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## CONTENTS

| Title of the paper  | Name of Author   | PAGES |
|---|--|-------|
| 1. An Approach to the Fifth Plan for Tribal Welfare.                    | S. K. Palit; I. A. S.                                  | 1     |
| 2. The Concept of Primitive   | Dr. Kulamani Mohapatra                                 | 7     |
| 3. Bejunis; their initiation into Shamanhood.                           | Prabhansu Sekhar Patnaik                               | 11    |
| 4. How and what the Kuvikondhs adorn                                    | Bharati Devi   | 21    |
| 5. Status of the Kuli Caste in the Districts of Bolangir and Sambalpur. | Research Report of the Tribal Research Bureau, Orissa. | 27    |
| 6. Social Status of the Ujjias of Orissa                                | Research Report of the Tribal Research Bureau, Orissa. | 31    |

Our Contributors

## An Approach to the Fifth Plan for Tribal Welfare.

S. K. PALIT, I. A. S.

It is generally agreed that, however, much we may augment the outlay in the backward classes sector during the Fifth Plan, no visible impact can be made on the problem within a span of 5 years unless a substantial portion of the general sector outlay is earmarked for it. Although this point regarding supplemental character of the resources in the backward classes sector has been repeatedly emphasised at different levels in the Government of India and the State Governments, no satisfactory formula has so far been evolved. Earmarking of funds on the basis of a certain percentage of the outlay as was attempted in some States may not always be possible nor is perhaps a very convenient method.

2. As a second alternative, the annual plan of a State can be split up into the districts which is being attempted in Orissa for the last 2 or 3 years and from that an approximate indication can be obtained regarding the extent of financial outlay from a particular development department for a district which is either a scheduled area or even otherwise a predominantly tribal area. There are however the

following limitations involved in this approach. (i) Under the existing planning mechanics, a broad indication can be obtained regarding annual plan outlay of a particular development department in respect of a district. If the tribal pocket is somewhat smaller than a district and not necessarily coterminous with a subdivision, it will be difficult to indentify the extent of the plan resources from the general sector flowing into this area during the course of a financial year. This would be possible if the detailed planning from the district level is perfected to an extent where even before the implementation of the annual plan begins it would be possible to know which part of the scheme would benefit this region or sub-region within a district. Although attempts at district planning have been initiated, the mechanics of planning has not yet developed to that extent. (ii) Even if an indication of the approximate financial outlay for the annual plan in respect of development department is available for the region, whether the benefit ultimately percolates down to the tribals in that area can be determined only by a detailed physical programming. For exam-

ple, the plan outlay of a crore of rupees on a medium irrigation project in a scheduled district by itself would not indicate the extent to which the tribals of the district have been benefited unless a study of the area cultivated, the extent of utilisation of skilled and unskilled tribal labour for the construction programme, etc., are worked out. This is precisely the reason why, notwithstanding a very heavy investment in 2 or 3 scheduled districts of the State, namely, Koraput and Sundergarh, during the last 15 years, the tribes of these 2 regions have not developed to the desired extent.

3. Therefore, an attempt to ensure that a substantial portion of the general sector outlay benefits the tribals has to be worked out not in terms of earmarking of financial outlays but in terms of a suitable machinery at the State level and the district level which will make concurrent evaluation of on-going programmes to assess as well as to ensure that a major portion of the benefit goes to the tribals. At the present stage of planning, this exercise is limited to an annual evaluation which is essentially of the nature of a *post-mortem*. As already indicated, continuous evaluation from this angle at the district level and the State level is a part of the overall improvement in the planning mechanics whereby the detailed district planning (both physical and financial) is done before a particular plan scheme is put into operation. Unless detailed district planning and ex-ante project

appraisal is developed it would be difficult to take up this evaluation with any degree of effectiveness.

4. As regards the resources available within the backward classes sector, certain basic trends as indicated by the development during the last 20 years since the inception of the First Five-Year Plan should be taken into consideration.

5. The trend of development of various categories of Scheduled Tribes over the last two decades, i. e., since the Constitution came into effect and a year later when the First Five-Year Plan was started, would indicate certain *prima facie* imbalance in the rate of growth of the various communities. The more advanced communities such as Mundas, Oraons and Santhals in Orissa have developed at a much faster pace than the comparatively backward communities like Saoras, Juangs, Dongria Kondhs and Kutia Kondhs, etc. Although special attempts have been made through the various schemes of Tribal & Rural Welfare Department of this State to accelerate the pace of their development, the comparatively advanced communities (both educationally and economically) have tended to take a greater share of the special benefits accruing from these supplemental resources of the Tribal & Rural Welfare Department. There are 62 Scheduled Tribes in Orissa. A comparative study of some of the major tribes in respect of the Pre-Matric and Post-Matric Scholarship awarded annually tribe-wise would corroborate this point. The largest and

the most backward tribe in the State, viz., Kondhs have the lowest percentage of literacy and the minimum number of Pre-Matric and Post-Matric Scholarship are awarded to this group. The Santhals in Mayurbhanj and the tribes of Sundergarh take by far the largest share of the stipends and scholarships.

6. Similarly if we take the development of the infrastructure, the economic occupation, etc. it would be observed that some of the groups which have been classified as the most backward 'A' category tribes by the State Government, namely, Lanjla Saoras, Juangs, Bondas and Koyas still continue to be practically in the same condition as they were 22 years back. Although schools have been located in the Bonda hill (Koraput) in the Juang-pirh (Keonjhar) for the Dongria Kondhs in Gunpur Subdivision of Koraput district, for koyas of Malkangiri Subdivision and similar other areas, the enrolment of these boys in the educational institutions is poor and wastage is heavy. There were hardly one or two Bonda boys in the High Schools of Govindpalli in Koraput district and it is not known if they are continuing their studies further.

7. This raises a very fundamental problem, viz., the Constitution of India laid down certain special provisions in respect of Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe and other backward classes in the matter of reservation in services, educational and economic schemes for their development with a view to enable these backward communities to

catch up with the average citizen of the country. This no doubt still remains a problem. For example, the average literacy in Orissa is 21 per cent according to 1961 census as against which the average literacy of the tribal is 7 per cent. Thus while the problem of catching up with the all-India or all-Orissa average still remains and efforts have to be made to achieve this end, the concept of an average in respect of literacy or economic development among the tribals is becoming a highly academic issue. While 7 per cent is the average literacy of the tribals in Orissa according to 1961 Census, if we take the district-wise average it would appear that districts like Phulbani, Sambalpur, Sundergarh, Dhenkanal are far better off as their literacy is above 10-11 per cent whereas the average in Koraput is 3 per cent. In Ganjam and Keonjhar and Kalahandi it is of the order of 5 per cent. Even within a district if we take smaller groups like Bondas, Koyas, Dongria Kondhs and Kutia Kondhs, etc. the literacy will be practically 0-1 per cent. Thus the average does not reflect the real bottleneck or the critical areas where inadequate development keeps the State average at a low level.

8. Although the resources of the backward classes sector are limited, the basic assumption in the constitution was that as some tribes get more and more developed they can be descheduled or the facilities enjoyed by them can be progressively reduced so that the residuary groups, which constitute the hard core of the problem, receive the major attention in

terms of organisation and resources. However, due to various compulsions inherent in the realities of the existing situation, it can be assumed that this process of descheduling or attempt to concentrate our resources on a smaller list of Scheduled Tribes would not be possible.

9. It is, therefore necessary that from the Fifth Plan and, in fact during the next 15 or 20 years, if the constitutional objectives are to be achieved according to a time-bound programme, attempts should be made to devise separate integrated schemes for the accelerated development of these smaller groups which have special handicaps.

10. These integrated schemes for well identified areas would not imply that tribals who are dispersed in smaller groups in other pockets will not receive any attention. These tribal groups depending on the nature of their concentration will get (i) benefits from the general sector outlay and (ii) where there is substantial tribal concentration not covered by an existing T. D. Block, the question of starting a sub-Block can be taken up. The major part of the resources, however, should be for the formulation of integrated schemes for economic development including outlay for social services. The existing pattern of having pilot tribal development projects purely for the economic development of particular areas supplemented by additional resources for social services to be made available separately is not a very satisfactory approach in as much as the problem of a tribal

village is an integrated one and unless the economic programme also takes cognizance of a certain minimum social amenities, the desired results cannot be achieved. It is necessary that the schemes to be formulated during the Fifth Plan for backward areas, to be identified for the purpose should be integrated and composite schemes taking into consideration the totality of the life of a tribal as a part of the village community.

11. A question sometimes arises in the context of the formulation of plans for backward pockets as to whether it should be an area development plan or a plan for the development of a particular tribal community. There is no basic dichotomy in this twin approach. If a particular tribal group is scattered over a large area it is not possible to evolve any satisfactory plan for the development of this community as one integrated plan. It is only if a substantial portion of this tribal community inhabit a well identified and compact geographical area, a suitable composite scheme for their development can be worked out. It will be in certain respects, an area development, for example, regarding infrastructure or in the provision of social overheads but, in terms of specific economic schemes, it has to be an individualised approach for the development of that tribal community. In this respect, it would be somewhat analogous to the S.F.D.A. and M.F.A.L. which involves identification of beneficiaries and providing them with the necessary assistance to improve their condition. In States like Orissa, Madhya

Pradesh, Bihar, Andhra it is possible to identify such well-defined regions of very backward tribal communities which can constitute one viable administrative unit for implementation of programmes.

12. Successful formulation of an integrated plan of this nature and implementation of these programmes would depend largely on providing a suitable machinery for the purpose. The Pilot Tribal Development Projects which have been started are registered societies with Collectors as the Chairmen and officials and non-officials as members. They receive grants from the Government of India directly. It provides for a nucleus staff on the assumption that the other extension staff would be provided by the various development departments and their field Agencies. Thus the success of this Agency would be proportionate to the measure of co-ordination which the Collector and the Project Director are able to secure from other development Agencies. Secondly, it would also depend on ensuring that sufficient allocations from other development departments are made available in the project area to supplement nucleus funds of the project and particularly the social services aspects of the programme not included within the scheme of the Tribal Development Agency are also provided in adequate measure by the concerned departments.

13. The pattern adopted by the Dandakaranya Development Authority envisages a more liberal

staffing pattern. Commissioner for Scheduled Caste and Tribe in one of his annual reports had suggested adoption of this approach for Tribal Development Programmes as well.

14. In Andhra, Regional Development Boards have been set up for the purpose of formulation of plans. It would be desirable to consider the possibility of having a more comprehensive Tribal Development Agency which would receive funds from the State Government as well as from the general sector and the backward classes sector and commercial financing institutions and take up intensive work in these areas in respect of the 4 or 5 major heads of development including social services. This would incidentally help in ensuring more intensive supervision by securing the services of a few selected officers from the various development departments with proper orientation and giving them suitable financial incentive and retaining them for this work for a minimum period. Since these officers have to work under various physical handicaps in isolated areas, it is necessary to provide them with the necessary monetary incentive for this special nature of assignment. If the implementation of project depends very largely on the field staff of various development departments in the project area, it is difficult to grant special incentives without creating problems of cadre management. This is the main problem in the

Pilot Tribal Development Projects which have been taken up during the Fourth Plan.

15. As regards formulation of the plan for the project it is to be preceded by a detailed survey of the requirements of the area. The census data (1961) in respect of some of the backward tribes are quite comprehensive but the limitation is that it is based on a 20 per cent sample. The 1971 Census data is not yet available. When a project report is to be formulated on an individualistic approach, identification of beneficiaries and their problems have to be worked out in the project report so that the scheme can be formulated accordingly. The land holding pattern, the extent to which this can be put to intensive agricultural operation, the extent to which it can be supplemented

by subsidiary occupation like animal husbandry, handicrafts, etc. the extent of indebtedness, the scope for processing all minor forest produce and how far an organisation like the Tribal Development Co-operative Society in Orissa or the Girijan Corporation of Andhra Pradesh or the Madhyapradesh Tribal Development Corporation can help in these efforts, the scope for starting small or medium industries and advanced planning to train up the tribals in these areas to avail of these benefits have to be worked out and funds released to the Agency both from the State Government and from the Government of India for implementation of this project. Unless funds are pooled and an organisation is built up for this selective approach it will be difficult to make any dent on the problem during the next 15 or 20 years.

## The Concept of Primitive.

DR. KULAMANI MOHAPATRA

This paper is concerned with the concept of 'primitive' as it is employed in anthropology and to certain extent in sociology as well. This is a topic which is both preliminary and fundamental for understanding the problems of the primitive tribes. Even at the present stage of maturity of the scientific study of the tribal problems there is a lot of controversy about the definition of the term 'primitive'. As yet the concept lacks precision and there is a lot of confusion in the fields of sociological as well as applied research. It is therefore necessary that the topic should be discussed at some length.

The idea of the 'primitive' is as old as civilization. The civilized man in his efforts at discovering his own genesis has always tried to locate or imagine a way of life completely different from his own which he has termed as 'primitive'. Conversely primitive societies on their part have not generated what may be termed as a definite idea or conception of civilization. This is not because the primitive people have no sense of history and development. They have certainly very clear notion of

development and progress. But as Stanley Diamond observes "x x history to them is the recital of sacred meanings within a cycle as opposed to a lineal perception of time. The merely pragmatic event, uninvolved with the sacred cycle, falls as it were out side history, because it is of no importance in maintaining or revitalizing the traditional forms of society.

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The primitive people have no secular sense of history and no lineal idea and hence no prophetic ideal of social progress". (Diamond, 1964, V).

There are certain commonly agreed characteristics which are associated with the primitive people. These are (1) absence of a written language, (2) a relatively simple technology, (3) social institutions which are cast in a simple mould, (4) smaller numbers, (5) relative isolation and (6) societies whose cultures are in general characterised by a slower rate of change. There is hardly any controversy as far as these characteristics are concerned. Controversies abound when the basic differences between the primitive and the civilized are sought to be

thrashed out with the implicit belief that these differences are absolute and unsurmountable. It is therefore necessary first to give a historical sketch of the concept of primitive, as it has developed in anthropology and then to discuss a dominant sample of the controversial themes.

The early anthropologists, who were strongly influenced by the evolutionist theory of the unilinear school, worked under the belief that primitives represented the back waters in the stream of evolution. This notion was upheld with regard to the culture and, sometimes in addition to it, to the biological status of the primitive people. After the turn of the century and anti-evolutionist trend was preceptible and anthropologists like Elliot Smith attempted to explain almost all cultural elements from one source—Egypt. This extreme form of diffusionism was succeeded by the Kulturkreis school. Anthropologists of this school consider the peoples of the world as products of several core cultures which spread over the entire world after attaining essential characteristics in the Old World, especially in Asia. As these basic cultures spread, new elements were added and others lost, but in every case enough of the original complex remained so that each could be identified.

The American historical school "emphasized the study of non-literate cultures from within, from the view point of the members of the society rather than from that of the observer". (Dozier, 1956,191). The concept of

the non-literate as mentally inferior and as an individual incapable of surmounting his "lowly level" was specifically challenged by Franz Boas in "The Mind of the Primitive Man". Boas demonstrated that the lowly position is merely the result of an ethnocentric comparison on the basis of one standard, i.e., the anthropologist's own culture.

The view of the British anthropologists are almost similar to their American counterparts but they also differ on some vital points. Contrasted with the American school, they deal with a narrower range of cultural phenomena within a structural—functional framework. They are gradually becoming conscious of history, yet their analysis is still devoid of historical depth.

After this historical review I will conclude the paper after a brief discussion of the most dominant tendency usually associated with the concept of 'primitive' i. e., the unsurmountable difference between the civilized and the primitive.

The idea of a 'primitive mentality' inferior to that of the civilized was developed by Levy Bruhl. Though controverted by empirical findings over fifty years the idea is still in vogue, especially among administrators and the lay public. Levy Bruhl spoke of a "prelogical mentality" of primitive people whose life is supposed to be determined by the law of participation—a concept which he had taken over from Durkheim. According to him the members of primitive societies, do not experience them-

selves as separate individuals, they and the objects of their world appear to them sometimes as the same, sometimes as others.

Again Heinz Werner explains the concept of 'primitive' in terms of developmental psychology. According to him 'primitive' does not simply mean that which chronologically comes first. Primitive is that which lacks greater differentiation and is comparable to childhood phenomena. The equating of childhood phenomena with primitive is completely erroneous as findings in the ontogenetic development of human beings cannot be compared with those in phylogentic sequences. Werner made comparison of phenomena observed in different stages of development, isolatedly, thus neglecting the very essence of comparison.

Another mistaken notion of 'primitive' is to assume the lack of abstract behaviour among the primitive people. The normal behaviour of human beings is characterised by two kinds of approaches to the world the concrete behaviour and the abstract behaviour. This can be illustrated by an example. When we feel sleepy and go to bed, we act concretely, often without being aware-of what we are doing. The reaction is based on the after effect of previous equal situations. If, however, we reflect that by going to sleep early we might embarrass someone who had to read late into night and thus refrain from going to bed, we approach the situation abstractly. The initiation of any performance presupposes the abstract attitude.

Again if anything goes wrong in the concrete activity, the abstract attitude is taken to correct the mistake. Patients with impairment of abstract attitudes show definite failures in all situations to which one can come to terms only by the abstract approach. It, therefore, goes without saying that a society cannot survive if all the members show concrete behaviour alone. Some scholars like Arieti have tried to explain that the lack of abstract behaviour in primitive societies is compensated by the support of the authority of the tribe. This authority consists of codes of conduct so elaborate that the individual has no need of any abstract behaviour. But the framing of such an elaborate code of conduct presupposes a superior mentality with abstract capabilities. Besides living by concrete behaviour alone is not possible—however rich the background may be. It is, therefore, established that both in civilized and primitive societies, concrete and abstract behaviour are necessary components of human nature. But there is a difference. The abstract attitude finds its expression in primitive society in the formation of a permanent structure of society, in civilized life in certain formations under special conditions.

The foregoing discussion shows that the notion of regarding the primitive people as intrinsically inferior to the civilized should be eradicated from the concept of primitivity. Inferiority is confined to one sphere alone, i.e. technology. It is true that certain forms of social organization and mental states are associated with primi-

tive technology but it has never been shown that these are unsurmountable differences. Nor has it been shown that any specific social organization or mental state has any intrinsic demerits. Rather it has clearly

been demonstrated that any type of social organization or technology is capable of producing values, codes of conduct and social ideals which stand against the flux of time.

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# Bejunis; their initiation into Shamanhood.

PRABHANSU SEKHAR DAS  
PATNAIK

## Introduction

The Western part of the district of Koraput of Orissa forms the present habit at of the bulk of the Dongria Kondh tribe. An area of about 250 square miles covered by rugged and precipitous hills and mountains is known as Niyamgiri Hills in the district of Koraput. The entire area is situated at an average elevation of about 2,000 feet above the sea level. Mountain ranges attaining 4,000 feet height are not uncommon in this locality. The whole area is diversified in appearance by exposures of naked rocks, ranges of ancient sargi-forest. The whole surface is thrown up into long undulations, the ridges of which have been cut into innumerable terraced Dongar plots for cultivation.

## Dongria Kondhs and their religion

The inhabitants of this area are known as Dongria Kondhs. Economically they are one of the most backward tribes of Orissa. The core of their religion consists of polytheistic beliefs in the cult of ancestors and a large, malevolent pantheon to be propitiated on innumerable occasions. Their magic is primarily concerned with my-

sterious impersonal forces and powers residing mostly in natural and artificial objects. The instruments employed in dealing with them are principally charms and spells, adjurational observances and taboos. The magical rites are organically connected with their normal activities of hunting, fishing and agriculture.

## Religious functionaries and roles of Bejunis.

The religious functionaries who are entrusted with the propitiation of the village deities of the Dongria Kondhs are, Jani Bejuni, Gurumai and Dishari. The Bejuni occupies a crucial place among them. There are a number of Bejunis, under one Head Bejuni in a village, who perform various religious ceremonies on behalf of the public and participate in communal and individual functions. Besides their public role of the 'shaman', they also practise black-magic in their private capacity to destroy or damage the normalcy of the society and as such they may be termed as sorceresses. She performs her duties in a frenzied state and is believed by the people to be in direct

communion with the gods. By virtue of her position she commands high prestige from the people.

### Qualifications to be Bejuni

When a female practices this art, is called 'Bejuni' and a male, is called 'Beju'. But in a village, the Bejunis always outnumber the 'Bejus'. Generally the old women are eligible to become Bejuni, though there is no formal age-restriction. This is also not a hereditary profession. It is an acquired art and an personal accomplishment. Skill in dancing is essential for a Bejuni. It is a preliminary step to appease the Penu (god) and in due course of frenzied dancing, she gets into a trance and in that state makes prophecies and offers solutions to the problems of the clients. Names of different penus are also to be mugged up before becoming a Bejuni. She should also know the art of divination with the movement of the winnowing-fan, waving of peacock feathers and supplication through 'Arua-rice' in the winnowing fan. Simultaneously she must know the nature of sacrifice, to be made for different 'pujas' and for different diseases. To know all these techniques an apprentice undergoes training under a Bejuni, called pat-Bejuni or head Bejuni. Thus in a village there may be four to five pat-Bejunis who impart training to the interested candidates in the evening, after the day's work.

### Basic component of a Bejuni and respective penus.

The Bejunis are believed to acquire power through the special grace of their own ancestor-spirits or Penus. It generally comes to the persons who have a temperament towards it. With the increase of their earnestness or rather yearning and devotion, they begin to pass sleepless nights in contemplation of certain Penus. In the village khambesi there are nine Bejunis who have got different penus. Arju wadaka's mother worships penus like, 'Kalia Patu', 'Sundar Patu', 'Kashaya Rani', 'Tamba-Rani', 'Nidi Muta' and 'Tamba Muta'. Maida wadaka's wife worships 'Kumita Nani and Baruanaka Nani. Drimba Jakishe's wife worships 'Hira Lai' and 'Danda Lai' Penus. Ludruka wadaka's wife worships 'Ghara-Deota' and 'Nia-made-Deota'. Arju wadaka's sister worships 'Lada-Penu', 'Sureni' and 'Bai-Sureni'. Dheda Sikaka's wife worships 'Lepruti', 'Thakrani' and 'Maradi-Deota'.

### Preliminary statge to become Bejuni.

All these Penus are ranked in ancestor-spirits. It is evident from the above discussion that each one has her specific penu. Moreover, the Bejunis worship female ancestor-spirits and the Bejus worship male ancestor-spirits. But there is no difference among them as far as their power over men and nature is concerned. For days together these different 'Penus' are contemplated deeply, incantations are made in their

honour. Dances are performed regularly. During these processes, the Bejuni in her dream or in frenzied state visualises the respective Penu and solicits blessing from them. It is believed that the Penu ordain different sacrifices to be offered to them on various occasions. Once the vision is realised, she is possessed by the spirits frequently and remains in trance. Then the public comes to know that the concerned woman is at the first stage of becoming a Bejuni. At the second stage the Bejuni contracts a 'spiritual marriage', with the Gods. This is done even if the woman is married in her worldly capacity. Beju and Bejunis are considered profane and inexperienced until such marriage is performed. To gain supernatural power, they must enter into conjugal relationship with Penu and therefore they should be married for the second time.

#### **Spiritual marriage : The first-ceremony**

To perform this type of marriage, a place is selected either near a stream or under a mango tree. On the Scheduled date, the concerned Bejuni and her husband go to the marriage alter, arranged beforehand, after ceremonial bath in turmeric water. The concerned Bejuni becomes her own priest. She carries various articles like, a winnowing fan, earthen lamp, resin-powder, Siadi-leaf, arua-rice, firewood, turmeric-powder, mango-leaves and ragi-powder to perform the marriage ceremony. Another Bejuni (under training) also accompanies her. The bride Bejuni puts on a mark of Ragi

powder on her forehead and applies the same on the forehead of her husband. She also catches a handful of Arua-rice. The assistant Bejuni in the meanwhile brings a pitcher-ful of water from the stream, keeps it under the mango-tree, and puts into it a pinch of turmeric powder and fastens sal and siadi leaves over it. The funnel of the pitcher is covered with garland of young mango leaves. The bride Bejuni throws handful of arua-rice over it while uttering incantations to Dharani-penu. In the meantime the relatives and friends gather at the spot. The relatives and friends prepare garlands out of young mango leaves and fasten them too to the pitcher. The bride Bejuni with the help of the assistant Bejuni invokes the specific penu (with whom marriage is to take place) by muttering incantations. While doing that she shivers and develops hysteric feats with the beating of drums. Suddenly with a perceptible jerking, she starts dancing and gets into a trance. This is an indication she is possessed by the specific Penu. Her husband then dons a saree and joins his wife in dancing. Various questions are put to her by her friends and relatives which she answers in a state of trance. Immediately when the bride Bejuni starts dancing, the assistant Bejuni feeds arua-rice to a cock and a pigeon for five times. Then she gives arua-rice to the bride Bejuni and her husband and keeps her right hand over their heads. She also starts uttering mantras and moves round the mango tree for 15 times. The process of giving Arua-rice to Bejuni and her husband is repeat-

ed during intervals of each round. The feeding of the cock and the pigeon is also repeated 15 times. It is the process of appeasing the concerned Penu. After circum-bulating the mango tree repeatedly, a feather is taken out from the pigeons and cocks and the heads of bride Bejuni, her husband and the spectators are touched with it. Immediately after that the pigeon is killed by the assistant Bejuni and blood is sprinkled on the pitcher to satisfy the Penu. After this sacrifice, the bride Bejuni comes back to her senses and becomes free of the spirit.

### The Second ceremony

After some days the second phase of marriage takes place on a considered auspicious for the occasion. It takes place at the altar of the first ceremony. In this phase the bride Bejuni stands facing East catching the little finger of her husband. Another assistant Bejuni along with the married couple goes round the mango tree for seven times. This circumbulation is called 'Sat-padia'. After this ceremony, new clothes, dyed with turmeric are tied to the head of the bride-Bejuni and her husband. The people then carry them on their shoulders to the place where the pitchers had been kept. The right foot of the bride Bejuni is placed on the left foot of her husband. The cock is fed Arua-rice for seven times and then the assistant Bejuni kills it by crushing its head under her feet. The blood is sprinkled over the feet of the bride-Bejuni. The head of the sacrificed bird is then placed over the pitcher.

### Third ceremony of marriage

The third ceremony then takes place after an interval. During this ceremony the pitcher under the mango tree is taken out and its water is poured over the bride-Bejuni and her husband. It is regarded as a holy bath during which the Penu gets into the body of both of them. Their feet are washed properly and the marriage rituals come to an end. A small feast is arranged after the ceremony. It is believed that the bride Bejuni hereafter attains the status of shaman equipped with spiritual knowledge. She is not to be dishonoured and disrespected after this.

### The fourth or 'Tapu' ceremony

'Tapu' means sacrifice. This is celebrated only when adequate funds are arranged. It is a very expensive function as a lot of expenditure is incurred to purchase different animals and food accessories to satisfy different ancestors, spirits and also to feed the entire village. The function continues for three days. It may be mentioned here that each Bejuni has got different penus and different animals are prescribed to be sacrificed for each. In this connection the case history of Malo, aged 40, the wife of Jagli Sikora may be given.

### MALO'S CASE HISTORY:—

Malo is the worshipper of four Penus such as, Jati-Guru, Budi-Guru, Silka-peju and Bangrai peju. To observe this function, she purchased four earthen pitchers, six fowls, three pigeons, one goat, five

karies (lambs), forty kilogram of rice and other food materials. Before the day of ritual an altar (pat) with an enclosure and temporary leafy-shed over it was prepared by the young man and girls (Dhangdas and Dhangdis) of the village.

#### OBSERVANCES ON THE 1ST DAY OF TAPU CEREMONY:—

On the 1st day about 10 Bejunis, who were apprentices came to her house along with pat-Bejuni (Head Bejuni) after taking bath and put on clothes dyed with turmeric. The Pat-Bejuni held a bundle of peacock-feather and a winnowing fan and the Bejunis held a winnowing fan each. The musical party also reached the spot. Malo appeared before the public with dishevelled hair. She was wearing a new saree and had vermilion marks on her forehead. There were chains of tinkling bells on her ankles. She held a handfull of peacock feathers. She also held in her hand an earthen pitcher with a narrow neck. This pitcher was full of water and mango leaves had been fastened to it. She handed over the pitcher to one of her apprentices and besmeared a portion of the altar with cowdung. After this she drew up an icon square on the besmeared place. This was done with a mixture of arua-rice powder, Ragi-powder and vermilion. A lump of vermilion was placed at the middle of the square around which another square was drawn up. In

the small square about  $\frac{1}{4}$ th kilogram of Arua-rice was strewn and the pitcher was placed upon it. When interogated, it was told that the pitcher represented Jati-Guru Penu, a goddess. Jati Guru is considered to be very powerful. She protects the life and property of the people. She is therefore, properly worshipped with the supplication of Arua-rice after which adequate 'Tapu' (Sacrifice) is offered to appease her. The Bejunis (disciples) the pat-Bejuni and Malo sat before the pitcher in a row. Pat-Bejuni first started uttering incantations and sprinkled water over the visitors to purify them. She offered arua-rice to Malo in a winnowing fan. Malo also started uttering mantras. Supplication of arua-rice and uttering of magical verses in a low voice started simultaneously. The disciples also joined them. Then the Pat-Bejuni raised her voice. Malo followed her and the disciples also started telling the same chained incantations. This continued for half-an-hour after which a fowl, a pigeon, and a lamb were placed one after the other over the head of Malo and then tied to different poles posted beside the pitcher. After that the Pat-Bejuni set fire to the resin powder and threw the same over Malo and on the Pitcher. Immediately after this Malo started shivering and danced to the tune of the drum-beating. It started with a slow rhythm but became rapid in due course with the quick beating of drums. It was the sign

of the Penu entering in to the body of Malo. The Pat-Bejuni and other Bejunis too started shivering and danced with Malo. The Pat-Bejuni dancing with Malo, bent down, placed left hand at her waist, waved the handfull of peacock feathers and started dancing. The tinkling of ankle bells of the Bejunis was very loud. During the dance, the pat-Bejuni embraced Malo twice and thrice and fed her resin-powder. Malo gradually became possessed by the spirit of the Penu and nodded her head frantically. The spectators tried to control her but she went on dancing in a frenzied manner till she fell down unconscions. The pat-Bejun, too fell down. Other dancers were restrained by the spectators. After a few minutes they all came to their senses and the last phase of the Puja was initiated by the pat-Bejuni. Malo again supplicated with arua-rice and muttered the Mantras. The sacrificed animals were again brought one after the other. They were bathed and vermilion was put on their heads. After this they were kissed by Malo. The fowl and pigeon were again touched to the head of Malo and then strangled to death by the Pat-Bejuni. Their blood was sprinkled on the pitcher, the icon square and also on the head of Malo. The lamb was not killed and tied again at the pole. Puja for the first days was over. It was 3 O' clock in the afternoon when it was completed. A small feast followed. The Mandal (village leader),

Bishmajhi, Jani and some relatives cooked rice separately. This was eaten exclusively by Malo, her husband and the Bejunis who participated in the dance.

#### 2ND DAY PERFORMANCE OF TAPU CEREMONEY:--

On the 2nd day the same process was repeated with some deviations. On that day another pitcher representing Budiguru Penu was placed instead of the first one. The first one was placed at the back of the second one. This Penu is belived to bring rain, protect animals and enhance animal wealth if properly appeased. Hence she must be given Tapu. The Bejuni attains a greater identification with the Penu in the second day than on the first. As on the previous day, two fowls, one pigeon and one lamp were brought. Fowls and one pigeon were killed but the lamb, instead of being tied, was set free. The children of the village chased it and drove it out of the village, so that it could not return or even look back. It is believed that the lamb is the messenger who conveys the prayer of the concerned Bejuni to Budi Guru-Penu. Malo danced twice and became possessed by the spirit. She was applauded and garlanded by the spectators. Pat-Bejuni taught Malo 'Puchna', i.e., the art of asking questions to the deity while supliating with arua-rice. While asking questions, the answers from the deity are believed

to be clearly audible to be Bejuni. The 2nd day ceremony continued from 8 O' clock morning to 5 O' clock in the evening.

### 3RD DAY PERFORMANCE OF TAPU CEREMONY:—

On the 3rd day the ceremony started from 4 A.M. in the morning and continued for two hours and was completed before the break of the day. Neither the drum beaters nor the public were invited. Only the Pat-Bejuni and the apprentices were present. At 3 A.M. Malo took bath with other Bejunis, put on a new black Sari (Cloth) and came out of the house with the third earthen pitcher. She placed the earthen pitcher in a square drawn with charcoal powder. A black cloth was wrapped over the pitcher. This pitcher represented the spirits. Silka peju and Bengrai peju, who are considered to be very pungacious and bring immense harm to the people.

During this performance the ritual procedure was almost the same as other occasions. Supplication was made with arua rice by the pat-Bejuni in a winnowing fan. This was accompanied with spells and incantations. Two black folws were kept one after the other on the pitcher. Vermillion marks were painted on them. Arua-rice was also sprinkled over them. This process was repeated for 15 times. A pigeon was brought and the same

procedure was again repeated. Lastly a lamb was brought. The 3rd pitcher was lifted and placed on the back of the lamb and the animal was forced to move round the black square. Then Malo sat on the back of the lamb and rode thrice round the square. After all these rituals, Malo again started supplicating with rice, and began to dance in a frenzied state. At the height of it she started rolling on the floor. The Pat-Bejuni immediately got up and threw a lump of resin-power at her and the apprentices caught hold of her and pressed her on the ground. This frenzied state symbolied her successful attainment of the status of Bejuni. When she came to her senses, she again supplicated with rice. The Pat-Bejuni, while doing this along with Malo, whispered thrice in her ear. This is considered as the final losson taught to the apprentice. The animals and birds for sacrifice killed one after the other. Their blood was sprinkled over the earthen pitchers. The carcasses were left at the altar.

### Performances on the 3rd day

After completing the rituals on the 3rd day Malo, accompanied with Pat-Bejuni and other disciples went to Dharni Penu of their village and started dancing there. The Pat-Bejuni with other three Bejunis went round the village to ward off the evil-spirits. The evil spirits

are supposed to be invading the village and the Mutha during the three days of the performances. After warding off the evil spirits the party returned to the altar where they were joined with others in a communal dance with the accompaniment of drum beating. This was done to give a public recognition to Malo as a full fledged Bejuni. The villagers too assembled near the dance party and offered arua-rice and pigeons to Malo to solicit blessing from her. Then Malo with her party moved round the nearby villages in the 'Mutha' to acquire wider public recognition and collected arua-rice and animals for sacrifice.

Persons in difficulties (such as disease, barrenness, etc.) promise to offer sacrifices to animals after getting proper remedy. They offer these sacrifices during the ceremony which is called Ghanta parab. Ghanta is a small earthen pot in which the offerings are made. When Malo remained busy in moving round the villages, the unmarried young men and women of the village made necessary arrangements for Ghanta Parab. The males piled up firewood on the altar and the women decorated the fourth pitcher with red ochre. The art is locally known as 'Linga' representing Thakrani-penu. Further Puja-accessories like plain-tains, edible roots, fruits, sweetmeats and a buffalo were also kept near the altar. The pandel

was well decorated with flowers and mango leaves by the young girls. Each individual brought his or her own Ghanta (Earthen pitcher) and puja accessories. All these arrangements were completed by the evening, so as to start the parab the next day.

On the 4th day the Ghanta Parab (or otherwise know festival of the earthen pitchers) took place. Kumte kane and Bamume kane are the two principal deities, grouped together as 'Thakrani penu', are worshipped during the occasion. It is believed Thakrani penu is very ferocious and inflicts smallpox on human beings and animals if she is not propitiated. Therefore, the families where somebody had suffered from smallpox, worship Bejuni and dedicate their children at her feet and satisfy her with offerings and sacrifice of animals.

On the 4th day Malo, pat-Bejuni and the apprentices reached the altar with the drum beaters and the village leaders. Each worshipper carried a ghanta on the head, a winnowing fan with arua-rice and other puja-accessories on the waist and either a fowl or pigeon with the right hand. The previous procedure continued. The sacrificed animals like, a lamb, a goat, a fowl and a buffalo were brought to the altar one after the other on whom Malo sat for a few seconds, after which these animals were taken

back. The purpose was to make a public show of the animals and to make them fit for sacrifice by the ritual touch of the shaman.

The 'Ghantas' were passed on, one after another to Malo and she worshipped it, with vermilion and arua-rice. This process was repeated for 7 times. During intervals, the supplication with arua-rice and feeding of it to the fowls also continued. While this process was coming to an end she suddenly wept aloud. Then she shuddered and went on jumping about. The Bejunis and the females ululated. The males clapped. The drum beating became more loud and rapid. Malo danced in ecstasy, holding the fowl. Immediately the animals, meant for sacrifice were brought, Malo stood upon each for some time. She was also jumping over them. Then she stood upon the piles of firewood, where too she danced. After being possessed by spirit she lost her senses. The animals, excepting the buffalo, were killed one after another by the Jani and the blood was sprinkled both over the pitcher and over Malo. Ultimately the buffalo was dragged by the young men of the village and tied to a post at the outskirt of the village where a small platform had been prepared. Malo came to her senses after resin-power had been thrown at her. She took her pitcher (Ghanta) on her head and others followed her. They walked

in a file towards the platform. Before reaching the platform the boys, girls, men and women who had suffered from small pox came forward and lied prostrate on the road by which Malo was to pass. She walked on each adult and touched the children with her feet.

Malo reached the outskirt and placed her 'Ghanta' first at the middle of the platform and others kept their respective 'Ghanta' on both the sides of the main pitcher. Malo, again became, possessed by spirit while supplicating with arua-rice. Simultaneously, the buffalo was cut by the young man and the head was placed over the main pitcher and then on the floor. Other animals were also sacrificed. The individual worshippers also sacrificed their own animals. The heads of the sacrificed animals were heaped up near the buffalo head. There was a pool of blood over the platform. The platform specially prepared for Thaurani Penu is considered to be purified by this pool of blood. One 'Ghanta' was first broken by Malo on the blood and others followed it to drive away Thakurani Penu from the village, lest the villagers suffer again. They all came back with their respective animals excepting Malo. Jani and Mandal brought her animals to the village as the leaders of the village. In the evening a feast was arranged by

Malo in honour of the participants. Persons belonging to the 'Domb' caste were also invited to share the feast. The ceremonies ended with feast. Malo thus became a Pat-

Bejuni. All Bejunis cannot afford the expenses of the ceremonies. They cannot therefore attain the status of Pat-Bejuni and have to remain as ordinary Bejunis.

# How and what the Kuvikondhs adorn.

BHARATI DEVI

## Introduction

In the year 1965-66, I had the opportunity to stay and work among the Kuvi Khonds of Kuttinga, a village in Koraput subdivision and district in Orissa, India, in connection with the collection of data on the reproductive life of their females. I, however, could collect some additional information about their dress and ornaments. The data were collected partly by interviewing and partly by direct observation method.

## The data

The dress of the Kondhs, both men and women is simple enough. The womenfolk of course are more inclined to adorn themselves than their malefolk. Since they do not weave they depend upon other caste people for their wearing apparel.

The infants remain naked. It is only at the age of 3-4 years when they start wearing a loin cloth.

The general dress of an adult male is also a loin cloth and nothing on the upper portion of the body during the summer. But during winter, in addition to the

loin cloth they also use wrappers, but not any stitched cloth. But of late, the use of readymade shirts and pants and 'lungis' are in vogue among younger generation.

The dress of female is divisible into two parts an upper garment (punhendra) and a lower garment (uchahendra) respectively. Both are unstitched. The lower garment again consists of two pieces—a loin cloth first and then a piece of handwoven cloth with two borders worn round the waist. This piece fully encircles the waist but does not cover the entire thigh region, though extended upto the knee. The upper garment, another piece of handwoven cloth or a 'lungi' (newly introduced) covers the breasts. Its loose ends are tied behind at the neck. The back remains entirely bare. Stitched garments, like blouse, have not yet found way into their society. It is important to note that seasonal change in dress amongst the male are more marked than the females.

Absence of any type of headgear and footwear among these people is noteworthy.

Women, especially young women, deck themselves with various kinds

of ornaments worn on different parts of their persons such as neck, ear, nose, hand, finger, waist, and ankle.

Silver necklace is known as 'Kaguri' (Fig. I.I). Two types of silver necklaces are found. First one is solid, simple and round. The other type is of stringed coins (Fig. I.I.I). Besides the metallic ones, a kind of head necklace known as 'Mahani' is also found in use. The beads are small in size and a bunch of stringed beads are worn at a time.

Piercing of earlobe is practised by both the sexes, piercing being done at an early age. In case of females, the upper part of the pinna is also pierced besides the earlobe. The ornaments for the ears are either of brass, silver or gold depending upon the economic condition of the person. The ornaments are very simple in design. A plain simple ring, small in size, is used for earlobe. It is known as Jambli (Fig. 1.2), whereas the ornament of the pinna is not simple but slightly twisted and known as Fansia.

Like ear piercing of nose is also practised by both the sexes. Generally the right ala is pierced among the male. Both the alae and septum of the female are pierced at a very early age. The ornaments of the nose are generally made of gold, because brass ornament sometimes causes ulcer. The ornaments of the ala is nothing but simple ring known as Murca (Fig. 1.3) The ornament of the septum is known as Mutli (Fig. 1.3). It may be of the same nature or slightly decorated.

Women use ornaments on forearm only. The upper arm remains completely bare. Solid bangles of silver, brass or even alluminium are used depending upon the economic condition of a person concerned. The brass bangles and alluminium bangles are known as Pitla Paza and Ragi Paza respectively (Fig.1.4) Bangles may be used in both hands or in one hand according to the convenience of an user and the number varies from 1—10. Besides these, I have also seen using them plastic bangles known as Pazu. Women of yonger age i.e., below thirty generally use the plastic bangles.

Male folk often use a single silver bangle in one hand i.e., right hand, slightly different in construction from that of the female.

Silver rings are worn on the left hand by the femalefolk only. Insertion of coin is prevalent although a few other designs are also noticed (Fig. 1.5.1. & 1.5.2).

Children and women, both young and old, may use ornaments on the waist. Children generally use head ornaments round the waist irrespective of sexes. Sometimes they also use blackstring with a few tinkling bells. The silver one, known as Tellimera is worn by female folk only.

The ornament worn at the ankle is known as Andu. It is made of brass. There are two varieties of Andu. One type resembles a bangle (Fig. 1.6.1). Its inner side is plain and rounded while the outer surface has a curved ridge. More than one Andu of this type may be worn at

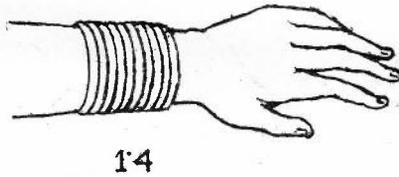
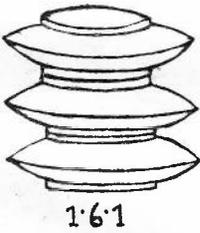
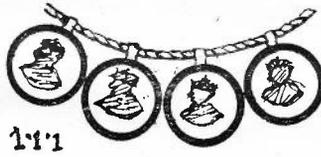
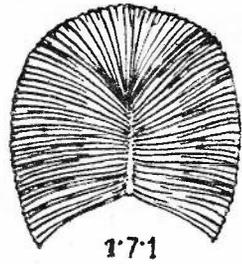
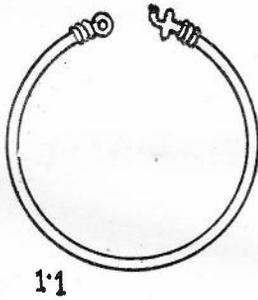
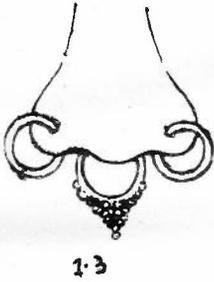


Figure 1. Hairdo and Ornaments of the Kuvi-Khond Women

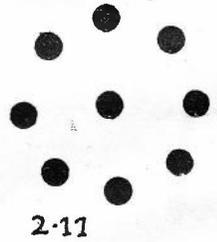
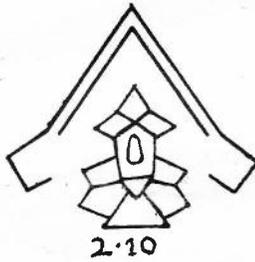
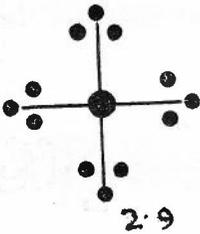
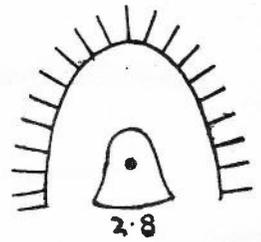
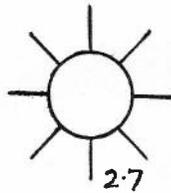
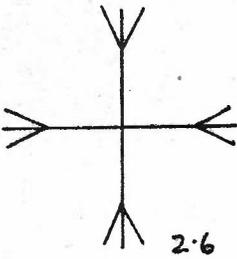
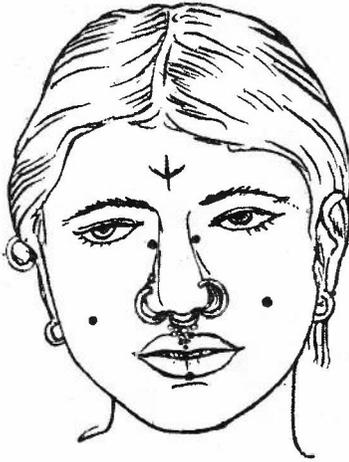


Figure 2. Tattoo designs of the Kuvi-Khond

a time. The other type is worn singly (Fig. 1.6.2). Two curves are present in this type. Andu is worn only by adult females. Children wear small tinkling bells strung by a thread known as Muia. The plastic ornaments are sold at the doorstep of the people by the hawkers and they purchase it either by cash or by barter. But for the gold and silver ornaments they are to depend on the smiths of the adjacent region. Brass ornaments are purchased from weekly markets or fairs.

### Personal Adornments

(1) *Hair*—The people are in habit of shaving the heads of their young ones irrespective of sex during the first menstruation period of the mothers after the child birth. From this time onwards complete shaving is not done. Only the frontal portion of the head is shaved while the hair at the backside remains untouched. Shaving is done with a sharp iron instrument similar to razor. The mother herself or a woman of the neighbourhood shaves the head of a child. There is no prescribed age for keeping the hair after the fashion of the grownups. Partshaving continues until the child is quite grownup, i.e. the boy goes out with cartle or the girl fetches water. Kusum oil (a kind of locally made oil) is used for lubricating the hair. A kind of locally available soil is used as detergent for cleaning the hair.

The traditional hair-do of the adult Khand male is not shaving but tying the bunch of the hair into a knot on the back. The young ones have changed thier outlook. They shave their hair like other caste peoples.

Khand women comb their hair with wooden combs. They part their hair in the middle (Fig.1.7.1), comb it closely backwards and gather it into a graceful chignon (Fig. 1.7.2) with twisters of false hair on the left side. The twists of false hair are prepared by themselves from their waste hair. Metal pin known as Tirmadera is struck to the chignon so that the twist may not come out. Tirmadera is made of silver. (Fig. 1.8). A long pin is fitted at the centre of a decorated disc. Besides this 4 small chains hang from the periphery of the disc.

The use of flowers on special occasions such as dancing or marriage ceremony is also noticed.

The old women do not take care of their hair. The hair simply hangs as it is on the back or tied in a plain knot.

2. *Tattooing*—Tattooing is very popular among the tribe. It is especially popular among young women, who consider it as a part of ornamentation.

Tattooing is done profusely on the face and hands. The use of dots, straight and curved lines, and spherical figures is prevalent. The most common design on the forehead resembles a trident. The common designs on different parts of the body are shown in figure 2.

Tattooing is a painful operation but the the young women voluntarily submit to the ordeal. A design is chosen by the woman who intends to get her body tattooed. The body is pricked with the help of needles on soot designs. The soot for this purpose is collected from

the under surface of earthen ware which are used for cooking. The whole thing is then covered with a layer of saliva. The entire process is repeated twice or thrice to make the tattoo marks permanent.

There is no special class of tattoos in Khond society. Women of the household or neighbourhood help each other.

Application of any colour on the body or chipping of teeth etc. is not in practice among the Kondh.

### Discussion and Conclusion

Systematic and intensive data on the dress and ornaments of the different tribes of India are yet to be compiled. However a comparison is made here with the help of existing literature. The Kuvi Kondh, a Dravidian speaking tribe under investigation shares a few traits with the Mundari speaking tribes also. For example the principal dress of an adult male is loin cloth among the Kuvi Kondh, the Asurs (Leuva 1963), Hos (Dalton 1872), Kharias (Roy and Roy 1937), Korwas (Dalton 1872), Mundas (Roy 1912) and the Oraons (Dalton 1872). Of course with the advancement of time and contact with outsiders there is a rapid change in traditional dress. For example stitched clothes have recently been introduced.

The Kharia (Roy and Roy 1937) females use two pieces of loin cloth for covering their body. A Kondh woman (present study) also uses

two pieces of clothes for covering her body. But they use a piece of loin cloth as undergarment for the lower part of the body. The Hos (Majumdar 1950) too, use a loin cloth under the 'Sari'.

In case of ornaments, necklace of stringed coins is found to be used by both Dravidian and Mundari speaking tribes such as the Asurs (Leuva 1963), Kondhs (present study) Oraons (Roy 1915) and Santals (Mukherjee 1962). Its distribution is also to be found even among the Gallons (Srivastava 1962) of Nefa.

Again, rings in which coins are fitted are found to be used by both the Kondhs (present study) and Santals (Mukherjee 1962) of Santal Pargana and Mayurbhanj.

The anklet is known by a common term Andu among the Hos (Majumdar 1950), Kondhs (present study) and Mundas (Roy 1912).

The hair-do of the females of different tribes presents an interesting feature. The combed hair gathered as a chignon on one side of the back of the head either right or left is found to occur among the Asurs (Leuva 1963), Hos (Dalton 1872), Kharias (Roy and Roy 1937), Khonds (present study) and the Santals (Dalton 1872). It also occurs among the Irulas (Luiz 1961) a far away Dravidian speaking tribe of Kerala. This style may be of Dravidian origin as the Irulas (Luiz 1961) of Kerala are also found

to follow the same pattern. And it is wellknown that the Mundari speaking tribes are entirely absent in South India.

Recent Changes among the Hos (Majumdar 1950) or the Santals (Mukherjee 1962) is that the hair is not worn into one sided chignon but at the centre of the back of the head.

Tattooing is extensively practised by the Ho (Majumdar 1950) Juang (Dalton 1872), Kharia (Dalton 1872), Kondh (present study), Maler (Dalton 1872), Munda (Roy 1912) and Oraon (Dalton 1872) (Roy 1915) women though the motif varies from tribe to tribe. Though practised by a few Dravidian tribes, Dalton (1872) is of the opinion that the trait is Kolarian in origin and the Dravidian tribes including the

present one borrowed — the trait from their Mundari speaking people.

In fine,, it may be said that from this little study it is not possible to say convincingly who are the originators or the borrowers of the traits discussed except in the case of hair-do and tattooing.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The author acknowledges her gratefulness to late Dr. D. K. Sen, formerly Director, Anthropological Survey of India for allowing her to carry out the research project. She also wishes to record her indebtedness to Shri M. P. Basu for his valuable suggestions, to Shri B. N. Bagchi for drawings and to Smt. Sriparna Roy (Chakroborty) for allowing her to utilise some of her research material.

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# Status of the Kuli Caste in the District of Bolangir and Sambalpur

*Research Report of the Tribal Research Bureau, Orissa*

(This report was prepared by Shri K. Mohapatra in the year 1962, on the basis of field investigation in the districts of Bolangir and Sambalpur. Shri Mohapatra has since obtained his Ph. D. degree and is working as Assistant Director, Tribal Research Bureau at present.)

The enquiry about the status of the 'Kuli' caste of Bolangir and Sambalpur was occasioned by a reference from the District Welfare Officer, Bolangir in his letter No. 14227 (Dev.) dt. 8-12-1961 on the subject. An idea about the anomalous character of the caste status of the Kuli, pointed out in the said letter, may be obtained from the following extracts from it:—

"As per notification of the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India dated 29-10-1956, publishing the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (modification) order 1956, the Kulis are classified as Scheduled Tribes and only in respect of Sambalpur district are treated as Scheduled Castes. Some Kulis are found in Bolangir district in Saintala, Loisingha and Agalpur area and they present some interesting features. These Kulis are in a way differentiated from either the Kulis of Sambalpur or the Kulis which pass in as Scheduled Tribes. They are believed to be a subcaste of Meharas which are classified as Scheduled Caste but probably a little more advanced in Social hierarchy than them. They do not suffer from the stigma of untoucha-

bility and their social mobility is less than the mehers (Bhulias or Weavers) a class of O. B. C. people.

Certain old documents and judgements relating to the year 1921 of (a) the Maharaja of Sonapur formerly the head of all caste guilds and associations in this region, (b). The Mufidar president of Bargarh and (c) the Rajguru of Patana State are to be found here wherein it has been laid down that the Kulis are not untouchables and are to be served by Brahmins in all their social and religious ceremonies and occasions. This in itself is rather conspicuous and therefore raised question of the status of Kulis in Bolangir district. The question of descheduling or otherwise also is linked up with it. Another peculiarity is that though the Kuli caste is not categorised as aborigine in section 196 of the Patna State Tenancy Act, 1944, in the settlement Khatian they are recorded as Adim Rayats and therefore practically treated as aborigines for purposes of the Tenancy Act. One consequence of this has been that a Scheduled Tribe can transfer immovable property to Kulis

without permission of the Subdivisional Officer without attracting the provision of section 105 and 106 of the Patna State Tenancy Act read with section 7(ii) (b) of the Orissa merged states (Laws) Act 1950. The position appears to be anomalous in this respect.

Therefore it is probably desirable that the status of Kulis in Bolangir district has to be determined precisely in relation to Scheduled Tribes and Castes and I would therefore urge on you to please take necessary action at your end through your organisation."

A field investigation on the caste status of the Kulis was made during my tour of the Bolangir district from 12-2-1962 to 6-3-1962 in connection with the preparation of handbook on Gonds. Data was collected from the Loisinga area of Bolangir district and Bargarh area of Sambalpur district. The findings are presented as follows:—

#### The Weaver Castes and the Kulis

The Weaver castes of Sambalpur and Bolangir are divided into seven groups. These seven groups, in spite of their common caste occupation, function as seven distinct castes. These castes are—

- (1) Bhulia
- (2) Krushna
- (3) Dhera
- (4) Patra
- (5) Rangini
- (6) Kuli
- (7) Ganda

The first four castes weave superior type of clothes. Kuli and Ganda weave inferior and coarse

type of clothes. The Ganda are equivalent to the Pano Caste and are regarded as one of the lowest among the Scheduled Castes. They also have matrimonial relationship with the Pano Caste. Patra and Rangini specialise in the weaving of "Pata" or silk clothing. Krushna are specialised in the weaving of "Matha" clothing which is a type of handspun silk different from that of "Pata". All the seven groups, except the Ganda, are endogamous. Only the Ganda, as has been observed earlier, have matrimonial relationship with the Pano. The rules of endogamy are very strictly observed by all the other six groups. Other caste rules are also observed very strictly. This is characteristic of castes who have specialised caste occupations. The following is a list of the surnames of these castes.

| Caste   | Surname            |
|---------|--------------------|
| Bhulia  | Meher              |
| Krushna | Meher              |
| Dhera   | Dhera              |
| Rangini | Meher              |
| Kuli    | Meher              |
| Ganda   | Numerous surnames. |

The above list shows that four castes namely the Bhulia, Krushna, Rangini and Kuli have the same surnames. It is indicative of a past relationship which has been severed in course of time. Though all the castes have adopted weaving as their caste occupation they specialise in different types of weaving. This specialisation might have been one of the reasons of caste differentiation among them.

It may therefore be maintained that the Kuli form a part and parcel of the weaver caste which has been divided into a number of sub-castes and each of these sub-castes have attained the status of fullfledged castes in course of time. Relationship of the Kulis with Other Castes

The relationship of a caste with other castes, especially the Brahmans and other service castes like barber and washerman is a determinant of the status of that particular caste. The relationship of the Kulis with the Brahmans and other castes are given below.

*Brahman*—Brahmans do not accept water from the Kuli. They also do not ordinarily touch the Kuli but untouchability is not strictly observed. The Brahmans enter their houses and take water from their metal utensils if brought by other people. Brahman priests also serve in the marriage, mortuary rites and other functions of the Kulis.

*Washerman*—The washerman washes the clothes of the Kulis. They even wash the clothes of the women worn during menstruation, which is regarded as polluted clothing.

*Barber*—The Barber cuts the hair of the Kulis and also shaves them.

*Gour*—The Gours (cowherds) do not accept water from the Kulis but they mix freely with them and no untouchability is observed by them.

*Kulata*—The Kulatas are a cultivating caste whose status is equivalent to that of the Chasa of the coastal areas. They do not

accept water from the Kuli but freely mix with them and no untouchability is observed.

*Ganda*—The Ganda accept water from the Kuli but the Kuli do not accept water from them. The latter regard the Ganda as a very inferior caste and treat them as untouchables.

*Occupation*—The sole occupation of the Kuli is weaving. They have absolutely no other economic pursuit. Agriculture is a subsidiary occupation for a very small fraction of people. Less than 1% of the Kulis own some land and in no case the holding is more than 2 acres.

Weaving constitutes a number of phases. Both the sexes participate in this. Some types of work are specially allotted to men some to women and some to both. A normal couple by working to their utmost ability can weave twenty pieces of standard sizes cloth per month. (The standard size of clothes in the locality is very small). This may be valued between 80 and 90 rupees. A couple can weave twenty pieces of clothing only under ideal conditions but as they have to face a number of difficulties such as lack of capital and market, the limit does not exceed 12 pieces when there is heavy demand. The demand is ordinarily very low throughout the year. Therefore the output of the weavers is between 1 to 3 pieces of standard clothes per month. Thus the income of an average family may be considered as extremely low not exceeding thirty rupees per month. Apart from their poverty, the Kuli may be treated as economically

distressed. During the past fifteen years they have gradually lost their market. Handwoven cloth has gradually been replaced by mill made cloth. In spite of its superior artistic quality the hand woven cloth has not been able to stand the competition with the latter. The Kulis have been more hard hit because they specialise in coarse and inferior type of clothing which is generally used by the poorer section of the people. These people now find the price of the clothes, produced by the Kulis, rather prohibitive. The pursuit of weaving as an occupation has made the Kulis an easy-going people. They are used to sitting under the shade and doing work leisurely. This has made them extremely immobile as far as occupation is concerned because they cannot stand the hardships of other occupations like labour and cultivation.

**Education**—The percentage of literacy among the Kulis is not more than 20 per cent. Compared to their caste and economic status this may seem to be a very high proportion but actually it is not so because most of the people who declared themselves as literate knew nothing except signing their names. In the whole area there were only 5 persons who had read upto the Middle English standard and there were only two who had passed High School Certificate Examination—the highest educational achievement found among the Kuli.

**The Kuli As a Tribe**—The Kuli are fully intergrated with the caste hierarchy of the Hindu society. They accept the superiority of the Brahman, have functional relationship with other castes and have a rigidly fixed caste occupation. They worship the gods of the Hindus and have no separate gods or goddesses. They do not take such food and indulge in such practices which are prohibited for Hindus. Rather they behave like high castes in this respect.

**Conclusion**—On the basis of the above findings the following conclusions may be drawn:—

- (1) There is no reason to justify the Kuli being treated as a tribe.
- (2) The Kuli have the status of a Scheduled Caste but in that capacity they occupy a position superior to other Scheduled Castes. A slight stigma of untouchability is now attached to them but they are likely to be cleared up of this in near future.

**Recommendation**—It is therefore recommended that the Kulis should be treated as a Scheduled Caste in both Sambalpur and Bolangir districts. They may be descheduled after a period of five years by which time they would have achieved a status equivalent to Other backward classes.

# Social Status of the Ujias of Orissa

*Research Report of the Tribal Research Bureau, Orissa*

(This report was prepared in the year 1970 by Srimati Kiran Eala Debi, Research Officer Tribal Research Bureau. The purpose of this study was to determine the social status of the Ujia Community.)

## 1. Introduction

The Ujia have been enlisted as a scheduled caste in Orissa. The term of reference of this report is to ascertain whether their social status entitles them to be enlisted as a scheduled tribe. This report is based on the field-investigation conducted in the months of February and May 1970. The study was conducted mainly in four villages namely Badajhupal and Gandidhar in Udla Police Station of Mayurbhanj and Panchurukhi and Nayabali in Baliapal police station of Balasore district. A few Ujias of Chuliapasi village in Udla sub-division of Mayurbhanj district and Remu in Baliapal police station of Balasore district were interviewed for cross-checking. Mainly interview method was adopted for

study in addition to observation and collection of Scheduled information. In this report attempts have been made to show in brief, their social status in the two different areas mentioned above. The first part of this report deals with the Ujias of Baliapal area showing their relationship with other caste people living there. In the second part a comparison has been made between the Ujias of Udla area with their counterpart in Baliapal.

## 2. Population of the Ujia

The Ujia are mainly concentrated in the districts of Balasore and Mayurbhanj. Their distribution according to 1961 census is as follows:

| Name of the district<br>(1) | Total population<br>(2) | Male<br>(3) | Female<br>(4) |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-------------|---------------|
| Sambalpur ..                | 13                      | 8           | 5             |
| Boudh-Khondmal (Phulbani)   | 1                       | 1           | ..            |
| Cuttack ..                  | 20                      | 12          | 8             |
| Mayurbhanj ..               | 1,299                   | 696         | 603           |
| Balasore ..                 | 5,091                   | 2,546       | 2,545         |
| Total ..                    | 6,424                   | 3,263       | 3,161         |

The above table shows that the main concentration of the Ujias is in the districts of Balasore (79.24 per cent) and Mayurbhanj (20.24 per cent). Though found in Cuttack, Phulbani and Sambalpur. their population in these districts is negligible.

In Balasore district their main occupation is fishing and they are chiefly found in coastal areas. In Mayurbhanj district they are concentrated in the areas adjoining Balasore.

The Ujia name might have taken its origin from the term Ujan i. e., to go against the current. It was perhaps their tradition to go against the current while catching fish. This view is recorded in the Census of Mayurbhanj State, 1931. If ever it was a tradition, it is not in vogue now.

### 3. The Ujia of Baliapal area

Like many other Scheduled Castes the Ujias consider their caste name as degrading. They designate as Danda Chhatra Majhi which is a section of their community according to the census of Mayurbhanj state, 1931.

As regards the origin of the name Danda Chhatra Majhi the Ujias have a legend that their ancestors held a Danda Chhatra (royal umbrella) during the coronation of lord Ramachandra. A different version of the story is that the umbrella was held to protect him from scorching heat of the sun while he was crossing a river in a boat during his exile.

The other sections are Amata, Bagti, or Baghuti and probably Baiti. But the Ujias could not tell anything about other sections. However these names have been enlisted separately in the Scheduled Caste list. More informations could not be collected regarding these sections.

The Ujias of Baliapal claim to be the original inhabitants of this locality. Their mother tongue is Oriya. There is no evidence that they ever spoke any other language. The Ujias live in multicasite villages among such caste groups as Keuta, Raju, Jali, Kandara, Hadi, Khandayat etc. Their dwellings sometimes form a separate cluster in the village. In the social scale they occupy an ambiguous status as untouchable. It was reported that previously their touch was considered as polluting by the upper caste Hindus. Yet they used to get the services of the washerman and outcasted Brahmin. The barber used to pare their nails but did not shave them or cut their hair. Their low status has been mitigated to some extent. Their touch is no longer considered as polluting by the Brahmins and Khandayats. Water and food (dry and pakka) are not accepted from the Ujias by these clean castes. The Ujias from their side consider some other scheduled castes like Pano, Kandara and Hadi, as lower in status and do not accept water or food in any form from them.

The Ujia community is divided into several sections called 'Gotra'. These include Basant (a bird), Nageswar (Cobra), Fingasa (a bird), Gundeicha (a bird) etc. The

gotra members abstain from killing or doing any harm to the birds or reptiles associated with the gotra. The Brahmin priest recites the gotra of his Ujia clients, while conducting marriage and worship. It is curious that unlike other castes and tribes they do not maintain gotra exogamy. They have a number of surnames such as Dalei, Mangaraj, Rout, Behera, Pattayet, Patta, Kanhar, Dandapat etc.

A lineage in the Ujia community is composed of a number of families whose members are descendants from a common ancestor. They recognise it till their ancestry is remembered. All members of the community, living in one village or nearby villages are required to observe death and birth pollution in common.

A family is the smallest unit in the social organization of the Ujia. It is patrilineal, patrilocal and patripotestal. Mostly families are nuclear in composition. Occasionally a family may include one of the parents or unmarried brothers and sisters. In the surveyed villages 67 out of 72 Ujia families were found to be unclear. As regards the size of the family it was observed that medium sized family (4 to 6 members) predominates in the Ujias community. Their number is 36 out of 72 of total families. The number of small sized families (1 to 3 members) is about 18 and that of large sized (7 to 9 members) families is 15. The number of very large sized family (10 and above members) is only 3.

The life cycle of an individual in the Ujia community includes many

rites and rituals among which pregnancy, child birth, marriage and death rites are important. During pregnancy period a Ujia woman like women of other neighbouring communities observes various taboos and restrictions in order to protect herself and the foetus from various assumed dangers. When a pregnant woman has labour pain a professional midwife is called for to help. After delivery she cuts the umbilical cord with the shell of a snail. The placenta of the first child is buried inside the labour room where as those of succeeding children are thrown away. After delivery both mother and child take bath in tepid water and a barber woman is asked to pare off nails of the mother to remove birth pollution partially. The period of pollution however continues for 21 days. During this period the mother observes certain food taboos. *Ekosia* or birth purificatory ceremony is held on the 21st day after child birth. For this occasion Ujias like other communities plaster walls with cowdung and throw away used earthen pots. The service of washerman is required to clean the clothings. The mother, after *Ekosia*, is allowed to enter in to kitchen where their ancestral spirits are believed to reside. In the evening the mother accompanies the midwife to the bank of the river or pond to worship the goddess *Sathi* who is associated with child birth. The midwife offers cakes sweet pulf rice to the deity praying a long life for the new born baby.

The Ujias in Baliapal area invite a Jyotish (an astrolonger) to calculate the position of the stars and

their influences on the child on the 3rd day of child birth. On the basis of the alphabets calculated by the Jyotish the parents or other relatives select a name for the child.

The Ujias prefer child marriage and this is also practised by other communities living in Baliapal. The rate of child marriage has decreased now due to the imposition of Hindu marriage act. Girls usually get married at the age of 13 to 16 and boys in between 16 to 20 years. It is highly objectionable to marry cross cousins as they are regarded as brothers and sisters. Junior levirate and Junior sororate are allowed by which a woman can marry her husband's younger brother and a man his wife's younger sister.

The only recognised form of marriage prevalent among the Ujias in Baliapal area is arranged marriage. Proposal for marriage usually comes from parents of the boy. Preliminary enquiries are made from both sides regarding the eligibility of the prospective mates and the economic condition of their parents. Proposals are finalized when the brideprice is agreed upon. Not only the Ujias but some other Hindu communities also have tradition of paying bride price.

Negotiations are finalised on an appointed day when the father of the boy alongwith some other relatives proceeds to the girl's place. There, the father or guardian of both of the boy and the girl take oath to get their son and daughter married. After the oath taking ceremony is over the boy's

father pays up the brideprice. Then both the parties in consultation with an astrologer fix up a auspicious day for the celebration of the marriage. The boy and the girl, at their respective homes take ceremonial bath annointed with turmeric paste and oil. Next day the bridegroom with his friends and relatives proceeds to the village of the girl where the marriage ceremony takes place. Sometimes, when he goes a day earlier the bridegroom takes the ritual bath at the girl's place. The latter type incurs less expenditure and is usually preferred.

The rites in connection with the marriage ceremony among the Ujias are almost similar to those of the clean caste Hindus like the Khandayat. The bride and the bridegroom are taken to the marriage booth. Lowgrade Brahmin unites their hands reciting vedic mantras before sacred fire. The girl's parents entertain the grooms party with a feast. After this the bridegroom and his party return home with the bride.

The Chauthi ceremony is held on the 4th day after marriage to restore a ceremonial right to the bride to worship the ancestral spirit of her husband. The Jyotish and the Brahmin officiate in this ceremony and perform it in accordance with the rules prescribed for clean caste Hindus. Here both the bride and the bridegroom offer raw rice to the ancestors of the groom. If a girl marries before attaining nuberty the ceremony is held after her first menstruation.

In the practice of divorce the Ujias differ from caste Hindus. Other Scheduled Castes living in the area also allow divorce. Widows and divorced women are permitted to remarry.

There is little difference in the observances of death ceremony between the clean castes and Ujias though the latter group prefers burial rather than cremation to avoid the extra expenditure on purchase of timber wood and performance of other rites. Members of the community living in that village assemble in the house of the dead and make necessary arrangements to take the corps to the burial ground. The dead-body is taken according to Hindu custom on a bier made of 6 bamboos. In the burial ground cooked food is offered, to the dead and then kept in a pit. The eldest son lits a fire with wick saturated with ghee and puts it in the mouth of the dead. In case of cremation he lits the pyre with it. When cremation or burial is over all people who followed the procession return to the village after taking bath in a nearby river or tank. Next day the lineage members partake of a rice gruel spiced with neem leaves.

The Ujias of Baliapal observe death pollution 7 days for the unmarried and ten days for the married. The spirit of the dead is believed to haunt the house till final death ceremony is over. Rice and curry are offered on the 3rd, 5th and 7th day after the death to appease the spirit. At the conclusion of the ceremony houses are plastered with cowdung

and the earthen cooking pots in the house are discarded. Clothes are washed by washermen. The barber pares off, cuts hair of the mourners before they take the purificatory bath. Haircut is confined only to male members.

The death ceremony of a married person is observed elaborately. Brahmin priest (outcasted) conducts the ritual on the 10th days for the final purificatory ceremony. A number of outcasted Brahmins are fed on the eleventh day.

The first annual Sradha is held after one year. It may take place on the 12th day or after 6 months.

Ujias' houses in Baliapal area ordinarily consist of one room, rectangular in size with one door and it is divided into two apartments by a wall. The outer apartment is used as a living room and the inner portion is used as kitchen. Persons living with parents or married brothers have two rooms. The well-to-do families usually construct a boundary wall to maintain privacy. There are separate cowsheds for the cattle.

The dress and ornament of the Ujias are almost identical with those of their neighbours. Males wear a Gamchha (a napkin) reaching up to knees and old torn cloths while at work but put on better type of Dhoti, Ganji and shirt when they visit their relatives. Women use mill-made or handloom Sarees measuring 8 to 10 cubits in length. As a matter of daily habit

women wear only glass bangles while on festival occasions they adorn their body with silver anklets, armlets, waist chain and bangles. They also use golden nose rings. Their hairstyle is not different from their neighbours.

The household articles of the Ujias of Baliapal are scanty. A few earthen pots, aluminium and brass bowls and plates, mat, a few iron implements and fishing appliances are all they have. Earthen pots are used for cooking, fetching water, and preserving dry fish. Iron implements are used for miscellaneous cutting purposes. Fishing implements play a significant role in their livelihood. These include a Sandada (a wooden bar with a sharp end to dig earth for raising a ridge across the flowing water), Kada (a wooden plate of a trapezium shape) Khainchi (unvalved baskettrap) and a variety of basket traps and small nets. Few can afford to purchase or prepare big nets for heavy fishing. Cultivators have a few agricultural implements like plough, yoke and spade.

Inland fishing is the traditional occupation of the Ujias. They depend on it for the large part of the year. The amount of earning from fishing varies from time to time depending on the quantity of catch per day. They usually catch small fish with the help of basket traps and small nets. The income from fishing is insufficient to meet the cost of living. As a result, they also depend on wage earning. The keutas and the Jalis who are fishermen by profession are found in the same locality. They catch fish by

means of nets and boats in the river Subarnarekha flowing through the heart of Baliapal and in the sea nearby while the Ujias use only primitive type of implements and confine their endeavour to canals, nalas and tanks. They do not have the means to purchase nylon and seasoned thread for making big nets. Recently a few of them have taken to sea fishing. These people are able to get employment for about 4 months from the month October to January which is the season for marine fishing. The number of Ujias practising sea fishing is 6 in the Panchurukhi and about 30 in Nayabali village. Most of them have recently run into debt for purchasing marine fishing net, and have outstanding loans varying from Rs. 200 to Rs. 400.

The Ujias of Baliapal mostly work as agricultural labourers. Daily wages vary from Rs. 2 in heavy agricultural season to about Rs. 1.50 in ordinary days. A few work on an annual contract. In this case they get remuneration amounting Rs. 30 to Rs. 40 per month in addition to food and clothing.

The Ujias have almost subsistence economy. Most of them do not possess any landed property. As per the survey in two villages of Baliapal about 42 households out of a total 72 were landless, 29 households have less than 1 acre of land and only one had a holding above 1 acre but below 2 acres. A very few families also work as share croppers.

Animal rearing among the Ujias also indicates their poverty. As per the survey in Baliapal about 21 households out of 72 possessed about 13 bullocks, 11 cows and 15 goats in toto. Rice is the staple food of the Ujia like other communities in their neighbourhood. They take it 2 to 3 times a day. Dry fish, fish, tamarind and occasionally dal or curry provide side dishes. Their diet rarely contains any milk, milk products or meat. Both males and females chew tobacco dust. Males also smoke *beedi* and *pica* (country made cigar)

Division of labour is primarily based on sex. Women do all household work like cooking, sweeping the floor, plastering walls by cowdung, clearing utensils, fetching water, husking paddy, etc. Cultivation, fishing, wage-earning as day labourer come within the male sphere. It is interesting to note that old and elderly women do small fishing with basket traps or small round nets and sell the catch in the market though they consider it degrading to work as wage labourers. Prestige value is attached to fishing. Legendary evidence of Parbati, the consort of Siva once doing fishing, is cited to prove the sanctity of the trade.

Literacy is very low among the people. Only 22 males out of 145 male population and 4 females out of 133 are literate. Among the literates only 8 males are of the L. P. standard and 2 of the M. E., standard. The percentage of literacy is 9.35 which is below the percentage of State average literacy among the Scheduled Castes.

The Ujias have strong faith in Hindu Gods and Goddesses. To ward off any danger or to gain a material prosperity they worship deities called *Bishnu*, *Siva*, *Laxmi*, and village tutelaries such as *Mangala*, *Manasa*, *Sitala* etc. Offerings of fruits are made to the higher deities in the shrines through Brahmin priests.

The village deities are worshipped communally by the villagers belonging to different communities. The priest who worships them is known as *Dehuri*. He usually comes from low caste Hindus. In the village Panchurukhi the tutelary deities known as *Nima Sitala*, *Manasa* and *Mangala* are worshipped by a *Dehuri* belonging to Jali caste. In Nayabali the priest comes from the Ujia caste. Prescribed rituals are performed every day in the Panchurukhi village. Performance of rituals in the first day of Oriya month is however the common pattern of worship. Special rituals are performed when there is an outbreak of epidemics like cholera, small-pox etc.

In order to appease the ancestral deities the Ujias observe *Sradha* ceremonies twice a year. *Paina Sradha* is held in the month of *Kartika* (October-November) on the day of Kalipuja when other Hindu communities propitiate their ancestors. *Paina* sticks (dried cotton plant) are lighted to receive the ancestors in imitation of other communities. *Balipinda* is offered through the Brahmin on behalf of the Ujia for the same purpose on the first day of the Oriya month of *Baisakh* (April-May) on the bank of a river. This is however not

observed by other clean castes Fried rice flour are offered on this occasion. Besides these rituals which are held at the lineage level the Ujias also observe Sradha ceremony at the family level and offer annual homage to their ancestral spirits.

The deity *Mahakala* is associated with fishing and hence is worshipped by the Ujia, Keuta and Jali. Whenever they catch fish in the sea or in a dangerous water tank they offer the biggest fish of the first catch to *Mahakala* with a view to overcome any apprehensive danger.

*Ganga Devi* is considered as the deity of the sea and only those Ujia who have adopted marine fishing participate with other fishermen to worship this goddess. The festival is held in the month of January—February just after the sea fishing for the year is over. All the seafishermen worship her in groups.

Rituals for sowing, harvesting of paddy etc. are observed by the Ujias who practise cultivation.

Besides these festivals the Ujias of Baliapal also observe other Hindu festivals like *Raja*, *Gamha*, *Makar* etc.

It was reported that previously the Ujias had a caste organization to decide the disputes relating to their social life. It does not exist now-a-days. The village council, composed of all important elderly members of the village including Ujia and other castes,

deals with all socio-economic and religious affairs.

#### 4. The Ujias of Udla area:—

Due to the stigma attached to the name of Ujia in Baliapal area members of the community designate themselves as Danda-chatra Majhi which is either a section of or synonym for their caste. In spite of this they have not discarded their traditional occupation. In Udla area the Ujias have assumed the tribal status of the Sawar. They are also distinguishable from the Ujias of Baliapal by their occupation and various customs and practices. Origin is traced from Biswabasu the great Savara King who is believed to be the first devotee of *Lord Jagannath* of Puri. It is not known as to why they have not identified themselves with any upper Hindu caste to elevate their status. Other communities recognise them as Ujia and they themselves also confess this when taken into confidence.

The physical and social surrounding in Udla area is quite different from Baliapal. The villages where intensive study was conducted are situated close to the forest-clad Similipal Hills. Hinduised tribal groups like Bathudis, Bhuiyans and non-Hinduised groups like Santals, Hos, Kolhas etc. constitute the majority in the area.

The Ujias who were interviewed during field investigations could not tell anything regarding their migration from any other place. It may be presumed that they have

migrated from Balasore where they are heavily concentrated.

Like their counterparts in Baliapal the Ujias of Udla also enjoy the defacto status of a clean caste. The barber and washerman have been serving the community since long. Brahmins who serve them are not outcasted. They have replaced the 'Jyotish' who formerly served as the priest. In spite of all these factors the upper caste Hindus and Hinduised tribes do not accept cooked food or water from them...On the other hand, the Ujias consider the Scheduled castes like Panos, Hadis, Doms, and Scheduled Tribes such as Ho, Kolhas, Santals, Mankidiyas etc. as lower to them and do not interdine with them.

The social structure of the Ujia here is based on Gotra at the apex and family at the base. Except Nageswar and Basanta other type of Gotras as are found in Baliapal are absent here. They have some other Gotras such as Padhiala ( a wild animal) and Saraswati (a bird) etc.

Marriage is strictly prohibited among the lineage members. Here the Ujias recognise kin relationship up to three generations instead of more, probably to offer a wider scope for marriage in the community whose population is small. Nuclear form of family is more in abundance. Out of 45 surveyed families about 39 belong to this group. The joint, extended and other type of families are quite negligible numbering about 1, 4 and 1 respectively. As regards size of the family it is noted that medium-sized family is more common. Next in importance is the small-size

family. Their number is 24 and 14 respectively. Next comes large-sized family whose number is about 7. The very large sized family numbers only one. This is also the common pattern in Baliapal area.

The difference in surnames has been recorded in two areas. Except Dehuri which is found common, others are Tageita, Palei, Pani-patra, Satrusalys, Katuals, Nayak, Bentakar, Pradhan, Dagarbag. Most of these imply the titles of the service holders under a feudatory king.

The rites and rituals in connection with the social life of the Ujia have been little affected by tribal influence. They follow their traditional customs is death, marriage and birth ceremonies. Rather they have gone a step forward than the Ujias of Baliapal in the social mobility by getting the service of a high class Brahmin. Along with the traditional customs they have also absorbed a few tribal traits. Offering sacrifices to the ancestors on the occasion of marriage ceremony, offering of an egg to the Mother *Sathi* expecting a long life for new born boby etc. are a few such instances. Another striking feature is the prevalent of love marriage in addition to their traditional form of negotiation marriage. Grown up girls meet each other and have love affairs while they roam in forests in search of fruits, roots and tubers.

The economic life of the Ujias has been greatly affected due to change in physical surroundings. It is note-worthy to metion the occupational mobility. Even in the same area, variations in main occupations are observed. The Ujias

who inhabit Podadiha area close to the Similipal live on forest collection where as those who have settled down further away from this area depend on wage-earning for their livelihood.

The forest clad Similipal Hill is of immense help to the Ujias of Podadiha area providing ample opportunity to procure forest products. Except for transplanting and harvesting time, when they get work in the village or as day labourer, the Ujias spend most of their time in collecting forest product. Their collections include honey, turmeric, resin, tamarind, Mahula, Palua, Asokbark, Sunari Bark Kusuma seeds, Mahula seeds etc. These articles are sold to the Government contractors and in the weakly markets. Usually they get down from the hills on each weekly market day to sell their forest procurements and purchase daily necessities. Next day they again proceed to the forest. The local tribals like Bathudis, Santals, Kolhas etc. donot depend so much on forests as the Ujias.

The Ujias are found engaged in wage earning mainly during agricultural operations. Some of them possess landed property. Out of 45 surveyed households about 28 belong to landless group while 11 households have land up to one acre, 4 have in between 1.1 to 3.0 acres, and 2 have within 3.1 to 5.0 acres. A few families also cultivate land on share cropping basis. As regards cattle wealth the position of the Ujias here is worse than that

of Baliapal area. Out of 45 households only 5 households have 7 cows 3 bullocks and 7 goats in total. In addition to these they keep fowls to meet the demand of their religious practices.

The Ujias of Podadiha area get opportunity for hunting and catching birds while they stay in the forest. Usually they hunt by help of bow and arrow. Birds not only provide meat but also bring them cash money. They are entrapped by bamboo splits besmeared with gum, which are put on the bough of the trees. Those birds which can be domesticated are sold in the market.

The Ujias have almost dropped out their traditional occupation i.e. fishing. Only occasionally they catch fish in tanks, agricultural fields and rivers, like other non-fishermen communities.

The Ujias living in Udla proper are devoid of the opportunity for collection of forest products as the dense forests are situated far away. Hence they earn wages as day labourer working in agricultural field, in construction of roads and buildings and also engage themselves in domestic work. Collection of forest produce, hunting and fishing are occasional additions to their earnings.

Thus the occupational pattern in different areas is not the same. The major sources of income in order of importance in different areas are as follows :

| Baliapal area   | Podadhia          | Udla Area | Udla Proper       |
|-----------------|-------------------|-----------|-------------------|
| 1. Wage earning | Forest collection | ..        | Wage earning      |
| 2. Fishing      | Wage earning      | --        | Cultivation       |
| 3. Cultivation  | Cultivation       | ..        | Forest collection |

It is found that the fishing, the traditional occupation of the Ujia occupies the second place in Baliapal areas whereas in other areas it is not at all a major source of earning.

In Podadiha, Ujia women are a great help to their husbands. They participate in economic pursuits. Collection of turmeric, *palua*, green leaves, etc., and preparation of *palua* flour from the tuber are done by females. They also earn wages as day labourers and help their husbands in agricultural operations. The males do all these works alongwith hunting, collection of honey, fishing and catching birds etc.

Most of the Ujias have one roomed dwellings. It is partitioned in the middle to make two apartments. All the houses are thatched and built of mud. The household equipments consist of hunting and food gathering materials in addition to a few brass and aluminium utensils, palm leaf mats, string bed, cutting and ploughing implements, etc. They do not possess a variety of fishing implements.

The dress and ornaments of the Ujias are the same as the local non-tribals. They speak Oriya as their mother tongue. Their physical appearance is quite unlike the local tribal people.

The field investigations evidently show that Ujias do not evince much interest in education. Out of 99 males only 16 literate without educational standard and 2 have come up to L. P. standard. Among 109 females only one has passed L. P. examination. The percentage of literacy is 9.1 which is even

below the standard of literacy than the Ujias of Baliapal.

Due to the impact of tribal religion the religious beliefs and practices of Ujia have undergone a considerable change. They have strong faith in both tribal and non-tribal deities. Hindu higher gods and goddesses are worshipped if somebody makes a vow. Baram, a tribal deity, is regarded as very powerful. He is to be propitiated each year for their wellbeing. Shrines for the deity are to be found in some villages in Udla proper. In Podadiha area they appease Him by sacrificing goats, fowls, etc., in the forest in the month of *Chaitra* (March-April) before they start collecting honey. The Ujia pantheon includes a number of deities, which are worshipped by the Bathudi tribe. The Dehuri who worships deities called *Athara Deula* installed on the foot of the Similipal on behalf of the inhabitants of this area at an interval of a few years, belongs to Ujia caste. The inhabitants of the villages situated nearby contribute for the festival. The *Athara Deula* deities have taken their names after Bathudi deities enshrined on the top of Similipal.

The village tutelary deities are considered as the common deity for all castes and tribes living in the village. Hence co-operation of all communities is prime necessity for their worship. The village priest called *Dehuri* usually belongs to a caste or tribe, considered as lower in status than the clean caste. The Dehuri of Badajhupal is a khanduala Gauda whereas as in Gandider he is a Kolha. The Ujias co-operate and contribute

with others when any ritual is observed.

The most important village festival, *Amba Nuakhia* (New mango partaking ceremony) otherwise known as *Dalipuja* is held in the month of *Chaitra* (March-April). The villagers bring *Sal* bough ceremonially from the forest and plant it before the tutelary deity. On that day goats and fowls are sacrificed to appease these deities. They also offer some green mangoes which are distributed among the villagers after the festival is over. On that day the villagers offer green mango to their ancestors after which they are allowed to take it. Besides this, *Baliusa* is observed at the village level in the month of *Asinya* (September-October). A basketful of sand is ceremonially brought from the river bank and kept before the village deity for 7 to 9 days. Paddy plants and mung and buri seeds are sown on it. These are ceremonially thrown away after germination. About 7 fowls are sacrificed to propitiate the village deity for this occasion.

The Ujias follow the tribal procedure of sacrificing animals. The ritual spot is plastered with cowdung and then the priest or head of the family, as the case may be, applies vermilion in the name of several deities including *Basumata* (mother earth), *Dharam Deota* (Sun god), *Baram*, etc., and keeps some *aru* (Sundried, husked

paddy) in heaps. The goats or fowls are then allowed to partake these rice grains after which they are sacrificed in the name of the concerned deities.

In addition to these festivals mentioned above the Ujias also observe some Hindu festivities like *Raja*, *Gamha*, *Makar*, etc.

As regards ancestor worship it was noted that they observe the traditional *Sradha* ceremony to appease the ancestral spirits each year on the day of their death. *Paina Sradha* and *Balipinda* are however not observed in this area. But when the new mango and new rice partaking ceremonies are observed they offer these first to their ancestors.

The Ujias here do not have any organized caste assembly like those at Baliapal. The Village Panchayat including elderly members from Ujia and non-Ujia groups decide the cases relating to socio-economic affairs.

Thus it is found from the foregoing pages that a great deal of tribal traits have made their way in to Ujia community in Udla area.

### 5. Conclusion :

In the light of the above findings it may be concluded that the Ujias may continue in the list of Scheduled Castes until they are sufficiently advanced both socially and economically.

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