

Tribes of Orissa



Scheduled Castes & Scheduled Tribes
Research and Training Institute
Bhubaneswar

ST & SC Development Department
Government of Orissa

TRIBES OF ORISSA

**Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes
Research and Training Institute
Bhubaneswar**

Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes Development Department,
Governemnt Of Orissa

First Edition: 1990

Revised Edition: 2004

Published by :

SC & ST RESEARCH AND TRAINING INSTITUTE
BHUBANESWAR

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Printed at:

Orissa Government Press, Cuttack

Preface

Tribes of Orissa, containing ethnographic accounts of different tribal communities of Orissa was brought out by the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Research and Training Institute in 1990. The main objective was to acquaint the development administrators with various tribal traditions, customs, social and cultural institutions, and enable them in implementing culture friendly development programmes. Most of the contributors to this volume were researchers of the Institute and scholars associated with it. Individual scholars have based their articles on field researches carried out among tribes and also made use of secondary source materials. The book has been found useful by academics, researchers, planners, administrators and development scientists. The book was so much in demand that it is now out of stock. All the copies of this publication were sold out by 2000. Considering its utility and demand it was decided to bring out a reprint after getting it revised, updated and re-edited.

In the second edition, efforts have been made to update the demographic figures of individual tribes and incorporate other relevant data. Descriptions of individual tribes have been made in respect of the following ethnographic aspects: the tribe, its origin and nomenclature, its population and distribution in Orissa, language, social structure and organization, cultural characteristics, religion and rituals, traditional political system and diacritical institutional features. By reading about a particular tribe one gets a holistic picture of the tribe and understands the distinctiveness of the tribe.

Even though empirical rigour is lacking in some places and ethnographic details are inadequate the book nevertheless guides its readers how to deepen their understanding of the tribe. One cannot claim that everything that one needs to know about a particular tribe of Orissa is found here in this book. One can however safely claim that it serves as a base level reader and helps open a window to the tribal world of Orissa.

According to Article-242 of the Constitution of India, Orissa is home to as many as 62 Scheduled Tribes. In the ethnographic map of India, Orissa occupies an important place, for it is inhabited by the largest number of tribal communities as compared to the other States and Union Territories and it also has the largest concentration of tribal people next to Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. The total Scheduled Tribe population in the State, according to the 1991 census is 70,32,214, which accounts for 22.21 percent of the total population of the State. The tribal population of Orissa constitutes 8.08 percent of the total population of the country.

The tribal communities, in varying concentrations, are found almost in all the districts of Orissa. Their population is very large in the districts of Mayurbhanj, Sundargarh, Koraput, Nawarangpur, Rayagada, Malkangiri, Keonjhar and Gajapati and very small in the districts of Kendrapada, Jagatsingpur, Cuttack and Puri.

The decadal growth rate of Scheduled Tribe population during 1981-1991 is 18.89 percent and that of the State 20.06 percent. The sex ratio of the tribal

population is 1002 and that of the State, 971. The percentage of literacy among the tribes is 22.31 and that of the State, 49.09.

Tribes, such as Kondh, Gond, Saora and Santal are numerically larger and are widely distributed. The Bondo Chenchu, Lodha and Mankirdia have small populations confined to certain pockets.

Each tribe has a cultural identity of its own. The cultural identity and distinctiveness of each tribe is manifested in its language, social organization, and rituals and festivals, and also in their dress pattern, adornments and art and craft. Tribes in general live in a close relationship with nature and depend on it for their survival.

Since Independence, sincere efforts have been made to bring about an all round development of the tribes. How to integrate them into the mainstream of national life has been a major concern. According to the provisions of the Article-46 of the Constitution of India, various welfare measures are being implemented for their socio-economic and educational development. Besides, provision of protective legislation has been made in the Constitution to protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation. Till the end of the 4th Five Year Plan period, tribal development schemes were implemented through SMPT and TD Blocks. From the 5th Five Year Plan onwards, tribal development gathered momentum with the introduction of a Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) approach. Under this approach, Special Development Agencies like Integrated Tribal Development Agencies (ITDAs) and Micro Projects were made to focus on the development of the tribal communities with cent percent financial assistance from the Government of India. For development of the tribal concentrated pockets, which remained outside the TSP area, special projects such as, MADA and Cluster approaches were launched. At present, 21 ITDAs covering the entire TSP area, 17 Micro Projects for development of 13 PTGs, 46 MADA Pockets and 14 clusters are operating in the State.

It is hoped that this revised edition of *Tribes of Orissa* will help development administrators, scholars, social scientists and the public in understanding the tribes, acquiring knowledge about the society, culture and language of the tribes and above all in articulating their thoughts and actions in planning for their development.

I express my grateful thanks to Smt. Alka Panda, I.A.S., Commissioner-cum-Secretary, STSC Development Department, Government of Orissa for her support and encouragement in bringing out this volume. I am also thankful to the researchers of the Institute and other eminent scientists who have made valuable contributions to this edition.

1st January 2004

P.K.Nayak
Director

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Social, Cultural and Linguistic Variations in Tribal Orissa

P.K.Nayak

Introduction

Orissa is home to a number of different varieties of tribes. Officially they have been enlisted as scheduled tribes numbering sixty-two. Each tribe possesses its distinct identity in terms of social organization, culture, and language. The people of one tribe organize their social relationships in certain ways, which are distinct from those of another tribe. Besides organizing themselves into certain characteristically structured social groups, which are in fact lineal descent groups, they are found tied to each other through family, marriage and kinship relationships in specific ways. Often, the descent groups forming a tribe are territorially bounded units functioning as corporate groups. In terms of the total cultural make-up, that is, in its life-style, beliefs, values and worldview one tribe differs from another. Similarly, the spoken languages of tribes differ from one another. Except the Ho, Kondh, Santal, and Saora who have in recent years developed their scripts, all other tribes do not have scripts of their own, and thus possess only spoken languages in the unwritten form.

In order to understand the problem of variation among most of the tribes of Orissa, we first observe, at the surface level, that an individual tribe has its hill dwelling division which is relatively different from the plains dwelling or foothill dwelling or plateau dwelling division. This dualism in habitation is important for an understanding of social, cultural and linguistic variations. Similarly, geographic location, physiographic condition of living, degree of isolation and exposure to the outer society are other factors important for understanding variations among tribes. Also, the varieties of adaptive strategies evolved by individual tribes for securing their respective cultural identities, which have been formally recognized by the regional or sub-regional authorities in the historical past, are important facts and factors one must bear in mind while investigating into the problem of variation among the tribes of Orissa.

Secondly, there are individual tribes having their ethno-cultural variations, or sub-tribes. For example, the tribe, Kondh has sub-tribes such as the Kutia Kondh, Dongria Kondh, Malia Kondh, Pengo Kondh etc. and the tribe, Saora has sub-tribes such as Lanjia Saora, Arsi Saora, Suddha Saora.

Thirdly, there are some individualized tribes who can be very comfortably put together into one variety in which case each individualized tribe will be regarded as a variation. Although, in order to understand the varieties of tribes or tribal communities we have individualized, differentiated and contrasted with one another, at some level one can see striking parallels and close similarities between and among them. For example, each one of the tribes like the Santal, Mankirdia, Munda, Ho, Kolha can be considered as a variation of one other.

The problem outlined above calls for a more comparative understanding of tribes. These should not be studied in isolation. The comparisons have to be made at a structural plane with reference to data collected and analysed at a historical depth so that the social, cultural and linguistic variations among the tribes of Orissa can be brought into focus. Comparative understanding of the spoken languages of tribes can be used as a pointer to locate the variations in social and cultural features, which in turn can explain linguistic variations. The social, cultural and linguistic parameters will have to be assumed to have bearing on one another. This mode of observation and path of analysis will provide clues to further understanding of the social and cultural formations of Orissa, a regional society as a whole, and enrich our knowledge of Indian society in general.

Social Variations

The majority of the tribal communities of Orissa are divided into exogamous clans, some having totemic symbols, others being non-totemic. Saora is one of the tribes which is reported to have no clan system but a system of descent groups known as *birinda*, lineage. Bonda is one of the tribes having a dual social organization, otherwise known as moiety system where there is moiety exogamy. Koya is another tribe which has more than two social divisions termed as phratries, and each phratry in turn is divided into several exogamous clans. Besides this, the tribes in general exhibit strong bonds of lineage brotherhood and in most cases all the tribal communities exhibit intense relationships, which characterise members of an extended family, at the functional level.

Among the Bagata the totemic clans are elephant, monkey, bird, flute etc. The Baiga clan names suggest the localities with which they disclose their identity. The Banjara clans are title groups. The Bathudi have clans like snake, conch, wild grass, wild fruit etc. The Bhotada have senior and junior social divisions and their clans are named after some animal species. The Bhumia have senior and junior divisions and in each division there are clans like tiger, cobra, goat, sun etc. The Bhumij have totemic clans like snake, tiger, millet etc. The Binjhal have clans like sun, snake, rice etc. The Binjhia have small clan-like divisions which are further divided into minimal and maximal lineages. The Birhor have totemic clans. The Bonda have tiger and snake groups. The Chenchu clans are horse, goat, banana, house, gold coin etc. The Chuktia Bhunjia have moiety-like social divisions. The Dal surnames are the clan names. The Dharua have clans and sub-clans. The Didayi have five totemic clans. The Dongria Kondh are divided into more than thirty clans, some are totemic and others are not. But each clan has its clan deity. The Gadaba are divided into four broad sections, such as, *bado*, *sano*, *parenga* and *olaro*. They have clans such as tiger, snake, kite, sun, bear. The Gond have exogamous totemic clans. The Kharia have clans like elephant, tiger, bear, deer, monkey, wild dog etc. The Ho have exogamous totemic clans. The Holva have clans like peacock, snake, tiger, tortoise, monkey, kite etc. the Jatapu have exogamous totemic clans named after plants and animals. The Juang have several clans. The Kandha can be characterized by strong territorial clanship system. The Kisan have totemic clans, such as, tiger, wild dog, fish, kite, tortoise, crow, monkey, salt etc. The Kol have several clans, some are totemic, others are not. The Konda Dora have clans like millet, earthen

vessel, cobra, cow, wild goat etc. The Kora clans are tortoise, snake, monkey, paddy etc. The Koya have been divided into five broad social divisions, such as, *sodi, madi, madkami, podiami* and *kawasi*. In each division there are clans and sub-clans. The Kutia Kondh is a sub-tribe of the Kondh and its clan system is very functional. The Lanjia Saora exhibit strong lineage ties and sisters, even after marriage, continue to belong to the brother's lineage. The Lodha surnames indicate their clan names. The Mahali organize themselves into several exogamous clan groups. The Malhar have totemic clan groups. The Matya have totemic clans like tiger, snake, goat, tortoise etc. The Omanatya have totemic clans like, tiger, cobra, tortoise, parrot, pumpkin, dog, monkey, milk, stone etc. The Oraon have eighteen clans. The parenga have clans like cobra, sun, tiger, vulture, bear, fish etc. The Pentia have clans like sun, monkey, tiger, cobra, tortoise etc. The Rajuar have three exogamous clans like, snake, conch and tortoise. The Santal are divided into several exogamous totemic clans and sub-clans. All the Sounti belong to one totemic group, that is, snake. But this totemic group is further divided into a number of exogamous clans. The Tharua have clans like tortoise, creeper etc.

Although people in tribal societies live in nuclear households, they like to maintain family relationships at the extended level. In most of these societies there are practices of one man marrying several wives, and hence polygynous families are found among them. Usually men of high social and economic status go in for multiple wives. But there are variations in the mode of residence of the co-wives. For example, among the Koya, each wife has her separate dwelling whereas among the Dongria Kondh the co-wives share only one dwelling.

Cross-cousin marriage (direct or indirect), inheriting the deceased elder brother's widow, and marrying wife's younger sisters (direct or indirect) are a few practices found among most of the tribal societies. However, the relationships by descent and marriage are clearly reckoned with. Marriageable groups are distinguished from the non-marriageable groups. In most cases they marry always outside the clan or clan like descent groups. But in all these practices significant variations are noticed. However, these variations are regular in nature and they follow an order. The kinship terms of address and reference follow a systematic order in one ethnic group. A comparison of kinship terms between tribes, arranged in a systematic order can reveal the variations. Variation in kinship terms can reveal the social, cultural and linguistic variations too. Kinship is an area where anthropologists and linguists can collaborate profitably.

Cultural Variations

In the settlement pattern and house type each tribe exhibits its uniqueness of identity. The Kondh (Dravidian) settlement structure is linear, arranged in rows of houses. All the sections of the Kondh, like the Dongria, Kutia, Mahia, Pango do have a linear pattern. The alignment and orientation of any Kondh village in relation to the shrine of the earth goddess and sun god is same everywhere. The shrines dedicated to the two deities are found centrally located within the settlement placed lineally between two rows of houses. All the sections of the Kondh follow one basic model although they exhibit variations to a certain degree. All other tribes of Orissa

have scattered settlement pattern where the houses are found spread out and keep distance from each other. One can say that all the Munda speaking tribes have scattered settlement structures. However, each Munda speaking tribe maintains its own structural arrangement. But the variations noticed among them could be due to cross influences, convergence and divergence. Similarly, the house type and architectural plan of the Kondh houses are dissimilar to that of the Munda group of tribes. Variations in house types among Munda group of tribes are quite discernible.

Tribes like Bonda, Dongria Kondh, Juang, Gadaba, Koya, Lanjia Saora, . Santal etc. exhibit their distinctiveness in their clothing, adornments, hair style. From the very look of a man's wear or a woman's wear one could know which tribe he or she belongs to. However, from the men's wear and women's wear of some other tribes one cannot be so certain as to their identities. Nevertheless, each tribe has its peculiarities.

Bonda

Male Wear:

Gasi (Loin cloth)
Gunlei (Dhoti)
Mpa (Shawl)
Shaka (Black shirt)
Turabu (Forehead band)
Sungurei (Bangle)
Sumrai (Rinklet)
Titi-sumrai (Armlet)
Arti (Finger ring)

Female Wear:

Ringa (short skirt)
Ampa (Scarf)
Rinamba (Bead fascines)
Lubeida (Bead necklace)
Nisangu (Neck band)
Jungjunglo (Ear ring)
Sungurei (Bangle)
Arti (Finger ring)
Limbilo (Ear bolt)
Gige (Waist chain)
Samba (Armlet)

Dongria Kondh

Male Wear:

Drilli (Loin cloth)
Kadi (Cloth/Dhoti)
Kapadaganda (Embroidered cloth)
Sireni (Mini comb)
Murma (Nose ring)
Murma (Ear ring)
Kagudika (Neck band)
Atasuta (Waist chain)
Singdisapa (Finger ring)

Female Wear:

Ganda (Sharee)
Kapadaganda (Embroidered cloth)
Sipna (Hair pin)
Chipna (Hair clip)
Aska (Hair pin)
Murma (Nose ring)
Nanguli ((Ear ornament)
Murma (Ear ring)
Kagudika (Neck band)
Mekodika (Bead necklace)
Takamekodika (Coin necklace)
Atasuta (Waist chain)
Teduapaja (Flat bangle)
Kajapaja (Thick bangle)
Milapaja (Thin bangle)
Andu (Anklet)
Puyu (Finger ring)
KenduKali (Toe ring)

Santal

Male Wear

Kacha ((Dhoti)
Uyu (Shawl)
Barki (Shawl)
Taren (Napkin)
Dota (Shirt)
Andar (Trousers)
Pagara (Ear ring)
Muchipagra (Designed ear ring)
Mudum (Finger ring)

Female Wear

Luguli (Sharee)
Jakit (Blouse)
Denga (Loincloth)
Khandaluguli (Sharee)
Heleluguli (Sharee)
Sindurluguli (Sharee)
Silho (Hair clip)
Sudpasi (Hair pin)
Chauriz (Tussel)
Pagara (Ear ring)
Fulli (Nosering)
Malla (Necklace)
Baju (Armlet)
Tipajap (Armlet)
Balasakam (Flat Bangle)
Sutulsakam (Thick Bangle)
Jhamar (Waist chain)
Pajap (Anklet chain)
Paini ((Anklet)
Mudam (Toe ring)

Lanjia Saora

Male Wear

Tarbalukab (Loin cloth)
Jeludkab (Red lion cloth)
Jingna (Chest wrapper)
Gudakab (Napkin)
Gurusaina (Shawl)
Redredbub (Turban)
Dupubid (Feather bunch)
Kadu (Wristlet)
Gitgitsun (Nose ring)
Pirpiria (Ear ring)
Ekongsika (Finger ring)
Rajangtang (Whitebead
Necklace)
Jatang (Black bead necklace)

Female Wear

Gatungkab (Skirt)
Garakab (Tricoloured Skirt)
Turtudiha (Black cloth)
Duinakab (Skirt)
Jingna (Chest wrapper)
Lankasul (Hair clip)
Pachasul (Hairpin)
Kudumi (Nose ring)
Pirpiria/ Angulu (Ear ring)
Daidailod (Ear ring)
Tanaguru (Ear plug)
Andudaka (Lobe ring)
Tangam (Bead necklace)
Tututang (Necklace)
Jatang (Blackbead necklace)
Paturmatang (Red bead necklace)
Kaddu (Wristlet)
Laladkadun (Bangle)
Enksi (Finger ring)
Enging (Toe ring)

A majority of the tribes take food and drinks quite similar to one another. Yet variations are noticed in their methods of preparation. The food habits, items of daily food, and ceremonial foods of a few tribes of Orissa are given below to facilitate a getting a broad understanding of their variations.

Trbe	Items of staple food/supplementary food/Condiments/Ceremonial food/drinks
Bonda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chaula Bhat (Kernja), Suan Bhat (Rignja), Mandia Bhat (Sameknya), Mandia Pej (Intira), Kanngu Bhat (Pnunu-inja), Maka/Jahna Bhat (Janha-Knya), Pakhala (Ojatur) • Biri (Ruma), Kankada Akhi (Punui), Jhudunga (Gibenga), Dongrani (Musuri), Harad (Luburnga) • Bhaji Sag (Nosembu), Madranga (Sulunter), Puruni Sag (Satiob), Pita Sag (Nturun), Kantabhaji (Girain-Sembu), Khata Sag (Punsu-ilu/ Lur-ob), Sun Sunia (Gurumu-indak) • Baigana (Yom), Simba (Mender), Tomato (Bheja), Kakudi (Sorlai), Boitalu (Kumuda), Kadali (Unsuguda), Amrutbhanda (Amrut), Jhudunga (Gibenga), Piaja (Tulirsun), Chhatu (Ntui), Baunsa Chhatu (AaAatui), Piri Chhatu (Lontui), Bali Chhatu (Gayamgatui), Jamu Chhatu (Gubutui), Maricha (Marching), Ada (Aada) • Kondmula (Etakolob), Karadi (Le), Torkai Kanda (Ntarlob), Simili Kanda (Kinra-Lob), Pita Kanda (Kunru-Lob), (• Ripe mango (Uli), Panasa (Kunsein), Khajuri (Dulura), Khajuri Kanda (Laruk), Tentuli (Tintim), Kusm Phala (Gwang), Mahula (Boh), Podei Phala (Bulkur) • Manda Pitha (Kirimtoi), Mandia Pitha (Boluk Sam), Mandia Gun (Lukur-Sam) • Fish, dry-fish and meat of Kutra (Sulup), Mirig (Elam), Thekua (Gulu), Jangali Musa (Lotaaur), Sambar (Saram), Harina (Sinedak), Gayala (Burutan), Godhi (Guboi), jhinko Mansa (Gisinre), Gai Mansa (Goitan), Ghusuri Mansa (Gubu), Chheli Chhua Mansa (Anbme), Chheli Mansa (Gime), Mendha Mansa (Senda) • Mahul Mada (Boh-Sagur), Guda Mada (Gud-Sagur), Kusum Phala Mada (Gwang-Sagur), Jamukoli Mada (Kude-Sagur), Panas Mada (Kunsui-Sagur), Khaguri Koli Mada (Bulura-Sagur), Amba Mada (Uli-Sagur), Bhalia Mada (Nsoi-Sagur), Kadali Mada (Unsuguda Sagur), Chaula Mada (Kunk-Sagur), Salap Mada (Sapung), Handia (Pendani, Landa)

- Kondh**
- Kandul Pej, Moka Pej, Kolath Pej,
 - Maka, Kandul, Johna,
 - Barada Sag, Sitikusa Sag, Konta Sag, Sunsunia Sag, Modranga Sag,
 - Mahula Phul, Gonjei Punga, Kusa Phul,
 - Kaina Manji, Borada Phala, Simba Manji,
 - Kanda,
 - Baigana (Seb), Piajo, Lanka, turmeric
 - mango, jack-fruit, Sadekanga, Sreok-Kanga,
 - Joharipit Pitha
 - Chingudi Sukhua, Kukuli Sukhua, Magur Machha, Pita Machha, Chengo Machha, Godisa Machha, Konkoda, Birudi, Mohu Pok, eggs
 - Handia, Bear from rice, maize, millet, Johna, Suan
 - Khajuri, Tala, Salap juice,
- Santal**
- Bhat (Daka), Dali (Dal), Handia (Handi), Basi Pokhala (Baske-Daka), Garom Pakhalo Bhat (Lol Mandi)
 - Kolatha Dali (Kurthi Dal), Biri (Rambda), Mug, Horad (Rahed), Ghonghara, Jara, Nadka,
 - Baigana (Bengal), Kokharu (Kohanda), Lau (Hotod), Jahni (Jhinga), Bilati Baigana (Bilati Bengal), Kolara (Karla), Amrut Bhandu (Ambarit), Bhendi (Bhundi), Khamba Alu (Hatijanga Alu), Kondamul (Boser Alu), Sajana Chhuin (Munga Suti), Lanka (Marich), Luna (Bulum), Piajo, Rosun, Jira, Tejopatra
 - Chhatu, Putua (Lat) or patra Poda Sag, Chhatu or Machha
 - Poi Sag (Purai Ala), Sajana Sag (Mun-Gas), Kosala Sag (Gandhri Ala), Kokharu Sag (Kuhunda Ala), Khata Palongo (kaunra), Saru Patra (Seru Ala), Kanchan (Sinala), Bhoderi Ala, Matha Ala, Nordok Ala, Saga Bhoja (Ala-Korha), Khota Palango (Kaunra Ala), Tentuli (Joj), Jongali Sag (matha Ala), Pita Sag (Pit-gini)
 - Amba (OauL), Amda (Salma), Ponasa (Kunthau), Rajkoli (Raj-Wada), Bora Koli (Didha-Uli), Kusum Phala (baru), jamu Koli (Kud), Dimiri Phalo (Loaa), Kendu (Diril), Charkoli (tarob), mankoda Kendu (Makal Kenda), Kadali (Kaira), Kamala (Jambir), Nima Phul (Nimah),
 - Machha (Haku), Manso (Jil), Sukhua (Suka),
 - Mahula Sijha (Matkom Tiki), Tentuli Manji (Jojtan), Simili Phala (Edel), Baidanko Mula (Korse), Kontasela Mula, Mahula Muan (Matkom Lathe) with Bajara Khoe (Jhanjoda Khoe) or Mokka Khoi (Janona Khoe), Mahula Khiri (Matkom Let), Manso Pitha (Jil Pitha), Manso Khiri (Jil let), Manso Polau (Jil Soledaka), Genda Pitha (Gonga Pitha), Genda Khiri (Gonga let), Panasa Tiki (Kia Mula + Tentuli Patro), Itili (Dumbu), Chuda Mudhi (Taden Khajadi), Pita Alu (Baanlo),
 - Eat meat of Baraho (Bir Sukuri, Harino (Posta), Sambaro (Saraam), Ghusuri Manso (Sukuri Jil), Thekua Manso (Thekua (Kulai), Kukuda Manso (Sim Jil), Chheli Manso (Merem Jil)
 - Handia (Handi), Modo (Paunra),

- Saora**
- Jau (Kudu), Goram Bhata (Atgidarai), Johna (Kombur), Mandia (Chitri), Kosla (Ganga), Ganthia (Korai), Kandul Dali (Drog-Dali), Borgoda dali (Sermoi), Jhudungo Dali (Kondum), Biri (Munu), Kosala Jau (ganga-Kudu), Chokuli Pitha (Chokuli-Pun), Chhona Pitha (Pitha Pun), Kangu Jau (Buruikulun), Ambili Jau (Arang-Kulun), Pokhala Bhat (Asiu-Daron),
 - Amrut Bhunda (Amrut), Kokharu (Atung), Baigana (Andarae), Lau/Lanka Lau (Kow), Johni (Kusali), Kolara (Saangam), Mati Alu (Soda-Gae), Kondmula (ganougae), Sajana Chhuin (Muniga), Piajo (Aansoda), Kolara (Samang)
 - Poi (Gelungab), Muniga, Kokharu Sag (Atung-Gab), Borada Sag (Bar-dab), Mandadu-Gab
 - Ambo (Ood), Panaso (Podsa), Kendu (Toril), Kodali (Kinte),
 - Machha (Ayo), Manso (Jelu), Sukhua (Asariya), Kotra (Alif), Baraho (kambun), Sambaro (Kinchar), Thekua (Ponder), Harino (Poragdof), Gurandi (Pikot), Jangal Kukuda (Kindringim), Genda (Gultangal), Konkoda Bhoja (Adning Kharon), Konkoda Poda (Abnal Kharon), Tentli-Saru torkari (Titin SaruTon-ngal),
 - Piajo (Aansoda), Lanka (Marich),
 - Salap Mada (Arasal), Khajuri mada (Sindisal), Mahul Mada (Abbasal),

The tribes of Orissa pursue their subsistence economy in a variety of ways by means of small-scale technologies which vary from tribe to tribe. Some subsist on shifting cultivation (Podu), some others on settled rice cultivation and pastoralism and a few others maintain a nomadic or semi-nomadic life style, who mostly subsist on food-gathering and hunting. Significant variations are noticed in each mode of subsistence. For example, the practice of shifting cultivation of the Juang differs from that of the Lanjia Saora and Dongria Kondh. The practice of settled rice cultivation and pastoralism among the Gadaba differs from that of the Koya. In their tools and technologies there are significant variations too. However, most of the tribes in Orissa depend to a substantial degree upon forest collections and tree produces. Nevertheless, women in tribal societies hold the key to their economy.

All the tribal communities observe a number of rituals and festivals throughout the year. Some of the annual rituals and festivals are given tribe-wise below:

Name of the Tribe	Ritual/festival	Timing	The Event in Brief
Bagata	Dussehra	Aswina (Sept-Oct.)	Worshiping of fishing basket and trident
Baiga	Chaita Navami	March- April	Perform <i>Shail</i> dance wearing wooden mask. Baiga priest is the main functionary
Banjara	Guru Nawami Dussehra	Sept -Oct	Puja performed by Brahman priest
Bathudi	Dussehra	Aswina (Sept -Oct.)	<i>Dehuri/Guru</i> performs the Puja, sacrifices goats and cocks
	Makarsankranti	Pusa (Dec -Jan.)	Brahman priest performs the

	Raja, Gambha Gambha Kalipuja Chaita Parab		Puja
Bhotada		Chait(March-April)	<i>Pujari</i> worships earth goddess and sacrifices goats, sheep and fowls for soil fertility and bumper harvest. Also the same is repeated for eating of new mango
	Akhiturtia	Baishakha (Apr - May)	
	Nuakhia	Bhadrab(Aug-Sept)	New eating rice
Bhumia	Dusserha Balijatra	Aswin (Sept -Oct) March-April	<i>Disari</i> sacrifices goat during fertility rites. Young girls dance in trance and act as a medium for the sprit called <i>Debata</i> . Village deity <i>Budhithakurani</i> is worshipped on all important occasions
	Budhi Thakuranipuja	Caitra (March-April)	
Bhumij	Karama	Aug -September	<i>Naya / Dehuri</i> performs the ritual for prosperity of the village
	Dhulla puja	Baisakha (April-May)	For well-being of the village
Binjhal	Vadhnaparab Karama	Kartika (Oct-Nov) Bhadrab(August-September)	New eating ritual <i>Jhankar</i> worships <i>Karamasani</i> deity for good fortune. <i>Badakarama</i> is observed in every three years in which un-boiled rice, milk, sweets and liquor are offered
	Haral parab	Sravan(July-Augst)	Ancestor worship for welfare of the children by keeping unboiled rice and milk on their feet
	Pusapunei or Madhen parab	Pausa (Dec-Jan)	Village deity is worshipped with rice, pulses, and animal sacrifices
	Maghaparab	Magha (March)	Dongar debata is worshipped and fowl and goat are sacrificed
	Makulbhaja parab	Caitra (March-April)	First eating of Mahua flowers
Binjhia	Dusserha Rathajatra Karama	Sept -Oct (Aswina) July (Asadha) August/September	<i>Kalo</i> worships the village deity, Gramsiri and sacrifices cocks and goats before the deity

Birhor / Mankirdia	Magheparab	Mahga (Jan -Feb)	Fowls are sacrificed Dehuri officiates in all the rituals The Supreme deity, Sing Bonga (Sun God) and the village deity (Dasuali) at Jahira are worshipped
	Hero Baha	Mahga (Jan-Feb) Chaitra (Mar-April)	Dancing and merrymaking Ritual for first fruit of Mahua And ceremonial hunting
	Makarparab	January	Fire festival, take holly dip in the hill stream Eat cakes
	Kali puja Dusserha	(Oct-Nov) (Oct-Nov)	Also observed Hindu festivals
Chuktia Bhunjia	Dussehra	Aswin (Oct-Nov)	Pujari (Priest), Kataria (Sacrificer) and Chhatria (Umbrella holder) worship Sunadei- Chief Deity - of the Bhunjias Bucks and Parrots are sacrificed for good rain, prosperity of villages and to be free from illness
	Viemsenpuja	(March-April)	Fowls are sacrificed and wine is offered before the deity for bumper Mahua crop
	Mati (Earth) puja	(Sept-Oct)	Buck, fowl and pig are sacrificed for bumper crops
	Dharanipuja	(Nov-Dec)	Buck sacrificed for preventing illness of all kinds
Dal	Puspunei	(Nov-Dec)	Bhoi/ Jani/ Bisal sacrifice fowls before the home deities of all
	Asadhakhai	(June-July)	Communal worship at village and then at forest
	Matijatra Penchhadapuja	(May-June)	Earth worship Brahmin worship under a Tulsi plant in the middle of village
Dharua	Lendipanda	Magha (Jan-Feb)	Palasi, village priest, sacrifices fowls, goats, pigs etc before Birbu (Mother Earth) goddess at the begging of agricultural cycle First eating of new fruits, mango, Mahua flowers etc
	Ghia Panda	April-May	Annual hunting ceremony
Dongria Kondh	GoesendiaHia Meriah	(March-April)	Ritual with buffalo sacrifice For well-being of the people, better

			fertility of the soil and health and happiness of the villagers For fulfillment of wants
	Ghantaparaba	Baisakha (April-May)	For harvest of ragi
	Mandiarani	Shraban (July-Aug)	First rice offering to village deity
	Dhannuakhia	Bhadrab (Aug-Sept)	Bumper crop of castor seeds First eating of red gram, small millets and jawar
	Pidika		Ritual for sowing seeds
	Punapadi	Aswin (Sept-Oct) Kartik (Oct-Nov)	
	Bihanpuja		
		Chaitra March-April)	
Gadaba	Bandapana Parab	July	Disari sacrifices fowls before Thakurani (Represented by a slab of stone) at a Hundi (place of worship)
	Dusserhra parab	(Sept-Oct)	Disari officiates in all the worships
	Puss Parab	December	
	Chait Parab	March-April	
Gond	Chaitra Parba	March-April	Devaril (village priest and Katora (clan priest) sacrifice pig and fowls in the rituals like worship of Akipen (village god) during first eating of new crops and for successful germination of seeds and Auwal (Mother goddess) before sowing new millets. Blood of the sacrificed animals is sprinkled over the seeds and the charmed seeds offered to gods are shown in the fields for good harvesting.
Hill Kharia	Dusserha	October	Dehuri sacrifices fowls and goats to venerate plough and axe
	Makar Sankranti	January	Ancestor worship-take holly dip in the hilly stream. Gather around fire and eat cake
	BhandarPuja	January-February	Worship the village deity and Bhandar Thakurani for good quantity of honey collection and sacrifice goats and fowls. Make community feast. Perform songs and changu dance

Ho	Maghe Baha Damurai Heru Jamnama Kolon Batuali Chaitra	Magha (Jan-Feb)	Dehuri officiates in all the rituals. The Supreme deity, Sing Bonga (Sun God) and the village deity (Dasuali) at Jahira are worshipped. All festivals are associated with agricultural operations.
Holva		March-April	Pujari worships during new mango eating ceremony.
Jatapu	Amus Pongal (Pondugu)	August-September January	New rice eating ceremony. Disari officiates in social function and Jani worships the village deity. Jahar is the Supreme deity and Jakeri is the goddess. Fowls, pigs and goats are sacrificed.
	Bhagudi	March-April	
Juang	Pus Punei	Pus (Dec.-Jan)	Nagam or Dehuri sacrifices a pig and sprinkles its blood over the grains for good germination purpose.
	Amba-Nua Tirtia Pirh Puja Dhan Nua Dusserha	March-April June (Aug-Sept) (October- November)	Deities, Dharam Deobta (Sun God), Basumata (Mother Earth) and Gramsiri (Village deity) are worshipped in all the occasions. Worship two-edged sword (Jhagna Khanda) and sword of strife.
Kisan	Bihanbuna	Baisakha (April-May)	First sowing of seeds.
	Gamha	Sraban (July-August)	Installation of Kendu twigs in crop fields.
	Nuakhai	Bhadrab (Aug-Sept)	Eating new rice.
	Dusserha Puspunei	Aswin (Sept-Oct) Pus (Dec-Jan)	Worshipping village deities. Ancestor worship with dance and merrymaking.
Kol	Maghapudi Baparaba/ Phulbhaguni Jamnamparab Makara Asadhi Gamha	Magha (Jan-Feb) Chait (March-April) Aswin (Sept-Oct) Magha (Jan-Feb) Asadha (June-July) Sraban (July-Aug)	Post harvesting ritual. Eating new mango, jackfruit and use of sal flowers. Eating new rice. Ancestor worship. Ritual for agriculture. Ritual for cattle wealth.
Kollohar	Karama Dusserha	Aswin (Sept-Oct) Aswin (Sept-Oct)	Well-being of people, dancing, drinking and enjoying special foods.
	Makara	Magha (Jan-Feb)	Rituals and sacrifice of animal.

	Nuakhai	Bhadrab(Aug -ept)	and birds before village shrines Ancestor worship & Community Feast Eating new - rice
Konda Dora	Makara Dhan Nuakhia Dusserha	Magha (Jan-Feb) Aswin (Oct -Nov) Aswin (Sept -Oct)	Ancestor worship Eating new - rice Sacrifice of animal and birds before village shrines
Kora	Dusserha	Aswin (Sept -Oct)	Sacrifice of goats and sheep and fowls before village shrines
	Puspurnima	Pus (Dec - Jan)	Post harvesting ritual
Koya	Bijapandu	April-May	Mango eating festival. Worship earth goddess and offering sacrifice of fowls, pigs and eggs
	Kurumpandu	Bhadrab(Aug - Sept)	Ritual for first eating small millets
	Dusserha	Aswin (Sept -Oct)	New rice eating
	Sikudpandu	Aswin (Oct -Nov)	New bean eating
	Bimudpandu	(Jan -Feb)	Worshiping of rain god and seeds consecration
Kutia Kondh	Korubiha Dakina (Meriah)		To appease <i>Dharnti Penu</i> , Earth goddess for soil fertility buffalo sacrifice is given Jani is the religious head
LanjiaSaora	Uroy-n-a- Adur Ganugey-n-a- Adur Kondem-n-a- Adur Kuroj-n-a- Adur Osa-n-a-Adur Rago-n-a- Adur Tanku-n-a- Adur Uda-n-a-Adur		Related to a kind of millet Related to sweet potato Related to a course variety of corn grow in the hills Related to a kind of grass First eating of a minor millet First eating of Kandul (red- gram) Storing of mango kernel Ritual before village deity for eating new mango
Lodha,	Sital Puja Manas puja Jathel	Baisakh (April- May) Jesta (May-June) Shraban (July-Aug)	Sacrifice of animal and birds to village deity Seed sowing ritual Ritual to protect the cattle from diseases

	Asthanipuja	Aswin (Sept -Oct)	Offering sacrifice to village shrines
	Bandanapuja	Kartik (Oct -Nov)	Eating new rice ritual
	Nateunhanri	Chaitra (April-May)	Annual ancestor worship ceremony
Mahali	Baha	Falguna (Feb - March)	Naya worships the village Pirha for welfare of the villages
	Sharai	Kartik (Oct -Nov)	Naya sacrifices fowls at the village outskirts
	Maa-mane	Magha (Jan-Feb)	Ritual for harvesting and using new fruits, leaves, wild grass for thatching and collection of wood
Malhar	Makarsankran -ti	Magha (Jan-Feb)	Ancestral worship
Munda	Sarhul	October	Reaping of paddy by the magico-religious head
	Karma		Well being of people, dancing, and enjoying special feast
	Jitia		
	Dusserha		
	Saharai		Ritual for cattle worship and enjoyment of special food
	Shivaratri		
Omanatya	Pusapurnima	Pusa (Dec-Jan)	Post harvesting festival
	Amnua	Chaita (Marc-Aprl)	New mango eating
	Akshimuthi	Baisakh (Aprl-May)	Pujari offers ritual for sowing seeds
Oraon	Fagu	Falgun (Feb-March)	Naega offers sacrifice before village deities
	Sarhul	Chaita (Marc-Aprl)	
	Bisu sikar	Baisakh (April-May)	Ritual for using Sal flowers
		(August/Sept)	Ceremonial annual huntig
	Karama		Ritual before village shrine
Parenga	Pusapunei	Pusa (Dec-Jan)	Offering sacrifice to cattle god
	Chaitaparab	Chaita (March-April)	Worship <i>Nangasery</i> and offer goat and fowl sacrifices before proceeding for annual hunting
	Bandapana	Shraban (July-Aug)	Eating of pumpkin leaves
Paroja	Asadhiparaba	Asadha(June-July)	Ritual to protect the cattle from diseases
	Nuakhia	Bhadrab(Aug-Sept)	Eating of new rice
	Chaitaparab	Chaita (March-April)	Annual ceremonial huntig
	Bihanthapa	Baisakh (April-May)	Seed sowing ceremony
	Langaladhua	Sraban (July-Aug)	Ritual for consecration of Agril

	Bhadraparab	Bhadrab(Aug-Sept)	Implements Eating of new rice
Pentia	Nuakhia	Bhadrab(Aug-Sept)	Eating of new rice. Disari sacrifices a goat before village shrine
Rajuar	Ambanua	Chaita (Mar-Apr)	New mango eating
	Makar	August/September	Ancestor worship & Community Feast
	Nuakhia Karam	Bhadrab(Aug-Sept) Magha (Jan-Feb)	Eating of new rice Ritual before village shrine
Santal	Erok-sim	Jeytha (May-June)	For sowing seeds
	Hariham-sim	Sravan (July-Aug)	At the time of Sprouting seedling
	Iri-guldi-sim	Bhadrab(Aug-Sept)	Offering small millets to deity
	Jantal	Pusa (Dec-Jan)	First eating of rice
	Saharai	Kartik (November)	Cattle worship
	Magha-sim	Magha (Jan-Feb)	Dancing and merrymaking
	Baha	Chaitra (Mar-April)	Ritual for first fruit of Mahua And ceremonial hunting
Saunti	Raja	Jestha (May-June)	Ritual before village deity and dance and merrymaking
	Ganpha	Sraban (July-Aug)	Installation of Kendu twigs in crop fields
	Makara	August/September	Ancestor worship and sacrifice of fowls
	Nuakhia	(Dec-Jan)	First eating of new rice
Tharua	Makara	January	Ancestor worship and eating of special food
	Randia	July-Aug	Ritual for cattle and enjoy special food
	Ganpha		

Linguistic Variations

- The sixty-two scheduled tribes inhabiting Orissa can be broadly classified into three ethno-linguistic groups, such as, Munda (Austro-Asiatic), Dravidian and Oriya (Indo-Aryan)
- Twenty-six of the tribes are Munda speakers, fourteen of them are Dravidian speakers and twenty-two of them Oriya speakers
- The Munda speaking scheduled tribe population is 28,45,736 (40.65%), the Dravidian speaking scheduled tribe population is 29,45,329 (42.07%), and the Oriya speaking scheduled tribe population is 12,09,755 (17.20%)
- The Munda speaking scheduled tribes are

Bhumija, Birhor, Bondo Paroja, Desia Bhumija, Didayi, Gadaba, Ho, Juang, Kharia, Kol, Kolah Lohara, Kolha, Kora, Korua, Lodha, Mahali, Mankidi, Mankirdia, Mirdha, Munda/ Munda Lohara, Mundari, Parenga, Santal, Saora/Savar Saura/Sahara and Shabar Lodha. Interestingly enough, Ollari, assumed to be a section of the Gadaba tribe speaks Dravidian

- The tentative list of Munda dialects spoken by the tribes of Orissa is as follows
Birhor (Mankirdia), Gata (Didayi), Gorum (Parenga), Gutob (Gadaba), Ho (Ho, Kolha), Juang, Kharia (Kharia, Mirdha), Koda, Mahili (Mahali) Mundari (Munda), Remo (Bondo), Santali, and Sora (Saora, Lanjia Saora, Juray, Arsi), Korwa, Bhumija,
- The Dravidian speaking scheduled tribes are Chenchu, Dal, Dharua, Gandia, Gond/Gondo, Jatapu, Kandha Gauda, Kond/ Khond/Sita Kandh/Kandha, Kisan, Konda Dora, Koya, Madia, Oraon and Paroja
- The tentative list of Dravidian dialects spoken by the tribes of Orissa is as follows Parji (Dharua), Koya, Kui (Kondh- Kutia, Dongria), Konda Kubi (Konda Dora), Ollari (a section of the Gadaba), Kurukh Oraon (Oraon), Gondi (Gond), madia, Kuvi (Kondh, Jatapu), Pengu (Pengo Kondh) and Kisan
- The Oriya speaking scheduled tribes are Bagata, Baiga, Banjara/Banjari, Bathudi, Bhottada/Dhotada, Bhuiya/Bhuyan, Bhumia, Bhunjia, Binjhia/Binjhua, Ghara, Holva, Kavar, Kharwar, Koli/ Malhar, Kotia, Kulis, Matya, Omanatya, Pentia, Rajuar, Sounti and Tharua. These scheduled tribes do not have any other mother tongue other than Oriya.
- The tentative list of Oriya dialects spoken by the tribes of Orissa is as follows: Southern Oriya (Desia, Bhuyan, Bhatra, Jharia, Matia), Western Oriya (Kondhan, Laria, Bhulia, Aghria), Northern Oriya – S W Bengali (Kurmi, Sounti, Bathudi), Hindi-Oriya (Sadri), Chhatisgarhi-Hindi (Binjhia), Hindi dialect (Banjara), Chhatisgarhi (Baiga), Marathi (Bhunjia), Oriya-marathi-Chhatisgarhi (Halbi). All these non-literary Indo-Aryan dialects are used by tribes either as mother tongue or second language. These dialects have developed in the process of contact, diffusion of linguistic traits, mutual borrowing of traits and convergence.
- Some languages have definite ethnic (tribal) identity and some have no particular ethnic affiliation.
- Larger tribes like Kondh and Saora have several sub-tribes like Desia, Dongria, Kutia, Pengo, Jatapu Kondhs and Lanjia, Jurai, Arsi, Sudha Saoras. Each of these sub-tribes speaks a distinct dialect.
- The tribal languages are characteristically non-literary. However, in the past few decades, scripts have been devised in Ho, Kui, Santali and Sora languages. Ho (Ho-Chiki) devised by Kol Lako Bodra (Singbhum) is being promoted and propagated by Ho speakers of Bihar and Orissa. A few texts have been published in Ho script. Kui (Kui Lipi Varnamala) devised by Dayanidhi Malik (G.Udaygiri) is in experimental stage. Santali (Ol-Chiki) devised by Pandit Raghunath Murmu (1905-1982) is being used by the Santali speakers and a good number of texts are

available in the script. Saora (Soran Sampen) devised by Guru Mangel Gamango (1916-1981) is being used by a section of Saora speakers. Some texts have been published in a press at Dambasara (Gunpur).

- T. Burrow and Norman Zide, in collaboration with other scholars in linguistics studied respectively the Dravidian and Munda languages of tribal Orissa and brought them to the world map of languages
- At present, most of the scheduled tribes are found to have adopted Oriya as their second tongue and thus have become bi-lingual at the minimum. A majority of Bondo Paroja, Didayi, Gadaba, Jatapu, Kondh, Parenga, Paroja, Ho, Kharia, Kolha, Kora, Mirdha, Munda and Saora have, in recent years become tri-lingual and still some others, such as, Banjara, Birhor, Gond, Kisan, Koya, Lodha, Mankidi, Mankirdia, Mirdha, Kuli, Oraon, Santal, have become multi-lingual due to the impact of acculturation, education and modernization
- Among the Primitive Tribal Groups, Bonda, Dongria Kondh, Kutia Kondh, Juang, Paudi Bhuyan are bi-lingual, where as Birhor, Chuktia Bhunjia, Hill Kharia, Lanjia Saora, Saora, Lodha, Mankirdia are multi-lingual
- Austroasiatic languages: It is spoken in South and Southeast Asia. Austroasiatic is conventionally divided into four sub-families: Munda, Nicobbarese, Aslian and Mon-Khmer.
- Austroasiatic speakers are scattered in a considerable sweep of Asia. Austroasiatic speakers are represented in every nation state of continental Southeast Asia (Burma, Thailand, West Malaysia, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia) as well as in southern China, India, Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh. The total Austroasiatic-speaking population will be about 100 million. A majority of these (about 70 million) are Vietnamese. The next largest group is the Khmer (about 6 million) and the third largest is the Santal (about 4 million)
- Munda Sub-Family



Figure I. The North Munda Branch

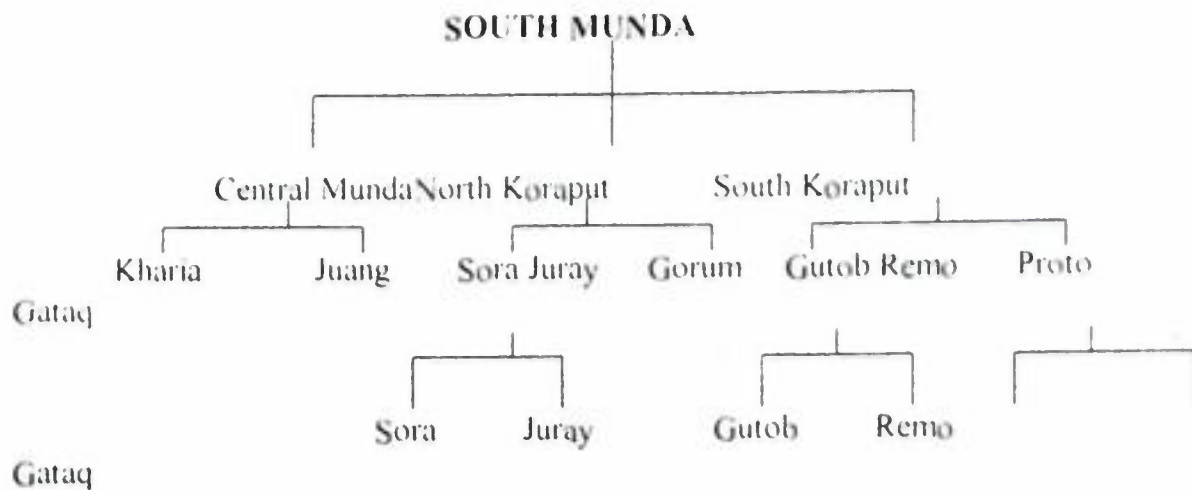
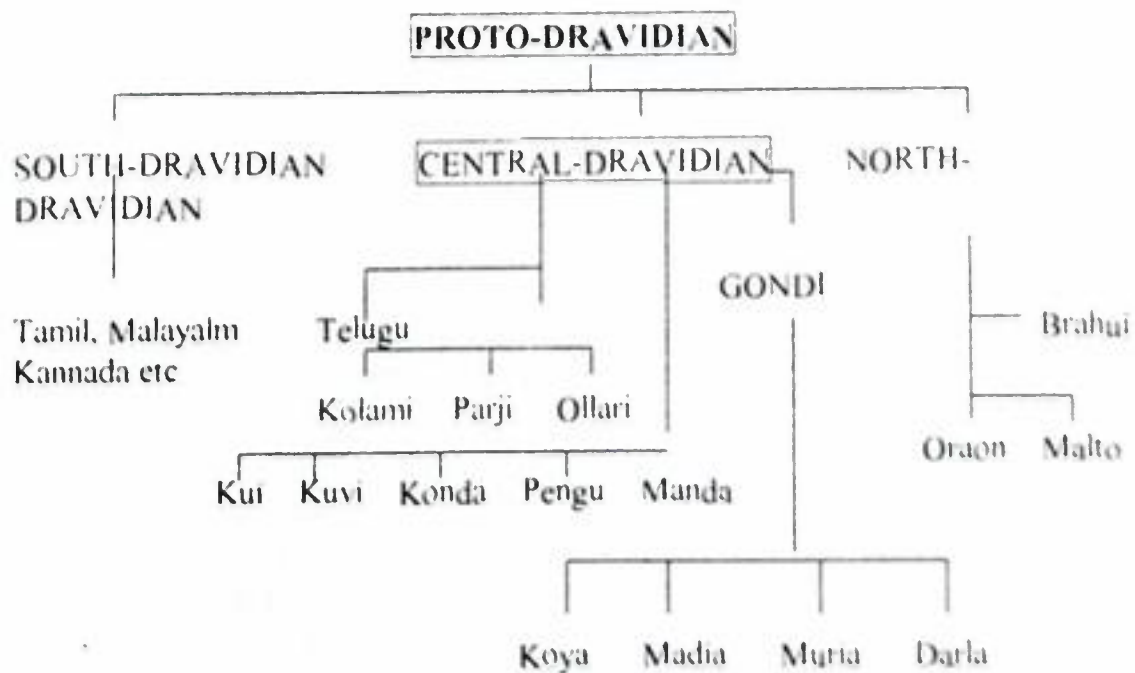
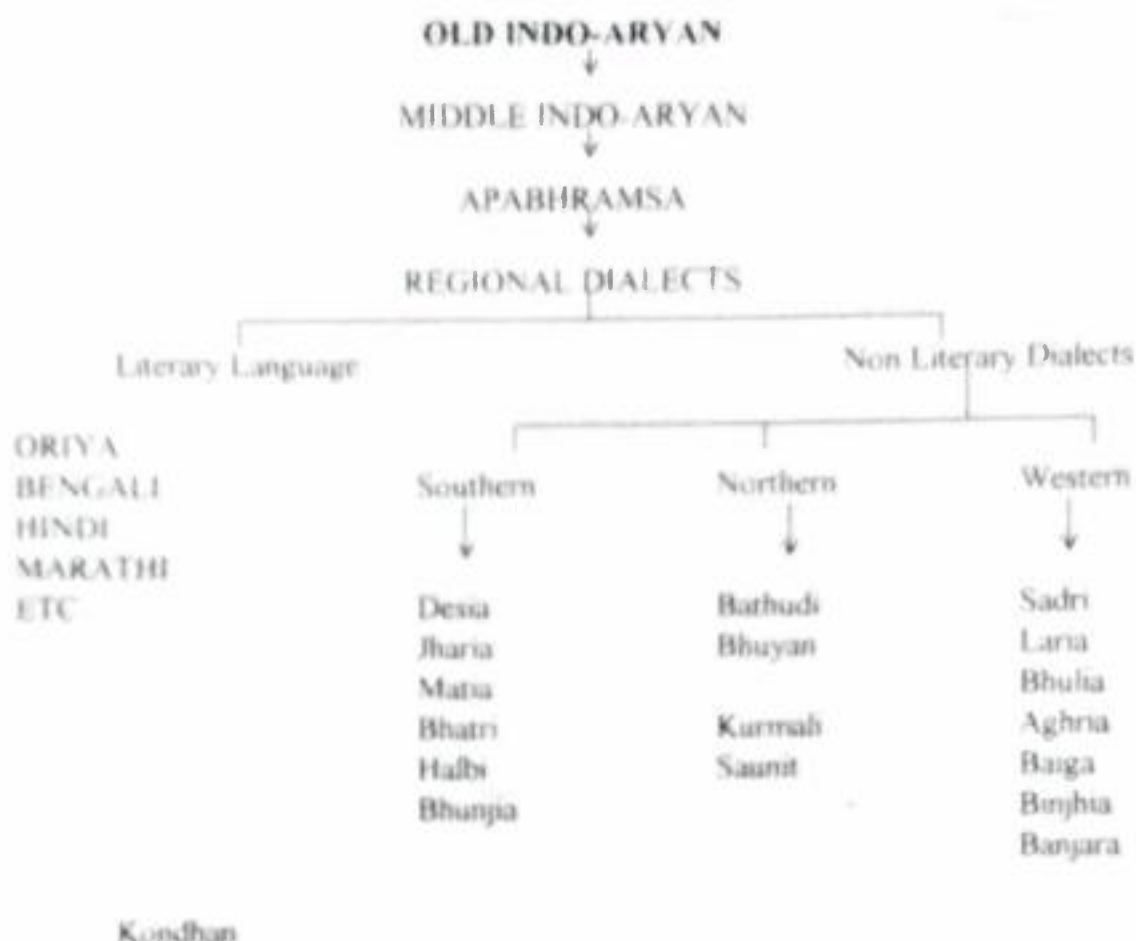


Figure II. The South Munda Branch





Conclusion

In the foregoing pages the nature and extent of social, cultural, and linguistic variations observed among the tribes of Orissa have been delineated and discussed from a comparative perspective. At the same time, some light has been thrown on possible ways of understanding of variations in respect of the society, culture and language of the tribes. However, the variations would have been sharply delineated and empirical generalizations would have been more pinpointed had we produced comparative ethnographies of tribes. Although a large number of ethnographic studies have been made on certain individual tribes and a vast literature have been produced on quite a number of tribes of Orissa, the lack of comparative perspective in them has constrained further scientific investigation and analysis. Orissa is a virgin field for tribal studies. Despite the change and transformation in many aspects of life of the people, the tribal cultures have continued as integrated wholes. Qualitative and quantitative comparisons both are quintessential at this hour if we are to understand the variations at a theoretical plane. Archival and historical researches would have been more rewarding and refreshing in studying social, cultural and linguistic variations in tribal Orissa. It warrants a technically programmatic exercise. Social, cultural and linguistic traits of tribes need to be examined holistically and compared precisely for arriving at a fuller understanding of these tribes and explaining the variations among them.

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Orissa Tribes and Their Homeland

G. N. Satpathy

According to the Constitution, (the Scheduled Areas Order 1977) the scheduled area in the State of Orissa comprises of the districts of Mayurbhanj, Sundargarh and Koraput, Kuchinda Tahasil of Sambalpur, Telkoi, Keonjhar, Champua and Barbil Tahasils of Keonjhar district, Khandamals, Balliguda and G. Udayagiri Tahasils of Phulbani district, R. Udayagiri Tahasil, Gumma Block and Rayagada Block, Suruda Tahasil excluding Gazalbadi and Gochha Gram Panchayats of Ganjam district, and Thuamul-Rampur Block and Lanjgarh Block of Kalahandi district, and Nilagiri Block of Balasore district. According to the Constitution, Scheduled Tribes Order 1950 as amended by the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Orders (Amendment) Act, 1976 there are 62 Scheduled Tribes in Orissa. According to 1991 Census, the total population of Scheduled Tribes of Orissa was 70.32 lakh, which constituted 22.21 per cent of total population of the State. The community-wise distribution of Scheduled Tribes in different districts of Orissa is given in the Annexure.

For taking of developmental works in tribal regions, the entire scheduled areas (except the portion of Suruda Tahasil) of the State is covered by Sub-Plan area. In the Tribal Sub-Plan area Integrated Tribal Development Projects have been taken up. The Blocks covered under T.S.P. district-wise are as follows:

District	Blocks
1. Mayurbhanj	1. Barasahi 2. Sama Khunta 3. Betanoti 4. Baripada 5. Rasgovindapur 6. Moroda 7. Saraskana 8. Kuliana 9. Suliapada 10. Bangiriposi 11. Bisoi 12. Bijatala 13. Kusumi 14. Rairangpur 15. Tiring 16. Bahalda 17. Jamda 18. Karanja 19. Raruan 20. Jashipur

2. Balasore

3. Keonjhar

4. Sundargarh

5. Sambalpur

6. Phulbani

21. Thakurmunda
22. Sukruli
23. Khunta
24. Gopabandhunagar
25. Kaptipada
26. Udala

1. Nilagiri

1. Patna
2. Ghatgan
3. Kendujhar
4. Saharapada
5. Harichandanpur
6. Telkoi
7. Banspal
8. Joda
9. Champua
10. Jhumpura

1. Boneigarh
2. Lahunipada
3. Gurundia
4. Koira
5. Kuanrmunda
6. Bistra
7. Nuagaon
8. Lathikata
9. Sundargarh
10. Subdega
11. Balisankara
12. Lifripara
13. Bargaon
14. Tangarpali
15. Hemagiri
16. Kutra
17. Rajgangpur

1. Kuchinda
2. Gobindpur
3. Jamankira

1. Phulbani
2. Phiringia
3. Khajuripada
4. Balliguda
5. Nuagaon
6. Daringibadi

7. Gajapati

8. Rayagada

9. Koraput

10. Nawarangpur

7. Tumudibandh
8. Kotagarh
9. Tikabali
10. G. Udayagiri
11. Chakapada
12. Raikia

1. Mohana
2. Nuagada
3. Ramagiri Udayagiri
4. Rayagada
5. Gumma

1. Gunupur
2. Gudari
3. Padmapur
4. Ramannaguda
5. Bissam-cuttack
6. Muniguda
7. Chandrapur
8. Rayagada
9. Kolnara
10. Kshipur
11. Kalyansingapur

1. Koraput
2. Similigurha
3. Pottangi
4. Nandapur
5. Dasamantapur
6. Lamtaput
7. Narayanapatna
8. Lakshmipur
9. Bandhugan
10. Jeypur
11. Boriguma
12. Kotaparh
13. Boipariguda
14. Kundra

1. Nawarangpur
2. Tentulikhunti
3. Papadahandi
4. Nandahandi
5. Kosagumada
6. Raighar
7. Umakote

- | | |
|----------------|-------------------|
| | 8. Chandahandi |
| | 9. Jharigaon |
| | 10. Dabugaon |
| 11. Malkangiri | 1. Malkangiri |
| | 2. Korkunda |
| | 3. Kalimela |
| | 4. Podia |
| | 5. Khairaput |
| | 6. Kudumuluguma |
| | 7. Mathili |
| 9. Kalahandi | 1. Thuamul-Rampur |
| | 2. Lanjigarh |

Beyond the Sub-Plan area many of the 62 Tribes mentioned earlier are residing. These are called Modified Area Development Approach (MADA) pockets. The Blocks covered under MADA are as follows:

District	Blocks
1. Balasore	1. Jaleswar
2. Jajpur	1. Dangadi
	2. Sukinda - I
	3. Sukinda - II
	4. Sukinda - III
3. Khurda	1. Banapur
4. Nayagarh	Ranapur
	2. Dasapalla
	Gania
	3. Nuagan
5. Bolangir	1. Deogaon
	Patnagarh
	2. Khaparakhole
	3. Muribahal
	Saintala
	4. Gudvela (Tentulikhunti)
	5. Tureikela
6. Dhenkanal	1. Kankadahada
7. Angul	1. Athamallik
	2. Pallahara

8. Keonjhar	1. Anandapur - I 2. Anandapur - II 3. Ghasipura 4. Hatadihi
9. Deogarh	1. Barakote 2. Tileibani
10. Baragarh	1. Jharbandh 2. Paikamal
11. Jharsuguda	1. Jharsuguda 2. Lakhanpur 3. Kirimira Laikera 4. Kolabira
12. Sambalpur	Rengali 1. Dhanakauda 2. Jujumura
13. Ganjam	1. Turubudi (Patrapur)
14. Gajapati	1. Kashinagar
15. Kalahandi	1. Bhawanipatna 2. Junagarh 3. Jayapatna 4. Kesinga 5. Madanpur-Rampur 6. Narla
16. Nawapara	1. Boden 2. Khariar - I 3. Khariar - II 4. Komna 5. Nawapara - I 6. Nawapara - II 7. Sinapali
17. Boudh	1. Boudh

Beyond the MADA pockets there are small areas of tribal concentration. These are called Clusters. The Blocks covered under Clusters are as follows:

<u>District</u>	<u>Cluster Pockets</u>
1. Jajpur	1. Barachana
2. Dhenkanal	2. Dhenkanal
3. Angul	3. Angul
4. Sambalpur	4. Naktideul

- 5 Baragarh
- 6 Bolangir
- 7 Ganjam
-do-
- 8 Kalahandi
-do-
-do-
-do-
- 9 Nawapara

- 5 Padmapur
- 6 Belpada
- 7 Sorada
- 8 Sankhemundi
- 9 Kantamal
- 10 Kokasara - I
- 11 Kokasara - II
- 12 Jaipatna - II
- 13 Bhawanipatna
- 14 Nawapara

Government of India have recognised 13 Primitive Tribes in Orissa. Some of them are in Tribal-Plan area and few are outside the Sub-Plan area. 17 Micro Projects have been functioning for all round development of the primitive tribes. District-wise distribution of these Micro projects is given below:

District

Micro Projects

Mayurbhanj

Lodha Development Agency, Morada
Hill-Kharia & Mankirdia Development
Agency, Gudugudia

Sundargarh

Paudi Bhuiyan Development Agency,
Khuntagaon

Keonjhar
Angul

Juang Development Agency, Gonasika
Paudi Bhuiyan Development Agency,
Jamardihi

Phulbani
Ganjam

Kutia Kondh Development Agency, Belghar
Saora Development Agency, Chandragiri
Tumba Development Agency, Tumba
Lanjia Saora Development Agency, Serango
Kutia Kondh Development Agency,
Lanjigarh

Malkangiri

Bonda Development Agency, Mudulipada
Didayi Development Agency, Bayapada

Rayagada

Dongria Kondh Development Agency,
Chatikona
Lanjia Saora Development Agency,
Puttasingi

Deogarh

Dongria Kondh Development Agency, Parsali
Paudi Bhuiyan Development Agency,
Rugudakudar

Nawapara

Chuktia Bhunija Development Agency,
Sunbeda

ANNEXURE

COMMUNITY-WISE AND DISTRICT-WISE SCH. TRIBE POPULATION OF ORISSA ACCORDING TO 1991 CENSUS

Sl. No	Name of the community	Balesor	Bolan-gir	Cuttac k	Dhen-kanal	Ganja	Kala-handi	Keonj har	Koraput	Mayur-bhanj	Phu-lbani	Puri	Sambal-pur	Sundar-garh	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1.	Bagata	107	40	41	35	74	68	386	498	460	16	23	310	2748	4806
2.	Baiga	31	88	58	7	1	64	126	147	681	1	15	187	150	1556
3.	Banjara, Banjari	40	577	2	20	9	6168	109	2645	156	115	1	2800	201	12843
4.	Bathudi	12659	34	966	45	174	115	59548	881	95818	4	326	356	148	171074
5.	Bhottada, Dhotada	95	-	28	40	12	33316	163	269993	103	14	138	90	145	304137
6.	Bhuiya, Bhuyan	1268	67	695	7591	629	1013	73366	5785	47472	49	976	30562	77100	246573
7.	Bhumia	93	-	16	5	1	100	145	108784	156	-	22	95	121	109538
8.	Bhumij	47044	12	7257	6555	16	98	5040	1083	106659	64	672	270	5444	178214
9.	Bhunja	111	72	72	11	22	7142	258	2254	932	1	14	130	257	11276
10.	Binjhal	136	37242	31	35	176	5869	2	255	231	15	12	74591	1334	119929
11.	Binjhia, Binjhoa	57	162	1	9	14	179	24	307	9	-	-	263	7103	8128
12.	Birhor	8	99	34	5	-	165	249	-	1	10	11	243	-	825
13.	Bondo Poraja	1	197	-	-	31	47	12	6863	45	-	12	75	32	7315
14.	Chenchu	3	2	2	-	10	27	26	152	3	-	5	36	9	275
15.	Dal	420	14674	14	-	51	3406	342	489	316	-	9	132	14	19867
16.	Desua Bhumij	331	210	206	2	86	72	105	137	250	-	48	362	71	1880
17.	Dharua	20	263	352	16	27	97	-	10209	371	51	2	74	30	11512
18.	Didayi	10	33	5	5	3	-	11	5324	61	-	14	-	5	5471
19.	Gadaba	36	42	34	43	15	40	-	66781	-	-	44	69	34	67138

20	Gandia	40	53	44	61	-	81	170	2489	403	1	6	206	34	3588
21	Ghara	18	256	108	120	10	168	33	329	18	86	73	245	89	1553
22	Gond. Gondo	1287	93331	665	23339	165	172686	65623	126526	22196	13619	889	135435	45378	701139
23	Ho	288	54	2072	9817	16	40	8067	148	25843	58	550	1840	2099	50892
24	Holva	29	14	1	20	-	720	311	11732	337	16	20	124	338	13662
25	Jatapu	160	41	12	151	2675	43	293	4186	810	11	8	516	233	9139
26	Juang	22	12	783	14920	5	34	19109	136	255	-	49	129	211	35665
27	Kandha Gauda	197	633	391	341	4019	742	218	3966	1230	3523	2009	784	1225	19278
28	Kawar	16	128	135	207	24	1390	194	228	373	1	143	1519	5224	9582
29	Kharia, Kharian	931	3434	455	2140	38	1006	631	310	15666	752	593	37352	105099	168407
30	Kharwar	35	26	1717	39	145	57	12	-	-	13	95	123	1018	3280
31	Khond. Kond. Kandha. Nanguli Kandha. Sitha Kandha	301	83577	6160	35407	71589	146225	2620	414206	967	290388	41707	43654	3573	114037 4
32	Kisan	77	535	122	11753	57	188	4153	392	520	166	300	136902	111206	266371
33	Kol	349	-	989	76	51	190	960	67	216	218	116	794	1751	5777
34	Kolah- Loharas. Kol- Loharas	300	583	865	389	32	1868	994	1227	2139	264	110	971	2579	12321
35	Kolha	31917	2205	14793	11585	251	794	148777	1632	182551	661	1371	3646	4681	404864
36	Koli. Malhar	57	325	664	828	471	49	384	108	154	131	50	1759	113	5093
37	Kondadora	22	279	14	116	404	1032	628	16000	351	110	68	98	113	19235
38	Kora	1080	620	90	3358	9	109	1554	1244	622	262	37	1234	94	10313
39	Korua	203	78	46	118	44	12	90	93	191	32	27	527	528	1989
40	Kotia	20	91	22	88	12	8089	77	14978	342	4653	29	169	37	28607
41	Koya	2	30	7	-	78	7	113	141509	25	-	80	45	31	141927
42	Kulis	28	1094	36	-	121	19	28	403	38	96	21	4630	12	6526

43.	Lodha	2	38	1775	53	181	1	428	1209	2405	4	791	399	172	7458
44.	Madia	196	68	48	135	40	1	-	486	57	1	111	286	10	1439
45.	Mahali	224	193	58	641	104	449	321	428	6778	11	121	469	3788	13585
46.	Mankidi	146	1	23	-	29	115	205	191	392	-	-	-	48	1150
47.	Mankirdia	8	126	121	103	10	388	111	65	321	12	-	121	105	1491
48.	Matya	651	36	2161	3186	1119	6	1882	2781	180	-	1040	155	29	13226
49.	Mirdhas	147	6891	271	859	-	1265	73	139	16	739	79	20294	80	30853
50.	Munda, Munda- Lohara, Munda- Mahalis	7745	3768	32901	26759	524	5940	42366	2296	37946	888	4232	66431	164765	396561
51.	Mundari	1205	95	1140	450	77	111	2406	365	5988	64	485	1764	16997	31147
52.	Omanatya	80	63	-	114	4	50	29	24489	55	382	83	319	247	25915
53.	Oraon	1508	207	485	632	207	124	4651	604	3716	26	341	35324	210004	257829
54.	Parenga	32	354	148	27	28	39	80	4673	88	-	10	301	63	5843
55.	Paroja	67	128	-	81	79	28217	327	322545	317	2	759	145	669	353336
56.	Pentia	95	27	162	218	17	18	696	8764	586	22	46	354	394	11399
57.	Rajuar	166	23	16	70	56	-	180	256	2154	2	-	127	96	3146
58.	Santal	72844	127	4648	8593	259	221	46368	7932	474051	95	6274	1249	7121	629782
59.	Saora, Savar, Saura, Sahara	2344	49023	40253	30711	77694	4097	10549	21064	4321	3941	38266	118956	2291	403510
60.	Shabar, Lodha	3337	14243	59642	30339	133471	60236	18768	12813	7493	790	21723	9667	1023	373545
61.	Sounti	1891	79	127	181	794	136	70641	108	19772	1	2269	214	38	96251
62.	Tharua	148	93	10	66	12	412	144	59	161	24	19	401	46	1595
	Orissa	197992	316797	182188	232519	296845	495425	595184	1636079	1090626	322408	127347	740323	798481	7032214

Tribal Societies in Orissa

N.K. Behura

The term 'tribe' refers to a type of society and designates a stage of evolution in human society. As a type of society the term signifies a set of characteristic features, and as a stage of evolution it connotes a specific mode of social organization. The term is theoretically meaningful and important, but seems to be, as it is argued, fraught with harmful political implications. The terms such as 'tribe' and 'tribalism' are used to determine modern contradictions found in developing countries. The contradictions seen in 'tribalism' are not attributed to a relic of precolonial structures, but to a legacy of the colonial period and the new relations involved in neocolonial domination. Many of the so-called 'tribal' groups were creations of the colonial period. 'Tribalism' with all its connotations of primitivity and traditionalism is the name given for the identity being used by groups competing for power and prestige in India and elsewhere. But even those groups for which continuity with the past could be claimed have lost so many of their traditional characteristics that in fact they must be viewed as new socio-cultural entities.

The English term 'tribe' comes from the Latin *tribus*, designating a particular kind of social and political organization existing in all these societies. The term refers to the largest kind of social and political community with internal sub-divisions or segments, and there is an internal relationship, real or implied, between kinship and political organization.

In the later half of nineteenth century Morgan (1877) demonstrated that the kind of social relations which dominate the organisation of most primitive societies are kinship relations. He showed that these kinship relations had an internal logic which had to be discovered through detailed studies of marriage rules and kinship terminologies, rules and terms which seemed to lack all sense in the eyes of Europeans who were puzzled by such institutions as the 'classificatory' kinship system found among the tribal societies of Asia, Africa, Oceania and America. He assumed that these kinship systems had a historical sequence indicating that man evolved from animal groups and sexually promiscuous primitive hordes, and that gradually the incest prohibition had been introduced and marriage between blood relations in wider and wider social categories became tabooed.

From Morgan's analysis it is evident that a tribe is a completely organised society, and therefore capable of reproducing itself. Structurally a tribe is segmented into a number of totemic or non-totemic clans. A clan is a fictive consanguineal group of relatives, descendants of a common ancestor. A clan is always functionally exogamous, and the tribe is endogamous. Thus a tribe is a collection of clans. Each tribe is individualized by a distinct nomenclature, by a separate language, with literary or non-literary tradition, by a political organization and by the possession of a territory contiguously, which is regarded as its own. Further, functions and attributes of tribal organization are the possession of a

common religious faith and cult, and practice of an undifferentiated primitive mode of economy. From an examination of Morgan's postulation of the concept of tribe it is evident that the social conditions of production of material life determine the content, form and evolution of society.

Eminent Indologist and historian, Niharranjan Ray (1972) in his scholarly quest for the meaning of the term 'tribe' in Indian context suggests that the Sanskrit term *Jana* referred to these primitive communities of people during ancient times. He says that the term *Jana* and *Jati* are both derived from the root *Jan* which means 'to be born', 'to give birth to' and hence has a biological meaning. By this Ray implies that the term *Jana* in ancient time referred to the autochthonous people like the Savaras, the Kullutas, the Kohas, the Bhillas, the Khasas, the Kinnars and a countless number of many others whom to-day we know are 'tribes'. With the passage of time each of these communities lent their names to the territory inhabited by them, and the territories came to be known as *Janapadas*.

There is linguistic and archaeological evidence to suggest that the pre-Aryan indigenous *Janas* were settled originally on the plains and river-valleys of the main land. But they were not all in the same stage of development. Many of these were still in a food-gathering economy, not knowing the use of metal, a few seem to have known the use of metal, a sort of shifting, *Jhum* or *Podu*, and hoe cultivation, and were on the thresh-hold of a real food-producing economy. They seem to have lived in isolated settlements, in shelters of various types.

They withdrew to various inaccessible areas such as hills and forests with the pressure of a superior social organization with a superior techno-economy as that of the Indo-Aryan speaking people. In records these areas are referred to as *atavika rajya*, *manakantara* or great forest regions and *Pratyanta Desa* or frontier regions. This process went on for centuries and millenia in a very slow and steady but very relentless manner. This indeed shaped the socio-cultural history of India, and has given rise to present-day insurmountable problems.

However, in the Indian context the term tribe refers to the indigenous *Janas*. They are commonly designated as *Adivasi* (original settlers), *Girijan* (hill-dwellers), *Vanyajati* (forest caste), *Adimjati* (primitive castes), *Jan Jati* (folk communities), *anusuchit Jan Jati* (Scheduled Tribes), and by their respective tribal appellations. In Orissa the term *Adivasi* is commonly used for the tribes.

In India there is an amalgam of 437 tribes, and in Orissa the number is 62. According to 1991 Census, in Orissa the total strength of the tribal communities comes to more than 70 lakhs (70,32,214), which constitutes 10.38% of the Indian tribal population and 22.21% of the total population of the State.

Linguistically the tribes of India are broadly classified into four categories, namely (1) Indo-Aryan speakers, (2) Dravidian speakers, (3) Tibeto-Burmese speakers, and (4) Austric speakers. There are some four hundred tribal languages, which means that most of the tribes have their own languages. However, in a majority of cases, these languages are unwritten ones. In Orissa the speakers of the Tibeto-Burmese language family are absent, and therefore Orissan tribes belong to

other three language families. The Indo-Aryan language family in Orissa, includes Dheki-Oriya, Matia, Haleba, Jharia, Saunti, Laria and Oriya (spoken by Bathudi and the acculturated sections of Bhuiyan, Juang, Kondha, Savara, Raj Gond etc.). The Austric language family includes eighteen tribal languages namely, Birja, Parenga, Kisan, Bhumij, Koda, Mahili Bhumiji, Mirdha-Kharia, Ollar Gadaba, Juang, Bondo, Didayee, Karmali, Kharia, Munda, Ho, Mundari and Savara. And within the Dravidian language family there are nine languages in Orissa, namely, Pengo, Gondi, Kisan, Konda, Koya, Parji, Kui, Kuvi and Kurukh or Oraon.

There was a general misconception that tribal communities did not possess languages but dialects. But with the extensive study of tribal languages Linguists have come to the conclusion that tribal, do possess languages. Tribal languages contain the same features which other languages possess, such as, (i) duality of structure (Phonemic and morphemic), (ii) productivity capability (creativity and novelty), (iii) arbitrariness (no correlation between linguistic morphs and their meanings), (iv) interchangeability (vocal and auditory functions are simultaneous), (v) specialization (codes and code-switching capability), (vi) displacement (abstractness of speech), (vii) prevarication (ability to misrepresent reality), and (viii) cultural transmission (learning and inculcation). Besides, tribal languages have all the four subsystems, such as (i) phono-morphemic, (ii) syntactic, (iii) semantic, and (iv) symbolic which other languages have. The major difference between tribal and non-tribal languages is that the former are unwritten ones, and therefore have no literary traditions, but only oral traditions. When one examines the entire range of folklore of a tribe, he finds that the oral tradition of that tribe is no less rich. Some of the major tribes have been trying to develop literary traditions of their own, for example, Santals of Orissa have developed a script, called Olchiki, for their language. Their cultural organization has been printing and publishing primary level text books, Santal songs, myths, riddles, proverbs, anecdotes and dramas in this script. And in addition, the cultural organization has been printing news letters and calendars of Santal annual cycle festivals.

The tribes of Orissa though belong to three linguistic divisions, yet they have lots of socio-cultural similarities between them. These commonalities signify homogeneity of their cultures and together they characterise the notion or concept of tribalism. Tribal societies share certain common characteristics and by these they are distinguished from complex or advanced societies. In India tribal societies had apparently been outside the main historical current of the development of Indian civilization for centuries. Hence tribal societies manifest such cultural features which signify a primitive level in socio-cultural parameter.

Habitat: A major portion of the tribal habitat is hilly and forested. Tribal villages are generally found in areas away from the alluvial plains close to rivers. Most villages are uniethnic in composition, and smaller in size. Villages are often not planned at all.

Economy: Tribal economy is characterised as subsistence oriented. The subsistence economy is based mainly on collecting, hunting and fishing (e.g., the Birhor, Hill Kharia), or a combination of hunting and collecting with shifting cultivation (e.g., the Juang, Hill Bhuiyan, Lanjia Saora, Kandha etc.). Even the so-

called plough using agricultural tribes do often, wherever scope is available, supplement their economy with hunting and collecting. Subsistence economy is characterised by simple technology, simple division of labour, small-scale units of production and no investment of capital. The socio unit of production, distribution and consumption is limited to the family and lineage. Subsistence economy is imposed by circumstances which are beyond the control of human beings, poverty of the physical environment, ignorance of efficient technique of exploiting natural resources and lack of capital for investment. It also implies existence of barter and lack of trade.

Considering the general features of their (i) eco-system, (ii) traditional economy, (iii) supernatural beliefs and practices, and (iv) recent "impacts of modernization" the tribes of Orissa can be classified into six types, such as: (1) Hunting, collecting and gathering type, (2) Cattle-herder type, (3) Simple artisan type, (4) Hill and shifting cultivation type, (5) Settled agriculture type and (6) Industrial urban worker type.

Each type has a distinct style of life which could be best understood in the paradigm of nature, man and spirit complex, that is, on the basis of relationship with nature, fellow men and the supernatural.

- (1) Tribes of the first type, namely, Kharia, Mankidi, Mankirdia and Birhor, live in the forests of Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar and Sundargarh districts, exclusively depend on forest resources for their livelihood by practising hunting, gathering and collecting. They live in tiny temporary huts made out of the materials found in the forest. Under constraints of their economic pursuit they live in isolated small bands or groups. With their primitive technology, limited skill and unflinching traditional and ritual practices, their entire style of life revolves round forest. Their world view is fully in consonance with the forest eco-system. The population of such tribes in Orissa though is small, yet their impact on the ever-depleting forest resources is very significant. Socio-politically they have remained inarticulate and therefore have remained in a relatively more primitive stage, and neglected too.
- (2) The Koya, which belongs to the Dravidian linguistic group, is the lone pastoral and cattle-breeder tribal community in Orissa. This tribe which inhabits the Malkangiri Sub-Division of the Koraput District has been facing crisis for lack of pasture. Rehabilitation of Bangla Desh refugees in the Koya traditional habitat has created certain socio-economic problems for the latter.
- (3) In Orissa Mahali and Kol-Lohara practise crafts like basketry and black-smithy respectively. The Loharas with their traditional skill and primitive tools manufacture iron and wooden tools for other neighbouring tribes and thereby eke out their existence. Similarly the Mahalis earn their living by making baskets for other communities. Both the tribes are now confronted with the problem of scarcity of raw materials. And further they are not able to compete with others, especially in the tribal markets where goods of other communities come for sale, because of their primitive technology.

- (4) The tribes that practise hill and shifting cultivation are many. In northern Orissa the Juang and Bhuiyan, and in southern Orissa the Kandha, Saora, Koya, Parenga, Didayi, Dharua and Bondo practise shifting cultivation. They supplement their economy by food gathering and hunting, as production in shifting cultivation is low. Shifting cultivation is essentially a regulated sequence of procedure designed to open up and bring under cultivation patches of forestlands, usually on hill slopes.

In shifting cultivation the practitioners follow a pattern of cycle of activities which are as follows: (i) Selection of a patch of hill slope or forest land and distribution or allotment of the same to intended practitioners, (ii) Worshipping of concerned deities and making of sacrifices, (iii) Cutting of trees, bushes, ferns etc., existing on the land before summer months, (iv) Piling up of logs, bushes and ferns on the land, (v) Burning of the withered logs, ferns and shrubs etc., to ashes on a suitable day, (vi) Cleaning of the patch of land before the on-set of monsoon and spreading of the ashes evenly on the land after a shower or two (vii) Hoeing and sowing of seeds with regular commencement of monsoon rains, (viii) Crude bunding and weeding activities follow after sprouting of seeds, (ix) Watching and protecting the crops, (x) Harvesting and collecting crops, (xi) Threshing and storing of corns, grains etc., and (xii) Merry-making. In these operations all the members of the family are involved in some way or the other. Work is distributed among the family members according to the ability of individual members. However, the head of the family assumes all the responsibilities in the practice and operation of shifting cultivation. The adult males, between 18 and 50 years of age under-take the strenuous work of cutting tree, ploughing and hoeing, and watching of the crops at night where as cutting the bushes and shrubs, cleaning of seeds for sowing and weeding are done by women.

Shifting cultivation is not only an economic pursuit of some tribal communities, but it accounts for their total way of life. Their social structure, economy, political organization and religion are all accountable to the practice of shifting cultivation.

However, shifting cultivation has certain demerits. Whenever shifting cultivation is carried out on a steep slope it invariably invites the agents of erosion and degradation. By deforestation soil loses its water retention capacity. The sub-soil gets washed away and the rocks and boulders are gradually exposed. Slowly and steadily the shifting cultivation process causes the streams down the hill to dry up. It also brings down heavy silts into the river basins, plains and valleys. The extensive deforestation affects rainfall. It affects the life of animals and forest resources, and it also leads to nomadic habits among the practitioners.

In the past, land in the tribal areas had not been surveyed and settled. Therefore, the tribals freely practised shifting cultivation in their respective habitats assuming that land, forest, water and other natural resources belonged to them. There were two traditional systems of land tenure prevalent among the tribes of Orissa. Among the tribes of northern Orissa, land and other resources were communally owned, and thus the annual distribution of plots on the hill slopes for shifting cultivation were being done in a corporate manner. But among the tribes of

southern Orissa all such lands and other natural resources were under the control of the village (tribal) head man, who on approach used to allot plots for use to individuals. And since the evolution of Indian Forest Policy in 1952 and completion of survey and settlement of land in tribal areas the traditional tribal land tenure system has dwindled. The tribals therefore, now have limited land and forest resources for the practice of shifting cultivation and for carrying on hunting, collecting and gathering activities.

The pernicious, yet unavoidable, practice of shifting cultivation continues unchecked, and all attempts made to wean away the tribals from shifting cultivation have so far failed. The colonisation scheme of the State Government has failed in spirit.

In certain hilly areas terraces are constructed along the slopes. It is believed to be a step towards settled agriculture. Terrace cultivation is practised by the Saora, Kandha and Gadaba. The terraces are built on the slopes of hill with water streams. In terrace cultivation the available hill slopes are fully used, and the available water of hill streams are tapped for cultivation throughout the year as the water flows from one terrace to another in down-ward motion. The terrace walls are rivetted and packed with stones and boulders, which cannot be washed out easily. In terraces paddy is mainly grown and the per acre yield is quite high. The quantity of terrace land under the possession of a family is not much.

(5) Several large tribes, such as, Santal, Munda, Ho, Bhumij, Oraon, Gond, Kandha, Mirdha, Savara etc., are settled agriculturists, though they supplement their economy with hunting, gathering and collecting. Tribal agriculture in Orissa is characterised by unproductive and uneconomic holdings, land alienation, indebtedness, lack of irrigation facilities in the undulating terrains, lack of easy or soft credit facilities as well as use of traditional skill and primitive implements. In general, they raise only one crop during the monsoon, and therefore have to supplement their economy by other types of subsidiary economic activities.

Tribal communities practising settled agriculture also suffer from further problems, viz: (i) want of record of right for land under occupation, (ii) land alienation, (iii) problems of indebtedness, (iv) lack of power for irrigation, (v) absence of adequate roads and transport, (vi) seasonal migration to other places for wage-earning and (vii) lack of education and adequate scope for modernization.

(6) Sizable agglomeration of tribal population in Orissa has moved to mining, industrial and urban areas for earning a secured living through wage-labour. During the past three decades the process of industrial urbanization in the tribal belt of Orissa has been accelerated through the operation of mines and establishment of industries. Mostly persons from advanced tribal communities, such as Santal, Munda, Ho, Oraon, Kisan, Gond etc., have taken to this economic pursuit in order to relieve pressure from their limited land and other resources.

In some instances industrialization and mining operations have led to uprooting of tribal villages, and the displaced became industrial nomads. They lost their traditional occupation, agricultural land, houses and other immovable assets. They became unemployed and faced unfair competition with others in the labour market. Their aspiration gradually escalated, although they invariably failed to achieve what they aspired for. Thus the net result was frustration. Occasionally their disappointment has been reflected in unrest agitation. The Jharkhand movement also capitalises on these issues.

While it is neither possible nor desirable to halt the process of industrialization, the authorities must contemplate built-in safeguards for all those who are affected by it.

In a discussion on tribal economy it is essential to dilate briefly on the concept of "Primitivism", because tribal communities in general are branded as primitive. The concept "primitive" has been subjected to increasing criticism by anthropologists. The term is considered as a cliché and a derogatory one, it is contemptuous and obfuscating. The term represents an ortholinear view point and a less advanced technological stage. Tribal societies, labelled as primitive, are almost in a state of equilibrium. The change though is ubiquitous, its pace is slow in tribal societies, because of geo-historical reasons. Branding the tribal communities as 'primitive' is an egregious error, because the more we understand the tribal communities, the better we understand ourselves. The term 'primitive' denotes a particular configuration of certain phenomena, that is, (i) small scale homogeneous kin-based society with simple division of labour, (ii) social and political organization go hand in hand, (iii) relative isolation with a specific geographical location, (iv) egalitarian society, lack of significant competition and the normative order rests on cooperation, (v) techno-economic level is low with the lack of formal education and capitalistic orientation, (vi) personality is endowed with an over-powering sense of realism and pragmatism, (vii) religious beliefs and performances directly contribute to a strong sense of personal security, and (viii) mono-lingualism contributing to socio-cultural isolationism. Therefore, what one notices here is that the largest significant reference group is the 'tribe' or a segment of it, the 'sub-tribe', this is, a single, endogamous ethnic group occupying a more or less contiguous territory. In some cases, e.g., Santal, Munda and Ho describe themselves as "Hor" meaning "man", while others are "Diku" or "aliens".

The tribes are segmented into exogamous (patrilineal in Orissa) totemic (excepting the Saoras) clans, frequently with territorial cohesion and strong corporate identity. Clans are segmented into lineages with known genealogical ties which function as effective corporate social units.

The overall kinship system of the tribes may be labelled as "tempered classificatory". In terminology the emphasis lies on the unilineal principle, generation and age. Descent and inheritance are patrilineal and authority is patripotestal among all the tribal communities of Orissa. On the basis of Kinship organization Orissan tribes can be divided into two categories. The kinship system of the tribes of the Dravidian language family is "bifurcate merging" type, whereas the tribes of the other two language families is "bifurcate collateral" type.

As regards the acquisition of brides for marriage the most widely prevalent practice among the tribes of Orissa is through "capture", although other practices, such as, elopement, purchase, service and negotiation are also there. With the passage of time negotiated type of marriage, which is considered prestigious, is being preferred more and more. Payment of bride-price is an inseparable part of tribal marriage, but this has changed to the system of dowry among the educated sections. In the past tribal marriages used to be performed in the house of the groom, but in recent times well-to do and educated tribal families have changed the marriage booth to the bride's parental home. After marriage the bride goes to the house of her in-laws. Therefore, family among all the tribal communities of Orissa is patrilocal. Among some of the Dravidian tribal communities of Orissa the customs of "prescriptive" and "preferential" marriages are there, that is, marriage with mother's brother's daughter or father's sister's daughter. Excepting the Kandha this custom is in operation among other Dravidian tribes of Orissa.

Among the tribes there is very little specialization of social roles, with the exception of role differentiation in terms of kinship and sex and some specialization in crafts, the only other role specializations are Head-man, Priest, Shaman and the Haruspex.

There is very little rigid stratification in society. The tendency towards stratification is gaining momentum among several settled agricultural tribes under the impact of modernisation. The tribes of Orissa are at different levels of socio-economic development.

The religion of the Orissa tribes is an admixture of animism, animatism, nature-worship, fetishism, shamanism, anthropomorphism and ancestor worship. Religious beliefs and practices aim at ensuring personal security and happiness as well as community well-being and group solidarity. Their religious performances include life-crisis rites, cyclic community rites, ancestor and totemic rites and observance of taboos. Besides these, the tribals also resort to various types of occult practices. In order to tide over either a personal or a group crisis the tribals begin with occult practices, and if it does not yield any result the next recourse is supplication of the supernatural force.

Crisis Rites

Outstanding among crisis rites are those connected with the important and critical, but normally expected events in the life-cycle of the individual, the biological crisis of life, namely, birth, sexual maturity, marriage and death. Rituals performed on these occasions have been called rites-of-passage, because they involve transition from one social status to another. This indeed implies separation, transition and integration. A person is separated from a social status and then admitted or integrated into another status after a phase of transition. Crisis rites are markers of special events in the life of the individual, and are different from recurrent cyclic rituals pertaining to sowing and harvesting. Happenings such as birth, sexual maturity, marriage, illness or death are extremely important to an

individual and to his kins and close relatives, and are generally of diminishing importance outside his kinship circle.

Birth is an important bio-social event in every society. It causes fresh alignments in the structural relations. The persons, on whom the birth as a socio-biological event hinges, observe certain taboos and refrain from the performance of sacred activities for varying periods of time.

Pubescent rite is an important event among all the tribal communities of Orissa. Sexual maturity of boys is not punctuated by any rite, but the maturity of a girl, on the other hand, is a very significant personal and social event. Attainment of puberty by a girl immediately leads to her physical and social segregation. This abruptly snaps her girl-hood, and the menstrual flow is considered as danger. For seven days the girl is kept in strict seclusion and is subjected to strict observance of taboos. On expiry of the period of pollution the girl under-goes a purificatory ritual. Through the ritual the event is announced among the kins, neighbours and others. Sexual maturity brings about marked change in personal behaviours and social relations.

Marriage is a remarkable event in the life of every individual. Marriage rite is an elaborate one, which begins with the attempts for bride acquisition and ends up in her affiliation with her affinal kingroup and sexual consummation. Although the rules of residence after marriage and customs of tracing descent are uniform among the tribes of Orissa, other factors, such as the mode of acquisition of a bride, payment of bride-price, and age at marriage very widely vary among them. Marriages may fall asunder, although most marriages are stable, but important is the degree of sacralization attached to marriage institution in all the tribal societies. It is vital for the social identity of children, and continuation of lineages, clans and other functioning social groups.

Classic features of rites of crisis are often most clearly evident in obsequies. The bereaved refrain from many normal acts, perform various rites of mourning for the prescribed period which varies from tribe to tribe and finally the funeral or mortuary rite is performed, which marks the end of the final formal mourning and after this kins of the deceased are brought back to normal social relationships.

The degree of elaboration of the funeral rite depends upon the social position of the deceased. The socio-cultural dimension of the mortuary rite is directly related to the age and social position of the deceased.

The annual cycle of rituals of the tribes is in tune with the cycle of economic activities, and surround socio-economic interests and well-being of the tribal communities. A ritual is a prescribed order for performing a concatenation of rites, and a rite is a traditional performance to which conventional symbolic meaning is attached by those who believe in it. The rituals are commonly but not always ceremonial in nature. A ritual brings human beings into relationship with gods, ancestral spirits and other supernatural entities. Rituals indeed make overt religion and re-enact the interrelationship between cosmographical, supernatural and social worlds.

Fixed and recurrent group rites which have nearly equal significance for all or most members of the social group in which they are performed range from familial ceremonies to those which apply to whole societies. The time of observance of these rites is correlated with the rhythmic cyclical changes in nature. Indeed many of these rites follow the annual cycle of seasons vis-a-vis the positions of the sun and moon in the zodiac during a calendar year. Among the tribes of Orissa, excepting those that are Hinduised (e.g. Raj Gonds, Raj Kuli Bhuiyans, Deshia Kandha, Bathudi, Bhumij, Mirdha and Oriya Juangs) observance of daily, weekly and monthly rites is almost nil. Most of the rituals of the tribes are seasonal and annual.

As most of the tribes of Orissa, practise agriculture in some form or the other, and as rest others have a vital stake in agriculture, sowing, planting, first-fruit eating and harvest rites are common amongst them. Their common cyclic rites revolve round the pragmatic problems of ensuring a stable economic condition, recuperation of the declining fertility of soil, protection of crops from damage, human and live-stock welfare, safety against predatory animals and venomous reptiles and to insure a good yield of annual and perennial crops.

The annual cycle of rituals commence right from the initiation agricultural operation, for instance, among the Juang, Bhuiyan, Kandha, Saora, Gadaba, Jharial, Didayee, Koya and Bonda, who practise shifting cultivation, the annual cycle begins with the first clearing of hill slopes during the Hindu month of Chaitra (March-April) and among others it starts with the first-fruit eating ceremony of mango in the month of Baisakh (April-May). All the rituals centering agricultural operation, first-fruit eating, human, live-stock and crop welfare are observe by the members of a village on a common date which is fixed by the village head-man in consultation with the village priest.

Thus the ideological system of all the tribes surrounds supernaturalism. The pantheon in most cases consists of the Sun God, the Mother Earth and a lower hierarchy of Gods. Besides there are village tutelaries, nature-spirits, presiding deities and ancestor-spirits, who are also propitiated and offered sacrifices. Gods and spirits are classified into benevolent and malevolent categories. A peculiarity of the tribal mode of worship is the offering of blood of an animal or a bird, because such propitiations and observance of rites are explicitly directed towards happiness and security in this world, abundance of crops, live-stock, plants and progenies. Sickness is not natural to a tribal, it is considered as an out-come of the machination of some evil spirits or indignation of ancestor spirits or gods. Sometimes, sickness is also considered as the consequence of certain lapses on the part of an individual or group. Therefore, riddance must be sought through propitiation and observance of rituals.

Society is an ordered arrangement of human beings. It provides solutions to all human problems. It is a complex net-work of institutionalized inter-human relationships, and not simply an aggregate of individuals. But the maintenance of social system depends upon the political forces of the society to secure discipline. There would be no coherent social life unless the social relationship, which bind

people together are institutionalized and predictable. The alternative to order is chaos. To maintain an orderly system of social relations, people have to be subjected to some degree of compulsion, they cannot at all times do, exactly what they like. Because often self interest may incite behaviour incompatible with the common good, and therefore every society has some rules for constraining people's behaviour. This is called political organization of a society.

Law and order, peace and security, the basic purpose for which man lives in society, are secured through the political organization of a society. All the tribal societies of Orissa had their well organized political organization in the past, through which they used to regulate their social life. But after independence with the introduction of the Panchayati Raj, the system of traditional political organization among the tribes has become weak, but yet it continues with certain diminutions and serves their social interests.

The traditional political organization of any tribe has three components, namely, (i) norms, customary laws and social sanctions, (ii) functionaries, and (iii) territoriality. Norms, customary laws and social sanctions are culture specific, and hence their similarity among the tribes of Orissa can be obtained at a level of abstraction. Functionaries and territorial organisation, also show considerable amount of uniformity among the tribes of Orissa.

Norms governing proper conduct, customary laws relating to social, economic, religious and political organisations, and social sanctions relating to regulations of sex, community natural resources and social solidarity do not show much difference from one tribe to another in Orissa. However, the traditional political organization of the Orissan tribes, in spite of the broad similarity, can be divided in to three sub-types, namely (I) northern, (II) southern, and (III) north-western. Each of these is coterminous with the local revenue administrative unit of the area. The northern type is known as 'Pirha', the southern type as 'Mutha', and the north-western type as 'Pargana'.

Tribes in Orissa mainly inhabit the Eastern-Ghat hill range, which runs in the north-south direction. Most of the areas in which various tribal communities traditionally lived were parts of different feudatory states of Orissa. And the traditional political organisation of the tribes was influenced by the revenue administrative organisation of the concerned State. For instance the political organisation of the Santal, Munda, Ho, Bhumij, Bathudi etc., who lived in the State of Mayurbhanj, was influenced by the revenue territorial organisation of that State. Thus among these tribes the hierarchical order of the political organisation, from bottom to top, runs as (i) family, (ii) lineage, (iii) village, (iv) paraganas, and (v) the king, symbolising the State. This is the hierarchical order of the traditional political organisation of other tribes of Orissa too, but among other north Orissan tribes such as Bhuiyan and Juang, and among the south Orissan tribes, such as, the Kandha, Saora, Gadaba, Koya, Didayi, Jhadia, etc., the inter-village political organization is called Pirha and Mutha respectively. But in reality situation the lineage and the village are effective political machineries among all the tribal communities, and indeed these are the guardians and custodians of tribal customs, norms and customary laws. The inter-village political organisation, that is, the

pragana or Pirha or Mutha as the case may be, used to be periodically called into action or as and when it became absolutely necessary. The jurisdiction, powers and functions of each level of the political organisation from the family to the king was specific and represented a stage in the socio-cultural life of the concerned tribe. The traditional political organization up to the village level is still in existence and is functional. After the introduction of the Statutory Panchayat Raj system the traditional tribal political organizations are gradually becoming feeble, yet they are considered as important socio-cultural institutions to regulate the socio-cultural life.

The roles of all the functionaries are important, but those of the lineage-heads and the village headmen are very crucial in the maintenance of social order. The role of village priest in the implementation of social control is supportive only. The traditional leadership among the tribes was corporate in nature. The joint authority system is still there. This means that the traditional leadership pattern continues to exist along side the modern democratic leadership pattern. The traditional village level tribal panchayat is a corporate body of village elders, the Priest and the Headman. A messenger is nominated by the headman from among the villagers to assist him in the discharge of his duties. Only men constitute the Panchayat as all the tribal societies of Orissa are patrilineal and patriarchal.

The position of priest, village headman and the inter-village headman are hereditary. The village headman is invariably from original settlers' clan of the village, which is obviously dominant. Punishments or corrective measures are proportional to the gravity of the breach of set norms or crime, and the punishments range from simple oral admonition to other measures, such as corporal punishments, imposition of fines, payment of compensation, observance of prophylactic rites and excommunication from the community. Truth of an incident is determined by oath, ordeals and occult mechanism.

Among all the tribes conformity to customs and norms and social integration continue to be achieved through their traditional political organisations. The tributary institutions of social control, such as family, kinship and public opinion continue to fulfill central social control functions. The relevance of tribal political organization in the context of economic development and social change continues to be there undiminished. Modern elites in tribal societies elicit scant respect and have very little followings. And as the traditional leaders continue to wield influence over their fellow tribesmen, it is worthwhile to take them into confidence in the context of economic development and social change.

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Tribal Culture in Orissa

B.B. Mohanty

Orissa occupies a unique position in the ethnographic map of India for having the largest variety of tribal communities. Being one of the fascinating ethnographic States of the country, it has been the homeland of as many as 62 different tribal communities numbering 70,32,214 population as per 1991 Census. Next to Madhya Pradesh, the State comprises the largest tribal population in the country, but barring the tribal States of North-eastern hill areas it ranks first in terms of percentage of tribal concentration among the other States of the country.

The tribal population of the State constitute 22.21 per cent of the total population of the State and 10.38 per cent of the total tribal population of the country. Although they are found in all the districts of the State, yet more than half of their total strength are found in three districts namely Koraput, Sundargarh and Mayurbhanj.

The tribes of Orissa are at various stages of socio-economic development. At one extreme are the group which lead a relatively secluded and archaic mode of life keeping their core culture intact while at the other extreme there are communities which are indistinguishable from the general agricultural communities.

Any Society-tribal or otherwise is comprised of organised groups of people- who have learnt to live and work together interacting in the pursuit of common goals. Each society has its own rules of business and tricks of trade which helps its people to define their relationship with one another and live and work together. Therefore a society is a going concern and functions and perpetuates itself on the basis of the rules for living together.

Culture is the shorthand version of the rules which guide the way of life of the people. More specifically culture can be thought of as the common learned way of life shared by the members of a society. Briefly, society means people and network of their interpersonal relationship and culture means behaviour of people, their ethos, views and value system.

The tribal people express their cultural identity and distinctiveness in their social organization, language, rituals and festivals and also in their dress, ornaments, art and craft. They have retained their own way of managing internal affairs of the village mainly through two institutions namely, the village council and the youth dormitory. The dormitory is the core of tribal culture and it reinforces the age-old traditions. In Orissa this institution occurs among many tribal communities in some form or other. It is variously called by different tribal groups. The Juangs call it Majang and Darbar, the Kondhs call it Dandaghar, the Bhuinyas call it Dhangarabaasa and among the Bondas it goes by the name Ingersin. Of all the tribes the dormitory system is well organized among the Juang. Conspicuous in the village, the Mandaghar is the largest hut. It has wall on three sides and is open in front. The wooden parts and sidewalls are carried with

decorative symbols depicting animals. The boys hang their changu, a flat tambourine like drum, which is used at the time of dancing. In front of the Mandaghar is the small open space where dance takes place almost every night after the day's work is over. The dormitory is so to say a school of dancing and expression of the communal art of the people. The elders of the village assemble at the dormitory house every day for every important event in their corporate life. Here they discuss matters concerning the welfare of the village, settle the distribution of swidden and fix date and time for celebration of the village festivals, etc. In these respects the dormitory may be considered as the centre of social, economic and religious life of the village.

The amazing conglomeration of traditions, beliefs, sorrows and philosophies that together constitute and vitalise the rituals and festivals of the tribes, has descended from antiquity and has been preserved unimpaired to the present day. Every facets of their life covering round-the-year activities is intimately connected with religious beliefs and ritual practices. It is these aspects of their culture that give meaning and depth to their lives, and solidarity to their social structure.

The tribes believe that their life and work is controlled by supernatural beings whose abode is around them in hills, forests, rivers and houses. It is very difficult to standardize the Gods and spirits as their composition continually changes when old ones are forgotten with the introduction of new ones. Their Gods differ from one another in composition, function, character and nature. Some are benevolent, some are neutral and some are malevolent. The malevolent spirits and Gods are feared more than their benevolent counter parts as they can bring misery.

Manipulation of environment being the main concern of the tribals, all the ritual acts are directed towards stimulating natural processes. Illness or misfortune is attributed to displeasure and malicious act of the Gods or ancestors. The sacrifice of different kinds of livestock accompanied by all the rites and ceremonials of fetishism is considered appropriate appeasement. Moreover, their extremely superstitious nature prohibits the undertaking of any enterprise unless the Gods are first appeased and the omens, after being carefully considered, are adjudged to be propitious.

Among the tribes there are religious functionaries who cater to their spiritual needs. For example, the hierarchy of priests among the Saoras may be divided into three categories. The Buyya is a priest who presides at agricultural festivals and offers sacrifices that especially characterise these occasions. The Kudan is a shaman who combines the functions of priest, prophet and medicineman. The sacerdotal head among the Juang is called Nagam or Buta, Pujari or Sisa among the Bonda and Jani among the Kondh. The post of these officials are mostly ascribed but not achieved.

The ceremonies and festivals of the tribes can be classified into two groups, that is, those that relate to the individual families and those that relate to the village as a whole. The ceremonies and rites relating to birth of a child, marriage, death

are observed family-wise whereas those relating to various agricultural cycle, eating of new fruits, hunting, etc. are observed by the village community.

Some of the important festivals observed by the tribal communities of Orissa include Guar ceremony of the Saora, Gotar of the Gadaba, push punei of the Juang, Kedu of the Kondh, Karam festival of the Oraon, Chait parab of the Bonda and Magha Parab of the Santal.

With the advent of time, traces of borrowing from Hindu Pantheon and religious ceremonies are noticed among the tribes of Orissa. They have started worshipping Siva, Parbati and Lord Jagannath. Hindu festivals like Raja, Laxmipuja, Dasahara and Gamha are also becoming popular among them day by day.

The tribes of Orissa, despite their poverty and their pre-occupation with the continual battle for survival, have retained the rich and varied heritage of colourful dance and music forming integral part of their festivals and rituals. Among them, the dance and music is developed and maintained by themselves in a tradition without aid and intervention of any professional dancer or teacher. It is mainly through the songs and dances the tribes seek to satisfy their inner urge for revealing their soul. The performance of these only give expression to their inner feelings, their joys and sorrows, their natural affections and passion and their appreciation of beauty in nature and in man.

Although the pattern of dance and music prevalent among them vary from tribe to tribe yet there are certain features common to all. Tribal dances have some accompaniments by means of which the rhythm is maintained. This consists of clapping of hands or beating of drums or an orchestra of different instruments. Every dance is accompanied by a song, which is sung by the performers. Both men and women, young and old dance and invariably sing but the accompanying orchestra or music is usually provided by the male members. Tribal dance is characterised not only by its originality and spontaneity but also for its wide range of movements. Many part of the body such as head, back, arms, feet, finger, etc., are brought into play. Some of the tribal groups put on colourful dancing costume during their performance.

Like dance, the songs sung by different groups differ from one tribe to the other. Among the tribes everyone is a musician and poet. When happily inspired, they can coin a song then and there and sing it. Like any others, when they see things of beauty and meet pleasantly, they exhibit this pleasure and happiness by composing songs. One finds in these songs humours, jokes, romance, satires, criticisms, acquisitions and anger. Though there is no modernity and fineness, their ideas being natural, the compositions are good, inspiring and melodious. On the occasion of performing Pujas and observance of festivals the songs sung are different. Such songs are adopted from the past so many years. These songs describe the history of gods, the process of creation and some epic stories.

The description that follows give brief notes on some of the tribal dances of Orissa.

JUANG

The Juang dance which goes by the popular name of "Changu dance" is performed by both men and women. Besides, they perform other types of dances such as deer dance, elephant dance, bow dance, pigeon dance, bear dance, koel dance and peacock dance. They dance and sing when they are in happy mood. Besides, the dance also forms an integral part of their social and ritual festivals. The Juang do not have any special dress for dancing. While dancing the girls stand in a straight line in front of the boys. While the dance goes on the line becomes semicircular. The girls hold each other's wrist or hand-in-hand and move forward and backward in bending posture. The boys stand in a straight line, which becomes a curve during dance. The musical instruments, which are used during their dance, are Badakatha (Drum), Dhol (small drum), Madala and Changu (Tambourine).

SAORA

The Saoras do not dance frequently as the Juangs and the Gadabas do. The Saora dance is very simple and lacks all the artistic exuberances. Generally the Saora dance during ceremonies and festivals, marriages, and when some important person visits their village. In their dance, group of men and women jumble up together and while dancing the drummers and the dancers advance towards each other alternatively with the rhythm of the music. Colourful costumes are worn during the dance. Other decorations include feathers of white fowl and peacock plumes. Besides, old coloured clothes of cotton and silk are tied as turbans by men and wrapped around their chest by women. While dancing they carry swords, sticks, umbrellas and other implements and blow whistles and make peculiar sounds. The musical instruments used at the time of dance consist of drums of various sizes, brass cymbals, brass-gongs and hide-gongs.

GOND

Among the Gonds of Koraput, dance is performed throughout the year. Besides this, dances are performed on special communal occasions like marriage. The boys dress themselves with colourful aprons and turbans during the dance. The turbans are adorned with "cowrie" shells and the apron is adorned with small pieces of mirror. The girls are dressed in hand-woven sarees and silver ornaments. A dancing group is ordinarily formed with 20 to 30 persons of both sexes. Only unmarried boys and girls participate in the dance. The musical instruments are played by boys. Two boys lead the dance with wooden drums. The girls dance in circles with simple steps of one and two, very often bending their bodies forward. The steps of the boys are more varied and subtle.

KOYA

Dance among the Koyas is richly varied and sophisticated. The most important occasion for dancing is the worship of the mother goddess in the month of Chaitra (April-May). Ordinarily both boys and girls participate in dancing but the girls are more conspicuous. However, in the festival only girls participate. During the dance, the girls keep rhythm by beating sticks on the ground which are

fitted with small bells. Dance groups are formed by about 30 to 40 persons. The most conspicuous movement about Koya dance is the complicated winding and unwinding of circles formed by girls.

GADABA

Gadaba dance is performed by women who wear the famous "Keranga" sarees and have their distinctive hair style. The men play the musical instruments. Chaitra and Pausa are the dancing seasons. The Gadaba women dance in semi-circle with steps of three and four which they gradually change to eight. The body is often bent forward. Very skilful moves are made on the heels.

KONDH

Kondh dance is mostly confined to unmarried boys and girls and free mixing of the sexes is allowed during dancing. The dances are performed especially when the boys or girls of one village visit another village. The dance forms an item in the daily routine of the Kondh, when the boys and girls in their dormitories meet after the day's toil. No instrument accompanied the dance of the Kondhs of Koraput. The girls dance in lines and the boys dance behind and in front of them. The dance of the Phulbani Kondh is more colourful. The girls wear sarees in two pieces and bangles on their ankles. They dance in rows, facing rows of boys who sing songs and play on hand drums. Songs play a very important part in the dance. Special dances are performed during buffalo sacrifice, called the Kedu festival.

The joy of free life find expression in tribal art and craft. It is through this endeavour their cultural self-image and aesthetic sensibility are visualised. The artistic skill of the tribal people is not only manifested in their dance and music but also in their dress and ornaments, wall-paintings, wood carvings and decorations, etc. The beautiful wall-paintings and floral designs of the Santals and the ikons of the Saoras which depict geometric designs and stylistic figures of plants and animals are the best example of tribal art. The multi-coloured designs and relief figures of animals and human beings which decorate the walls of Mandaghar in Juang society are indeed works of art of very high order. Similar wall-paintings and decorations as observed among the Mundari group of tribals are also very attractive.

Some of the tribal communities like the Bonda and the Gadaba have their own looms by which they weave clothes for their own use. These hand spun textiles of colored yarn are examples of best artistic skill of these people. So also among the Dongria Kondhs the ladies are very much skilled in making beautiful embroidery work in their scarf. The tribal women in general and the Bonda, the Gadaba and the Dongria Kondh women in particular are very fond of using ornaments. The Bonda women who are considered most primitive, look majestic when they wear headbands made of grass, necklaces of coloured beads and girdles made of brass on their bodies. All these are expressions of their artistic quality and aesthetic sense.

The tribal people turn out excellent handicrafts for their own use. The wood carving of the Kondhs, metal works by lost wax process among the Bathudis, cane and bamboo basketry works among the Juags and Bhuinyas, are all symbolic of artistic creation.

Tribal Languages of Orissa

K. Mohapatra

The tribes of Orissa have their distinct ethnic identity which is overtly marked in their languages besides many other cultural traits and traditions. The tribal ethnography can never be complete without reference to their verbal behaviour. It is remarkable that even though different tribal communities have their own independent languages, yet they share at the inter-group level certain basic linguistic features regardless of their own linguistic ethnicity. The most fundamental characteristics of human verbal behaviour are preserved in their languages which are distinctively observed in vocabulary, sound symbolism, grammatical structures or such other aspects. Thus Santali and Sora of the same Munda family and Remo, Parji and Bhatia of Munda, Dravidian and Indo Aryan families respectively show certain common features of the nature and structure of the tribal languages. For example absence of sets of separate honorific terms of pronouns, formation of echo-words with change of vowels of the basewords, construction of morphologically variant verb-forms to indicate motion towards or away from the speaker, formation of self-benefactive imperatives, use of classifiers in respect of human and other animate and non-animate nouns, two-way contrast in tense as past and non-past, different sets of directional demonstratives, monomorphemic exclamatory verb, phrases, etc. are some of the universals in the nature of tribal languages. Such common typical features characterise the tribal languages as a part of their unique culture and ethnicity.

Some people define tribal languages as dialects simply because the languages have no script and literature. This is not even common sense about the distinction between the concepts of language and dialect. Most of the tribal speeches belonging to Munda or Dravidian stock are structurally and genetically definable as autonomous languages. However, the tribal speeches having basic affinities with Indo-Aryan literary languages may be treated as dialects.

Ethno-linguistic Classification

The tribes of Orissa are ethno-linguistically classifiable into three groups: Munda (Austroasiatic), Dravidian and Indo-Aryan. A group-wise tentative inventory of the tribal languages and dialects may be drawn up as follows:

Munda Group

Gata (Didayi)
Gotob (Gadaba)
Juang
Koda
Birhor (Mankidia)
Mundari (Mundari/ Munda)
Santali
Saora (Saora, Lanjia, Juray, Arsi)

Gorum (Parenga)
 Remo (Bonda)
 Kharia (Kharia/ Mirdha)
 Korwa
 Bhumija
 Ho (Ho/ Kolha)
 Mahili (Mahali)

Dravidian Group

Parji (Dharua)
 Koya
 Kui (Kondh-Kutia/ Dongria)
 Konda/ Kubi (Konda dora)
 Ollari (Gadabva)
 Kurukh/ Oraon (Oraon)
 Gondi (Gond)
 Madia
 Kuvi (Kondh, Jatapu)
 Pengu (Poengo Kondh)
 Kisan

Indo-Aryan Group

Dialect

Desia
 Bhuyan
 Jharia
 Bhatni
 Matia
 Kondha
 Laria
 Bhulia
 Aghria
 Kurmi
 Sounti
 Bathudi
 Sadri
 Binjhia
 Banjara
 Baiga
 Bhunjia
 Halbi

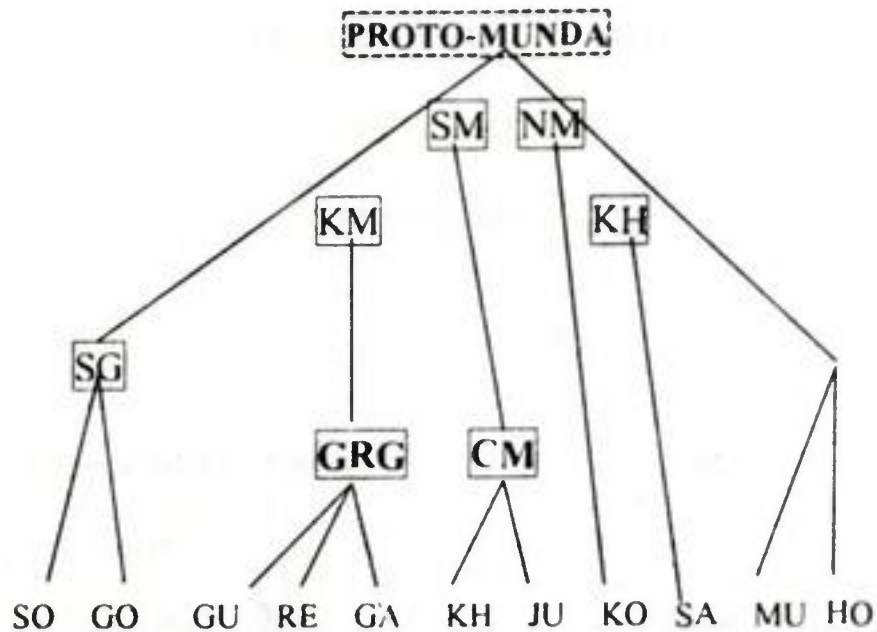
Language Affinity

Southern Oriya
 Southern Oriya
 Southern Oriya
 Southern Oriya
 Southern Oriya
 Western Oriya (Sambalpuri)
 Western Oriya (Sambalpuri)
 Western Oriya (Sambalpuri)
 Western Oriya (Sambalpuri)
 Northern Oriya- S.W. Bengali
 Northern Oriya - S.W. Bengali
 Northern Oriya - S.W. Bengali
 Hindi - Oriya
 Chhatisgarhi-Hindi
 Hindi Dialect
 Chhatisgarhi
 Marathi
 Oriya-Marathi-Chhatisgarhi

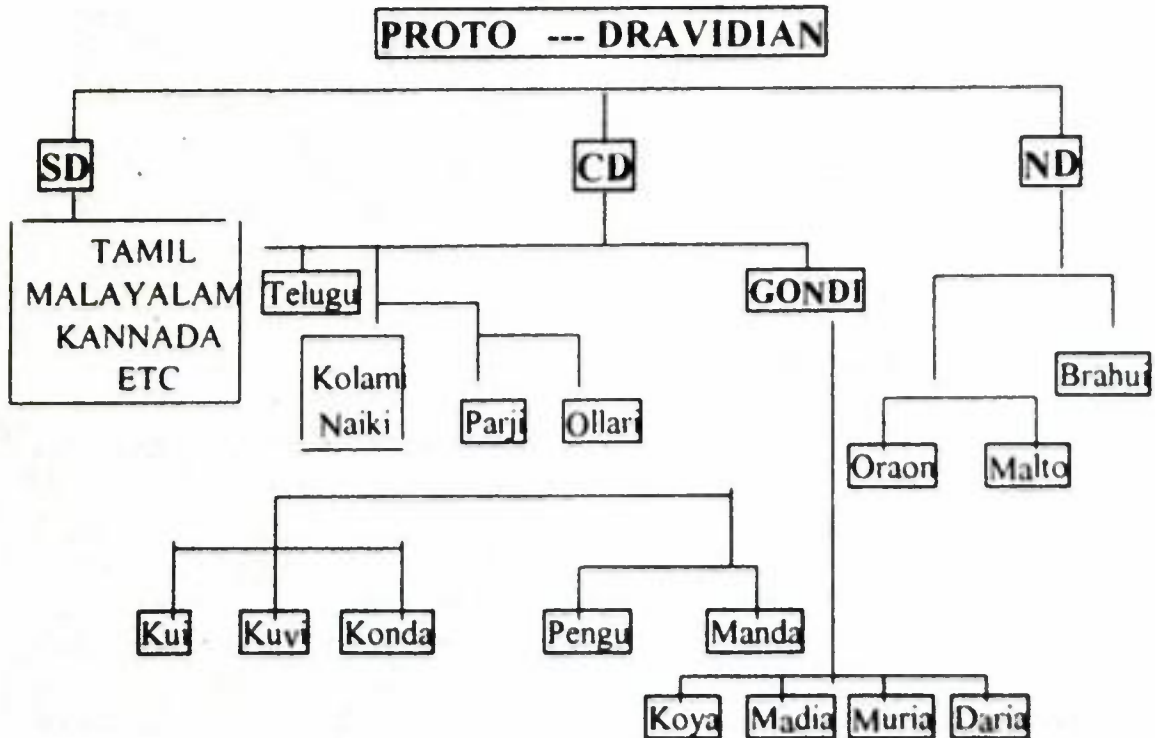
Genetic Relation

The languages of each group are inter-related both genetically and structurally. They have a common source, common ancestry and cultural heritage.

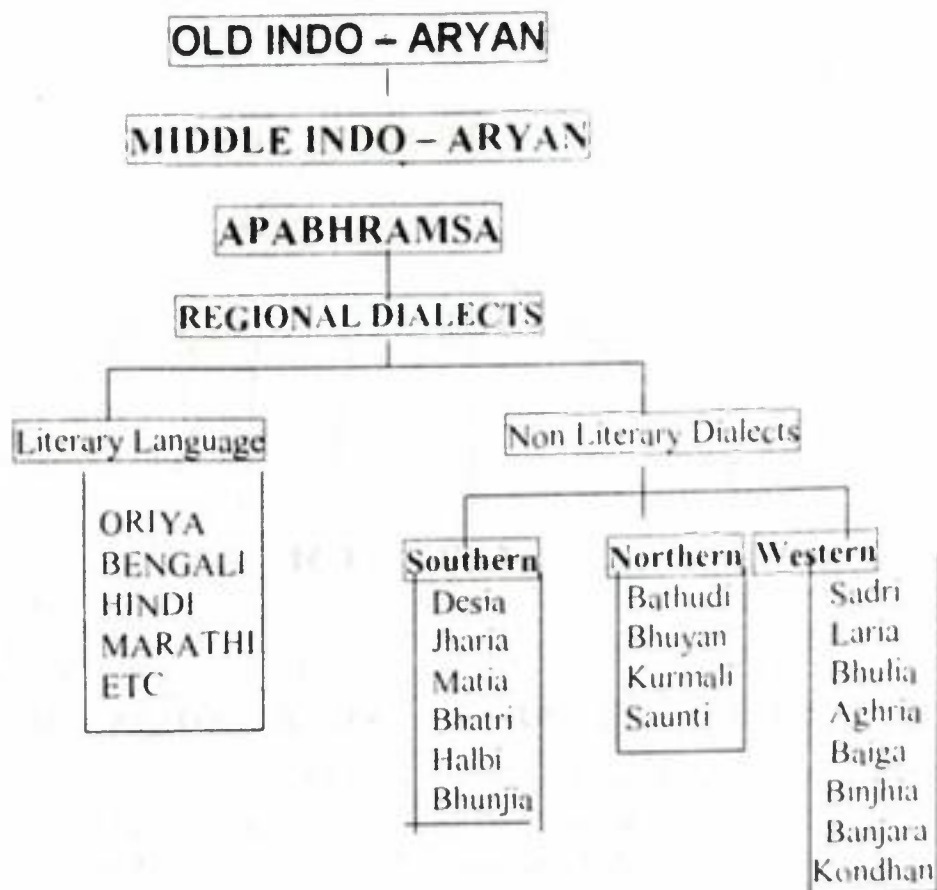
The relationship among the languages within a group may be schematically charted as under.



[SM - South Munda, NM - North Munda, KM - Koraput Munda, CM - Central Munda, SG - Sora : Gorum, GRG - Gutob : Remo : Gta, KH - Kharia, JU - Juang, KO - Korku, KH - Kherwari, SA - Santali (Mahili, Birhor), MU - Mundari (Bhumija, Munda), HO - Korwa].



[SD - South Dravidian, CD - Central Dravidian, ND - North Dravidian]



[All these non-literary I.A dialects are used by the tribals either as mother tongue or second language. These dialects are based on archaic forms of the modern literary languages and have developed peculiarities in course of time due to convergence of languages belonging to different families, diffusion of linguistic traits across genetic boundaries and hybridization of languages as a result of extensive bilingualism or multilingualism. In multi familial and multi-dialectal situations there have been lot of inter-mixture and mutual borrowing resulting in development of certain common traits among the dialects of divergent origins]

Typological Categorisation

It appears from the above statements and statistics that the sixty-two tribes in Orissa use a variety of languages and dialects. However, all of them are not of equal status. This is conceivable from several aspects, such as, numerical strength of the speakers, primitiveness of the tribe, use of own, separate script, richness of oral literacy tradition, influence of other languages, prevalence of bilingualism, tendency towards Oriyanisation, adaptation of regional Oriya dilects at inter-tribal level, etc. As a result of such considerations tribal languages are being differentially treated now as a major/minor, autonomous/semi-autonomous, pure/pidgin, literacy/ordinary and recognisable/ignorable. It is better to categorise the langauges under some sort of typological classification, such as,

- a) Autonomous languages with definite tribal identity (e.g. Santali, Remo, Kurukh, etc.)
- b) Semi-Autonomous dialects with an established tribal identity (e.g. Bhuyan, Bhatri, Bathudi etc.)

- c) Semi-Autonomous dialects with no particular tribal identity but with inter-tribal functions (e.g. Desia, Sadri, etc.)

It may be explained that most of the languages of the Munda and the Dravidian Groups fall under typology-(a) and the dialects of Indo-Aryan groups came under typology-(b) and (c).

In this context, other notable facts are as follows.

- i) Some of the tribes, such as Lodha, Mirdha, Bhumia, Jatapu, Bagata, Pentia, sections of Gond etc. do not have distinctive linguistic identity and tribes like Mahali, Kondh, Kisan etc. have only dialectal distinction from autonomous languages like Santali, Kui-Kuvi, Kurukh etc.
- ii) Some of the tribes having scattered settlements in different regions, under the same tribe-name use different languages (e.g. Kondh, Saora, etc. living elsewhere outside Koraput, Ganjam and Phulbani districts use Oriya dialects) and on the other hand in some cases the name of the tribe and the name of their language are different (e.g. Dharua speak Parji, Kolha speak Ho, Gadaba speak Gutob or Ollari, Kondh speak Kui or Kuvi or Konda).
- iii) Larger tribes like Kondh, Saora etc. have several subgroups as there are Kutia/Dongria/Pengo/Jatapu Kondhs and Lanjia/Juray/Arsi/Sudha Saoras and each of these sub-groups speak a distinct dialect of the language.

Problems of orthography:

In general the tribal languages are non-literary. The languages began to appear in written form only in the last century. Initially the Christian missionaries produced written and printed texts in Roman script. Subsequently attempts were made for using the scripts of the regional literary languages (Oriya, Telugu, Bengali, Hindi, etc.). However, in the recent past, between 1935-85, at least four scripts have been devised for the languages - Santali, Ho, Sora and Kui. The exponents of these scripts are taking various steps to promote literacy in the scripts at their respective community levels.

It is, of course, true that the tribal languages have such phonetically peculiar sounds as checked consonants, glottal stop, low tone, stress, long or geminate vowels, positionally different articulation of palatal and velar nasals, different qualities of vowels etc. It is also true that no language has perfect one to one equation of its phonemes to graphemes. Hence, instead of developing separate writing systems for each and every spoken language, a more practical solution could be to employ the existing Oriya graphemes with necessary diacritic marks for standardising the orthography of peculiar phonemes of the tribal languages. Experimentations in this direction are gradually getting more popular and academic support because of the simple fact that the tribals being bilingual, by necessity, they can use a single script for writing their own languages as well as the State language. It is noteworthy that publication of more and more books in many tribal languages during the last few years by adapting Oriya writing system has greatly expanded literary activities in the tribal languages.

Necessity of a Tribal language survey

The tribal Orissa is in fact represents a micro-linguistic area as we find here three different ethnic and linguistic communities divided into sixty-two separate tribes live together and use one language at intra-tribe level and another at inter-tribe level, or mix up one with the other at both the levels. Hence for having a very clear picture of the linguistic situation, first of all, a survey of the tribal dialects of Orissa is indispensable. It is a pity that as yet no studies of dialectology as such have been done in tribal dialect areas. The scope and objects of such a survey may be as follows:

- a) Reconnaissance of dialectal variations typological and areal
- b) Identification and classification of speech varieties
- c) Grouping of different forms of speech on the basis of structural and genealogical affinities, mutual intelligibility and geo-physical distribution
- d) Collection of lexical, grammatical and textual materials
- e) Evaluation of bilingualism - its nature and extent
- f) Evaluation of tribal scripts vis-à-vis adaptation of a standardised writing system in Oriya script
- g) Evaluation of the process of Oriyanization/Tribalization in operation in the tribal language speaking communities and tribal dominated areas

The results of this survey is likely to minimise the confusion over the status of language and reduce the demo-linguistic complexities and the long array of languages to a manageable sub-groups. Once the languages are clearly identified and properly classified into cognate groups, due attention can be given for their study, preservation and promotion at administrative, academic and socio-cultural spheres.

We may recall in this context a pertinent statement of Pandit Nehru that says, "The language problem is almost always exceedingly important from the psychological point of view. The best solutions one might offer would break down if it produced wrong reaction on the other side. One must therefore make it perfectly and absolutely clear that Government would encourage the tribal languages. It is not a question of merely allowing them to continue. They must be encouraged and helped and made to flourish"

(Conference on Tribes and Scheduled areas, New Delhi, June 1st, 1960)

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The languages of Orissa were unknown to the world till the other day. It is only during the past forty years there have been considerable reconnaissance works due to the initiative taken by scholars like M B Elmenau, T Burrow, F.B J Kuipor, H.J Pinnow and Norman H. Zide. Particularly, Burrow and Zide with their collaborators have done most commendable works in bringing to lime light the Dravidian and the Munda languages of Orissa respectively. A selected bibliography of their works is given below to show the latest position of materials to be available for a study of multifamilial sprachbund in the tribal Orissa

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ETHNOGRAPHY ON TRIBES

BAGATA

A.C. Sahoo

The little-known Bagata are one of the numerically small tribal communities of Orissa. In their lifestyle, cultural heritage and social affinity, they identify themselves as one of the sections of the Telegu freshwater fishermen communities. They also have sociocultural interaction with Oriya fishermen. Although Bagatas are numerically very small, their distribution and occupational diversification are notable. Their distribution as recorded in the last three census reports needs special attention. Their total population in Orissa according to the 1961 census was 1511 (756 males and 755 females). In the 1971 census there were only 262 Bagatas (131 males and 131 females) living in the State. According to the 1981 census the total number of Bagatas rose to 2614 (1310 males and 1304 females). In 1991 census the total number of Bagatas are 4806 (2490 males and 2316 females). They are found in all the 13 districts of the state in different numbers. However, their main concentration is in Sundargarh (2748) district. A considerable number of Bagatas also reside in the districts of Koraput (498), Mayurbhanj (460), Keonjhar (386) and Sambalpur (310). They are also found in other districts such as Baleswar (107), Cuttack (41), Dhenkanal (35), Phulbani (16), Bolangir (40), Kalahandi (68), Ganjam (74) and Puri (23).

From the population figures of the Bagatas as recorded in the different census reports (1961, 1971 and 1981) it may be presumed that there was defective enumeration during the 1971 census. In the 1991 census there are 1002 females per 1000 males. The literacy percentage of Bagatas, which was 8.4 according to the 1971 census, went up to 29.5 in the 1991 census.

According to C. Hayavadana Rao the 'caste' is divided into different exogamous septs (*intiperulu*), some of which also occur among the Kapus, Telugus and Vantanis. The Bagatas also account for their name as Bhakta by referring to the tradition that they served with great devotion (Bhaktis) to the then rulers. During that period they were very influential people and ideal farmers. But in course of time they changed their primary occupation of cultivation and adopted other means of earning their livelihood. They have proved their value in fishing. According to E. Thurston, 'on the Dasara day they worship the fishing baskets and also a kind of trident'. The trident is probably the fishing spear which Bagatas use for catching fish. The Bagatas of the Kotpad area of Koraput district depend on shifting cultivation for their survival, whereas in Cuttack and Balasore they are famous for catching fish in fresh water. The Bagatas also work for wages today. It can be seen that the Bagatas have adopted different types of occupation according to their environmental situation and the availability of natural resources.

The Bagatas strictly follow the socio-cultural norms of the community. Previously child marriage was pursued, but this is no longer practised. Preferably one should marry one's maternal uncle's daughter. One's own maternal uncle is given priority for marriage. A bride price in the form of cash is usually not paid.

among the Bagatas. However, the parents of the groom have to give sufficient jewellery to the bride.

One section of Bagatas are Vaishnavites, whereas another section are Saivites. The Vaishnavites burn their dead but the Saivites bury them in accordance with tradition. The Bagatas of the Kotpad area observe various traditional rituals and festivals. They have retained their cultural tradition to a great extent and resist change, whereas the same community in other parts of Orissa have been acculturated and show much interest in change and innovation.

BATHUDI

B. Chowdhury

The Bathudi are one of the highly Hinduised tribes of Orissa and depend mainly on settled cultivation and agricultural wage labour. With a population of 1,71,074 they claimed 2.43 per cent of the total tribal population of 70,32,214 in the State in the 1991 Census. Their main concentration is in the Panchpir (Karanjia) and Kaptipada sub-divisions of Mayurbhanj district, the Champua and Keonjhar Sadar sub-divisions of Keonjhar district and the Nilgiri sub-division of Balasore district. Here they live in plain areas in the midst of different castes and tribes. Their population showed a growth rate of 15.61 per cent during the decade 1981 to 1991, which is little less than those for the total tribal population of the State during the said period. They have recorded a sex ratio of 1000 females per 1000 males in 1991. Apart from the name Bathudi they do not bear any other synonym. Russel and Hiralal (1916) refer to the Bathudi as an inferior branch of the Bhuinya. But the Bathudi do not accept this, and in the case of a marriage with a Bhuinya or any other caste or tribe, the whole family is expelled from the group permanently.

As regards the origin of the tribe, the 1931 Census Report for Mayurbhanj State mentions that the Bathudis originally belonged to Batuligarh in Dudh. Subsequently they migrated following the course of the river Godavari in Deccan. But the Bathudi of the present generation expresses ignorance of any such tradition.

In the Census of India, Vol XIII, Orissa Part V-8, it is mentioned that the forefathers of the Bathudis migrated from Bakua in the Similipal hills. Some of the Bathudis said that originally the Zamindars of the Bathudi tribe reigned in the Similipal ranges. However, they defeated the great chief of Jashipur, one Dasu Kharia of the Kharia tribe. It is popularly believed that the head of the vanquished Kharia still exists in solidified form at the top of the Batuli Fort in the Similipal hills. The informants also recounted a tradition that, in order to reign supreme in the area, the Bathudis had a bitter fight with the Gonds at Tentaposhi in Bamanghati sub-division and defeated them. One of their ancestors named Birabara came across two stone slabs floating in the river Khairi. He attempted to seize them with his hands, but the one in his left hand eluded his grasp and sank. The other one he picked up, and it was installed later in the Raghunathjee Math, which continues to maintain its supremacy over other Maths in the area. The Maths at Karanjia and Jashipur were reported to be later offshoots of it.

The Bathudi have no mother tongue of their own but speak Oriya. They do not know whether their forefathers had any other language as their mother tongue.

In these areas they live in villages of mixed population. Among other tribes the Santal, the Gond, the Munda, the Ho, the Sounti, the Bhumij and the Bhuinya are important. Many Hindu castes like Brahmans, the Khandayat, the Goud, the Teli, the Kurmis etc. live in these areas.

The percentage of literacy among the Bathudis in 1991 stood at 33.38 as against 22.31 per cent for the total tribal population of the State. The literacy rate has increased from 20.80 per cent in 1981 to 33.38 percent in 1991.

The Bathudis, although they live in villages with mixed populations of various castes and tribes, are seldom seen occupying the same hamlet as other groups. In most of these villages, they have separate settlements of exclusively Bathudis. The houses in a settlement are generally arranged in two rows flanking the village street. These are generally two-roomed, rectangular, with gabled roofs. Most of the houses have mud walls with high verandahs front and back, and a cowshed on one side. One door opens on to the courtyard, the other on to the backyard. The living room is partitioned in the middle by a chest-high wall. The inner room is used for sleeping and cooking, and the other is set apart for goats and poultry. A platform made of wooden planks and mud is used for storing agricultural commodities, food grains and other household equipment. The walls of houses are not decorated lavishly with multi-coloured designs as seen among their Santali neighbours. They usually apply a single colour to the walls, either white or red, uniformly. Some rich Bathudis have different rooms for sleeping, storing, the kitchen, cowshed, etc., built on four sides of a courtyard lying at the centre. They use paddy straw to thatch their houses.

They have few household articles. They use charpoys and mats made of wild date-palm leaves for sleeping purposes. Wooden furniture is very rarely found. They use earthenware or aluminium vessels for cooking and storing water. Pots and plates of bell-metal and aluminium are used in taking meals. Bamboo baskets of different sizes and shapes are commonly seen.

Old men wear a small *dhoti* or a napkin, while well-to-do Bathudi boys wear a long *dhoti*, shirt, shorts and even shoes. Elderly women wear saris which reach up to the knee. Young girls wear a blouse and under-petticoats. Women wear a few ornaments, glass or metal bangles around the wrist, rings for the fingers, toes, nose and ear, necklaces and chains for the neck and anklets. Clips and flower designs for the hair are made of cheap metal and alloys. Gold and silver ornaments are worn by well-to-do Bathudis.

The most common weapons they have include bows and arrows, swords, axes and knives. They have the same bullock-driven ploughs and other agricultural implements that are used by the neighbouring castes and tribes. Baskets, pots, weapons, utensils and iron agricultural implements are purchased from the different castes who manufacture them for sale.

The tribe is divided into several *gotras*, viz. (1) Parasara, (2) Nageswara, (3) Sailya, (4) Ganeshwara, (5) Kashyapa, (6) Dhanaphula, (7) Bharadwaja, etc. some of which are common among the neighbouring Hindu castes or tribes. As noted in the Census Report for Mayurbhanj State, 1931, the tribe is divided into more than fifty-six different sections, which are derived from as many titles, which they bear respectively with their names. Most of these titles appear to relate to the particular military or domestic service rendered by the ancestors of the section bearing that title in their relationship with the Zamindars. But investigations in the

Jashipur area of Mayurbhanj district revealed the above-mentioned sub-divisions, which are called *khili* and are exogamous, marriage within them being tabooed. The headman of the village is called the *Badanaik*, while the head of several villages is known as the *Desa Pradhan* in Mayurbhanj and the *Mahanaik* in Keonjhar. He is assisted by a *Paramanik*.

The Bathudi observe birth pollution till the ninth day, when the house is washed and the washerman is required to clean all the used clothes of the family concerned. The baby's head is shaved along with those of the other male members of the family. Festive meals in new earthenware vessels are prepared. Friends and relatives are invited to the feast, if the family concerned can afford one.

On the twenty-first day known as *Ekusia* the name-giving ceremony takes place. A pot filled up with water is brought. Two pieces of thread crossing each other at right angles are placed at the brim of the pot. A grain of till is first dropped through a guard angle. Then rice grains are dropped one after another by uttering different names. The dropping of rice grains continues until one of the grains and the till meet each other. The name said when this particular rice grain was dropped is given to the baby.

Before marriage, both boys and girls should receive *Karna Mantras* from the *Vaishnava Guru*. Unless a person undergoes this ceremony, he or she cannot marry.

Marriage among the Bathudi is a costly affair when compared to their economic condition. Marriage is chiefly adult, though infant marriage is not unknown. The proposal for marriage generally comes from the boy's side. Before any negotiation is started, the boy's parents consult an astrologer to know whether the marriage would be successful. When he declares in its favour, two people are employed as *Dandia* (go-betweens) in the negotiations. Both parties exchange visits to see the prospective partners, and to fix the amount of bride price and a date for the marriage. The bride price consists of Rs. 30.00 to Rs. 100.00 in cash, about 75 kgs. of rice, about 30 to 60 kgs. of paddy, and several pieces of cloth for the bride's parents, grandfather, grandmother and brothers. The groom goes to marry in the bride's village. One or two months before the marriage, the bride price is paid to the bride's parents. The party which accompanies the bride to her husband's house includes both males and females in large numbers. Drummers belonging to the Dom or Ghasi castes also join with them on request. The marriage rites are performed according to Vedic rites by a Brahman of high status. Two to five days after the marriage the bride cooks food, which the couple offers to the dead ancestors. After a week or so the couple pays a visit to the girl's parents with presents. The special marriage cake of enormous size prepared with a *maund* of rice flour is no longer served at present.

In the past every marriage was celebrated with dancing and feasting for several days. But now they have given up dancing, and the guests are entertained with a festive meal. Previously there were marriage by capture and also marriage by service, but now these are rarely practised. Widow remarriage is allowed. Divorce is allowed with the approval of the village council.

They practise both cremation and burial. Families who can arrange fuel wood can cremate the deceased. Those dying of cholera or smallpox, as well as children, are usually buried. Before burial or cremation the corpse is anointed with oil and turmeric paste. New cloth and some paddy grains are given with the deceased. After burial or cremation, the lineage (*kutumba*) members take bath, and all the cooking earthen pots are removed from the house of the deceased. After returning from bath, they take fresh food prepared without using cooking oil.

Death pollution continues for seven to nine days, after which the final purification rites take place. On this day, all the male members of the deceased's family have their haircut, all the used clothes of the family are washed by the washerman, and house is cleaned. They take uncooked food on this day. During the period of pollution they abstain from eating fish and flesh.

Next day a Brahman is invited to officiate in the *shradha* in which food is offered to the deceased. In the evening, the shade is brought back to the house, where cooked food is laid out and spread over with rice flour. After the shade is conducted to the house they examine the rice flour. They think that shade has come. Those who went to call the shade now eat the cakes made from this rice flour. Next day, a feast is arranged for kin and friends. Thus the Bathudis enjoy the services of a Hindu Brahman, a barber and a washerman and are treated as a clean group.

The religious beliefs and practices of the Bathudis are same as those found among the Hindus of the neighbouring villages. Like caste Hindus they observe Raja Parab, Gamha Purnima, Makar Sankranti, Dasara Kali Puja etc. Their village deities are worshipped by the village priest called the Dehuri on the occasion of the eating of new rice and mango and while transplanting and reploughing the paddy seedlings. They have not yet completely lost their belief in the working of magic and witchcraft.

The main occupation of the Bathudis is settled agriculture. The amount of land owned by most of the families is not sufficient to meet all their requirements. There are also landless Bathudis who depend solely on wage earning or the petty business of buying rice at a cheaper rate from one locality and selling it at a higher rate in another locality. They grow paddy and few varieties of cash crops such as pulses, sugarcane, potato, groundnut etc. Hunting and fishing are no longer practised as gainful economic pursuits.

Rice, which is eaten throughout the year, is their staple food, with some green leaves or vegetables as a side dish. They prepare cake from rice flour. They are fond of non-vegetarian dishes but are handicapped by lack of scope for hunting and also by their low income. They take clean food and abstain from eating beef or pork but will eat termites and red ants. Poultry is sacrificed at the time of religious ceremonies and eaten. Previously they did not accept food from Brahmans. Alcoholic drinks such as *mohua* liquor and rice beer are generally avoided.

At present they have the status of a clean caste in the caste hierarchy of Hindu society.

BHOTTADA

G.N. Satpathy

The Bhottadas are one of the efficient agricultural communities of Orissa. They are known as Bhottaras and Bhottadas due to the pronunciation of 'r' as 'd' under the influence of Chattisgadi, Dhottada being a wrong use of the term Bhottada. It is said that they are immigrants from Bastar. Mr Tylor has identified them with the Murias. It seems that both the Murias and the Bhottadas are subdivisions of the great Gond tribe, whether or not they are identical. Mr. Bell has expressed his doubts regarding the tribal origin of the Bhottadas. In his opinion, they are Hindus who have been influenced by prolonged contact with aboriginals. At present, they constitute a major part of the population of Nowrangpur district and Koksara and Jaypatna police stations in Kalahandi district, their distribution in other districts being very small.

The total population of the tribe according to the 1991 census is 3,04,137 or 4.32 percent of the total tribal population of the State. Their growth rate in the decennial period 1981-1991 was 22.78 per cent as against 18.89 per cent for the total tribal population of the State. The sex ratio was 1230 females per 1000 males. The percentage of literacy among them has increased from 7.50 per cent during 1981 to 7.81 percent in 1991.

They speak a corrupt form of Oriya. Some consider their language to be Muri or Lucia, otherwise known as Sasturia, a dialect of Oriya. No vestige of a tribal dialect survives.

The tribe is divided into two endogamous divisions called Bodo and Sano. The Bodos claim to be of purer descent and hence are higher than the other division in social status. They have a number of exogamous totemistic clans like tortoise, tiger, cobra, monkey, dog, lizard, goat, etc. The clan names are of the animal world and the animals are respected by the members of the respective clans.

The family is the important social unit of Bhottadas. There are more nuclear families than extended ones. The joint family structure breaks down at marriage and with the death of the parents. Kin in the paternal line up to the seventh generation are called *kutumbas*.

The Bhottadas have no organisation like the dormitory, but recently in some villages they have started Jatra groups, membership of which is open to all interested parties.

The Bhottadas live in heterogeneous villages along with other neighbours like the Omanatya, Domb, Rana etc. The village functions as a unit from the socio-political point of view. Every village has one secular head known as the Naik, a religious head known as the Pujari and an attendant known as the Gonda. The Naik and Pujari are men of their own community, whereas the Gonda is a Domb. They constitute the traditional panchayat with other important members of the village and adjudicate all cases among themselves. The Pujari performs all religious ceremonies for the welfare of the village as a whole.

A number of such villages together constitute a Dosh. For each Dosh there is one Bhatnaik and a Panigrahi. Each Dosh has one Gonda known as the Desiagonda. The Bhatnaik controls the violation of taboos and expels offenders, also restoring the offender to the society after a suitable purification ceremony. When any cases cannot be decided at the village level, they are referred to the Dosh panchayat and the decision is binding on all. Gobadh and Machiapatak are two offences leading the offender to ex-communication, who is restored to the caste by the Bhatnaik and Panigrahi. The Bhatnaik performs a ritual, gives him Mahaprasad and brings him back into the caste.

A pregnant woman observes some restrictions on her food and activities for the safety of the child. She is not allowed to go to the burial ground. She is forbidden to touch a corpse. She does not take curd. At the labour bed she is attended by her own kin, who cut the umbilical cord and bury it in a ditch outside the house. Birth pollution is observed for some time. On the third day, mother and baby are cleaned with turmeric. On the ninth day a name-giving ceremony is held. The Disari selects the name by divination. A feast is given to all the villagers. The entire night is spent in dancing and singing. The first hair-cutting ceremony is performed after one year. The father shaves the hair. The ear and nose piercing ceremony is conducted at the age of 4 to 5 years and is done by a Sunari woman. The thread ceremony is conducted before marriage.

The most significant and elaborate event in the life of the Bhattadas is the marriage ceremony. They practise both adult and infant marriage, but mostly the former. The usual age at marriage is 14 to 18 in the case of girls and 18 to 20 in the case of boys. A young man has a right to his uncle's daughter. If any one else takes her, he receives some compensation from him. Widowed and divorced women may remarry. Marriage by arrangement, by capture, and by service are recognised in the society. Marriage by arrangement seems to be honoured and widely prevails.

In marriage by arrangement, the exogamy of the clan, lack of any offence leading to the outcasting of the parents of the girl, social status, the existence of any permanent disease like leprosy, etc., are all taken into consideration while selecting a mate. Such selection is usually done by the boy's parents.

A few men, including the boy's guardian, call at the house of the girl carrying with them some wine, sweets and other eatables. After the feast at her residence is over a proposal of marriage is put forward for approval. Some indirect indications, like 'We have come to pluck the scented flower', are given to the girl's parents to obtain their opinion. Her parents, in consultation with the relatives and the girl, may accept or reject the proposal. This is called *mangni*.

If matters cannot be finalised at this visit, two more visits may be organised for the final reply. On receipt of a positive answer, the Disari is consulted and a trip is made to her house with palm wine and food articles. The kinsmen of the girl assemble and are told of the promise of her father. This is called *sagajanki*. At another visit, the negotiation is confirmed in the presence of the villagers and relatives. This is known as *chidni*.

The next visit is known as *balarani*, which is followed by *guojokni*, when the boy himself and some relatives pay a visit and he is offered a betel nut by the girl's guardian. From this day, the boy has a right to the girl and is entitled to compensation if anyone kidnaps her. The next visit is made with several measures of paddy, pulses, etc. to fix and pay the bride price. This is called *jolu*.

After a month or so a date is fixed in consultation with the Disari, and the groom, carrying a sword over his shoulder, goes with his father and relatives to the bride's place taking a ring, bangles and two pieces of sari. A feast is given by bride's parents and the ornaments are given to the bride. The party returns with the bride.

Marriage takes place at the groom's place. An altar is constructed. Seven *sal* (*Shoea robusta*) poles are fixed on it. The marriage ceremony lasts eight days and a number of feasts are given by both parties. To construct this platform the villagers are given a feast at their respective villages. The Disari officiates as the priest. The little fingers of the couple are hooked together and their cloths knotted, they walk seven times round the pandal, the *homa* is lit, and their foreheads are marked with turmeric paste and rice. The girls keep dancing the entire night. Doms beat the drums. The occasion is followed by a grand feast. Next day the couple will search for something valuable from a jar filled with water, mud and different fruits. They smear themselves with the mud. Then they go to the river and bathe, and the bride is carried back on the shoulder of the boy. Thereafter they attend a feast. A feast is also given to villagers the next day for their services during the wedding.

On the ninth day the bride and bridegroom with five young men and women and five old men and women go to the girl's mother's house carrying rice, pulses, vegetables, fowls, etc., where they enjoy a grand feast and the party returns. At the later date, the bride cooks using new pots and serves her relatives. The ancestors are given food and she becomes a member of her husband's family.

Marriage by capture. To avoid this long and expensive arranged marriage the Bhottadas sometimes capture a girl from the market or during the Chaitra festival. Her kith and kin visit the boy's place to abuse and threaten the boy and demand that he hand over the girl to them. If the girl is happy, she usually does not come out of her hiding place. If she is not happy, she surrenders herself to her father and is taken back. Compensation is demanded from the offender.

If the girl does not show herself, elders come out to settle the affair. The amount of compensation, bride price, etc. are discussed. The decision is binding on the kidnapper, who pays the amount demanded and marries the girl.

Marriage by Service. Sometimes a poor Bhottada goes to serve in the family of a well-to-do person with the aim of obtaining the latter's daughter or sister in marriage after the stipulated period of service. The term of service extends from five to ten years. During this period the servant receives only food and clothes. After the stipulated period the girl is given in marriage to the boy. If he

wishes, he may stay with his father-in-law or he may erect his own house or may go back to his own house.

A man may keep his elder brother's widow if he desires. If she leaves, the man is entitled to compensation from the new husband. Polygyny is also practised if the wife is found to be barren.

The Bhottadas bury their dead in a sleeping position. Very well-to-do persons in certain localities are not interested in practising cremation. Death rites consist of Pitakhia on the third day, Dasha on the tenth day, and a feast on the eleventh day. Pollution is observed for ten days, during which the deceased's agnates are forbidden to cook any food. On Pita day they eat rice, nim, dried fish and brinjal. The nails are pared. On Dasha day, the son is shaved, and everyone is given cloth and a napkin. On the eleventh day, everyone is feasted. The barber does not serve them; instead the sister's son does the work and gets the presents. They believe in rebirth, but do not observe any Sradha, etc.

The Bhottadas have a great belief in the existence of a number of spirits, gods and goddesses. Budhi Thakurani, Bhairabi, Budhi Pardeshi, Basumata, Bana Durga and the Sun are a few of their deities. These are propitiated during festivals and offered sacrifices of fowl, goat and sheep. Their Pujari acts as the priest.

The festivals are (i) Chaitaparab in Chaitra, (ii) Akhi Trutia in Baishakh, (iii) Sraban Amus in Sraban, (iv) Nuakhia in Bhadrab, (v) Dashara in Asin, (vi) Diwali in Kartika, (vii) Punia in Pusa and (viii) Suriya Jatra in Magha.

Chaitaparab is one of the important festivals and is connected with fertility rites and the production of a bumper harvest. They eat new mangoes after offering the same to the village deity. The Pujari sows the first seeds. They arrange the annual hunt and spend the night in dancing and music. Seeds are sown after proper worship and offering to Basumata.

Pusa Punia is a festival of enjoyment and merry-making, with dancing in other villages for weeks together. During Diwali they worship cows, bullocks and offer rice and salt to them. They arrange a feast on this occasion and enjoy it.

Apart from these festivals they participate in Holi in Fagun and the car festival in Asadh with the neighbouring population. They have now adopted Laxmi puja in Magusir in imitation of other Hindu neighbours. Bali Jatra is observed in Koraput district in some areas when crops fail for lack of rain in several years successively. The effigies of Bhima and Kandhuni Debi are ceremonially kept and worshipped. The Bhottadas participate in it with other non-tribals and Hindus.

The Bhottadas dance on various occasions such as marriage, Pusa Punia and Chaita Paraba. They have a few types of dance and are not so expert in dance and music as the other tribals. They dance the *cherechera* during Pusa Punia and *daunidarnat* during marriage ceremonies. Both men and women participate in *cherechera*, though they dance separately. The movement is very brisk and lively. *Daunidarnat* is danced by girls only. Both types are expressions of love.

The Bhottada settlements are too large and heterogeneous. The houses are set in one row with the road in front of them. They have no common house. The village deity has its temple at one end of the village. The villages are situated in the plains, and agricultural land surrounds the village.

The houses mostly have one room in the Kalahandi area and two to three rooms in the Koraput area. The houses have wide covered verandas. The doors of the rooms open on to the veranda. Cooking is done inside the room. The roofs are thatched with straw and the walls are made of wood wattles plastered with mud. Gradually brick walls are replacing the mud walls. In Kalahandi area, tiled roofs are also to be seen.

Before constructing a house, the Disari is consulted. According to his decision, they construct the house after the Disari or Brahman performs *homa*.

Their material culture is very simple. They use earthen pots made by the potter for carrying, storing water and cooking. Rope cots are seen in certain houses. Aluminium utensils, brass jars and pots are also seen in well-to-do families. They make receptacles out of straw to store grain. They have *barsi*, screwdrivers, axes, *paniki* etc. They have the husking lever and the hand-pounder or *kituni*. For agricultural implements, they have the ploughshare, plough, *pata*, sickle, bullock cart, *akudi* and wooden sticks. They make their own ploughs. For musical instruments they have drums known as Nangara, Dhol, Tamak, Tudubudi. They have Mahuri. They also use Gini and Thala.

The Bhottadas neither spin nor weave but purchase clothes from local dealers like the Doms. Bhottadas living near the town mostly wear mill-made clothes, which they buy in the market. The men wear shirts and *hanians*. In Kalahandi men usually wear napkins and *chaddars*. Women wear white and coloured saris. The men wear alloy *khudu* on their wrists and *nolis* in their ears. The women wear glass or rubber bangles, alloy or silver *khadus*, armlets, *noli* and earrings, nose rings, glass-bead or metal necklaces, or *gagals* round their neck. Rings of silver alloy for the fingers and toes are in common use. They wear *pahud* on their legs. These ornaments are bought locally. The well-to-do wear gold ornaments in or on their ears, noses and necks.

The Bhottadas are good agriculturists. They pursue wet cultivation and do not practise shifting cultivation. They work as labourers when there is no work in the fields. A few of them also have jobs in companies and government institutions. In Nowrangpur area, most of them have a few acres of land, whereas in Kalahandi area, they plough land on a share basis. Hunting is sometimes carried out as a pastime. Food collection is resorted to in times of acute scarcity.

They produce all sorts of vegetables from their lands. Paddy, sugarcane, pulses and tobacco are the main crops that they harvest from their land. They are hardy and do not allow the land to remain barren when water is available. However, for daily necessities they depend on other communities and on the

markets. They purchase salt, cloth, earthenware vessels, ornaments and utensils for their daily use. Raw materials like iron for ploughshares are also purchased.

They are very simple and obey the authorities. In spite of their hard labour, they fail to prosper, as they should be on account of being exploited by more advanced neighbours. Most of them do not know current market rates. The women sell and buy goods in the market place and are easily duped by clever businessmen. In times of need they borrow money from local traders, and after the harvest pay back three to four times the money actually borrowed to the moneylender. Officials in the Forest, Revenue and Excise departments take advantage of their simplicity and take their produce in the form of bribes. Marriage being very expensive, they borrow money and become prey to the exploiters. The Doms are cunning and exploit them when selling salt and cloths to them. Taking two to three times the actual price from these innocent folk.

The Bhottadas are not untouchables. They consider the Domb and Panos to be very low and do not touch them. Brahmans allow the Bhottada to enter their houses. Most of the other communities, except the Brahmans, Karan and Khandayat, will take water from them. They treat the Omanatyas and Bhumias as their equals but regard tribes like the Kondh, Gond and Gadabas as inferior. They do not practise any defiling occupation and can worship in Hindu temples. However, they are still educationally very backward and should thus be given special safeguards.

BHUYAN

B.B. Mohanty

The Bhuyan are one of the primitive tribes of Orissa and are found mainly in the Bhuyan Pirh of Keonjhar district. They are also found in large numbers in the adjoining states of Bihar, Bengal and Assam. S.C. Roy has divided the tribe into two broad sections. The southern section, centred in Orissa, is the backward section of the tribe, while the northern section, centred in Chottanagpur, contains the relatively advanced section of the tribe.

In Orissa the Bhuyans are found in Bansapal Block of Keonjhar district and the adjoining areas of Bonai and Pallahara subdivisions of Sundargarh and Dhenkanal districts. The name 'Bhuyan' may be derived from the Sanskrit word 'Bhumi', meaning land or earth. The tribe is also called variously as Bhuiya, Bhuiyan and Bhuiya.

Bhuyan Pirh, the main concentrated pocket of the Bhuyans, lies roughly between 21° and 22° north latitude and 8.50 and 8.60 east longitude. The blocks of hills and elevated valleys which stretch from north to south along the western borders of Keonjhar and join Bonai sub-division of Sundargarh district on its north-eastern side form the homeland of the primitive section of the Bhuyans. This tract is the watershed of the Baitarani river in the north and the Brahmani river in the south. The national highway running through the blocks of hills of upper Keonjhar separates the habitat of the Bhuyans from that of the Juang. The Juang Pirh, with its centre at Gonasika, lies to the east, while the Bhuyan Pirh, with its centre at Bansapal, lies to the west of the upper Keonjhar.

The approach to the Bhuyan villages located in this region is very difficult, particularly in rainy season, due to lack of adequate road communications. Moreover, the jungles, which once teemed with many wild animals such as tigers, bisons, elephants, bears and wild boars, have now been completely deprived of any such fauna, due to the continued practice of shifting cultivation.

The Bhuyan population in Orissa in 1981 census was 2,07,793, of which 1,97,483 were rural dwellers and 10,310 were urban dwellers. During 1991 census their population went up to 2,46,573 establishing a growth rate of 18.66 per cent over the decade. The sex ratio among them is 1022 females per thousand males.

The percentage of literates, which was 22.5 per cent during 1981, further improved to 35.4 during 1991. This is somewhat higher than the overall average of 22.31 per cent for the entire tribal population of the State.

The Bhuyan hamlets or villages are situated either on plateau land on the hilltops or else on the hill slopes in the middle of the forest. The villages are generally small in size and contain a homogeneous Bhuyan population. The settlement patterns of the villages are not identical and do not conform to any pattern. In a village some houses may be built adjacent to one another in rows facing a street which runs in between them, while other houses may be located here

and there in the uneven terraces. There is usually a courtyard at the front of the house and a kitchen garden at the back. The cowshed is constructed at a convenient place on one side of the courtyard. Like the Juangs, the Bhuyans have well-maintained youth dormitories known as Mandaghar or Darbarghar for the unmarried boys, usually constructed in the centre of the village. The dormitory also serves as a guesthouse, meeting place for elders and a granary for the village. Important musical instruments like the *changus* (tambourine) and drums are kept hanging from the extended deer antlers fixed to the walls. In front of the dormitory is an open space which serves as the dancing area for the unmarried boys and girls of the village. On one of the corners of the dancing area, at a little distance, lies the sacred shrine of Gainsiri Khunta, made of a round piece of carved wooden pillar and representing the tutelary deity of the village.

A Bhuyan house is rectangular in ground plan with two sloped roofs thatched with grass. The average size of the house is 25 ft. by 12 ft. The walls of the house are made up of wooden logs thickly plastered with mud and cowdung on either side. The rafters and beams of the roof are made up of wooden logs, and the roof is thatched with a kind of wild grass called Khar. Some well-to-do families who can afford them have houses thatched with tiles made by themselves. The house has a single door which is made either of wooden planks or of bamboo splits plastered with mud and cowdung on either side. The house has no windows. A piece of rope is used to close the bamboo door, but in the case of the wooden door, the locking arrangement is made by fixing an iron chain to the door and a hook on to the doorframe.

The material contents of the Bhuyan house exhibit a very poor picture, from which the economic condition of the tribe can be assessed. House articles consist mainly of different types of earthen vessels, jars, gourd containers, palmleaf mats, string cots, wooden headrests, a leaf umbrella and raincoat, broom, bamboo baskets of different sizes, a winnowing fan, a mortar and pestle, a grinding stone, small and large axes, a few knives, a ploughshare, a digging stick, a hoe, a bow and arrow, a kerosine lamp, and a grain bin made from straw. Except for the earthenware vessels and iron implements, which are purchased from local market, the other articles are self made.

The economic life of the Bhuyans mainly centres around shifting cultivation, which is the primary source of their livelihood. To a large extent this is supplemented by the collection of minor forest produce and wet and dry cultivation, and by hunting, fishing and wage earning. Other than those mentioned above, some Bhuyan, particularly those living in the plains, have taken to petty trade and commerce and industrial employment. Rope-making and ordinary carpentry are known to all men, and mat-making is the recreational activity of the Bhuyan women. The Bhuyans follow a sexual division of labour for certain activities. Generally heavier work, such as cutting trees, ploughing, sowing, hunting and fishing, fall on the shoulders of the men, while lighter work, such as cooking and other domestic work, are the monopoly of the women. Thatching houses and climbing trees are taboo for them. Work like clearing the forest, weeding, transplanting, harvesting, threshing, and the collection of minor forest produce are undertaken by both men and women.

The land at the valley bottom (*halia*) is used for permanent cultivation, paddy being the only crop grown. As water is available in the valley throughout the year, these lands are the best for paddy cultivation. These favourable conditions have induced them to apply chemical fertilizers to their wetlands to improve productivity. In addition to these lands they have plain lands at elevated sites (*nala*) which are used for growing *niger*, pulses and minor millets. The kitchen garden (*bakadi*) is intended for growing vegetables, tobacco, maize and mustard. The *bala*, *nala* and *bakadi* lands are privately owned, while the lands under shifting cultivation are held communally. Both sowing and transplanting are practised in growing paddy in wet land, while only sowing is practised in growing crops in *nala* and *bakadi* lands. Except for *bakadi* land and wetland no other types of land are manured, and bullock-driven ploughs are commonly used to till all types of land in the village.

Cultivation is a family affair in which all able-bodied adult members of the family cooperate. Whenever any extra labour is required it is commissioned not by hire but by exchange basis. Outside labour is required only for weeding and harvesting. A man having no draught animals may accept the help of another man who has them. In such cases he has to till the land of the owner of the animals for the same number of days he used the animals on his own land.

The Bhuyans domesticate various animals like the cow, bullock, buffalo, goat, sheep and fowl, etc. The main object in keeping cows is not milk but cultivation and breeding.

The Bhuyans are in the habit of collecting minor forest produce extensively for their own consumption and also for sale as a secondary source of income. The important items of forest collection include *mohua* flowers, *mohua* seeds, mango, jackfruit, tamarind, *harida*, *anala*, *sal* seed, *kusum*, various types of green leaves, mushrooms, edible roots and tubers. They also collect firewood, thatching grass, fibers for rope-making and different types of herbs and shrubs of medicinal value.

The Bhuyans practise shifting cultivation extensively, which is called *taila chasa*. They generally cultivate a patch of forestland for three consecutive years, after which it is left abandoned. The patch in the first year of cultivation is known as *hiringa*, in the second year as *kaman* and the third year as *guda*. These patches are located on flat hilltops stretching down to the foothills. The hills in this area are generally flat topped and without many stone boulders, and the gradient is gentle. Land under shifting cultivation is confined to 5° to 12° slope. After cultivating a patch of land for three years they leave it fallow for a period of 5 to 7 years to recuperate. Previously the fallow period was 12 to 15 years. The main reason for its reduction is population pressure and the shortage of land for *podu* cultivation. The land under shifting cultivation belongs to the village, but a patch of swidden after distribution by the village committee remains in the possession of a man so long he cultivates it.

The first year of shifting cultivation (*hiringa*) involves several stages such as the selection of hill slopes in December-January by the village committee headed by the Pradhan, tree-felling and bush-clearing (*guchhakata*) from February

to April, piling up of felled trees and firing (*anapuda*) in April-May, bush-clearing (*patikata*) in May, sowing (*huna*) in July after Akhin Parab, ploughing and hoeing (*bhuinyange*) in July, weeding and debushing (*judabachha*) in September-October after Ashiaripuja, watching the crops in November-December, and finally harvesting from December onwards. The crops grown in the swidden during the first year are *kolatha*, *birhi*, *rasi* and various types of vegetables, pulses and creepers.

During the second year of shifting cultivation (*kaman*) the main crop grown is a short duration paddy and *jawar* (*ganget*). The former is sown in the middle of the plot and the latter on the borders of the plot. *Kada*, *mandia*, *kangu* and various types of vegetables are grown in the second year. In the third year of shifting cultivation (*guda*) only *niger* is grown. If a patch fetches a good harvest in the second year, then it is cultivated for the third year. The same patch can be brought under cultivation for a fourth year if there is a good harvest in the third year.

The Bhuyans use very simple implements in their agricultural operations. The most important implements used in shifting cultivation are the hoe and the axe. Other implements include the plough, yoke, crowbar, spade, sickle, knife, wooden pole etc.

Rice is their staple food and is considered superior to all other types. Whatever amount of paddy is procured it is never sold. Otherwise they exchange *birhi* and *niger* for rice. Besides rice they make preparations of millets and other cereals. They eat pulses occasionally, particularly on festive occasions. Roots, tubers, flowers and fruits, which are collected from forest, supplement their food to a great extent during the lean months.

Among alcoholic drinks the Bhuyans drink *mahua* liquor, a rice beer called *pachhi*, toddy extracted from date palms, *salap* drink extracted from sago palms, and liquor prepared from cereals. The Bhuyans are used to both chewing and smoking. Men smoke tobacco grown in kitchen gardens by rolling it in *sal* leaves, while women chew it with lime. *Bidi*, tobacco paste (*gurakhu*) and *hetel* are purchased in the local market and consumed.

S.C. Roy has recorded the following sections of the Bhuyan community. These are Des Bhuiya or Mal Bhuiya, Paraja Bhuiya or Routali Bhuiya, Bathudi Bhuiya, Santali Bhuiya, Dandasena Bhuiya, Rajkuli or Bar Bhuiya, Saontia Bhuiya, Khandait or Pawanbans Bhuiya, Katti Bhuiya, Naksiya Bhuiya, Aake Bhuiya, Dake Bhuiya, Reichisan Bhuiya, Mushar Bhuiya and Ghatwar Bhuiya. Some of these sections are just descriptive names, while some others are designated on the basis of their mythical origin.

The family, being patrilineal, is the smallest social unit and comprises both consanguineal and affinal relations. As the family is patrilineal descent is traced through the male line from father to son. A daughter belongs to her father's *khilli* (extended lineage group) so long as she is unmarried, but after marriage she becomes a member of her husband's *khilli*. The family is mostly nuclear, consisting of husband, wife and their unmarried children. In some cases

dependents, like parents or unmarried brothers and sisters, are also found living with the nuclear family. Extended or joint families are rarely met with.

The next biggest social unit is the lineage or *kutumba* formed by a group of families related to one another by blood. The relationship between the lineage groups is based on mutual help and co-operation. Exchanges of labour at the time of the construction of the house and agricultural operations, exchanges of food during festivals, and the organisation of joint functions and observance of birth and death pollution jointly are some of the striking features which govern the activities of the lineage members.

Several *kutumbas* from an exogamous unit called a *khilli* or *bansa*. All the members of a *khilli* are believed to be descended from a common ancestor.

The next biggest unit is the village, which may comprise the members of one or several *khillis*. In the past the Bhuyan villages were homogenous and all the households in a village were related to one another by blood, therefore intra-village marriage was forbidden. Broadly speaking, Bhuyan villages are divided into two groups: *bandhu* villages (cognatic) where marriage is possible and *kutumba* villages (agnatic), where marriage is not possible. Recently, due to in and out migration the composition of villages has undergone a change. Now, villages with both cognatic and agnatic groups are not unusual.

The Bhuyans believe that every human being must pass through different events in life such as birth, childhood, adulthood, old age and death. Unnatural deaths are attributed either to the wrath of the gods and goddesses or to a sin committed by the person during his previous birth. They look down on barren women, and those women who give birth to many children enjoy considerable pride and prestige. Birth is always welcome in Bhuyan society, whether of a boy or a girl. The expectant woman undergoes several restrictions during her pregnancy. She is not allowed to eat the meat of any sacrificial animal. She does not take curd or anything that tastes sour. She is not allowed to go to the place of worship or to forest alone. She should not touch a corpse, nor see the smoke from a cremation fire. Birth takes place in a separate shed constructed as a lying-in room. An elderly experienced woman is called to act as midwife (*sutrunihari*). The naval string is cut by the baby's mother with an arrowhead if the child is male and a split bamboo if the child is female. The placenta and the cord are buried in a pit dug at the back of the house. The midwife bathes the baby and the mother using tepid water and warms them by kindling a fire inside. The mother observes certain restrictions in respect of her food intake for some time during the post-delivery period. The pollution continues for two to three months which is removed in a phased manner. They carry out name-giving and first hair-cutting ceremonies.

The Bhuyans observe clan (*khilli*) and village exogamy if the village is inhabited by one *khilli*. In the past marriage within the village was forbidden because the people of a village were agnates and belonged to a single *khilli*. The types of marriage prevalent among them are marriage by elopement (*dharipala*), marriage by capture (*ghicha*), love marriage (*phulichust*, *amilesare*, *kalalesare*) and marriage by negotiation (*mangt bibha*), etc. The most common type is

marriage by capture (*ghicha*), although instances of marriage by elopement (*dharipada*) and negotiation (*mangi bibha*) are not unusual. Widow marriage is also prevalent in the society. They do not recognise cross-cousin marriage as a preferential form of marriage. Likewise levirate and sororate marriages are not practised in their society. An arranged marriage involves the payment of a heavy bride price and expenditure on feasts given to the guests, agnates and cognates who attend the marriage ceremony. Bride wealth varies depending upon the economic status of the family. Generally, it consists of three bullocks or cows. Besides, one piece of cloth and a rupee are given to the bride's mother and about 160 kgs. of rice and a he-goat for the feast. In the case of other types of marriage, the bride price is also paid but at a much reduced rate.

They believe that a human being has to die one day or other after being very old. News of a death is immediately conveyed to the kinsmen and other elder members of the village. They practise both burial and cremation, although the former occurs more than the latter. The corpse is carried to the burial ground on a bier amidst the loud lamentations of the family members and kinsmen. It is believed that if the relatives do not lament for the dead, the latter may feel offended in the other world. A pit about seven feet long and five feet deep is dug, and the dead body is laid down in it with the head pointing north. The eldest son and, in his absence, the brother of the deceased puts the first handful of earth over the corpse after which the pallbearers fill up the pit with earth. Boulders, stones and thorny branches are then put on the grave. Death pollution is observed for two to three days. At the end of it, the villagers are given a feast by the deceased's family. The lineage members clip their hair, shave their beards and pave their nails. The olden earthenware vessels are thrown away and replaced by new ones.

The Bhuyans believe in the existence of innumerable deities having their abode in the village and nearby spring and in the surrounding hills and forest. They influence the life of the people and the course of events in the village. Success, failure, death, disease and the well being of the individual and of society depend upon the mental condition of these supernatural powers. In order to ensure safety, security and prosperity these supernatural beings are propitiated with timely offerings of food and drink by the religious headman of the village.

Like many other tribal groups of the area, the Bhuyans have two high gods known as Dharam Devata (Sun God) and Basukimata (Earth Goddess) who are always benevolent. These supreme beings are not represented in any form but they are constantly remembered, and whenever any religious ceremony is performed individually or collectively they are worshipped properly.

Boram, which is represented by a stone boulder placed in the sacred grove on the outskirts of the village, is an important village deity. A number of *pat-devata* also exist in the locality. The term *pat* usually refers to a region and the *pat-devata* is the tutelary deity of that region. Different regions have different *pat-devatas* with distinctive names and functions of their own.

Gainsiri, represented by a wooden pillar (*kunta*) or a block of stone placed in front of the bachelor's dormitory, is another important village deity. Gainsiri is

installed first in the new site selected for founding a village. Thakurani is another village deity located in a hut adjacent to the bachelor's dormitory. The image of Thakurani is made of clay by the local potter and it is changed every year for a new one in the month of December. In addition to these deities there are ancestral spirits and a number of malevolent spirits who cause disease and death when angry. They are also suitably propitiated on different occasions. The Bhuyans have now started worshipping Hindu gods and goddesses like Siva, Lakshmi, Jagannath, Radha and Krishna on such occasions as is prescribed in the Hindu ritual calendar.

In every Bhuyan village there is a panchayat which meets at the *darbar* whenever required. The village headman or *pradhan* presides over the panchayat. A group of villages form a confederation called a *pirha*. The panchayat at this level is called the *pirha panchayat*, and the secular headman who presides over it is called the *sardar*.

The primary functions of the village panchayat are to decide the partition of property among brothers, to distribute land for shifting cultivation, to organize religious ceremonies, and to maintain peace and order in the village. In the earlier dispensation the *pradhan* and *sardar* were very powerful and men of authority. They used to collect land revenue from the *ryots* and maintain law and order in their respective areas of jurisdiction. Since independence and the abolition of intermediary system and merger of the feudatory states with Orissa these traditional political organisations have been weakened. The introduction of the statutory panchayat has further weakened the old political order and *pirha* organisation.

Being one of the primitive tribal communities, the Bhuyans are facing a lot of difficulties in the economic front. Due to the ban imposed on shifting cultivation, the scarcity of wet land in the valley bottom for paddy cultivation and the rapid extinction of forest wealth, the people are forced to become wage earners and indebted in the absence of alternative means of livelihood. Further this has resulted in the out-migration of people in search of employment. Besides, they suffer from various diseases, of which the incidence of malaria is very high because of insanitary conditions and lack of health education. Moreover, in the absence of an adequate number of sanitary wells, there is an acute shortage of drinking water in Bhuyan villages, particularly those located at higher altitudes.

In the recent past massive developmental programmes have been launched by the government for the uplift of the weaker sections, particularly those belonging to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Although various anti-poverty and income-generating schemes are now being implemented among the Bhuyans through agencies like the block, DRDA and ITDA, it is still felt necessary that for the Paudi Bhuyans, the most primitive section of the tribes, at least two micro-projects, one each at Bhuyan Pirh of Keonjhar district and the other at Koida block of Sundargarh district, should be established to look after their development exclusively.

BHUMIA

G.B. Sahoo

The Bhumia are mostly concentrated in Nowrangpur district. In addition, they are sporadically scattered in the districts of Sambalpur, Boudh-Khondmal, Ganjam and Sundargarh. According to the 1991 census report, their total population in Orissa is 1,09,538 of which 56,657 are males and 52,881 are females. The total population of Bhumias has increased from 75,221 in 1981 to 1,09,538 within a decade and the growth rate is 45.62 per cent. Their sex ratio is 933 females per 1000 males. They have adopted Oriya as their mother tongue. Their rate of literacy increased from 6.3 per cent to 9.3 per cent within a decade from 1981 to 1991.

They are divided into a number of totemistic exogamous clans called *hansa* which are known as Nag, Bagh and Surya. Ordinarily families of one *hansa* reside in a village. There are separate hamlets for different *hansas*. But nowadays this is slowly yielding place to multi-*hansa* villages or hamlets which appear to have come to stay. Although marriage within the same *hansa* is strictly prohibited pre-marital sexual experiences did not appear to be altogether absent.

Usually the Bhumia settlements are located on the outskirts of clean caste villages. They do not follow any definite settlement pattern so far as the setting of villages are concerned. The houses lie scattered here and there. Sometimes they are arranged in two rows facing the principal village road. Their houses are rectangular in shape with gabled roofs. The walls are made either of wooden planks or wattle plastered with mud. Their houses may measure 18' in length, 12' in breadth and 10' to 11' in height. The roof is made using either bamboo or wooden rafters thatched with forest grass. Their houses are divided into two halves having a wall in the middle, the height of which varies from 4' to 5'. The inner part is used as a storeroom and the outer part, with a doorway on to the front verandah, is used as a kitchen and bedroom. The houses are not provided with windows for cross-ventilation. Sometimes the houses are provided with lofts spreading bamboo poles, which serves as an additional storeroom. The cattle sheds are usually located at the side of the living house.

In constructing a new house the house site is usually selected by the Disari, the traditional priest of the Bhumia community. On an auspicious day in the evening, three grains of rice are placed at the three corners of the proposed site and covered with leaf cups by the Disari. The next morning these leaf-cups are removed by the Disari and if it is found that the grains have not been disturbed, then the site is considered to be auspicious and fit for dwelling. Then the Disari fixes a central pole to lay the foundations of the new dwelling.

In Bhumia society, male children are preferred. The position of women is looked down upon and the position of a barren woman is found to be even worse.

Two forms of marriage are prevalent, namely arranged and forced marriage. The prevalence of bride price leads many to adopt the latter form of marriage, whereby girl elopes with the boy with whom she is in love and their

marriage is solemnised afterwards. The arranged form of marriage is settled by the parents of the boy and the girl. In this form of marriage the bride price is given by the groom to the bride's parents and mainly consists of a cock, a goat, a ram and one *pauti* of rice. The marriage feast continues for three to four days and the tribesmen from nearby villages are invited to it. But in the forced type of marriage, which is locally known as *udulia*, the marriage feast is given to tribesmen for one day only. Besides these two forms of marriage, cross-cousin marriage is also practised among them. Their society is patrilocal, patriarchal and patrilineal.

Barren women are looked down upon, as mentioned earlier. Pollution after birth is observed for eight days. The dead are usually cremated. People who die of snakebite, cholera or smallpox are buried. Children up to the age of seven are also buried.

Rice is their staple food. They also take millet and pulses along with vegetables, roots and tubers. They prepare gruel out of *mandia* (*ragi*) powder, which they take in the morning and evening. They are habituated in taking liquor and *salap* juice as intoxicants. Apart from these, they also chew and smoke tobacco, which they grow in their back yard. Nowadays tea is becoming more popular as a beverage due to outside contact.

The Naik is regarded as the accepted leader of the village. Usually the richest man of the village, who possesses a good number of cattle and acres of land, is selected for the post. Next to Naik is the Bhatnaik, who is regarded as a leader of 10 to 12 villages. Both these offices are hereditary.

The Bhatnaik settles village feuds, while petty village quarrels are referred to the village Naik. In certain important disputes, the Bhatnaik calls a conference of village elders to discuss and decide the matter. The Disari is regarded as the religious head of the village and performs the ceremonial worship for both individuals and the village as a whole.

The main occupation is settled cultivation which is supplemented by agricultural labour. Besides these, they also resort to wage-earning and the collection of minor forest products to supplement their income during the lean months. They mainly grow gram, oil seeds, etc. on high lands. Most of them own land, plough bullocks and other agricultural implements for settled cultivation. They are also expert in making baskets out of bamboo splits for sale. Besides these, they also practise fishing with nets and hunt small game.

The Bhumia pantheon consists of a number of gods and goddesses. Budhi Thakurani is their village deity who is worshipped on all important occasions. A platform with a thatched roof is set up at the centre of every Bhumia village, where the goddess Budhi Thakurani is installed. Once a year, during the month of Chaitra (March-April), a goat is sacrificed in front of her. Besides Budhi Thakurani, they worship other village deities like Nisani, Mauli and Ran Devata.

The main festival observed by the Bhumias is Bahijatra, during which elaborate fertility rites are observed. During this festival young girls dance in a

trance and act as a medium for a spirit called Debta. Hundi Debta and Budhimani are the chief deities. In every village, there is a priest called Disari who is also treated as a doctor of magic.

A male Bhumia usually wears a small napkin about 2.5 yards in length and one yard in width. The women wear coloured saris about 4 yards long. While going out of the village, the men wear a small *dhori* and a shirt and the females wear sari and petticoats. The children within the age group of 6 to 8 usually wear small napkins. The well-to-do men of this community use warm clothing during the winter months and the poorer sections use coarse cotton wrappers to save themselves from the chilly weather.

The Bhumia women wear *mudi* for the nose, *khanja* for the ears and necklaces. These ornaments are usually made of brass and white metals. Well-to-do Bhumia women use these ornaments made up of gold. Besides these glass bangles are becoming popular among the younger generation.

Although the Bhumia are economically very poor they are very clean in their habits. The walls and floors of their houses are regularly smeared with cowdung, mud and water by the women. The outer walls are painted with red, white and black ochre. The women take a great interest in these works. They are very fond of dance and music. The Dhemsa dance is gaining much popularity among them. Boys and girls dance together. They play a number of stringed instruments like the *behela*, *sarangi* and drums like the *tamak*, *runji* and *gaumura* during the dance. Nowadays, however, the Bhumia have lost their original cultural traits due to the impact of modern civilization though they retain some traditional characteristics, which attract both anthropologists and sociologists for further study.

BHUMIJ

P.S. Daspatnaik

The Bhumijas are one of the Hinduized tribes and are found largely in the district of Mayurbhanj. Etymologically the term 'Bhumij' means one who is born from the soil. The Hindus who immigrated later on might have given them this name, as the Bhumijas being the earlier settlers were in possession of land.

Dalton classifies them as Kolarian on linguistic grounds. Racially they are proto-Australoids. Risley says that the Bhumijas resemble the Mundas mostly closely in speech and manners. He also says that the Bhumijas are nothing more than a branch of the Mundas, who have spread to the east, mingled with the Hindus, and thus for the most part severed their connection with the parent tribe. This hypothesis seems on the whole to be borne out by the facts observable at the present day. The Bhumijas of western Manbhum are beyond doubt pure Mundas. They inhabit the tract of the country which lies on both sides of the Subamarekha river. The region contains an enormous number of Mundari graveyards and may fairly be considered as one of the very earliest settlements of the Munda race.

The Bhumijas are a dolicocephalic and platyrrhine people with wavy hair and dark complexion. They now speak a kind of broken Oriya in which they have borrowed considerably from Bengali. But in olden days, the tribe had their own original tongue.

The Bhumijas of Mayurbhanj do not claim to be the original inhabitants of the soil. According to the tradition prevalent among them their original abode was in Tamulia in Bihar. There lived a man named Munda, who had four sons. As their descendants increased in number, they migrated in different directions and one came to Mayurbhanj. The Hindus from whom they freely borrowed their customs and manners seem to have been later immigrants.

According to another story referred to by Dalton, Sing Bonga (the Sun God) was self-created. He made the earth and animals and a pair of human beings. Twelve boys and girls were born to them. They lived as husbands and wives as desired by Sing Bonga, and all human beings sprang up as a result of their pairing. Ho, Bhumijas, Brahmans, Sudras, Bhuinyas, Santals and Ghasis.

In Orissa the tribe is concentrated thickly in the districts of Mayurbhanj, Sundargarh, Keonjhar and Balasore, and sporadically distributed in other parts. The total population of the Bhumij was 1,57,614 (79,191 males, 78,423 females) during 1981, which further increased to 1,78,214 during 1991, establishing a growth rate of 13.07 per cent over the decade. The sex ratio among them is 983 females per 1000 males according to the 1991 census. The percentage of literates increased from 12.1 per cent in 1981 to 21.1 percent in 1991.

A village contains from ten to sixty houses, even more, belonging to the Bhumij. Other tribes and castes like the Santals, Kharias, Bathudis, Hos and other Hindu castes are also found to be living in these villages. The houses, though

constructed in the plains, are not arranged in any order. They live in commodious double-slope houses with a plinth area of about 30 ft x 15 ft. Most of the houses have two rooms. But some of the well-to-do families have houses with more than two rooms. The rooms are utilized as a kitchen, bedroom, storeroom and cattle shed.

All the rooms have permanent doors but no windows. Houses are constructed out of bamboo and *sal* saplings, tied with grass ropes and thatched with straw. The walls are made of bamboo and *sal* saplings and twigs plastered over with mud on both sides. The walls are sometimes decorated with the designs of elephants and men riding on horses, and paddy stalks painted with rice powder mixed with water. Their houses contain a portico which they use for entertaining guests. They also construct wooden racks over which grain containers are kept. At one end of the house a separate shed for cattle is made.

Before constructing houses on a new site they resort to the grain divination method to determine the auspiciousness of the site. In the evening they place rice grains mixed with vermilion in one corner of the selected site. If these grains are found intact the next morning, the site is considered auspicious. Similarly, before occupying a new house, they offer *puja* to Thakurani to protect them from the evil influence of the spirits.

Among household articles they have few of indigenous origin. Most of the articles are purchased from the market. The household and agricultural implements consist only of those articles which are needed in day-to-day life, for example, baskets, earthenware water vessels, metal dishes and tumblers, wooden ladles, axes and sickles. All these goods are purchased from the market, except ladles which they make at home. Other articles made at home are mats, bamboo-leaf umbrellas and *tharkeas* (wooden bells for cattle).

The hunting implements of the Bhumijas consist of bows and arrows. The arrow with a wooden head is called a *thuthi* and that with an iron head a *tir*. The iron head is obtained from the market.

Their musical instruments are flutes (*bansi*) and drums (*dhol* and *madal*). The wooden frame of the *dhol* they make themselves out of *gamhari* wood, and the skins of the drum are fitted by the Chamar caste. The flutes are made out of bamboo.

As regards dress and ornaments they follow their Hindu neighbours. Children of both sexes go naked for up to four or five years. Then they wear a towel (*gamucha*) or pants till adolescence when they start wearing clothes. The male dress consists of a shirt, a *dhoti* and a towel. The towel is kept on the shoulder. The women wear a sari and a blouse called *jakit*. The sari is generally white in colour. During winter, they also wear saris or *dhotis* for protection against cold. In summer, men do not wear shirts when they are in the village.

The young girls are fond of ornaments. They purchase various brass ornaments such as nose-rings, earrings, bead necklaces, armlets and bangles. They

also wear flowers in their hair, particularly at weddings and festivals. These dresses and ornaments are purchased in the market.

The Bhumijas are agriculturists. They are settled cultivators having their own land. They grow only one crop, that is, paddy in the wetland. They grow some *rahi* crops such as oilseeds, pulses in their upland plots and vegetables in the kitchen garden. In the paddy fields sowing starts in the month of May-June. The seedlings are raised in a small plot before being transplanted. Transplantation takes place in July-August and harvesting in November-December. In between transplanting and harvesting, weeding is done twice or thrice by both sexes. Besides agriculture, they work as agricultural labourers in others' field, for which they get three kilograms of paddy or Rs 5/- as wages per day. After the harvest, when they cannot find any wage earning, the males go to work in the mining quarries and the tea gardens of Assam. They stay there for three to four months and come back again when their agricultural operation commences the next year. Hunting, which was a gainful economic pursuit in the past, has been given up due to the depletion of the forest and restrictions imposed by the Government. However, the main occupation at present is mostly supplemented by wage-earning and forest collection.

Rice is their staple food and is eaten throughout the whole year. Like Hindus they eat dal and vegetable curry if they can afford to. They abstain from taking beef and pork but eat white ants, termites and insects like the Bathudi and Sounti. Rice beer is their favourite drink. Mohua liquor is used sumptuously during feasts and festivals. The whole of Bhumij society is mainly divided into four endogamous groups such as the Tamudia or Tamarua Bhumij, Haldipokhoria Bhumij, Teli Bhumij and Desi or Dehuri Bhumij. Of these the Tamudias occupy the highest place in social precedence because of their traditional occupation of shaving. Next to them are the Haldipokhoria Bhumijas. It is said that the females of this section used to serve as midwives among other Bhumijas. The Teli section, who occupy the next position, traditionally pressed oil. The Desia section used to burn lime. All these sections have now left their traditional occupations but have retained their endogamous divisions, with much emphasis on caste-ranking. Each class forms an endogamous group of its own so that a Tamudia Bhumij will not marry a Haldipokhoria Bhumij and vice-versa.

Each section of these groups consists of a number of exogamous sub-groups called *killi*. For example, the Tamudia Bhumijas have no less than fifteen such clans, like Hotalva (a kind of wild flower), Tutia (a grass-like rice plant), Sura (a hug), Naga (a snake), Tarai (a lotus), Marum (a horse), Mati (the earth), etc. These names seem to be totemistic in nature. The names of the exogamous groups are chosen from diverse sources, representing the fauna, flora, heavenly bodies, earth, etc. The members of each group observe certain taboos in respect of these totemic symbols and refrain from causing injuries to them. But no elaborate ritual is celebrated in honour of the totems. Because of their gradual contact with the Hindus, the ineffective side of the totemistic system declined, leaving only the effective side, such as the prohibitive marriage rules. However, the *killi* is a strictly exogamous group, and marriage within it is considered incestuous.

Most of the families among the Bhumijas are of nuclear type, consisting of husband, wife and unmarried children. The children set up their own families soon after marriage. They are patrilineal. Descent and inheritance are traced through the father's side. The family is patripotestal, that is, the father is consulted on all important matters by his unmarried and married children.

The kinship terminology is mostly of classificatory type, as they use the same word to designate a number of relatives. They use certain terms like Sala, Istri, Didi, Ma, Beti etc. which have been borrowed from Hindu usage. They are not permitted to joke with or touch certain relatives like brother's wife, husband's elder brother, etc. Joking relationships are permitted with the wife's younger sister, wife's younger brother, elder brother's wife, etc. They can marry the wife's younger sister and the wife of the deceased elder brother.

The clan system regulates marriage, and adult marriages are in vogue. The most common means of acquiring a bride is through negotiation and payment of bride price. Marriage by capture, service and intrusion are also prevalent. Levirate and sororate types of marriage are also prevalent. Sanga Baha or widow remarriage and cross-cousin marriages are in vogue.

A matchmaker (*dandia*) arranges the marriage. The bride's father is approached by the groom's father along with the elderly members of the village after the matchmaker has finally received a hint. They are cordially greeted with a sumptuous feast. A symbolic plough is exchanged between the negotiating groups as a token of their consent. The bride price (*ganang*) is then decided, varying from Rs 150/- to Rs 2000/-, with two bullocks, and clothes for the mother, grandmother and the brothers. The date of the marriage is settled in consultation with the astrologer (*ganak*) by the boy's father in the presence of the girl's father.

On the appointed day the bridegroom, along with the villagers, relatives and friends, proceeds to the girl's village with a musical band for marriage rites. They are received by the boys and girls of the bride's village soon after their arrival. After the bride price is paid to the bride's father, the groom goes to the marriage booth, where the nuptial tying ceremony takes place. The Brahman priest or, in his absence, the maternal uncle performs *homo* and join the hands of the bridal pair, uttering all the while certain *mantras* or mystical formulas. After that *sindurdan* rites take place, in which the bride and groom apply vermilion marks to each other's forehead twice. This solemnizes the ceremony.

The marriage may take place either at night or in the morning. After the ceremony the groom returns home with his wife. After a week or so, the bride is taken back by her father. Then the groom goes to bring the bride back after a fortnight. There he is presented with new *dhoti* and shirt, and sweetmeats to be distributed among the children in his village. On the same day the groom returns to his own village with the bride.

In marriage by capture, the boy puts a vermilion mark on the forehead of the girl when the latter happens to visit either the field or the market place alone. If the girl accepts then the marriage takes place. This is called Sangabaha. Widow

remarriage is practised following this procedure. If the girl is unwilling, she does not suffer any social stigma and may be married in a regular way to another man.

Polygamy in the form of polygyny is sometimes indulged in by the wealthier families, the barrenness of the first wife being the main reason. The husband can divorce his wife only in extreme cases of adultery. In this matter the decision of the council of elders is final. Women do not have this privilege. Adultery with a member of the tribe is generally condemned with a fine, but if with a member of another tribe it results in outcasting.

At birth, a woman is attended by a midwife belonging to the Hadi community. The umbilical cord is cut with a knife and buried inside the lying-in room in a corner. Birth pollution is observed for 9 days. During this period the family is considered unclean. No one accepts food from them. The father does not shave his beard or have his hair cut. On the ninth day a barber pares the nails, shaves the beard and cuts the hair of the newborn infant's father. Then they take bath. From this day on everyone becomes clean except the mother and baby, who become clean on the twenty-first day, on which day a ceremonial bath is given to the mother and child. Then she cooks food which is accepted by all. The child is named by the village elders on the ninth day. They have no dormitory system. In the absence of this, training in tribal customs, folklores, etc. is imparted to the child by his or her family members.

They cremate the dead, except for those below twelve years of age, who are buried, as are those who die of cholera and smallpox. In the case of the death of a pregnant woman the embryo from her womb is taken out through an incision in the abdomen. The incision is then stitched up again. The embryo is buried beneath a *mahua* tree, the idea being that it will live on the juice of that tree.

After death the body is brought out of the house and placed in the courtyard with the head pointing towards the south. Its hands are taken together and a measure of paddy is placed in its palms, and then this is taken back by his son, or in his absence the nearest relative. This is repeated three times, the idea being that the dead man should not take any children with him and thus no misfortune might affect the family thereafter.

Before cremation the body of the deceased is rubbed with oil and turmeric, and a *pausa* is put in the mouth of the dead as its passage money to the other world. The body is then placed on the pyre fully flat, with its head directed towards the south. The son or in his absence the nearest relatives walk round the pyre three times in an anticlockwise direction carrying a lighted piece of wood which is finally put into the mouth of the corpse. After the body is reduced to ashes, the women quench the ashes with water brought for that purpose. Then a conventional human figure is drawn and *khichuri* (rice and dal boiled together) is offered to it in lumps on three *sal* leaves by any male member of the bereaved family. Then the party takes bath and is sanctified with water into which *tulasi* leaves have been dipped. After this they pick some *nim* leaves and return home.

All the members of the family and relatives of the deceased are considered unclean for nine days. On the tenth day, they go to the nearest stream with a so-called Brahman of their own tribe, a barber and a washerman. The head of the person who kindled the pyre is shaved. He puts on a new piece of cloth and offers *khichuri* on three *sal* leaves to the departed soul as before. They then return home where a feast is provided in which fowls, goats and rice beer (*handia*) are consumed, as much as they can afford to spend. They do not observe any annual *sradha* ceremony.

The headman is called the Sardar. In all cases of violation of social rules, the Sardar convenes a meeting of the elders, who enquire into the dispute, hear the necessary evidence and punish the delinquents. Generally, a fine is imposed which is spent for the purchase of rice beer and a goat for a feast. Cases of theft and murder are brought to the notice of the court. The office of the Sardar is not hereditary.

Religious beliefs and practices indicate the adoption of some Hindu religious traits into their tribal religion. The Brahman priest does not officiate in their religious functions; instead a Naya or Dehuri officiates as the village priest.

The Bhumijas revere the sun under the name of Sing Bonga and Dharam, both of them being considered to be their supreme deities. They also worship a host of minor gods and spirits such as Jahir Buru, worshipped in the sacred grove of the village (*jahirthan*); Karakata, another female deity responsible for bumper crops; Baghut, a male deity responsible for warding off animals and protecting crops; Gram Deota and Deoshali, gods of village life, who ward off sickness and watch over the supply of drinking water and irrigation of the crops; Buru, a mountain deity, etc. They believe in ghosts and spirits. They do not make any images of their gods. The dreaded spirits are Kudra, Bisaychandi, Varam etc. All accidental deaths, whether of men or animals, are attributed to the misdeeds of some evil spirits.

The Bhumijas are agriculturists. Most of their festivals are connected directly or indirectly with agriculture. In the month of Chait (March-April), they worship at the Siva temple and offer sweets, milk and flower to Siva. Dhulla Puja is held in the month of Baisakh (April-May) for the well-being of the village. Asarhi Puja commences before reploughing and transplanting of paddy seedlings. Vadhna Parab is held on the day of the new moon in the month of Kartika (October-November) before reaping and Nua-Khia, the ceremony for eating the new rice. The festival of Makar falls on the first day of the month of Magha (January-February). No specific *puja* is celebrated on this occasion. They simply sing, dance and make feasts. They also observe Saharae during Diwali when cattle are worshipped by the priest. They celebrate the Karma festival in the month of September for the prosperity of the village. A branch of the *karma* tree is brought from the jungle by an unmarried male and planted near the house of the Dehuri. They eat, drink, dance and sing for the whole night. On the following day, the same branch of the *karma* tree is taken out of the soil and immersed in the river by an unmarried male. Besides this, the Bhumij, like other tribes, practise ancestral worship on all occasions.

The Bhumija sacrifice various animals like the goat, sheep, pig and fowl to satisfy the deities and spirits. Like Hindus they have started offering coconuts, plantains, sweetmeats, etc. and visit the Kali and Siva temples at Hindu festivals. They believe in the efficacy of white and black magic. Witchcraft is considered to be black magic. There are a number of witchdoctors found in a Bhumij village. However, they adopt Hindu manners and customs and are always looking for ways to give their indigenous customs a Hindu colouring.

Under different plans and in different periods, schools, roads, wells and cottage industries have been built in their area. As such their contact with non-tribals have led them to accept many things from the customs and practices of the Hindu people.

BHUNJIA

T. Patnaik

The Bhunjia are a numerically small and little-known tribe who mostly reside in the Kalahandi District of Orissa and Raipur District of Madhya Pradesh. They belong to the Dravidian racial group. According to Russel and Hiralal, 'The term Bhunjia may perhaps signify one who lives on the soil, from *bhum*, the earth, and *ia*, depended on.'

The Bhunjias have been divided into two main sections, Chuktia Bhunjia and Chinda Bhunjia. Russel and Hiralal mention that the Chuktias are of mixed Halba and Gond descent. It is noticeable, however, that the Bhunjias, though surrounded by Gonds on all sides, do not speak Gondi, but a dialect of Hindi which, according to Sir George Grierson, resembles that of the Halba, and he also describes it as 'a form of Chhattishgarhi which is practically the same as Baigani'.

According to Russel and Hiralal, the Chinda division of the Bhunjias may have been derived from the Binjhvars, a Hinduised offshoot of the ancient Baiga tribe. This would account for the fact that the tribe speaks a dialect of Hindi, not Gondi. As the Chuktia sub-tribe appears to be of mixed Gond and Halba origin, and as the Chindas are probably descended from the Baigas, the Bhunjias may be considered to be an offshoot from these three important tribes.

The Chuktias are recognised to be of illegitimate descent. As a consequence of this they strive to increase social status by the very strict observance of the rules of ceremonial purity. If any man not of his own caste touches the hut where a Chuktia cooks his food, it is entirely abandoned and a fresh one is built. They do not even eat food cooked by other members of their own community and this is a restriction found only among those of doubtful descent, where every man is suspicious of his neighbour's parentage. The Chindas whose pedigree is more reliable are far less particular about their social purity and form the acculturated section of the tribe. The Chuktia Bhunjias are confined exclusively to the hills of the Sonabera plateau, while the Chinda Bhunjias are scattered in the plains with other tribal and non-tribal communities.

The total population of the Bhunjias in Orissa is 11,276 (5,709 males and 5,567 females) according to the 1991 Census. Their main concentration is found in Kalahandi district, where their population is 7,142. Next to Kalahandi they are found in sizeable numbers in Koraput, and the rest are distributed in Sambalpur, Dhenkanal, Balasore and Keonjhar districts. Their growth rate during the period of 1981-91 is 24.22 per cent. The sex ratio according to the 1991 Census comes to 975 females per 1000 males. The literacy percentage among the Bhunjias was 8.5 per cent in 1981, which increased to 13.8 per cent in 1991.

Bhunjia villages vary in size ranging from 8-10 households to 50-60 households. They believe that the village boundary is guarded by many gods and goddesses, who protect the village from the infiltration of evil spirits. Bhunjia houses are arranged in a peculiar way, two or more households taking a wide-open

space to build their individual houses there. A Bhunjia house generally has three huts, the largest one serving as the living-cum-store room, the second hut adjacent to it being used as the cattle-shed, and the third and the smallest one, being built a little in front of the living room, is the kitchen, which is enclosed all round. The houses are made of mud and thatched with wild grass. The houses have no doors except for the living room and kitchen. The floors are plastered with either cowdung or coloured earth, and the walls with red and white earth. The walls of most Bhunjia houses are painted with floral and animal designs.

Household belongings comprise mats (*champ*), earthenware pots, mortar and pestle (*mayur*) and some hunting implements, fishing traps (*chapa*), digging sticks, sickles (*hansia*) and axes (*tangia*). Besides these utensils, they have cooking utensils, clothes and baskets for storing foodstuffs and forest collections.

Some peculiarities are marked in the dress and ornaments of the Bhunjias, especially in case of the woman. Men mainly wear a piece of cloth, and the better people wear undergarments and shirts. The women wear only saris and are not in the habit of wearing blouses and undergarments. They use ornaments like necklaces made of beads and coil, glass and brass bangles, anklets and earrings made of either aluminium or silver. Bhunjia women comb their hair in a very decent manner and arrange the hair into a massive bun at the back of the head by using a bulky tassel and fixing pins into it to keep the bun in position.

The family is the smallest social unit among the Bhunjias and is of nuclear type, consisting of parents and their unmarried children. The family size varies from 3 to 10 or even more members. After the son gets married, he establishes his own family in a separate place at the same village. A daughter leaves her father's house after her marriage and lives with her husband. Unmarried sons and daughters continue to live with their parents until their marriage. In the case of the death of the parents, the unmarried brothers and sisters stay with their married brother until their marriage. The head of the family is usually the eldest male member of the family. Thus a Bhunjia family is patrilocal, patrilineal and patriarchal.

Marriage in the Bhunjia language is termed *byahghar*. They believe that marriage is a union of man and woman for procreative and economic purposes. Cross-cousin marriage is common. A man can marry either his father's sister's daughter or his mother's brother's daughter.

The tribe is divided into two exogamous moieties, Netam and Markam. Each moiety is sub-divided into a number of *barges*, and each *barge* has a specific designation. The Netam moiety has as many as ten *barges*, and the Markam moiety has nine. Marriage within the moiety is strictly prohibited. There is no restriction in marriage between Chuktia Bhunjia and Chinda Bhunjia, but in such cases a rite called *dudh-pani* is performed, in which a *bandhu* washes the mouth of the bride with milk before she is taken in as a member of the groom's group.

Adult marriage is general. A boy marries at around twenty and a girl at fourteen years to eighteen. Incestuous relationships are taboos among the Bhunjias. The Bhunjia mostly practise monogamy. In the case of a wife's barrenness, a man

marries a second time after obtaining the first wife's consent. Marriage by exchange and elopement are some of the types of marriage prevalent among the Bhunjias. They also practise levirate and sororate types of marriages. However, marriage by exchange is the most common of all the type of marriages. There is no definite month for marriage and generally it is held after the harvest, so that they do not face any difficulties in meeting the marriage expenses.

Bhunjias do not have any custom of bride price. The dowry system has been newly introduced into their society. Negotiation takes place in three phases: *tokidekha*, the visit of the groom's father to the bride's house; *magen*, and the third phase, *byhaghar*, in which the actual marriage takes place.

Divorce is socially permitted under such grounds as the extramarital and illicit sexual affairs of either of the partners, the frigidity of the woman, the indolence or quarrelsome nature of the wife, and the ill treatment of one partner towards the other.

The Bhunjia kinship system is bilateral, i.e. it extends in two directions, the direction of the father's family of origin and of the mother's family of origin. The former is called consanguineal and the latter affinal.

Among the Bhunjias, the joking relationship is prohibited between a man and his grandfather (*dadi*) and a man and his mother's mother (*budhi*). It exists between a man and his elder brother's wife (*bohū*) and a man and his father's mother (*amma*). A married couple may not address each other by name. A woman has an avoidance relationship with her husband's elder brother and with her younger sister's husband.

The husband of a barren woman may take a second wife. Bhunjias prefer a male child because after marriage the female child will go to her husband's house and the family will lose a member as well as her contribution to economic well-being of the household. Taboos against going to the burial ground, doing hard work in the advanced stages of pregnancy, and eating sacrificial meat are observed during pregnancy. Delivery is assisted by an experienced elderly woman of the village. In the case of a difficult labour, the help of a medicine man is obtained. After birth the umbilical cord is cut with an arrowhead by the attending midwife. After childbirth the mother is kept under restriction for a period of three months. She is given a soup of boiled horse gram and some herbal juice. Her diet consists of rice gruel and salt. Several rituals are performed following childbirth. The maternal uncle plays an important role in these functions.

Puberty rites in the case of a girl are observed for a week, during which the girl is kept confined in a room while she is considered unclean. It is tabooed for her to look at the face of any male member.

News of a death is sent to all the members of the lineage. The dead body is given a bath and, after being covered in a new piece of white cloth, is carried to the burial ground on a bamboo frame. On the third day of the death all the related members of the family are invited for the mortuary feast. On this occasion the

nephew sprinkles cow's milk all over the house, throws away all the used earthenware pots, and cooks food in the new pots. The eldest son of the deceased is shaved by the nephew, after which he puts on a new cloth and takes the cooked food in three leaf cups to the burial ground. Thereafter the relatives are fed.

Rice is their staple food. Sun-dried rice is eaten mostly. Women are prohibited from eating chicken. An adult eats two meals a day, one at midday and the other in the evening just after sunset. There is no such time limit for the children, who eat food any number of times, as the family can afford. Both men and women drink tea. Tobacco is very popular among Bhunjia men.

The Bhunjias depend on agriculture for their subsistence. They pursue wet cultivation and also shifting cultivation, which they called *bewar*. Besides agriculture, they practise other economic pursuits, like hunting, collecting, animal husbandry, fishing and wage-earning. Animal husbandry is not very popular among the Bhunjias, though they domesticate cows, bullocks, goats, sheep, buffaloes, dogs, fowls, pigeons and parrots. Chuktia Bhunjias consider the domestication of pigs defiling and polluting, whereas the Chinda Bhunjias do not.

The society makes a typical allocation of different types of work between men and women. Adult males and females work in the fields, but ploughing is only done by the males. Hunting and the use of the bow and arrow are taboo for women. Fishing, the rearing of animals, the collection of forest produce and the selling of commodities, etc. are done by both men and women. All types of household work are done by the women. However, in certain circumstances men also help in domestic work.

The political organization of the Bhunjias comprises the village council and the intervillage council. Each Bhunjia village is an independent socio-political unit having its own village council and a group of traditional leaders. The traditional village council comprises a corporate body of elderly male members called *bhal bhal*, the traditional office bearers, the Pujari, Chhatriya, Katariya and the eldest male members of all *harges*, being bona fide members. The council does not meet regularly. Women are not allowed to participate in the meeting of the council of elders. The council settles disputes relating to matters like quarrels, breaches of taboo and the inheritance of property, and it is confined to the members of the village only. The delegates of the council of elders of all the villages meet in the inter-village council, whose chairman and chief spokesman is known as the Kurha.

The Bhunjias worship many gods and goddesses. Their main and original supreme deity is known as Sundei. In addition, each *harge* has a specific deity, and the name of the *harge* is based on the worship of that deity. For example, the people belonging to the *harge* of Matihor worship the earth goddess known as Mati (earth). Pujari is the ritual head of the worship of Sunadei, to whom he offers food and prayer. The Chhatriya also holds the umbrella open at the time of worship, and Katariya sacrifices the animal.

The Bhunjias observe a festival fifteen days long at the shrine of Sunadei in the month of October-November during Dasahara. Another festival is observed in

the month of March-April, the speciality of which is that for the first time in the year *dahi* cultivation (shifting cultivation) is performed. In most cases the deities are worshipped to free people from all kinds of illness, particularly fever and smallpox.

Although this community leads a wretched life like any other identified primitive tribe of the state, no special development programmes have been implemented for them as yet. Since, their area of concentration does not come under the sub-plan area, they are deprived of those benefits that are extended to the tribes residing within the sub-plan area.

BINJHAL

K. B. Debi

The Binjhals are recognized as one of the Scheduled Tribes of Orissa and Bihar States. According to Russell and Hiralal the community is synonymous to Binjhvars inhabiting Raipur and Bilaspur area of Madhya Pradesh and are offshoot of the Baiga tribe but are comparatively civilized than the latter group. 'O' Malley also refers to the Binjhals as *Binjhvars*.

Linguistically the Binjhals belong to Dravidian group. In Orissa they speak Oriya except a few Binjhals of Sundargarh district who have retained their own dialect. Some of their brethren who live in Kalahandi have adopted Laria as their mother tongue. They are of medium stature. Their skin colour varies from dark brown to fair.

The total Binjhal population of Orissa is 1,19,929 according to 1991 Census, which constitutes 1.7 per cent of the total tribal population of the State. The net increase of their population between 1981 and 1991 is 21,298. Thus the growth rate during the decade is 21.59 per cent as against the growth rate of 18.89 per cent for the total tribal population of the State. The Binjhal population includes 60,979 males and 58,950 females. Thus the sex ratio is 967 females per 1000 males. About 89.9 per cent of the Binjhals live in rural areas. The Binjhals are mainly concentrated in the districts of Sambalpur and Bolangir. These two districts taken together claim 93.2 per cent of the State's total Binjhal population in 1991.

The etymological meaning of the word 'Binjhal' is (*Bin + Jhal*) 'without sweat'. The Binjhals claim that they can do very hard work by the sweat of their brow. Some of the Binjhals say that, their name is derived from *Bindhyabasini*, their tutelary deity.

There is very little data to trace their origin and ancestry. The Binjhals have a legend regarding their migration to Orissa from central India. The story goes like this.

The goddess *Bindhyabasini* had twelve sons who were very good archers. They later were known as *Barabhai Bentakar* (twelve brother archers). Once they were out in the forest for hunting. While following a wild boar they shot an arrow, which struck the door of the temple of Lord Jagannath at Puri. No body could pull it out from the door. Even the king of Orissa harnessed his royal elephants but could not succeed. Twelve brothers one day came to Puri in search of their arrow and they pulled it out very easily. The King was very much pleased with them. He gave them the Borasambar Estate of Sambalpur district and the title *Bariha*, which symbolizes the strength of the wild boar. Since then they use *Bariha* as their surname.

Another legend showing the royal affinity of the Binjhals to Patna State has been described by J. K. Das as follows:

"During Asta Malla administration in Patna, Romei Deo was born and brought up in the house of a Binjhal at Borasambar as his mother was afforded

protection by the Binjhals. Later on he defeated Asta Mallas and usurped the throne of Patna. It is since then that the household of the Bariha Zamindar of Borasambar is recognized as the uncle's house of the Raja of Patna. In reward for the protection afforded to his mother, the Raja of Patna gave the Binjhal the Borasambar Estate requiring him and his descendants the tribute of a silk cloth on his accession of the zamindari. This service along with affixing of *ticca* to the Maharaja of Patna on his accession has been rendered ever since by the zamindar of Borasambar as a mark of fidelity."

The Binjhal villages are usually medium in size. It is inhabited by twenty to fifty families. The settlement pattern is of linear type i.e., the houses are situated on both sides of the village street. Exception to this type is also noticed. At times seven to eight families have a common courtyard. A dwelling consists of one or two rooms, which are small in size with verandah in the front and at the backside. One portion of the verandah is enclosed and is used as kitchen. In another side of the verandah paddy is pounded by conventional methods. Cattle shed is an addition to the Binjhal dwelling. The fowls and goats are accommodated inside the room or in the verandah. The walls of the hut are made of mud. The roof is provided with bamboo and wooden structure. It is gable shaped and is thatched with straw.

The Binjhal live in unhygienic condition. Their houses are usually small in size having no window. The fowls and goats are accommodated in the bedroom, which make it dirty. As the courtyard belongs to a number of families nobody cares to clean it. The garbage is dumped at the backyard making the surrounding filthy. Due to lack of ventilation the rooms remain dark even during day.

The Binjhal men ordinarily wear a piece of coarse cloth measuring 6 to 7 cubits in length around waist, which is called *Dhoti*. Another napkin, which they put on their shoulder, is known as *Karia*. Women wear hand-woven Sambalpuri sarees. The children go naked up to five or six years, then they use rags as napkins. School going children wear shirts, frocks, shorts. Now the Binjhals wear shirt and banyan when they go to the market or relative's house.

The women are fond of decorating themselves with various ornaments, made of silver, brass and beads. The gold ornaments are rarely used except on nose and ears, which are known as *Guna* and *Suna* respectively. Their common ornaments consist of bangles (*Bandaria*, *Chudi*, *Mathi*, *Katuria*), necklaces, (*Khagala*), armlets (*Bahasuta*) *Bahatada* anklets (*Painti*) made of silver or brass. The necklace made of lac beads is also their favourite ornament. Now-a-days glass and plastic bangles, and silver necklaces have become very much popular.

The staple food of the Binjhals is rice. It is taken with dal, cooked vegetables. Occasionally the Binjhals enjoy meat of fowls, pigeons and goats. In the past they were indiscriminate in their diet and used to eat snake, rat, pork and red ant, etc. Gradually due to contact with the Hindu castes these items as food have been given up.

Generally the Binjhals take their meals twice a day, once during mid-day and again in the evening. After harvest however they prefer to have another meal

in the morning. Cooked rice soaked in water serves their morning meal and at noon and evening hot boiled rice is taken. Rice cake and fried rice are prepared as breakfast items for the children.

The Binjhals are addicted to liquor. They have great attraction for the *Mahua* liquor and toddy. Drinking has a ceremonial significance also. It is offered to their gods and goddesses. The Binjhals indulge in drinking liberally during social and religious ceremonies. The males chew and smoke tobacco.

The Binjhals are well equipped with all necessary agricultural implements like plough, sickle, yoke, leveller, axe and hoe. Invariably, each Binjhal household have an *Olia* or straw-made grain container. They also use bamboo baskets of different sizes for storing seeds. For husking paddy the Binjhals have a heavy and hollow wooden mortar, which is thrust into the floor with a long wooden pestle whose lower end is fastened with an iron band. They use earthen cooking pots. Ladles and utensils are of brass and bell metal or aluminum. They use several types of basket traps for catching fish.

The Binjhal is an endogamous tribe, which is divided into a number of exogamous divisions called *Vansas*. *Amri, Nag, Khusal, Duguke, Kamati, Mahatinga, Bagha, Marthi Endja, Bentakar* are some of their *Vansa* names. The main function of *Vansa* is to regulate marriage. The members of a *Vansa* are considered as blood related kins and so sexual relations between members of the same *Vansa* is tabooed. The descent is traced through male line only. They use *Lartha, Endja, Mullick, Negi, Lahar, Samni, Kharsel and Maht* as surnames.

Each *Vansa* is divided into a number of lineages, which embrace all the agnatic male descendants, their wives and children. After marriage a woman loses the membership of her paternal lineage. Again a lineage is sub-divided into a number of families.

The family is a unilaterally related group of persons connected through father. Usually it is of extended type consisting of a man, his wife, married sons and their off springs. A daughter after her marriage goes to live with her husband. Some exceptional cases are also found and married daughters are found staying with their parents. A son may not be separated from his parents immediately after his marriage but when several brothers get married and particularly after death of a father separation between brothers becomes necessary. The family among the Binjhals is patrilineal. Property and surnames are transmitted from father to son.

The family functions as an economic and social unit under the guidance of the father who is the head of the family. On vital issues the father may consult his grown up children and wife. After the death of the father however the eldest brother becomes the head of the family.

As family organization among the Binjhals is based on patrilocal descent, the law of inheritance operates through the male line and the sons inherit property.

A woman is an economic asset in the family. In addition to her household work, she helps her husband in agricultural field. The man generally claims superiority over woman but in actual practice the woman enjoys equal status with man. She is always consulted in any vital issues. A girl is allowed to select her spouse, and if cannot pull on with her husband she can divorce him and remarry another man of her choice. However her ritual status is not on par with the menfolk. Besides she is deprived of the legal share in family's property although she is an important earning member.

Both husband and wife bear the responsibility of rearing the children, giving them training and arranging their marriage. Grand parents are paid due respect by the younger members in the family. The relationship between grand parents and grand children and between younger brother and his elder brother's wife, between a girl and her elder brother's wife's brother is of joking. The relationship between the elder brother and his younger brother's wife is of avoidance. They are not allowed to touch each other. The father-in-law and mother-in-laws are respected by a woman who does not utter their names. The husband is addressed as father of so and so.

The birth of the child usually takes place in a separate room. In case of difficult delivery a midwife of the local maternity center is called in to attend. An elderly experienced woman called *Dhai* attends normal delivery cases. She cuts the umbilical cord with an arrow blade and buries it with the placenta in a pit dug in the backyard. A stone is kept on the pit so that animals cannot open it. The child is bathed in tepid water. The mother and the child remain segregated for seven days. In the lying-in-room, a fire is kept burning for seven-days to give warmth to both mother and the child.

Birth pollution continues for seven days. During this period the mother is not allowed to touch anything or enter the kitchen. On the seventh day both mother and child take a purificatory bath. Their clothes are washed and the house is cleaned. The occasion is celebrated by a feast.

The name giving ceremony is held on the sixth day after birth. *Gunia's* (sorcerer) service is sought to select the name of the child. Generally a male child takes the name of his grandfather or great grandfather and female child, the name of her grandmother or great grandmother. The *Gunia* utters *mantras* and moves some paddy in a winnowing fan. He then utters the name of the ancestors and throws paddy on the floor. He repeats the act till two paddies fall jointly. The name uttered at that time is selected for the child. Then the elders present there bless the child.

The child is taken care of by the mother. When the mother goes out for outside chores, she leaves the child in care of grand parents or elderly children in the family. As long as the child is breastfed, the mother may arrange a substitute to feed it when she has to go out. Weaning take place at the age of 2 to 3 or after the second child is born. Even after this occasional suckling is not denied to the child. No efforts are made to teach the child to talk nor it is given any toilet training. The child learns the habits when it is old enough to pick up such ideas.

Marriage within the same *Vamsa* is forbidden. Adult marriage is practised. Marriage is not allowed between spouses having blood relationship. The age of marriage for the boys is 20 to 25 and for the girls, it ranges from 15 to 20 years.

Among the Binjhals there prevails a system of payment of bride price in cash. It varies from Rs. 1001 to Rs. 5001.

The tribe permits mainly the following four types of marriages

(1) Negotiation marriage Most of the Binjhal marriages are performed by negotiation between parents of the boy and the girl. It is generally initiated from the boy's side.

(2) Love marriage This form of marriage is known as *Udulia*. It is resorted to when the boy and the girl love each other, decide to marry against the wish of the respective parents. They sometimes elope away to another village and settle there as husband and wife. But such type of marriage is rare now a days.

(3) Widow remarriage. In the Binjhal society the widows are allowed to remarry. In most cases widows are married to the widowers. No ceremony is performed for widow remarriage.

(4) *Ghar Jama* This type of marriage is followed when a girl have no brothers. The girl stays with her husband in her father's family. In this case no bride price is paid.

One day before the date fixed for marriage, the party consisting of the groom, his parents, relatives and villagers, both men and women start in a procession for the bride's village where marriage is to take place. They move after sunset. Before they proceed some amount of paddy, rice and other materials for feast are sent in a bullock cart to the bride's house. While going they sing songs and beat drums. The night is spent by singing, dancing and drinking. Next day morning the elder sister of the bride carries the bridegroom on her shoulders and enters into the house of the bride. The girl's mother foment the bridegroom's cheeks with hot cakes. Seven women of the bridegroom's party smear turmeric on the groom's body. The bride and the bridegroom are taken to the marriage altar where they sit side by side. The bride throws some paddy and *arua* rice over the bridegroom and the bridegroom follows the suit. Then women of both the parties perform *Bandapana*. When marriage ceremony comes to an end, both the parties attend a feast arranged by the bride's parents. In the evening bridegroom along with the bridegroom's party returns to their village.

Performance of marriage ceremony differs from place to place. In some Binjhal villages a trunk of *Mahua* tree having two branches is planted on the marriage altar. Under this branch a dagger and some rice are kept in a winnowing fan. The dagger represents the bridegroom and winnowing fan, the bride. Both bride and bridegroom move around the trunk one by one. A plough is placed on a yoke on the marriage pandal. Some relatives climb up the trunk and pour water on the couple. Next day the bride and bridegroom are carried to the marriage post on

the shoulders of the relatives. They are seated under the marriage post. The priest ties their legs with a new thread. The newly weds are given bath after which the bridegroom shoots seven arrows at an effigy of a deer made of straw. The brother-in-law of the groom takes away the seventh arrow and hides it under his cloth and pretends to be dead. The bridegroom goes in search of the arrow and finds it from the clothing of his brother-in-law. Thus the marriage comes to an end.

When a Zamindar's (landlord) marriage ceremony is performed he invites all his caste fellows. Here on the marriage platform any number of marriages can take place. If marriage has been negotiated between a boy and a girl they can be married there. Such marriages are eagerly done as no expense is incurred there. Zamindar takes charge of the feasts and other expenses.

Divorce is socially permitted among the Binjhals but it is rarely practised. It generally takes place due to maladjustment or misunderstanding between the spouses. Sometimes infidelity or sterility of the wife also leads to divorce. If the wife is found guilty her parents have to return the bride price. When the husband is at fault the bride price is forfeited.

The Binjhals believe in the immortality of soul. When a man dies his soul always lives among his family members and takes rebirth as grandson or granddaughter.

The customary mode of disposing off a dead body is by burial. The dead body is first anointed with turmeric paste and washed. Then it is covered with a piece of new cloth. Four relatives carry it either on a cot or a mat to the burial ground. There a pit is dug and the corpse is taken round it seven times after which it is laid on an old cloth in the pit with the head pointing to north. Some cooked rice is put in the mouth of the dead. Then the pit is filled up. After the burial all the relatives take a purificatory bath.

The mourning lasts for seven days. All socio-religious observances of the bereaved family remain suspended during this period. On the third day following death the first purification ceremony called *Tela* is observed. The house and courtyard are washed with cow dung mixed in water and the old earthen cooking pots are thrown away. The male mourners get themselves shaved by a barber and take a purificatory bath. The female mourners pair nails and take bath after anointing turmeric paste. The last purification ceremony is held on the seventh day when the relatives assemble in the house of the dead and participate in the mortuary rites. All of them take a purificatory bath. On that day boiled rice and curry are offered to the spirit of the dead in the graveyard. A lamp is lighted near the offerings. When an insect approaches the light it is caught and brought to the house on the belief that it imbibes the soul of the deceased. The insect is placed on a flour cake and is kept covered till the next day. On the next morning it is offered rice and taken to a pond where it is buried in the mud. A feast is arranged for the relatives and the villagers.

The Binjhals are primarily an agricultural community. They practise settled agriculture. For them land is not only of great economic value but it also accords

social prestige. Many Binjhals are landless and work as labourers in the farm of the Pandras and Kultas who are big farmers in the locality. Those who work on daily wage basis are called *Mulia* and those who make contract to work for the whole year are called *Halia*. The latter are paid annually in addition to the privileges of borrowing money from the landowners. Loans are paid back in cash or kind. It can be also adjusted with the dues of the *Halia*. A *Halia* on termination of his contract with the employer is free to contract with another landowner. The contract is usually done for one year starting from one *Pusa Purnima* (the full moon day of December-January) to the next. Those who work as daily labourers are paid either in cash or in kinds of paddy daily or weekly.

The main crop grown by the Binjhals is paddy. Besides, pulses, summer and winter vegetables such as brinjal, tomato, chilly, cucumber, and pumpkin are grown in their *Bari* land. Sometimes, they also grow *til* and sugarcane.

Both broadcasting and transplanting methods are adopted by the Binjhals for cultivation. The methods of cultivation includes ploughing, manuring, sowing, transplanting and weeding etc. The land is ploughed once or twice before onset of monsoon and again in the month of June the land is ploughed and seeds are broadcast. Those who adopt transplanting methods replough the land in the month of August. Women do weeding in September. November and December are the harvesting months.

The Binjhals do not depend much upon outside market. They consume what they produce. Fuel is collected from the forest. Oil prepared from the seeds of *Mahua* known as *Tal* is used for cooking. However for some essential articles like salt, kerosene, tobacco, dry fish, cloth, etc. they go to the weekly market.

The Binjhal religion represents a form of animism, which has now been considerably influenced by the religious beliefs and practices of the caste Hindus. The *Bindyabasini* is the supreme deity of the Binjhals. Her original abode was the Bindhya Hill of Madhya Pradesh. *Barabhai Bentakar* (twelve brothers who were archers) who are said to be the ancestors of the Binjhal community, brought the deity from Bindhya hills and installed her on the Nrusinghanath Hills in Sambalpur district. A stone in shape of a woman represents the deity. She looks after the welfare of the Binjhals and protects them from all dangers. Other deities whom the Binjhals worship are *Dongar Devta*, *Mu/en Devi*, and *Du/a Devata*. *Mu/en Devi* and *Du/a Devata* are their family deities. A few bangles kept in the corner of house represent *Mu/en Devi*. She is offered sweets, fruits and sacrifices. A barren she-goat is sacrificed to her when the first child of a couple in the family is born. *Du/a Devata* is worshipped on all important occasions. Due to their contact with Hinduism the Binjhals have adopted a number of Hindu gods and goddesses and pay reverence to Lord Jagannath, Siva, Laxmi, etc. The practice of ancestral worship is prevalent among them.

The Binjhals have their own festivals. *Karma* is observed on the 11th day of *Bhadrah* (August-September) when the deity, *Karamasani* is worshipped for their good fortune. On that day the unmarried boys bring *Karam* tree representing the deity. While returning from the forest in a procession the boys and the girls sing

amorous songs and dance to the tune of musical instruments. The *Karam* tree is planted in the center of the village. The priest known as *Jhankar* worships *Karam Devata*. Unboiled rice, milk, sweets and liquor are offered to the deity. Then *Jhankar* narrates the story of *Karamasani* to the villagers. This is followed by dancing, singing and beating of drums, which continues till the immersion of the *Karimsani* on the following day.

Badakarma is held once in every three years. On that day *Karamasani Puja* is organized as usual. After the worship is over, young boys and girls of a number of villages form a party and go on a dancing trip to five villages situated nearby. They stay one night in each village and dance there. The host villages make necessary arrangements for their food and accommodation.

The *Harali Parah* is held in the month of *Srabana*. The festival is meant for welfare of the children. On that day different types of cakes and porridge are prepared.

The *Binjhals* worship their own child by keeping unboiled rice and unboiled milk at their feet. They believe that their ancestors have taken rebirth as their children and they should be worshipped.

Pusa Punei or *Madhen Parba* is held in the month of *Pausa* (December-January) when the paddy harvesting is over. The village deity is worshipped with offerings of rice, pulses and animal sacrifices.

The *Magha Paraba* is meant for the worship of *Dangar Devata*. The deity is offered with sweets and fruits. Fowls and goats are sacrificed in honour of the deity.

Makulbhaja Paraba is observed in the month of *Chaitra* (March-April) to mark the occasion of first eating of *Mahua* flower. The village deity is also worshipped on this occasion.

Besides the festivals described above the *Binjhals* also celebrate many Hindu festivals like *Diwal*, *Dasara* and *Nuakhia*.

The *Binjhals* have no formal traditional village council. Usually the elderly villagers deal with the problems that affect their social life. A decision in the meeting is reached by the consensus of the adult villagers present there. The offender is punished and fine is realized which is spent on a feast. Their traditional village leaders include, (1) *Ganat* who officiates in marriage and other social functions, (2) *Jhankar* who serves as priest and (3) *Chowkidar*, the village watchman.

The *Binjhals* are a progressive community. They are strongly influenced by Hinduism. They build similar type of house, wear similar type dress and undertake the similar kind of economic activities as the caste Hindus do. They are making conscious efforts to graduate to the level of the neighbouring castes.

BINJHIA

H.S. Mishra

The Binjhias believe that their original home was Kolanagari in the Vindhya valley in the central provinces. From Vindhya hills they moved eastwards to Chhotnagpur, Keonjhar, Sundargarh and Barasomar. Long time ago they called themselves as Vindhyaniwasi. But after settling down at Chhotnagpur, gradually they were known as Binjhia by the local people.

The Binjhias are spread over a large area covering the States of Bihar, Orissa, West Bengal and Madhya Pradesh. In Orissa according to 1991 Census, their total population is 8128 out of which the male and female population comes to 4042 and 4086 respectively. The sex ratio is 999 females per 1000 males. The percentage of literacy is 26.77 per cent. The growth rate is calculated at 1.07 per cent between 1981 - 1991 Census. In Orissa, the Binjhias are found in the districts of Sundargarh, Koraput and Sambalpur. In Sundargarh they are found in large concentration.

The houses of Binjhias are rectangular in shape, consisting of two rooms and a front verandah. But some houses have verandah on front and rear sides. The walls are made of beaten earth. The roofs are thatched with *Khapar* (country tiles).

Binjhia language is a crude type of Hindi known as *Jaspuri*. They also speak Oriya and Hindi. The males wear *dhoti*, *kurta* and the females wear saree, blouse and other clothes like the neighbouring castes. Their staple food is rice. It is generally taken along with pulses and green vegetables. Beef eating is strictly prohibited.

The Binjhia society is patriarchal in nature. Inheritance and succession is reckoned through the male line. Their society is endogamous and divided into seven exogamous septs, which are unilineal descent groups.

As soon as a girl attains puberty and the boy is adolescent, they are considered fit for marriage. Cross-cousin marriage is prevalent. For marriage, father's sister's daughter or a girl from mother's sept is preferred. A male broker arranges the marriage. The bride price constitutes 4 to 5 *maunds* of rice, clothes for the members of the bride's family, one goat and some money for drinks. The marriage rituals are very much similar to those of neighbouring castes. The Brahmin performs the marriage ceremony. Polygyny, widow remarriage and divorce are permitted in Binjhia society.

The birth of Binjhia child generally takes place in the father's house. An elderly woman from Ghasi or Domb community is engaged to act as a mid-wife. The presence of the elderly woman of the family or the neighbourhood is also needed during the childbirth. The birth pollution lasts for 21 days. During this period, the family is tabooed against attending any socio-religious function and the mother is not allowed to do any household chores. On the twenty-first day,

purificatory rites are observed. In case of the male child, the sacred thread ceremony is observed before the child attains the age of twenty.

The deads are cremated. But the dead bodies of the children are buried. The period of mourning and pollution is observed for ten days. On the tenth day, the barber shaves the family members and their kins and the Brahmin priest, conducts the putificatory rites following the Hindu traditions.

The Binjhias consider themselves not related to any other tribal communities. Socially, they claim equality with the Rajputs and superiority over the communities like Domb, Rana, Ghasi, Munda and Kharia, etc.

The Binjhias observe Hindu festivals like *Dasara*, *Ganha Purnima* and *Ratha Jatra*, *Heli* and *Diwali*. At the time of *Dasara* they conduct animal sacrifices and make feast. They witness the festivals observed by the Hindu castes but they do not worship any of their Gods and Goddess. With other neighbouring tribal communities, the Binjhias also observe the *Karma* festival. Their village deity is known as *Gramasiri*. The Binjhia priest, *Kalo* worships the village deity.

Agriculture is the mainstay of the Binjhia economy. Being settled cultivators, they grow paddy, maize, *ragi*, *kodua*, *gurjee*, pulses and oil seeds. Unlike other tribals they do not yoke cows. Now-a-days, many of them are engaged as industrial workers. During non-agricultural season they also work as part time or daily labourers in the mines and construction sites.

BIRHOR

P.K. Mohanty

The tribal India presents a spectacular diversity. Many tribal groups in India are still in food gathering state and some others practise shifting cultivation while the rest are settled with agriculture and allied pursuits. The food gathering communities also take up hunting in their food quest. Those groups usually had minimal contact with other communities and depend upon the forest for satisfying their needs. Such communities are very few in number. With the opening up of tribal areas following operation of River Valley Development Projects, Mining and Industrial Establishments, and the like, many tribal communities who lived in relative isolation are at present in close contact with other tribes and castes and have developed a symbiotic relationship with them. The Birhors fall into this category of hunting and gathering group having economic relations with the local peasants. They pursue a semi-nomadic way of life.

Birhors are found in large numbers in Bihar where their population was 3464 in 1971 Census. At the same time in Orissa their number was 98 only. The population of the tribe increased to 142 during 1981 and 825 in 1991 registering a growth rate of about 180.98 per cent. The percentage of literacy among them was 12.6 during 1981 and went up to 18.6 during 1991. Since among them the males outnumber the females, the sex ratio is 919 females per 1000 males.

The term Birhor means, forest (*Bir*) people (*Hor*). They are, morphologically, a dark-skinned, short statured, long headed, wavy-haired and broad-nosed people.

It may be noted that the local people used to call the Birhors in different names. In the district of Kalahandi and Sundargarh they are named Mankidi whereas in Mayurbhanj and Sambalpur districts they go by the name Mankirdia. The reason for calling the Birhors, Mankidi or Mankirdia is that they are skilled in catching monkeys. When these monkeys create havoc in the rural areas and destroy crops, fruits and vegetables, the local people employ these Birhors to catch them.

There are two types of Birhors, the *Uthals* i.e., nomads and the *Jagi* i.e., settlers. The *Uthals* move from place to place in groups within a specified area. Each group comprises on an average 10 to 15 families. Some of the families are related to each other consanguinally and others, affinally. A temporary Birhor camp is called *Tanda*. It is generally set up in a place close to the forest and not far away from market center and peasant villages. *Kumbha*, the leaf huts in which the Birhors live are dome shaped, having an opening for entrance. It is made of twigs with leaves of *sal* tree, woven in a framework of wooden saplings tied together with *siali* fiber. The height of *Kumbha* found in Karanjia sub-division of Mayurbhanj district in Orissa, is about five feet. It covers a circular space having a circumference of 46 feet. Besides the *Kumbhas* belonging to the individual families, there are two other

units, *Dhugala*, used by the unmarried boys and *Kudi Ada*, used by the unmarried girls for sleeping at night in every *Tanda*.

The subsistence activities of the Birhors centers round three seasons of the year i.e., rainy season, winter season, and summer season. Their movement from place to place is more frequent in summer than in other seasons. But in rainy season they set up their *Tanda* and stay all the four months in a locality. In winter season they change the camp two or three times. The frequent change of settlement is primarily made in search of forest produce. Moreover, the wanton destruction of the forest by some tribal communities who practise shifting cultivation and by non-tribal people who gather fire wood from the forest make it difficult for the Birhors to get required amount of forest produce i.e., the *siali* bark with which they make ropes. A list of the places where the Birhors usually set up their *Tandas* in different seasons is given below:

Sl. No.	Name of the Place of the <i>Tanda</i>	District	Season
1	Nilagiri	Balasore	Rainy
2	Kendumundi	Mayurbhanj	Rany
3	Melana	Keonjhar	Rainy
4	Satkosia	Mayurbhanj	Winter
5	Dhokata	Mayurbhanj	Winter
6	Gudabhanga	Mayurbhanj	Winter
7	Dongadiha	Mayurbhanj	Winter
8	Hothikocha	Keonjhar	Winter
9	Mandinocha	Keonjhar	Winter
10	Marichapal	Keonjhar	Winter
11	Tomaka	Cuttack	Summer
12	Kaliapani	Cuttack	Summer
13	Angul	Dhenkanal	Summer
14	Daitari	Keonjhar	Summer
15	Nandara	Keonjhar	Summer
16	Patalikata	Keonjhar	Summer
17	Harichandrapur	Keonjhar	Summer
18	Janghira	Keonjhar	Summer
19	Jaikoshi	Keonjhar	Summer

It may be clearly mentioned that the Birhors of a *Tanda* do not frequent all the place which are mentioned above round the year. The list given above indicates only those places which are generally visited by the Birhors and where they set up their *Tanda* in different seasons. But the general pattern of movement is that a Birhor *Tanda* is confined to one or two places in the rainy season and it is more frequent in summer.

The Birhor thought life as a concurrent process from birth to death, through infancy, adolescence, youth, marriage, and old age. The death, which brings life to an end, takes him to the unseen world where a man is transformed into a spirit and starts influencing the human beings.

The birth of a baby is a matter of great rejoices among the Birhors. The father is addressed as *Aba* and the mother, as *Mai*. Those who are addressed as such feel proud of their parenthood whereas those having none to address them as such remain unhappy. Among them a male child is preferred to a female child because the latter leaves her parents after marriage and therefore is of limited economic utility.

During pregnancy a woman observes some restrictions and is relieved of doing hard work and particularly, cooking. Most often she is not allowed to go outside or come in contact with a dead body and move near the shrine. She is forbidden to take consecrated meat. While going outside she must cover up her body completely with her clothes, lest enemies or persons with evil eye may cause harm.

After the birth of the child the whole *Tanda* is considered polluted for a period of 7 days and the family in which the birth took place observes pollution for 21 days.

Marriage is very colourful event in a Birhor's life. It takes place when a girl attains 14 to 18 years of age and a boy, 20 to 25 years. The bride price paid to the bride's parents comprises Rs 17/- and three pieces of clothes. The marriage is solemnized by smearing vermilion on the forehead of the bride by the groom. Prior to marriage the Birhor boys and girls have to spend atleast two years in their respective dormitories and thereafter the marriage is contemplated. Arranged marriage is common. Besides, marriage by elopement and marriage by exchange are also practised.

There is no specified month for holding wedding ceremonies. Generally the best time for marriage is after the monsoon when people have some savings in hand and the guests and relatives can be entertained without difficulty. On the day of marriage when the boy smears vermilion on the forehead of the girl and the marriage is solemnized, the boys and the girls of both the parties dance and sing in great joy and happiness to the tune of their drums and other musical instruments. After the marriage ceremony is over, the bride and the groom with the party return to the latter's *Tanda* where the father of the groom arranges a feast for them.

When death takes place in any Birhor's house, other members of his family send the news to all the people of their lineage. Death occurring prior to old age is believed to be caused due to the machination of evil spirits or sorcerers. Generally the dead body is buried in a trench. Head of the dead body is kept in southwest direction. The pollution period is observed for a period of ten days. On the 10th day *Dehuri* (priest) conducts purificatory rites and sprinkles water all over the *Tanda* and over the lineage members. In the evening a feast is arranged for the elderly persons of the *Tanda*, lineage members and other invitees.

The common diseases found among the Birhors are Malaria, fever, dysentery, cold and cough, headache and small-pox. In addition to these diseases, they suffer from chronic skin diseases like scabies, itches and eczema. Illness of

any kind is believed to be caused by malevolent deities and spirits. The witches and sorcerers also cause illness through the black magic.

As soon as one falls ill, the common practise is to consult the traditional witch doctor-cum-medicineman (*Raulia*) who practices herbal medicine. He prescribes the dose. In case the herbal medicine fails, the *Raulia* conducts divination to identify the evil spirit responsible for the malady and then prescribes the required therapy.

The primary occupation of the Birhors is making of ropes out of the bark of the *siali* creepers (*Lama Bayer*), which are used by the local peasantry for different agricultural and domestic purposes. A list of the type of the ropes in the Birhor terminology, their approximate cost per unit and manner of use is given below.

Sl. No.	Local term	Birhor term	Cost per unit	Manner of use	Daily out turn
1	<i>Sika</i> (Sling)	Sikur	Rs 5/- per pair	Used in carrying poles for carrying things on shoulders	2 pairs per head
2	<i>Pagha</i> (Halter for cattle)	Pagha	Rs 1/- per piece	Rope for tethering cattle	20 pieces per head
3	<i>Barjao</i> (Rope for drawing water)	Barehi	Rs 4/- per piece	Used for drawing water by means of pots from wells	10 pieces per two persons
4	<i>Panda chhati</i> (halter for buffalo)	Kodadgha	Rs 5/- per two pieces	Ropes in which buffaloes are tethered	8 to 10 pieces per head
5	<i>Chheli Pagha</i> (Halter for goat)	Meronijoda	5 paise per piece	For tying goats	20 pieces per head
6	<i>Jaunli</i> (Rope used during harvest)	Dhaunri	Rs. 2/- per four pairs	For tying cattle at the time of harvest	10 to 12 pieces per head

In addition to these ropes, the Birhors make small baskets (*Tupa*) out of the *siali* barks, which are used for oil pressing. Except the baskets and halters used for tying the buffaloes, which cannot be prepared by women, all other types of ropes are made by both the sexes. On an average a Birhor produces materials worth Rs 10/- to Rs. 12/- in a day.

The Birhors are skilled monkey catchers. They use nets made of *siali* creepers for catching monkeys. They eat the flesh of the monkeys and sell the skin to the local skin traders for cash. A taboo is observed against the use of turmeric paste for preparing curry out of monkey's flesh. It is generally believed by them that the use of turmeric in the preparation of the said curry will make them unsuccessful in their monkey hunting. Sometimes, they catch birds, snares, squirrels, hare and deer with the help of traps and nets. The birds and animals caught are generally disposed of in neighbouring villages or at market places for cash.

Many Birhors have learnt some of the techniques of agricultural operations such as weeding, transplanting and harvesting of paddy. The local people very often employ these people as labourers during agricultural season. The wage earned from this pursuit by both the sexes adds to their family income. Although the Birhors tap different sources for their livelihood, they run deficit in their food supply many a times. During scarce period they eat mango kernels, which are preserved at home for use in difficult times.

The staple food of the Birhors is rice. With the sale proceeds of ropes and forest produce they buy their weekly requirements of rice and other things from the market. They also buy corn and minor millets in harvest seasons and eat these in addition to cooked rice. They collect various types of green leaves, mushrooms and various types of fruits such as *Kendu*, palm and mango from the forest for their own consumption. During their trip to forest for collection of barks, they dig out roots, fibres and also collect honey which supplement their diet. In many places cocoons are available in forest and the Birhors are well acquainted with these places. The cocoons add to the income of the Birhors in the form of cash, which they use for buying their clothes.

The family budget calculated for a week of a Birhor shows that they do not have any stable income from week to week. The maximum amount of weekly income is in the order of Rs 60/- and the minimum, Rs 20/-.

The economic life of the Birhors is full of hazards and hardships and barely at the level of subsistence. Even though they live from hand to mouth, they appear to be joyful and contented.

The Birhor family is invariably of nuclear type. It comprises father, mother and unmarried children. In some cases either the widow mother or the widower father lives with the married son in his family. The next higher social unit is clan that regulates marriage and prohibits incestuous sexual union. Although a large number of clans are found among the Birhors, a study conducted at the *Kendumundi Tanda* found the following clans:

1. *Sinkhili*
2. *Hembrum*
3. *Nagpuria*
4. *Malihi*
5. *Sikria*

Marriage within the *Tanda* is in vogue as the *Tanda* is multi-clan in structure. Cross-cousin marriage is absent but marriage of sororate and levirate types are in vogue. Whenever, the people of a *Tanda* want to shift to a new place all the families of the *Tanda* move together to the new place where they set up their new *Tanda*. A man can leave his parent *Tanda* at his will and join a new *Tanda* elsewhere. He is also at liberty to return to his parent *Tanda* where he will be received by the inmates of the *Tanda* cordially. It is the customary practice that the newcomer offers drinks to the headman and the fellowmen of the *Tanda* for his readmission.

The headman of the *Tanda* is called *Mukhya*. His post is hereditary. The headman often acts as the priest. In this capacity he worships the deities and officiates in all the ritual performances.

Birhors punish the sinners and offenders by social boycott, which they call *Chindal* or *Began*. The situation which invokes this kind of social sanction is incestuous sexual union between brother and sister or persons belonging to the same clan. When any person develops maggots in the sore or any part of the body he is also boycotted until the sore is healed and a purificatory ritual is conducted accompanied with a common feast in the *Tanda*.

As regards their social interaction with the neighbouring communities, the Birhors eat cooked food in the houses of Santals and Kolha but not the *vice versa*. They do not accept cooked food from the Muslims, the Scheduled castes and the Kharias. Any breach of this social norm leads to social boycott.

The Birhors are polytheists. They believe that Gods and spirits who create trouble and cause illness and death are malevolent and others who bring progress and prosperity and overall well being to the society are benevolent. Ancestral worship is conducted with the purpose of enjoying good health and for being successful in hunting and collection of forest produce without meeting any accident. In the thicket of Similipal hill ranges the abode of their two supreme deities such as *Logohir* and *Budhimai* lies. They are worshipped regularly in different months. Every clan has its own deity for which, a small leaf hut is constructed in the *Tanda* and food and prayers are offered to the deity on all ritual occasions.

The Birhors lead a semi-nomadic style of life and have retained the practice of setting the *Tandas* very close to forest. Their economic life is very much dependent on Similipal hill ranges around which most of their *Tandas* are situated. Now the Birhors are thinking to give up their wandering habits and settle down permanently upon agriculture and allied pursuits. Presently, they have been identified as one among the 13 Primitive Tribal Groups (PTG) of Orissa. A micro project named Hill-Kharia and Mankirdia Development Agency headquartered at Jashipur in Mayurbhanj district is working for bringing about their all round development since 1987. It has set up two Mankirdia settlement colonies, one at Durdura and another at Kendumundi, to rehabilitate the nomads. The community has shown a good response to their development programmes initiated by the micro project and other agencies.

BONDO

P.S. Daspatnaik

The high hills located towards the remote south-western tip of the Malkangiri uplands and north-west of the river Machkund in the district of Koraput are inhabited by sparsely populated primitive tribes. The Bondos are one of them and the hills on which they live are called the Bondo Hills. Once they were regarded as a criminal tribe among the tribes of Orissa. Though few in number the tribe has successfully retained the distinctive features of its culture, chiefly on account of its geographical isolation, and more perhaps due to its stubborn and independent spirit. Their language is called *Remo*, which comes under the Austroasiatic language belonging to the Mundari group.

The tribe is divided into three groups: the Upper Bondos or Bara-Jangar group, who live on the slopes at 3,000 feet altitude, with Mudulipada as its capital in Khairput Block; the Lower Bondos, who live at the foot hills under symbiotic pressure of the surrounding peasantry, and the Gadaba-Bondos, who, being greatly influenced by the Gadabas, live at the same altitude as the Upper Bondos. Both the Barajangar group and Gadaba-Bondos are considered Hill Bondos.

According to the 1981 Census, the total population of the Bondos was 5,895 which further increased to 7,315 (3,475 males, 3,840 females) during 1991. The growth rate of this community during the period (1981-91) is 24.09 per cent. The sex ratio is 1105 females per 1000 males. The percentage of literacy which was 3.6 during 1981, increased to 4.2 during 1991.

Anthropologists and ethnologists like E. Thurston (1909), C. A. Henderson (1911), C. von Furer-Haimendorf (1945) and Verrier Elwin (1950) have regarded the Bondos as members of a group of Austroasiatic tribes, which had at some remote date migrated and settled in the wild Jeypore Hills.

From a geographical point of view the Bondo settlements can be divided into three groups: the Hill Bondos or Bara-Jangar group consisting of 12 villages, the Gadaba group of Hill Bondos consisting of 13 villages, and the plain group of 24 villages. All these villages come under Khairput Block.

There are both small and large Bondo villages situated either on hill tops or hill slopes. The village is considered to be the smallest territorial unit and consists of 4 to 5 hamlets inhabited by different clans. There are no regular streets within the village and the individual houses are scattered lying close to each other. The megalithic platform called *sindibor* is built either at the centre or at a convenient place in the village where the village meeting is held. The shrine of Hundi, the presiding deity of the village, is found at the entrance, while the dormitory house is found either at the middle or at the extreme end of the village.

A Bondo hut consists of two rooms. The larger apartment, which is used as sleeping- cum-cooking room, is about 8 feet wide and 6 feet long, with some raised platforms at each corner to keep utensils and water containers. The smaller apartment, which is about 5 feet in length and 4 feet in width, is used as a granary.

In between the two rooms is an interconnecting door. A verandah about 5 feet wide encircles the house on all sides. This serves the purpose of sleeping and gossiping. Those who can afford to do so enclose the verandah with clay walls. Other than an entrance door and a door in between the two rooms, there are no doors or windows in the hut. The walls are made up of mud mixed with straw or plastered bamboo. The roof is supported by a number of wooden pillars, beams are fitted, and bamboos are tied in different ways to make the roof gabled, and the latter is thatched with *pir* (a type of grass). Wooden racks and a shelf are fitted to the walls in the smaller room over which grain-containers are kept. Each house is constructed by individual family members. The auspiciousness of a house site is confirmed by the Disari (astrologer-cum-medicine man) through the process of rice divination and then a wooden pillar 4 feet in height called *muldei*, is posted at the centre of the site to represent the ancestral spirits. At the time of final entry to the house, the *muldei* is offered ritualistic food by the Disari. The Bondos do not maintain their houses properly. Household articles are extremely limited and meet only the bare necessities. These consist of a few earthenware pots, a bow with a bunch of arrows, a billhook, and a few agricultural tools and fish traps.

The Bondos use scanty clothes to cover their private parts only. The dress of a Bondo woman is remarkable. Men wear a *gosi*, a loin cloth 3 feet in length and 1.5 feet in width, whereas women use a *ringa* or *nadi* about 2 feet in length and 1 foot in width. This is a striped and coloured cloth tied to the waist thread (*thumiya*). Using their indigenous loom Bondo women weave *ringa* out of *keranga* fibre collected from the forest. Bondo children go naked upto 6 to 7 years of age. A wrapper is used on chilly nights. While on a visit or during feasts and festivals, the men wear dhoti and black shirts, while the females put on their usual *ringa* and cover the upper part of the body with an extra bunch of bead necklaces. Bondo women look majestic in their traditional dress and ornaments, which consist of a large number of bead necklaces which hang down to the navel and a number of necklaces of different colours and aluminium bands around their necks, head bands made of either grass or beads, aluminium bangles, nose rings, anklets, etc. They shave their heads completely and wear a number of bands around it.

The Bondos are mainly agriculturists. They also practise shifting cultivation (*klunda chas*) quite extensively. Their other sources of livelihood are collecting, hunting, fishing, animal husbandry and wage-earning.

The Bondos are expert cultivators. They cultivate four types of land: wet land (*jhola* or *livang*), upland (*pada*), hill slopes (*kunda* or *dongar*) for shifting cultivation, and kitchen gardens (*dinrbui*) within the settlement. All these types of land other than *dongar* are individually owned. *Dongar* lands are collectively owned by the clan members. Irrigated and terraced paddy fields are used for cultivation. They grow paddy by the transplantation method. Besides paddy, they grow cereals, pulses, millets and oilseeds such as- *kangu*, *suan jana*, oats, black gram, maize and niger. Maize, tobacco and vegetables are grown in the kitchen garden.

Though the forests have been depleted to a great extent, as forest dwellers the Bondo are still in the habit of going to distant forests to collect bamboo, wood,

bark, wild grass, fruits, greens and mushrooms. In their leisure hours they trap birds and animals. They also undertake ceremonial hunting in a group in the month of March-April. After the prey is killed it is equally distributed among all the families in the village.

Fishing is very rare in Bondo country. They rear cows, bullocks, buffaloes, goats, pigs, sheep and fowls. The cowshed is built separately in front of the house. Cowherds are employed against payment to graze the cattle.

The scope for wage-earning in the Bondo country is very much limited as the Bondo are reluctant to go to the plains. On the other hand the *goti* or bonded labour system is current in Bondo society. The labourer is bonded to the creditor for the loan taken by his father, grandfather or great grandfather to meet brideprice expenses or expenses incurred in fighting cases in the courts.

The economy of the Bondos is still essentially a barter economy. They sell their marketable surplus either in the LAMPs instituted recently in the area or in their different weekly markets at Mundiguda, Mathili and Govindapalli. They also exchange crops for various usable articles.

The family is the smallest social unit among the Bondos. It comprises a man, his wife and their children. Most of the families are of nuclear type. The extended or joint family is rare. This nuclear segmentation is due to the non-availability of adequate space in the old hut and the desire to build a separate house after marriage. The family being patrilocal, the daughter instead of living in the natal house goes to reside with her husband. The Bondos are patrilineal in respect of the inheritance of property. As a result, only the male heirs inherit property not the females. In a family the normal pattern of relationship between the head of the family and the other members is one of superordination and subordination. The traditions and mores of the society are transmitted to the young by the elders in the way of formal or informal institutions.

Bondo society is broadly divided into two moieties or *hansha* called Ontal (cobra) and Killo (tiger). These *hanshas* are therefore totemistic in nature. Ontal is the most numerous and is considered superior to the Killo.

The next biggest social unit above the family is the exogamous patrilineal clan organization, which is called *kuda* or *manda*, which comprises a number of families who are believed to be descended from a common ancestor. These clans derive their names from the village functionaries, such as the Bad-Naik, Challan, Dhangda Majhi, Kirsani, Sisa, etc. In due course, a village which was once inhabited by a single clan becomes multi-clan due to population exogamy, growth and movement. In spite of this the individual clans have been able to maintain their separate identity.

Thus, finally the village became the most important social unit. Though there are different *kudas* in a village who live separately with their identity, they share a common *sindibor* (village deity), and obey a common leader or *naik* and a

magico-religious head or *sisa*. They are tied together into a common brotherhood. The boys and girls of the same village are therefore treated as brothers and sisters.

The next widest social group is the confederacy known as the *bara-jangar* or *sorubhai* group, comprised of twelve Hill Bondo villages. The Bondos of these villages are treated as brothers as they share the *soru* meal, a special meal prepared on the occasion of a festival in honour of the Supreme Being, Patkhanda Mahaprabhu. As such, marriage ties are not established among the boys and girls of these twelve villages, even if they belong to different *kudas*. The entire *soru* group forms an exogamous unit.

The most important events in life are birth, marriage and death, and each event is observed with certain rituals by the Bondos. A woman during pregnancy observes certain restrictions in respect of her movement, diet and contact with outsiders.

After the birth of a child the family and its kin group observe birth pollution for nine days. On the ninth day the purificatory rite is performed. Chicken, tobacco, cooked rice and liquor are offered to the ancestors by the head of the family. On this occasion the *Disari* is summoned, and he also offers sun-dried rice and sacrifices a chicken to appease the ancestors. On the 15th day following birth the *Duhokaige* ceremony is performed, at which the maternal grandfather offers a feast to the lineage members of the child. In course of time the child, male or female, grows up and becomes more and more responsible. No special ceremony is held for the boy's initiation.

Marriage is the most important stage in the lifecycle of the Bondos. In Bondo society the boys and girls go to their respective dormitories called *ingersin* and *salani dingo* to sleep at night. The Bondo dormitory is chiefly a sort of matrimonial agency. Young boys are allowed to visit the girl's dormitories of different villages at night and join in the fun, music and dancing with the girls of such villages. They have an opportunity to establish intimacy with marriageable girls and select their sweethearts. Thus, the selection of spouses is left completely to the choice of the children. Once the selection is final, the parents give their consent and the marriage rite is performed. *Sehung*, the regular form of marriage, is very expensive. Brideprice (*sagar tanka*) is paid in the form of either cows or bullocks or buffaloes, together with one or two rupees. If the brideprice cannot be paid, a poor family takes a loan from the *shawkar* by remaining as a bonded labourer under the debt bondage. On the fixed date the bride comes to the groom's house in a procession. After the necessary rituals, both the bride and the groom are forcibly locked in a room for a few minutes, which gives them social recognition as husband and wife, after which they come out. In a few cases marriages are performed through intrusion. But the majority of Bondo marriages are performed through capture. Widows are allowed to remarry widowers in Bondo society.

The most interesting feature of Bondo marriage is that the wife is often older than the husband. Older girls prefer to marry younger boys who will earn for them when they grow old. When the wife grows old the husbands are sometimes

found intriguing with the younger brother's wife. This leads to family quarrels and divorce. The disparity in age also leads to polygyny in some cases in later years.

To the Bondos, death is believed to be the work of evil spirits, black magic and witchcraft. They practise both cremation and burial. After death the corpse is wrapped in a white cloth and placed on the funeral pyre. Most of the usables like bow and arrows, knife, dress and ornaments are kept on the pyre with the dead body. The eldest or any male agnate usually sets fire to the pyre. The *hud* ceremony is observed on the third day to ascertain whether the death was normal or due to sorcery. The *kingdak* or final purificatory ceremony is held on the tenth day. In the case of a murder, the dead body is surrendered to the police and therefore no funeral takes place.

Bondo religion at present is a mixture of both Hinduism and Animism. They have firm belief in *Patkhanda Mahaprabhu* whom they consider to be the creator of the universe. *Hundi* or *Bursung* (Mother Earth), *Sindibor* (the village Goddess), and *Kapurchuan* (the deity of the stream) are also conceived as their high gods and goddesses, for they are responsible for the existence of the animal kingdom. *Singrai* is their village deity. *Uga* and *Renungbor* are forest deities. *Dhartani* is the deity of the cowshed. The different *Kudas* or clans also have different gods and goddesses, and their procedure of worship also differs from one another. *Lamtachuan*, *Doliang*, *Garbeda*, *Kaliarani* and *Vinding Sagar* are the spirits of streams, the mango tree, low-land paddy fields, a hill and a musical drum respectively. These are benevolent spirits but require to be appeased periodically with adequate rituals. There are also evil spirits such as *Gunam*, *Kamini*, *Raskuda*, *Devta*, etc. who are dreaded. The spirits of dead ancestors, called *Muldei*, are housed in a small wooden post four feet long in the main room of the house. They are classed apart and offered rituals as and when festivals occur or when the inhabitants suffer. *Patkhanda Mahaprabhu*, otherwise known as *Singi-Arke* (Sun-moon), is represented by a sword three feet long and kept in the hollow of a banyan tree in the village of Mudulipada. The Barajangar group of villagers offer rituals ceremoniously during the Magha festival.

Other than these, the Bondos also believe in the efficacy of magic and sorcery. Shamans are the oracular practitioners who with the help of rice divination detect spirits, communicate with them in trance, and offer them rituals and sacrifices. They also practise black magic secretly. These shamans have their individual guardian spirits, whom they appease with periodic sacrifices.

The Pujari or Sisa is the village priest, the Dishari the medicine man-cum-astrologer, and the Gurmai the shaman. These functionaries act on behalf of the public at rituals.

Bowing and genuflection are the various means of obeisance used to satisfy the supernatural powers. Sun-dried rice is the only sacrificial food offered to the deities. Liquor is tabooed from use in all rituals except for the rituals offered to the ghosts and dreaded spirits. Even religious functionaries are tabooed from using liquor while performing rituals. Various animals like the buffalo, pig, goat, lamb,

and fowl are sacrificed to appease the deities. The Bondos believe in chance and luck, and associate them with the divine will of Patkhanda Mahaprabhu.

Bondo society tries to secure the favour and active help of supernatural powers with the help of magico-religious ceremonies so as to ensure safety and prosperity. They observe various festivals like Bondafun or Kuree in the month of June-July, Push Parab in the month of December-January, Magha Parab in the month of January-February and Chaita Parab in the month of February-March. They have also adopted Hindu festivals like Dasahara and Dewali. Most of these festivals are associated with their annual agricultural cycle.

The main items offered to the deities are sun-dried rice, vermilion, joss sticks, incense powder, mango twigs, leaf-cups and leaf-plates. Recently they have started offering molasses, coconut, plantain and sweetmeats to *Patkhanda Mahaprabhu*. They have taken the initiative in constructing a temple of God Rameswara on the top of a hillock at Mudulipada. They are so keen on Hinduism that a Bondo has been appointed as priest to offer rituals to Rameswara every day.

In the Bondo political organization the Naik occupies the highest position. He officiates for a period of three years, after which a fresh one is reappointed. He is an elderly person of the village with more experience. He presides over the village assembly and adjudicates cases concerning village affairs. Cases violating social customs and traditional conventions are brought to the assembly and decided. Punishment is given to the offender in accordance with the gravity of the case. The village headman is assisted by a Challan and Barika. The Challan is the organizer of the meeting and his post is hereditary. The Barika, who belongs to Dom caste, is the messenger of the village. He informs the police in case of any murder in the village. He is the first witness if a trial takes place in a court of law. He also acts as a liason between the Bondos and outsiders.

Like other tribal areas in Orissa, the Bondos have also started participating in the general panchayat election. Accordingly new ward members are being selected in different panchayats in the Bondo area. These members cooperate with the elderly village leaders and work for the overall development of the village. Over the village panchayat, there is a supreme panchayat called the *hara-jangar* confederation, in which twelve Bondo villages are grouped together. This is also called the *soru-bhai* panchayat. The Bada-Naik occupies the highest position. He officiates for a period of three years and enjoys one acre of lowland paddy field. He is appointed ceremoniously on the day of Magha Parab by the Naiks of the twelve villages. All important cases relating to the village boundary, adultery, divorce and such other social offences are decided by the Bada-Naik.

The Bondos are extremely aggressive. Their strong sense of equality and independence, age-old isolation, poverty, indulgence in excessive liquor consumption and fear of sorcery are the chief reasons for their committing criminal acts. Until the beginning of the fifth five-year plan, very few developmental programmes were taken up in the Bondo Hills. Only at the beginning of the fifth five-year plan, with the new concept of the sub-plan, concerted attention was given to ameliorating the socio-economic condition of the Bondos. Under the new

strategy, a micro-project was started in year 1976-77 to look after the development of the Bondos exclusively.

The Bondos have now gradually adopted the cultivation of wheat, potato, high-yielding paddy, pulses, vegetables, etc. They are now following the transplanting method in cultivating ragi. The project has adopted large horticultural plantations in *podu*-affected areas, which are maintained by the Bondos. This new strategy for development has brought health and happiness in the Bondo country, and the time will come when the Bondos will find themselves in the mainstream of the population.

DAL

Ch. P.K. Mohapatra

The Dal constitute a small tribe and have a population of 19,867 according to the 1991 Census. They are mostly found in the southern and western regions of Bolangir District and part of the western region of Kalahandi District. Out of their total population of 19,867 as many as 18,080 are found only in the districts of Kalahandi and Bolangir, the district of Bolangir having a major proportion of the population, i.e. 14,674. During the 1981 census their total number was 18,163. The growth rate in the decade between 1981 and 1991 is calculated as being 9.38 per cent. There has been a marginal growth among the literates during the decade, with the literacy rate at 16.46 per cent in the 1991 Census. Their main concentration in the Bolangir District is in Belpara, Khaprakhole and in Kantabanjhi Panchayat of Nuapada District.

The houses of the Dal are in the pattern of the local Hindu people and they thatch their houses with *khaparas* or country tiles prepared by themselves. A house is generally rectangular in ground plan. The floor of the house is made of earth with walls plastered with mud. It consists of 2 or 3 rooms having a separate kitchen. The cowshed is constructed separately adjacent to the hut. Each house has a kitchen garden properly fenced where vegetables are grown. They live with other caste people like the Bhuliyas, Loharas and Panos. The dress and ornaments are same as those of the local people. They speak colloquial Oriya like their neighbours and do not have a separate dialect of their own.

The Dal kinship system is very interesting. Earlier they were divided into six exogamous units, namely *Bhoi*, *Jhankar*, *Majhi*, *Mallik*, *Bisal* and *Jani*. In course of time the exogamous nature of few of the divisions like *Bhoi*, *Mallik*, *Majhi* and *Jani* has changed, and these have become endogamous units having two different sub-divisions. Each sub-division is an exogamous unit. For example, the *Bhoi* group is divided into two sub-divisions, namely *Sat gachhia* and *Bar gachhia*, i.e. seven trees and twelve trees. *Sat gachhia* consists of seven lineages like *Guruska Bhoi*, *Jugaska Bhoi*, *Lihujka Bhoi*, *Chilmilka Bhoi*, *Jadaka Bhoi*, *Jalangia Bhoi* and *Sat Malika Bhoi*. The other division, *Bar gachhia*, consists of twelve different lineages, namely *Patra*, *Mutka*, *Jahaska*, *Lipu Chika*, *Lurka*, *Karka*, *Bharka*, *Bisal*, *Kunar*, *Tilika*, *Banjahlaka* and *Thanapets*. The two sub-divisions of an endogamous unit are generally known as *hanjukha* and *mutka* and are exogamous. The other two units of the Dal like *Bisal* and *Jhankar* are exogamous units and can have marriage relations with the four units mentioned above.

Ordinarily they put on dress and ornaments like other caste Hindu neighbours. These ornaments are of the cheap, simple and lighter varieties. They rarely wear gold ornaments. The hairstyle of the Dal women is unique. They spend a lot of time in dressing the hair and decorate it with coloured ribbons, clips and specially designed combs.

The life cycle of the Dal is marked by four different rites connected with birth, youth, marriage and death. The birth of a child is always welcome in the Dal

community. They consider conception and pregnancy (*garavhas*) to be a blessing from God. The gestational period in some cases may be earlier and in some cases it may be late. At the end of five months of pregnancy when the woman feels foetal movement she declares that she is feeling heavy. She is not given any medicine during this period unless required. A pregnant woman has to follow certain food restrictions. She should not eat non-vegetarian food because it will create complications at the time of the delivery. Due to their poor economic condition, they cannot afford to provide pregnant women with a good diet. The diet in general consists of boiled rice, dal, edible leaves and a small quantity of vegetables. A pregnant woman has to take various precautions for the baby while it is in her womb. She should not see or touch a corpse lest it will bring danger to the baby in the womb. She should not go to the river or streams or to the burial ground, to a dark place or to the temple. A pregnant woman should not tie knots during a solar or lunar eclipse. A woman works despite of her pregnancy. It is recognised, however, that work which is too heavy may result in miscarriage and, therefore, the woman who wants a child should be careful about this.

When a pregnant woman feels labour pains, she immediately informs her mother-in-law or any other elderly female member of the family. The delivery takes place at one corner of the living room. The pregnant woman is asked to sit with her legs stretched forward holding a cot. Sometimes the woman in attendance massages her waist and belly with groundnut oil for a smooth delivery. Some elderly married women of the community remain present in the lying-in room to assist the pregnant woman in the delivery. No male is allowed to remain inside the house. After the child is born, the umbilical cord is severed by one of the women in attendance using a knife or razor blade, which are normally unsterilised. The placenta is then put in an earthen pot and handed over to the husband or father-in-law who takes it out to bury it in the back yard of the house. The pit is covered with a stone, so that it is not eaten away by a dog or any other animal.

In cases of unusual or difficult delivery the family calls for a nurse or a doctor from a nearby hospital. In cases of abortion or stillbirth the woman is always treated with the help of a nurse and sometimes by a doctor. In serious cases they take the woman to the hospital. The Dal despise barrenness. In most cases a barren woman is sent back to her parent's house or divorced and her husband remarries. The cause of barrenness is not clear. They say barrenness is due to the wrath of evil spirits and also to incurable diseases. Barrenness is thought to be removed by worshipping the village deity. Nowadays, the Dal also get medicines from the hospital and accept the advice of the doctor concerning removing barrenness.

Soon after birth the female attendant cleans the baby with a piece of cotton cloth. Then she anoints both the mother and the baby with castor oil or til oil or groundnut oil and bathes them in tepid water. The new-born infant is warmed up three times daily for thirty consecutive days. Then this is reduced to two times and ceases when the baby is six months old.

Five to six hours after delivery the attendant or the mother herself extracts some milk from her breasts and throws it away. Then she anoints the nipples with

warm cow's ghee and starts feeding the new-born child. She takes some powder of *akanbindi* leaves for three consecutive days. Sometimes she is given allopathic treatment if considered necessary for a period of six days or if the naval cord drops off. Both mother and child take a purificatory bath in the morning with warm water after being anointed with oil and turmeric paste. The family invites all the members of the lineage (*kutumb lok*) for the celebration of a purificatory ceremony called *Handi Dharana*. The special feature of this ceremony is that 7 to 9 women take the parturient woman to the kitchen and make her touch the cooking pots in which food is stored. The guests present on the occasion are served with such food touched by her. From that day on the mother is allowed to do all her normal household tasks.

Whenever the baby cries the mother immediately feeds it. The frequency of feeding varies from child to child. If the mother dies the child is fed by other female members from the breast for a month or so. Thereafter cow's or goat's milk added with water is given in a feeding bottle. If mother's milk is not sufficient the baby is given cow's milk.

On the day of delivery the woman is given a liquid diet, and from the second day onwards she is given boiled rice, together with a handful of garlic fried in ghee once a day. She is allowed to take this for a week or so. From the twentieth day onwards she is given full meals twice a day. The name-giving ceremony takes place on the 21st or 30th day after the birth. In the morning both mother and child put on new clothes presented by the maternal uncle after a purificatory bath. A Brahman is called to perform a *puja* and to give a name to the child. If the family can afford it, a feast is arranged for the relatives.

The first hair-cutting of the infant takes place at three months. The maternal uncle or, if he is not available, any person of the clan first shaves the infant after sacrificing a fowl to the deities. The infant is given rice and other starchy food at seven months when the first eating of rice ceremony takes place. In most cases the cost of the ceremony is borne by the maternal uncle and in his absence by the father. On this occasion the baby, dressed in a new cloth, is fed rice porridge from a new plate. The mother does not wean away the child from breast-feeding deliberately as it is considered a sin. The baby is allowed to take breast milk as long as it is there. On the arrival of a new baby the previous one is weaned away gradually.

The new-born baby sleeps most of the time, preferably on a cot. There is no provision of a cradle but sometimes a child sleeps in a *charpoi* hung from the roof of the house. At night it sleeps with the mother until it is 6 to 7 years old. Generally the child begins to walk at about one and half years. But in many cases this is delayed because of poor growth. Walking is taught to the babies by their elder siblings.

For the first six months the baby is allowed to urinate and defecate on a piece of cloth, which is spread over its bed. The mother changes the wet cloth whenever it is noticed. During this period the mother cleans the child's mouth with a piece of cloth dipped in oil. Subsequently it is taught to use a *nim*, *karanja* or *sal*

twig to brush its teeth. Children at the age of three years are taught by their mother and other elder persons of the family about bathing and bodily cleanliness, wearing dresses and combing the hair.

Up to three years most children go naked. Sex differentiation is observed in their dress pattern, little girls are found wearing frocks and panties, and boys putting on shirts and shorts. Girls from 7 years to 8 years wear small saris, but the boys continue to wear shirts and shorts.

The first words taught to the baby are *bua* (father) and *ha* (mother). Most children start talking at the age of one half to two years. No care is taken to help the children to talk. In such cases the children have to pick up it through the absorptive process of hearing older people. Sex differentiation is observed right from childhood in their play. Male children tend to play separately with toys made of wood sticks and stones, while the girls play with coconut shells, tile, lid and bottle corks. Grown-up girls in a group go to the field to defecate in the morning and evening and also to bathe in the nearby pond. The boys also form a group and wander about the village to play and gossip. The boys of poor families do not go to school from 12 or 13 but help their parents in economic activities.

Puberty is an important occasion in the life of a girl. After her first menses she is considered mature and ready for marriage. At the onset of puberty she is kept secluded in a part of the house for seven days. During this period she is not allowed to see the faces of the male members of the family. The mother and other female members attend her. On the seventh day she takes a purificatory bath after anointing oil and turmeric paste over the body. She puts on a new sari, a blouse, bangles and ribbons. Then she is asked to prepare rice porridge and distribute it to all her family members and friends.

Physical punishment is inflicted on children when they are capable of understanding language, i.e. after three years. Punishment is given immediately after a mistake is committed in early childhood. Physical punishment generally consists of beating and pulling the hair or ears. Adults are not beaten but scolded for the mistakes they commit. Grown-up boys or girls are usually not beaten but scolded for their mistakes.

Monogamy is the rule but there are also cases of polygamous marriages. Each clan is exogamous. However, a person can also marry the wife of another person belonging to his own clan if the person dies. Marriage by negotiation is very common. In choosing a bride, father's sister's daughter and mother's brother's daughter are preferred. Usually the proposal of marriage is made by the boy's parents. The parents or the elder brother of the groom goes with a pot of liquor and a basket full of fried rice (*bhuga*), *lia* (*khan*) or flat rice (*chuda*) to the bride's house accompanied by his relatives. If the father of the bride accepts the liquor and eats the *bhuga* and *chuda*, the negotiation is finally approved. On that day the date for the marriage is fixed with the help of the village astrologer or *Nahaka*, once the brideprice has been fixed. The brideprice usually consists of Rs 40/- in cash along with clothes for all the members of bride's family, one quintal of rice, a goat and about twenty bottles of liquor. On the day of marriage

the groom sits on a sacred mat on the altar and the rituals start. The Jhankar or priest of the community presides over the function. Marriage rituals are identical with those of Hindus. Levirate and sororate are allowed. The Dal have a few persons of their own who are known as *Mahamanab*. They are on the lower rung of Dal society and exert immense influence with regard to issues like divorce and disputes among the Dal. They conduct the *Jatia Samaj Bhoji*, where all the Dal of that region gather and discuss the issue and are entertained by the leaders. The contributions are collected from parties who present themselves for the settlement of their disputes and are aided by the leaders who are economically better off. In cases of divorce, the girl who is divorced is brought to the gathering by her father. The man who is divorcing her gives the divorcee Rs. 5 and a new cloth. The *Mahamanab* or the leader gives the girl to another person on that day and the brideprice procured is spent on feasting and merrymaking. These social gatherings are usually held in the month of Chaitra and Baisakh. People from distant villages are invited to attend the gathering.

The Dal are very fond of dancing and singing. Both boys and girls sing and dance together. As soon as night approaches the unmarried boys and girls get together for dancing and singing. The boys and girls of the same village do not dance together, as they are considered brothers and sisters. In fact, dancing and singing are organised on various ceremonial occasions. Their musical instruments include *dhola*, *nisan*, *ghumra*, *badadhola* and *bainshti* (Flute). Before dancing, country liquor is habitually drunk by the Dal.

Corpses are generally cremated. Death pollution continues for ten days. On the third day the Telaghara ceremony is observed where the inmates of the deceased's house use *tolo* oil and take a purificatory bath in the stream. From that day on people are allowed to mix with outsiders. On the tenth day the final purificatory ceremony takes place as among the Hindus.

The family is considered to be the smallest social unit. It is patrilineal, patrilocal and patripotestal. Property is inherited through the male line. In a Dal family unmarried sons normally stay with their parents and separate after their own marriages. Though a married son maintains a house of his own, he still maintains his close links with his parents and the other unmarried brothers and sisters. In all social, economic and religious matters the entire family works together as a single unit. The paternal property is divided among the brothers only after the death of the father.

In the economic field they live as cultivators in both districts. They plough both wet land and upland. They know the use of manure and chemical fertilizer, pesticide and insecticide. They cultivate ragi and *kodua* more than paddy and *gurji*. In the uplands, they grow H.Y.V. paddy, *kodua*, ragi, pulses like *mung*, *biri*, *arhar*, *kulthi* and seasonal vegetables. In wet and medium land they grow only paddy. Tobacco is also grown in the kitchen gardens of almost everyone. Apart from these each Dal owns a number of *mahul* trees. *Mahul* is collected and stored by each family and they depend on it for their food. Mostly *mahul* is exchanged for ragi and *kodua* with the contractors who brew liquor in the neighbourhood. They depend on the nearby forest for collecting firewood, fruits, green leaves, honey and

lac. Hunting is a part-time activity. Landless families depend entirely on day wages. Some families are engaged in brick- and tile-making. They depend on the nearby markets for salt, oil, turmeric and cloths. These are sold by Marwari businessmen who charge exorbitant prices for an article. The Kultas, Bhuliyas and Marwaris also exploit the Dal by advancing them loans for produce at a nominal rate as a condition at the time of giving loan. The Dal are compelled to dispose of their produce at the rate fixed at the time the loan is advanced.

The Dal of Belpara, Khaparakhole and Kantabanjhi regions are connected with the worship of the God Mahadev at a place known as Harisankar, where there is a temple to Lord Siva, where the Dal are the traditional worshippers of this god. The Dal of the Komna and Khariar blocks of Nuapada District are still believers in Hinduism and all their activities are influenced by the beliefs and practices of their Hindu neighbours. They say that they worship all the major Gods and Goddesses of the Hindu pantheon such as Siva, Ram, Krishna, Durga, Kali, etc. Apart from that each *gotra* mentioned above has a God of its own. For example, *Vaira* and *Jannakarher* are the gods worshipped by the *Bhoi* group, *Dolkribudhi* and *Patkhanda* are the gods worshipped by the *jani* group, *Duarsani*, *Chandi Majhi* and *Bar Roul* are worshipped by the *bisal* group. They have separate sacred houses for each of these gods and goddesses.

The Dal observe different festivals and rituals according to the Hindu calendar. Some of the festivals concerning their religious life are given below:

1. Magha Tiar This is celebrated in the month of Magha (Jan., Feb. and March). The home deity is worshipped. No sacrifice is made on this occasion.
2. Mahula Kuchi This is celebrated in the month of Phaguna (Feb-March). On this occasion the ancestral spirits are worshipped. They are appeased with *mahua* liquor and a cock.
3. Chaita Parab This is celebrated in the month of Chaitra (March-April). On this occasion a goat or a cock is sacrificed in front of the home deity.
4. Bihan Behera This is observed in the month of Baisakha (April- May) when paddy appears for the first time.
5. Mati Jatra In the month of Jestha (May-June) the mother earth is worshipped at the end of the village.
6. Asadha Khai This is observed in the month of Asadha (June-July). Communal worshipping made first at the village and then in the forest.
7. Kodua Jatra In the month of Sravana (July-August) this ceremony is performed at the individual family level. The home deities and ancestral spirits are worshipped.

8. Navana Puja This is performed when new rice is eaten. It is mostly observed in the kitchen or *bhitarghar*.
9. Panchhada Puja This is commonly observed and is held in the middle of the village under a *tulsi* plant. A Brahman priest performs the rituals.
10. Chauladhua On this occasion the new rice is washed for cooking.
11. Laxmi Puja In the month of Margasira (October-November), like other Oriya families, they worship the goddess of wealth.
12. Pus Punei This is observed in the month of Pausa (November-December) and is an important festival in the Dal community. Fowls are sacrificed in front of the home deity.

Apart from these festivals they have a number of deities of their own. Among them the important ones are *Patkhanda*, *Biru*, *Bhagabati*, *Gangadevi*, *Bahuna*, *Jharjhar*, *Mauli* and *Dharani*. They also worship forest deities like *Mamuli*, *Khud*, *Dharani*, *Jader* and *Lili*. At these festivals they eat, drink and dance.

DHARUA

Ch. P.K. Mohapatra

The Dharua or Dharua Gonds are one of the oldest tribes of Orissa and are found in different districts of the state. According to Sir H. Risley they are one of the several septs of the Gonds and are otherwise known as Naiks. He is of the opinion that the Dharua are the ordinary Gonds, who form an endogamous group in most districts. According to Russell the word 'Dharua' may be derived from *dhur* (dust), that is, the common people, and they are inferior to Raj Gonds. On the other hand, Sir Edward A. Gait thinks that the Dharua were once the main tribe of Narsingpur State and formed a major group. At that time they were ranked high and enjoyed the services of the Brahmans, Bhandari and Dhoba, all of whose services are now denied to them and they are no longer of any political importance. They are considered a distinct community so far as physical characteristics are concerned. The Dharuas closely resemble the Negro type. They are of medium stature with well-developed chests and massive shoulders, and the nose is broad. Their hair is black, coarse and curly, and they have scant growth of beard and moustache.

The population of the Dharuas in three different census years shows that their population increased from 7210 in 1961 to 8791 in 1971. But after that their population decreased and in 1981 it was recorded at 8610 and it again increased to 11,512 in 1991. The overall percentage of decrease from 1971 to 1981 was 2 percent and the overall percentage of increase between 1981 and 1991 is 33.69 percent. The sex ratio according to the 1991 Census is 808 females per 1000 males. The percentage of literacy, which was 6.1 in 1981, went up to 7.3 in 1991.

As mentioned before, in most districts the Dharua form one endogamous group. Some large septs, especially the *Mika* and *Dharuva*, are divided into a number of sub-septs within each of which marriage is not allowed. The Dharua or Dharua Gonds are divided into *Soma* (Moon), *Surya* (Sun), *Jadu*, *Kadamba*, *Gangu* and *Garga vansas*, which are well known Kshatriya stocks of India, and it seems that this classification of the tribe has most probably been based on the tradition of the Hindu Puranas. Each of the *vansas* is said to have a *rishi* representing the name of the clan of the family and it is interesting to note that each *rishi* is represented by an animal which is highly respected by the family. According to P. Acharya, these six *vansas* have been classified according to the number of gods, and this classification is due to the number of sons born to each of the seven sons of Parameswar at the time of creation. This classification according to Sri Acharya is as follows:

Name of family	Name of God	Name of Rishi	Name of animal
1. Ganga	Duideo	Makar	Crocodile
2. Surya	Tirideo	Vasistha	Lion
3. Kadamba	Charideo	Subesh	Falcon
4. Jadu	Pand deo	Kasyp	Tortoise
5. Garga	Chhadeo	Garga	Elephant
6. Soma	Sata deo	Nagasa	Cobra

The father acts as the head of the family and manages it. The income of the family members goes to the headman, and it is the headman's duty to fulfil the needs of the family members. Both nuclear and joint families are found among the Dharuas.

Marriage is an important social obligation. In the Dharua community the father is over-anxious to get his sons and daughters married early. There is no fixed age for the marriage of both the sexes, except that they should marry as early as possible. However, the practice of both infant and adult marriages is found among the Dharua, but under Hindu influence they are more inclined to adult marriage. Marriage is generally undertaken by parental arrangement. *Sinduradan* and marriage to a mango tree form a prominent part of the ritual of this tribe, and the marriage ends with water being poured over the bride and groom by a barber.

In olden times the Dharua were mostly agriculturists by occupation though some of them were employed in the military service of the native Rajas. But in course of time, a great change took place in their economic life. Now, besides being agriculturists, they are found in different wage-earning professions. They are in character reserved, sullen and suspicious, and thus get themselves into a lot of trouble in various ways. They are indifferent cultivators and consequently the yield from their land cannot provide for the family's consumption. However, National plans are being worked out to provide them with ample opportunities for their economic development.

Religion is the cream of every society. The cultural superstructure is based firmly on religion. The Dharua worship the gods associated with their clans. Their supreme gods are known as *Bar Do* and *Dhulha Deo*. In addition to the above gods they also worship Hindu gods and goddesses, coming into close contact with neighbouring clean-caste people. They also believe in the existence of ghosts and spirits and thus offer food to their ancestors at the time of the observance of various festivals. The Dharua do believe in witchcraft. When any member of a family is attacked with disease, people think that it is due to the anger of a god or goddess, and they sacrifice fowls, etc. to propitiate the god or goddess.

The Dharua burn corpses. Before the dead body is taken to the funeral ground, it is anointed with oil and turmeric and is wrapped in a new cloth. The dead body is generally carried by the clan members to the funeral ground and disposed of there. The kith and kin of deceased mourn and observe death pollution for a temporary period of three days, after which they purify themselves by bathing. On the third day they make offerings of food to the departed soul.

DIDAYI

B. Chowdhury

The Didayi are a small group listed as one of the sixty-two Scheduled Tribes in the State of Orissa. They are a typical tribe found only in the Konda Kamberu Hill ranges of the Eastern Ghats in the Malkangiri District in Orissa and are described as a 'wild tribe' by Verrier Elwin (1950) and as 'the stratum of primitive semi-nomadic shifting cultivators' by C. von Furer-Haimendorf (1945).

The Didayi legend of origin tends to show that the Bondo were their elder brothers and other tribes like the Gadaba and the Paroja their brethren. According to their legends, in the beginning the universe was full of water. Once a gourd with two children, one male and the other female, fell down from heaven and started floating on the water. Being in dire calamity, the two children cried helplessly. On hearing their lamentable cries, *Mahapru*, the creator of the universe, sent a crow to ascertain the source of the cry and the reason for it. The crow discovered the source and told *Mahapru* about the helplessness of the two children. *Mahapru* became compassionate and created the earth with trees, plants, lakes, mountains, rivers, birds and animals out of various parts of his body, asking the two children to travel in opposite directions, which they complied with. After a long separation they met once again under a *kendu* tree. Here they indulged themselves in passionate love and the girl gave birth to a number of children, who became the original settlers like the Bondo, the Gadaba, the Paroja and the Didayi in the earth. Up until today the Didayi live in the midst of these tribal communities and have many cultural similarities with the Gadaba and Bondo in particular.

The name by which the Didayi know themselves is *Gntre*, meaning 'man'. The name Didayi, meaning 'wild people', has been applied to them by outsiders. The Didayi have their own dialect, which is very similar to those of the Gadaba and the Bondo. Their dialect is classified in the non-Kherwarian branch of the Austroasiatic family.

The area inhabited by the Didayi is intersected by the well-known Bondo Hills, which form part of the Konda Kamberu hill ranges of the Eastern Ghats. The Machhkund river, which flows along the Ghat, forms three well-marked sub-regions. The first sub-region lying on the left bank of the river Machhkund is comparatively flat, where Didayi villages like Orapadar, Bhojaguda, Sanyasiguda, Totaguda, Jantra, Dakepada and Dabugam are located. The second sub-region lying between the Machhkund river and the Bondo Hills is characterised by rugged and mountaineous terrain, where the elevation of land increases from the north-west and slopes towards the south-east. Here Hill Didayi villages like Bayapada, Suripada, Ganjapada, Badkiaguda, Khajunguda, Amblibeda, Gisingijhola and Damarbeda are located. The third sub-region lying between the Bondo Hills and the Jeypore-Chitrakunda road is partly flat and partly hilly. Muduliguda, Oringi, Purunaguma and Chillipada are important villages located in this sub-region.

The climate of the area is more or less like that of the Deccan Plateau, but it is milder on account of the high elevation. The area receives about 79 per cent of

its annual rainfall during the monsoon season, which lasts from June to September. The annual rainfall varied from 1017.09 mm to 2191.04 mm during the period 1971-1980. The soil is rocky and red in most parts of the area. It is mostly porous having a low water-retention capacity. The surface consists of undulating laterite beds resting on rock beds. The forests of the area contain deciduous species like *sahai*, *hije*, *simuli*, *dhaura*, *kendu*, bamboo, etc. in the hilly region, and *sal* and teak in the comparatively flat area. Here wild animals like the deer, sambar, bear, monkey, wild boar, leopard, wild dog and tiger are seen. Peafowls, red and grey fowls are very commonly found.

There has been marked variation in the growth rate of the Didayi population. In 1941 their population was 1661, which rose to 1978 in 1961, registering an average annual growth rate of less than 1 per cent. This increased to 2164 in 1971, showing the same average annual growth rate as against 2 per cent for the total tribal population and 2.5 per cent for the total population of the State. But in 1981 the Didayi population declined to 1977, registering a declining trend of 8.6 per cent during the period from 1971 to 1981. It increased to 5,471 in 1991 showing a growth rate of 179.59 per cent between 1981-91. They had a very low rate of literacy in both 1961 (2.72%) and 1971 (0.78%) but in 1981 a substantial increase was noticed in the number of literates who constitute 3.2 per cent of their total population. In 1991 their level of literacy rose to 6.2 per cent.

In the past the Didayi were in the habit of shifting their settlement from place to place to bring suitable patches of forest land under shifting cultivation. But now they lead a settled life in both the plains and the mountainous region. In Didayi villages, houses lie scattered, sometimes two to three houses are built facing a common courtyard. The house with the kitchen garden close to it is always protected with a fence. The most significant common place, known as *gulising* (an open space), where meetings of the village panchayat are held to conduct communal ceremonies and dances, is located at the central place of the village.

The Didayi house has a rectangular ground plan, 13.5 feet in length and 10.5 feet in breadth. Each house has a front verandah with a door. The houses have mud walls and two-slope roofs thatched with wild grass called *piri*. The house is divided into three parts by bamboo wattle. The hearth and the kitchen are located in one corner below an over-hanging wattle. The middle part is used for sleeping and the other part for storing grains and household belongings. They build separate sheds for cows, goats and pigs, while fowls, if any, occupy a corner of the living house. A Didayi house contains limited material belongings, such as brass and aluminium utensils, earthen vessels and gourds for storing water, baskets for storing grains, mats of wild-date palm leaves, grinding stones, husking levers, agricultural implements and weapons used in hunting.

The self-made traditional women's dress, called *kisalu*, is now replaced by long saris available in the local market. Didayi women are fond of ornaments made of silver, gold, aluminium and alloys. The use of beads is not so common as among their Bondo neighbours.

One of the characteristic features of Didayi social organization is the existence of the moiety system. Their society is divided into two exogamous segments, which may be equated with moieties, each containing totemic groups called *gta*. All members of a single moiety are consanguineal relatives and consider members of the other moiety to be affinal relatives. One moiety, namely *Nkhoo* (tiger), is composed of one totemic group, and the other has four totemic groups viz *Mala* (cobra), *Goe* (bear), *Musali* (crocodile) and *Gei* (tortoise). These totemic groups are exogamous, and all members of a particular *gta* pay reverence to their totemic animal whenever they meet and abstain from killing or injuring it. The totemic clans are strictly exogamous. Some of these clans are further sub-divided into several sub-clans, the names of which are used as surnames by the members of the respective groups.

For example, the members of the *Nkhoo gta* have surnames like *Gudia*, *Ghia*, *Dongar Majhi*, *Nkak*, *Dhangar Majhi*, *Palasi*, *Muduli*, *Muduli Palasi*, and *Sig*. Similarly the members of the *Mala gta* use surnames like *Niar*, *Golpeda*, *Pujari*, *Gta*, *Palasi*, *Truk*, *Snohe*, *Angra Bisoi*, *Kusuah*, *Mleeh* and *Rimbi*. The *Goe gta* has four, viz *Sanvasi*, *Bhoi*, *Goloeda* and *Rapeda*. All members of the *Musali gta* bear the surname *Kumbhai* and that of *Goe gta* *Rachhi* only.

Each clan is further sub-divided into several lineage groups called *biria*, formed by all the consanguineal relatives in a village under the joint leadership of the *manag* (the eldest male member of the group) and the *dhanang* (the second eldest male member of the group), who discharge important social functions like regulating the conduct and marriage negotiations of its members and in representing and protecting the interests of the group in the traditional village panchayat.

The family, which is patrilocal and patrilineal, is mostly nuclear and monogamous, since a son has to live in his own home and hearth soon after his marriage. In few cases married sons live with their parents or two married brothers live jointly. A family is a closely knit group in earning their livelihood and maintaining themselves. Succession and inheritance of property are always in the male line. If a man dies without a son, his property is inherited by his brother.

The relationship and behaviour pattern of kinsmen in Didayi society corresponds to its classificatory terminological system. Among them the father's brother and mother's brother are highly respected. Familiarity among cross cousins, who are potential mates because of the prevalence of cross-cousin marriage system, is tolerated. There is strict avoidance between a man and his wife's parents and wife's elder sister and between a woman and her husband's elder brother and parents.

Didayi parents are fond of children and any indication of pregnancy is a matter of joy for the couple. At the time of childbirth, experienced women of the lineage group assist the pregnant woman. On the tenth day the child is given a name ceremonially. The baby is nursed for up to three years, and during this period the birth of another child is generally avoided. When the children enter

adolescence, they are categorised according to sex, and at the approach of youth they are allowed to mix with their age-mates for the selection of a life companion.

Final choice in the marriage is generally made by the young couple concerned. Monogamy is the common practice but in exceptional cases polygyny is practised. Cross cousins in the mother's line is the most preferred type. Marriage by negotiation is very elaborate and expensive and is generally avoided. In the regular negotiated form of marriage, called *roso*, the bride is taken in a procession, accompanied by dancing and singing to the tune of the musical instruments, to the bride-groom's village for the marriage rite, which is celebrated with dancing, singing and feasting. Besides this negotiated form of marriage, they have other ways of acquiring mates. These are *Udli* (marriage by elopement), *Paisamuddi* (marriage by intrusion), *Gubhoi* (marriage by capture) and *Gariya* (marriage by service). The enormous expenses involved in a negotiated marriage can be avoided in these types of marriage. Marriages by capture and elopement are common. The payment of brideprice, which generally consists of Rs 40/- to Rs 80/- in cash, a potful of palm wine and five measures of rice, is made to the girl's family. If a boy is unable to pay it, he goes to serve in the family of the would-be father-in-law for a stipulated period to get his hands on his beloved. Widow remarriage, junior levirate and sororate are prevalent. Divorce on grounds like adultery, laziness, lack of adjustment etc. is allowed.

When a person dies, the corpse, along with some of the favourite personal belongings of the deceased like his dress, axe, knife, bow and arrow, are taken in a funeral procession to the cremation ground. The corpse is burnt, and mourning is observed for ten days when the village priest ceremonially offers cooked food to the guest of the deceased. Funeral rites are concluded with communal dancing and singing.

The economic life of the Didayi at present is still at subsistence level and depends on cultivation, both settled and shifting, combined with forest collection, hunting, the domestication of animals and wage-earning. According to the Census 1971, 722 out of 726 workers were returned as cultivators and agricultural labourers. The Plains Didayi mainly depend on settled cultivation on whatever amount of wet land they possess, and on forest collection and wage-earning as subsidiary sources, while the Hill Didayi largely depends on shifting cultivation supplemented by forest collection and hunting. The survey conducted by THRTI in 1982 reveals that 25.64 per cent of 897 Didayi households carry on wet cultivation only, 34.22 per cent both shifting and wet cultivation, and 35.67 per cent only shifting cultivation. In other words nearly 70 per cent of Didayi households still depend on shifting cultivation in whole or part.

The Didayi carry on shifting cultivation, called *hri*, on the hill slopes adjacent to their respective villages. The work cycle starts with the cutting of trees and bushes in the selected patches after winter. These felled trees and cleared bush are allowed to dry up until March or April, when these are set on fire. Then the ashes are spread over the patch around which fencing should have been fixed in the meantime to protect the crops from damage by wild animals. After sowing the seeds in late June or early July, when the monsoon starts, the soil is raked with the

help of a hand hoe and with bullock-driven plough. They grow minor millets like ragi, *suan*, jawar and *kandula* (red gram) in the first year and *birhi* (black gram) or niger and brinjal in the subsequent two years. A patch is cultivated for three consecutive years and left fallow for 10 to 12 years.

In upland areas the Didayi grow a few varieties of millet, oilseeds and grams, while in the lowlands they only grow paddy. Bullock-driven ploughs are used in cultivating this type of land. In the plains, the Didayis are now anxious to take up wet cultivation on whatever land available, but they do not possess knowledge of improved methods of cultivation, and do not have capital in the shape of suitable implements or ploughing bullocks with which they can obtain a higher yield.

Basketry, primarily for their own use and occasionally for sale, is made. The rearing of a few varieties of domestic animals like cows, pigs, fowls and goats is common.

Although the Didayi mainly depend on cultivation, the collection of forest produce like edible fruits, leaves, flowers, shoots, roots and mushrooms at different seasons and hunting are still important and supplementary sources of livelihood. Firewood, timber, bamboo, thatching grass and fibres for ropes are also collected from the forest. Men, women and children all take part in forest collection. At the time of the collection, they consume the edible items on the spot, but bring the remaining items home. The sago palm trees in the forest provide them their favourite drink during the summer. The flour prepared by crushing the pith of dead sago-palm trees is used to prepare cake gruel. The collection and sale of *kendu* leaves, mangoes, tamarind, arrowroot, etc. bring them additional income.

Hunting, once an important activity of the Didayi, has become a thing of the past in recent times due to forest regulations. But some of them are skilled hunters who never miss any opportunity to hunt. When guarding the standing crops in the *podu* land and moving through the forest for collecting purposes, birds and animals like deer, sambar, *kutra*, etc. are often hunted. In the month of Chaitra (March-April), the annual hunting ceremony called *Goesendia Hia* is observed, while the ceremonial hunting during the eating of first fruits ceremony called *Ghia Panda* is observed in Baisakh (April-May).

In spite of their dependency on cultivation and other economic pursuits, they still lead a hand-to-mouth living. In cases of crop failure, the Hill Didayi depend on forest collecting and hunting, the Plains Didayis on wage earning. Ragi and minor millets constitute the staple food among the Hill Didayis and rice among the Plains Didayis. These are supplemented by seasonal fruits, roots and tubers collected from the forest. *Mohua* liquor and the juice of the sago palm and date palm are their favourite alcoholic drinks, consumed on festive occasions.

In the past, Didayi society had a well-organized territorial socio-political organization at different levels. The largest unit was the apex organization of the whole tribe meeting once in a year at Kudumulguma village to solve inter-village and inter-tribal problems and to consider the larger issues of tribal life. Such

meetings, which were attended by the leaders and influential members of all Didayi villages, were presided over by one of the secular headmen of an important village. A group of adjacent villages having common forest territories formed a single inter-village organization to protect their rights over forestland. But both these systems have now become defunct and belong to the past.

The traditional village panchayat now exists as the most powerful socio-political organization at the village level. All village elders, under the leadership of the Naik, the secular headman, and the Palasi, the village priest, with their messenger called Chalan, constitute the village panchayat. These posts are normally hereditary in the male line. The village panchayat is a corporate body, the purpose of which is to regulate the behavior of each individual in the village and to organize corporate activities in the social, political, economic and religious spheres. The Naik represents his village to outsiders whenever occasion arises.

The religious life of the Didayi centres round the worship of Mother Earth, represented by a big stone called *Brihu* as the supreme being, although the name of Mahapru, identified as the creator, is uttered at each worship. Their pantheon includes several gods, with goddesses as their counterparts. These are *Buro Bhairo* and *Nahnangri*, *Bangur* and *Raskurka*, *Goa* and *Sendia*, *Ran* and *Aksia*, *Goud* and *Suni*, *Thakran* and *Burimata*, *Bok* and *Pa*. These deities are amenable and compassionate. The Didayi also believe in the existence of a number of semi-gods, who are worshipped at regular intervals to prevent diseases and calamity in their society.

Deities are regularly propitiated through a series of religious ceremonies throughout the year. The most important festival of the year is Lendi Panda, which signifies the beginning of the agricultural cycle. This is observed very elaborately in the month of Magha (January-February) in honour of Mother Earth. In the month of Chaita (March-April), the ceremonial sowing of seeds is carried out by the village priest in a ceremony called *Siholove Hia* in honour of Iswar and Parvati. This is followed by the annual hunting ceremony called *Goesendia Hia* in the same month. Then comes another important festival known as *Ghta panda* in April-May which marks the first eating of new fruits like sal seeds, mangoes, mohua flowers, etc., followed by ceremonial hunting *Dihir Hia* and *Gonghir Hia*, which marks the beginning of ceremonial harvesting of the main crop rice is celebrated in the month of Pond (November-December). The *Pusarke Panda*, the closing religious ceremony of the year, is celebrated in the month of Pus (December-January).

On the occasion of each of these ceremonies the sacrifice of animals like fowls, goats and pigs is very common. These occasions are celebrated by dancing and singing continuously for several days.

The Didayi possess a number of primitive characteristics, and the Government of India have rightly declared them to be one of the primitive tribal groups found in the state. They are a small and distinctive group depending largely on a staple form of agriculture called shifting cultivation and forest collection, have simple tools and limited material belongings, and are still governed by their customary laws, which are administered by the traditional village panchayat, led by

the secular headman and the priest. In order to bring them within the ambit of intensive developmental programmes, the Government of Orissa have launched a micro-project in their area, with its headquarters at Kudumuluguma.

GADABA

J.P. Rout

The Gadaba are one of the colourful tribes of Orissa. They are mostly concentrated in the southern-most part of the state, in Koraput and Malkhangiri Districts, where they are found in large concentration in Lamataput, Similiguda, Pottangi, Nandapur and Khairput blocks.

The total population of the tribe, which was 56,911 during the 1981 Census, went up to 67,138 by 1991, establishing a growth rate of 17.97 per cent over the decade. The sex ratio according to the 1991 Census is 972 females per 1000 males. The percentage of literacy was very low during the last two Census periods, being 6.5 per cent in 1981 and 10.36 per cent in 1991. Although some of them understand Oriya well, their own language is known as *Gutob*.

The name 'Gadaba' seems to have been formed of 'Gada+ba' or 'Gada+va', the final syllable meaning 'pertaining to or belonging to'. The derivation seems to be true, as all the Austric tribes, of whom the Savars are the main stock, lived during the time of Dasaratha, Rama, in the northern high lands of the Vindhya mountains (Aboriginal tribes in the Ramayana, *Man in India*, Vol. V, 1925). It is but natural that these 'Gadabas', whose original home was in the north of the Vindhya Mountains, should be called by a name connected with *gada*, indicating a brook or a stream in that part of the country. They may have migrated into the hills of Vizagapatam District when all the Munda tribes were dislocated when foreign and more powerful peoples flooded the native homes of these tribes.

The Gadaba build their houses in two rows facing each other, with a broad gap left between them. The headman's house is the biggest and generally stands in the middle of one of the rows. In front of the headman's house, a tree, *Ficus Indica*, banyan or mango, is planted in the centre of the space between the rows of house. Round the foot of the tree a platform is made with stones. This is the seat for the leaders of the village to hold court and decide many disputes of their community. During festive occasions too everyone gathers here to drink and dance. The unmarried young men and women are not allowed to sleep with their parents at night. All the maidens sleep in one place and all the young men in another place, far removed from that of the maidens. For this purpose two houses are set apart in each village, one for the maidens and the other for the bachelors. Each forms a household in itself managed by an elderly maiden in the case of the maiden's home, while the bachelors' house is managed by the oldest of the bachelors. They do not cook food there but live there at other times of the day. They have their beds there and it is binding on every maiden or young man to keep their respective homes neat and clean. None of the maidens is permitted to go at night to the bachelors' home, nor should a bachelor go to the maidens' home.

The economic life of the Gadaba mainly centres around agriculture. This is supplemented by the collection of forest produce, hunting and fishing. The people attach more importance to agriculture than any other economic pursuit, as it is their principal source of livelihood. Subsidiary occupations, such as collecting forest

produce, hunting, fishing and wage-earning, etc., are only seasonal and are practised more as a matter of habit than anything else.

Shifting cultivation, commonly known as *dongar chasa*, was extensively practised by the Gadaba formerly, but nowadays the practice has declined considerably. The hills around Gadaba villages are devoid of thick vegetation, due to its repeated destruction by the people, and because of this many of the hillocks are now barren, with their parent rock materials being exposed. A mixed crop of ragi, *suani*, minor millets and niger (oilseed) is grown in their swiddens. In the lowermost portion of the hillocks patches of plain land are available, which are best suited for paddy cultivation irrigated by the permanent hill streams. The Gadaba grow different varieties of paddy on these lands.

The agro-climatic conditions of the area are highly suitable for horticultural plantation. Among the fruit trees jackfruit and mango are plentifully found in the forest. The Gadaba sell these fruits in large quantities in the nearby markets. The people also gather firewood from the forest for their domestic use and sale. The womenfolk collect *sal* leaves in large quantities from the forest and sell these in the market.

The Gadaba domesticate local varieties of cows, buffaloes, goats, pigs and poultry. They do not breed cattle either for sale or for selling milk. The cows and buffaloes are used for ploughing. They do not milch cows, as this reduces the animal's strength.

The Gadaba use very scanty clothes for their dress. The menfolk use a piece of cloth called a *lenguthi* with a flap which hangs down in front. But those who have come in contact with outsiders wear a *dhoti* and shirt. The womenfolk wear a long strip of cloth commonly known as a *kerang* tied round the waist, and a second piece of cloth is worn across the breasts and fixed at the left or sometimes right shoulder with a large knot. The children up to the age of four or five either go naked or use a piece of *lenguthi*. Better-off people generally use more expensive cloth than the poorer section of Gadaba.

Gadaba women are fond of wearing a number of ornaments to decorate their bodies. The ornaments are generally made of brass or aluminium. The hair is neatly combed and they use hair pins. Generally it is found that the elderly married women wear a peculiar type of earring which is made out of silver, brass or aluminium. They also wear ornaments in their noses and on the fingers. They use bangles, which are made of brass. No tattooing is worn.

The Gadaba are divided into five divisions: (1) the *Bodo* Gadaba, (2) the *Parenga* Gadaba, (3) the *Sano* Gadaba, (4) the *Ollar* Gadaba and (5) the *Kapu* Gadaba. Sometimes the *Sano* are also called *Parenga*. In social status the *Bodo* Gadaba enjoy a higher position than other divisions. The Gadaba of Lamtaput block are very primitive and belong to the *Sano* Gadaba. The family is the smallest unit in their society and is mostly nuclear. After marriage sons reside neolocally. The family is patrilineal, patrilocal and patripotestal. Gadaba society is divided into a number of phratries (*honso*). Each *honso* has a surname of its own. A number of

honsas come under one group known as the clan. These are exogamous and totemistic. Gadaba clans include *kora* (Sun), *nag* (Cobra), *bag* (Tiger), *kora* (Parrot) and *collari* (Monkey). Although the totem objects have lost their importance over time, they still worship them occasionally.

After puberty, Gadaba girls obtain knowledge about menstruation and sex from their elder sisters and co-mates. Generally girls attain puberty in their early teens. When the monthly course is missed, with associated vomiting, etc., this indicates pregnancy. During this period she abstains from eating certain food items like pulses, fish, meat, chillies and sour food. She is also prohibited from undertaking hardwork during this time. There are no restrictions imposed on sexual union between the couple in the early stages of pregnancy. However, it is strictly taboo in the advanced stage. The pregnant woman is also not allowed to touch a corpse nor visit the burial ground. At the birth of a child the mother is considered impure for about fifteen days. The name-giving ceremony is observed on the tenth day when child is given a name. Usually the Gadaba name their children after the days of the week in which they were born in consultation with the *disari*, the village astrologer. The infant stays at home with other brothers and sisters and receives a lot of care. After the child is able to walk it does not depend on its parents so much and gradually picks up their food habits.

Adult marriage is in vogue among the Gadaba, although child marriage is not rare. Generally girls marry at the age of 14 or 15 years after attaining puberty and the boys at 19 or 20 years. Marriage within the clan is prohibited and is hence exogamous. The boys and girls of a single clan are regarded as brothers and sisters. Monogamy is the rule, although in the exceptional cases polygyny is practised. This happens when the first wife does not give birth to a child and proves herself barren. The other grounds for such marriage is the sexual frigidity of the first wife. The different types of marriage the Gadaba follow are: (1) arranged marriage, (2) *udlia* marriage, (3) *paisamundi* marriage, (4) *gharjwani* marriage, and (5) widow marriage. Among all these types, arranged marriages, though expensive, are held to be ideal.

In an arranged marriage the consent of the son is taken into consideration in finalising the marriage proposal. After several visits by both the parties the proposal is finalised, a process in which the groom's side plays a major role. In all the visits the groom's party takes presents to the bride's house consisting of liquor, rice, fowl, etc. After the proposal is settled the *Disari* is consulted to fix a date for the marriage. Marriage takes place at the bride's house amidst lavish feasting and prolonged dancing and music. The payment of a brideprice is essential and varies according to the paying capacity of the parties. The elaborate marriage ritual is performed by the *Disari*, who is later remunerated for his dignified performance by both parties.

Divorce is permitted in Gadaba society with the approval of the caste council. Both husband and wife can divorce each other on reasonable grounds. The husband has to pay two rupees to the divorced wife, and if he is being divorced he receives some compensation from the new husband of the divorced wife.

When a person dies, the corpse is taken to the burial ground, which is located far away from the village. Family members and relatives follow the corpse amidst loud cries. If a man dies his wife must follow the corpse to the cremation ground and in case of a woman dying the reverse is done. After the dead body is disposed of, all the mourners go to a stream, wash themselves and catch some fish. These fish and some rice are cooked in separate pots and these are left on the way leading to the cremation ground. This is repeated on the third day. On the tenth day a feast is arranged in deceased's house in which the pall-bearers and kinsmen participate. For the feast, a buffalo or an old cow is slaughtered and plenty of liquor, especially prepared from fermented ragi flowers, is served. This marks the end of the pollution period. But every Gadaba must perform a great ceremony called *Got Tar*, within three or four years after the death in honour of the dead to ensure the latter's admission to the unseen world. This occasion is the cherished goal of a Gadaba, which is very expensive and entails among other things the sacrifice of large number of buffaloes. After the corpse has been disposed off, the son or brother of the dead man picks up a stone from the place where the dead body has been disposed off and preserves it carefully for the *Got Tar* ceremony.

The Gadabas have their own way of managing the internal affairs of the village through their traditional political organization, which plays a vital role in strengthening village solidarity and cooperation. Every village has its own traditional panchayat headed by the Naik, the secular headman. He is assisted by a Challan or attendant and a bearer or Barik. The Barik belongs to the Domb caste and communicates declarations to the villagers and acts as a messenger for the individual families. The function of the Challan is to assist the Naik in holding village meetings, and in entertaining guests, outsiders, government officials who visit the village from time to time. The village council holds its meetings regularly and decides intra-village disputes and such other matters as breaches of social laws, etc. The village meetings are held at a central place called *sadar*, which is located in the middle of the village under a big tree. The posts of Naik and Challan are hereditary and the rule of primogeniture regulates succession. But the Barik is selected from time to time by the village elders. The village priest or Disari officiates at all worship in the village and acts as a medicine man-cum-astrologer.

The Gadabas believe in many gods and goddesses, the chief of them being *Thakurani*. There are also clan gods who are worshipped on different occasions. They also believe in ghosts and spirits. *Thakurani* is represented by slabs of stone, which are worshipped by the Disari. The place of worship is known as Hundi. The important festivals of the Gadaba are *Bandapana Parab*, *Dasahara Parab*, *Pusha Parab* and *Chait Parab*, which are celebrated in Oriya months of Shrabana, Aswina, Pausa and Chaitra. The Gadaba celebrate these festivals with the utmost care, sincerity, devotion and fear. None of these festivals are very expensive and only require a fowl, coconut, turmeric powder, rice, flowers and leaf cups. These are celebrated with great joy and happiness amidst drinking and dancing for days together.

The Gadaba are fond of dancing and music. Among all the tribes they are very famous for their *Dhemsha* dance, which is performed by women wearing their famous *kerang* saris. The menfolk play the musical instruments while women

dance in semi-circles with steps three and four which gradually change to eight. The body is often bent forward showing skilful movements with the heels. Their musical instruments consist of large drums, the *ta/mudibaja*, *mada*/, flutes, *tamak* and *mahuri*. They are also very fond of music: they compose their own songs befitting different occasions and sing these songs while dancing.

GOND

Ch. P.K. Mohapatra

The Gond are the most predominant tribal community in India and inhabit the mountaineous tracts of central and southern India popularly known as Gondwanaland. The country of Gondwana includes the Satpura plateau and sections of the south and west. There is, however, no district or state in Central India that does not contain some Gonds, and it is both on account of their numbers and the fact that Gond dynasties possessed a great part of its area that the territory of the former Central Provinces was formally known as Gondwana or the country of Gonds. According to the 1971 Census the total population of Gonds in India was 4,812,164 or 12.78 per cent of the total tribal population of India. The majority (78.38 per cent) were in Madhya Pradesh, 10.38 per cent in Orissa, 6.89 per cent in Maharashtra, 3.27 per cent in Andhra Pradesh and the rest in the other states. In Orissa the population of the Gond according to 1991 Census is 7,01,139 or 9.97 per cent of the total tribal population of the state. Next to the Kondh, Gonds are numerically the largest tribal community found in the state. During the period 1981-91 they have a growth rate of 16.32 per cent. The sex ratio is 1001 females per 1000 males. The percentage of literacy has increased from 18.7 per cent in 1981 to 24 per cent in 1991.

The generic term 'Gond' encompasses several endogamous and linguistically distinct groups. The derivation of the term 'Gond' is uncertain. The Gonds are neither racially, culturally nor linguistically a homogeneous group. The cultural, material and physical differences are so great that one wonders why they should be grouped under the same tribe. They call themselves Gond or Koitur.

Professor Fürer-Haimendorf considered the Koyas to be Telugu-speaking Gonds. Hence it would be appropriate to replace the generic name 'Gond' with the term 'Gondi-speaking population'. As the Gonds speak a common language, have a common name and habitation, and a contiguous territory, the cultural diversity need not come in the way of considering them as belonging to a common tribe.

The term 'Raj Gond' is considered to have been derived from the princely status that the Gonds enjoyed for a long period as the rulers and chieftains of the famous Gondwana, with Chanda as the principal seat of Gond rule, and Manikgarh, Sirpur and Utnoor as vassals, where ruins today stand witness to the once flourishing Gond rule. The term 'Raj Gond' is also attributed to the racial admixture due to the impact of the Rajput rulers who sometimes entered into affinal relationships with the Gonds and migrated to these tracts between the 11th and 15th centuries.

The Gonds occupy two main tracts, one to the north of the Vindhyas and the Satpuras, and the second to the south of these major hill ranges. The first is the wide belt of broken hill and forest country and is mainly comprised of the Khindwada, Betul, Seoni and Mandla Districts, with portions of several others adjoining them. And the second is the still broader and more inaccessible mass of hill ranges extending south of the Chattisgarh plain and the south-west down to the

river Godavari, which includes portions of Chattisgarh district, Bastar and Kankar States and the great part of Chanda. The Vindya range traverses nearly the whole width of peninsular India, a distance of about 100 kms, with an average elevation of 300 metres above sea level but including the valleys of the Narmada and some others to the south, and sloping gently northwards to the Ganga valley. Forming one of India's main watersheds, this mountain chain was long recognised along with the Satpura range, which is more or less parallel to it, as the dividing line between north India and the Deccan. Thus the Gond population of Bastar, Raipur and Durg Districts in erstwhile Madhya Pradesh State, Yeotmal, Chandrapur and Nanded Districts in Maharashtra : undivided Kalahandi, Koraput, Bolangir, Ganjam and Boudh Khondmal Districts of Orissa, and the entire Gond population of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka constitute the southern Gonds of India. These Gonds differ in both language and custom from those living in the northern region.

The Gonds of Orissa can be divided into two entirely different groups. The Gonds of Sundargarh, Sambalpur, Bolangir and parts of Kalahandi have been highly acculturated under the influence of Hindu customs. They have attained the status of a warrior caste. They speak no other language except Oriya. The Gonds of Kalahandi and Koraput Districts are primitive in respect of having their distinctive dress, habits and culture. They speak 'Gondi', a dialect belonging to the Dravidian family. The acculturated Gonds live in villages inhabited by other castes and tribes. They especially live together with the Kandha, Bhuyan and Gour. The primitive Gonds live in homogeneous villages.

Among the acculturated Gonds considerable respect is shown to the elders. Among the primitive Gonds the different age-groups have informal organisations of their own. Within each age-grade there is considerable intimacy. Among the primitive Gonds the women are kept in seclusion after giving birth, and a lot of rites are observed to keep the children safe from evil spirits. Among the Hinduised Gonds all rites are performed according to Hindu customs, but the local deities and Gonds' own gods are also worshipped.

Marriage is strictly forbidden within the same clan or a brother clan. Cross-cousin marriage, marriage by service and regular marriage, which are arranged by the parents, are commonly practised. Brideprice is always paid, and the amount is generally fixed in a meeting of the parties. Both infant and adult marriages are popular among the Hinduised Gonds.

Marriage takes place in the bride's house. The ceremony of the Hinduised Gonds is modelled after the marriage rites of lower-caste Hindus. They obtain the services of a barber and Brahman, who conducts Vedic rites as the binding portion of the marriage. Among the primitive Gonds their tribal priest performs the rites. Both men and women participate in the marriage procession. Use of alcoholic drinks and dancing have been ended by the Hinduised Gonds, while the primitive Gonds dance in a drunken state during the marriage. Marriage is one of the biggest items of expenditure in a man's life and plunges a person into debt.

Widow marriage is practised. Divorce on reasonable grounds is allowed by the caste panchayat. The dead are either buried or cremated. The mortuary rituals

of the Hinduised Gonds show maximum Hindu influences. Pollution is observed for ten days, after which there is purification and calling back of the shade. The services of the Brahman, Barber and Washerman are obtained at the time of the purificatory rites. Among the primitive Gonds, the cause of an unnatural death is to be ascertained by magic. Mourning is observed for four days, when the house is cleaned and a menhir erected, if the deceased's family can afford to pay money for the food and drink needed for this ritual.

The Gonds' main occupation is agriculture or agricultural labour. The Gonds of Bastar still practise the traditional method of shifting cultivation called *bewar*. In the Raigarh area of Orissa the Gonds cultivate millets for food and *niger* as a cash crop. Maize has been introduced recently and is becoming popular in Dandakaranya region. Apart from the cultivated lands, all over the southern region the Gonds grow vegetables in the gardens attached to their houses. The Gond economy is unisectoral with heavy dependence on agriculture and no diversification, though many agro-mineral and forest based industries like cement factory, cotton-spinning factories, paper mills, etc. have been set up in the Gond country and on its periphery.

The dietary habits of the southern Gonds of different regions are almost similar except that the cereals and pulses consumed in various places differ from one another, as these are grown according to the suitability of the soil of the regions. In Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra, *jowar* and maize along with red gram or field beans form the staple food, while in Madhya Pradesh and Orissa ragi, *kodi* or Italian millet form the staple diet. Maize has been introduced in this area by displaced persons from Bangladesh who have been settled in Dandakaranya. Rice is grown as a rain-fed dry crop in Madhya Pradesh and Orissa, rarely in Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra. The usual diet consists of a gruel made from broken *jowar* called *peja* in Central India. It is consumed without any vegetables early in the morning. Smaller grains like *samai* and Italian millets are widely consumed in Madhya Pradesh and Orissa. The usual side dish is a red gram dal with much chilli powder, a few onions and tamarind. Vegetables are consumed in large quantities, but only during the winter when these are extensively grown in back yards. The Gond rarely consume oil, milk or milk products. The consumption of mutton is also very negligible. In contrast to the large consumption of wild foods like roots and tubers, or fruits and leaves by other tribals of the region, the Gonds consume mainly cultivated foods. Their cereal and pulse consumption is relatively superior to that of other tribals, and their diet is rarely deficient in protein or calories. However, their diet is deficient in minerals such as iron and calcium, and vitamin A and B complex, due to the absence of milk and milk products and fruits.

The Gonds nowadays do little hunting and appear to have abandoned it as a sport or ritual activity.

The Gonds usually look healthy, but they suffer from malaria, scabies, tuberculosis and digestive tract diseases whose incidence is relatively greater in inaccessible areas.

The social structure of the southern Gonds is different from the Gonds of other regions. It is based on a mythologically decreed organization into four phratries. Each of these four exogamous phratries consists of a number of clans, and members of the clans in a particular phratry are considered to be brothers and sisters. The four phratries trace their descent back to each of the four, five, six and seven mythical brothers from whom the members of the phratry are considered to have sprung, and they are called the 'four-brothers phratry' (*nalwen saga*). The Gond descent system is based on structural principles of unity and is distinct from the Indian caste system. However, structurally the Gond kinship system is part of the wider Hindu system. The Gonds see themselves as totally separate. Professor Furer-Haimendorf observed that Gond society is conceptually a total system, and no segment of it can contract out of the basic framework of phratries and clans. Conversely the Hindu caste system has an inbuilt tendency to split up into endogamous sub-sects of varying social status. No section of Raj Gond society could function as an independent endogamous unit short of complete repudication of all ties of tribal solidarity.

The phratry is strictly governed by two basic principles, descent and fraternal solidarity. Descent is traced through the vertical axis, following the divisions of the Gond society into four epical ancestors. This system binds the living male members together into an agnatic group, while the horizontal dimension revolves around the basic principles of fraternal solidarity between the contemporary members of the agnatic group and their wives. The phratry regulates affinal relations and corporate activities in the social, economic and ritual relations of their life.

Each phratry is strictly exogamous and subdivided into a number of clans. Clan rather than phratry is the most immediately apparent motif in the Gond society. Every man or married woman or boy is identified by the clan and by its phratry. Every member of the Gond society knows by heart which clan belongs to which phratry and the relationship between two individuals persists through a classificatory model. All members of a person's own phratry stand to him or her in the relation of *Saga* i.e. paternal kinsmen and are excluded from the ranks of potential mates. Members of other phratries are *Soira* or potential mates and relations-in-law. The phratry system is not so strong in Bastar and Orissa as in Adilabad but even here they consider those clans as brother clans which worship the same number of clan Gods. The four phratry system does not extend to all branches of Raj Gonds, while four phratries are found in that part of Madhya Pradesh which lies south of Nagpur, only two phratries occur among Gonds of Northern Nagpur plain and Satpura region. Many of the Gond clans are totemistic and named after animals. Generally the members of a sept do not kill or injure their totem animals.

The Gonds all over India are polytheistic. All deities are thought of in anthropomorphic terms. All Gonds worship a supreme being, who is called *Shembu Pen* in Chanda and Adilabad, and *Bara Deo* in Madhya Pradesh. Various other names are used for the Supreme God. Near Chanda and Adilabad, he is known as *Persa Pen*, in Bastar as *Bara Pen*, in Orissa as *Badiyal Pen*. It is evident from Gond traditions that in olden days *Bara Deo* was honoured by the sacrifice of

a cow, a practice that is declining. *Bara Deo* is recognised as the creator and master of the universe. *Dharti Mata*, the earth mother, is also worshipped universally.

The cult of village guardian deities, both male and female, is also a universal phenomenon of Gond religion. Thus *Aki Pen*, the village guardian, and *Auwal* (mother), the village mother, are found in every Gond village of Adilabad and Khermai in Central India. Gods of disease such as *Manai Mata*, *Sital Mata*, the shrines of *Bhimana*, *Jangubaj*, *Beani*, *Rajel Pen*, all deities with power to influence the fate of the human beings, are also found in many villages, but their cult rests with individual families and they are known as household gods. These household gods increase or decrease as special occasion requires. If one set of gods does not work satisfactorily they are discarded and a new set introduced. Similarly field gods and cattle gods of the dead are also very common. The cult of the clan gods or deities stands foremost in the Gond's religious consciousness, except in areas where tribal culture is already in a state of disintegration. Among the southern Raj Gonds of Adilabad and Maharashtra the cult of the clan god is still very prominent and firmly anchored in Gond mythology, which is preserved as an oral tradition by the Pradhans, who are hereditary bards to Gonds. Due to growing contacts with neighbouring Hindu populations in Madhya Pradesh old forms of ritual customs such as cow sacrifice have disappeared. The Gond religion in its original form is still very much evident among those inhabiting the hill tracts lying between the Penganga and Godavari rivers.

To propitiate deities there are separate priests for the clan deities and village deities. The clan priest is called *Katora*, and his office is hereditary. Each clan and sub-clan have one family of *Katora*. Usually the office passes from father to eldest son, but if necessary any member of the family can function as *Katora*. He is very important in establishing harmonious relations between the living clan members and invisible forces, including the spirits of ancestors and the departed. The village priest is the *Devaril* and performs rites for the village deities. He is usually the descendant of the village founder and often combines his function as priest with that of *Patel*. The *Bhaktal* establishes direct contact with the gods by falling into a state of trance, which is interpreted as possession by the gods during certain ritual performances. These are men and rarely women. The two principal *Persa Pen* feasts are held in the months of Bhawe (May-June) and Pus (December-January), and a minor ceremony is often performed at the time of Dashara. Another functionary in both Adilabad and Madhya Pradesh is the *Pradhan* or *Pradhanga*, the traditional bards of the Gonds, and the songs and stories they preserve through oral transmission are the most important depositories of Gond traditions. Their presence at religious rites is obligatory, but they function only as musicians, never as priests.

Belief in witchcraft and magic is strong among Gonds. The Gonds sacrificed cows in the recent past. It is also recorded that the Gonds used to offer human sacrifices, especially to the goddess Kali.

Gond festivals are also performed for the first eating and sowing of the new crops. In Chait (March) the Chaitra festival is celebrated in Bastar, Orissa and Andhra Pradesh. A pig or fowl is offered to the village gods and the new beans and

jowar or other foods are offered uncooked. After dancing and singing the whole night they start eating the new foods. Before sowing new millet sacrifices to the mother goddess and the village deities are performed to ensure the successful germination of the seeds. Some grains, fowls and a pig are sacrificed to the deity, the blood of the sacrificed animal is sprinkled over the seeds, and the charmed seeds offered to the god are then distributed to all the villagers, who sow it in their fields for luck.

The Gonds of Bastar and Orissa have caste panchayats, which settle inter-tribal and intra-tribal disputes. The members of the panchayat are selected by mutual consent and enjoy office while of good behaviour. Inter-tribal and intra-village disputes are settled by a common sitting of the two panchayats. Guilt is established either by direct eyewitnesses, divination or ordeals like putting one's hands in boiling oil or lifting a red-hot crowbar. The offences dealt by the panchayats are adultery, taking another man's daughter or wife, being sent to jail, eating with a man of lower caste, etc. Excommunication is the severest punishment. Feasts have to be arranged for readmittance of the excommunicated person into the community.

Gond society is also under the influence of various religious movements. In the states of Madhya Pradesh and Orissa, the Gonds appear to be under the strong influence of religious leaders who are advocating various restrictions in terms of food, drink, etc. A similar trend is seen among the Gonds of Raigarh in Orissa. The Gonds of Adilabad, who have preserved a rich cultural tradition, are also being exposed to the alien faith and have come under the influence of the late saint Tukdoju Maharaj. His disciple, saint Surya Bhan Maharaj, who resides in the high lands of Uttnoor Taluk, is also advocating vegetarianism and other taboos. In Udaipur village in Raigarh it was noticed that even the traditional social institution of the *ghotul* (youth dormitory) has come under the influence of religious movements. Gonds in this village have also learnt new patterns of *bhajans* and prayers taught them by their religious leaders or *babas*, and this is reflected in their music and dance patterns.

It can thus be seen that the religious institutions, religious beliefs and social life of Gonds are undergoing changes. As a result of this Gond society is becoming segmented between traditionalists and neo-religious practitioners.

HO

P.S. Daspatnaik

The Ho form a major group among the Orissan tribes. It is the popular epithet Kol by which the Ho are generally known to the outside world. They dislike being addressed as Kol, which in Sanskrit means 'pig'. The word Ho has most probably been derived from the word *horo*, which in their language means man, and the word might have assumed different forms like Koro, Kolo, etc. in course of time. However, many distinguished anthropologists are of the opinion that the Ho, Kol, Kolha, etc. are offshoots with a common origin.

So far as their physical characteristics are concerned, the Ho are short in stature, dark in complexion, and with broad and flat noses. The eyes are dark brown, and the hair black and straight or wavy. The chin is narrow but in some cases prognathism is also found. They do not possess strong and muscular bodily features.

The Ho do not inhabit any compact area of their own, but live in villages of mixed population. But in most cases they form separate wards detached from the other population of the village. They are distributed throughout the state, but their largest concentration is found in the district of Mayurbhanj. Their population in the last two census years of 1981 and 1991 was 44,496 and 50,892 respectively. The growth rate during the period 1981-91 is 14.37 per cent. The sex ratio is 1088 females per 1000 males. The percentage of literacy, which was 12.7 in the 1981 Census, increased further to 34.7 during 1991.

The Ho narrate no tradition about their original home or migration. They admit to having descended from the common family of the Mundas and refer to their original home as having been Chotanagpur, from where they say they migrated to Singhbhum, Saraikella, Kharswan, Mayurbhanj and Keonjhar. It was stated earlier that the majority of the Ho immigrants of Mayurbhanj hail from the Kolhan estate in Bihar. Part of the Kolhan estate was an integral part of the state of the Mayurbhanj until 1837. It is for this reason that the Ho of Mayurbhanj claim to be autochthones of Mayurbhanj.

A typical Ho village is built on high ground or a ridge in the middle of an undulating plain. In some cases the Ho inhabit the village exclusively, while in other villages they live side by side with other Scheduled Castes and Tribes. In the larger villages, they are distributed into two to three hamlets, each hamlet being separated from the other by a small valley or a clean open space. On all sides of the village, there are huge tamarind plants and luxuriant jungle shrub, which hide the houses from sight. Large flat stones firmly fixed on the ground are found near the boundary line of each village. These are considered to be gravestones where the ancestors of the clan or *killi* have been laid to rest. The *akhara* or dancing ground stands in the centre of the village. At one end of the village, at a little distance from the cluster of houses, lies the village grave or *jahtra*.

The Ho house is built very neatly, as a hut with a rectangular ground plan, the dimensions varying according to the means of the owner. The smallest hut measures 13.5 feet x 7.5 feet, and the largest 25.5 feet x 10.5 feet. The sleeping room is usually larger than the dining room, but the latter is more important. It is the seat of the *ading*, where the family ancestors are carefully sheltered. Each hut has gables and narrow verandahs on three sides, with one slightly wider on the front. Each hut is partitioned by a wall, with one door only for both rooms.

The houses are built of mud, thatched with grass, or roofed with tiles as means permit. The walls are painted in different colours of black and brown, and show neat workmanship. The walls are also artistically decorated with drawings. Separate sheds for cows and domesticated animals are built near the bedroom. The *lhenki* or paddy husking pedals are installed in a corner of the cattle shed or in a projecting wing of the hut.

As regards household articles, these make a poor show. The Ho use wooden framed cots woven with thin ropes and mats made of wild date-palm leaves for sleeping purposes. Wooden furniture is found only very rarely. They use earthenware or aluminium vessels for cooking and storing water. Pots and plates of bell-metal and aluminium are used for meals. The Ho keep baskets for storing grain.

A narrow strip of cloth called a *hotoi*, fastened round the waist by a male Ho, was the traditional dress. Similarly women used to wear the *langa*, a coarse sari, in the village. But due to their frequent contact and temporary migrations to urban centres their patterns of dress have undergone change, and now they wear dresses like other caste Hindus. The women ordinarily used to wear ornaments like anklets (*anduo*), *guna* or *nakafula* (nose pin), *murkhi* (earring), *hisir* (necklace), *sakom* (bangle), etc. being replaced by new cheap glass and plastic bangles, small bead necklaces, etc. Gold ornaments are seldom found, and only well-to-do families possess tiny hairpins and rings made of gold. Tattooing, once popular among the women, has become less important. School and college children still prefer to inscribe their initials on their forearms. Women prefer to tattoo the designs of their own clan. They are great admirers of flowers. Young girls with wreaths and floral ornaments participate in dancing and music with their boyfriends on the *akhara* (dancing ground) of the village.

Rice is their staple food. They also take gruel. Fried green leaves, vegetable curry, garlic, onion, chilli, salt and *kachada* oil extracted from mohua seeds are all that are required to constitute the side dish. They relish dried fish, red ants, termites, crabs, fish of all varieties and snails. They eat sheep, beef and pork. Those who are more Hinduized do not take beef and pork. They have a natural dislike of milk and milk products and universally drink *illi* or rice beer.

They are developed agriculturists. Those who have less or no land resort to agricultural labour. They also earn wages by becoming industrial labourers in the factories, mines and quarries. A few educated persons have been employed in different services. Both men and women work in agriculture right from the start of the rains. Other than ploughing the women take part in all agricultural pursuits.

They use cows and oxen as draught animals. Paddy is mainly produced in the lowlands. Maize, *ragi*, the *gundulu* variety of paddy, black gram, etc. are produced in the upland areas. Vegetables are grown in the kitchen gardens. A short variety of paddy called *Asha Dhan* is also grown in the uplands.

Forest collection has diminished to a greater extent due to depletion of forests. Still they go to distant forests for collection of house building materials and firewood. The women go to nearby forest patches to collect mahua, greens, mushrooms and flowers. After harvest, most of the villagers go to industrial areas to work as wage-earners until the rains set in, when they come back again and engage themselves in cultivation. They undertake communal hunting in the month of March-April as a ritual event. Hunting is no longer a regular pursuit. Fishing is done in a group when the fields and meadows fill up with water during the rains.

The barter system is still in vogue in rural areas, although money has become the medium of exchange. They are experts in basketry and rope-making. They prepare ropes out of the *stali* creeper or from *sabat* grass. Some women are specialists in drawing artistic designs on the walls. They squander away money in drinks and in purchasing cheap cosmetics, etc. as an aspect of their frequent urban contacts.

The Ho are not divided into sub-tribes. Their society is divided into several clans, and each clan bears the name of some animal, plant or material object. Certain taboos are observed regarding the totemic symbol by all the members of the clan. Each totemic clan is exogamous, that is, members of a totemic clan cannot marry within the clan. Again each *killi* or clan has several sections, and marriage within these sections is prohibited by custom. In the villages where there are several *killis* and divisions of the major *killi*, marriage within the village is not allowed. Marriage outside the tribe is also prohibited.

The family, which is the smallest unit of Ho social organization, is patrilocal and patrilineal. Women do not inherit property. The property is inherited through the male line. However, the interest of the family finds its fulfillment in the larger interest of the *killi*. Birth, marriage, death and other festivals are apparently communal affairs, as the rites and ceremonies connected with them are performed by all the members of the *killi*. There are now changes under way, and these rites are being replaced by individual celebrations. Even the production of food was a corporate responsibility. This is not found nowadays. In spite of this all the members of a *killi* are united together by a bond of kinship.

Motherhood is much respected by the Ho, and the expectant mother receives adequate attention from the other members of the *killi*. A midwife from the Ghasi community attends the mother during the birth of a child. Pollution is observed for eight days by the mother and there are certain practices from which she has to abstain. On the morning of the eighth day the child's head is touched with a razor (*dashi*) and washed in tepid water. The father also shaves his head and beard and takes a ceremonial bath with his wife. The family and the members of the *killi* offer *illi* to all the ancestral spirits and *bongas* (deities) before they themselves partake of it. The purificatory feast is not held on the eighth day but in

the latter half of the month. On this occasion the hut is cleaned and all members of the *killi* are treated to a sumptuous feast to which it is usual for the members to contribute in kind. The ceremonial naming of the child is an important occasion held on the 21st or 30th day.

The Ho considers pairing as essential to fecundity. Adult marriage is the rule. A man usually marries outside his *killi* and village. There are various ways of acquiring a mate among the Ho, such as *andi*, *diku andi*, *oportipi*, *rajikushi* and *anadar*. *Andi* and *diku andi* marriages are the usual ways of seeking a wife, the other types of marriages being rare. But today *andi* is becoming less popular, as it invariably involves a heavy brideprice (*gonong*).

The Duttam (negotiator) is appointed to negotiate between the families desiring the marriage. Girls do not marry before 18 to 21 years and boys seldom marry earlier than 24. In this type of marriage the Deuri (priest) performs the marriage functions. In the *Diku* form a more Hinduized fashion is adopted where a Brahman is called in to officiate. The average amount of brideprice consists of 10 to 15 heads of cattle, Rs. 50/- and ornaments, besides 50 to 100 pots of *illi* and the cost of feeding the *killi* members.

On the day of the marriage, the bride is escorted to the groom's house. The bride comes in a procession to the accompaniment of dancing and music. There is not much of a ritual. Both bride and groom sit on a wooden stool (*Pidhu*) facing each other. Two small cups, one containing oil and the other turmeric powder, are placed on a mat. The bridegroom pledges the bride by pouring some liquor (*Handia*) from his cup. The compliment is returned. The groom first anoints the bride with the mixture of oil and turmeric powder, and the bride then anoints the forehead of the groom with the same. This solemnises the marriage ritual. A feast follows and all partake it. Among the Ho, marriage with mother's brother's daughter and father's sister's daughter is allowed. Even marriage with the mother's sister and also with the widowed maternal aunt is permissible.

Burial and cremation are both practised by the Ho. Those who die in unnatural ways, like snakebite, suicide, smallpox, leprosy or killed by the tiger spirit (*Bagia Bonga*) are buried. The string charpoys (*parkoms*) are used as a bier. Before placing the corpse on the bier, the Deuri takes some *arua* rice in his hand, and uttering a few incantations in honour of the principal *bonga*, throws it on to the floor of the hut and the courtyard. Rice and some pulses are then placed in the palm of the deceased. The funeral procession is led by the eldest son of the deceased with the pall-bearers and other mourners. Before the pyre is lit, all the usable articles like utensils, ornament, bows and arrows, clothes, etc. of the deceased are placed in the pit, and then faggots are piled up.

On the next day the women go to the cremation ground to collect bones of the deceased. Only two bones are collected, to be dried in the sun and kept in a new earthenware pot, which is kept hanging from the roof in a corner of the sleeping room. The *sulesi* or *sradha* ceremony takes place on the 21st day. Restrictions on diet and movements during pollution are observed by all the members of the *killi* concerned. On the 21st day, the clan members crop their hair,

have their nails pared, and take a ceremonial bath. The Deuri digs a pit in which one of the bones hung in the sleeping room is buried.

A large stone is obtained to erect the tomb. Another bone is kept in the sleeping room and is placed on the funeral spot above which the tombstone is placed. After this ceremony the departed soul is believed to join with the souls of other dead ancestors.

The Ho believes that natural objects exercise a beneficent influence on their life and happiness. As such, they offer periodical prayers and offerings as part of their thanksgiving service. Thus the sun, moon, river and mountain are the Ho's principal *bongas*. The chief of these is *Sing Bonga* or the sun, who is the creator of this universe. In each village there is also a sacred grove (*jahira*) in which resides *Dasauli*, the protecting spirit of the village. Ancestral spirits are worshipped in the home. Like the Santal, the Ho is afraid of malignant spirits. They believe in black magic and witchcraft. *Basam Thakurani*, *Kalimuhin* and *Dwarsuni* are considered to be terrible spirits who bring calamities if they are not properly appeased. All these spirits require continuous propitiation by means of sacrifices.

The Ho observes seven important festivals like *Madhe*, *Baha*, *Damurai*, *Hero*, *Jomnama*, *Kalon* and *Batauli*. These are associated with their agricultural operations, and their time and season are therefore determined by the needs of agriculture. In all the festivals, the object of worship is the village *Dasauli*, though prayers are offered to *Sing Bonga*. Most villages have a Deuri family. The post of Deuri is hereditary. He is entitled to certain considerations in kind in return for his services to the villagers.

The Ho have no caste organization at present. Previously, they had their head in the Kolhan estate in the district of Singhbhum in Bihar. Since a village was inhabited by number of *killis*, the dominant *killis* like Munda and Manki used to be recognized as the aristocrats of the village. While the *killi* was primarily a social unit, the *hatu* was a political unit. The *hatu* was presided over by the Munda, while the authority of the *killi* was vested in its elders. Originally the Munda was the custodian of the village land. But at present it is the *killi* leaders who collect the rent. They are responsible for any crime in the village. They settle all the disputes. They fix the dates of festivals and look after the general welfare of the people. A Ho looks to his clan for all matters concerning religion, social relationship and the code of the *killi*.

However, the tribes are in a process of rapid transformation. The changing economic environment of the tribal areas has forced the tribal people to adopt a new pattern of life. The industrial economy has undermined the agricultural economy and the sedentary way of life. But the change has not helped the tribe to adjust fully to the new conditions and environment. This has created problems. Seasonal emigration has undermined the stability of tribal social organization. Today, the family has become the dominant element in Ho social organization, that is, the interests of the family are regarded as of greater importance than that of the *hatu* (village) or even *killi* (clan). Yet these changes have not completely undermined discipline or social solidarity.

HOLVA

S. Routray

The Holva are one of the Scheduled Tribes of Orissa. The very name of the tribe is derived from the word *holo*, meaning 'plough'. Thurston has described it as a synonym of Pentiya and the name of a section of Oriya Brahmans who plough the land. Satapathy reports (*Adibasi*, 1963-64: 161) that they are said to have migrated from Bastar State in Madhya Pradesh. They are mostly distributed in the southern part of Orissa and the northern part of Andhra Pradesh. In Orissa they are concentrated in the undivided districts of Koraput and Kalahandi. They have a population of 13,662 according to the 1991 Census. The growth rate during 1981-91 is 53.80 per cent, which is very high given the growth rate of 18.89 per cent of the total tribal population of the state. The sex ratio is 1,108 females per 1,000 males according to the 1991 Census. The literacy rate was 14.1 per cent during 1981 Census and 17.3 per cent during 1991. Formerly they spoke a dialect called *Haihi*, but now they speak Oriya fluently.

The tribe has several local divisions, such as *Bastarha*, *Chhatigarhia* and *Marethia*. In Orissa, the Holva claim to belong to the *Bastarha* division. These *Bastarha* Holva form a separate sub-caste and do not have any relationship with the other divisions. They have a number of exogamous divisions, such as *Manjur*, *Nages*, *Bagh*, etc. These are named after animals and plants, which are respected by the kin members. These totemistic groups are called *bargua*. They have a number of surnames, like *Sunia*, *Majhi*, *Naik* and *Bhal*. Nowadays marriage is avoided between persons having the same surname as well as between those of the same *bargua*.

Most of the families are of nuclear type, extended and joint families being rare. The family is patrilineal, patrilocal and patripotestal besides being patriarchal. The father controls the family when the married sons live with him. Parents without issue may go for adoption. The adopted child enjoys all the normal privileges like inheritance of property, etc.

In the socio-political field the village acts as a corporate body, with the Naik, Pujari and Barik as its officials. The political head, the Naik, presides over and gives decisions in the council meetings, which are final and binding. Above the village level, the Jati Naik presides over a number of villages and has greater political powers to resolve social offences. A person is punished and sometimes excommunicated if he commits any fault like killing a cow, or if he develops *machiapatak* in his body. The Jati Naik can also release a guilty person from his sin by eating food from his hand and thereby taking all the sins upon his own head. He is considered an honourable person and is invited to attend all the socio-religious functions. Dormitory organisations are almost non-existent among the Holva. In its place new institutions like *yubak sangh*, *kirtan mandali* and *mahila samiti* have grown up in the villages.

In most tribal societies an individual is taught from early childhood how to lead a corporate life within the norms and patterns of the society, instead of aiming

at individual achievement by competition. Their behavioural patterns are greatly influenced by early socialization processes, which starts from birth to adolescence.

The cessation of the monthly cycle is accompanied by allied symptoms like vomiting, morning sickness, etc. indicating that conception and the period of pregnancy is counted from that month onward. The woman communicates the news to her mother-in-law and husband in the second month of pregnancy. Sexual cohabitation is generally avoided during the later months of pregnancy. During pregnancy the woman continues to perform her normal household chores and work in the fields as usual. However, she must follow a number of pre-natal restrictions, not being allowed to go to a lonely place at night or eat the flesh of any animal. When the labour pains begin the mother-in-law calls the traditional Dhai and an elderly woman of her own tribe to assist in the delivery. Delivery takes place at one corner of the living room under the guidance of the traditional Dhai, at which time the pregnant woman sits on a wooden plank and holds a rope hung from the rafters of the the roof of the house. As soon as the baby is delivered the Dhai checks its respiration by swaddling it with her hand. Then she cuts the umbilical cord with an unsterilized, sharp-edged arrow or blade. Birth pollution extends up to the twelfth day, during which the mother is not allowed to touch anybody. The first hair-cutting ceremony is observed on the sixth day of birth or any day after the stump of the naval cord drops off. Also on the sixth day, the name-giving ceremony is observed in consultation with the Brahman priest. They observe the ear-piercing ceremony when the child reaches the age of five. The kinsmen, particularly those on the maternal side, are invited to a feast on this occasion.

Marriage is considered to be an auspicious event in the life of a Holva youth. Clan exogamy is strictly observed. Monogamy is common. Polygyny is also allowed. Child marriage is not encountered. But girls marry at an early age. According to J.K. Das, the Holva have an established marriage relationship with the Pentiya. Marriage by negotiation is the common practice, in which a mediator known as the Mahalia takes an active part in finalising the marriage proposals. After it is fixed, the boy's father sends some fixed quantities of grains to the girl's house and visits her village along with his relations and the maternal uncle of the boy. There he is treated with a feast and pays some money to the girl. The wedding date is fixed on the same day by the caste priest. In the case of less expensive types of marriage, the bride with her friends arrives at the groom's house, where the marriage is solemnized. On the third day the bride's parents arrive at the groom's house. They sing together with the groom's relatives. Then they enter the house of the groom and sit down where the household gods are kept. On the fourth day the clothes of the couple are tied together and they move around the marriage post seven times, the bride following the bridegroom. The groom then puts vermilion on the bride's head and covers her head with a cloth. A small feast is arranged on that occasion and after seven days the couple goes to the bride's place where they remain for three weeks. This type of marriage is much preferred, as it reduces the marriage expenditure. The other type of marriage is expensive and performed at the bride's house. A widow can remarry the younger brother of her deceased husband. A divorcee can remarry with the approval of the society.

The Holva cremate their dead, but those dying of cholera or smallpox are buried. The dead bodies of those women who die during pregnancy are also buried. The dead body is anointed with oil and turmeric and wrapped with a new cloth before being taken to the funeral ground. In a burial salt is sprinkled over and under the corpse. The kith and kin of the deceased mourn and observe death pollution for eleven days. The male members are shaved by the village barber at the river on the tenth day. A feast is given on the eleventh day, attended by the villagers. During burial, the head of the deceased is pointed towards the east in the case of a female and towards the west in the case of a male. Some rich families observe the *Sradha* ceremony each year in the month of Bhadrah. Many buffaloes are sacrificed in honour of their ancestors on this occasion.

The Holva have incorporated a number of Hindu gods and goddesses into their pantheon, like Siva, Bishnu, Laxmi, Kali and Durga. They also fear and worship the goddess of smallpox, as is done by the local Hindu population. Smallpox is not regarded as a disease but as the appearance of *Thakurani* on the body, and the affected person goes to the priest, who makes offering to *Thakurani* for his recovery. In religious ceremonies, offerings are made to different gods and goddesses for a good harvest and the eradication of disease and natural calamities. The Holva observe the new mango-eating ceremony in Chaitra, the *Anus* festival in Sraban, the new rice-eating ceremony in Bhadrah, and Iswar and Siva Puja in Magh. They participate in all the festivals of their Hindu neighbours to which they are invited.

Holva villages are heterogeneous. The houses are lineally arranged. The shrine of the village deity is situated at the entrance to the village. They build their houses at a distance from the houses of other caste groups. A typical Holva house has a rectangular plan with two sloped roofs thatched with forest grass and straw. The walls are generally constructed with mud or bamboo splits and wattles plastered with mud. Black and yellow paintings are also made on the walls. The house may have two or three rooms with a wide verandah. The rooms are used for cooking, sleeping and storing food grains. Small shelves are made inside the room using bamboo for storing grains. Before constructing the house pujas are performed and offerings made to the household deity. Household appliances consist of leaf utensils, gourds, earthenware vessels, stick knives, carrying poles, leaf and cloth umbrellas, husking pads, etc. Aluminium utensils, brass plates, jars, lanterns, clothes and torchlights are also found in some houses.

The Holva's pattern of dress and ornamentation is like that of their Hindu neighbours. The men wear a *lungi* while at home, but when they go to the market or attend any function they wear a *dhoti* and *chadar*. The women wear white saris with red borders. Unmarried girls wear printed saris of inferior quality. They put on silver ornaments mostly, gold ornaments occasionally. They adorn themselves with bead necklaces and silver chains, glass bangles, brass and silver *khadus* on the arm, earrings, toe and finger rings, *pahuda*, *ghungurias*, etc.

The Holva earn their livelihood by agriculture. They cultivate lands as owners and also on a sharecropping basis. They produce different types of crop like rice, *ragi*, maize, pulses, etc. They also grow sugarcane and tobacco to a

certain extent. The main agricultural implements they use are the plough and hoe, with or without an iron point. The iron implements used in agricultural operations are purchased from the local markets. The income from land is supplemented by forest collections, hunting and fishing. A few people of this community are now in government jobs. Many of them work as daily labourers on different construction projects undertaken by the government.

Their staple food is rice. Cereals like *ragi* and *gurzi* are also eaten. They also eat curry prepared with edible leaves and vegetables along with rice. They use oil and salt in their food preparations. On festive occasions meat is a necessity along with rice, *dal* and curry. Unlike other tribal groups they do not eat beef, but fowl, pork, mutton are eaten as and when available. During days of food scarcity they live upon mango kernels and *mohua* flowers. Intake of intoxicants like rice-beer, *salap* juice and arrack distilled from the *mohua* flower are very common, and during the observance of socio-religious functions like marriages, dances, etc. they drink without any limit.

In their society a woman is considered to be an economic asset to the family. She helps her husband in all economic pursuits. In addition to this she cooks food, fetches water, rears children and takes care of ill members. Though there is a division of labour, she shoulders the responsibilities of the family to a greater extent than other members. On the other hand she is self-sufficient and adds earnings in both kind and cash for her family. Therefore women enjoy a very high status in Holva society.

The Holva have established social relationships with neighbouring tribals like the Gond, Koya and Kondh, and non-tribal groups like the Sundhi, Teli and Mali. Other than Brahmans they do not take cooked food from others. But they take water from the Rana, Karan and Dhakad. They treat tribes like the Gond, Koya and Kondh as inferior to them. Some of them employ Brahmans to perform their ceremonies.

Since independence the government has been trying to free the people from economic and social distress. The Holva, who are educationally better off than other tribals, are receptive to change. As a result, they accept innovation without much difficulty and are developing fast.

JATAPU

B.B. Mohanty

The Jatapu are described in the Madras Census Report for 1901 as a "civilized section of Kondhs, who speak Kondh on the hills and Telgu on the plains and are now practically a distinct caste. They consider themselves superior to those Kondhs who still eat beef and snakes and have taken to some of the ways of the castes of the plains" (Thurston, 1909: 453). According to Mr C. Hayavadana Rao, "the name of the Jatapu is popularly believed to be an abbreviated form of Konda Jatapu Doralu or lords of the Kond caste. To this caste the old chiefs of the Palkonda zamindari are said to have belonged." In Orissa the Jatapu are mostly found in the districts of Koraput and Ganjam. Their main occupation in Koraput District is cultivation and wage-earning.

The population of the Jatapu, which was 10,801 at the 1961 Census, came down to 8047 at 1971 before rising again at the 1981 Census to 18,457. In 1991 it was 9,139. The percentage of literacy, which was only 4.3 during 1961, advanced to 8.9 in 1971, 10.5 in 1981 and 17.2 in 1991. They showed a record growth rate of 129.4 per cent during the decennial period 1971-81 as against 16.62 per cent for the total tribal population. It declined by 50.48 percent during 1981-91. The sex ratio was 962 females per 1000 males in the 1991 Census.

The Jatapu, who live side by side with the Kondhs in Telegu-dominated regions, speak both Kondh and Telegu fluently, although they have a language of their own which is a variant of Kondh. In addition to these languages, the Jatapu can speak and understand Oriya well.

The tribe is divided into the following ten clans, which are totemic:

1. *Thorika* or *Thoyika* (species of wild fowl)
2. *Kadrika* (species of wild fowl)
3. *Mamdangi* (bull or cow)
4. *Addaku* (*Bauhinia racemosa*)
5. *Konda Gorre* (a certain breed of sheep)
6. *Navali Fitta* (peacock)
7. *Arika* (*paspalum scrobiculatum*)
8. *Kolaka* (arrow)
9. *Kutraki* (wild goat)
10. *Vinka* (white ant)

The titles which they suffix to their names are Dora, Naika, Samant Muduli and Jani.

Most Jatapu houses are two-roomed with wide verandas and low roofs. The outside room is used as bed-cum-storeroom and the other room is used as kitchen. The walls are made of bamboo splits, wattles and mud. The walls are generally polished with coloured ochres. The doors are made of split bamboos plastered with

mud and cowdung. Generally, the construction of a new house starts in January after the Pongal festival. The village priest is consulted for this purpose.

The dress of Jatapu men is very simple and consists of a loincloth called a *gochi* wrapped around waist. Women use cheap small saris, which they wear above the knees. Various types of brass and aluminium ornaments are used by women. However, in well-to-do houses gold ornaments are used.

No restrictions are imposed on a pregnant woman in respect of her food or work. She does her normal work as usual until she feels pre-delivery pains. Generally, birth takes place in the husband's house. A portion of the backyard is used as a lying-in room. The village medicine man or *Disari* is consulted in the case of a difficult delivery. But nowadays these types of cases are being referred to the hospital. The assistance of the old and experienced women of the village is sought in case of normal delivery. Soon after the delivery the umbilical cord is cut with a knife by the *Dai*, and the placenta is buried in one corner of the backyard in a pit. Date-palm root is administered to the mother along with some other roots to avoid exposure to the cold and help in lactation. During the first three days of confinement, she is given hot gruel, which is later exchanged for a small quantity of boiled rice with *dal*. As a rule, she is not given any curry. Pollution is observed for seven days, and on the last day both the newborn baby and the mother take a purificatory bath. On the eleventh day the child is given a name. Usually the grandfather's or grandmother's name is preferred. On this occasion a feast is arranged for the members of the family. At puberty a period of segregation is observed for ten days.

Marriages take place when boys and girls reach adulthood. But in certain cases child marriages are also conducted. Clan or *gotra* exogamy is observed. Generally, cross-cousin marriages are permitted. A man can marry the younger sister of his wife in a case of the latter's death but never the elder sister. Among the different forms of marriage, marriage by service, marriage by mutual consent and marriage by negotiation, etc. are prevalent. But the most common form of marriage is performed through negotiation. The marriage ceremony of the Jatapu closely resembles that of the neighbouring Telegus.

Marriages are finalized after two or three visits from the boy's side to the house of the bride on purely exploratory grounds. The groom does not accompany the party on any of their visits. After the selection is decided betrothal is undertaken through the presentation of some gold ornaments to the bride from the groom's side. Then the village priest fixes the date of the marriage. The payment of brideprice is prevalent, and nowadays it is paid in cash. After the marriage ceremony, the party, with the bride and the groom, return to the groom's village in a procession. The next morning the toenail-cutting ceremony (*Kalla gola sambranam*) takes place. The priest attaches a *kankanam* (wrist thread), tying the wrists of both the partners together. Then they take a bath in water that has been fetched by unmarried girls. Finally, a feast is arranged which is enjoyed by all.

Generally the dead are cremated, but those dying of smallpox, cholera and snakebite are buried. The news of a death in the family is communicated to all kin members soon after it occurs so as to enable them to join the funeral procession.

The eldest son lights the pyre and immediately after this leaves the cremation ground. The pollution period for a death is three days, during which all activities connected with agriculture are suspended. Every year, an annual *śradha* ceremony is observed in honour of the dead. On this occasion a fowl or a goat is killed and cooked in the house, and a little of the cooked food is collected in a plate and placed on the roof of the house in honour of the dead. A joint ceremony involving all the tribespeople of the village is also performed every twenty years in honour of the ancestors.

The Jatapu's main occupation is agriculture. Those having no land have turned to working as agricultural labourers and wage-earners. The main crops they grow are paddy, *ragi*, *suan* and maize. They do not practise shifting cultivation. The women assist the men in different agricultural operations. Among the subsidiary occupations which the Jatapu resort to are carpentry and the manufacture of ropes made out of *siali* fibre. Rice and *ragi* gruel constitute the staple food of the Jatapu. Other minor millets like *suan*, *ghantia*, etc. are also eaten. During days of food scarcity they eat gruel made out of a powder consisting of dried mango kernels and tamarind seeds. Non-vegetarian food, which consists of certain preparations of meat, fish and dried fish, are relished much more than the vegetarian food. Among the drinks, rice beer and sago-palm juice are popular.

Every village has a traditional village council, which is headed by a Nayak. Previously, the Nayak acted as an agent of the zamindars. But today, since the abolition of zamindari system, their prestige and powers have been considerably reduced. Nevertheless the Nayak continues to be the headman of the village and decides all intra-village disputes. He is assisted by the Barik, a messenger who belongs to the Domb caste. The other functionaries of the village are the Disari and the Jani. The former officiates in marriages and other social functions, and the latter worships the village deities. The supreme deity is called Jakara. Isha Debata is the household deity. On festive and ceremonial occasions they worship Jakara and Jakeri by sacrificing pigs, goats and fowls to them. Among the festivals, Pongal or Pondugu is the most important. Another festival called Bhagadi is observed in the month of Chaitra. Nowadays, some Hindu festivals like Dasahara and Nuakhia are observed.

JUANG

K.B. Debi

The Juang are a tribe found only in Orissa State. The community can broadly be divided into two sections, namely the Hill Juang and Plain Juang. The Hill Juang are confined to the hill ranges of Keonjhar and Pallahara, whereas the Plain Juang are distributed among the plains of Dhenkanal and Keonjhar Districts. The Hill Juang are still in a primitive stage, subsisting mainly on shifting cultivation, whereas the Juang of the plains have taken to settled agriculture. In Pallahara they pursue basket-making in addition to their traditional shifting cultivation. Ethnically the Juang are considered a branch of the Munda group. They are medium in stature with long heads and high cheek bones. The complexion of their skin varies from light brown to dark brown. They have their own language known as Juang. Nowadays they can speak Oriya.

The Juang claim the Juang Pirh of Keonjhar District as their homeland. Those who live in this area are known as *Thaniya* (original settlers), while those who have migrated to the plains of Keonjhar and Dhenkanal Districts are called *Bhagudia* (those who have fled away). There is a popular myth about their origin. The Juang believe that they are the first human beings to be born on earth. Their ancestors were born from a *Rusi* couple (a saint and his partner) who were living in Rusi Tangar, a hillock near Gonasika in Keonjhar District. According to the 1991 Census the Juang population was 35,665 or 0.5 per cent of the total tribal population of the State. In 1981 their population was 30,876. Thus the growth rate of the Juang during the decade 1981-91 was 15.51 per cent as against 18.89 per cent and 20.06 per cent of the state's tribal and general population respectively.

The Juang live in homogeneous villages located at the foothills or in the valleys surrounded by forests. Some settlements are situated in the plains. The villages present a scene of scattered houses. A unique feature of the Juang settlement pattern is their frequent change of village site. Each village has a number of village sites and the villagers live in one site for a number of years after which they move to another site. Many reasons are attributed to the change of village site, the main reasons being the shortage of *taila* land (land under shifting cultivation) around the village, the spread of epidemics, frequency of deaths in the village, etc. Nowadays they live in permanent villages.

At the centre of the village is a dormitory house called a *majang* or *mandaghar*. This is their community house. Juang huts are small in size and are used for multifarious purposes such as bedroom, kitchen, store, and sometimes goatshed. They can accommodate only one couple and young children. Grown-up sons sleep in the *mandaghar*. Families with old parents and grown-up daughters have a separate room for them. Cowsheds are built close to the huts. The walls of the houses are made of wooden pillars plastered with mud and cowdung. Thatching is generally done with grass. The room has no ventilation except one small entrance. A verandah in front of the room provides sitting accommodation.

The household appliances of the Juang consist of a few earthenware or gourd containers, earthenware cooking pots, some baskets, one or two headrests, a few date-palm mats, aluminum or brass plates and cups, one or two axes, sickles, a plough, hoes, digging sticks, and bows and arrows. For a Juang a hoe is more important than a plough because it is easier to use in the hills. Digging sticks and axes are used in shifting cultivation and therefore these are of great importance.

The Juang diet is never standardized nor systematic. During the agricultural season they eat food grains while during the off-season they satisfy their hunger with leaves, fruits, tubers, etc. Rice is the favourite food of the Juang. But since paddy cannot be cultivated in their *taila* and wetland is in short supply they produce other crops as a substitute. The Juang are extremely addicted to liquor and drink different varieties such as *mahuli*, rice-beer, toddy and liquor made from maize and other cereals.

The dress of the Juang is nothing unusual. The men wear a *dhoti*, the women a *sari*. School-going children wear shirts and pants while other children use napkins. The women adorn their body with varieties of ornaments such as bangles, nose rings, earrings, toe rings, anklets, armlets made of brass or alloy and multi-coloured bead necklaces of different designs. Women like to have tattoos on their foreheads and arms. This is considered necessary to enhance their beauty. The Juang bathe and clean their teeth regularly. Clothes are also washed daily. But women do not take a bath daily due to a shortage of saris. They take little care of their hair. On market day or during any socioreligious function they comb their hair properly by applying *kusum* oil.

The routine work of the Juang centres around their economic activities. Work starts before sunrise and continues till late in the evening, when they go to bed. There is a division of labour based on age and sex. The women do domestic work and also help their husbands in economic pursuits. Ploughing, sowing, broadcasting, thatching and tree felling are exclusively the work of men. The Juang pursue cultivation on four types of land: (1) *taila* (land under shifting cultivation), (2) *guda* (upland), (3) *badi* (kitchen garden), and (4) *bila* (wetland). *Bila* is owned by individual families whereas *taila* is the communal property of the village. Generally the hill slopes are cultivated for three to four years after which they are left fallow to recuperate. Then another hill-slope is selected for cultivation. After the patch is selected it is distributed among the households. The main crops, which are grown in the *taila*, are *mandia*, *gangei*, *kangu*, *jali*, *dhan*, *biri*, *tila* and vegetables. Maize and tabacco are raised on the upland. In *bila* only paddy is grown.

The forests in Keonjhar are still rich with wild game and the Juang pursue hunting occasionally when they get time. They also collect fruits, roots and tubers from the forest. Fishing is a pastime rather than an economic pursuit for the Juang. The Juang of Pallahara make various types of baskets from bamboo, a skill they have picked up from the local Scheduled Castes. Livestock rearing has not been taken up as an independent means of earning livelihood. The Juang raise cows, goats, fowls and pigs in small numbers either for agricultural or for religious

purposes. The Hill Juang of Keonjhar do not like to work as labourers. In Dhenkanal most Juang are agricultural labourers or sharecroppers.

Extensive poverty, sub-standard housing, poor hygienic habits and an unhealthy climate are the reasons for the widespread prevalence of various types of disease among the Juang. The Juang diet at present days has been affected adversely by various factors such as the shortage of food due to repeated clearings of the forest, inadequate forest collection and the disappearance of wild life in the area. Water for drinking is obtained from tube or other wells. For all other purposes they use water from the hill streams. Juang villages do not have any system for the disposal of wastage. They defecate in the open fields and spit in every odd place in the room and in the *mandaghar* where the young boys sleep. Their rooms are small, dirty and have no ventilation. They are also not aware of the environmental sanitary conditions. For all these reasons the Juang suffer frequently from malaria, skin diseases, a vitamin and protein deficiency and a high rate of morbidity.

Diseases are attributed to the evil intentions of unseen power, evil spirits or displeased ancestors, and the black magic of sorcerers and witches. Unless these unseen powers are propitiated with sacrifices and offerings, there is no hope for a quick recovery. The Juang have their own diagnostic tools and techniques, which rely on divination. The treatment is also based on traditional methods of the propitiation of gods, exorcism, magic, use of charms and amulets and sometimes the administration of herbal medicines. Only those who live near medical centres avail themselves of modern medical facilities.

Ordinarily the Juang have nuclear families consisting of a husband, wife and unmarried children. Grown-up sons after marriage remain separate. Extended families consisting of a married couple and elderly parents are also not uncommon. After her marriage a girl ceases to be a member of her parental family and goes to stay with her husband. The family in the Juang society is patrilineal, patrilocal and patripotestal. The father is the head of the family under whose guidance the family functions as social and economic unit. The family in the Juang society is the primary unit of production, distribution and consumption, but the importance of the village as an economic and social unit cannot be ignored. It has a formally recognized territory of exploitation with well-defined land boundaries. A Juang is allowed to cultivate and cut down trees from that part of the forest that belongs to his village.

The most characteristic feature of the Juang social organization is their village exogamy. The village is unclan and marriage within it is forbidden. As such village and clan exogamy go hand in hand. The clan is a unilineal descent group whose members trace their origins back to a common ancestor. The clan is called a *bok*. It is patrilineal, totemic and governed by the usual clan rules. Incest within the clan is considered a very serious offence. All the clans in the Juang society may be grouped in to two divisions known as *bandhu* clans and *kutum* clans. The members of a *kutum* clan are considered parallel cousins and as such marriage or sexual relations with members of a *kutum* clan is taboo.

The institution of the dormitory, called a *majang* or *mandaghar*, is their traditional youth organization, and still exists among the Juang of Keonjhar and Pallahara. It plays a very significant role in the sociocultural life of the Juang. Here the unmarried youth sleep at night and elderly men chat in the morning and evening and warm themselves by the fire which is kept burning throughout the year. The fire is considered sacred and is used to fire the clearings in the forest, which is selected for shifting cultivation. In front of the *mandaghar* is an open space where the unmarried boys and girls dance. The boys and girls above eight years of age constitute the formal members of the dormitory organization. The *mandaghar* also serves as a courthouse for the village elders, a guest house for visitors and a storehouse for communal property.

Birth, puberty, marriage and death are the most important stages in the life of the Juang. Some kind of ritual is associated with each stage of their life cycle. A woman in Juang society is expected to become a mother after marriage. If a couple remain childless over a long period of years, they try to overcome the trouble by divination. When a woman becomes pregnant she has to observe various taboos. At the time of delivery a midwife or elderly woman from the village is called to assist the expectant woman for easy delivery. She cuts the umbilical cord with a bamboo knife, anoints with turmeric paste and bathes the child in warm water. The mother remains secluded and is not allowed to do any household work during the period of birth pollution, which continues for up to seven days in Dhenkanal and one day in Keonjhar. On the fifth or sixth day after delivery the name-giving ceremony of the child is held. The child generally takes the name of one of its deceased ancestors. On that day the child's father sacrifices chicken and offers the meat to the ancestors and other deities. The mother cooks rice and chicken which she distributes to the lineage members.

Marriage is the most important event in the life of an individual. It not only satisfies their biological urge but also gives them a status in society. There are several methods of acquiring mates in the Juang society. These are (1) marriage by negotiation, (2) marriage by capture, (3) love marriage, and (4) widow marriage.

In negotiation marriage the parents of the boy select the girl for marriage. The parents perform rice divination on an auspicious day before starting negotiations for marriage. If the divination indicates a good sign, the boy's party does not raise any objection to the marriage. The marriage is settled when both parties agree. The villagers fix an auspicious day for the marriage. On the fixed day the villagers of the boy pay a brideprice and bring the bride. The bride's party consisting of her kith and kin comes to the bridegroom's village. A *changu* competition is held between the two parties. The marriage takes place at an altar constructed in front of the groom's house. Marriage by capture is most common among the Juang. The bride is captured by the bridegroom's representatives from the dancing ground, bathing ghats or market. In this case the prior permission of the groom's parents is required, although the prior consent of the bride's father is not necessary. After marriage the bridegroom's party visits the bride's village and pays the brideprice consisting of some money, paddy and cloths. Love marriages sometimes takes place, which is regularized afterwards. Divorce is socially

permitted in the Juang society. Divorcees and widowers can remarry if they like. A widow is expected to marry her late husband's younger brother.

Like many other tribals the Juang believe that death occurs due to acts of supernatural powers. In order to satisfy the soul of the dead and give it rest in the other world, the Juang observe a death ceremony in different phases. The customary law of disposing of the dead is the cremation of the corpse. The nearest relative take the corpse to the cremation ground on a bier, where it is placed on the pyre with its head pointing towards the east. One of the nearest relatives lights the pyre after certain rituals are held there. Then the mourners return home and take a purificatory bath. Death pollution is observed for two days in Keonjhar and ten days in Dhenkanal. The deceased's close relatives are the mourners who observe various restrictions in respect of food and work. On the day of purification everyone takes a bath. Food is offered to the departed soul and a feast is given to the villagers.

In every Juang village there is a village council consisting of some office-holders and the village elders. It is responsible for the maintenance of peace and traditional norms in the village. The Pradhan is the formal headman of the council. All significant matters are brought to his notice. He decides cases like quarrels among the villagers, breaches of minor taboos, divorce cases and the separation of property with the help of village elders. The Nagam or Dehuri, the sacerdotal chief of the village, takes an active part in some important decisions regarding the distribution of *taila* land to the villagers and fixing the date for observing different rituals. The Dangua acts as the messenger of the Nagam and the Pradhan.

The Juang Pirh in Keonjhar District is divided into six sub-pirhs, which are the maximal traditional units for judiciary functions. Each sub-pirh has a Sardar as its headman with a number of Pradhans under him. The duties of the Sardar in the past were to maintain law and order in his area and to collect land revenue from the *raiya*s on behalf of the chief of the feudatory State. At present he only exercises his judicial power in deciding cases such as incest, pre-marital pregnancy and other matters that cannot be settled at village level.

The Juang believe that their life is controlled and guided by various deities and deified spirits who live around them in the hills, forests and rivers. But at the top are Dharam Deota (the Sun God) and Basumata (Mother Earth) who are the creators and preservers of Juang society. The next most important deity is Gramsiri or the village deity, which is represented by a pointed stone installed in front of dormitory house. She protects the villagers from all sorts of calamities and is therefore worshipped on almost all occasions.

The Juang observe various rituals throughout the year to propitiate their deities and ancestors. Their important festivals include Puspunei, Amba-Nua, Tirtia, Asadi, Pirh-Puja, Dhan-Nua, etc. On the occasion of Amba-Nua and Dhan-Nua the Juang clean their houses, throw away their old earthenware cooking pots and use new ones. They prepare a special type of food and offer it to the ancestors with *mahuli* liquor. The Juang observe Pus Punei with much pomp and ceremony, this being the beginning of the agricultural cycle. On the full moon day of Pausa

(December-January) the Nagam kills a pig and sprinkles blood over the grains collected from each household, these being kept in the *mandaghar* for seed purposes. Amba-Nua is associated with offerings of mango blossoms to the village deities and ancestral spirits. The village youth worship their deities called Bhima or Kanchery in the dormitory on this occasion. There are some traces of borrowing from the Hindu pantheon and religious ceremonies. Hindu deities like Siva, Parbati and Jagannath are worshipped, and Hindu festivals such as Ratha Jatra, Raja Sankranty, Ganesh Puja and Laxmi Puja have been included in their annual festive cycle.

Dancing and music are an integral part of Juang social and religious festivals. Dances are also performed when the boys of one village go to visit another village on dancing expeditions. The boys and girls of one village belong to one *kutum* clan and cannot dance together. Therefore, occasionally they visit *bandhu* villages where *changu* dances are held. The dance continues for two, three or more days and nights without a break. While dancing the boys sing songs accompanied by musical instruments called *changus* and the girls dance to its tunes. The Juang are fond of singing. Their songs are also sweet and melodious. They have several folk songs, legends and folk tales, which depict their origin, cultural values, day-to-day activities, love and sorrows.

The Juang of Orissa are no longer an isolated group. They live among Hindu castes in Dhenkanal District. In Keonjhar some Gauda, Teli and Scheduled Caste families live in Juang villages. But the Juang of these villages are the dominant groups and are less affected by Hindu ways of life than their brethren in Dhenkanal. However, changes are found to some extent in their way of life.

Among the Juang of Keonjhar District various development programmes have been implemented for their all-round development through the Integrated Tribal Development Agency and micro-projects. Both the agencies in their respective areas have adopted a number of development programmes with an emphasis on agricultural development. The agencies provide improved varieties of seeds, fertilizers, insecticides, agricultural implements, irrigation facilities and developed land to the shifting cultivators. Raising the seedbed, transplanting seedlings, use of chemical fertilizer and control of water management through irrigation channels have modernized the agricultural process of the Juang to some extent. The agencies have taken care to open an intensive health care centre. Education is essential for the development of the Juang. The percentage of literates at present is 7.99. Agencies have established some schools and adult education centres to provide a modern education. Vocational training centres are also in operation in the Juang area and villagers are given training in tusser-rearing, tailoring, etc.

KANDHA

P.S. Daspatnaik

Numerically, the Kandha form the largest group among the 62 tribes in Orissa, with a population of 11,40,374 according to the 1991 Census. They constitute 16.20 per cent of the total Scheduled Tribe population of 70,32,214. Although they are largely concentrated in the Central and Rayagada Sections of the Eastern Ghat region, they are found sporadically through out the state. Customarily they were once famous for their brutal acts of human sacrifice (*meriah* sacrifice), carried out to produce bumper crops and the killing of infants for a better yield of turmeric. The word 'Kandha' is derived from the Telugu word 'Konda', a hill, according to Macpherson. He further states that the Telugu people call them 'Kotuvandlu'. Besides Orissa, these people also live in Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal and Madhya Pradesh. Originally they were hill-dwellers.

The tribe registered a growth rate of 15.27 per cent during the period 1981-91. The sex ratio is 973 females per 1000 males. The percentage of literacy has increased substantially from 12.4 in 1981 to 20.2 in 1991. There are various sections of Kandha. Each section is endogamous, though originally they hail from the Kandha community. The Dongria Kandha of Rayagada District and Kutia Kandha of the Belghar area of Kondhamal District represent the primitive sections.

The Desia Kandha inhabit the plains and coastal areas. They represent the Hinduized section of the tribe. There are various other sections in between these two extremes who are at various stages of socio-economic development. The primitive sections are shifting cultivators. The Dongria Kandha are expert horticulturists. The Desia Kandha are settled agriculturists. There are other sections like the Malwa and Penga Kandha who are in between shifting cultivation and settled cultivation. However, all these sections are the descendants of the seven brothers who lived at Gumma in Baliguda sub-division in Kondhamal District, and were created by the Supreme Being, 'Sapangada'.

Racially, the Kandha are related more closely to the Proto-Australoid stock with considerable Mongoloid admixture. They are divided into two linguistic groups, 'Kui' and 'Kuvi'. The Kutia Kandha, whose distribution corresponds approximately to the area of Kandhamal district, speak the Kui dialect, while Kuvi is spoken mainly in the eastern part of Koraput District. However, the primitive sections of the Kandha communities are found largely in the districts of Kondhamal and Rayagada. The Desia Kandha have left their hill fortress and are found in large numbers in the northern plateau of the central table land, the northern section of the Eastern Ghats and the coastal region. They comprise approximately 39.4 per cent of the Kandha population.

The settlement pattern of the Kandha village is of linear type. Two rows of houses on either side of the central street is the average pattern of settlement. The thatch of the adjacent houses merge in such a way as to give an impression of a long roof stretching from one end of the village to the other. There is an altar to the Earth Goddess called *jakhri* at the centre of the village street. In some villages,

among the primitive sections, they have well organized dormitories called *dhanger iddu* for both unmarried boys and girls.

The permission of the chief headman is obtained before one constructs a house at a site of one's choice. The layout of a primitive Kandha house generally consists of front and rear verandah, a bedroom in the centre and a small kitchen. The floor is slightly above the level of the central street. The walls are made of mud, and the roof is grass-thatched. Each house has a low ceiling which provides as a garret (*attu*). The Kandha of Phulbani live in low wooden houses. The house is rectangular in size. Walls are made of wooden planks or bamboos plastered with mud. Wooden poles are then placed to construct a trellis over the wooden scaffolding to fix the thatch. Then construction of the two-sloped roof begins either by thatching it with tall grass or by fixing wooden planks, the latter being fixed by the more acculturated Kandha. The actual construction is preceded by an ordinary ceremony of a symbolic nature. A careful look at the Kandha house shows use of very simple equipment, including a gourd, wooden, bamboo and stone articles, and baskets, earthenware pots and iron implements.

The dress worn by the Kandha is not in keeping with their environment. They use some covering on the body, of course, to withstand the cold, yet their way of life has made them conditioned to the local climate, which indirectly helps them maintain their traditional dress. Kandha women wear two pieces of clothing, one around the waist up to the knees and another for the upper portion of the body. But Desia Kandha women wear saris. Kutia Kandha men wear only a loincloth. A Dongria male wears a cloth called a *kodi*, 16 feet in length and one foot in width. The sophisticated Kandha have started wearing *lungi*, shirts and half-pants. On special occasions headgear is worn. A coloured turban is worn by the groom during marriage.

Kandha women are very fond of ornaments. Among the Dongria Kandha the women beautify themselves with hair-pins, earrings, nose-rings and head necklaces. Wristlets and earrings are used by the men among the primitive sections of the Kandha community. Men also like to grow their hair long and tie it into a knot at the nape of the neck in traditional fashion. The Desia Kandha follow the Hinduized way of living. The Kutia Kandha tattoo their faces and hands whereas the Dongria do not.

Men and women dine together. The children are served earlier *peja*, a gruel prepared from millet (*ragi*), serves as morning tiffin, which is usually eaten at 9.00 a.m. The same is also taken during lunch in the terrains or swiddens or in the forest. The day's hunger is relieved by drinking sago-palm juice (*salap*). The evening meal is considered to be the best meal, as rice and a leafy vegetable curry add charm to the supper. But the Hinduized section eat rice as their staple food because they are settled agriculturists. The primitive sections eat buffalo, beef, pork, mutton, etc. The advanced section has not relinquished this habit altogether. Turmeric and chilli are the only condiments used in cooking. Boiling is the only process of cooking. They are fond of fish, crabs and snails. Dry fish is relished with the greatest satisfaction.

The Kandha use both distilled and fermented liquor for socio-religious purposes. Distilled liquor is largely consumed by the Desia Kandha. Even the primitive sections have a great fascination for distilled liquor, but they cannot afford to purchase it regularly. They therefore depend upon local varieties like sago-palm juice (*salap*) and date-palm juice (*tadi*). Local herbs and roots are added to the juice to increase its alcoholic content. Sometimes, *mahua* flowers are collected and liquor is prepared to meet the requirements of special occasions. Liquor is regarded as a food and at the same time a ritualistic food to satisfy deities and spirits. It is considered a social necessity and therefore consumed irrespective of sex and age. Negatively it also affects the economy of the Kandha, as they incur loans and are exploited by the Doms, local Sahukars and liquor vendors. Tobacco is used as a narcotic. The leaves are dried and powdered. This powder is eaten casually to provide energy. Tobacco leaves are rolled in *siali* or *sal* leaves and smoked as *pika*.

The Kandha are agriculturists. Occupational patterns vary. The primitive groups are mainly shifting cultivators. They carry on cultivation on swiddens, including hunting and food gathering. They do not have enough scope for wage-earning. Casually, as and when required, they are engaged as labourers by the villagers and paid *bhuti* (food) and an amount of Rs 5/- to Rs 10/-. This amount is not distributed individually. When the amount increases, it is used for a group feast. The Kandha who live in the plains and in coastal areas are simply agriculturists. They have better opportunities to develop their land by using fertilizers, insecticides, etc. With opportunities for irrigation, they also produce short-duration paddy, wheat, etc. besides long-duration paddy. They have better scope for wage-earning and other sources of livelihood. There are also other sections in between these two polarities, who have different occupational patterns and accordingly have different economic statuses and degrees of cultural development. The primitive sections produce paddy on the uplands and wherever available at the foot of the hills, but mainly depend upon minor millets and cereals. They also produce cash crops like turmeric, ginger, mustard, *niger*, black gram, arrowroot, etc. The Dongria section of the Kandha community produce fruits like bananas, pineapples, oranges, jackfruits etc. All these sections raise livestock. The primitive sections also keep buffaloes for sacrifice. They use their cattle wealth mainly for feasts and festivals. But the Desia Kandha use their cattle mainly to plough the fields.

The distribution of land among the primitive sections is clan-based. That is, a large territory is earmarked for a specific clan, the members of which may be living in eight to ten villages. All the members share the land in that area equally. These lands are owned according to hereditary rights but not yet recorded in favour of anybody, as there has not been any settlement operation in most of the areas where the primitive sections are living. Further, each of the agricultural phases is pursued collectively with ritual formalities and under the direct supervision of the clan leaders. The agricultural calendar is followed strictly. As the plain Kandha own land individually in the record of rights, they do not have any compactness nor any communal feeling in carrying out agricultural operations. There is no direct supervision as they are answerable to the common leaders of the village rather than to their community leaders.

The barter system is still the traditional method of exchange among the primitive section. Money is the basic unit of exchange. As a result, outside traders still have the upper hand in exploiting the primitive sections. Lands have therefore mostly been alienated, and fruit-bearing trees and cropped fields mortgaged to eke out a livelihood. Co-operative societies called LAMPS have been organized in these areas to control the usurper's tricky ways, to provide reasonable prices for their commercial crops and also to supply them with their daily necessities at reasonable prices. In fact, steps are now being taken by the government to improve the economic condition of these primitive sections through various schemes and projects.

The family is the smallest unit in Kandha social organization. The family occupies a single domicile. The nature of the family is conjugal, for it consists of a husband, wife and their children, who live in a two-roomed domicile. They share a common kitchen and work for the maintenance of the family. Most families in Kandha society are at first simple or nuclear in nature, after which there is extension in the vertical line when the respective sons bring in their wives. The sons separate after dividing the property into equal shares. Joint and extended families are rare. The father is the head of the family and he exercises authority in every sphere, which is passed on to the eldest son after death. The family is patrilineal, the Kandha reckoning descent through the male line.

Children receive orientation in their culture within the family. Grown-up children pass the night in their respective dormitories, according to traditional custom. Though such buildings are not found in most Desia Kandha villages, the custom still persists in a modified form. The boys visit the girl's dormitory in the adjacent village as suitors, observing the rules prescribed to that effect.

The next largest group is the clan, which is a unilineal group consisting of agnates residing in a number of elementary families. These elementary families live in a number of villages constituting a *mutha*. The respective heads of these families have clear genealogical relations, for they are the descendants of the same great-grandfather. Each clan is exogamous. Each Kandha looks towards these patrikins as his second line of defence with whom he cooperates in many of his activities. The members of the patrilineage help the head of the family meet many of his obligations by contributing cash or kind during ceremonies observed in connection with birth, marriage, etc.

A Kandha is introduced to the various stages of the life-cycle through characteristic rites of passage. A Kandha marries a second time if his first wife proves barren, because he loves children very much. An expectant mother is loved by everybody. The delivery is attended by an old lady. The delivery takes place in a secluded room or on the rear verandah. The umbilical cord is severed by the midwife with the help of a sharp-edged arrow and then subsequently buried in a deep hole in the back yard or near the threshold. The baby is then given a thorough wash in lukewarm water mixed with turmeric powder. Both mother and baby spend the next six days as the lying-in period and are carefully attended by the midwife. On the sixth day, a chicken is sacrificed to the dead ancestors. The blood is smeared on the walls using a piece of bark from a mango tree. A portion of it is hung at the entrance door to avert evil eyes. This frees the child from birth pollution, though the mother remains confined to the lying-in room for a month.

after which the head of the family offers rituals again with chickens to the dead ancestors. On that day the child is given a name. However, these customs are performed in different ways at different places. The children in the Kandha society are not considered burdens. They help their parents when they grow to five or six years of age.

Marriage is the accepted form of union between a man and a woman in the Kandha society. Generally adult marriage is the prevailing custom. Traditional marriages are conducted by either negotiation or service. The informal types, namely marriage by consent and marriage by capture, are very popular. They perform traditional marriage only in the months of Push and Magha. The conventional brideprice includes cash amounting to Rs 50/- to Rs 80/-, two cows, one buffalo, 15 kilograms of rice, and saris among the primitive sections, but is more among the advanced sections. *Iрпи-калу* or distilled liquor is also a prestigious gift exchanged between the two parties. The bride comes to the groom's house for marriage. The marriage nuptial is solemnized when the left foot of the bride and the right foot of the groom are tied together, the former above the latter, with a thread under a mango tree by the village priest or Jani. A grand feast is organized on the occasion with buffalo meat and barrels of distilled liquor. Young boys and girls of different clans have an opportunity to dance, sing and woo each other for the whole night. The advanced sections of the Kandha community have started imitating the Hindu fashion of marriage.

In marriage by capture the brideprice is more and the groom's father pays a penalty as compensation for the bride's loss of prestige. If the normal bride price cannot be paid, the groom serves in the bride's house for some years until the amount of brideprice has been paid in full, after which the marriage takes place. Levirate and sororate marriages are prevalent in Kandha society. Polygynous marriages are also preferred if the first wife proves to be barren or indolent. Widows remarry widowers and no brideprice is paid.

The Kandha practice cremation, but burial is also undertaken when the death is due to infectious disease. After death, the corpse is taken outside after an hour to give the body a thorough wash. Female affines do this. The hair of the corpse is shaved and the body is covered with a new piece of cloth, after smearing it with castor oil. Men and women both follow the bier. The corpse is kept on the pyre, and one of the consanguines inserts a bunch of grass and lights it by means of burnt firewood. They all leave the pyre still alight. On the way back they bathe in the stream and become free from pollution.

The final offering to the departed soul is performed on the eleventh day. The ancestor spirits (*dumba*) are worshipped by the Shamans (Bejuni). The Earth Goddess is also worshipped by the village priest or Jani. The ceremonial function comes to an end when the Jani sprinkles water on the feet of each person present there to absolve the house finally from death pollution. The evening is devoted to a grand feast which is attended by the members of the patrilineage, as well as affines.

The Kandha believe in Dharani (the Earth Goddess), the Supreme Being. She is all powerful and the highest of all deities. She is, therefore worshipped in all ceremonies as a mark of honour and respect. She is represented by a block of stone erected in a hut. She has her own twelve disciples, who are represented by different stone slabs. The entire structure is called a *Jhaker*. She is responsible for the growth of vegetation and other produce of the land. She used to be satisfied with human blood only, which was called *meriah* by the Dongria section and *toki puja* by the Kutia section of the Kandha community. This custom was suppressed long ago by the British, and buffalo are sacrificed instead at present.

In addition to Dharani, the village deity Jatrakudi is installed at the outskirts of the village. Gungi Penu, Bhima Penu and Lei Penu are deities of stream, hill and forest respectively. They have not been installed in any temple nor are they represented by any image but they are worshipped periodically. The Kandha worship ancestors, who are called *dumbas*. These ancestor spirits appear in dreams when they desire to receive periodic worship. Sita Penu is considered to be the deity of wealth. Birnapenu is responsible for giving rain. There are various deities and spirits, who differ with the different localities that are inhabited by the various sections of the Kandha. Apart from these spirits, they believe in the existence of ghosts (*mahane*), which are controlled by the shamans. The Kandha also believe in white and black magic. They are fatalists and believe in chance and luck.

The Lamba, Jani, Pujari, Dishari, and Beunis or Kalisis are various religious functionaries who preside as and when necessity arises. The Lamba presides only when the Earth Goddess is worshipped during the Meriah festival. The Jani is the village priest and offers rituals to different gods, deities and spirits at the village level. The Pujari is the assistant of the Lamba. The Dishari is the medicine man-cum-astrologer. The Beunis or Kalisis are the shamans.

Dependence, conciliation, propitiation and prayerful submission are the various means used to appease supernatural forces. The materials and objects required to satisfy these forces are standardized. Unboiled rice, incense powder and joss-sticks are the main items to worship with. Buffalos, cows, pigs, lambs, goats and fowls are sacrificed. Animals are tortured and killed to obtain the desired result quickly. Eggs are also offered as a ritual food to satisfy the ghosts and spirits. The Kandha have drawn up a programme of feasts and festivals throughout the year for better yields of crops. Two festivals such as Chaitra parab observed before sowing paddy and other millets and the Meriah or Kedu festival, observed in the month of February-March, are the most important and are observed with pomp and grandeur. The Hinduized section also observe the Hindu festivals in addition to these festivals.

The primitive sections still have well-organized patterns of traditional leadership not only at the village level but also at the *mutha* level. The Hinduized sections have no such organization at present as they have become subservient to the caste panchayat of the village. However, the Jani, who is the religious headman, is also the secular headman of the village among the primitive sections of the Kandha community. His post is hereditary. The Bishmajhi is the assistant to the Jani. The Barika or village messenger belonging to the Domb or Pano

community is the assistant of the Bishmajhi. The post of Barika is remunerative. The Mandal is the head at the *mutha* level. While this is the system among the Dongria Kandha, the Kutia section call their leaders at the village and *mutha* level the Majhi and Patro respectively. Since the *mutha* is gradually losing its importance, the *mutha* heads have also become unimportant.

Generally, the venue of the village panchayat is the seat of the Earth-Goddess, Jhaker. This body consists of all households in the village and is strictly limited to cases of black magic, witchcraft, incest, adultery, rape, divorce, etc. Matters regarding brideprice, land disputes, etc. are referred to the *mutha* panchayat. Since the tribals believe in customary laws and go by their own codes, they generally avoid referring any case to the law courts. At present, the tribals are also nominated statutory leaders in Kandha society.

However, the Kandha have taken adequate advantage of the local environment in setting up their domiciles and the village and in developing their patterns of subsistence. The various networks of relationships, and the concrete series of activities in the social, economic and religious spheres, are organized in relation to an ideal model in which each sub-system contributes to the totality of activities in such a way as to bring about coherence to the entire structure. The clan occupies the lowest level of their overall organization and is where members unite and co-operate to enable the clan to function as a whole and to maintain its continuity in the form of a descent group. The Kandha of the Eastern Ghat region consider themselves as belonging to one community by virtue of being worshippers of the same Earth Goddess, who is believed to maintain the fertility of the area they cultivate for their subsistence.

KAWAR

S. Ray

The Kavar, Kanwar or Kour are one of the Scheduled Tribes of Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Bihar. The Kavar trace their origin from the Kauravas of the Mahabharata, who were defeated by the Pandavas at the great battle of Hastinapur. The Kavar have lost their own language, if they ever had one, and now speak a corrupt form of Chhattisgarhi dialect of Hindi. They belong to the Dravidian group.

In Orissa the Kavar are found in all districts but concentrated in large numbers in Sundargarh, Sambalpur and Kalahandi. The Kavar population in the 1981 Census was 8549, which increased to 9582 by 1991. The growth rate of population during the decade 1981-91 was 12.08 percent. The literacy percentage in 1981 and 1991 were 13.7 and 26.8 respectively. This shows that there was a growth in the literacy rate during 1991. According to the 1991 census there were 1030 females per 1000 males among the Kavar. The Kavar greatly resemble the Gonds in appearance and manners. Dalton describes them as "A dark, coarse featured, broad-nosed, wide-mouthed and thick-lipped race, decidedly ugly, but taller and better set up than most of the other tribes."

The Kavar have eight endogamous divisions, Tanwar, Kamalbansi, Paikara, Dudh-Kavar, Rathia, Chanti, Cherwa and Rautia. The Tanwar group, also known as Umara, to which the zamindars belong, is considered to be of the highest social ranking as compared to others. They now claim to be Tomara Rajputs and wear the sacred thread. The Kamalbansi or 'stock of the lotus' may be so called because they are the oldest sub-division and are considered to rank next after the Tanwar or zamindar group. The Paikara are the most numerous sub-tribe, deriving their name from the Paiks or fort soldiers, and they formerly followed this occupation by being employed in the armies. They still worship the two-edged sword, known as the Jhagna Khanda or Sword of strife, on the day of Dasahara. Colonel Dalton states that the name 'Dudh' or 'Milk' Kavar has the meaning of 'cream of the Kavar', and he considered this sub-caste to be the highest in social order of ranking. The Rathia are a territorial group, being immigrants from Rath, a wild tract of the Raigarh Ex-State. The Rautia are probably the descendants of Kavar fathers and mothers of the Rawat (herdsman) caste. The Kavar and Rawat are accustomed to intermarry. The Cherwa are probably another hybrid group descended from Kavar fathers and Chero mothers, the latter being a tribe of Chotta Nagpur. The Chanti, who derive their name from a word for ant, are considered to be the lowest in social ranking.

None of the sub-castes eat together. As reported by Russell and Hiralal, the tribe has a large number of exogamous clans, which are generally totemic and named after plants and animals. The names of 117 septs have been recorded, and there are probably even more. A selection of names is given in the following list:

1. Andil-Born from an egg
2. Bagh-Tiger

3. Bichhi-Scorpion
4. Bilwa-Wild cat
5. Bokra-Goat
6. Chandrama-Moon
7. Chanwar-A whisk
8. Chita-Leopard
9. Chuva-A well
10. Champa-A sweet scented flower
11. Dhenki-A pounding lever
12. Darpan-Mirror
13. Gobra-A dunginsect
14. Hundar-A wolf
15. Janta-Grinding mill
16. Kothi -A store house
17. Khumari-A leaf umbrella
18. Lodha-A wild dog
19. Mama-Maternal uncle
20. Mahadeo- The deity
21. Nun materia-A pocket of salt
22. Sendur-Vermillion
23. Sua-Parrot
24. Telsi-Oily

Generally it may be said that the clans have taken their names from animals, birds and even articles of food or dress and household implements. The totemic objects are taboo for use by the particular totemic group. Those whose clans are named after plants or animals usually abstain from injuring or cutting them, but where these rule would cause too much inconvenience it is transgressed.

Marriage within the same clan is not possible. The Kavar practise adult marriage. A man can marry his wife's younger sister but marriage with wife's elder sister is prohibited. Marriage by negotiation is common. The proposal for a match always comes from the boy's father. The boy's party have to pay a brideprice known as *sule*, which is paid in cash, husked or unhusked rice, pulses or oil. The amount of brideprice differs from one sub-caste to another. If a widower marries a girl, a larger brideprice is expected. The wedding follows, and in many respects conforms to the ordinary Hindu ritual, but Brahmans are not employed. A girl going astray with a Kavar before marriage may be fined and the fine from her parents is spent in holding a feast. For a liaison with any other outsider she is excommunicated. Widow remarriage is permitted except in the Tanwar sub-caste. The younger brother of the deceased has the right to keep her. If the widow desires to marry another man, she loses her right to property. No particular ceremony is held for the purpose nor is any brideprice is paid. Polygamy is permitted, but is not common. Divorce is permitted for serious disagreement or bad conduct on the part of the wife.

Birth pollution continues for five days and after this period the mother is given regular food. On the fifth day the house is cleaned. The umbilical cord is cut by the midwife. It is buried in the market if the parents want the boy to be a trader, in the

place where village council sits if they want him to be eloquent, and near the shrine if the child is to be a pious man. In the case of a girl the cord is usually buried in a dung heap which is regarded as a symbol of fertility. Five months after birth the lips of the child are touched with rice and milk and it is named.

The Kavar practise both burial and cremation, which depends on economic condition of the deceased's family. If a family can afford to obtain wood, they burn the dead. In the case of those dying of smallpox and cholera, the dead are usually buried. The corpse is laid on its side in the grave, with its head to the north and face to the east. A little *til*, cotton, *urad* and rice are thrown on to the grave to serve as seed grain for the dead man's cultivation in the other world. A dish, a drinking vessel and a cooking pot are placed on the grave with the same idea, but are afterwards taken away by the Dhoba (washerman). In the case of cremation the ceremonies are very elaborate and generally resemble those of the Hindus. After the funeral the mourners bathe and return home. Death mourning continues for ten days for a man, nine days for a woman and three days for children under three years old.

The religion of the Kavar is entirely of an animistic character. They have a host of local and tribal deities, the main one being the Jhagra Khand or two-edged sword. They also have a supreme deity whom they call Bhagwan and identify Him with the Sun. The tiger is deified as Bagharra Deo and worshipped in every village for the protection of cattle from wild animals. The sword, the gun, the axe and the spear each have a special deity. They also believe that every article of household furniture is the residence of a spirit, and that if anyone steals or injures it without the owner's permission, the spirit will bring some misfortune on him in revenge. Theft is said to be unknown among the Kavar.

The Kavar believe in the efficacy of imitative and sympathetic magic like primitive people. Every Kavar village has its *tonhi* or witch, to whom epidemic diseases, sudden illnesses and other calamities are ascribed. The witch is nearly always some unpopular old woman, and several instances are known of the murder of these unfortunates. Tuesday is considered the best day for weddings. Thursday and Monday for beginning work in the fields, and Saturday for worshipping the gods.

The Kavar living among Hindus in north-west Orissa live in spacious house and wear the sort of dress and ornaments found among the lower castes of Hindu society. Women wear pewter rings around their necks. They decorate the ears with silver pendants, but as a rule do not wear nose-rings. Women are tattooed on the breast, arms and legs with miscellaneous patterns.

The Kavar consider military service to be their traditional occupation but most of them have given up their traditional occupation and now they are mainly cultivators and labourers. The Routia make ropes and sleeping cots, but the other Kavar consider such work to be degrading. They have the ordinary Hindu rules of inheritance. Hunting in the forest is carried out at times. Collection of edible roots and forest products supplement their food and economy. The staple food of Kavar is rice. They also eat a gruel of millet and maize but abstain from eating beef, pork

and other unclean foods. They drink rice beer and other alcoholic drinks. The Kavar take food only from Gonds and Gonds also take food from them.

Since independence remarkable changes have been taking place in all sections of the tribal population. This is also true in the case of Kavar, who are rising from their deep slumber and are marching ahead in progress and prosperity.

KHARIA

T. Sahoo

The Kharia are widely spread over Orissa, Bihar, West Bengal and Madhya Pradesh. Concerning the origin of the name 'Kharia', Russell and Hiralal suggest that it is a jargon term derived from *kharkharia*, palanquin or litter. The original name Khar-Kharia has been contracted to Kharia who carry palanquin. The Kharia are thus named in accordance with the tradition that their first ancestors carried a *hanghy* (carrying pole). The Kharia legend of origin resembles that of the Mundas, and tends to show that they are an elder branch of that tribe. The history of origin shows that their traditional occupation had been to till the soil and carry *hanghy*. Dalton also records the following tradition of origin. "There is a tradition that the Kharia with another tribe called Purans were the aborigines of Mayurbhanj, one of the Katak Tributary Mahals. They aver that they and the family of the chief (Bhanj) were all produced from a peafowl's egg, the Bhanj from the yoke, the Purans from the white and the Kharia from the shell."

The Kharia tribe is split into three social groups, namely the Pahari Kharia (Hill Kharia), the Dhelki Kharia (early-comers), and the Dudh Kharia (pure Kharia). These three social groups are distinguished from each other and have, relatively speaking, three grades of primitive culture. The Hill Kharia, the primitive and backward section of the tribe, represent the hunting and food-gathering stage of economic life along with the practice of rudimentary cultivation and primitive culture. The Dhelki section represent a more advanced culture with plough cultivation and food production. And the Dudh Kharia section represent the most advanced culture, bringing them into line with other Munda-speaking tribes in India. In addition to the above three social divisions of the tribe, three other social groups called Munda Kharia, Oraon Kharia, and Berga Kharia are found. These sections of the tribe do not have own cultural characteristics but are merely the outcome of the illegitimate sexual union of the Kharia with members of alien ethnic groups. As such they deserve no special mention here.

As for the history of migration of the Hill Kharia, it is recorded that they once lived in the fertile river valley situated towards the north of the Vindhya and Kaimur range. With the coming of the Aryans and conquest by other tribes, they moved south of the hill ranges and subsequently settled in the hill ranges of Mayurbhanj district in Orissa. In course of time they spread to the hills of Singhbhum and Manbhum Districts and other parts of Mayurbhanj District in Orissa.

But ignoring this historical migration, the Hill Kharia claim to be the autochthons of the Mayurbhanj Hills. The Dhelki Kharia and the Dudh Kharia probably migrated from the Kaimur plateau and came down to live in the country of Chotanagpur and Birupargana in Ranchi District through the Kharia Ghat. The Dhelki Kharia moved up earlier and subsequently the Dudh Kharia followed their migration route. In time the Kharia moved over to Sundargarh, Sambalpur and Mayurbhanj in Orissa, Midnapur and Bankura in West Bengal and the tea gardens of Assam.

The Similipal hill ranges are the hearth and home of the Hill Kharia. They are also found in insignificant numbers in Manbhum, Chotanagpur and Singhbhum in Bihar, Midinapur and Bankura in West Bengal, and Balasore, Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Sambalpur and Dhenkanal in Orissa. The Ranchi plateau is the central place of habitat of the Dudh Kharia. Their habitat extends to the areas of Gangpur in Sundargarh and some areas of Sambalpur in Orissa. Gangpur in Sundargarh District is the stronghold of the Dhelki Kharia. They also live alongside the Dudh Kharia, but the former are numerically preponderant.

According to the 1981 Census the total Kharia population in Orissa was 1,44,178, increasing to 1,68,407 in 1991. The growth rate of the Kharia was 16.80 per cent over the decade 1981-91. According to the 1991 Census the sex ratio of the Kharia was 1046 females per 1000 males. According to the 1961 Census their rate of literacy was 9.37 per cent, increasing to 12.16 per cent at the 1971 Census. The percentage of literacy further increased to 17.9 by 1981 and to 28.37 by 1991.

The Hill Kharia live in the hills and forests of Mayurbhanj. Their villages vary in size from five families to twenty families or even more. Their huts are located in a scattered manner on hill tops, slopes or even the foothills. A typical Hill Kharia house is a small multipurpose rectangular hut with walls made of *sal* wood and plastered with mud. The roof of the hut is made out of a double sloped wooden frame and thatched with grass or straw.

The Dudh Kharia and Dhelki Kharia live alongside other castes and tribes in villages of larger sizes in the plains. The well-to-do Dudh and Dhelki Kharia have more than one hut with a kitchen, a separate cow-shed and pigsty. In Sambalpur and Sundargarh most of the Kharia houses are thatched with *khapper* tiles. The household furniture, tools and appliances of the Kharia include date-palm leaf mats, string cots, earthenware vessels, gourd vessels, metal and silver utensils, bamboo baskets, leaf plates and cups, pestle and mortar, grinding stone, bow and arrow, axe and spear.

Kharia children go naked up to six years. Children from 7 to 10 years wear the *boroka* (loin cloth) around their thighs and waists. Adult Kharia wear small dhotis and women wear white cotton saris, which fall down to the ankles. Nowadays the Kharia, especially the more advanced sections of the tribe, wear modern dress. Kharia women adorn themselves with various types of ornaments, which include brass necklaces, armlets, earrings, finger rings and iron hair pins. Some young boys also wear bead necklaces. Women wear ribbons to decorate their hair.

The three sections of the tribe lie at three different stages of economic scale: the Hill Kharia subsist on food gathering and hunting, the Dhelki Kharia on agricultural labour and the Dudh Kharia on settled agriculture. Formerly the traditional occupation of the Kharia was carrying litters. But nowadays the Hill Kharia mostly depend on food-gathering and hunting. Some of them also practise rudimentary cultivation. Their major source of income is derived from the collection of forest products such as resin, wax, honey, tusser cocoon, gum, lac, etc., which they barter for paddy and other cereals. For Dhelkis, agriculture has

been the main source of livelihood. Some also work as agricultural labourers. The Dudh Kharia are settled agriculturists. In the recent past a large number of Kharia have gone to the tea gardens of Assam to work as daily labourers.

According to the 1991 Census the Kharia work force constitute 38.29 per cent of the total population. Most workers, comprising 82.77 per cent, were engaged in cultivation and agricultural labour. Another 0.77 per cent were found to be associated with the occupational categories of transport, storage and communication. The remaining workers were engaged in mining and quarrying, construction, trade and commerce, household industry, etc. Fishing is a subsidiary and occasional economic pursuit for the Kharia. The habitat of the Hill Kharia provides little scope for fishing, but the other two sections of the tribe go fishing whenever the opportunity arises.

Many Dudh and Dhelki Kharia spin thread. Generally Kharia women make mats out of date palm and splits of bamboo for their own use. The Kharia make ropes out of *sabai* fibres and the leaves of the aloe plant. A few Kharia know the technique of oil pressing. The Hill Kharia are expert hunters. Using bow and arrows, sticks and spears, they hunt wild game like deer, pea-fowls, jungle fowls, snipes and squirrels.

The life cycle of the Kharia consists of such events as birth, childhood, adulthood, marriage, old age and death. In the case of the Hill Kharia, after delivery of a child a period of birth pollution is observed for nine days. The mother and the new-born baby take a ceremonial bath on the ninth day. A few families observe a second purificatory ceremony on the 21st day after the birth. In the case of the Dudh and Dhelki Kharia, the first phase of pollution is observed for seven days, and the final purificatory rite is observed after two weeks. During the purification ceremony a magico-religious rite is performed and then the baby is given a name. The next noticeable event, the ear-boring ceremony, is held when the child reaches five or six years of age. Different sections among the Kharia never intermarry. Adult boys marry at the age of twenty and above, and girls marry at the age of fifteen to eighteen years. They practise monogamy and cross-cousin marriage. Marriage by arrangement and negotiation is the ideal pattern. The groom's party pays a brideprice, which consists of Rs.60/- in cash, six pieces of cloth, one maund of paddy, two barrels of liquor, one goat and other such edibles required for the wedding feast. After marriage the couple live neolocally. The other prevailing forms of marriage are marriage by capture, elopement and service. Divorce is allowed and widows are permitted to remarry. They bury the corpse and observe death pollution for ten days.

The family is mostly nuclear, consisting of parents and their unmarried children. The average size of the family is five to six members. The Kharia family is patrilineal and patriarchal. Among the Dudh and Dhelki Kharia joint families are found rarely. The Hill Kharia of Mayurbhanj have no clan organisation. However, there is a totemistic clan organization among the Dudh and Dhelki Kharias. Their clans, which are exogamous, regulate kinship ties and marriage. They believe that the members of a single clan are descended from a common ancestor. Marriage within the clan is strictly prohibited. Incestuous relations between members of the

same clan is tabooed. According to S.C. Roy the Dhelki have eight clans, such as *Muru* (tortoise), *Soreng* (stone), *Samad* (deer), *Barliha* (a fruit), *Charhad* (a bird), *Hansda* (ell), *Kiro* (tiger) and *Topno* (bird). Among the Dudh Kharia nine totemistic clans have been reported, such as *Dung dung* (the ell), *Kulu* (tortoise), *Samad Kerkitta* (quail), *Bilung* (salt), *Soren* (a stone), *Bua* (paddy), *Tetetchoin* (a bird), *Kiro* (tiger) and *Topo* (a bird). There are also some sub-clans.

The Kharia have both classificatory and descriptive kinship terminologies. An avoidance relationship exists between a woman and her husband's elder brother and a man and his wife's mother and sister's son's wife. A man jokes with his wife's younger sister and younger brother and elder brother's wife on a reciprocal basis. Bond friendships are often made between two persons when they perform a ritual to become relatives in faith.

Thakurani or the Earth Goddess is the supreme deity of the Hill Kharia. They also worship Dharani Devata and a hero named Banda. They venerate their ploughs and axes on the day of *dashara*. They worship the Sun. Their religious beliefs and practices are based on the propitiation of various gods and spirits by observing different rites, ceremonies and sacrifices. They believe that the spirits who reside in the hills and forests control nature. The Kharia believe in black and white magic. However, currently their religious ideas, beliefs and rituals have traces of borrowing from the Hindu pantheon.

The traditional political organization of the Kharia is constituted at two different levels, one at the village level and the other at the inter-village level, in order to keep solidarity and law and order intact. Every Kharia village has a panchayat of its own headed by a Pradhan among the Hill Kharia, Kalo among the Dhelkis, and Kalo or Bainga or even Pradhan among the Dudh Kharia. Cases of a breach of any taboo and disputes about partition, divorce, adultery and the like are decided in meetings of the village council, which also raises funds for public worship, religious feasts and sacrifice during epidemics. The members of the council are present at rites and ceremonies relating to birth, marriage and death. In cases of serious offences, the village council has the power to excommunicate a person from the society.

Above the village council is the inter-village council. The Kharia call the organization the Parha Panchayat or Kutumba Sabha or Bhira. Among the Hill Kharia the Bhira consists of the representatives of some inter-linked settlements and is headed by the eldest, wisest and most influential Pradhan of these settlements. The headman is known as Dhira or Dandia among the Dhelkis. Their Kutumba Sabha is composed of members from villages of more than one clan. A man from the Muru clan acts as Paindiha or master of ceremonies, and a headman of the Samad clan acts as a Bhandari (Barber). Among the Dudh Kharia the Parha is composed of villages of more than one clan. The head of the Parha is called the Kartaha and this post is inherited. Nowadays, elections are held for this chair. He acts as the custodian of tribal law and custom. It is the exclusive power of the inter-village council to readmit an ex-communicated person into the tribe. Those cases which cannot be decided by the village council are referred to the inter-village council. Nowadays, the modern Panchayat system has been introduced in Kharia

areas. But it is not fully effective, as the people are not educated but still guided by the traditional authorities.

Like other tribes, the Kharia are very fond of dancing and music. Every occasion of feast and festivities is celebrated by dancing and music. Musical instruments such as the *madal*, *changu*, *dholak*, *nagra* and flute are used for dancing.

The three sections of the tribe have been influenced by other cultures and have thus undergone certain changes. The Dhelki and the Dudh Kharia have changed more than the Hill Kharia. In the recent past some Hill Kharia left their hill dwellings and moved to other parts of the area in search of a livelihood. Now they are living with other peasant communities. This contact with caste Hindus has brought some noticeable changes in their techno-economic and religious spheres. As a result they have taken up settled agriculture, animal husbandry and wage-earning for their livelihood. On the other hand, the Dudh and Dhelki Kharia, who have been in contact with Hindu castes for a quite some time, have been more influenced by Hindu ideas.

KISAN

B. Chowdhury

The Kisan tribe is listed as a Scheduled Tribe in Orissa, Bihar and West Bengal. In the 1971 Census, they numbered 1,97,644 in the whole country, constituting 0.52 per cent of the total tribal population of 37,998,041. Orissa, with 1,80,025 (91.09%), claims the highest number of Kisan, followed by Bihar with 16,903 (8.55%), and then by West Bengal with 716 (0.36%). In Orissa, the Kisan population (2,66,371) constitutes 3.79 per cent of the total tribal population of the state in 1991. Their population showed a growth rate of 16.83 per cent during the decade 1981-91 as against 18.89 per cent for the total tribal population and 20.06 per cent of the total population. The sex ratio is 999 females per thousand males. Although they are found in most of the districts of the state, their concentration is very heavy in the districts of Sambalpur and Sundargarh.

The term 'Kisan' is a Hindi word meaning 'cultivator'. This name might have been given to them by their Hindi-speaking neighbours because of their efficiency in agriculture. But a Kisan calls himself 'Kunhar', from which the term 'Kisan' might also have been derived. In some places they are referred to as 'Kuda' because of their efficiency in earthwork. However, a Kisan feels pride in calling himself a 'Kisan'.

In some places in Orissa, as quoted in the Census report of 1911 by Sarat Chandra Roy (1915), the Oraons describe themselves as Kisans, 'cultivators', or Kores, 'diggers', and in some other places as Dhangar-Kodas. In this way writes Roy (1915) 'different occupations followed by the Oraons in different localities have secured them from their neighbours different names and they are on the way to creating different sub-sections of the same tribe among whom intermarriage is no longer permitted'.

As to the origin of the tribe, they have only faint memories of their traditions. According to tradition the mountaineous tract of Bada Nagapur was the original abode of the Kunhar as opposed to Chotta Nagpur. When their forefathers were in Bada Nagapur, hunting and forest collection were their main sources of livelihood. At that time they were moving from place to place in search of suitable jungle tracts. In course of time a group arrived at the densely forested Nagara area. In those days there was no *Raja* or *Zamindar*. So they invited and installed a Bhuiya as the *Zamindar* of the area and distributed the forest land among themselves. Subsequently they learnt and practiced settled agriculture by clearing the forest land. Whatever may be the tradition they recall concerning their original birth place, they show much similarity in language and in cultural traits with the Oraon, whom they consider their younger brothers. No doubt one can conclude that the Kisan tribe is an offshoot of the Oraon tribe.

Their percentage of literacy has improved from 8.90 in 1961 to 11.45 in 1971 at state level. It increased further to 17.3 by 1981 as against 13.96 of the tribal population of the state as a whole. In 1991 it rose to 28.95. This shows that they are already ahead of many of the tribal communities in the educational field.

They live in any compact area alongside other tribes, though with separate ward (*tola*) set up at one corner of the village. The arrangement of houses in a Kisan settlement and the house patterns are not the same throughout the locality. In some settlements, generally in the older villages, the houses are clustered together, while in certain others, which have comparatively new houses, these are neatly arranged on either side of the village road. Each individual house has its compound. Well-to-do Kisan households build houses along the sides of a quadrangle, which serves as the courtyard. Kisan houses are rectangular in size, with one door in each room open to the courtyard. Most of the houses have low mud walls and a *naria* tiled roof.

In selecting a new site for the construction of houses, the Kisan follow a method of grain divination. At the selected site, seven grains of *arua* rice in the name of Mother Earth and the Sun God are placed in a spot that was cleared earlier. These rice grains are covered with a *pipal* leaf with sand on it. If these grains are found undisturbed the following morning, the site is considered auspicious. Before actual construction of the house is started the first wooden pillar, called the auspicious pillar, is fixed ceremonially by the oldest male member of the household. Most households own more than one living room, besides the cowshed and the kitchen.

Kisan household articles do not differ much from those of middle-class Hindus and other tribal groups like the Oraon and the Gond. They now possess many modern articles. As regards household furniture, the *khatti* (charpoy) with a wooden frame woven with thin *sabai* rope is found in many households. *Patia* or mat made of date-palm leaf is also used very commonly as bedstead. Some of the well-to-do houses have a framed wooden cot, chair and table. Their household utensils include plates and pots of various sizes made of brass, bell metal and aluminum. They use earthenware or aluminum cooking pots. The husking lever and grinding stone are found in many houses. Bamboo baskets of different shapes and sizes, and all types of utensil, are purchased from the market. The kerosene lamp, lantern, torch light, radio, watch, cotton umbrella, bucket and bicycle are now very commonly used. In dress and ornaments they do not show any peculiarity. Common dresses as used by the rural folk are worn by the older generation. Tattoo marks are mainly seen among the old women. Their other household articles include different varieties of agricultural implements, fishing traps and weapons for hunting. Musical instruments, which include drums of different size, are owned collectively by the villagers.

Rice is their staple food, which is taken two to three times a day with a side-dish of green leaves or vegetables. Besides these general items, they also eat special items such as cakes and non-vegetarian dishes, mostly on festive occasions. Edible roots, fruits and flowers collected from the nearby forests are eaten. Rice-beer and mohua liquor are the most common alcoholic drinks. Tobacco-smoking, chewing and the use of tobacco-paste (*gurakhu*) are common habits.

In the treatment of diseases, they still depend on their traditional methods of magico-religious treatments to some extent, although modern treatments like Ayurvedic, allopathic and homeopathic, are also resorted to. The shaman known as

Mati and the quacks called Kabiraj are still there to provide traditional methods of treating diseases.

As their name indicates, the Kisan are mainly an agricultural community. A majority still stick to agriculture. The employment pattern among the Kisan is more or less the same as that of the total tribal population of the state, with a slight deviation in the industrial category of manufacturing, processing, servicing, repairs, etc. Their participation in mining and quarrying and other services should have been more, in view of the mining activities and other characteristics of the area of their habitation. In other words, the Kisan have not yet taken up gainful employments like regular service, trade and commerce to an appreciable extent, but still largely depend on cultivation and agricultural labour. For a long time the Kisan have enjoyed the reputation of being good farmers among the tribes. Most have some land, which they cultivate. They mainly grow rice and *gulji*, a minor millet, as their main food crop. Most still follow the traditional method of cultivation, and very few have taken up new methods by using improved seeds or chemical fertilizer. They use the same types of agricultural implements that are used by their neighbours. In addition to agriculture the Kisan depend on forest collection as much as their places of habitation permit. They collect firewood, green leaves, fruits, *mohua* flowers and seeds mostly for their own consumption, and *kendu* leaves for sale. Hunting and fishing have become pastimes. As regards household industries, women have a knowledge of making mats and broomsticks from wild date palm leaves, while many men know brick-making and carpentry.

The tribe is divided into several *bansos*, or totemic exogamous clans. The Kisan population belonging to the following *bansos* are found in Sundargarh and undivided Sambalpur Districts:

<i>Banso</i>	<i>English equivalent</i>
1. Lokda	Tiger
2. Bahata	Wild dog
3. Bada	Banyan
4. Kind	A kind of fish (<i>seula</i>)
5. Tapo	A kind of bird
6. Kujur	A kind of leafy plant
7. Minj	Kite
8. Aka	Tortoise
9. Maha (r)	Crow
10. Tiga (r)	Monkey
11. Hesar	Paddy
12. Panner	Iron
13. Bakur	Salt
14. Palar	Cur
15. Majhi	Term used for the village by boatmen
16. Khalir	Secular headman among the Santal

They have no knowledge how these clans originated. They have no religious rites for the multiplication of their totems or as a mode of paying respect. They also do not show reverence towards their totemic objects, animals or plant.

The *bansos* are exogamous, and marriage within a *banso* is strictly prohibited. Marriage within one's *banso* will result in the excommunication of the offenders, which is irrevocable. There are several totemic names, which are similar to those found among the Oraon. Some of the *bansos* are divided into sub-groups, which are named after the old places from which the forefathers of the sub-groups migrated. For example the Lakda *banso* is divided into Tungulia, Gudhiali, Karanjia and Alandia. Similarly the Majhi *banso* is sub-divided into Dasalpurie, Nagpuria and Saheria.

The delivery of a child takes place in one corner of the living room, and experienced women assist the woman in confinement. In extremely difficult cases, the traditional shaman's help is summoned or the woman is taken to the nearest hospital. Soon after birth, the naval cord is severed with a knife, and along with the placenta, it is buried in a pit by one of the women who had assisted at the time of the delivery. Until the purificatory rites are performed on the seventh day, the mother is not allowed to cook or go out. She is given boiled rice and *kulthi dal* to eat during this period. On the seventh day the mother washes her clothes, takes a complete bath and takes *tulsi* water for her purification. On the 21st day after the birth, the child is given a name. On this day, if the family can afford it, it may invite the neighbours and relatives to eat festive meals, which include liquor.

Marriage within the same clan or to a member of any other caste or tribe is strictly forbidden. Marriage by capture, elopement and service, though socially approved, are less common than marriage by negotiation. However, both boys and girls are given freedom in the selection of spouses. Cross-cousin marriage is not compulsory but preferential. In a case of arranged marriage, the marriage proposal is brought formally by the boy's family. After the exchange of several visits, the brideprice and the date for the marriage ceremony are fixed. The brideprice is paid in both cash and kind, the amount of which varies from place to place. The cash payment varies from Rs 16.00 to Rs 18.00, and payment in kind, including paddy measuring 10 *khadies* or 150 kilograms approximately, and two clothes. Before the actual marriage the brideprice is paid by the boy's side. On the appointed day the groom, accompanied by relatives, both male and female, young and old, proceeds to the bride's village for marriage. The occasion is celebrated with dancing and singing and feasting in both villages. Widow remarriage and divorce are socially approved.

They both bury and burn the deceased. Death rites are observed in two stages as primary and secondary rites. During the primary death rites, they dispose of the corpse, collect its bones and observe purificatory rites. During the secondary rites they ceremonially throw the pot containing the bones of the deceased into the fixed water source known as Ganga ghat. After death, the corpse is anointed with turmeric and oil, and is carried to the cremation ground in a bier or a charpoy. After cremation they take bath and return to the deceased's house, where they purify themselves with the smoke from a burning fire in which oil is poured. On the third day of cremation, they go to collect the bones in a pot. On the eight or twelfth day the final purificatory rites are observed by cleaning the houses and washing the clothes. After the harvest the bone immersion ceremony is observed.

The Kisan believe in the existence of a number of Gods and Goddesses. They refer to the under-god as Mahapur and worship the Earth Goddess, and village deities named Gansir, Budha-Band and Bhim Debata. They believe in the existence of innumerable spirits who bring diseases and death. Various religious ceremonies are observed in honour of Gods and Goddesses round the year. Religious rites connected with agricultural operations start with the ceremonial sowing of paddy (*bihan buna*) in Baisakh (April-May). The Gamha festival for planting *kenidu* twigs is held in the agricultural fields in Sravan (July-August). Nuakhai or the first eating of new rice in the month of Bhadrab (August-September) and finally Puspuncel in the month of Pusa (December-January), which marks the end of agricultural operations for the year. In addition to these they also observe Dasarha, Kali Puja and Dol Purnima, along with their Hindu neighbours. On these festive occasions, special food like cakes and mutton are taken. The sacrifice of goats and fowls is very common. Such occasions are celebrated with dancing and music.

The Kisans are fond of dancing and music. On every occasion like marriage, the bone emersion ceremony, and at religious ceremonies, dancing and singing by both male and female, young and old, continue for day and night without break. Jatra, the festival of youth, is observed at different regions in different months of the winter and summer season. Groups of male and female Kisan visit the place where Jatra is held to participate in the dancing. They have special dances and music for this specific occasion.

In a village all Kisan show mutuality and cooperation in their daily lives. All the elders form an informal group under the informal leadership of the Sian, the secular headman. The village priest called Kalo and the witch-doctor known as Mati act and assist the Sian as spiritual priest and teacher in the society. All disputes and the celebration of socio-religious ceremonies in the village pertaining to their own group are examined by the informal village council. Over and above the village, they used to have a territorial unit consisting of a group of neighbouring villages under a tribal chief called *Bariha* to look after tribal matters and to organize the annual bone emersion ceremony. But this institution exists no longer. The only official who still continues it is the Panigiri, who officiates at the time of the bone emersion ceremony.

After independence the influential and educated Kisans made an attempt to bring about various reforms in the society for the improvement of their social status in the locality. They held meetings and finally formed informal tribal organizations at various places. The main aim of such organizations and the meetings of the prominent members of the tribe was to bring about the reform of their society by removing superstitious beliefs and customs, drinking habits, poverty and illiteracy. Several resolutions of reform pertaining to marriage rules and socio-economic improvements were passed and implemented in the past. The Kisans are now conscious of their socio-economic status in the locality and are trying hard to improve their economic conditions with the assistance of the Government, and their educational standards under the guidance of some educated and active members of their own group. Many changes have occurred in their society and several Hindu elements are now being absorbed.

KOLHA

P.S. Daspatnaik

During the pre- and post-independence periods, various writers like Col. E.T. Dalton, Sir H. Risley, etc. have described the socio-cultural life and values of the Ho, Kol, Kol-Lohara, Kolha and Larka-Kol. Most often, these terms have been used to denote a single group of people inhabiting different areas. The name 'Munda' seems to have been given to these people by their ancient Hindu neighbours. The Munda call themselves Horoko (Men) and their tribe Horo (Mankind). The appellation 'Kol', generally used for the Munda, Mundari and other Kolarian tribes, is now strongly resented by them simply because it is regarded as derogatory. They like the term 'Munda', as in their own language it signifies the well-to-do secular village headman (Prof. Sachidananda, the changing Munda, page 77). However, the Census of India has identified this group as Kol, Kolha, Kol-Lohara, Munda and Mundari and brought about confusion in the proper naming of the tribe by using multiple names to denote the same community. They are identified as both Ho and Kolha in Mayurbhanj District. While they are called Kol in Bihar, they are addressed as Kolha in Orissa. It is confirmed in the report of the Linguistic Survey that Har, Horo, Ho and Koro are the words commonly used by the Munda tribes to denote themselves (Russell and Hiralal, III-1975: 501). In fact, Kol, Kol-Lohara, Munda and Mundari belong to the same ancestral stock and inhabited the Kolhan region in Singbhum District in Bihar, from where they migrated in all directions in course of time and also to the border district of Mayurbhanj in Orissa.

The Kolha, along with kindred races, constitute one of the largest Scheduled Tribes in the states of Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Maharashtra. When they were in the Kolhan region, the Aryans invaded northern India, and the tribal communities living there left the Gangetic plain. These communities probably belonged to the same ancestral stock and there was gradual differentiation and fragmentation during the course of history. Hence the present day Kolha and Munda belong to the same ancestral stock except for the fact that the Mundas are more Hinduized than the Kolha (Dalton). Of course, we do not have any recorded evidence to prove that the Kolha migrated from the Kolhan, but their migration to neighbouring districts of Mayurbhanj and Keonjhar is assumed, based on the statement of members of the community that their ancestors had migrated to Orissa from Kolhan. Even now, their marriage circle extends well into Bihar, which reinforces the argument of their possible migration.

This tribe mostly inhabits the mining and industrial belt of the Bihar-Orissa border and has been exposed to the forces of industrialization right from the beginning of the century. In Orissa the Kolha have been separately enumerated at 4,04,864 according to 1991 Census and constitute 5.75 per cent of the total tribal population in Orissa; they are scattered throughout the state. They live alongside other Kolarian tribes, like the Santal, Munda, Ho, etc. The growth of the Kolha population of the state from 1961 to 1991 is shown in the following table.

Growth rate of Kolha population

<u>Year</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Growth Rate</u>
1961	2,03,515	-
1971	3,09,588	52.12
1981	3,26,520	5.08
1991	4,04,864	24.00

It is evident from the table above that the rate of increase in the decade from 1961-1971 is high is compared to the growth rate from 1971-81 which is low. Again it is high compared to that in 1981-91. This may be attributed to the fact that there has been heavy immigration during the decade 1961-71. But in the next decade the Kolha migrated to other places, to industrial and mining centres to eke out their livelihood. The sex ratio according to the 1991 Census is 1005 females per 1000 males. The preponderance of females over males may be due to the immigration of females by marriage and also to a higher survival rate among females in certain groups. According to the 1991 Census only 15.39 per cent of Kolha are literates.

Since the Kol or Kolha are in contact with Hindu culture, most of their villages are usually found together with other castes, not in the forest, but in an open space. Kolha villages follow a linear pattern of settlement with two rows of houses facing each other along a common road or footpath. They generally build their houses in separate enclosures, each being a separate unit. Every house has its own spacious fence enclosing the house proper, cowshed, harvest ground and storage space for straw and firewood. Each Kolha village has a *jahera than* or place of the village deity, which is usually a large *sal* grove, located preferably in the eastern part of the village. There are, generally speaking, well-defined village boundaries.

The typical Kolha house has either one multi-purpose room or two or three rooms at the most. If it is a one-roomed house, it is partitioned into at least three small spaces by a temporary thin wall. One of these spaces is used as a kitchen, while the other two are used to store grains and for multipurpose uses. If the house has more than one room, every room is separate in this function. The doors are either wooden or bamboo, and windows are conspicuously absent in most houses. The entrance of the house is ideally towards the east. The roof is thatched and mud floors are common. The walls are coated with yellow or red mud which is available in the locality.

The selection of house site is meticulous and carried out with the greatest caution, using a rice divination method for the purpose with the help of the village priest or Dehuri and elder members of the lineage. If the grains are not significantly disturbed the site is considered auspicious. Women may aid in building the house, but their work is limited to assisting in building the walls and floor of the house. For a woman to get up on the roof is taboo. When the building

is complete, a dedicatory ceremony takes place to instal the household god. The place near the hearth is marked with vermillion and *homo* is lit. A *tulsi* plant is planted somewhere in the courtyard.

The room of a Kolha house is littered with many bare necessities. A large sun-dried mud urn is used to store grain so that it may not be destroyed by rats and moisture. There are agricultural implements and other tools in the corners. Baskets of various sizes are heaped over the mud urn. In one corner, the view of which is generally hidden as one enters the room, is the cooking space with its stone mill and oven and a few pots for cooking purposes. The stone implements are the grindstone and the pestle. Valuables are kept in a tin box. However, the main articles in the house are those connected with food and drink. Hunting is a part of the culture of the Kolha. The observance until today of the annual communal hunting expedition in the month of Baisakh (April-May) signifies the place of hunting in their social life. Bow and arrows of various kinds hang on the inner walls of the sleeping room. Other household articles and utensils are prepared out of wood, bamboo, cane, brass, aluminium and bell-metal.

The dress of the Kolha is very simple and not distinct from that of their neighbours like the Santal, Bathudi, Munda, etc. The men wear a handwoven coarse *dhoti*, rarely coming below the knees. The lower portion of the *dhoti* is tucked in at the back. Modern types of dress like synthetic trousers, shirts, etc. are often worn by village youth. Women use a piece of coarse sari, usually with broad-coloured criss-crosses, and about 6 feet to 8 feet long. Blouses and undergarments are not uncommonly worn among young girls and also those working outside the village. Women use a number of ornaments, including glass or silver bangles, bead or glass or silver necklaces, silver anklets, hair pins, wristlets, etc. Unlike spinsters, married women wear iron bangles (*medaskam*) and toe rings (*katapola*) to give them a special identity.

Rice is the staple food of the Kolha. Dehusked rice, which is prepared almost every day in all houses, is used. Like other Hindu neighbours, the Kolha have two meals a day, one about noon and the other late at night. Early in the morning, some of stale rice is usually eaten before going to work. Millet is frequently eaten, and fried leaves of various kinds, onion, garlic, chillies and a pinch of salt constitute the typical side dish. Sometimes they prepare rice-cakes too. They relish fish, meats of sheep, goat, hare, deer, fowl, pigeon, duck, geese, etc. are boiled and eaten with great satisfaction. Beef and pork are sometimes eaten. On ceremonial occasions rice, pulses, vegetables curry and meat are prepared. The Kolha drink milk when available and the age-old taboo on its use is gradually losing its ground. The Kolha prepare a drink of homemade rice called beer or *illi*, which is consumed by everybody irrespective of sex and age. The beer prepared from the *mahua* leaf is also a favourite drink of the Kolha. They are also addicted to toddy-palm (*tadi*). No festival or ritual among the Kolha is complete without rice beer and meat of some kind or the other.

Earlier the Kolha subsisted on hunting and collecting, but their gradual contact with Hindus led them to practice cultivation and adopt plain-land wet agriculture. Their long contact with the Mahato community enabled them to learn

the techniques of agriculture in a more sophisticated way. Most Kolha depend on agriculture either as cultivators or as agricultural labourers. But these activities do not prove adequate to sustain them throughout the year and they are, therefore, attracted by remunerative daily wages and prefer to be engaged as day labourers in industrial areas. This sort of employment opportunity and possibility to earn cash exposes them to the evils of an urban industrial culture. Thus, agriculture has become an occupation of the old and disabled. Whatever landed property is possessed entered the clutches of moneylenders and affluent caste Hindus.

The total cultivable land is divided into three categories, namely, paddy land, orchard and homestead land. The paddy land is classed into three categories depending on level, high or low, and is assessed for rent accordingly. *Beda* is the low land or wet land, which has sufficient water for crops, while *dhipa* or *guda* refers to the rainfed category, which does not have any facility for irrigation. The land near the house is kitchen. Paddy is produced in the low land. In the summer, *dhipa* lands are used to grow vegetables, blackgram (*raba*), red gram (*rahi*) and many other local varieties, like *koda*, mustard, *gundlu*, *tisi*, *ruma*, *jang jada*, etc. From the kitchen garden, they get brinjal (*bengay*), tomato (*biliti*), greens (*aya*), beans (*simili*), papaya (*bindi dura*) and many other fruits and vegetables.

The cycle of agriculture among the Kolha is no different from that of other neighbouring tribals and caste communities. It starts with the processing of the fields during the months of May-June, just before the arrival of the southwest monsoon. If the rain is timely, an early variety of paddy is sown in the months of April to May, otherwise this operation is extended to June. Ordinarily, cow dung compost manure is used. Sowing of paddy seeds usually begins on the *Akshya Trutitva* day in the month of May. Broadcasting, a practice more popular than transplantation, continues thereafter for some days. During the time of the rains, that help mature the crops, the cultivators remain busy in removing the weeds and grass from the fields. By their strenuous exertions, the cultivators go on guarding the safety of the crops. Simultaneously, they prepare their *khala* (threshing floor) in readiness for the coming harvest.

Although individuality has taken over from the spirit of traditional collectivity in the Kolha social life, communal labour still plays important role in agricultural production. Some members of a clan, including women and children of both sexes, constitute a labour group, especially during transplantation, harvest and the transfer of crops from the field to the granary. Ideally, the members of this labour group do not obtain anything in cash or kind except for the midday meal offered by the landowner. The bullocks of some clan members are requisitioned at different phases of agricultural operations, and no rent is paid for the services rendered by these animals. But this guarantees reciprocal help at the time of need. These days, in most cases, hired labour is available for agricultural operations. While an adult man receives Rs. 8/- as daily wage, a woman receives Rs. 6/-. The payment may be in cash or kind, depending on what the labourers demand.

Nowadays hunting has become more of a ritual than a means of subsistence for the Kolha. Communal hunting, a symbol of social integrity and co-operation, is still being practised. Usually, after the *Akshya Trutitva* in the month of Baisakh

(April-May), all the men of the village move for hunting to the forest under the leadership of the Dehuri. Natural forest is almost non-existent in the area. There are jungles far away. The villagers do not even spare the most distant forests to collect firewood and house building materials. The women collect edible fruits, roots, tubers, etc. from nearby forests. The cattle wealth of the Kolha consists of cows and bullocks. They also raise goats, sheep and fowl. Fishing is not a significant subsistence alternative for the Kolha.

Kolha society is divided into various clans or *killi*. A *killi* is strictly exogamous. Marriage within the same group is strictly prohibited. This clan exogamy is due to the fact that the members of a *killi* are believed to be descended from a common mythical ancestor and thus to be related to each other by blood ties. This belief in a blood relationship not only imposes a total ban on marital relations, but also induces a high degree of unity and intimacy between the members of a *killi*. Every *killi* is associated with a totem. The *killi* of a Kolha is easily known due to the common use of the clan name as his surname. While a male retains his clan identity throughout life, a female has to change her clan after marriage. But in the case of the remarriage of a widow, she belongs to her parental clan rather than the clan of her deceased husband.

The family in Kolha society is regarded as the smallest socio-economic and politico-religious unit. Most families are nuclear in composition. Among the more affluent, some families are found in the pattern of Hindu joint families. Monogamy is a common practice, with the rare occurrence of polygynous families. Although polygyny is never encouraged in a Kolha community, it takes place in exceptional situations like the barrenness or disability of the first wife. In such cases, the supremacy of the first wife is nevertheless maintained, and a second wife is only sought with her approval. The father is recognized as the head of the family and all authority relating to the overall maintenance of the family is vested in him. He officiates in all family rituals and represents the family in village functions. Interpersonal relations continue between the members of the family, which is based on cordiality, mutual love, affection and sympathy. The status of women in the Kolha community can be said to be fairly high. There is a wholesale sense of equality among the sexes upon the break-up of the family by death. The sons are generally supposed to have equal rights to the property. The female members of the family do not enjoy equal rights with the males. A girl, when married, loses her membership in her family and becomes a member of the new household. Descent among the Kolha is traced unilineally and unilaterally, meaning that the Kolha are basically a patrilineal society with descent through the male line. All the members of the society are agnatic kin to one another.

The Kolha observe birth, name-giving, marriage and death rituals elaborately and spend lavishly in entertaining their fellow villagers. A woman in pregnancy is not considered unclean and there are no particular taboos upon her. The actual delivery takes place at home. She is attended by her mother-in-law. The birth usually occurs with the mother squatting on the floor, seated on her heels and bending over a large basket. The umbilical cord (*mara*) is severed with an iron arrow or a new blade. Immediately after the birth ash is sprinkled lightly over the baby from head to feet. This, it is claimed, prevents skin trouble, a possible chill

and wards off evil spirits. The baby is bathed in luke-warm water. Subsequently it is gently massaged with til oil. On the ninth day, the *marta* ceremony takes place when the stump of the umbilical cord has fallen off. On the twelfth day after the bath the mother finally resumes her daily works. The family remains ceremonially unclean for a month. After a month, if the family is affluent, a feast is offered to clan members. The new-born is named on the 21st day, called *numutu puria*. The names of the paternal or maternal grandparents are preferred.

The Kolha usually marry outside their clan. Monogamous marriage is most preferred. Preferential cross-cousin marriages are widely observed, and secondary marriages like levirate, sororate and widow remarriages are practised. Generally adult marriage takes place. Marriage by negotiation (*diku andi*) is common, though there are other forms of marriage, such as marriage by capture (*oportipi andi*), marriage by elopement (*raji kushi*), marriage by intrusion (*anader*), marriage by adoption (*gandi jamat andi*) and marriage by exchange (*badal andi*). Except for *diku andi* or marriage by negotiation, all forms of marriages are arranged at the groom's residence.

A *ganang* or brideprice, which ranges from Rs. 500/- to Rs. 800/-, 3 to 4 cows and about 30 to 40 kilograms of rice, is paid by the groom's father to fix the marriage. Marriage takes place on a pandal erected in the courtyard of the groom's house. The Dehuri officiates as the priest. Vermilion is applied by the groom to the girl's forehead with a silver coin. The ends of their clothes are tied together usually by the bride's sister. They circumbulate the pandal seven times invoking Sing Bonga, the Supreme God and other goddesses. This solemnises the nuptial tie. Feasting and dancing follow throughout the night. Divorce is allowed in Kolha society but must be sanctioned by the members of the community council. In the urban context, the sexual unchastity of either spouse is the sole cause of divorce. In the rural situation divorced women are looked down upon.

The Kolha practise both cremation and burial. At present burials have become more common. After three days of cremation, a bone of the deceased is collected from the ashes and kept in a new cloth for later disposal. The *Daswt* or final purificatory ceremony takes place after ten days. *Sapsi* or the funeral feast occurs on the tenth day. In the case of females, it is observed on the ninth day. The first morsel at the funeral feast is consumed by a Hindu lower caste man. Then the departed soul (*ambal*) is offered another morsel of the special food prepared for that occasion in a new earthen vessel. All *killi* members and the villagers are entertained with a feast. After the ceremony, if the purse allows steps are taken to immerse the bone of the deceased in a river. They summon a Brahman priest to perform the ceremony. The ashes and bones are then cast into the river, which is called Sirana.

Life without religion is unthinkable to the Kolha. Like other tribal communities in Orissa, the Kolha have an ardent faith in supernatural beings and in the soul of departed individuals. Most of their social activities are permeated by religion and magic. Both gods and goddesses termed *Bongas* regulate their day-to-day individual and communal behaviour. Every Kolha village has a permanent abode for their *Bongas*, which is usually a *sal* grove (*Jahira*), a little away from the village, who are regularly propitiated and where regular sacrifices are offered to

them. It is also believed that the spirits of dead ancestors take shelter inside the house, where offerings are made in their honour on festive occasions. It is believed that Sing Bonga is the chief among all, and that he created the universe. In fact, *Bongas* are divided into two types, the benevolent and the malevolent, depending on their nature. *Sing Bonga*, a male deity, otherwise known as Dharam Debata or the Sun God, is believed to be omnipresent and therefore no definite place of worship is accorded to him. *Basuki Thakurani* is the Earth Goddess and is worshipped as one of the protectors of the entire Kolha community. *Grama Siri* is the presiding deity of the village. *Marang Bonga* is the clan deity. *Buru Bonga* is the deity of the forest. *Euddhipat* is the Goddess responsible for rainfall. *Dessuali Bonga* is the Goddess of disease. *Karam Bonga* is believed to be the goddess *Laxmi*. Other than gods and deities, the Kolha also believe in ghosts and spirits. *Churel*, *Danawa* and *Jind* are dreaded spirits. *Matia* is the demon of the whirlwind. The evil-eye (*nazar*) exerts a powerful and dangerous influence. Among the Kolha illness and disease are often associated with the work of unfriendly spirits.

Every Kolha village has a priest known as the *Dehuri*, who performs all worship to different deities on behalf of the villagers. The *Raulia* is the medicine-man in Kolha society, and adopts the oil-water method to detect the spirits. The general tendency is towards offerings of coconut and food rather than animals at present. This is due to the influence of the Vaishnavite sect of Hinduism. Animals which make acceptable offerings include chickens, goats, pigs and sheep.

The Kolha observe four festivals communally besides domestic rituals. These festivals are a combination of socio-religious and recreational activities. These are a) *Magha Pudi*, b) *Ba-Parab*, c) *Hera Parab* and d) *Jamna Parab*. *Magha Parab* is observed in the month of *Magha* (January-February) after the harvest is over. *Ba-Parab*, otherwise known as *Phulbhanguni*, is observed for four days in the month of *Chaitra* (February-March) before the eating of fruits like mango, *sal* flower, jackfruit, etc. *Hera Parab* is related to the agricultural cycle. *Jamnam Parab* is otherwise known as *Nuakhia Parab*, and is usually celebrated in the month of *Aswin* (October-November). Beside these festivals, the Kolha observe *Maker Parab*, *Ashadhi Parab*, *Gamah Parab*, etc. The ultimate authority of the local group rests with the village *Pradhan*. The traditional *panchayat* is composed of the *Pradhan* and all the individual adult males of the community. The *Pradhan* is the head of the village judiciary and is supported by the village elders. Practically all major and minor issues affecting the life of the community were decided by the *panchayat*. The *Dakua* (messenger) has the responsibility of informing all the villagers according to the date and time of meeting. When the penalty is decided upon the *panchayat* sees that it is enforced. The fine in some cases amounts to Rs. 100/- to Rs. 200/-.

Besides being the secular head, the *Pradhan* also has some roles to play in communal and domestic rituals at the village level. The *Pradhan* supplied free labour (*bethi*) for the king and *Sarbarakar*. He looked after the all-round development of the village. The post of *Chowkidar* was also introduced to inform on the cases of birth, death, suicide, etc. to the state police. He was appointed by the *Sardar* in consultation with the village *Pradhan*. But with the disintegration of Kolha villages and subsequent migration to different urban centres to eke out a livelihood, the Kolha lived in villages with other ethnic groups and lost their

identity. Subsequently the *panchayat raj* system was introduced and new leaders emerged, like *sarpanches* and ward members. With that, the Kolha lost their own political entity. At present, they participate in the panchayat election and hold the posts of *sarpanches* and ward members. They go by the decisions of the village panchayat where Hindu caste members predominate.

The artistic expressions of the Kolha affords an example of neat workmanship, especially on the walls of the house. The walls are artistically decorated with drawings. Some of these drawings resemble the simple sketches of children, some are crude drawings of animals and plants, and of men with bows and arrows pursuing game in the forest. Though the designs are crude, attempts are made to make details of the arts represented on the walls, so that the pictures look realistic. The black paint is made by burning straw, the ashes of which are mixed with cowdung. The red and yellow are obtained from the red or yellow earth found on the sides of hills.

The Kolha are passionately fond of music, songs and dancing. They may sing, dance and beat the drums unceasingly the whole night long. The rhythm of work is maintained by songs, as at the transplantation of paddy plants, or in the act of carrying loads. With various musical instruments like the *dholak* or *mudal*, *tomka* or *nagra* (kettledrums), *kartal*, *mizina* or ordinary cymbals, they sing a number of songs like, *dadar*, *bhagat*, *bhajans*, *phagu*, etc. *Tohari*, a type of song in which the verses are made up of two lines, is sung in honour of guests. Dancing is found in connection with all happy occasions like births, weddings, feasts and festivals. Among the Kolha, it is only the women who dance. Dancing is invariably accompanied by singing and drumming. Kolha dances, even today, are a source of healthy recreation.

The Kolha recognize the merit of specialization in crafts. Certain families in the village have the reputation of being competent brewers and they are approached to brew liquor at the time of feasts and festivals. Basket- and rope-making from *hohai* grass are not only done by experts. Every Kolha can do it. Most Kolha mend clothes, if necessary, and this is mostly done by men. Boys sometimes make a very inferior type of bow and arrow with which they hunt. However, Kolha society was exposed to the vagaries of modern forces of industrialization long before independence, unlike many other tribes of Orissa, and therefore changes in various aspects of life, society and culture can easily be seen. Forces of industrialization and subsequent urbanization have greatly affected the structure and function of the family among the Kolha.

The excess of bridewealth and the high percentage of spinsterhood among the Kolha still persist. Marriage by elopement (*Raji Kushi Andi*) has become a common affair due to the impact of industrialization. The rate of divorce has now gone up considerably. The change of family relationship has often influenced kinship ties and obligations. A lack of agricultural land or landlessness has forced most Kolha to become engaged as daily labourers. This has jeopardised the traditional agricultural economy of the Kolha. The traditional mechanism of exchange has been replaced with a money economy. The conventional political system which existed up to independence exists no longer. Under the impact of

modernization, the Kolha are gradually losing faith in the wrath of spirits and deities. Annual festivals, mostly agriculturally based, are no longer observed with pomp. Despite the fact that their life style has changed due to the impact of modernity, they still cling to tradition and maintain their cultural identity. They still lean upon their sovereign *Bongas*.

KOLI, MALHAR

M. Behera

The Koli and Malhar have been identified as one and the same tribe in Orissa and are jointly enumerated by the census organization. According to the 1991 Census their population is 5093, of whom 2392 were males and 2701 females. In 1981 their population was 4710. Hence, the growth rate during this decade is 8.11 per cent. The sex ratio (1981-91) is 1129 females per thousand males. The percentage of literacy in 1981 was 28.7 increasing to 34.96 in 1991. According to Russell and Hiralal the Koli are a primitive tribe who have been confused with the Kori caste, Hindu weavers of northern India, their name actually being derived from the Kol. They also suggest that in Marathi custom 'i' is added to any name, like Patwi for Patwa, Banjari for Banjara, and Halbi for Halba, thus the Koli may have derived their name from the Kol. They also suggest that the Malhar are one of the five divisions of Koli named after their deity Malharideo, and are also called *Panbhart* or water carrier. But the Koli and Malhar have few common socio-cultural features. The Kori caste derived from the Kols and called Koli trace their origin from Kabir, the apostle of the weaving caste, whereas according to J. K. Das "Malahars are a nomadic tribe in Orissa whose main occupation is collection of honey and Koli are a class of weavers. They are two separate tribes who bear apparently no regional or ethnic affinity. However, under what circumstances both these tribes have been clubbed together is a matter for more detailed enquiry."

The Madras Census report for 1901 mentions the Koli as a fisherman and boatman caste of Bombay who are found in South Canara. It is also stated that low-status Bengali weavers called Koli migrated to Orissa and were found in Ganjam district. J. K. Das says, "the members of the tribe are known as Koli and there exists no other synonym or name by which the tribe is known to the outsiders. In spite of all attempts nothing much could be obtained so as to know the origin of their name and the history of their migration." Some Koli, however, claim that the members of the tribe once had a numerical preponderance near and around Ichhapuram in Andhra Pradesh and lived in close association with the Telugu-speaking people. They were in primitive state. Some were weavers, some were rearing goats and poultry. Later on they migrated to different regions of Orissa. Hence Koli who live in Ganjam District of Orissa use Telugu terms and call their father *dada*, sister-in-law *hani*, and aunt *pini* or *ata*. The Koli are spread over different parts of Orissa and mainly concentrated in the district of Ganjam.

The social status of the Koli is much higher than the other tribal communities in Orissa. Irrespective of *gotra*, the Koli have free access to the village well and temples, and they are served by Brahman priests, washermen and barbers. They speak Oriya and Telugu.

The dress and ornaments of the Koli are just like those of the neighbouring peoples. The men wear *dhotis* and women saris. The earlier handwoven saris have now been replaced by mill-made cloths and silk and woollen garments. Women are very fond of ornaments. They wear glass bangles known as *kacha*. Their gold nose

rings, nose tops, earrings and ear tops are locally called *besari*, *dandi*, *phula* and *noli* respectively. The heavy ornaments, like *bombai rupa khadu* (anklet) made of silver, have become out of fashion. Tattooing was very popular half a century ago. In the past women liked to tattooed their arms and legs. Nowadays tattooing is no longer practised.

Generally, the Koli are non-vegetarians. They eat fish, pork and beef. Rice, which is their staple food, is eaten with different kinds of millet and pulse. Groundnut oil is used in the preparation of curry. Chewing pan and tobacco is popular. Drinking tea has become very common and is also offered to the guests.

Weaving is the main occupation of the Koli. Other than weaving they do not have any other occupation. They do not like agriculture. Although a few families own a plough, bullocks and land, they let them out for sharecropping by others. Weaving is mostly done with cotton yarn which is obtained from the nearby markets. Yarns are processed by both male and female members of the family and are woven in their own houses on handlooms.

Koli society is patrilineal. The father exercises power over the family, after his death property is divided among the sons. Generally the Koli are endogamous. There was a strict observation of exogamy between the same division or *Gotra* but this is not so strictly observed nowadays. The *Gotras* are the exogamous divisions of the Koli. There are *Gangalama Gotra*, *Sodasa Gotra*, *Nagesa Gotra*, etc. Persons belonging to the *Gangalama Gotra* and *Sodasa Gotra* claim to be the superior to the members of other *Gotras*.

The first delivery of a woman generally takes place at the house of the parents of the woman and the subsequent deliveries take place at her husband's house. A country *dhai*, generally of the Bauri caste, serves as the midwife. Nowadays the assistance of a midwife from a maternity centre or hospital is sought. The *dhai* cuts the umbilical cord using either a shell or a sharp knife. The placenta is buried near the threshold by an elderly woman of the household. The mother is not allowed to eat marine fish or dried fish during the period of lactation. After delivery she is immediately given boiled water mixed with garlic and other spices to drink so that she may not suffer from cold. Birth pollution is observed in two stages. The first stage runs from the birth of a child to twelve days later, when mother and child are kept segregated from others. The second stage continues till the 21st day after the birth, when mother and child are bathed ceremonially. The clothes are washed and a feast is arranged for the occasion. The newborn baby is presented with dresses and ornaments by the relatives.

The rituals associated with puberty are observed rigorously. A girl attaining puberty is kept segregated for seven days. During this period she is forbidden to see the face of any male person. At the end of the seventh day she is taken to the nearest water source to be bathed. She is then given a new sari to wear and led to the temple of the village goddess for worship. A feast is also arranged that day. In subsequent menstruation periods segregation is not observed so strictly. However, she is not allowed to touch anybody for seven days and not allowed to enter the kitchen.

By and large marriage is celebrated according to Hindu customs. Usually an altar is made. A sacred fire (*homa*) is lit, and the sacred joining together of the hands of the bride and groom (*hata ganthi*) and sacred playing of shells by both bride and groom are undertaken as among Hindus. A Brahman priest also officiates at the marriage and the services of barbers are sought. Separation from the parents does not occur immediately after marriage. The boy continues to stay with his parents in a joint family. Quarrels in the family occur which breaks the household into nuclear families.

Among the Koli there is a preference for cross-cousin marriage. A boy marries his maternal uncle's daughter. Sororate and levirate are practised. Most marriages are arranged by negotiation. The initiative may be taken by either of the two parties. If the girl's parents are rich, the function is held at their house, otherwise the girl is brought to the boy's house for the marriage. There is no system of brideprice or dowry but the girl's parents give presents to their son-in-law, whatever they can afford. Divorce is allowed. The person at fault is penalised by the caste council. Now the system has been abolished. The remarriage of widows and widowers is allowed.

According to the *kulaniyam* (caste rule) of the Koli, the *Patra* is the secular headman. He is called *Kula Behera*. It is a hereditary and honourable post. The *Kula Behera* is especially honoured by placing a new cloth on his head on *Makara Sankranti* day in January-February every year at the temple of village goddess. A grand feast is arranged on this occasion to honour the *Kula Behera*.

The most important village deity is Thakurani, who is worshipped on *Makara Sankranti* day. The presiding deity of each household is called *Ista Debata* or *Isana*. The deity is worshipped in the kitchen. Special offerings are made to the deity on *Makara Sankranti* day for which the services of a Brahman priest are not required. The Koli also celebrate Ganesh Chaturthi on Sankranti day for which again the services of Brahman priest is not required. On this day the looms are cleaned and placed in front of the god Ganesh for worship.

The tribe is highly acculturated. Many are highly educated and some have become doctors or engineers. In social status they occupy a higher status among the scheduled communities.

MALHAR

The Malhar are a seminomadic community. They are mainly found in undivided Dhenkanal District.

The men wear short dhotis and the women wear saris. Children wear small rags to cover their bodies.

The Malhar are non-vegetarian but do not eat rats and snakes like some other tribal communities of Orissa. Some do not eat chicken or goat either. They drink a local liquor called *khajur mada*. On festive occasions they indulge

themselves in excessive drinking. They have their own spoken language which other caste people can partly understand. The Malhar also speak Oriya.

The traditional occupation of the Malhar is the collection of forest products, which mainly include wild roots and fruits. Lacking land or ploughs, they do not practise cultivation. They also work as day labourers to supplement their income from forest collection. Since the forests have become denuded, the economic condition of the tribe has declined. The Malhar have different surnames like *Behera*, *Dehuri*, *Pradhan*, etc. Their secular headman is called *Behera* and solves quarrels among the villagers. He also supplies information required to outsiders and collects contributions from the villagers for the observance of common rituals. There is no dormitory system but they have a common house in the village called the *kotha ghar*.

Birth pollution among the Malhar continues for nine days after the birth of a child. During this period no outsider takes water or food. The Malhar are endogamous. Marriage outside their community is not allowed, and arranged marriages are most common. Widows and widowers can remarry. Divorce is also allowed. The dead are either buried or cremated depending on the status and economic condition of the deceased's family. Mourning continues for ten days. Pollution is observed by all lineage members, and the funeral rites are performed according to Hindu customs.

The priest is called the *Dehuri*. The Kondh *Dehuri* performs religious rites for the village gods and goddesses whereas the Malhar *Dehuri* performs rites for the gods and goddesses of the home. The Malhar have their own deities called Bana Durga, Kalika, Mangala and Grama Devati. They also worship Hindu gods and goddesses.

Due to their poor economic conditions and traditional occupation of forest collecting, the Malhar have not developed like the Koli. They have remained backward as before.

KONDA-DORA

S. Das

The Konda-Dora are a small tribe of Orissa numbering 19,235 according to the 1991 Census. W. R. Cornish describes the tribe as follows. "Contrasting strongly with the energetic patriarchal and land-revering Paraja (Poraja) are the neighbouring indigenous tribe found along the slopes of the Eastern Ghats. They are known as Konda-Dora, Konda-Kapus and Ojas." In the Telugu language Konda means 'Hill' and Dora means 'Leader'. The Konda-Dora are said to be a section of the great Kondh tribe. Their culture has been influenced by Telugu- and Oriya-speaking people. The Konda-Dora are distributed in all the districts of Orissa, but are mainly concentrated in undivided Koraput District. Sizable population is also found in Kalahandi and Ganjam. Their population in other districts is negligible. The sex-ratio among the Konda-Dora is 832 females per 1000 males. The percentage of literacy is 10.00 in 1981 and 14.00 in 1991. This shows a trend of educational progress among the community. The tribe can broadly be divided into two groups on the basis of language. One group speak Oriya whereas the other group speak Telugu. There is no evidence to show that they ever had their own language.

The houses of the Konda-Dora are generally of the *kutch*a type and made of wattle and daub with thatch covering. Well-to-do families have built larger houses consisting of two to three rooms with stone pillars and brick walls. The household materials of this tribe tally with those of the Telugus of Andhra Pradesh. The Kondas use bell metal, brass and steel utensils. The dress of the Konda-Dora is just like that of the neighbouring Telugus. The men wear a *dhoti*, *banyan* and shirt and the women wear long saris and blouses. Like Telugu women they decorate themselves with a number of glass bangles, nose-rings, earrings and bead necklaces.

The family is the smallest social unit among the Konda-Dora. It is patrilineal and patrilocal. As the family is patrilineal, descent is always counted through the male line from father to son. A daughter is regarded as a member of her father's extended lineage so long as she is unmarried. Property is always inherited by the sons after the death of the father. It is equally distributed among all the sons. The eldest male member of the family is considered the family head.

The Konda Dora have well-defined two exogamous groups known as the Pedda (large) Kondalu and Chinna (small) Kondalu. Of these two groups the former have retained their culture to a large extent whereas the later have come under Telugu influence. The Pedda Kondalu have totemic divisions such as Naga (cobra), Bhag (tiger) and Kochching (tortoise). The Chinna Kondalus have adopted the custom of *menarikam*, according to which a man marries his maternal uncle's daughter and may further marry his own sister's daughter. Generally it is seen that Konda-Dora social organization is entirely like that of the Telugus. The Chinna Kondalu, being *rayats* under *Bhakta* or landlords, bear the title *Anna* or *Ayya*. The Pedda Kondalus usually have no title.

Marriage is polygamous among the Konda-Dora. Marriage procedures are different in both sections. The girls of both sections may marry either after or before puberty. The marriage negotiation of the Pedda Kondalus is described by E. Thurston as follows: 'when a man contemplates taking a wife, his parents carry three pots of liquor to the home of the girl whose hand he seeks. The acceptance of these by her father is a sign that the match is agreeable to him, and a *jhola tanka* (brideprice) of Rs. 5/- is paid to him.' The bridegroom's party has to give three feasts to the bride's party, and on each occasion a pig is killed. The girl is taken to the house of the groom, and if she has attained puberty, she remains there. Otherwise she returns home and joins her husband later the occasion being celebrated by a further feast of pork.

Among the Chinna Kondalu, after the marriage proposal is settled the girl's parents receive a present called *voli* worth some rupees and a sari. On an auspicious day fixed by the *Chhukamurti* (astrologer) the bride is taken to the home of the groom. The bride and groom bathe in turmeric water and put on new clothes presented by their fathers-in-law, and threads are tied to their wrists. On the same day the groom under the direction of caste elders ties the *sathamamam* (marriage thread) on to the bride's neck. The day following the marriage the wrist threads of the bride and groom are removed and the newly married couple bathe together.

The Konda-Dora accept brides from the Kondhs. During marriage a feast is arranged in which pork and liquor are served. The Pedda Kondalu permit the younger brother to marry the widow of his elder brother. Among the Chinna Kondalu a man can marry a divorcee by paying some money to her first husband, of which a share goes to the villagers.

The dead are usually cremated by both the sections. The Pedda Kondalu kill a pig on the third day after the death and hold a feast at which much liquor is drunk. Among the Chinna Kondalus the death ceremony is called *chinna rozu* (little day) ceremony.

The economic activities of the Pedda Kondalus are different from those of the Chinna Kondalus. The main source of livelihood of the Pedda Kondalus is agriculture, i.e. shifting and settled cultivation. The Pedda Kondalus grow paddy, millets and other crops on their land. Most of this group own cultivable paddy land and are very rich. They sell their agricultural produce in nearby villages and earn a lot of money. Now some landholders have become sensitive to the present day demands of the local market and have started to grow varieties of vegetables and sell them in market. This provides an additional income for them. The Pedda Kondalus also practise shifting cultivation. First they cut down all the big trees and small bushes on the hill slopes. Then, after a week, the logs are set on fire and left for a few days after which the ashes are spread over the hill slopes, the patch is ploughed and seeds are sown. This type of cultivation is also known as slash and burn cultivation.

Most of the Chinna Kondalus are in government service as peons, bearers, etc. A few also work as labourers in the nearby villages. With the impact of industrialization and the establishment of new townships around the areas

inhabited by the Konda-Dora they have changed a lot. Due to the establishment of the Dandakaranya project and MIG factory many Konda-Dora have the opportunity to do business in the towns and factory areas. Some are employed in the factories.

KORA

G. B. Sahoo

According to Risley, the Kora are a Dravidian tribe of the Mundari group. They have various synonyms such as Khaira, Kaora, Khayra, etc. The tribe have well-marked totemistic similarities with the Munda tribe. They are well known for their earthworking and cultivation. Numerically, the Kora are a small tribe in the State of Orissa. They are mainly confined to the districts of Dhenkanal, Keonjhar and Sambalpur. According to the 1981 census, their total population was 5822. But during the 1991 Census, it has increased to 10,313. The growth rate of the tribe is 77.11 per cent. The Kora have no separate dialect of their own and speak Oriya. The percentage of literacy was 13.30 according to the 1981 Census. But during 1991 this increased to 26.02 per cent. The sex ratio is 850 females per 1,000 males.

Ethnically, the tribe is divided into a number of endogamous groups such as Dhalo, Molo, Sikharia, Badamia, Suryavansi, etc. Those living in Orissa claim to be of the Suryavansi division. They have a number of totemistic clans, such as Kaich, Nag, Makad, Khajur, Dhan, Nun, etc. Some of the totems denote the names of trees or animals and a few indicate the names of foodstuffs or articles. These totems are always honoured. The family is regarded as the smallest social unit, which mainly consists of father, mother and their unmarried children. Property is generally inherited through the male line, and in family life the authority of the father is always recognized. In other words the tribe is patrilocal, patrilineal, patriarchal and patripotestal. The kin group is a group larger than the family, and is usually counted up to three generations both in the father's and mother's side. Marriage is strictly prohibited within this kin group and the members of the same clan are regarded as brothers and sisters.

They have both infant and adult marriages. In the adult marriage system, the boy marries at the age of 18 and the girl at the age of 15. At the time of marriage, the brideprice is given by the groom to the bride's parents, and usually varies from Rs 50/- to Rs 500/-. They have adopted Hindu marriage rituals. Like Hindus they use the services of Brahmans and barbers at the time of marriage. In some places, marriage is performed by smearing vermilion on the forehead of the bride by the groom. In Kora society polygamy is permitted. A man is permitted to keep more than one wife if the first wife proves to be barren or economically inefficient in doing agricultural work. Widow marriage is practiced. The widow is not bound to marry her deceased husband's younger brother, though such marriage is considered both respectful and convenient. The husband can divorce his wife but not vice versa and he has to pay her food and clothing for six months. Now being influenced by rest of the population of the area, divorce has been prohibited by their caste assembly. If a woman is divorced, she can marry again.

Birth pollution is observed for 21 days by the mother of the newborn male baby. In the case the issue is a girl, they perform the birth ritual on 12th day. On this day her mother pares her nails and is allowed to touch water but she cannot cook up to the 21st day. In the case of male issue the birth ceremony is observed on the 21st day and a feast is given to the co-villagers.

Previously the dead were usually buried. But nowadays the Hindu custom of cremation is gradually entering into the society and well-to-do persons cremate the corpse. Those who die of cholera or smallpox are buried. They observe mourning for ten days and abstain from eating a non-vegetarian diet. A *sradh* in imitation of Hindu customs is performed on the 11th day. They observe an annual *sradh* ceremony for the deceased.

They worship Hindu Gods and Goddesses. They think of themselves as Saktas and Vaishnabs. Their village and household deities are Bhairabi, Gram Deoti and ancestral spirits, who are offered rice, sugar, plantain and sacrifices of fowls and goats. Like Hindus, they observe Dasahara, Kartik Purnima, Laxmipuja, Pus-Punia, Holi, Rakhi Purnima, etc.

Their houses are small in size and rectangular in shape. The walls are made of mud and wattle and thatched with straw or jungle grass. Some well-to-do families have constructed tile-roofed houses. The houses are not provided with windows for ventilation.

They consider digging tanks, making roads and earthworking to be their traditional occupations. In course of time, they have adopted the making of *catechu* as their profession, which involves the following procedure. Having cut down a tree they strip off the bark. The inner wood is cut into pieces and the pieces are boiled with sufficient water for four days. A black paste is obtained. The water is let out and the residue eaten with a betel-leaf. Adopting this profession has led them to roam from place to place with their family, as the procedure involves the cooperation of both men and women and depends on the availability of the *catechu* plant near at hand. After the trees are exhausted in one place, they shift their camp to another place where such trees are available. This wandering life in the forest with their family members has brought them down in other's estimation, and they have thus lost their social position. Most of them have now given up this profession and have taken up agriculture. In Orissa, nearly all of them have taken up cultivation either on their own lands or on the lands of others on a share basis. Today, they are regarded as first-rate agriculturists. They produce paddy, pulses, and oil-seeds in their fields. Hunting in the forest is carried out at times. Fishing is rarely practiced. They mostly collected edible roots, fruits and tubers from the local forest to supplement their food and economy. Unlike the Koras of Chotanagpur who eat beef, drink wine and practice degraded occupations like making *catechu*, those living in Orissa no longer make *catechu* or eat beef. They have even given up their drinking habits.

They have their own traditional panchayat system, which plays an important role in their caste organization. All disputes are settled at village level. If anyone is dissatisfied he can invite outsiders to reconsider the case. Superimposed on their village panchayat is the caste council, which sits at least once in a year and is represented by the headman of each Kora village. Usually matters relating to reform in the caste organization are formally discussed here. Besides this, the admission and ex-communication of Kora individuals, the taking of a non-Kora into their caste, and the adjudication of other grave social offences come under the purview of the council. Nowadays, their caste council is pressing hard for the

exclusion of their caste name from the tribal category. They say that they are Suryavansi Kshyatriya, and as they are no more practicing the occupation of making *khaira* or *catechu* they should not be called Khaira.

KOTIA

F. Bara

The Kotia, also known as Katia, Khatia or Kutia, are a little known and numerically small tribe found mostly in Koraput, Kalahandi and Phulbani Districts of Orissa. They are mainly concentrated in Mathili Police Station of Koraput District. According to the Madras Census (1901-1902: 163) the community is regarded as a section of the Oriya cultivators found in Vizagapatnam Agency. In *Adivasi* (63-64: 182) the Kotia are described as being identical with the Kutia Kondh. J.K. Das refuted this view and says that the tribe is more allied to the Bhumia than the Kutia Kondh. He writes that the Kotia and Bada Bhumia are almost identical tribes. A few cases of intermarriages were found in the study area.

According to the 1981 and 1991 Censuses the total population of Kotia in the state was 19,136 and 28,607 respectively. The growth rate during the period 1981-91 was 49.49 per cent and the sex ratio 969 females per thousand males according to the 1991 Census. They are mainly rural dwellers. The percentage of literacy is 11.26 according to the 1991 Census. The Kotia speak a corrupt form of Oriya.

Two-roomed houses are mostly found among the Kotia. The inner room is used as the storeroom. The other room is usually divided into two parts by half a mud wall, one part of which is used for the kitchen and the other part for other purposes. An adjoining verandah is the most common feature, which is used for sitting and occasionally sleeping during summer season. Bamboo, timber, mud and straw are the usual building materials. Timber or bamboo platforms are sometimes constructed inside the room to store different articles. Two doors are the common features in their houses, of which one is at the front of the house and the other at the back. The construction of a new house is accompanied by some specific rituals like the worship of Mati Padmini or the earth goddess. Consulting a *disari* is considered essential before the construction of a new house in order to determine the auspiciousness of the site. A small peg is placed at the spot where the new house is to be constructed and a little turmeric paste is kept on it. A chicken is sacrificed in honour of the earth goddess. The mud walls are made with cow-dung and red ochre. The floor of the house and the courtyard are cleaned regularly.

The joint family is common among the tribe. Married sons with their children and wives live with their parents. If a married son wants to be separated, a new room and a kitchen are constructed for him, but the landed property is never divided. Joint cultivation of land is found among the divided families.

Rice and *ragi* constitute their staple food. These are supplemented by roots and tubers like *pita kanda*, *dari kanda*, *balia kanda*, etc. Mahua flowers and seeds are collected for food, alcohol and oil. Mango kernels are also collected and stored for future consumption. *Tola*, *kusum* and *alsi* oil are used in cooking. Onions, chillis, tamarind, turmeric and other spices enrich their curry. Dry fish and tortoise flesh are their favourite food. Except for beef and buffalo meat, they eat all kinds

of meat. The Kotia use earthenware pots, aluminium and bronze vessels as their kitchen equipment. Leaf cups and plates made of *sal* leaves are commonly used.

Kotia men wear only two pieces of napkins as their dress. Ornaments are rarely worn. Women wear three-yard-long saris woven by the Doms. The traditional handwoven coarse saris have now been replaced by fine mill-made clothes. One can find Kotia women today wearing long saris when going out. Small children under five usually go naked. Children of about 6-7 years wear a *gochi* or *koupin*. Kotia living in urban areas wear dresses like pants, shirts, frocks, blouses and petticoats, etc. bought from the local market. The traditional ornaments of the Kotia are the *kadu* and *pahnri* made of brass and aluminium, which are now replaced by gold and glass bangles. *Nanguli* or nose ornaments are no longer used and have been replaced by the *khanja* and *phuli*. The *nothu* and *dandi* are mostly made of gold. The *kala sorisamali* and *nanpatti* are used as neck ornaments. The *pahnri* is worn on the ankle. Tattooing is not common. The sacred thread is worn by Kotia men at the time of marriage, but it is not compulsory to wear it later on. Perhaps they do not place so much sanctity on this sacred thread.

Restrictions are imposed in respect of some food items and the movements of a parturient woman. She is forbidden to eat molasses, bananas or sweets. She works until the day of the childbirth and resumes her day to day work just after the purification and name-giving ceremony. There is no practice of constructing a separate hut for the delivery. Birth usually takes place in one of the living rooms. An experienced old woman of their own community assists in delivery. She cuts the umbilical cord of a male child with an arrow and of a female child with a knife. The placenta is buried in the backyard of the house.

The mother and the newborn are given a hot water bath and anointed with turmeric paste. A *pala kanda* (a tuber) is served to the mother with hot boiled rice and salt. Birth pollution is observed for nine days. On the tenth day, the purification and name-giving ceremonies are held. Both mother and baby are given a purificatory bath. The house is properly cleaned. After the purification ceremony two black beaded strings are tied on to the neck and waist of the child. The Kotia believe that these strings guard the baby against evil spirits. The Disari officiates at the name-giving ceremony. No special feast is held, but the woman who had assisted in delivery is served delicious food.

Three days of seclusion is observed by a girl attaining puberty. On the fourth day she takes a bath and wears a new cloth. Girls marry at or close to puberty. Boys marry when they are capable of earning their livelihoods. There are usually three types of marriage, marriage by force, by consent, and by negotiation. In the first category the girl is taken out forcibly by the boy who takes the girl to his house and obtains her consent which is very important. Unless the willingness of the girl is forthcoming marriage will not be possible. When the father of the girl comes in search of his daughter she must be released if the girl wants to go away. But, if the girl is willing to marry the boy, the father of the girl is presented with a brideprice consisting of some rice, fowl and goat. Their marriage is then socially recognized.

The second category of marriage is called *udulia* or love marriage. In this type of marriage the boy and the girl both are willing to marry but finding some resistance from one side or another they run away from home. The father of the girl then visits the boy's house. The boy's father is blamed at first but the marriage is finalized when he gives one *putti* of rice, a goat and a fowl to the girl's father. A feast is held in which both parties participate. In the negotiation or arranged form of marriage, more initiative is taken by the boy's party, which pays visits to the girl's house several times. On their second visit the party accompanied by a *nayak* carry some flattened rice and molasses. The proposal is confirmed when the parents of the girl accept the gift. On the third visit the father of the girl settles a date for marriage for which a *disari* is consulted. Their marriage is usually celebrated during the months of Magh (January-February) and Phalguna (February-March).

Marriage is celebrated in the groom's house. On the morning of the day of the marriage five people from the groom's village visit the house of the bride with some molasses and flattened rice. They hand over these to the girl's parents and return, except for two members of the party who stay on to accompany the bride and her kinsmen. A feast is arranged for the girl's party by the boy's parents. *Langa* or an auspicious time for marriage is prescribed by the *disari*. At this moment the father of the boy presents the girl's father with one *putti* of rice, a goat, four earthenware pots, one fowl and one gourd. A feast is arranged in which both parties participate. The bride and groom sit on the platform under a shed constructed for the purpose. The *disari* officiates at the wedding. A piece of cloth is held between the bride and the groom. At *langa* time the *disari* puts the leg of the groom on top of the bride's. The cloth is then taken away. The *disari* sprays water on their heads, and other members of both parties anoint turmeric paste on each other and enjoy the night. The bride and groom with some villagers visit the house of the bride after four days and the newly married couple stay there for three to four days.

Widow marriage is prevalent. A divorcee can also remarry. If a married woman leaves her husband to marry another man the previous husband has to be compensated with double the amount of the expenditure he incurred for the marriage. However, such practices are discouraged nowadays. Marriage with the maternal uncle's daughter and maternal aunt's daughter is allowed.

The cremation of the deceased is the general practice in their society. But the dead bodies of children and those who die of epidemics are buried. The dead body is washed in tepid water and anointed with turmeric paste and oil. Its hair is combed. Mourners of both sexes accompany the funeral procession to the outskirts of the village where bier is kept for some time. The widow's bangles are broken there and after that women are not allowed to proceed further. The dead body is placed on the funeral pyre face upwards and with its head towards east. Usually the maternal nephew lights the fire. All those who accompany the dead body to the cremation ground go to a pond or river to take a bath. There the nephew says, 'Your house is on fire from today'. The mourners then sprinkle water on each other with a mango leaf. The mourners are offered milk and oil. On the fifth day all members of the deceased's household visit the cremation ground. A small image of

the dead is made of rice and is covered with a cloth smeared with turmeric. Three *kendu* (*Deospyros Melayion*) twigs are placed crosswise. A new earthenware pot with water is placed on it in such a way that water trickles down through a hole and falls right on the bosom of the image. Finally, the *dasa* or *buda* (final death ceremony) is held on any convenient day when the family members of the deceased become able to afford the cost of the ceremony, as the ritual involves heavy expenditure to feed all the friends and relatives. Four or five *puttis* of rice and a few goats have to be arranged for this final purification ceremony.

The Kotia are an agricultural tribe. Most of those who have landed property are settled agriculturists. Those who do not have land take to agricultural labour and wage labour. Catching fish is a subsidiary occupation, as the Kotia like fish very much. Fish traps and nets of various types are found in their houses. Dried fish is preserved for future use.

The *nayak* or the village headman is consulted in matters of social disputes and conflicts. He is assisted by the *chalan*. There is no formal caste organization among the Kotia. The priest is known as the *pujari*. The *disari* acts as the sorcerer.

The most important deity of the tribe is Mauli Debta, whose shrine lies under a *kendu* tree. Nisaniguda is their goddess who protects them from smallpox. Both deities are worshipped in the month of Chaitra (March-April). They have also adopted Hinduism to a certain extent. Many Hindu gods and goddesses are worshipped. Chaitraparab is the most important festival of the Kotia. It is observed for a period of seven days with great joy and merriment. There is no fixed date for observing the festival but the *disari* fixes a date during the month of Chaitra (March-April). During this festival they eat mango for the first time and cease working. Another important festival is Nua-Khia, which is observed on any Monday during the month of Sravana (July-August).

KOYA

Ch. P.K. Mohapatra

The Koya constitute the principal tribe of Malkangiri, and are most widely distributed throughout this area. But it can be seen that the Koya gradually thin out as we go towards the east and northeastern region. Their concentration is limited to the entire southern portion and some portions in the north up to Mathili, a distance of 29 miles north of Malkangiri, where they come into contact with the Rana and Bhumiya. In Orissa, they are found in large concentrations in the district of Koraput, though in some other districts are distributed thinly. The total population of the tribe according to the 1991 census is 1,41,927 or only 2.02 per cent of the total tribal population of the state. The population of the tribe, which increased from 87,261 in 1981 to 1,41,927 in 1991, register a very high growth rate of 62.64 per cent as against the state average of 18.89 per cent during the same period. The sex ratio is 919 females per 1000 males. The literacy percentage, which was very low (4.90) in 1981, had increased to 11.55 by 1991.

The Koya of Malkangiri sub-division, though culturally a homogeneous group, can be divided into two groups according to the proximity of the local population of the sub-division with whom they come in contact and by whom they have been profoundly influenced in many respects. The Koya living north of the sub-divisional headquarters up to Mathili and in the south up to Manyemkonda are of a more primitive nature than the southerners living within villages of Mallavaram and Mottu at the southernmost point of the sub-division. The southern Koya have been greatly influenced by the Telugu people, who come from an adjacent area of Andhra Pradesh. Most of the people living at Mottu happen to be Telugu businessmen.

The Koya villages are situated in clearings in the forests. Access to the villages is by narrow footpaths of the *kacha* road. There are also villages that lie by this *kacha* road. There is no specific demarcation to indicate the approach to a village, but in the northern part of the Koya region this is indicated by a cluster of stone pillars of "Urs KIK" raised in memory of the dead ancestors. The split bamboo fencing of gardens also indicates the presence of a village nearby. Villages vary in size, the largest village may consist of 25 to 30 houses and the smallest of 4 to 5 houses. In every village, one will find two or more clusters of houses indicating the later or early settlers of the village. The Koya very often shift from one village to another, either in search of new land or for fear of supernatural elements, which they believe cause natural calamities to their health and prosperity.

Each house consists of one or two small huts, which are used as sleeping rooms. The walls of a house are made of tree branches and bamboo, which are thickly plastered with mud. The roofs are thatched with a type of jungle grass that the Koya collect from the nearby jungle, known locally as *sindi*. The houses are rectangular in size and partitioned into rooms by means of walls of bamboo plastered with mud. As the house has no windows it is always dark inside, and the oven is situated in one corner of this house where the Koya women cook their

meals. The boundary of each house site is demarcated by fencing made of neatly woven bamboo splits. Apart from the sleeping rooms there are small sheds for pigs, goats and fowls. Sometimes pigs also share the same house with the men. Attached to the house there is always a verandah almost on all sides. This serves the purpose of sitting and doing domestic work. In the southernmost part of Malkangiri Taluk, where the Koya have been much influenced by Telugu people, one finds verandahs of more elaborate nature, sometimes three feet high. The Koya do not have separate storerooms. The grain and collections are stored under the roof over a shelf inside the sleeping rooms. The shelves are made of bamboo and wooden pillars.

In each village there happens to be one *bijagudi* or 'House of God'. This is not always situated inside the village. Sometimes the *bijagudi* is situated near the village boundary, and sometimes in front of the house of the chief. There are also places that are considered sacred, such as a group of *mahul* trees in or near a village, where the villagers worship Gudimata, the village goddess. In each village there is a house which is used by the unmarried girls of a village for sleeping and gossiping at night. But this practice is probably going out of vogue.

Each house has attached to it a garden, where the Koya grow tobacco, mustard and vegetables. These gardens are always either behind or near the house of the owner. Maize and millets are also grown in the garden. The roofs of almost all houses are covered with vegetable creepers. Every Koya plants *sikul koya* or beans in his garden or near his house. Among the trees that are found in Koya village are IK or *mahul* (*Bassia latifolia*), and *salpa* (*Caryota urens*), which are very common. When a patch of clearing is made, all the trees are felled except for the *mahul* trees. These trees provide liquor to the Koya, without which they say they cannot survive. A Koya can carry on without food for a few days but not without such liquor.

The Koya use the wide open spaces in front of each house for their cattle. Long ropes to posts or the trunks of nearby trees tether the cattle. The Koya do not have sheds owned either by individuals or groups. The cattle are always exposed to the weather.

The language spoken by the Koya belong to the Gondi dialect of the Dravidian group. This dialect also differs among the two groups of the north and the south. To a certain extent the difference may be attributed to the fact that the vocabulary of the Koya is very limited, so that they depend on the major lingua franca of the region in which they live. There has been some incorporation of Telugu, Hindi and Oriya words into the language of the southern and northern Koya respectively. From the above descriptions it is evident that the Koya of the two regions of the sub-division are more or less similar linguistically, the slight differences being due to contact with Oriya or Telugu speakers. The southerners have been much influenced in dress, ornaments and hairstyle by the Telugus, while the northerners have retained their primitiveness to a great extent.

The family may be taken as the smallest unit of social grouping in Koya society. A family is called *lotam* in the Koya language. It includes the parents and

their children, and in a way follows the Hindu joint family system by including the brothers with their wives and their respective children. In fact, a family consists of the parents, their adult sons with their wives and children and unmarried daughters. Sometimes the family also includes the *olaam* or the *gharjuain* who stays in his father-in-law's house with his wife. This is marriage by service. As soon as the sons grow up and get married, they build their own houses round the parents' house and live separately with their wives, though the cooking for the whole family is done in one place. If any of the adult sons wants to separate from the family, he asks his father to give him some land separately from the rest of the family. This process is gradually becoming common among the Koya.

Though monogamy is the rule, many Koya families are based on the system of polygynous marriage. As the expenses of getting a bride are high, most Koya cannot afford to marry more than one wife. A wealthy Koya can afford to marry three to four wives. Polygynous marriage in the Koya society is thus possible for those who are economically better off than others. Those who marry more than one wife usually have two considerations in mind in doing so. One is to obtain sufficient economic help from their wives, as the women in Koya society play an immense role in the pattern of economic activities. Secondly, it reinforces gratification of the sexual urge because in many cases the wives are older than their husbands, and become old when the husband still has youth and vigour. Besides, a Koya feels that he becomes a man of position and status by marrying more than one wife.

The Koya distinguish between two types of kin groups, called *kutumam* or consanguineal kin and *wiwalwand* or affinal kin. The consanguineal kin of a person belongs to the same phratry as that person. There are five such phratries present in the Koya society. They are 1) *Kowasi*, 2) *Odi* or *Sodi*, 3) *Madkam*, 4) *Madi*, 5) *Padiam*. A *Kawasi* can take a wife from any of the four remaining phratries other than his own. Similarly, any person belonging to a particular phratry can choose a wife from the other groups. A person cannot marry a girl of the same phratry to which he belongs because all persons in that group are believed to have a blood relationship with the person, even though they do not know the person and live widely apart from each other. As such, when a man goes in search of a bride he is asked which phratry or *katta* he belongs to.

This is because a phratry consists of a number of clans with different names, some of which are detailed below:

<i>Edukatta Phratry</i>	<i>Kawasi, Duher, Emala, Wanzamir, Korsta, Witer.</i>
<i>Aidukata Phratry</i>	<i>Sodi, Wika, Galir, Gontpontalewar, Ganget, Lawar, Dagulwar, Pittalwar.</i>
<i>Mulkatta Phratry</i>	<i>Madkam, Durwa, Madiam, Tai, Mottum, Dharmu, Pondur, Jondor, Joder, Undmir, Kalmu, Turramir.</i>
<i>Parengotta Phratry</i> <i>Bogar.</i>	<i>Jelir, Oyemir, Madir, Darer, Pujsentir, Punyem.</i>

Koya marriage or *pendul* is one of the important social functions, without which a man has no place in the society. For Koya, marriage is a necessity because they have to perpetuate their generations and satisfy the biological need related to the sexual urge. Moreover, the wife is the indispensable partner in all spheres of their lives, and from a study of the division of labour on the basis of sex it becomes evident that a Koya cannot do anything without a wife in his ordinary daily life. The Koya attach little or no importance to the physical beauty of a girl for marrying. The criteria for a coveted wife are her sound health and ability to undertake arduous labour in economic as well as social activities. The criteria for a good husband lies in the fact of his being physically tall and healthy, able to support the family and having a large number of cows and bullocks.

Freedom in the selection of a spouse is very limited, and it is only the parents who take the initiative in marriage negotiations. Where freedom is exercised by any girl or boy, the form of marriage bears a different name, which is tolerated but after a very complicated method concerning the payment of compensation, which will be discussed later. The commonly practised form of marriage is known simply as *pendul*. The system of marriage in which a boy carries off a girl with the help of his friends while she is in the forest or field is known as *karsu pendul* or marriage where compensation has to be paid to the bride's father. The other form, where a girl having a previous connection with a boy comes forcibly to the boy's house to stay, is called *lon-udi-wata* marriage. In this case the brideprice to be paid to the bride's father is much less than that in other forms of marriage, because she enters the groom's house at her own will and without the consent of the parents. In the case where a boy carries off a girl he has to obtain the consent of the girl directly or indirectly. Then he tells his father of his motive, and if his father gives his consent, he brings the girl to his house with the help of his friends. The bride's father demands compensation from the boy amounting to three hundred rupees, one she-calf for the girl's maternal uncle, a *chhada* or cloth for the mother of the girl. Out of the three hundred rupees, eighty are given to the bride's father for his own villagers because they help him in obtaining compensation from the other party. The villagers use it for a feast.

The age for marriage is fixed at the maturity of both the sexes. The Koya think a boy attains maturity when hairs develop in his armpit and hair appears on the lips. Usually these things happen when a boy is aged twelve to thirteen. Hence the marriageable age for boys starts at thirteen. A girl becomes marriageable when she has attained puberty (*etarta*), irrespective of her age. Hence the age of wives is more than that of their husbands. Many instances can be cited to show that husbands are younger than their wives. This is one important reason why the Koya practise polygyny. Wives lose the urge for sex while their husbands are still young. But this is not always the case. The problem arises when a nubile girl marries a bridegroom, who has not actually attained maturity but is thought to have attained

it. This is because of the early development of sexual hairs. In this case the wife has to wait until her husband is fully grown up to perform sexual intercourse with her. She sleeps with her husband and is expected to remain chaste, but this does not actually happen. Rare instances are found of an adolescent boy marrying an infant bride, in which case the boy has to wait until she is mature and comes to stay with him.

Koya marriages begin soon after the first harvest is over and continue till the month of April. In selecting a bride, preference is given to the maternal uncle's daughter (*erupiki*) or father's sister's daughter (*erupiki*). This is the generally approved form of marriage. There is another form of marriage known as *karsupendul* or marriage where compensation has to be paid to the bride's father because the bride has been forcibly taken by the groom. On the day of the wedding, the bride is brought to the groom's house, accompanied by her friends and relatives. Villagers from distant places come to dance in the marriage ceremony even without being invited. They are given rice beer (*landa*) to drink and some food. The Koya perform the ceremonial dance wearing bison horns on their heads.

The Koya are not able to understand the physiological phenomena of birth and the relationship between sexual intercourse and conception. When a woman conceives, it is thought that God has put the child inside the mother's womb. A pregnant woman carries on her routine work until the expected month of delivery, when she is taken to a hut erected behind the main house. Six to seven days after delivery of the child, she returns home. Delivery is assisted by some experienced woman of the village.

The naming ceremony is done a few days after the birth of the child. It is interesting to note that the names of the Koya are very limited in number, and in a single village more than one person may be found bearing same name. This may be due to the way in which names are given. A child is put in cradle and some rice is put into its closed palms. The shaman goes on saying names as they come into his mind. When the baby opens its palms and throws the rice down, the name being uttered by the shaman at that particular time is given to the baby. Sometime the practice differs. The shaman makes the baby cry while it is in the cradle. The shaman goes on saying names. When the baby sleeps and stops crying, the name being uttered at that time is given to the baby. The Koya believe in reincarnation. A grandfather is supposed to be born as grandson, i.e. a person's son. As such the grandfather's name is given to the grandson.

The Koya divide the period from the birth of a child to the end of the weaning period into seven stages. They are:

1. *Ukadta Unzito* (The period of sleeping in the cradle)
2. *Kapmundita* (Rolling from one side to the other)
3. *Kudigaitite* (To crawl in a sitting position)

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| 4. | <i>Marmindan</i> | (To crawl on all fours) |
| 5. | <i>Tagse Duder</i> | (To walk with the help of a bamboo frame) |
| 6. | <i>Gundu Gundu</i>
<i>Minite</i> | (Little running) |
| 7. | <i>Gati Mirito</i> | (Running fast) |

When a child reaches the last stage he leaves off sucking his mother's breast, learns to speak and is helped by its mother to learn the names of kins. Until seven years of age the mother takes the entire responsibility for the care of a child. Until the end of the weaning period a child is treated with kindness. After that period he is slightly chastised if his behaviour is found to be unruly. Fathers generally do not beat their daughters when they are above twelve. Mothers generally do not beat their sons when they are above twelve and become grown up. The boys and girls are expected to show proper behaviour to others even before they reach the stage of maturity.

Until the age of six neither boys nor girls use any cloth to hide their genitals, but soon after this their mothers teach both boys and girls how to wear the *chil wudsa*. When the girls reach the age of nine or ten they know how to wear the *golad udsa*, the way in which women folk wear their clothes. The boys wear loin clothes. Koya boys learn their traditional knowledge of making bows and arrows and other things early, even before they are adolescents. They prepare miniature bows and arrows (*jurit*) and play with them. A group of boys play the *jurikarsitor* game but aim at a particular place. Either they divide themselves into two groups or two boys play at a time. When a boy misses a shot, the arrow is taken away by the winner. It is interesting to note that small boys as young as ten to twelve possess the power to aim accurately at a particular spot. As a matter of fact the boys in a group go hunting for small birds, and if they happen to find any, eat them after roasting them in fire.

The Koya have incorporated a number of Hindu gods and goddesses into their pantheon. The local Hindu gods and goddesses are worshipped at Manyam Konda, Bezangwada, Mariwada and Malkangiri. They also fear and worship the goddess of smallpox. Smallpox is not regarded as a disease, and a person affected by it goes to the *perma* or the priest of the village, who makes an offering to the goddess as propitiation and as a cure. Belief in the cult of the village mother (*gudi mata*) and the cult of the earth (*bhum*) is the most common. In religious ceremonies, offerings are made to their goddesses for a good harvest of all crops and the eradication of disease and natural calamities.

The religious ceremonies that are observed by the Koya are mainly four. They are Bijja Pandu, Kodta Pandu, Bimud Pandu and Idu or Ikk Pandu. Bijja Pandu is observed in the month of Semiti, which corresponds to the months of Baisakh and Jeystha, when the early goddess is worshipped with offerings of cocks, pigs, eggs and mangoes. The priest requests the goddess to render a good

harvest. Paddy seeds are also placed before the goddess, believing that those seeds will become good ones by the divine touch. Mangoes are eaten ceremonially during this festival. Ceremonial hunting (*bijja wata*) is also carried out after this festival. Work during this festival is taboo. In the month of Kani (Bhadrab-Aswin) Kurum Pandu is observed when *suau* is eaten ceremonially. The new rice eating ceremony is observed in the month of Dashara (Aswin-Kartik). Sikud Pandu or the new bean eating ceremony is observed in the month of Dewad (Kartik-Margasir). Bimud Pandu or the worshipping ceremony of the rain god is observed in the month of Magh (Magh-Phalgun). This festival is observed just after the completion of the harvest of all types of crops. Two small clay models of the rain god and his wife are made and kept under a *mahul* tree over a stone on the festive day. The villagers, with the priest and the headman, will gather at the site and the villagers carry crops of all types to the site. After worshipping the god the priest fills the empty baskets with crops and is followed by the headman and the villagers. An unmarried girl is made to stand between the *nayak* and the priest. The villagers throw water over them and laugh, saying that the marriage of the rain god is over today (*gajje binud pendul nend terta*). Then ceremonial dancing and singing begin.

The Koya used to be mainly shifting cultivators. But nowadays, for various reasons, they have taken to settled cultivation. Their method of cultivation shows their poor knowledge of wet cultivation. At the start of the rainy season, they plough their fields once or at best twice and sow seeds. When the plants grow to a certain height they store water in the fields and pay no further attention until the harvest. As a result they get a very poor crop yield. As the paddy yield does not suffice for a family to survive for the whole year, the Koya resort to other types of food quest, i.e. the collection of roots and fruits from the jungle and the growing of minor crops like *suau*, maize and pulses. The collection of roots and fruits substantially helps the Koya to solve their food problems. *Mahul* trees abound in the Koya area, and during the months of March and April large quantities of *mahul* are collected, dried and stored for future use. During the months from July to September several types of roots are collected from the jungle and eaten. Just before harvest, the villagers go to watch their crops in the field against the depredations of wild animals and birds. The children are also engaged in driving off birds. During the harvest all the families go to their respective *ketuls* or huts in their fields, where they spend the whole day and come back to the village in the evening. During this season, only old men and women are found in the village during the day time.

The Koya are very fond of hunting. Throughout the year they can be found in the forest in the pursuit of wild birds, hares, squirrels and wild rats. In the months of April and May they observe a festival called Bijja Pandu or the sacred seed festival, when ceremonial hunting is done for days together. Fishing in the rivers is done communally. They use different types of fishing implements and sometimes use poison to catch fish.

The Koya own large herds of cows and bullocks. In the interior regions, one may be surprised to see a family possessing three to four hundred heads of cattle. The Koya do not properly maintain their wealth in cattle. No shed is

constructed for them and they are exposed to weather throughout the year. The forest nearby is used to graze cattle and no other steps are taken to feed them.

According to the traditional system, *chom* or wealth means cattle because a Koya without cattle has no status in the society. No marriage can take place without cattle, which are given to the bride's father as a brideprice. Secondly, the cattle are used as a means of purchasing clothing and other necessary household articles. Nowadays the direct barter of cattle for any purchase has grown less common, and cattle are sold for money, which is used to purchase other things. Thirdly, cattle are used to plough fields and cows are no exception. Fourthly, oxen and cows are slaughtered as offerings at funerals and other festivals. Lastly the cattle provide quantities of beef which the Koya eat. The Koya seldom milk their cows. They say that the calves will die if the cows are milked every now and then. The cows are nonetheless milked during the rainy season, and the Koya make a little curd and butter from the milk. They do not prepare *ghee* as other peoples do.

Leadership, both political and social, revolves round the headman of each village. Until recently, as mentioned elsewhere, he had certain economic prerogatives which made him virtually all powerful in a village. Even in religious matters he is the first man to take the initiative to ask the priest and the villagers to perform religious ceremonies on various occasions. Usually the office of headman is hereditary. After the death of a headman his eldest son becomes the headman of the village. But this is subject to certain conditions. Certain attributes must be fulfilled by the new headman. He must be a good and impartial person. He must be able to voice the difficulties of the villagers before any government official that visits their village. He must be wise in making decisions in respect of various types of dispute. These days the headman is expected to know a little Oriya so as to be able to converse with Oriya officers and traders. In every Koya village the headman is found to be wealthier than others. He may not be the wealthiest man but wealth is always a factor enabling a man to become a headman. Although the office of headman is succeeded by the eldest son, this principle is not always adhered to. If the eldest son does not satisfy the conditions mentioned above, preference is given to the next son if he is found capable. If the headman has no son to succeed him, preference is given to his brother's son. In the absence of any of such relationships, the priest of the village is selected to succeed the headman in addition to his office of religious leadership of the village.

The headman of each village takes a decision with regard to the disputes that arise within that village. He asks the elders of the village to sit round him, and the parties involved in a quarrel sit before the headman, each party sitting on one side. The headman also sits in the *kula panchayat*, the panchayat of a particular clan, even though he does not belong to that clan. In a *kula panchayat* members of that *kula* or clan can only sit and discuss a disputed matter concerning incest. By virtue of being the headman of that village, a headman may be asked to decide any dispute that arises within his own village.

A decision made by the headman of a village is never challenged. No instances could be found with regard to a headman who has ever been unjust and unpopular. If a headman becomes unpopular for some reason, the villagers sit

together and select another man. It is reported somewhere that the people of a village sit together once a year to discuss the headman's activities. The headman sits and listens to what the people say. If he is abused or criticised for any reason he tries to justify himself accordingly. This occasion is known as *plea gudma*. When a new headman is chosen, a ceremonial function in this connection is performed by the villagers. A new cloth is wrapped around his head like a turban by the priest of the village, and he is taken to the village goddess to swear to remain just and good.

Apart from the village as a political unit there is another, wider unit known as the Mutha Panchayat. A Mutha Panchayat consists of members who are the headmen of the different villages of a particular area. It consists of five headmen of five villages. The Mutha Panchayat controls a number of villages in that region with regard to disputes of a serious nature which involve persons from several villages. The members of the Mutha Panchayat are chosen by all the headmen of a particular region. The Mutha Panchayat mainly deals with cases like taking away another man's wife, which is considered a *barhiva tapu* or big crime. The aggrieved person asks the headman of his village to summon the Mutha Panchayat to obtain compensation from the accused person. Crimes like witchcraft and sorcery are also dealt with by the Mutha Panchayat if it happens to involve persons belonging to more than one village.

Next to the headman the priest of the village, who is called the *perma* or *pujari*, assumes immense importance as a leader of Koya society. Although his functions are mainly religious the Koya have a great regard for this leader. He is believed to have the power of communication with supernatural beings, and as such he acts as an intermediary between human beings and unseen powers. The Koya, like other primitive people, mostly depend on their religious rituals to obtain relief from the natural calamities that are believed to be caused by angry gods who need to be propitiated. A bumper crop or a successful hunt is thought to be due to the blessings of the gods. Hence they are constantly concerned with supernatural beings with regard to all aspects of their way of life. The priest is the person who must attend to all the needs of supernatural beings by worshipping or propitiating them with the help of his villagers.

The office of priest in a village is usually hereditary. If the priest dies without leaving an heir, a son of his brother may assume the post. Before becoming a priest a person has to undergo a series of initiation rituals and is asked to observe sexual continence. He then is taught by another priest of some other village if his father should be dead. He strictly observes religious festivals like Bijja Pandu, Marka Pandu and Idu Pandu, etc. The night before the festival, he observes sexual continence and never eats food cooked by a female. He has to fast until the worship is over, and he is the first man to eat after offerings to the god have been made. He is invited by the villagers to eat the new fruits or drink the liquor first, before they enjoy the new fruits or drink. By doing so they think the gods will remain pleased with them. Apart from his religious duties the priest also attends meetings of village panchayats and always has a say with regard to any type of dispute. He is, of course, treated as one of the village elders in these cases.

When there is an increase in smallpox, which is believed by the Koya to be caused by the goddess, the priest gives orders to the villagers to observe certain taboos.

The *wadde* is a magician who occupies as important a position in Koya society as the headman and the priest. A man becomes a *wadde* not because he is the son of a magician or has been chosen by the villagers, but because he is supernaturally endowed with the qualities necessary to become a magician. After the birth of a child, if *jatel* or matted hair is observed on the head of a child, he is destined to become a magician in Koya society. From childhood he is kept under the special care of his parents, and certain taboos are observed with regard to his food habits. From boyhood he is kept under the training of an adult magician, who teaches him the ways of magic while performing his duties as a magician.

Like the priest the magician also has the power to communicate with supernatural beings. He differs from the priest by being capable of moulding supernatural beings and keeping them under control in order to achieve success in his designs. He can summon the aid of malevolent spirits to cause harm to anybody he hates, and as such, he is dreaded by the Koya. On the other hand he is capable of driving away malevolent spirits with the help of his magical performances. It is very common in the Koya area to find magicians chanting magical charms before patients of various types. Most diseases are believed to be caused by spirits or angry gods. The Koya run to the magicians for immediate help in dealing with such troubles.

As a member of society the magician enjoys equal right with other Koya in a village. He can marry and lead a life like others in the village in accordance with social rules and regulations. The Koya usually have an ambivalent attitude towards him. He is liked as well as dreaded and as such hated. But the Koya believe his services to be indispensable.

The *katwal* is usually considered to be just useful because he helps the headman in his work. The headman calls on his help whenever a meeting of villagers is to be held. At religious festivals the *katwal* goes round the village to call on the villagers to gather before the headman to decide the work that has to be done communally. In inter-village gatherings the *katwal* is sent to other villages as a messenger. When an outsider stays in a Koya village the headman makes arrangements for the guest with the help of the *katwal*. In this way the services of the *katwal* are also thought to be useful. Apart from this he enjoys equal privileges with others as a member of society.

The Koya are regarded as one of the primitive tribes of Orissa. Since their area of habitation comes under the sub-plan area, special emphasis has been placed on their development by the government. An Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA), with its headquarters at Malkangiri, has been functioning for a long time to care for the development of tribals of Malkangiri sub-division. Since its inception the Agency has implemented various development programmes for both individual benefit and infrastructure development to promote the rapid socio-economic development of tribals of this region.

KULI

B.B. Mohanty

The name Kuli, as mentioned in the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes list (Modification) Order, 1956, refers to a tribe commonly known as Kuli and found mostly in western Orissa. At the 1971 census this community was enumerated as a Scheduled Tribe numbering 1893 and a Scheduled Caste numbering 3554. This dual nomenclature and listing has caused some controversy over their caste status. In order to determine this, a study was undertaken in 1962 by the Tribal and Harijan Research-cum-Training Institute, Government of Orissa. On the basis of the findings of the study, it was recommended that the Kuli should be treated as a Scheduled Caste and be descheduled after a period of five years, by which time they would have achieved a status equivalent to the Other Backward Classes. However, they still enjoy the status of a Scheduled Tribe. The name 'Kuli' might derive from the word 'Kula', the dumb-bell of the cow used in carding. Like the Koli, the Kuli are weavers by occupation though in the past it was claimed by many that their main occupation was the carding of cotton.

The population of the tribe in the 1991 census was 6526 and during the period 1981-1991 their growth rate shows an increase of 335.64 per cent. The population of the community in three different census years was as follows:

1961 - 1609

1971 - 1893

1981 - 1498

1991 - 6526

The tribe is distributed in varying numbers in twelve out of thirteen districts of the state. Their concentration is greatest in Sambalpur, followed by Bolangir. The population of the Kuli in these two districts taken together constitutes more than 85 per cent of the total. Their main concentrated pockets are Patnagarh and Saintala in the district of Bolangir, and Padampur in the undivided district of Sambalpur. Of the total population men and women are 49.72 and 50.28 per cent respectively. The sex ratio is 1011 females per 1000 males as against 1002 for the total tribal population in 1991. Rural dwellers constitute 89 per cent. Of all the tribal groups the Kuli record the highest percentage of literacy, which is 46.7. During the past three decades their percentage of literacy has gone up from 15.8 in 1961 to 32.5 in 1971, 36.3 in 1981 and 46.79 in 1991. They have no specific language of their own. They speak Oriya as their mother tongue. The Kuli live in heterogeneous villages along with caste Hindus such as the Gonda, Suda, Kansari, Teli, Dhoba and Jyotish castes. They are regarded as a sub-caste of the Meheras, a Scheduled Caste community. But in the caste hierarchy they rank slightly higher than them as they do not suffer from the stigma of untouchability. The Brahmans serve them at their marriage and death rituals.

They follow the traditional local pattern in constructing their houses. Construction of a new house begins with the installation of a wooden post decorated with mango leaves and vermilion at the centre of the homestead land. A *puja* is performed before the pillar, then construction of the house starts. The house is mostly rectangular in shape, mud walled and low roofed with three to four rooms. On all sides of the house lies a continuous narrow verandah. Of all the rooms, a room slightly bigger in size is kept exclusively for the loom and weaving activities. Depending on the availability of space either in front or at the back of the house, they maintain kitchen gardens where seasonal vegetables, tobacco, mustard and many other crops are grown. Those with cattle build a cattle shed at a distance from the house. Unlike the other tribal groups, their living conditions look sanitary, as they take the greatest care in maintaining their houses. The house is cleaned often and the walls, and courtyard are regularly dabbed with cow-dung water.

There is hardly anything distinctive or peculiar about the dress or ornaments of the Kuli. A coarse cotton *dhori* and a mill-made or a handloom sari constitute their dress. The women use various types of ornaments made of silver or gold in their ears, nose, neck and ankles. In some areas of Phulbani District the women tattoo their limbs like the Kutia Kondhs, although this practice is no more popular now.

There are certain taboos associated with a woman during her pregnancy. She is not given too much of either sweet or sour items of food. She is also not allowed to visit a religious place or cross a stream or river. Otherwise the expectant woman does her usual work until the day of the delivery. As soon as the pain starts the woman is confined in a room and an elderly and experienced woman of the village is called to attend her. Soon after the delivery the umbilical cord is cut by means of a sharp knife by the attending midwife and buried in a pit dug in one corner of the back yard by some male members of the household. In order to deal with post-delivery pain a paste prepared from a powder of *nim* leaves, garlic and dried ginger, and *pipali* is administered to the woman. She is given hot rice and boiled vegetables for six days, during which she is kept segregated along with the newborn baby. The first phase of pollution ends on the sixth day. The mother and child are given a bath on that day and the former wears a new cloth. A small feast is arranged in which indigenous porridge and cakes are prepared and served to the *kutumba* members. The second phase of pollution continues till the 21st day, at the end of which the house is cleaned and the old earthenware pots are thrown away and replaced by new ones. The mother of the newborn baby takes a bath and enters the kitchen to resume her routine work. The child is given a name on that day by a Brahman, the household priest.

On attaining puberty a girl is kept segregated for seven days in a room and the fact is kept secret. After the stipulated period she takes a bath and wears a new cloth. With subsequent menstruation there is no such restriction imposed on the girl, who can even cook after a bath on the same day.

The tribe is divided into a number of exogamous clans called *gotras*. Marriage is prohibited within the same *gotra*. Among the Kuli both adult and child marriages are practised, although nowadays the former type of marriage is more

common than the latter. In child marriages, generally a girl is given in marriage between the age of 5 and 12 years, and on the fourth day of the marriage she is sent back to her parent's house. After she attains puberty, the parents of the girl take her to her father-in-law's house and leave her with some gifts. The occasion is celebrated with a feast after the priest performs all the necessary rituals. In adult marriages, after the negotiation is over and the brideprice has been fixed, betrothal takes place. The amount of brideprice, which consists of some gold ornaments and cash, generally varies from person to person depending upon their paying capacity. On a fixed day the wedding takes place at the bride's house after the arrival of groom and his party. A Brahman priest is summoned and he performs the accompanying rituals of the *homa*, the union of the palms, etc. Soon after this the feast follows. The day following the wedding the bridegroom and his party return to their village along with the bride. The remarriage of widows and divorcees is permitted. Both the husband and wife can divorce each other on reasonable grounds. Cross-cousing marriage is also prevalent.

The dead are either buried or cremated. The bodies of those dying of cholera, smallpox or any other infectious diseases are thrown away in the open. The Kuli have their own cremation ground located in some isolated place at a distance from the village. Dead bodies are carried to the cremation ground in a stringed cot borne on the shoulders of affines and consanguines. The corpse is accompanied by a burning lamp, an earthenware pitcher and a winnowing fan. If the dead body is to be buried, then on reaching the outskirts of the village it is lowered and the eldest son touches fire on to its face and returns home. But in cases of disposal by cremation, the eldest son accompanies the funeral procession up to the cremation ground. At the cremation ground the body of deceased is placed on the pyre in a north-south direction with its head pointing towards the north. In the case of a male the face points towards heaven and in the case of a female towards the ground. The eldest son of the deceased sets fire to the pyre first followed by others. After the cremation is over the pallbearers return to their respective homes after a purificatory bath in a nearby pond or stream. Death pollution is observed for twelve days. *Dassah* is performed on the tenth day when the male members shave their beards and cut their hair near a pond. On this day the house of the deceased is cleaned and the walls and floor are washed with cowdung water. The old earthenware pots are thrown away and replaced by new ones. On the eleventh day a *homa* is performed by the priest, and a feast is arranged in the later part of the day at which non-vegetarian food is served. On the twelfth day the final purificatory rites are performed, which follows another feast of vegetarian food.

The main occupation of the Kuli is weaving, which is supplemented by agriculture. Almost all households have looms of their own and both men and women take part. Coarse cotton *dhotis* and saris which they produce are sold in the market for money. Weaving consists of a number of phases in which both sexes participate. There are certain works allocated exclusively to men, certain others to women, and some to both. A couple can normally weave twenty to twenty-five pieces of cloth per month. After the introduction of mill-made cloths the demand for these coarse cloths has declined, and as such they are facing difficulties in marketing their products. The income they derive from the sale of these clothes does not support them in maintaining their family throughout the year. Moreover,

due to the lack of an improved loom, working capital or raw materials they are not in a position to increase their production. Under these circumstances, they are forced to live a wretched life. Although they feel that this trade is not profitable to them nowadays, for various reasons they are not in a position to switch to other occupations. Also, because of their easy-going habits they find it extremely difficult to withstand the hardships involved in wage-earning and cultivation.

The principal diet of the Kuli is rice. They also consume *ragi* along with pulses and all varieties of vegetables. Fish and meat are also eaten when available. Drinking liquor is not very popular, but chewing tobacco and *betel* and smoking *bidi*s are quite common.

They mostly observe Hindu festivals and worship Hindu gods and goddesses. Their chief deity is Biswakarma and their main festivals are Dewali and Dasahara. It is necessary to discuss their relationship with other caste groups, in order to throw light on their social status and justify their position in the caste hierarchy. Brahmans do not accept water from the Kuli and do not touch them ordinarily. But untouchability is not strictly observed. They accept water from the metal utensils of the Kuli if provided by other people. The Brahmans serve them at the marriage ceremony, mortuary rites and other functions. The washerman washes the clothes of the Kuli, which include those worn by women at menstruation. The barber serves them by cutting their hair and shaving their beards. The Gouda (milkman) accepts water from the Kuli and mixes with them freely without observing any untouchability. The Kultas, a cultivating caste equivalent in status to the Khandayats, accept water from the Kuli. They do not observe any untouchability and also mix with them freely and visit their houses. The Ganda, another weaving community belonging to the Scheduled Castes, accept water from the Kuli, but the Kuli do not accept water from them. The Kuli treat them as an inferior caste and do not touch them. It is quite evident that the Kuli have become fully integrated into the hierarchy of Hindu society with a very few tribal traits. Although there is a very little stigma of untouchability attached to them, they justify having a position above the Scheduled Castes.

LODHA

S.C. Mohanty

The Lodha are an ex-criminal Scheduled Tribe of Orissa. They are famous for their aggressiveness and criminal activities. Their neighbours have always held them in contempt. The jungle-clad hilly terrains of the Chotanagpur plateau running across the Bengal-Orissa-Bihar border including Mayurbhanj District in Orissa, Singhbhum District in Bihar, and Midnapur District in West Bengal form the homeland of the Lodha. Midnapur and Singhbhum have large concentrations of the tribe. In Orissa the Lodha population is small and mostly confined to two blocks, i.e. Morada and Suliapada in the Sadar sub-division of Mayurbhanj District. The Lodha population in Orissa was 5100 at the 1981 census, increasing to 7458 with a decennial growth rate of 46.24 per cent by the 1991 census. Their level of literacy, 8.40 per cent in 1981, went up to 17.22 per cent by 1991. This reflects the backwardness of this vulnerable community.

The origin and historical background of the tribe are obscure. According to Bhowmik, who is an authority on this tribe, 'the term Lodha is derived from "Lubdhaka" meaning a trapper or flower. There is a land-holding caste in Madhya Pradesh named Lodha or Lodhi who are immigrants from the United Provinces (Uttar Pradesh) and who originally lived in Ludhiana District in the Punjab. But the present ethnographic data do not indicate any relationship between the Lodha of Bengal, Bihar or Orissa and the Lodha of Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh.'

Like many other forest-dwelling communities, the Lodha trace their descent from the famous Savaras described in the Hindu *puranas* and great epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. Their legendary origin tells us that they are the descendants of the mythical Savara king of Nilanchal and the legendary hero Vishwvasu. He was the first worshipper of the idol of Lord Nilamadhav, which was later stolen by Vidyapati, the Brahman Minister of King Indradyumna of Puri, and installed in Puri as Lord Jagannath. As such the Lodha identify themselves with the Vishwvasu group of Savaras and regard the Vyadhev, Kirta and Jara groups of Savara as their kin. Hence, the Lodha call themselves the Lodha Savara.

Their legendary origin places them within the tribe-caste continuum. Eminent anthropologists like Dr. N.K. Bose believe that the Lodha were exclusively a jungle tribe thriving on hunting and food-gathering like the Savaras as described in the Hindu *puranas* and epics. They seem to have belonged to the Mundari group. In course of time their prolonged interaction with Hindu castes has accelerated their Hinduization. Now they live with tribal and non-tribal communities like the Santal, Oraon, Bathudi, Munda, Mahali, Bhumij, Kora, Bagdi, Sadgop, Mahato, Karan, Brahman, Khandait, Raju, Teli, Mahishya, Vaishya, Gudra, Kamar, Kayastha, Vaidya, Namasudra, Napita, Bauri, Dom, Puran, Tanti, Gola, Kaivarta, etc. But the Lodha claim a social status superior to those of the neighbouring Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe communities.

The Lodha were originally a Mundari-speaking tribe. Now they speak a dialect composed of distorted Bengali, Oriya and Mundari. This indicates their

assimilation to the regional Oriya and Bengali cultures. As regards their physical affinities, they belong to the Vedial racial group. In this respect they are very close to the Hill Kharia, Malers of Rajmahal and Chenchu of the Krishna Basin. These communities share a common pre-agricultural, forest-dwelling, hunting and food-gathering economic background.

The Lodha live in small and large villages belonging exclusively to them and sometimes together with other communities. As with other tribal settlements the settlement pattern is irregular, with houses scattered here and there. They have small straw-thatched huts with a rectangular ground plan and mud walls. The majority of huts have all-purpose single rooms with a raised platform near the hearth called *isan* or the seat of ancestral spirits. This is a trait borrowed from the caste Hindus. Goats and cattle are kept on the side verandah. Well-to-do cultivators have larger multi-roomed houses with spacious courtyards and kitchen gardens fenced with vertical bamboo poles. Their household belongings are scanty.

The Lodha are economically backward. Most of them are at the pre-agricultural stage of the economy. Their occupational pattern varies according to the local environment. The Lodha who live in the forest areas stick to their age-old pursuits like hunting, food-gathering, the collection of minor forest produces, tussar cultivation, etc. These days, they also work for the forest department and forest contractors in plantation programmes and timber operations. Apart from the collection of edible fruits, roots and tubers for their own consumption, they collect *kendu* leaves to roll *bidi*, *sal* and *siali* leaves to make leaf cups and plates, *sabai* grass to make ropes and also tussar cocoons, honey, lac, resin, *sal* seeds, *mohua*, firewood, etc., all of which they sell in the neighbourhood to earn their livelihood. They hunt with the traditional bow and arrow and use different kinds of traps and snares to catch animals. With the arrival of rapid deforestation and the prohibitory forest laws they have been deprived of their forest-based subsistence. Some Lodha have therefore resorted to unfair means and clandestine activities to keep body and soul together.

The Lodha living in the plains mainly thrive on wage-earning as agricultural labourers and construction workers. Very few own cultivable lands, the produce of which is anyway insufficient to meet their household consumption needs. Most Lodha are landless or marginal farmers. Some Lodha have taken up share-cropping.

Unlike their Hindu caste neighbours, the Lodha do not attach any social stigma to any kind of occupation. They never hesitate to take up any kind of vocation available to them irrespective of their socio-economic status. Hence they earn and supplement their livelihood from a variety of occupations like petty trades, rearing of livestock, carpentry, weaving, mat-making, rope-making, and the like. Fishing and the catching of reptiles such as snakes, lizards, tortoise and alligators from ponds and streams, are their favourite pastime as well as a subsidiary occupation. Fish and tortoise are eaten and the surplus is sold. They also earn money by selling the skins of reptiles, which are in great demand for making musical instruments, shoes and fashionable articles.

The Lodha are endowed with a strong physique and are capable of doing hard work. But they are bit lazy. They prefer to idle away their time indulging in gossip and catching fish rather than doing any strenuous work. The Lodha women are comparatively more active and industrious than the men. As well as their major traditional role of housekeeping and child-rearing, they take part in all economic pursuits with the men except ploughing, thatching, and catching snakes and reptiles, which are forbidden to them. Children lend a helping hand to their superiors in these activities.

Rice is the staple food of the Lodha and is supplemented by pulses, seasonal fruits, roots and tubers and non-vegetarian items like meat, chicken, eggs, fish, etc. depending upon the family budget and their availability. They usually eat boiled rice soaked with water and its gruel. Vegetable items are either boiled or roasted. They normally eat food twice daily, i.e. in the morning and evening. If food is available they go for a third meal at noon or in the afternoon. In times of scarcity of food they manage with one meal or starve for days together. The Lodha are addicted to narcotics like country liquor and tobacco. They are particularly fond of *handia* (rice beer), *bidi* (country-made cigarettes,) and *gudakhu* (tobacco paste), which they use regularly.

The Lodha wear cheap and coarse type of clothes. Men use *dhotis*, *chaders*, napkins, *banyans* and shirts. Women wear saris and blouses. Small children up to five years of age usually go naked. Grown-up boys wear a thin piece of loin cloth fastened to string around the waist. Girls wear frocks and skirts. Due to their poverty, they manage with just a few items of clothing and cannot afford to keep it clean. Woman adorn themselves with necklaces and bangles made of aluminium, silver, brass and glass. They also tattoo their upper arms and chest with floral designs.

The Lodha have few household articles. For cooking and serving food they have husking levers, earthenware pots, iron pans, aluminium vessels and plates. Well-to-do families keep brass utensils, which are mortgaged for loan or sold in times of need. These implements for hunting, fishing, agriculture and food-gathering consist of bows, arrows, crowbars, axes, billhooks, scythes, ploughs, knives, spades, mattocks, etc. These are generally purchased from the local blacksmith or weekly market.

The Lodha do not have a very cordial relationship with neighbouring communities. Their neighbours hold them in contempt for their criminal activities. They are always suspected of involvement in all the crimes committed in the neighbourhood, for which they are harassed by their neighbours, government officials and the local police. Thus, they have to struggle hard to earn their living, as their neighbours hesitate to employ them. The social stigma and social isolation, hostile inter-community relationships, poverty, starvation and psycho-emotional stress originating from these attitudes sometimes become unbearable for the Lodha. Often they revolt violently against their unjust neighbours and become even more notorious. As a result violence and aggression occur between Lodha and non-Lodha.

The Lodha social system is characterised by its clan organization. They have nine clan groups which they refer as *gotras*. These clans are exogamous and patrilineal in nature. Each individual by his or her birth belongs to a particular clan. While clan identity remains unchanged throughout life for men, that of the women changes after marriage. Each clan has a totemic origin, and the totemic objects are considered to be very sacred. Certain taboos are observed by clan members in order to pay respect to their respective totemic objects. A list of clan names together with their totemic objects is given below.

<i>Clan Names</i>	<i>Totemic Objects</i>
1. Bugta, Bhukta, Bhakta	Chirka Alu (a kind of yarn available in the forest)
2. Mallik	Makar (a kind of mythical sea monster or shark or <i>sal</i> fish)
3. Kotal	Moon or Grasshopper
4. Laik, Layak, Nayak	<i>Sal</i> fish
5. Digar	Porpoise
6. Parmanik	A bird called <i>manik</i>
7. Dandapat or Bag	Bagh (Tiger)
8. Ari, Ahari	<i>Chanda</i> fish
9. Bhuiya, Bhunia	<i>Sal</i> fish

The family is the smallest basic social unit in the Lodha system. Most Lodha families are elementary or nuclear in type and consist of the married couple and their unmarried children. Some examples of joint and extended families, which include old and dependent parents, unmarried, married and/or divorced brothers, sisters, sons and daughters, are also found. Through conjugal infidelity, there are instances of divorce and remarriage of either of the spouses. In such cases children born in previous marriages may stay with their stepfather or stepmother. Polygyny, or a man having more than one wife, is permitted. The Lodha family is patrilineal and patriarchal in nature. Social status and family property are inherited in the male line. The father or senior male is regarded as the family head. In their hard struggle for survival, the family members act as a close-knit group helping each other and contributing their share of their day-to-day life for the well-being of the family. Children are well cared for and are brought up with love and fondness. The best food items are served to the children first. Growing children assist their parents in domestic and outdoor activities.

Junior family members always respect their superiors. Like the Hindu kinship system, joking and avoidance relationships are found among certain categories of kin. A joking relationship is maintained between grandparents and grandchildren, younger brother and elder brother's wife, husband and wife's sister. Therefore instances of the levirate, i.e. the younger brother marrying the widow of

his deceased elder brother, and the sororate, i.e. a widower marrying the younger sister of his deceased wife, are also found. Strict avoidance is observed between an elder brother and his younger brother's wife. There is a taboo on married couples addressing each other by name, so they call each other 'father' or 'mother of so and so'. Sometimes, the Lodha extend the sphere of relationship to friends and associates of their own community and other communities by forging ritual kinship bonds. These are based on a socio-economic relationship of give and take.

From birth to death, the life of a Lodha passes through a series of rituals at different phases of life. Ceasing menstruation is regarded as an indication of pregnancy. A pregnant woman observes a number of taboos regarding her food, sex life and movements. Goat and fowl are sacrificed and fruits offered to the local deities to bring about a smooth delivery and the well-being of mother and child. The help of a local *dhat* or midwife is summoned for the birth. Birth pollution is observed for 21 days, during which the mother and baby remain in confinement, and certain precautionary taboos and practices are observed. On the 21st day a purificatory ritual called *ekusia* is performed. The baby is breast-fed by the mother till he or she is six months old or more. After six months the hair-cutting and rice-feeding ceremonies are held on a Tuesday, which the Lodha consider an auspicious day.

Marriage is the most significant social event in a Lodha's life. Adult marriage and marriage by negotiation are commonly practised. Marriage negotiations between the boy's side and girl's side are carried on with the help of a go-between and settled with the payment of a brideprice in cash and kind. However, the consent of the boy and girl is required before finalizing the marriage proposal.

Besides arranged marriages, instances of other kinds of marriages, such as child marriage, love marriage, marriage by service, marriage by exchange of sisters, *gharjamain* type of marriage, levirate, sororate, and the remarriage of widows and divorcees are also found. In case of child marriage a second marriage ceremony is performed when the girl attains puberty, and then she is allowed to sleep with her husband. Levirate, sororate and widow remarriages are called *sanga*. These marriages involve no payment of brideprice. However, such marriages are finalized after payment of a royalty in cash called *gram manya* to the groom's village panchayat, and then formal permission from the village headman is obtained. The bride in a *sanga* marriage is called *sangali bou* and her social status is inferior to that of a bride in a regular arranged marriage. Lodha society allows a man to divorce his wife for reasons of infidelity, indolence and incompatibility. A woman cannot divorce her husband formally, but she can compel him to divorce her by deserting him and going to stay with her parents or lover. No ritual formalities are observed when people divorce.

The Lodha observe elaborate death rituals in accordance with Hindu traditions. The dead body is either buried or cremated. Mourning and death pollution are observed for ten days. On the tenth and eleventh days purificatory rituals are performed. The relatives and co-villagers are entertained with a feast.

The annual Sradha ceremony is performed every year on the last day of the month of Chaitra to appease the ancestral spirits.

The Lodha have their own traditional village panchayat called *desh*. All adult male persons are members of the panchayat, which decides offences relating to the violation of tribal customs, norms and taboos. It can impose fines on and ostracize the offender and grant permission for *sanga* marriages. The village headman, called *mukhia* or *sardar*, presides over its meetings and gives his verdict in consultation with senior members. Everyone has to obey his verdict. The *mukhia* or *sardar* is assisted by the village messenger, the *dakua* or *athgharia*, who always comes from the Kotal clan. There are many magico-religious functionaries viz. *deheri*, the village priest, *talia* or *chharidar*, the assistant to the *deheri*, *hantakar*, the ritual sacrificer, *gunni*, the medicine man, *hyakra*, the shaman in Lodha villages. The *deheri* conducts the worship of the village gods and deities and all the communal rituals in the village. His post is hereditary.

The Lodha strongly believe in the unseen supernatural world. The benevolent beings are Bhagwan, the Supreme being, Dharm Devta, the God of Righteousness, Basumata, the mother earth, Sitala, the village deity and Goddess of Epidemics, Baram or Garam, the Jungle Deity and the Tutelary Deity of the Lodha. Chandi and Yogini are worshipped as the dreaded deities. There are also various types of ghosts and evil spirits called Kundra, Chirguni, Fretasini, Daini, Kalporus, Baghoa, Gomua, Janka, Kath, etc.

The Lodha observe a number of magico-religious rituals and festivals throughout the year to propitiate supernatural beings to prevent misfortunes. Important festivals like Sitala Puja and Chandi Puja in the month of Baisak, Mansa Puja in Jaistha, Jathel in Sraban, Asthani Puja in Asvin, Bandana in Kartik, Laxmi Puja in Agrahayan, Natun Hanri i.e. the annual Sradha ceremony, and ancestor worship in Chaitra are observed by the Lodha.

The intensity of criminality among the Lodha has been a matter of grave concern to the custodians of law and order. However, Lodha criminality is not hereditary. Their social system is very strong and has endured the test of time. There is nothing in the system to teach them criminality. During British rule an unfortunate turn took place in the history of their struggles; some changes were made to the rapidly changing environment that took some of them towards criminal activities in order to vent their frustrations and also to earn an easy livelihood. The evident cause is poverty, social neglect and maladjustment. This was the outcome of the disintegration of their social and economic moorings and prolonged exploitation, following the restriction of their traditional means of livelihood derived from land and forest.

Instances of organized highway robbery, murder, theft and burglary, committed by Lodha gangs mostly in the West Bengal-Orissa border areas, have made them formidable. The problem of Lodha criminality is of a psycho-emotional nature. After independence, the welfare government showed some concern to bring the Lodha into the mainstream of the population. Attempts have been made to rehabilitate them socio-economically in rehabilitation colonies. They have been

provided with land, houses, agricultural inputs and alternative or subsidiary vocations to improve their lot. A micro-project called the Lodha Development Agency, which comes under the Harijan and Tribal Welfare Department, founded in 1986, has implemented various welfare schemes for the socio-economic development of the Lodha in Mayurbhanj District. Lodha rehabilitation colonies have been set up at Morada and Suliapada Blocks in the district. All these efforts to draw the Lodha away from their criminal activities have yet to produce satisfactory results.

MAHALI

A. Mall

Of 62 tribes in Orissa the Mahali are numerically a small group found mainly in Mayurbhanj and Sundargarh Districts in Orissa. Early writers have described them as bamboo workers. S.C. Roy (1915), referring to various tribal communities and castes occupying the Chhotanagpur plateau, has mentioned that the Mahali and several other occupational castes like the Lohars (blacksmiths), Kumbhars (potters), Chik Baraiks (weavers), Ahirs (cattle grazers) and Goraitis or Ghasi (drummers) were living side by side with the Oraon and other tribal communities and castes to provide traditional services. Risley (1891) has described the Mahali as a Dravidian caste of labourers, palanquin bearers and workers in bamboo found in Chhotanagpur and West Bengal.

However, the Mahali seem to be emigrants from Bihar and Bengal, who came to live near the Orissa border and then spread to other districts of the state. Risley (1891) gives the names of five sections of the tribe, such as (1) Boasphor Mahali who make baskets and do all kinds of bamboo work, (2) Patar Mahali, basket-makers and cultivators, (3) Sulunkhi Mahali, cultivators and labourers, (4) Tante Mahali who carry palanquins and (5) Mahali Munda, a small outlying sub-caste confined to Lohardanga.

There are many similarities among the Mahali, Santal and Munda tribes which may be due to their long association among themselves. Some hold the view that the Boasphor, Sulunkhi and Tante Mahali are merely branches of the Santal tribe. Similarly the Mahali Munda have separated from the original Munda tribe. Separation from the main tribe is due to their acceptance of a lower occupation like palanquin-bearing and basket-making, which is regarded as a standing slur on their character. The entire sub-caste regard the pig as their totem and thus consider it wrong to eat pork. The Patar Mahali employ Brahmans as priests and do not eat beef. However, the Mahali claim to be the original group of the parent tribe. The Mahali, like the Munda, are divided into a number of clans which are exogamous in nature and are also totemistic. These are Charbar (a tree), Duagri (wild pig), Kathar gach (jack tree), Kerketta (a kind of bird), Murumar (nilgai), Topowar (a bird), Tirki (bull), etc. The members of a clan are forbidden to kill or cause harm to the totemic plant or animal. The totems may not be killed or eaten. Marriage is also contracted outside the totemic clan.

The Mahali population in Orissa, which was 11767 in 1981, went up to 13,585 in 1991. The bulk of the population is found in Mayurbhanj and Sundargarh Districts. The growth rate was 15.45 per cent during the period 1981-91 and the sex ratio according to the 1991 census was 1015 females per 1000 males. The literacy percentage improved from 4.2 in 1961 to 7.2 in 1971, 10.7 in 1981 and 21.68 in 1991. The Mahali have their own language, which is classified with the Mundari group. Now most of them have taken to Santali, but they can speak and understand Oriya.

Like some other tribal communities, the Mahali live in multi-caste and multi-tribal villages. Here they live in separate hamlets exclusively. Before selecting a site for the construction of a house they follow a method of divination, putting some rice, paddy, cow-dung and vermilion on the new site at night. Next morning they examine the items. If they find any loss in the quantity of cow-dung, they consider it an ill-omen for the cattle wealth. Loss in the quantity of rice signifies a low yield from land. If all the items are found intact they consider the site to be auspicious and construct the house there. They worship their dead ancestors before entering the new house.

The housing condition of the Mahali is as good as that of the neighbouring tribes. A typical Mahali hut measures about 16' in length and 7' to 8' in width with a height of 7'. The houses in the hamlet where they live are usually situated on both sides of the lane. Each family usually has two or three rooms. The larger one is usually partitioned by a mud wall, one portion of which is used as a kitchen and the other as a bedroom and storeroom. One room is used as cowshed. The houses are commonly mud-walled with a straw-thatched or *naria*-tiled roof. But well-to-do families construct more spacious houses.

The dress of a woman consists of a sari about 8 to 10 cubits long either hand-woven or mill made and for a man a short *dhoti* or napkin about 5 to 7 cubits in length. The dress worn by those who go to schools or colleges is the same as that used by other advanced communities. Mahali women usually tie their hairs into a knob on the right above the neck. This is called *sud*. Small girls like to leave the plait dangling at the back, which is called *galaon* in their language. Mahali women rarely use gold ornaments. But use of silver ornament is common. They wear glass bangles called *churi* and metal bangles called *bala* on their wrists. They also wear silver *haju* on their arms and metal or bead necklaces around their necks. They wear earrings and toe-rings. Gold ornaments, if used at all, are placed on the nose in the shape of rings and tops. The women are fond of tattooing, which they do on the forehead, arms, chin and ankles, like some other tribes in the state.

The Mahali are non-vegetarian and eat pork, mutton, fowl, fish, etc. But eating beef is gradually becoming unpopular. Rice is their staple food. They use mustard and *mahua*-seed oil for cooking. They prepared *handia* (rice beer), which is their traditional drink. They offer this drink to their deities and to the *manes* or dead ancestors. *Handia* is usually drunk on special occasions like religious ceremonies, marriage and death rites. Snails, crabs and termites are also eaten whenever available. They are not fond of milk or milk products. Nowadays they drink tea as a popular beverage. Many of them also take food in leaf cups and plates, which they make at home.

Stringed charpoys, bell metal and aluminium utensils and a few earthenware pots are their main material pieces of equipment, which they purchase from the nearby market. Although the Mahali are not as clean as the Santal, they keep their houses, streets and lanes fairly neat and clean. On festive occasions they plaster the floor and walls with clay mixed with fresh cow dung. Drinking water is fetched from the wells and some times from the nearby streams. Now tube-wells

have been set up by the government in most villages. They bathe regularly and clean their clothes with soap.

Like other tribal communities the Mahali believe that diseases are mostly caused by the displeasure of a deity or ancestral spirit. Therefore they try to appease these supernatural beings through worship by the shaman. On such occasions they sacrifice fowls or goats.

The economic activity of the Mahali, like the Doms of the plains of Dhenkanal, is primarily based on bamboo working. They weave baskets of various sizes and shapes. They usually make the *theka* (big basket), *chala*, *tati* (frail screens), *kula* (winnowing fan) *doli* (grain bin) and *pachhi* (net basket). Apart from these they also make fences, fish traps and broomsticks. The tools and implements they use in making these articles consist of the *katus* (small knife), *tangia* (axe), *katuri* (hand axe) and *bharbadise*, a long wooden support which is placed on the ground to form a 30° angle at one end, the other end being supported by two small bamboo rods, crossing each other.

The Mahali usually take their bamboo products to the local market or to nearby towns for sale. They dispose of their products for cash or kind, which usually consists of food grains. The traditional occupation, which has been their main source of livelihood, provides them with a meagre income because of the decreasing demand for their products in the locality. Though basket-making is the mainstay of most of the population, a few Mahali who possess small amount of land grow paddy on this land using traditional techniques.

Like other tribes of the locality the Mahali engage to some extent in forest collection, hunting, and fishing to supplement their income. The pursuits of hunting and fishing are of rare occurrence and irregular in nature. The headman of the Mahali community takes a leading role in hunting expeditions, and other follow him with their weapons. Those who cannot cope with their traditional occupation and do not possess land take up wage-earning wherever there is scope to do so.

The life of a Mahali begins in the mother's womb and comes to an end at the cremation ground. After marriage the couple expect a child, preferably a male one. Cessation of menses and a feeling of nausea indicate pregnancy. This makes a woman feel proud, as she will become a mother. During pregnancy a woman has to observe certain taboos and restrictions. She is not allowed to remain alone. If she is alone she has to carry some iron implements such as a knife with her to avoid the evil influence of malevolent spirits. At delivery an experienced old woman, either from the mother's own community or from a local Scheduled Caste community, assists the expectant mother soon after the delivery pains begin. Immediately after the baby is born, the female assistant cuts the umbilical cord with either a bamboo split or an iron knife, this being buried outside the house. Then the baby is given a bath and the mother is washed. Thereafter for eight days the mother and the baby are kept confined in a room under strict observation of pollution. From delivery to the end of the pollution period no adult males are allowed to come into contact with the mother, and the eating of meat or fish is restricted. On the ninth day the mother, accompanied by the female relatives, goes to take a purificatory bath by

anointing turmeric paste and oil. The baby and the male members of the family are shaved and take a bath. On this day the name-giving ceremony for the newborn baby may also take place, the kith and kin being invited to a feast. The female attendant is given food and rice beer and remuneration in cash for her services. The baby's name is selected by the grain method of divination.

Both child and adult marriages are practised, although the former is practised more than the latter. Boys at 18 and above and girls at 14 and above become fit for marriage. Marriage outside the own tribe is not allowed. Those who violate this rule are punished with excommunication. An incestuous relationship between members of the same clan is strictly prohibited. A boy and his family members generally select a good-looking girl with expertise in household chores. Similarly, a girl prefers to marry a handsome and industrious boy. In the case of an arranged marriage, the initiative is always taken by the boy's side. They first consult the astrologer to find out whether the match will be a suitable one. If he declares in its favour, they send a *raiwar* (go-between) to start the negotiations. He pays a visit to the girl's family and makes the proposal. If he receives a favourable reply a date for the visit of the boy's side is fixed. On the appointed day the boy's father, along with his relatives, goes to the house of the prospective bride. On arrival they are received and served with drinks. During this visit the brideprice is settled and the date of the wedding is fixed. The father of the boy gives the prospective bride a bead necklace and some cash as a mark that the negotiations have been finalized.

On the day of the wedding, the invited kith and kin are served with food and drink. Then the bridegroom is taken to the bride's house in a procession accompanied by dancing and music. Before the marriage rites are performed, the groom's party has to pay the brideprice, which comprises two saris, one *dhoti*, two cows and Rs 100/- in cash. The *naya* acts as the priest of the ceremony. On reaching the house of the bride, the party is greeted and mats and charpoys are provided for them to sit down. The bride and bridegroom sit on a plank in one room of the house. Then the bridegroom puts a vermilion mark on the bride's forehead about five times. After this, the party is served cooked food and rice beer. Finally the occasion is celebrated with dancing and singing. Then the bridegroom returns to his village with the bride. The *raiwar* receives a *dhoti* after the marriage. Levirate and sororate types of marriage are also prevalent. Marriage by service and marriage by capture are now rare. Divorce is allowed with the prior approval of the tribal panchayat. When a husband divorces his wife, he gives her one rupee and takes away the iron armlet that was given to her during the wedding.

They either bury or cremate the dead, although the former practice is more common at present. The dead body is carried on a bier made in the form of a ladder-like frame with six bamboo poles. Relatives and other Mahali carry the corpse and no one belonging to other castes or tribes is allowed to touch it. Usually the eldest son of the deceased leads the funeral procession. On the way to the burial ground the bier is lowered and kept over the ground at a crossroads. A pit is dug and the eldest son brings a pitcherful of water from the nearest stream, with which the corpse is washed after being anointed with turmeric paste and oil. A new piece of cloth is wrapped around the body, after which the eldest son puts a mark

of vermillion over the deceased's forehead. The body is then lowered into the pit and positioned with its head pointing towards the north and its face upward. The eldest son first throws a handful of earth into the pit. The process is repeated by the pallbearers and others present at the ground. All those attending the burial then take a purificatory bath and return to the house of the deceased, where they are fed rice along with salt and onion. Death pollution is observed for a period of ten days. On the tenth day the kith and kin and the members of the deceased's family are shaved and take a bath after offering food and alcohol to the departed soul. Then a feast is arranged for the relatives by the deceased family. Nowadays, they practise cremation more and more through coming into contact with the neighbouring caste Hindus.

In the case of cremation, a piece of bone is collected from the cremation ground and is kept in turmeric water. Some throw it into a river or rivulet in the vicinity. Those who bury the dead also collect a piece of bone from the ground six to eight months after the burial. The bone is then kept in the turmeric water, and a little quantity of rice beer is offered to the deceased.

The family is the smallest social unit in Mahali society. The family is mostly nuclear and composed of the married couple and their unmarried offspring. After marriage a son lives separately with his wife and a girl leaves her father's residence and lives with her husband. Sometimes even married sons share the same house or live with their parents. The family is patrilineal and the male child inherits the property of his father. The girls have no right to property but have a right to their maintenance until they are married. Formerly the eldest son received an extra share (*jeth-ang*) with the partition of the family property. But with the passage of time, this system is no longer working. Now they prefer to divide the entire property equally among all the sons, though the division usually takes place only after the death of the father. A group of individuals having a consanguineal relationship among themselves form a *killi* (clan), which is exogamous. Activities among *killi* members are based on mutual co-operation and help, and ceremonial exchanges strengthen ties and maintain a relationship which has more of cordiality than strain in it.

The Mahali, like other tribes of the area, have their own political organization consisting of the village panchayat, which exercises control over members of the community in the village as a whole. The panchayat consists of the Naya (the priest), the Majhi (the secular headman), the Gadeat (the messenger) and a few adult members to protect the tribesmen and their society. In settling cases relating to a serious violation of the norms and values of the society and other intra-village disputes, Mahali prefer the village panchayat to the local court. The traditional panchayat has an exclusive power to excommunicate persons from the society and also to permit the re-admission of expelled members. All the decisions of the village council are binding upon villagers. Individuals found guilty are invariably punished with a fine, which varies from fifteen to fifty rupees and sometimes an equivalent amount to meet the expenses of a feast to the villagers. The amount of fine imposed depends on the severity and nature of the crime.

Like the Santal, the Mahali worship Marang Buru as their supreme deity and few other deities who reside in a *sal* grove called *jahirasthan* situated not far from the village. They also worship Bana Kuanri before proceeding on hunting expeditions. Maneiko Tureiko for a bumper crop, Babaji for the welfare and prosperity of the community, and the goddesses Bada Chandi and Ranga Chandi to ward off epidemics. At home, they offer food and drink ritually to the spirits of the dead ancestors on all festive occasions. They also worship Lord Mahadev, Ahira and Garaya, whose images are specially constructed for worship.

The religious festivals of the Mahali are mostly communal in nature. They celebrate the following festivals in different months of the year.

(a) Baha

The Mahali celebrate this festival on any day in the month of Fagun (February-March). Every household provides a fowl and some rice for the ritual. The Naya or village priest, who generally belongs to the Santal tribe, worships the village deities in the village Pirha for the general welfare of the village. All the male Santal and Mahali present there arrange a feast. After this the young boys and girls spend the night dancing and singing.

(b) Saharae and Bandana

This is observed in the month of Kartika (October-November). On this occasion the Naya performs a *puja* and sacrifices a fowl on the edge of the village. In the mean time all the villagers must collect all the bullocks and cows in the village and drive them towards the place where the Naya performs the *puja*. Any cow or bullock which eats the offering at the *puja* is caught. Next year the owner of the cow or bullock will supply a pot of rice beer to the villagers at the time of Saharae. That afternoon most households decorate their bullocks with flowers and vermilion and keep them tied to the poles in front of the house. A group of young boys with musical instruments sing songs and go from house to house, drinking liquor and making the bullocks dance.

(c) Ma-Mane

This ritual is observed during the harvest season, particularly before the harvesting of paddy in October. The Naya performs the *puja* in the *jahirasthan*, and the occasion is celebrated with communal dancing and singing. On the last day of the month of Magh (January-February) the Naya performs a *puja* on the edge of the village before collecting jungle products such as fruits, leaves, wood and wild grass for use in building a house. This is also celebrated with dancing and music. On the occasion of the Sakrat (which is same as Makar Sankranti) festival in the month of January, the household offers food and sacrifices to their ancestral spirits. The village Naya or priest officiates at the village festivals. In villages where the Mahali live side by side with the Santal, the festival is observed jointly.

Music and dancing form an important part of their lives, without which they feel dull and lifeless. All festivals and occasions like weddings and the observance of death rites are accompanied by specific dances and music. All able-bodied persons, irrespective of sex and age, participate in the dancing and singing and relax. The sound of drums and the sweet songs attract the participation of young boys and girls in particular, who suspend any works in hand.

The Mahali are accorded a low status in the overall society. They accept water from the Bathudi, Bhuyan, Santal, Bhumij and Munda, but refuse to accept it from the Dom, Pan, Tanti or Karua. The Santal must purchase at least those baskets that are used on ceremonial occasions from the Mahali. However, no castes or tribes accept water from them.

Although the Mahali are considered to be migrants, their close association with neighbouring tribes and castes, coupled with various welfare measures taken up by government for their uplift, has given a different shape to their life. Until then they need government aid for their betterment, with a view to bringing them up to the standard of other advanced groups in the locality where they live.

MIRDHA

S. Routray

The tribe Mirdha are classed as a Scheduled Tribe of Orissa and Bihar. The word 'Mirdha' implies head coolie. According to U.C. Mohanty, the Mirdha are a small Dravidian tribe who are known as Koda in the districts of Sambalpur and Bolangir in Orissa. Due to their previous occupation of digging and carrying earth they are also known as Koda, which means earth-digging labourers. But in course of time they have adopted the more honourable name of Mirdha in place of the derogatory term 'Koda'. As regards their physical characteristics, they are of medium to tall stature. They have oval to squarish faces with a broad nose, thick lips, a well-developed zygomatic bone and dolicocephalic heads. Their chins are narrow but there is little prognathism. They have a dark complexion with straight or wavy hair.

The Mirdha are found distributed in most of the districts of the state, but their main concentration is in the districts of Sambalpur and Bolangir. Their total population in the state was 28,177 in 1981, which increased to 30,853 by 1991, a rate of growth of 9.50 per cent over a period of ten years. According to the 1991 Census they constitute 0.44 per cent of the total tribal population of the state. The sex ratio was 930 females per 1000 males. The literacy percentage was 16.50 in 1981, increasing to 26.99 by 1991. A considerable section of the Mirdha population are bilingual. Besides their own Mirdha language they speak Oriya as a second language.

The Mirdha are expert earthworkers. The men do the digging and the women assist them. The implements used are simple and crude. These are the *kodi* and *gouti* for digging and the *dola* or *bhara* for carrying the earth. Most of them also work as agriculturists and field labourers. They also collect roots, fruits, fuel, tooth sticks and leaves from the nearby forests. The leaves are collected to make leaf cups and plates.

The arrangement of houses in a Mirdha settlement follows no fixed pattern. The houses are mostly scattered in an irregular fashion, either clustered or neatly arranged on either side of the road. The pattern of housing is also not the same throughout the locality. Houses usually have two rooms, with walls of bamboo mats or dried twigs thickly plastered with mud and thatched with straw. Pucca tile-roofed houses are rare. Of the two rooms, which have no windows, one is used as a kitchen and the other as a bed-cum-store room. Usually a small shed is constructed for the cattle and fowl. All rubbish, cow dung and refuse is heaped up in the backyard.

The Mirdha either live exclusively with their kith and kin or with other tribes and castes in heterogeneous villages. In choosing a new site to construct houses, they carry out certain rituals as practised by their neighbouring tribes. They put seven grains of rice, together with turmeric, into pits at the four corners of the site. The heaps are examined the next day. If they are found intact the site is considered auspicious. Before erecting the first pole the Mirdha dig a pit, place dub

grass, rice and turmeric into it, and then put up a pillar in the name of the goddess Matima. They consider Wednesday to be an auspicious day to enter a new house. On the date of entry, a feast is arranged in which cooked food is first offered to the soul of the deceased ancestors and then a few kin and friends are fed.

According to U.C. Mohanty, the Mirdha identify themselves as Kunhar and speak Kun Boli, the language of the Kisans. Not only in language but also in social customs, the religious rites and political organization the Mirdha have a great affinity with those of the Kisans. In fact the so-called Mirdha are none other but a section of the Kisan tribe. There are only two divisions in the tribe, the Bad Kunhar and the San Kunhar. The former have retained many of their original Kisan customs, while the latter are more Oriyaised in their customs.

The Mirdhas have small size families of from two to four individuals, and they are patrilineal and patriarchal. Very rarely, joint families are encountered. Usually after marriage the son leads a separate family life with his newly married wife. They have a clan organization which is exogamous in nature. The clans are generally named after the plants and animals to which the clan members ascribe their origin. Primarily, the exogamous nature of the clan is established at the time of marital contacts. Authority in a family is vested in the father. He receives the highest respect and exercises power in all family affairs. He is of major ritual importance at the time of the marriage and other ritual ceremonies. The mother plays an important role in the process of socialization and is the main economic asset. All major decisions pertaining to marriage and rituals are made in consultation with the wife. The children usually respect their parents, though there are exceptions, which are few and far between.

The Mirdha live below the poverty line. Their few household possessions present a poor picture of their economy. The household articles include utensils such as pots, plates of various sizes made of earth or aluminium. They keep baskets of various sizes, usually made of bamboo, for storing food grains. They also have stone implements like the grinding stone and *sila*. The other household appliances are different varieties of agricultural implements, fishing traps, weapons for hunting, and musical instruments like drums of different sizes.

- A small coarse *dhoti* or sari, usually hand woven by the neighbouring Gandas, is their usual dress. Women wear saris, placing the *anchal* over the right shoulder. Even grown-up children wear loin cloths called *kaupin* or *lenguti*. Those with some education in the schools wear shirts and pants. The women wear gold and aluminium ornaments in the ear and nose in the form of nose-rings, nose tips, earrings and ear-tops. The ornaments for the ear are the *ganthia* and *jhalka*, for the nose the *guna* and *nakaputki*, for the neck the *khagala* and *gunjamali*, for the wrist the *bandria*, *chudi*, *Baha-suta* and *tade*, and for the ankle the *paijhal*. Not much care is taken over dressing the hair. The usual pattern is to keep long hairs uncombed and irregularly tied into a knot at the back of the head on the right. Women apply *aleta*, a strip of red paint, to their feet. Most women tattoo their limbs, particularly before marriage. The arms, hands and legs are tattooed with various floral designs.

The food habits of the Mirdha are very irregular. They have no fixed time for eating. They eat whenever food is available. But three meals a day is the common practice. Early in the morning they take rice cooked the previous night and moistened in water. This is repeated at midday but with a side dish of some edible leaves to which some salt and chili are added. Some families occasionally take dal or some vegetable curry, which are luxury items for the poor. Besides these general items they also take special items such as rice beer, *mahua* liquor, etc. Chewing and smoking tobacco are a common habit. Rice is their staple food, but their chief millet is *gulzi*. Cereals and pulses of other varieties are also eaten along with edible forest roots and fruits. They relish *tole* oil and *sargi* oil, which are extracted from *mahua* and *sal* seeds respectively.

The Mirdha rejoice at the birth of a child, as it adds a new member to the family. Barrenness is regarded as unfortunate. Mostly, they welcome the birth of a son, as he will continue the line. No separate room is prepared for the delivery and birth generally takes place in a corner of the living room. In hard cases the parturient woman is sent to the nearby hospital. An experienced woman assists the woman in confinement. She cuts the umbilical cord with a knife and buries it with the placenta in a pit in the backyard. The mother is kept to a restricted diet which chiefly consists of vegetable soup and boiled rice. Normally the *antudi* fire is not lit except when either the mother or the child catches severe cold or pneumonia. Pollution lasts for a week. On expiry of this period, the house and its surroundings are cleaned with cowdung water. Kinsmen and relatives are fed in a small feast. It is the father or grandfather who names the child. Two grains of rice are dropped into turmeric water while uttering the names of dead ancestors one by one. If both grains float and meet, the name being uttered at that time is accepted for the child. After naming the child both the grains of rice and the naval cord that has already been cut are buried together in the doorway to the bedroom. Some *kusuma* or rice beer is also mixed with it. On the 21st day after the delivery the final purification ceremony is held, when a final cleaning of the house, clothes and utensils is done. A small feast is arranged in order to entertain the tribesmen.

When a girl attains puberty no restriction is imposed on her, nor is any isolation observed during subsequent menstruations. The whole affair goes unnoticed and there is no formal recognition of such an important critical stage of the life cycle.

Marriage is of great importance in the life cycle of a Mirdha. The tribe is divided into a number of exogamous clans called *gotras*, which have names such as Macha, Majhi, Bagha and Kau. The only title they invariably use is Mirdha. They mostly prefer adult marriage. Divorce is socially approved and divorced women can remarry. Although marriage by capture (*jhinka*), elopement (*udultia*) and service are socially approved of, marriage by negotiation is the common feature. Sororate and levirate marriages are practised to some extent. In particular, girls and boys are both given freedom in selecting their spouses.

Marriage by negotiation is the most common form. Marriages are negotiated and finalized by mediators called *kant hara*, on whom they depend to finalize all the details of the marriage until it is completed. They consider the

month of Magh to be the most suitable month for marriage, and the days that are considered auspicious are Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. The brideprice is paid in both kind and cash and varies from Rs 4/- to Rs 6/-. Payment in kind includes a pair of *dhotis* and two pairs of saris. The parents of the groom usually hand the entire responsibility for the marriage to an elderly and experienced kinsman, who is vested with full authority to organize the function. The different occasions of the marriage are enjoyed with dancing, singing and feasting in the village. Meat and *kusuma* liquor are lavishly served on these occasions. A few days after the marriage, the married son is separated from his parents and establishes a residence in the same village.

They bury corpses. The corpse is anointed with turmeric paste, and after being adorned with a new piece of cloth is carried to the cremation ground on a cot by the tribesmen. Usually a pit 6' x 3' in size and about 4' deep is dug and the body is placed inside it with the head pointing south. The eldest son, who officiates as the chief mourner, throws the first handful of earth to fill up the pit, and others follow him. They place ten to twelve stone slabs over the pit in order to ward off jackals and other cadaver-eaters. Pollution continues for eleven days. It ends on the twelfth day, when the eldest son goes to the burial ground with a small earthenware pot filled with water. He cleans the ground, prepares a small earthenware toy, which he brings home in the pot, and buries it in his own house on the tenth day of Kartika in the succeeding year. The kinsmen and relatives show sympathy to the bereaved family. Finally, they are treated with a small feast in which rice and meat are served.

The Mirdha celebrate their life by rejoicing with the famous *dhal khai* dance, which is celebrated during Chaitra and Phalguna. All dancers, young and old, dance in a semicircular movement. During the dance two dancing groups converse with one another in song. To accompany the dancing they mainly use drums, the *tamaka* and *mahuri*. Bodily movements and exposure are of great importance in this dance, which is based on the love episode of Radha and Krishna, the legends of Ramayana and many other folk tales.

The Mirdha still practise their traditional magico-religious treatment to cure diseases. Very few are aware of modern systems of treatment like the ayurvedic, homeopathic or allopathic. They still call the village shaman to provide them with traditional treatment for diseases.

The Mirdha profess Hinduism and worship many Hindu gods and goddesses. Though Siva, Vishnu and Durga are revered the most, Mangala Thakurani and Budha Devata are also worshipped. Apart from this, they greatly venerate their dead ancestors. They fervently enjoy some festivals with their kith and kin, particularly when their granaries are full. Various religious ceremonies are observed in honour of different gods and goddesses throughout the year. On festive occasions special food like cakes and mutton are eaten, and they enjoy themselves in dancing and music. They dance to songs in which both men and women, young and old, participate and which continue day and night without a break. Among the festivals Nuakhia is by far the most important festival. This is observed for a day in the month of Bhadrap (August-September). On this occasion, new rice is taken for

the first time. The *pitru-pita* or souls of the dead are worshipped along with their *ista-devata* or presiding deity. Another festival called Amba-Gundi is observed on the full-moon day of Falguna, when mango, *mahua*, *chora* and *kendu* are eaten for the first time. During most of these ceremonies unmarried girls and boys have an opportunity to choose their life partners.

The low level of literacy among the Mirdha shows that these people are educationally very backward. As education is the key factor in any type of development, it is necessary to strengthen their educational base by providing an adequate number of ashram schools in their area. In addition, a supply of safe drinking water under the minimum needs programme is essential for this area, as the people are in the habit of drinking water from unhygienic springs, rivers and ponds. In addition, land alienation and indebtedness continue to be serious problems for this tribal people.

OMANATYA

S.C. Biswal

Omanaito, Omaito and Omanatya are the alternative names of an Oriya-speaking cultivating class of tribals in Orissa. They have no tribal dialect of their own, nor do they constitute a distinct community of hill tribe. These three names, identifying one and the same community, seem to have emerged in course of time in corrupt deviations through the tongues of the European officials and writers. They derive from the most popular traditional name, 'Amatya', meaning a minister of state affairs in the ancient India principality. Legend has it that the ancestor of the tribe was a minister of Sri Ram at Ayodhya, and after Ram went to heaven, there was no one to look after them, so they took to agriculture.

The tribe lives mainly with a concentration of population to the north of Jeypore in the district of Koraput and also in the district of Nawrangpur. A skeleton population of the community also live in each of the districts of Orissa, with the exception of Balasore District, where not a single soul is recorded. According to the Census of India for 1991, their total population in the state was 25,915 and was confined to the district of Koraput. The growth rate in the population in 1991 over 1981 was 33.14 per cent. The level of literacy was 5.2 in 1971, increasing to 8.2 in 1981 and 13.53 in 1991. In 1991, the sex ratio was 932 females per 1000 males.

The caste is divided into two endogamous sections, called Bodo (big) and Sanno (little or small). The latter are regarded as the illegitimate children of the former by a Bhottada, Gond, or other woman. Many do not admit that this division exists. The Bodo section has a number of exogamous clans called Sua (parrot), Bagh (tiger), Kachhima (tortoise), Naga (cobra), Sila (stone), Dudho (milk), Kumda (*cucurbita maxima*) and Kukru (dog). Nuclear families are the chief social units. The numbers of extended and joint families are few. Such joint, extended families automatically break down upon the marriages of sons and birth of their children. A sonless family adopts a *gharjoian* or any other individual as its son, with the same rights and privileges as a true son. The family is patrilineal, patrilocal and patripotestal in nature.

The boy is considered adult when the moustache grows. Then a girl is sought for him. Cross-cousin marriage being the general rule, a man has the first claim to the paternal uncle's daughter in marriage. One can marry the widow of one's elder brother. Marriage is settled by negotiation. Instances of marriage by elopement and service, as among the Bhottadas, are very rare.

The Omanatya follow an elaborate process of selecting and marrying girls. The parents set out with some eatables, including jaggery (crude sugar), to the bride's home. When the negotiation is concluded, a second visit is paid in similar manner. On an auspicious day fixed by the *disari*, a *mahal keria* (mediator) is sent. The mediator pays a little cash to the girls of the bride's village and is known from that day as the *mahal keria* of that particular marriage. On the fourth visit, the *jhola* is fixed with some rice, paddy, a little cash for bangles, a cloth for the mother and

one for each unmarried sister in the case of infant girls, along with some more rice and cloth for elderly girls. At this visit, the proposal is finalised. The villagers are asked to prepare *pandals* in their respective villages. On the appointed day, the bridegroom is conducted to the bride's village in a procession, sometimes on horseback. At the auspicious moment, the bridegroom is conducted to the *sal* tree (*Shorea robusta*) and a central post of the *ippa* (*Bassia*) tree. The messenger says aloud (to the paternal uncle) 'the bridegroom has come, bring the bride quickly'. The *disari* links their little fingers together, while the women throw rice smeared with turmeric water over them. Turmeric-coloured water is also poured over the couple from five pots. They then dress up in new clothes presented by the father-in-law. The bride's party provides a feast. The night is spent in dancing and song.

The next day the bride is conducted to the bridegroom's house. At the entrance to the village the bridegroom's mother sprinkles turmeric-coloured water over the couple. Liquor is distributed followed by a feast. The *disari* takes seven grains of rice and seven green nuts, and ties them up in the cloth-ends of the married couple. They go round the sacred poles seven times and return home. The next day the Kado Handi ceremony is performed. Mud and turmeric water are thrown around, and everyone takes a bath in the stream. They return home, the girl being carried on the boy's shoulder. Then the grand feast is held.

A system of pseudo marriage is prevalent in which the girl is married to a *mahul* tree post placed in the courtyard and adorned with vermilion, *kajal*, etc. Seven sheaves of turmeric and mango leaves are tied to the *mahul* post. The bride is brought to the *pandal* and the marriage ceremony is consummated by pouring water on the *mahul* post, which is held tightly by the women. The rite ends with a feast. No stigma is attached to the girl.

Like the Gond, a Omanatya is subject to excommunication for getting sores, causing *go-baddha*, or kidnapping girls from other communities. He may return to the caste by giving a feast.

Birth pollution is observed over 25-30 days. On completion of this period, the old pots are replaced with new ones. The nails are pared and the name-giving ceremony observed. The mother may touch pots thereafter. The *disari* selects the name by divination. The *snari* pierces the nose and ears of the child at the age of three. Death pollution is also observed by the family of the deceased for ten days. After shaving and purification, new pots are used. The caste profession is not pursued during this period and the mourners are fed on this occasion. On the eleventh day, the purification ceremony is observed with a caste feast. Both burial and cremation are used. The dead are buried in a sleeping posture.

The religious bias of the tribe is towards Hindu traditions and customs. At marriage, a Omanatya assumes the sacred thread for the rest of his life. They worship Thakurani and Chamaria Devta. They observe Pusa Punia in Pusa, Magh Jatra in Magh, Am nua in Chaitra, Akhi Muthi in Baisakh, Amus in Sravan, Dhan Nua in Bhadrab, Dhsahara in Asin, and Diwali in Kartik. Some observe Laxmi Puja in Magasir. They also take part in the Holi festival in Fagun and the car festival in Asadha. They keep away from untouchables like the Dom, etc. and do

not take food from the Bhottada or Bhumia. They do not rear pigs. They use rice and water coloured with turmeric powder, exchange areca nuts and jaggery, use mango leaves for rituals of sanctification, and observe birth and death pollution, an index of their socio-religious affinity with non-tribals in the locality.

The Omanatya live in a heterogeneous village and maintain homogeneous socio-economic ties with the other communities living there. They do not practise shifting cultivation, but prefer wet land for carrying out intensive agriculture. In addition to raising crops like paddy, sugarcane, tobacco, *ragi* and varieties of pulses and oil seeds, they grow vegetables like brinjal, onions and potatoes, etc. They also carry out fishing and occasional hunting. They make their own ploughs and agricultural tools. They also own the *barsi*, screwdriver, sickles, plough, *ankudi*, *kodi*, *kodal*, *katuri*, etc. They are interested in rearing bullocks. Their implements include cane baskets, rope, string cots, knife, storing pots made of straw and other earthenware vessels, small fishing nets and traps, including bows and arrows for hunting purposes.

They dress like the neighbouring villagers. The *dhoti*, napkin, *chadar* and sometimes shirt or *banyan* are their usual apparel. Women use both hand-woven and mill saris. The ornaments of the women consist of silver *khadu*, glass and rubber bangles on the wrist, a silver armlet on the arms, *pauji* on legs, rings on the fingers and toes, gold or brass *nolis* and *phulis* in the ears, and *dandi* and *fasia* in the nose. Black bead necklaces are worn round the neck. The men wear *nolis* in their ears. Gold ornaments are rarely worn.

They have entertainments, like dancing on various occasions such as weddings, Pusa Purnima, etc. Their dances are called *junia nach* and *cherachera nach*. They sing *chaita parah* songs on festive days and *kutni* songs at weddings. They build houses in rows and at times in clusters. They are gradually replacing their mud houses with brick dwellings. There are two to four rooms in a house, which lack windows. There is neither a dormitory house nor a common hall in the village.

There are a number of titles in the community given originally by the King, such as Pradhani (executive secretary for royal affairs) and Pujari (worshipper of gods). A number of villages are grouped together as a *desh*. The head of the *desh* is the *kulnaik* whose office is hereditary. He arranges meetings to settle social disputes and deals with cases of excommunication, etc. Every village has a caste head called a *naik* and the village priest or *pujari*. The *disari* and *mahalkertia* are the functionaries connected with social functions like marriage, etc. These traditional functionaries are no impediment to the economic progress of the community at the present. A few of them have entered government service. During lean times they work as labourers without any taboo.

ORAON

B. Chowdhury

The Oraon are one of the major tribes in the country and are listed as a Scheduled Tribe in West Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. Their population in Orissa according to the 1981 Census was 2,15,336 which increased to 2,57,829 by 1991, thus establishing a growth rate of 19.73 per cent over the decade. They constitute 3.66 per cent of the state's total tribal population. They are mainly concentrated in the districts of Sundargarh and Sambalpur, which adjoin Bihar and Madhya Pradesh. Numerically the Oraon are the largest tribe in the district of Sundargarh, their main concentration being in Talsara, Sundargarh Sadar, Lefripada, Bargaon, Raghunath Palli and Biramitrapur Police Station areas of the district. In undivided Sambalpur District they are mostly found in villages around Sambalpur and Jharsuguda towns and in Deogarh Police Station area. In these areas they are found dispersed in many villages and it is difficult to find a single village with purely Oraon inhabitants.

According to Oraon tradition, their original homeland is said to have been in the Deccan. Roy (1915) has made an attempt to reconstruct Oraon history prior to their entry into their present home of Chhotnagpur. When they entered the Chhotnagpur plateau, they found the area occupied by tribes economically more backward than themselves. Up until then, the Kora and the Birhor had been either hunters or herdsmen. The Mundas who had taken to agriculture had a very rudimentary method of tilling the soil. Here they settled down but could not give up the habit of moving from one place to another under hard economic pressure in search of suitable patches of land for cultivation and for their livelihood. Thus some of them migrated to Orissa and others to Madhya Pradesh.

There are several folk tales relating to the origin of the community and of their name, discussed by early ethnologists, particularly Roy (1915). Since the first members of the community were born from the blood of the chest (Uras or Ur in Sanskrit) of the holy ascetic, they were first known as Urager, then Thakur, and then as Oraon for their unholy and unclean food habits. According to another folk tale, they were connected with one of the ancient kings, Karakh, and sometimes were known as Kurukh. However, the tribe and their original mother tongue are still known as Kurukh, although they are commonly referred to as Oraon or Dhangara.

They have their own language called Kurukh, which is classified as a Dravidian language. Those who inhabit the border areas of Bihar speak Sadri, which is mixture of Hindi and several tribal dialects of the Chhotnagpur plateau. They are the main tribe from which Kisan tribe has originated. The percentage of literacy among the Oraon stood at 38.30 as against 49.09 per cent for the total population and 22.31 per cent for the total tribal population of the state at the 1991 Census. The percentage of literacy among the Oraon improved from 23.7 in 1981 to 38.30 in 1991. Though the Oraon are far above the literacy rate of the general tribal population, they still lag behind the general population of the state.

Although the Oraon live in mixed villages, they tend to build separate settlements of their own. In the past each family had a tendency to build its house close to its reclaimed agricultural land. But now Oraon settlements, barring a few in the interior areas bordering Madhya Pradesh, are established without following any definite plan. The houses of a settlement are usually scattered and connected with uneven and irregular lanes. They now build spacious houses with fire-proof roofs of *naria* tiles (*khappar*) in place of small houses with wild-grass thatched roofs, as in the past. Most houses have mud walls and a two-sloped *naria* tile roof opening on to a courtyard. These houses have a high verandah at the back and a low verandah at the front. Houses are generally not constructed facing the village lane. Most houses have more than one living room, the number of which depends upon the size of the family. The cow-shed and the pigsty are built close to the living room.

Household articles include the *khatti* (*charpoy*) and mat made of date-palm leaves, which are used as bed. Very well-to-do families have wooden and steel chairs, a wooden table and cots and, steel and wooden almirahs. Various size of plates and pots made of brass and bell-metal for taking food, earthenware and aluminium pots for cooking food, earthenware vessels for storing water, and bamboo baskets of different sizes and shapes are other common household articles. The gourd-bottle for carrying rice and rice-beer is rapidly disappearing, and the aluminium tiffin carrier is becoming popular in its place. Oraon agricultural, fishing and hunting implements are quite similar to those seen in the households of the neighbouring Hindus. Modern articles like the bicycle, lantern, suitcase, steel trunk, cotton umbrella, radio, tape-recorder, etc. are generally found in many households.

Their traditional dress is the *kareya* for men and the *khanria* for women, made from self-made yarn and woven by a weaving caste called Ganda. Nowadays, these are rapidly being replaced by modern saris and other dresses available in the local market. A limited variety of ornaments made of gold, silver and alloys are worn by the women. The profusion of tattoos seen among the old women are not found among the younger generation nowadays.

The internal structure of the Oraon society is very elaborate. Risley (1898) mentions that the tribe had five sub-tribes, viz. Gagra-Oraon, Dhanka-Oraon, Kharia-Oraon, Khendro-Oraon and Munda-Oraon, who have, in course of time, become strictly distinctive endogamous groups. The larger social groupings like phratry and moiety systems, which are found among some other tribal groups of the state, are absent.

At present the Oraon tribe is internally divided into a number of exogamous totemic clans known as *gotra* or *varga*. Each clan contains a number of families which are distributed in different villages. S C Roy (1915) has given a long list of totemic clans of the Oraon of Chhotnagpur area in Bihar. Both Dalton (1972) and Risley (1898) have provided lists of their clans. Das and Raha (1963) give a list of 38 totemistic groups which they found among the Oraon of Sundarban in West Bengal. While mentioning the characteristic features of the clan system among the Oraon, Roy (1915) writes, 'totemism, which was the basis of social and political

organization of the Oraon in what may be roughly called the hunting and pastoral stages of Oraon culture, still forms the fundamental feature of their social organization in so far as kinship, marriage and relations of the sexes are concerned'. Among the Oraon of Orissa, only 18 totemistic groups could be found. These are (1) Tirki (mouse), (2) Lakda (tiger), (3) Kerketa (hedge sparrow), (4) Gidhi or Gidhiar (Vulture), (5) Toppo (a species of fish) (6) Khalkho (a species of fish), (7) Minj (a species of fish), (8) Kachchu (tortoise), (9) Bakla (a kind of grass), (10) Barla (*Ficus Indica*), (11) Khes (paddy grain), (12) Panna (iron), (13) Bekh (salt), (14) Kujur (a variety of wild fruit on a creeper), (15) Kispatta (pig's entrails), (16) Bandra (monkey), (17) Khakha (raven) and (18) Gidhra (vulture). As regards the origin of these totems, they have a faint memory that the totemic plants, animals or objects are believed to have helped or protected the ancestors of the clan. Religious significance and observances of religious rites concerning the totems are absent. Members of the totemic groups pay reverence to their respective totemic animal or plant whenever they come across it. The taboo on using totemic objects which are indispensable in daily life is relaxed. For example, the members of the Bekh (salt) clan do not eat raw salt but can take food in which salt is added. All members of a clan regard themselves as the descendants of a common ancestor, and as such marriage relations are strictly prohibited within the clan. Thus clans are exogamous and any sexual relationship among the members of the same clan is considered highly incestuous. A person, whether male or female, breaking this rule is ex-communicated, this being irrevocable.

The Oraon are described as an agricultural community. Though it is true that the major segment of the Oraon population who own some agricultural land adhere to agriculture, there has been considerable diversification in occupation. The employment pattern among the Oraon is substantially different from the total tribal population and the general population in the state. Dependency on agricultural labour is less among the Oraon, while the participation of workers in mining, quarrying, manufacturing, processing, servicing and repairs within the industrial sector has shown a rising trend. They also have an appreciable quota of workers in household activities.

The crops the Oraon grow are mainly used for their own consumption. Their principal crop is rice, which is generally grown once in a year, occasionally twice by a limited number of households that have irrigation facilities. They also grow a few types of millets, pulses and vegetables during the Kharif and Rabi seasons. They also sell the surplus agricultural produce for cash, with which they buy dresses and other necessities of life. Cultivation is primarily a family activity. Sometimes a household may seek the help and cooperation of close relatives on a reciprocal basis. Cultivating households that have larger holdings engage either labourers on a daily basis or retain labourers, preferably belonging to their own group, to assist them in different agricultural operations.

Besides cultivation, some Oraon have earned proficiency in rural crafts such as carpentry, tile- and brick-moulding and rope-making. Women still weave mats from date-palm leaves and make broomsticks from wild grass. People working in mining and quarries and in industrial establishments, whether as skilled or unskilled workers, constitute a sizable quota among the workers. Hunting,

fishing and the collection of forest produce have ceased due to the lack of forests. The weekly market plays an important role both in their economic and social life. This not only provides an opportunity to sell surplus agricultural produce and to purchase the daily necessities of life, but also provides an opportunity to meet the kinsmen living in distant places. They do not suffer from chronic problems of indebtedness.

The staple food is rice, occasionally supplemented by millet gruel. They have changed their food habits after coming in contact with the neighbouring Hindus. They are no longer omnivorous as in the past. They have given up many items which are considered unclean by the local people. They relish goat, pig and fowl meat. Non-vegetarian food and cakes constitute the festive dishes on ceremonial occasions. Rice beer which they brew, *mahua* liquor and tobacco-smoking and tobacco-chewing are their traditional intoxicants. Among women, the chewing of *gurakhu* (tobacco paste) is gaining in popularity.

Birth pollution continues for 7 to 10 days, after which the Chhati (purification rite) is observed soon after the stump of the umbilical cord dries up and drops off. During the period of pollution the family does not take part in any ritual activities. No member of other families will accept food from this family. A fowl is given to the Oraon priest to perform a sacrifice to protect the baby from evil spirits and the evil eye. On the day of purification the houses are cleaned and all the clothes used by family members are washed. The traditional midwife (*kusren*) and other women who conducted the delivery wash the clothes and mat used by the mother. The baby is bathed in tepid water. All male members of the family have their hair cut. All those who assisted at the time of delivery are entertained with festive meals and rice beer. If the family can afford it; it may invite friends and relatives also. The baby's name is selected from among the names of the dead ancestors through grain divination performed by an unmarried boy. On this occasion the baby's hair is cut for the first time.

They practise adult marriage. Premarital unions and marriage within one's own totemic group or to a person belonging to any other community are considered unsocial. Preferential marriages to cross-cousins and levirate and sororate marriages are still practised. Marriage by elopement, capture or service occasionally take place. But the most common but expensive type of marriage is held through negotiation. In this type of marriage, several visits are exchanged by both parties to fix the amount of brideprice and the date of the marriage. The brideprice includes Rs.4/- to Rs.7/-, four pieces of clothes and two to three quintals of paddy. Sometimes cash only is paid, this varying from Rs.100/- to Rs.200/-. The wedding takes place in the girl's village. Putting vermilion on each other's forehead is the binding ritual. The occasion is celebrated with singing and dancing which continues for three to four days in both villages. The guests and relatives are entertained with festive meals and rice beer. Widow remarriage is socially approved. In most cases widows remarry widowers, with the rare exception of boys marrying their deceased elder brother's wife. Divorce by either side is permissible on grounds like adultery, laziness and bad temper, with approval of village panchayat.

The deceased, with the exception of children and pregnant women, are generally cremated. Those who die after the sprouting of the new paddy plants and before the harvest are buried temporarily. If the family wishes, it can cremate the deceased immediately after death. In the case of a temporary burial, the remains of the deceased are collected after the harvest and then cremated. After cremation, all male members who attended the funeral cut their head hair. Both men and women who attended the funeral take a bath and return to the deceased's house to purify themselves from the smoke emerging from the fire in grain husks and by sprinkling water mixed with turmeric and oil on their heads. After this all present are entertained with rice beer. On the following day women go to collect the bones of the deceased. The bones of all those who have died in the village during the year are taken ceremonially for drowning in a river or a stream. The occasion is celebrated with dancing, singing and feasting.

The Oraon had a tradition of managing their own tribal affairs through multi-level panchayats. At the village level the Mahato (the secular headman) and the Naega (the sacerdotal head), assisted by the Pujari or Panbhara and the village elders, constitute the village panchayat to deal with offences and disputes such as theft, assault, division of property, divorce, offences relating to breaches of clan rules and also sexual offences committed in the village. Beyond the village, a group of neighbouring villages of 10 to 12 constitute a Parha under the leadership of the Mahato of the important village. Here inter-village disputes are settled. But after their migration to the Sundargarh area, the Oraon leadership was subjected to many factors which influenced and reduced the importance of their leadership pattern. First of all the existing village administration under the leadership of the Gauntia, Ganju, Parganadar, etc. gave the first blow to their traditional leadership. Secondly, the spread of Christianity and the statutory village panchayat reduced the importance of their traditional leadership. The leadership pattern has undergone many changes under the impact of caste Hindus. Thus the traditional leadership based on age, experience and heritage has been taken over by a new form of leadership based on occupation, wealth and political consciousness, which is trying to bring reform in their society. However, their traditional priest continues to officiate in the rituals today.

Oraon religious beliefs and practices have been considerably influenced by Hinduism and Christianity. They believe in the existence of a number of Gods and Goddesses. Their supreme benevolent God is called Dharani, who is equated with the Sun God and is worshipped at every religious ceremony. According to their belief system the fate of the individual and the community depends on their relationship with the supernatural powers who intervene in human affairs by bringing diseases and other hardship. They employ a village priest called Naega, who belongs to their own group, whenever any misfortune befalls on an individual. The Mati is also consulted. They appease supernatural powers by offering sacrifices through a series of rites and ceremonies round the year for their safety and protection. They observe religious rites connected with their economic pursuits and at each individual's life stage like birth, marriage and death. The important religious ceremonies include Phagu in February-March to mark the end of the year and the beginning of new year, Sashul in March-April before eating the new fruits and flowers of the forest, Bisu-sikar (summer hunt) in April-May, Jeth-Jatra in May-June, Jitua in August-September and Karma in September-October. Besides

all these, they also observe Kalipuja and Dasahara along with their Hindu neighbours. Those who have been converted to Christianity observe the festivals of their new faith. All these occasions, including ceremonies observed in connection with birth, marriage and death, are celebrated with appropriate communal dancing and singing.

In Orissa, the Oraon are one of the most progressive tribes. In the field of agriculture they use chemical fertilizers, pesticides, improved seeds and modern techniques and do not suffer from indebtedness. They have availed themselves of opportunities to improve their economic conditions through various special programmes like ITDA, ERRP and IRDP, etc. They are hard-working, and some family members temporarily migrate elsewhere for wage-earning during the period when there is no work at home. A majority earn sufficient to maintain themselves and to purchase several varieties of modern articles like watches, radios, cycles, motor cycles, dresses and other household articles. The area is accessible, and many villages have approach roads and electricity. They are now saving money to be spent on acquiring assets.

PARENGA

J.P. Rout

The Parenga are a sub-division of the Gadaba, a colourful tribe of Koraput District. Mr Bell considers this community to be a distinct principal tribe of the Munda group. Though in their social traits and characteristics the Parenga have a lot in common with the Gadabas, local enquiries revealed that they are two separate tribes and that it would be a mistake to regard them as one and the same tribe. The origin of the tribe is concealed in obscurity. In spite of local enquiries and fieldwork, it was not possible to obtain any legend or tradition regarding their origins or migrations. They have no subdivisions, but they are divided into two endogamous sections known as Kholei and Parenga. They have a number of exogamous clans as sun, bear, tiger, etc. The sects are totemic in nature.

The Parenga are mainly inhabitants of Koraput District and are concentrated in the Padwa area of Koraput subdivision. Their total population was 5 843 in 1991, in comparison to 9623 in 1981 census. Therefore, they had a negative growth rate of 39.27 per cent during the period 1981-91. The percentage of literacy was 14.66 in 1991 as against 11.50 in 1981. The sex ratio is 937 females per 1000 males. They have a language of their own. Some social scientists and linguists identify their language with that of the Gadaba. The Parenga speak a Munda language, and according to Professor Ramamurti, their language closely resembles that of the Savara of the Parlakhemundi Maliahs. They say that their language is known among themselves as *parenga bhasa*. Some Parenga can understand and speak Oriya, but most of them can speak Telugu.

Parenga families are nuclear, patrilineal, patrilocal and patripotestal. The village acts as an independent socio-economic unit. The festivals are observed in the village communally. They are expert hunters and all the villagers join in hunting together. Social observances like birth and death are communal affairs in which everyone participates.

The headman of the tribe at the village level is called the Naik. The Naik had traditionally been given a high place in Parenga society, as he was the agent of the Zamindar at the village level for the collection of land revenue. He is also responsible for the maintenance of law and order. The Challan, who belongs to a Scheduled Caste community in the village, assists him in the day-to-day affairs of the village. All disputes arising out of divorce, marriage and other social constraints are referred to the Naik, who seldom seeks advice from elderly persons to settle matters. The regional head is called the Bhata Naik.

Unnatural deaths from tiger bites, falls from trees, burning or drowning are held to be the consequences of serious crime by the society. The members of the household in such cases are outcasted. They are accepted into the caste and their normal social inter-course is restored only when they undergo penance. If any one marries a Gadaba, Jhadia or Khond girl he is also outcasted. Such matters are usually referred to the Naik.

Previously they had dormitory houses separately for the boys and the girls. But nowadays these youth organizations are absent in most of the villages. Boys above eight years old visit the dormitory house in the evening and sleep there. The girls also visit dormitories, but they sleep in a widow's house where there is no dormitory house for them.

Pregnant women are forbidden from taking intoxicating liquor in any form. She is also forbidden from taking rice gruel, the flesh of wild boars, jackfruits or pumpkins. The bedroom is usually set apart for the delivery. Generally the old women assist the parturient woman in delivery, but only one, the most experienced woman of the tribe, is present in the lying-in room. She cuts the umbilical cord with a knife or blade. The mother of the newborn buries it beside a fence with the placenta. The child is anointed with oil and turmeric paste and bathed after the birth. Birth pollution is observed for seven days. The name-giving ceremony is observed on the tenth day, and the name given to the child is selected by the Disari. Generally, the child is named after the name of the day on which it was born. The hair-cutting ceremony is observed after one year on a fixed day convenient to the family. The maternal uncle shaves the child on that day and the hair is thrown outside. On both the Handidharni and name-giving days, either a goat or fowl is killed, according to capacity, for a feast in the household. Segregation is observed for the girl attaining puberty till the menstrual flow stops. At the end of the period she is taken to the nearest stream or river for a bath, where the Disari also performs some rituals.

Marriage within the same clan is forbidden. Adult marriages are common, and cases of child marriage rare. A man can marry the daughter of his father's sister. But wedding with the cousin-sister (father's brother's daughter) is strictly forbidden. Divorcees and widows are allowed to remarry with the approval of the society. In some cases a widow can remarry her deceased husband's younger brother. Among the Parenga marriages occur through negotiation and capture. Most marriages are settled by negotiation, called Raibadi. In marriages by capture the young men of the tribe called Dhangadas bring a girl by force to the house of one of their mates, whose choice is she. But in the case of marriage by consent, boys and girls elope for a day or two and then return for the ceremony to be solemnised.

Marriage formally takes place in the house of the boy. A feast is arranged at the girl's house with contributions from both sides. A platform is made under a shed which has five supporting posts of mango and jamo wood. Near each post is arranged a pillar of earthenware pots. The girl is asked to move round the central post thrice. She is then taken into the house to wear a new sari. After this, with the accompaniment of her girl friends, she joins the return procession to the boy's house.

Unmarried boys and girls of the tribe sleep in separate dormitories although in the villages nowadays the dormitory system is disappearing fast. The old people of the village say that the girls' dormitory is kept in charge of an elderly woman, while an old man remains in charge of the boys' dormitory. Here they learn songs and dances, and in the course of the communal dances, the boys have an

opportunity to select their partners. Boys after marriage continue to stay with their parents. Partition occurs only when they have children and the size of the family becomes very large. Even after partition the system of joint cultivation of land continues.

The deceased are disposed of both by burial and cremation. Those dying of smallpox are buried. The body of an expectant woman is disposed of by cremation. Death pollution is observed for five days. On the third day they are shaved and perform the Pita ceremony. On the fifth day a feast is given to the villagers. After one year they perform Barsikia or Badakum, and everyone is invited to this occasion and given drink and food. Like the Gadaba they perform the Gottar ceremony, killing a he-buffalo for each deceased male and a she-buffalo for each deceased female. In either burial and cremation a male corpse is laid with its head to the west and a female corpse with its head to the east.

Parenga houses lie in irregular clusters and no systematic pattern appears to guide their method of settlement. The houses are small and mostly have two rooms, one the bedroom and the other the store. The house has a single door and no windows. A wide verandah is provided at the front. The walls are made of split bamboos and wattles plastered with mud. The roof is thatched with straw. The Disari is consulted to fix an auspicious day for laying the foundations of a house.

The Parenga do not dress themselves very significantly. But the old people in Parenga villages say that previously they used to prepare their own cloth called *kerang*. Such practices have disappeared long since. There is no specific reason for it except that the influence of outside culture might have induced the Parenga to give it up. Now they wear hand-woven and mill-made coarse *dhotis* and saris. Many of the males also wear shirts and *banyans*. Parenga women wear ornaments made of brass and nickel. Some women wear gold ornaments. Their wrists are adorned with silver *khadu*, glass bangles and *gendu*. Use of anklets called *khadu*, once so popular among the women, have been given up. The men wear gold rings in their nose and ears and silver rings on their fingers. Some wear small *mali* on their necks. Castor and *kusum* oil are used for the hair. They do not tattoo their limbs.

The Parengas staple food is maize and *ragi*, but they also eat rice for a limited period. Salt are purchased either by payment in cash or in kind. They eat beef, pork and fowl. Liquor of various types is usually drunk daily by the Parenga. Agriculture is the mainstay of their economy. Most of them practise shifting cultivation. Wet or settled agriculture is limited to those having some land. They supplement their income from land through forest collection and wages. They grow vegetables like brinjals, pumpkins, tomatoes, etc. in their kitchen gardens and sell these in the nearby weekly markets.

Of their main festivals, mention may be made of Pusa Punei, Chaita Parab and Bandapana. On the day of Pusa Punei, they take great care of their cattle, washing them and anointing them with turmeric paste. A grand feast is arranged in the village for everyone, and good food is also given to the animals. In Chaita Parab they worship Nangseri, on which goats and fowls are sacrificed to the deity.

The festival continues for eight to ten days, and during this time they pursue communal hunting in the nearby forest. This is also the occasion for eating the mango fruit for the first time. Bandapana, which is observed in Sravana, is the occasion for taking the *gour* twigs for the first time.

The Parenga are great lovers of songs and dancing. They use drums, tamaka, ghumra and flutes while performing dances. The *dhemsa* dance is performed in Chaita Parab, and lathidudia during Pusa Parab. In performing the *dhemsa* dance, a large number of women stand in a circle holding each other's hands and dancing in a rhythm to the accompaniment of music. Other types of dance, such as *gottar* and *ghumura*, are also performed. In *gottar* they use swords and sticks while dancing.

PAROJA

S.C. Mohanty

The Paroja are one of the well-known major tribes of Orissa. Their main concentration is in the districts of Koraput and Kalahandi, but the tribe is also found in small numbers in other districts such as Sundargarh, Keonjhar, Puri and Cuttack. According to the 1991 Census the total population of the tribe was 3, 53, 336. The sex ratio is 1041 females per 1000 males. Their growth rate was 32.24 per cent during the period 1981-91.

The term 'Paroja' is a local Oriya term sometimes pronounced as Paraja, Parja or Poroja. It appears to be derived from the Sanskrit word Praja, which literally means the common people, i.e. subjects or citizens as distinct from the former ruling chiefs called the Raja or the Zamindar in pre-independence times. One of the legendary traditions of the tribe also states that formerly the Rajas and the Prajas lived like brothers. Later the former took to luxury and comfortable living like riding horses, while the latter accepted the hardship of carrying burdens. The term 'Paraja' also has another meaning in Oriya language, namely the tenant (peasant) or Royat.

The Paroja have many features in common with the neighbouring major tribes namely, the Gond, Kondh and Gadaba. In Koraput, the Paroja live with other communities like the Rana, Paika, Mali, Domb, Gadaba and Kondh. The following main sections of the tribe are found in southern Orissa.

1. Bada Paroja or Sodia Paroja
2. Bada Jodia Paroja or Penga Paroja
3. Bareng Jodia Paroja
4. Konda Paroja or Selia (Chhelia) Paroja

But broadly speaking the tribe is divided into two sections, such as Bada Paroja and Sana Paroja. The Bada Paroja comprise the first two groups and the others constitute the Sana Paroja. Apart from their respective cultural differences, the major distinction between the two sub-divisions is that, following the Hindu tradition, the Bada Paroja do not eat beef or buffalo meat, and observe elaborate purificatory rituals even when a cow or buffalo dies in their households, while the Sana Paroja eat the flesh of both these animals. In general, the Bada Paroja seem to be more progressive and economically advanced than the Sana Paroja. Hence, the former groups claim a higher position in social ranking than the latter.

Among all sections of the tribe the Selia (Chhelia) Paroja or Konda Paroja are considered to be more primitive than others. The name Sella or Chhelia is a local term meaning people who live from goat-breeding. This section of the tribe were goat-breeders in the past. Now they do not like to be called Chhelia and instead identify themselves as Konda Paroja. Hence, R.C.S. Bell, in his Koraput District Gazetteer, 1945, has equated them with another tribal group named the Konda Dora and thus excluded them from the bulk of Paroja.

The Paroja in general are strong, stout and hardworking. Compared with other tribal communities, they show some cultural differences, especially in respect of their settlement pattern, dress and ornaments, economic life, belief and worship, manners, customs and folk traditions. They are simple, friendly and hospitable, but like to remain aloof from the people of other communities as they feel shy of them.

The men usually wear loin cloths and napkins, and women wear coarse and cheap saris. Children of up to three to four years of age go naked. After that, they wear a small piece of cloth, torn off from old, discarded clothing of the adults of the family, which barely covers their genitals and is called *koupuni*. These clothes are not washed regularly except for certain important social occasions but used in a dirty condition for days on end. Nowadays, due to external contact, modern dresses like shirts, banyans, blouses, coloured saris, ribbons, etc. are becoming popular. These dresses are preferably worn during festive days or while visiting friends and relatives. Common ornaments worn by Paroja women are bangles, armlets, bracelets, necklaces, rings, hair pins, etc., usually made of silver, aluminium, brass and sometimes gold. A number of brass earrings dangle from each ear and the nose. A married woman must wear these rings lest she be subjected to severe social criticism and ridicule. Silver rings called *shamka*, often studded with coins, are also worn around the fingers. On the toes they wear silver rings known as *hakuli* and *gungur*. Wearing glass or plastic bangles on the wrists is very common. Metal chains and bead necklaces adorn the neck and chest. The *khagla*, a kind of heavy and broad silver ring is used as a necklace, while a thinner type called *khadu* adorn the forearm and upper arm. Wearing *khagla* and *khadu* is compulsory for married women. Tattooing is prevalent among Paroja women. Girls above five years of age have tattoo marks on their faces and hands.

The Paroja inhabit large or small settlements, either exclusively or with other communities like the Domb, Rana, Kondh, Sundhi and Gauda, etc. In large villages either they live in separate wards inside the village or in a separate hamlet a little away from the main village. The villages or hamlets are usually found near the forest or in the foothills adjacent to a permanent water source like a perennial stream or river and are linked to footpaths from various directions. Paroja are not nomadic in nature, but they often move from one place to another in order to obtain relief from natural calamities, attacks of wild animals and other disasters which affect their economy and well being. Moreover the primitive section, which still practises shifting cultivation, also changes place of settlement along with the shifting of their cultivation sites. This kind of movement is made within specific pre-selected sites following a cyclic rotation. To select new sites, elaborate ritual procedures are followed with the advice and active participation of the village priest, headman and elders.

The settlement pattern of the villages does not follow any typical or regular model. In some villages houses are scattered here and there, while in other villages individual houses run in two parallel rows facing each other along a common street. In the open spaces between houses, sheds are built to accommodate domestic animals like cattle, sheep, pigs and fowls. Individual households have small kitchen gardens in front of the house. In the village there are two important places called Bema Munda and Nissan Munda. Bema Munda is a centrally located

place inside the village comprising a constellation of circular stone slabs where the village headman, leaders and elders gather and sit down to discuss and decide village affairs. Sometimes, this place is in front of the headman's house and otherwise called Munda Dand. The Nissan Munda is another place where a circular stone slab is kept encircled by menhirs standing erect. This is the seat of the village deity called Hundi Dehta.

The pattern of individual housing is more or less the same, irrespective of the difference in the social or economic status of the household. The Paroja use indigenous raw materials like soil, mud, cow-dung (*lappy*), bamboo, wood, straw (*piri*) and country-made tiles (*jhikar*) for house construction. Laying the foundations of a new house involves elaborate rituals conducted by the household head and the village priest. Animals such as pigs or fowls are sacrificed to appease the deities and ensure the smooth construction of the house as well as the well-being of the occupant's family. The walls, verandah and floors are regularly maintained by plastering with cowdung and decorating with coloured soils. The Paroja are fond of using red or white coloured soil mixed with cowdung or ashes to colour the house. The roof is maintained by thatching the house once a year, preferably after the harvest when paddy straw are available. In order to protect the low thatched roofs from the cattle, wattle fencings are made around the house.

The typical feature of Paroja housing is that, like those of agricultural tribes like the Kondh, Bathudi, Gond and Santal, Paroja houses, besides having a kitchen garden, have a verandah raised higher than floor level and a spacious courtyard on either side of the house. The verandah is used as a place for sitting, gossiping and sleeping. The doors are smaller in dimension but coloured and decorated with carvings. Inside the house, partitions are made for the hearth and the kitchen, store and sleeping spaces. A space lying preferably at the eastern corner of the house and strictly prohibited for outsiders is earmarked as the sacred seat of family deities and ancestral spirits. Livestock is accommodated in a separate shed beside the house and poultry is kept inside a small cabin either inside the house or on the verandah.

Although the houses are similar in type, the size of the house and number of rooms vary according to the need and economic status of the individual household. Nowadays, well-to-do families are constructing big, strong, spacious houses having more than two rooms. Some progressive people construct brick walls and semi-permanent roofs using country-made tiles and providing multiple doors instead of one common door. Affluent landowners among the Jodia and Penga Paroja living in Kalahandi District have large double-storied houses locally known as Dhaba Ghar. The Dhaba Ghar usually have country-made tile roofing. The upper storey is smaller in height and used for storing grains, implements and other household assets.

In the course of his secular life between birth and death, a Paroja individual passes through several successive phases and crises of life. They have their own rational view that human life begins in the mother's womb and terminates with death. They are quite aware of the fact that conception results from the sexual union of adult men and women but with supernatural blessings. A pregnant woman

is subjected to many taboos and restrictions in respect of her diet and daily activities for her well-being and safe delivery. However, in practice, pregnant women remain engaged in their daily chores till a late stage and often up to the moment when the labour pains start.

At childbirth the woman is confined to a room and no male members are allowed inside. Only elderly and experienced woman and the traditional midwife attend the expectant mother. Gurumain, the female priest, is summoned to conduct rituals for smooth delivery. In spite of all these measures, if the delivery becomes painful and if any complications arise the traditional witch doctor-cum-medicine man (Gunia) is sought to diagnose the cause, and he prescribes appropriate herbal remedies. After the delivery of the child, the umbilical cord is cut by the midwife, and the child is given a bath near a pit dug in the courtyard of the house for this purpose. The mother and child remain polluted and secluded inside the house until the naval cord dries up. On this day, the midwife throws the dried-up naval cord into the pit. The pit is then filled up with earth after lighting a lamp and incense sticks near it to ward off evil spirits. Then the mother and the child take a bath and change clothes. Family deities are worshipped for the well-being of the family and newborn. The family's earthenware cooking pots, and the clothes and beddings from the delivery room, are thrown away and replaced with new ones. A ritual is conducted to purify family members from birth pollution. The midwife is remunerated in the form of a new sari, some rice, *ragi*, turmeric, oil and vegetables. Then the mother resumes her normal activities.

The rituals and ceremonies connected with the name-giving and first hair-cutting of the child is held on auspicious dates fixed by the traditional astrologer (Disari) within a year. In these ceremonies, the maternal uncle and grand parents play a vital role. The child continues to be breast-fed until two to three years of age. Older people, namely the grandparents or elderly children who are unfit for outdoor activities, always act as baby-sitters and take care of small children while parents are working outside. If there is no one in the house to look after the child, the mother usually carries the baby with her to the work site. The child grows up in an atmosphere of fondness and affection.

Paroja boys and girls attain puberty at between 12-14 years of age. A girl enters into womanhood and is considered fit for marriage after puberty. At the time of her first menstruation, a girl is considered impure and unclean, and she remains in seclusion in a remote corner of a room for seven days. During this period, she is subjected to many taboos and restrictions. She should avoid the sight of male members, abstain from eating non-vegetarian and spicy food items, and should not move outside alone. She should not use oil, soap or cosmetics. At the end of her confinement, she takes bath, wears new clothes, worships the deities and removes her pollution.

In traditional Paroja society, the institution of the youth dormitory functioned in every village. Like those of the neighbouring Kondh tribe it is called the *basaghar*, one each for the unmarried boys (*dhangda basaghar*) and girls (*dhangidi basaghar*). The boys and girls spend the night in their respective dormitories and enjoy the liberty of knowing one another more and more intimately. Whenever they wish, they meet at the communal dancing ground at the

centre of the village (*serna munda*) and amuse themselves by dancing together or simply hold song competitions. The songs are mostly of the question-answer type (*laga gita*). The boys and girls communicate their ideas and feelings through romantic love songs. The music and dancing that often follows the song competition makes the whole situation more lively and attractive. During festive days, groups of boys and girls visit the neighbouring villages and hold dance competitions with groups of opposite sex there. These sessions help in creating an intimacy between the boys and girls of different villages which culminates in love affairs leading finally to the selection of a marriage partner. Sometimes the whole night is spent dancing. When they feel tired, they retire to their respective dormitories. However nowadays, the youth dormitories have lost their significance and are gradually dwindling away. In most Paroja villages this age-old institution is now almost non-existent.

Marriage is the most significant event in a Paroja's life. It is also an important ceremony in the Paroja villages. Paroja boys are considered fit for marriage after attaining eighteen years of age, and girls after attaining puberty. Formerly child marriages were prevalent in the Paroja society. Nowadays adult marriages have become the common practice. Among the Paroja cross-cousin marriage is preferred, and the rules of clan and village exogamy are rigidly followed, as the boys and girls of the same clan are treated like brothers and sisters. Russell and Hiralal observed that sometimes, 'The rule of clan exogamy is not adhered to and members of the same sept are permitted to marry as long as they do not come from the same village, the original rule of (clan) exogamy being thus perhaps exemplified'. It is the boy's side which takes the initiative in arranging the marriage. When a boy is considered an adult and capable of earning his own living, he is considered fit for marriage and his parents look for a suitable match for him. A girl having a good physique, attractive appearance and capacity for hard work is usually preferred. When the boy's parents find a suitable bride, they initiate the proposal before the girl's parents and negotiate the match after finalizing the brideprice through successive customary visits to the bride's place. But before finalizing the match the consent of the boy and girl is obtained by their respective parents. The consent of the girl is very important in this matter, because if she marries against her will she may desert her husband after few days, thus causing disgrace and economic loss to both her husband and her own parents, which may finally lead to divorce and separation.

As in other tribal communities, the Paroja have various ways of acquiring mates. The most common, prestigious and ideal way is marriage by formal negotiation. The Paroja call this *haribol/maga*. This is a ceremonial type of marriage involving elaborate procedure and greater expense, which only the well-to-do families can afford. In this type of marriage, the parents or guardians of the boy seek a bride by observing the conventional rules and make the proposal to the father or guardian of the selected girl at the market places or fairs after offering drinks. The consent of the boy and the girl is formally taken by their respective parents, and the traditional village astrologer is consulted to forecast the future of the match-making before proceeding further.

These marriages are held in the month of Magh (January-February), when the harvesting is over and the Paroja families have plenty of food, money and leisure. The formal negotiation of marriages starts from the month of Kartik (September-October). At first a small party consisting of the boy's parents and male relatives visit the bride's house carrying presents such as rice, *ragi*, fowls, palm wine (*salap*) and money to put forward the marriage proposal. After several such visits with more and more presents, the girl's side agrees. Then the amount of brideprice (*jolla* or *pani*) is finalized.

The amount of brideprice paid for *maga* marriage varies from place to place. However, it is paid in both cash and kind. Generally a few head of domestic animals (usually cows or buffaloes), a huge amount of rice or millet (*ragi* or *mandia*), clothes for the girl and her relatives, rice beer (*pendum*), *mandia* beer (*jandha*), palm wine (*salap*) and some cash above a hundred rupees are paid. The day on which the brideprice is finalized, both the parties celebrate the occasion by entertaining their guests in a small feast in which rice, meat and wine are served. The wedding ceremony is held at the boy's house. The day before the wedding, the bridegroom, accompanied by a group of his friends and relatives, goes to the bride's house and escorts the girl and her close companions to his house in a procession, after which the marriage is consummated.

The extravagant expenses, huge brideprice and lengthy procedures of negotiation in the case of the *maga* or *harihol* types of marriage practically makes the groom's family bankrupt. Those who cannot afford these forms opt for other types of marriage, which are simple and less expensive. The other types of marriage are marriage by capture (*jhinka-utra*) and marriage by elopement (*udlia*). Levirate and sororate types of marriage are also permitted. Divorce is socially permitted on the grounds of marital incompatibility, mal-adjustment and infidelity. Cases are decided in the traditional village council. A husband divorcing his wife pays her compensation as fixed by the village council. If the woman divorces her husband she has to return the brideprice which he has paid to marry her. After the divorce has been formally granted, the man and woman are free to marry again elsewhere.

Death is regarded as the most dreadful event in Paroja life. Death pollution is observed for three to nine days. During this period the deceased's family and kinsmen observe certain restrictions in respect of food, sex and other daily activities. Conventional death rites are performed, and a feast is given to the villagers by the deceased's family after the pollution period is over. Poor families may postpone the feast and arrange it within a year, especially during the month of Magh or Pausa, when they have plenty of food and money after the harvest.

The Paroja have exogamous totemic clans such as Bagh (tiger), Kachhim (tortoise), Bokda (goat), Netam (dog), Gohi (lizard), Pandki (dove), Bedia, Moria, Sodria, Halkaria, Chemia and so on. They highly respect their respective totemic species and observe taboos against killing or harming them. The family is the

smallest social unit in Paroja society. Nuclear families are common while joint families are very rare. The family is patrilineal and patriarchal.

The Paroja are seasoned cultivators and agriculture is the mainstay of their economy. Formerly, the Paroja subsisted from shifting cultivation which is nowadays reduced to being a secondary or tertiary means of livelihood. Nowadays they mainly depend on wet cultivation, which is supplemented by shifting cultivation and other allied economic pursuits like the collection of forest produce, wage-earning, animal husbandry, etc.

Their cultivable land is divided into four major categories. The first type is known as *beda* or wet land and is best for paddy cultivation. The second category is known as *huda* which is plain non-irrigated upland where paddy and minor millets are grown. The third category of land is *dongar* and is meant for shifting cultivation, where oilseeds, millets and pulses are grown. The fourth type is the kitchen garden situated behind the house where different kinds of vegetables are grown. Regular care is taken of the kitchen garden and every year these plots are manured with cowdung.

The major crops grown by the Paroja are of the highland variety, namely maize, minor millet, early paddy, *ragi*, *suan*, *jowar*, *niger*, etc. Recently new crops such as potato, *arhar*, wheat, sugar cane, and vegetables like cabbage, cauliflower, brinjal, tomatoes, etc. have been introduced by the development agencies. On shifting cultivation sites they grow minor millets, *kandul*, *suan*, *ragi*, maize, *biri*, early paddy, etc. Fruit and vegetables are also grown in a small kitchen garden behind the house and in the lowlands where irrigation is available. For cultivation, the Paroja use very simple agricultural implements, namely the plough, spade, hoe, axe, etc. Cultivation of land, manuring, sowing, weeding, reaping, harvesting are done carefully and systematically. In all phases of agricultural operations mutual co-operation and coordination between people are striking features.

Paroja farmers are occupied in different agricultural pursuits throughout the year. In the month of January long-duration paddy, maize, small millets (*suan*) and a few other crops are harvested. During the months of February and March the people amuse themselves with feasts and festivals, as there is very little work to be done in the fields. However, the collection of *mahua*, jungle grass, hunting of games and group fishing are some important gainful activities pursued during these months. During April the seasonal agricultural operations start, and the farmers prepare their lands and raise maize and vegetable crops in the kitchen garden. Mangoes and oil-seeds are collected from the forest. May and June are the busiest months when small millets and paddy are sown in the uplands and dry lands. In these months the fields for shifting cultivation are cleared and twigs burnt. Ploughing of the fields and clearing of stumps are also completed in this month. In the month of July the sowing of wetland paddy and millets and raising of some vegetable crops and maize are completed, followed by different routine agricultural operations in the months of August and September. These two months are considered to be the lean months, when the people live on forest produces and sometimes incur loans in either cash or kind. The months of October and November bring hopes and happiness when the people harvest short-duration

paddy, *ragi* and small millets. They celebrate new crop-eating festivals (Nuakhia) and perform magico-religious rites for eating beans. Otherwise, watching over and caring for long-duration paddy and sowing of oil seeds keep them engaged during this month. December and January are the main harvesting months, when the long-duration paddy is harvested and the crops are stored. The Paroja are fond of cattle wealth. They raise cows, bullocks, buffaloes, goats, pigs and fowls. The cows, she-buffaloes and she-goats are not milked but used as agricultural draught animals.

Paroja society is governed by a division of labour based on age and sex. Small boys and girls are not assigned any work. Older boys and girls are trained to help their parents in indoor and outdoor activities. Usually hard work like ploughing is done by men, and household chores and minor agricultural operations are performed by women. Paroja women are more hardworking, meeker and milder than the men.

Rice is the staple food, supplemented by millets, maize, vegetables they grow themselves and other edible fruits, roots, leaves, and tubers collected from the forest around the year. Non-vegetarian items, cakes, sweets and other delicacies are eaten during festive occasions and whenever available. The Paroja are addicted to alcoholic drinks and beverages. Use of liquor is a customary practice in all magico-religious rituals, feasts and festivals. They drink various kinds of liquor such as *mahua* liquor, millet liquor (*landha*), rice beer, palm wine (*salap*), etc. *Landha* and *salap* are the most favourite drinks.

The Paroja village has a well-organised socio-political system, which functions as an independent autonomous unit. It has its own set of traditional functionaries who remain in charge of the different internal and external affairs of the village. The Jani is the sacerdotal head. The Muduli is the secular head of the village and is assisted by a Challan. The Jani functions as the village head priest. His physical presence in all important matters of the village is indispensable. His words are honoured in the village. The Muduli is the de facto chief of the village. He decides civil and criminal disputes, collects revenue, organizes communal functions, receives and entertains guests and officials, and acts as the spokesman of his fellow men with external agencies. He is assisted by a Challan who conveys the decision of the Muduli and Jani to their people. The offices of the Jani, Muduli and Challan are hereditary and carry high social prestige.

There are other magico-religious functionaries in the village called the Disari Gur-main, Gunia, and Bhattanayak. The Disari acts as the village astrologer and determines auspicious dates and moments for holding marriage ceremonies, communal festivals and rituals, seasonal agricultural operations and so on. He also finds a name for new-born babies and predicts the future of match-making activities regarding matrimony. The Gurmain is the priest-cum-witch doctor whose duty it is to worship the village goddess on the different festive occasions and to ensure the recovery of the sick. The Bhattanayak is an important functionary in the Paroja village, purifying ritually polluted people who have been condemned for committing socially disapproved offences.

The Paroja worship a number of gods and deities for their well-being. The important deities are Danteswari, their tutelary goddess; Laxmi, the goddess of wealth and fortune; Landi, the god in charge of ensuring an orderly social life; Jhakar Debta, the earth goddess; Dongar Debta, the forest god; Mahapuru, the supreme god, and Nisan Debta, the village deity. Dead ancestors, who are called Duma Debta, receive routine worship and sacrifices at festive occasions. The Paroja observe many seasonal festivals with pomp and ceremony around the year in order to propitiate their deities and ancestors as well as for their own enjoyment. Among these the important ones are Asadh Parab, Nuakhia, Diali Parab, Baulani Jatra, Pus Parab, Chait Parab, etc. In the month of Chait or Baisakh (April) they observe the Bihan Thapa festival. The village Disari announces an auspicious date for this festival and collects a small quantity of paddy seeds from each and every household. He performs a ritual at the *nissan munda* of the village in honour of Jhankar Debta (the Earth Goddess) where he purifies the seeds by sacrificing a pig. A portion of the ritualized seeds is distributed among the different families. These seeds are mixed with the remaining seeds of the family and are sown in the field on an auspicious day fixed by the Disari.

Asadh Parab is observed in the month of Asadh (June and July) and consists a series of two or three rituals performed one after another. Langaladhua Punei or Bandapana Parab is observed during the month of Sraban (July-August). In it Paroja families perform certain rituals. Agricultural implements are cleaned, decorated with red coloured earth and covered with a piece of new white cloth. They enjoy the occasion by preparing and eating cakes and sweets, and singing and dancing. Bhada Parab or Nachuni Parab is celebrated in the month of Bhadrap or Ashwin (September) for first eating of new rice. Diali Parab, the festival of lights, is held in the month of Ashwin or Kartik (September-October). The most significant and colourful festival of the year are Pus Parab and Chait Parab. Pus Parab is held in the month Pausa (January) in order to celebrate the harvesting of paddy and other crops. Chait Parab is held in the month of Chaitra (March-April) when the people go on communal hunting expeditions. The day following Chait Parab, all the able-bodied men of the village proceed in a hunting expedition. If anyone stays behind, he is humiliated by the ladies who throw dirty cowdung water over him and virtually push him out of the village. Women also go to the forest and collect fruits, leaves and flowers. The hunting expedition continues for two or three days. Success in hunting foretells the well-being and prosperity of the village community in the coming year. The flesh of the hunted animal is distributed equally among the villagers. The Jani and Muduli get a larger share, including the head of the animal. Then the Chait Parab comes to an end.

Dancing, song and music are characteristic features of Paroja aesthetic life, without which they feel their mundane life to be meaningless. They are experts in all these arts. Their inborn theatrical talent finds expression in dances and songs like *dhensa nacha*, *dundunga nacha*, *laga gita*, etc. Songs and dances are performed as an indispensable part of all individual and communal functions and festivals. They also enjoy themselves through song and dance whenever they wish to do so. Whenever the boys start playing their musical instruments and singing songs, the villagers, young and old men and women rush to the *berna munda* and amuse themselves by dancing and singing. As a rule, the women form separate

groups according to age and start dancing and singing, while the boys play musical instruments and sing songs. In their dances they imitate the peculiar movements of animals like the snake's crawl, frog's jump, bird's chirping and the like. They compose their own songs suitable to particular occasions and fix the tune and rhythm of the dance and song. The finer and beautiful elements of nature, i.e. the sky, stars, sun, moon, rain, wind, hill, hill streams, trees, flowers, birds, animals, influence and appear in their song and music.

So far the Paroja have more or less retained their own way of life, which distinguishes them from other tribal and non-tribal communities. Their traditional economic organization, marriage and kinship system, political system, magico-religious life, folk culture and world view, though having changed to some extent with the changing times, still continues to function effectively. But by and large, they have remained socio-economically backward as compared to the general population.

PENTIA

A. Mall

The Pentia, a numerically small tribe of Orissa, are mainly concentrated in Koraput, followed by Mayurbhanj and Keonjhar Districts. The Pentia also call themselves Haluva or Halaba or Halba. In the Madras Census Report of 1901, they are designated Pentiya or Pentia and described as Oriya betel-leaf sellers. According to Mr C. Hayavadana Rao, a number of them migrated from Bastar state (now in Madhya Pradesh) and settled at Pentikonna. That is why they are called Pentkonaya or Pentiya.

The total population of the Pentia according to the 1991 Census is 11,399. Their population in the district of Koraput alone accounts for 76.88 per cent of the total. According to the 1991 Census they constitute only 0.16 per cent of the total Scheduled Tribe population of the state. During the period from 1981 to 1991 the tribe registered a growth rate of 44.14 per cent. The sex ratio is 835 females per 1000 males.

The percentage of literacy, which was only 24.8 per cent at the 1981 Census, showed a decline by 1991 by going down to 16.96 per cent. It is reported in the Gazetteer that their language is Haluva, which is easily understood by Oriya-speakers. But the Pentia of Jeypore do not acknowledge this and state that Oriya is their only language. Very few of them are bilingual.

The tribe is divided into two endogamous sections called Bado (larger, genuine) and Sano (little). The Sano are regarded as being the illegitimate descendants of the Bado. This pure section, namely Bado, are further subdivided into a series of clans, e.g. Kurum (tortoise), Bagh (tiger), Nag (cobra) and Surya (sun). The totemic objects are honoured.

Pentia villages are located in the plains and are mostly heterogeneous. But they generally live in separate hamlets. In rare cases they live together with other castes or tribes with whom they hold social intercourse.

Before building a house they choose an auspicious site by burying rice in the traditional way. On this day, they consult the Panji and choose the day to lay the foundation of the house. Before construction is started they dig at the spot three times, making offerings of flowers, sandalwood paste and incense. They also consult the Panji before the first occupation of the house. The well-to-do invite 10 to 15 people and feed them on the day of their first entry into the new house. In a village, the houses are arranged in two continuous rows facing the village street. House design mostly resembles that of their Hindu neighbours. Most houses have verandahs at the front. The walls are generally constructed with mud or with a plastering of mud over split bamboos and wattles. The roofs of the houses are thatched with straw or grass. Ceilings are provided by spreading bamboos on the walls. Windows are rarely seen. Sheds for cows and goats are built separately near the house.

Earthenware vessels, string cots, leaf umbrellas, sticks, husking levers, etc. are the common household articles found in Pentia houses. Aluminium utensils, brass plates, jars and glasses, lanterns, cloths, umbrellas and torches are found in some Pentia houses which are economically well-off. Being agriculturists they possess agricultural implements like the plough, yoke, plough share, leveller, sickle, digging stick, *ankudi*, spade, axe, *katuri* and knife. A few also own swords and guns of traditional varieties. Fishing traps and fishing nets are mostly seen in their houses. Musical instruments like drums, the *tamak*, *madala*, *gini* and *thal* are also found.

Although the Pentia are very neat and clean, they are very poorly dressed. They wear both mill-made and hand-made cloth. The common male dress is a *dhoti* which is sometimes too short to cover their knees. The women wear saris without any undergarments. The ornaments they wear are mostly of silver and brass and sometimes of gold. They use the *noli* and *phuli* for the ear, *dandi* for the nose, beads (made of *pohala* and gold) for the neck, *khadu* and glass bangles for the wrist, and brass and aluminium *paunris* for the ankle. They do not have any distinctive features in their hair style. Some women tattoo their limbs, particularly the arms and legs, though this is not popular nowadays.

The Pentia are mainly settled agriculturists. But as most of them are landless, they earn a living working as agricultural and industrial labourers in different parts of the state. They grow vegetables in the backyard. Fishing and hunting are rarely practised. They collect different edible materials like roots, tubers and leaves from the forest during their leisure time. They do not practise shifting cultivation. Rice is their staple food. They also eat *mandia*, *suan*, *gulzi*, *kangu*, *mahul* flowers and mango kernels at different seasons of the year. They do not eat beef or pork and hate those who do. But they eat fowl, which is their favourite non-vegetarian food. They like to drink *mahul* or *salap* wine. Distillation at home is rare. They usually purchase their daily requirement of liquor from the market.

Pentia women generally feel proud to bear child. Pregnancy brings happiness to family members. But they are unaware of the proper pre-natal care of the pregnant mother. A few restrictions concerning food and movement are imposed on her during this period. Birth takes place in one of the living rooms of the house. No separate room is provided to the mother and newborn baby. An experienced elderly woman of the tribe is called in to assist during the delivery. She cuts the umbilical cord with a knife and buries it along with the placenta in the backyard. The delivered mother is served boiled *kulthi* water as a medicine. During the post-delivery period the mother is not given brinjals, ladies finger or dried fish to eat. Birth pollution is observed for 21 days, but the mother is allowed to touch water after twelve days. The child is given a name as selected by the Disari or astrologer according to the day and time of its birth. On the 21st day, the Ekoisa ceremony is observed, and some Pentia perform the ear-piercing ceremony on that day, otherwise about six months after the birth.

Girls generally reach puberty between the age of 12 to 15 years. On attaining puberty, a girl is kept segregated for nine days. During this period no one is allowed to see her except her mother who gives food to her. At the end of the period of pollution she is escorted to the river where she takes bath and puts on a

new cloth. The female counterpart of the Disari offers some worship in the presence of female members of the tribe.

Both child and adult marriages are in vogue. Thus girls are married either before or after puberty. Love marriage generally prevails in their society. They prefer cross-cousin marriage, though do not follow it strictly. When a boy and a girl make up their mind to marry each other, the boy seeks to obtain the consent of the girl's father by sending some presents consisting of rice, dal, vegetables and Rs 50/- to Rs 60/- in cash to the parents of the girl. If the girl's parents accept these presents, a feast is arranged in the house of the girl and the marriage is solemnized in the house of the boy. In the case of an arranged marriage, the parents of the boy send friends with flattened paddy and molasses and liquor as presents to the house of the girl. Then several visits are exchanged by the two parties. The parents of the boy have to give *kanya mula* which ranges between Rs 100/- and Rs 180/-. The date of the marriage is fixed by the Disari. The marriage generally takes place at the house of the bride. *Pandals* are raised in front of both bride and bride groom's houses.

On the day of the wedding, the bridegroom and his party go to the bride's village with the customary brideprice, which includes three clothes for bride's mother, Rs 3/- for her father, a cloth and two annas for each of her brothers. They present these articles and take a rest in a separate house, where some rice beer and food are also given to the bride's party. The marrying partners bathe, put on new clothes and are brought to the altar by Disari for rituals to take place. The bride and bridegroom stand apart from one another with a screen between them. The bridegroom is given the sacred thread and the couple are asked to go round the altar seven times. The Disari performs *homa* and enchanting mantras, and ties the right palms of the couple together, a rite called *hata ganthi*. This marks the end of the marriage ritual. Then after enjoying a feast given by the bride's parents on the following day, the bridegroom's party returns home with the bride. Soon after arrival the newly married couple play with each other by throwing turmeric water. A feast is arranged and the night is spent dancing.

A widow can remarry, preferably to the younger brother of her deceased husband. If a widow remarries anyone else, her deceased husband's brother claims Rs 100/- to Rs 150/- as compensation from the second husband. But no such compensation is paid in case of a divorcee.

The dead are either buried or cremated. The period of death pollution is ten days. They follow a death rite similar to that of their Hindu neighbours. Immediately after death news is sent to the relatives and friends of the deceased person. When they arrive, the dead body is carried on a bier made of split bamboo to the burial ground. Some paddy and rice grains and small earthenware lamps are placed at each of the four corners of the bier. At the burial place they point the head of the deceased towards the north with the face upward. In a case of disposal by cremation the eldest son first touches fire to the mouth of the deceased. They wait until the dead body is fully burned. Then the pall-bearers return home, take their bath, and take rice and gruel in the house of the deceased.

The Pita ceremony is observed on the third day. The friends and relatives are invited to a feast where non-vegetarian items of food are served. But the eldest son and wife of the deceased are forbidden from taking any non-vegetarian food for a period of ten days. On the tenth day members of the deceased's household take their bath after shaving and paring their nails. Then they wear sacred threads and new clothes. A final feast is given to the relatives and friends of the deceased and thus the purification ceremony ends. Every year on the particular day when the death of the person had occurred the Sradha ceremony is performed by the relatives of the deceased and a Brahman is called to officiate.

Samalai Thakurani is their most important deity. They worship this deity on all important occasions. When epidemics like smallpox, cholera, etc. break out they worship the goddess in the belief that she can stop the outbreak of the epidemic. They observe Nuakhia in the month of Bhadrap on the occasion of the first eating of rice. Goats are sacrificed before the goddess on this occasion. Amba Nua is observed in the month of Chaitra when they first take the mango fruit. They also observe Pausa Purnima when they worship Nisani or home deity in their houses. On Dewali they worship their cattle and sacrifice a goat before their goddess. Like other tribals, Pantia are also lovers of dancing and music. Each and every festive occasion is followed by dancing and music. They generally use the *dhola*, *madal* and *gini* as musical instruments. At weddings the boys and girls of neighbouring villages also indulge in dancing for hours on end.

The tribal head at the village level is called the Bhata Naik or Nul Naik. A group of elderly persons with the Bhata Naik at their head take decisions on all important social matters. The other officials are called Pradhani, Dalei, Dhoba, Bhandari and Chalan. The Chalan is the messenger of the council and acts on the instructions of the Naik. Over a number of villages there is one Kul Naik or Bhata Naik. An individual becomes outcast when he accidentally or knowingly kills a cow or becomes affected with sores. He is taken back into the caste after a ceremony is performed. The offender is taken to the bank of the stream where his tongue is burnt with a gold or silver wire or ornament by the Bhata Naik. Then some offerings from the Jagannath temple at Puri are given to him. He is then taken home and he provides feast in which the Bhata Naik has to accept the food first. When the feast is over he is again taken with some cooked rice to the stream and with it he enters into the stream and takes bath. This ceremonial bath makes him free from pollution.

The Pantia occupy a high position in the society. They are served by barbers and washermen. A Brahman is employed on certain occasions by well-to-do families. They treat tribals like the Koya, Paroja, Gadaba, Bondo, Kondh, etc. as inferior to them. They do not take water or any cooked food from castes like the Dom Pano, Sundhi or Teli.

Since they are found mostly within the Sub-Plan area of the State, they are served by various special developmental programmes implemented through the Integrated Tribal Development Agencies. Because of their high social status and level of literacy and their eagerness to achieve self-reliance, they will be able to use this assistance to enhance their economic condition at a faster pace than the other primitive tribal groups inhabiting this region.

SANTAL

K.B. Debi

The forest-clad, undulating, hilly regions of the District of Mayurbhanj and adjoining areas of Keonjhar and Balasore Districts are inhabited by many Munda-speaking tribes, of which the most important and predominant community is the Santal. Numerically speaking this community is one of the largest tribes of Orissa. According to the 1991 Census their population in the state is 6,29,782. The growth rate over the decade 1981-91 was 18.65 per cent. Out of the total Santal population of 6,29,782 in 1991, 3,21,436 are males and 3,08,346 are females. The District of Mayurbhanj claims 75.27 per cent of the total Santal population of the state. Next to this district comes Balasore, followed by Keonjhar District, which had 11.56 per cent and 7.36 per cent respectively of the total Santal population. The Santal speak a language known as Santali which belongs to the Munda group of the Austroasiatic sub-family of the Austric family. At present most Santal can speak and understand Oriya. The Santal of Orissa never claim their present habitat as their original homeland. Rather they are proud of describing a legend which gives Ahiripipiri as their birth place and Chaichampa as their fort located some where in Bihar.

In the past, the Santal were nomadic in habits and used to wander from place to place in search of agricultural land. Some scholars link their traditional homeland with central India (Dandakaranya area). Later they came to the Chhotanagpur plateau and the adjoining districts of Midnapur and Singhbhum. At the close of the 18th Century they made their home in Santal Parganas. At present they are spread over a large tract of land within the geographical jurisdiction of West Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Assam and Tripura. They constitute one of the largest tribes in the country as a whole.

Most Santal settlements are more or less permanent in nature. But sometimes individual families shift their house sites when there is a scarcity of land around the settlements to feed their growing population. Outbreaks of epidemic or fear of witchcraft also make them feel the need to abandon the old house site for a new site. The Santal village consists of a number of households surrounded by agricultural fields and pastures. The villages are large, the average size varying from fifty to a hundred households. Many villages consist of a number of hamlets situated around the main hamlet. The villages are lineally arranged on either side of the road. Adjacent to each village there must be one common ritual place called a *jaher* or sacred grove consisting of *sal*, *asan* and *nim* trees in which their village deities reside. The *manjhi-than*, another ritual spot in the village, is located in front of the house of the Manjhi, the secular headman of the village. The *manjhi-than* is the seat of the spirit of the founder headman of the village.

The Santal house may have a single room or a cluster of several rooms constructed according to the needs of the family. Some houses have compounds that are mostly square in shape, the huts being arranged on all sides. They do not have separate kitchens but use any bedroom for this purpose. Generally a separate shed is built for the cattle. In every house, towards a corner of the main room there

is a sacred place known as the *bhitar*, a place for the ancestral spirits. In every house on all sides of the rooms there must be one verandah to keep husking lever, and provide sitting and sleeping accommodation at night in summer. The walls are made of wooden logs planted upright and plastered with mud. Roofs are gable-shaped and covered with wild grass, straw or *khaper* (local tiles). The Santal make beautiful houses and decorate their walls in different colours, with figures of human beings, flowers, animals and birds.

The household articles of the Santal no longer consist of their traditional materials like gourd containers, earthenware pots, leaf-cups and plates, etc. Instead there is a greater inflow of modern articles like aluminium and brass utensils, cooking pots, radios, cycles, watches, etc. Their other household materials consist of some agricultural, hunting and fishing tools, musical instruments, baskets, broomsticks, string cots, etc. which they make themselves or obtain by exchanging agricultural products.

The typical way of dressing of the Santal distinguishes them from the local non-tribals. The men wear a rough *dhoti* or *gamchha*, and women wear green or blue check printed saris made by local weavers. Nowadays mill-made cloths are also used. Petticoats and blouses have become common items of fashion for young women. In the course of their close association with the local non-tribals, Santal women seem to be changing their taste for wearing ornaments. The traditional ornaments, which mainly consist of heavy brass bangles, anklets, armlets and coral beads, are now out of fashion. They attach greater value to plastic, glass and light silver ornaments.

The cicatrization mark on the arm of the male Santal distinguishes them from others not only in this world but also in the underworld. It is a universal practice among Santal to have cicatrization marks. But no ritual importance is attached to it. Tattooing is a common fashion for Santal women. They make tattoo marks of various designs on the arms, wrists and chests.

As regards their sanitary habits, they are very neat and clean. Every day they brush their teeth, take a bath and comb their hair. On weekly market days the women wash their clothing with soap or ash and comb their hair decently. The Santal women keep their houses neat and clean. Every morning they sweep the rooms, verandah and courtyards. Cowdung and other refuse is thrown away. Cleaning the floor of the house with cowdung diluted in water is a part of women's daily routine work. Just before important festive occasions, the women clean the walls and paint them in different colours. They take care to wash their utensils every day and making them bright.

The Santal depend on rivers, streams and wells to obtain their drinking water. In summer, when the wells dry up, Santal women collect water from *chuha* or holes dug in the sandy bed of the river. Rice is their staple food all year round, supplemented by other cereals such as minor millets, wheat, etc. Vegetable, dry fish or pulses are eaten as side dishes. The Santal relish various fruits available in the area, especially mango and jackfruit, which are eaten both at the green and ripe stages. When Santal catch fish from agricultural fields or other water sources like

rivers, ponds or canals, they have a chance to enjoy fish and dry fish. Domestic animals like goats, fowls and pigs are generally slaughtered on festive occasions for feasts. Occasionally the Santal catch birds, which also supply them with meat. Rice beer called *handia* continues to be the traditional drink of the tribe. Although *mahua* liquor and toddy are drunk, *handia* is the favourite drink. It is drunk when old friends and relatives get together at festivals and funerals, births, marriages and betrothals. Before anybody drinks it, *handia* is offered to the ancestral spirits on ceremonial occasions and also when it is brewed at home.

The Santal suffer from various types of disease such as malarial fever, stomach troubles, influenza, scabies, itches, etc. Malaria was hyperendemic throughout the area in the past. In the recent years the government has taken measures to eradicate this disease by introducing a malaria eradication programme. As a result, it has been controlled to a large extent. Incidences of leprosy, T.B. and yaws appear to be negligible. On the other hand stomach trouble and scabies are common due to the lack of safe drinking water, especially in summer. The Santal ascribe various causes, such as natural causes, supernatural agencies and witchcraft for their sufferings. For sickness they first refer to the Ojha, the village medicineman-cum-spirit doctor. By examining the symptoms, the Ojha diagnoses diseases and prescribes herbal medicine in the first instance. When this does not work he applies magico-religious methods to detect the causes of diseases. Any type of chronic and serious disease is believed to be the evil effect of a spirit. Leprosy and *machhiapatak* are regarded as a social crime for which a leper is driven out of the village and the *machhiapatak* patient is outcasted temporarily until he is cured.

The Santal are divided into a number of clans known as *paris*. Regarding their origin they tell the following story. The first human pair in Santal tradition, namely Pilchu Haram and Pilchu Budhi, committed incest under the influence of rice beer, which Marang Buru, their high god, taught them to brew. Seven sons and seven daughters were born to them who again mated incestuously and gave birth to Santal progeny. To avoid further incest it is said that the descendants of the first seven pairs were divided into seven *paris* and marriage was not allowed among the members of the same pairs. The names of these seven *paris* are Hansda, Murmu, Kisku, Hembrum, Marandi, Tudu and Soren. Later on five more clans were added to the list, namely Baske, Basra, Pauria, Chane and Bedia. At present the Pauria, Chane and Bedia clans are not found in Orissa.

Santal clans Santal are unilineal descent groups whose members trace their origin back to some common mythical ancestor. Usually each of these clans is named after some natural phenomena, animal or other object. Hansda means *hans* (duck), Marandi is a kind of weed, while Murmu resembles *murmu* (cow). Some observe taboos associated with their clan names: thus Hansda do not eat the duck or its eggs and the Murmu do not kill *murmu* (cows). Marandi do not destroy the *marandi* weed which grows in the fields in the rainy season. Except for these instances no taboo appears to be observed by other clan members in connection with their clan names. There is no totemic worship. The members of a clan are regarded as brothers and sisters, and as such marriage or sexual relations among them is taboo. But recently it has been found that the marriage is allowed between

clan members. Each clan is again divided into a number of sub-clans, and marriage is prohibited among sub-clan members. Those who disobey this rule are generally excommunicated. Severe punishment is imposed upon them by the hunt council, the traditional supreme court of the tribe. The punishment known as *hitlaha* was prescribed for the culprit but this rarely occurs at present.

Each sub-clan is further divided into a number of groups known as *bansa*. *Bansa* members offer certain sacrifices at definite occasion to the *Abge Bonga* and have a greater sense of solidarity. All group members inhabiting nearby villages assemble in one place to worship their *Abge Bonga* every four or five years. They do not have any specific term for the lineage group. *Kutum*, an Oriya term, is used to designate lineage members. They are summoned to attend death, birth and marriage ceremonies. A close kinship tie and greater co-operation among lineage members are observed.

The family, their smallest social unit, is patrilineal, patrilocal and patripotestal. Descent is reckoned through father's line. According to their residential pattern after marriage a girl leaves her father's house and stays at her husband's place. Most Santal families are nuclear, comprising a husband, wife and unmarried children and sometimes one of the parents. The domestic group generally breaks up into separate houses within the lifetime of the father. However, some extended families consisting of both parents and their married sons and grandchildren are also found. Joint families consisting of several married brothers and their offsprings are very rare. Authority within the domestic group is vested in the eldest male member, who is responsible for maintaining family peace and economic stability. Kin relations are classified into two groups, *bandhu pele* and *kutum pele*. The *bandhu pele* includes persons related by marriage, while *kutum pele* includes uterine kin. Both groups participate in marriage, death and birth ceremonies.

During pregnancy a Santal woman observes certain taboos and restrictions to protect herself and the baby in her womb from all evils. As a protection against ghosts, spirits and witches she is not allowed to go alone to the forest, to touch crops, or to go to the cremation ground. During pregnancy, she does all sorts of household work, but avoids hard manual labour. When labour pain starts the expectant mother is kept confined in a separate room into which male members are not allowed to enter. A traditional midwife called a *Mukhi* assists her in delivering the child. After birth the midwife cuts the umbilical cord, bathes the child and mother, and puts the placenta, etc. in a pit in the same room. The mother is considered ritually unclean. She remains secluded in the lying-in room till the *Janam chhatiar* or the purificatory rites are performed. During this period she is not allowed to enter the kitchen or to touch anybody. The ceremony takes place on the seventh or ninth day of childbirth. On this day all family members take a purificatory bath, clean clothes and houses, and throw away used earthenware pots.

The name-giving ceremony called *Nyatam* takes place on any day within one year. The relatives and the village elders are invited for the occasion. When everyone has assembled, the midwife takes the child and selects a name from among the dead ancestors of either the paternal or maternal side. Those who are present on the occasion bless the child and give presentations in either cash or

kind. The invitees are entertained with festive meals and drink. Children are generally nursed and reared by the mother up to four or five years of age. The mother does not go to work outside the house for about seven to eight months. Thereafter, when she goes out, the child is left in the house under the care of a female relative or grandparents. Puberty marks the beginning of full-fledged womanhood. When a girl attains puberty she is not allowed to enter the cowshed or *bhitur*, the sacred place of the house. When the period is over she takes a full bath and washes her clothes.

The most significant turning point in the life of an individual is the marriage known as *hapla*. Marriage makes an individual a full-fledged member of the community. From an economic point of view a man obtains a life partner who can help him in all economic pursuits. Santals have definite rules and regulations concerning marriage. The main restrictions on marriage are tribal endogamy, clan exogamy and the exclusion of cross-cousin marriage. Marriage within the clan is tolerated nowadays. However, there are certain clans which never intermarry with one another due to past quarrels.

In the Santal society the illegitimacy of child does not exist. Marriage gives social validity to the illegitimate child. In Santal society a partner is generally acquired by the following methods:

1. Marriage by negotiation
2. Marriage by mutual consent
3. Marriage by force
4. Marriage by intrusion
5. Marriage by elopement
6. Widow marriage
7. Hindu type of marriage (*Diku* Marriage)

Of all forms of marriages the most frequent are marriage by negotiation and *diku* marriage. Negotiations are first initiated by the boy's party. The elders of both parties exchange several visits and on such occasions fixing the brideprice forms one of the most common points of discussion. A brideprice is paid in both cash and kind, consisting of few rupees, cow/ bullock, three saris, one to the mother of the bride, one to her paternal grandmother, and the third to her father's sister. If both parties approve the proposal a day is fixed for the marriage. On the wedding day the bride with a party arrives at the boy's place where marriage ceremony is held. The expenses of the wedding depend largely upon the form of marriage. Marriage is a communal affair and members of both the villages and also neighbouring villages participate in it. The parents of the boy and the girl and the village officials play very important roles.

Residence in Santal society is patrilocal. After marriage a bride comes to stay with her husband. But there is another form of marriage known as *ghar-de-jamei* when the boy comes and lives with the family of the girl. This happens if the girl has no brother. Widow marriage is permitted in Santal society. A widow is expected to marry her deceased husband's younger brother. If both agree they marry, otherwise the woman is at liberty to marry any other man she likes. Divorce is socially permitted. It can be initiated by either husband or wife. If a woman

leaves her husband and elopes with another man, the second husband will return the marriage expenses and brideprice. If a man wants to divorce his wife he must give compensation fixed by the village elders.

Just like birth and marriage, death also involves many rituals. The Santal believe that the spirit of the dead remains in the house and may cause harm to family members and villagers in general until the death rituals are performed. Therefore they hasten to perform the obsequies as early as possible. Within five to twenty days after death the first purificatory ritual is observed when all the male members of the *kutum* group shave their heads and the women cut their nails, smear turmeric paste and anoint their bodies with oil. All bathe the head. On this occasion various rites and rituals are performed and the spirit of the dead is offered food. If the family is well-to-do, food will be served to all. Otherwise the feast is restricted to the nearest kin groups. The Santal believe in the ceremonial immersion of the bones of the deceased in a holy river, called Damodar Jatra after the name of the river Damodar. Santal now living in different localities have different *ghats* in the nearby river where the last death ritual is performed and the bone of the deceased is immersed.

The main occupation of the Santal is settled agriculture. At present both men and women are engaged in cultivation but mainly as marginal and small farmers and agricultural labourers. The emergence of mining and industrial activities both in and outside their home districts have provided them with some scope for occupational mobility. A good number have migrated to Jamshedpur in Bihar for industrial work and to the neighbouring Koraput and Keonjhar areas for agricultural work. In industries most of them work as unskilled workers. With the spread of education some have regular Government jobs. Both men and women are active, strong and hard-working. The economic activities of the Santal community are carried out with the co-operation and participation of both sexes.

In the Santal area, land can be divided mainly into three types, i.e. *bila* or lowland, *guda* or upland and *hari* or kitchen gardens. Paddy, being the main crop, is produced on *bila* land. On *guda* land the Santal grow short-duration paddy, *gulji*, *janha*, *til* and maize. Adjacent to each house or a little further away from it there are plots of *hari* land where varieties of vegetables, maize and pulses are grown. The Santal practise monocropping if the land is unfertile and irrigation facilities are not available according to their requirements. As a result, the return from land is poor. Agriculture, which is mainstay of the Santal, does not provide adequate means for their maintenance round the year. They supplement it by forest collection and wage-earning. When the harvesting of paddy is over, the Santal have sufficient time to be employed else where until the start of the next agricultural season. They generally migrate to the towns and industrial belt to earn their daily wages. Landless Santal are employed during agricultural season as agricultural labourers in the same locality.

With the passage of time the Santal have passed the stage of food gathering and hunting and have become cultivators and agricultural labourers. But the age-old practices have not been completely left behind. Forest collection is one of the important sources of income. In fact their food is greatly supplemented by roots,

fruits and tubers collected in the forests. These include different varieties of green leaves, yams, honey, *mahua* flowers, mushrooms, fruits like the mango, *kendu*, *charkoli*, insects, etc. The forest also provides them with fuel and herbal medicines, tooth twigs, and grass and timber to build houses and make agricultural implements.

The Santal area was once surrounded by dense forest and infested with wild animals but is now becoming deforested day by day, as a result of which game is rapidly dwindling. Besides the restrictions imposed by the government in respect of hunting, wild animals are also responsible for their loss of interest in hunting. The Santal now occasionally go on hunting expeditions in the summer. The last day of the Baha festival marks the beginning of the communal hunting. Elaborate rituals are conducted before the actual hunting begins. A success in such hunting indicates good luck for them and ensures bumper crops for the year. They also hunt birds by using a bow and arrow when they are free from work. Fishing does not form an important source of income for the Santal, but it supplies a delicious menu to their diet. The fishing appliances they use consist of nets and traps. In the rainy season, the agricultural fields become fishing grounds, and everyone who has land catches fish with the help of a basket trap. The Santal keep cows, bullocks, goats, sheep, poultry and pigs for domestic consumption and sale. The goats, poultry and pigs are used in sacrifices, while bullocks and buffaloes are used to plough the fields.

The Santal make various crafts for their daily use. Their cottage industry includes manufacturing wooden materials such as the plough, leveller, husking lever, string bed, etc. Some are skilled enough to make bullock carts, chairs and benches. In bamboo the Santal only make fishing traps, whereas grain containers and other types of bamboo basket are purchased from bamboo workers who belong to the Mahali tribe.

The Santal living in and around the dense forest who have a large number of Asan trees practise tussar rearing. They collect cocoon seeds from the forest and take loans from cocoon traders or co-operatives. However, it is considered a difficult task because the rearers must observe various taboos and restrictions during the raising period. The Asan is believed to be a deity and so sanctity must be maintained and the deity must be propitiated to achieve successful rearing.

The weekly market or *hat* plays an important role in Santal economy. Except those who live in close proximity of towns, others mostly depend on the local *hat* for the purchase of their daily necessities and sale of agricultural and forest produce. Now LAMPS and TDCC centres have been established in the Santal area to provide articles of daily consumption and to purchase their produce at a reasonable rate.

The Santal have well-knit religious organizations. They believe in various deities, ghosts and spirits residing in the hills, forests and streams, and the ancestral spirits guiding every aspect of their lives. Thakur or Sing Bonga or Dharam is their Supreme deity who is identified with the sun and is worshipped with great reverence. He is the creator of the universe and a benevolent deity. There is no

specific festival to worship him and he is worshipped at every important festival. He is remembered. Their village deities are Marang, Buru, Moneko-Turiko Jaher Era and Gosani Era, who reside in the village *jahera*, a holy grove located on the outskirts of the village. The village deities play a vital role in the life of the Santal and control their socio-economic activities. Another important deity or spirit is the Manjhi Bonga who resides in the *manjhi than* which is located inside the village in front of the house of the village Manjhi or headman. Manjhi Bonga is the spirit of the founder of the village. In addition, they worship Abge Bonga or household spirits, Hapranko Bonga or ancestral spirits, Buru Bonga (hill deities), Rango Bonga (forest deities) and Basumata or mother earth. In order to keep them in a good mood, the Santal observe a number of festivals spread over different months of the year. Their most important festivals are Erok-sim, Harihar-sim, Iri-Guldi-sim, Janthar, Saharas, Magha-sim and Baha, which are associated with agricultural operations. Erok-sim marks the beginning of sowing the seeds in the fields. Harihar-sim is observed at the time of the sprouting of seedlings. Iri-Guldi-sim is observed for the offering of the first millet crop. Jantal is a celebration of the first fruit of the winter rice crops. Magh-sim is observed in the month of Magha (January-February), which marks the end of the year. During Baha festival the Santal offer the first fruit of *mahua*, wild flowers and fruits to the *jaher* deities. Bonga worship is mainly done out of fear. The Santal have a strong belief in their own religion. Nowadays, however, they have started worshipping local Hindu gods and goddesses.

The smallest unit of traditional political organization is the village council, which is composed of office-bearers and the village elders. The council is headed by a Manjhi or headman, who is assisted by the Paramanik or assistant headman, the Naik or village priest, the Jog-manjhi or moral guardian of the village youth and the Gadet or messenger. The meeting of the council generally takes place at the *manjhi than*. The village council is an important social unit for the administration of justice. Family and village disputes are referred to it. The topics discussed in the council include cases of divorce, partition of property, adoption of children, quarrels over land, etc. Death, birth and marriage ceremonies are organized by co-operation and participation of the village council. In addition, before any religious ceremonies are begun, the village elders meet together to discuss the feast and festivals. Due to the introduction of statutory panchayat the old system is fading away.

The inter-village council is known as the *pirh* or *pargana*, which deals with matters which cannot be settled at the village level. It is constituted by the representatives of several villages under the *pirh* or *pargana*. Major offences like incest, adultery and inter-village disputes are discussed at this level. When somebody is dissatisfied with the decision of the village council, he may seek the help of the *pirh* or *pargana* council. Above all these authorities is the hunt council. The annual hunt is organized by a large number of Santal from different villages beyond the *pirh* or *pargana*, which gives them a chance to meet and discuss complicated disputes. Hunting expeditions may continue for three or four days. Spending the whole day in the chase, the hunting party takes a rest at one place overnight where they discuss different problems. Any case previously referred to the village or *pargana* council may be placed before the hunt council for a fresh

trial. Excommunication from the community or *bitlaha* can be declared by the hunt council. Inter-village councils and the hunt council are not functioning properly, but the village council still plays a vital role in socio-political matters. Guilty persons are fined by the council and the fine raised from the offender is spent on feasting.

Like other tribes of Orissa, the Santal are fond of dancing and music. They dance and sing when they are in happy mood. Dancing and music are associated with all the rituals and festivals. This is a way to free oneself from the tired and boring life. The Santal dance is a group affair. Boys and girls, old and young, participate in it. Dancing visits are exchanged between different villages. There is no hard and fast rule regarding the time and place for dancing. But they generally dance at night. The dancers do not wear any special dress during their performances. The main musical instruments used by the Santal are the *tamrak*, *dhol*, *bhuang*, *surangi* and flutes. The Santal have different types of songs for different occasions. Devotional songs are sung during religious ceremonies.

Santal women show their artistic talents by decorating their walls with different colours and drawings. The Santal houses are most picturesque among the tribes of Orissa.

The Santal have experienced different socio-economic changes over several decades. They live among various castes and tribes. The influence of Hindu neighbours can be seen in some aspects of their culture. Urbanization and industrialization, and interaction with Hindus, have changed the outlook of the Santal to a great extent. A large number of Santal go outside in search of jobs and work in towns and urban centres, from which they return with new ideas and practices which become a model for the rest.

The material culture of the Santal has changed considerably. Their household articles no longer constitute their traditional materials, which they make or collect from the forest. They frequently visit towns where urban goods are displayed. This increases their desire to enjoy these things. Many well-to-do families have a radio, cycle and wooden furniture. Most Santal of the younger generation wear pants, shirts and *banyan* instead of their traditional coarse cloths. The women wear mill-made saris, blouses, pettycoats, and glass or plastic ornaments in imitation of local Hindu women. The habit of taking tea, smoking *bidis* and cigarettes has been acquired by Santal living in towns and urban centres.

Change in the economic life of the Santal is most remarkable. Because of the sub-division and fragmentation of landholdings owing to families splitting and restrictions imposed by the Government in order to reclaim fresh forest land for cultivation, the owner cultivators have been turned into agricultural labourers and sharecroppers. Many Santal from interior areas have come to Koraput, Jamsedpur or Keonjhar to work in industries and mines. Many of them migrate temporarily to nearby agricultural areas to work as agricultural labourers.

The social and religious life of Santal who live in the villages has been least affected by the outside forces. They follow their traditional customs and manners in respect of death, birth and marriage ceremonies. Here the Santal observe the

same rites and rituals with great detail to avoid displeasing the traditional deities. Some local Hindu gods and goddesses have entered the Santal pantheon. Yet in spite of all these changes in their material life, the Santal have remained essentially the same as they were in the past. In fact most of their cultural borrowings are outward and superficial. In recent years, in fact, educated Santal have been organizing socio-cultural associations for the preservation of their traditional culture.

The development of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes is one of the main objectives of the state. There has been a continuous effort since independence by the government to raise their socio-economic standards. Stress has been laid on educational development. As a progressive community in the state, the Santal avail themselves of the maximum facilities provided to them. The opening of residential schools and hostels, and the provision of scholarships, have provided ample opportunity for the Santal to educate their children.

SAORA

B.B. Mohanty

The Saora are one of the oldest known tribes of Orissa, so widespread that they are found in all the districts of the state. But their main concentration extends over the Parlakhemundi sub-division of Gajapati District and Gunupur sub-division of Rayagada District. The two sub-divisions, being contiguous, form a compact area of Saora land. They are called by various names such as Savara, Sabara, Saur, Sora, etc. and have a racial affinity with the proto-Australoid physical features which are dominant among the aborigines of central and southern India.

Being one of the most primitive and ancient communities, frequent references to the Saora are found in Hindu mythology and classics. They are widely found all over central India, comprising Bihar, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and West Bengal. In northeastern states like Assam and Tripura they have a sizable population in the tea plantation zones, where the Saora work as labourers. The term Saora appears to have two connotations, one derived from the Sagories, the Scythian word for axe, and the other from Saba Roye, the Sanskrit term for carrying a dead body. Both of them fit well with their habit of always carrying an axe over their shoulder and their primitive occupation of hunting and living on the spoils of chase. More often, the Saora find mention in the Sanskrit literature, the epics, the Puranas and other religious texts.

'Sora is an uncultivated language, and has no recognized standard. It varies considerably not only between villages but also between individuals', says Rammurti, the authority on the Saora language. It belongs to the Austric family of languages to which Mundari belongs. There are no doubt poetic themes in the language. Verrier Elwin says, 'The Saora who give the impression of being rather matter of fact and prosaic are surprisingly picturesque and metaphorical in their speech'.

The Saora are one of the major tribes of Orissa. Their population in different census years is given below:

1951	-	1,91,401
1961	-	3,11,614
1971	-	3,42,757
1981	-	3,70,060
1991	-	4,03,510

The above census figures show that the tribe is on the increase. According to the 1991 Census they constitute 5.74 per cent of the total tribal population of the state. On the basis of their numerical strength they occupy fifth position among the 62 tribal communities. Within a span of ten years from 1981 to 1991 the tribe registered a growth rate of 9.04 per cent. The sex ratio based on the latest census

figures comes to 1015 females per 1000 males. The Saora are educationally very backward. According to the 1991 Census the literacy level among them is 25.58 per cent as compared with 22.31 per cent for the total tribal population and 49.09 per cent for the entire population of the state. Their percentage of literacy showed an increase of 25.58 per cent over their earlier figure of 14.50 per cent recorded in 1981 Census.

In appearance the Saora resemble the other pre-Dravidian tribes. They have long heads and flat noses with expanded alae. The brow ridges are prominent but not to a great extent like the Kondhs. There is a depression at the root of the nose. Facial prognathism is marked. The hair is wavy and curly, but individuals with straight hair are not unusual. Some individuals have epicanthic folds in the eyes. Skin colour is generally brown to dark brown, though there are quite a number of fair-complexioned individuals with yellowish shades. The Saora are not strongly built like the Kondh, but they are better in body build in comparison to the tribes of north Orissa. The most noteworthy point is their efficiency in climbing and walking on hills.

There is hardly anything distinctive about the dress of a Saora man, which consists of a loincloth about six feet long and about ten inches in breadth. This may be plain or may be decorated with red tassels at the ends. This is tied around the hips and hangs down in two strips, the one in the rear being longer. Occasionally a man wears a single necklace of beads. The traditional dress of a Saora woman is a waist cloth with gray borders which hardly reaches the knees. The skirt is about three feet in length and about two feet in breadth. In chilly weather a woman covers the upper part of the body with another piece of cloth. These cloths are woven by the Doms from yarn, hand spun by the Saora themselves. At present in some places they have taken to mill-made clothes and ready-made dresses. Converted and acculturated Saora women cover the upper parts of their body with a blouse or a sari. The males wear shirts and shorts, even trousers, generally when they visit the market or relatives in other villages. Saora women do not use huge bundles of necklaces of beads and metals. They wear a few necklaces of beads, round wooden plugs, spiral rings made of brass, bell-metal or aluminium in the fingers and toes, little rings in the alae of the nose and metal anklets. All varieties of these ornaments are purchased from local market.

Saora villages are situated in the most inaccessible areas and in many cases lie hidden in forest-clad hills, making it difficult to reach them except along steep zig-zag hill paths. They build their houses on the slopes or foothills. They generally live in small villages, the average size varying from a few households to around 200. In the case of large villages they live in several hamlets. Whether large or small, Saora villages have been long established at their present sites. Unlike their *podu* or shifting cultivation their settlement pattern has nothing nomadic about it. The terraced field exhibiting the Saora's skills in contour bunding, revetment and water management is located close to the settlements at one corner. When founding a new settlement they select high lands and hill slopes which are free from water-logging and lie near the natural water sources.

Saora villages do not conform to any particular type of settlement pattern. Houses are often built in rows with a street left in between. In some villages there are several rows of houses with streets crossing each other at right angles. Sometimes houses facing the same direction are arranged in rows one above the other like terraces. In many cases the houses are jumbled up, and there are narrow lanes and small openings on to which the doors of the houses open. Saora houses are rectangular in shape and fairly high. The plinth is high while the roof is proportionately low. There may be a single door or in some houses a back door, right in line with the front door. There is a high front verandah. The walls of the houses are made of stone and mud. In some areas walls are built of bamboo splits or wooden planks thickly plastered with mud on either side. The walls are coloured red with red earth. Inside the house is a large loft resting on wooden pillars and covering about three-quarters of the house, which is used for storing most of the household articles from food grains to tiny titbits and clothes. The open space is meant for husking grains with pestles and dining. The hearth is located under this loft at one end adjoining a wall. The fire is kept burning constantly. The household utensils are kept near the hearth. In winter and the rainy season all family members and visitors sleep under the loft. In summer some people may sleep on the verandah.

From the roof hang a number of objects like baskets, gourd vessels, bundles of clothes, umbrellas, spears, bows, arrows and earthenware pots. Agricultural implements are piled up at one corner of the house. The dedicated pots, gourds and baskets containing the special clothes of the ancestors and tutelary deities are hung on the wall, which is decorated with italons or ikons representing men, archers, gunmen, mantle-bearers, kings, queens, elephants, horses, dogs, etc. The fowls are usually allowed to find shelter in the living room. Sometimes a fowl pen and a shelter for the pigs are provided on the verandah. A cowshed is built on one side of the house.

The village chiefs and other well-to-do Saora build larger houses with a spacious verandah fitted with carved doors. A Saora with more than one wife must construct a separate house for each wife. When constructing a new house, rice and wine are ceremoniously put in the hole dug for the first pillar to be erected in the name of the earth goddess. The household contents of the Saora show a very poor picture. Earthenware vessels are generally used in cooking and for storing water. Brass and aluminium pots are used among the well-to-do Saora. They sleep on mats made of palm leaf. Some village headmen use a charpoy. A large number of baskets of different sizes are also seen.

The economic life of the Saora rests on shifting cultivation to a large extent and terraced and wet cultivation to some extent. Their other means of subsistence economy are occasionally hunting, rarely fishing and forest collecting throughout the year. The economic composition and employment status of the Saora as a whole at the 1991 Census reveals that workers comprise 41.04 per cent of the Saora population. Among the workers, cultivators constitute 42.59 per cent and agricultural labourers 46.76 per cent. The remaining 10.65 per cent are engaged in other economic pursuits.

The Saora are the best terrace cultivators. The terraced fields in which water flows throughout the year are locally called *sarroba* and are exclusively meant for paddy cultivation. The upper terraces which are dry are locally called *jvanum* and used for cultivating *ragi* (*elusine corocana*), *hiri* (*phaseolus mungo*) and *kulthi* (*dolichos biflorus*). The terraces are built right up the beds of the hill streams and extend many hundreds of feet from the depths of the valleys to the hill slopes, in some places rising up to the hill tops. The terraces are works of great engineering skill. The platform of each terrace is flat throughout and the fall of each terrace is packed with stones. The construction of the terraces is so ingeniously and skillfully done that no soil is carried down with the water that flows from the higher terraces to the lower. The terrace fields are privately owned and handed down from father to sons. These are valuable assets to the Saora and are sometimes mortgaged to local money and paddy lenders who are mostly from the Pana community.

Two varieties of paddy are grown in the terrace fields, an early variety called Ambadhan and a late variety called Badadhan. The calendar of agricultural operations connected with terrace fields are given below.

Agricultural operations of terrace cultivation.

Early variety (month)	Name of work	Late variety (month)
(1)	(2)	(3)
December	Preparation of seed bed	June
February	Transplantation	July
April	Weeding	September
May-June	Harvesting	November-December

Ragi is cultivated in dry fields. No manure is applied in these fields. *Ragi* transplantation starts after the first shower of rains, and weeding and harvesting are carried out in the months of July and October respectively. The Saora also grow pumpkins, cucumbers, beans, pineapple, tobacco, maize and ginger in their kitchen gardens.

The Saora observe certain rituals in connection with terraced cultivation. The principal one is connected with transplantation. Before the seedlings are pulled up for transplantation a ritual is performed in the seed bed. On this occasion dried fish and fowl are offered to a deity called Jatra. The belief is that the deity will be pleased, protect the plants from pests and ensure a good harvest. In addition to wet or terraced cultivation the Saora practise shifting cultivation quite extensively. The shifting cultivation is known as *bagada chasa*, and each and every family has a few patches of swiddens, either on the hill slopes or on the hill tops, providing mainly minor millets and pulses.

Among the Saora the swiddens are owned individually and are handed down on a hereditary basis although there is no legal document in support of their ownership rights. They conceive of themselves not as belonging to their ancestral swiddens but rather as owning them. In their attitude there is all the proud

possessiveness of the landowners in the plains who vigorously defend their rights against any illegal encroachment. The land itself, timber, fruit trees and game animals are as dear as life to the Saora. Generally speaking the focal point of all activities in Saora society is land, and the root cause of Saora *fituri* is land alienation.

Every Saora village has a well-defined boundary and its inhabitants carry on shifting cultivation in the hills located within the village boundary. Some hills are close to the village and others are at a distance. Traditionally the hills are distributed on the basis of the *birinda* or extended family. Members of a particular *birinda* used to have swiddens exclusively on one hill and no outsider was allowed to share the hill for purposes of shifting cultivation. But with the increase in population and out-migration, change has been noticed in this pattern. Today cases of outsiders cultivating hills belonging to a *birinda* other than their own are not unknown.

A piece of land is used for cultivation for two to three years during which period different crops are sown in succession. Then the land is abandoned so that it can recuperate. A mixed crop of cereals, minor millets and pulses such as *elusine corocana*, *penicum liiare*, *penicum italicum*, *sorghum vulgare*, *penisetum typhoideum*, *cylanus cajan* and *dolichos biflorus* are grown in the swiddens. This practice of growing mixed crops is dictated by their food habits and the ecological conditions. The shortening of recuperative cycle, which is due to the shortage of land and population explosion, has caused more damage to the vegetation in the swiddens. The Saora work the soil using a hoe called a *gubla*. Unlike the Juang of northern Orissa, they do not use ploughs in the swiddens.

The monthly calendar of agricultural operations connected with shifting cultivation is given below.

<u>Months</u>	<u>Nature of Work</u>
November-December	Clearing the forest, debushing
March	Firing
April	Dibbling, sowing
June	Weeding
August-January	Watching, harvesting

Certain rituals are connected with shifting cultivation. A ceremony is performed on the day of sowing. Before the seeds are mixed and broadcast the village *buyya* and *kudan* worship the hill gods by offering them liquor and sacrificing a fowl and goat. A minor ritual which involves the offering of either a fowl or a goat to the hill god called Barusim is observed towards the end of August after the *kangu* is harvested. The next ceremony follows before the *jana* is threshed or the *kandula* harvested. On this occasion fowls are offered to the hill gods.

Among the Saora there is a belief that if these ceremonies are performed they will get good crop from the swiddens.

The principal food of the Saora is gruel (*pej*) prepared from rice, *ragi*, *jana* or *ghantia*. They also eat vegetables grown in the kitchen gardens, and fruits, roots, leaves, tubers and honey collected from the forest. Non-vegetarian food is relished much more than the vegetarian diet, and no festival is observed or guest is entertained without non-vegetarian food. The social life of the Saora is based around the idea of a harmonious relationship with the living as well as the dead, and there is a continuous process of reciprocity. This process is manifested in different social organizations, and community life is pregnant with this ideal. The ceremonies and festivals of the Saora are occasions when social bonds are commented.

The smallest social unit among the Saora is the family, which is mostly of nuclear type. Generally a family comprises parents and unmarried children. They have no exogamous totemic clan, phratries or moieties. Saora society has been divided into several sub-divisions based on occupation, social status, food habits and many other customs and manners. According to Thurston's (1909) classification the Saora have been divided into two broad classes, that is, the Hill Saora and the low country Saora. The following sub-divisions are included among the Hill Saora.

1. *Savara, Jati Savara* (Savaras par excellence) or *Maliah Savara* - The members of this section regard themselves as superior to other divisions who eat the flesh of the buffalo but not of the cow.
2. *Arsi, Arisi, or Lambo Lanjiya* - *Arsi* means monkey and *Lambo Lanjiya* means long tailed. These are the names by which the members of this section are called, in reference to the long piece of cloth that the males allow to hang down. Their occupation is said to be weaving coarse cloths as well as agriculture.
3. *Luara or Muli* - The members of this section are workers in iron, who make arrow heads and other articles.
4. *Kindal* - The members of this section are the makers of rough baskets which are used for holding grains.
5. *Jadu* - Said to be a name among the Saora for the hill country beyond Kalakote and Puttasingi.
6. *Kumbi* - Members of this section are potters who make earthenware pots, which are used for cooking or for hanging up in houses as the fetishes of ancestral spirits or certain deities.

The low country Saora have been divided into two groups:

1. *Kapu* - denoting cultivator, or *Pallapu*
2. *Sulho* - good

Thurston has noted further that the pure Saora tribes have restricted themselves to the tracts of hill and jungle-covered valleys. As the plains are approached traces of amalgamation become apparent, resulting in a hybrid race, whose appearance and manners differ but little from those of the ordinary denizens.

of the low country. The Kapu Saora are said to retain many Saora customs, whereas the Sudho Saora have adopted the language and customs of the Oriya castes.

Sitapathi, another noted scholar who had worked on Saora, found as many as twenty-five sub-divisions among them. Some of the important sub-divisions are

Arsi Sor : Arsid is a Saora word meaning baboon. According to the Jati Saora they eat baboons.

Jadu Sor : They live in inaccessible areas of Kalakote and Puttasingi area and are in the habit of eating cows.

Kindal Sor : They are basket-makers and work with bamboos.

Kumhi Sor : They are pot-makers.

Luara Sor : They work with metals and are called blacksmiths.

Kampu Sor : The Saora who live in the vicinity of Telegus.

Sudha Sor : The Saora who live in the vicinity of Mahendragiri.

Kudumha Sor : They are potters.

Jati Sor : They eat the flesh of buffaloes and pigs.

Bobilli Sor : They live in and around Bobilli.

Lamba Lanjia Sor : They are really the primitive section of the community. They are called *Lanjia* because of their manner of wearing the loin cloth in which a long tail hangs behind. They are also called *Malu* as they live in the uplands or *mala*. This *Lanjia* group is numerically superior than other groups. The other sub-divisions are

Based Sor
Bimma Sor
Dandiya Sor
Gantra Sor
Jaro Sor

Jura Sor
Kimsod Sor
Luang Sor
Mala Sor
Mara Sor

Mani Sor
Muli Sor
Mulfa Sor
Sarda Sor
Tenkali Sor

The Saora are unique due to their lack of any clan or sub-organization of the sort common to most tribal societies of the country. Without a clan they lack the complementary institutions of totemism and taboos in marriage relationships. Instead there are extended families called *birindas*. The *birinda* is not a well-defined structure, but consists of the descendants of a common ancestor four or five generations back. Marriage is prohibited within a *birinda*, whose members

stand to each other as blood brothers. They participate in the Guar and Kariya ceremonies with their contributions. When one dies the *birinda* performs the funeral rites and even the Guar ceremony, after which the dead is admitted to the underworld. The *birinda* also inherits the property of a heirless member. A remarkable feature among the Saora is that a woman from birth to death belongs to her father's *birinda*. Her *birinda* membership does not change by virtue of her marriage. After her death the members of her own *birinda* may claim the right to perform her funeral rites and Guar. Such claims are ungrudgingly accepted by her husband's family. Nevertheless the *birinda* is not synonymous with the clan or *gotra* where members living in distant places observe common rules of exogamy. There are totems deriving from flora and fauna, and associated rites linked with these totems. In the case of the Saora *birinda* members live in one village and membership is limited to four to five generations, or even less. It thus resembles the Hindu *sapinda* or *kutumba*. On rare occasions someone may migrate to another village, but he retains his own *birinda*, and after death his bones, etc. must be brought to his original village.

The Saora love their children very much. When a woman proves to be barren, the man may marry another woman or adopt a child. A pregnant woman does her usual work up to the time of delivery. When the labour pains start she is confined in a room which is generally a corner of the house. At the time of delivery, an experienced elderly lady of the village or of the adjoining village officiates as midwife. She rubs the abdomen of the pregnant woman with castor oil, and this process facilitates an easy delivery. The umbilical cord is cut by the midwife with a sharp arrow. The placenta is then buried in a pit in one corner of the courtyard of the house. Then the mother and the new-born baby take a bath in tepid water. The pollution period is observed for seven days. On the seventh day the woman takes a bath and cooks food which is shared by the females of the house. Generally they prefer the names of ancestors for the child.

Saora marriage is not an elaborate affair. It is rather queer that people who spend most of their resources in series of festivals and ceremonies for trivial reasons celebrate marriage in such a simple way. Out of the different forms of marriage prevalent in their society, viz. marriage by arrangement, capture or service, the Saora have accepted the first form as the rule and others as exceptions. Polygamy in the form of polygyny is widely prevalent. The Saora say that if a person has more fields to clear, he can have several wives, as each wife can clear a patch of land, thus increasing the economic condition of the family.

The parents and relatives of the groom take the initiative in arranged marriages. Generally negotiations are undertaken according to the status of the two parties. In some cases it is noticed that a man from a lower *birinda* has married a woman of a higher *birinda* by offering more pots of liquor to the bride's parents. The brideprice is locally known as *panghal*, the amount of which varies between Rs. 60.00 to Rs. 80.00 and eight pots of country liquor. The Saora generally prefer to marry the daughter of their maternal uncle. The boy's father, accompanied by some kinsmen, visits the girl's house with a pot full of wine. If the girl's parents approve the proposal the wine pot is accepted and drunk in the presence of some important people of the village. However, in this type of marriage the opinion of

the girl is also sought. Thereafter, the groom's father, accompanied by some kinsmen, visits the bride's house on more than one occasion with one or more pots of liquor. On one such occasion an arrow is taken and the engagement is finalized, while on another occasion the amount of brideprice is discussed and finalized. The brideprice is paid generally in both cash and kind. On the appointed day, the groom's party visits the girl's house for the betrothal, taking along nine pots of wine. On this occasion, they are entertained with festive meals consisting of rice, buffalo meat and liquor. One year thereafter, the bride is brought to the groom's house. The day is celebrated by dancing and drinking, and from that day, they are recognized as husband and wife.

The Saora also practise both sororate and levirate forms of marriage, i.e., a man can marry his deceased wife's younger sister and woman can marry her deceased husband's younger brother.

The Saora cremate their dead, except that those dying of cholera and smallpox are buried. As cremation is a family function, some members collect wood for the pyre. The girls who are trained to act as assistants in funeral rites fetch water and prepare turmeric paste. Then the corpse is carried to the cremation ground accompanied by a musical band. On the day following the cremation, the family members of the deceased visit the cremation ground to examine the ashes and discover a sign of the cause of death. In the evening, a fowl is killed at the cremation ground and cooked with rice and bitter leaves, a meal shared by the mourners of the village. Then, after a year or two the Guar ceremony is observed. On this occasion menhirs are planted and a large number of buffaloes are sacrificed. This is generally followed by three successive Karya ceremonies every second or third year to commemorate and honour those who have died in that particular period. This ceremony is generally observed in the month of March or April which is generally treated as out of season for agricultural operations.

Possibly the religion of no other tribe is as elaborate as that of the Saora. It is true that without understanding their religion, one cannot understand any other aspects of their life. The concept of a supreme god is almost non-existent among the Saora. In different parts different gods are considered supreme. Moreover, there can be no standard catalogue for these gods, for its composition continually changes, as new ones are introduced and old ones forgotten. But all the varied aspects of their environment are associated with some god or other. The Saora gods differ from one another in composition, function, character and nature. Some are benevolent, some neutral and some malevolent. All these gods and spirits make constant demands on the living. If their demands are not met they can cause harm. Malevolent spirits are therefore looked after more than their benevolent counterparts.

Sonnum or *sunnam* is the general name for the Saora deities and spirits. The deities are called in different names such as, Labo Sum, Rude Sum and Karuni Sum, etc. The word *sonnum* is used in a general sense when applied to any deity or spirit, and in a restricted sense when applied to a particular order of deities. Besides these, the Saora worship a number of evil spirits and malevolent deities. In addition, those who die in the house appear in dreams and direct that they should

be given the offerings. Sometimes these devils enter cattle sheds and make cows and oxen ill in order to make their displeasure known.

The Saora are very famous for their wall paintings, which are known as icons. Inside the house on the walls one often finds a group of elaborately drawn sketches, which are of religious significance and therefore called italons or icons. The exact symbolic meaning of the icons, which consist of various sketches of human beings, horses, elephants, gunmen, aeroplanes, cycles, sun, moon, etc., are very difficult to understand. An icon is painted to flatter and please the gods and ancestors so that they may spare the members of their household from their invidious attention. At frequent intervals one icon may be replaced by another depending on the circumstances and the god or ancestor who may be pestering a household at the time.

Saora society is full of shamans called Kudan (male) and Kudanboi (female). They play a great role in curing all types of illness. A shaman is a diviner-cum-medicine man who can establish direct communication with the unseen world in a trance and cure all types of illness caused by the wrath of evil spirits. Shamanism is very interesting as every shaman has a female tutelary and every shamanin has a male tutelary. The relationship between these two sets of pairs is the same as that between husband and wife.

The ceremonies and festivals of the Saora are either celebrated by individual families or the whole community. The ceremonies and rites relating to the birth of a child, marriage and death are observed by individual families, whereas those relating to various agricultural operations, the harvesting of crops, and the biennial or triennial Guar (filling up of stone slabs in memory of the deceased) are observed by the village community.

Some of the important festivals observed by the Saora are as follows.

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|----------------------------|---|
| 1. <i>Buroy-n-a-Adur</i> | (relating to a kind of millet) |
| 2. <i>Ganugey-n-a-Adur</i> | (relating to sweet potato) |
| 3. <i>Kondam-n-a-Adur</i> | (relating to a coarse variety of corn grown on the hills) |
| 4. <i>Kuroj-n-a-Adur</i> | (relating to a kind of gram) |
| 5. <i>Osh-n-a-Adur</i> | (relating to a minor millet) |
| 6. <i>Rago-n-a-Adur</i> | (relating to red gram) |
| 7. <i>Tanku-n-a-Adur</i> | (relating to the storing of a mango fruit) |
| 8. <i>Uda-n-a-Adur</i> | (relating to the ripening of mango fruit) |

Besides these ceremonies, which are mostly connected with agriculture operations, a ceremony called Guar is observed in honour of deceased relatives. This ceremony is very expensive since it entails among other things the sacrifice of a buffalo.

The religious functionaries who cater to the spiritual needs of the Saora consist of a Buyya, who presides over agricultural festivals, and Kudan, the

shaman who combines the functions of priest, prophet and medicine men. His female counterpart is the Kudan boi. The position of the Buyya is ascribed, whereas for the Kudan it is achieved.

Ideally Saora villages are self-governing and the traditional panchayat plays an important role in maintaining law and order and village solidarity. In every village the people are under the influence of two elders, the Gomang or secular headman and the Buyya or religious headman. The offices of both are hereditary and occupied by the members of one and the same family. In addition to these offices, which are indigenous, there is an astrologer called Disari in the village, a post which is achieved rather than ascribed. Anyone who acquires a knowledge of stars and predicts events can function as an astrologer. The annual cycle of festivals and the date and time of holding them are decided unanimously in the village meeting. Cases relating to the partition of property, sale and mortgage of land, divorce and other social matters are also decided there. The Gomang must preside over every village meeting, initiate discussions and take decisions in consultation with the elders of the village. Ordinarily for any usual offence, the accused must pay by way of a fine two pots of liquor and one goat, etc. and to feed the villagers with these. The exact quantity, however, depends on the gravity of the offence.

The Saora are a very artistic people. Their artistic skills are not only revealed in their wall paintings but also in their dance and music. Every Saora is a musician who can coin a song then and there and sing it. Both men and women cultivate the art of dancing and singing as a matter of natural habit. In their songs, one can find a great deal of humour, romance and melody in combination of the words. In Saora dances, groups of men and women mix together and the drummers and dancers advance towards each other in alternation to the rhythm of the music. Colourful costumes are worn while dancing. Other decorations include white fowl feathers and peacock plumes. Old coloured cloths of cotton and silk are tied as turbans by men and wrapped around the chest by women. While dancing they carry swords, sticks, umbrellas and other implements and blow whistles and make peculiar sounds.

The musical instruments of the Saora are not many but consist of drums of various sizes, flutes and string instruments. The drums are of three types, a kettledrum, a double membrane drum and a large drum shaped like a bowl. There are also brass cymbals, brass gongs and hide gongs. All these noisy percussion instruments are usually used at certain agricultural festivals. Fiddles are popular at weddings. There is a two-stringed fiddle consisting of a bamboo stem with half a coconut serving as a resonator. It is played by running a bow across it. A second kind of two-stringed instrument, somewhat like a guitar, also has a bamboo stem, but here the resonators are two gourds. A third musical instrument, very popular at weddings, is a rasp. This is made from a segment of bamboo and has a slit cut longitudinally down its middle portion. The slit is corrugated, and when scraped with stick emits a grating sound.

The Saora, who have very little knowledge about environmental sanitation, do not keep their villages clean. Rather, their villages look dirty, as cowdung and other refuse like household dirt and animal excreta, etc. are thrown here and there.

in the street. Also, in the rainy season the village streets become muddy in the absence of a proper drainage system. All these conditions are excellent for mosquitoes and flies to germinate. As a result the Saora suffer from various diseases, of which malaria, gastro-intestinal disorders, diarrhea, dysentery, hookworm and roundworm infections are common. They also suffer from malnutrition, which is very much marked among the children.

The problems faced by the Saora are many and deep-rooted. Reduction in the productivity of swiddens over the years and the ban imposed by the government on cultivating these lands have become serious problems, which are threatening to shatter their economy. Added to this is their unchecked exploitation by the Dombs, one of the neighbouring scheduled castes.

SHABAR

T. Patnaik

The Shabar are a tribal community distributed in the coastal districts of Orissa. They are supposed to be a part of the great Savara tribe to which the Saora belong. It is held that a section of the Saora migrated to the coastal districts in the remote past and forgot their own language and culture in course of time. These acculturated sections of the Saora are known as Shabar. They have no language of their own and no tradition that they ever possessed one. They have adopted the language of their neighbours and speak Oriya. At home they speak with an inflexion, which is supposed to have been influenced by their aboriginal tongue. They worship Hindu gods and have those functional relationships with the Hindu deity which characterise a caste. On the other hand, the primitive section of the Saora chiefly reside in the forests and hills of the districts of Ganjam and Koraput. They have their distinct language and culture and possess all the characteristics of a primitive tribe.

The Shabar, who are supposed to be part of the great Saora tribe, have been classed on racial, cultural and particularly linguistic grounds among the Munda groups of the aborigines of India, sometimes called the Kolarian group.

The tribe is divided into different exogamous groups known as *vansa*. Each group has its own totem of animal, fruit or plant origin. The main divisions of the tribe are:

1. Jara Shabar - Descendants of Jara, who killed Lord Shri Krishna.
2. Vasu Shabar - This Vasu Shabar is represented in Hindu tradition as a devotee of Lord Jagannath. The tradition goes that a Brahman called Vidyapati was sent in search of the God Shri Krishna by Raja Indra Dyumna. He found Vasu Shabar secretly worshipping the deity. This Brahman won the confidence of Vasu Shabar, became enamoured by the daughter of the Shabar and married her. The name Vasu has since been further Aryanized into Visva-Vasu.

It may be mentioned that during the Rath Yatra (Car Festival) and Snan Yatra (bathing festival) of Lord Jagannath, the descendants of Vasu Shabar remain in sole charge of the deities and form an important class of Sebakas. These Shabar, attached to Puri temple, are known as Daitas. Customarily, the Daitas transfer the Brahma or inner contents of the deities from the old image to the new one at the time of Naba-Kalebar. Due to the nature of their employment in the temple of Lord Jagannath at Puri, they are now regarded as equal in rank to other high castes, with whom they occasionally have marital relationships. The Daitas are only found in Puri.

3. Patra Shabar - They are leaf clad Shabar of the Puranas.
4. Ghumura - These Shabar play a musical instrument known as *ghumura*.
5. Kirata - They are descendants of the demon Kirat.

The Shabar are distributed in all the districts of Orissa, their main concentration being in the districts of Ganjam, Kalahandi, Cuttack and Dhenkanal. The population of the Shabar, which was 3,29,209 in 1981 further increased to 3,73,545 in 1991. Thus, their growth rate during the period 1981-91 was 13.47 per cent. According to the 1991 Census, they constitute 5.31 per cent of the total tribal population of the state. They have a sex ratio of 1014 females per thousand males. According to the 1991 Census, 21.00 per cent of the Shabar are literate as compared with 22.31 per cent for the tribes in the state as a whole, and 49.09 per cent for the whole population of the state. The literacy percentage was 12.90 in 1981. In physical characteristics the Shabar are of dark complexion, sometimes approaching black, and short in stature.

The dress and ornaments of the Shabar are just like those of their neighbouring non-tribal lower caste people. The male dress consists of a *dhori*, which is also used as a wrapper during the winter for protection against the cold. They also wear shirts called *anga*. The women wear saris, mostly white in colour. A blouse is worn on special occasions. The women wear brass ornaments. Other ornaments consist of necklaces of beads, and glass and brass bangles known as *kharu*. Children of either sex do not wear any clothes up to four or five years. Then they wear a loin cloth. After puberty they start wearing lower and upper garments.

The Shabar have no village in the strict sense. Properly speaking, groups of people live together and form a settlement known as ward or *sahi*. These settlements are isolated and situated on the outskirts of the clean caste villages or near forests. The houses are rectangular in shape and are not arranged in rows or in any order. The materials used in building houses are *sal*, *kendu*, *mahua* and other wood, thatching grass and mud. Ordinarily the house has only one room, which is used for all purposes including cooking. In some houses, however, the only room is divided into two halves by a partition wall, one part being used for sleeping and the other for cooking. Traditional Shabar houses are very dark and have no windows. The cooking is generally done in an earthen oven made on the southwestern side. The Shabar perform a religious ceremony when occupying a house. A fowl is sacrificed by the head of the family to the deceased ancestors or *burha burhi* for the happiness and prosperity of the family in the new house. They give a feast on this occasion. Every Shabar settlement or village has its own communal house known as the *bhagat ghar*. This is used as the guesthouse of the village and also as the courthouse where cases are decided by the religious and secular leaders.

The material culture of the Shabar is poor. Their household articles mainly consist of earthenware vessels, metal plates, wooden ladles, gourd vessels, palm-leaf mats, etc. Their main sources of livelihood are wage earning, collecting edible roots, herbs and fruits from the jungle, agriculture and winemaking. Their traditional occupation is cutting wood and selling it in the nearby villages. They are landless. They cultivate small *haris* that have been settled in their favour by the government and are hence their private property. They do not have their own plough and cattle and thus hire them from their neighbours. They plough *hari* soon after the rain starts and sow paddy, maize and millet. Agriculture is not their main occupation, and they do not practice shifting cultivation. They work as labourers throughout the year. Shabar women also work as menials in the nearby towns.

They struggle hard to earn their livelihood and because of their continuous poverty fall a prey to the Sahukars (local merchants).

The family is the smallest social unit in Shabar society. The Shabar are monogamous but polygyny is not unknown. Descent, lineage and inheritance of property are traced through the father's side, i.e. are patrilineal. Property is shared by sons after the death of their father. However, the eldest son gets a little more than others. This is known as *jestha ansa* (eldest share). During the lifetime of the father, a portion of landed property is given to the married sons for their maintenance. Daughters are entitled to maintenance only until their marriage. Widows are entitled to maintenance as long as they do not marry. In the absence of any heir, one can adopt a boy of one's own community as one's son. An adopted son has a full claim to property. Family life in Shabar society is very pleasant. The father is respected by his children and he acts as their guide and guardian. The relationship between mother and children is very strong. The mother realizes the practical difficulties of her children. After the daughters marry, they leave their family and live in their husband's family. A married daughter visits her father's house on auspicious occasions and during festivals. The husband is respected and honoured by the wife. They have a rule of avoidance according to which they do not have any joking relationship with the husband's father, husband's elder brother, daughter's husband, wife's elder sister, etc. A joking relationship is permitted with the wife's younger sister, elder brother's wife, wife's younger brother, etc. A man may marry his wife's younger sister and widow of the deceased elder brother. The maternal uncle (*mamu*) plays an important role in the social structure of Shabar society. Sororate and levirate are prevalent.

The successive stages of development in the life cycle of a person are birth, early childhood, adolescence, adulthood, old age and death. These essential events in the life of a Shabar are associated with ceremonies and rituals. Birth is an occasion of much sociological importance in Shabar society. Barren women occupy a lower position in the society and are treated as un auspicious. Birth is always welcome in the Shabar society and a male child is preferred to a female child. From conception to the final purificatory rites, a number of rituals and restrictions are observed in the family. A *sada* ceremony takes place for the pregnant woman in either the seventh or ninth month when she is adorned with new clothes and fed delicious food. An elderly woman who may be a Shabar or from any other caste or tribe is called to serve as midwife (*Dhai*). The naval cord is cut with a knife and buried outside, at a corner of the house. This is done by the *Dhai*. There is pollution for nine days. During this period the father does not shave his beard or take a bath. On the ninth day, the mother and baby are given a ceremonial bath and the father shaves his beard. The mother is considered unclean for twenty-one days, at which point the purification ceremony is performed and a feast given to the villagers to mark the occasion. The child's first rice-eating ceremony takes place in the ninth or eleventh month before teething sets in. The name-giving ceremony takes place when the child grows. He learns all aspects of community life in his family environment by imitation and participatory observation. They have no village dormitory, so the child learns everything from the elderly people of the village and the family.

Marriage is an essential ritual and several procedures are followed in a Shabar marriage. Marriage by arrangement is the regular type. Marriage by choice is now prevalent due to the influence of other higher castes. Generally the age of marriage for boys is from 17 to 20 years and for girls from 13 to 15 years. Village and totem exogamy are practised, as all the villagers are considered to be agnates. Breaches of this rule are severely dealt with. Marriage within the totemic group is prohibited for they trace their descent from the same ancestor.

The marriage proposal comes from the boy's side. The following procedure is adopted in a regular Shabar marriage. (1) Kanya Dekha (bride-seeing), (2) Kunia (relative), (3) Nirbandha (negotiation), (4) Bahaghara (marriage). Proposals for the marriage are made by a middleman (Bhalaloka). The selection of the bride is done by the parents or by the brothers if the parents are dead. Before the bride-seeing or Kanya Dekha ceremony, the middleman informs the parents of the two parties. On an appointed day the groom's father and other relatives from his village visit the bride's village to see the bride. After seeing the bride, the groom's father places Rs 1/- or Rs 2/- in the hands of the girl but he never gives his consent at once. After returning to his own village and consulting his relatives, he gives his consent to the middleman, who in turn informs the bride's parents.

A date is then fixed for the second stage, Kunia (relative), by the bride's parents. On the appointed day the groom's parents go to the bride's house with sweets, new clothes and about two rupees in cash to give to the proposed daughter-in-law. The barber carries the presents to the bride's house. After a few days, the bride's father with his relatives visits the groom's house to see his son-in-law and pays him about Rs 2/-. From this day on both parties are sure of the marriage. The negotiation takes place in the bride's village. The following materials are sent by the groom's father: (1) one and half a seer of sweets, (2) two new saris (one for the bride, the other for the bride's mother), (3) a new *dhoti* for the bride's father, (4) *usuna* (boiled) rice, (5) vegetables worth Rs 3/-, (6) a pair of silver leg ornaments (*bala*), (7) a hand ornament (*magar*), (8) cosmetics (scented oil, vermilion, toilet soap, etc.) and (9) one areca nut. This is called the bride price.

Generally the marriage is arranged soon after the negotiation. Marriage takes place in the month of Fagun and Baisakha and on all days except Saturday and the birthday of the boy or the girl. The marriage date is fixed by the groom's father in consultation with a clean caste astrologer. The wedding continues for three days, the Mangan (day before marriage), the Bahaghar (marriage proper) and the Chouthi (4th day). On the day before marriage (Mangan), the groom accompanied by a group of married women and a band of musicians goes to their village deity with new clothes and ornaments. The shaman priest of the deity, known as the Kalisi, bathes the deity and offers fruits, etc. given by the groom's party. The Kalisi then touches the deity with the new ornaments and clothes. A *ghee* lamp is then lighted near the deity. At night a feast is given to the relatives.

On the day of marriage the bridegroom visits the bride's house with the party. A Brahman (priest) is employed to conduct the marriage ceremony, which takes place on an elevated platform known as the *veli*. The bridegroom is asked to apply vermilion to the forehead of the bride seven times with his little finger and vice versa. Then the groom's hand is tied with that of the bride in a ceremonial

knot or *hataganthi*. In a widow marriage the hands are not tied. A feast is then served to all the guests and villagers of the bride's village. The next day the couple is sent to the groom's house, and seven married women perform a ceremonial worship (*bandapana*) of the couple. The next day the couple meets together. On the seventh day the bride goes to her father's house and remains for about a month.

In a Shabar marriage, bride price is prevalent which is paid at the time of negotiation. An analysis of the marriage rites and ceremonies of the Shabar shows that they are influenced by their caste neighbours to a great extent. Widow remarriage is permitted. This second marriage is known as *dutia*.

The Shabar believe in life after death. After death the corpse is taken to the graveyard on a bedstead (*kokei*) carried by four male Shabars. Before the corpse is placed on the bedstead a *ghee* lamp is shown near its face i.e. the wife of the eldest son. The corpse is cremated with the head pointed to the north, or buried if the economic condition of the family is poor. If a man dies of smallpox or cholera, he is thrown into the jungle. The death ritual is observed for ten days. A feast is served to the villagers on the tenth day.

Every Shabar village has its own socio-political organization known as Gaon Sabha. The socio-political organization of the tribe as a whole is arranged like a ladder. Chhatisa is at its head. Next to the Chhatisa are the Pada Sabha (inter-village organization) and Gaon Sabha (village organization) in descending order. The *Gaon Sabha* is the lowest socio-political organization of the tribe and has two hereditary leaders, the Nahak and the Behera, the secular and religious leaders respectively. The Behera is the chief of the organization. All Shabar villages have their own village organization. The village elders assist them when the council is in action. The village organization decides cases like adultery, marriage, divorce and other minor quarrels arising in the village. Breach of tribal law is also punished. No fee corresponding to the court fee is paid to summon the council. In serious matters the guilty are kept under a social ban. In minor cases the guilty are fined and the fine goes to the common fund of the village, which is known as *kotha*. Refusal to pay the fine or to obey the decision of the council is referred to the Bada Behera of the inter-village organization, known as the Pada Sabha.

Several villages combine together to form the inter-village organization. The chief of the organization is the Bada Behera whose post is hereditary. He is assisted by the Nahaks and Beheras of all the villages representing the council. This decides cases like adultery, intermarriage, interdining and breaches of tribal law. The council fines the guilty party, and the fine goes into the common fund of the accuser's village. No fee is paid for summoning the council.

The *Chhatisa* is the highest socio-political body and court of appeal. It has the special power to frame rules and regulations for the tribe as a whole. The Bada Behera, the chairman of the council, levies fines and punishes the guilty in consultation with the Nahaks and Beheras present. He is also able to excommunicate those who do not obey the decisions of the Chhatisa from the tribe. Fines go into the common fund of the complainant's village. On the last day of the session, a great feast is arranged and all the leaders and village elders join in. If the

fine collected is more, part of it goes towards the common feast, to which all the participating villages contribute jointly.

The Shabar's socio-political organization has become more formal due to the introduction of the Panchayati Raj. The traditional leaders have now been replaced by the elected ward members. Even cases arising in the village are now taken to the civil court, due to the emergence of village touts. The Shabar have become thoroughly Hinduised, and even Brahmans serve them as priests for the worship of the gods. They worship a female divinity called Mangala, who is the prototype of the Hindu Kali. At the end of every village under the shade of a tree, Mangala is installed and decorated with vermilion. This deity is worshipped by the shaman priest or Kalisi. They also worship other Hindu gods and goddesses.

Songs and dances play a vital role in Shabar life. But now this is vanishing day by day, due to the influence of the neighbouring clean caste Hindus. They observe all festivals with their clean caste neighbours. The important tribal festivals of the Shabar are Raja Parab and Gamha Purnima. Shabar dances are only held during festivals and on other auspicious occasions. In most places Shabar women do not now take part in dances, due to the influence of Hindu manners and customs. But the general rule for dancing at Gamha Purnima is that men should dance with women irrespective of their social position or relationship. The Gamha Purnima dance is mainly observed by the Patra Shabar and women freely join in. The dance is accompanied by the *ghumura*, a kind of drum. The dances are always accompanied by songs. Shabar songs can be broadly divided into two parts, such as *bhendia* and *jamudal*. *Bhendia* songs are highly obscene, while *jamudli* songs are mainly mythological.

Traditional Shabar culture is now totally integrated. Their cultural contact with the advanced Hindus have made them slowly but steadily reach the apex of civilization. They are becoming more modern in their outlook by dropping out their traditional customs and culture, due to the impact of rapid industrialization, political modernization and socio-economic transformation.

SOUNTI

B.B. Mohanty

The Sounti are found in all the districts of the state of Orissa, but their main concentration is in the districts of Keonjhar and Mayurbhanj. The total Sounti population according to the 1991 Census is 96,251, 1.37 per cent of the total tribal population of the state. They had a growth rate of 41.81 per cent during the period 1981-91. The literacy percentage, which was 8.00 at 1981 Census, increased to 38.92 by 1991. The sex ratio is 1072 females per thousand males. Details about the origin of the tribe have been given in the Census Report for Mayurbhanj State, 1931, according to which the tribe originated in the 16th century, when its founder, one Joygobinda Das of Puri, said to be of the Khandayat caste, was allowed to settle in Manamata, one of the villages in Keonjhar, near Musakhanj. According to Mr O. Malley, 'The nucleus of the caste consisted of persons outcasted from respectable Oriya castes who were allowed by the chief of Keonjhar to settle in Manamata, one of the villages in his State. Their number grew rapidly as they received other castes with open arms. The only qualification for admission was that the new comers must have belonged to some castes from whom Brahmans would take water' (Census of Mayurbhanj State, 1930-1937).

The name 'Sounti', which seems to have been derived from the word Saunta, meaning 'gathered in'. In Keonjhar and Mayurbhanj they received special attention from the rulers of the state. The Sounti were invited to all state and social functions, and in recognition of their special services to the state they were honoured with famous titles. In the District of Mayurbhanj there are separate villages or hamlets inhabited exclusively by Sounti. In Keonjhar District, on the other hand, they live side by side with other caste Hindu neighbours like the Gauda, Kamar, etc.

Among the Sounti the selection of a home site is the most important factor before the construction of a new house. Before the site is selected, a rectangle is drawn at the centre of the proposed site, vermilion paste is placed at the centre of the rectangle, followed by a handful of rice covered by a leaf lid. Next morning, if the rice is found intact, the site is considered auspicious. Houses, which are generally two roomed, are built round a central courtyard. Single-room houses are very rarely met with. Cattle sheds are built close to the dwelling house. Goats, poultry and other domesticated animals are either accommodated in the bedroom or in a separate shed built close to the house. The dress of the men consists of *dhotis*, which are about 8' long, while women wear coloured saris 12' to 15' long. Various types of silver ornaments, such as necklaces, bangles, earrings and anklets, are worn by the women. The use of glass bangles can be observed nowadays.

There does not seem to be any restriction imposed on a parturient woman except that she is not allowed to cross a river. She does her normal duties until the labour pains start. The Sounti observe a ceremony called *Sadakhia* during the advanced stages of pregnancy, when the woman is offered with some delicious food of her choice by the father. The living room is converted into a lying-in-room.

where the child is delivered. The assistance of experienced old women is generally sought for a safe and easy delivery. However, nowadays, if there are complications, the patient is taken to the hospital. According to Sounti tradition the umbilical cord of a male child is cut with an arrow blade and of a female child with a knife. A period of pollution of 21 days is observed by all lineage members. During this period no outsider takes food or water from any family members of the lineage group. The first stage of purification falls on the ninth day, when the house is cleaned and dabbed with cow-dung. Members of the household are shaved and the washerman washes the clothes. But the woman is not allowed to cook until the second stage of the pollution is over, which falls on the twenty-first day. On this day the house is cleaned again and all the used earthenware vessels are replaced by new ones. The mother takes bath and puts on new clothes. A feast is arranged which is shared by kinsmen and relatives. The celebration ends after giving a name to the child.

Marriage within the *khilli* is prohibited. Adult marriages are most common, although there is no restriction on child marriages. Monogamy is the general rule, but a few cases of polygamy in the form of polygyny also occur. Widow marriages are also allowed. Selection of spouse is always the responsibility of the parents. But the initiative for negotiation starts from the boy's side. Several visits are exchanged by the parties before the selection of spouses. Then an astrologer is called to match the horoscope of the boy with that of the girl. If he declares in favour of the match, then negotiation immediately takes place by paying a bride price, which is generally in cash amounting to ten rupees. Then a date convenient to both the parties is fixed for the marriage by consulting the *Oriya Panji*. The betrothal ceremony is held at the house of the girl, on the occasion of which a feast is arranged.

On the day of the marriage, a procession consisting of the bridegroom, his relatives and friends goes to the house of the bride accompanied by a musical band. At the bride's house the groom is ceremonially received by the mother and other old women of the house. A feast is given to the marriage party before the Vedic wedding rituals start. Then the priest performs the marriage on the altar on which both bride and groom sit. Here a *homa* is arranged and the palms of the bride and groom are tied together by the priest. The Vedic rites, which generally take a longer period, end when the fathers of the boy and girl offer their son and daughter to each other. Next day, the groom returns home with the bride. On the day of the return a feast is arranged in the groom's home. On the fourth day a ceremony called Chaturthi and on the eighth day another ceremony called Athamangala are observed.

Divorce is permitted in Sounti society on reasonable grounds. When a divorced woman marries a second time her first husband must be compensated. However, if the fault is not with the woman, the husband is required to pay a sum of Rs. 4/- and a piece of cloth to the woman at the time of the divorce.

The dead are either buried or cremated although the latter practice is more frequent than the former. The funeral and mourning rites look quite similar to that of the neighbouring caste Hindus. A period of mourning is observed for ten days.

The news of the death is immediately conveyed to the kinsmen and others in the village. Soon after the kinsmen assemble in the deceased's house, the corpse is carried on a wooden bier, a piece of ladder made especially for the purpose, or a piece of cot to the cremation ground. The corpse is washed and anointed with oil and turmeric, and then laid down on the pyre or pit with its face pointing upwards and its head towards the north or west. After cremation the kinsmen proceed to a pond or river, where they are shaved by the barber and after a bath return home. On their arrival at home the cooked earthenware pots are removed from kitchen and thrown out. The same day evening relatives and kinsmen are given food by the deceased's family, which consists of bitter rice. From the next day up to the tenth day the eldest son of the deceased carries some food in a leaf cup to the cremation ground and offers it to the soul of the deceased. During the period of pollution, which lasts for ten days, people are considered ritually unclean. All activities connected with agriculture are suspended. On the ninth day they are shaved again and the house and clothes are cleaned. On the tenth day a *śradha* is performed in which the officiating Brahman priest offers food to the departed soul. In the night the soul is brought back to the home and offered food. On the eleventh day new earthenware pots and vessels are purchased and a feast is arranged for kinsmen, villagers and visiting relations.

The economic life of the Sounti mainly centres around agriculture. Those who possess some land have taken to cultivation. But for the majority of people who have no land, wages are the main source of income. Generally, the poorer section of the people work as labourers in the fields of well-to-do persons in the village. Otherwise, they work as labourers in different construction sites in the area. Rice is their staple food, and is eaten throughout the year. They also eat vegetable curry occasionally, whenever vegetables are available. Non-vegetarian food is relished much more than vegetarian food. In the rainy season they catch fish from nearby *nalas* and rivers. Very rarely they hunt animals in the forest. Meat of various types of birds such as parrot, fowl, peacock, etc. are eaten.

There is nothing very striking so far as their religious beliefs and practices are concerned. The festivals and rituals that they observe are the same as those observed by their Hindu counterparts. Some of the important festivals they observe include Raja Parab, Gamha Purnima, Makar Sankranti, Dasahara, etc. Among the deities they worship, Basuki, the village deity, is the chief and is worshipped at Nuakhia, transplantation, harvesting, etc. Earlier they had music and dances at weddings and festivals. The boys and girls formed groups and used to dance together to the accompaniment of music. Nowadays this aspect of their culture has totally ceased, topped and been replaced by *kirtan mandalis*.

Notes on other Tribes

Baiga

The total population of this tribe is only 1556 as per 1991 Census.

Banjara

The total population of this tribe is 12843 as per 1991 Census. They are mainly found in the districts of Kalahandi, Sambalpur and Koraput.

Chenchu

This is a very important South Indian tribe. Their population in Orissa is only 275 as per 1991 Census.

Desua Bhumij

This tribe with a total population of 1880 as per 1991 Census constitute a section of the Bhumij tribe.

Gandia

This tribe with a total population of 3588 according to 1991 Census form a section of the Koya tribe.

Ghara

Their total population in the State is only 1553 according to 1991 Census. They are regarded as a part of the Gond tribe.

Kandha Gauda

Their number in Orissa is 19278 as per 1991 Census and they are known to be the crossbreed of Kandha tribe.

Kharwar

Their total population in Orissa is 3280 as per 1991 Census.

Kol, Kol Lohara, Munda

The total population of Kol, Kol Lohara and Munda in Orissa according to 1991 Census is 5777, 12321 and 396561 respectively. They belong to the same group as Kolha.

Korua

The total population of this tribe is 1989 as per 1991 Census.

Madia

This tribe form a part of the Koya tribe with a total population of 1439 as per 1991 Census.

Mankidi, Mankirdia

They are the synonyms of Birhor. The population of the Mankidi and Mankirdia is 1150 and 1491 respectively as per 1991 Census.

Matya

The total population of this tribe in the State is 13226 as per 1991 Census. They are mostly found in Dhenkanal and Koraput districts.

Mundari

They belong to the same group as Ho and their total population is 31147 as per 1991 Census.

Rajuar

With a total population of 3146 according to 1991 Census. Their concentration is more in Mayurbhanj district in comparison to other districts of the State.

Tharua

Their population in the State is 1595 as per 1991 Census. Their concentration is more in Kalahandi and Sambalpur districts in comparison to other districts of the State.

List of Contributors

1. Professor Dr. P.K. Nayak,
Director,
SC & ST Research & Training
Institute, Bhubaneswar.
2. Dr. N.K. Behura,
Ex Professor & Head
Department of Anthropology,
Utkal University, Vani Vihar,
Bhubaneswar.
3. Dr. Ch. P.K. Mohapatra,
Ex-Deputy Director,
SC & ST Research & Training
Institute, Bhubaneswar.
4. Sri B. Chowdhury,
Ex-Deputy Director,
SC & ST Research & Training
Institute, Bhubaneswar.
5. Smt. K.B. Debi,
Ex-Deputy Director,
SC & ST Research & Training
Institute, Bhubaneswar.
6. Sri P.S. Daspatnaik,
Ex-Deputy Director,
SC & ST Research & Training
Institute, Bhubaneswar.
7. Sri G.B. Sahoo,
Ex-Deputy Director,
SC & ST Research & Training
Institute, Bhubaneswar.
8. Sri G.N. Satpathy,
Ex-Research Officer,
SC & ST Research & Training
Institute, Bhubaneswar.
9. Sri J.P. Rout,
Deputy Director,
SC & ST Research & Training
Institute, Bhubaneswar.
10. Sri B.B. Mohanty,
Deputy Director,
SC & ST Research & Training
Institute, Bhubaneswar.
11. Sri S.C. Biswal,
Statistician,
SC & ST Research & Training
Institute, Bhubaneswar.
12. Miss F. Bara,
Deputy Director,
SC & ST Research & Training
Institute, Bhubaneswar.
13. Dr. A.C. Sahoo,
Director,
ATDC, Bhubaneswar.
14. Sri H.S. Mishra,
Research Officer,
SC & ST Research & Training
Institute, Bhubaneswar.
15. Smt. S. Ray,
Research Officer,
SC & ST Research & Training
Institute, Bhubaneswar.
16. Smt. T. Patnaik,
Research Officer,
SC & ST Research & Training
Institute, Bhubaneswar.
17. Smt. S. Das,
Ex-Research Assistant,
SC & ST Research & Training
Institute, Bhubaneswar.
18. Sri M. Behera,
Ex-Research Assistant,
SC & ST Research & Training
Institute, Bhubaneswar.

19. Sri S. C. Mohanty,
Research Officer,
SC & ST Research & Training
Institute, Bhubaneswar.

20. Sri T. Sahoo,
Research Officer,
SC & ST Research & Training
Institute, Bhubaneswar.

21. Smt. S. Routray,
Research Assistant,
SC & ST Research & Training
Institute, Bhubaneswar.

22. Smt. A. Mall,
Research Assistant,
SC & ST Research & Training
Institute, Bhubaneswar.

23. Miss K. Patnaik,
Research Assistant,
SC & ST Research & Training
Institute, Bhubaneswar.

24. Shri P. K. Mohanty,
Lecturer,
Department of Anthropology,
B. J. B. College, Bhubaneswar.

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K. Patnaik

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