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EDITORIAL

Shifting cultivation is an age old tradition of many backward tribal groups. In Orissa backward tribes like the Saora, Kotia Khond, Dongria Khond, Bonda high landers, Hill Juang and Paudi Bhuiya are basically shifting cultivators. They practise slash and burn method on the hill slopes and broadcast millets, beans, oil-seeds and niger on the hill. These seeds grow up during rainy season and the crops are harvested in autumn. Paucity of wet land compels these tribal groups to resort to shifting cultivation which causes soil erosion and destruction of forests. From time to time the Forest Department has tried to curb widespread shifting cultivation. Even then the practice continues unabated. Efforts were made in last 20 years to settle these shifting cultivating tribes on land. Colonies were established for a few families and they were provided with land, agricultural implements and live-stock along with permanent houses in those colonies. However, it has been

found that these re-settlement colonies have not succeeded to any great extent in eradicating the practice of shifting cultivation. Firstly, the land provided in those colonies are mostly dry land without facilities of irrigation. This actually does not secure good crops. For the first year they get some crops but in subsequent years the yield becomes poorer leading to dejection among the settlers, as a result of which they lose interest in settled life, and revert to traditional one. Land reclamation particularly in forest areas has to be done systematically. The tree stumps which stand on the land make cultivation a difficult process.

The cultural fixation of the tribals in the traditional practice of shifting cultivation deter them from giving up this practice and adopting completely a new mode of life. The forest which is destroyed in Belghar and other parts of Phulbani by shifting cultivation presents a deplorable sight. Perhaps a few trees which are cut

in Belghar by the Kotia Khond to prepare hill clearings will be much more valuable than the crops which are produced on the cleared lands. It is all right to say that this practice should be checked with a strong hand. But so far there has not been an alternative to cure this malady. Students of Anthropology and others who study the tribals have advocated a better mode of life for the shifting cultivating tribals to wean them away from shifting cultivation. A permanent solution has to be sought now for this purpose. It was suggested by a UNESCO study team from Indonesia that slopes below 10 per cent gradient may be left for shifting cultivation as soil erosion is lesser in those slopes. The higher slopes should not be brought under hoe cultivation. Simultaneously it is to be seen that shifting cultivation being a traditional mode of life cannot be abruptly put to an end by administrative pressure. This practice has, therefore, to go side by side

with other methods of cultivation. In course of time when the tribals feel that a different mode of cultivation produces better results than the present one they are bound to show preference for the former. For this purpose, the authorities should provide suitable cultivable lands, properly reclaim those land and provide dependable source of irrigation. Moreover, terracing of slopes for which there is superingenuity of certain tribals like the Saora may be encouraged. The terraces are fed by hill-streams and produce double crop of paddy. This practice should be encouraged among the Saora. This may also be introduced in other areas and the tribals in those areas may be encouraged to learn this. Till other methods of cultivation are readily available and are fully adopted by the tribals the practice of shifting cultivation may have to continue in spite of all its deleterious effects.



Khond child drinking water, Munargaon
*Photo by—*Courtesy of Robert Ebnither.

BUDDHADEB CHAUDHURI

Introduction

Every culture irrespective of its simplicity and complexity has its own beliefs and practices concerning diseases. It does not work in a meaningless fashion. The system of medicine of a culture tries to treat the diseases in its own way. This treatment of disease varies from group to group depending on the nature of culture. Little work has been done on the interaction of primitive and modern medical practices in a rural setting. It is very interesting to study how the two apparently different approaches to heal a disease operate in a same setting. This paper represents an effort to discuss the concept and treatment of diseases and the interaction of primitive and modern medical practices in a Munda village, Telkand. This will show whether the villagers are accepting the modern medical practices or they are in favour of their traditional method. In this connection, the sanitation, water-supply, public health and their concept of modern medical practices shall also be discussed.

In West Bengal, the Mundas are mainly concentrated in North Bengal, Sunderbans of 24 Parganas and the western and north-western parts of Midnapur. This latter

MAGIC VS. MEDICINE IN A TRIBAL VILLAGE

region is physically contiguous to Chotonagpur plateau, their homeland. They have migrated to this region some 150 years ago in search of occupation and better economic security.

Telkand is a typical Munda concentrated village in Sankrail police-station of Jhargram subdivision in Midnapur district, West Bengal. It consists of 46 Munda families. Recently, a Raju family has settled here and lives in the outskirts of the village. The total population is 242 which includes 121 (50 per cent) males and 121 (50 per cent) females. This village is far away from any urban centre. Kharagpur is 30 miles away. The two nearest important villages are Rohini (3 miles south-east) and Ragra (2 miles west). There is a regular fair-weather bus service which plies from Jhargram to Rohini. The distance between Rohini and Telkand is generally covered on foot.

The mud-built thatched houses of the Mundas are mostly situated in a linear fashion by the side of village main road. The houses are rectangular in ground-plan and none of this tribal people has any double storied building. In most cases there are 2/3 rooms

depending on the economic condition and size of the household. However, in most cases, there is no window and in many cases, the kitchen is within the main hut. As such, the inside dwelling room, the *Giti-ora*, is very unhygienic. Besides, when there is any infectious disease, they cannot always segregate the patient from other members of the household. In all cases, a lavatory is absent, so also any drainage system. Then there are the manure-pits adjacent to the courtyard where the sweepings of the yard, the refuses of the cow-shed are thrown. This, though essentially necessary for cultivation, is very harmful to health. The main source of drinking water is well. Besides, there is the Banshi-canal, which they use for washing and bathing purposes. But as the water is not well protected, it can easily be polluted and contaminated. It is seen that at the time of childbirth they call an untrained *Dhai-ma* or midwife belonging to the low *Hari* caste. She cuts the umbilical cord with an iron arrow head. This traditional method, though unhygienic, is followed by all the villagers and they do not go to the health centre.

Cultivation occupies a prominent place in their primary pursuits and may be regarded as the principal source of livelihood.

Before discussing anything about the concept and treatment of diseases of the Mundas of this region, something must be said, about the Mundas of Chotonagpur plateau, as has been pictured by

S. C. Roy. "The Mundas are great believers in the power of evil-eye, and in cases of repeated sickness in a family or among the cattle of a family, a witchfinder—the *Sokha, Mati* or *Bhagai*—is appealed to for detecting the witch". (1912 : 486). Thus it is seen that the Mundas has a doctrine concerning sickness and a functioning group of curers. The present-day Mundas of Midnapur also believe that this world is full of prying witches and other malevolent spirits, which are always seeking to do harm to human being and have much evil potentialities. (Bhowmick and Chaudhuri 1966 : 100—107)

In this village there are two Munda medicinemen or *Deonas*, who collect medicinal herbs or roots and prepare the medicines. They are Remeshwar Singh and Lalmohan Singh. It is said that the *Deonas* have to undergo an elaborate training under the guidance of a man who teaches the techniques of magic art and the methods of treatment of diseases and spirit-possession. The Mundas of this village can get the modern medical facilities from the nearby villages like Ragra and Rohini. There is a health centre at Rohini. There are also qualified medical practitioners (L. M. F.) and their dispensary-cum-medical shops in both the villages. Besides, there is a Homeopath at Itamandua village who treats minor ailments.

In order to understand how far their magico-religious beliefs and practices stand in relation

to other ways of modern treatment and how far they have still clung to their traditional beliefs and practices about the concept and treatment of diseases as reported by S. C. Roy

(1912), a total number of 76 cases of diseases with their reported causes and methods of treatment were studied. It covered cases of three years, 1963—65. It is given below :

Persons consulted			Reported causes		Nature of treatment				
Total cases	Village Deonas	Doctors from outside	Natural cause	Spirit-possession, Evil-eye & Sorcery	By the Deona			Modern treatment	
					Ayurvedic medicine	Magical puffs	Promise to the Deity	Allopathy	Homeopathy
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
76	54	22	56	20	28	19	7	16	6

It has been observed during the study that during illness the villagers do not at first consult the doctors from outside. They call the local physician or *Deona*. He is supposed to assess the cause of illness by feeling the pulse and in acute cases by performing oil-divination (*Telkhari*)¹. The Mundas believe that a man becomes ill due to natural cause, Spirit-possession or influence of evil-eye and sorcery. They also attribute a few diseases to particular deity as for instance, epidemic diseases like Cholera, Smallpox, etc., are attributed to *Sitala*. Thus with an effort to avert the diseases, they annually worship the deity. Generally the *Deonas* at first prescribe medicinal herbs or roots and in complicated cases, they apply

magical puffs. One such interesting case is given. In 1963, Charimani Dasi fell ill. They called Lalmohan Singh. He came, touched the pulse and said that it was a case of spirit-possession (*Chamak-laga*). So some sort of magical treatment should be made. He then asked for mustard seeds, lamp and a clean piece of cloth. When those objects were supplied, he lighted the lamp in front of the patient and uttered incantations. Then he set fire to the cloth and threw mustard through the burning cloth uttering incantations. It was reported that then the patient moved, as if she was shocked (*Chamak*) and she was cured. It is seen that for the magical treatments, they use mustard seed which they believe

1. *Telkhari*—Charging Mustard Oil with special magical power with incantations and using the same for detection and/or treatment against spirit possession, evil-eye or sorcery.

has great magical potency to counteract evil-eye or spirit-possession.

In very acute cases, they ask the patient to promise to offer fowl or goat to the deities as in the case of Kartick Chandra Singh, whom Rameshwar Singh could not cure by medicine or magical puffs. It was reported that after they offered a fowl to Manasa, the patient was cured.

Again, it is found that when the village medicinemen fail to diagnose and treat a disease properly, the doctors from the nearby

villages like Ragra, Rohini and Itmandua are consulted. Thus out of 22 cases where doctors from outside were consulted, six of them were Homeopaths and sixteen Allopaths.

Now, the nature of treatment for the natural cause and spirit-possession, evil-eye or sorcery is discussed here separately to indicate if there is any variation in the method of treatment.

The method of treatment of diseases for the natural causes is given below in a tabular way :

No. of cases	By the village Deona			By the Doctors from outside		
	Ayurvedic medicine	Magical puffs	Promise to the deity	Allopath	Homeopath	Total
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
56	22	7	5	16	6	22

Thus, it is seen that for the natural causes, the village *Deonas* are inclined to use their Ayurvedic medicine more than other methods.

Now the method of treatment of diseases when the cause was reported as spirit-possession, evil-eye or sorcery is given below :

No. of cases	By the village Deona			By the Doctors from outside		
	Ayurvedic medicine	Magical puffs	Promise to the deity	Allopath	Homeopath	Total
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
20	6	12	2	x	x	x

Discussion:

The belief of the interference of supernatural agency in diseases, the attribution of some diseases to certain deities and the belief in evil-eye, spirit-possession or sorcery clearly indicate that still these Mundas have clung to their traditional modes of beliefs and practices. To avert the diseases, they annually worship the deity. They think that sudden and violent sickness are due to evil-eye, spirit-possession or sorcery. They believe that witches have evil-eye. Thus, if they wish, if they only cast their look on a living being harm is sure to befall it. They strongly believe that then only a *Deona* can save by his magical powers. It is seen that a *Deona* feels the pulse and tries to diagnose the illness first because specific type of illness has specific type of treatment. The variation in the nature of treatment where the reason is natural cause or spirit-possession, evil-eye and sorcery also indicates it. Now they also say that a person is suffering from Influenza, Pneumonia, etc. This naming seems to be due to their contact with modern medical practices. It is also found that due to the facilities now available, a few villagers consult the doctors of nearby villages when the *Deona* fails to heal up the disease. Another interesting feature may be mentioned here. Many of the villagers were seen to have taken vaccinations. This practice shows that they are now becoming aware of the utility and usefulness of vaccinations against Smallpox. This indicates that their traditional concepts

and methods of treatment are now changing and their traditional views about diseases are existing side by side with modern medical practices. However, modern medical practices have not influenced them to any appreciable extent. Illiteracy and poverty are great obstacles to proper health education. Besides, it is seen that, very few people would like to go to a clinic or hospital at the first instance. They only go when anything serious happens. So, in many cases, the patients do not get well and as such they begin to distrust the modern system. Marriott rightly has said that in a village the clinics serve all too frequently as the last resort (1955). The Munda traditional treatment may be unsuccessful in one case. But the failure of one treatment does not teach them that all their methods of treatment is bad or useless. The inadequate care and callous treatment in the clinics and hospitals also sometimes make them distrustful and fearful of the clinic and hospital. There are also a few other factors which are creating hindrance for the introduction of modern medical practices.

There is a great importance in understanding a community as a whole with its socio-cultural systems. This may avert the resistances in health programmes and other obstacles a doctor may face in a village. The Mundas have a doctrine concerning sickness and health. They take the help of untrained *Dhaima* or midwife belonging to low *Hari* caste at the time of birth. She cuts the umbilical cord with an iron arrow head where there is every chance of

septic. But they do not want to change this traditional method all on a sudden and take the help of an expert midwife. So many such socio-cultural factors are creating hindrance for the introduction of modern medical practices. Its proper introduction is not an easy task and this can be done more easily if the new idea takes its root at the village level. In this particular village, it can be done with the help of the members of *Munda Sevak Samaj and Telkand Ashram*. They can understand more easily the modern concepts about germs, etc. and the merits of modern medical practices. In fact, it is not always for their economic condition but also for their traditional beliefs that they at first take the help of a village *Deona* and not a doctor from outside. According to their traditional belief, a few diseases are attributed to certain deities. So if the doctors from outside are consulted instead of appeasing the deity, the deity might well be offended. Again, they believe that if a person is ill due to evil-eye of a witch or due to spirit-possession, a doctor can not cure the patient for they are helpless against them. Some sort of magical treatment must be done by the *Deona*. The *Deona* informs them about the presence of that witch, whom they should avoid. But a doctor cannot do it. Again, according to their traditional belief they think that just like a *Deona*, a doctor should be able to diagnose the reason of illness by simply feeling the pulse. But a doctor cannot do it. He enquires many things and then he can prescribe the medicine. For this, their faith in modern medical practices is

lessened. The villagers have to pay cash money at once to the doctors. They pay in cash or kind or in both to the village *Deonas* on the *Dak Sankranti*, the last day of *Paush* (December-January) which is not at all a small amount. Besides, in many complicated cases, they have to pay money or buy objects which exceeds the amount to be paid to a doctor. Marriott rightly has said, "In terms of number of patients, amount of expenditure and frequency of use, patronage of indigenous medicine surpasses that of western medicine one hundredfold" (1955 : 241).

The knowledge of what people believe about health and diseases can be helpful in a number of ways. The study of concepts of diseases of a particular community is interesting because it will show the views and ideas of the other spheres of their life. Thus, the magico-religious belief concerning diseases indicates that such a group cannot interpret agricultural innovations in a truly scientific spirit. In fact, it is seen that among the Mundas, the recognition of supernatural interferences is particularly strong in connection with disease and agriculture. So for the introduction of new practices the total world-view of the people should be changed. Again, if the new ideas want to influence the local people, there should not be a wide gulf separating the thinking, experience and idea of a doctor from that of their village patients. Because patients in all societies want that the doctor understands them. Among these Mundas, the doctor must not challenge or criticise their traditional beliefs openly. Because

though there is a pragmatic bent in the attitude of the villagers, the authority of the *Deona* is still dominant in the village and he is esteemed by the villagers. A doctor's advice may be followed and the gulf can be bridged by presenting the new modern methods in a way which may fit with their already existing cultural pattern.

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GANANATH DAS

The question of doing tribal welfare work in an effective way has occasionally been raised for serious consideration. Once, in an informal discussion of such a nature a man of position remarked saying that the most effective way of doing tribal welfare would be to go with a gun and at the point of bayonet to ask the forest dwellers to leave the hills and forests and come down to the plains, reclaim land, build roads and houses and settle down as peasants like the settled cultivators. That in his opinion would not only yield quick results, but would also ensure enduring development of the tribals. A veteran social worker who was participating in the discussion felt outraged at this and lodged a strong protest observing that such a course of action would not only run counter to all accepted ideas on social welfare, but might endanger the very existence of the tribals.

Tribal welfare has been attempted to be done in India in very many ways down the years. It will be worth the while to take stock of the methodology adopted to see how rewarding or otherwise the different methods followed have been.

It is commonly assumed that tribal welfare work in India is of

TRIBAL WELFARE METHODOLOGY

recent origin. This is not correct. For, we notice that in the epic period of our past history there were culture contacts between the Aryans and the forest dwellers in which an approach of tolerance and friendship has been exhibited. In later years we find the same attitude of tolerance and kindness towards the border people and forest dwellers emphasised in the edicts of Emperor Asoka. The officers of State were enjoined upon to pay particular attention to the welfare of these people and to look upon them with compassion.

During the Muslim period no specific attitude was ordained and contact with the forest dwellers was a matter of rare occasion. No policy of State appears to have been laid down in this respect.

The same attitude of non-interference and indifference appears to have been followed during the British period. Left to themselves and their indiscretion, the local Chiefs, Zamindars and officers exploited the forest dwellers as a result of which there were a few explosive revolutions and uprising by the latter. These were put down ruthlessly. Some of the areas inhabited by these people

were then declared, as excluded and partially excluded areas more in order to preclude contact with the hill people by outsiders than with any worthier objective.

Coming to more recent times, we find that years before the dawn of independence some pioneering work was done by social reformers like Thacker Bapa of revered memory. Inspiration was also generated by the Father of the Nation for work in this field.

All that drew the attention of the country in some measure to the forest people and their condition. This was later reflected in our Constitution in the form of special provisions for the welfare of the Scheduled Tribes and the Scheduled Castes and for the development of the backward areas inhabited by them. The State Governments were charged with the welfare and prevention of exploitation of the backward tribes who came to be identified as Scheduled Tribes. Grants-in-aid were provided to enable the State Governments to undertake special measures for their welfare.

Thus it was during the more recent times which may roughly be synchronised with the advent of the current century that we find tribal welfare work undertaken on an organised scale by non-official and official agencies. The objective has broadly been to bring the hill people to the level of the general population of the country in the fields of economic and educational development.

That brings us to the question of methodology adopted by these agencies to achieve the objective. It may in a general way be stated as follows:

(a) Some of the pioneers who undertook organised tribal welfare work carried with them the belief that there was no hope for the tribals without personal purification (*Sanskar*); that in order to achieve the standard of progress of the general population they must first shed their impurities and adopt the way of life, manners and customs of the advanced people. The imagination of these workers was no doubt moved by the zeal to do good to the backward people, but perhaps they remained more obsessed with their 'ism' rather than the realities of the problem, and so the achievement was not spectacular. Another hurdle was the want of resources in amenities and funds that circumscribed their efforts seriously. For the purpose of description we may call their methodology, "the dogmatic way".

(b) We come across certain workers who profess what they call a "rationalistic or scientific way". According to them the primitive society has to pass

through certain well-defined phases before emerging as a modern industrial society and it would be a folly to attempt level jumping in this field. Where any proposal was made to establish a modern industry in a backward tribal area they resisted saying that such a step might involve the risk of eliminating the tribal community as a result of the stress and strain which it would not be able to withstand. They would prefer the usual evolutionary processes to manifest themselves in the natural course of events.

- (c) There are instances of work done in the steam roller way. In this case the worker did not want to profit by the experience nor to be warned by the pitfalls of others. He thought that tribal welfare was to be done merely by the strength of one's common sense and the question of methodology was sheer prattle. More often than not such a worker depended on his idiosyncrasy and it did not take anybody long to find the hollowness of the whole show.

- (d) Planned development on a comprehensive scale has been introduced under the Community Development Programme. For giving

special attention to backward tribal areas, Tribal Development Blocks have been started with larger inputs of funds and intensified activity. It is noticed that programmes undertaken for the general population under the C. D. Scheme have been repeated in the Tribal Development Blocks. No notice has been taken of the special circumstances obtaining in the tribal areas, the likes and dislikes of the tribal people and their social customs and manners. Too many programmes have been attempted simultaneously with too little co-ordination. This has by some people been called the 'Formalistic Way'.

- (e) The trial and error method has been followed by some workers and organisations. Where the scope of the trial was carefully decided and depending on the result of the trial, those programmes which proved successful were expanded with proper discretion, the results appeared to register satisfactory progress.

In our vast country there is a large tribal population. The tribals are found living in innumerable communities each with a different culture pattern handed down traditionally from generation to generation. Each has a

dialect of its own not commonly understood by the other. The manners and customs of each differ from those of the other in spirit and in form. No doubt educationally and economically these communities have an affinity with each other in that they are all equally under-developed and show an apathy to change.

It would not be correct to assume that because of the common trait of economic and educational backwardness they would be equally responsive to common programmes of development work. It would be folly indeed to forget that they cherish their traditions and would not react favourably to a programme that involved the slightest disrespect to their traditional sense of values.

Yet, there are a few instances of primitive tribal societies accepting even alien faiths, and becoming interested, in the wake thereof, in programmes of common welfare like education, housing, cultivation of cash crops, medical and public health measures and so forth.

That goes to show that it will not be possible to lay down a rule of thumb and prescribed a scheme of development as applicable to all manner of backward tribal people. In that context, the most

rewarding methodology seems to be the one described under the caption "trial and error method". The wise tribal welfare worker would do well to carefully consider the experience of his forerunners in the field and follow the path that led them to success and avoid their pitfalls.

The voluntary and Governmental agencies should initiate studies, surveys and research for the benefit of their field workers. It would be wrong to try to prescribe by fiat schemes that are based on scant attention, and assumed strength of common sense. Today unfortunately the grandeur of opening ceremonies seem to count for the whole show. People forget soon after, that the opening ceremony was to be followed by a whole range of programme. The crafty worker may try to bag a reward by just planning some such showy opening functions and he may be able to succeed to an extent in furthering his self-interest but we may be sure that this would lead us no further in the right way to tribal welfare. Planned development for community, in order to succeed, has to be done with care and vision. The workers have not only to acquire the right skill but the right approach required for the purpose. Planners for this programme will do well to build up the tools accordingly.

HARJINDER SINGH

The main problem for agricultural development in our country is low level of adoption by farmers of improved agricultural practices. Various factors, such as economic, social and psychological have been attributed to such a situation. The present study is an attempt to find out the social factors, viz., education, age, socio-economic status, that have got bearing on the adoption of few recommended agricultural practices among farmers in an Indian village inhabited by tribal and non-tribal population. It also aims at analysing the significance of different sources of information in regard to improved agricultural practices.

Case of village G

Village G is of average size, with a population of 887. It is covered by a development block since April 1958. The village population is divided into tribal and non-tribal population which is further subdivided into Hindu and Muslim religious groups. In all there are 161 families out of which 75 are farm families.

Design :

For the study, 25 farm families were selected on random

ADOPTION OF AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES—A CASE STUDY

sampling basis. The head of each of these families, who was the decision-making individual regarding farming was approached and was asked to answer a number of questions incorporated into a schedule. The interviewee was asked which of the six improved agricultural practices recommended by extension agency he follows. He was also asked from which source he got the information in regard to three significant practices. His age, education, land area owned, religion, caste, etc., were also noted. The measure of socio-economic status employed in the study was the index of status based upon area of land owned, number and type of livestock, type of housing and social position in the village.

Findings

(i) *Adoption and social characteristics*—In order to assess the significance of certain social characteristics of respondents as determinants of adoption of recommended agricultural practices, information about their



Kambagudialu, the daughter of the Majhi (headman) of Munargaon.
*Photo by—*Courtesy of Robert Ebnither.

education, age, socio-economic status was collected and this has

been cross tabulated with improved practices in a table as follows :

TABLE I

(Social characteristics of the respondents and their adoption of improved agricultural practices)

Social Characteristics	Improved Seeds	Imple-ments	Chemical Fertilisers	Green Manuring	Line sowing of paddy	Insec-ticides
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
<i>(a) Education:</i>						
Illiterate ..	1	1	3	1	1	2
Primary ..	3	2	4	3	1	3
Middle ..	3	3	6	2	2	3
High and above..	4	3	6	4	2	5
<i>(b) Age:</i>						
Less than 25 years	2	2	4	1	1	3
26—35 years ..	3	2	6	3	2	4
36—50 years ..	5	4	7	5	3	5
50 and above ..	1	1	2	1	..	1
<i>(c) Socio-economic status:</i>						
High	6	5	8	5	3	6
Middle ..	4	4	6	4	3	5
Low ..	1	..	5	1	..	2

The table above shows that these six improved agricultural practices are not followed by all the 25 farmers. Only 11, 9, 19, 10, 6 and 13 respondents have adopted improved seeds, implements, chemical fertilizers, green manuring, line sowing of paddy and insecticides respectively.

Now, if we analyse the response in this table in respect of education, we find that the respondents who have adopted these improved practices are either illiterate or have read up to primary, middle, high or above educational standards. Here we

find that adoption is lower in case of those who are illiterate, whereas, it goes on increasing with an increase in the standard of literacy among farmers. Thus, adoption is far more pronounced in case of those who have read up to High or above. Therefore, it shows that adoption of these agricultural practices is affected by educational standard of the respondents.

So far as age as a factor determining adoption of these practices is concerned, the table indicates that adoption is less in case of the respondents who are less than 25 years of age. Most

of the respondents who have adopted these practices are either from 26—35 or 36—50 years age-groups. The adoption is minimum in case of those who are 50 or above. Therefore, we find that mostly the adopters come from middle age-groups.

Similary, the table shows that the socio-economic status of the respondents indicated in terms of high, middle and low categories has definite bearing on

their adoption of these agricultural practices. Here, the respondents with high or middle socio-economic status tend to adopt more of these practices as compared to those who carry low status.

(ii) *Adoption and sources of information*—The study aimed at knowing the sources of information in regard to improved seeds, implements and chemical fertilisers. This picture is presented in the following table :

TABLE No. 2
Adoption of agricultural practices by farmers and their source of information

Sl. No.	Improved practice	Source of information			
		Neighbour	Block agency	Radio	Pamphlet, etc.
		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
		(N=11)			
1	Improved seeds ..	5	3	2	1
		(N=9)			
2	Improved implements	4	3	1	1
		(N=19)			
3	Chemical Fertilisers ..	8	7	3	1

The table shows that neighbours constitute most important source of information in regard to adoption of improved seeds, implements and chemical fertilizers. The block agency is only second important source of information. Next comes Radio. Pamphlets and other such literature is least significant in this respect.

Summary and conclusions

Basing observations on this study few conclusions can be drawn.

The study shows that all the farmers have not yet adopted improved agricultural practices as recommended by extension agency. Further, for those who

have adopted there is significant and positive relationship between adoption and social characteristics of farmers, i.e., education, age, socio-economic status.

It has also revealed that neighbours still constitute the most important source affecting their decision with regard to adoption of these improved agricultural practices. This may be due to the fact that our farmers are frequently in contact with their fellow farmers. The block agency is only second important source of information for them. Radio and pamphlets have not still made much impact in this regard.

In the background of these conclusions there is a need for a sincere attempt on the part of field workers engaged in this programme to improve the situation. For this following steps are suggested .—

- (1) The Block officials should make adequate use of mass media of communication such as films, slides, etc., so that agricultural information is diffused to more farmers in an effective manner. They should make more contacts individual and group, and

render necessary guidance at all stages. Efforts should be made to secure more and active participation of farmers in various formal and informal activities.

- (2) Pamphlets written in simple and local language should be frequently distributed among literate farmers. Radio rural forums should be activated and their activities be frequently reviewed.
- (3) More attention should be given to the training of farmers. This should be properly planned and implemented. In such training programmes more emphasis should be laid on practical demonstrations rather than theoretical discussions of various topics.
- (4) To help the small farmers undertake more profitable ventures, the Government and co-operative organisations should create more credit facilities. Progressive farmers should be duly recognised and rewarded.

**KRUSHNA CHANDRA TRIPATHY
NRUSINGH PRASAD MISHRA**

Serological studies in India Particularly of ABO blood groups have covered some important aboriginal and castes. On the basis of the above studies it is possible to assess the ethnic status of the populations. However, as regards Orissa not much work has been done except in case of a few tribal groups. The authors in this short paper attempt to assess the ethnic status and mode of distribution of ABO blood groups among some important castes in Orissa State.

The three major castes of Orissa such as Brahmin, Karan and Khandayat have been taken along with the samples from other castes. The general caste pattern in Orissa is same as elsewhere in Eastern India. In the caste hierarchy of Orissa, Brahmins occupy the topmost position and the Karans claim to stand next to Brahmins akin to Khatrihood. The Khandayats are mostly farming castes. Castes such as the Bauri, Dom, and Hadi constitute the Scheduled Caste groups.

ABO BLOOD GROUP DISTRIBUTION AMONG SOME ORISSAN CASTES

Material and Method :

In this short paper it is attempted to present ABO blood samples of different caste groups collected by the authors in the New Capital and Bhubaneswar area during the year 1965-66. The total number of individuals tested was 165, out of which 28 were Brahmins, 45 were Karans, 38 were Khandayats and the rest 54 were the other caste groups. The data were collected from different villages and from the Capital area to include random samples mainly representing sections and sub-sections of the each caste group. The subjects were unrelated.

Blood samples were taken from finger pricks and were collected in numbered slides. The finger tips of the subjects were washed with rectified spirit and cotton and the blood drops were directly collected on cleaned slides. High titre anti-A and anti-B sera of sufficient avidity obtained from Haffkine Institute, Bombay were used. Blood groups of the male subjects were typed. Known O, A, B and AB blood groups were included as controls in every series of tests.

TABLE 1
Distribution of ABO system among some caste groups of Orissa

Group	Phenotypes				Chi-square
	O	A	B	AB	
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Brahmin					
(28) No. Obs.	9	7	11	1	
Obs. %	32.17	25.00	39.28	3.57	
No. Exp.	7.12	7.12	11.53	2.30	1.159
Karan					
(45) No. Obs.	15	10	17	3	
Obs. %	38.33	22.22	37.77	6.66	
No. Exp.	11.45	11.45	18.50	3.50	0.485
Khandayat					
(38) No. Obs.	7	10	17	4	
Obs. %	18.42	26.32	44.73	10.53	
No. Exp.	9.68	9.68	15.60	2.22	1.340
Other Castes					
(54) No. Obs.	11	15	23	5	
Obs. %	20.36	27.77	51.86	9.26	
No. Exp.	13.75	13.75	22.37	4.98	0.766

Table 1 presents the result of the investigation among the four caste population samples tested mainly from New Capital area, Bhubaneswar in the district of Puri. The gene frequencies (presented in

Table 2) have been calculated by Bernstein's improved formulae (Mourant, 1954). The expected and the observed phenotype numbers and the goodness of fit X^2 also has been calculated.

TABLE 2
Distribution of Gene Frequencies

Groups	p	q	r	Goodness of fit	D/
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	
Brahmin					
(28)	0.21	0.18	0.56	1.159	
Karan					
(45)	0.08	0.17	0.66	0.485	
Khandayat					
(38)	0.24	0.37	0.42	1.345	
Other Castes					
(54)	0.24	0.33	0.45	0.766	
Total					
(165)	0.228	0.124	0.648	0.759	

Analysing Table 1 and Table 2 it has been observed that blood group B is distributed in greater percentage among all the caste groups. Distribution of A blood group is next to B, O and AB blood groups occur in lesser percentage in all caste groups studied. But when a comparison is made by using a '4x4' contingency table on the four caste population samples investigated in the present study, the chi-square values reveal that

the population samples, namely, the Brahmin, Karan, Khandayat and the other castes form a single cluster so far as the ABO blood group distribution is concerned. The data on the four caste population samples have, therefore, been combined and the gene frequencies have been estimated as shown in the Table 2, such as $O=0.648$, $A=0.228$ and $B=0.124$ for the combined data. $\chi^2=0.759$ (T. & F.) $0.50 > P > 30$.

TABLE 3

Distribution of ABO Blood groups with Gene frequencies among the various populations in Orissa

Groups	Author	Number	O,	A,	B,	AB	p,	q,	r	Chi-square
Aboriginal tribes.	Sarkar (1956)	103%	38 36.89	22 21.36	32 31.07	11 10.68	17.39	23.45	59.16	1.12
Oriya Khandayat	Macfarlane (1938)	60%	27 45.00	11 18.33	15 25.00	7 11.67	..	..	..	..
Brahmin	Tripathy and Misra	28%	9 32.17	7 25.00	11 39.28	1 3.57	..	..	..	1.159
Karan	(present-study)	45%	15 33.33	10 22.22	17 37.77	3 6.66	..	..	..	0.458
Khandayat	..	38%	7 18.42	10 26.32	17 44.37	4 10.53	..	..	..	0.345
Other castes	..	54%	11 20.36	15 27.77	23 51.86	5 9.26	..	..	..	0.766

It has been observed from table 3 that Macfarlane's (1938) study of Oriya Khandayats does not differ from the Khandayats of the present study in any of the genetical characters. Further comparisons could not be made at present as blood

group data on Orissan caste groups are inadequate. Further studies are, therefore, necessary to have an elaborate comparative study of ABO system of Orissan caste populations.

TABLE 4

Values of chi-square inter-group Differences with regard to ABO blood group

Group Combinations	Author	Chi-square
Brahmin \times Karan	Tripathy and Misra	4.481
Karan \times Khandayat	(present study)	0.134
Khandayat \times Brahmin	..	0.145

Analysing Table 4 it is observed that among the three caste population due to deficiency of AB blood group distribution the chi-square value in case of Brahmin and Karan is very significant though not high. But when the other caste population are compared it is found that the groups are indistinguishable. Besides, the samples have been subjected to the test of homogeneity by using the '3 \times 4' contingency tables. Highly significant chi-square values indicate that the caste groups are not homogeneous. The insignificant values indicate that the samples are homogeneous in nature so far as the ABO blood group distributions are concerned.

Summary :

Blood samples of 165 individuals belonging to Brahmin, Karan, Khandayat and other caste populations were tested for ABO blood groups from Bhubaneswar (New Capital) area in the district of Puri, Orissa. Out of the said caste groups Brahmins, Karans and Khandayats have been tested for homogeneity. Except between Brahmins and Karans, other caste groups are homogeneous so far as the ABO blood group distribution in Puri district is concerned. The samples have been subjected to the test of homogeneity by using the '4 \times n' contingency tables.

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NITYANANDA DAS

On 1st April 1936 Orissa was formed a separate province combining various parts of the erstwhile provinces of Bihar and Orissa, Central Provinces and Madras Presidency. The district of Koraput was constituted with the undivided zamindari of Jeypore excluding Madgul. The Indian National Congress was then organized in this district. In the election of 1936 Congress candidates were returned in all the three seats in the district. The tribes then did not have franchise and used to be represented in the Assembly by nominated members. The first Congress Ministry was formed in 1937 in Orissa. Thereafter Congress activities were geared up by organising camps to train Congress workers. The most important camp was held in 1938 at Nuaput about 7 miles from Jeypore town. This was attended by eminent leaders like late Gopabandhu Choudhury, and Godavaris Misra and Acharya Harihar Das. Quite a large number of young men from different parts of the district were enrolled by the organisation. Lakshman Naik, the Naik of village Tentuligumma was initiated and trained in this camp.

Lakshman Naik was born in village Tentuligumma in Boipari-

MARTYR LAKSHMAN NAIK, A HERO OF FREEDOM MOVEMENT

guda Police-station in the year Circa 1895 in a Bhumia family. The exact date of birth is difficult to ascertain. His father Padlam Naik was the headman of the village. Padlam had three sons and two daughters. Lakshman was the second son.

Village Tentuligumma is a fairly big village of 90 families. There are 7 Harijan, one blacksmith and rest of the families are Bhumias. It is situated in the extremity of the district bordering Madhya Pradesh. River Kolab and high hill ranges isolate this village from other parts of the district. Forests around the village are infested with wild animals. Every year man-eating tigers take a heavy toll of life in the area.

Lakshman Naik had some rudiments of schooling in the childhood. There was no regular school in the area. Local teachers imparted education to acquaint pupils in alphabets and 3 years. He married at an early age to Manguli Naikani of the same village. One son Raghunath was born to them, who is now about 40 years of age. Young Lakshman was a good hunter. He obtained a licence for a muzzle-loading gun. He had reputation



Family of late Lakshman Naik (L to R), Son—Raghunath, wife—
Manguli Naikani, brother-in-law Bansingh Majhi

Photo by—N. Das

as an amiable, patient and upright man in the locality. After his father's death Lakshman succeeded as the Headman of the village. He was the leading personality from whom local people sought advice to resolve their disputes.

Lakshman Naik was indoctrinated into National Congress by the then Congress leaders of the district, Sarva Sri Radhakrishna-Biswas Roy, late Radha Mohan Sahu and Sadasiba Tripathi. Lakshman took to organizational discipline devotedly and wholeheartedly. He gave up hunting as a measure of practising non-violence and took to vegetarian diet. He introduced cotton growing and spinning Khadi in his family. He enlisted large number of persons in adjoining villages as 4 annas members of Congress. During his frequent visits to Jeypore he was closely associated with Congress leaders of the district.

In 1939, the then British Government declared war against the Axis powers and India was dragged into it without reference to Indian leaders and people. Mahatma Gandhi objected to it, and Congress ministries resigned. Then came the phase of individual Satyagraha. Congress leaders offered Satyagraha opposing country's participation in the war without ascertaining the will of the people. Lakshman Naik offered Satyagraha thrice and courted arrest in 1939 and 1940. He was released after 3 months. He was also fined Rs. 300. During that period Congress gave the clarion call to boycott war operations of

the British. Lakshman Naik took the leadership in the area and inspired hill tribes not to co-operate in war efforts or to contribute men and resources to the war. He forbade paying illegal exactions to the forest, police and excise staff.

This was the turning point in his life as Lakshman's activities were considered perilous to the tranquility by the district authorities. The local officials and Jeypore Maharaja's officers considered him a dangerous person. They prejudiced the British Agent at Koraput against Lakshman Naik. Lakshman Naik was mostly concentrating on constructive programme and propagated non-violence and passive resistance against oppression of the rulers. He was, however, a terror to petty officials of the Government and Maharaja of Jeypore, who were constantly harassing the backward tribals. They were also trying hard to instigate and mobilise money-lenders, some village Headmen and other opportunists against Lakshman Naik.

The 'Quit India Movement' which transformed the otherwise peaceful nation to gallant fighting against the British Raj reverberated in the high hills of Koraput. The prominent Congress leaders of the district were arrested by the 12th August 1942. Congress Office at Jeypore was seized and locked. Some of the Congressmen who were not arrested managed to cyclostyle pamphlets and distributed those all over the district to continue the movement. Those

handouts urged the people to fully dissociate with the British Government.

After the arrest of the leaders the rank and file became restive. Lakshman was not arrested and he organised the movement in Mathili area where communication was very poor.

On the 16th August 1942 a large crowd marched to Jeypore. The crowd was lathi charged and ruthlessly dispersed. After this incident Lakshman Naik was sought by the authorities to be arrested. He was asked to immediately leave the town by friends. He traversed over forests at night and reached Ghumar the native village of his close associate Nila Patro. They together decided to organise a march to Mathili on the 21st August 1942. The authorities came to know about their move.

On the 21st August 1942, a large crowd of tribals and others congregated at Mathili about 40 miles from Jeypore. The Bonda highlanders live on the high hills to the east of this police-station. They are dreaded for their fearlessness and homicidal propensities. This march to Mathili was, therefore, considered highly explosive and the authorities grew panicky.

The Officer-in-charge of Mathili police-station gathered a posse of reserve police in the police-station, but considering their number small he mustered all the forest guards, excise peons and other pro-police and pro-zamindari elements who had arms, and posted them behind the police-station. It

was well known in the area that Lakshman Naik had organised people to refuse to pay plough tax, road tax, shandy tax and other taxes to the Samasthan authorities until the British left the country. The Samasthan and Government agencies incited some of the local headmen to oppose him. His family members were harassed in various ways. Yet Lakshman Naik continued to fight against all odds undunted and unperturbed.

On the 21st August 1942 the large crowd which gathered at Mathili, picketted liquor shop and the shandy. They held a meeting at Shandy (Hatapada). Lakshman presided over the meeting. The crowd marched towards police-station singing Ramdhun and raising "Mahatma Gandhike Jai". Their aim was to hoist Congress tri-colour on the police-station as a measure of heralding independence from the British rule. When the crowd gathered in front of the police-station the police officer on duty asked them to disperse. The crowd was then lathi-charged when it demanded to hoist the national flag on the police-station. A Magistrate who was camping there, by accident ultimately ordered firing. Simultaneously volleys of shots were fired on the crowd from all directions. Before the firing began it is told that Lakshman Naik was hit by a Police bayonet on his face and was lying unconscious in a small drain in front of the police-station. In the firing quite a large number of unarmed people were killed and wounded. When the crowd dispersed it was discovered that a forest guard Ramaiya was lying

dead in a drain a few paces from where Lakshman was lying. Lakshman Naik and other wounded persons were taken away by the people to a nearby forest and were treated there by jungle herbs. This massacre at Mathili ultimately turned out to be the turning point in the history of freedom fight in Koraput.

It is widely current that a large number of dead bodies were burnt in an orchard nearby the police-station. There are stories of even unconscious persons burnt alive. After the firing which took place at the mid-day the crowd ran helter and skelter to their villages. It was rainy season and all the rivers and hill streams were in spate. While marching to Mathili small culverts and ferry boats in river Kolab were destroyed by the villagers. Hence the retreating persons after the firing were in great predicament to reach their native villages. The people of the following villages participated in the march to Mathili on the 21st August 1942.

Kamrabeda, Sindibeda, Ghuspalli, Sedenga, Dalpatiguda, Atalguda, Timsiput, Sarangpalli, Sangumma, Kukudaguda, Tentuligumma, Luler, Udaigiri, Karpanpalli, Bauisaghat, Nuaguda, Kaliaguda, Barabeda, Kattapalli, Mufdar, Rangabeda, Masariguda, Kaudiguda, Kupuliguda, Naikaguda, Tanguda, Gangla, Bandguda, Malibakaguda, Pangam, Macchhaguda, Amguda and Tanlguda, etc.

Lakshman Naik, however, left for Jeypore to consult other con-

gress leaders on future programme. When he reached Jeypore the next day, he found the Congress Office was locked and almost all associates of Lakshman were behind the bars. Some friends advised him to leave the town atonce lest he would be arrested. He then went to Nila Patro's village on the way but could not meet the latter. He left for his village Tentuligumma.

On the 28th August a large contingent of armed police, swooped various villages including Tentuligumma at dawn. The villagers looked askance when police let loose a reign of terror by seizing live-stock, breaking open houses, beating-up inmates in a frenzy. Lakshman Naik's house was besieged and his family members and farm servants were manhandled. Even his minor son Raghunath, who lives to narrate the incident, was ruthlessly beaten and was taken to police-station at Mathili. This was the aftermath of Mathili firing. It was then little known that a hard fate was awaiting some of the persons who were wounded in the firing. Hundreds of persons from different villages who were 4 annas members of Congress and sympathisers were rounded up and marched to Mathili by the police.

A good deal of importance was attached by the then administration to Mathili episode particularly to the emergent leadership of Lakshman Naik. The Jeypore Zamindary officials considered him a dangerous element. They combined with police, excise and forest authorities to hatch a plot

to reap vengeance against Lakshman Naik. By then all eminent Congressmen of the district were behind the bars. The British rulers of those days were told that Lakshman Naik's existence in the areas would put the empire in jeopardy. He would incite the ferocious Bonda highlanders and other hill tribes, and the meagre police force would be unable to check the uprising.

For all those who were interested to suppress the freedom movement in general and Lakshman Naik in particular, the death of a forest guard Ramiya at Mathili on August 21st, 1942, with bullet injury provided a golden opportunity. In fact this forest guard who was an opium addict was beating the crowd at Mathili beyond the fence of police-station. When firing started without warning from different directions, most probably Ramiya was hit by a bullet and fell in a drain. By then Lakshman Naik was already lying unconscious after receiving a bayonet injury, a few paces from where Ramiya fell. The death of the forest guard was concocted to frame a charge of murder against Lakshman Naik and his associates. It was alleged that the mob was incited by Lakshman to loot shops, burn the houses and properties of innocent persons, destroy the police-station and kill all Government Officials. In furtherance of this common intention it was alleged that Lakshman killed the forest guard Ramiya by giving a severe blow on his head by a steel lathi. Once this plot matured a

good deal of colour was added to the story. The reserve police force arrested all Congress members and sympathisers and a reign of terror was let loose in Mathili area. Arrested persons were marched to Mathili tied in ropes. They were belaboured, kept outside during rains and tortured in various ways. After some days of ordeal at Mathili about a hundred persons including some who had bullet injuries were ordered to march to Jeypore on foot. Lakshman protested to walk the distance and declared that he would prefer to be killed there rather than to accede to such inhuman order. When all persure and torture proved futile a police lorry was deployed to transport the arrested persons to Koraput. They were kept in Koraput jail. Police submitted chargesheet against 49 persons on charges of murder, arson, loot, etc. After commitment proceedings the case was tried by a special sessions judge at Koraput. A large number of witnesses almost all being either Police Officials or officials of the Jeypore Samasthanam said parrot like that the forest guard Ramiya succumbed to a severe lathi blow dealt on his head by Lakshman Naik. On this trial there was no defence witness. 18 persons were convicted to lesser terms. 30 were sentenced to life imprisonment and Lakshman Naik was sentenced to death. The death sentence was confirmed by Patna High Court. He was transferred to Berhampur camp jail where other congress leaders of the State were detained. On the dawn of the 29th March 1943, the

freedom fighter and patriot of Mathili was hanged at Berhampur camp jail. The local authorities announced with beat of drums the hanging of Lakshman Naik to terrorise the people. Lakshman's wife Manguli Nayakani and son Raghunath learnt the tragic end of Lakshman from the drum beat.

All those serving life sentence were released in 1946. But Lakshman Naik sacrificed his life for the freedom of his country. Our country achieved independence and the tricolour was unfurled in Government buildings on 15th August 1947. Indians ruled from the seat of the British rulers. The Maharaja of Jeypore lost his powers. Lakshman however did not live to see the attainment of independence. He was one of those hundreds of martyrs who sacrificed their lives and watched the proceedings from their heavenly abode; when millions of their fellow countrymen were released from foreign domination.

Bansingh Pujhari of Tentuligumma who was hit by a bullet on his upper arm, and was cured after two years at Cuttack hospital, was also sentenced to life imprisonment. He is now a political pensioner. He described that on the day death sentence was pronounced on Lakshman Naik and he was being led to isolation ward, Lakshman told to Bansingh that "He would now die because the British and Jeypore Raja decided so. But he would accept the fate, so that

millions of his countrymen would get their dear freedom and Gandhi Raj would be established. Those who had been convicted to prison terms would then be released." He ordained Bansingh to look after his family members, his wife, and young son when the latter would be released. They would not feel any remorse, rather be proud of the sacrifice of Lakshman. Bansingh Majhi lives though partly disabled to tell this story of gallantry.

Similarly, on the day Lakshman was hanged in Berhampur jail he expressed his last wish to see three Congress leaders of Koraput, late Radhamohan Sahu, Radhakrushna Biswas Roy and Sadasiba Tripathi.

Shri Sadasiba Tripathi who was till recently the Chief Minister of Orissa met him. Lakshman showed unflinching courage at the time of being led to the gallows. He walked dauntless and upright, singing Ramdhun. The Magistrate who committed him to court of sessions narrates that during the trial Lakshman Naik showed unique courage and was behaving with perfect dignity. He knew that he was innocent. Yet he knew that cunning and shrewd interests and their lackeys were going to see through his end. He gladly accepted the course ordained by the fate without hesitation or remorse. Even at the time of supreme sacrifice this tribal hero of freedom movement who was neither educated nor sophisticated hailing from the backward inaccessible agency tracts of Koraput exhibited

courage and devotion unparallel in the history of freedom movement in the country. He sacrificed his life for the mother

land. There are some memorials at Koraput and at Bhubaneswar dedicated to Laskhman Naik.



Khond youth of Munargaon

P. K. BHOWMICK

Introduction

Article 46 of the Constitution of India, provides that Government will take special interest to promote the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, particularly the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Besides, the Constitution envisaged the provision of free universal and compulsory education for children up to the age of 14 years. According to the Census of 1961, the tribal population in India is about 29.88 millions, i.e., 6.81 per cent of India's total population. These tribal Groups consisting of more than 572 different communities, are mainly found to live in a few localised zones of our country which, a few years back, were considered as inhospitable or inaccessible areas. Due to impact of various factors those conditions have changed and gradually the tribal people have migrated and settled at different places in search of food and better employment. Traditional ways of living which were so long prevalent amongst them have also changed due to changes of economic and political conditions of the people. This sort of economic mobility undoubtedly altered the existing conditions which prevailed so long and

WAYS TO EDUCATE THE TRIBALS

affected to an extent the general educational system of the country. Due to interaction of these forces and spread of education the percentage of literacy amongst the tribal people has also increased now.

It is true that after independence, both Government and some voluntary organisations with financial assistance from the Government are trying their best to wipe out illiteracy amongst the backward communities. Without this the communities concerned will not be able to realise their own status and responsibilities and they will not be in a position to wipe out the ingrained age-old prejudices and vices of their society. It has been noticed that literacy, in many cases, has made them more discerning and intelligent and helped saving these illiterate people from the ruse of the usurers or money-lenders who directly or indirectly had brought about almost a total ruin on these down-trodden communities by their shrewd dealings in the past. It has been further observed that due to spread of education now a small section of many such tribal communities have progressed well and have developed a sort of political awareness

and ambition that may bring them social and economic security in course of time.

In a way, they are now merging with the more advanced societies around them and fostering a sort of integration with them. The theme of education that has been prescribed for them, however, does not meet their requirements. Proper education demands not only preparation for the future through a gradual process of socialisation but also fostering of a feeling of integration with a sense of love and respect for the people of the country as a whole. There are many instances where it is found that some of the most famous educators of the world had not even achieved the status of literates in the real sense of the term but they realised and explained the worldly affairs in such a way that these afforded means to solve some of the basic problems of their own people. Examples are not few of persons having conventional diplomas or certificates from recognised or reputed educational institutions, who are sometimes found utterly demoralised and indulge in vice and corruption, which largely contributes to the degeneration of a country. Proper form of education should enable a man to exert his restraining powers against vices or immoral situations without which it has no value.

II

Traditional form of tribal education.

It has been stated earlier that the tribal population of India have got a heterogenous cultural pattern with variegated economic condi-

tions and activities. Economic activities depend largely on ecological settings and ethnic environment. These have immense influence on the cultural patterns of the groups concerned. Primitive men tried their best to exploit the nature by devising numerous means for their survival, which brought effectiveness in their struggle for existence at different stages. Their ways of living had, therefore, to be adjusted with the existing cultural milieu of the region. Thus, the primary groups like family, age-groups and other conventional social institutions have their respective roles to train up an individual for the varied needs of social existence. Socialisation starts from birth and takes shape through childhood until a clear conception of 'self' is generated. Family shapes his moral standards and livelihood patterns through his continuous participation in its day to day functioning, by which, ideas and thoughts about social values are formed. It prepares a child for the future and helps to build up his character.

By primitive education, it is meant that the children or the future generation of the group are made accustomed with the patterns of social set-up and conventional traditional customs by gradual socialisation and other approved systematic procedures for imparting such training. As such, a child in future learns most of his essential future pursuits and gets sufficiently acquainted and equipped to adjust himself with any future situation, favourable or unfavourable. Besides, the child will learn various ideas, customs,

idioms of rituals, current in all societies, by which the norm of the society is continued. The social solidarity thus remains undisturbed and, as such, formal and informal obligations, duties, etc., are automatically observed by an individual through familial and kinship relations. All these are regarded as informal type of education or learning. As most of the preliterate tribal people have no conventional script of their own so their systematic education pattern is devoid of rigid formalities. Yet in many primitive people, there are formal institutions or associations, where not only economic pursuits, but also rituals, philosophy and political ideas are systematically cultured and propagated to the children to train them up.

Formal educational institutions are prevalent in many primitive tribes of India, like, the Oraons, who have *Jonkerpa*, or *Dhumkuria*, meaning a bachelors' dormitory. Likewise, the Mundas and the Birhors, had in earlier times, *Gitora*, the Gonds had their *Gotul* organisation, the Garos had *Nok pante*, the Ao Nagas had *Morung* or 'age-group' organisation, etc.

Shri S. C. Roy gave an elaborate description of the indigenous institution called '*Dhumkuria*', which was, according to him, 'an effective economic organisation for the purposes of food quest, a useful seminary for the training of young men in their social and other duties and an institution for magico-religious observances calculated to secure success in hunting and to

augment the procreative power of young men, so as to increase the number of hunters in the tribe'. The dormitories of the Oraons are mud-structured buildings, situated in the village, very near to the dancing ground, where both the village maidens and bachelors gather *en masse*, during celebrations. The maidens have a similar organisation known as *Pel-erpa*, though it has got no separate structure like the dormitory for the boys. In the dormitory of the youth, there are three grades or '*Tur*', comprising of different age-groups. They have respective duties and obligations. There are elaborate rituals in connection with initiation or first admission into the dormitory. The head of the dormitory is selected by the village elders and he has some specific obligations to the community. Thus these youths get an early opportunity to exercise their political responsibility and judgement, which help developing the qualities of effective leadership in the society.

The age-group system of the Ao Nagas is known as *Morung*, in which every three years, a new group of boys born during this period, are admitted for training. Girls also have their age-groups, but the system does not play a prominent part in female life. 'At the initial stage of their admission into the *Morung*, the boys have certain duties to perform, till, after the next three years' time, a new age-group takes their place and the fags of yesterday blossom into buds for the next three years of *Morung* life. A *Morung* is a microcosm of the village and

has its own council, reminding one strongly again of a public school with its prefects. Boys of the *Morung* receive regular disciplinary advice in respect of fighting, social services, dancing, singing and even in courtship, from the elders.'

Among the Dimasas of Cachar, the custom is to set up a *Nodrang*, which serves the purpose of a bachelors' dormitory. It is a long hut with elaborate sleeping arrangement, to accommodate the unmarried youths of the village. After the admission into the *Nodrang*, the boys have to work under the guidance of the elders of their society, according to conventional cultural pattern.

Besides, the formal educational organisation of the tribals, we can find how a Mahali child learns the art of basket-making from his parents or a Santal boy prepares a bow or fix up a string with the stave of the bow very accurately. In this way, the economic pursuits, followed by a parent, with their tact and technique, are handed down to the posterity, through participation of the latter in day-to-day work with their parents.

However, it has been noticed that due to changes in the political condition of the country and opening up of new livelihood patterns for the people after independence, extension of communication facilities to the various other social amenities offered, spread of a new type of education has been accelerating with pace, amongst the tribal people of our country.

III

Present Set-up

After independence, though remarkable changes have occurred in respect of educational patterns of the tribal people, yet these are not considered sufficient to wipe out illiteracy. A sum of Rs. 3,400.45 lakhs had been earmarked during the Third Plan period, for various works of development like, primary education, setting up of Ashrams (Residential) schools, secondary education, exemption from payment of tuition fees, Post-Matric Scholarships, Overseas Scholarships, for establishing hostels, etc. To impart compulsory free education to the children of our country up to the age of 14, is the motto of our present Government.

Educational facilities (mainly primary), which are generally extended to the children are of mainly two types : traditional and basic. The number of Basic Schools set up, at present, are sufficient to meet the pressing needs of the students, both tribals and non-tribals. It is true that through basic education, a child gets a few advantages in course of his study, which cannot be had through the traditional system. But subsequently, he faces difficulties, after the expiry of the term of schooling, when he has to seek admission in a traditional school for further education. There is no compromise or balance between the two systems and as such, basic pattern of education is considered incomplete and somewhat disappointing.

However, a few important problems are still left unattended, hindering the spread of education in tribal regions. In course of field work, it has been reported to the writer that tribal students generally get ill-treatment in the hands of non-tribal teachers. So some of the tribals, specially the Mundas, the Lodhas, the Santhals and the Koras of western part of West Bengal, demanded having separate schools of their own.

In the district of Midnapur in West Bengal, as per recommendation of the District School Board, a few schools have already been started with one or two teachers, in the heart of the tribal habitats experimentally. But, at present, there are certain handicaps, affecting the spread of education like, irregularity in attendance or absenteeism on the part of the students, due to lack of interest of their guardians to send their boys regularly to schools.

It has been observed that (a) poor economic condition of the parents is one of the foremost handicaps, in this regard. The parents, though quite a number of families want that their children should get education, face a lot of difficulties in procuring text-books, slates, clothing, etc., which are pre-requisite for school students and, as such, could not, in spite of their eagerness, send their boys to school. Besides, a good number of boys of the age-group of 9—12, are earning members of the family, who work as cowherd or as domestic servants doing some odd jobs for which they get two square-meals and a remuneration from

Re. 1 to Rs. 2 per month. This tempts the poor parents to employ their boys elsewhere, than to send them to schools. Such is the case with the tender-aged girls. They have to assist their mothers who go away for jobs, keeping the babies under their supervision. For such domestic needs, the parents do not have interest in sending them to school.

In most cases, the tribal boys have to attend school without taking meal, or taking any other sort of food. This naturally compels them to go out of the school during the teaching hours, in search of some edible roots or wild fruits, from the nearby jungles, to quench their hunger, thus neglecting their lessons. It is apparent, therefore, that the poor economic condition of the tribal people stands largely in the way of rapid educational progress.

(b) Lack of proper encouragement is yet another snag. It has been observed that many neighbouring scheming and prosperous communities discourage the poor tribal people to avail of the educational facilities for their children. Instead they advise and influence them to employ the youngsters as domestic servants or in other small jobs, by which they may help them by their earning. So the tribals or other backward communities prefer to send their children to the houses of the caste Hindu neighbours for doing odd jobs there, for wages, than to send them to school.

(c) Distances of locations of the schools, sometimes create hindrances in many parts of India, as the

boys have to trek many miles to attend these, involving great physical hardship. But so far as West Bengal is concerned, there are many primary schools situated in the heart of the tribal villages, although these are much short of the actual needs. Opening of more such schools in convenient areas is, therefore, a vital requirement for spread of education.

(d) Insufficient accommodation in school buildings and lack of equipments, etc., are one of the major problems in tribal, as well as, rural India. In many cases, specially in tribal region, there is only a structure without any shutters or flaps for the doors and windows. There is no teaching equipment also. These arrangements for education of the youngsters are not at all attractive or alluring and so they have a general aversion for schools.

(e) Teaching hours in some schools do not suit the local conditions of vocational practices of the people. In most of the cases, specially in rural areas, schools start at about 11 A. M. and continue till 5 P. M. In this arrangement there are some inconveniences. The better timing for this area is that the school should start early in the morning and close at 11 A.M. and reopen at 2-30 P.M. and finally break at 5 P.M. The children should prepare their lessons in the school in presence of the teachers. This is suggested because home environment of most of these boys is not encouraging or congenial for education, at all. If the school is run on one shift, the students very rarely get the

opportunity of preparing their lessons and this indirectly stands in the way of their educational progress.

(f) Selection of teachers with proper qualification is another essential requirement for spread of education in the tribal areas, as elsewhere. The teachers should be very sympathetic to the poor tribal children and treat them as their own wards. They must know the local tribal language, which will enable them to clarify any problem, in dealing with them easily. They should show a sentimental affection for the spontaneous emotions of inquisitive tribal students and should deal with them very carefully.

In a few States like, Andhra, etc., the wife of a teacher is also given some remuneration, if she attends the school, where her husband works. This create a very homely atmosphere, which easily attracts the tender children. It has been noticed that lady teachers are more effective in primary stages, because male teachers generally participate in local politics and embark on petty business enterprises, in addition to their teaching duties and so could give little attention to the children. So selection of a good teacher is very important for the schools located in tribal or rural areas.

(g) *Medium of instruction*—It is true that one particular object can be illustrated easily, if it is expressed in the local dialect or the mother-tongue of a child, at least, in the primary stage. Though there is no standard script

of any dialect for the tribal people in India, many educationists suggest that atleast the regional scripts should be used in the tribal areas. The State language in many cases creates difficulties. It has been observed that, as result of its introduction, in many cases, tribal children have become bilingual.

(h) The subject-matter of education for the tender boys in primary school specially in the tribal-concentrated areas, should be carefully selected. Local myths, riddles, folk songs, dances, etc., should be included in the curriculum, by which gradual assimilation of these themes could be effected. The students should be encouraged to observe the regional festivals with the people. This will create a very cordial relationship amongst the tribals and the geographical phenomena, historical non-tribals. Besides, the regional events, the nature of social setting, inter-relationship of the people of the locality, group participation, etc., should be discussed in an illuminating manner.

One of the important topic of the subject-matter should be the economic condition or the social conditions of the tribal people in general, and how these communities have been gradually transformed or constituted into a bigger society. The prominent qualities of the tribal life should be depicted comprehensively and it should be very carefully illustrated how the local traits have been borrowed from the Caste Hindu neighbours, through

a long and close contact and historical processes.

(i) Environment of the school should be of model type, having garden, playground, etc., which easily attract the boys to the school campus. Besides, there should be some sort of audio-visual teaching arrangements made, through entertainment, by the Publicity Department of the Government, symposia or discussions of the teachers of the locality held in the schools regularly, which would have great educative value. Thus the students would feel encouraged and the teachers would also overcome their monotony of life.

These are a few problems which are not insignificant or which cannot be tackled or eliminated easily. If anybody wants to transcend these educational difficulties, he should certainly give due stress on the matters specified above.

All these problems should be dealt with very carefully, because these relate to three vital problems, which are observed, when one probes into the tribal life. These problems are (1) absenteeism, (2) a feeling of stagnation and (3) wastage of zeal for education. Government may spend money for the welfare of the tribal people, but it has been observed that if these three drainages continue then every effort will prove futile. To combat these factors, the teachers should be more regular in taking courses and sympathetic to the students. Though in many places of West Bengal, in

primary schools, there are committees who look after the regularity of attendance of the students, but these are not very active due to obvious reasons, as there are economic difficulties and other associated disadvantages in the way of improving the teaching conditions.

In many cases, a tribal student gets his stipend or book grants after six months from the date of his admission. Just after admission, applications with particulars for this purpose, are filed and it takes such a long time that the boys get disinterested and leave the school. In this way, wastage of zeal for education continues. Money is spent for the purpose, but the object is not achieved.

Disinterest in education brings stagnation and, as a result, a good number of tribal students regularly get plucked in the examination, even after getting the allotted financial assistance, which is done in a haphazard manner. Sometimes, they discontinue their study altogether. These two particular problems, at the moment, are very serious in nature, in respect of tribal education and require immediate attention.

Though Government has arranged for coaching facilities, etc., for the students of Higher Secondary Schools to overcome such stagnation, but the results are not satisfactory, at all

Hostel grant which is awarded to the tribal students is Rs. 22 per head only, and it is not at all possible to run a hostel with

such a meagre grant. It has to be compensated in many cases, from funds saved due to absence of other student boarders. However, all these problems should be very carefully considered by the Executive Officers who are in charge of the Tribal Welfare Department.

IV

Suggestion : A case study :

It has been observed that to overcome all the above difficulties, Government should give more stress on voluntary organisations, which work with a missionary spirit and select teachers having requisite qualifications, to work amongst the tribals. To create appreciation or some sort of enthusiasm for education, the people should be trained up in such a way or should be given such lessons, by which they may sincerely feel the importance of education or the benefit of wiping out illiteracy. Unless such enthusiasm is created, the tribal children will not attend the school regularly. It has been stated earlier that home is the first educating centre in which the parents and family members are the educators of the boys. To overcome this difficulty, a good number of adult education centres should be organised, i. e., the whole tribal education policy should be based on a two-tier system, one being adult education, both for men and women and the other education of the children. In every tribal village there should be a *Chatsala* or *Pathsala* type hut. Very near that hut the social worker or the teacher will

live with his family. It will be undoubtedly a model type, having the facilities of garden, etc. During day time, the children will come and learn and participate in other activities also. The grown-up boys or the parents may attend their classes after dusk. The boys may be accommodated during night inside the centre, if necessary, or they may prepare lessons, listen to radio programmes, or learn tit bits of cottage industry.

A lady worker, preferably the wife of the teacher, will teach the women and more importance should be given on it. Because the male persons of the tribal society, as has been stated, engage themselves in hard day's labour and in most of the cases, they are addicted to drinking. So they remain indifferent to family affairs. If the housewife who particularly and diligently combat against all the evils of the day-to-day family life could be given some education, her desire may inspire a child to go to school. So the mother of the child will be given priority in the social education campaign.

Besides, the mother can be taught the means of maintaining sanitation, health and hygiene. Influence of mother on the child's immense. So in a tribal society, the mother may act for proper tending and education of the child. Considering all these, the Samaj Sevak Sangha of Midnapur have engaged two women social workers in two of their centres, as an experimental measure, and

the organisers are keenly watching its results. The Samaj Sevak Sangha, a registered voluntary organisation, functioning on a limited scale, has been entrusted by the Government to implement certain rehabilitation schemes in Midnapur. In its main centre there is one junior basic school, having one Ashram Hostel for the denotified Lodha boys (inmates number 30). A few years ago, it was a simple one-teacher primary school for the Lodhas alone, and for about 5 years, there were no regular students, though the teacher used to attend the school at 11 A.M. daily. When the Sangha came forward for the betterment of this area, they requested the authorities concerned to alter the timing of the school, for local convenience, e.g., to make it function from 11 A.M. to 4-30 P.M., in two shifts, split up into morning and afternoon sessions. This has been done since, and some Basic Trained lady teachers have already been appointed for the children classes.

The organisation benevolently spends a considerable amount for all the students now, including supplying substantial breakfast to the Ashramites taken this year. It also spends a lump sum amount to supply stationery materials and garments to some of the students and encourages the children of other communities and tribal groups to read in this school. As a result, a sense of integration is gradually being forged amongst all sections of people living in the locality.

A library has also been set up by the Sangha, where the local people and students and teachers of other local High and Higher Secondary Schools regularly come to read the books of their interest and participate in seminars. Arrangements have also been made to bring a few boys from the local *Chatsalas*, situated in neighbouring tribal concentrated areas to the Hostel, after they had read up to Class III standard. In this way, these sub-centres organised by the Sangha, have established regular contacts with the main centre, where they get valuable suggestions and advice in time of need and difficulties. A few local fairs and festivals have also been organised and held under the auspices of the Hostel and the Organisation, in which many tribes and castes of this area participate. It should be always borne in mind that to give special advantages, according to their needs, we must not create an idea of separatism or ethnocentrism amongst the people which is a dangerous phenomenon of the present day.

Government of India has committed to establish Vocational Youth Hostels in tribal areas during the first phase of the Fourth Plan period. For this arrangements should be made to start such a

vocational youth hostel adjacent to the Ashram Hostels by which the tribal students may get an opportunity of being trained in some sort of industry, from the very childhood. Additional expenses for allowance may be saved by this.

To spread education amongst the tribal population, Government or Social workers must think that after getting proper education, these tribal boys would be placed in proper pursuits, which will enthuse them towards better survival, as well as, prompt them to contribute their share for the betterment of the country and the nation some day.

The Tribal Welfare Department should request the school teachers of the tribal areas, through the Education Department, for imparting to the boys proper training, by which orientation in this line may be developed. A free primary school committee constituted mainly of tribal leaders, should also be set up for such training by the State Training Institutes or any other organisation, including in it the school teachers. In this way, the democratic outlook of the Government may influence the tribal leaders and the school teachers, by which, the prevailing idea of separatism can be dispelled.

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PRAVANSU SEKHAR DAS
PATNAIK

PATTERN OF INDEBTEDNESS IN A SAORA VILLAGE

The study of indebtedness was undertaken in course of conducting the survey of submersible villages under the Salia Medium Irrigation Project in Banpur Tahasil of Puri district. In the aforesaid village there are 168 Saoras who belong to the great Saora tribe who are mostly concentrated in Ganjam Agency. They are definitely a part of the Lanjia Saora tribe who are autochthones of Ganjam Agency and Pottasingi.

In this background the problem of indebtedness has been studied in village Sundari to know the economic adjustment of the people in their present economic set-up and the various factors and forces which have induced them to incur loans from private agencies. The study also reflects certain aspects like, capability of the people in paying off their outstanding debts and their unforeseen fate.

Sundari is a small village, one and half miles to the north of the main Salia Dam. It is situated on the top of a small hillock, surrounded by shrubby forests. The village is not connected with outside world except by narrow footpath.

The village has twelve Saora families with a total population of 63, out of which 24 are males and 39 are females. About three to four generations back, one of these families migrated from village Manjusa near Paralake-mundi and came to this place. They call themselves Bhima Saora and belong to single Bhima 'Birinda'. Birinda is the exogamous unit among the Saora not synonymous to clan.

The picture of indebtedness going to be presented here will be preceded by an account of their general economic condition.

The Saoras in this village have totally given up their traditional occupation of shifting cultivation in the present set-up and have adopted plain cultivation like other neighbouring castes and tribes. Paddy cultivation is their main source of living. Apart from cereals, fruits, flowers, leaves, roots and tubers supplement their diet. About 90 per cent of the families are engaged in agriculture.

In this area there are only two varieties of land, such as *bila* (wet land), and *padar* (up land). The villagers do not possess any

wet land. Upland are found in abundance. Total area of upland owned by the people is five 'bati' and five 'mana'. The extent of

utilisation of total land in the possession of the villagers is shown in the table below:—

Land Utilisation

Total land in Homestead 'Bati' and Mana land		Land under cultivation		Cultivable land lying fallow		Non-cultivable land	
Bati	Mana	Bati	Mana	Bati	Mana	Bati	Mana
5	5	..	10	4	10	..	..

An acre is equivalent to roughly 2 Manas and one 'Bati' is equivalent to roughly 40 Manas or 20 acre..

Cultivable land lying fallow—

Out of 5 mana of cultivable land. 3 mana of land are not cultivated because of forest growth. Two mana of land have been left uncared for by one family since 1964 because those lands will be submerged in the Salia Irrigation Project.

All these cultivable lands are lying scattered in and around the village within a radius of two miles.

Size of Agricultural Holdings—

As in the case of other agricul-

turists the size of holding has a tremendous importance for the Saora cultivators. If the modern cultivator needs a bigger and more fertile farm for raising his standard of living the aboriginal requires it for meeting his bare necessity of coarse grains. In fact the latter wants more land than the former, for he relies more on the natural powers of the soil, and has extremely limited means to augment the fertility of soil by artificial means.

Distribution of Agricultural Land

Community	Total No. of households	Number of households with					11—15 mana	15—22 mana
		No. land. 1—3 mana	4—6 mana	7—10 mana				
Saora	12	2	2	2	2	3	1	

Out of 12 families, 2 households do not possess any agricultural land. Two land owners hold 1 to 3, 4 to 6 and 7 to 10 mana of land, each. The table shows that only three families or twenty-five per cent of

the land owners owe 11 to 15 mana of land. Only one family or 8.3 per cent of the landowner holds 15 to 22 mana of land. Average size of the holding per family is about 9 manas of land.

Despite the fact that each family possesses about 9 manas of land, the condition of each family is not very promising because the land are all *padar* land where from only a single paddy crop is raised in a year and other cash crops and cereals, etc. are paid up to the local 'Sahukars' towards loans. Since the river Salia is flowing much below the level of the village, the river cannot be utilised to irrigate the lands. Hence the villagers solely depend on rainfall.

Excepting agriculture, they have got other sources of living like forest collection, wage-earning, *baramasia* (annual contract labour).

Forest collection—By tradition Saora is a forest dweller. Forests have shaped the habitat and economy of the tribe. Forests are the very fountain of life for the tribe. Most of the activities pertaining to food quest are performed in the forest. The Saoras consume grain and other crops which grow luxuriantly on the *padar* lands. Fruits, flowers, leaves, roots and tubers which supplement their diet are obtained from the forest. Wild animals from tiger to mouse which are found in the forest and near perennial streams are hunted for eating. Fish a delicacy in Saora's diet, are caught from small streams, ponds and water holes spread in the interior pockets of forest. They collect materials such as bamboo, timber, thatching grass, rope, etc., from the forest for constructing their houses. Fire-

wood for cooking and warming their dwellings are collected from the forest. They also sell firewood in the neighbouring villages. The clean castes, though living at the close proximity of the forest do not generally go for forest collections and depend on the Saoras and other tribes for supply of firewood which cost nearly Re. 0.75 paise per bundle. Bamboo, timber, thatching grass, etc. are also procured and sold by the tribesmen in the neighbouring villages. Thus forest is the major source of income for the Saora and almost all the families are engaged in forest collection. The average income per family from this source is about Rs. 150 to Rs. 200 annually.

Wage-earning—Out of 12 families, 8, work as casual labourers, 2, work for 8 months and the remaining families are wage-earners throughout the year. This is the main source of income during the lean months. Males, females and children above 14 years, go for wage-earning. Generally they prefer to work in the neighbouring villages not very far off from their own village. They prefer to work as agricultural worker and for constructing houses. They get their wage on daily payment basis. The prevailing rate of wage for male is Rs. 1.50 P., for female and for children, Rs. 1.25 P. On a rough calculation the average income from wages per family is about Rs. 120 over a year.

Annual contract labour (baramasia)—It is not a major source of income for all the families. Only two persons are engaged as *baramasia* at Janteswar. The

get 8 maunds of paddy and one cloth annually. In the morning they are provided with breakfast. A *baramasia* earns about Rs. 180 annually being engaged as annual labourer. The Saoras in this locality do not prefer to remain as annual labourers because, it is not a lucrative profession, but prefer to be day labourers. It is very difficult to assess the income of the families, which depend on agriculture, because they cannot correctly state the quantity of agricultural produce. The produce are not measured or weighed, but are kept at home and subsequently

paid to the Sahukars towards debts. It is also difficult to make any assessment of the income of the families, who depend on forest collection and wage-earning, etc., which do not ensure steady and regular income.

An attempt has, however, been made to find out the approximate income of the families engaged in different economic pursuits. A table relating to the monthly income of different families is shown below. The average annual income is Rs. 658 per family.

No. of families with monthly income of

Community	Total No. of families	Rs. 1-25	Rs. 26-50	Rs. 51-75	Rs. 76 to 100	Rs. 101 to 124	Rs.
Saora	12	5	3	2	1	1	

Expenditure—Like income, it is very difficult to assess the expenditure of the families. The Saoras could give only a rough estimate of expenditure on different items of daily life. In fact most of them were unable to count even the number of persons in their families. It was therefore not possible for such simple people to give

exact figures about their expenditure for the whole year.

However an attempt has been made to state the approximate expenditure of the families. A table relating to the monthly expenditure of different families is shown below. The average annual expenditure comes to Rs. 763.

No. of families with monthly expenditure of

Community	Total No. of families.	Rs. 1-35	Rs. 36-60	Rs. 61-84	Rs. 85 to 109	Rs. 109-133	Rs.
Saora	12	5	3	2	1	1	

An analysis of Saora's sources of income and the items of expenditure reveal the standard of living of the tribe. There is an excess of

expenditure over income in case of all the families, that is cent per cent of the total number of families are having deficit budgets. In

other words nobody is able to meet their expenditure or what to say of some surplus. Hence, almost all the families are in bad debts.

The above figure on income and expenditure relates to the year 1965-66. This was the year of drought, which is the main factor for such a large deficit.

Indebtedness—To supplement the deficit, each family had to run to the local money-lenders or *Sahukars* to borrow either money or grains.

Before going to details, it is necessary to qualify that the Saoras are so ignorant and illiterate that

they are unable to exactly tell the amount of their debt. They do not maintain regular accounts nor they are told by their creditor their outstanding balance at the end of every year. Moreover it is extremely difficult to get any information regarding debt by direct questions. They are living in steep poverty and therefore, there is greater possibility of their falling easily into the hands of money-lenders and a lesser possibility of getting out of debt due to their low income. However, an attempt is made to show the debt position of the villagers in the table below for the year 1965-66.

Position of the villagers for the year 1965-66

Community	Total No. of families	Name of the persons who are in debt	Debt in kind	Debt in cash	Year and month of bringing loan
Rs.					
Saora	12	Sanya Saora	2 quintals of paddy.	200	1965-66 Falguna and Chaitra.
		Ania Saora	2 quintals of paddy.	200	Ditto
		Giria Saora	4 quintals of paddy.	300	Asar
		Dama Saora	30 K. G. of paddy.	40	Magha
		Kula Saora	50 K. G. of paddy.	140	Magha
		Arjuna Saora	2 quintals of paddy.	120	Jestha
		Pandia Saora	4 quintals of paddy.	500	Aswin and Falguna
		Kalia Saora	50 K. G. of paddy.	40	Chaitra

Community	Total No. of families	Name of the persons who are in debt	Debt in kind	Debt in cash Rs.	Year and month of bringing loan
		Guna Saora	35 K. G. of paddy.	40	Chaitra
		Haria Saora	85 K. G. of paddy.	50	Do.
		Barikia Saora	25 K. G. of paddy.	40	Do.
		Gadua Saora	2 quintals of paddy.	200	Magha
Total			18.75 K. G.	1,870	

The average debt per family in kind and in cash is about one quintal and fifty-seven Kg. paddy and Rs. 155.83 or about Rs. 230 (including grain).

The incidence of debt analysed from this angle bears some relation to the average debt per family.

Wherever the percentage of cash loans is higher than grain loans, the average debt per family is also found higher. The reason is that Saoras find it more difficult to repay the cash loans which remains outstanding. The following table indicates the proportion of grain and money loans in the village.

Proportion of Grain loans and cash Loans

Name of the village	Total No. of families	Total debt Rs.	Grain loans 18 Qu. 17 K.G.	Money equivalent to grain loans Rs.	Percentage Col. 4 to total debt	Cash loan Rs.	Percentage of to total debt
Sundari	12	28.70		1,000	34.9	1 870	65.1

The Saoras take recourse to money loan only when they purchase articles of consumption

directly from some weekly market. Ordinarily they are habituated to barter system.

Out of 12 families within the monthly income-group of Re. 1 to Rs. 75 indebtedness among 10 families exceeds Rs. 230. Out of 2 families, earning more than Rs. 75 per month, range of indebtedness among them exceeds Rs. 300 or above. Cause of increase in the range of indebtedness with the rise in income may be attributed to the fact that the families with

increased income have greater economic potentiality and credit-worthiness as their income is the security against loans.

The following table exhibits a rough relationship of economic position of the family with regard to indebtedness and expenditure for the year 1965-66.

Name of the village	Percentage of deficit families	Average income per family in the year	Average expenditure per family in the year	Average debt per family in the year
		Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Sundari	100%	658	763	230

Purpose of loan—Ordinarily Saoras do not borrow if they get normal crops in successive years. With the produce they manage their consumption and seeds for sowing. They are able to meet their cash requirements either by selling cash crops, firewood, leaves, etc. in the neighbouring villages or in the weekly market. The ratio hangs on a delicate balance as they are petty cultivators. A slight failure of the crop immediately pushes them below the margin and compels them to borrow either for maintenance or seeds. Crop failure and fall in agricultural returns were the factors for which the villagers suffered a lot last year.

The statistical analysis of the purposes for which loans are contracted shows that over 80 per cent of borrowing are for

maintenance and seed. This high percentage of loans for the said purposes may be due to the poor crops last year. The next important purpose for which they contract loans is rituals and festivals. About 8 per cent of the total debt is incurred for meeting expenditure on those. Next to it is marriage for which they also incur loans. About 6 per cent of the total debt was incurred for meeting expenditure on marriages. If one has not collected some money by selling his surplus cash crops, he has to take cash advances either from a more resourceful Soara or from the *Sahukars* of the area. Nearly 2 per cent of debt found to have been incurred for purchasing cattle or on miscellaneous items like payment of fines for forest offences or purchase of utensils, etc.

Security for loans—Saoras do not borrow in large sums but in small instalments as and when they need. Their moveable assets are few. They are essentially cultivators and partly food gatherers. An average Soara has hardly any disposable surplus at the harvest. So when a loan becomes an unavoidable necessity, he surrenders his claim over future yield to the *Sahukar* as a security for the loan. In case the Saora debtor fails to repay the interest or capital, his cattle are either taken away by the *Sahukar* or are sold off on the spot.

Squeezed to the last by the pressing circumstances, a Saora would mortgage the silver ornaments of his wife. The *Sahukar's* greed, cunningness and malpractices find full scope for exploiting the ignorant Saoras. In fact, they have practically nothing movable or immovable to offer as security, except their personal labour or fruit of their hard work.

Sources of taking loan—Lack of communication, inaccessibility and an altogether strange social environment prevent any organized institutions for extending credit facilities into this area. Hence there is no credit co-operative society or graingola in and around the village. Only those persons who live either in the village or near about and two have an intimate acquaintance take the risk of advancing loans to them. However, the money-lenders of Banpur and other neighbouring villages like Janteswar, etc., have their business to a considerable extent. The

investigation reveals that about 80 per cent of the money-lenders belong to Banpur who belong either to Khandayat or Teli castes. About 20 per cent of the money-lenders belong to other neighbouring villages who are either Teli or Karan by caste. They are intimately aware of the character and credit-worthiness of each of their clients. They charge high rate of interest. They visit at the time of harvest for recovering their dues. The legislation to control high rate of interest is of little avail to the Saora as the money-lenders do not maintain any regular accounts nor do they grant any receipt on repayment to their debtors.

Interest—Ordinarily, the rate of interest charged by the *Sahukars* varies between 25 to 50 per cent. The majority of loans is against personal security, owing to the fact that land is non-transferable and cannot be offered as security against loans. In the absence of any tangible security the rate of interest is bound to be high. Usually a rate of 25 per cent is charged on grain loans borrowed for consumption purposes, with the condition of repayment of the loan at the next harvest. In certain cases the rate on such loans may go up to 50 per cent where the grain loan is borrowed for seed. A rate of 50 per cent or 75 per cent is charged on cash loans. If the debtor fails to repay at the stipulated time, the interest is compounded.

Generally loans in kind are repaid in kind. When that is not possible cash crops are appropriated towards interest. The

following is the rate of interest paid in kind:—

- 1 Adda is equivalent to half seer.
- 1 Adda mustard=2 Adda paddy.
- 1 Adda Niger=2 Adda paddy
- 1 Adda Biri=2 Adda paddy
- 1 Adda Mung=3 Adda paddy
- 1 Adda Koltha=1½ Adda paddy.

In case of cash loans, the interest is paid in cash.

Time of taking loan—As living from hand to mouth, they frequently resort to loans even just after the harvest. At harvest they repay the outstanding debts. Thereafter in the months of 'Magha' and 'Faguna' (December-January) they go to the money-lenders to bring loan in cash to celebrate various festivals and to perform marriage ceremonies. Sometimes to meet the emergency like 'Sradha' ceremony they also approach the money-lenders. During the months of 'Jestha' and 'Asar' (May-June) they also approach the money-lenders for seeds. During these months loans are mostly in kind.

Payment of previous loans—The study in this submersible village reveals that all the 12 families have been given compensation for the loss of their lands. The total compensation received by 12 families is Rs. 33,800. The

compensation was paid in the year 1963. During these years, the compensation received by the people has already been spent for purchasing land, paying off old debts of 1963-64 and 1964-65, purchasing food-stuff and for other purposes.

Conclusion—An analysis of the distribution of debt burden shows that almost all the Saoras owe a debt of over Rs. 230 (including grain). From their average income, their economic handicaps and the inability to save, it is clear that these people will not be able to be released from indebtedness in the near future. The position is further aggravated due to drought conditions in 1966.

The Saoras have incurred money loans in the year 1965-66. The same position continued in the year 1966. Due to these circumstances, they could not pay off their old debt of 1965-66. Not a single family has been able to pay off the old debts.

The heavy rate of indebtedness and the pattern of life were shaken consequently on the implementation of Salia Medium Irrigation Project. Since 1963, compensation was received for their loss of land amounting to Rs. 33,800. It has been found that the compensation received in cash has been mostly utilised in other things and paying off the old debts of 'Sahukars'. Moreover the imminent prospect of loosing about 102 acres of 'Paderlands' which is going to be submerged also affected their general interest for cultivation and land use. Therefore, at the

present moment they feel insecure and whatever cash compensation was left has been mostly used for the maintenance of the families. The picture therefore throws the mounting indebtedness of a tribal village which has emerged due to interaction of multiple factors coupled with overall backwardness. The tribals of this village who have given up quite a good number of their traditional traits to suit to their present environment have now been brought to the predicament of displacement. Government wants to rehabilitate them provided they give Rs. 500 as 'Salami' which they are unable to pay. The payment of cash compensation was certainly a shortsighted policy as they have spent out the entire compensation.

The prospect of displacement in 1967 has made them extremely panicky and with the debt mounting without any prospect of future acquisition of land have considerably affected their normal life. It has therefore been strongly suggested from a survey of the area that the tribals should be rehabilitated on land by the Government without asking for 'Salami' as well as they may be provided with agricultural implements, etc. to start a new lease of life. A word of caution should be thrown that if proper attention is not paid the condition of the people in these villages will be extremely miserable, after the submersion of their village in July 1967.

SIBA PRASAD ROUT

The Bhunjias are one of the little known tribes of Orissa. Russel and Hiralal in their "Tribes and castes of the Central Provinces of India" have given some passing references on the Bhunjias in general, but no detail description about their socio-cultural life is available in the ethnographical literature. Numerically the Bhunjias are a small tribe numbering 2,375 souls. They are autochthones of Kalahandi district. Sunabeda plateau is considered to be the birth place of the Bhunjias wherefrom they are believed to have migrated down to the plains and to the villages of Madhya Pradesh. The Bhunjias of the plateau are fairly secluded from their non-tribal Hindu dwellers and maintain cultural conservatism to a greater extent, and those settling on plains have adopted alien traits in their socio-cultural life. But inspite of such diversification the Bhunjias observe strict rules to maintain their purity. They do not eat food even from Brahmins and burn the kitchen house if touched by an outsider. The present article aims at analysing important and interesting points of Bhunjia social organization. The article does not aim at analysing their socio-cultural traits, but provides baseline data which may give clues to

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ethnologists to explore more and more about the details of Bhunjia culture.

The study was conducted in two Bhunjia villages—Junapani and Sunabeda—on the Sunabeda plateau for a period of three weeks in the year 1965.

History and Genesis

The racial origin of the Bhunjias is difficult to be traced out. There are no written documents which record the history of their origin and their flight to different places. The notable account on Bhunjias given by Russel and Hiralal in "The Tribes of the Central Provinces of India" holds the view that a section of the Bhunjia called 'Chaukhuntia' has originated from the marriage between Gonds and Halvas, but the field study among the Bhunjias revealed that the two sections of the tribe—*Chinda* and *Chaktia* have completely different connections. Those dwelling on hills are referred to as *Chaktia*, but the plains dwellers are called *Chinda*. Furthermore, the *Chaktias* strictly observe the traditional norms of Bhunjia culture than the acculturated *Chindas* and thereby claim higher social status than the latter. By *Chinda*, the Bhunjias also mean "one who

knows more" and thus the enlightened Bhunjias of the plains who by the privilege of their close contact with the outsiders have widened their outlook are said to be *Chinda* by the secluded hill-dwelling *Chaktia* Bhunjias.

Like other tribes the Bhunjias have their legendary evidence to state as to how the earth was created, how the human race was produced, and how the Bhunjias originated. As the legend goes Sunabeda was the ancient patch of the earth where dwelt the first couple of the human race called *Dokra* and *Dokri*. Once the *Dokra* on his way to the forest, overheard the Gods discussing about the problems of the earth. He heard them saying "today it will thunder, tomorrow there will be rains and a day after tomorrow all the world will be flooded". Coming back home the *Dokra* built a wooden box, kept food, water and other necessities inside, and locked the box keeping his son and daughter inside. As he heard there was heavy pouring of rains and the earth was submerged under water. However, the wooden box with two human lives was floating on the sea. Goddess *Parvati* created a crow to trace if any living human beings were available on the earth. In the meanwhile, Lord *Mahadev* created earth-worm to make the earth solid, and the two children lived there. As they did not know their identity, in course of time they remained as husband and wife and begot children. From them were born the *Gonda* (untouchables), who are the eldest brothers, next to them the Bhunjias

and other tribals, and at last were born the ancestor of other castes."

The fact that the Bhunjias had racial admixture with the *Gonds* is, however, ascertained from the legend narrated by them. The story narrates that in earlier days the Bhunjias had no inter-marrying group (*Markam*). Seven *Gond* brothers coming from the west in search of games married seven daughters of the *Mathiar* (The *Netram* Bhunjia living in *Sunabeda*) and thus became *Bandhu* (*Markam*) to the *Netam* Bhunjias.

The Bhunjias have no language of their own. They speak a dialect which is admixture of *Oriya* and *Chhatishgari* and dress themselves in *Chhatishgari* style. They are fairly strong in their body built and eke out their living mainly by cultivating land. Shifting cultivation has long since been given a good-bye and settled agriculture is widely practised, but the economy is no doubt substantiated by collection of roots, fruits, greens and tubers from the jungle, wage-earning by working as firm-labourers working in road-work, cutting timbers from the jungle on wage basis and collecting and selling valuable forest products.

The villages vary in size. The big villages with three to four wards have 60 to 70 families, but the small ones may have 10 to 15 families. The villages on the plateau are, more or less homogeneous save a few *Ganda* (drummers) families who are settled by the Bhunjias to get their service during marriage or on other socio-religious functions.

The houses are two-sloped houses thatched by wild grass. A single family has usually three huts, the outer house, the kitchen and the cattle-shed. The outer house is divided into two compartments, the sleeping apartment (*kudia*) and the outer house (*beska* or *chepar*) meant to accommodate guests. Cows and buffaloes are kept in cattle-shed. This is considered sacred because the Bhunjias believe that the *mirchuk* (spirit of those ancestors who had no place in the kitchen) reside in the cattle-shed to take care of the cattle. A menstruating woman thus avoids to go to the cattle-shed. Kitchen is the most sacred hut of the Bhunjias. It is the abode of their ancestral spirits and the touch of any outsider is believed to drive away the spirits (*dumba*). A Bhunjia takes proper caution to construct the kitchen a little away from the main house and to fence it properly so that an outsider may not have an easy access to it. The kitchen is considered to be the temple-house where all the family rituals are performed sacrifices made and the ancestors propitiated. Menstruating women are prohibited to enter into the kitchen and if an outsider happens to touch the kitchen it is set on fire without hesitation.

Units of Social Organization

Family—Family is the smallest unit of Bhunjia social organization. A single family with three to five members is the normal pattern, but big families with ten or more persons are also not uncommon. Average number of persons per family is 5.8. Nuclear family

consisting of a married couple with their unmarried children and giving shelter to widow mother or the widowed father is the most predominating type, but cases of extended families comprising of parents and their married son or sons are also occasionally met with. The frequency of joint families where the married brothers continue to live jointly after the death of the father are very rare. Generally, a Bhunjia starts living independently separated from his parents or brothers soon after marriage. In cases of separation unmarried sons continue to stay with the father till marriage, though the married sons leave the father after their marriage. In case of the death of a father, an unmarried brother stays with his married brother till he is married and is able to establish his independent household.

The family sample collected from the hill villages in Sunabeda area showed that 85.3 per cent were nuclear families, 13.4 per cent were extended families and only 1.3 per cent were joint families. The above data show that the authority in a family is vested more with the father than with the brothers. Occurrence of greater frequency of extended families than the joint families may be attributed to the fact that the married sons of a father tend to live collectively under the control of their father, but as soon as the father dies the kin ties become loose and the married brothers get themselves separated from each other to establish their independent household.

Preponderance of nuclear families over joint and extended families is a common occurrence in all tribal societies. Nuclear family not only minimizes tensions between brothers but is an economic necessity. It promotes economic stability in a family. It generates new responsibility in the brothers who learn to shoulder their own burdens soon after marriage. They exert more labour and struggle hard to raise their economic standard. In joint and extended families there is greater economic co-operation, but nuclear family encourages greater economic competition leading to increase economic standard of the family. Thus among the Bhunjias, the nuclear families are more stable in economy than the big joint and extended families.

Break of joint families does not necessarily result in the break up of kin ties between the brothers. The brothers living in separate families tend to co-operate with each other and help each other in scarcity more than other kins in their socio-economic life.

Lineage—The members of one lineage, though living in separate families may be grouped together genealogically. The members of a minor lineage can trace their relation genealogically, but the members of a major lineage fail to do so, though they believe in a common ancestry. In their social, economic and religious intercourse, it is difficult to mark and measure the difference in the degree of dealings between the members of major and minor

lineages, but closer kin tie and greater association between the minor lineage members can never be doubted. The annual rituals performed in family sphere are always performed by the senior most male member of the lineage on behalf of all the families of the lineage. The logic of this lies in the fact that since the immediate ancestors of all the families in a minor lineage happen to be the same persons a single rite performed by the minor-lineage head to propitiate the ancestors serves the purpose for all the families. In case of death, however, all the families of minor and major lineages throw away their old earthen cooking pots.

Barag—Each minor-lineage consists of a number of families the members of which are closely related to each other and come directly under a single genealogy, and the major lineage consists of a number of such minor lineages whose members believed in a common ancestry but fail to trace their relationship genealogically. Likewise, a *barag* consists of a number of major lineages. The *barag* name is used as surname. Like clan, each *barag* is exogamous which regulates marriage, but unlike clan it lacks any totem. Each *barag* has also its tutelary deity to whom the *barag* members propitiate on festive occasions. The ownership of land is vested in *barags*. Each *barag* has traditionally defined territory in which the *barag* deity dwells. Any new settler in a village must seek the permission of the *barag* members and propitiate the concerned *barag* deity whose land he intends to

enjoy. On hills 19 *barags* could be noted, but the number was reported to be much more on the plains.

An interesting feature of the *barag* organization is that not only each *barag* is exogamous but a number of *barags* taken together constitute one agnate group. The members of all such *barags* believe to be brothers to each other who owe their marital alliances with another set of *barags* who stand as marrying *barags* to them. This phenomenon divides the whole Binjhia tribe into two exogamous sections, the *Netam* and the *Markam*, each having a set of *barags*. The *barags* of *Netam* group can only have their marital alliances with the *barags* of *Markam* group, but such relation is strictly prohibited with any *barag* of the *Netam* group. The following gives a list of the *barags* of *Netam* and *Markam* groups.

A. *Barags* of *Netam* group—

- (1) Barge
- (2) Chhatra
- (3) Dandasena
- (4) Bhoi
- (5) Dabi
- (6) Disori
- (7) Barik
- (8) Sarmat
- (9) Naik
- (10) Bhamargadia

B. *Barags* of *Markam* group—

- (1) Pujari
- (2) Majhi
- (3) Mallick
- (4) Jhankar
- (5) Patia
- (6) Suar

- (7) Ambarukhia
- (8) Dumerbaharia
- (9) Sosengia

The Bhunjia legend holds that in the long past the Bhunjias had no inter-marrying group. There were only *Netam* Bhunjias, and the *Markam* Bhunjias originated only after the *Netam* Bhunjia gave their daughters in marriage to seven Gond brothers.

Village—Bhunjia villages on hills are homogeneous except that the Bhunjias give shelter to a few Pana or Ganda families in their villages. The Panas beat drums in Bhunjia rituals and to commemorate their feasts and festivals. In some villages the Bhunjias live along with the Gonds who are supposed to be their brethren tribe and from whom the Bhunjias accept water and cooked food. The villages are not exogamous as the people of both *Markam* and *Netam* groups live together in the same village. A village may have a number of wards, situated as far as a mile away from the main village, but all the wards owe their identity to the main village. Each village has its own set of ritual and secular officers who discuss and decide the village quarrels and conflicts. On village rituals, the wards of a village funds for village rituals which contribute for worshipping materials and the rituals are performed communally in the main ward. In each village, are installed stones representing *Matideota* or the village deity to safeguard the villagers from disease and death. Marriage is viewed more to be the responsibility of the villagers than the guardians of the

marrying partners. The guardians bear the expenses of a marriage, but the co-operation of the village men and women is essential to make the marriage ceremony a success. Similarly, in birth and death rites help and co-operation are sought from the villages. In their economic life, co-villagers help each other in lending bullocks for ploughing fields, weeding fields, harvesting crops, thatching house and so on. In cases of minor quarrels and conflicts, the village leaders assemble to discuss and decide the matter.

Inter-village organization

The Bhunjias of different villages come in contact with each other on major ceremonial occasions, in marriage, in fairs and in markets. In *Dasahara* festival (October) groups of tribals and non-tribals from neighbouring villages come to worship Sunadei, the tutelary deity of the Bhunjias. As M. P. border being only after five miles from Sunabeda, the Bhunjias of Sunabeda seek their marrying partners from villages of Orissa and M. P.

The markets are situated far away from the Bhunjia villages of Sunabeda area. The Bhunjias of Sunabeda have to come down about 23 miles to reach Vella market and about the same distance to go to Dharambandha market. Bhunjias from the surrounding villages also frequent Vella for bringing money and grain loans either from the Panchayat Graingola or from private lenders.

In cases of incest or irregular marriages delegates from the neighbouring villages assemble to decide the matter. The Kurha (political chief) decides the matter in consultation with the council of elders and the erring ones are penalised.

The Tribe—The origin and genesis of the Bhunjias have been described earlier. The Bhunjias of Sunabeda plateau designate themselves to be Chakatia and recognize four sections of Bhunjias, namely *Chakatia*, *Khalarajia*, *Nuagarhia* and *Sharia*, according to the area of their inhabitation. Those dwelling on hills are called *Chakatia* those living in open country on plains (*Khala*-open and *rajya*-country) as *Khalarajia* and those remaining in Nuagarh area are called *Nuagarhia* Bhunjias. The *Saharia* Bhunjias are so named as they live around towns and other urban centres. Broadly, however, the Bhunjias may be grouped under two sections the *Chakatia* (the hill-dwellers) and the *Chinda* (the plains dwellers).

While the *Chindas* show large number of changes by coming in contact with the outsiders, the *Chakatias* are conservative in observing their traditional customs and manners. The classification of the tribe into four sections has no functional basis as there is no stigma to recognize each section as a distinct unit. There is no bar in exchanging brides among the four sections and between the *Chindas* and the *Chakatias*. Only a minor rite (*dudh-pani*) is performed when a *bandu* washes the mouth of the

bride with milk before she is taken in as a member of the groom's group. Neglecting this minor rite, all the four sections of the Bhunjias consider themselves to be of one tribe. They never marry outside the tribe and do not accept cooked-food from others save a few castes and tribes to whom they do not consider inferior.

Inter-ethnic relation and social distance.

Social distance maintained by the Bhunjias with other castes reveals that they are strictly abided by their traditional customs. They consider polluting to eat cooked food from outsiders. Males may eat food from Gonds and Gours if cooked in metal pots, but the women never eat anything cooked by outsiders. After marriage, the daughter also never eats food cooked by her parents. On her visit to her parents she is provided with uncooked provisions which she cooks by herself and eats as long as she stays there. The reason as to why the Bhunjia men eat cooked food only from the Gonds and Gours and not from higher castes like Brahmins is that the caste were born after the Bhunjias were born and thus became lower in status to Bhunjias. Their association with the Gonds has been described earlier with whom the Bhunjias had matrimonial relations, but as to why they accept cooked food the Gours could not be ascertained. This may be due to the fact that the Bhunjias have come in closer association with Gours since time immemorial

and in course of time have taken Gours to be a clean caste.

As the legend goes, Gandas (Pana) were born prior to Bhunjias and as such are viewed to be elder brother to them, but because they ate beef they were cursed by Sunadei and became lower in status than the Bhunjia. A Bhunjia does not accept cooked food from a Ganda, but may eat mollase sold by a Ganda vender. The touch of a Ganda is not considered defiling, and a Ganda may dwell in the same ward where the Bhunjias live. A Bhunjia also never hesitates to work as a labourer to a Ganda.

The Bhunjias also maintain certain food taboos. They do not eat beef, pork or buffalo meat. The women observe more taboos than the men. They never eat outside. On their way to far off places they cook their own food. While at home they eat in the kitchen which is considered to be their sacred hut. Menstruating women are not allowed to enter into the kitchen or to the cowshed. While at outside the women do not eat usuna (rice husked after the paddy is boiled) rice as such rice touched by an outsider is considered to carry pollution. The idea of pollution goes so strong in the mind of the Bhunjias that even within the same tribe such idea plays its role. When a chakatia, for example, marries a *Chinda* a purificatory rite is performed for the bride before she enters into the house of the bride-groom and is accepted as a member of the new society. Likewise, it is the custom

among the Bhunjias to perform arrow-marriage (*kanda bara*) for their girls before they attain puberty. When a girl becomes 10 to 12 years old the parents given her in marriage to an arrow. Unless and until a girl is ritually married to an arrow her actual marriage ceremony cannot be performed. Furthermore, if a girl attains puberty before her "arrow-marriage" she loses all her status in the society so much so that no one approves her for marriage. Such a girl can be eloped away but her marriage is not socially approved. After *kanda bara* a girl is considered to be an active partner and a full-fledged member of the society and she observes all the taboos observed by the women-folk of the society.

It is very difficult to state definitely as to why the Bhunjias strictly observe a series of such taboos and maintain social-distance with other castes and tribes to such a degree. It is, of course a common belief among the tribals to consider themselves the first produced human beings of the earth and thereby claim superiority over others. It seems, therefore, that the Bhunjias, like other tribes consider themselves superior to all other castes and tribes by virtue of their priority in being the first born human race on the earth, and they further try to raise their status in the society by observing a series of taboos and adhering to strict principles of austerity. Russel and Hiralal hold the view that because the Bhunjias are a product of racial admixture of two ethnic groups,

they are, therefore, highly suspicious about the racial purity of others. They therefore, observe all such taboos and maintain social distance from others to raise their social status. Such suspicion goes so strong in their mind that among their own group they take sufficient precaution to free themselves from social pollution. They doubt the chastity of their own girls and as a precautionary measure perform *kanda bara* ritual for them before they attain puberty, so that they abide by strict rules of the society even before they become responsible members of the society. Russel and Hiralal further opine that it is not strange for a father to doubt the purity of his married daughter, a fact for which the married daughters are not allowed to enter into the kitchen of their parents and cook their food in separate hearth during their visits to the father's house.

Whatever the reason may be the fact that the Bhunjias observe strict rules to maintain their social purity cannot be doubted. This not only keeps the Bhunjias away from other communities of the society, but poses serious problems for social workers to implement welfare schemes among the Bhunjias without affecting their cultural norms. A single example will illustrate the situation. How can schemes to promote female education be crowned with success when the social norm of the Bhunjias does not allow their girls to remain and eat outside their own house after the tenth year of their age? During the field investigation I was really shocked to

know that a Bhunjia girl of Sunabeda who was reading in Vella (about 20 miles from her village) and passed U. P. securing a high position in the examination among all the students of the centre had to discontinue her studies because she was discouraged by her tribesmen. The Bhuanjias apprehended that misfortunes may befall on

her parents and on the village lest she remains away from home and continues her studies after 10 years of age. When I interviewed the girl she seemed to be very intelligent and sharp and she expressed that she was forced to give up her studies due to her villagers.



Dom child of Munargaon
*Photo by—*Courtesy of Robert Ebnither.

ROBERT EBNOTHER

TRADITIONALISM OR MODERNITY IN DEVELOPMENT

[I am afraid, I am not qualified enough to enter into a discussion apart with Shri V. K. Mathur's lucid arguments, as expounded in his excellent article in "Adibasi" No. 3, October 1966. I hope, however, the following very general and perforce inconclusive reflections might evoke contributions from more competent quarters to kindle a discussion: 'traditionalism versus modernity'—a topic I consider to deserve utmost attention. I should be specially interested if a subsequent article could elaborate on 'the departure from orthodox education towards education for modernity' as suggested by Shri Mathur in his discourse, i.e., about form and problems of practical implementation of such education in (a) tribal areas and (b) in traditional 'underdeveloped' rural areas]

Gradual and cautious weaning from traditional culture or sudden break with the past and unrestricted exposure to the modern world?—that is one of the crucial questions facing those concerned with the integration into a dynamic society, of hitherto isolated tribal communities and economically less developed rural populations—in India and in most of the so-called underdeveloped countries. In other words: democratic or revolutionary approach to development?—the former perhaps adopted by India (in keeping with her age-long tradition), the latter exercised to day in China—to pick out but two distinct traits from the varied pattern of development trends. Both ways claim to have the same goal: to free the people in the shortest possible time, from the anachronic misery and want

accompanying the sub-subsistence economy of a static society, and to offer everybody equal opportunity for a better life.

Is the heated discussion then but the expression of a difference of opinions how best to achieve one and the same goal? And is it but my own concern which leads me to see in India's more liberal way a feeling or conviction that—however pressing and important an issue—mere economic progress is not enough to ensure the full integrity of man? On the other side, the revolutionary way is clearly emphasizing the primary need for radical change by all means, almost according to the rule: the best way to learn swimming is to jump, or be thrown, into deep water (without bothering too much how many might

drawn in the process). In addition, the void created by such a total rejection of traditional values is liable nowadays to be filled by political doctrines likely to be inconsistent with India's professed adherence to democratic values. Moreover, one experiment in a large-scale 'cultural revolution' (China) causes perhaps enough strain to world equilibrium for the time being !

In any case though, the confrontation (partial or total) with a modern dynamic society is bound to undermine and dissolve the rigid and static frame of every traditional culture—whether this confrontation comes as the result of a protective or of a revolutionary attitude. 'Progress' and acculturation in both instances will no doubt differ from each other in degrees and orientation, depending on a multitude of factors, such as how far the superimposed stimuli for change are preceded by, or concomitant with, a psychological 'revolution'. Change and development still tend to be predominant concern of technicians and officials, and not of the people directly involved. As long as there is no constructive dialogue between people and 'developers' to foster confidence, understanding and co-operation, the people are unlikely ever to reach that point of 'take-off' crucial to every development. Hence, a new orientation in education (of recipients and promoters of change alike) is certainly highly desirable.

Nobody today will question the imperative need to alleviate the

misery and want still haunting two-third of the world's population. It is also understood that satisfactory results may be achieved only through the adoption of modern methods as offered by science and technology. To expect, however, that the economically advanced West holds the answers to all present and future problems would be fallacious.

Let us not, in blind admiration of the technological progress of the production-consumption directed society, overlook that this affluent society is also facing a host of problems and a growing crisis, the signs of which are apparent to every critical mind. I need mention here but a few, such as : alienation of man from himself, from his fellow and from his environment; increasing aggressiveness and frustration resulting from unchecked and artificially augmented acquisitiveness and urge to possession; restlessness, loneliness, fears, etc.—leading to an alarming number of all kinds of neurosis. Let us also not forget that under Ashoka's reign, and later in the days of the Cholas, the Pandyas, Cheras, Andhras, etc. India had already achieved an elevated level in logical and abstract thinking, and in the natural sciences, such as astronomy, physics, mathematics, geometry, medicin, etc.—long before, and at a time when the now 'developed' West was still groping in the darkness of religious bigotry and superstition. Moreover, the latest discoveries in biology, psychology, physics, etc., already hint at a departure from the predominance in modern

Western thought of the dualism as expected in the subject-object dichotomy, towards the traditional Indian view that all physical and spiritual phenomenae, all animated as well as 'dead' matter are all but parts of one universal Entity (But here I am venturing out into a field I am not qualified to enter!). This might help to view the assumed and propagated superiority of the West with the appropriate distance and detachment, and perhaps to find a way to use the benefits of science in the struggle against poverty and want without falling prey to the same insane crave for unlimited consumption and possession with all its concomitant harms, as characteristic of industrialized rich nations.

I am clearly aware that these reflections and reservations—coming from a young member of that affluent society—must sound naive, sentimental and even hypocritical to those standing in the midst of human suffering, searching for means and ways to bring relief to their people. I have, however, witnessed (though never directly experienced) the misery of the poverty-stricken rural populations in India and in other parts of the world, and have come to feel deep concern about, and sympathy with, their plight. This experience in turn has also sharpened my awareness of the

dark sides of the attractive prosperity and affluence found in the industrial West and negative aspects which naturally are less real and obvious to those who have never had the chance to partake of that prosperity. I must emphasize again therefore, that to mention the commonplace truth that 'mere material prosperity does not make for happiness' can never mean withholding the benefits of modern times from traditional 'untouched' and underprivileged societies, under the pretext of protecting them from the accompanying dangers and evils. On the contrary, the fertilization of an ancient (if of late somewhat static) culture—such as found in India—with new dynamic impulses from the outside, might eventually yield a new synthesis which the West and all those uncritically following its leadership, may one day be grateful to discover.

Perhaps for the first time in India's long history TIME has become a decisive factor in shaping development policies. This together with the growing awareness and increasing participation of the hitherto more or less inarticulate rural masses, might yet seriously jeopardize and frustrate any balanced and well-planned development by dictating its own terms !

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