



Kulis

**Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes
Research and Training Institute (SCSTRI)**
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Preface

Kulis are notified as a Scheduled Tribe vide Sl. No. 42 in the Scheduled Tribe (ST) list of Odisha. They are numerically a small community mostly found in Western Odisha.

The name 'Kuli' might have been derived from the word 'Kula', the dumb-bell of the cow or from the word 'Kulina' meaning clean work, denoting their traditional occupation of weaving. Like the Koli the Kulis are weavers by profession though reportedly in the past their main occupation was cotton carding. The Kulis form a part and parcel of the generic weaver caste which has been divided into a number of sub-castes and each of these sub-castes have attained the status of full-fledged castes in course of time. They are known by their title as Meher.

The Kulis are strictly endogamous and divided into twenty exogamous totemistic septs. Kulis family is nuclear, patrilocal and patrilineal. Monogamy is common rule and marriage through negotiation is the ideal form of marriage in their society. They practise burial or cremation to dispose of their dead and observe the death pollution for eleven days.

They have their own traditional community council headed by Meher who is assisted by Bhal lok, and these posts are elective. They profess Hinduism, observe Hindu festivals and worship Hindu gods and goddesses in addition to their own. Their chief deity is Karamsani and their main festivals are Karamsani puja, Kalasi puja, Mangala puja and Laxmi puja. Like the higher castes they get the services of Brahman priest and barber to conduct their rituals. The Kultas, a cultivating caste equivalent in status to the Khandayats, accept water from the Kulis. It is quite evident that the Kuli have become fully integrated into the hierarchy of Hindu society.

This photographic documentation of the life style of the Kulis is a part of the series on the tribes of Odisha. Shri S.C. Mohanty, former Joint Director who is now working as a Consultant (Research) and Shri B.K. Paikaray, former Research Assistant of SCSTRTI have provided valuable inputs for preparing this colourful booklet. I thank them profusely and hope that it will be useful to all who are interested for knowing the tribal culture of Orissa.

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Kulis

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IDENTITY

Kulis is numerically a small weaver community mostly found in western Odisha. KULIS, was notified as a Scheduled Tribe vide at Sl. No. 31 in the Scheduled Tribe (ST) list for the whole State of Odisha in the Presidential Order of 1950. In SC & ST Modification Order of 1956, the caste KULI was notified as a Scheduled Caste (SC) for Sambalpur district only. In 1976 KULI was deleted from the SC list while KULIS continued as ST at Sl. No. 42 of the ST list of Odisha.



The name 'Kuli' might have been derived from the word 'Kula', the dumb-bell of the cow used in carding or from the word 'Kulina' meaning clean work, denoting their traditional occupation of weaving. Like the Koli the Kulis are weavers by profession though reportedly in the past their main occupation was cotton carding.

The weaver castes of undivided Sambalpur and Bolangir districts are divided into seven groups, such as, Bhulia, Kushta, Dhera, Patra, Rangani, Kuli and Ganda. These seven groups in spite of their common caste occupation function as distinct castes. The first four castes weave superior type of cloths. Kuli and Ganda weave inferior type of cloths. The four castes namely Bhulia, Kusta, Rangani and Kuli have the same surname, Meher. This is indicative of a past relationship which has been severed in course of time. Thus the Kulis form a part and parcel of the generic weaver caste which has been divided into a number of sub-castes and each of whom have attained the status of full-fledged castes in course of time.



The Kulis are believed to be a sub caste of Mehras who are notified as a Scheduled Caste but probably a little more advanced in social hierarchy than them. They are known by their title as Meher. They do not suffer from the stigma of untouchability.

According to 2011 Census the Kulis are largely distributed in the districts of Bargarh, Bolangir, Sambalpur and Sonapur in Western Odisha. Their total population in the State is 13 689, comprising 6854 males and 6835 females. Their total literacy is 78.88% out of which male literacy is 88.22% and female literacy is 69.56%. This is much higher than that of all the tribes of Odisha that is 52.24%. The community has registered a sex ratio of 997 females per 1000 males.



Language

According to Swain (2014), Kuli speak a language (dialect) of their own. There is no script developed for its writing and it is confined to oral communication only. The source of this language is traced back to Ardha-Magadhi an Indo-Aryan language. They are also conversant in Odia language of Western Odisha type which is also an Indo-Aryan language.

Personal Adornments

There is hardly anything distinctive about the dress or ornaments of the Kulis. They wear simple garments. A coarse cotton dhoti of two to three meters length for the male and a mill-made or a handloom sari of about five meters length for the female constitute their traditional dress.



Kuli women like to adorn themselves with varieties of ornaments to look beautiful and charming. Married women wear glass bangles on their wrists and toe rings (jhunita) on their leg fingers as symbol of marriage. They wear various types of ornaments made of silver in their wrists (Katria & Bandria), ears (Kanful), nose, neck (Khagla), waist (Gunchi) and ankles. Their hair style is turban like which females do to avoid hair loss and irritation during work. Most of the females like to grow long hair. In some areas of Boudh district women tattoo their limbs like the Kutia Kondhs, although this practice is no more popular now.

In recent times, due to the trends of modernization, their dress pattern has changed and it resembles those of the neighbouring castes. Now-a-days, their males wear pants, shirts, dhotis, lungis, banyans etc. and females wear coloured and printed sarees with under garments such as saya and blouse etc. They wear modern garments while visiting markets, relatives or attending functions. On ritual and ceremonial occasions, they wear their traditional dress (Sarees and Dhotis)



SETTLEMENT AND HOUSING

Exclusive Kulis settlements are few. They generally reside in multi-ethnic settlements along with Hindu castes in rural areas having communication links to nearby towns from where they can purchase their raw materials necessary for their profession of cotton carding and weaving and can sell their textile products. In multi ethnic villages they dwell in separate wards maintaining social distance from other communities and there by maintaining their cultural identity.





In their wards houses are arranged in a linear pattern leaving wide space as the village street. Their houses are generally two to three roomed and rectangular in ground plan with gable shaped low thatched roofs. Some houses are double storied; the 1st floor built upon wide and flat wooden ply supported by wooden blocks. The walls are made of wooden logs, bamboo splits and mud, plastered and polished by cow dung paste. A narrow verandah surrounds the house. Of all the rooms, a bigger room is used exclusively for the loom and weaving activities.



They raise kitchen gardens either in front or at the back of the house where seasonal vegetables, tobacco, mustard and other crops are grown. Those who have cattle build cattle shed little away from the house. Unlike the other tribal groups, their living conditions look hygienic, as they take great care in maintaining their houses. Their houses are decorated with various iconic figures in different colours and paintings of Gods hang in frames.

The Kuli houses are marked by the paucity of furniture and well planned arrangements for living within a narrow space. Their household assets consist of their aluminium utensils, earthen jars, glass tumblers, grinding stone, string cots, kerosene lamps, umbrella, grain bins, knives, loom and carved wooden vessel to colour the yarns. Bright brass utensils are very conspicuous in their houses. Some of them rear goats, poultry birds and those who possess cultivable lands have plough bullocks, plough, yoke, ploughshare, hoe, leveler, sickles etc.



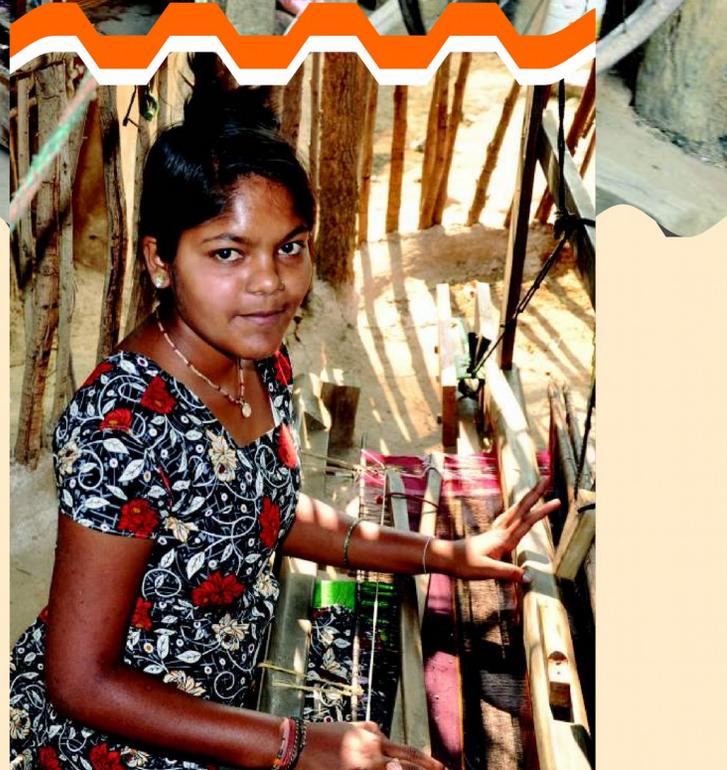
LIVELIHOOD

The sole traditional occupation of the Kulis is weaving. Agriculture is a subsidiary occupation for those who own cultivable lands. Besides, they also take up seasonal forest collection, fishing, petty trade, wage earning, service etc. Exchange of labour for the purpose of cultivation and for building or repairing houses is also prevalent among them.





Kulis households have looms of their own and both men and women take part in weaving. Weaving consists of a number of phases in which both sexes participate. A couple can normally weave twenty pieces of standard sized cloths per month at the maximum 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 at the time of heavy demand.





The coarse cotton dhotis and saris which they produce are sold in the market for cash. After the introduction of cheap mill-made cloths the demand for their coarse cloths has declined, and they are facing difficulties for selling their products. The income from the sale of these clothes does not support them throughout the year. Moreover, due to the lack of improved loom, working capital or raw materials they are not in a position to increase their production. Under these circumstances, they are forced to live a hand to mouth life. Although now-a-days, they feel that this trade is not profitable, for various reasons they are not in a position to switch over to other occupations.

Kulis women besides attending to their routine household chores contribute substantially to their family income by participating in weaving, cultivation, wage earning and collection of fuel woods, roots, tubers, green leaves and seasonal fruits from the nearest forest.

Food and Drinks

Kulis are non-vegetarians. Their staple food is rice. They eat vegetarian dishes prepared out of green leaves and mushrooms of different kinds. In the scarce season they manage with edible roots, tubers, green leaves etc. The mangoes collected in the summer are dried to prepare pickle and stored for use throughout the year. During the period of food crisis, their food consists of stale rice, a piece of dried mango pickle, salt, chilly and onion. They are very fond of non-vegetarian foods. They consume fish, meat, chicken, eggs, etc. They eat Kolath dal which is very cheap and small fish fry almost every day. Their feasts always include non-vegetarian dishes.

Kulis are not very much addicted to alcoholic drinks but many of them drink as per their choice. They usually consume mahula liquor and Palm wine. Being a hospitable people they entertain their guests with non-veg dishes of chicken and alcoholic drinks.



SOCIAL LIFE



Kulis are an endogamous community who are divided into twenty exogamous totemistic clans called Kude Ghar or Gotras. These are named after different totems namely 1. Bagh (Tiger), 2. Neul(mongoose), 3. Bachul (Calf), 4. Khar (Hare), 5. Bel (a type of tree), 6. Sanani/Majhi (Sun), 7. Pat (grass pastures), 8. Bhaensa (Buffalo), 9. Kurum (Tortoise), 10. Hanuman (Monkey), 11. Para/Parua (Dovel Pigeon), 12. Seul(Fish), 13. Gaurchula (Fish), 14. Suar (Boar), 15. Laya (Fish), 16. Bhatapahari (Bird), 17. Nag (Cobra), 18. Ganapati (Elephant), 19. Khand (Sword), 20. Choudhury /Behera (a tree). The members of clan groups revere their respective totemic objects and do not harm them.

"Each clan has its own Gods and Goddesses who are worshiped at different festive occasions of the family and community. The members of one clan (Gotra) belong to one Gotra and have a sense of brotherhood marked during life cycle rituals observed in the villages. The role of kins and community members becomes more prominent during death ritual that begins from lifting of the dead body (Murdar-buha) to the twelfth day of final purification." (Swain ; 2014).

The obligations of clan members are not only evident by their presence but also by sharing the cost of the rituals and ceremonies. Serving food to the family of the deceased for two days is a good example of their kinship obligation. During marriage also, the clans men and relatives extend help to the family of the bride and the groom by gifting various daily use items. (Swain; 2014)

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Family

In Kulis society family is predominantly nuclear (Bhine-ghar). Joint families (Ek-thania) and vertically extended families are also seen in rare cases. Koli society is patrilineal. They follow the rule of patrilocal residence after marriage and the rule of patrilineal descent. The eldest son succeeds the father. The father exercises authority over the family.



Life Cycle

Pregnancy and ChildBirth

The Kulis impose certain taboos on the pregnant women regarding their food and movements for the wellbeing of the mother and foetus. The woman is prohibited to visit religious places, cross a stream or river, expose herself during lunar and solar eclipse, eat sour food items, sleep or travel alone in dark night, touch a corpse or go near the cremation ground etc.

As soon as the labour pain starts the woman is confined in a room and an elderly and experienced woman is called to attend her as midwife (dhai). Soon after the delivery the umbilical cord is cut by a sharp knife by the midwife and is thrown to fire within that room or is kept in the Umbhei - the fire pot. To relieve the post-delivery pain a paste made of neem leaves powder, garlic, dried ginger and pij'ali is administered to the woman. She is given hot rice and boiled vegetables for six days, during which she and her baby are kept segregated in the delivery room called Antrisal.

Post delivery ritual

The first phase of birth pollution (Chhitkia) continues for six days or the day on which the naval cord is finally dropped from the child's belly. On the 6th day, the placenta is buried within the house. It is believed that any disturbance to this (placenta in the pot or hole) will harm both mother and child. They are given a bath and the mother wears a new cloth. On this day, the deities called Dharua Dharuen are worshipped by the clan chief or Meher in the Antrisal for the well being of the child. In case of girl child, a hen (Penta) and in case of boy child, a cock (Ganja) is sacrificed; liquor is also offered to appease the Goddess. Meher sprinkles rice mixed with turmeric powder on the mother and baby to purify their bodies and to assimilate them with the group (Jati). This is called Janam-jaet. (Swain; 2014) A small feast is served to the kutumba (lineage) members.

The second phase of pollution continues till the 21st day (Eksia), at the end of which the house is cleaned and the old earthenware are thrown away and replaced by new ones. The mother takes bath and enters the kitchen to resume her routine work. The child is named on that day.

The name giving ceremony called Eksia is conducted by the Meher of the village. Invoking Karamsani, their supreme deity, he recalls various names to be given to the child, and spells out the name that comes to his mind. There is another method of divination for naming the child in which the names of ancestors for boys and names of ancestress for girls are uttered by putting rice and black grams into a pot of water. If any grain of rice or black gram sinks down in the water while uttering a particular name, that name is given to the child. There is yet another method of name giving by which the child is named according to the day of his/her birth. For example, the boy or girl born on Tuesday (Mangalbar) may be named as Manglu or Mangla, those born on Thursday (Gurubar) may be named as Guru or Gurubari and the like.



Arranged Marriage (Prastabita Biha): The Kulis consider marriage arranged through proper negotiation as an ideal and prestigious mode of acquiring a spouse. The groom's family searches for the bride during the auspicious months from Kartik (October - November) to Shraavan (July- August) only. After finding a suitable bride, the groom's parents visit the girl's house to see her first. They visit again with bottles of country liquor and it is called 'Madpiani'. The acceptance of this gift by the girl's family indicates their preliminary consent for the marriage. On this occasion the boy's parents ask the girl's name, her star and her first date of menstruation (karma). If the name and star of the boy and girl matches, then the boy goes to see the girl.

To finalise the proposal the boy's parents accompanied by the community head (Meher) and some elder members visit the girl's house with the items of bride price (Kaudi ljhola tanka) comprising a new saree, bangles, ornaments, jaggery (Guda), flattened rice (Chuda), coconut (Nadia), sweets (Mitha) and liquor (Mada). In the presence of Meher and elders of the girl's village, the boy's family and their Meher seek the consent of the girl's father and the girl which is very important for the matrimony. If it is affirmative the proposal is finalized. Then the girl wears the new saree, bangles and ornaments presented by the boy's parents. This event is called Chuddi Pindhani that marks the conclusion of marriage negotiation.

The wedding ceremony takes place at the bride's house on the scheduled date. The groom's party goes there in a procession where they are given a warm reception and treated with a feast called Dhuli-Bhata. The bride and groom are led to the marriage pedal (Biha-bedi). Here, in the presence of the clan-heads, friends, relatives and Jati Bhai of both the sides, the Meher and Bhal-lok conduct the traditional wedding rites. It is followed by the bride's parents putting the bride's hand on the groom's hand. The ritual ends with sprinkling turmeric added rice and water over the couple. Now-a-days, because of Hinduisation, many Kulis families are engaging purohit (Brahman priests) to chant mantras and conduct the wedding rituals following the caste traditions.

The occasion is celebrated amidst dancing, feasting and drinking of liquor. As agreed upon during negotiation, the cloths for the female relatives (Sar-luga) of the bride along with the cloths for Meher, are given by the groom's party to the bride's party at this time.

The next day the bride takes farewell. The groom's side pays some money to the bride's friends as Sang cheddani to make her stop crying and to allow her to leave them.

Marriage by Intrusion (Paisamundi Biha) : In this type of marriage, the girl loving a man very intensely intrudes into his house with the permission of Meher and then hosts a feast for the community people. If she enters into the house of a married man, she stays as a co-wife (Sauten). No formal wedding rituals are performed in this kind of marriage.

Marriage by Elopement (Udulia Biha) : This type of marriage takes place when the boy and the girl are in love and their guardians do not agree to their wedlock. The boy elopes with the girl secretly and they live together elsewhere as husband and wife. After some time their elders trace their whereabouts and convince them to return home. Then the couple seeks the consent of their Meher and Jatibhai. In this type of marriage the boy's parents are relieved of the burden of heavy expenses of regular arranged marriage.

Marriage with Flower (Phul Biha) : It is an unique type of marriage done between an unmarried girl and a bunch of flowers or flowers in a pot made of the Sal leaves (Dana). This type of marriage is performed for the over aged unmarried girls called Badua which is a stigma for whom suitable grooms are easily not available. This stigma is removed by performing Phul biha in the presence of Meher and Jati Bhai.

Widow Re-marriage (Bidhaba Biha) : To solve the problems of the widow after the death of her husband, the Kulis society permits the widow to remarry. The widowers and divorcees are also permitted to remarry.

Divorce

In their society divorce is allowed and either party can divorce his/her spouse on the grounds of maladjustment in conjugal life, impotency, barrenness, indulgence in **extra-marital relationship**, poor maintenance, cruelty etc. Their Meher and Jatibhai decide the appeal for divorce in presence of the divorce seeking couple and their parents.



Death

The dead are either buried or cremated. The bodies of those dying of cholera, smallpox or any other infectious diseases are thrown away in the open. The death news is communicated to the clan members, Mehek Bhalalok and Jatibhai. The dead body is anointed with turmeric paste and covered with a new cloth. It is carried to the cremation ground placed on a stringed cot borne on the shoulders of kinsmen

For burial, on reaching the burial ground the Meher throws some liquor on the dead body, which is called Madturpa. **The burial pit is dug deep to avoid Hyenas** (Hundar/Hetabagha) digging and devouring the corpse. The eldest son of the deceased puts some earth on the corpse followed by others present there. Finally the dead body is buried and later a small earthen platform is made over the burial pit.

But in cases of cremation, the body of deceased is placed on the pyre in a north-south direction with its head pointing to the north. In case of a male the face points towards the sky and in case of a female, towards the ground. The eldest son of the deceased sets fire to the pyre first followed by others. The participants in the funeral take bath in a stream or pond and return to the house of the deceased where they purify themselves by taking of 'Pita' (water with neem leaves).

Death pollution is observed for 12 days. For the first two days, the bereaved family members do not cook and their Jati bhai families supply food (Mithi-bhat) to them. On the 3rd day called Tel, the lineage members take bath applying oil and eat a feast arranged by the bereaved family.

Dassah is performed on the tenth day when the male members shave their beards and cut their hair near a pond. On this day the house of the deceased is cleaned and the walls and floor are washed with cowdung water. The old earthen pots are thrown away and replaced by new ones. The community members (Jati bhai) supply Ghee or non-vegetarian food to the bereaved family. The day is marked with worshipping Kulibudha and Kulibudhi.

On the eleventh day called Kaml Karya Ghar, a homa is performed by the priest and a non-vegetarian feast is hosted by the bereaved family for the Jati bhai, friends and relatives in the afternoon. On the twelfth day called Barapatri, the final purificatory rites are performed, which is followed by another vegetarian feast. There after the family and lineage members become free of death pollution to resume their routine activities.

In cases of premature deaths caused by accident, animal attack etc. the same rituals are done.



RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

The Kulis mostly profess Hinduism like the neighbouring castes and worship all the Hindu deities especially, Lord *Jagannath*, Lord *Biswakarma*, Goddess *Mahalakshmi*, *Maa Mangala*, *Maa Samalei* in addition to their own deities namely *Karamsani*, *Kalisi*, *Kuli Budha-Budhi*, as well as their respective clan deities namely *Bagha Budha*, *Charkore-chaurasi*, *Charadei*, *Santh-Kabir*, *Dharua-Dharuen*, *Dwarapal*, *Darani Maa*, *Pattakhanda*, *Ranna*, *Dulha*, *Lahurkata*, *Thakur-de*, *Barrole*, *Dulhadevi* etc. They observe their rituals festivals with great devotion for their well being.



Karamsani Puja

Their most important annual festival KaramsaniPuja commences on the 11th day (Sukla Pakhya) of the month Bhadrab (August-September) and observed for three days with pomp and ceremony. On the 1st day, Kulis boys and girls go to the jungle in the evening and collect a branch of a Halan tree that symbolises Goddess Karamsani. As the belief goes, the Goddess lives in this tree and blesses with all types of success in life. They install the branch in the village, where it is worshipped by the villagers with drinking and dancing round it all over night. They make offerings of fruits, rice, sweet meats, liquor and sacrifice fowls to appease the deity.

The next day, all members observe fasting. A quadrangular earthen platform with four posts placed in equal distance and decorated with flowers and the seat of the goddess lying in the middle is constructed to worship the goddess by dancing and singing around the platform. The worship is conducted by the Meher who seeks the blessings of the goddess for the well being of the community. During the worship stories are told about the goddess and her kindness for the community.

On the third day the goddess Karamsani is bade farewell. The branch representing her is made to visit all the houses in a procession to bless everyone. Then the goddess is immersed in ohalla - the water of village pond or nearby river.



Kalasi Puja

The name Kalasi comes from the word "*Kalas*" (a small earthen water pot) that is worshipped during this puja which is held in the month of *Kartika* (October-November) in the village *KaIngadera*, exclusively a Kuli village coming under Bijepur Police Station in Bargarh district. It is believed that the spirit of the Goddess enters into the body of a particular *Kuli* person called *Barua* (Goddess incarnate) who while being spirit possessed drinks the blood of the sacrificed goats, sings the glory of the deity, prescribes solutions to human problems and blesses people for prosperity.

Kuli Budha and Kuli Budhi

The *Kuli Budha* and the *Kuli Budhi* are revered as the first parents. They are represented by pillars raised in their hamlet (*Kuli pada*) in every village. The Kulis seek their blessings for their happiness and well being in all festive occasions. On the wedding altar, they are also worshipped as *Gaura Gauri* in the form of cow dung balls. Both the deities are specifically worshipped on the day of *Pausa Purnima* - the full moon day of the Odia month *Pusha* (December-January).

Matichuan:

This is an agricultural festival held on the day of *Akhitrutiya* in the Odia month of *Baisakha*. On this day the Kulis farmers begin cultivation by throwing ritualized paddy seeds and sprinkle unboiled milk and liquor in their ploughed fields.

Mangala Puja

Goddess *Mangala* is worshiped during the Odia months of *Aswina* and *Chaitra*. The Goddess is also revered as the *Gotra debi* (clan Goddess) of some Kulis clans and worshiped for the well being of the members of the concerned clans.

Laxmi Puja

Following the caste traditions Goddess *Laxmi* is worshipped at the family level by the female members on every Thursday of the month of Margaseera (November- December) for health, wealth and prosperity of family. Kulis women conduct the worship and appease the Goddess by offering various dishes.

Besides the above, the Kulis observe all important Hindu festivals like *Ganesh Chaturthi*, *Diwali*, *Holi*, *Raja Gamha*, *Sabitri*, *Dola*, *Sital Sahasthi*, *Nuakhai*, *Makar*, *Dasahara*, *Biswakarma Puja* etc. with great festivity.

They believe in the existence of evil spirits such as ghosts and witches who are malevolent in nature. If these spirits are not propitiated properly, they can cause great misfortune to the village and people. They utilize the services of their traditional witch doctor to gratify these evil forces.



SOCIAL CONTROL

The Kulis society has their traditional mechanism of social control for maintaining orderly social life. At the village/hamlet (pada) level they have their community head Meher who is assisted by a Bhol lok. Both of them are appointed by selection and hold their position till they enjoy the confidence of their fellow men.

In the absence of Meher, the Bhol lok acts as his substitute. For resolution of disputes and handling other community matters, the Meher and the Bhol lok consult the elderly and experienced members of the community. Usually they handle inter-personal, inter and intra family, inter and intra village, inter and intra community disputes relating to land, partition of property, marriage, incest, pre-marital pregnancy, extramarital affairs, divorce, violation of customary rules etc. In case a dispute could not be solved at the village level the Meher of other villages are called upon to resolve the dispute. Generally, the guilty is punished by way of arranging a feast for the community members. Disobedience of the verdict is treated as a serious offence for which the offender may be outcasted from the community and can be readmitted into the society after his due penance including a grand feast to be hosted for the community members of the village.

The mechanisms of social control also operate at the clan levels. Each clan has its own arrangements to resolve their internal disputes and conflicts. The clan head with the help of other senior members resolve the internal conflicts.

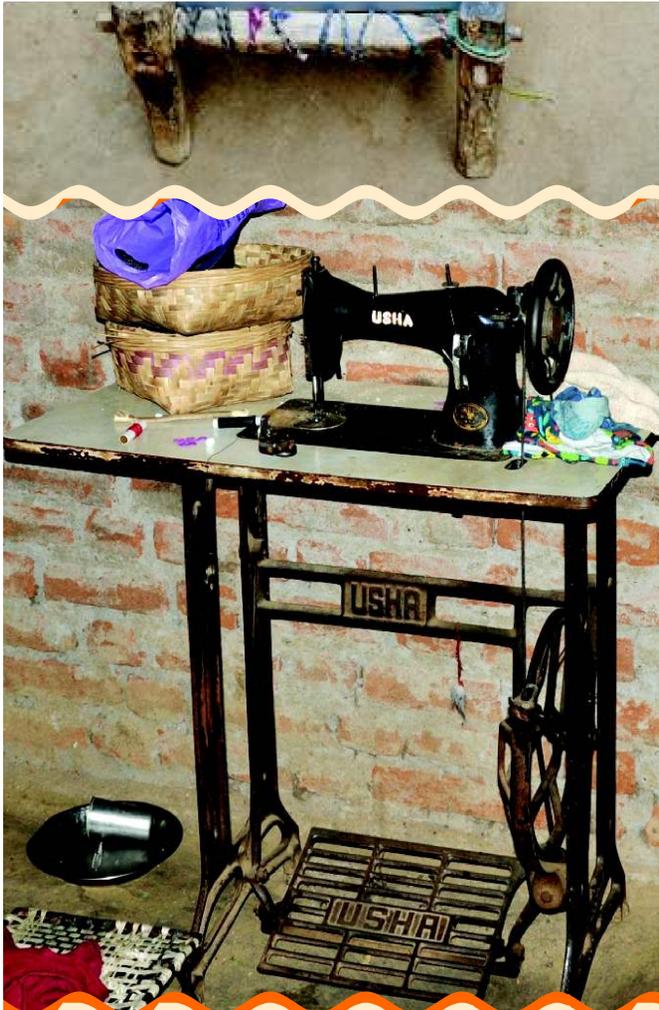


DEVELOPMENT AND CHANGE

In modern times, the rapid changes in administrative set-up and political climate of the country and their exposure to the external world have influenced their way of life. Especially after independence, the welfare Government has taken a very benevolent attitude towards improving the lot of the backward tribal people of this country including the Kulis. Various protective, welfare and development measures initiated by the Government have resulted in exposing the community more and more to outside contact.

Government has launched many development programmes in different sectors including income generation, education, communication, housing, agriculture, irrigation, drinking water, health and sanitation etc. The Kulis have been benefited from different tribal development programmes. The impact of planned change and modernization are visible in their life style.





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Besides, in course of time, the Kulis society has accepted many cultural, social and religious elements from their neighbouring caste communities due to their long association with them. Now the tribe is highly acculturated and Hinduised and almost attained the status of an artisan service caste i.e., a weaver caste. They accept the superiority of the Brahman, have functional relationship with other castes and have a fixed caste occupation. They do not take such food and indulge in such practices which are prohibited by Hindus. They behave like a clean caste in this respect.

The Kulis are fully integrated into the caste hierarchy of the Hindu society. As such they get the services of Brahman priest and barber to conduct their rituals. They occupy a higher place like those of clean weaver castes of Western Odisha in the social hierarchy of local caste society.

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