



# PAUDI BHUYAN

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## FOREWORD

The Bhuyan is one of the most prominent and numerically preponderant tribes widely distributed in different parts of Orissa. This historically well known community represents varying socio cultural stages of development. The Paudi Bhuyan is one of the major sections of the Bhuyan tribe which has been identified by as a primitive tribal group of the state. This photo handbook is an account of socio-anthropological reflecting Paudi Bhuyan's environment, lifestyle and culture.

The Paudi Bhuyan are very simple, sober and hard working people mostly found in Bhuyan Pirha of Keunjhar, Banai mountainous areas, hill tracks of Sundergard and Angul districts. They like to live in hill terrains and valley bottoms. They remain busy at home, field and forest from dawn to dusk and never sit idle. They eke out their living by slash and burn type of rotation cultivation and also paddy cultivation. They have an established social control system and social harmony and always feel devoted to their innumerable gods, goddess, deities, spirits and unseen power. According to them one can lead happy life by keeping good relation with benevolent and malevolent spirits.

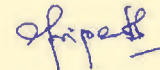
They are very much creative, imaginative and believe more in equality than individual status. They are very shy and remain away from outsiders. Occasionally they express their inner feelings only before a few with whom they have confidence and close intimacy. They are very faithful to keep their words and do according to the commitment. They have culturally established social behaviour, social harmony and devotion for divinity that keep them happy and joyful. In course of living hard life they imbibe many qualities that are needed for survival. They are very innovative, hard working and imaginative. One can learn a lot of things from their customs, traditions and indigenous technologies and values of social life.

The Paudi Bhuyan maintains symbiotic relationship with the environment and neighboring ethno-cultural groups. They have greater confidence on their hard work and will-power. They don't work solely for economic benefits rather enjoy their work and derive pleasure out of it. Even today 'shifting cultivation' provides them minimum food security and their knowledge and skill in this regard is more scientific. They observe a series of annual feasts and festivals prescribed by their forefathers.

In marketing of their agricultural and forest produce Paudi Bhuyan are being exploited by local traders and money lenders. Low yield, population pressure, depletion of forest, fluctuation in the environment and natural calamities are some of the main factors which hinder their holistic development. They have strong hold on their natural and human resource potentiality; however, there is distinctive division of labour. Paudi Bhuyan village is a closely knit social entity with huge measure of cohesion and continuity. People share each others sorrows and happiness. Their social life is more village affair than an individual concern and village is quasi. But the village in Paudi Bhuyan society is never an isolated entity rather it forms a segment of wider inter village organization called Phirha.

Now, youths of present generation and educated ones are very much conscious of their democratic rights and responsibilities. Their customary laws and traditional council are strong enough for resolving disputes ensuring right justice. There is continuous approach to bring sustainable development to Paudi Bhuyan through PBDA Khuntgaon in Sundergard district, PBDA Jamardih in Angul district and PBDA Rugudakudar in Deogardh district.

I hope this book would be of immense help to the Paudi Bhuiya lovers, tourists, researchers, personnel associated with them in different parts of the state as well as general readers.



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# THE PAUDI BHUYAN



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## INTRODUCTION

The Paudi Bhuyan, a major section of the historically famous Bhuinya tribe are found in Bihar, Orissa, West Bengal and Assam. They are also well known as Hill- Bhuyan and found in Sundargarh, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Sambalpur and Angul districts of Orissa. It is one of the identified Primitive Tribal Groups of the State and reveals its distinctive socio-cultural features. According to census 2001 Bhuyan population is found to be 2, 46,573 out of which 1, 21,951 are males and 1, 24,622 are females. It is not possible to give exact population of Paudi Bhuyan as this section of population has not been enumerated separately by census. The Paudi Bhuyan mostly inhabits in hills and mountainous forest areas are geographically isolated. Many Paudi Bhuyan villages are devoid of all weather roads because of geo-physical constraints. Areas around the Paudi Bhuyan settlement are without thick forest due to practice of slash and burn type of rotation cultivation.



The Paudi Bhuyan speak local Oriya which is pronounced differently. They are strong and stout with muscular body and medium height. Head is dolichocephalic. Nose is broad and depressed at root and lips are thick. Their skin color is usually light brown.

The male persons usually put on dhoti, banians and shirts and women wear Saree and blouse. They also adorn their body with traditional ornaments like bangles, armlets, anklets, necklaces, nose rings, earrings etc. made of different metals. The women decorate their buns with hairpins and colorful flowers.



The Paudi Bhuyan villages are mostly located on hill slopes, valleys and on top of hills. The villages are full of mango and jackfruit trees and during rains the settlements become swampy with thick forest growth, in and around.





## SETTLEMENT PATTERN AND HOUSE



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Their area is rich in sal forests. In each settlement, stretches of land are usually available to provide the people scope for slash and burn type of rotation cultivation. As they live in forests they are bound to depend on it for their livelihood. They carry on food gathering and hunting in the forest.

The youth dormitory “Darbargarh” is usually constructed at the centre of the village. This is the house meant for the unmarried boys of the village where other male members are also allowed to take rest on several occasions. It also serves as guest house, granary of the village where, village level cases are decided.





The unmarried boys keep their Changu (tambourine) hung on deer horns fixed to the inside walls of Darbar. Grain bins are kept on a wooden platform raised in a corner of Darbar. During winter male people enjoy flames of fire in dormitory and the village deity house or Thakuranighar is constructed near the dormitory. Moreover, at one side they install Gaisiri Khunta made of a piece of carved wooden pillar. This pillar represents the village deity where ritualistic observances are held on different occasions.

The dormitory organization is losing its striking features under the impact of modernization. However, many Paudi Bhuyan have yet retained their identity and striking socio cultural characteristic features. The Paudi Bhuyan villages comprise 5 to 20 families and a few villages are also there having about sixty families. The Juang, Munda and Kolha tribes and Hindu caste people, like Gouda, Kamara, Gudia, Khandayat etc live in their close proximity. Previously the Paudi Bhuyan were changing their village sites specially when the forest around the village are exhausted and villagers suffer from divine curse leading to spread





of epidemics, tiger menace, breach of cholera and repeated crop failures. When Gaisiri Khunta is broken or uprooted they take it as divine warning for changing the village site. While selecting a new site, they give importance on perennial water sources and virgin forest at close proximity. Moreover, successful divination in omen reading on the proposed site is equally vital for selection of a new site to establish a settlement.


The Paudi Bhuyan houses are very neat and clean. The walls are plastered with cow dung and

locally available red earth. The women are very conscious of keeping the house attractive throughout the year. The courtyards and backyards are swept everyday for keeping it clean.

The houses in a village are dispersed here and there within a particular boundary. Each family maintains its house with a kitchen garden where they grow pumpkin, gourd, chilly and other vegetables along with maize. During winter they grow tobacco and mustard there. The cow sheds are constructed close to the living house.



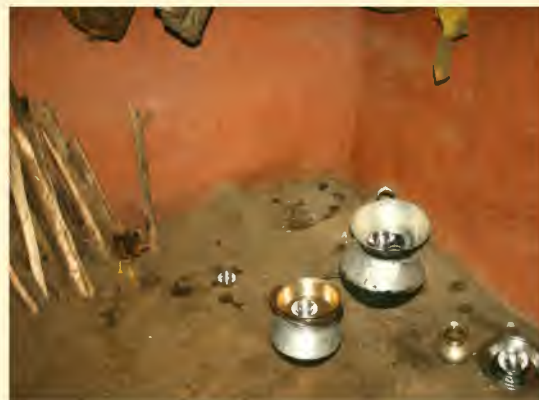




The construction of a new house is started usually on Wednesday or Friday. The house heads undertake a ritual to appease the concerned deity. The living house of the Paudi Bhuyan is rectangular in shape having sloped thatched roof supported by wooden rafter and pillars. Walls are plastered with mud. Doors are made of bamboo splits and well to do people use wooden frame for doors and planks for shutters. They make verandah at all sides of the house. The house is divided into three distinct portions. The inner most portion is meant for storing grains and important articles of the house. Middle portion is used for cooking and ancestral spirits are installed there. The same room is also used for sleeping. The area having the hearth is considered sacred and outsiders are strictly prohibited to enter inside, because the ancestral spirits may get angry and make the family members suffer. A separate shed is built for guests, outsiders, and women during delivery. Buffaloes and cows are kept in separate shed. Goats and chickens are given shelter in one side of the living house.



The Paudi Bhuyan mainly used earthen ware vessels, which are getting replaced by aluminum ones. However, earthen ware jar, gourd vessels, date palm leaf mats, wooden cot, leaf umbrella, rain hats, broom sticks, bamboo baskets, pestle, grinding stone and roller, axes, knives, ploughs, bow and arrow, kerosene lamp, grain bins etc are some of the common materials in a Paudi Bhuyan house.





## ECONOMIC LIFE

The Paudi Bhuyan are shifting (Kamana) cultivators. A patch of forest land brought under shifting cultivation is known as Biringa. At individual family level Paudi Bhuinya get ownership for cultivation of Biringa but after it is left fallow it belongs to the village. In the second year it is called Kaman and in the third year as Guda. They grow pulses, like black gram, horse gram, beans, pumpkins etc in Biringa, ragi and small millets in Kaman and paddy, nigers and small millets in Guda.



They grow paddy in Billa or Jami which is owned individually, on a permanent basis. These irrigated lands are considered as the best land, which are very costly. The kitchen garden is situated very close to house known as Badi where they grow vegetables, maize and mustard. This land is very fertile because cow dung is collected from the cattle sheds and is spread on the land.

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The unmarried boys and girls may cultivate a land on co-operative basis to raise a common fund for the youth organization. Similarly, the villagers also cultivate some land to increase the common stock of grains for its use in community level functions. A village having very less land for shifting cultivation may borrow some land from the neighbouring village on a temporary basis for which prior permission is taken by offering presentation in form of liquor and feast. However, some of





the Paudi Bhuyan are practising shifting cultivation for survival. Some of them are also engaged as labourers and wage earners. They work irrespective of their sex and social status. Activities, like ploughing, sowing, thatching, climbing trees hunting are performed by male folks and these are strictly prohibited for women. The females are very hard-working and perform all household works mainly cooking, house maintenance and child care. There are certain works like cutting bushes, manuring, weeding, reaping, weaving mat, house plastering, sweeping etc which are performed by the women. However, men and women work together in several occasions for the family.

The Paudi Bhuyan do the work themselves and take help of labourers from their own community according to their requirement. The Paudi Bhuyan may hire labourer on daily wages basis, annual basis, by lending cattle for ploughing, by mutual arrangement, using community labour force of the village, dormitory youths of the village, unmarried girls of the village, close relations etc. The rate of payment also varies for different types of labour. Either for own self or for others they work with all sincerity and pleasure. Their joyful orientation, temperament and attitude towards work deserve high admiration. During hard work they also enjoy songs to break monotony of their work.

In order to safeguard their crops from natural calamity and wild animals, they appease super





natural beings by offering prescribed rituals. The feasts and festivals connected with the agricultural cycle provide them complete rest in between hard and monotonous work. This temporary rest brings within them new zeal and enthusiasm for undertaking further heavy work.

Other than shifting cultivation and plains agriculture they also depend on food-gathering, hunting and fishing to supplement their food. They collect mushrooms, tubers, roots, shoots green



leaves, fruits, berries and nuts, seeds from the local forest either

for consumption or sale. Almost in all the seasons Paudi Bhuyan people collect variety of minor forest produces like lac, sal, resin, char many kinds of wild rope, firewood, leaves for making cups and plates and several others which they sell in the market. By and large forest plays pivotal role in the socio economic life of the Paudi Bhuyan.



The livestock of the Paudi Bhunya people comprises of cow, bullocks, buffaloes, goats, sheep, poultry etc. The animals particularly goats and chickens are domesticated not only for consumption but also to be sacrificed at the deities. The cows and buffaloes are quite beneficial for agricultural





purposes. Chickens and goats are always kept with special care to save them from wild animals. They engage persons to tend cattle or the same work may be performed on rotation basis among themselves. They have attached rituals for safety and security of their cattle wealth.

The Paudi Bhuyan are well known for their basketry work. Their area is very rich in bamboo and people are quite skilled in bamboo craft hence, in leisure hours they make varieties of baskets, paddy containers, winnowing fans, bamboo mats and other such items of different shape and size. Their basketry work is having a lot of demand among the neighbouring groups. The women are expert in weaving mats out of date palm leaf.

The Paudi Bhuyan are not good in trading, however, they exchange their agricultural and forest produce for their daily necessities, like rice, salt and the like. But, now-a- days they sell their marketable commodities for money and pay cash for any purchase. In spite of several preventive measures at the Govt. level, they get exploited by money lenders of the area. The merchants cheat them in weights and measures and local Sahukars charge a high rate of interest. The Paudi Bhuyan are also cheated frequently by the outside traders.



They hunt animals and birds in the forest and it is considered as a sport and accepted a means of getting non-vegetarian food items, it is also intimately associated with their economic and socio-cultural life. Apart from the bows and arrows they also use multifarious devices and varieties of hunting weapons at the time of hunting. Their communal hunting expedition is having linkage with their socio-economic and religious life. During "Akhripardhi" so called annual hunting festival, failure in hunting is believed to have very bad impact on the current annual agricultural harvest. They also observe a number of taboos, dietary and sexual restriction before proceeding for ritual hunting. Before proceeding for such hunting, Naik, the religious specialist of the village offer a series of rituals to satisfy Dharm Devata "Sun God", "Basuki" earth goddess, "Gaisiri", village deity and "Boram" guarding deity. They also offer sacrifices of chicken in expectation of successful hunting. In a successful hunting the person responsible for killing the animal is ceremonially welcomed by women of the village. The hunter is praised and rewarded with a new cloth. The ceremonial hunting is observed for three consecutive days as a religious occasion than a quest for non-vegetarian food. The women cannot take part in hunting but, play quite vital role at the time of return especially after successful hunting. In due course, hunting is gradually becoming an individual affair than a community expedition due to depletion of forest.



Like hunting, Paudi Bhuyan male and females go for fishing in hill streams, rivers, and rivulets. They catch fish by hand, using fishing rod and fish traps. They also catch small fish by using the cloth by filtration





process. They set fish traps in paddy fields during rainy season. Fish may be eaten by roasting or frying. They preserve dried fish for future consumption.

The Paudi Bhuyan remain busy throughout the day from dawn to dusk. The house wife engages herself in multifarious domestic activities, like sweeping the courtyard, husking paddy, washing utensils, cooking foods, taking care of babies, cleaning cow sheds and several other jobs which vary from family to family. The male members go for morning performances and female remains busy in the kitchen. The whole family including the children takes food and proceeds for field where they work throughout the day. While coming back at home, a man carry fire wood and the women bring leaf cups and leaf plates made by them in the field. They also collect edibles available in the nearest jungle. The women come back at home by the evening and again remain busy in cooking whereas males found relaxing at the village dormitory. The Paudi Bhunya take food in late evening and go to bed. Their daily routines vary according to prescribed seasonal work cycle.



## SOCIAL ORGANISATION

The Paudi Bhuyan people are related to each other in a specified social network based on consanguinity and affinity. They behave each other in a prescribed pattern giving due respect to their age old practice of social norms and values. The family is considered as the smallest social unit. It is patrilineal, patrilocal and patriarchal. Members in the community are related with each other by birth or by marriage. Marriage is strictly prohibited among the agnatic kins. The spouses are always selected beyond the agnatic groups. The Khilli is the maximal lineage or extended group. After marriage a women becomes a member of that family. Even an adopted son-in-law becomes a member of the family of his father-in-law. The properties are always inherited by the sons and the eldest one gets a little more. Married daughters cannot demand any immovable property. The property of a person having no male issue is enjoyed by his male agnates. A daughter continues to live with her parents till she marries. Her relation continues with her parental family even after she goes to her husband's house. Father is the head of the family and after his death eldest son controls the family members. The head of the family exercises power over all the members. Widow mother is taken care of by her sons. Her suggestions are taken into consideration.

One can find nuclear family, joint family, extended family among the Paudi Bhuyan but now-a-days







nuclear families are very common. It depends on the members of the family either to accept to live jointly or prefer to have their respective independent establishments. In respect of hunting rituals, shifting cultivation, annual revenue collection, village subscription, village rituals family has to play pivotal role. Families are also having some religious functions. It is the moral obligation of the family members to propitiate their ancestral spirits. After family, lineage is found to be very important for various social activities. The maximal lineage is group called "Khilli" is divided into a number of minimal lineages. A cluster of related linkages constitute a major lineage called "Khilli", Lineage groups are to observe pollution when a lineage member is dead, In case of successful hunting on festive and ceremonial occasions the role of "Khilli" is the most vital. Among the Paudi Bhuiya Kutumba Khilli, and there are Bandhu Khilli. Men are strictly prohibited to marry in Kutumba Khilli as it is only permitted in Bandhu Khili.

Each Paudi Bhuyan village is a social entity; the people are interrelated and share each other's sorrows and happiness. In respect of youth dormitory, Biringa cultivation, death of a person, hiring of community labour, etc. village plays a vital role. It has a definite location and areas having prescribed group activities.

Each Paudi Bhuyan village is an independent social and economic unit. It has its own political council and prescribed rules for management. A number of adjoining villages form an inter village social and administrative unit called Pirha. Inter village relationship like marriage, hiring of community labour for



agricultural purposes, hiring of a Birringa, dance among boys and girls, exchange of some bottle of liquors are observed between members of the villages of Pirha. In few functions, elders from different villages get together and hear from each other on different matters of their respective villages. Boys and girls of two different villages and Khillis joke and exchange gifts among themselves out of love and affection. Pirha organization is the larger

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form of organization. A number of Paudi Bhuyan villages are grouped for socio political purposes. People from all the villages of a Pirha assemble in a particular occasion to decide matters relating to their community, like re-admission into their society, distribution of property of a hire less, incorporation to of a non-Paudi Bhuyan to Paudi Bhuyan community etc. The Pirha Dehuri performs rituals observed at Pirha level in order to maintain social solidarity.





## YOUTH ORGANISATION

The unmarried boys and girls of a village constitute the formal members of the youth dormitory locally known as Darbar. It is constructed by the boys and girls of the village in central position. All the unmarried male youths of the village construct this house, repair it from time to time and take up thatching every year. The girls of the village plaster the dormitory home and keep it neat as clean regularly. They sweep the dormitory and its surrounding every day. Throughout the year fire is kept burning and boys are duty bound in bringing required logs from the forest in regular intervals. Grain bins are kept on a raised wooden platform and Changus are kept hung on walls. The boys take rest in leisure hours and sleep there at night. All the unmarried boys and girls contribute to raise a common fund for its use in appropriate time.

Unmarried boys and girls of the village are quite aware of their duties and responsibilities relating to dormitory. They work when someone hires their services. The girls and boys of a village take all care of the boys and girls of their Bandhu villages during their occasional visit and night halt in the village. Boys and girls dance with the boys of the Bandhu village. Any negligence in treatment of boys and girls of Bandhu village is seriously viewed and punished by the village council. During the visit of either girls or boys of Bandhu village dance may continue for days and nights. A lot of funs, jokes, merrymaking and gift exchange take place. Sometimes a pair of intimate boys and girls may leave to a secluded place where the girl messages the body of the boy. At the time of departure the girls go up to certain distance to see off. On certain occasions a Bandhus girl may be captured for her marriage with a boy. After marriage he or she is deprived of dormitory membership and they are given a feast and formal farewell in traditional manner. Youth dormitory is a centre for learning and provides training on cooperation and mutual help, fellow feeling and friendship. Govt officials and outside guests also stay in the dormitory at night. This institution is losing its identity and luster day by day.



## RELIGION

The Paudi Bhuyan believe that the world is under the absolute control of some deities and spirits. According to their respective power and function they are worshipped and appeased. They consider Dharam Devata Sun God as Supreme Being and Basukimata (Earth Goddess) as supreme deity. They are considered as husband and wife and look after the Paudi Bhuyan people in all respect. Apart from these two very important deities, Boram (Village deity), Birda (a male deity), Pats (Deities of hills), Gaisiri (enshrined near Darbar) and Thakurani (Important village female deities) are very important. All the

above stated deities are benevolent in nature and appeased in their respective prescribed manner on different occasions. The Paudi Bhuyan also satisfies different malevolent deities and spirits at the time of need. Apart from their indigenous deities, spirits, ancestral spirits, ghosts etc they also worship Lord Shiva, Laxmi, Durga and Local gods and goddesses of their respective regions. Bishri Ossa is worshipped with all sincerity and devotion and believed to be protector and fulfills desires of the people. Of course this is Hinduised female deity but occupied special place in Paudi Bhuyan pantheon.



Dehuri is the sacerdotal head who performs all community level religious rituals and satisfy the village level deities, spirits, gods and goddesses. Dehuri is offered a basketful of paddy and other ritualistic objects by the villagers out of reserve the rice of which he cooks & offers to different deities and spirits. If the villagers are not satisfied with the functioning of a Dehuri they can change him and select a suitable one but, usually such situation hardly arises, rather eldest son of Dehuri inherits his father's post and renders prescribed services. Dehuri being sacerdotal head gets the head of a sacrificial animal. He enjoys some special powers and privileges. He is allotted with a specific patch of land, gets special share of meat in hunting ceremony, villagers work for him free of cost, etc. A number of ceremonies connected with birth, marriage and death are performed by the house head including his wife.



The Shaman, locally known as Raulia plays some important role particularly in curing patients and appeasing malevolent deities. He is also a good psychologist, an astrologer and a medicineman. A Bejuni (Sorcerer) is famous for his black magic. People are afraid of sorcerers and never dare going against him in any case.

By and large, Dehuri, Raulia and Bejuni have their respective roles to play in the field of religious activities and controlling benevolent and malevolent spirits. They help in retaining social health and happiness and well being of the community. However, the Paudi Bhuinya people are very much afraid of Bejuni and his black magic.



## FESTIVALS

The Paudi Bhuinya celebrates a number of feasts and festivals throughout the year. Each festival is associated with; specific deities, Gods and goddesses, ritualistic observance, special food items agricultural cycle, activities relating to forest, shifting cultivation, hunting, fishing, food gathering, life cycle rituals, etc. It provides opportunity for interaction and get together between kin members and relaxation from monotony and boredom of daily routine works. They enjoy, merry make and

revive their zeal and interest for successful endeavour. They start their new year after Maghpadai. They celebrate Am Nua in the month of Jan-Feb to give formal approval for taking raw mango after which manuring of agricultural land is undertaken.



Kath Jatra is celebrated in the month of Jan-Feb in which delicious cakes and non vegetarian food items are relished and onwards fried Mahua flower is allowed to be eaten by Paudi Bhuyan People. Gilor Jatra is observed for consumption of the Gilor flower by Paudi Bhuinya in the month of March. Akhani Paridhi is celebrated for successful hunting in the month of March-April. Accordingly Boram Devata worship is conducted in the month of March –April to appease the village deity and afterwards





Paudi Bhuinya get divine approval for setting fire on dried bushes left in fallow land meant for Biringa cultivation. In the month of May, Tirtia is celebrated for sowing sanctified seeds in the field. They observe a number of taboos in this festival. Ashad is celebrated to ensure good rainfall. After this transplantation of paddy seedlings, sowing of black gram, horse grams etc. are undertaken. In order to allow the people to observe Gahma on a regional basis Pirha Jatal Puja is conducted by the people of a number of villages. Gahma festival is meant for worshipping the cows. It is celebrated in the month of July-Aug with pomp and new festival food items are relished on this occasion. During Sept-Oct eating of new paddy festival i.e. Nua Khia is celebrated by the Paudi Bhuyan in their respective villages on different days. After harvest of paddy they celebrate Karma festival with sincerity and devotion by narrating legend of Karama Raja and worshipping branches of Karama plant (*Nauclea Parvifolia*). The Paudi Bhuyan celebrate this festival for days together by inviting near and dear ones and arranging drinks, non vegetarian food items and other delicious food.



They have also adopted some festivals of other tribal communities and neighboring Hindu caste people. They have started worshipping Bishri Ossa, lord Shiva, Durga, Ganesh and many other Hindu deities.



## POLITICAL ORGANISATION

The Paudi Bhuyan are having well organized traditional council. Naik is the secular head, however, Dehuri also plays vital role in the traditional council. Some well to do and local persons of the community also take part in the discussion. Of course every body is empowered to put forth his views but a few Paudi Bhuyan elites only take active part. Now-a-days traditional leaders and elected emerging leaders together form the council. The decisions are based on consensus.




The secular head Naik or Gauntia or Pradhan as they are known differently in various regions is the ruling chief for administrative purpose. During king's administration Naik used to collect revenue, decide quarrels and conflicts, attend the Govt officials and take care of them during their visit to the area. The post is hereditary and eldest son succeeds his father. He plays a vital role in deciding marriage negotiation, allotment of Biringa, during traditional hunting ceremony in matters relating to various socio-economic disputes and many others. Naik enjoys special status in the community and people pay him a lot of respect. As the kingpin of administrative and social matters he exercises a lot of power. He conducts his court either in the evening or in the morning. The youth dormitory functions as court where all people assemble. He takes initiative and listens from the accused and declares final verdict.



The cases that come to traditional council are quarrel between two individuals, partition of property, adultery, extra marital relationship cases, socially restricted sexual activities and disputes relating to property. Three or more villages join together under a wide traditional organisation, called Pirha or Bar where inter village disputes are resolved. Pirha has its functionaries to perform certain prescribed works. In this connection, Bhal Bhai, Pirha Bhandari, Dhoba or Behera, Pirha Naik or Jati Behera, Dal Behera, Ghadai, Pirha Brahman are having some role to play. Every body is paid according to the





function they have to perform. In certain important matters the Naik and Dehuri call for a meeting to undertake a preliminary trial. The sexual relation with an agnate or person of same khilli is considered very serious and the persons involved are excommunicated.

The offender pays a fine in cash or kind which is consumed by the participants in Pirha council. The out-caste people are readmitted to the community in the Pirha council where the person concerned begs apology and feeds the people in a group. In this process the offender gets free from the fault and restores his normal position in the society. In Pirha council a number of problems which are not solved in the traditional village council are sorted out. Incest is considered as the most serious and culprits are ostracized from the area and villagers treat them as dead and accordingly perform funeral rites. The persons released from jail have to face the Pirha council for their readmission to the Paudi-Bhuyan community.

In the changing scenario traditional village council and Pirha council are found to be relaxed and rules and regulation are not strictly adhered. Socio-cultural rules and village traditional councils are losing its importance and younger generations are changing their mind away from the strict socio-cultural customs and traditions.

In spite of all these, in normal situation the Paudi-Bhuyan are peace loving people and don't like to interfere in other's affairs. They hardly express their displeasure against some one rather they prefer to lead a smooth life without developing enemies. Of course, they are not completely free from anger, jealousy, revengefulness rather they avoid occasions which lead to quarrel and conflicts. The political organization feels morally bound to provide safety and security to its community men.

The Paudi Bhuyan had their very well organized political organisation in the past. With the introduction of the Panchayati Raj their traditional political organization has become weak but somehow it continues and serves the politico-jural interest of the people.



## LIFE CYCLE RITUALS

Life cycle rituals of a Paudi-Bhuyan comprises birth, childhood socialization, adolescence, adulthood, old age, death, death rituals. A woman is expected to give birth to a child and her bareness' brings her position low in the society. If she fails to give birth to a child her husband is socially permitted to remarry. A male child is preferred over a girl child in their community because girls leave their parents after getting married.

A pregnant woman is strictly prohibited to consume meat of any sacrificial animal. She is not allowed to attend any rituals other than the rituals relating to her pregnancy and child birth. In expectation of foetus injury she has to face a lot of



troubles. After birth of a child she is confined to reside inside the house. Traditional midwife takes care of the baby and woman. The naval cord is usually cut by the mother or grand mother by using an arrow in case of a male child and with a bamboo split in case of a girl. The mid-wife is paid in cash or kind for her services. The birth pollution continues from a week up to three months. However, rituals are conducted in phased manner to make the family members free from pollution. Name giving ceremony may be observed on seventh day where village old women and other members may join to select a suitable name for the child. They adopt a procedure in which sun dried rice and sisamum seeds are put on the surface of bowlful of water to confirm the diviners order for final selection of the name of the infant. Mostly, they prefer the name of the paternal grand father in case of male child and name of the paternal grand mother if the child is female. After the name is announced publicly the family members cook special food items and enjoy with close relatives. The woman henceforth is allowed to be free from pollution and seclusion. She observes dietary restrictions for a few months and she is offered prescribed






diets, like rice, salt and onion. Vegetarian and non vegetarian food items are strictly prohibited. Early child-hood socialization process is taken care of by the mother and other family members. In case of successive death of the children, the parents may handover the child to one of their close relations in a formal meeting though practically the child remains with the original parents. Taking into account different situations the parents may offer sacrifice of animals and birds before Thakurani, Gaisiri, Boram and Pat deities for safety

and security of the child. Godo Dhuari ceremony is observed after the child walks and first hair cutting ceremony is celebrated in which maternal uncle cuts the natal hair. Late childhood socialization process is very important in case of Paudi Bhuyan boys and girls as they acquire knowledge for their survival in the community. They join the youth dormitory at the age of 12 to 14 years and remain adhered to friends with their respective sex groups.

The Paudi Bhuyan marries within the tribe to cognates but the marriage is strictly prohibited among agnate, which is considered incestuous. They have very clear cut idea about Kutumb groups (agnates) and Bandhu groups for conducting marriages. Marriage is monogamous but one can remarry if the first wife does not give birth to a child. Marriage by negotiation (Mangi Bibha) is mostly preferred but it is very expensive and time taking. Marriage by elopement (Dhari pala) and marriage by capture



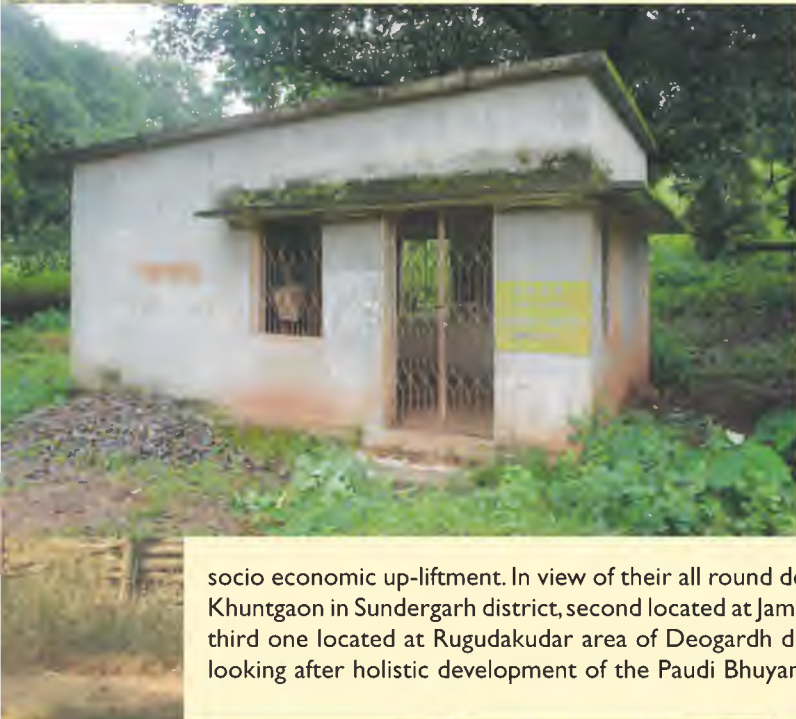


(Ghicha Bibha) are common as these are less expensive and easier to acquire a life partner. There are love marriages; by putting flower on the bun of a girl (Phul khusi) or by throwing mango to a girl (Am lesera) or by putting mud on the body of a girl (Kada lesera). One can also marry a widow following social norms and values. The marriage ceremony is very expensive and payment of bride price is a must. Of course the payment time and rate may vary from one type of marriage to other and it may differ from person to person taking into account one's economic status. Well to do Paudi Bhunya celebrate marriage function with much pomp and show and seriously follow different stages of marriage ceremony and associated rituals. The dormitory friends are offered presentation by the couple and they take formal farewell from their respective dormitory friends. Though it is difficult but divorce in both the cases is possible but, the Paudi Bhuyan couple is found very cooperative and they manage their life with their children happily. At their old age sons are expected to take an adequate care of the old parents. The old persons lead happy life with their respective sons, daughter-in-laws and grand children. Death to them is due to unhappiness of the gods, goddesses, deities, spirits and black magic. The agnates and cognates attend and carry the corpse to the burial ground. The first handful of earth is put by the eldest son, which is followed by other kiths and kins. When a pregnant woman dies rituals are somehow different because pollution period lasts for only two to three days. They call back the soul of the dead at home and enshrine their ancestral deity inside the main house.





## DEVELOPMENT AND CHANGE



For a pretty long time in the remote past the Paudi Bhuyan remained in isolation. Under the impact of modernization, introduction of planned development efforts and exposure to other religions they got influenced to change and adopt new way of life. The socio-economic development activities have brought immense change in their cultural pattern and lifestyle. The main factors responsible for their economic transformation are development programmes launched by the State Govt., Govt. of India, NGOs, Foreign funding organization, etc. During the last six decades, Government has initiated various welfare measures to bring sustainable socio economic development. They have been immensely benefited by their respective I.T.D.A.s, D.R.D.A.s and particularly by their respective Micro Projects for their

socio economic up-liftment. In view of their all round development three Micro Projects, one located at Khuntgaon in Sundergarh district, second located at Jamardihi area in Pallahara block of Angul district and third one located at Rugudakudar area of Deogardh district are functioning. These Micro Projects are looking after holistic development of the Paudi Bhuyan of their respective jurisdiction. They have now





gradually adopted, developed agricultural practices, using high yielding seeds, chemical fertilizers and pesticides and some of them are adopted fruit cultivation and producing vegetable to earn good money. The state Government is attempting to bring in significant development intervention to raise standard of living and quality of life. Multifarious development programmes relating to health and sanitation, education, environment conservation, infrastructural development, individual benefit schemes etc., have transformed their outlook. Introduction of modern agriculture, multiple cropping, use of high yielding variety of seeds, provision of irrigation facility, input assistance, market assurance, etc. have brought quite visible changes in their lifestyle. Because of meagre harvest in slash and burn type of rotation cultivation, the Paudi Bhuyan have adopted modern techniques and use of high breed seeds as well as pesticides and fertilizer.

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Paudi Bhuyan youths are found engaged in small business, selling of fire wood in the nearby town, working as daily wage earner in the house of non tribal etc. The emerging new leaders behave and act like pseudo-politicians in the plains.



The genius of the Paudi Bhuyan and their indigenous wisdom are considered outdated and their dependence syndrome is developing very fast. Now a days young women work in road construction as daily labourer under the contractors and some of them have adopted small business and trading. The development organizations and welfare institutions, like primary health centre, police check post, office of the agricultural extension officer, veterinary hospitals, post office, and weekly market, big shops, establishment of banks, LAMPs and several others have contributed to the changing life of the Paudi Bhuyan. The 'Darbar,' which was once upon a time the main tribal socio-cultural institution has lost its identity. Hindu religion influence has percolated dipper and their chief deities are losing their importance. Most powerful kinship organization, inter and intra village relationship, help and cooperation at family level and unity among the Paudi Bhuyan are changing fast.



All the three Paudi Bhuyan Development Agency as well as their respective I.T.D.A. and DRDA have brought a lot of positive impact on development of education, agriculture, irrigation, soil conservation, housing, communication, health and sanitation etc.

The residential High School of Paudi Bhuyan attracts the students of the area. Non formal educational centres are having good contribution for development of education among the children.



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