* are worshipped not only by the Ganda but by all the Hindu and aboriginal inhabitants of the village. However, the female deity exercises more influence and commands greater respect from the villagers. The seat of the stone images of both the deities generally lies in the open air, sometimes, beneath giant trees like *Bara*, *Aswath*, or *Mohua*.

As per the longstanding local traditions these guardian village deities are not served by the Brahman priests. In most of the villages, a priest called *Pujari* or *Jhakar*, who may be a tribal or an upper caste or a lower caste like Ganda, is kept in charge of routine attendance of these deities. In some places the traditional village chief *Gauntia* discharges the priestly functions for the mother deity of the village. For example, in the village Barangpali the female deity named *Balipatian* is served by the *Gauntia* who is a *Kulta* (cultivator caste) and the male deity i.e., the *Grampati* is served by the *Jhakar* who belongs to Saora tribe. This service is hereditary, in lieu of which the functionaries were formerly remunerated with rent free *jagiri* (village

service) lands as long as they continued to serve. After independence, these lands have been settled with the former office-bearers with occupancy rights but on payment of equitable rent.

The non-brahmanic tradition of worshipping the village deities indicates that, this is an ancient institution started by the aboriginal settlers who had set up human habitations with their gods and deities amidst jungle clearings in the remote past. Later, Hindu castes and other communities came and settled with them. In course of time, there has been a considerable socio-cultural give and take between the tribals and their non-tribal co-villagers. But still some original traits have been preserved by the individual communities which distinguishes their uniqueness and independent cultural identity.

These village deities are worshipped by the whole village with pomp and ceremony on the seasonal festive occasions of *Nuakhia*, *Pus-Punei*, *Dhanmaden* and *Dussera*. They receive special communal worship during the period of grave crisis like flood, fire, draught, epidemics, etc. Individual families of the village also propitiate the deities on the occasions of marriage ceremony, birth, death and other important ritual celebrations in the family. In most of these occasions animal sacrifices, fruits and cooked food are offered to the deities to appease them.

Household Deities & Spirits

The Ganda house is not a dwelling place for human beings alone. There are some personified deities and spirits who are believed to be dwelling inside the Ganda household. One of the rooms preferably the store room of the multiroomed houses or the only living room of the single roomed houses of the Ganda is used as the deity room and called *Pitar ghar* or *Devta ghar*. The Ganda households strictly observe the purity and sanctity of this room by following a customary code of conduct. They never allow strangers, and persons bearing various kinds of ritual pollutions to enter into this room. Even the women of the household under menstrual and child birth pollutions are prohibited to enter into this room. Taking food in this room is also restricted because the left over food causes pollution. Failure to comply these rules results in pollution of the room and the fellow supernatural inhabitants are displeased. This room receives

special attention in respect of cleaning and purification. It is properly cleaned and plastered with mud, cowdung, coloured earth or lime during seasonal festive occasions, domestic ceremonies, rituals and pollutions. Prayers are offered daily by the head of the household in the morning and evening to the household deities in this room by offering flowers and burning incense sticks or resins.

The invisible supernaturals who stay inside the *Devta ghar* are *Masan* (ancestral spirits), *Dulha-Bar*, *Chula*, *Mangala*, *Mahalaxmi*, the village goddess and *Baghia*. In one side of the room, the seat of *Masan* lies in the left corner. The seats of *Mangala*, *Mahalaxmi*, *Dulha-Bar* and *Chula* are in the middle. The *Baghia* resides in the corner behind the entrance door.

Masan, the seat of the family ancestors is the place where the *pinda* of each ancestor is buried. (See the death rituals in the chapter- Life cycle). *Dulha-Bar* or *Dulha-Deo* is a tutelary deity of the Ganda household who gives protection against all evils and misfortunes. There is an interesting legend about this deity. Once a Gond bridegroom (the son of a Gond *Zamindar*) was riding horse back to his bride's place in a procession for wedding. On the forest path he was lifted by the *Baghia* (a deified tiger) who was annoyed for some reason. Since then, both the *Baghia* and the *Dulha* (the bridegroom) have been deified and being worshipped by the Gond tribals and the lower castes like the Ganda of the area. The seat of *Dulha-Bar* is represented in the middle of *Masan* and the village goddess by a hearth where the head of the household cooks food to be offered to the household deities during rituals and festive occasions. On the other days, no one especially the women, except the head of the household is allowed to touch the sacred hearth lest the *Baghia* would take revenge. The Ganda are very sacred of the *Baghia*, who is described as a ferocious spirit of a tiger capable of causing devastating storm, whirlwinds and tornado. If displeased, he may take possession of human beings and animals and can kill them. He has to be appeased by periodic worship and animal sacrifices. At the time of harvesting, the Gandas pray and invoke this spirit to maintain moderate breeze to help in winnowing paddy.

Besides these deities, the pictures and small images of various gods and deities are sometimes hung on the walls of the *Devta ghar*. Prayers and worships to the deities are conducted by the head of the household on the occasion of festivals and household rituals and ceremonies. In the day of *Nuakhia* and *Pus Punei* the ancestral spirits and other household deities are propitiated by offering cooked food and the blood of poultry birds. According to the customary practice a black coloured hen is sacrificed for the village goddess and a red or light brown coloured hen for ancestral spirits. The *Dulha-Bar*, *Baghia* and *Mangala* are appeased by sacrificing a multicoloured cock preferably white and brown.

ANIMISTIC BELIEFS

The religious thinking of the Ganda is saturated with animistic ideas. The Ganda considers the animate objects such as, trees, plants, animals as well as human beings as the abode of spirits. For him the mystery of natural phenomena can be explained with reference to the spirit world. The day to day happening of the human life are attributed to the spiritual forces.

The Gandas believe that the spirits live in trees. Hence, cutting down trees is against ritual norms. On the otherhand, planting of trees is a meritorious act which often brings good luck like getting offsprings or increase of wealth. The spiritual significance of the trees and plants are found in their use in domestic and communal rituals, practice of magic and cure of diseases.

The Ganda honour a number of trees. Most important among them are *Bara* or banyan (*Fiens bengalensis*), *Pipal* (*Fiens religiosa*) *Am* or mango (*Mangifera indica*), *Bel* (*Aegle marmelos*), *Neem* (*Melia indica*), *Panas* or jackfruit (*Artocarpus integrifolia*), *Amla* (*Phyllanthus embilica*), *Bahada* (*Terminalia bellerica*), *Barkoli* (*Zizyphus jujuba*), *Champa* (*Michelia champaca*), *Kuchila* (*Strychnos nux-vomica*) *Mohua* or *Mahu* (*Bassia latifolia*), *Sal* (*Shorea robusta*), *Tentuli* or tamarind (*Tamarindus indica*), *Dimuri* (*Fiens glomerata*) *Kendu* (*Disospyros melanocylon*), *Harida* or *Harra* (*Terminalia chebula*), *Baula* or *Molsuri* (*Mimusops elengi*), *Asok* (*Polyalthia longifolia*) and *Karma* (*Adina cordifolia*).

The *Bara* (banyan) and Pipal or *Aswasth* are found in the Ganda country. These trees are most widely venerated since they are believed to be the resorts of spirits, and gods of the Hindu pantheon. They are also connected with the cult of the dead and fertility rites. Every leaf of these trees are said to be the seat of a god. Plantation of banyan and pipal trees bring good luck and prosperity.

The *Bel*, *Boula*, *Asoka* and *Champa* are of great religious importance to the Ganda. The *Bel* leaves are a favourite of Lord *Shiva*. The leaves, fruits and roots of the tree are used in various rituals like marriage, birth, death; in worshipping various deities; in magic and for medicinal purposes. The starlike flowers of the *Boula* are worshipped and used in worshipping the gods. The leaves and twigs of the *Asoka* tree are used for festooning the shrines during festive occasions. Like the above trees the flower of *Champa* is also sacred as it is a favourite of Lord *Shiva* and other gods of the Ganda pantheon. Because of their religious significance, these trees are always planted in the precincts of temples and shrines.

Various parts of the mango, *Barkoli*, *Harida*, *Bahada*, *Amla*, jackfruit trees have entered into the magico-religious and the medicinal usage of the Ganda. Especially leaves and branches of mango and *Barkoli* are considered as good omens. The leaves of jackfruit tree are used in the death rituals.

Mohua tree is worshipped as an abode of spiritual beings. Death and other purificatory rituals of the Ganda are performed beneath this tree. The branches of the tree are planted at the four corners of the ceremonial altar on which wedding rituals are performed. Trees like bamboo, cocoanut, *Kendu*, *Dimuri*, *Tal*, *Sahara*, etc. also enter into the similar usages. The first two species are particularly related with fertility rites. Because of their sacred value their very sight is taken as good omen.

Considerably, more magico-religious significance is attached with the *Neem* tree which is more universally revered than the other species. Its leaves, branches, flowers, bark and roots are very useful for treatment of small pox, skin diseases, snake-bite and other kinds of fatal poisoning as well as for various rituals and against the action of evil spirits. The tree is regarded as the seat of *Matamaisiri*, the

goddess of smallpox and other epidemics. Hence by worshipping the tree and thereby appeasing the goddess, the Gandas seek to save themselves from the dreadful diseases.

The *Karma* or the *Sal* tree is regarded as the seat of *Karamsani*, the goddess of good fortune (*Karam*) and of granting children. A branch of the tree is worshipped on the 11th day of the bright fortnight in the month of *Bhadon* or *Bhadra* (August-September) with pomp and ceremony called *Karma Puja*.

The plant which is highly revered as a deity is *Tulsi* or 'holy basil'. Its very presence inside the courtyard of the house is enough to keep the evil spirits at the bay.

The *Tentuli* or tamarind tree and the mustard plant are very effective to ward off the evil spirits. The mustard seeds and tamarind leaves are connected with magical rites.

The castor plant also enters into the magico-religious usages of the Ganda. It is largely connected with child birth rites. By inserting a ritualised stem of the plant into the ear of a new born infant, deafness and dumbness can be cured.

Like plants, the Ganda also reveres the animal world attributing spiritualism to its creatures. The intimate ties between human and the animal world are constantly illustrated in their folk tales. The attitude of the Ganda towards the animal life is merciful and in some cases propitiatory.

The Gandas are grouped into several exogamous sects or *bargas* some of which are named after their totemic animals like, *Nag* (serpent), *Bagh* (tiger), *Podh* (buffalo) etc. The members of such bargas rever their totemic animals and observe taboos against touching, injuring or killing them.

Devotion to the *Gomata* (cow) as a sacred animal is so universal in the Hindu religious system that, beef eating and scavenging of carcass of the cow are condemned as unclean and sinful. The communities and the castes like Ganda who pursue these activities are treated as untouchables. The Gandas say that their legendary

ancestor was excommunicated for such unclean deeds. Today the Gandas claim to have given up beef-eating and scavenging and their traditional caste council have also banned such disrespectful social practices for which they have been relegated to a derogatory social position in the traditional society.

Like ox and cow the bull is honoured for its courage, strength virility and as an associate of Lord *Shiva*. The buffalo for its dreadful appearance and bad temper is revered as the vehicle of *Yama*, the 'God of Death'. *Devi Durga*, the Mother Goddess of Hindu religion and the wife of Lord *Shiva* had acquired the title of *Mahishamardini* by destroying a dreadful buffalo-shaped demon called *Mahishasura* according to the puranic traditions.

The horse is revered as a sacred and a lucky animal and as a symbol of peace, prosperity, fertility and protection. But the ass is held in contempt. It is generally associated with foolishness, social excommunication, ridicule and humiliation.

The lion is regarded as the "vehicle" of *Durga*, the Mother Goddess who is therefore called *Shimhabahini*. But tiger appears more predominantly in their folk beliefs. It often replaces the lion as the vehicle of the Mother Goddess. Tiger is also regarded as a totemic animal of the Ganda, persons belonging to the barga named *Bagh* (the tiger). The parts of tiger's body has various usages. Its fat cures rheumatism and its heart and flesh are used as tonics, stimulants, aphorsidiaces and communicate its physical strength and courage to those who use them. Its flesh is burned in the cattle shed to dispel cattle disease and in the field to ward off blight. The animal's gallbag, clavicle, lever, fat, milk, urine, hair, moustache, teeth, paws and skin are highly valued. The tongue and powdered tooth are administered as a tonic to strengthen weak children. The whiskers and pairings of the tiger's claws with other components of magical charms are hung as lockets on the necks of children or tied around their upper arms as armlets in order to ward off evil spirits and enhance the vitality. Moreover, the Gandas worship *Baghia Devta*, the "Tiger God", who can cause storm and cyclone by making the winds to blow faster. He

guards the household properties, crops and cattle if duly appeased with rituals, offerings and animal sacrifices. This god resides in the corner behind the entrance door of the Ganda house.

The dog is esteemed for his faithfulness, loyalty and companionship to its master. His habits like eating rotten and filthy things such as human excreta, decomposed flesh, etc. are held in contempt. The dog is associated with the cult of dead.

The cat as a domestic pet enjoys a good reputation. Women are tabooed against injuring a cat or trodding upon its excreta which renders them unclean. Killing a cat is a serious religious offence which is equal to killing ten cows.

The goat is a sacred animal suitable for sacrifice to the gods and deities. The pig is looked down upon as filthy and unclean animal for its weird appearance and foul eating habits. It is connected with mortuary rites of the Ganda. A male pig is sacrificed on the eleventh day rites of death for appeasing the gods, ancestral spirits and the departed soul.

The rats are honoured for being the companion and vehicle of Lord *Ganesh*. The animal is propitiated on the festive occasion of *Ganesh Chaturthi* for ensuing protection of corns and grains.

Monkey is a sacred animal. He is worshipped as *Hanuman* in almost every village. Propitiation of monkey is also associated with magic and cure of barrenness in women.

The cult of serpent worship is very widespread in Hindu religion. The Gandas are no exception to this. The snakes especially the poisonous cobra is a favourite companion of Lord *Shiva* and many gods and goddesses of the Hindu pantheon. The Gandas highly revere these reptiles. The cobra or the *Nag* is a totemic animal of the members of the *Nag barga* who are tabooed against killing or injuring the cobra.

The Gandas respect many birds. The parrots, peacocks, pigeon, goose, dove and the domestic fowls are lucky and sacred birds. The peacock is regarded as the vehicle and companion

of Lord *Kartik*, the 'God of War'. A quill is considered a lucky pet as he brings misfortunes to himself saving the household of his master. The domestic fowl is largely used as sacrificial bird in magico-religious rites.

The crow, owl, kite and vultures are considered unlucky birds. However, food materials are offered to the crows with the belief that it will appease the ancestral spirits. Appearance of a crow in the morning foretells the arrival of relatives to the household. But the owl is regarded as the forebader of evils. The very sight of an owl and hooting brings misfortune.

FETISHISM

A broader concept of fetishism is deep-rooted into the Ganda religion which conforms to the attribution of spiritualism to certain inanimate objects. In other words, it is the belief in the supernatural powers, possessed by certain material objects, a phenomenon broader than the theoretical concept of fetishism.

The worship of images and idols made of stone, wood, clay, metals etc. are universal feature of Hinduism as well as the Ganda religion. The worship of stone is of special importance. Strange and queer shaped rocks and stones are always believed to possess supernatural powers. These are always associated with legends and magico-religious rites. The foundation of a new house is laid with a lucky stone. The gods and deities are represented by their stone images for worship. The animal sacrifices to the gods and deities are made on a sacrificial stone altar raised before the seat of the deities. In the burial ground the graves of dead individuals are often identified by putting a piece of stone over the ground where the head of the dead body lies. Household implements, appliances and utensils like grinder, mortar and pestle, cup and plates, buckets to store water and feed the cattle are sometimes made of stones. The domestic mortar and pestles and other kinds of grinding stones are considered lucky, sacred and a symbol of fertility. Hence, these are associated with wedding and child birth rites. The household grinding stone is regarded as the seat of *Sathi Davi*.

The plough and plough share are honoured as sacred objects connected with material prosperity and fertility. The plough along with other professional and household implements like winnowing fan, sickle, rake, grass scraper, knife, scythe, mattock, axe, the loom and other tools and equipments associated with weaving etc., are cleaned and worshipped by applying vermilion, sandalwood paste and flower on the occasion of *Dusseera*. The objects like *Panki* (vegetable cutter), *Kurali* (scythe), *Deep* (lamp), *Chhura* (knife), *Chhatar* (umbrella) are regarded as totemic objects of *Mahanand*, *Kurali*, *Deep*, *Chhuria* and *Chhatar baragas* respectively. The members of *Mahanand barga* do not take the vegetables those are cut in the vegetable cutter since their totemic spirit living inside the vegetable cutter may get disturbed and angry and enter into their body through the vegetables to take revenge. Similarly, the members of *Deep barga* stop eating if the light of the lamp goes out while they are eating.

The fetishes have one thing in common with the images and idols, i.e., the possession of supernatural powers. But there are certain limitations for the fetishes. While an image is fashioned to represent and personify the concerned god or deity the fetish may not have definite shape to personify the indwelling and inscrutable spirit which cannot possess more than one object at a time.

The fetish is distinguished by its own distinguished personality and willpower and it may sometimes have human characteristics. Possession of fetishes may be private or public. The owner of the fetish believes that it may act by the will or force of its own spirit or by an alien spirit entering into it. Hence, it is prayed, worshipped, sacrificed to, talked with, petted, cared for and sometime illtreated. The private owner wants his personal wishes to be fulfilled through the powers of the fetish under his possession.

LUCK AND OMEN

Under the impact of his religious beliefs and physical environment, the Ganda becomes a pessimist sometimes in his outlook. He attributes most of the happenings of human life to the spirit agencies. He is always alert to outwit these unseen powers and searches for the signs that will indicate the future. He always

seeks to see through the veil which shrouds the future destiny and plans his worldly activities under the most favourable circumstances. Thus in his beliefs and practices, he makes a blend of the known and unknown and invent a pseudo-science which he thinks, has originated from the practical human experience, the world view and the knowledge of various fields of human activities. The assurances and confidence that human life and all his deeds are being regulated by certain unseen super-human forces often stimulates his energy and leads to success. Thus his belief in luck and omen is very integral to the belief in supernaturalism.

In this field of Ganda-religion, the rôle of the astrologer and the diviner is very important. The traditional village astrologer is generally a Brahman who is called *Pundit*. He is always consulted for fixing auspicious dates and time for marriage, birth and death rites and other rituals, commencement of a journey, initiating agricultural and other professional activities etc. He also prescribes remedies for troubles and mistakes. He forecasts the action of stars and other heavenly beings upon the human destiny and suggests appropriate reconciliatory rituals. He gets nominal remunerations for his services in form of grains, vegetables, cloth and cash. Non-traditional astrologers are often found inside and outside the Ganda community. But the Ganda rely more upon the Brahman *Pundits*.

The Ganda distinguish between lucky and unlucky periods of time for conducting various activities in their day to day life. Among the week Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday are, considered unlucky in general. Monday and Thursday are ideal for starting educational programme of the child and agricultural activities like ploughing, sowing and harvesting. But Thursday is inauspicious for such other business as economic transactions, commencement or termination of journey, sending the bride to her in-law's house or parent's house, arrangement and negotiations for bride price and wedding ceremony etc.

Besides, the darker fortnight of every month, particularly those of the four rainy months *Sawan, Bhadon, Ashwin* and *Kuanr*; the days of *Amavasya, Sankranti, Masanta*; the days of eclipses and

ritual pollutions caused by birth, death, menstruation, epidemics are regarded inauspicious in general. Especially wedding, shaving, starting a journey or constructional project like laying the foundation of a new house and other socio-economic activities should not be undertaken in these unlucky times.

Wednesday morning is the best time to commence a journey. However, Monday and Friday are also lucky days for this purpose. Journey outside the village should always be undertaken in these days preferably, during morning hours—between 4 a.m. to 6 a.m. Returning home from a journey on Saturday, Sunday or Tuesday should be avoided since these are unlucky days for this purpose and in case this happens the person concerned may fall ill. It is good to return home or visit a relative's house during afternoon hours.

The Ganda reckons lucky and unlucky numbers. All odd numbers except three and thirteen are generally lucky and all even numbers are unlucky. Five and multiples of five, seven, nine and fractions of a number are lucky numbers.

Luck and sacredness is also attached to the sides and directions. The ideal direction for the house to face is south. The deities, gods, and their temple entrances should face the East. Sleeping with one's head towards the west is harmful. The dreadful *Ahiraj* (a deified great king cobra) lies in the west. Sleeping in this direction means sleeping upon this snake god which may bring serious misfortune or even cause death to the person doing so. East and South are favourable and lucky directions for the head of the sleeping person to face. East is occupied by *Dharamraj* (the Sun God and the Supreme deity of the Ganda) and *Brishvraj* (the deified great bull who is the companion of Lord *Shiva*). The head of sleeping man facing in this direction lies in the laps of either of these benevolent gods. Thus the person earns the goodwill and blessings of these gods. The head facing east while sleeping means it rests upon the lap of *Adimata* (the Mother Goddess). The fate in this case is normal, neither good nor bad, because man has been originated from the Mother Goddess and sleeping on the Mother's lap as a child of Her is very natural.

Omens are very important in the day to day life of the Ganda. Most important among them are those related to the sight or meeting of certain symbols or objects while commencing or proceeding on an important Journey or venture. These are described in the following:—

Inauspicious or Unlucky Omens of Journey

- (1) A deadbody in the right side;
- (2) A jackal or a cat crossing the road from the right;
- (3) A bitch with a bone in her mouth in anyside;
- (4) A *Dhobi* (Washerman), *Teli* (Oil man) an eunuch, a widow, a barren woman, a witch, a diseased man, a man riding an ass or a buffalo, an woman in her menstrual period or birth pollutions or (with an empty pitcher;
- (5) An ass, owl, kite, pig and vultures;
- (6) A brick or an earthen pot dropping out of the doorway and shattered to pieces;
- (7) Upturned black earthen cooking pots;
- (8) A dead tree, a ruined or deserted settlement and a dry pond;
- (9) A donkey carrying load of bricks.

Sight of these signs at the onset or during the journey forecasts failure and misfortune to the person concerned. If this happens he should at once stop then and there, without proceeding further and come back home to wait for another suitable auspicious day for the purpose.

Auspicious or Lucky Omens of Journey

- (1) A dead body, a jackal, an ass braying and an woman carrying pitcher full of water in the left side;
- (2) A Brahman with his books;
- (3) A woman with a male child sucking her breasts;
- (4) A horse or a man riding a horse;
- (5) A milch cow of black or white colour followed by her calf;
- (6) A man carrying a torch or an umbrella;
- (7) A sweeper with his basket full;
- (8) A snake, preferably a cobra;
- (9) A donkey carrying a load of clothes;
- (10) Male and female pigeons dancing;
- (11) A *Neula* (mongoose), an elephant, a spotted deer, a dove, a parrot, a goose, a sparrow;
- (12) Persons of either sex carrying headloads of paddy;
- (13) A bird couple enjoying themselves or feeding their babies in their nest.

These omens foretell success and goodluck to the person undertaking journey on a definite purpose.

There are numerous omens related to other fields of activities. The Ganda takes seriously the common saying that "morning shows the day". He believes that his fate and activities of the day are indicated by certain omens and he acts with precautions; planning carefully his conduct for the day. A person gets up with a refreshed mind and vitality. At this time the nervous system is tense and the imagination is readily impressed. He takes due

precautions to see that the first object to catch his sight should be auspicious. It foretells a good luck for the day if he first sees the following:—

- (1) A pitcher filled with water (may bring success in ventures);
- (2) A beautiful flower;
- (3) A Brahman *Pundit*;
- (4) A cow and calf (show the prospect of economic gain);
- (5) A fair child playing (implies happy domestic life);
- (6) A white cloth inside a *tanta* (loom) (implies success in weaving);
- (7) The *Birtia* (the traditional priest);
- (8) The parents and the maternal uncle;

The number of ill-omens of the morning are many. To see a widow, a barren woman, a prostitute, an ugly woman, a bitch, a washerman, a cat, two cats or dogs quarreling for foods, a kite, an ass, a man who has not washed his face immediately after leaving the bed, indicates a bad day.

Twitching of right eye and irritation of right palm for men and the *vice versa* for women are good omens which indicate good luck and apparent economic gain. The reverse of the above indications are bad omens.

The list of omens as observed by the Ganda is very large. These omens are larger than the life of the Ganda, who have profound faith in it's efficacy.

OCCULTISM

To the Ganda everything, animate or inanimate, or some intangible things like a word, a number, or bodily parts of living organisms have spiritual powers in themselves. Some of these powers are strong and active and others are weak and dormant. These powers may be beneficent or maleficent. Human beings ought to be careful towards these strong and maleficent occult powers.

The most dreadful of these occult powers is the *nazar* or the 'evil eye'. Certain persons are believed to be born with evil or destructive powers in their eyes. When these persons look with interest to the living beings, food, drink, wealth and crops of another person's household, serious misfortune follows the latter. Certain persons are also born with evil mouths alongwith evil eyes. Their evil looks on a healthy child or standing crops sometimes makes them to utter in jealousy or in their own ulterior motives, the phrases like, "how fine it looks". This is enough to ruin the object.

The term 'evil eye' is used by the Ganda in the sense of the baleful influence emanating from the glance of certain class of people like, an issueless couple or a barren woman, a witch, an one-eyed person, an evil looking and deformed person, a person with black lips and dreadful black eyes. It is caused by envy or coveteousness. Any attractive or beautiful object may be a victim to fascination. On the other hand, deformed, disfigured, defective and ugly things do not come under such influence. The Gandas believe that this is effected by the action of unseen and unknown evil spirits. They take all precautions to avert the 'evil eye'.

Standing crops may get ruined by the destructive powers of the "evil eye". So the Ganda farmers either put an upturned black earthen pot painted in white colour or a magical image made of straws or a skull of a dead animal on a wooden or bamboo pole at the centre of the field to counteract the evil eye.

Movable properties are marked with black spots. Domestic cattle and live-stocks are protected by tying beads around their necks. Nails are driven into the door posts or the threshold. Black and white painted earthen pots are sometimes fixed over the thatch of the house to ward off the evil eye.

Children and women are more susceptible to the occult influence of the "evil eye" than anything else. Particularly at the time of menstruation, marriage and child birth, women are easily exposed to this danger. They protect themselves by using the shoot of the

lamp called *kajal* in their lower eyelids, using dirty clothes or remaining ugly and unwashed. Mothers regularly apply *kajal* in the lower eyelids, on the sole of the feet and palm of their children. Children are often given insignificant second names and called by these names by their parents and relatives in order to deceive the occult agencies.

Most of the infantile troubles are attributed to the evil eye. The relief is obtained by various ways. Often local witch doctors are called for help. In case of bitterly crying infants, stomach troubles, food poisoning, wasting diseases, etc. the witch doctor generally administers salty water ritualised by magical charms or simply exercises the evil eye by magical spells and rituals. Another method is that, the mother untying the knot of her hair lightly brushes the infant with the tip of her hair. Then she pulls a hair from her head, spits at it and throws it out of the house.

Many devices such as jewels, beads, mirrors, flowers, amulets, charms, talisman rings, stones, tattoo marks are used by the Ganda to avert the evil eye. Certain objects like menstrual blood of women, charcoal, salt, incense, saliva, urine, a tiger's claws, teeth and whiskers, mustard seeds, copper coins, iron rings, conch shell, turmeric, tamarind leaves, black and red threads are believed by the Gandas to be effective in counteracting the "evil eye". They use these objects under the advice of the astrologers, saints and witch doctors.

CONCLUSION

The religious beliefs and practices of the Ganda is neither indigenous nor exclusive. Folklore, Myths, religious teachings of saints, popular religious books and scriptures, cultural contacts, local and regional traditions all have influenced their religious ideology. Consequently, their religion is a mixture of animism, animatism, polytheism with occasional traces of monotheism also. In addition to that, there is a living faith in spirits, ghosts, witches, fetishes, omens, occult agencies and magic. The complex of all these elements constitute the picture of the supernatural world as it is conceived by the Ganda.

The difference in the nature of various gods and deities worshipped by the Ganda have probably historical reasons, as it is obvious that many of their deities have not originated from their culture but have been borrowed from their neighbours. However exclusive the Gandas may be in social respects, in religious matters they are quite liberal and open minded. They never make a conscious distinction between native and alien deities and are always ready to extend worship to any god or accept any belief from whose favour they expect any-benefit.

The character of religion as accepted and practised by the Gandas and their attitude in this regard can be understood from the elements of fatalism and the ethics of righteousness called *dharma*. The Gandas have a degree of fatalism and demonstrate a spirit of resignation towards predestined facts ordained for them by the supernatural world. They are used to saying, "What is predestined, must happen; human can not alter their fate which is the will of God". Associated with this concept of fate is the Hindu doctrine of *Karma*. The *karma*, i.e. the deeds determine the course of transmigration of the soul after death and it's rebirth. The Gandas synthesise this phenomenon into a practical precept; "the course of human life is largely predestined on the basis of his deeds in the past life and his deeds in this life will determine the character of his future life; but by 'acting rightly' in this life, he can influence his life after death."

CHAPTER VIII

ANNUAL FESTIVALS & RITUALS

The supernatural world of the Ganda is accessible through prayers and rituals which form an integral part of the Ganda religion. The Gandas have a rich tradition of annual festivals and rituals, most of which belong to the regional traditions and observed by other castes and communities living with them. The annual calendar of seasonal festivals is given in the following table.

Most of the festivals described in Table-16 are commonly observed by the other castes all over the State except *Nrusimha Chaturdasi*, *Nuakhia*, *Karma Puja*, *Bhajiuntia*, *Puajiuntia*, *Hanu Jatra*, *Dhanmaden*, *Balikaling*, *Mahulgundi*. The Gandas observe these festivals with other castes in Balangir and Sambalpur districts. Among these festivals those, which are important for the Ganda deserve brief description in the following:—

Nrusimha Chaturdasi

This is held on *Vaisakh Sukla Chaturdasi*, i. e., the 14th day of the bright fortnight of *Vaisakh* (May-June). This is a popular festival in Balangir and Sambalpur observed by all the castes in honour of *Nrusimha*, an incarnation of *Vishnu* in a half lion, half human form. The devout Gandas observe fasting and abstinence during this day. Big fairs are held at the famous shrines of *Nrusimhanath* at Paikmal, Gogua (a big village in Deogarh Subdivision) in Sambalpur and Harishankar in Balangir. A large crowd of devotees from the neighbouring area including Madhya Pradesh, gather in these sacred places of pilgrimage. They take bath in the holy waters of these shrines to purify themselves of their worldly sins and pray god. The Gandas avail this opportunity for ritual purification and restoration of social status of the sinners from ritual offences and pollutions. The fair held at *Nrusimhanath* continues for three days. In the small village near the shrine of *Harishankar* a fair called *Harihar bheta* is held. This fair is a synthesis of the cults of *Hari* & *Shankar*.

Sital Sasthi

It is a very popular festival in Western Orissa. It is performed in the month of *Jyesth* (June) to celebrate the wedding of the divine couple, *Shiva* and *Parvati* with pomp and ceremony. The Ganda being a staunch devotee of *Shivite* cult, observe this occasion within fasting and festivities. They wear new clothes and worship the divine couple offering flowers; coconut and banana in the local *Shiva* temples. On this day they are allowed to enter into the *Shiva* temple for prayers and offerings.

During this occasion, big fairs are held for a week at the local *Shiva* temples at Barpali, Talsirgida and Sambalpur. Large number of pilgrims from the neighbouring areas including Madhya Pradesh and Bihar participate in the fair.....

"The festival starts with *ganthal-phita* (untying of the wedding knot) of the divine couple continuing from the previous year. A devotee generally acts as the father of goddess *Parvati*. He takes the image of the bride to his house. Another person appointed as the father of *Shiva* goes in a procession tothe parents of the bride to make a formal proposal of the marriage by giving a bundle of *Sal* leaves. This is called *Patra Pande*. After the negotiation is over, representative deities from *Shiva* temple move to extend invitation to different deities of the locality and also to general public. The bridegroom's procession, popularly known as *barat* starts on the 5th night of the bright fortnight and the marriage ceremony is performed in a traditional manner. In the following night, the return procession moves with great pomp and grandeur throughout the town and then reaches the temple the next day."

(Sambalpur, District Gazetteer)

Ratha Jatra (The Car Festival)

The famous Car Festival of Lord *Jagannath* of Orissa, takes place during the month of *Asarh* (June-July). In most of the important localities of Western Orissa (Sambalpur town, Deogarh,

Rairakhol, Barpali, Bhatli, Sonapur, Patnagarh, Bhaliamunda, etc.) where there are shrines of Lord *Jagannath*, this festival is held as an important religious function amidst large gathering of devotees from all castes and communities. The decorated wooden cars bearing the images of Lord *Jagannath* are pulled by the crowd of devotees from the main temple to another temple called *Gundicha-ghar*. The *Bahuda Jatra*, i.e. the return journey of the deities from the *Gundicha ghar* to the main temple is performed in a similar manner on the same day in some places. In other places, it takes place after six days. The Gandas, who are denied admission into the local *Jagannath* temples participate in the Car Festival in large numbers to have a free *darshan* (view) of their beloved deity and pull His cart.

Rakhi Purnima/Balaram Janma

The last day, i.e. full-moon day of *Sawan* (July-August) is observed as *Rakhi Purnima* and *Balaram Janma* all over India. The Gandas celebrate it as the birth day of Lord *Balaram*. They clean their houses, tie a *Rakhi* in the *manga* (the loom) and enjoy delicious dishes of sweets and cakes. This festival is also called *Gamha Purnima* (the worship of cattle). On this day the Gandas, like the clean castes bathe their oxen in the nearby pond and worship them by garlanding and applying turmeric and vermilion over their forehead and legs. The cattle are not yoked and given cakes and good feeds during this day. The head of well-to-do Ganda households wear new clothings and some of them also observe fasting. Normal economic activities are suspended for this day.

Nuakhai

Nuakhai (the new eating) is a most popular and distinguished festival of Western Orissa. It is held in an auspicious date within the bright fortnight of *Bhadon* (August-September) fixed by the local astrologers in order to initiate the first eating of newly harvested rice when the new paddy of the year ripens. It is observed as a day of general festivity, very pompously, both communally and individually, by all castes and tribal communities of the Ganda inhabited area.

Preliminary preparations start before a fortnight of the festival. On the stipulated date the head of the household cooks the newly harvested rice with milk and sugar and distributes among the family members, guests and neighbours after offering the food to the household deities and ancestral spirits. Poultry birds or goats and sheep are also sacrificed before the household deities in this ritual and the meat is relished by the family members. Those who do not have land or new paddy, borrow from their relatives or neighbours. Communal ritual and feast is organised in honour of the village goddess in every village in which all the villagers contribute and participate. It is a day of great rejoice for all. From early morning to the night fall, all enjoy themselves with sports, songs, dances and other recreational activities. Everyone irrespective of their socio-economic status wear new clothes. It is also a great social occasion of meeting and greeting friends, relatives and neighbours. Generally all the members of the household are expected to unite and spend the day happily together. The days ceremony is the expression of gratitude for the new life that they have because of the new crop of the year and the people anxiously look forward to this day.

Dussera/Puajuntia/Bhaijuntia

Dussera is the one of the most popular festival of India. It is celebrated with pomp and ceremony for over a week all over the country in the month of *Ashwin* to worship the goddess *Durga*. The Gandas observe this festival on the tenth day of the darker fortnight of *Ashwin*.

During this month two important regional festivals, *Puajuntia* and *Bhaijuntia* are observed by the people of Western Orissa, on the 8th day of the dark fortnight and the 8th day of the bright fortnight respectively. The former is celebrated by the mothers and the latter by the sisters wishing long life and prosperity of sons and daughters as well as of brothers and sisters. The Ganda women also take part in these observances. On the occasion of *Puajuntia*, the Ganda mother observe fasting and abstinence all over the day and night and worship the deities *Duti Bahana* or *Sathi Devi* to grant longevity and goodluck to their children. A sacred thread called *juntia* is put around the

necks of their children. The sisters observing the *Bhaijuntia* ceremony perform in a similar manner, but, they worship the goddess *Durga*. During these occasions sons and brothers present new clothes to their mothers and sisters.

Diwali

Diwali, the festival of lights, is another prominent festival of India held on the *Amavasya* (the last day of the darker fortnight) of *Kartik* or *Kuanr mas*. The Gandas perform this festival by worshipping the goddess *Kali* and offering lighted lamps in to the darkness of night for their deities and ancestral spirits, which is a Hindu custom.

Bali Jatra

The month of *Kartik* or *Kuanr mas* (October-November) is an auspicious month for the Hindus. Following the clean castes, the devout Ganda men and women observe *Kartika brata* through celibacy and abstinence. From the tenth day to *Kartik Purnima* (the last or the full-moon day of the month) the Gandas worship *Lord Krishna* in the banks of rivers or tanks. This is called *Baliatra*. This is celebrated in various parts of Balangir and Sambalpur especially at Sonepur, *Samlai* temple of Sambalpur and other local shrines and continues up to the 2nd day of the following month. A man, locally called *Barua* becomes spirit-possessed and in that condition he is called *Bali*. He dances with intoxication bathing in pots full of curds and the blood of goats sacrificed to the deities. A large gathering of people takes place to watch this performance.

Laxmi Puja

The Ganda women worship one of their principal deity *Mahalaxmi*, the goddess of wealth and prosperity during the four Thursdays in the month of *Margasira* like the women of upper Hindu castes do. In these occasions the married women clean and decorate their houses with mango leaves, flowers and *jhunti* (*alpna* paintings) and observe fasting and abstinence. They prepare various kinds of cakes namely, *mugbara*, *suanli*, *arsha* and *chakel* for offering to the deity and then enjoy with their family members. Unmarried girls and widows can not take part in this celebration. Even the married daughters of the family can not eat the foods offered to the deity.

Pus Punei

It is a grand, colourful festival of the Ganda area like *Nuakhia*. This is basically an agricultural festival primarily meant to celebrate and rejoice the joys of leisure after the harvest of paddy and also to worship Lord *Krishna* who destroyed evils from this earth by killing the puranic great demon, *Kansa* on this day.

This festival is held in the last day of the month of *Pus* (December-January). It is observed publicly and privately. The head of the Ganda households observe fasting. They worship the household deities and ancestral spirits by offering cooked foods and animal sacrifices. The village goddess is also worshipped communally with feasts and festivities. The Gandas wear new clothes, visit their friends and relatives and enjoy themselves with delicious dishes, communal dances and music.

Shivaratri

It is a major festival widely observed in India on the 14th day of the dark fortnight of *Phagun* (February-March) in honour of Lord *Shiva*. The Gandas being devotees of the deity observe this occasion through fasting and abstinence which is very important. Those who observe this are not supposed to eat or drink anything until the scheduled mass worship in the local *Shiva* temple usually held during evening hours is over. People sit in and around the *Shiva* temple holding lighted lamps and praying the deity all over the night. Big fairs take place at the famous shrines of Lord *Shiva* in this area namely the famous *Bimalaswar* temple at Huma, the *Budharaja* temple at Sambalpur, the noted *Nrushimhanath* at Paikamal, *Harishankar* and *Baidyanath* in Balangir. These local fairs sit for a number of days attracting large number of people. The Gandas also visit these sacred places during *Shivaratri*.

Gundikhia and Holi

The *Gundikhia* festival is held in the day of *Phalguna Purnima*, the last day of the month of *Phagun* (February-March) to celebrate the first eating of the new gram, mango and *Mahua* of the year. This is also called *Mahulgundi*. On this day, the head of the Ganda households offer the new gram, mango and *Mahua* to the family

deities and then all the family members eat. This festival is popularly observed with pomp and grandeur in coastal Orissa in the name of *Dola Purnima*.

The day following *Phalguna Purnima* is celebrated as *Holi*, a major colourful communal festival of the year observed all over the country. On this occasion, the Gandas play with each other by throwing various colours, teasing and joking. Those standing in joking relationship with each other often engage in vigorous jest and banter. The performance of obscene songs and dances by men are permitted.

Mangala Puja

Goddess *Mangala* is highly regarded by the Gandas as their chief matron deity. The four Tuesdays in each of the months of *Ashwin* and *Chait* (March-April) are celebrated as *Mangala Puja* by the Gandas. In the month of *Ashwin* only women folk worship the deity. But both the sexes participate in this ritual in the month of *Chait*. The participants take a good bath, observe fasting during morning hours of the Tuesdays of these two months and worship *Mangala* by offering cakes and pais. They break fasting and take food after the ritual.

The rituals, ceremonies and festivals are associated with every phase of the individual and communal life of the Ganda. These are the cherished occasions of leisure recreation, fasting, feast, festivities and provides relief from the monotony and hardship of day to day life. On the other hand, the wealth of ritual performances and the way in which they are thought to provide divine support for the human becomes apparent only through the ritual practices of this community throughout an entire calendar year.

TABLE

Annual Calendar of

Sl. No.	Name of the English month	Name of the Hindu month		Date of the Festival (as per the Hindu calendar)
		Oriya name	Local name	
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
1	April-May	<i>Vaisakh</i>	<i>Vaisakh</i>	3rd day of the 2nd fortnight. 14th day of the 2nd fortnight.
2	May-June	.. <i>Jyestha</i>	<i>Jyesth</i>	.. 6th day of the 2nd fortnight.
3	June-July	.. <i>Asadha</i>	<i>Asarh</i>	.. From the 2nd day to the 8th day of the 2nd fortnight.
4	July-August	.. <i>Srabana</i>	<i>Sawan</i>	.. Last day i.e., the full-moon day.
5	August-September	<i>Bhadrab</i>	<i>Bhad Bhaden</i>	.. 8th day of the first i.e., darker fortnight. A date fixed by the astrologer within the bright fortnight.

No. 16

Festivals & Rituals

Name of the Festival	Principal Deity worshipped	Purpose of worship	Remarks
(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
<i>Akshaya Tritiya</i>	<i>Mahalaxmi Basu mata</i>	For granting a good agricultural season. This also marks the beginning of the agricultural year.	Performed by the households having cultivable land. The head of the household conducts the ritual in the field by offering cooked foods, fruits and flowers to the deities of agriculture.
<i>Nrusimha Chaturdasi</i>	<i>Nrusimhanath</i>	For forgiving all the worldly sins committed by the human beings and to purify the body and soul.	Great fairs take place at the shrines of <i>Nrusimhanath</i> at paikamals and <i>Harishanker</i> in Bolangir on this day. A large number of devotees take part. They bathe in the holy waters of these shrines and purify their body and soul.
<i>Sital Sasthi</i>	<i>Shiva & Parvati</i>	Marriage ceremony of the Divine couple.	The celebrations are held in the local <i>Shiva</i> temples.
<i>Ratha Jatra</i>	<i>Lord Jagannath</i>	The Car Festival	The Gandas attend this festival in large numbers to see the image of their beloved God Jagannath and pull his cart.
<i>Rakhipurnima</i>	<i>Balaram</i>	For the prosperity of the crops & the cattle.	..
<i>Janmastami</i>	<i>Krishna</i>	Celebration of the birth-day of God.	Devout Ganda men and women observe fasting and abstinence.
<i>Nuakhai</i>	Village & household deities and Ancestral spirits.	First eating of the newly harvested rice of the year.	A very popular festival. A great occasion of rejoice dance, music, household and communal worship, enjoyment of delicious food, meeting and greeting friends and relatives.

Sl. No.	Name of the English month	Name of the Hindu Month		Date of the Festival (as per the Hindu calendar)
		Oriya Name	Local Name	
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
6	September-October	<i>Ashwin</i>	<i>Dusseramas</i>	4 Tuesdays 10th day of the bright fortnight. 8th day of the dark fortnight. 8th day of the bright fortnight.
7	October-November	<i>Kartik</i>	<i>Kunarmas</i>	14th day of the dark fortnight.
8	November-December	<i>Margasira</i>	<i>Margasira</i>	From the 10th day to the last, i.e. full moonday. 4 Thursdays
9	December-January	<i>Pausa</i>	<i>Pus</i>	<i>Purnima</i> , the full moon day.
10	January-February	<i>Magha</i>	<i>Magh</i>	
11	February-March	<i>Phalgun</i>	<i>Phagun</i>	14th day of dark fortnight. <i>Purnima</i> , the full moon day.
12	March-April	<i>Chaitra</i>	<i>Chait</i>	1st day 4 Tuesday

Name of the Festival	Principal Deity worshipped	Purpose of worship	Remarks
(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
<i>Mangala Puja</i>	<i>Mangala</i>	To propitiate the matron deity of the Ganda.	Performed by women only
<i>Dussera</i>	<i>Durge</i>	For removing all evils from the earth.	
<i>Puajjuntia</i>	<i>Duti Bahana/ Sathi Devi.</i>	For granting longevity and prosperity to the children.	A regional festival observed by the child bearing mothers only.
<i>Bhaljuntia</i>	<i>Durga</i>	For granting longevity and prosperity to the brothers.	A regional festival, observed by the girls having brothers.
<i>Dwali</i>	<i>Kali & Ancestral Spirits.</i>	<i>Kali</i> is worshipped to destroy all evils from the earth and lamps are shown to guide the ancestral spirits to the path of heaven.	
<i>Bali Jatra</i>	<i>Krishna</i>	To sing the glorious deeds of <i>Krishna</i> .	
<i>Laxmi Puja</i>	<i>Mahalaxmi</i>	For material prosperity	Only women perform this ritual.
<i>Pus-punei</i>	Village Deities, Household Deities, Ancestral Spirits.	To celebrate the leisure after harvest.	A very important and popular regional festival. An occasion of leisure, recreation and socio-religious activities.
			No important celebration
<i>Shivaratri</i>	<i>Shiva</i>	For the blessings of the deity and fulfilment of wishes.	A major festival of the Ganda. Men and women observe fasting all over the day. Celebrations are made in the local <i>Shavi</i> temples.
<i>Mohulgundi/ Gundikhla</i>	Household and Village Deities.	To celebrate the first eating of the new gram, mango and <i>mohua</i> .	Only male members of the family conduct the rituals.
<i>Holi</i>	... <i>Radha-Krishna</i>	To enjoy social life by playing with colours with each other.	The famous festival of colours. An occasion of rejoice, joking, teasing, dance and songs.
<i>Mangala Puja</i>	<i>Mangala</i>	To worship the matron deity of the caste.	Both men and women participate.

CHAPTER IX

POLITICAL ORGANISATION AND SOCIAL CONTROL

Every human society whether primitive or advanced has its own built-in socio-political machinery to regulate the behaviours of its members and maintain law, order, justice, discipline, conformity as well as social control in the society. The Gandas are no exception to it. Since the Gandas are the citizens of an independent nation, they are subject to the constitution, law, government and administration of the State. Most of them live in villages with other castes and communities and come under the traditional administrative and political control of the village organisation. Last but not the least, is their traditional caste panchayat—a wellknit organisation to handle the internal and external affairs and safeguard the interest of the caste. Thus the Gandas live under dual control—one organised in association with neighbouring castes and communities at the village level and the other organised among themselves at their caste level.

Village Organisation

The Gandas form a part of the village community. In the traditional social hierarchy of the village community, the Gandas placed in the lower ranks of lowly and untouchable group amongst other Hindu castes and communities. Hence, it is not the Ganda and other lower castes, but the prosperous upper castes and communities who predominate in the socio-political affairs of the village.

The villagers irrespective of their different caste or communal backgrounds and personal, familial or group differences share common interests, problems and views, as the *bona fide* members of one and the same village. In course of time, they have developed various inter-related institutions to regulate their social life and enforce social control for the well-being of their village. In this sense, every village is a localized heterogenous community as well as an independent social, political and territorial unit.

The mechanism of social control operates through the internal and indigenous socio-political organisations of the village community which has been structured upon a complex and comprehensive network of units and institutions functioning at different levels of social life. The smallest basic and primary unit of the society is the family. In respect of its structure, function, nature of authority, descent and locality, the family of various castes and communities is almost one and the same, i.e. patriarchal, patrilineal and patrilocal. Formerly, in the village there were larger number of extended families for reasons of economy. Now, for the same reason, extended families are fast breaking down to nuclear or elementary families as sons show the tendency for separation from their parental families soon after their marriage. Uterine brothers usually stay together till the death of their father, after which separation of kitchen and family establishments and partition of the paternal property take place among them. Whatever may be the structure of the family, it always functions as a molecular socio-political entity. The senior male member, may be the father, grand-father or the eldest brother, is regarded as the head of the household. Sometimes, the senior-most member may be old and invalid; in that case he acts as the titular head, while one of the next senior members who economically supports the family, discharges the functions of the 'defacto' head of the family.

The head of the family is expected to be an honest, righteous, truthful, resourceful, dynamic, wise and benevolent person who should act according to tradition and look to the well-being of the family. His relationship with other members should be proprietary, not authoritarian. Younger members of the household must show respect to him and honour his wishes. The head should benevolently dominate others and command their respect. He should treat all in an equal footing without any discrimination.

It is the responsibility of the head of the household to safeguard the interests and the social prestige of the household. A serious socio-religious offence committed by a member of the family would seriously affect the social status of the family and sometimes, would result in the ex-communication of the whole family. In addition to that social ridicule and public criticism

brings further disgrace to the family as a whole in the village community where individual and families are well known to each other. As such, the head of the family must watch the behaviours of all the members of his household and advise, warn or admonish them according to the necessity of the situation. It is because, the family head is held responsible for the deviant and anti-social behaviour of his family members. Parents are criticized and accused by the villagers for the offences committed by their sons and daughters. People say that children go astray and indulge in anti-social or permissive activities mainly due to the lack of parental control.

The head of the family is answerable to the villagers and to the traditional village council for the objectionable behaviours of his family members. Sometimes, the father or the family head receives punishment and pays penalty spelt out by the village council. This compels and entitles him to exercise a controlling hand in domestic affairs.

While, a righteous head of the family who enhances the reputation of his family is praised, an irresponsible and dishonest head who becomes a liability to his family, loses his claim for the respect and obedience of his family members. In that case sympathy of the villagers is on the side of his dissenting family members. This is a very unpleasant situation which the head of the household does not want to face.

Even after physical separation, the younger members treat their superiors with courtesy and respect. On the occasions of family re-unions, such as those connected with the crises of life or with annual rituals for worshipping the ancestral spirits, it is the eldest member of the family who takes a leading role.

The family not only socializes an individual but it also enculturates the individual with the social values, beliefs, norms, usages, customs and traditions, thereby controlling deliberately the behaviour of the individual and functioning as the most primary and effective agency of social control.

Every family belongs to a caste or an endogamous section of a caste. In this section the families are grouped into several exogamous descent groups which are, in the case of the Ganda community, called *barga*. The members of a caste, its subdivisions and its component kinship groups have their own set of rituals, norms and customs to preserve the unity, integrity and identity of their groups as well as the caste as a whole. Hence, these social groups duly contribute their part in matters relating to the enforcement of social control through their traditional caste panchayat in their own way by regulating the interpersonal relationships within the group by dealing with the conduct of its members. In spite of the present ban imposed by the caste council with regard to beef-eating, if a Ganda is caught redhanded then, it not only creates internal problems within the group itself but it also tells upon the social status of the entire group inside and outside the village community.

Every family belongs to the caste or community with whom it shares a settlement site, be it a village or a hamlet attached to the village. In socio-religious affairs, control of the individual is broadly threefold; that of his family, caste group and the village. Often, it is only the independent, exogamous division of the caste which takes cognizance of certain offences and penalises the offenders. The caste organization deals with certain kinds of disputes and offences. The traditional political organisation of the village has its own limits of jurisdiction cutting across those of the family, group, caste or community. However, cases may be tried by larger *ad hoc* judicial bodies comprising representatives of the concerned social units as well as the parties in respect of inter-village or inter-group disputes. It may so happen that sometimes either of the concerned parties may not be satisfied with the decision of these traditional judicial organs and may seek justice by bringing the issue to the court of law. Whatever the case may be, the negative social sanctions against serious deviant behaviours when translated into actions like public ridicule and social ex-communication, act as an effective instrument of social control. To put it otherwise, ex-communication and social ridicule are powerful deterrents against anti-social activities because the existence of individual is not possible without

mutual help and co-operation of his fellowmen of his village and his community. The society and the community is larger than the individual in the highly personalised village community.

Village Political System

The Ganda inhabited villages in Western Orissa are simply not territorial and socio-cultural units. They also function as independent and autonomous political institutions. They are complete with their administrative and judiciary organs and a set of traditional office-bearers to look after various social aspects of the village, reflecting a traditional structure of authority and a unique machinery of justice.

The Feudal past

As described earlier, the territory of Western Orissa, where the majority of Ganda population is concentrated, was formerly divided under various ex-princely States and *Zamindaries*. During British occupation these categories of feudal chiefs were recognised by the British authorities and were granted hereditary proprietary rights over their respective estates for the purpose of land and revenue administration, on payment of various prefixed tributes and/or rendering certain kinds of services to the then rulers from time to time. These feudal chiefs, besides, collecting land revenue and other dues levied upon their tenants from time to time, were also discharging police and judicial functions and executive functions like maintenance and construction of public utility structures, maintenance of law and order, judging civil disputes, criminal offences and organisation of periodic rituals, festivals and ceremonies. For their services they were enjoying rent free *Bhogra* lands and receiving many kinds of customary tributes, payments and *bathi-begari* (free services) on various occasions from their tenants.

The genesis of this feudal system may be traced back to the remote past when aboriginal tribal chiefs of the Gonds and Binjals had divided the territory among themselves. Later on, the native kings or rulers and then the British authorities recognized them as their representatives and utilized their services in the internal administration of the estates in this territory. Moreover, *Zamindary* system

was created by the then rulers in return for collection of tributes, rents, taxes, and other services including Police and Military services from these feudal chiefs. These offices became hereditary and succession had to be recognised by the ruler on payment of *Nazarana*. The *Zamindars* and other feudal chiefs were also regularly paying a tribute called *Kamijama* or *tikoli* to their rulers, the amount of which varied from estate to estate and was being revised from time to time especially at each settlement through assessment of the total income from all sources of the *Zamindar* from his estate. The officials, agents and representatives appointed by these chiefs for the internal administration of their respective estates were also subjected to the approval of the rulers on payment of small tributes called *Nazarana*. Hence, the dismissal of the office-bearers by the feudal chiefs also required prior sanction of the rulers.

The status of the feudal Chiefs, i. e. *Zamindars* as well as their rights, duties, obligations and privileges and the nature of their relationship with the rulers defined from time to time, were impartible and resurable for breach of the terms and conditions laid down in the *Sanad* and liable to lapse in absence of direct heir or near heir, as the case may be. Succession to these offices was governed by the law of primogeniture, subject to the approval of the ruler. The *Zamindar*, *Kharposhdars* and other kind of chiefs had to attend the ruler's *Durbar* and to perform such other duties as was imposed on them from time to time and were held responsible for the proper management of their estates. They had rights to collect appropriate land revenue and cesses, revenue from country liquor, kine-house and ferries etc. in their estates. They were further allowed to retain the management of forest and fisheries in their estates during British rule. The post of these chiefs were carrying great social prestige, vast administrative and judicial powers as well as respect and obedience from the people in those days.

For the purpose of overall administration, the entire territory was broadly divided into two kinds tracts such as; *Khalsa* and *Zamindari*. The *Khalsa* was the tract directly under the Government administration and the *Zamindari* was the estates held by *Zamindars*, *Kharposhdars*, Princes, and other categories of feudal chiefs. Both the categories of tracts were being administered by the concerned authorities

through their agents and representatives at various levels. In most of the villages the *Gauntias* were functioning as the headmen of the villages.

The village administrative set-up consisted of the officials such as *Gauntia*, *Choukidar*, *Thakar*, *Nariha*, *Negi* etc. These posts were hereditary and continued to function before three decades ago. During feudal administration, these offices were attached with rent free cultivable lands called *Jagiri*. As such *Jagiri* means village service tenures granted by the then rulers to the Village Service Tenants in lieu of their services. The office-bearers enjoyed *Jagiri* tenures as long as they continued to serve. After independence, following the abolition of the *Zamindari* System, these village offices were abolished by enactment of various Acts of the legislature and Notifications of the Government such as; Orissa Merged State (Laws) Act of 1950, Orissa Estate Abolition Act of 1951, Orissa Private Lands of Ruler's (Assessment of Rent) Act of 1958, Orissa Merged Territories (village office services abolition) Act of 1963, Orissa Offices of Village Police (Abolition) Act of 1964. These former feudal chiefs and office-bearers at different levels have been compensated with grant of permanent and transferable occupancy rights over the non-transferable and rent free *Bhogra* and *Jagiri* service lands held under their private possession.

The Gauntia

The headman of the village was designated as *Gauntia*, a term possibly derived from the word *Gaon*, i.e. the village. He is the person who held lease of the village territory on payment of a small tribute called *Nazarana* to the then feudal rulers. He was responsible for the land and revenue administration of the village.

The origin of the *Gauntia* system may be traced back to the hoary past when human habitation grew up amidst jungle clearings. The earliest settler was spontaneously respected as headman and his words and decision were given due weight in respect of the internal and external affairs of the village. In course of time these village headmen were found to be men of authority and responsibility in the village and came to be called by the title of *Gauntia*. In later

periods the feudal chiefs took advantage of their position by recognising their position of authority and influence in the village and appointed them as their agents, for collection of land revenue and other dues and carry out the overall administration of the village affairs. Thus the *Gauntia* became the *defacto* head and chief administrator of the village.

The rent free land attached with the office of *Gauntia* was called *Bhograbhogi*. In the capacity of the administrator of the village estate, *Gauntia* possessed best variety of lands in the village area apart from the *Bhograbhogi*. In this respect the *Gauntia* was a small landlord, although he was the wealthiest man of the locality and had considerable amount of landed property.

The term *Bhograbhogi* referred to the proprietary rights exercised in small parcels of land held under the private possession by the village *Gauntia* and his family. This was a non-transferable immutable, resumable and hereditary tenure of rent free lands granted to the *Gauntia* in return of his services to the feudal rulers. In addition to that the *Gauntia* had rights to claim and avail forced services from each of his tenants called *Bethi* for his personal works and collect various kinds of fees from the fairs, festivals, rituals and events like marriage, divorce, etc.

The *Gauntia* was vested with responsibilities of the land and revenue administration in the village. He was functioning as the agent of the feudal administration for collection of the land revenue and such other rents, taxes and dues as forest cess, local cess, *Patwari* cess, *Parva-Parvani* cess etc. those were being levied upon the village tenants from time to time by the rulers.

The *Gauntia* was collecting land revenue and all other dues from the tenants in one or several instalments between January and March every year. During British period, the 31st March, was introduced as the last date for payment of these dues. Arrear dues were being collected with interest, but the *Gauntia* used to take all possible steps for collection of the entire demand for which he was responsible. Each tenant was supplied with a printed book in which the *Gauntia*

used to endorse regarding collection of rents and dues as there was no system of granting receipts for this purpose. The tenants were ignorant about the rents and miscellaneous dues they had to pay. For this they had to take the word of the *Gauntia*. Such a state of ignorance in most of the cases was becoming a source of exploitation by the *Gauntia*.

After abolition of *Zamindary*, this system has been changed and the tenants are now paying rents directly to the State Government. In most of the Ganda inhabited villages revision survey has been completed, various dues and rents upon the tenants have been reassessed and Record of Rights have been granted to tenants establishing their ownership and tenancy rights. In the present system, the tenants are now required to pay their dues to the *Tahasildar* through the concerned Revenue Inspectors who are revenue officials of the State Government. The tenants are now being issued with printed receipts in support of payment of their dues. They are required to pay their dues in one instalment after the harvest but before 31st March. In deserving cases, the tenants may be granted to pay off in more than one instalment but interests are charged upon the arrear claims.

As described earlier in the previous chapter, there were seven principal classes of lands namely *Bahal* and *Berna* (wet paddy lands better than other kinds), *Ata* and *Mal* (up and dry lands), *Gharbari* (homestead land), *Bercha* (sugarcane land) and *Bagicha* (garden land). The rate of rent for each class of land varies according to their cropping pattern, quality and yield capacity. Just prior to independence the rate of forest cess and local cess was twelve per cent of the total amount of land revenue paid by the tenants. The rate and the amount of *Patwari* cess and *Parva-Parbani* cess was varying from place to place and from person to person depending upon the socio-economic condition of the area and the tenant. After the abolition of *Zamindary* system the *Patwari* cess and the *Parva-Parbani* Cess have been withdrawn but other cess and dues are being collected along with the land revenue from the tenants.

In addition to the land revenue and cess, the village tenants were required to render free and unpaid labour for construction and repair of the public roads, buildings, tanks, schools, religious institutions etc. and for the services required by the *Gauntia*, *Zamindar* and the visiting officials. The *Gauntia*, besides his responsibilities of land and revenue administration, was also discharging other executive functions, including the above mentioned repair and construction works. He was supplying necessary lands, materials and funds for these projects. No wage or ration was being given to the labourers. This kind of free labour is locally called *Bethi-Begari*. Besides contribution of free labour, the tenants were also required to pay nominal fee between Re. 0.25 to Re. 1/ depending upon one's socio-economic status, at the time of marriage and other functions held in the household of the *Gauntia* and the *Zamindars*.

Under the *Zamindari* administration, contribution of *Bethi* (forced labour) and cash of the nature described previously was compulsory and one could refuse to do so only on the pain of corporal punishment. There were a category of officials called *Tandakars* appointed by the feudal chief for the purpose of extracting rents, dues and services from the poor defaulting tenants. A *Tandakar* was in charge of several contiguous villages and was helping the concerned village *Gauntias* in matter of revenue collection and maintaining law and order. In fact he was torturing poor villagers as the strongman of the *Zamindar* and people were very afraid of him. The *Gauntia* was also taking advantage of his position by utilising the services of *Sukhbasi* (landless tenants) for his personal work without paying wage or ration.

It was the duty of the *Gauntia* to attend the visiting officials and dignitaries and look to their comforts. He used to make arrangements for their boarding, lodging, conveyance and if necessary accompany them from place to place within the locality. He was acting as the chief spokesman of his villagers before the higher authorities. He had to attend regularly the *Durbar* of the feudal rulers with customary tributes and presents which he collected from the tenants. He was held responsible for the overall internal administration of the village affairs.

By virtue of his office, wealth and influence, the *Gauntia* was the undisputed headman of the village and was discharging many other socio-religious, administrative, legislative and judicial functions. He was a pivotal figure in the village and enjoyed a position of great social prestige and influence. He was taking initiative to organise seasonal rituals, feasts, and festivals in the village and he was always given a place of honour at all village ceremonies. He was the *ex officio* Chairman of the traditional village council and was deciding disputes, conflicts and offences of the village in the village council. Cases of disputes and offences were always brought to his notice and he used to convene a meeting of the village council to deal with these issues. His views and decisions were always being accepted by the villagers and seldom disregarded as his displeasure would result in dreadful consequences. He was in a key position of influencing the opinions of the villagers and members of the village council in all important matters of the village. He not only judged cases but also sometimes executed the punishment meted out to the offenders by himself or by the village council. He was in charge of maintaining law and order in the village. Sometimes, he was seeking the aid and advice of the village council. Of course, he was taking a leading part in the deliberations and discussions of the council and often guided its course in such a way that his wishes in the matter were carried out.

The office of the *Gauntia* has been abolished since past two decades and his powers and functions in matters of land and revenue administration has been withdrawn from him and been transferred to concerned State Government officials. The rent free and non-transferable *Bhogra* lands attached to the office of the *Gauntia* were settled with him with transferable occupancy rights on fair and equitable rent. He still continues to be a wealthy influential, and respectable personality in his village.

The Jhakar and the Choukidar

In the feudal administrative set up, the offices of *Jhakar* and *Choukidar* were very important and ranked below that of the *Gauntia* in the village. They were village officials discharging certain police and menial services and assisting higher officials as and when required. The *Choukidar* was responsible for keeping watch in the village and

for patrolling it at night. He was assisting the police and Government officials in the prevention and detection of crimes and other anti-social activities in the village. He was reporting to the Police Station and incidence of offences, criminal activities, epidemics, births and deaths in the village. His main duty was, however, the maintenance of birth and death registers for the village and to report at the Police Station. He was also to report about the movements of suspects and arrival of strangers in the village.

In addition to the above mentioned duties he was rendering various other services to the villagers, *Gauntia* and Government officials. He was attending to the comforts of the visiting officials, carrying out their orders and assisting them by carrying their records, mails and serving various notices in the village. He was also assisting the *Gauntia* in the collection of revenue and other dues and accompanying him at the time of depositing the collections in the Government treasury. Acting upon the directions of the *Gauntia* and the Government officials, he was heralding various important messages, orders and announcements inside the village and gathering the villagers for meetings or discussions.

The functions of the *Choukidar* and the *Jhakar* were similar but with certain differences. The post of *Choukidar* was usually held by a man belonging to the Ganda community. Being a person of an untouchable community his scope of activities was nevertheless limited as compared to that of the *Jhakar* who always belonged to a clean caste. The *Jhakar* could take personal care of the officials and dignitaries by supplying water, cooking food, carrying their luggages, supplying cots and beddings etc. Apart from these functions the *Jhakar* was incharge of worshipping the village deities daily and organising seasonal rituals and ceremonies. Thus, he was discharging important socio-religious functions.

Both the functionaries were enjoying rent from *Jagiri* lands in return of their services. However, they were paying various cesses and other dues assessed on their land holdings from time to time and were exempted by the villagers in many places from paying donations and contributions for public rituals and ceremonies of the village in view of their services to the village community. Besides, they were receiving their customary dues both in cash and kind during communal rituals and ceremonies and at the time of harvest from the villagers

they were serving. The offices of *Jhakar* and *Choukidar* have been abolished by the Orissa Village Police (Abolition) Act of 1964 and they have been granted permanent ownership of the rent-free village service land held by them. In case of the *Jhakars* who were serving as the village priests, they have been granted occupancy rights of a major portion of *Jagiri* lands formerly held under their possession as they still continue to discharge socio-religious functions.

Grama Sabha—Village Council

In most of the Ganda villages there is a traditional village council called *Grama Sabha* or *Panchayat*. It is a formal body composed of the traditional village officials, headmen of representatives from each of the castes or communities and other elderly influential and leaderly persons of the village. It decides all important internal and external affairs of the village. The decision of the *Grama Sabha* is taken as final in most of the cases and the villagers invariably accept and comply with it. It is an old democratic institution and probably come into existence as a result of initiative of the villagers themselves at a time when the administration of the day was too far away to take care of their day-to-day problems and difficulties.

The village council performs several important functions. It hears and decides minor cases of disputes, offences, etc. in the village which do not ordinarily go to the court of law. It fixes the details of the rituals, ceremonies, fairs and festivals to be organised by the village community as a whole. At the time of crisis, like out break of epidemics (cholera, small-pox, plague, etc.) flood, drought and fire that threatens and endangers the public life in the village, an emergency meeting of the council is held to decide appropriate remedial measures like organisation of communal worship, ritual and other arrangements to avert the immediate danger. It fixes the amount and the mode of contribution which should be made by the different families for any communal undertaking. For any undertaking in the public interest of the village the initiative is always taken by the council. For example, the matters of public works like construction, repair and maintenance of temples, buildings, roads, dams and sinking and repair of wells, ponds, tanks, canals, etc. are placed before the council for discussions, planning and finalisation of the details of each work.

The scope of the executive and judicial powers of the village council is very wide relating to most of the matters of public interest and internal affairs of the village. It acts as the custodian of the village community and keeps strict vigilance on the conduct of individuals and groups, preservation of social values, norms, customs and traditions as well as maintenance of orderliness of social life in the village. A serious breach of norm affecting the communal life is always brought to the notice of the council. In such cases, a meeting of the council is held to try the case and deliver the final decision. The matter may be amicably settled between concern parties or the offender may be punished as the case may be. Final decision is mostly arrived at through the consensus of the members present in the meeting. In case, there is no concensus, the decision of the majority prevails over that of the minority.

The cases which are usually brought before and heard in the *Gram Sabha* are those of inter-personal, inter-community and inter-group disputes, quarrels and conflicts connected with various issues of social life. It also deals with issues like partition of family property among brothers, breach of taboos, irregular marriages, acts of ritual pollution and petty civil and criminal offences like theft, cheating, illegal encroachment of individual and communal rights and properties and other kinds of malpractices. Sexual offences in forms of adultery, incest, rape, pre-marital and extra-marital affairs and the like are seriously viewed by the village council as matters of grave concern.

It is the duty of every member to take part in all important business of the village council but there is no compulsion to do so. Some times, Certain members who are not happy with the state of affairs in the village council as well as in the village community, do not participate in its sessions and actions. This happens due to the presence of factions, cliques and dominance of upper caste groups. The representatives of the less prosperous groups frequently complain that since the prejudices of some of the dominating members get due consideration always hence, their participation in the dialogues of the village council is useless.

Often it is found that, the defaulting and the inactive members are ciphers and do not have necessary personality traits to make their presence felt in the affairs of the village as well as the village council.

Whenever they attend the sessions of the council, they remain disinterested and passive. More vocal and influential members of the village elite easily outwit them.

Members of cliques wielding some influence in the community and others with some nuisance value have often been appeased by inviting them to the sessions of the *Gram Sabha* for the appeal to their sense of vanity. This formal recognition of their importance in some cases develop in them a greater sense of social responsibility.

As a matter of routine, *Gram Sabha* meetings are held before seasonal fairs and festivals and other regular occasions. On other special occasions i. e. when such needs arise, meetings are convened depending upon the gravity of the situation. A prominent and leaderly person, a group of persons or either of the concerned parties, involved in a serious dispute usually take initiative to inform the *bona fide* members of the council and other leaderly persons of the village about the issue in the hand and invite them to hold a meeting of the *Gram Sabha* to deal with the matter. Formerly, the secular headman of the village, i. e. the *Gauntia* was acting as the *ex officio* Chairman of the *Gram Sabha*. Most of the time, it was he who was convening meetings of the *Sabha* for deliberation on various vital issues of the village community. He was using his position of authority, wealth and social prestige to guide the course of deliberation and influence the ultimate decisions of the body in his favour. Services of the *Choukidar*, *Jhakar* or the *Barik* of the village was being utilized for gathering the members for the meetings of the *Gram Sabha*.

Now-a-days, the village officials like *Gauntia*, *Jhakar* and *Choukidar* no longer continue to serve, as their offices have been abolished after independence. Statutory Panchayat Raj have been introduced in the rural communities as a democratic and socialistic institution guaranteeing self-rule to the people. In the present political environment, the *Sarpanch* or the ward member of the village are the modern leaders whose involvement in day-to-day affairs of the village is more than any one else. In this situation, it goes without saying, that, the elected people's representatives are now replacing the *Gauntia* in the management of social and political institutions of the village community.

Caste Organisation

The castes and communities living in the village have their own caste organisations which comprises their traditional leaders and caste panchayats. These agencies work as the guardians of social control, serve as the custodian of the socio-cultural values and preserve the identity of the caste in the social hierarchy of the village community. These caste organisations extend from the village level to the regional level interlinking the villages in one or more than one district. Certain major castes have their own caste associations at the State level which are very effective, powerful and well-organised. But the Gandas do not have such organised association.

The headman of a Ganda ward or hamlet at the village level is addressed as *Mukhia* or *Sian*. The function of the headman is not simply to represent his caste at various levels of the socio-political set up of the village community, he is expected to do much more than that in fact the headman keeps liason between his fellow men of the village, and the common organisation of the village community on the one hand and the wider caste organisation of the entire neighbouring region, on the other. He represents the castemen of his villege in internal and external matters and particularly in the traditional village panchayat and caste panchayat at various levels of their caste organisation.

The general opinion about the duties and responsibilities of the caste chief of the village is that he should act like a guardian of this castemen, keep his people under control like a father or big brother and not allow them to deviate from the traditional way of life, which would affect the social position and reputation of their caste. As a leader he should take a decisive role in all the internal and external affairs of his caste. He should be strict, firm, honest but considerate and helpful. He should possess necessary qualities by which he would lead them, guide them, mobilise and motivate them, organise them and command the admiration, respect and obedience of his people. Further, he should be the spokesman of his fellow men to the external agencies and take initiatives to convene the meetings of the caste panchayat as and when required. He must not ignore his caste brothers but seek their views and co-operation in all important matters. The Gandas say that under a good *Mukhia*, people conduct

themselves properly, obey the established tradition and authority and respect of the elders properly. Quarrels and disputes rarely occur among the people, if the *Mukhia* conducts his business properly.

The nature of his office and authority is not well defined. Neither he is paid any remuneration for his services. He exercises his authority, influence and discharges his functions by virtue of his social and economic position and his personality. The situation varies from person to person and from place to place. By tradition, the intervention of the headman is sought for most of the important issues of the caste members. He maintains peace and orderly social life, regulates the conduct of his fellowmen, enforces conformity, discipline and solidarity among them, organises communal feasts and festivals, upholds social values and norms of his caste, decides minor disputes, judges the offences among his caste men in the traditional caste-panchayat and mediates in matrimonial alliances. His approval, mediation or intervention is solicited in the negotiation of the bride-price and the marriage, finalisation of divorce, widow marriage, polygynous marriage and all other types of uncommon matrimony like marriage by probation of service, *Ghar jamain* marriage, marriage by mutual exchange of sisters, levirate, sororate, love marriage or marriage by elopement etc. He is invited as a 'guest of honour' to all the social ceremonies and rituals like wedding, death, seasonal feasts and festivals. As a custom, the groom's side presents a *dhoti* and some money (Re. 1 to Rs. 10) to the headman of the bride's village which is an indispensable item of the bride wealth. This customary gift called *Gan chinha* is given as a token of respect to the headman and ensure his approval of the matrimony as well as to seek his intervention in case of future disturbances in the marriage contract between the concerned parties. In communal ceremonies and rituals he receives the head of the sacrificed animal.

In case, the headman does not possess necessary personality traits to command the confidence, esteem and allegiance of his people or does not behave according to the expectations of his fellowmen, he is criticized and ignored. If he is adamant, authoritarian, autocratic, selfish, ego-centric, dishonest or lenient, no body cares for him and

he becomes the nominal head and other members of the caste with qualities of dynamic and charismatic leadership replace him.

In most places, the succession to the office of the caste chief is hereditary by convention. But there is no well-defined or hard and fast principles in this respect. However, in most cases the leaders are men of affluence, eloquence, education, ambition, dynamic nature, knowledge and wisdom, particularly in respect of managing their caste affairs.

Jati Sabha (Traditional Caste Panchayat)

The traditional caste council of the Ganda is called by the name *Jati Sabha* or *Jati Panchayat*. At the village level it is more or less a corporate body formed by the traditional leaders and elderly men as well as the household heads of the Ganda. Sometimes, elderly and enlightened persons of neighbouring castes and communities of the same or the neighbouring villages who have earned reputation for their sense of judgement and knowledge of customary laws are invited to the meetings of the caste panchayat. Women are not allowed to become members or participate in the meetings of the panchayat. However, they can be called in as witness or as party to the issues in which they are involved. Even then, they cannot take part in the deliberations or the decision making process of the council.

The caste panchayat serves as the court of first instance in deciding all cases of minor quarrels, disputes and breach of norms among the members of the caste. Generally, it decides cases of small quarrels and disputes between persons, groups or families, breach of established norms and taboos, irregular marriages, bride price, divorce and separation, incest, adultery, pre-marital and post-marital offences, separation of brothers and partition of joint families. In most cases, the real offender is penalised to pay compensation to the avenged party as well as a fee to the caste panchayat which is spent in providing a feast and drink to the members of the panchayat and other caste men of the village.

he becomes the nominal head and other members of the caste with qualities of dynamic and charismatic leadership replace him.

In most places, the succession to the office of the caste chief is hereditary by convention. But there is no well-defined or hard and fast principles in this respect. However, in most cases the leaders are men of affluence, eloquence, education, ambition, dynamic nature, knowledge and wisdom, particularly in respect of managing their caste affairs.

Jati Sabha (Traditional Caste Panchayat)

The traditional caste council of the Ganda is called by the name *Jati Sabha* or *Jati Panchayat*. At the village level it is more or less a corporate body formed by the traditional leaders and elderly men as well as the household heads of the Ganda. Sometimes, elderly and enlightened persons of neighbouring castes and communities of the same or the neighbouring villages who have earned reputation for their sense of judgement and knowledge of customary laws are invited to the meetings of the caste panchayat. Women are not allowed to become members or participate in the meetings of the panchayat. However, they can be called in as witness or as party to the issues in which they are involved. Even then, they cannot take part in the deliberations or the decision making process of the council.

The caste panchayat serves as the court of first instance in deciding all cases of minor quarrels, disputes and breach of norms among the members of the caste. Generally, it decides cases of *small quarrels and disputes between persons, groups or families, breach of established norms and taboos, irregular marriages, bride price, divorce and separation, incest, adultery, pre-marital and post-marital offences, separation of brothers and partition of joint families*. In most cases, the real offender is penalised to pay compensation to the avenged party as well as a fee to the caste panchayat which is spent in providing a feast and drink to the members of the panchayat and other caste men of the village.

The meetings of the panchayat are convened in an informal way at the time of need. When such situations arise, the meetings of the panchayat are held sooner or later, depending upon the exigencies of the situation. The members gather at a convenient place, may be in front of the house of an important person, or in an open space before the shrine to hold the session. Every member has the liberty to deliberate and express their opinion freely and frankly over the issues. Even in case of disputes and offences, the concerned parties and their witnesses are allowed full scope and freedom to state and plead for themselves. Decisions are arrived at by the general consensus of the members present there. In case of differences of opinion between the members, decision of majority prevails. When the panchayat is satisfied that the facts of the case have been adequately established, the provisions of the relevant customary laws are interpreted and precedents of similar past cases are quoted and made applicable to the case in question. However, the decisions of the panchayat are always aimed at an amicable settlement between the disputing parties.

It is the traditional leaders and the persons of wealth, influence, knowledge and eloquence, who take initiative in organising meetings of the panchayat and play a decisive role in influencing the courses of deliberations and the final decision. The Gandas honour the decisions of the panchayat and the cases of disobedience are few and far between. In case of serious breach of norm or disobedience to the verdicts of the panchayat, the offender is socially boycotted.

Inter-Village Council

As described so far, each caste group in the village community behave as an independent and autonomous community. Although they have their respective *Jati Sabha* and traditional leaders to handle their day-to-day internal caste affairs, certain unavoidable situations of quarrels and conflicts occur between individuals or the caste and communities belonging to different villages. As these issues are beyond the jurisdiction of the village panchayat they are referred to an *ad hoc* inter-village council constituted for the purpose. But inter-village caste issues are referred to the extra-village territorial caste councils depending upon the gravity of the

cases. Minor cases of disputes relating to uncommon and irregular marriages, widow marriage, marriage by mutual love affairs and elopement, bride price, divorce, separation, land, property, profession, religion and other matters between the Ganda inhabitants of different villages are mutually settled through the inter-village council, while extraordinary and serious disputes are referred to the representative caste council of the larger territorial caste council.

Sometimes, mediation of the elders of other friendly village is solicited in the inter-village council. To decide cases of divorce or separation, negotiation and payment of bride price for marriage, the village elders and headman on the male side always move to the woman's village and hold a joint session with the caste panchayat of her village. In the cases of adultery and pre-marital sex leading to pregnancy, marriage by love, elopement and abduction of girls or married women, the relatives and village elders on the female side proceed to the boy's village to lodge complaint before his village elders. Then both the sides sit together to discuss and settle the matter amicably. Likewise, in all other disputes it is the aggrieved party who mobilises its kith and kin to demand justice from the accused party either directly or through the intervention of a third party. In such situation, members from different villages representing the concerned parties form an *ad hoc*, inter-village judicial body for mutual mitigation of the disputed issue.

Regional Caste Organisation

The Gandas have their socio-political organisation beyond the village comprising a group of neighbouring villages spread over a well-defined contiguous territory variously referred as *Desa* or *Rajya*. The territorial limits of the *Desa* or *Rajya* often, cuts across the boundaries of the Blocks, Subdivisions and sometimes even, the districts. For instance, the Ganda inhabitants of Barpali area claim that they come under the jurisdiction of a *Desa* comprising the Ganda settlements scattered over an extensive territory between the Murghat of Mahanadi in Sambalpur and Satighat of Anga Nadi in Bolangir where there is one lakh Ganda households.

This extra village and territorial caste organisation have been functioning through a representative *Jati Sabha* (Caste council). In earlier times a traditional chief designated as *Sethia* used to be the head of the caste organisation besides his duties to the council.

The *Jati Sabha* or *Desa Sabha* is a representative body formed by delegations of the *Mukhia* (the village headman) and elderly persons from component villages or hamlets and held at the time of need to decide socio-political affairs of the caste men, particularly those relating to broader issues of the caste at large, which cannot be decided at the village or inter-village level. Although it is a formal body representing the larger caste organisation yielding wide judicial and legislative powers, it is not held very often or with routine regularity but in rare important occasions when such needs arise. Neither it has a specific site or venue to hold its meetings. As a matter of practice, it is held either in the concerned village which is a party or arbitrator to the issue to be dealt with or where a serious offence has occurred. More often it is held in holy places, generally before famous shrines of the locality. The famous shrines of Lord *Nrusimhanath* in the Padmapur Subdivision of Sambalpur and Lord *Champeswar* at Champamal, Lord *Harisankar* in Bolangir are very popular venues for this purpose where not only the Ganda but other castes also hold their *Jati Sabha* meetings. In case, the *Jati Sabha* is held in the village as mentioned above, the Ganda inhabitants or the concerned party bear the expenses and hospitality of the participating members and delegates. The social and economic burden of hosting such a large body is immense, which acts as a powerful deterrent against the involvement of component village units and the members of the community in serious disputes and offences. Because of such financial reasons, the Gandas are forced to refrain from indulgent practices, conflicting situation, disputes and breach of established social norms.

While, the caste panchayat at the village level and inter-village level serve as courts of first and second instance to try minor disputes, the larger territorial council is a powerful judicial body which functions like a higher court to hear and decide over the major and fundamental issues relating to the individuals, groups,

villages and the caste at large under its jurisdiction. It also functions as an appellate body for the aggrieved persons or villages against the decisions of village or inter-village caste panchayats and takes up for discussion the fundamental issues about interpretation and explanation of customary laws and caste regulations. Whatever the case may be, the decision of the council is final and binding on the parties. Disobedience to the decisions of the council leads to the consequences of ex-communication of the concerned person.

The cases which are considered gravest offences are incestuous adultery and illicit pregnancy, forbidden marriage, illicit sexual relationship and eating cooked food with the persons of lower castes; killing a cow, indulgence in the banned and forbidden practices like selling and eating beef, removing dead cattle and dealing with leather and hides, serious cases of witchcraft and black magic. Growth of maggots in the wounds is also considered a serious matter. In such cases the council is held at the village where the case has occurred. Prior to convening the meeting the *Mukhia* and the elders of the concerned village detect the case and conduct a preliminary trial in the village caste panchayat in order to determine the gravity of the case and if required make necessary arrangements for the meeting of the caste council. Always, the offender is penalised to bear the fooding of the delegates and in deserving cases of poor offenders their villagers and their kith and kin share the economic burden. Considering the seriousness of his offence, he is socially outcasted by his castemen through his village caste panchayat for a temporary period, till he is able to meet the fooding of the caste council which is convened to deal with his case and restore him his previous caste status.

In the meeting of the caste council the headman and elderly persons of the offender's village initiate the case with a detailed statement of the case history. Concerned parties or the accused and the witnesses are called before the council to give their version and be cross-examined by the members of the council. The parties are given full scope to plead for themselves. The parties and their witnesses before giving statements have to take oath in the name of the Supreme Deities—Lord *Shiva* and *Dharam Devta* (Sun God) and the village

shrine to speak the truth. As a regular practice, *Paduka* (holy water and offerings of coconut water, bet leaves and flowers) brought from the local shrines of Lord *Shiva* and the village deity by the *Mahanda* (caste priest) is held in the hands of the accused while taking oath and giving his statement. Normally, he confesses the truth for fear of supernatural punishment. When the accused confesses his guilt or the case is adequately established before the council, the members discuss the matter among themselves and interpret relevant provisions of customary laws and precedents applicable in that case. Finally, they arrive at a decision through consensus and spell out the verdict.

Generally, the offender and the outcaste admits his fault and beg excuse before the council praying for the restoration of his caste status. If the council takes a decision in his favour, he is readmitted into the caste with his statusquo after going through necessary purificatory rites conducted by the caste priest of his village. He is shaved by the *Barik* (the caste barber), takes a ritual bath, wears new clothes and the *Paduka Pani* (holy water) from the local shrine of Lord *Shiva* is sprinkled over his head by the priest symbolising ritual purification. Then he pays a nominal fine to the council and fees to the functionaries conducting the rites. He offers the blood of a sacrificed animal and cooked food to the village deity and ancestral spirits and entertains his guests, i. e. his villagers, kith and kins and the delegates of the council in a sumptuous feast with meat and liquor. Before the food is served the offender touches all the items of cooked food ready to be served and also sits down in the company of his guests to take food with others which means that he has been accepted as a member of the caste. This makes the offender free from all sins and he regains all his normal position in the society. A formal declaration in favour of restoration of his caste status is made by the council members either at the time of the feast or afterwards. In one session the caste council may decide a number of such cases.

Killing a cow or an ox is regarded as a socio-religious offence in the Ganda society. The person responsible for this is condemned as a sinner and outcasted by his castemen. He leads a miserable life in a state of total physical seclusion from his family, kith and kins,

and his community and lives in a temporary hut at the outskirts of his village. He is socially excommunicated and nobody visits him and even touches him. During this time, he observes celibacy and abstains from drinks, non-vegetarian foods and other minimum comforts of life. He sleeps on the ground, wears minimum clothings does not take bath daily and shave his hair and beards, and endures all these physical and mental tortures to pay for his sin. If he is well-to-do, his family and kins folk make arrangements immediately for his purification. If he is poor, he has to move from door to door begging alms and foodgrains which he saves for meeting the expenses of feeding the caste council and of the purificatory rituals. More often his co-villagers and relatives assist him in this respect.

When he is ready to bear the cost of convening the caste council and the purificatory rituals he intimates the headman and elders of the caste panchayat of his own village and solicits their assistance in this regard. Then his family, relatives and village leaders take initiative and fix up a date for holding a session of the caste council and the traditional purificatory rites. On that day the sinner confesses his sin before his castemen in the session of the caste council and pleads for his readmission to the caste. The caste council considering the seriousness of his sin passes orders for undertaking necessary purificatory rites then and there. The customary procedure of purification in this case begins with shaving the head and face and cutting the nails of the sinner by the *Barik* (caste barber). Then he takes a ceremonial bath applying soil and turmeric paste over his head and face. After the ablution he wears new clothes, the caste priest sprinkles cowdung and *paduka pani* brought from local *Mahadeva* (Lord *Shiva*) temple. He has to drink a few drops of cowdung water and *paduka pani* to purify his body and soul. The shed-off wet clothes of the person are taken away by the caste barber. Then the person meets his relatives and castemen and pays respect by prostrating before the gathering.

In the meantime, the caste priest conducts necessary rituals at the feet of a *Mahua* tree. He sacrifices a goat and offers its blood to the deities and spirits praying for forgiving the sin of his client, i. e. the offender. The meat of the animal is cooked for the grand communal feast to entertain the guests. According to the tradition,

only the members of *Mahananda*, *Deep*, or *Sona barga* of the sinner's village can cook the food. When the meal is ready the sinner requests everybody to sit down and enjoy the food with liquor. The castemen on the other hand insist that the host should sit down and dine with them. Foods are served in leaf plates. At first, the caste priest starts eating and then others follow the suit. After the feast, the caste men comprising the caste council announce there that the sinner have been excused and reinstated into the caste. The barber, priest and the delegates of the council are paid token remuneration in kinds or cash Re. (0.25 to Rs. 5) and some foodgrains or vegetables for their services, the amount and kinds of which varies from place to place as per the local tradition.

There are alternative procedures for purificatory rites. For the poods, who can not afford the above mentioned extravagant procedures go to the famous shrine of Lord *Nrusimhanath* with his village elders and relatives and arrange purificatory rituals through the mediation of their caste priest and the temple priest at the holy place. Purification of all kinds of sins are particularly performed on the auspicious festive occasion of *Nrusimha Chturdasi* (in the month of May) before the famous shrines of Lord *Nrusimhanath* and Lord *Harishankar* where great fairs take place on that day. A large crowd of devotees gather there to take purificatory bath in the sacred water of the nearby holy *kunds* (pools) of the perennial streams in both the places in order to cleanse themselves off and then pray the gods to forgive their sins. Therefore, the small but picturesque waterfall at *Harishankar* has been popularly named as *Papanasini*, the remover of sins. There is a strong belief among the people of this region that bathing in sacred water of both the holy shrines on that auspicious festive day washes away all the sins and purifies the body and soul. As mentioned earlier, the caste councils of various castes in this region hold their sessions at the shrines on that day for easy and quick disposal of the cases of a large number of outcasted sinners of their respective communities. The caste council and sinners of the Ganda community also avail this opportunity.

Certain offences which strikes at the root of the basic foundation and structure of the society are seriously viewed by the Ganda community. Violation of incest taboos is one of them. It is a grave

and unpardonable social offence as well as a sin. Hence, the traditional caste panchayat at the village level have no authority to deal with such cases and as such these are referred to the caste council. Although, the caste council takes up such cases for hearing, no mercy or concession is granted to the offender in matters of spelling out punishment. Even though, the offender confess his sin, pleads guilty, begs pardon and expresses his willingness to host a grand feast and pay a big fine before his castemen in the council all his requests are turned down and he is never excused. He is severely condemned and awarded the highest and the most severe punishment that the caste council can order, that is to say he is outcasted and ostracized from the community for ever. Moreover, the offender is treated as dead and gone and his family members undergo necessary ritual purification by shaving head, pairing of nails, cleaning houses and clothes, throwing away the polluted earthen cooking pots in order to get rid of this mortuary pollution.

Similar consequences awaits for the persons who accept mates from lower castes violating the rules of caste endogamy. While the community tolerates and grants pardon to the male members who married lower caste girls, mercy is never granted to the members of the opposite sex who married male members of lower castes. Nevertheless such deviant cases of matrimony are beyond the jurisdiction of the village caste panchayat and therefore brought before the caste council for final decision. At first, both the male and the female offenders are outcasted. The male offender (who married a girl of lower caste) is invariably rehabilitated into the caste again after paying a fine and penalty feast. But a Ganda woman committing the same offence is never excused. Like the sinner who committed incest, she is permanently outcasted. Her family members observe purificatory rites as if she is dead. Moreover, they are obliged to entertain their villagers and council members with a penalty feast. This shows that the Ganda society is male dominated and patriarchal in theory and practice.

The caste council also functions as a representative caste assembly and takes up for discussion the problematic topics relating to the interpretation, limitation and scope of application of the customary laws and caste regulations from time to time. In order to keep pace

with the changing time this representative body reviews the code of customary rules and regulations and makes necessary amendments. Besides it also initiates progressive and reformatory social measures and bans outdated, unclean and disrespectful social practices (beef-eating, scavenging, drum beating etc.) by adopting various resolutions. These are purposively meant for the socio-economic progress and well-being of the community as a whole.

Sethia

The regional caste chief of the Ganda in earlier times was called *Sethia*. He was the secular as well as sacerdotal headman in charge of a group of contiguous Ganda villages comprising a well-defined territorial unit. For example, the former *Sethia* of the village Barangpali was being regarded as the caste chief of one lakh Ganda households spread over a large territory lying between the Mur Ghat of Mahanadi in Sambalpur and Sati Ghat of Ang Nadi in Bolangir. As described earlier the Gandas of this territorial unit formed their representative caste council. The *Sethia* was in a position of *primus inter pares* in the affairs of the council as well as the community at large.

As the traditional caste chief, he occupied a pivotal position in the socio-political set up of the Ganda community. All important matters were brought to his notice for opinion and intervention. As the custodian of the norms and social sanctions, he might convene a meeting of the territorial caste council to decide the matter or settle it himself, depending upon the nature of the case. He used to preside over the meetings of the caste council and decide the cases of incest, adultery, irregular marriage, bride price, divorce, separation, pre-marital pregnancy, inter-village and intra-village disputes, partition of property, and sinful offences those involved ritual sanctions. By virtue of his position of authority, knowledge of customary law and experience he used to exercise considerable influence over the course of deliberations and decision-making in the council.

The *Sethia* by exercising his judicial powers was not only spelling out the verdict on offences, disputes and other problematic issues of his castemen but was also the executor and supervisor

of the corrective measures. As a ritual functionary, he was officiating in the rituals of marriage and purification against the pollutions caused by death (especially abnormal and accidental deaths caused by drowning, suicide, homicide, attack of wild animals, snake-bite, dreadful diseases, burning, pregnancy or child birth, suspected black magic etc.) and breach of socio-religious norms in respect of killing a cow, pre-marital pregnancy, prohibitive marriage, forbidden sexual relations among the members of the same *barga* adultery, incest and dining with the persons of lower castes.

As a matter of practice, the *Sethia* was playing a decisive role when he was called in to arbitrate in the inter-village and intra-village disputes and those regarding marriage proposals, bride price, divorce and separation. Especially the finalisation of uncommon type of marriages such as widow marriage, levirate, sororate, polygyny, *ghar-jamain*, marriage by service and marriage by mutual exchange of sisters required his prior approval.

The post of *Sethia* was hereditary. Since, the Ganda society is patriarchal, the office passed from father to the eldest male heir. A turban was the insignia of the office of *Sethia*. When a new *Sethia* assumed his office, a gathering of the representatives from the villages was being held at the *Sethia's* village and the delegates tied a turban on his head declaring him as their chief and paying their allegiance. The occasion was being celebrated with pomp and ceremony, and grand communal feasts hosted by the new office-bearer.

The office of *Sethia* was functioning since the distant past and later, it was backed by the sanction from the rulers. He was granted with rent free *Jagiri* lands in lieu of his services to his own community. For example, the Utsab Mahananda, the former *Sethia* belonging to the village Barangpali was in possession of 50 acres of village service lands. In return of this he was obliged to attend the *darbar* of the then feudal rulers held on the occasions of *Dussera Nuakhia*, *Pus Punej* and marriage and other important ceremonies at the ruler's palace. On these occasions, he was presenting the ruler with customary gifts in forms of money, foodgrains, clothes

and vegetables levied from the Ganda villages under his jurisdiction and acting as the chief spokesman of his community to putforth the problems and grievances of his people.

In addition to the Jagiri land, the *Sethia* was enjoying other privileges also. He was collecting a nominal fee of Re. 0.25 to Rs. 2.00 from the groom's side in cases of regular and arranged marriages. For widow marriages, second marriages (polygyny), sororate type of marriages, the rate of fee was higher, i.e. between Rs. 1 to Rs. 5 in cash or kind. Few days before the commencement of the wedding ceremony the relatives on the girl's side and the boy's side were coming to invite the *Sethia* by following a customary practice of applying turmeric paste on his forehead and then paying a small tribute of money (eight annas to one rupee) and a piece of *dhoti*. *Sethia* was also collecting fees from the concerned parties for deciding the disputes and offences either himself or through the caste council and the inter-village council; for officiating in the ceremonies and rituals regularly from the households under his control at the rate of one *tambi* of rice and one *anna* cash in the harvest season and before the festival of *Pus Punei* every year. Seventy-five per cent of all these collections he was depositing in the Ruler's treasury and the remaining twenty-five per cent was being kept by himself as his remuneration.

The *Sethia* was being assisted by attendant designated as *Fekari*. He was accompanying *Sethia* to all places wherever the latter went to exercise his judicial and executive functions and carrying out his immediate orders. He was heralding the public messages and announcements and gathering people for meeting by beating a drum called *Nissan* or *Timki*. For his services he was getting a small share from the fees collected and remuneration earned by the *Sethia*.

The territory under control of the *Sethia* was large and it was practically very difficult for him to look after the day to day problems of the large area and discharge his functions properly in all matters. Hence, for the purpose of smooth administration the area was

in the prevailing democratic system. The ward members of large Ganda wards or hamlets are the persons belonging to their own caste on whom the natives have greater reliance than anybody else. He is their leader, spokesman to the external agencies, reformer of social evils, guardian of social values and justice and initiator of developmental measures. He is found to be a well-to-do dynamic and enlightened person, articulate in his thoughts and actions and voice while representing his people. He is honoured by his people in the public and private ceremonies and his words weigh more than anybody in the Grama panchayat, caste-panchayat as well as in all the domestic affairs of his own caste in the village. In most of the Ganda villages the ward members and the traditional headman (the *Mukhia*) happen to be one and the same person. But in course of time there may be changes in the pattern through spread of liberal education and political consciousness.

divided into certain sub-units. Each sub-unit was in charge of a subordinate caste chief designated as *Tala Sethia*. The *Tala Sethias* were managing the day-to-day internal affairs of their respective area which were not so serious and significant requiring direct intervention of the *Sethia* himself. Besides, they were assisting the *Sethia* and representing him in his absence in all important business as and when required. Like that of *Sethia* the office of the *Tala Sethia* was hereditary. It was recognised by the then feudal rulers and remunerated with *jagiri* lands (10—20 Acs.) but subject to the approval and satisfaction of the *Sethia*. All these offices have been abolished along with the feudal system soon after independence.

The New Wave

The former system of feudal administration has been replaced after independence and there has been phenomenal changes in the social, political and economic organisations in India which, nevertheless, have its impact on the Ganda. The traditional village and caste organisations have since been reorganised and modernised to keep pace with the time after the super-imposition of the democratic institutions for self-rule, i.e. the statutory panchayat and the election of peoples' representatives. The vacuum caused by the departure of the former traditional leaders like *Gauntia*, *Sethia*, *Tala Sethia* are now filled up by the peoples' representatives, the ward members and the sarpanches of the statutory grama panchayats who have become key persons in the arena of village politics.

Now the sarpanchs, ward members and other progressive youth leaders have come forward to take more and more interest in the important affairs of the village community. Even the traditional village panchayat and the caste panchayats have accepted their leadership in place of the former office-bearers. The Ganda community have never lagged behind in this respect. They have become conscious of their rights and duties as *bona fide* citizens of this country despite their socio-economic backwardness and discrimination in the rural society. They are taking active part and exercising their choice in the election of their representatives

CHAPTER X

PROBLEMS, PROGRAMMES AND PROSPECTS

In the preceding chapters various aspects of Ganda life and culture have been described. The Gandas live in a contiguous territory of Western Orissa in association with other castes and communities. Though they have borrowed many cultural elements from their caste Hindu neighbours, still they have been able to maintain their cultural identity by preserving some of their indigenous cultural traits.

Due to historical forces the Gandas have developed a recognisable ethnic homogeneity and consciousness among themselves. This has made the Gandas a close-knit cultural group somewhat different from others. In the traditional society the idea of social hierarchy based upon the caste or *Jati* system is deep rooted. The Gandas who belong to the *Asvarna* category, are placed in the lower stratum of the society as an impure and exterior (untouchable) caste.

Because of their lowly social status, the Gandas lead a despicable life and perform many odd and menial jobs at the beck and call of their prosperous caste Hindu neighbours. The evils of untouchability, abject poverty and drudgery have in reality reduced them to serfdom. They have been so oppressed and depressed that they have little self-respect and more of inferiority complex. However, their depressed condition has developed in them an ethnic consciousness which provides a basis for social cohesion and solidarity. Hence, their group identity expressed in terms of "we" as opposed to "they", i.e. the other communities, helps to cement ties within the community and keep them in their moorings.

As time advances there occurs gradual cultural changes from time to time corresponding with changes in their social and physical environment. Most of these changes, which have been

well accepted in their culture and manifest in various aspects of their life, consist of Brahmanic tradition as well as those of modernisation. The motive behind this is very obvious and conspicuous, i.e. upward mobility from the lower echelons to the upper echelons in the vertical caste hierarchy of the traditional society. This has been a well-founded trend of culture change deliberately followed by most of the untouchable and tribal communities in India.

The elements of change noticeable in Ganda social life have been discussed in the preceding chapters. It may however be pointed out that the traditional organisations of the village communities are gradually disintegrating and the caste barriers for these former untouchable communities are not as rigid as it was during yester years. On the other hand, deterioration in the quality of the selfsufficient rural life and economy; i.e. the productive organisation, has put the rural people in confusion. The old ways of life which provided confidence and security in life are in the process of transformation and the new ways are taking time to take firm root. In such a transitional phase the emerging values particularly hope, aspiration, direction have not yet taken any concrete shape. Naturally the feeling that comes to one's own mind is hopelessness and frustration at one time and hopefulness and patience at the other time. In such a situation the former state of mind takes upper hand over the latter state of mind, because centuries of subjugation and deprivation have rendered them handicapped to face the challenges of the present time.

The root of all the evils is not the prejudicial casteism alone but their proverbial poverty and ignorance. Unless the social and economic gap between the Ganda and their prosperous neighbours is levelled and unless they are properly motivated to a point where they can realise a sense of freedom and desire for better things, there seems no other viable alternative for their wellbeing. Once their educational and economic standard is

raised to an extent where it can remove their ignorance and promise them minimum comforts of life, the social barriers shall slowly give way.

The Working Group on the Scheduled Castes and Other Backward Classes (1978) reported that :

"The Development efforts for Scheduled Castes so far has been too meagre to make a significant impact on their condition. No clear strategy for their development has been evolved though, it is their problem which must be assigned a central position in the national endeavour for growth with social justice".

The Ganda is a major scheduled caste of Orissa who comprise 1.5 percent of the total population and 10 percent of the Scheduled Caste population of the State. A developmental programme for more than 3 lakhs of their population may lead to basic structural changes in the region of the State they inhabit which is bound to be resisted by their neighbours and the vested interests.

The Socio-economic condition of the Ganda has been subjected to a variety of forces in the past few decades. A small section of them consisting of the educated and the urbanites has been able to acquire some vertical mobility through reservation in jobs and other economic opportunities. But on the other extreme, the position of large masses of their population is becoming more vulnerable with growing population explosion and stiff competition for limited resources. The modernisation of industry and technology and expanding markets ironically push the traditional Ganda weavers to the despised and disagreeable positions. The more articulate groups i.e., their fellow caste Hindu weavers, like Bhulias and Kusthas are steadily moving into more lucrative and respectable positions in this respect.

Even after independence, the welfare efforts for widening their narrow economic base has been scanty. The benefits of the general programmes have not reached them. The observation of the Working Group (1978) about the present conditions of the scheduled castes hold good views for the Gandas :

“Practice of untouchability in malignant form persists in many regions. Overt social discrimination is on the wane in urban areas but the prejudices remain with sophisticated concealment and the push from villages is swelling the number of Scheduled Castes in the growing slums. Many of them are engaged in strenuous occupations”

As indicated above the population of the Ganda is dispersed largely over the western region of Orissa. As a socially disabled community their problems are co-extensive with those of the other weaker sections. As an untouchable scheduled caste they have one serious handicap that is their social and economic disability. Therefore, the rapid pace of economic development in the country has accentuated the difference between the levels of development of the poor Gandas and the better-off sections in their native area. The Gandas in general and the poorer section of the community in particular are expropriated from the benefits which flow from the general or special developmental programmes on account of their backwardness and social disabilities.

In general the approach and strategy for the socio-economic progress of the Gandas should cover three aspects viz. protective, promotional and social. The protective aspects should be taken up first. The priorities in this respect are, protection of their existing resources, consolidation of their traditional professions and professionalisation of “unclean” occupations.

For the purpose of socio-economic development the problems of various occupational groups among the Gandas should be dealt with properly. It is necessary to assess the

specific felt-needs and problems of each group and suggest appropriate action plan for development. Occupationally the Gandas broadly grouped in to the following categories:—

- (1) Those who depend upon agriculture as (a) Marginal Farmers (b) Landless Agricultural Labourers.
- (2) Artisans and Skilled Workers like Weavers, Basket makers and Village Musicians.
- (3) Those engaged in unclean pursuits as (a) Butchers in towns (b) Village Watchmen, Sweepers, or Home-Guards, (c) Village Messengers, etc.
- (4) Those engaged in strenuous non-farm occupations involving unskilled or semi-skilled manual labour like rickshaw pulling, brick-making, stone-cutting, mining, masonry, carpentry, etc.

The Gandas have been generally identified with certain traditional occupations, viz. Village Watchmen, Weavers and Village Musicians. The diversification of national economy, rapid industrialisation with modern technology have caused disintegration of traditional occupations of the Ganda forcing a majority of their population to join the army of landless labourers. A large number of these landless labourers who cannot support themselves in the villages are being drawn to the growing urban and industrial settings to take up some occupations, mostly manual, unskilled and semi-skilled and live in the growing slums. Hence to-day, their dependence upon the hereditary occupations is tenuous and marginal in many cases.

The bulk of the Ganda population depend on agriculture and allied sectors, although most of them are landless agricultural labourers who form the major occupational category amongst the caste. A small group, comparatively better-off amongst them is of marginal and small agriculturists, who owns only a small fraction of the total land area in the villages. Some of them are also share-croppers. Since there is no effective organisation to protect the economic interests of these groups, they

face a number of problems. Therefore, developmental planning should be geared towards improving their economy. This will in turn increase their consumption and thereby lay the solid base for the growth of secondary and tertiary sectors of the rural economy. For this purpose, it is necessary to increase the income of the agricultural labourers by effective implementation of minimum wages policy and alternatively providing increased additional employment from all possible sources created by the Integrated Rural Development Programme, Economic Rehabilitation of the Rural Poor, Programme, Rural Works Programmes, Food for Work Programme and promotion of various non-farm occupations not only during the lean season but even during the busy agricultural season, especially at the harvest time. This will enable them to bargain for better wages for Agricultural labour. The alternative and additional employment programmes cited in the paragraphs which follow, should be so carefully chosen that they contribute to the economic development of the area while meeting the immediate and primary purpose of increasing the bargaining power of the agricultural labourers and increasing their annual earnings. In this respect, priority should be given to the areas where wages are low and unemployment or under employment are highest.

The small sections of marginal farmers, small farmers and share-croppers among the Ganda find themselves in precarious economic condition. The meagre earning from small land holdings does not support a family for a year. Hence, they have to search for supplementary means to keep their body and soul together. More often than not, they sink into debt bondage and reach the bottom after alienation of their land and other valuable assets. This process of deprivation of the community of its scanty assets has to be checked by judicious legislation and uncompromising enforcement. The first step in this direction should be to ensure that the small land holdings and other valuable assets possessed by them or those have been allotted to them by the public authorities are under their effective command. Special provisions should be made in the laws against the transfer

and encroachment of their land and other properties. This has to be viewed in the context of the broad objective of planning for growth with social justice.

Since their ownership of land and other assets is limited, suitable programmes should be devised and implemented to allot ceiling of surplus lands and Government waste lands wherever available, to the landless poor, marginal and small farmers. As the planning commission observes :

“ Even the provision of small land holdings will improve the social status of the landless, particularly Scheduled Castes and Tribes and enable them to have better access to other means of production”.

Besides protection of their assets and allotment of land the next important objective in this direction would be to enhance the value of their assets through quick and full development to maximise the output from these sources. This can be achieved through more intensive utilisation of available land and water resources by developing necessary infrastructure and introducing modernized agricultural practices. The Gandas are anxious and eager for owning land and taking up cultivation. They should be helped and encouraged by vesting their right in land by supplying necessary inputs including development of the land and irrigation facilities, proper motivation and timely extension services.

In the allied and subsidiary sectors of agriculture, they can be helped to undertake horticulture, animal husbandry and fishery programmes. The I. R. D. P. and E. R. R. P. Programme should extend those benefits to the Gandas on a priority basis and in a phased manner.

The plight of the Ganda artisans i.e., the weavers deserves special attention. As already stated, their major problems are related to money (capital), materials (raw materials), marketing and modernisation. The organisation of the Handloom Weavers Co-operatives is yet to liberate the poor Ganda weavers from

the exploitation of middlemen and private money-lenders. Weaving simple and coarse handloom fabrics has been the major traditional occupation of the Gandas. Under the present circumstances of modernization, industrialisation and expanding market, the traditional cottage industry is declining in competition with the organised groups and industries. Lack of higher skills, modern tools, working capital, raw materials and market demand for finished products has made the economic condition of the Ganda weavers increasingly vulnerable. Unless their sick cottage industry is modernised and well organised to protect and promote their interest their economic conditions will not be improved and their traditional craft will be perished slowly.

A comprehensive action plan based upon identification of the Ganda weavers and their felt-needs should be drawn up. Assistance through the IRDF and ERRP should be given to the weavers on a priority basis. The co-operative sector should be reorganised to serve more effectively in this field.

Besides the large mass of Gandas being small and marginal farmers, landless labourers and weavers, a good number of them are also engaged in unskilled or semi-skilled and sometimes skilled occupations like rickshaw pulling, stone-cutting, brick-making, masonry, carpentry, construction work, small mechanical repair work, small business etc., especially in the urban areas. These professions are physically strenuous and unorganised. The wages or earnings of the workers are low as compared to the amount of labour put in and also the nature of employment is uncertain. These workers have to be helped to organise themselves to claim their due rights and benefits. Economic programmes should be directed towards increasing their income and generating full-time employment in the occupations, they are generally accustomed with or towards which they show great liking. Assisting the incumbents to own the means of their livelihood, that is to say, making a rickshaw puller to become the owner of a rickshaw, will be a very effective step towards bringing about economic reform and development among them.

It has been pointed out earlier that rurality, poverty, low income, chronic indebtedness, fewer assets, low level of literacy and education, low social position and concentration in traditional activities are the characteristic features of the Ganda community, that explain their subsistence or below subsistence level living condition. Socio-economic adversity and societal retardation compel even the children and old people, to work for survival at the cost of their health and physical well being. As marginal workers, they cannot be withdrawn from the workforce until the economic condition of the family improves. Therefore, strategies will have to be formulated so that work participation among these marginal workers is minimised as far as practicable.

Priority should be given to the problem of unemployment particularly the under employment which is the tap root of unemployment among the Gandas. The evil of casual labour on which the Gandas subsist in large majority is positively a vicious condition. A Ganda casual unskilled labourer gets some work and earns some wage in good time and goes out of work altogether in bad times. In such a situation his life and the lives of his wife and children are naturally embarked in a sort of desperate, fatalistic gamble with circumstances beyond his control.

Suitable economic schemes should be initiated for generation of employment potential, income augmentation, skill development and access to assets, in response to the felt needs of the Gandas. These schemes should provide avenues for additional seasonal employment to supplement their income. Location specific schemes on minor irrigation, land reclamation, soil conservation and public work programmes should receive top priority for furtherance of employment opportunities for the Gandas during lean season. Additional inputs on animal husbandry, fishery and horticulture in some areas of Ganda country shall provide them with subsidiary means of livelihood by generation of additional employment and income. The target group for these employment and income generating schemes are the small and marginal farmers, landless agricultural labourers, artisans, persons engaged in household and other traditional occupations and those who are unemployed or under-employed. The objective of these schemes include optimal use

of existing skills, provision of employment opportunities based on different levels of skill and proper understanding of such employment opportunities for the diverse population of skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers. In the implementation of the schemes care must be taken to protect rights of the workers from exploitation and develop inbuilt mechanism to provide necessary vigilance for payment of legitimate wages for their labour, in these income-generating schemes.

In the economic life of the Ganda, the predominance of tradition bound activities which are seasonal in nature, the norms of work discipline are almost absent. The traditional economic pursuits are more time consuming and less remunerative. So the new opportunities would necessarily facilitate higher work participation. Participation and productivity may not be directly related. But the income generating schemes should be modulated in such a way so as to develop efficiency of the workers in a gradual manner, taking into consideration their habits, poor health conditions and other factors. This can adequately be achieved through a micro-approach in promoting new economic opportunities.

The traditional employer-employee relationship in the agrarian structure of Western Orissa is both obligatory and compulsive which increases work participation of the Ganda workers. The system of *Guti* or *Khamari* (the bonded labour) caused by indebtedness among the poor contributes to this situation. No short-term remedial measures except the economic programmes suggested above can change the standard of living of the Gandas. The poor Ganda workers engaged in various occupations should be organised in such a way so as to learn to assert their rights and privileges and claim their due share in the national progress. This aspect embraces political, social and economic considerations. It is a formidable task to achieve. Ideally, the leadership should emerge from within the community. If outsiders take up the leadership, there is even likelihood of manipulation and abuse. With appropriate educational facilities and support, the Gandas seem capable of assuming the leadership in their community.

The productivity of the Ganda workers can be improved by upgrading their skills. Therefore, in the employment programmes, emphasis on functional literacy should be introduced in such a manner so as to improve their skills and enhance their productivity. Since these workers cannot adopt better technology (use of better tools and machinery) without necessary training and aptitude, the educational and technological content of the schemes will have to be carefully designed to suit to the conditions of the target group. The innovative approach in the "Barpali Experiment" initiated by the American Friends Service Committee in a Ganda area during the fifties seems to be a useful indicator for new economic programmes for the Gandas.

The process of "Sanskritization" has been visibly operating in the Ganda community in these days. This tends to lower the participation in manual labour because of the tendency to emulate the upper castes in cultural practices. Throner (1956,12) remarks:

"The primary aim of all classes in the agrarian structure has not been to increase their income by adopting more efficient methods but to rise in social prestige by abstaining in so far as possible from physical labour."

This pattern is visible among the educated, well-to-do Gandas and especially among the women belonging to the middle income groups in the urban areas.

To sum up, the strategy for the development of the Gandas should include such suitable programmes which would solve the following problems.

Problem of Unemployment and Underemployment

As an unhealthy person runs greater risk than a healthy person of being infected by a disease, the Gandas who have a very weak economic back bone are susceptible in greater degree than others to economic disturbances. When affected by such economic adversities they stand little chance of making speedy recovery, lose all hope of security and go under altogether. The main cause of this despicable

situation is their employment. It is therefore of paramount necessity for us to provide suitable employment opportunities for their economic improvement.

As pointed out earlier, the Gandas more than any other people contribute to the casual labour force in large majority. A Ganda casual unskilled labourer who is habitually underemployed gets sufficient labour only in heavy agricultural seasons and is often out of work in lean season. The rhythm of his employment is hinged with the local agricultural cycle over which he has no control. A simple survey of economic condition of the Gandas and the seasonal calendar of agricultural activities will reveal with great amount of accuracy the quantum of employment likely to be reached in any season. It ought to be possible for the administrative authorities to view the whole situation in advance on the basis of survey data and devise suitable measures for providing gainful employment to the Gandas in their bad times.

For sometime to come the Gandas will largely remain as wage-earners and agricultural labourers in view of the fact that they are not skilled enough to be absorbed in any industrial activities and the possibilities of occupational diversification in the area seem to be bleak in the near future. Moreover, the peasant society as that of the study area is not too modernized to allow for occupational mobility across different caste groups. However, with the availability of water through irrigation channels radiating from the Hirakud Dam, the lands which were single cropped are now put to double and multiple cropping. Besides the paddy cultivation which is the main economic pursuit of the people, vegetable growing and cultivation of cash crops such as sugar cane, groundnut, etc. have equally become important avocations of the local peasants. With such changes in the agricultural sector there may be greater opportunities for getting agricultural labour round the year and the problems of casual labour and slump in the labour market are likely to be minimised. In such a situation a regulating machinery be set up to organize labour contract co-operative societies among the Gandas, and ensure fair wage for the labour. Any systematic organization of labour will minimise loss to the labourers and maximize benefits to the employers.

Problems of Weavers

The Gandas are traditionally weavers of coarse clothes. The area in which the Gandas live is also inhabited by three other weaver castes namely the Kustha, the Bhulia and the Kuli. The first two castes namely the Kustha and Bhulia are not scheduled castes as the Gandas and the Kulis are and the former two castes weave finer clothes and turn out better and costlier textiles than the latter two groups who weave only coarse clothes. Each kind has its own loom and they use accessories which are different from one another. Their setting of the loom, designs and techniques of weaving are also different from one another. The "tie and dye" technique which is used for producing floral and animal designs and various types of line designs on woven products is the monopoly of the Bhulias. It is a taboo for the Bhulia weavers to kill tasar (silk) worms by boiling the cocoons which is a prerogative of the Kustha weavers.

In the same manner the techniques of weaving followed by the Kulis and Gandas are peculiar to each other. The Kuli weavers do not use the roller on the far end to wind up the wrap as the Bhulias and the Kusthas do. They keep the entire length of the wrap stretched throughout the length of their house which affects the texture of the woven materials. There are similar differences in the setting of the looms and the types of accessories used by the Kulis and the Gandas in weaving the clothes. Such monopolies in techniques and designs of weaving are mutually respected and no attempt is made either to borrow or to imitate, although these weaving communities live in close proximity to one another in the same village and are aware of each other's technical differences in weaving. Therefore, to ask a caste to accept a pattern of weaving or an improved appliance of a loom which is regarded as the monopoly of another caste is resisted. Unless these caste's rules and prejudices and their strengths and weaknesses are understood fully it would be difficult to introduce innovations in weaving appliances and techniques.

Although terylene and polyester products including mill made cotton clothes have travelled far into the interior rural areas still hand-loom products particularly the textiles produced by tasar weavers in the study area have ample prospects for bringing about economic

improvement in the communities. It is necessary to organise several small co-operative societies with limited number of members in each society and help them to produce better textiles which can be easily marketed. Generally, people in the peasant society do not trust each other and therefore they do not co-operate with one another in improving each other's economic condition. As a first step to educate the weavers to understand the simple principles of co-operative and self support and trusting each other in business the weavers' co-operative societies proposed to be established should be managed and supported by themselves.

Problems of Co-operation

There are a few co-operative societies in the study area. But the members in these co-operative societies work as wage earners. But it is necessary to bring home to them the idea that the co-operative society is theirs and each member contributes as much for its self development as for the development of other members of the society. In view of this, major emphasis should be given to educate the weavers to take the responsibility of running their business by themselves, to save as much as they can and to co-operate with one another, share each other's experience and knowledge and work as an integrated unit.

The weavers in general do not know the techniques of dyeing their yarn scientifically. It will be a matter of great benefit to them if they would dye their own yarn and use the dyed yarn in weaving clothes. Similarly, the Ganda weavers should be exposed through training programmes for learning the techniques of tie and dye and other complicated designs of weaving. In all these they should be helped to start from the weaving of simple designs involving little caste restrictions. Once they realise that products with designs fetch good price they may like to adopt the better techniques of weaving and more complicated designs for greater income and profit.

Necessary assistance by way of providing yarn and appliances of loom to the members of the co-operative society should be readily available so that the turn-out of the woven products is maintained steadily.

Unless marketing facilities are developed for the sale of the finished products of the weavers the progress in weaving is bound to suffer a serious set back. In view of this suitable outlets will be opened up for the marketing of the woven products at a fair price regularly throughout the year. In this work also the weavers should take major responsibility and manage their own marketing organization. Periodic assessment of progress, profit and other aspects of the Co-operative societies by the members themselves will help in removing inter-personnel distrust and foster mutual faith and confidence.

Problems of Occupational Mobility

A review of the occupational pattern which are carried out by different Scheduled Castes shows that the main occupations include leather collecting and shoe making and bone collecting; weaving and spinning; fishing, washing, dying and printing of clothes; sweeping and scavenging; basket, mat and rope making; fruit and vegetable selling; carpentry and black-smithery; seashell burning and lime and salt-nitre making; toddy tapping and liquor making, pig rearing, pottery, vessels and quilt making, drum beating, fine metal work, ornament and lac bangle making; gold washing, timber floating, catachu making and masonry work.

This long list of occupations does not mean that any single Scheduled Caste can take up any of these occupations. Barring a few occupations such as fruit and vegetable selling, rope making and masonry work, all other works are caste specific. Although certain occupations such as fishing and carpentry are pursued by people across caste groups, there are specific fishing communities and carpentry castes whose caste occupations are fishing and wood work respectively. But occupations like leather work, weaving, washing of clothes, sweeping and scavenging, basket making, black-smithery, toddy tapping, drum beating and catachu making are carried out along caste lines and no caste can take up any of such occupations other than its own.

Moreover, certain works like leather work, scavenging, washing of clothes are considered ritually unclean and polluting and therefore the castes whose caste occupations correspond to such polluting

works are considered worst untouchables and occupy very low positions in the caste hierarchy. Thus, there are social gradations from the very lowly to low positions based on occupational gradations within the scheduled castes.

In such a situation what occupations other than their caste occupation of weaving can be introduced among the Gandas by way of initiating occupational diversification for their economic improvement is worth considering. The place inhabited by the Gandas are not without contact with the outside world and many such places have grown and become urban centres. For example, the Barpali village located at a distance of 80 kms. from Sambalpur on the Sambalpur-Balangir Highway has grown to a township within two decades. Such places are most suitable for carrying on such occupations as fruit and vegetable selling and work connected with small-scale industries. In a growing township there is ample scope for works such as carpentry and masonry which are caste free and will fetch a better income for the Gandas round the year.

Problems of Sectoral Development

Most of the Ganda households are landless. A few households having some land are not able to utilize their land properly for want of wherewithal required for development of land and modernization of agriculture. Many Gandas have some land attached to their houses and these lands are most suitable for horticultural plantation and vegetable growing. In some places, water is scarce and therefore it is difficult to develop backyard orchard and kitchen garden. Even wherever water is available land remains unutilized for lack of technical know how and necessary inputs. Provision of energized tubewells and dug wells in areas of scarcity of surface water and credit and other agricultural inputs in all areas under family oriented benefit approach in all probability to enable them to make a fortune and cross the poverty line.

Lack of infrastructural facilities such as approach road, electricity, educational institutions in Ganda *bustees* or hamlets are responsible for their stagnation and backwardness. The low level of literacy and large scale educational backwardness have been major barriers to progress in the community. The squalor, poverty, ill-health and

the low quality of life which are found in the worst form in the community are largely due to large scale illiteracy and educational backwardness. In view of this top-most priority needs be given on educational advancement. This can be achieved by opening schools in Ganda *bustees* with suitable teachers drawn from their community, and providing financial assistance to Ganda children for prosecuting studies at both primary and higher levels of education.

It is the practice among the poorer sections particularly wage earning groups that the parents leave small children under the care of the bigger children and go out for work. This is an economic necessity and the result is that the children go without schooling. Moreover the bigger children in wage earning and poorer families are an economic asset, and help their parents in many economic activities. In view of this, the parents are not in favour of sending their children to school and the low enrolment and the poor attendance of the Ganda children in schools are due to this reason. In order to encourage the Gandas for giving education to their children it is necessary to establish creches at places and provide some monetary incentive to the parents for the common economic pool of the family. It is suggested that a monthly payment of Rs. 30/- per landless family, Rs. 25/- for a marginal family and Rs. 20/- for the family of a small farmer would go a long way in solving the problem.

Problem of Health & Nutrition

The problem of poor health, malnutrition, sanitation and scarcity of drinking water in the Ganda *bustees* have already been described in the fourth chapter. The Gandas suffer from a number of diseases. Their basic problem is their social disability as well as their reliance on traditional health practices and indifference or lack of means to avail the health services located in their area. The first step in this regard is to make a survey in order to assess their present conditions of health, nutrition and sanitation and drinking water supply and suggest suitable health services to meet the problems.

There are many Ganda women skilled in the art of traditional midwifery, who have been rendering valuable service to the rural community. These traditional health functionaries should be identified

and their skill and experience in midwifery further promoted by providing training along scientific lines and their services utilized in the locally established medical institutions.

Particularly the Ganda women and children are the victims of malnutrition. The best remedy for this is the midday meal which is to be provided to the children at school and *Anganwadi* which is to be set up in Ganda *bustees* to take care of the vulnerable section of the community. In Western Orissa, people are habituated to drink water from polluted sources of water supply such as *Katta* or tanks. More sinking of wells in the villages would not solve the problem, unless the people are made to change their habit. But it is a hard nut to crack. Nevertheless, serious attempts should be made to bring about a change in their age-old-established habit of using water from polluted sources and developing a new habit of using pure water from wells. The necessary condition for effecting a change in this field is that wells should be dug in the Ganda *bustees* and as education spreads and understanding develops, it is likely that a change in the habit may take effect.

Housing

The miserable condition of housing of the Gandas both in rural and urban areas deserves serious attention and needs improvement as quickly as possible. There are many Gandas having no house or even no house site of own. Those who are deprived of such a basic necessity as some kind of permanent shelter are in most cases forced to stay in the farms of their landlords. A condition of this nature inevitably forces these people to remain in perpetual debt bondage to their landlords. In view of this, it is necessary to provide necessary assistance to the Gandas to have their houses. In this work the concerned families should be involved to the extent that they would contribute all labour on payment basis so that the programme can be implemented at a much lower cost than in cases where people's participation is not sought and the houses built would be of the choice of the beneficiaries.

Last but not the least, there is the twin social evils of casteism and untouchability of the Ganda. According to Srinivas (1955): "Caste is like one of the many monsters which inhabit the vast and

colourful world of Hindu mythology". The most unfortunate part of it has been that a large mass of population is debarred from any physical contact from other people falling under the category of clean castes and are therefore secluded under the influence of the social stigma of untouchability.

Problems of untouchability and upward mobility.

Various studies and vast literatures are available giving India's caste system in detail including its structural and organisational peculiarities with particular reference to hierarchical ranking, inter-caste transaction, patron-client relationship and untouchability. There is no need for reiterating these much talked about phenomenon of caste. But the question whether the Ganda untouchables can acquire a higher rank in the local hierarchy so as to render them free from the evils of untouchability. If it is possible, then by what way they can achieve it.

Before this issue is taken up, it is necessary to have an understanding of the present conditions under which the untouchability of the Gandas perpetuate. Nowhere in the study area or for that matter in the State as a whole do the Gandas form the majority of the population and own enough land to be self-sufficient and keep themselves out of wage labour and remain free from tied-labour. It is assumed that the people of the low caste who form numerically the vast majority in a particular territory having no powerful higher castes therein, would have little or much less experience of being treated collectively as untouchable than the people of the same community living scattered in areas inhabited by dominant higher castes. Two other conditions are required for their upward mobility in the caste hierarchy to take effect. One is in respect of their ownership of enough land in their homeland to make them affluent and self-sufficient enabling them to be free from the debt-bondage and economic intimidation and to abandon their low caste occupation which is considered polluting and largely responsible for their untouchability. The other is related to their higher educational standard and cross-country mobility and trading in foreign merchandise which are likely to

create favourable conditions for transactions between the untouchables and local high-castes thus narrowing the social distance and inapproachability which exist at present in the peasant society.

A chain of changes would take place in an untouchable caste which finds itself lodged in a position of numerical predominance, ownership of vast landed property, occupational and spatial mobility with enhanced educational standard. Its members are likely to be drawn sooner rather than latter towards the locus of modern political power and reap the benefits of constitutional safeguards and protective legislations including reservation in public services. With their acquisition of higher positions in caste hierarchy and political arena they would start resenting publicly the kind of treatment meted to them in the matter of giving food to them on social occasions. A similar situation has occurred in the case of the Gandas. In both rural and urban areas certain Scheduled Castes play on drums and provide music on marriage ceremonies and festive occasions. The Ganda is one of such castes. The people belonging to this community no longer want to provide this service to the high castes and for that matter are not in favour of organizing any band party on commercial basis the reason being that the members of the band party are given food at the end after all people belonging to high castes who are invited to partake the feast have taken their food. Supply of food to the untouchable service castes at the end after everybody invited has eaten on social and festive occasions which was in vogue as an established tradition in peasant society is vehemently opposed by the members of the unclean service castes. Wherever any Scheduled Caste or even an individual household of that community enjoys vast landed property, and economic affluence, high political power and educational position, automatically ceases to carry out any caste-defined ritually unclean occupations and imitates the customs and habits of high castes. Gradually they form a near non-untouchable sub-caste by ceasing commensality and marriage with the low section of their caste. A legion of such changes and adjustments is made in a way primarily to convince the higher castes that they need not be treated as untouchable any longer and start accepting food, at least, dry food to begin with, from their hands and extending brahminical and other caste services to them.

Two situations are most likely to emerge out of such a process of upward mobility of an untouchable caste. The higher castes particularly if they are dominant, will not appreciate the untouchable caste to abandon its untouchable identity and instead insist it members to continue its traditional polluting occupations failing which either economic boycott, or physical attack or encounter are likely to result. Another consequence of this upward mobility is that the practice of untouchability is perpetuated rather than wiped off from the peasant society.

The conditions referred to above being favourable for upward mobility, the untouchable caste enblock or the reformed section of the caste becomes gradually a non-untouchable in a large measure if not fully and some higher but poorer castes will not mind to trade rank for the new hand outs and carry on transactions with the newly emerging erstwhile untouchable. The more approachable the neo-untouchable becomes to the higher castes the less contact will it have with the traditional section of its own caste and also other untouchable castes. Two diametrically opposite forces come into play in this situation, one pulling neo-untouchable towards the higher castes and the other pushing the neo-untouchable away from other untouchables. By this process the untouchability is in no way weakened, rather it perpetuates as strongly as ever before.

However, one hopes that as education spreads among the Sch. Castes and their economic condition improves and as the industrial development begins to work for modernising the traditional peasant society, the conditions favouring the caste system to perpetuate get weakened and the inter-caste differences become hazy and finally vanish. One point more needs to be mentioned. Caste system draws its nourishment mainly from two sources which give strength and resistance to it in spite of its weakness of divisions into privileged and unprivileged, dominant and suppressed high and low class structured groups. One of the sources in which its strength lay is the monopoly which is theoretically given to the incorporated communities over certain occupations and the other is the non-competitive orientation of the whole caste organization. These two elements of the caste system are maintained by various ritual and moral codes and social control.

Out of these conditions grow other restrictions which keep on one side different classes and castes separated from one another and on the other get tied to one another in a net work of inter-dependent duties and rights. To perpetuate differences in rank and status and maintain hierarchy inter-marriage and interdining are prohibited and to uphold the entire caste structure the caste guilds are entrusted with certain types of non-interchangeable economic activities barring agriculture and agriculture labour which is open to all with support from sacred authority and temporal power. All these points show that the pre-conditions for any untouchable community to acquire a higher rank in the local caste hierarchy are large concentration of that community in a particular territory, possession of vast landed property, high educational standard, cessation of unclean occupations and influential leadership position and political power. To what extent can the Gandas raise their rank from their present position and how long will this process take for their social upgradation will be determined in the light of the above mentioned pre-requisites.

—X—

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ahmad, S. I. .. 1978 "A Comparative Study of Child Rearing Practices and Personality Structure among the Harijans and Adibasis of Chhotnagpur, Bihar", *Bulletin, Anthropological Survey of India*, XXVII (1 & 2), 7-17.
- Adibasi-Vol. XIV .. 1972-73 "Status of the Kuli Caste in the district of Balangir and Sambalpur", Research Report of the TRB, Orissa, prepared by Shri K. M. Mohapatra, 28-29.
- Bailey, F. G. .. 1957 *Caste and Economic Frontier*, Manchester: University Press.
- .. 1959 *Politics and Social Change in Orissa in 1959* : Berkley University of California Press.
- .. 1960 *Tribe, Caste and Nation*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Census Report ... 1911 United Provinces, 11-12.
- .. 1901 United Provinces, 216 ff.
- Census of India .. 1911 Vol. I, pt. I, 383-384.
- .. 1971 *Pocket Book of Population, Statistics*.
- .. 1971 *General Report, Orissa : Series, 16, Part-IA*.
- .. 1961 *Orissa District Census, Hand Book, Boudh-Khondmals*.

- Gluckman, Max .. 1965 *Politics, Law and Ritual in Tribal Society*, London: OUP.
- Government of India .. 1978 *Report of the Working Group (1978) on Scheduled Castes and Other Backward Castes During Medium Term Plan, 1978—83*, New Delhi: Ministry of Home Affairs.
- Indian Conference of Social Work. 1955 *Seminar on Removal of Casteism and Untouchability*, Bombay.
- Mohapatra, M. .. *Bauri of Bhubaneswar*, Bhubaneswar : THRTI.
- Mead, M. .. 1963 *Growing up in New Guinea*, Penguin Books.
- Naik, T. B. .. 1956 *The Bhils, Delhi : Bharatiya Adimjati Sevak Sangha.*
- Senapati, N. (ed) .. 1968 *Orissa District Gazetteers, Balangir.*
- 1971 *Orissa District Gazetteers, Sambalpur.*
- Patnaik, N. .. 1953 "The weavers of Barpali: A Study of Their Social and Economic Conditions." *Man in India*, XXXIII(27).
- 1954 "Caste and Occupation in Rural Orissa", *Man in India*, XXXIV, 257-270.
- Patnaik, N. et,al .. 1980 "Hand Book on the Pauri Bhuiyan" *Adibasi*, XIX (1—4), Special Issue.
- Patnaik, N. and Das .. 1982 *The Kondh of Orissa*, Bhubaneswar : THRTI.

- Census of India .. 1961 Orissa District Census Hand Book, Kalahandi.
- .. 1961 Orissa District Census Hand Book, Balangir.
- .. 1961 Orissa District Census Hand Book, Sambalpur.
- Cluckhohn, C. .. 1965 *Mirror for Man*, New York: Premier Books.
- Chowdhury, B. .. The Oraon, Bhubaneswar: THRTI.
- Crooke, W. & R. E. 1925 *Religion and Folklore in India*, Ethoven Delhi: S. Chand & Co.
- Daltor, E. T. ... 1872 *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal*, Calcutta: Indian Studies (Reprint, 1960).
- Dash, S. P. .. 1962 *Sambalpur Itihas* (in Oriya), Sambalpur.
- Dube, S. C. .. 1955 *Indian Village*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Fraser Jr. T. M. .. 1968 *Culture and Change in India: The Barpali Experiment*, Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Press.
- Fuchs Stephen .. 1963 *The Origin of Man and His Culture*, Delhi: Asian Publishing House.
- Furer-Haimendorf, C. 1979 *The Gonds of Andhra Pradesh*, Von Delhi: Vikash Publishing House.
- Ghurey, G. S. ... 1963 *The Mahadeo Kolis*, Bombay: Popular Prakashan.

- Risley, H. H. .. 1981 *The Tribes and Castes of Bengal*, Vol. II, Calcutta: Bengal Secretariat.
- Russel R. V. and .. 1975 *The Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India*, Vol. III, Delhi: Cosmo Publications.
- Singh, Y. .. 1973 *Modernizaion of Indian Tradition*, Delhi: Thomson Press (India) Ltd.
- 1977 *Social Stratification and Change in India*, Delhi: Manohar.
- Srinivas, M. N. .. 1955 *India's Villages*, Calcutta: Development Department, West Bengal.
- Srivastav, S. N. .. 1980 *Harijans in Indian Society*, Lucknow: Upper India Publishing House.
- Thurston, E. .. 1909 *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, Delhi: Cosmo Publications, 1975.
- Tripathy, B. .. 1971 *A Portrait of Population, Orissa: Census of India*.

INDEX

(A)

Aboriginal	.. 165, 173, 175, 176, 208
Adultery	.. 217, 221, 223, 230, 231
Adult marriage	.. 141
Agricultural Labour	.. 1, 84, 88, 100, 102, 240, 246, 256.
Animism	.. 165, 173, 191
Animatism	.. 191
Ancestral Spirit	.. 34, 56, 57, 61, 111, 152, 162, 178, 182, 183, 206, 226.
Ata and Mal	.. 71, 212
Avoidance relationship	.. 130, 143

(B)

Bahal and Berna	.. 212
Barga	.. 139, 140, 143, 146, 147, 149, 180, 207, 231.
Barik	.. 122, 152, 158, 161, 163, 218, 226, 227.
Beef-eating	.. 6, 7, 13, 16, 52, 140, 181, 207, 230,
Benevolent	.. 169, 171, 186
Bhutia	.. 84, 87
Bhaijuntia	.. 40, 58, 113, 197
Bhogra Bhogi	.. 211
Birtia	.. 111, 149, 161, 163, 189
Birth Pollution	.. 113, 120, 121, 187
Black Magic	.. 61, 111, 225, 231

Bride Price	133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 141, 142, 143, 144, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 156, 221, 223, 230, 231.
(C)	
Caste Council	53, 141, 144, 181, 207, 223, 224, 225, 227, 228, 229, 230, 232.
Caste hierarchy	236, 250, 254, 256
Caste Panchayat	135, 138, 139, 141, 144, 145, 146, 147, 155, 156, 204, 207, 219, 221, 223, 224, 225, 229.
Celestial bodies	171
Child birth	111, 112, 116, 117, 119, 120, 121, 122, 190.
Child marriage	142
Choukidar	1, 4, 90, 209, 210, 214, 215, 216, 218.
Clothing	41, 42, 43, 142, 195
Consanguineal Kin	139
Conception	110, 111, 112, 113
Corpse	156, 157, 158, 160, 164
Cult	169, 182, 193, 194
Cultural Complex	131
Customary gift	136, 138, 142, 160, 220, 231.
Customary Law	160, 221, 222, 225, 226, 229, 230.
Cross-Cousin Marriage	130, 139, 140

(D)

Death Pollution	..	158, 159, 164
Deceased	..	142, 156, 157, 158, 160, 160, 161, 162, 163.
Descent Group	..	149, 207
Devta ghar	..	176
Divorce	..	1, 165, 156, 211, 221, 223, 230.
Draught animal	..	75
Dulha Bar	..	177

(E)

Endogamy	..	140, 141, 229
Evil eye	..	61, 111, 113, 114, 125, 190, 191.
Evil Spirit	..	57, 61, 114, 119, 120, 180.
Exogamy	..	139, 140, 146, 147
Extended family	..	154, 205
Extra-marital affairs	..	155, 217

(F)

Family	..	154
Fetishism	..	183
Feudal Chief	..	208, 209, 210, 211

(G)

Ganda households	..	104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109.
Gauntla	..	4, 65, 66, 136, 175, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 218, 233.
Guti	..	84, 85, 86, 87, 244

(H)

Hair Style	..	49, 50
Heterogenous	..	10, 15, 204
Hindu Pantheon	..	165, 171, 182
Homogenous	..	9, 15, 130
Household budget	..	104, 105, 106

(I)

Incest	..	321, 223, 228, 230
Income group	..	105
Indeptedness	..	105, 106, 107, 109, 138, 244.
Indepted household	..	105, 106, 107, 108
Infant mortality	..	111, 112

(J)

Jhakar	..	175, 214, 215, 216, 218
Joint family	..	154, 155
Joking relationship	..	199

(K)

Karma Puja	..	43, 89, 103, 173, 180, 193
Kins folk	..	160, 227
Kinship bond	..	159
Kinship group	..	207
Kinship usages	..	130
Kitchen garden	..	52, 54, 250
Kith and Kin	..	138, 160, 223, 226

(L)

Levirate	..	139, 142, 143, 220, 231
Lineage member	..	160
Love marriage	..	145, 146, 220

(M)

Mohananda	..	226, 228, 231
Magiko-religious usage	..	178, 180
Malevolent spirits	..	111, 113 164
Marital alliance	..	134, 139, 140, 141, 148
Marriage	..	111, 133, 134, 136, 137, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 150, 151, 154, 155, 156. 211, 231,
Marriage by elopment	..	145, 220, 223
Marriage by negotiation	..	148
Masan	..	166, 177
Masonry	..	78, 88, 91, 102, 239, 242, 250.
Midwife	..	118, 119, 120
Modernization	..	83, 236. 237, 241, 242, 250
Monogamy	..	141
Monotheism	..	191
Mortuary rites	..	58, 103, 141, 160, 163, 164
Mythical ancestor	..	139

(N)

Name-giving ceremony	..	124
Nazarana	..	209, 210
Non-vegetarian dish	..	52, 53, 56, 158
Norm	..	236, 207, 217, 220, 221, 224, 230,
Nuclear family	..	154, 205
Nuakhia	..	40, 43, 52, 58, 89, 103, 113, 137, 142, 178, 195, 196, 197, 231.

(O)

Occult power	..	189, 190
Offspring	..	169, 170
Ojha	..	111, 142, 151
Omens	..	171, 179, 185, 187, 188, 189, 191,
Ornaments	..	44, 49

(P)

Pajeni	..	81
Parmani	..	81
Parallel-cousin	..	140
Patriarchal	..	154, 205, 229, 231
Patrilineal	..	154, 205
Patrilocal	..	154, 205
Patron deity	..	169
Paturient woman	..	114, 115
Penalty feast	..	141, 144, 229
Pilati	..	112, 117
Pinda	..	161, 162, 163
Polygamy	..	141
Polygyny	..	231, 232
Polytheist	..	165, 173
Poultry bird	..	52, 77, 196
Preferential marriage	..	130, 140
Pre-marital affairs	..	217
Primogeniture	..	209
Probationary marriage	..	147
Puajuntia	..	40, 58, 113, 172, 196
Puberty	..	131, 141, 142, 149

Pundit .. 111, 112, 122, 123, 125, 158

Purificatory ritual .. 122, 141, 158, 159, 160, 164, 167, 227, 228.

Pus Punei .. 37, 40, 43, 52, 58, 89, 103, 137, 142, 170, 178, 196, 198, 231, 232.

(R)

Rayat .. 66

Ritual .. 56, 61, 103, 120, 122, 135, 152, 159, 160, 163, 166, 167, 170, 173, 185, 186, 191, 193, 196, 199, 211, 216, 220.

(S)

Sahukar .. 109

Settlement pattern .. 30

Siblings .. 126

Socialization .. 123

Socio-economic Status .. 130, 131, 148, 196, 213

Socio-religious rituals .. 107

Sororate .. 139, 145, 220, 231, 232

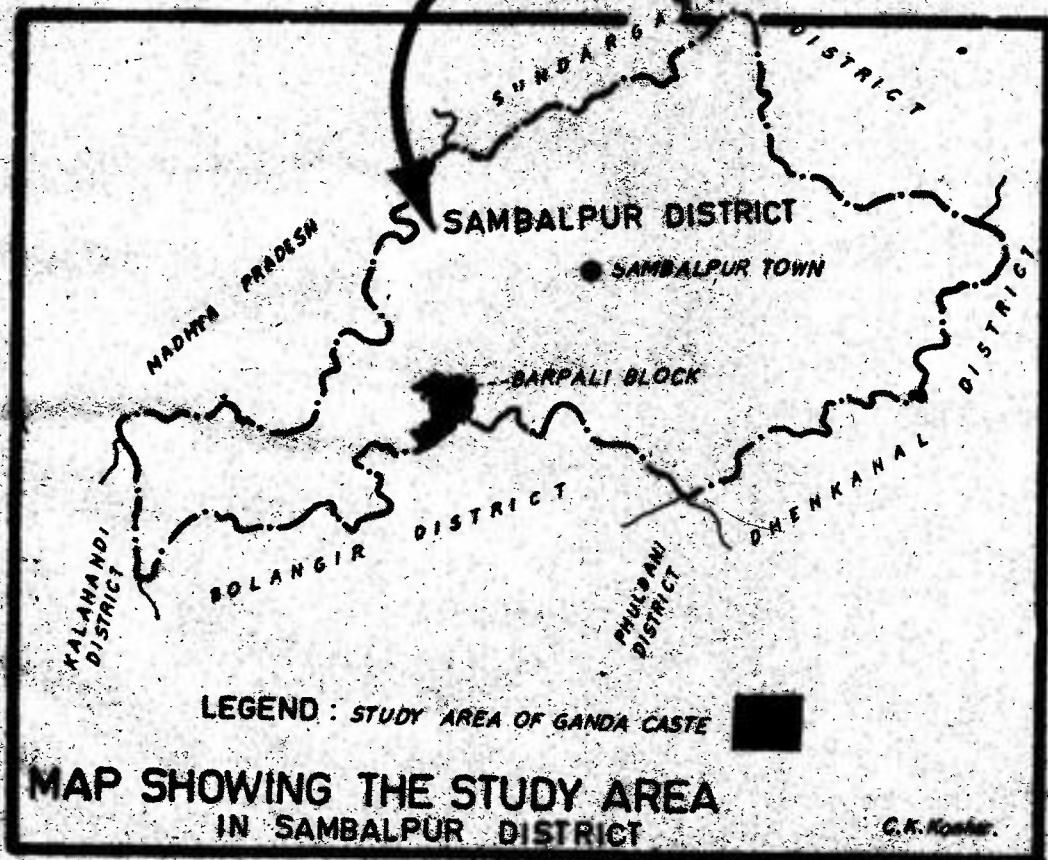
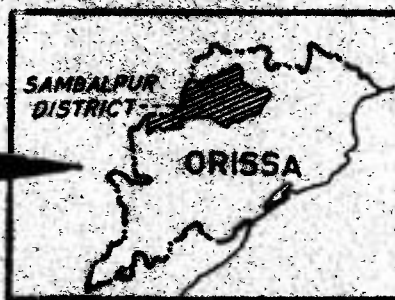
Spouses .. 154

Staple food .. 51

Supernatural Agencies .. 61, 111, 114

Supreme 'trio' .. 169

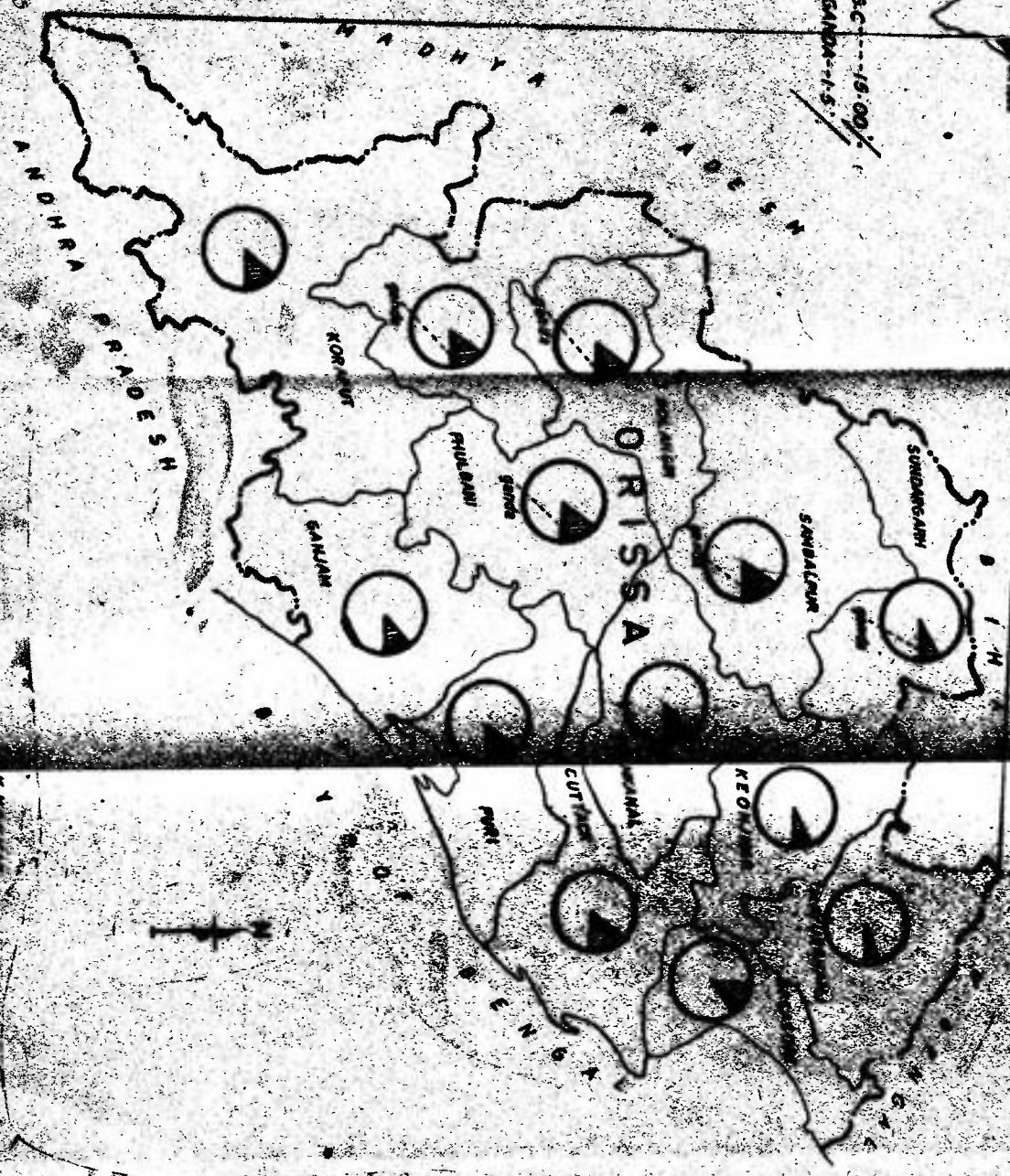
	(T)	
Taboo	..	81, 113, 114, 115, 121, 140, 182, 217, 221, 228, 247.
Tattooing	..	50, 51
Titual head	..	205
Totem	..	173
Tutelary godlings	—	172, 177
Tye-and-bay	..	4, 63, 247, 248.
	(U)	
Umbilical cord	..	110, 118, 119, 120
Unhygienic habits	..	38, 60
Untouchable	..	1, 14, 30, 43, 52, 130, 180, 204, 235, 236, 238, 250, 253, 254, 255, 256.
Uterine brother	..	205
	(V)	
Vaidya	..	61, 11
	(W)	
Wearing	..	1, 3, 78, 80, 81, 82, 90, 100, 102, 242, 247, 248, 249, 250.
Widow marriage	..	1, 143, 144, 223, 231, 232
Witchcraft	..	61, 11, 119, 225
	(Y)	
Yarn	..	80, 81, 83, 248
	(Z)	
Zamindary	..	64, 65, 208, 209, 210, 212



MAP SHOWING DISTRICTWISE DISTRIBUTION OF GANDAKA IN INDIA
(PERCENTAGE OF DISTRICT)



ORISSA



K. K. K.

MAP SHOWING DISTRICTWISE DISTRIBUTION OF GANDA IN ORISSA (PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION)

