

Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Research and Training Institute (SCSTRTI), C.R.P. Square, Bhubaneswar-751003

2018

PREFACE

he Kandha Gauda, also known as Tanla Gauda a Scheduled Tribe of Odisha is numerically a small tribe and mostly found in Kandhamal, Bolangir, Nawrangpur and Sundergarh districts. They speak a Dravidian languages, Kui - the mother tongue of the Kandha tribe of Kandhamal and are also conversant in the Odia language. They are believed to be a subset of the Kandha tribe.

The name 'Kandha Gauda' is derived from 'Kandha' and the 'Gauda' (cowherd) that comes from the community's traditional occupation of herding the cattle of the Kandha tribe. In return for their services their Kandha masters provide them food and food grains daily and annually.

Interestingly, the Kandha Gaudas have no clan system unlike the neighbouring tribes. The community is divided into several exogamous lineages the names of which are used as surnames. They strictly follow the rules of community endogamy and lineage exogamy. Consanguineous marriage is tabooed. Socially permissible marriage types are by negotiation, by service, by capture and by elopement. Monogamy is the common form of marriage. The tribal institution of bride price is prevalent. Married women wear a necklace made of kaincha (a kind of bead) as the symbol of marriage. Divorce and remarriage of widow, widowers and divorcees are permissible with social approval.

For the deceased, the Kandha Gauda practise cremation for the adults and burial for the children and victims of infectious diseases. The death pollution is observed for eleven days and concluded by performance of final mortuary rite by their priest followed by a feast for the friends, relatives and villagers on the 11th day. They have the cult of ancestor worship.

They derive their subsistence from land and forest. Now, the income from their traditional occupation of cow herding does not sustain them for the whole year. Most of them are landless. Hence, they have taken up subsidiary occupation like, wage earning, collection of minor forest

products, fishing, petty trade, industrial labour, working in mines and quarries to supplement the income. Yet, they still remain backward socio-economically.

Like the Kandhas, "Dharani Penu" (Earth Goddess) is their Supreme deity. Besides, they worship a number of deities namely, Bodrabali, Grama devati, Thakurani, Gramaseni, Baral devi, Siva, Vishnu, Trinatha, Laxmi, Parvati etc on different occasions to obtain their blessings for their well being. They observe festivals like Dasahara, Nuakhai, Dola-Purnima, Lakhmipuja, Gamha Purnima, Holi etc.

In the post-independent times, the welfare government has implemented various development programmes to uplift them. This has brought immense changes in their lifestyle and cultural ethics. As a result they are now in a state of transition. One can notice visible changes in their way of life due to acculturation and modernisation. But on the other side, there are loosening of the strong social ties. Time will show to what extent they will conserve their cultural identity as a distinct community in the process of their integration with the mainstream society.

My sincere thanks are due to Ms. Sushree Sangita Mohanty, former Research Scholar of ATLC for preparing the draft of this book. Shri S.C. Mohanty, the former Joint Director and now working as a Consultant of this institute has taken pains to edit the manuscript thoroughly by addition of required data to make it ready for publication. The Capital Business Service & Consultancy also deserves my thanks to artfully design and print this colourful booklet.

I hope this illustrated literature will be useful to the readers who are interested to know about this little known tribe of Odisha.

Prof. (Dr.) A.B. Ota Director (SCSTRTI) & Special Secretary to Govt.



KANDHA GAUDA

A.B. Ota S.C. Mohanty Sushree Sangita Mohanty

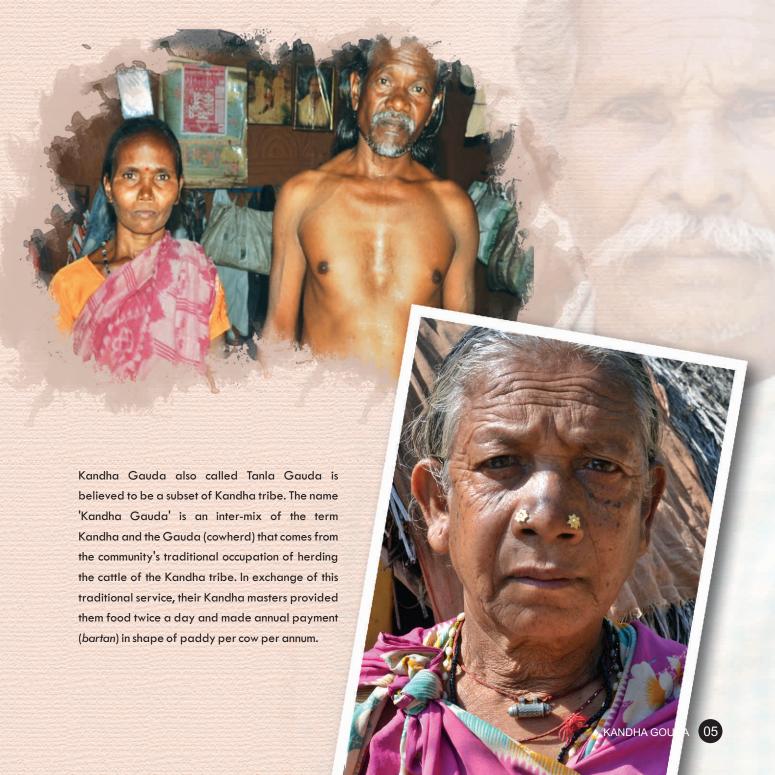
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IDENTITY

he Kandha Gauda, a Scheduled Tribe of Odisha is numerically a small tribe and mostly found in Kandhamal, Bolangir, Nawrangpur and Sundergarh districts. They are also known as Tanla Gauda. However they are thinly scattered in many parts of Odisha. As per 2011 census, the total population of the tribe in the state is 26,403 out of which 13 318 are males and 13 085 are females. The sex ratio is 983 females per 1000 males and overall literacy rate is 56.49% out of which male and female literacy rates are 67.74% and 45.11% respectively. They speak a Dravidian language, Kui – the mother tongue of the Kandha tribe of Kandhamal at intra community level and use Odia language for conversation with others.





Dress and Ornaments

The traditional dress of the Kandha Gauda male is dhoti, gamchcha and lungi. Presently they are wearing shirts, banions and pants while going outside. On special occasions, a headgear is worn. Traditionally, females wear coarse handloom sarees with or without a blouse. Kandha Gauda women are very fond of ornaments. They beautify themselves with hair-pins, earrings, nose-rings and necklaces, silver ornaments and glass beads.







SETTLEMENT & HOUSING PATTERN

The settlement pattern of the Kandha Gauda village is of linear type like those of their Kandha masters. Two rows of houses running on either side of the central street with the thatch of the adjacent houses merging in such a way that it gives an impression of a long roof stretching from one end of the village to the other. At the centre of the village street, there is an altar dedicated to the Earth Goddess called Jakhri. In some villages, among the primitive sections, they had in the past well organized dormitories called Dhanger Iddu for both unmarried boys and girls like those of the Kandhas. The permission of their traditional headman is obtained before one constructs a house in their settlement.









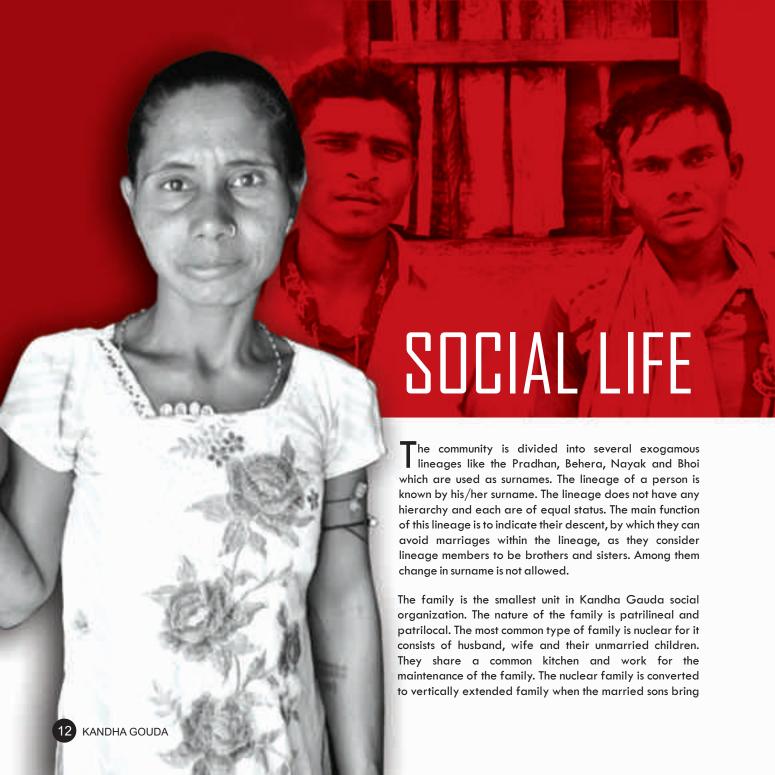




House:

Traditionally, they live in low wooden houses rectangular in shape like those of the Kandhas. The walls are made of wooden planks or bamboos plastered with mud. A Kandha Gauda house generally consists of front and rear verandas, a bedroom in the centre and a small kitchen. The floor is raised slightly above the ground level. Each house has a low ceiling which provides a garret (attu) for storing grains and household articles. Then construction of the double sloped roof begins by fixing wooden planks. In the Kandha Gauda houses, there are very simple household articles such as, gourd containers, wooden, bamboo and stone articles, baskets, earthen and aluminium pots and iron implements.





in their wives. The sons get separated from their natal family after dividing the property into equal shares among themselves following the rule of equigeniture.. Daughters are maintained in their paternal family up to their marriage; after that they have no claim to their father's property. Succession to the traditional office of father, if any, is by the eldest son. Joint and extended families are very rare. The father is the head of the family and he exercises his authority in every sphere, which is passed on to the eldest son after his death. Children are socialized within the family.









Pregnancy and Child birth

Pregnancy and child birth are welcome events in a Kandha Gauda family. Though they do not observe pre-delivery rituals, an expectant mother is required to observe certain restrictions in respect of her food, movements and activities for the safety of her and the baby in her womb. The delivery is attended by an old and experienced lady who acts as the mid wife. The delivery takes place in a secluded room or on the rear veranda. The umbilical cord is severed by the midwife with the help of a sharp edged arrow and then buried in a deep hole in the backyard of the house.

The new born baby is then cleaned thoroughly in lukewarm water mixed with turmeric paste. Post-delivery pollution is observed for ten days during which both mother and baby lay in the secluded room attended by the midwife. The naming ceremony is performed at a suitable time after the period of pollution is over. The baby is named by the priest only after he has worshipped the Kandha-Gauda goddess, Badrabali. After that there is a small celebration with relatives and a small

> feast is given. The Mundan (head shaving) ceremony, first feeding of cereals, thread wearing ceremony or puberty rites are not observed by the Kandha-Gauda.

Marriage

They strictly follow the rules of community endogamy and lineage exogamy. Generally, adult marriage and monogamy is commonly practised. Polygyny is allowed in exceptional cases of barrenness or incurable sickness of the first wife of course with her consent. Consanguineous marriage is taboo and is therefore not permitted. Junior sororate and junior levirate marriage is permissible if the persons are found to be suitable. Socially permissible marriage types are by negotiation, by service, by capture and by elopement. Monogamy is the general form of marriage.

Marriage rituals are performed at the bride-groom's residence. The bride and her relatives come to the bridegroom's house where the marriage ceremony is performed by the priest of the community. Feasts are given by both the sides with buffalo meat and barrels of distilled liquor. After that the bride and groom return to the groom's house and stand facing each other on a yoke placed on the floor at the main entrance of the house. The relatives of the groom perform rituals like, touching the cheeks of the groom with a pithy (cake) made out of rice paste and then with rice and turmeric. They also perform a ritual known as bandana. Then the bride and bridegroom enter the house of the groom where the chauthi (nuptial ceremony) is performed.

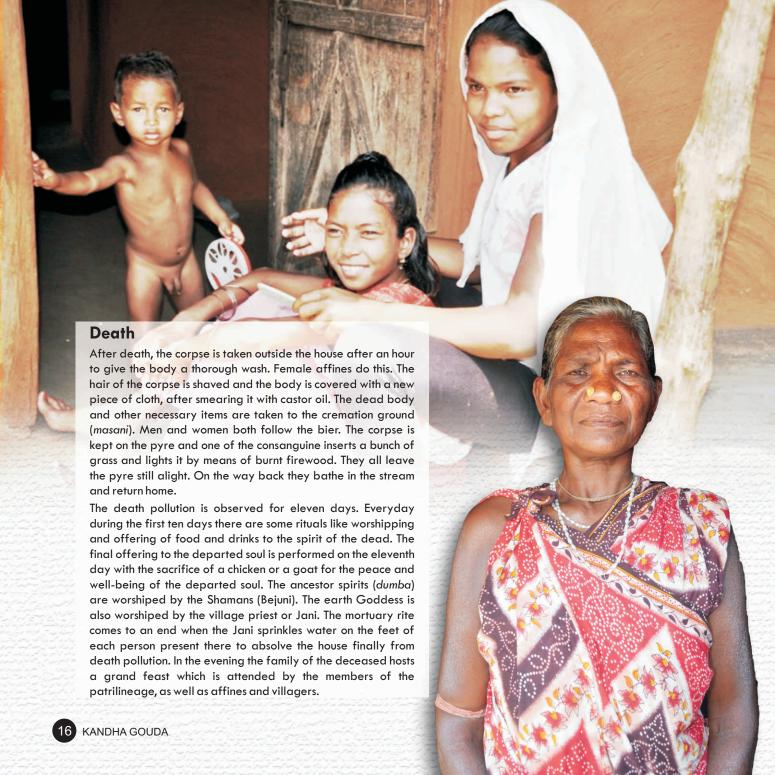
Married women wear a necklace made of kaincha (a kind of bead) as the symbol of marriage. kanya mula or kanyasuna (bride price) as well as jautuka (dowry) are presently practised by them which was not being practised earlier. Both bride price and dowry are given in cash as well and in kind.

Residence after marriage is generally patrilocal. Divorce is permissible with social approval. The reasons for divorce are adultery, maladjustment, cruelty, practice of witchcraft and sorcery. Both partys can divorce but generally a divorce occurs when the wife returns the bangles to the

husband as a sign of divorce. Thereafter, they approach the village council and ask for approval and once approved they return each other's dowry as well as bride price, the list of which is kept during marriage. Divorce compensation is given to the wife's parents, but if the divorce is due to the fault of the wife then compensation is given to the husband. Children stay with their father after divorce. Remarriage of widow, widower, male and female divorcees, sororate and levirate are permissible. Due to the influence of the caste Hindus, the dowry system is also now prevalent.

The Kandha Gauda, practices cremation for deceased adult members and burial is undertaken for dead children and victims of infectious diseases. Death in a family is condoled by all community members of the village and they come to console the bereaved family, crying loudly and extolling the dead one's virtues.

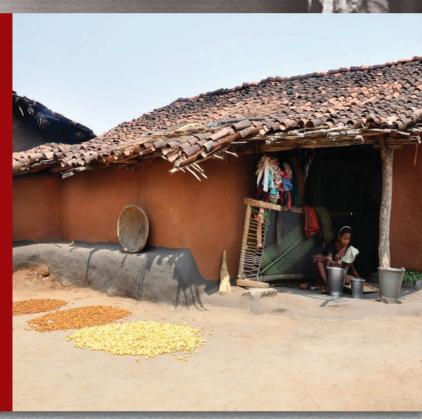


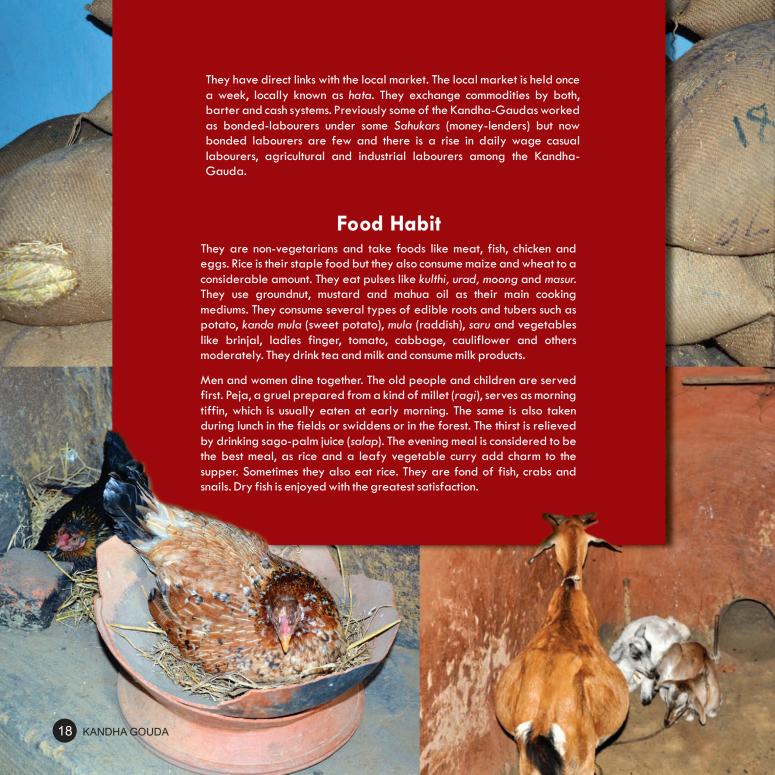


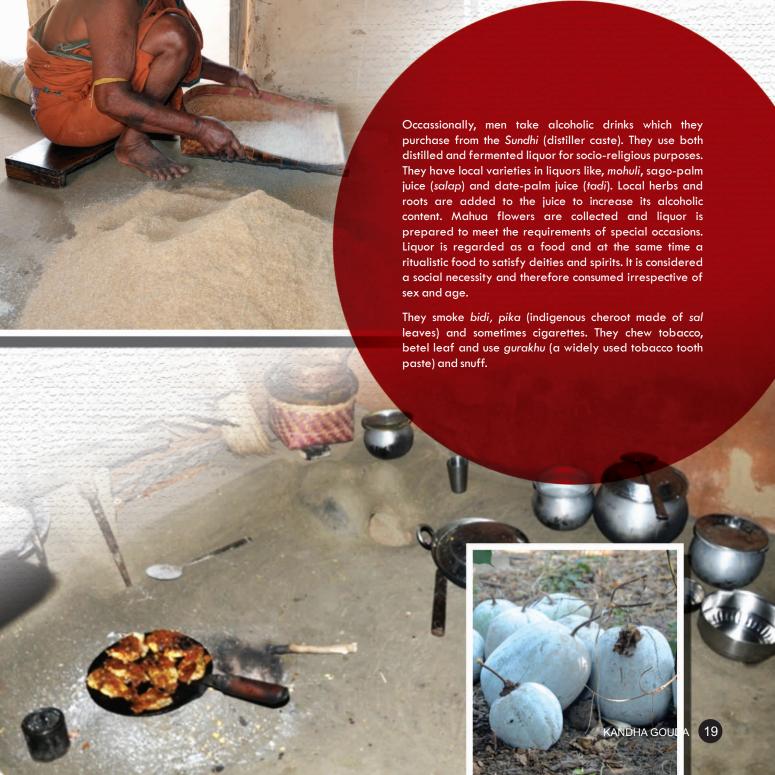
LIVELIHOOD

The main economic resources of the Kandha Gauda are land and forest. A majority of them are landless and a very few have their own marginal land holdings for cultivation. They develop quality of their agricultural land by using manures and fertilizers. They produce short duration paddy, wheat etc. besides long duration paddy. The distribution of land among them is lineage based.

Their traditional as well as present occupation is cowherding. Some of them work as skilled and non-skilled labourers in government or other services and are also engaged in subsidiary occupations like shifting cultivation, wage earning, collection of minor forest products, fishing, petty trade, industrial labour, working in mines and quarries to supplement the income.









MAGICO-RELIGIOUS BELIEFS & PRACTICES

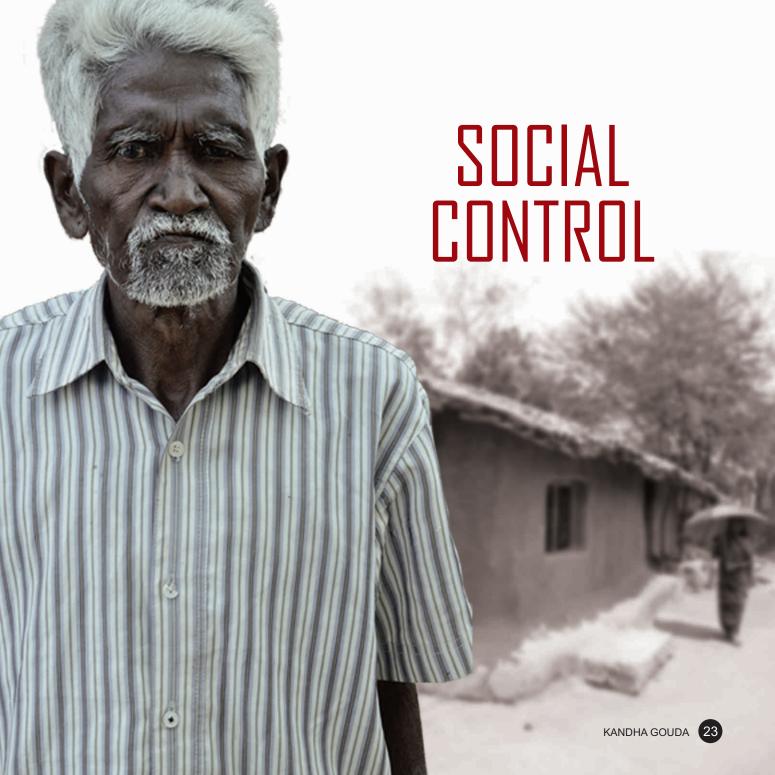
The Kandha Gauda profess Hinduism. Like the Kandhas, "Dharani Penu" (Earth Goddess) is their Supreme deity. They worship a community deity known as *Bodrabali*. Village and regional deities like *Grama devati*, *Thakurani*, *Gramaseni*, *Baral devi*, *Siva*, *Vishnu*, *Trinatha*, *Laxmi*, *Parvati* etc., are also worshipped by them. They worship *Baral devi* once a year in the month of *Pausha* (December-January). They worship two sticks, one made from *Kendu* plant and another from the *Patuli* plant. They consider the *Kendu* stick to be male and *patuli* stick as female. These two sticks have been deified by them, and they believe that these sticks grow in length every year due to supernatural powers and their worship.

They have sacred specialist known as *Dehuri* belonging to their own community for the worship of *Bodrabali* and the deified sticks. The head of the house can also perform this worship if the priest is absent. For other religious ceremonies they have sacred specialists like the *pujari* from the Brahman community and *Dehuri*, *Jhakar*, *Jani* from the Kandha community. These sacred specialists perform life cycle rituals and also worship the deities. The *Dishari* is the medicine man-cum-astrologer. The Kalisis are the shamans.



Dola-Purnima, Lakhmipuja, Gamha Purnima, etc., which are of socio-religious as well as of socioeconomic significance. They visit the Hindu religious shrines and also participate in traditional Hindu festivals like Ratha yatra, Dasahara, Holi, but they do not have any specific role in these festivals.

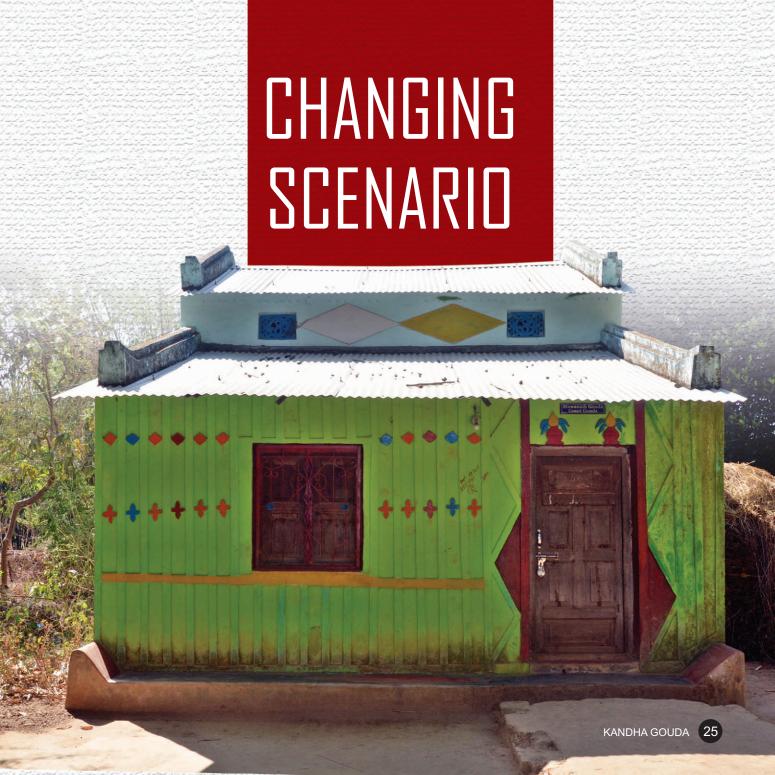


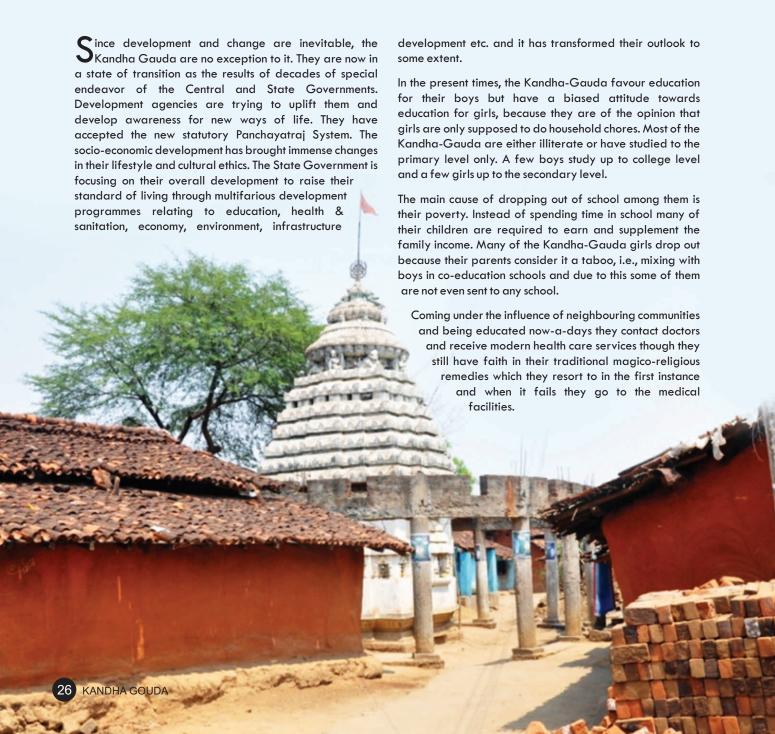




The Kandha-Gauda have their traditional councils or panchayats at the village and regional levels. At the village level they obey the decisions of the traditional council of the village composed of the representatives of all the communities residing in the village. Their regional council constituted of the headmen of each constituent Kandha Gauda village is known as Samaj. The council sits at least once a year to discuss matters pertaining to the customary matters of the community. It acts as the guardian of customary norms and rules of the community and decides the cases of adultery, rape, elopement, theft and violation of customary rules. Punishments are awarded to the offenders to pay in cash and kind and in serious offences the culprit is ex-communicated or ostracized. They still have faith on their traditional councils











They avail of the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, and Rural Development Programmes run by Government and voluntary organizations. Some of them are self-employed through activities such as agriculture, animal husbandry, transport and contractorship.

One can notice visible changes in their way of life due to acculturation and modernisation. But on the other side there are loosening of the strong social ties even among the villagers, clansmen and lineage and family members. The old custom of reciprocal help is dying very fast. Time will show to what extent they will conserve their cultural identity as a distinct community in the process of their integration with the mainstream society.





