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**THE  
KONDH OF ORISSA**

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# **THE KONDH OF ORISSA**

**THEIR SOCIO-CULTURAL LIFE AND DEVELOPMENT**

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# **THE KONDH OF ORISSA**

WITH A FOREWORD BY  
**Shri R. K. Bhujabal, I.A.S.**

With deep gratitude dedicated to :

**Shri S. M. Patnaik, I.A.S.**  
**CHIEF SECRETARY, ORISSA**



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## FOREWORD

In the wild undulating plateaus and river valleys of the Eastern Ghat region lives a fascinating Kui-speaking tribe called, the Kondh who are numerically the largest among the 62 tribal communities of Orissa. Mr. Russell in his report of August 1836 was the first who brought to the notice of the Madras Government the barbarous practice of female infanticide and human sacrifice prevalent among the Kondh. On receipt of this information the British Government appointed immediately Colonel Campbell who was succeeded by Captain Mac Pherson as assistant to the Collector of Ganjam to extirpate these horrid practices.

These superstitious beliefs and practices made the tribe known to the administrative as-well-as academic world. But the thorns and thickets of the wilderness and the unhealthy climate which was notorious for malaria and backwater were deterrent to any free access to the Kondh country and to have first hand knowledge about the tribe. However, as the time passed by and road communication was developed entry into the Kondh area and contact with the tribe became possible. Scholars like - Dalton, Risley, Thurston, Russell and Hiralal have left behind a few pages about the Kondh in their published works. But much of these writings has been reproduced over and over again. Thereafter there have come out articles and notes on some aspects or the other of the tribe in the census reports and scholarly Journals. But no full ethnographic work was available till this book was published.

The Kondh are at various stages of development. The Kutia Kondh of Belghar area and the Dongria Kondh of Bissamcuttack area represent the primitive sections and the Desia Kondh living in the plains of Phulbani district, and other districts represent the Hinduised section

of the tribe. In between these two polarities are various sections of the Kondh which are at different stages of socio-economic development. Unlike the Kutia Kondh who are primarily shifting cultivators and unlike the Desia Kondh who have taken to plough cultivation in a large measure in the plains, the Dongria Kondh as mentioned above are basically horticulturists.

This publication deals with the Dongria Kondh in the first part, the Desia Kondh in the second part and health and nutritional status and developmental aspects in the third part. Numbering about 6,000 in population the Dongria Kondh inhabit the lofty *Niyamgiri* hill ranges in the district of Koraput. From the point of view of cultural peculiarities they occupy a very special place in the heart of Anthropologists. One can see in the *Niyamgiri* hills vast stretches of land in the hill slopes under banana and pineapple plantation amidst jackfruit trees which the master hands of the Dongria Kondh have grown. Expert horticulturists as they are the Dongria Kondh have proved that the skill, ingenuity and perseverance of Man can tame any rugged terrain without even the application of any improved technology for the prosperity of mankind.

With the development of road communication the Kondh have come in contact with others who live in the plains. In course of acculturation they have borrowed many cultural traits from their Hindu neighbours. They have given up many of their archaic practices and turned themselves into a class of peasantry in the low-land countries. Part II of this book deals in detail with the life and work of the acculturized section of the tribe which identifies itself as the Desia Kondh.

In this book both aesthetic and humanistic interests have been interwoven to present the thought-ways and work-ways of a people who lead a life of indigence and



poverty in the midst of plenty. Though major portion of the book is devoted to socio-cultural aspects of anthropological interest the economics of axe-cultivation, horticulture and plough agriculture have been discussed in a detailed manner. Besides, problems of health and approach and strategy for tribal development have been highlighted succinctly in this book. I have no doubt that scholars and administrators alike will find this book interesting and useful.

Rajpath, Bhubaneswar  
31. 3. 1982

**R. K. Bhujabal**

## PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Like any other tribe the Kondh form a species for themselves as far as their social organization and cultural pattern are concerned. Almost a century and a half ago this tribe featured very prominently in the report of Mr. Russell for their heinous practices of female infanticide and human sacrifice. Thereafter short articles and papers on different aspects of the Kondh culture and social organization appeared in various magazines and Journals. The Kondh are most numerous in the State and also one of the major tribes of the country. An understanding of the life and work of this important tribal community is not only of academic interest but also the same is essentially required to provide proper lead in formulating plans for their development. Keeping this objective in view we had undertaken intensive field studies among the Kondh in various parts of Orissa. The Kondh of Southern Orissa where they are found in large concentration were our main focus and this book is based on our intensive field work among them.

The Kondh have been of great fascination not only to us but to many scholars who are interested in understanding the life styles of different ethnic groups. It is necessary to highlight a few of the salient features of the Kondh life and culture. Most of the people belonging to this tribe continue to live in the mountainous tracts away from main arteries of travel. The forms of Kondh villages are mainly of two types—shapeless cluster or agglomerate with no village street and linear cluster with two long and parallel rows of houses flanked by a wide and straight street. The lack of symmetry in settlement pattern of the former type is due to the rugged nature of the tract and the uniformity in the village forms of latter type is possible in such places where flat lands are available for human habitation. The diversity is noticed not only in the village pattern but also in



the materials which are used for the construction of houses. While in some areas the Kondh use wooden planks set horizontally one upon the other for constructing the walls, in other areas they have walls made of lattice-twined wicker work or bamboo wattle work plastered with mud. In a large measure the settlement pattern and the housing architecture are in conformity with the terrain, environmental condition and material resources of their habitat.

The Kondh villages are in general screened around by several fruit-giving trees like mango, jackfruit and tamarind. In the centre of the village usually two shrines are present, one for the *Darani-Penu* (Mother Goddess) and the other for *Kotiasal* (Her consort) and an open ground with seats of stone slabs earmarked for the meeting of the tribal court of panchayat. Another significant feature of a Kondh village is its *Adasbetta* a dormitory for the spinsters of the village which is located near the hill stream on one end of the village.

Some of the aspects of their social organization are of special nature. The clan organization among them is one of such specialities. In this case the clan is not totemic as is usual in other tribes. It is rather derived from the *Mutha* system, a territorial unit which was devised for administrative purposes during the British rule. For example, Khambesi, a Dongria Kondh village near Bissamcuttack was formerly under a *Mutha* called *Wadaka* and according to the name of the *Mutha* the clan of the Kondh who live in Khambesi and other villages situated in the *Wadaka Mutha* has been named as *Wadaka*. This clan-territory is exogamous like a totemic clan. The Kondh families belonging to the *Wadaka* clan predominate and own all lands in Khambesi. All other clans living in Khambesi have recently migrated to this village and are considered outsiders.

The Kondh villages, ideally speaking, are as much social entities as they are politically with huge measure of cohesion and continuity. Every village continues to have its own tribal council. All the tribal adults of the village are members of the village council. The head of the village tribal council who is also the headman of the village is called, *Saonta*. Parallel to the secular position held by the village headman is the religious head called, *Jani* who presides over all the religious functions organised by the people of the village. In some areas the headship of both secular and religious functions combines with one person which goes by one term *Jani*. In addition to these secular and religious head there is a functionary called, *Dishari* who works as the medicine-man in some areas and astrologer in other areas. In every village there is a peon called, *Barika* of the Domb community who plays an important role in the village life. He calls the people to the meeting place when the village assembly sits and contacts officials on behalf of the village and acts as an interpreter of the people. The tribal council enjoys considerable freedom in conducting its day-to-day activities.

To an outsider the Kondh particularly the Dongria and Kutia sections of agency areas strike as a very important tribal community for their simplicity, quickness in observation and sensitivity. In almost all activities the people of the Kondh community reveal a corporate life. They help each other in economic activities, and drink, dance and sing all in congregation. Religious ceremonies and festivals are performed communally. Crime is rare and adultery is uncommon and the individual behaviour is marked by honesty and truthfulness. Ideally hospitable, exceptionally candid and remarkably simple, the primitive section of the tribe particularly the Kutia and the Dongrias live in Nature and fade away in its mystery. To the Kondh the Nature is the greatest impeller, the scenery around forming the grand arena



where the human drama of vicissitudes of the mortal life is staged.

Many people have helped us during our field work among the Dongria and Desia sections of the tribe. We remember their help with a sense of deep gratitude. But due to lack of space we have not been able to mention all of their names individually in this place. While acknowledging persons for their help the name of the Social Worker Smt. Malati Biswal known locally as Apa is uppermost in our mind. She has introduced us to the tribals and helped us in collecting data from them. We remain grateful to her.

We are thankful to the Research Staff of the T. H. R. T. I., particularly Shri Prasanna Kumar Naik, Shri B. B. Mohanty, R. O. Shri Ananta Ch. Sahu, J. R. O. and Shri B. B. Sahu, J. R. O. who worked with us during field investigation and carried out aspect-wise analysis and processing of the data.

The name of Dr. N. K. Behuria, Reader, Department of Anthropology, Utkal University, needs special mention for the help which he had rendered by going through the first draft and offering his comments.

We owe a special debt to Shri R. K. Bhujabal, I.A.S., Commissioner-cum-Secretary to Government, H. & T. W. Department who gave all encouragement to bring out this monograph. We are deeply grateful to him for his sympathy and support without which, of course, the publication of this work would have been an impossibility. He was kind enough to give the foreword of this book.

Our especial gratitude and thanks are due to our informants particularly the leading members of their society who opened their minds and gave us necessary information. We are much beholden for their cooperation and help.

Our colleague Dr. Almas Ali, Special Officer, Tribal Health of the Institute has contributed a chapter on health. The materials contained in the chapter were collected by him through clinical tests and medical examinations of many people of the Kondh community during his field trips. We express our gratitude and thanks to him for contributing this chapter.

The photographs which are included in this book were taken, developed and printed by Shri Sunil Kumar Roy, Photographer of this Institute. We express our thanks to him for this work.

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1st April 1982

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## BACKGROUND

### Nomenclature :

The Kondh tribe is variously known. They are called, the Khond or the Kondh or the Kond, according to the usage of the term in vogue in different places in which they live. But whatever be the terminology used, it refers to the same tribe. The people of that class call themselves the Kondh as a result of their contact with the Oriyas. So we refer to them as the Kondh in this paper. This nomenclature is believed to have come from the Telugu language in which the word '*Konda*' means a small hill as well as the hill-men. The territory in which the Kondh reside in large concentration is called, the Kondhmal, '*mal*' in Oriya signifying a hill tract. The other name of Phulbani district is Boad-Kondhmal, and the northern portion of the Ganjam district which adjoins the Kondhmal is called, the Kondh Maliah, meaning the hill tract inhabited by the Kondh.

Due to physical barriers the Kondh of different areas very rarely, if ever, come in contact with one another. In course of time they have formed themselves into separate endogamous units and have developed considerable cultural and economic diversity. Broadly, the Kondh are divided into three groups depending upon their habitat. The groups are :

1. The Kutia (hill) — This is the weakest section leading an isolated life of poverty and indigence.  
Kondh
2. The Dongria (hill) — This section is comparatively less primitive and is skilled in horticulture.  
Kondh

- |                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| 3. The Desia (low country) Kondh | The Kondh of this section have left their hill fastnesses and settled down in the plains to pursue cultivation. |
|----------------------------------|---|

Kui is the language of the Kondh people and it has such local variations as described below.

1. The Kondh of Koraput sub-division speak the Kuvi language.

2. The Kondh of Baliguda sub-division speak the Kui language.

3. The Kondh of Gudari area speak Kutia which is a mixture of Sora and Kui dialects.

4. The Kondh of Rayagada sub-division speak Kuvi mixed with Telugu.

Many of the Kondh have lost their mother tongue and speak Oriya. Some have become bilingual because they speak Oriya in the interior areas of the State and Telugu in border areas. The somatoscopic and anthropometric data of the Kondh relate them more closely to the Proto-Australoid racial stock with considerable Mongoloid admixture. Of the 62 tribal communities inhabiting Orissa, the Kondh is numerically the largest. According to the Census of 1971 the total population of the Kondh is 8,69,965 out of the State's population of 21,944,645 and the State's tribal population of 5,071,937. In other words, the Kondh constitute, according to the census of 1971, 3.96 percent of the State's population and 17.15 percent of the State's tribal population. The main concentration of the Kondh population is in the central section (Boad-Kondhmal), Rayagada section (Rayagada and Gunupur sub-divisions) and South-Western section (erstwhile Kasipur estates and Mahulpatna) of Eastern Ghat Region. The distribution of the Kondh population

as per the 1971 Census in different natural divisions of the State is given in the Table-1.

**TABLE-1**

(Distribution of Kondh population in different natural divisions).

Natural Divisions	Total Tribal population	Kondh population	Percentage
1. Northern Plateau	1966149	15510	0.79
2. Central Table Land	649370	88623	12.88
3. Eastern Ghat Region			
(i) Northern Section	128421	30517	23.76
(ii) Central Section	244279	223322	91.42
(iii) Rayagada Section	460652	229655	49.85
(iv) South Eastern Section			
(a) 3000 ft. Plateau	208266	96738	46.45
(b) 2000 ft. Plateau	449994	19218	4.27
(c) 1000 ft. Plateau	140459	5377	3.83
(v) South Western Section	324628	114644	35.31
4. Coastal Region	275689	42361	15.36

The table shows that the largest concentration of Kondh population anywhere in the State is in the Central Section of the Eastern Ghat Region. This Section covers the whole of Phulbani district. The next concentration of lower order is in the Rayagada section and the 3000 ft plateau of Koraput sub-division where the Kondh must have over-shot the 50% mark by now. The Kondh of other natural divisions are scattered in the non-tribal population and live with Oriya people in the plains. On the whole, the habitat of the Kondh is the hills separating



the districts of Ganjam and Vizagapatam and continuing northwards into the erstwhile feudatory States of Boud, Daspalla and Nayagarh and crossing the Mahanadi river into Angul and Kondhmals. The Kondh area also covers the Thuamul-Rampur Tahsil and the Northern plains of Kalahandi district and the southern region of Bolangir Patna.

### History :

The Kondh are widely known in the ethnographic world for their earlier pernicious practice of human sacrifice and female infanticide. Honourable Mr. Russell was the first who through his report of August, 1836 brought these horrible customs of the Kondh to the notice of the Madras Government. The entire region inhabited by the Kondh was then in a state of insurrection, disorder and violence. Added to this were the unhealthiness of the climate in all its unmitigated forms and the rugged terrain, and the precipitous hill ranges covered with thorns and thickets of interminable wilderness which made the Kondh country difficult of access. One of the concerns of the British Government was to stamp out the barbarous practices and restore peace and order in the territory.

The practical measure which Mr. Russell proposed to the British Government for achieving the objective was to revive the fairs formerly held in different localities and to establish market in other places. His idea was that the Kondh would be attracted to such fairs and market centres where they would easily get their coveted articles such as salt, saltfish, brass utensils, scarlet woollen red blankets and coarse cotton clothes at a less cost. They used to get these favourite articles solely from their lowland neighbours either in the way of rapine or exchange at a high price. He further thought that the market centres would afford opportunities to the Kondh for seeing many new articles of foreign merchandise and



tend greatly to promote new tastes and create new wants in them. The whole idea in setting up a net-work of marketing organizations was to create conditions under which the British authorities could have frequent and unreserved intercourse with the Kondh and such influence on them as to wean them away from their horrible superstition without applying any force.

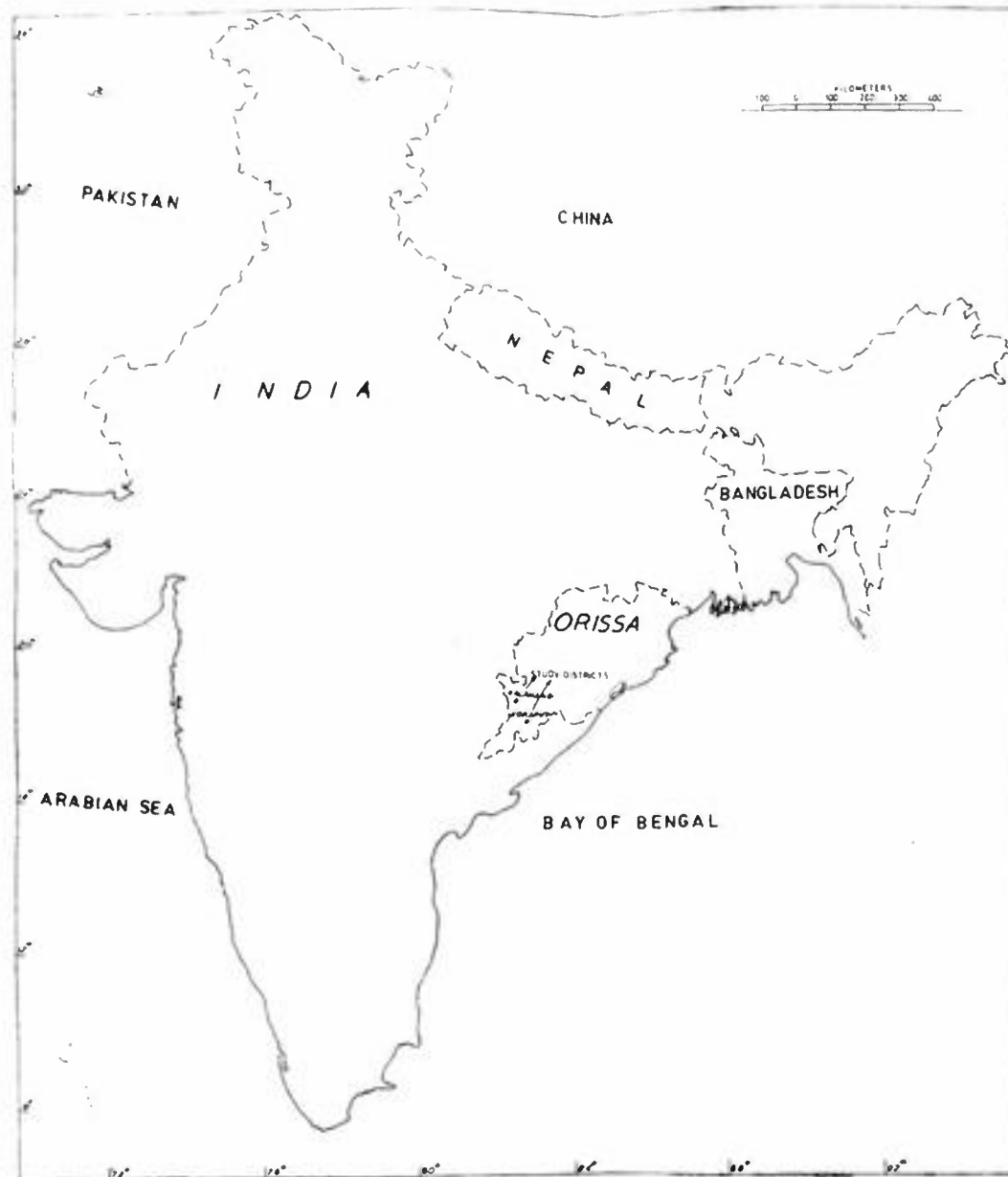
The British officers sincerely believed that a law denouncing human sacrifice and remonstrating against cruelty to female children and providing punishment for the offenders would, as a general measure, prove abortive and involve a compromise of character. Therefore, their aim was to develop a friendly relationship with them and try to reclaim them from the savage practices using conciliatory measures and moral force rather than threat, violence and power. In fact, the British authorities such as Campbell and Macpherson who were entrusted with the responsibility of suppressing the practices of human sacrifice and female infanticide could stamp out such detestable superstitions by non-violent means.

More than half a century ago, the Kondh were most numerous of the tribal communities in erstwhile Kalahandi State. The Kondh claimed the right of installing the chief of the State on his throne (*Gadi*), and until this was done, the chief was not formally recognized by them. The important feature of the ceremony was that the chief married a Kondh girl on this occasion. The marriage ceremony was performed by presenting a girl to the chief who immediately returned her to her parents and according to the Kondh system of divorce a fine was paid by the husband to the tribe for divorcing his wife.

Part-I

**The Dongria Kondh**

Map showing location of Koraput and Kalahandi Districts



## CHAPTER-I

### INTRODUCTION

Orissa is one of the most fascinating ethnographic States of India. It has been the home of as many as 62 different tribal communities among which the Kondh top the list in numerical preponderance. Considering the levels of economic development the Kondh are divided into several sub-sections such as—Kutia Kondh, Dongria Kondh, Jharria Kondh and Desia Kondh.

The Part I of the book deals with the Dongria section of the Kondh community. This section is found in the *Niyamgiri* hill ranges which comprise 4 Community Development Blocks namely; Bissamcuttack, Kalyansingpur, Muniguda and Biswanathpur of Rayagada and Gunupur sub-divisions of Koraput district. The ethnographic account of the Dongrias which finds place in this part relates to such villages as Kurli, Hundijali, Khambesi, Khajuri, Mundabali, Kadrageumma, Batigumma, Uppargumma and Radang of Bissamcuttack block and Bondeli and Tanda of Kalyansingpur block. In addition to these villages where intensive field work was carried out for collection of data about the Dongrias, many neighbouring villages inhabited by the same section of the tribe were visited several times to check and cross check the data already collected from the core area.

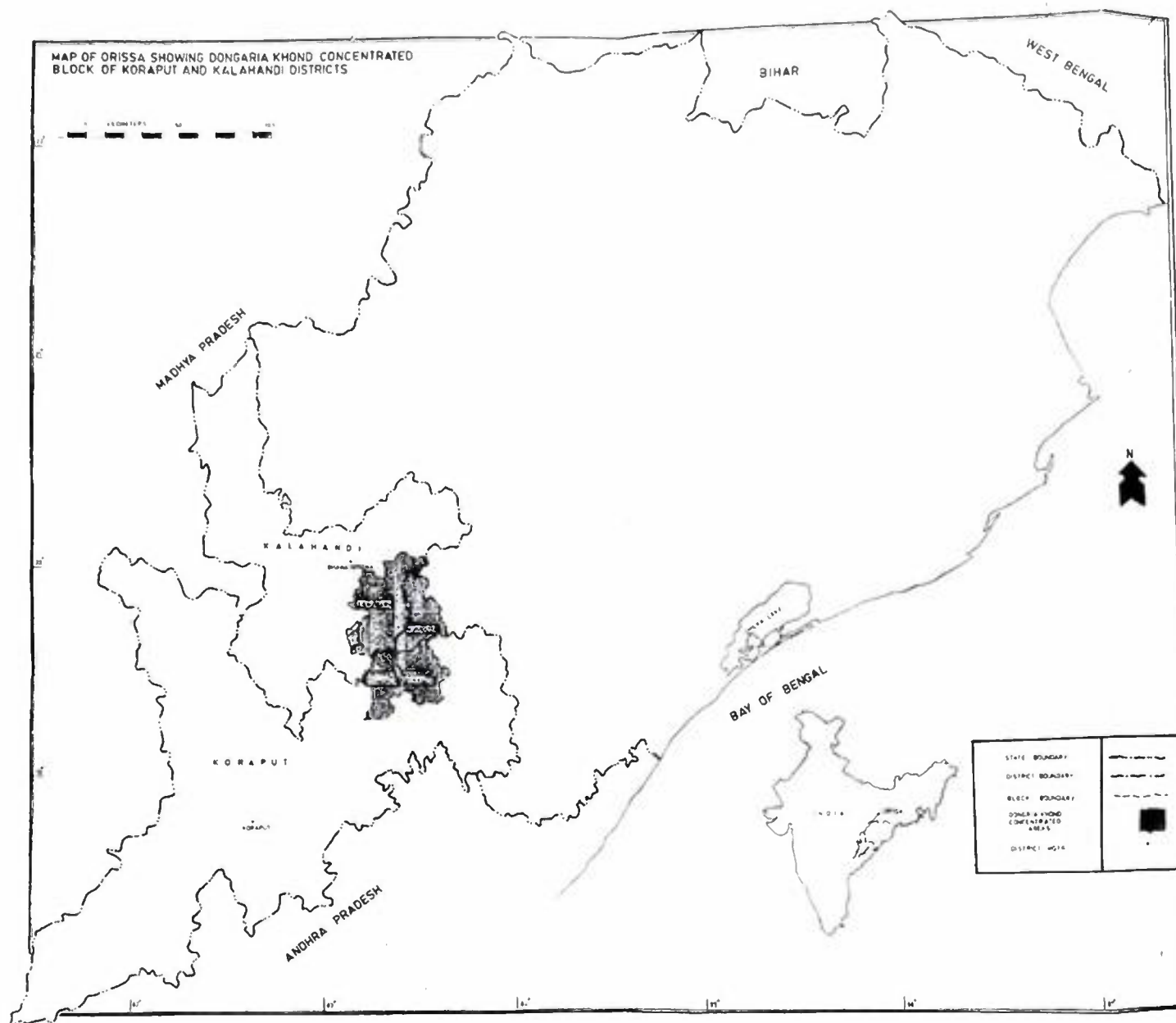
The Dongrias stand separate from all other sections for their skill in horticulture. They occupy the *Niyamgiri* hills of Rayagada sub-division of Koraput district and grow pineapple in vast stretches of land in the hill-slopes. These pineapples are planted in places where the jackfruit trees are present, so that the leaves of the trees provide shade to the pineapple plants. The



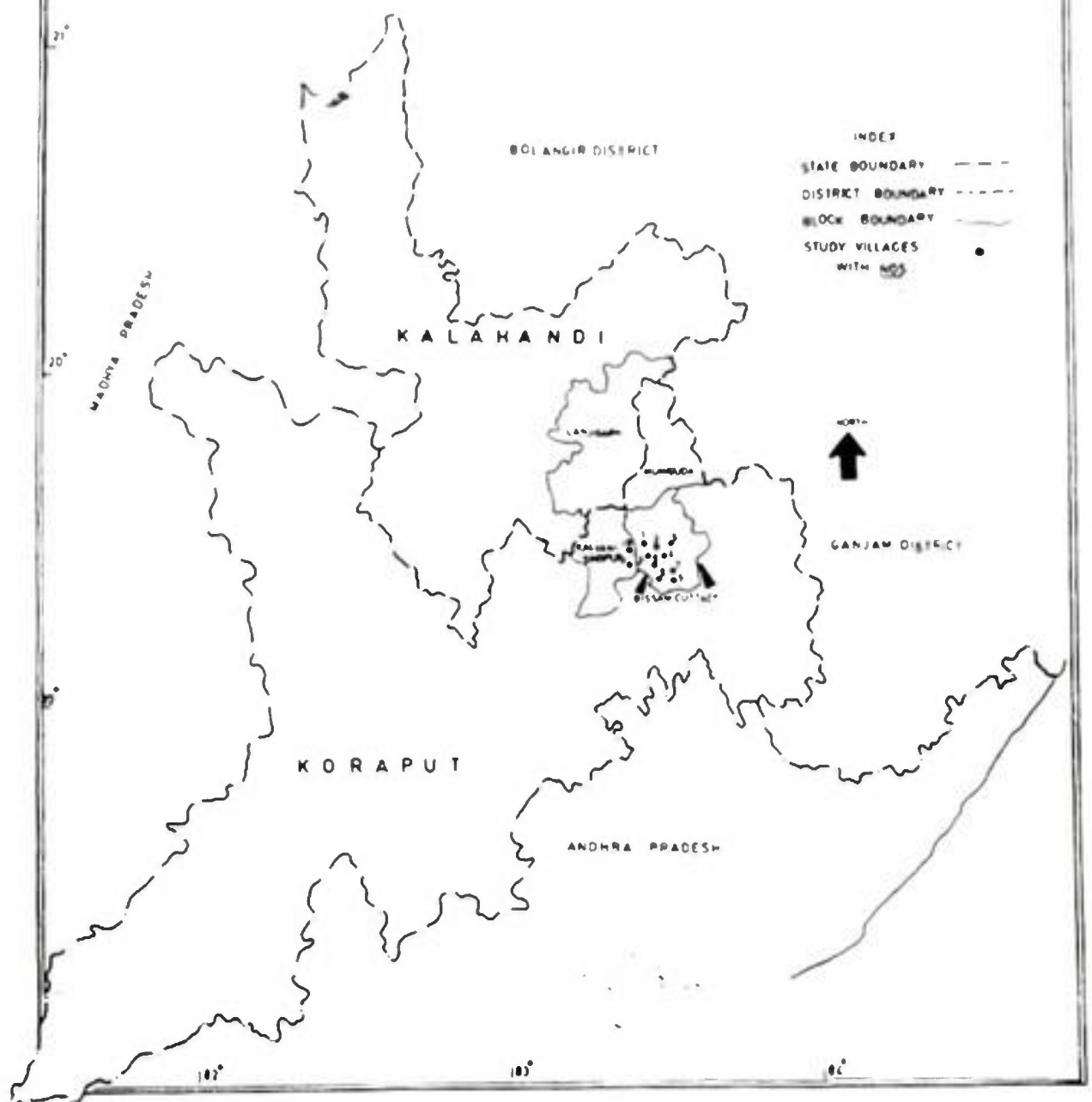
Dongrias are also skilled in banana plantation and turmeric cultivation. The terrain in which the Dongrias live and its climatic conditions are most favourable for horticulture and therefore, the Dongrias grow plenty of fruits of the types mentioned above. But they do not gain much from this pursuit. The reasons are that the local Domb merchants exploit the products from the Dongrias and there is no organized market for the proper outlet of the fruits with reasonable profit to the producers.

Side by side the Dongrias carry on shifting cultivation in hill-slope at a higher altitude close to the hill-top. The same rotational method as found among the neighbouring Saoras is followed in the cultivation of the clearings technically known as swidden, but the rotational cycle which is on an average five to six years in southern Orissa is longer by one or two years among the Dongrias because of thicker forest cover in the *Niyamgiri* hills than elsewhere. Nevertheless the threat of the indiscriminate axe which is steadily stripping the country bare of its vegetational cover is as frightening and real in the Dongria area as elsewhere.

It is interesting to note that the Dongrias depend upon both primitive and advanced means of livelihood. The shifting cultivation represents the prior stage of economic development whereas the horticultural plantation a higher stage of development. In fact the former preceded the latter in the economic life of the Dongrias. In the earlier dispensation when the Dongrias were under the administration of the Maharaja of Jeypore they used to visit the royal palace in festivities. On one occasion the Maharaja gave them suckers of some pineapples, which he got from Burma, to grow in their terrain. The Dongrias did as the Maharaja said and now the pineapple plantation has spread every nook and corner of the *Niyamgiri* hills. One



— — — — —



reason which possibly explains coexistence of primitive and advanced practices of livelihood is that the shifting cultivation provides the Dongrias with minor millets, pulses and cereals on which they subsist where as the fruits of horticulture give them ready cash with which they meet their other requirements such as clothes, ornaments and utensils.

The Kondh as a whole were widely known for their earlier practice of human sacrifice and female infanticide. Mr. Russell's reports show how the British Government stopped this practice not by force but by moral influence and conciliatory measures. Other steps taken by the British officers for reclaiming the Kondh from the savage practices were the establishment of friendship with them through direct contact and by strictly interdicting the army and camp followers from entering their villages and meddling in any way with them or with their domesticated animals such as—fowls, goats, etc.. Fairs and market centres which were discontinued for some reason or the other were revived and articles such as—salt, salt-fish, brass utensils, red blankets and all but the coarsest kind of cotton clothes which the Kondh were excessively fond of were made available on sale to them at these places at most reasonable rate.

In addition to these measures taken by the British Government, the Maharaja of Jeypore *Zamindari* to which the Dongrias belonged introduced a festival called, '*Jura-Parab*' during the *Meria* sacrifice. This measure succeeded in a large measure in replacing the human beings with the buffaloes for sacrifice during the festival.

The dress and the ornaments which adorn the Dongrias particularly their male members distinguish them from other sections of the tribe. In general a Dongria male puts on a narrow scarf wrapped around



the waist and adorns his body with ornaments of various types. He shaves his head keeping a tuft of hair neatly tied to a knot at the back. Sometimes a leaf-rolled cigarette will be seen tucked in the hair-knot at the back and invariably every Dongria male will be carrying an axe in his shoulder and a knife is kept hanging from his waist-belt.

Besides these peculiarities in dress and adornment the installation of *Darani-penu* and her consort called, *Kotiasal* in the centre of the village street is a typical feature of Dongria settlement. The maidens' dormitory which is invariably present in each Dongria settlement is another typical feature which adds to the specialities of Dongria social structure and culture.

Every Dongria village had and still continues to have its own traditional council as part of the political organization. With the abolition of the feudal system in Orissa the *Mutha* system of administration which was in vogue in whole estate of Jeypore, of which the Dongria area was a part, was replaced by an elective system. Under this arrangement statutory village councils were established in villages in the place of traditional political institutions.

In the case of the Dongria villages the traditional panchayat is still effective and runs along democratic principles as before and serves the people well in the matters of maintaining social control and enforcing social sanctions. The alien political structure like statutory gram panchayat which the Dongrias do not understand and do not feel it as theirs appear to be an unnecessary superimposition having no stake in the Dongria political system.

What strikes most to a visitor to the Dongria country is their sordid poverty. It is a paradox to see poverty

in a resource-rich area. The Dongrias are extremely laborious and are tenacious about rights over their land. They excel all other neighbouring communities in their acquisition of skill in horticulture plantation. But one of their draw backs is their dependence on the local Domb merchants for the purpose of the marketing of their products. There is a symbiotic relationship between the Dongrias and the Domb which cuts across economic activities. Both the communities have been living together from the time beyond memory and even though the Dongrias feel the cruelty of exploitation they have no other way but to endure it with limitless patience in the present circumstances because of their illiteracy and ignorance.

The Dongrias have landed in the inaccessible areas of *Niyamgiri* hill ranges not by their own choice but by being pushed into these area by advanced non-tribal communities. Not until the end of the second part of the present century the Dongrias did not come in the direct contact with either administrators or social reformers or academicians. It was only after the independence that the social reformers developed interest in initiating developmental works among them. Then the scholars started visiting the area for carrying out scientific studies on them. Thereafter the State Government got interested in bringing about change in the economic life of the people by introducing several developmental schemes.

One of the schemes worth mentioning was the Purchase Sale and Fair Price Shop Scheme which was implemented by the Tribal and Rural Welfare Department. The objective of this scheme was to procure all kinds of forest products collected by the Dongrias at a fair price and provide daily necessities to them at a reasonable rate. It may be pointed out that all these developmental measures by and large were taken by

fits and starts. No detailed ethnographic data were available to formulate any aptitude-based plans for their development. This monograph appears to have filled this data gap and it is hoped that the findings presented in this book will be of use in formulating an integrated plan for the development of the Dongrias.

## CHAPTER - II

### THE AREA AND THE PEOPLE

The Dongria Kondh, a sub-tribe of the Kondh tribe of Orissa, live on the top of the *Niyamgiris*, a rugged mass of hill ranges situated on the borders of Rayagada and Gunupur sub-division of Koraput district. These hill ranges form the Rayagada-Gunupur section of the Eastern Ghats and rise steeply from 1000 feet to a number of peaks, of which the highest is 4,970 feet above the sea level. Some of the peaks are *Tumudi Ghati*, *Kodkasil*, *Patrapokan Ghati*, *Patar Dongar* and *Sargikhaman*.

The *Niyamgiri* hills lie in 19.33°N Latitude and 83.25°E Longitude.

The *Niyamgiris* are situated at a distance of 21 kilometers to the North-west of Bissamcuttack town. The nearest Dongria village is *Kurli* which is located at an altitude of 3,000 feet above sea level at a distance of 13 kilometers from Bissamcuttack. The first three kilometers of the road from Bissamcuttack to *Kurli* village are motorable and the remaining 10 kilometers are rugged and zig-zag, running through the mountainous terrain. The point at which the road becomes rugged and ascends the hills is the location of Chatikona, a Railway Station situated on the Waltair-Raipur railway line.

High altitude of the Dongria Kondh habitat has made the climate cool and pleasant. Humidity ranges from 92 percent of saturation in August and September to 60 percent in March, April and May. During the winter months (November to February) there is heavy dew fall. The rainy season (July to October) is extremely



unhealthy. Rains are continuous and heavy and nearly 80 percent of the annual rainfall is received from the South-West monsoon during the months of June, August and September. The periodicity of rain is neither uniform nor regular. But the area does not experience drought any year.

No river flows in the Dongria country. A perennial stream called, *Gadgada Nallah* flows through a winding course all over the area and it is the only source of water supply to the Dongrias.

The Dongria Kondh have a good knowledge of the types of soil available in their habitat. According to them there are mainly three types—(1) Stony clay (*Kankada Birga*), found all over the hills, (2) Black soil (*Panka-Birga*), fertile soil found in the foot-hill and (3) Coloured clay (*Guudi-Birga*), found in the hills. Black-soil is considered very fertile and *Dongar*-paddy is sown, wherever this type of soil is present. But the entire area is predominately present with stony clay and therefore, production of each crop is not up to the level of expectation.

The extensive practice of shifting cultivation and wanton destruction of forests have rendered the wild animals scarce in the area. However, some panthers (*Panthera Pardus*), leopard-cats (*Felis bengalensis*), spotted deer (*Muntiacus Muntjak*), sambars (*Cervus unicolor*), wild-boars (*sus-scrofa*), common monkey (*Presbytis Phayrei*), striped squirrels (*Ratufa bicolor*), Indian porcupines (*Atherurus Macrourus assa mensis*), hares (*Coprolagus hispidus*), bears (*Melursus-ursinus*) grey and red jungle fowls (*Phasianidae*), peacocks (*Pavo cristatus*) and green pigeons (*coluubidae*) are found in distant forests where people go for collection of forest produce and for communal hunt. The area is full of venomous snakes and cases of snake-bites are common. Wild birds and parrots destroy standing crops. But the people ward off such animals by indigenous methods.

In the Rayagada division of the Eastern Ghats of which the Dongria country forms an important part, Sal (*Shorea robusta*) is the dominant species and the common associates of Sal are Bija or Piasal (*Pterocarpus arcupium*), Teak (*Tectona grandis*), Mohua (*Madhuka Lotifolia*), Kendu (*Diospyros melanoxylon*), Bamboo (*Bombax malabaricum*), Jackfruit (*Artucarpus-heperophyllus*) and mango (*Mangifera indica*) are found both in the hills and in the vicinity of settlements. A kind of tall grass Birsa (*Imperata arundinacea*) grows luxuriantly in the area and it is used for thatching roofs. Among the creepers Siali (*Bauhinia vahlli*) is most common. Various kinds of edible roots and medicinal herbs are also found in the forests.

The Dongria Kondh belong to the Dravidian linguistic group. G. A. Grierson has written, "The Kandhas or Khonds are Dravidian tribe in the hills of Orissa and neighbouring districts. The name which they use themselves is Kui and their language should accordingly be dominated Kui". (Thurston, Edgar. 1909).

The language which is spoken by the Kondh appears to have mainly two local variations—'Kuvi' spoken by a majority of the Kondh of Koraput, Kalahandi and Bolangir patna and Kui, spoken by the Kondh who live in the Phulbani district. Kuvi appears to have original structural composition while Kui an acculturated and transformed form of Kuvi language. Besides the Kondh of Koraput, such other tribal communities as *Kondha-Paraja*, *Konda-Paraja*, *Penga - Paraja*, *Jatapu dora* and *Konda-Dora* speak Kuvi with a little admixture with Telugu.

The Kondh are most numerous in Orissa. According to the 1971 Census their population numbered 8,69,965 out of the total tribal population of 50 lakhs. Thus, the Kondh comprise about 17 percent of the scheduled tribe population of the State.

No separate census has been taken for the Dongria Kondh section of the Kondh. There are 110 villages and

the census taken in these villages by the Tribal and Harijan Research-cum-Training Institute (THRTI) in 1975 enumerated the Dongria population to be 5618, that is 0.65 percent of the general Kondh population. Alongside the Dongria Kondh live no other communities except the Domb, a Scheduled Caste, which migrated to the area from the neighbouring districts. History is silent about the exact date when the Domb came to the homeland of the Dongria Kondh. But as told by both, the Domb and the Dongria Kondh were *Khunt-katidors* (that is, cut the forest same time for habitation) and contemporary settlers of the area. There are about 1173 Domb found scattered in the Dongria villages.

The villages which were included in the study comprised 453 Dongria families with 1564 population, that is on an average of 4 members per family. The Dongria villages are located in relatively isolated and inaccessible areas because of the natural barriers through which no road communication has developed and such situations have enabled the Dongria Kondh to retain their traditional form of economy, social organization, ritual and belief.





Descendant of Niyamgiri royal lineage



## CHAPTER - III

### ECONOMIC LIFE

#### Sattlement Pattern :

The villages of the Dongria Kondh are located in a tangle of thickly wooded hill ranges. The earliest ones are situated in the valleys and the later ones either in the hill-slopes or at the hill top. The suitability of a site for habitation is determined by the availability of sufficient land for shifting cultivation and a perennial source of watersupply.

Apart from the availability of the resources, every construction of a house in a new site is preceded by a magico-religious divination to ascertain ritual worthiness or otherwise of the site. Both the person concerned and the medicine-man (*Dishari*) go to the site before dusk after taking bath. The former digs a pit at the middle of the site. Then the latter puts some unboiled white rice in the pit, covers the grains with a leaf-cup made of siali-leaves and at the end of the rite sprinkles water over the cup by reciting some magical formula. Thereafter both of them leave the place and proceed non-stop homeward without looking backward. Next day both of them come to the spot to see what has happened to the grains. If the grains are scattered then they conclude that the ancestors of the person concerned do not want him to stay there and therefore, the site is considered inauspicious. On the otherhand if they find that the grains are intact then it is concluded that the ancestors have indicated that the site is auspicious and therefore, approve of the site for building the proposed house.

A village comprises in the minimum two separate wards, one innabited by the Dongria Kondh and the other by the Domb. The houses are built close to each other conforming to a linear pattern. A narrow street runs

from one end to the other of the village separating the two rows of houses.

When population increases in the village the population moves out and builds new houses in the proximity. The space in the main village is so much limited that it becomes difficult to accommodate beyond certain size of the population. It is for this reason that separate hamlets have come up around the main village. For all social and ritual purposes the village and its hamlets act as a compact and cohesive unit and are tied up together with mutuality of obligation in economic and other spheres of life.

In some cases there may be lanes and bylanes radiating from the main street and by the side of these alleys there may be houses behind those in the main street. In no case the settlement pattern takes the form of a shape close cluster.

At the entrance of the village, which is marked by mango grove and jack-fruit trees, a shed thatched with bamboo splits is built to represent the shrine of the village deity called *Jatrakudi Penu* who is believed to protect the people from evil-eye. A straw-thatched shed called, *kuddi* is built in the middle of the village street to lodge the Earth-Goddess (*Darani-Penu*). Close to the *kuddi* stands there is a small wooden post of 3 to 4 feet in height. It represents the husband (*Jhankad* or *Kotebali Penu*) of *Darani Penu*.

At the extreme end of the village opposite to that where the shrine of the village Goddess is located, lies the girls' dormitory (*Hada Sala*) near the hill stream which flows close to the village. The idea is to allow the young boys and girls to mix freely to choose their mates. It is the responsibility of the young boys of the village to build this hut and it is here the young girls of the village sleep at night.



A wide space called, *Bateria* is set apart near the village for defecation and for piling up of garbage. Every Dongria village has a sweeper (*Jhateni*) and any one of his family sweeps the village street and keeps the *Batera* clean.

### House Types :

Generally the house of a Dongria Kondh is rectangular in ground plan. Earth is removed from the site on which the house is to be built. The floor of the house is made of earth being rammed uniformly to make it levelled all over. A typical Dongria Kondh house consists of a spacious rectangular room, and another small room (*Dhapa*) at the back of the first room with a front verandah and a back verandah. All these parts are built under a two-sloped roof thatched with grass. The roof is made so low as to leave a space of two feet from the ground to crawl into the house. A low roof of this type does not allow cold wind to get into the house and keeps it warm for comfortable living. Except the four main walls of the house a small partition wall is built inside to separate the kitchen from the main room, and to keep it out of the sight of outsiders. The back room has also encloser on all sides to provide privacy to the ladies who use it at the time of menstruation.

The walls are made of lattice of bamboo splits and wattle of broom sticks plastered with mud and cowdung. A coating of coloured earth is applied over the wall to add beauty to the house. Well-to-do families use wooden planks for making walls. These planks are fixed upright on the ground linearly and later on plastered with mud.

The living room which is used for sleeping and dining is about 12 feet in length and 8 feet in breadth and 7 feet in height. The dimension of the kitchen room which is attached to the living room is 4 feet by 2½ feet. The back room, called *Dhapa* is 6 feet in length and

4 feet in breadth and 6 feet in height. The front verandah is wider than the back verandah. The size of the front verandah is 10 feet by 3 feet while that of the rear one is 5 feet by 5 feet.

A house requires 21 wooden poles (*Munda*) for construction. The central pole (*Tuli Munda*) among all the poles of about 10 feet in height is planted on the ground and other poles (*Dhapa Mundas*) of varying sizes are planted on either side of the central pole in proper places. Before the central pole is fixed on the ground a small wooden post (*Hadada Munda*) is fixed in the ground in front of the central pole. This post represents the ancestral spirits (*Dumba*). After completion of the house a fowl is sacrificed at *Hadada Munda* and the house-warming ritual is performed. The details of the ceremony are furnished at the end of this section.

Now coming to the construction of the house, after the central pole is fixed, another pole of 15 feet long is laid horizontally on the central pole. Then smaller pieces of bamboos are placed in slanting position, side by side, on either side of the beam with a gap of 6 to 9 inches and are tied to it by means of fibres. Upon these bamboos, smaller bamboos are laid horizontally and are tied to them with fibres. This criss-cross bamboo work forms the trellis of the roof which is thatched with grass. Bamboo splits are laid on the thached grass and tied with the bamboos of the trellis so that the wind and rain cannot cause any damage to the roof.

The house is provided with three doors one of 3½ feet long in front of the house, the other of 4 feet long at the entrance of the back room opening to the main room, and the third one of 3½ feet long at the back of the back room opening to the back verandah. No windows are provided in the house to prevent the entry of wild rats and snakes. Well-to-do families provide a





A Kondh Village in the plains



Kondh Villages are of linear pattern

ceiling like platform below the roof of the main room to store food grains and other sundry articles of the house. Wooden poles are fixed in the walls across floor above head height forming a platform for storage purpose.

After day's work when the members of the family come back home the male members sit at the front verandah and spend time in relaxing and gossiping and the female members do the same thing in the back verandah.

There is no fowl-pan as such. A basket serves this purpose and this basket is kept in the back room. Goats are tethered in the back verandah. During rainy season they are given shelter in the back room. The Dongrias are fond of keeping pigs. The pig stay is built close to the back verandah. Cattle are tethered to the wooden posts in the cowshed (*Hada sala*) which is built either by any side or at the back of the house. Pigeons are kept in a wooden crate and their place of stay lies in the space under the roof of the back verandah.

After the construction of the house is over a ritual is performed before the *Hadada Munda* to propitiate the ancestor-spirits (*Dumbas*) and seek their blessings and good wishes on the occasion of first entrance into and occupation of the newly built house by the owner of the house and his family members. The religious functionary of the village (*Jani*) sacrifices a fowl at the wooden altar. Thereafter the house-wife cooks some white rice and the consecrated chicken in a new earthen pot and offers the cooked food to the ancestral spirits. Then the head of the family, his wife and children partake the consecrated food and pray their ancestors for a happy and prosperous life in the new house.

#### **Contents of a Dongria Kondh house :**

The household equipments in a Dongria family are scanty and just serve the purpose of bare necessities. They are neither costly nor very durable.

The Dongrias sleep on the floor by spreading a piece of cloth. Use of pillow is out of question. Wherever cot is present it is made of wooden frame woven with rope. The cot is used for drying food grains. The Dongria Kondh are mainly shifting cultivators but a few of them who have land at the foot of the hill slopes called, *Penga* carry on wet-cultivation. A list of the important agricultural implements used by the Tribe is given in the table.



TABLE No. 1

Sl. No.	Local Name of the Implement	English equivalent	Use in economic pursuit	Materials used for construction.	Particulars of use.	Durability & price.	Remarks
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1.	<i>Kadali</i>	Big axe	Agriculture	Iron blade & wooden haft.	For felling big trees	Rs. 4-7/-	Purchased from the market
2.	<i>Simme</i>	Small axe	-do-	-do-	For splitting bamboos & cutting branches of trees and used on the shoulder as an decorative implement.	Rs. 1-3/-	-do-
3.	<i>Nagal</i>	Plough	-do-	Wood collected from the forest.	For ploughing	No cost	Hand-made
4.	<i>Tahapa</i>	Hoe	-do-	Iron blade & wooden haft.	For shifting cultivation i.e. for planting turmeric & other crops in the swidden.	Rs. 0.75 to Rs. 1.50	Purchased from the market.



1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
5.	<i>Kogdi</i>	Spade	Breaking clods of earth	Iron blade wooden haft.	For agriculture	Rs. 2-3/-	Purchased from the market.
6.	<i>Sabana</i>	Shoval & Crowbar	Digging earth	-do-	For Forest	Rs. 5-8/-	-do-
7.	<i>Bega</i>	Sickle	Reaping	Iron	For agriculture	Rs. 0-75-1.50	-do-
8.	<i>Kati</i>	Bill-hook	For cutting branches & twigs while felling trees in swidden.	Iron & wooden haft.	Agricultural purposes.	Rs. 3-5/-	-do-
9.	<i>Chhuri</i>	Knife	To cut twigs.	-do-	-do-	Rs. 2-4/-	-do-
10.	<i>Pipli</i>	Small knife	To reap.	Iron & brass-made haft.	Agricultural purposes, decorative ornaments, use at the hair knot.	Rs. 0.50-1/-	Purchased from iron-smith (Muli)
11.	<i>Kalu</i>	Wooden pole	For thrashing	Wood locally collected	Agriculture purposes.	No cost	—
12.	<i>Dunda</i>	Big basket	For carrying crops.	Bamboo made	For carrying different crops	Rs. 2-3/-	Purchased from Medra caste.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13.	<i>Katara</i>	Flat basket	For drying grains.	Bamboo made	For drying different crops.	Rs. 1-2/- Purchased from Medra caste.
14.	<i>Duli</i>	Small grainary	For storing grain.	-do-	For storing.	Rs. 5-8/- -do-
15.	<i>Heni</i>	Husking level	For grinding different grains.	Wooden with iron socket	For grinding.	0.50-0.75 Purchased from market
16.	<i>Hippri</i>	Broom made of twigs.	To collect grains after sweeping.	—	—	No cost —

All these agricultural implements are used for about 6 to 7 years and sharpened as and when required from Muli (Iron-smith). Only family belonging to Muli community is found to be living in the village, but he spends most of his time at Chatikona. For sharpening the implements payment is made either in kind or cash as and when one feels convenient. Baskets and grain-containers are changed almost every year.

The following table indicates various implements used for hunting, fishing and trapping.

TABLE-2

## Hunting, Fishing and Trapping implements.

Sl. No.	Name of the implement	English equivalent	Used in economic pursuits	Materials used for construction	Particulars of use.	Durability and price	Remarks
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1.	<i>Belu</i>	Bow	Hunting games	Bamboo	Economic and for food.	No cost. It is changed in each year	—
2.	<i>Gundcha</i>	Arrow	-do-	Bamboo sticks with iron blade	-do-	-do-	—
3.	<i>Munda</i>	Sticks	-do-	Bamboo poles	-do-	-do-	—
4.	<i>Bana</i>	Countrymade gun	-do-	Iron pipe with wooden butt.	-do-	Life long	Purchased
5.	<i>Kara</i>	Gun powder	-do-	Gun powder	-do-	Rs. 80-110/- from market	-do-
6.	<i>Barida</i>	Deer & bear trap	-do-	Bamboo splits	-do-	Rs. 5/ per 100 gram as & when required	-do-
7.	<i>Bati</i>	Clay ball	-do-	Clay made & dried up	-do-	No cost changed after 5 to 6 years	—
8.	<i>Jali</i>	Net	Catching fish	Net	-do-	In a day or two	—
					-do-	10-15 years	Purchased from market
					-do-	Rs. 7-9/-	



The following table indicates use of basketry in a Dongria Kondh Household.

TABLE No. 3

Basketry

Sl. No.	Name of the Implement	English equivalent	Used in economic pursuits	Material; used for construction	Particulars of use.	Durability & price	Remarks
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1.	<i>Topa</i>	Basket	For carrying grains and forest collections.	Bamboo splits	Economic use.	Changed each year and payment is made according to size.	Purchased from Medri community
2.	<i>Dunda</i>	Big Basket	For carrying grains.	-do-	-do-	Rs. 2-3/- for one year	-do-
3.	<i>Trehapa Topa</i>	Small Basket	For collecting forest materials.	-do-	-do-	Re. 0.75-Re. 1/- Changed in each year.	-do-
4.	<i>Katara</i>	Flat Basket	For drying grains.	-do-	-do-	Rs. 1.50-Rs. 2/- Changed in each year	-do-
5.	<i>Bhurki</i>	Roundshaped small basket	For eating fried maize	-do-	-do-	Re. 0.25-0.50	-do-
6.	<i>Duli</i>	Small grainaries	For storing grains.	-do-	-do-	Rs. 5-8/-	-do-
7.	<i>Hukusa</i>	Bamboo-made trunk	For keeping valuables of the house.	-do-	For storing clothes etc.	Rs. 7/-	-do-

The following table indicates different articles used in the kitchen

TABLE-4

## Kitchen Utensils

Sl. No.	Name of the Implement	English equivalent	Used in economic pursuits	Materials used for construction	Particulars of Use.	Durability & price	Remarks
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1.	<i>Kaja daka</i>	Big earthen pot	For cooking gruel.	Earthen pot	For cooking	Rs. 0.80-2-3 months	Exchange in village -do-
2.	<i>Sarada &amp; Pidpa</i>	Small Flat sized earthen pot	For cooking Dal & curry	-do-	-do-	Rs. 0.30-50 15 days or 1 month	-do-
3.	<i>Malga</i>	A big Flat sized earthen pot	For cooking Peja or rice	-do-	-do-	Rs. 0.80-1/- About a month.	-do-
4.	<i>Mutta</i>	Round-shaped small earthen pot	For storing salt and turmeric powder.	-do-	For storing	0.20 0.30 5-6 months	-do-
5.	<i>Heet</i>	Ladle	For stirring	Wood	For stirring	No cost	Not purchased
6.	<i>Dumuni</i>	Gourd container	For serving gruel & water	Made out of dry guord	For serving	No cost, broken after 2-3 months	-do-

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
7. <i>Thola</i>	Big leaf cup	Gruel is served.	Siali leaf	For serving gruel.	No cost, daily leaf-cup is prepared.	—	
8. <i>Chipli Tandul</i>	Small leaf cup	Curry is served.	Siali leaf	For serving curry.	-do-	—	
9. <i>Kaja Thali</i>	Big size plates	For taking rice.	Alloy metal	Rice is served.	Rs. 40-60/- Life long.	Purchased from the market.	
10. <i>Ichhan Thali</i>	Small-size plate.	For taking rice.	Alloy metal	Rice is served.	Rs. 30-60/- Life long.	-do-	
11. <i>Tabla</i>	Dekchi	For carrying Aluminium food to the swidden.	Aluminium	Food container	Rs. 12-18/- 10-15 years	-do-	
12. <i>Kalamb</i>	Small ridged container	For eating curry.	Alloy metal	To serve curry.	Rs. 18-25/- Life long.	-do-	
13. <i>Bettini</i>	Straw bundle	For placing earthen pitchers.	Straw	To place vessels	No cost, Prepared by Every weekly themselves		
14. <i>Daka or Gera</i>	Pitcher	For storing water.	Bell-metal	For storing water	Rs. 25-400/- Life long	Purchased from the Market.	
15. <i>Gilasa</i>	Glass	For drinking water.	Aluminium	Water is drunk	Rs. 1.75-3/- 2-3 years.	-do-	



1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
16. <i>Sipa</i>		Small container	For serving curry,	Aluminium	Curry is served.	Rs. 0.75-2/- 2-3 years	Purchased from the market.
17. <i>Juta</i>		Grinding stone	For grinding grains,	Stone,	Grinding all grains	No cost (Life long)	Locally made.
18. <i>Wali</i>		Mortar & pestel	For grinding spices,	Stone,	For grinding spices,	-do-	-do-
19. <i>Badi</i>		Kerosene lamp	For lighting	Tin-made	For lighting,	Rs. 0.25 to 0.50, 1-2 years	Purchased from the market.
20. <i>Jomba</i>		Wooden planks,	For sitting	Wood,	For sitting.	No cost Life long	Locally prepared.
21. <i>Kachha</i>		Bottle	For storing	Glass.	For storing Kerosene,	Rs. 0.50 to Rs. 1/-, 4-6 months.	Purchased from the market.

In fact, the household appliances, though of little market value are of great use for the Dongria Kondh. Fishing and trapping are insignificant to the Dongria Kondh and therefore, they do not possess much of such accessories. All the wooden hafts wooden plough, the yoke, carrying pole, slings, strings, bow and arrow, grinding stones etc. are made by the males. The leaf cups are prepared by the ladies. The hoe is more important than plough for the Dongria Kondh. Living primarily on glean-ing economy, a Dongria Kondh cannot part with his axe which is used both for chopping trees and as an insepar-able decorative instrument used for personal safety on necessity. After the establishment of Fair Price Shops, most of the well-to-do Dongria families have got many more modern articles for use. They now possess steel or tin trunks, lantern, torch-light, cotton umbrella, buckets, aluminium utensils etc..

Musical instruments like—big clappers (*Jhatgi* or *Talhara*), small clappers (*Gini*), big drums (*Dhapu*), small drums (*Lisari*), smallest drums (*Dudung*), flat drums (*Dadadi*), bell-metal rings (*Ghagudi*) etc. are communally owned and kept either in *Kuddi* or in some one's house in the village.

These are used when communal dances take place. Mouth organ (*Gaani*) and flute (*Bainshi*) are individually owned and used mainly by the young males in solitude.

#### Dress :

The clothes which the Dongria Kondh wear are very simple and scanty. A man wears a cloth called, *Kodi*, of 16 feet in length and one foot in width. It is wrapped round the waist several times and then passed between the thighs, so that one end hangs in front and the other end at the back. The front end is decorated with coloured threads and embroidery work. Old men use an extra piece of small cloth called, *Ganda Kapda*, which is about three feet in length, and one and half

feet in width, around the waist. Some men who are well-to-do wear a shirt when they go out to market or other places.

A woman uses two pieces of cloth (*Kapda-Ganda*), each, three feet in length and one-and half feet in width. The first piece is wrapped round the waist with a knot in the front. The second piece hangs around the waist and one end of it passes through the arm-pits and tied at the back to cover the upper part of the body. A small piece of cloth (*Langota*) is always used by an adult woman as an underwear. Children below the age of three years go naked.

Both men and women use a wrapper over their body in winter. Women of economically better off families wear saris with red borders. Men of standing like *Mutha* Head, Village leaders put on turbans.

The Dongrias use other country-made umbrella or modern factory-made umbrella. They have no habit of wearing any foot-wears. Women mend and stitch torn clothes. Men are skilled in making hats out of *Siali* leaves.

They use ash to wash and clean their clothes and *Kosla*-rice powder (a starchy millet) to stiffen the clothes. Now-a-days, use of soap is common in almost all households.

Ordinary clothes are kept on a bamboo pole hanged against walls of the sleeping room. One or two pairs of washed clothes are kept in the bamboo-basket which are used on ceremonial occasions.

One piece of cloth is used for a fortnight or so by a male. But a female uses two pairs alternatively during the same period. Dirty clothes are not cleaned with any detergent regularly or weekly.



On ceremonial occasions, clean clothes or new clothes are used. Men prefer to wear black-shirts and women have no such special choice. Along with the clothes, a conch-shell thread (*Kradli*) is used as sacred-thread and a bundle of peacock feather (*Tanya*) is fixed on the turban. The females put on saris who can afford. The rest part of the body is decorated with ornaments.

#### Ornaments :-

The Dongria Kondh, both males and females, including children, are very much fond of ornaments with which they adorn themselves ordinarily and look attractive. It really becomes difficult to differentiate the sex from a long distance when both the sexes put on ornaments. Because, the Dongria males grow long hair as proverbially required by the mythical *Niyam Raja* to differentiate themselves from other sections of the Kondh and prepare braided locks like the females at their sculps. It is a fact that they cannot afford to put on golden ornaments, but usually ornaments made out of silver, brass, and alloys are used.

A wooden comb (*kokuya*) is fixed at the hair knot irrespective of sex which adorns the hair-lock and keeps the hair tight. A tiny knife (*pipli*) with two colourful-thread balls at its bell-metal handle, is used by the ladies at the hair-lock which too, adorns the hair-lock and serves the purpose of cutting anything as and when required. Sometimes, the young girls use more thread balls at the *Pipli*.

Ear-rings and nose-rings (*Murma*) are used irrespective of sex but such ornaments are used more by the females. Along with the rings brass-made pointed sticks (*Kutti*) are used irrespective of sex, both for adornment and to take out thorns etc. if pierced into the feet while moving in the forest. A knife and an axe are inseparable companion of a male Dongria Kondh. A bell-metal or

a wooden tobacco-pipe is fixed at the waist so artistically by a man that, it looks more like an ornament than utilitarian article. In fact, all these ornaments, stated above have both functional value as-well-as decorative value.

Other than these ornaments which are used by both sexes, the females put-on bead and coin necklaces (*Kekodika*) in bunches. Persons, who are economically better off put-on golden necklaces. Aluminium rings are put-on mainly by the young girls which they present to the young boys (*Dhangdas*) in the dormitory during courtship.

These ornaments are used on normal occasions. On ceremonial occasions, the ladies put-on brass-wristlets (*Khadu or Paja*) and silver anklets (*Pahari-Andu*), those who can afford. But generally, the ornaments mentioned earlier are used by many. The young girls on festive and ceremonial occasions, put-on 5 to 6 numbers of scissors type hair-pins in line at the hair-lock which look like a crown. The males, put-on conch shell threads (*Kradli*) at the back like sacred thread and a bunch of peacock feather (*Tanya*) at the turban on ceremonial occasions.

Elderly or married ladies prefer to put-on more ear and nose rings and such ornaments which have more functional value. Children too, put-on ear and nose rings. But the young boys and girls really look picturesques when they put-on all sets of ornaments during feasts and festivals. In fact, no status Competition is found in putting-on ornaments among the Dongrias.

Lastly ornaments are kept in a tin-box, purchased now-a-days from the Fair Price Shops by the well-to-do-families. But ordinarily, usable ornaments are kept in bamboo-made baskets (*Hakusa*).



## Food :

Generally the Dongria Kondh eat three times a day—once in the morning at about 8.00 A. M., once in midday at about 1.00 P. M. and once in the night at about 7.00 P. M. As the people go out early morning to work in their Dongar fields they carry along with them the morning and midday meals to the field. When they come back from field in the evening they take the night meal at home. The morning meal consists of only ragi-gruel and a pinch of salt. The same food is taken at midday with cooked green leaves. The night meal comprises either ragi gruel cooked with *Kosala* rice or unboiled rice and with vegetable curry. The Dongria Kondh are fond of dried fish. They take it after baking directly on fire. It is usually taken with the night meal. Sometimes, boiled rice constitutes the night meal. The cooked rice is eaten with vegetable and dried fish.

Various creepers like—*Kating*, *Baila* and *Jhudang* are boiled or fried and eaten during winter. Cereal like—*Kandul* (red gram) is prepared as Dal. Maize too, is fried and eaten while working in the farm land. Various types of roots (*Impomoea batatas*) like—*Rani Kanda* and *Langala Kanda* are boiled and eaten as morning tiffin and when one feels hungry. Comparatively better food is eaten in winter months. Green leaves and mushrooms are eaten more during summer and rains. Fish is eaten during summer, if there is any catch. Scarcity of food is experienced during lean months. Fruits, though available in plenty, are not consumed but marketed for ready cash.

In the field tiffin and lunch are eaten in buffet style. Parents and children sit down together for taking their food. The wife serves food to her husband and children first and afterwards she takes her food. The vessels containing food are kept near-by and any one who needs more takes from the vessels by means of the



laddle kept for that purpose. This is the manner of taking food while in the field. But at home the older members are served food first and next the head of the household and children. And women take their food at last, and when they finish eating, they sweep the floor and clean the place where the food is eaten. The cooking vessels are kept as such in the kitchen to be washed next morning.

Salt and turmeric paste are the only condiments used for preparing curry. Green chilly is added for taste. Garlic is used when green leaves are cooked. Garlic, onion, ginger and dry-chilly are used when fish or meat curry is prepared. The medium of cooking both vegetarian and non-vegetarian dishes is castor oil. Ground-nut oil is used in feasts. The Dongria Kondh do not observe any food taboo along the lines of sex. Both men and women eat whatever considered edible. Babies are fed ragi-gruel from the age of six months. Except mother's milk no other milk is given to the babies. Milk does not constitute as an item of food in the diet of the Dongrias. The Domb sweeper of the village and the Domb who tends cattle are given food daily by all the families in a village for the services rendered by them. Whatever excess food remains is preserved to be taken next morning. The rotten food is fed to the domesticated animals.

It is the duty of women to cook food and children above 6 years of age, help their mothers in cooking. Normally men do not cook, but when women are in their menstrual period the burden of cooking falls on men. The custom of eating in the house of the neighbour during exigencies is in vogue among the Dongrias.

The Dongria Kondh relish chicken, mutton, buffalo meat, pork and beef. The latter two types of non-vegetarian stuff are the main items of food on festive

occasions and marriage ceremonies. Animals killed in hunting trips are shared by all households in the village including the Domb families. All households in a Dongria village including the Domb households form a cohesive unit and the sharing of the product of the chase among themselves conforms to the social norm, that is, equally distributed.

The Dongria women do not participate in any ceremonial cooking. Food processing and cooking on festive occasions is the prerogative of men. During marriage ceremonies men and women are allowed to dine together. But on all other occasions it is only the men who dine together and food for women and older people is sent to respective houses.

Roots, fruits and vegetables are cut or peeled with the help of knife and then cooked. Green leaves are not cut, but simply washed and cooked. Mushrooms are soaked in turmeric water before cooking for half an hour. Salt, spices, and oil are used for cooking their food stuff. But anything collected from the forest is not directly cooked. The collected stuff is boiled first and the water in which it was boiled is thrown away. Then fresh water is added to the boiled stuff and then cooked. Salt, turmeric and oil are added as usual. Fish is cooked mainly with mustard-seeds and chilly. Dry-fish is simply baked on fire and eaten along with salt. To make it tasty oil is added sometimes. Animals of any type when killed or sacrificed are cooked without being skinned.

Regularity in eating is not maintained any time in the year. When there is heavy pressure of work during sowing and harvesting, the women especially skip their tiffin and lunch. The men are also irregular in taking food during heavy agricultural season. But they are very particular about their drinking habits. They drink either the juice collected from the Sago-palm or Mohua liquor in the house of the Domb.



Collection of firewood is the work of both men and women. It is stored in the back verandah of the house and used for cooking food. The fire from the hearth provides light to the house. The well-to-do families use kerosene lamp and lantern. Use of lantern is a recent novelty, which has been introduced after the Fair-Price-Shops have been opened in the area.

Indigenous practices of fire-making include wood-friction and percussion. The former method includes drilling with a cylinder of wood in a passive piece of hearth. In case of the latter method, that is, fire-making through percussion only a piece of flint and a piece of steel are required. The latter is rubbed fiercely against the flint and the sparks which are generated thereby come in contact with cotton which is held along side and that catches fire. The wooden holder in which the flint is kept at the bottom and the cotton at the top is called Rug-Duna. The piece of steel which is used in fire-making is kept hanging by the side of the container by means of a piece of thread. These indigenous practices of obtaining fire are being replaced by match-stick which is now readily available in Fair-Price-Shops.

#### Food Taboos :—

People of *Niska* clan do not dine with those of other clans. It is believed that *Niska* is the founder clan and the people belonging to this clan are the direct descendants of the ruling chief of *Niyamgiris*. The members of *Niska* clan have given up taking beef and buffalo meat, whereas members of other clans continue to take beef and buffalo meat.

The Dongria Kondh do not accept cooked food from the hands of the Domb who are considered untouchables. But uncooked and dry food are acceptable from the Domb. Any fruit or vegetable fallen on the ground



is meant for, they believe, regeneration of plants and therefore, not to be eaten. In case it is offered to any neighbour, the latter can eat after touching it in his left leg. It is believed that the touch with the left leg makes it free from evil touch, and consequently becomes edible. Women are not allowed to eat meat of animals which are sacrificed to propitiate deities on public festive or ritual occasions, because it is believed that the spirits of other clans will cause harm to them. But they can eat the meat of such animals which are offered to their own ancestral spirits. Salt, chilly, onion and non-vegetarian food are not eaten by the women during menstrual period and after delivery. The belief is that these affect the health of the women, and impair their physique. Any food made from *Kosla*, *arka*, *jana* and *ganthia* is taboo before the festival called *Punapadi* which is observed in the month of *Kartika* (Dewali-lenju). Soon after harvest these crops are offered to the ancestral spirits first and then eaten. Such taboos which are associated with food are strictly observed by one and all as otherwise misfortune and calamity would befall them.

### **Intoxicants and Narcotics :**

The high terrain upon which the Dongria Kondh live, the topography, the climatic factor etc. have shaped their living conditions and made them perpetual addicts. The very savour of Mahua liquor (*Irpi Kalu*) and Sago-palm juice (*Mada-Kalu*) makes the Dongrias almost wild.

Liquor is locally called Kalu. Various kinds of liquor are brewed domestically such as, *Irpi-kalu* (Mahua liquor), *Amba-kalu* (Mango-liquor), *Panasa-kalu* (jackfruit-liquor), *Kadali-kalu* (Banana-liquor) and *Guda-kalu* (Molasses-liquor). Sago-palm juice (*Mada-kalu*), an intoxicated drink is collected from locally available sago-palm trees.

*Irpi-kalu* is secretly brewed, but not in large scale. Domestic brewing being prohibited, the Dongria Kondh

are afraid of local preparation and therefore, depend upon the market and their next door neighbour, the Domb. The Domb are expert in brewing *Irpi-kalu* and make it a professional source of income. On special occasions like—*Mandia Rani* and *Meria* festivals as-well-as on marriage ceremonies they brew *Irpi-kalu* secretly with the Domb. But they never brew for commercial purposes. Sago-palm trees grow wildly in the area and are owned family-wise. These trees are considered as valuable possessions of the family. Trespassing into any body's tree is seriously viewed.

The shoots of the tree come out only from the month of October-November and remain upto March-April without being withered away. Within that period ample juice is available from each shoot. To enrich its alcoholic content, various local roots like, *-kanikutra* plant, root of *kosla* plant etc. are added to it.

Liquor in any form is not socially prohibited irrespective of sex and age. Taking of liquor is a common practice and approved by the society as it has various ceremonial and religious usages. To get rid of the boredom of hard labour as-well-as for sake of pleasure it is drunk. It is used as medicine when any body suffers from cold and headache. Liquor is indispensable for rituals. In almost all the rituals liquor is offered as oblation to satisfy different gods and goddesses and mainly the ancestral spirits. It has a still more social value. It is customary to offer a cup full of liquor to a friend or relative or neighbour as a medium of social intercourse. It creates and sustains friendship. Thus Mahua liquor and sago-palm juice are considered more as food than as mere intoxicant drinks.

Liquor is also prepared from different fruits as mentioned earlier. It is seasonally prepared mainly by the young boys. The young boys when attend dormitory are



presented with small bottles of seasonal fruit liquor by the young girls as a token of love.

Liquor is purchased from the licentiate liquor shop established at Chatikona Railway Station. In almost all social functions, liquor is not purchased by the Dongrias themselves, but by the Domb, who purchase directly from the shop and give delivery at the door steps of the Dongrias. The Dongria kondh cannot pay net cash and therefore, mortgage cropped fields and fruit-bearing trees and thus become prey of the pernicious exploitation by the Domb liquor-vendors.

#### Narcotics and Stimulents :

The Dongria Kondh use various narcotics and stimulente like-*Kara*, *Dhungia*, *Kundeli* and *Chunga*. *Kara*, is prepared out of dry and raw tobacco leaf and fine ash. Raw tobacco is simply pressed and chewed which is known as *Dhungia*. *Kundeli* is otherwise known as *Pika*. Tobacco leaf is rolled in *Siali*-leaf and used as country-made cigars. *Chunga* is tobacco-container pipe used for smoking.

*Kara* and *Dhungia* are chewed, but *Dhungia* and *Chunga* are used for smoking. *Kara* is kept in a small wooden container called *Dabi*. There are two varieties of *Chunga*-the smaller one is used by the women and the bigger one is used by the men. Both men and women chew tobacco and they have to depend on the market for this as they do not cultivate tobacco. The amount of narcotics consumed by a person depends on his or her personal taste and capacity to afford the cost.

#### Daily life :

The Dongria Kondh are very early risers. Men leave their bed at about 3.00 to 3.30 A.M. and gather at *Kuddi* (Shrine of village deity) where they relax with *Pika* and gossip. After an hour or so, when the cocks give first



crow, they start dispersing one after another to attend to their field work in the Dongar lands. They keep themselves busy in various agricultural operations in their respective fields up to 8 00 A.M., when they take their breakfast. Thereafter they resume their work up to 1.00 P.M. with half-an-hour or one hour break in the middle for drink. After taking their mid-day meal they take a little nap for an hour or so, and again they start their work. They also take drinks in the afternoon. After 4.00 P.M., they visit their orchard and collect whatever fruits are ripe mostly for sale, and sometimes, for own consumption. On their return journey around 6.00 P.M., they take bath in the stream as they do not get time to take bath throughout the day. On coming back home after the day's toil the first work to be done is to cut firewood and kindle fire at home and sit around it with their children.

Women get up earlier than men. The first work which they do is to grind the millet (Ragi or Suan) and start cooking. They prepare both breakfast and lunch at a time and finish all domestic works before 6 00 A.M. and then go out to the Dongar fields carrying food and babies with them and join the male members there in the agricultural work. Among the Dongrias the whole family works in its Dongar land without strictly adhering to any division of work. During lunch break, all the members of the household present in the field sit down at one place and the house-wife serves food to all of them. She also takes food herself with them. After a little rest they resume the work till evening when they come back home. Men go to bed earlier than women, because the latter eat later than the former at night.

Older members of the family also do some light works, such as, watching children and collecting minor forest produces from nearby forests. Children within the age-group of 7 to 14 years of age are also kept engaged in work both at home and in the field.

### Sources of livelihood :

The important sources of livelihood of the Dongria Kondh are :— (1) Agriculture and horticulture (2) Forest collection, (3) Trade and (4) Animal husbandry.

### Agriculture :

The entire tract of the *Niyamgiri* hill ranges is situated on the Eastern Ghats. In view of the altitude, soil and climatic condition, the people are forced to practise shifting cultivation as there is no plain land for wet-cultivation. All the socio-cultural and socio-economic practices therefore, veer round the shifting cultivation of the Dongria Kondh.

The land in the Dongria region is divided into three categories—hill slopes or top of hills are called, *Haru*; land at the foot of hills, called, *Penga*; and lands adjoining the hamlets are called, *Bada* (Kitchen garden). In view of the terrain, the Dongrias mostly possess *Haru*-type of lands rather than other varieties of land which are very scarce. Again, of all varieties, *Penga* type of land is considered to be the best variety as regards fertility as it contains black soil (*Birga*). Some well-to-do families raise hill-paddy on this type of land.

The following table indicates the types of crops harvested from each type of land.

TABLE No. I  
Types of land and the crops harvested

No.	Types of land	Cropes harvested according to their importance.	Remarks
1	2	3	4
1.	Haru	Millet;-Ragi or <i>Mandia</i> , <i>kosla</i> - Staple food. Pulses : Redgram or <i>kandul</i> , <i>Ganthia</i> , <i>Arka</i> and <i>Jana</i> are used as Dal.	

1

2

3

4

Legumens : *Jhudang* and *Bailo* used as tiffin.

Castor-seeds (*kala-Manji*) produced as cash crop.

Roots & Tubers : *Saru kanda*, *Langala kanda* and *Roni-kanda* are produced mainly to be eaten and if any surplus are sold.

Turmeric (*Hinga*), ginger (*Ada*) and arrow-root (*Palu*) are produced as cash crops.

Vegetables : Pumpkin, bean (*Simba*) and *Dongar Marchi* (Chilly) are produced.

These are eaten and if any surplus remains then it is sold out.

Fruits : Banana, orange, jackfruit and pineapple are produced mainly as cash crops.

## 2. Penga

*Dongar-Dhan* (Paddy) is produced. It is sown if the land is fertile.

*Kosla*, ragi and tobacco leaf (*Dhuan*) are produced. If the land is fertile, maize is produced.

## 3. Bada (Kitchen garden)

Gourd, pumpkin, bean, brinjal, chilly are produced. The kitchen garden contains mainly mango and jackfruit trees.



### Concept of property :

As believed by the Dongria Kondh, property (*Mojan*) is mainly of two types—movable and immovable. Hill-plots (*Haru*), roof of the house (*Temberi*) and fruit orchards are considered immovable property and one must possess them any where in the *Niyamgiri* hills to claim himself to be a Dongria. Other assets, including the *Duna* (money container where currency notes are kept concealed) and the livestock are treated as rich valuables and are considered immovable. These hill-slopes are divided according to *Mutha*. *Mutha* is an important feature of social organization among the Dongria Kondh. It consists of a group of villages treated as an administrative-cum-social unit. For example; the entire police station of Bissamcuttack (where the study was concentrated) is divided into five *Muthas* such as—*Jakasika*, *Wadaka*, *Pushika*, *Kadraka* and *Niska*.

Prior to the year 1961, particularly during British rule, under the supervision of a *Dewan* known as Peter Saheb, sent by the then King of Jeypore, the entire *Niyamgiri* hills was divided into five *Muthas*.

The *Mutha* leader, Mandal, in consultation with the village leaders like—*Jani*, *Bishmajhi*, *Pujari* used to distribute Dongar plots among the villagers. The Dongrias occupied hill fields on the basis of traditional *Mutha* divisions and within a particular *Mutha* among the constituent villages and after land survey and settlement operations by the State Government individual record of rights have been issued to occupants of the hill fields in the year 1961. Each such *Dongar* plot is so vast that there is no bar for its segmentation in future with the growth of population, because the land under the possession of a single Dongria cannot be cultivated at one time due to lack of adequate manpower. But even if a big patch of land is segmented the occupancy right will remain with its original owner as it has been settled in his name and

his right on that land has been recorded. Now this land will be inherited only patrilineally; and in fact land in Dongria area is being inherited in this manner.

However, land in this area is owned individually. There are certain lands like—grazing land, obsequial land, land relating to village shrines and land near the stream are owned communally.

As per individual ownership, the head of the family inherits the property patrilineally. During the life time of the father, property is distributed among all the sons equally after their marriage. The daughters are not entitled for any share after marriage. In case there is no heir, the brother of the deceased or his son inherits the property. Adopted son or the son-in-law too, inherits the property in case he is prepared to tolerate the authority of the owner of the house. But once he leaves the house, he loses his right over the property.

#### **Techniques of cultivation :**

Each occupant at his own initiative and as per availability of manpower, selects the land for cultivation. only after *Bihan-Parab* or seeds are worshipped ceremoniously near Earth-Goddess by the *Jani* in the month of *Chaitra* (February-March) the land is cleared both by the males and the females. The males fell the big trees and the females cut the bushes and the shrubs. When these bushes get dry after a fortnight or so, they are collected at one place and then set with fire called '*Noi-Rundhi Manalsu*' (Setting the fire) ceremony. During this period the entire Dongria area appears to be dotted with brightly lit fire. Almost all the Dongar plots look white after burning and then the soil is prepared for sowing. Right from the bottom of the hill up to the hill top, both the males and the females dig the *Podu* land to mingle and mix the ash with the soil. The ash is also spread equitably all over the plot to encrease the fertility of the *Podu* land. There is no scope either for application of chemical



fertiliser or irrigating the land. The people after this operation therefore, wait for the rain. This cultivation is entirely dependant on monsoon.

*Kandul* (Red gram) plot is prepared separately. Redgram seeds are dibbled with perceptible gap from one seed to the other to encourage free growth. A separate land is prepared for sowing ragi, *Kosla* and *Jhudang*. Other crops are mixed and broadcasted in a separate plot. Turmeric, ginger and arrow—root are grown in a separate plot. Big pits of about one and half feet depth are prepared for planting various types of roots in the banana yard. No other crop is grown in the banana yard. Pine-apple is grown in a separate yard. Vegetables like-chilly, beans etc. are grown both in the kitchen as-well-as in the Dongar plot.

As soon as seeds are broadcasted in a field the Dongrias carry out extensive hoeing by means of an instrument called *Tahapa* so as to drive the seeds into the soil.

The task of weeding begins in the month of June when saplings are grown up. From August to January, crop fields are watched both by men and women in the small hut prepared on the Dongar plot called *Ladi*. A barn is also prepared before the *Ladi* where all crops are threshed and processed. The threshed grains are then brought home to be stored in the grainaries.

In August crops like—*Kosla*, *Arka*, *Jana* & *Ganthia* are ready for harvesting. Other crops are also harvested one after the other latest by November. Each crop is reaped with the help of a small knife both by man and women. Men dig out the roots of various millet crops and dry them in the barn yard. Both men and women dig out turmeric, ginger and arrow—roots. Turmeric is boiled in large scale near the stream and then dried up in the sun both by men and women. In fact, all the crops are processed in the threshing floor prepared at the Dongar



plot before being brought home for consumption and storing.

The Dongria Kondh use their shifting cultivation lands for only three to four consecutive years and grow same crops and leave it fallow for a period of 4 years. During this time they take up another clearing for shifting cultivation.

However, the following table indicates months and associated agricultural operations :—

TABLE No. II

## Months and associated Agricultural operations

No.	Types of land	Agricultural operations.	Months when done.	Remarks
1	2	3	4	5
1.	<i>Haru</i>	Felling of trees Burning Dibbling Sowing Weeding Watching Harvesting	February-March April-May May-June July August August August	
2.	<i>Penga</i>	Crops grown in the <i>Haru</i> land are also produced in the same months in the <i>Penga</i> land. Only those who produce <i>Dongar</i> paddy plough the field in the month of May-June, sow paddy in the month of July and harvest it in the month of November-December—		
3.	<i>Bada</i>	( Same as in Haru )		

The Dongria Kondh follow different methods for storing different types of seeds. Ragi and *Kosla* being staple food are stored in bamboo-made granaries (*Duli*). *Arka*, *Jana*, *Ganthia* are stored in different baskets (*Dunda*). Turmeric is stored openly on one of the corners of the sleeping room. Other minor seeds are stored in earthen-ware. These containers are sealed with straw and clay.

The well-to-do families, who have a tendency to hoard food-stuff on a large scale, purchase big granaries and keep them over the loft (*Attu*).

#### Division of labour :

*Dongar* plots are individually owned. Hence respective plots are cultivated by respective family members. Both adult males and females of a family work in the field. A strict work routine has not been outlined either for men or women. No agricultural work is tabooed for women. Women, though are mainly engaged in domestic work, men too at times help them in cooking and regularly supply processed firewood for cooking. Agriculture, orchard keeping, forest collections, selling of surplus commodities etc. are done both by men and women, though arduous part of such works are done mainly by men. Felling of trees in the shifting cultivation land, procure of big logs from the forest, digging of hard soil, digging out of edible roots etc. are done mainly by men. Construction of house is done by both men and women, and even women thatch the roofs.

Within the community, when labourers are contracted to do any sort of work, both men and women participate in the pursuit mainly not with a view to earn wage but to help a person who belongs to their own group. Of course, the persons engaged are given food and paid a nominal sum of Rs. 5/- to Rs. 10/- for the labour. The person who engages them also works with others. In this way personal calls are attended and the amount thus collected is deposited with the *Barika* and spent in a feast.

However, the women due to their biological difficulties are unable to participate always effectively in all sorts of works. They cannot undertake strenuous works. And further, grown up women suffer from regular periodical disabilities, but other than this, the women in the Dongria society are not tabooed to do any type of work. Secondly, men, though undertake hard work, do less work than the women mainly because, they like to loiter aimlessly without shouldering much responsibility. This may be due to their characteristic inebriety.

#### Consumption and distribution :

The Dongrias grow various crops mainly for their food as-well-as to earn cash to meet other expenditures. *Kosla*, *Mandia*, *Arka*, *Jana*, *Gonthia* and *Jhudang* are the crops for their consumption, whereas *Baila*, Castor-seeds, Roots, Fruits, Turmeric, Ginger and Arrow-root are mainly cash crops in the Dongria society. *Dongar* paddy, if produced, is kept reserved for obtaining essential commodities through barter like-tobacco, cloth, dry-fish, earthen-pots and baskets.

The entire agricultural produce is not consumed by any family. Immediately after harvest old or out-standing debt is repaid as per contract as, almost all the families are in debt. Women pedlars, who often visit the village and sell dry-fish, bead necklace etc. on credit are repaid with interest immediately after harvest.

Dues in the licentiate liquor shops and in the weekly-market are cleared in kind. After old debts and dues are cleared, payment is given to the Domb menials like-*Barika* (Messenger of the village), *Goudia* (Cowherder) and the *Jhateni* (Sweeper) each with—*6Ada* (About 5 and half kilograms) of *kosla* rice of *ragi* and food for two times by each family for the rendered services annually.

Household requirments like-earthen-pots, baskets, iron-implements etc. are purchased on cash payment or



on payment of paddy or other grains. To meet all these expenditures, a family has to completely exhaust its cash crops, and sometimes, food crops, and more often than not it becomes prey of the local Domb for getting loans.

The Domb act as middle men between the Dongria Kondh and the outside traders, who exploit the Dongrias outright. The Domb are landless and do not practice agriculture as a means of livelihood, and yet prefer to live with the Dongrias, because they know pretty well that they can eke out a smooth existence by merely veering round the Dongria society. They thrive on the toil of the Dongrias through their manipulative activities. In fact, they take away a lion's share of the Dongria agricultural produces including yields of their orchards. Cases of forcible plucking of fruits and reaping of crops from the orchards and fields of Dongrias are not uncommon. Sometimes they completely seize the orchards and usurp standing crops for procrastination in repayment of petty loans. The Domb have other tricks to entrap the Dongrias. Quite often the Dongrias are enticed by the Domb to purchase liquor from them on credit, and the Dongrias become very easily gullible to this trick. Another modus operandi of exploitation by the Domb of the Dongria is the grant of small sum of loan by the former to the latter on exorbitant rate of interest.

The amount advanced by the Domb is not realized immediately and the same goes on swelling, which the simple Dongria Kondh cannot understand. On the other hand, the Dongria Kondh rather feel obliged for getting timely help in the form of loan and services from the Domb. Lack of alternative credit facilities, ignorance, simplicity, and a sense of serene values which the Dongrias have developed due to their age-long isolation have made them completely dependant on the Domb, and as a result of all these the Dongrias are subject to ruthless exploitation.

The irony of the fact is that the Domb carry out their rapacious exploitation under the cover of ceremonial friendship. This pretext provides a suitable berth to the Domb to carry out their nefarious activity without any impurity. Excessive use of liquor, dogmatic sacrifice of animals in feasts and festivals and high rate of bride-price have coerced the Dongria Kondh to irredeemable indebtedness, and thereby have completely become dependant on the Domb for loans when they are in distress.

## HORTICULTURE

The economic life of the Dongrias of the *Niyamgiri* hills hinges almost exclusively on fruit growing vast stretches of land in the hill-slope right from valley bottom to the hill-top are covered with plantations of jackfruit and citrus fruit trees, banana and pineapple, Turmeric is extensively cultivated in hill-slopes stretching from the foot-hill to an elevation of about 3000 ft. above sea level. It is also grown in the valley, formed between the hills and plain lands. Innumerable mango trees of different varieties grow wild by the people themselves and are common in the *Niyamgiri* hills.

It is a fact that the type of climate that prevails in a region determines the types of soil and vegetation in that region. Rain fall, temperature and humidity provide the basis for all agricultural and horticultural land utilization. The *Niyamgiri* hill conforms fully to the climatic influences on vegetation and its impact on cropping pattern. The main climatic factor which have favoured fruit growing in the *Niyamgiri* hills are high altitude, good drainage and longer duration of low temperature period.

However it goes without saying that climate alone cannot bring about development of horticulture unless the human factor comes forward to harness the climatic and environmental potentialities for this purpose. In this respect the Dongrias are a noteworthy example showing how the team-work of Man and Nature has brought extensive land surface in the rugged terrain of the *Niyamgiri* hills under fruit farming. The plantation of orchards and fruit trees which have come up in the habitat of the Dongria Kondh as a result of this team-effort is discussed in the following paragraphs.

The Pineapple is probably indigenous to Brazil and seems to have reached India by 1548. The variety of Pineapple which the Dongria Kondh grow in the *Niyamgiri*



hill ranges is called Spanish and as far as the people remember the fruit was introduced in the hills by the Raja of Jeypore long ago. The Dongrias make holes less than 5' in depth by means of a crowbar in the hill-slope right from the foot-hill up to the middle region of the mountain and sometimes beyond this line and plant the suckers and slips in rows from top to the bottom. As the plants are poorly anchored and have a tendency to fall over, the Dongrias do the close planting so that the plants support each other.

Before the holes are dug the hill-slopes are cleared of the shrubs and herbs. The suckers are planted in the months of March, April, and May and the plants take nearly two years to yield fruits. No cereals and pulses are grown in the place where the pineapple is planted. But banana and Jackfruit trees are grown in the pineapple orchards. The pineapple plant is not able to bear very strong sunshine nor does it require complete shade. Therefore, the Dongrias grow pineapple under the jackfruit trees which protect the plants from direct sunlight and provide shade which is congenial to the growth of the pineapple plants. It is the experience of the Dongrias that the banana plants do not grow well with the pineapple plants and therefore they grow banana in a separate strip of land adjacent to pineapple plantation. In many places banana plants are grown at some elevation above the places where pineapples are planted. Moreover, in places at higher altitude where pineapple is grown the sun shine is less bright and in such mild climate pineapple plants grow very well.

Pineapple is grown in the Niyamgiri hills without irrigation. The plants get water from rain. The leaves of the pineapple plants are stiff and waxy on the upper surface, with stomata in furrows on the under surface protected by a thick growth of hairs. Transpiration is thus held to a minimum. The rosette of stiff leaves is so arranged that very little rain gets past them to the

ground. The leaves are slightly concave so that the water which falls by drops from the leaves of the jack fruit trees is conducted to the base. Heavy dew is collected in the same way. A slight amount of water accumulates in the pocket where these leaves clasp the short stem of the plant and only when these pockets overflow with water reach the ground. The soil retains moisture because of the shade of the pineapple plants and jack fruit trees. The hill-slopes where the pineapple is planted contain a coarse gravelly soil which is not sticky and can be more easily worked. The thick deposition of leaves which fall from the jack fruit trees and the dried leaves of the pineapple plants get decomposed and provide rich humus to this soil.

The fruits which the pineapple plants bear are of great flavour. The horticulturist who is in charge of fruit preservation unit located at Chatikona, a railway station at the foot of the *Niyamgiri* hill ranges is of the same opinion that the pineapples grown by the Dongrias are of great flavour. It is the belief of the Dongrias that the flavour of the fruit is due to the lateritic soil in which the plants grow. Whatever may be the case good drainage, mild climate, lighter shade, less bright sunlight, medium altitude all combine to help the plants grow luxuriantly in the *Niyamgiri* hills.

The Dongrias do not take any other care of the plants except weeding the area under plantation twice in a year. They are not in the habit of applying either any fertilizer or any pesticide to the plants. They have estimated that they are able to get about 500 fruits from half an acre of land under pineapple plantation. Each fruit weighs about 1 kg to 1½ kg in the first year and in subsequent years the weight is reduced to 1 kg or less than a Kilogram. But the yield in subsequent years increases to about 1000 fruits in the minimum and the weight of each fruit varies from less than a kg to 1 kg. Some plants yield large fruits while others



yield small fruits. If the land under pineapple plantation is left unattended weeds grow and overpower the plants causing damage and death to the plants. But the Dongrias do not allow this to happen in any case.

It is the tradition of the Dongrias that they do not pluck the fruits for sale in the market. Every pineapple orchard is sold at a wholesale rate to the local Domb merchants who pluck the fruits and carry them to nearby weekly hats and market centres for sale. Plantation of  $\frac{1}{2}$  acre of land fetches to the grower 200/- to 300/- Rupees. But the Domb merchants sell the fruits at Re. 1/- or more per fruit. The Dongrias are in need of money to meet their expenditure on clothing, food and festivities. Before the plants come to fruition the orchards are hired out to the Domb merchants on payment of some advance and when the plants bear fruit the Domb make payment of the balance amount at the rate fixed at the time of giving advance and pluck the fruits for sale.

As a result of the contact of the Dongrias with development agencies of the Government they are gradually realising that the Domb merchants are not giving them a fair price and are exploiting them. Being aware of this situation many Dongria Kondh are now selling their fruits directly at the local weekly hats and market centres without depending any further on the Domb merchants for this purpose. A cooperative society has been established at Chatikona where the weekly market is situated. One of the functions of the co-operative society is to buy the pineapples from the Dongrias. In season a Dongria village comprising about 10 to 15 households produces pineapple worth Rs.10,000/- There are many Dongria villages located near about the co-operative society. But the co operative society fails to buy all the fruits from all the villages. The Dongrias of Kurli village complain that the society is able to buy only Rs. 1,000/- worth of pineapples daily



whereas they are in a position to produce pineapples worth more than Rs. 10,000/- per day. It is, for this reason that they have to sale the pineapples to the local merchants and traders who pay them less what they get from the co-operative society.

It is the observation of the Dongrias that the mortality of the plants grown by the Governmental agencies in the *Niyamgiri* hills is very great. Though the Governmental agencies grow improved variety of pineapples, irrigate the plants, apply fertilisers and pesticides and take all possible care of the plants but their plants die out in large number. Compared to this the Dongrias grow their indigenous variety and take least care of the plants. But in their case the mortality of the plants is not significant. This is true in the case of all other plants such as mango, lemon, orange, etc. which the Dongrias grow extensively in thair habitat.

It is the tradition among the Dongrias that they share one another's labour in agricultural and horticultural works on a co-operative basis. When some one is working in the field of some one else and has with him a few seeds of jack fruit or some mango stones he may put them in the field in which he is working without any objections from any body. When the trees grow and bear fruit the person who has grown them enjoys the fruit from those trees. The man who has possessed the land in which such trees have been grown has no usufruct right over such trees. Though the grower has the usufruct right over the trees, he has no right to grow any crop in the land in which he planted the trees. One factor which goes in favour of such a tradition is that the Dongrias do not have any plain land. They have mostly dongar lands (lands in hill-slope), which have not been surveyed. The Dongrias claim ownership over such lands by virtue of their possession over a long period of time. In reality the dongar lands belong to the *Mutha* and as long as a person is in cultivating possession of

a particular hill-slope for growing cereals and pulses his right over such a hill-slope is not disputed. But the plantation of frees is considered in a separate vein and any Dongria irrespective of his clan or clan-territory enjoys the right of planting trees anywhere in his own village and outside his village.

### Jackfruit

As mentioned above the Dongrias have grown innumerable jackfruit trees in the pineapple orchards and also in other parts of their settlements. It is grown in the months of February and March and seeds are generally used for propagation. The humid hill-slope as well as the dry plain land seem to be congenial for the growth of the trees in the wooden country of the *Niyamgiri* hills which varies from 1000 m to 1500 m in elevation. Young trees give more fruits than the old ones. There are some old trees in the hills which are more than 15 feet in girth. They do not bear any fruit any longer. Bearing starts in about 6 to 10 years and the average yield per tree is 30 kg with some trees giving more than 100 kgs.

The Dongrias depend upon the Domb merchants for disposing of the jackfruits from their trees. Every year before a tree bears fruit a price is settled between the Domb merchant for the whole produce of the tree and the former receives some advance from the latter. When the jack fruits are ready for sale the Domb merchant pays the balance amount to the owner and collects fruit from the tree and sells them to the merchants at Chatikona. If the tree bears more fruit the merchant gets more profit and if the tree bears less fruit the merchant gets less profit. If the tree does not bear any fruit or negligible number of fruits the merchant does not ask the owner to give him back the advance which he paid long ago and meets the loss to compensate it from the profit he gets by selling the produce from another tree having substantial number of fruits.





Kondh country noted for Jack-fruits





Fruits of the forest



Leaf-plates for sale at the depot

Generally a jackfruit tree fetches Rs. 15/- to Rs. 40/- and a Domb merchant invests Rs. 400/- to Rs. 500/- in the business of jackfruit. Neither the Dongrias nor the Domb merchants know how to make curry out of raw jackfruits and therefore do not eat unripe ones. But they relish the ripe jackfruit. They also do not know how to prepare curry out of seeds of jackfruits other than eating the seeds by boiling. Therefore they dispose of most of the seeds for cash. Unripe jackfruit sells at 20 to 30 paise per Kg whereas the seeds cost 10 to 20 paise per Kg. A Dongria earns about Rs. 300/- to Rs. 1500/- per year from the sale proceeds on unripe jackfruits and about Rs. 200/- to Rs. 1000/- from the seeds.

### Banana

The hill variety banana is wild in the *Niyamgiri* hills. Vast stretches of land in the hill-slope in the *Niyamgiri* hill ranges are covered with banana plantation. Both banana gardens and pineapple orchards and jackfruit trees coexist. The virgin forest soil with its accumulation of humus which is not very deep but well drained appears to have been very helpful for the growth of the plants in high altitude without manuring and irrigation.

Two varieties, mainly, are found in the hills—one variety is used when cooked and the other variety is used when ripe. The banana plants are grown from suckers and a plant attains a height of 8 ft to 10 ft. giving on an average 10 to 20 bananas of about 2 Kg to 3 Kg in weight in a bunch.

The Dongrias do not use banana when cooked, not because of any superstitious belief but they do not know how to make curry out of green plantains. Therefore all the green bunches of banana are sold to the Domb merchants. However, the Dongrias eat ripe banana, but most of this variety also is sold for cash.



### Orange and Lemon.

Orange (*Kamala*) and Lemon (*Kageji*) plantations are not very much extensive. Some Dongrias have grown them at places. These citrus plants are grown for seedlings and not for seeds. The seedlings of three years old are planted in the rugged lateritic soil near foot-hills close to hill-streams. The trees are thorny and grow tall and slender and take about 8 to 10 years to bear fruit. The fruits are neither very sweet nor very sour. The growers of orange complain that the trees after bearing fruits for about 5 to 6 years wither away and die.

### Turmeric.

Turmeric is a very important cash crop in the *Niyamgiri* hills. The small hillocks and the lower parts of the high hills, where vegetational cover is scanty and fruit bearing trees are almost conspicuous by their absence, are used for growing turmeric. Planting of turmeric starts from March and goes till May. Plantation is stopped as soon as rain comes at the end of May and in the early part of June.

The turmeric takes two years for maturity. Harvesting starts from November and continues till March.

Like other crops the Dongrias sell turmeric in wholesale field-wise to the Domb merchants. On the basis of the growth of the plants in a particular patch of land and by taking into consideration the rate of the previous year the price of turmeric for the whole quantity to be produced from the land is estimated and the Domb merchant who buys the turmeric pays some advance to the grower. When the turmeric is ready for harvesting the rate prevailing then is taken into account and the price fixed already is revised on that basis. After the price is settled the Domb pays it either fully on one payment or by instalments as per the demand of the grower.



As pointed out above the practice with the Dongrias is that they grow the crops such as—pineapple, banana, Orange, jackfruit and turmeric but do not harvest them by themselves. They sell the crops wholesale by trees and fields to the Domb merchants who harvest the crops and sell them to bigger merchants at weekly hats or market centres. The men carry the fruits by means of carrying poles on their shoulders and women by head—loads. The Dongrias are never in the habit of carrying their produce to market places for sale.

In the changed context the Dongrias have started one by one harvesting their own crop and carrying them to markets for sale by bypassing the Domb merchants. A change like this in the business transaction and particularly the activities of harvesting and carrying as taken up now by the Dongrias is ridiculed by the Domb merchants and subjected to criticism by them. A verbatim record of reaction of a Domb merchant is reproduced below in translated form.

“The Dombs were exclusively carrying banana to market places. Now the Dongrias are doing so no matter whether a bunch consists of a dozen or more bananas. They are now digging out turmeric and carrying on business with it, raw or processed. They are now selling raw turmeric. It is exchanged for paddy. We have no paddy and therefore are not able to transact with the Dongrias. Carrying anything that they produce was something like a taboo on the part of the Dongrias. They were busy round the clock in their swiddens and orchards and the refore they were getting plenty of everything. There was a time when some Dongrias were busy weeks together in harvesting and *Kosala Ragi*. Some of them were getting more than six or seven quintals of cereals and pulses. It was due to their hard labour that they were getting plenty of food and they were then well fed and well nourished. Now they have been educated and are carrying on business by themselves, in the earlier

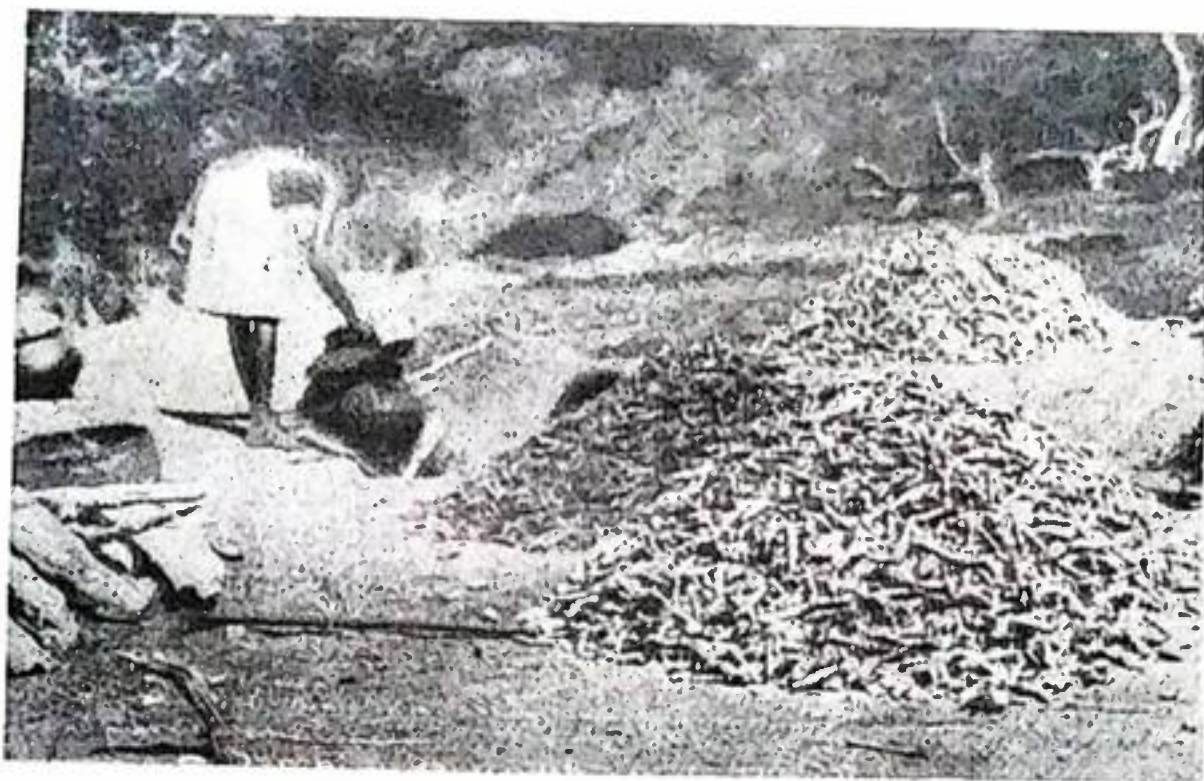
times they had no need for going out of their village. We were supplying their necessities such as-dried fish, salt, chilly, etc. at their door step. Though they have taken to business, they have done so at the cost of their agriculture and horticulture which have rather deteriorated their economic condition and caused shortage of food".

### Mango

Throughout the ages, the mango has been acknowledged as an excellent fruit liked by adults and children alike. There is no locality in Orissa which does not have mango trees. In some areas they are found in greater number than in other areas. Of all the fruit-bearing trees found in tribal areas the mango trees are most common. In lean months when the grain bins are empty and work in the field is hard and heavy mango provides food to the hungry mouths of the tribals. The Dongrias are no exception to this situation. Down in the valley and near village site, uphill and in the hill-slopes, along the hill streams and by the side of the foot paths or roads leading to tribal settlements everywhere are mango trees young and old providing fruit and shade to the people.

No tribal causes any damage to the mango trees. Even those who practise shifting cultivation in the hill-slopes spare the mango and other fruit-bearing trees from the processes of cutting and clearing of the vegetational cover in the swiddens. These trees are jealously guarded and carefully protected from fire. Like other tribal communities mango growing has been so to say an inborn habit with the tribals. Trees grow from mango stones. After the pulp is eaten the mango stone is thrown away. Generally, the crows pick up such thrown away stones and carry them to any place which they find convenient for the purpose of eating whatever amount of pulpy substance is left over the stones. Mango trees are found in dense forests and at hill tops





Turmeric is produced in tons in the Kondh area



and also in most inaccessible areas of the wood lands of tribal areas. The crows mainly and also tribesmen to some extent are responsible for the propagation of mango trees in such places.

The Dongrias eat both raw and ripe mango and also earn some income by selling them in local markets. A Dongria may have mango trees in his own land or in the land of a cotribesman or in any other place in the locality. The man who planted a mango stone in the ground anywhere in his locality is recognized as the owner of the tree which grows out of that stone and enjoys fruit from that tree. The Dongrias do not have any idea about making *Achar* or *Chatni* from the raw mangoes. But they are in the habit of using the kernel inside the stone as food at the time of scarcity of other types of food. The mango found in the habitat of the Dongria is of indigenous variety. it is the largest of all other fruit trees available in the locality.

#### **Fruit Preservation Unit.**

A fruit preservation unit of the Directorate of Agriculture is functioning at Chatikona. The staff comprises one fruit preservation officer, and five non-technical subordinate staff. The unit has a huge building and is well equipped. The officer informed that a sum of about Rs. 30,000/- is spent on establishment. If the wear and tear is taken into account it would cost Rs. 10,000/- towards machinery and Rs. 5,000/- towards buildings and about Rs. 5,000/- towards breakage, propulsion, cartage etc.. The total liability of the unit comes to Rs. 50,000/- per year.

The unit buys pineapple, mango, lemon, tomato locally from cooperative society and prepares juice and sauce, mango pickles and cold drinks. Last year the food growers' cooperative society supplied 74 quintals of decrowned pineapple to the unit at the rate of Rs. 1.50 per pineapple. 1 8 kg of pineapple will yield 750 grms.

of juice which makes one bottle. Out of 74 quintals of pineapple about 4100 bottles of juice were prepared. The bottle costs Rs. 1.10 and the processing costs Rs. 4.40 and one bottle of juice is sold at Rs. 5.75 or Rs. 6.00. The cost of 4100 bottles of juice comes to Rs. 24,600/-.

The unit also prepared about 2000 bottles of tomato sauce. At the rate of Rs. 5/- per bottle the unit got Rs. 10,000/- out of the sale proceeds of the tomato sauce. Leaving aside the breakage of some bottles which occurs in transit the unit produced juice and sauce about Rs. 30,000/- in the year 1980-81.

As mentioned above one bottle of tomato sauce costs Rs. 5/- and one bottle of pineapple juice, Rs. 6/-. If the establishment and maintenance charges are added to the cost, the price per bottle increases to Rs. 12.50 to 15.00. In other words, the rise is in the proportion of Rs. 2.50 per Rupee. The officer in charge of the unit explains that the unit is not entirely a business concern with the kind of a profit-motive which is met with in the professional business community. Therefore it meets a loss of Rs. 50,000/- per year for the sake of consumers.

Apart from its business, it plays the role of a training institute giving training to women at various centres in the techniques of preparing sauce, juice and cold drink. If the social cost-benefit of the training component of the unit is taken into account the picture may be different. But the training programme is exclusively confined to the non-tribal population and has not yet reached any tribal women. On the whole as the situation stands the bell tolls negligibly for tribal communities and largely for the urban elites.

### **Food Growers Cooperative Society.**

A Cooperative Society named as the *Niyamgiri* Food Growers Cooperative Society is working at Chatikona



since 1979. 16 Dongria villages come under this society and there are as many as 257 members belonging to the Dongria community in the society.

The society is functioning under the guidance of a Board of directors which comprises the Sub-Divisional Officer of Gunupur as Chairman, Special Officer, Dongria Kondh Development Agency as Vice-Chairman and Welfare Extension Officer as Ex-Officio Secretary. Assistant Registrar, Co-operative Society, Gunupur, Block Development Officer, Bissamcuttack, Branch Manager, Tribal Development Co-operative Corporation, Assistant Technologist, Chatikona Fruit Preservation Unit are included as members of the Board. There are also two Dongrias as members in the Board.

The supporting staff of the society is comprised of one marketing assistant, one weighman and watchman and one sales assistant.

The society advances loan to the fruit growers and is expected to buy the fruits at a fair price from the growers for marketing purposes. The following statement shows the advance and collection of loan during the year 1979-80 and 1980-81.

(in rupees)			
Year	Loan advanced	Loan collected	Balance
1979-80	Rs. 27,495.00	Rs. 10,450.00	
1980-81	1,500.00	4,806	
	<u>Rs. 28,995.00</u>	<u>Rs. 15,256</u>	13,739

The Co-operative Society has one fair price shop working at Kurli, about 10 K.Ms. from Chatikona where the society is located. It had another fair price shop at Khajuri, about 5 K. Ms from Chatikona. But since 1980 it is no longer functioning, the reason being less sale of things at this place. The following statement gives the



transaction of fair price shop at Kurli for two years 1979-80 and 1980-81 (up to February 1981)

(in ruppes)		
Year	Stock supplied	Balance
1979-80	11,036.19	8,031.74
1980-81	29,324.10	24,625.06

### Business

The Co-operative Society collects forest produce from the Dongria Kondh of the *Niyamgiri* hills at a fair price and supplies to them some of their daily necessities through the fair price shop at Kurli and at the headquarters. A statement is furnished below to show collections of different items of forest and agricultural produce for the last two years. The statement shows that the society purchased Q. 74.77 kgs and 1250 number of pineapple worth Rs. 12,030.60 in the year 1980-81. It has been mentioned earlier that a single Dongria village of small size of about 10 to 15 households produces pineapple worth on an average Rs. 10,000/- in season. Apart from other villages there are 16 villages under the direct perview of the society and invariably almost every village produces pineapple worth round about the figure mentioned above. To what extent does the society serve the pineapple growers in matters of buying their produce is obvious. Under such circumstances there is no point on blaming the itinerant Domb merchants and lamenting over their exploitation of the innocent tribals.

One item of agricultural produce which is intriguing is turmeric. The society purchased Q. 33.85 Kgs of turmeric in both the years under review at a cost of Rs. 20,093/-, and sold only 13.56 kgs at Rs. 8391/-. The balance of amount of turmeric which is Q. 20.29 kgs is lying in the stock unsold. The reason for this is not known.

The Dongrias were and still in majority are millet eaters. The millets grown by them are of limited quantity and therefore are in short supply to go round the whole year. But the fruits such as-banana, jackfruit, pineapple and mango supplement their food substantially. Of late the Governmental agencies have introduced paddy in the locality and some Dongrias have taken to paddy cultivation in valley bottom near hill-streams. Those who grow paddy do not either sell for cash or exchange for anything else. They have not only found a special taste for this food stuff but also have been identified in the society as rice eaters. Those who have no suitable land to grow paddy but have developed a craze for rice get the required quantity in exchange for turmeric.

The society has been able to purchase 21 kinds of fruits, seeds, roots, cereals, pulses and minor forest produce such as-hill broom. What a variety of rich forest produce and agricultural and horticultural crops do the *Niyamgiri* hill ranges grow is clear from the statement. One wonders why the Dongrias who are the sources of this proverbial wealth continue to live a life of poverty and indigence. One point which is obvious is that proper functioning of whatever Infrastructural facilities are available in the area, and lack of dedicated officers with imaginativeness and vision and feeling for tribals seem to be the most significant barriers to development of about 3 lakhs Dongria highlanders of this Rayagada section of the Eastern Ghat region.

STATEMENT SHOWING THE BUSINESS TRANSACTION  
DURING 1979 TO FEBRUARY 1981

	1979-80		
	Purchase	Sale	Balance
1. Pineapple	Qs. 120,77 Kgs	Rs. 18,742.10	—
2. Pineapple suckers	1,25,400 Nos	Rs. 11,180.00	—
3. Banana Suckers	7,200 Nos	Rs. 4,800.00	—
4. Jack seeds	1,380 Kgs	Rs. 1,356.00	—
5. Ginger	309 Kgs	Rs. 703.50	—
6. Orange	4,665 Nos	Rs. 545.20	—
7. Khamboallu	253 Kgs	Rs. 176.00	—
8. Narangi	140 Nos	Rs. 16.00	—
9. Small Chilli	6 Kgs	—	—
10. Turmeric	Q. 26.85 Kgs	Rs. 2,600.00	—
11. Banana Fruits	—	—	—
12. Jhudungo	140 Kgs	Rs. 265.00	—
13. Paddy	750 Kgs	—	—
14. Niger seeds	Q. 4.70 Kgs	Rs. 1,060.00	—
15. Kosola	92 Kgs	Rs. 360.00	—
16. Jinjili	400 Kgs	Rs. 1,500.00	—
17. Jowar	4000 Kgs	Rs. 3,760.00	—
18. Ragi	100 Kgs	—	—
19. Hill brooms	28,500 Nos	Rs. 8,675.00	—
20. Turmeric	1700 Kgs	Rs. 1,308.00	—
21. Castor seeds	328 Kgs	Rs. 750.00	—



1980-81

	Q.	Purchase	Sale	Balance
1. Pineapple				
2. Pineapple suckers				
3. Banana suckers			Rs. 12,538.00	—
4. Jack seeds	Q. 74.77 Kgs	1250 Nos } 12,030.60	—	—
5. Ginger	—	—	—	—
6. Orange	121 Kgs	272.75	Rs. 302.00	—
7. Khamboallu	1050 Nos	128.00	Rs. 175.00	—
8. Narangi	43 Kgs	32.25	Rs. 43.00	—
9. Small Chilli	—	—	—	—
10. Turmeric	9 Kgs	225.00	Rs. 455.00	1 Kg
11. Banana Fruits	700 Kgs	4,200.00	Rs. 5,791.00	Q. 20.29 Kg
12. Jhudungo	12,840 Nos	705.50	Rs. 836.50	800 Nos
13. Paddy	—	—	Rs. 96.00	—
	Q. 46.00 Kgs	4,830.00	Rs. 600.00	Q. 47.60 Kg sent to Kurli for Exchange of Turmeric
14. Niger seeds				
15. Kosola	100 Kgs	280.00	Rs. 170.00	—
16. Jinjili	810 Kgs	777.00	Rs. 1130.00	—
17. Jowar	—	—	—	—
18. Ragi	2,040 Kgs	2,135.00	—	Q. 20.40 Kg
	220 Kgs	231.50	—	100 Kg to F.P. shop
19. Hill Brooms	—	—	—	2300 Nos.
20. Turmeric	—	—	—	—
21. Castor seeds	100 Kgs	280.00	—	128 Kgs.

## Gleaning—

The Dongria Kondh continue to maintain their traditional interest in wild fruits, tubers and nuts although in recent times there has been a steady diminution of various forest produce owing to large scale deforestation due to the practice of shifting cultivation. In fact, their food is greatly supplemented by fruits, roots, and tubers collected from the jungle, and food collection is still an indispensable aspect of the Dongria Kondh economic life. Most of the poor families depend on forest collection for about six months in a year. The following table gives list of some of the edible items collected from the forest.

Table No. III

## Food materials collected from jungle

No. Main item	Name of the things collected
1. Fruits	<i>Amba, Kendu, Panasa, annala, Siadi, Koliari, amti-fala, onkel-kuli, Koling-kuli and podi-kuli.</i>
2. Green leaves	<i>Girli, Koliari-kuchha, Jaba-kuchha, Kopu-kuchha, Koti-kuchha, Gandri-kuchha, Barada-kuchha, Mali - kuchha, kanta-hapka-kuchha, Chhatu-Kuchha, Chhakunda-Kuchha, Medrenga-kuchha, Kena-kuchha and Khiprti-kuchha.</i>
3. Roots and Tubers	<i>Roni-kanda, Nagol-kanda, Pita-kanda, Seabil-Kanda, Saru-kanda, Chaul-Saru-Kanda, Thoda-kanda, Khojrang-Saru-kanda, Alu-kanda and Rong-Saru-kanda.</i>
4. Mushrooms	<i>Amba-chati, Pansa-chati, Sargi-chati, Basa-chati, Kupa-chati, Manei chati, Surubali-chati, Phuli-chati, piyal-chati, Dungu-chati, Medrenga-chati, Dakel-chati, Ghusra-chati, Mayurbhanda-chati, Jambu-chati, Tak-chati, Kunt-chati, and Banj-chati.</i>

No.	Main item	Name of the things collected
5.	Honey	<i>Bichhana</i> , <i>Satpuria</i> , <i>Dummi</i> , and <i>Bagh</i> are name of different bees and honey is named after different hives.
6.	Birds	<i>Pandka</i> (Pigeon), <i>Kugure</i> (Dove), <i>Sari</i> (Mayna), <i>Kirang</i> (Parrot), <i>Kaju</i> (Jungle-fowl) <i>Milu</i> (Peacock) are caught and prepared as special dishes.
7.	Animals	<i>Garia</i> (wld boar), <i>Sibda</i> (Sambar), <i>Kotra</i> (Kutra), <i>Mralu</i> (Rabbit), <i>Bolu</i> (Bear), <i>Sranhi</i> (Percupine) are hunted for special dishes.
8.	Reptiles	<i>Damna</i> (A type of snake) and <i>Godhi</i> (Iguana) are hunted for using skins in musical instruments.

The food materials collected from the forest have seasonal variation. Fruits are plenty in summer, while green leaves and mushrooms are available during rainy season. Availability of roots and tubers is also purely seasonal during winter.

Activities connected with the collection of food items are exclusively confined to the members of the family. Both men and women participate in the pursuit. Chase-dog (*Kasing*) is the constant companion in the ceremonial hunting expedition which takes place in the month of *Chaitra* (March-April).

#### Animal Husbandry :

The Dongria Kondh domesticate various animals like buffalo (*Kodru*), cow (*Kodi*), goat (*Adda*), lamb (*Mendha*), Pig (*Poji*), dog (*Neudi*), fowl (*Koyu*) and pigeon (*Parua*). Milk is never drawn from milch cows and buffaloes. The animals and birds that are reared for meat are cow, buffalo, goat, sheep, pig, fowl and pigeon. All these animals are reared up for sacrificial purposee, Different sheds (*Hadda*) are prepared for different types



of animals. The pigeons are kept in a box-like shed called *Paru-kudda*. In small rituals, fowls pigeons and eggs are sacrificed. Cows, buffaloes, lambs and goats are sacrificed in bigger feasts and festivals.

Ordinarily no special food is given to the animals. They entirely depend upon natural grazing. The village cow-herder (*Goudia*) takes everyday the animals for grazing. Sometimes, animals are also mortgaged to seek loan from the Domb. Over and above the money borrowed, about 50 percent interest is charged. In case money is not refunded it is realised in kind, that is, either turmeric, jack-fruit or pineapple is taken away by the Domb in lieu of total amount. Skins of the domesticated animals are also sold at the rate of Rs. 60/- to Rs. 70/- each to the outsiders. In fact, animal husbandry is not a major source of income of the people.

#### **Wage-earning :**

Wage-earning is considered to be a derogatory economic pursuit by the Dongria Kondh as they claim to be the descendants of the *Niyam Raja* of the *Niyamgiri* hills. They rather prefer to work for the members of their own community either on nominal payment or on labour-exchange basis. Amongst them, there is no employer-employee feeling. They treat each other as equals. As such, no one asks for payment on the basis of employer-employee relationship.

The employee, as a token of labour, pays a nominal sum of Rs. 10/- to all the persons engaged and the food. This labour is put forth, just as a token of mutual relationship. Thus, wage-earning too, is not a substantial source of income.

#### **Domestic trade :**

The Dongria Kondh are renowned horticulturists who raise large scale of orange, jackfruits, pineapple

and banana and at the same time turmeric and castor-seeds. But trading of all these are monopolized by the Domb, who in fact, thrive through this business. Each Domb is vigilant about his Kondh neighbour's assets, agricultural yields and the surplus and accordingly he spreads his net to capture as many Kondh families as he can by extending loan to them as and when required and by creating bond-friendship with them. Thus each Domb has his own circle of loanees from whom agriculture produces are procured and sold to outsiders in double or triple the cost of procurement price. Secondly, the Dongria Kondh, by nature are lethargic in carrying headload of marketable commodities to the market. They rather prefer to dispose of the commodities at their doorsteps, which the Domb purchase.

To curb such Domb monopoly, the Government introduced Purchase-Sale and Fair Price Shop Scheme in the year 1964 to procure such commodities from the Dongrias by giving reasonable price to them and to extend to the latter interest-free loans. But the scheme could partially benefit the tribals as it became difficult to break the age-old relationship of the Domb and the Dongria Kondh.

However, a major portion of their surplus products is sold either to the Domb or at the Fair-Price-Shop Centre. While visiting the weekly market at Chatikona Railway Station as a routine programme, the Dongria ladies carry banana and other fruits in small quantities in a basket on their head for sale. Their manfolk practically do not carry any thing. Hence the principal classes of traders in the market are the Domb, the Kumti, the Teli and the Desia Kondh, who sell clothes, brass and aluminium utensils, groceries, dry-fish, kerosene and other articles.

Though money is the medium of exchange both in the village and in the market, money barter and pure

barter both are prevalent. In the village, exchange of articles are made chiefly with grains, but grains and the articles to be bought are valued in terms of money. Paddy is collected from villages of Rayagada and Kalyan-singhpur areas in exchange for turmeric by the Dongria Kondh. The paddy procured in such manner is subsequently exchanged in the village for purchase of baskets and earthenwares. Paddy, *Kosla*, *Suan*, and turmeric are also exchanged in the market for obtaining salt and dry-fish.

The Dongria Kondh though do not form a trading group or are not specialized in trade and commerce, a major portion of their salable commodities is taken away by the Domb who form a trading group.

This, in brief gives a picture of the economic life of the Dongria Kondh. Though, the Dongria Kondh are mainly shifting cultivators, they are also horticulturists. They raise a number of crops but still are crippled with privation due to exploitation, which needs to be checked as early as possible.





Kondh—on the way to weakly market

## CHAPTER IV

### SOCIAL ORGANISATION

#### Family :

The family is the smallest social group consisting in the simplest form of parents and unmarried children. Such nuclear type of family is the most common among the Dongria Kondh. When a son is grown up and gets married he sets up his own house and lives there with his wife and children. Sometimes, if space permits a new room is added to the old house and the married son is accommodated in it. A survey in 7 Dongria villages shows that out of 157 families, as many as 124 families (79%) were of nuclear type and only 11 families (7%) of joint and extended types. Whether it is joint or extended the family among the Dongria Kondh is always unilateral in as much as the persons comprising the family are related through the father only. The daughters or sisters after they are married leave their parental families and seminal brothers and get separated to form part of the families of their husbands elsewhere. In this sense the Dongria family is strictly patrilocal. Since membership is counted unilaterally, that is, by relationship through the father alone, it makes the family both patrilineal and patriarchal.

The next form of the family depends upon the nature of marriage. In majority cases the marriage is of monogamous type, that is, a man marries one wife at a time. Cases of marriage in which a widower or a widow having children marries again and has offspring are also met with in the Dongria society. Though such marriages are of monogamous type the family which it forms can be regarded as combination of two member families.

A woman in the Dongria society is considered an economic asset and therefore, polygamous families, though numerically insignificant are not altogether uncommon. In a number of 157 cases of marriage there were 22 (14%) polygamous marriages and in all such cases all the wives of a man lived together and children were not in any way distinguished according to their mothers.

The family is not only a social unit but also an economic unit. All the able-bodied adult members and even the children above 5 years of age toil in the field and contribute to the common economic pool of the family. Men do the hardest part of economic activities such as—ploughing and cutting trees and women do the cleaning of thorns and thickets in the fields, particularly in the hill slopes and make them fit for growing crops. The men make holes in the fields and the women who follow them dibble seeds into them. Works like weeding and reaping fall primarily on the shoulder of the women. Similarly cooking food for the family is the work of women exclusively. A clear cut division of labour is practised along sex line in the Dongria family. In such a division women are allotted a large number of tasks than men. The formers are more hard-working and are seen busy in doing some work or other continuously the day.

Most of the agricultural activities are also done by women. Collection of firewood and minor forest produce are also their work. Other works which they do include weaving, fishing, and stitching. Felling of trees, cleaning of forests and carrying of heavy logs of wood and such other hard works are done by men. Collection of forest produce such as—honey, resin, arrow-root, roots and tubers etc. is the work of both men and women. Boys and girls above 10 years of age lend support to their parents in agricultural activities and in the collection of forest produce. They also work independently as *Bhatiyas* or contractual labourers on wage basis.



They take part in hunting expeditions and in setting traps for catching animals and birds. Old persons are no less active than the adults. But those who are too old are not fit for any hard labour. Their main work is to watch the children at home while the adults are out in the field for agricultural activities.

The entire family expenditure is controlled by the house-wife in consultation with her husband and grown-up sons and daughters. Both husband and wife go to the markets and Fair Price Shops to dispose of their commodities.

The boys and girls enjoy greater sense of freedom and choice, and exercise it in matters of marriage, occupation and expenditure without any body's interference in their work.

In a strictly patrilineal and patriarchal society unaffected by change to a great extent the unmarried sons and daughters remain under overall authority of their father even though they enjoy some autonomy in respect of their choice in some social and economic affairs. But as soon as the sons get separated in residence from their parents after marriage the scope of their freedom in business of their living and managing their family gets widened and the parental authority gets diminished. So long as their parents are alive no one in the village recognizes the married sons as village elders entitled to deliberate in socio-political matters in the village meeting and their separate residential units as political distinct entities. The link with the parental household is broken completely and the nuclear family of the son is recognized as a full fledged separate entity after the death of his father and the partition of the parental property among the coshairs takes place.

The father-right of the Kondh society debars its women from propitiating own deities and participating in any family, village and clan rituals. It is only the male

ancestors who are worshipped to the complete exclusion of the female ancestors. A male priest presides over all occasions of communal worship at the village level and the patriarch of the family over all rituals and ancestor worship at the family level. The Dongria Kondh society, being what it places the male folk high above the female folk, and even the deities and ancestral spirits receive offering only from the hands of male members. After marriage when a daughter leaves for her husband's house, her father ensures that the family deities do not desert the house with his daughter.

### **Family Relationships :**

Life in a Dongria Kondh family is most peaceful and without conflict and tension. Husband and wife are partners in all walks of life. Both of them do not address each other by their respective names as father and mother of so and so. The husband never shows any disrespect to his wife and seeks her advice in all social and economic matters. Both of them work together at home and in the field, one helping the other in such ways as the custom of their society dictates.

Among the Dongria Kondh the older people are highly respected by the younger people. The children obey their parents and act according to their instructions. The relationship between the siblings is congenial and intimate. The seminal brothers and sisters are tied to one another by mutual help and obligation. Such cordial relationship continues life long and the separation of the sibs after marriage does not dissociate them from their seminal brothers.

### **Nuclear Family :**

The Nuclear family is the basic unit. The head of the family and his wife lead a conjugal life, bear children, rear them up, train them in economic activities and social



moorings and help them grow to adulthood. Marriage of the offspring with those of similar nuclear units expands the sphere of relationship both affinal and consanguinal beyond village boundary resulting in formation of larger social groupings.

Each nuclear unit has in its possession some property, both movable and immovable which all members of the unit enjoy equally to a certain stage. When the sons grow up and get married they hive off and settle down in separate places for want of space in their parental house. The youngest one who is likely to get married last lives in the parental house. The daughters after they are married leave their parents for good and settle down with their husbands in other villages.

Some times back, the institution of dormitory was functioning in every Dongria Kondh village most effectively. The unmarried boys and girls used to spend most of their time in their respective dormitories. It is in this institution they used to receive training under the stewardship of the senior ones in various aspects of social and economic life. But the dormitories have now gone into disuse and the family of procreation has been sole responsible for the enculturation and orientation of the children in life and work of the society. The family has also a major role to play in the realm of religion. The ancestral-spirits who reside in the house are propitiated regularly on many ritual occasions and the worshipping of these spirits and other deities connected with health and happiness of the family members falls on the shoulder of the head of the family.

#### **Extended families :**

Generally the size of an extended family is not very large varying from 10 to 12 members. Each such family constitutes parents and their married sons with their wives and children. The original house having only two



living room lacks space to accomodate all the members of the family. Two more rooms are built adjacent to the old house where space permits for such expansion and all the members adjust themselves in the house. Where sufficient space is not available for expansion the married sons build new houses elsewhere in the village separately from their parents and also unmarried children live in the old house. In the extended family old father exercises authority over the family members and after his death the eldest son takes his position.

### Adoption :

A male child, but not a female child, is adopted by a childless-family in the Dongria Kondh society. In a patrilineal society like the Dongria Kondh, any of the brother's son is adopted to continue to exist the family and lineage, No heir is adopted from maternal side. Only after the child is brought to the family, a formal permission is sought from the village Panchayat,

After the death of the head of the family, the adopted son inherits the entire property like own son and exercises authority over it as per prevailing custom of the society. In case he leaves and comes back to his own parents, he relinquishes his right over property and the entire property is seized and kept under the control of the village Panchayat.

### Marriage ;

The kuvi term for marriage is *Haidi*. According to the Dongria Society like all other communities marriage is an essential activity in life. A man marries to have children so that his family and lineage continue to exist and does not meet extinction. Those who can afford, marry more than one woman. In the Dongria Kondh society women are an economic asset and therefore source of economic prosperity. Fecundity is a virtue and

barrenness is ridiculed. The larger number of children a family has happier it is in the village. They prefer male children to female children because it is the former who are future fathers and procreators of children. Masculinity is a great virtue of man. It is proved by one's capacity of bearing children.

#### Sanctity of marriage :

Marriage as an auspicious occasion, the day on which marriage takes place is a day of merrymaking. On this occasion both bride and bride-groom put on new clothes (*Khadl*) and guests and relatives come in their best attire to attend the marriage ceremony. Whenever boys of marriageable age want to attend any marriage they do so properly dressed with a black Jacket and adorned with torch light held in hand, a sharp and costly knife kept hanging from the waist and an axe rested on the shoulder.

The village priest (*Jani*), assistant priest (*Pujari*), and the shaman (*Bejuni*) perform the marriage ritual and solemnize the union. The house where marriage takes place is cleaned with cowdung and the ingredients required for propitiating the Earth-Goddess during marriage include vermilion, unboiled-rice, incense-stick, rice-powder and mango-twigs. These things are used in the worship in accompaniment of incantations of ritual hymns. The rituals are performed in-order-to sanctify the marriage union and to ward off evil spirits and evil-eyes which are believed to cause harm to the bride and bride-groom.

#### Status of marriage :

Until marriage a boy or a girl is treated as a child having no responsibility and no voice of importance in the council of village elders. But after marriage the



status is enhanced to a full-fledged adult member of the society. In the case of a man he is reckoned as one of the village elders bestowed with privileges of attending village council, adjudicating cases and participating in discussions concerning affairs of the village. In the case of a woman she becomes house-wife having responsibility of managing her family and looking after the members of her family.

Both the boy and the girl are after marriage different from what they were before marriage. Now they are married couple tied to each other with a bond of relationship as husband and wife. They are loyal to each other not only in sexual matters but also in matters of shouldering the burden by mutual help of running their household and bringing up their children and discharging their duties as adult members of their society. As indicated above, marriage is meant for procreating children. In case no child is born due to her some physical disability the wife advises her husband to take a second wife so that the progeny is kept going. The pressure of work is distributed among the members with less heaviness than what was formerly the case.

If a boy and a girl like each other, they exchange presents and sweet words. The boy playfully snatches the cloth of the girl under a tree at a fair. Both sing songs and cut jokes with each other. Pre-marital relationship between the boy and the girl never leads to obscene act such as clasping of breasts and sexual commitment. Such acts are never committed until the union between them is solemnized in marriage. The deviants are somehow tolerated with immediate persuance of marriage. It is also the fact that such illicit sex play never takes place unless and otherwise both the boy and the girl belong to separate clan. However, the Dongria Kondh prefer arranged marriage to any other types of marriage because the former yields a good bride-price for the girl's parents and a good working hand for the boy's parents.



### Incentive to marriage :

As the children grow up the adolescents and adulthood they find out their age-mates of opposite sex and develop a longing for courtship and parenthood with them. Their life-ways and work-ways provide ample opportunities for their meeting in the village, on the way to the fields, in the forests and at the market places. These are the best chances for them to exchange gifts, jokes, and love with one another. Such informal relationships between a boy and a girl grow into intimate bond-ship of love and affection culminating in marriage between them.

They know the chain of events that will take place after marriage and the status the couple will enjoy in society. Their longing for bearing children and tending them with care to adulthood will now be fulfilled. The burden of earning their livelihood will fall on their shoulder and as full-fledged members of the society they will be able to participate in different activities according to the norms of their society.

From the very moment of its birth the infant is set in the cultural frame of the life-cycle. As time passes on it undergoes bodily transformation from childhood through adolescent and adulthood to old age. In the process it undergoes enculturation in its earlyhood and imbibes ideas and knowledge at every stage of life about the manners of behaving and techniques of living.

### Regulation of marriage :

The tribe is divided into number of clans such as *Niska*, *Jakasika*, *Wadaka*, *Kadraka*, *Huiyika*, *Sikoka*, *Bengeska* and *Praska*. This is not the exhaustive list of the clans. There are many more such clans existing among the Dongria Kondh. Each such division is an endogamous unit within which marriage is prohibited. Each of these clans

is non-totemic and persons belonging to a clan do not believe to have descended from a common ancestor. In this sense the clan does not form part of any lineage group.

Whatever may be the fact, there is status hierarchy among these divisions. The *Niska* clan members claim to be the superior most in the hierarchy as they are tabooed to eat beef and flesh of buffalo. The *Jani* (Priest) belonging to this clan is only entitled to worship Earth-Goddess during *Meria* Festival. Since other clans eat beef and buffalo flesh, it is tabooed for the *Niska* clan to receive cooked food from the former. *Huiyka*, *Proska* and *Bengeska* are considered to be the lowest in the category, because they eat snakes and insects. Other than *Sikoka*, *Wadaka*, and *Kadraka*, marriage relationship is not established with other clans by the *Niska* people. Even after marriage, either the boys or the girls have to be abstained from eating beef and flesh of the buffalo.

Each division is strong and rigid. Boys and girls of each clan are considered to be brothers and sisters. A village in the Dongria society constitutes number of clans. But boys and girls of the same village are also considered as brother and sister. Therefore, village exogamy is practised.

Again, the Dongria society is divided into number of *Muthas*. *Mutha* is an important feature of social organization. It consists of group of villages treated as an administrative-cum-social unit. All these *Muthas* are named after each clan according to their predominance. Marriage within the *Mutha* is permissible.

Endogamous restriction is there from the point of view of clan consanguinity. Inter-clan marriage means marrying one's own sister, which is incestuous and may bring hazard to the family and drought in the area. Even primary cousin marriages are not preferred.

The minimum age for marriage for a boy is 20 to 22 years but 16 to 18 years for a girl. But much earlier to this marriageable age, negotiation is pursued even while a girl is born in a Dongria Kondh household. When the girl attains maturity only, the negotiation is finalized.

Mainly for economic reasons marriage is postponed. In fact, a girl in the Dongria Kondh society is bargained and poor people cannot keep pace with the high rate of bride-price demanded by the girl's parents. This invites lot of fissions and clan feuds in the Dongria society.

Physically disabled persons like—deaf, dumb and blind are not preferred to be married. Persons with good physique and less indulged in liquor are always preferred for marriage.

Similarly working and capable girls are always preferred to be married. To ensure capability only, marriage negotiation is pursued from early childhood of the girl. If the first wife is proved to be barren or overburdened, the second wife is brought. If there is no issue from both the wives the male is ridiculed and teased by friends.

#### **Mode of marriage :**

Marriage by capture is in vogue in the Dongria Kondh society. The boy captures the girl of his choice in a place where she is found alone and in this work the friends of the boy lend helping hand. Later the boy arranges a feast and entertains his friends for the help they had rendered.

As soon as the girl is captured she is carried to the house of the boy. The news of the capture spreads wide and the parents of the girl come to know about it. On getting the information the parents accompanied by



their kinsmen rush to the boy's house and confront his parents with a lengthy and heated discussion. However, everybody knows that this is all a matter of routine and finally both the parties calm down and settle the bride-price to be paid by the boy's parents.

Generally the marriage by capture does not fetch a lucrative bride-price. Knowing that they are looser in this case, the parents of the girl find no alternative but finally to agree to the proposal of marriage of their daughter with the boy. After the agreement is reached between the two parties drink is served at the end to the visitors and all assembled at the place enjoy the drink to their heart's content and disperse in a joyful mood. Marriage by exchange is prevalent if, boys and girls of marriageable age group are present in both the households and they belong to different clans. In this type of marriage the question of payment of bride price does not arise. In case, the boy or the girl is physically handicapped, such type of marriage does not take place.

Marriage by service is also practised in the Dongria Kondh society. When the boy's father is incapable to pay the requisite bride-price, the boy serves in the bride's house for three to four years or more until the amount demanded as bride-price is compensated by the input of labour of the boy. Once the amount is adjusted, marriage takes place. Only poor people resort to such type of marriage. The boy in this case gets full support from his would-be parents-in-law by proving his ability and sincerity in work. Although the boy lives in girl's house, he does not come in direct contact with the girl. The girl is well aware that the boy is her prospective husband and she would marry him after completion of the full tenure of his service which is adjusted towards the payment of bride-price. She avoids mixing with other boys lest her prospective husband would take exception to it and there may be trouble for both of them.

### Arranged Marriage :

Marriage negotiation is initiated either by the boy's parents directly or through a go-between belonging to the boy's clan. It is desirable that the mediator may be a resident of the girl's village. In most cases the boy chooses his wife and informs his parents about her. Thereafter the parents start negotiating the matter. The lineage members take part in the negotiation and help the boy's parents until the marriage is performed. Similarly the girl is at liberty to choose her partner and conveys it to her parents who thereafter carry on negotiation with assistance from the kinsmen.

Generally the marriage proposal is initiated first by the boy's parents. Among the Dongria Kondh women are considered a great economic asset and therefore the girl's father enjoys a superior status. Before the negotiation starts it is necessary to take the consent of the boy and the girl and seek approval of the members of the clan.

Infant betrothal is in vogue. When the boy is in infancy, the boy's father goes to the girl's house with the marriage proposal. The girl's father receives many such marriage proposal from various sources. He examines the pros and cons of each proposal and finally yields to one proposal. This acceptance of the proposal is symbolized by his acceptance of wine from the particular boy's father. Marriage is postponed till the girl attains puberty when the negotiation starts afresh. During the period from the selection of the boy to the day of marriage, exchange of gifts and presents take place between the two parties. In the mean time if any other boy captures the girl and takes her away a serious dispute arises between them and heavy compensation is demanded both by the girl's father and by the father of the boy.



After the negotiation is resumed the boy goes to the girl's village and visits the girl's house. If the girl's father is determined to give his daughter in marriage to the boy he offers peja (gruel) to the boy. Giving peja to the boy is symbolic of accepting him as the son-in-law. If after this, the girl's father does not pursue the matter quickly for some causes or other, that is, does not come with his kinsmen with wine to offer to the boy's father for final negotiation, the boy becomes impatient for losing his prestige and gets irritated and threatens the girl's father to behead him and set fire to his house by throwing an axe and bundle of wood, collected from forest with the friends. Of course this is not a common feature.

However, after these events, the girl's father accompanied by his kinsmen and clan brothers proceed to the boy's house to settle the bride-price. After lot of higgling and haggling the amount of the bride-price is settled. Generally it varies from Rs. 500/- to Rs. 750/- in cash and two cows, 30 to 40 kgs. of rice and five tins of liquor. Upon settlement of bride-price, the girl's father and his relatives are entertained with a feast. Sometimes, the betrothed mates meet there and give their consent for marriage. This is how the consent is taken. Both the boy and the girl are called to appear before the assembled parties and asked to stand before them. Some one of the group asks the girl if she is willing to marry the boy. The girl keeps quiet and does not utter a single word. This sort of silence is indicative of her willingness to marry the boy.

Once the engagement is final, both the parties inform their respective clan members about the marriage. The village *Barika* is employed to invite the relatives and agnates from different villages.

In between the final negotiation and the day of marriage only a month or so is left for making all



arrangements for the marriage. The boy's father consults an astrologer ( *Pathania* ) at Chatikona for an auspicious day on which the marriage is to take place. Generally Tuesday and Friday are considered auspicious for marriage purpose. Relatives arrive one after the other, each contributing about 5 kgs. of rice, a fowl, and one bottle of liquor to the boy's father for marriage. The uncle ( Mother's brother ) contributes more than what others do. He gives 10 kgs. of rice, a cow and 5 bottles of liquor. The ladies vigorously gear up their work. Some of them are engaged in processing different corns, others in making leaf-cups out of *Siali*-leaves, and some others in cleaning the house and setting things in order. Similar chores of activities/are also performed at the girl's house.

On the appointed day groom's party reaches the bride's house to escort the bride's party. The girl puts on the bridal attire and the bride's party gets ready to proceed to the groom's village. At the auspicious moment they start with a great procession of relatives and friends accompanied by the beat of drums.

On reaching the outskirts of the village, they retire for sometime and get themselves refreshed by taking some dry-food and water. The mother, sister and other female relatives of the boy then go with a brass-pitcher to the place where the bride's party has halted to escort the bride. The bride takes hold of the pitcher and from there goes directly to the spring *jodi* in accompaniment of the musicians and drum-beaters to fetch a pitcher-full of water. With this water, rice, brought by the girl is cooked in three different earthen pots in front of the boy's house. In the mean time, the Shamans, who have assembled earlier, recite hymns and offer rituals to the ancestral-spirits ( *Dumba* ) in the sleeping room of the boy's house. The rice cooked by the girl is then offered by the Shamans to three main ancestors. With this, the bride is admitted into the groom's ancestry.

Then the bride is taken to the place ( *Kuddi* ) where the Earth-Goddess ( *Dharani-Penu* ) resides. Before the assembled clan members, the *Jani* and the *Pujari* offer unboiled rice to the deity and sacrifice a black-dotted fowl. The blood is sprinkled over the rice and on the head of the bride with blessings for a happy and prosperous life of the bride.

From there she is taken to the threshold of the room where the groom is seated. There one leg of the younger sister of the bride, who stands for the bride is tied loosely to the leg of the groom's younger brother, who stands for the groom. Any leg will serve the purpose, but the legs would be symmetrical. The *Jani* sprinkles liquor over the cord tying the legs and kills a chick by thrashing it over the legs.

Thereafter the wife of the elder brother of the boy keeps a winnowing fan with unboiled rice over the head of the bride and leads her to the groom. Both the bride and the groom sit side by side and the winnowing fan is placed in front of them. The sister-in-law fills a measuring-pot with a handful of rice from the winnowing fan and empties it in the winnowing fan. The groom starts doing the same thing. If it is found that the rice falls short and the measure is not fitted to the brim, it indicates that the groom is to suffer. The same process is repeated by the bride also.

At the end of all rituals, the guests, relatives and friends assembled there are entertained with a grand feast. Young boys and girls of different clans get opportunity to sing and dance the whole night.

Next day, in the early morning, the bride is taken to the spring. The boy's relatives have a look at the bride ceremoniously and give her presents varying from 10 paise to 10 rupees according to their capacity. This becomes bride's property and no one has any share in it.



After this function is over, the *Jani*, makes an image in clay representing Goddess Laxmi *Sita Penu* at the bank of the stream and offers *puja* with unboiled rice. A white chicken is sacrificed and blessing is solicited both for the bride and the groom. While sacrificing if the mound cracks or breaks, it is considered inauspicious and indicates trouble in the economic life of both the bride and the bridegroom.

The superior Shaman *Pat-Bejuni* there after, chants a long series of incantations with the help of peacock feather and unboiled rice to ward off malicious spirits, so that they do not create any trouble for the bride on her way to the groom's house. A fowl is sacrificed to appease the malicious spirits and some unboiled rice is also offered for this purpose. Then the bride cooks the consecrated rice and fowl at the spring and both herself and the groom eat it. The idea of eating this consecrated food is to enjoy good health and be free from any attack of evil-spirits. After this food is eaten a joking scene takes place. All young boys and girls belonging to different clans take bath in the stream along with the bride and the groom and splash water at each other in a joyful mood with obscene words and songs. Old men and women leave the place and the youngsters enjoy to the fullest extent.

After bath, both the bride and the groom being accompanied by the *Jani* and the drum-beaters go near a mango tree and stand under it beside the spring. A new piece of cloth (*Gandapadi*), given by the groom's party is covered around three persons including the *Jani*. The *Jani* recites mantras and the *Gurumeni* (another religious functionaries) sprinkles water over them twenty-one times with the help of a mango-twigg from a new earthen-pot. They go round and round the mango tree thrice and the audience shouts joyfully. This is recognized by twenty-one spirits dwelling in all directions including the mango tree. With this ceremony, the bride is believed



to be incorporated into the clan of the groom. After this, a feast takes place which is shared by friends, relatives, and invitees of the *Mutha*. The bride's friends depart hereafter with tears in their eyes.

At night, the bride remains in a room along with the groom and his younger brother. In the Dongria Kondh society levirate marriage is permitted and therefore, the younger brother of the groom is considered potential husband of his elder brother's widow. It is for this reason the younger brother is allowed to stay with the bride and the groom in the same room.

After three days the bride escapes from her husband's house stealthily to her parent's house. This does not cause any anxiety in any body's mind as every body knows that she has gone to her parent's house as per the custom of the tribe. After five days the bride is brought back either by her parents or by any other kinsmen to her husband's house. She comes back with 15 kgs. of rice and 5 to 6 kgs. of turmeric to please her husband and his relatives. On her return two buffaloes are killed, packets of flesh, rice and turmeric are distributed among all the relatives of the groom. This is how marriage is recognized and formalized. In fact, any individual function becomes a public function in the Dongria society.

Though the people who are well-off observe the marriage in an elaborate manner, the rituals to be observed and the customs to be followed remain the same irrespective of the rich and the poor,

Among the Dongria Kondh the honeymoon is observed in the *Dongar* (Hill), but not at home. *Dongar* provides the scenic surrounding and solitary environment—the conditions which are pre-requisite for the mating and courtship of the couple.

### **Termination of Marriage :**

Marriage relationship is breached only when the husband deserts his wife or the vice-versa. Too much indulgence in liquor, lack of masculinity, carelessness and irresponsibility for the family may force a woman to desert her husband. Similarly barrenness, commitment of adultery and callousness in domestic work may force a man to divorce his wife. But such cases are very rare. In a case, if the wife deserts, the husband demands bride-price to be refunded to him. If the wife is divorced she goes back to her parents and seeks remarriage. The former husband demands the bride-price which he paid at the time of his marriage from her new husband.

In case the divorced woman has children, her relationship with them remains in tact, no matter whether she remarriages or not. It may so happen that in her old age, she is entitled to depend on any son of her first husband, whatever may be the case, any estrangement of relationship between husband and the wife is always looked down upon by the society.

### **Remarriage of widowed and divorced Persons :**

As pointed out earlier, the Dongria Kondh society is polygamous. It is not easy to get young and unmarried girls as second or third wife. Moreover, people do not prefer to give their daughters in marriage either to the widowers or to those persons who have divorced their wives. Naturally those who want to have multiple wives get in most cases the widowed and divorced ones easily.

In this type of marriage the amount of bride-price is less. The rituals are not observed in an elaborate manner. Relatives are not invited in a large scale for the purpose.

In case a man wants to marry a widow or a divorced woman, but cannot afford to pay any bride-

price, the only way to achieve his objectives is to capture her. If the relatives of the woman pose any problem by way of retaliation they are pleased by arranging a feast for them.

#### **Sororate and levirate types of marriage :**

These types of marriage are prevalent in the Dongria Kondh society but levirate is not practised in large scale. Though the elder brother's widow is a potential mate of her husband's younger brother, the latter does not take to inherit his deceased elder brother's widow if she has children. When the age difference between the two brothers is not much and she has no issue, in that case the younger brother may marry her. In case he does not inherit her, she has two alternatives either to stay on her husband's house and enjoy her husband's share of property or she may go back to her parent's house and seek remarriage if she so desires.

Sororate type of marriage is largely practised. After the death of the first wife, the man marries her younger sister provided she is not already betrothed and wants to marry her deceased sister's husband.

#### **Irregular unions :**

Marriage in violation of incest taboo is not prevalent. The rule of exogamy is widely and rigidly followed. Apart from own sisters, village girls are considered to be own sisters and any irregular union with them is considered to be incest. Fear of divine punishment prevents any incestuous relationship.

That does not mean that there are no irregular unions. The dormitory organization in some of the villages in the Dongria society even encourages the married persons to mix with unmarried girls. In the



Dongria society, after a child is born, the mother abstains herself from any sexual contact with her husband at least for two years for the health of her baby. During this period, the married men find it difficult to restrain themselves from sexual intercourse and therefore, commit various irregular unions in the dormitory. As a result some of the girls become pregnant. Of course, bachelors are not exception to such pre-marital sexual intercourse. Whatever may be the case, if after conception, such girls get married and the fact of their conception is known, the matter is not viewed so seriously. The child is accepted as the own child of the husband. But, if a conceived girl finds it difficult to get married and all her efforts of abortion fail, she remains unmarried throughout her life. In that case, she is married to a spirit called, *Kosambiri* to get womanhood. This is called spiritual marriage. Barren woman too, is given in marriage to *Kosambiri* to get child. In that case, a goat is sacrificed to the deity and the sacrificial meat is cooked and eaten by the concerned woman.

### Celibacy :

Bachelors and spinsters are rare in the Dongria Kondh society. The desire to get married and procreate children and be one with other elders of the village is foremost in the mind of every Dongria Kondh boy. Similarly to be a housewife and run the family is the foremost desire of a girl.

Female children are valued most in the Dongria Kondh society, because women are a great economic asset and without them, no family is completed. From the very earlyhood female child is betrothed and engaged. As soon as she attains puberty, she is given in marriage to the boy with whom she was engaged. The boy keeps waiting for this long period with patience

and as soon as he comes to know that she attained maturity, he puts pressure on her father to arrange for marriage soon. The manner which pressure is brought to bear on girl's father has already been mentioned earlier. If the pressure does not work and girl's father breaks his promise, the betrothal is disengaged. In such cases the girls generally lead a life of celibacy.

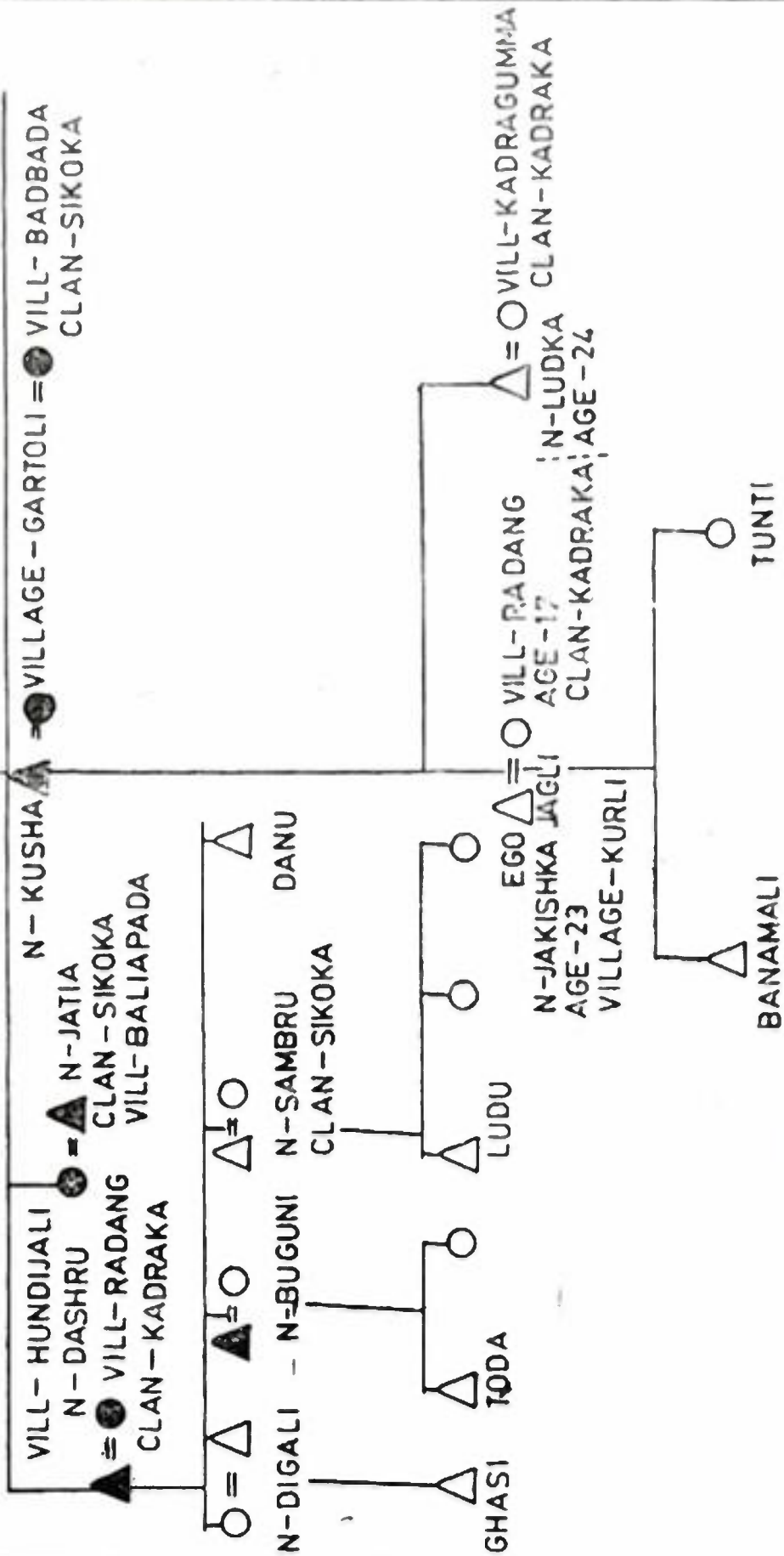
#### Kinship system :

Clan organization, exogamy and patriliney are the three main factors of the Dongria Kondh's kinship organization. Descent is recognized in the male line, and marriage between persons of the same clan is tabooed.

The following tables show the genealogies of two families.

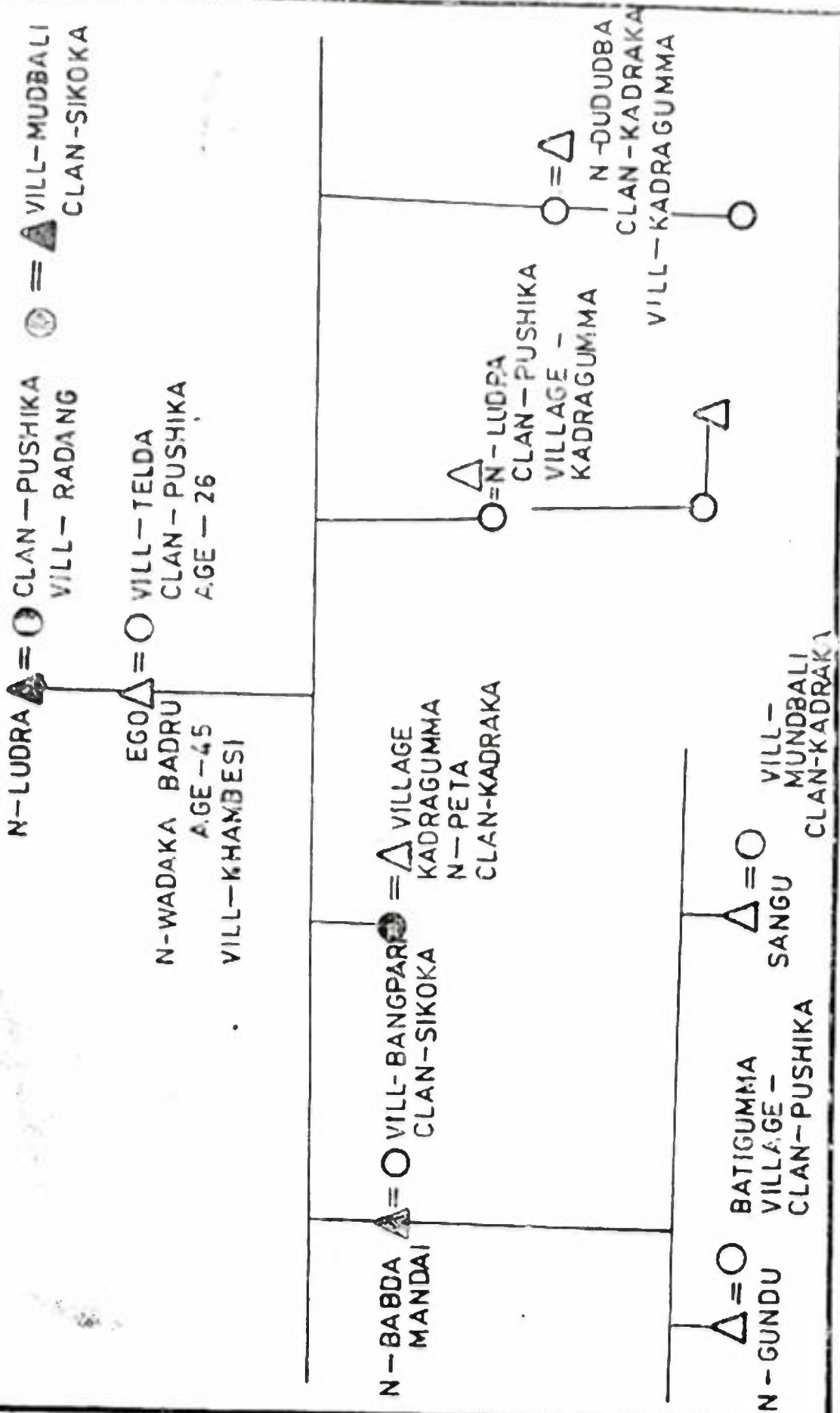
**FAMILY NO.1.**

TIKPOI = KADRAKA = CLAN  
 GOHINI = GARTOLI = VILLAGE  
 = LAKPADAR - VILLAGE  
 KADRAKA - CLAN





**FAMILY NO. 2.**



The following table of the Dongria's term of relationship and mutual address was obtained by means of genealogies.

Terms of Relationship	Terms of Reference	Terms of address
E go's father	Abba	Abba
E go's mother	Aya	Aya
Father's younger brother	Ichhan Abba	Ichhan Abba
Father's younger brother's wife	Ichhan Aya	ichhan Aya
Husband	Dukra or Dakra	Wamu (you) or father of so and so
Wife	Dukri or napenari	Wamu (Mother of so and so)
Elder brother's wife	Abbale	Eh—Abbala
Father's elder brother	Kajaba	Eh—Kajaba
Mother's elder sister's husband	Kajaba	Eh—Abba
Mother's younger sister's husband	Ichhaba	Eh—Abba
Elder brother	Karja Tada	Eh—Tada
Elder sister's husband	Tada	Eh—Tada
Younger sister's husband	Ichhan Tada	Eh—Tada
Father's elder brother's son	Tada	Eh—Tada
Father's younger brother's son	Tada	Eh—Tada

1	2	3
Father's elder sister's son	Tada	Eh—Tada
Father's younger sister's son	Tada	Eh—Tada
Mother's elder sister's son	Tada	Eh—Tada
Mother's elder brother's son	Tada	Eh—Tada
Ego's Elder's sister	Wenda	Nana
Father's Elder brother's daughter	Nana	Eh-Nana
Mother's Elder sister's daughter	Nana	Eh-Nana
Wife's Elder brother's wife	Nana	Eh-Nana
Ego's younger brother	Unam Nanju	Budda
Younger sister	Unam Nari	Boi
Elder daughter	Wenda Boi	Boi ( Called in her name )
Younger daughter	Unam Boi	Boi -do-
Younger brother's daughter	Boi	Unam Boi
Younger sister's daughter	Bhanji	Boi ( Called in her name )
Son's wife	Maga	Boi
Father's Elder brother's daughter	Boi	Eh-Boi
Father's Elder sister's daughter	Boi	Eh-Boi
Father's younger brother's daughter	Boi	Eh-Boi



1	2	3
Father's younger sister's daughter	Boi	Eh-Boi
Father's younger brother's daughter	Boi	Eh-Boi
Father's younger sister's daughter	Boi	Eh-Boi
Mother's elder brother's daughter	Nana	Eh-Boi
Wife's younger brother's wife	Boi	Eh-Boi
Eldest son	Kajja Mila	Ade (or called in his name)
Younger son	Unam Mila	-do-
Father's elder sister's husband	Mama	Mama
Father's younger sister's husband	Mama	Ade-Mama
Mother's brother	Mama	Ade-Mama
Mother's mother	Aji	Eh-Aji
Grand father	Tadi	Tadi
Grand father's wife	Aji	Aji
Grand father's elder sister	Amma	Eh-Amma
Grand father's younger sister	Amma	Eh-Amma
Great Grand father	Tadi	Tadi
Great Grand father's wife	Aji	Aji
Father-in-law	Abba	Abba
Mother-in-law	Amma	Amma
Elder brother-in-law	Mesenju	Eh-Abba

Clan exogamy and the recognition of kinship through the father's line, still primarily govern the kinship and matrimonial organization of the tribe. Clan exogamy may indeed be practically the sole principle of matrimonial eligibility among the Dongria Kondh, with only one exception, namely, the prohibition against marriages between persons whom society regards as having parents-progeny relationship.

The Kinship system of the Dongria Kondh, is broadly speaking, of the kind known as classificatory. The fundamental feature of this system is the application of the same relationship term in addressing most, though not all persons of the same generation and sex. It may be mentioned here that the terminology used by the Dongria Kondh is no longer purely classificatory; for certain distinctions, as is seen from the above mentioned tables, are now made in the terms used for near and distant relatives of the same category.

These Kinship nomenclatures reveal that the Dongria Kondh use 'Eh', 'Ade' while addressing various relatives. Sometimes these words 'Eh' 'Ade' are prefixed or suffixed, but they are employed almost for all types of kins irrespective of age and sex. Some of these terms of address are also employed in addressing another, even unrelated persons of the same sex and generation as the relative or relatives to whom the term of address is appropriate. From the above list it is revealed that the Dongria Kondh apply the same kinship term in addressing a number of relatives of the same generations and sex.

The above list also reveals that the Dongria Kondh use the same term in addressing some relatives who stand one degree higher as well as certain other relatives who stand one degree lower than himself in the pedigree.

### Kinship and its extention :

Kinship has penetrated into the other aspects of culture in various ways but the institution of kinship has got closer connection with the other institutions like—the family, the marriage, economic organization and the institutional way of life

At different levels, the kinship structure merges with marriage and family structures. For example; at the time of bride capture from a different clan, the clan brothers (clan-consanguineous) try to have the girl for their brother. On the other hand the girl's consanguineal kins try to protest the capture. Here, at this time marriage presentation embraces a good deal of kinship relations. Moreover, at the death ceremony or on the occasion of *Meria Parah* all the kins (Affinal and consanguineal) come and join in the feast and in the ceremony.

Besides this, family is the root of each kinship tie and the family members help a boy or a girl to establish relationships with other people.

Moreover, the closer the kin tie the closer is the interaction which ultimately helps in exploiting the resources of the nature. Mutual exchange of labour, gifts and services become possible only through kinship tie.

Analysis of patterned mode behaviour can be made on the basis of gifts and counter gifts which embrace a wide field of situations, interactions and ceremonial activities besides, certain particular activities at the time of shifting cultivation and all other economic, political and ritual cooperations. Kinship embodies cooperation and mutual help. All these can be interpreted in terms of the three theories of gift exchange.

- a) Gift received for the gift given.



b) Motivation to extent gifts.

c) Motivation to receive gifts.

These three theories of Marcel Maurs can be analysed vividly in order to interpret the patterned kinship ties. Through this gift exchange analysis the patterned kinship tie is better comprehended and explained.

At the time of marriage and mortuary ceremony, the maternal uncle must be present with his major gifts for the marriage of his nephew or neice. This includes either a cow or a buffalo or a goat, two to three number of hens, vegetables, pulses and one or two tins of wine. At the time of these ceremonies, the role of some kinship members are more patterned and the kinship behaviour is nothing but an obligation which can be put into the formula of Nadel like ;

A r B

But  $r = a, b, c, d, e \dots n$ , types of behaviour and obligations.

: : r is nothing but a number of behaviours

$\therefore$  r stands for a, b, c, d, e—n

=summation of behaviours.

As A is related to B and relations r is nothing but different behaviours.

A is tied with B

and A & B relationship is nothing but patterned mode of behaviour.

Maternal uncle and nephew relationship is there due to the different behaviour of the uncle to the nephew and vise-versa.

As is observed in all the phases of shifting cultivation most of the members of a clan (*kuda*) join and

work in the field on basis of terms. Each man gets food for the whole day and the clan members participating the occasion get ten rupees for taking liquor. Thus the *Kuda* relationship is another patterned relationship.

Besides this, the inter-clan patterned relationship is of another type, where, at the time of *Meria Parab* one clan members institute the festival where other clan members come and they are entitled to sacrifice the buffalo. They also take share in the feast and amusement. This is wide type of patterned relationship at the level of the tribe as a whole, Presentations and counter presentations are involved here too.

Above all, other patterned relationships are there between husband and wife, father and son, brother and sister, even between two age mates and sexmates of equal sex.

#### **Joking relationship :**

Jests and jokes and certain modes of speech suggestive of conjugal familiarity are freely used between persons related to each other as grand parents and grand child (In the classificatory sense) among the Dongria Kondh and improper relations between such relatives are thought lightly by the society. It is also noticed that similar jokes are freely allowed between a man and his elder brother's wife and great lassitudes are permitted between these relatives, because it is seen in the Dongria Kondh society that, a widow's deceased husband's younger brother has the first choice of her hand in marriage.

#### **Avoidance relationship :**

Avoidance relationship is not there in actuality between two particular individuals. Girls try to avoid the young men for they may be captured as their wives. The younger brother's wife addresses her husband's elder

brother as '*Tada*' and sometimes, if she needs, she can take permission to go anywhere. Moreover, they work together in the same field and manage to do their domestic work in the same household. The elder brother is treated as her own elder brother and he is never avoided. It is indicative of the fact that, a woman is too free in the Dongria Kondh society. Thus avoidance relationship is not at all a rigid pattern or tradition in the Dongria Kondh society.

#### **Behaviour towards non-relatives :**

The behaviour of the Dongria Kondh towards their community members who are neither affinal or consanguineal relatives is also not strange. They never misbehave, rather, consider them as members of the same community. This attitude towards every one binds them together both in day-to-day life and even in the level of social life as a whole.

In spite of this attitude, sometimes, dispute arises between clans regarding bride-capture and payment of bride-price. This feud goes to the extent of quarrelling and assulting between males. But no repulsive attitude is taken against the females.

The females therefore, become the mediators and play a greater role in solving and subsiding the feuds arising out of different situation.

Even though there is no kinship relationship, the non-relatives are treated as kin members and considered to be the members of the same ethnic group.

#### **Bond friendship :**

Besides this, other kind of friendships are established in the Dongria Kondh society. People of same age group establish '*Sai*' relationship for which ceremonial and occasional presentation are exchanged.



This is also prevalent among the females in the local name of 'Adi'. The bond friends call each other as 'Silurbani' though they are addressed differently by their parents.

To extend this kin relationship bond-friendship is also established with the people of the Domb community. Though the Domb are considered to be untouchables, the Dongrias treat them as members of their society because being neighbours. With this feeling, bond friendship is established ceremoniously with the exchange of gifts and counter-gifts. Though it is a fact that, the Dongria Kondh are exploited basing on this relationship, still it is pursued to encompass the Domb to be the members of their society as real occupants of the *Niyamgiri* hills.

Thus the non-relatives, whether the Dongria Kondh or the Domb are entangled by a type of friendship which is ritualized and known as ritual friendship. In wider sense, the Dongria Kondh society has no non-relatives and everybody is a relative to other.

**Interpersonal  
relationship :**

**Social relationship  
and groups :**

This society, organized by the Dongria Kondh is based basically on interpersonal relationship. Some of these relationships are stereotyped basing on which the society functions and certain relationships are acquired in the day-to-day life. A Dongria Kondh, born in his society learns first these stereotyped or standardized relationships which he exhibits in due course in the wider sphere of his society. Family is the smallest organization in the society from which a Dongria Kondh, right from his birth learns the behavioural patterns. Through marriage the relationship is further widened and thereby

a social relationship develops between the members of the villages and the *Mutha*. Family, clan, village, intra-village of *Mutha* and inter-*Mutha* are the various organizations in the society within which social interaction takes place and a stereotyped social relationship develops. Certain formal relationships also develop beyond the fixed organization with other communities of the society and social interaction also takes place with these groups. Social interaction takes place with equal proportion both within the group and outside the group.

### Youth Organization :

The youth organization centres round the institution of bachelors' and spinsters' dormitory. The common term used for dormitory house is *Dhangdi-sala* or *Adasbetta*. The dormitory house in size is smaller than that of ordinary houses in the village. It is located at one of the extreme ends of the village near the stream. The house is kept on repair and thatched every year by the unmarried boys (*Dhangda*) of the village. The *Dhangdi-sala* is meant for the unmarried girls who spend their night at the place and sing and dance in open space in front. It is the place where the unmarried boys meet with the girls and dance and sing with them. Even the married men sometimes join the girls in the dancing and singing and mix with them freely.

The institution is losing its importance. In fact in some villages it has disintegrated. One main reason for this is that the young girls for whom the institution is maintained are not available in those villages. This institution is functioning in full swing in those villages where the young girls are present in large number. It is to those villages that the young boys of different villages visit at night to spend time with girls. The *Dhangdis* are very liberal in this matter and allow free mixing between the boys and the girls within limits of social rules and sanctions concerning marriage.





Kondh—Bond friends (Sai)





## CHAPTER V

## LIFE CYCLE

## Reproduction :

After marriage pregnancy (*Milaya-mane-Futata*) is very much welcome, because according to the Dongria belief pattern, as one of their ancestors is likely to be born. It provides physical evidence of a married couple's fecundity and inevitable parenthood in the society, and thereby the couple feels elated because the husband and wife, would be attaining the statuses of *Abba* and *Aiya*. Pregnancy of a woman portends the addition of an extra member in the family who is expected to increase the manpower in the family which is essential for economic betterment in future. Birth of child is believed to be the outcome of the combined blessings of the Supernatural Powers. Longing for children, irrespective of any sex is very common in the Dongria society. Though a male child is preferred, baby of any sex is considered to be the blessed child of *Darani-Penu*. "*Na wadi Dukri Milaya mane-Fututa*" (It means my wife is pregnant, she will give birth a child and therefore, she is a rich woman now). This the husband speaks boastfully before others.

On the other hand, if a woman does not conceive even after two to three years of marriage, she is despised by her husband and members of his clan. The husband sometimes, takes recourse to the application of indigenous medicines purged with magical rite by the *Dishari* (Medicine man) for pregnancy. If it fails, she is suspected of being barren. Barrenness is regarded as a stigma and hence an unfortunate phenomenon. No scientific treatment is undertaken for its redemption. The only alternative for the issueless Dongria woman is to make a vow that she will offer a goat or a lamb for sacrifice during *Ghanta Parab* before the *Darani Penu* in the event of birth of a child.

Cessation of menses, nausea, giddiness and vomiting are primary indications of pregnancy but later on the pregnancy is confirmed with the usual abdominal protuberance. The last month of cessation of menstrual flow is taken to be the first month of conception and in-order-to calculate the date of birth of the child nine months more are added to the first month and during the last month offerings are made as-well-as feasts are given to friends and relatives before the impending delivery of the child. Though they neither perform any ritual to mark the conception nor observe any pre-natal ceremony, every care of the enceinte is taken to avoid miscarriage or abortion of the embryo or foetus. But the parturient is required to observe certain taboos and restrictions for instance :

1. She should avoid looking at the sun or moon during the eclipse. If she looks, the child will be physically deformed.

2. She must not visit the burial ground or come to its vicinage lest she may be bewitched which may harm the child in the womb.

3. She must not go to desolate or secluded places in the evening or night so as to avoid coming under the influences of evil spirits.

4. In her advance stage of pregnancy she must avoid taking up arduous work like—carrying logs from the forest, cutting trees etc. as it is believed that hard work may lead to abortion or miscarriage.

All through pregnancy, the husband tries to shoulder more responsibility and takes care that his wife is not put to hardship.

#### Childbirth :

The delivery takes place at the husband's house—the first delivery as-well-as the subsequent ones also

Usually the delivery takes place in the second room (*Dapa* room) of the house. As soon as she experiences labour pain, the second room is emptied. All the articles are temporarily shifted to the first room or to a neighbour's house to avoid pollution. An old lady of the community acts as a midwife and assists the parturient during the delivery. Excepting the husband other elderly men of own community attend the woman outside until the delivery is over. In case of difficult delivery services of the Shaman is sought who performs an occult rite to waive the difficulty and cause easy delivery. A delivery in a family becomes the concern of the entire village. The villagers render physical, moral and economic help during this crisis.

Delivery takes place in sitting-posture with the help of three to four elderly women, who are neighbours. The midwife cuts the umbilical cord with a small knife (*kati*) and places the placenta in an earthen pot and buries the same behind the house carefully.

After birth, the child is cleaned properly with a piece of cloth and the mother uses cloth pads. Both are taken out to be bathed in tepid water by the acting midwife. Baby is gently rubbed with ragi-powder mixed with boiled turmeric paste to uproot if any hairs, from its body.

#### **Post-natal care :**

The post-parturient mother is not given any particular care. In a nuclear family it is not possible for the husband to keep himself engaged always with the care of the wife at the cost of his daily routine of work as-well-as seasonal pressure of agricultural work. Therefore, the mother takes care of herself and that of the baby to the extent it is possible for her. She cooks the food for the family throughout the period of pollution. But for the first four days the midwife attends



to the mother and the newly born baby. During this period she cleans the room, massages the body of the mother and the baby and attends to such other work as nursing and warming the newly born baby and the mother. On the 21st day, she gets a customary payment of 5 kilograms of ragi or 3 kilograms of unboiled rice.

The mother of the newly born child is not given any solid food on the day of delivery. Up to 21 days, she is not given ragi-gruel, but instead, is given boiled rice and vegetable-curry. She does not eat any green-leaves as it may irritate her stomach. No salt is given to her during this period. A pinch of turmeric powder is added to the curry only. After 21 days, she is usually given regular diet and redgram (*kandul*). Until 21 days, the mother takes care of herself and her baby. She cleans all clothes in the stream, massages and nurses the baby etc..

The pollution period continues for 21 days. During this period the members of the household and other consanguineal kins of the ego are considered as polluted; and the villagers and other members of the community do not accept food or water from the polluted ones. They are also denied participation in any common social or religious functions of the village. The household itself observes certain restrictions in socio-religious matters. Its members do not take non-vegetarian diet, including fish during the pollution period and do not participate in any communal feasts and festivals. The husband and other male members too, do not cut hairs, shave beards or pare nails. No clothes are also washed.

On 21st day, the purificatory ritual takes place. Elderly ladies of the own clan and some neighbours cooperate with the parturient to clean the *Dapa*-room with an emulsion of clay and cowdung. The mother cleans all clothes if she can or else it is done by other elderly women. The child is bathed in the stream for

the first time with the anointment of turmeric paste. The mother also takes bath in the stream and carries water in a new earthen-ware after putting on a piece of new cloth. She cooks food with that water in a new earthen pot.

*Jani*, ( Priest ), *Pujari* and *Gurumeni* ( Assistant to the *jani* ) and a Shaman in are invited on this occasion to perform rituals and make offerings for the ancestor-spirits *Dumba*. The Shamanin draws 17 number of icons of linear-squares with sundried rice-powder before the main post *Tuli Munda* of the house. She arranges other puja accessories and invokes the ancestors one after the other with prolonged incantations. While invoking, when she gets into trance, *Jani*, *Pujari* and *Gurumeni* also start reciting incantations. The *Gurumeni* drops wine on each of the sundried rice balls placed within the line images. When the Shamanin gets back to her senses, a fowl is cut by the *Pujari* and blood is sprinkled over each rice ball. It is believed that the ancestors are appeased through this ritual.

The fowl is then cooked by the mother separately. Cooked rice and fowl are offered as ritualistic food to the ancestor-spirits by the *Jani*. This food is afterwards taken by all the members of the family and the religious functionaries.

On that day, close affinal and consanguineal relatives, members of the lineage and some fellow-villagers are invited to a feast, which is hosted by the family. A buffalo is killed in the evening for the purpose.

The relatives present 5 kilograms of rice, one fowl and a bottle of liquor each, excepting the mother's brother of the newly born, who presents a lamb and 10 kilograms of sundried rice. Members of the lineage and fellow-villagers do not present any thing. On the following morning invited relatives go back. After the departure of the relatives and guests the entire house is cleaned,



its walls and floor are smeared with a thin emulsion of clay and cowdung. This frees the members of the household from pollution and thereafter there is no restriction on their social intercourse with others. Hereafter the family can participate in community religious functions and perform rituals.

After 21 days, mother resumes her normal domestic work, but does not go to the forest nor to the agricultural field to assist her husband until the baby is four to six weeks old.

#### Name-giving ceremony :

When the child is about a month old, the name-giving *Mila-Daru* ceremony is performed. On this occasion, rituals and feasts are not elaborate. Maternal uncle and maternal grand-parents are invited on this occasion.

The process of grain-divination is adopted to select the appropriate name for the child. The maternal uncle brings a leaf-cup full of water from the stream and places it on a grinding stone (*Wali*). The child is bathed neatly with turmeric water and then its eyelashes are bedecked and embellished with eye cream prepared out of lamp-shoot and a dot is made on its forehead with the same. The baby is made to sit on the lap of its mother and is surrounded by the neighbours. If the child is a male then the maternal grand-father takes the lead to select the name. If the child is a female, then the maternal grand-mother takes the lead to select the name. Twelve numbers of paddy (*Kuli*) are kept in the left hand and thrown one after the other in the leaf-cup by uttering the name of the ancestors. Names are uttered as per the sex of the ancestors and sex of the child. And while uttering a name if two grains touch each other, that name is selected for the child. The paddy and the leaf-cup are thereafter thrown in the stream.



After the selection of the name, the mother first addresses baby only once by that name and thereafter others call the baby by that name.

On that occasion a small feast is held where the Domb functionaries like—*Bariko* ( Messenger ), *Goudia* ( Cowherder ) and *Jhateni* (Sweeper ) also participate.

When the child becomes six weeks old it is taken out of the home, as the mother is to move out the agriculture field, forest, market and other places out of necessity. So the child is taken out ceremoniously in a midday by two to three elderly boys ( in case of male child ) beyond the village boundary under the shade of an umbrella on payment of remuneration which varies from one rupee to fifty paise. Only the consanguineal relatives remain present. The child is kept under the shade of the umbrella for 5 to 10 minutes and returned back to its mother. After this only, the child can move with the mother to any place.

#### Ear-lobe piercing ceremony :

There is no formal ceremony for ear-lobe piercing. It is otherwise known as *Ki-ka-patpikamu*. Along with ear-lobe piercing, nasal septums are also pierced. This ceremony is held both for a male child as-well-as for a female child. When the child is six months old, a woman of the village, proficient in the art of piercing is requested to pierce four places at the ear-lobes and septums of the child with the help of thornes.

After pircing, four *Nim*-sticks are inserted. To stop bleeding castor oil or backed-turmeric paste is applied at the injuries. After a fortnight when the wound is healed up the sticks are taken out and the holes remain in tact.

For ear-lobe and nasal septum piercing, the woman is given 2 kilograms of ragi powder. On this occasion relatives are not invited and no ritual is observed.

There is no other ceremony during the childhood. The birth rituals are not so elaborate among the Dongria Kondh.

Excepting nursing and feeding relevant for the child, adult guidance and sponsorship are very informal. The parents remain busy throughout the day and practically get no time to guide the child. Occasionally, to mend the erratic behaviour guidance is given to the child. So far personality formation of the child depends much upon his or her perception of the activities of the members inside the house and outside the house. Grand-parents are rather helpful in this connection who find enough time to amuse and guide the child. The roles of neighbours are also too significant in this respect.

In the process of socialization, when the child gradually grows up to adulthood ( 18 to 20 years in case of a male and 14 to 16 years in case of a female ) longs for life partner as per prevailing customs of the society, Thus he or she is married which has been dealt with in the Chapter, "Social Organization".

#### **Pubescent ceremony :**

There is no specific pubescent ceremony or rites for the girls when they attend their first menstruation. Nor there is any ceremony for the boys when they attend adulthood. Earlier, when the dormitory house (*Adisbetta* or *Hada-sala*) was functioning properly in each village the girl who attained puberty, was exclusively kept for a week in that room and attended by her mother and her sister-in-laws, if any. But now-a-days, since the dormitory organization has lost its importance, the girl is confined in the second room of the hut (*Dhapa*) and attended by her female relatives.

During the seven days, she is considered to be a sick girl and uncleared. She is tabooed to enter into the kitchen and touch other belongings of the house. She

does not participate in any rituals, whether conducted at home or in the village.

On the seventh day, a Shamanin is called to invoke the spirit, *Gangu Penu*, only for the first time, who is supposed to entrap her during menstruation and cause physical injuries.

The girl is taken beside the stream where a ritual is offered by the Shamanin with half kilogram of sundried rice, a pinch of vermilion and a red-coloured chick. The Shamanin utters incantations and puffs intermittently from the girl's face up to her legs. It is believed, by this *modus operandi*, the spirit goes away from the girl's body. To appease the spirit from future attack, the chick is sacrificed and blood is sprinkled over the sundried rice and on the feet of the girl.

This operation is not repeated in future. After this the girl takes bath and gets free from pollution.

#### Death rites :

It is believed that, life (*Jarmana or Jurma*) and death (*Hateyas*) are determined by the Supreme Being, *Darani Penu* who has created this world. To the Dongria Kondh, death has always an evil association. It is always feared and is believed to be the work of the malicious spirits, black magic or the wrath of gods and deities. The truth that death is unavoidable and no one can escape it in the mortal world is not unknown to the Dongrias, yet they cannot face the incidence of death boldly. They fight tooth and nail to save a person till his/her last gasp by administering their folk medicines and by performing all sorts of magico-religious rites. Notwithstanding all their efforts, if death occurs, the Dongrias console themselves and make arrangements for proper disposal of the dead. Because the soul (*Ukodi*), which activates a person to grow, rests at heaven (*Petpur*) after death and



this must be satisfied as per existing norms in the society.

When a man dies his female relatives including his wife and a few others from his clan rend the air with loud lamentation which continues till the dead body is taken to the cremation ground. If this is not done, it is believed that the departed soul would not realize the depth of sorrow of his relatives and would grumble in the other world. When a woman dies kinsmen also express their grief in similar manner.

Immediately after death the body is considered defiled and not touched either by any member of the deceased's household or members of the deceased clan. It is believed the spirit is dissatisfied and moves round the house until cremated and may be harmful to any member. Hence, the Dongria neighbours belonging to other clans if any, are invited to dispose off the dead body. The Domb, though untouchables, extend their cooperation sympathetically in bringing firewood, digging pit in burial ground and doing other sundry work.

Four persons lift the corpse and carry it through the back-door and place it on a rope-knitting cot. to be carried to the cremation ground. The corpse is not carried through the first room, as it is considered to be the abode of the ancestor-spirits. Above the cot, the deceased personal belongings like—tobacco-container, axe, knife, utensils, agricultural implements, small quantities of various cereals and a handfull of straw from the roof of the deceased are placed alongside and the bier is carried to the cremation ground in a procession of mourners. Two earthen-wares with water are also carried to the cremation ground.

After the party reaches the cremation ground, a-few of the community members go for collection of firewood, a-few others remain watchful to the dead

body, lest it might be eaten by dog and jackle and the Domb dig the pit only after the eldest son gives first stroke. A pit about 4 cubits long, one and half cubits breadth and 2 cubits depth is made upon which funeral pyre is prepared.

The corpse is then circumbulated clock-wise around the pyre three time to exhibit the body to *Darani-Penu* for the last time so that the soul of the deceased may remain content. The corpse is then placed on the pyre in such a way that the face remains upward and the head remains towards the east. It is believed that the eastern side of the heaven is the abode of all ancestor-spirits. By placing the corpse in the manner it is believed that the face of the deceased is shown to the ancestor-spirits indicating thereby soul of the former is joining them.

Above the corpse again wood are piled up. All the belongings of the deceased are put on the dead body along with a-few coins (*Taka*). The eldest son first lits the fire with a bundle of straw and sets it to the pyre and others follow him. Until the body is cremated entirely, it is watched, lest it may be a ghost in future. After the body is burnt, water carried in the earthen-wares is poured to extinguish the fire.

The mourners, instead of going back straight to the deceased's house, take bath in the stream with bark of mango tree to get themselves purified. After reaching home old clothes are stripped off and clean clothes are put on.

The ladies too, purify the deceased's house by sprinkling an emulsion of clay and cowdung. The ladies too, take bath and get themselves purified and put on washed clothes. All the polluted clothes are washed by themselves. The mourning period continues for two days only.



The Dongria Kondh observe death pollution for two days. During this period the members of the deceased's household are expected to observe certain taboos. They do not take non-vegetarian diet during this period. During this period oil is not used in cooking as-well-as for hair-dressing. Besides, the male members refrain from shaving and paring their nails. The community members who accompany the dead body to the cremation ground also observe pollution for two days. They are also not touched by the neighbours. No ritual is observed during this period. In the family of the deceased spouses refrain from physical contact with each other. A bit of *Nim*-leaf (*Margosa*) powder is mixed with the ragi-gruel which is eaten during the pollution period. Ripe fruits and crops in the field are not touched. The second room is not used at all during the period. All the agricultural works are suspended for the two days. Villagers also avoid members of the deceased's family and do not accept any food or water from them.

On the second day, mortuary rite (*Dasha* or *Karja-ki-manamu*) takes place. *Jani* performs the purificatory rite at the altar of the ancestor-spirits. *Ghar-Dumba* and *Konda Dumba* are mainly propitiated on this occasion. Two lumps of sundried rice representing two *Dumbas* are placed separately on two images drawn on the floor with *Arua*-rice powder. The *Ichhan Jani* (Assistant to the *Jani*) fixes mango twigs and incense sticks upon the rice balls. while uttering incantations, the *Ichhan Jani* waves a lighted lamp around the rice balls, and throws incense powders there a number of times, The *Jani* too, pours wine on the rice balls a number of times and a pig is sacrificed there.

Then both *Jani* and *Ichhan Jani* stand up and utter prolonged chants in chorus and circumbulate around the rice balls. Ultimately the *Ichhan Jani* sacrifices a goat there and sprinkles its blood over the rice balls. It is believed that the ancestor-spirits are satisfied through this rite,



and as a result, they allow the deceased to be united with them. After that, it is believed, the spirit of the deceased does not further trouble or harass the members of his household.

Relatives, community members and neighbours are invited on this occasion to participate in a feast. The feast is arranged in the morning. A buffalo is killed for this purpose. Half of its meat is cooked and distributed in the feast. From the rest half, chunks of meat are separately wrapped up in *Siali* leaves and sent to headman of other Dongria villages as token of death message. This is the way how the death news is circulated among all members of the community. In the evening all the relatives disperse. Thus the ceremony comes to an end.

The unusual cases of death, such as, murder, suicide, persons dying of snake-bite, cholera, small-pox, labour-pain etc. follow different rites. The Shamanins are invited on this occasion to trace out malignant spirits by the help of rice-divination and getting into trance. After knowing the spirit, responsible for such death, sacrifice is prescribed and the spirit is appeased accordingly. The dead bodies of such persons are never cremated but are buried unlike those who die a natural death. It is believed that persons who are killed by tiger are transformed into tiger-spirits. The children are usually buried.

Further, occurrence of repeated deaths in a family is ascribed as unnatural deaths and malignant spirits and ghosts are responsible for them. For that *Aejo-Arpi-manamu*, seeing the ghost ceremony takes place which involves lot of expenditure. About half a dozen expert Shamanins along with the *Jani* are utilized to trace out such malevolent spirits. When the *Jani* is engaged to appease the ancestor-spirits, the Shamanins trace out

pernicious spirits in each corner of the village. Large number of sacrifices are given to appease these spirits. Most of the relatives are invited to participate in this function.

## CHAPTER VI

### LEADERSHIP PATTERN, DEVIANT ACTIONS AND SOCIAL CONTROL

A study on the leadership pattern of the Dongria Kondh throws light on their socio-political organization. The position of the leaders in a society is very important. The leaders not only enjoy status and high prestige in the society, but they also exercise considerable authority in getting things done in the most correct manner. Their opinion in settling quarrels and conflicts is decisive.

The leaders may be classified as traditional and modern depending on the antiquity of their offices, or on their roles. The head of the family fulfills the various essential functions and enforces the norms in accordance with the established customs and sanctions. The community at large is composed of such families and since this is more or less based on kinship ties, each family acts in conformity with an accepted mode. This mode, though authoritative is guarded by custom. This function is further centralized in an individual of higher prestige. These authorises are exercised at four level that is family, lineage, village and *Mutha*. The leaders shoulder all responsibilities, participate in all social activities and effectively influence the life of their fellowmen. In this process this becomes an institution and office turn into hereditary normally. The traditional leadership is based on hereditary status and position. The status is ascribed rather than achieved. This rests upon the formal arrangement of the society. In contrast to the traditional leadership, modern leadership is achieved. The function of modern leaders are diverse. They are more oriented towards development activities. They are progressive and make liaison between government



agencies and the people. They held elective posts under the statutory panchayat system. Modern leaders are amorphous and unstable.

Notwithstanding the inroads made by the newly introduced statutory panchayat in the area of their habitat the Dongria Kondh still try to regulate their community affairs through traditional tribal council which is a fairly effective organ of social control. It is however, convenient to discuss the roles of the village leaders before switching on to the leaders of the wider organization.

#### **Village leaders :**

Each village is a political unit having its own set of officers. These officers are in an informal way the leaders of the village and they have more voice in the village affairs than others. The leaders are of two types, namely-sacerdotal and secular.

#### **Jani :**

*Jani*, the priest, though religious head is also formal head of the village council. All important matters are brought to his notice for opinion and intervention. As the custodian of the norms and social sanctions, depending on the gravity of the matter, he may convene a meeting of the village council to decide the issue or may settle it himself.

He is the formal spokesman of the village. It is his duty to see that justice is done according to the aggrieved or breach of the norm is restored. He participates in all important village affairs such as—rituals, festives, ceremonies etc. At the time of betrothal, marriage, funeral rites in any family of the village his formal presence as-well-as participation is indispensable. He is expected to protect the interests of his fellow-villagers.

In the event of any of his fellow-villager having been offended or assailed by a person of another village he (headman of the distressed party's village) takes the issue to the headman of the other village (aggressor's). The date for the observance of various community festivals and worship of village and other gods and deities is fixed by him. Likewise the date for the communal hunting is also fixed by him in consultation with village elders. As the religious head, he officiates at both individual and community rituals. He can only and does worship *Darani-penu*. He is the specialist mediator between the people on the one hand and the Dongria Kondh Supreme God and other deities. In order to command respect from his fellow villagers he observes the prescribed taboos connected with his duties. Thus the *Jani* as a secular chief as well as a religious specialist occupies a very important position in the Dongria Kondh village. By virtue of his important position and the roles that he performs is highly respected by the people.

The post of *Jani* is hereditary. After the death of the father, the son, or in his absence any of his consanguineal relative becomes *Jani*. Though hereditary the aptitude and the capability to memorise the hymns and incantations are taken into considerations to become *Jani*. These hymns and incantations are learnt in the process of socialization by any one of the sons and then only he is selected as *Jani*.

No ceremony or function is hold for selection. Only a declaration is given to that effect before the assemblage of persons in a meeting of the Panchayat organized by the village messenger.

In case of the same person proves himself to be incompetent, he is substituted by any other adult member of his family with adequate competency. it is also declared before the public. But this sort of occasion

has never occurred. Moreover, a *Jani*, once officiates is considered to be the incarnation of *Darani-Penu* and supposed to be of special nature with all goodness.

The *Jani* does not receive any honorarium for the services rendered for his people. He holds the highest post in the village and it is the prestige only he earns for his services. But during communal worships etc., he is given a major share and head of the sacrificial animals though he never demands.

#### **Bishmajhi :**

*Bishmajhi* collects revenue both for land and forest from each household of the village and functions as the custodian of the fund. He occupies the next position to *Jani* and presides over the village council meetings when the latter is either ill or absent. In consultation with the *Jani*, he fixes up the rate of subscription for different communal feasts and festivals. As an assistant to *Jani* he together with the latter presides over all individual functions. *Jani*, in consultation with *Bishmajhi* levies fine as per the nature of offence committed by an accused. The amount realised in the shape of fine from the offenders is kept with him. His office does not carry any remuneration,

#### **Barika :**

Though *Barika* or messenger is a Domb, he holds a very key position in the leadership organization of the Dongria Kondh community. By virtue of his role and functions he is not only obeyed but respected by all members of the Dongria community.

*Barika*, being the messenger, conveys messages and carries news around the village, summons people to the village meetings, informs the village officials about the same, collects cash or grains from the villagers on





Jani (Kondh) and Barika (wlth half shirt and Dhoti)  
of kurli village

instruction from the headman, and informs the villagers about important events in the village, such as—death, birth etc.. His presence is necessary in all meetings. He always remains with, the *Jani* and *Bishmajhi* on all important occasions and in all village meetings and events.

He accompanies the villagers to deposit land and forest revenues at Bissamcuttack. As per tradition, he wakes the villagers up from their bed early in the morning and enquires about their personal difficulties when they assemble in the *Kuddi* (seat of *Darani-Penu*). He as Oriya knowing man, is the liaison between the villagers and outsiders. He arranges petty loans for the villagers on request. He fixes up rates for each commodity to be sold in the market by the villagers. He is supposed to safeguard the interests of the villagers.

He assists the village youth in the capture of bride. His views are taken in to consideration in the matter of bride-price fixation. Whenever any dispute arises between the clan members, he intervenes and tries to bring about an amicable settlement as all are his masters. If any sort of criminal offence takes place in the village, he informs the police in consultation with *Bishmajhi* and *Jani*. He takes care of the Government officials or outsiders who visit the village. Thus, the *Barika*, though a menial, considered to be an untouchable, is a key person in maintaining integrity among the villagers.

For doing these jobs, the *Barika* collects about 5 kilograms of *ragi* or *kosla*-rice from each household during harvest. Besides, he also collects cooked rice every day from each household.

Apart from these secular leaders, there are also sacerdotal leaders in each Dongria village who too, hold, more or less equally important positions in the village council. They are follows :



*Pujari :*

He is one of the religious functionaries next to *Jani*, who has a specific role during *Meria*-festival only. During the *Meria*-festival procession he holds up an umbrella (*Cbatri*) made of bamboo. He is the custodian of that umbrella and prepares the umbrella himself. He is the first man to strike at *Meria* animal ceremoniously with an axe, and thereafter others follow him. He too, is the custodian of all utensils utilized in *Meria*-festival. He does not get any remuneration for his services.

*Dishari :*

He is the medicine-man who practises occultism and folk-medicine in order to cure certain ailments and maladies. He performs recondite magical rites while uttering esoteric invocations to cure sick persons. His services can be sought by any person or by any family or by the whole village. In addition to these services, he imparts training in his art to those persons who are interested in it. For his services, the *Dishari* charges a nominal amount of 25 Nayapaise and takes those animals which are sacrificed in the magical rites.

*Bejuni :*

*Bejuni* is the Shaman who performs divinations through trance and recitation of incantations so as to decipher the Supernatural Agencies responsible for the malady or disease or death or distress of some sort. She is also the sorcerer and bewitches persons. Her services are needed in individual families and communal festivals to ward off the evil-spirits

In a village, there might be one or more *Bejunis*. The head of the *Bejunis* is called *Pat-Bejuni*, who is expected to be proficient in her art, and thus is treated as the top specialist *Bejuaſ*,



She accepts no remuneration other than the rice supplied for the purpose of divination and the head of sacrificial animals.

Except her specialist role she has no other definite role in village affairs.

#### *Goudia and Jhateni :*

*Goudia* and *Jhateni* are primarily menials appointed by the Dongria Kondh from the Domb community on annual contract basis to graze the cattle and sweep the village street respectively. Though they are menials, they play very important roles in the village affairs of the Dongria Kondh. They too, become the mediators between the Dongria Kondh and outsiders as they know Oriya, and work out the rates for different commodities through negotiation with the latter, before sale or exchange. Occasionally, they also function as commission-agents of the licentiate liquor-vendors in the village for sale of liquor.

Like the village *Barika* they also accompany the team that goes to capture a bride, and act as mediators to solve different disputes which arise out of long-standing clan-fueds. They are invited to participate in the village council meeting and their considered views are sought in various matters.

#### **Modern Leadership :**

The Panchayat Raj system in India has evolved out of the community Development Programme introduced in October, 1952 for the development of the backward and neglected rural sector. In 1957, it was realized that the programme has not brought about the desired results and because of that the community development programmes and schemes could not make a satisfactory headway. Hence in 1957, Balwantraoi Mehta Committee

suggested the remedy. The Committee recommended the constitution of a Three-Tier structure of local self-governing bodies from the village to the district level all over the country.

Accordingly the village or the 'Gram' remained at the very bottom level from which a leader designated as 'Member' is elected for a specific term to represent the village at the Panchayat level. The Gram Panchayat functioned as a Corporate body of members from one or more villages whose Chairman is called Sarpanch—a prolific leader by direct election.

#### **Member :**

Thus apart from the traditional leaders in the village organization, members have been nominated as statutory leaders in the Dongria Kondh society. Each village has one ward member to work as its representative in the Panchayat. The member is nominated by his villagers. He is directly responsible to the immediate government agencies, for reporting important problems of the village. He has to mobilize cooperation of his villagers developmental works in the village. The members are by far the most rich, prompt and clever persons in the village. The fact that the member is nominated by the village, presupposes that he must have some influence in the traditional system of the society, even if he holds no formal position in that system. By virtue of the fact that he is resourceful and opulent, his commands are obeyed and his views are final in decision-making. In some villages the traditional leaders, who are young and energetic are also nominated as ward members. He has full freedom in deciding the important issues mainly the developmental measures of the village and it is noticed that in most villages, the voice of the members weigh more in settling disputes.





A modern leader in new political arena



### Village council :

The village leaders, as men of experience, constitute the inner circle of the traditional village council, called, *Sobha*. But as per the customary practice the eldest male of each household, who is usually the head of the family, is invariably invited to the village council meetings.

The *Jani* convenes the meeting of the village council whenever any necessity arises. The council discusses matters of common interest. All members freely participate in the discussion, which is free and frank. The discussion is generally led by the *Barika*, and thereafter arguments and counter arguments follow. The inconclusive discussions may continue for some days pending the collection of evidence by the *Barika*. The accused persons are called to the meeting and are given a chance to explain their positions. Proper hearing is given to all the aggrieved as well as accused persons. The council may depute the *Barika* and some other elderly persons to make further enquiries in the matter and attempt for a reconciliation if, that is possible. In all matters the council strives for unanimity among all the members. In no case division or factionalism among the members is allowed to be perpetrated by any one.

The matters discussed in the village council for decision include problems such as quarrel between two persons of breach of taboos, commitment of an offence under the influence of liquor, for instance, hurling of abuses on an innocent neighbour, partition of joint families, inheritance cases, irksome love affairs between boys and girls of different clans, cases of adultery etc .

The culprits or offenders are fined ; the range of which varies from a bottle of liquor, worth Rs 2/- to Rs. 10/- to heavy amounts worth Rs. 40/-. The fine imposed is generally realized. In case of defiance, the matter is referred to *Mutha* council. When fine is collected,

generally on the spot or within a specified period, it is kept with the *Bishmajhi*, part of it is spent towards liquor by the members of the council and rest amount is kept as such, and when the accumulation swells up it is spent towards a feast arranged for all the villagers.

The cases of incestuous love affairs, cases of bride-capture, premarital pregnancy cannot be decided by the village council. These matters are referred to the *Mandal* (Headman of the *Mutha*), and the elders of all the villages of the *Mutha*, who are summoned to this meeting decide the matter.

#### Intra-village councils :

Certain matters like land and boundary disputes between villages, divorce and desertion, bride-capture etc. are referred to *Mutha* councils which cannot be decided by the village councils. Land disputes are very intricate problems which cannot be decided easily without a meeting of the *Mandal*. Similarly, as marriage partners normally belong to two different clans, members of which inhabit two different villages, divorce or desertion cases cannot be settled without the intervention of the *Mandal*. Similarly a dispute arises when a girl is captured from another village. The matter of bride-capture at times assumes the form of a riot. When a woman seeks a separation from her husband, her parants must return back the bride-price. Thus in all inter-village disputes *Mutha* meeting is summoned which is presided over by the *Mandal*.

Generally the venue of *Mutha* meeting is summoned in the village of the *mandal*. *Barikas* of different villages intimate the concerned parties and village leaders about the date and time of the meeting. The offending parties first entertain the leaders with liquor. The fine imposed is realized either on the spot or afterwards, that is, within a week. Judgement of the *Mandal* in consultation with



the village leaders is binding on both the accused and the aggrieved.

The amount realized in the shape of fine depends on the gravity of the offence. It varies from Rs. 30/- to Rs. 300/-. Maximum limit of fine imposed in the case of bride-capture is Rs. 300/-. If the boy is found to be guilty. In case the girl is found to be guilty the bride-price is not paid and the girl's father has to pay 1/10th of the normal bride-price to the *Mutha* council. The amount realized for different offences is kept with the *Bishmajhi* of *Mandal's* village and is utilized in the Meria-festival in which all the villages of a *Mutha* participate.

#### **Mutha organization :**

'*Mutha*' is an important feature of social organization among the Dongria Kondh. It consists of group of adjoining villages and is treated as an administrative-cum-social unit. The entire Bissamcuttack Police Station, where our study was conducted, has been divided into five *Muthas* such as *Jakosika Mutha*, *Wadaka Mutha*, *Pushika Mutha*, *Kadraka Mutha*, and *Nishka Mutha*. Similarly, it is learnt that the entire Dongria area has been divided into 21 *Muthas*.

Each *Mutha* has one *Mutha* head, called *Mandal*, who before independence, was directly responsible to the *Raja* of Jeypore in the district of Koraput. He engaged people from different villages of his *Mutha* in various types of manual work of the *Raja* as '*Bethis*' or forced labour. In exchange, the *Raja* offered a turban to the *Mandal* ceremoniously as a symbol of ring-leader in his court during *Dasahara* festival and allowed the *Mandal* to enjoy right over lands and hillocks of a certain limited area consisting of a few villages. Later on, after the abolition of human sacrifice each *Mandal* was allowed to sacrifice two buffaloes near Goddess *Durga* at Bissamcuttack during *Dasahara* festival and the entire cost was borne by the



King himself. That is otherwise known as *Jura Parab*. In fact, the *Mandal* was empowered to control all the villages under his *Mutha*. After the abolition of *Zamindari*, the *Mandal* formally became a judicial head at the *Mutha* level and people respected him too. He still continues to be so. His authority is therefore, now unquestionably obeyed.

The post of the *Mandal* is hereditary and honourary.

#### Inter-Mutha council :

No inter-*Mutha* council exists in the *Niyamgiri* area. Only when a problem arises on issues like-boundary disputes, land disputes, disputes over bride-capture and cases of bride-price etc. the concerned *Mutha* heads sit together and decide the cases by themselves.

However, in deciding all such cases, either at village level or at *Mutha* level (also inter-*Mutha* level) the traditional leaders do not function as autocrats. The delegates invited from all households and villages have equal voice in the council meeting. The village or *Mutha* council is still a formal organization. People accept and abide by their decisions for two reasons—firstly, no one wants to be boycotted and thereby lose the cooperation of the fellow beings in the society and secondly everybody is afraid of supernatural punishment in the event of defiance. The Dongrias believe that an action in defiance of social norms is sure to bring calamity, adversity and mishap on the individual as well as on the family. Moreover, criticism, ridicule, and gossip are primary mechanisms to check or mend or counter anti-social measures. In the Dongria society the process of enculturation is carried on in such a manner that an individual normally remains norm-abiding and does not become a perpetual deviant.

It may be mentioned here that, in the statutory set-up of Gram-Panchayats in the area, the new leaders (Members) have emerged who have influenced the young mass to bring changes in the society in a positive way. No doubt, they have raised their voice, but the impact is too imperceptible in the age-old ideological frame of the Dongria Kondh. The traditional leadership is still very influential and effective and the emergent leaders have not yet gained ground as the activities of the political parties are not very effective in the area.

### **Deviant Actions and Social Control :**

One aspect of common cultural patterns which are part of every system of social action and hence of social system is always normative. There is an expectation of conformity with the requirements of the pattern and it implies the existence of common standards of what is acceptable or approved behaviour. But under certain circumstances resistances to conformity with social expectations or violation of normative behaviour and social action develop. It is these circumstances which make the problem of conformity and deviance a major axis of the analysis of social action and social systems.

In any situation of deviant action in contravention of institutionally integrated interactive system the mechanisms of social control start operating to counter-act the deviant behaviour. The fundamental point of reference in the analysis of social control is the processes by which deviant tendencies and situations are forestalled and the stable equilibrium of the interactive system is restored.

Another point of reference is the interaction context and in the analysis of social control is the social sanctions. On the one hand there are the expectations which set standards for normative behaviour on the part

of the actors. On the other hand there is another set of expectations relative to the reactions of others which are called sanctions. There are two sub-divisions of social sanctions—positive and negative. If an actor in an interaction context feels certain sanctions to be gratification—promoting then such sanctions are positive from his point of view. But if he feels them to be depriving then such sanctions according to him are negative. In this section we have given a brief account of a few actions which constitute deviant behaviour, the social sanctions evoked under such circumstances; and the mechanisms of social control which operate to bring back the social system to the old equilibrium state.

The Dongrias in each village have a shrine in central place in the village street. It is the abode of village Goddess and it is at this place a festival called *Merla* or *Jhakar Puja* is celebrated. This festival is observed normally once in 3 to 4 years. Elaborate arrangements are made to perform this festival. Before the festival is observed the shed in which the village Goddess is installed is properly repaired. Relatives and guests are invited to take part in the festival and a buffalo is sacrificed at this place.

There is another shrine called *Kotiasal* at some distance from the village Goddess in the village street. The husband of the village Goddess is installed at this place. At the time of *Merla* sacrifice at the Mother Goddess a similar ritual is observed at *Kotiasal*. No buffalo is sacrificed at this place but a goat serves the purpose.

The third sacred place is located at the outskirts of the village. It is known as *Jatrakudi*. Fowl is sacrificed on festive occasions at this place.

During her mense a woman is forbidden to pass through these places. In case any one violates this



tradition there will be mishap in the village. The tigers will be active and kill goats and cattle. In addition to the menace of the wild animals the deities will be upset and create dreadful situation. When such cases and such situations occur the sorcerer (*Bejuni*) and religious head (*Jani*) will sense first these divine actions and offer and sacrifice pigeons at the shrine of the Mother Goddess to abate further divine disaster.

The Dongrias follow clan exogamy which means that marriage within the clan is strictly forbidden. The breach of this social taboo is a very serious offence. The contravention of clan exogamy brings not only disaster in village but also puts the villagers to great shame. Thy co-villagers will not look to the face of the person who has breached the social taboo, nor accept water from his hand and cut off all connection with him. Social boycott is not enough for such offence. They will drive him out not only from their village but also from the territory which is inhabited by the Dongrias. They publicly declare that the culprit is not their brother nor their son. The main reasons for driving him out of the Kondh country are that the offender has subjected the whole community to great disrespect and has caused others to look down upon the community. In the cases of breach of clan taboo neither the deities get dissatisfied nor the wild animals kill the domesticated animals. In such cases the social prestige is at stake and the appropriate punishment for such offences is to drive the offender out of their country and treat him as dead and gone.

Cases of theft are considered social offence in the Kondh society. The person who commits theft is summoned to the village panchayat and the village headman as chairman and the village elders as the members of the panchayat adjudicate the case and levy a fine on the criminal. The fines which are collected from such sources are utilised in a feast for all the villagers of the

*Mutha* to which the village in question belongs. For example, Kurli village belongs to a *Mutha* which comprises six other villages such as—Mundbali, Huttesi, Hundijali, Tuaguda, Bondeli and Raniganj. If a feast is arranged at Kurli out of the amount collected in the form of fines from the culprits the villagers of other six villages belonging to Kurli *Mutha* are invited to partake the feast.

There are cases of abduction in Dongria society. If a man kidnaps the wife of another man the amount of fine to be paid by the abductor varies from Rs. 300/- to Rs. 400/-. In case the abductor does not pay the fine he is boycotted. During this period no one of the village will talk to the culprit, invite him to a drink and allow him to take part in festivities. He is also forbidden to go to the places of worship and to attend the village meeting.

The restrictions of social boycott are so severe that it is difficult on the part of the offender to live in the village. He meets the village headman and his assistants and village religious headman and other functionaries of the village and requests them to allow his readmission in to the village community. Thereafter the village people meet at the village assembly and decide the amount of fine which is to be paid by the offender. After the fine is paid the village headman upon the approval of the village elders declares his readmission in to the village community.

Practice of black magic is considered a serious social offence. If a person is found to be practising black magic his house is raged to the ground and he is driven out of the village. Among many tribal communities development of maggots in the wound of a person pollutes not only the person concerned but also all his kinsmen. But among the Dongrias, such cases do not cause any ritual



pollutions. The Domb who live with the Dongrias in their villages observe this pollution very strictly. If anyone in their community happens to have such a wound in his body which has developed maggots he becomes ritually polluted and makes his kith and kin of his lineage group similarly polluted. Members of other lineage do not touch the members of the lineage which is polluted and do not accept food and water from them.

After the wound is healed an elaborate ritual is performed by the members of the lineage including the person who was affected to make themselves free from pollution. On such occasions the chief of the Domb community called *Mandal* is invited to preside over the function. The person who was afflicted provides a piece of new cloth, a little bit of gold, a fowl, one brass plate and a brass cup and a sum of Rs. 20/-. On the appointed day the used earthen vessels are thrown away from all the houses of the lineage, and new vessels are used for cooking food. The person who was affected is shaved and given a fake ritual bath. His tongue is touched with a gold ring when it is hot.

Food is cooked in the house of the affected person and the *Mandal* of the community is served first with the cooked food in the new utensils brought for this purpose. After he has taken his food all others assembled at the house are provided with food.

Unless all these rituals are not observed not only the affected person but also all others of his lineage group remain ritually unclean and people of other lineage groups do not touch them and accept food from them.

Though the Dongrias and the Domb are living together in the same villages the former have not



borrowed these social practices from the latter. According to the Kondh tradition development of maggots does not cause any ritual pollution. Hence no ritual purification is needed.

In every Dongria village there is a spinsters' dormitory which is generally located in the back of the village. Sometimes it is located close to the hill-stream which flows near the village. The unmarried girls of the village sleep in this dormitory at night. The bachelors belonging to nearby villages who come on a visit to the village also sleep in the same dormitory.

The Dongria villages have become heterogenous in clan composition. For example, Kurli village is composed of households belonging to such clans as *Wadaka*, *Kadraka*, *Sikoka*, *Miniaka*, and *Mandika*, etc.. The unmarried girls of this village who spend night in the dormitory belong to different clans. Similarly the bachelors who come from neighbouring villages to visit these girls at night also belong to different clans. Though they spend the night together in the dormitory there is no case of pregnancy resulting from pre-marital sexual relationship. It does not mean that there is no sexual union between the bachelors and the spinsters who spend the night together in the dormitory.

Among the Dongrias marriage negotiations start at an early age. Parents settle marriage of their children by receiving bride-price and accepting liquor from each other of the concerned parties. In this case a particular girl is already engaged with a particular boy from the very earlyhood. If this girl develops sexual relationship with another boy when they are grown up, it is obvious that it would lead to difficulties. The parents of the boy who was really selected for the girl would naturally get upset and not only demand the bride-price back to them but also seek opportunity to assault the parents of the girl.

It is but natural that pre-marital sexual union is unavoidable though it leads to all kinds of trouble and sometimes criminal offence in case any pre-marital pregnancy takes place. In order to avoid these troubles the Dongrias apply indigenous herbal medicines to stop pregnancy.

In case a girl becomes pregnant during her dormitory life the boy who has made her pregnant is likely to take her away to his village with a view to keeping her as his wife. This particular girl is already betrothed to some other boy and in settlement of this betrothal the girl's parents had received the bride-price from the groom's parents. Under such circumstances according to the kondh tradition the girl belongs to the boy with whom she was betrothed inspite of her illegitimate pregnancy.

In such a case the parents of the boy would seek the earliest opportunity to capture the girl and bring her to their house. The co-villagers assist the parents of the boy in this matter. when anything relating to such cases is discussed with the Dongrias they say with great emphasis that "we will catch hold of her and bring her to our house inspite of her being pregnant by some other boy. We have paid the bride-price and therefore, that girl is ours. However, the fact remains that the child (who was given birth by the concerned woman) when grownup cannot speak big things and no one would attach any importance to what he say."

The life in the dormitory reveals that clan exogamy is strictly followed because there is strong negative social sanction against clan incest. But pre-marital sexual relationship which does not violate the clan exogamy is not an objectionable act.

Tribal councils are fairly effective organs of social control. The Dongrias regulate their community affairs through these traditional tribal councils. The



village council and *Mutha* council are formal or institutionalised bodies which of course function in informal ways. Breach of social norms, particularly those relating to sex, divorce or separation, bride-price and bride-capture and such other offences occur mostly due to alcoholic addiction. These are dealt with by their councils and the offenders are punished as per the social sanctions and customary laws.

Further, the attributes of tribal status—namely linguistic, social, ritual and jural are conceived in terms of community sentiment, community authority and community life. Everything, which is of significance to the Dongrias derives its validation from their value system. The importance of the Dongrias as a cooperative group partially emerges from the fact that about 55 percent of the kinship ties are distributed within the vicinage group. If all the real and fictitious kinship ties in a village are taken into account the whole village emerges as a close-knit kin group with only a few isolates. In fact, the atmosphere which prevails in the village is entirely egalitarian and community works like an organic whole.

It is through this composite and organic social life as well as through the process of socialization an individual learns socially prescribed modes of behaviour and accordingly internalizes the existing norms and mores of the society. He too follows the examples of his elders and shows eagerness to earn public reputation by conforming and adhering to the social norms, customs, mores, taboos and sanctions. In fact, public opinion in a cohesive society has a tremendous impact in shaping the personality of a person in the Dongria Kondh society. Criticism, ridicule and gossip are primary mechanism in curbing anti-social activities. In a grievous situation like adultery or marriage outside the tribe, the society punishes the transgressor to the extent of ostracism. Hence, any action in defiance of social norms is avoided, and norms are adhered to.



Norms are obeyed as per prescribed codes of conduct lest one may earn the wrath and indignation of supernatural powers, which may cause sickness, suffering, wants, misery and even death. This fear of supernatural punishment makes a man more conscious of his duties and obligations for the society. In this connection the following case studies are cited below.

*Case No. 1 :* In the year 1969, Gultu Jakasika, aged 35 years, of Kurli village committed adultery with the wife of Adi Jakasika, aged 37 years of the same village. When Adi came to know about it he threatened to behead his wife. Despite this the illicit relationship continued.

In the month of December, the villagers in a group went to a distant forest for collection of grass used for making broomsticks. While returning Gultu and Adi's wife were found absent. Adi located them in a pit and became enraged. He rushed to behead Gultu with his axe. Gultu retaliated and both were injured.

Next day, Adi sent his wife to his father-in-law's house. Gultu could not escape the public defamation. He was teased and hooted.

After four months of this incident, Adi's wife expired as a result of miscarriage which Adi did not know. Gultu's son too suffered from small-pox and died. Gultu completely lost his balance and vowed before *Pat-Bejuni* of Khambesi village to sacrifice a buffalo in the next *Ghanta Parab* in honour of the Goddess *Takrani* to save his second son. For this offence he spent Rs. 430/- to appease the *Penu*.

*Case No. 2 :* Kamlu Jakasika, aged 45 years of village Kurli is a drunkard and has a special taste for sago-palm juice. It is tabooed to take Sago-palm juice from a new

tree until a ritual is performed in the month of October. There was one such palm tree which belonged to Jagli Jakasika of the same village. Kamlu stealthily climbed the tree one evening. While climbing he fell down from the tree. Since, it was dark at that time and there was no body on the *Dongar* and hence none could help him. He lay unconscious until his family members found him there. He was carried home and given treatment. Even though he was cured he, became lame.

Therefore, it is ardently believed that Supernatural punishment is more severe than that which is awarded by the tribal councils. Hence, people are more careful about their own conduct and their course of actions.

## CHAPTER-VII

### Religious beliefs and Practices :

Religion, like the religion of other Orissan tribes centres round the propitiation of gods, goddesses, tutelary deities, spirits, manes and natural objects. The Dongria Kondh are animists and polytheists, and conceive of a large pantheon of Supernatural Beings who control their whole life. Religion has two inter-related constituents, beliefs and practices. Belief is the mode of conception and ritual is the mode of action. The rituals are the starting points of major actions of a society. They throw light on social relations expressing the structural arrangements of the society.

The whole life of the Dongria Kondh—economic, social and political, is pervaded by their religion. Their religion consists of regular propitiation of gods, spirits and manes and performance of rituals. Propitiation is done through appropriate rites and sacrifices, charms and spells. They always remain submissive and dutiful to the supernatural entities, but invariably entertain some misgivings and mistrust towards the malevolent spirits.

To the Dongria Kondh everything above, below or around is animated either by spirits or by a spiritual energy of immense power. They believe that the spirits of the numerous native hills, forests and stream etc. are the ever multiplying spirits of dead human beings, all seeking food and drinks. In order to get rid of the evil intention and designs of these spirits, and in order to protect themselves and their scanty earthly possession the Dongria Kondh try to establish a friendly relation with the spirits through appropriate rites and rituals.



## Dongria Kondh Pantheon :

### The Supreme God :

At the top of all the Gods, deities and spirits stands the *Darani Penu* (Earth Goddess), the Supreme Goddess. She is respected with high esteem as the creator of the world and does not ordinarily cause any harm to men, and enlivens as-well-as protects them from pestilence, depravity and evil.

She is installed in a hut in the front yard of each village called, *Kuddi*. She is represented by three elevated stones placed horizontally upon them. Sixteen other small stones which cropped up automatically in due course after the installation of *Darani Penu* represent Her disciples.

She is otherwise known as *Jhankar*. She is specially worshipped during *Bihan*—festival (*Bihan Laka*) and *Meria* festival (*Meria Laka*) by the *Jani* and *Lamba* respectively. During other feasts and festivals she is appeased with various sacrifices. No important matter relating to social, economic or political life of the Dongria Kondh is settled without an offering and a prayer to *Darani Penu*. All rituals start with the worship of *Darani Penu*, the Supreme Deity, safeguarding the life of the Dongria Kondh. That is why utmost care is taken of Her and She is profusely appeased. Women, if, cast glance at Her during their menstrual period, suffer from spirit-possession. That is the main reason for which *Darani-Penu* is installed in an one-sided enclosure, generally not seen from outside.

### Village Gods :

Next to *Darani Penu* are the village gods who are being described heirarchically according to their position in the society,



Darani-Penu, the Supreme-Being

*Kotebali :*

*Kotebali Penu*, a male deity, otherwise known as *Kotiasal* is believed to be the husband of *Darani Penu*, installed just at the back of *Kuddi*, in the middle of the common front yard of the village. He represents a big stone about 2½ to 3 feet long posted vertically with a crossed wooden pole *Munda* at its back. This deity is nicely adorned. Two wooden combs with coloured thread balls are fixed at the two extreme ends of the horizontal piece of wood fixed on the cross bars. As a male Dongria Kondh uses comb always on his tuft of hair as a mark of adornment, *Kotebali* as the husband of *Darani Penu* is also supposed to use the comb. At the back of *Kotebali* a wall of about 3 feet in height is erected to protect the deity from the sight of women during their period of pollution.

He is considered to be the sentry of the village and is supposed to keep constant watch on the villagers and protects them from any mishap. He too, is worshipped whenever *Darani Penu* is worshipped on various occasions.

*Jatrakudi Penu :*

Next to *Kotebali*, is *Jatrakudi Penu*, a male deity, installed at the outskirts of the village. He resides under a bamboo shade (*Chhamunda*) at the western end of the village.

He is considered to be very arrogant and even for a trifling error or negligence He brings drought and other natural calamities to the village. To cool down His temper Shamanin worship Him in each month with adequate sacrifices.

Apart from these gods and goddesses some other deities are also worshipped within and outside the village. They are placed hierarchically by the Dongrias.



*Bima Penu :*

A male deity, otherwise known as *Bima Penu*, is not represented by any image or object, but is worshipped at the eastern corner of the village by the *Jani* and the *Shamanin*. He is associated with agriculture and bumper crops.

*Lahi Penu :*

A male deity, otherwise known as *Dongar Penu* who does not have any shrine nor is represented by any object, and is worshipped appropriately by the *Shamanins* during April-May (*Baisakh Lenju*) after which trees are felled in the swidden. Prior to it, neither the trees can be cut nor logs can be brought home for firewood purposes. For the supply of natural manure and increase of the fertility of the soil, He is worshipped with adequate sacrifices after which "Felling of trees" ceremony (*Khotla-perpa*) takes place.

*Takrani Penu :*

She is an important female deity. She is supposed to reside at one end of the village, but she is supposed to cause infectious diseases and accidents. She is supposed to cause small-pox, cholera etc. in the village and animal diseases, if dissatisfied. She, therefore, is communally worshipped in the month of November (*Pandu-Lenju*) with elaborate rituals and sacrifices. Votive offerings are made to Her by an individual who suffers from such diseases.

*Niyam-Raja Penu :*

He is a male deity, who is represented by a sword, worshipped during *Dasahara* and *Jura Parab*. In the temple of Goddess *Durga* at Bissamcuttack, this sword representing *Niyam Raja* used to be worshipped by the *Dongria Kondh* during *Jura Parab*. This festival has



A change from human sacrifice to pig sacrifice

become obsolete. Now the *Niyam Raja* is worshipped at the village, who is supposed to save the people from unnatural deaths and accidents. This deity does not have any permanent abode in the village.

Other than these major deities there are minor deities who too are worshipped periodically.

#### *Lada Penu :*

She is the forest deity who resides under a banyan tree at the entrance of the forest, and is worshipped along with *Lahi Penu* in the month of May (*Sarua*) before commencement of communal hunting. Customarily, the villagers go to the forest on any occasion, offer a leaf to Her as a token of reverence to be saved from any possible mishap in the forest. While going for and returning from hunting expedition, she is properly worshipped with adequate sacrifices by the *Jani*. She is believed to save the villagers from the wild animals and helps the villagers in getting games.

#### *Hira Penu :*

Hira Penu is a female deity considered to be the maid servant of *Takrani Penu*. She inflicts pain on and tortures the children if not properly worshipped. Along with *Takrani Penu* she is worshipped.

Next in hierarchy are the household Spirits, called, *Dumba*. The *Dumbas* are appeased due to their benevolence and munificence, and are termed as *Penu* too

#### *Household spirits :*

It has been mentioned earlier that, a wooden post (*Tuli Munda*) inside the sleeping apartment of each house represents the "Ancestor Spirits". Household spirits are mostly named after their ancestors who are also



considered as *Penu*, who can be dreadful if not appeased properly.

*Lai-Penu :*

A female spirit who brings property to the house if worshipped properly during the month of September (*Dela Lenju*) by the *Bejuni*.

*Sita Penu :*

*Sita Penu* is a female spirit who is represented by a dry gourd (*Tumba*), which is hung from the ceiling at the western corner of the sleeping room, containing various sorts of seeds. She is considered to be the Goddess *Laxmi* and worshipped during the full-moon-day in the month of December (*Push*) after all the crops are harvested. The housewife worships *Sita Penu* with all new seeds which are kept in the *Tumba* and the old seeds mixed with new seeds are sown again.

*Danda Penu :*

It is a female spirit who is represented by another small post in the sleeping room. She is the guardian deity of the grainaries (*Duli*). After she is worshipped in the month of September (*Dela lenju*), the grainaries are replastered and grains like *kosla* and *ragi* are kept.

*Chhatar Penu* is a male spirit, who is represented by another post (*Munda*). He is worshipped by the *Bejuni* inside the house during *Meria* festival. He is very pernicious and brings diseases if not properly appeased. To please Him a buffalo is sacrificed.

*Banjari Penu* is a male spirit equally powerful like *Chhatar penu*, and is represented by a *Munda* (post) and is appeased with a cow to avert epidemic in the family. He too, is worshipped by the *Bejuni* in the month of January (*Magh*) when *Meria* festival takes place.

*Banjarian Penu* is a female spirit who is represented by a hanging wooden container which is fastened around the neck of cow (*Lodla*) which is kept hanging most often at the corner of the sleeping room. This instrument contains various kinds of seeds and is worshipped along with *Sita Penu*. This spirit is believed to ward off evil eyes on household possessions if properly appeased with a pigeon by the *Bejuni*.

*Haru penu* is a female spirit who is by no object, and is worshipped along with *Banjarain penu* to ensure good harvest. She is appeased with the blood of two chicken.

*Ghungi penu* is a female spirit, who resides in the stream, is considered to be an ancestor-spirit. She is worshipped in the month of August (*Sraban Lenju*) when the stream is turbulent. She is believed to tease the young girls and, therefore, appeased with a chick by the *Bejuni*.

*Bhairo Penu* is a male spirit and is very harmful and brings accidental deaths in the family if not appeased with a major sacrifice like a cow by the *Bejuni* during *Meria* festival. He is represented by a big wooden post in the sleeping room.

These ancestor-spirits are worshipped by the *Bejuni* mainly. But all these spirits are also invoked ceremoniously by the *Jani* during the *Meria* festival. For each spirit a separate icon is prepared with sundried rice powder and a lump of sundried rice is placed over which blood of a chick is sprinkled. With this offering, they are supposed to remain satisfied and save the household members from odds and evils.

These ancestor-spirits, termed as family spirits are worshipped in each Dongria family. Besides, there are various other guardian-spirits of the *Bejunis* who are worshipped by the *Bejunis* themselves and provided with sacrifices (*Tapu*) to be satisfied.

Each *Bejuni* has her own Guardian spirits. Such spirits are numerous. Some of them may be specially named as—*Jatiguru, Silka Peju, Kaliapatu, Sundar Patu, Kasarani* etc. who are very much dreadful and pernicious. They are periodically invoked by the *Bejunis* and appeased with different types of sacrifices. Each *Bejuni* invokes her own spirits to be helpful in curing various diseases while attending to patients.

Apart from the benevolent spirits, who are appeased with periodical sacrifices, there are dreadful spirits like: *Mieli-Penu, Buru Penu* and *Suka Penu* who intentionally harass people with different diseases and cannot be satisfied by the junior *Bejunis*. The *Pat-Bejunis* (Head of the *Bejunis*) are capable of appeasing them with their profound knowledge of the art.

Apart from these spirits, the Dongria Kondh believe in the existence of ghosts (*Mahane*). Bad persons die unnatural deaths. These persons become *Mahane* and whose souls move about here and there, specially near the cremation ground and in foriorn places. These *Mahanes* are not satisfied with sacrifices, they are controlled and contained by the *Bejunis* who are supposed to have knowledge.

The Dongria Kondh also believe in the effect of evil-eyes or in the efficacy of black magic called, *Pangna*. Any physical accident, loss of property, etc. are ascribed to the effect of black magic and to obliterate it, the help of *Bejuni* is sought. She through divination and magical rites ascertains the cause of mishap. In case it has been caused by a malevolent spirit she exercises it. She also nullifies the influence of evil-eyes.

**Luck and chance :**

The Dongria Kondh are fatalists. Good or bad fortune of a person is ascribed to his or her attitude towards the impersonal powers. Everyone attempts to



please all the impersonal powers, and inspite of this, if he suffers, he ascribes it to his luck and chance. In fact, belief in the chance factor or probability is less in the Dongria Kondh society. It is rather divine power which exerts mechanical control over the failure and success of a person. The degree of satisfaction of divine agents depends upon human action, and the results thereupon are considered to be in proportion to such actions, but not due to chance and probability. There is no method to control luck, excepting keeping the supernatural powers in good humour through propitiation with appropriate rituals and offering of sacrifices. Besides, one has to pay due respect to the social norms.

#### Sacred objects and places :

The Dongria Kondh believe in sanctity of places and sacredness of various objects. They are not believers of idols and fetishes, since most of their pujas are meant for impersonal powers in the universe. But the stones which represent various *Pujas* are meant for impersonal powers in the universe. But the stones which represent various *Penus* are the result of their imitation of the neighbouring Hindus, the Domb. Shrines are considered as sanctified places, and hence not touched by any one unceremoniously.

Accessories used during *Meria*-festival, such as—iron-chain and plate (*Poda-Kant*), brass-ware (*Garia*), and wooden umbrella (*Chhatri*) are considered as extraordinary objects, which are supposed to contain supernatural powers, and as such, these are considered sacred objects, and hence are not touched by anyone other than the *Jani* or *Pujari*.

*Kuddi* (*Sadarghar*), *Koteasol*, *Jatrukudi Tulimunda* (Middle post), corner of the maidens'-dormitory, sleeping room of the *Bejuni* are considered to be sacred places as *Penus*

are installed there. The hill at Hundijali village is considered to be a sacred place as the seat of *Niyam-Raja*. All gigantic Nim and tamarind trees, caves, the hill at Hundijali etc. are considered as sacred objects.

The Dongria Kondh think about and practise religion in terms of immediate problems of their welfare and their families.

### Religious Practices :

The Dongria Kondh perform certain rites and rituals to appease the supernatural forces in order to achieve peace and progress for the individual as-well-as for the entire community. The religious functionaries worship the gods and goddesses on behalf of the community in several occasions. The function of ritual or ceremonial is to express social solidarity, and thereby maintain the existing sentiments that are necessary for the social cohesion.

Religious functionaries in fact, are the representatives of the people to propitiate gods, deities and spirits with a full sense of reliance. They invoke these divine powers through rituals, invocations, offerings and sacrifices and thereby solicit their blessings for the people. The religious functionaries invoke and invite the deities to action through incantations and songs. Invocations are sung in chorus by the *Bejunis*, These are the praises for the supernatural powers.

Animals, such as—buffalo, cow, goat, lamb, pig, fowl and pigeon are mainly sacrificed. Egg is also a sacrificial item. *Lia* ( Puffed-rice ), sweet-meats prepared out of molasses and wine of any kind are considered to be ritualistic food. Burning of incense powder and joss-sticks are very common features in any form of ritual. The Dongrias also quite often make votive offering to various gods and goddesses for fulfilment of desires or on ailment. In any prolonged suffering, vow is taken by

the sufferer to sacrifice an animal. But the nature of sacrifice differs according to gravity of suffering.

Religious shrines are purified with the application of or by smearing the floors with cowdung added with clay. In case there are no shrines, the temporary structures are decorated with mango-twigs, banana plants as-well-as with various flowers collected from the forest.

The ritual specialists get themselves purified after bath before attending to any sort of propitiation. They put on new washed clothes. It is essential for them to undergo fasting on the day of an important ritual.

The functions and responsibilities of the ritual specialists are as follows :

*Jani* :—*Jani* is the ritual head of the village. Each village has its own *Jani*, but at times one *Jani* may attend to functions in two to three villages. This post is hereditary, that is, the office passes from the father to the eldest son. In case the *Jani* has no son, his younger brother gets the chance. He performs all village rituals and is given a special share of sacrificial animals.

*Lamba* :

*Lamba* is also another nomenclature for *Jani*, who specially officiates at the rituals of *Meria* festival. The services of the *Lamba* are requisitioned from the villages like, Bondeli and Bongpadi ect in *Nishka Mutha*. Only male *lambas* are found in the Dongria society. The *Jani* of *Nishka Mntha* is supposed to have immense religious experiences and knowledge which he has acquired through his endeavour and panance. For performing the *Meria* rituals, the *lamba* does not charge exorbitant remuneration but only takes one-fourth of the total quantity of grains collected for the festival, Four of heads of the



sacrificial animals like-goat and lamb and good a share of the sacrificial meat. In return, the *lamba* too, feeds the villagers one day during the *Meria* festival.

### *Ichan Jani :*

The assistant of the *Jani* is called *Ichan Jani* who sacrifices animals, arranges *Puja* accessories and if required, participates in the recitation of the incantations along with the *Jani*. This post is not hereditary but one of the male members of *Jani's* lineage holds the post at the pleasure of the village council. For doing his job, he gets about 3 kilograms of sundried rice and a head of a sacrificial animal in a major ritual.

### *Pujari :*

This post is hereditary. In each village there is a *Pujari* who presides over *Meria* festival alongwith *Jani*. But he plays different role. He prepares an umbrella out of a bamboo collected from the forest in the dead of night, unnoticed by anybody. In the *Meria* procession, he dangles that umbrella to ward off the evil—eyes of the pernicious spirits. He too, chants spells with *lamba* and other *Janis* of the *Mutha* in the *Meria* festival. He is the man who first strikes at the head of *Meria* (sacrificial animal) and then others follow. In other religious functions, the *Pujari* also presides along with *Jani* and *Ichan Jani*.

### *Bejunis :*

*Bejunis* are shamanins who are specialists in divination. In each village there are two to three shamanins. There may be shaman also. But in the Dongria society shamanins are more. Each shaman or shamanin has his/her own spirit to whom he/she regularly worships and appeases to get help during his/her occult practices. Through divination, prayer and rites, the shamans/shamanins get into trance, during which they are believed to visualize and talk to the spirits who are respon-

sible for causing harm to the people. During trance, the shamans/shamanins talk with the spirits and request them on behalf of the victims to free the latter from troubles. When they regain senses, they adopt rice-supplication process called, '*Puchna*' through which they ascertain various types of sacrifices required to appease different spirits. Through rituals and sacrifices the spirits are appeased and thereby the shamans/shamanins are supposed to save people from various odds and evils.

Thus the role of a Shaman/Shamanin is very important in the Dongria Kondh society. On the one hand he/she acts as a religious functionary, by presiding both in individual as-well-as communal function, on the contrary, too, he/she practises both black and white magic.

Generally a woman becomes shamanin who undergoes training for long period systematically until she attains proficiency or spiritually marries to her spirit, leaving aside her own husband. When she attains the perfect stage of divination, she is called *Pat-Bejuni*.

While practising her art, she puts on a red Sari (*uchitrai Gandha*) and uses metal bell at her ankles. She waves a bundle of peacock feather (*Tanya*) over the head of a sufferer to the accompaniment of dance and music.

As black magician, her services are secretly sought. As white magician, her services become socially essential. She is highly respected as diviner. As white magician she charges a nominal amount of Re. 1/- but takes 1/3 share of the meat of the animal which is sacrificed for the purpose. As black magician she takes Rs. 10/-. While presiding over any communal festival she takes 5 kilograms of sundried rice, and two heads of the sacrificial animals.

*Dishari* : He is a medicine man. He applies herbal medicine which are charged with magical powers.

His post is not hereditary. Any body who learns the art may become a *Dishari*. He does not preside over any religious function but is considered to be a leader in the village. He charges a nominal amount of 25 Naya paise for any type of minor treatment. For prolonged treatment, he takes a lump-sum amount of Rs. 5/- and about 5 kilograms of unboiled rice.

#### Family head as priest :

The head of each family also acts as a priest for propitiating his manes, who benign and hence are not dreaded and thus are easily appeased. The *Jani* and *Bejuni* too worship ancestor-spirits of others during certain crises, when required.

#### Regulation and divination :

In religion proper, the attitude of the Dongria Kondh towards the Supernatural Powers is one of the reverential fear in the presence of certain mysterious Supernatural Powers. Dependence, conciliation, propitiation and prayful submission are various means to appease such Supernatural powers to regularly get food, remain healthy, live a normal life for them, their progenies and their livestock. The religious functionaries—*Lamba* or *Jani*, *Pujari*, *Bejuni* are the specialists and intermediaries between gods, goddess, spirits and such other entities on the one hand and men on the other.

The materials and objects required in connection with all rituals are almost standardized. These consist of such simple materials, such as—turmeric powder, husked rice, vermilion, incense powder, wicks, molasses, liquor, leaf-cups, flowers—and birds and animals for sacrifice—depending on the nature of the ritual.



The procedures in a ritual may vary from complex to simple rites, but the general trend is almost standardized. For divination, the ritual procedures include such steps, like-smearing of the ritual spot with cowdung and water drawing of geometrical designs of squares with sundried rice-powder; placing of rice balls within each square mark and putting of vermilion in each such squares, burning of the wicks and joss-sticks and incense, and offering of liquor and cooked rice. For sacrifices the steps include propitiation the animals by sprinkling water over it, putting up of vermilion on the head of the sacrificial animal, making the animal eat some of the rice grains out of those offered to the deity, pulling out of some feathers or hairs from their body and, slaughtering them ; and finally offering the detached head of the sacrificial creature to the God or Spirit. The final step of the rituals is to bow down and sometimes, lay prostrate and pray for health and happiness of the people.

The procedure and nature of the Dongria Kondh rituals are stereotypes. This is amply proved from the materials used in rituals, the procedures followed and the personnels involved in each ritual. There is very little variation in the observance of rituals.

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Sl. No.	Name of the ritual	Date of observance	Purpose	Offering	Deities worshipped	Who worships	Communal or Individual
1.	<i>Ghanta Parab</i>	Baisakh <i>Sarua</i> April-May	Fulfilment of vows and to improve economic condition	As per the capacity of vow makers different animals are sacrificed. Lamb-1, Liquor-80-90 bottles.	<i>Sita Penu</i> <i>Takrani Penu</i> <i>Hirapenu</i> <i>Jatrakudi Penu.</i>	<i>Bejunis</i>	Communal
2.	<i>Salangi</i>	<i>Jaistha (Jet)</i> May-June	To save cattle from diseases & epidemics.	Fowl-2 Pigeon-1 Liquor-15 bottles,	Ancestors	Head of the family.	Individual
3.	<i>Mandia Rani</i>	<i>Shravana (Sabna)</i> July-Aug	For bumper harvest of ragi	Buffalo-1 Fowl-1 Liquor-110 bottles.	<i>Kotiasal</i>	<i>Jani/Bejuni</i>	Communal/Individual
4.	<i>Dhan-Nuakhia</i>	<i>Bhadra (Bhada)</i> (August-September)	First rice offered in honour of <i>Jhankad</i>	Fowl-1 Pigeon-1 Pig-1 New rice, fruits, Vegetables purchased individually.	<i>Jhankad</i> and other evil spirits.	<i>Jani</i>	Communal

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
5. <i>Pidika</i>	<i>Ashin</i> ( <i>Dasahara</i> ) Sept.-Oct.	For ample growth of castor seeds and to save them from insects.	Buffalo—1 Fowls —3 Pigeon—1	<i>Jatrakudi</i> <i>penu</i>	<i>Jani/Bejuni</i>	Communal	
6 <i>Punopadi</i>	<i>Kartik</i> ( <i>Dewali</i> ) Oct.-Nov.	First eating of <i>Kosla, Kandul,</i> <i>Arka, Jana</i> and other seeds and fruits.	Buffalo—1 Pigeon—1 Fowl —2	<i>Jatarkudi</i> <i>penu</i>	<i>Bejuni</i>	Communal	
7. <i>Dongarpuja</i>	<i>Margasira</i> ( <i>Pand</i> ) Nov.-Dec.	To get more crops.	Pig—1 Fowl—1	<i>Haru penu</i>	<i>Bejuni</i>	Individual	
8. <i>Meria festival</i>	<i>Magha</i> ( <i>Maghe</i> ) Jan.-Feb.	For better- ment and pros- perity of the village.	Buffalo—1 Fowl—1 Goat—5 Sacrifice of animals of various types by the vow- takers.	<i>Penu i.e.</i> <i>Jhankad</i>	<i>Lamba,</i> <i>Jani,</i> <i>Pujari</i> <i>Bejunis</i>	Communal	
9. <i>Bihan Puja</i> or <i>Sadrangi Laka</i>	<i>Chaitra</i> ( <i>Setar</i> ) Mar.-Apr.	Before sowing season	Fowl—1 Pigeon—1	<i>Darani Penu</i> <i>Sita Penu</i> <i>Haru Penu</i>	<i>Jani/</i> <i>Bejuni</i>	Communal Individual	



*Ghanta Parab :*

It is observed communally in the month of *Baisakh* for three days. *Ghanta* means earthen pot, and each such pot with flour cake is offered to *Takrani-Penu* along with a sacrificial animal by the vow-taker who suffers from small-pox and cholera.

Accordingly various ancestor spirits, like *Hira-Penu* and *Sita-Penu* are worshipped individually and *Takrani-Penu* and *Jatrakudi Penu* are worshipped communally.

On the first day, the young boys and girls of the village prepare a temporary structure at the front yard of the village with wooden posts and leaves of *Tamberi* (local name of a tree) and under this a clay altar *Duki* of 4 feet in length and 3 feet in width is made. Over that altar a small branch of the *Bel*-tree is posted which represents *Takrani Penu*. On both sides of this two other small altars are constructed which represent *Hira Penu* and *Sita Penu*. All these altars are nicely decorated with banana plants, mango leaves and twigs.

The *Ichan-Jani*, *Bejunis* and vow-takers assemble there with *Puja* accessories. The *Pat-Bejuni* and other *Bejunis* sit in a row, each with a winnowing fan for divination. The *Pat-Bejuni* draws three squares representing three *Penus* with sundried rice powder and piles up a heap of rice ball in each of the three squares. Thereafter all the *Bejunis* start singing in chorus and invoke three *Penus* while offering rice to them. It is believed, immediately when any of the *Penu* is visualized, the *Pat-Bejuni* gets into trance. Until that, the *Bejunis* continue to dance chanting incantations in chorus.

After all the *Penus* are visualized, the *Bejunis* along with drum-beaters go round the village and its outskirts for seven times waving a bunch of peacock feather over

their heads to ward off the evil-spirits. This event takes place on the second day. While going in the procession, the *Pat-Bejuni* throws water with a mango twig from the earthen pot (*Ghanta*) over her head to purify the house from pollution and in return collects sundried rice presented to her by each housewife.

On the third day, as per prescription the vow-takers assemble each with a new decorated earthen pot (*Ghania*) full of rice-flour cakes along with their respective sacrificial animals. The Domb prepare another altar before the deities where these *Ghantas* are placed. *Bejunis* perform rituals like the one that are observed on the first day. The *Pat-Bejuni* frantically dances over a lamb bought from communal fund and gets into trance. It is believed that she is possessed by the *Takrani Penu* and thereafter she behaves like the *Takrani*. When she regains her senses the lamb is sacrificed by the *Ichani Jani* and blood is sprinkled over the piles of rice for three *penus*.

Thereafter vow-takers sacrifice their votive animal on that altar one after the other and sprinkle blood over the cakes in the *Ghanta*. The *Bejunis* simply touch those *Ghantas* in order to purify that.

When all the sacrifices are over, the *Pat-Bejuni* along with her team of *Bejunis* and the drum-beaters goes in a procession to the western outskirt of the village. While the procession goes on, the villagers, irrespective of age and sex roll on the ground to get touch of the feet of the *Pat-Bejuni* who is supposed to be the *Takrani-incarnate*. This gesture, it is believed will save them from any attack of small-pox and cholera in future. After arrival of the procession at the outskirt of the village, the *Pat-Bejuni* performs a ritual at the *Jatrakudi* in a manner similar to earlier ones and sacrifices a pigeon by piercing a sharp bamboo shaft through its rectum.

After this the ritual comes to an end. The vow-takers take away their respective ritualistic food and offer only the head of the animals already sacrificed to the *Bejunis*. The *Pat-Bejuni* alone receives the lamb. All the *Bejunis* distribute rice and head of the animals equally.

It is believed that after this ritual the people may not suffer from small-pox and cholera in future.

### *Salangi Puja (Hada Puja) :*

Domesticated animals are to be saved from the predations of wild animals and ravages of diseases. To save them, *Sala-Penu*, the deity of the Cowshed (*Hada sala*) must be worshipped in the month of *Jet* (May-June) by the head of the household.

A clay idol of either a snake or an elephant or any other wild creature is prepared by the head of the household which represents *Sala-Penu*. The *Penu* is considered to be a male spirit. He is installed at one corner of the cowshed. After being ritually purified, the head of the family worships the spirit with *puja* accessories by uttering the names of his ancestors. A fowl is sacrificed to appease the spirit.

The same procedure is also adopted on the day it is celebrated collectively. For communal observance, funds are collected through public contribution from all the villagers.

On the first day, in the evening, *Jani*, *Ichani* and six *Bejunis* come with *Puja* accessories and sacrificial animals. The young girls prepare a corn bunch out of the sheaves of ragi, red—gram and other millets and hang it in front of the *Jhankad* or *Kuddi* after cleaning it with cowdung and water. The *Pat-Bejuni* along with her five other assistants starts supplicating rice in winnowing fan to know the existence of *Sita-Penu*. In her trance she knows the



existence of *Sita Penu* either in the *Kuddi* or in any one of the house in the village and accordingly leads the team to that house when she regains her senses with the drumbeaters.

Reaching that house on the same day the *Jani* draws rice powder in the kitchen before the *Tuli-Munda*, representing ancestor-spirits. The meat of all the sacrificial animals are cooked with rice and part of it is given to the animals first to be eaten. A little of it is also offered to the ancestor-spirits. The rest is shared by the inmates of the house.

It is believed, after this ritual, the domesticated animals do not suffer from any disease.

#### *Mandia Rani :*

This festival is observed individually and also communally in the month of *Shravan* (July-August) before harvesting of ragi. The objective is to get a bumper yield of ragi and other varieties of millets. It is observed for two days—on the first day, it is observed communally and on the second day individually. On the first day a big square and ten small squares are drawn on the ground of the *Kuddi* out of rice-powder which represent *Sita-Penu* and her disciples, in which rice balls are piled up by the *Jani*. The *Jani* recites mantras and others follow him and oblates incense powder on each such pile. The whole night is passed like that. Just at the day break, the *Ichhan Jani* brings the bunch of ragi sheaves keeps it on the pile of rice and cuts 11 fowls one after the other for all the eleven deities, and sprinkles blood over each heap of rice. It is believed that, *Sita Penu* is appeased with that. Each household receives two to three sheaves from the bunch and mixes the ritualistic grains with ragi after harvest.

After the *Puja* is completed the *Jani* moves from house to house to appease ancestors in each house. A chick is sacrificed on this occasion by each household.

Finally in the evening all the functionaries reach near *Kotebali Penu* (Husband of *Darani Penu*) for a communal worship. To be spirit-possessed, the *Pat-Bejuni* dances frantically and becomes senseless which is indicative of the fact that she is spirit-possessed. After her recovery, the *Jani* draws an icon and offers rituals to both *Darani Penu* and *Kotebali*. In the meanwhile, the young boys reach there with a bunch of sheaves of ragi and other millets from the swidden of the *Jani*. This is put in the icon by the *Jani* and worshipped with long chant of mantras. Finally the head of a buffalo is severed by *Ichani Jani* and blood is sprinkled over the rice to appease the *Penus*.

The meat of the birds sacrificed earlier and the buffalo are cooked and eaten ceremoniously by all the villagers amidst dance and songs.

#### *Nuakhia or Marangi Laka :*

This festival is a new addition to the annual festival calendar of the Dongria Kondh which was not traditionally observed as paddy was not the main food item of the people. It is perhaps an adoption from the Hindu neighbours particularly from the Domb. The well-to-do families still utilize a patch of their *Dongar* plot in cultivating paddy with which this ceremony is associated. Therefore, along with the paddy other new roots, fruits, green leaves and vegetables etc. obtained either from the forest or from the *Dongar* are also eaten ceremoniously for the first time.

This festival is observed under a mango (*Marangi*) tree for which it is called as *Marangi Laka*.

*Jani* and *Ichani-Jani* collect handful of new unboiled rice and other roots etc. from each house and pile them up in a large square drawn around a mango tree at the eastern outskirts of the village. No *Penu* is worshipped on

that occasion. But, it is believed that malevolent spirits who reside in a big mango tree must be appeased. Therefore, under a big mango tree, this ritual takes place. Usually the *Jani* recites invocations by throwing burning incense and pouring liquor over the pile of rice inside the square. A pig and a pigeon are sacrificed to appease the spirits.

After the rituals, the youngmen participate in the communal cooking and all the villagers share that food.

The same festival takes place in the month of *Chaitra* (March-April) before mango is eaten for the first time. After this festival only communal hunting takes place.

#### *Pidika :*

Insects are locally called *Pidika*, who are harmful to the free growth of castor plants. For eradication of the insects a ritual is observed in honour of *Jatrakudi penu* who is believed to save plants if, properly appeased. Due to the economic importance of castor seeds more emphasis is given to satisfy the deity with a buffalo, three fowls and a pig.

As usual, three *Bejunis*, including the *pat-Bejuni*, invoke in a chorus while offering rice in the winnowing fans in order to get themselves spirit-possessed in the middle of the village. If they are not spirit-possessed, it is believed that there are no malevolent spirits in the vicinage. Ultimately they reach near *Jatrakudi* for completion of the ritual.

The young boys post a small wooden pillar at the shrine to tie the buffalo, and thereafter the floor of the shrine is purified with cow-dung. The *Jani* and the *Ichan-Jani* jointly draw a big square and other small eleven squares with rice powder which represent *Jatrakudi* and Her disciples. The *pat-Bejuni* first starts dancing until she is spirit-possessed. Once she is in trance, the *Jani*



starts propitiating the *penu*. He oblates a burning wick around all the piles, and places burning incense near each spirit while reciting invocations. When the *pat-Bejuni* regains her senses, she again resumes in her rituals, sacrifices a pigeon and sprinkles blood of it over all the piles of rice excepting the bigger one. After an hour or so, two fowls are sacrificed and blood is sprinkled over all the piles of rice within the squares, which represent the spirits.

The young girls, in the meanwhile reach the spot with a garland of *sioli*-leaf within which insects are kept after having been collected. This is placed around the neck of the buffalo, which is already tied to the post by the *Barika*. The *Barika* holds the tail of the buffalo and the *Ichani-Jani* strikes at the head of the buffalo with an axe. Others present there follow him immediately and the animal is killed in no time. The head is severed and placed on the bigger pile of rice and the *Jani* recites invocations along with *Ichani Jani* and *Bejunis*. With this sacrifice, the *puja* comes to an end, and henceforward, no insect is believed to cause harm to the growth of castor-seeds.

A communal feast follows the ritual.

#### Punapadi :

Millet crops, like—*Kosla*, *Arka*, *Jana*, *Ganthia* etc. are eaten ceremoniously for the first time after harvest, and for that this festival is observed. Before eating, these crops are ceremoniously offered to *Jatrakudi penu* and to the ancestors. It is observed for a day in the month of *Kartika* (*Dewali-Lenju*). The *Bejunis* propitiate the *Jatrakudi penu* on this occasion.

A day before the observance of the ritual, the temporary thatch of *Jatrakudi penu* is repaired and new bamboo-splits are replaced by the *Dhangdas* (Youths) of the village. Three of the *Dhangdis* (Maiden) go from door to door for collection of new crops and pile them up in front of the *penu* and watch them for the whole night.

Next morning, after the arrival of the *Pat-Bejuni* along with three other *Bejunis*, three *Dhangdis* carry three new pitcher-full of water from the stream and place them separately on the pile of various crops. The *Bejunis* start their chorus and the *Pat-Bejuni* gets into trance alternately. She gets into trance three times, and each time she regains consciousness, she pours unboiled rice from her winnowing fan into the water pitchers. It is believed that three dreadful disciples of *Jatrakudi penu* are satisfied by that. Ultimately the *pat Bejuni* is spirit-possessed for the fourth time indicating the presence of *Jatrakudi penu*. Other *Bejunis* then start reciting invocations forcefully and throw burning incense on the pile of crops. The *pat-Bejuni* after regaining her senses, sacrifices a pigeon and two fowls one after the other in the name of *Darani-penu*, *jatrakudi penu* and for Her disciples respectively.

The relatives, who are present on the spot, also give animals Called, *Bolani* to be sacrificed.

Ultimately a buffalo, brought for sacrifice, is tied at a tree by the *Barika*. The *pat-Bejuni* stands over it and starts dancing. In the meanwhile, three other *Bejunis* throw crops from the pile at the buffalo. While dancing, the *pat-Bejuni* is again spirit-possessed, which is indicative of the fact that the *Jatrakudi penu* is asking for food. Immediately after she gains back her senses, the buffalo is cut by the *Barika* and blood is sprinkled over the pile of crops.

The meat of all the birds sacrificed and buffalo is cooked separately which are eaten by the villagers in a feast. After this, usually crops can be sold or eaten.

### *Dongar Puja :*

Before crops are harvested *Dongar Puja*, which is otherwise known as *Lahi-penu Laka*, is observed for a day in the month of November-December in each household.

It is conducted only by the *Bejunis*, who move in a procession with drum-beaters from house to house to ward off the evil-spirits by means of peacock feathers. From there they observe certain rituals. They draw two squares representing *Lahi-penu* and *Indra penu* (God of rain) and place sheaves of each crop on the drawn squares. Rituals are observed in the same manner as specified earlier and a pigeon and a fowl are sacrificed respectively on two lumps of rice to satisfy the *Penus*.

After this ritual is observed, crops are harvested.

#### *Meria festival :*

It is the biggest festival observed communally in any one of the villages of a *Mutha* for 8 days in the month of *Magha* (January-February) where all people of a *Mutha* and people of other *Muthas* too, participate. If there is no bumper crop, the festival may be postponed to the next year as it involves lot of expenditure.

The purpose of this festival is mainly to appease the Supreme Goddess, *Darani Penu*, and Her disciples. At the same time steps are also taken to appease all other deities and spirits of the various clans present in the *Mutha*.

To observe this festival, a decision is taken by the elders of all villages under the leadership of the *Mandal*. Decisions are also taken with regard to the date and place for observance, contribution to be given by each household, selection of volunteer, and collection of necessary articles. *Bejunis* are invited, services of the *Lamba* and *Janis* are requisitioned and list of invitees from other *Muthas* is also prepared and specific responsibilities are assigned.

All these decisions are taken and necessary arrangements are made at least a month in advance. Until the festival is over, all the works are suspended



and all the people remain agog with pleasure and happiness for the forthcoming festival.

#### Function of the *Pujari* :

Before four days of the celebration of the festival, the *Pujari* along with four persons proceeds to the forest being unnoticed by anybody to cut a bamboo pole of about 14 feet in height to prepare *Meria* Umbrella, called, *Chhatri*. This he cuts being completely nude, as it is reported. If the bamboo is cut in this manner the spirit who resides in the bamboo clamps may not do any harm to him. To make the bamboo pole strong, it is soaked in the stream for two days after which it is used as a stand for the umbrella. Before the day of the festival, a coloured cloth is spread over which different coloured glasses are fitted. The entire set is fixed on the bamboo pole and posted before the *Jhankad* and dangled by the *Pujari* in the *Meria* procession.

It was a traditional system and was in vogue when *Jura Parab* used to be observed. This system is being continued now.

#### Coming of the Invitees :

Four days before the date of observance the invitees reach the houses of their respective relatives in the village of the *Meria* festival with gift articles, like—five bottles of liquor, five kilograms of *kosla* rice or paddy and one sacrificial animal, either a goat or a lamb or a fowl. *Bishmajhi* in each village collects them and keeps them for use in the festival.

#### Observances :

*Darani-Lamba*, usually takes the lead in organizing the ritual, who propitiates *Darani Penu* on this occasion. He is assisted by *Janis*, *Ichani-Janis* and *Pujaris*. Friday of the week is selected as an auspicious day for the festival.

On the first day *Mandal*, and other religious functionaries accompany the *Lamba* with the drum-beaters and musicians to a banyan tree to take out the *Meria* utensils. Reaching there, the *Lamba* gets into the hollow of the tree with vermilion, incense-powder, unboiled rice and a bottle of liquor. After doing certain rituals there, two iron-chains, and a thick iron-plate are taken out to be used in the present festival. These accessories are being used from time immemorial, probably from the time when human sacrifice was in vogue. After use, these are again kept in a secret place which no one knows excepting the *Jani* and the *Pujari* of the village where the festival takes place.

The *Dhangdis* in the meanwhile decorate the *Kuddi* (*Jhankad*) with banana plants, mango twigs and branches. The floor of the *Kuddi* is also besmeared with clay and cowdung and a new *Sari* is spread over the deity and Her disciples.

After the procession reaches the village, the *Lamba* places those articles in the *Kuddi*. He draws twelve square diagrams with rice-powder, piles up rice on each diagram, fixes burning joss-sticks and invokes all deities and spirits by reciting mantras with other *Janis* for the whole night.

On the second day morning the *Bejunis* along with *pat-Bejunis* reach the *Jhankad* in batches. The *Lamba* and *Janis* retire to take rest. But the *Bejunis* along with *pat-Bejuni* start dancing in batches to appease *Darani penu* and Her disciples. Immediately when the *Pat-Bejunis* gets into trance, the *Lamba* is informed, who comes to the *Jhankad* immediately to take note of the presence of the spirit. A fowl and a pigeon for each smaller pile of rice, and a goat for each bigger pile of rice are sacrificed and blood is sprinkled over all the piles. This is done for 12 times to satisfy all the twelve disciples of the Earth Goddess. In the



Neatly dressed Dongria to attend Meria festival.



evening the meat of all the animals sacrificed is cooked along with rice to entertain all the invitees.

After the feast, when all retire, the third sitting starts with *Lamba*, *Ichhan-Janis* and the *Pat-Bejuni*, together invoking the *Darani-penu*. In the dead of night three young girls (who have just attained maturity and have not been caputred) are sent to bring three brass-wares (*Mera* accessories) from the *Pujari's* house. After coming back, three of them go straight to the stream to bring three pitcherful of water without looking back. It is believed, they may be bewitched by the spirits, who are supposed to be inside the pitchers, if they look back. The *Pujari* too, accompanies them brandishing a bunch of feathers to ward off the evil-spirits.

With water they reach the *Meria* animal (A big buffalo who is called *Meria*) and bathe it with that water. This *Meria* animal is tied to a big wooden post and is considered to be purified after the bath. Then, they come to the *Lamba* to ask for "*Podo-Kandi*" (Iron-chain and plate). Forelegs of the buffalo are tied with the chain, which is indicative of the fact that the *Meria* would be sacrificed within a short time.

The villagers, invites, friends, relatives and all others reach the *Jhankad* and get ready with their axe and knives to strike at the animal. While invoking both the *Lamba* and the *Pat-Bejuni* get into trance with the beating of drums. The time following this is considered appropriate to satisfy *Darani-Penu*. Immediately after regaining senses they make arrangements for the sacrifice of the animal.

A big procession consisting of all males, irrespective of young, old and children, the religious functionaries, batches of *Bejunis*, drum-beaters and the vow-takers with various sacrificial animals starts to the eastern outskirts of the village. The *Dishari*, the *Pat-Bejuni*

and the *Ichan-Jani* carry these brass-wares with water. The *Pujari* dangles the umbrella before the procession to ward off the evil-eyes of the spirits. The *Bejunis* rejuvenate their energy and dance rhythmically with the beating of drums. The young boys howl and ululate in chorus. The stalwarts both from the Dongria Kondh and the Domb community catch hold of the ropes tied at the *Meria* animal. The *Lamba* and the *Janis* lead the procession and reach at the outskirts little before the dawn. The *Meria* animal is tied to a big wooden-pole. Other vow-takers too, tie their animals.

Just at the break of dawn, the animal is sacrificed and the first blow is given by the *Pujari*. Other blows fall one after the other on various parts of the animal and thus the animal is hacked to death. Even when blows are being showered, the entire belly of the buffalo is torn apart and its intestine etc. are pulled out nibbled and rubbed over the body out of joy and revelry by the participants. It is believed, more the animal is tortured, more the *Penu* is satisfied.

Simultaneously, the vow-takers kill their animals one after the other on the *Meria* spot to please *Darani-Penu*. With the sacrifice of a large number of animals, the entire field is flooded with blood.

After that, the *Meria* head is brought back in the procession by an outsider (*Padria*) other than the *Mutha* clan-members. It is tabooed for the *Mutha* clan-members to touch the *Meria* head.

Reaching at the *Jhankad*, the *Lamba* draws a big square diagram on which the head is placed. The *lamba* offers it as ritualistic food to *Darani-Penu* by putting on vermilion over it and pours five gourdful of wine over it. With this the ritual part of the observance comes to an end. A portion of the *Meria* animal after having been

skinned is given to the *Lamba* as a major share for conducting the ceremony, a portion of it is cooked with rice and shared by all the members present on the spot, and the rest portion is parcelled into small pieces and sent with the relatives and invitees to their villages as a token of publicity-as-well as to ensure better crops in their area too.

On the fifth day, outsiders (*Padrias*) customarily assemble near *Lomba's* house and approach him to part with a portion of *Meria*-animal which must have been kept ready by the latter on the previous day. On this issue, mock acrimonious exchange take place between them and the *Lomba* ultimately gives a portion of the meat to everyone.

The outsiders cook it with 35 to 40 kilograms of rice at their own cost and feed the host villagers. This is how the outsiders oblige their hosts. After the feast, they disperse.

For the rest two days, the young boys and girls get the opportunity to sing and dance before *Darani-Penu*.

On the 8th day, *Lamba* himself kills a goat, cooks about five kilograms of rice and offers it to *Darani-Penu* and Her disciples as ritualistic food. This food is distributed among all the households of the *Mutha* as *Lamba-Bagu* (Ritualistic food of *Lamba*). The *Lamba* too, as an outsider obliges the hosts in this way.

In the evening the young boys and girls exchange rice as a token of apology for offending each other by way of jokes. The young boys touch the hands of the parents of the young girls and beg excuse and offer a bottle of liquor to satisfy the latters.

Thus the festival is observed to ensure good harvest and prosperity for the *Mutha*.



*Bihan Puja :*

It is the last festival of the year, observed communally and individually for two days in the month of *Chaitra* (March-April) before the sowing of crops.

On the first day, *Jani* and *Ichani-Jani* move from door to door to collect all varieties of seeds from all the households. After collection, they take bath in the evening and assemble with drum-beaters at the *Jhankad*. Twelve square diagrams are drawn there and the seeds are piled up in each diagram. Rituals are performed by oblation wine, burning incense and by chanting invocations. A pigeon and a fowl are sacrificed separately to appease the deity. The crops are kept in a basket which is hung above the head of *Darani-penu*.

When *Jani* remains busy in propitiating the *Darani-Penu*, the *Pat-Bejuni* along with her party goes to individual *Dongar* fields to appease *Hiru-Penu* and *Sita-penu*. There similar rituals as mentioned above are performed with the crops and blood of the chicken sacrificed is sprinkled over the crop to satisfy the *Penus*. These ritually treated grains are kept in an earthen pot by individual house owner.

On the second day, the villagers along with *Jani* and other religious functionaries proceed to the forest for communal hunting with bows and arrows. After five days, they come back with game which are cooked and shared by all villagers excepting the females. Any sort of animal killed beyond the village boundary is tabooed to be eaten by the female. It is believed that they become aggressive.

On the sixth day, the villagers assemble near the *Kuddi*. The *Jani* counts eight number of seeds from each variety of crop and hands it over to a young man who inters them in the ground in front of the *Kuddi*. Afterwards each householder is offered a handful of seeds.

These seeds are mixed with other seeds and kept by each house owner in an earthen pot in his house. These are sown first ceremoniously and then other seeds are sown.

Thus, It is evident from the above descriptions that most of the rituals of the Dongria Kondh are associated with their annual agricultural cycle. The rituals are either performed to mark the beginning of the important agricultural activities or harvest of crops or intended to restore the lost fertility of the soil.

Excepting the *Kuddi*, where *Darani-Penu* is enshrined, the Dongrias have evolved no temples or shrines or special shelter to install their gods and goddesses. It has already been described, the Earth-Goddess resides on the earth, *Kotebali* resides in the forests and on hills.

The Dongria Kondh are not quite unfamiliar with Hindu gods and goddesses. They are aware of 'Goddess *Laxmi*, *Durga*, and *Mahadeb*. They say, *Sita-Penu* represents Goddess *Laxmi*, who brings wealth and prosperity to the family if she is properly worshipped. On various occasions, therefore, she is worshipped specially on *Nua-Khia* ceremony, *Takrani* represents Goddess *Durga* who saves people from diseases and epidemics. On the day of *Sivaratri* most of the Dongria Kondh visit the *Siva* temple at Chatikona to get *Darshana* and spend the whole night there. In fact, they have gradually started borrowing many traits of Hindu religion in course of their contact with the neighbouring caste people with the development of communication in the area.

#### Taboos :

Other than the methods applied to appease the divine powers, some protective measures are also adopted to escape from fear and anxiety. The Dongria Kondh believe that taboos are productive, protective

and prohibitive. They believe that unless they are prohibited from doing certain things, dreadful adversity may befall them. Taboos associated with the process of cultivation are designed to be productive. Those like—keeping women and children away from certain places, actions and objects are protective. In case of a priest or a chief, a magician or a menstruating woman, it is prohibited to do certain things. If they do not obey the taboos, misfortune will come to them.

The children wear amulets (*Tabla*), put-on eye-shoots (*Kaji*) to escape from evil eyes. The elderly males use knife, bill-hook and an axe not only for adornment but to escape from evil eyes. The ladies too, use knife and amulets to avoid evil eyes.

Similarly there are food taboos, totemic taboos, reproductive taboos, mortuary taboos etc. which are observed strictly to avoid mishaps. The taboo is used to designate all the restrictions, communicated through verbal dos and don'ts, and generally associated with ritualistic behaviour which a member of the community has to submit to.

#### Omens :

Omens are used and interpreted to ascertain auspiciousness and inauspiciousness of certain objects whether animate or inanimate. Certain local birds—*Kuguria*, *Kumbhatal* and *Gundru* are considered auspicious if seen on the way while going to capture a bride. The crowing of wild fowl (*Joda Kayu*) is auspicious as it brings more cash for a man if he sells anything. If, while coming to the groom's house the bride sees the bird *Harada*, it is considered to be auspicious. It is believed that the bride is sure to bring more happiness to the family. Pitcher—full of water (*Daka*), burning lamp (*Dipi*) and corpse (*Mada*) on the way are considered good omens. Among bad omens may be mentioned-sight of a barren



woman, fox crossing path from the left to the right, the sight of an empty vessel etc. Similarly Tuesday and Friday are considered to be auspicious and therefore, almost all ceremonies are celebrated on those days. Journeys are undertaken normally on those days and also on the full-moon day (*Puniya*). Journey is avoided during the day, following the full-moon day.

#### Dreams :

Dreams are locally termed as *Hapna*. Ordinarily dreams are interpreted either as good or bad. Site-seeing, talking with the Government officials, making transactions in Fair-Price-Shop Centres and going in the train—such dreams bring cash to the person concerned. Dreams like-eating of ceremonial food, fried rice and sweetmeats bring good health for the person concerned. A person suffers if he dreams of visiting forest, climbing hills, sleeping in a cave and taking bath in the stream. It is believed that spirits residing in the above mentioned places may like to harm the person concerned. To avoid any suffering the person stops going to such places at least for a day. Sometimes, a person who died recently, though becomes a *Dumba*, if, appears in the dream, is again considered to bring economic prosperity in the family. Thus, different values are attached to different types of dream in the interpretation.

#### Magicians and diviners :

Religion and magic are two ways of tiding over crises. The magic and religion are very close to each other in their roles as tools of adoption when common skills and capabilities are of no avail.

Strictly speaking there are no magicians in the Dongria Kondh society. The *Bejunis* who are specialists as diviners bring fortune to the people by curing them from various diseases etc. But these specialists do not

use such techniques to create rain or bring good harvest if there is drought. The only technique employed by these diviners is to appease their respective guardian spirits by performing appropriate rituals and sacrifices.

Further, due to compactness of the area and unity of the people, the shamanins do not use any black magic even if, some of them know the art. Through the guardian spirit only, black magic is used. In that case, the shamanin is to take the risk of her life as it may be leaked out through village gossip or a more expert shamanin may know it.

In fact, other than religious devices, occult devices are not utilized to bring either good results or bad results into the society.

To conclude, it can be said that the Dongria Kondh do not worship the gods and goddesses, deities and spirits or placate the spirits and ghosts from philosophical point of view or from the devotional outspring of their heart. They are very practical in their temperament and the purpose to worship or placate the spirits etc. is to get economic benefits, safety and security.

## CHAPTER - VIII

### ENVIRONMENTAL SANITATION, HYGIENIC HABITS, DISEASE AND TREATMENT

#### Environmental Sanitation :

Though the Dongria Kondh live much to be desired from the point of view of sanitation, they keep their main street, lanes and by-lanes fairly neat and clean. The *Jhateni* (Sweeper), appointed from the Domb community, sweeps the street etc. everyday and piles up the garbage at a spot not far from the dwelling. During rains, water accumulates on the lanes and the area becomes muddy and filthy. The dwellings are not kept tidy as the inmates practically do not get time to look after their houses and household belongings as they spend most of their time on the *Dangar*. Only on festive occasions, houses are cleaned and walls are plastered with clay mixed with fresh cowdung. The yard utilized as defecation ground, is not far from habitation but it does not pollute the environment due to haunt of pigs in a large scale. Water for all consumption is fetched from the perennial stream, *Gadgada nallah*, flowing beside most of the villages. During rain, muddy water is drawn from the stream for all purposes. During summer, water level too, goes down though not completely dries up.

#### Hygienic habits :

The Dongria Kondh lack modern scientific sense of hygiene. Bath is not taken everyday and no schedule time is there for that. During summer, bath is taken if time permits, but for months together bath is not taken daily in the winter. Once they climb hills in the morning to reach their *Dongar* plots and start working. They do not feel to climb down again to the stream to take bath. Only when they come back home after the day's toil, on the way, they wash their limbs and face instead of taking a full bath.



No regularity is maintained to wash teeth and face. As and when required teeth are cleaned with mango twigs. After defecation, the excreta is cleaned with any green leaves readily available and water is rarely used. The ladies too, do not use water either after defecation or after urination. If time permits, castor-oil is used for dressing hair of the head by the ladies, and thereafter hair is combed. But the males do not use oil for months together but comb hair everyday during leisure time. Only during festive occasions, oil is used and proper care is taken to trim the hair.

Apart from a few well-to-do families, soap is not used for cleaning clothes or body by others. *Chili-mati* (*Chili*, a local variety of clay) is used both by men and women for cleaning hair as and when time permits. With the help of fine ash dirty clothes are treated with warm water and then rinsed and cleaned once in a month by the ladies in the stream. Males never wash clothes, since it is considered as a feminine job and hence derogatory for men.

Nails are pared after a month or two. Hair too, is cut after two months or so. They cut each other's hair as there is no professional barber.

The mother remains awefully busy for the whole day and does not get time to take special care of her babies other than swaddling and feeding her breasts. The father, though remains busy, spends his leisure hour either in taking liquor or strolling here and there aimlessly. In fact, the ecological setting and the nature of work shape their daily habit and compel them to be neglectful of good health; and this also precludes development of hygienic consciousness.

#### Disease and Treatment :

It would seem that almost all the Dongria Kondh are a superstitious folk who believe that the diseases are

mostly caused due to the wrath or displeasure of a deity or ancestral spirits. Even any mishap or accident is ascribed to the indignation of different *Pemus* ( Gods ) and *Dumbas*. They, therefore, make every effort to appease these supernatural agencies who are associated with different deities, spirits etc.. A functionary known as the *Dishari* who normally belongs to their own community and plays an important role in the diagnosis and treatment of diseases. On the basis of certain symptoms or divination he diagnoses the disease. On the other hand, the *Bejuni*, who is a shamanin and who is also supposed to cure diseases, traces out the deity behind the disease. In order to do this she performs necessary rites, gets into trance, realises hallucinatory revelation, sacrifices animals as per the demand of the deity or spirit. Thus, when the *Dishari* diagnoses diseases with local herbs and roots perforated with divination, the *Bejuni* diagnoses the disease only through necessary rituals and divinations.

#### Medical Therapy :

Though all the diseases are considered to be the outcome of the wrath of deities and spirits, the Dongria Kondh still consider some of the minor diseases like— fever ( *Namberi* ), headache ( *Kapda Nai-Mamjane* ), cough ( *Tanha* ) and stomach pain *Pato Bish* ) etc. to be the result of natural causes and skin diseases to be due to contagion. But diseases which are incurable and prolong for number of days are ascribed exclusively to the obsession of spirits and deities. It is believed that due to commitment of immoral action or complete violation of the social norms person is destined to suffer.

However, the *Dishari*, who mostly uses herbal medicines, collected from the nearby forests, applies them in following manner for different diseases.

Accidents are often faced, injuries are sustained regularly by the people due to heavy indulgence in liquor.



To stop bleeding *Latchiri*-creeper is made paste and anointed over the wound. Immediately after the preliminary aid, paste of leaves of *Drayakala* plant or *Luhatarchi* plant is applied at the wound. For quick recovery from a fatal injury warm turmeric paste is also applied.

In any sort of burn injury immediately cowdung is applied. Later on the bark of *Manda* tree is soaked in water for a day and then ground to prepare a sort of paste which is applied on burn bruises for healing up.

In order to alleviate the pain of a sprain, castor-oil is boiled with turmeric paste and applied three to four times a day over the sprain. Sometimes a paste prepared out of *Bishalyakarani* is applied over the sprain after heating it up. And upon this sort of balming a tender banana leaf is covered and tied up with a piece of cloth for a day or two in case of bone fracture.

In the Dongria Kondh society, there are no snake charmers. Roots of *patal Garuda* and *Fapana* plant are ground together and applied over the wound caused by either a snake or a poisonous insect. As an antidote to the poison, caused by venomous snakes, root of a creeper, locally called *padda*, is ground and orally administered.

For healing up of fractures, *Hadsikula* creeper is also used by the Dongrias. A tender portion of the creeper is collected and then it is ground to a thick paste which is evenly applied over the fractured bones, which is then tightly fastened by placing two pieces of split up bamboo on either side of it.

For cure of eye-sores the Dongries use turmeric paste. It is wrapped up in a small piece of cloth and then frequently heated up for giving hot compression to the eyes for healing. In case of vomiting, *Bhusana* (Roots of *Patal Garuda*) is ground up and then orally taken,



For cure of diarrhoea pulverized root of *Kumdi* plant is taken along with water.

Roots of *Anahinga* plant, *Bachha* or *Daja* plant and arrow-root (*Badhra*) are ground together and diluted with Mahua liquor (*Irpi Kalu*) in order to prepare a lotion which is anointed over the entire body to get rid of fever.

Seeds of *Tralu* tree are collected. The skins of the seed are taken out. Root of *Ketkaya* plant is mixed with the skins of the *Tralu* seeds and ground together. The entire substance is diluted with water and used twice a day to get rid of cold.

For cure of indigestion, root of *Sarumaricha* plant and roots of *Bhusana* (*Patal Garuda*) plant are ground together and taken with water three to four times a day.

For amelioration of rheumatism, the outer skin of dried-up broom sticks are collected, burnt, made powder and dissolved in castor-oil and then boiled for sometime and this oil is rubbed on the rheumatic portion of the body.

Roots of *Kumdi* plant and roots of *Bhusana* plants are pulverized together and then mixed with water. It is taken three to four times a day. It is a curative for any sort of gastro-internal disease.

#### Modus Operendi of *Dishari* :

Each Dongria Kondh, more or less, knows certain remedial measures when he is susceptible to minor sufferings. His open-air movement, less liking for confinement in his house and frequent movement in hills and forests tend him to pick up basic knowledge of certain medicinal herbs and roots which either he gathers or brings immediately for treatment. Only when his personal knowledge fails he approaches the practitioner.

In almost all the big villages there are one to two *Dishari* who are consulted even in odd hours.

The practitioner verifies certain symptoms after checking the palpitition of the right wrist of the female and accordingly diagnoses the disease. Eyes and tongues are not tested ; only stomach is pressed. After due checking the practitioner determines the disease and prescribes the medicine.

The practitioner is the custodian of indigenous herbs and roots. He, after due checking, takes out appropriate herbs or ready-made medicine, utters some magical spells solemnly and puffs on the medicine as-well-as on the patient three to four times. It is believed that the *Ghungi Penu* and *Lai-Penu* are worshipped by the *Dishari* and appeased with adequate sacrifices so as to acquire the knowledge of the art.

A *Dishari* is supposed to know the medicinal effect of required roots and herbs available in the area along with charms and spells. The post becomes hereditary if the son is competent. If not, any man who develops the art becomes *Dishari*. A woman *Dishari* is not found in the area.

*Dishari* does not demand any fee for the treatment. The patient pays only a nominal fee of 25 Naya Paise for the medicine, and when cured, he pays what he likes as gift either in kind or cash.

*Dishari* does not undergo any formal training to learn the art. The post is also not hereditary. If the son likes, he learns some spells and charms to appease the *Penus* in connection with different treatment.

The status of a *Dishari* is in no way inferior to those of other religious functionaries of the village. As a folk doctor of the village, he is highly esteemed and given higher status in the society.





**"Wrath of deities-cause of diseases"—says  
Medicine-man**



### Mental therapy :

Therapeutic treatment through magic is practised by individual effort in the area. *Bejuni* the shamanin, through white magic takes up treatment of mental illness. People also believe that through magical diagnosis the diseases can be cured and therefore, attach importance to it.

It may be stated at the outset that, shamanin as such, is actually a part of religious nexus because it is through a ritual process the end is achieved. The key idea is to ward off the evil spirits and deities as-well-as to appease them with appropriate rites and sacrifices. Through this appeasement when the desired end is achieved, it may be called sympathetic white-magic.

For harming an enemy also the services of a shamanin is sought. The type of occultism which she uses for infliction misfortune and harm on a target person is called 'Peshint'. Such an art may be termed as contagious or black magic. It is not public but secretly practised, lest the party may be bewitched by more experienced practitioner.

However, only when medical therapy fails, the people take recourse to magical therapy, that is, they approach the shamanin to take up the treatment.

Shamanins are organized on the basis of their respective tutelary spirits, whom they worship. In each group the *Pat-Bejuni* or the chief shamanin takes the lead in divinations or in the performance of rites, who supposed to have gained proficiency in the art after rigorous training. Though there are male shamans, their number is much less. When they act, they adorn themselves with ladies garments.

### Modus operandi of the shamanins :

First symptoms of the disease are ascertained by the shamanin. The *Pat-Bejuni* tests the extenal symptoms of the patient. From the very look of the patient, she can guess the type of disease which the patient is suffering from, and then determines the main causes of suffering. Afterwards she resorts to the procedure of divination and invokes appropriate spirits and *Dumbas* of the ailment leaving aside other spirits and *Dumbas*.

The *Pat-Bejuni*, along with her assistants, starts supplicating sundried rice balls separately in winnowing fans with magical spells and charms so as to trace out the concerned spirit which has done the harm. In case, the spirit remains unidentified even after long recitation, the *Pat-Bejuni* jumps off and starts dancing. immediately the disciples follow her, while dancing she is possessed by the spirit. It is believed, the real spirit who is causing harm gets into her body. She ultimately gets into trance and starts talking to the spirit on behalf of the patient in that state of trance. She vows to placate and appease the spirit with whatever sacrifices the spirit desires to have. After that she gets back her senses and prescribes for ritualistic articles to be offered to the spirit. Accordingly rites are performed and sacrifices are given.

If, even after this, the patient is not cured, a more efficient *Pat-Bejuni* is consulted, who performs rites more elaborately and offers more sacrifices. And if after this the patient is not cured, the matter is left to be decided by the Earth-Goddess (*Darani-Penu*).

Shamanins are generally paid nominal fees. At the individual call she collects about 250 to 500 grams of sundried rice given by the head of the household, heads of sacrificial animals, that is, head of a chicken, a fowl or a goat and a nominal fee of Rs. 1-25. On communal worship, a group of shamanins participate and the

entire mass of sundried rice and the kills are equally distributed. In terms of money, each shamanin gets about Rs. 55/-, if she participates in the communal festival. In exercising white magic a shamanin is rewarded as per the nature of benefit received by the beneficiary. For performing black magic a shamanin is paid about Rs. 60/-

#### Medical care :

No special attention is given to a patient by the inmates of the house as they remain busy always. The patient usually sleeps on the floor covering the body with a piece of cloth. Mainly the housewife cooks food for the patient. No special diet is given other than ragi-gruel. Rice is not usually given when patient suffers, but it is given when the patient recovers. In case, any one visits market, buys cheap biscuits and loaves for the patient. During convalescence, the patient is not given liquor to drink.

From the account given in the preceeding para, it seems that the Dongria Kondh, in spite of culture contact still continue to rely on indigenous method of diagnosis and treatment. Recently, however, they have started availing of the allopathic treatment available in the dispensary installed in the village Kurli. But due to inaccessibility, the dispensary is not functioning properly. It is also a fact that the people are not apathetic towards allopathic treatment.

Out of 25 adults (Male, 16 + female 9) interviewed from 4 villages of *Jakasika* and *Wadoka Muthas*, it was found that almost all persons opined in favour of taking up allopathic treatment. Each adult again came to the dispensary varying from 16 to 31 times during the year 1967-68. But from the next year, the trend decreased because, the dispensary was not systematically managed and no care was taken for timely supply of medicines.



From the year 1970-71, the dispensary was completely in ramshackle and the people lost all hopes. Further, the males approached the dispensary mainly when they suffered from Malaria, stomach pain and sustained injuries. The females approached the dispensary mainly for Malaria. During the year 1969-70, the midwife, incharge of the dispensary attended only 4 delivery cases. Thus it is found that, when most of the people groan of Malaria and cripple in injuries, they come to the dispensary. It is also a fact that, the ladies, even if face prematured death, do not like to come to the midwife for delivering child.

The Dongria Kondh are never health-conscious nor take proper care of their health. Even when they are sick, they either work or stroll. But only in acute stage, they seek for treatment. The acute stage is only ascribed due to wrath of the deities and spirits. Normally when indigenous efforts are failed, they prefer to succumb to the alien medicines like allopathic. But illness or death during old age is not accounted for the evil effect of deities and spirits. Family planning devices have not been adopted by the people.

## CHAPTER - IX

## CHANGING SCENE

"We are *Paroja Logu* (subjects), like *Dongar-chas* (Hill cultivation) and hate *Pada Desia* (outsider)"—these are the real feelings of the Dongria Kondh which have kept them isolated for generations. But after the establishment of Community Development Blocks in the Dongria Kondh area, introduction of Purchase-Sale and Fair Price Shop Scheme in the year 1964 and with developed communication facilities, the Dongria Kondh are frequently coming in contact with the Government Officers. Fairs, markets, and liquor shops have attracted many a Dongria Kondh to come in contact with various types of people, and thereby have facilitated culture contact. The forces of Hindu culture and Hindu ways of living have influenced the Dongria Kondh due to close contact with the Domb community to a greater extent despite the fact that they are still in the mooring of their traditional way of life.

The Dongria Kondh have been living in their original land for centuries. The few Domb people living in the Dongria villages in the Niyamgiri hills are the tenants of the latter. They have little or no independence whatsoever in exercising their powers and privileges. As occupants of the lands of the Dongrias, they pay their annual land revenue regularly in cash to the Dongrias for village rituals, and contribute towards other contingent expenses of the village. In general the Domb living in these villages contribute money, grains, buffalo, cow, goat, lamb and other votive animals for the Dongria Kondh rituals. If any Domb goes against the decision or commits any wrong to the village he is liable to be punished by the village council of the Dongria Kondh. The Domb observe the Dongria Kondh festivals, rituals, taboos and prohibitions for the safety and security of the village. They too, share the entire belief system of the Dongria

Kondh. In this area, however, there is very little scope for the elements of an alien culture being thrust upon the Dongria Kondh. The Dongria Kondh have no doubt been influenced by their caste Hindu neighbours. On the other hand they have also been able to diffuse some of their own cultural traits among the Domb as the latter are economically dependent on the former.

As they are a peace-loving people, the problem of harmonious adjustment is not so difficult, despite the fact that the Domb are exploiters. They have an intense desire to establish friendly relations with the Domb and the Desia Kondh at the foot of the Niyamgiri hills by making them *Sai* or *Adi*. But the persons from the plains are taking undue advantage of the Dongria Kondh's friendship and honesty.

#### Culture change :

Change is the inevitable phenomenon of nature as-well-as of life. Man has to adapt himself to the conditions which confront him. It may be rapid or slow, good or bad and complete or partial. Culture itself is never static. Since culture is dynamic, the life of a person cannot be static. The Dongria Kondh culture is also in a transitional phase and is passing through the process of acculturation in many respects.

The process of normal social interaction, does not bring in significant structural change, for instance, the young couples seek partition and live separately immediately after marriage without carrying the parents and unmarried siblings. The practice of seeking separation from the parents after marriage is not unusual on the part of a son, but it is not a common feature of Dongria society. All sons do not seek separation from their parents immediately after marriage. Bride-capture which was a casual phenomenon, has become a regular feature because one becomes sure of getting a girl. The rate of



widow remarriage has increased. The dormitory life and the associated youth organization, which continued to flourish even in half-hearted form, have lost their charm. This has led to more commitments of premarital sexual laxity and adultery. The young people are now found to give more emphasis on the feast aspect of almost all the social functions rather than ritualistic aspect. Not only that, but a sense of status competition has also emerged in elaboration of the feast. The most remarkable thing is that, in most of the social functions, the neighbours are rather preferred to be invited than the distant agnates and affines, and most of the uterine relatives are ignored. The *Barika* (village messenger) does not feel obligatory to call the relatives as per social custom even if he is annually remunerated. In fact the set of old values now seems to be threatened.

#### Technological change ;

Though the technology has not been developed in this region, the people are not unaware of the essential things of daily use. Now, the people prefer hurricane lanterns instead of burning the wood for light. Similarly, they use safety razors for shaving, umbrella in rainy season, torches for night journey, soap for washing clothes, steel trunks, aluminium utensils and so on. Houses are well built, double roofs (*Attu*) are properly made with thick wooden planks and coloured properly to hoard more load of grains and protect them from eating insects. Decorative doors, prepared by the local carpenters are fitted to the house.

#### Modernization :

The Dongria Kondh are assimilating other cultures. They possess a sense of beauty, both natural and artificial. A large number of young boys and girls have a touch of modernity in their taste in matters of dress and ornaments. The girls prefer more to put on shirts of various colours other than black colour. They also prefer

mill-made clothes and foam rubber chappals now-a-days. Wooden combs are gradually being replaced by plastic combs. More alloy-metal and golden ornaments are prepared than simply bead necklaces. The young girls are more attracted to the dazzling glass and plastic bangles.

#### Economic change ;

The Dongria Kondh eke out their living mainly by shifting cultivation and by collection of roots, fruits, greens and other edible jungle products. This is partly due to their primitive agricultural practices and partly to the rocky and hilly area they inhabit. Although the Tribal Development Blocks and Integrated Tribal Development Agency and Dongria Kondh Development Agency etc. are taking steps to ameliorate their economic condition by phasing out different developmental programmes, the effects of these measures are not perceptible.

As regards the agricultural scene there is not much development in the use of new agricultural implements, modern fertilisers and pesticides. Of course, the area of paddy cultivation has increased after obtaining final settlement records during the year 1973 but the result is very disappointing. Due to lack of proper irrigation facility and rocky soil the yield is too low.

The younger generation is now gradually veering round to the view that the Dongar lands will give them much better return if put under fruit-trees. They have therefore, started accepting green variety of pineapple, Singapuri type of banana etc as supplied by the Block and ITDA authorities. In the meanwhile, the Government have installed various Demonstration Farm orchards in the holdings of the natives which, when grow up will be possessed by different occupants.

The old attitude to tolerate the torture of exploitation of the Domb is further remonstrated by the young



people. They now want to breach the age-old relationship with the Domb and instigate their group members to cooperate fully with the Government. The *Padar* type of land which was once cultivated by the Domb in connivance with the old people is taken away by the young people after the settlement operation.

#### Political change :

Despite interchange, the tribal and *Mutha* councils have not undergone any changes and the voice of the traditional leaders is not yet questioned. It is a fact that the Dongria Kondh do not like to bring any case to the court of law lest their own secrecise are leaked out. For that they even tap the *Barika* not to relay any matter to the police even if there occurs any casualty.

Now-a-days adult Dongria Kondh realise the value of their vote. They are keen to cast their votes during the general election and Panchayat election. People are keen to know their rights. The new ward member is equally respected by the villagers and holds high status.

#### Religious change :

The religious life of the Dongria Kondh has been least affected. They observe the same rites and rituals with great details to avoid the displeasure of their deities. With the introduction of paddy cultivation, *Nua-khia* (First new eating) ceremony has been adopted. Young people have minimized their expenditure on liquor and do not like to spend much for liquor as-well-as for feasts and festivals. They believe that the Hindu gods and goddesses are more powerful. Therefore, some of them visit the *Siva*-temple on *Sivaratri* at Chatikona railway station and offer sweetmeats as ritualistic food in case they are sick.



Thus, it can be concluded that the tribe is in a transitional phase but this does not mean that there are chances of revolutionary change in the tribe in the near future, as old customs, beliefs and values still hold sway over the Dongrias. In spite of awareness, the social structure of the Dongria Kondh has remained basically intact.

Part-II

**The Desia Kondh**

## CHAPTER - I

## INTRODUCTION

Among the 15 major tribes numbering more than one lakh population each, the Kondh with 8,69,965 population according to the census of 1971 top the list. Though its main concentration is in southern Orissa the Kondh are spread in an uneven manner throughout the State. Their distribution in different geographical zones is given below.

Sl. No.	Zones	Places covered	Kondh Population	
			Total Kondh population	Approximate Desia Kondh population
1	2	3	4	5
1.	Northern Plateau	Sundargarh, Mayurbhanj and Keonjhar districts; Bamra and Kuchinda portion of Sambalpur district, interior plains of Balasore district, and Pallahara region of Dhenkanal district.	15,510	15,510
2.	Central Table Land	Whole of the Brahmani and the Baitarani basins	83,623	83,623
3.	Eastern Ghat Region			
a)	Northern Section	Starting from Nilgiri in Balasore district stretches upto border in Puri district.	30,517	30,517



1	2	3	4	5
b)	Central Section	Boud, Balliguda, G. Udayagiri areas of Phulbani district.	2,23,322	25,530
c)	Rayagada Section	Parlakhemundi area of Ganjam district and Raya- gada area of Kora- put district.	2,29,655	57,551
d)	South- Eastern Section ( 3000 ft. Plateau )	Koraput subdivision including Pattangi plateau of Koraput district.	96,738	—
e)	South- Eastern Section ( 2000 ft. Plateau )	Jeypore and Nawa- rangpur sub-division of Koraput district.	19,218	—
f)	Malkangiri Region ( 1000 ft. Plateau )	Malkangiri sub- division of Koraput district.	5,377	—
g)	Southern- Western Section	a) Plains area and b) Dongara area of Kalahandi district.	1,14,644	84,644
4.	Coastal Region	Eastern Sea-board plains stretching from the mouth of the Rushikulya river to the Subarna- rekha river.	42,361	42,301
			8,60,965	3,39,736 ( 39.4 )

The Desia are the Hinduized section of the Kondh tribe and as the table shows they are found in large number in the Northern plateau, central table land Northern section of Eastern Ghats and the coastal region. and comprise approximately 39.4% of the Kondh population. Those who live in close proximity to this primitive section of their tribe particularly in Koraput and Phulbani districts have been able to preserve most of their pristine cultural traits while those living among the non-tribal majority in the plains have changed a great deal and have become almost indistinguishable from the Hindu peasantry.

Like their non-tribal neighbours the Desia have taken to plough cultivation and with it have adopted Hindu pantheon and associated ritual practices and belief system. They have given up hunting and food-gathering activities which their primitive brethren pursue and the axe cultivation as the advanced section among the primitive group does to earn their livelihood. The Desia have completely forgotten Kui or Kuvi which is the mother tongue of the Kondh and speak Oriya like their Oriya neighbours.

In some parts of Orissa the Desia grow special crops like turmeric, corns and vegetables in an extensive scale. As these products are prized by the more prosperous non-traditional neighbours and merchants they have been drawn into a complex monetized marketing organization. But a careful observation of their cultural life reveals that their economic symbiosis with the non-tribal neighbours and trading communities have least influenced some of the subtleties of their traditional cultural core.

This is not the whole story of cultural change among the Desia. Some institutions and aesthetic aspects of the tribal culture have undergone considerable attenuation and a few others have completely disintegrated and disappeared under the impact of Hinduization.

The custom of *Meria* sacrifice may be cited to illustrate the point. In the olden days a human being was sacrificed on this occasion. After the human sacrifice was stamped out the human being was replaced by a buffalo and with it the name of the festival changed from *Meria* to *Kendu*. But other items of the rite such as—the number of days observed, rituals performed, solemnity with which the rite was observed and the joyous congregation of people remained unchanged. In course of time the non-tribal people looked upon the buffalo sacrifice with hatred and in some places like the ex-state of Nayagarh the slaughter of the buffalo was prohibited by law. At present the Desia Kondh who live in Nayagarh manage the festival with a billy-goat and in some places with even a cock. In such places the term *Kendu* has been replaced by another term *Jantal* which conveys an atmosphere of feasting, eating and jockned gathering rather than the horried atmosphere of human or buffalo sacrifice.

Unlike the above case where the change has been gradual the institutions of traditional tribal council and dormitory system have completely disappeared in the Desia villages. In the earlier dispensation there was a tribal council in every Kondh village and the tribe used to manage its own internal affairs through this council. Similarly the institution or dormitory was of immense help in fostering cohesion and corporate living in the Kondh society. But these institutions have disappeared all together among the Desia Kondh particularly among who live among the Hindus of the coastal region. One adverse effect of Hinduization is the fading away of certain picturesque customs like the dance of men and women together which takes place every evening in accompaniment of song and music. More pitiful is the loss of their artistry and colourful ritual practices which made them ever joyful and gave their lives a meaning and significance. In the Part-II, a brief account of the socio-economic life of the Desia has been given indicating different factors which impinge upon them to change their social life and cultural tradition.





Collective labour binds the Kondh together into a cohesive unit

## CHAPTER - II

### ECONOMIC LIFE

#### House Type :

Generally a new house is constructed in the months of *Magha*, *Phalgun*, *Baisakha* and *Jestha*. The sorcerer finds out an auspicious day and time for this purpose and performs some ritual and sacrifices a hen and offers blood to Mother Earth before the work begins.

The construction of a Kondh house is very simple. The walls are made of planks of *Sal* trees covered with mud and the trellis made of bamboo splits are thatched with grass collected from the nearby forest. The house is made very low, not exceeding 10 feet in height and the eaves are at a height of about 4 feet from the ground level.

The lay-out of the house consists of a bed room (*Dapanidu*), a kitchen (*Bojanidu*), a shed (*Gaheli*) attached to the bed room and a youth dormitory (*Danganidu*). The granary (*Deyba*) is provided at two corners of the main room. A narrow verandah is provided in the front as well-as in the back of the house.

The front verandah is always kept clean and used as a meeting-place where leisure hours are spent on recreational activities. The back verandah is used for keeping fire wood and forest produce. Two doors are provided—one in front and one at the back of the house. They are about 2' to 2'6" in width and 4' in length. The front door which is the entrance opens to the bed room. The back door is fixed just opposite to the entrance door. No window is provided in the house. An oven is provided to keep the room warm during winter. The kitchen is attached to one side and the cattle-shed to the other side of the bed room. Passage is provided to the kitchen on one side and to the cattle-shed on the other side of the

bedroom. The kitchen room intercepts between the room for the unmarried youths and the bed-room. The door to the *Danganidu* is provided at the backside of the house. A mortar is fixed on the floor in the bed room and food grains are husked here with the help of a pestle,

The wall is coloured red by using red earth and made polished by means of a smooth large pebble. Sometimes a shed is made without any wall at the back of the house to keep fire wood and agricultural implements.

#### Agricultural Implements :

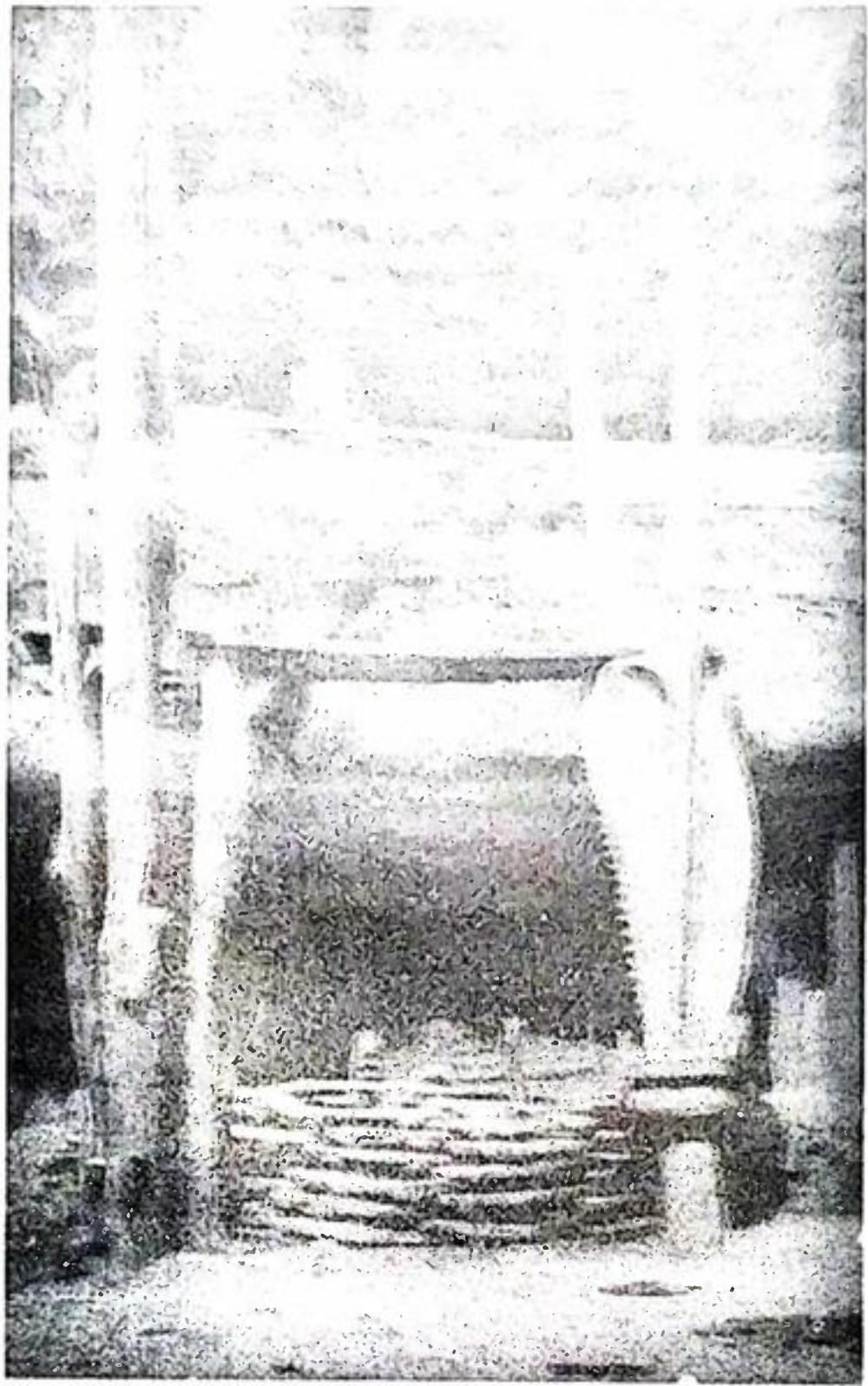
The Table I gives a list of the agricultural tools and implements used by the Kondh.

TABLE I

( Agricultural tools & implements )

Local name	English name	Approximate price in Rs.	From where procured.
<i>Nangeli</i>	Plough	16	Local market or made by oneself.
<i>Fauda</i>	Spade	8	Lohara
<i>Juali</i>	Yoke	3	( Blacksmith ) Local Market or made by oneself.
<i>Sabal</i>	Crowbar	5	Blacksmith
<i>Kele</i>	Sickle	1	Blacksmith
<i>Kati</i>	Cutting implement	3	Blacksmith
<i>Tangi</i>	Axe	3 to 4	Blacksmith
<i>Pota</i>	Leveller	1 to 2	Made by oneself
<i>Rape</i>	Spade	10	Blacksmith





Kedu—place of sacrifice

The iron materials of the implements are either purchased from the local market or obtained ready-made from the blacksmith who visits the Kondh villages periodically. The wooden parts are prepared by the Kondh themselves. Most of the Kondh are skilled carpenters and can make whatever wooden objects they need at home or in the field.

The important household articles are alluminium vessels, earthen pots, and brass utensils which they purchase from the local markets on payment of cash. Clothes and ornaments are also purchased from the local markets on payment of money.

A list of domestic articles is given in Table 2

TABLE — 2

## Domestic articles

Local Name (Kondh)	English Equivalent	From where procured
<i>Mudha</i>	Small jug	Local Market
<i>Ghura</i>	Water Vessel	Local Market
<i>Teki</i>	Earthen pot	Potter
<i>Batki</i>	Metal cup	Local Market
<i>Tabala</i>	Alluminium pot	Local Market
<i>Takuk</i>	Spoon laddle	Blacksmith
<i>Dibiri</i>	Lamp	Local Market
<i>Katery</i>	Cot	Made by oneself
<i>Laaka</i>	Stick laddle	Made by oneself
<i>Deyba</i>	Basket for storing paddy	Domb (Scheduled caste)
<i>Bihari</i>	Fish trap	Domb (Schedule caste)
<i>Danga</i>	Cistern	Made by oneself
<i>Sitkee</i>		Domb
<i>Baaga</i>	Small basket	Domb
<i>Badi</i>	Grinding stone	Made by oneself

1	2	3
<i>Katuri</i>	Bamboo work	Domb
<i>Tata</i>	Chisel	Blacksmith
<i>Koadu</i>	Pestle	Made by oneself
<i>Pata</i>	Leveller	Made by oneself
<i>Duda</i>	Carrying pole with baskets	Made by oneself

### Food :

Paddy, Maize, *Ganjei* and Ragi are the staple food of the Kondh. Food is in short supply during summer season which is referred to as 'Days of Starvation' by the Kondh.

Generally the Kondh take meals three times a day—the first meal (*Benda eju*) at about 10 A.M. after ploughing *Badi* land, the second meal (*Tila Bela eju*) at 2 P.M. and the third meal (*Nadang eju*) at 8 P.M. after coming back home from field work.

The poor people cannot afford to take three meals a day. They drop the morning meal for want of food.

The housewife prepares food for the family. Rice is not washed before cooking and rice water is not thrown away. Gruel is made from ragi powder mixed with rice. Turmeric, chilli and tola oil and mustard are used for preparing curry. The Kondh are inveterate smokers. Tobacco is generally grown in the backyard and care is taken to grow a good crop. They prepare their own cigars by wrapping the tobacco with the *Sal* leaf. A cigar is about 5 inches in length. The Kondhs are very much addicted to drinking. Three types of drink are in use, Mohua liquor (*Irpi Kalu*), Sagopalm juice (*Mada kalu*) and Date-palm juice (*Kajuri kalu*).

*Irpi Kalu* is distilled by the side of a stream in a hidden place in the forest. It is used by the Kondh on





Typical bun of a Kondh lady

all occasions. Sometimes they purchase the liquor from licenced shops or from the local agents who are *Sundi* or *Pana* by caste.

*Mada Kalu* is extracted from Sago palm and *Kajuri Kalu* from date-palm. Some herbs and roots are added to the juice to make it intoxicating. Fermented liquor is prepared from rice, maize and ragi. It is the common drink for all people and is used to make libation to their deities for abundance and prosperity.

#### **Dress :**

The children move about naked upto three to four years. There after they start wearing loin cloth. Previously the male folk were using a loin cloth in the lower portion and a wrapper on the upper portion of their body.

The Kondh women like to wear deep coloured sarees and blouses. Red and blue are their favourite colours. Young women are fond of printed sarees which are now readily available in local markets and bulbs and beads of different colours are used as necklace and silver and gold ornaments are used by well-to-do women. Tattooing is most common among the Kondh women. They get their faces, hands and legs tattooed with line and dotted with geometrical designs. There is a movement going on now among the Kondh prohibiting the practice of tattooing and many women of younger generation are found now without any tattoo marks.

#### **Occupational pattern :**

The economic life of the Kondh and their struggle for earning a livelihood mainly centre around agriculture. They practise both shifting cultivation on the hilltops and hill-slopes and plough-cultivation in valleys and low lands. Collection of edible roots, tubers and leaves from

forest; hunting of wild animals, fishing in the hill streams and tanks and water logged paddy fields and wage earning by daily labour supplement their income from land.

### Forest economy :

The tribals are known as the forest people and the Kondh are no exception to it. Forest is their treasure-house and an important source of their livelihood. It gives them food in the forms of nutritious fruits, edible leaves, mushrooms, roots and tubers, nourishing honey and wild game and fish.

Forest produce supplements their meagre income from land. The important forest collections include timber, firewood, bamboo, *Siali* creepers, *Kendu* leaf, *Sal* leaf, etc. The timber and bamboo are used for construction of house and for making agricultural and hunting implements and fishing traps. The Kondh collect fire-wood for their own use and also for sale. *Siali* creepers are used in the construction of houses and for making ropes. *Kendu* leaves and *Sal* leaves are an important source of cash income. The former are sold to *Kendu* leaf society established at various centres, and the latter are used for making plates and cups which are sold to Cooperative Societies.

The seeds of *Karanja* (*Pongamia Glatera*) and *Mohua* (*Bassia Latifolia*) give them oil which they sell for cash and use them for cooking food. The Sago-palm (*Caryota Urans*) provides plentiful sap which is the chief solace of their life.

Similarly the spirit distilled from corollae of *Bassia Latifolia* gives them relief from anxiety and pain and supplies nutrition to their body.

Forest provides them with material to build their houses and to practise their arts. Their folk-tales speak





Beauty and grace unparellel

of their relationship with the sylvan spirits and their myths and legends emphasize the deep sense of their identity with the forest.

#### **Hunting :**

Now-a-days hunting is not a regular feature of the Kondh economy. Much less importance is attached to it. There are mainly two reasons for this. Firstly, the people have taken to wet cultivation on increasing scale, and, secondly, the forest has been destroyed to a large extent and is now at a great distance from the settlement. However, the people go for hunting when they are not busy with agricultural work. The wild birds and animals which are found in the neighbouring forest are barking deer, sambar, wild buffalo, bison, spotted deer, duck, fowl and peacock. The hunting is done either individually or in a group and the hunting implements include bow and arrow and gun. The animals which are killed are eaten rather than sold.

#### **Fishing :**

Fishing is occasional pursuit. So also is hunting. Water-logged paddy fields and hill streams are the only source from which they catch fish. Fishing is largely an individual action and not a group action like hunting. Fish is caught both by hand and by trap and net. Generally the fish caught are used for their own consumption and rarely for sale.

#### **Agriculture :**

The Kondh practise four types of cultivation namely (1) shifting cultivation on the hill-slopes and hill-tops, (2) *Dahi* cultivation on the flat hill-tops and at foot-hills (3) Dry and Low land cultivation, and (4) backyard cultivation. The techniques involved and crops grown in for the different types of lands are discussed below.

### Shifting cultivation (Sauru) :

The Kondh term for shifting cultivation is 'Sauru Chasa'. According to the tribe Sauru stands for hill and 'chasa' is an Oriya word for cultivation.

The Kondh practise shifting cultivation both on the hill-slope and the hill-top. Every Kondh village has its own territory and the hills located in it belong to the village. It is on these hills that shifting cultivation is undertaken. Formerly the recuperative cycle was 15 to 20 years, but it has been reduced to 7 to 10 years.

The result of this reduced cycle has all along been diminishing return from the swiddens. The crops raised in the swiddens must have been nutritionally deficient also.

In the month of October and November the people assemble at their village meeting-place to decide which hill they would take up for cultivation. On an appointed day they all meet at the foot of the selected hill and distribute plots of land on the hill-slopes among themselves for cultivation. As long as a person is in possession of a swidden he continues to cultivate it and after his death his sons use the same swidden. If any family has no heir, the swidden cultivated by it reverts back to the village and the village elders allot it to the person who needs it. The hills which are located within the village boundary are cultivated by rotation, the period of cultivation ranging from 2 to 3 years on each hill. Lands under shifting cultivation are neither sold nor mortgaged.

### Technique of cultivation :

In the month of November the Kondh start felling trees and cutting brush woods and low thickets. This work is done by both men and women. After a month or so, the branches of the felled trees are chopped off





Action of axe in swiddens



into small pieces. The hardest part of the forest clearing is cutting down the trunks of big trees and it is always done by men. The trees are cut down and stumps of about 2 ft. high from the ground level are left over. The young shoots which grow on the stumps are broken and thrown on the ground to dry and decompose. The Kondh do not cut the fruit-bearing trees such as—Mango, Jamoo, Guava, Tamarind, Mahua and Sago-palm. Trees located in demarcation lines separating one swidden from the other are left out. Two implements, namely *Kuradi*, an axe, and *Kela*, a sickle, are used for felling trees and clearing grass and brush wood.

After the arduous work of forest-clearing is over the logs of wood and branches are left to dry. Towards the end of March fire is set to the dried-up stuffs and the ashes are spread evenly over the swidden.

The swidden is now ready for sowing. After the first shower of rain in the month of May the Kondh sow the seeds of *Kandula* (*Cajanus cajan*) and *Biri* (*Phaseolus aurgus*) by dropping them in holes dibbled in rows by means of a stick called *Meana*. After these seeds sprout they sow the seeds of *Kalha* (*panicum miliare*) by scattering them over whole area. Both men and women participate in sowing.

The weeding takes place in the moth of June and July and the work is done by both men and women.

From the end of July till the end of December the crops are guarded against wild animals. A temporary field hut is built at a strategic point in the swidden where one spends the night scaring away the animals.

In the month of November and December crops are harvested in succession. The red grams and the green grams are plucked either by hand or by a knife.

Millets are harvested by means of sickle. The grams are beaten with a stick and threshed in that fashion. Sometimes men and women form a ring and go round and round treading corn with their feet.

Two important rituals are performed in connection with shifting cultivation. One is *Saurupenu* and the other *Banipenu*. The former ritual is meant for worshipping the hill-God and the latter for worshipping minor deities residing at the foot of the hills. The hill-God is worshipped so that all the operations connected with shifting cultivation may be performed without any trouble and that the people may get a bumper crop. Similarly the *Banipenu* is worshipped so that people may get plenty of food.

#### *Dahi* cultivation :

*Dahi* cultivation is another form of shifting cultivation practised by the Kondh. The land used for this purpose is known as *Nela*. The flat hill-top or the plain land located at the foot of the hill below the swiddens are selected for such cultivation. Turmeric and paddy are grown through *Dahi* cultivation. It may be mentioned here that the Kondh of Phulbani district are famous for growing turmeric in a large scale. But the production of turmeric has been considerably reduced after the Kondh have been forbidden to carry on shifting or *Dahi* cultivation.

*Dahi* cultivation is different from shifting cultivation in many respects. In the former case the branches of trees grown on lands at a higher level are cut and left to dry. In April when the branches are sufficiently dried, they are dragged down to the *Nela* lands at the lower level. Fire is set to the leaves. When rain comes



the ashes get mixed up with the soil. The *Nela* land is then ploughed with the help of a plough drawn by cattle.

When the land is ready for growing turmeric, holes are dibbled in rows and in each hole a piece of the turmeric root is planted. Turmeric takes two years to grow. The whole area under turmeric plantation is covered with leaves of *Sorea Robusta*. The leaves supply not only warmth but also manure to the crop after they are decomposed. Turmeric is an important cash crop of the Kondh.

The Kondh have abandoned shifting cultivation in many places. There are many reasons for this. The forest staff have been very strict and vigilant and have planted permanent trees rendering the swiddens unfit for shifting cultivation. By repeated cutting and burning the forests, the nearby hills have been made bare of vegetation. Now the forests are lying at a great distance from the villages. To take up cultivation on distant hills is not possible, because most of the time is spent in walking the distance and very little time is left for real work in the hill-slope. Watching crops at night is a tough problem as no one likes to spend the night on the hill-slopes at a distance. In many cases physical barriers like river and hill streams which flow between the hill-slope and the village stand in the way of carrying on swidden tillage on distant mountains.

Non-availability of plain land near the habitat where most of the crops which are grown in the swiddens can be grown makes one disinterested in shifting cultivation. It has been pointed above that a variety of crops is grown in the swiddens. Most of these crops can also be grown in the plains. A list of the crops grown in swiddens and in the plains is given in Table 3.

TABLE 3

( Crops grown in Swidden and Plain land )

Crops grown in <i>Dahi</i> and Swiddens.	Crops grown in Plains.
1. <i>Dahi</i> paddy (upland paddy)	X
2. <i>Kandula</i> ( <i>Cajanus cajan</i> )	X
3. <i>Kalaka</i> ( <i>Penicum Italicum</i> )	X
4. <i>Kangu</i> ( <i>Penicum Miliare</i> )	X
5. <i>Mandia</i> ( <i>Eleusine corocana</i> )	X
6. <i>Janha</i> ( <i>Sorghum Vulgare</i> )	✓
7. <i>Koirl</i> (Millet)	✓
8. <i>Gunji</i> (Millet)	✓
9. <i>Kolatha</i> ( <i>Dolichos Biflorus</i> )	✓
10. <i>Maka</i> (Maize)	✓
11. <i>Biri</i> (Green gram)	✓
12. <i>Rasi</i> ( <i>Sesamum Indicum</i> )	✓
13. <i>Sorisa</i> (Mustard)	✓
14. <i>Haladi</i> ( <i>curcuma Longa</i> )	✓
15. <i>Kaunria</i> ( <i>Hibiscus cannabinus</i> )	✓
16. <i>Jhudanga</i> (Pulses)	✓

X = means not grown

✓ = means 'grown'

The above list shows that the change from hoe cultivation on the hill-slope to plough cultivation in plains has not affected very much the variety of crops grown by the Kondh. The upland which was brought under *Dahi* cultivation of the foot-hill has been replaced by the paddy grown through wet cultivation in the plains. It has not been possible to grow *Kandula* (*Cajanus Cajan*) *Kangu* (*Penicum Miliare*) and *Ragi* (*Eleusine corocana*) under

conditions of wet cultivation and such kinds of cereals and pulses do not form part of food stuff of the Kondh who have given up shifting cultivation. As no data are available about the nutritive value of the crops grown in the swiddens nothing can be said about the injury made to the nutritional status for want of these food-stuff in their diet.

No improved agricultural practices such as—application of fertilizer and pesticide are used for growing paddy. The Kondh once applied pesticide to their crops but they found that it did more harm than good to agriculture. The adverse effects of the use of the pesticides were that the earthworms which loosen the soil enabling luxuriant growth of plants were killed. Similarly different fishes which lived in paddy fields were also killed.

The Kondh grow both the early variety and the late variety of paddy. The former type is grow in uplands and the later type, in low lands. Transplantation of paddy plants rather than sowing seeds by scattering them is most common among the Kondh and cowdung manure is applied to the paddy fields. Transplantation takes place in the month of June and the paddy is harvested from September to November.

Ragi is grown in dry fields and no manure is applied to these lands. The lands are ploughed more than once, and the ragi seedlings are transplanted after one or two showers of rain. Transplantation takes place in the months of may and June and the crop is harvested in the months of September and October. Mustard is grown after ragi is harvested, The Kondh are aware that such rotation of crops held in maintaining fertility of the soil. The other crops grown in the uplands where ragi is grown are horse gram (*Kulthi*) and til.

However the Kondh did not feel bad about abandoning the practice of shifting cultivation because the



ecological conditions prevailing in their habitat are favourable to growing most of the swidden crops in the plains. There was very little economic diversification among the Kondh when they used to practice solely shifting cultivation for their livelihood. With the stoppage of swidden cultivation the tribal economy has been diversified. Business in *Kendu* leaf, *Sal* leaf plates and cups and *Sal* seeds supplements the income from plains cultivation. Similarly sale proceeds of charcoal which they make by burning fire wood are now an important source of income. Ropes made of grass called *Samba* which is available in the forests sell well in the locality. This rope is used for making the bed of the cots. Mats prepared from the *Khajur* leave fetch also a good income. The Kondh have also taken to wage-earning and with the added income from these sources they have been able to improve their economic condition to a great extent.

#### Plough cultivation :

The Kondh carry on plough cultivation in low lying areas. There are two types of such lands called *Jodi ketang* and *Dhepa ketang*. The former type of land is at the lowest level and the latter type at the higher level in the plains. Bullock-drawn plough is used for tilling the soil and local varieties of paddy are grown in these lands.

The Kondh believe that a deity called *Sandi-Mauli* resides in the paddy fields which is worshipped before paddy is harvested. Every household performs this ritual. On an appointed day the head of the household sacrifices a fowl in one of his paddy-fields where the deity is supposed to live. If the ritual is not observed it is believed that the deity would get angry and the crop will taste bitter.

#### Kitchen garden :

Every Kondh household has a well-maintained kitchen garden on one side of the house; Various types

of vegetables such as-brinjal, chilli, pumpkin, cucumber and sweet potato are grown in the kitchen garden. Maize is also grown in the backyard extensively. If there is more space *kandula* and *Jhudanga* are also grown with other crops,

#### Division of labour :

There is a well-marked sex division of labour in the Kondh society. Work like hunting, tree-felling, ploughing, cattle-tending, priestly activities, building of houses and thatching roofs are done by men and work of cooking, husking and collection of minor forest produce and *Sal* and *Kendu* leaves-making of leaf-plates and bowls are the monopoly of women. Generally men do heavier work and women lighter works. Both men and women cooperate and work hand in hand for all economic activities.

#### Annual cycle of work :

Different activities are pursued in different months. The monthly routine of activities is presented in Table 4.

TABLE 4  
( Monthly routine of activities )

Month	Kondh equivalent	Works
1. January	<i>Magha dahanju</i>	Collection of fire wood and honey, ploughing in wet and Dryland, thatching houses.
2. February	<i>Phaguna dahanju</i>	Harvesting of turmeric, collection of honey, ploughing in the wet land.

1	2	3
3. March	<i>Chaitra dahanju</i>	Collection of Mahua ( <i>Basia Latefolia</i> ): Setting fire to dried matter in swiddens; ploughing and manuring.
4. April	<i>Baisakh dahanju</i>	Collection of firewood; sowing in swiddens; ploughing in wet and dry lands.
5. May	<i>Jestha dahanju</i>	Preparation of seed beds and sowing in swiddens; collection of Mango, jackfruit etc. from the forest; works in kitchen garden.
6. June	<i>Asadha dahanju</i>	Transplantation of paddy and collection of Mushrooms.
7. July	<i>Saban dahanju</i>	Transplantation of paddy and weeding and collection of Mushrooms.
8. August	<i>Budo dahanju</i>	Weeding in wet and dry lands: work in kitchen garden, Harvesting of <i>Maka</i> and <i>Kuari</i> . Collection of roots and tubers.
9. September	<i>Sin dahanju</i>	Harvesting of paddy and ragi



1	2	3
		from Dry lands, watching crops in swiddens, sowing mustard in dry lands.
10. October	<i>Kartik dahanju</i>	Harvesting paddy from dry land: watching crops in swidden. Harvesting of green gram, Ragi, <i>Kulthi</i> ( <i>Dolichos Biflorus</i> ) and <i>Kalka</i> harvesting til from dry land.
11. November	<i>Magsir dahanju</i>	Harvesting of paddy from low-land; repairing and thatching of house, harvesting of Mustard; Collection of firewood.
12. December	<i>Pusa dahanju</i>	Repairing of houses and fencing of kitchen garden; cutting of grass for rope making and thatching of houses.

#### Live stock :

The Kondh rear such domestic animals as cow, bullock, buffalo, goat, pig and fowl. The cattle are used for ploughing. The goats, pigs and fowls are reared for sale, sacrifice to deities and food on festive occasions.

The cattleshed, pig stay and fowl pen, forms a part of their domicile. A cow-herd either belonging to their community or to a milkman or any other caste is employed by the people of a village to lead their cattle.

Every household pays two *khandis* (40 kgs.) of paddy to the cattle-herd at the time of harvest and contributes something daily in the form of food for him and his family.

#### Land Tenure :

It is difficult, if not impossible, to generalise about the use of land and the occupational pattern that prevailed among the Kondh. At one extreme there is a section of the Kondh who carry on swidden tillage including hunting and food gathering from the nearby forests. They live a hand-to-mouth existence in forests. At the other extreme there are Kondh who have fine houses and a highly developed civilization and who are settled agriculturists. They have become so acculturized and have lost so much of their culture, language and art in the process that there is little to distinguish them from the neighbouring Oriya population. In between these two polarities there is an endless variety in the occupational pattern, the economic status and the degree of cultural development. Therefore, discussion of land revenue system areawise and in retrospect appears to be important.

Kondhamal is predominantly inhabited by the Kondh. It was formerly a part of the Princely State of Boudh. Later when Angul was constituted into a district it was linked with it. In Kondhamal the general system of administration was enforced through the traditional headman of the village called, the *Malika* and the headman of a group of villages called, *Mutha Sardar*. No land revenue was assessed and this exemption from assessment of land revenue was considered purely

personal to the Kondh. However, a plough-tax calculated on the number of ploughs possessed by individual Kondh families was realised from them with their consent.

In the earlier dispensation the administration of Koraput district depended mainly on the administrative machinery of the *Maharaja of Jeypor Zamindari*. The system of rent collection prevalent in the district was locally known as *Mustajari*. Groups of village called *Mutha*, were leased out by the *Zamindar* to individuals called *Mustajars* who collected rent from the tenants either in cash, as in the case of the Rayagada division, or in both cash and kind, as in the case of Koraput and Nowrangpur divisions.

In Kalahandi district the Kondh used to claim to be the real owners of the soil and when questioned about their rights the answer invariably given by them was that they were the real proprietor of the soil. The wilder section of the Kondh did not pay any regular land revenue. But they paid and still pay a nominal fee for the area under shifting cultivation.

In the Agency tracts of Ghumsur-Udayagiri Taluk and Agency portions of Suruda the Kondh who lived above ghats held land free of rent. Similarly, in Balliguda and Ramgiri-Udayagiri Taluk and a portion of Parla-khemundi Agency, land was held by the Kondh free of rent. However, this area was split up into several *Muthas* and each *Mutha* was in charge of a *Mutha-head Patra* who owned land on service tenure for services like—execution of Agency civil works and maintenance of law and order. The Kondh living in *Rayatwari* tract enjoyed all privileges which any *Rayat*, regardless of Caste and tribe enjoys in relation to land, payment of rent and sale and mortgage of land.



Abolition of Intermediary interests came into effect between 1952 and 1962. The result that followed was that the *Muthadars* and *Mustajars* and other categories of intermediaries like *Zamindars* and chiefs lost all super-ordinate hold on the peasantry of their *Muthas*, estates, states etc. and became such ordinary citizens as others are in the country. Such land reforms have not altered the relationship of the Kondh to lands under shifting cultivation which continue to be the common property of the village community and no rent is paid to anyone for such lands, except in Kalahandi district where a nominal fee is paid on area basis by the Kondh to the Government.

Lands on a hill slope are distributed among the villagers in a common village meeting, and as long as a Kondh cultivates his share of lands on the hill-slope, his possession over such lands remains undisturbed. Lands which are not cultivated are reverted to the village. Lands which are under cultivation and possession of a family are handed down from father to son and are rarely mortgaged because except the Kondh none else are skilled in slash-and-burn type of cultivation.

The Kondh of the plains having permanent plots of cultivated land come under the *Ryotwari* land tenure system. Such lands have been covered under land survey and settlement, and *Putta* has been issued in favour of the owners in respect of their lands. The Revenue Inspectors in charge of different circles collect land-revenue and cess from the land owners as per the assessment determined for each category of land survey and settlement.

Sons of a Kutia Kondh do not claim for partition of land or for a share in any other property of the family until they are married. Generally partition takes place among the co-sharers after the death of their father.

Property is divided in equal shares among the sons. In some cases the eldest son gets a little more than what his younger brothers get. It is the responsibility of the eldest son to arrange the marriage of the unmarried daughters and all the sons contribute to the expenses of the marriage of their sisters. Among the Kondh polygamy is prevalent, and the sons of all the wives have equal right to their parental property.

When a man dies without a male issue, his land passes to his nearest male relations and is divided equally among them. They must support the widow and the daughters, if any, and get the latter married when they grow up. Women in Kondh society cannot hold land. But they can claim only maintenance. Daughters who are supposed to get married and leave the family, are debarred from acquiring any right to the ancestral property. It has been pointed out earlier that with regard to the ownership of land the joint community system prevails amongst the hill Kondh. The people of each village, on a larger scale, and those of a *Mutha* own their jointly. Individual possession is not recognised and, in exceptional cases, it is permitted by the community for the sake of convenience. Outsiders cannot acquire land in a *Mutha*, let alone a village within the *Mutha*, to the exclusion of the members of the sept. Each *Mutha* is generally composed of a single sept, and therefore, acquisition of land in the *Mutha*, therefore, amounts to an admission of only consanguinal members to exclusion of alien people.

An outsider who is not related by blood to the people of *Mutha* is looked upon as an interloper, and, in no case, he is allowed to acquire any permanent right of occupancy in their holdings. Wherever anyone has leased out a portion of his land to an outsider or to a poorer relative on the basis of share cropping can eject him whenever he likes. In such cases the lease-holder or the



under-tenant is not permitted to perform the rite of sacrifice to the earth-goddess residing in the holdings and participate in the annual worship of the earth-goddess ( *Dharani puja* ) in the village.

Clan homogeneity of *Muthas* is not now strictly kept up in the region inhabited by the Kondh. Various factors have contributed to the heterogeneity of the clan composition of the *Muthas*. Growth of population and scarcity of land for cultivation have been largely responsible for mixed clan composition of the Kondh *Muthas*. In some cases a son-in-law is allowed to stay in the house of his father-in-law if the latter has no son. He looks after the ancestral property and after the death of his father-in-law, acquires the right to it. In other cases persons settle down in *Muthas* other than their own on acquiring by purchase the land of a family having no legal heir to inherit it. This happens in the cases of the servants of the *Sardars*. Some of the domestic servants of the *Sardars* may not be necessarily inhabitants of their masters' *Muthas*. If any one of them, particularly the older ones among them, wants to settle down in the village of his *Sardar* whom he serves the latter finds out land in his *Mutha* for him and helps him to acquire such lands and builds a residential house in his village.

In spite of heterogeneity in the clan composition of a *Mutha* a distinction is always noticed between the outsiders who are called, *Koda Tana* and the original settlers who are known as *Jombo Tana*. The Kondh may not have any objection to such acquisition of land by an outsider their village. But they accept him with much regret and think that he has, as though, taken away their wives and held them in his possession. The verbatim remark of a Kondh upon the acquisition of land by an outsider in his village runs as "*Nain Kudani pati Dihindi pati*". It means that the outsider who lives in his village has, as if, his wife in his keeping. A person of *Koda Tana* category may contribute either in cash or in kind to the worship of *Dharani*





**Darani Penu with a typical kondh house  
in the background**

*Penu* (Earth Goddess) but is forbidden to take part in the worship. Whenever any marriage takes place in the family of a *Koda Tana*, that is, an outsider, persons of *Jombo Tana* category, that is the original settlers of the village, do not make any contributions either in cash or in kind to the expenses of the marriage. Whenever any one dies in a Kondh village, not only the family of the deceased is considered to have been ritually polluted but also the whole village is regarded to have been contaminated by it. But the outsiders residing in the villages are not affected by such pollution, and therefore they do not observe any ceremony of purification as the other inhabitants of the village do.

In brief, the Kondh used to hold land directly under the Government and claim permanent right in the soil. They did not own any landlord until the *Mustajari* or *Muthari* system was introduced. Even after these intermediaries came into power the Kondh continued to hold that they were the landlords. The villages where the Kondh resided were grouped into several *Muthas*, and each *Mutha* was strictly homogenous in clan composition. In earlier days there was more land in relation to population and the Kondh were in possession of extensive holdings.

When someone had difficulties in utilizing all his land for growing crops the profitable course open to him was to lease out the same land to some of his relatives on the basis of produce rent which varied from one third to half of the yield.

With the passage of time the region inhabited by Kondh opened up by degrees and many outsiders infiltrated into it as military adventurers, agents of local chiefs and of Government, and domestic servants of the *Mutha* heads. Later on liquor vendors, brokers, peddlers and moneylenders found their way into these hill fastnesses for the purpose of carrying on business.

Every class of intruders tried to grab land from the Kondh by some means or other and exploited them beyond measure. Particularly the Oriya *Sondis*, who rendered the Kondh poorer by pandering to their taste for liquor, were the exploiters of the worst type. They made the Kondh alienate their lands into their possession. When the matter went from bad to worse the Government passed the Agency Tracts Interest and Land Transfer Act 1 of 1917 prohibiting all transfers from the tribals to the non-tribals without express permission of the authorities. Subsequently the protective legislation was amended several times to plug the loopholes in the laws. But the resulting benefits are only nominal and that the tribal lands have been continually passing into the possession of the non-tribals. The important reasons why the protective machinery of the State has been ineffective are the several ways by which protective legislation is circumvented and the ignorance and illiteracy of the tribals are exploited by the land grabbers who are superior to them in monetary, legal and technical transactions.

### Nutrition :

Nutrition as a biological process is more fundamental than sex. Of all the needs food is the most important and recurrent want in the life of the individual organism. All activities in tribal and non-tribal societies pivot round the problems of getting food. Nutrition is dependent for its fulfilment on food seeking activities which are governed by the ecological factors and environmental conditions. Man's adjustment to a habit through his various food-getting activities, particularly in a tribal community, is a strong disincentive to leaving his own habitat. This explains why certain tribes show considerable doggedness in sticking to their native places in spite of limitations set by the terrain for better production of food stuff.





Jani, Village religious headman at the place of  
kedu worship

A study of shifting cultivation and nutritional status in three tribal villages—Tumkur, a village of Gumma block inhabited by the Lanjia Saoras and the Sundijuba a village of Thuamul—Rampur block inhabited by the Kondh and Sankerai, a village inhabited by the Hill-Bhuinyas of Banspal block was undertaken in 1977-78 by the Tribal and Harijan Research-cum-Training Institute and some of the important findings are presented below. The primary source of food-seeking activity in the three villages is shifting cultivation. Sundijuba spends a higher proportion of working hours in shifting cultivation than the other two villages. Average intake of carbohydrate, protein, fat and mineral matter by the sample families of these villages is given in the table 5.

TABLE 5

( Intake of different constituents of food in three tribal villages per unit per day in grams. )

Village	Carbohydrate	Protein	Fat	Mineral matter.
1	2	3	4	5
Tumkur (Saora)	400.72	32.78	3.04	4.06
Sundijuba (Kondh)	419.11	39.17	3.20	4.24
Sankarai (Bhuinya)	305.65	22.62	2.23	3.09

The work pattern in the three villages shows that people of Sundijuba devote more time of their total working hours to shifting cultivation, those of Tumkur to settled and terrace cultivation and those of Sankerai to hunting and food-gathering. The above table shows that the shifting cultivators are better fed than the terraced cultivators and hunters and food-gatherers.

As regards consumption of calory a hard-working adult unit requires 3500 calory per day and what is important in the food habit of the tribes is the quantity not quality or balanced diet. Average intake of calory by the sample families of the study villages is presented in the table 6.

TABLE-6  
(Intake of calory in the study villages  
per unit and per day in Kg.)

Villages	Rice consumed	Calorific value of rice consumed	Calory required	Deficiency/ Sufficiency of calory
1	2	3	4	5
Tumkur	0.603	2200.18	3500 —	1299.91
Sundijuba	0.675	2338.09	3500 —	1161.91
Sankeraï	0.579	2003.34	3500 —	1496.66

The table relates all the three villages and shows calorific dificiency ; but it is less in the Kondh village than in the Saora and Bhuinya villages. It is important to find out the proportion of animal and vegetable proteins which composes the food of the sample families in the villages under study. The table 7 presents the comparative figures in this regard.

TABLE —7  
(Intake of Protein (Vegetable and Animal) per  
unit and per year in Kg.)

Villages	Vegetable protein	Animal protein	Total protein intake	Percentage of	
				vegetable protein	Animal protein
1	2	3	4	5	6
Tumkur	11.680	0.284	11.964	97.63	2.37
Sundijuba	13.741	0.556	14.297	96.11	3.89
Sankeraï	6.644	1.612	9.256	80.46	19.53



The table shows that in all cases major bulk of protein is derived from vegetable sources and the intake of animal protein is, so to say, negligible in Tumkur and Sundijuba as compared with that in Sankeraï.

The main sources from which vegetable protein is obtained are swiddens and terraced fields and plain lands. It is interesting to find out to what extent do the sample families of the villages under study get vegetable protein from the crops grown in shifting cultivation. The table 8 gives the comparative picture in this regard.

TABLE— 8

(Intake of Vegetable protein obtained from shifting cultivation per unit and per year in Kgs.)

Villages	Intake of total vegetable protein.	Intake of vegetable protein obtained from shifting cultivation.	Percentage of vegetable protein obtained from shifting cultivation.
1	2	3	4
Tumkur (Saora)	11.680	4.357	37.318
Sundijuba (Kondh)	13.741	4.683	34.083
Sankeraï (Bhuinya)	6.644	1.315	19.79

The above table shows that shifting cultivation is an important source of vegetable protein in all the three villages. It is more so in Tumkur than in the two other villages. Whatever vegetable protein is consumed by the sample families of Tumkur village is obtained not from terraced fields, but from shifting cultivation. Paddy which is not a protein-yielding crop is grown in terraced fields extensively whereas minor millets and

pulses which are rich in protein are grown in shifting cultivation.

Considering the availability of food in different times of the year the months such as November, December, January and February may be taken as peak period and July, August, September and October as lean period and the remaining months, March, April, May and June come under the category of medium period. The table-9 provides figures regarding intake of calory during peak and lean periods in the villages under study.

TABLE— 9

(Amount of Rice consumed in peak and lean periods in the study villages.)

Peak Period						
Villages	Rice consumed per day in Kg.	Calory equivalent of Intake of rice	Deficiency (-) Sufficiency (+) Sufficiency (x)	Rice consumed per day In Kg.	Calory equivalent of Intake of rice	Deficiency (-) Sufficiency (+)
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Tumkur	0.867	2999.82—500.18		0.448	1548.08—1951.92	
Sundijuba	1.086	3757.56+257.56		0.340	1176.4 —2323.60	
Sankera	0.498	1723.08—1776.56		0.386	1335.56—2164.44	

The table shows that in peak period Sundijuba records intake of calory above the prescribed norm of 3500 per day per adult unit, whereas, Sankera and Tumkur are much below the norm. In lean period all the three villages suffer calory deficiency, Sundijuba more severely than the other two villages.

The analysis of diet and nutritional ingredients shows that, in general, Sundijuba enjoys a higher nutritional status than the other two villages. The main reasons are that most of the crops grown in shifting cultivation and elsewhere and all the games killed in the surrounding forest are consumed rather than sold for want of road communications and suitable outlets. The vegetational cover around the Kondh village is not so much destroyed as is done in the cases of Saora and Bhuinya villages and, therefore, edible roots and tubers, fruit and flowers are available in greater quantity in the former village than in the latter villages. Alcoholic beverage is also a source of nutrition. The people of Sankera and Sundijuba drink the juice from sago-palm and other palm trees whereas those of Tumkur have given up drinking under the influence of Christianity. The nutritional loss caused by abstinence from alcoholic drinks in Tumkur village has not been compensated by taking any other nutritive substitute. One of the significant findings of the study is that no protein-yielding crop is grown in the plain lands and terraced fields. But the millets and pulses which are grown in shifting cultivation are protein-rich. It is important to note that any plan which discourages shifting cultivation without providing alternative sources of vegetable protein will deteriorate the protein deficiency further and consequently do more harm than good to the shifting cultivators.



## CHAPTER - III

### SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

#### Family and Kinship Pattern :

Family is the smallest social unit. All tribal communities as a rule live in simple or nucleus families. The Kondh is not an exception to it. A nucleus family comprises parents and their unmarried children. The joint family which consists of old parents and their married sons is very rare in the Kondh community. It is the practice among the Kondh that as soon as a boy gets married he builds a house of his own and lives separately from his parents. The reason for this is that a Kondh house is small and there is no space for more than one couple to live in such a small house. A Kondh cannot afford to build a big house for financial reasons. Moreover, there are ecological constraints. In a hilly terrain and on a sloping topography big houses are out of the question.

The next bigger unit is lineage which comprises a number of remembered blood-related families. Members of a lineage live together in different hamlets of a village or in a group of villages. Many consanguinal families constitute together an exogamous division called, *Klambu*, the members of which claim descent from a common ancestor and occupy a distinct territory called *Mutha*. *Klambu* may correspond to a clan or sept while *Mutha* to a clan-territory. A clan group goes by the name of the territory. A clan-territory is heterogeneous in ethnic composition with the Kondh of a particular clan forming the core community and the warrior and the washerman and the Brahmin and the other non-tribal people forming fringe communities. According to the views of some Kondh these non-tribal castes were in their homeland on sufferance. The other view was that they were

there on invitation to lead them in war and act as interpreter in their dealings with the British Officers.

The largest unit is the Kondh tribe which is rather a *de jure* entity. Based on different levels of development the Kondh have been divided into several sub-tribals. The most backward section which lives in relatively more inaccessible and unhealthy hilly areas and carries on incipient agriculture with hunting and food-gathering as primary source of livelihood is known as Kutia Kondh. The most advanced section which lives in the low lands and fertile valleys and practices primarily wet cultivation is known as Desia Kondh. In between these two polarities there are various other sections which go by such names as Jharia Kondh and Dongria Kondh. These intermediate groups are neither as badly off and indigent as the Kutia Kondh, nor are they as well off and prosperous as the Desia Kondh.

There is all the difference in the world between a Kutia Kondh leading a hand-to-mouth existence in the forest and speaking Kui language and a Desia Kondh having irrigated and fertile paddy fields and speaking Oriya language. Other differences lie in the subtle aspects of belief and value system. The more primitive sections follow their traditional religion, practise tattooing and perform buffalo sacrifice during *Kedu* festival. But the more advanced sections have been either Hinduized or Christianized. There is a great variety in economic status and degree of cultural development. These differences and physical separation have made them different from one another. As a result each sub-tribe has been a cultural isolate and an endogamous group.

#### Kinship :

Kinship is defined as relationship which is determined, and can be described, by means of genealogies.

According to this definition, Kinship differs from relationship set up by membership of the clan. The kin of a man are all his known relatives, both on the father's and the mother's side, who would belong to two different clans. In this way the Kinship relationship is wider than the relationship set up by common membership of the clan which is unilateral. On the other hand, members of the clan to whom one cannot trace relationship would only be clan not kin.

There are mainly two modes of denoting relationship; the classificatory system and the descriptive system. The system of relationship in which a group of relatives is addressed by a single term is called, classificatory system. In this case relatives are grouped in classes. This is not so in the case of the descriptive system. It is a system of relationship in which a relative is addressed by a kinship term which is not used to address any other relative. In the case of descriptive system relatives are not grouped into classes, they are distinguished from one another by separate terms of address. A few selected terms of address are given in Table-10 to discuss the kinship system among the Kondh.

TABLE 10  
( Kinship terms )

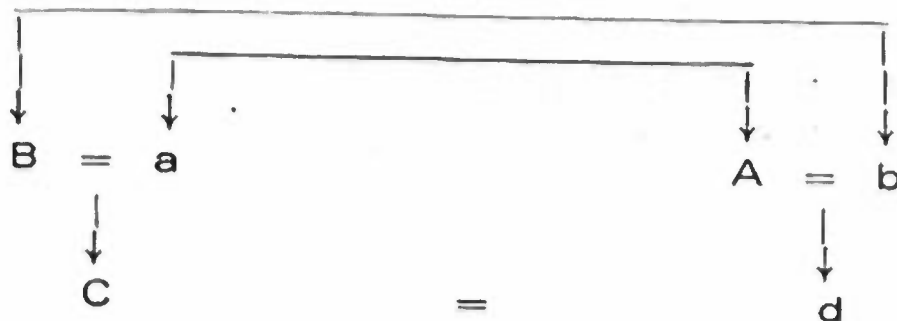
Sl. No.	Relative	Kondh Terms of Address		
		Kutia	Dongria	Desia
1	2	3	4	5
1. Father		<i>Aba</i>	<i>Abale</i>	<i>Bapa</i>
2. Mother		<i>Aja</i>	<i>Ayale</i>	<i>Ma</i>
3. Father's Father		<i>Aku</i>	<i>Tadile</i>	<i>Aja</i>
4. Father's Mother		<i>Aji</i>	<i>Adile</i>	<i>Ai</i>
5. Father's Sister		<i>Amna</i>	<i>Ammle</i>	<i>Ata</i>



1	2	3	4	5
6.	Father's Brother ( elder ) ( younger )	<i>Pesuba</i> <i>Kaku</i>	— <i>Manale</i>	<i>Badu</i> <i>Daddi</i>
7.	Elder Sister	<i>Nana</i>	<i>Nanale</i>	<i>Nani</i>
8.	Younger Sister	<i>Api</i>	<i>Baile</i>	—
9.	Elder Brother	<i>Toja</i>	<i>Todale</i>	<i>Bhai</i>
10.	Younger Brother	<i>Apu</i>	<i>Buddale</i>	—
11.	Mother's Brother	<i>Mamma</i>	<i>Mamma</i>	<i>Mamu</i>
12.	Mother's Sister	—	<i>Makaki</i>	<i>Mausi</i>
13.	Elder Brother's Wife	<i>Abya</i>	<i>Awale</i>	<i>Bau</i>
14.	Younger Brother's Wife	<i>Kudya</i>	<i>Baile</i>	—
15.	Mother's Father	<i>Aku</i>	<i>Adile</i>	—
16.	Mother's Mother	<i>Aki</i>	<i>Adile</i>	—
17.	Father's Sister's Husband	<i>Mama</i>	<i>Mamale</i>	<i>Mamu</i>
18.	Father's elder Brother's Wife	<i>Per</i>	<i>Makagaya</i>	<i>Baddi</i>
19.	Father's younger Brother's Wife	<i>Kaki</i>	<i>Maikunaya</i>	<i>Kaki</i>
20.	Elder Sister's Husband	<i>Michu</i>	<i>Tadala</i>	—
21.	Younger Sister's Husband	<i>Jaway</i>	<i>Buddale</i>	—
22.	Mother's Brother's Wife	<i>Amma</i>	<i>Ammale</i>	—
23.	Brother's Son	<i>Bhanja</i>	<i>Buddale</i>	<i>Patra</i>
24.	Brother's Daughter	<i>Bhanji</i>	<i>Baile</i>	<i>Jhiari</i>
25.	Sister's Son	<i>Apo</i>	<i>Buddale</i>	—
26.	Sister's Daughter	<i>Api</i>	<i>Baile</i>	—

A glance at the Kinship nomenclature shows that while some relatives are classed together and given a single kinship term other relatives are each denoted with a distinct kinship term. Both classificatory and descriptive system of relationship are met with in the Kondh society. For example, *Mamma* is applied to a

man's mother's brother, the husband of his father's sister and father-in-law while his father's sister, his mother's brother's wife and mother-in-law are grouped together by denoting them with a single term *Anma*. The custom of classifying the relatives by marriage with near kin at once suggests marriage of a certain kind which makes the mother's brother and father's sister's husband and father-in-law one and the same person. The same kind of marriage is also responsible for classifying the father's sister with the mother's father's wife and mother-in-law.



In the above diagram capital letters stand for men, small letters for women. Suppose C marries d. In this case it is evident that A, the mother's brother, or father's sister's husband becomes C's father-in-law, while b the wife of the mother's brother or father's sister becomes mother-in-law. It shows that the study of kinship terminology can throw light on different forms of marriage prevalent in a society. Elaborate analysis of a larger set of classificatory kinship terms will give a full picture of both the past and present organization of the society in question.

#### Inter caste relationship :

In no village of the Kondh there is cent percent homogeneity, Besides one or more clusters of hamlets of the Kondh there may be clusters of hamlets in which the Oriyas and the Panos reside. The main castes of the villages of the Kondh are the Brahmin, the Oriya, the

Gouda (milkman), the Barika (Barber), the Kamara (Blacksmith), the Dhoba (Washerman), the Sundis (liquor vendor), the Siala (toddy tapper), the Pano (Scheduled Caste), and the Ghasi (Scheduled Caste). Most of these castes provide some service or other to the Kondh and receive payments in kind during harvest every year. The relationship which exists between the Kondh and the service-castes corresponds to a patron-client relationship in many ways. The nature of services offered and payments made are mentioned below.

#### **The Brahmin :**

The Brahmins bearing surnames of '*Panda*' '*Sahu*' and '*Nanda*' are found in the Kondh clan territories. A Brahmin serves a Kondh at the time of marriage for tying up the hands of the bride and the groom ritually, and he performs *Homa*, a purificatory ceremony, to remove death pollution. During harvest the Brahmins collect some food grains from each and every Kondh household.

#### **The Oriya :**

The Oriyas bear surnames such as—'*Bhakta*' and '*Bissoi*'. The Oriya musicians participate in Kondh marriages not as a rule but on personal requests and out of fellow feeling. The Kondh live in the house of the Oriyas but the reverse is not true.

#### **The Gauda :**

One section of the Gauda caste is known as '*Padhan*' and '*Naga*' which terms are their surnames, the other section is known as '*Tela*' and '*Bagarti*' which are their surnames. The former section occupies a higher position in social status than the latter section, and therefore, the superior group does not accept cooked food from the inferior group. But the Kondh eat in the houses of all sections of milkmen.



The occupation of the Gaudas is tending of cattle. A Ganda is paid in paddy at the rate of one 'Khandi' per head of cattle annually during harvest. Besides, he collects some food called "Gundi" from each house daily.

#### The Kondh Gauda :

The Kondh Gaudas stand separate from their Oriya counterparts and the two communities, in spite of similarity in name and occupation do not intermarry and inter-dine. The Kondh Gauda stand separate from their Gauda counterparts and the two communities, in spite of similarity in name and occupation do not intermarry and interdine. The Kondh Gauda are inferior to the Oriya Gauda. People of the high Oriya castes accept water from an Oriya Gauda but not from a Kondh Gauda. The latter accepts not only water but also cooked food from an Oriya Gauda but this is not reciprocated. The Kondh accept water and cooked food from both the Oriya and the Kondh Gauda.

#### The Kamars :

There are two sections among the Kamar. The superior section bears the surname 'Guru' and the inferior section is called 'Lohar'. Both the sections are black-smith, and despite their similarity in occupation they do not intermarry. A Lohara accepts cooked food from a Kondh but this is not true in the case of a Guru Kamar. Similarly a Lohara accepts food from a Guru Kamar but this is not reciprocated. From the information gathered about these two types of smiths, it is known that the Kamars represent the Oriya smiths and the Loharas their Kondh counterparts. However both the sections provide their services to the Kondh, but the Kondh smiths do so regularly, and the Oriya smiths rarely.

A Lohara receives 10 'tambis' of paddy per plough annually from each Kondh household to supply a plough

share and sharpens all types of agricultural implements.

#### The Dhoba :

The washermen are distinguished from other castes by their occupation of washing clothes and by their surnames such as —'Setti' and 'Behera'. Though washermen serve the Kondh at the time of purificatory ceremonies they are not dependent upon the latter for their living through any '*jujmani*' service. A Dhoba receives payment in cash for his service rendered to a Kondh but he does not accept any food from the latter.

#### The Sundi :

There are two groups of the Sundi community, Mata Sundi and Cherua Sundi. Though both the sections bear the same surnames such as—'Padhan' and 'Sahu' they neither intermarry nor interdine. The Sundis are primarily liquor vendors and many of them carry on business in grocery and forest produce. There is no *jujmani* relationship between the Kondh and the Sundi. The main work of the Sundis is to prepare liquor and sell it to the Kondh. Alcoholic drink is a great favourite of the Kondh. The local Sundis have reduced the Kondh to indigence and poverty by pandering to their taste for liquor. One of the factors which favours land alienation and indebtedness is the habit of drinking. Most of the lands belonging to the Kondh have passed into the hands of the Sundis.

## CHAPTER IV

### LIFE CYCLE

#### Birth :

It is the belief among the Kondh that a person passes through five stages in his life—infancy, childhood, adolescence, adulthood and old age. A pregnant woman does not sit idle at home. She does her work as usual. As soon as labour pain starts she comes to the main room of her house and delivers the child without any assistance from anybody. However, her husband has to stay in the room in case she may need his help. It is the duty of the father to cut the umbilical cord of the child. If it is a male child his cord is cut with an arrow head. If it is a female child then a knife is used for the purpose. The dirty matters including the placenta are buried in a safe place in the kitchen garden. Among the Kondh birth pollution is observed for 11 days. All the lineage members including the members of the family in question have to undergo ritual purification which takes place two times—once on the 12th day and the other after a month from the date of birth of the child.

On the 12th day the villagers assemble at the door of the family. The mother comes out of her house with the baby and an earthen pot full of water over her head. There must be a bow and arrow on the pot or some bamboo to signify the sex of the Child. The mother goes straight to the nearby stream, takes bath and comes back home. From this day the birth pollution is partially gone.

When a month is completed the full purificatory rites are observed. On this occasion the lineage members and also the relatives by marriage take part in the ritual. A feast is prepared and the assembled relatives and kin members are offered food and drink.



### Marriage :

Marriage is one of the important social functions among the Kondh. Adult marriage is practised among them. A boy marries when he is between 21 and 25 years of age. But a girl marries at a low age which varies from 15 to 18 years. According to the rules of exogamy a man cannot marry within his clan or *Mutha*. Monogamy is rather the rule than the exception. But polygyny is prevalent in case the first wife does not bear any child. Some preferential type of marriage such as sororate, widow-marriage and cross-cousin marriage are prevalent in the Kondh society. Besides, love marriage, marriage by force and marriage by exchange also take place among the Kondh. But arranged marriage is by far the best and most of the marriages are of this type.

Payment of bride-price is prevalent and the amount of the bride-price is settled through a go-between. Bride-price is paid either in cash or in kind or both. After negotiation is settled and the bride-price paid, the would-be bride-groom visits his would-be-father-in-law's house and participates in the agricultural field work along with the members of the family of her father-in-law. The idea of taking part in field work is to show that he is capable of doing hard work and maintaining his family. Thereafter a day is fixed on which the marriage takes place and the newly-married couple take up a house of their own separately. Divorce is allowed in the Kondh society. Both husband and wife are at liberty to divorce each other. Divorced persons are also allowed to remarry.

### Death :

The Kondh believe that death is a natural phenomenon and beyond one's control. As soon as a person dies, the members of the family start crying and

the dead body is kept in the north-south direction with the head towards north.

On hearing the news the lineage members assemble at the door of the house of the deceased and take out the corpse to the cremation ground. A new cloth is wrapped over the corpse and the ornaments used by the person are not removed. The corpse is set over the pyre and the fire is set to it.

Persons who die of small-pox, chicken-pox and cholera are buried in an isolated place. It is the duty of the Ghasi who is attached to the family of the deceased to supply firewood and collect ornaments from the ashes and take them for his own use. After the cremation is over the lineage members take bath and return home. The family of the deceased and the lineage members observe death pollution for 11 days. On the 12th day the members of the family of the deceased and their lineage members undergo ritual purification which comprises cleaning of houses, clothes and all other materials used by them. They also shave their hair and moustache and beard and cut their nails. A feast is arranged on this occasion at the house of the deceased and all the assembled guests and relatives take part in the feast which marks the end of the ceremony.



Music of flute



## CHAPTER - V

### TERRITORIAL AND POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

#### Territorial Organization :

The smallest territorial unit is the hamlet. A village may comprise, on an average, three to four hamlets. Some villages do not have any hamlets. The largest territorial unit is called *Mutha* which, like the village is an administrative unit, formerly in charge of a hereditary official, the *Sardar* and his assistants, the *Paiks*. A *Mutha* may consist of 10 to 12 villages on the average. Each *Mutha* has a name and a distinct boundary. It is in existence since time beyond memory and the Government since British rule has recognized this unit for administrative purposes.

A *Mutha* can be used in several contexts. It is an administrative unit composed of the Kondh, and people of different Oriya communities and Scheduled Castes. Of all the communities the Kondh are in great majority. They have either their own village or hamlets exclusive to themselves or they live along with the Oriyas and the Scheduled Castes in other villages in a *Mutha*. The name of the *Mutha* coincides with that of the clan to which the Kondh inhabitants belong. The term *Klambu* is the *Kui* equivalent of clan and it is to this *Klambu* and not to the Oriyas and other castes that the soil of the entire *Mutha* belongs.

The composition of a particular *Mutha* is given below for the sake of illustration. *Piranga* is one of the 50 *Muthas* located in Kondhmals. The *Piranga Mutha* comprises the following settlements.

Settlements	Composition
1. Taragabali	The Kondh
2. Majhi para	The Kondh and the Oriya
3. Nedi Sahi	The Kondh and the Milkmen
4. Madurga	The Kondh and the Oriya
5. Kasnipada	The Kondh, the Oriya and the Pano
6. Laderpanga Burunginali	The Kondh
7. Glaisnga	The Kondh
8. Chhitakapataki	The Kondh
9. Kambapada	The Kondh
10. Uparpada	The Kondh and the Pano
11. Oriya Sahi	The Oriya

The story is that there were two brothers *pagu*, the elder brother and *Pira*, the younger brother. *Pagu* settled down in a *Mutha* called *Jurapanga* while *Pira* in *Piranga Mutha*. The latter stayed first in a place called *Gambergada* and later shifted to *Uparpada*. From this place his descendants spread to different settlements of *piranga Mutha*.

It may be observed that *Piranga Mutha* includes not only the Kondh, but also the Scheduled castes and the Oriyas. The land of *Piranga Mutha* belongs to none except the Kondh of the *Mutha* who are exogamous. In other words, *Piranga Mutha* works as an exogamous clan for the Kondh who are related to one another by consanguinity. In the sense of heterogeneity of composition of the Kondh, the Pano and the Oriya who are not united by any bonds of kinship the *Piranga Mutha* stands for an administrative division. But in the sense of exogamy among the Kondh who have descended from a common ancestor, that is *Pira* and, therefore, related to one another by blood, the *Piranga Mutha* stands as a clan for its Kondh inhabitants. In short,



*Piranga* means not only a clan when referred to as a social organization of the Kondh but also a clan territory when referred to as a geographical and administrative division.

It has been pointed out earlier that formerly no Kondh of any other clan-territory was allowed to settle down in *Piranga Mutha* (In the test both *Mutha* and clan-territory are used interchangeably in geographical sense). But now-a-days the homogeneity of the clan territory has been breaking down and people of other *Muthas* are found living in *Piranga Mutha*. The same heterogeneity is also noticed in other clan-territories. It has already been mentioned that these alien elements are not recognized as owner of the land of the *Piranga* clan and, therefore, no right to worship of *Dharani* (Earth-Goddess). Similarly any type of ritual pollution of the original Kondh (*Jombo Tana*) does not affect the alien Kondh (*Koda Tana*) and vice-versa.

Following the social customs of the Kondh the non-tribal communities, such as--the Panos and the Oriyas, avoid marriage within the *Mutha*. Any incestuous offence committed by a member of any community-tribal or non-tribal residing in the *Mutha* pollutes the whole *Mutha* and endangers the life and property of all people of the *Mutha*. The remedial measures taken in such cases are excommunication or expulsion of the offenders from the *Mutha* and ritual purification and worship of goddess *Dharani*. As long as the offenders who commit incestuous union are in the *Mutha* they spell danger to the whole *Mutha*. Once they leave the *Mutha* and stay elsewhere the evil effects of the incest fails to influence it. Mention may be made of the relationship between *Piranga Mutha* founded by the younger brother and *Jurapangia Mutha* founded by the elder brother. No marriage takes place between the Kondh of *Piranga* clan and *Jurapangia* clan. But the ritual pollution in one of the agnatic clans does not affect the other so seriously because it defiles them exclusively. One of the purificatory items observed by the Kondh when polluted



ritually is to throw away all old earthen wares used at home and replace them with new ones. This custom which is called *Tenginga Mraspa* is observed by all among the Kondh of the *Mutha* where pollution occurs, but it is not observed by their agnates living in a distant *Mutha*. However, in the case of death pollution all agnates from far and near gather at the house of the deceased and take part in the non-vegetarian food cooked on this occasion for the assembled relatives.

From locational point of view there exists among the Kondh two kinds of clanship. One may be called as the localized clan existing within a larger group of heterogeneous composition such as—the Kondh, the Oriya and the Pano in a clan-territory. The other may be called blood-linked clan dispersed in two or more than two clan-territories. A localized clan enjoys exclusive ownership of the land of its *Mutha*, worships its own Earth-goddess and is affected directly by any incestuous offence committed by any one of its *Mutha*. It also makes a political unit and fulfils jointly with others of the *Mutha* all obligations concerning administrative matters. A related branch of its clan resident living in another *Mutha* has nothing to do with any of the matters mentioned above. It is sought to participate only on social occasions and marriage with one of its members is forbidden.

#### Political Organization :

Every *Mutha* had a *Sardar*, generally known as the *Mutha Sardar*. He was of the Kondh tribe and his post was hereditary. He was responsible for maintaining peace in his *Mutha*. He used to engage porters to carry the luggage of the officers during their tour from village to village. He was personally responsible to Government for plough contribution from each ryot. He used to collect some amount at a fixed *ryot* from the *ryots* towards his perquisite. He also received other perquisites

on the occasion of a widow's marriage or on the death of a man without heirs.

#### The Village police :

There was a police or chowkidar in each *Mutha*. His job was to watch the *Mutha* and keep the criminal activities under check. He used to engage labourers for the construction of roads which were allotted to him by the Government for execution. For the payment of the village police a collection of paddy, calculated on the extent of each Man's cultivation was made annually and paid to him by the *Mutha Sardar*. The post of village police was hereditary.

#### The *Deheri* and the *Jakeri* :

The two other important persons holding religious offices at the *Mutha* level were the *Deheri* and the *Jakeri*. The *Deheri* was entrusted with the work of worshipping the Hill-Gods and the *Jakeri* was in charge of worshipping the Earth-Goddess. These two religious heads now continue to offer their services and perform the rituals without any attention to their sacred functions. The posts of the *Deheri* and the *Jakeri* are not necessarily hereditary. Any man of their family having knowledge of the rituals of worship is chosen to act as the religious head.

#### The *Sardar* of *Mutha* confederacy :

A group of six or more *Muthas* formed a bigger territorial unit and there was a head *Sardar* in charge of this administrative unit. For example, the *Muthas* such as- *Firingia*, *Jurapangia*, *Baddingia*, *Saitingia*, *Gupnigia*, and *Bhaburgaon* formed an administrative unit and there was a head *Sardar* in charge of this confederacy. The head *Sardar* of a group of *Muthas* was mostly of the non-tribal Oriya caste, but in some *Muthas* dignitaries were of the Kondh tribe. The responsibilities of the head *Sardar* was to maintain



law and order in this area; collect revenue or plough contribution from different *Muthas*, engage labourers in public works such as—construction of roads and buildings and repairing of Bunglows, schools, etc, and cases of adjudication were referred to him by his subordinate *Mutha Sardar*. The business of the Siali is to tap the juice from palm trees and sell toddy. A Siali pays Rs. 5/- per tree to the tree owner and is a license holder for carrying on business in toddy. The Panos are untouchables. There are two classes of panos—the Kondh Pano and the Oriya Pano. In the past these two sections were each endogamous and did not dine with one another but they are now in marital relationship with one another. They bear surnames such as—*Digal, Naik, Mahananda* and *Dehera*. The Kondh Pano eats beef and removes carcass from the village and throws it away. He acts as a go-between for the Kondh in marriage ceremony and serves as a messenger. In the past the Kondh used to utilize the services of the Kondh Pano for cremating the dead bodies. But it is no longer in vogue.

The pano is inextricably interlinked with the life of the Kondh. According to the traditions of the area the panos were brought from outside to the Kondh hills to serve many needs. As indicated above they serve as scavengers. They remove carcass from the village and play on pipes and drums for music at the time of marriage. They serve as a plough-servants and casual labourers in the farm of the Kondh.

All panos in the land of the Kondh are much ahead of their Kondh masters in all respects and exploit them in many ways. They have always been their middlemen. They visit markets in the plains and acquire cattle at cheap rate and sell them to the Kondh at a high price. The panos have a monopoly of cattle in the land of the Kondh. They also supply jewellery and ornaments to the Kondh at a high cost. At harvest-time they are in the habit of wheedling some amount of paddy from the



threshing floor of the Kondh. At every festival they visit every Kondh house and ask for food. They are so shrewd and cunning that they flatter the Kondh as their Raja and give them opportunity to demonstrate superior status. This sort of attitude is assumed for no other purpose than exploitation.

The panos do not stand on their own right. They live as parasites and thrive at the cost of the Kondh. They make capital of the ignorance and superstition of the Kondh. They act as brokers, peddlars and sycophants to cheat them.

#### **The Ghasis :**

They are known by two surnames as-*Mukhi* and *Bhetkul*. Their main occupation is clearing the village street and for this work a *Ghasi* receives annually 5 *Tambis* of paddy per household and some food daily. It is customary that after the dead body is cremated a *Ghasi* gathers from the ashes whatever ornaments the deceased had worn. He also serves as a musician at the time of marriage.

#### **The Paikas :**

Each head *Sardar* had a number of paikas to assist him in his work. The Paikas are recruited from various communities such as-the Oriya, the Sundi, the Washer-man and the Kondh. The duties of a paika are to accompany the Head *Sardar* and *Mutha Sardar* during their village visits and summon people to public meeting. The paikas of higher caste were required to supply water to officers during their tour in Kondh villages. Some of the paikas came into the Kondh country with military adventures and were welcomed by the Kondh as it was thought that they would make good soldiers in battle. Some accompanied the agents of the Raja or the Hill-chief or of the Government and got themselves absorbed as paikas in the administrative establishment of the *Sardars*. The

Kondh had given the warrior caste a good deal of land by way of payment for their services as messengers and for their quasi-police duties. The warrior caste however, never thought that the land given to them for military service belonged to them. They recognized the Kondh ownership of the land by paying them occasional tribute or by entertaining the Kondh whenever the latter visited the villages in which they lived.

The Kondh do not recognize the classical caste system. But they treat the people of the other castes living in their midst in such a manner as leads one to think that they are conscious of the distinction of caste. They take food and drink from Bhahmins, warriors and Oriya herdsmen, but refuse to have water from the hands of weavers, washermen and distillers whom they consider untouchables. The Kondh themselves are not untouchables. The clean castes freely go into their houses, and come in physical contact with the Kondh without any ritual pollution. From the untouchables the Kondh always expect such behaviour as is due to a superior caste from an inferior caste. As regards the relationship between the clean caste Oriyas and the Kondh, the former do not accept food and water from the Kondh still then the latter do not make any attempt to assert their superiority by refusing to have food and drink from the people of the higher castes.

In the earlier dispensation the Kondh were dominant in all respects. But things have changed now, and the Kondh no longer enjoy any dominant status. In the by-gone days the Kondh were the original settlers of the territory which they now inhabit. Kondhmals, the northern promontory of the Eastern Ghats, has been the stronghold of the Kondh. It was surrounded on almost all sides by a number of Oriya Kingdoms which were classified until 1948 as the feudatory or tributary states of Orissa. These Kingdoms and the smaller chiefdoms which were located



within them were at constant war with one another for expanding their kingdoms and subduing the weaker one's among them. There was continuous struggle to rearrange the ladder of kinship and chiefship and dependency.

In the process of colonization and struggle for power many Oriyas infiltrated into the frontier areas which were occupied by the Kondh. But in spite of their numerical preponderance the Kondh came under the rule by the alien Oriyas. At present the Kondh occupy fewer positions of power and responsibility in commerce and in the administration than the Oriyas. The fertile valleys are now under the occupation of the Oriyas where many large Oriya villages and towns and business centres have come up. The Kondh have been pushed into foot hills and the smaller valleys. It is needless to say that the more fertile wider valleys which are more suitable for rice cultivation have made the Oriyas wealthy and prosperous whereas the narrower and remoter valleys which are less fertile and, in most cases unsuitable for rice cultivation, have made the Kondh indigent. Oriya villages earn more from the diversified economics than the Kondh villages. Added to this, the processess of mounting land alienation have rendered the Kondh landless and the Kondh now, in many cases, have become wage earners and agricultural labourers. This change from proprietorship to agricultural servitude in the economic life of the Kondh has affected adversely the other aspects of their life. This applies, *mutatis mutandis*, to the whole of the Kondh territory.

### **The Kondh Rebellions :**

Generally the Kondh may be regarded as a bold and fitfully labourious mountain-peasantry of simple and dignified manners. They are upright in their conduct, sincere and faithful to their superstitions, proud of their position as landholders and tenacious of their rights.



Veracity is a notable quality of the Kondh. Too much addiction of liquor is one of their weaknesses. Because of this bad habit, the most valuable portions of their land have passed into the possession and enjoyment of Sundi liquor vendors and the Pano Saowkars or money lenders by way of payment of loans, the greater portion of which was spent in drink.

Human sacrifice and killing of female children which prevailed among the Kondh was in human and barbarous practices. The British Government took all measures to suppress these horrible acts. The Kondh rose in revolt against them and there were several encounters between the troops and the rebel tribals, and in the long run, the savage practices were stamped out fully.

In the hill tracts inhabited by the Kondh and other tribal communities there were many chiefdoms ruled by *Zamindars* and *Rajas*. Goomsur was one of such kingdoms. In 1836 the *Raja* of Goomsur refused to pay his *Peskash* to the British Government and disturbances broke out in the kingdom. Mr. Russell, first Member of the Board of Revenue, was given the power of supreme control of affairs. The *Raja* fled to the hills with his treasury. The troops followed him. The *Raja* took refuge in a Kondh village and from rights of hospitality the Kondh of the whole area refused to give him up. The Sepoys attacked the Kondh who paid them back in their own coin and massacred many soldiers. Even after the death of the fugitive the struggle between the Kondh and the troops continued until the Kondh leader Dora Bissoyi was shot dead. A near relation of the deceased leader called, Onkaru Chokro Bissoyi led the Kondh in 1836 as "champion of the *Meria*". They were supported by *Paikas* and *Bissoyis* of some *Muthas*. Detachments of troops had to be scattered all over the country to keep order. Chokro Bissoyi finding himself hard pressed in the hills led his followers into the plains to burn villages, and finding but

few to help him there, he set up a child as the son of the late Goomsur Raja.

With the spread of British rule in the hill-tracts many developmental schemes such as-roads, rest-sheds, schools and dispensaries were constructed there and with the opening up of the interiors, many people of the plains infiltrated into these areas as contractors, money-lenders, merchants and brokers. The Kondh suffered in many ways at the hands of these exploiters. In 1865 a general rising of the Kutia Kondh took place having its root in a dispute about payment for construction of certain roads which the Patro of subarnagiri had contracted to execute. At times the Kondh had risen in revolt against police excesses. In 1872 the Hochiponga Kondh of Chandragiri *Mutha* rose in masses to rescue two of their fellow villagers who had been arrested by the police.

In some erst-while feudatory states the Kondh were in ritual and symbolic relationship with the ruling families. The states like-Kalahandi and Nayagarh fall into this category. Whenever any trouble arises regarding succession or mismanagement in these states, it affects the Kondh most. For example, in 1881 a dispute as to the succession arose in Kalahandi state. The Kondh broke into open rebellion and committed many excesses attended with bloodshed. The disturbance was repressed and in 1882 a British Officer was appointed as political Agent, with Headquarters at Bhawanipatna to manage the state. A similar rebellion took place in 1894 in Nayagarh state. The call for revolt is disseminated in an indigenous fashion. The news of an intended rising is circulated by means of a consecrated knot or '*Ganthi*' which is quickly passed on from village to village.



## CHAPTER - VI

### EDUCATION

#### Primary education :

Orissa, in general, was very backward till the dawn of independence. But there has been considerable institutional expansion of general education in the period following independence. This is more so in the rural and urban areas than in the tribal areas. According to the 1971 Census the percentages of literacy among the urban, rural and tribal population are roughly 48, 28 and 10 respectively. Compared with these overall percentages, the Kondh recorded only 8 percent of literacy in 1971 Census.

The educational survey undertaken in 1979 by the Directorate of Education of Orissa, in Koraput district, shows that the percentage of literacy among the Kondh in Koraput district is only 5. Among the major tribes of Koraput district the Kondh occupy the first position. The survey shows that in 24 out of the 42 blocks the Kondh emerge as the major tribe.<sup>1</sup> In 2441 (46.73%) habitations out of 5224 habitations of these 24 blocks more than 50 percent of the population in each settlement belong to the Kondh. In 850 (35.23 percent) such habitations, primary schools have been established and in 598 more habitations there are primary schools within a distance of 1.5 Kms. Thus, in all 1458 or 59.73 percent of the habitations predominantly inhabited by the Kondh are provided with facilities of primary education, the corresponding figure for the whole district being 70.59 percent.

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\* 1 A tribe was regarded as a major tribe at the block level if it contributes to at least 5 percent of the block population.

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The analysis of educational status in blocks of Narayanpatna, Bandhugam, Kolnara, K. Singpur and Chandrapur where Kondh population ranges from 71 percent to 82 percent reveals that out of a total of 968 habitations in those blocks 852 are predominantly inhabited by the Kondh and of these habitations 498 (58.45 percent) have schooling facility either in the habitation itself or within a distance of 1.5 Kms. In the case of Narayanpatna where the Kondh constitute 82 percent of the population the percentage of habitations served by schooling facility is 68.55 and in the case of Chandrapur where all the 180 habitations are predominantly inhabited by this tribe the figure is 42.22 per cent. A substantial proportion of the population in Chandrapur (56.52 percent) is yet to have schooling facility within walking distance.

#### **Enrolment and wastage :**

As regards enrolment and wastage the above-mentioned educational survey shows that out of 50,902, the Kondh children in the age-group of 6-11 in the blocks where Kondh constitute as the major tribe, 28,337 (15.57 percent) attend primary schools. The percentages of total enrolment in classes I, II, III, IV and V are 34, 89, 33, 55, 24, 47, 4.75 and 2.40 respectively. Taking enrolment in class I at 100, the enrolment figures for the subsequent four classes are 96.31, 70.26, 18.63 and 6.90 respectively. This shows that the relative position for the Kondh is better than the overall district position (75 percent and 54 percent) in class II and in class III, but in the upper primary classes the figures are nearly 30 percent short of the district-level figures (20 percent and 10 percent).

In the last quarter of the 19th century the British officers had observed that the attendance of the Kondh children in schools was solely due to the pressure of personal influence applied by the *Patros* and stimulated

by constant inspections, any relaxation of which was at once followed by a disappearance of the Kondh element from the benches. It was their experience that the large increase in the number of children in schools and the desire for new schools were stimulated by prospects of employment in masonry work of road construction in taluk and sub-assistant agent's offices of those Kondh who could read and write. It was also their observation that the Kondh were anxious for their children to learn Oriya. In fact, what they had found was that the mixed school of Kondh and Oriya children was more satisfactory in educational development and more profitable to the Kondh. One of the British officers had noticed that the *Malikos* and *Pradhans* were vehement in insisting on the Kondh master of the purely Kondh school at Kalingia to teach their children in Oriya. Some British officers pointed out that whatever attendance had languished it was largely due to the incubus of the very inferior teachers. In the inspection note one of the British officers had mentioned that the average attendance for the quarter ending November 30th, 1880 had fallen to 8 at Ramgiri and a fraction over 3 at Udayagiri, notwithstanding the fact that there were over two hundred children running wild at each place. This had led him to think that no one would expect any very great improvement in the desire of the people to educate their children for many years to come. The survey of the Directorate of Education shows that the months during which attendance abruptly falls are June, July, August, November and December. In some cases April has also been reported. The causes of poor attendance are cultivation and harvesting in which children are employed. The main reasons for dropouts are poverty, lack of parental guidance, and non-availability of reading and writing materials and absence of teachers and non-availability of quality teachers.

In 1978 an indepth study on work pattern was taken up in Sundijuba, a Kondh village in Kalahandi

district, by the Tribal and Harijan Research-cum-Training Institute. The working hours were distributed under five categories of activities namely-1. Shifting cultivation, 2. Wet cultivation, 3. Pasturage, 4. Hunting, food gathering and fishing and Leisure time activities and the time devoted to these activities in different time-intervals month after month for nine months was recorded. Month-wise distribution of time devoted to the different activities is presented in the table-11.



TABLE 11

Monthwise distribution of works in hours (Children workers)

Categories of work (in hours)									
MONTHS SEASONS	Shifting cultivation and walking and wage earning.		Wet/plain cultivation	Pasturage	Hunting, Fishing etc.	Leisure etc.	Total Col + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 + 6	Sleep in hours.	Total Col. (7+8)
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
March	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
April	1292 (26.11)	106 (2.14)	261 (5.27)	461 (9.32)	2829 (57.16)	4949 (100%)	1675 (25.29)	6624 (100%)	
May	325 (13.29)	12 (0.30)	203 (5.14)	480 (12.15)	2731 (69.12)	3951 (100%)	1809 (30.41)	5760 (100%)	
June	788 (16.53)	264 (5.54)	224 (4.70)	446 (9.35)	3045 (53.88)	4767 (100%)	4453 (33.79)	7200 (100%)	
SUMMER	2605 (19.06)	382 (2.80)	688 (5.03)	1387 (10.15)	8606 (62.96)	13667 (100%)	5917 (30.21)	19584 (100%)	
July	1686 (21.71)	246 (8.92)	243 (4.86)	524 (10.48)	2902 (58.03)	5001 (100%)	2775 (35.69)	7776 (100%)	
August	492 (19.52)	223 (8.85)	71 (2.82)	257 (10.20)	1477 (58.61)	2520 (100%)	1224 (32.69)	3744 (100%)	
September	856 (18.75)	116 (2.54)	114 (2.53)	340 (7.45)	3139 (68.76)	4565 (100%)	2347 (33.95)	6912 (100%)	

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
October	126 (17.52)	19 (2.64)	41 (5.70)	41 (5.70)	492 (68.44)	719 (100%)	433 (37.59)	1152 (100%)
RAINY	2560 (19.90)	604 (4.72)	469 (3.66)	1162 (9.08)	8010 (62.55)	12805 (100%)	6779 (34.61)	19584 (100%)
November	864 (23.15)	395 (10.52)	62 (1.65)	306 (8.15)	2122 (56.53)	3754 (100%)	2006 (34.83)	5760 (100%)
December	752 (23.70)	249 (7.77)	50 (1.56)	116 (5.18)	1979 (61.79)	3203 (100%)	1981 (38.21)	5184 (100%)
January	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
February	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
WINTER	1620 (23.40)	644 (2.26)	112 (1.61)	472 (6.78)	4101 (58.95)	6957 (100%)	3987 (36.43)	10944 (100%)
ANNUAL	6793 (20.32)	1630 (4.88)	1269 (3.79)	3021 (9.04)	20716 (61.97)	33429 (100%)	16683 (33.29)	50112 (100%)

1. The data show that the busiest months for the children below 14 years are April, July, August, November and December, when they are required to help their parents in economic activities.

Another study was taken up by the Tribal and Harijan Research-cum-Training Institute to assess the extent of dropouts and stagnation at primary level in Koraput district. Some of the causes of dropouts and stagnation which the survey revealed are long distance, lack of companion, bad road communication, want of opportunity for utilisation of reading and writing in practical life, helping parents at home, lack of cultural activities including tribal dance and music, disliking of the routine of the school, dislike for staying in hostel, harassment and rough behaviour of the teachers, heavy manual work, parents' apathy towards childrens, education, language difficulty in following lessons, failure in examination and late disbursement and supply of Government aid in the form of scholarship and reading and writing materials.

#### **Middle School in Kondh dominated villages :**

As it has been pointed out earlier, the Kondh emerge as the major tribe in 24 out of 42 blocks. There are 5224 habitations with a total population of 3,96,142 in these 24 blocks. The number of habitations in which Middle school has been set up and the number of habitations which are served with this facility within a radius of 3 Km. are 29 and 374 respectively. Thus, in all 403 or 16.51 percent of Kondh dominated habitations with a total population of 93,649 (23.64 percent) have been served with facilities of Middle school education within walking distances.

The above mentioned survey of Directorate of Education revealed that in the blocks of Bandhugam, Kudumulguma, Lamptaput, Nandapur and Semiliguda



not a single Kondh village has the Middle school facility. In three other blocks, namely—Chandrapur, Kasipur and Pattangi more than 90 per cent of the habitations go without this facility. The survey has further found out that only 24.97 percent of habitations has been provided with Middle school facility in Koraput district as a whole. Despite all their backwardness the Kondh habitations come close to the district average.

### **Secondary Education :**

There were 67 High schools in the district as on the 31st December 1973. Taking the total population of the district into consideration the ratio of High school to population comes to 1:30,000. The corresponding ratio for Cuttack district is 1:7,300. It shows to what extent Koraput is educationally backward as compared with the Coastal district.

Educational improvement is a tri-dimensional phenomenon. The three dimensions are children, parents and teachers. The survey undertaken by the THRTI reveals that there is no interlinkage between the parents and teachers with the result that the former are quite in dark about the usefulness of education. The teachers also do not make any special effort to adjust the children to the environment and discipline of the school. These factors explain why the parents do not take any interest in educational improvement of their children and contribute to heavy dropouts, wastage and stagnation in school education.

## CHAPTER - VII

### POTENTIALS OF TRIBAL REGION AND PROBLEMS OF DEVELOPMENT

#### Kondh Land :

The areas of Kondh concentration in the State are comprised of various sections of the Eastern Ghat Region. This region covers an area of about 17,198 square miles, that is, 29.2 per cent of the total land surface of the State. The hill ranges which vary in height from 500 ft. to 5,500 ft. run from north to south and are no where more than 50 miles from sea. They constitute a series of undulating plateau divided by fertile valleys of various sizes. It is necessary to give an account of the geophysical features of this region to assess its potentiality and problems.

#### Geology :

The Eastern Ghat Region consists of six different rock systems.

(1) **Kondhmal division :** It consists of Gondwana system containing grey, black and white shales with ferruginous rocks on the top.

(2) **Balliguda division :** The higher slopes consist of a highly metamorphosed sediment of Khondalite.

(3) **Kalahandi division :** The rocks are of Archaean age and consist of gneisses and schists. Soils in Kalahandi approach to black-cotton type with lime concretions or alternating with red gravel in Dharampur area, and Bauxite-laterite in Bhawanipatna area.

(4) **Parlakhemundi division :** It consists of Charnochite rocks and are a massive eruptive dark coloured hypersthene granatoid gneiss. It is igneous plutonic rock and varies in composition from basic to acidic.

There are also biotite gneisses. Laterite capping is common towards the eastern border near Pathapatnam.

(5) Koraput and Pottangi division : This consists of alternating bands of charnockite and Khondalite rock. The charnockite rocks furnish good building stone and the Khondalite consists of quartz, garnet and sillimanite with lesser quantities of felspar, graphite, manganese and iron ore.

#### **Jeypore and Nawarangpur Plateau :**

The rocks of this area belong to the great Archaean system and consist of a series of metamorphosed sediments which have been intruded successively by granites, charnockites and debrites. In the Nawarangpur plateau near Umakote the rocks of the Hirapur hill consist of banded hematite quartzite and carry iron ores.

#### **Climate :**

Orissa lies in the sub-tropical belt of medium pressure and the chief characteristics of its climate are high temperature and medium rainfall. But topography (climate is discussed by taking rainfall, temperature and humidity into consideration) significantly alters the climate of a region.

#### **Rainfall :**

The Eastern Ghat division receives its greater part of the rainfall from the Arabian sea branch of the monsoon current which usually sets in the first week of June, a few days earlier than the Bay of Bengal current. Jeypore valley situated on the windward side gets as much rain as 76.70 inches while Rayagada which lies on the leeward side gets only 40 inches of rainfall. The district of Koraput is affected by cyclonic storms in the Bay of Bengal. It causes heavy fall on the Ghats. Winter and Summer precipitation is practically negligible and drought hazards are very little.



### Temperature :

The Eastern Ghat region except Malkangiri is the coldest part of Orissa in all seasons of the year. In general, an increase in altitude of 300 ft. is equivalent to a fall in the average temperature of 10 F. The maximum temperature reaches 104° 2' F. during May and the minimum temperature falls as low as 36° 8 F. during December and January. High grasses are coated with thick frost-like particles in the morning of these two months.

### Humidity :

Humidity is the most important factor that affects the role of transpiration. The lower the relative humidity at a given temperature the more will be the transpiration of loss of water from the leaf. On high mountains excessive water loss result in a stunted and gnarled growth of plants. There is a great variation in the humidity in the different sections of this region. In Koraput, the humidity ranges from 92 percent saturation in August and September, the wettest months, to 60 percent in March and 61 percent in April and May. Koraput is the dampest part of the State during rainy season.

The type of climate that prevails in a region determines the type of soil and vegetation of that region. Climate complex which includes rainfall, temperature and humidity sets limits beyond which certain crops cannot be grown. A crop-pattern is found to be associated with climate as described below. The climatic conditions prevalent in the Eastern Ghat Region is not suitable for cultivation of Jute but most favourable for growing Mesta (*Hibiscus Subdyariffa* L). The regours in the soil make it possible to grow cotton as a Kharif crop. High altitude, good drainage and long duration of the period of low temperature favour growth of citrus fruits, such as—lemon and orange. Parlakhemundi Aency, Thuamul-

Rampur block, and Pattangi valley provide such climatic conditions and therefore, are suitable sites for growing citrus fruits. In fact the Deomali hill range which is the highest peak in Orissa (5406 ft. above sea level) contains the finest valley like Pattangi which may be compared with the Lombardy plain of the Alps which is suitable for cultivation of citrus and other temperate fruits. The deep loamy soil of Rayagada area with a drier and hotter climate and longer summer days and well-distributed rainfall in June and July is most favourable for plantation of sugarcane. In fact, Rayagada, Aska, and Bargarh have been the centre of sugarcane cultivation.

#### **Soil :**

Investigation of the properties of the soils is a task of very great importance to utilize land according to its capability. Soils are the product of environment and are related to the climatic condition and the parent rock. The eastern Ghat Region presents the following soil type.

- (1) Skeletal soil on the upper portion of the slope,
- (2) Laterite, (3) Grey brown podzol and (4) Valley soil.

Above 4000 ft. plateau very little deciduous tree growth is found with stunted bushes of Terminalia Chebula, bamboo or dendrocalamers strictus type and grass type vegetation is generally found to cover the land in the plateau. Chemical weathering is very much limited and there is more of physical weathering. The soil prevailing in the plateau is of endodynamic skeletal type and is composed of rock debris, gravel, quartz and sand. The hill tribes practise shifting cultivation in the area.

The laterite soil occurs above 800 ft. altitude. The Eastern Ghat Region is semihumid and sub-tropical and under this condition there is downward movement of



water through the soil as a result of excess of rainfall and over-evaporation. Continual leaching by water containing very little organic matter removes silica and kaolin downwards while iron oxide and aluminium oxide remain behind. Therefore the soil looks red with various tints of brown and yellow colour. The soils are loamy in structure and at places full of ferruginous concretions. Due to peculiar granular condition, the soils can be cultivated immediately after heavy rain as otherwise the surface gets hardened.

Grey brown earth is found in the Khondmal agency which is a plateau varying in altitude from 1500 ft. to 2000 ft. with dense Sal (*Shorea robusta*) forest. There is a layer of raw humus. The humic acid formed in the upper horizon moves downwards. The iron oxide get protected by the humus colloids is leached down and therefore the horizon loses colour and below it, a brownish black and then a rusty brown horizon is formed. All the nutrients are washed down. But the trees having deep roots recover the plant food lost by leaching. For cultivated crops the soil is low in fertility.

#### **Vegetation :**

From vegetational point of view the land surface of Orissa can be divided into hills, plains, marshy lands and coastal tracts. In all these areas different types of forests and grasses of economic importance are found. There are mainly four well marked vegetation zones in the southern-eastern section of the Eastern Ghat Region. (1) The Rayagada region (2) Pattangi and Koraput Plateau, (3) Jeypore Plateau and (4) Malkangiri Plateau. The south-western section which covers Kalahandi stands separate in many respects of vegetation from the south eastern section.

The dominant species in the upper reaches of the Vansadhara basin in the Rayagada division is Sal and



in the Nagavali basin the forest is mainly of semi-deciduous type. The hills in Pattangi and Koraput plateau now support deciduous species such as—*Lagarstaemi parvi flora* (*Dhaura*) and *Terminalia tomentosa* (*Sahaj*). Bamboo is common locally, and *Sal* is rarely found above 2500 ft. In Koraput *Mangifera indica*, *Tamarindus indica*, and *Madhuka latifolia* (*Mohua*) are common. The Jeypore plateau is covered with *Sal* forest of a moist peninsular type. The common associates are *Terminalia tomentosa*, *Madhuka latifolia* and *Adina cardifolia* mixed with creepers such as *Bauhinia vahli* and *Butea superba* and grasses such as *polliuidium angusti folium* (*Sabai*) and *Imperata arundinacea*. In Malkangiri plateau *Sal* disappears about 18°30' latitude and Teak is common. In the lower plateau deciduous species are found.

Altitude plays an important part and five altitudinal zones are met with in the distribution of flora. The vegetation in the plateau of 1000 ft. 2000 ft. consists of dry mixed deciduous forest, in which *Sal* is accompanied by *xylia xylocarpa* (*Taub*) and mixed with grasses of various types. The main plateau of 2000 ft.—6000 ft. is cultivated, but the narrow belt of land on both sides of hill streams is covered with forest vegetation. The ravines between 2500 ft. and 3500 ft. are covered with damp type evergreen flora and ferns. The upper slope of 2500 ft.—3500 ft. represents '*Dongar ehas*' region which is almost bare of vegetation. It is so because of repeated cutting and burning of forests for shifting cultivation. The hill-top of 3500 ft. 4500 ft. consists of flat laterite plateau covered with grasses and is used as pasturage during monsoon months.

The Eastern Ghat Region is in general, subjected to destructive practices of shifting cultivation extensively. The hills in all places have become almost bare of vegetation. The desication of forsts is so colossal and extensive that the forest area may not exceed 10 per cent of the

land surface in this region. It is necessary that more than 25 per cent of the area should be under forest to prevent soil erosion and conservation of soil fertility and plant nutrients. Thus, the land utilization in the Eastern Ghat Region demands highest priority in schemes concerning afforestation, control of grazing, formation of grass reserves and modernization of shifting cultivation and mechanization of terraced cultivation.

#### **Pisciculture :**

Like the tribes of other parts of the country those of Orissa are fond of eating fish. The Kondh in general and the Dongria Kondh, in particular, are very fond of dried fish. They walk miles to weekly market centres to get the dried fish. The rivers which flow in the tribal areas, thousands of hill streams, and innumerable stagnant pools of water are stocked with fish of various types in the Eastern Ghat Region. Paddy fields are also an important source of fish in rainy season. An artificial tank created by damming up a river which flows between two hills becomes a reservoir fit for pisciculture. Such sites are numberless in tribal areas.

There is a very big reservoir of this type near Firingia in Phulbani district. It is full of fish and it is so big that it can supply fish in plenty to Phulbani town and nearby places throughout the year. But there is difficulty in catching fish from this reservoir. The stumps of the trees which stood on the site were not cleared before the dam was constructed. Nets used for catching fish get stuck up in these stumps and get torn while dragging them out. The stumps need to be removed if pisciculture is to be developed on a commercial basis. The reservoir is located in such a beautiful place that it is suitable not only for a large-scale fish industry but also for a tourist spot.

The Kondh use various types of traps for catching fish. They also take to angling for this purpose. Their



knowledge about the use of nets is limited because, they get little scope for using nets. Modern methods of pisciculture are unknown to them. It is necessary to impart training to the kondh on work like clearing of weeds, de-silting, eradication of predators and maintenance of embankments, culverts, sluices, application of manures, culture and propagation of fish, development of hatcheries and stocking of fingerling. The panchayats located in Kondh villages may be encouraged to take up pisciculture. Facilities may be provided to them to dispose of fish by cheap and speedy methods for maximum benefit.

#### **Horticulture :**

The habitat of the kondh extending over Belghar, Balliguda, Chandrapur, Niyamgiri, Rayagada, Koraput and Pattangi belt is located in high altitude and enjoys good drainage and mild climate. These geophysical and climatic conditions are most favourable for horticultural development. In fact, the Kondh belt has favoured the growth of mango, jack fruit, pine-apple and citrus fruits. The Kondh of Pattangi plateau have been cultivating wheat since time immemorial. It is the experts' view that wheat grows very well in high altitude with 60 inches rainfall. The local Malis grow peas, cabbage and cauliflower and tomato extensively throughout the year. The Kondh do not grow such vegetables, the reason for which is not lack of interest but want of sufficient land for vegetable-growing. Whatever land they have in the plains, is used for paddy cultivation. They grow ginger, and turmeric and as many as 40 kinds of cereals, millets and pulses in hill-slopes and hill-tops.

There is an experimental station at Pattangi town. Coffee, black pepper and cardamom are grown. Silver oak grown in the station provides support to the creeper plants of black pepper. There is also a sericulture station there. Worms, silk worms (yielding white and



yellow silk fibres) are reared with success. Worms feed on leaves of castor plants and silk worms on leaves of mulberry. The result of these demonstrations has not yet been made known to the tribal villages although the environmental conditions favour carrying on such experiments with success. The reason for the lack of appreciation on the part of the local tribals for growing coffee etc. and rearing silk worm is the lack of land in plains and heavy expenses involved in such experiments. Cultivation of citrus fruits such as orange has been successful in Ramgiri-Udayagiri of Ganjam Agency.

The programme of horticulture has been taken up on a large scale in Phulbani, Ganjam and Koraput districts. The podu-ravaged areas in high altitudes and foot-hills were selected for horticultural plantation. Mango and citrus fruit trees which the tribes were already raising are taken up for plantation. Though the indigenous methods of horticulture are quite scientific, the tribes had no knowledge about pesticides to cure plant diseases. The extension agents provided this knowledge and helped the tribals in solving the problem. A simple technique which goes by the name 'crow technology' was adopted for in situ plantation of mango trees. At a subsequent stage selected mango varieties are grafted on the indigenous root-plants giving the resultant plant vigour of the locality and the quality of the exotic. The new scheme is taken up with active participation of the beneficiaries at every step of the programme. Plantation has taken place on large compact areas of State-owned lands. The beneficiaries will have private ownership on the trees grown by them with Government's financial assistance. Subsequently the lands under such plantation will be assigned to individuals for specific purposes. The tribal youths who are involved in this scheme are provided with technical know-how such as—plant life, plant disease, techniques of grafting etc.. They are also responsible for the

protection of the plants and development of plantation. The main objective of this endeavour is to turn some of the depleted forests and podu-ravaged hill-areas of today into flourishing garden-colonies of tomorrow.

The success of the scheme depends upon successful transformation of collective ownership which is characteristic of the tribal land tenure system into private ownership and well managed marketing organization free from all kinds of exploitative elements.

It has been the experience elsewhere that the growth of a cash crop economy has resulted in malnutrition and impoverishment of soil. The development of road communication, a measure taken to facilitate timely marketing of the perishable fruits has only encouraged further deterioration of nutritional status. The plantation of orange trees in Ramgiri-Udayagiri is mentioned here for the sake of illustration. The tribals of this area are traditional pioneers of plantation of orange and lemon trees. With the help of technical agency they have recently expanded plantation on a large scale. The local Pano merchants are their traders. They pluck fruits at a nominal rate and sell them at local and distant markets at a high price and get a huge profit. The development of roads in the area has helped the Pano merchants transporting the crop with ease to distant market centres and in getting more profit. The local tribal development agency took it upon itself to market the produce by eliminating the intermediary traders with a view to giving the tribals maximum benefit. There developed a competition between the Pano merchants and the development agency. In the struggle the former out-witted latter, picked most of the fruits unripe without their full complement of nutrients by paying a low price to the growers and sold them at a high price at Berhampur town. The case shows that the oranges growers in the hills did not get reasonable price for their produce and the orange consumers did not get the full complement of nutrients from the fruits.



Unless the marketing system is taken care of properly the local tribal will not derive the desired benefit from the programme of horticultural development.

### Agriculture :

Most of the agricultural land in the Kondh belt is utilized for production of food; cash crops are of secondary importance. The shifting system of cultivation is extensively practised by the Kondh. The *Dogar* lands situated in hill slopes and hill-tops are used for shifting cultivation. Land is not ploughed but hoed by means of a spade called *Kuduki*. Except ashes of the trees which are cut and burnt in the process of forest-clearing no other fertilizer is applied in the swiddens. Growing of mixed crops is rather the rule than exception. Sowing by broadcast is common. But the seeds of *Kandula* (*cajanus indicus*) are dibbled in holes dug with sufficient interval of space all over the swidden. The seeds of bean are also dibbled in holes around the dead trees that still stand over in the swiddens.

The crops which are grown in the swidden consist of coarse cereals of various types of millets such as—ragi (*Eleusine corcana*), *bajra*, (*Penisetum typhoideum*), Jowar (*Andropogon sorghum*), *Kangu* (*Setaria italica*) and *Suan* (*Echinochola frumentaceas*). A kind of sorghum called Jawar or *Johna* is grown in the swiddens. These crops are sufficiently drought-resistant and can grow in hill-slopes under rainfed condition. They constitute the staple food of the Kondh.

*Dahi* cultivation is practised in lands situated in the lower reaches of the hill-slope. These lands are variously called as Neda by the Kondh of G. Udayagiri and Firingia and *Bata Jami* by the *Penga* Kondh of Kasipur. Different kinds of millets as mentioned above and upland paddy are grown in such land. The land near the foot hills is called *Penga* universally by all sections



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of the tribe. It is in other word, *Padar* or upland is which paddy, ragi, *kosala*, *suan*, mung, biri, *kolatha*, turmeric and ground-nut are grown.

The land close to the homestead land goes by the name of *Bada* among the Kondh of G. Udayagiri and Firingia and Dongria Kondh of Niyamgiri hills; *Ijata Badi* among the Penga Kondh of Kasipur; *Gharbari* among the Kondh of Kalahandi and *Padar* among the Kondh of Kotagarh. It is used for growing maize, Johna, and mustard, turmeric and vegetables. Tobacco is also grown in *Bada* land. *Bada* land is generally fertilized with Cowdung manure. Location of these lands favours good drainage and plants grow well under these conditions.

The land at the bottom of the valley is called *Kita* or *Bila* or *Berna* or *Bahalpani* by the Kondh of Phulbani, Koraput and Kalahandi district. It is most suitable for paddy cultivation. Only a few rich families may have such land.

In addition to the above mentioned crops grown in various types of lands the Kondh agriculture also includes small grained crops, root crops, oilseed crops and fibre crops. Wheat is one of the small grained crops which requires rigour soil. The Kondh grow it in forest soils of the Eastern Ghat Agencies. It has been mentioned already that the Kutia Kondh of Pattangi plateau have been growing a special variety of wheat since time commercial.

The important root crops which the Kondh grow are sweet potato (*Impomoea batatas*), potato, tapioca (cassva roots) and arum (*colocacia*). Sweet potato is a supplementary food adding variety to the diet of the Kondh. Arum is called the poor man's potato. If it is so, the whole of Andhra Pradesh may be called as the "Poor man's land". Arum is cultivated under swampy situation where potato and sweet potato cannot be



grown. The Dongria Kondh grow arum extensively and relish it very much.

#### Oil seed Crops :

The oil seed crops which feature prominently in the tribal agriculture are niger, mustard and castor. *Mohua* and *Karanja* seeds provide oil to the Kondh. The oil seeds are important cash crops and are grown extensively.

#### Fibre Crops :

Mesta is an important fibre crop grown in some areas by the Kondh. As water requirement of Mesta is lower than that of Jute the former is grown by the Kondh in fertile land and also in swiddens. Cotton is grown by the Kondh of Kalahandi not in the Dongar area but in the plains which contain black cotton soil.

#### Cash Crops :

Turmeric and ginger are the two most important cash crops grown extensively by the Kondh of Phulbani. The sites where these crops are grown are situated at a height of about 3000 ft. above sea level. It is generally grown on hill-tops and hill-slopes and in valleys. The cultivation of turmeric has been very much restricted as a result of the ban imposed on shifting cultivation, and therefore, the production has been reduced considerably.

#### System of manuring :

A Kondh of the hilly region is primarily a shifting cultivator and uses as manure the ash which he gets by burning trees and scrub growth on the hill-slope. He uses cow-dung manure in homestead garden lands and in rice fields. The annual production of cowdung is



very poor. Although number of cattle maintained is very high, the quality of cattle is poor and the by-product received from such poor quality of cattle is meagre. The Kondh are not particular about keeping cowdung in pits, and therefore, there is much less of nutrients from cowdung. Application of chemical fertilizer is not wide spread. Only the rich farmers among the Kondh having low lands in the valleys apply fertilizer on a limited scale.

### **Plant Protection :**

Modern methods of plant protection are repulsive to most of the Kondh.

In the neighbourhood among the non-tribals application of pesticide is popular whereas it is the reverse among the Kondh. The Kondh pray their deities to guard insects, pests and plant disease and also apply many indigenous medicines to keep their crops healthy. The "Silver Shoot" of paddy is a serious pest, not only in the plains but also in the hilly areas. The disease is due to the attack of a fly known as "Paohydrielosis Oryzae". But the formation of the pale or bluish yellow shoots of the plant resulting from the irrigation of the maggot is regarded as something supernatural, and certain ceremonies are performed in the field and at home to ward off this trouble. When a swarm or locust fly over a trap it is taken as a divine act and certain rites are performed to propitiate the angry Gods who are believed to have sent these insects to destroy the crop.

As regards the indigenous practice followed to protect the diseased plants the Kondh use twigs and barks of certain trees in paddy fields. These barks being bitter in taste are allowed to rot in the paddy field. This prevents rice hispa (*hispa armigera*), rice case worm, and (*Nymphuli dupuncialis*) and other bugs. Leaves of

*Begonia* and *neem* (*Melia Azadirachta*) are used for storing grains. Cowdung ash mixed with pulse seeds are used to prevent attack of pests on the grains. It is astonishing to note that when effective chemical pesticides are available and are placed within easy reach of the Kondh they do not accept them and prefer their indigenous practice to the modern methods of plan protection. Why ? The case of application of pesticide by the Kondh of Firingia block throws light on this problem.

Some years back the Kondh of Firingia applied in their paddy plants. The source of drinking water of the Kondh is the wells which are dug in some convenient places in paddy fields. Sometimes, the water in the fields and in the wells is at the same level and the pesticide applied to the affected plants got mixed up with well water. The extension agency cautioned the Kondh not to use water from these wells and thereby the people were put to great inconvenience. It was the feeling of the Kondh that the inconveniences and loss which the pesticides caused to them outweighed the benefits which the practice, promised to give to them. The loss which the people had sustained was that the fish and snail in the paddy fields were killed. Some of the Kondh who are known in their society as progressive farmers complained that they did not mind very much the destruction of the fish. That which was considered great loss was the large scale killing of earth worms which loosened and fertilized the soil. According to them the harm done to their paddy cultivation by the application of pesticide was irreparable.

#### Irrigation :

It goes without saying that irrigation farming permits greater control of production factors than any other system of farming. Nature is bountiful, but she is



not dependable. Agriculture in our country is a gamble with monsoon. Most of the hill streams in the tribal areas are perennial, but they are of little benefit to the tribals. All the lands which the tribals use for growing crops are all on the hill-slopes and the hill-tops and these lands are beyond the reach of the stream water. Deforestation caused by unlawful felling of tree by the contractors and by the destructive methods of shifting cultivation has affected rainfall to a great extent. The tribals every where in the State are the worst sufferers on account of the vagaries of weather.

Irrigation works in Orissa may be divided into four classes (1) canals, (2) storage reservoirs, (3) tanks and (4) wells. In some places lands in Kondh areas of Rayagada sub-division are irrigated by means of lift irrigation and new crops like wheat and double cropping of paddy cultivation have been successfully taken up in these areas. Minor Irrigation Schemes have been successful in some areas and have failed in other areas. Firingia, a Minor Irrigation Scheme, has acquired a vast catchment area formerly cultivated by the Kondh. But on account of shortage of water the reservoir area remains dry most of the year. At Kotagarh a minor irrigation scheme was intended to supply water to the lands of the Kondh of the neighbourhood. But the people could not grow crops on account of the depredation of wild animals. In fact, the Kondh of a group of villages in Kotagarh block deserted their villages and shifted to some other place. Dug-wells have been of great help to the Kondh in irrigating their lands and growing both khariff and rabi crops. Some Kondh families of Ramchandrapur colony in Kotagarh block have taken to potato cultivation after having dug-wells in the lands and have been able to improve their economic condition. In some cases the scheme has ruined the farmers, not because of the fault of the dug-wells but because of the defective execution. In a Kondh village in Firingia block a farmer used to grow all kinds of vegetables. He was



the only person in the area who grew vegetables on a large scale and was able to meet the demands of the Firingia town. He used to irrigate his vegetable plots by an indigenous method of lifting water from a hill stream at a lower level through several points upto his homestead garden lands which lie at a higher level. The Co-operative Extension Officer approached him and advanced him a loan for a dug-well. The vegetable grower excavated the well in his garden land, but due to defective construction the well caved in and served no purpose. Finding no other alternative the grower reverted to his old practice of lift irrigation. That was not the end of his trouble. His property was attached by the Cooperative Society to recover the loan and it cost him his wife's necklace to clear the dues of the Society.

#### **Implements :**

The main implement which is used by the Kondh for growing crops is a hand hoe. In some places, particularly in the plains, a wooden plough is used for tilling the soil and growing crops. But essentially the agriculture of the Kondh may be called Hoe-culture. Some of the accessory tools used in various agricultural operations are harrow, leveller, and sickle which are made locally either by themselves or by the blacksmith. Modernization of agricultural processes such as-application of fertilizer, use of improved seeds and control of water and mechanization of agriculture are not possible in most of the Kondh areas on account of ecological limitations.

#### **Soil Erosion :**

Soil erosion is the most spectacular result of bad land management. Erosion by water is most common throughout Orissa. There are mainly three types of soil erosion caused by water, (1) sheet erosion (2) rill erosion

and (3) gully erosion, Sheet erosion is universal in all-bare and fallow land, whose grass cover have been completely destroyed over grazing and burning. Gully erosion is common in mountainous regions. The numerous hill streams carve out gullies on bare lands and erode the land very badly.

Almost all the hill areas in Orissa have been bare of vegetation by the practice of destructive method of shifting cultivation and therefore, the Eastern Ghat Region, particularly the Rayagada division and Kalyansinghpur area, are the worst eroded tracts in the State. Rivers, hill streams and rain water have washed away all the top soil making many hill-slopes bare of vegetation and unproductive. Soil erosion makes the soil empty of plant nutrients and therefore, the crops grown in such poor soil do not contain adequate nutrient. People who are accustomed to food grown in poor soil show a high incidence of leprosy and yaws. These diseases are widely prevalent among the Kutia Kondh of Belghar area. The Dongria Kondh of Niyamgiri hills are relatively free from such diseases.

Soil erosion is very much severe in the Belghar area than on the Niyamgiri hills. Therefore the crops which the Kutia of Belghar grow are not only poor in quantity but also poor in quality. Albert Howard has suggested that crops and livestock raised in soils of good fertility and with organic manure attain a high measure of immunity from infective and parasitic as well-as from degenerative diseases such as—malaria and framboesia. He also stated that maintenance of soil fertility is the basis of health. It is now clear that the susceptibility of the Kutia Kondh of Belghar area to leprosy and yaws is due to the diet which is poor in nutritive elements. Nevertheless, it is necessary that soil conservation experts should examine the intensity of soil erosion and the problems which demand immediate solution and draw up a satisfactory



programme of soil conservation and use of land for the establishment of balanced agriculture in Belghar and in equally affected other areas.

#### Financing and credit facilities :

Like other tribal people most of the Kondh are indebted to non-tribal traders, merchants and money-lenders. The important reasons for their indebtedness are : (a) unproductive agriculture, (b) expensive festivals and rituals, and (c) the habit of drinking liquor. Being exceedingly trust worthy a Kondh believes it as his sacred obligation to pay his debts whatever might be the burden. But his creditor never wishes payment in cash but aims at the produce raised by him in settlement of the debts. The rate of interest is never stipulated in terms of money. For each rupee advanced a specific quantity of produce in the form of paddy, cereal, pulse, millet, tamarind, turmeric is asked towards interest for the stipulated time.

The non-tribal merchants provide the Kondh with their requirements such as—In salt, kerosene, onion, molasses, dried fish, cattle, goat, poultry, tobacco, chilli and cotton cloth and collect the cost of the things in kind at the time of harvest. The price fixed by the merchant is always high and, therefore, he has to pay very heavily in kind. In many cases the produce offered by him is found insufficient for the price charged by the merchant. The reasons for this are the high price charged for the things provided and the use of false weights and measures in business transactions. The money-lender adopts other dishonest methods, such as—blank promissory notes in which thumb impression of the Kondh debtor is taken without any mention of the amount of the loan and in which the amount of loan is inflated according to discretion. The Kondh is thus kept indebted to him in perpetuity. The resources of the debtor being limited his indebtedness increases month



after month and finally a situation is reached when the Kondh has to offer his land for sale or for mortgage to the merchant or the money-lender. He has also to take further loans in cash from the money-lender to meet unforeseen expenditure on account of illness, death, etc.

Being unable to pay the loans received from the merchant or the money-lender the Kondh offers himself as agricultural labourer in the farm of his creditor. Thus the *Goti* system (Serfdom) and *Khandagota* system (a system of land mortgage) has developed. Once a Kondh gets into this vicious circle of economic exploitation it is an impossibility for him to get out of it. The amount of his debt goes on mounting year after year making him serve the merchant in perpetuity.

Necessary regulations have been promulgated in the tribal areas under the special provisions of the constitution to tackle the problems of (a) land alienation (b) bonded labour (c) indebtedness, (d) marketing of agricultural and minor forest produce and (e) supply of essential consumer commodities. These regulations are :

- i) Orissa Debt Bondage Abolition Regulation, 1948.
- ii) Orissa Scheduled area Transfer of Immovable Property (by Scheduled Tribes) Regulation, 1956.
- iii) Orissa Scheduled Area Debt Relief Regulation, 1967.
- iv) Orissa (Scheduled Areas) Money Lenders Regulation, 1967.

In addition to these Regulations promulgated by the Governor of Orissa the following general laws have continued to be in force for furtherance and protection of tribal interests :

- a) The land improvement Loans Act, 1883

- b) The Agriculturists Loans Act, 1884
- c) The Minimum wages Act, 1948
- d) The Orissa Land Reforms Act, 1960
- e) The Orissa Co-operative Societies Act, 1962.

Moreover, the Orissa Land Reforms (Amendment) Act, 1973 provides that 70 percent of the surplus lands vested with Government shall be settled with persons belonging to the scheduled tribes or scheduled castes in proportion to their respective populations in a village in which the lands are situated and the remaining lands shall be settled with persons not belonging to the afore-said categories.

Towards the end of 4th Five-year plan when the new strategy of Sub-plan approach was ushered for development in areas of tribal concentration the above mentioned Regulations and Acts were strictly enforced. For example, on the strength of Land Alienation Act many illegal transactions were detected and cases were instituted in the Court of law for restoration of lands to the tribal owners. Similarly on the strength of the Debt Bondage Act serious attempts were made to identify Gotis and free them from the clutches of the merchants and the money-lenders and rehabilitate them suitably in colonies. The collection of cases of illegal transfer of land and debt bondage is always a difficult affair. The tribals who have sold their lands or are in debt bondage are reluctant to reveal their identity for fear of economic intimidation. Even if they give their names to the enquiring authorities, they deny having done so before the magistrate. There is another difficulty from the other side also. The non-tribal buyer, in many cases, does not get the land recorded in his name. He holds it as a usufruct. In spite of these difficulties, a substantial number of cases of illegal land transfer have however been



brought before the court of law and recovery of land has been made in many instances. But it is found that in many cases the tribal to whom the land was restored does not come forward to take possession of the land for fear of harassment by the executives. Another difficulty is that no follow-up action is taken to implement the courts' decree in some cases. As a result, the executives continue to enjoy the benefits of the land which they had acquired from the tribals. In such a situation the tribals remain as poor as before and their condition becomes worse day after day because of the rising cost of living.

Apart from the legal measures against exploitation, the Government have established Tribal Development Cooperative Corporation in the tribal areas with a view to buying agricultural and forest produce from the tribals and supplying them their daily requirements at a fair price. According to the recommendations of Bawa Committee, Large-sized Multipurpose Societies, 'LAMPS' have been established in each block in the tribal areas to provide to the tribals a package of services, the main component of which are credit (production as-well-as consumption credit), supply of seeds and other agricultural inputs, supply of consumer goods, and marketing of both agricultural and minor forest-produce. It is through these LAMPS that the tribal beneficiaries are provided with necessary financial assistance to sink dug-wells. In many cases it is found that the tribals have put extensive areas under cultivation for growing potato, chilli and vegetables by using water from the dug-wells and have derived considerable benefit from this programme.

In spite of these governmental measures the grip of the local merchants and the money-lenders on the tribals has not been loosened completely. Some of the important lacunae in such measures is the complicated procedures which the tribals do not understand and



therefore do not take advantage of credit and marketing facilities placed within their reach. The other difficulty is the official red-tape which causes considerable delay in disbursing loans or agricultural inputs. As a result, the purpose of the loan or other facilities is not served and therefore, whatever is received untimely is spent on something else. Thus, the tribals are left with no other choice than to borrow either in cash or in kind from the local merchants with whom they continue to maintain an unbroken economic relationship.

The TDCC and the LAMPS do not function properly in many places in respect of purchase of the forest and agricultural products. The tribals collect forest products and take them to the nearest market centres for selling. More often than not the merchants, on the market days, walk upto the tribal villages, and before the tribals reach the market-places, they stop them either in their villages or on the way by coercive methods and take hold of the products on paying a very nominal price to them. Even those few tribals who succeed in bringing their products to the market centre eluding the merchants on the way are literally swarmed by the merchants at the market and whoever has the necessary physical strength, virtually grabs the products and thrusts into the hands of the tribals some arbitrarily fixed price. Here, too, the tribals are deprived of their legitimate income. The Kondh are thus, subjected to different kinds of pressures from the merchants because of long-standing economic relationship that has been existing between them. The Kondh do not like to hurt the feelings of the merchants lest they forego the financial help that they get from them in times of need. There is a long-standing intimate economic relationship between the tribals and local merchants which always has been working to the disadvantage of the Kondh and subjecting them to continued economic exploitation at the hands of the merchants.

To remedy this situations and help the Kondh to get fair prices for their goods, it is necessary for the Government-sponsored marketing organization to function legally and effectively as the sole buyer of the commodities at the doorsteps of the Kondh.

**Part-III**

**Health and Developmental  
Aspects**



## CHAPTER - I

### HEALTH PROFILE \*

The Tribal communities living in different eco-systems face health and genetic problems of varying nature. Nothing is known about the health and nutritional status and also about the medico-genetic problems which are prevalent among the primitive sections of the Kondh tribe as no comprehensive study of this nature has yet been undertaken among these sections of the tribe. The present study centres round this problem and its coverage is limited to two different sections of the Kondh tribe, one residing in Burlubaru village of Belghar area, Phulbani district and the other residing in Kurli village of Bissamcuttack area, Koraput district. The main objectives of the study are :

- i) To assess the health status and disease profile of the tribe ;
- ii) To find out their dietary habits and assess the extent of malnutrition among them ;
- iii) To study the medico-genetic problems among them and
- iv) To get an insight of their belief system regarding diseases, their traditional methods of treatment and attitude towards modern system of medicine.

#### Methods of Study :

20 Kondh households comprising 52 males and 53 females and 25 Kondh households comprising 53 males,

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\* This chapter has been contributed by Dr. Almas Ali, Special Officer (Tribal Health) of Tribal and Harijan Research-cum-Training Institute, Bhubaneswar.

and 69 females were selected for a door to door survey in Burlubaru village and Kurli village respectively. All the 225 persons, that is 103 persons from Burlubaru village and 122 persons from Kurli village were examined physically, clinically and the blood samples were tested for malarial parasite, (*Plasmodium falciparum*), sickle-cell gene and G-6-PD (Glucose-6-Phosphate Dehydrogenase), deficiency. The overall nutritional appearance of each case was appraised to find out whether a person is grossly underweight or has generalised skin lesion or other indications of unsatisfactory health, possibly due to nutritional imbalance. Changes in hair, eyes, skin, neck, mouth, teeth, knee and ankle jerk reflexes and oedema of lower extremities suggesting possible nutritional deficiency were evaluated.

Data on hygiene, sanitation, religious belief about health practices, traditional methods of treatment, present health condition and health facilities and medical care available in these villages were also collected by observation and by interviewing people of both the villages.

Haematological investigations with special reference to genetic diseases such as sickle-cell disease and red-cell enzyme G-6-PD deficiency were carried out with the help of following method :

- i) For detection of sickle-cell disease the simple sickling test was conducted using sodium-metabisulphite.
- ii) For detection of G-6-PD deficiency Breinstins method was adopted using 2-6 Dichloro-Phenol indophenol and Phenacin-methasulphate.
- lii) For detection of malarial parasite thick and thin blood films were taken and examined.



## MAJOR FINDINGS

### Health status and disease profile :

From the present study the following health problems have emerged. In the matter of health and sanitation the sections of the Kondh residing in Belghar area are more backward and primitive. Their knowledge regarding health and nutrition is rudimentary. Their isolation and backwardness and their faith and reliance on the traditional magico-religious methods are the main reasons for the low degree of awareness about modern medical practices. Other factors which attribute to poor health are the lack of environmental sanitation and personal hygiene, poor living condition, including improper ventilation and the like. Consciousness regarding bodily cleanliness is lacking among the Kondh of Burlubaru particularly among the children and women. Lack of personal hygiene causes skin diseases and other infections. They do not take bath for days together and most of them do not brush their teeth and therefore dental and skin diseases are most common among the Kondh of Burlubaru. As regards the personal cleanliness the Kondh of Kurli are not so unclean as compared to the Kondh of Burlubaru.

There is no well in both the villages and the people drink water from the hill streams. Water of the hill stream is used in both the areas for multifarious purposes such as—washing clothes, bathing, washing their body after defecation, scrubbing their cattle cleaning their utensils and also for cooking food and drinking. This explains why water-borne disease Viz; diarrhoea, dysentery (amoebic and bacillary), and other gastrointestinal disorders are very common among the Kondh of both the areas. Moreover, water of the hill-streams in Belghar area is not only polluted but also has high



content of graphite which causes irritation in gastro-intestinal tract resulting in gastric discomfort abdominal pain, hyperacidity and constipation. The incidence of helminthic (worm) infestations viz; *Taenia solium*, *Taenia bovis* and *Ascaris lumbricoides* (tape worm, round worm and hook-worm) is comparatively high among the Kondh of Burlubaru which may be attributed to their food habits. However the common gastro-intestinal disorders prevalent among the Kondh of Kurli are gastritis, colitis, and dyspepsia. The common diseases of the respiratory system which were diagnosed in both the areas were bronchitis (acute and chronic), asthma and diseases of the upper respiratory tract. Cases of influenza, cold and cough were also observed in both the area. Tuberculosis is prevalent both among the Kondh of Burlubaru and the Kondh of Kurli. Most of the patients were suffering from cough with expectoration for more than a month, sub-febrile temperature moderate haemoptysis, loss of appetite and breathlessness. Semi-starvation, inferior diet and unhygienic living conditions attribute to the prevalence of tuberculosis. Their houses generally have no windows and hardly any light gets into the hut. Poor ventilation and close contact with infected members of the family are largely responsible for wide spread contagion.

Only 3 cases of leprosy were detected in Burlubaru village. But in Rangaparu, a village located at a distance of about 3½ Kms. from Burlubaru, leprosy was rampant. Though no thorough investigation was conducted in Rangaparu but during our preliminary visit as many as 23 cases of leprosy, were detected in this village. They were not segregated from their society and the disease spread widely as a result of close contact with the infected patients. However, not a single case of leprosy was detected in Kurli. Yaws was absent in both Burlubaru and Kurli Villages. However, five cases

of Yaws were detected in Kadragumma, village located at a distance of about 2 Kms. from Kurli. Skin diseases are very common among the Kondh of Burlubaru and Kurli villages. However, five cases of Yaws were detected in Kadragumma, a village located at a distance of about 2 Kms. from Kurli. Skin diseases are very common among the Kondh of Burlubaru village and scabies tops the list among all the skin diseases. Venereal diseases viz; syphilis and gonorrhea are not common among the Kondh of both the areas.

One of the most significant findings among the Kondh of Kurli was the wide prevalence of arthritis and allied rheumatic disorders. 18 cases of rheumatoid arthritis with prodromal symptoms of malaise, weight loss, vasomotor disturbances (Paresthesias, Raynauds Phenomenon), and vague periarticular pain and stiffness were detected. In all the cases there was characteristically symmetrical joint swelling with associated stiffness, tenderness and pain. Pain and stiffness were prominent in the morning and subsided during the day while they were busy with their work. In most of the cases stiffness became much more severe after strenuous activity. The proximal interphalangeal and metacarpophalangeal joint of the fingers, wrists, knees, ankles and toes were most often involved. Thus in most cases the onset was insidious and in small joints and progression was centripetal and symmetrical. 4 cases of idiopathic ankylosing spondylitis (Mariestumpell disease) with chronic backache were detected in Kurli. However, not a single case of arthritis and allied rheumatic disorders was detected among the Kondh of Belghar area.

Most causes of morbidity and mortality seen in the present civilisation like atherosclerotic cardiovascular and cerebrovascular diseases, diabetes mellitus and cancer are rare among both the sections of the Kondh. Hypertension (High blood pressure) is very rare among



the Kondh of Burlubaru, on the contrary hypotension (Low blood pressure) was very common, this may be because of their low salt culture.

Malaria is also very common among the Kondh of Belghar area and more so in the study village and manifests its typical clinical symptoms. All the blood samples were tested for the detection of malarial parasite, with the help of thick as-well-as thin blood films. The incidence of positive cases with malarial parasite in the blood smear was not very high (only 14 positive cases). All of them belong to the species *Plasmodium falciparum*. But clinically with the help of past history of the illness (anamnesis) and through clinical examination it was found out that at least 63 persons were suffering or had suffered in the recent past, from malarial infection. This was also evident from a very high incidence of hepato-splenomegaly (enlargement of liver and spleen). 18 persons were suffering from malaria when the survey was undertaken. Mostly children were suffering from typical symptoms that is high fever of intermittent type, with shivers and profuse sweating even though the clinical and laboratory investigation for the identification of malarial parasite did not tally always. But it can be explained by the fact that at the time of collection of blood samples presumably, the parasites were absent, though in reality the persons may be suffering from malaria. Among the inhabitants of Burlubaru village the incidence of malaria is reasonably high but the mortality rate from malaria is comparatively low.

The incidence of *plasmodium falciparum* malaria in Kurli was comparatively low. Only one positive case with malarial parasite in the blood smear was detected. Clinically only 4 persons were suspected to be suffering from malaria.



### Diet and nutritional status :

The food habit of the Kondh of both the areas does not present a monotonous picture. But it is rather more varied depending on seasonal variations and availability of food materials. There is no regulated menu for their daily diet. The Kondh of both the areas practise shifting cultivation and the production of food from this source is scarce and therefore, not sufficient for the whole year. The cereals and millets hardly last for four months and the rest of the eight months they depend on wild roots, tubers, fruits and leaves of edible plants. The diets of the Kondh of Kurli contained more of millets, while the diets of the Kondh of Burlubaru were mostly based on rice and wild tubers. In case of the Kondh of Kurli, Kola rice and ragi were predominant food. However, consumption of pulse was very rare in both the areas. It was interesting to observe that the consumption of green leafy vegetables by the Kondh of Kurli was considerably more as compared to the Kondh of Burlubaru. Consumption of milk and milk products among both the sections of the Kondh was found to be very low. The Kondh of both the areas are non-vegetarians. They eat buffalo meat, beef, pork, chicken and other fleshy foods mostly on festive occasions which are limited in number. Oil is used for cooking purposes in a small quantity. Consumption of sugar and jaggery is also very rare. Use of salt in case of the Kondh of Burlubaru is very low. All kinds of edible fruits available in the habitat are eaten by the Kondh of both the areas. The Kondh of Burlubaru have a special liking for the mangoes, and jackfruits, whereas the Kondh of Kurli like pineapples and oranges. The Kondh of both the areas are very much addicted to alcoholic drinks. The common drinks are Mohua and Salap liquor. These alcoholic beverages are taken to get relief from fatigue after hard days work.

In general, the consumption of all foods in both the areas is much less than recommended amount and the survey shows that the diet of Belghar Kondh is nutritionally more deficient than that of the Kurli Kondh. However, the diet of the Kondh of both the areas is all balanced throughout the year and lacks several essential nutrients. Deficiency in diet is both qualitative. Basic caloric requirements are not met. Intake of protein is very marginal while intake of vitamins and minerals, falls far short of the desirable level. There is not enough food and the food gap for the majority of households is considerable. Health conditions under such gross dietary deficiency can never be satisfactory. Morbidity pattern of a community depends mostly upon its nutritional status and on intake of food. The survey in both the Kondh villages show a high incidence of diseases caused by nutritional deficiency. Thus, among the health hazards present in both these Kondh areas nutritional diseases occupied a unique place. High incidence of frank nutritional deficiency was present specially among the vulnerable segments of population, viz ; infants, children, pregnant women and nursing mothers. For every case of frank nutritional deficiency there were several cases of sub-clinical or "twilight" zone of malnutrition in these areas. The relationship between malnutrition in one hand and infection as-well-as worm infestation on the other is two fold. Infection and worm infestation lowers the nutritional status. Therefore, widens the gap of deficiency and aggravate malnutrition. Malnutrition coupled with lowering resistance makes the child more vulnerable in infection. In most of the Kondh children who die early of gastro-Intestinal and respiratory infections, the real cause of death is the underlying malnutrition. The infection merely acts like the last straw.

However, it is very difficult to ascertain and confirm clinically the cases of protien calorie malnutritional (P. C. M.) in adults. But these clinical signs are quite apparent in infancy or childhood. Moreover, insufficiency of one



or the other nutrient in smaller quantity, does not necessarily lead to a clinically defined nutritional disease. Symptoms of illness and disease caused by nutritional deficiency is a rule rather than an exception. The population surveyed showed physical signs of deficiency of one or more nutrients to a varying degree with its clinical manifestations.

On clinical assesment 43 cases among the Kondh of Burlubaru and 31 cases among the Kondh of Kurli showed one or more signs or symptoms of nutritional deficiency. Most common deficiencies observed were :

**1. Under-nutrition :**

- (a) Low weight in relation to height
- (b) Diminished skin folds
- (c) Lethargy-especially in children
- (d) Exaggerated skeletal prominence
- (e) Doss of elasticity of skin

**2. Protein-calorie deficiency :**

- (a) Oedema
- (b) Muscle wasting
- (c) Moon face etc.

**3. Vitamin 'A' (Retinol) deficiency :**

- (a) Xerosis of skin
- (b) Xerosis conjunctivae
- (c) Keratomalacia
- (d) Bitot's spots

**4. Vitamin B<sup>1</sup> (Thiamlne) deficiency :**

- (a) Loss of ankle jerks
- (b) Calf muscle tenderness



**5. Vitamin B<sup>2</sup> (Riboflavin) deficiency :**

- (a) Angular stomatitis
- (b) Chelosis
- (c) Magenta tongue
- (d) Corneal vascularization

**6. Vitamin C (Ascorbic acid) deficiency :**

- (a) Spongy and bleeding gums
- (b) Petechiae

**7. Vitamin 'D' deficiency :**

- (a) Active rickets in children
- (b) Healed rickets in children and few adults.
- (c) Osteomalacia in adults with local skeletal deformities.

**8. Iron deficiency :**

- (a) Pallor of Mucous Membrane (Anaemic)
- (b) Koilonychia

The prevalence of protein calorie-malnutrition among the Kondh of Burlubaru was more compared to the Kondh of Kurli. The prevalence of the signs of Vitamin 'A' deficiency in the Kondh of Kurli was much lower than that seen among the Kondh of Burlubaru. As in the case of Vitamin 'A' deficiency signs were comparatively less among the Kondh of Kurli. The considerably lower prevalence rates of Vitamin 'A' and Vitamin 'B' complex deficiency signs seen among the Kondh of Kurli may perhaps be attributed to the practice of including green leafy vegetables in their diets, which would have contributed fair amounts of both  $\beta$  carotene and riboflavin.

### Medico-genetic problems :

The chief genetic problem among the Kondh of Burlubaru village is sickle-cell haemoglobinopathy and G-6-PD (Glucose-6-Phosphate — Dehydrogenase) deficiency.

### Haemoglobinopathy :

The term Haemoglobinopathy encompasses clinically and genetically a heterogeneous group of hereditary anaemias resulting from the abnormality in the Haemoglobin molecule.

Haemoglobin (Hb) is a protein which contains a prosthetic group in the form of a flat disc containing iron in its centre. Each molecule of Haemoglobin contains four Haem groups and therefore four atoms of iron. The globin or protein part consists of four polypeptide chains. In normal adult Haemoglobin (Hb-A) there are two types of chain termed alpha and beta. The alpha-chains consist of 141 amino-acid residues and the beta-chain of 146 residues, the molecule therefore contains a total of 574 amino-acid residues. The term sickle-cell disease is applied to all hereditary (genetic) disorders in which the red-cells contain Haemoglobin-S (Hb-S) instead of normal adult Haemoglobin. (Hb-A) and Hb-S are different. Hb-S contains in the beta-chains a glutamine residue in position 6 instead of a valine residue.

When oxygenated, Hb-A and Hb-S have the same solubility but Hb-S is much less soluble in the reduced state and the solubility of Hb-S falls by about one hundred times as much as that of Hb-A. Thus the Hb-S in the red-cell will remain in solution as long as the cells are in a rich oxygen environment, but when the oxygen is reduced either artificially-exposure to high altitude or in the tissues, the Haemoglobin crystallizes out and distorts the red cells to the sickle cell shape. The sickle-cells in

circulation are easily broken up producing an anaemia, while some of the more rigid sickle-cells block small vessels, cutting off the blood supply to the tissues. This blocking of small vessels causes the 'crisis' periods from which many die. Sickle-cell disease is inherited as a Mendelian dominant. The common sickle-cell diseases are sickle-cell trait, sickle-cell anaemia and sickle-cell thalassaemia.

The incidence of sickle-cell disease is quite high among the Kondh of Burlubaru village. Out of 103 individuals 22 persons i.e. 21.36 per cent possessed sickle-cell Haemoglobin. Out of 22 individuals 17 were heterozygous and 5 apparently homozygous for sickle-cell Haemoglobin. These apparent homozygotes included two males, one of them was a child aged 6 years and three females. All the female homozygotes had delayed puberty, but female heterozygotes followed the normal pattern of sexual development.

Sickle-cell disease chiefly affects the development of the bones and glands in the body, because of localised ischemia. Some of the patients had suffered from periodic painful crisis. It is also known that infarcts due to sickling of red-cells appear at different ages. In small children the growing bones of hand and feet seem to be particularly affected. A six year old Kondh boy of Burlubaru village presented with joint pain starting with swelling of fingers preceded by fever. There was history of jaundice about three years prior to evaluation. The spleen and liver were not palpable. Investigations revealed the boy to be a case of sickle-cell anaemia with both parents showing sickle cell trait. However, most of the homozygotes at sometime or other suffered from splenomegaly. All the three females had spleens palpable at a mean distance of 3.6 cm. below the left costal margin. One male had a palpable spleen where as the other did not.



Sickle-cell disease is a major public health problem among the Kondh of Burlubaru village. It is also believed that certain diseases like malaria, infections (viral and bacterial), infestations (hook-worm) and dietary deficiencies (iron and folic acid) can influence the course of the disease, prognosis therefore, depends mainly on a satisfactory standard of nutrition and prompt treatment of infections.

However, not a single case of sickle-cell disease (sickle-cell anaemia and sickle-cell trait) was detected among the Kondh of Kurli village.

#### **G-6-PD Deficiency :**

The red-cell enzyme G-6-PD deficiency is a genetically transmitted disorder by a sex-linked gene of intermediate dominance. Full expression of the trait occurs in hemizygous males, in whom the single x-chromosome carries the mutant gene and in homozygous females in whom both sex chromosomes (XX) carry a mutant gene. Intermediate expression is found in heterozygous females in whom expression is variable. Among the Kondh of Burlubaru 16 cases with G-6-PD deficiency were detected. Such a high incidence of G-6-PD enzyme deficiency calls for immediate remedial attention. The abnormality of this gene exposes them to (i) Drug induced as-well-as other forms of haemolytic anaemias and (ii) Congenital malformation.

#### **Malaria and genetic disorders :**

Presumably the hilly areas of Belghar region are hyperendemic for malarial infection. The Kondh of Burlubaru have been possibly exposed to malarial infection for the last several hundred years and as a result such mutation might have occurred in them. The heterozygous advantage in affording protection against malaria, particularly against plasmodium

falciparum is known and this possibly must be the genesis of such a high incidence of sickle-cell disease and red-cell enzyme G-6-PD deficiency among the Kondh of Belghar area.

Other side of the problem is still more interesting and at the same time alarming which calls for immediate attention of health authorities in particular. In eradication of malaria the role of red-cell enzyme G-6-PD deficiency should be given due emphasis. Moreover, we know, that malaria is treated with anti-malarial drugs like Chloroquine, Camoquine, Primaquine etc., which in turn can induce acute haemolytic anaemia in persons having this deficiency and in some cases this may be fatal. So, instead of saving them from the grip of malaria we can do great harm by administering anti-malarial drugs to persons who are G-6-PD deficient. So, this may lead to some serious complications resulting in severe jaundice and anaemia.

By the help of this survey a thorough screening for G-6-PD deficiency was done in Burlubaru village, inhabited by this primitive section of the Kondh tribe. Record has been made regarding the frequency of the incidence of G-6-PD deficiency among the Kondh of Burlubaru village. Hence indiscriminate use of anti-malarial drugs for treatment as-well-as prevention has to be given with precaution taking into view of this particular factor. Thus, this phenomenon not only becomes a problem for the geneticist but also to the Public Health authorities and the Tribal Development authorities.

#### **Belief-system regarding diseases and traditional methods of treatment :**

The Kondh of both Belghar and Bissamcuttack areas generally believe in the prevalence of benevolent and malevolent spirits which influence the life in many



ways. The most important functionary which concerns us most in the context of health culture is the witch-doctor, who is called "*Kutaka*" in Belghar area and "*Beju*" / "*Bejuni*" in Bisamcuttack area. The witch-doctor knows the techniques of counter-acting the evil effects of black magic and appeases the malevolent spirit which cause disease and death. The Kondh also follow several taboos concerning social and religious customs. They also believe that any breach of such taboos causes illness and death.

However, things are changing in the Kondh community with considerable rapidity. Though their faith on their traditional medicine man has changed least the Kondh of the study areas have shown inclination towards modern medical practices. During the field work in both the villages it was apparent that the Kondh are becoming favourably oriented towards modern medical practices and there is no significant cultural resistance to acceptance of these practices provided they are efficacious and are available and accessible to them. Infact, apart from initial inhibition the major handicap is poverty which does not afford a tribal to seek medical help when he is ill.

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS :

1) Most of the diseases afflicting the Kondh of both the villages viz : Burlubaru and Kurli are mainly due to poor nutrition, lack of safe drinking water, poor environmental sanitation, lack of personal hygiene and ignorance.

2) Health education seems to be one single most important factor in keeping the Kondh healthy. Therefore, health education should receive adequate attention and should become an integral part of general education. Health education in these areas may be imparted to



them by introducing topics on health in the curriculum of studies and through adult education.

3) One of the most significant findings among the Kondh of Kurli is the wide prevalence of arthritis and allied rheumatic disorders. However, such pathologies are absent among the Kondh of Burlubaru.

4) The other major diseases prevalent among the Kondh in both the areas are upper respiratory tract diseases viz ; tuberculosis, malaria, skin infections and gastro-intestinal tract disorders.

5) Most causes of morbidity and mortality seen in advanced societies like atherosclerotic cardio-vascular and cerebro-vascular disease, diabetes mellitus and cancer are rare among the Kondh of both the areas.

6) Incidence of leprosy among the Kondh in Rangaparuvillage of Belghar area, is quite high. They are not secluded from their society and live in close contact with family members. Therefore, a leprosy assylum will stop spreading this disease.

7) In the constant struggle for daily survival health is accorded a low priority. The chief concern of the Kondh of both the areas is with problems of acute illness, childbirth and trauma which interferes with their daily work. Preventive medicine and its long term benefits have little meaning for them whose only concern with health is the treatment of illness which prevents them earning their livelihood. Even pain and fear of major chronic diseases like leprosy and tuberculosis seldom bother them to come forward for early diagnosis and early treatment until they become disabled and reach a stage of gross debility.

8) Malnutrition is one of the major Public Health problems among the Kondh of both the areas. The incidence of malnutrition is comparatively high among the

Kondh of Belghar area especially among the vulnerable segments of the population viz; infants, children, pregnant women and nursing mothers.

9) Nutritional needs should be solved by the community itself through a better utilisation of its own resources that is locally available, cheap but nutritious food. Specific objective should therefore, be to test at the village level how locally acceptable and available food can best meet the nutritional needs of vulnerable section. It is therefore necessary to analyse the food value of such food stuffs which are locally available and popularise such nutritious food as to provide a balance diet to the Kondh.

10) The Kondh of both the areas have a strong habit of drinking alcoholic beverages. Before any attempt is made to stop this habit, it is necessary to analyse all types of alcoholic beverages chemically and find out if they contain any nutrients, minerals and vitamins. Any proposal for liquor should include suggestion of substitute which will supply the same nutrients.

11) Detailed knowledge about various types of herbal medicines and their medicinal efficacy is over due. Therefore, the nature and value of the herbal medicines used by the Kondh should be studied, understood and analysed in order to assess their scientific worth and efficacy.

12) The incidence of sickle-cell disease ( sickle-cell trait and anaemia ) and the red-cell enzyme- ( G-6-PD ) deficiency is quite high among the Kondh of Burlubaru. However, such genetic diseases are absent among the Kondh of Kurli.

13) An investigation into the prevalence of sickle-cell trait and anaemia in other sections of the Kondh tribe residing in various pockets located at different ecological settings is a pressing necessity.



14) Studies on G-6-PD deficiency among other sections of the Kondh are also equally important as these groups mostly live in areas which are endemic to malarial infection and this gene often co-exists in the same population. It thus, poses an added health problem when drug challenge exists.

15) Genetic and patho-genetic mapping among the tribals in general and among the Kondh in particular with a view not only to detect abnormalities but also to chart lines of future development seem called for.

16) Genetic counselling could be given to the Kondh of Burlubaru village to prevent marriages between carriers of homozygotes of sickle-cell gene and G-6-PD deficiency to help a process of dilution and elimination of these dreadful disorders.

17) There is no cultural resistance among the Kondh to acceptance of modern medical practices as long as they are efficacious and are available and accessible to them. Actually his resources do not permit him to avail of it.

18) To set aside the inertia if there is any among them in regard to the adoption of improved medical practices, the first step is to make such practices available at their door step and spread health education among women and then among men.



## CHAPTER - II

### TRIBAL DEVELOPMENT AND ITS ADMINISTRATION IN RETROSPECT

For a general review of the approaches to tribal development from the time of British rule in India the area inhabited by the Kondh may be divided broadly into three Zones namely ; (1) Koraput district (2) Ganjam Agency and (3) Ex-Eastern States Agencies.

#### Koraput District

The district of Koraput which was constituted on creation of Orissa as a separate State on 1st April, 1936, was formerly a part of the Vizagapatam district. It was at that time under the *Maharaja of Jeypore*. The inhabitants of the Jeypore *zamindar* were governed under a land revenue system known as '*Mustajari*', was appointed by the *zamindar* to collect rent from the *ryots* and look to miscellaneous administrative works in the villages which were leased out to him for this purpose. In some places rent was collected in cash and in other places in both kind and cash. Use of money at that time particularly among the tribal people was very much limited on account of lack of marketing and communication facilities. In such a situation a system of cash rent should have been burdensome on the part of the *ryots* in those days. It appears that the system of kind rent would have been of greater advantage to the *ryots* in payment of their rents. But both the systems, particularly the one of cash rent were fraught with malpractices. The *ryots* were completely at the mercy of the *Mustajaris* and were forced to pay whatever amount of rent was demanded by them.

### Ganjam Agency

As regards the Ganjam Agency which included Ghumsur, G. Udayagiri, Balliguda, R. Udayagiri, and Parlekhemundi hill tracts, a different situation was prevalent. The Agency was extremely hilly and rugged and the climate there in was most unhealthy. The Kondh and the Saora who were the predominant tribal communities of this area were extremely turbulent. Under these conditions the British Government was not in a position to bring it under any regular settlement and as such, as a stop-gap arrangement asked the *zamindars* to pay a fixed amount of annual *peskush* to the Government.

In 1936 disturbances broke out in Ghumsur when the *Raja* refused to pay any *peskush*. Mr. Russell, the first member of the Board of Revenue was appointed to control the situation. Mr. Russell's report on the Ghumsur rebellion drew attention to the Government to the barbarous rite of human sacrifice known as '*Meria*' which commonly prevailed among the Kondh. In order to stamp out this horrid practice Captain Campbell was appointed as Assistant to the Collector of Ganjam with special charge over the Kondh of the Agency tract.

To effectively deal with the emergencies in the Agency areas the Government removed the Agency from the jurisdiction of normal administration and put it under the special control of the Collector as Agent to the Government with Assistant Agents to help him in running the day-to-day administration in the Agency.

It may be mentioned here that although both Koraput and Ganjam were brought under the agency administration the only difference between these two areas was that the former was brought under the permanent settlement and almost all the laws which were in force



in the plains for revenue administration were also in force there where as the latter was kept outside the purview of any regular settlement and also the laws which were in force in the plains.

British action against the practice of human sacrifice and introduction of an administrative system which was rather unknown in these tracts had upset the Kondh who expressed their dissatisfaction and resentment by rising many a time in revolt against the Government. The hill Zamindars and their Patros and Bissoiys who were named as 'wardens of Marches, had also a hand in such disturbances and it was one of the reasons why the British Government did not like to bring the Ganjam Agency under any permanent settlement and to confer proprietary right in the soil on the Zamindars.

In the whole of the Agency tracts both in Koraput and Ganjam the Kondhs used to hold land rent free and pay mammul to the Hill Chiefs in kind as well as in cash. Through a proclamation issued in 1846 the Government made it known to the public not to levy any tax on the Kondh. What happened as a result, most of the lands belonging to the Kondh and other tribal communities passed on to the non-tribals by the process of alienation. To put a stop to this process the Agency Tracts Interest and Land Transfer Act-1 of 1870 was passed prohibiting transfer from the tribal people to the non-tribal people without express permission of authorities,

#### **Ex-States :**

There was a sizable Kondh population in the ex-states, known as Eastern States Agencies. Being pushed by the advanced non-tribal people, the Kondh and other tribal communities who occupied first the fertile Mahanadi belt retreated and settled down in the secluded hills and forests of the ex-States. This retreat of the tribes had taken place much earlier to the formation of these areas as States.



During disturbances resulting from Muslim incursion and changes in Kingdom in Upper India many princes and persons of nobility migrated to Orissa and infiltrated into these isolated pockets. Being skilled in warfare and having superior technology at their command they fought with aboriginal forerunners, subjugated them and established kingdoms for themselves. Eventually during the British regime they were recognized as the ruling chiefs of their respective kingdoms, which were known as tributary states. Most of these ruling chiefs had no interest in improving the socio-economic condition of the indigenous population. As a result the old tribal system of social organisation, economic life and political organization continued with least change.

#### **Partial Exclusion Policy :**

The province of Orissa was created in 1936 and many changes had come about in different spheres of life of the people since then. The Government of India Act had earlier provided for partial exclusion from its operation of certain backward areas principally inhabited by primitive tribes. By the force of this Act the districts of Koraput, Sambalpur, Angul, Kondhmals and Ganjam Agency tracts were declared as 'Partially Excluded Areas'. The outcome of this Act was nothing but storms of criticisms which swept over the whole country. Typical of the bitter criticisms of this Constitutional provision was that of the Indian Legislative Assembly in February, 1936. The members condemned the exclusion as a trick of the Anthropologists to preserve the aboriginals as museum specimen for the exercise of their "Blessed Science". In the same year, the Indian National Congress meeting at Faizpur, denounced exclusion as "yet another attempt to divide the people of India into different groups with unjustifiable and discriminatory treatment, to obstruct the growth of uniform democratic institutions in the country" and as intended to leave out the larger control, disposition and exploitation of the

mineral and forest wealth in those areas and keep their inhabitants apart from India for their easier exploitation and suppression".

Both officials and politicians criticised the special measures for aboriginals. Their plea was that it was unfair and inadequate to single out the tribal communities for special treatment, when there were other backward communities. Others who were in favour of special constitutional measures for the tribal communities had ready answers in stock to these criticisms. According to them the tribal communities were the most backward and worse exploited communities in India, and the least adapted to the impact of modern conditions. Moreover, the tribal communities had their own distinct culture, languages, social organisations and cultural traditions, which did not apply to the untouchables and other backward castes. Further, all other communities were politically far less backward than the tribal communities.

Lastly, the argument of some section of the population was that even in the partially excluded areas there were untouchables and backward Hindu peasant classes living among the tribal communities while in other areas the tribal minority was always in close symbiosis with non-tribal majority. Therefore, their plea was that it would be impossible to confine the working of the developmental measures to the tribals alone or to the Partially Excluded Areas. There was vast work to be done for the betterment of all people of the country irrespective of caste and creed. Measures which would be taken for the betterment of the tribal communities living in the Partially Excluded Areas would also equally help the non-tribal communities who live with the tribal communities in the same areas for their development.

The policy of exclusion clearly revealed what was in the mind of the Britishers in regard to the tribal problems. Many British Officers held the view that the tribals



were a contented and happier people and therefore there was no need for interfering in their way of life. Moreover it was not an easy task to carry on administration in the thickets of inaccessible regions which are dreaded for their unmitigated forms of unhealthy climates. Being influenced partially by these conditions and partially by concern perhaps of keeping the tribals away from any political infection the British authorities followed the policy of least interference with the tribal communities.

#### **Developmental Efforts in Agency Tracts :**

The policy of partial exclusion does not mean preclusion of developmental activities from the tribal areas. In this context Verrier Elwin's interpretation of the policy of exclusion as the Policy of "Leave Them Alone" should be taken with a pinch of salt. The Hill-Tracts Administration reports which have been left behind in the Collectorate of Ganjam by the Agents who were incharge of the administration of the Agency areas amply prove that considerable efforts were made during the British time to develop these areas.

A net-work of administrative arrangements was set up in the Agency areas with the Agent to the Collector of the district at the top and principal, senior and Special Assistant Agents posted at various stations at the local level to maintain law and order, promote peace and good Government and execute developmental schemes in the Agency tracts. The reports of these officers show that road, bridges and buildings including bungalows, rest houses and market sheds were built at several places and were kept under proper repair. Military roads connecting strategic places were built to deploy army in emergencies to keep the disturbances in check and restore tranquility in the area. The local Kondh, Saora and non-tribal elements from the plains were employed as labourers in these developmental works.



Census was regularly taken to record death and birth statistics and other demographic aspects of the population. In one of the reports Mr. C.F. MAC CARTIE, Special Assistant Agent, Ganjam, dated Balliguda, 7th April 1881 had reported thus, "the Daringbadi census shows 1229 Kondh girls as compared to 1127 boys. It is the conclusive evidence that there is no infanticide where 30 years ago not a single girl child was to be found". The census enumerators were the school teachers.

As the Agency areas were endemic to malaria and blackwater the administrators were very particular to control these diseases. Repeated occurrences of small-pox were also one of the unhealthy features of the terrain. Vaccinators were posted at various places in the Agency tracts to carry on vaccination on a large scale. Sometimes required medical staff working in the plains were deployed in Agency areas to take health measures at the time of epidemic. Lanoline Lymph was supplied from Bangalore fortnightly to the Tahasildars who distributed them among the vaccinators as per their requirements.

Considerable measures were taken to spread education among the tribal people. Schools with preparatory classes and higher classes were established in different parts of the Agency. The Rule of Three which include Grammer and Dictation, History and Geography as the main subjects of the curriculum was in vogue in these Institutions.

Dedicated teachers belonging to the locality were posted in these schools and there was strict supervision of their performances not only by educational staff but also by the administrative staff of the Government. The teachers were held responsible for any lack of progress in any school and those who did not show

good performance were dismissed from service. For example, one of the Assistant Agents had reported that there was a school at Linapada in Balliguda area and it had the largest attendance, 58 out of 92 names on the roll, being exclusively of Kondh community. His observations were that the upper classes of this school were very well taught, but the preparatory classes were in a backward condition. What he did was to dismiss the assistant master who was incharge of preparatory classes as a measure of discipline which yielded better results later on.

There were schools exclusively for the Oriya children and for the tribal children. It was the observation of the Assistant Agents that the Oriya schools were unusually efficient. This was attributed in part to the higher scale of intelligence observed among the pupils who consisted chiefly of the sons of high caste Oriyas including Brahmins and local merchants and in part to the exertions of the masters who were mostly descendants of chieftain lineage.

There were also a few mixed schools where both tribal and non tribal children received education. In such schools the attendance of the tribal children was generally more satisfactory than that of those schools which were exclusively meant for the tribal children. Invariably, Arithmetic was very weak among the Kondh children, but in other branches they were doing excellently well. There were schools to which the epithet of stationery was those which were handicapped by the incubus of very inferior teachers.

Periodic reviews of the over all progress by the concerned officers of the Agency schools had shown that there was no cause of despondency although progress had not been by leaps and bounds at any rate. It was not the expectation of the authorities to see any



very great improvement in the desire of the people to educate their children for many years to come.

For the benefit of education from a subjective point of view no tribal cared a straw. But the principle of self-interest was in operation to foster the popularity of the schools atleast among the Oriyas owing to the facilities which they afforded to their children of attaining to the dignity of mastership provided they could get through the normal classes. The indifference of all classes of Oriyas towards tribal education was too openly displayed to leave room for argument. The hill chiefs and *Mutha* heads all had been shorn for their influence while the parents of tribal children had never exerted themselves further than to "assent with civil leer" to the warnings and exhortations which had been lavished upon them.

The British Government had employed liquor vendor on contract basis to carry on business in liquor in Agency tracts. For example, Messrs Minchin Brothers & Co. had contracted in 1871 to supply liquor to the Goomsur Maliahs where the Oriya Sundis and Panos had been reducing the Kondh to indigence by pandering to their taste for liquor. In 1873 the system was introduced into other hill tracts, but smuggling and illicit distilling were so much prevalent that in March 1883 the system was abandoned. Thereafter licences were sold by public auction to distill and sell liquor, but no liquor shop keeper was allowed to hold land. This condition was found necessary in order to keep the liquor vendors in check and had to some extent stopped the alienation of Kondh land into their hands and also induced many of them to leave the Agency tract.

The British officers had marked that the Kondh were very much inclined to enlist themselves in the Police force. In fact, the Governor in council had pointed out that among the numerous scheme which had to be implemented for the development of the Kondh and their native country, that which was regarded by Mr. Mac



pherson, the then great authority on the Kondh, as one of the most important proposals was in respect of the employment of the Kondh on public services which were suitable to their character and liking. Without considering the acquisition of the Kondh and their usefulness many Assistant Agents had taken many Kondhs on appointment in the police force. It was their observation that the Kondhs were more inclined, if they had a chance, to bully their fellow-Kondhs on the strength of their police uniform than the low country police. In the long run enlistment of the interested Kondhs in the police force had a good effect on the Kondh at large. One good thing was that the Kondh in general became very friendly to the local officials and were found always useful as interpreters.

A series of disturbances of the worst type had taken place when attempts were made by British authorities to stamp out the practice of human sacrifice. Towards the end of last century *Meria* sacrifices had passed off without any bloodshed other than that of the unfortunate buffaloes which were hacked in the shreds as usual at the demand of the Earth Goddess. But there were other factors which were responsible for disturbances and breach of peace.

Throughout the last half of the last century the whole Agency was in a state of insurrection and rebellion. Every part of the Agency tracts was in a state of disorder and violation. The hill chiefs and *Mutha* heads were fighting with one another on issues concerning boundary disputes, family quarrels, and succession inheritance of property. Many chiefs did not obey the Government orders and refused to pay any peshkush. They also instigated the tribals to rebel against the Government. Lacking any permanent settlement and record of rights rack-renting by *Mutha* heads known as Bissoiys and Patros was oppressive beyond measure and when the tribals found it unbearable they

used to rise in revolt against the exploiters and oppressors. On such occasions the Government had to deploy army to keep the disturbances in check and restore normalcy in the area.

As regards the relationship which existed between the Kondh and the Government, one of the Assistant Agents had reported thus. "I am convinced that the Kondhs are animated by a strong sentiment of contentment which it would require a course of systematic oppression or of the most insensate mismanagement to upset, while there is no doubt that combination for rebellion would in a great measure be thwarted by diversity of dialect and the survival of bloodfeuds between *Mutha* which though liable to cause casual breaches of peace, as a bulwark against general rebellion".

During the British regime many missionaries infiltrated into the tribal areas and started proselitizing the tribal people. They took a rather poor view of tribal life and brought to bear their onslaught on tribal tradition and culture. Wherever tribal communities came within the grip of the missionary civilization in Orissa it had detribalized them and made them feel ashamed of some of their own cultural traditions and done in the sequel more harm than good to them.

Whatever merits and demerits there might be in the British administration of hill-tracts, one thing which it did was that it brought about in the public a greater awareness and realization of the tribal problems. It was strongly felt that unless a comprehensive knowledge was gained about the living condition of the tribal communities in different eco-systems it would not be possible to formulate a realistic programme for improving them. Considering these points seriously and being influenced by the public opinion, the Government



appointed a committee in 1938 to go into details of the problems of the tribal communities living in the Partially Excluded Areas and suggest remedies for their improvement. The Committee known as Partially-Excluded Areas Enquiry Committee, Orissa consisted of Shri A. V. Thakar of Harijan Sevak Sangh as its Chairman and three other members of Orissa Legislative Assembly as its members.

The enquiry Committee had within its scope a very wide coverage not only in terms of geographical area but also in sectoral development. Its recommendations included reorganization of administrative jurisdiction, enforcement of prohibition, elimination of shifting cultivation, strengthening of veterinary services, improvement of road communication, education, and public health; abolition of bonded-labour, modernization of agricultural practices, plantation of coffee, tobacco and sugarcane and introduction of such other programmes which would protect the tribals against exploitation and improve their socio-economic condition. The Committee submitted the report to the Government in 1940-41. but because of war emergency, the recommendations of the committee could not be implemented and the tribal problems remained unchanged.

In fact, it was only after Independence that some concrete steps were taken to ameliorate the tribal condition. To remedy the situation a new policy was evolved by the Government of free India. This post-Independence policy disparaged thoroughly the approach of assimilation which was followed by the missionaries and aimed instead at activizing and developing all that was good in the tribal society and culture. In a number of speeches, late Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had expressed his attraction towards the tribal people and was filled with great concern about the dangers of their disintegration resulting from imposition of alien way of life upon them. He insisted that the Government should take suitable steps



to develop them and extend all help to them to grow according to their own genius and tradition.

### **Special Multi-Purpose Tribal Development Blocks (S.M.P.T.)**

Following from this concern and intentions of the leaders of the nation, special safeguards were provided in the Constitution of India. Article 46 of the Constitution lays out thus, "The State shall promote with special care the weaker section of the people, and in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation." In accordance with this policy special schemes were prepared to set up Special Multi-Purpose Tribal Development Blocks (S. M. P. T.) which were later converted into Tribal Development Blocks (T. D. B.) in the undeveloped areas of tribal concentration. Through these special schemes many developmental programmes covering agriculture, irrigation, soil conservation, road communication, health, education, village industries, cooperation, housing and rehabilitation were implemented in the tribal areas,

During the 4th Five-year plan several committees were set up to review the working of such special schemes. Some of the weaknesses in policies and programmes of tribal development which were dictated by the review committees are (a) since many sectoral programmes were dependent on the limited resources of the Backward Classes Welfare Sector they got atrophied financially and physically, (b) there was failure to comprehend distinctive characteristics of the tribal areas and Scheduled Tribes, and (c) the policies and programmes as-well-as the administrative machinery therefor were hardly moulded to their needs.

### **Tribal Sub-Plan Approach :**

From the lessons learnt in the past a new strategy was evolved for planning development of the tribal areas

and tribal communities. This strategy is called Tribal Sub-Plan which was grounded from the 5th plan period. Three basic principles were recognized in the formulation of the strategy. First, that there is variation in the social, political, economic and cultural milieu among the different Scheduled tribe communities in the country. Second, that their demographic distribution reveals their concentration in parts of some States and dispersal in other. Third, that the primitive tribal communities live in isolated pockets. Hence, the broad approach of tribal development has had to be related to their level of development and pattern of distribution. In predominant tribal regions area approach with focus on development of tribal communities has been favoured while for primitive groups community oriented programme has been preferred. The dispersed tribals found in pockets have to avail of the programmes of rural development. For execution of programmes having integrated thrust, pooling of finances from all sectors has been regarded as an essential requisite.

Based on these guidelines the area having more than 60% tribal concentration was carved out for the operation there in of the tribal sub-plan. This area was split up into smaller areas called Integrated Tribal Development Agencies (ITDAs). Each ITDA serves as the unit of planning and execution of developmental programmes and there are 21 such ITDAs in the State. A list of the ITDAs with other details is given in Annexure I. It shows that the Kondh population is predominant in as many as six ITDAs.

The Tribal sub-plan aims at comprehensive development with focus on the individual family. The families living below the poverty-line, whether belonging to Scheduled Tribe communities or not are identified and their felt-needs and problems assessed and suitable programmes for their development are executed. Apart from core economic sectors like agriculture, animal



husbandry, horticulture, etc. sufficient emphasis is given on development of education. In fact, improvement of education has been taken as the key sector in the 6th plan.

The idea of integration in terms of sectoral programmes and pooling of resources is fundamental in the concept of tribal sub-plan. In the past, the tribal areas had been deprived of their due share of funds. The infrastructure was poorly developed and therefore, capacity for the absorption of funds was very low. This situation explains why there was inhibition in investment in the tribal areas. All these factors resulted in stagnation of infrastructural facilities in tribal areas. This vicious circle is now being broken by quantified investment in the tribal areas for infrastructure and individual family development from the Central and State plans as well as institutional finance. This effort was initiated in the 5th plan and is now carried out systematically and thoroughly.

#### **Development of Primitive Tribes :**

At the time of review of tribal development programmes on the eve of the 5th plan it was recognised that special programmes for the extremely backward tribal groups known as primitive groups should be taken up on the basis of proper identification on the lines suggested by the Shilu Ao Team and Dhebar Commission. It was also considered that the programmes meant for the development of these primitive groups would be financed cent percent by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India.

In the identification of primitive groups three norms are generally followed.

- (1) Pre agricultural level of technology,
- (2) Low level of literacy and



(3) Stagnant or diminishing population.

On the basis of these norms 9 tribal communities have been identified as primitive. They are (1) Bondo (2) Soura, (3) Kharia, (4) Mankidia, (5) Kutia Kondh, (6) Dongria Kondh, (7) Paudi Bhuinya, (8) Juang and (9) Lanjia Saora.

The area inhabited by each of these primitive groups is delineated and project reports for their development have been prepared. As the aptitudes, felt-needs and aspirations are different from one primitive group to the other the programmes of development are specific to each group. Moreover, the ecological setting of each group is taken into consideration while formulating the projects for the development of primitive groups.

The problem of primitive groups is not mainly economic. Though raising of the economic level is undoubtedly an important aspect, some of the recent studies on primitive groups show incidence of genetic abnormalities like sickle-cell anemia, and G-6-PD deficiency and sexually diseases. The Tribal & Harijan Research-cum Training Institute (THRTI) of the Government of Orissa has started already field investigation on genetic and pathogenetic abnormalities in various primitive groups to chart lines of action for the elimination of such abnormalities.

The Action plans which are formulated for the development of the primitive groups are known as Micro projects. These micro projects are in operation in nine different areas inhabited by primitive groups. The list of micro projects with other details is given in Annexure II. The Annexure shows that the Kutia Kondh of Belghar area in Phulbani district and the Dongria Kondh of Bissamcuttack area in Koraput district are included under the micro project.

In addition to these primitive tribes the THRTI has identified nine more primitive groups for whom special

micro-projects are under formulation. These newly identified primitive groups are : (1) Didayi of Kudumulguma block (2) Koya of Korunda block (3) Gadaba of Lamptaput block (4) Paroja of Koraput, block (5) Kondh of Rayagada block (6) Lanjia Saora of Gunupur block (7) Paudi Bhuinya of Banspal Block (8) Eranga Kolha and Birhor of Bonai block, and (9) Lodha of Suliapada block.

#### **Development of Tribals in MADA Pockets :**

The ITDAs and the micro-projects which are included in the tribal sub-plan cover about 63.13 percent of the total tribal population of the State. In other words, there are 31.87 percent of the total tribal population which are scattered in some areas and found in lesser concentration in other areas outside the Tribal Sub-plan. In pursuance of the guidelines issued by the Government of India in the Ministry of Home Affairs, 30 tribal pockets of lesser concentration have been identified outside the present Tribal Sub-plan area of the State. The criterion adopted for delineation of such pockets is that each pocket should have a minimum of 10,000 total population out of which not less than 50% should be Scheduled Tribe population. The villages with a pocket should be contiguous to one another to qualify their inclusion in the pocket. These pockets are known as Modified Area Development Approach (MADA pockets). The total population of these 30 identified pockets is about 5,72,760 out of which the tribal population is 3,23,643. Roughly 6.38 percent of the total tribal population of the State is covered under MADA pockets.

A detailed survey was undertaken by the THRTI in each of these 30 MADA pockets to find out caste composition of each village, socio-economic condition aptitude and felt-needs of each family, natural resources of the area and existing infrastructures in each pocket. Based on these data the THRTI has formulated Action Plans for the development of each MADA pocket.



It will be seen from the foregoing paragraphs that about 25.49 percent of the tribal population are present outside the areas under Tribal Sub-Plan and 30 MADA pockets. The THRTI carried out an exercise in location of these dispersed tribal population and from this exercise has identified 17 more MADA pockets which qualify the population and proximity criteria issued by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs. The list of the existing MADA pockets and the newly identified MADA pockets is given in the Annexure-III. These newly identified 17 MADA pockets comprise 2.20 percent of the total tribal population of the State.

All these special projects including proposed MADA projects which have been evolved under the new strategy for tribal development in the fifth and sixth Five Year plans cover 76.71 percent of the total tribal population of the State. There are still 23.29 percent of tribal population which do not come under special plan. These tribal communities may be in a scattered form in some areas and in some concentration in other areas. There may be broadly three categories of distribution.

1. Concentration of tribal population between 3000 to 5000 in a particular niche having total population between 5000 and 10000
2. Concentration of tribal population between 2000 and 3000 in a particular settlement situated in dominant non-tribal locality and
3. Dispersed tribal population below 2000 in a specified locality above 50 Sq. Kms.

For the first category of tribal distribution community approach with emphasis on individual benefit schemes will be most suitable whereas the approach suitable for the other two categories of distribution will be of the integrational type. The tribal people living



widely scattered among non-tribal majority in larger area may not be able to utilise the help that will be extended to them for their development. In such places the non-tribal majority who are dominant numerically, economically and politically are likely to expropriate the benefits from the special schemes meant for the tribal communities. In such a situation tribal population should not be considered a part society in a larger society, rather the correct approach should be to view the tribal population as part and parcel of the larger society. Unless a feeling of inter-ethnic emotional integration is fostered in the locality in question no harmonious development can take place there. The tribal people and the equally needy non-tribal people will be treated alike in the matter of administration of development in this locality.

# ANNEXURE I

## List of ITDAs with other details

Sl. No.	Name of the I.T.D.A.	Area of operation including the district to which it belongs	Total geographical Area (in Sq. Kms.)	Total population	Scheduled Tribe population	Predominant Tribe
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.	Baripada	Baripada sub-division of Mayurbhanj dist.	2993.82	619462	315606	Santal, Munda
2.	Rairangpur	Rairangpur sub-division of Mayurbhanj dist.	2144.33	321176	202597	Santal, Ho
3.	Karanjia	Karanjia sub-division of Mayurbhanj dist.	1798.18	264732	67955	Santal, Kolha, Bathudi
4.	Kaptipada	Kaptipada sub-division of Mayurbhanj dist.	1460.08	22824	149698	Santal, Munda, Bathudi
5.	Nilgiri	Nilgiri block of Balasore dist.	224.16	70028	37628	Bathudi
6.	Sundargarh	Sundargarh sub-division of Sundargarh dist.	3647.66	441675	256816	Oraon, Kisan, Munda
7.	Panposh	Panposh sub-division of Sundargarh dist.	1785.75	412019	177770	Oraon
8.	Bonai	Bonai sub-division of Sundargarh dist.	2259.06	177064	115815	Bhuinya
9.	Keonjhar	Keonjhar sub-division of Keonjhar dist.	5532.12	461059	261878	Juang, Bhuinya

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10.	Champua	Champua sub-division of Keonjhar dist.	1190.37	242281	122103	Gond, Santal
11.	Kuchinda	Kuchinda sub-division of Sambalpur dist.	1930.08	162534	90978	Kisan, Oraon
12.	Koraput	Koraput sub-division of Koraput dist.	3359.44	389273	220233	Kondh, Paroja
13.	Rayagada	Rayagada sub-division of Koraput dist.	2641.91	251330	158949	Kondh
14.	Jeypore	Jeypore sub-division of Koraput dist.	2263.68	324185	161721	Gadaba, Paroja
15.	Malkangiri	Malkangiri sub-division of Koraput dist.	4409.07	268865	153500	Koya, Bonda, Bhottada
16.	Nawrangpur	Nawrangpur sub-division of Koraput dist.	3912.23	547243	304676	Gond
17.	Phulbani	Phulbani sub-division of Phulbani dist.	2162.26	110835	60844	Kondh
18.	Thuamal Rampur	Thuamal Rampur and Lanjigarh blocks of Kalahandi dist.	1328.50	77054	39899	Kondh
19.	Paralakhe- mundi	Paralakhemundi sub-division of Ganjam dist.	2980.11	208872	144100	Saora, Kondh
20.	Balliguda	Balliguda sub-division of Phulbani dist.	6283.48	282772	157694	Kondh
21.	Gunupur	Gunupur sub-division of Koraput dist	2941.29	261022	151435	Saora
			56242.58	6129274	3455598	



**ANNEXURE II****LIST OF MICRO-PROJECTS FOR PRIMITIVE TRIBES**

Sl. No.	Name of the Micro project	Area of operation including the dist. to which it belongs	Total tribal population	Predominant Tribe
1.	Pauri Bhuinya Development Agency	26 villages of Pallahara block of Dhenkanal dist.	3635	Puari Bhuinya
2.	Bonda Development Agency	31 villages of Khairiput block of Koraput dist.	3870	Bonda
3.	Dongria Kondh Development Agency	42 villages of Bissamcuttack & Muniguda blocks of Koraput dist.	2676	Dongria
4.	Saora Development Agency	26 villages of Mohana and R. Udayagiri blocks of Ganjam dist.	2845	Saora
5.	Thumba Development Agency	59 villages of Patrapur block of Ganjam dist.	2621	Lanjia Saora
6.	Lanjia Saora Development Agency	21 villages of Gumma & Nuagarh blocks of Ganjam dist.	789 families	Lanjia Saora
7.	Kutia Kondh Development Agency	68 villages of Kotgarh & Tumu dibandh blocks of Phulbani dist.	3016	Kutia Kondh
8.	Juang Development Agency	15 villages of Banspal Block of Keonjhar dist.	3181	Juang
9.	Pauri Bhuinya Development Agency	4 villages of Lahuni-pada & Bonai blocks of Sundargarh dist.		Pauri Bhuinya

## ANNEXURE-III

## A. EXISTING MADA POCKETS

Sl. No.	Name of the MADA project	Area of operation including the dist. to which it belongs	Total population	Total tribal population	Predominant tribe
1	2	3	4	5	6
1.	Sukinda-I	33 villages of Sukinda block of Cuttack dist.	11851	6228	Kolha Santal
2.	Sukinda-II	12 villages of Sukinda-II block of Cuttack dist.	10104	5396	Kolha Santal
3.	Dangadi	23 villages of Dangadi block of Cuttack dist.	15169	9022	Kondh Santal
4.	Banpur-Ranpur	82 villages of Banpur & Ranpur blocks of Puri dist.	11605	7914	Kondh Santal Bhuinya
5.	Daspalla & Gania	196 villages of Daspalla & Gania blocks of Puri dist.	24071	12927	Kondh
6.	Jaleswar	31 villages of Jaleswar block of Balasore dist.	11647	9776	Santal Kolha
7.	Anandpur-I	55 villages of Anandpur-I block of Keonjhar dist.	18588	15133	Sabar Gond
8.	Anandpur-II	29 villages of Anandpur-II block of Keonjhar dist.	20875	12427	Sabar Gond
9.	Hatadihi	24 villages of Hatadihi block of Keonjhar dist.	14240	8878	Sabar Gond
10.	Pallahara	145 villages of Pallahara block of Dhenkanal dist.	32755	17180	Bhuinya Juang

11.	Kankadahada	52 villages of Kankadahada block of Dhenkanal dist.	23125	13456	Juang & Bhuinya
12.	Dhankonda	24 villages of Dhankonda block of Sambalpur dist.	13099	7260	Gond, Oraon, Kisan
13.	Kolabira & Rengali	41 villages of Kolabira and Rengali blocks of Sambalpur dist.	28660	14465	Oraon, Kisan
14.	Laikera & Kirimera	45 villages of Laikera and Kirimera blocks of Sambalpur dist.	21241	12558	Gond
15.	Jujumera	92 villages of Jugumera block of Sambalpur dist.	33991	17037	Gond, Sabar
16.	Paikmal and Jharabandha	45 villages of Paikmal and Jharabandha blocks of Sambalpur dist.	24962	12953	Binjhal
17.	Deogarh	131 villages of Deogarh block of Sumbalpur dist.	23258	16111	Kisan, Bhuinya
18.	Barkota	62 villages of Barkota block of Sambalpur dist.	14574	1255	Kisan
19.	Bhawanipatna	94 villages of Bhawanipatna block of Kalahandi dist.	13537	8268	Kondh
20.	Kesinga	17 villages of Kcsinga block of Kalahandi dist.	11810	6101	Kondh
21.	Madanpur-Rampur	157 villages of Madanpur-Rampur block of Kalahandi dist.	19261	11228	Kondh



22.	Junagarh	41 villages of Junagarh block of Kalahandi dist.	10360	6035	Kondh
23.	Nawapada-I	36 villages of Nawapada-I block of Kalahandi dist.	13203	6869	Kondh
24.	Nawapada-II	41 villages of Nawapada-I block Kalahandi dist.	24924	12531	Kondh
25.	Komna	73 villages of Komna block of Kalahandi dist.	37546	19544	Kondh
26.	Boden	50 villages of Boden block of Kalahandi dist.	27743	14426	Kondh
27.	Patrapur	146 villages of Patrapur block of Ganjam dist.	12859	8090	Kondh & Saora
28.	Khaprakhole	56 villages of Khaparakole block of Bolangir dist.	22357	11705	Kondh & Gond
29.	Tureikela	22 villages of Tureikela block of Bolangir dist.	10673	5531	Kondh & Gond.
30.	Boudh	100 villoges of Boudh block of phulbani dist.	9995	4798	Kondh

## B. NEWLY IDENTIFIED MADA POCKETS

Name of the MADA Project	Area of operation including the dist. to which it belongs	Total population	Total tribal population	Major Tribes
1	2	3	4	5
Ghasipura	19 villages of Ghasipura block of Keonjhar dist.	13,723	6,964	Gond
Lakhanpur & Jharsuguda	22 villages of Lakhanpur and Jharsuguda blocks of Sambalpur dist.	13,262	6,440	Oraon, Kisan
Lakhanpur	20 villages of Lakhanpur block of Keonjhar dist.	11,262	5,851	Kharia, Kisan
Patnagarh & Deogaon	28 villages of Patnagarh and Deogaon blocks of Bolangir dist.	10,628	5,827	Kondh, Gond
Tentulikhunti	45 villages of Tentulikhunti block of Bolangir dist.	13,492	7,153	Kondh, Gond
Saintala & Muribahal	35 villages of Saintala and Muribahal blocks of Bolangir dist.	13,085	6,585	Kondh, Saora
Athmalik	59 villages of Athmalik block of Dhenkanal dist.	11,958	6,695	Kondh
Dhenkanal & Odapada	39 villages of Dhenkanal & Odapada blocks of Dhenkanal dist.	10,027	5,754	Juang, Saora
Zarbhanga	110 villages of Harbhanga block of Phulbani dist.	11,774	6,112	Kondh

1	2	3	4	5
Narla	38 villages of Narla block of Kalahandi dist.	11,601	5,824	Kondh
Sinapali	44 villages of Sinapali block of Kalahandi dist	13,421	6,926	Kondh
Jaipatna	24 villages of Jaipatna block of Kalahandi dist.	13,650	7,287	Kondh
Khariar I	16 villages of Khariar-I block of Kalahandi dist.	10,200	5,399	Kondh
Khariar II	27 villages of Khariar-II block of Kalahandi dist.	10,141	5,178	Kondh
Kasinagar	36 villages of Kasinagar block of Ganjam Dist.	11,013	7,777	Saora
Soroda Dharakot	80 villages of Soroda and Dharakot blocks of Ganjam dist.	10,253	6,560	Saora & Kondh
Sankhemundi & Digapahandi	56 villages of Sankhemundi & Digapahandi blocks of Ganjam District.	10,037	5,013	Saora & Kondh



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