

Encyclopedia of Tribes in Odisha

VOLUME
I



Edited by
A.B. Ota
S.C. Mohanty

**Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Research
and Training Institute**
ST & SC Development Department,
Government of Odisha

Supported by
Ministry of Tribal Affairs
Government of India

**Encyclopedia
of
Tribes in Odisha**

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A. B. Ota

S. C. Mohanty

**Scheduled Castes & Scheduled Tribes
Research and Training Institute (SCSTRTI),
Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India, 751003**

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Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India

2021

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2021

©: Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Research and Training Institute
(SCSTRTI), Bhubaneswar

Published by:

Director
Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Research and Training Institute
(SCSTRTI), Bhubaneswar

ISBN: 978-93-80705-82-8

Price :

Printed at:

Capital Business Service & Consultancy
B-51, Saheed Nagar, Bhubaneswar

FOREWORD

Odisha holds an important position as the home of the largest number (62) of notified Scheduled Tribes, including many Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups. Naturally, the spectrum of tribal culture, livelihood and development in the State is very wide. It is essential for the country to preserve this heritage of tribal culture and knowledge, so as to facilitate further analysis for formulating more effective policies and programmes for socio-economic development and cultural preservation of the tribal communities.

The Schedule Castes and Scheduled Tribes Research and Training Institute (SCSTRTI) of Odisha has been doing exemplary work in the field of ethnographic research and documentation of various aspects of tribal life and culture. This vast work of compiling relevant details in 'Encyclopedia of Tribes of Odisha' will be a treasure of knowledge for researchers and policy-makers.

Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India deeply appreciates the dedicated work done by Prof. (Dr.) A.B. Ota, Director, Sri S.C. Mohanty, Consultant and the team of SCSTRTI, Odisha for compiling, editing and presenting hundreds of meaningful articles in these five volumes. It is expected that this will inspire a new generation of students and researchers, and will also motivate those working in the fields of public policy.



Anil Kumar Jha

Secretary

Ministry of Tribal Affairs
Government of India

PREFACE

The motley crowd of tribal communities living in the hills and plains of Odisha has enriched the cultural heritage of the state by their ethno-cultural diversities. Officially they have been enlisted as Scheduled Tribes (STs) numbering 62 including 13 Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs). As per the 2011 census, they number 95,90,756 persons accounting for 22.85 percent of the total population of the State. In terms both Scheduled Tribe communities and PVTGs, Odisha has the highest number amongst all the States, in the entire Country.

Each tribe possesses its distinct identity in terms of social organization, culture, and language. They pursue their own distinctive life styles different from each other which help them to preserve their cultural identity that is defined and redefined from time to time. They represent a type of society in the scheme of social evolution. As a structural as well as cultural concept, tribe encompasses features of simple societies. The major and smaller tribal groups have separate ethnic identities including historical and cultural heritage.

By and large, tribal communities are relatively encysted, deprived, economically backward, but their heritage, tradition and culture make their society tenacious to survive amidst upheavals and downfalls. In a nutshell, tribal communities are closed societies with open mind. In spite of certain socio-cultural changes taking place in their age old way of life under the present pressing circumstances of planned change and intervention, many of them have still kept their distinct ethnic identity intact. In this context, the inadequacy of in depth anthropological research and documentation on the colourful life style of the tribals has to be taken in to due consideration.

In this regard many works have been done by the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Research and Training Institute (SCSTRTI) of Odisha - the premier and oldest tribal research institute (TRI) of the country established since 1952. The main objective of setting up of the Institute was to conduct studies on the society, culture and development problems of the tribal communities of Odisha and to serve as a centre for providing data and advisory services to Government. Publication of books, reports and research journal is one of the important activities of the Institute for dissemination of information on various aspects of STs. So far it

has published 126 books comprising monographs and popular literature, photo hand books, development handbooks, action plans and information brochures etc. on SCs and STs. These publications are based on research works undertaken by the Institute.

In addition to that the Institute publishes bi-annual News Letters on the activities of the Institute and a half-yearly research journal, ADIVASI published in June and December containing articles on various aspects of STs and SCs. Published since 1955, ADIVASI has earned the distinction of being the oldest anthropological research journal of Odisha. The journal aims to publish original unpublished research papers on tribal centric issues to highlight those aspects hitherto unexplored. The corpus of the journal though is largely anthropological in nature; its scope is broadened to make it multidisciplinary to cope with the changing times. It endeavours to provide a forum to eminent scholars as well as young researchers to exchange innovative ideas and speculations.

Marching with the time the ADIVASI journal has gloriously entered into its 61st year of publication. Within the treasure of its published articles there are many precious articles including many old ones of the fifties, sixties, seventies, eighties and nineties as well as the recent ones of the 21st Century depicting various aspects of the life and culture of the Tribal Groups of Odisha. Considering the rapidly changing scenario of the present times in which many ethnic groups are undergoing transformation towards modernity the institute felt it necessary to compile, re-edit and republish the articles on the 62 Tribes of Odisha published in its Adivasi journal and some more brought from its other published and unpublished documents to bring out their past and present in to limelight in order to show their "then" and "now". This compilation containing 418 articles is organized into five edited volumes. It is a huge task deserving commendation.

I must acknowledge the contributions of all the eminent scholars whose articles have found place in these volumes. Many of them who were active in the past century have taken great pains and faced immense hardships to go to the remote tribal areas, collect empirical data and prepare these articles. The phenomenon of time coupled with fate and destiny has taken its toll and many of these great souls are no more with us. But they will live with us through their works. Publication of these volumes is a tribute to them.

I will be failing in my duty if I do not acknowledge the painstaking efforts of Prof. A. B. Ota, Director and Editor and Shri S. C. Mohanty, Associate Editor of Adivasi and Consultant, SCSTRTI for their relentless effort, dedication and

engrossing involvement to conceptualize the project, collect, select, compile and re-edit such large number of articles and to accomplish all other tasks required to produce these huge volumes. Both of them deserve my heartiest thanks.

It is hoped that these five volumes will serve as a reference literature on the Tribes of Odisha which will be of immense help to the researchers, development practitioners, academicians and general readers interested in conducting research and acquiring knowledge in tribal society, culture as well as their development.



Kanjana Chopra, IAS
Principal Secretary
ST & SC Development Department
Govt. of Odisha

EDITOR'S NOTE

In the aftermath of independence and adoption of Indian Constitution incorporating special provisions for the protection, welfare and development of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, the Tribal Research Institute (TRI) of Odisha took its birth in Bhubaneswar, the capital city of Odisha way back in 1952 christened as Tribal Research Bureau (TRB), in pursuance of the constitutional goals and objectives. Now rechristened as Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Research and Training Institute (SCSTRTI), this institute not only has the distinction of being the premier and oldest Tribal Research Institute (TRI) of the Country, but it is also credited with the publication of a nationally reputed as well as the oldest Anthropological Research Journal of Odisha titled "Adivasi" incorporating the research articles of reputed anthropologists, sociologists, development practitioners and researchers who have worked and gained knowledge and experience in the field of tribal and non-tribal societies and cultures. Being published since 1955, almost uninterruptedly, this veteran research journal of Odisha which is nearly 61 years old, has come up with its 61th volume in the year 2021.

Over these years, the journal has endeavored to publish valuable research articles on various aspects of the society, culture and problems of Odishan tribes and castes and marching with the time it has gloriously entered into its 66th year of publication. Within the treasure of its published articles there are many precious articles including many old ones of the fifties, sixties, seventies, eighties and nineties as well as the recent ones of the 21st Century depicting various aspects of the life and culture of the colourful tribes including 13 Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs), previously called as Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs) of Odisha - a distinct and fascinating ethnic category among the tribes many of whom are known the world over for their pristine culture. Considering the rapidly changing scenario of the present times in which these ethnic groups are undergoing transformation towards modernity it was felt necessary to compile the selected articles on the Tribes of the State published in our Adivasi journal as well as our other research reports and publications to bring their past and present in to limelight in order to show their "then" and "now".

Prior to this, our institute also published 13 colourful Photo Hand Books on the 13 PVTGs of Odisha which has gained popularity among the Indian and foreign readers. Consequently, some of these have to be reprinted as they became out of stock. Considering the popular demand for the publications relating to PVTGs, it was decided to compile the selected articles published in our Adivasi journal from the nineteen fifties to the present and publish it in three volumes in the name of "PARTICULARLY VULNERABLE TRIBAL GROUPS OF ODISHA". In these three volumes one hundred and fifty five articles find place classified as related to (1) Ethnography (vol. 1), (2) Change & Development (vol. 2) and (3) Anthropology of Health and Medicine (vol. 3). These three volumes have been published during 2015.

While putting our priorities on bringing out publications on our PVTGs, we have never forgotten other tribes given the fact that the State of Odisha is the homeland of 62 Scheduled Tribes. Indeed, by the end of the last century we have published 10 monographs on 06 tribes of Odisha namely, 1. BHUNJIA, 2. BONDO (2), 3. JUANG (2), 4. KANDHA (2), 5. KOYA (2), and 6. SAORA. Besides a book containing ethnographic articles on 43 important tribes have been published in the name of "TRIBES OF ORISSA". For their popular demand the stocks of books on BONDO, KONDH, SAORA, JUANG and the TRIBES OF ORISSA have been exhausted and revised editions of books on KANDHA, KOYA and TRIBES OF ORISSA have been brought out in the mean time.

In addition to that we have published colourful Photo Hand Books on total 62 Scheduled Tribes of the State. These books have also become popular for which some of it have to be reprinted to meet the demand. We also have made several publications covering different socio-cultural and development aspects of different tribes of Odisha.

The present task of collection and compilation of research articles on all the Tribes of Odisha from our Adivasi journal and other sources is not an easy task. Most of the articles and especially those of the past century were prepared and printed when computer was either not in our dreams or in our distant dreams. Hence, those have to be computer typed again, corrected, edited, if so required, and formatted to make these ready for reprinting. To accomplish the task, we did not have the luxury of time. This has to be done in a short span of time within a busy and hectic schedule of many other pressing engagements.

At last we could put together the 1st Volume - containing 89 articles on 16 tribes. In this compilation, the names of the tribes on which articles have been

presented have been arranged in ascending alphabetical order as notified in the list of Scheduled Tribes of the State under alphabet 'B' starting from BAGATA and ending at BONDA.

The picture of the past life style of the tribes that the illustrious anthropologists of past century have presented in their articles may not be found in these days except in the memory of the still living old guards. To the present generation of the tribes it may appear strange and outdated. But as a matter of fact, change is inevitable. Due to the powerful impact of planned change and modernization many of the old life ways of the tribes have become obsolete and lost in antiquity while some others are on the verge of decline. But one has to march with time but with reference to his past that gives him his cultural identity. Moreover, everything that one need to know about the Tribes of Odisha may not be found in this book but it can certainly help open a window to the picturesque tribal world of Odisha and guide the readers to deepen their understanding of these distinguished and colourful ethnic groups who exhibit our diverse tribal cultural panorama.

Commitment of errors and omissions have become part our lives. This work is no exception. In spite of our sincere efforts, these lapses may be there. We apologize for that and request our kind and learned readers to bring those to our notice along with their constructive suggestions for improvement in order to enable us not only to correct our mistakes but also to learn from our mistakes.

We owe a deep debt of gratitude to all the eminent scholars whose articles have found place in this volume. Many of them belonged to us and few still belong to this Institute. Many of them who were active in the past century have taken great pains and faced immense hardships to go to the remote and Dark Continent of the tribes, collect empirical data and prepare these articles. The phenomenon of time coupled with fate and destiny has taken its toll and many of these great souls are no more with us. But they will live with us through their works. Publication of this volume is a tribute to them.

I will be failing in my duty if I do not acknowledge the help and cooperation of all who have typed, read, compared and corrected the typed articles as well as the printer without whom this book would not have seen the light of the day. Of all, my special thanks are due to my co-editor, Shri S.C. Mohanty, the former Joint Director of SCSTRTI and now working with us Consultant (Research & Publications) for his singular relentless effort, dedication and engrossing involvement to conceptualize the project, collect, select, compile, edit and format

the articles and to accomplish all other tasks to produce the book in spite of his multifarious pressing engagements. This work would have remained in our dreams without him.

This book is unique of its kind as in it a humble attempt has been made to amass and streamline the fragmented data about the Tribes of Odisha of the past and present times. I hope this book would be of enormous help as a ready reference for the tribal lovers and researchers alike and all those who are interested in the subject matter of Odishan tribes.

20th August, 2021
Bhubaneswar



Prof. (Dr.) A.B. Ota, IAS
Advisor-cum-Director
& Special Secretary
SCSTRTI

CONTENTS

<i>Foreword</i>		V
<i>Preface</i>		VII
<i>Editor's Note</i>		XI
Tribes of Odisha		
(1) BAGATA, BHAKTA		
1. <i>Siba Prasad Rout</i>	Bagata	1
2. <i>S. C. Mohanty</i>	Bagata	3
3. <i>A. C. Sahoo</i>	Bagata	4
4. <i>A.B. Ota, S.C. Mohanty & P. Patnaik</i>	Bagata	6
(2) BAIGA		
5. <i>S. C. Mohanty</i>	Baiga	14
6. <i>A.B. Ota, S.C. Mohanty & Khirad Kumar Turk</i>	Baiga: A Little known Tribe of Odisha	16
(3) BANJARA		
7. <i>P. K. Mohapatra</i>	Banjari	25
8. <i>S. C. Mohanty</i>	Banjara	27
9. <i>P. S. Das Patnaik</i>	Socio-Economic conditions of the Banjaras	29
10. <i>A. B. Ota, S.C. Mohanty & K. Patnaik</i>	Banjara	50
11. <i>S. C. Mohanty</i>	Socio-Economic life of the Banjara/Banjaris	64
(4) BATHUDI		
12. <i>B. Choudhury</i>	Bathudi	67
13. <i>S. C. Mohanty</i>	Bathudi	72
14. <i>B. Choudhury</i>	Bathudi	74

15.	<i>A. B. Ota, S.C. Mohanty & S. R. Pingua</i>	Bathudi	79
-----	---	---------	----

(5) BHOTTADA

16.	<i>G. N. Satpathy</i>	Bhottada	87
17.	<i>S. C. Mohanty</i>	Bhottada	94
18.	<i>G. N. Satpathy</i>	Bhottada	96
19.	<i>A.B. Ota, S.C. Mohanty & S. C. Patnaik</i>	Bhottada	103
20.	<i>Nityananda Das</i>	Bhattara Marriage	113
21.	<i>Meerambika Mahapatro</i>	A Preliminary Study of Acceptability of Permanent Measures of Birth Control among the Bhattara tribe of Orissa	117

(6) BHUIYA, BHUYAN

22.	<i>G. N. Satpathy</i>	Bhuiyan	121
23.	<i>B. B. Mohanty</i>	Bhuyan	134
24.	<i>N. Patnaik</i>	Economic Life and Food Gap in Tamera – A Bhuinya village in Keonjhar District	142
25.	<i>S. C. Mohanty</i>	Paudi Bhuyan	166
26.	<i>A. B. Ota & A.C. Sahoo</i>	The Paudi Bhuyan	168
27.	<i>N. Patnaik, Almas Ali, S.P. Rout & K.B. Debi</i>	HandBook on the Pauri Bhuinya	181
28.	<i>S. P. Rout</i>	Pauri Bhuinya Marriage	298
29.	<i>B. Choudhury</i>	Economic Activities of Pauri Bhuiya	310
30.	<i>B. Choudhury</i>	Swidden Cultivation: The Pauri Bhuyan way	319
31.	<i>L. K. Mahapatra</i>	From Shifting Cultivator to Agriculturist: the Pauri- Bhuiyan in transition	333

32.	<i>S. P. Rout</i>	Hunting among the Pauri Bhuinyas of Kuirra, Sundergarh District	348
33.	<i>N. K. Behura</i>	Impact of Evolving Forest Policy & Planned Development on Indigenous People in Orissa : The case of Pauri Bhuinyas	355
34.	<i>L. K. Mahapatra</i>	Status, Hierarchy and Hinduisation in Pauri Bhuiyan society in North Orissa	372
35.	<i>S. C. Mohanty & B. K. Paikray</i>	Paraja Bhuyan of Sundergarh District	387
36.	<i>B. N Swain</i>	Social Status of Khandayat Bhuinya or Bhuinya Khandayat of Sundargarh District	393
37.	<i>T. Patnaik</i>	Paik Bhuyan/Khandayat Bhuyan	397

(7) BHUMIA

38.	<i>S.C. Mohanty</i>	Bhumia	399
39.	<i>P. S. Das Patnaik</i>	Bhumia	401
40.	<i>S. K. Ghosh Maulik</i>	Bhumia	405
41.	<i>G. B. Sahoo</i>	Bhumia	409
42.	<i>A. B. Ota & P. Patel</i>	Bhumia	412

(8) BHUMIJ & (16) DESUA BHUMIJ

43.	<i>S. C. Mohanty</i>	Bhumij	419
44.	<i>B. Choudhury</i>	Bhumij	421
45.	<i>P. S. Das Patnaik</i>	Bhumij	426
46.	<i>A.B. Ota, S.C. Mohanty & H. B. Barad</i>	Bhumij	433
47.	<i>A. C. Sahoo</i>	Bhumija Festivals : Continuity and Change, An Anthropological study	443

48.	<i>Bijayalaxmi Dash & N. C. Dash</i>	Indigenous Plant Medicine for Fertility Regulation: A Study on the Bhumija tribe of Odisha	454
49.	<i>B. Choudhury</i>	Desua Bhumij	463

(9) BHUNJIA

50.	<i>Siba Prasad Rout</i>	Bhunjia	467
51.	<i>T. Patnaik</i>	Bhunjia	471
52.	<i>S. C. Mohanty</i>	Chuktia Bhunjia	476
53.	<i>A. B. Ota & T. Sahoo</i>	Chuktia Bhunjia	
54.	<i>Siba Prasad Rout</i>	Social Organisation of the Chaktia Bhunjias of Kalahandi	787
55.	<i>Ch. P. K. Mohapatra</i>	Cultural Conservatism among the Bhunjia	796
56.	<i>P. K. Mohanty</i>	The Bhunjia of the Sonabera Plateau and Strategy for their Development	502
57.	<i>B. Mohapatra, R. Parida, M. K. Jena & A. B. Ota</i>	Folk Knowledge on Utilitarian Aspects of Plants: Findings from Chuktia Bhunjia and Gonds in Sonabera plateau	506
58.	<i>Jagannath Dash & L. K. Sahoo</i>	Cognitive Aspects of Indigenous Knowledge System: An Anthropological study of the Bhunjias in Odisha	516

(10) BINJHAL, BINJHWAR

59.	<i>K. B. Debi</i>	Binjhal	530
60.	<i>S. C. Mohanty</i>	Binjhal	538
61.	<i>K. B. Debi</i>	Binjhal	540
62.	<i>A B.Ota, S.C. Mohanty & P. Patnaik</i>	Binjhal	549

(11) BINJHIA, BINJHOA

63.	<i>Ch. P. K. Mohapatra</i>	Binjhia	559
-----	----------------------------	---------	-----

64.	<i>S. C. Mohanty</i>	Binjhia	561
65.	<i>H. S. Mishra</i>	Binjhia	562
66.	<i>A. B. Ota & A. Mall</i>	Binjhia	564

(12) BIRHOR, (46) MANKIDI, & (47) MANKIRDIA

67.	<i>S. C. Mohanty</i>	Birhor / Mankirdia	572
68.	<i>D. P. Sinha</i>	The Birhor and their World View	573
69.	<i>N. Patnaik</i>	The Birhor	580
70.	<i>P. K. Mohanty</i>	Birhor	
71.	<i>P. K. Mohanty</i>	Living Conditions of the Bihors in Orissa and strategy for their Development	609
72.	<i>Trilochan Sahoo</i>	The Changing Life style of the Birhor: From nomadic life to settled life	614
73.	<i>Trilochan Sahoo</i>	Mankirdia : Quest for Development Interventions	633
74.	<i>A.B Ota & S.C. Mohanty</i>	Mankirdia	643
75.	<i>A. B. Ota & T. Sahoo</i>	Birhor	653
76.	<i>N. C. Dash</i>	Bio-Cultural Determinants of Fertility of the Mankirdia: A semi-nomadic tribe of Odisha	665

(13) BONDO

77.	<i>S. C. Mohanty</i>	Bondo	675
78.	<i>U. C. Mohanty</i>	Bonda	677
79.	<i>A. B. Ota & S. C. Mohanty</i>	Bonda	682
80.	<i>P. S. Das Patnaik</i>	Bondo	687
81.	<i>B. B. Mohanty</i>	Marriage & Family : A study on the Bondo of Orissa	694
82.	<i>B. B. Mohanty</i>	Poltical Organisation and Administration of Justice among the Bonda	707

83.	<i>J. M. Basantia & D. Mukhopadhyaya</i>	Modernity and Primitiveness: A conflict in the Bonda life	718
84.	<i>M. Haque</i>	Earlobe Attachment and Eye Brows among the Bonda of Koraput district in Orissa	724
85.	<i>SCSTRTI</i>	Tribal Medicine and Medicinemen: An exploratory study of the Bonda of Orissa	726
86.	<i>R. N. Sahu</i>	Bonda Highlanders: Tradition and Development	757
87.	<i>L. K. Mahapatra & R. P. Mohanty</i>	Land Use and Development <i>in situ</i> in Bonda Hills	767
88.	<i>B. B. Mohanty</i>	Persistence and Change in Bonda society	787

B A G A T A *

*Siba Prasad Rout*¹

The Bagatas are otherwise called as Bhaktas or Baktas. They are a class of Telugu fishermen and are very expert in catching fish in fresh water with a long spear. They have relations with Oriya fishermen. As Thurston writes "They account for their name by the tradition that they served with great devotion (Bhakti) the former rulers of Golconda and Madugula who made grants of land to them in *mokhasa* tenure".

According to the 1961 census the population of the Bagatas is estimated to be 1,511, whose main place of abode is Koraput district. More than 90 per cent of the Bagatas live in Koraput district, while the rest are found distributed in Kalahandi, Sambalpur, Bolangir, Boudh, Ganjam, Sundergarh, Cuttack, Mayurbhanj and Balasore (former undivided) districts. Their population, according to 1961 census can be stated as follows.

Districts where the Bagatas are found	Total population	Male	Female
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Koraput.	1,374	692	682
Kalahandi	32	12	20
Sambalpur	15	10	5
Bolangir	1		1
Boudh	3	1	2
Ganjam	3	-	3
Sundergarh	1	-	1
Cuttack	28	15	13
Mayurbhanj	52	24	28
Balasore	2	2	-
Total	1,511	756	755

* Published in ADIBASI, Vol. V, No.3, (Special Issue), TRB, 1963-64, pp.97-98

¹ Research Assistant, Tribal Research Bureau (TRB), Bhubaneswar

Caste Composition

The Bagatas are primarily a fishing community. Madras Census Report, 1901 states, "on Dasara day they worship the fishing baskets and also (for some obscure reason) a kind of trident". According to E. Thurston, "the trident is probably the fishing spear". In the Gazetteer of the Vizagapatam district, it has been recorded that there is a fish-pool under the Yendrika Hill, 5,188 feet above the sea. This pool is "crowded with *mahseer* of all sizes. These are wonderfully tame". At Sivaratri, a festival occurs near this pool at a shrine. A part of the ritual is to feed the sacred fish and the priest is a Bagata.

Some of the Bagatas are hill cultivators in the Agency tracts of Vizagapatam. They are also considered as an offshoot of Kapu caste. The head of a single village is called a Padal, the Padal being the name of an exogamous sept of the Kapus. "The overlord of a number of Padals styles himself Nayak or Raju and the Mokhasadar has the title of Dora".

Census Report, 1871 states-"in the low country, the Bhaktas consider themselves to take the rank of soldiery, and rather disdain the occupation of *ryots* (cultivators)".

Marriage

In a note to the Bagatas, Mr. C. Hayavadana Rao writes that the Bagatas are divided into a number of exogamous septs or *intiperulu*. Girls are married either before or after attaining puberty. Marrying maternal uncle's daughter is almost obligatory. The system is called "menarikam" which renders it a man's duty to marry his mother's brother's daughter. Bride-price is known as "voli". The bride is presented with jewelry by the groom's parents as a substitute for the bride price.

In Census Report of 1901, it has been noted that the groom is struck by his wife's brother, during the marriage rites and is presented with a pair of new cloth.

Religion

The Bagatas are both Vaishnavites and Saivites. The Vaishnavites get themselves branded on the arm by a Vaishnava Guru who lives in the Godavari district. "The Vaishnavites burn their dead and the Saivites bury them in the customary sitting attitude. Satanis officiate for the former, and the Jangams for the latter. Both sections perform the *chinna* and *peddarozu* (big and little day) death ceremonies. The hills Bagatas observe the Itiga Ponduga festival, which is celebrated by the hill classes in Vizagapatam".

Out of 1,511 Bagatas 1,472 persons are found to lack any education, i.e., about 97.4 per cent of the Bagatas is illiterate.

BAGATA*

S. C. Mohanty¹

Bagata is a small tribe numbering 8813 individuals as per 2011 census. According to their legendary tradition, their community name "Bagata" is derived from the term *Bhakta* meaning "devotee". The then rulers gave this name to them because they were a class of very devoted and loyal warriors. That time they were quite well to do farmers too.

As per census 2011, their population is largely distributed in undivided Sundargarh, Mayurbhanj, Sambalpur, districts of Odisha. Their sex ratio is 1039. The level of total literacy among them is 53.89 per cent. For males it is 64.31 per cent and for females, 43.83 percent. Bagata is an Odia speaking tribal community. Some of them are conversant in Laria and Sadri.

Agriculture is their primary occupation. Besides, they eke out their living by wage earning, fishing and food gathering.

The community is divided into several exogamous clans (*bansa*) like, *Hatiyar* (elephant), *Belhar* (monkey), *Samudia*, *Bamia*, *Tiruar* (bird), *Sarnia* (flute), *Chuniar* and *Kuardar*. They use clan names as their surnames.

Nuclear families are commonly found in their society. They prefer cross-cousin marriage and consider marriage by negotiation an ideal type of matrimonial tie. Acquiring mates by elopement is also observed in some cases. Their society also permits junior levirate and sororate, sororal polygyny, widow remarriage and divorce. The institution of bride price (*oli*) which was in vogue in the past is slowly giving way to dowry due to culture contact with the neighbouring Hindu castes.

Their life cycle rituals mark different stages of life, viz. name giving, ear piercing, first cereal feeding, first hair cutting, puberty, wedding and death.

Their pantheon includes large number of tribal and as well as Hindu deities. There are *Vaishnavite* and *Saivite* groups among the Bagata. The former group cremates the dead and the latter follows burial practice.

* Unpublished article of 2000 updated in 2018

¹ Research Officer, SCSTRTI

BAGATA*

*A. C. Sahoo*¹

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

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

* Published in Tribes of Orissa (revised edition), 2004, pp. 57-58

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

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

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

BAGATA*

*A. B. Ota*¹

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IDENTITY

Odisha is home to a number of different tribes most of whom are enlisted as Scheduled Tribes, numbering sixty two. Each tribe possesses its distinct ethnic characteristics in terms of social organization, culture and language.

The Bagata is one of those 62 tribal groups living in Odisha. Bhokta, Bhogata, Bhagata are some of their synonyms. In the neighbouring State of Andhra Pradesh they are known as Kampu. The name 'Bagata', is said to have been derived from the word Bokta which means a person who is not intelligent.

The Bagatas account for their name as Bhakta by referring to the legends and historical traditions that their ancestors were a class of warriors who served the then rulers with great devotion (Bhaktas). During that period they were very influential people and ideal farmers. But in course of time they changed their primary occupation of cultivation and adopted other means of earning their livelihood. They have proved their skill in fishing. They rather identify themselves as one of the Telugu fresh water fishermen communities. As such, they have a very good socio-cultural interaction with the Odia fisher men.

By their faith, the Bagatas constitute mainly two groups i.e. Vaishnavites and Saivites. The former are the worshipers of Lord Vishnu, who strictly follow the rules of Hinduism. This group cremates the dead whereas the later group, practice burial. The Vaishnavites according to some authors do not have any surname and sub group. About their origin very little ethnographic and historical data is available. It is believed that they have migrated from Ranchi area of Jharkhand to their present habitat in Odishain the beginning of the 20th century.

* Published in the Photo Handbook on BAGATA (2014)

¹ Director, SCSTRTI

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³ Curator, Tribal Museum, SCSTRTI

The Bagata are medium-statured with good physiques bearing some biological traits of Proto-Australoid tribes of south and central India.

Population:

Even though they are numerically a small community, their distribution and occupational diversification are notable. Their population is distributed in all the undivided 13 districts of Odisha but they are largely concentrated in the district of Sundergarh followed by Mayurbhanj, Sambalpur and Baleswar districts. Besides, a considerable number of Bagatas are found in the Koraput district.

The total population of Bagata in Odisha as per 1961 census was 1511 (756 Males, 755 Females), which in 1971 census declined to only 262 (131 Males, 131 Females) probably due to defective enumeration because their population steeply rose by almost 10 times to 2614 (1310 Males, 1304 Females) in 1981 census and to 4806 (2490 Males & 2316 Females) in 1991 census and to 6733 (3331 Males, 3402 Females) in 2001 census registering a sex ratio of 1021. Following the trend, there was a positive growth of population in 2011 census in which their total population was 8813 (4323 Males, 4490 Females) and a sex ratio of 1039.

Literacy :

The literacy rate of the Bagata as per 1961 census was only 8.4%. But from 1981 census onwards their literacy rate has increased steadily. In 1981 census the male literacy has substantially gone up to 24.66 % which rose to 42.62% in 1991 and again up to 52.29 % in 2001 census and up to 64.31% in 2011 census. Likewise, their female literacy rate in 1981 was only 6.44% which rose to 15.27 % in 1991, to 25.17 % in 2001 and jumped to 43.48% in 2011. This shows that the programme of free education adopted by the Govt. of Odisha has a very positive impact among the tribe and especially among their females.

Language

They communicate among themselves as well as with the outsiders with their mother tongue Odia. Some Bagatas can speak Laria, Sadri and Hindi also.

Dress & Ornaments

The Bagata do not have any specific dress to identify themselves like some other tribes. Their personal adornments resemble those of the neighbouring caste people. Males wear Dhoti, Banyan, Shirt or Pajama like. Their ornaments are very simple and common such as metallic finger rings and chains around neck which is not customary but depends on personal choice. Besides, they also wear *paita* (sacred thread). Young children put on loin cloths.

Like the women of other tribes the Bagata women do not have distinguishing attire and ornaments. Like the neighbouring caste women they wear *saree*, *saya*, blouse and very little ornaments like earrings, finger rings, toe

rings, necklaces etc. Old women have tattoo on their arms and on the feet which is now gone out of fashion among the younger generation.

HABITAT, SETTLEMENT & HOUSING

The Bagatas live both in multiethnic as well as uni-ethnic villages located in the plains area as well as in the hilly tracts. The area of their habitation has moderate climate with humidity and medium rainfall.

In multiethnic villages they live with other castes and tribes but reside in separate wards maintaining their cultural identity. Being a tribal community they are not socially discriminated like the Scheduled Castes by the socially higher ranked castes and tribes.

Their settlement and housing pattern are no different from those of the neighbouring communities. In their wards linear arrangement of houses in parallel rows leaving a street within the rows is common.

Their traditional houses are simple *kutch*a huts, mud walled, straw thatched, two or more roomed with verandah which serves multipurpose. One of the rooms is used as kitchen where lies the sacred seat of their household deities and ancestors. In all family rituals the household head worships the unseen beings by offering food, flower and incense to appease them and get their blessings for the wellbeing of the family. The livestock are sheltered in separate sheds.

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

As an endogamous group, the Bagatas are divided into a number of totemic clans (*bansas*) like Hatiyar, Belhar (monkey), Sarania (flute), Tiruar (bird), Samudia, Bamia, Chumiar and Kuardar. The totemic clan symbols are elephant, monkey, bird and flute etc. The clans are again divided into a number of *kutums* (lineages) which regulate marriage. They use clan names as their surnames

The Bagata believe in Varna system and claim their position as a clean caste in the local social hierarchy. Other communities also treat them as a clean caste. Scheduled Castes like Pano, Ganda, Domb, Mochi, Ghasi, Hadi, are said to be lower in social position than the Bagata.

Following the traditional rules of inheritance, the paternal property is equally divided among sons but the eldest son gets an extra share (*jestybhag*). Daughters do not usually get any share from the parental property but may get some shares from mothers' ornaments. Father is the head of the family and after his death, the elder son succeeds him.

LIFE CYCLE RITUALS

Pregnancy & Child Birth

Pregnancy is a part of life of every woman and the Bagata women are no exception to it. But some pre and post-delivery restrictions in their movement and

taking food are strictly observed in their society. A pregnant woman is prohibited to visit the cremation ground and come out of the house during eclipses. She is also forbidden to enter into the temple or place of worship during an advanced stage of pregnancy. Restriction is also imposed on taking dry fish.

During childbirth a local professional midwife (*dhai*) of the Ghasi caste is called for facilitating the delivery and attending to the mother her baby. A bundle of *siju* twigs is hung at the house entrance door to indicate birth pollution.

After the child birth, pollution is observed for 21 days for the whole family. Pollution norms are partly relaxed on the seventh day which is known as *uthiari*, when the mother and baby are shifted to another room. The room is cleaned with cow dung and old earthen pots are replaced by new ones. The *sathi* rite is observed in which offerings are made to the Sathidevi. For the new born horoscope is prepared by taking the help of the Nahaka or Jyotisha (Astrologer). The final purificatory rite called *ekosia* is observed on the 21st day. A local Brahmin priest is invited to perform the Satyanarayan Puja and name giving ceremony. The baby is named in consultation with the parents, maternal uncle and other kinsmen. After the ritual, the invited kinsmen are entertained with special food like *khiri* (rice porridge), *pitha* (locally prepared cake) etc. Among them for the girl child, a special rite called *baratratri* instead of *ekosia* is observed. No specific ceremony is observed for *anna prasanna* (first eating of rice by the baby). The first hair cutting (*bala paka*) ritual is held without any ceremony when the child is 02 years old.

Puberty:

Puberty rite of a girl is observed like other tribal communities as soon as the girl attains her first menarche. She is kept confined in a room for seven days so that no male members can see her face. In the early morning of the seventh day, she after anointing her body with turmeric paste takes full bath and puts on new cloths to get rid of the pollution. Thereafter, she visits a Siva temple and offers a coconut to the deity and resumes her routine activities.

Marriage:

The Bagatas strictly abide by their customary rules for marriage. They follow the rules of community endogamy as well as *bansa* and lineage exogamy. The marriageable age has been restricted by the community, which for boys varies from the age of twenty to twenty five and for the girls from eighteen to twenty five years. In the past, child marriage was in vogue, but this is no longer practised.

The Bagatas generally prefer three types of marriages such as marriage by mutual consent, elopement and marriage by service. Negotiated marriages are common but marriage by elopement also takes place in few cases. In case of marriage by negotiation, when the proposals come it is finalized in presence of members of the traditional community council.

Preferably one should marry one's maternal uncle's daughter. Levirate,

widow remarriage and sororal polygyny are practised and divorce is allowed. Widow remarriage or *bidhaba bibaha* is permitted in their society.

The institution of bride price (*oli*) which was in vogue in the past is slowly giving way to dowry (*varakatnam*) due to culture contact with the neighbouring Hindu castes. However, the parents of the groom have to give sufficient jewelry to the bride.

Marriage ceremony is conducted at bride's village in a *mandap* (marriage booth). The Fixation of the date and time of marriage (*lagan patrika*) is fixed by the *nahaka* or *vyotisha*. The local Brahmin or the village priest of the Bagata community performs the wedding rite. A marriage feast is hosted by the bride's family for the guests. The custom of *nirbandha* or *pindani* (betrothal) rite, *hastaganthi* (ritual joining of the hands of the couple) and burning of sacred fire (*homo*) is performed. The bride and groom are not allowed to see each other or meet before the observance of *chouthi* (nuptial) ceremony is over and after worshiping of the ancestral spirits and family deities. The concluding ceremony of the wedding is the celebration of *asthamangala*, held on the eighth day. The putting of vermilion on the forehead, use of *lac* bangle or shell identifies a married woman. A marriage badge (*thali*) around the neck symbolizes the marital status of a girl.

The Bagatas prefer monogamous type of family. But when the first wife found to be barren, the husband can go for second marriage but with the consent of the first wife and at the same time, with the approval of their traditional community council. In such a situation one may prefer to marry the younger sister of his wife (sorrorate).

Patrilocal residence is the rule of the Bagata society and after marriage a girl goes to live in the husband's village. Divorce is accepted with the approval of the caste council on the grounds of adultery, maladjustment, suffering from serious diseases etc.

Death:

Dead body is generally buried. Death pollution is observed till the 11th day. The eldest son, who throws soil into the pit, becomes the chief mourner. On the fourth day, the house of the deceased is dabbled or smeared with cow dung water, all the old earthen pots are replaced by new ones and cloths are washed. Like the Hindu rite, all the male members of the family get shaved and women get their nails pared off by the barber. A Brahmin priest is called for to perform the Sradha rite on the tenth day. On the eleventh day a community feast is hosted.

LIVELIHOOD

Agriculture and fresh water fishing are the main source from which the Bagata derive their livelihood to a great extent. They possess and cultivate small land holdings and also resort to collection of forest produce to supplement their income. The Bagatas of the Kotpad area of Jeypur sub-division depend on shifting

cultivation for their survival, whereas in Cuttack and Balasore they are famous for catching fish in fresh water. The Bagatas also work for wages. It can be seen that the Bagatas have adopted different types of occupation according to their environment and the availability of natural resources.

However, some Bagatas are engaged in business and trade. They prepare different types of basket for their own use. Women play various roles in social, economic and religious spheres but not at the political level. They engage themselves in all sorts of household chores like fetching water, cooking, cleaning the house and cowshed, taking care of children and the domestic animals and entertaining guests. Collection of firewood, wage earning and helping the male members in the field is their outdoor economic activities. They control the family expenditure. Women also prepare puffed rice in their house for sale in the market. Child labour is never encouraged by the family. Both barter and cash system are prevalent at the village level but those who live near the urban areas use cash as their medium of exchange.

Food & Drinks :

The Bagatas are non-vegetarians. They take fish, goat, chicken, egg but do not take beef or pork. The Vaishnavite section among them is purely vegetarian. Rice is their staple food and it is taken with dal and veg curry. Red and green grams invariably form the major items of their diet. Niger seed oil (*valasanune*) is used for seasoning the dishes. They are fond of seasonal fruits available in their locality. In festive occasions, they prepare Khiri (rice porridge) and *pitha* (local cake). Consumption of pulses, vegetables and fruits has increased among them. Some Bagatas have developed the habit of taking chapatti (wheat bread) at night instead of rice.

Occasionally, men take *handia* (rice beer), *kushmo*, *modo* (*mahua* liquor) and *todi* purchasing from the local market. The Bagatas take tea, smoke tobacco and chew betel. Both men and women use *gurakhu* (tobacco paste) for cleaning their teeth. Young boys and girls now-a-days are using tooth brush instead of Karanja or other twigs to clean their teeth.

SOCIAL CONTROL

The mechanism of social control has a two-tier system among the Bagata - one at the village level and the other at the regional level. The Pradhan is the head of the Jati Sabha (traditional community council) at the village level who is assisted by the Dakua (messenger) and Bhala Bhai / Bhadrak - the village elders. The regional council is known as Mahasabha headed by officials like Sabhapati (President), Sampadak (Secretary) and Treasurer who handles the financial matters of the council. The posts of the village Headmen and Messengers of different villages under Regional Council are hereditary where as other posts are by election but mostly by voice vote.

The main function of the community council is to regulate marriage and other customary tribal matters at the village and inter-village level and to settle disputes arising there in. Severe punishment is imposed on the offenders in cases of incest, adultery, breach of traditional norms, insult to the authority of caste council, killing of cow etc. The offenders in such cases are punished with heavy cash fine or social boycott (*jatibahar*). With the introduction of statutory Gram Panchayat system by the Government after independence, the importance of traditional community council is gradually declining.

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS & PRACTICES

The Bagata believe in animism as well as Hinduism and worship the Hindu Gods and Goddesses. *Ista devata* along with Bura and Buri are considered as family deities. Gramasiri is the village deity. They also visit temples of Hindu gods and goddesses in the locality. Important Hindu festivals like Kali Puja, Makar Sankranti, Nuakhai, Push Punei, Sital Sasthi, Janmastami, Karma etc are observed by them with full devotion. On the Dasara day they worship the fishing baskets and also a kind of trident. The trident is probably the fishing spear which the Bagatas use for fishing.

On festive occasions, houses are cleaned and walls and courtyards are decorated with *ikons/ jhoti* (design drawn with rice flour). Special delicious foods are prepared and offered to the deities. Pahun or Kutum Ganga (village tribal priest) is invited to perform the *puja*. But with the change of time they are inviting Brahmin priest for the purpose. The Bagatas participate in local fairs and festivals like Rathayatra, Dussera and Dolayatra etc.

The Bagatas have some traditional songs for different festive occasions and marriage ceremony. Both men and women participate in these occasions. Sankirtan, which is a popular devotional programme in the village performed during evening among the caste people, is now-a-days being participated by the Bagatas. Musical instruments like Kholo (Murdung) Madal (Bigdrum), Gini, Harmonium, Banshi (flute) etc are used by them. Karma folk dance which is their traditional dance is performed both by men and women.

They observe certain restrictions and norms with regard to their traditional inter-community relationship. They accept both *kachha* and *pucca* foods from castes like Brahmin, Karan, Khandayat, Mali, Gudia but maintain social distance from the communities considered lower to them. Inter community marriage is not allowed by the community.

CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT

The interface between tradition and modernity controls the compatibility of the cultural components of ends. For the traditionalist Bagata, social, cultural and intellectual expressions are deeply rooted in their culture and thus are tradition bound. These are strongly linked with the notion of cultural heritage,

social identity and historical continuity in their society. On the other hand, development stands for economic growth and social development. Economic and social developments are complimentary to each other. In the context of tribal development, the development agency or the Government has to strike a balance between economic and social aspects and has to be culture specific so that development efforts should have a holistic prospective.

Now, in the context of the Bagata, development efforts by the Government have a positive effect even though they are tradition bound. Now their poor economic condition never stands in their way and they show interest in educating their children and accepting the development programmes. Because they have realized that spread of education among them has a pride of place in the priorities of developmental needs of the people. It brings knowledge to the community and helps in acquiring a new strength to face the necessities and the challenges of the dynamic and developing society. Earlier, their low economic conditions did not allow their children goes beyond the level of primary school and the girls, mostly dropped out at the primary level. This situation has changed now.

They are well aware of various development and welfare programmes introduced by the Government which has brought noticeable improvements to their socio economic conditions. Introduction of modern agriculture, supply of improved variety of seeds, irrigation facility, market support for their surplus produce by the Government have brought confidence in them which has led to a remarkable change among them. Use of indigenous methods for their ailments and health care has been changed and they are now using both modern and traditional method of treatment but more inclined to modern methods of treatment. Attitude towards family planning is positive and favourable. But usually women get sterilized. The Bagatas prefer small family of two or three children. They have improved their sanitary habits and get drinking water from tube wells, sanitary wells and other safe sources. Some well-to-do people possess radios, televisions, motor cycles, modern furniture and educated persons read newspapers. They are undergoing a phase of transition.

BAIGA*

S. C. Mohanty¹

Baiga tribe has synonyms like *Bhumiraja* and *Bhumijan*, meaning 'Lords of the Soil' or 'Sons of the Soil'. As such it bears similarities with those of Bhuyan and Bhumia tribes. Russell and Hiralal opined that the Baiga were early settlers of Chhatishgarh and later on, they migrated to different parts of Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Odisha and Bengal provinces.

They are numerically a small ethnic group largely found in Sindergarh and Baleswar districts. According to 2011 Census they number 338 individuals only. Among them there are 173 males and 165 females. Their sex ratio is 954. Their total literacy rate is 67.25%. For males it is 78.77 percent and for females, 55.07 percent. They speak *Baigani*, a dialect of Chhatishgarhi and use *Devnagari* script. Baiga settlements are found compact and generally uniclan and homogenous.

The Baiga are settled cultivators and agricultural labourers. They also supplement their economy by forest collections and selling of herbal medicines. In a few cases, they practise shifting cultivation and take resort to non-agricultural wage earning. They are non-vegetarians: they eat pork. Rice and ragi are their staple food. They are addicted to *mohua* liquor and smoking of tobacco.

The Baiga are also skilled woodcarvers. Baiga women are distinguished for their decorative tattoo marks depicting moon, triangles, human forms, peacocks, flies, flowers and fish bones around forehead, face, arms, breasts and legs. They retain their famous traditional dance forms such as, *Karma* and *Shail* performed during *Chaita* festival wearing wooden masks.

Their religion is an admixture of Hinduism and animism. River Narmada is regarded as sacred by them. Their traditional deities are *Bardeo*, *Dulkadeo*, *Burhimai* and *Khila-Muthawa*. Traditional Baiga priest conducts the rituals. They

* Unpublished article of 2000 updated in 2018

¹ Research Officer, SCSTRTI

observe Hindu festivals like *Chaita Navami* (Ram Navami), *Dussehra*, *Kuar* (*Kuar Purnima*), *Diwali*, *Holi*, *Hareli*.

The community is divided into ten endogamous groups: *Binjhar*, *Bharatia*, *Narotia* or *Nahar*, *Raibhaina*, *Kathbhaina*, *Kondwan* or *Kundi*, *Gondwaina*, *Kurka-Baiga*, *Sawal-Baiga*, and *Dudh-bhaina*. Each one is divided into two territorial subgroups: *Garh* and *Goti*. Each in turn is further divided into various totemistic septs like, *Bastaria*, *Belghasria*, *Tijaria*, *Amthuria*, *Kathodia* and *Kulharia* etc.

Family is nuclear, patrilocal and patrilineal. Inheritance always follows the rules of male equigeniture. They practise monogamy and marriage by negotiation is considered ideal. Cross cousin marriage is prevalent. The other modes of acquiring mates are by service and by elopement. Bride price is obligatory. Remarriage of widows and widowers, junior levirate, and junior sororate are permitted.

Newborn baby is considered as a reborn family ancestor/ancestress. Birth pollution continues for a period of fifteen days and on the last day the maternal uncle shaves the hair of the newborn baby. The purificatory rites are conducted the same day. The other ritual called *Chouk* is observed within one year. They have no puberty rites. The Baiga usually practise burial for the dead, but in few cases they cremate. On the third day of death, the *Chotokam* is performed by the agnates by shaving each other's head. Mourning and pollution lasts for ten days. The final mortuary rite *Dasa karma* is performed on the tenth day with a feast to lineage members and villagers. They also perform the annual rites *Barakam* to observe death anniversary.

The Baiga have their own traditional community panchayat headed by a chief called *Patel*. At the inter-village level they have a regional head called *Gountia*. They maintain *Jajmani* relations with Ahir and Lohar neighbours.

BAIGA: A LITTLE KNOWN TRIBE OF ODISHA

*A. B. Ota*¹
*S. C. Mohanty*²
*Khirad Kumar Turk*³

IDENTITY

The Baiga is numerically a very small and little known Scheduled Tribe of Odisha. The term 'Baiga' means priest. They identify themselves as Bhumiraja/ Bhumijan, meaning "Lord of the soil" or "Son of the nature". They are a Mundari or Kolorian people widely distributed in central Indian States of Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha and West Bengal. Russell and Hiralal (1916) stated that the Baiga were earliest settlers in Chhatisgarh and later migrated to other States. They speak Baigani a non-literary language of Indo-Aryan family belonging to Western Odia section interrelated with the dialect of Chhatisgarhi. They are multi-lingual and speak Hindi for inter community communication.

Numerically, the Baiga are a small ethnic group in Odisha. As per 2011 census, their total population in Odisha is 338 i.e., 0.0035 per cent of the total tribal population of the State. They are found mostly in Balasore and Sundergarh districts. Their sex ratio is 954 females per 1000 males. Their level of literacy is 67.25 percent which is 78.77 percent for males and 55.07 percent for females.

* To be Published in the Photo Handbook on Bagata

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Dress and Ornaments

Their dress is simple. The male folks wear a string around their waist and wrap a small piece of loin cloth called *lengoti* with the help of that waist string just to hide their genital parts only. The women wear a small piece of cloth called *dhutia*. It decently covers their body from their shoulder to knees.

At present due to modernization and culture contact with the other ethnic groups changes are seen in their dress pattern. Now-a-days, the males are wearing *dhoti* or *lungi* in place of *lengoti* and shirt or *bandi* or *baniyan*. They are also wearing trouser, half trouser, shirt and jacket and women are wearing coloured and printed *saree*, *blouse* etc.

Though Baiga are poor, they have sense of beautification and ornamentation. They do like to wear both metallic and non-metallic jewellery. The women wear *nathni* (nose ring), *laung* (nose pin) in nose, *bindi* or *tikli* on forehead, *kan-phool* in ears, hair lock in head; *sutiya* (neck-band), *havel* (string of silver coins) and *munga* (necklace of red bead) around neck, *baju band* (armlets) in arms, silver belt around waist, *todar* and *pair* in their ankle and *bhicchiya* in their toe fingers.

Baiga women are distinguished for their decorative tattoo marks depicting moon, triangles, crosses, dots, etc. on forehead, dots or small lines or long stripes of parallel lines on the cheek and chin, long parallel lines, human forms, peacock, magic chains, crosses, etc. on the back and in between breast and neck and flies, flowers and fish bones on their thighs, legs and hands in order to enhance their beauty and look attractive.

SETTLEMENTS AND HOUSING

Baiga settlements are compact and in general exclusively unclan and homogenous. They like to dwell in separate wards maintaining distance from other communities and keeping their own cultural identity. They live near foot-hills or hill slopes surrounded by the hills and forests. The perennial hill streams flowing nearby provide them drinking water throughout the year.

Baiga village structure is in the form of a large square and linear pattern having a broad space between the lines approximately 30 feet wide forming the village street. The houses are made nearer to cultivable lands. The village boundary *mero* is clearly marked by piles of stone and in most of the villages the burial grounds are just inside the *mero*.

Their houses are made of wood and bamboo and plastered with mud. Now-a-days, they also use bricks to construct their houses. Houses are rectangular in shape. The number of rooms depends upon the economic status of the owner. It varies from single room to four or five rooms. In a single roomed house, they establish their kitchen in its eastern corner and in the other they install their household deity. The doors are made of wood or bamboo.

The roof is made of wood and bamboo frame and thatched with straws or grasses. Wooden and bamboo poles are fixed vertically to raise the roof in such a way to make it sloppy on both the sides. Floor of the house is made of hard mud and is polished by their women folk using red soil and rubbed with polished stone for glazing. They hang their clothes on the ceiling by rope and bamboo hangers and hunting weapons like bows, arrows, and axes are hung on the walls of the living room. Agricultural implements are kept outside of the room.

LIVELIHOOD

The Baiga depend mainly on cultivation and collection of minor forest produce for their livelihood. They also work as agricultural and non-agricultural wage earners to supplement their income

They practice shifting cultivation. They select a patch in hill slope to practice slash and burning type of cultivation. The rain water spreads the fresh ashes into the soil. Hoe is used to dig the soil. Then the land is used for cultivation for two or three years during which different mixed crops are sown in succession. Usually they produce maize, *ragi*, minor millets, mustard, tobacco, tea and *til* etc.

After three years of cultivation, the soil nutrients are rapidly depleted and the land becomes infertile to grow crops. Then Baiga finds new sites for cultivation and the old site left fallow at least for three years for recuperation.

They collect varieties of seasonal forest produce like edible fruits, roots, tubers, *sal* seeds, leaves, mushrooms, honey, medicinal herbs, timber, fuel wood and grasses and fodders to meet their own needs and to sell the surplus in the local market. Baiga are expert woodcutters and skilled in wood carving, basketry and mat making. They sell their products in the local weekly markets.

Food and Drinks

They are generally non-vegetarians. They relish on meat, chicken, eggs, pork, fish and dry fish, but abstain from taking beef as they consider it unclean. Rice and *ragi* are their staple food which is taken with other dishes. They also take maize, pulses like *khesri* and *masoor* along with vegetables.

Both males and females are addicted in drinking and smoking. Drinking is considered as most auspicious during festive occasions and marriage, birth or death rituals. They use country liquor *mahuli*, self-brewed rice beer *handia*, *pachi* and offer it to their guests and relatives during festivals and also use it for ritual offering to deities. They also grow tobacco in their backyards.

SOCIAL LIFE

The Baiga community is socially divided into ten endogamous groups, i.e. Binjhwar, Bharatia, Narotia /Nahar, Raibhaina, Kathbhaina, Kondwan/ Kundi,

Gondwaina, Kurka-Baiga, Sawat-Baiga, and Dudh-bhaina. Each section is again sub-divided into two territorial subgroups like Garh and Goti. Each sub-section is further divided into various totemistic septs like, Bastaria, Belghasria, Tijaria, Amthuria, Kathodia and Kulharia etc.

Family is the most basic social institution of the Baiga community. The Baiga family is exclusively nuclear in structure which consists of a man, his wife and their unmarried children and is partilocal and patrilineal in nature. Inheritance always follows the rule of equigeniture in male line only and ancestral property is divided equally among all the sons. Though women do not inherit the parental property, a widow can inherit her deceased husband's property. If a family have no male child it can adopt a male child from the nearest patrilineage who later on can inherit the adoptee father's property and office. Junior levirate and junior sororate and cross cousin marriage are allowed but parallel-cousin marriage is strictly prohibited in their society.

LIFE CYCLE

Pregnancy, Child Birth and afterwards

New born baby is considered as a rebirth of family ancestor/ancestress in Baiga family. A pregnant Baiga woman has to observe a number of taboos. When a woman is going to face the first delivery she receives advice from experienced women about various taboos specifically for her diet and daily activities for the well-being of herself and her child to be born. The woman and her relatives often make promise to offer sacrifices to the deities to ensure smooth and safe delivery of the child.

The pregnant woman is prohibited to climb a ladder, sit on a grinding stone, step over the narrow open receptacle, stand and sit on the doorway, sleep on a sack, sleep alone, touch a corpse, go near the burial ground, travel alone in dark night and go out during lunar or solar eclipses. Her husband is tabooed to kill animals.

The Baiga women take part in routine activities till the advanced stage of pregnancy. On the day of child birth they engage an experienced elderly woman or mid-wife of their own community to attend the pregnant woman for smooth and safe delivery of the child.

When mother's labour pain starts she goes into the house with any women who is with her and shuts the door. No male members are allowed inside the lying in chamber but wait outside the house. After the delivery, the umbilical cord is cut off using a sharp bamboo blade or sharp broken earthenware by the midwife. Then they dig a hole in the floor on the very spot where the child is born and bury the umbilical cord in that pit. They cover the pit with soil and place the nuptial fire

over it. The mother and the baby remain polluted and secluded inside the house until the naval cord dries up.

Birth pollution continues for a period of fifteen days and on the last day, the maternal uncle shaves the hair of the new-born baby. Then he gives the name. The name is given as per the name of the month or a day of the week or physical peculiarity of the child. Bad name is given to the child if he or she is in critical condition. To save the child, the parents ritually sell the baby to a couple of Agaria or Gond community for adoption.

Puberty:

The Baiga girls usually attain their first menarche when they reach the age of twelve to fifteen years. But they have no tradition to observe puberty rite.

Marriage

The marriage is the most important event in the life of the Baiga as it terminates the bachelorhood and promotes him to become a responsible member of the community. Marriage within the same sept is strictly prohibited. In the Baiga community, adult marriage and monogamy is the common practice. Marriage by negotiation (*Mangni*) is considered as ideal and prestigious mode of marriage. The other modes of acquiring mates are by capture, by service (*Gharjowain*), by elopement (*Uthwa*) and by intrusion (*Pathul*).

Cross-cousin marriage is given preference in the community in which a man marries to his father's sister's daughter or mother's brother's daughter. Remarriage of widows, widowers and divorcees, junior levirate and junior sororate are also permitted. A younger brother can marry the widow of his deceased elder brother or a man can marry to his deceased wife's younger sister in their community.

When the boys and girls reach marriageable age, their parents set the norms. Generally, the marriage proposal comes from the bride's parents. The father of the girl or maternal uncle after taking consent of their girl initiates the proposal with a bottle of *Mahua* liquor presented to the boy's father. If the boy's father accepted the proposal, then the *sagai* or negotiation is celebrated in the presence of lineage members. The payment of bride price is obligatory. It is given in shape of cash i.e. Rs. 18 or Rs. 25 and in kinds. At the time of payment, the boy's parents give a large feast known as Barokhiat the girl's house and the date of wedding is finalized then and there.

On the appointed day, the wedding procession starts from the bride groom's house and received by bride's side outside the village. Both the parties embrace each other and proceed to the marriage-shed. The two *Dosis* (bride's and groom's parents and uncle) and two *Suasin* (young unmarried girls or sisters of both the sides) have great role in the marriage ceremony. The *Dosis* perform the wedding rites and *Suasin* have to remain in constant attendance. When the

marriage ritual begins, the *Dosis* go to the shrine of *Thakur Deo* and offer fire and incense with a lamp before him. The *Suasin* is asked to bring pot of water and some rice. To ascertain whether marriage is auspicious or not, the *Dosi* utters *mantra* and drops two grains of rice into the water. The marriage is considered highly auspicious if the tips of the grains meet, swing round and float side by side immediately. If the grains do not come together, the marriage is considered unsuccessful and it is believed that the couple will quarrel in their married life and that the bride will return to her father's house.

The bride and bridegroom throw fried rice at each other until they are tired and then go three or seven times around the marriage altar with their clothes tied together. The newly married couple spends their first night in the jungle. On that night, the husband must provide some gifts to please his bride otherwise he might be ridiculed by his spouse or he will become impotent later.

Generally, divorce happens on the grounds of misunderstanding in conjugal life, misconduct, extra marital affairs, cruelty etc. Divorce cases are adjudicated in their traditional council. If the case is not settled by the council and the female lives separately in the same village, then the husband is responsible for maintenance of her with her children.

Death Rites

Death is considered as a great event of misfortune in Baiga community. They believe that witchcraft, ghosts, spirits or breach of taboos etc. are the causes of death. The Baiga usually practice burial for their dead.

When a person dies his wife washes the floor with a cloth dipped in cow-dung water. Then the corpse is laid down on the floor by the relatives who put sweetmeat or a coin in its mouth.

After death of a person his/her spouse only removes the clothes of the dead. If the man is a widower, then his son may do this. In case of death of a woman, her mother or sister bathes her. After bathing the corpse is anointed with turmeric paste and oil and wrapped with a new cloth. The dead man's son pulls some straw from the roof over the door and spreads these on the pre-prepared bier. The body is laid upon it and four men carry the pall to the burial ground.

A grave is dug waist deep. The bier is circled three times around the grave and placed down on the ground little away from the grave. The dead body is laid naked in the grave with the head pointing towards south and his daily use personal items like tobacco, coin, axe etc. are placed near the grave. The corpse is laid down keeping face downward in the grave and in case of woman, it is upward. The dead man's son ties a bit of new cloth in waist and takes bath in the nearest stream or pond and comes back to the grave. He stands back and first throws a handful of soil into the grave. Then all mourners fill soil in the grave.

A stone is erected over the grave, which is called the *Bhiri* of the deceased. As per their belief, the *Bhiri* is worshipped during calamities. The mourners return home after the burial work is completed. The *Samdhi* (married son's or daughter's father-in-law) of the dead man waiting with a pot of water sprinkles it on the mourners. The pall bearers anoint each other with the turmeric paste and oil brought by the dead man's widow for purification.

Mourning is observed for a period of nine days. On the third day, the agnates assemble and the *Chotakam* is performed by them by shaving each other's head. The final mortuary rite *Dasakarma* is performed on the tenth day with a feast to lineage members and villagers. They also perform the annual rites *Barakam* to observe death anniversary.

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

The religion of Baiga is an admixture of animism with Hinduism. River Narmada is regarded as sacred by them. Bura Deo is regarded as their principal deity who resides in *Sal* tree. Their pantheon includes Thakur Deo: the God of village land and boundaries, Dulha Deo: the God, who averts disease and accidents, Bhimsen: the Rain God, Dhartimata or Mother Earth who is worshipped for bumper harvest, Narayan Deo: the Sun-God whom they appease for the wellbeing of the humans. They worship their deities with great reverence and pray for their wellbeing. Animal sacrifices are offered to all the deities. They also worship their ancestors.

The village deities are worshipped by the Baiga Priest. Major religious practitioners are Dewar and Gunia. Dewar's status is considered higher than Gunia. Dewar is responsible for the performance of agricultural rites, closing village boundaries and stopping earthquakes. The Gunia deals largely with the magical-religious cure of diseases.

The Baiga calendar of rituals and festivals is agricultural in nature. They also observe Hindu festivals like Chaitra Navami in April, Dusshera in October-November, Kuanr (Kuanr Purnima), Holi, Diwali, Hareli at the family level in different months of the years. Dusshera is the occasion during which the Baiga hold Bida rite, a sort of sanitizing ceremony in which the men dispose off any spirits that have been troubling them in past years. The Cherta festival (a children feast) is observed in January; the Phag festival (in which the women are allowed to beat men) is held in March; the Bidri festival is celebrated in the month of June for protection of crops; the Hareli festival is observed in August to ensure good crops; and the Nawa feast i.e. the thanks giving festival is observed in the end of rainy season.

Dances and Songs

Baiga dance and songs are integral parts of their culture. Still these folk traditions remain undisturbed in the present times. Baiga songs and dances have

different forms such as, *Karma*, *Sheila* and *Bilma*. *Bilma* is performed by both children and adult males during *Chaitra* festival wearing wooden masks. The dance and song, its music and basis are purely natural. The simple sweet lyrics, dancing and singing accompanied by the play of traditional musical instruments like *Mandar*, *Timki* and *Bansuri* is enchanting and it distinguishes their cultural identity. *Karma* song is named after deity, *Karmasani*. *Sheila* is a male dominated form of dance and song competition between the groups of two villages performed for entertainment.

SOCIAL CONTROL

The Baigas have their own traditional political institution called as *Jaati Panchayat* at the village level. It is held in the village headed by the village chief called *Mukaddam*. The panchayat also called "Panchs" comprises five members *Mukaddam*, *Diwan*, *Samrath*, *Kotwar* and *Dewarall* of them belonging to the Baiga tribe only. The decision of 'Panchs' is obligatory for all the Baigas of a village.

The Baiga society has given special importance to the *Mukaddam*. It is a hereditary post. The *Mukaddam* is assisted by another functionary called *Diwan* whose post is also hereditary. In the absence of *Mukaddam*, his work is done by *Diwan*. The other functionary is *Samrath* whose post is also hereditary. His main job is to play host to the common guests of the village like visiting Government officers and others. The *Kotwar* or the village watchman looks after the security of whole village. He maintains the village records regarding birth and death. *Dewaris* a traditional ethno-medicinal doctor.

The panchayat acts as the guardian of their customary affairs and adjudicates the cases pertaining to family disputes, immoral love affairs, marriage disputes, divorce, family partition, intra and inter village disputes.

The Panchayat has the right to punish an offender making him to pay the penalty in cash and in kinds of hosting feast for the villagers. The amount of financial punishment depends upon the gravity of offence committed by the offender. The council can ex-communicate the deviant if he/she disobeys its decision and can also restore him/her after due penance and hosting a feast to the villagers with country liquor *mohua*.

CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT

The Baiga live in remote villages. The different socio-economic developmental activities implemented by the government have brought visible change in their socio-cultural life. They are no longer isolated from the outer world. Their economic condition is better than before and their level of literacy has also increased. Introduction of modern agriculture, multiple cropping, use of high yielding variety of seeds have brought changes in their economic life.

The schools established by the ST & SC Development Department and Education Department of Odisha Government have been a noble intervention for desired transformation of the Baigas in social sector. Similarly, by creating infrastructure facilities through development agencies and units like Anganwadi Center and PDS centers, etc. at the villages level, the Govt. of Odisha have been trying to create a sustainable socio-economic support system ranging from food security and safe drinking water to mobile health units to empower the Baiga community.

Towards ensuring the livelihood enhancement and women empowerment, the Baiga women have been roped into Self Help Groups (SHGs) by extending financial assistance by the ITDAs and DRDAs. Individual assistance to women entrepreneurs for running grocery shop, petty business has opened up new areas of the economic opportunity for individual family and community development.

Although they have been greatly influenced by Hinduism, their practice of animism is unabated. They have undergone perceptible changes due to influences of education, development interventions, Hinduisation and modernization.

BANJARI *

*Ch. P.K. Mohapatra*¹

Banjaris are a small tribe living in the western and northern regions of Orissa. Russell and Hiralal describe the tribe as having migrated from Rajputana and its surrounding places. They also deduce from the word Banjara that it is a derivation from the Sanskrit word "Banijya Kara, a merchant". Formerly, they were migratory in their habit and sold commodities in various places moving in a large group and carrying the good on their bullock carts. It is reported from history that the Banjaris were employed by the Hindu as well as Muslim kings to carry necessities for the Soldiers to the war fronts. It appears this tribe have, in course of time, migrated to different places in Orissa through Central Province and Bihar. The distribution of the Banjari population is indicated in the table below:-

Name of the district	Total number	Males	Females
Kalahandi	1,933	896	1,037
Koraput	427	197	230
Sambalpur	370	176	194
Bolangir	147	63	84
Boud-Kandhmal	1		1
Sundergarh	800	391	409
Total	3,678	1,723	1,955

The literacy figure among the Banjaris are as follows:---

Kalahandi	188
Koraput	32
Sambalpur	53
Bolangir	7
Baud-Kandhmal	1
Sundergarh	67

* Published in ADIBASI, Vol. V, No.3, (Special Issue), TRB, 1963-64, pp.149-50

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As described by Russel and Hiralal (1916), the two parties of a marriage meet at a particular place where bride price is fixed and which varies from Rupees 200 to 1,000. The groom goes to the bride's' house to stay for few days after the negotiation is settled. Marriage ceremonies are held in rainy seasons as during dry weather they travel from one place to another. Widow re-marriage is prevalent and when a man dies the widow is taken by either the elder or younger brother of the deceased.

At the time of birth of a child the mother remains unclean for five days and lives in a separate hut. She washes the feet of all the children of the settlement on the sixth day, feeds them and returns to the hut of her husband. Bodies of unmarried persons and those dying of smallpox are buried and those of others are burnt. The mourning rites are observed for three days only.

The deities worshipped by the Banjaris are Banjaridevi, Mithu Bhukia and Siva Bhaia. Cattle are also worshipped by the Banjari who provide the means of transportation on which they depend for their livelihood.

The Banjaris are also referred to as dacoits who plunder the by-passers. Gradually, they have become settled agriculturists in Orissa.

BANJARA *

*S.C. Mohanty*¹

BANJARA is otherwise called Banjari. Their neighbours call them by various names such as Banajari, Wanjari, Vanjari, Bepari, Boipari, etc. The name probably had come from two different sources: *Banijya* - trade or *Banachara*, the forest dwellers.

As per 2011 census their total population in Odisha is 18 257 and sex ratio is 1001. Their total literacy rate is 62.28% (males 75.56 % and females 49.14 %). The bulk of their population is found in Kalahandi district followed by Bargarh and Nowrangpur districts. They are believed to have migrated from Rajasthan as evident from their own "Banjari" dialect and typical dress pattern. Banjaras are distinguished by their *Ghagra*, *Orhni*, *Kanchhi* and *Zhabta* dresses, silver ornaments and tattoo marks. They also speak Hindi and Odia.

Traditionally they are mobile traders who drive pack of bullocks. The dominant section among them called *Labani* was trading salt moving place to place by their bullock carts. In the past, the Banjara were earning their livelihood as wage labourers by transporting the wares of traders by their bullock carts as well as by hawking goods by themselves. Now a day, this traditional occupation has declined. They have taken up rice and vegetable cultivation and small business. They claim descent from a *Kshatriya* ancestor.

They are grouped into four major exogamous septs called *Vansas*, viz. *Chauhan*, *Panwar*, *Rathor* and *Uthria*. Each *Vansa* is composed of three to four minor exogamous *gotars*. The tribe is strictly endogamous. Adult marriage, monogamy and marriage by negotiation with the consent of the boy and the girl and with payment of bride price (*Para*) are ideal and common. Other kinds of permissible marriages are sororate, remarriage of divorcees, widow and widowers including junior levirate. Divorce is permitted.

* Unpublished article of 2000 updated in 2018

¹ Research Officer, SCSTRTI

Birth pollution lasts for 21 days. Customarily, the newborn is given a name on the *Holi* festival, and the first hair cutting ceremony is held in the month of *Chaitra* (March-April). Following the Hindu tradition they cremate the dead and conduct purificatory rites on the 12th day. They get the services of Brahman priest, barber and washer man.

They are devotees of Guru Nanak. They worship Hindu deities and their own *Banjari Devi* or *Mariama Mata*. Their festivals are *Guga Nawami*, *Janmasthami*, *Dasara*, *Diwali*, *Holi*, *Gowardhan*, *Hariali* and *Nawakhai*.

Their traditional community council headed by *Naik* in the past and *Dako* at present deals with cases of disputes and breach of customs relating to marriage, divorce, bride price, adultery etc.

They are well organized a group who zealously uphold their ethnic identity.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF THE BANJARAS *

*P. S. Das Patnaik*¹

The Banjaras, or Banjaris as mentioned in the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe Lists (Modification) order, 1956 are a tribe of carriers and drivers of pack-bullocks in Orissa. With considerable concentration of their population in South-western part of the State, particularly in the areas of Lanjigarh, Dharamgarh, Jaypatna and Nuapara Tahasils in the district of Kalahandi. Their settlements lie mostly on the plains and many of them are so greatly Hinduised and accultured that to call them a tribe is perhaps a misnomer. Notwithstanding this, the members of the tribe do not take offence to being called as Adibasis or to being identified as members of the Scheduled Tribe. Apparently they do not bear any other synonym though Wanjari, Labhana and Mukeai as they are called by some may be only phonetic variations of their original name.

The main objective of the present study was to assess the socio-economic status of the Banjara. The study was expected to throw light on the actual economic and social position of the group living in the district of Kalahandi. Socio-economic conditions are taken here as the totality of the economic life of the people in the context of their social and physical environment and culture.

This study was taken up in the month of September 1986 for a period of 10 days. Two villages, namely Kadapadar and Ladugam in Koksara Block, Uchala in Jaypatna Block and Mahichala village of Junagarh Block of Kalahandi district were taken up for detailed study. Darlipada, a village in Komna Block was also taken up to cross check the data regarding land, income, position of indebtedness among the Banjaras. The study design included a set of schedules and questionnaires. Methods of interview, observation, case history were adopted to elicit facts from the informants. A simple Census was taken to find the population, size of family, literacy and land holdings. Similarly, exhaustive questionnaires were used to

* Unpublished empirical study report of THRTI (now SCSTRTI) : 1988

¹ Research Officer, THRTI

determine the local conditions of original habitats of the migrants, their topography, soil, sources of water-supply etc. However, this study may be treated as a base line study wherein attempts have been made to throw light on the basic data such as distribution of the tribe in the district, their socio-economic life and the problems of the people. The following table indicates the distributions of the Banjaras in different villages.

Table-1
Distribution of the Banjaras

Name of the Block	Name of the villages	No. of Households
KOKSARA	1. Tunugaon	30
	2. Childunguri	14
	3. Futugaon	3
	4. Dabriguda	18
	5. Temera	37
	6. Dengaguda	24
	7. Ampani	8
	8. Tileijhar	4
	9. Kendudunguri	15
	10. Ladugaon	11
	11. Kandabutura	7
	12. Jhariaguda	13
	13. Dunguriguda	7
	14. Sarasmal	30
	15. Sargiguda	12
	16. Musapali	30
	17. Gotamunda	4
	18. Tentapali	25
	19. Kadapadar	30
	20. Ainli	3
	21. Banadangari	4
JAYPATNA	1. Kapurmal	10
	2. Badatmeri	10
	3. Thekogaturi	6
	4. Khaliabhata	13
	5. Nagpheni	3
	6. Rengalpali	2
	7. Gopalpur	1
	8. Nchalanuaguda	12
	9. Ghantiguda	35
	10. Pujariguda	90

DHARAMGARH	1.	Kirkakani	20
	2.	Parla	12
	3.	Behera	25
JUNAGARH	1.	Golijuba	60
	2.	Kusumkhunti	5
	3.	Moter	4
	4.	Mahichala	25
	5.	Patiachula	8
	6.	Charbahal	4
GOLAMUNDA	7.	Banjipadar	9
	8.	Golamunda	60
	9.	Khaliakani	25
KALAMPUR	10.	Dumermunda	20
	11.	Burdal	4
	12.	Kalampur	5
	13.	Mandal	16
	14.	Nuagaon	13
NARLA	15.	Siripur	25
	16.	Rupraroard	2

The analysis of the table reveals that the Banjaras are predominantly found mainly in Dharamgarh Sub-division and to some extent in Bhawanipatna Sub-division of the district. In fact about 50 villages of both Dharamgarh and Bhawanipatna Sub-divisions are inhabited by the Banjaras. Other than these, the Banjaras are also found in Nawapara Sub-division of the district, the details of which could not be collected due to lack of time.

Figures relating to population and literacy of the members of the tribe, as obtained in the 1971 Census are given in the table below.

Table-2

Table showing population and Literacy of the Banjaras (Census 1971)

Name of the District	Population			Literates		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
1. Bolangir	132	63	69	7	6	1
2. Kalahandi	3362	1625	1737	515	486	29
3. Koraput	565	273	292	28	26	2
4. Mayurbhanj	4	3	1	1	1	-
5. Sambalpur	2192	1034	1158	167	141	26
6. Sundargarh	28	17	11	-	-	-
All Orissa	6283	3015	3268	718	660	58

The table reveals that, the district of Kalahandi has about 53 percent of the tribe's total population which is the largest and the next district is Sambalpur that is inhabited by 34 percent of the tribe. Koraput has only 0.89 percent of them. The rest 8.11 percent are scattered in Bolangir, Sundargarh and Mayurbhanj districts.

Figures relating to literacy as per 1971 Census indicates that only 718 persons or 1.14 percent of the population are literates. This indicates that literacy among the Banjaras is very negligible. The following table indicates the total population and literacy of Banjaras in the study villages.

Table No.-3

Table indicating population and literacy of Banjaras in the study villages

Sl No	Name of the villages	Total No. of Banjara House-holds	Population			Literates		
			Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
1	Kadapadar	29	148	73	75	47	35	12
2	Ladugaon	16	68	31	37	9	7	2
3	Uchala (Hamlet of Nuaguda)	16	55	27	28	7	7	-
4	Mahichala	35	150	74	76	9	9	-
	Total	96	421	205	216	72	58	14

The present study covers 4 villages of Koksara, Jaypatna and Junagarh Blocks of Dharamgarh Subdivision in the district of Kalahandi. In these villages, Banjara population comes to 421 with 205 males and 216 females constituting 96 households. The table further indicates the position of literacy in the villages. Out of the total population of 421, only 72 or 17.1 percent are literates of which 58 or 13.7 percent are males and 14 or 3.3 percents are females. As compared to 1971 Census there has been an increase in the literacy figure in the year 1986.

According to the present study the sex ratio comes to 1053 females per 1000 males. There are more of female issues than males.

The following Table-4 shows the distribution of population of the study villages according to age group and sex. This clearly indicates that very significantly a high percentage of distribution in the age-groups 0-4 and 5-14 is found. This reveals that the health condition has improved and more children have survived in recent years. The school going children in the age group of 5-14 is also very significant.

Table-4
Distribution of the population according to age-group and sex.

Sl. No.	Name of the villages	Population			0-4		5-14		15-59		60 and above	
		M	F	T	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
1	Kadapadar	73	75	148	10	13	28	30	33	29	2	3
2	Ladugaon	31	37	68	3	5	12	13	13	15	3	4
3	Uchala (Hamlet of Nuaguda)	27	28	55	2	3	13	15	8	5	4	5
4	Mahichala	74	76	150	9	13	25	24	34	32	6	7
	TOTAL	205	216	421	24	34	78	82	88	81	15	19

Origin:-

The Banjaras are a small tribe living in the south-western regions of Orissa. Russell and Hiralal described the tribe as having migrated from Rajputana and its surrounding places. They also deduce from the word Banjara that it is a derivation from the Sanskrit word "*Banijyakara*". Formerly they were migratory in their habitat and sold commodities in various places moving in a large group and carrying the goods on their bullock-carts. It is reported from history that the Banjaras were employed by the Hindu as well as Muslim kings to carry necessities for the soldiers to the war front. It appears that the tribe in course of time migrated to different places of Orissa through Central Province and Bihar.

In the study villages the Banjaras are said to have been migrated from Rajasthan where from they came to Madhya-Pradesh and finally settled in Orissa. Traditionally, they are the tribe of carriers and drivers of pack-bullocks.

The villages:-

The study villages are inhabited by various castes and tribes. The list of those castes and tribes with their households is indicated below.

Table No.5

Table showing various castes and tribes with total households.

Sl. No	Name of the village	Name of Castes/Tribes	Total Households
1	KADAPADAR	1. Baishnaba	4
		2. Maharana	3
		3. Gouda	4
		4. Sunari	5
		5. Banjara	29
		6. Gond	4
		7. Sabara	70
		8. Domb	8

2	LADUGAM	1. Brahmin 2. Bairagi 3. Bhotara 4. Sunari 5. Sundhi 6. Marwari 7. Gouda 8. Paika 9. Barika 10. Mali 11. Banjara 12. Sabar 13. Holva 14. Gond 15. Kondh 16. Paraja 17. Domb 18. Ghasi 19. Mangli	50 40 400 8 25 60 100 15 20 10 16 15 6 15 10 10 150 8 1
3.	MAHICHALA	1. Brahmin 2. Gouda 3. Mali 4. Sunari 5. Lohara 6. Sundhi 7. Banjara 8. Gond 9. Sabar 10. Kondh 11. Domb 12. Ghasi 13. Beldar	16 90 40 1 3 2 35 12 9 30 80 1 1
4.	UCHALA(Hamlet Nuaguda)	1. Bhatra 2. Gouda 3. Lohara(Parabhoi) 4. Mali 5. Banjara 6. Ghasi	100 10 2 1 16 1

In most of these villages which have been studied, the Banjaras live separately and have formed a separate ward called, *Tanda*. Other castes living in those villages do not live in the *Tandas* with the Banjaras. They live separately.

The infrastructural facilities available in the villages are as follows.

Table No-6**Table showing infrastructural facilities in the villages**

Sl. No.	Name of the Villages	Infrastructural facilities
1	KADAPADAR	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. U.P. School-1 2. Grocery Shops-6 3. Siva Temple-1 4. Anganwadi Centre-1 5. Weekly Market-1 (Saturday) 6. TubeWell-1 7. Well-1
2	LADUGAM	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. U.P. School-2 2. L.P. School-1 3. High School-1 4. Post Office-1 5. Health Centre-1Hospital (6 Beded) 6. Hotel-4 7. Cloth Shop-5 8. Betel Shop-8 9. Tea Stall-7 10. Grocery Shop-5 11. (i) Siva Temple-1 (ii) Jagannath Temple-1 (iii) Gramadevati-1 12. Bus Stop-1 13. State Bank-1 14. i) Private Well-100 ii) Govt. Well-6 15. Tube Well-5
3	UCHALA (Hamlet of Nuaguda)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. U.P. School-1 2. M.E. School-1 3. Panchayat office-1 4. R.I. Office-1 5. Post Office-1 6. Mahila Samiti-1 7. Grocery Shops-2 8. Gramadevati-1 9. Well-1 10. Tube Well-1
4	MAHICALA	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. L.P. School-1 2. Post Office-1 3. A.N.M. Centre-1 4. Dispensary-1

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Club-1 6. Mahila Samiti-1 7. U.P. School-1 8. High School-1 9. M.E. School-1 10. L.I. Centre(Veterinary)-1 11. Co.op.Societies-1 12. Restaurant-2 13. Weekly Market-1(Wednesday) 14. Siva Temple-1 15. Well-2 16. Tube Well-2
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The table above indicates that maximum facilities are available in Ladugam and Mahichala villages, because these villages are centrally located and well communicable. Other two villages are located inaccessibly and not directly connected with Bus route. These facilities are commonly enjoyed irrespective of castes and tribes. The Banjaras, though a Schedule Tribe, are a trading people, who have installed many grocery and tea shops in the villages. The higher castes without maintaining any social distance buy from the shops and also take tiffin and tea from the tea stalls installed by the Banjaras.

Area:-

The study villages, situated on the plain lands are drained by the rivers Mudha and Kamal. This tract has been considerably de-forested. The only forest worthy of mention within this region is at Khatigarh, which is about 30km.s away from the village Kadapadar. This is a very wild and almost inaccessible tract. This forest is of dry deciduous mixed forest wherein the common miscellaneous species found are Teak, Asan, Dharua, Bandhan, Kasi and Kendu. Salia bamboo is found at some places.

Climate:-

The climatic condition of the area is of extreme type. May is the hottest month and December is the coldest month of the year. The monsoon in this area commences by about the middle of the June of the year. The normal rainfall of the area is 13.78 m.m (5'.5").

Soil:-

The land of the area is mostly rain fed and is dependant on monsoon. Irrigation facilities available are very inadequate. Due to scanty and erratic rainfall the area suffers from drought almost every year. The area contains sandy and black-color soil.

CHAPTER-II

Socio-cultural life of the people

Social life:-

It is more usual to find that the Banjaras live amidst mango and jack-fruit groves that are grouped together as a single unit. The villages have no well-defined boundaries. At the outskirts of the village deity Banjaramata is installed under a tamarind or a banyan tree. There are one or two central paths to which the houses face. These paths usually go round in a northerly-southerly direction and are often winding. The houses are scattered and not in rows. The houses are of thick mud walls. The roof is of country tiles. The lanes are narrow, dirty and tortuous.

The Banjaras build houses like other neighbouring Hindus. The houses are of brick walls plastered with mud of about two feet thick, a tiled roof laid out on bamboo poles and a fairly large courtyard. The mud walls, inside and outside, the floors and the court-yard are plastered with a mixture of cow-dung and clay.

The houses are not all of the same height. There are no beams to support the roof structure. Instead, poles are used to hold on the roof inside the rooms as well as in the verandahs. The maximum height of the room is 10 ½ feet. The doors are made of wooden frames, fixed with wooden planks or with wattle bamboo pieces woven in to a sort of net.

There are generally two rooms 9'x12' and another 11'x12' average house. There is a back verandah-6'x20', enclosed by mud walls, which serves as kitchen and dining space. Some house holds put up a middle wall with a door in the verandah to separate the kitchen from the dining area. The bigger room is used for sleeping and the smaller to store grain. There are also three-roomed houses possessed by well-to-do Banjaras. The first two rooms are used as drawing-room and bed-room. The house is also attached with a separate kitchen and with an inside verandah of 3' wide. The back-yard of the house is well fenced to grow vegetables for family consumption. One remarkable feature in the construction of these houses is that, wood is rarely used because it is not readily available in the forest.

In a Banjara house the kitchen is the sacred place as it is abode of the ancestral-spirits. The Banjaras domesticate animals like bullocks, cows, goats and sheep. Bullocks and cows are kept in a cowshed. Another shed is made where goats and sheep are kept. Fowls are also domesticated for sacrificing and appeasing the deities.

Before constructing the house the Banjaras contact the astrologer to test the auspiciousness of the site. Before entering the new house the owner offers cooked

rice with a chicken in a new pot to the ancestral-spirits and entertains kinsmen with a sumptuous feast.

Inside the house on the verandah the dhenki (rice-husker) is fixed and a mill-stone is kept. Beds and cots are used for sleeping. Only well-to-do families keep chairs and tables. The main articles in the house are those connected with food and drink. Earthen-vessels and aluminum utensils form major articles in the kitchen. Agricultural implements, a few baskets are also found in the house. These are purchased from the local market.

The household articles are kept arranged neatly and give a clean look to the outsiders.

Dress and Ornaments:-

The regular dresses of the adult Banjara consist of a loin cloth which hangs from the waist to the knee joint. They use a turban as headdress on special occasions. The adults always wear a *fatei* (the traditional shirt). They put on warm-clothing for the winter. The women wear saris of 12 feet as gown for everyday use. They also use petty-coats above which the one end of the sari is wrapped through shoulder and inserted to the right waist.

Ornaments:-

The women wear a variety of ornaments on different parts of the body. Most of these are of silver, except rings in the nose and in the ears which are of gold or brass. *Notha*, nose-ring is worn in the nose and a chain, called *sinkuli* is attached to the ear. One ring-shaped worn in the upper earlobe, is called *fasia*. Golden necklace or head necklaces called, *Mali* are worn in the neck. *Balia* (wristlet), made of tusk of the elephant is worn in the hand but *bahukankana* (armlet) made of silver is worn in the arms. *Chuda* or *janjara* is put on in the leg which creates tinkling sound while walking. In fact the women are very much fond of ornaments and these ornaments add more beauty when these are worn with red-coloured saris. The women too, are very much keen for gold ornaments even if they are poor.

Food habits:-

The Banjaras eat almost everything. They generally live on vegetable diet because they can not afford to eat meat and fish often. Their staple food is rice. From rice they prepare cakes of different varieties. They prepare curry with different vegetables which they produce in their own kitchen garden. Potato is rarely used by them. They eat various types of fruits such as, jack-fruit, guava, plantain, black-berry, tamarind, papaya etc.

They relish animal food very much. They are very fond of meat of goat, sheep, mouse and hare. But they do not eat beef and pork. Insects and red-ants are

also eaten by them. Milk is very much utilized for preparing curd and for churning butter. The butter milk is also drunk by them. In fact, their food habits and the method of preparations are almost identical with those of their Hindu neighbors.

Liquor habit:-

The Banjaras drink *chauli* ceremoniously as and when festive occasions occur. *Chauli* is prepared from the cooked rice and is as good as *handia* (rice-beer). This is also offered to their ancestral-spirit and to other gods and deities ritually. It is also used as medicine during various ailments. They also drink *mahuli* which is purchased from the liquor shop. They do not prepare it themselves. Liquor, whether *chauli* or *mahuli* is not consumed in a large scale ordinarily, but on special occasions.

They are inveterate smokers. The indigenous method of smoking is to take some pieces of dried tobacco leaf, wrap them in a *sal* leaf, and smoke it like a cheroot. The manner, in which tobacco is most commonly used, is by chewing dried tobacco with lime.

Family:-

Generally two types, such as, individual family and extended families are found among the Banjaras. Out of 96, 72 or 78.26 percent are of extended families. Ordinarily the sons with their wives live with their father, mother and grand parents. The family is broken up by marriage when the daughters by the law of exogamy go to another clan. The sons sometimes establish their own home when they have got their own family.

Family is patrilineal and patripotestal. In the individual family, the father is the head, where as in the other type the grand father or any senior male member is head in every respect. Property is inherited through the male line and the females are debarred from getting any share. Till marriage the daughters enjoy equal status with the sons but after marriage they can not claim any right over the property.

In the family the conjugal love is similar to what we find in the civilized society. The husband, in important matters consults his wife. At the time of marriage of their sons and daughters, the consent of both the father and the mother is necessary. There is often a genuine mutual respect between husband and wife. The wife, in practical, has fair amount of independence and a position which may be said to be nearly co-ordinate with that of her husband, within her own sphere.

The Banjara women have an important status in their society. Though they are shut off from certain religious and administrative functions their economic status is very high. It is they who generally go to market, do the bargaining and make over the proceeds for the sustenance of the family. They are the repositories

of the moral and religious tradition of the society. The relation between the parents and children among the Banjaras is also of a sweet affectionate type.

Clan organization:-

The internal structure of the tribe is singularly complex and elaborate. There are several exogamous division called, *bansa* (septs) such as :-i) *Rathor*, ii) *Chouhan*, iii) *Pamar*, iv) *Odtia* and v) *Turi*. Again each sept is having sub septs. For example; *Rathor* is divided into six sub septs. Similarly other exogamous groups are having different sub septs. Among the clans there is status hierarchy. For example; *rathor* claims to be the superior most in the hierarchy because they are completely vegetarians. Again each clan is personified with its tutelary deity. For example, *moramamai* and *tulja bhavani* are tutelary deities of the *rathor* clan. *Ashawani* and *danteswari* are the deities of the *chauhan* clan. All these deities belong to the place of origin where from these people migrated. All these deities of the respective clans are ceremoniously worshipped in the month of Dasahara (September-October). Other than this, the clans are not identified on the basis of totem. No taboos are observed by the clans. Marriage is exogamous and boys and girls of the same clan are treated as brothers and sisters.

Life-cycle:-

Birth:-

When the labour pain starts the pregnant woman is confined to a room and an experienced woman of the community acts as mid-wife. After child birth, the umbilical cord is cut by the mid wife with a snail by placing a coil beneath it, which is afterwards taken by the mid-wife. The placenta is then buried in a pit at the backyard of the house. The house is considers polluted. The pollution is over on the seventh day in the case of a male child and on the ninth day in the case of a female child. All the inmates of the house are saved by the village barber after which the pollution period is over. The polluted clothes are given to the washer-man of the village. The mid-wife brings the child to the barber to cut a few locks of hair from different parts of the head of the baby, which are put in a leaf-cup. She then ties two threads to the snail with which the umbilical cord was cut. All the relatives then go to take bath in a near by stream. The midwife carries the child together with the mother to the bathing place. There, the mid-wife throws the locks of hair and one of the threads in the water. After bathing, they return to the house. The midwife brings with her the second thread and the snail. This thread is then smeared with turmeric paste and tied round the waist of the child.

On the day of purification the relatives who assembled at the house are entertained with a feast and liquor.

On the twenty first day the child is given its name. In case of a son and heir, he takes the name of his grand-father. The second son takes the name of his maternal grand-father and the paternal grand-father's brother for the third boy,

the maternal grandfather's brother for the fourth boy and so on. The same procedure is followed for the girl, the feminine relations being in same order from the female side.

Marriage:-

It is strictly forbidden for any Banjara to marry within his own sept. He may marry into any other sept or sub-sept to which his mother belongs. It is customary among the Banjaras that marriage within the same sept is possible if there is gap of three generations.

Girls and boys are married as adults. Pre-sexual laxity before marriage is not tolerated. Should he attempt to capture the girl, he would be liable to severe punishment by giving Rs 750/- towards fine. Moreover, he is publicly shamed for seven times. In Banjara marriage, there is no restriction of age. The bride may either be younger, older or of equal age with the bride-groom.

Arranged marriage is the rule which is more prevalent in their society. The practice is that the girl's father first initiates the marriage proposal. A marriage-broker is appointed to negotiate. If the groom is found suitable, the bride is taken to the groom's house to ascertain his family position and economic condition. In the second phase arrangements are made so that the bride and the groom select themselves finally, in a fair or in a market place. In the third phase the question of giving dowry by the bride's father is decided.

In the fourth phase, marriage day is fixed in consultation with the local astrologer. The groom goes to the bride's house for marriage. The bride-groom along with his father and headman of the village, a few relatives and co-villagers set out for the bride's house in procession. At the outskirts of the groom's village a *puja* is offered to the ancestral-spirit. The groom puts on a pith-crown on his head, keeps a sword hanging at his waist and a spear in his hand. That is the usual marriage attire when the bride-groom goes for marriage. Instead of going on a camel, which was the traditional system, the bride-groom goes over a horse at present with the accompaniment of beating of drums.

The Brahmin priest officiates to perform marriage rituals. An altar, constructed for this occasion in the court-yard of the bride's house, beautifully decorated with plantain trees, mango twigs and multi-coloured papers. On the altar they place two rice-pounding pestles, round which both the bride and the groom move about seven turns. Among the Banjaras the marriage ritual resemble the usual Hindu type. The priest gives the nuptial tie and performs *homo* or fire sacrifice to the ancestral spirits. The priest gives a knot by tying up the end of clothes of both the bride and groom and they walk round the fire. This solemnizes the marriage tie.

On the next day, when the bride arrives at the groom's house after wedding, two small brass vessels are given to her, in which food is cooked and

served to all the inmates of the house by the bride. By that the bride formally is taken into the clan of the groom. Then both the bride and the groom are ceremoniously received in to the husband's *kuri* or hut.

Banjara marriages are frequently held in the rains, a season forbidden to other Hindus. This is most convenient to them, as in the dry weather, they are usually out for their business as peddlers.

Other types of marriages like marriage by elopement, marriage by capture, marriage by exchange etc are not prevalent. Widow re-marriage is in vogue. A widow is seldom allowed to go out of the family. When her husband dies she is taken either by his elder or younger brother. If the widow prefers another man and runs away to him, the first husband's relatives claim compensation. Sororate and levirate marriages are not prevalent.

Death:-

The Banjaras bury the dead bodies of the unmarried persons and those dying of small-pox and cholera, but cremate the others. Their rites of mourning are not strict, and are observed for twelve days. During the pollution period the Banjaras observe taboos like their Hindu neighbours. On the eleventh day the pollution period is over when the entire house is besmeared with cow-dung and the old earthen-pots are thrown away. The barber shaves the male member on that day. The washer man too, washes the polluted clothes. The members of the house take purificatory bath in the stream. The head of the family cooks rice and chicken in a new earthen-pots and offers a little of it to the deceased soul at the cremation ground. On the eleventh day the village Brahmin presides over the *sradha* ceremony and offers *panda* (cooked rice) to the ancestral-spirits. No animals are sacrificed on this occasion. A grand feast is arranged to entertain the relatives and the lineage members.

Inter-caste relationship:-

The process of Hinduization is essentially a social phenomenon. In their contact with Hindu neighbours Hinduism has steadily absorbed in the Banjara's beliefs and practices and has made them its own. Hinduism in the villages is hardly to be distinguished from the animism of the primitive tribe. This has eventually laid the Banjaras to become a part of the Hindu social system. At the present time, the Banjaras though hinduised to a considerable extent, are not yet accepted among the higher caste Hindus. Though the Brahmin priest is called for in Banjara weddings and in the name giving ceremony or to perform death rites, the former does not accept cooked food from the latter and inter-dining is strictly forbidden. Strictly speaking no stigma is attached to the bodily touch, but the higher castes never inter-dine or accept cooked food from the Banjaras. Of course the Banjaras have ascertained their position in the social hierarchy by getting services of the Brahmin priest, barber and the washer man. They therefore, do not accept cooked food on inter-dine with the lower caste of the village. The washer

man is even not allowed to enter into their houses. In their social functions the lower castes, though invited are served separately. In all functions at the village level the Banjaras keep their entity by cooking and eating separately. No restriction is imposed to use water from the wells on tanks. The Banjaras are allowed to enter temples of the village.

Economic life:-

Traditionally the Banjaras were carriers and drivers of pack-bullocks. Salt and other commodities used to be traded by moving here and there in different villages by the Banjaras. When they permanently settled in the villages of Kalahandi district, the-then *Zamindars* appointed some of them as revenue collectors. In returned some of them got free land from the *Zamindars*. Some of them also reclaimed fresh land unauthorized and settled down in the villages permanently. Those who did not get land continued their traditional occupation either by way of installing petty shops in the villages or by becoming paddlers. Those who could not pursue their traditional occupation they became labourers. Some of them who were little educated became service holders. Table No.7 indicates the distribution of workers according to their primary occupation.

Table No-7
Distribution of workers according to their primary occupation.

Name of the village	Wage earning		Trade		Agriculture		Forest collection		Stock rearing		Service		Total	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Kadapadar	13	14	4	2	6	7	5	3	3	3	2	-	33	29
Ladugaon	5	8	2	2	3	4	1	-	1	1	1	-	13	15
Uchala (Hamlet of Nuaguda)	3	4	2	-	2	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	8	5
Mahichala	8	10	7	8	11	8	-	6	3	-	5	-	34	32
TOTAL	29	36	15	12	22	20	6	9	8	4	8	-	88	81

The table depicts the pattern of livelihood of the Banjaras in the study villages. It is clear from the table that out of 421 total populations, 169 or 40.14 percent of the people are workers. Majority of them that is, about 38.46 percent are dependent on wage-earning. Next to wage-earning 24.85 percent and 15.97 percent of them are engaged in agriculture and trade respectively. Others subsist on stock-rearing, service and forest collection. It is learnt from the people that at the early stage when they migrated to this village, only 8 families were given 40 acres of forest land by the-then *Zamindar*. In due course, more forest lands were reclaimed due to pressure of population. At present all the households possess only 243 acres

of land. Persons living on wage earning are mostly engaged as agricultural-labourers and road contractors in the forest and in the Block area. Persons engaged in trade have grocery and stationary shops in their own village or neighbouring villages. Only 4 families are engaged as peddlers and move from village to village with petty stationary articles and salt.

Paddy is mostly produced by the Banjaras in their fields. The land in this area is of three types such as wet land, up land and kitchen garden. Other than paddy, jute is also produced in the wet-land. Crops like: - groundnut, sugarcane, *arhar*, black gram, green gram, horse gram are also produced as cash crops. Seasonal vegetables and tobacco are produced in the kitchen garden for family consumption. Since there is no irrigation facilities in the area no high yielding crops are produced.

However, the following table indicates distributions of households according to landholdings.

Sl. No.	Name of the village	Landless households	Households having				Total no of Households
			0 -1 Acs	1.1 - 4.5 Acs	4.6 - 7.5 Acs	7.6 Acs & above	
1	Kadapadar	9	7	6	4	3	29
2	Ladugaon	4	6	2	3	1	16
3	Uchala (Hamlet Nuaguda)	7	5	2	2	-	16
4	Mahichala	11	8	5	6	5	35
	Total	31 (32.29)	26 (27.08)	15 15.62	15 15.62	9 9.37	96 100.00

It is evident from the table that nearly 32.29 percent of households are landless. 27.08 percent of families have land within 1 acre. Only 9 families covering 9.37 percent have more than 7.6 acres of land. The average size of land holding is only 2.53 acres per family. But this holding is also uneconomic in the sense that there is no irrigation facility in the area and the people completely depend upon seasonal rain which does not help in fruitful production.

They rear livestock which include cow, bullock, buffalo, sheep and goat. Fowls are kept for sacrifice to the deities on festive occasions. They take milk and milk products. When necessity arises they sell sheep and goats. Fire wood, house building materials, leaves, edible roots, varieties of mushrooms are collected from the near by forest by both the sexes of the community.

Both the males and the females go for wage earning. When the female are mostly engaged as agricultural labourers, the males generally opt for road

construction and forest work with the contractors. The male earns Rs15/- per day but a female earns Rs8/- per day.

Only 8 males are focused in petty jobs like, teachers in primary schools and peons in the Forest Department.

They do not pursue their traditional occupation further by moving here and there as they are permanently settled at present. On an average a family earns Rs500/- annually which indicates that they are in utter poverty. To compensate deficit income they borrow either from the private money lenders by giving exorbitant rate of interest and from the Government. In the year, about 1986-87 Banjaras received ERRP was along with other villagers.

Religious life:-

Religion of the Banjaras, like the religion of other tribes centers round the propitiation of gods, goddesses, tutelary deities, spirits, manes and natural objects. The Banjaras are animists and polytheists. They perform certain rites and rituals to appease the supernatural forces in order to achieve peace and progress for the individual as well as for the entire community. They believe "Banjari Devi" is the Supreme Deity, represented by a heap of stone under a shady/grove in the village. Other tutelary deities are: - *merma mai*, *tulja devi*, *kankalimata*, *ashawani*, *danteswari* *wagjai* etc. Each clan has its tutelary deity. For example, *kankali mata* is the deity of *pamar* clan, *meram mai* and *tulja bhabani* are deities of *rathor* clan etc. The Banjaras still worship their pack-cattle. When sickness occurs they lead the sick man to the feet of the bullock called *hatadiya*.

There are no religious functionaries among the Banjaras. The oldest man of the family or in the clan group presides as the priest. They invoke these divine powers through rituals, invocations, offerings and sacrifices and thereby solicit their blessings for the people.

Animals such as, goat, lamb and fowl are mainly sacrificed to appease the deities. Sweet-meats and *chauli* (rice-bear) are considered as ritualistic food. Burning of incense powder, joss-sticks and flowers are very common features in any form of ritual. The Banjaras also quite often make votive offering to various goddesses for fulfillment of desires. Vow is taken by the sufferer to sacrifice animal. But the nature of sacrifice differs according to gravity of suffering.

In this village the Banjaras have not erected any shrine for the deities. But temporary structures are raised, smeared with cow dung and decorated with mango twigs, banana-plants and flowers. The officiating priest purifies himself by taking bath and putting on a new cloth.

The Banjaras are terribly vexed by witchcraft. There are two classes of magicians called *bhagats-ninbu-katna* is the white magician and *janta*, is the black magician. The role of the white magician is very important as he cures number of

persons suffering from various diseases with the help of herbal medicine perforated with incantations. As against this the black magician takes complete help of his guardian-spirit and practices imitative magic. That is, he collects hair or nails etc of the victim with which he applies magic and tortures the victim.

The head of each family also acts as a priest while worshipping the ancestral spirits. Besides, they also believe in Hindu gods and goddesses. They visit the Mahadev temple in the village and perform Laxmi puja with all purity.

The Banjaras have devised their own festival calendar though of Hindu origin. In the month of March they observe *fagu* or *holi* festival when all the crops are harvested. It is a thanks-given ceremony to Banjara Devi for giving them different crops. She is ceremoniously worshipped by the entire community. She is satisfied with the sacrifice of five goats.

Sitala puja is observed in the month of *asadha* (June & July). On this occasion a pit is dug on the front yard of the village. The women folk, after purificatory bath; assemble there with a pitcher-full of water each and different cereals mixed together in a leaf-cup. Each one of them pours water in the pit. The senior most member of the community acts as priest and offers different cereals in a leaf-cup as ritualistic food to *sitala mata* and her seven sisters. Three fowls are sacrificed to appease the deities. After the ritual the cereals are eaten for the first time as ritualistic food. This is called *nabanna* ceremony. With this ritualistic fowls, other fowls are also sacrificed and added to it and eaten ceremoniously by all the members of the community. The women dance who moves round the pit with their hands interlaced through the night and sing songs. The males remain busy for the whole night in playing with sticks among themselves. *Sibabhaiya* and *meraban* deities are considered very dreaded and are worshipped ceremoniously in the '*tij*' festival which commences on the first day after full moon in the month of *shravana* (July & August). It continues for nine days. These deities are worshipped by the people of *rathor* clan specially. A person who leads celibacy acts as a priest to ensure heavy rainfall for bumper crops. Two lambs and one goat are sacrificed on this occasion. For nine days, the community members cook and eat communally and spend nights in dancing and singing songs.

On *dasahara* festival in the month of October, Banjara Devi, the Supreme Deity is worshipped. On this occasion, the sword, representing this warrior community is worshipped before Banjara Devi with much of pomp and grandeur to ensure good health both for the men and animals. Number of vow takers sacrifices animals on this occasion.

On the day of *deepawali* in the month of *margasheera* (October-November), *giri gobardhana puja* is organized in the line of Hindus fashion for keeping their cattle epidemic-free.

However, in the religion proper, the attitude of the Banjaras towards the supernatural powers is one of the reverential fears in the presence of certain mysterious supernatural power. Dependence, conciliation, propitiation and pray-full submission are various means to appease such powers to regularly get food, remain healthy and live a normal life.

Political life:-

In each village the Banjara community lives in a separate ward called, *tanda*. The community, composed of various families is related by kinship tie. Each family acts in conformity with an accepted mode. The mode, though authoritative is guarded by custom. These authorities are exercised at family level, clan level and village level. The leaders of the village shoulder all responsibilities, participate in all social activities and affectively influence the life of their fellowmen. In this process this becomes an institution and office turns into hereditary normally. The traditional leadership is based on hereditary status and position.

Each village or *tanda* is a political unit having its own set of officers. These officers are in an informal way the leaders of the *tanda* and they have more voice in the village affairs than others. *Naik* is formal head of the *tanda* council. All important matters are brought to his notice for opinion and intervention. His post is hereditary. No ceremony or function is hold for his selection. He does not receive any honorarium for his services but he gets a major share of the sacrificial animals during communal worships etc.

Karvari is the village messenger. He holds a very key position in the leadership organization of the Banjara community. He being the messenger summons people to the village meetings and becomes the custodian of cash and kind collected for all festivals and fines collected from different culprits.

Bhagat is the sacerdotal leader in each Banjara *tanda*. He is equally respected by the community members. In the event of any dispute in the *tanda* these leaders decide cases. The members of the community still consider these leaders as very important in decision making process. It is a fact that the Banjaras live in multi-caste villages. Though they are abided by the village council, still they pay more allegiance to their traditional leadership pattern.

Conclusion:-

The Banjaras are focused mainly in the southwestern part of Orissa in the district of Kalahandi. They are largely concentrated in Koksara, Jayapatna and Komna Blocks of Dharamgarh and Bhawanipatna sub-divisions of Kalahandi district. They number about 6283 in Orissa as per 1971 census of which 3015 are males and 3268 are females. The district of Kalahandi has about 53 percent of the total Banjara population. Only 1.14 percent of the Banjaras are literates.

The Banjaras are already enlisted in the Scheduled Tribe list (Modification) order 1956 and are a tribe of carriers and drivers of pack-bullocks in Orissa. The main objective of this study therefore, to assess the socio-economic status of the tribe. Socio-economic living conditions are taken here as the totality of the economic life in context of their social and physical environment and culture.

To assess this 2(two) villages such as, Kadapadar and Ladugaon in Koksara Block, Uchala in Jayapatna Block and Mahichala village of Junagarh Block were study. These data were cross checked with the data collected from Dantipada village of Komna Block. The study villages comprise 96 households with a total population of 421, of which 205 are males and 216 are females. Out of 421, 72 or 17.1 percent of the Banjaras are literates. Educationally they are backward. Ignorance and illiteracy are the causes of their general backwardness.

In the study villages, the Banjaras live with other castes and tribes. They have formed separate wards called *tanda*, in those villages. It is said that the Banjaras are not the original inhabitants but migrated from Rajasthan and its neighbouring places and settled in Kalahandi and other districts of Orissa. Traditionally they were the carriers and drivers of pack-bullocks and used to sell salt and other grocery articles by moving from village to village. In Orissa, they were appointed as revenue collectors by the-then *Zamindars*. They were given free land for their services. In course of time, they reclaimed forest land and took up cultivation as permanent source of livelihood.

The Banjaras live in multi-caste villages but form separate *tanda*. Generally each *tanda* consist 15 to 20 households. There is no systematic arrangement of their houses in a *tanda* but scattered here and there. They have got brick-built houses plastered with mud with tile or straw thatched roof. Each house consists of two rooms. They install their ancestral-spirits in the house. In the village, Banjari Devi, the village deity is installed. They have a cowshed attached to each house where buffalo, bullock, cow, goat and sheep are kept. Their household articles are not very elaborate. Rice is their staple food. They are non-vegetarians and relish the meat of goat and sheep. They neither eat beef nor pork. Jungle animals like mouse, hare, insects and red ants are relished. They drink milk and consume milk products. They brew *chauli* (rice-beer) and use as it as alcoholic drink and offer it as ritualistic food to their deities and spirits.

Wage-earning is their main occupation. They supplement their income by agriculture, trading, service and forest collection. Both males and females work for a living. They have mostly upland instead of wet land. Paddy is produced mainly in the wet land. Groundnut, black-gram, green gram etc. are also produced in the upland. No high yielding varieties are produced due to lack of irrigation facilities. About 32.29 percent of the people are landless. On an average a family earns Rs500/- annually. In spite of diversified occupations, their income is low. They reconcile themselves to strict economy, but events like, marriage, death and

magico-religious observances necessitate incurring of heavy expenditure which is disproportionate to their income.

About 78.26 percent of the families among the Banjaras are extended. Ordinarily the sons with their children live with their father, mother and grand parents. Family is patrilineal and patripotestal. The community is divided into several exogamous divisions called *bansa* (Septs) such as *rathor*, *chauhan*, *pamar*, *odtia* and *turi*. Each Sept is exogamous and is having its tutelary deity.

They have their typical customs in the observances of life-cycle rituals. They do not pay bride-prices but dowry and the boy goes to the girl's house for marriage like the neighbouring Hindus. They are served by the Hindu priest, barber and the washer-man.

They are polytheists and believe in the existence of different gods and goddesses, spirits and ghosts. Banjari Devi Mai is revered as their Supreme Deity. They do not have their own priest. The head of the family and the oldest man of the Sept act as priests. They observe different rituals and festivals of their own. They also follow Hindu pantheon and observe local Hindus festivals.

They have their traditional caste council to decide different disputes. *Naik* is the headman of the village. They also participate in the village council.

In spite of the fact that the Banjaras have become part of Hindu social system, the higher caste Hindus still do not accept cooked food nor inter-dine with them. The Banjaras also do not enter into the houses of lower caste Hindus. Living in the same village, the Banjaras along with other castes and tribes enjoy the same privilege and avail the infrastructural facilities provided in the village. For example, in the village Kadapadar, 6 Banjara boys and 2 girls are found to be reading in U.P. School. Four Banjara girls are also reading in Anganwadi Centre located in the village. They use water from the tube-well and well installed in the village. In fact, the Banjaras have availed almost all the opportunities along with other facilities provided in the village. Hence, there is no justification to provide further special privileges to the Banjaras when they live in minorities in heterogeneous villages. However, the present study by this institute in 4 selected villages is enclosed which depicts the socio-economic status of the Banjaras.

BANJARA *

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IDENTITY

The BANJARA or BANJARI notified as a Scheduled Tribe (ST) at Sl. 03 of ST list of Odisha, are a semi nomadic tribe of carriers and drivers of pack-bullocks. Migrated from Rajasthan through Madhya Pradesh and Bihar, they are largely concentrated in the southwestern part of Odisha, particularly in the areas of Lanjigarh, Dharamgarh, Jay Patna and Nuapara Tahasils of undivided Kalahandi district.

The ethnographers like K.S. Singh (1998) has reported "Traditionally a nomadic community, the Banjara were carriers and drivers of pack-bullocks. The community name is derived from the word *bajjika*, which means trade or business. One view is that the name is derived from the Sanskrit word *vanijya* or *banijyakara*, meaning a trader or merchant, while the other view is that the name Banjara is a derivative of the word *banji*, meaning a peddler's pack. Now, Banjara universally means the trading community, though the root word differs across states. The Banjara trace their descent from Lakhi Banjara, who, as recounted, used to move from one forest (*ban*) to another with his merchandise."

Crooke (1896) describes them as a tribe whose primary occupation is, or rather used to be, that of grain carriers and suppliers for armies in the battlefield. Risley (1891) states that the term 'Banjara' is applied to a grain and cattle merchant who moves to different markets. Ibbetson (1891) opines that they and the 'Labana caste are generally said to be identical being called Banjara in the eastern districts and Labana in the whole of Punjab proper'.

* Published in the Photo Handbook on Banjara, SCSTRTI, 2014

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Russell and Hiralal (1916) described the tribe as having migrated from Rajputana and its surrounding places. Formerly they were migratory in their habit and sold commodities in various places moving in a large group and carrying the goods on their bullock-carts. It is reported from history that the Banjaras were employed by the Hindu as well as Muslim kings to carry necessities for the soldiers to the war front. It appears that the tribe in course of time migrated to different places of Orissa through Central Province and Bihar.

The Banjara of Orissa are also known by several synonyms such as Banjari, Wanjari, Vanjari, Brinjari, Bepari, Mukeai, Laban etc. The community name probably had come from two different sources: *banijya* - trade or *banachara*, the forest wanderer. Their principal group's name Laban / Labana is derived from the Sanskrit word *lavanah*, meaning 'salt' as traditionally, they were salt traders. The members of the tribe do not take offence to being called as Adibasis or to being identified as members of the Scheduled Tribe.

Besides Odisha, this tribe is found in many other States of India with different social and constitutional status. They have been notified as Scheduled Caste in Himachal Pradesh as Banjara, in Chandigarh, Haryana and Punjab as Bhanjara and in Karnataka as Banjara, Lambani. They enjoy ST status in Bihar in the name of Banjara. In the States of Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Delhi, Andhra Pradesh they are called Banjara, Laban etc and do not come under ST or SC category. They are found moving around in different parts of the country especially during fairs and festivals.

Language

They are multi-lingual. Their mother tongue is 'Banjari'. They are also conversant in regional languages like Odia, Hindi, Telgu, Tamil, Kannad, Marathi etc depending upon their place of residence as they move here and there for trading.

Population & Literacy

As per 2001 census, the Binjhia population in Odisha is 18 257, of which males number 9126 and females, 9131. Their sex ratio is 1001 females per 1000 males and decennial growth rate is 15.06%. Their total literacy rate in 2011 census is 62.28% that is 75.56% for males and 49.14% for the females.

Personal Adornments

The Banjaras and particularly their womenfolk are distinguished by their very elaborate, colourful and attractive personal adornments, hair style and tattoo marks. The regular dress of the adult Banjara male consists of a loin cloth (*dhoti*) which hangs from the waist to the knee joint. They use a turban as headdress on special occasions. Men always wear a *fatei* (the traditional shirt) or *kurta* (short with many folds). They put on warm cloths in the winter. These clothes are designed especially for protection from harsh climate in deserts and to distinguish them

from others.

The costume of Banjara women is the most colourful and elaborate among other tribal communities in India. They are identified by their *ghagra*, *orhni*, *kanchhi* and *zhabta* dresses, silver ornaments, distinguished hairdo and tattoo marks.

They wear the costumes of *ghaghra* and *choli* (a blouse). Ghaghra is a full length skirt made of red, black and white cotton, embellished with pieces of mirrored and its borders embroidered in mustard and green thread. They wear *phetiya* (as *ghagra*) and *kanchalli* (as top) and have *mehendi* tattoos on their hands. Silver, brass, gold, cowries, ivory, animal bone and even plastic are used in making a Banjara wardrobe. Their dress is considered fanciful and attractive by Western cultures.

The Banjara women also wear *sarees* of 12 feet length for everyday use. With it they wear petty-coats above which the one end of the *saree* is wrapped through shoulder and inserted to the right waist.

Traditionally, Banjara women are very fond of ornaments and they are never tired of wearing and collecting so many and so heavy ornaments. The women wear a variety of ornaments on different parts of the body as stated below.

Hair Ornaments	Ghugri
Nose Ornaments	Bhuria Phule, Notha
Ear Ornaments	Sinkuli, Fasia
Necklaces	Waute, Har, Cheed, Hasla, Mali
Armlets	Bandiya
Bangles & Wristlets	Chodus, Moterabalia, Balia
Finger rings	Winte, Phula
Anklets	Khas, Ghode, Wankdo, Bahu Kankana
Legs & Toe-rings	Chuda, Kuncia, Gazera, Kusotia

Notha, i.e., the nose-ring is worn in the nose and a chain called *sinkuli* is attached to the ear. One ring worn in the upper earlobe is called *fasia*. Golden necklace or bead necklaces called, *mali* are worn in the neck. Balia (wrist let) made of tusk of the elephant is worn in the hand but *bahukankana* (arm let) made of silver is worn in the ankles. Chuda on Jhunjara is put on in the leg which creates tinkling sound while walking.

Most of these ornaments are made of silver, except the rings in the nose and the ears which are of gold or brass. Their ornaments are made of silver rings, coins, chain and hair pleats tied together at the end by *chotla*. In fact, these ornaments add more beauty when these are worn with red-coloured *sarees*.

Womens' adornments distinguish unmarried from married and married from widowed women. Married women wear horn / ivory bangles (*chodur*) between wrist and shoulder, whereas, unmarried women wear these up to the

elbow from wrist. Married women use hair ornaments called *ghugri* which distinguish them from unmarried women and widows who are prohibited to wear these. A widow can wear *ghugri* if she is married again. Ghugri is a silver ornament and looks like a pendant made of a tube with small silver beads hanging. It is attached to the hair on both sides with a pin. Covering this pin is a clamp shaped silver disc. The silver beads almost touch the cheeks. Ghugri is indicative of the marital status of a woman.

Women wear necklace and finger rings made of old silver coins. They wear *khas*, a bell metal anklet round in shape with different designs drawn on the surface. It is worn by both married and unmarried women. But *ghode* and *wankdo* type of anklets are worn by only married women. Kusotia is a small cloth belt, bedecked with glass beads on the upper side and cords of cowries and glass beads hanging from the side. This belt is used only by married women to tie both shoulders. Whereas *kuncia*, a decorative piece made of red coarse cotton cloth put into a triangular shape and the lower edge of the cloth are attached glass beads of different hues and cowries, is worn by unmarried girls hanging it on the wrist. The maidens also wear black bead necklaces which are taken off at marriage.

The hair style of traditional Banjara women is quite different from that of others. They part their hair sideways so that the hair may fall on both cheeks and on these they fix hair ornaments.

Tattooing

Traditional tattooing is found among the Banjara women, which are done since childhood. Men usually get their names tattooed and the figure of scorpion is commonly seen on their forearms. They believe that if they have the figure of scorpion tattooed on their body scorpion will never bite them and if by chance it bites them, it will not be fatal. Women have tattoo marks on their hands, forearms, on legs, on their backs and on their face as well. The tattoos are of different kinds of designs drawn, some very complicated and some are very simple. These tattoos among women are mainly for the beautification and some said that tattooing relieves the body joints from pain and exertion.

HABITAT, SETTLEMENT & HOUSING

In western Odisha, the Banjara settlements are found on the hills, forests and mostly on the plains. In multi-ethnic villages, they live in separate wards called, 'Tanda' maintaining their distinct cultural identity. Their *tandas*, established outside the main village may be as far as one or two miles away from the main village. Characteristics of nomads still persist with them. Traditionally being nomadic traders, they had settled temporarily in places outside the main village, where they could find plenty of space to keep their cattle and exclusiveness to carry on their activities without any hindrance from outsiders. Even after they left their nomadic style of life and properly settled down, they still continued to raise their settlements outside the main villages.

It is more usual to find that the Banjara settlements lying amidst mango and jack fruit groves as a single unit. They have no well-defined boundaries. At the village outskirts their patron deity *Banjarimata* is installed under a tamarind or a banyan tree.

Generally, each *tanda* consists of 15 to 20 households. There is no definite pattern of arrangement of their houses in a *tanda* - in some places houses arranged in parallel rows facing each other leaving a street in between and in some other places, houses scattered here and there. These are one or two central paths to which the houses face. These paths usually go round in a northerly -southerly direction and are often winding. The lanes are narrow and dirty.

The Banjaras build houses like neighbouring caste Hindus. The shapes of their dwellings are rectangular with a tiny single entrance made with wattle or bamboos within a wooden frame and without windows. These are made of brick walls of about two feet thick plastered with mud, having a tiled or straw thatched roof laid out on bamboo poles and a fairly large courtyard. The inside and outside of the mud walls, the floors and the courtyard are plastered with a mixture of cow-dung and coloured clay. The houses are not of the same height. There are no beams to support the roof structure instead; poles are used to hold on the roof inside the rooms as well as in the verandahs.

Usually, each Banjara house consists of two or three rooms. The bigger room is used for living and sleeping and the smaller, to store grains and other articles. In three roomed houses belonging to well-to-do families, the third room is used as drawing room. There is a spacious back verandah enclosed by mud walls, which serves as kitchens and dining space. Some households put up a middle wall with a door in the verandah to separate the kitchen from the dining area. In their house the kitchen is the sacred place as it is the abode of the ancestral spirits.

The interior of the house is very dark and without ventilation. The floor of the house is kept clean by bedaubing with cow dung once in a month and on festive occasions. The walls are also plastered with cow dung once in a year and also on the occasions of social ceremonies and festivals. The edifice is plastered with red earth. The front yard of the house is swept clean and sprinkled with water mixed with cow dung once in a day and decorated with *rangoli / muggu* (decorative lines drawn with white flour) to give a better look to the house. The walls of the house, both inside and outside, the floor inside the house, the partitions inside the house are painted with *rangoli* which lasts at least for six months. The whole house with all these decorations, gives an ethnic look.

They domesticate animals like bullocks, cows, goats and sheep. Bullocks, buffaloes and cows are kept in a cowshed and goats and sheep, in another shed. Fowls are also domesticated for sacrificing and appeasing the deities.

The back-yard of the house is well fenced to grow vegetables for domestic consumption. One remarkable feature in the construction of these houses is that wood is rarely used because it is not readily available in the forest.

Before constructing the house the Banjaras contact the astrologer to test the auspiciousness of the site. Before entering into the new house the owner offers cooked rice with a chicken in a new pot to the ancestral spirits and entertains kinsmen with a sumptuous feast.

Household Articles:

For their traditional nomadic style of life, they used to possess scanty household items to meet their bare minimum necessities of daily life. Those who have settled down to a sedentary life, more or less, have acquired extra household assets required for the changed style of life. These articles are kept neatly arranged and give a clean look to the outsiders.

Their household items include aluminum pots, pans and utensils, earthen pots, wooden boxes, wooden almirahs, small aluminum trunk, grinding stone, pestle, kerosene lamp, mat, quilt blankets, gunny bags, knife, axe, spade, spear, sickle, rope, *utti* (hanging frame), cots made of bamboo and *sutli* (strings) etc. Beds and cots are used for sleeping. Only well-to-do families keep chairs and tables. They make mat, basket, broom, tray from the grass available in the forest. They also have *lathi*, *bhala*, *bher*, *khanti* and axe which they use as their weapons. On the verandah, the *dhenki* (rice-husker) is fixed for husking and pounding food grains.

ECONOMIC LIFE

Traditionally, the Banjaras were semi-nomadic rural traders who traded salt and other commodities driving pack-bullocks. In course of time, when they permanently settled down in the villages of Kalahandi district, the then Zamindars appointed some of them as revenue collectors granting them rent free lands. Some of them reclaimed forest lands for settlement and cultivation. Some others either continued with their traditional occupation of trading by opening petty shops in the villages or by becoming peddlers. The rest i.e., those who could not pursue their traditional occupation became wage earners. Some of them who were little educated became service holders.

Now the Banjaras are mostly agriculturists. The land in this area is of three types such as wet land, up land and kitchen garden. Paddy is their major crop. Other than paddy, jute is also produced in the wet land. Crops like groundnut, sugarcane, *arhar*, black gram, green gram, horse gram are also raised as cash crops. Seasonal vegetables and tobacco leaf are produced in the kitchen garden for family consumption. Since there are no irrigation facilities in the area, no high yielding varieties of crops are produced.

Animal husbandry is their secondary occupation. They rear livestock which include cow, bullock, buffalo, sheep and goat. Fowls are kept for sacrifice to

the deities on festive occasions. They take milk and milk products. When necessity arises they sell sheep and goats for cash.

Some of them still retain their traditional occupation of selling salt, coconuts, stationary goods etc at the weekly markets and local fairs. Some of them work as agricultural labourers. Both the male and females go for wage earning. When the females are mostly engaged as agricultural labourers, the males, generally opt for road construction and forest works with the contractors.

They are experts in traditional hand embroidery with mirror works. Artwork of Banjaras has a good demand in the market in the various States of India. Articles made of materials like silver, brass, gold, cowries, ivory, animal bone and even plastic, adorn the wardrobes of fashionable urbanites.

They gather fire wood, house building materials, leaves, varieties of mushrooms, edible roots, fruits and tubers from the nearby forest to meet their consumption needs. This is done by both the sexes.

Food & Drinks

The Banjaras are non-vegetarians and eat almost everything. Their staple diet consists of *ragi*, *jowar* (millet) and rice. They also eat pulses like gram, *moong*, *kulthi* and use mustard and groundnut oil as cooking medium. They are considered as experts in making *dal* and *roti*. They prepare a dish called Daliya using many cereals, such as wheat or *jawar*. They generally live on vegetable diet because they cannot always afford to eat meat and fish. From rice they prepare cakes of different varieties. They prepare curry with different vegetables which they produce in their own kitchen garden. They make *biriyani* and *puri* occasionally. They eat various types of fruits such as, jack fruits, guava, plantain, black-berry, tamarind, papaya etc. On festive occasions and social ceremonies, they make elaborate dishes which include sweet dishes.

They relish animal food very much. Traditionally, beef and pork are prohibited. But they eat a large variety of non-veg foods made from meat of sheep, goat, fowl, mouse, hare, deer, rabbits etc. Among birds they eat the meat of pigeon, peacock etc. Insects and red-ants are also eaten by them. They prepare a unique non-vegetarian dish called *saloi*, made from goat blood and other goat parts. If they can afford they would like to eat non-veg every day.

Their everyday dishes are very simple with veg curry, chutney, pickle, *rasam*, buttermilk etc. They are also known for preparing spicy food. Milk is very much utilized for preparing curd and butter. The butter-milk is also drunk by them. Generally, they take tea.

Traditionally, their cooking utensils are earthen pots. They say that the food cooked in earthen pots tastes good. They take their meals in aluminum plates and for drinking they use bell metal or aluminum tumblers. Only, head of the

family eats in brass plate brought by daughter-in-law in marriage. Majority of Banjara families cook their food in *chulas*. In urban areas, they use kerosene stoves.

The drinking of country liquor (*mad*) is common. They take alcohol regularly. Among them, it is customary for both the sexes to take liquor on certain occasions. After a long hard working day, at night they eat, drink and dance exotically. Visiting relatives is rare among them, but whenever they meet it is customary to eat non-veg dishes and drink liquor by both the sexes.

The Banjara drink *chauli* (rice beer) on festive occasions. Chauli is prepared from the cooked rice and is as good as *handia* (rice-beer) prepared by the tribes of north Odisha. This is ritually offered to their ancestor spirits and to other gods and deities and also used as a medicine for curing various ailments. Besides, they drink *mahuli* which is purchased from the liquor shop.

They are inveterate smokers. The indigenous method of smoking is to take some pieces of dried tobacco leaf, wrap them in a *sal* leaf, and smoke it like a cheroot. The manner, in which tobacco is most commonly used, is by chewing dried tobacco with lime.

SOCIAL LIFE

The tribe is divided into several hierarchically graded exogamous clans or septs (*bansas*) namely Rathor, Chouhan, Pamar, Odtia, Turi etc. having their own tutelary deities who are ceremoniously worshiped during the Dasra festival. Again each sept is subdivided into sub-septs or *gotras*. For example, Rathor sept is divided into six sub-septs and this clan claims to be the most superior in the hierarchy because they are completely vegetarians. Moramanai and Tulja Bhavani are the tutelary deities of the clan. Ashwani and Danteswari are the tutelary deities of the Chauhan clan. All these deities belong to their place of origin where from these people have migrated. The boys and girls of the same clan are treated as brothers and sisters and therefore, sex and marriage among them is strictly prohibited.

Family

Generally two types families, such as; nuclear family and extended families are found among the Banjaras. Ordinarily the sons with their wives live with their father, mother and grandparents. The married sons sometimes establish their own separate house.

Family is patrilineal and patripotestal. In the individual family the father or the senior most male members is the head. Property is inherited through the male line and the females are not entitled to get any share. Till marriage the daughter enjoys equal status with the sons but after marriage she cannot claim any right over their paternal property.

The Banjara women enjoy an important status in their society. Though they are debarred from certain religious and administrative functions, their

economic status is very high. It is they who generally go to market, do the bargaining in their sale transactions and they make over the sale proceeds to the male members for the sustenance of the family. They are the repositories of the moral and religious traditions of their society. There is a genuine mutual respect between husband and wife. The husband consults his wife in all important matters. The relation between the parents and children among the Banjaras is also of a sweet affectionate type.

Life Cycle

Birth

The conception and birth of a baby is considered a prestigious event among the Banjaras. Pregnant woman is given special prestige and care. When the labour-pain starts the pregnant woman is confined to a room and an experienced woman of the community acts as midwife. After child birth, umbilical cord is cut by the midwife with a snail by placing a coin beneath it, which is afterwards taken by the mid-wife. The placenta is then buried in a pit at the backward of the house.

After the child birth, the house considered to be polluted. The pollution is over on the seventh day in the case of a male child and on the ninth day in the case of a female child. During this period, the mother and the baby are kept secluded. After the pollution period is over, the mother takes bath and washes her clothes. All the family members are shaved by the barber. The polluted clothes are given to the washer man of the village. The midwife brings the child to the barber to cut a few locks of hair from different parts of the child's head, which are put in a leaf-cup. She then ties the snail with which the umbilical cord was cut using two threads. All the relatives then take bath in the nearby stream. The midwife carries the mother and child to the bathing place. There the midwife throws the locks of child's hair and one of the threads into water. After bathing, they come back home. The midwife brings with her the second thread and the snail. This thread is then smeared with turmeric paste and tied round the waist of the child. The relatives who assembled at the house are entertained in a feast with liquor.

The customary practice of holding the name-giving ceremony for the new born baby on the occasion of Holi festival has changed. Now, it is being held on the 21st day with the help of a Brahman priest. The first male child takes the name of his paternal grandfather, the second one takes the name of his maternal grandfather or the paternal grandfather's brother and for the third, the maternal grandfather's brother and so on. The same procedure is followed for the girl children naming them after their female relatives in the same order. The first hair cutting ceremony of the baby is performed in the month of Chaitra (March-April).

Marriage

The Banjaras are strictly endogamous. Any marriage outside the group is considered incestuous and the offenders are punished with ex-communication. Members of the same *gotra* cannot marry as they are considered brothers and

sisters by a term known as *bhaipana* (brotherhood). Members of different *gotras* may marry, and this is known as *kai-laageni* (not related). A boy may marry in any other clan or *gotra* to which his mother belongs. Marriage within the same clan is possible if there is gap of three generations. Traditionally, the *jaaths* (caste structure) of prospective couples are checked by experts known as *dhadibhaat* who know about the *gotra/jaath* system and could identify proper matches.

Girls and boys are married as adults. The bride may be younger or older, or of equal age with the bridegroom. Pre-sexual laxity before marriage is not tolerated. In case a boy attempts to capture the girl of his choice, he would be liable to severe punishment along with a cash fine. Moreover, he is publicly beaten with shoes for seven times.

Monogamy is the accepted norm of the community but polygamy is allowed in exceptional cases like barrenness, insanity and incompatibility of the wife. Except the junior levirate and the sororate they do not have parallel or cross – cousin marriage as preferential type of marriage. Marriage with one's mother's brother's daughter, wife's younger sister and husband's brother is permitted.

The normal way of acquiring mates is by arrangement through negotiation and mutual consent of the prospective boy and girl which is the rule and is more prevalent in their society. The usual practice is that the girl's father first initiates the marriage proposal. A marriage broker is appointed to negotiate with the groom's side. If the groom is found suitable, the bride is taken to the groom's house to ascertain his family position and economic condition. In the second phase arrangements are made so that the bride and the groom select themselves finally in a fair or in a market place. In the third phase, the matter of giving dowry by the bride's father is decided. Besides the dowry, the customary bride price to be paid by the groom's side to the bride's side is also settled during the process of marriage negotiation. It is paid in cash and kinds.

In the fourth phase, the wedding day is fixed in consultation with the local astrologer. The groom goes to the bride's house for marriage. The bridegroom along with his father, headman of the village, a few relatives and co-villages set out for the bride's house in a procession. At the outskirts of the groom's village a *puja* is offered to the ancestral spirits. The groom puts on a crown on his head, keeps a sword hanging at his waist and catches hold of a spear in his hand. That is the usual marriage attire when the bride-groom goes for marriage. Instead of going on a camel, which was the traditional practice, the bridegroom goes on a horse at present with the accompaniment of beating of drums.

A Brahmin priest officiates in the performance of wedding rituals. An altar constructed for this occasion in the court-yard of the bride's house is beautifully decorated with banana trees, mango twigs and coloured papers. On the altar they place two rice-pounding pestles, around which both the bride and the groom move seven turns. Their wedding rituals resemble those of the Hindu castes. The priest secures the nuptial tie and performs *homa*. He makes a knot by tying up the

ends of clothes of the bride and groom, and they walk round the fire. This solemnizes the wedlock. The occasion is celebrated with a community feast.

On the next day, the bride is brought to the groom's house where both the bride and groom are ceremoniously received. There two small brass vessels are given to the bride in which she cooks food and serve it to all the inmates of the house. By that the bride is formally admitted into the clan of the groom.

Banjara marriages are frequently held in the rains, a season forbidden to other Hindus. This is most convenient to them, as in the dry seasons, they are usually out for their business as peddlers.

Other types of marriage like-marriage by elopement, by capture, by exchange etc are not prevalent in the Banjara society. Widow re-marriage is in vogue. A widow is seldom allowed to go out the family. When her husband dies she is taken either by his elder or younger brother. If the widow prefers another man and runs away to him, the first husband's relatives claim compensation.

Divorce is allowed with the approval of the informal village council. When a woman seeks divorce to marry elsewhere, the first husband is paid compensation by the new husband. If the woman is found guilty then her parents have to refund the bride price paid at the time of marriage. If the husband is found guilty the bride price is not paid back. After divorce, the children if any, are to stay with the mother till they are grown up.

Death Rites

The Banjaras generally cremate their corpse. However, they bury the dead bodies of the unmarried persons and those dying of small-pox and cholera. Before carrying the corpse to the cremation ground, it is bathed and wrapped with a new cloth. The corpse is placed on the pyre with its head towards north. The eldest son, or in his absence any male member of his family first lightens the pyre.

They observe death pollution for twelve days. On the eleventh day, purificatory rites are performed when the entire house is besmeared with cow-dung and the old earthen-pots are thrown away. The Hindu barber shaves the male members. The washerman too, washes the polluted clothes. The members of the bereaved family take purificatory bath in the stream. The head of the family cooks rice added with the fowl's meat in a new earthen-pot and offers a little of it to the departed soul at the cremation ground. The Brahmin priest performs the mortuary rites and offers *pinda* (cooked rice) to the departed soul and ancestral spirits. No animals are sacrificed on this occasion. A grand feast is arranged to entertain the relatives and the villagers.

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

The Banjaras are animists and polytheists. Their religious beliefs and practices, like those of others tribes, center round the propitiation of gods, goddesses, tutelary deities, spirits, names and natural objects. They believe in the

existence of a number of Gods and Goddesses. They rever "Banjari Devi" as their supreme deity, represented by a heap of stone under a shady grove lying at the village outskirts. Other tutelary deities are - Menma Mai, Tulja Devi, Kamkali Mata, Ashawani, Danteswari, Wagjai etc. Each clan has its tutelary deity, for example, Kamkalimata is the deity of Pamar clan, Merama Mai and Tulja Bhabani are deities of Rathor clan etc. Other than this, they also believe in Hindu gods and goddess. They visit the Mahadev temple in the village and perform Laxmipuja with all purity and devotion.

The Banjara still worship their pack-cattle. When sickness occurs they lead the sick man to the feet of the bullock called Hatadiya. They believe in the existence of ancestral spirits and worship them on important festivals to get their help against danger and distress. The head of each family acts as the priest while worshipping the ancestral spirits.

They perform certain rites and ceremonies round the year to appease the supernatural forces by offering sacrifices in order to achieve peace and progress for the individual as well as for the entire community. Animals such as, goat, lamb and fowl are mainly sacrificed to appease the deities. Sweetmeats and *chauli* (rice beer) are considered as ritualistic food. Bunning of incense powder, joss-sticks and flowers are very common features in any form of ritual. The Banjaras also quite often make votive offerings to various goddesses for fulfillment of desires. Vow is taken by the sufferer to sacrifice animal before the concerned deity or spirit. But the nature of sacrifice differs according to gravity of suffering.

They observe religious rites and festivals connected with economic pursuits and important occasions. All these occasions are celebrated with communal dancing and singing. They have devised their own festival calendars of Hindu origin. In the month of March they observe Fagu or Holi festival when all the crops are harvested. It is a thanks-giving ceremony to Banjaradevi for giving them different crops. She is ceremoniously worshipped by the entire community with the sacrifice of five goats.

Sitala *puja* is observed in the month of Asadh (June - July). On this occasion, a pit is dug on the front yard of the village. The womenfolk after taking purificatory bath assemble there with a pitcher full of water each and different cereals mixed together in a leaf-cup. Each one of them pours water in the pit. The senior most member of the community acts as priest and offers different cereals in a leaf-cup as ritualistic food to Sitala Mata and her seven sisters. Three fowls are sacrificed to appease the deities. After the ritual the cereals are eaten for the first time as ritualistic food. This is called Nabarna ceremony. With the three ritualistic fowls, other fowls are also sacrificed and added to it and eaten ceremoniously by all the members of the community. The women devotees move round the pit with their hands interlaced throughout the night and sing songs. The males remain busy for the whole night in playing with sticks among themselves.

Sibabhaiya and Meraban are considered very dreaded deities and are worshiped ceremoniously in the "Tij" festival which commences on the first day following the full moon day in the month of Shravana (July - August). The worship is conducted by a bachelor of the Rathor clan to ensure heavy rainfall for bumper crops. Two lambs and one goat are sacrificed on this occasion. It continues for nine days during which, the all the community members cook and eat together and spend nights dancing and singing.

On Dasahara festival in the month of October, Banjara Devi - the supreme deity is worshiped. On this occasion the sword, representing their warrior status is worshiped before Banjara Devi with of pomp and ceremony to ensure good health both for the people and animals. The vow takers sacrifice animals on this occasion.

On the day of Deepawali in the month of Margashira (October - November), Girigobardhan Puja is organized in the Hindus fashion for keeping their cattle epidemic-free.

The Banjaras are terribly afraid of witchcraft. There are two classes of magicians called Bhagats - Nimbu-katna, the white magician and Janta, the black magician. The role of the white magician is very important as he cures persons suffering from various diseases and attack of malevolent spirits using herbal medicines, prayers and incantations. As against this the black magician takes complete help of his guardian- spirit and practises contagious magic. He collects hair or nails etc. of the victim with which he applies magic and torture the victims.

Music & Dance

The Banjaras perform a special kind of folk dance popularly known as *lambadi* which involves participation of their women who bedeck themselves in colorful costumes and jewelry. Female dancers dance to the tune played by the male drummers to pay homage to their deities. Another popular form of folk-dance is *dandakhelna*. They play musical instruments like *dholak*, *dhapra*, *chikara* etc.

SOCIAL CONTROL

The Banjara Tanda is composed of families related to each other by kinship tie. Each family acts in conformity with the accepted mode. The mode though authoritative is guarded by custom. Authorities are exercised at the family level, clan level and village level. The leaders of the village shoulder all responsibilities, participate in all social activities and affectively influence the life of their fellowmen. In this process this becomes an institution and office turns hereditary. The traditional leadership is based on hereditary status and position.

The Tanda is a socio-political unit having its own set of traditional leaders. They have a say in the village affairs. The Naik is the formal head of the Tanda council. All important matters are brought to his notice for opinion and intervention. His post is hereditary. No ceremony or function is held for his

selection. He does not receive any honorarium for his services but he gets a major share of the meat of sacrificial animals during communal worships.

The Karvanri is the village messenger. He holds a very key position in the leadership organization of the Banjara community. He summons people to the village meetings and acts as the custodian of cash and kind collected for all festivals and fines collected from the offenders.

The Bhagat is the sacerdotal leader in each Banjara *tanda*. He is equally respected by the community members.

In the event of any dispute in the *tanda*, these leaders decide the cases. The members of the community still consider these leaders very important in their customary affairs. Hence, they pay more allegiance to their traditional leadership than the modern leadership imposed by the statutory *panchayati raj*.

DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS AND EFFECTS

Changes have occurred in Banjara culture during last few decades. Some of them are the result of education and influence of external environment. Besides, Banjaras have picked up many new cultural elements from the neighboring castes and tribes in course of their long contact with them. Few of them follow Hindu social and religious traditions and try to live like caste Hindus.

Government has launched development programmes for the tribal people by which the Banjaras are also benefitted. Development interventions made through programmes of education, agriculture, communication, drinking water, housing, health, nutrition and sanitation, income generation, skill up gradation, SHGs, social security etc. have a positive impact on their socio-economic life. Awareness has been created among them under the environment of planned change and modernization. Noticeable changes have occurred in their way of life. They have 'more or less' settled down giving up their nomadic style of life.

The ST and SC Development Department, Government of Odisha under the aegis of Ministry of Tribal Affairs has established a Tribal Museum in the premises of SC and ST Research and Training Institute, CRPF Square, Bhubaneswar for preservation of material culture of different tribes. Few ornaments, personal belongings, traditional implements, and musical instruments and selected photographs of Banjara tribe have been preserved in this museum. Besides, SCSTRTI had made a documentary film on the socio-cultural life of the Banjara of Odisha.

SOCIO- ECONOMIC LIFE OF THE BANJARAS / BANJARIS *

S. C. Mohanty ¹

(The salient findings of an empirical ethnographic study undertaken during 1986 on the Banjaras covering 05 villages in 04 blocks of undivided Kalahandi district)

The tribe has synonyms like Vanjari, Labana, Labhana and Mukeai. The major concentration of the tribe lies in Lanjigarh, Dharamgarh, Jay Patna and Nuapara Tahasils of undivided Kalahandi district.

Russell and Hiralal (1916) described the tribe as having migrated from Rajputana and its surrounding places. Formerly they were migratory in their habit and sold commodities in various places moving in a large group and carrying the goods on their bullock-carts. It is reported from history that the Banjaras were employed by the Hindu as well as Muslim kings to carry necessities for the soldiers to the war front. It appears that the tribe in course of time migrated to different places of Orissa through Central Province and Bihar.

In the study villages the Banjaras are said to have been migrated from Rajasthan where from they came to Madhya Pradesh and finally settled in Orissa. Traditionally they are a tribe of goods carriers and drivers of pack-bullocks.

In the study villages inhabited by various communities, they live in separate wards called Tanda maintaining their cultural identity. At the village outskirts their patron deity Banjara Mata is installed under a tamarind or a banyan tree. Their individual houses made of thick mud plastered brick walls and roofs thatched with country made tiles and having large courtyards and backyard kitchen gardens lie in a scattered manner.

* Unpublished empirical study report of SCSTRTI, (1986-88)

¹ Report edited in 2014 by S. C. Mohanty. OSD, SCSTRTI

In their house the kitchen is the sacred place as it is the abode the ancestral spirits. They domesticate animals like bullocks, cows, goats and sheep. Bullocks and cows are kept in a cowshed and goats and sheep, in another shed. Fowls are also domesticated for sacrificing and appeasing the deities.

The regular dress of the adult males is loin cloth which hangs from the waist to the knee joint. On special occasions, they put on *fatei* (the traditional shirt) and a turban as head dress. The women wear *saris*. They also use petty-coats above which one end of the sari is wrapped through shoulder and inserted to the right waist and wear a variety of ornaments.

They are non-vegetarians and rice is their staple food. They do not eat beef and pork. Insects and red-ants are also eaten by them. Milk is very much utilized for preparing curd and for churning butter. The butter milk is also drunk by them.

They drink rice beer called *chauli* on festive occasions and ritually offer it to their ancestor spirits, gods and deities. It is also used as a medicine for treating various ailments. They also drink *mahuli* purchased from the liquor shop. They smoke hand rolled cigars and chew tobacco.

The tribe is divided into several exogamous hierarchically graded clans called Bansa like Rathor, Chouhan, Pamar, Odtia, Turi etc. having their respective tutelary deities who are ceremoniously worshiped during the Dasahara festival.

They prefer adult marriage, monogamy and arranged marriages. Marriage rites are conducted in the bride's place and the bride's father gives dowry. Their society permits widow re-marriage.

The Banjaras bury the dead bodies of the unmarried persons and those dying of small-pox and cholera but cremate the others. Mourning is observed for twelve days and purificatory rites are performed on the 11th and 12th day.

Traditionally, the Banjaras were semi-nomadic rural traders who traded salt and other commodities driving pack-bullocks. In course of time, when they permanently settled down in the villages of Kalahandi district, the then Zamindars appointed some of them as revenue collectors granting them rent free lands. Some of them reclaimed forest lands for settlement and cultivation. Some others either continued with their traditional occupation of trading by opening petty shops in the villages or by becoming peddlers. The rest i.e., those who could not pursue their traditional occupation became wage earners. Some of them who were little educated became service holders.

The Banjaras are animists and polytheists. They perform various rites and rituals to appease the supernatural forces for the wellbeing of the individual as well as the entire community. "Banjari Devi" is their supreme deity, who is represented by a heap of stones under a shady grove in the village outskirts. Other

tutelary deities are – Menma Mai, Tulja Devi, Ashawani, Danteswari, Wagjai etc. Each clan has its tutelary deity, for example, Kamkali Mata is the deity of Pamarclan, Merama Mai and Tulja Bhabani are deities of Rathor clan. They still worship their pack-cattle.

They have no religious functionaries. The oldest man of the family or the clan group presides over rituals as the priest. They invoke divine powers through rituals, invocations, offerings and animal sacrifices to solicit their blessings.

The Banjaras observe Fagu or Holi festival in the month of March when all the crops are harvested during which they worship Banjara Devi with the sacrifice of five goats. Sitala Puja is observed in the month of Asadha (June & July) during which three fowls are sacrificed to appease the deities and after the ritual the new cereals are eaten for the first time. This is also called Nabarna ceremony. The Dasahara festival is observed in the month of October in which Banjara Devi is worshiped. On this occasion the sword, representing this warrior community is worshiped before Banjara Devi with much of pomp and ceremony. They observe Diwali in the month of Margashira (October-November). Girigobardhana Puja is organized for keeping their cattle epidemic free.

Each Tanda of the Banjara is a political unit having its own set of traditional leaders. Naik is the secular head of the Tanda council. His post is hereditary. All important matters are brought to his notice for opinion and intervention. Karvanri is the village messenger who holds a key position in the Tanda organization. Besides summoning people to the village meetings, he maintains the account of the cash and kinds collected for all festivals and fines collected from the offenders. Bhagat is the sacerdotal leader respected by the community members.

The Banjaras though Hinduised to a considerable extent, are not yet accepted among the higher castes. Though the Brahmin priest serves them for conducting their birth, weeding and death rites, he does not accept cooked food from the latter. In all social functions at the village level, the Banjaras keep their identity by cooking and eating separately. Physically, they are not treated as untouchables and are allowed free access to common water sources, temples etc.

BATHUDI*

*Bhagirathi Chowdhury*¹

The Bathudis are mostly found in the districts of Mayurbhanj and Keonjhar. They are said to be a branch of Bhuiya tribe. According to Russell the 'Bathurias' form an inferior sub-section of the 'Bhuiyas, and are looked down upon because of having taken food from other low Caste. According to the local traditions quoted in the Census Report of Mayurbhanj State, 1931, the Bathudis claim Ayodhya or Oudh as their original home but they are not able to substantiate this claim. The district-wise distribution of the tribe is noted below.

Name of the District	Population		
	Total	Male	Female
Keonjhar	37,465	19,092	18,373
Mayurbhanj	59,377	29,208	30,169
Balasore	7,076	3,419	3,657
Sundergarh	75	75	..
Koraput	5	4	1
Total	103,998	51,798	52,200

The Bathudis speak Oriya as their mother-tongue. In Mayurbhanj and Keonjhar they live in the midst of caste Hindus, Sounti, Plain Bhuyans, Gonds and Kharias. There are some exclusive Bathudi villages in the adjoining areas of Mayurbhanj and Keonjhar districts. Where ever they live in a Hindu village, they establish separate wards.

Settlement and Houses

In a Bathudi ward or village, the spacious houses with high verandahs at the front and back are built. Most of the families possess more than one living

* Published in ADIBASI, Vol. V, No.3, (Special Issue), TRB, 1963-64, pp.137-38

¹ Research Assistant, Tribal Research Bureau (TRB), Bhubaneswar

room, built around a rectangular courtyard. Sometimes, brothers build their houses facing to a common courtyard. Houses are built either in a linear or in a scattered fashion. Most of them own *kachha* houses with mud walls and straw thatched or local tile thatched roof. Sometimes walls are made of wooden plans planted upright and plastered with mud. Although four-sloped roof is the general pattern, two-sloped roofs are not totally absent. It is not common to find windows or more than one door in a Bathudi house. Cow-sheds are built close to the living house. Behind the houses are the kitchen garden protected either by mud walls or fences.

As regards household articles, they make a poor show. They use wooden framed cots woven with thin ropes and mats made of wild date-palm leaves for sleeping purposes. Wooden furniture is very rarely-found. They use earthenware of aluminium vessels for cooking and storing water. Pots and plates of bell-metal and aluminum are used in taking meals. All these articles are purchased from the local market.

Dress and Ornaments

Old men wear small dhoti or a napkin, while well-to-do Bathudi boys wear long dhoti, shirt, shorts and even shoes. Aged women wear a saree which reaches up to the knee. Young girls wear blouse and inner petticoat. While working they always use small cloths. A very limited number of ornaments are used by women. They wear glass or metal bangles round the wrist, rings for the fingers, toes, nose and ear, necklaces and chains for the neck, anklet for legs, clips and flower designs for the head hair. Most of these ornaments are purchased from the local market. Wealthier sections of the tribe possess gold and silver ornaments. Some boys are seen wearing rings in the ear and a thread or a chain in the neck.

The most important weapons possessed by the Bathudis are bows and arrows, swords, axes and knives. The Bathudi cultivators have got the same bullock-driven ploughs and other agricultural implements used by the neighbouring castes and tribes. Baskets, pots, weapons, utensils and iron agricultural implements are purchased from the different castes who manufacture them for sell.

Internal Divisions

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

relation to the Zamindars". But my investigation reveals that these sub-divisions called Khili are exogamous, and marriage within the group is tabooed.

The headman of the village is called Badnaik while the head of several villages are known as Desapadhan in Mayurbhanj and Mahanaik in Keonjhar. He is assisted by Paramanik. But their caste, organization has become functionless since eight to ten years.

Birth Rites

They observe birth population for nine days. On this day the houses are washed and the washer-man is required to clean all the used clothes of the family concerned. The baby's head is shaved along with other male members of the family. Festive meals in new earthenware vessels are prepared. The friends and relatives are invited to a feast, if the family concerned can afford.

On the twenty-first day known as Ekusia the name-giving ceremony takes place. A pot filled up with water is brought. Two pieces of thread crossing each other at right angles are placed, at the brim of the pot. Through a quadrangle a *Khasa* (a kind of oil-seed) is first dropped. Then rice grain is dropped one after another by uttering different names. Dropping of rice grain continues till one of the grains and the *Khasa* meet each other. The name at which this particular rice grain was dropped is given to the baby.

Before marriage, both boys and girls should have received Karna Mantras from the Vaishnav Guru. Unless one undergoes this ceremony, he or she cannot marry.

Marriage

Marriage among the Bathudi is a costly affair considering their economic condition. They practice adult marriage, though infant marriage is not unknown. Proposal for marriage generally comes from the boy's side. Before proceeding for any negotiation the boy's parents consult an astrologer to know about the success of the marriage. When he declares in its favour, two persons are employed as *dandia* (go between) for negotiation. They pay several visits to the bride's house and fix the bride price which consists of Rs. 30.00 to Rs. 100/- in cash, rice about two mounds, paddy about one to two mounds and several pieces of cloths for the bride's parents, grandfather, grandmother and brothers. It is paid one or two months before the marriage. In Keonjhar the wedding rites are generally held in the groom's house and occasionally at bride's house. But in Mayurbhanj now most of the grooms go to marry in the bride's village. The party which accompanies the bride to her husband's house comprises of both males and females in large number. Drum-beaters belonging to Dom or Ghasi caste also join with them. The marriage rites are performed by a Brahmin priest according to Vedic traditions. Two to five days after the marriage the bride cooks food, and the couple offers the

food to the ancestors. After this ceremony honey-moon takes place. After a week or so the couple pays a visit to the girl's parents with presentations.

In the past every marriage was celebrated with dancing and feasting for several days. But now they have given up dance and guest are entertained with one meal only.

Previously there were marriage by capture and also marriage by service. But now these are rarely practiced. Widow remarriage is allowed. Divorce with the approval of the village council is prevalent.

Death Rites

They practice both cremation and burial. Families, who can arrange wood, can cremate the deceased. Only cases of death by cholera or smallpox and corpse of the child are usually buried. The corpse before burial or cremation is anointed with oil and turmeric. New cloth and some paddy grains are given with the deceased. After burial or cremation, the lineage (Kutumba) members take bath; all the cooking earthenware pots are removed from the house of the deceased. After returning from bath, they take bitter rice (Pita Bhat).

The death pollution continues for seven to nine days when the final purification rites take place. On this day, all the male members of the deceased family get their hairs cut, all the used clothes of the family are washed by the washer man, and houses are cleaned. They take uncooked food on this day. During the period of pollution they abstain from eating fish and flesh.

Next day, a Brahmin is invited to officiate in the *śradha* in which food is offered to the deceased. In the evening, shade is brought to the house where rice-flour is spread on which cooked food is kept. After the shade is conducted to the house they examine the rice-flour. If any impression is seen on the rice-flour they think that shade has come. The persons, who go to call the shade, now eat the cakes made from this rice-flour. Next-day, a feast is arranged for the kinsmen and friends who come with presentations.

Thus the Bathudis enjoy the service of Hindu Brahmin, barber, and washer-man. They are treated as clean caste. Brahmin accepts water from them.

Religion

The religious beliefs and practices of the Bathudis are same as found among the neighbouring castes. They along with caste Hindus observe Raja parba, Gamha Purnima, Makar Sankranti, Dasara, Kali Puja etc. Their village deities are worshipped by the village priest on the occasion of eating of new rice and making and while transplanting and re-ploughing the paddy seedlings. They have not yet completely lost the belief in the working of magic and witchcraft.

Occupation

The main occupation of the Bathudis is settled agriculture. Amount of land owned by most of the families is not sufficient to meet all requirements. There are also landless Bathudis who solely depend on wage-earning or petty-business. Thus most of them work as part-time labourer and do petty-business of buying rice at a cheaper rate from one locality and selling at a higher rate in another locality. They grow paddy and few varieties of cash crops such as pulses, sugar-potato, groundnuts, etc. Hunting and fishing are no more practiced as gainful economic pursuits.

Food

Rice which is taken throughout the whole year is their staple food. Some green leaves or vegetable constitute a side-items. They prepare cakes from rice-flour. They are fond of non-vegetarian dish but they are handicapped by the non-availability of scope for hunting and also by their low income. They take clean food and abstain from eating beef, pork but take termite, red-ants. Fowls are sacrificed at the time of religious ceremonies and eaten. Previously they were not accepting food from the Brahmins. Alcoholic drinks such as *mohua* liquor and rice-beer are generally avoided.

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

BATHUDI*

*S. C. Mohanty*¹

Bathudi is one of the Hinduised tribes of Odisha. They have synonyms like Batudi, Bahutuli, Bathuhuli etc.

They are concentrated in northwestern parts of Odisha, particularly in the districts of Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar and Nilagiri Subdivision of Balasore. As per 2011 census their population is 2 17 395(1 06 515 males and 1 10 880 females) and sex ratio is 1041. Their total literacy rate is 63.71%. It is 75.74 percent for males and 52.27 percent for females. They have no other separate tribal dialect and have adopted Odia as their mother tongue.

Bathudi settlements are generally uniclans and homogenous. In multi-ethnic villages they live in separate hamlets.

Bathudis are settled cultivators and wage earners. They cultivate rice and different cash crops like pulses, sugarcane and oil seeds. Bathudi women supplement the family income by preparing flattened and fried rice and making *sal* or *siali* cups and plates and selling these in the local markets. They collect seasonal forest produce and engage in household industry like *sabai* grass rope making. In Balasore district some of them collect gold dust from the Suvarnarekha. Rice is their principal food and they are generally not addicted to country liquor or rice beer.

The community is divided into several exogamous septs (*Gotra or Khili*), viz. *Saluka* (wood husking) *Kusmardia* (wild grass), *Nag* (serpent), *Thariyar* (a wild fruit), *Panipuk* (water insect), *Sankhiyar* (conch), *Dhanphul* (paddy flower) and

* Unpublished article of 2000 updated in 2018

¹ Research Officer, SCSTRTI

Parasar, Sailya, Kashyap, Bharadwaja, etc. somewhat resembling those of the Hindu castes.

The Bathudi family is nuclear, patrilocal and patrilineal. Marriages are monogamous though there are few cases of polygyny in their society. Marriage through negotiation is commonly practised and bride price both in cash and kind including paddy, rice and clothes is given to the brides' parents before marriage. Before the marriage, a Hindu Baishnab administers the rites of *Karna Mantra* to the bride and the groom. The marriage ritual is conducted at the bride's place following *Vedic* rites. The Brahman priest performs the rites. Musicians belonging to Domb or Ghasi community play music on this occasion. The family hosts a feast to kinsmen, villagers and guests. Other modes of acquiring mates such as by service and by capture have become rare these days. Marriage of widows, widowers, divorcees, junior levirate and sororate are permissible, but cross cousin marriage is tabooed.

Birth pollution is observed for nine days, during which the mother of the child is prohibited to enter into kitchen and touch the cooking pots and utensils. Name giving is observed on the twenty-first day. The Bathudi practise both cremation and burial for the dead. The death pollution continues for ten days. On the tenth day the purificatory rites conducted by a Brahman priest are observed. Service castes like Barber and Washer man render their services on this occasion. They also celebrate annual *Sradharites* utilizing the services a Brahman priest.

The Bathudi have their own community council (*Jati Samaj*) headed by a hereditary Chief called *Desh Pradhan* in Mayurbhanj, and *Mahanaik* in Keonjhar to deal with their community matters. At the village level, *Pradhan* the secular Chief and his associates, *Desh Chatia*, *Dakua* and *Chowkia* manage the communal affairs.

Bathudis observe local Hindu festivals and worship Hindu deities along with other tribal deities including the deities of *Sarna* - the sacred grove. Their important festivals are *Raja*, *Makar Sankranti*, *Nuakhia*, *Dussehra*, *GamhaPurnima*, etc. Their traditional priest *Dehury* remains in charge of attending to their village deities.

Bathudis have given up their traditional dance and music, language and tattooing etc. However, they have retained their famous *Chhau* dance (*Akhada*) - a gymnastic and fighting exercise as part of the tradition of a warrior tribe.

BATHUDI*

*B. Chowdhury*¹

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

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

In the Census of India, Vol.XIII, Orissa Part V-8, it is mentioned that the forefathers of the Bathudis migrated from Bakua in the Similipal hills. Some of the Bathudis said that originally the Zamindars of the Bathudi tribe reigned in the Similipal ranges. However, they defeated the great chief of Jashipur, one Dasu Kharia of the Kharia tribe. It is popularly believed that the head of the vanquished Kharia still exists in solidified form at the top of the Batuli Fort in the Similipal hills. The informants also recounted a tradition that, in order to reign supreme in

* Published in Tribes of Orissa (revised edition), 2004, pp. 59-62

¹ Deputy Director, SCSTRTI

the area, the Bathudis had a bitter fight with the Gonds at Tentaposhi in Bamanghati sub-division and defeated them. One of their ancestors named Birabara came across two stone slabs floating in the river Khairi. He attempted to seize them with his hands, but the one in his left hand eluded his grasp and sank. The other one he picked up, and it was installed later in the Raghunathjee Math, which continues to maintain its supremacy over other Maths in the area. The Maths at Karanjia and Jashipur were reported to be later offshoots of it.

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

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

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

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

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

Old men wear a small dhoti or a napkin, while well-to-do Bathudi boys wear a long dhoti, shirt, shorts and even shoes. Elderly women wear saris which

reach up to the knee. Young girls wear a blouse and under-petticoats. Women wear a few ornaments, glass or metal bangles around the wrist, rings for the fingers, toes, nose and ear, necklaces and chains for the neck and anklets. Clips and flower designs for the hair are made of cheap metal and alloys. Gold and silver ornaments are worn by well-to-do Bathudis.

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

The tribe is divided into several gotras, viz. (1) Parasara, (2) Nageswara, (3) Sailya, (4) Ganeshwara, (5) Kashyapa, (6) Dhanaphula, (7) Bharadwaja, etc. some of which are common among the neighbouring Hindu castes or tribes. As noted in the Census Report for Mayurbhanj State, 1913, the tribe is divided into more than fifty-six different sections, which are derived from as many titles, which they bear respectively with their names. Most of these titles appear to relate to the particular military or domestic service rendered by the ancestors of the section bearing that title in their relationship with the Zamindars. But investigations in the Jashipur area of Mayurbhanj District revealed the above-mentioned sub-divisions, which are called *khili* and are exogamous, marriage within them being tabooed. The headman of the village is called the Badanaik, while the head of several villages is known as the Desa Pradhan in Mayurbhanj and the Mahanaik in Keonjhar. He is assisted by a Paramanik.

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

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

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

Marriage among the Bathudi is a costly affair when compared to their economic condition. Marriage is chiefly adult, though infant marriage is not

unknown. The proposal for marriage generally comes from the boy's side. Before any negotiation is started, the boy's parents consult an astrologer to know whether the marriage would be successful. When he declares in its favour, two people are employed as Dandia (go-betweens) in the negotiations. Both parties exchange visits to see the prospective partners, and to fix the amount of brideprice and a date for the marriage. The brideprice consists of Rs. 30.00 to Rs. 100.00 in cash, about 75 kgs. of rice, about 30 to 60 kgs. of paddy, and several pieces of cloth for the bride's parents, grandfather, grandmother and brothers. The groom goes to marry in the bride's village. One or two months before the marriage, the brideprice is paid to the bride's parents. The party which accompanies the bride to her husband's house includes both males and females in large numbers. Drummers belonging to the Dom or Ghasi castes also join with them on request. The marriage rites are performed according to Vedic rites by a Brahman of high status. Two to five days after the marriage the bride cooks food, which the couple offers to the dead ancestors. After a week or so the couple pays a visit to the girl's parents with presents. The special marriage cake of enormous size prepared with a *maund* of rice flour is no longer served at present.

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

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

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

Next day, a Brahman is invited to conduct the *sradhha* rite in which food is offered to the deceased. In the evening, to bring back the shade of the deceased to the house, they lay out cooked food spread over with rice flour and then examine the rice flour to find signs of presence of the shade. Those who went to call the shade now eat the cakes made from this rice flour. Next day, a feast is arranged for kin and friends. Thus the Bathudis avail the services of a Brahman priest, a barber and a washerman for their purificatory rites and are treated as a clean group.

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

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

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

At present, they have the status of a clean caste in the local caste hierarchy.

BATHUDI*

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IDENTITY

There are 62 Scheduled Tribe communities residing in the different district of Odisha. Among them Bathudi is a major tribe. They are one of the highly Hinduised tribes of Odisha. They generally inhabit the districts of Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar and Balesore in the State.

They are also known as Bathdi, Bahutuli and Bathuhuli. They claim themselves as one of the original settlers of Bhanjabhumi that consists of the present Mayurbhanj and Keonjhar districts in Odisha and partly Singhbhum district in Jharkhand. According to Raghavaiah (1972), they are born from the arm (*bahu*) of Lord Brahma - the Creator. Risley (1981) describes the Bathudi as a small aboriginal tribe of uncertain origin found in the tributary State of Odisha. Some Bathudis say that they have migrated from Bakua in the Similipal hills. They strongly believe that the zamindars of the tribe originally reigned in the Similipal range and gradually they established their citadel (*garh*) in Jashipur area.

Physical Traits

By their physical traits, the Bathudis have short to medium stature with dolichocephalic head, moderately broad face and a medium nose. According to Chatterjee (1929), physically, Bathudis are long headed, of medium stature, of stout build, have deep brown (body) colour or light brown, medium nose slightly depressed at the root, stiff hair and brown eyes.

* Published in the Photo Handbook on Bathudi, SCSTRTI, 2019

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Population and Concentration

As per 2011 Census, the population of Bathudi in Odisha is 2, 17, 395 accounting for 2.26 per cent of the total Scheduled Tribe population of the State. District wise distribution of their population shows that Mayurbhanj district has the highest concentration of 1, 18,939 Bathudis followed by Kendujhar (78,964) and Baleshwar (16,502). The overall sex ratio of their population in Odisha is 1041 females per 1000 males. Their population has registered a growth rate of 10.44 per cent during the decade (2001-2011). As compared to other States, the tribe has its largest concentration in Odisha.

Literacy

The literacy rate of the Bathudi as per 1961 census was very low i.e., 8.29 percent of which males 13.63% and females 3.01% indicating that they had not given much importance to education and more particularly to female education. It rose up marginally to 13.30 percent in 1971 (males 23.91%, females 2.45%), up to 20.80 percent in 1981 (males 35.50%, females 6.29%), jumped up to 33.38 percent in 1991 (males 51.10%, females 15.80%), substantially went up to 49.57 percent in 2001 (males 66.25%, females 33.03%) and in 2011 it has reached 63.71 per cent (75.74 percent for males and 52.27 per cent for females). It indicates that the people both male and female have shown interest to educate themselves as evident from the pattern of growth in their literacy rates over successive censuses.

Dress and Ornaments

The traditional dress pattern of Bathudi is plain and simple. The old men wear small *dhoti* or a napkin and aged women wear a *saree* which reaches up to the knee. These are purchased from local weavers or from local markets. The young boys wear long *dhoti*, shirt, shorts and even shoes and young girls wear the blouse and petticoat. Little children below seven years of age go naked.

When men and women are working they always wear small clothes. Now-a-days, due to external contact, modern dresses like shirts, banyans, pants for males and blouses, coloured *sarees*, ribbons, etc for females are being used. Women love to adorn themselves with varieties of ornaments for beautification. The Bathudi women wear glass or metal bangles around the wrist, rings in the fingers, toes rings (*Jhuntia*), studs on nose and ears, necklaces and chains around neck, anklets on legs, clips and flower designs in the head. Those ornaments are made of copper or brass and they purchase all the ornaments from the local markets or weekly hats. The well-to-do Bathudi women wear gold ornaments.

SETTLEMENT AND HOUSING

The Bathudi settlements are mostly uni-clan and homogenous. Multi-clan settlements are also found. In multi-ethnic villages they live in separate wards maintaining their cultural identity. Their houses are organized in two rows leaving a village street in between.

Usually, individual houses have two rooms and are generally made of mud walls supported by wooden poles, bamboo frames and country tiles etc. having rectangular gabled roofs. Most of their houses are thatched with paddy straw. They do not construct windows in any room for ventilation. They build high verandahs enclosed by mud walls in front and rear side of the house. Each house has two doors out of which one door opens to the courtyard and the other to the back yard. The bigger room is partitioned with a wall of which the bigger one is used as living room and the smaller one as kitchen. They construct a shelf with wooden planks supported by mud wall to store their household utensils and agricultural products in one side of their living room. The walls are polished by their women by using white or red soils mixed with lime. Now a days, some well-to-do families build multi-roomed houses consisting of living room, store, dining, kitchen and cowshed, etc.

They build separate sheds for cattle, poultry and goats in the rear side of their house. They also raise kitchen gardens in back side of their houses for producing different kinds of green vegetables for their household consumption.

Household articles

The Bathudis possess few household articles. They use wooden framed cots and mats made of wild date-palm leaves for sleeping purpose. They rarely use wooden furniture. Most of the Bathudis use earthen pots for storing drinking water and aluminum vessels for cooking. The aluminum plates are used for taking meals. They use handmade bamboo baskets for storing their grains. They also have few agricultural implements, hunting weapons and fishing nets etc.

SOCIAL LIFE

The Bathudi is an endogamous community and is divided into several totemistic exogamous septs (Gotra or Khili), viz. *Saluka* (wood husking), *Panipuk* (a water insect), *Nag* (serpent), *Kusmardia* (wild grass), *Dhanphul* (paddy flower), *Thariyar* (a wild fruit), *Sankhiyar* (conch), and *Parasar*, *Kashyap*, *Bharadwaja* (a Rishi), *Shalya* (Army General), etc. resembling those of the Hindu castes. They do not dishonor their clan totems and do not kill or harm them. They use surname similar to those of Hindu castes such as Nayak, Giri, Bishal, Rout, Khawli, Bansori, Patra, Mundiyyar, Khandai, Sangia, etc. that relates to the particular military or domestic service rendered by the ancestors to the then Zamindars.

In Bathudi community family is the smallest and an important social unit and it is predominantly monogamous, nuclear, patrilocal and patrilineal in nature. They mostly prefer to live in nuclear family. Joint and polygynous families are rarely found.

Inheritance of paternal property follows the rule of equigeniture in male line only and in the family having no male successor the married daughters inherit the ancestral property. Issueless families can also adopt a male child from

the nearest patri-lineage who latter on inherits the family's property. The eldest son succeeds to father's social position.

LIFE CYCLE

Pregnancy and Child birth

The pregnancy of a married woman is a joyous event in the Bathudi family. They observe pre-delivery ritual (*sad bhaskhan*) in the 9th month of pregnancy. The woman's parent's family presents sweet meats for their pregnant daughter followed by the lineage members and relatives.

They engage an experienced woman of their own community as *dhai* to assist for easy and safe delivery of the child. They use a corner of their living room as the lying-in-chamber. Except women, male members are not allowed to enter into the chamber.

The birth pollution lasts for nine days. During this period the mother is restricted to enter into the kitchen and cook food or touch the cooking pots and utensils. On the 10th day after the pollution period is over they clean the house with water mixed with mud and cow dung. The mother takes the purificatory bath in the nearby pond or hill stream anointing her body with turmeric paste and mustard oil. Then she resumes her routine household chores. The family members also take purificatory bath. The barber pairs the nails of the mother and cuts hairs of the father. The washer man cleans the clothes of the family members. In the evening the family hosts a feast to the lineage members and the new born baby is presented to them for their blessings and prayer for his/her bright future. They observe the tonsure ceremony (*Ekosia*) on the 21st day and on that day the new born baby is given a name by rice divination method.

Puberty:

The do not observe puberty rite for their pubescent girls on attainment of their first menarche.

Marriage

Bathudi is exclusively an endogamous community which is divided into several exogamous clans. Marriage within the same clan is strictly prohibited in their society as clan members consider themselves as brothers and sisters for they consider themselves to be the descendants from a common ancestor. In their society monogamy and adult marriage is the rule. Usually a boy gets married at the age of 18-24, and the girl, at the age of 15-18 years. The child marriage is strictly prohibited in their community. In their society it is obligatory for both boys and girls to receive *Karna Mantra* from the Vaishnav Guru before their marriage. Marriage is a very expensive affair in their community.

They consider marriage by negotiation (*Sambandha*) as ideal and prestigious. The other modes of marriage are by consent (*bhalpai*), by exchange

(*badal*) by intrusion (*dhuka*) etc. Remarriage of widows, widowers and divorcees, junior levirate and junior sarorate (*Sanga*) are socially permitted. Cross-cousin and parallel cousin marriages are strictly tabooed in their society.

The marriage proposal generally comes from the boy's side. It is finalised through negotiations and mutual consent. Two to four family relatives are engaged as *dandia* (go-between) for negotiation. They consult an astrologer before taking the final decision.

Traditionally, they have the institution of bride price (*kanya pan*). The minimum amount of bride-price is Rs 200 to 300 in cash, 75 kg of boiled rice, 30 to 60 kg of paddy and a he-goat. The amount of bride price depends upon the economic condition of the bridegroom's family. Now-a-days the dowry system has been introduced.

They perform the marriage rites engaging a Brahmin priest following the Vedic traditions of the neighbouring castes. The bride after a week of her marriage cooks food for the family which the newly wedded couple offers first to the family ancestors and then the family members take it.

Divorce

The divorce (*charachari*) is permitted in the Bathudi society and either party can divorce his/her spouse on the grounds of misunderstanding, misbehavior, impotency, cruelty, poor maintenance, adultery in conjugal life and suffering from incurable diseases etc. The cases of divorce are decided by their traditional community council. If divorce is granted, the bride-price must be refunded to the husband.

Death

The Bathudi practice both cremation and burial to dispose of their dead. They usually bury the dead bodies of small children, pregnant women, victims of unnatural deaths and those died of smallpox. In case of cremation, the community members arrange fire woods to cremate the dead body. Death news is communicated to all the kinsmen and relatives requesting them to come and take part in the mortuary rite.

Before cremation or burial the dead body is anointed with turmeric paste and oil. It is wrapped with a new cloth sprinkled with some paddy grains and taken to the funeral ground. The eldest son sets fire into the pyre and in case of burial he first throws the soil into the burial pit. After the burial or cremation is over, all the lineage (*kutumba*) members take bath in a river or pond and return home. After returning from the bath, they take bitter rice (*Pita Bhat*). Then all the earthen pots used for cooking are removed from the deceased person's house and thrown away.

Death pollution continues for seven to nine days. During pollution period the family members observe certain taboos in respect of their food and activities.

Relishing non-vegetarian foods, giving alms to beggars, worshipping deities, observances of rituals and festivals, use of oil, visiting sacred places and sexual union etc. are tabooed during this period. Some Bathudi families observe the first purificatory rite (*Pitabad*) on the third day.

On the 10th day i.e., the day of final mortuary rite, they observe the *sradha* rite. On this day a Brahman priest is invited to officiate in the rite in which food is offered to the deceased. The same day in the evening, a shade is brought to the house where rice-flour is spread on which cooked food is kept. Once the shade is taken inside the house they examine the rice-flour. If any impression or picture is seen on the rice-flour then they believe that the shade (imaginary departed soul) has come. The persons who invoke the shade eat the cakes made with rice-flour.

On the 11th day, they host a feast for the kinsmen and villagers. The Bathudis avail the services of Brahman priest, barber and washer-man for observance of mortuary rites.

LIVELIHOOD

The Bathudis are agriculturists. Their primary occupation is settled agriculture. Paddy is their major crop which they grow in their wet lands. They grow different varieties of paddy. In their upland they cultivate cash crops such as pulses, sweet-potato, groundnuts, *jowar*, mustard and different kinds of vegetables. Most of the Bathudi families do not possess enough cultivable lands for cultivation. They are mostly landless or marginal farmers. Landless persons work as wage labourers in agriculture, construction sites or take up petty-business to earn for their livelihood. They also collect minor forest produce from the nearby forest like fuel wood, timber, *siali* leaves, fruits, roots, mushrooms and green leaves etc. Very few families collect gold dust from the Suvarnarekha River.

Now-a-days due to impact of urbanization and industrialization, many of them have migrated to the urban areas and live in slums and have employed themselves as daily wage labourers in different construction works and factories. Some of them are also employed in private and government sectors.

Food Habits

The Bathudis are non-vegetarians. They relish mutton, chicken, fish, dry fish, eggs etc. but abstain from eating beef and pork. They take termite and red-ants. Normally, they eat rice, pulses, roots, tubers and locally available leafy vegetables. During festive occasions, their menu is added with non-veg items like chicken and mutton curry. They use mustard and *mahua oil* for cooking.

They drink *mahua* liquor, rice beer (*handia*), *tea* and milk. Both male and females chew tobacco and betel and smoke *bidi*.

SOCIAL CONTROL

Bathudi have their own traditional community council (*Jati-Samaj*) both at the village level as well as at the regional level. The village level council composed of some influential community members is headed by the village chief called *Baadanaik*. Other important village functionaries associated with the traditional council are the sacerdotal head, *Dehri* and the village messenger, *Dakua*, *Desh-Chatia* or *Chowkia*. The council deals with their customary affairs. The regional council is known as *Desapadhan* in Mayurbhanj and *Mahanaik* in Keonjhar. It deals with cases those could not be decided at the village level.

The caste councils (*Jati-Samaj*) adjudicate cases pertaining to family disputes, illegal pregnancy, theft, rape, adultery, divorce and cattle killing as well as violation and modification of their customary rules etc. and their verdict is final. It is empowered to punish the offender both by cash and kind or excommunicate the culprit from the society by judging the gravity of the crime he/she has committed and can readmit an offender into society after his/her due penance. The village council also organizes the village level rituals and festivals. All the office bearers of these councils are highly respected in their society.

Under the Influence of modernization now they follow the Panchayatraj system. So their traditional political system is gradually declining. The office bearers of the statutory Panchayatraj institutions are elected people's representatives such as Ward Members, Sarpanch, Chairman of Panchayat Samity and Zilla Parishad etc. They look after the planned development programmes in their villages. Also some of the Bathudi persons have been elected as MLAs and Sarpanchs of the Gram Panchayats.

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

Bathudi profess Hinduism with amalgamation of some elements of animism. They observe local Hindu festivals and worship Hindu deities along with their tribal deities in the *Sarna* or *Gramthan* - the sacred grove. Their family deity is *Mangal Thakur*. They believe in black magic and witchcraft as well as existence of ghosts, witches and evil spirits among whom some are benevolent and some are malevolent. The latter can effect calamities and ill health to humans and cattle. To avert the ill effect of evil agencies they seek the help of their witch doctor to gratify these spirits by sacrificing fowls and offering liquors.

The Bathudi observe a number of festivals in a year namely *Basuli*, *Raja*, *Baram* and *Nuakhai* and worship *Kalimuhi*, *Sitala* and *Manasa* deities. In *Nuakhai* festival ancestor worship is performed. Their priest *Dehury* worships village deities during new eating of rice, ploughing, transplanting paddy seedling, etc.

They pay reverence to Lord *Jagannath*, *Siva*, *Laxmi*, *Kali* and all other Hindu Gods and Goddesses and observe all Hindu Festivals such as *Raja*, *Rathajatra*, *Gahma*, *Dasara*, *Diwali*, *Makara Sankranti*, *Holi* etc. They make

pilgrimage to Puri to worship Lord Jagannath.

Dance and Music

Bathudi have a rich oral tradition of folk tales, folk songs, folk dances, riddles and proverbs etc. They are expert singers, musicians and dancers. They dance on occasions when crops ripen. After harvest they indulge in merry making by participating in dance with music to forget their hardship and woes. During festive occasions both men and women participate in the festivals and perform *chhau* dance, *changu* dance and *paik* dance. The females dance merrily with the melodious tune of music provided by the males by their musical instruments.

DEVELOPMENT AND CHANGE

The Integrated Tribal Development Agencies (ITDAs) functioning in the Bathudi habitation areas are implementing various socio-economic development programmes for development and modernization of horticulture, agriculture communication and irrigation for the sustainable development of the Bathudi. So now they have gradually adopted modern agricultural practices by using high yielding varieties of seeds, chemical fertilizers and better irrigation facilities. Some of them have adopted horticulture, poultry and fishery schemes for their livelihood enhancement.

The programmes of the STs and SCs Development Department have helped to reduce the burden of poverty of the Bathudi. Since education is the key input for the socio-economic development, the STs and SCs Development Department have established a number of educational institutions like EMRS (Ekalavya Model Residential Schools), Higher Secondary Schools (Science and Commerce), High Schools, Girls High Schools, Residential and Non- Residential Ashram and Sevashram Schools in their area. This has brought noticeable changes in their life style, dress pattern and belief system. Under various socio-economic development schemes the Bathudi women now form SHGs which have also played a major role for the upliftment of their economic and social life.

Development of infrastructure facilities, construction of Aganwadi Centers, PDS Centers and provision of houses under IAY and Mo Kudia Yoiana, electricity under Kutir Jyoti and Biju Gramya Jyoti Yoiana, provisions for safe drinking water, Mobile Health Unit along with subsidy linked loan, vocational and orientation training to the tribal youths in the area has brought visible change in their way of life.

Implementation of PESA Act in their area has also brought changes in the quality and pattern of leadership among the Bathudi. The occupational pattern of the Bathudi and their means of subsistence have been changed. Change is observed in their living pattern, social customs, food habits and dress pattern.

BHOTTARA*

*Gopinath Satpathy*¹

The Bhottaras are one of the efficient agricultural communities of Orissa. They are known as Bhottaras and Bhottadas and due to the pronunciation of 'r' as 'd' under the influence of Chattisgadi. Dhottada is wrong use of the term Bhottara. It is told that they are the immigrant from Bastar. Mr. Tylor has identified them with Murias. It seems that both Murias and Bhottaras are the subdivisions of the great Gond tribe, whether they are identical or not. Mr. Bell has expressed his doubt regarding the tribal origin of the Bhottaras. In his opinion, they are Hindus who have been influenced by prolonged contact with aboriginals. At present they constitute a major bulk of the population of Nowarangpur subdivision of Koraput and Koksara and Jayapatna police-station areas of Kalahandi district though their distribution in other districts is very little. The district-wise population of the tribe is given below.

Sl. No.	Name of the district	Number of Males	Number of Females	Total
1.	Koraput	79,617	78,151	1,57,768
2.	Kalahandi	526	599	1,125
3.	Sundargarh	117	55	172
4.	Sambalpur	13	9	22
5.	Boudh-Kondhamal	3	1	4
Total		80,276	78,815	1,59,091

They speak a corrupt form of Oriya language. Some consider their language to be Muria, or Lucia otherwise known as Basturia, a dialect of Oriya. However, no vestige of tribal dialect survives.

* Published in ADIBASI, Vol. V, No.3, (Special Issue), TRB, 1963-64, pp.115-18

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The tribe is divided into two endogamous divisions named as Bodo and Sano. The Bodos claim to be of purer descent and hence are higher social status than the latter. They have a number of exogamous totemistic clans like Tortoise, Tiger, Cobra, Monkey, Dog, Lizard, Goat, etc. The clan names are of the animal world and the animals are respected by the members of the respective clans.

Family is the smallest social unit of Bhottaras. Nuclear families are more in number than the extended ones. Joint family structure breaks down with marriage and death of the parents. Members on the father's line up to seventh generation are termed as Kutumbs.

The Bhottaras have no organization like dormitory but recently in some of the villages they have started *Jatra* groups, the membership to which is open to all interested persons.

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

A number of such villages together constitute a 'Desh'. For each 'Desh' there is one *Bhatnaek*, and a *Panigrahi*. Each *Desh* has one *Gonda* known as *Desia Gonda*. The *Bhatnaek* adjudicates the cases of violation of taboos and out castes the offender. He restores the offender into the society after due purification ceremony. When any offence is not decided in the village level, it is referred to *Desa Panchayat* and its decision is binding on all. *Gobadh* and *Machiapatak* are two offences leading the offender to excommunication, who is restored by the *Bhatnaek* and *Panigrahi* into the caste. The *Bhatnaek* performs some ritual, gives him *Mahaprasad* and brings him back into the caste.

Life Cycle

The pregnant wife observes some restrictions of her food and activities for the safety of the child. She is not allowed to go to the burial ground. She is forbidden to touch corpse. She does not take curd. At the labour bed she is attended by her own kins. The kins cut the naval cord and bury it in a ditch outside the house. The birth pollution extends for length of time. On the 3rd day, the mother and the baby are cleaned with turmeric. On the 9th day, name giving ceremony is observed. The *Disari* selects the name by divination. A feast is given to all the villagers. The entire night is spent in dance and song. First hair cutting ceremony is done after a year. The father shaves the hair. The ear and nose piercing ceremony is observed at the age of 4 to 5 years. A *Sunari* woman does the job. The thread ceremony is performed before their marriage.

The most significant and elaborate event in the life of the Bhottaras is their marriage ceremony. They practice both adult and infant marriage but the adult marriage is largely followed. The usual age of marriage is 14 to 18 in case of girls and 18 to 20 in case of boys. The young man has a right over his uncle's daughter. If anyone else takes her, he gets some compensation from him. The widow and a divorced woman can marry again. Marriages by arrangement, by capture, and by service are recognized in the society. Marriage by arrangement seems to be honoured and widely prevails.

(1) *Marriage by arrangement*- The rules of clan exogamy, non-committance of any offence leading to outcaste of the parents of the girl, their social status, prevalence of permanent disease like leprosy, etc. in the family are taken into consideration while selecting a mate. Such selection is usually done by the parents of the boy.

A few men including the guardian of the boy call at the house of the girl carrying with them some wine, rice, sweets and other eatables. After the feast at her residence is over, the proposal of marriage is put forth for approval. Indirect indications like "we have come to pluck the scented flower" have given to her parents to give their opinion. Her parents in consultation with the relatives and the girl may accept or reject the proposal. This is called *Mangni*.

If it cannot be finalized in that calling, two more visits may be given for the final reply. On receipt of positive answer, the *Disdari* is consulted and a trip is made to her house with, Palm wine, food articles. The kinsmen of the girl congregate and are made aware of the promise of her father. This is called *Sagajanki*.

At next calling, the negotiation is confirmed in the presence of villagers and relatives. This is known as *Chidni*.

The next visit is known as *balarni*. The *balarani* is followed by *guajokni*, when the boy himself with some relatives pays a visit and is offered a betel nut by the guardian of the girl. From this day, the boy gets a right over the girl and is entitled to compensation if any one kidnaps the girl.

The next visit is made with several measures of paddy, pulses, etc. to fix up and to pay bride price. This is called *Jola*.

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

Marriages take place at the groom's place. An altar is made. Seven sal (*Shorea Robusta*) poles are fixed on it. The marriage ceremony lingers for 8 days and a number of feasts are given by both the parties. To make this platform the villagers are given a feast at their respective villages. The Disari officiates as the priest. Little fingers of the couple are hooked together and their cloths knotted, they walk seven times round the *pandal*, *homan* is lit, their foreheads are marked with turmeric paste and rice. The girls keep on dancing for the entire night. Doms beat the drums. The occasion is followed by a grand feast. Next day, the couple will search valuables from a jar filled up with water, mud and different fruits. They besmear themselves with mud. Then they go to the river, take bath and the bride is carried back on the shoulder of the boy. They will attend a feast. A feast is also given to the villagers on the next day for their services during marriage.

On the 9th day both bride and bridegroom with 5 young men and women, and 5 old men, and women go to the girl's mother's house. They carry rice, pulses, vegetables, fowls, etc. There ensues a grand feast and the party returns.

At the later date, the bride cooks in new pots and serves the relatives. The ancestors are given food and she becomes a member of her husband's family.

Marriage by capture- To evade this long and expensive arranged marriage, the Bhattara sometimes capture a girl from the market or during Chaitra festival. Her kith and kins visit the boy's place and abuse and threaten the boy to handover the girl to them. If the girl is happy, she usually does not come out of her secret place. If she is dissatisfied, she surrenders herself to her father and is taken back. Compensation is demanded from the offender.

If the girl does not come out, some elders come out settle the affair. The quantum of compensation, bride price etc. are discussed. The decision is binding on kidnapper and he pays the amount and marries her.

Marriage by Service- Sometimes a poor Bhattara goes to serve in the family of a well-to-do person with the aim of getting the latter's daughter or sister in marriage after the stipulated period of service. The term of service extends from 5 to 10 years. During the period the servant gets only food and clothes. After the stipulated period, the girl is given in marriage to the boy. If he likes, he may stay with his father-in-law or he may erect his own house or may go back to his own home.

A man may keep his elder brother's widow, if he likes. If she goes out, the man is entitled to compensation from the new husband. Polygony is also practiced, if the wife is found to be barren.

Bhattaras bury their dead in sleeping posture. The very well-to-do persons in certain localities are now interested to practice cremation. Death rites consist of *Pitakhia* on the 3rd day, *Dosa* on the 10th day and feast on the 11th day. The

pollution is observed for 10 days, when the deceased agnates are forbidden to cook any food. On *Pita* day, they eat rice, *neem*, dried fish and brinjal. The nails are pared. On the *Dasa* day, the son is shaved; all are given new cloths and napkins. On 11th day, all are given a feast. The barber does not serve them and the sister's son does the work and gets the presents. They believe in rebirth, but do not observe any *sradha* rites.

Religious Beliefs & Practices

Bhottaras have a great belief in a number of spirits, gods and goddesses, *Budhi Thakurani*, *Bhairbi*, *Budhi Pardesi*, *Basumata*, *Bana Durga* and Sun God are a few of their deities. These are propitiated during the festivals and are offered sacrifices of fowl, goat and sheep. Their *Pujari* acts as the priest.

The festivals are- (i) Chaito *parab* in Chaitra, (ii) Akhi Trutia in Baishakh, (iii) Sraban Amus in Sarban, (iv) Nuakhia in Bhadrab, (v) Dashara in Asin, (vi) Dewali in Kartik, (vii) Punia in Pusa and (viii) Surjya Jatra in Magh.

Chaito Parab is one of the important festivals connected with fertility rites and production of bumper crop. They eat new mangoes, after offering the same to village deity. The *Pujari* sows the seeds first. They arrange annual hunts and spend the night in dance and music.

Akhi Turtia is an individual family level festival and seeds are sown after conducting proper worship and offering to Basumata.

Pusa Punia is the day of enjoyment and merry making. They go to dance in other villages for weeks together. During Dewali, they worship cows, bullocks and offer rice and salt to them. They feast and enjoy.

Apart from these festivals they participate in Holi festival in Fagun and the Car festival in Asadh with the neighbours. They have now adopted Laxmi Puja in Magusir in imitation of the other caste Hindu neighbours.

Bali Jatra is observed in Koraput district in some areas when crops fail for lack of rain for several years continuously. The effigies of Bhima and Kandhuni Debi are ceremonially kept and worshipped. The Bhottaras do participate in it with other non-tribal and Hindu folks.

The Bhottaras dance on various occasions such as marriage, Pus Punia and Chaito Parab. They have a few types of dance and are not so expert in dance and music like the other tribal folks. They perform *cherchera* dance during Pus Punia and Daunidarnat during marriage ceremonies. In *cherchera* dance both male female do participate but they dance separately. The movement is very brisk and lively. Daunidarnat is done by girls only. Both the types are indication of love.

The Bhottara settlements are invariably large and heterogeneous. The houses are set in one row with road in front of them. They have no common house.

The village deity has its temple at one end of the village. The villages are situated on plain and agricultural lands surround the villages.

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

Before constructing the house, they consult '*Disari*' and according to his decision, they erect the structure after performing *homa* by the Disari or Brahmin.

Their material culture is very simple. They use earthen pots made by potter for carrying, storing water and cooking purposes. Rope made cots is seen in certain houses. Aluminum utensils, brass jars, pots are also seen in well-to-do families. They make receptacles in straw to store grain. They have *barsi*, screw driver, axe, *paniki* etc. They have husking lever and husking lever (*kutuni*).

As agricultural implements, they have plough share, plough, *pata*, sickle, bullock cart, *akudi* and wooden sticks. They make their own ploughs. As musical instruments they have drums known as Nangara, Dhol, Tamak and Tudubudi. In addition to these, they also use Gini, Mahuri and Thala.

Bhottaras neither spin nor weave. They purchase clothes from the local dealers of Domb caste. Bhottaras living near the town mostly wear mill-made clothes, which they purchase from the market. The males put on shirts and banians. In Kalahandi area, men usually wear loin cloths. They use Napkin and Chaddar. Females wear white and coloured sarees. The males wear Khadu of alloy on their wrist and Nolis in their ear. The females wear glass or rubber bangles, Khadus of alloy or silver, armband at the arm, Noli and earrings in ear, nose rings, glass bead necklaces, metal necklaces and Gagalas round their necks. Rings of silver alloy for the fingers and toes are in common use. They wear Pahuds on their legs. These ornaments are locally purchased. The well-to-do persons are wearing gold ornaments in ear, nose and neck.

Economy

The Bhottaras are good agriculturists. They know wet cultivation and do not practice shifting cultivation as a mode of their occupation. They work as labourers when there is no work in their fields. A few of them also serve in firm and Government institutions. In Nowrangpur area, most of them have a few acres of Land, whereas in Kalahandi area, they cultivate land on share-cropping basis. The hunting is carried out at times like pastime. Food collection is resorted to at the time of acute scarcity.

They produce all sorts of vegetables in their lands. Paddy, sugarcane, pulses, tobacco, are the main crops which they harvest from their land. They are hardy and do not allow the land to remain barren when water is available.

But, for their daily necessity they depend upon other communities and the markets. They purchase salt, cloth, earthen vessels, ornaments, utensils for their daily use. The raw materials like iron for plough share are also purchased.

They are very simple and obey the authorities. In spite of their hard labour, they fail to prosper as they should be on account of being exploited by the neighbouring advanced folk. Most of them do not know the market rates. The females sell and buy goods at the market places and are easily duped by the advanced businessmen. At the time of need, they get money from local traders and at the time of harvest three to four times of the money are taken by the money-lender. The field officials of Forest, Revenue, Excise departments take advantage of their simplicity and exploit their produce in the form of bribes. The marriage being very expensive, they borrow money and become prey of the exploiters. The Dombs are cunning and they exploit them at the time of selling salt and cloths to them. Two to three times of the actual price is taken from these innocent folk.

Social Status

The Bhottaras consider Dombs, Panos to be socially very low and do not touch them. Brahmins allow Bhottaras to enter into their houses. Most of the other communities except Brahmins, Karan, Khandayat take water from them. They treat Amanatyas, Bhumias as their equal but tribes like Kondh, Gond, and Godaba are held inferior to them. They do not practice any defiling occupations and can worship in Hindu temples. They are yet educationally very backward and hence deserved special safeguards.

BHOTTADA*

S.C. Mohanty¹

Bhottada or Bhattara or Dhottada is a major tribe of Odisha numbering 4,50,771 persons (2,22,266 males and 2,28,505 females) as per 2011 census and their sex ratio is 1028. Their total literacy rate is 40.03%. It is 50.94 percent for males and 29.47 percent for females. They are distributed in most of the districts of Odisha except Sonepur, Deogarh and Gajapati districts. They have larger concentration in Nowrangpur, Koraput, Kalahandi and Malkangiri districts. They speak a dialect of their own called *Basturia*. They speak Odia too.

The Bhottada are primarily vegetable growers and rice cultivators. Some of them earn wages as agricultural labourers and raise livestock to supplement their income.

Their traditional dance forms are called *Cherechera* and *Daunidarnat*. The former is performed by men and women during *Pus Punia* festival and the latter, only by girls during wedding ceremonies.

Being polytheists the Bhottada worship Hindu deities and their own such as *Budhi Thakurani*, *Bairabi Budhi*, *Pardesi*, *Basumata*, *Banadurga*, etc. They observe many festivals like *Laxmi Puja*, *Chait Parab*, *Akhi Tritiya*, *Pus Punia*, *Holi*, *Dassara*, etc.

In the past, the tribe had endogamous dual divisions: Bado - the original and superior and Sano - the junior. Now intermarriage takes place between them. Each division is constituted of several exogamous totemic clans or *gotras* named after some animal species. The clans break up into agnatic lineages formed as local

* Unpublished article of 2000 updated in 2018

¹ Research Officer, SCSTRTI

descent groups who live close to each other in villages. The members of the lineages help each other physically and financially at the time of need.

In the Bhottada society the child marriage of the past has given way to adult marriage at present. Marriage by negotiation (*Bibha*) though considered ideal and prestigious, involves a very elaborate process and is an expensive affair. Other ways of acquiring mates are by elopement, by bride capture, by service to the girl's parents. Cross-cousin marriage, junior levirate and sororate, divorce and remarriage are permitted on reasonable grounds.

Childbirth is a welcome event in the Bhottada family. The birth pollution lasts for 8 days. On the third day *haldigasari* is performed to bathe the mother and baby after anointing turmeric paste. On the ninth day *Dissari* - the astrologer chooses a name for the infant and the occasion is celebrated amidst feast and dance. The first hair-cutting ceremony is performed after one year and the ear-nose piercing ceremony after 4-5 years. Puberty rites for girls are held on the 7th day to end the pollution and her confinement. They bury the dead and conduct purificatory rites - *Dassah* on the 10th day followed by a feast on the 11th day.

At the village level the traditional chief *Naik* assisted by *Chalan*, *Pujaria* and *Gonda* handles the community affairs. At the regional level a group of villages constitute a *Desh* headed by *Bhat Naik* and supported by *Panigrahi* and *Desia Gonda* who mitigate inter-village disputes.

The Bhottada are in transition to Hinduization but not yet integrated with the Hindu social system.

BHOTTADA*

*G. N. Satpathy*¹

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

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

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

Social divisions

The tribe is divided into two endogamous divisions called Bodo and Sano. The Bodos claim to be of purer descent and hence are higher than the latter in social status. They have a number of exogamous totemistic clans like tortoise, tiger,

* Published in Tribes of Orissa (revised edition), 2004, pp. 63-68

¹ Former Research Officer, SCSTRTI

cobra, monkey, dog, lizard, goat, etc. The clan names are of the animal world and the animals are respected by the members of the respective clans.

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

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

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

A number of such villages together constitute a Desh. For each Desh there is one Bhatnaik, a Panigrahi and Desiagonda. The Beatnik adjudicates the cases of the violation of taboos and expels offenders. On the other hand he also restores the offender to the society after a suitable purification ceremony. When any case cannot be decided at the village level, it is referred to the Desh panchayat and its decision is binding on all. Gobadha and Machia patak are two grave offences leading the offender to ex-communication, who is restored to the community by the Bhatnaik and Panigrahi. The Bhatnaik performs a ritual, gives him Mahaprasad and brings him back into the community.

Life Cycle

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

Marriage:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Marriage takes place at the groom's place. An altar is constructed. Seven sal (*Shorea robusta*) poles are fixed on it. The marriage ceremony lasts eight days and a number of feasts are given by both parties. To construct this platform the villagers are given a feast at their respective villages. The Disari officiates as the

priest. The little fingers of the couple are hooked together and their cloths knotted, they walk seven times round the *pandal*, the *homa* is lit, and their foreheads are marked with turmeric paste and rice. The girls keep dancing the entire night. Doms beat the drums. The occasion is followed by a grand feast. Next day the couple will search for something valuable from a jar filled with water, mud and different fruits. They smear themselves with the mud. Then they go to the river and bathe, and the bride is carried back on the shoulder of the boy. Thereafter they attend a feast. A feast is also given to villagers the next day for their services during the wedding.

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

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

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

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

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

Death Rites

The Bhottadas bury their dead in a sleeping position. Very well-to-do persons in certain localities are not interested in practising cremation. Death rites consist of Pitakhia on the third day, Dasha on the tenth day, and a feast on the eleventh day. Pollution is observed for ten days, during which the deceased's agnates are forbidden to cook any food. On Pita day they eat rice, neem, dried fish

and brinjal. The nails are pared. On Dasha day, the son is shaved, and everyone is given cloth and a napkin. On the eleventh day, everyone is feasted. The barber does not serve them: instead the sister's son does the work and gets the presents. They believe in rebirth, but do not observe any Sradha.

Religious beliefs & practices

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

The festivals are (i) Chait parab in Chaitra, (ii) Akhi Trutia in Baishakh, (iii) Sraban Amus in Sraban, (iv) Nuakhia in Bhadrab, (v) Dashara in Asin, (vi) Diwali in Kartik, (vii) Punia in Pusa and (viii) Surya Jatra in Magh.

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

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

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

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

Settlement pattern

The Bhattada settlements are large and heterogeneous. The houses are set in one row with the road in front of them. They have no common house. The

village deity has its temple at one end of the village. The villages are situated in the plains, and agricultural land surrounds the village.

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

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

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

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

Economy

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

They produce all sorts of vegetables from their lands. Paddy, sugar cane, pulses and tobacco are the main crops that they harvest from their land. They are hardy and do not allow the land to remain barren when water is available.

However, for daily necessities they depend on other communities and on the markets. They purchase salt, cloth, earthenware vessels, ornaments and utensils for their daily use. Raw materials like iron for plough shares are also purchased.

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

Social status

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

BHOTTADA*

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IDENTITY

The Bhottadas are one of the numerically major agricultural tribe of Odisha. They are also known as Bhotara, Bhottara and Dhottada. The term "Bhottara" has been derived from *bhu*, meaning land and *tara*, meaning *chase*. They are sparsely distributed in Nawrangpur, Koraput and Kalahandi districts of Odisha. They are considered as the original settlers of Barthagada from where they migrated to Visakhapatnam and then to Bastar area of Madhya Pradesh and finally to the neighbouring undivided Koraput district of Odisha. Ethnographers believe that ethnically the Bhottadas are akin to the Murias of Bastar, both of whom are sub-divisions of the Gond tribe. Some others opine that they are basically Hindus influenced by prolonged contact with the aboriginals.

They speak Bhatri, a semi-autonomous and non-literary dialect with an established tribal identity that is linguistically grouped under southern branch of Indo-Aryan family of languages. They are conversant in Odia language and use its script for inter group communication.

As per 2001 census, the total population of the tribe is 375845 (Males 1 88 584 and Females 1 87 261). Their sex ratio is 993. The total literacy is 24.29%, out of which the male literacy is 37.39% and the female literacy is 11.09%. The Decadal growth rate of this tribe is 23.58% according to 2001 Census.

Personal Appearance

By their physical traits the Bhottaa are of medium height; have a long and narrow head and moderately broad face with broad nasal features. In the past

* Published in the Photo Handbook on Bhottada, SCSTRTI, 2014

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Bhottada men used to wear a short piece of loin cloth (*langoti*) to conceal their pubic regions only leaving the upper portion fully naked and the women folk used to wear a short piece of coarse cloth purchased from the local weavers which barely covered their body up to the knee. Children below seven years of age went naked. Tattooing was a fashion among women in the past which have been abandoned at present.

At present due to their close culture contact with the Hindu neighbours, their dress pattern has been influenced. Now-a-days, the Bhottada men wear pants, shirts, *lungi*, *banian* and women wear printed sarees and blouses purchased from the local market. Their women's modern adornments consist of brass *khadu* and various types of armlets, glass bangles, nose ornaments such as *noli* and nose rings, necklace made of beads or brass, old coins or silver and varieties of *ghagla*, finger rings made of brass, aluminum or old coins and toe rings and *pahud* in their legs to look attractive and charming. Women of well-to-do families also wear golden ornaments.

SETTLEMENT & HOUSING

The Bhottada habitat is generally located in undulating terrains with picturesque landscapes that stretch beyond the mountain ranges in the southern belt of Nawarangpur district of Odisha and its adjoining districts of Bastar, at about 2000 feet above the sea level.

The Bhottada settlements are generally homogenous and are located near foot hills or hill slopes where perennial hill streams are flowing to provide them drinking water throughout the year. But in multiethnic villages, which are usually located in plain areas, they exclusively dwell in separate wards keeping distance from other ethnics there by maintaining their own cultural identity. Some Bhottada settlements are large and heterogeneous surrounded by agricultural fields. They have no community or dormitory house. The village deity is installed at one end of the village.

Their houses are arranged in a linear pattern, leaving a narrow village street. Individual houses are built with low roofs thatched with *pirigrass* and mud walls cleanly polished using white or red clay by their women folk. The houses mostly have one room in the Kalahandi area and two to three rooms in the Koraput area. The bigger room is used as their living room and to store their grains and the smaller one is used as their kitchen. There are no windows for ventilation. They construct a separate shed in the rear of the house to accommodate their livestock.

The houses have wide verandas polished with black clay which is found to be higher than the plinth of their houses to be used as sitting place and to provide shelter to their guests. The doors of the rooms open to the veranda. Some of them also construct a separate shed in a corner of their rear verandah to seclude the girls during attainment of their first menarche.

They consult their traditional priest - Disari, who fixes an auspicious moment for construction of a new house. The Bhottadas normally keep their surroundings neat, clean and green.

Their material culture is very simple and they have scanty household belongings. String cots are used for sitting and sleeping. For carrying, storing water and cooking, they use earthen pots made by the local potter. Aluminum utensils, brass jars and pots are possessed by well-to-do families. They make straw bins to store grains. They have the husking lever and the hand-pounder or *kituni*. Their agricultural implements include the ploughshare, plough, sickle, bullock cart and wooden sticks etc. They make their own ploughs. Their musical instruments are known as *Nangara*, *Dhol*, *Tamak*, *Tudubudi*, *Mahuri*, *Gini* and *Thala*.

LIVELIHOOD

The Bhottadas are primarily settled agriculturists. As such cultivation is their major source of livelihood. They do not practise shifting cultivation. It is supplemented by allied pursuits like seasonal forest collections, animal rearing, carpentry, bamboo basketry, fishing and wage earning both in private as well as industrial sectors. Few of them are also recruited in Government institutions.

Paddy is their major crop raised in their wet lands. In their up lands they cultivate varieties of crops such as hill paddies namely *dongar dhan* / *beda dhan*, *ragi*, sugarcane, minor millets like *kangu*, *kosla* and in their dry land they grow oil seeds like *alsi*, *til (rasi)*, pulses like *kandul*, *dongar rani*, *bodei*, *ganthia*, *kulthi* (horse gram), *biri* (black gram) and cereals like *janna* and *khetjanna* etc. They raise small kitchen gardens adjacent to their house where they grow varieties of vegetables like brinjal, potato, *patalghanta* (tomato), cabbages, pumpkin (*kumuda*), gourd, *jhudung* (cow pea), *lau* (gourd), *kakudi* (cucumber), *semi* (sesame), maize and different types of edible tubers and green leaves. During lean season they also collect varieties of seasonal forest produce like roots, fruits, tubers viz, *karadi*, *pita kanda*, *tarekkanda*, *serengkandaas* well as green leaves, mushrooms, medicinal herbs, fibers, timbers, fuel wood, bamboo kernel, fodders and wild grasses to thatch their roofs.

Food and Drinks

The Bhottadas are non-vegetarians. Rice and *ragi* are their staple food. They relish on fish, dry fish, meat, chicken and eggs etc but do not take beef or pork. They also consume alcoholic drinks like rice beer (*pendum*), sago palm juice (*salap*), country liquor (*mohuli*) and *ragi* beer (*landa*). During food scarcity, they manage with the gruel of dried and powdered mango kernel and tamarind seeds. Both men and women smoke hand rolled cigar - *pika*, *bidi* and chew tobacco paste.

SOCIAL LIFE

The Bhottadas are an endogamous community which is divided into three endogamous divisions such as *bada*, *madhya* and *sana*. Among them the Bada group

claims social superiority over other two for their purer descent. These divisions are further sub-divided into various exogamous and totemistic septs (*bansa*) such as *kachchimo* (tortoise), *bhag* (tiger), *goyi* (lizard), *nag* (cobra), *kukur* (dog), *mankad* (monkey), *cheli* (goat) and *pandiki* (pigeon) etc. They use *majhi*, *chalan*, *nayak*, *randhari*, *bhotra*, *bhatra*, *pujari*, *bhandarkaria*, *panigirit*, *bhatnayak*, *padhani*, *choudhury*, *somaratha* and *khordia* as their surname.

Family

The Bhattada families are mostly nuclear and patrilineal in structure. The lineage members (*kutumb*) consider themselves as descendants of a common ancestor. The patri-lineage breaks up after seven generations following the death of the eldest male member. Vertically and horizontally extended families are also found in few cases. Inheritance of ancestral property follows the rule of primogeniture in male line only. In families having no male successor, the daughters inherit the paternal property and the family having no issue may adopt a male child from the nearest patri-lineage who inherits the property. The Bhattada women play an important role in agricultural, religious, ritual and social activities in addition to performing their routine domestic chores.

Life Cycle

Pre-delivery Conditions

For the Bhattadas pregnancy of a woman is a joyful event in their family as they think that some ancestor might take rebirth soon. For that reason they offer various sweetmeats to the pregnant woman during the sixth month of her pregnancy. For the wellbeing of the pregnant mother and the baby in her womb, she is tabooed to eat the meat of the sacrificial animal, to sleep in an isolated room, to go to the burial place and to touch a corpse. She is also prohibited to be exposed during solar or lunar eclipse.

Child birth

The birth of a Bhattada baby usually takes place in a separate confinement constructed for the purpose in their rear verandah. They engage an experienced old woman of Dom community or from their own as midwife to assist the pregnant woman for easy and safe delivery. The naval chord of the baby is cut using a knife and the placenta is buried outside the lying- in-room. Birth pollution continues for nine days.

Post Delivery Rituals

On the third day of child birth the mother and the baby are given a ceremonial bath, anointed with turmeric paste. The pollution ends on the ninth day when the house is cleaned and the used earthen wares are thrown away. On this day the naming ceremony (*nao-dharani*) is conducted and the new born baby is given a name by their traditional astrologer (Disari) by the rice divination method. Generally, the names of their ancestors are chosen. When the child is about one

year of age they observe the tonsure (*sevore-bal*) rite and the ear piercing ceremony of the baby. There is no specific time for thread ceremony, but they observe it before the marriage of the boy.

Puberty Rite

The Bhottadas observe puberty rite (*nahanburuna*) for the adolescent girl on her first menarche. The girl is kept in seclusion in a chamber built for the purpose at the rear verandah of the house. The pollution lasts for seven days. During this time she is prohibited to look or be exposed to any male person. On the dawn of the eighth day, she takes her purificatory bath in the nearby hill stream or river being anointed with turmeric paste and mustard oil and wears new cloths. Their traditional priest sprinkles holy water after which she becomes purified to resume her routine activities. In the evening her family hosts a non-vegetarian feast to guests, relatives and kinsmen.

Marriage

In the Bhottoda society adult marriage and monogamy is the norm. Instances of polygyny are also seen where the first wife is barren or physically unfit for serious handicaps. They consider marriage arranged through negotiation (*magni*) as the most ideal and prestigious way of acquiring a life partner. In their marriage, payment of bride price (*jholla*), both in cash and kindis customary.

The arranged marriage (*magni*) in the Bhottada society is an elaborate and expensive affair involving a series of proceedings to settle the matrimony. The groom's parents engage a mediator from among their *bandhu* clans to negotiate with the bride's side. If the bride's guardians agree to consider the proposal, the groom's parents pay their first visit to the bride's residence with a jar of county liquor (*mohuli*) and some sweetmeats to seek the views of the bride's parents which is called *manguni*. If they get a positive response, they make the second visit (*sugajanki*) accompanied by their kinsmen to get the approval of the lineage members of the bride on the proposal. It is followed by the third visit (*chidni*) to confirm the proposal in presence of the kinsfolk of both the sides. Then the fourth visit (*balarani*) is made to settle the bride price (*jholla*). In the fifth visit, the groom, accompanied by his kins, goes to the bride's house (*guojokni*) where the bride's father greets and entertains them by offering sweetmeats and a betel nut which indicates finalization of the matrimony. Thereafter on a fixed day, the groom's parents pay the sixth visit to pay the bride price to the bride's father.

The marriage rites are conducted at the groom's residence, to which the bride is escorted in a marriage procession accompanied by her parents, friends and relatives singing their traditional wedding folk songs and dancing with the tune of music played by the Dom musicians. A marriage altar is made using seven *sal* poles and on the center pole they tie an earthen pot filled with turmeric water. Their traditional priest (Disari) presides over the marriage rite and unites the hands of the couple who later move around the marriage altar seven times. Then the groom puts vermilion mark on the forehead of the bride by using the pointed

edge of a sword (*tika*) which has now been replaced by putting turmeric paste with *arua* rice mark on the bride's forehead by the groom and the vice-versa. It is followed by the *kadahandi* rite in which the groom puts a cowry(shell of a sea snail) with some fruits in a ditch of mud and water and the bride tries to find it out and offer it to the groom. Thereafter the groom agrees to give some gifts as demanded by the bride with the promise to provide her lifelong company. As soon as the demand is fulfilled, the bride and the groom along with their friends involve themselves with amusement, dancing and singing their traditional amorous wedding folk songs and cutting jokes by smearing the mud and water on each other's face. Then they go to the river and bathe and the bride is carried back on the shoulder of the groom. After that the groom's parents host a non-vegetarian feast to the guests, relatives, kinsmen and the bride's party along with country liquor (*mohuli*), rice beer (*handia*) and *ragi* beer (*landa*).

On the ninth day of marriage the newlywed couple with five young men and women and five old men and women go to the girl's parent's house carrying rice, pulses, vegetables, fowls, etc., where they entertained with a grand feast and then the party returns home. The next day, the bride cooks using new pots and serves her husband, in-laws and their relatives. The ancestors are also offered the food after which she becomes a member of her husband's family.

In the Bhattada society, the other modes of marriages are by capture, by service, by consent and by elopement. Cross-cousin marriage, junior levirate, junior sororate and remarriage of widows, widowers and divorces are also permitted in their society.

Marriage by capture is resorted to avoid the complexity and expenses of the arranged marriage. The boy with the help of his friends captures a girl from the market or during the Chait Parab and keeps her in his place. After getting the news, her kith and kin rush to the boy's place to threaten the boy and demand her release. If the girl is willing to marry her abductor, she stays at the boy's place where the wedding is arranged after negotiation of the bride price between both the sides. If she does not agree, she is returned to her father who demands compensation from her abductor.

Sometimes a poor boy who is unable to afford the expenses of the arranged marriage and the bride price seeks relief by resorting to marriage by service. He goes to serve in the family of his perspective father-in-law with the aim of obtaining the latter's daughter or sister in marriage after the stipulated period of service is over. The term of service extends from five to ten years. During this time he is only provided with food and clothes by the girl's guardian. After the period of service is over the girl is given in marriage to the boy. If he wishes, he may stay with his father-in-law or he may build his own house or may go back to his parent's place.

Divorce

In the Bhottada society, either of the spouses can demand divorce on the ground of maladjustment in conjugal life, illness from contagious diseases, barrenness or impotency, indulgence in adultery and extramarital relationship etc.

Generally a special session of the traditional inter-village council is held to adjudicate the divorce cases which is usually presided over by their regional secular head (*bhatnaik*), his assistant (*panigrahi*) and messenger (*desiaganda*) in which both the groom and the bride's village chiefs (*naik* and *chalan*), their relatives and family heads including the appellants take part. The appellant generally arranges the food and drinks for the assembly.

In the case, where the wife desires to divorce her husband, her parents have to return the bride price (*jholla tanka*), but if she marries another person deserting her husband, the later has to repay the bride price with a stipulated fine to her former husband as has been settled by the council. Similar penalties are also awarded in case of the girls who eloped with someone else, after their engagements and payment of the bride price (*jholla tanka*) for them.

The father keeps the grown up children after the divorce but the mother is allowed to keep the breast feeding child for the time being and has to return the child to her former husband after he/she is grown up.

Death Rites

During the past the Bhottadas practised burial of their dead but at present they practise both burial and cremation. In case of unnatural or premature deaths occurred during infancy and due to snake bite, tiger attack, accident, suicide, pregnancy or child birth, illness for diseases like cholera, smallpox, the corpses are buried in a distant jungle as they believe that the soul of the deceased might become an evil spirit and cause harm to the family as well as to the villagers.

The death news (*madakhabar*) is first communicated to the deceased's sister's house and then to all relatives and to villagers by special messengers soon after the mishap (*madaghar*). After the congregation of the kinsfolk, the corpse is given a bath, anointed with turmeric paste mixed with castor oil and then dressed with a new white cloth. The kinsfolk and family members offer some coins, *aruarice*, paddy, ragi or millets etc over the cloth.

The pall bearers (*madabuha*) prepare the pall using seven *sal* poles tied with *siali* fiber to carry the corpse for funeral. At the cremation ground, they collect the cloth, coins and grains which they exchange for liquor (*mohua*) and tobacco (*dhungia*). The senior person of the family or the eldest son of the deceased first digs the burial pit or if they cremate the dead, he sets fire on the pyre. They dispose the dead in a sleeping position keeping its face upward and head towards north.

The mourning period continues for ten days, during which the bereaved family does not cook food and the families of their lineage supply food for them. During this period, observance of rituals and festivals, consumption of non-vegetarian dishes and sweet meats, visiting sacred shrines, worshipping deities, giving alms to beggars and sexual union are strictly tabooed and all the agricultural operations are suspended for the bereaved family and its lineage.

The first purificatory rite is observed on the following day of cremation, when the eldest son of the deceased accompanied by the pall bearers visits the cremation/ burial spot with an earthen pot filled with water and sand and plant a banyan or *pipal* tree over that spot hanging a water pot over its branch with a small hole under it to supply water for the tree. It is planted to provide shelter for the departed soul and to offer foods like fried rice and water in new earthen pots there for the dead.

On the third day, the *pitakhia* rite is observed. On this day, they eat rice, *nim*, dried fish and brinjal. The nails are pared. The final purificatory rite (*dasahi*) is observed on the tenth day presided over by their traditional priest (Disari). The eldest son is shaved, and everyone is given a cloth and a napkin. The barber does not serve them: instead the sister's son does the work and gets the presents. On the eleventh day, the family hosts a non-vegetarian feast to kinsfolk, relatives and villagers. They believe in rebirth of the soul, but do not observe any annual Sradha rites.

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

The Bhattada profess their traditional tribal religion of animism with admixture of some elements of Hinduism. Goddess Basumata (Mother Earth) and her consort, the Surya Debta (Sun God) are their supreme deities. Besides that, their pantheon includes a number of deities such as Budhi Thakurani, Bhairabi, Pardeshi, Banadurga, Kandhuni and Bhima which they install under shady trees in their village outskirts and propitiate them during festive occasions with great reverence by sacrificing goats, sheep, fowls and offering country liquor (*mohuli*), rice beer (*pendum*), ragi beer (*landa*) and sago palm (*salap*) juice etc. Their traditional magico-religious head (*pujari*) worships them praying for their mercy for the betterment and wellbeing of humans as well as their domestic animals and for the bumper harvest of their crops.

Their major festivals are the *pus parab* held during *puspunia*, *suryayatra* during *magh, nuakhia* during *osha/ bhod*, *mandiarani* and *baliyatra* during *diwali/ kartik*, *amnua* during *chait* and *bandapan* during *sravan (bandapan)*. They observe these events with great pomp and ceremony amidst dancing, singing, feasting merry making.

Apart from those, they also worship some Hindu deities like Lord Jagannath, Lord Shiva, Durga, Kali and Laxmi etc and observe many Hindu

festivals such as Rathyatra, Diwali, Holi, Luxmipuja and Kalipuja etc with great festivity.

Dance and Music

The Bhottadas possess rich oral traditions and their aesthetic life is extensively elaborate as they are naturally talented in the skill of their traditional folk dance, folk song and folk music. Dhemsas are their popular form of dance which they perform during many festive occasions. Besides, they also perform *cherechera* dance during observance of *pus parab* and *daunidarnat* dance during their weddings. Both boys and girls are skilled in composing their folk songs instantly, coping with the present circumstances, depicting vivid imagination and describing humors, jokes, romance, criticism and satire etc while dancing with cheerful contentment.

During performance of dance, the Dom musicians provide the concert with the tune of indigenous musical instruments like *dhol* (double membrane drum), *ghumura*, *tamak*, *tudubudi*, *baisi* (flute), *tal* (cymbal) *mairi* (*mohuri*), *dhapa* (circular drum) and *jhumka* etc.

SOCIAL CONTROL

The Bhottadas possess their own traditional community council both at village and regional level to handle their customary affairs. Their village level council is headed by their secular head (*naik*), his assistant (*chalan*), the magico-religious head (*pujari*) and a messenger (*ganda*). All these posts are hereditary except that of the messenger (*ganda*) who is appointed by nomination from the Dom community and is paid some remuneration annually for his services in kinds of grains like paddy, *ragi* or minor millets by every individual family. These office bearers along with other elderly persons of the village constitute the traditional village council and adjudicate all cases in the village.

Their regional community council called *desh panchayat* is constituted by a group of villages called *desh*. It is headed by a *bhatnaik* who is assisted by a *panigrahi*, and a messenger called *desiaganda* of Dom community.

Their traditional community council adjudicates cases pertaining to family disputes, adultery, and illicit premarital pregnancy, partition of property and violation of traditional norms and customs. The complicated cases, which are not settled in the village council, are referred to the regional council (*desh panchayat*) for final decision. It also decides inter-village disputes, divorce cases and also mitigates intra-community and inter-community conflicts. The Bhatnaik watches the violation of taboos and expels offenders and also readmits the expelled offender to the society after a suitable purification ceremony. Gobadh (killing of cow) and Machiapatak (formation of maggots in the wounds) are two offences leading to ex-communication the offender, who is restored to the society by the Bhatnaik and Panigrahi. The Bhatnaik performs a ritual, gives him Mahaprasad

and brings him back into the community. The Bhottadas honour the traditional leaders of their community council with great esteem.

CHANGING ARENA

Change is a continuous process. With the advancement of science and technology, noticeable changes have occurred in Bhottada way of life during last few decades. Education and mass media play a great role in effecting such changes in their society. Besides, the Bhottadas have accepted many new cultural, social and religious elements from their neighbouring castes and tribes owing to their long association with them. Their material culture has changed to some extent. Their household articles have been replaced by many modern gadgets. Now many well-to-do Bhottada families have radio, watches, cycle, motor cycle, television, mobile phone, modern dresses, wooden and synthetic furniture.

Government has launched many development programmes for the tribal people including the Bhottadas through various Income Generating and Infrastructure Development Schemes. Government has also made massive development interventions for education, agriculture, communication, drinking water, housing, social security, health and sanitation. Awareness has also been created among them on different development schemes so that they can reap the benefits. As a result, transformation is going on in their living style, economic pursuits, social life, food habits, dress pattern, cultural and religious activities.

The ST and SC Development Department, Government of Odisha under the aegis of Ministry of Tribal Affairs has established a Tribal Museum in the premises of SC and ST Research and Training Institute (SCSTRTI) at CRPF Square, Bhubaneswar for preservation and exhibition of the diverse material culture of different tribes of Odisha. In this tribal museum, the dress and ornaments, hunting weapons, fishing implements, and musical instruments of the Bhottada tribe have been displayed in the different show cases which reflect their inherent talent in arts and crafts. Besides, the live performance of the Bhottada dancers in different District, State and National level cultural events including the Annual State Level Adivasi Exhibition organized by the ST and SC Development Department, Government of Odisha and National Tribal Dance Festival organized by the SCSTRTI every year exposé the richness of the Bhottada culture to the world outside.

It is true that the Bhottadas still maintain a colourful cultural life in their green surroundings. The core of their age old culture is less influenced by the external agencies.

BHATTARA MARRIAGE*

*Nintyananda Das*¹

The Bhattaras or Bhattadas constitute a major bulk of the population of Nowarangpur subdivision of Koraput district and Koksara and Jayapatna police station areas of Kalahandi district. There is little doubt that Bhattara are an ancient stock of the area. Their legend states their original home to be Arangul in Bastar and their migration to the state of Orissa following the Penga Parojas. They are an agricultural group. Hunting is resorted to as a form of pastime during Chaitra (April) festival. Food gathering is infrequent. In this area they live together with Amanatiya, Bhumia, Rana, Mali, Gond, Bhumija, Dom and higher castes like Brahmin and Karan.

The most elaborate and significant event in the communities is the marriage. There are few parallels among other communities where a man's entire orientation to life is based on saving for the marriage of his own self or his children and wards. Bell believed them to be farther away from the tribes on account of their elaborate form of marriage (Bell Dist. Gazetteer, Koraput 1945). Among the Bhattaras there is only adult marriage. Grown up boys and girls of 18 to 20 years of age are given in marriage. There is mostly marriage by arrangement, the initiative always taken from the boy's side. The parents or guardians or when there are no living guardians of a marriageable boy, he himself, keeps information about grown up girls in the area, and from village gossips gather on the suitability of the match. Suitability of the match is a relative factor based on several considerations. The principal consideration is the clan.

Bhattaras are divided into several sub- divisions. The principal clans are Tortoise, Cobra, Dog, Tiger, Lizard, Bird, Leopard etc. Marriage within a clan is strictly prohibited. All the members of a clan believe in descent from a common ancestor and hence are brothers and sisters. Marriage among brothers and sisters

* Published in ADIBASI, Vol. III, No.2, 1958, pp.22-25

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is not only a violation of social code, but also a sin against the gods and is met with catastrophes. The dread of incest has been exemplified by instances from many contemporary primitive societies. Therefore while considering suitability of marriage it is definitely ascertained that the boy and girl do not belong to same clan. The other considerations are that the family of the girl has not committed any offence, or has not been permanently out casted. Existence of dreadful diseases like leprosy in the family stand on the way of initiating any proposal. Social status of the parties has also to be considered. An ordinary man may not aspire to have the daughter of a Nayak or Pujari in marriage. When these considerations are properly examined there begin calling to the girl's place.

(1) Five to three men including the father or guardian of the boy call at the house of the girl. They carry with them a pot of wine, perched rice, sweets and other eatables. The total expenditure is generally three to five rupees but may exceed in case of well-to-do families. The girl's parents and other kinsmen enjoy the food and drink together with the visiting group. Then the topic is initiated. The boy's men suggest that they want to pluck the beautiful flower from the garden, on the scent of which they have come from a far off place. There are other types of indirect indications. This is called *mangni*. The girl's parents consult their relations, and may even take consent of the girl. They may accept the proposal or may outright reject the same.

(2) If it cannot be finalized in one calling, there may be one or more subsequent calling, till the proposal is accepted or rejected. If accepted, after a few days in consultation with the Disari at the right moment another call is paid with nine men including the father or guardian of the boy to the girl's house. The kinsmen of the girl congregate in large numbers. The visitors bring wine, food articles and sweets. Palm (Salap) wine is specifically sought for this occasion from far off hills. This is called *sagajanki*.

(3) Then there is a third calling. This time there is a grand feast and congregation of all the kinsmen from both the sides. Important persons of both the villages are invited. On this occasion the negotiation is confirmed. It is called *chidni*. The food articles and wine are carried by relatives of the boy.

(4) There is another call to the girl's place with about twenty five seers of rice, other food articles and liquor. There ensues a feast. This is called *paitibhata*. This is also called *balarni*.

(5) This time the boy himself goes with a few relations to the girl's house, with food articles and liquor. The father of the girl or if the father is not living, the next kin offers a betel-nut to the boy. This is called *guajokni*. After this ceremony the boy gets a right over the girl and he can claim compensation from the person who kidnaps the girl. He can also forcibly drag the girl to his house, and there will be no offence according to Bhattara social code. Conflicts arise in the community

when such a girl runs away with another boy, and it may lead to serious conflagrations. The offender apart from paying the bride price has to compensate the boy to whom the girl is engaged. Such disputes are decided by the caste-chief called *Bhat-nayak* with the help of a Panchayat.

(6) This time the boy's parents with relations reach the girl's house on an appointed day with several measures of paddy (not less than two to three *maunds*), pulses and cash up to one hundred rupees. Sometimes one or more goats are taken. The cash price is paid. The social and economic status of the families mostly determines the quantum of bride price. There follows feasting for eight days. This is called *jola*.

(7) After a month or so for the *Jola* ceremony, a date is fixed on the basis of calculation made by Bhattara Disaris. They have their own book of calculation called '*medhagantia panji*'. In that auspicious and inauspicious moments are described. More sophisticated Bhattaras also consult Hindu astrologers. On that date the groom goes with his father and relatives to the bride's place with a ring, bangles and two pieces of Saris. A feast is given by the bride's parents. Then the party returns with the bride.

Marriage takes place at the groom's house. An altar is made and it is covered. Seven Sal (*shorea robusta*) poles are fixed. No Brahmin priest is engaged. The *Disari* and some elderly persons consummate the marriage. The bride is carried on the shoulder of the groom and all present would be dancing. The groom is besmeared with turmeric paste. Then they make circles around the wooden poles. The unmarried girls take prominent role in the ceremony. They keep on dancing, cajoling and joking all the time. The Doms are the drummers for the Bhattaras. The marriage area vibrates with drums, thrilled with singing and dancing toned up with practical jokes. The occasion is followed by a grand feast to which the relations contribute food articles and animals. Marriage in a well-to-do Bhattara house is such an elaborate affair, that it separates them from any tribal community.

As has been indicated, the total expenditure involved in the arrangement, and marriage is so heavy that almost all the resources of Bhattara family are accumulated for marriage. Boys themselves earn and save with this aim. The maternal uncle and paternal uncles also financially help at the time of marriage. Marriage looms large as a problem among this community. To evade the rigor and strain on an arranged marriage Bhattaras sometimes capture a girl from the market or during Chaitra festival when the young men visit adjoining villages for dancing during the festival.

When a girl is captured the parents of the girl search for her, and in due course come to know the kidnapper. Then they come with their kith and kin and other influential persons to demand the release of the girl. The girl is kept hidden

at a secret place. The visiting men abuse and threaten and placate the girl to come out of her hidden place. If the girl is not happy or does not like the boy and she had been kidnapped against her will, she may come away and surrender herself. Then she is taken back to her home and compensation is demanded from the offender. The matter is referred to the community head *Bhatnayak*. Sometimes suits are filed in law courts. But this is a later acquisition due to contact.

If the girl likes the affairs and she has come with the boy of her own will, she would not come out of her hiding place. Then there may ensue shouting, catcalls and vilifications. Some elders come to settle the affair. When the tempers fall and tension released both the villagers sit down and the quantum of compensation, bride price etc., are discussed. If the girl would have been engaged to another person the latter has to realize all the articles he would have given and costs paid for the girls, from the kidnapper. There follows a decision and the kidnapper submit to it and pays the dues in due course.

More often a humbler Bhattara may serve in the family of a well-to-do person with the aim of getting the latter's daughter or sister in marriage after the stipulated period of service. The period of service varies from two to five years. Within that period the servant gets his food and clothes only and renders whole time service. If he does not dine with the family he may get about five *maunds* of paddy per year. After the stipulated period of service the servant is given with marriage to the girl. The expenses are borne by the girl's father or brother. After marriage the couple may continue to stay with the family of the girl, or may like to set up a new home or may return back to home of the boy. Through service the bride price and excessive expenditure of Bhattara marriage are eliminated.

A PRELIMINARY STUDY OF ACCEPTABILITY OF PERMANENT MEASURES OF BIRTH CONTROL AMONG THE BHATTARA TRIBE OF ORISSA*

*Meerambika Mahapatro*¹

Despite the enormous legislative awakening, publicity, and positive advocacy, the population problem retains its acuteness and it is growing at predatory height. High fertility still continues to be the main culprit behind the population explosion. Hence fertility control or check by the birth control devices alone can promise a ray of hope to the desperate human community, though ecological, biological, social, cultural, psychological and economic factors have been found to be the prime determinants of fertility control.

According to Jacobson (1988), family planning is one of the most preventive health care strategies though it is rarely recognized as such. In many developing countries demographic surveys have shown that as many as 50% 80% of married women already want to limit or space future birth (Sadik, 1991).

Family planning programmes, however, slowly may proceed, do exert an influence on the number of birth and awareness of risk involved in frequent pregnancies. The use of birth control devices is usually more prominent in third world countries.

Several obstacles that stand on the way of family planning are the cultural, attitudinal and other situational circumstances. For example, ignorance, lack of motivation and faith in the process formed a part of it. These obstacles can be overcome by use of media and creating a general awareness among people. In Asia and Latin America well designed family planning programmes have increased the use of contraception and made it a more acceptable (Potts & Thapa, 1990). In India the lesser use of all the methods is partly due to ignorance and partly due to lack of media inaction particularly in the rural areas (Basu, 1984).

* Published in ADIBASI, Vol. XXXVIII, Nos. 1&2, 1998, pp.45-48

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The basic mode of fertility control can be categorized into five major types-physical, psychological, bio-chemical and the social and sterilization. The physical practices include condom, IUD, and all other barrier methods. Physiological ones account for the menstrual identification and the rhythm method. Coital practices are the psychological mode of contraception. The bio-chemical types of fertility control are jelly cream and pills. Social practices such as abstinence and ritual taboos have been practised to control pregnancies. The permanent method of birth control i.e. tubectomy and vasectomy) are more popular in all the communities.

Yet, these methods excepting sterilization are neither reliable nor applicable to all types of couples. However, the ideal contraceptive method has not yet been attained although today-we know of methods that are entirely harmless, that give a maximum of protection, and are generally satisfactory.

Though the permanent method of contraception or sterilization has given as a good result, but it has been seen that women after laparoscopy or tubectomy have suffered from different health problems, such as giddiness, weakness etc., besides, some psychological problems too which are more often reported by the men who have undergone vasectomy.

The aim of the present study is to assess the impact and attitude towards permanent method of birth control (Sterilization) of the women of Bhattara tribe of Orissa. The present paper is, however, a preliminary report on the subject.

Methods:—The schedule which probes into marriage history, fertility, mortality, migration and knowledge, and attitude and practice of birth control measures was prepared. The schedule contained both open and close ended questions. Unit of study for the present work was ever married woman in each household, who acted as a primary informant. The schedule was applied through interview to the main informant.

Kosagumuda (in Orissa), one of the largest villages inhabited by the Bhattara Tribe and was selected for the present study.

Materials:—The present study is based on the information gathered from 80 households having 99 ever married women.

Result:—The distribution of acceptors and non-acceptors of permanent birth control measures are set out in the Table -I and the reasons for non-acceptance of permanent method of birth control are set out in the table-II. However, the reasons that motivated the users to adopt the permanent method of birth control are given in the Table-III.

From the table it can be inferred that 12% of women and 1% of men had undergone sterilization, chiefly because of economic reasons. While about 45% women did not want to adopt it for desire of more children, about 29% of them did not want to undergo sterilization for fear of side effects including fear of death.

TABLE- I
DISTRIBUTION OF ACCEPTORS AND. NON-ACCEPTORS OF PERMANENT
BIRTH CONTROL MEASURES

Age Group	Acceptors No. of Women	Percentage (%)	Non-Acceptors No. of Women	Percentage (%)	Total No. of Women	Percentage (%)
15-19			12	12.12	12	12.12
20-24	1	1.01	17	17.17	18	18.18
25-29	2	2.02	22	22.22	24	24.24
30-34	4	4.04	11	11.11	15	15-15
35-39	1	1.01	3	3.03	4	4.04
40-44	4	4.04	9	9.09	13	13.13
45-49			6	6.06	6	6.06
50-54			4	4.04	4	4.04
55-59			2	2.02	2	2.02
60+			1	1.01	1	1.01
Total	12	12.12	87	87.87	99	99.99

TABLE- II
REASONS FOR NOT USING PERMANENT BIRTH CONTROL MEASURES

Reasons	No. of Women	Percentage
1. Want more sons	3	3.44
2. Want more children	45	51-72
3. Women not well	2	2.29
4. Husband does not approve	2	2-29
5. Parents-in-law do not approve	2	2.29
6. Against religion and cultural norm	3	3.44
7. Absent at that time (No knowledge)	1	1.14
8. Fear about side effects	21	24.13
9. Fear of death	8	9.19
10. Total	87	99.93

TABLE- III

REASONS THAT MOTIVATED THE ACCEPTORS TO ADOPT THE PERMANENT METHODS OF BIRTH CONTROL (STERILIZATION)

Reasons	No. of Women	Percentage
1. Economic constraint	8	66.66
2. Ill-health of women	1	8.33
3. Fear of labour pain	1	8.33
4. Fear of miscarriage	1	8.33
5. To check unwanted female births	1	8.33
Total	11	99.98

Conclusion : It appears that the programme of sterilization may become more acceptable if the people are educated more extensively and economically more empowered besides allaying their fear of the side effects of sterilization. However, more emphasis should be given to the methods may be specifically more reliable to them as per their opinion. In the present study the Bhattara believe on the indigenous method of sterilization and they do practise it. Therefore this method should be developed more scientifically among these people so that, the problem of this natural growing population may be checked effectively.

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BHUIYAN*

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Introduction

The Bhuiyan tribe is one of the important tribes of Orissa. Here, one finds them in various stages of cultural development from the almost primitive Pauri Bhuiyans of Keonjhar, Bonai and Pallahara to the thoroughly Hinduized Khandayat Bhuiyan families of Bamra and Gangpur ex-States. The term Bhuiyan is derived from the Sanskrit word 'Bhumi' meaning 'land'. They consider themselves to be children and the owners of the land and hence are known as Bhuiyans. Mr. Stirling, Grierson, Russell, Dr. Hutton, Roy have included this tribe in 'Kol' group, whereas Dalton, McPherson have grouped the tribe on the Dravidian side. Taking the racial and cultural affinities into consideration the tribe may be taken under the 'Kol' group and they have been included as such since the census of 1931. The term Bhuiyan include various tribes like Rajuar, Bathudi, etc., but here it means only Pauri, Rajakoli, Khandait and Rautia Bhuiyans excluding Bathudi, etc., which are considered as separate tribes.

Population

The tribe is spread over eleven districts of Orissa. Their total number is 156,878 of which 152,769 live in rural areas and 4,109 constitute the urban population. The district-wise distribution is as follows:-

* Published in ADIBASI, Vol. V, No.3, (Special Issue), TRB, 1963-64, pp.89-96

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Sl. No.	Name of the District	Male Number	Female Number	Total Population
1.	Keonjhar	26,478	26,208	52,686
2.	Sundargarh	22,664	22,504	45,168
3.	Mayurbhanj	14,966	14,650	29,616
4.	Sambalpur	10,339	10,256	20,595
5.	Dhenkanal	1,965	1,680	3,465
6.	Kalahandi	1,063	1,045	2,108
7.	Balasore	551	615	1,166
8.	Cuttack	536	450	986
9.	Koraput	187	177	364
10.	Puri	176	171	347
11.	Bolangir	110	49	159
12.	Phulbani	20	18	38
Total		79,055	77,823	1,56,878

Language

They are a much acculturated tribe as a whole and have adopted the languages of the regions they inhabit. They speak Oriya and it appears that they have no other language of their own. The Pauris pronounce the Oriya terms peculiarly, whereas the plain Bhuiyans speak like local Oriyas around them.

Social Organization

The tribe is divided into a number of endogamous divisions, of which the old Bhuiyans give an exhaustive list. Some of the so-called divisions are not found in Orissa. Some divisions like 'Hake Bhuiyan', 'Dake Bhuiyan' are mere nicknames. A few divisions like Rajuar, Bathudi, and Saontia have acquired the status of independent tribes and have been listed as such in the Scheduled Tribe list. Living aside these divisions, the Bhuiyans proper may be broadly classified into four divisions like (i) Desa Bhuiyan, (ii) Khandayat Bhuiyan, (iii) Rajakoli or Rajadi Bhuiyan, (iv) Praja/Paraja Bhuiyan. The term 'Des' is an all-inclusive term for the primitive sections of the tribe, of which the genuine Pauri Bhuiyan of the hills is the typical representative. They adopt the 'banghy' or 'wooden carrying pole', as their *santak* whereas the other sections have either sword or axe for their *santak*. There is further division in the Pauri on the basis of their acculturation and absorption of Hindu cultural elements. Koida Bhuiyan, Sadari Bhuiyan and Pauri Bhuiyan of Bonai may serve as an example in this respect. Those plain Bhuiyans whose ancestors had once formed part of the militia of the ex-States, are known as Khandayat or Paik Bhuiyans. The Paraja Bhuiyans known as 'Rautali' are mainly agriculturists. The Rajkoli Bhuiyans are said to be the descendants of the Raj family from Bhuiyan concubines. The Praja Bhuiyan, Paik Bhuiyans and Rajkoli Bhuiyans together are known as Plain Bhuiyans who have subdivisions amongst them known severally as 'Eksai-gharia', Panchsai-gharia', etc.

The Pauri Bhuiyan are said to have no clans. But they have village exogamy. Dr. Pattanaik in his article on Paudi Bhuiyan has shown that they have a number of clans playing an important role in their marital alliances. Khandait Bhuiyans have adopted the Nag and Kachhap *gotars* after Hindus. They have a number of titles like Padhan, Naik, etc., which are exogamous to certain extent.

The elementary social unit of the tribe is the nuclear family consisting of parents and their children. Extended families are comparatively more common amongst the plain Bhuiyans. The family is partilineal, partilocal and patripotestal. The sonless families adopt a boy from one of his agnatic group. Such adopted son enjoys all the rights and privileges of a natural son including the right of inheritance. Ownership to all property vests in men and the widow is entitled to maintenance till her death or remarriage.

The next larger unit of the social organization of the Pauris is the village composed of families regarded as *Kutumb*. The Plain Bhuiyans consider the families of the same title of a village as agnates. So for a Pauri, villages are classified as Bandhu and Kutumb villages. The villages with which a Bhuiyan of a village may enter into marital relationship are called his Bandhu villages.

Every village in case of Pauris, and in a number of villages taken together in case of Khandait or Plain Bhuiyans, there is a secular headman known as Naek or Padhan, a sacerdotal head called Dehuri or Kalo and a village messenger called Tandakar. Rests of the villagers are known as Paraja. These traditional posts are hereditary. In case of the death of heirless Dehuri or Naek, the villagers elect a successor by adopting a tribal test known as Punji (throwing of rice). The Naek is the guide, the representative of the villagers in their relations with outsiders, the judge of the village Panchayat, and the commandant for any fight. The Dehuri performs worships and takes active part in judicial, political, and social matters with the Naek. He fixes the date for hunting expedition and other community worships. Especially, when any one commits the sin of killing a cow knowingly or accidentally, and of keeping a non-Bhuiyan female as a mistress, the Naek and the Dehuri jointly pass the sentence of ex-communication, fix the quantity of food grain and fine to be paid by the guilty for his/her restoration into the community.

According to S. C. Roy "The Pauri village community is not only bound together by bond of blood relationship and common worship of the village deities but it is also an economic, social and quasi-political organization".

The village organization and the importance of the secular head among the Plain Bhuiyans have decayed to a considerable extent due to the imposition of statutory Panchayati Raj system after independence.

Superimposed on the village organization is the wider organization of the Bar in the Pauri country of Pragana in Koida and of Desa in the Plain Bhuiyans'

country. The villages of the Pauri country are grouped for socio-political purposes into several Bars, each Bar consisting of a number of villages. The elders of the villages constituting the Bar meet in Bar-Panchyats with the object to restore an ex-communicated Pauri into the society or to incorporate a non-Pauri into the community. Each Bar has its public servants known as Bhandari, Behera, and Dhoba of its own. The Bhandari notifies the date of gathering, summons the people and shaves the social offender. The Behera does purificatory rites and the Dhoba washes the clothes of the offender's family. A feast is given at the expense of the offender to the assembled guests. Each Bar has a Pat (some prominent hill or river) which is regarded as the deity of the Bar. The Bhuiyans of Koida have no Bar organization but the entire Pragana constitutes one unit having Garhnaek as leader and Simesvari Pat as presiding deity. The Plain Bhuiyans of each Pragana has Pirs. Several Pirs constitute Desa or country. Each Pir has its own Panchayat, with office bearers as Patanaik or Bhalabhai, Panigrahi, Chatia or Dakoa. These posts are honorary and hereditary. The Chatia is the messenger, the Bhalbhai is the president and the Panigrahi eats the first morsel of food in a tribal feast. At these Panchayats, generally matters relating to adultery and marriage with socially unapproved mates, woman slaughter, causing death to cow (*go-badha*) and contamination of leprosy (*machiapatak*) are adjudicated.

When the Panchayat fails to decide an issue, it is referred to a higher tribunal known as Danti Sabha in Mayurbhanj and Gaddy Sabha in Keonjhar, Pallahara and Bonai. The president of Danti Sabha is the tribal head of entire Pragana known as Mahapatra. In case of Gaddy Sabha, there is no such president and the most intelligent person guides the deliberations. Reformatory measures of the entire community are discussed and are passed at these large gatherings.

Such all the wider tribal gatherings for socio-political purposes is not seen among the Pauris but now they have started to assemble in a religious festival of Kanto-Kauri at Bonaigarh, once in a year. Topics of social interest have begun to be informally considered there.

Boys and girls are sleep with their parents till about their 7th or 8th years, after which they are admitted into their respective dormitories. The boy's dormitory is called Mandaghar or Darbarghar and that of the girls in known as Dhangriabasa. Mandaghar and Dangriabasa lie close to each other. The unmarried boys and girls of a village sleep in their respective dormitories. Where separate house for girls are not found, they sleep together in the hut of a lone widow. The boys are trained in habits of obedience, and are instructed in their duties, in dancing and singing. One or two elder boys act as leaders. They chastise the other boys when they neglect in their duty. The older boys exercise authority over the younger ones and distribute the work of fetching water, cleaning the floor, and bringing woods, etc. amongst the younger ones. The leaders decide the villages to which they will go for dancing on a particular day. Similarly the elder girls exercise authority over younger girls and instruct them to perform their duties.

This organization is breaking down. At certain places among the Pauris, these are no more seen. At certain places, one married man known as Dangoa is selected to act as the leader and supervisor of the bachelors. Similarly an elderly woman acts as the supervisor for the maidens.

Among the Plain Bhuiyans, this institution is completely lost. They have started Jubak Sanghas and Kirtan Mandals in their villages. Membership to such organizations is open to all irrespective of their tribe, caste and age.

Life Cycle

The Bhuiyans at the commencement of each successive stage in the life cycle perform some ritual just to relieve the individual from the spiritual influences and to make the new state of life safe and prosperous.

An expectant mother observes certain precautions like avoiding the visit to the jungles, hills, cremation grounds, etc. in order to protect herself and the child from spiritual influences. In case of difficult labour, vows are made to Dharam Deota and Basumata by the head of the family and the vows are fulfilled just after the birth of the child. No male is permitted to enter the chamber during pains and before delivery. The naval cord is cut with an arrow in case of a male child and with a knife or a bamboo blade in case of girl child, by the father's mother and is buried by her outside the house. The mother observes some restrictions in her diet and is given rice and *neem* to eat for a length of time. The ceremonial impurity of the woman is removed by part. On the 8th day, after the clothes are washed, she is allowed to touch water but she cannot cook. On the day of name giving ceremony, the old earthen pots are thrown out. Relatives are given a feast on the day of final purification which usually takes place after 4 to 5 months of the birth of the issue. Her husband is even disallowed from approaching the seat of deities till that day. The name giving ceremony is performed in between 8th to 20th day by the selection of a name through a tribal test. A grain of sesamum together with a grain of rice is dropped into the water of a jug and the name of certain dead relatives of the child is pronounced one by one. The name of the relative at whose call the rice floats is selected as the name of the new-born baby.

The plain Bhuiyans on the other hand observe Sathi on the 6th day, Barajatra on the 12th day and Ekoisia on the 21st day of the birth like the caste neighbours. Final purification is done on the 21st day. Names are given by choice in consultation with the astrologer. They have adopted the Hindu custom of ceremonial feeding of the child. They perform the ceremony on the 4th month. Some elderly member of the family puts into the mouth of the child, a little amount of *khiri* (rice boiled with milk) after offering the same to gods. Feast is given to relatives.

The first hair cutting ceremony is performed within 2 to 5 months after the child birth. The maternal uncle shaves the hair of the baby and casts them into

water. He is given a feast and a drink. The child's ears are perforated at the age of 4 to 5 years by his paternal grandmother in case of Pauris and by the barber in case of Plain Bhuiyans.

A, menstruating woman is considered impure and unclean for a week. When she is not allowed to cook or touch water. On 8th day, she washes her clothes in ash and hot water, anoints her body with oil and turmeric paste and takes bath.

Some Pauris and almost all Plain Bhuiyans are observing thread ceremony at the time of marriage.

Traditionally, the Bhuiyans practise both child and adult marriage. Marriage among them is endogamous so far as the four main social divisions are concerned but exogamous so far as Kutumbs or agnates are concerned. The villages for matrimonial purposes are classified as *kutumb* and *bandhu* villages. In certain areas, the Pauris have the clan system to regulate their marriage. The plain Bhuiyans have clans but the clans are not strictly exogamous. The only restriction on marriage is that there can be no marital tie between a couple if any agnatic relationship is traced between them. They have different titles like Sahu, Thakur etc. Though intermarriage between members of the same title of a village is prohibited, there is no bar to have such tie within the members of the same title living in other villages. Cross cousin marriage is preferred. Polygamy is allowed, though monogamy is the rule. In case of bareness, and inability to assist in agriculture pursuits, second wife is accepted. Four forms of marriage such as Mangibibha, Dharipala, Jhinka and Phulkhosi are recognized in their society. Dharipara and Jhinka are love marriages between adults. Phulkhosi marriage is a compulsory marriage. Mangibibiha in some cases is a love marriage and in other, the partners are selected by their guardians. Widow marriage known as Randi Bibha is also in vogue. The *mangibibha* marriage is an imitation of the Hindu custom and occurs largely among the Plain Bhuiyans. Bride price is never demanded and is paid. Among the advanced folk, money is being paid as bride price instead of payment in kind like cow, goat, etc.

(i) **Dharipara marriage** - During the dances in Bandhu villages, girls and boys fall in love with each other. The girl presents the cob of the maize and the boys gives her one of his necklaces. The acceptance of the articles makes them *phulmitras* and no other boy will propose to the girl. During these visits the affianced young boys and girls meet at markets, when the girl presents her sweet heart with eatables such as cakes, etc. and the boy gives her wooden combs. At a later visit, he seizes his sweet heart and elopes with her. At the boundary of his village, they wait. Some elderly women of the family mark their heads with turmeric paste and take them home. They perform Hanri-sara ceremony by inviting relatives and offering Jau and other delicacies. In such marriage, no bride price is payable at that time. But on the birth of a child or at any time within 12

years from the marriage the customary bride price consisting of three oxen, five *khandis* of paddy, two pieces of cloth are given to the bride's presents.

(ii) **Jhika or Ghincha Marriage-** The boy expresses his desire to marry such and such a girl before his parents, who in their turn send some relatives to ascertain the willingness of her parents. If her parents agree, they say, Ghichi Kari laijeba. On a suitable day the bridegroom goes to the jungle with his friends. Similarly, the bride accompanied with some other girls is sent to the jungle on the pretext of gathering fuel or leaves, etc. The bride-groom seizes his bride-elect and tries to escape. The companions of the bride make a feigned attempt for her rescue. There ensues a mock fight between the two groups and finally the bride and bridegroom escape to the bridegroom's place.

Being informed of the incident, the girl's father and relatives go to the jungle, and make a mock search. Finally they go to the bridegroom's place and demand "blood for blood". With due submission, the boy's people admit the fact and promise to pay the bride piece within a year. A feast is given at the spot.

The bride and groom are taken home, anointed with turmeric paste and oil, clothed with yellow cloth. Harrisara ceremony is performed then and there.

After that the Juharpani ceremony is performed when both stand on a yoke and female relatives pour water mixed with turmeric paste on their heads. Wives of the bridegroom's brother and cousin besmear them with mud.

A year or so later, the parents of the bride are invited to take the bride price and a feast is arranged for the purpose.

(iii) **Phulkhusi-** If a maiden does not accept the love of a young man, he manages to insert in her hair a bunch of white flowers. This amounts to her betrothal and no other youth may claim her hand. When afterwards, the girl agrees, marriage is performed as is the case with Jhika marriage. If reconciliation is not made, the girl can only marry another man after going through ceremonies appropriate for a widow marriage.

(iv) **Mangi Bibha-** In this form the parents take initiative to contact the father of the girl for his willingness through an intermediary. A party pays a visit to her place and when the girl's parents agree to their desire, they put on the brass ring on her right ring finger. The customary bride price is too heavy and differs from locality to locality. In Bonai, one cow for the bride's mother, two bullocks, one for her father and the other for her maternal uncle, two goats, five pieces of cloth, one rupee for her mother and some amount of rice and paddy are usually paid.

Later on, on an appointed day, she is brought to her husband's place through a procession. The women wash the feet of the guests. The Dehuri gives offerings to Earth-goddess, Sun, and Ancestor spirits invoking them to bless the new couple. The Dehuri marks the forehead of the couple with turmeric paste and

sprinkles Arua rice on them. The couples have their nails paired and are conducted to the platform. On this platform, the couple sits upon a yoke and are bathed in water brought by married females. They put on clothes dyed yellow with turmeric and their faces are anointed.

Then follows feast with dance and music for 3 days and nights.

The widows can remarry. The younger brother of the deceased has the first right to keep her. If she wants to marry another man, she loses all right and authority. No specific ceremony is held or bride price is paid for the purpose.

The plain Bhuiyans have modified their marriage ritual after their Hindu brothers. The use of Brahmin, barber on such occasion is definitely a Hindu borrowing element.

A Bhuiyan may divorce his wife for her habitual neglect in duties or quarreling nature or carrying on an intrigue. Wife is made over to her parents and the relatives are informed of the fact of divorce. The divorced wife may remarry just like a widow without any ceremony and bride price.

Death and Mortuary Rites

When an individual falls ill, they consult Rauria (a spirit doctor). Dehuri makes offerings to the Gods and Goddess. When all these remedies fail and the sick dies, the corpse is laid with its head to the south and is besmeared with oil and turmeric paste. After the corpse is taken out, the court-yard and the floor are cleaned. Both forms such as cremation and burial are practiced for disposing of the dead. Persons dying of cholera, smallpox, or of snakebite or of pregnancy are buried. In case of burial, the corpse is laid in a pit of six feet long and 3feet deep on its left side with its head to the south and face to the west. The eldest son throws a handful of earth into the grave. Others follow him. Three pieces of wood are placed on it and the pit is covered with earth. Pieces of stones are piled over the grave and over the stones; thorny twinges and bushes are spread. In case of cremation, the corpse is laid on the funeral pile with its head to the south, and the eldest son puts fire to it and others follow him. On their return from the burial ground, they have their nails pared, and the hair round the scalp shaved. The clothes are washed and a feast is given on 11th day. From the day of burial till this day, a son of the deceased carries leaf-cup of boiled rice to the boundary of the village and puts it down on the ground for the nourishment of the spirit of the deceased. On the day of purification at noon, a party goes to the crossing of two roads, cleans the ground with cow dung and offers a little unboiled rice and turmeric powder to the ancestor spirits. They bring back a red ant or white ant or a leaf or a grain of rice from the spot and come home. They let loose the worm or leaf or rice on the floor of the kitchen.

After the death ceremony, the shade of the dead is called back to the house. At sunset a party of relatives proceeds in the direction of the grave, one

man carrying a new earthen vessel containing rice, another carrying an earthen vessel containing cooked goat's flesh, and another taking two sticks or one stick and one brass cup. At cross road of the boundary, the vessel containing the flesh is smashed into pieces and the deceased is called back. It is believed that the dead does come and enter the vessel containing rice flour. The vessel is brought back home. Someone examines the flour to note the feet print of the animal which is believed to have carried the spirit on its back. Something resembling the foot-print of an elephant, of a cow, is always imagined. A fowl is offered to the ancestor spirits. Some agnates put rice on a leaf plate and offer the same to the dead spirits of the past and finally to the recent one. It is believed that the deceased is thus reconciled with ancestral Gods.

Festivals

The Bhuiyans perform community feasts and festivals all the year round so as to ensure safety and prosperity in their seasonal occupations. The principal festivals are as follows:-

1. **Magh Jatra** :- This festival marks the termination of the agricultural year and is usually observed in the month of Magh (December-January). A hut is constructed and fire is set on it. The ash is taken by all. Next morning the Dehuri sows a handful of grain over the ash, and two Bhuiyans plough the area by themselves. They offer rice and sacrifice few fowls to village deity and Sun God.

The villagers are allowed to cut wood, fell trees, to begin new clearings on their hills tops and to commence fresh agricultural operations only after this ceremonial burning of wood and ploughing and sowing of seed is over.

On this occasion, they make new friends like Makar, Maitra etc.

2. **Maker Jatra**:-This festival is observed in Koira. The Dehuri offers water, molasses, flower, unboiled rice to a sacred stone known as Nageswar Mahadeb in an open field outside the village. Men perform the Paiki dance to celebrate the occasion.

It is after this festival that old domestic servants are released from their contract and new ones are taken in. People make cake and enjoy feasting.

3. **Am Nua**:- This festival is observed in the month of Fagun that is February-March. The day is fixed by Dehuri. He offers Jau (rice boiled with mango blossoms) to village deity and Sun God.

All are allowed to eat mango and new fruits of the season, and to manure the land, after this festival is over.

4. **Akhin Pardhi**:- This festival is observed in Chaitra (March-April). This is the hunting festival. The day is fixed by the Dehuri. All join in the expedition.

Dehuri offers turmeric to the Earth Goddess. The blood of the first hunt is given to Sun God and village deity.

The villagers can hunt in the forest only after this ceremony.

5. **Akhy Muthi:-** The ceremonial sowing is done in Baisak (April-May) to ensure good crop for the year. The Dehuri sows some paddy after offering unboiled rice to Sun, Earth and village deity. This is also done for their personal benefits. The wet cultivators of plains also worship Laxmi on this occasion.

6. **Asarhi Puja:-** This ceremony is observed in Asadh (June-July) to ensure seasonable and abundant rainfall and to have a good harvest. All contribute some paddy to Dehuri who worships the village deity on this occasion and offers a goat and fowl.

7. **Gamha Punei:-** This is observed in the month of Sraban (July-August). They feed cattle with salt. In the evening, they clean their hoofs, anoint their foreheads with turmeric paste and feed them rice. Lamps are lighted in cowshed.

8. **Nuakhai Festival:-** This festival is observed in the month of Bhadrab (August-September) is intended to make the reaping and the eating of new rice safe. They offer rice, water and molasses to Sun God and cut a few sheaves from their land. These sheaves are suspended from their roofs. After three days, the Dehuri scarifies a fowl to Sun God. The new rice is boiled and is offered to village deity, ancestral spirits.

9. **Karama Jatra:-** This is observed in the month of Kartik or Asin (October-November). The date is fixed by the Dehuri. The Karama branch is brought by him and is planted before Mandaghar. The girls offer rice and molasses to the plant. They sing the story of Karama Raja and Rani. All enjoy the night in dance, feast and music. Next morning the Karma Plant is taken round the village and is immersed in water.

10. **Khala Puja :-** When threshing is over, a hand full of rice is placed on the threshing floor. New rice beer and rice flour cakes are offered to ancestral spirits at the threshing floor. Night is spent in merry making.

11. **Pusa Punia:-** The occasion is observed in Pusa (December) and a number of days and nights are spent in dance and music.

In addition to these tribal festivals, the plain Bhuiyans observe a number of other Hindus festivals adopted from the neighbouring castes. Chita Parab in the month of Sraban (July- August), Laxmi Puja in Magusir (November), Ratha Jatra in Asadh (June-July) are a few of them.

Dance and Music:

The Bhuiyans are very fond of dance and music. Young men and women are found dancing for hours together in the open space in front of Mandaghar of their village. Specially, on occasions of periodical religious festivals, and social festivals and occasion of the visit of young men and women of the neighboring villages, dances and songs continue for two, three or more consecutive days and nights without break.

Men generally sing songs and play upon their *change* drums. The women are the principal dancers. They have various types of dances, in most of which the dancers adopt, stooping gait, in some they have erect posture, in some the women folk veil their faces, and in others they dance unveiled, in some the movements are show, in others brisk, in some dance the dancers are arranged in one or more rows, in some forms they move in circles, in some form a large number of men take in part and in others smaller number. Their dances appear to be suggestive of courtship and wooing.

Sanginat, Udkanat, Deganat, Tukinat, Burinat, Paikinat are the names of their dances. The most interesting dances are the dances in imitation of various animals, reptiles, birds of their native hills and forests. Sapparinat, Boraparinat, Baghparinat, Bhalparinat, Mirgparieat, Hetaparinat, Gidhparinat, and Murgiparinat are a few of them. Today, most of the imitative dances are lost.

Songs :

They are fond of music and songs. Their musical instruments are few and simple. These consist of bamboo flute and the *changu* drums. The *changus* are made by them with wooden frame and the goat skin for sounding board.

The subject matter of songs is the subject of the environment and the feeling of human heart. They have now learnt a lot of Radha-Krishna love songs.

The plain Bhuiyans have developed a feeling of hatred towards this co-dance and they have almost given it up. They are arranging Kirtans and the usual songs are Radha-Krishna love affairs.

Material Culture :

The Khandayat Bhuiyans live in plain with other Hindu castes whereas the Pauris live on the valleys between successive hill ranges, close to the streams. Forest land surrounds their habitats within which they can shift their site. Each site consists of a very few limited number of families from 20 to 40. In some villages, the houses are set in rows with a wide street in between. In some other villages, houses are clustered around the house of headman and Dehuri. The jack fruit trees are there outside the settlement. In the middle or at the entrance is the Mandaghar. In its front lies the courtyard known as Darbar.

The houses consist of one to four huts. The huts are rectangular in shape with two sloping roofs. The walls are made of logs of wood planted vertically on the ground and plastered over with mud. The roofs are thatched with grass or straw. Walls are coloured but not painted. One of the rooms is used as the seat of ancestral spirits and is usually the store room. The other chamber is the sleeping and kitchen room. One room is utilized by outsiders and visitors. The other room is used as cowshed or goat shed.

The stock and store of the house is very limited. Earthenware vessels for cooking, storing and drawing water, earthenware lamp, a stone roller, grindstone, palm leaf mats, few pumpkin gourds for carrying water, leaf baskets and bamboo baskets, carrying poles, winnowing baskets, brooms made of wild-grass, rain hats and umbrellas, bamboo trap for fishing, knives, axes spear, bows, arrows, combs, tobacco containers, flutes are the few articles generally found in their houses. The well-to-do persons have brass plates, cups, jars, string cots, cloth umbrellas, Kerosene oil lamps, lantern, wooden mortars and pestle, husking lever and aluminum utensils.

As agricultural implements, they have axe, spade, digging stick, plough share, yoke, hoe and plough. For hunting purposes, they use bow and arrow, axe, sword and spear.

Their dress is very simple. The poor wear only a strip of loin cloth kept in its place by a string round the waist. Men usually wear a small cloth round the waist. At the time of dance and going outside to market place, long clothes are used. Napkin in case of poor people and a cloth in case of average men are used as upper garment. The plain Bhuiyans wear shirts, banyan and mill-made clothes. Females wear cloths of 12 cubits long. Usually cloths are coloured ones.

The ornaments consists of brass bangles on both arms, brass Kankan on wrist, ring on fingers, Jhantias on toes, brass anklet on leg, bead necklaces, earrings and nose rings. The Plain Bhuiyans have adopted silver ornaments as are used by the neighbouring communities. The Bhuiyans neither tattoo their faces, nor wear any head-dress like Kondh.

Economy

The sources of living of the Pauris are food gathering, hunting and shifting cultivation. They collect edible roots, fruits and worms (Kai) from the forests, hunt wild animals, and fish occasionally from the near-by streams. As agriculture, they practise shifting cultivation. Bushes and trees are cut from an area of the slopping hills. They are burnt in piles and the ashes are scattered. In the first year they sow Biri, Kolath, Jutangi, castor seeds and cotton, and plant pumpkin, bottle gourd, brinjal, black-gram, sweet potato, etc. Towards November and December all these produces are harvested and the field remains barren for 2 to 3 months. Towards April, the little bushes that are grown on the ground are burnt and the field is

cultivated for sowing of upland paddy. Kangu, millet, *ragi*, maize and red gram are also cultivated along with it. The paddy is harvested towards November but the other produces remain till January. On the 3year, the plot is made ready for sowing Guladi, Suan, etc. These are harvested towards October.

Thus the Pauris cultivate upland paddy, Suan, *ragi*, Kangu, Guladi, Kolath, Biri, Beans, Cotton, castor seeds, sweet potato, vegetables from his field. Wet cultivation of rice and terracing the field are gradually entering into the society.

The Plain Bhuiyans are mostly settled agriculturist. A few of them serve in firms and under Government. Most of them are labourers and earn their livelihood by daily wages. As settled agriculturists they produce paddy, Suan, Pulses, Kolath, and vegetables. A few of them do cultivate sugarcane and tobacco.

The Bhuiyans consume what they produce. In addition to these items, they purchase salt from the local markets. They buy clothes from local traders. Liquors made of *mahul*, rice, *salap*, date plam are their favourite diet.

They are exploited to a great extent due to their illiteracy and poverty. The local merchants reach them at their time of need and eagerly lend them money. They realise the money in kind at the time of harvest. They take three times of their money at the time of recovery. Thus the Bhuiyans are found without anything to live upon within a fortnight of their harvest.

The cloth merchants, ornament makers reach them and dupe the Bhuiyans to a considerable extent. A cloth of rupees five is sold to them for paddy of worth rupees fifteen or so. The beer merchants similarly cheat them.

Conclusion

The Bhuiyans, especially the Pauris are very backward. Education is yet to spread among them. They are simple and the notorious non-tribals are taking advantage of their simplicity.

BHUYAN*

*B. B. Mohanty*¹

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

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

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

The approach to the Bhuyan villages located in this region is very difficult, particularly in rainy season, due to lack of adequate road communications. Moreover, the jungles, which once teemed with many wild animals such as tigers,

* Published in Tribes of Orissa (revised edition), 2004, pp. 69-75

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bisons, elephants, bears and wild boars, have now been completely deprived of any such fauna, due to the continued practice of shifting cultivation.

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

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

The Bhuyan hamlets or villages are situated either on plateau land on the hill tops or else on the hill slopes in the middle of the forest. The villages are generally small in size and contain a homogeneous Bhuyan population. The settlement patterns of the villages are not identical and do not conform to any pattern. In a village some houses may be built adjacent to one another in rows facing a street which runs in between them, while other houses may be located here and there in the uneven terraces. There is usually a courtyard at the front of the house and a kitchen garden at the back. The cowshed is constructed at a convenient place on one side of the courtyard. Like the Juangs, the Bhuysans have well-maintained youth dormitories known as Mandaghar or Darbarghar for the unmarried boys, usually constructed in the centre of the village. The dormitory also serves as a guest house, meeting place for elders and a granary for the village. Important musical instruments like the *changes* (tambourine) and drums are kept hanging from the extended deer antlers fixed to the walls. In front of the dormitory is an open space which serves as the dancing area for the unmarried boys and girls of the village. On one of the corners of the dancing area, at a little distance, lies the sacred shrine of Gainsiri Khunta, made of a round piece of carved wooden pillar and representing the tutelary deity of the village.

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

The material contents of the Bhuyan house exhibit a very poor picture, from which the economic condition of the tribe can be assessed. House articles consist mainly of different types of earthen vessels, jars, gourd containers, palm

leaf mats, string cots, wooden headrests, a leaf umbrella and raincoat, broom, bamboo baskets of different sizes, a winnowing fan, a mortar and pestle, a grinding stone, small and large axes, a few knives, a ploughshare, a digging stick, a hoe, a bow and arrow, a kerosene lamp, and a grain bin made from straw. Except for the earthenware vessels and iron implements, which are purchased from local market, the other articles are self-made.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The first year of shifting cultivation (*biringa*) involves several stages such as the selection of hill slopes in December-January by the village committee headed by the Pradhan, tree-felling and bush-clearing (*guchhakata*) from February to April, piling up of felled trees and firing (*anapuda*) in April-May, bush-clearing (*patikata*) in May, sowing (*buna*) in July after Akhin Parab, ploughing and hoeing (*bhuinyange*) in July immediately after hoeing, weeding and debushing (*judabachha*) in September-October after Ashiari puja, watching the crops in November-December, and finally harvesting from December onwards. The crops grown in the swidden during the first year are *kolatha*, *birhi*, *alsi* and various types of vegetables, pulses and creepers.

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

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

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

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

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

The family, being patrilineal, is the smallest social unit and comprises both consanguineal and affinal relations. As the family is patrilineal descent is traced through the male line from father to son. A daughter belongs to her father's *khilli* (extended lineage group) so long as she is unmarried, but after marriage she becomes a member of her husband's *khilli*. The family is mostly nuclear, consisting of husband, wife and their unmarried children. In some cases dependents, like parents or unmarried brothers and sisters, are also found living with the nuclear family. Extended or joint families are rarely met with.

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

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

The next biggest unit is the village, which may comprise the members of one or several *khillis*. In the past the Bhuyan villages were homogenous and all the households in a village were related to one another by blood; therefore intra-village marriage was forbidden. Broadly speaking, Bhuyan villages are divided

into two groups: *bandhu* villages (cognatic) where marriage is possible and *kutumba* villages (agnatic) where marriage is not possible. Recently, due to in and out migration the composition of villages has undergone a change. Now, villages with both cognatic and agnatic groups are not unusual.

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

The Bhuyan observe clan (*khilli*) and village exogamy if the village is inhabited by one *khilli*. In the past marriage within the village was forbidden because the people of a village were agnates and belonged to a single *khilli*. The types of marriage prevalent among them are marriage by elopement (*dharipala*), marriage by capture (*ghicha*), love marriage (*phulichusi*, *amilesare*, *kalalesare*) and marriage by negotiation (*mangibibha*), etc. The most common type is marriage by capture (*ghicha*), although instances of marriage by elopement (*dharipala*) and negotiation (*mangibibha*) are not unusual. Widow marriage is also prevalent in the society. They do not recognise cross-cousin marriage as a preferential form of marriage. Likewise levirate and sororate marriages are not practised in their society. An arranged marriage involves the payment of a heavy bride price and expenditure on feasts given to the guests, agnates and cognates who attend the marriage ceremony. Bride wealth varies depending upon the economic status of the family. Generally, it consists of three bullocks or cows. Besides, one piece of cloth and a rupee is given to the bride's mother and about 160 kgs. of rice and a he-goat for the feast. In the case of other types of marriage, the bride price is also paid but at a much reduced rate.

They believe that a human being has to die one day or other after being very old. News of a death is immediately conveyed to the kinsmen and other elder

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ECONOMIC LIFE AND FOOD GAP IN TAMERA - A BHUINYA VILLAGE IN KEONJHAR DISTRICT *

*N. Patnaik*¹

Setting

Tamera is a small Bhuinya village situated in Banspal block at a distance of about 20 miles from Keonjhar of Orissa State. The nearest central place is Kanjipani through which the newly built Calcutta-Bombay National Highway No.6 has passed. Kanjipani is a bus stop and provides some functions of lower order such as a branch post office, a small medical store, a weekly market, tea shop, etc., to the villages lying in its hinterland. A *katcha* road of 4 kms long meandering through two high hills and densely wooded country connects Kanjipani with Tamera village.

At the time of the study of the village in 1975, there were 39 families of which 29 families belonged to the Bhuinyas, four to the Juangs, five to the Gaudas and one to a Pana (a scheduled caste) which are scattered within a radius of one kilometer. All the households lie to the north of a hill stream which runs very close to the village from west to east.

The lands immediately around the village which are called Badi are used for growing thatching grass, maize and mustard and the hill in which the Bhuinyas of the village carry on Taila cultivation (shifting cultivation) lie in the east and west of the village. Many jackfruit and mango trees are present in and around the village.

The Bhuinyas were the first to come and settle down in the village. Then came the Juang families followed by Milkmen and Pana. The families of different castes and tribes live separately from one another in their respective wards.

* Published in ADIBASI, Vol. XXVII, Nos.1-4, 1977-78, pp.01-20

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As the study was confined to the Bhuinya families exclusively, the demographic features and other aspects of the community are given below.

Demographic features

The distribution of the Bhuinya population by age and sex groups is given in the Table 1.

Table 1
(Distribution of Bhuinya population by age & sex)

Age-groups	Male	Female	Total
Up to 10 years (Children)	32	37	69
Above 10 and below 20 years (Adolescents)	17	12	29
Above 20 years (Adults)	22	25	47
Total	71	74	145

It is seen in the table that the population of the adolescents is much less than that of the children at one end and that of the adults at the other end of the age grades. A detailed demographic analysis of the Bhuinya will throw more light on the bulges of the population at both ends and shrinkage of population in the middle.

The breakup of the family types is given in the Table 2.

Table 2
(Types of Bhuinya families)

<u>Type</u>	<u>Number</u>
1. Nuclear	
(a) Parents and unmarried children.	19
(b) One of the parents and unmarried children.	8
2. Intermediate	
(Parents with married children).	<u>2</u>
	Total 29

Each nuclear family has a house of its own. If a man has in his family his mother, grown up unmarried sisters and daughters, he builds a separate house for them close to his own and his grown up unmarried sons and brothers sleep in the village *mandaghar*.

The size distribution of the Bhuinya families is given in Table 3.

Table 3
(Size of Bhuinya families)

<u>No. of families</u>	<u>No. of members</u>
05	Up to 3
20	4-6
4	7-9

Settlement Pattern and Social Structure

The village is composed of mainly five clusters of houses each inhabited by a group of families belonging to a clan called Khila. Clan is an exogamous division of the tribe. The five Khilas are (1) Mantri of one family, (2) Parihal of one family, (3) Pradhan of five families, (4) Dehuri of seven families and (5) Saningi of 15 families. The Mantri Khilais signified as M., Parihal as R., Pradhan as P., Dehuri as D, and Saningi Khila as S. in the map which is provided in the paper. Formerly the Dehuri and Mantri Khilas were one and the same. That is why inter-marriage between them is forbidden. Likewise, all other Khilas are also exogamous. The family belonging to the Parihal Khila has recently migrated from Lata a nearby village.

The study reveals that the Saningi, Dehuri and Pradhan Khilas are the original settlers of the village and all others followed them in succession in the last two decades. The map shows the location of houses of different families in the village. The household of Mantri Khila is located in the south and that of Parihal Khila in the extreme north of the village. Of the 5 families of Pradhan Khila one lives with the Mantri Khila and the other with Saningi Khila. There are 7 households belonging to the Dehuri Khila and their main cluster lies close to the village in the east. Three Dehuri families live away from their main cluster-one in the south of the village with a few Saningi families and two in the main cluster of the Saningi Khila. As the Saningis are numerically preponderant their cluster which is situated in the north of the village is the largest. Two Dehuris, one Pradhan and the Parihal families also live in the cluster of the Saningi Khila. Apart from its main cluster the Saningi Khila has two sub-clusters-one in the south having four families and the other in the far east of the village having three families.

Each of the Khilas is split up into a number of lineages and the families belonging to a lineage that tend to cluster in some cases and scattered in other cases. Mantri family (House No. M1), Parihal family (House No. R 17), one Pradhan family (House No. P5) and two Saningi families (House Nos. S24 and S29) have no lineage of their own in the village. The remaining four Pradhan families (House Nos. P2, P3, P4 and P6) belong to one lineage group and live scattered in the village.

All the seven Dehuri families (House Nos. D7, D8, D18, D19, D20, D21, and D26) are of one lineage group. Except for the three families (House Nos. D7, D8 and D26) the remaining four families (House Nos. D18, D19, D20 and D21) are clustered together in a single place.

In regard to the Saningi Khila, two families (House Nos. S24 & S29) have no lineage of their own in the village. The remaining 13 families belong to three different lineage groups. The composition of each lineage group is as follows : (1) four adjacent families of house Nos. S11, S12, S13 & S16, (2) two adjacent families of house Nos. S14 & S15, (3) four families of house Nos. S9 & S10 situated together in their main cluster and house Nos. S22 and S23 living together in the far east of the

village and (4) three adjacent families of house Nos. S25, S27 and S28 living in the extreme south of the village. Of the two Saningi families (House Nos.S24 and S29) who have no lineage of their own in the village, one family, (House No. S24) lives close to a cluster of two families, (House Nos. S22 and S23) of this Khila in the east and the other family (House No.S29) close to a cluster of three families, (House Nos.S25, S27 and S28) of the same Khila in the south. It appears from the map that the general pattern of settlement is that members of different Khilas live in separate clusters with a few exceptions of inter Khila intermingling of families.

House Type

Each household has a single roomed house of its own. Cow sheds and goat pens are built adjacent to the houses. A Bhuinya house is rectangular in ground plan. The walls are made of logs of wood plastered with mud and the roof is thatched with grass once in 10 years. The verandah is made of beaten earth and coloured black. The black colour is obtained from the bark of Arjun tree. The wall also is coloured carefully by using coloured earth available locally. The lower portion of the wall is coloured crimson and the upper portion white.

Generally each house is provided with a door in front and it serves as both entrance and exit. The Bhuinyas do not have windows in their houses. But some progressive ones among them use window as a decoration to their houses.

Mandaghar

Conspicuous in the village is the bachelors dormitory which is called Mandaghar in the Bhuinya pih. The Mandaghar is the largest hut in the village. It has walls on three sides and is open in front. The side walls and wooden posts are carved with decorative symbols depicting animals. The other distinguishing feature of Mandaghar is its roof which is thatched with grass in a special way. Fire is always kept alight in the centre of the room and the unmarried young men sleep there at night encircling the fire place. Visitors to the village are also accommodated in the Mandaghar. The unmarried boys maintain the Mandaghar in good repair with the help of unmarried girls. Boys keep hanging their *changus* -a flat tambourine like drum of medium size on the deer horns fixed in the walls. In front of the Mandaghar is a small open space where boys and girls dance together at night.

The village elders spend a large part of their time at the dormitory in the open space in front either gossiping or mending baskets.

The village council meets at Mandaghar and matters of common interest such as division of land for shifting cultivation and performance of religious activities are all discussed here by the village elders.

The Mandaghar is important not only socially and politically but also economically and ritually. In one of the corners of the Mandaghar a small room with a raised wooden platform is built to store seeds of cereals, pulses, minor millets

which are grown in swiddens. As soon as the sowing season approaches the Bhuinyas appoint an auspicious day and consecrate the seeds at Mandaghar by worshiping the village goddess. In general the Bhuinya village grows up with the Mandaghar as its central focal point in all respects.

Shrines of Village Deities

Other common places of importance are the shrines of village gods and goddesses. The shrine of the village goddess called Gramshiri is situated at one end of the village. The Bhuinya worship the deity collectively once in the month of February and once in August. Badamu is another goddess as important as Gramshiri and is also worshipped in common by all the Bhuinya families.

There is another shrine near the hill stream which flows in the south of the village. It is the abode of another important deity called Thakurani. In the month of January all the Bhuinya families of the village contribute each Rs. 6.00, half a kg. of paddy and one kg. of rice for a feast at the shrine and one and all of the village irrespective of caste and tribe take part in it. The idea behind these ritual activities is to maintain peace and amity in the village and keep the deities contented and satisfied so that they ward off evil spirits and calamities from the village.

Economic life

1. *Taila land* --The habitat of the Bhuinyapirh is mountainous, thickly wooded and rugged. There is very little plain land in the Bhuinya country. It is for this reason that the Bhuinyas resort to shifting cultivation on the hill-slopes which is their primary source of livelihood. The Bhuinya's call it Kaman or Taila cultivation. In a village meeting which is held in the month of February the villagers decide which hill-slope they would take up for Taila cultivation in the current year. On an appointed day all people of the village go to the site chosen for cultivation for distribution of land among themselves. Each family gets as much land as it can cultivate. Families having more members get more than those having less numbers. If there is a small family, it is given land in the middle of the hill-slope where it will be better protected. If there are several men available in the family for guarding the crop it is given in a more exposed position or in the outer fringes of the selected hill-slope. The village officials such as the Pradhan (village secular headman) Dehuri (religious headman) and ward member of the statutory gram panchayat do not enjoy any special privilege in regard to allotment of land. The extent of land allotted to a family for shifting cultivation is determined by the size of the family and the labour force which it can deploy for cultivation.

Each family cultivates every year at least two strips of land located in two different hills. One of them is called Rasi Kaman (Niger cultivation) or first year Taila and the other Dhana Kaman (paddy cultivation) or second year Taila. It means that a particular strip of land is cultivated for two years first year for growing Niger, black gram and horse gram and second year for paddy, *jally*, *ragi* and *kulthi*. After

two years it is left fallow for a period of 10 to 12 years to recuperate and another strip that has sufficiently recuperated is taken up for shifting cultivation. The cycle of rotation two decades ago was only five to six years. But it has now increased to 10 to 12 years on account of slow regeneration of vegetational cover in the hill-slopes.

In the month of May the Bhuinyas start the jungle-clearing. They cut down the trees and creepers and after a lapse of a few days set fire to the dried matter. Just before the rain comes or during the rains they sow seeds of Niger, black gram and horse gram mixed together in the first year Taila land then plough the field with the help of a hoe. Some people also use country plough in areas of gentle slope. They harvest Niger and other crops grown with it in the month of January. In the second year they sow seeds of paddy *jalii*, *ragi* and *kulthi* mixed together in the same plot after clearing and firing the brushwood and undergrowth in the same manner as before. They sow the seeds in July and plough the field with the help of a hoe or a plough during the rains. Weeding is essential for good growth of the plants. The crops are reaped in succession from the month of December.

The depredation caused by the wild elephants, deer and bears is immense and the primitive weapons of the Bhuinyas and their indigenous techniques of scaring away these wild animals are not very effective in protecting the crops. The milkmen of the village let loose their cattle which also destroy the crops grown by the Bhuinyas. Their complaint against the milkmen to the police and administrative authorities goes unheeded.

2. *Badi land* - The land around the village is called Badi land and is more fertile than the swiddens in the hill-slope. The Bhuinyas own these lands on individual basis and manure them by applying cow dung. They plough them under with the help of country plough and grow maize, mustard, bean and cucumber in these lands. In some places papaya, banana and castor plants are also grown along the ridges of these lands.

3. *Taila land* -The land in the valley and on either side of the hill stream is called Bila land. Only five families own three acres of such land and they grow paddy in this land. The lands of this type get sufficient water throughout the year and are most fertile. Therefore the farmers do not use any manure in such lands.

4. *Grass land*- The villagers have set apart a large strip of land in which they grow thatching grass. The grass land is held by the village in common and the grass grown there is shared equally among them. If anyone needs more than his share he has to purchase it from others having surplus.

5. *Cremation ground* -The villagers have earmarked a piece of land as cremation ground which is held in common. It is here that the dead bodies irrespective of community are cremated.

6. *Forest Land*- The villagers hold that the hill-slopes which face towards

their village are in their possession and it is on this side of the hills their swiddens lie. The opposite sides of the hills belong to the villages towards which they face, and on these sides the people of those villages carry on shifting cultivation. But no such demarcation is observed in the case of collection of forest produce and grazing. A Bhuinya is free to collect forest produce anywhere in the Bhuinya-pirh. Similarly he can graze his cattle wherever suitable pasturage is available. Normally the Bhuinyas do not go outside their village boundaries for these purposes.

Some years back hunting was a substantial source of food supply and it was practised either individually or communally. But the practice of hunting is almost given up and is confined only to one or two ritual occasions. One of the reasons for gradual abandonment of hunting is that the forests have been cut considerably and the wild animals have diminished in number.

A word about the rights of the Bhuinyas over the forests may be mentioned here. The Bhuinyas regard the forest as their own and the clearings on the hill-slopes as their private property. But according to the forest rules the Bhuinyas have actually no right to the forests at all and the practice of shifting cultivation is declared illegal. However, the Bhuinyas enjoy certain concessions in regard to collection of forest produce. The Bhuinyas are permitted to collect forest products only for own consumption and not for sale. In regard to grazing the concessions are that grazing may be allowed in the reserved forests for all kinds of cattle, except sheep and goats subject to payment of grazing fee.

The Bhuinyas have less cattle and more sheep and goats and as there is insufficient pasturage in the open forests, they use the reserved areas for this purpose in contravention of the forest rules. The entire area under Khesra forest is almost out-cropped and therefore unsuitable for shifting cultivation. But according to the concessions the Bhuinyas are allowed to carry on shifting cultivations in Khesra forests. Therefore the indiscriminate felling and burning of the trees in the hill-slopes which are under reserved forest for the purpose of shifting cultivation is done out of sheer necessity. The details of the rules for management and preservation of forests which were in vogue in the ex-Keonjhar State and the rights and concessions as applicable to the Keonjhar Division at present are furnished in Annexures I and II respectively. A close look to these forest rules and concessions reveal many other areas of conflict between the forest economy of the Bhuinyas and the rules regarding preservation and conservation of forests.

Land Revenue and system of free labour

During the feudal regime the villagers in the Bhuinya-pirh used to pay revenue to the erstwhile ruling chief of Keonjhar State. The collection of revenue in the Bhuinya-pirh was made on village basis as was in vogue in the neighbouring Juang-pirh but on individual basis. The names of the *ryots* and the extent of land they cultivated were recorded in a revenue register called Aekapadia which was maintained by the village Pradhan since 1931-32. This demand register also

contained the amount of revenue which was to be paid by each *ryot* to the ruling chief of the State. The village Pradhan was responsible for collecting the land revenue and depositing it in the treasury of the ruling chief.

The total revenue collected from Tamera village was 19 rupees, 9 *annas* and 2 paise. Since 1973 the people of this village have stopped paying any revenue to the Government. The land survey and settlement was going on during the field work in the village and when the settlement would be finalised and revenue fixed per holding, the *ryots* would pay revenue for their holdings according to the fixed rates.

During the feudal regime the Bhuinyas all over the Bhuinya-pirh were subjected to forced labour (Bethi of various types such as Ratha Bethi, Inda Bethi, Dashara Bethi and Palia system) by which labour is supplied to visitors to the Bhuinya villages free of charges. The Rath Bethi which is now abolished included supply of ropes used for drawing cars during car festival at Keonjhar. They used to provide a very big *sal* tree to the king on the occasion of Ind festival and during Dasara they had to supply a ram for sacrificial purpose.

Except the Palia system which is still in vogue in the Bhuinya-pirh all other types of Bethi system have already been done away with since independence. The Palia system is to provide by turn certain services to the visitors to the Bhuyan villages. Whenever there is a visitor in a Bhuinya village the villagers serve him in rotation at the rate of three persons daily. One of them provides firewood and the other supplies water and the third one cooks his meals. They also provide food to the porters who carried the visitor's belongings. It is only the Bhuinya porters who are entitled to such free food from the villagers. The Bhuinyas provide porters to the visitor for carrying his luggage from village to village.

Land System

Low-lying paddy fields in the plains are scarce in the whole of Bhuinya-pirh in general and in areas from Kanjipani to Banspal in particular. Therefore the people have to remain satisfied with lands in the hill-slopes where mixed crops are grown by axe-cultivation. Considering the quantum of labour available in the study village the extent of land available for shifting cultivation within the village boundary is not insufficient. Inadequate labour supply and primitive agricultural tools are serious constraints for bringing the available land surface under shifting cultivation. These difficulties are responsible for acute shortage of food in the Bhuyan-pirh in general and in Tamera village in particular.

The lands under shifting cultivation belong in common to the whole village. A strip of swidden remains in possession of a person as long as he carried on shifting cultivation there. When the land lies fallow it reverts to the village. The grass land also belongs to the community. The low-lying paddy fields and other types of land in the plain such as Badi and homestead lands are individually held. The fruit trees such as jackfruit and mango trees belong individually to those who

have planted them. At the time of partition the trees are not partitioned among the co-sharers. The trees are held in common among them while the fruits are equally divided among co-partners every year. On the whole private ownership of property is largely in vogue among the Bhuiyans, In other words, the system of revenue collection from the Bhuiya *ryots* on the basis of rent register had weakened the traditional communal ownership of property among them.

Business of Living

1. *Produce from land* – Of the 29 Bhuiya families of Tamera village, 27 families cultivated the first year Taila (Rasi Kaman) and all families cultivated the second year Taila (Dhana Kaman) in the year under review. Each family had two strips of land, one strip of *Rasi Kaman* and the other for *Dhana Kaman*. Each strip of land on an average measures 1.5 acres. Thus the area under first year Taila cultivation was roughly 40 acres and that under second year Taila cultivation, 45 acres. Except three families others have Badi land each of half an acre in extent. Thus there are roughly 13 acres of Badi land which are under cultivation.

Only five families have Bila land to the extent of three acres in the valley bottom. On account of financial difficulties and preoccupations in Taila cultivation, they were not able to grow any crop in their Bila lands. The Table 4 gives the produce from the Taila and Badi lands.

Table-4
(Produce from Taila and Badi lands)

Type of land	Crops grown	Extent of land under cultivation (in acre)	Amount produced in Kg	Rate of conversion in money	Money value	Converted to rice at the rate of Rs.1.50 per 1 Kg of rice
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
1. 1 st year Taila (Rasi Kaman)	Rasi (Niger)	40	1,290	3.00	3,870	2,580
2. 2 nd year Taila (Dhana Kaman)	Dhana (Paddy)	45	2,786	0.75	2,090	1,394
3. Badi	1.Mustard 2.Maize	13	333 153	4.40 2.00	1,465 306	976 202
				Total	..	5152

Calculated at the rate of 3Kgs of rice being consumed daily per family 5,152 Kgs of rice will be sufficient for about two months.

2. *Produce of Tree crops* - The Bhuinyas are famous for plantation of Jackfruit trees. Of the 29 families, 26 families have jackfruit trees either individually or in share with others. There are about 72 jackfruit trees which bore in the year under review about 721 fruits. The Bhuinyas are not in the habit of selling jackfruits. Whatever they get they consume and they say that the jackfruits provide food for one month.

There are also many mango trees in the Bhuinya country which have grown mostly of their own accord. The mango crop provides food to the Bhuinyas of the study village only for a month and the mango kernel which they eat by mixing with roots and tubers and green leaves lasts for two months. During mango season the Bhuinyas eat nothing but mangoes. Similarly when the jackfruits are available they eat only jackfruits and nothing else. These two fruits including mango kernel and seeds of jackfruits provide food to the Bhuinyas of the study village at least for four months.

3. *Roots and tubers and green leaves* - It is difficult to ascertain how much roots and tubers and green leaves are collected annually by the Bhuinyas from the forests. The dietary study in three families revealed that two families used roots and tubers mixed with other types of food stuff for three days in a week and the quantity used daily varied from half a Kg. to three Kgs. Calculated on this basis the total collection of roots and tubers would not exceed 6,000 Kgs. In a year. Since the roots and tubers are not marketable commodities it is difficult to convert them to money value. The Bhuinyas subsist on the roots and tubers exclusively when the cereals, millets and pulses are scarce. In the case of the study village the roots and tubers collected from the forests provide food for a month and a half.
4. *Wage* - The Bhuinyas of Tamera earn some wage by working on the National Highway No.6 and in the horticultural farm at Kanra and in the paddy fields of milkmen of their village. The rate of wage per day and per head for road work is Rs.2.00 for male and Rs.1.75 for female. The rate of daily wage for farm labour is Rs.1.50 per head for male and Rs.1.25 for female. The total income from these sources is roughly Rs.1043.00. It is only during the off season that they take up road work or farm labour to supplement their income from their own sources. For road work and farm labour they are paid in cash while for agricultural labour in the lands of the milkmen they are paid in paddy at the rate of one *pai* (approximately one Kg.) for six hours of labour. It is the practice with the Bhuinyas that they spend most of the wage on food. They buy rice out of the cash wage from the local weekly markets. Calculated at the rate of Rs.1.50 per Kg. of rice the quantity of rice that can be obtained out of the wage income of

Rs.1,043.00 is of the order of 695 Kgs. which is sufficient only for a period of eight days for all the 29 Bhuinya families.

5. *Loan* – All the Bhuinya families are in debt, and their sources of loan are Kothighar (Graingola), Tribal Development Co-operative Society and local money and grain lenders. A short note on each of these sources is given below.
 - (i) *Kothighar (Graingola)* – A branch of the main Gonasika Kothighar operates at Kanra and the Bhuinyas of Tamera borrow paddy from this branch.
 - (ii) *Tribal Development Co-operative Society (TDCS)* – There is one TDCS working at Kanjipani. Its main function is to buy the agricultural and forest produce from the local tribals at fair price and provide interest free loan in cash and kind except for loan in the form of seeds for which 10 percent interest is charged. The objective of the TDCS is to check the business of the itinerant businessmen who cheat the tribals in weights and measures and also in payment of the cost of the produce which they buy from the Bhuinyas.
 - (iii) *Local money and paddy lenders* – (a) *Gopal Khuntia of Tamera* – Gopal Khuntia is a milkman (Gouda) by caste. He migrated to Tamera 15 years back, held some land from the Bhuinyas and started agriculture and animal husbandry which is his caste occupation. In a very short period of time he became a rich and progressive farmer. He soon started business in paddy lending in Tamera as well as the neighbouring villages. The rate of interest he charges is 50 percent.

Hara Pradhan, Bhikari Sainingi, Danja Parihal and Chhabi Dehuri of Tamera – Certain Bhuinyas of Tamera have improved their economic condition by virtue of hard work and have been able to carry on business by lending their surplus agricultural produce to the poorer families of their village. The important ones among them are Hara Pradhan (house No.4), Bhikari Sainingi (house No.10), Dania Parihal (house No.17) and Chhabi Dehuri (house No.20). Their terms and conditions pertaining to loan are more or less the same as those of Gopal Khuntia and they charge interest at the same rate of 50 percent as he does.

Kuchia Sahu of Rangadihi- Kuchia Sahu of oilman caste does grocery business and is a good cultivator. Paddy lending is his side business. He advanced loan in paddy to some, Bhuinya families of Tamara at 50 percent rate of interest.

Punia Pahana of Irida and Kolha Padhan of Tangarpada- Some Bhuinyas of neighbouring villages have taken up the business in paddy lending with their tribesmen of Tamera. For example, Punia Padhan of Irida and Kolha Padhan of Tangarpada belong to this category of paddy lenders. Like others they also charge interest at the rate of 50 percent. The Table 5 gives an account of loan advanced by different category of creditors to the Bhuinyas of Tamara.

Table No.5
Account of loan advanced by different categories of creditors to the Bhuinyas of Tamera

Sl. No.	Categories of Creditors	Name and Address	Amount of loan advanced in					Rate of interest charged	No. of debtors advanced loan
			Cash (Rs.)	Rice	Mustard	Paddy	Rabi		
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
A. Institutional									
1.	Official sources	TIDCC, Kothighar	740	45kg.	2kg.	..	13kg.	Nil	18
2.	Non-official sources	..	..	..	..	6kh 160 pai	..	50% for seeds 25% for food	20
B. Private									
3	(1) Non-tribal of own village.	Gopal Khuntia of Tamera (Milkman)	..	8 pai	..	10 kh 287 pai	..	Varies from 25% to 50%	25
4	(2) Own tribe of own village.	Hara Pradhan, H.N.4 Bhikari Samingi, H.N.10 DainaParihal, H.N.17 Chabi Dehuri, H.N.20	..	4kg	..	10 pai	..	50%	9
5	(3) Non-tribal of outside village.	Kuchia Sahu of Rangadihi	..	..	..	10 pai	..	50%	1
6	(4) Own tribe of outside village	Kolha Padhan of Tangarpada & Punia Pahana of Irida	..	8pai	..	6 pai	..	50%	2
Total			740	49 kg 2 kh 42 pai	2kg.	16kh 473 pai	13 kg.		
			740	131 kg.	2kg.	793kg.	13kg.		

The sources of credit are broadly divided into two categories : (1) Institutional and (2) Private. The institutional source is sub-divided into two classes : (1) Official which includes Tribal Development Co-operative Society and (2) Non-official which includes Kothighar (Graingola attached to Gram Panchayat). The private source of credit is sub-divided into four classes.

1. Non-tribal of own village which includes one creditor, that is, Gopal Khuntia, a Milkman of Tamera village.
2. Own tribe of own village which includes four creditors, that is, Hara Pradhan (House No.4), Bhikari Sainingi (House No.10), Dania Parihal (House No.17) and Chhabi Dehuri (House No.20), all being Bhuinyas of Tamera village.
3. One Non-tribal of outside village ie, Kuchia Sahu, an oilman of Rangadihi; and
4. Own tribe of outside village including two creditors, that is Kolha Pradhan and Punia Pahan both being Bhuinyas of Tangarpada and Irida respectively.

The Table 5 shows that Gopal Khuntia has the largest number of debtors and Kuchia Sahu has the lowest number of debtors in the village. Arranged in order of importance the categories of creditors are non-tribal of own village of private category, having 25 debtors; non-official source of institutional category, having 20 debtors; official source of institutional category having 18 debtors, own tribe of own village, having nine debtors; own tribe of outside village having two debtors and non-tribal of outside village having only one debtor in the study village. The only source from which the Bhuinya get cash loan is T.D.C.S. All other sources are of the category of grain lenders. Among them Gopal Khuntia is the biggest paddy lender in Tamera village. Next to him are the Bhuinya creditors whose business in rice considered together is the highest in the village. The non-tribal money or paddy lenders of other villages have very little business transaction with the Bhuinyas of the study village.

The total amount of loan both in cash and kind is converted to rice making it 1,053kgs. Calculated at the rate of three kgs. of rice as the normal, the rate of consumption per day per family, 1,053 kgs. of rice will be sufficient for a fortnight for the 29 Bhuinya families of the study village.

5. *Domesticated Animals* - The animals domesticated by the Bhuinyas are cattle, goats and poultry. There are 35 cattle, 28 goats and 30 hens and cocks. The cattle are used mainly as draught animals and the goats and poultry are offered to the village deities and provide meat to the Bhuinyas. Calculated roughly the food obtained from the sources of animals is sufficient only for two weeks.

Taking all these sources of income into consideration all the 29 Bhuinya families are able to provide food for themselves for a period of 233 days. This means that there was a deficit of food for 127 days in the year under review. The consequences of this acute shortage of food are indebtedness, wage earning malnutrition and chronic illness.

To get a clear picture of the dietic situation a diet survey was taken up for a week from 17-1-1975 to 23-1-1975 in three families. The quantity of food of different kinds consumed during the week is given in the Table 6.

Table 6
(Data on Diet Survey for a week)

Family 1	(Three adult units)		
17-1-75	Rice - 1 ½ <i>mana</i> Vegetable - 1 Kg Wine - 1 bottle	22-1-75	Attended a feast in a relative's house in a neighbouring village.
18-1-75	Participated in village feast	23-1-75	Rice - 2 <i>mana</i> Vegetables - 1 kg. (Salt - 1 kg. per week)
19-1-75	Jalli (minor millet) 1 <i>mana</i> Rice - 1 ½ kg Wine - ½ bottle	Family 3	(4 adult units)
20-1-75	Ragi - 1 Kg Onion - Re. 0.10 Roots - 1 Kg	17-1-75	Rice - 1 <i>mana</i>
21-1-75	Participated in a feast at Tangarpada Rice - ½ Kg	18-1-75	Participated in village feast
22-1-75	Rice - 2 <i>mana</i> Roots - 1 Kg	19-1-75	Rice - 1 <i>mana</i> Roots - 2 Kgs.
23-1-75	Rice - 1 <i>mana</i> Routs - 1 ½ <i>mana</i> (Salt 1kg. per week)	20-1-75	Roots - 3kgs Rice - ½ <i>mana</i>
Family-2 (4 adult units)			
17-1-75	Rice- 2 <i>mana</i> Vegetable - ½ kg Meat - ½ kg Spices - 0.10 <i>paise</i> Tobacco - 0.25 <i>paise</i> Wine- Re. 1.00	21-1-75	Participated in a feast at Talagada village Roots - ½ kg Vegetables - 1 kg Drink - 1 bottle
18-1-75	Participated in village feast. (2kg. rice was consumed)	22-1-75	Rice - 2 <i>mana</i> Onion - 10 <i>paise</i> Dry fish - 25 <i>paise</i>
19-1-75	Rice - 1 <i>mana</i> Minor millet - 1 ½ <i>mana</i> Meat - ½ kg	23-1-75	Rice- 1 <i>mana</i> Minor millet - 1 <i>mana</i> Dry fish - 25 <i>paise</i> (Salt 1 kg. per week)
20-1-75	Rice - ½ <i>mana</i> Minor millet - 2 <i>mana</i> Vegetables - 1 ½ kg.		
21-1-75	Participated in a relative's house in a feast at Talagada		

All types of food were converted to money and then to rice. The idea was to estimate how much food in the form of rice was consumed by the three families in a week. The table 7 gives this conversion.

Table 7

Items of food stuff	Family 1 (3 adult units)			Family 2 (4 adult units)			Family 3 (4 adultunits)		
	Quantity used	Money value	Converted to rice (Kg.)	Quantity used	Money value	Converted to rice (Kg.)	Quantity used	Money value	Converted to rice (Kg.)
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Rice	8 mana (5kg.)	7.50	5	12 mana (8 kg.)	12.00	8	6 mana (4 Kg)	6.00	4
Vegetable	2 kg.	3.00	2	4 ½ mana	4.50	3	1 ½ kg.	2.25	1.500
Drinks	Rs.5	5.00	3.250	Re.1	..	00.750	0.75 paise	..	00.500
Jalli (Minor millet)	1 ½ mana (1 kg)	1.50	1	(1 ¼ kg)	1.88	1.250	1 ½ mana (1 Kg)	1.50	1
Ragi	1 Kg.	2.00	1.250	..	..	..	..	..	..
Roots	3 Kg.	..	1.500	..	..	..	(6Kg.)	..	3
Spices	10 paise	..	00.250	10 paise	..	00.250	10paise	..	00.250
Salt	1 Kg.	..	..	1 kg	..	..	1 kg	..	00.250
Tobacco	25 paise	..	..	25 paise	..	..	25 paise	..	..
Dry fish	..	..	..	..	..	..	50 paise	..	..
Meat	..	..	..	1 Kg	6.00	4Kg.	..	..	..
	Total	..	14,250	..	..	147.250	..	..	10.500

The Table 7 shows that the three families consumed 42 kgs. of rice or roughly 2 Kgs. of rice per family per day. In the proceeding paragraphs the requirement of rice was calculated at 3 Kgs. per day. Calculated at this rate the Bhuinya families showed a deficit of food by 127 days. If the rate of consumption is reduced the food gap in terms of days of deficit may be reduced but the extent of under feeding and malnutrition will be increased to a considerable extent.

Inter-ethnic Relationship and External contact

The Bhuinyas both men and women can speak Oriya well. They have forgotten altogether their mother tongue. The mobility of the Bhuinyas is largely

confined to their habitat except their visits to the weekly markets at Keonjhar and Jatra which are situated at a distance of 20 miles and 10 miles respectively from their village. As most of the Bhunyas have no Bila land and they have no contact with the non-tribal farmers having such land for agriculture. There is a horticultural farm 4 ½ kilometers away at Kanra. But the people of Tamera have adopted nothing from the farm. Some of the factors which inhibit diffusion of improved practices into the village from the adjacent farm and market centres are the poverty of the people and the environmental limitations. This implies that no amount of opportunity for diffusion can effect any advance of the village beyond the limitations set by the habitat. The other implication of the situation which exists in the environs of the village is that the level to which the village can develop is dependent upon the agricultural potentiality of its ecological setting.

In social hierarchy the milkmen occupy the highest position. But the place which the Bhuinyas occupy in the hierarchy is also equally high. The Bhuinyas and the milkmen accept cooked food from one another. The Panas and the Juangs take food in the house of the Bhunyas but the reverse is not true. The Bhuinyas do not touch either the Panas or the Juangs because they believe that such contact is defiling.

The Bhuinyas hold all leadership positions in the village. The secular headman (Pradhan) and the religious headman (Dehuri) belong to the Bhuinyas community. These positions are hereditary. The ward member is not elected but selected by unanimous decision. The village Pradhan and the Dehuri and the elders of the Bhuinya community dominate the village council in all deliberations. The village goddess and other deities are propitiated by none but the Bhuinyas.

The standard of education among the Bhuinyas is very much low. Except a few people who are barely literate all others do not know how to read and write. There is an Ashram School at Kanra which is at a distance of 4 ½ kilometers away from the village. But not a single child of this village is studying in this school. Added to the general disinterest of the Bhuinyas in education, the distance of the school from the village is a great disadvantage. No school of primary standard is present either in the village or within easy reach from the village. In view of this a residential Sebashram school in this area is badly needed. It is hoped that educational improvement among the Bhuinyas may create interest in them for adopting with least resistance the developmental programmes which are being implemented in the Bhuinyapirh by the Government.

APPENDIX - I

“An extract of ex-Keonjhar State Rules for Management and Preservation of Forest so far as it relates to (1) rights and concessions to tenants including Tribals and (2) also with regard to practice of shifting cultivation”.

Rights & Concessions -

RULES FOR RESERVED STATE FORESTS

In reserved forests no person will be entitled to enter it without permission to gather any forest produce, to cultivate it, to graze cattle or do anything calculated to cause injury to such forest.

Persons on entering a reserved forest will not be permitted to carry, kindle or keep any fire on any pretext whatsoever while in the reserve, except as stated in Rule 4 below. Any person found infringing this rule will be liable to prosecution and fine, and further to the cancellation of any concession granted to him.

For the convenience of travelers passing through the reserved forest or for sawyers working or graziers grazing in the reserved forest, certain places will be set apart and cleared of all undergrowth as camping grounds by the Forest Officer who will yearly notify the same. Camping at localities other than those set apart is strictly forbidden.

Note - No other rights of any kind exists in Reserved Forests.

The following aboriginal tribes, viz. Sabars, Juangs, Kols, Khonds, Malhars and Bhuiyas will be permitted to remove free when the produce is required for their own consumption and not for purpose of sale, the following forest products, viz, yams, edible flowers, fruits and roots and edible leaves. In the event of any one of their members doing damage to any forest tree or produce he will be subject to the penalties laid down and his concession will be liable to be withdrawn.

Note - In the case of a fire occurring in the reserved area, all persons residing in the State, who are allowed to remove any produce from, or are employed in, or who live within a distance of five miles from the boundary of the forest in which the fire breaks out will be bound to report the same to the nearest Forest Officer, and will also help to extinguish the fire. Villagers living near the reserved forest shall be bound to keep up boundary lines and clear fire traces when ordered by the Superintendent on rates of payment fixed by him. They will be liable to be fined for any omission, neglect, refusal or disobedience on their part.

Grazing may be allowed in the reserved forests for all kinds of cattle, except sheep and goats, wherein the opinion of the Superintendent there is insufficient grazing in the open forest-subject to payment of grazing fee.

Rights & Concessions in Khesra Forests

The following classes of trees are declared to be reserved in the Khesra forest, and no person is entitled to cut the same without permission.

No	Local Name	Botanical Name
1	Sal	Shorea robusta
2	Piasal	Pterocarpus marsupium
3	Sissu	Dalbergia latifolia
4	Kendu	Diospyros melanoxylon
5	Gambari	Gamelina arborea
6	Kusum	Schleichera trijuga
7	Kurum	Adina cordifolia
8	Asan	Terminalia tomoitosa
9	Harira	Terminalia chebula
10	Bahara	Terminalia belerica
11	Aunla	Phyllanthus emlica
12	Am	Mangifera indica
13	Tamarind	Tamarindus indica
14	Mohul	Bassia latifolia
15	Jackfruit	Artocarpus integrifolia
16	Khair	Acacia catechu
17	Bandhan	Ongenia dalbergiodes
18	Kongra	Xyladola briformis
19	Jam	Eugenia Jambolana
20	Swam O Rohini	Soymida febrifuga
21	Sarap	Caryota urens
22	Bheru	Chloroxylon swietenia
23	Arjun	Terminalia arjuna
24	Char	Buchanania latifolia
25	Dhaw/Dhoura	Ahogeissus latifolia

Provided, however, that such permission will not be necessary for gathering the fruit and flowers or leaves or any above mentioned trees in Khesra forest.

Exception 1 - Resin may be collected from spontaneous exudations only, and throughout the entire area of the Khesra forests of the State no ringing of trees will be allowed for the purpose.

Exception 2 - Kurum trees may be cut by Kundras for the manufacture of combs and such other articles as they ordinarily manufacture.

Exception 3 - Khair trees may be cut for the manufacture of catechu by persons licensed to manufacture the same.

Exception 4 -Tusser rearing may be allowed on Asan scrubs in selected areas.

The Superintendent may, with sanction of the Political Agent, add any other trees to the list given in Section 1 and omit any of the trees therein specified either permanently or for any specific period.

With the permission of the Superintendent trees of the reserved species and bamboos may be felled, cut, lopped or removed and other forest produce may be manufactured and removed on behalf of a public object and State purpose, the produce being disposed of as may have been approved by the Superintendent. Any amount realised from this source will be credited as forest revenue.

Trees not reserved and all other forest produce whatsoever, may be felled, cut collected and removed by every forest cess-payer of the State, all Pans and members of the indigenous tribes and all persons of the poorer classes and landless labourers provided -

- (a) That the produce shall be required for personal use and shall not be sold of bartered except in the case of pans and members of aboriginal tribes, poorer classes and landless labourers to persons privilege under these rules who will then be bound in the same way.
- (b) That forest cess-payers may be allowed trees of reserved species when required for their own personal use at half the prescribed rate. Full royalty will be charged from all persons when required for export or sale.
- (c) That all persons holding cultivated land within the State will be required to pay an assessment as sanctioned in the political Agent's letter No.1197, dated the 26th August 1909, viz :-

Name of the Subdivision	Class of land								
	Each man of paddy or other land not Taila			Each man of Toila land			Each man of culturable waste		
	Rs.	As.	P.	Rs.	As.	P.	Rs.	As.	P.
Sadar Subdivision	0	1	0	0	0	6	0	0	6
Nayagarh	0	1	0	0	0	6	0	0	6
Anandapur	0	1	3	0	0	9	0	0	6
	On account of the general use of the Khesra forest								

RULES AND PROHIBITIONS CONCERNING KHESHRA FORESTS

Subject to the rules for the Khesra or open forests the following acts are prohibited.

- (1) The quarrying of stone
- (2) The burning of the line and charcoal
- (3) The collection or subjection to any manufacturing process or removal of any forest produce.
- (4) The breaking up or cleaning of any land for cultivation, for building for herding cattle or any other purpose.

Tusks and minerals found within the State forest are the property of the State and no one will have any right to remove the same without permission.

No person, whether a resident of the State or not, shall clear or break up any land within the Khesra forest for cultivation or any other purpose without the previous sanction of the Superintendent which will only be granted when the land to be cleared is capable of conversion into wet lands.

Men of the Juang, Bhuiya, Bhumij, Savar, Kol, Malhar, Kandha and other aboriginal classes who do not live by regular cultivation, will be allowed to practice *dahi* in such portion of the Khesra forest as may be pointed out to them for that purpose but the Superintendent will endeavour to discourage the practice and induce the above tribes to take to regular cultivation.

- (i) Trees felled from grounds cleared for cultivation belong to the State and the Superintendent may give them to the residents free for their own use or he may sell the timber.

No person, not a resident of the State, will have any right to remove any forest produce from any Khesra Forest without permission.

Also a brief description of the Forests of this Forest Division is enclosed herewith.

The Forests of Keonjhar are situated in the Dry Deciduous Zone and towards the South-eastern extremity of Central Indian *sal* belt which terminates in Midnapore district of Bengal, and is separated from the extension of the Tarai and Duars *sal* forests into Assam by the Gangetic plain and delta; and the littoral forests of the Sunderbans.

The general character of the vegetation of this Division is "Tropophilous" but with, a distinct tendency to xerophytic structure in many of its species. There are no tropical rain forests, but a number of eastern Himalayan and Assam species, occur locally in the cool moist valleys. *Sal*, is by far the most conspicuous species, and represents the present climatic climax; constituting over 60 percent of the growing

stock throughout the Division. In Barbil region this percentage is still greater about 90 percent. In areas less suited for *sal* growth the proportion of *sal* may be less.

In the central region of these Divisions however, in pockets a forest with miscellaneous species along with *sal* occurs. The *sal* forests can further be divided into 5 types as per classifications made by Sri H.G. Champion.

(1) Type I- Dry mixed forest (with bamboo)

Anogeissus - Mitragyna Dendrocalamus occurs in Parts of Baulah, Atei, Kalapat, Santoshpur and Barbank R.F. blocks. In this zone in valleys of hill streams and collar aspect more percentage of *sal* occurs.

Other associate species are Adina cordifolia, Eugenia dalbegioides and Launea grandis. Hymenodora ctyonexclusum; with shrubs of Rungia parviflora, Heliclera sisora, Dendro calamus. Depending on edaphic factors sub-climaxes are found.

(2) Type II Open grassy, dry *sal* forest (Shore- anogeissus - woodfordia)

This is found in exposed hill slopes in all aspects, where the soil is shallow, infertile clay derived from decomposed shales which are often rich in secondary quartz. The top canopy is generally under 30' in height and consists of *sal*, Zizyphus xylopyros, Anogeissus latifolia. Gardenia gummifera, undergrowth consists of Woodfordia fruticosa. Wendlendia tinctoria, Phoenix acculis. Grasses are Arundinella setosa and Eulalipsis binata (Sabai).

(3) Type III- High level plateau Sal-Shorea - Bauhinia - Themeda)

This type comprises the forests grow in on flat lopped hills, which are a characteristic feature in this Division. The elevation ranges from 2000 to 3000 feet above M.S.L. The soil is generally lateritic clay which has a low moisture retaining capacity. Strong winds, which are most prevalent at higher elevations, have a desiccating effect on the soil and exert an influence inimical to the rapid reforestation of these plateau lands. The effect of past shifting cultivation as a retrogressive factor cannot also be under rated. For these reasons *sal* tends to be pure but of very poor quality (generally Q. IV-V). Trees attain a height of 40' or so although in sheltered position the height can be expected up to 60.

Characteristic species of the top canopy are *sal*, Bauhinia retusa, Eugenia species and Gardenia species. Undergrowth consists of Indigofera hamiltonii, Flemingia paniculata, Croton hirta, Conyza species, Lageraeletta, Vicoa indica. Grasses are abundant and consist of Arundina ceasctosa, Apludavaria, Themed aimberis and Cyperus niveus. Typical climber is Bauhinia vahlii (Siali).

(4) Type IV - Moist Hill Sal-Wendiandia - Indigofera

This type is widely distributed in this Division. It avoids hot slopes and thrives better on the northy aspects up to 3000 feet elevation, Height is 70 ft (average).

Its characteristics associates are *Buchanania Lanzas* (Char), *Embica officinalis* (Anla), *Diospyros melanoxylon* (Kendu) and *Terminalia tomentosa* (Asan). Typical shrubs are - *Wendiandia tintoria*, *Gargeniag ummifera*, *G. Turgida* and *Woodfordia fruticosa* (Dhatki). Grasses are numerous, conspicuous being *Eulaliopsis binnata* (Sabai) and *Heteropoginon tortus*. Pollinia species *Apludavaria*, *Schimaner vosum*, *Phoenix accutis* are often very abundant. Fire plays a great role in such forests either to promote or retard growth creating various communities of plants.

(5) Type V - Valley Sal (*Shoreaflemingia Imperata*)

Sal occurs mostly and purely - mixed with (as underwood) Asan, Dhaura, Kusum, Kasi, Koim or Kurum, Mohua. Typical herbs and shrubs are *Flemingia*, *Wendlendia* species, *Randiaduma lortam*, *Antidesma diandrus*, etc. This type of forest is very rich in climbers of which *Siali* and *Butea parviflora* (Palasa) are most conspicuous. Slightly shade bearing grasses are common and consist of *Imperataa rundinacea*, *Eulatia argentea*, *Puliculum articulate* and *Amphilophis glabra*.

(6) Type VI- Moist Mixed Sal (*Terminalia - Mallotus - Combretum*)

In such type of forests the soil is usually deep clayey loam. Flora is remarkable for the diversity of composition and luxuriance of its growth. Canopy is invariably closed. Height of crop exceeds 100. Large climbers are abundant, notably *combretum*. Sal is seldom entirely absent although it forms only an insignificant proportion of the total crop. Asan and Kurum (Koim) are most conspicuous. Other typical species are *Rai*, *Siris*, *Semul*, *Kasi*, *Mallotus*, *Polyethia cerasoides*. Although this plant community is clearly an adepic climax, at times it also appears as post climax to the valley *sal* (typical in *Rebena R.F.*).

(7) Type VII- Coastal Sal (*Shorea Dillenia - Croton*)

Typical coastal *salis* nowhere developed in this Division. This type is conditioned by high humidity and absence of extreme temperatures.

Thus, as can be seen, the forests of this Division are mostly *sal* type in the Dry Deciduous zone towards the south easterly extremity of central Indian *salbelt*.

The forests in Bhuyan-pirh and Juang-pirh can be classed under type IV and V but due to constant human interference there is fast retrogression. Given rest, these forests might recover back to their original types.

Productivity in Shifting cultivation is dependent more upon fast regeneration of forest so that fertility of the soil can increase.

Therefore shifting cultivators need be trained to adopt agro-silviculture methods i.e. growing of forest species of cash crops along with their crops, fitting to their rotation of shifting cultivation from 10-12 years.

APPENDIX II

Rights and Concessions in Keonjhar Forest Division

Reserved species	(1)Sal, (2) Piasal, (3) Sisoo, (4) Kendu, (5) Gahmar, (6) Kurum, (7) Kusum, (8) Asan, (9) Harida, (10) Bahada, (11) Anla, (12) Ambo, (13) Tentuli, (14) Mahula, (15) Jackfruit (16) Khair, (17) Bandhan, (18) Kangra, (19) Jamu, (20) Swam, (21) Sarop, (22) Bheru, (23) Arjun, (24) Char, (25) Dhaw, (26) Toon, (27) Kochila.
Nistar cess & other cesses	Nistarcess Re. 0-2-0 per acre on wet land <i>royati</i> Re. 0-1-0 per acre of Goda land <i>royati</i> Re. 0-3-0 per acre of wet land <i>lakhraj</i> Re. 0-4-6 per acre of goda land <i>lakhraj</i> Chandan cess Re. 0-4-0 per household Demand Rs.60,000
In 'A' class R.F. - Timber	Free to cess payers with previous sanction if not available in Khesra Forests.
Firewood	Nil
Bamboo	Free with permission if not available in Khesra Forests
Minor Forest Produce	Fibre free if not available in the Khesra Forests with permission.
Aboriginal tribes, landless or poorer classes are allowed to remove for the purpose of sale naturally fallen firewood, bamboos, fibres, leaves and grasses, honey and wax on payment as follows :-	
Firewood	Re. 0-12-0 per annum for one head load a day
Grass	Rs.1-8-0 per annum for one <i>bahangi</i> load a day
Fibres, Leaves, Honey &Wax	According to the rates in force

Hadis, Dombs, Gaudas and other tribes are permitted to take bamboos on payment of following rates :-

	Rs. A.P.
Head load a day	1 8 0 per annum
Bahangi load, a day	3 0 0 per annum

Kundras are permitted to remove trees for making combs and other articles on payment of royalty at half rates.

Aboriginal tribes are permitted to remove for their own consumption edible fruits, roots, flowers and leaves free.

Grazing	No free grazing						
	Type of Animals	Tenant's rates per head			Outsider's rates per head		
		Rs.	A.	P.	Rs.	A.	P.
	Cow or Bullock	0	2	0	0	4	0
	Buffalo	0	4	0	0	8	0
	Elephants or Camel	0	8	0	1	0	0
	Horse, Pony	0	3	0	0	6	0
	Donkey		..			..
In 'B' class R. Fs. or D.P.Fs.	For cess paying villages situated within a convenient radius of 'B' class R.F. timber for agricultural implements free according to a fixed scale. Excess over the scale at schedule of rate.						
Firewood	Free according to the scale prescribed excess over the scale at the schedule of rate.						
M.F.P.	Free						
Grazing	No free grazing						
	Type of Animals	Tenants rates per head			Outsiders rates per head		
		Rs.	A.	P.	Rs.	A.	P.
	Cow or Bullock	0	1	0	0	2	0
	Buffalo	0	2	0	0	4	0
	Elephants or Camel	0	4	0	0	8	0
	Horse, Donkey&Pony	0	2	0	0	4	0
In Khesra or Unreserved or U.D.P. Fs.- Timber	Unreserved and reserved species for agricultural implements free. Reserved species for personal use at ¼ schedule of rate. All Pans and members of the indigenous tribes and all persons of poorer classes and landless labourers allowed unreserved trees for their personal use as well as for sale and reserved trees for personal use.						
Firewood	Free						
Bamboo M.F.P. and Grazing	Free						

PAUDI BHUYAN*

*S. C. Mohanty*¹

Paudi Bhuyan belongs to the primitive section of the Bhuyan tribe. *Bhuyan* is derived from a Sanskrit word *Bhumi* meaning land or earth. The tribe is variously found mentioned as Bhuiya, Bhuiyan and Bhuyan. The tribe belongs to the Munda group of tribes.

They have no tribal language of their own and speak Odia. The Bhuyan are widely distributed in many parts of Odisha, Bengal, Bihar, Assam and Chhotnagpur. Desh Bhuyan or Mala Bhuyan is a section of the Bhuyan represented mainly by Pauri Bhuyan. The Pauri Bhuyan distinguishes themselves from other sections of Bhuyan by adopting *banghy*, a wooden carrying lever as their tribal emblem. The Pauri Bhuyan inhabit the Bhuyan Pirh of Keonjhar district, Bonai Hills of Sundargarh district and Nagira Hills of Dhenkanal district. The population of the Paudi Bhuyan inhabiting the Micro Project areas (as the tribe is not enumerated separately) is 13, 744 as per 2012 (Action Plan for PTGs for 12th Five Year Plan) survey data.

They live in scattered settlements. The new village site is inaugurated by ceremoniously affixing a carved wooden post, *khunta*, representing *Gaisiri*, the village deity in the centre to ensure protection and blessings of ancestors. The Pauri houses are without windows having only one door. The tutelary family deity is placed in one corner near the hearth. They make regular offerings there. The Pauri Bhuyan have dormitories (Darbar) for the unmarried boys that serve as a guest house, elders' meeting place and granary of the village.

The Pauri males and females dress just like the caste neighbours. Pauri women adorn themselves with a number of bangles, nose rings, ear rings, toe rings, anklets made of brass alloy and cover their neck and chest with multi coloured bead necklaces.

* Unpublished article of 2001 updated in 2018

¹ Research Officer, SCSTRIT, Bhubaneswar

The Pauris believe in many gods and goddesses. *Dharam Devta* (Sun God) and *Basukimata* (Earth Goddess) are regarded as their supreme deities. They also worship the spirits of hills, rivers of their territory called *pat* and the common worship of these *pats* reflects their tribal solidarity. *Dihuri* is their priest. The Pauri Bhuyan dances have a social and religious significance. Women dance while the men play *change* (circular drum), drums and sing songs. The Pauri Bhuyans observe a series of festivals which mark the turning points in the annual round of their economic life such as distribution of forest land for cultivation, felling trees, eating new crops, etc. Some of their festivals are: *Magh Podoi*, *Ama Nua*, *Katha Jatra*, *Boram Devata*, etc.

Their lineal kins as *kutumbs* at a bigger level form a corporate group called *khilli*. They follow *khilli* exogamy. Marriage by negotiation and capture (*ghicha*), are the most common types and other types include marriage by elopement (*dhripala*) and love marriage (*phulkhusi*). Bride price is prevalent and it varies depending on the status of the family. Besides, their essential events of life like birth, marriage and death are observed ceremoniously.

The village council includes all the adult members of the community headed by *Naik* or *Pradhan*. At inter village level, a group of Pauri villages of a territory form a confederacy called *bar* or *pirh* headed by a *Sardar*.

After being identified as a Primitive Tribal Group (PTG) of Odisha, three Micro Projects are functioning in Anugul, Deogarh and Sundergarh districts to bring about their all-round development.

THE PAUDI BHUYAN*

*A.B. Ota*¹

*A.C. Sahoo*²

INTRODUCTION

The Paudi Bhuyan, a major section of the historically famous Bhuinya tribe is found in Bihar, Orissa, West Bengal and Assam. They are also well known as Hill-Bhuyan and found in Sundargarh, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Sambalpur and Angul districts of Orissa. It is one of the identified Primitive Tribal Groups of the State and reveals its distinctive socio-cultural features. According to census 2001, Bhuyan population is found to be 2, 46, 573 out of which 1, 21, 951 are males and 1,24,622 are females. It is not possible to give exact population of Paudi Bhuyan as this section of population has not been enumerated separately by census. The Paudi Bhuyan mostly inhabits in hills and mountainous forest areas which are relatively geographically isolated. Many Paudi Bhuyan villages are devoid of all-weather roads because of geo-physical constraints. Areas around the Paudi Bhuyan settlement are devoid of thick forest due to practice of slash and burn type of rotation cultivation.

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

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

* Published in the Photo Handbook on Paudi Bhuyan, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar, 2010

¹ Director, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar

² Officer-on-Special Duty (Tribal Museum), SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar

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

SETTLEMENT PATTERN AND HOUSING

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

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

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

The dormitory organization is losing its striking features under the impact of modernization. However, many Paudis have retained their identity and striking socio- cultural characteristic features. The Paudi Bhuyan villages comprise 5 to 20 families and a few villages have about sixty families. The Juang, Munda and Kolha tribes and Hindu caste people, like Gouda, Kamara, Gudia, Khandayat etc live in their close proximity. Previously the Paudi Bhuyan were changing their village sites specially when the forest around the village are exhausted and villagers suffer from divine curse leading to spread of epidemics, tiger menace, breach of cholera and repeated crop failures. When Gaisiri Khunta is broken or uprooted they take it as divine warning for changing the village site. While selecting a new site, they give importance on perennial water sources and virgin forest at close proximity. Moreover, successful divination in omen reading on the proposed site is equally vital for selection of a new site to establish a settlement.

The Paudi Bhuyan houses are very neat and clean. The walls are plastered with cow dung and locally available red earth. The women are very conscious of keeping the house attractive throughout the year. The courtyards and backyards are swept every day for keeping it clean.

The houses in a village are randomly scattered within a boundary. Each family has its house with a kitchen garden where they grow gourd, pumpkin,

chilly and other vegetables along with maize. During winter they grow tobacco and mustard there. The cowsheds are constructed close to the living house.

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

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

ECONOMIC LIFE

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

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

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

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

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

In order to safeguard their crops from natural calamity and wild animals, they appease supernatural beings by offering prescribed rituals. The feasts and festivals connected with the agricultural cycle provide them complete rest in between hard and monotonous work. This temporary rest brings within them new zeal and enthusiasm for undertaking further heavy work.

Other than shifting cultivation and plains agriculture they also depend on food-gathering, hunting and fishing to supplement their food. They collect mushrooms, tubers, roots, shoots green leaves, fruits, berries and nuts, seeds from the local forest either for consumption or sale. Almost in all the seasons Paudi Bhuyan people collect variety of minor forest produces like lac, sal, resin, char many kinds of wild rope, firewood, leaves for making cups and plates and several others which they sell in the market. By and large forest plays pivotal role in the socio economic life of the Paudi Bhuyan.

The livestock of the Paudis comprises of cows, bullocks, buffaloes, goats, sheep, poultry etc. The animals particularly goats and chickens are kept not only for consumption but also to be sacrificed at the deities. The cows and buffaloes are quite beneficial for agricultural purposes. Chickens and goats are always kept with special care to save them from wild animals. They engage persons to tend cattle or the same work may be performed on rotation basis among themselves. They have attached rituals for safety and security of their cattle wealth.

The Paudi Bhuyan are well known for their basketry work. Their area is very rich in bamboo and people are quite skilled in bamboo craft, hence, in leisure hours they make varieties of baskets, paddy containers, winnowing fans, bamboo

mats and other such items of different shape and size. Their basketry work is having a lot of demand among the neighbouring groups. The women are expert in weaving mats out of date palm leaf.

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

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

Like hunting, Paudi Bhuyan males and females go for fishing in hill streams, rivers and rivulets. They catch fish by hand, using fishing rod and fish traps. They also catch small fish by using the cloth by filtration process. They set fish traps in paddy fields during rainy season. Fish may be eaten by roasting or frying. They preserve dried fish for future consumption.

The Paudis remain busy throughout the day from dawn to dusk. The housewife engages herself in multifarious domestic activities, like sweeping the courtyard, husking paddy, washing utensils, cooking foods, taking care of babies, cleaning cow sheds and several other jobs. The male members go for morning ablutions and female remains busy in the kitchen. The whole family including the children takes food and proceeds for field where they work throughout the day. While coming back at home, a man carry fire wood and the women bring leaf cups and leaf plates made by them in the field. They also collect edibles available in the

nearest jungle. The women come back at home by the evening and again remain busy in cooking whereas males found relaxing at the village dormitory. The Paudi Bhuinya take food in late evening and go to bed. Their daily routines vary according to prescribed seasonal work cycle.

SOCIAL ORGANISATION

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

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

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

Each Paudi village is an independent socio-economic unit. It has its own political council and prescribed rules for management. A number of adjoining villages form an inter village social and administrative unit called Pirha. Pirha is the inter village organization. Inter village relationships like marriage, hiring of community labour for agricultural purposes, hiring of a Biringa, dance among boys and girls, exchange of some bottle of liquors are observed between members of the villages of Pirha. In few functions, elders from different villages get together and hear from each other on different matters of their respective villages. Boys and girls of two different Bandhu villages and Khillis joke and exchange gifts among themselves out of love and affection. People of the villages of a Pirha assemble in certain occasions to decide matters relating to their community, like re-admission into their society, distribution of property of an heir less person, incorporation of a non-Paudi Bhuyan to Paudi Bhuyan society etc. The Pirha Dehuri performs rituals at the Pirha level in order to maintain social solidarity.

YOUTH ORGANISATION

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

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

Govt. officials and outside guests also stay in the dormitory at night. This institution is losing its identity and luster day by day.

RELIGION

The Paudi Bhuyan believes that the world is under the control of some deities and spirits. According to their respective domains they are worshipped and appeased. They consider Dharam Devata (Sun God) as Supreme Being and Basukimata (Earth Goddess) as supreme deity. They are considered as husband and wife and look after the Paudi Bhuyan people in all respects. Apart from these two very important deities, Boram (Village deity), Birda (a male deity), Pats (Deities of hills), Gaisiri (enshrined near Darbar) and Thakurani (Important village female deities) are very important. All the above stated deities are benevolent in nature and appeased in their respective prescribed manner on different occasions. The Paudi Bhuyan also satisfies different malevolent deities and spirits at the time of need. Apart from their indigenous deities, spirits, ancestral spirits, ghosts etc. they also worship Lord Shiva, Laxmi, Durga and Local gods and goddesses of their respective regions. Bishri Ossa is worshipped with all sincerity and devotion and believed to be protector and fulfiller of the people's desires. Of course, this is Hinduised female deity but occupies special place in Paudi Bhuyan pantheon.

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

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

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

FESTIVALS

The Paudi Bhuinya celebrates a number of feasts and festivals throughout the year. Each festival is associated with; specific deities, ritualistic observance, special food items, activities relating to agriculture, forest, shifting cultivation, hunting, fishing, food gathering, life cycle rituals, etc. It provides opportunity for interaction and get together between kin members and relaxation from monotony and boredom of daily routine works. They enjoy, merry make and revive their zeal and interest for successful endeavour. They start their new year after Maghpadai. They celebrate Am Nua in the month of Jan-Feb to give formal approval for taking raw mango after which manuring of agricultural land is undertaken.

Kath Jatra is celebrated in the month of Jan-Feb in which delicious cakes and non-vegetarian food items are relished and onwards fried Mahua flower is allowed to be eaten by Paudi Bhuyans. Gilor Jatra is observed for consumption of the Gilor flower by Paudi Bhuinya in the month of March. Akhani Paridhi is celebrated for successful hunting in the month of March-April. Accordingly Boram Devata worship is conducted in the month of March -April to appease the village deity and afterwards Paudi Bhuinya get divine approval for setting fire on dried bushes left in fallow land meant for Biringa cultivation. In the month of May, Tirtia is celebrated for sowing sanctified seeds in the field. They observe a number of taboos in this festival. Ashad is celebrated to ensure good rainfall. After this transplantation of paddy seedlings, sowing of black gram, horse grams etc. are undertaken. In order to allow the people to observe Gahma on a regional basis Pirhajatal Puja is conducted by the people of a number of villages. Gahma festival is meant for worshipping the cows. It is celebrated in the month of July-Aug with pomp and new festival food items are relished on this occasion. During Sept-Oct eating of new paddy festival i.e. Nua Khia is celebrated by the Paudi Bhuyan in their respective villages on different days. After harvest of paddy they celebrate Karma festival with sincerity and devotion by narrating legend of Karama Raja and worshipping branches of Karama plant (*Nauclea Parvifolia*). The Paudi Bhuyan celebrate this festival for days together by inviting near and dear ones and arranging drinks, non-vegetarian food items and other delicious food.

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

POLITICAL ORGANISATION

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

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

The cases that come to traditional council are quarrel between two individuals, partition of property, adultery, extra marital relationship cases, socially restricted sexual activities and disputes relating to property. Three or more villages join together under a wide traditional organization, called Pirha or Bar where inter village disputes are resolved. Pirha has its functionaries to perform certain prescribed works. In this connection, Bhal Bhai, Pirha Bhandari, Dhoba or Behera, Pirha Naik or Jati Behera, Dal Behera, Ghadai, Pirha Brahman are having some role to play. Everybody is paid according to the function they have to perform. In certain important matters the Naik and Dehuri call for a meeting to undertake a preliminary trial. The sexual relation with an agnate or person of same Khilli is considered very serious and the persons involved are excommunicated.

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

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

In spite of all these, in normal situation the Paudi-Bhuyan are peace loving people and don't like to interfere in other's affairs. Of course, they are not completely free from anger, jealousy, revengefulness rather they avoid occasions

which lead to quarrels and conflicts. The political organization feels morally bound to provide safety and security to its community men.

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

LIFE CYCLE RITUALS

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

A pregnant woman is strictly prohibited to consume meat of any sacrificial animal. She is not allowed to attend any rituals other than the rituals relating to her pregnancy and child birth. In expectation of foetus injury she has to face a lot of troubles. After birth of a child she is confined to reside inside the house. Traditional midwife takes care of the baby and woman. The naval cord is usually cut by the mother or grandmother by using an arrow in case of a male child and with a bamboo split in case of a girl. The mid-wife is paid in cash or kind for her services. The birth pollution continues from a week up to three months. However, rituals are conducted in phased manner to make the family members free from pollution. Name giving ceremony may be observed on seventh day where village old women and other members may join to select a suitable name for the child. They adopt a procedure in which sun dried rice and sisamum seeds are put on the surface of bowlful of water to confirm the diviners order for final selection of the name of the infant. Mostly, they prefer the name of the paternal grandfather in case of male child and name of the paternal grandmother if the child is female. After the name is announced publicly the family members cook special food items and enjoy with close relatives. The woman henceforth is allowed to be free from pollution and seclusion. She observes dietary restrictions for a few months and she is offered prescribed diets, like rice, salt and onion. Vegetarian and non-vegetarian food items are strictly prohibited. Early child-hood socialization process is taken care of by the mother and other family members. In case of successive death of the children, the parents may handover the child to one of their close relations in a formal meeting though practically the child remains with the original parents. Taking into account different situations the parents may offer sacrifice of animals and birds before Thakurani, Gaisiri, Boram and Pat deities for safety and security of the child. Godo Dhuari ceremony is observed after the child walks and first hair cutting ceremony is celebrated in which maternal uncle cuts the natal hair. Late childhood socialization process is very important in case of Paudi Bhuyan boys

and girls as they acquire knowledge for their survival in the community. They join the youth dormitory at the age of 12 to 14 years and remain adhered to friends with their respective sex groups.

The Paudi Bhuyan marries within the tribe to cognates but the marriage is strictly prohibited among agnates, which is considered incestuous. They have very clear cut idea about Kutumb groups (agnates) and Bandhu groups for conducting marriages. Marriage is monogamous but one can remarry if the first wife does not give birth to a child. Marriage by negotiation (Mangi Bibha) is mostly preferred but it is very expensive and time taking. Marriage by elopement (Dharipala) and marriage by capture (Ghicha Bibha) are common as these are less expensive and easier to acquire a life partner. There are love marriages; by putting flower on the bun of a girl (Phulkhusi) or by throwing mango to a girl (Am lesera) or by putting mud on the body of a girl (Kadalesera). One can also marry a widow following social norms and values. The marriage ceremony is very expensive and payment of bride price is a must. Of course, the payment time and rate may vary from one type of marriage to other and it may differ from person to person taking into account one's economic status. Well to do Paudi Bhunya celebrate marriage function with much pomp and show and seriously follow different stages of marriage ceremony and associated rituals. The dormitory friends are offered presentation by the couple and they take formal farewell from their respective dormitory friends. Though it is difficult but divorce in both the cases is possible but, the Paudi Bhuyan couple is found very cooperative and they manage their life with their children happily. At their old age sons are expected to take an adequate care of the old parents. The old persons lead happy life with their respective sons, daughter-in-laws and grandchildren. Death to them is due to unhappiness of the gods, goddesses, deities, spirits and black magic. The agnates and cognates attend and carry the corpse to the burial ground. The first handful of earth is put by the eldest son, which is followed by other kiths and kins. When a pregnant woman dies rituals are somehow different because pollution period lasts for only two to three days. They call back the soul of the dead at home and enshrine their ancestral deity inside the main house.

DEVELOPMENT AND CHANGE

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

respective Micro Projects for their socio economic upliftment. In view of their all round development three Micro Projects, one located at Khuntgaon in Sundergarh district, second located at Jamardihi area in Pallahara block of Angul district and third one located at Rugudakudar area of Deogarh district are functioning. These Micro Projects are looking after holistic development of the Paudi Bhuyan of their respective jurisdiction. They have now gradually adopted, developed agricultural practices, using high yielding seeds, chemical fertilizers and pesticides and some of them are adopted fruit cultivation and producing vegetable to earn good money. The State Government is attempting to bring in significant development intervention to raise standard of living and quality of life. Multifarious development programmes relating to health and sanitation, education, environment conservation, infrastructural development, individual benefit schemes etc., have transformed their outlook. Introduction of modern agriculture, multiple cropping, use of high yielding variety of seeds, provision of irrigation facility, input assistance, market assurance, etc. have brought quite visible changes in their lifestyle. Because of meager harvest in slash and burn type of rotation cultivation, the Paudi Bhuyan have adopted modern techniques and use of high breed seeds as well as pesticides and fertilizer.

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

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

All the three Paudi Bhuyan Development Agency as well as their respective I.T.D.A. and D.R.D.A. have brought a lot of positive impact on development of education, agriculture, irrigation, soil conservation, housing, communication, health and sanitation etc. The residential High School for Paudi Bhuyan attracts the students of the area. Non formal educational centers are having good contribution for development of education among the children.

ADIBASI SPECIAL NUMBER
Vol. XIX Nos. 1-4, April, 1979-January, 1980

HAND BOOK ON THE PAURI BHUINYA

*An Anthropological study of
the Primitive Section of the Bhinya Tribe of Orissa*

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The people and their land

The Bhuinya is one of the most widespread tribes found mostly in Bihar, Orissa, Bengal and Assam. S. C. Roy has classified the tribe into two broad sections, i. e. the southern section having Orissa as its centre and the northern section with Chota Nagpur as its Centre. The southern section of the tribe is relatively more backward than the northern section, but of all, the Pauri Bhuinyas or the Hill Bhuinyas of Orissa are the most primitive and backward.

Dalton⁵ holds the view that the Bhuinya belong to the southern or Dravidian rather than to the northern or Kolarian race. However, judging from the racial and cultural affinities, Stirling, Grierson, Russel, Hutton and S. C. Roy⁶ classified the tribe under the Mundari group.

Sections of the Tribe

S. C. Roy recorded the following sections of the Bhuinya. They are—

1. Des Bhuiya or Mal Bhuiya represented mainly by Pauri Bhuiyas.
2. Parja Bhuiya or Rautali Bhuiya
3. Bathudi Bhuiya
4. Santali Bhuiya
5. Dandsena Bhuiya
6. Rajkuli or Bar Bhuiya
7. Saontia Bhuiya
8. Khandaitor Pawanbans Bhuiya
9. Katti Bhuiya
10. Naksiya Bhuiya
11. Hake Bhuiya
12. Dake Bhuiya
13. Rikhiasan Bhuiya
14. Musahar Bhuiya
15. Ghatwar Bhuiya

⁵ Dalton Ethnology of Bengal, 1872 p. 140

⁶ Roy S. C., The Hill Bhuiyas of Orissa, p. 26

Some sections like Katti Bhuiya, Dandsena Bhuiya, Hake Bhuiya, Dake Bhuiya and Naksiya Bhuiya are just descriptive names not definitely applied to any section of the tribe, while some other sections are designated differently on the ground of their varying mythical origin. Thus the Musahar Bhuiyas believe to have descended from the younger son of a sage, whose elder son was the ancestor of the Rajwar Bhuiyas. Likewise the Rikhiasan Bhuiyas derive their name from the holy sages who were living on wild roots, fruits and tubers, and the Pawanbans Bhuiyas claim their descent from Hanuman, the son of the wind god (Pawan). On the other hand some of the sections like Bathudi Bhuiya, Saonti Bhuiya, and Santali Bhuiya have long since attained the status of separate communities as the Bathudi, the Saonti and the Santal who share many common social and cultural traits with the Bhuiyas. Thus the sections which remain are (1) Des or Pauri Bhuiyas of Keonjhar and Bonai who are very primitive; (2) Paik Bhuiyas of Orissa plains, who represent the quasi-militia Khandayats; (3) the mixed Rajkoli Bhuiyas of Orissa, who are agriculturists; (4) the Praja or Rautali Bhuiyas of Orissa and south-eastern-parts of Chota Nagpur, who are also agriculturists and agricultural labourers; and (5) the land-holding Ghatwar or Tikait Bhuiyas of Santal Pargana, Hazaribagh and Gaya.

Myth and Origin

The name of the tribe is derived from the Sanskrit word "Bhumi" meaning land or earth and therefore the Bhuiya hold the view that they were born out of the mother earth and became "Bhumiputra" (sons of the soil). The tribe is pronounced differently as Bhuiya, Bhuiyan and Bhuiya. The spelling used in this book is Bhuiya. The Pauri Bhuiyas, have some legends of their own regarding their origin. Some of these legends are given below.

Legend 1:

When the earth was first created, there were only three sections of people. In order to decide their socio-economic status the God brought three jars duly sealed at the mouth and placed them before the people. Each section took one jar each. When opened the Bhuiya found that their jar was full of earth, and the jars containing gold and money were taken by the other two sections. As the earth fell to their side, the Bhuiya became the owner of land and cultivated it for their livelihood. From that day they were called 'Bhuiya' (owner of land). The relationship of the Pauri Bhuiyas to the land goes beyond its economic value. It figures strongly in their religion and entire way of life. When a Bhuiya takes oath he does so by holding a handful of earth. It is believed that if anybody tells a lie by touching earth, he is likely to die soon and become a part of the earth.

Legend 2:

The legend goes like this. Formerly all sections of the tribe were of royal origin and enjoyed equal status. But some of them lost the purity of their royal blood and were degraded to a lower status. The story goes as follows: —

Long ago there lived a demon in the forest near a village called Kula in Koira area of Bonai and was called *Kulal Asur*. He had seven daughters. One day seven Bhuinya brothers came to this part of the jungle on hunting. While following a prey they lost their way. Soon they heard the voice of women and with a hope to find their way out of the Jungle they proceeded in the direction where from the voice was coming. Reaching the spot they found seven young and nude girls catching fish in a stream. The Bhuinyas threw seven pieces of clothes at them and after being clad properly the girls invited the seven brothers to their house for a lunch. In those days the Bhuinyas observed strict rules of austerity and refrained themselves from drinking liquor, eating fowl and pork. With the intention of marrying the boys by degrading their social status the girls served them with chicken curry hiding under cooked rice. The youngest brother was late in taking bath, and before he sat down for lunch others had started eating their shares earlier. Soon after they had put some rice in their mouth they found the chicken bones hidden underneath. It was too late for them to worry over the issue as they had already lost their sacred status by eating chicken. As soon as the youngest brother arrived at the place and sat down to eat, other brothers informed him about the trick of the girls and advised him to run away to the hills. He soon left the place on horse back, but the demon girls pursued him by following the hoof prints of the horse. In order to save the boy from the clutches of the demon girls a peacock wiped out the hoof marks by its legs. Being unable to seize the boy the demon girls returned home and married the six Bhuinya brothers. They thus lost their social status and remained amidst hills and forests. The youngest brother who managed to escape became the king and as the peacock helped him he passed an order in his country forbidding peacock shooting.

A similar legend showing the royal affinity of Pauri Bhuinyas is given below.

In the long past, there were seven Bhuinya brothers. One day there arose a quarrel among themselves regarding the possession of the throne, and by mutual agreement it was decided that the throne would go to him who would be able to kill an owl sitting on a *Kadam* tree in one shot. The first six brothers tried one by one to shoot at the owl, but missed the game. The youngest brother, however, succeeded in killing the owl in one shot and was thus made the king. He called himself '*Kadam Kesari*' after the name of the tree on which the owl was sitting, and other six brothers continued to be called as Bhuinyas.

Population and Distribution:

According to 1971 census the population of the Bhuinya is estimated to be 1,88,212 out of which 1,81,863 live in rural areas and 6,349 constitute the urban population. It is not possible to estimate the exact population of the Pauri Bhuinyas who have not been enumerated separately.

The districtwise population of the Bhuinya as per the 1961 and 1971 censuses is given in the Table No. 1.

TABLE No. 1
District wise population of the Bhuinya

Sl. No.	Name of the District	Population (1961)			Population (1971)		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
1	Keonjhar	26,478	26,208	52,686	27,596	28,399	55,995
2	Sundargarh	22,664	22,504	45,168	28,910	29,912	58,822
3	Mayurbhanj	14,966	14,650	29,616	18,949	18,960	37,909
4	Sambalpur	10,339	10,256	20,595	10,216	11,087	21,303
5	Dhenkanal	1,063	1,680	3,465	2,214	2,293	4,507
6	Kalahandi	1,063	1,045	2,108	259	194	453
7	Balasore	551	615	1,166	668	733	1,401
8	Cuttack	536	450	986	129	127	256
9	Koraput	187	177	364	3,179	3,083	6,262
10	Puri	176	171	347	377	389	766
11	Bolangir	110	49	159	98	94	192
12	Phulbani	20	18	38	85	51	136
13	Ganjam				72	138	210
Total		79,065	77,823	1,56,878	92,752	95,460	1,88,212

The Table No. 1 shows that the Bhuinyas are widely distributed in Orissa. But their main concentration is in the districts of Keonjhar, Sundargarh, Mayurbhanj and Sambalpur where they form 93 per cent of their total population. The primitive section of the Bhuinya community, i.e., the Pauri Bhuinyas are found only in the Bhuinyapirh of Keonjhar district and the Bonai Hills of Sundargarh district. The habitat of the Pauri Bhuinyas lies roughly between 21° and 22° North Latitude and 85° and 86° East Longitude. The blocks of hills and elevated valleys which stretch from north to south along the Western borders of Keonjhar and joins Bonai subdivision of Sundargarh district in its north-eastern side is the homeland of the primitive Pauri Bhuinyas. This tract is the watershed of the Baitarani river in the north and the Brahmani river in the south. The National Highway running through the blocks of hills of the upper Keonjhar separates the habitat of the Pauri Bhuinyas from that of the Juangs. The Juang-Pirh with its centre at Gonasika lies to the eastern side while the Bhuinya Pirh with its centre at Banspal lies to the western side of the upper Keonjhar. Lack of road communication has kept most of the Pauri villages cut-off from the outside world. Except a few rough roads constructed by the Forest Department, there are no good all weather roads connecting to many Pauri villages. Approach to Pauri villages becomes more difficult particularly in rainy season when the hill streams are in spate. Once the jungles of the Pauri area teemed with many wild animals such as tigers, bisons, elephants, bears and wild boars, but with continued practice of shifting cultivation the valuable fauna have disappeared to a great extent.

Education & Literacy :

According to 1971 Census 14.9 per cent of the Bhuinyas were literate as compared with the corresponding figure for the tribes as a whole of the state which is 9.5 per cent and for the whole population of the state which is 26.2 per cent. As no separate figure is available for the Pauri Bhuinyas, nothing can be said in figures about the level of their literacy. But from our observation and study of the community it is estimated that the literacy may not exceed 5 per cent. One important reason for such a low level of literacy is that the schools at the primary level in the Pauri Bhuinya area are few in relation to population, but it is often difficult to get students even for these few schools, for various reasons. In some cases schools exist only in pen and paper and not in reality. Teachers are lacking in many schools. The Pauri Bhuinyas do not see any economic benefit in giving education to their children. The school timing clashes with the economic activities of the people. Due to lack of road communication the school inspectors seldom visit the schools in Pauri areas. As a result, the teachers freely remain absent from the schools without being caught by the authorities.

Physical Features :

Physical features of the Pauri Bhuinyas have been described by S. C. Roy in detail and his findings are based mainly on the measurement of a sample of 100 Pauri adults. The Pauri Bhuinyas are said to be muscular in body built and their height varies from short to medium. Their hair is black, plentiful on head but scanty on the body. Hair is usually heavy. Head is mostly dolicocephalic, nose is broad and depressed at the root and lips are thick. The skin colour is mostly light brown, lighter than most of the other Mundari groups. They are mostly prognathous, the projecting cheeks and jaw bones giving a certain squareness to the face. Study among the Pauri Bhuinyas and their neighbouring tribes such as the Juangs and the Kols would however, reveal that the Pauri Bhuinyas are comparatively more lighter in skin colour and exhibit fine physical features than the Juangs and the Kols.

Language :

The Bhuinyas have no tribal language of their own. With their long association with the Oriyas they have adopted Oriya as their mother-tongue, and speak Oriya with local accent. The plains Bhuinyas are able to speak Oriya fluently and correctly, but the Pauris are accustomed to pronounce Oriya terms peculiarly.

Dress & Ornament :

Dress and ornaments of the plains Bhuinyas are just like those of their neighbouring non-tribal peasants. The men wear *Dhoti*, banian and shirt, and the women wear *Sari*. Blouse is worn on special occasions. The ornaments worn by the plains Bhuinya women are simple and of lighter variety. Like other rural women they are fond of silver bangles, armlets, anklets and necklaces, and nose-rings and ear-rings made of gold. Brass bangles and bead necklaces are conspicuous by their absence among the plains Bhuinyas, but they are most common among the Pauri

Bhuinyas. Unlike the women of the plains the Pauri women adorn themselves with a number of bangles, nose-rings, ear-rings, toe-rings, anklets, and armlets made of brass and alloy. They cover their neck and chest with bunches of multi-coloured bead necklaces made of beads and decorate their buns with wild flowers and hair-pins with pendants. The men wear short *Dhoti*, but the children go naked or tie a small piece of rag around their waist. The women wear *Sari*, but do not cover their heads. With the development of road communications and increasing contact with non-tribals and as a result of many changing circumstances such as opening up of mining and industrial complexes the traditional dress pattern is being slowly replaced by modern style and adornment.

The detailed ethnographic account of the Pauri Bhuinyas which is presented in the following chapters is based on a reconnoitre survey in the whole of the Pauri Bhuinya area followed by an intensive field work in two villages – one situated in the tribal setting and the other in an industrial and mining setting. The study of the villages was undertaken at two different time periods interspersed by about 10 years. A decade of time was long enough to assess change which had come about in the Pauri villages as a result of the development of road communications, mining and industrial activities, and exposure to many external forces of change.

CHAPTER II

LIVING CONDITIONS

The present chapter deals with the general hygienic conditions of the Pauri area, their sanitary habits, the main types of diseases they suffer from, their beliefs about the agencies inflicting disease and sickness and methods of curing, food habits, methods of food preparation and dietary system. Impact of modern health facilities, peoples' response to such facilities and the concurrent achievements have also been described to show the people's changing attitude.

Sanitary Habits :

As has been described in the previous chapter the Pauri Bhuinya villages are situated on high hills. Due to high altitude the people enjoy fresh and cool breeze but the presence of thick forest all around and heaps of rubbish and refuses thrown indiscriminately give birth to mosquitoes. During rainy season the home land of the Pauri Bhuinyas become malarious, but the native people who are accustomed to their habitat have developed strong resistance for malaria. Most of the Pauri villages are also surrounded by thick mango and jackfruit trees. The huts are covered with overhanging branches of these trees so that sunshine hardly falls on the huts. During rains many places become swampy. Rain water gets accumulated in puddles which become breeding-ground for flies and mosquitoes.

The Bhuinya houses are kept clean. The housewife takes care of her house which is plastered with cowdung and earth. The verandah is plastered on alternate days and the walls once in a week or fortnightly. She also cleans the cowshed every morning and throws the dung in the kitchen garden or *Bariin* which maize and mustard are grown. The courtyard and backyard are swept clean every morning. The housewife cleans cooking vessels which are mostly made of earth. Brass and aluminium vessels are also used in some families. Leaf-cups and leaf-plates are used for eating food and are thrown away after use.

Chicken is a nuisance in every Bhuinya house. It passes excreta every now and then indiscriminately in the courtyard and inside the house and makes the surrounding dirty. To add to this the Bhuinyas, like many other tribals, spit in every odd place. They do not have any pit or place into which to throw the rubbish and refuses. Mounds of cowdung and other rubbish are piled all around and serve as breeding-ground for flies and mosquitoes.

The Bhuinyas do not get pure drinking water. On hills the stream water is considerably pure, but this gets polluted as the water sources are used for more than one purpose. Water of a particular place may be used for washing clothes and

utensils, and for bathing and drinking purposes. The water also gets dirty when the leaves fall and rot in the water. The Bhuinyas prefer to defecate near the sources of water and during rainy season the dirt is washed down and pollutes the water. There are no wells on the hills and the habit of drinking water from the polluted sources causes enteric diseases. The common complaint of the Pauri Bhuinyas is stomach disorder.

In their daily habits the Bhuinyas are not so unclean. All above the age of 8 or 10 years brush their teeth with *sal* twigs early morning before eating anything. The womenfolk brush their teeth on their way to the stream for a bath. Stream beds are usually used as latrine. Both men and women take bath regularly, the women washing their head daily. They take naked bath while allowing their cloth to dry up, and any body approaching the bathing ghat must shout or give other signals so that the women get time to cover up their nudity. Some women take bath twice daily. Use of soap is rare among the Pauri Bhuinyas. The clothes may be washed by the women ordinarily once or twice a month, and positively prior to any festive or ceremonial occasion or before visiting other villages and market places. The Pauris use ash or soda to wash their clothes while those who afford to buy soap may use it. In the cases of ritual uncleanliness arising out of birth and death cases the services of washermen are required to wash the clothes.

The Pauri Bhuinyas have scanty hair growth. They shave their beard rarely and the males of older generation keep long hair which is tied as a knot at the back and those of younger generation, however cut hair once a month. They have their own scissors and they cut each others hair. The services of a barber are required only on the occasion of shaving the head of the offender as a sort of ritual purification prescribed by the tribal council. Razor-blades and shaving sticks are also used by some young persons for occasional shaving.

The men comb their hair daily after bath, while the women do not get time to do so daily. They use bamboo combs made by men, but now-a-days cheap plastic combs are widely used by both the sexes. A woman ties her hair to a simple knot, while the girl makes an elaborate bun decorating it with wild flowers. Now-a-days coloured ribbons have become a fashion for the girls. *Til* or mustard oil is used by both men and women for anointing over body and for head-dressing.

Food :

Rice is esteemed as the ideal food by the Pauri Bhuinyas. Even meat and millet without rice do not constitute a hearty meal. The Bhuinyas cultivate paddy, but their harvest is so meagre that it can hardly feed them for four or five months. To increase the stock they exchange black gram (*Biri*), niger, and mustard for paddy. The rice thus procured by exchange holds them for another two or three months. It should, however, not be misunderstood that the Bhuinyas eat rice sufficiently and continuously till the stock is exhausted. It may be noted that not all the meals are rice meals. Sufficient quantity of rice is stored for consumption during the rainy season when hard labour is put in the agricultural operations.

Ragi, *Suan*, *Guludir*, *Kangu* and other cereals grown by the Bhuinyas in the swiddens also supplement rice meals.

Edible roots and tubers, vegetables and mushrooms collected from the forest supplement the Bhuinya diet to a greater extent. In fact many poor families depend mainly on forest produce. In summer season the Bhuinyas live upon jackfruit and mango which grow in abundance in the area, and during rainy season mushrooms of different varieties are eaten as the most favoured dish. During winter the forest is rich with roots and tubers which the Pauri Bhuinyas collect in plenty.

Hunting and fishing are viewed more as sports than as a source of food. In adjoining reserve forest areas, wild animals are hunted occasionally. They catch fish from the streams and rivers. Fish and meat are not their principal diet.

To conclude, the food of the Pauri Bhuinyas does not constitute routine and monotonous items, but is more varied depending on the seasonal variation and availability of food materials.

Methods of Food Preparation :

The Bhuinyas husk their own rice. Rice is never washed before it is cooked, and the *Pej* (surplus water of the boiled rice) is not thrown away. It is either drunk after the meal or added to *Dal*(lentil) or meat to make it tasty. Sometimes, *Pej* and water are added to cooked rice which is kept till it cools down and then eaten.

Most of the Bhuinyas eat rice only with salt. Some may add onion and chilly to their menu. *Daland* curry are cooked occasionally or on special occasions. *Arhar*, *Bin*, *Mung* and *Kolatha*, are the important lentils grown by the Bhuinyas in the swiddens. The lentils are boiled in water, then salt and chilly are added for taste. The Bhuinyas rarely, if ever, use oil for cooking purposes. Vegetables are boiled and spices like mustard, onion, chilly and salt may be added. Green leaves are boiled with salt only. Meat is cooked with spices and oil and *Pejis* added to serve as its juice. Fish are either fried on ember or cooked with mustard and oil.

The Pauris store mango kernels to prepare cakes. The inner kernel is made to a paste and the same is kept under running water overnight. Next morning a little salt is added to it and a cake is prepared by baking the paste on embers.

Hunting is inaugurated on the day of ceremonial hunting called *Akhani Paridhi* and the preys include deer, sambar, barking deer, hare and different kinds of birds. As no success is guaranteed in hunting, the Bhuinyas rear goat, sheep and fowl for nonveg dishes. These are sacrificed during rituals and may be slaughtered to entertain guests and relatives. The Bhuinyas never eat beef and buffalo meat.

By custom the Bhuinyas do not milk their cows. Whenever needed the milk and milk products are purchased from the milkmen who live in their midst.

To break the monotony of their diet, the Pauri women prepare cakes and porridge on festive occasions. These are also used as gifts on visits to the relatives.

It is also customary for the unmarried girls to offer cakes to their boy friends. Rice cakes are most common and preferred above all other types of cakes. The paste of rice flour is wrapped in *Sal* leaves and steamed or baked to make cake. *Mandia* (ragi) cake may be prepared by baking the paste wrapped in *Sal* leaves on embers. *Mandia* cake is eaten especially during monsoon when they work in rains as it is believed that *Mandia* cakes keep the body warm. Cakes are made from green maize and the maize cakes have the best taste, Porridge is usually prepared on ceremonial occasions to offer it to the family ancestors. This is prepared by boiling rice and adding milk and molasses to make it sweet.

Roots and tubers are mostly consumed by steaming or roasting on embers. The tubers which taste bitter are sliced and kept under running water over night to washed away the bitterness to some extent. The slices are then steamed and eaten.

Fruits are generally eaten raw. Of all the fruits mango and jackfruit supplement the Bhuinya diet to a great extent. Raw mangoes are sliced and eaten with pinches of salt and poorer families eat mango slices as a substitute for their rice meal. Ripe mangoes are also eaten to a great extent. Every Bhuinya settlement must have mango groves, but most of the mangoes are obtained from the jungle where mango trees grow wild. The juice of mango is used to make a kind of cake called *Amsara* by drying the paste on a piece of mat. Jackfruits grow in abundance in Pauri villages. The green Jackfruits are boiled and eaten, but most of the Paruis prefer to eat the ripe ones. Semi-ripen Jackfruits are eaten by steaming and by roasting on embers. The seeds are eaten by roasting or by boiling.

Food Preservation :

The Bhuinyas hardly get any surplus food which requires to be stored for future use. The agricultural produce is barely sufficient for the whole year, and therefore the question of storing does not arise, But certain things which occasionally come to them in greater quantity can be preserved for future use. Wild meat which they get by hunting are preserved by smoking. Likewise, fish may be dried or smoked to store for future use. The Bhuinyas enjoy dried-fish more than the raw ones. Maize is stored for future use. Similarly, mango juice is preserved in the form of dried paste.

Daily Diet :

The adults eat twice or thrice a day, and the children eat as many times as the foods supply permits. During the days of adversity and scarcity, the adults manage to keep their body and soul together by one or two meals. A meal usually consists of cooked-rice and salt. Occasionally *Dal*, vegetable and green leaves, meat or fish serve as side dishes. One of the principal meals is taken at noon and the other in the evening. Some cooked-rice of the night is kept for the Children to serve as their breakfast. After taking their meals the Bhuinyas drink the *Paj* extracted from the boiled rice. When rice and cereals are out of stock they subsist on roots tubers, green vegetables and fruits.

The housewife takes care of cooking and the food is served in leaf-cups made by her. The children eat proportionately more than the adults, who do not get enough to eat and manage to remain satisfied with the minimum of food.

Drinks and other Intoxicants :

Liquor has the following uses for the Bhuinyas: –

- (i) It is taken as an intoxicant to forget the trials and tribulations of life, and to get relief from fatigue after strenuous field work.
- (ii) *Mohua* liquor is used as medicine to cure cold and headache.
- (iii) Some Bhuinyas drink liquor as a substitute for food and keep themselves fit for all hard work.
- (iv) Liquor is indispensable on ritual and festive occasions. It is offered to the deities and to the ancestral spirits to keep them in good temper and thereby solicit their favour for plenty and prosperity.
- (v) Liquor has great social value. It is customary for the Bhuinyas to entertain their guests and relatives when the latter visit them. Plenty of liquor is consumed during important festive and ceremonial occasions when large number of guests crowd their families. Important rites connected with birth, marriage and death ceremonies are performed by offering liquor to appropriate deities. Liquor is also used while deciding quarrels and conflicts.

Liquor is either prepared by themselves at home or purchased from the local vendors who visit their villages and sell liquor in exchange of agricultural produce. Different varieties of liquor are taken by them. They are *Mohua* liquor called *Mahuili*, rice-beer called *Pachhi*, toddy extracted from date-palms, *Salapa Mada* extracted from sago-palms, and liquor prepared out of cereals.

The Bhuinyas do not like to drink the rice-beer which is prepared by any other tribe and caste. Hence they brew their own liquor at home. Many of them own date-palms and sago-palms which they tap for drinking.

The Bhuinyas are habituated to smoking and chewing tobacco. Tobacco is grown in kitchen garden and is stored for the whole year. The men smoke tobacco by rolling it in *Salleaf*, while both men and women chew it with lime. Tobacco is an insignia of social prestige. The guests and relatives visiting Bhuinya houses are first offered tobacco and *Sal* leaves as a token of hospitality. In their traditional youth organization the *Bandhu* (cognate) girls present tobacco to the unmarried boys as a token of their love. Children start smoking when they are as young as six or seven years of age. Young boys who earn some cash smoke *Bidi* purchased from the local shops. Betel is too dear for them. Tobacco paste (*Gurakhu*) is popular among the Pauris, and young women and girls are very fond of it. *Gurakhu* is purchased from local weekly markets and is taken twice or thrice daily.

Tea has become a habit for many Bhuinyas, who can afford. As they do not milk their cows they take it raw in the morning.

Health and Hygiene :

Most of the Bhuinyas are pretty strong and stout and their stature varies from tall to short, the majority being medium in stature. The sound physique of the Bhuinyas may be due to the food they eat and the climate they live in. Their diet is composed of more protein than starch. The little quantity of rice which they eat is full of food value because it is hand pound and not washed before cooking so that the brown coating remains intact and the surplus rice water which remains after cooking is taken and never thrown away. The fresh green leaves and vegetables are boiled without adding much spices or oil and therefore the nutrients are not spoiled. The roots and tubers collected from the forest are eaten by the Bhuinyas mostly by roasting, and the fruits which are eaten raw are of great nutritive value. Meat, mutton, chicken and egg constitute a small proportion of their diet. Almost all the parts of an animal including the skin, brain, tongue, liver, guts and intestines are eaten by the Bhuinyas except the hairs, hooks and the horns. The meat eaten by them does not lose its nutritive element as it is eaten either by roasting or by boiling without adding much spices and oil.

The Bhuinyas do not like to sit idle and they do hard out door work from dawn to dusk. They enjoy a cool and healthy climate which drives away disease and sickness from them and keeps them active.

Disease and their treatment:

In spite of healthy climate of their habitat and nutritious food they take the Bhuinyas sometimes suffer from malaria, stomach trouble, headache, cough and cold. The reasons they attribute for illness are untimely bath, irregularity of diet and negligence of bodily care. Besides these natural explanations they also attribute the illness to supernatural causes. The Pauris believe that certain ghosts and spirits inflict sickness if they are offended due to one reason or the other. Likewise, the ancestral spirits if not properly appeased or if their sacred tabernacle is defiled, may make their descendants to suffer. Some individuals are believed to possess "evil-eye" (*Nazar*), and when they cast their look on somebody with a malicious intention the person is liable to suffer. Sufferings may also be caused by evil spirits (*Churni* or *Masani*) or by the witches. Persons violating social taboos and committing serious offences like incest are believed to suffer from leprosy.

The Bhuinyas do not bother to take steps for treatment of minor diseases at the primary stage of any illness. When the disease becomes serious disabling the person to carry on his daily activities steps are taken for remedy. As the Bhuinyas ascribe illness to external agencies, necessary steps are taken to appease the latter for recovery. If an illness is caused due to the visitation of some deity the help of the village priest is immediately taken. The village priest (*Dihuri*) offers libations and sacrifices and prays the offending deity to remove illness. In case the *Pat* (Hill) spirits are offended a vow is made to sacrifice a goat or a fowl after the sufferer is cured. To satisfy the angry ancestral spirits the Bhuinyas offer *Jau* and liquor in the *Bhitar* (sacred corner in the house where ancestral spirits live) for quick recovery.

To avert the evil-eye and to neutralize the mischief caused by witches or sorcerers the services of *Raulia* (Witch detector-cum-curer) are requisitioned. The *Raulia* first tries to detect the offender by divination and then invokes more powerful spirits to neutralize the evil effects and cure the illness.

The following tests are employed by a *Raulia* to detect the agency creating sickness.

(i) *Measuring Reed* – Two reeds of a kind of each measuring nine spans in length are used for this purpose. The *Raulia* utters the names of the suspected spirits or persons one by one measuring the reeds in each case. When the offender's name is pronounced, the reeds tend to lengthen slightly beyond their actual length.

(ii) *Test by water Jug* – A brass plate (*Thali*) filled with water is brought for this purpose. A lamp with four lighted wicks are kept in the middle of the plate and a brass water jug is kept inverted over the lamp. When the name of the offender is recited the water in the plate begins to bubble and the jug is set in motion.

(iii) *Test by a Grain-measure (Pai)* – The *Raulia* keeps *Pal* (Brass grain-measure) of paddy on the floor and puts the *Pai* with its mouth down wards. A man is asked to sit on the *Pai*. When the name of the evil spirit who has caused illness is uttered the *Pal* shakes and tilts of its own accord.

After the evil spirit causing illness is found out by any of these divinations appropriate rituals are performed to propitiate it and offer sacrifices to it. The *Raulia* also has a good knowledge about medicinal herbs and applies them wherever necessary. If a person suffers from frequent stomach-ache the *Bhuinyas* usually try to cure the patient by branding his belly with a hot piece of forked iron rod. In the case of epidemic the *Dihuri* offers libations to *Dharam Devta* (Sun God), *Basuki* (Earth Goddess), *Gaisiri* (village Goddess) and other gods and goddesses such as *Boram* and *Thakurani* and prays for help.

Neither the *Pauri Bhuinyas* believe in efficacy of modern medicine, nor the modern health and medical facilities are within their reach. Physical barriers and lack of communication to the interior areas have stood in the way of establishing dispensaries and other medical infrastructures in the *Pauri* area and it is mainly for this reason that they depend upon their own methods of curing illness. But those who live in close proximity to dispensary and modern medical facilities do not get medical help when wanted. Some of the reasons are that doctors are not available in some dispensaries and due care is not taken of the patients. Moreover sufficient medicines are not in stock to dispense among the patients. Added to these difficulties the doctor imposes certain food restrictions which the *Pauri* finds it difficult to follow. The disciplines of modern medical practices make no concessions to the tribal customs. For these reasons mainly the *Pauris* do not bother about modern health facilities unless any major illness endangers life.

CHAPTER III

PAURI BHUINYA SETTLEMENTS

As has been described in preceding pages inhospitable hill terrain and valley bottom form the homeland of the Pauri Bhuinyas. The Bhuinya settlements are located either on the table land at the hill-top, and the hill slope or in the valleys surrounded by hills and forests. The Pauri settlements and crop fields are subjected often to the depredation of wild animals who live in the surrounding forests. Jaldih, one of the study villages, is situated on an open table land of a hill of about 2,000 ft. altitude above sea-level. The village was fairly isolated, till very recently a jeepable road has been laid over the hill tract by the Orissa Forests Corporation for exploitation of timbers. There are rich *Sal* forests all around the village, which in fact have attracted the Forest Department to construct the jeepable tract. Tantara, another study village is situated on the top of a hill. This village was also surrounded by thick forest and was devoid of any communication facilities till the mining operation was geared up at Tensa. With the establishment of Tensa township a jeepable road has been constructed connecting Tantara and its mineral rich hills with the township. This has also led to the destruction of the surrounding forests to a greater extent.

The blocks of hills around the Pauri villages provide land for slash and burn type of cultivation. Due to non-availability of low lands, the Bhuinyas are bound to carry on shifting cultivation in the nearby hills and forests. In the Pauri country the settlements are located in such places where sufficient hill-slopes are available for shifting cultivation and thick forests are available for carry on hunting and food gathering and good perennial streams are present to provide water to the villagers.

Construction of houses does not conform to any pattern. In some cases they are built either on both sides of the main village path or are dispersed on all sides. Each family owns a courtyard around which the huts are built. The huts face to the courtyard, The number of huts which a family owns depends upon its family size. The cow-shed is constructed on one side of the courtyard. At the back of the houses lie maize and mustard plots in the kitchen-garden where chilly, tobacco, and some vegetables are also occasionally grown. Dispersed all around and overhanging the thatched huts are the jack fruit trees, the sight of which indicates the location of a Pauri village or an abandoned village site.

The most descent and commodious hut known as *Mandaghar* in Keonjhar and *Darbaghar* in Sundergarh, is usually constructed in the centre of the village. This is the dormitory house of the unmarried boys. It also serves the purpose of a guest house, council house and granary of the village. The *Changus* or circular tambourines played upon by men in dances and the drums are kept suspended with strings from pronged deer antlers fixed to the walls. In the inner portion straw packed bundles containing common stock of grains of the village youths or of the

village are stored on raised wooden platform. In some villages a separate hut is constructed a little away from the village which is called *Thakurani ghar*.

On one side of the *Darbarghar* is installed the sacred shrine of *Gaisiri Khunta*, made of a round peice of carved wooden pillar. This pillar represents the tutelary deity of the village to whom offerings are made from time to time for the well-being of the villagers. In front of the *Darbarghar* lies an open and wide space called *Darbar* or the plaza where dances are held and the village Panchayat meets. The dormitory organization continues to have its hold in the Bhuinyapirh of Keonjhar district, but it is in the process of disintegration in Sundargarh district. In Koira area many Bhuinya villages lack the *Darbargarh*, though the rites associated with the dormitory organization have not completely been discarded.

The size of a Bhuinyan village varies from 5 houses to 20 houses. The villages located in the plains are much bigger having in some cases more than 60 houses with population ranging 200 to 400. Jaldih village had a Bhuinya population of 140, distributed in 27 families in 1962 while it increased to 158 distributed in 25 families in 1970. The Bhuinya villages in the hills tend to be small due to the scarcity of *Podu* lands, drinking water facility, slopping terrain and non-availability of wide level ground.

Most of the Pauri villages are homogeneous except one or two *Gour* families. The latter are given shelter in Bhuinya villages to provide milk and miik-productst tothe Bhuinyason important occassions. Besides, they are employed to tend to cattle of the Bhuinyas. The *Gour* houses are located at some distance from the Bhuinya settlement. In the plains and mining areas some Kol and Munda families are found in Bhuinya villages, but they always live in separate hamlets. Some big Bhuinya villages have two or more wards. For example Patuli has two wards, namely *Bada* and *San* Patuli. Kadakala situated in the Bhuinyapirh has two wards. Upper and Lower Kadakala. The wards have no separate entity; they function as one in socio-religious matters and owe their allegiance to the main village.

Changing Village Site:

The Pauri Bhuinyas tend to change their village site forvarious reasons some of which are stated below –

- (1) General boredom of living in a particular place for a long time. The Pauris believe that prolonged stay in one site may not bring prosperity to the villagers and just like wearing new clothes, they enjoy to shift their settlement to new sites.
- (2) As described earlier the Bhuinya settlements are built usually near forests so that the people do not have to walk long distance for *Podu* cultivation. When the jungles around a village are all exhausted they shift their village to another site where they get forest lands in close proximity to practise shifting cultivation.
- (3) General calamity in a village such as successive deaths of cattle and human beings, repeated crop failure, breaking out of fire and cholera or any other

epidemic in the village, frequent tiger menace, etc., force the people to abandon their old settlement and take up a new site.

(4) If the *Gaisiri-Khunṭa* is broken or up rooted, the village site must be changed forthwith otherwise it is believed that dire misfortune may over take the village.

Some villages have definite sites to which they shift their village on rotation basis. These sites have different names so that when the village shifts to a new site it is named after the site on which it stands. Village Jaldih, for example, has another site called Jabakadih to which the village moves when required. In absence of such definite sites, steps are taken to select new sites on the following considerations—

(a) There should be perennial water sources in close proximity so that the villagers do not face any trouble in fetching water for domestic use. This being the most important and practical consideration, due care is taken to search for the water source before selecting a new site.

(b) Being predominantly shifting cultivators, they tend to select such sites around which lie vast hills and forests at close proximity which can be cleared for cultivation without much strain.

(c) The last, not the least important factor for selection of a new village site is its favourableness for habitation which is determined by several tests of omen. If it is found inauspicious or ill-omened the place is rejected for another site.

Testing of Omen for selection of new site :

After a site is chosen steps are taken to know if the site will be auspicious for habitation by testing of omen. The *Dihuri* (village priest) after taking a bath cleans a small patch in the new site and plasters it with cowdung and water. He must have observed continence in the previous night. The priest prays *Dharam* (Sun God), *Basumata* (Earth Goddess), *Gaisiri* (village deity), *Thakurani*, *Boram*, *Pat* (deities residing in hills, forests and streams) and *Pitru* (ancestral spirits) and puts a handful of husked paddy (*Akata*) on the plastered patch and a circle of turmeric powder around the rice pile. He then bends down and prays—"Oh *Dharam Devta*, *Basumata*, *Gaisiri*, *Thakurani* Borm *Pitru*pita, today we are placing a pile of *Akata* in your honour. Let us know if the proposed village site will be auspicious for habitation. Let all be in the best of health. Let there be enough for all to eat". After the prayer is over the *Dihuri* covers the pile of rice with an earthen pot cautiously so that the pile is not disturbed. He then carefully plasters the rim of the pot with mud and cowdung carefully to prevent the ants and insects from entering inside and disturbing the rice grains. Next morning the *Dihuri* takes his bath and with the villagers go to the spot. The *Dihuri* uncovers the pile and closely inspects the position of the grains. If he finds the pile disturbed and the grains are scattered and some are found outside the turmeic circle the site is considered inauspicious and is at once rejected. On the other hand undisturbed position of the grains is the sign of good luck, and the site is selected for habitation.

Construction of Dwellings in the new site;

On an auspicious day which is selected by the *Dihuri* and the village elders at the *Darbar* the sacred *Gaisiri Khunta* is installed in the new site by the *Dihuri* and the *Naek* (the secular head of the village). The *Dihuri* offers milk and molasses water to the *Gaisiri* and prays.

"Oh *Gaisiri*, today we are installing you here in our new village site. Guard us from all the misfortunes. See that there is bumper harvest, so that every body gets enough to eat. Let the villagers and the cattle be in good health".

The *Darbarghar* is constructed near the *Gaisiri* preferably in a central place in the village. This is constructed by joint effort of the villagers in which unmarried boys and girls take more active part. The men bring timber and other building materials from the jungle and erect the structure of the house, and the women plaster the walls. After the *Darbar* house is constructed the *Dihuri* and the *Naek* build their houses and then others of the village follow suit.

Shifting of settlement site was a frequent phenomenon in olden times when the Pauri Bhuinyas were solely shifting cultivators. But at present they rarely change their village site because they have taken to low-land permanent cultivation of paddy in the village bottom to a great extent. The practice of shifting cultivation is now restricted to a great extent because it is under a ban which is enforced strictly by the Forest Department. Adoption of permanent paddy cultivation in the valley bottom has changed the ownership of land from the village to the individual family and the settlement pattern from shifting to a sedentary life. The land survey settlement in the Pauri area has formalized the individual holding of property which the settled cultivation initiated. The homestead lands and the kitchen gardens are recorded in the name of the individual families. Formerly such types of land belonged to the village as a whole. The change in land tenure system does not give much scope for the villagers to move to new sites unless dire necessity compels them to do so. With the adoption of wet cultivation the pressure on *Podu* cultivation has been minimized. There is no hurry now to rotate the swiddens within a short span of time. The fallow period has been lengthened and the swiddens get sufficient time to recuperate to have a thick growth of vegetational cover.

Ritual for constructing a New House :

On a Wednesday or Friday the family head may start the construction of his new house. Before the structure of the house is erected, the *Subha Khunta* (sacred pillar) is fixed on the ground. The family head takes a bath and plasters a small area with cowdung and water. He then digs a hole and prays the deities for good health and happiness of the family members and also for good harvest. He then puts some turmeric powder and a few rice grains in the hole. Seven mango leaves are tied with a string on the top of the sacred pillar which is covered with an earthen pot so that birds may not pass excreta at the top. The pillar is then kept

in position in the hole and fixed to the ground without being tilted. Subsequently when the house is constructed the sacred pillar is kept in a central position which ultimately forms one of the pillars of the *Bhitar* (sacred inner tabernacle). After the house is constructed a minor ritual is performed before it is occupied. Gruel (*Jau*) cooked in a new earthen pot is offered to the ancestral spirits in the *Bhitar* portion of the house to safeguard the family members from misfortunes and calamities.

Description of House :

A Bhuinya hut is rectangular in shape with grass thatched sloped roof. Average size of a house is 25 ft. by 12 ft. The walls are made of logs of wood planted vertically close to each other and are plastered with mud and cowdung. The rafters and beams are made of logs of wood which are thatched with variety of wild grass called *Khar*. Some well-to-do families have houses thatched with tiles usually made by them. The roof is supported by wooden pillars on all sides. Doors are made of split bamboo and plastered with mud and cowdung while the rich persons have doors made of wooden planks. A piece of rope is used to close the bamboo door but iron chain is fixed to the wooden door with a hook fixed to the door frame to facilitate locking. An earthen elevated platform called *Pinda* is built around the house or only in front for sitting purposes. The house lacks any window and therefore the inside is dark. The structure of a house is laid by men while plastering of the house is done by women. Most of the building materials like logs of wood, bamboo, rope and thatching grass, etc. are gathered from the forest while iron nails and chains are purchased from the market.

Functionally the Bhuinya house is divided mainly into three distinct portions. The innermost portion of the house is used for storing food grains. On a raised platform made of wooden logs are kept grain bin made of straw. Other household articles such as baskets are also kept on the platform. The chickens and goats take their shelter under the wooden platform.

The middle portion of the house is divided into three parts. The portion where a hearth is made serves the purpose of *Chulla* (kitchen). From the hearth a narrow passage leads to a small and secluded apartment called *Bhitar* which forms the abode of the ancestral spirits. The outer portion is used as the sleeping apartment and is called as *Basa*. A wall is usually built between the above portion of the house and the outermost apartment and sometimes a door is fixed inside to separate the store and the kitchen -cum- bed room from the outer apartment which is used for more than one purpose. In the middle portion there is a hole where grains are husked by means of a pestle. Hence this portion of the house is known as *Kutunisal* (husking apartment). Close to the walls near the Kitchen are kept water jars on a raised earthen platform.

It is important to note that only one of the clusters of huts belonging to a family contains the *Bhitar*. The house with *Bhitar* is called *Mulaghar* (main house) while other huts are known as *Mela ghar* (out houses). Sometimes, a group of

families of a minor lineage possess a common *Bhitar* or *Mulaghar* as they all have a common set of ancestral spirits.

Of all the sections, the cooking apartment and the *Bhitar* are considered the most sacred. Entry of outsiders into these portions is strictly forbidden. If somebody enters the outer section that is, *Kutunisala* he may be excused, but in no case he should get into the inner chamber. The portion having the hearth is considered sacred, because the food cooked here is offered to the ancestral spirits in *Bhitar* portion. The entry of outsiders defiles the food and there will be shortage of food in the family. The worst that happens is that the ancestral spirits get angry and may leave the house and bring sickness to the family members. Entry of menstruating women also defiles the house. During their menstrual cycle, therefore, the women are not allowed to enter this section and do not cook or sleep here. The clothes are also not dried on the roof of the *Mulaghar* as this house includes the sacred *Bhitar*. No birth should take place in *Mulaghar*. A separate shed is built to serve as the lying-in-room. The parturient woman spends one or two months after delivery in this shed and it is only after the purificatory rites that she is allowed to enter the *Mulaghar*. Temporary pollution caused by death of person in *Mulaghar* is removed by propitiating the ancestral spirits and offering them gruel (*Jau*) cooked in a new earthen pot.

Cows and buffaloes are kept in separate sheds constructed close to the main house, while goats and chickens are kept in any of the living room of houses.

Household Equipments :

Material culture of the Pauri Bhuinyas is poor. The household articles consist of mainly earthen vessel, earthen jar and gourd vessel, palm-leaf mat, string cot and wooden head-rest, bamboo umbrella, leaf rain-coat and bamboo hat, broom-stick made of wild grass, bamboo basket and winnowing fan, hand operated husking mortar and pestle, grinding stone and roller, small and big axes, a few knives, plough-share, digging-stick, hoe, bow and arrow, kerosine lamp and strawmade grain bin. The earthen vessels, iron implements and baskets are purchased from the market while most of the other articles are self made. Some of the richer families afford to own brass jars for storing water, brass and aluminium vessels and plates, cloth umbrella, husking lever operated by leg, lanterns and flash lights and other costly household articles. Bicycles and wrist watches are also no more an exclusive possession of the caste people. The household materials of the plains Bhuinyas of course, are more costly and numerous than those of the Pauris. The small-scale, largely personal, subsistence economic system with little in the nature of a market economy and limited money medium and a slow process of cultural borrowing are perhaps the main reasons for the low standard of material culture among the Pauri Bhuinyas.

CHAPTER IV

ECONOMIC ORGANISATION

Daily Life :

The daily routine of work of the Pauri Bhuinyas throws much light on their economic life. It is therefore, necessary at the outset to give an account of the daily life around their hearth and home, field and forest before describing their agricultural practices and other economic pursuits.

The first crow of the cocks rouses the Pauris from their slumber. After leaving bed the man of the family may sit leisurely for a while near the house fire and enjoy the smoke of the country-made cigar, but the housewife soon pushes the bamboo door aside and comes out to engage herself in domestic works. She washes her face and keeps a gourd full of water and tooth twig ready for her husband. Thereafter she starts sweeping the courtyard and sprinkles cowdung water on it before doing any other work. Then she goes in and sits down at the mortar to husk paddy or *Jali*, by means of a pestle. It is the belief that grains husked before sunrise tend to multiply in quantity and therefore can feed more persons. After the grains for the day's meal are husked she takes up other works such as plastering the floor of the house, cleaning cowshed and throwing the dungs in the kitchen garden washing utensils, and fetching water from the stream or river. The children enjoy playing together while the elderly men assemble at the *Darbar* to discuss matters of common concern. Returning from the *Darbar* man may engage himself in making baskets, repairing agricultural implements, or ploughing in the nearby field. After food is cooked for him he goes out to work on the *Biringa* or *Kaman* (*Podu* plots). As the children do not stand hunger for longer and cannot wait till cooking is finished, they are served with some rice kept from the previous night with salt or onion. The housewife now gets time to brush her teeth, and goes for a bath. On return from the bathing ghat with pitchers of water she starts cooking the days' meal which constitutes boiled rice, *Kangu* or *Jali* and some greens serving as the side dish. When the food is being cooked she utilizes her time in making leaf-cups and plates for family use. Returning from his morning work the man brushes his teeth and goes to the stream for bath. Then he takes food and retires for a while. In the meantime the house wife and the children take their food. Then both the husband and the wife start for field work in the *Kaman*, They carry some extra food and gourd-ful of water with them to the field.

The whole family including the children leaves for the field. They work there for the whole day, the man cutting the trees and bushes, setting fire to those, ploughing the field, hoeing, sowing, weeding and reaping or harvesting and the woman doing similar works except ploughing. On their way back home the man

may carry a load of firewood and the woman plucks some leaves for domestic use and collects some greens, mushrooms and tooth-twigs.

In slack seasons, when much labour is not needed for the agricultural operations both the man and the woman go out to the forest with others of their village with digging sticks to collect edible roots, tubers, fruits, greens, mushrooms, honey and eggs. During this seasons, especially in summer, the man may engage himself in hunting, fishing and bird-catching and while at home he makes his own plough, carrying poles and ropes, repair agricultural implements, brings thatching grass and thatches his house . In leisure hours the woman goes out to collect date-palm leaves from the jungle, weaves mats, washes clothes and plasters walls with coloured earth. On return from the field the man goes to the *Darbar* for relaxation and for a chit chat with others while the woman resumes her domestic works such as fetching water, chopping firewood and cooking food. A Pauri family takes food very early at night. Soon after the night meal the man with a lighted torch made of soft wooden logs move to his *Kaman* to spend the night there watching the crops and scaring away the wild animals. The unmarried boys go to sleep in the *Darbar* house. They spread their own mats and sleep with their feet towards the fire which is kept lighted in the centre throughout the day and night. The small children sleep in the house with their mother.

Economic Life :

The Pauri Bhuiyans eke out their living mainly by shifting cultivation which is commonly called as *Kamani*. Recently they have taken to wet cultivation by reclaiming lands in the valleys. The produce from agriculture is not sufficient to go round for the whole year. Therefore the Pauris engage themselves in food collection, hunting, fishing, basket-making, wage earning and other economic pursuits to supplement their income from land. The paragraphs which follow gives an account of the land system of the Pauri Bhuinyas, their agricultural practices, food-gathering pursuits, and other sources of living along with division of labour between the sexes, live-stock, trade and marketing facilities, wealth and inheritance, and other aspects of their economic life.

Land :

As already stated, the Pauri country comprises blocks of hills and forests intersected by rivers or ravines and by tplateaus and wooded plains. The area is mostly unsurveyed and the tribals are free to cut and clear the patches of forests to practise *Kamani* cultivation. Except for a few selected areas in Bonai the restrictions enforced by the Forest Department in respect of *Kamani* do not apply to the Pauri area. Therefore the Pauris in most cases are free to carry on *Kamani* cultivation in the forests. Village being the land owning unit, each Pauri village has a definite area demarcated by boundary lines from the time of the feudatory chiefs and the villagers are free to cut forest and hunt within their territory. Tresspassing in the land of another village leads to quarrels and conflicts which may either be decided mutually by both the villages or may be brought to the court of law for trial. Such

cases, however, occur very rarely. During the field work, only one such case could be reported. This was a dispute between Jaldih & Tinto regarding their village boundary. The matter is still under negotiation and as the Pauri Bhuinyas are peace loving and good natured people and are least provoked. Therefore both the villages, were anxious to decide the matter by mutual discussion. Generally the following guiding principles are followed for deciding disputes over land. Each village-contributes a big chicken and a few honest and truthful Bhuinyas from the neighbourhood are invited to act as judges. They all proceed to the disputed land and there each village performs a ritual praying to *Dharam Devta*, *Gaisiri*, *Basumata* and *Pat* deities and ties the chicken there. The chicken is then covered with a new earthen pot and mud is plastered around its rim. The chickens are left for one night in this manner and the judges watch overnight so that the chicken of one village does not kill the other. Next morning, the pots are taken out to find out which chicken is dead. It is believed that the chicken of the village to which the disputed land does not belong should die and that of the village which is the real owner of the land should survive. If both the chickens stand the test and survive or otherwise die under the effects of occult sciences in such cases the disputed land is divided equally between both the villages. On the basis of these principles the judges decide the disputes concerning land.

Type of land – The cultivable land of the Pauri Bhuinyas may be classified under six main categories as follows –

(i) *Biringa* – A patch of forest land brought under cultivation for the first year is called *Biringa*. All these lands are owned by the village and every year patches of forests are distributed among individual families for cultivation. During the period of cultivation a piece of land remains under the individual ownership, but after it is left fallow it reverts back to the village. *Biri* (black-gram) is the principal crop grown in *Biringa*. A variety of other crops such as niger, pumpkin, gourd, *dunka* (beans), *Suturi*, *Kolath* (horse-gram), *Mung* etc., are also grown in it.

(ii) *Jala or Kaman* – A patch of *Biringa* under second year cultivation is called *Kaman*. A kind of fast-growing paddy is grown in *kaman* and *Gangei*, *Ragi*, maize *Ruma* are sown on all sides of a *Kaman* to mark the boundary lines.

(iii) *Guda* – When a patch of *Kaman* is cultivated for the third year it is then called *Guda*. After being cultivated consecutively for two years a patch of *Guda* generally lacks much fertility. Hence such crops like light paddy, *Jali Suan*, or niger are usually sown on such plots. After three successive years of cultivation the land is left fallow for ten to fifteen years till the fertility of the soil is regained by suitable vegetation.

(iv) *Nala* – In order to grow more crops some Pauris may take extra pains to plough open patches of fallow land and grow *niger* or *Kolath* (horse-gram). Such plots are called *Nala*.

(v) *Bila or Jami* – These are permanent paddy plots reclaimed close to the river or stream bed in the valley so that the source of the water can be diverted to

irrigate these lands. Such lands can be reclaimed up to 30° slope and the water from the hill streamis put to use for irrigating these lands. These lands are individually owned on a permanent basis. Paddy is the only crop grown in these lands.

(vi) *Bakadi* – Close to the family dwellings and preferably at the back side lie the patches of open land owned permanently by individual families. After recent survey and settlement work in Pauri area these plots with the homestead have been measured and record of rights has been issued to individual families. These backyard lands are very fertile because the house wife dumps cowdung cleaned from the cowshed every day on this land. Every year two crops such as maize and mustard are grown alternatively on *Bakadi*. A small portion is fenced properly where they grow tobacco, chilly, and some vegetables.

Ownership of land – Somekinds of land are owned permanently by individuals, some permanently by the village, while the ownership of some other types of land rests with the village though individual families exercise ownership over those during the period of cultivation. The following table states the ownership pattern of different types of land in Bhuinya area.

TABLE No. 2
Types of Land and Ownership Pattern

SI. No.	Bhuinya Term.	Type of land English Equivalent	Type of ownership
1	Biringa	Swidden under the first year cultivation.	Owned by individual families for a temporary period till it is under cultivation. As soon as the land is left fallow the ownerships reverts back to the village.
2	Kaman	Swidden under cultivation for the second year.	Ditto
3	Guda	Swidden under third year cultivation.	Ditto
4	Nala	Open patches of fallow land taken up for cultivation.	Ditto
5	Bila or Jami	Permanent paddy plots constructed by individual families.	Owned by individual families permanently.
6	Bakadi	Kitchen garden	Ditto
7	Jhad	Virgin forest or village forest.	Owned by the village. Usually this patch of forest is not brought under cultivation and is kept reserved to provide timber and other house building materials to the villagers.

According to the Land Alienation Act the land of the Pauri Bhuinyas is not alienable to the non-tribals. The rule prescribed that without prior approval of the competent authority a Bhuinya cannot dispose of any land to a non-tribal.

Distribution of land – Patches of forest land for shifting cultivation are distributed among the individual family heads every year after the ritual called *Magh Punei* which is held in the month of January-February. The *Naek* (secular-head) of the village and *Dihuri* (village priest) go to the spot which is selected for cultivation and allot the plots to individual family heads. The *Dihuri* cuts a tree with axe or puts some mark on a tree to separate the boundary of one plot from the adjoining one. In course of distribution the *Naek* and the *Dihuri* are also given land to cultivate.

If the villagers want to cultivate some land on communal basis to increase the common stock of grains a plot may also be marked for joint cultivation by the villagers. Members from each family go to work in the village plot starting from felling trees and forest clearing to the harvesting of the crops. Both men and women may work jointly and the yield is stored in the village fund to be used for common purpose.

The unmarried boys and girls of a village also cultivate patches of *Kaman* on co-operative basis. The boys take bullocks from their respective families and plough the field, while the girls do such works like hoeing, cutting and clearing bushes, setting fire to the dried trees and bushes, weeding and harvesting. The seeds to be sown in the swidden may be borrowed from somebody or are brought on loan which is paid off after the harvest. The yield is stored in the common fund of the boys and girls to meet the expenses concerning their youth organization.

A patch of forestland cultivated consecutively for a period of three years is left fallow for 10 to 15 years till it recuperates sufficiently and regains its fertility. If suitable patches of forest land are not available in a village, the village may borrow some land from the neighbouring village for temporary cultivation. In such cases, some of the elders of the village pay a visit to the other village with a few bottles of liquor and beg their permission to allow them to cultivate the land. If they agree, the villagers may cultivate the land for three years and in return give a few measures of grains and some bottles of liquor to the owners of the land as a token of their gratitude.

Sources of livelihood :

The main source of livelihood of the Pauri Bhuinyas is agriculture, i. e., shifting and settled cultivation. In this connection agricultural practices, cropping pattern, labour potentiality, division of labour between sex and age-groups, communal labour, capital for investment in agriculture and distribution of agricultural produces, etc. are described. As the produce from agriculture is not sufficient for the whole year, the Pauris spend sometime in food gathering,

hunting, fishing wage-earning, basket-making and such other supplementary sources of income. It is also necessary to describe all these pursuits to get a full picture of the economic life of the Pauri Bhuinyas.

Agricultural Activities :

1. *Biringa* (First year podu land) - The ritual of *Magha Punei* marks the beginning of the new agricultural cycle. After this ritual is performed plots of land in a patch of forest are selected for cultivation and these are allotted to individual family heads by the village headman and the priest. Soon after the distribution is over the Pauris start cutting trees and bushes.

The forest clearing continues for two to three months from the months of *Magh* (January-February) to *Chait* (March-April). Except a few trees which are spared here and there all others are cut down and piled in rows on the *Biringa* to dry in the sun. Small bushes and branches are piled around the standing trees. After these are dried fire is set to them. With the first shower of rain the heaps of ashes are washed out and scattered all around thus providing manure to the field. The women collect the pebbles and stones, throw them away and break the clods of earth. The rocky places where ploughing cannot be carried out are hoed by men and women. After the field is ploughed twice, *Biri* is sown in it, and in the border, grains of *Rasi* may be sown. *Dunka*, beans, pumpkin and gourd are planted in the ashes heaped around the standing trees so that the creepers twist and grow up round these supports. Some grains of *Mung* may also be sown by broadcast in *Biringa* along with *Biri*. Weeding is done by women in the month of *Aswin* (September-October) to facilitate the growth of the *Biri* plants. In the month of *Pous* (December-January) after the crop ripens the plants are rooted out and heaped on a patch of ground previously cleaned and plastered with cowdung to serve as the threshing floor. The plants are left to dry in the sun for three to four days after which these are threshed by beating with a stick or pole to separate the seeds from the chaff. After threshing, the yield may be winnowed and stored in straw bins. Afterwards, niger is harvested in the same manner by threshing the dried plants with a light stick. The beans, pumpkin and gourd are harvested later on.

(2) *Kaman* - Upland paddy is sown in *Kaman*. As all the trees are cut down in the first year no major forest clearing is necessary in the second year. The dried grasses are only weeded out, and the small bushes are cut down to render the field suitable for ploughing. After the bushes are all dried these are heaped together and fire is set to them. The field is then ploughed twice in May-June and sowing starts soon after. Paddy is the main crop sown in *Kaman*, and a variety of other seeds such as *Ragi*, *Gangei*, Maize, *Kangu*, *Tisidia* are sown on the borders. *Arhar* is sown by broadcast along with paddy, and cucumber, pumpkin and *Ruma* are planted around the standing dead trees. After the paddy plants grow to a certain height the grass and other unnecessary growths are carefully weeded out. After a few showers of rain towards August and September, it becomes necessary to cut down the overgrown bushes. Paddy begins to ripe towards December. As the

swiddens are situated in heart of the forests away from the human habitation these are open to the ravages of wild animals, such as elephant bear, boar, deer and sambar. In order to save the crop from depredation of the wild animals the Pauri Bhuinyas watch crop at night. They build small field huts in their *Kaman* on a raised platform or on the branches of big trees and sleep there at night driving the wild animals by shouting loudly, throwing stones and pebbles at them or by beating drums. A fire is kept burning under the watch-tower on the ground to scare away elephants. In some villages the Pauris take much pains to erect a hedge around the whole *Kaman* fields of the village collectively for protecting crops. Some openings are provided at places and different kinds of traps are set to trap the intruders.

After the crop is ready to be harvested a portion of *Kaman* is properly cleaned and plastered with cowdung to serve as the threshing floor. Reaping is done both by men and women and the bundles of the plants are heaped on the threshing floor around a pole preferably fixed in a central position. Four or five cattle are tied to this pole in a line and they are made to tread over the paddy bundles around the pole. After the grains are separated from the straw these are then properly winnowed and brought home. The straw is stored to feed the cattle.

(3) *Guda* – After the paddy is harvested the Pauris cultivate the *Kaman* for the third time. Such land is called *Guda* in the third year. As the *Guda* lands lack sufficient fertility the Pauris grow such crops as *Jali* or *Guludi* which can grow in soil deficient in fertility. In some cases if the *Guda* land is found to be fertile, paddy or niger may be sown in it.

(4) *Nala* – Any one who wants to increase his stock of harvest may plough a patch of open fallow land for one year and sow *niger* or upland paddy in it. These plots are not distributed to individual families and only those families having more man-power and labour potentiality may cultivate *Nala* lands. As *Nala* has very little fertility a bumper harvest is hardly expected from such land.

(5) *Bakadi* – Patches of *Bakadi* lying close to the dwellings are owned by individual families. These are manured daily by the women by dumping cowdung which are cleaned from cowshed. Two crops, i. e., maize and mustard are grown alternatively on such plots, but sometimes, paddy may be sown in lieu of maize. These plots are ploughed twice or thrice in the month of *Jestha* (May-June) and maize or paddy is sown in *Asad* (June-July). Grass and other wild growths are weeded out in due course and when the maize starts ripening the Pauris watch the crop at night. By *Aswin*, (September-October) maize is harvested and the field is ploughed twice for sowing mustard. Weeding and watching are not required for mustard cultivation which is harvested in *Pous*. (December-January). A small portion of *Bakadi* may be fenced properly to grow tobacco, chillies and some vegetables. Tobacco seeds are first germinated and then planted in rows in *Bhod* (August-September). The tobacco leaves are ready for plucking by *Margsir*

(November-December) and the chillies and vegetables are ready for use by the same time or a little later.

(6) *Bila* or *Jami* – *Bila* or permanent paddy plots are different from swiddens in more than one way. A patch of swidden is owned by an individual for a temporary period when it is under his cultivation, where as *Bila* lands are privately held for all time to come. Secondly the swidden is cultivated temporarily for a period of three or four years after which it is left fallow for a period of 10 to 12 years to recuperate, where as paddy plots are cultivated permanently every year. Cultivation of swiddens involves heavy and labourious agricultural operations like cutting down the trees and bushes setting fire to them and hoeing. These activities are not necessary for *Bila* cultivation. The ashes are applied as manure to the swiddens while cowdung manure are applied to *Bila* lands. The swiddens are rain fed every year, whereas the *Bila* lands are irrigated, the sources of irrigation being hill streams and pools of water held by means of embankments. Lastly the swiddens are multi cropped while the *Bila* lands are single cropped.

The different agricultural activities performed during calendar months are stated in the following table.

TABLE No-3
Agricultural activities performed during different months

SI. No.	Type of land	Agricultural operations	When performed	
			Local names	English equivalent
1	Biringa	A. Cutting trees B. Fishing C. Ploughing D. Sowing E. Weeding & Debushing F. Harvesting	Magh-Phagun Chait-Baisakh Jestha Asad Aswin Pous-Magh	February April May-June June-July September-Oct January
2	Kaman	A. Degrassing & Debushing B. Firing C. Ploughing D. Sowing E. Weeding & Debushing F. Watching G. Cutting and Harvesting	Chait-Baisakh Baisakh Jestha Jestha Sraban-Bhod Kartik-Margasir Margsir-Pous	April April-May May-June June-July August November December
3	Guda	Same as Biringa	---	---
4	Nala	Same as Biringa or Kaman	---	---
5	Bakadi	A. Ploughing for maize or paddy. B. Sowing maize/paddy C. Weeding D. Harvesting	Jestha Jestha Sraban Bhod	May-June May-June July-August August-Sept

		E. Ploughing & Sowing mustard. F. Harvesting mustard G. Tobacoo plantation H. Tobacoo leaves ready for use	Bhod Pous Bhod Margasir	August-Sept November-Dec August-Sept November
6	Bila	A. Ploughing B. Manuring C. Sowing D. Weeding E. Watching F. Harvesting	Chait-Baisakh Baisakh Jestha Sraban-Bhod Margasir Margasir	April April-May May-June August November-Dec November-Dec

Agricultural Implements – The agricultural implements of the Pauri Bhuinyas consist of wooden and iron tools made and/or purchased by them. Most of these things are not very costly and therefore the Pauris can afford to purchase them. The wooden parts are mostly made by the men, and the iron blades are brought from the local markets. The following table gives a list of the agricultural implements, their name, price, etc.

TABLE No. 4
Agricultural Implements of the Pauri Bhuinyas

Sl. No.	Type of Work	Tools used	Local Name	Made by them or purchased	Approx. cost (Rs.)
1	Felling trees	Small axe and Big axe	<i>Budia</i> and <i>Tangia</i>	Iron blade purchased	0.80 to 3.00
2	Ploughing	Plough and Yoke	<i>Langal</i> and <i>Juali</i>	Plough share purchased/Made by them.	2.00 to 4.00
3	Hoing	Hoe	<i>Ganar</i>	Iron blade purchased	0.50
4	Breaking clods of earth	Small axe	<i>Budia</i>	Iron blade purchased	0.80 to 1.00
5	Digging earth	Crowber and spade	<i>Sabal Kudali</i> <i>Gainti</i>	Purchased Iron blade purchased Iron blade purchased	10.00 to 15.00 6.00 to 8.00 10.00 to 12.00
6	Levelling	Leveller	<i>Mai Kurala</i>	Made by them Made by them	---- ----
7	Carrying earth	Carrying basket	<i>Gandua</i>	Made or purchased	1.00

8	Sowing	Small Basket	<i>Gandua</i>	Made/ purchased	0.25
9	Weeding & Debushing	Scythe	<i>Churani</i>	Purchased	4.00 to 5.00
		Small axe	<i>Budia</i>	Purchased	0.80 to 1.00
10	Reaping	Sickle	<i>Dao</i>	Purchased	0.50 to 1.00
11	Carrying Crops	Pole to carry paddybundles	<i>Bihida Badi</i>	Made by them	---
		Carrying pole	<i>Bahangi</i>	Made by them	---
		Carrying ropes	<i>Sika</i>	Made by them	0.50 to 1.00
		Baskets	<i>Tupa</i>	Made/ purchased	1.00 to 2.00
12	Harvesting	Threshing pole	<i>Tenga</i>	Made by them	1.00 to 2.00
		A long pole with pointed iron rod to separate straw from the grains.	<i>Ulkhani badi</i>	Iron part purchased	0.25
		Winnowing fan	<i>Kula</i>	Made/purchased	
13	Storing Grains	Straw bundles	---	Made by them	1.00 to 1.25
		Bundles made of leaves		Made by them	

Division of Labour between Age and Sex Groups :

Each Pauri family is an economic unit where all able bodied adult members co-operate in all economic activities. The grown up children also assist the parents in many works. In this connection it is worth while to describe work done by different age and sex groups in Pauri society. The following table states the work done by different age groups.

TABLE No. 5
Different age groups and work done by each group

SI. No.	Age Group	Type of works done
1	10 – 15 years	Debushing, degrassing, burning, ploughing, weeding, cutting trees, manuring, husking, grinding cereals and spices, fetching water winnowing, plastering courtyard with cowdung, making leaf-cups and plates, chopping firewood with small axe, weaving of mat, herding cattle.
2	15 – 50 years	All sorts of heavy work of above categories
3	50 years till death.	Light works as done by the minors of 10 to 15 years of age.

The Pauri Bhuinyas are always active and in their society idleness is condemned. The spirit of alertness and will to work is injected in them from the very childhood when the parents teach the youngsters to learn different works. Even small children from six to ten years of age take care of the young babies when the parents engage themselves in other works. In their old age, the Pauris do not like to sit idle and depend upon others completely for their subsistence.

Both men and women work together to earn for the family, and in most cases the women are more hard working than the men, but according to their traditional norms certain duties are done exclusively by men while some others are viewed to be the duty of the women. On some occasions a man may do the work of a woman, but certain tasks which are exclusively done by the menfolk are tabooed for the women. The division of labour between men and women is given in the following table.

TABLE No. 6
Division of Labour between the Sexes

Sl. No.	Activities	Done by the sex (In order of preference)	Remarks
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
1	Cutting trees	Men	Women may do so
2	Firing trees	Men & Women	Women may do so
3	Manuring	Women	Rarely done by men
4	Ploughing	Men	Tabooed for women
5	Sowing	Men	Tabooed for women
6	Levelling	Men	Tabooed for women
7	Crossing-Cultivation	Men	Tabooed for women
8	Hoeing	Women	Also done by men
9	Transplanting	Women	Tabooed for women
10	Degrassing	Women	Tabooed for women
11	Weeding	Women	Tabooed for women
12	Debushing in Swiddens	Men & Women	-----
13	Watching crop fields	Men	-----
14	Reaping crops	Men & Women	-----
15	Carrying crops to house	Men with carrying pole Women on head	Tabooed for women Men may do so
16	Threshing	Men	Men may do so
17	Winnowing	Women	-----
18	Storing grains in straw packs.	Men	-----
19	Husking	Women	-----
20	Grinding	Women	-----

21	Fetching water	Women	Men do so in exceptional cases.
22	Cooking	Women at home Men in feasts	Men do so in exceptional cases
23	Sweeping & Plastering.	Women	Men do so in difficulty
24	Thatching	Men	Tabooed for women
25	Climbing trees	Men	Tabooed for women
26	Collection of roots & tubers etc.	Women	Also done by men
27	Chopping fire wood.	Men & Women	Tabooed for women
28	Basketry	Men	Women do not know the work
29	Weaving mat	Women	-----
30	Preparing leaf cups and plates.	Women	Men do so in difficulty
31	Making plough and other agricultural implements.	Men	----
32	Herding cattle	Men	Women may do so
33	Going to market	Men & Women	----
34	Hunting	Men	Tabooed for women

The above table shows three things regarding the division of labour between the Pauri men and women. They are (1) most of the works are done by both men and women (2) some are feminine works, but during menstrual cycle, birth and other unavoidable circumstances the men may do such works, and (3) activities like Ploughing, sowing thatching, climbing trees, and hunting are considered to be the work of men and are tabooed for women.

Hiring of Labour :

Ordinarily the Pauri Bhuinyas do their agricultural works themselves, but some phases of cultivation like cutting trees, weeding, and harvesting require periodical employment of outside labour because the man power available in the family is inadequate to meet the time-bound activities. Additional labour is hired from the following sources :—

- (i) By employing individuals on daily wage basis
- (ii) Hiring labourers on annual basis
- (iii) Getting free labour by lending cattle for ploughing
- (iv) Exchange of labour by mutual arrangement
- (v) Unmarried boys and girls of the village may be hired as a working team.
- (vi) The village as a whole may be hired as a working party
- (vii) Unmarried girls of cognate villages may be invited to work.
- (viii) Relatives working as labourers.

The daily wage for agricultural labour is paid in kind at the rate of two *Pai* of paddy per day. In lieu of paddy, ragi or other cereals may also be given. Traditionally, cash payment per day was four annas and some food in the noon, but with the development of mining operations, exploitation of forest by the Forest Department and construction of roads, etc. the rate of daily wage has gone tip up to one rupee. The rate of payment for employing a labourer on annual basis was Rs. 12-00 with food to be provided daily and some clothes annually or twelve *Khandi* of paddy. The payment was made in advance or instalment basis. At present besides food and clothing the cash payment has been increased from Rs. 12-00 to Rs. 60-00 or more.

Many Pauris do not possess any cattle to plough their fields. Therefore it becomes necessary for them to hire cattle from others on the condition to provide free labour as when required. Some phases of agricultural operations like felling trees and ploughing require joint effort. Some Pauris may form a team and work on each others field on rotation and get their works done by this method.

Due to some difficulties like illness a Pauri may not be able to perform some of the heavy agricultural activities. In such a case, he may hire the services of the unmarried boys and girls of the dormitory on payment of a token amount in cash or kind. He may provide food to them and pay a nominal amount to their common fund. Sometimes the boys and girls incur loan in the form of rice and goat from a villager on the occasion of visit of their cognate girls from other village and in return work in the field of the lender to pay back the loan. Likewise a poor man unable to pay any wage may make an appeal to the council of village elders in the *Darbar* requesting for free supply of labour for a day. Considering the economic condition of the person, the village council arranges one working adult from each family to work in the field of the person on an appointed day. In the olden days the villagers, out of their gratitude and reverence to the village leaders used to work in the field of the *Naek* and *Dihuri* for one day free of wage and in return the latter used to entertain the villagers with a feast. With the change in time and the way of life of the people this custom is gradually weaning away.

In some stages of agriculture when many families are in need of hired labour and the village is not in a position to meet the requirement it becomes necessary to seek labour from other villages. A Pauri may invite the girls of cognate villages for a few days to work in his field. During their stay in the village they are given food by the host and when they leave they may be given a few measures of foodgrains as a token of his affection. In no case the cognate girls are hired to work on wage basis.

Finally, in busy agricultural seasons, some Pauris make it convenient to visit their relatives to help them in their agricultural works. Like the cognate girls the relatives working for a Pauri are not paid any wage. But they are given some measure of foodgrains as gift at the time of their departure.

Forced Labour (Bethi):

During the reign of the ruling chief of Bonai state forced labour or *Bethi* was a common practice. The Pauris were forced to work on construction of roads and buildings free of payment Besides, it was obligatory for each village to give 12 *Khandi* of *Bin*, 3 *Khandi* of mustard, 10 Seers of turmeric, 8 *Manos* of ghee, 2 *Khandi* of niger, honey, firewood, rope and vegetables to the chief every year. After independence this practice has however, been abolished.

Stimulation for work:

The Pauri Bhuinyas do not work solely for economic benefit and, therefore, do not feel homely if they bind themselves exclusively to routine work. They have no stipulated working hours and do not like to work continuously for a certain period without having any diversion. This is due to their temperament and attitude towards work. They work with pleasure in accompaniment of music. They take everything easy and do not feel the burden to undertake any hard work. Since they are not accustomed to work following a rigid schedule and time table they do not like to work in any industrial and mining setting which according to them, provides no concession to their joyful orientation to work.

While at work the Pauris enjoy by relaxing under the shade of the trees and eating wild fruits freshly plucked from the nearby forest, or cucumber and maize grown in their fields, The unmarried boys and girls break the monotony of their work by singing *Doli* songs. To add to all these merriments arrangement of feast and provision of drink are sources of great pleasure for the Pauris while working in the fields and the forest. When a Pauri engages the villagers to work in his field he arranges a feast which is cooked on the spot and provides some rice beer to the workers. This creates a new zeal among the workers and makes them energetic to put hard labour in work.

Ritualobservances in connection with Agriculture :

Distribution of lands in the hill-slope marking the agricultural cycle of the New Year is done only after the commencement of *Magh Punei* ritual. Likewise, different agricultural activities like felling trees sowing, debushing and degrassing, and other economic pursuits connected with food gathering are performed only after appropriate rituals are observed. In order to safeguard their crops from the caprices of nature and the depredation of wild animals and to ensure bumper harvest the Bhuinyas perform suitable rituals to appease the supernatural elements. After harvest, and before eating the new crops, the Bhuinyas make it a point to offer the new crops to the deities and ancestral spirits to keep them in good humour. These rites and rituals which are connected with the agricultural cycle are not only meant for propitiating the supernatural beings but also for breaking the monotony of life and also for providing a source of enjoyment to the Pauri Bhuinyas. It is interesting and important to note that rites and rituals are performed in connection with the traditional agricultural operations and not with

latest agricultural practices such as cultivation of paddy in *Bila* lands and cash crops such as mustard and *niger* in *Bakadi* lands

Leisure and Holidays – Economic activities concerning food production and food quest keep the Pauri Bhuinyas extremely busy almost throughout the year. Felling trees ploughing, sowing, degrassing and debushing, weeding and harvesting are the hardest and busiest agricultural operations requiring regular attendance in the field. The slack seasons commence from *Aswin* till *Margsir* (after weeding and before harvesting) and during *Pous* and *Magh* (after the crops are harvested till tree felling is started). During the lean months the Pauri Bhuinyas enjoy the hours leisurely by doing light work. The men may make baskets, organize hunting expeditions, move to the jungle for food collection and make agricultural implements, while the women weave mats, collect the grass from which broom sticks are made and gather roots and tubers from the forest. The annual feasts and festivals provide complete rest for the Pauris who enjoy the occasions in feasting and drinking. Besides, on certain occasions the Pauris are forbidden to work in the fields. Marriage is an occasion which requires the full cooperation of all the villagers. Likewise, in the case of death the Pauris abstain from agricultural activities till the purificatory rites are performed. During birth and its associated rites and rituals the family members may not attend to outdoor work and make arrangements for the birth rites. Thus on many occasions the Pauri Bhuinyas get an opportunity to retire temporarily from heavy work and relax and rejoice till they again resume their routine work with new zeal and enthusiasm.

Gleaning – As the produce from agriculture does not suffice for the needs of the Pauris for the whole year, they devote some time to food gathering hunting and wage earning to supplement their income from agricultural sources. In the past the Pauris were primarily food gatherers and hunters. Agriculture was not known to them and as they narrate, in those days the forest all around their settlement was so rich with roots and tubers, fruits, berries and vegetables they could collect plenty of them and live happily. With the adoption of agriculture, they now produce a variety of crops. But they have not given up food gathering which is pursued side by side with agriculture. In fact, collection of food from the forest is second major economic pursuit of the Pauri Bhuinyas and the poorer families depend on food collection for about six to eight months a year. Gleaning is done more or less in all the seasons of the year and by people of both sexes of all age groups. Both men and women, young and old go to the forest in groups with baskets and digging sticks in search of roots, fruits, tubers, and other edibles. During harvest the Pauris do not get time for foraging, but in lean months they spend most of their time on food gathering and live upon roots and tubers. Food collected from the forest not only supplements Bhuinya economy but it also breaks the monotony of their millet and ragi diet and provides nutrient and rich food to the Pauris. Roaming about in the forest in search of food is considered a happy pastime by the Pauris.

The Pauri Bhuinyas get about twenty varieties of wild tubers, thirty kinds of fruits and the same number of greens, and five varieties of mushrooms besides honey, *Mohua* flower, edible insects, eggs, etc. *Mohua* flowers are eaten raw and may be stored for distilling liquor, while the seeds may be used for extracting oil. Honey, eggs, insects and some varieties of tubers and greens are found throughout the year. But some of the forest products are available in particular seasons. Fruits are usually plenty in summer and roots and tubers grow in abundance during winter. But certain kinds of fruits like *Jam* and *Amruli*, tubers such as *Pitalu*, *Alu* and *Bana-Kundur Tunga*, greens like *Sanka Kunning*, *Pathar Chata Bursuani Mainga* and *Madranga* and different kinds of mushrooms, during rainy season. Of all the fruits mango is the most important, which grow plenty in the forest and Bhuinyas collect basketsful of mangoes for their consumption.

Forest Economy :

Besides providing food forest plays an important role in Pauri economy. Minor forest products like lac, resin, honey timber and firewood, wild rope which the Pauris collect from the forest fetch a substantial income and make their life comfortable. The jungle also supplies medicinal herbs which give relief from pain and cure illness of various types. Briefly speaking forest occupies a pivotal position in socio-religious life of the people.

Animal Husbandry:

The Bhuinyas being agriculturists raise livestock, but have not taken up animal husbandry on a wide scale. Their livestock include cows, bullocks, buffaloes, goats, sheep, and poultry. Chickens, goats and sheep are common possessions of many Pauri families. These are used more for non-agricultural purposes than for anything else. They are sacrificed at the deities, slaughtered on occasions to entertain guests and relatives and may be sold for cash. Cows and buffaloes, on the other hand, are reared mainly for agricultural purposes. They plough the fields and supply manure. The Bhuinyas however do not milk their cows because their belief is that the milk is for the calf and not for men- A few families have kept buffaloes and sell buffalo milk and milk products and earn substantial amount of money.

The cattle are not given any fodder. They are loose in the day time under the supervision of cow herd to graze in the nearby forest and are kept confined in shed on their return in the evening. Cows and buffaloes are tethered in separate sheds, while goats and sheep may either be accommodated in a small shed constructed for them, or if they are small in number they may be tied in a corner of the sleeping house. Chickens are always kept inside the house under the wooden platform raised for storing. Cattle feed pose no problem for the Pauris as the vast forests all around provide good pasture for the cattle. Goats and sheep are either tended along with the cows or in separate groups. Most of the families engage one of their family members to tend the goats and sheep but these may be tended co-operatively by a number of families on rotation basis or by employing a herdsman.

Buffaloes are always herded in a separate group from other animals. Usually a *Gour* or a Pauri Bhuinya cowherd is employed to herd all the buffaloes of the village throughout the year. For about five months after the harvest of crops till the next sowing is over no herdsman is necessary to herd the cattle as the cattle graze of their own accord and return home in the evening. But when the crops are present in the field it is necessary to herd the animals as otherwise they cause damage to the plants.

There is no cattle market in the neighbourhood of the village. The nearest cattle market are at Bonai and Keonjhar which are situated at a distance of about forty and sixty miles away from Koira respectively. A good cow or bullock costs about Rs.100 to Rs. 150 while a buffalo may cost Rs.300 or more.

The Pauri Bhuinyas attach great sacredness to the cows and bullocks. During *Gamha* festival they feed the cattle and buffalo with puffed corn and fried paddy, give them complete rest and worship them.

Basketry :

Basketry is a profitable craft known only to a few Pauri families of Koira area. Bamboo is found in plenty in the nearby jungle and the tools and implements used in basket-making are very simple. The important tools consist of an axe to cut the bamboo, a big knife to make splits out of the thick splits and a crude iron needle for sewing the rim of the basket with threads of young bamboo shoots. Raw materials used in making baskets are available free of cost and the leisure hours are spent on making baskets. The baskets made by the Pauris consist of big and small baskets for storing grains, huge paddy containers serving the purpose of a granary, winnowing fan, basket for cleaning cowshed and throwing away rubbish, small baskets used while sowing grains and the like. The baskets made by the Bhuinyas have great market value which are sold in the weekly markets and a Bhuinya earns on an average about Rs. 20 per month during slack seasons and about Rs. 10 during busy agricultural seasons. The money earned by selling baskets is used for purchasing tea, tobacco leaves and paste, clothes, salt, vegetables and other consumer goods. The menfolk make baskets, but the art is not known to the women who weave mats of date-palm leaves both for family use and for sell. Unlike basketry, the art of weaving mats is known to all Pauri women of different areas.

Trade and Barter :

The Pauri Bhuinyas are neither good traders nor interested in trading. They are also not keen to collect forest produce in large quantity for marketing purposes. Gum, resin and honey may be collected occasionally when the Pauris roam, about in the forest in search of house building materials like rope and thatching grass, or while digging out roots and tubers. These articles collected occasionally in very small quantity are sold to the non-tribal merchants in weekly markets. But this is not viewed as a substantial source of income by the Pauri Bhuinyas.

Barter was widely prevalent in Pauri area in the past. With the introduction of money economy the Pauris are no longer interested in carrying on barter. Money as a medium of transaction has significantly captured the Pauri area. The Pauris sell all their marketable commodities for money and purchase the articles of their daily requirements by paying cash. Some of the agricultural products are still bartered by the Pauris for some of their requirements. For example mustard, niger, castor seeds, *Til, Biri, Mung* and beans are bartered for rice and paddy. Ordinarily a Pauri Bhuiyia desirous of selling his goods would have to go to the market and sell them there and with sale proceeds buy whatever he wants for himself and for his family. In barter system, on the other hand, he need not take the trouble of going to the market for any transaction. Soon after the crops are harvested the non-tribal merchants visit the Pauri villages with load of rice and paddy and the Pauris get those readily by exchanging their crops at their door step at the usual rate. One *Seer* of ragi, mustard, *Biri, Mung* or beans fetches two *Seers* of paddy or one *Seer* of rice. The rate of exchange of castor seeds for paddy is 1 to 3. Occasionally, the Pauris also give their cash crops to the local merchants to liquidate their old debts. In such cases they are easily exploited by the lenders. There are various ways by which the merchants cheat the poor Pauris firstly the former charge a high rate of interest and cheat them in weights and measures.

In order to free the Pauri Bhuiyias from the clutches of the non-tribal merchants the Tribal & Rural Welfare Department established purchase and sale fair price shops in Bhuiyia and Juang Pirth of Keonjhar district. The idea was to procure the marketable commodities directly from the tribals and supply them their consumer goods at a reasonable price. The other objective of the scheme was also to advance interest free loans to the Pauris which they pay off after harvest by selling niger, mustard, pulses and oil seeds directly to the fair price shops at the prevalent market rate. The scheme has served useful purpose in Bhuiyia Pirth of Keonjhar but the Pauri Bhuiyias of Koira area have been least benefitted by "it because the shop was located in the plains far away from the Paurj villages.

Other Occupations :

Some Pauri Bhuiyias are found to have taken up work in Barsuan mines of Hindustan Steel Ltd on weekly wage basis and in road and house construction works and some others engage themselves in cutting timber under the Forest Corporation during summer. When forest roads are built both men and women go to work for wages. At the initial stages of mining operation the Pauris did not like to send their girls to work in mines because they apprehended that the girls would come in contact with many outsiders and might be subjected to immoral sexual acts. But it was difficult to prevent the girls from going to work in the mines and the apprehensions of the elders that the girls would go astray has come true in many cases. Education has not made much headway among the Pauris and therefore the cases of service in white collar jobs are negligible.

Hunting- The Pauri habitat is full of high hills and dense forests teeming with wild games like deer, sambar barking deer, boar, wild rats, peacocks, etc. and the Pauris carry on hunting whenever they are free from agricultural activities. Hunting is viewed by the Bhuinyas more as a sport and a means of getting protein food than as substantial source of income. But it is intimately associated with their socio-cultural life and has its economic and religious importance.

Bows and arrows constitute the only hunting implements used by the Bhuinyas. Whenever a Pauri goes out he takes a bow and a bunch of arrows with him just for safety in the jungle. While in forest he may come across some prey by chance and may kill it. Hunting is rarely done individually. It is a group activity rather than an individual activity.

The communal hunting expeditions reveal interesting features of Bhuinya social, economic and religious life. *Akhani Paridhi* the annual hunting festival marks the first day of hunting for the Bhuinyas. It is held on the third day of the moonlit night in the month of *Chait* (*Akshya Tritia*).

The preceding evening, the *Naek* meets the villagers at the *Darbar* and informs them that they are to start on *Akhani Paridhi* on the following day. The men who wish to join in hunting observe continence and sleep away from their wives. Early in the morning all assemble at the *Darbar* armed with their bows and arrows and with drums and sticks proceed to the forest. The hunters bring seven bows, seven arrows, two chickens and some husked paddy (*Akata*) and turmeric powder and give them to the *Naek*. The *Naek* worships the *Dharam Devta* (Son God) *Basuki* (Earth Goddess) *Gaisiri* (village deity) and *Boram* at the outskirts of the village and offers two chickens to the deities. He sprinkles the blood on the bows and arrows and prays "Today we are celebrating the *Akhani Paridhi*- Let the hunters meet all sorts of games on their way and let them be able to shoot down all". He also burns some incense and tobacco to please the forest and hill spirits (*Baghias* and *Bauti*) to ensure success in hunting. The offered chickens are burnt and the person joining the hunting partake it before they start for hunting.

The only method adopted by the Bhuinyas in communal hunting is beating the bushes and driving the animals. After reaching the jungle the party is divided into two groups. The daring and fearless persons having name as good hunters are selected as *Ghatias*- They sit on key places through which the animals are expected to pass and hide themselves behind the trees. The rest of the party beat the drums and the bushes, shout at the top of their voice, throw stones and make peculiar noises to drive the animals towards the *Ghatias*-As soon as the game runs near by the *Ghatias* shoot it down by their bow and arrow. As soon as the game is bagged the *Dihuri* or any elderly man in the absence of the *Dihuri* takes some of the blood and offers to the *Dharam Devata*, *Basuki*, *Gaisin*, *Boram* *Bautis* and *Baghias* and prays, "Here we are offering the first blood of the hunted animal. May we attain success in hunting in future". The man whose arrow kills the animal also takes some blood

from the game and offers it to his family ancestors praying for success in hunting in future.

After the animal is killed all go to the *Naek's* house with the game- The women of the village greet them by washing their feet with turmeric water anointing their forehead and chins with turmeric powder and kissing them.

The meat is cut into pieces except the head of the animal, one loin and the hind quarter. One of the boys of the hunting team comes down secretly from under the bush and mimics the gait and gestures of the hunted animal. He is beaten by the leg of the animal on his back and is given the hooks to roast and eat. Before the meat is distributed, some meat, the brain and the heart of the animal are roasted on embers and offered to the deities in *Jambu* leaves. Such offering is made thrice, i.e., on behalf of the persons who participated in the hunt, on behalf of the hunter whose arrow killed the animal and on behalf of the villagers (*Barabhai*).

The two hind quarters of the game are presented to the *Naek* as *Ahani Bheti* and one of the loins is offered to the hunter. The rest of the meat is equally divided into two shares. One share is equally distributed among all the members of the hunting party and the other share is equally distributed among all the families of the village.

The *Naek*, in return, rewards the hunter with a cloth of ten cubits if a *Sambar* or pig or a deer is killed and a *Gamcha* (napkin) for a *Kutara* (barking deer). In lieu of cloth he may give twelve annas for the long cloth and four annas for the napkin. Besides, he offers a basketful of rice cakes to the members of the party both in successful and unsuccessful hunting.

The ceremonial hunting is observed for three consecutive days, i.e., the first day being the *Naek's* day, the second for the *Dihuri* and the final day for the *Barabhais* or villagers. The same procedures are followed on all these days except that the *Naek* presents the party with a basketful of rice cakes on the first day to carry with them to the forest and the women offer *Mandia* cakes and rice cakes to the party on the third day.

A study of the hunting practices of the Pauri Bhuinyas and the associated rites and rituals throw much light on the various aspects of their life and culture. It reveals the belief system of the people on the one hand and throws light on varying obligations between the different kins. The specific points of interest can briefly be stated in the following :—

Hunting is more a religious observance than a quest for food. The Bhuinyas lead a lonely life in the hills surrounded by forest and hill spirits, and consider it essential to offer sacrifices to these spirits at least once a year to please them.

For success in hunting the Bhuinyas observe a series of taboos to maintain purity and sanctity. The persons whose wives are in menstrual period are neither

allowed to join the hunting party, nor to watch and take part in the ritual performances connected with hunting. On the previous night of the *Akhani Paridhi* day the persons desirous of going on hunting observe strict continence and steep in a separate bed from their wives. They should not see the face of any menstruating women when they start for hunting lest they would have no chance of success in hunting.

The *Naek* also observes continence on the previous night so as to enable him to perform the rituals on the next morning. He offers chicken, husked rice and turmeric powder to the deities and also burns incense and tobacco and prays for success in hunting.

The various rites and rituals associated with hunting throws light on the belief system of the Pauri Bhuinyas, Segregation of women from the hunting rituals is based on the idea that the presenced of menstruating women will defile the spirits and the deities and may result in unsuccessful hunting. Hence every precaution is taken to avoid women during the hunting expedition. Women, being the weaker sex, cannot take part in hunting which requires masculine strength and vigour. Added to this the periodical pollution renders them unfit for taking part in hunting excursions.

The Bhuinyas believe in the casual relation between a successful hunting and bumper harvest. According to them successful hunting during *Akhani Paridhi* indicates a rich harvest in the current year and this belief keeps them alert to safeguard against all the evils obstructing success in hunting.

To ensure successful hunting the Pauris believe in and perform sympathetic magic. The two chickens sacrificed by the *Naek* just before the party starts for hunting is believed to contain the spiritual powers of the gods and godlings to whom these are offered and if the members of the party eat a bit of such meat they soon possess such power and may thus be able to slay any game they meet.

The blood of the chickens, after sacrifice, is also believed to carry such power and hence the *Naek* sprinkles it on seven bows and arrows just to help for the success in hunting.

The arrow which kills the animals is brought out from the body of the prey and is never washed in water. The bloodstained arrow head is let to dry out. Bydoing soitis believed that the arrow would always kill more games in future and would remain bloodstained for ever.

After the game is killed and before the meat is distributed one of the members of the hunting party imitates like the slain animal and mimics its gait. Crawling down he comes from a corner and passes by before the hunters. One of the members of the hunting party takes a leg of the game and hits the immitator with it. It signifies that in future hunting, no game can escape the look of the hunter and the hunters would be able to kill all the animals they meet.

Before the meat is distributed, the brain, heart and some meat is roasted on ember and offered to the spirits and the deities for whose favour they met with success in hunting. The meat thus offered is considered sacred and is believed to carry the 'power'. The husbands of the menstruating woman are not allowed to eat such meat. If any outsider eats such meat the real hunting power is believed to be transmitted to his body and the villagers may not have the good luck to have more success in hunting.

Hunting is an occasion when one can notice the interplay of various relations. Hunting is purely a communal affair, which involves co-operation of all the villagers. Each village has to hunt within its boundary demarcated from the time of *Raja*. Since successful hunting indicates rich harvest it becomes the duty of all the villagers to try heart and soul to make the hunting expedition a success. Generally each family deputed one or more of its male members to participate in the hunting, and it is the responsibility of the women to collect *Mandia* and paddy from all the houses and prepare cakes for the party on the third day of the *Akhani Paridhi*.

Distribution of meat is made keeping in view the social and political life of the village. The hunter must get an extra share for his ability to kill the prey, but *Naek*, the head of the village, gets two hind quarters for his status and authority in the village. The *Dihuri* is not given any special portion of meat, but is always given an extra share of meat for holding an office in the village. All the families get share of the meat no matter whether anyone participated in the hunting or not.

Getting some extra meat on the part of the *Naek* is of prestige rather than of economic value because the cost he has to bear for the gift of cloth and cakes to the hunters is much more than the actual cost of the meat he gets. It may also be noted that the *Naek* does not eat all the meat he gets as a special share. This meat is divided into three shares. The first share is used by his family. The second to the families of his closer lineage group and the third to the rest of the families of the village. The hunter also distributes some meat from his special share among the families of his closer lineage group.

In course of time the Bhuinyas are getting more modern in their outlook and are dropping out their traditional customs associated with hunting. Some of the Bhuinyas have managed to acquire guns and are hunting games on their own sweet will. Hunting is gradually becoming more and more an individualistic affair. The individual hunter who has killed an animal by shooting in his gun sells major portion of the meat for money instead of distributing it among his kith and kin and co-villagers.

Another marked change is noticed in the attitude of the Pauri for hunting. In the olden days jungle was thick and the games were plenty all around. Hence, the chances of success in hunting was far greater than in the present days when most of the jungles in the Bhuinya country are frequently cut down for shifting

cultivation and the wild animals are rapidly decreasing in number. These difficulties, however, have least affected the age old belief system of the people, who still observe the hunting ceremony with all its detail. Posts of new leaders have been created in the village, but the new leaders are never given special shares of meat in hunting. The *Naek* continues to enjoy his traditional status in the village and gets the hind quarters of the hunted animal as usual. The amount of reward the *Naek* used to give to the hunters has also been increased. Since the price of the cloth has now been increased the *Naek* now offers two rupees in lieu of the cloth instead of twelve annas which he used to pay in the past.

Fishing – Like hunting, fishing may be viewed more as a past-time than as an economic pursuit of the Pauri Bhuinyas. Narrow and shallow swift running streams full of boulders are not suitable for fishing and very rarely the Pauris may engage themselves in catching fish, in the hill streams. However, some time they catch small fish from the streams by hand. The children having enough leisure time may use fishing rods to catch fish, while the adults spend their time on activities of greater economic gain. Women may catch fish while taking bath. They may spread a piece of cloth under the water and by filtering the water out of the cloth catch small fish. A portion of the stream bed may also be carefully bounded on the sides and fish may be caught after removing the water from it. In plains, the Bhuinyas use small fishing traps made of bamboo splits. These are set against the flowing water of the stream or at an opening of the over flooded paddy plots during rainy season to entrap fish. Fish may be eaten by roasting or cooking with oil and spices, but as the Pauri Bhuinyas relish dried fish the catch may be stored for future use after drying in the sun or by smoking on fire.

Wealth and Inheritance :

As indicated above the Pauri Bhuinyas are poor and live from hand to mouth. There is no division of people into rich and poor class among them. The term 'wealth' has little connotation for the Pauris as most of them do not have means to amass any wealth. They say that the small axe is their wealth which gives them food, shelter and clothing, those who have enough food to eat and do not incur any loan are considered rich persons in the Pauri society. The wealth of the Pauris largely consists of cattle, foodgrains, brass utensils, gold and silver ornaments and lowland paddy fields. As the Pauris are not much conversant with money economy and do not like to hoard money this may not be considered as an item of their wealth.

Any wealth owned by individual family is distributed equally among all the brothers after the death of the father except the eldest one who gets a little extra share. Ornaments are exclusive possession of the women. If a Pauri dies without having any son to inherit his property the same may go to his brothers living in own or separate villages, though a small share may be given to his daughter. In absence of brothers the property may be claimed by the deceased's father's brother, father's brothers' sons, or by other close lineage members. If no such kin is

found available the property is enjoyed by the tribal council called *Pirh* who assemble on an appointed day and enjoy a hearty feast by disposing off the deceased's belongings. A widow enjoys the right over the property of her husband till her death, but forfeits her claims if she leaves the village on remarriage. A Pauri marrying the widow of his deceased elder brother has, however, every right to inherit all her properties, In absence of male issues a daughter may enjoy the property of her father during her life time if she leads the life of a spinster, but with marriage she loses all rights on her parental property.

From the study of the economic life of the Pauri Bhuinyas it may thus be concluded that the Pauris struggle hard to earn their livelihood. Most of them continue to cling to their age old primitive agricultural practices. Modern methods of agriculture, use of chemicals, fertilizer and compost, adoption of improved seeds and high, yielding, crops are yet to be made popular in Pauri villages. Crude plough, hoes, digging sticks and axes are the main agricultural implements of the Pauris which are used for *Biringa* cultivation. The water sources have not been properly tapped to provide irrigation facilities in the Pauri country. Shifting cultivation being subjected to the vagaries of nature, they supplement their income from that swidden by gathering food materials from the jungle and working on wage as agricultural labourers as coolies in public works and as unskilled labourers in mining activities. In fact most of their time is spent on quest for food and very little time on any skilled craft and specialized work. On special occasions like marriage and death the Pauris have to incur heavy expenditure which is not possible to meet from their own sources. Such occasions force them to lend money from the local money lenders at an exorbitant rate of interest. Being trustworthy they pay back the loan with interest in time and in this way most of the produce from land is drained away for clearing the loans.

CHAPTER V

LIFE CYCLE

Essentially the successive stages of development in the life cycle of a person comprise birth, early childhood, adolescence, adulthood, old age and death. When a person attains adulthood he or she is married and sets up his or her family. This chapter deals with the essential events in life i.e. birth, marriage and death with associated ceremonies and rituals.

Birth :

Barrenness in women is always condemned. Barren women are looked down upon by others and they occupy low position in the society. On the other hand, women giving birth to too many children enjoy considerable pride and prestige. One of the main intentions of marriage is to beget children, and in case a wife fails to fulfill this aim the husband is socially permitted to remarry.

Birth is always welcomed in Bhuinya society, but a male child is more valued than a female child, in spite of the fact that the parents have to face acute economic strain to marry their sons. The girls, on the other hand fetch cloth, cattle, money, grains and other items of bride wealth for their parents in marriage. Both the boys and girls equally labour hard and help their parents in agricultural pursuits, but the fact that the girls leave their parents for good after marriage, and the boys continue in the family explains perhaps why the parents are more inclined towards the sons.

From conception to the final purificatory rites number of rites and restrictions are followed concerning birth of a child in a Bhuinya family. The father and the expectant mother do not eat any meat of any sacrificed animal. They are also not allowed to go to the place of worship to witness the rituals. The woman does not eat curds or anything which tastes sour because it is believed that these things hinder easy delivery. She may not go to the forest or to any lonely and distant place lest the evil spirits might injure the foetus. She should not touch a corpse, or see the smoke rising from cremation fire. At the time of eclipse, the expectant mother should either confine herself inside the house, or remain outside. But if she is outside she should not come in and if she is indoors she should not come out. If she violates this taboo the baby in the womb is likely to be displaced. Such a woman is not allowed to offer cooked-rice or *Jau* to the ancestral spirits at the family shrine in the *Bhitar* portion of the house.

Birth never takes place in *Mulaghar* where the sacred family shrine lies. A separate shed is constructed as a lying-in-room. An elderly woman who may be a Bhuinya, or any other caste or tribe may be called to serve as midwife

(*Sutrūnihari*). She takes care of the new born and the parturient woman and receives rice, dal, a new cloth, and cash varying from Rs. 2.00 to Rs. 10.00 as remuneration for her help. Difficult labour is believed to be due to the ill temper of the family ancestors, *Pataspīrits*, play of witchcrafts or due to other malevolent spirits. To effect an easy delivery the village priest may worship the *Gaisiri* and promises to offer sacrifices on behalf of the concerned family. The familyhead also prays the family ancestors at the *Bhitar* with a potful of water for quick delivery and make vows to sacrifice goat or sheep. A few drops of this water is sprinkled over the woman and she may also drink a little quantity of this water to get relief from acute pain. In case the pain continues for days together, a witch-doctor (*Raulia*) is consulted. He reads omens by measuring two pieces of reeds. After the offender obstructing delivery is detected, steps are taken to quicken the delivery without pain.

The naval string is cut by the mother or by the baby's father's mother if the former is not in her senses. In no case it is cut by the midwife. The naval cord of the male-child is cut by an arrow head which is afterwards presented to his mother's brother, while that of the girl is cut by a piece of bamboo split which is thrown away after use. The placenta and the cord are buried at the back side of the house. The midwife bathes the baby and the mother in tepid water and warms them by kindling a fire inside. For about a week or so the mother is not given greens, vegetables, and *Dal* to eat. She only eats fresh cooked-rice, salt and onion and should refrain from eating fish and meat till the child sits up.

The birth pollution continues for about two to three months which is removed phase by phase. On the fifth or seventh day after the child birth the baby and the parturient woman take their first purificatory bath. The clothes are given to the washerman for washing. This day the mother ties a piece of new thread besmeared with turmeric powder around her own neck and that of the baby. From this day other members of the family may take water from her hands, but she is not allowed to enter the kitchen and cook food. Name giving ceremony may be observed on this day or may be deferred to the seventh day or to a later date.

Name giving ceremony—A case study of the name giving ceremony describing the rites and rituals performed on this occasion is given below.

Naming ceremony for Chhīhulu's son was performed on the 22nd February, 1970 on the fifth day after the birth of the baby. About 10 A. M. the *Mahataris* (old women) of the village assembled in the house of Chhīhulu. Mangulu's mother an elderly woman, who also served as the midwife was called to officiate in the naming ceremony. She bathed the mother and the child in tepid water after anointing their body with turmeric paste. The confinement room was also cleaned. The mid-wife herself then took bath and laid a painting on the cleaned patch with a white liquid prepared from white rice powder. On the painting was kept about a *Pai* of paddy and a bowl filled with water and a mango twig was placed on the paddy pile. The mother holding the baby on her lap sat near the painting and the

old woman who officiated the ceremony took her seat to a side facing the mother and the child on the opposite side. She threw a grain of *Arua* (sun-dried husked paddy) rice and a *Til* (sesamum) seed together on the bowl-full of water and prayed. "We are giving a name to the new born". If the name is auspicious let the rice and the *Til* float. Let everything end happily". In the case of a male child the name of his father's father is usually preferred, and in case of a girl her father's sisters or father's mother's name is considered proper. In this case the same practice was followed. After uttering each name she threw grains of rice and *Til* on the water and watched until the grains floated so that the name for which the grains were intended was selected. In this case, the grains floated when the name Sajan (the baby's father's father) was uttered. The *Sutruni* then exclaimed "Oh, Sajan has come". The name was thus selected without any hesitation. The *Sutruni* then blessed the mother and the baby by-touching turmeric powder and sun-dried rice on their foreheads and throwing the same on them. The baby and the mother were also greeted with waving a lighted lamp followed by *Hul Hula* sound. She then threw the bowl of water on the thatch of the house. To announce the name given to the new born she struck her bangles on the empty bowl seven times saying loudly "Oh, the name Sajan is given to the baby. Let all be aware of it". Other *Mahataris* also blessed the baby and the mother in the same manner and with this the name giving ceremony came to an end. This day all the used earthen cooking pots were thrown away and a little *Jau* cooked in a new pot was offered to the family ancestors.

In olden days all the *Mahataris* were served with cooked rice, but it is now given only to the *Sutruni* and not to *Mahataris*. It is reported that the Pauris living in the interior areas in Bonai and Keonjhar, are bound to give a feast to the villagers on the occasion of name giving ceremony. But on account of poverty it is not now possible to follow this tradition and therefore some children cannot be given a name till very late age. They are addressed as *Gojinangal* (small plough) in the case of boys, and *Kainful* (water lily) in the case of girls.

After the name giving ceremony is over other families may accept drinking water from the hands of the parturient woman and cooked food from other members of the family, but she does not enter the kitchen and cook food until the final purificatory rites are performed after two or three months.

God Dhuari ceremony – This ceremony is usually performed after the child walks and becomes five or six years old. The ceremony is performed to propitiate the deities praying them for health and happiness of the child.

Usually goats and fowls are sacrificed to appease the *Pat* and other deities. *Jau* is offered to the ancestral spirits. If a child does not suckle properly the parents may promise to offer sacrifices to the *Pat* in *God Dhuari* ceremony. The ceremony performed for the ward member's daughter of the village Jaldih is stated below.

The member's daughter refused to suckle her mother's breasts during her infancy. The member made a vow that he would sacrifice a *Boka* (uncastrated goat) and chickens to the *Pats* and the deities and a potful of *Jau* to the ancestral spirits if the girl would stickle properly. Afterwards the baby became alright and suckled properly. When the girl became three years old the member arranged for the ceremony. He purchased a piece of new cloth for his daughter and arranged the materials like *Akta* (sun dried husked paddy), a *Boka*, a cock, small chicks, a new earthen pot and *Arua* rice for cooking *Jau* and turmeric powder which are required for the ritual. In the evening of the 25th February, 1970, he met the village elders in the *Darbar* and expressed his wish to perform *God Dhuari* ceremony for his daughter. This was, however, unanimously agreed by all.

Preparations for the ceremony were made on the 26th morning. As the ceremony was performed on the bank of the stream all the articles were brought there. Those who arranged rice for their own use also assembled near the place of worship with their stock of rice and cooking utensils. All the families could not participate as they could not arrange rice for their meal. Men and children joined the ceremony and no woman attended it.

The *Dihuri* started worshipping at about 10 A. M. after taking a bath. He cleaned two patches with cowdung and water, laid paintings of three horizontal bars cross-cut by three perpendicular bars in liquid rice paste. One patch was meant for the *Pats* and spirits, while the other was intended for the deities. He collected a few boulders to represent the deities and spirit and placed them on the cleaned patches. Facing east and bending his left knee in a kneeling posture, he washed *Akata* and placed nine small piles in honour of *Gaisiri* and the *Pat* deities. The incense was kept burning. He then brought a chicken, made it to eat a few grains of *Akata* piles, pulled a few feathers from its head, cut the head and placed it on the pile. The body was thrown to the left side. Six chickens were offered in the same manner. Some of these refused to partake the *Akata* grains indicating that the deities for whom these were dedicated were not satisfied with the offering. The member, therefore, kneeled down and with folded hands prayed the deities not to get annoyed with him as the chickens were small in size. He also prayed that he did not have any big chickens in his stock and the deities may be kind enough to accept their shares merrily. Incense was burnt separately for *Thakurani* and *Boram*. The *Dihuri* offered nine piles of *Akta* and slaughtered a big chicken in honour of *Thakurani* and a *Boka* for *Boram*. The heads of the animals were placed on the *Akta* piles and some water was poured on them. The girl for whom the ceremony was observed was bathed and made to wear a new cloth. The member lifted her and kept her feet above the head of the *Boka* which was placed on the *Akta* piles. The *Dihuri* poured some water on her feet and the water was allowed to fall on the head of the *Boka*. The *Dihuri* and the member then bowed down and prayed for health and happiness of the girl.

Jau cooked in a new earthen pot and curry of dried rice paste (*Bari*) was offered to the ancestral spirits separately on leaves. No sacrifices were made.

The head-meat was eaten by the *Dihuri* and the unmarried boys. The member carried some of the goat meat home for his family use, and the rest was distributed among those who started cooking there. It is the custom that the meat of this ritual is neither given to anybody who is not related by blood to the family concerned. Others cooking their meals at the place of worship are not to bring any cooked food home, but to eat everything there.

Fostering – To prevent successive death of the children the parents may ceremonially handover their child to somebody else. Usually, the child's father's younger or elder brother fosters the child. In a council of village elders he makes his formal request to the father of the child. Taking the child to his arms he says "The children are dying with you. I am taking this child. From today he/she belongs to me. I will take care of him and he will look to my comforts in my old age (in the case of a son) or she shall be with me till she is married and I shall "sell" her to *Bandhus* (cognates) and enjoy the bride-wealth (in the case of female-child)". The child continues to stay with his/her own parents, but the foster father feeds him/ her on ceremonial and festive occasions.

A child may also be ceremonially handed-over to the villagers. The *Mahatars* (elderly men) and *Mahataris* (old women) assemble and bathe the child. They tie a new thread around his/her neck, give him/her a new name and bless him/her. When the child grows up and before marriage the parents give a feast to the villagers and take back the possession of their child.

First Hair Cutting – The natal hair of the child is called "*Pap Bal*" (hair of sin). The child's mother's brother shaves the head of the child and the hair is thrown in a stream. He is entertained with delicious dishes and liquor. Some Bhuinyas may take their children to some temples and get them shaved by barbers.

Marriage :

Marriage among the Bhuinyas is endogamous so far as the tribe as a whole is concerned. In the past marriage within the village was forbidden because the people of a village were agnates and belonged to a single clan (*Khilli*) believing to have descended from a common ancestor.

Among the Bhuinyas the name of the *Khilli* and the village are synonymous. Since the members of a clan are consanguinal the clan is always exogamous. Since the people of a village are of a single clan the village therefore is exogamous. Village exogamy as observed by the Bhuinyas were based on clan exogamy.

All people belonging to a single clan are not confined to a single village. The blood related families are scattered in different villages. Thus, the villages which comprise related families of a single clan are grouped together to form *Kutumba* or agnatic villages. According to the rules of clan exogamy a person cannot marry within the same clan. Any sexual union between members of a single clan is considered incestuous. But he can marry outside his own clan. The clans in which

he can marry are his *Bandhu* or cognatic clans. Like the *Kutumba* or agnatic clans, the *Bandhu* or cognatic clans are also scattered in different villages. Following these principles persons of *Kutumba* villages can have marital relationship with those of their *Bandhu* villages in the Bhuinya society. With the migration of people from one village to another the Bhuinya villages have become *multi-khilli* composition. Though majority of people in some villages belong to a single *Khilli* of patrilineal kin but there are some matrilaterally attached kin members, cognates and affines now found in these villages. In some other villages there may be families of patrilineal kin and of matrilateral affiliation living mixed together in more or less equal number. Inhabitation of families belonging to both consanguinal or *Kutumba* and affinal or *Bandhu* social units in a village has broken down village exogamy and has led to marriage between the *Kutumba* and *Bandhu* families within the same village.

Marriage outside the tribe, though quite uncommon, is never totally ruled out. Cases of Bhuinya girls marrying to *Gours* could be recorded during the field investigation but such cases are extremely rare and are considered highly irregular. Child marriages are quite uncommon, and the Bhuinyas marry when both the partners are full adults. The boys usually marry after twenty years of age and the girls after the age of eighteen.

Marriage is monogamous, and after the death of the first wife one may marry again, in case the first wife proves to be barren, one has the liberty to have a second wife. Cases of persons marrying for the second time during the life time of their first wife are also occasionally encountered. In Jaldih, a Bhuinya fell in love with his wife's younger sister and married her when the first wife was alive. In this case unfortunately the young wife died soon after the marriage. It is, therefore, not considered proper for a Bhuinya to have two wives at a time.

Cross-cousin marriage is not common and no preference is indicated for sorrorate marriages. Likewise, marriage by exchange are very rarely met with.

The following forms of marriage are prevalent among the Bhuinyas.

1	Dharipala	Marriage by elopement
2	Ghicha	Marriage by capture
3	Phulkhusi	Love marriage by arrangement
4	Amlesare	
5	Kadalesare	
6	Mangi Bibha	Marriage by negotiation
7	Randi Bibha	Widow marriage

Of all forms of acquiring mates, *Dharipala* and *Ghicha* marriages are the most common forms. Love marriage with arrangements (*Phulkhusi*) is only in the memory of the Bhuinyas and there is not a single case of such marriage found in the study villages. *Mangi-Bibha* is the most recent form of marriage which has been

adopted from the caste Hindus. Very recently, in certain cases of *Mangi-Bibha* Vaishnab or Brahmin is invited to act as the priest. This is called *Mukut Baha* since the bridal pair wear crowns (*Mukut*) made of flowers during the marriage ceremony. *Mukut Baha* is still unfamiliar in hill villages, but in the plains some Bhuinyas have adopted it to raise their social status. The rich families living in the plains can afford to arrange *Mukut Baha*. During the field work one case of *Mukuta Baha* (a girl of this village marrying in Dengula) was observed. The marriages other than *Mukut Baha* are termed as *Mankada Baha* (lit, marriage of the monkeys).

Each form of marriage is a slight modification of the *Mangi* form of marriage. However a short account of each form of marriage is given below.

1. *Dharipala* – If a boy likes a girl of certain village he goes to her village and consults with her about their marriage. Both escape and come to the boy's village. The girl is left in the outskirts of the village and the boy goes and informs his elder brother's wife and grand mother (own or classificatory) to bring her. The women bring her home and kiss the chin and forehead of the boy and the girl with turmeric powder. Other rites are performed as in the case of *Mangi-Bibha*.

2. *Ghicha* – In this form of marriage the girl's parents and villagers are consulted beforehand. After they express their willingness the girl is captured by the boy and his friends either from the forest when the girl goes to pluck leaves, from the stream while taking bath, from market or fairs, on her visit to the boy's village or some other village on a dancing trip.

If the girl has to be captured from her village, then on a certain day the boy and his friends come and hide themselves in the forest. The girl's parents are informed secretly so that they send the girl without her knowledge to that part of forest with her friends to pluck leaves. There the girl is captured and taken to the boy's village. Her friends put up a mock fight to save the girl, but in vain. They hurry back home and inform the villagers and the girl's parents that the girl was lifted by a big tiger. The villagers go to the forest and pretend to examine stones and bushes of the place from where the girl was captured and say "Here is the pug marks of the tiger! Here is some blood! Here is the torn cloth of our girl, and here is her ornament ! They then proceed to the groom's village and that day the marriage is performed. Next day the women and the girls of the bride's village pay a visit to the boy's village and they are given a feast. In this form of marriage bride-wealth is paid after two or three years of marriage. If a certain girl is captured on her visit to some village or from the market two *Khandrias* (middlemen) from the groom's village go to the girl's village with sticks. Reaching there they first go to the *Naek's* (village headman) house and say – "One cow of this village has been eaten by a tiger (or swallowed by a snake). We don't know to whom the cow belongs. The *Naek* replies "Has the cow been completely eaten or any part of it is left". The *Khandria's* reply – "It is almost eaten, only the head or the legs are left". The *Naek* consults the villagers and later on informs the *Khandrias* that the cow belongs to such and such person's shed. The *Khandria's* go to the girl's house and

are duly welcomed. Their feet are washed in turmeric water by a lady of the girl's family and a mat and tobacco are given to them. After a short discussion with the girl's father all come to the *Darbar* and the same type of conversation is exchanged between the *Khandarias* and the villagers, as the former had with the *Naek*. Then the villagers (300 Ghars) say – 'Any way the *Bandhu* has taken his property (A girl is thought to be the property of the *Bandhus*. She is kept in custody of the parents and when time comes she goes to the *Bandhu* after marriage). There is nothing wrong in it". When the *Khandrias* depart, the villagers tell them – "*Age Jauntu Panda Hal, Pachhe Jauchhanti Jauntu Qayal, Bandhu, Samphali Tha*". (Lit, let the pair of buffalos-meaning the two *Khandarias* go first, later on the mighty bisons meaning a party from the girls – will follow, Oh *Bandhu*, be prepared).

Next day, the villagers of the girl's village go to the groom's village and marriage takes place there. The party is entertained with meat and rice.

In this type of marriage, the girl does not get a chance to offer cakes and mat to the boys and girls of her village (*Sang Chhada*). It is formally done to symbolise the dissociation between herself and her dormitory friends.

3. *Phulkhusi* – The boys of a village go to their *Bandhu* village for a *Changu* (musical instrument) dance. There the boy puts some flower on the bun of his desired girl, and drags her while dancing. The girl escapes. In *Ghicha* the boy with his friends capture the girl in a group, with prior intimation to her parents. In *Phulkhusi*, on the other hand, the girl's parents are not consulted beforehand and the girl is dragged not by the boy's friends as a group, but by the boy himself. After the girl escapes, the boy comes back to his village and informs his parents and the villagers. After a few days the women and girls of the girl's village bring her to the boy's village for marriage.

4. *Am Lesare* – A boy and a girl may like each other. One day the boy splashes mango-juice at the girl in the forest and throws mangoes at her to get one of her ornaments. The girl escapes and goes back home. Her mother says – "You were with such and such boy, and you have lost your ornament. Why did you not go with him? Then the *Mehataris* (village women) and other girls of her village bring her to the boy's village for marriage.

5. *Kada Lesare* – It is same as *Amlesare* but in this form the boy splashes mud at the girl.

6. *Mangi Bibha* – In *Mangi Bibha* or marriage by negotiation two *Khandrias* from the groom's party go to the girl's parents. They assemble at *Darbar* and say. "We have come to take a small chicken (or a nice fruit) from your village". The villagers ask "to whom does the chicken belong?" The *Khandrias* say the name of the girl's father. The villagers say "We shall ask him" and tell you. Then the *Khandrias* go back. In this way they come for five or six times to the girl's village till the proposal is finalized. In Pauri areas the *Khandrias* receive some rice and liquor

from the groom's family every time at the time of their return home. But in other areas, the *Khandrias* are fed by the girl's family on every visit.

The following is a brief description of the various steps of *Mangi* marriage :—

1. *Phul Handi*—When the day on which the bride is to be taken is fixed, the *Khandrias* informs this to the groom's party. Two or three days prior to this day the groom's party sends *Phul Handi*, painted with rice paste and containing paddy and rice, *Gur*, flat rice, comb, mirror and flower for the bride. A ring is also sent for her by the groom which the girls of the bride's village put on her finger. The groom's relatives come halfway to the girl's village while sending the *Phul handi*. 2½ *Khandi* of rice (in big *Pai*) is also sent this day by the *Khandrias* for cooking *Bila Jau* in the bride's village. When the *Khandrias* arrive in the bride's village the *Mahataris* go with the bride to receive them. The girls sing song and the *Khandrias* are brought to the bride's house.

2. *Tel Haldi*—That night seven women anoint oil on the girl's head. The girl holds seven straws fixed to her forehead and the *Mahataris* pour oil seven times on the straws with *Hulhula* sound.

3. *Dia Mangula*—The *Mahataris* go in the four directions at the outskirts of village next day with the bride and offer homage to *Pat*, *Dharam Devta*, *Basumata* and *Gramsiri*, for a successful marriage.

4. That day again *Tel Haldi* ritual is repeated by seven women.

5. *Cooking Bila Jau*—Rice brought from the groom's village is distributed and given to all families for cooking. They cook and bring the cooked rice back to the *Darbar*. Here, the cooked rice is distributed to all members of the village.

6. *Taking the Bride*—One *Khandria* from the groom's party and one from the bride's village leave earlier for the groom's village to arrange food for the girls party. Two others remain to take the bride. After the party reaches the groom's village they are given food and water. Each party ceremonially greets each other asking about their health and happiness. The girls of the bride's village sing marriage songs. The groom's mother or his father's brother's wife carries her on her back to the *Darbar* house.

7. *Ghurur Pani*—The bride and the groom are given ceremonial bath by the women of their respective villages on the *Dobati* of the village (where two paths bifurcate).

8. *Juali Pani*—The bride and the groom are given a ceremonial bath. They are made to sit on yokes. The women of the groom's village bathe the bride, while those belonging to the bride's village bathe the groom. The groom does not go out of his house on the night the bride is brought to his village for marriage.

9. *Selling Medicine (Asa Bika)* :—The women and girl of the bride's village dress themselves as monks. They start from the *Darbar* house to the *Khanda Sal*

(kitchen house) to sell "medicines". Vulgar talks and jokes relating to sex are exchanged between the women and the boys. The boys give two *Pai* of rice to them. They again go to the groom's village and get another two *Pai* of rice. Cakes are prepared out of these four *Pai* of rice and distributed among them afterwards.

10. *Sala Bidha*—In a formal ceremony, the women of the groom's village and his relatives make gifts of money to the bridal pair and to the *Girhialis* (partners of the groom and the bride). The bride's younger brother pats on the back of the groom and is given a piece of cloth by the groom. He carries the groom on his back, and the groom's younger brother carries the bride on his back. Both dance for a few minutes.

11. *Kada lata* :—When the women relatives present gifts to the bridal pair on the marriage altar, the persons who are in joking relationship with one another throw mud and cowdung water, ashes and black-dyes. A lot of fun and joke is thus exchanged between them at each other.

12. *Ceremonial Bath and Breaking the Bow*—The women and the girls of the bride's village take the bride and the groom to the stream for a bath. There the bride hides the jar under water and the groom finds it out. The groom also hides it and the bride finds it out. This is called "*Dub Duba*". The bride carries a potful of water on her head on the way back home. The boys of the bride's village make a strong bow with *Sal* branch and '*Ponasi*' string. The groom shoots at the water pitcher carried by the bride and breaks the bow and throws it away. He should break it at one attempt, otherwise he is not considered strong.

13. *Handi Sara*—The bride and the women of her and the groom's villages husk about three to four *Pai* of paddy after the bride returns from the stream. She cooks '*Jau*' out of this rice and offers it to the family ancestors of the groom at the family shrine. The persons of both sides eat a little of this *Jau*.

14. "*Kanya Samarpan*" (*Handing over the bride to the Bandhus by the bride's villagers*)—At the parting time the girl's villagers and some of her close relatives handover the bride to the groom's villagers and say—*"Oh"* respected *Bandhus*, now you get your daughter-in-law. When she was young she was of her parents, but after her puberty she belonged to the village (*300-Ghar*). Now we *300-Ghar* are giving her away to you. She may be ugly or beautiful, blind or one-eyed, deaf or dumb or lame, she might be a witch or sorceress (*Daini* or *Pangini*) she may not know how to cook, how to talk, and how to respect you. Anyway, she becomes your *Bahu* (Daughter-in-law) now. If she does anything harm to you, or she is not liked by you, don't let her wander shed to shed (begging food) but bring her back to the same tree (to her parents) where from you have taken her". The grooms villagers reply -, "*Oh ! Bandhus*, She may have anything which goes against her, but she is our *Bahu* now. She is not only your daughter, ours too. Unless she does serious offence should we bring her to you ?

15. *Gundi Chaul* and *Mand Chheli*—When the bride's villagers leave after marriage the groom's party gives them about five *Pai* of rice (called *Gundi Chaul*) and one goat (*Mand Chheli*) to arrange a feast and enjoy themselves.

16. *Consumation of Marriage*—Before the boy and the girl start sleeping together (after three or four days of marriage) the bride cooks a little *-Jau'* in a new earthen pot and offers it to the ancestors at the family altar in the *Bhitar*. At night the groom's elder brother's wife (own or classificatory) bring the groom and the bride to the house and say—From today you (meaning groom) get your home (wife). Start building your shed (lit, have children) and let your family prosper".

17. *First Visit of the girl and the boy to the girl's parents* - On their first visit to bride's parents, they are given hearty meals. On the parting day a chicken is killed for them and they may be given new clothes, cakes and cooked rice which they carry to their village.

Bride Wealth :

Bride wealth is the same for any type of marriage and is paid within a year or two. But in the case of *Dharipala* it may be paid after 5 to 10 years when the boy accumulates enough to pay it. In the case of extremely poor persons, they may be exempted to pay the full amount. The bride's father, her father's younger brother and mother's brother go to the groom and collect their shares of bride-wealths.

Economy in Pauri Bhuinya Marriage :

Ceremonies are most expensive among the Pauri Bhuinyas. Contribution from the relatives are negligible and the parents start saving little by little in the form of cash and crop from five years or more for financing a marriage. In spite of their efforts they run into debt to meet the marriage expenses. A considerable amount is spent in feasts and a sizable amount in the payment of bride-wealth (*Mula*) paid to the bride's relatives.

The items and amount of bride-wealth are same for all types of marriages. Item-wise detailed list of the bride-wealth paid in Bhuinya marriages is given below—

- (1) One bullock for the bride's father.
- (2) One bullock for her father's younger brother.
- (3) One bullock for her mother's brother.
- (4) Three rupees and about 12 *Pai* of rice for the *Khandrias* (middlemen).
- (5) About 7½ *Khandi* of rice for *Bila Jau*.
- (6) One rupee and a *Sari* for the bride's mother.
- (7) About 5 *Pai* of rice (*Gundi Chaul*) and a goat (*Mand Chheli*) for the bride's villagers when they leave after marriage.

A piece of cloth or one or two rupees in lieu of cloth is paid to the bride's younger brother (*Sala Bidha*) but this does not constitute an item of the regular bride-wealth.

Feasts arranged during marriage drain away major savings of the family. In a marriage feast the groom's party is expected to feed the villagers of both sides sumptuously. The groom has to spend on feasts several times as follows : –

(1) The day on which the bride is brought for marriage the boys and the girls of the groom's village are fed properly to receive the marriage party.

(2) As soon as the bride and her escorts arrive at the groom's village they are given cooked rice and *Dal*.

(3) That night after the girl's party reach the groom's village they are fed by the groom.

(4) Next day goats are slaughtered and the villagers of both the sides are given a hearty meal.

(5) After the marriage, on some day, the groom is obliged to feed his villagers once more for their co-operation and help in the marriage.

Besides the above occasions, quite a heavy stock of rice is also required by the groom to feed the guests and relatives who visit him for the marriage. To all these expenses may be added other miscellaneous expenses like purchase of new clothes for the bridal pair and the relatives, ornaments for the bride, rice given to the different age and sex groups for playing their specific roles in marriages.

Keeping in view all the items of expenditure the total amount spent in a regular Bhuinya marriage (marriage by arrangement) is estimated to be of the order of Rs.1000/- or more. In other forms of marriages less amount is spent on feasting, thereby reducing the total expenditure to about Rs.200/-. In the case of second marriage, the bride-wealth is more than the usual bride-wealth.

Conclusion :

Without going into the details of the rites and rituals of the institution of marriage, it is significant to analyse the role which it plays among the tribe. Its implications on the interplay of social relationship, group ties, and other social and economic ramifications are noteworthy.

Marriage is always viewed more as an affair of the village than as an exclusive concern of the concerned family. The unmarried girls though biologically belong to their parents, but sociologically all the unmarried girls are viewed to be the "property" of the *Bandhus*. They are kept in custody of their parents and taken care of till marriage, but as soon as the *Bandhus* want to take possession of their "property", the parents are obliged to part with them.

In a broader sense all the unmarried boys and girls are viewed to be the members of the village and the village youth dormitory. In the case of giving away the girls in marriage, the opinion of the village elders is never overlooked. Likewise marriage of the boys is the responsibility of all the families of the village. The parents finance the marriage, but the villagers lend their help and co-

operation to make the marriage ceremony a success. While ceremonially handing over the bride villagers of the bride make an appeal to the groom's villagers and say that they offer the girl in marriage not only to the groom, but also to his villagers at large for the proper upkeep of the girl. In the case of divorce, therefore, the groom's villagers formally handover the girl to her village elders while performing formally the ritual concerning divorce.

Marriage is the proper situation to study the roles played by different age and sex groups. The elderly men (*Mahatar*) and women (*Mahatari*) and the unmarried boys (*Bhendia*) and girls (*Dhangdi*) play specific roles in marriage. The *Mahatars* work as marriage brokers (*Khandria*), fix up marriage properly and formally handover and take over the bride in marriage and engage themselves in communal cooking. The ceremonial rites are mostly performed by the *Mahataris*. Ceremonial bathing of the bridal pair, greetings to the marriage party, blessings offered to the marrying couple, are performed by the women. Marriage is the only occasion where women have greater roles to play than men. Likewise, the unmarried boys and the girls are closely associated with the marriage ceremony. The boys play on *Changu* (musical drum) in marriage dance, prepare marriage bow for the groom, supply firewood, fetch water and help in cooking the marriage feast, while the girls sing marriage songs, grind spices, supply leaf-cups and plates and accompany the bride while performing marriage rites. For performing their duties, each group is reasonably offered food and gifts.

An analysis of some of the marriage rites of the Pauri Bhuinyas throws light on their social values and belief system. As they claim to have descended from royal chiefs, the tradition of riding on horse back is still retained by them. It is still customary for the Bhuinyas to carry the bride and the groom on their backs, which symbolizes horse-riding and after marriage the rice and dal paid to the persons carrying the bride and the groom is called *Ghoda Dana* (lit, fodder for the horse). Likewise, the breaking of the bow by the groom and shooting arrows are claimed to be the imitation of the epic custom of Rama breaking *Shiva Dhanu* for marrying Sita. Bathing the bride and the groom, making them sit on a yoke symbolize that from that day they are to share and shoulder the responsibilities of the marital life. The Bhuinya, like many other tribes have great attachment to their native soil, and this sentiment has been reflected in their marriage in which the women of the bride's village worship the *Dharti* (Earth Goddess) and tie some earth in the cloth of the bride.

Marriage marks the termination of the one phase of life and a beginning of a new sphere of life. The married couple ceases to be members of their youth association and attain the status of the married persons (*Mahatars* and *Mahataris*). Before assuming the new roles and responsibilities, the bride and the groom present gifts to their dormitory friends and formally take farewell from their association. They are also entertained with feasts by their friends before their final withdrawal from the dormitory organization.

In case of the bride, she not only steps on to a new social position from *Dhangdi* to *Mahatri*, but it is more significant for her to enter into the clan of her husband. To mark this transition the bride cooks *Jau* (porridge) on the marriage day and offers it to the family ancestors of the groom at the sacred *Bhitar*. Likewise, to mark the consummation of marriage, before the couple start sleeping together the wife offers *Jau* to the ancestors of her husband.

Marriage sample collected from Jaldih reveals that marriage by capture and elopement, are more in number than the arranged and more expensive form of marriage. Out of 141 marriage cases, 36.2 per cent are arranged marriage while 63.8 per cent are other types of marriage. The following table gives the number of different types of marriages held in Jaldih village.

TABLE No. 7
Frequency and percentage of types of marriages among the Pauri Bhuinya of Jaldih village

Sl. No.	Types of marriage (Local Names)	English equivalent	Frequency	Percentage
1	Mangi	Marriage by arrangement	51	36.2
2	Ghicha	Marriage by capture	36	25.5
3	Dharipala	Marriage by Elopement	51	36.2
4	Randi Bhibha	Widow remarriage	3	2.1
Total			141	100

As marriage is an expensive affair and many Pauri families cannot afford to meet the marriage expenses many Bhuinya youths are forced to lead the life of bachelors and spinsters. The heavy expenditure was minimized to some extent in the olden days when less expensive forms of marriage such as marriage by capture or by elopement was prevalent in significant number without any stigma attached to such modes of acquiring mates. But such forms of marriage are now-a-days more looked down upon than what was the case formerly and therefore many Bhuinya youths whose economic condition has not improved significantly are forced to remain unmarried. In village Tantara, it was found in 1969 that 19 girls of ages between 20 and 56 years and 19 boys above 22 years of age were unmarried on account of financial difficulties. They did not like to take recourse to marriage by capture or elopement lest they might be looked down upon by their fellow villagers and neighbours. This has serious social consequences and unless the bride price of the Bhuinya is curtailed and other steps are taken to liberalize the terms and conditions of marriage, the Bhuinya youths may not be able to enjoy the status of full-fledged member of their society in their life time.

Death Rites :

The Pauri Bhuinyas believe that death occurs due to ill temper of hostile spirits, gods and goddesses, and due to the play of black magic. The fact that

nobody can escape death is well known to them, and when death occurs the Pauris make necessary preparations for proper disposal of the dead.

When a person dies his kinsmen and near relative start wailing loudly, till the corpse is taken to the burial ground. The wailing signifies the heartfelt sorrow of the relatives for whom the death of their near and dear one was extremely frustrating. It is also believed that if the relatives do not lament for the dead, the latter may feel offended in the other world. Both *Bandhus* (cognates) and *Kutumbas* (agnates) carry the corpse to the burial ground. A pit of about seven feet long and five feet deep is dug and the corpse is laid down on its left with the head facing north. The eldest son and in his absence the brother of the deceased puts the first handful of earth on the corpse following which others fill up the pit with clods of earth. Stones and thorny branches are put on the grave so that wolves and dogs do not open it and disturb the corpse. Some of the possessions of the deceased like a mat, one or two pieces of clothes, a pitcher or a gourd, an axe, a bow and an arrow are left with the deceased in the pit. If the deceased is a woman all her jewellery except the gold and silver ones are all buried with the dead body. It is believed that the dead needs all the things of daily use in the other world and if these things are not given the spirit of the dead might visit its descendants and press for such things. After the dead body is buried the members of the deceased family and their relatives pray as follows :

"As long as you were in this world, we shared a common life, but now death has separated you from us. Please go and tell the *Yama* (the God of Death) that you were the only person in the world and after you died there is no one else left here".

When a pregnant woman dies special rites are performed for her burial. To prevent the sorcerers practising black magic through the medium of foetus, the Pauris draw seven lines on the womb of the deceased before she is buried. Such cases of death amount to serious social offence called *Stri Hatya* (lit, woman-slaughter) and the family members remain socially outcasted until they can afford to summon the *Bar* (wider tribal organization) council to perform necessary ritual purification. Persons killed by bear and tiger are believed to turn into malevolent spirits. Especially the tiger spirits (*Baghia Bhuta*) create great havoc and kill human beings in the disguise of tigers. When somebody is killed by a tiger the *Raulia* is called on to perform special rites in the burial ground while burying the dead body. Idols of the tiger and the dead are made of earth and the *Raulia* propitiates them by slaughtering a *Boka*. The heads of both the idols are cut and these along with the head of the slaughtered animal are thrown into the flowing stream. This prevents further attack of the *Baghia Bhuta*.

The pollution period lasts for two to three days. At the end the villagers are entertained with a small feast. During the pollution period all the families of the deceased's lineage and also *Bandhu* families throw away their old and used earthen cooking pots. Mats and other household articles are all washed in water. The clothes are also properly washed or given to a washerman for washing. On the

final purification day all the members of the lineage clip their hair and shave their beard and pare their nails. During the period of pollution they refrain from eating any non-vegetarian dishes and anointing their bodies with oil.

Calling back Soul home (*Jiba Anba*) :

The Pauri Bhuinyas believe that life does not come to an end with death. It only separates a person physically from his kith and kin but the deceased continues to dominate the sacred world and lives in the form of a spirit and always watch over the activities of the two family members, whom he left behind. With the passing away from the mortal world the spirit of the dead takes seat in the sacred *Bhitar* of the family and is duly propitiated on festive occasions. By virtue of its higher position as a supernatural and superhuman being the ancestral spirit commands respect and reverence from the living descendants who try to maintain a harmonious relationship with their ancestral spirits.

The spirit of all the dead persons cannot attain the status of ancestral spirits (*pitu*) and therefore cannot have a seat in the sacred *Bhitar*. A person killed by tiger, bear and snakebite anyone who died of serious diseases like cholera, small-pox and leprosy, a woman dying with the baby in her womb; any person who committed suicide; and anyone who died unmarried do not constitute the ancestral spirits of the Pauris. After death the souls of these persons float in the air or are changed to hostile spirits having their abode in the woods and forests, and causing illness in the villagers. On the other hand the souls of the persons who die a normal death are ceremonially invited to the *Bhitar* and are propitiated periodically. Such ancestral spirits are benevolent in nature and unless they are offended they safeguard the interest of their descendants and keep thorn and their livestock in good health and give them prosperity and happiness.

The day on which the shade of the deceased is brought home, a goat is slaughtered in front of the deceased's house and is offered to the family ancestors. A few drops of blood and some meat are cooked in a new earthen pot which is called *Ains Handi* (pot containing non-vegetarian dishes). The son of the deceased or any other male relative observes fasting for the whole day and remains seated inside the *Mulaghar*. At sun set seven villagers with a basketful of rice, flour, the *Ainshandi*, two pieces of *Sal* and a piece of *Kendu* stick proceed from the deceased's house towards the graveyard. On the way where two paths meet or diverge they plaster a patch with water and fix up the three sticks in the form of a tripod. The pot with cooked meat is kept on the tripod in honour of the deceased and the same is broken in a single blow by striking it with a stick. As the pot breaks the persons call loudly addressing the deceased to come with them and enter the *Bhitar*. They say "Where are you? May you be under rocks and stones and behind the bushes and trees. Please come and take your seat in our house (*Bhitar*)". It is believed that being attracted by the smell of the mutton the spirit of the dead comes to the spot and enters into the basket filled with rice flour. Poor families may put fish and *Biri Dal* in the *Ains Handi* in the place of meat curry. Calling the spirit seven times the

Bhuinyas draw some impression on the rice flour with thorny branches or with fingers and carry the basket back home beating two pieces of iron rods or sickle together. Reaching home they beat the roof of the house and those inside the house ask "what have you brought?" The persons reply "We have banished sickness and brought health and happiness". Then they enter the house and all assemble to examine the foot prints of the spirit on the rice flour. The man on fast cooks some meat of the goat slaughtered for the purpose. Meat curry, rice, cakes and *Jau* are offered to the ancestral spirits including the new comer at the sacred altar of the *Bhitar*. Then he first takes some of the offered food. Following him others start eating. The extra meat and the cooked rice should not be stored for the next day, but be all eaten or thrown away.

The shade of the dead is brought home on the third or fifth or seventh day. Until the soul calling ceremony is performed the deceased's son or brother offers rice to the spirit at the outskirts of the village. After the soul of the deceased is brought home, the deceased family and all others, agnates and cognates become free from death pollution and resume their, normal activities.

CHAPTER VI

YOUTH ORGANIZATION

Bachelor's dormitory, a traditional educational institution was once in existence in many tribal communities. But it is fast disappearing as a result of the impact of modernisation. The tribes like the Hill Juangs and the Hill Bhuinyas are singular exceptions who have conserved the bachelor's dormitory in all its fullness and originality. Wherever the tribes have been in contact with the non-tribals and other agencies of change like the Juangs of Dhenkanal and the Bhuinyas of Sadar Subdivision of Sundargarh district, the bachelor's dormitory among them have disappeared. The youth organization and bachelor's dormitory as prevalent among the Pauris of interior areas of Koira region of Bonai, is described below.

The unmarried boys above 14 years and the unmarried girls above 12 years of age are the formal members of the youth dormitory. The boys are called *Dhangada* and the girls, *Dhangdi*. The unmarried boys and girls taken together as a group are called *Sunderphul* (lit, red flowers), and their association centres around the *Mandaghar* as it is called in Keonjhar and *Darbarghar*, in Sundargarh. The *Mandaghar* is by far the most commodious hut preferably constructed in a central place of the village. The boys sleep in this dormitory house, whereas the girls do not have any such special hut to serve as the girl's dormitory. They usually sleep in the house of a widow of the village or in different houses according to their convenience. But for other purposes their activities are associated with the main dormitory house of the village. The boys take care of thatching and repairing of the dormitory whereas the girls do the cleaning, plastering its walls and floor and sweeping the plaza. A fire is kept burning day and night in the centre of the house for which the boys supply the logs. On its four walls hung *Changu* (tambourines) played on by the boys during dance. In a portion of the dormitory are kept bundles of grains and cereals on a raised wooden platform. The boys sleep around the fire keeping their feet towards the flame to drive out cold during winter.

Admission into the dormitory does not require any special rites and rituals. All the boys and girls of proper age-group who are able to contribute to the common fund of the dormitory are taken as its members.

Within the framework of the dormitory organization the *Dhangadas* and *Dhangdis* have specific roles and responsibilities. The former bring logs of wood for the sacred fire of the dormitory. As indicated above, the fire is kept burning throughout the year, otherwise if it is extinguished it is believed to bring ill luck to the village. During marriage they fetch firewood for the groom's family and help in drawing water, cooking marriage feast, accompanying the bride to the groom's village with *Changu*. They also help in cooking the communal feasts on other

occasions. The repairing and thatching of the dormitory is the responsibility of the boys who either do so by themselves or take the help of the elders of the village to get it done. When any visitor stays in a Pauri village, the boys take care of him by supplying firewood and water for cooking his meals. During the visit of *Bandhu* (cognatic) girls to their village it is the responsibility of the boys to raise contributions and collect grains and other food materials to feed the girls during their stay in the village. The unmarried boys and girls constitute an effective working potential who may be hired by any villager to work on his field on payment of cash or kind. If they so desire, the boys and girls may also cultivate patches of land jointly and utilize the yield for their common purposes. In some important village rituals the boys and girls are required to contribute a goat by raising contributions from among them. To add to all these it is the duty of the boys and girls to keep *Changu* dance going during feasts and festivals.

Like the boys, the girls too have their specific rites and duties as dormitory members. It is the duty of the girls to plaster the dormitory and sweep the plaza ordinarily once in every week and positively on important occasions like marriage, village festivals and during the visit of Government officers. In some villages, they supply sleeping mats of date palm leaves to the boys and the boys reciprocate supply of firewood for their sleeping place and when a visitor halts in the village the girls supply leaf-cups and plates. During marriage, the girls grind spices for the marriage feast and fetch water, accompany the bride to the groom's village and sing marriage songs. When *Bandhu* village boys pay a visit, it is the responsibility of the girls of the village to look after them and arrange for their food.

The association of the boys and the girls confers communal responsibility. For the fault of any individual member of the dormitory the whole group of the boys or girls is held responsible. For negligence of their duties the boys or girls are fined by the village elders, the fine being a few measures of grains and a goat for any major offence or liquor worth four to five rupees for minor offence.

Association of the Bandhu boys and girls :

The boys and girls of a village are supposed to be of the same *Khilli* and therefore they consider each other as brothers and sisters. In such a situation joking, funmaking and exchange of gifts are not possible among themselves. The boys and girls, therefore, exchange gifts with the girls and boys of *Bandhu* villages. In fairs or market places, the boys offer gifts of *Gurakhu* (tobacco-paste), fried rice, comb, mirror and ribbon to the *Bandhu* girls who reciprocate with gifts of cakes, flat-rice and tobacco leaves. They usually purchase the gifts after raising funds from among themselves and tie those to the cloth of the receiver. While reciprocating the boy and the girl exchange hearty and joking remarks with each other. Each party tries to address the other party in superlative terms and place the self in the most insignificant position. A boy always addresses a girl as princess and refer to himself as an untouchable. Similarly a girl addresses a boy as king and calls herself as an untouchable. While giving away the gifts the boy tells the girl.

"Oh, dear; princess, the untouchable is making you an offer of a bunch of flowers (meaning the gifts). If you so appreciate, then adorn yourself with them. Otherwise, throw them in the stream." The girl in return replies. "Oh, boy; you are the prince and I am an untouchable. Why should I throw away your kind gift? It is the most prized thing I have been looking for". On the day of a ritual observed by the Pauris the boys collect honey from the jungle and the girls make cakes. Honey and cakes are exchanged between *Bandhu* boys and girls on this day.

Dancing Trips :

After the exchange of gifts for a couple of times, the boys and girls invite each other to visit their villages for *Changu* dance. When a party of *Bandhu* boys arrive, they send a message to the girls of the village to meet the former in the house of a widow and greet them enquiring about their health and happiness. The boys reply jokingly that they are not well and some of them have fever, some have injured their legs on the way, some have been attacked by bears and tigers, and the like and ask about the girls health and happiness. The girls also reply in similar fashion. The gift brought by the boys is distributed among all the dormitory members and the girls supply the *boystobacco* and *Sal* leaves for smoking.

When the girls intend to visit a village they first discuss it with the widows and a suitable day is fixed. The girls make prior arrangements and collect rice for preparing cakes, tobacco and other articles to carry with them for the *Bandhu* boys. On reaching the village they take shelter in the house of some widows or any relative where the boys meet them, greet each other and accept the gifts.

During the visit of boys or girls, *Changu* dance goes on day and night and the boys try to irritate the girls through the songs and the girls respond to it by rhythm and stepping of their dance. A lot of fun and jokes are thus exchanged between them to make the dance more lively. At the dead of the night after the village elders retire for sleep, the boys and girls may pair off and go to some secluded places where the girl massages the boy. The visitors are provided with food by the boys and girls of the village. The requirement is met by raising contribution from the dormitory members or from their common stock of grains, if any. In the case of scarcity, they may get a loan from somebody promising to pay it back by working on his field. Ordinarily the guests are provided with rice and *Dal*, but on the parting day a goat or sheep is slaughtered for them. At the time of departure the boys or the girls as the case may be walk certain distance with their *Bandhu* friends to see them off. The girls sing *Dolisongs* on the way and at the time of parting and one party, tells the other party in jest.

"Farewell friends, do not wish to come to this village again. We could not feed you, properly. Tell others that no rice is available in our village and we fed you with only roots and tubers". The other party replies that their stay was most comfortable and they were provided with sumptuous food. One party requests the other not to call their names at the back and expresses gratitude for the trouble taken in arranging food and making the stay comfortable.

During the visit of the girls one or more girls may be captured for marriage and intimation is sent to their parents afterwards. But with the changed circumstances this practice is becoming rare day by day. Cultural contact between the Bhuinyas and the non-tribals and increasing mobility and development of road communication have all combined at the present time to weaken the dormitory organization and disintegrate the *Changu* dance and music.

Retirement from the membership of Dormitory (Sang Chhada) :

Membership in a dormitory terminates with marriage and after marriage a boy or a girl ceases to be a formal member of the dormitory. After the marriage proposal is finalized and before the commencement of marriage the dormitory members collect grains and other things from among themselves and provide a hearty feast to the departing member, bid farewell and wish good luck and happy days in the next phases of life. This rite is called *Sang Chhada* (i.e. departing companionship). In the case of a boy he offers puffed rice, sweets, combs, mirrors, and tobacco-paste to his dormitory friends on the occasion of his farewell ceremony. Likewise, a girl offers cakes, tobacco, flower and a new mat for the boys. Some elderly *Mahataris* (married women) act as intermediaries between them when the gifts are made over to the dormitory members. In the case of a girl the *Mahataris* offer the gifts to the boys and say.

"Oh boys, accept the small gift of your sister. Till to-day the girl was a member of the dormitory. She might not have fulfilled her duties regularly and might have offended you. She now begs that she may be pardoned for all her lapses. Now the time has come for her to leave your association and build her own house. Eat the cakes which she has prepared for you and sleep on the mat which she has made for you".

The boys accept the gifts and reply

"She was never a bad girl and has not done anything wrong. Rather we might have done some injustice to her, for which she may forgive us. She was very nice to us, she liked us and has prepared cakes for us. Now the Bandhus have come to take her from us. Let her be happy in her new home".

The girl then sings some melodious marriage songs in weeping fashion and greets the boys by bowing down (*juar*) to all. The same procedure is followed for bidding farewell to a boy. That night all enjoy grand feast arranged by other dormitory members and *Changu* dance is held to mark the parting ceremony.

Functions of the Dormitory :

The institution of dormitory occupies a key position in Pauri society and plays a significant role in their socio-cultural life. In fact all phases of Pauri life—social, economic, educational, political and religious centre around this institution. Among others, the most important functions of the dormitory are stated below.

(1) Dormitory provides sleeping accommodation to the unmarried boys of the village and for the guests and relatives during their stay in the village.

(2) The dormitory serves as a meeting place where the village elders assemble every morning and evening, around the fire place and discuss matters relating to the village.

(3) Educative role of the dormitory is immense. Here the boys are taught rhythms of *Changu* stepings of dance, and folk tales and legends. They are taught the habits of discipline, manners and etiquette regarding behaviour towards senior members of the dormitory and elders of the village. Dormitory provides opportunities for boys and girls to develop in them a sense of responsibility, awareness towards their duties and inculcates in the young people the duty of loyalty and norms and values of their society. This institution provides training to the boys and girls on the art of co-operation, fellow feeling and hospitality.

(4) The life in a dormitory inspires not only its members but also prepares the boys and girls to take up economic pursuits and become successful earning members of the society. The boys and girls cultivate patches of forest land and store the produce in a common fund to feed the guests and visitors to spend on gifts and to meet their own expenses. They also provide labour to those who need their help in agricultural operations.

(5) The dormitory serves as grain-gola of the village. In a portion of the dormitory is built a raised wooden platform on which are kept straw packs containing paddy, husked rice, pulses and cereals. These may belong to the common stock of the village and of the dormitory members.

(6) The plazain front of the dormitory is used as a court where open sessions are held by the village elders to discuss the current affairs and other topics of interest, to take decisions on important issues, quarrels and conflicts. Topics like selection of day and time for performing village rituals, marriage proposals, selection of hill-slopes for shifting cultivation are discussed at the *Darbar*.

(7) Dormitory house is used as a kitchen wherethe food for the guests and relatives and for the dormitory members of other villages coming on dancing trips is cooked. During community rituals the consercated rice grains and the sacrificial meat are cooked by the *Dihuri* of the village in the dormitory. Some of the marriage feasts are also cooked either in the dormitory or close to it in the plaza.

(8) *Darbarghar* is a sacred institution. In some village the goddess *Thakurani* takes her seat in an inner apartment constructed in one of the corners of the dormitory. Besides the deities connected with *Changu* and other kinds of drums are believed to reside in the dormitory. Close to the dormitory is usually installed the sacred pillar of *Gaisiri*, the village tutelary deity. During religious ceremonies the *Dihuri* and others of the village start their procession from the dormitory. During their menstrual cycle the women are not allowed to enter the *Darbar* lest the deities will be defiled.

(9) The last but the main function of the dormitory is essentially recreational in nature. The musical instruments are hung on the dormitory walls and the dance

is performed in front of it. In order to forget the worries and tribulations of life, the Pauri youths, after their day's toil engage themselves in dancing and singing from the evening to the late hours of the night. On marriage occasions, the boys and girls of the bride's village visit the groom's village and take part in dancing competition. The *Changu* dance performed by the boys and girls of *Bandhu* villages is more lively than that which is held by the boys and girls of the same village. The reason for this is obvious. In the former case the boys and the girls being not related as affines to one another can joke and make fun with each other in course of dancing and singing while in the latter case the boys and girls being related to one another by consanguinity are forbidden to cut jokes with each other.

It has been indicated earlier that the dormitory organization is in the process of disintegration and with it also the *Changu* dance which is an integral part of the dormitory, is meeting the same fate. Both the dormitory and the *Changu* dance made the life of young people of the Pauri society most glamorous and colourful. But with the gradual decay of the dormitory institution the boys and girls have almost lost their artistry, joy in life and aesthetic qualities which distinguished them from their dull, grief stricken and charmless counterparts of the plains. As indicated above the dormitory functioned as a school where youths were initiated into tribal tradition and the art of community living. But with the gradual disintegration of this institution a vacuum is created in the sphere of education. The reasons of disintegration of the *Darbar* complex are many. During the earlier dispensation of the ruling chief of Bonai State the Dewan took a poor view of the Pauri life and looked askance at the picturesque custom of dance of boys and girls together. He asked the Pauris to stop such dances whereby in some villages the dancing and singing was stopped. After the merger of the State with Orissa roads were built to connect the backward and interior areas with the developed areas in the plains. Such road communications facilitated frequent visits of officials and people from the plains to the Pauri areas and resulted in culture contact between the primitive Pauris and the advanced Hindus. Land survey and settlement in the Pauri area changed land holding system from communal ownership to private ownership. Prospective geological explorations identified areas of mineral deposits and thereafter establishments of mining and industrial complexes followed in the Pauri country. Administrative machinery stretched its tentacles into these inaccessible areas. Slowly but steadily the people of these areas were drawn to the vertex of civilization. In a nutshell all these forces have combined to alienate their people from their cultural traditions and disintegrate their traditional institutions. With the penetration of political modernization and socio-economic change into the Pauri area the current tendency seems to be an ambivalent attitude towards the values current in the modern society, some are inwardly accepted, even while there is an idealization of the Pauri's ancient culture not for the preservation of their cultural heritage but largely for gaining political privilege.

CHAPTER VII

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

Essentially social organization appears as a complex process by which groups of people within societies relate themselves to each other in a network of relationships based on consanguinity and affinity or differentiate themselves from each other in the setting of available resources. In other words, a social organization is a set of members related to each other in ways that facilitate the carrying out of activities characteristic of a particular society. Social organization can be viewed structurally, in terms of the various activities by means of which it is maintained. Elaborating the concept concerning the social organization a little further, a kin group belonging to a patrilineal clan can be viewed structurally as a kind of social alignment. This kin group can also be viewed functionally in terms of the behaviours expected from and exhibited by the members who comprise the society. The social structure and organization of the Pauri Bhuinyas are described in this chapter both structurally and functionally.

Family :

Family is the smallest social unit. Among the Pauri Bhuinyas it is patrilineal. It consists of members who are related to each other both by marriage and by birth. The former relationship exists between the husband and the wife, while the blood ties exist between father and son, brother and sister and the like. Members related to each other by blood are called agnates or consanguinal kins while the relations determined by marriage are known as cognates or affinal kins. Marriage is strictly prohibited among the agnatic kins. For matrimonial purposes spouses are always selected from cognatic groups. As the family is patrilineal the descent is always counted through the male line from father to son. A daughter is regarded as the member of her father's *Khilli* (extended lineage group) so long as she is unmarried, but after marriage she becomes a full-fledged member of her husband's family. Even in the rare cases, when a Bhuinya adopts a son-in-law in the absence of any son of his own the basic structure of the family remains unaffected in the sense that the son-in-law is not included in the *Khilli* of his father-in-law. The adopted son-in-law takes care of his father-in-law in his old age and inherits all his property. Even then he does not qualify himself to be counted in the family line of descent of his father-in-law.

Property is always inherited by the sons after the death of the father. It is equally distributed among all the sons, except the eldest one who gets a little more than others. When a Bhuinya dies without leaving any son, the property cannot be claimed by his married daughters, but by his close agnates such as brothers, father's brothers, or father's brother's sons, living either in joint families, or

separate families. In case such relations cannot be traced out the property is enjoyed by the tribal community at large. Such cases are referred to the *Bar* (inter-village council) which is attended by the headmen of different villages. They assemble at an appointed place on the appointed time and discuss the matter and arrange a feast by disposing off the properties of the deceased.

The Pauri families are patrilocal. The daughters continue to be regarded as members of their father's family for a temporary phase till they marry and leave their parents. After they are married they live in the villages of their husband. In the case of the sons they stay with their parents and even after their partition. They continue to have links for ever with their parents and also with one another, in all social, economic and religious matters. They take care of their parents in old age and inherit their father's properties after his death.

The eldest male member of the family is considered the family head. He is usually the father in a nuclear and extended family or eldest brother in a joint family where the father is dead. The father being the family head exercises considerable authority over all the members of the family and all others are expected to obey him. The father owns the property which is not divided during his life time, even if the sons establish their independent households. After the death of the father the widow mother neither owns property nor is viewed as the family head. In fact the authority vested in the father descends down to his eldest son. The family head exercises considerable authority, but in no case he is the totalitarian head. Before taking up any decision it is customary for the family head to discuss the issue with other members of the family and take their suggestions and views into consideration. In all cases he takes the consent of other members of his family before he does anything concerning the whole family. The families of the Pauri Bhuinyas can be classified into four groups, i.e., nuclear joint extended and mixed families. A nuclear family is composed of such members as a married couple either widow mother or widowed father and their unmarried children. The grown up sons' usually establish their independent households soon after their marriage. Separate cooking marks the establishment of a new family. Married sons like to live separately by building their own houses and are eager to lead an independent life and shoulder the responsibility of earning their livelihood separately and maintaining their own families. Moreover the Pauri houses are not big enough to accommodate more than one couple. It is therefore necessary on the part of the married sons to live separately from their parents by establishing their own families wherever space permit in their parental village. Being a family head a person enhances his position in the society and enjoys several social advantages as the elders of the village do.

Joint family is an extended form of nuclear family which is composed of more than one nuclear family, the family heads belonging to same generation. After the death of the father the married sons with their children may continue to live jointly. Their unmarried brothers and sisters also stay with them. Thus a joint family comprises married brothers and their children and unmarried brothers and

sisters, if any. In a joint family the eldest brother is considered to be the family head who assumes the roles and responsibilities of the father. All others are expected to obey him. His wife is also viewed to be the chief housewife who usually cooks for all and distributes food for all the family members. Such families are extremely rare among the Pauri Bhuinyas. After the death of the father the brothers may continue to live jointly for a few years, but very soon they feel the need for establishing their independent households. Frequent quarrels among the sisters-in-law, poverty and lack of accommodation in the parental house are among the most important reasons for the break-up of the joint family.

An extended family is a variant of joint family where the married sons and their spouses live jointly with their parents, the head of the family being the father and not the eldest brother. A single married son with his children living together with his parents may also constitute an extended family.

The types of families other than those described above are mixed families. Such families are composed of widow and her unmarried children, orphans and such relations as father's sister, sister's children and widow sisters, etc.

The Pauri families are usually small in size, the smallest one having in the maximum three members. Large families having more than 10 members are occasionally met with. The house to house census taken in the two study villages, i.e., Jaldih and Tantara which comprise 53 families shows that 37 families (69.8 per cent) were of nuclear type, 6 families of joint type, 7 families of extended type and the remaining 3 families of mixed type. A Pauri family irrespective of type is characterized by a tie of belonging together economic co-operation, common religious functions and interpersonal intimate relationship. All the members of a family think themselves to be the branches of a common tree and the emotional attachment and sense of oneness bind them together. If one of the family members is beaten or offended the matter is taken into heart by other members and a joint effort is made to take revenge.

A Pauri family is an economic unit. Patches of forest land are allotted family-wise for shifting cultivation and the shares of meat procured by hunting or of sacrificial meat are distributed to individual families. Likewise, annual revenue, collection of grains for the village fund and subscription for village rituals are paid on family basis. The male and female members have distinctive duties to perform and both men and women work hard in agricultural and other pursuits. But all the earnings of individual members go to the common economic pool of the family.

The Pauri family is also a ritual unit. The ancestral spirits of a family are propitiated by the parents and offerings of food are made to them for their blessing. Before a new fruit or crop is eaten this must be offered to the ancestral spirits at the family altar. The festival called *Akshaya Tirtia* clearly signifies the emotional tie of the members of a family as distinguished from others. The sacred paddy seeds are sown in a separate patch of land and the produce is kept

separately after harvest and consumed only by the members of the family and not by anyone else outside the family including the married daughters. This paddy is also not used for paying up the loan or for giving away as gift to anyone outside the family sphere. As mentioned already authority is vested in the father whom all others of the family are expected to obey. The women are never under subjugation in any family though they occupy a lower position than men in the Pauri society. The women are more hard working than the menfolk. They perform all the domestic duties and join the men in agricultural operations. In feasts and festivals and in marriage and birth ceremonies the women play greater role than men. Their position in the family sphere is pretty high and they are not under the male tutelage. A man hardly scolds his wife lest she might flee away to her parents. For this reason she is treated with affection and tenderness. Their only disability is the periodic pollution caused by their menstrual cycle that they suffer during which they are segregated and debarred from taking part in any ritual affair. Other points which contribute to their low position is the lack of their voice in any political matter and their ineligibility to inherit paternal property.

It is observed that the prescribed norms and behaviour of family members towards each other vary a great deal from the actual behaviour. According to the ideal pattern the children are expected to obey their parents and persons of younger age group should treat those of older age group with deference. Brother to brother relationship should be hearty and congenial. In this context the interpersonal relationships between different members of a family may be described here.

The biological age cross-cuts the social age and the latter overrides the former. In some cases the persons of upper generation may be younger in age, but they are theoretically superior to those of lower generation who may be older in age. In actual practice this norm is hardly followed. Persons calling their father's younger brother and the elder brother (own or classificatory) by name and not by kinship terms. The authority of the father wanes with age and though he is treated to be the family head theoretically, in practice the eldest son exercises great control in the family. In old age the parents become completely dependent on their sons and have little or no voice in the family, in Jaldih, a man wanted his second son to marry the widow of his eldest son but the son refused to do so. Levirate marriage is in vogue among the Pauris. But in this case it did not materialise.

After separation the brothers seem to be pretty individualistic and they look after their own prosperity. The emotional ties which bound the brothers when they were in joint mess with their parents become very weak after separation. The data gathered from the Jaldih village show that in 3 out of 15 cases, the brothers lived in a joint family with their wives and children while in the other cases the brothers lived separately in their own respective nuclear families. In the case of the brothers' wives strangely something opposite takes place. While in joint mess they are envious of each other and quarrel among themselves frequently, but after separation their relationship with each other becomes cosy and congenial.

Physiological and sociological kin relations seems to have no difference. For example the children of a man born by his levirate marriage and by any other type of marriage are not discriminated against one from another.

Lineage :

The maximal descent group called *Khilli* is divided into a number of smaller social units called lineage. The broader group is called major lineage which further splits into a number of smaller segments called minor lineages. To put it otherwise, a group of families who can identify their consanguinal relationship with one another with a fairly accurate knowledge constitutes a minor lineage by means of their genealogy. There may be a number of minor lineages who are related to one another by consanguinity. They all believe to have descended from a common ancestor, but vaguely remember who that ancestor was. In such a case the duster of related lineages constitutes a major lineage. In the case of *Khilli* which comprises a number of mythically related major lineage groups the idea of common ancestry is still more mythical and vague.

Jaldih comprises more than one *Khilli*. Some of them consist of major lineages and some others do not. Again some major lineages are split up into a number of minor lineages while some others are not. For example, *Sarkondi Khilli* consists of only one major lineage which is divided into two minor lineages. The *Kadakudi*, *Batagain* and *Kasiali Khillis* have more than one major lineage each but none of these units is further split up into the minor lineages. Hence these major lineages are for all socio-religious purposes treated as minor lineages, *Chadi*, *Derial* and *Kemsidi Khillis* have each only one family, and therefore the differentiation of the lineages into major and minor units does not arise in these cases. Some of the salient features of lineage organization is described below :

(i) When a lineage member dies and as soon as the lineage members, wherever they are, get the news, they throw away the earthen cooking vessels and remain polluted till the purificatory ceremony is held in the family of the deceased.

(ii) In successful hunting, the hunter gets a special share of meat, a portion of which is distributed among the lineage members.

(iii) On festive and ceremonial occasions shares of cooked rice, meat curry and cakes are distributed among the families of a lineage.

(vi) Lineage members help each other in economic pursuits and on marriage and festive occasions on the basis of reciprocity and mutuality of obligation.

Khilli

Khilli is composed of a number of lineages the members of which believe to have descended from a common ancestor, though such ancestry cannot be traced out genealogically. The members of a *Khilli* consider themselves as brothers and sisters and therefore marriage within the *Khilli* is incestuous. A *Khilli* thus regulates marriage. The difference between *Khilli* and clan is that the former is non-totemic and the latter, totemic.

The Pauri Bhuinyas lack any clan organization. Originally a Pauri village was composed of a single *Khilli* named after the village. Thus the Pauris of Patuli village who belonged to *Patilia Khilli* are those belonging to the villages such as Kasira, Losi, Sarkonda, Raisuan, Batgaon, Sareikala, Chaada, Kadakala and Raikala claimed to have belonged to Kasiri, Losial, Sarkondi, Raisuin, Batgain Sareikuli, Chaadi, Kadakali and Raikuli *Khillis* respectively. It has been already mentioned earlier that when a village was uni-*Khilli* it was exogamous. Among the Pauris the village exogamy is same as *Khilli* exogamy. But certain *Khillis* among the Pauris are agnatic and these agnatic *Khillis* are found in different villages. Since *Khilli* is exogamous no marriage can take place among the members of the *Kutumba Khillis* no matter whether they are found in one village or multiple villages. That means that marriage cannot take place between the people of these villages which are comprised of *Kutumb Khillis*.

In this case the village exogamy that means people of a group of villages who fall to the *Kutumba* category cannot marry among themselves. They can have marital relationship with people of the villages of *Bandhu* category. The guiding principles in the matter of marriage is not only the *Khilli* but also the village. As the villages have been heterogeneous in *Khilli* composition, now-a-days the *Khilli* has been the main guiding factor rather than the village in regulating marriage.

Village :

Every village in the Pauri country has a definite location in space and a definite area and boundary in extent. The size of villages varies from one to the other depending upon the population and location. It is observed that the villages which are situated not far from the business and market centers, towns and roads are bigger than those which are situated in the interior areas.

A Pauri village is a closely knit social entity with a huge cohesion and continuity. In a village the people are interrelated and share the sorrow and happiness of one another. It is a land owning unit so far as the sites which are suitable for clearings are concerned. These lands which are situated in hill-slopes are distributed by mutual consent in the village *Darbar*. The business of *Bringa* cultivation is closely connected with the village *Darbar*. As long as a person carries on cultivation in a plot of land he is not dispossessed by any means. But as soon as it lies fallow it comes back to the *Darbar* for redistribution among the villagers.

Recently private property in land situated in the plains has been introduced by the operation of land survey and settlement in the Pauri area. Records-of-right has been given to the persons in respect of the lands held by them in the plains. The homestead lands and kitchen garden and other types of lands around the village are recorded in the name of the individual owners. In spite of these changes the traditional collective outlook and cohesiveness continue as distinct land marks of the Pauri villages.

The social life of a Pauri is more a village affair than an individual concern. The rites and rituals connected with birth, marriage and death require the cooperation of all the villagers. If in a family children die one after the other in young age, the family head ceremonially handover his child to the villagers to avert further misfortune and ensure its health and happiness. The unmarried boys and girls are viewed as assets of the village rather than as exclusive possession of their respective parents. Marriage is the affair of the village. The bride wealth received for the village girls is enjoyed by all the families, and in the case of the marriage of the boys each family contributes grains and money as gifts. Starting from the selection of marriage mate till the final marriage rite, active co-operation of the villagers is needed at every step. *Darbar* house symbolizes the unity of the village. It functions as the club house of the village boys and the meeting place of the village elders. The ritual organization of the village shows elements of community feeling and sense of solidarity. Every Pauri village has *Gaisiri*, the tutelary deity installed close to the *Darbar* of the village. She is worshipped on many occasions for the wellbeing of the villagers. There is a common set of deities and each village has a set of religious functionaries of its own to propitiate these deities and perform the rituals. The *Dihuri* again comes into the picture in a very big way in the religious activities of the villagers. The day on which different rituals would be performed is decided by the elders at the village *Darbar*. The *Darbar* of the village inaugurates the jungle clearing by setting fire to the combustible matter with the sacred fire which is kept lighted in the *Darbar* throughout the year by the bachelors of the village.

Each Pauri village is also quasi-political unit. There is a secular head in every village and he is called *Naek* or *Padhan*. Minor quarrels and conflicts are decided in the village level. *Darbar* serves as the court where the village elders assemble morning and evening to dispose of cases and discuss important matters. Issues like changing village site, distribution of forest land, selection of days on which to perform rituals are discussed at the *Darbar*. The role of the secular head of the village and the procedures followed for deciding quarrels and conflicts have been discussed in a separate chapter.

Inter-village Relationship :

Though a Pauri village is an independent unit economically, socially, ritually and politically it is never an isolated entity. For various purposes interaction between villages becomes extremely essential and a village thus forms a segment of the wider inter-village organization called *Pirh* or *Bar* organization. The following occasions necessitate interaction between villages.

According to the rules of village exogamy a Pauri boy of a village seeks for his mate in another village. With the breakdown of the traditional structure of village, marriage within a village has become possible now, but the Pauris prefer to marry outside their village, and therefore matrimonial relations bring people of different villages in contact with each other. The dormitory organization facilitates

interaction between villages when the boys and girls of one village visit other villages and spend some days there dancing and singing with their counterparts in their cognate villages. For agricultural purposes help from a neighbouring village may be sought for. If suitable forest clearings are exhausted in a village a few delegates from the village visit a neighbouring village and seek their permission to cultivate some patches of forest land of the latter. In such cases, after harvest the villagers visit the land owning village with gifts of a few measures of grains, some bottles of liquor and some amount of money as a token of respect. In scarcity of loans, grains for seeds may be brought from another village. In busy agricultural season a Pauri may need the help of a neighbouring village and hire its bachelors and spinsters to work on his field. In such cases the labour force is not paid in terms of wage, but is entertained with delicious food. During some seasons the women of a village may visit another village with gift of cake and tobacco and on their return bring gift of turmeric, mohua flower, maize and jackfruit.

For various reason some families may leave their parental village and settle down in another village with their cognatic kins. On special occasion such as death or divorce it becomes necessary for these families to visit their original village and seek help of their agnatic kins. Cases of pre-marital and extramarital activities, and divorce involving more than one village are settled by the elders of the concerned and neighbouring villages.

Feasts and festivals like *Pith Jatal Puja* and *Thakurani Osha* observed in a few selected villages also bring the people of those villages together. The market centre acts as the meeting place of people of a number of villages. It is the place where the elders from different villages meet together, negotiate on marriage proposals and hear from each other about a variety of matter concerning their villages. Likewise bachelors and spinsters exchange presents, jokes and words of love when they meet at the market place.

Pirh or Bar organization :

Superimposed on the village organization is the larger organization called *Bar* in Sundargarh and *Pirh* in Keonjhar. For socio-political purposes the Pauri Bhuinya villages are grouped into number of *Bars*, each *Bar* consisting of a number of villages, the number varying from one *Bar* to the other. For example, the *Tinkhandia Bar* consists of three villages and the *Satkhandia Bar*, seven villages. There are also still bigger *Bars* in the Pauri country. Delegates from different villages of a *Bar* assemble on an appointed day at a fixed place to take steps on matters concerning readmission into their society of a fellow tribal who was excommunicated for committing such offences as killing a cow or a woman; distribution of the property of a heirless Bhuinya; and incorporation of anon-tribal such as a *Gour* in the Pauri community and the like.

A religious festival called *Pirh Jatal Puja* is observed at the *Bar* or *Pirh* level and this ritual reinforces and maintains solidarity and unity of the *Bar*.

Representatives from all the villages of a *Pirh* meet together to participate in the ritual with contributions of a goat, some paddy grains, and a small amount of money. The *Pirh Jatal Dihuri* officiates in the ritual and offers sacrifices to all the *Pat*, deities of the individual villages of the *Pirh*. *Jau* cooked in a new earthen pot is also offered to the ancestral spirits. The *Pir Jatal* festival is performed to mark the observance of *Gamha* festival in individual villages. The religious rites and the political aspects of *Pirh* or *Bar* are described in detail in sections dealing with religion and political organization of the Bhuinyas.

Tribe :

The Bhuinya as a tribe is the most prolific and numerous one widely distributed in different areas of the State of Orissa representing varying socio-cultural stages of development. Until recently there was no organization or forum which brought different sections of the tribe together for some common purpose. Only myths, oral traditions and common cultural heritage helped in binding different sections of the tribe together and bringing about awareness in them, an awareness that they were branched off from a common stock. In recent times the same myths, tradition and culture are used for bringing about unity not at the regional, narrow, tribal level but at the national, wider, trans tribal level. The factor which fosters the wider tribal integration is not cultural; it is the concept of sub-nationalism which is largely responsible for bringing about unity of multiple tribal groups in a larger political arena. The objective of this inter tribal unity and integration is not to revive the tribal cultural heritage but to gain political privileges.

CHAPTER VIII

RELIGION

Religion forms one of the broad groupings of cultural aspects, the other broad groupings being technology and economy, social organization and education, political systems and mechanism of social control, folklore, drama, music and language. The aspect of arts may be included in the groupings of religion. Each of these cultural aspects satisfies specific wants of man. For example technology and economics fulfils the basic physiological wants of man. Social organization and education serve to perpetuate the group, its thought-ways and work-ways, political structure safeguards the rights of the members of a society. As against these needs and requirements what the religion does is to adjust the man to his universe by providing security against forces more powerful than man.

E. B. Tylor defined the religion as "Belief in Spiritual Beings or 'Animism' which centres round the belief in soul, deities and subordinate spirits and practices of worship and propitiation of these Spiritual Beings. The important aspects which characterise religious phenomenon are animistic or animalistic beliefs, concepts of spirits and ghosts, power concept mana, magic, taboo, monotheism and polytheism. It is necessary to understand these concepts in the context of the culture of the society that is studied. Religion, as it is revealed from the studies of different cultures is a universal phenomenon and man had developed some religious beliefs and practices long before he devised means of producing food through agriculture and animal husbandry.

The least utilitarian aspect of culture such as the religious beliefs and practices developed so early in the experience of man. Why ? The man must have been filled with consternation and awe having his dream experiences and been obsessed by the fear of supernatural powers and spiritual forces of the universe.

The man thought that the most austere and the most remote deities and spirits must have much in them that is human. He must have observed that the supernatural power which gave power to gods and ghosts and made it possible for inanimate objects to become entities motivated by good or illwill was a humanly controllable essence.

The primeval man's approach to achieve this objective had been through supplication, propitiation, expiation and magical means. The description of the 'Religion,' among the Pauri Bhuinyas which follows in this chapter includes the religious belief with particular reference to different supernatural powers and the particular manner in which they influence the life of the Pauris, the rituals by means of which these powers are enlisted in behalf of them and the religious and

magical functionaries who mobilise efforts through their occult controlling techniques and prayers to achieve desired results.

Pauri Bhuinya Pantheon :

According to the Pauri Bhuinyas the universe is believed to be dominated by a number of deities and spirits with varying range and intensity of their powers. According to their faith, a social hierarchy exists among the divine beings. The gods and spirits of the Pauris may be broadly classified as the supreme deities, general tribal gods, nature deities, village deities and family and ancestral spirits.

Like most other Munda group of tribes the Pauri Bhuinyas esteem *Dharam Devta* (Sun God) and *Basukimata* (Earth Goddess) as their supreme deities. The Sun God shining high above the sky sustains life on the earth by giving light and the Mother Earth provides food for all. *Dharam Devta* and *Basukimata* or *Basumata* are described as husband and wife by most Pauris, but unlike the Earth Goddess the Sun God moves around the world regularly to look after the living beings. These deities occupy the highest rank and there are no specific ceremony meant for worshipping them. But whenever liquor is taken a few drops are first poured on the ground with the prayer, "*Upere Dharam Devata, Tale Basumata* (lit, the Sun God above and the Mother Earth below)". It is a common incantation expressing reverence to the Supreme Deities. While taking an oath or a vow either the name of Sun God is uttered or a fistful of earth is held. It is believed that nothing can be kept hidden from the Sun God who keeps a watch over the activities of the human beings and any lie or falsehood in his name is sure to bring ill luck to the offender. Likewise if a person tells a lie by holding a handful of earth serious calamity must befall him leading to death after which he gets mixed in the earth. *Dharam* and *Dharti* are always viewed as benevolent deities.

Boram, *Birda* and *Kanto Kuanri* are some of the general tribal deities worshipped by the Pauri Bhuinyas. Of all, *Boram* is considered to be the most powerful. Some Pauris identify *Borams* with the Sun God, but others view it as a distinct entity. *Boram* is viewed to be a female deity and like Sun God she is benevolent in nature. She resides in the sacred grove situated at the out-skrit of the village and is represented by stone emblem. In most of the major ceremonies she is propitiated duly and fowls and goats are sacrificed and rice is offered to her. The festival called *Boram Puja* which is performed in the month of *Chait* is celebrated in honour of *Boram* to mark certain phases of agricultural operations such as forest clearing and setting fire to dried matter in the swiddens and sowing paddy and *Gulji*. Besides, other important annual festivals like *Kath Jatra Akshya Tritia*, *Bihira Puja* are performed near the sacred altar of the *Boram* called *Boram Merh*.

Birda a male god of minor significance and a few other minor gods are also worshipped along with *Boram* in major rituals. But *Kanto Kuanri* has attained the status of a national deity of Bonai. She is of tribal origin and worshipped by all tribes and castes including the royal families of erstwhile Bonai State.

She takes her form as a round piece of metal and appears once every year before her annual worship. It is said that a cultivator found her out while ploughing his paddy land and gave her to a Pauri priest of the village Jolo near the Khandadhar waterfall who started worshipping her. During the days of worship the deity is carried by the *Dihuri* from village to village and to the palace of the ruling chief of Bonaigarh. During her visit she receives offerings and sacrifices from all the castes and tribes. After the festival is over the deity is kept hidden in a secret place in the jungle to be taken out for worship next year.

The spirits residing over the local hills, forests, streams and rivers are also propitiated by the Pauris during village ceremonies and specifically on the last day of *Magh Parab* to guard them against the wild animals and evil spirits dwelling in the hills and forests. The term *Pat* usually refers to a block of hills, but in general the deities residing in the hills, forests and fields, streams and rivers are also called *Pats*. Thus we get *Kurali Pat Bhairpat* and *Kopta Pat* named after the neighbouring hills, *Kala-pat* and *Rengapat* named after the forest and *Brahmani Pat*, the deity of the river Brahmani. People of a group of villages assemble at one place to worship their common *Pat* deities. During *Pirh Jatal worship* while the delegates from all the villages of Koira Praganna assemble at Koira they sacrifice fowls and goats and worship their territorial *Pat* deities such as *Mandal Pat*, *Pauri Pat* and *Kula Pat*.

Gaisiri and *Thakurani* are the two important village deities of the Pauri Bhuniyas. *Gaisiri* represented by a wooden pillar or stone slabs fixed on the ground near the *Darbar* is regarded as the tutelary village deity. She is benevolent and protects the villagers and their cattle and crops from diseases. When the village is shifted to a new place the sacred pillar of the *Gaisiri* is first installed at the new place and then construction of houses starts. During each and every ritual *Gaisiri* is worshipped without fail. In emergencies like sickness, epidemic and cattle disease, the *Dihuri* burns incense, offers prayer and food and propitiates her in great solemnity so that she wards off all troubles and difficulties. She is also worshipped to give a bumper crop. *Thakurani*, otherwise called *Mangala* is worshipped in many Pauri villages. She is associated with *Gaisiri* and is installed by her side, close to the *Darbar*. The terracotta image of *Thakurani* is supplied every year by the local potter and worshipped in the month of *Margasir*. During the whole month sacrifices of goats and fowls are made to the deity in fulfilment of personal vows and the image is immersed in a stream at the end of the month. The ancestral spirits are the family deities and are offered consecrated food and incense on every ritual and festive occasions. The spirits of the unmarried persons and the children and those who died of cholera, small-pox, leprosy, snake-bite, tiger-kill and by committing suicide do not have any place in the spiritual world. They turn into ghosts and roam around the village. These ghosts are believed to cause illness and therefore, are appeased by offering tobacco, liquor and food. The ancestors of the village in general are worshipped by the village *Dihuri* during all collective worships where as those of the families are worshipped separately by individual family heads. The ancestral spirits are generally benevolent in nature and help the

family members in every way and keep them and the cattle healthy. If they are offended and neglected they get angry and bring sickness and kill cattle. Therefore every family is very particular about the worship of the ancestral spirits.

In addition to their own indigenous gods, spirits and ghosts Pauri Bhuinyas have adopted many Hindu deities like *Shiva*, *Laxmi*, *Durga* and *Mahadev* and have started worshipping them.

Religious Functionaries :

The sacerdotal-head of Pauri village is called *Dihuri* who officiates in all communal worships of the village and propitiates the deities on behalf of the villagers. He is said to belong to the senior most branch of the original village family and his post is hereditary. There is no bar for an unmarried or young man to hold the post of *Dihuri*. After the death of the *Dihuri* of Raikara, his son succeeded him at the age of nine. In case a *Dihuri* dies without leaving any son to succeed him the post goes to his brother. The insignia of the office of *Dihuri* is a basket (*Dala*) used for carrying consecrated materials which are offered to the deities during ceremonial occasions. This basket is considered most sacred and kept hanging in a carrying rope (*Sika*) from the roof of the inner house. None except the *Dihuri* may touch it lest the basket is defiled and replaced by a new one forthwith. At the time of succession to the post of *Dihuri* the village elders, on an appointed day, assemble in the *Darbar* with a collection of about a handful of paddy from each family. They put all the paddy in a new basket with some incense and hand it over to the new *Dihuri* with the following announcement "Oh, *Dharam Devta*, *Basukimata*, *Gaisiri*, *Boram*, *Pitrupita* from to-day we get our new *Dihuri*. Let every thing go well with him and with the villagers. Let all the deities receive gifts from his hand merrily". The paddy which the *Dihuri* receives from the villagers is husked by him and offered to all the deities. Some of the husked rice is kept separately with the *Dihuri* and cooked by him inside the *Bhitar* of his house and offered to the ancestral spirits of his family.

In case crops fail every year, people fall ill constantly and die in spite of treatment and serious calamities over-whelm the village, people feel the need for replacing the existing *Dihuri* by some one selected from the *Khilli* which settled first in the village. The following test is applied while selecting a new *Dihuri*.

A village elder plasters a patch of land at the *Darbar* with cowdung and water after taking bath. He husks some paddy and collects the rice grains. Praying *Dharam Devta*, *Basumata* and *Gaisiri* he draws a circle of turmeric powder on the plastered spot and places three piles of husked rice. The first pile is called '*Dharam Punji* – (*lit*, the pile in honour of *Dharam Devta*), the second, the *Dihuri Punji* (representing the proposed new *Dihuri*) and the third, the *Parja Punji* (representing the common villagers). The piles are then carefully covered with an earthen vessel and cowdung and mud are plastered around its rim so that ants and other insects cannot enter and disturb the position of the piles. The piles are kept covered overnight and are opened next morning. If the piles are found intact and undis-

turbed the proposed person is selected as *Dihuri*, otherwise, similar test is applied for others till a suitable man is found out by the process of such divination.

The *Dihuri* being the sacerdotal head of the village works as the village priest to propitiate the deities for the general wellbeing. He starts first various phases of agricultural operation like felling trees in *Biringa*, setting fire, ploughing, and sowing and then others follow the suit. By doing so it is believed to result in bumper harvest. By virtue of his ritual status in the village the *Dihuri* enjoys certain privileges. He gets the head of all the animals sacrificed to the deities on ritual occasions. During communal hunt a day is devoted exclusively for him as is done for the village *Padhan* and is entitled to a special share from the hunt. In all rituals each family contributes a handful of paddy to be husked by the *Dihuri* and the rice grains are used as offerings to the deities. After the ritual is over these grains are cooked and eaten by the *Dihuri*. In some villages situated in the plains one or two plots of paddy land are given to the *Dihuri* to grow crops and meet out of the produce the ritual expenses. In good old days all people used to work free for a day in the field of the village *Dihuri*, but this practice is no longer in vogue.

An unmarried boy (*Bhendia*) acts as a priest in a ritual called *Jangal Puja* (lit ritual for forest) or *Dhulia Puja*. This ritual is performed on the last day of *Magh Podoi* a festival in which a *Bhendia* offers cakes on *Sal* leaves to the deceased unmarried boys and girls. Likewise, on certain ceremonies like *Gilor Jatra* and those associated with life cycle and crisis of life the wife of the *Dihuri* and the married women *Mahataris* play the role of priests.

At the family level each family head acts as a priest while performing family rituals. After the communal worship is done by the *Dihuri* at the village level, the family-heads perform the same in their own houses and propitiate the family ancestors by offering them cooked rice and other eatables. Ceremonies connected with birth, marriage, and death are all performed in individual houses in which the married women and or the family-heads perform the rites.

The inner tabernacle where the ancestral spirits reside, *Boram Merh* or the sacred grove where the deities like *Boram* and *Gaisiri*, inhabit and the shrine of the village *Thakurani* are considered sacred by the Pauris. Women during their menses are not allowed to step into these places lest this might drive away the deities resulting in unforeseen calamities and disaster.

Ceremonial cycle :

As indicated above, the Pauri Bhuinyas like most other tribes observe a series of feasts and festivals round the year. Besides their religious significance most of the festivals are closely associated with the agricultural cycle and are performed to mark different phases of economic activities. Agricultural operations like distribution of forest land for shifting cultivation, felling trees, ploughing, weeding, debushing, harvesting, and eating new crops are all solemnized by performing appropriate rituals and worshipping concerned deities and ancestral

spirits. Besides their economic significance festive occasions provide scope for social interaction and get-together of kith and kin. Of all, the most important purpose of the feasts and festivals is to break the monotony and boredom of daily routine and to provide relaxation and leeway for enjoying life. The religious occasions come off and on in both slack and busy periods in the life of the Pauris. Some relaxation and digression from routine activities help one to feel invigorating and work with a new zeal.

Magh Podoior Magh Parab held in the month of *Magh* marks the beginning of agricultural cycle of the year following which are performed such festivals as *Am Nua*, *Kath Jatra*, *Akhani*, *Gilor Jatra*, *Boram Devta* and *Tirtia*. The following table gives a list of festivals of the Pauri Bhuinyas.

TABLE No. 8

Table showing the Annual Festive Cycle of the Pauri Bhuinyas

Sl. No.	Name of the festival	Month when performed	Purpose	Remarks.
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
1	Magh Podoi	January-February	To mark the allotment of <i>Biringa</i> land, felling trees in <i>Biringa</i> , collecting thatching grass.	A traditional Pauri festival observed for three days.
2	Am Nua	February-March	To mark the new mango -eating.	A traditional Pauri festival.
3	Kath Jatra	February-March	To mark the firing of <i>Biringa</i> fields.	A traditional Pauri festival.
4	Gilor Jatra	March	To mark the first eating of <i>Gilor</i> green.	Performed by the women.
5	Akhani	March-April	To inaugurate ceremonial communal hunting.	Observed for three days
6	Boram Devta	March-April	To worship the paddy for first sowing.	----
7	Tirtia	May	Observed to mark the first sowing of paddy and <i>Gulji</i> .	Observed mainly by the non-tribals.
8	Bihira Puja or Asadi	August	To mark transplanting and cross-cultivation paddy and sowing of <i>Biri</i> and <i>Kolath</i> and also to ensure good rainfall.	Associated with both low-land and shifting cultivation.
9	Pirh Jatal Puja	August	Performed by a group of villages to mark the new eating of maize.	

10	Gamha	August-September	Observed for cattle worship and for ceremonial borrowing of grains.	
11	Nua Khai	September-October	To inaugurate reaping and eating of new rice.	
12	Karma	November-December	Performed after harvest and before the threshing of low land paddy to ensure bumper harvest.	
13	Makar Jatra	December-January	Festival for worshipping lord <i>Shiva</i> .	An Oriya festival

All the rituals of the Pauris exhibit a common trend. The procedures followed, equipments used and personnel involved in the rituals lack any variation and are extremely stereotyped. The materials used in the rituals include turmeric powder, vermilion, husked *Arua* rice, incense, wicks, milk, molasses and leaf-cups and the animals needed for sacrificial purpose are goat, sheep and fowl. Axe is the only tool used for slaughtering the animals. The procedures followed for performing the rites vary from ritual to ritual depending upon the simplicity or complexity of the rituals. But the common trend in all cases is standardized more or less. The universalities of the rites are clearing the place of worship, drawing horizontal and vertical lines, cross-cutting each other with turmeric powder, putting vermilion dabs inside, burning incense and lighteing the wicks, washing the husked-rice and offering piles of rice in honour of individual deities, pouring milk and molasses water on the piles, formally offering the sacrificial animal by lifting it in hands making it to eat a few grains from the rice piles, pulling some hairs or feathers from its head, slaughtering it by an axe, placing the head of the rice-pile and pouring the blood over it. The final step of the rituals is to bow down and pray for health and happiness, plenty and prosperity. Since all the ritual are standardized it may not be useful to describe all the rites of different rituals in detail. However, a short description is necessary to throw light on their belief system and the aims and objectives of each festival.

Magh Podoi :

It is observed in the months of January-February for three days. After the year's harvest is over a day is selected in meeting at *Darbar* and all the villagers are informed at least four to five days in advance so that each family gets ready to perform the ritual. Advance intimation helps every family to prepare required quantity of *Kusana* (rice beer) and arrange required quantity of rice and other requirements. One day prior to the ceremony the unmarried boys collect a leaf-cup full of paddy and *Katala* from every family and take those to the *Dihuri's* house.

The *Dihuri* who has observed fasting and has already taken his bath receives the paddy and *Katala* and husks them separately. The first day of the festival is called *Khiri Katala* (lit offering of poridge prepared out of *Katala*). When the *Dihuri*

worships the *Gaisiri* and offers shares of husked rice and molasses water to all the deities. He also cooks some rice *and* prepares gruel from *Katala* offers them to all the deities and ancestral spirits.

The second day of the festival is called *Poda* (lit, burning) A patch on the ground near the *Gaisiri* is cleaned and a small hut is constructed with four pieces of freshly cut logs of wood. This miniature hut is thatched with wild grass. The *Dihuri* propitiates all the deities and kindles a new fire by friction of two pieces of sticks. He lights the ghee-soaked wicks in this new fire and sets the newly constructed hut on fire. A chicken duly worshiped is thrown in to this fire. On this day every family of the village puts out fire altogether from the family hearth and takes a little bit of the sacred fire from the place of worship to kindle a new fire in the hearth of its kitchen. No outsider is allowed to take this sacred fire. When the hut is on fire the *Dihuri* and all present there shout "*Haribol*" and pray to all the deities. All the feasts and festivals of the year is over and here comes the new year with the cycle of ceremonies. Let everything be auspicious for the New Year. After the fire is extinguished the villagers carry, the *Dihuri* on their back and proceed to his house and all others follow them, *Dihuri's* wife pours a little water with turmeric powder on every body's feet and all are given cakes to eat. As the ashes of the new fire is supposed to carry good-luck all put a mark of it on their fore head and carry the new fire to their houses. Gruel is prepared out of paddy and *Katala* in this new fire and is offered to the ancestral spirits.

On the last day of the festival called "*Pitha Khiani*" (lit, eating of cakes) the *Dihuri* goes to the place where the newly constructed hut was burnt. He worships the deities by offering rice grains and then sows a handful of paddy on the ashes. The place is ploughed with a ploughshare. The family heads prepare cakes and offer cakes and *Kusana* (rice.-bear) to their family spirits in the sacred *Bhitar*. With this the ceremony comes to an end.

Magh Podoi marks the termination of the new agricultural. It is observed to bid farewell to the last year and to pray the deities for a beautiful and prosperous new year. The burning of the hut the sowing of the paddy in the ashes and the ploughing of the place of worship signify that such activities as cutting trees, setting fire to bushes and trees and all other activities connected with forest clearing and ploughing sowing and all other agricultural operations are now open to be taken up by any one of the village according to his convenience. Similarly, the Pauris are now free to collect broom-stick and thatching-grass from the jungle, split raw *Biriand* eat *Katala*, without offending any deity and without any detriment to their health and happiness.

Am Nua :

Am Nua is observed in the months of January-February when the mango trees blossom. A day for the ritual is fixed and communicated to all. On the appointed day the *Dihuri*, after taking a bath, husks paddy collected from individual houses and proceeds to the *Borammerh* with other offering materials.

Some others of the village who must have observed continence on the previous night and whose wives are not in menstrual period and the boys for whom no negotiation for marriage is yet been made may accompany the *Dihuri* to the *Boram Merh*. The *Dihuri* worships all the deities and offers husked rice, molasses and milk. Either a male goat or a pair of chicken (one hen and one cock) are sacrificed on every alternate year to appease the deities. The *Dihuri* then cooks some husked rice mixed with mango blossoms and offers the gruel to all the deities. The villagers present there carry with them rice cooked in their houses in new pots. After the rites are observed the meat is cooked on the spot and all enjoy a hearty meal there and return home. Any surplus food is never brought home. Until this ceremony is performed no Pauri may eat raw mango or manure his fields. If he breaks the taboo, calamities are likely to befall him and his co-villagers.

Kath Jatra :

The burning of dried trees and bushes in the forest clearings *may* only be started after the *Kath Jatra* ceremony is held in the months of January-February'. Like many other festivals this ceremony is not celebrated on any definite calendar day of the year. A day is fixed by the villagers for holding the ritual. The *Dihuri* installs two pieces of Sal logs, one dry and the other green, at the *Darbar*. He plasters a patch on the ground and offers husked-rice, molasses, and milk (*Pal Sital*) to the *Gaisiri*. He then goes to the *Boram Merh* and after performing necessary rites sacrifices a fowl. The rice grains and the meat are cooked and eaten there. Unless this ceremony is performed the Bhuinyas do not eat fried *Mohua* flowers which are eaten before hand only by boiling.

Gilor Jatra :

Gilor Jatra follows *Kath Jatra* in the month of March to mark the eating of *Gilor* flowers, which are collected in plenty from the jungle to serve as one of their supplementary diet. As collection of *Gilor* blossoms are done mostly by women this is the only ritual for which they fix a day and make necessary arrangements to perform it. The *Mahataris* (married women) who are neither pregnant nor during menses collect a handful of paddy from every household and give it to the *Dihuri's* wife. The latter husks it and with other materials such as incense, milk, molasses, proceeds to the forest. Other women of the village accompany her. Reaching there the *Dihuri's* wife worships a *Gilor* plant with offerings of milk and molasses and all return to the village with a *Gilor* branch. The branch is stuck on the ground at the *Darbar* which was previously cleaned and marked with some paintings. Here the *Gilor* branch is worshipped with offerings of milk, molasses, and *Mohua* flowers. Seven women carry the plant to the stream for immersion after which all the women enjoy rice and dal cooked near the stream. It is only after this ceremony that the Pauris may collect and eat *Gilor* blossoms.

Akhani :

Akhani, otherwise called *Akhan*, *Paridhi* is celebrated to mark the beginning of the communal hunting. This had been described in detail in chapter Four.

Boram Devta :

A day in the months of March-April is fixed for worshipping *Boram Devta*. One day prior to the ceremony (*Bar Rua*) the *Dihuri* keeps fasting and does not smoke until he husked paddy collected from all the families to be used in the ritual. After doing so he eats once only in the late after-noon and observes continence. At night every family takes a gourd-ful of paddy to the *Dihuri's* house and leaves it there overnight. Next morning the *Dihuri* slaughters a chicken at his door step and sprinkles the blood on all the gourds containing paddy. Women with veils on their face come and take home their respective gourds. It is believed that this paddy carries good luck (*Subha*) and is stored for the first sowing on the *Akshaya Tirtia* The *Dihuri*' then, proceeds to *Boram Merh* with a group of villagers and propitiates *Boram* by offering rice-grains, milk, molasses, and by sacrificing fowls and/or goats. The meat and rice are cooked and eaten there and are never brought home. It is only after the *Boram Devta* is observed that the Pauris can take up works like setting fire to their *Biringa* and sowing upland paddy and *Gulji*.

Tirtia or Akshya Tirtia :

Tirtia ceremony is observed on the third day of the moon in the month of *Baisakh* by individual family heads to initiate the first sowing of paddy. One day preceding the ceremony the man observes fasting and after taking bath he husks some paddy. After arranging husked-rice, turmeric powder, vermilion and other offerings he eats only one meal in the late afternoon. That night he observes fasting and continence. Early next morning he takes a bath and proceeds to his *Bakadi* or paddy field with the consecrated materials. Facing to the East, he cleans a patch of land and worships *Gramsiri*, *Dharm Devta*, *Basmata* and *Boram* by offering rice, milk and molasses. He then sacrifices a fowl in honour of the deities and sprinkles drops of blood on the piles of offered rice grains. After propitiating the deities and praying for good harvest he digs up some soil with a plough-share and touching the paddy on his forehead sows two handfuls of paddy. Some of this paddy are sown in a separate plot, the produce of which is consumed by the Family members and are neither sold nor given to others. On return from the field some gruel is cooked in a new earthen pot and offered to the family spirits in every house.

The Pauris observe a series of taboos on *Tirtia* ceremony. Any man whose wife is pregnant or in her menses may not perform the ceremony. He should observe continence the night before and should not touch a menstruating woman on the ceremonial day. On the day of the ceremony he should not brush his teeth, smoke or eat any food and talk to anybody until the ritual is over. Neither he nor any of his family members should go to any body's house until the family head has performed the ritual and taken his food. An outsider is not allowed to witness the ritual. The family members do not give anything to anybody outside the family until the ritual is over. The produce from the land in which the *Tirtia Muthi* (sanctified seeds) is sown is kept separately for family consumption. As this harvest is believed to carry good-luck, this may not be sold or given to others.

Asadi or Bihira Puja :

Asadi observed in the month of August is intended to ensure good rainfall. The *Dihuri* worships the village deity, *Gaisiri* and sacrifices a goat or fowl alternately every year. After this ritual the Pauris may undertake such agricultural operations as cross-cultivation, transplantation and weeding of low land paddy, sowing of *Biri* and *Kolath* and ploughing of *Guda* land for the second time.

Pirh Jatal Puja :

This is the only ritual observed communally by a group of villages. Delegates from all the villages of the area participate in the ritual which is observed in the month of August. The Pauris of Koira area celebrate it in Koira village and a *Dihuri* called *Pirh Jatal Dihuri* performs the religious rites. He selects a day for holding the ritual and sends message to the respective villages through an office bearer called *Gadhai*. The Pauris of the participant villages raise subscription and purchase a male goat for the ritual. Those who intend to go to attend the ceremony collect rice and curry with them for their own food. On the appointed day delegates from the concerned villages assemble at the place of worship with their goats. The *Pirh Jatal Dihuri* worships the tutelary deity of the area and other important local hill deities (*Pat*) and offer sacrifices. Rice and meat are cooked on the spot and the participants enjoy a feast. It is only after this festival that the Pauris can observe *Gamha* in individual villages and eat maize.

Gamha :

Soon after the *Pirh Jatal Puja* is over the Pauris observe *Gamha* in their respective villages on the full-moon day in the month of *Sraban* (July-August). A few days prior to the festival, the *Naek* (secular-headman of the village) brings some paddy on a loan on behalf of the village to be paid back after harvest. This paddy is shared by all the families of the village. On the festive day the Pauris offer gruel, rice cakes, and meat curry to the ancestral spirits in their respective houses. In the morning the cattle are given salt to eat and their hoofs are washed, horns anointed with oils, and forehead besmeared with turmeric paste. They are given full rest for the day. At night Pauri women greet them with lighted wicks and offer fried-paddy (*Khai*) and cakes to eat.

Nua Khia :

Nua Khia or new-rice eating ceremony is observed in the months of September-October to make the eating and reaping of new rice. On the festive day the *Dihuri* cut a few sheaves of up-land paddy from the *Guda* of the villagers after making libations (*Pal Sital*) of milk, molasses and rice grains to *Gaisiri* and *Boram*. Following the *Dihuri* other villagers go to their respective fields and after praying *Dharma Devata* cut a few sheaves of *Guda paddy*. These are kept hanging on the roof in a bunch. Subsequently they reap *Guda paddy* and after the harvest give some of this paddy to the *Dihuri*. On same day the *Dihuri* husks the paddy, prepares a gruel and offers it to *Gaisiri*, *Boram* and the ancestral spirits along with sacrifices of

fowls. *Jauis* also prepared in individual houses and offered to the family ancestors. It is only after this ceremony that the Pauris may newly harvested *Guda* rice.

Karama :

Karama festival is observed preferably after the paddy is harvested in the months of November-December. Four or five days earlier the Pauris make necessary arrangements for the ritual. On the appointed day the *Dihuri* and the girls of the village fast for the whole day. In the morning the *Dihuri* takes bath and goes to the jungle with flowers and a pot of water in search of the *Karama* (*Nauclea parvifolia*) plant. When a suitable plant is traced out, he greets the plant with flowers and returns to the village. In the evening he goes to bring a branch of the plant to the village. The unmarried boys accompany him with drums. The *Dihuri* makes libations to the sacred plant by offering rice-grains, molasses, and milk and cuts the branch. Seven boys carry the branch and on reaching the village the women wash the feet of the *Dihuri* with turmeric water. The floor of the *Darbar* is now plastered and a mud altar with a canopy of twigs and branches is prepared. The *Dihuri* plants the *Karama* branch on the altar, and worships it by offering rice-grains, molasses, milk and sweets to the branch. The girls provide fried *Gangei* to the *Dihuri* to offer to *Karama Devata*. A man who knows the legend of *Karama Raja* narrates it. The girls spend the night by lighting lamps near the sacred plant and the men engage themselves in dancing.

Next morning, the *Dihuri* worships the sacred plant and sacrifices chicken contributed by the girls. In every seventh year of the worship a girl is obliged to contribute a chicken for sacrifice in honour of *Karama Devata*. After the plant is worshipped the *Dihuri* uproots it and hands it over to the boys. Seven boys carry it to every house of the village where they are greeted by the women and with offerings of rice cakes. Finally the branch is thrown in a stream or river. The festival is enjoyed with feasting and great rejoicing and during this festival many guests and relatives visit the Pauri families.

Makar Jatra :

Makar Jatra is not a traditional festival of Pauris and is observed only in the Koira village where the Pauris from some of the neighbouring villages assemble to celebrate the festival. On the full-moon day in the month of *Paus* (December-January) the *Bhuinya Dihuri* of Koira village worships a sacred peice of stone called *Nageswar Mahadeb* installed in an open place at the outskirt of the village. Persons belonging to other castes and tribes also participate in the worship and present offerings of coconut, ripe banana, fried-paddy and sweets to the deity.

The above account of the feast and festivals of the Pauri *Bhuinyas* shows that the Pauris worship their deities more with a view to gain economic and other benefits than merely for religious and devotional purposes. Almost all rituals and festivals which are observed by the Pauris are closely associated with agricultural activities and the deities are propitiated to guard their crops, ensure good rainfall

and help in getting a bumper crop, and to keep the Pauris free from disease and disaster. All the important agricultural operation like distribution of forest land for *Biringa* cultivation, felling trees and firing dried trees, ploughing, sowing, transplanting, weeding, reaping and harvesting, and eating of new crops are marked by religious observances unless the *Dihuri* starts them first no other persons of the village dare to do so for fear of divine punishment.

The religious practices of the Pauri Bhuinya are based on community feeling and co-operation. Most of the ceremonies are observed at the village level in which the village priest worships the deities on behalf of all the villagers and prays to the deities for the wellbeing of the village and all people on the universe at large. Every household contributes offering materials and objects of sacrifice and the village *Dihuri* makes sacrifices and offers consecrated materials to the god and spirits and propitiates them for the wellbeing of the community.

Traces of borrowing from the Hindu Pantheon and the religious ceremonies are noticed even among the remote Pauri Bhumyas who lay greatly insulated from the outer world due to lack of suitable communication and due to geographical and cultural barriers. The gods and goddesses like *Shiva* or *Mahadeb*, *Durga*, *Laxmi*, and *Jagannath* are revered by many Pauris, and in *Makar Jatra*, a Bhuinya *Dihuri* worships at the shrine which is dedicated to *Mahadeb* called *Nageswar*, one of the Holy Trinity of the Hindu Religion. The festivals like *Makar Jatra* and *Ganha* lack any feature of the tribal religion and are clear case of cultural borrowing. It is interesting to note that the borrowing of religious traits has been a two-way traffic. The Pauris have borrowed some religious trait from the neighbouring non-tribal communities and vice versa. For example, groups of men and women belonging to different castes and tribes assemble at Koira to celebrate the *Makar Jatra*. *Kanto Kuanri* is supposed to be a Bhuinya deity, when it is carried by a Bhuinya *Dihuri* from village to village the deity is offered sacrifices by all irrespective of castes and tribes. One and all starting from the low to high caste *Khsyatriyas* and *Brahmins* participate in the worship of the deity along with the Bhuinyas and other tribal communities like Kondh and Gond who live in the area. The tribal deity called *Pauri Devi* is often identified as *Durga* worshipped by caste Hindus in the low-country villages. The process of trans-acculturation in religious life as a general phenomenon is very much evident in the Bhuinya area.

Unlike many tribal communities such as Saora, Kondh, Santal, Oraon and Munda, the Pauri Bhuinyas have not embraced Christianity. Their strong religious sentiments and a sense of higher social status have kept them free from all allurements of the Christian missionaries in spite of their poverty and indigence.

CHAPTER IX

LEADERSHIP PATTERN

The Pauri Bhuinyas like the Juang are a peace loving people and therefore do not like to interfere with or intrude upon the affairs of others. Even if they are displeased with somebody they try to suppress their feelings and do not give vent to their emotional outburst. Inhabiting inhospitable terrain they want to lead a smooth life free from animosity and bitterness with their fellowmen. Intra and inter-village quarrels are rarely met with. However, the human nature in general as it is the Pauri Bhuinyas are not completely free from jealousy, covetousness and wantonness which create occasions for quarrels and conflicts, but these are never so serious as to threaten the community life. Conflicting situations in the village are decided at the village level by a council of elders under the leadership of the *Naek* while inter-village quarrels and conflicts which cannot be decided at the village level are decided either by the elders of the concerned villages or are referred to the wider territorial organization. The political organization in practice moulds and modifies the behavioural pattern of the Pauri Bhuinyas in conformity to the traditional norm of the society. In this context the role which the village traditional elites such as the *Naek*, and *Dihuri* play is very significant. These elites not only occupy higher social status in the society by virtue of their authority, but are also guardian of traditional values and social control.

Such leaders of the Pauri society may be classified as traditional and new or emerging leaders. The post of the traditional leaders is hereditary where as that of the new leader is held on tenure basis for a limited number of years. One of the new leaders is the member of Gram Panchayat who represents the village in the statutory panchayat. The panchayat member is invariably selected by unanimity not by majority vote. Pauri village in general works harmoniously and there is very little intra village conflict. It is almost free from any disruptive influences of party politics and majority votes. Every one participates in decision-making and decisions are reached inevitably by conscience and not by majority vote. A short account of different leaders of a Pauri village is given below.

Village Leaders :

Naek

The secular-head of each Pauri viage is called *Naek* or *Gauntia* in the Bhuinya area of Sundargarh district and *Padhan* in the corresponding Bhuinya pirth of Keonjhar district. This office was created by the ruling chiefs for administrative purposes. The *Naek* used to collect annual revenue from the village, decide quarrels and conflicts, attend to officers during their visit to the Pauri villages. After the merger of the states, the *Naek* continued to collect the revenue which was

levied on village basis and not on individual basis. The *Naek* decided the amount to be paid by individual families according to their economic standard.

The post of the *Naek* is hereditary. Since the Pauri society is patriarchal the office of the *Naek* descends from father to the eldest son. A turban is the insignia of the office of the *Naek* and when a new *Naek* assumes his office, the villagers tie a turban on his head, bow down with folded hands and pray "You have become our new *Naek* from to-day. Let you be in best of health and let you look after your *Paraja* (lit, the villagers)".

Being the secular-head the *Naek* plays a very important role in judicial affairs of the village. He presides over the village meeting and decides cases relating to interpersonal quarrels, breach of social customs, partition of property among cosharers, and marriage proposals. In all such case he discusses the issue with the assembled elders of the villages and takes their consensus and arbitrates the matter on the basis of the collective opinion of the villagers. He serves as the chief spokesman while negotiating with the *Bandhus* regarding any marriage proposal and hands over the bride price on behalf of the groom's parents to the bride's parents. Distribution of fresh *Biringa* lands among the families is done by the *Dihuri* and the *Naek*. The first day of the annual ceremonial hunting expedition is observed in honour of the *Naek* who performs a ceremony to appease the deities for successful hunt and if any animal is killed the *Naek* gets the hind legs as a token of respect. In short the *Naek* works as the conscience keeper of the villagers and all the villagers are expected to respect him and obey his orders.

As the village-headman the *Naek* enjoys some other privileges. For example all able bodied village adults at the rate of one from each family work for one day free on his field. In Cock-tail parties the *Naek* is served more quantity of liquor than the commoners and he is served first than the others of the party. For his work as the revenue collector, the *Naek* gets remuneration of two *Pais* of husked-rice and some cash called *Bheda Paisa* at the rate of one anna per rupee of revenue collected. In *Gamha* festival it is customary for the *Naek* to incur a loan of grains on behalf of all the families and it is he who also clears the loan in time.

Dihuri :

While the *Naek* in the capacity of secular-head works as the intermediary between the villagers and the governmental authorities and external agencies, the *Dihuri* as the sacerdotal head acts as a link between the supernatural powers and the living beings. Being the religious head and having hailed from the senior most branch of the village the *Dihuri* is respected by every one of the village and enjoys certain privileges which are limited to contribution of free labour for a day by the villagers, and extra share of sacrificial meat including heads of the animals sacrificed in rituals. The village *Dihuri* is strictly viewed as religious head while the *Naek* as the kingpin and the formal leader of the village.

Member :

The post of Member or Ward Member is a new office created after introduction of statutory panchayat in the tribal areas. Functionally the posts of the *Naek* and the Member are complementary to one another. The main differences between them are that the former is the traditional leader who is the guardian official control, values, and code of conduct and the latter is an emerging new leader who is largely concerned with the economic development and welfare of the village. The *Naek* is the spokesman of his villagers while the Member is the liaison between the villagers and the Grama Panchayat at the lower level and the Government officers at the higher level. In education, wealth and general outlook the *Naek* is almost same as commoners of his village. But the Member must be more articulate and active and have more contact with outsiders than others of his village in order to be effective in his works.

Village Elders (Bhal Bhai) :

Apart from the *Naek*, Member and *Dihuri* who constitute the formal leadership of the village, the village elders play no less important role in the socio-political area of the village. The village elders take part actively in all discussions which are held at the *Darbar* of the village and their opinion is duly taken into consideration before any decision is taken finally. Any difference of opinion is sorted out and discussions are held threadbare until unanimity is reached. In a Pauri village an individual is regarded as an integral part of the organic whole and in such a social structure unanimity rather than majority vote is followed as the guiding principle in decision-making process.

Village Council :

The village council is composed of the formal leaders such as the *Naek*, *Dihuri*, and the Member and a group of elderly men of the village. The deliberations of the council are made at the *Darbar* or in the dormitory house either early morning before the villagers leave for their fields and forests or in the evening when all return home after the day's toil. Every day the elderly men assemble twice in the *Darbar* in the morning and evening in an informal meeting to discuss about the current affairs of their daily life and other topics of interest. But when summoned for arbitration of any important case the council of village leaders and elders constitute the jury and the *Darbar* serves as an open-air court house. The Pauri Bhuinyas have a set of formal leaders, but as a democratic people the real authority is vested not with the defacto leaders but with the council of elders. All present in the *Darbar* take part in the arbitration and the decision is accepted with unanimous approval of the jury. The *Naek's* duty at the dose of arbitration is only to declare the verdict of the council.

The topics which come up to the village council for decision include such matters as quarrel between co-villagers, partition of property among brothers, breach of taboos negligence of duties of *Dhangdas* and *Dhang* is adultery, extra

marital and socially forbidden sexual relationship, etc. The concerned parties are summoned to the *Darbar* and the party which is found guilty is fined a few measures of husked-rice, a goat or fowl, a few bottles of liquor and some cash. In the case of adultery, the woman, may be handed over to the adulter as his co-wife. In the case of love between *Bandhu* partners the girl is given in marriage to the boy with whom she has intrigue. If anybody tries to conceal his fault, it becomes necessary to detect the actual offender by oaths and ordeals. The suspected persons are asked to tell the truth by touching some earth or a piece of tiger skin. It is believed that anybody telling lie by touching earth or tiger skin soon meets death and becomes a part of the earth or is killed by tiger. In serious cases the alleged person tasked to face ordeals like picking up a coin from a pot-ul of boiling water or holding a piece of hot iron,. The fine collected from the offenders is spent in holding a feast and the liquor is sprinkled ceremonially to mitigate the conflict. The cases of land dispute between two villages, incestuous love affairs, premarital pregnancy, witchcraft of serious nature, homicide divorce and separation which cannot be decided at the village level are referred to the council of wider territorial organization.

Inter-village Council :

As has been pointed out previously, such matters as boundary disputes between two villages and cases of divorce, which cannot be decided by one party and are not important enough to be brought to the notice of the *Pirh* council (council of wider territorial organization) are decided mutually by the elders of concerned villages. To settle any dispute regarding village boundary, elders of the neighbouring villages are invited and the matter is decided by divination which is described in Chapter Four. In the case of divorce, a delegate of village elders proceed to the girl's village and discussion is held at the *Darbar*. If the woman is proved to be at fault the groom's party may claim compensation for the bride-wealth they paid to the girl's parents. On the other hand, if the man is found guilty the woman's parents may claim a few measures of husked-rice and some amount in cash towards the maintainance of the woman during her stay with them after separation. The formal divorce is declared jointly by both the parties after ceremonial drinking of liquor and thereafter the woman is free to marry again. But so long as the divorce is not formalized and rites connected with it not observed her husband continues to retain all the jural claims over her and may perform necessary funeral rites in case she dies in her parental village. During this period if she remarries, her legal husband may claim compensation of bride-wealth from the new husband. Cases of separation are also likewise discussed between the elders of both the villages and the girl is advised to go back to her husband and lead her family life.

Bar organization or Pirh Council :

For judicial purposes the Pauri villages are grouped under a wider territorial organisation called, *Bar*. A *Bar* may consist of three or more villages to

decide socio-political affairs which cannot be settled at the village level. In Koira and Bonai areas of Sundargarh there are *Tin Khandia Bar* consisting of three villages, *Sat Khandia Bar* having seven villages, *Battish Khandia Bar* with thirty-two villages under its jurisdiction and other *Bars* like *Modani Bar*, *Majuri Bar*, *Nadir Separi Bar*, etc. The last three Bars taken together constitute a still bigger socio-political organisation called *Panchasaghar* (lit, five hundred houses). The *Bar* is also designated as *Pirh* and the council held by the *Bar* is thus called *Pirh Council*. Each *Pirh* or *Bar* has its own tutelary deity worshipped on the occasion of *Pirh Jatal Puja*. The village Jaldih comes under *Majuri Bar* and a total number of 20 villages belonging to three (*Majuri*, *Modani* and *Nadir Separi*) *Bars* constitute a *Bar* for socio-political and other judicial purposes. *Simeswari* is the presiding deity of the *Bar*.

As has been pointed out earlier serious offences affecting the tribal life, such as violation of incest taboos, adultery, homicide, cases of women dying of labour pain, killing cow and marriage outside the tribe, witchcraft and sorcery of serious nature, disposal of property of hairless Pauri cannot be decided at the village level and are, therefore, referred to the *Pirh Council*. The *Pirh Council* also meets to readmit the excommunicated persons after performing proper purificatory rites. Circumstances which lead to excommunication of a person is the formation of worms in a wound, admission into hospital for medical treatment and imprisonment in a jail. It may be mentioned that hospitalization and imprisonment are by themselves not causes of outcasting. The real cause for excommunication is eating food from the hands of persons of low castes.

Each *Pirh* has its public functionaries who are allotted specific duties when it is in session. The name of the offices and their functions are as follows :

(i) *Bhal Bhai*: Elderly persons delegated from each village to participate in the deliberations of *Pirh* council and offer their opinion in deciding case.

(ii) *Pirh Bhandari* or the barber : He shaves the head of the offender. Ordinarily, Pauri Bhuinyas do not employ the services of a barber and they shave their own heads. In the past one of the Pauris was employed to act as the barber of the *Pirh* council but at present a man of barber caste is employed to act as *Pirh Bhandari*. It is believed that shaving by a barber ritually purifies the offender and makes him free from pollution.

(iii) *Dhoba*, *Behera* or a washerman by caste : He washes the clothes of the offender on the day of the *Pirh* council. Ordinarily the Pauri Bhuinyas wash their own clothes, but on occasions like birth, death and *Pirh* council the clothes are washed by a washerman for ceremonial purification.

(iv) *Pirh Naek* or *Jati Behera* : His duty is to perform the purificatory rites by sprinkling diluted cowdung water and cow's urine on the head of the offender. He also eats the first morsel of cooked food touched by the offender.

(v) *Dal Behara* : He acts as the treasurer. The fine collected in cash is kept with him to be used during the *Pirh* council.

(vi) *Ghadai* : He is the messenger-cum-errand man whose duty is to inform the date and the place of the *Pirh* council to all the villages so that all may assemble on the appointed day. It is also his duty to intimate the date of *Pirh Jatal Puja* to all the villagers concerned.

(vii) *Pirh Brahman* : Coming in contact with the non-tribals the Pauri Bhuinyas now seek the services of a Brahmin priest in *Pirh* council to purify the offender. After the culprit undergoes the traditional rites and rituals to purify himself the Brahmin burns some ghee to mark the final purification.

The different functionaries of the *Pirh* are paid for the services rendered by them. The *Jati Behera* is considered the highest official by virtue of his social position and his role in the *Pirh* council is very significant. His office is honorary. The council of elders coming from different villages (*Bhal Bhai*) also do not get any fixed remuneration but are given a token amount of the money collected as fine from the offenders. The remaining office bearers are paid in cash and or in kind for discharging their duties. The barber and the washerman get each a piece of new cloth and five rupees, with a few measures of husked-rice given extra to the latter towards his food. The *Pirh Brahmin* is given two pieces of new clothes and two to five rupees. Of all the functionaries the *Ghadai* gets the most. For his services during the *Pirh* council and *Pirh Jatal Puja* he collects *ten Pai* of paddy and some quantity of pulses from each village of the *Pirh* during harvest every year. It shows a patron-client relationship between the *Ghadai* and the Pauris.

The *Pirh* council is held in the village of the offender. The method of convening the meeting and the procedures followed are as follows. After the case is detected the *Naek* and *Dihuri* of the village of the offender first call a meeting and sit down for a preliminary trial of the case. The offender is fined a few measures of husked-rice, some amount of money and a goat. These are kept in the common stock of the village to be used for feeding the *Pirh* people on the day of the *Pirh* council. The *Naek* then asks the offender to arrange provisions to feed the delegates and the offender is outcasted. He lives in a hut constructed at the outskirts of the village and nobody dines with him, exchanges tobacco or maintains any social relation with him. After the person has arranged the provisions the village *Naek* calls for the *Pirh Ghadai* and sends the message through him to all the villages of the *Pirh* informing the date fixed for the *Pirh* council. On the appointed day-delegates from different villages arrive in the village of the outcaste where they are greeted by the women who wash their feet with turmeric water as a token of respect. The delegates in return may present a few coins to the women. The visitors are then given tobacco and smoking leaves and are provided with food which is cooked in a separate hearth. The provisions for this meal is provided by the villagers of the outcaste. After the delegates sit down for arbitration, the *Naek* makes them acquainted with the topic of discussion. The outcaste is called to the

spot to express his views. After he begs excuse for the fault, a decision is taken for his restoration to the tribal community. The *Pirh Bhandari* now sprinkles a few drops of cowdung water on the head of the outcaste, shaves his head and pares his nails. The *Dhoba Behera* washes his clothes. The outcaste then takes a bath and the *Desmae* or the *Pirh Behera* purifies him by sprinkling some more water in which some cowdung is mixed and a copper-coin is dipped. The outcaste also partakes a few drops of this water. After he is purified in the traditional methods, the *Pirh Brahmin* burns some ghee and sprinkles water on him with *Tulsi* leaves for final purification. After the purificatory rites are over the concerned person gives about five to seven *Khandi* of husked-rice, one or more goats and some cash for liquor in payment of the fine. With these provisions a big meal is cooked in a common hearth called *Mahakhanda* by those who stand as *Bandhus* to the offender. After the food is cooked, the *Desmae* offers the cooked-rice and meat curry to the common ancestor facing all the directions. The offender then touches the piles of cooked-rice and pots of meat-curry and the *Desmae* eats the first morsel of food. He then loudly passes his order five times requesting all others to take their meals.

It is only after this declaration that all the delegates eat the food along with the offender. This makes the offender free from all sins and he regains all his normal position in the society. In some Pauri villages readmission to the tribal community is declared only after the offender shares a common tobacco-pipe with the delegates. In one session a *Pirh* council may decide a number of cases. An arrangement like this in which a number of cases clubbed together to be decided on one date in a single session of the *Bar* council saves time of the delegates and minimises cost incurred on such occasions.

Pirh council is also held when a Pauri dies without leaving behind any male heir to inherit his property. In such a case a small share of the property of the deceased is given to his married daughters and close agnates and the rest are sold away. The sale proceeds are utilized by the *Bar* Council in a common feast. In the case of adultery the adulter is asked to accept the woman as his co-wife. Incest cases are dealt with utmost severity. The offenders are ostracized from the village and are considered dead and gone. The villagers perform funeral rites for them. A Pauri-male marrying a *Gour* girl is duly admitted to the society after paying usual fine to the *Pirh* council. If a Pauri girl elopes with a *Gour* boy or any other non-tribal her parents may have to face the *Pirh* council and pay fine. If the girl changes her mind and wants to remain as a *Bhuiya*, the *Pirh* council may restore her to the *Bhuiyan* society. However, Pauris marrying in castes which are considered very lowly by them are permanently out-casted. Cases of homicide are dealt by the Police, but after the offenders are released from jail they may have to face the *Pirh* council for their entry into the tribal community as bonafide members.

Pirh-Council in Bada Patuli, a case study :

In the month of *Magh* (January-February), 1962 the *Pirh* council met in *Bada Patuli* village to decide three cases. The first case was that one *Jata Dihuri* of village

Jaldih was outcasted as his wife died of difficult labour. As this amounted to *Stree Hatya* (lit, killing woman) the deceased's husband had to undergo ritual purification. The second one was that one Danei Bhuinya of Bada Patuli was going to plough fields with his pair of bullocks. On the way, the bullocks which were tied to the yoke fell in the river. The river was in full spate and the bullocks died. As Danei was responsible for the death of the bullocks he was charged with the offence of killing cow (*Go Hatya*). The third one was like that of *Stree Hatya* which is referred to in the case No. 1 which occurred in Sarigarh village. All the three cases were difficult to settle at the village level and therefore it was necessary to convene the *Pirh* council.

The *Naeks* of the respective villages referred the cases to the *Desmae*. In order to relieve the outcastes from heavy economic burden of feeding the delegates and to save the time of the delegates the *Desmae* thought it proper to fix a single date for disposing of these cases in a single sitting of the *Pirh* council. The venue for this meeting was fixed at Bada Patuli. After the harvest was over, a day in the month of February was fixed and the *Desmae* sent message to all the villages of the concerned Bar and also to some of the villages of Bhuinya *Pirh* of Keonjhar district through the *Ghadai*. Thus several representatives from Chamakpur *Pirh*, Sunderpur *Pirh* and Char Naek *Pirh* of Keonjhar district attended the meeting. Intimation was sent to the *Pirh Bhandari* (Raghu Naek, barber by caste) *Dhoba Behera* (Rama Parmanik of Patuli, washerman by caste), and *Pirh Brahmin* (Gokul Naek of Jakeikala).

On the appointed day the delegates from different villages gathered at Bada Patuli and the women of the village greeted them by washing their feet with water. There was nothing controversial to be debated in the council. Everything was done according to the prescribed procedures. *Pirh Bhandari* shaved the heads of the offenders, *Dhoba Behera* washed their clothes, and *Desmae* sprinkled over them some water mixed with cowdung and cowurine including a copper coin dipped in it. After the offenders had taken bath, the *Pirh Brahmin* sprinkled *Tulsi* water over them to purify them completely.

After the purificatory rituals were over the offenders supplied eight *Khandis* of rice and three goats for the feast. The goats were slaughtered and rice and meat were cooked to feed the delegates. After the food was ready the *Desmae* offered shores of cooked-rice and meat curry to the general ancestral spirits facing all directions. Then the purified offenders touched the heaps of cooked-rice and meat-curry. After taking permission from the *Bhal Bhai* the *Desmae* took the first morsel of food following which others including the ritually cleaned offenders sat down to take food. By this process the offenders were made ritually clean and readmitted into the society.

The barber, washerman and the Brahmin were paid their dues which consisted of three pieces of new clothes and three rupees for the barber, the same

for the washerman, and three pieces of new clothes and five rupees for the brahmin priest.

An amount of Rs. 35-00 was deposited by the *Naeks* of the villages to which the offenders belonged with the *Dal Behera* as the treasurer of the *Pirh*. This amount was collected by the village councils from the offenders as fines during their preliminary trial of the cases in question. This amount was distributed among the *Bhal Bhai* including those who came from Keonjhar towards their pocket expenses.

With the changing pattern of life, the rigid structures enforced by the tribal council have been relaxed to a great extent. The rules and regulations of the traditional political organisation are not strictly adhered to and the Bhuinyas have become more liberal in their outlook. Two cases of incestuous marriage recorded from village Tantara have not been so seriously viewed. In one case a Bhuinya married a girl of *Kutumba* (agnate) *Khilli*, and in the other case both the husband and wife hailed from the same *Khilli* and were related to each other as brother and sister prior to their marriage. Normally, such cases would have been considered very serious offences and the offenders would have been driven out of the area and their agnates who lived in the village would have observed death rites thinking the offenders to have died and gone. On inquiry it was, however, revealed that the offenders were found living with others in the village without any ritual stigma and without causing any indignation of the ancestral spirits and other gods and goddesses. The Pauris no doubt consider these offences most serious, but in these cases they just did not bother about them. Tantara village is situated at a stone's throw distance from Tensa town, the centre of Barsuan Iron Mines. The villagers of Tantara are in close contact with a multitude of mine workers of heterogeneous caste composition and socio-cultural background. The impact of the mining activities on the people of Tantara has brought about modernization in the life style and value system of the Pauris. Moreover their full-time engagement in mining works as labourers leaves little time to bother about breaches of socio-cultural customs and traditions. People of younger generation who are change-prone are more in number than those of older generation. All these factors have combined to weaken the social fabric and cultural tradition of the Pauris of Tantara village and therefore breaches of social rules and conventions do not concern them much in the changed context.

CHAPTER X

SOCIAL CONTROL

The Pauri Bhuinyas lead a sedentary life. Although their swidden cultivation shows periodic shifting from one clearing to the other, but there is nothing of nomadic nature in their settlement pattern. Among the Juangs the settlement is shifted in every 10 or 12 years, alternatively in two sites. But this is not the practice among their Pauri neighbours.

The Pauris have long since given up the parasitic economic base of hunting and food gathering as the primary source of livelihood. Although they are largely slash and burn cultivators, but the productive system in their case has been more systematic now than before. Most of the Pauri Bhuinyas have based their economy on the periodic felling of trees and the cultivation of millets, pulses, maize and vegetables in the clearings. Those living in the valleys have taken to plough cultivation in permanently owned plain lands in addition to shifting cultivation and have been trying to improve their economic condition. In course of transformation from nomadic habits to settled life the Pauris have gradually adopted their life style to the changing techniques of productive system.

The Pauri Bhuinyas live in small villages. Originally the settlements were homogeneous, that is, the households were related by blood to the founder family and belonged to one *Khilli*. But with the spread of population the villages located in accessible areas have become heterogenous in *Khilli* composition. When villages were homogeneous, village exogamy was prevalent. But as the composition became heterogenous marriages within the village could take place. With the change from homogeneity and village exogamy to heterogeneity and village endogamy many changes in interpersonal behavioural pattern and intra village code of conduct have of late surfaced.

Primitive cultivation of crops involve preparation of soil, felling of trees and burning of forest sowing of seeds, watching and harvesting of crops. These practices force people to stick to one locality. Moreover, the stores of grain make movements from one place to the other practically impossible. Thus cultivation of crops brings greater stability to the settlements than that food gathering and hunting do among hunters and collectors. The greater permanency of the local group creates a greater need for social control capable of keeping in check socially disapproved activities and maintaining morals and values, ethos and taboos in the society. The following paragraphs give a discussion of the social control as observed among the Pauri Bhuinyas of the study villages.

Every Pauri village has a well demarcated boundary within which there are hills, forests, hill streams and valley-lands. The residents of the village may hunt and collect forest produce anywhere within the territory which belongs

traditionally to the village. The villagers distribute among themselves according to their requirements the hill-slopes for shifting cultivation. As long as a Pauri cultivates a hill-slope the land and its produce are his undisputed property, but when after two or three years the soil loses its fertility and the swidden allowed to regenerate it also reverts back to the ownership of the village. When after seven to ten years it is again ready for cultivation any one of the village may clear the forest and the previous occupier has no prior right to its utilization.

In the case of the lands situated in the valleys private ownership is recognized. A Pauri who has made a piece of land arable in the valley bottom and has taken to plough cultivation permanently owns it. However, such individual right in lands which are under settled cultivation does not weaken the solidarity of the village. The main reasons are that wet cultivation in arable lands is a secondary source of livelihood and not all people are privileged to have such lands in their possessions. As against this, shifting cultivation is widespread and universal in the Pauri villages. It is the primary source of living for the Pauris. The common ownership which is associated with land under shifting cultivation serves as the main basis of the village cohesion and continuity.

The cohesiveness is further strengthened by observance of common rituals. All people in a Pauri village join hands to celebrate seasonal festivals and perform sacrificial rites connected with the agricultural cycle. The village astrologer fixes the date and time of all rituals, the priest performs them and the headman mobilises the people and monitors the activities. During certain festivals all adult members of the village observe fast, propitiate the earth-mother and other deities at the village *Darbar*, offer prayer and sacrifices to the deities for the prosperity of the community as a whole and at the end enjoy the occasion by feasting, singing and dancing together. On the whole the atmosphere which prevails in the village is entirely egalitarian and community works like an organic whole.

The Administration of Justice :

The Pauris, like other castes and tribes are subject to the ordinary judicial procedure of the state. Serious crime such as murder, homicide, suicide and theft are dealt with by the local police and judicial courts. But breaches of law of clan exogamy, marriage rules, and minor disputes over women and land, are referred to the traditional village council where the case are adjudicated by the village headman and elders. Any sexual relation with an agnate or with a person of the same Khilli is considered a serious offence, and the man and woman guilty of such offence are driven out of the village. They are treated as dead and their family members undergo necessary ritual purification by shaving head, paring nails, cleaning houses and clothes, throwing away earthen cooking vessels. Even if the guilty man begs appology for his guilt and expresses before the village council to break off the incestuous intrigue and is willing to bear the cost of feasting the entire village, his request is invariably turned down and he is not excused. The belief among the Pauris is that any lenity shown towards the wrong doers for such

offences causes displeasure of the earth-mother and other deities who bring misery and misfortune not only upon the culprits but also to the village. According to the Pauri Bhuinyas the offences such as incest between agnates are held to be of particular gravity and are not pardonable. The only way of averting the supernatural sanctions from the offender's kinsmen and his co-villagers is to sever all contacts by driving the guilty persons away from the village for good. The idea of taking such a serious step is largely for self-preservation. But the practice of ostracism serves as a punishment to the offenders as well as a safety device for their agnates and the village community.

Cases of adultery are generally an inter-village affair and the offender is brought to justice by the joint council of elders of concerned villages. At the council meeting the two headmen in conjunction with the elders of the two villages discuss the case and in most cases the abductor is ordered to pay a fine in cash which is given to the aggrieved husband towards a token refund of his bride-price and marriage expenses. The offender also gives a goat and some rice which are used in a feast for the assembled people of both the concerned villages. Generally cases of adultery and abduction are rare and therefore the social sanctions by which such cases are handled do not confirm to any set pattern.

Supernatural Sanctions :

The Pauris believe in many supernatural beings which live in their homes, villages, fields and hills. They appear in dreams and influence human fortunes. They are worshipped and propitiated in festivities and are offered food and drink to appease them. They demand from the Pauris the observance of certain taboos and punish those who break them. For example, if any one eats a mango before the relevant first-fruit offerings have been given to the deities, he suffers from a serious illness or is killed by a tiger.

There are various ways by which the elements of supernatural sanctions come into the arena of social control. A person who has committed some offence but pleads innocence may take an oath to show that he is not guilty. The mode of taking an oath is by either holding a handful of earth or placing his palm on the ground and calling upon Mother-Earth as witness. Another way is to place the palm on the head of one of his sons. Now a days, the guilty person is asked to go to a *Siva* temple and take oath by touching the garland which adorns the deity. The Pauri firmly believe that a man guilty of perjury, will be killed by a tiger if he takes oath by touching the ground, his son will die if he takes oath by touching his son's head and he will be bitten by a snake if he takes oath by holding the Lord *Siva's* garland. If he speaks truth while taking oath his accusers will come to harm.

One problem which requires examination is that whether or not supernatural forces have any concern about the relations between man and man and whether there is any divine punishment for crime or reward for virtuous behaviour. Though there is no direct link between the human moral conduct and

super-human reactions, offences such as clan-incest arouse concern and wrath of the gods in many indirect ways. For example, the Pauris believe that such an offence pollutes the earth and the villagers where it has occurred. Unless the offender is driven away from the village and all contacts with him is severed the deities would not accept any food and drink offered to them in festive occasions and as a result they would cause misery and distress for the villagers. In such a case expulsion of the offender from the village is the only way to get relief.

Merit and Status :

The Pauris lead a life almost below the subsistence level. Everybody in the community has to work hard to eke out his living otherwise he has to starve. In such a situation to sit idle and become lazy is out of question. It does not mean that all people are equally energetic and industrious. There are successful cultivators and less efficient husbands, more prosperous families and careless cultivators. But the difference between the skilled and unskilled workers is ephemeral and is not expressed and perpetuated in distinctions of material wealth and economic status. Even then those who are lazy and idle are looked, down upon by others of the community and such disdainful attitude of the public serves as a corrective to transform the passivity of the lazy persons to activity. There are several Pauri proverbs which condemn laziness. One of such proverbs is –

*"Askara ke Askari,
Daiba Deichi Vetkari"*

It means that the god has united in marriage a lazy man with a lazy woman. The lazy couple feel ashamed when the above proverb is addressed to them and in order to avoid such derogatory references they tend to shake off their idle habits and try to be hard workers.

Pollution and guilt :

Certain codes of conduct and social customs of the Pauris consciously guard their distinctiveness from other communities. Any action which infringes the prestige and integrity of the tribe is severely dealt with. For example, if an unmarried girl is suspected to have sexual relationship with any outsider she is immediately ex-communicated. Such an offence is considered not so serious as the clan-incest is and therefore she can be restored into the society when she pays a fine charged by the village council and bear the cost of the feast of expiation.

When a man returns home after undergoing imprisonment he is kept secluded in a separate hut until he is made ritually clean. The Pauris believe that being in a jail is defiling. On his return from jail he is kept secluded until he buys his way back to the community by bearing the cost of a feast for the villagers and undergoing the purificatory rites.

A man may become polluted without his fault. One example of this situation is the formation of maggots in an open wound of a person. The man having this condition becomes polluted and is therefore, ex-communicated. When his wound is cured he undergoes the rituals of purification. On an appointed day the house in

which he lives is cleaned and his head is shaved and clothes washed. His earthen cooking vessels are thrown away. He takes bath in the stream and the water mixed with *Tulsi* leaves and cowdung is sprinkled over him to remove pollution. Food is cooked at the stream and all the assembled people of the village including the concerned man eat it on the spot. These rituals and the feast of expiation are believed to wipe out pollution and the man is readmitted into the society.

Other sources of pollution are menstruated women. The shadow of a woman during her menses is defiling and therefore she is forbidden to visit the places where the village deities reside. If by mistake she passes by these places the deities are polluted and necessary rituals are performed to purify them. The people supplicate the deity who is polluted by a sacrificial rite and beg apology and pray that such defiling acts should not be repeated. Any negligence in their performance of necessary rites and rituals of purification is considered not only too hardy but also dangerous to the community. The concerned deity who is polluted by the shadow of menstruated woman appears in dream and particularly the village *Dihuri* sees this dream and becomes aware of the matter. He then reveals it to his covillagers who thereupon take steps to perform the purificatory ceremonies to remove pollution from the concerned deity.

Sorcery and Shamanism :

The ritual life of the Pauris bears imprint of many features of social control and the ritual functionaries like the *Dihuri* (Priest), *Raulia* (Shaman) and *Bejuni* (Sorcerer) play a structural role of great significance in day-to-day adjustment and adaptation of Pauri society. Using the idiom of mystical affliction, the priest and the shaman are busy in appeasing the gods and spirits, redressing breach of customary norms and reaffirming values of Pauri society. To meet the need of maintaining the social order and harmony, many calendrical rituals presided over by religious headman are performed. Similarly many curative rituals are performed by the shaman who tries to redress natural misfortune, cure illness and neutralize the effects of sorcery and blackmagic. Both the shaman and the sorcerer are able to establish contacts with the supernatural forces. But the former uses such forces for good purposes while the latter for evil purposes. The shaman like the priest strives to gain divine favour for the individual and the community at the time of crisis. But the sorcerer manipulates the agents of affliction through black magic to the detriment of specific individuals. Though blackmagic is frowned upon as a disreputable activity, no one dares to expose the person who performs it. By doing so he fears that he may fall victim to the sorcerer's spells and occult controlling idioms. If anyone thinks that he is the spell of blackmagic he employs a shaman or a more powerful sorcerer to perform counter-magic.

CHAPTER XI

HEALTH AND NUTRITION

Nothing is known about the health condition and nutritional status of the Pauri Bhuinyas as no comprehensive study of this problem has yet been undertaken among this tribe. The present study centres round this problem and its coverage is limited to the Jaldih village. The main objectives of the study are :—

- (1) To assess the health status and disease profile of the tribe;
- (2) To find out their dietary habits and assess the extent of malnutrition among them;
- (3) To get an insight of their belief system regarding diseases, traditional methods of treatment and attitude towards modern system of medicine; and
- (4) To find out the existing modern health facilities in the village.

Methods of Study :

34 Pauri Bhuinya families comprising 86 males and 92 females were selected for a door to door survey. All the 178 persons were examined physically, clinically and the blood samples were tested for malarial parasite, (*Plasmodium falciparum*), sickle-gene and G-6-PD (Glucose-6-Phosphate Dehydrogenase) cell deficiency. The overall nutritional appearance of each case was appraised to find out whether a person is grossly underweight or has generalised skin lesion or other indications of unsatisfactory health, possibly due to nutritional imbalance. Changes in hair, eyes, skin, neck, mouth, teeth, knee and ankle, jerk reflexes, oedema of lower extremities suggesting possible nutritional deficiency were evaluated.

Consumption of food was assessed by taking up a diet survey in which weight of raw uncooked food articles was taken twice daily for seven consecutive days in four selected households.

Data on hygiene, sanitation, religious beliefs about health practices, traditional methods of treatment, present health condition and health facilities and medical care available in the village were collected by observation and by interviewing people of the village.

Haematological investigations with special reference to genetic diseases such as sickle-cell disease and red-cell enzyme deficiency (G-6-PD) were carried out with the help of following methods :

- (i) For detection of sickle-cell disease the simple sickling test was conducted using sodium-meta-bisulphite.
- (ii) For detection of G-6-PD-deficiency Breinstins' method was adopted using 2-6-Dichloro-Phenol indophenol and Phenacin-methasulphate.
- (iii) For detection of malarial parasite thick and thin blood films were taken and examined.

From the study the following health problems have emerged. Like most of the other primitive tribes the knowledge of the Pauris about health and nutrition is rudimentary. Their isolation and backwardness and their faith and reliance on the traditional megico-religious methods are the main reasons for the low level of awareness about modern medical practices. Other factors which attribute to poor health are the lack of environmental sanitation, poor living condition including improper ventilation and the like. As regards the personal cleanliness they are not so unclean compared to some of the other primitive tribes. Mostly all adults take bath regularly. This may be one of the reasons for the lower incidence of skin diseases among the Pauri Bhuinyas. They brush their teeth with *Sal* twigs and perhaps this may explain why their teeth are in healthy condition. In fact our observation is that the incidence of dental diseases is not significant among the Pauri Bhuinyas of the study village.

Source, quality and quantity of drinking water ;

There is no well in the village and the people drink water from ponds and hill streams. Water sources are used for more than one purpose. Water of a particular place is used for multi-farious purposes such as washing clothes, bathing, washing their body after defecation, scrubbing their cattle, cleaning their utensils and also for cooking food and drinking. This explains why water-borne diseases are very common among them.

Population Composition:

As indicated above the total population of the Pauri Bhuinyas surveyed in the study village comprises 86 males and 92 females. The percentage distribution of population by age and sex is presented in Table No. 9.

TABLE No. 9
Distribution of population by age and sex

Age-Group	Male	Female	Total
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
0 - 1	4 (2.24)	4 (2.24)	8 (4.49)
1.1 - 2	1 (0.56)	1 (0.56)	2 (1.12)
2.1 - 3	2 (1.12)	1 (0.56)	3 (1.68)
3.1 - 4	4 (2.24)	3 (1.68)	7 (3.93)
4.1 - 5	1 (0.56)	2 (1.12)	3 (1.68)
5.1 - 9	4 (2.24)	8 (4.49)	12 (6.74)
9.1 - 14	14 (7.84)	8 (4.49)	22 (12.35)
14.1 - 24	9 (5.05)	15 (8.42)	24 (13.48)
24.1 - 34	10 (5.56)	10 (5.56)	20 (11.23)
34.1 - 44	15 (8.42)	20 (11.23)	35 (19.66)
44.1 - 60	15 (8.42)	10 (5.56)	25 (14.04)
60+	7 (3.93)	10 (5.56)	17 (9.55)
Total	86 (48.32)	92 (51.68)	178 (100.00)

The study included 57 children (32.02 per cent) under 14 years of age and 17 persons (9.55 per cent) of 60 years old and above. The number of males and females as distributed in different age-groups do not indicate significant variation except in the age-group of 9.1 to 14 years where the male population is significantly higher than the female population.

Health status and Disease profile :

The data regarding the general pattern of diseases prevalent among the Pauri Bhuinyas of Jaldih village is presented in Table No. 10.

TABLE No. 10

Distribution of major diseases prevalent in different age-groups as per the Health Survey

Sl. No.	Name of the major group of disease	0 - 4		4.1 - 14	
		M	F	M	F
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
1	Disease of G.I. Tract	8(3.11)	7(2.72)	6(2.33)	11(4.28)
2	Diseases of Respiratory System	4 (1.55)	5(1.95)	4(1.55)	8(3.11)
3	Worm infection	1(0.39)	2(0.78)	7(2.72)	8(3.11)
4	Nutrition disease	6(2.33)	7(2.72)	10(3.98)	16(5.49)
5	E.N.T. disease	4(1.55)	2(0.78)	3(1.17)	2(0.78)
6	Malaria	---	1(0.39)	8(3.11)	6(2.33)
7	Cold, Cough & Influenza	3(1.17)	4(1.55)	5(1.95)	8(3.11)
8	Skin disease	---	1(0.39)	2(0.78)	1(0.39)

TABLE No. 10

Distribution of major diseases prevalent in different age-groups as per the Health Survey - Contd.

Sl. No.	Name of the major group of disease	14.1 - 24		24.1 - 44	
		M	F	M	F
(1)	(2)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
1	Disease of G.I. Tract	---	5(1.95)	2(0.78)	8(3.11)
2	Diseases of Respiratory System	1(0.39)	3(1.17)	---	3(1.17)
3	Worm infection	---	1(0.39)	---	2(0.78)
4	Nutrition disease	1(0.39)	12(4.66)	---	14(5.05)
5	E.N.T. disease	1(0.39)	1(0.39)	---	3(1.17)
6	Malaria	1(0.39)	5(1.95)	2(0.78)	4(1.55)
7	Cold, Cough & Influenza	1(0.39)	2(0.78)	2(0.78)	1(0.39)
8	Skin disease	---	1(0.39)	---	1(0.39)

TABLE No. 10

Distribution of major diseases prevalent in different age-groups as per the Health Survey- Contd.

Sl. No.	Name of the major group of disease	44.1-60		60+		Total
		M	F	M	F	
(1)	(2)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)
1	Disease of G.I. Tract	1(0.39)	1(0.39)	---	3(1.17)	25(20.23)
2	Diseases of Respiratory System	2(0.78)	1(0.39)	1(0.39)	---	32(12.45)
3	Worm infection	1(0.39)	---	---	---	22(8.56)
4	Nutrition disease	---	1(0.39)	---	2(0.78)	69(26.85)
5	E.N.T. disease	---	1(0.39)	1(0.39)	1(0.39)	17(6.12)
6	Malaria	1(0.39)	1(0.39)	1(0.39)	1(0.39)	30(11.67)
7	Cold, Cough & Influenza	---	---	2(0.78)	1(0.39)	29(11.29)
8	Skin disease	---	---	---	---	6(2.33)

The major complaints in order of their frequency are as follows for each group of diseases :-

(1)	Disease of Gastro-intestinal (G.I.) Tract	Dysentery (amoebic and bacillary), diarrhoea, gastritis, colitis, constipation and dyspepsia.
(2)	Diseases of Respiratory System	Bronchitis (acute and chronic), asthma and diseases of upper respiratory tract.
(3)	Worm infections	Hookworm and round worm.
(4)	E.N.T. disease	Tonsilitis, otorrhoea, pharyngitis & otitis media.
(5)	Cough, Cold & Influenza	---
(6)	Skin diseases	Ringworm and eczema
(7)	Malaria	---
(8)	Diseases of Nutrition	Vit. 'A' deficiency B ₂ deficiency, nutritional anaemias, Vit. 'D' deficiency and others.

The Table No. 10 shows that Gastro-intestinal (G.-I) tract diseases are most prevalent and comprise 20.23 per cent of the total diseases. The frequency of dysentery (ameobic and bacillary) and diarrhoea is also equally high. Other G. I. tract diseases prevalent in the village are gastritis, colitis, gastro-enteritis and dyspepsia,. 11 cases of G.I. tract disease were detected among the female children within the age-group of 4.1 to 14 years.

The common diseases of the respiratory system which were diagnosed in the village were acute bronchitis, chronic bronchitis asthma and diseases of the upper respiratory tract. 32 cases of respiratory diseases were detected which constitutes 12.45 per cent of the total diseases. The incidence of malaria (*Plasmodium falciparum*) in this village is as high as 11.67 per cent. Worm infestations

(round worm and hook worm) constitute 8.56 percent of the total diseases. 29 cases of influenza, cold and cough were observed which constitute 11.29 per cent. The incidence of malnutrition is very high among the children and infants. 39 cases (14.43 per cent) of malnutrition with typical clinical signs (frank nutritional deficiency) were detected in the age-group of 0 to 14 years. Malnutrition causes loss of resistance even in ordinary diseases. Due to undernutrition and malnutrition, diseases of respiratory system and those of ear, nose and throat make their appearance in many cases at frequent intervals. Nutritional anaemias due to iron, folic acid or B₁₂ deficiency is most common among women of child bearing age. 14 cases (5.05 per cent) of nutritional deficiency anaemia were detected in the age-group of 24.1 to 44 years among the females. No case of nutritional anaemia was detected among the males in the same age-group. The ENT (ear, nose and throat) group of diseases constitutes 6.12 per cent of the total diseases. Incidence of splenomegally and hepatomegally is high in the village due to malnutrition and prevalence of malaria. Only 6 cases (2.33 per cent) of skin diseases were diagnosed during the Survey. Detailed investigation is necessary to find out the cause of such a lower incidence of skin disease. No cases of filariasis leprosy, venereal diseases and yaws were detected at the village during the survey.

Similarly no cases of genetic diseases or deficiencies such as haemoglobinopathies, including sickle cell disease (Sickle cell anaemia and sickle cell trait) and red-cell enzyme Glucose-6 Phosphate-Dehydrogenase (G-6-PD) deficiency were detected in the study village. Blood pressure on an average varied between the normal ranges.

Bhuinya Diet :

The data on the Bhuinya diet are presented in the Table-11 and 12. These tables show that the staple food of the Pauri Bhuinyas is rice which is husked at home with the help of mortar and pestle. The Bhuinyas do not wash the rice before cooking and never throw away the cooked rice water (*Peja*). An adult person eats twice a day and children as many times as the food supply permits. An adult Bhuinya consumes on an average 339 gms. of cereals per day which is 61 gms less than the daily allowance recommended by the I. C. M. R.

Usually they eat rice with salt. Dal and green leaves and vegetables are cooked occasionally. They use oil for cooking vegetables.

As mentioned in earlier chapters the Pauri Bhuinyas practise shifting cultivation and the production of food from this source is scarce and therefore not sufficient for the whole year. To increase the stock they exchange black-gram and mustard for paddy. Millets such as ragi (*Eleusine corocana*), *Gangei* (*Sorghum vulgare*) and *Bajra* (*Pennisetum typhoides*) supplement the rice meals alongwith edible roots, tubers and vegetables collected from the forest. Pulses like blackgram (*Phaseolus mungo*) horse gram (*Dolichos biflorus*) *Kandua* (*Cajanus indicus*) and *Masura* (*Lens esculents*) comprise to some extent the dietary stuff of the Bhuinyas. The diet survey shows that the daily intake of the pulses on an average is 28 gms.

as against the recommended daily allowance of 85 gms. It shows that the deficiency of pulse is of the order of about 68 per cent.

TABLE No. 11

Composition of the Average Diet of Pauri Bhuinya compared with the Indian Council of Medical Research (I.C.M.R.) recommended Diet.

Sl. No.	Food Stuffs	*C.M.R. recommended quantity.	Average intake of an adult Pauri Bhuinya	Excess	Deficiency	Percentage
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
1	Cereals	400gms.	339 gms.	---	61 gm.	15.25
2	Pulses	85 gm.	28 gm.	---	57 gm.	67.06
3	Leafy Vegetables	116 gm.	64 gm.	---	52 gm.	44.83
4	Other Vegetables	85 gm.	35 gm.	---	50 gm.	58.82
5	Oils and Fats	28 gm.	5 gm.	---	23 gm.	82.14
6	Milk&milk product	170 gm.	---	---	170 gm.	100
7	Meat,Fish & eggs	28gm.	---	---	28 gm.	100
8	Fruits (and nuts)	57gm.	---	---	57 gm.	100

*Aykrod - The Nutritive value of Indian foods and planning of satisfactory diet.

TABLE No. 12

Composition of the Average Diet of Pauri Bhuinya compared with the Indian Council of Medical Research (I.C.M.R.) recommended Diet.

Sl. No.	Constituents (Nutrients)	*I.C.M.R. recommended quantity.	Average intake of an adult Pauri Bhuinya	Excess	Deficiency	Percentage
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
1	Protein	70gm.	37.14gm.	---	32.86gm.	47.04
2	Fat	50 gm.	8.82 gm.	---	41.18 gm.	82.36
3	Carbohydrate	440 gm.	276.41 gm.	---	163.59 gm.	37.18
4	Calories	2,500 K.cal	1,312.69 K.cal	---	1187.31 K.cal	18.7
5	Calcium	0.8 gm.	0.651 gm.	---	0.149 gm.	18.7
6	Phosphorous	1.4 gm.	1,142 gm.	---	0.258 gm.	18.43
7	Iron	40 mg.	27.7 mg.	---	12.3 mg.	30.75
8	Vit. 'A'	7,300 IU	2106.66 IU	---	5139.34 IU	81.14
9	Vit. B ₁	1.8mg.	0.64mg.		1.16mg.	64.45
10	Vit. 'C'	200mg.	22.77mg.		177.23mg.	88.62

*Aykrod - The Nutritive value of Indian foods and planning of satisfactory diet.

The Pauri Bhuinyas take a lot of green leafy vegetables but infrequently i.e., whenever available. The survey shows that mustard *Sag* (*Brassica comperstris* var

sarason) was consumed by all the four sample families. The average daily intake of leafy vegetable came to 64 gms. By the I. C. M. R's recommended standard which is 116 gms per day the intake of leafy vegetables shows a deficit of 14.83 per cent. The common vegetables which are used by the Bhuinyas are brinjal, tomato and potatoes. During field work the vegetables which were found to be eaten are pumpkin, onion and bean. The average daily intake of these vegetables is 35 gms. as against 85 gms. which is I. C. M. R's recommended daily allowance. The vegetable intake records a deficit of 58.82 per cent.

Fats and Oils – All the four households surveyed used oil for cooking purposes in a small quantity. The food survey shows that the consumption of fat and oil was below the recommended level by 82.42 per cent.

Sugar – None of the surveyed families did use sugar during survey.

Meat and flesh foods – The Bhuinyas are non-vegetarian but the use of mutton or chicken is only restricted to festive and ritual occasions which are limited in number. As none of the families under investigation was found to have eaten meat during the survey it was not possible to estimate the daily intake. Among the Pauri Bhuinya some food items are considered food and acceptable food and some other kinds, however nutritious they may be are rejected on the ground of religious taboo, ignorance and taste. The Bhuinyas were never beef eaters and have given up eating pork even since they have come in contact with the Hindus. They consider the beef and pork ritually unclean food and therefore defiling.

Fruits – All kinds of edible fruits available in the habitat and forest. Fruits are eaten by the Pauri Bhuinyas with a special liking for the mangoes and jack fruit. But during the survey none of the four families consumed any type of fruits.

Milk and milk products – Milk and milk products do not constitute major food item in the Bhuinya diet. They think that the milk is for the calves. Moreover milk is not available in sufficient quantity in the Bhuinya village and there is no taboo against taking milk and milk products. During the diet survey milk and milk product was not an item of food in any of the sample families:

Nutrient Intake :

Constituents of food are very important in order to assess the nutritional status of the individuals. Table No. 12 shows the average daily intake of food constituents per adult Pauri along with the I. C. M. R. recommended standard.

(1) *Protein* – Whatever protein was consumed by the Bhuinyas during the survey was from the sources of cereals, millets and pulses. The calculation of protein intake shows that the average intake of protein by an adult was 37.14 gms. as compared to the I. C. M. R. recommended standard of 70 gms. indicating a deficiency of 47.04 per cent.

(2) *Fat* – Pauri Bhuinyas do not use much fat or oil. The average intake of fat is 8.82 gms. The quantity recommended by I. C. M. R. is 50 gms. which means that the Bhuinyas recorded a deficiency of fat intake by 82.36 per cent.

(3) *Carbohydrates* – The content of carbohydrate in the diet of an adult Bhuinya came on an average to 276.41 gms. per day. The corresponding figure which is recommended by I. C. M. R. is 440 gms. which means that there is a shortage of carbohydrates by 37.18 per cent.

(4) *Calcium* – The average intake of calcium is 0.65 gms. whereas the recommended daily allowance is 0.8 gms.

(5) *Phosphorous* – The average daily phosphorous intake is 1.142 gms. which is little less than the recommended daily allowance of 1.4 gms.

(6) *Iron* – The average intake of Iron is 2.7 mgs. which is far less than the recommended daily allowance of 50 mgs.

(7) *Vitamin 'A'* – Green leafy vegetables provide vitamin A mostly in the form of B-Carotene.

(8) *Vitamin 'B₁'* – (Thiamine) Cereals like rice, *Gangei* and pulses like black gram provide Thiamine. The average intake of Vitamin B₁ is 0.64 mg. as against the recommended daily allowance of 1.8 mg.

(9) *Vitamin 'C'* (Ascorbic acid) – Green leafy vegetables provide Vitamin C to the Bhuinyas. The average intake came to 22.77 mg. while the recommended daily allowance is fixed at 200 mg.

(10) *Calories* – Calorie is a measure of energy supplied by the food intake. The average Pauri Bhuinya diet consists mainly of cereals and pulses which mostly account for their calorie intake. In assessing nutritional status of an individual it is very much essential to find out the calorific requirement and intake. The average calorie intake of an adult Pauri is 1312.69 k. cal and this has been calculated from the diet of the sample families. This value is less by 1187.31 K. cals as per standard from the Calorie recommended by I. C. M. R. which is fixed at 2500. K. cals. The families which were observed and studied showed a calorie deficiency by 47.50 per cent by the ICMR's standard. The analysis of Calorie intake does not include the alcoholic beverages which the Bhuinyas are in the habit of drinking.

The Pauri Bhuinyas are very much addicted to alcoholic drinks. The common drinks are Mohua liquor (*Mahuli*), rice beer (*Pahhi*), liquor extracted from date palm (*Toddy*) and from Sago palm (*Salap*) and liquor prepared out of cereals. These alcoholic beverages are taken to get relief from fatigue after hard days work. It was difficult to determine the quantity of beverage consumed by the members of the sample families and therefore the calorie content of beverage has not been taken into account in the calculation of calorie intake. On the whole the diet survey shows that the Bhuinyas are undernourished and malnourished.

The food habit of the Pauri Bhuinyas does not present a monotonous picture. It is rather more varied depending on seasonal variations and availability of food materials. There is no regulated menu for their daily diet. The survey shows that the Pauri Bhuinya diet is nutritionally deficient as per the ICMR standard. It is ill-balanced throughout the year and lacks several essential nutrients. Deficiency in diet is both qualitative and quantitative. Basic caloric requirements are not met. Intake of protein is very marginal while intake of vitamins and minerals, falls far short of the desirable level. There is not enough food and the food gap for the majority of households is considerable. Health conditions under such gross dietary deficiency can never be satisfactory. Morbidity pattern of a community depends mostly upon its nutritional status and on intake of food. The survey in the Bhuinya village shows a high incidence of diseases caused by nutritional deficiency. However, it is very difficult to ascertain and confirm clinically the cases of protein calorie malnutrition (P. C. M.) in adults. But these clinical signs are quite apparent in infancy or childhood. Moreover, insufficiency of one or the other nutrient in smaller quantity, does not necessarily lead to a clinically defined nutritional disease. Symptoms of illness and disease caused by nutritional deficiency is met with in some form or other in the whole population. Among children, malnutrition is a rule rather than an exception. The population surveyed showed physical signs of deficiency of one or more nutrients to a varying degree with its clinical manifestations. On clinical examinations 69 cases showed one or more signs and symptoms of nutritional deficiency, thus constituting 26.85 per cent of the total diseases. Most common deficiencies observed were :—

(1) Protein calorie deficiency in the form of Oedema, muscle wasting and moon face.

(2) Vitamin 'A' (Retinol) deficiency in the form of conjunctival xerosis, keratomalacia and Bitot's spots detected mostly in the age group of 4.1 to 14 years.

(3) Vitamin B₁ (Thiamine) deficiency with loss of ankle jerks and calf muscle tenderness seen in some cases

(4) Vitamin B₂ (Riboflavin) deficiency was found clinically manifested in the form of angular stomatitis, cheilosis, glossitis and magenta tongue.

(5) Vitamin .C' (Ascorbic acid) deficiency which was clinically manifested by the presence, of spongy gums and petechiae.

(6) Vitamin 'D' deficiency detected in the form of active rickets in children, healed rickets in children and few adults and Ostemalacia in adults with local skeletal deformities.

(7) Iron deficiency anaemia in the form of pallor of mucous membrane and koilonychchia detected in women of child bearing age.

Health culture and magico-religious system of treatment:

The chapter on Religion and Social Control have covered in detail the religious beliefs and practices including cosmology spirit-world, ritual & magical functionaries and diviners. The most important personnel which concerns us most in the context of health culture is the Raulia who functions as a witch doctor.

The Pauri Bhuinyas believe in many Gods and Goddesses. Some of them are benevolent and others malevolent. The sorcerers set the evil spirits against persons of their target by means of divination and magical performances and cause illness. There are shamans and witch-doctors who know the techniques of counter acting the evil effects of black magic. A study of both black and white magic reveals the world of information about illness and disease, supernatural agencies causing such illness, machinations of witchcraft, evileye, blackmailing deities, and methods of curing illness.

The Pauri Bhuinyas follow several taboos concerning social and religious life. Any breach of such taboos causes illness and death. There are several guardians of culture and tradition who are in charge of values and social control. These guardians guard against any infringement of social taboos through various mechanisms of social control and try to maintain harmony with the universe. The study of tribal culture indicates that public health is an integral part of the social process in which wants being and function, his body, mind, activity, emotions and social relations are intertwined into an organic whole. Any imbalance in the unity of functions of this whole or any part thereof may result in illness in any of the parts of the configuration. This structural peculiarity of the tribal society is such as anyone living in that society would tend to believe that which causes disease is also responsible for failure of crop, menace of tiger, development of maggots in a wound ill luck in hunting and so on and so forth. Briefly speaking the study of Bhuinya culture reveals that the concepts of health and disease are part of man's view of the universe and his place within it. However things are changing in the Bhuinya community with considerable rapidity. Though their faith on the medicine man has changed least the Bhuinyas have shown an inclination towards modern medical practices. During the field work in the village it was apparent that the Bhuinyas are becoming favourably oriented towards modern medical practices. For example, they wanted to be examined with the help of the stethoscope, get themselves checked up by blood pressure measuring instrument and also wanted their blood to be taken and examined under the microscope,. They attached great curative value to injections (*Suin*). The difficulty is that no medical facility is now within their easy reach. The nearest Primary Health Centre is located at Korla at a distance of 8 kms. from the village. Thickly wooded lofty hills of Malayagiri mountain range have separated the village from Korla, the nearest urban market centre. This geographical barrier is a disincentive to the doctors and local officers in making visit to this village and keeping contact with the people. Unless a plains man has a strong determination and wish to cover the

five hour journey uphill through dense forest on foot it is not possible for him to visit this village even once in his life time.

Conclusions and Recommendations:

(1) Gastro-intestinal (G.I.) tract diseases were of common occurrence and the frequency of dysentery and diarrhoea was high.

(2) The other major diseases prevalent were those of the respiratory system. Malaria, ENT group of diseases, worm infestations, influenza, nutritional diseases and skin diseases. However, the incidence of skin diseases was low.

(3) No cases of venereal diseases, yaws, leprosy, tuberculosis and filariasis were detected.

(4) Genetic diseases such as sickle cell disease (Sickle cell anaemia & sickle-cell trait) and G-6-PD. deficiency among the surveyed population was absent.

(5) The diet survey indicates that the Bhuinya diet is deficient both in quality and quantity as compared to the accepted standard. Even the basic caloric requirements are not met, let alone other dietary components.

(6) The unsatisfactory food intake is reflected in the wide prevalence of signs of malnutrition. The incidence of malnutrition is very high among the children and infants. In children malnutrition is a rule rather than an exception.

(7) Due to undernutrition and malnutrition, disease of respiratory system and those of ear, nose and throat make their appearance significantly. Nutritional deficiency anaemia is most common among women of child bearing age.

(8) Nutritional needs should be solved by the community itself through a better utilisation of its own resources i.e., locally available, cheap but nutritious food. Specific objective should therefore, be to test at the village level how locally acceptable and available food can best meet the nutritional needs of vulnerable groups; infants, children, pregnant women and nursing mothers. It is therefore, necessary to analyse the food value of such foodstuffs which are locally available and popularise such nutritious food as to provide a balance diet to the Bhuinyas.

(9) The Pauri Bhuinyas have a strong habit of drinking alcoholic beverages. Before any attempt is made to stop this habit, it is necessary to analyse all types of alcoholic beverages chemically and find out if they contain any nutrients, minerals and vitamins. Any proposal for stopping the habit of drinking should include suggestion of substitute which will supply the same nutrients.

(10) The nature and value of traditional medicinal systems particularly the herbal medicines should be studied, understood and analysed in order to assess their scientific worth and efficacy.

(11) Most of the diseases afflicting the Pauri Bhuinyas of Jaldih village are mainly due to insanitary condition, ignorance and lack of health education. It is necessary that proper health education should be imparted to the people so that

they understand the problems in scientific perspective and adopt remedial measure to improve their health.

(12) Many enteric ailments can be eliminated by drinking water from protected sources. It is necessary to dig wells in the village and make the water free from contamination and persuade the people to use this water for drinking.

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PAURI BHUINYA MARRIAGE *

*S. P. Rout*¹

The Village

Marriage customs of the tribals have been a topic of study for many anthropologists and sociologists. Marriage ceremony with all its elaborate rites and rituals not only provide ethnographic details of customary practices of a people, but as an important life cycle ritual throws light on the socio-cultural frame work of the society as a whole. Thus, it not only describes the marriage customs and procedures but aims at analyzing their social, economic and religious significances. Marriage though an individual's concern is a communal affair among most of the tribes. In fact the unmarried boys and girls of a village in a broader sense are viewed to be the children of the village, and thus it becomes the responsibility of all the villagers to arrange for their marriage. Though the parents have to finance the marriage of their children, other important matters like selection of mates, negotiation and finalization of marriage proposal, fixation of marriage date, co-operation and participation in making marriage-ceremony a success, are always the responsibility of the villagers. In this connection it is equally important to discuss the duties and rights of different age groups, the economic and other responsibilities laid on various kins, and changing attitude towards marriage customs etc.

Introduction

The article is based on the data collected from Jaldih, a Pauri Bhuinya village in Kuira Block of Sundargarh district. Jaldih is a hill village situated about 8 miles from Koira amidst thick forest. Save one Gour family Jaldih is a homogeneous Bhuinya village with 27 Pauri Bhuinya families. The total population is 144 out of whom only four persons are Gours. The traditional feature of village exogamy of the Bhuinya no longer exists in Jaldih as the Bhuinya of the village belong to seven different local decent groups. The village was originally inhabited by members of Sarkondi Khilli (local descent group)

* Published in ADIBASI, Vol. XI, No.3, 1969-70, pp.49-60.

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exclusively, thereby, maintaining the village exogamy, but with the immigration and emigration of *bandhu* (non-agnatic) families of seven different Khillis, inter-marriage in Jaldih has become possible now. The *khilli*-wise structure of the village with total number of Bhuinya families and population is given in the following table.

TABLE 1
Different Khillis, Total Number of Families and Population in Village Jaldih

Sl.No	Name of the Khilli	Total No. of families	Total Population		
			Male	Female	Total
1	Sarkondi	14	38	40	78
2	Kadakadi	5	11	14	25
3	Batgain	3	8	8	16
4	Kasidi	2	4	6	10
5	Kemsidi	1	2	4	16
6	Derial	1	2	1	3
7	Chaadi	1	1	1	2
	Total	27	66	76	140

The village is said to be originally inhabited by the persons of Sarkondi Khilli who feel proud of being the first settlers of the village and constitute the majority in the village, while other are *bandhu* (non-agnatic) *khillis* who came there later. Out of the total 27 families 14 families, i.e. 51.8 percent belongs to Sarkondi *khilli* while 13 families belonging to six other *khillis*. Case studies of the family-heads revealed that out of these 13 *bandhu* families 7 are living in their mother's brother's village, 3 in father's mother's village, 1 in sister's husband's village and/or wife's village and 1 in father's sister's husband's village, while 1 family has no such relation in this village.

Jaldih is a medium village with a total population of 144. Deducting 4 Gours of one family, the Bhuinya population comes to 140, out of which 66 (47.1%) are males and 76 (52.9%), females. The high ratio of female to male population has resulted in greater number of spinsters. Due to high bride-price many Bhuinya boys fail to marry a virgin. They thus manage to marry young widows or divorced ladies, and thereby the opportunity of the marriage of spinsters is limited. Average family size is calculated at 5.2 persons.

The villagers mostly depend on slash and burn type of cultivation, though some possess a few patches of permanent paddy plots constructed on valleys or terraces. Their economy is no doubt supplemented by food collection from jungle, hunting, occasional fishing, wage earning and basketry.

There are no schools or any other Government institution in the village. The dormitory organization of the unmarried youths functioning in interior hill

villages and has been abolished in plains Pauri Bhuinya villages is on the process of decay in Jaldih.

Marriage

The Bhuinya is an endogamous tribe, but exogamous at the village level. Originally Bhuinya village were uni-*khilli* (clan) villages; all the villagers believing in a common ancestry. As they treat each other as brothers and sisters, marriage among them is considered incestuous and thereby tabooed. The villages being inhabited by the persons of a single *khilli*, the *khilli* name is synonymous with the village name. For example, the members of village Patuli belong to Patulia *khilli*; those of village Kasira, to Kasiri *khilli*, and likewise those of village Losi, Sarkonda, Raisuan, Batgaon, Sareikala, Chaada, Kadakala and Raikala to Losi, Sarkondi, Raisuin, Batgain, Sareikali, Chaadi, Kadakali and Raikuli *khillis* respectively. Not only each *khilli* is exogamous, but each has a group of *kutumb* and *bandhu khillis*. Matrimonial relations can only be established with the *bandhu khillis*, while with the *kutumb* ones marriage is strictly prohibited.

Migration of families of different *khillis* to a particular village has broken the traditional village exogamy. The Bhuinya villages are now inhabited by members of many *khillis*, thus facilitating marriage inside the village. Marriage outside the tribe, though quite un-common, is never totally ruled out. Cases of Bhuinya girls marrying Gours though extremely rare and are considered highly irregular, could be found during my field investigation.

Child marriages are quite un-common, and the Bhuinya marry when both the partners are full adults. The boys usually marry after twenty years of age and the girls after the age of eighteen.

Marriage is monogamous, and after the death of the first wife one may marry again. In case the first wife proves to be barren, one has the liberty to have a second wife. Cases of persons marrying for the second time during the life time of their first wife are also occasionally encountered. In Jaldih, a villager fell in love with his wife's younger sister and married her when the first wife was alive, but soon after the marriage the young wife died. It is, therefore, not considered proper for a Bhuinya to have two wives at a time.

Cross-cousin marriages are not common and no preference is indicated for sorrorate marriages like-wise, exchange marriages are very rarely met with.

The following forms of marriages are prevalent among the Bhuinyas.

1. Dharipala – Love marriage with elopement.
2. Ghicha – Marriage by Capture.
3. Phulkhusi – Love marriage by arrangement.
4. Amlesare -- Love marriage with arrangement.

5. Kadlesare -- Love marriage with arrangement.
6. Mangi Bibha – Marriage by Negotiation.
7. Randi Bibha – Widow Remarriage.

Of all forms, Dharipala and Ghicha marriages are the most common forms. Love marriages with arrangement (Phulkhusi) are just in the memory of the Bhuinya, but marriage sample does not show a single such case. Mangi Bibha is the most recent form of marriage which has been adopted from the caste Hindus. Very recently, in certain cases of Mangi form of marriage a Vaishnav or Brahmin is invited to act as priest. This is also called Mukut Baha since the bridal pair wear crowns (Mukut) made of flowers like the caste people during the wedding ceremony. Mukut Baha is still unfamiliar in hill villages, but on plains some Bhinyas have adopted it to elevate their social status. Only few rich families in the plains villages can afford to conduct Mukut Baha for higher expenses. During the field work one case of Mukut Baha (a girl of this village marrying in Dengual) was encountered. Marriage other than Mukut Baha is termed as Mankad Baha (lit, marriage of the monkeys).

Each form of marriage is slightly a variant of the Mangi form of marriage but all these may be described very briefly.

1. **Dharipala-** If a boy likes a girl of certain village, he goes to her village and consults with her about their marriage. Both escape and come to the boy's village. The girl is left in the outskirts of the village and the boy goes and informs his elder brother's wife and father's father's wife (own on classificatory) to bring her. The ladies bring her home, and kiss the chin and fore-head of the boy and the girl with turmeric powder. Other rites are performed as in the Mangi form of marriage, to be dealt in detail subsequently.
2. **Ghicha-** In this form of marriage the girl's parents and villagers are consulted beforehand. After they express their willingness the girl is captured by the boy and his friends either from the forest when the girl goes to pluck leaves, from the stream while taking a bath or fetching water, from market or fairs, on her visit to the boy's village or some other village on a dancing trip.

In case the girl has to be captured from her village, on a certain day the boy and her friends come and hide themselves in the forest. The girl's parents are informed secretly, so that they send the girl without her knowledge to that part of forest with her friends to pluck leaves. There the girl is captured and taken to the boy's village. Her friends start a mock fight to save the girl, but in vain. Coming home they inform the villagers and the girl's parents that the girl was lifted by a huge tiger. The villagers go to the forest and pretend to examine stones and bushes where the girl was captured and say, "Here is the pug mark

of the tiger! Here is some blood! Here is the torn cloth of the girl, and here is her ornament!" They then proceed to the boy's village and that day the marriage is performed. Next day, the women and the girls of the bride's villages pay a visit to the boy's village and they are entertained in a feast. In this form of marriage bride-wealth is paid after two or three years of marriage. If a certain girl is captured on her visit to some village or from the market or fairs, two *Khandrias* (middle-men) from the groom's village go to the girl's village with a stick. Reaching there they approach the Naek's (village headman) and say "one cow of this village has been eaten by a tiger (or swallowed by a snake), but we don't know to whose shed the cow belongs". The Naek replies- "Has the cow been completely eaten or any part is left". The *Khandrias* reply- "It is almost eaten only the head or the legs are left". The Naek consults villagers and later on informs the *Khandrias* that the cow belonged to such and such person's shed. The *Khandrias* go to the girl's house and are duly welcomed. Their feet are washed in turmeric water by a lady of the family and a mat and tobacco are given to them. After a short discussion with the girl's father, all of them come to the *Darbar* (community center of the village) and the same type of dialogues are exchanged between the *Khandrias* and the villagers, as the former had with the Naek. Then the villagers (300 Ghar) say- "Any way the *bandhu* took his property (a girl is thought to be the property of the *bandhus* kept in the custody of her parents). There is nothing wrong in it". When the *Khandarias* depart, the villagers tell them- "*Age jauntu Panda hal, pachhejauntu Gayal. Bandhu, sambhalitha*".lit., let the pair of buffalos meaning the two *Khandrias* go first, later on the mighty bisons meaning a party from the girl will follow. Let the *Bandhu* be prepared to receive all.

Next day, the girl's villagers go to the groom's village and marriage take place. The party is entertained with meat and rice.

In this type of marriage, the girl does not get a chance to offer cakes and mat to the boys and girls of her village (*sang chada*) to formally dissociate herself from the dormitory; neither can she be given the farewell feast.

3. **Phulkhusi**- The boys of certain village go to their *bandhu* village for *changu* dance. There the boy puts some flower on the bun of his desired girl and drags her while dancing. The girl escapes. In Ghicha the boy with his friends captures the girl in a group with the prior approval of the girl's parents. But, in Phulkhusi, the girl's parents are not consulted beforehand and the girl is dragged not by the boy's friends as a group, but by the boy alone. After the girl escapes, the boy comes back to his village and informs his parents and the villagers. After a few days, the women and girls of the girl's village bring her to the boy's village for marriage.

4. **Am Lesare-** A boy and a girl may like each other. One day the boy splashes mango-juice at the girl in the forest and manages to get one of her ornaments. The girl escapes and goes back home. Her mother says -“*You were with such and such boy, and you have lost your ornament. Why did you not go with him?*”. Then the Mahataris (village women) and other girls of her village bring her to the boy’s village for marriage.
5. **Kad Lesare-**The same type as Am Lesare, but in this form the boy splashes mud at the girl.
6. **Mangi Bibha-** In Mangi Bibha or marriage by negotiation, two *Khandrias* from the groom’s side go to the girl’s parents. They assemble in the *Darbar* and say - “*We have come to take a small chicken or a nice fruit from your village*”. The villagers ask, “*To whom the chicken belongs?*” The *Khandrias* say the name of the girl’s father. The villagers say “*We shall ask him and tell you*”. Then the *Khandrias* go back. They come for five or six times to the girl’s village till the proposal is finalized. In Pauri society they bring rice and liquor with them which are supplied to them by the groom’s family. But here and in this area, the *Khandrias* are fed by the girl’s family on every visit.

The following is a brief description of the various steps of Mangi Marriage;-

- (i) *Phul Handi*- after the day for taking the bride is fixed; the *Khandrias* go and inform the groom’s party. Two or three days prior to the taking of the bride the groom’s party sends *Phul Handi*, painted with rice paste and containing paddy and rice, *gur* (molasses), flattened rice and comb, mirror and flower for the bride. A ring is also sent for her by the groom which the girl’s of the bride’s village put on her finger. The groom’s relatives come halfway to the girl’s village while sending the *Phul Handi*. 2 ½ *Khandi* of rice is also sent this day by the *Khandrias* for cooking *BilaJau* in the bride’s village. When the *Khandrias* arrive in the bride’s village the *Mahataris* (women) go with the bride to receive them. The girls sing songs and the *Khandrias* are escorted to the bride’s house.
- (ii) *Tel Haladi* - That night seven women anoint oil on the girl’s head. The girl holds seven straws fixed to her forehead and the *Mahataris* pour oil seven times on the straws with *hulhuli* sound.
- (iii) *Dia Mangula* - The *Mahataris* go to the four directions at the village outskirts next day with the bride and offer homage to Pats - Dharam Devta, Basumata, Gram Siri, etc. for a successful marriage.
- (iv) That day again *Tel Haladi* ritual is repeated by seven women.

- (v) Cooking Bila Jau- Rice brought from groom's village is distributed and given to all families for cooking. They cook and bring the cooked rice back to the *Darbar*. Here, the cooked rice distributed among all members of the village.
- (vi) Taking the Bride- One *Khandria* from the groom's party and one from the bride's village leave earlier to arrange food for the girl's villagers. Two others remain to take the bride. After the party reaches the groom's village, they are given food and water. Each party ceremonially greets each other asking about their health and happiness. The girls of the bride's village sing marriage song. The groom's mother or his father's brother's wife carries the bride on her back to the *Darbar*.
- (vii) Ghurur Pani- The bride and the groom are given ceremonial baths by the women of the respective villages on the *dobati* of the village (where two paths bifurcate).
- (viii) Juali Pani- The bride and the groom are given a ceremonial bath. They are made to sit on yokes. The women of the groom's village bath the bride, while those belonging to the bride's village bath the groom. That night the groom confines himself inside the house till the bride is brought to the village for marriage.
- (ix) Selling Medicine (Asa Bika) - The women and girls of the bride's village dress themselves as monks. They start from *Darbar* to the *Khandasal* (Kitchen house) to sell "medicines". Vulgar talks and jokes relating to sex are exchanged between the women and boys. The boys give two *pai* of rice to them. They again go to the groom's house and get another two *pai* of rice. Cakes are prepared out of these four *pai* of rice and distributed among them afterwards.
- (x) Sala Bidha- In a formal ceremony, the women of the groom's village and his relatives offer gifts of money to the bridal pair and to the *Garhialis* (partners for the groom and for the bride). The bride's younger brother pats on the groom's back and is given a piece of cloth by the groom. He carries the groom on his back and the groom's younger brother carries the bride on his back. Both dance for a few minutes.
- (xi) Kadalata- When the women relatives present gifts to the bridal pair on the marriage altar, the joking relations throw mud, cow dung water, ashes, and black-dyes at them. A lot of fun and joke is thus exchanged between the joking relations.
- (xii) Ceremonial Bath and Breaking the Bow- The women and the girls of the bride's village take the bride and groom to the stream for a bath.

There the bride hides the jar under water and the groom finds it out. The groom also hides it and the bride finds it out. This is called “*Dub Duba*”. The bride carries a pot full of water on her head on her way back home. The bride’s village boys make a strong bow with *sal* branch and *ponasi* string. The groom shoots at the water pitcher carried by the bride. He should break it in one stretch, otherwise he is not considered strong. On the half way, he breaks the bow and throws it away.

- (xiii) *Handi Sira*- The bride and women of her and the groom’s villages husk about three to four *pai* paddy after the bride returns from the stream. She cooks *Jau* out of this rice and offers it to the family ancestors of the groom in the inner chamber of the house. The persons of both sides partake a little of this *jau*.
- (xiv) *Kanya Samarpan* (Handing over the bride to the Bandhus)- At the parting time the girl’s villagers and some of her close relatives hand over the bride to the groom’s villagers and say- “*Oh! Respected Bandhus, now you get your daughter-in-law. When she was young she was of her parents, but after her puberty she belonged to the village (300 ghar). Now we 300 ghar are giving her to you. She may be ugly or beautiful, blind or one-eyed, deaf or dumb, lame; she might be a witch or sorceress (Daini or Pangani); she may not know how to cook, how to talk, and how to respect you. Anyway, she becomes your Bahu (Daughter-in-law) now. If she does anything harm to you, or she is not liked by you, don’t let her wander from shed to shed (begging food) but bring her back to the same tree (to her parents) where from you have taken her*”.
- The groom’s villagers reply- “*Oh! Bandhus, she may have anything against her, but she is our Bahu now. She is not only your daughter, ours too. Unless she does serious offence why should we bring her to you?*”
- (xv) *Gundi Chaul & Mand Chheli*- When the bride’s villagers leave after marriage the groom’s party gives them about five *pai* of rice called *Gundi Chaul* and one goat (*Mand Chheli*). The villagers may eat it on their way or bring to the village and then hold a feast.
- (xvi) *Consummation of Marriage* - Before the bridal pair starts sleeping together (after three or four days of marriage) the bride cooks a little *jau* in a new earthen pot and offers to the ancestors in the *Bhitar*. At night the woman who stand as elder brother’s wife or father’s father’s wife (own or classificatory) come to the house and say- “*From today you get your home (wife). Start building your shed (lit, have sons and daughters) and let your family prosper.*”
- (xvii) *First visit of the married couple to the Girl’s parents*- On their first visit to the bride’s parents, they are given hearty meals. On the parting day a

chicken is sacrificed for them and they may be given new clothes. Cakes and cooked rice are given to them to carry to their village.

Economy in Pauri Bhuinya Marriage

Marriage lays great economic strain on Pauri Bhuinyas. Contribution from the relatives and the close kins is so negligible that the parents start hoarding crops and cash for five years or more till they are able to amass considerable amount for financing a marriage. In spite of their efforts they run in to indebtedness and incur heavy loans to meet the marriage expenses. A considerable amount is spent in feasts. Other heads of expenditure include bride-wealth (*mula*) paid to the bride's relatives, clothes for the bride, groom, and other relatives, and other miscellaneous expenses.

The items and amount of bride-wealth are same for all types of marriages, which are paid within a year or two after the marriage except Dharipala (marriage by elopement) in which it may be paid after five to ten years when the marrying partners accumulate enough amount for the purpose. Extremely poor persons are sometimes exempted from paying full amount for bride-wealth. The following gives item wise detail list of the standard bride-wealth paid in Bhuinya marriage:-

1. One bullock for the bride's father.
2. One bullock for her father's younger brother.
3. One bullock for her mother's brother.
4. Three rupees and about 12 *pai* of rice for the *Khandrias* (middlemen).
5. About 7 ½ *Khandi* of rice for *Bilajau*.
6. One rupee and a *sari* for the bride's mother.
7. About a 5 *pai* of rice (*Gundi chaul*) and a goat (*Mandchheli*) for the bride's villagers when they leave after marriage.

A piece of cloth, or one to two rupees in lieu of cloth is paid to the bride's younger brother (*sala bidha*), but this does not constitute an item of the regular bride-wealth.

The feast drains away major savings in marriages. In a marriage feast the groom party is expected to feed the villagers of both sides sumptuously till they eat sufficiently and leaves some food on their plates. The groom has to spend on feasts on the following occasion:-

1. The day the bride is brought for marriage the boys and the girls of the groom's village are fed properly to receive the marriage party.
2. As soon as the bride and her escorts arrive in the village outskirts they are given cooked rice and *dal*.
3. That night after the girl's party reach the groom's village they are fed by the groom.

4. Next day goats are slaughtered and the villagers of both the sides are given a feast.
5. After the marriage, on some day, the groom is obliged to feed his villagers once more for their co-operation and help in the marriage.

Besides the above occasions, quite a heavy stock of rice is also required to feed the guests and the relatives. To all these expenses may be added other miscellaneous expenses like purchases of new cloths for the marrying partners and the relatives, ornaments for the bride, rice given to the different age and sex groups for playing their specific roles in marriages.

Keeping in view all the expenditures, the total amount spent in a Bhuinya marriage (marriage by arrangement) is estimated to be Rs. 1000 or more. In other forms of marriages, less amount is spent on feasting, thereby reducing the total expenditure by about Rs. 200. In case of second marriage, the bride-wealth is more than the usual bride-wealth.

Conclusion

Without going into the detail of rites and rituals of the institution of marriage, it is significant to analyze the role which the institution of marriage plays among the tribe. Its implications on the interplay of social relationship, group ties and other social and economic ramifications are also noteworthy.

Marriage is always viewed to be on affair of the village than that of the concerned family. The unmarried girls biologically belong to their parents, but sociologically they are viewed to be the "property" of the *bandhus* (inter-marrying spouses). They are kept in custody of their parents and taken care of till marriage, but as soon as the *bandhus* want to take possession of their "property" the parents are obliged to part with them. In a broader sense all the unmarried boys and girls are viewed to be members of the village and the village youth dormitory (*darbar*) which associate more closely with the socio-religious life concerning the dormitory organization. In case of giving away the girls in marriage, the opinion of all the village elders is never overlooked. Likewise, marriage of the village boys is the responsibility of all the families of the village. The parents finance for the marriage, but the villagers lend their help and co-operation to make the marriage ceremony a success. While ceremonially handing over the bride, the girl's villagers in their prayer to the groom's villagers firmly hold that they offer the girl not only to the groom, but to his villagers at large for her proper upkeep. In case of divorce, therefore, the groom's villagers formally handover the girl to her village elders while performing the formal divorce ritual.

Marriage provides the proper situation to study the roles played by different age and sex groups. The elderly men (*Mahatar*) and women (*Mahatari*) and the unmarried boys (*Bhendia*) and girls (*Dhangdi*) play specific roles in

marriage. The *Mahatars* work as marriage brokers (*Khandria*), fix up marriage proposals, formally handover and take over the bride in marriage, engage themselves in communal cooking and shoulder other responsibilities. The ceremonial rites are mostly performed by the *Mahataris*. Ceremonial bathing of the bridal pair, greeting the marriage party, blessing the marrying couple and other important rites are performed by the women. Marriage is the only occasion where women have greater roles to play than the men. Likewise, the unmarried boys and the girls closely associate in marriage ceremony. The boys play *changu* (circular musical drum) in marriage dance, prepare marriage bow for the groom and supply firewood, fetch water and help in cooking of the marriage feast, while the girls sing marriage songs and do other tasks like grinding spices, supplying leaf cups and plates and accompanying the bride while performing marriage rites, etc. For performing their duties, each group is reasonably rewarded by feast and other gifts.

An analysis of some of the marriage rites of the Bhuinya throws light on their social values and belief system. As the Bhuinya claim to have descended from royal chiefs, the tradition of riding on horseback is still retained by them. It is still customary for them to carry the bride and the groom on their backs, which symbolizes horse riding and after marriage rice and *dal* is given to the persons carrying the bride and the groom. It is called *Ghodadana*, lit, fodder for the horse. Likewise, breaking of bow by the groom and shooting arrows are claimed to be the observance of the epic custom of Lord Rama breaking the *shivadhanu* for marrying Goddess Sita. Bathing the bride and the groom by making them to sit on a yoke symbolizes that from that day they are to share and shoulder the responsibilities of the marital life. The Bhuinya, like many others tribes have great attachment to their native soil, and this sentiment has been reflected in their marriage in which the women of the bride's village worship the Dharati (Earth Goddess) and tie some earth in the *sari* of the bride.

Marriage marks the termination of one phase of life and entry into a new sphere of life. The marrying partners cease to be acting members of their youth association and attain the status of the married persons (*Mahataras* and *Mahataris*). Before assuming the new roles and responsibilities, the bride and the groom present gifts to their dormitory friends and formally take farewell from their association. They are also entertained with feasts by their friends before their final withdrawal from the dormitory organization.

In case of the bride, she not only steps on to a new social position from *Dhangdi* to *Mahatari*, but it is more significant for her to enter into the clan of her husband. To mark this transition the bride cooks *jau* (porridge) on the marriage day and offers it to the family ancestors of the groom in the sacred *bhitar* (inner portion of the house where the ancestors are believed to reside).

Likewise, to mark the consummation of marriage, before the couple starts sleeping together, the wife again offers *jau* to the husband's ancestors.

Marriage sample collected from Jaldih reveals that of all the types of marriages i.e., marriage by capture, elopement, etc., are resorted to more frequently. Then comes the regular and more expensive form of marriage by arrangement. Out of 141 marriage cases 36.2 percent were marriage by arrangement while 63.8 percent were other types of marriages. The following table gives a quantitative assessment of different types of marriages.

TABLE
Frequency and Percentage of Types of Marriages among the Pauri Bhuinya

Sl. No.	Types of marriage (local names)	English equivalent	Frequency	Percentage
1	Mangi	Marriage by arrangement	51	36.2
2	Ghicha	Marriage by capture	36	25.5
3	Dharipala	Marriage by elopement	51	36.2
4	Randi Bibha	Widow re marriage	3	2.1
Total			141	100%

As has been described in this paper, marriage is a costly proposition for the Bhuinya and they being mostly poor and fighting to sustain their living can hardly afford to finance a marriage. Failing to arrange the marriage expenses, many Bhuinya youths are forced to remain as bachelors and spinsters. The heavy expenditure was minimized to some extent in old days when the Bhuinya preferred to procure mates by capture or elopement but now days as marriages other than marriage by arrangement are looked down upon, the poor persons are forced to remain as lifelong bachelors. In village, Tantara, it was found in 1969 that 19 girls between the age-group of 20-56 years and 9 boys above 22 years of age could not marry through they crossed the marriageable age. They did not take recourse to obtain their marrying partners by capture or elopement lest they might be looked down upon by their fellow neighbours. This has serious social consequences and unless the bride-price of the Bhuinya are curtailed and other steps are taken to ameliorate the terms and conditions of marriage, the Bhuinya youths may not enable themselves to enjoy the status of full-fledged members of the society by virtue of their marital status.

ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES OF PAURI BHUIYA*

*Bhagirathi Choudhury*¹

The Pauri Bhuiya or Hill Bhuiya, a primitive and backward section of the Bhuiya tribe is mainly concentrated in the adjoining hilly tracts of Keonjhar, Dhenkanal and Sundargarh districts. The population of Bhuiya tribe in Orissa is 1,56,878 among whom 45,168 are found in Keonjhar and Sundargarh districts respectively. Pauri Bhuiyas are not separately enumerated.

The present report - on the economic activities of the Pauri Bhuiya is based on investigation carried in two Pauri Bhuiya villages, Karangadihi in Banspal Block of Keonjhar district and Jaldihi in Koira Block in Sundargarh district.

ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

Economic activities of the Pauri Bhuiya are considerably influenced by the ecological character of the area. As the area consists of ranges of rugged hills covered with forest, the quantity of land available for wet cultivation is meager. Besides wet cultivation they also practise cultivation on up-land, *badi*-land and *biringa* (land brought under shifting cultivation). Their other economic activities centre round the agricultural activities. Besides cultivation, they also undertake collection of forest products; engage themselves in indigenous craft, wage-earning, fishing in the adjacent streams and hunting in the forest.

CULTIVATION

The Pauri Bhuiya are traditionally shifting cultivators. Wet cultivation is done in a limited scale but at present it is gaining ground among them as a profitable enterprise and is resorted to whenever suitable land is available.

Land is classified by the Pauri Bhuiya into four categories, viz.

* Published in ADIBASI, Vol. IX, No.3, 1967-68, pp.36-43

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- a) Bila or Wet-land
- b) Guda or Up-land
- c) Biringa or land for shifting cultivation
- d) Badi or homestead garden (also known as Basti-land)

The extent of wet land possessed by individual families could not be ascertained in the absence of survey and settlement in this area of Keonjhar district. In Koira area of Bonai subdivision, the extent of wet-land can be collected from the record of rights. As there is no individual ownership of land under shifting cultivation (*biringa*) and as they do not cultivate the same plot every time, quantification on the basis of seed used or yield will not give a correct picture. Eleven out of twenty two families in Jaldihi do not possess wet-land, while most of the wet-land-owning families have got less than two acres each. In the village Karangadihi fourteen out of forty-two families do not have wet-land. When the amount of wet-land is calculated on the basis of seed capacity, six out of twenty-eighty land-owning families have got four acres or more. The maximum amount of wet-land owned by any family will be eight acres. Rest twenty-two families have owned less than four acres of land. The amount of land under shifting cultivation, up-land and *badi*-land which are generally possessed by each and every family of both villages is not included.

As bullock driven ploughs are used in the cultivation of all types of land, many families have bullocks and some have buffaloes. Keeping of cows for breeding and goats and sheep for sale is a common practice among them.

TECHNIQUE OF CULTIVATION

Different techniques of cultivation are followed in different types of land, short description of which is given here.

(a) Wet Land

In the available wet land only paddy is sown. They rarely sow red-gram (*sula*) as a second crop of the year wherever there is water in winter and summer seasons. The paddy grown in this type of land is called *baddhan*. They follow methods like broadcasting (*buna*) and transplanting (*rua*).

In *buna* method of cultivation, broadcasting of seeds is done after ploughing twice. Soon after the first shower after the harvest, they plough the land for the first time.

Towards the latter part of Baisakh (April-May) or in Jestha (May-June) the land is ploughed for the second time (*diuda*). Cow dung manure is spread across the field. If cold breaking is necessary both men and women do it and the land is made ready for sowing. After the ceremony of Tirtia Muthi (ceremonial sowing of seeds) the seeds are broadcast on the land and a final

ploughing is done to cover the seeds. When the rice plants grow to a height of a foot or so and sufficient water stands in the field another ploughing (called *bihuda*) is done. After ten to fifteen days, the leveler (*mae*) is driven through the field. This is followed by weeding (*judbacha*) in the month of Bhadraw (August-September) as the last phase of agricultural operation before harvesting in the month of Kartik (October-November) or Margasira (November-December). If the wet-lands are situated in the midst of dense forest and if there is the danger of destruction by wild animals, they watch the fields in the night.

In transplanting, a plot is selected as the nursery which will provide seedlings to plant on three or four times of its own size. The nursery is ploughed twice earlier and manured. Before sowing the seeds in the month of Jestha (May-June) another ploughing is done and clods are broken. Then the seeds are scattered in the usual method. This is followed by leveling the ground with the help of *mae*. In the meantime the field selected for transplanting is ploughed. Soon after the monsoon showers intensify, it is re-ploughed.

When the seedling grows nearly one foot in height, the field for transplanting is leveled. The seedlings are mostly transplanted by women. After a month or so, weeding is done. The standing crops are guarded by young boys as well as by men. Reaping is done both by men and women. Women carry sheaves on their head and men on their shoulder balancing on carrying pole (*bihida*). Threshing with the help of bullock or by feet is done on platform specially prepared for the purpose either in one of the fields or in a barn. Winnowing is the work of women. Paddy is dried and stored in straw containers (*pudug*).

There are also inferior wet-lands located at a comparatively higher ground. This type of land is cultivated only by broadcasting method. Here they follow the technique as followed in case of low-lands but another variety of paddy known as *khetudi dhan* is grown in these lands. Sowing is done in Asarha (July) but harvested in Aswina or Kartik (October-November), nearly one month earlier than the *bad dhan* grown in low-land.

Only a few Bhuiya cultivators grow *sula* (Red gram) in the low-land. After the harvest the land is ploughed. The seeds are then sown in the month of Margasir (December-January) after which another ploughing is done they harvest the crop in the month of Phagun or Chait (March-April).

(b) Guda (up-land)

Most part of cultivated area in Pauri Bhuiya country is *guda*-land. This type of land is not fertile and does not stand repeated cultivation. So they generally cultivate this type of land for two continuous years with the usual rotation of *rasi* (niger) in the first year and paddy mixed with *arhar* or *birhi* (pulses) in the second year. If there is good yield in the second year, the land is

used for growing paddy, *birhi* or *kolath* (pulses) in the third year also. After this, the area is left fallow for four to five years.

Soon after the first shower, the land is given one or two ploughing and made ready for sowing. Paddy and *arhar* or *birhi* (pulses) are sown in the month of Asarh (June-July) when the land is still wet. The variety of paddy grown is called *guda-dhan*. Rasi (*niger*) in the month of Bhadrav (August-September) or *ramtila* or *jhatingi* (another variety of *niger*) in the month of Sravan (July-August) are also sown. Weeding, if necessary is generally done by women. Paddy grown in this land is harvested in the month of Aswina (September-October).

(c) Badi-Land

Most of the *badi*-land at the backyard is utilized for growing mustard and maize. Almost all families grow vegetables in the rainy season and a few families grow tobacco, ginger turmeric and arrowroot.

At the beginning of rains, the *badi*-land is ploughed twice, kept ready for sowing and manured with cow dung for growing mustard. In the month of Jestha (May-June) some families plant ginger, turmeric, arrowroot and *saru* (a tuber) in a portion of the *badi*-land. In the month of Asarha (June-July) maize and vegetables are sown by almost all families of the village. Mustard seeds are sown in the month of Bhadrav (August-September) and tobacco is planted in the same month. Weeding in the maize field and mustard field takes place in the months of Sravan (July-August) and Aswina (September-October). Maize and vegetables are consumed in the month of Aswina (September-October) when there is acute shortage of food. In the month of Magh (January-February) they harvest mustard. Harvesting of tobacco and *Saru* takes place in Pausa (December-January) or Magh (January-February). Ginger and turmeric are harvested in the month of Jestha or Asarha (May-June).

(c) Biringa or Land under Shifting Cultivation

Shifting cultivation of the Pauri Bhuiya is known as Biringa, Jhumi or Toila (the term also used by the Juang). There are two methods of shifting cultivation, *dahi* and *koman*. The *dahi* process consists of selection of a hill slope more or less leveled for cultivation. Trees and bushes are cut down and piled in rows. If there are adequate number of trees in the clearing, felled trees in other patches are brought and piled. When dried up fire is set to those piles. The ashes are spread as manure. In the *koman* the bushes and scrubs on the clearing are cut and piled at the foot of big trees found on the spot. After a month or so when these dry up, are burnt and the clearing is made ready for cultivation.

The *dahi* process is more painstaking but yields better results than the *koman* type and hence, preferred. In *koman* type of cultivation selection of a patch

for shifting cultivation is controlled through the traditional village leadership within the limit of village boundary not touching reserved forest boundary. The direction from which the echo of 'Haribol' has come at the time of Magh Podi ceremony, which marks the termination of agricultural year is taken into account. In a meeting of village elders in the village Darbar ground, presided over by the village Naik (secular headman), the area for shifting cultivation is selected in consultation with the village Dehuri (Priest). On another day the village elders accompanied by the Naika and Dehuri go to the selected patch to allot plots for each family according to the need and capacity of the family members. The size of the family and the number of working adults are considered while allotments are made. Plots are demarcated along the slope from top to bottom. As there is the danger of damage to crops by wild animals, a contiguous area is cleared so that all can guard the crops effectively. No patches of forest in between the various plots are left uncleared. The allotment procedure removes grievances and disputes and provides for collective acknowledgement of rights of various families.

During the months of Phagun (February-March) and Chaita (March-April) felling of trees (Jhumikat or Kathkata) takes place. First of all, bushes, smaller trees and plants are cut. This is done by both men and women with the help of Budia (axe) and Da (Sickle). Children also take part in the operation. The bigger trees are sometimes left out, cutting only the branches if there are too many. All the felled trees, plants, bushes, and grass are piled and allowed to dry. In the month of Baiakh (April-May) those are burnt.

In the month of Jestha (May-June) seeds of several varieties of beans such as Dunk, Suttur, Tipira, Ruma and Sima and vegetables are sown in the clearings. Their creepers climb up the tree stumps. In Asarha once again the bushes and scrubs are cleared and allowed to decompose for the purpose of manuring. In the same month *birhi* (pulse) is sown and the surface is ploughed. While sowing in the hill clearings the seeds are broadcast from the bottom to the top of the slopes. Weeding (Lata-bachha) of wild grasses and other roots take place in the month of Bhadrav (August-September). It is done by both men and women assisted by children. These weeds are left in the Biringa field itself to decompose in course of time to provide manure to the soil. If necessary, another weeding is also done. From the month of Kartika (October-November) the fields are carefully guarded to protect those from the wild animals and birds. Cultivators divide into groups and guard the fields in turn. For this purpose they construct temporary huts at a higher ground. A fire is kept burning throughout the night to scare wild animals away from the Biringa fields. At the time of harvest, a temporary threshing floor in the clearing is made jointly by several families. The *birhi* plants are uprooted and piled in the threshing floor to dry up. After a week or so, threshing is done by striking the dried plants with the help of sticks. Beans are given similar treatment.

When the same plot is cultivated for second year in the month of Baisakh, bushes and *birhi*-stumps, if any, left out from the previous year are cleared. In the month of Jestha (May-June) after a few showers, Mandia with *harad* (a variety of pulses) are sown and the land is ploughed with bullock driven ploughs. This is followed by bunding (*hida*) and made into several plots.

These bunds are about two to three cubits in width. Bunds along both sides of the slopes are used for growing Gangei (a variety of millet) while on other bunds across the patch they grow Katada, Kangu, Tisidia and Tipira (all are food crops). In the month of Bhadrav (August-September) weeding takes place. By the month of Kartika (October-November) almost all the crops grown are harvested and threshed in the Biringa-land.

For the third year the same piece of Biringa-land is cleared for growing Gudlu or Jali (both are food crops). Just before sowing the seeds in the month of Asarh, (June-July) the weeds and bushes if any are cleared and are allowed to decompose. After the seeds are sown the field is ploughed and weeding is not done. Harvesting of these crops takes place in the month of Kartika (October-November) or Margasir (November-December). Then the patch is left fallow for ten to twelve years. Due to pressure of population the clearings are now a days brought under cultivation after five to six years. In that case, those could be cultivated only for a year or two not three years as would be possible in clearings left for ten years.

Agricultural Implements

The principal agricultural implement of Bhuiyas is *langal* (plough) with an iron share (*luhafal*) and a long shaft (*isa*). At the time of ploughing, the shaft is tied with the yoke (*juali*). The *garduni* (hoe) is made of iron with a wooden handle at an end. The digging stick (*khanta*) consists of a long and flat iron blade fitted to one end of the wooden handle. They have also *kudi* (hoe), *mae* (leveler), *kudal* (mud leveler), *da* (sickle), *budia* (axe) for use in agricultural operations. For carrying the sheaves men use a *bihida* (carrying-pole) and for grain a *bhar* (another kind of carrying pole) and *sika* (sling).

WAGE SYSTEM

The day labourer who works with contractor gets Rs. 1.25 for male and Rs. 1.00 for female. A farm labourer is given nearly two kilograms of paddy and a meal for a day's work. The labourer who works with his own plough gets a meal and two kilograms of paddy. Contract-labourer gets an advance free of interest. For his daily labour he gets at the usual rate of wage. He binds himself to his creditor till the full repayment of debt. Scope of wage earning is limited to a few construction works, forest operations, mining queries and cultivation assistance to some land owners.

LOCAL SALE AND PURCHASE

The Bhuiyas depend on outside markets to fulfill their basic requirements like cloth, ornaments, earthen or metal utensils, iron implements, weapons, salt and tobacco. On the other hand they sell or barter some of their products such as oil seeds, pulses and several other forest products. In course of time due to contact with outsiders, their wants have increased. With the increase of money income, their buying and selling activities have increased in recent times. A short account of their sale and purchase is given here.

Sale

They sell or exchange a number of commodities either in the local weekly markets or at their villages to the petty traders who visit them. These commodities can be grouped into the following categories.

(a) Agricultural and Horticultural Products

They sell for cash or exchange mustard, niger, *biri*, *kolath* and *harad* etc. It is a practice with them to exchange mustard, *biri*, *kolath* and *harad* with rice, and niger with paddy. Sometimes, local traders belonging to oilman caste visit their villages to sell tobacco, onion, *gurakhu*, (tobacco paste), dry fish etc., in exchange with oil seeds and pulses. During the lean months some Bhuiya families also bring advances in cash and kind from the Sahukars of the plains. Those are paid back in the shape of oil seeds or pulses. Government of Orissa have recently started a scheme in Keonjhar district to purchase oil seeds from the tribals at a reasonable rate. It is equally proposed to open fair price shops to supply their daily necessities. This is aimed at checking exploitation by traders and to improve the bargaining power of the tribals.

The other minor products under this category are *sula* (red gram), *maka* (maize), castor seeds, sweet potato, beans, *ganegi*, *gudlu*, chilly, turmeric, arrowroot, ginger and vegetables. Very rarely they sell principal food crops like paddy, *kangu*, *suan*, *mandia* which they grow.

(d) Forest Product

They collect a number of forest products such as, timber, firewood, mango, jackfruit, gums, *lac*, honey, *tasar*, *mohua* flower and fruit, tamarind, tooth sticks, a number of edible wild fruits, roots and leaves, fibers and grass for rope. They generally carry these things to the market for sale.

(e) Handicrafts

Mats and broomsticks made of date palm leaves, other broomsticks made from wild grasses, bamboo baskets of various size and shape (only in Koira area) are manufactured and sold by them for cash and kind.

(f) Domestic Animal

They breed goat and sheep. These animals and occasionally the bullock, cow, fowl and eggs are sold in the markets by them.

Purchase

They purchase a number of articles for various purposes either in cash or in kind from the weekly markets or from the traders who visit their villages.

(a) For Food and Drink

As mentioned earlier, they usually exchange various produce for paddy and rice. Besides, they also purchase food grains paying cash which they earn for wage or by selling other commodities. They purchase salt, tobacco, chilly, onion, spices, dry fish, *mohua* liquor, vegetables, *gurakhu* (tobacco paste), molasses, etc. Whenever they visit the markets they purchase various kinds local confectionaries some of which are eaten and the rest carried for children such as *gulgula*, *kundapitha*, *bara*, *enduri*, *ladu*, etc. brought by the Gudia caste for sale. Parched rice, flat rice, *ukhuda*, etc. are also purchased by them from the Keuta sellers. They also by fried groundnut, boiled sugar potato, boiled or fried redgram, cooked *mahua* flower.

(b) Occupational Requirements

All the agricultural implements and weapons are purchased from the village blacksmiths or from the local markets. Seeds and cattle for cultivation are purchased from the neighbours or from the markets.

(c) Dress, Ornaments and other Articles for bodily Adornment

All varieties of dress and ornaments used by them are purchased mostly from the market. Cosmetics are becoming popular. Cheap looking-glasses, combs, ribbons, hair oil, soap, ready-made garments are also purchased.

(d) Household Articles

Domestic utensils are purchased from the market. The earthen wares used in cooking and storing water are purchased from the potters. For carrying and storing grains they require baskets of various sizes and shapes. The Bhuiiyas of Keonjhar who do not make those purchase from the Doms. Other domestic articles such as trunk, bamboo-box, kerosene lamp, lantern and umbrella etc., are bought from the local markets or from annual fairs.

CONCLUSION

Foregoing description of their economic activities will give an insight into the economic condition of the Pauri Bhuiiyas. They still cling to the age-old practice of shifting cultivation while they have also developed liking for settled cultivation which requires less labour and care. But yields from cultivation are

not adequate to sustain them throughout the whole year. Thus they have to supplement their dietary requirements by consuming locally available fruits, roots, shoots and wild vegetables. Wage earning whenever there is scope and selling of some items of forest products are also alternative sources of income.

It is thus now high time on the part of the personnel engaged in the upliftment of the tribals to make them settled agriculturalists in the true sense of the term, by providing land and capital at the first instance.

SWIDDEN CULTIVATION: THE PAURI BHUYAN WAY *

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Introduction:

Orissa is a unique State in the country for having rich natural resources and cultural heritage represented in architectural and sculptural styles in temples, spectacular handicrafts like filigree works, appliquéés and stone carvings, typical textiles and handlooms and distinctive performing arts like Odissi and Chhou dances. Besides it is also a fascinating State for having 62 varieties of colourful and typical tribal communities not found elsewhere in the country. The tribal communities with a population of 84.3 million constitute 8.20 per cent of country's total tribal population and 22.13 per cent of the total population of the State in 2001. Their concentration is mainly in southern and northern districts of the state. They show wide variation in their economic pursuits which are greatly influenced by ecological characteristics of their habitat and own traditions. Basing on their traditional economy the tribes of Orissa may be grouped under (a) hunters and food gathers, (b) cattle herders, (c) artisans, (d) shifting cultivators, (e) settled agriculturists and (f) mining and industrial workers. Tribal economy still revolves round agriculture in some form or other and as the mainstay of the people as about 90 per cent of them has returned as cultivators and agricultural labourers in the Census reports.

Tribal economy vis-à-vis tribal agriculture has been under the influence of several internal and external forces during last 50 years or so as a result it has changed to a large extent. Based on this, the bulk of tribal farmers can be grouped as (a) fully dependant on swidden or shifting cultivation (b) partly dependant on shifting cultivation and partly on settled cultivation, (c) fully dependant on settled cultivation by totally abandoning shifting cultivation and

* Published in ADIVASI, Vol. 47, No.1&2, 2007, pp.48-58

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(d) progressive cultivators who have opted modern and scientific techniques. However, tribal cultivators still retained some agricultural features like terraced cultivation, horticulture, mixed cropping, rotation of crops, production of typical crops etc. for which they are famous since long. The salient features of the present day tribal agriculture are briefly presented here.

Traditional agriculture among the tribes in general is characterised by simple technology, simple division of labour, small units of production with very little capital investment and primarily for meeting consumption needs of small social units, like family, lineage etc. Crops are exposed to the risk of frost, draught, insects, pests and wild animals. Working knowledge is common to adult members learnt by experience. Agriculture is totally dependent upon the family labour. It is a cooperative group based on sexual division of labour.

Shifting cultivation, an archaic mode of agriculture, commonly known as 'Podu' in Orissa and 'Jhum' in North-Eastern India is traditionally practised by many tribes namely, the Bonda, Koya, Paroja, Gadaba, Dongria Kandha, Kutia Kandha and the Saora in southern Orissa, the Juang and Pauri Bhuyan in the northern Orissa. As estimated by a Government source in 1948, the area affected by shifting cultivation was 12,000 sq. miles and population involved was about 10 lakhs. Shifting cultivation is named differently by different tribal groups viz, *Koman*, *Biringa* or *Toila* among the Pauri Bhuyan and the Juang, *Bagad* or *Barun* among the Saora, *Livang* or *Kunda chas* among the Bonda, *Haru* among the Dongria Kandha and *Podu* among the Gadaba, Paroja and Kandha tribe. It is undertaken in forest areas, hill tops and slopes covered with forest.

The salient features of shifting cultivation in brief are (a) selection of patches, (b) making clearings by cutting non-fruit trees, trimming fruit trees, clearing shrubs and vines, (c) burning the felled vegetative materials after dried up, (d) spreading of ashes all over the patch (e) tilling the soil with hoe or mattock or ploughing with bullock driven plough as among the Pauri Bhuiya before or after, (f) broadcasting, (g) arduous work of de-bushing and weeding, (h) risky job of guarding the standing crops, (i) harvesting, (j) threshing and finally (k) bringing home the crops. The process starts in May and ends in January. A specific patch is generally cultivated for 2 to 3 years or till good production of crops is seen and left fallow for a period of 7 to 8 years to recoup.

Shifting cultivation is subsistence oriented. Hence, different kinds of seeds mixed together and sown to meet their consumption needs. Common crops grown are rice (only in northern Orissa), minor millets, pulses, oil seeds, creeper vegetables, spices like ginger, turmeric and chilly. These crops which ripen one after another are harvested in small quantity to meet their daily consumption needs till these are finally harvested, threshed and brought home.

In the past, when tribal areas had not been covered by land survey and settlement operations, the land and forests belonged to the tribals. At that time, there were two traditional systems of land tenure in the tribal areas. In northern Orissa, the Juang and the Pauri Bhuyan had community ownership and land for shifting cultivation was distributed among families by the village leaders in a corporate manner. In southern Orissa, area under shifting cultivation was individually owned by the families and inherited by the younger generation.

The practice of shifting cultivation has mythical foundation. There are myths current among some tribes that the creator of the tribe had advised them to adopt the practice for their survival. There are also rituals associated with the practice of shifting cultivation and are performed with the help of tribal priest. The village secular leaders play a dominant role in ensuring smooth distribution of patches and completing the operation with mutual cooperation and help among all families. Use of simple implements and short duration traditional crops grown under rain fed condition require low investment. Labour is provided by the family members and engagement of outside labour is done not by payment of wages but by providing food and drink. Even in drought situation the short duration crops give a stable yield.

Realising the adverse effects of the practice of shifting /swidden cultivation and specially the low yield rate and knowing about the advantages of terraced cultivation, tribals in certain areas have become conscious. By their own efforts and without taking any external help, they have started land terracing in hill slopes, especially in south Orissa. Terracing is, no doubt, labour intensive, painstaking and requires hard work, but after it is done it becomes rewarding because the yield rate is comparatively high.

While undertaking different phases of shifting cultivation, they avail the opportunity of hunting and collection of different varieties of edibles, fuel wood and materials used in house construction with ease. Though yield is low, they are satisfied with the production of several cereals which are available when there is food scarcity during the period from September to December.

It is observed in tribal areas that farmers are becoming conscious of the adverse effects of chemical fertilisers and pesticides which are costly, destroyer of bio-diversity and killer of micro organisms in the soil rendering it infertile after continuous use. In lieu thereof, they are pleading for bio-farming or organic farming, use of bio-fertilisers and indigenous pesticides etc in order to develop sustainable farming. It is really a boon for the tribal area.

The tribals who have stopped practising shifting cultivation fully or partly, have adopted settled cultivation in whatever land is available with them. During the last 50 years or so the Government have been allotting land with inputs to take up settled cultivation. But the new practice lacks in many

respects to get adequate return. The size of operational holding is generally small and poor in quality. These people lack modern agricultural outlook, continue to follow the past practices in the use of implements and other methods learnt by experience.

Orissa Situation:

Shifting cultivation has become a problem of great concern for administrators, planners, academicians and the public at large. This practice is viewed as one of the major factors responsible for progressive loss of forest coverage and degradation of land causing ecological imbalances. Earlier efforts to control it did not succeed to the extent desired. The practice is still continued in several countries including India, causing anxiety to the Government and the public. In some parts of our country, where this system has been stopped due to either non-availability of swiddens or Government restrictions, the swiddeners are passing through a crucial period. The Government at the State and the National levels and the international body like UNESCO also called upon to carry on research on shifting cultivation for evolving a suitable strategy to tackle the problem. Studies on swiddeners of various regions have called upon to view shifting cultivation from the twin perspective of culture and environment, to recognise it as a 'way of life' and not a 'necessary evil'. Strategy to control it by eliminating its harmful effects is also worked out. Some researchers have observed that the problem of shifting cultivation in all areas / communities may not be the same but have their peculiarities. Thus, whenever efforts are made to tackle it in any specific area/ community, proper study on various aspects needs be conducted.

Orissa is one of the major States in India where shifting cultivation is still undertaken extensively as an age-old practice by many tribes/sub-tribes, like the Juang, the Pauri Bhuyan, the Lanjia Saora, the Kutia Kandha, the Dongria Kandha, the Didayi, the Paroja, the Gadaba and the Koya spread over nine out of 13 old districts. According to some estimates an area around 30 lakh hectares or so in Orissa is subjected to shifting cultivation and roughly around 5 to 6 lakhs population are involved in it. However, not much systematic study on this system has been conducted to examine the detail, the rhythm and pattern of shifting cultivation and its influence on various aspects of the life of the people. In the present micro-study, we have made a humble attempt to find out its historical and socio-cultural ramifications among the Pauri Bhuyan of Keonjhar district. In specific terms, we have attempted to seek answers to questions: whether shifting cultivation among the Pauri Bhuyan is (a) an organic response to the geophysical conditions of the area, (b) a practice resulting out of historical reasons, (c) a mechanism for integrating different aspects of the economy and society, (d) conducive for the people having simple technology and (e) pivotal to other economic activities. It thus, seeks to outline

the extent of interdependence between the shifting cultivation and different aspects of the habitat, economy and society of which it is a part.

The Pauri Bhuyan:

The Pauri Bhuyan constitutes the primitive section of the Bhuyan enlisted as one of the Scheduled Tribes in Orissa State alone. The name Bhuyan and its other variants, such as, Bhuiyan, Bhuinya, Bhuiyar, Bhuihar, etc. are mostly derived from the Sanskrit word "*Bhumi*" meaning "*Land*" and therefore the Bhuyan hold the view that they were born out of the 'Mother Earth' and became '*Bhumiputra*' (sons of the soil). Several mythical stories current among them and in the neighbouring Juang tribe indicate that they are the original inhabitants of the present habitat, and highlight how they along with the Juang and some other communities were children of a common ancestor. The total population of the Bhuyan in Orissa was 2,77,420 in 2001. They are found in almost all undivided districts with larger concentration in Sundargarh, Keonjhar, Sambalpur and Mahyurbhanj. The percentage of literacy of the population stood at 50.88 in 2001 with males and females registering 66.18 per cent and 35.68 per cent respectively.

The tribe has now several distinctive endogamous sections. These are Pauri Bhuyan, Rajkuli Bhuyan, Rautali Bhuyan and Khandait Bhuyan etc. Among them the Pauri Bhuyan, also known as Desi Bhuyan, Paburi Bhuyan and Hill Bhuyan are still regarded as the true representative of the Bhuyan tribe. The Pauri Bhuyan speak Oriya with local accent as their mother-tongue showing racial and cultural affinities with the Kolarian stock.

Adjoining Banspal and Telkoi development blocks of Keonjhar district, Koida and Lahunipada blocks of Sundargarh district, Barkot block of old Sambalpur district and Pal Lahara block of old Dhenkanal district constitute the habitat of the Pauri Bhuyan. The area is full of wild lofty hill ranges and dense forests forming part of the watershed of the river Baitarani and the Brahmani. There are extensive table lands on the mountain summits containing loose stones fit for pasturage and tillage. In between the hill ranges there are valleys with a number of hill streams. The area receives medium rainfall and has medium temperature which is suitable for vegetative growth. Thus, topography, soil type and climatic conditions of the habitat are favourable to shifting cultivation, practised by the Pauri Bhuyan from time immemorial.

The Pauri Bhuyan of Keonjhar are well known for their linkage with the local royal family. They are also equally known for their rebellion against the rulers on two occasions, first in 1868 because of installation of one Dhanurjay Narayan Bhanj as king, and in 1891 against the *bethi* system (free and forced labour) in the construction of an earthen-dam for water supply to Keonjhar town. The Pauri Bhuyan is an endogamous group and their social organization is

characterised by extended lineages, minor lineages, nuclear family and territorial units and absence of totemistic clans, phartries and moieties. The extended lineage is termed as *khilli* in imitation of their Mundri neighbours. All members of a *khilli* consider themselves as brothers and sisters and hence, marriage among them are not allowed. Matrimonial alliance is also not allowed with some other *khillis* which are regarded as *kutumba khillis*. Those with which marriage is allowed are called *bandhu khillis*. Previously when villages were uni-*khilli*, principles of village exogamy were being followed. The villages with which matrimonial alliance can be established are known as *bandhu* villages and those with which it is not allowed are called *kutumba* villages. The *khilli* is further sub-divided into a number of minor lineages called *kutumba*.

Nuclear type of family consisting of the husband, the wife with their unmarried children is very common. Soon after marriage, a son has to live separately in a house constructed by himself and his wife. Ancestral properties, after the death of the father, are equally distributed among all sons with the eldest son getting a little more.

Most Pauri Bhuyan villages are still unilineal in composition. Collective outlook, co-operative attitude and cohesiveness of the villagers are exhibited on many occasions like observances of community rites, rituals, economic pursuits like shifting cultivation, forest collection, hunting, fishing, intra-village activities, individual marriage and death rites etc. The village is a quasi-political unit. The traditional secular headman called Pradhan (also Naek), the village priest called Dehuri and the Gram Panchayat ward member shoulder the responsibilities of maintaining harmony and peace in the village. They also lead the traditional council of village elders in handling all socio-economic matters of the village.

The Pauri Bhuyan as Swiddeners:

The Pauri Bhuyan have adopted shifting Cultivation as their principal mode of livelihood since time immemorial, but there has been changes in their economic activities in some localities where shifting cultivation as replaced by some new economic activity consequent to dwindling supply of swiddens, governmental restrictions and developmental efforts. In some other pockets shifting cultivation still continues to be the dominant source of livelihood for the majority. In such cases it is usually supplemented by collection of forest produce, hunting, fishing, animal husbandry, settled cultivation, wage-earning and household industries. These economic pursuits revolve round the principal activity - the cycle of shifting cultivation.

The present study is based primarily on data collected from two villages selected for the purpose. Of these, Sankarai is predominantly a Pauri Bhuyan village where all the 98 Pauri Bhuyan households carry on shifting

cultivation. The other village, Bayakumutia, has a mixed population. Only 5 out of the 62 Pauri Bhuyan households in the latter carry on shifting cultivation. In the former, located in a less accessible area, all other economic pursuits revolve round shifting cultivation for which swidden patches are still available. In the latter which is a roadside village, loss of forest coverage, infiltration of outsiders and restrictions imposed by Government by declaring some areas as reserved forests and some covered with Government sponsored plantation. Majority of the households here have some plain or wet land and have taken resort to other economic pursuits and have stopped shifting cultivation. In addition to these two villages, under the jurisdiction of Banspal development Block, data from the neighbouring villages and from official and non-official organizations were also collected.

Shifting Cultivation has been occupying a distinctive place in the socio-economic life of the Pauri Bhuyan since time immemorial. They use the term 'Toila Chas' for shifting cultivation. It is also commonly referred to as Kamani meaning 'productive work'. The community claim to be autochthons and as the "owners of the soil". The belief is reflected in their folk tales and legends and even in the official documents of the pre-independent era. A village as a whole was the owner of the area demarcated for its use. The right was recognized by the neighbouring Pauri Bhuyan villages. Although homestead land, plain and wet land are now privately owned in those villages where land survey and settlement operations are conducted, the land under shifting cultivation in particular are still communally owned by the village community, and any trespass by outsiders is not tolerated. Ownership of swidden is still vested with the village community and individual /household has only usufructuary rights. Change of the village site within the traditionally defined boundary, a frequent phenomenon under shifting cultivation, no more takes place except in some exceptional cases.

Swiddens are cultivated normally for a period of two to four consecutive years depending upon productivity. Thus, a Pauri household normally cultivates each year three patches allotted to it for three consecutive years. Each patch is known differentially according to the year of cultivation. Clearings under the first, second and third year are known as 'Biringa', 'Koman' and 'Nala' respectively. A patch after cultivation is left fallow for a period of 5 to 8 years for recuperation.

Selection of swidden is based on group deliberation and discussion under the leadership of the village head and other functionaries. Distribution of plots is done in the presence of members representing all willing households. Quarrel or conflict normally does not occur at the time of distribution of patches. The village functionaries, like the *Pradhan*, the *Dehuri* and the Panchayat ward member enjoy preference and the destitute, like a widow or

widower are favoured with special considerations in the allotment of the patches. The size of the patches largely depends on the need and manpower of the household, and occasionally on the availability of the forest patches. The village council and the unmarried youths of both sexes are also separately allotted with patches to raise crops for a public fund. The celebration of the *Magh Podoi Parab* in the month of *Magh* (January-February) makes the beginning of the new agricultural session and the distribution of patches. A swiddening household normally cultivates three patches in a year. The total area of such patches taken together per household on an average was 2 areas in the village Sankarai and one acre in Bayakumutia in the year 1990-91.

The work cycle in different patches show slight variation. The heavy and arduous jobs like tree felling and bush cutting mark the beginning of the cycle in a fresh patch. This is followed by piling of felled material and then firing. In the second year swidden, cutting of foliage and weeding followed by firing are mostly done by women. A third year patch does not have enough growth of weeds and foliage for cutting. Thereafter sowing, ploughing, hoeing and foliage cutting are done in the same manner in all patches. Weeding, watching and harvesting crops are done simultaneously in all patches.

Shifting cultivation among the Pauri Bhyan is motivated by orthogenetic myths and divine sanction. It is believed that the creator Himself directed the first progenitors of the community to eke out a living by undertaking shifting cultivation. It is also linked with cultural values and religious beliefs and practices. The Pauri Bhuyan consider land as mother Goddess (*Basuki*). Paddy, regarded as a sacred object, is used in all rituals. It also constitutes the staple food. The community believes in a number of Supernatural Powers presiding over the land and forest. In consonance with such a belief system, a series of rituals and observances of taboos form an essential component of the process of shifting cultivation. Before a major operation is initiated, a ritual for seeking blessings and protection of the Supernatural Powers is performed by the traditional village priest. After the *Magh Podoi Parab*, in the month of January-February, fresh patches are distributed among all households for making clearings and firing of felled materials with the new fire rekindled on this occasion by the village priest. Ceremonial hunting, in the month of April- May, gives an indication of good or bad harvest in the coming season. The *Tirtia Muti*, is observed in April-May by individual households to perform ceremonial sowing of paddy seeds, the *Asarhi* ritual in the month of June- July for good rain and the *Nua Khia* or first eating of new rice in the month of September-October are observed.

Shifting Cultivation is primarily a labour intensive pursuit with very little specialization and all able-bodied members irrespective of age and gender are free to participate. However, some traditional norms regulate the

distribution of different items of work. Adult male members can also participate in the deliberation of the village elders in the selection and distribution of swidden, cutting of big trees, sowing and ploughing and climbing of trees (to collect fruits). These are tabooed to female workers of all age groups. Some items of work like firing the felled material, watching the standing crops in the swidden in the night, fashioning and repairing of wooden implements, making straw bundles for storing food grains are exclusively done by male members, although there is no bar for a female member to undertake these jobs. Adult females undertake such items of work which require endurance. These consist of bush cutting, gathering of felled materials and firing, foliage cutting, hoeing, weeding, harvesting, threshing and winnowing. There is no restriction for males, however, to undertake these items of work. Children and adolescents assist their parents in such items of work specified on the basis of gender. Shifting cultivation, thus, requires participation of both males and females. A household having no male or female working hand finds it difficult to undertake shifting cultivation without help beyond the household. Selling of labour in the swidden of another household is considered a disgrace. Thus extraneous labour for a genuinely needy household comes spontaneously from the cooperating kinsmen in and outside the village as a social obligation or on a reciprocal basis. Collective labour by the villagers or the village youths is also available with nominal or without payment of wage. According to the calculation made at the time of the study it is seen that 109 man days are devoted for cultivation of one acre of fresh clearing. In case of the second and the third year patches, the number of man days required goes down to 67 and 26 respectively.

The Pauri Bhuyan follow a definite cropping pattern which is the same as adopted by their forefathers in the swidden cultivation. They follow rotation of crops in the swidden under first, second and third year of cultivation. Diverse crops are grown from the patches under first and second year of cultivation using different portions for sowing different crops excluding the leguminous crops which are grown here and there under the leafless dried trees. Crops, like *jowar* or *arhar* are sown on the boarder which helps to protect the main crop of black gram in the first year patch and similarly *niger* is sown on the border to protect the main crop of rice in the second year patch.

The crops grown in the swidden include at least eight varieties of cereals including rice (their staple food), and Ragi, Kangu, Kathia, Jowar, Jali, Maize and Suan, three varieties of pulses (*arhar*, *kulthi* and black gram), Niger (a kind of oil seed), about eight varieties of vegetables consisting mostly of creeper variety occasionally, chilly, turmeric and several varieties of edible green leaves. The main motive behind this diversity of crops grown in the swidden, as in the case of subsistence cultivators, is to meet the basic requirement of food at the first instance at different times of the agricultural session. Different

verities of cereals, vegetables and edible green leaves become ready for harvest starting from the month of *Bhudh* (August-September) to the month of *Magasira* (December-January).

Shifting Cultivation is economically more viable to the Pauri Bhuyan, because of low capital investment for seeds, manures, implements and techniques employed in production. Apart from land and labour which are cheap, they use traditional seeds preserved at the time of harvest or obtain it from their neighbours on exchange. These fields are not manured except spreading of ashes obtained from firing of felled vegetative materials. Implements used are very simple. The most distinctive practice found among them is the use of draught animals like cows and bullocks for ploughing the swidden. Techniques of cultivation are acquired through active participation since early age.

A rough estimate of average yield of different crops from an acre of swidden under each year of cultivation was attempted during the study. It revealed that the average yield of all important crops came to 102 kilograms which is currently (1990-91) priced at Rs.368.00. From the second year patch the total yield was 154 kilograms, the market value of which was Rs. 339.00. In addition to these major crops, they had obtained different varieties of vegetables in the first and second year patch. The average yield of the lone crop of *jali* (minor millet) grown in the third year patch was only 42 kilograms worth Rs.84.00 only. Swidden cultivation not only provides the crops overtly grown but also brought in a number of other essential items without involving extra labour. Collection of items such as, fuel wood, faggot, timber, fodder, thatching grass, fibre and edible green leaves, fruits, shoots, tubers etc. went on simultaneously with shifting cultivation. Further, a variety of food crops ripening one after another within a period of 5 to 6 months helped them to meet the instant food requirements to a large extent. Thus considering from the utilitarian point of view, shifting cultivation is not uneconomical to them.

Shifting cultivation is not a lone and exclusive economic pursuit but is the nucleus of an occupational complex around which such other economic activities, as the plain land cultivation, forestry, hunting, fishing, livestock rearing and wage-earning revolve.

Shifting cultivation not only provide employment to all able-bodied persons irrespective of age and gender but also continues to be the main source of livelihood for those who do not have permanent land. It does not run the risk of total crop failure either due to excessive rain or drought as crops ripen one after another at different period spread over about 5 to 6 months.

Family is the most effective production unit as far as shifting cultivation is concerned. All members in a family participate ungrudgingly and

to acquire the skill. Shifting cultivation is a collective, more or less, a sort of cooperative production system in which members of various social units starting from family, mini-lineage group, kin group to village have to participate individually and collectively and cooperate with each other at various operational stages.

In shifting cultivation, the entire village acts as a single production unit. All decisions relating to this pursuit are taken in the meetings of the village elders presided over by the village functionaries, like the Pradhan, Dehuri and Ward Member. The village Darbar, an open space in front of the defunct bachelor's dormitory is the place where almost all formal and informal village meetings and all community celebrations are held.

The role of the village leaders is still considered essential and inseparable from the process of shifting cultivation. As mentioned above the traditional secular headman and the ward members of the statutory Gram Panchayat in collaboration with the traditional village priest and with the approval of village elders take decisions relating to the practice of shifting cultivation. Those who do not act in accordance with the decisions and those who violate the taboo and do not honour traditional values and norms linked with shifting cultivation are penalised. The village priest, being the spiritual and the ritual head of the village, is the chief functionary to fix the dates of celebration of communal rituals which precede various major operations of shifting cultivation and he also officiates in the rituals. He is the ritual specialist to initiate tree felling, firing, sowing and harvesting in the swidden.

Thus, shifting cultivation is integrated and inter-twined with the political, religious and social system and is more a social activity than an economic pursuit. It ensures unity, collective outlook and cohesiveness of various units of social organisations, like the family, the *kutumba* and the village. The institutions, like the associations of the unmarried youths and the village political organization exhibit in their behaviour, loyalty and emotional attachment among the members at the time of actual operations.

In short the socio-economic implications of swidden / shifting cultivation have shown that:

1. The process among the Pauri Bhuyan is motivated by divine sanctions and was adopted as the means of survival from time immemorial;
2. It is a spontaneous adaptation to the topography and climatic conditions of the habitat;
3. It continues till today in less accessible pockets;
4. A clearing is used only for 2-3 years;

5. At present the recuperation period is reduced to 7 to 8 years instead of 12 to 15 years as in the past;
6. Clearing of swiddens consists of felling, cutting, slashing and burning the dried vegetative debris;
7. Farming operations from tree felling to harvesting is initiated by the village priest after performing necessary rituals;
8. Ownership of *jhum* land is vested in the village and the individual / household has only usufructuary rights;
9. The selection of the area and distribution of patches among households follow group deliberations and decisions taken in the meetings of the village elders under the village headman;
10. The allotment is proportional to the need and manpower available to the allottee;
11. In the allotment, the secular headman, the ward member, the village priest and destitutes receive priority;
12. It is a nucleus of an occupational complex around which other economic pursuits such as settled cultivation, forest collection, hunting, fishing, animal husbandry and wage-earning revolve;
13. It is a collective production system with the village at the apex and the household at the bottom;
14. It is continued as main source of livelihood for those who do not have permanent land;
15. It is carried upon the use of traditional skills and techniques;
16. It is a hard, arduous and risky job and not the occupation of the lazy and the lethargic;
17. Implements are simple, i.e., bullock drawn ploughs and hand tools;
18. It is organized with very little investment in seeds, implements and manure;
19. It is primarily labour intensive with very little specialization but based on division of labour;
20. It is free from the employment of paid labour;
21. It is accomplished by household labour complemented or supplemented by mutual help between participating households;
22. Different cropping pattern is pursued on in the same patch in different years of cultivation;

23. A variety of crops are simultaneously raised in different parts of the same patch under first and second year of cultivation;
24. Certain short-duration crops, like minor millets, maize and paddy are grown primarily for subsistence;
25. A few specialised crops like Niger, black gram, *arhar*, etc., are grown for exchanges / barter;
26. It facilitates the collection of a number of other items, like fodder, fuel, edible leaves, fruits and shoots, timber, thatching grass, fibre, etc., simultaneously;
27. Edibles collected from and around swidden and food crops grown in swidden help to maintain a balanced diet;
28. The cultivators do not consider it uneconomical as they obtain several other useful items in addition to the cultivated crops;
29. The yield per acre/ unit comparatively less than that from the wet land and plain land cultivation;
30. It is neither profit oriented nor for the accumulation of assets and wealth;
31. It does not run the risk of total crop failure either due to drought or excessive rain as crops ripen one after another at different times within 05 to 06 months;
32. It provides consumable food crops acceptable to the black-smith, the basket-maker, the oilman, the milkman and the potter in exchange of their merchandise;
33. It is functionally linked with the socio-cultural systems of which it is a part and
34. It is still a way of life with a number of inherent advantages in the context of its practices.

The swidden / shifting cultivation continues to be a problem of great concern all over the world in general and Tribal India in particular. On the other hand, the problem of shifting cultivators may vary from community to community. Even in the same community, there may be variation from area to area, and as such all cannot be dealt with a common set of programmes. Thus, before preparing any restorative and ameliorative programme for the swidden cultivators, the micro situations should carefully be studied and properly understood. Implementation of any programme should go hand in hand with follow-up action, so that the achievement of the desired goal is fairly achieved.

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FROM SHIFTING CULTIVATOR TO AGRICULTURIST : THE PAURI-BHUIYAN IN TRANSITION *

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The Pauri Bhuiyan or Hill-Bhuiyan are found in contiguous hill ranges and intervening valleys over a wide area in Western Keonjhar, eastern Bonai, and in adjoining parts of Pallahara and Bamra ex-states. They are one of the major tribes of North Orissa, well known for their attachment to shifting cultivation.

The Pauri are considered as the most primitive, least acculturated section of the great Bhuiyan people found in the state of Orissa, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and elsewhere. In North Orissa there are Hinduized sections of the Bhuiyan known as Khandait Bhuiyan, Rautali Bhuiyan, Kanti Bhuiyan, etc. at various levels of Hinduization. However, all of these Bhuiyan are settled agriculturists and the only group still practicing shifting cultivation till recently were the Desh Bhuiyan or Pauri Bhuiyan.

The Pauri Bhuiyan are, however, not undifferentiated at least on the techno-economic plane. Those who live in hill villages, on convenient flat terrain, have some terraces for rice cultivation, as at Tasra, where the author worked. In a valley, or at the foot hills, a Pauri village might have been firmly rooted for a few generations, cutting terraces or irrigating its lands for wet cultivation. These were rather self-sponsored changes before the Government came in.

The Government of Orissa since the merger of the ex-State have exerted in all manners to stop shifting cultivation, brought a large area under reserved forests, and settled the shifting cultivation or Pauri Bhuiyan and other neighbouring tribes, Bentkar, Cherenga (known also as Erenga) Kolha, and the

* Published in ADIBASI, Vol. VII, No.2, TRB, 1965-66, pp.31-48.

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Juang in Keonjhar in jungle clearings, in the valleys and plateaus. The slow, natural process of emulation of the neighbouring agriculturist castes was thus sought to be reinforced and extended on a large scale, yet urgently, into rather compulsory settlement in agriculturist colonies with all the incentives, assistance and facilities at the command of the Government.

In order to portray this picture of transition from shifting cultivation to agriculture, we require consideration of the techno-economic changes and their concomitant socio-cultural changes and problems at three levels—changes in the hill village, changes in the valley village settled for generations, and changes introduced or induced at the Government-sponsored agriculturist colonies. This author had made some extensive and intensive studies in 1953-54 under the auspices of the Tribal Research Bureau, Orissa, and in 1957 on his own, in south-eastern Bonai round Mahulpada.

In the Hill Village of Tasra

Techno-economic developments in the direction of agriculture in the hill village, Tasra in which the author concentrated, were few but decisive. About 10 terraced plots of settled agriculture had been constructed in Tasara, owned individually almost exclusively by the “Matiali” or first settlers section of the village population. The ‘Para’ had equal rights to widen, jungle and other wastes, but were not always fortunate like the ‘Martial’ people to occupy sizeable plots for kitchen garden or ‘Maize-garden’ But a large number of men and women through their periodic dependence on day-labor in the valley village had acquired a good amount of skill in transplanting paddy as in wet cultivation, and in sloughing as done in the plains. Their economy had come to depend on the nearby markets for selling some cash crops and bartering or purchasing important consumer items like rice and cloth.

In the Valley Village of Derula

The data are mostly based on Derula, supplemented by information on Burhabhuin (south) which I had visited only once in 1954. Derula lies on the left bank of the Kala (kola) river, about 5 kilometers north-east from Mahulpada. The main village has now 3 hamlets: Badbil, composed of colonists from Kunu hill village in the main, Manakhunta, similarly, of colonists from Kamalachua hill village and Sagadia Sahi, composed of Munda, Kolha immigrants. The Pauri Bhuiyan colonists have come down voluntarily, at the earliest, 30 years ago.

Derula is famous for its settled agriculture in low terraces, constructed since 3 generations or thereabouts, and for irrigation channels by damming up the Kala River at two places. This irrigation helps watering the seed-beds of late paddy or transplanting seedlings later on and to meet the threat of drought when the river may be rather full. There are at present three main types of land for use: swidden land free to all villagers and held by the tenure of “corporate village ownership” as village common land and forests, and private ownership in

terrace plots, and in the flat upland or 'gura' land. Swidden cultivation is done as in Tasra, and terrace plots yield only one crop, paddy. But in 'gura' cultivation both plots and crops are changed in rotation to grow 'Kulthi' pulses (leguminous) in the first year, paddy in the second year and sesamum oil-seed in the third year; then for 2 years a plot is kept fallow, followed by burning the bush before cultivating. Mustard and maize are grown as in the hills in gardens, which are now private property to all intents and purposes.

All 'Matiali' families have privately owned agricultural plots while almost all 'Parja' have to depend on swiddens as their main source of livelihood. In 1952 the present Headman's household reaped 1200 Kilo paddy from agriculture and 400 kilo from swidden thus making the contribution of swidden secondary, though substantial, especially in supplying vegetables, millets, oil-seeds, pulses and taro. Besides watching swidden up the hillside makes the job of watching lowland agricultural fields easier, as otherwise the onslaught of the wild animals on lowland agriculture would be too much. Similar, halting function of swidden watching was also referred to by peasants at Mahulpada. As to the question why the Pauri of Derula would not raise vegetables or other crops in the plots which could be irrigated come the problems of fencing and manuring. Moreover, my Bhuiyan informants asserted that all were not agreed on starting such cultivation. If only a few cultivate, others would be jealous and would surely work sorcery against food crop, as the few growers could not possibly satisfy the demands of so many relatives and neighbors. The Gour (milkman) family who lives in Derula and owns and holds on lease a good number of plots, blamed not so much the type of soil, as the Pauri did, but strangely, the black magic of the Bhuiyan. However, the Bhuiyan cited the relatively-no-better crop harvested by the Gour with all his ample cattle-dung manure as the sure proof of the unsuitability of the soil.

On the security of land and cattle one could get loans of paddy at 25 percent interest (simple interest) from the Government paddy granary of 'Dhangaola' at Kumudih. But as most did not have either land or cattle they could not take advantage of this blessed facility. However, private granaries in the valley charged 25 percent or 50 percent compound interest and Derula men were never willing to pay 100 percent compound interest unlike Tasara men. Derula men impressed me as quite aware of the opportunities about them and not slow in exploiting them.

Yet most of the land owners have leased out land at one time or the other on petty loans. In one case for Rs. 10.00 of loan some terrace plots were leased out for 10 years. In another, a "name-sake" ritual friend of Gour caste was cultivating a plot belonging to a Pauri, and by bribing got his rights of ownership established during the next settlement operation. A Gond of Jagati village advanced Rs. 25.00 to a Bhuiyan for right of cultivating a big terrace for only 5 years, but even after 10 years the land was not re-covered in 1954. In such underhand processes some lands are already lost to the Derula Bhuiyan.

The alienation of land was however deliberate in case of certain other villages further north. In "Khesra" forests for use of the villagers at Patamund and Phuljhar the Pauri had made their swiddens for two years and then gave away the cleared land to Mundari immigrants for money, grains and goats for feasting the whole village. At Nagaria village, it was reported, Bhuiyan lands were cultivated by Mundari, Cherenga Kolha and Gond for a nominal tax of Rs. 1.00 per "plough" (land cultivated with a pair of cattle, a conventional measure). In Derula the Mundari Kolha were given the lands round an old site 'Sagadadih', where, the Pauri alleged, tigers took a heavy toll of the Bhuiyan whenever they lived there.

Alarmed at the specter of land-alienation especially by the local Gour and Gond rather than by Munda immigrants, and understanding the value of literacy, especially in interest calculation, execution of deeds & understanding the law, Derula men had approached me for getting a school for Derula through my recommendation. It might be that by having a school they wanted also to gain in prestige among other Pauri villages or to attract visiting officers who ordinarily ended their circuit at Mahulpada. But they were quite clear about their need to check this process of surreptitious land-alienation. The opening of "Gram Panchayat" at Mahulpada gave very handy opportunities for ventilating their grievances against the exploiters in this manner. On the other hand, the power of settling land disputes arising shifted to "Gram Panchayat" from the Village Assembly, which became less effective in disputes between the Bhuiyan and others even lesser, in cases between a Pauri and Gond or Gour.

Living in the valley and having greater contacts with outsiders some villagers have worked in Calcutta and Assam, and some still go to Sarkunda and Ratna mines to work in the winter and early summer. A few caught and sold 'sari' talking-birds travelling up to Chaibasa in Singhbhum and even Midnapore district in West Bengal for about 3 generations, one or two traded in iron axe-blades from Khajuri Khaman in Bamra.

As at Derula, similarly at another valley village Khadka in Pallahara, as also in Budhabhuin (south) in Bonai, almost all the agricultural plots are owned by 'Matiali' sections. As at Tasara, so at Rada in Pallahara, the few terraces made in the hill village also belonged mostly to this dominant section. At Budhabhuin (south) in the narrow valley of a hill stream the difference in wealth was extreme. The 'Sardar' or regional Headman since 1945 (or slightly later) in this village had owned much of the well constructed terraces and buffaloes (much more costly and productive than cows) and had himself made 10 terraces in his life-time. Similar concentration of wealth was evidenced at Derula in one Pauri house and in one of the Gour families.

Apart from a tendency to extremes of wealth in a valley village there are some necessary modifications in the rituals. At Tasara those who have terraces, nonetheless make ceremonial sowing only in the swidden, while at Derula it was

just the reverse. Before transplanting paddy the worship of 'Kadabali' is observed along with the Pauri ceremony of 'Asadhi Puja'. 'DhanNua' or "Eating First Paddy" is observed here slightly more elaborately than at Tasra, but much less elaborately than in other mixed villages, say Kumudhi. 'BishriUsa' was introduced into Derula about 1925-26 as perhaps the first Pauri Bhuiyan village in Mahulpada region of Bonai. The householders celebrate two ceremonies of threshing ground, once for swidden paddy known as 'Gundamanda' and the other time for paddy from low land agriculture called 'Khala Puja', the latter being more elaborate. At the latter ceremony, 'Lachmi', the Hindu goddess of wealth, in popular cult, is worshipped with a sacrifice of white chicken and 'Baram', the tribal deity, with another chicken.

As land has now permanent value through its permanent productivity in settled agriculture, it was just another step from rights of "inheritable use" and "private rights" in scarce lands as at Tasara to completely private ownership in agricultural land as in all settled villages. The lands for making gardens for maize and mustard have, however, not yet become private property, at least in law. The preferential share of the eldest son has, however, not been allowed to extend to inheriting one more plot of agricultural land at Derula. The brothers get equal shares in terraces, and I have no information if the eldest one gets preferential treatment in upland or 'gura' plots. However, the women are as usual disinherited from land.

The development and tendencies evident at Derula and a few other villages in the valley with settled agriculture should be borne in mind for comprehending the changes that may lie in wait for Tasara villagers when they come down. But more obvious, binding, and imminent are the changes that have already occurred in some of the colonies started by the Government in the valley forests.

In the Government Colonies

In this I shall be often referring to my study of Guhalbandha colony which started in 1951-52 as an off-shoot from Tasra. But some data will also be added from other colonies as occasion arises. Much information on the evolving life in the colonies is given by N. Patnaik (1952, 1957) and most of his interpretations meet mine and my observations.

In 1949-50 the first colony was started with Pauri families from Tal and Upar Ginia, many of whom had some settled agriculture but still cutting swiddens. As Patnaik noted in 1950, some of them had "actually left their wives, and others, their sons and brothers to look after the Koman fields and orchards of banana, jackfruit and mango" (1952, p.23). At Guhalbandha only 11 families of Pauri from Tasra in 1951 and in 1952 some Cherenga Kolha in 1952 some Cherenga Kolha and Pauri families from Rengali came to settle down. By 1957 a Bentkar family partrilineally related to Tasra 'Matiali' section had come from Burhabhuin (south), loving somewhat away from the Pauri. Similarly, the few

Cherenga Kolha families live in a separate ward of their own. Settlers from Tasra were given some paddy (9 kilo per individual) and one bullock already in 1950 before coming down. The paddy was meant to be seed but was readily consumed. Next year after taking divinatory precautions as to the suitability of the colony-site the families came down and were given about 20 kilo seed-paddies in April-May per family. The Bhuiyan head-man of Guhalbandha colony as in other colonies was presented a gun to keep away wild beasts, but it stood more as a symbol of prestige and allurements for the others still in the hills. After occupying the colony, house building and extensive shifting cultivation in rotation of plots and crops as in Tasra, were the main activities. Those who had money and some surplus paddy made some lower land into agricultural terrace by raising embankments. Thus the Bhuiyan Headman of Guhalbandha with Rs. 200 saved and borrowed, and about 200 kilo paddy, engaged some Cherenga Kolha and Bhuiyan labourers and could make 2 terraces ready in one year. A somewhat well-to-do 'Paraja' from Tasra had invested, as reported, about Rs. 412.50P., and 1400 kilo paddy between 1951 and 1954 for constructing embankments and terraces in Guhalbandha. This family owned 15 heads of cattle in 1954. As the Government had given one bullock per family and the virgin land required heavy and repeated ploughing, only those who had one or more heads of cattle of their own could hope to carve out some terraces while fully attending to shifting cultivation. When some bullocks from Talcher areas, not adapted to the cooler climate and less sturdy than the shorter Pauri cattle succumbed to diseases and water facilities were worse than at Tasra (where Beljhari rivulet was a perennial source), disappointment and criticism ran high. But with more Government subsidy in grains and a little money and another bullock, by borrowing and saving surplus from extensive swiddens and gardens, the colonists were on the way to meet the challenge of the new life.

Up to 1956 they could cut new swiddens, besides raising new crops like sesamum (*tila*) and 'kulthi' pulses along with paddy and 'gangei' millets in 'gura' or upland, maize, mustard, 'muga' pulses and turmeric in 'bakhuri' or maize garden, and tobacco and gourds in the kitchen garden. In 1957 many had used their third-year swiddens to cultivate 'biri' pulses and 'ruhma' beans, used in an important ritual called 'Nangakhia' (Eating First Fruits), as there was no forest to make new swiddens to raise these traditional crops. Similar reasons had driven colonists from Kunu and Kundla to cut swiddens in their ancestral hill villages, but they could not cultivate there on governmental pressure. This shows how attached the Pauri Bhuiyan indeed were to their shifting cultivation and not a little due to some magi co-religious requirements. If they cannot grow certain early millets like 'kangu' and 'gundli' or the earliest hill maize ripening as early as mid-August to allay their privation, they can now fall back upon the earliest paddy ripening near about the same time on 'gura' land. 'Gura' land requires periodical fallowing for 2/3 years and the jungle is burnt into ashes before being put into use. The cattle-dung manure, formerly given only in the gardens, is now

being required in the gardens as well as in agricultural plots. As this dung is still the main manure used by the Bhuiyan colonists, one wonders how a family with only two heads of cattle could manage to meet the manuring needs. The natural way to way to the increase in cattle is somewhat blocked by the bias of Hindu officials against giving cows as draught cattle. The local shifting cultivators used cows and not only bullocks in swiddens, and later also in agriculture.

The Cherenga Kolha colonists in general depend on their own labour and governmental subsidies and have no reluctance like the Pauri Bhuiyan towards the inevitable heavy earth work involved in reclaiming land for terraces. So they have fared better than those Pauri who had not much capital or cattle. But evidently they could not construct more terraces than those, who had money and cattle. More ever the poorer, both Pauri and Cherenga Kolha, most often could not occupy the lowest and wettest terraces, as they required greater outlay of labour and money for constructing high embankments. Some well-to-do men, much more among the Pauri than among the Cherenga Kolha, have been able to keep one and even 2 'halia' or "hires labourer for a year" and thereby occupy and utilize more land, and thus have grown richer and richer. The number of families keeping such 'halia' has of course increased but rather slowly. Some of these greedy agriculturists must have to give up their not-so-good plots when distribution is made on basis of 5 acres (2 hectares) of wet land and 3 acres of upland (*gura*) per family. It is because of such unregulated land-grabbing and lack of more forests for shifting cultivation, that many Bhuiyan did not believe as early as 1954 the official assertion that there was still more a land for colonists in Daleisara forest clearing.

Thus we find the original Government intention to give equal amount of aid and to allot equal amount of land, and thus to give an equal start to allot equal amount of land, and thus to give an equal start to each colonist family has been belied, simply because in conditions of wealth and skills they were not equal. The Cherenga Kolha were on the poorer but had better skilled in agriculture besides being free from the sentiment against earth-work. We have already noted in Derula and Burhabhuin (south) as elsewhere that settled cultivation had created a class of have-nots in land not given to swiddens, and the concentration of wealth in a few hands was remarkable when compared to condition in Tasra, where differences in holding wealth were never so extreme. Similarly, a few among the Cherenga Kolha, like the Head-man Barchua village with settled agriculture had amassed wealth in land, grains, cows, buffaloes, and pigs. By 1957 this process of concentration of wealth and of widening the economic rift between the poorer and the richer was not merely continued but also appears to have been accelerated in the basis of differentiation in wealth was based both on working hands and a few inherited economic opportunities, in the colony, it was primarily based on the accumulated wealth which a colonist brought with him. After the redistribution of lands this process may be checked but not reversed, as the Government policy is to extend equal (not equitable)

opportunities for all families in the colonies. The process will be checked also because the hires labourers, either Pauri Bhuiyan or Cherenga Kolha will be getting lands on their own rights as colonists somewhere. It remains to be seen how far the present differences in wealth, no longer of territorial and political status as between 'Matiali' and 'Parja' sections in the hills, may be crystallized and ramified into other aspects of life to create something like social classes. But at presents there are two economical classes in the colonies, obvious also to the colonists themselves.

We may now follow other developments one by one.

In the field of technology of agriculture a few skills, like ploughing in the round instead of along the contour and downwards as in the hills or thinning out of paddy and transplanting, had to be learnt. As many of the Pauri Bhuiyan colonists and all Cherenga Kolha had known them, it was not a great handicap. The real handicap, even in 1957, appeared to be the stumps of trees and the infinite number of small rocks that were to be seen everywhere in there claimed plots. The plough now lost its string arrangement with the yoke for coping with the intervening boulders as in the hill swiddens, and the pick or 'garden' used in rocky place, inaccessible to plough had little use in agriculture. The hoe is not used in the corners of the field where the plough does not reach.

In house-building, the tendency is to construct stronger houses with door-panels made of wooden planks instead of bamboo wickerwork as in the hills. This is consonant with more private property and larger stores to be securely locked. The Bachelors Dormitory was the best and spacious building in Guhal-bandha in marked contrast to its dilapidated condition in Tasra in 1957. The front verandah of houses tends to be wider. Only a few Pauri outside Guhalbandha have constructed roofs with 'khapra' or country made tiles learnt from Cherenga Kolha neighbors.

In settlement pattern there has been the most significant change in having a linear pattern with houses on both sides of a wide and often straight street. The village deities stay in a sacred grove. Villagers had begun planting jack fruit and mango trees right since their occupation. The streets are kept daily clean, though garbage might be scattered in the back yard of the houses. The colonies are inter-connected with roads.

Coming to other aspects of material culture, lighting arrangements seem to be universal with tin kerosene lamps and at least 8 hurricane lanterns in Guhalbandha colony, although away from the main road running between Mahulpada and Bonaigarh. Cloth umbrellas are owned by almost all families. In Guhalbandha the said well-to-do 'Parja' from Tasra even boasts of a pair of shoes. A few others like the Headman of Daleisara colony also wear shoes. Except a few older men, all wear ready-made shirts and the cloth of men most often

reaches beyond the knees. Soaps and 'bidi' or small leaf-cigarettes in place of home-made 'kahali' leaf-cigars are coming into greater use.

The food has become less balanced than in the hills, because there is more rice, a little vegetable, but more pulses and much less meat or fish. After the swidden phase is over, not much millet will be available for beer, which will now be made more from rice and the men will grow more dependent on distilled liquor. Similarly, the varieties of vegetables grown in swidden will no longer be available and only a few households have papaya or banana. Hunting is rather infrequent and mostly restricted to the ceremonial hunting and is rarely successful. For fishing there is no longer a stream nearby. Vegetables and dried fish will have to be purchased. Collection of jungle fruits leaves and tubers, flowers, and honey will be progressively more difficult as the jungle is shrinking away. However, it is an exaggeration to say "Tubers were available in abundance and they were, living on this food", without the qualification that tubers were the primary food in privation months only (Patnaik, 1957, p.12). On the other hand, the observation, "Meals are cooled two times daily" in the colonies, which was not always possible in the hills, is correct. "No difficulty of water" in hill villages is not borne out by examples of Tasra and Hatisul; at Hatisul villagers had to descend a long way down in the summer for drinking water.

In the economic life there has been the net result of production of rice surplus, and a sharp decrease in quantity and variety of cash crops. This has been partly compensated by recourse to day-labour and working at the mines at Barsuan in the winter and early summer. This dependence on wage labour has the tendency to increase, as the colonists require more and more money as their needs swell and as they get more leisure after the swidden-cum-reclamation phase is over. We have already seen at Tasra that lending paddy was not a dream and that there was some surplus of paddy, however insecure this surplus may be, supported as it was partly on supply of fruits, taro and yams. Also contrary to Patnaik's information (1957, p.12) it was sometimes possible to hire annual labourers (*halia*) at Tasra. This was possible under two conditions: firstly, the household had some surplus the previous year to feed the extra hand, and secondly, this extra hand always produced more than he got by way of food and a pair or more of cloths. But in a colony he got food, a pair of cloths and paddy up to 100 kilo. Even then this rate seems to be much less than what the same labourer would have got from a plainsman (non-Bhuiyan or non-Cherenga Kolha). The remuneration according to my information in the plain consists of daily rations, a pair of cloths, and paddy from 300 to 400 kilo. Judged from this rate, it looks as if it were exploitation in the colonies and in the hills. However, in the hills one household of average economic standing had taken one annual labourer for help in shifting cultivation while in other cases sometimes a young man earning half-wages only is spared for job. What is of great importance in the hills or even in the colonies is that the annual labourer is, as a rule, of the same ethnic group as the employer and in many ways socially connected with the

latter and lives as a member of the household. The more thoroughly economic relations between a plainsman employer and an ethnically outsider 'halia' is simply not possible in the hills, and to a large extent in the colonies. Another change in economic life may be the use of surplus rice as a cash earning commodity, which was never possible in the hills. Already some dehusked rice has been sold to the official at Daleisara. Further it looks as if a cowherd caste man, appointed by colonists to tend the cattle, is going to be a permanent village servant, unlike in the hills. Moreover, "reciprocal co-operative labour" or "bajakama" was used scarcely in the colony in the phase of shifting cultivation and has, it is alleged, stopped completely now. In its place day-labour at the usual wages current in the plains is being taken to. It is probable that the attitude of reluctance towards day-labour and work a mine will change in the near future. Day-labour may become indifferent in prestige value as the avocation of the majority.

The womenfolk seem to be contributing less to the economy, as forest collections has lost its importance, and also have much fewer opportunities here as contrasted with the hills. This means that they are going to be more dependent on their men folk economically. As it is men who hold individual rights on land, lone widow have no longer a household of their own.

It is too early to discern changes in the socio-political life. Yet some trends are clear. In the beginning in colonies a family with more working hands was in an advantageous position to attend to shifting cultivation and land reclamation. In 1957 when records of land were going to be made and every family was to get a fixed quota of lands the married brothers and sons and even unmarried but grown up sons tried to set up their own households. Among them were some 'halia' or annual labourers. Thus in 1957 there were at least 20 young men married and unmarried, clamoring for land and of them only 4 had some lands below their quota. As the opportunity for getting a fixed quota of private land comes only once at a time of settlement in the colony, and there is no shifting cultivation as a flexible source of livelihood, the tendency seems to be premature separation of dependent families or adults. Lone widows have to live with their daughter's husbands or other male relatives, instead of having their own households as at Tasra.

As all the colonists have come together to an unoccupied area, where there are no 'Matiali' privileges in socio-political status. But the 'Matiali' section of the mother-village retains the posts of Headman and Priests as usual. Although 'Dihabandhani' ceremony (village site foundation day) is still observed, one of its main purposes, that is, admission of new 'Parja' and reassurance of loyalty of the old 'Parja' have lost their meaning. But the Pauri as a whole have gained some political power over the Cherenga Kolha and the few Bentkar colonists. The Pauri being in the majority, the whole scheme was mainly to bring them down and permanent officials give more weight to the Pauri Bhuiyan in all affairs of colony life. The Cherengas are untouchables of lower

status. At Guhalbandha colony, where they live away from the Bhuiyan, the domination of the latter is more obvious than in the exclusively Cherenga colonies with their own headman and priests. At Guhalbandha they are asked to contribute for 'Debi Usa' and perhaps many other festivities of the Pauri Bhuiyan, while the Pauri do not contribute anything in their rituals. This has been so for three reasons. Firstly, the Cherenga had come to settle one year or more later than the Bhuiyan of Tasra who all came in a group, thus becoming numerically the majority and dominant group, supplying the headman and the priests. Secondly, the Cherenga had always acknowledged the Bhuiyan as the lords of the land and themselves as their "Paraja" rather figuratively, so much so that in Mahulpada valley they won't collect thatch-grass before the Bhuiyan did, where the interests clashed. Thirdly, the PauriBhuiyan has always worshipped the village deities in the valley village of Jagati, Mahulpada, Barchua, Rengali and Kumudhi, where formerly the Cherenga Kolha lived. I suspect the Pauri Bhuiyan of Daleisara colony has similar status of dominance over the Cherenga Kolha of Ratakhandi colony nearby. Incidentally, Patnaik has always referred to the Cherenga Kolha of the colonies as "Munda", as they speak a Mundari language (1957).

Patnaik has rightly pointed to the weakening position of the Headman and senior priests in the colonies (1957, p.13). But he does not fully explain the situation when he says, "The causes of their ineffectiveness in the village are obviously due to contacts with outside people and the gradual breakdown of the village solidarity after wet cultivation has been introduced" (Ibid. p, 13). In the next sentence, he implies village solidarity is impaired, as in "Wet cultivation (agriculture) economic interdependence and constant (frequent) need for co-operation are not necessary as they are in the cultivation of 'biringa' (Kaman or shifting cultivation)." (Brackets enclose the terms preferred). Sharing cattle and implements and co-operative labour are not necessary or possible in the colony as the governmental help and the insistent need for reclaiming land by each household for its private exploitation have made a household autonomous and acquisitive to that extent. On the other hand, the older pattern of celebrating village rituals and festivals, communal partnership groups for arranging them, collective hunting expeditions, however few, and the bachelors' dormitories in the colony and even having the institution of 'Priests Granary' or 'Dehuria Dhana" in Kunutola and Jhinkar Ghaira colonies (from Kunu and Kundla hill-villages) show that the old village solidarity is still much preserved. However, the custom of joint cultivation of a swidden by the young men and maidens of a colony for their own common interest, as in hill villages, was preserved till forests were available to make swiddens. As the land was reduced intoprivately owned agricultural plots, this automatically stopped. In this instance, the village or colony solidarity of the young persons suffered heavy economic and social deprivation due to conditions of agriculture. The threat to village solidarity came also from two other sources. Firstly, some colonies, Guhalbandha and Ekpadi,

are composed of people from two, three or even more villages. Moreover, a few colonies like Guhalbandha may be composed of two or more tribes, Pauri, Cherenga and Bentkar. In this condition colonies present different physical composition from the old exclusive Pauri village. When Pauri colonists from a hill village have stayed in an exclusive colony they have preserved even 'Dehuria Dhana', pointing to the solidarity of, and surviving allegiance to, the 'Matiali' section of these villages. Secondly, unlike in a hill village, the colonists are not bound to pay allegiance to any definite section in the colony for the rights in land and other facilities. All are given equal chances, theoretically, and all owe loyalty directly to the Government, represented by their visiting officers. There is no solid dominant 'Matiali' section having first rights and no clustering of the 'Parja' round it, and hence the political component of the old village solidarity will be lacking. Where the fiction of this old relationship of 'Matiali-Parja' persists, because of a total transplantation of the village, in that case the old village solidarity appears to hold on in the colony. Thus, both the decrease in old village solidarity and the weakening of the position of former Headman of a Pauri village-in fact the spokesman and leader of the 'Matiali' section, among the colonists, may be rather explained in terms of the altered political and economic status derived wholly from outside authority and outside traditional territory, and not merely in terms of settled agriculture and "contacts without side people" as such. Fundamentally for this reason, reinforced by direct and daily contacts with the authority of Government officials, visiting or stationed at Daleisara colony, the old position of the Headman and Priests in the colony will be impaired still more. That my interpretation of dynamics of this change is basically sound is supported by Patnaik's following observation in 1950, when shifting cultivation was in full swing at Daleisara colony. "The position of Naek (Headman) is already being lowered and his voice is becoming less and less effective in the management of village affairs. (1952, p.24).

Coming to the ritual life, we find the colonists prone to observe the ceremonial sowing preferably in the low land (terrace) plots, as at Derula, and only if they do not have any, then in a 'gura' or upland plot, the last choice being the swidden. The agriculture (lowland or upland) has been given the highest ritual importance even when a swidden was there. At Tasra we have seen always this ceremony was observed in a swidden even when a man cultivated a terrace plot. At Tasra 'Makar' or the first day of solar Magh (January-February) was not celebrated in any way. But at Guhalbandha (and in other colonies) on this Hindu festival day-time work was stopped and the colony went out hunting.

For meeting the colonists' needs, a Government shop stocks all sorts of things from clothes, utensils to luxury articles and maintains a free Dispensary with a Compounder. The patients are not only the Pauris and other colonists but also the officials stationed at places upto Mahulpada and the nearby villagers. Even if no proportion of the Pauri Bhuiyan patients is given, I may accept Patnaik's assumption that the main body of the invariably high number of

patients of digestive diseases came from the Pauri population. But these Pauris then are from amongst the colonists and only rarely from the hills as I know from my personal experiences and also from the Compounder. If the digestive patients be mainly from among the colonists, both Pauri and Cherenga Kolha, as is more probable, the reason seems to be not far. Patnaik has already noted that the colonists did not grow vegetables (1957, p.8). I was told at Derula that without shifting cultivation they might not have enough vegetables and this was confirmed from Tasra. Without vegetables and fruits and with a rather exclusively rice diet it is quite possible that the colonists suffered from digestive troubles. That a change from shifting cultivation to settled low land or terrace cultivation is at the cost of growing vegetables is also evident from the Abor Hills, Assam, according to Dr. B.S. Guha.

Lastly, not to leave a very important change in the field of education, it must be pointed out that colonization has opened the gate to literacy and a wider mental horizon for the younger generation. A Sevashram school of Lower Primary standard was established soon after the starting of the Daleisara colony on the 24th January 1950. Another Sevashram school now extended to a higher standard was opened on the 19th March 1952 at Dhokamunda. Mostly boys attend the schools. Children are spared reluctantly by parents for studies, more so in the case of girls. It appears not only that the Pauri Bhuiyan and the Cherenga Kolha are not convinced of the benefits of literacy and school education especially for the girls, but also that the economic demands of the family on the school-age children are as yet heavy.

Conclusion

The changes and trends outlined above were observed and inferred on data available till 1957 and it is necessary to find out how much of these have got crystallized, or been arrested and even replaced, through all these years.

Comprehensive analysis of changes attendant on changeover to agriculture can be undertaken only when natural history of some colonies, exclusively Pauri Bhuiyan and other composite one, is compiled.

The paper has been a preliminary attempt to trace the changes and trends of development by supplying a sketch of the natural history of Government-sponsored colonies for shifting cultivators.

Nonetheless, a few denotative conclusions given below on the process of change from shifting cultivation to agriculture do emerge in our study. It was not our objective to single out the various causative factors in these changes, but rather to chart the course of associated changes in the socio-cultural-economic set up. For validation of these conclusions we may not only turn to older colonies in the area, but also to the newer ones. One of the latter is a colony started in 1959 by the villagers till sticking to shifting cultivation in Tasra hill village, a few miles

away from Guhalbandha established in 1951-52 by a feeler group from Tasra. This author expects to study this colony in the near future.

1. In spite of initial reserve and suspicion of the Government intentions, the shifting cultivators have gradually accepted living in colonies. This has hastened the process of change-over to agriculture already taking roots in their self-sponsored attempts in the valley villagers and even in the hill villagers to a limited extent.
2. Whereas in their old villages, almost all of the agricultural plots were occupied by the 'Matiali' section, in Government colonies all irrespective of 'Matiali' or 'Paraja' status got equal shares in reclaimed land.
3. In the valley villages private property rights in agricultural land were first recognized and enforced by the state and in the Government colonies these were further extended, as all cultivable lands, were privately owned. Co-operative labour and other forms of co-operation lost their importance. Due to differential size of holding of land in the valley village as also in the early phase of settlement in the colonies, economic opportunities tended to be concentrated in a few families. Thus, a category of well-to-do farmers gradually emerged, which may form an incipient economic class, un-known in the hills.
4. In view of the Government's practice of allocating land to individual families, irrespective of their being nuclear or joint families, there has been a tendency for grown up sons to part from their parents much earlier than in the hills.
Lone widows can no longer maintain a household of their own, as in the hills, because land is owned only by male heads of families.
5. The authority of the Headman and Priests, as well as the village solidarity declined, primarily because the 'Matiali' section did not enjoy pre-eminent position as first settlers. Land being granted now by the Government composite, heterogeneous colonies tended to go against village solidarity.
6. The Pauri Bhuiyan as a whole gained higher political status in the process of decision making and in showing the benefits and facilities when compared with other tribes who came to settle down in the colonies.
7. The tendency of the Pauri Bhuiyan to consider themselves as a clean Hindu caste obtained further impetus in the valley and colonies, as in rituals, economic activities, dress, housing, education, etc., they could in that area.

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'Matiali' are descendants of first settler' in a village, while 'Parajas' are the immigrants incorporated in the village.

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HUNTING AMONG THE PAURI BHUINYAS OF KUIRA, SUNDERGARH DISTRICT *

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The Bhuinyas

The Bhuinyas are one of the few tribes whose different branches represent various stages of cultural evolution from the more or less primitive culture of Hill Bhuinyas to the Hinduised plains Bhuinyas. Some of the Zamindars in plains Bhuinya families claim Rajput or Kshyatriya descent. The Bhuinyas have an extensive distribution of varying numerical strength over a number of States like Bengal, Bihar, Assam, Chhotnagpur and Orissa, etc.

In Orissa they are found chiefly in two different stages of cultural development i.e. the most primitive Hill or Pauri Bhuinyas of Keonjhar, Bonai and Pallahara, on one hand and more advanced plains Bhuinyas of Bamra and Gangapur on the other.

The name "Bhuinya" seems to have been derived from the Sanskrit term "Bhumi" meaning "land". Hence the Bhuinyas claim themselves either as the autochthons of the land or as the owners of the land. They have a legend to support their association with the land which tells how the Bhuinyas took one of the jars presented to them by Dharam Devta at the time of the creation of Earth and opening the jar they found that it was full of earth. So they treated Earth to be their wealth and called themselves Bhuinyas. They thus developed such strong ties with the land that it was considered to be most sacred and was revered more than the mother. The oath taken in serious trials by the Bhuinyas is started by touching the earth only. It is believed that if one takes false oath by holding soil in his hand he soon dies and becomes a part of the soil.

* Published in ADIBASI, 1964-65, Vol. VI, No. 2, 1964, pp.57-62

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Judging from their racial and cultural aspects, the Bhuinyas are included in the 'Kol' group by Mr. Stirling, Russell, Hutton and Grierson. In Orissa, the Bhuinyas number 1,56,878 with their different sections and various names. In Sundargarh, the Pauri Bhuinyas are among seven such sections of the Bhuinya tribe. In order of their social hierarchy such sections are known as Rajkuli Bhuinya, Saunti Bhuinya, Rautali Bhuinya, Kanti Bhuinya, Mal Bhuinya, Pauri Bhuinya and Bathduli Bhuinya. It is very difficult to estimate the distinguishing features between such sections. But only non-acceptance of cooked food and the prohibition of marital relations between the sections are the two important features to distinguish the various sections of the tribe. The last section, namely Bathuduli Bhuinyais considered to be a separate tribe and the rest of the population may be broadly categorized under plains Bhuinyas and Pauri (Hill) Bhuinyas. Socially, economically and culturally, the latter lead a backward life, least affected by the Hindu culture as the plains people and their name indicates that they dwell on the hills (Pahar).

Population and Distribution

The population figure of Bhuinyas is 1,56,878 according to 1961 Census, those are distributed over the various districts as follows:-

Table showing the distribution of Bhuinya Population in Orissa

Sl	Name of the District (undivided)	Male	Female	Total
1.	Keonjhar	26,478	26208	52686
2.	Sundargarh	22664	22504	45168
3.	Mayurbhanj	14966	14650	29616
4.	Sambalpur	10339	10256	20595
5.	Dhenkanal	1065	1680	3465
6.	Kalahandi	1063	1045	2108
7.	Balasore	551	615	1166
8.	Cuttack	536	450	986
9.	Koraput	187	177	364
10.	Puri	176	171	347
11.	Bolangir	110	49	159
12.	Phulbani	20	18	38
13.	Total	79055	77823	56878

The Bhuinyas have lost their own language and now speak a form of Oriya, which has a peculiar pronunciation.

The Article

The present article describes the methods of hunting among the Pauri Bhuinyas of Kuirra in Sundargarh district. The article aims at analyzing the

importance of hunting in the socio-economic life of the Bhuinyas and in bringing forth the change of traditional traits associated with hunting. The article is based on the data collected by interviewing the Pauri Bhuinyas of Kuira and by witnessing a hunting ceremony in Jaldih.

Hunting

Bows and arrows constitute the only hunting implements of the Bhuinyas. Whenever a Pauri goes out, he takes a bow and a bunch of arrows with him just to protect himself in the jungle. On his way amidst thick forest, he may meet some prey and may kill it, but this may not be strictly viewed as hunting. Besides, on an off day, if a Bhuinya occasionally goes in search of a hunt all by him, this phenomenon of individual hunting will be regarded with least attention in Bhuinya society.

The communal hunting expeditions reveal interesting features of social, economic and religious life of Bhuinya. *Akhani Paridhi*, the annual hunting festival marks the first day of hunting for the Bhuinyas. It is held on the third day of the moon (*AkshayaTirtia*) in the month of *Chait* (March-April).

The preceding evening, the *Naek* (the village head man) meets the villagers in the *Darbar* (dormitory house) and informs about the commencement of *Akhani Paridhi* on the following day. The men who wish to join in hunting observe continence and sleep away from their wives on the forenoon. Early in the morning, all assemble in the *Darbar* armed with their bows and arrows and with drums and sticks to drive out the games. The hunters bring seven bows, seven arrows, two chickens and offering materials like *Akata* (husked paddy) and turmeric powder and give them to the *Naek*. The *Naek* worships the *Dharam Devta* (Sun God), *Basuki* (Earth Goddess), *Gaisiri* (Village deity) and *Boramat* the outskirts of the village and slaughters two chickens in their honour. He sprinkles the blood on the bows and arrows and prays "Today we are celebrating the *Akhani Paridhi*, let the hunters meet all sorts of games on their way and let them be able to shoot down all". He also burns some incense and tobacco to please the forest and hill spirits (*Baghias* and *Bauiti*) to ensure success in hunting. The offered chickens are burnt and the persons joining the hunting party are given little of such meat to eat before they start on hunting.

The only method adopted by the Bhuinyas in communal hunting is beating at the bushes and driving the animals. After reaching in the jungle the party splits off into two groups. The daring and fearless persons having hunting reputation in the past are selected as *Ghatias*. They sit on key places through which the animals are expected to pass and hide themselves behind the trees. The rest of the party beat at the bushes, shout at the peak of their voice, throw stones and make peculiar noises to drive the animal towards the

Ghatias. As soon as the game runs near by the *Ghatias*, they shoot it down by their bows and arrows. When the game is bagged, the *Dihuri* (the village priest) or any elderly man (in the absence of the *Dihuri*) takes some of the blood of the hunted animal and offers it to the *Dharam Devta*, *Basuki*, *Gaisiri*, *Boram*, *Bautis* and *Baghias* and prays - "There we offering the first blood of the slain animal. May we attain success in hunting in future." The man whose arrow kills the animal also takes some blood from the game and offers to his family ancestors praying for the success in future hunting.

After the animal is slain all go to the *Naek's* house with the game. They are greeted by the ladies who wash the feet of the hunters with turmeric water, anoint their forehead and chin with turmeric powder and kiss them.

The meat is cut down into pieces except the head of the animal, one loin, and hind quarter. One of the boys comes down secretly from a corner and imitates the gait of the slain animal. He is beaten by the leg of the animal on his back and is given the leg portion to fry and eat. Before the meat is distributed, some meat, the brain and hearts of the animal are fried on ember and offered to the deities on *Jamu* leaves. Such offering is made thrice, i.e. on behalf of the persons who participated in the hunt, on behalf of the hunter whose arrow killed the animal and on behalf of the *Barabhai* (villagers).

The two hind quarters of the game are presented to the *Naek* as *Akhani Bheti* (presentation of the hunt) and one of the loins is offered to the hunter. The rest of the meat is equally divided in two shares. One share is equally distributed between all the members who joined in the hunting party and the other share is equally distributed between all the families of the village.

The *Naek*, in return, rewards the hunter with a cloth of ten cubits if a *Sambar*, or pig or a deer is shot, and a *gamcha* (napkin) for a *Kutra* (barking deer). In lieu of the cloth, he may give twelve *annas* (coins) for the long cloth and four *annas* for the napkin. Besides, he offers a basketful of rice cakes to the members of the party both in successful and unsuccessful hunting.

The ceremonial hunting is observed for three consecutive days, i.e. the first day being the *Naek's* day, the second day for the *Dihuri* and the last day for the *Barabhai* (villagers). The similar procedures are followed on all the days except that the *Naek* presents the party with a basketful of rice cakes on the first day to carry with them to the forest and the village ladies offer *mandia* (millets) cakes and rice cakes on the third day, i.e., the last day.

Conclusion

A study of the hunting practices of the Pauri Bhuinyas and the associated rites and rituals throws much light on the various aspects of their life and culture. It tends to unfold the beliefs and systems of the people on the one hand

and throws a light on varying obligations between the members of different units of their social organization. The specific points of interest can briefly be stated in the following:-

- 1) Hunting is more a religious observance than a quest of food for the Bhuinyas. The Bhuinyas lead a lonely life on the hills surrounded by countless forest and hill spirits. To be safeguarded by these spirits, it is essential to please them at least once a year by the sacrifices and offerings. Hence, the Bhuinyas observe the ceremonial hunting of *Akhani Paridhi* to avert the ill-will of the spirits and to please them by hunting some animals and offering their blood.

For a successful hunting ritual, the Bhuinyas observe a series of taboos to maintain purity and sanctity. The persons whose wives are continuing with their menstruation cycle are neither allowed to join the hunting party, nor do they come to watch the ritual performed at the outskirts of the village to ensure success in hunting. On the previous night of the *Akhani Paridhi* day, the persons desirous of joining in the hunting party observe strict continence and sleep in a separate bed away their wives. Just before starting for hunting, the persons should not see the face of the menstruating ladies, which may spoil the chance of success in hunting.

The *Naek* also observes continence on the previous night so as to enable himself to perform the ritual for the success in the hunting in the next morning. He offers fowls, husked rice and turmeric powder to the deities and bribes the spirits by burning incense and tobacco for a successful hunt.

- 2) The various rites and rituals associated with hunting reflect the beliefs and systems of the Pauri Bhuinyas. Segregation of women from the hunting rituals is based on the idea that the presence of menstruating ladies will avert the spirits and the deities and may result in unsuccessful hunting. Hence, every precaution is taken to avoid the ladies during the hunting expedition. Women, being the weaker sex, cannot very well practically go for hunting, but more particularly the fact that they suffer from periodical pollution which debars their privilege to be associated with hunting.

The Bhuinyas believe in the casual relation between successful hunting and bumper harvest. According to them successful hunting during *Akhani Paridhi* indicates a rich harvest in the current year, and this belief keeps them alert to safeguard all the evils obstructing success in hunting.

- 3) To ensure successful hunting, the Pauri believes in performing sympathetic magical rites. The two chickens sacrificed by the *Naek* just before the party starts on hunting is believed to contain the spiritual power of the gods and godlings to whom these are offered and if the members of the party eat a

bit of such meat they soon possess such power and may thus be able to slay any game they meet.

The blood of the chickens, after sacrifice, is also believed to carry such power and hence, the *Naek* sprinkles it on seven bows and arrows just to help in successful hunting.

The arrow which kills the animal is brought out from the body of the prey and is never washed in water. The bloodstained arrow-head is left to dry out. By doing so it is believed that the arrow would always kill more games in future and would remain bloodstained forever.

After the game is killed and before the meat is distributed, one of the members of the hunting party acts like the slain animal and imitates its gait. Crawling down he comes from a corner and passes by before the hunters. One of the members of the hunting party takes a leg of the game and hits the imitator's back with it. This signifies that in future hunting, no game can escape the notice of the hunter and the hunters will be able to kill all the animals they meet.

Before distribution of meat, the brain, hearts and some meat is roasted and shares are offered to the spirits and the deities for whose favour they had a success in hunting. The meat thus offered is considered sacred and is believed to carry the "power". The husbands of the menstruating ladies are not allowed to eat such meat. If any outsider eats such meat the real hunting power is believed to be transmitted to his body and the villagers may not have the good luck to have more success in hunting.

- 4) Hunting is a perfect occasion where one can notice the interplay of social relations. It is purely a communal affair, which involves cooperation of all the villagers. Each village has to hunt within its boundary demarcated from the time of the Raja. Since, successful hunting indicates rich harvest; it becomes the duty of all the villagers to try heart and soul to make the hunting expedition a success. Generally, each family deposes one or more of its male members to participate in hunting and it is the responsibility of the village women to collect *mandia* (millets) and paddy from all the houses and prepare cakes for the party on the third day of the *Akhani Paridhi*.

Distribution of meat is made keeping in view the social and political life of the village. The hunter must get an extra share for his ability to kill the prey, but *Naek*, the head of the village, gets two hind quarters by dint of his status and authority in the village. The *Dihuri* (the village priest) is not given any special portion of meat, but is always given an extra amount for holding an office in the village. All the families get shares of meat whether any of its male members participated in the hunting or not.

Getting extra meat, on part of the *Naek* is more of prestige value because the cost he has to bear for returning the gift of cloth and cakes to the hunters is much more than the actual cost of the meat he gets. It may also be noted that *Naek* does not eat all the meat he gets as a special share. This meat is divided into three shares. He distributes one share between the families of his closer lineage group and gives the final share to rest of the families of the village. The hunter also distributes some meat from his special share between the families of his closer lineage group.

Recent Changes in Hunting Practices

In course of time the Bhuinyas are getting more modern in their outlook and are dropping out their customs and traditions associated with hunting. Some of the Bhuinyas have managed to acquire guns and are hunting games on their own sweet will. Hunting is gradually becoming more individualistic in nature. The man having a gun may give little meat to his villagers but he sells the major portion of the game and gets money for it.

Another marked change is noticed in the attitude of the Pauris for hunting. In the old days, jungle was thick and the games were plenty all around. Hence, the chances of success in hunting was far greater than in the present days when most of the jungle around the Bhuinya country are getting depleted for shifting cultivation and the wild animals are rapidly decreasing. These difficulties, however, have least affected the age old beliefs of the people and they still observe the hunting ceremony with all its detail. Posts of new leaders have been created in the village, but the new leaders are not given special shares of meat in hunting. The *Naek* continues to enjoy his traditional status in the village and gets the hind quarters of the slain animal as usual. The amount of reward the *Naek* used to give to the hunter has, however, been increased. Since, the price of the cloth which was costing twelve *annas* in the good old days has now been increased to two to three rupees, the *Naek* now offers two rupees in lieu of the cloth instead of the twelve *annas* he used to pay in the past.

The hunting customs and practices of the Pauri Bhuinyas, as described in this article, however, does not apply to the life of the plains Bhuinyas and is different from the Pauri Bhuinyas of Bhuinyapirh of Keonjhar, Dhenkanal and Mayurbhanj districts, but the general trend may be almost identical.

IMPACT OF EVOLVING FOREST POLICY AND PLANNED DEVELOPMENT ON INDIGENOUS PEOPLE IN ORISSA : THE CASE OF PAURI BHUINYAS *

*N. K. Behura*¹

The Bhuinya is one of the most widespread tribes found in the States of Assam, West Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. The Bhuinya tribe can be classified into two broad sections on the basis of geographical area, such as, the Northern section and the Southern section. The Northern section has its main concentration in Bihar and the Southern section has its concentration in Orissa. The Bhuinya population in Orissa as per 1981 census is 207,793 (Male 103,048 and Female 104,745).

In Orissa the Bhuinyas mostly live in the districts of Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Sundergarh and Sambalpur. They mainly inhabit the Eastern-Ghat hill range which transverses through these districts in North-South direction. There are as many as fifteen types of Bhuinyas, and the Pauri or hill Bhuinya of Northern Orissa appear to be the most numerous and primitive section depending wholly or mostly on shifting cultivation. The present study is on Pauri Bhuinyas of Keonjhar and Sundargarh. Field study has been conducted among the Pauri Bhuinyas in four villages, two in each district during 1988.

Identity and Self-image

As regards identity and self-image, the views of the Pauri Bhuinyas conform to the general pattern of creation stories of other tribes of the State. They believe that the creator, Dharam Devta, existed before all else on earth. From the ocean arose the earth and Dharam Devta created a man and woman out of the mud the first couple was killed by a tiger created by the God and

* Published in ADIBASI, Vol. XXX, 1990, Nos 2&3, pp. 5 -15

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their blood was used to steady the earth. The ancestors of the Bhuinya emerged out of mother earth: and therefore the tribe is named as Bhuinya or earth-born. The appellation also suggests that they are autochthones or children of the soil or *Bhumi* or *Bhuin*. The term Pauri refers to hill, and thus Pauri Bhuinya means the Bhuinyas that live on the hills.

As they lived in hilly and forest ecosystem, their dependence on forest was nearly complete. Forest not only influenced their livelihood, but also shaped their personality, world-view and ideology.

Forest and the Tribals in Orissa

In the past relationship between the forest and the tribals was very intimate as the latter lived in or around forests. Tribals used to think that they were the owners of the forests because before the formulation of the forest policy they managed and freely exploited the forest resources.

The traditional tribal mode of exploitation of forests has been halted due to rapid deforestation. The report of the National Remote Sensing Agency (N.R.S.A), released in mid-1984, makes some disturbing revelations. It shows that while in 1972-75, 16.89 per cent of the total land area of the country was under forest cover, by 1980-82 it had dwindled to 14.10 per cent, that is, a loss of 2.79 per cent during the seven-year period. The total tree cover in 1972-75 was 55.52 million hectares, while in 1980-82 it came down to 46.35 million hectares, i.e., a total loss of 9.17 million hectares. This indicates that India has been losing on an average 1.3 million hectares of forests every year. During this period Orissa witnessed deforestation of 9 lakh hectares (*Fernandes*, 1988:3). In Orissa the *percapita* forest area is 0.2576 hectares (N.R.S.A., 1982: 8-9) only.

The impact of the massive deforestation may be seen in three sets of interdependent factors:

(a) the environmental factor, that is, the country is threatened with inevitable ecological imbalance (b) the human or social factor, that is, restricted access and non-availability of forest produce which brings misery to that section of population which traditionally depended on forests and (c) development factor, that is, economic growth of the country is effected by the non-availability of forest based raw materials. However, environmental issue is more important than the development issue.

The availability of forests is decreasing every day in India, while the requirements are mounting. For instance, nearly 80 per cent of the country's population use firewood as their principal domestic fuel, and it accounts for, 70 percent of all the varieties of fuel used for cooking.

Major Causes of Deforestation

Population pressure is a predominant factor of deforestation. It is often alleged that the local inhabitants destroy the forests for their various needs. No doubt they as forest dwellers collect timber, bamboo, firewood and minor forest produce, apart from hunting birds and animals from the forest. Some of the tribal communities do practice swidden or shifting cultivation and some persons mention this as a major cause of deforestation. Such people certainly underestimate the impact of industries which take to large scale tree felling to meet their requirements of raw materials. This is being done with the approval of the government; and not only this, government also encourages reclamation of forests for revenue requirements, agriculture, and rehabilitation of displaced persons and for several development purposes. Thus deforestation is caused by a combination of factors. The forest dwellers get the brunt of the accusation most because they do not have access to the mass media so as to defend themselves. The Pauri Bhuinyas are also victims of depletion of forest resources and the evolving forest policy of the government.

Traditional Economy

The traditional economy of the Pauri Bhuinyas is an undifferentiated one. It consists of a variety of activities, and includes gathering, collecting of edible items from the forest, hunting, fishing, pastoralism, shifting cultivation and plain land cultivation. In the past their dependence on gathering, hunting and shifting cultivation was more, because the environment was bounteous and there was no restriction on their use of the forest even a few decades ago. With the shrinkage of vegetational cover, degradation of forests, depletion of forest resources and progressive imposition of restrictions on forests the Bhuinyas are very much hard pressed like other tribal groups with regard to gathering, hunting and practice of shifting cultivation. Due to the lack of alternative resources forest dwelling tribal communities are being impoverished. Fernandes writes: "It is estimated that during the last decade the number of Orissa tribals below the poverty line has increased from 50 percent to 85 percent (1988:21). About 60 percent of the total population of Orissa lives below the poverty line compared to the national average of 48 percent. Several factors can be attributed to this phenomenon. But an important factor is the imposition of growing restrictions on the use of forests. However, this is inevitable in view of the fact that India has been losing on an average 1.3 million hectares of forests every year. Therefore alternative sources of income will have to be provided to the tribals.

Shifting cultivation is mentioned by some people as a major cause of deforestation. Those who say so certainly ignore other causes. Shifting cultivation, commonly known as Podu Chas does exist in Orissa and perhaps it is true that today it contributes to deforestation along with other causes. In

Orissa Bonda, Koya, Didayi, Jhadia, Gadaba, Saora, Kandha, Pauri Bhuinya and Juang practice shifting cultivation in varying proportion.

In the past when man-forest ratio was high, tribals used to abandon their shifting cultivation patches at least for 12 to 15 years for recuperation. Now with the pressure of growing population and limited availability of hill slopes the cultivators are returning to their abandoned sites much sooner. Thus the cycle of rotation is shortened for non-availability of fallows. However, this approach is counter-productive, because the land does not resuscitate its lost fertility so soon.

Approximately 32,000 or 55.85 percent of Pauri Bhuinya families practice shifting cultivation even today. They select gentle slopes with thick sub-soil on the Eastern Ghat for shifting cultivation. Eastern Ghats at this point receives higher medium rain fall and maintains moderate temperatures. They cultivate a swidden plot for three years continuously. The first year plot is called Biringa and the second and third year plots, Kaman and Nala respectively. In the Biringa (first year plot) black gram, horse gram, and *niger* are mostly grown, in the *Kaman* (second year plot) millets, leguminous crops and vegetables are grown, and in the *Nala* (third year plot) they raise early variety of paddy if the slope of the land is gentle; otherwise millet cultivation is repeated. Practice of shifting cultivation is now confined to the nearby degraded forests only.

In recent decades some Bhuinya families have acquired plain land for rice plantation. The plain land patches are situated in the foot-hills and valleys. In the study villages 22.7 per cent families possess plain land and rest others are landless. And among the land owners 40 per cent are small farmers and the rest are marginal farmers. With the non-availability of suitable patches of hill slopes for shifting cultivation the urge for acquisition of plain land for rice cultivation has become very strong among the Pauri Bhuinyas. But no plain land is available in their hilly and forest habitat. Conversion of degraded forest land into rice fields is a stupendous task; the process is long and strenuous.

Plain Land Rice Plantation

The desire for acquisition of plain land for rice cultivation gradually growing stronger among the Pauri Bhuinyas is an indicator of change. Although 27.7 per cent of the families in our sample own land, a total of 38.73 per cent of families are engaged in plain land cultivation now. By general consensus Pauri Bhuinyas consider it as a stable, dependable and independent economic activity.

They plough the paddy lands in a crude fashion. They fully depend on rain water and apply traditional inputs of rice plantation. They mostly grow

paddy as the main crop in the monsoon season, and in the winter they either grow mustard or Niger in the same fields. The productivity of the land is very low due to uneconomic holdings and undulating nature of the terrains. Sometimes the yield is not very much secured due to the trancy of monsoon and inadequate use of modern agricultural inputs. They have not yet learnt the technique of utilizing hill stream water for irrigation purposes.

In order to stabilize plain land rice farming among the Pauri Bhuinyas, as a part of agricultural planning, terraces along the foothills are to be extensively built. This must follow development of irrigation facility, modern input supply system and easy credit facility. All these agricultural infrastructure facilities must be backed up by intensive extension services, so that diversification of cropping pattern, crop rotation and multiple cropping systems can be slowly achieved.

Some two decades back the dependence of the Pauri Bhuinyas on shifting cultivation and forest resources for survival was nearly totalistic, and today the situation is different. Education has made sufficient headway among them. And they are becoming increasingly aware that shifting cultivation is not a profitable and dependable economic enterprise. And in general terms they understand that it denudes and degrades the environment. They have not yet realised the indirect pernicious effects of the practice of shifting cultivation. Nevertheless, they cannot give it up unless they have alternative sources of livelihood. However, India as a welfare State, Government are making all efforts to develop these weaker sections of Indian society. Constitution of the country ensures protective measures for them. Ever since India became independent, it has oriented its administrative machinery for quick execution of welfare measures and development programmes.

Structure of Ground Level Welfare Administration:

The scheme of Panchayati Raj was introduced in India on 2nd October, 1959. But Orissa worked it out on the 26th January, 1961. It is a three-tier system of village republic, namely. Gram Panchayat at the village level, Panchayat Samiti at the Block level and Zilla Parishad at the district level.

The Gram Panchayat is manned by Sarpanch (President), a Naib Sarpanch (Vice-President) and 9 to 23 ward members, all of whom are elected by their fellow villagers on the basis of adult franchise for a Period of 5 years. The Sarpanch, who presides over Panchayat meetings and regulates the activities of the Panchayat, is assisted by an office secretary. The Gram Panchayat has both regulatory as well as development functions. It functions as the ground level local self-government.

For the smooth implementation of development and welfare programmes the State Government have divided each district into such number of local areas as they deem fit and each is known as a Block. The Block and Panchayat Samiti are coterminous. The Panchayat Samiti consists of a Chairman, who is an elected non-official member, a Vice-chairman, an elected non-official member, local member of the State Legislative Assembly, local member of the Indian Parliament, all Sarpanchas of the Grama Panchayats within the jurisdiction of the Block, one elected woman member and the Block Development Officer (B.D.O) who is executive officer of the Block. In the execution of all welfare and development schemes the B.D.O is assisted by various departmental extension officers, such as, Agriculture, Co-operation, Education, Gram Panchayat, Medical, Veterinary, Social Welfare, Industries, Engineering, Fishery and VAWs or VLWs. The Block or Panchayat Samiti is vested with the responsibility of planning, execution, and supervision of development Programmes, public works and welfare schemes relating to community development. The Panchayat Samiti also manages controls and expands primary education. The staffs of the Block are responsible for implementing the schemes approved by the Panchayat Samiti.

The structure of welfare administration is uniform all over the country. Therefore all sections of the rural and tribal population of the country come within its scope. The Panchayati Raj system has made tremendous impact on the tribal communities. It has nullified the influence of their traditional *panchayats*.

A Brief Survey of the Institutional Framework for Tribal Development

Protection of tribal interests and integration of the tribal communities into the mainstream of the nation necessitated the implementation of special development programmes through general as well as special institutions. While implementing the schemes and programmes, modifications were made in the development institutions on the basis of experiences and recommendations of various Committees instituted to evaluate the programme implementation. There major trends are seen in the approach to tribal development. After independence Multi-Purpose Project Blocks were established in tribal areas with top-down approach. These Blocks sponsored by the Central Government, provided necessary finances, guidelines and framework of administration. In course of time, centralised planning was found to be unsuitable for local needs and priorities of the tribes. Therefore, an attempt was made to involve tribals in their own development programmes through democratic decentralization.

Panchayat Samiti consisting of selected representatives of the people was formed to design and supervise the work of Tribal Development Blocks. The staffs of the Blocks were made responsible for implementing programmes

and schemes approved by the Panchayat Samitis. Block plans became part of the District Plan, which was approved by the Zilla Parishad.

This was the bottom-up approach. However, Tribal development Blocks failed to take cognizance of the growing imbalances between different regions and committees. This led the government to introduce a new strategy for area and group specific development planning from the Fifth Five-Year Plan onwards. The Planning Commission gave tribal development an integrated approach over larger areas than the TD Blocks. The Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) was prepared during 1975 as a part of the larger plan, and the tribal belt within the State of Orissa was divided into 19 integrated Tribal Development Projects for operational purposes. During the Year 1979, two more such projects came into existence, and at present there are 21 such projects. Later on these have been renamed as integrated Tribal Development Agencies.

The ITDAs are expected to bring about an all-round integrated development of the particular region under a well-conceived Sub-Plan. Funds of different departments and agencies are channalised through the Project authority, who spends them through different Blocks in its jurisdiction. A senior civil servant designated as Project Administrator co-ordinates the activities of different specialists and programmes at the project level. The ITDAs are advised by an Advisory Board consisting of heads of all departments at the district level, local Public Representatives. The District Collector is the Chairman of the Advisory Board while the Project Officer acts as the Secretary.

Now the ITDA constitutes the unit of planning, fund disbursing agency and the supervisory body and the existing Block organisation is utilised for implementation of the programmes of the TSP. At present two ITDAs, namely, Bonai and Keonjhar are serving the Pauri Bhuinyas and other local tribes. The ITDAs have been registered under the Registration of Societies Act, 1960. Each ITDA covered about 10,000 tribal families or 50,000 participants. The economic development programmes include tribal agriculture, land reclamation, horticulture, land development, soil conservation, control of shifting cultivation, minor irrigation, development of animal husbandry, land restoration, land records and survey and debt redemption. The agency subsidises 50 per cent to 75 per cent of the capital requirement of each programme and the balance is met by tribal beneficiaries through loans from institutional and other resources.

As the Pauri Bhuinyas are a primitive tribal community, for micro level development planning and implementation, two Micro Projects i.e., Pauri Bhuinya Development Agencies are also functioning under the I.T.D.As. Each Agency looks after approximately 650 families. In addition to the above

programmes, which the Micro Projects directly implement, they also execute schemes relating to the supply of drinking water, promotion of education, health and sanitation. The Micro Projects are headed by Special Officers, who are assisted by agriculture, soil conservation and welfare extension officers apart from ministerial and field staff.

Besides the above institutions, the Tribal Development Co-operative Corporation is also operating in the Bhuinya area, as in other tribal areas of the State, to cater to the needs of the Bhuinyas. Primitive tribal communities who live in inaccessible forest and hill terrains are subjected to exploitation by the rapacious traders and usurious money lenders. One of the propitious conditions which favour the unscrupulous merchants and money lenders to exploit the tribals is the lack of proper marketing facilities. As a supplementary measure to their main economy of shifting cultivation the Bhuinyas collect various minor forest produce from the nearby forests and walk long distances to reach the market centers and weekly markets to dispose of their goods and buy their necessities. As a measure to stop exploitation T. D. C. C. has been set up and registered as a co-operative corporation in the Year 1972. The main objective of the corporation is to purchase the surplus agricultural produce and the minor forest produce from the tribals at a reasonable price.

In order to protect the interests of the Bhuinyas and other tribes of the area two T.D.C.C. centers have been set up in the Bhuinya habitat, one at Lahunipada of Sundargarh district and another at Suakati of Keonjhar district.

Tribal Development Co-operative Corporation (TDCC) was established to play a key role in bringing about a new relationship between the tribal and market economy through an integrated credit-*cum* -marketing service. The T.D.C.C. is engaged in purchase and sale of agricultural products of the tribal producers, and supplies them with necessities of daily life.

Apart from T.D.C.C., Large-sized Agricultural Multipurpose Co-operative Societies (L.A.M.P.) also operates in the tribal areas,. The LAMP provides production as well as consumption credit to the tribals and undertakes marketing of agricultural and minor forest produce. It supplies fertilizer and other agricultural inputs to the tribals at a subsidized rate.

Besides these, there are rural banks in the Bhuinya area to provide soft credit to the tribals. These Banks combine the good features of both Co-operative and Commercial Banks and exclusively provide credit to small and marginal farmers, agricultural labourers and rural artisans.

The Rural Bank has floated a 'Crop Loan Scheme', which seeks to replace the money lending system by shifting the emphasis from real property to crop as security and this attracts more tenants as potential borrowers,

Secondly the scheme relates the size of the loan to the requirements of business or crop production and a borrower is assured of his full credit requirement.

Special Programmes for Rural Development

In order to provide, gainful employment and for creating infrastructure to help generate income for all the Scheduled Tribes (STs) among others the following programmes are in operation since 1978-79 in the State as well as in the TSP area. These programmes are meant for the rural poor and almost 90 % of the tribals, like Pauri Bhuinyas, come within its scope. These programmes aim at resource development of a community. To provide supplementary employment opportunities, to the unemployed in rural areas these programmes have been designed. Thus the Sixth Five-Year Plan of the country launched a direct attack on the basic problems of rural poverty and unemployment.

Integrated Rural Development Programme (I. R. D. P)

Progressive reduction and eradication of poverty has been one of the major goals of India's economic policy. I.R.D.P. is a poverty alleviation programme. Its target groups consist of the poorest of the poor, small and marginal farmers, agricultural and non-agricultural labourers, rural artisans and craftsmen, and SC and ST families who live below the poverty line.

Among the Bhuinyas a very small percentage comes within the definition small Farmer (S F) and another small percentage comes within the scope of Marginal Farmer (M F) and the rest are landless.

The I.R.D.P. schemes envisage development of minor irrigation (individual and community), land development soil conservation, soil reclamation, distribution of milch cows and other animals, supply of bullocks and bullock carts, promotion of horticulture, fisheries, sericulture, farm forestry, small industries, small scale trade and service.

The rate of subsidy admissible under I.R.D.P. for tribals is 50 percent of the capital cost subject to a maximum of Rs. 5,000 within the project period. The selection of I. R. D. P. beneficiaries which is expected to be made by the Village Level Worker (V. L. W.), by following the *antyo daya* principle, i.e., selecting the poorest of the poor first, is often pretentious. This is due partly to some genuine difficulties in following this principle and partly to some deliberate defaults on the part of the V. L. W. The genuine difficulties include reluctance and/or inability of the poorest of the poor to be able to purchase and manage one of the assets identified for him at the time of household survey with bank loans and I.R.D.P. subsidy. This is also partly due to the lack of managerial ability of the beneficiary and partly to his inability to bear the risk involved in purchasing a loan financed asset. This certainly means that we need to identify

and formulate bankable projects that would suit the managerial and risk bearing ability of the poorest of the poor among the tribals.

However, because of the willful defaults of the concerned V. L. Ws. in the selection of beneficiaries only a negligible percentage of Pauri Bhuinyas have been benefited. This has happened so because the Scheduled Tribes have been clubbed with Scheduled Castes and the total number of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes beneficiaries in our sample comes to 30 per cent. There is of course another factor which comes on the way. The I. R. D. P. employs the cluster approach to select villages for implementing various components of the programme, the *anttyodaya* approach to select beneficiaries within the selected villages, and the package approach to assist the selected beneficiaries. The cluster approach ensures that the supporting infrastructure is either already available in the selected villages, or can be made available at a relatively low cost, the *anttyodaya* approach makes sure that the poorest of the poor are selected first, and the package approach assures the beneficiaries full benefits from the complementarity between various inputs and services.

National Rural Employment Programme (N.R.E.P.)

To eradicate the problems of rural unemployment and underemployment, what is required is a multi-pronged strategy which should aim on the one hand at resource development of vulnerable sections of the population, and on the other, should provide supplementary employment opportunities to the rural poor, particularly during lean periods, in a manner which can at the same time contribute directly to the creation of durable assets for the community. Programmes like Small Farmers Development Agency (SFDA), Marginal Farmers and Agricultural Labourers (MFAL) Scheme, Hill Areas Development Programme and I.R.D-P- aim at resource development on an individual and area basis. To provide supplementary employment opportunities to the rural areas, special programmes are needed. The Rural Works Programme (R.W.P.) which was introduced in 1971, was the first major Public Programmes aimed at providing employment to the unemployed particularly in the lean season.

The ERRP has made a positive impact on the rural poor and on the tribals. About 90 percent of tribals come within the scope of this scheme. A poorest family is defined as one with an annual income of less than Rs. 1200 p.a. and cultivable land within one acre.

A number of Pauri Bhuinya families have drawn benefits from Employment Guarantee Schemes (EGS), Food for Work Programme (FFWP), National Rural Employment (NREP) and - Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP). About 38 per cent of Pauri Bhuinyas in our

study villages have drawn benefits from these schemes. The main problem with most of them is that their awareness level is extremely low.

The EGS guaranteed employment in that field of unskilled manual work to all adults above eighteen years of age within fifteen days of the demand for work. In the implementation of the scheme the worker did not have any choice about the nature of work. The programme aimed at producing durable community assets, which would increase the growth as well as employment potential of the economy. The FFWP which was implemented by the development administration directly was a good scheme. It however ended up in 1980.

The NREP, which was introduced during the Sixth Five-Year Plan (1980-81), was an anti-poverty programme. The basic objectives of the programme are: (i) generation of additional gainful employment for the unemployed and under-employed men and women in the rural areas, (ii) creation of durable community assets to strengthen the rural infrastructure.

From the present study it is evident that IRDP and NREP have made positive impacts in respect of the growth of rural economy. The income level of some rural poor has risen and likewise the nutritional status and living standards of a sizable population have improved.

Rehabilitation of Bonded Labour

The scheme of rehabilitation of bonded labourers is being implemented in the State from 1978-79. In the districts of Keonjhar and Sundergarh. About 400 Pauri Bhuinya bonded labourers have been identified and freed till 1987. Nearly 300 of them have been rehabilitated through the provision of gainful employment or self-employment and the rest others are awaiting rehabilitation.

Education

As education is a prelude to economic development and modernization, it constitutes a priority sector in tribal development in India. Besides enabling the tribal communities to comprehend national development programmes and mix freely with their neighbours, it increases their capability to cope with the pace of development.

Elementary, middle, non-formal, and girls education are being given prominence. Special type of educational institutions such as Sevashrams (Primary Schools), Ashrams (Middle Schools) and Higher Ashrams (High School) are being run by the State Government. There are *Kanyashrams* exclusively for girls. Most of the schools are residential in nature. By 1981 educational progress of the Bhuinyas was quite satisfactory. There were 45,000 literates, 1288 Matriculates, 191 Graduates, 7 Post Graduates and 230 persons with technical qualifications among the Bhuinyas.

Non-formal education has also made sufficient headway among the Bhuinyas. By 1981 about 1849 persons (both men and women) had received non-normal education and vocational training among them and by now another record number of individuals must have got this benefit. In the dissemination of non-formal education, the Integrated Child Development Scheme has been playing an important role.

The style of life of the educated Bhuinyas has undergone modification. They harbour rising aspirations and prefer a happy life, and indeed strive for it. Their dress pattern, food habit; utensils, furniture, observance of rituals, etc. have undergone change.

Changes in Health care and concept of Hygiene

Spread of education, extension of communication facilities and expansion of audio-visual mass media facilities have created a sense of health awareness among the Bhuinyas of younger generation. They have developed a secular orientation towards health and sickness. However, the traditionally minded Bhuinyas think that they have a natural right to normal health, and they suffer from sickness only at the intervention of supernatural entities. But the educated Bhuinyas think about human health and hygiene in a different way. They think that human body is naturally susceptible to various diseases which are caused by a multiple of extraneous factors. Therefore man must take appropriate care of his health.

Bhuinyas living in the interior of hills and forests are being covered by public primary health care and family welfare programmes. The personnel of the Integrated Child Development Scheme move door to door to educate the people about proper maternity care, child health and family welfare programmes.

Now-a-days about 60 percent expectant Pauri Bhuinya mothers go to the nearby primary Health Centers for periodical health checkup. Similarly about 68 percent of the Pauri Bhuinya parents in our sample have immunized their babies at the nearby Primary Health Centers. Health consciousness has also brought another significant change in Pauri Bhuinya habits. Formerly they were fully depending on hill stream water for all purposes. Having become health conscious educated Bhuinya families have started taking boiled water. Others of course do not boil water always, but collect water for drinking purposes from the tube-wells provided by the government in several of their villages. Initially the Bhuinyas were repugnant to the use of tube-well water partly for their superstitious beliefs and partly for its repulsive taste.

Change in House Pattern:

Well-to-do Bhuinyas in recent years have built cement-mortar houses with modern elegance. Formerly they used to live in single-room dwellings without any ventilation. Now-a-days about 50 per cent of Pauri Bhuinyas live in two-roomed houses with tiled roof. The rooms are spacious and well ventilated. Sleeping accommodation for the grown-up boys and girls of the family is provided within the household. No longer are they inquired to go to the village dormitories for sleeping during the night. Dormitories have become dysfunctional and hence have disappeared.

Bhuinya villages by and large have been electrified. But only a few well to-do families here and there have taken electrical connection. But the trend is that with the rise in the income level more and more families will go in for electrical installation in their houses.

Occupational Mobility:

With the imposition of more and more restrictions on the practice of shifting cultivation, the Pauri Bhuinyas are economically very much hard pressed. Although they are permitted to go in for the collection of minor forest produce, they are unable to make a complete living by it as there is more competition among themselves. And moreover, it is seasonal activity. Under severe economic constraints landless Bhuinya families have taken to wage-earning. In the past, wage-earning was an abominable economic pursuit for them. In those days they had free access to virgin forests in their neighbourhood and the nature was also bounteous. Now their environment is degraded and resources are scarce.

Some Bhuinya youths have entered into the new occupation of *bidi* (country made cigar) rolling in the nearby towns. Each of them earns about 12 to 15 rupees per day. Salaried service is also a new occupation for the Bhuinyas. Educated Bhuinyas hanker after salaried jobs, and they also get such jobs without much endeavour because of the Reservation Policy of the State. Now-a-days in almost all Pauri Bhuinya villages quite a few salaried employees are found. Bhuinya women also have taken manufacture of leaf-plates in a big way for augmenting family income. Manufacture of leaf-plates has turned out to be a cottage industry for the Pauri Bhuinyas.

Weakening of the Traditional Political Organization

The traditional political organisation of the Bhuinyas was two-tier system one at the village level and the other at the inter-village level. The village headman, designated as Padhan, looked after the village problems and discipline. The inter-village organisation, called *Pirha*, was headed by a tribal chief, designated as Sardar. The position of Sardars considerably has been impaired

as there is no inter-village or Pirha organization. However, the position of the Padhan or village headman continues to be functional, with diminished powers and functions. He only looks after the social and religious matters of his fellow Pauri Bhuinya villages, and thereby maintains social solidarity. His traditional position has conspicuously been impaired due to the extension of State administrative machinery onto all the tribal communities. Although the Pauri Bhuinyas, like other tribal communities, enjoy the privileges of State Protective measures, yet they are slowly and steadily assimilated in the national mainstream through the macro socio-political process of the country.

The Pauri Bhuinyas, like other, tribal communities, have been subjected, in a progressive manner, to various welfare and development. From the Fifth Five-year Plan, that is, from 1975-76, onwards area and group specific development programmes were formulated and implemented. Since this time tribal communities have responded to development programmes and have registered some change in their economy and social structure. Last two decades also witnessed rapid growth in communication facilities. This in turn meant their gradual exposure to forces of modernisation. What is disturbing in this respect is that there has been unequal progress among the Pauri Bhuinyas,

A high priority has been accorded to strict implementation of protective measures. The areas of exploitation in tribal areas which happened to be liquor vending, land alienation, money lending and collection of agricultural and forest produce continue to be there. The State has enacted laws and formulated regulation to prevent transfer of land from tribals to non-tribals but there are loop-holes, and the non-tribal buyers escape with impunity.

Conclusion

From the foregoing discussion it is evident that since the early fifties India has been concerned with the development of its varied masses including the STs in a massive way. Indeed economic growth and social development have been the fond ideals and cherished goals of the National Government. The sole objective of development has been to improve the quality of life of the rural masses, particularly those of the weaker sections. Indian Constitution, which is a very powerful document of planned social change, entails special provisions for the development of weaker sections that is, the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. There are several safeguards enshrined in the Constitution for the all-round development of these communities. While setting them on the path of planned socio-economic development Government of India strove to preserve their diverse priceless cultural heritage as evident from the policy enunciation of Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India. Nehru in his foreword to Verrier Elwin's "The philosophy for NEFA" (1957) has delineated the tribal Panchashila or Five Principles of tribal welfare administration in India, which continue to guide government approach to

tribal development. The quintessence of Nehru's *Pancha Shila* is the development of the tribes according to their own genius and preservation of their respective cultures. However, the State Policy has been not to keep them isolated from the national mainstream. Therefore, all of them have been made to participate in the post-independence political culture of the country. And in fact the process of democratic decentralization and the structure of party-based politics have pulled the tribal communities, in varying degrees, into the ambit of the national political culture.

As a result of this and the special development effort which is being made by the Government of India as well as by the various State Governments all the 414 different tribes have registered unequal socio-economic progress. There are several factors responsible for this phenomenon. The scope of the paper does not permit an elaborate discussion on all these. However, an important factor which needs mention is that all the tribes were neither in the past nor now at the same stage of the techno-economic and educational parameters. Hence the present differential progress is noticed among them. Not only has that, under the impact of welfare and development administration internal socio-cultural differentiation among several tribes becomes conspicuous. The homogeneity and egalitarianism, which were the hallmark of the tribal communities some four decades ago, are fast vanishing. This is the case among the Pauri Bhuinyas too. These accounts for the fact that either all the Bhuinya beneficiaries have not been able to derive the benefits of development uniformly or the fruits of development have not reached the intended beneficiaries at a more or less similar rate.

Planned development has generated the phenomenon of restlessness too among the tribal societies. These erstwhile placid and complacent societies are now stirred by a generation of newer demands which engender competitiveness and rising expectations particularly among the members of younger, generation. Their individual needs steadily multiply and their urge for novel consumer goods sharpens disproportionately. Therefore, the young literates and all those who have succeeded in participating in the neo political culture of the country grab any benefit or opportunity that comes on their way with all the skill and manipulative ability they have mastered. They are the elites, and they are the representatives of their fellow tribesmen. They are responsible for the economic and social well-being of the people they actually or nationally represent. But in reality they are self-seekers under the camouflage of community well-being. They have earned these status positions and therefore make constant endeavour to perpetuate them. Some of them have taken to salaried jobs and thereby have improved their economic condition and others have internalised the political culture and operate as local political leaders or activists.

The tribal political leaders or activists, who have direct linkages with the political party-in-power, wield more influence in their respective localities. Tribal masses look to them as their benefactors. But indeed they are not. The political leaders, activists and the elite, all were insiders who have gradually turned as outsiders or at least behave as outsiders and have been alienated from their own tribesmen and traditional culture. They are referred to as *babus*, who are believed to have personality traits characteristic of a superior culture. This is a change that has come over not only in the Bhuinya society but also over other tribal societies in India. Spread of formal education, market economy, the political process of democratic decentralization, implementation of the various welfare measures undertaken in a big way by the government, population growth and the increasing differences of wealth within the community are some of the more important factors which have given rise to the emergence of a privileged class which is a variant of Paik's (1928) formulation of the concept of 'Marginal Man'. Without entering into any conceptual wrangle one can say that the emerging elites or insider-*babus* in the Bhuinya society are the real beneficiaries of the poverty alleviation programmes and not the more deserving ones.

Those who are below the poverty line continue to remain deprived and neglected because of their ignorance and lack of ability to articulate with welfare administration and financial institutions. Our study attests that these elites (insider-*babus*) have drawn larger benefits from the anti-poverty programmes of the Government, namely, Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), Economic Rehabilitation of Rural Poor (ERRP), National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) and Rural Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP) than the poorer sections of the Pauri Bhuinyas, They adroitly exploit their non-literate and credulous fellow tribesmen. They pretend to be the natural and legitimate spokesmen of their fellow tribesmen. They not only maintain this position, but also deliberately cultivate an image of altruistic stance.

From the foregoing discussion it may be concluded that man is selfish by nature, and he does not miss an opportunity whenever the scope comes on his way. Thus the State Policy that development along with social justice is defeated. Success of planned economic development depends on effective participation of common people. This objective can be better realised if the present level of people's awareness rises and they acquire the necessary ability to articulate with the administrative machinery that implements the anti-poverty programmes. Therefore the new imperative for socio-economic development is to educate the intended beneficiaries through a vigorous literacy and awareness campaign. In this context the right approach should be to involve the people in the decision making process at the village level.

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STATUS, HIERARCHY AND HINDUISATION IN PAURI BHUIYAN SOCIETY IN NORTH ORISSA *

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I had undertaken field work among the Hill Bhuiyan, or Pauri Bhuiyan as the primitive tribal group called itself, in 1953-54 as Research Scholar of the Tribal Research Bureau, now known as Tribal and Harijan Research-cum-Training Institute. Though primarily I had taken up residence on the hill of Bonai in Tasra village, I had cultivated familiarity with some other villages in the valley below, like Derula with some lands seasonally irrigated by damming up a hill stream, or Budhabhuin along a hill stream, wedged between hills. Besides, I had undertaken some preliminary studies among the Pauri Bhuiyan resettled in Daleisara and Dhokamunda colonies with forest-cleared land under Government sponsorship. Some families from Tasra village had come down to resettle in a locality called Guhalbandha in Dhokamunda colony. In a way, these Tasra families were coaxed and cajoled to come down the hill village, but were maintaining social, ritual and economic ties with the mother village even in 1957, when I had got the last reports for writing my doctoral thesis on the people at Hamburg University. The status and roles of village functionaries as also the basic dichotomy of the society between the high status Matiali and Parja of lower status were maintained even when the villagers were resettled at Guhalbandha. Another basic status dichotomy between men and women has also been taken up, as it is forcefully obvious in their society.

In the following pages, I deal with the basic quasi-hierarchical division of the society between *Matiali* and *Parja* and the ascribed and achieved statuses found in the society, besides discussing in general the role of wealth and power at the base of this hierarchy in the village society. A discussion is presented on the social position of the Pauri Bhuiyan in relation to the other tribal groups

* Published in ADIBASI, Vol. XXXIII, Nos. 3 & 4, 1993, pp.1-9.

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and Hindu castes and their orientation to Hindu society in general in the region at the junction of 4 ex-princely states, namely Bonai (at present in Sundargarh district), Keonjhar (at present Kendujhar district), Pallahara (at present in Dhenkanal district) and Bamra (at present in Deoghar district). The facts and relations described refer to the 1950's and equally well, to the 1960's.

Status, Ascribed and Achieved

Firth regards the social status of a person as "his position in a social system, represented by the rights and privileges he enjoys and the obligations or duties he should perform" (Human Types, P. 103). Status may be "ascribed" that is, given by virtue of birth or "achieved" that is attained by virtue of individual merits. The fact that ascribed status may be denied because of ritual, physical and mental deficiencies does not invalidate this important distinction

We have seen above that the priest because of their vital roles in the economic life and physical well-being of the villagers enjoy high social status, as does the Head man for his socio-political leadership in corporate activities of the village. These are the most highly prized position in the society which are open only to the '*Matiali*' section as a whole. Others who are not born in this group are debarred from these offices and privileges.

Against these cases of ascribed status are available a wide range of opportunities for achieved social status. Through acquisition of paper knowledge one might attain the very important status of medicinemen-cum-shaman, or at least a lower position of diviner-cum- exorcizer. The social status of the witches is not low, perhaps primarily because they come from the wealthiest households, but they also enjoy certain circumspect consideration through fear, which impels villagers to be on good term with them.

As we have seen, the offices of member of "Gram Panchayat" and his assistants have tended to be attained by 'Parja' men. Assistants to the priests and priestesses are selected ad hoc and the senior 'Parja' are usually welcome because of their experience. The messengers of the village Assembly are junior 'Parja' elders. Proficiency in singing ,beating drums or tambourines, dancing , handicrafts, hunting or other skills, especially in making good speeches, bring prestige and thus contributes to the social status of a person.

Apart from such achieved status but closely allied to it is the higher status accorded to a married individual, especially to a family having its own household, the head of the household being automatically an elder of the Village Assembly.

Women are accorded a lower social status than that of men in general. They are, however, far from being chattels or repressed. Their contribution in

the economic life is indispensable and vital, they may accumulate property of their own and bequeath it as they think fit, have almost as much say as their men have in household affairs and specially on the question of marriage of children, and they worship village deities and demons and hold festivities of their own and sometimes act as a group. On the other hand, there is male precedence in ritual and festivities and exclusive male control of socio-political affairs of the village, easier divorce for the men and denial to the women of the inheritance of important forms of wealth including land. In day-to-day life, however, they appear to be brave and independent and not at all complaining, and they do not have any trace of *purdah* system, which in rural west-Orissa is not so prominent as in the east. However, we have noted that in food consumption they appear to be under privileged as in other aspects of life in this patrilineal and markedly partilocal society. But the women proudly referred either to the high status of their parents of 'Matiali' lineages of their ancestral villages or to their present incorporation in the 'Matiali' clan-section.

The all-important sex, and the fundamental division of the 'Matiali' and the 'Parja' based on birth in or outside the clan of the first-settlers, supplemented by differences of age, hold the key to social status in the village. Added to this are the position in the lineage and even the length of time an outside lineage has settled in *Tasra*. The former factor is very important in succession to traditional offices and inheritance and the latter, in the delegation of an important office ('Member') to the senior most male of the oldest immigrant lineage in Pal-Lahara. Thus viewed ascribed status is of paramount importance in the socio-political life of the village. However it must be noted that opportunities for achieving status are increasing in the "unreserved" spheres of handicrafts or of offices like member and his assistants or even of wealth.

The Village Community and 'Matiali' and 'Parja' sections

Firth defines a human community as "...a body of people sharing in common activities and bound by multiple relationship in such a way that the aims of any individual can be achieved only by participation in action with others" (p. 41, 1951). Besides the aspect of living together, the term... "Involves recognition, derived from experience and observation, that there must be minimum conditions of agreement of common aims, and inevitably some common ways of behaving, thinking and feeling" (p.27. 1951). Obviously *Tasra* village is a community, into which people are born, in which they live, work, and marry and die. Besides its territorial integrity, ritual and economic unity, social and political solidarity and general behavioural conformity, the community has also some local pride and distinctiveness in many ways as against the adjacent villages. The hamlets may be taken as sub-communities.

But this should not cover up certain fundamental divergence of status and roles, power and wealth, in general of interests between the two segments of the community, the 'Matilia' and the 'Parja'. The 'Matiali' are descended from the first settlers of the Tarsa and formally incorporate the immigrant families of 'Parja' on the oath that the latter would recognise the former's authority and obey the "law of the land" including the local rituals and other customs. The very term 'Parja' means "subjects" and "Matilia" stands for "children of the soil", who have right as 'Khuntkatidar' or first settlers who cleared the forest.

As these groups ultimately derived their character from their divergent relations to the village territory, in this sense these are here viewed as territorial groups. The 'Matiali' group forms a clan section as described above, while the 'Parja' group is an amorphous body of immigrant families. The latter's "group" character is understandable in contradistinction to the 'Matiali' group, especially at the time of the ceremony of founding the village (hamlet) site, at drinking of beer with the priests and at the funeral ceremony which I had attended. At the first one an immigrant family is formally awarded the status of a villager, or if already living at Tarsa, is required formally to re-affirm his loyalty to the 'Matiali' section in the name of the headman and the priests and is to prepare some native beer for the ceremony. Now in case of incorporation the incumbent has to feed the village (hamlet) in a ceremony of 'Uburasabura' or ritual purification. In the other two cases the 'Parja' as a group were entertained apart from the 'Matiali' and the 'Bandhu' (affinal relatives from outside). At the funeral ceremony the 'Parja' were first greeted and welcomed and then the 'Bandhu', the 'Matiali' group playing the host. This latter occasion demonstrated the precedence of specific territorial ties with the 'Parja' (who are also 'Bandhu' or affinal relatives) over the 'Bandhu' which is a pure Kin group.

Formerly, the 'Parja' had no claim to any important official functions except being assistants to priests. The opening of the "Gram Panchayat" or council of villages has created a new avenue for good orators among the senior members of 'Parja'.

Wealth and Power

While dealing with indebtedness we have already noted that there are about 7 households which are considered well-to-do in the sense that they do not go hungry in the lean months. Only one family, a recent immigrant from *Khadka* where they have agricultural land and fruit trees, can claim to be wealthy with about 200 Kilo paddies as a saving. There is another well-to-do 'Parja' household, also recent immigrant from *Khadka* with landed property, from which some share in the proceeds comes yearly, as in the other case. Along with 5 'Matiali' households they also save some money. One well-to-do 'Matiali' household has some paddy saved, because there are only two souls in

the family and as a priest at *Kumudhi* the remuneration is of some good amount. Moreover, the household is a bit miserly.

The '*Matiali*' section claims 18 households and the '*Parja*' 19. Living houses excluding the livestock sheds and including the sheds for husking lever where it is separately constructed, we find the '*Matiali*' have 37 huts between them and the '*Parja*' 29. The difference becomes more marked when we come to consider cattle and maize-gardens. Thirteen households of the '*Matiali*' have one or more cattle as against only 7 households among the '*Parja*'. Similarly, all the 18 '*Matiali*' households have one and some cases two plots of maize-gardens while only 6 '*Parja*' households "own" a plot. Of course, a few more '*Parja*' could obtain a plot by standing drinks for the village elders. Kitchen garden is similarly scarce and almost monopolized by the '*Matiali*' section. One might argue: first come, first served. But the fact is that there is number of have-nots. Even there are some plots cultivated by the '*Parja*' with permission of their legal "owners". If we take the wooden husking lever as an instance of capitalization of effort, there are 6 among the '*Matiali*' and 3 among the '*Parja*'. Hurricane lanterns purchased more for show than for use were found with 5 '*Matiali*' households and those 3 '*Parja*' households who had or have intimate associations with plains-people in *Pal-Lahare* and *Barma*. Out of 10 plots of agriculture-terraces, 8 belong to the '*Matiali*' group. They also own the great majority of the Jackfruit trees.

We have seen before how production is correlated with working hands and industry; therefore wealth increases social status. Wealth by itself hardly leads to power. Of the two '*Parja*' well-to-do households, the one wealthiest has little power. Power is shared now only with the oldest and nearest immigrant lineage in the village. Partly the motivation may be to keep the center of new powers at a safe distance in a hamlet where the Headman does not reside.

It remains just to be pointed out that the '*Parja*' owe loyalty to the '*Matiali*' section as a whole, and to the priests and the Headman in particular, and to the deities and demons of the village territory. They have to stand some native beer as something like a yearly tribute. Besides all the households had been contributing paddy for the '*Dohuria Dhana*' or "Priestly Granary", collected and managed by the priests and the Headman. At the time of its dissolution in 1950-51 as an institution of the total village, the paddy was distributed among the '*Matiali*' families, though a half of the cereals was used in feasting the village. On the occasion of occupying swiddens senior priests and the Headman demarcate the shares on the spot.

Thus the '*Matiali*' group, deriving power ultimately from their descent from the first settlers of the village, are on the whole better off, own greater wealth, and exercise power over the '*Parja*' as a whole to the material

advantage of their group interests. The leadership however, lies in the hands of senior priests and the Headman, and of late is shared in a secondary non-traditional sphere with a 'Parja' of an influential lineage. Among the women the older priestesses exercise leadership assisted by elderly 'Parja' ladies.

Men and Women

Men of the village / hamlet act as a group and participate in the village (hamlet) assembly, on hunting and fishing trips, in village/hamlet rituals when a male representative from each household is required to partake of the offerings, drinking of beer or feasting on other communal occasions. They also cook and serve all the assembled men and women in funeral and marriage ceremonies. They meet daily in the bachelor's dormitory or on *Manda Darbar* outside around the fire to gossip and deliberate. The men act and interact as a group almost daily round the year. Of course, here the children are excepted.

The women, however, come together as a group on only a few occasions. The rituals '*Udhuai Bhasna*' '*Rahani Bhasna*' are organized and executed exclusively by the women, when they partake of the offerings. On the day of '*Dhuliani*' the women play the most important roles in the worshipping of the '*Baram*' deity reciting what appears to be origin-myths, besides staging a mock hunting in men's dress. On the occasion of '*Pankhira Pitha*' day, they as a body cook and offer the cakes and flowers to the menfolk in general. Similarly they also offer cakes to older men and young men on the occasion of '*Rahani Bhasna*' ceremony. Occasionally, they cook food together out of some village funds and distribute the food household-wise. As the men work under the guidance and leadership of priests and Headman, the women also are guided by elder women of the priestly families, who alone worship in the rituals.

Although the women act as a group on much fewer occasions, they non the less fulfill important functions in the rituals and festivities of the hamlet as a whole. However, they never come together from all the households as a group- unlike in the case of men, except at the time of funeral and marriage ceremonies when they eat together the food cooked and served by men.

In fairness to the women it must be remarked that collecting of tubers and yams, fruits or flowers, etc. are not organized exploitations as hunting or fishing by men and participation in political life of the village is denied to them. These facts together shut them off from a great many opportunities for corporate action. However, in comparison with caste villages the participation of women as a body in the village rituals and festivities are remarkable.

The Priests

The Dehuri '*bamsa*' or maximal lineage is the senior most in the '*Matiali*', section and supplies the priests. On rare occasions, however, some

senior members of the Naika '*bamsa*' may officiate when the regular priests are ill or involved in ritual pollution.

The priest (Dehuri) or '*Baram*' deity is of the highest rank, that of '*Gaenshri*' and the '*Pat*' denotes and '*Nishar*' comes in the second position while the priest for the '*Sarani Pat*' occupies the third rank.

Strangely enough, the priest of '*Bharali Pat*' the highest deity of the '*Batis Bar*' organization is relegated to a lower rank than that of the priests for the village deities. This might be due to the fact that the village deities have much more important roles in the rituals touching upon the economic life and security system than '*Bharali Pat*' has. For the latter the junior most sub-lineage had always provided the priest, as a rule.

The priesthood is usually hereditary in the sub-lineage, but not strictly so. '*Baram*' priest has come not from the senior most sub-lineage, which had, however, taken care of '*Gaenshri*' and the other '*Pat*' deities. The eldest son usually takes over the duties; if he is young or incapable, then the next brother has the privilege to serve. The division of the village into hamlets has loosened the succession to priesthood.

The priestesses do not have any emoluments except a sumptuous meal with meat and social prestige. A village priest that of '*Gaenshri*' and '*Bahmuni Pat*', was once helped by the man of the hamlet in cutting of his new swidden, and had to stand only native beer. Besides this a priest who worships on the ceremonial hunting gets a special share of the game.

However, the Tasra priests serving in three valley villages, Kumudhi, Barcua and Rengali, got handsome presents including cloth, and the priest of Kumudhi had even a few agricultural plots on service tenure. As the Tasra '*Matiali*' had lived in these villages in the valley, only they could worship and appease the deities and demons of the neighbourhood.

The Village Headman

The village Headman or '*Naika*' comes from the '*Naika*' '*bamsa*' or maximal lineage. The eldest son always has the right to this office. But when the would-be '*Naika*' is a minor the next younger brother of the former '*Naika*' may manage the affairs. In Derula because the father was quite old (about 90), the eldest son was handed over the office.

The Headman takes active interest in the well-being of the village, its cultivation and law and order situation. He is formally recognized by the local police-station at Mahulapada and thus by the Government. All transactions of

the Government officials were formally directed to him alone and at present divided in some minor respects with the "Panchayat" Member.

But he is far from being an autocrat. He is the most powerful spokesman of the village and the first among equals, though these "equals" are the 'Matiali' people. He first introduces a topic to be decided upon by mentioning the gravity, the urgency or simply the importance of the occasion, and then listens to the opinions offered by senior elders, 'Matiali' and 'Parja', from time to time he sums up the discussion and puts some critical points of decision for further ratification or clarification. Though he is implicitly obeyed his approach in commanding people is courteous and cautious in being often an indirect instruction. However, we have noted already how the headman reinforces his authority with sorcery, of which he and his wife are suspected.

Apart from the social precedence shared with senior priests he enjoys no emoluments of any significance. Sometimes the villagers may work for him and get sumptuously fed for that. Formerly he had a special share on the day of successful ceremonial hunting. But he was also to give a suitable counter-present.

A junior Headman was responsible for internal day-to-day affairs in Tal Tarsa. After his shifting to 'Upar Tasra', I found nobody working as such in 1957.

The "Panchayat" Member

This new office has been introduced in 1953 when the "Gram Panchayat" (Council of villages) Act of the Orissa Government came into effect in Mahulpada region. Every village was to send an elected Member to the council which sat at least once a month. In a village assembly composed of elders of both the hamlets, a senior intelligent man of the priestly lineage, a good speaker, was elected unanimously for Tasra. One 'Parja' elder, known to be a good speaker and a right-hand man of the Headman was also selected as an assistant or 'Sipai' to the member.

After the death of the member a senior 'Parja' from the old Iti lineage, an experienced speaker, having some experience with plains-ways, was elected as his successor. The other 'Parja' elder and another good speaker, a 'Kutumb' of the 'Matiali' group, both from Upar Tasra were appointed as 'Sipai' or assistants. In both cases the Members were from Tal Tasra. As the power and authority of the member might directly clash with that of the Headman, it was advisable that the new locus of power was kept at a distance in Tal Tasra. We have also noted that many in Tal Tasra and some in Upar Tasra also suspected sorcery inflicted by the Headman causing death to the former Member. This happened allegedly because of the latter's popularity and rising prospects of

his emerging a rival to the headman's power. Such motivation might have goaded the Headman to provide for some handy safeguards in nominating assistant(s) faithfully to him and under his direct control in Upar Tasra. That his fears are not ill-founded is now somewhat clear. After the junior Headman's shifting to Upar Tasra and as there was nobody from the 'Naika' lineage in Tal Tasra, the Member had been managing the day-to-day affairs in the capacity of a junior Headman.

Diviners, Medicine men and Sorcerers

Ordinary, diviners are known as 'Sagunia'. They not only divine but also exercise disease-spirits or deities. Diviners of higher order, especially dealing with suspicion of sorcery, are 'Raulia' or medicine man. The latter can work against sorcery and may also prescribe certain herbal medicines. All the 'Raulia' in Tarsa are 'Chedunia' or those who may counteract sorcery but cannot inflict. A 'Raulia' also gets possessed by spirits or deities and may be compared to shamans. Shamanism is very widespread in the region, even the Casa, a Hindu caste, employ shaman on serious crises like difficult labour. Sorcerers are known as 'Pangna' and sorceresses as 'Pangni'. Diviners, medicine man and sorcerers (Sorceresses) learn their trade from 'Guru' or teacher-experts and their specialized education is the nearest approach to formal instruction.

A medicine man enjoys high prestige in the village because of his capacity to save lives and cure diseases. A diviner approached for smaller ailments and is the person of first call and has the tendency to function like a "family doctor". There are about 2 medicinemen as against 4 or 5 diviners. It is perhaps not without significance that both the members of Tasra were either 'Raulia' or 'Sagunia'.

However, sorcery is discredited and considered a crime, but the Sorcerers and sorceresses are feared and one dare not anger them for nothing. This potential threat of sorcery becomes a good weapon for maintain power as in the Headman's case. But in extreme cases of sorcery one might be expelled from the village.

Incipient Stratification

Firth noticed; "when a graded system of statuses is of general operation in a society, affecting many spheres of social activity, it is termed a system of social stratification. Here, each stratum or layer in the grading scheme is composed of people who fill much the same position in the social structure". (Human Types, para. 105). Obviously, there must be two horizontal layers at the least. We have seen how and to what extent the 'Matiali' section has social precedence, economic advantages, political power and ritual control over the

'Parja', who are led and guided by the other. The latter's higher social status is always acknowledged by the 'Parja'. The lowest occupation, that of day labour, is also resorted to by the many 'Parjas' and shunned by the 'Matiali' except for the two or three helpless widows. When it comes to carrying something for a visiting official it is the poorer 'Parja' who are ultimately prevailed upon to do; when erecting my house even old 'Parja' men were working while younger senior priests and the Headman were just directing most of the time. Costlier marriages and funeral (cremation) also fall largely to the 'Matiali'.

All these and other details described above go to show that there is a some sharp break between the 'Matiali' and the 'Parja', however relative it may appear in day-to-day life. The 'Matiali' section resembles in many ways a landholding aristocracy and the 'Parja' commoners or second class citizens. The designations even as analogy must be sharply trimmed to have real meaning in the actual situation. Though the 'Matiali' were descended from the first settler they do not expressly claim that all land belongs to them and them alone. On the other hand, they emphasise that every villager has right to get land according to his needs for making swiddens, and for other purpose when there is suitable land. Under these circumstances I have defined the land-tenure as "corporate village ownership". Moreover both the 'Matiali' and the 'Parja' must work hard for their subsistence, and there is no "leisure" class. As for the rank of the 'Parja' (literally, "subject"), to compare them with commoners is to disregard the fact that in the recent or back in the remote, past each of these 'Parja' ancestor belonged to the 'Matiali' section of the ancestral villages. Even today they cherish the memory of their higher social rank in ancestral villages.

Even under such limitation and with free intermarriage between the 'Parja' and 'Matiali', it appear there is some sort of loose social stratification between the compact, powerful, numerous, 'Matiali' section and the 'Parja' from diverse lineages and villages, an odd assortment of affinal relatives owing individually and collectively the ever all loyalty to the 'Matiali'. That is a legitimate right of the 'Matiali' to be the traditional leaders and loci of power in the village is accepted by all parties.

If the image of such a lose nascent stratification does not conform strictly to the classical models of "estate" ("Stand" in German) or "class", that is not of fundamental importance, the more significant point of observation is, that in an apparently "egalitarian" society may lie hidden a strong tendency towards formation of something like classes or estates. In whatever rudimentary from it may be. Dr. Elwin has already discovered a clear formation of social classes among the Hill Saora, where the aristocracy prefers their sons to marry within the aristocracy and may accept the girls from... the commoners, named "proletariat" by him (P.50-52).

Status change in Government Colonies

As all the colonists have come together to an unoccupied area are no "Matiali" rights in socio-political status. But the 'Matiali' section of the mother-villages retains the posts of Headman and priests as usual. Although 'Dihabandhani' ceremony (village site Foundation day) is still observed one of the main purposes, that is, admission of new 'Parija' and reassurance of loyalty of the old 'Parija' has lost its meaning. But the Pauri as a whole have gained some political power over the Cerenga Kolha and the few Bantkar colonists. The Pauri are in majority, the whole scheme was mainly to bring them down and the visiting officers and permanent officials give more weight to the Pauri Bhuiyan in all affairs of the colony life. The Cerenga Kolha are 'untouchable' and of lower status. At Ghalbandha colony, where they live away from the Bhuiyan, the domination of latter is more obvious than in the exclusively Cerenga colonies with their own headman and priests. At Guhalabandha they are asked to contribute for 'Devi Usa' and perhaps many other festivities of the Pauri Bhuiyan in the name of the village, while the Pauri do not contribute anything in their rituals. This has been so for three reasons. First, the Cerenga had come to settle for one year or more later than the Bhuiyan of Tasra who all come in a group, which is numerically the majority and dominant group, supplying the Headman and the priests. Secondly, the Cerenga had always acknowledged the Bhuiyan as the Lords of the lands and themselves as their 'Parja', rather figuratively, so much so that in the Mahulpada valley they would not collect thatch-grass before the Bhuiyan do, where the interest clash. Thirdly the Pauri Bhuiyan have always worshiped the village deities in the valley village of Jagati, Mahulpada, Barcu, Regali, and Kumudih, where formerly the Cerenga Kolha live. I suspect the Pauri Bhuiyan of Daleisara colony have similar status of dominance over the Cerenga Kolh of Rata Khandi colony. Incidentally, Patnaik has always referred to the Cerenga Kolha of the colonies as "Munda", as they speak Mundari Language (GRI, 1957).

Patnaik has rightly pointed to the weakening position of the Headman and senior priests in the colonies (GRI, 1957, P.13). But he does not fully explain the situation when he says. "The causes of their ineffectiveness in the villages are obviously due to contact with outside people and gradually break down of the village solidarity after wet cultivation has been introduced".

In the next sentence, he implies village solidarity is impaired, as in "wet cultivation (agriculture) economic interdependence and constant (frequent) need for co-operation are not necessary as they are in the cultivation of 'Biringa' (Kaman) or shifting cultivation. (Brackets enclosed the terms preferred). Sharing cattle and implement and much co-operative labour are not necessary or possible in the colony as Governmental help and the insistent

need for reclaiming land by each household for its private exploitation have made a household autonomous and acquisitive to that extent. On the other hand, the older pattern of celebrating village rituals and festivals, communal partnership groups for arranging them, collective hunting expeditions, however few, and the bachelors dormitories on the colony basis and even having the institution of priests, granary paddy or 'Dehuria Dhana' in Kunutola and Jhinkar Gahira colonies (from Kunu and Kundia hill villages) show that the old village solidarity is still much preserved. However, the custom of joint cultivation of a swidden by the young man and maidens of a colony for their own common interest, as in hill villages, was preserved till forests were available to make swiddens. As the land was reduced into agricultural plots, privately owned, this automatically stopped. In this instance the village or colony solidarity of the young persons suffered heavy economic and social deprivation due to condition of agriculture. The treat to village solidarity came also from to other sources. Firstly, some colonies Guhalbandha and Ekpadi are composed of colonists from two or three or even more villages. Moreover, a few colonies like Guhalbandha may be composed of two or more tribes, Pauri, Cerenga and Bentkar. In this condition colonies present different physical composition from the old exclusive Pauri villages. When Pauri colonist from a hill village have stayed in an exclusive colony together they have preserved even 'Dehuria Dhana', pointing to the solidarity of and surviving allegiance to, the 'Matiali' section of those villages. Secondly, unlike in a hill village the colonist are not bound to pay allegiance to any definite section in the colony for the rights in land other facilities. All are given equal chances, legally of course and all owe loyalty directly to Government, represented by their big visiting officers. There is no solid dominant 'Matiali' section having first rights and no clustering of the 'Parja' round it, and hence the political composition of the old village solidarity will be lacking. Where the fiction of this old 'Matiali-Parja' relationship persists, because of a total transplantation of the village, in that case the village, solidarity of the old type appears to hold on in the colony. Thus both the decrease in old village solidarity and the weakening of the position of former Headman of a Pauri village, in fact the spokesman and leader of the 'Matiali' section, among the colonists may be rather explained in terms of the altered political and economic status derived wholly from outside authority and outside traditional territory, and not merely in terms of settled agriculture and "contacts with outside people" as such. Fundamentally for this reason, reinforced by direct and daily contacts with the authority of Government officers and officials, visiting or stationed at Daleisara colony, the old village solidarity and the old position of the Headman and priests in the colony will be impaired still more. That my interpretation of the dynamics of this change is basically sound is supported by Patnaik's following observation in 1950, when shifting cultivation was in full swing at Daleisara colony, "The

position of Naek (headman) is being lowered and his voice is becoming less and less effective in the management of village affairs". (GRI, 1952, P-24).

Inter-Community Status and Hinduization

In the Kola valley round Mahulpada the Gond and Pan Untouchables count along with the Parui Bhuiyan as the earliest settlers. Cerenga Kolha and later on Kissan came before the various Hindu castes and Mundari and Munda Kolha immigrants. The present Headman of Mahulpada, whose grandfather come from Sihiria in the north-west, belongs to the eldest Casa cultivator family in this area. The village servant castes, water-men and cowherds, blacksmiths, oilmen, washerman, liquor-sellers etc. come to join the thriving villages. A Brahman priest comes from a faraway village to serve the Casa, Gour and Gond castes. The Gond, calling themselves as Raj Gond, are here completely Hinduized and count themselves as a clean Hindu caste employing Brahman priest, washerman and barber, although the waterman do not serve them water in rituals and festivities and water from them is not accepted by higher castes like Casa, Gour (waterman and cowherd), Barber, Brahman. The barber family art Mahulpada was brought in 1954 expressly to serve the higher caste people of Mahulpada region.

The Hill Bhuiyan, though not yet served by Brahman and only occasionally by a Barber, require washermen in all important rituals and water is accepted from them by all castes and tribes. In the latter aspect they are in higher ritual status than the Gond and the Mundari from whom the higher castes do not take water. The Pauri on their part take water only from Casa, waterman and cowherds and Brahman. However, they will not accept cooked rice from even Brahman, not to speak of other castes and tribes. As in actual life some adjustment has to be made with the numerous Gond clients in Kumudhi and Rengali and other villages where Pauri Bhuiyan priests worship village deities, they accept rice-cake fried in oil, but not boiled in an earthen pot, from perhaps the last two castes only in 1954. For the Pauri Bhuiyan the basket maker and musician Ghasi, Pan and Cerenga Kolha are untouchables, as also Kamar (Blacksmith) who use bellow of cow-hide. In this bias they identify themselves with all clean castes. The Pan have given up eating buffaloes while other untouchables have not yet done that. In the school at Daleisara and Dhokamunda teachers take into consideration this bias of Pauri colonists against Cerenga Kolha. The Bentkar tribals are not untouchables, though water is not accepted from them by their co-brethren, the Pauri Bhuiyan. The Mundari who have left eating cattle are sitting by side with the Pauri Bhuiyan at Mahulpada or Dorula schools.

The Gond and Pan castes and the Kissan are at present striving hard to raise their social and ritual status. The Gond demand to get their menstruating

women's clothes washed by the washerman, who do this only in case of Casa and Gourin the locality. But the washerman did not agree to this demand in their castes council. The Pan have now taken to worshipping 'Bisri Devi', a locally popular Hindu goddesses, separately on their own and are trying to stop their service for removing dead cattle from the villages including that of the Pauri Bhuiyan colonies. This function will in all probability be taken over by Ghasi untouchables. Some Kissan have gone so far as to engage good Brahman in their marriage ceremonies and a Gour man serves water at these ceremonies to the Brahman priest, as he would not accept water from the Kissan. It may be foreseen with all probability that the Pauri Bhuiyan in colonies will try to engage barber and later on even Brahman priest at their marriages, besides accepting cooked rice from the Brahman. The last practices may not come soon, as the Bathudi in Keonjhar, since long Hinduized, would not accept such food from any outsider caste even in 1950.

Of special importance is the relation of the Pauri Bhuiyan with Magadha Gour, who often live with the latter. Marriages with a Gour man or women are not rare and as early as in 1896, D.A. Mac Millon had already noted them. At Tasra an old man had married a Gour women (in 17 p) who was socio-ritually accepted into the Pauri society at a 'Bar' celebration. Similarly, a Gour of Battamund village in Bonai married a Pauri woman, who was assimilated in the Gour caste in 1957.

We have already seen how the Pauri borrow seed and grain, sometimes even money, from Gour, Gond, Casa, and Pan, Teli (oilman) or Shundi (liquor seller) and even a Cerenga Kolha. After coming to the colony some Tasra Bhuiyan had taken loans from Khuntgaon in the north-west. Their credit-worthiness, not only in the area of credit operations, seem to have increased. When they would be able to get loans at 25% interest in the valley and from the Government granary at Kumudhi, the bitter feeling against the money lenders and their castes might disappear.

There is "Jajmani" system of fixed patronage for washermen, cowherds, barbers and blacksmiths in the valley. A washerman or blacksmith served a few villages and no other man conventionally enters into competition by offering the same services in this service area. The Barber and Brahman have the same system. A Gour cowherd has been kept in some colonies to tend cows on payment of grains and rations at a fixed rate per cow, bullock or calf. The Pauri already had such relation with washerman and Gour in the Tasra for some time. Thus, there is great probability that the Pauri in the colony will be drawn into the "Jajmani" system of some services as in the valley.

The Pauri Bhuiyan are traditional priests of village deities in Rengali, Kumudhi, Jagati, Mahulpada, Bareaua and perhaps a few other non-Pauri

villages, and they are considered as the eldest occupants of land and hills (excepting specific case of Tasra, where the Bhuiyan came later on). Also their ritual status in the Hindu eyes is the highest among all the tribal groups in the region. For all these reasons their social status is the highest among all tribals perhaps excluding the Hinduized Gond in Mahulpada region.

However, the Hindus hold the Pauri in contempt for certain of their practices, also found among some other local tribes. They do not wash with water after defecation. They yoke cows to plough, which is considered sacrilegious. The institution of dormitories, dancing of women, premarital sexual laxity, ignorance and illiteracy, general dirtiness of habit and of person, eating certain rats and birds including one which takes human night-soil, taking rotten meat of dead animals and native beer, burying the dead and perhaps a few other qualities and practices are looked down upon. Nonetheless, they highly appreciate their love of truth, steadfastness in friendship and promises, engaging hospitality, courage and endurance. However, the people of the valley are also afraid of Pauri Bhuiyan sorcery.

(Note: C. Stands for Ch. in local terms)

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PARAJA BHUYAN OF SUNDERGARH DISTRICT *

*S. C. Mohanty*¹

*B. K. Paikray*²

The Paraja Bhuyan also known as Rautali Bhuyan constitute an endogamous section of the Bhuyan tribe. The name of the Bhuyan community has been derived from the Sanskrit word 'Bhumi' meaning 'Land'. Early ethnographers Like Dalton classified Bhuyan among 'Kol' or 'Munda' tribe (1872; 140). In Orissa the community has a primitive section known as Paudi Bhuyan. The other branches have titular appellations like Rajkuli Bhuyan, Khandayat Bhuyan or Paik Bhuyan and Paraja Bhuyan or Rautali Bhuyan.

Among them, the Paraja Bhuyan - a little known community is sparsely distributed in Hemagiri, Lefripada and Tangarpalli Block of Sundergarh district in Orissa. Scanty ethnographic information is available on this community. Therefore an empirical study has been undertaken in four Paraja Bhuyan settlements namely Tumbapalli, Khamarbahal, and Belsara in Tangarpalli Block and Sardega in Hemagiri Block area of Sundergarh district by SCSTRTI during 2005.

In the study villages there are 89 Paraja Bhuyan households having a population of 429 including 224 males and 205 females. Among them 127(56.7%) males and 95 (46.34%) females are literates. The total literacy is 51.75 percent. They speak 'Oriya'.

In multi ethnic settlements they dwell in separate wards.

* Unpublished empirical study report of SCSTRTI, (2005)

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Social divisions

The community divided into twenty five exogamous *Bansos* namely, *Mahulgian Pradhan*, *Khedia Pradhan*, *Bindamolia Pradhan*, *Gurulia Sa*, *Talabiria Sa*, *Baragharia Sa*, *Kudubighia Sa*, *Sanakaria Sa*, *Daldalia Sa*, *Patel*, *Chowdhury*, *Naik*, *Singh Barik*, *Buda*, *Kalo*, *Biswal*, *Adha*, *Sahu*, *Bisi*, *Dhamal*, *Raudia*, *Taudia*, *Bariha*, *Bhuye* etc. They use their respective *Banso* names as their surnames. All of them claim to belong to one *gotra* i.e., *Nag* (Cobra) which they might have adopted later by imitating the caste Hindus.

Life Cycle

Child birth & post birth rites

They largely follow local caste traditions in their life cycle rituals. They observe pre-delivery ritual, *sadali* on the seventh month of the pregnancy, on which the bride's parents present sweetmeats to the expectorant mother. An experienced woman of Ghasi community is engaged as mid-wife (*dhai*) to assist the mother during childbirth. The naval cord of the newborn baby is cut by a knife (*pana*) and the placenta is buried in the backyards of their house wrapping it with *sal* leaf plate. The postnatal rites they observe are *sathi* on the 6th day and *ekosia* on the 21st day. Birth pollution lasts for twelve days and ends after observance of purificatory rites- *baradinia* on which washer man washes the clothes and barber pairs the nails of the mother. On that day, the new born baby is tonsured and given a name by the maternal grandfather. *Bhatakhia*- the first feeding of rice is observed after one year and the ear piercing rites are performed when the baby is about 2 years of age.

Puberty rites

They observe puberty rites for adolescent girls. On the onset of the first menarche, the girl is secluded in an isolated room for a period of five days and tabooed to look at males. At the end of the five-day pollution period she takes the purificatory bath at the dawn on the sixth day.

Marriage

In Paraja Bhuyan society adult marriage and monogamy is the common practice. Marriage through negotiation (*Bihaghar*) is considered the most ideal and prestigious mode of acquiring a spouse. The boy's parent takes the initiative. Their marriage proceedings include *gharadakha* (visiting with proposal), *pindhani* (Presentation of ornaments to the bride), *badidera* (obtaining of consent), *chudicheripeti* (wearing of bangles and marriage apparel), *homa*, *hataganthi* and *athamangala*. A low grade Brahman priest (*Jhadua Brahman*) conducts their wedding ritual. The consummation of marriage takes place in the residence of the groom on the day of *athamangala* (the 8th day). The kinsmen, guests and villagers are entertained with marriage feast by the bride's parents on the day of the marriage

and by the groom's parents after the newlyweds return from the customary visit to the bride's house after marriage. Bride price (*sukumul*) is prevalent among them and is paid both in cash and kinds.

Other modes of acquiring mates permitted in their society are by elopment (*udulia*), by service (*gharajoin*), by exchange (*badalkania*) and by courtship (*pasand*). Remarriage of widow, widower and divorcees, junior levirate (*bhaujabandei*) and junior sororate (*salibandei*) are also permitted, but parallel cousin marriage and cross cousin marriages are strictly tabooed in their society.

Death rites

The Paraja Bhuyan practise burial of their dead. The dead person is buried with its head towards the north and face upwards stripped of clothes but covered with a new cloth. They observe death pollution for eleven days. During this period, visiting shrines, worship or entry into the temples, observance of festivals and rituals, giving alms to beggars, eating delicious and non-veg foods, use of oil and sexual intercourse are tabooed. They observe *telpani* rite on the 3rd day, *dasa* on the 10th day and *kriyakarama* on the 11th day. The mortuary rites are conducted by a Brahman priest (*Jhadua Brahman*) and the bereaved family hosts a feast to lineage members and villagers on that day. They do not observe death anniversary rites. Construction of monument- *matha* in honour of the dead is done on the eleventh day. Some well-to-do families do emersion of bone in holy water after two to five years, as it is a very expensive matter. In such cases the concerned family has to offer a feast to its *banso* members to get rid of its ritual pollution for handling the dead person's bones, lest it may have to face social excommunication.

Economy

Settled cultivation is the mainstay of Paraja Bhuyan's economy that is supplemented by sharecropping, wage earning both in mining and industrial sectors, forest collection, animal husbandry, and services. They domesticate cows, buffaloes, Goats, sheep and fowls but not pigs. They are good farmers. Paddy is their major crop and they also cultivate Ragi, Bajra, Pulses and vegetables both in *Khariff* and *Rabi* seasons. The present survey shows that almost all the Paraja Bhuyan families (97.8%) in the four study villages possess cultivable lands at an average of 3.21 Acs per landowning household. (*Ref- Annexure-1*).

The average annual income of the surveyed household is 25,044/-. Out of total 89 households 42 have incurred loan from different sources for development of agricultural lands and for installation of lift irrigation points in their farmlands. Average amount of loan per loanee household is Rs.11,226/-.

Paraja Bhuyan are non-vegetarians and rice is their staple food. They abstain from taking beef and pork. They are addicted to country liquor and homemade rice beers. They smoke and chew tobacco.

Social control

The Paraja Bhuyan have their own regional traditional community council called *Gadi* composed of component village chiefs (*Sian*) and headed by a *Gadidar* who is assisted by a messenger called *Katual* to deal with their community matters. The oldest *Gadi* was a bigger unit comprising of all the Paraja Bhuyan settlements which later was divided into five *Gadis* viz- 'Sardaga' in 'Hemagiri Block,' 'Dumabahal' and 'Kulabira' in Lefripada Block, 'Majhiapada' in Sadar Block and 'Tumapali' in Tangarpalli Block, each comprising 20 to 50 villages. At the regional level the *Gadi* acts as the custodian of their social norms and customs and settles matters concerning village feuds, intra and inter-community disputes.

At the village level *Sian* heads the traditional community council, *jatisabha*. *Dakua*- the messenger and *Kalo/Jhankar* their traditional village priest assist the *Sian*. The post of *Kalo/Jhankar* is hereditary whereas *Sian* and *Dakua* are chosen by nomination. Their village council adjudicates cases pertaining to family disputes, theft, incest, adultery, *gobadha* (killing of cow), *machhiapatak* (formation of maggots in the wounds) etc.

Religious beliefs & practices

Paraja Bhuyan religion is an amalgamation of animism and Hinduism. They worship Hindu deities along with their traditional tutelary deities. *Belsian*- the village deity installed under a *mohua* or *kochila* tree is worshipped by their traditional priest, *Kalo/Jhankar* offering animal sacrifices in festive occasions. *Samalei*, their supreme deity and *Dulladei*, their household deity are worshipped by women offering *jukha*, the hard boiled rice cooked out of newly harvested paddy on *Nuakha* festival. *Nuakhai*, *Karma*, *Puspune* and *Makar* are their major festivals. They also observe *Akhitrutia*, *Raja*, *Dola*, *Gamha*, *Kumar purnima*, *Dassera*, *Gundicha*, *Dipabali*, and *Laxmipuja*, festivals. During *Pus pune* and *Karma puja*, their priest-*Kalo/Jhankar* sacrifices goat, sheep or fowl before their supreme deity *Samalei*. In *Karma* festival both the sexes perform traditional folk dance- *Karma nach* to the tune of *Madal* wearing their dance costume *ghagara* on waist and *gulugula* (tinkle) on ankles.

They believe in witchcraft and black-magic and seek the help of witchdoctor to appease the benevolent and malevolent spirits. They have no astrologer. Their *Jhauda* Brahman priest acts as astrologer in match making. Some of the old men and women who know and prescribe herbal remedies for various ailments are called *Baida*.

Inter-ethnic relationship

Adopting social mobility tactic and acquiring many caste traditions the Paraja Bhuyan have carved a better place in the local caste hierarchy. They are not treated as physically untouchables. Maintaining their social identity they live in ethnically homogenous as well as heterogeneous settlements. Caste Hindus like

Brahman, Khandayat, Gauda, Gudia do not accept water and cooked food from them. The Paraja Bhuyan also do not accept water and cooked food from Teli, Sundhi, Badhei, Lohara, Kamar, Agaria, Kulta, Khadia, Kol, Kisan, Mochi, Dhoba and do not allow house entry to them. They are allowed entry into the village temple, to participate in village festivals and feasts but do not inter-dine sitting close to other communities. They maintain distance and sit in a separate row with the people of their own community. They are allowed to share village well, bathing *ghat*, tea stall in the village, public transport and common platform in the village meeting. But they do not share the common crematoria of the village. They have their own separate burial ground. They also avail the services of low grade Brahman priest, barber and washerman

ANNEXURE- I

Name of the Study village	No. of Paraja Bhuyan Households	Population			Literacy			Land less Households	Land holding Households	Total Farmland (Ac)	Total Annual Household Income (Rs)
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total				
1.Khamarbahal	50	110	101	211	66	48	144	Nil	50	154.5	11,74,000
2.Sardega	29	81	75	156	42	32	134	Nil	29	107.5	5,15,000
3.Tumbapalli	9	31	27	58	17	14	39	2	7	13.00	5,27,000
4. Belsara	1	2	2	4	2	1	3	Nil	1	4.00	13,000
Total	89	224	205	429	127 (56.7%)	95 (46.34%)	222 (51.75%)	2 (2.24%)	87 (97.8%)	279 (Average 3.21 Ac per Household)	22,29,000 (Average Rs25,044 per Household)

SOCIAL STATUS OF KHANDAYAT BHUINYA or BHUINYA KHANDAYAT OF SUNDARGARH DISTRICT*

*B. N Swain*¹

The Bhuinya Community which is included in the Sch. Tribe list of Orissa may broadly be classified into two sections, the plains Bhuinyas and the Hill Bhuinyas. The Plains Bhuinyas have been greatly influenced by the Hindu culture and Hindu way of life. The Khandayat Bhuinyas or Bhuinya Khandayats come under this group. According to S. C. Ray the classification of Bhuinya tribe is as follows (The Hill Bhuinyas of Orissa, 1935, page 2).

“Here we may study them in various stages of cultural development, from the most primitive Pauris or Hill Bhuiyas of Keonjhar, Bonai and Pallahara states to the thoroughly Hinduized Bhuiya Zamindar families, such as Garhatia family of Himgiri and the Mahapatra family of Hagra in the Gangpur state and some others and the Paik Bhuiyas or Khandayat Bhuiyas and Rajkoli and Parja Bhuiyas, who hold intermediate positions”. He further states (page 29) that the plains Bhuiyas some of whom still form and whose ancestors have once formed part of the militia of two states respectively, known as Paik (soldier) Bhuiyas or Khandayat (swords man) Bhuiyas or Khandayat Paik Bhuiyas. He has classified the Bhuyan tribe in to the following divisions (page 36).

1. The primitive Das Bhuiyas represented mainly by the Pauris or Hill Bhuiyas of Hills of Keonjhar, Bonai, Pallahara states.
2. The quasi-military Khandayat Bhuiya or Paik Bhuiya of Orissa plains and the southern parts of Chotnagpur.
3. The mixed Rajkoli or Rajkuli Bhuiyas of Orissa states.

* Unpublished Report of Tribal & Harijan Research-cum-Training Institute (THRTI) (now SCSTRTI), 1993

¹ Research Officer, SCSTRTI

4. The Praja Bhuiya or Rautali Bhuiya of Orissa and South eastern Chotnagpur who live by agriculture or in some cases agriculture labourers and
5. The landholding Ghatwar Bhuiyas or Tikoit Bhuiyas or Rae Bhuiya of Santal Pargana, Hazaribagh, Gaya Monghur and Bhagalpur Districts who generally wear the sacred thread and call themselves Surjbhansi Rajputs.

In order to ascertain the social status of the Khandayat Bhuiya or Bhuiya Khandayat a field study was undertaken by the Tribal & Harijan Research-cum-Training Institute (THRTI), Bhubaneswar in the village Padampur of Panposh sub-division of Sundargarh district during 1992-93. Empirical data were collected from the field administering the prescribed schedule and interview guide. Besides relevant information were also collected from secondary sources.

The study village & community

The village Padampur is located about 2 kms away from Kuanrmunda Police Station and Block Headquarters, 15 kms away from Panposh Sub-division and Rourkela steel plant. The State Highway passes through the village. There are daily regular bus services. The village has various infrastructural facilities like High School, M.E. School, U.P School, Hospital, Mahila Samiti, VAW Centre, Bank, Veterinary hospital etc.

The village is inhabited by different castes, like Brahmin, Karan, Khandayat, Pano, Kumbhar, Munda, Ganda, Khadia etc. There are 52 Khandayat Bhuiya households in the village. The total population of the village is 821 of which the Khandayat Bhuiya population is 225.

Social & Cultural life:

The Khandayats Bhuiyas live in houses made of mud walls and floor, having roof of local country made tiles (*khapar*). Some of them have *pucca* houses. In the front of the house there is a long verandah for sitting purpose. Most of the houses have two to three rooms and a cowshed. The rooms are well ventilated having two to three windows.

Khandayat Bhuiya men wear *dhoti*, banion and napkin. Very few of them put on shirts when going out. The wearing of *lungi* in the village has become very common. The young people are seen wearing pants, shirts and coats. During rituals and festivals like remarriage, death etc. traditional dresses are worn by them. The women invariably wear sarees and sometimes inner garments.

Men, usually, do not wear ornaments. A rich man may wear a gold ring at the most. But the women are fond of ornaments. The women of affluent families have gold ornaments whereas others wear ornaments made of silver, bronze or alloys. Women wear ornaments in the neck, hand, nose, ears and legs.

Rice is the staple food of the Khandayat Bhuiyan. The vegetables and occasionally, fish and meat are taken as side dishes. Sumptuous meals cannot be afforded by them. So they take only one item of curry. Two meals are taken in a day. The morning meal is taken before noon while the evening meal is taken at about 9 PM. Boiling is the common method of food preparation. Tea is becoming popular in the village. The Khandayat Bhuiyans are addicted to liquors. They drink Mahuli (distilled liquor) and Handia (rice beer).

Birth of a child takes place in the main room of the house. The village traditional 'Dhai' (mid wife) of their own community attends the mother. She is paid for her services both in kind and cash. Immediately after the child birth, the 'Dhai' cuts the umbilical cord with a sharp edged bamboo split and puts the placenta etc. into an earthen pot which is buried near the bed of the mother. The family members observe birth pollution until a purification ceremony is held. On the 21st day, the name giving ceremony is held and a feast is arranged for the villagers. Those who are not economically sound may not arrange a feast.

Different types of marriages, such as arranged marriage, love marriage, marriage by service, marriage by elopement, widow remarriage were in vogue among the Khandayat Bhuyan. However at present marriage of a boy and a girl may be arranged either through negotiation or by elopement. In case of marriage by negotiation betrothal ceremony is held. The bride groom's party consisting of parents of the boy and two other relatives go to the house of the girl. When the proposal is accepted by the parents of the girl, a middle man is appointed by the boy's or the girl's parents to serve as go-between. The middleman fixes up an auspicious day for performance of the marriage ceremony. Lastly, two to three persons go to the girl's parent's house and announce the date for marriage.

On the day of marriage, the groom is given a white Dhoti, a white shirt and a white cotton shawl to wear. The bridegroom proceeds with his parents, relatives and friends to the bride's house. There the marriage ceremony is solemnized. The bride, the groom and his party members are given a sumptuous dinner by the bride's parents. Then the bride and the groom return to the groom's house. Some gifts consisting of household articles like clothes, utensils, ornaments are presented to the newly married couple by the bride's parents and relatives.

Divorce and widow remarriage are permissible under the prevailing custom of the tribe and for that no ceremony is observed.

The Khandayat Bhuiyans cremate the dead body. The death pollution is observed for 10 days. On the 10th day, all the family members shave their heads as a mark of respect to the departed soul. They sleep on the floor during the period of mourning. On the day of purification (*kirya*) mortuary rites are performed by the chief mourner. The family members wear new clothes. A feast is arranged by the family members of the deceased for the villagers.

Economy:

Agriculture is the most important source of livelihood of the tribe who produce paddy, millet, *channa*, mustard, maize and vegetables in their land. Beside they keep cow, buffalo, goat, sheep, chicken which are sold at the time of need. They also earn wages as daily labourers working outside the village. Some of them have been employed in petty services in urban areas. They collect fuel wood and forest products from the nearby forests. Though agriculture is the main occupation of the villagers, many educated persons are looking for employment in non-agricultural sector. The average income per household is estimated to be Rs. 3,260/- in a year. So, most of them are still below the poverty line.

Ritual & Political life:

The Khandayat Bhuinyas worship their traditional deities known as Gramdevati, Nagara, Adhistrethi, Jhagdei and Samalei. Their main festival is Nuakhai. At the time of harvesting, they perform Nuakhia festival. They worship their village deity and offer cooked rice, vegetables and *handia* (rice beer) to the deity. To satisfy her, they sacrifice a pig or a chicken. The priest or the village headman annually performs the *puja*. Dashara, Kalipuja, Ganesh Puja are also performed by them. Makar is one of their important festivals. Now-a-days, due to acculturation, the Khandayat Bhuiyan also worship the Hindu God and Goddess.

There is no community Panchayat in the village. It is abolished since the introduction of Panchayati Raj system. The ward member is elected to work as representative of the village. His main function is to look into development works at the village level. Matters concerning construction of roads and canals, small canals, village disputes are discussed and materialized at the village level under his guidance. He also reports all the village matters to the Sarapanch.

Conclusion

The findings of the field study shows that the Khandayat Bhuiyans or Bhuinya Khandayats have retained some tribal cultural traits in spite of their assimilation in to Hindu society. They practice both negotiation marriage and marriage by elopement. They have their traditional deities who are propitiated by their own priest through offerings of animal sacrifices and rice beer.

However, some of the Bhuiyans have tried to elevate their social status by adopting Hindu way of life. They write their community name as Khandayat Bhuinyas. Even some of them write only 'Khandayat'. Though an endogamous section of the Bhuyan tribe, the Khandayat Bhuyan / Paik Bhuyan have not yet been included as such in the Scheduled Tribes list of Odisha.

PAIK BHUYAN/ KHANDAYAT BHUYAN *

*T. Patnaik*¹

BHUIYA, BHUYAN is notified as a Scheduled Tribes (ST) community at Sl. 6 of ST. list of Orissa. According to S.C. Roy (1935), PAIK BHUYAN / KHANDAYAT BHUYAN/ KHANDAYAT PAIK BHUYAN are endogamous sections of the Bhuyan tribe. According to S.C. Roy (1935: 29, 35-36) and Risley (1891), PAIK BHUYAN / PAIKA BHUYAN are endogamous section of the Bhuyan tribe. PAIK BHUYAN / PAIKA BHUYAN have surnames such as Naik, Ohdar, Pradhan, Ganzhu, Kotwar, Raut, Amat etc. They have number of clan groups called Khilis and one gotra- Nagas or Nag.

Etymological meaning of the community name -

According to N. Patnaik (1980), the etymological meaning of the Bhuyan is derived from the Sanskrit word "Bhumi" meaning land or earth. According to Roy (1935 : 29), "Those plains Bhuiyas some of whom still form, and whose ancestors had once formed, part of the militia of the States they respectively inhabit are known as Paik (soldier) Bhuiyas or Khandait (swordsmen) Bhuiyas or Khandait Paik Bhuiyas"

Distribution

The notified community Bhuyan is concentrated in Bansapal block of Keonjhar district and the adjoining areas of Bonai, Pallahara subdivisions of Sundergarh and Dhenkanal districts. The PAIK BHUYAN/ PAIKA BHUYAN are concentrated in the low lands of Keonjhar, Bonai, Pallahara, Gangpur, Bamara, Mayurbhanj etc.

Population

The total population of the notified Scheduled Tribe community Bhuyan is 2, 46,573 as per the 1991 Census. The district wise population is given below.

* Unpublished study report of SCSTRTI, (2003)

¹ Research Officer, SCSTRTI

Sambalpur (30562), Sundergarh (77100), Keonjhar (73366), Mayurbhanj (47472), Balesore (1268), Cuttack (695), Dhenkanal (7591), Phulbani (49), Bolangir (67), Kalahandi (1013), Koraput (5785), Ganjam (629) and Puri (976).

The districtwise population of Paik Bhuyan is not available separately.

Level of Education / Literacy

The percentage of literacy of the notified community Bhuyan is 35.37 according to 1991 Census. No separate literacy figures for Paik Bhuyan / Paika Bhuyan are available.

Occupation

The traditional occupation of Paik Bhuyan was military service to the then rulers and cultivation. Presently they are living mainly upon cultivation.

Socio-cultural Features

- According to Roy (1935 : 29), "Those plains Bhuiyas some of whom still form and whose ancestors had once formed, part of the militia of the States they respectively inhabit are known as Paik (soldier) Bhuyas or Khandait (swordsmen) Bhuiyas or Khandait Paik Bhuiyas"
- Paik Bhuyan are an advanced and Hinduised section of the Bhuyan tribe.
- They have number of clan groups called *khilis*.
- They observe ear boring ceremony.
- The traditional village priest is known as "Kalo".
- Their secular headman is called as Naik / Ganjhu
- Their tribal panchayat is known as "Gaddi".
- They do not take liquor and fowl.
- They accept rice etc. only from the hands of Brahaman and Kshatriyas.
- They employ low grade Brahaman priests to perform their life cycle rituals.
- They practise arranged marriage, love marriage, marriage by service, marriage by elopement etc.
- Divorce is allowed only when the wife proves to be unchaste.
- Remarriage of widows and divorcees is allowed only with a widower.

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BHUMIA*

*S. C. Mohanty*¹

BHUMIA is a term originated from *Bhumi* - earth. Thus, *Bhumia* denotes "sons of the earth." The tribe is largely concentrated in Koraput, Malkangiri and Nowarangpur districts of Odisha. They speak Odia. As per 2011 census their population is 2 17 395 (1 06 515 males and 1 10 880 females) and sex ratio is 1041. Their total literacy rate is 63.71%. It is 75.74 percent for males and 52.27 percent for females.

Traditional Bhumia settlements were uni-clan and homogenous. Now they live in heterogeneous villages due to immigration of other castes and tribes into their villages. In many villages the Bhumia live in separate hamlets.

The Bhumia are generally settled cultivators and agricultural labourers. They cultivate paddy, minor millets, pulses and oil seeds. They collect varieties of forest produce, like roots, tubers, fruits and green leaves also. In lenient season they engage in different non-agricultural wage earning. Rice is their staple food. They prefer non-vegetarian diet. They are habituated to taking country liquor, *salap* juice and chewing tobacco.

In their religious beliefs and practices they are more inclined towards caste Hinduism with traces of tribal religious practices. They visit Hindu shrines and worship Hindu deities along with their tribal deities viz. *Nissani, Mauli, Ran Devta, Lenjan, Kanchari, Pardesini, Baisakhi Devta* etc.

They observe festivals like *Bali yatra, Chaitparab, Budhi Thakurani Osa, Pus Parab* etc. amidst colourful *Dhems*a dance in which the Dom musicians play their musical instruments.

* Unpublished article of 2000 updated in 2018

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The tribe is divided into two groups: *Bada* and *Sano* each of which is again divided into a number of exogamous totemistic septs (*Bansa*), such as, *Bagh* (tiger), *Nag* (cobra), *Cheli* (goat), and *Surya* (sun), etc

Bhumia family is nuclear, patrilocal and patrilineal. In most cases they maintain monogamy. Marriage by negotiation is regarded as ideal. Bride price is paid either in cash or in kind, in the form of food grains, goat and *mahua* liquor. Acquiring mates by elopement, exchange and capture is in vogue. Remarriage of divorcee, widow and widower as well as junior levirate, sororate and cross cousin marriages are also prevalent in the society.

An experienced woman of Chamar caste attends the pregnant woman during her delivery. The birth pollution is observed for 8 days. The Bhumia usually practise cremation for the dead but burial is done for unnatural deaths. Death pollution is observed for ten days. On the eleventh day the kinsmen perform purificatory rites and a communal feast is hosted on the twelfth day.

The *Naik* is their traditional village headman, and *Bhatanaik* is the regional head. At the village level, *Polari* and *Disari* are sacred specialists and *Chillan* acts as the village messenger-cum-assistant to *Nail*. Matters concerning village feuds, intra and inter community disputes are settled in the regional council. In early days, the office of the *Nail* was powerful and prestigious and his decision was binding.

During freedom struggle the involvement of the Bhumia community under the leadership of Martyr Laxman Naik bears testimony to their ethnic solidarity and prowess.

BHUMIA*

*P. Das Pattanaik*¹

The total population of the Bhumias is 50,294. The distribution of the tribe all over the State is as follows:-

Sl. No	Name of the (tribe) District	Total population	Male	Female
1.	Koraput	49,584	24,477	25,107
2.	Sambalpur	560	273	287
3.	Phulbani	6	6	0
4.	Ganjam	121	61	60
5.	Sundargarh	23	23	0
Total		50,294	24,840	25,454

The Bhumias are divided into totemistic units or clans. The three such totems, which are called 'Bansa', mentioned at Balia village are Nag, Bagh and Surjya. Ordinarily, in a village, families of one Bansa reside. There are separate hamlets for members of different Bansas. In their community the clan organizations is a simple one. In every village, the Naika is the accepted leader. He is ordinarily the richest man possessing lands and cattle in opulence. Next to the Naika is the 'Bhat-Naika'. There is one such for a region, sometimes comprising of 10 to 20 or more villages. Both these offices are ordinarily hereditary. The 'Bhat Naika' settles the village feuds. While petty village quarrels are referred to the village Naika, serious disputes involving clan questions are referred to the Bhat-Naika. The Bhat-Naik calls a conference of the elders of the villagers and the matter is discussed and decided in open.

The Bhumia villages do not have any plan. No doubt, the houses are arranged in two rows flanking the principal village road, but from village to

* Published in ADIBASI, Vol. V, No.3, (Special Issue), TRB, 1963-64, pp.43-44

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village there is difference in the width of the road and location of the houses. In large villages like Balia, houses are scattered about in all directions.

The dormitory system is not noticeable in the Bhumia community. Young unmarried boys and girls sleep in their parents houses. Although marriage between boys and girls of the same Bansa is taboo premarital sexual experiences did not appear to be altogether absent.

In Bhumia society the birth of a boy is ordinarily preferred to the birth of a girl. This is not difficult to understand considering the position of women in the society. Infertile women are ordinarily looked down upon. A man generally waits for 8 to 10 years before taking another wife for getting a child. The Bhumias believe that when women in pregnancy die they become ghosts and ordinarily they are evil spirits. They are supposed to haunt the village premises and to frighten solitary persons. Among the Bhumias in case of difficult labour, vows are made to 'Bhudhimai' to facilitate delivery. The delivery takes place in a portion of the hut set apart as the lying-in-compartment. As soon as a child is born, the naval string is cut by the father's mother. The naval string is buried by her outside the house. The baby is washed in tepid water shortly after birth. The ceremonial impurity of a parturient woman is removed by installments for eight days. On a day between eight and the twentieth day from the birth of a child, a name is selected for the baby. From two to five months after the birth of a child the hair of the child is shaved for the first time.

The two recognized forms of marriage are 'the arranged' and the 'forced marriages'. Arranged marriages are settled by the parents of the boy and girl. The bride-price payable is one cock, one ram, one *puti* of rice. The marriage feast has to be given for three or four consecutive days and Bhumias from the area are all invited. Frequently such marriages are suggested by married sisters and other relations of the parents. The enforced marriage is known as 'Udulia' where the boy feel that it will not be possible to pay the bride-price, and where opposition is apprehended the boy has to forcibly take away the girl to his house with her consent. Bride-price in the shape of a fowl and some rice is payable. But the marriage feast is given only on one day. In this society cross-cousin marriage is preferred. There is almost an established claim for the maternal uncle's daughter's hand in the Bhumia community. After marriage the Bhumia ordinarily resides with his bride in the ancestral house to which a room is added for the newlyweds.

When the sick man dies, the corpse is laid with its head to the south and is besmeared with oil and turmeric paste. The corpse is carried out of the house, face upwards and feet pointing north, wrapped in a mat and tied to a wooden pole. Persons are generally cremated. Persons who die of snake bite, a fall, cholera or smallpox, must be buried. Children up to the age of seven or above there about are buried.

Being agriculturists, the Bhumias attach great importance to fertility rites. Of this the 'Balijatra Parab' is most important. Once in every three years this festival is observed in a village. Close to the village *sadar* a special house of split bamboo frame is constructed. Every family collects some sand from nearly *nullas* or river in specially prepared Sal, bamboo baskets. Seeds of various kinds of cereals and paddy are put in this by each family and are watered for nine days. The seeds germinate. If the germination has not been good, the gods have to be propitiated. During the period of 9 days, the Gurumai has to sing prayers and invocations to the gods and goddesses to the accompaniment of the music from two bows against the arc or which are rubbed split bamboo sticks to produce the music. Young unmarried girls observe fast and perform 'Debta' in trances.

The Bhumias have a village Sadar, which is ordinarily built in the middle of the main village road. Over that a thatch roof is provided where goddess Budhimai is installed. She is the village deity with whom men, women and children appear to be familiar and friendly. The other deity of importance is Hindu Debta. He is considered more powerful than Budhimai. In each village there is a 'Desari' who is the specialist in medicines and magic.

The Bhumia women are fond of music and dance. The 'Dhemsas' dance is popular among them. Young men and women dance to the music and drum beating of the Dombos. In nearly every house musical instruments like Behela, which is akin to the one-string Sarangi, Tamak, Runji, Ghumra, etc., are kept. These are utilized for music and dance in small groups.

In the matter of houses also, Bhumia, does not seem to follow any fixed pattern but the bulk of the houses have the principal room which is used as the granary. The other room by its side which opens out to the front verandah is used as the kitchen-cum-sleeping room. There is located this principal hearth, where food is cooked and stored. Under the gable thatch on both sides of this principal block, two small side rooms are ordinarily curved out. One shelters the goats and in other provision for a small hearth is made for miscellaneous purposes. Sometimes a guest is accommodated there. In front of the house is courtyard. The walls of the Bhumia houses in most cases, particularly in the interior villages are very attractively colour washed in red, blue, black, white, yellow, etc. The careful housewife takes great pains to paint the walls in horizontal designs.

In addition to the field work, the Bhumias prepare the implements like 'Kula' and 'Duti'. One 'Kula' is the ordinary winnowing fan. The 'Duti' is a round or square container for storing fish at the time of catch. From various kinds of fibre like the jute, *sabai* or *siali* they weave Bisarshalla, which is a large net for catching fish by drawing and Kudarjal for entrapping rabbit. From *siali* leaves they prepare Talari, which is a rain-proof coat. They also prepare *langal*, *juali* and other agricultural implements.

The Bhumia women put on innumerable brass bangles. If they can afford, they decorate themselves from head to feet with ornaments made of mostly silver and rarely gold. The arms and the ears are the most favoured in this respect. The ordinary clothing of an adult consists of a piece of cotton cloth about a foot in width and three to five or even six yards in length. One woman ordinarily wears round the waist only a piece of cloth about four cubits long.

The Bhumis are principally agriculturists. They do not practice Podu (shifting) cultivation. But they are accustomed to growing grams, oil-seed, etc. in the comparatively higher land. Nearer urban areas, they are interested in growing vegetables, tobacco and similar other cash crops which they sell in the market.

The Bhumias indeed are a very interesting tribe. Their number is small. Due to the impact of civilization they are on their way to complete assimilation, but still they are retaining their tribal characteristic and constitute a rich subject-matter for further study.

STUDY OF SELECTED DERMATOGLYPHIC CHARACTERS OF TWO TRIBAL POPULATIONS OF THE SAME NEIGHBOURHOOD *

*S. K. Ghosh Maulik*¹

As dermatoglyphic characters of finger tips and palm are under close genetic influence, these are used by the anthropologists as discriminative characters for studying human variation. There has been considerable improvement in the method of analysis during last one hundred years. Penrose (1949) emphasized the use of 'F-td' angle variation as a useful marker which was subsequently improved by Geipel and Weninger. Sharma in his various papers discussed about metrical analysis and method of taking prints for this particular character. Comparatively the 't-d' ridge count and its correlation with the 'atd' angle has been paid much less attention.

The Study Populations :

The two populations from which samples have been drawn are (i) Didayi and (ii) Bhumia living in villages around Kudumulugumma (Block). Both the populations share the same environment and are primitive in technological aspects, education, health and economy. Farming activities are supported or supplemented by seasonal collections from the jungle. A large section of the Didayis lives in the hills but the Bhumias are plains dwellers. Both the tribes are genetically isolated from each other, but there are few cases of intermixtures. Some study reports on these populations are available, so no attempt will be made to give their social identification.

Sample-A sample of 75 individuals (male :54, female : 21) of Didayi and 115 Bhumia (male :74 female : 41) were taken in 1973-74, as a part of a study project. A total number of 380 palm prints of both the hands have been considered, because quite a considerable number of prints from the individuals had to be rejected. Main cause of rejection is obliteration of the digital tri radii due to corn formation, which is very common due to prolonged use of axe.

* Published in ADIBASI, Vol. XXVIII, No.1, THRTI, Bhubaneswar 1988, pp.29-32

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Method of print collection and analysis

Palm prints were connoted from both the hands in the most convenient way by applying ink on the palm and keeping a small cotton pad below the paper to ensure good print of the hollow region of the palm. Care was taken to keep the palm in normal flexed condition as suggested by Berg and also Sharma. The 'atd' angle is slightly affected if there is too much stretching which is not in case of the t-d ridge count. Often the position of the axial tri radius is altered either in the proximo-distal or in the medic-lateral position. It has been suggested that in such cases both the angle and the count differs. It has become conventional to record maximal reading in case of the angle and minimal count for the ridges. Though such methodological difficulties are encountered, these two quantitative characters have been accepted as very useful discriminant in palmar characters.

Analysis and interpretation

Following the methods of J. Mavalwala (1963) and S. B. Holt (1968) the data have been analysed and shown in table 1 and 2. Mean of the angle and ridge-count have been shown along with standard error and standard deviation.

TABLE 1
Maximal atd angle among the Didayi and Bhumia

Population	Sex No.	Left hand mean angle in degree	s. e.	s. d.	Right hand mean angle in degree	s. e.	s. d.
Didayi	Male 54	39.1	0.54	4.02	38.5	0.66	4.92
	Female 21	40.3	1.24	5.70	41.4	1.03	4.70
Bhumia	Male 74	42.0	0.82	7.21	41.2	0.82	7.23
	Female 41	41.1	1.04	6.70	41.1	0.89	5.72

The maximal atd angle among the Didayis is 39.1 degree in the left palm as against 38.5 degrees in the right, in case of the male but the females of the same population show higher divergence in both the palms (above 40°). There is no statistically significant bilateral or bisexual difference.

The Bhumia males show 42° and 41.2° angle in the left and right hands respectively; but the females show similar mean measurement in both the hands. They also do not exhibit any significant difference between the sexes or the sides.

Both the populations present a very close nature of occurrence of the mean measure of the atd angle with the Didayis having comparatively low score.

Minimal count of t-d palmar ridges of the two populations have been presented in table-2. The Didayi males show highest occurrence of ridges in between the two tri radii t and d. They exceed the mean count of their female counterpart. But an opposite picture is obtained in case of the Bhumias, where we see the females exhibit higher count than the males of their own group. No

apparent reason can be assigned for bisexual variation in the above two population samples.

TABLE 2
Minimal t -d ridge count among the Didayi and Bhumia

Population	Sex	No	Left			Right		
			Mean Count	s.e.	s.d.	Mean Count	s.e.	s.d.
Didayi	Male	54	108.3	2.1	15.6	107.8	1.8	13.2
	Female	21	90.5	1.6	7.4	85.4	2.7	12.4
Bhumia	Male	74	89.8	1.9	16.8	90.4	1.8	15.6
	Female	41	102.7	0.6	4.2	101.5	0.94	6.0

In table 3, the data have been summed up as averages of the means and respective standard deviation for the sake of easy comparability. The Didayi show mean of 39.8 for atd angle which is 42.6 in the Bhumias. The mean of t-d ridge count among the Didayis is 97.9 and among the Bhumia it is 96.1. The two groups exhibit a significant difference in the atd angle (t-2.2, significant at 5 per cent level of probability).

TABLE-3
Some statistical Estimations of the Traits

Populations (1)	No (2)	Atd angle mean (3)	S. d. (4)	t-d count mean (5)	S. d. (6)	Coeff. of cor.(r) (7)
Didayi	75	39.8	4.8	97.9	12.1	-0.02
Bhumia	115 t-2.2	42.6	6.7	96.1 t-0.37	1.6	-0.06

There is no significant difference between the groups in t-d ridge count. Both the tribes show a negative correlation between the traits.

Discussion

Discriminative efficiency index of the atd angles and t-d ridge counts, using the sums of the characters and average of the means, was calculated as suggested by Penrose and Smith (1966) and Berg (1968). The values are given in table 4.

TABLE-4
Discriminative efficiency indices of the two characters

Populations	Sum of angles		D	S	I	Sum of count		D	S	I
	Mean	S.D.				Mean	S.D.			
Didayi	79.9	9.6	2.9	11.4	0.6	196.0	24.3	3.9	22.8	0.03
Bhumia	82.8	12.9								

It appears that the angles atd is slightly wider in the left hand than the right hand of males in both the groups. The wider angle depends not only on the divergent positions of the tri radius 'a' and 'd' but on upward positions of the axial tri radius (t). It has been suggested (Geipel, Weninger (1973) that the length- height index of the hand has got certain relation with the 'atd' angle. Weninger ('73) also suggested physical constitution and racial affiliation of the subjects are important criteria to be considered. The indices of discrimination and 't' values of comparison do not detect any good degree of difference between the populations, in these two characters. These two groups are neighbouring and have been living under similar ecological conditions for a considerable longer time. They have got very close physical resemblances though are genetically isolated. Obliteration of variation in genetic character of complex nature cannot be explained very easily. Negative correlation between these two characters is also reported by Mukherjee (1967) on Bengalees and Berg (1968) on Englishmen.

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The material of this paper was presented at the Indian Science Congress session at Ahmadabad 1978.

BHUMIA*

*G. B. Sahoo*¹

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

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

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

* Published in Tribes of Orissa (revised edition), SCSTRTI, 2004, pp. 76-78

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The main festival observed by the Bhumias is Balijatra, during which elaborate fertility rites are performed. During this festival young girls dance in a trance and act as a medium for a spirit called Debta. Hundi Debta and Budhimani are the chief deities. In every village, there is a priest called Disari who is also treated as a doctor of magic.

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

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

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

B H U M I A*

*A. B. Ota*¹

*P. Patel*²

IDENTITY

The Bhumia tribe of Odisha has a rich cultural heritage and is also considered as the most heroic of all tribal communities of the State. It is believed that the Bhumias are a sub-tribe of the Baiga tribe living in Madhya Pradesh and Chhatisgarh. There is no legend to suggest as to when, how and from where these Bhumias came to inhabit Koraput (undivided district). As per their old belief, the name Bhumia indicates their origin from the soil (*bhumi*). Their legend and tradition confirm that they were the first to start farming in the highlands of Koraput region. That is why they believe that they have the first and the foremost claim on the soil and that their ancestors ruled over the land from the ancient time. The Bhumias, unlike other tribes, speak 'Desia', the *lingua-franca* of Koraput rather than a separate tribal language of their own.

According to 2011 census, their total population in Odisha is 1 25 977 out of which 61 360 are males and 64 617 are females. Their sex ratio 1053 females for 1000 males. Their total literacy rate is 41.94 per cent i.e., 54.21 percent for the males and 30.45 per cent for the females. Their decadal growth rate between 2001 to 2011 is 21.67 per cent.

The Bhumias generally wear dresses like their neighbouring Hindu castes. The males use *kasta*, *dhoti* and *gamucha* and the females use *kasta saree*. Small children up to the age of 3 to 4 use no cloths. When they grow up they use small

* Published in the Photo Handbook on Bhumia, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar, 2015

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gamcha as *kaupini* (loin cloth). Now the younger generations are using readymade garments and foot wears which are generally purchased from the local markets. They are now using modern dresses, such as pant, shirt, colored *sarees*, *ribbons* etc.

The females are very fond of ornaments. They use various kinds of ornaments such as bangles (*kankana*, *bahuti*, *chudi*), necklaces, rings, hair clips, armlets etc. They also wear flowers in their hair, particularly at the time of wedding ceremonies and festivals. All the ornaments are basically made of silver or brass but some people also wear gold ornaments too. Ear ring (*khanja*) and nose ring (*mudi*) are compulsory for the married women and they wear toe ring too. The glass bangles are becoming popular among the young generation.

HABITAT & SETTLEMENT

The Bhumias live in a close interface with verve supporting, plentiful natural world, found in hills, dales and rapids that swirl in the valley in the undivided district of Koraput, Odisha. They live generally near the forest where their basic needs are soundly met. They are concentrated in the districts like Koraput, Malkangiri and Nowrangpur.

Usually the Bhumia settlements are located separately in the outskirts of multi-caste villages. They do not follow any definite settlement pattern. The houses lie scattered here and there. Sometimes they are arranged in two rows facing the principal village road.

Unlike other tribal groups their housing techniques are different. Their houses are rectangular in shape with gabled roofs. The walls are made either of wooden planks or wattle plastered with mud. Their houses may measure 18' in length, 12' in breadth and 10' to 11' in height. The roof is made using either bamboo or wooden rafters thatched with forest grass called *piri*. Their houses are divided into halves having a wall in the middle, the height of which varies from 4' to 5'. The inner part is used as a store room and the outer part, with a doorway on the front veranda is used as kitchen and bedroom. The houses are not provided with windows for cross ventilation. Sometimes the houses are provided with lofts spreading bamboo poles, which serve as an additional storeroom. The cattle sheds are usually located at the side of the living house.

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

Although the Bhumias are economically backward, they are very clean in their habits. The women regularly smear the walls and floors of their houses with

cow dung, mud and water. The outer walls are painted with red, white and black soil. Nowadays, however the Bhumia community is losing its traditional cultural traits due to the impact of modernization.

LIVELIHOOD

Agriculture is their primary occupation. Earlier they were largely depending upon forests for their collection of food but due to degradation of forests now cultivation only gives them food security. In course of time, agriculture has become their economic backbone. Paddy is their principal crop. The agricultural activities are supplemented by secondary occupations such as wage earning and the collection of minor forest products, fishing and hunting during the lean months.

They mainly grow gram, oil seeds etc on the high lands and paddy on the low lands. After the developmental intervention most of the Bhumias are taking keen interest in cultivating vegetables like cauliflower, brinjal, beans, carrot, tomatoes and potatoes. Most of them have owned lands, plough bullocks and other agricultural implements for settled cultivation. They are also expert in making baskets out of bamboo splits for sale. The engagement of Bhumia workers in processing, servicing and repairing works within the industrial sector has shown a rising trend.

Food Habits

Since time immemorial, the Bhumias totally depended upon the forest for their food requirements. They collect fruits, vegetables, roots from the forest, fish and crabs from the streams and rivers. But now in the changing scenario of scarcity of forest resources, their food habits have changed to a great extent. Currently they are settled agriculturalists and rice is their staple food which is taken with other dishes. They are very fond of watered rice, tamarind curry and *mandia/jawar* gruels which they take in the morning and evening. They also take millet and pulses along with vegetables, roots and tubers. They are habituated to taking liquor and *salap* juice as intoxicants.

Liquor has a very special importance in their life and starting from the child, adult to old person everyone drinks liquor. The Bhumias take rice bear, *mahua* liquor and tobacco powder both in ritual and festive occasions and in their day to day life. Rice bear popularly known as *landha* is their favorite traditional drink and it is home made. Guests and relatives are offered with the rice bear. The feasts, festivities, marriage ceremony and other rituals are celebrated with the consumption of the rice bear. The Bhumias are also fond of tobacco and both the males and the females like to chew and smoke tobacco, which they grow in their back yards. Now-a-days tea is becoming more popular as a beverage due to outside contact.

SOCIAL LIFE

By the influence of the neighbouring castes the Bhumia tribe is sharply divided amongst themselves into two groups- *bada*, the higher and *sano*, the lower. The higher section of the Bhumias even refuses to touch water from the hands of the lower Bhumias.

Each of these groups is again sub-divided into a number of totemistic exogamous clans called *bansa* which are known as *nag* (snake), *bagh* (tiger), *cheli* (goat) and *surya* (sun). Customarily families of one *bansa* reside in a single village. There are separate hamlets for different *bansas*. But now-a-days it is slowly giving place to multi-*bansa* villages or hamlets, although marriage within the same *bansa* is strictly prohibited.

Life Cycle

Pregnancy & Child Birth

After marriage, a Bhumia woman and her family members expect a baby without any gender prejudice. When it is confirmed that a woman is pregnant, she has to observe certain taboos in respect of her food, works, movements and other activities with devotion and sincerity.

Experienced and elderly women of their tribe act as midwives at the time of delivery. After the delivery the new born baby is bathed and the mother cleans her body in tepid water. Birth pollution generally continues for 8 days but it differs from locality to locality. During this period the family does not take part in any ritual activities. No member of other families accepts food from this family. The pollution continues until the stump of the umbilical cord dries up and drops off. Then the midwife takes the umbilical cord and puts inside a hole and covers it with mud. Then she performs a ritual (*puja*) in front of the hole. This ritual is meant to protect the baby from evil spirits. On this day the house is cleaned and all the clothes, utensils and earthen pots which are used by the mother and the new born baby are thrown outside and are replaced with new ones. Then all the family members worship the deity for the wellbeing of the mother and her baby as well as the whole family. The name giving ceremony is held after 15 days of the birth.

Puberty

On the day of her first menstruation, a girl is considered ritually unclean and forbidden to take part in any socio-religious activities till she is ritually purified through puberty rites. During this time she is kept in seclusion to avoid the sight of males. When the menstruation period is over, she takes bath, wears new clothes and becomes clean to take part in all normal day-to-day activities.

Marriage

In the Bhumia society, the institution of marriage has always been held in high esteem. The clan system regulates marriage and adult marriages are in vogue.

Boys above 18 years of age and girls after attainment of puberty are considered fit for marriage. Child marriage was a past tradition. In most cases they practice monogamy. Marriage by negotiation is regarded as ideal, prestigious and it is the most common type of marriage. Bride price is paid either in cash or in kind, in the form of food grains, goat and *mahua* liquor. Acquiring of mates by capture, by service, by intrusion, by elopement, by exchange and by capture are also in vogue in their society. Remarriage of divorcee, widow, and widower as well as levirate, sororate and cross-cousin marriage are also permitted in their society.

Death

Death is generally considered a tragic event and when a person dies in a family, pollution continues up to 3-9 days. During this time the family members of the deceased have to go through certain taboos and restrictions. They observe the purificatory rituals and offer a feast to the kinsfolk and villagers. Poor people can perform the death ritual within a year, starting from the day of death.

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

The Bhumia pantheon consists of a number of Gods and Goddesses. *Budhi Thakurani* is their village deity who is worshipped on all important occasions. A platform with a thatched roof is set up at the centre of every Bhumia village, where the Goddess *Budhi Thakurani* is seated. Once a year, during the month of *Chaitra* (March-April), a goat is ritually sacrificed before the village deity. They also worship other village deities like *Nisani*, *Mauli* and *Gram Devata*.

Since they are agriculturalists, most of their festivals are connected directly or indirectly with agriculture. The main festivals observed by the Bhumia are *Balijatra* during which elaborate fertility rites are observed. During this festival young girls dance in a trance and act as medium of a spirit called *Devata*. *Hundi Devata* and *Budhimai* are the chief deities. In every village, there is a priest called *Disari* who also acts as a magico-religious specialist. They observe *Dulla Puja*, *Ashari Puja*, *Vadhan Parab*, *Nuakhai Parab* etc. They also sacrifice various animals like goat, sheep, pig and fowl to satisfy their deities and spirits. They believe in the efficacy of white and black magic.

They also worship the Hindu Gods like *Siva*, *Bishnu*, *Laxmi* etc. Gradually they are adopting the Hindu customs and traditions.

Music & Dance

The Bhumia are very fond of dance and music. They enjoy their lives through dance and music. In their young age they are more inclined to singing and dancing. Especially on festive occasions, they compose and sing love songs to impress the young women of their tribe.

The *dhemsa* dance is gaining much popularity among them and in this dance boys and girls dance together. Through dance, song and music they

interpret and communicate to the audience the facts of life and narrate each and every aspect of nature which reflects how intimately they are connected with it. They have specific dance and music for different occasions. They play a number of stringed instruments like Behela, Sarangi and drums like the Tamak, Runji and Ghumura during dance.

SOCIAL CONTROL

For better administration and social control, they have chosen a person as the head of the village. He is popularly known as Naik/Mukhia. The Naik is usually the richest man of the village, who possesses a good number of cattle, acres of land and other productive assets. Above the Naik there is the leader called Bhatnaik at the regional level, who is regarded as a leader of 10 to 12 villages. Both the positions are hereditary. The Bhatnaik settles inter village disputes while petty intra village matters are handled by the village Naik. In certain important disputes, the Bhatnaik calls a conference of village heads and elders to discuss and decide the matter. The Disari is the religious head of the village who conducts the rituals and ceremonies for the individual families and the village as a whole. The Chalan is functions as the messenger of the community who passes the messages from person to person.

In Bhumia villages the institution of youth dormitory was functioning separately for unmarried boys and girls in the past. It was playing a major role in socializing the young and moulding them to become useful members of the community. Now due to the impact of culture change and modernization, this useful social institution has become obsolete. Now instead of attending the dormitory, the Bhumia boys in the age group of 9-15 watch cattle and help their parents in agricultural works. The girls help in household works.

CHANGING SCENARIO

With the passage of time, there are many changes occurring in the Bhumia society. The Bhumias have acquired many new cultural elements from the neighboring castes and tribes in course of their prolonged contact with them. The age old traditional social institutions are declining under the impact of cultural adaptation and modernization. Their occupational pattern and means of subsistence have been changed. Traditional barter system has been replaced by money system. Change has been observed in their living pattern, social customs, food habits and dress pattern. There is increasing use of modern gadgets, mill made cloths, cosmetics etc. The importance of magico-religious functionaries has declined and in many cases the rituals are observed symbolically.

With the development intervention, their life, economic status, communication and living style has changed to a great extent. After independence, various government as well as non-government agencies are lunching different

development programs, exclusively for the tribal areas and tribal people with two fold objectives i.e. economic upliftment through income generation schemes and infrastructure development programmes which have brought changes in their life style. The functioning of Integrated Tribal Development Agencies under Tribal Sub Plan approach have made a positive impact in the overall development of education, agriculture, communication, drinking water, housing, health and sanitation. Initiatives have also been taken at Gram Panchayat and Block Levels to create awareness among them on different development schemes so that they can reap the benefit out of it and become prosperous.

The Bhumias have become one of the most progressive tribes in the undivided district of Koraput. Particularly in the field of agriculture now they are using chemical fertilizers, pesticides, improved seeds and modern techniques. They have proved themselves by improving their economic conditions through various special programmes lunched by government from time to time.

B H U M I J *

*S.C. Mohanty*¹

Bhumij or Bhumija etymologically means "sons of earth". It is one of the Munda group of tribes, Hinduised a great extent. It is assumed that the Hindus who settled there later might have given them this name because the Bhumij being the early settlers were in possession of major chunk of land in their habitat. According to their oral tradition, their original abode was in Tamulia of Bihar. As their descendants grew in number, they migrated in different directions

The Bhumijas are found in Odisha, West Bengal, and Bihar. In Odisha they are largely concentrated in the districts of Balesore, Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Sundergarh and Dhenkanal. As per 2011 census their population is 2 17 395 (1 06 515 males and 1 10 880 females) and sex ratio is 1041. Their total literacy rate is 63.71%. It is 75.74 percent for males and 52.27 percent for females.

They are divided into a number of endogamous sections such as: Tamaria, Haldipokharia, Teli, Desi or Desia or Singhbhumia and Seri or Dehuri Bhumij. Each division further consists of a number of exogamous totemic groups, *killis*. Some of the totemic groups are: *Hotalva, Tutia, Sura, Naga, Tirai, Marumand Mati*. They have surnames like *Chalki, Kachchyap, Hemrom, Chapra, Saral, Tesa, Hemla, Khatu, Ghugushyama* etc.

They live in mud houses with thatched roof. Inside the houses they have provision for storage of grains, and outside cattle shed. Ritual paintings with rice powder are often made on the walls. They possess some household articles and musical instruments, all made by themselves.

* Unpublished article of 2000 updated in 2018

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Their dress and ornaments are almost similar to their Hindu neighbours. They are prohibited to take beef. Rice is their staple food. Rice-bear and toddy are their common drinks. On festive occasions they take *mohua* liquor. They eat varieties of vegetables, green leaves and tubers. Kitchen is considered as sacred, prohibited for outsiders.

Bhumijas are basically settled agriculturists. They grow rice, cereals, pulses, oil seeds and vegetables. The landless families work as agricultural labourers, wage earners. In the long past, they were engaged in hunting and trapping birds. Bhumijas have four hierarchical divisions on the basis of their social and occupational hierarchy.

Bhumijas propitiate a number of deities. *Baram, Sing Bonga, Dharam Devta, Gram Devta, Jahaburu, Karakata, Baghut, Deoshali* and *Buru* are their revered deities. Bhumija believe in ghosts, spirits and efficacy of black and white magic. They practise ancestral worship on all occasions. They sacrifice goats, sheep and fowls to appease the deities.

Saharai, Karma, Banda Parba, Nuakhia, Makar and *Tusu* are the main festivals. They also participate in Hindu festivals like *Sivaratri, Dhulla Puja, Dusserah* etc. During festivals and ceremonies they eat, drink, sing and dance the whole night.

They generally practise monogamy but polygyny is limited to a few. Cross cousin, levirate and sororate marriages are in vogue. They acquire mates in different ways and bride price is still prevalent.

Bhumijas observe ritual prohibitions attached to childbirth, puberty and death. Dead bodies are generally cremated; buried in case of accidental and abnormal deaths. Bhumija social organization is well delineated.

At the village level, the council of village elders is headed by *Pradhan* and at the inter-village level by *Sardar*. The religious head is *Dehuri*. They get ritual services of Brahman priest, barber and washer man.

In multi ethnic villages they live with tribal communities like the Santal, the Kharia, the Bathudi, the Ho and other Hindu Castes, where they reside in separate wards keeping intact their distinct cultural identity a maintaining social distance from neighbouring communities.

BHUMIJ*

*Bhagirathi Chowdhury*¹

“The Bhumij” writes Risley “are nothing more than a branch of the Mundas, who have spread to the east-ward and mingled with the Hindus, and thus for the most part served their connection with parents’ tribe”. In Mayurbhanj ‘Munda’ is another name for the Bhumij. Whatever may be the story of their origin and migration, the tribe in Orissa is concentrated heavily in the districts of Mayrubhanj, Sundargarh, Keonjhar, Balasore and sporadically distributed in other parts. A table given below will show the district wise distribution of the tribe in Orissa.

Sl. No	Name of the District	Population		
		Total	Male	Female
1.	Balasore	20,149	9,954	10,195
2.	Mayurbhanj	79,394	39,278	40,116
3.	Cuttack	1,734	845	855
4.	Keonjhar	8,122	3,971	4,151
5.	Puri	64	34	30
6.	Dhenkanal	2,325	1,201	1,124
7.	Sundargarh	4,288	2,278	2,010
8.	Ganjam	1	1	00
9.	Boudh-Kondhmal	4	3	1
10.	Bolangir	2	2	00
11.	Sambalpur	78	54	24
12.	Koraput	20	8	12
Total		1,16,181	57,633	58,548

* Published in ADIBASI, Vol. V, No.3, (Special Issue), TRB, 1963-64, pp. 119-122

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Language

The tribe has got its aboriginal tongue, but they are adopting Oriya rapidly. They now speak both Oriya and Bhumij at home and outside. They have developed liking for Oriya.

Subdivisions

The different sections of the Bhumij tribe as given by the Census Report of the Mayurbhanj State, 1931, "are known as Tamaria, Barabhumiya, Matia, Desi, Teli, Haldi-pokharia and Sahara-Bhumij. The Tamaria sections are generally employed as sawyers, while the Teli section presses oil. Females of the Haldi-Pokharia section serve as midwives to the other Bhumij. The Desi Bhumij prepare and sell burnt lime. The Matias do earth work. The Barabhumiyas derive their name from Barabhum." Of these sections, the Tamaria, a more Hinduised sections, has become a separate caste. The Desi or Desia or Singhbhumia Bhumij found in Keonjhar have got lowest position among these sections.

Each of these sections is again divided into a number of exogamous groups known as Kili. One of the informants of the village Kadapani in Bisoi P.S. of Mayurbhanj district gave me a list of twelve Kili found among the Bhumij. They are Saman, Sandi, Barda, Birjilu, Donda, Hansda, Gulgu, Hembrom, Koyali, Nag, Rui and Uru. These names seem to be totemistic in nature, but cannot be ascertained exactly at present. These names indicate some kind of bird, beast, insect, plant or some inanimate objects. As mentioned earlier, the Kili is strictly exogamous body and its members cannot marry among themselves. Such union is considered incestuous and dangerous. The Kili is a unilateral group where descent is traced in the male line.

Marriage

They practice both child and adult marriage and thus there is no fixed age for marriage at present. The most common type of acquiring a bride is through negotiation and by payment of bride price. Marriages by capture, by service and by intrusion are also prevalent. Levirate and sororate are allowed and so also widow-remarriage which is known as Sanga. Cross cousin marriage is in vogue. Divorce is allowed and divorced women can remarry.

For marriage negotiation the boy's family employ a clever man called Dandia (go-between) who pays several visits to the girl's house for fixing the marriage and the bride price known as Ganang. The bride price consists of two bullocks worth of Rs. 80.00 to Rs.100.00, Rs. 5 in cash, cloths for the grandmother, mother and the brother. Before the marriage is settled up they consult with the astrologer to calculate the stars of the boy and the girl. When he declares in its favour they proceed with the proposal and fix the marriage.

On the appointed day the bridegroom accompanied by friends and relatives of both sexes and the musical band proceeds to the girl's village for

participating in wedding rites. As soon as they reach the outskirts of the girl's village they are taken to the Dera (a house in the village kept vacant for the groom's party). The guests are entertained with rice beer. Previously when they had musical instruments, the young boys and girls of the bride's village were to welcome them with dance and music. If there is sufficient time for the marriage rites, the groom's party cooks their meal in the Dera. After-wards the groom is conducted to the marriage booth constructed in the courtyard of the bride's family. The Brahmin priest, who is usually invited in some localities of the district, officiates in the marriage. He performs a *Homo* and joins the hands of the bridal couple as the binding rite of marriage. In the absence of the Brahmin priest, the maternal uncles of the couple come to help them to perform the rite of *sindur-dan*, in which the bridegroom and the bride apply vermilion paint on each other's forehead twice. Then they are conducted to the Dera and anointed with turmeric and oil. Later on they are given food to eat. Then they return to the bridegroom's village, accompanied by the friends and kinsmen of the bride. Previously when they had their dances and musical instruments, every marriage ceremony was marked by dancing, singing and drinking for several days together. After-wards the bride-price is paid to the bride's parents.

Birth rites

During the period of birth pollution which continues for 9 days, the whole family is considered unclean. On the last day of this period, the family cleans its house and washer man if available, is recruited to wash clothes of the family and the Hindu barber to shave the male members and the baby and to pare the nails of all the members of the family. A name is selected by dropping rice grains and oil-seeds while uttering the selected names. The kinsmen and the friends are entertained with rice-beer.

Death rites

Both cremation and burial are practiced by them according to the availability of firewood. Mourning period for the whole lineage (*Kutumba*) continues for ten days. On the very day of occurrence of death, the cooking earthen pots are removed from all the families of the lineage. During the period of pollution, they abstain, from eating fish and flesh. On the 10th day, the Hindu barber shaves and pares the nails of all members of the family. The washer man cleans the clothes of the family. In some localities Brahmins are invited to perform *Sradha* for the departed soul. On this day food is cooked in new earthen pots.

Religion

The religious beliefs and practices of the Bhumij show adaptation of some Hindu religious traits into their tribal religion. The Brahmin priest, whom they require for their marriage and death rites, has no function in their religious practices. All the offerings and sacrifices to their deities are made through a *Naya* or *Dehuri* (village priest) belonging to their own tribe or clean caste.

Like Hindus they observe Raja Parab, Gamha and Makar Sankranti. Religious rites connected with the agricultural operations consist of Asarhi before re-ploughing and transplanting paddy seedlings, Bandha before reaping and Nua Khia, the new rice eating ceremony. Before collecting new leaves, fruits from the forest, they perform a rite called Fulpuja. On the occasion of these religious ceremonies, the Dehuri performs Pujas to the village deities located in a grove. They also perform Saharae during Diwali when cattle are worshipped by the priest. They have not yet completely lost their faith in the working of magic and witchcraft. They also believe that diseases are brought by the malevolent deities. Thus they also take the help of the shaman for magical cure.

Dance and music

As mentioned earlier, they have given up dancing and singing in the recent past. But some of them have musical instruments. They occasionally dance as a source of recreation. The girls dance to the sound of the musical instruments played on by the boys.

Houses and settlements

The Bhumij settlements are situated near the hills or forests whenever suitable site is available. They also live in the Hindu villages. In this case, they always build a separate ward of their own. Before constructing houses in a new site they employ grain-divination in selecting the site. In the evening they place rice grain and vermilion in any corner of the new site. On examination when these grains are found in tact in the following morning, they consider the site to be favourable for human habitation. A Bhumij ward is marked by big trees which give fruits. In Mayurbhanj they live with the Kharia, Santal, Munda, Bhuiya, and caste Hindus. In such villages their houses are not indiscriminately scattered among the domiciles of other castes and tribes but occupy a definite quarter of the village. In such villages which are found around Baripada town they have adopted many cultural traits of the Hindus and they also pose like clean caste Hindus.

A Bhumij house is rectangular in size, length varying from 15' to 9' while the breadth is usually between 7' to 5' and the height is between 5' to 8'. Ordinarily verandahs are built in the front. The houses with mud walls have generally straw or wild-grass thatched roof. Most of them own more than one room with opening to the courtyard. Cowsheds are built close to the living room. The walls are decorated like those of Santal with coloured water prepared from soil.

Dress and Ornaments

As regards dress and ornament they follow the Hindu neighbours. Men wear napkins and occasionally long dhotis while women wear saree which covers up to knee. Use of blouse and inner petti-coat is yet to become popular among Bhumij girls. Children are given shirt to wear. Only well-to-do Bhumij can afford to wear shirt and other modern dresses. Women are not very much particular to

decorate the different part of their body with varieties of ornaments. They put on glass or metal bangles on their wrist, one or two necklaces of imitation coin or chain in their neck, one ring in the nose. Only well-to-do families can afford to use ornaments made of gold or silver. All these ornaments are purchased from the market.

Occupation

Their main occupation at present is settled cultivation which is supplemented by wage-earning, collection of jungle products and hunting. After harvest when they do not find any scope for wage-earning, the Bhumij men go to work in the mining quarries, in tea garden of Assam and in Calcutta. They stay there for a period of three to four months and come back when the agricultural operation is started for the next crop. They grow only one crop of rice in a year. They grow some *rabi* crops such as oil seeds, pulses in their up-lands and vegetables in the kitchen garden. As land is not sufficient for most of the families, they work as part-time labourer for the neighbouring cultivators during the agricultural calendar. Hunting as a gainful economic pursuit has been given up due to depletion of forest and restrictions imposed by the government.

Food and Intoxicants

Rice is their staple food and is taken throughout the whole year. They abstain from eating beef, pork, but take fowl, white-ants and termites like those of Bathudi and Sounti. They take rice-beer and *mohua* liquor like the neighbouring tribes of Santal, Mahali and Kharia.

BHUMIJ*

*P.S. Das Patnaik*¹

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

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

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

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

According to another story referred to by Dalton, Sing Bonga (the Sun God) was self-created. He made the earth and animals and a pair of human beings. Twelve boys and girls were born to them. They lived as husbands and wives as

* Published in Tribes of Orissa (revised edition), SCSTRTI, 2004, pp. 79-85

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desired by Sing Bonga, and all human beings sprang up as a result of their pairing: Ho, Bhumijas, Brahmans, Sudras, Bhuinyas, Santals and Ghasis.

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

A village contains from ten to sixty houses, even more, belonging to the Bhumij. Other tribes like the Santals, Kharias, Bathudis, Hos and other castes are also found to be living in these villages. The houses, though constructed in the plains, are not arranged in any order. They live in commodious double-sloped houses with a plinth area of about 30 ft. x 15 ft. Most of the houses have two rooms. But some of the well-to-do families have houses with more than two rooms. The rooms are utilized as a kitchen, bedroom, store room and cattle shed.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The young girls are fond of ornaments. They purchase various brass ornaments such as nose-rings, earrings, bead necklaces, armlets and bangles. They also wear flowers in their hair, particularly at weddings and festivals. These dresses and ornaments are purchased in the market.

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

Rice is their staple food and is eaten throughout the whole year. Like Hindus they eat *dal* and vegetable curry if they can afford to. They abstain from taking beef and pork but eat white ants, termites and insects like the Bathudi and Sounti. Rice beer is their favourite drink. Mohua liquor is used sumptuously during feasts and festivals. The whole of Bhumij society is mainly divided into four endogamous groups such as the Tamudia or Tamarua Bhumij, Haldipokhoria Bhumij, Teli Bhumij and Desi or Dehuri Bhumij. Of these the Tamudias occupy the highest place in social precedence because of their traditional occupation of shaving. Next to them are the Haldipokhoria Bhumijas. It is said that the females of this section used to serve as midwives among other Bhumijas. The Teli section,

who occupies the next position, traditionally presses oil. The Desia section used to burn lime. All these sections have now left their traditional occupations but have retained their endogamous divisions, with much emphasis on caste-ranking. Each class forms an endogamous group of its own so that a Tamudia Bhumij will not marry a Haldipokhoria Bhumij and vice-versa.

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

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

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

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

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

and the brothers. The date of the marriage is settled in consultation with the astrologer (*ganak*) by the boys' father in the presence of the girl's father.

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

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

In marriage by capture, the boy puts a vermilion mark on the forehead of the girl when the latter happens to visit either the field or the market place alone. If the girl accepts then the marriage takes place. This is called *Sanga baha*. Widow remarriage is practised following this procedure. If the girl is unwilling, she does not suffer any social stigma and may be married in a regular way to another man.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

B H U M I J *

A. B. Ota ¹

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IDENTITY

The Bhumij, a major Scheduled Tribe of Odisha is found largely in the district of Mayurbhanj. Etymologically the term “Bhumij” denotes one who is born out of the soil. It is assumed that the Hindus who settled there later might have given them this name because the Bhumij being the early settlers were in possession of major chunk of land in their habitat. According to their oral tradition, their original abode was in Tamulia of Bihar. There lived a man named Munda, who had four sons. As their descendants grew in number, they migrated in different directions and one came to Mayurbhanj. The Hindus from whom they freely borrowed their customs and manners seem to have been later immigrants.

They are believed to be a branch of the Munda tribe. Racially, they are of proto-Australoid origin. They are dolicocephalic and platyrrhine people with wavy hair and dark complexion. In past, they had their mother tongue called ‘Bhumij’ that belongs to the Munda family of dialects. Now, they have become multi-lingual and are conversant in local languages like Odia, Hindi and Bengali.

As per 1981 census, the total population of Bhumij were 1, 57,614 (79191 males and 78423 females), which later increased to 1,78,214 (89852 males and 88362 females) during 1991, and it further increased to 2, 48,144 (125102 males and 12304 females) during 2001, registering a growth rate of 13.07% (in1981-1991) and 39.24

* Published in the Photo Handbook on Bhumij, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar, 2014

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% (in 1991-2001) over the decades. The sex ratio among them was 983 females per 1000 males according to 1991 census and 984 females per 1000 males according to 2001 census. The percentage of literacy increased from 12.10% in 1981 to 21.11% in 1991 and to 36.48% in 2001 census. Their population is concentrated in Mayurbhanj district of Odisha and is sparsely distributed in the districts of Sundergarh, Keonjhar and Balesore. Besides, they are also found in the neighbouring states i.e., in the districts of Medinapur, Purulia, Bankura, Chabish Parganas of West Bengal and in the districts of Tamad, Bundu and Manbhum area of undivided Bihar.

Dress and Ornaments

Traditionally, the Bhumij males wear a short piece of hand woven loin cloth (*lengti*) to cover their pubic regions only leaving the entire body completely naked and the females wear short and coarse *sarees* of white colour purchased from the local weaver community which covers their body above their knees. But in modern days, as they come in close contact with the caste Hindus, their dress pattern has changed imitating their caste neighbours. Children below five years of age wear short loin cloth (*gamucha*) but after that age they start wearing *gamucha* or pant and reaching the adult stage, they wear clothes like shirts, *dhotis* and *gamuchas*. The *gamucha* also adorns the men's shoulders. The females are fond of wearing ornaments generally made of brass metal consisting of nose rings, ear rings, bead necklace, armlets and coloured glass bangles which they purchase from the local markets. Women belonging to well-to-do families also wear gold ornaments during festive occasions to decorate themselves and look attractive.

SETTLEMENT & HOUSING PATTERN

The Bhumij settlements are situated near the foot hills or within forests where perennial hill streams are flowing to provide them drinking water throughout the year. Their settlements are generally homogenous consisting of ten to sixty houses. In multi ethnic villages they live with tribal communities like the Santal, the Kharia, the Bathudi, the Ho and other Hindu Castes, where they live in separate wards with their distinct cultural identity, maintaining safe distance from the adjoining ethnic groups.

The Bhumij houses are arranged in a linear pattern in plain areas or are randomly scattered on undulating terrains at the foot hills. Their houses are very simple structures made of mud walls with low roofs thatched with wild *sabai* grass, paddy straw or with country made tiles (*khappar*). For house construction they use locally available materials like bamboo and *sal* saplings, grass ropes and bamboo. The poor families build their houses using *sal* saplings, twigs and plaster both of its sides with mud. The well-to-do families construct houses with brick walls. The walls and floors are cleanly polished with red, black or white clay by their women. The Bhumij women are talented to decorate and paint the walls with designs of elephants, men riding on horses, different flowers and creepers, motifs etc. Their houses have a portico used for entertaining guests. Houses generally

consist of two rooms. The bigger room is used as their living room and also to store their grains. The smaller room is used as the kitchen, where also lies the seat (*bongathan*) of their ancestors (*halabonga*) in a corner and the clan members are prohibited to enter into that room. They construct wooden racks over which grain containers are kept. They also construct a separate shed to accommodate their livestock. Their rooms have only doors and no windows for ventilation.

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

They have limited household articles consisting of small bamboo baskets, grain containers made of bamboo splits, aluminum or bell metal dishes and tumbler, earthen wares, water vessels, wooden ladles, leaf umbrella, wooden bells for cattle, agricultural implements like axes and sickles, ploughs, leveler, yokes, spades, pick-axe and hunting implements like bows (*dhanu*) and arrows (*tir*).

SOCIAL LIFE

The Bhumij is an endogamous community with four endogamous social divisions like Tamudia or Tamaria Bhumij, Haladipokhoria Bhumij, Teli Bhumij and Desi or Dehuri Bhumij. Tamudias are regarded as socially higher than the other three sections in hierarchical order because of their traditional occupation of wood sawing, followed by the Holidipokharia Bhumij whose women used to serve as midwives, the Teli Bhumij who were oil pressers and the Desia or Dehuri Bhumij who prepared and sold burnt lime in the descending social order. All these four sections though now have abandoned their traditional occupations, have retained their endogamous divisions, with much emphasis on caste-ranking and prohibition of inter-group marriage.

All the divisions are again sub-divided in to a number of strictly exogamous totemistic clans or septs called *killi* which regulate their matrimonial alliances. These clans named after the elements of nature include Hotalva (a kind of flower), Tutia (a species of rice plant), Sura (pig), Naga (cobra), Tarai (lotus), Merum (goat), Mati (the earth) etc. which are again sub-divided into several sub-clans (*bhaiyadi*) like *arkali*, *patala*, *sarjong*, *sarmali*, *bukuru*, *hensel*, *jaja*, *tirur*, *bundu*, *pancha*, *edel*, *situ*, *siliary*, *sili*, *kaanchi*, *leong*, *bakarkulid*, *baru*, *rugudi*, *landra* and *sereng*, etc. Ethnographers like Singh (1998) have stated other sub-clans of the community are *chalki*, *kachchyap* / *kasyab* (tortoise) *chapra*, *saral*, *kharu*, *ghagushyam*, *hemla*, *tesu*, *khatu*, *samat* / *samad*, *hamla*, *gulgu*, *dama*, *boogool*, *kaith*, *shad*, *sona*, *kata*, *kada*, *baddakurkutia* (a kind of worm), *barda*, *bhuya*, (fish) *chandili*, *gulgu*, (a fish) *obarsari*, *pila*, *sagma*, *saola*, *tesa*, *tuti*, (a short of vegetables), *salarisi* (sal fish), *hansda* (wild goose), *leng* (mushroom), *sandilya* (a bird), *hemron* (betel palm) and *tumarung*

(pumpkin) etc. Members belonging to the same clan and same sub-clan believe to be descendants of a common ancestor for which marriage within the same clan and sub-clan is strictly tabooed. Risley also opined that among them Patakumia and Tamaria sub sections occasionally intermarry and probably descended from Barahumia Zamindari family for which the Tamaria section occupies highest rank in social hierarchy in their community. The members of each clan revere their totemic clan objects and observe taboos in honour of their totem and refrain from causing harm to them but do not observe specific ritual in honour of the totems. They use *raja*, *manki*, *tarafsardar*, *saidal*, *ghatowal*, *tanbedar*, *laya*, *sardar*, *singh*, *singhsardar*, *singmuru*, *singhmunda*, *dehury* and *sadiyal* as their surname.

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

Their family is mostly nuclear, patrilocal and patrilineal composed of husband, wife and unmarried children. Succession and inheritance of ancestral property follows the rule of equigeniture in male line only. In families having no male successor, the daughters inherit the paternal property but the family having no issues may adopt a male child from the nearest lineage who later inherits the property. The grown up children set up their new residence soon after marriage.

Life Cycle

Pregnancy & Child Birth

Pregnancy and child birth are welcome events in the Bhumij society. During pregnancy, the woman observes certain taboos and prohibitions like not coming outside during solar or lunar eclipse, not eating the meat of ritually sacrificial animals, sleeping alone in an isolated room and the like for the protection of the mother and her forthcoming child.

During the ninth month of pregnancy they observe pre-delivery ritual called *nage* or *sadakhia* in which the parents and relatives of the expectant mother present varieties of sweetmeats to her.

The birth of a child is usually arranged in a separate lying-in-room enclosed near the rear verandah. They engage an experienced woman belonging to Hadi or Kol community to assist the expectant mother for easy delivery of the baby. The umbilical cord is cut using a knife and the placenta is buried in a pit in a corner inside the lying-in-room keeping it within an earthen pot.

Birth pollution is observed for nine days. During this period the family is considered unclean. No one accepts food from them. The father does not shave his beard or have his hair cut. The post-delivery purificatory rite (*narta*) is observed on

the ninth day on which they pare the nails, shave the beard and cut the hair of the infant's father and take bath after which the name giving ceremony (*mutum*) is celebrated and the new born baby is given a name chosen by their village elders/village chief by grain (mustard) divination method. Generally the names of grand- parents of mother's side are preferred. From this day everyone becomes clean except the mother and the baby, who are considered to be clean only on the twenty-first day. On that day a ceremonial bath is given to the mother and her baby. Then she cooks food which is accepted by all.

They also observe the tonsure rite ceremoniously. When the child attains about one year of age they observe the ear piercing (*luturtukul*) ceremony of the baby. As they consider the new born as an incarnation of their ancestor, the concerned family, whose ancestor's name has been selected, gladly officiates and bears the expenses of the ceremony and presents the gold ear rings (*kansi*), silver waist chain (*naame*), new dresses for the child to celebrate the occasion and a hen is sacrificed during observance of the ritual.

Puberty Rite

They observe puberty rite (*marangjana*) for adolescent girls on attaining her first menarche. The menstruating girl is confined in a secluded room for the pollution period of seven days. During this period the girl is tabooed to look at or be looked at by any male person. The girl takes the purificatory bath on the dawn of the eighth day in the nearby hill stream by anointing her body with turmeric paste and mustard oil and disposes her used clothes there and put on new clothes presented by her family and returns home accompanied by her mother. On reaching home she is presented with new clothes and cosmetics by her maternal uncle, relatives and kinsmen. In the evening the family hosts a non-vegetarian feast to guests, relatives and kinsmen.

They have no dormitory system. In the absence of this, training in tribal traditions, customs, folklores etc. is imparted to the growing child by the family members, kith and kin.

Marriage

In the Bhumij society, monogamy and adult marriage is the rule but sororal and non-sororal polygyny are also found in rare cases where the first wife is found to be barren, mentally retarded or suffering from serious or contagious diseases. Junior levirate (*sanga baha*), junior sororate (*sanga baha*) and cross cousin marriage and remarriage of widows, widowers and divorcees are also permitted in their society.

The most common and prestigious mode of acquiring a bride is through negotiation (*baha*) and payment of bride price (*ganang*). The other modes of marriage are by capture (*sinduri baha*), by service (*ghar jamai*), by intrusion (*chaudal*) and by elopement (*ganam*). A matchmaker (*dandia*) arranges the marriage. The bride's father is approached by the groom's father along with the elderly members of his

village after the matchmaker has finally received a hint. They are cordially greeted with a sumptuous feast. A symbolic plough is exchanged between both the parties as a token of their consent. The bride price (*ganang*) is then decided.

Payment of the bride price (*ganang*) is obligatory. It is paid both in cash and kinds, consisting of cows, bullocks, goats, grains, money and also includes clothes for grandmother, mother and brother of the bride. They consult with their traditional astrologer (*ganak*) to fix an auspicious date and time for the marriage. The marriage rites are held in the residence of the bride and the bride groom proceeds there with his parents, relatives and kinsmen in a marriage procession amidst the tune of music played by the Dom musicians. On their arrival, they are received by the boys and girls of the bride's village. A low grade Brahman priest or the maternal uncle of the bride conducts the marriage rites by chanting the hymns and joins the hands of the bride and the groom as a ceremonial tie to live as husband and wife. Then the *sindurdan* rite is observed in which the groom puts vermilion mark on the bride's forehead and vice-versa reflecting the acceptance of each other as their life partner after which the marriage rite is concluded.

At night, the bride's parents host a non-vegetarian marriage feast to entertain the groom's party, guests and relatives along with country liquor (*mohuli*) and rice beer (*handia*). On the following morning, the groom returns home with the bride and the members of his marriage party. The bride stays there for a week after which she comes back to her parental home with her parents. After a fortnight, the groom visits his in-law's house with some gifts where he is greeted warmly and entertained with delicious dishes. There he is presented with new *dhoti* and shirt and sweetmeats to be distributed among the children in his village. On the same day, the groom returns to his own village with the bride. On that night the marriage is consummated in his residence.

In marriage by capture, the boy puts a vermilion mark on the girl's forehead when the latter happens to visit the field or the market place alone. If the girl agrees to marry the boy then the marriage takes place. This is called (*sinduribaha*). Widow Remarriage is practised following the same procedure. If the girl or widow is unwilling, she does not suffer from any social stigma and she is free to marry another man of her choice.

Divorce

In the Bhumij society, divorce is permitted and either party can divorce his/her spouse on the ground of misunderstanding and maladjustment in conjugal life, cruelty, contagious diseases, poor maintenance, extra marital relationship and barrenness/ impotency etc.

Divorce cases are adjudicated in their traditional community council, presided over by their secular head (*sardar*) in presence of the headmen (*mundmaniks*) of both the villages including the family members of the appellants. In case the wife wants to desert the husband, her paternal family has to return the

bride price (*ganang*) paid for her to her husband, but if the wife deserts her husband and marries to another male the new husband has to repay the bride price with a penalty which may be settled upon the will of the former husband. If the divorce takes place for the husband's fault, he cannot claim repayment of the bride price.

After divorce, the father keeps the children but a lactating mother is allowed to keep the baby for its nourishment and then to keep the male child but not the girl child after they grow up.

Death

They practise both cremation and burial to dispose of their dead (*gaejana*). Dead bodies of children below twelve years of age, pregnant women and persons suffering from smallpox or cholera or the victims of unnatural death are buried. In the case of death of a pregnant woman, the embryo from her womb is taken out through an incision in the abdomen and buried beneath a *mahua* tree the idea being that it will live on the juice of that tree. The incision is then stitched up again.

Soon after the occurrence of death, all relatives are informed by messengers. They congregate to take part in the funeral. The corpse is placed in the courtyard keeping its head towards south keeping a handful of grains in its hand which is later released by his son. This is repeated three times, the idea being that the dead man should not take any children with him and thus no misfortune would befall on the family and the departed soul will live in peace bearing no burden.

The bereaved family members anoint the corpse with mustard oil mixed with turmeric paste and keep some coins on its mouth. It is the passage money to the other world. Then the pallbearers (*maldaring*) belonging to their own clan, carry the dead keeping it on reverse side of his cot to the cremation ground with all his personal articles like clothes, utensils, umbrella, tobacco container and some tobacco etc. The body is placed on the pyre, with its head towards the south. The eldest son or in his absence the nearest kin walk around the pyre three times in an anticlockwise direction carrying a burning wood which is finally put on the mouth of the corpse. The eldest son ignites the pyre. After the corpse is reduced to ashes the women sprinkle the ashes with water. Then a conventional human figure is drawn and *khichuri* (rice and *dal* boiled together) is offered to it in lumps on three *sal* leaves by the eldest son or any male member of the bereaved family who then collects a piece of bone (*bajaeng*) to immerse it in the hill stream later treating it as the holy river- Ganges for salvation of the departed soul. Then the party takes bath and is sanctified with water containing *tulsi* leaves. After this they pick some *nim* leaves and return home.

The death pollution continues for ten days. The purificatory rite (*hayanalaah*) is held on the tenth day presided over by their traditional priest. On this day, the family and kinsfolk of the deceased go to the nearest stream accompanied by their priest, a barber and a washer man. The head of the eldest son or the person who

had kindled the pyre is shaved. He puts on a new piece of cloth and offers *khichuri* on three *sal* leaves to the departed soul. After the purificatory rite is over, in the evening the bereaved family hosts a non-vegetarian feast to relatives and villagers with rice beer (*handia*) and country liquor (*mohuli*). They do not observe any annual *sradha* ceremony.

LIVELIHOOD

Cultivation is the mainstay of their economy and is supplemented by other pursuits like wage earning, collection of minor forest produce, animal husbandry, leaf plate (*khali*) stitching, hunting, fishing and small business etc. During lean seasons some of them migrate to work as labourers in mining and quarry sectors and some others go out to work in the tea gardens of Assam.

Paddy is their major crop which they grow in their wet land. In their upland they cultivate *ragi*, *suan*, *janna*, *bajra*, *kangu*, *kosala*, *biri*, *kulthi*, *alasi*, *tila* and maize etc. In their kitchen garden they raise varieties of vegetables such as brinjal, ladyfinger, papaya, banana, gourd, pumpkin, drumstick etc. to meet their consumption needs. All families possess some dry lands where they grow *sabai* grass. From dry grass they make *sabai* ropes to sell in the market for cash. The Bhumij women besides performing their household chores contribute substantially to their family income by participating in economic pursuits of cultivation, forest collection, wage earning, *khali* stitching etc. Hunting which was a gainful economic pursuit in the past has been given up due to the depletion of the forest and restrictions imposed by the Government.

Food Habits

The Bhumij are non-vegetarians. Rice and *ragi* are their staple foods which they take with *dal* and vegetable curry. They relish on meat, chicken, fish, dry fish, eggs, white ants, termites and insects but abstain from taking beef and pork. Both males and females are addicted to rice beer (*handia*) and country liquor (*mohuli*) which they consume more during their feasts and festivals.

SOCIAL CONTROL

The Bhumij have their traditional community council both at the village as well as at the regional level. The village level council is headed by their secular chief called *mundmanik* who is assisted by their traditional sacerdotal head of the village or a Benagli Brahman, the magico-religious head -the *dehuri / laya*, the village elders and a messenger (*dakua*). The regional council is headed by the *sardar* who is assisted by the *mundmaniks* of component settlements. The post of *mundmanik* and *sardar* are hereditary whereas the post of *dakua* is by nomination.

The traditional community council is regarded as the custodian of their traditional norms and customs. It adjudicates cases pertaining to family disputes, theft, rape, molestation, misbehavior, adultery, extra-marital relationship, illicit pregnancy, divorce and violation of customary laws and can impose penalty to the

offenders in shape of cash and kind and to outcast the guilty person or his/her family from the society depending upon the gravity of the offence he / she has committed. All the office bearers of their traditional community council are highly esteemed in their society.

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS & PRACTICES

The Bhumijis profess their autonomous animistic tribal religion which is amalgamated with few elements of Hinduism. They worship *marang buru* and *sing bonga* or *dharma* (the Sun God) as their supreme deities. Their pantheon also includes a number of deities i.e. *jahir buru* seated in the village sacred groves (*jahirthan*), *karakata* (female deity for bumper harvest), *baghut* (the male deity for warding off wild animals and protecting the livestock), *baram*, *deoshali* (the deity of water and health), *buru* (the Mountain God) and many others representing objects of nature as well as the village deity called Gram Deota.

They believe in black magic and existence of some benevolent and malevolent spirits namely Kudra, Bisaychandi, Varam etc. and think that diseases and ill fates are caused due to effect of malevolent spirits. To appease them, they take the help of their traditional witch doctor and on his advice they sacrifice fowls, goats and offer country liquor (*mohuli*) and rice beer (*handia*) etc.

Fairs & Festivals:

Karma is their major festival observed for the prosperity of the village during the month of September. During this event their unmarried boys collect and transplant a twig of *karma* plant with great pomp and ceremony amidst feast, drink and dance by singing their folk songs with the tune of music provided by the Dom musicians. They also observe *chait parab* during March-April, *baisakha parab* and *dhulla puja* during April-May, *asarhi* during transplantation of paddy seedlings, *vandana parab* during the month of *kartik* (October-November), *nuakihia*, *maghe parab*, *makar*, *saharae parab*, *sarhul* festival etc. Besides under the influence of neighbouring Hindu castes they believe in Hindu Gods like, Shiva, Durga, Kali, Jagannath and observe many Hindu festivals like *raja parab*, *ratha yatra*, *dusserah* and *laxmi puja* etc.

PLANNED CHANGE & DEVELOPMENT

Changes have occurred in the Bhumij society and culture with the passage of time. They have accepted many new cultural elements from the neighboring castes and tribes in course of their prolonged contact with them. After Independence, various welfare and development measures taken up by the government for their upliftment, has brought noticeable changes in their way of life.

Government have launched several development programmes exclusively for the tribal areas and the tribal people with two fold objectives i.e. economic upliftment of tribals through Income Generating Schemes and area development through Infrastructure Development Schemes. Establishment of ITDAs in Bhumij

concentrated areas has a positive impact on development of education, agriculture, communication, drinking water, housing, health and sanitation. There are some special programmes, like legal aid, rehabilitation of victims of atrocities, housing facilities, establishment of special employment exchanges, reservation in education, employment and public representations, establishment of residential schools and hostels etc.

The establishment of schools for tribal students by the ST & SC Development Department and School & Mass Education of the Government of Odisha in their area and implementation of Right to Education Act (2010) are noble interventions for desired transformation of the Bhumij tribe in the social and educational sector. Development of infrastructure facilities and socio-economic support through different development agencies ranging from construction of Aganwadi Centers, PDS Centers and provision of houses under IAY and Mo Kudia Yojana, electricity under KutirJyoti and Biju Gramya Jyoti Yojana, safe drinking water, Mobile Health Unit along with subsidy linked loan, vocational and orientation training to the tribal youths in the area has brought an immense change in the life style of the tribe.

Implementation of PESA Act in tribal area has also brought a lot of change in the quality and pattern of leadership among the tribe. The occupational pattern the Bhumij and their means of subsistence have been changed. Money economy has replaced the traditional barter system. Change is observed in their living pattern, social customs, food habits and dress pattern. There is increasing use of modern electronic gadgets; mill made cloths, cosmetics etc. Their area has become accessible and now many of their villages have approach roads and electricity. On the other side, the age old traditional social institutions are declining under the impact of planned change and modernization.

The ST and SC Development Department, Government of Odisha under the aegis of Ministry of Tribal Affairs has established a Tribal Museum in the Premises of SC and ST Research and Training Institute (SCSTRTI) at CRPF Square, Bhubaneswar for preservation and exhibition of material culture of different tribes. In this exclusive anthropological museum, the ornaments, personal belongings, hunting weapons, fishing implements and musical instruments of the Bhumij tribe have been displayed in the different show cases which reflect their inherent talent in arts and crafts. Besides, the live performance of the Bhumij dancers in different District, State and National level cultural events including the Annual State Level Adivasi Exhibition organized by the ST and SC Development Department, Government of Odisha and National Tribal Dance Festival organized by the SCSTRTI every year exposé the richness of the Bhumij culture to the world

BHUMIJA FESTIVALS: CONTINUITY AND CHANGE, AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDY*

A. C. Sahoo¹

The present article is based upon the Anthropological study in the typical Bhumija village Patasanipur in the district of Mayurbhanj in Orissa during the year 2008. The ethnic data and information are exclusively based on the inputs collected from the village Patsanipur.

Festival is an important symbol of any group life. Festival is a time for get-together and sharing of joys and sorrows. A festival is a celebration by a community marking a specific event, occurrence or an aspect of the community. Festivals could be both religious and secular. While religious festivals are observed to appease the Gods and Goddesses or other supernatural powers, the secular festivals celebrate occurrences of significance (victories, birthdays etc.). Each community projects its own socio-cultural significance, identity and uniqueness in its observances and celebrations. Most of the festivals have their respective history of origin and ritual exercise. Festivals not only provide an occasion for fun and frolics but also give an opportunity to the people to remember their past history and renew their cultural identity

For a tribal, festivals are the essences of life. He looks forward to the celebration of festival as an individual intimately identifying with the collectives. Most of the tribal festivals reflect the ingenuity and belief system, which are inlaid in different pursuits of life. Every tribal village observes festivals, which punctuate the entire year. They are organized primarily in two streams: life cycle occasions

* Published in ADIVASI, Vol. XXXXVIII, No.3, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar 2008, pp. 32-40

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(Rites de Passage) and occasions of agricultural (seasonal) operations. A well-established fact is that the tribal festivals are directed towards appeasing the Gods/Goddesses, seeking their goodwill for the community life. However, there are some festivals, which are for entertainment, full of gaiety, fun, humour and interesting banter. Festivals impart meaning and significance to the tribe-person's life. Dancing, singing and ritual performances are integral to the form of the tribal festivals. Animal sacrifice is a common feature practiced by the tribes in most of the rituals. The entire community participates in the celebration; there are no performers as separate from viewers. The fairs and festivals observed by tribes round the year have socio-religious-economic manifestations as well.

Every festival has a separate function. In the religious ceremonies the tribesmen seek to establish an intimate relationship with the Gods and Goddesses, ancestral spirits and other supernatural forces that would secure for them all kinds of material prosperity and render them immune from all fatal diseases. Fairs and festivals are also staged for the welfare of agriculture, household life and livestock breeding. Since tribal economy is mostly agro centric and partly pastoral in character, all rituals centering round the same are slashed into three phases in the year -the early phase of the commencement, the middle and finally at the year end. The fairs and festivals keep their rhythm with the seasonal changes. The entertainment transcends the mundane boundary of its immediate import.

We know that, tribal people are not denizen of an existentialism triggering world, where they roam in a meaningless world and are completely free to choose their actions. On the other hand the tribal are very much obligated to the almighty that, they are here by his grace. That is why they like to celebrate their life and enjoy it to its last. They don't apprehend mishaps so long as the grace flows to them as an elixir. They don't have any hidden agenda except to celebrate their life, nothing else. The present article tries to look at the major festivals celebrated by the Bhumija Tribe in Orissa in a given year. Further it attempts to outline the changes occurring in the modes of celebrations of these festivals.

The Bhumijas are one of the Hinduised agricultural communities mostly found scattered across Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Balesore and Sundargarh districts of Northern Orissa. Bhumija means the one who is born from the native soil; however this naming of the tribe is perhaps made by the neighboring Hindu castes or the then rulers of the area. Racially they are Proto Australoid and belong to Mundari speaking group. The original abode of the tribe was Tamundia in the present Jharkhand state. As their number multiplied, they migrated to different places and a particular group made their way to Mayurbhanj district for settlement. Bhumija society is divided into four endogamous groups such as TamudiaBhumija or Tamaria Bhumija, Haldipokhria Bhumija, Teli Bhumija and Desi Bhumija or Dehuri Bhumija. Further each section is divided into a number of sub sections called 'Kili'. Each Kili represents an animal, flower, plant, hog, earth etc. that are totemic in nature. The members of each group observe certain taboos in

respect of their totemic symbols and marriage within one Kili is strictly prohibited. The kinship terminology is mostly of classificatory type. The headman of the Bhumija village is called Sardar who has immense temporal power over his fellow men and decides all types of disputes and cases of violation and infringement of social rules. The Bhumija people rever Sing Bonga(Sun God)and Dharam who are their supreme deities. A number of village deities in the nomenclature of Guru and Buri are used to be worshiped in Jaherthan – the village sacred groove. They also believe in ghosts and spirits. The Dehuri is the village magico - religious specialist who invokes Gods and Goddesses, ethnic deities and spirits at Jaherthan. The Dehuri usually belongs to Shabar community. The village religious functionary Hatu Dehuri performs all village level rituals and worships. However, each head of the family performs all individual family level rituals at home. They utilize the services of Brahman, Barik, Dhoba, Lohar, Kumbhar, basket makers etc. These service castes belong to other ethnic stocks. They abstain from eating beef and pork but take rice beer and wine distilled from Mahua flower on different occasions. They celebrate a number of festivals throughout the year in the prescribed months in a calendar year.

Patsanipur, a typical Bhumija village is situated on the foothills of Similipal hill ranges. The village is situated 29 Kms away from sub-divisional headquarters of Kaptipada of Mayurbhanj district in Orissa. One can approach the village by going 20 Kms straight towards left after covering 9 Kms on PWD road from Udalato Baripada. The village is connected with an all-weather black topped road. The river Nahua flows at North West side of the village and river Sanja is found towards North. Pata Thakurani is enshrined in western side of the village where Jahera deity is worshipped by Dehuri- the community priest of the village.

Patsanipur, the village is the cultural hub of ethnic Bhumija tradition and sits from the North to South in a linear fashion. This is a composite village giving shelter to various tribes of the district like Bathudi, Mahali, Lodha, Kolha, Santal etc. and castes like Bindhani, Weaver, Washer man, Potter, Blacksmith, Domb and Barber. Non-tribal caste people render various services to the Bhumija people. Even some Santal families found in the village share ethnic hostile relationship with the Bhumija people.

The village reflects the vibes and ambience of a prosperous farmers village symbolizing the predominant agricultural pursuit in the economic life of Bhumija. The two lanes of thatched houses punctuated here and there with tile-roofed houses have the village lane as the divider. Each houses of the village has a cowshed and hen pen for the poultry population. Rich Bhumija farmers have their own thrashing field in their backyards. Marginal farmers have collective thrashing arena. They raise various kinds of crops and vegetables in their agricultural fields. Small rivers and streams coming out from Similipal Mountain range criss cross the village, supplying water and irrigation facilities to the village farmers.

There are educational institutions like U.P. School and High School, and infrastructural facilities such as Panchayat office, dug wells, tube wells, rice hauler, Post office, Anganabadi centre, Dhai centre, youth club, *jatra* pendal for drama and dance, playground etc. available in Patsanipur. The villagers at community level celebrate Laxmi Puja and Durga Puja like other Hindu castes. The players from neighboring villages take part in volleyball, football and cricket competition, which used to take place in Patsanipur in different seasons. On every Saturday a weekly market sits in village Patsanipur where all the people from neighboring villages come for procurement of their daily necessities and disposal of agricultural surplus and forest produce at fair price.

The locale and location of the village has ethnic ambience. The village deities are Biratpat enshrined towards west flank and Kutasuni towards east flank of the village. They sit in their worshipping pedestal just on the North and South of the village shaded by Jahira. They have a belief that, the powerful ethnic goddesses do protect them from all sorts of problems and insulate them from external danger. Hereditary priests Dehuri from Shabar community and Hatu Dehuri from Bhumija community used to worship the deities on different festive occasions. The deities are offered votive terracotta horses, elephants and tigers. They believe that their traditional deities can assure them safety and security if satisfied. The deities get annoyed and do harm if there is any deviation and default in conducting prescribed ritualistic observances. Deona is meant for appeasing evil spirits and saves people from evil eyes. The Bhumija people depend on him to get rid of unavoidable situations connected with socio religious matters.

The Bhumija celebrate different festivals at individual family level and at community level. In all the community level festivals, the services of Dehuri is required. In case of family level festivals Hatu Dehuri or the house owner acts as the priest and worship family deities and spirits. For appeasing different ethnic Gods and Goddess the required worshipping materials are sacrificial animals, sun dried rice, coconut, banana, terracotta human figurine, elephant and horses, leaf cup and plate, ghee, oil, milk, *jhuna*, *dhupa*, *tulshi* leaf, sun dried rice powder, rice cake, charcoal powder, brick powder, lamp, pumpkins, maize, edible green leaf, flower, turmeric powder, *methi* powder, *barkoli* leaf, *duba ghas*, *sal* flower, *mahua* flower, mango, *bell* leaf, earthen pot, winnowing fan, eggs, rice beer, wine etc. The color of the animals and birds and specific items like votive objects and ritual food etc. are prescribed for each Gods, Goddess, deities and spirits. Some of the most important festivals celebrated by the Bhumijas are Herpuna Banapuch, Raja Parab, Jargi-asalia or Chitau Parab, Gahma Parab, Dassain (or) Dasahara Parab, Saarai (or) Bandana or Dipabali Parab, Khetabadha, Pus Parab (or) Makar Parab.

Herpuna Banapuch:

The Bhumija people celebrate Herpuna Banapuch in the month of Baishakh (April - May) before broadcasting the paddy in the field. In this festival they worship Hapanu -the most revered ancestral spirit. The male head of the

family acts as the worshipper as this is mostly celebrated at individual family level. On a prescribed day the concerned family organizes the ritual in the courtyard of the house. The courtyard is plastered with cow dung at its centre. They organize the ritual by placing the measuring pot, wooden stool, and baskets duly washed with cow dung and rice powder and painted with beautiful drawings of traditional designs. The house owner takes a sanctified bath and dressed with clean or new cloth and keeps the paddy seeds inside the measuring pot and basket kept on a wooden stool. The worshiping materials like sun dried rice, *sal* leaf cup, rice beer, and vermilion are required during ritualistic performance conducted to appease the Hapanum. While worshiping the house owner invokes Hapanum and Goddess Laxmi and after completion of the ritualistic observances the owner proceeds to his own agricultural land for sowing the seeds. All the neighbors, near and dear ones are invited for taking the ritually cooked rice and rice beer. According to the most experienced members of the community, without the performance of this ritual sowing paddy seeds may not yield the desired harvest. However, Hapanum and Goddess Laxmi, if satisfied, bring prosperity and bountiful production to their home. In spite of several changes one can find Bhumija farmers are very much enthusiastic to celebrate this occasion with utmost sincerity and devotion.

Raja Parab:

The Bhumija celebrate Raja Parab in the month of Jyesta (May-June) particularly during Raja Sankranti. This festival is celebrated continuously for a period of three days. The festival is celebrated for their respective forefathers at individual family level. The revered deity Hapanum is worshiped with devotion and care during this occasion for safety and security of their family and community members. The head of each family acts as the ritual head to satisfy their most powerful deity - Hapanum by offering socially prescribed requisites. The family members relish various types of traditional cakes, fried rice, ripe jackfruits and such other food items available in this season. All the family members refrain from physical work and enjoy festive food items and make merry in groups. During the Raja Parab the women enjoy song and dance during the night and male members beat drums and play musical instruments out of sheer pleasure. Boys and girls as well as adult women enjoy swing play. Friends and relations living very close, visit each other's village to take part in the occasion.

Jargi-Asalia or ChitauParab:

In the month of Asadha (June-July) the Bhumija people celebrate Jargi Asalia or Chitau Parab. This is celebrated on the 1st Monday of Asadha (June-July). During this festival they worship their adored deity Hapanum and the head of the family performs rituals at family level. The ritualistic materials required for performance of the prescribed ritual are rice, rice powder, vermilion, *sal* leaves, *tulashi* leaves, green edible leaf, chicken etc. During this festival all the family

members relish palm cake as special festival food item. All the boys and girls enjoy the occasion up to their hearts content.

Gahma Parab:

The landowners celebrate Gahma Parab in the month of Sraban (July-August). The household head performs rituals at family level to please their supreme deity and ancestors. It strengthens the relation between brothers and sisters and helps retaining their eternal love and affection towards each other for all time to come. The great attraction in this occasion is the cake and stew prepared out of molasses and rice along with rice beer. During the celebration boys and girls, men and women dance together along with performance of traditional dance and music throughout the night. Enjoyment of rice beer and wine distilled from *mohua* flower are common for all adults in the occasion.

Nuakhai:

The Nuakhai falls in the month of Bhadrab (August - September). The Bhumijas eagerly wait to celebrate this festival when crops are ready for harvest in the field, preferably during first week of lunar phase. The house owner worships the ancestors Buru Bonga for safety and security of the family. The head of the family performs all prescribed rituals. Sun dried rice prepared from newly harvested paddy, roasted maize harvested for the first time in the field are powdered and offered to the deities on *bhalia* leaf. According to prescribed social practice some of the observers offer sacrifice of goat and chickens to appease different Gods and Goddesses those are considered directly or indirectly responsible for newly harvested paddy, maize etc. The head of the family after taking a sacred bath performs the rituals and offers items prepared from newly harvested crops to Happanum, Buru Bonga along with molasses, milk, rice beer etc. in order to please them. After the ritual, all the family members can take the items offered to the deities in this occasion. Throughout the night the boys and girls, men and women sing and dance in group and sing traditional music.

Dassain (or) Dasahara Parab:

In the month of Aswinya (September - October) all the villagers celebrate this festival for seven days. One of the male Bhumijas dressed with all the traditional costumes of Goddess Durga is carried in a procession from house to house where all the participants are expected to wrap a saree and dance keeping two sticks each around the living goddess. Each house owner is expected to contribute in kind. The party may move to nearby villages where they receive the same treatment. It is celebrated to appease Karma Kampaguru- a deity looking after the wellbeing of the people. The village magico-religious specialist appeases Karma Kampaguru with rituals and incantations. Finally on the 10th and last day of the occasion the collected subscription is utilized for hosting a community feast for all the participants and villagers. The Hatu Dehuri at the community level and house head at the family level worship the deity as priests. Rice, vermilion,

pumpkin, *sal* leaf cup and rice beer are main requisites for the ritual. All the male members enjoy by beating drums and singing songs drinking rice beer and wine distilled from *mahua* flower. The women also enjoy dance and remain busy for preparation of festive food items. By and large, all the members irrespective of their age, sex and status get involved in enjoyment and merry making.

Saarai or Bandana or DipabaliParab:

Dipabali or Bandana or Saara festival is celebrated in Kartika (October – November) for three days at the community level during the KartikaAmabasya time. Puja is performed at the community level to appease Gaat Banga. The head of the family performs the rituals to satisfy Hapanum. The requisites in the ritual are *sal* leaf cups, vermilion, flower, sun dried rice, plantain, cakes, etc. The family head offers sacrifice of chicken and festival cake prepared in the cattle shed to satisfy the deity who safeguards their cattle wealth. They worship their Buru Bonga, ancestral spirit along with other deities with the belief of maintaining peace, health, happiness and harmony in the family. They believe that their cattle become disease free and protected from all types of dangers by the blessings of the concerned deity. All the family members gather in the courtyard where the family head performs the ritual using vermilion, hen, egg, rice beer etc. The cattle are worshipped and fed well. Relatives and friends are also invited to participate in this festival. All the family members go to everyone's cattle shed singing and playing music. It is obligatory in the part of the women to take active part in group in each other's cattle shed to honour the domesticated animals. In every house they are offered rice beer and wine to drink as a symbol of hospitality.

Khetabadha:

The Landowners celebrate this festival in the month of Margasir (November – December) after cutting paddy crops. After end of the crops cutting owner keeps a very small portion of standing paddy crops in the land untouched, this is harvested with divine care. It may be noted that the standing crop is up rooted and brought to thrashing floor for worship. In this festival they worship their forefathers. In this occasion the head of the family plays the role of priest to appease the supreme deity. In this ritual the prerequisites are rice, tobacco, rice beer, eggs, leaf cup, vermilion and such others. They invite the neighbors at home to drink rice beer and eat festival food. Thereafter, in group they recite songs and marry-make together. Later on the harvested crop is kept with utmost sincerity and devotion at the threshing ground subsequently in the grain storing containers. The owner and his family members take an adequate care of the invited guests by rendering all possible hospitality. They believe that during this festival the Goddess Laxmi enters into their house, hence the guests need to be treated in best possible manner and the deities are to be satisfied whole heartedly with reverence.

Pus Parab (or) Makar Parab:

Pus Parab or Maker Parab is the most significant festival celebrated in the month of Pausa (December – January). This is observed during Maker *sankranti*. In the Makar Parab they worship their revered Hapanum and deities looking after health and wealth. Mainly they use rice, white hen, *sal* leaf, leaf bowl, and rice beer at the time of worshipping.

Makar Parab is essentially a festival of remembering their revered ancestors. During the time they religiously worship them, by offering their favourite food items. They usually prepare ethnic food items; meats and others sweat condiments for the purpose. After the offering they take the foods.

The three day long Makar festival has its own schedule and agenda. The first day is utilized for the grand preparation for the celebration. They clean their houses and make required purchases and wait expectantly for the day of the celebration. On the Sankranti day – they invoke the spirits of their forefathers to come to their houses. On that day they observe rituals for appeasing their ancestors with religious fervor and sanctity. On the penultimate day they make social interactions. They visit the neighboring families early in the morning in a spirit of bonhomie and brotherhood. It signifies that Makar festival - the beginning of the ethnic New Year may bring prosperity and happiness to all the villagers dissolving the animosities and hatred if any.

On the last day they exhibit a special ethnic feature. They make the image of an old woman in clay and place it at the village cross road situated on the eastern flank of their village. The virgin and unmarried boys and girls congregate in the place and offer water, rice, cakes, molasses and flattened rice to the image. This shows proper respect to gerontocracy, which is unique in Bhumija tribe.

Maghbanga or Magha puja:

In the month of Magha (January-February) the festival of Maghbanga is celebrated at the community level. The Hatu Dehuri- the village priest acts as the ritual specialist. The ritualistic requisites are plantain, flower, vermilion, turmeric powder, sun dried rice powder, *methi* powder, *sal* leaf cup, rice beer etc. The village deities and ancestral sprits are worshiped for benevolence of the community men. The Hapanum, Nagaera, Bijjera, Goddess Laxmi and other associated deities are appeased with prescribed rituals. The community level ritual is followed by individual family level worship. Everybody is strictly prohibited to cut a plant even dry wood in the jungle before performing this ritual. After celebration of the most important festival Makar, all the villagers eagerly wait for observation of Maghbanga to get formal social approval to use forest and stream water after this festival. In case anyone violates this taboo of collection of forest produce before this festival, the matter is seriously viewed and the defaulter is punished by the traditional village council.

Baa-Bonga(or) Phula puja:

This festival is celebrated at the individual family level to appease Hapanum in the month of Phalgun (February-March) during moonlit period. The family heads worship their respective ancestral deities for whom ritual requisites are sun-dried rice, vermilion, *sal* leaf cup, *sal* flower, *mahua* flower, mango, tobacco, rice beer and a chicken. They believe that any newly grown forest produce including new mango fruit are to be offered to their ancestors before they consume the same. Even the children are restricted to do so. Deviation to the rule may lead to illness of the family members and cattle. Loss of health, wealth and happiness are expected if there is any laxity in ritualistic observances at the household level. In this occasion, rice beer and non-vegetarian food items are enjoyed in group by inviting neighbours and friends.

The Bhumija tribe of the village Patsanipur has their indigenous tradition of festivals and festivities centering on life process relating to supernatural powers, village deities and their ancestors. The other motive is related to their agro-economic life revolving around subsistence agriculture. The bountiful harvest exudes in them the satisfaction of being in the God's helpline and they celebrate the festivals as contented souls. The celebration of festivals is intimately connected with bouts of drinking and dining in the company of near and dear ones. The celebration is both collective and individual, where the reciprocity is unlimitedly institutionalized.

On the whole, it may be said that these festivals are communally sponsored and not keyed to the prestige of an individual; the main purpose is community welfare; there is no reference to a precise sacred lunar calendar; the prayers are simple and not sufficiently specialized in terms of different festivals; the villagers as a whole, are aware of the supernatural connotation of the festivals; there is little specialized performance and differentiation between the audience and the performers; there is no reference to a complex and elaborate sacred lore or myth; and villagers meet on a footing of equality in social participation.

Simultaneously, the original nuance and flavor of tribal festivals witness gradual transformation, due to influx of cross-cultural influences. The festivals on the once segregated hills and distant mountain ranges are now exposed to the medium of rapidly proliferating mass communication from the plains. The festivals admit, besides the members of the tribe, only of few outsiders and caste people for participation. They may be the village Brahmins, Barbers, Potters, Blacksmith, Weavers, Basketry makers or Sweepers. The exposure has brought modern modes of entertainment to the doorstep of the tribals. One can see radical changes in dressing patterns and food habits. In addition to it, the process of conversion to Christianity and Sanskritisation has had its impact on the trends. The Shiva Temple constructed in Patasanipur, attracts number of tribal people and they are found reasonably comfortable in the new faith and values. Globalization has also impacted the festivals in multifarious ways.

It may be stated that there has been a distinct “shift of prestige” to the introduced non-aboriginal, Hinduised festivals. On the other hand we find the Bhumijas’ sentimental loyalty to their traditional festivals. It is mentioned before that the neglect of such essential element as the offering of fowl and rice-beer, ceremonial group dancing by women, etc, in the traditional festival under the pressure of prestige drive, create in them a feeling of guilt and also a fear that the neglect of their long standing friendly Gods might be unhappy and bring them harm.

The transformation in Bhumija ceremonial cycle cannot be described by such blanket terms as “secularisation”. Transformation here is not consistent in the direction of “holidays” from “holy day”. In fact we might say with some confidence that sacred cultural performances in the festivals of the Bhumija have become more elaborate through Hindu influences and also through internal development. This however, does not mean that the festivals as a whole have become more sacred in terms of the “attitude” of the Bhumija villagers. With reference to most of the large scale festivals outside the village, one may say that for the Bhumija of Patasanipur those are mainly sites of fun (although the festival have elaborate ritualistic relevance to the sponsor families), there being little sense of a supernatural gain by participating in those festivals. There are, however, exceptions, as in the case of Maker Parab at Chhata Pukur or Satighata where taking sacred baths in the Subarnarekha River has much ritual significance as in any aboriginal festival. One may also note that the Bhumija villagers of Patasanipur are occasionally found to offer sacrifices to Goddess Durga during the Durga Puja festival at Bamni, as fulfillment of a vow to the Goddess for during sickness. For such persons Durga Puja has deep a ritualistic importance.

The cases where the process in the direction of universalisation appear transparent are those where “little tribal tradition “have become conjoined with the Great Tradition of the Hindus, the latter were often being sponsored by feudal chiefs. In the conjunction of aboriginal Karama Parab and more universal IndParab one such case may be found.

Taken as a whole, in comparison with their aboriginal pattern, it may be said that the contemporary Bhumija villager has been participating in relatively more secularized form of behavior in some of the orders of festivals than they ever did before. At the same time, they are participating in a relatively more complex sacred culture. If we look at the immediate or recent perspective of history, we would see in them the interaction of two distinctive configurations of religious traditions - a case of heterogenic development. It is futile to argue whether the transformation of Bhumija festivals is heterogenic or orthogenic in a specific historic sense. Culture cannot be insulated from the contemporary realities. If we study in this sense it becomes instantly clear that the Bhumija culture - scape falls prey to the flux of ongoing all round changes.

With the change of time, the village Patsanipur has witnessed rapid developmental works. Modern time has its alchemy touch with the modern day polity and cultural canvas. The study village amply reflects the touch.

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INDIGENOUS PLANT MEDICINE FOR FERTILITY REGULATION: A STUDY ON THE BHUMIJA TRIBE OF ODISHA*

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ABSTRACT

The present paper makes an attempt to focus on the use of Indigenous plant medicine for fertility regulation among the Bhumija tribe of Odisha. The study reveals that eighteen plant species belonging to fifteen plant families are being used as traditional medicines for the cure of different fertility related problems. The village medicine men, who have a good knowledge about the herbal medicines usually diagnose and prescribe medicines for treating the patients. Many elderly persons of the village and the experienced women who attend the deliveries are also aware of the importance and use of such plant medicines. Various plants and plant-parts are being used for the preparation of medicines. It is found from the present study that even though the traditional reproductive health service is generally affordable and easy to access, yet most of the younger generation respondents are being attracted by the modern medicines. Further, due to the process of urbanization and cultural contact, there is always threat to this indigenous knowledge of treatment. Hence, there is an urgent need to execute a revitalization strategy for protecting such rich indigenous medical knowledge from complete desertion.

KEY WORDS: Indigenous plant medicine, Traditional healer, Fertility regulation

* Published in ADIVASI, Vol. XXXXIV, Nos. 1&2, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar, 2014, pp.9-15

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INTRODUCTION

India is the second largest country in the world in respect of human population. Over 550 tribal communities are covered under 227 ethnic groups residing in about 5000 villages of India in different forests and vegetation types (Sikarwar, 2002). Orissa has 62 different Scheduled Tribes with over a million of tribal populations. They are having a very good knowledge of the plant resources, based on generations' old experience. Our knowledge of intimate relationship between man and plants in his immediate surroundings has been passed on to us mainly through surviving tradition (Jain 2004). However, with the passage of time and development of technological medicine and health infrastructure, this knowledge is under a serious threat. The traditional knowledge about the use of the naturally available plants and their products has been transmitted through oral communication within the society and has passed from generation to generation. The uses of various plants and their products have been reported for post-delivery care by Kaur (1999).

In recent times, with the increased knowledge of life and culture of the tribal communities, the social scientists are taking interest in ethno-medicinal studies. Many works have also been reported, especially from the rural and tribal communities of India (Bhadra and Tirkey 1997; Sharma Thakur 1997; Choudhury 2000). Ray and Sharma (2005) have given a description of ethno-medicinal beliefs and practices prevalent among the Savaras, a tribal community of Andhra Pradesh. Kumari (2006) gave an account on the concept of illness and disease and the application of folk medicine among the Sauras of Jharkhand. A number of organizations within India are concerned with maintaining India's Traditional Medicine System. Recently the importance of these traditional medicines has been realized worldwide as some of them proved to be more effective (Marini-Bettolo 1980). Nearly 80% of the world's population depends on traditional medicines, most of which involve the use of plant extracts (Sandhya et al. 2006).

Keeping in view of the importance of traditional medicine which provides health services to 80% of the world's population, increase demand of herbal drugs by the pharmaceuticals and depleting natural plant resources, it is high time to document the medicinal utility of less known plant available in remote areas of the country (Zaidi and Crow 2005). Moreover, the health care scenario in urban India as well as globally, is undergoing dramatic transformation; evolving into a new emerging situation that emphasizes preventive health, customized care, body-mind medicine and the use of natural products (Bodeker et al. 2005).

Studies on traditional medicine in Orissa though started recently, have given very encouraging results and is gaining momentum with more and more botanists taking the subject seriously (Kamla-Raj, 2011, *Ethno Med*, 5(1): 51-55). Noteworthy contributions on the subject have been made by Jain (1971), Pal and Banerjee (1971, 1974), Saxena and Dutta (1975), Mudgal and Pal (1980), Saxena and Brahman (1994), etc. However, limited tribe-wise or ethnographic explorations

have been done in the state. Only a few studies (Saxena et al. 1988; Pandey et al. 2000, 2002; Pandey and Rout 2003; Rout 2005) have been carried out on the tribals of the state who utilize a number of medicinal plants available in the forests for the treatment of various diseases. But the information on plants used for reproductive health and fertility control is meager in these publications. However, in a study, Dash and Dash (2003) have observed that although a large number of plants are associated with food, economy and religion, the use of plant species as traditional medicines are dominant in the entire tribal society. The state has one of the oldest and richest cultural traditions of using medicinal plants. The tribal people of the state still depend on the common traditional ethno-medicine for their day to day primary health care. These medicinal plants gain further importance in the region where modern health facilities are either not available or not easily accessible. Guite and Acharya (2006) have shown that the acceptance of a particular health care system among the tribal people mostly depends on its availability and accessibility. So far no work has been reported on traditional medicine on reproductive health of the Bhumija tribe of Baleswar. However, Kabikanya and Dash (2003) have reported on the Bhumija Perception of Health and Health Care System in a unique socio-cultural system of Jajpur District of Orissa. Therefore, there is an urgent need for documentation of their traditional knowledge. The present work concentrates on the traditional medicines used by the Bhumija women of Baleswar for reproductive health and fertility control.

MATERIALS & METHODS

The authors have conducted an intensive exploration to collect data in the tribal (Bhumija) dominated villages of Baleswar District. Five villages of Remuna Block namely, Phulkiary, Jodabari, Ghatgharsahi, Jambani and Gudgudia and three villages of Nilagiri Block namely, Chaturkhunta, Chandipur and Makhpada of the district were covered. Rapport was established before collection of data. The data were collected from the village medicine-men whose treatments are believed to be very effective and also from the local knowledgeable elderly persons and from the old women who conduct the delivery. The medicine men and the elderly persons of the community were interviewed for recording the local names, plant parts used, purpose of usage and the method of administration. In the collection of data, no structured questionnaire was used. Medicinal properties of plants were learned through in-depth, informal interviews. A number of group discussions were also conducted during the period of investigations. Data collection was carried out during 2007-08. In the following enumeration, the botanical name of the plants have been arranged alphabetically followed by family within parenthesis, local names in Oriya, locality of collection, plant parts used for medicinal purposes and their mode of use.

DESCRIPTION

Earlier, in the tribal societies, the use of traditional medicines was predominant. But with the advancement of modern medical facilities, the

traditional medicine is losing its efficacy. Available evidence (Table 1) indicates that traditional medicines are involved in providing reproductive health care and fertility control. The use of traditional medicine for reproductive health care is due to subsisting cultural beliefs, as they consider pregnancy and pregnancy related problems as a natural occurrence. The tribal people are not interested in sharing their knowledge with outsiders. After developing intimacy with some traditional healers and experienced women, some information on traditional medicine could be collected and presented in this paper. In the present study, eighteen plant species of fifteen different families are being used for different reproductive health problems and for fertility control. The version of the villagers revealed that people have been shifting from traditional medicine system to modern medicine system. This is due to the effectiveness or quick action and easy availability of modern medicines. The present paper has highlighted the plants and plant products used as traditional medicines for reproductive health and fertility control. The Bhumija community is eventually *Odia* speaking. The important medicinal plants used by the Bhumija Tribe for reproductive health and fertility regulation are described below.

1. **Scientific name and (Family) :** *Abrus precatorius* (FABACEAE)
Local name/Locality : "Kaincha"/ Chaturkhunta,
Plant parts/Purpose : Seeds for contraception
Mode of use : Seeds soaked in un-boiled cow milk at night and taken in the morning
2. **Scientific name and (Family) :** *Annona reticulata* (ANNONACEAE)
Local name/Locality : "Ramaphala "/ Gudgudia, Jambani,
Plant parts/Purpose : Seeds for abortion
Mode of use : Seed powder mixed with black pepper (*Piper nigrum*) is taken by the pregnant woman up to 3-4 months.
3. **Scientific name and (Family):** *Annona squamosa* (ANNONACEAE)
Local name/Locality: "Ata"/ Jadabar, Makhapada
Plant parts/Purpose: Root to induce abortion.
Mode of use : Dried root powder is taken orally in the morning for five days
4. **Scientific name and (Family):** *Asparagus racemosus* (LILIACEAE)
Local name/Locality: " Satabari" - Chandipur ,Jadabari
Plant parts/Purpose: Tuber to initiate lactation
Mode of use: Fresh tuber paste is taken by lactating mothers
5. **Scientific name and (Family):** *Bombax ceiba* (BOMB ACACEAE)
Local name/Locality " Semuli"/ Chaturkhunta,
Plant parts/Purpose: Root to promote conception
Mode of use: The root paste of young plants mixed with cow milk is taken early in the morning for one week to regulate menstrual disorder

6. **Scientific name and (Family):** *Borassus flabellifer* (ARECACEAE)
Local name/Locality: "Tala" / Ghatgharsahi
Plant parts/Purpose: Inflorescence / for contraception
Mode of use: Mixture of burned male inflorescence and black pepper (*Piper nigrum*) is taken by the woman with cow milk
7. **Scientific name and (Family):** *Crateva magna* (CAPPARIDACEAE)
Local name/Locality: "Barun" / Gudgudia
Plant parts/Purpose: Stem bark / for contraception
Mode of use: Stem bark juice mixed with black pepper (*Piper nigrum*) powder is taken by the woman in the seventh day of menstruation
8. **Scientific name and (Family):** *Dillenia pentagyna* (DILLENACEAE)
Local name/Locality: "Rai" / Chaturkhunta,
Plant parts/Purpose: Stem bark / for easy delivery
Mode of use: Tree gum is used by the experienced lady (Dhai) for easy delivery.
9. **Scientific name and (Family):** *Ficus hispida* (MORACEAE)
Local name/Locality: "Dimiri" / Chandipur,
Plant parts/Purpose: Fruit / for milk secretion
Mode of use: Fruit is boiled and given to mother to prevent miscarriage and for more milk secretion.
10. **Scientific name and (Family):** *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* (MALVACEAE)
Local name/Locality: "Mandar" / Phulkiary
Plant parts/Purpose: Stem / for contraception
Mode of use: Mixture of flower paste, iron dust is taken by the women on the days of menstruation for contraception
11. **Scientific name and (Family):** *Millettiapinnata* (FABA Chaturkhunta, CEAE)
Local name/Locality: "Karanja" / Chaturkhunta,
Plant parts/Purpose: Stem / to control excessive bleeding
Mode of use: Extract of stem bark is taken for checking excessive bleeding after delivery
12. **Scientific name and (Family):** *Nelumbo nucifera* (NYMPHAEACEAE)
Local name/Locality: "Padma" / Chaturkhunta,
Plant parts/Purpose: Rhizome / To reduce white discharge
Mode of use: Decoction of rhizomes and Flowers is taken for 15 fertility days
13. **Scientific name and (Family):** *Oroxylum indicum* (BIGNONIACEAE)
Local name/Locality: "Phanphani" / Chandipur,
Plant parts/Purpose: Stem / To control bleeding

Mode of use: Decoction of stem bark with common salt is taken twice a day for one month to control bleeding during menstruation

14. **Scientific name and (Family):** *Phyla nodiflora* (VERBENACEAE)
Local name/Locality: "Kicharanga" / Makhapada
Plant parts/Purpose: Root/ for promoting sexual desire
Mode of use: Decoction of root with unboiled egg is taken by the women
15. **Scientific name and (Family):** *Ricinus communis* (EUPHORBIACEAE)
Local name/Locality: "Jada" / Makhapada
Plant parts/Purpose: fruit / for easy delivery
Mode of use: The oil massaged gently on the belly for reducing delivery pain
16. **Scientific name and (Family):** *Saraca asoca* (CAESALPINIACEAE)
Local name/Locality: "Asoka" / Gudgudia
Plant parts/Purpose: Buds / To increase fertility
Mode of use: Buds are taken orally with water for prescribed period
17. **Scientific name and (Family):** *Tephrosia purpurea* (FABACEAE)
Local name/Locality: "Bana Kolothia" / Chandipur,
Plant parts/Purpose: Leaf / to avoid post natal complications
Mode of use: Decoction of leaf mixed with honey is taken by women twice a day for one month to avoid post natal complications
18. **Scientific name and (Family):** *Zizyphus mauritiana* (RHAMNACEAE)
Local name/Locality: "Barakoli" / Jadabadi
Plant parts/Purpose: Stem bark / to get relief from abdominal pain.
Mode of use: Stem bark paste is taken twice a day after food during pregnancy

DISCUSSION

It is paradoxical to see the modern world of late focusing more on alternative medicine which has a predominantly herbal base. The modern medicine has brought a revolution throughout the world but the plant based medicines have its own unique position. With the influence of urbanization, the Bhumijas are gradually being attracted towards the advent of modern health care facilities and Government health measures. But still the prevalence of traditional medicines is observed in this tribal region. The present study is based on the data collected from several villages situated in the urban fringe. The local use of plants and plant products are particularly common in those areas, which have little or no access to modern health services. But, these people can easily avail modern medical facilities from the nearby town or District Headquarter hospital of Baleswar and it is found that the new generations have no interest in the indigenous methods of treating diseases. They are not even concerned about the importance of these herbal plants and its medicinal values.

Shankar (2007) has also highlighted that a section of the rural people in all social classes, including the poor are giving up traditional health practices and turning to western bio-medicine. For the rural poor, this replacement of tradition has serious economic consequences. Socio-economic surveys indicate that the single and largest cause of rural indebtedness is health expenditure. The observation also reveals that the Bhumijas use roots, stem, bark, flowers, rhizomes, leaves and seeds of the most common plants for the preparation of medicines to cure different reproductive health problems. Although the information given by traditional healers is not comparable to the modern medicine, their efficacy is claimed to be high by the Bhumijas. Prasad (2007) draws attention to the choice of traditional treatment among the poor which is restricted and limited by a variety of factors such as affordability, accessibility and social distance. Despite of all factors, the tribal people are still using traditional medicines though the prevalence of these medicines is waning.

CONCLUSION

The study reveals that the Bhumijas have vast knowledge about ethno-medicinal use of plants growing in their vicinity. It has also been drawn that the Bhumija community has been changing at a certain pace along with their health seeking behaviour. The tribals inherit a rich traditional knowledge about the flora investigated and apply this knowledge for making crude herbal medicines to cure different diseases. But it is observed that the traditional knowledge which formed the basis for the origin of alternative medicine also paved way for the evolution of modern medicine. Now such indigenous knowledge is facing slow and natural decline. However, the study certainly points out that the traditional reproductive health care system still finds its meaning of survival in the tribal domain. In this study, it is also found that though the Bhumijas are in favor of taking the modern medical facilities, the older generation still has inclination towards traditional medicine. Presently, very few elders in the tribal community practice traditional medicine. If this trend continues, within a few years, there will not be a single elder member in the tribal community who would speak about the traditional medicine. The growing disinterest in the use of traditional medicine for reproductive health problems among the younger generation will lead to a disappearance of this traditional practice. Therefore, greater efforts are required to document the rich traditional knowledge of the local people so as to prepare a comprehensive account of it. Wild plants and other natural resources used as traditional medicine unfortunately are being eroded due to the loss and degradation of their natural habitats or over harvesting for commercial purposes. Urgent measures for conserving wild genetic resources, as well as for kick-starting large-scale cultivation, are necessary (Shankar 2007). Therefore, there is an immediate need to execute a revitalization strategy for protecting the indigenous knowledge from complete desertion.

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DESUA BHUMIJ *

*Bhagirathi Chowdhury*¹

The Desi or Desua Bhumij, also known as Singbhumi Bhumij constitutes a section of the Bhumij tribe of Munda origin. In some localities they are commonly known as 'Bhumij' and while referring to the tribe, the word 'Desua' is always dropped. Their district-wise distribution in Orissa is given below:-

Sl. No.	District	Population		
		Male	Female	Total
1.	Sambalpur	3	00	3
2.	Puri	22	17	39
3.	Mayurbhanj	112	94	206
Total		137	111	248

They are considered untouchable and they do not get service of the Hindu Brahmin, barber and washer man. They have totally forgotten their aboriginal language, and have adopted Oriya as their mother tongue.

Clan and Marriage

The tribe is divided into a number of exogamous groups called Kili or Gotra. They Karji, Pardhan, Dalnaik, Naik, Barda, Hembrum, Magadha etc., most of which are found among the other sections of the tribe. Marriage within the same Kili is forbidden and considered incestuous.

Arranged marriage is the general rule. But there are also marriages by capture and by intrusion prevalent among them. In case of the former, the amount of bride-price is less than that in an arranged marriage. Bride-price in a marriage by intrusion is never paid. In this case a girl comes and enters into the house of the boy of her liking. If the boy's parents accept her, no bride price is demanded.

* Published in ADIBASI, Vol. V, No.3, (Spl. Issue), TRB, Bhubaneswar 1963-64, pp.125-26

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Widow re-marriage is allowed without bride price. Levirate and sororate are prevalent. There is provision for divorce though it is very rarely practiced.

Proposal for marriage by negotiation comes first from the boy's side. When both the parties give their consent the betrothal takes place. On this occasion the boy's parents accompanied by some kinsmen pay a visit to the girl's family with a new cloth for the bride and nearly ten seers of paddy and pot-full of liquor. A day is fixed for the marriage rite which takes place in the boy's village. On the appointed day a group of young boys and girls with their musical instruments go to bring the bride. They carry with them the bride-price which consists of Rs.4 in cash, two mounds of paddy and a cloth for the girls' mother. Unless bride-price is paid the bride's parents do not send their daughter for marriage. After payment of the bride-price they come in a procession with dancing and singing and reach the groom's village in the evening. On their arrival they are received with dance and music. The bride is taken to the groom's house. Now the marriage rites take place near the marriage booth constructed for this purpose in the courtyard of the groom's family. The father or in his absence paternal uncle offers food and liquor to ancestors and Thakurani before the *Sindurdan*, the binding ritual of marriage. Then the groom and the bride give vermilion marks on each other's forehead. They are anointed with oil and turmeric. The marriage is concluded with feasting, drinking, dancing and singing which continue till the next day when bride's party returns to their village.

Birth rites

Birth pollution continues for nine days, when the males of the family and the baby are shaved by their tribesmen. The mother washes her cloths and takes bath. The houses of the family concerned are cleaned. All the used clothes are washed by the family members. The woman, who acts as mid-wife for the delivery, selects name for the baby by dropping rice grain and Khasa (a variety of oil seed or Til seed).

Death rites

The mourning period continues till the purificatory rites are observed on the tenth day. During the period of pollution, they abstain from eating fish and flesh. On the tenth day all the males of the deceased's lineage shave their heads and females pare their nails. All used clothes are washed by themselves. After cooking food, they go to bring the departed soul and offer food. Thus the death pollution is removed. It is now the common rule to bury the dead. The difficulty of procuring firewood does not allow them to cremate.

Religion

Whatever may be their religious beliefs and practices in the past, they now observe several festivals of the neighbouring Hindus. Among these Raja Parba, GamhaPunein, Dasara, Makar Sankranti, Prathamastami are important. On the

occasion of Raja Parba, they like the Hindus, suspend all work and spend the time as holidays for three consecutive days. They make swings. Song competition between boys and girls who form two separate parties goes on among the tribe. They do not offer sacrifices or any other materials to the deities communally. They have no priest to worship their deities. They are also not required to participate in the religious ceremonies connected with agricultural operations, observed by the Hindus of the village. They worship Thakurani, who is installed as a clay image for seven days in a year. Every festival is marked by singing and dancing by girls to the accompaniment of musical instruments played on by the boys. Drinking of rice beer and *mohua*-liquor is a common thing in every festival.

They believe in magic and witchcraft. For illness they consult the shamans who belong to their own tribe. Occasionally they go to hospital for medicine.

Dance and Music

They celebrate every festival and the marriage ceremonies with dance and music. Girls in a row dance while the boys play on the Changu, the only musical instrument they possess. Their songs are in Oriya language which has been adopted as their mother tongue.

Houses and Settlement

The Bhumij settlements which form part and parcel of the Hindu villages are built completely detached from the wards inhabited by other castes and tribes. The arrangements of houses in a Bhumij ward do not follow any definite pattern. In some villages, houses are built to a linear fashion with two rows of houses facing the same street, which also serves the purpose of courtyard. In some villages houses are scattered over big area. They like to build houses in a place where there are fruit-trees and a good source of water, such as a spring, a well etc. They have kitchen gardens which are located in front of the houses or at the back. The non-availability of faggots due to depletion of forests and their meager income to meet the expenses for a stone or a mud wall, force them to keep their kitchen gardens open. Here they grow millet, maize and a few varieties of vegetable mostly for their own consumption during the rainy seasons. They do not possess any common-house in the ward.

The tiny and mud huts with straw-thatched roofs of the Bhumij by the side of big and well-maintained houses belonging to caste Hindus, will at once give an impression of their poverty and misery. The houses with low walls are very small in size. There is no window in any house. The door is so small that while entering into a house one has to bend his head as low as waist. The shutters are either made of wattles or kerosene tins. Very small verandahs are constructed in the front side. Most of the families possess only one room which serves the purpose of kitchen, sleeping and store-room. As soon as a son is married a separate house is built by him. Unmarried grown-up boys of the ward sleep in some vacant houses. So also the unmarried girls sleep in a widow's house.

Household Articles

As regard household articles they make a very miserable show. Now they use sack or a mat made of wild date palm as their beds. A family may possess two or three aluminums utensils for taking food, some earthen vessels for cooking and storing water, a few items of basketry. One or two families in the village may possess a steel trunk or any other valuable property. The axe, bows and arrows are the only weapons used by them.

Dress Ornaments

Men wear napkins and occasionally long dhotis while women wear mill-made sarees. Use of blouse and inner petticoat has become very popular among the young girls. Use of shirt, short and banyan is gaining popularity among the young boys. All these dresses are purchased from the local market. Children up to six to seven years of age are allowed to go naked.

The Bhumij women wear few ornaments, made of cheap metal, sold in the market. A chain or a necklace of imitation coin for the neck, glass or metal bangles on the wrist and metal anklet are common ornaments used by them. Those who can afford, wear ornaments made of valuable metals like gold and silver. Young boys are sometimes seen wearing flower designs made of metal in their lobes.

Occupation

The Bhumij have taken to wage earning as the main source of income. Most of them are landless and only a few families have got land which is not also sufficient to meet their requirements. So almost all of them work as labourers for the neighbouring cultivators. Children are employed to tend cattle of the cultivators. The depleted forest in the neighbouring are does not provide much scope for collecting green leaves, roots and fruits as in the past. With much difficulty they can bring fuel and Sal leaves for sale. In leisure time they manufacture bricks on demand. During summer a few Bhumij men go to work in tea garden of Assam or in Calcutta or in the mining quarries in Keonjhar.

Food and Intoxicants

Although rice is their staple food, they hardly get full meals throughout the year. Whenever it is available it is taken. They eat beef; pork, fowl white-ant, mouse, termites and other unclean food. Rice-beer and *mohul*-liquor are taken.

For their unclean food habits, they are still considered unclean. They do not get the services of Brahmin, barber and washer-man of the Hindu society.

BHUNJIA*

*Siba Prasad Rout*¹

Bhunjias are a small tribe numbering 2,375 souls. According to R. V. Russell and R.B. Hiralal, "The term Bhunjia may perhaps signifies one who lives on the soil, from Bhum, the earth, and Jia, depended on. The word Birijia, a synonym for Binjhar, is similarly a corruption of Bewar Jia, and means one who is dependent on *dahia* or patch cultivation". Sir H. Risley considers Birjia, Binjhia and Binjhar as synonymous terms and maintains that Bhunjia may be another corruption form of such kind.

Bhunjias belong to Dravidian group and speak a dialect of Hindi which, as Sir G. Grierson considers, resembles the dialect of the Halbas. According to him this dialect is a "form of Chhattisgarhi" which is practically the same as Baigani. Though surrounded by Gonds, the Bhunjias never speak Gondi.

Population and Distribution

Russell, in his book "The Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India" estimates the population figure of the Bhunjias to be 7,000, approximately distributed over Bindranawagarh and Khariar Zamindaries. The population of Bhunjias in Orissa, according to 1961 census in 2,375, distributed mainly in Kalahandi, Mayurbhanj and Balasore districts.

* Published in ADIBASI, Vol. V, No.3, (Special Issue), TRB (now SCSTRTI), Bhubaneswar 1963-64, pp.99-100

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Population Figure of Bhunjias

Sl. No	District in which they are found	Population	Male	Female
1.	Kalahandi	1,992	956	1,036
2.	Sambalpur	14	6	8
3.	Ganjam	70	34	36
4.	Mayurbhanj	136	70	66
5.	Balasore	163	77	86
Total		2,375	1,143	1,232

The Bhunjias are divided into two sections, known as Chaukhtutia and Chinda. Russell writes about their origin as follows:-

“The Chaukhtutia sub caste appears to be mixed origin from the Gonds and Halbas, and as the Chindas are probably descended from the Baigas, the Bhunjias may be considered to be offshoot from these three important tribes.

The origin of the Chaukhtutia is further given by Russell in the following lines:

“On one occasion a Bhatra Gond named Bachar cast a net into the Pairi River and brought out a stone. He threw the stone back into the river and cast his net again, but a second and yet a third time the stone came out. So he laid the stone on the bank of the river and went back to his house, and that night he dreamt that the stone was Bura Deo, the great God of the Gonds. So he said, ‘If this dream be true, let me draw in a deer in my net tomorrow for a sign’, and the next day the body of a deer appeared in his net. The stone then called upon the Gond to worship him as Bura Deo but the Gond demurred to doing so himself and said he would provide a substitute as a devotee. This Bura Deo agreed, but said that Bachar, the Gond must marry his daughter to the substituted worshipper. The Gond then set out to search for somebody, and in the village of Lafandi he found a Halba of the name of Konda, who was a cripple deaf and dumb, blind and leper. He brought Konda to the stone, and on reaching it he was miraculously cured of all his ailments and gladly began to worship BuraDeo. He afterwards married the Gond’s daughter and they had a son called Chaukhtutia Bhunjia, who was the ancestor of the Chaukhtutia division of the tribe. Now the term Chaukhtutia in Chhhtisgarhi signifies a bastard, and the story related above is obviously intended to signify that the Chaukhtutia Bhunjias are of mixed descent from the Gonds and Halbas.

Social Customs

The Chinda division of the Bhunjias is supposed to occupy higher position in the hierarchy of their social status and they have a saying “Chinda Raja, Bhunjia Paik:. As the Chaukhtutia are recognized to be of illegitimate descent they struggle hard to increase their social status by observing strict rules of ceremonial purity. If

a non-Chaukhutia touches the kitchen hut of a Chaukhutia, the hut is entirely abandoned and a new one is built. The Chaukhutia never eat food cooked by a man who does not belong to his own community. Even food is not eaten from the married daughter. Here everybody is suspicious of his neighbours parentage, and thus refrains from taking food from others. Though they observe such strict ceremonial purity, they never clean their bodies regularly. Russell writes- "Only while it is remembered that these rules are observed by people who do not wash themselves from one week's end to the other, and wear the same wisp of cloth about their loins until it comes to pieces, can the full absurdity of such customs as the above be appreciated."

The Bhunjias eat pork, but abstain from beef and the flesh of the monkeys. In spite of their strict observance of many rites for ritual purity, they rank lower in status than the Gonds, and none except the Kamars accept food from their hands. Women are secluded during the menstrual period up to eight days and during this period they are not allowed to touch any article. No strangers are allowed to enter into the house of the Bhunjias. A separate hut is built for them in the village and during their stay they are given uncooked grains and pulses to cook for themselves. They have their own method of curing and they hardly go to Government dispensary for medicine. The most popular method of curing diseases is by branding the skin with a hot iron.

Marriage

The exogamous divisions of the Bhunjias are derived from those of the Gonds. The Chaukhutias marry their daughters before puberty. Russell writes- "Among the Chaukhutias it is considered a great sin if the signs of puberty appear in a girl before she is married and to avoid this, if no husband had been found for her, they perform a 'Kand Byah' or 'Arrow Marriage'; the girl walks seven times around an arrow fixed in the round and is given away without ceremony to the man who by previous arrangement has brought the arrow". Cross-cousin marriage is considered to be the most suitable. The proposal for marriage among the Chaukhutias is made on the boy's behalf by two men who are known as Mahalia and Jangalia representing a Nai (barber) and a Dhimar (water-carrier). The marriage takes place in the bridegroom's village, and ceremony is conducted by a priest known as Dinwari, the main rite being walking around the sacred post seven times. The post of the Dinwari is hereditary. Among the Chinda Bhunjias the bride goes away with the groom and after a few days returns to her parents' village to make offerings to the deities. The Chaukhutias, on the other hand, never allow the married daughters to return to her home. If a Chaukhutia girl comes to visit her parents after marriage she is kept in a separate house and is made to cook food for her separately. In a Chaukhutia marriage, the provisions for feast are distributed raw to the guests who cook for themselves.

Sex relations before marriage is considered improper but the Chaukhutias are stricter on this matter. If a girl of Chinda group goes wrong with an outsider

before marriage and becomes pregnant, the matter is hushed up. But in Chaukhutia group she is expelled from the community. Widow-marriage and divorce are permitted, but a husband would often try to avoid it. It is not the custom to bring such cases before the tribal committee or to claim compensation.

A special type of relation exists between a man and his sister's children. Marriage between brother's son or daughter to a sister's daughter or son is considered the most suitable. A man shows special respect to his sister's children, who are not allowed to eat the leavings of food on his plate and are never scolded, even though they deserve it. It is of great fame for a man to pay for the wedding ceremony of his sister's son or daughter.

Religion

Mata, the deity for cholera and smallpox is worshipped every year in the month of Chait (March), and is offered a goat and cocoanut. Liquidation of debt is considered to be a primary obligation by the Bhunjias and they worship the Sun for gratitude by offering cocoanut. They believe in the Hindu idea of the world being rested on the back of the tortoise, and thus pay great reverence to the tortoise. The tortoise is called to be the foot-stool of God, and the Bhunjia ladies are never allowed to sit on a foot-stool or a bed-cot. They consider it disgraceful to walk across the shadow of any elderly person or to step over somebody or any revered object. If a man falls from tree he offers a chicken to the tree spirit.

The Bhunjias are cultivators and they earn their bread by tilling the soil. They are not advanced community in the sense that about 94.5 per cent of them are illiterate.

BHUNJIA*

*T. Patnaik*¹

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

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

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

The Chuktias are recognised to be of illegitimate descent. As a consequence of this they strive to increase social status by the very strict observance of the rules of ceremonial purity. If any man not of his own caste touches the hut where a Chuktia cooks his food, it is entirely abandoned and a new one is built. They do not even eat food cooked by other members of their own community and this is a restriction found only among those of doubtful descent, where every man is suspicious of his neighbour's parentage. The Chindas whose

* Published in Tribes of Orissa (revised edition), SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar 2004, pp. 86-90

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pedigree is more reliable are far less particular about their social purity and form the acculturated section of the tribe. The Chuktia Bhunjias are confined exclusively to the hills of the Sonabera plateau, while the Chinda Bhunjias are scattered in the plains with other tribal and non-tribal communities.

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

Bhunjia villages vary in size ranging from 8-10 households to 50-60 households. They believe that the village boundary is guarded by many gods and goddesses, who protect the village from the infiltration of evil spirits. Bhunjia houses are arranged in a peculiar way, two or more households taking a wide open space to build their individual houses there. A Bhunjia house generally has three huts, the largest one serving as the living-cum-store room, the second hut adjacent to it being used as the cattle-shed, and the third and the smallest one, being built a little in front of the living room, is the kitchen, which is enclosed all round. The houses are made of mud and thatched with wild grass. The houses have no doors except for the living room and kitchen. The floors are plastered with either cow dung or coloured earth, and the walls with red and white earth. The walls of most Bhunjia houses are painted with floral and animal designs.

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

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

The family is the smallest social unit among the Bhunjias and is of nuclear type, consisting of parents and their unmarried children. The family size varies from 3 to 10 or even more members. After the son gets married, he establishes his own family in a separate place at the same village. A daughter leaves her father's house after her marriage and lives with her husband. Unmarried sons and

daughters continue to live with their parents until their marriage. In the case of the death of the parents, the unmarried brothers and sisters stay with their married brother until their marriage. The head of the family is usually the eldest male member of the family. Thus a Bhunjia family is patrilocal, patrilineal and patriarchal.

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

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

Adult marriage is general. A boy marries at around twenty and a girl at fourteen years to eighteen. Incestuous relationships are taboos among the Bhunjias. The Bhunjia mostly practise monogamy. In the case of a wife's barrenness, a man marries a second time after obtaining the first wife's consent. Marriage by exchange and elopement are some of the types of marriage prevalent among the Bhunjias. They also practise levirate and sororate types of marriages. However, marriage by exchange is the most common of all the type of marriages. There is no definite month for marriage and generally it is held after the harvest, so that they do not face any difficulties in meeting the marriage expenses.

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

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

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

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

avoidance relationship with her husband's elder brother and with her younger sister's husband.

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

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

News of a death is sent to all the members of the lineage. The dead body is given a bath and, after being covered in a new piece of white cloth, is carried to the burial ground on a bamboo frame. On the third day of the death all the related members of the family are invited for the mortuary feast. On this occasion the nephew sprinkles cow's milk all over the house, throws away all the used earthenware pots, and cooks food in the new pots. The eldest son of the deceased is shaved by the nephew, after which he puts on a new cloth and takes the cooked food in three leaf cups to the burial ground. Thereafter the relatives are fed.

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

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

The society makes a typical allocation of different types of work between men and women. Adult males and females work in the fields, but ploughing is only done by the males. Hunting and the use of the bow and arrow are taboo for

women. Fishing, the rearing of animals, the collection of forest produce and the selling of commodities, etc. are done by both men and women. All types of household work are done by the women. However, in certain circumstances men also help in domestic work.

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

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

The Bhunjias observe a festival fifteen days long at the shrine of Sunadei in the month of October-November during Dasahara. Another festival is observed in the month of March-April, the specialty of which is that for the first time in the year *dahi* cultivation (shifting cultivation) is performed. In most cases the deities are worshipped to free people from all kinds of illness, particularly fever and smallpox.

CHUKTIA BHUNJIA *

*S. C. Mohanty*¹

Chuktia Bhunjia is a small and little known tribe of Western Orissa. They consider themselves as a pure and clean section of the Bhunjia tribe. They are autochthones of Nuapara district and Sunabeda plateau is considered to be their birth place where from 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 setting on plains have adopted alien traits in their socio-cultural life. But in spite of such diversification the Bhunjias observe strict rules to maintain their purity.

Their mother tongue *Bhunjia* is a mixture of Oriya, Hindi and Chhatisgarhi languages. As per the survey data for the Action Plan for PTGs for 12th Five Year Plan- 2012, their population in the Micro Project i.e., Chuktia Bhunjia Development Agency (CBDA) area in Sonabera plateau of Nuapara district is 2378.

Their villages are located in the sylvan hill ranges. They have linear pattern of houses, arranged in rows. The house consists of one large living room, an open verandah, a kitchen shed, a cattle shed and a goat pen. The houses are made up of wooden poles and mud walls, the roof thatched with wild grass. The kitchen separately built at a little distance is the most sacred place for them and they entertain the belief that their ancestral spirits dwells in there. No unrelated person, not even the daughter of the family, especially after her marriage is allowed to enter into kitchen. Consequent upon the defilement of the kitchen it is leveled to the ground and the roof is burnt and a kitchen is built anew.

* Unpublished article (2000), updated in 2015

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Men wear hand-woven clothes, *dhoti* and *gamuchha* and women wear sari. The women adorn themselves with ornaments of brass, aluminum, silver and imitation ornaments and put on tattoo marks.

The Chuktia Bhunjias are settled agriculturists and depend on minor forest collections. Rice is their principal crop. Besides, they cultivate pulses, oil seeds and vegetables. Due to lack of regular market and communication facilities the middlemen exploit them.

The shrine of *Sunadei* - their supreme deity is located at the heart of the Sonabera village. The Chuktia Bhunjia worship *Sunadei*, *Budharaja*, *Dharanimata* and *Budhimai* for their wellbeing. Being influenced by Hinduism they worship Hindu gods and goddess like, *Siva*, *Jagannath*. *Bhudha raja* and *Sunadei* are their main village deities. *Chaitra Jatra* is their main festival. They also worship ancestral spirits, natural and supernatural objects. *Pujari*- the priest, *Chhatriya* - the umbrella holder, and *Katariya* - the animal sacrificer are their religious functionaries.

The tribe is divided into two exogamous moieties viz, *markam* (affines) and *netam* (kins). Each moiety is again split into a number of lineages (*barags*). They prefer cross-cousin marriage. A Chuktia can marry a Chinda Bhunjia following a rite called *dudh pani* in which an affine washes the mouth of the bride with milk. They observe birth pollution for six days. Pre-puberty rite, *kundabera*, a ritual of arrow marriage is significant for the maiden. It is celebrated for a group of girls of the same age-set. No girl can marry before that. They bury the dead and observe death rituals on the third day and organize mortuary feast. The maternal uncle plays a vital role in all the life cycle rituals. Their village council is called *bhunjia baithki*. *Siyani* is the headman of the village and *Bada majhi* is the chief adjudicator of the inter-village council called *kuraha*.

CHUKTIA BHUNJIA*

*A. B. Ota*¹

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Socio-Cultural Identity

The Bhunjia is a numerically small and little known tribe of Orissa belonging to the Proto-Australoid racial group. The name 'Bhunjia' signifies one who lives on the soil. It is derived from the word 'bhum', the earth and 'ia', 'depend on'. The Bhunjia speak a mixed dialect of Baiga and Chhattisghari. The tribe is divided into two sections, Chuktia Bhunjia and Chinda Bhunjia. The former represents the one particularly vulnerable Tribal Group (PTG). The latter section is perhaps of mixed 'Holva' and 'Gond' descent, and considers them as the autochthones of hills of Sunabeda Plateau. As per 2007 survey, population of the Chuktia Bhunjia in the CBDA, Sunabeda Micro Project area was 2269 (Male 1124 and Female 1145). The growth rate among them during the period 2001-2007 was 3.96 per cent. The sex ratio is 1018 females per 1000 male. The literacy among them was 18.77 per cent, (28.55 per cent for males and 9.17 per cent for females).

The Chuktia Bhunjia socio-cultural identity is distinct with their sacred kitchen-shed, a small one, built a little away from other rooms and enclosed around to guard it from the touch of any outsider including their married daughter. If any outsider touches the kitchen shed, it is set on fire and razed down to the ground. Until a new shed is built, the food is cooked in a makeshift kitchen in an enclosed/ open space.

The women do not use any under garment but wear only saris. They use necklace made of beads and coil, brass and glass bangles, anklets and ear-rings made of either aluminum or silver. The women-folk comb their hairs in a very decent manner and dress the hair into a massive bun at the back of the head by using a bulky tassel and fixing pins into it to keep the bun in position. Tattoo

* Published in the Photo Handbook on Chuktia Bhunjia, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar, 2010

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marks add to the body beauty of women. Over generations women both young and old used to beautify their arms and hands with tattoo marks of different designs. Currently the younger generation under the influence of modernization has become disheartened to have such tattoo marks.

The men mainly wear a piece of cloth and the affluent group wears under wear and shirts. As religious injunctions from Supreme deity, 'Sunadei' the tribesmen do not use tiles for roofing, cots for sleeping and *dhenki* for husking grains.

Settlement

The settlements of the Chuktia Bhunjia vary in size ranging from 8-10 households to 50-60 households. The village boundary is guarded by many Gods and Goddesses who protect the village from the infiltration of evil spirits. The Chuktia Bhunjia houses are arranged in a peculiar way, two or more households taking a wide open space build their individual houses there. A Bhunjia house, generally has three huts, the biggest one serves as the living-cum-store room, the second hut built adjacent to it by its side is used as the cattle-shed and the third one in the front, is the kitchen.

The house is made of mud and thatched with wild grass. It is devoid of door, except the living room and kitchen-shed. The floors are plastered with either cow dung or red earth and the walls with red and white soil. The walls of most of the Bhunjia houses are painted with floral and animal designs.

Habitat

Up in the hill ranges of Gatibeda amidst picturesque physical setting lives the primitive tribe, Chuktia Bhunjia, in the Sunabeda Plateau, which forms an important part of Khariar ex-Zamindari in the erstwhile Kalahandi (now Nuapada) district of Orissa. In this plateau, the home of the Bhunjia, lies between 21°25' North and 21°30' North Latitude. Sunabeda plateau lies in the westernmost series of hill ranges in which the Hill Bhunjia settlements are situated. Sunabeda village lying at the center of the plateau is at 3000 ft above the mean sea level.

A road of 35 Kms crosses Sundar River at Vela village and runs through a series of high hill ranges and hill streams and connects the Sunabeda village with Komna block headquarters on the Bhawanipatna -Nuapada State highway in the plains. Besides, there are a few carts tracks and foot paths running in different directions from Sunabeda villages used by people for marketing and visiting sacred centers.

The habitat's sylvan forest surroundings and wildlife sanctuary enriched with beauty with a number of waterfalls and two sulphurous hot springs enchant the tourists. The forest is rich with a variety of wild animals, like buffalo, leopard, bear, tiger, wild boar, hyena, chital, barking deer and dog. Among the birds, pea-

fowl, partridge, myna, bulbul are the main species. Besides, reptiles, like Indian python, cobra and some types of krait are seen. The forest is mainly of northern tropical dry mixed deciduous type. Its vegetation includes Sal, Mahul, Teak, Bija, Sahaj, Dharua, Haldu, Sisoo, Kendu and Harida trees. The main forest produce includes timber, logs, planks and poles, charcoal, firewood, bamboos, *kendu* leaves, marybolans, *mahua* seeds, *sal* seeds, *siali* fibres and leaves, *simuli* cotton, soap nuts, gums, resins, roots and tubers, fruits, flowers and medicinal plants and herbs. The household belongings comprise mats (Champ), earthenware pots, mortar and pestle, stone grinder, umbrellas (Mayur) and some agricultural, hunting and fishing implements, fishing traps (Chapa), digging sticks, sickles (Hansia) and axe (Tangia). Besides these, they have cooking utensils, cloths and baskets and bags for storing food-stuffs and forest produce.

Food & Drinks

Rice is the staple food of the Chuktia Bhunjia. Sun-dried rice is mostly consumed. They also eat maize, *bajara* and minor millets, pluses and vegetables, like papaya, pumpkin, brinjal, sweet potato, mustard and other oil seeds. Various preparations of millets and vegetables cooked with rice gruel are their food items. Mahua flower is their favorite food as it is delicious and nutritious. They fry the flowers and make them jelly- ball and store them for future use. Both men and women are non-vegetarian and teetotalers. Occasionally, they eat meat of the animals which they rear, sacrifice and hunt; they also consume egg and fish. Women are forbidden to take chicken and pregnant women refrain from taking sacrificial meat. Both men and women drink tea. Chewing tobacco powder is very popular among the Bhunjia males. Men smoke tobacco and country *biri* or cigarette. Many kinds of roots and tubers, fruits, flowers, etc. collected by them supplements their food requirements. The bamboo shoots (Karadi) are their favourite food stuff. An adult takes two meals a day, one in themed-day and the other in the evening just after the sun set. There is no such time limit for the children who take food number of times.

Livelihood

The economic life of the Chuktia Bhunjia is subsistence oriented. Agriculture is their mainstay. They pursue wetland cultivation in small chunks as well as practice shifting cultivation which they called Bewar. In Bewar cultivation they use labour co-operatives. The groups of volunteer workers are hosted with a feast on the workday but no payment is made to them. In the Bewar field they grow minor millets, like *ragi*, *suan*, *guji* etc. and pulses and vegetables like *biri*, *kandula*, *jhudung* (beans), brinjal etc. and *ramtial* (oil seed). They cultivate minor millets, such as *bajara* and *janha*, cucumber and mustard in *bari* lands (kitchen garden). Paddy is cultivated in the plain wet lands through broadcasting and transplanting (Dahi) method. Bullocks and buffaloes are used for drawing plough and cart and harvesting. Very few number of progressive farmers availing dug well scheme now are able to grow cash crops like sugarcane and vegetable- such

as banana, tomato, cabbage and chilly. Besides agriculture, they practice other economic pursuits, like hunting, gleaning, animal husbandry, fishing and wage earning. Animal husbandry is not very popular among them though they domesticate cow, bullock, goat, sheep, buffalo, dog, fowl, pigeon and parrot.

They are used to natural grazing of livestock in the forest. They depend on forest for grazing cattle, goats, sheep and buffaloes. While parrots are talking friends to Chuktia, the goats and fowls are reared by them mainly for sacrificial purpose and often for sale for meeting contingent expenses. Though not expert in fishing, they catch fish occasionally from the reservoirs and streams nearby the village by using *thapa*, *singa*, bow and arrow and also by intoxicating the fish with the food particles (*keukanda*), the intake of which makes the fishes senseless. The local varieties of fishes are, like *seul*, *bambi*, *magura*, prawn, *rohi*, etc. which they catch, consume and often sale. They mostly collect fire wood and transport those on head-load and collect wild grass and prepare brooms for their own use and often for sale. The Chuktia Bhunjia collect bamboo from the forest cut the bamboo into slits and prepare *singha*, fishing tools, baskets for storing grains and frames of bamboo for use in houses and fence.

Social Life

Socially the Chuktia Bhunjias are divided into two exogamous moieties, the Netam (a group of consanguineal relatives) and Markam (a group of affinal relatives). Every moiety is sub-divided into number of Barags and each Barag has got a specific designation as per the ritual duties of the assigned deity. The Netam moiety has as many as ten Barags and Markam moiety has nine Barags. A Barag consists of a number of families with blood relation. As a rule moiety and Barag are exogamous and thus, non-intermarrying groups.

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

A group of girls from all the families of a Chuktia Bhunjia village at the age of about ten undergo pre-puberty rite (Kundabera) at a time. A girl younger in age puts palm leaf caps on the girls' heads and takes them to the nearby river for a ceremonial bath. Then all the girls return home and walk seven times around an arrow fixed on the ground which is followed by a feast arranged for the guests and relatives. Unless Kundabera is celebrated, no girl marries and once she undergoes this ritual, she is treated at par with adult woman and observes all restrictions.

Marriage

After menarche, the unclean girl is confined for a week in one room. On the seventh day, she anoints turmeric paste mixed with *mahua* oil and takes bath in river and then goes to her mother's brother's house, where she cooks food in a brass pot in a new hearth made in the kitchen shed. Like Kundabera, this rite is necessary before a girls' marriage. Incestuous relationship is tabooed among the Chuktia Bhunjias. Marriage (*byhaghar*) is believed in their society as a union of man and woman for procreative and economic purposes. Adolescent as well as cross-cousin marriage is prevalent among them. A man can marry either his father's sister's daughter or his mother's brother's daughter. Monogamous marriage is the most common among the types of marriage. Besides, marriage by exchange, elopement, levirate and sororate are some of the types of marriages prevalent among the Chuktia Bhunjia. The marriage process is very simple and inexpensive and the rite is not elaborate. Marriage takes place in the bride's father's house and it is solemnized there by walking around the sacred post.

Dinwari, the traditional priest, conducts the marriage rites. In the case of a marriage between members of Chuktia and Chinda sections of the Bhunjia tribe, a *dudh-pani* rite is observed in which an affine washes the mouth of the bride with milk before she is taken in as a member of the groom's group. They do not have any custom of bride price. Divorce is socially permitted in their society. In Chuktia Bhunjia society, pregnancy indicates rebirth of an ancestor, which may be a boon or a bane. A woman in carrying stage observes restrictions, like not to touch dead body and not to go to burial ground, not to do hard work and forbidden to take sacrificial meat. An elderly woman of her lineage helps in the delivery and cut umbilical cord with an arrow head.

Death Rite

The dead body is given a clean bath and covered with a new piece of white cloth. Then it is carried to the burial ground on a bamboo frame. At the burial ground the nephew of the deceased anoints turmeric paste in the face of the corpse before it is buried and stones are piled over. On the third day of the death all the relations of the family are invited for the mortuary feast. On this occasion the nephew sprinkles cow milk all over the house, throws away all the used earthen ware pots and cooks food in the new pots. The eldest son of the deceased is shaved by the nephew. There after he puts on a new cloth and takes the cooked food in three leaf cups to the burial ground. There after the relatives are fed.

After death ritual it is believed that the abode of Dumba, spirit of a married dead find place in the kitchen shed. Unlike Dumba, Mirchuka, the spirit of the unmarried dead represents a wooden pole fixed to the ground in the courtyard of the house. The Dumba and Mirchuka are worshipped by head/elderly person

of the household by offering coconut, milk and ghee for happy and prosperous life and wellbeing of the household.

Religious life

The Chuktia Bhunjia worship many gods and goddesses. Their supreme deity is known as Sunadei. She is installed in a shrine at the village Sunabeda. Three ritual functionaries, like Pujari, Chhatriya and Katariya are associated with the worship of the Sunadei. The Pujari is the ritual head in the worship of Sunadei, who offers food and prayer. While the Chhatriya holds the umbrella open at the time of worship and the Katariya sacrifices the animal. The main worship takes place on Dasahara in the month of September-October in which all the Bhunjias of 48 villages gather at Sunabeda and worship the deity. Duck and parrots are sacrificed. If properly appeased, she brings rain and prosperity to the village and villagers and blesses the barren women with children. Besides, each *barag* has a specific deity and based on the worship of that deity the designation and nomenclature of the *barag* is derived. For example the people belonging to *barag*, Matihar worships earth goddess known as Maiti (earth) in the months of September-October by offering duck, fowl and pig for bumper crop. The Bada Majhi worships Dharani deity in November-December and sacrifices animals for preventing illness of all kinds, particularly fever and small pox and to drive away all wild animals and snakes and save people from danger. They also worship many Hindu Gods and Goddesses which is a recent phenomenon.

Fairs, Festivals and Entertainment

The Chuktia Bhunjia observes three annual fairs and festivals on the occasions, like Dasahara, seed sanctification and Mahua collection, which are related with their livelihood and socio-physical wellbeing. A 15-day long festival is held in the month of October-November during Dasahara at the shrine of Sunadei. Every day a lamp is kept burning in the shrine of the Sunadei. On the 15th day of the festival which witnesses a large gathering of people from far and near to see the burning lamp brought to the abode of the Linga (phallic symbol of Lord Siva) under the big and old Banyan tree and participate in the function. The specialty of the Banyan tree is that it stands on the rocks without much anchorage of the props and roots, and thus considered sacred.

Another festival is observed under the Banyan Tree in the month of March-April, which also attract large gathering of the devotees of the plateau. The specialty of the festival is that for the first time in the year of *dahi* cultivation (shifting cultivation) the worship is performed on this occasion. A ritual for sanctification of seed is observed in which the Chhatriya of Sunabeda village provides 5 Kgs. of paddy seeds for the purpose. These seeds are sanctified before the deity through the ritual and distributed among all the Bhunjias to use as seeds in the *dahi* cultivation. The shrines of Budharaja and Verma deities are at Sosenga, a sacred and important place in the plateau for all the Bhunjia people. The place is

abounded by large number of *mahua* trees. The *mahua* harvest festival of Chuktia has a forest and seasonal background. The Bhunjia people of the plateau assemble at this place in March and April to sing devotional songs relating to the deities. The principal priests, like Majhi and Chhatriya worship them. Mahua flowers, bucks, fowls and wine are offered to the deities for bumper *mahua* crop and good collection of *mahua* flower. After the festival the devotees along with their family members continue to stay there in leaf hutments for a month or so for collection of *mahua* flowers.

The women folk of Chuktia Bhunjia young and old alike enjoy all the fairs and festivals through dance, songs and music. Towards the preservation and promotion of tribal culture, the participation of Chuktia Bhunjia people in the Annual Adivasi Exhibition is a very recent phenomenon. The theme pavilion set up by SCSTRTI on the eve of Annual Adivasi Exhibition 2009 at Bhubaneswar displayed the Chuktia Bhunjias' material culture.

A Chhuktia Bhunjia had the privilege to welcome Hon'ble Chief Minister of Orissa to see the replica of his hut, art and artifacts in Adivasi Exhibition 2009 at Bhubaneswar. The game of cock's fights in the weekly market is a great pleasure for most of the Chuktias. The winning possibilities in this game for the cock owners and the spectators attract a large gathering and most of them love and enjoy the gambling through the cock fights.

Traditional Community Councils

Political organization of the Bhunjias comprises of village council and the inter-village council. Each Bhunjia village is an independent socio-political unit having its own village council and a group of traditional leaders. The traditional village council comprises a corporate body of elder male members called Bhal-bhai. The traditional office bearers, like Pujari, Chhatriya, Katariya and the eldest male members of all barges are bonafide members of the village council. The council does not meet regularly. Generally the women are not allowed to participate in the meeting of the council of elders but they are summoned as parties to the disputes and as witness. The council settles disputes relating to matters, like quarrels, breach of taboos, inheritance of property and it is confined to the members of the village only. The decision of the Council is based on consensus. It is always impartial and binding upon both the parties. The cases, like suicide, homicide, theft and damage of public property are decided in the court of law. The delegates of the Council of elders of all the concerned villages form the inter-village Council. The Chairman, the Chief spokesman of the inter-village council is known as Kurha. It settles disputes of all concerned villages and villagers in special meetings arranged for the purpose. Previously the *Makadam* was acting as the ex-officio Khura for 84 Bhunjia villages. Important cases which cannot be settled at village council level are referred to the inter-village council. The remarkable changes in the village socio-political structure of the tribe are the abolition of the Zamindari system and a switch over from a system of traditional

political organization to a well-defined democratic system of statutory political institution. After introduction of Panchayati Raj system, there is co-existence of both the system, the Bhala-bhai and Panchayatraj Institution in the Chuktia Bhunjia villages. Consequent upon the introduction of the Panchayati Raj Institutions, the traditional system is declining and elected peoples representatives have assumed their roles with reservation for women. However, both the systems co-exist in cooperation rather than contradiction.

Change and Development

Change is inevitable. In course of time, the Chuktia Bhunjia society and habitat have undergone many changes. The frequent visits of Forest officials to the Sambaed area, construction of forest bungalow and setting up a Micro Project (Cahokia Bunkie Development Agency) in the year 1993-94 by Government of Orissa with financial assistance from Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India for the total development of the Chuktia Bhunjia (PTG) and the conservation of the forest resources in to a Wildlife Sanctuary for preservation of wild life in the plateau have brought forth changes into the lives of the Chuktia Bhunjia. The development interventions, like construction of the village roads, installation of tube wells and digging of sanitary wells, irrigation tanks etc, initiated by the Gram Panchayat in the 90s have now been intensified and widened by the Chuktia Bhunjia Development Agency (CBDA), Sunabeda. Due to the restriction of Forest Officers, Dahi cultivation has been banned causing a great loss of food grain to the people. Development interventions by the Chuktia Bhunjia Development Agency (CBDA), Sunabeda has brought forth socio-economic development and effected creation of critical infrastructure in the villages. The functionaries of CBDA have been playing a catalytic role in bringing total development among the Chuktia Bhunjias. After construction and improvement of roads, the boon of development through the CCD plan 2007-08 implemented by CBDA, Sunabeda made the villages in the Sunabeda plateau accessible throughout the year and also the Chuktia Bhunjia people were provided with gainful employment through the construction works.

The Chuktia Bhunjia considered their life in feudal dispensation (Ex-Zamindari) was better as they used to do Bewar and Dahi cultivation freely and grow *ragi* plentifully. Then the plateau was inhabited mostly by them with a few families of Gond and Paharia tribes. Immigration of people, firstly like Gond and Paharia (Kamara) and then Kulta and other castes in to the plateau affected Dahi/Bewar land alienation among the Chuktia Bhunjia. Reversely, the Chuktias' contact with Kulta caste people was a boon for the former as they had learnt the advantages of the schooling and modern farming practices from the latter.

Educational development programmes for the Chuktia Bhunjia children has been a priority of the CBDA. It has made special efforts towards promotion of pre-primary education for the pre-school children at villages. This has been helping the Chuktia children in enrolment at Residential Ashram Schools for

education. Especially, the establishment of a Residential Educational Complex at village Saleipada and its functioning in the year 2008 by engaging the Chuktia Bhunjia High School passed youths as contractual teachers and non-teaching staff under CCD Plan for promotion of primary education of as many as 200 Chuktia Bhunjia girls seems to be quite useful for the plateau dwellers. Excavations of tanks with the financial assistance by CBDA under CCD Plan help increasing of the water level of the surface and check the soil erosion and provide irrigation facility to the Chuktia Bhunjia fields, besides generating employment and income. Continuing efforts in scientific farming through land development, irrigation facilities, like dug wells, check dams and extension of field channel for assured flow irrigation and supply of agricultural inputs to the Chuktia Bhunjia farmers and undertaking crop demonstration programmes for them have brought revolutionary changes in the agrarian activities of the Chuktia Bhunjia and promoted their economic empowerment.

With the development interventions of CBDA, Sunabeda, some Chuktia Bhunjia progressive farmers have developed fruits and vegetable gardens, development of papaya, banana, and vegetables cultivation under horticulture programmes that has helped to extend motivation to the Chuktia Bhunjia farmers by provision of financial assistance, inputs, technical guidance, etc. for diversification of farm activities through undertaking cash crops for employment and additional income generation. Now, they grow cash crops, like sugarcane, fruits and vegetables, such as banana, papaya, brinjal, tomato, cabbage, cauliflower, and chilly, etc. in a sustainable way.

The attitude of Chuktia Bhunjia people towards cooperation, skill up-gradation training and value addition to MFPs and goat and sheep rearing through the financial assistance in a group mode efforts of CBDA help promote women SHGs, resulting in social and economic empowerment and self-reliance of women folk. Breaking the traditional beliefs, the Chuktia Bhunjia people have used *khapar* tiles in the roofs of their houses. The importance of the traditional elites has been reduced with the implementation of 73rd Amendment of the Constitution relating to Gram Sabha and Gram Panchayat under the Panchayati Raj system. Previously, the Sarpanch of the statutory Gram Panchayat was selected from among the Chuktia Bhunjias, now the post of Sarpanch has gone to the hands of Gond and other tribes. The ceremonial hunting and free use of forest produce for household consumption have been checked in the forest core area covered by the Wild Life Sanctuary. Amidst the change, there is also persistence, like the shrines of Sankarji Linga under the big banyan tree and the shrine of Sunadei, the supreme Deity of Chuktia Bhunjia and the worship and month long *mahua* collection festivals at Sosengia and that confirm no or little changes, particularly in religious activities and festivities without compromising the socio-economic development.

SOCIAL ORGANISATION OF THE CHAKTIA BHUNJIAS OF KALAHANDI *

*Siba Prasad Rout*¹

The Bhunjias are one of the little known tribes of Orissa. Russell 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 where from 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 setting 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 analyzing their socio-cultural traits, but provides baseline data which may give clues to ethnologists to explore more and more about the details of Bhunjia culture.

The study was conducted in two Chuktia 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 migration to different places. The notable account on Bhunjias given by Russell and

* Published in ADIBASI, Vol. IX, No.1, 1967-68, pp.50-58

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Hiralal(1916) in "The Tribes and Castes 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 called Chaktias, but the plains dwellers are called Chinda. Furthermore, the Chaktias strictly observed 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 over 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. 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 became husband and wife and begot children. From them were born the Ganda (untouchables), who are the eldest brothers, next to them the Bhunjias and other tribals, and at last were born the ancestors 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 tells 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 Netam Bhunjia living in Sunabeda) and thus became Bandhu (Markam) to the Netam Bhunjias.

The Bhunjia 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 abandoned and settled agriculture is widely practiced, but the economy is no doubt substantiated by collection of roots, fruits, greens and tubers from the jungle, wage earning by 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 have gable shaped roofs 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 / 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 going 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 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 predominant type, but cases of extended families comprising of parents and their married son or sons are also occasionally met with. The frequencies 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 percent were nuclear families; 13.4 percent, extended families and only 1.3 percent, joint families. 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 together under the control of their father, but as soon as the

father dies the 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 breakup 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 lineages is found. 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 line age 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 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 Bhunjia tribe into two exogamous sections (moieties), 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. Chhatria
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 groups. There were only Netam Bhunjias and the Markam Bhunjias, and

the Markams originated only after the Netams gave their daughters in marriage to seven Gond brothers.

Village

Bhunja villages on hills are homogenous except that the Bhunjias give shelter to a few Pana or Ganda families in their villages. The Panas beat drums in Bhunja rituals and to commemorate their feasts and festivals. In some villages the Bhunjias live along with the Gonds who are supposed to be their brother's 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 worshiping materials and the rituals are performed communally in the main ward. In each village, are installed stones representing Mati *deota* 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 no. in cases of minor quarrels and conflicts, the village leaders assemble to discuss and decide the matter.

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

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 neighbouring Madhya Pradesh (now Chhatishgarh).

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 penalized.

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, Kholarajia, 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 centers. 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 *bandhu* washes the mouth of the bride with milk before she is taken in as a member of the groom's group. Except for 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 strictly abide by their traditions and customs. They consider it 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 castes 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 molasses sold by a Ganda vendor. 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 bridegroom and is accepted as a member of the new society. Likewise, it is the custom among the Bhunjias to perform arrow-marriage (*kandabara*) for their girls before they attain puberty. When a girl becomes 10 to 12 years old, the parents give 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 *kandabara* 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 born 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. Russell and Hiralal (1916) 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 precautions to free themselves from social pollution. They doubt the chastity of their own girls and as a precautionary measure perform *kandabara* 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. Russell 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 the welfare schemes to promote female education be successful when the social norm of the Bhunjias does not allow their girls to remain and eat outside their own house after they attain ten years of 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 to pursue her education further. The Bhunjias apprehended that misfortunes may befall on her parents and on the village lest she remains away from home and continues her studies after 10 year 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.

CULTURAL CONSERVATISM AMONG THE BHUNJIA*

*Ch. P.K. Mohapatra*¹

The iniquitousness of cultural change is no more a hypotheses for study in a given culture. It has almost assumed the position of an axiom. The wheels of modern civilization which have been set agog by developing technologies during the present century have penetrated into the regions, hither to considered, the most inaccessible. As a result, criteria of homogeneity, isolation and simpler technology can seldom be attributed together to any single community, at present, which may be considered as primitive.

The students of change have found out methodological tools to deal with the process or the dynamics of change. Attempts have been made to visualize change against the spatial as well as time dimensions apart from the details of the agencies of change.

In contrast to the phenomena of change, the literature on which abound, there remains yet another phenomenon which has attracted attention of very limited number of scholars interested in the analysis of the dynamics of change. It is this phenomenon which in the face of rapid cult change, provides stimuli for the members of a particular society to continue their traditional way of life. This is "the phenomenon of cultural stability, a phenomenon which, in its psychological aspects, is called conservatism" (M.J. Herskovits).

Although we find highly developed methodological schemes to deal with the study of culture change, it is surprising to find that not even sufficient literature on the subject is listed for appreciation and appraisal of the problems of cultural conservatism. The problem is described as negatively oriented and as such difficult to deal with. It is also held that study of the problem of conservatism can be undertaken only when the field worker is present on the spot at the time of introduction of new element in a culture so as to be in a position to observe how it

* Published in ADIBASI, Vol.IX, No. 4, pp. 43 - 49, 1968

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is rejected or resisted. So far, historical documentation facts or testimony offered by members of a society has formed the main source of data for analysis.

In the present paper attempt has been made to draw information partly from historical sources along with testimony offered by Bhunjia themselves to corroborate the present force of conservatism at work. Besides, few of the institutions and traits have also been analyzed. It may be indicated that the term conservatism which implies resistance to change, while it is in process, may be significantly determined in particularly those cultures which are under the powerful impact of change either through innovations or inventions leading to the very struggle for existence of itself. This may not, however, imply that cultures undergoing a gradual process of changes do not manifest elements of conservatism. What is emphasized here is that methodologically, it may be easier to approach those cultures which are under the sway of complete assimilation with the donor cultures. Because the elements of conservatism are more pronounced here than that of others, so much so that they appear to be exaggerations unless viewed from psychic distance of the observer. Kroeber holds the view that "No matter how awkward an established system becomes it normally remains more practical to keep it by a better scheme. The wrench and cost of reformation are greater, or are felt to be greater, by each generation than the advantages gained". Reforms and changes are easy to be brought in technological aspect of a culture but it is difficult where institutions are involved. From the following accounts it will be evident as to how the Bhunjia have been under powerful impact of changes since many generation yet maintain their own identity by exhibiting conservatism in certain elements of their traditional culture which give meaning and continuity to their way of life.

The Tribe

The Bhunjia are a numerically small tribe of Orissa numbering as little as 2,375 souls according to 1961 census. Their habitat lying at an altitude of 2,000 feet on the forested Sunabeda plateau of Kalahandi district is an extension of the central plateau which was once inhabited by Kolarian tribes and subsequently witnessed the large incursion of Gonds who came from south. The only written record about this tribe has been made by Russell and Hiralal (1916). The history of their racial origin has been a disputed one. The above mentioned authors hold the view that a section of the Bhunjia originated as a result of marriage between Gonds and Holvas. Field enquiry did not reveal any such fact to corroborate the view although definite connections between Gond and Bhunjia could be traced in the history and myth of Bhunjia. The mythical origin is detailed below.

In Sunabeda area a 'Mathiar' or the worshipper of Goddess 'Maait' was living. A group of seven brothers of Gonds came from west in search of wild games and shot a *sambhar* with arrow which ran for life and fell dead on the outskirts of village Sunabeda. The brothers followed and found the *sambhar* and

divided the meat into seven shares. Surprisingly, the shares became nine instead of seven. Each brother tried in turn to find to their great surprise that the same nine equal shares emerged invariably. They thought that somebody else must be staying nearby and called for him. The 'Mathiar' came and the eight shares were distributed. The brothers again shouted for the remaining unknown inhabitant to take the last share. Lastly a Gond came from Gatibeda village and shared the meat. Thus he is called 'Pat Dhurwa' or the Gond who came last. When the Gond brothers were there they saw seven young unmarried girls in the house of the Mathiar who were his daughters. The Gonds wanted to marry them. The Mathiar agreed under certain conditions that they have to leave their religion and custom and become Bhunjia and live in that territory. The Gonds agreed and became the Markam or 'Bandhu Barag' which was to have affinal relation with the 'Netam' group of clans of the Bhunjia.

The myth can be corroborated by historical record of events to the extent that during the distant past there was an incursion of Gonds into this plateau. The Gonds were a superior group, who not only brought under their sway large tracts of land and ruled over them but also influenced as well as got influenced by the numerous other communities during the passing of years. Hence inter-marriage with a smaller tribe and subsequent adoption of their culture on the part of the Gonds is nothing but a part of usual phenomena that took place in the central and southern belt of India before advent of British.

It is, however, not known as to what was that tribe in this particular case who established marriage relationships with the Gonds but it may be suggested that the 'Matia' was the earlier name for Bhunjia, both the terms implying origin from earth.

The Process of Culture Change

In the foregoing accounts it is found that the Bhunjia had their earliest contact with Gonds with whom they established marital alliances. That the Bhunjia eat food cooked by a Gond further corroborates the fact. Contact with the neighbouring Hindu castes must be ranked as next because on the plains down below on each side of the plateau Hindu villages ranging from small to very big are found. The Bhunjia, today, depends on the markets and stores for their daily necessities to a large extent. Their material culture has been enriched by introduction of complex implements and tools for various purposes. They cultivate their land in the way their Hindu neighbours do. Mustard and millet are grown on commercial basis and taken to the markets down below. Growing of tobacco extensively for own use as well as marketing indicate their expanded outlook on agricultural practices.

Their dress and hairstyle are nothing other than the local Hindus. They admit that they have been addicted to tea now days which not even known to the past generation. They visit Hindu festivals and enjoy Opera and other audio-visual

programs with utmost pleasure whenever they get the opportunity. There is always a flow of Hindu traders, merchants and other outsiders to Bhunjia villages.

With the introduction of 'Sunadevi' cult which has been incorporated fully in Bhunjia pantheon their religion has been greatly influenced by Hinduism. The myths of Bhunjia are full of names of Gods and Goddess who are described in Hindu mythology. Goddess Sunadevi who is worshipped with observance of elaborate festivals thrice a year attract not only Bhunjia but also Hindus from quite distant places like Komna in Orissa and places from M.P. side down the plateau.

The iconic figure of Sunadevi Goddess has been enshrined in a thatched temple constructed by the Bhunjia in their village. It is interesting to note that the traditional Goddess of Bhunjia, namely "Maait" is enshrined below a thorny tree without any shade and no iconic figure is developed for her by the Bhunjia. She is much less elaborately worshipped on various occasions. The Bhunjia, these days, install 'Tulsi Chaura' a cult represented by earthen structure over which a Tulsi is planted according to Hindu myth representing Goddess 'Vrundabati' sitting on the head of Lord Vishnu. This cult is introduced in Bhunjia religion which further corroborates that Hinduisation has been in process among the Bhunjia since many generations.

Elements of Conservatism

Amid bewildering array of cultural change in process among the Bhunjia it is interesting to note that certain elements are very rigidly adhered to by them. Mention may be made of the institution of ancestor worship which is observed not only with austerity but the place of worship is considered sacred, and a slight touch of the place by an outsider leads to complete demolition of the structure. The structure is no other than their own kitchen which is the abode of their revered ancestors. The placement of kitchen in the house site of Bhunjia is very carefully considered. It is always constructed away from any road or lane or bypasses to eliminate the possibility of touch by an outsider. Even inside the area of courtyard the kitchen is erected 10 to 15 yards apart from the main house where they sleep and work. The male member of a family are not always allowed to enter into the kitchen because they work outside and may not always be able to keep themselves clean before entering the kitchen. The women are, however, allowed to work in the kitchen after taking bath. During menstrual period they are strictly tabooed to enter the kitchen until the flow ceases. Thereafter, they are allowed to enter after taking bath. Till then, the husband or any of the consanguinal relation of the husband manages cooking inside the kitchen.

It is interesting to note that a daughter, soon after her marriage, is prohibited to enter or touch the kitchen as she loses her tie with her father's clan. When she visits her father's home, she is given with food grains and utensils to cook outside and eat.

According to the Bhunjia the kitchen is the abode of their ancestors. The cult of ancestor worship is thus one of the important features of Bhunjia religion. The dead ancestors are considered to be the guardian spirits of the Bhunjia who look to the family wellbeing and prosperity and guide them in their day to day work. An elaborate rite is observed on the occasion of bringing the spirit of the dead of family who was a married person and died a natural death. The rite is known as 'Budh' and is performed on completion of one year of the death or can be deferred to the 2nd, 3rd or 4th year. If it cannot be held on the fourth year then a gap of five years is given to hold the rite on the ninth year. It is an expensive rite which tells upon the economic status of a person. Nevertheless, the rite is thought to be indispensable for no social or religious function can be observed in that particular family where the death has occurred. On the eve of the ceremony all the affinal and consanguinal kins, are invited although the consanguinal kins take active part in the ceremony. There is a special ceremony called 'pithpoda' which is observed to invoke the dead ancestor and offerings are made to satisfy them.

There is another element of conservatism finds its expression at the time of marriage between a bride from 'Chinda' section and a groom from the 'Chaktia' section and not the *vice versa*. In this connection it is necessary to know about the distinction between the two sections of the Bhunjia. The 'Chinda' section of the Bhunjia lives on the plains down the hills above which the 'Chaktia' Bhunjias live. The 'Chinda' or those who are the more acculturated group and have been considerably influenced by the local Hindu culture and are no more observing the traditional religious rites with as much austerity as the Chaktias. Their kitchens are no more so much sacred as that of the Chaktias. They eat food from Hindu clean castes. They worship most of the Hindu gods and goddesses of the local area. The 'Chaktias' have however, continued to keep marriage relationship with them. On eve of marriage the bride of a ChindaBhunjia has to undergo certain special rites being poured with "DudhPani" (milk water) so as to be cleaned and allowed to enter the sacred kitchen of the Chaktia Bhunjia thereafter.

There is another element which is clearly indicative of conservatism among the Bhunjia. The Bhunjia do not eat food or drink water from the hands of Brahmin who, according to Hindu caste hierarchy are the only privileged caste to worship the various gods and goddesses of Hindu religion. It is only Brahmins who cook and make offerings to various gods and goddesses. In this context it is interesting to note that the Bhunjia do not eat food cooked by a Brahmin or drink water from his hands. The reason may be adduced to the fact that the Bhunjia being racially an admixture of the Gonds, retain the Gond conception about Hindu Castes, especially Brahmins. The true Gonds who have not come under the sway of Hinduisation as compared to the Hinduised Raj Gonds, consider it polluting to eat food from Brahmin whom they think to be inferior in social status.

There are many other instances of conservatism with regard to the various religious and social institutions. An analysis of these may be made here for purposes of precision.

Conservatism vrs. Change

It has been observed that the Bhunjia have been in contact with other communities, especially, the Gonds since time immemorial. Other Hindu castes have also been in contact through trade and agriculture. The material culture of Bhunjia has been greatly enriched as a result of culture contact with these communities. The religion has also been influenced by Hindus. The result of change has been conspicuously observed in the separation of a section of Bhunjia called 'Chinda' who have almost adopted Hindu way of life. In face of such changes which have been in process since long the retaining of traditional way of life has been a problem for the section called Chaktias. The elements of conservatism are nothing but "stubborn addiction to folkways, the established and the habitual. Some of it is due to societies getting enmeshed in their institutions and not seeing a way out..." (Kroeber). If the Bhunjia are considered a tribe with their distinct cultural traits it is only the manifestation of conservatism in certain traditional institutions through which one can understand the distinctiveness.

Their cult of ancestor worship is based upon their sole dependence upon their ancestor for their well-being in spite of the fact that the Hindu goddess Sunadevi is elaborately worshipped. The females when go to markets or outside, cook their own food to eat instead of purchasing cooked food. This is because the females are largely responsible for up-keeping the sanctity of the kitchen. The males are usually not allowed to enter the kitchen off and on.

Avoidance in taking food from Brahmins indicates the true tribal spirit of Bhunjia based on the idea of ethnocentrism which is characteristic of unsophisticated cultures. Outsiders including Brahmins are considered socially low in spite of having high social status in Hindu society. The 'Chinda' Bhunjia, however, regard Brahmins superior and do not hesitate to take food from them. It has earlier been mentioned that the 'Chaktias' perform 'Dudh-pani' ceremony while marrying a Chinda bride although they are a section of the same tribe. In this case the attitude of conservatism is more pronounced in spite of the fact that they have continued to maintain marriage relationship with the Chinda section. It is a matter of further intensive research to find out the factors responsible for such social union. What is important here is that a specific purificatory ceremony is observed to permit such a bride to be socially acceptable. As mentioned above a married woman is largely responsible for up keeping the sanctity of the kitchen which is the sacred abode of their ancestral spirits. It is for this reason that the 'Dudh-pani' ceremony is considered indispensable for a Chaktia groom while marrying a Chinda bride.

THE BHUNJIA OF THE SONABERA PLATEAU AND STRATEGY FOR THEIR DEVELOPMENT *

*Prasanta Kumar Mohanty*¹

According to 1981 census the Scheduled Tribe population in Orissa is 595,067 i.e. 22.43 per cent of the total population of the State. There are as many as 62 categories of Scheduled Tribes living in varied cultures. Now their arena is not at all separate from the non-tribal habitation. But they are unique in their culture and life style. These tribal communities form socially independent groups in contrast to their non-tribal counterparts. Due to backwardness in economy and education, they are under-developed and automatically isolated.

Bhunjia, a small tribe having a population of 7,410 (1971 Census) found mostly in the Kalahandi district of Orissa where their number exceeds 5,000. Besides, they are found in its adjacent Raipur district of Madhya Pradesh. The etymological meaning of the term is "growing out of land" and the Bhunjia think themselves as the fore-runners of those who landed on the earth first.

Russell and Hiralal (1916) have mentioned in "the Tribes and Castes of Central Provinces in India" that the Bhunjias have originated from the union between the Gond and the Holva. But lacking any circumstantial evidence regarding the authenticity, it is very difficult to ascertain this view point. However, there lies a lot of similarities between the Gonds and the Bhunjias, taking into account their physique, economic life, social organization and religious practices.

The Bhunjia of Kalahandi (undivided) districts are living in Sonabera plateau which is situated at a height of 3,000 feet from the sea-level. It lies roughly between 21.25' north to 21.30' north latitude and 82.35' east longitude. Living in the plateau, the Bhunjias regard themselves to be the autochthones of the area and from this cradle land their kin-members have diffused.

As per the 1971 census their population is 7,410 in Orissa. Out of which Kalahandi district tops the list having 5,673 Bhunjias followed by Koraput district where they number 1635.

* Published in ADIBASI, Vol. XXVII, No. 2&3, 1987, pp. 38-40

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The tribe has been divided into two main sections namely the Chukutia Bhunjia and the Chinda Bhunjia, the former represents the original section of the tribe and later the acculturated section of the tribe. The Chukutia sections are ubiquitously found in the adjoining area of the Sonabera plateau and the Chinda Bhunjias are found scattered in the plains with other ethnic groups.

A mythical legend focuses that at one point of time the Bhunjia of a particular area were all blood-relations and there was no group with whom to have affinal relationship. Time passed on. Once the Gonds came into that area accidentally and marriage relationship was established with them and that resulted two inter-marrying groups namely, *Markam* and *Netam*.

Hence, socially the tribe is divided into two exogamous moieties, the *Netam* & the *Markam*. The former stands for *Niji Banshi* (the consanguineal relatives) and the later stands for *Suraj Banshi* (the affinal relatives).

The Bhunjia possess a fairly muscular body with dark skin color. The stature varies from short to medium while a few cases of tall statures are found. They speak a dialect which is a mixture of Oriya and Chhatisgarhi.

The Bhunjia villages vary in size from as small as 7 to 10 households to as big as 50 to 60 households.

The most striking cultural land mark of the Bhunjia is their sacred kitchen-shed which is built apart from other huts of a household and is fenced around so that no outsider can have any physical contact with the shed. In case by mistake anybody touches any part of it, the same is immediately set on fire and razed to the ground and a new one is built. For that period the food is cooked in an enclosed space until a new shed is built up. The kitchen-shed is one of the sacred places and no woman during her menses is allowed to enter into it. Kitchen-shed continues to be held as a shrine.

The main and the supreme deity of the Bhunjias is *Sunadei*. She has imposed some restrictions on her devotees. Some of these restrictions are the use of tiles for roofing, the cots and beds for sleeping, the country husking lever for paddy husking and the wearing of blouse by the women.

The commensal restrictions and food taboos observed by both men and women keep them as clearly marked tribal community and help them in preserving their cultural distinctiveness and identity. They have been following these taboos so rigidly that any violation in any form will definitely bring malady and ill-harvest. One illustration here will clearly establish the fact.

That once the Forest Department decided to build an Inspection Bungalow at Sonabera village with a tiled roof. But the Bhunjias living there raised objection against it. But later on they were convinced that the building did not belong to them. So they co-operated with the work and the building construction was done with the tile roof.

The economic life of the tribe is very simple and of subsistence type. In order to maintain their subsistence they practice low land paddy cultivation and shifting cultivation in small patches. The produce from lands and the gleaning from the forest provide them just the bare minimum. Small land holdings and the primitive method of cultivation hinders them to prosper in the field of agriculture that resulted in their poor economic condition day by day. So whatever food one gets from all sources is less than that required for consumption. So the question of saving or surplus does not arise.

They are in the habit of carrying on shifting cultivation which is called *Bewar*, a term used by the Gonds of Madhya Pradesh for such type of agricultural practice. It is a co-operative practice i.e. the labour is available to each household without any payment. A particular piece of land is cultivated for three consecutive years after which it is kept fallow for 3 to 4 years and thereafter it is again taken up for growing crops.

The Bhunjias grow *bajra* (*Pennisetum typhoideum*), *janha* (*Sorghum vulgare*) and cucumber in the lands around their houses which are known as *Hari Jami* (Lands). These crops are followed by mustard, maize and beans which are grown in the same bare lands.

The local varieties of paddy which they grow are *Sankarai*, *Benskanthia*, *Dubraj* and *Jalli*. There are also other local varieties of paddy namely, *Setka*, *Kuli* and *Bairiguntha* raised by them which take a period of three to four months for harvesting. High yielding varieties of paddy crops are still unknown to them.

The paddy fields are more or less open to the ravages of wild animals. Unless they take pains to keep watch over their fields and drive away the animals, they can hardly expect to reap a good harvest. Untimely rain fall and forest also affect the growth of the plants, which result in poor harvest. They do not have any control over the parasites, weeds, insects and other pests which ruin the crops.

The study of the tribe is worth noting from two angles. One is related to cultural conservatism of the tribe and the taboos which perpetuate continuity of traditional cultural pattern and the other relates to the devising of a suitable strategy for the economic upliftment of the tribe. Now the anthropologists in action have not been interested in preserving the tribal communities as museum specimen for their anthropological study. Instead they are in searching for a suitable strategy and planning for their overall development using the ethnographic knowledge collected directly from the field.

The following suggestions may help in the changing the socio-economic conditions of the Bhunjias living in the plateau.

1. Input assistance of fertilizers will replace the cutting of bush and small shrubs and even rare species which are being dried, burnt and the ashes used in the field as manures.

2. Road communication is badly necessary to keep contact between the Bhunjias of the plateau and the nearest business center i.e. Komna and Khariar. So the dishonest middle men cannot take advantage of their simplicity in their economic transactions.
3. Road communication will help the Government and semi-Government officials to implement the developmental schemes and keep touch with the follow-up actions with the Bhunjia villages in the Sonabera plateau.
4. Disease is not uncommon to them. The blind beliefs and the religious dogmas will not medically help to diagnose the diseases and effect proper treatment. Without finding any agency for medical treatment the Bhunjias have to depend for their wellbeing upon their supreme Goddess *Sunadei* who acts as the custodian of their society being propitiated by worship and offerings. So a hospital or medical center of any type is necessary in the plateau so that, they will immediately get the medical treatment, which in long run will help to wean them out of blind beliefs and religious dogmas.
5. Literacy and education are the instrument of socio-economic change in the modern times. Through it people become articulate and capable of perceiving, interpreting, criticizing and finally transforming their society in a positive direction. But in the plateau, the existing educational facility leaves much to be desired. So proper educational facilities should be provided to the Bhunjias living in the plateau.
6. Taking the ignorance of the tribe many unscrupulous non-tribals have infiltrated into the plateau to carry on trade and farming at the cost of the simple and ignorant Bhunjias. The migrants are well equipped with modern technology of farming and animal husbandry as compared to the indigenous tribals of the plateau who are still in the pre-agricultural stage of development. Attempts should be made to keep away these migrants who are exploiting the Bhunjias knowingly and unknowingly.

The suitable measure for all-round development of the Bhunjias is to declare them as a Primitive Tribal Group (PTG) and the Sonabera plateau as one of the Scheduled Area of the State, which will consequently bring into force the tribal development administration to the Sonabera plateau in the interest of the indigenous tribal inhabitants.

Keeping the above facts in view, a location specific micro-project can be established in the plateau for the all-round development of the Bhunjia to enable them to enjoy an everlasting freedom from poverty, diseases and illiteracy.

FOLK KNOWLEDGE ON UTILITARIAN ASPECTS OF PLANTS: FINDINGS FROM CHUKTIA BHUNJIA AND GONDS IN SONABERA PLATEAU *

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What separates the ethnic communities in Odisha is their inexhaustible knowledge of plants, plant-animal interactions and the ethno-ecological perceptions on the nature and natural processes. This knowledge is based on utilitarian and cognitive aspects of their socio- cultural links with the surrounding natural world. In more subtle terms such knowledge systems are regarded as indigenous knowledge of communities which is a manifestation of their acute and continuous observation and interpretation of their habitat and surrounding.

Folk/ Indigenous Knowledge on Plants : Relevance and Perspectives

According to Brodt (2000), indigenous knowledge implies any knowledge produced by and /or distinctive to a particular culture group or any loosely defined group of resource users in a given area. ... As such, the term is synonymous with 'folk knowledge'. These definitions and their implied boundaries are intended rather loosely, in recognition of the fact that it is often difficult to determine in the field where one knowledge system ends and the other begins (Brodt, 1998, 2000).

Indigenous technical knowledge has become important for a sustainable management and conservation of the world's forest that has gained more and more attention. Indigenous means that something is originated locally and performed by a community or society in a specific place. It emerges as peoples' perceptions and

* Published in ADIBASI, Vol. XXXXIV, Nos.1&2, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar, 2014, pp.1-8

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experience in an environment at a given time in a continuous process of observation and interpretation in relation to the locally acknowledged everyday rationality and transcendental powers (Seeland, 2000).

Indigenous knowledge is not formally taught, but perceived in a particular context at a certain stage of the perceiver's consciousness that grows in the world of local events. Knowledge is to be called indigenous, if it is bound to local experiences and takes its local world perhaps not as the only one existing, but as the most relevant of all. Local knowledge, is an encompassing whole of what has been revealed to human perceptions in a particular place or region. There will always be local knowledge even if modern scientific knowledge invades a socio-cultural setting and challenges its local knowledge more or less effectively.

There are two views in context. Firstly, there is the idea that an environment can only be properly managed by its inhabitants and not by ultimately absent experts from outside. The go-on-travelling experts may know 'solutions' to environmental problems because they are not part and parcel of local setting. They do not live where they work for long or even for generations in a tight social cohesion and mutual dependence. Secondly, the technical experts who are trained in a western scientific rationality are more and more convinced that indigenous knowledge fits very well into a participating approach that involves people with their knowledge in the process of economic development. After decades of extension activities, now there has evolved awareness that modern global expertise has always to cope with autochthonous knowledge that is deeply woven into the social fabric of a local and particularly rural community within a transitional developing society. There is always so to speak a basic layer of knowledge in every community from times immemorial, which is a representation of a society in its typical natural surroundings. The wisdom and experience of generations reflect the way of life of their ancestors before one's own generation and one took over. Indigenous knowledge is a matter of continuity, although one's surrounding may change at a slower or quicker pace. It is a matter of social and cultural evolution in the background of an ancestral tradition.

Indigenous knowledge cannot be displaced because it is autochthonous empirical experience and only valid as a world in its place of origin. Authenticity means to know things from personal experience in places where they originate and thus experiencing them in their proper context. The modality, how tribal forest dwellers perceive things live with them and use them is a mode of appropriation that they may share with many other tribal all over the world. To collect them and use them for a network presumes that forest dwellers can anticipate what may be useful for them. It contradicts the principle that those who know and what is of local relevance to be known is part of the same environment.

Sooner or later, tribal communities respond to outside or social mainstream developments in conservationist, adaptationist or fundamentalist way. Then the question arises, whether indigenous knowledge is to be equated

with ecologically sound knowledge? There is, for e.g., an overall notion of cosmos in any tribal society that encompasses all physical, social and spiritual aspects of life in a form of animism or natural symbolism and ritualism. This does not mean that all interactions between physical aspects are known to rural people as interconnected in the sense of the term in natural science, 'ecological'. If one, however, understands ecology as 'to know about the interconnectedness between all forms of life as such', then indigenous knowledge can be called ecological. Yet, ecological does not necessarily mean that tribal forest dwellers care for a sustainable resource use - that is sustainability as emphasized in the recent western environmental discussions. Ecology should much more be understood as the reproduction of a cultural lifestyle that has been passed on and not as an economical rationale (*ibid*).

Shackeroff & Campbell (2007) citing references from many authors on importance of local peoples' knowledge on ecology presents that conservation researchers are approaching traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) with increased alacrity (Drew, 2005; Drew and Henne, 2006; Fraser, et al, 2006) recognizing its potential contributions to both understanding biological phenomena and the practice of protecting species and ecosystems. For example, fishery biologist and ecologists have recognized the need to engage with local knowledge holders, particularly when they are indigenous and/or have long ties to ecosystems, in order to fill in the gaps in our understanding of marine ecosystems (Pauli, 1995; Pitcher and Pauli, 1998) and to explore alternative approaches to management (Pitcher and Pauli 1998; Mc Goodwin, 2001; Berkes, 2003) engaging with TEK (and also with local ecological knowledge LEK) may indeed be a means for conservation researchers to link their efforts to the local, environmental and cultural contexts (Berkes, et.al.,2003). TEK 'is presumed here to constitute a "body" and a "system" of understanding and know-how that arise through time from a variety of individual and shared experiences and observations, mediated by culture, with regard to environmental factors, behavioural attributes and ecological dynamics' (*ibid*) It may also provide a much needed tool to help revamp environmental management practices (Acheson, 2005; McLeod and Leslie; *Forthcoming*). Thus, in response to growing interest in accessing traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) for conservation purposes, complexities involved in doing TEK research assumes relevance.

Forest represents a legacy and is a testimony to the evolution or migration of biological species; flora and fauna, in various societies. Forests, trees, and their products are managed by indigenous people who are knowledgeable about local consumption, in largely self-sustained rural communities often located in remote areas. To make use of these resources and manage them, indigenous knowledge of trees and forests encompasses locally available renewable resources and social and spiritual energies... What 'forest' and 'knowledge of forest' mean to members of any culture are reflections of their worldview and traditions, which vary according to their different stages of economic and technological development. This

knowledge goes beyond technical (i.e. botanical) knowledge, hunting skills, wood harvesting know-how or non-timber forest product usage (Seeland & Jena, 2008).

The acquisition of indigenous knowledge is generally guided by utilitarian considerations. It is neither shared equally among all of the inhabitants of a place nor is it a standardized and comprehensive account of *what is known*; sometimes it varies tremendously. Often gender specific knowledge separates what is known among people of the same area into different worlds. Indigenous knowledge is applied at the level of human senses – such as seeing, touching and feeling – as well as by remembering natural phenomena. To our knowledge, there is no record of indigenous people being interested in the traditional or local knowledge of another forest dwelling community. Knowledge for the sake of knowledge mostly does not exist in an indigenous community; curiosity – about flora, fauna or other natural phenomena that do not have any practical value – is rare (*ibid*).

There is always a fundamental basis of inherited knowledge in every community, a representative of the society in its typical geographical and climatic surroundings that is individually interpreted, modified and passed on for generations. The experience and knowledge of peoples' ancestors are generally passed down orally to the younger generations, but increasingly often this transmission is limited by cultural change. The indigenous knowledge of trees and forests consist of a rather solid fund of knowledge, although the pace at which environmental conditions change may vary, becoming slower or quicker in the wake of social and cultural evolution. Devaluation of indigenous knowledge can have many causes: alternative life styles, new modes of production and degradation of important natural resources, as well as forest dwellers being displaced into territories unknown to them or their worlds being affected by laws and modernization from outside (*ibid*).

Traditional forest dependent communities residing in and around Protected Areas have acknowledgeable ethno-ecological knowledge that could be instrumental in achieving the conservation goals in a participatory management model. Mohapatra, et al, (2013) basing on evaluation of their findings on Sunabera and Karlapat sanctuary in Odisha appropriated and built rationale for incorporation of such knowledge systems in shaping up principles for effective co-management of Protected Areas to meet the twin objectives of conservation and livelihoods. The authors argued that what is needed in the long run is an appropriate Protected Area policy that builds on indigenous culture, knowledge and values reflecting the locally perceived ambivalence between biodiversity conservation and sustainable economy and permits freedom to use and manage natural resources.

Moreover, traditional knowledge systems have been gaining favour in biodiversity conservation related legislations in India. Prof. Madhav Gadgil, an authority in the subject, in a brainstorming discussion on National Biodiversity

Strategy Action Plan at Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, on 12 October 2012, argued aloud that 'While it is true that use of traditional knowledge has been restricted to local communities, the Biodiversity Act states that local knowledge will be considered for conservation planning', justifying the importance of folk knowledge on biodiversity conservation and management.

Setting the Methods for Enquiry: Experiences of Early Workers

People are familiar with hundreds of plants categorized as edible, non-edible, spices, medicines, construction materials, veterinary medicine, and so on. There are certain plants with which the community members are so familiar that they can identify a plant from a small part of it. Even small differences are noticed and plants are distinguished from one another with minor differences, much like the scientific systems of plant classification in taxonomic texts. Most plants, especially the ones with which the community members are fairly familiar, for sure, have a name and the less familiar plants are grouped with a group name. Such an understanding is also common in many cultures in India and the World. Levi Strauss (P.1) in his *Savage Mind* quoted Krause as 'among plants and animals the Indian designates by name only those which are useful or harmful; all others are included under the classification of bird, weed, etc'.

Levi Strauss in his *Savage Mind* has quoted experiences of various researchers investigating into the natives' knowledge of the plant and animal kingdom as well as their understanding on the interaction of plants and animals. The descriptions, directly and indirectly, have hinted the working methodology for enquiring the natives' knowledge. A description by E. Smith Brown from her experiences with an African tribe itself provides a methodology for assessing the knowledge of local communities on the plant world.

'These people are farmers: to them plants are as important and familiar as people. I'd never been on a farm and am not even sure which are begonias, dahlias or petunias. Plants like algebra have a habit of looking alike and being different or looking different and being alike; consequently mathematics and botany confused me. For the first time in my life I found myself in a community where ten year old children weren't my mathematical superiors. I also found myself in a place where every plant, wild or cultivated had a name and a use, and where every man, woman and child knew literally hundreds of plants... (my instructor) simply could not realize that it was not the words but the plants which baffled me' (Smith Bowen, P.19 cf Levi Strauss, P.6).

Further, quoting Gilges on his experiences with certain peoples of Northern Rhodesia –

'It has always been a surprise to me to find with what eagerness the people in and around Balovale were ready and willing to talk about their

medicines. Was it that they found my interest in their methods pleasing? Was it an exchange of information amongst colleagues? or was it to show the off their knowledge? Whatever the reason, information was readily forthcoming. I remember a bit old Luchozi who brought bundles of dried leaves, roots and stems and told me about their uses. How far he was a herbalist and how far a witch doctor I could never fathom, but I regret that I shall never possess his knowledge of African psychology and his art in the treatment of his fellow men, that, coupled with my scientific medical knowledge, might have made a most useful combination' (Gilges, P.20 cf Levi Strausse, P. 6)

From his experiences on certain primitive Indians Dennler wrote -

'The natives are actually aware of the characteristic trees, under scrub and grasses of each distinct 'association area' ... in its ecological sense. They are able to list in detail and without any hesitation, the characteristic trees in each, and also to record the string, resin, grasses, and other products used in material culture, which they obtain from each association, as well as the mammals and birds characteristic of each habitat. Indeed, so detailed and so accurate is their knowledge of these areas that they note the gradual changes in marginal areas ... My informants were able to relate without hesitation the changes in fauna and in food supply in each association in relation to seasonal changes (Dennler cf Levi Strausse, P. 45)

The experiences of various researchers quoted by Levi Strausse presents a comprehensive understanding that local communities are well versed about names of plants that come in their use, or putting it differently, plants with which the locals are very familiar have names. Another understanding is that each local is an informant knowing some or most of the plants that comes in their use. However, the work exposure or occupation of the informants may happen to be the reason for why some people know about more plants and some people know the least. Work exposure wise or occupation wise informants may tell about different groups of plants and trees with which they are familiar, or, putting it differently, an informant is familiar with such plants that are much related to their work, occupation and profession. Accordingly, amongst the local communities there could be specialists knowing about varieties of plants in terms of utilitarian categories and 'association area'.

The authors in this paper have made an effort to assess the folk knowledge on plants and trees on the basis of their utilitarian aspects. The hypotheses that guided the enquiry were like - there are certain plants and trees about which every lay person in the community is familiar with and they are thus the most commonly known plants; for example, the edible fruits in the surrounding and the forests. Similarly, there are certain plants only known to specialists or the people who are occupationally related with these. For example, herdsmen have a fair knowledge on ethno-veterinary drugs, fisherman knows better about poisonous plants useful

for fishing, carpenter knows better about timbers, medicine man is well versed about medicinal plants, women know more about the wild edibles and NTFPs and the ornamental plants. The knowledge acquired by each group of people, as given here, may not be an exclusive domain of knowledge respective to the category of informants. A farmer also knows about quality of timbers for a given purpose but he may not be overtly describing about the timbers in a more familiar manner than the way he would be able to describe about the crops. A medicine man may know about some edible weeds growing in the swiddens along with other crops but he may not feel as comfortable as a woman describing about that edible weed, the season of its availability, the way it is cooked, and such. The authors tried these hypotheses to understand the utilitarian aspects of plants and the familiarity of categories of people with categories of plants from utility point of view.

Study Area and People

The study has been conducted in the Chuktia Bhunjia villages coming under Chuktia Bhunjia Development Agency (CBDA), Sunabeda that was established in the year 1994-1995 during 8th Five Year Plan (1992-97) with its headquarters at Sunabeda of Nuapada district. It is located 90 km away from the district headquarters at Nuapada. It is spread over 3 GPs in Komna Block. It comes within Sunabeda Wild Life Sanctuary of Nuapada Forest Division. The total geographical area of the project is 150.00sq.km. The Chuktias basically depend on settled and shifting cultivation in few areas, agricultural labour, Non Timber Forest Produce collection, Bamboo artefacts, etc. They observe Nuakhai, Sunadei worship, Chaula Dhua, Chaitra as important festivals. Their dance forms are Bichdharia, Raisedena Cherchera, Sua, Gendi Holi, Karma and Mandli Dance.

Sunabeda Sanctuary comes under Nuapada district in the west of Orissa. Since its declaration as a sanctuary and wildlife reserve in 1983, it is considered as one of the important protected areas and recently declared as a tiger reserve. This indicates that the forest is well stocked, diverse and is important from biodiversity point of view. The area is full of high and undulating hill ranges, streams and dense forests. It is a sparsely populated area with dispersed and small villages and hamlets. Their erstwhile practice of shifting cultivation has affected the landscape of the region and now the *Chakutia Bhunjia* earn their livelihoods through the collection and sale of minor and non-timber forest produce.

Apart from its importance as a sanctuary, Sunabeda is also of paramount religious significance for the shrine of Sunadei Thakurani. Many local people visit there on several occasions and people from the neighbouring state of Chhatisgarh also visit the shrine often in groups. Although people visit the shrine anytime in a year yet, Dasahara and Chait Parab are specific occasions when people visit the shrine in thousands to offer worship to the deity.

The original settlers in the sanctuary area include tribal communities like Bhunjia and Gond. Bhunjia is a very conservative tribe while Gond is considerably

open. However, both the tribal communities have been residing there since ages and in several ways depend on the local forests. In their livelihood trends one can observe higher dependency on the forest land than trees in the forest.

From the livelihood point of view, as the local people describe, they were better off while practising shifting cultivation on the hill slopes and simultaneously doing paddy cultivation on available low lands or plain lands. Under shifting cultivation system they were doing mixed cropping of millets, finger millets, cow pea, black gram, sorghum, yam, pumpkin, etc. They were cultivating a patch of land continuously for three years after which they were abandoning the slope for natural regeneration of forests. Apart from the produces from shifting cultivation and wet cultivation people were also making good collection of forest products including Kendu leaves which they were selling to the local traders.

Methods and Techniques of Data Collection

In view of relevance of indigenous knowledge to a Scheduled Tribe categorized as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group like Chuktia Bhunja, the primary approach of data collection was empirical including both diachronic and synchronic enquiries. The selection of villages was made in view of the remoteness and traditional lifestyle of villagers. Side by side, villages with some contact with the mainstream have been covered. As the primary objectives of the study were centered around folk/ indigenous knowledge on plants and trees, data mostly from the specialists and knowledgeable persons of the society were recorded in selected villages instead of choosing informants on the basis of quota sampling.

After collection of basic data, these findings have been randomly cross checked with neighboring villages. The base villages for the study were Holuapali, Cherchuan, Kholigaon and Sunabeda. The primary information gathered has been cross checked with villages like Majhagaon, Adara and Jamagaon in the vicinity of Sonabera plateau.

Like enquiries in social science, the methods and techniques of data collection started with participant observation. Moving with men and women to their work places, swiddens, discussions at work breaks, all had immensely helped to visualize, understand and collect relevant information presented in the paper. Organizing informal informant interviews without a structured schedule put the team of researchers in a position to collect primary data in relative details.

Results and Findings

Wild Edibles

Allmanianudi flora, Alternanthera sessile, Amaranthus polygamus, Amaranthus spinosus, Cassia tora, Chenopodium album, Cleome viscosa, Clerodendron serratum, Commelina benghalensis, Ipomoea carpa, Leucas aspera, Marsilea minuta, Mollugopenta phylla, Oxalis corniculata, Polygonum lebeium, Portulaca oleracea, Triumfetta rhomboids, as leafy vegetables; Asparagus recemosus, Curcuma zedoaria,

Dioscoreapenta phylla, *Dioscoreabul bifera*, *Dioscoreaop positifolia*, *Pueraria tuberosa*, as important tubers; *Bombusaar undinacea*, *Careyaar borea*, *Celosia argentea*, *Costuss peciosus*, *Phoenix sylvestris*, as shoots, stems and sap; floral buds of *Bauhinia purpurea*, *Bauhinia variegata*, *Capparis brevispina*, *Cassia fistula*, *Celosia argentea*, *Indigofera cassioides*, *Madhuca longifolia*, *Woodfordia fruticosa*; amongst fruits and seeds *Annona squamosa*, *Antides maghaesembilla*, *Bauhinia racemosa*, *Bauhinia vahlii*, *Bombax ceiba*, *Bridelias tipularis*, *Bridelia retusa*, *Carissa carandas*, *Cordiadi chotoma*, *Diospyrossyl vatica*, *Ethretiacia navensis*, *Embeliats jeriam*, *Ficusra cemoso*, *Flacourtiaca taphracta*, *Flacourtia indica*, *Flemingiam acrophylla*, *Gmelinaar borea*, *Grewiati liaefolia*, *Mangifera indica*, *Morus alba*, *Pithocello biumdulce*, *Phoenix sylvestris*, *Solanum nigrum*, *Solanum violaceum*, *Sterculia urens*, *Syzygium cumini*, *Tamarindus indica*, *Ziziphusr ugosu*, *Ziziphus jujube*.

To collect the information on wild edibles, common folks including women and children were consulted. Each one's information was collected on separate data sheets. When the information were put together the above enumeration of plants was possible. However, it has been observed from the data sheets that while women are well versed about the leafy vegetables and tubers, the children are familiar with berries, fruits and nuts. The common men and women know about the shoots, buds, fruits and seeds of different plants that are associated with their food habit. Looking from a different perspective, it is clear that in terms of knowledge on diversity of wild edible species the women have better knowledge compared to others in the society.

Plant Parts Used for Strengthening Intoxication

Artocarpus heterophyllus, *Azadirachta indica*, *Bauhinia vahlii*, *Cassia fistula*, *Holarrhenaanti dysenterica*, *Mangifera indica*, *Mdhuca longifolia*, *Oryza sativa*, *Terminalia tomentosa* are the plants and trees parts (root and bark, seeds) which are used for strengthening intoxication and quickening fermentation process of distilled spirits and fermented beverages. Observation on data sheets indicated that this is an exclusive domain of men's knowledge. Similarly, for poisoning fishes in a stream for an effortless fishing, parts of species like *Alstonia scholaris*, *Caesalpinia digyna*, *Daturastr amonium*, *Entada prusaetha*, *Euphorbia nivulia*, *Ficus gibbosa*, *Semecarpus anacardium*, *Thevetiaperu viana* are mainly used. It is the men again who are familiar with these kinds of plants.

Non Timber Forest Produces and Other Economic Plants

The forests within the sanctuary area has good production of certain NTFF like Charseed (*Buchanania lanzan*), Mahula (*Madhuka longifolia*) flowers and fruits, Neem (*Azadirachta indica*) seeds, Babul (*Prosopissps.*) seeds, Harida (*Terminalia chebula*), Amla (*Emblica officinalis*), etc. The local people were able to make out a good part of household economy from collection and sale of the same. However, since the sanctuary was declared and subsequently the Tiger Reserve was made, the locals have been imposed with restrictions on collection and sale of these produces as they were doing earlier. The Tendu leaves (*Diospyros melanoxylon*)

including the other NTFP species as mentioned above seems to be the most common set of knowledge known to almost all in the community. However, the other species that are valued as NTFPs or wild economic crops include *Acacia catechu*, *Asparagus racemosus*, *Bauhinia vahlii*, *Buteamonosperma*, *Cassia fistula*, *Curcuma zedoaria*, *Embelia robusta*, *Phoenix sylvestris*, *Pollinidium gustifolium*, *Pongamia pinnata*, *Rauwolfia serpentina*, *Semecarpus acardium*, *Terminalia bellirica*, *Tamarindus indica*, *Thysanolaena maxima*, *Woodfordia fruticosa*.

Conclusion

Folk knowledge on utilitarian aspects of plants in the surrounding is diverse among the Chuktia Bhunja and Gonds inhabiting the Sunabeda Wildlife Sanctuary. While some forms of knowledge are common among all community members, there are also specialized and discrete knowledge systems known to specialists acquired out of their occupations. A systematic documentation of the knowledge systems not only would pave way for strategizing efforts for biodiversity conservation, at the same time, shall be very useful in promoting actions towards streamlining conservation and sustainable use of biological resources in the broader context of conservation and livelihoods.

Acknowledgement

The authors acknowledge Kangara Majhi and Dayaram Majhi of Khaligaon, Mohan Jhankar of Michhapali, Chamarray of Cherchuan, Tejraj Patel of Nuapada for facilitating the study and extending invaluable help while interpreting the results.

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**COGNITIVE ASPECTS OF INDIGENOUS
KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM:
AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE BHUNJIAS
IN ODISHA ***

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ABSTRACT

Indigenous knowledge system has several dimensions of study. It is very much connected with the human culture, surroundings, environment, material culture, technology and all most all socio-cultural institutions of the community. Therefore, knowing indigenous knowledge system of a culture is equivalent to the understanding of the total culture which in the next step may help us to plan appropriately for the development of the concerned community. Here in this paper, besides several aspects of indigenous knowledge system, attempts have been made only to document and understand the cognitive aspects of indigenous knowledge system of the Bhunjia community live in and around Sunabeda Wildlife Sanctuary located in Nuapada district of Odisha. The paper underscores that Bhunjia indigenous knowledge system has had a cognitive structure to conceptualize and perceive nature and culture at cognitive and empirical level.

Key Words: Bhunjia, Cognitive Anthropology, Indigenous Knowledge System, Sunabeda

* Published in ADIBASI, Vol. XXXXXV, No.2, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar, 2015, pp.1-14

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Introduction

Cognitive anthropology has several dimensions with specific reference to traditional and modern society. As Barfield (1997: 67) has mentioned “cognitive anthropology is the study of the relationship between mind and society”. Further he has classified that, “traditionally, cognitive anthropology examines cultural knowledge in terms of its organization and application in everyday activities such as classification and making inferences” (ibid). In nutshell, cognitive anthropology is connected with ethno science or ethno semantics where a detail classification along with meanings of various socio-cultural activities, celebrations is focused. Such a type of folk conceptualization in its analysis, project the folk conceptual category for a clear and better understanding of the society, culture and environment. Common people in a traditional society are not so much aware of the modern science; they need to understand each and every aspect of the surrounding otherwise the maintenance of livelihood is impossible. For such traditional people tradition is most powerful and knowledge is the power. People without any scientific knowledge can tell about the surrounding world in no less scientific manner. They see the surrounding with an ethnic vision which is set by the culture and interpret them in a socio-cultural manner so that their cognitive aspects are popularly denoted as ethno linguistics, ethno semantics, ethno botany, ethno zoology which all together tell about people’s scientific perception know as ethno science. However, the basic ingredient of cognition is knowledge which all preliterate people achieve by virtue of enculturation and socialization.

Objectives

The paper has the following objectives:

- i. To examine the concept cognitive anthropology and the studies relating to the cognitive aspects of indigenous knowledge system in the domain of anthropology.
- ii. To highlight a least known Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PTG) of Odisha uniquely dominated the entire Sunabeda Wildlife Sanctuary.
- iii. The paper from empirical finding from Bhunjias of Sunabeda Wildlife Sanctuary of Odisha documented and explains the cognitive aspects of indigenous knowledge system from anthropological point of view.

Methods and Techniques of Data Collection

The data for the paper have been collected from primary sources. In order to collect primary data from different categories of informants like knowledge specialists, key-informants and elderly persons, the paper adopted observation, synchronic and diachronic approaches in which the socio-cultural background and importance of the cognitive aspects of indigenous knowledge system of Bhunjia community have been reflected. Sets of interview guidelines were developed to collect in-depth qualitative data from different knowledge specialists and other

knowledgeable persons of the Bhunjia society. The villages covered under primary data collection from the Chuktias are Sunabeda, Salepada, Junapani and for cross checking from Chindas in the villages namely Deodara, Sirli and Majhagaon.

Study Area and People

For the sake of documenting and understanding cognitive aspects of indigenous knowledge system the authors have selected a PTG (formerly called Primitive Tribal Group and now Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group) of Odisha, mainly Chuktia Bhunjia living in the Sunabeda plateau of Nuapada district. Besides their primitiveness, Bhunjias are also known for the preservation of their traditional culture which has been possible due to the absence of a fair weather road to this area from the district headquarters. On one side they belong to a remote corner of Odisha and on the other they live adjacent to Chhattisgarh border. The area of study, Sunabeda plateau is also declared a Wildlife Sanctuary and is about 50 km. from the district headquarters at Nuapada. The Sunabeda Wildlife Sanctuary named after Sunabeda, a well-known tribal village situated more or less at the centre of the plateau. The area includes the entire plateau along with the adjoining forest for which it is named as Sunabeda Wildlife Sanctuary.

Sunabeda Wildlife Sanctuary is located in the North-West corner of Nuapada district (Ex-Kalahandi district), adjoining the interstate boundary between Odisha and Chhattisgarh and situated within 20-24'-00" to 20-44-00" latitudes North of equator and 82-20-0" to 82-34-42" longitude East. The entire Sanctuary area is constituted of only one division that is Sunabeda Wildlife Division with its headquarters at Nuapada and comes under Bhawanipatna Circle. The Division has three Ranges i.e. Komna Wildlife Range with headquarters at Komna, Nuapada Wildlife Range with headquarters at Nuapada and Sunabeda Wildlife Range headquarters at Sunabeda (Sahu & Dutta, 2010:4).

The Bhunjias are socially grouped in to two major sections namely, Chinda and Chuktia. Whereas the Chindas are confined to the plains and found to be acculturated by the local people, the Chuktias on the other hand are living in the remote forest areas having little contact with the outside world. However they are well connected with the neighbouring tribal communities like Gond, Kamar and some other backward people. Though they are not so much acculturated, the people through market, Government officials, and business people and due to the impact of mass media have changed to some extent. In this respect it is emphasized that when the state of Indigenous knowledge is least or little affected, it should be properly documented through research. Thus, the Bhunjias are the right choice for the present research.

Anthropological studies on Cognitive Aspects of Indigenous Knowledge system

As regards the importance as well as relevance of cognitive aspects of indigenous knowledge system, several eminent scholars and authorities have also created ground long ago by their critical discussion and in-depth vision and have

made certain substantial contributions on the issues of indigenous knowledge studies. Some such scholarly works are *Savage Mind* (1962) by Levi-Strauss, *The Mind of Primitive Man* (1938, 1955) by Franz Boas, *Primitive Man as Philosopher* (1957) by Paul Radin, *Primitive Classification* (1963) by Emile Durkheim, *Cognitive Anthropology* (1969) edited by Stephen A Tyler, *Local knowledge* (1983) by Clifford Geertz. Franz Boas has very clearly explained the progressive mind of the primitive man which from time to time contributes the progress of the technique and intellectual work as he continued to explain “every new technical invention is an addition to earlier achievements” (1938:199). Taking examples from Eskimo, Bushmen, Australians and Veddas he has given ample citations about the perfection of the technique and progress of intellectual work. Boas has also given the importance of society and language which play dominating roles to develop primitive thought along with the cultural tradition. He mainly justified the need based knowledge through the development of thought in a primitive mind. The implications of primitive are very much practical and directly connected with the natural environment. On the ground of Franz Boas, Paul Radin developed the basic approach in his work i.e. “*Primitive Man as Philosopher*” in 1957. He designed his total work with regard to the primitive views on the philosophy of life in conservation, plasticity, the context of gender, tragic sense of life, mysticism, symbolism, human personality, analysis of reality, the nature of god and the ultimate tendencies of man in a very critical way. Though the purpose was never to explain indigenous knowledge system exclusively, he has utilized all possible ideas (empirical) to define the philosophical ability of man in a socio-cultural context. The thought and tendencies of man have been very much crucial from the view point of his socio-cultural existence. All such philosophical nature of man, as discussed earlier, greatly contributed to the indigenous knowledge system.

In the book “*Savage Mind*” (1962), Levi-Strauss has attempted to reach into human mind at the structural aspects of unconscious mind and very appropriately as an anthropologist he took a linguistic approach than psychological. It is extremely noteworthy that, to him, the basic property of human mind is to think and resulting systems are by no means simple. He also considered that the dichotomizing of human mind is of structural nature. He further said that “the most important activity of human mind is to organize the raw materials of experience provided by history and environment, but the laws of organization are common to all human beings” (Upadhyay and Pandey, 1997:294). In the overall assessment it is learnt that why in the discussion about “*Savage Mind*” Levi-Strauss has not considered the primitive mind rather the universal mind of human beings. Durkheim and Mauss in “*Primitive Classification*” (1963) have gone a little further to the cultural classification of the surrounding, universe, as an essential social phenomenon where the efficiency of primitive mind has been spelt out very rigorously. Their discussions about primitive classifications are directly connected to the knowledge formation in a traditional or indigenous society. Classification as such requires thorough understanding of a situation or matter and in this classic

work both Durkheim and Mauss has taken up a seminal approach to express the understanding of Eskimo, Bushmen and Australians' acquaintance with their respective cultural as well as natural system in order to present their respective indigenous system of classification. In cognitive anthropology edited by Stephen A. Tyler (1969) various accounts on cognitive system, folk taxonomy, structural analysis, semantics, social relations, cognition and componential analysis of kinship terms by several celebrated authorities out of which the context and variation by Tyler and "A little knowledge" by Moer Man are quite noteworthy for the context of this research. Such valuable presentations mostly explored the knowledge and tradition of the primitive man through componential as well as structural analysis; their intrinsic values for various applications in anthropological research have been established.

The approach of Clifford Geertz (1983) under the title "Local knowledge" has been the most recent and original thinking in the field of knowledge research. Emphasizing on the natives' point of view, common sense as well as art as cultural systems and ethnography of modern thought, Geertz has discussed the contribution of local knowledge to the knowledge system of culture calling it local knowledge. He has mostly based his thought and work on the Indonesian data.

Cognitive Dimension of Time and Space

Like all other human groups around the world Bhunjias have their own system of conceptualizing self and surroundings. On normal occasions people talk in a loose voice, but when we analyse peoples thought, action and behavior together with specific reference to a critical issue and query, then comes something as a cognitive explanation. All common Bhunjia persons even though use cognitive factors unknowingly or unconsciously, most of the time the specialists talk in a conscious language with reference to cognitive and socio-cultural dimensions. Therefore, in all societies common people may use cognitive languages but only the specialist can interpret them very well. First of all, let us start with the dimension of time and space as explained in Bhunjia culture.

1. In a Bhunjia village and its surrounding, all the used and unused spaces are categorized into two categories, namely (a) Sacred (*sudh*) and (b) Profane (*asudh*). Under the first category usually village shrine, kitchen, all hills, water sources and sky (*saragpur* and *bhagabanpur*) come. Under the second category (*asudh*) living room of the house, unused land, *yamapur* and *patalpur* come. Bhunjias very strictly maintain the sense of purity and pollution and accordingly they distribute as well as classify their space within the family and outside. Besides this they also classify the Bhunjia girls and women as pure beings in comparison to the males.
2. In their day to day living, though the time factor is considered with specific reference to natural time, it has socio-cultural expressions as found below.

- (a) The Bhunjia time starts with sunrise. It has several symptoms (*janatri*) as mentioned below:
- i. When the cock crows (*basato*)
 - ii. When porcupine sounds (*jhinkaria*)
 - iii. When the sparrows chatter
 - iv. When the cow sounds and allow the calf to take milk
 - v. The crow crows
- (b) During summer when the sun sets
- i. The reddish rays of the sun directly signify it.
 - ii. Birds return to their nests.
 - iii. Domestic animals return to their shed.
 - iv. In the rainy season around the setting sun the frogs make sounds.
 - v. The leaves of the *amla* tree get closed.
 - vi. The leaves of the *chakunda* also similarly closed.
 - vii. The flowers of ridge guard blossom.
 - viii. As in summer the birds and domestic animal return home.
 - ix. But in winter the porcupine makes sound throughout night and as usual the birds and domestic animals return home.

The Bhunjias has conceptualized the day and night very critically and systematically as mentioned below.

- i. Pagurphuta – The twilight in the sky before the sun rise.
- ii. Dina Ningati – When the sun rises completely.
- iii. Dina Tutarek – When the sun rays fell up on the front veranda of the house (up to the height of cultivator’s stick).
- iv. Lai Thek – Sun rays from the sky above 30 feet high on the ground.
- v. Basi Khaya – When the people take their morning food around 9 a.m.
- vi. Sig Najan – the noon.
- vii. TarkaTarki – Afternoon when sun comes down from the mid position.
- viii. Din Basati – End of the day marked by setting of the sun.
- ix. Jhum Jhum Andhar –Dawn of the evening when one can identify a person nearby.
- x. Cherati Rait – Around 9 p.m the night, when everybody has gone to bed.
- xi. Barabar Rait – Mid night.
- xii. Uttarti Rait – After the mid night around 1 a.m.
- xiii. Golehaa Jhinkiria (*porcupine sounds*) – around 2-3 a.m night.
- xiv. Kukuda Basati (*fowls crows*) – Around 4-5 a.m. morning.
- xv. Jhum Jhum Andhar – Around 5 a.m morning when one can recognize faces from close distance.

Besides the above classification of time and space, there are some individual terms used for day to day conversation among the Bhunjias. They are mentioned below

- i. Kulup - Pitch dark, when once cannot see anything.
- ii. Ukia - Light; also refers to torch, lamp, etc.
- iii. Ujud - Specially refers to the lights of sun and moon.
- iv. Andhar - Darkness.
- v. Bihinia - Morning.
- vi. Rait - Night.
- vii. Din - Day.
- viii. Saanj - Evening.
- ix. Majhangn - Midday.
- x. EkPahar - Afternoon.

Bhunjia classify their day time as well as night time into two categories as mentioned below.

Day

- i. Bininia Pahar - Morning time from 6 a.m to noon.
- ii. Ek Pahar - Afternoon, up to sun setting.

Night

- i. Rait - From 6 p.m. to mid night (12 hours).
- ii. Utarti Rait - Midnight to 5 a.m morning.

There are few words in Bhunjia daily usage which refer to days and seasons and some crisis situation. Bhunjia divide the year into three seasons whereas in Odia culture we consider six seasons in a year. In the following manner they may be discussed.

Time (*ber*)

- i. Day - Din, ii. Week - Hapta, iii. Month - Mahina, iv. Year - Bachhar,
- v. Bright Fortnight - Ujjalpak, vi. Dark Fortnight - Aandharpak

Seven Days of a Week

- i. Moonday - Sambar
- ii. Tuesday - Mangalbar
- iii. Wednesday - Budhwar
- iv. Thursday - Girnar / Laxmibar
- v. Friday - Sukhbar
- vi. Saturday -Sanichar
- vii. Sunday - Etwar

Season (*rit*)

- i. Rainy Season - Pani din / mahina
- ii. Summer Season - Gham din / mahina
- iii. Winter Season - Sit din / mahina

Other Related Terms

- i. Cloudy Weather - Mus Musuri din

- ii. Rainy Day – Badrahi
- iii. Rain with Storm – Jhedpani
- iv. Thunder – Badargarjata
- v. Lightning – Ij
- vi. Rainbow – Inglaet
- vii. Cloud – Badar
- viii. Dew – Osh
- ix. Fog – Dhundukura
- x. Air – Batas
- xi. Famine – Makar
- xii. Flood – Boaed
- xiii. Dry River – Sukha
- xiv. Season – Rit

Indigenous Methods of Measurement

In Bhunja indigenous knowledge system all kinds of measurements take a very interesting dimension.

Measurement of Distance

- i. Measurement – Nap
- ii. Distance – Dhuria
- iii. A person at a distance of listening to one's voice – Haink.
- iv. At a double distance of hearing a Voice – Dui haink
- v. Accordingly Dui haink – One Ap
- vi. Two Aps – One Kosh

Other Forms of Measurement

- i. One Meter – Ek Harei
- ii. Height – Deng
- iii. Approximate – Surta
- iv. Depth – Gahir
- v. Thickness – Mot
- vi. Thinness – Pattal
- vii. Length – Lamb
- viii. Breadth – Chakar
- ix. One Arm – Bahalielak
- x. Thick as Finger – Anghielak
- xi. Thick as a Blade of Grass – Sirraelak
- xii. Thick as a Stick (*used for stitching leaf plates*) – Sink elak
- xiii. Thick as a Leg Bone (*Tibia & Fibula*) – Pindra
- xiv. Thick as a knee joint Bone – Jang elak
- xv. Thick as a Body – Gagadelak
- xvi. Thickness from Elbow to Elbow at the time of folding Hand – Anoakaelak
- xvii. Girth of twelve Hands – Eknahanaelak
- xviii. From Thumb fingertip to Little finger Tip – Ekbhithaik

- xix. Height up to two joints of Heel - Ghonntha had
- xx. Height up to Mid part of Knee Joint - Pindaraek
- xxi. Height up to Knee Joint - Mandlaek
- xxii. Height up to Thigh - Jaanghakek
- xxiii. Height up to Waist - Kanhiaek
- xxiv. Height up to Abdomen - Potlaek
- xxv. Height up to Chest - Chhayitek
- xxvi. Height up to Neck - Tondaraek
- xxvii. Height up to Mouth - MuhunPuchakaek
- xxviii. Height up o Head - Mudak / Mund
- xxix. Height up to tip of raised Hand - Hanthachapad
- xxx. Height up to the tip of a Bamboo (*Approximately 30 feet*) - Lai thek
- xxxi. Length of a foot - Ekpaon
- xxxii. A Bunch of Fruits / Flower - Jhompa

Measurement of Grains

- i. One Handful of Paddy Stalk - Ekmutha
- ii. Ten Mutha - Ekkadpa
- iii. Three Kadpa - Ekonga
- iv. Six Onga - Ek penda
- v. Handful of Grain - Ekmuthe
- vi. Grains on the Palm - Tho van
- vii. Grains on the Two joint palms - Anjra
- viii. One bunch of Sticks - Peta
- ix. One bunch of Greens / paddy stuffs - Bail
- x. One bunch of Fruits (*banana*) - Ghada
- xi. Of less Amount - Itki
- xii. Of more amount - Khubyea
- xiii. Distribution of share - Banta
- xiv. Of some Amount - Duthun
- xv. One Shaft full of materials - Ekkawed
- xvi. One bunch of materials if lifted by one hand - Chhotpendi
- xvii. One bunch of materials if lifted by two hands - Badka penda
- xviii. Food grains equivalent to 75 grams - Ek boda
- xix. Two Bodas - Ek Gidha (*also for liquid*)
- xx. Two Gidhas - Ek shoal
- xxi. Two Sholas - Ek Ada (*also for liquid*)
- xxii. Four Adas - Ekkatha
- xxiii. Twenty Katha - Ekkhaandi
- xxiv. Twenty Khaandis - Ekgada

Measurement of Counting

Always Bhujias count up to 20 after which they count as multiplication of 20s.

- i. Counting - Ganati

- ii. One - Gotak
- iii. Two - Duthan
- iv. Three - Tin than
- v. Four - Chan thun
- vi. Five - Panchthun
- vii. Six - Chhaethun
- viii. Seven - Saatthun
- ix. Eight - Aththun
- x. Nine - Na thun
- xi. Ten - Das thun
- xii. Eleven - Gyarathun
- xiii. Twelve - Bara thun
- xiv. Thirteen - Terathun
- xv. Fourteen - Chaudathun
- xvi. Fifteen - Pandarathun
- xvii. Sixteen - Sola thun
- xviii. Seventeen - Satrathun
- xix. Eighteen - Athrathun
- xx. Nineteen - Anaishthun
- xxi. Twenty - Bisthun
- xxii. Twenty Numerals - Kodi

Bhunjias after counting up to 20 make it a single unit and there from every unit which includes 20 numbers are counted unit wise. They usually keep one small stone for each unit of 20s (*kodi*) and it continues in 20s or *kodis* till the counting of all numbers are completed. In this way the number of cattle and other material belonging are counted. For counting various units of food grains they also adopt similar counting method. A family or household living room, cowshed and kitchen are counted as one unit. Thus, the knowledge of numeral counting among the Bhunjia go up to 20 and never beyond it.

Folk Astrology

Bhunjia as a traditional community and Chuktia Bhunjias are accorded primitive status which speaks of their adherence to various traditions, customs and beliefs. Mainly because they live in nature and depend on supernatural entities for their day to day activities, for achieving any success or averting any misfortune, foreseeable danger and failure, they maintain several folk astrological procedures. Very substantially such folk astrological practices influence their daily and special activities throughout the year. All such folk astrological practices add to their indigenous knowledge system greatly. Mentioning below are some of the folk astrological beliefs which Bhunjias apply with great emphasis.

1. For starting all new kinds of ritual and economic activities, always the priests are consulted to find out a suitable date for starting the activity. Usually they consider the period of dark fortnight (*aandharpak*) as inauspicious. If one starts

any important activity during this period it is believed to meet with failure. Similarly doing any activity during bright fortnight (*ujjalpak*) one experiences success. Similar beliefs are also there among the neighbouring tribal and nontribal communities in and around Sunabeda plateau.

2. In Bhunjia society, people always prefer solar and lunar eclipse days for the starting of the important learning processes like hunting, magical practices, collection of herbal medicines, singing of songs etc. This belief has a folk tale behind it. According to the tale, one day a Bhunjia male went to a very rich cobbler in order to borrow some money for the marriage ceremony of his son. As the cobbler did not know him he refused to give him the loan. Then his wife went to same cobbler for getting a loan. The lady was very uncomfortable for the foul smell of the hides the cobbler was using. Because of her repeated appeal lastly the cobbler lent her some money keeping sun and moon as the witness. But after the marriage of the son, the Bhunjia couple can't pay back the loan. Therefore, the cobbler cut sun and moon who are the witness to the incidence. When sun and moon were unable to effect the repayment of the loan the cobbler covered both of them by cow hide. Consequently, the whole universe suffered due to the absence of light. As a result, it is customary practice that all the Bhunjias on the solar and lunar eclipse days bring out some costly utensils like brass, pots and offer them to sun and moon towards the repayment of loan amount, so that he cobbler will remove the hide cover from them and the universe will be brightened by light. All Bhunjias strongly believe that mainly because they repay the loan amount through brass utensils, the eclipse time period gets over within a little span of time. For this reason both the eclipse days are considered to be auspicious days and all the Bhunjias prefer to start new activities on these two days only.
3. While planning for starting any new work Bhunjias always consider a good or auspicious day to begin with. All the seven days in a week are not considered auspicious for all purposes. Starting from Monday to Sunday all the seven days are having different status position. This may be cited in the following.
 - i. Monday (*Sambar*) – A good day for starting all kinds of activities.
 - ii. Tuesday (*Mangalbar*) – A very powerful day, therefore people worship goddess on this day to get power.
 - iii. Wednesday (*Budhwar*) – Considered to be a day of getting intelligence, therefore people prefer to start learning process on this day.
 - iv. Thursday (*Gurbar*) – Considered to be the day of goddess Laxmi, therefore people never sacrifice animals on this day.
 - v. Friday (*Sukurbar*) – Believed to bring all kinds of happiness and pleasure.
 - vi. Saturday (*Sanichar*) – Considered inauspicious for all kinds of activities.
 - vii. Sunday (*Etwar*) – Considered to be a good day for the collection of herbal medicine from the forest.

4. Bhunjias are very much serious about omens and other incidents for starting a new activity. In some way it is found to be superstitious, but the Bhunjias strongly believe them and conduct their activities accordingly. Such omens are of different varieties, namely by knowing about them in the dreams. Some dreams are known to be quite auspicious and others, inauspicious for any achievement. Besides the witting of good or bad omen in the dream there are also other varieties of good/bad omen in the matter of starting for journey. By observing various good or bad omens while starting from the home, people forecast their degree of success or failure. Even though people are quite emotional while following them accurately, they maintain a belief on such folk astrological beliefs. Some of them are presented below for reference.

Beliefs Related to Dreams

- i. Dreaming of fire and burning of house is believed to be a sign of noise.
- ii. If someone dreams breaking of iron, it is believed to hear death news.
- iii. If someone is dreams a mountain, it is believed to meet an officer.
- iv. If anyone dreams pure water, it indicates arrival of relatives to house.
- v. If someone dreams the muddy water of rainy season, it is believed there will be crowd of people.
- vi. If someone dreams ripe mango, banana, it is believed that meat and fish will be available to eat.
- vii. Dreaming cutting of bamboo means the family may face danger.
- viii. If someone dreams of lying down upward to downward, it is believed that there will be fever or any health problems.
- ix. Dreaming of hiding of iron is believed that dreamer will bury a corpse
- x. If someone dreams the pouring of oil, it is believed to see blood.
- xi. If someone dreams the marriage of any one, it is believed to get sad news and fever will come to family.
- xii. Dreams in the midnight are believed to happen in reality.
- xiii. If someone dreams a dead body, it is believed that he will eat meat.
- xiv. If someone dreams blood, it is believed that he will eat milk.
- xv. If someone dreams a tiger, it is believed that he will get rice.

Beliefs Related to Tradition

- i. Most of the ladies in the tribal society tattoo their bodies with a belief that it is a symbol of their parents, when they die it will go with them.
- ii. With an intention to satisfy the deities and for the welfare of the family, tribal people sacrifice birds and animals.
- iii. The Bhunjia married ladies do not take meal in others' families.
- iv. The ladies do not participate in the religious activities.

Beliefs Related to Magic and Religion

- i. In Bhunjia society, whenever somebody suffers from illness, people believe it has happened due to wrath of the deities. Instead of going for the modern treatment they prefer to satisfy the concerned deity as prescribed by the sorcerer or shaman.
- ii. In case of snake bite too, the Bhunjia first go to a sorcerer for cure by magic spells.
- iii. Starting from the life cycle rituals (birth, marriage and death) to all magical rites, the Bhunjias satisfy the deities mostly by animal sacrifice with the blind belief that the deities cherish the blood most.

Beliefs related to Travel

- i. While starting on journey, if one sees an empty pot, it indicates failure.
- ii. While starting for journey, if one sees a person defecating, it indicates success.
- iii. While starting on journey, if you see a *taunsa* bird on the way it is good omen.
- iv. While starting for journey, if you see a cobra in the left side it is auspicious.
- v. If you see a widow then your journey is inauspicious for you.
- vi. While starting a journey if you see a pitcher full of water success is predicted.
- vii. While starting a journey, if one calls him from his back then it is bad for him.
- viii. While starting a journey, if you see a child is crying then it is bad for you
- ix. If there is a dog barking continuously for two to three days, a bad news comes.
- x. If on the way a calf is milking and both are of the same colour it is good.
- xi. If the dogs are fighting on the way it is a bad omen for your journey.
- xii. While starting on a journey, if you see a jackal then it indicates failure.
- xiii. While starting on a journey, if you see a barber then it is bad for your journey.
- xiv. While starting on a journey, if you see a bald man then it is harmful.
- xv. If you see a baby suckling his/her mother, then it is good for your journey.
- xvi. While starting on a journey if you saw a clamor then it is harmful.
- xvii. While starting on a journey, if you see a beggar then it is harmful.
- xviii. If one sees an animal sacrifice on the way it is believed to be good.
- xix. If a crow crows on the house it indicates that somebody will die in the family.
- xx. While starting on a journey, if you saw a Ghughua bird on the way then you will suffer from fever.
- xxi. If the right eye jumps then it indicates that a family member will fall ill.
- xxii. If the left eye jumps, it indicates that you will suffer from any disease.

Conclusion

In view of the above discussed cognitive aspects of indigenous knowledge system of the Bhunjias it has been directly emphasized and observed that their perception of nature and culture has a direct impact on their daily life and that occupy the core area of their indigenous knowledge system. On the whole the cognitive aspect of indigenous knowledge which has dealt with cognitive dimension of time and space, indigenous method of measurement and folk astrology are very much emphasized in all the spheres of Bhunjia culture by virtue of which Bhunjia indigenous knowledge system has been acclaimed as quite essential as well as substantial for the maintenance of the livelihood in the habitat of Sunabeda plateau in the district of Nuapada of Odisha.

Acknowledgement

The authors are grateful to the key-informants of Bhunjia community in Sunabeda valley; especially to late Rajsingh Majhi of Salepada village.

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BINJHAL*

*Kiranbala Debi*¹

The Binjhals or Binjhvars, a Dravidian tribe are distributed in the Provinces of Orissa and MadhyaPradesh. These people are advanced and resemble the local non-tribals. They live amidst the non-tribals. R. V. Russell and Rai Bahadur Hiralal have written about the tribe that they are “a comparatively civilized Dravidian tribe” who are “an offshoot of the primitive Baiga tribe”. The Baiga and Binjhals are found in the same regions and agriculture is the main occupation of both the tribes.

In Orissa, the Binjhals are distributed in the districts of Puri, Sambalpur, Bolangir, Sundargarh, etc. But they are concentrated to a large extent in Sambalpur district. The table below shows the distribution of Binjhals in different districts of Orissa and their population according to 1961 census:-

Sl. No	Name of the District	Total population	Male	Female
1.	Puri	4,368	2,202	2,166
2.	Koraput	5	2	3
3.	Sambalpur	46,134	23,269	22,865
4.	Bolangir	25,191	12,073	13,118
5.	Ganjam	1	00	1
6.	Sundargarh,	612	313	299
7.	Dhenkanal	154	70	84
8.	Keonjhar	3	1	2
9.	Cuttack	24	11	13
10.	Mayurbhanj	197	110	87
Total		76,692	38,052	38,640

Origin of the Tribe:

The name of “Binjhal” is derived from the name Bindhyabasini, the chief deity of the Binjhals. They believe that their original home was on the Bindhya

* Published in ADIBASI, Vol. V, No.3, (Spl. Issue), TRB, Bhubaneswar, 1963-64, pp.75-80

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hills. Once upon a time, there were "Bara Bhai Bentakar" (twelve brother archers) who were in pursuit of Barha (wild pig). When they shoot arrows, those came out and struck on the door of the temple of Lord Jagannath which is situated in Puri district. The King of Orissa was unable to pull them out though he harnessed his elephants. Those twelve brothers came in search of their arrows and pulled them out from the door. The King became pleased and gave them some estate and entitled them with the title Bariha which means wild pig. The Zamindar of Bodasambar in Sambalpur district is the descendant of one of those brothers.

The etymological meaning of the name "Binjhal" is "Bin+jhal" not sweating. They do hard labour and do not care for sweating. It is said "*Jete shrama kale Bhai Jhal, tenukari tanka nama hoila Binjhal*".

Meaning: They are called Binjhals because they do not sweat even though they work hard. They believe this about the origin and significance of their name.

The Binjhals are physically of medium stature. Height varies from five feet to five feet five inches in case of males and four feet five inches to five feet in case of females. Their colour varies from dark brown to fair. They resemble Oriyas.

The Binjhals speak colloquial Oriya language (Sambalपुरi)

Social Organization:

The tribes is divided into four subdivisions-

(1) The proper Binjhars, (2) Sonjharas whose occupation is washing of gold in the sands of Mahanadi, (3) The Binjhia who practice shifting cultivation, (4) Binjhia. They are regarded as a separate caste in Bilaspur.

The Binjhals have innumerable clans such as (1) Amari, (2) Kamatia, (3) Nag, (4) Khursal, (5) Duduka, (6) Baanga, (7) Monchy, (8) Bagh etc.

Brahmins and washermen of the village do not serve the Binjhals but barbers do. They do not accept water and boiled rice from other castes except Brahmins.

Village and Houses:

The Binjhal houses are arranged in parallel rows facing each other. Exception of this type is also noticed. The house consists of an inner spacious room with an enclosed veranda before it. They have no window and have only one door. Light cannot pass through the room. The veranda is used for cooking, husking of paddy whereas inner room is used for keeping materials and sleeping purposes. The hearth is constructed generally towards one corner of the veranda. In the middle, slightly to one side, a hole is found which is used for paddy pounding. Those who have cattle have separate cowsheds.

Family:

The Binjhals live in joint family. A family consists of husband, wife, son, daughter-in-law, unmarried daughters, brothers and sisters, etc. Generally after

the death of the father, the family breaks up in some cases and the brothers remain separately after marriage. The family is counted by "Dibi" or Chula. When a brother separates from another brother, both of them cook in separate cooking pots (Dibi). The husband is the head of the family but the wife is consulted. If father dies the mother acts as the head of the family, and takes care of her children until the eldest son grows up.

Property is inherited by sons. It is divided among them in equal shares. Daughters do not have share.

Polygyny is possible among the Binjhals but it, is found rarely. If child is not born to the first wife the husband may marry again.

Joking relationship exists between grand parents and children, between a women and younger brother of her husband. But women avoid their husband's elder brothers. A man can call his wife by her name but a woman cannot call her husband, father-in-law, mother-in-law and her husband's elder brother by name. The husband is addressed as the father of the child.

Birth Rites:

When a baby is born, the woman is kept separately. She is attended by an elderly Binjhal woman who knows how to facilitate delivery. In case of difficult delivery, they ask midwife of the nearest hospital to attend them.

When the child is born, the umbilical cord is cut by the midwife with a thread. Then the child is bathed in hot water. For seven days the child and mother remain segregated. On the 7th day they cut nail, take bath to get purified.

The Binjhals believe in immortality of the soul. They think ancestors are born as grand children or great grandchildren. Hence a few days after the birth of the baby, a "Gunia" is consulted. He holds some paddy in a winnowing fan and muttering some mantras speaks names of the ancestors and at the sametime moves his hand over the winnowing fan and throws paddy. It two paddy grains fall jointly, the name uttered at that time is selected.

Children are taken care of by their mothers. Weaning takes place at three years or until another child is born. Even after this, occasional suckling is not denied to babies. When the child attains two or three years of age, and parents are busy in the field, children are taken care of by grandmother or elder sister.

The Binjhal boys and girls adopt their own occupation when they are young, but they are not required to labour hard. The boys help their parents in the field and girls rear take care of their younger sisters and brothers and cook.

Marriage:

Among the Binjhals endogamy is the general rule. Marriage is prohibited among persons related by blood. The girls marry after they attain maturity. Generally they marry from sixteen to twenty years of age and men from twenty to

twenty-five years of age. Child marriage is not practiced. During festival days the young boys and girls get opportunity to mix and choose their mates for marriage. The parents of bridegroom and some other related persons come to the bride's house. They bring two cloths (sarees) and ornaments for the bride and sugar and fried rice for the family. This is known as Mangen Kania. On that day, the father of the bride asks for money, paddy and rice to the father of the bridegroom.

On the wedding day the bridegroom party arrives at the bride's place in the evening. Before it, rice, paddy and other materials for the feast are sent in a bullock cart. Both men and women accompany the bridegroom. On the way they sing and beat drums. Whole night is spent by singing, drinking and dancing. Generally, girls of both the parties sing songs. The party asks questions and other party gives answers in form songs. The real marriage ceremony takes place on the next day morning. The bride groom enters into the bride's house sitting on the shoulder of the elder sister of the bride. The bridegroom has to undergo some performances. His cheek has to be roasted by hot cakes. He has to pound paddy by a husking implement. The women of the bridegroom's party smear turmeric on the body of the bride and women of the bride's party smear turmeric on the groom's body. They both sit side by side. The bride throws some paddy and rice over the bridegroom and the bridegroom does in the same manner. Women of both parties do "Bandapana". When marriage ceremony is over both parties attend a feast arranged by the bride's parents. In the evening bride and bridegroom return to their village accompanied by the bridegroom's party. Nothing is performed in the bridegroom's village.

Performance of marriage ceremony differs from place to place. Among some Binjhals a trunk of Mahua tree with two branches is placed on the marriage pendal. Under this, a dagger is placed on a winnowing fan filled with rice. The dagger represents the bridegroom and the winnowing fan, the bride. Both bride and bridegroom move round the trunk one by one. A plough is placed on a yoke over the marriage pendal. Some relatives climb up the trunk and pour water over the couple. Next day, bride and bridegroom proceed to the marriage post on shoulders of two relatives. Marriage thread is tied by the village priest around the feet of the couple. He utters some mantras. Then man shoots arrow, bringing it from marriage post. The Bride and Bridegroom take bath in a tank and the bridegroom shoots seven arrows to an effigy of a deer, made of straw. His brother-in-law takes the seventh one, hides it under his cloths, and pretend to be dead. The bridegroom goes and searches and at last finds his arrow from his brother-in-law's cloth. Thus marriage ceremony is over.

The Brahmin does not serve in the marriage ceremony. A Binjhal priest serves on such occasion. His office is hereditary.

When a Zamindar's marriage ceremony is performed he invites all his caste fellows. Here on the marriage platform, any number of marriages can take place. That is, if marriage has been negotiated between a boy and a girl they can be

married there. Such marriages are eagerly done as no expense is incurred there. The Zamindar takes charge of the feast and other expenses.

Among Binjhals, family life is maintained peacefully. Women are partners of their husbands. They do all household works, take care of their children and help their husbands in field. Though men are the head of the family, women are consulted in family affairs.

Divorce is in vogue but found in rare cases. Adultery and marital incompatibility are the main causes of divorce. In case of divorce for the woman's fault, the bride-price have to be repaid to the bridegroom's parents. No ceremony is performed for this occasion.

Death rites:

The Binjhals bury the dead body. It is their custom that the relatives and friends of the deceased come and accompany the funeral procession. Female relatives cry and wail. On the third day the relatives assemble, take some unboiled rice, offer to the deceased on the grave. A lamp is lighted over the rice. When an insect comes they catch it and bring it home believing it the spirit of the dead person. They keep it in a flour cake till the next day. On the next day morning all come to the pool and thrust it in the mud after offering rice. This is known as Kharpani.

Important Festivals:

Because of the process of culture change many of the Hindu festivals and ceremonies are being observed by the Binjhal along with their own traditional tribal festivals. Karma is their most important and indigenous festival. On the 11th day of Bhadraba they observe this festival when they worship the deity Karamsani who is to be satisfied for their good fortune. This festival provides opportunities for young boys and girls for selection of their partners of life. On that day they go to the jungle and bring *karma* tree (Sal or Halan tree) which represents the Goddess Karamsani. Amorous songs are sung, drums are beaten and young boys and girls dance. The whole village remains in drunken condition for two days. The Karama tree is planted in the centre of the communal ground and is worshiped by the Jhankar, the Binjhal priest. Unboiled rice, milk, liquor and sweetmeats are offered to the Goddess. Then the Jhankar tells the story of Karamsani. When it is over the villagers dance, sing and drums are beaten. Next day they also spend in this manner. Then on the third day morning the villagers go in a procession to a particular pool, throw the Karama tree in water and take bath there and return to the village. Then they attend a grand feast.

BadaKarma:

After every three years the Bada-Karma (big Karma) is held. On that day the Karamsani Puja, is done as usual. Then young boys and girls of different villages form a party and go to five villages staying one day in each village.

Members of those villages make arrangements for their lodging and boarding. All these five days they spend by drinking, singing and dancing.

HaraliParab :

The Harali Parab is held in the month of Srabana. This festival is meant for their own children. The Binjhals believe that their ancestors are born as sons and daughters and therefore they should worship them. On that day, different types of cakes and *khiri* (boiled rice mixed with sugar and milk) are prepared. They worship their own children by keeping unboiled rice and unboiled milk on the feet of their children. Then they distribute cakes and sweet meats among their children.

Besides these festivals, the Binjhals also observe Diwali, Nuakhia, Pus Punei which are not their own festival but coming in contact with the neighbouring castes of the area they are observing these events.

Religious Beliefs:

The Binjhals obey the God and Goddess of Hindus besides their own deities. Bindhya Basini is their principal Goddess. Her original place was on Bindhya Hills. "Barabhai Bentakar" (twelve brother archers) who are the original ancestors of the Binjhals brought the deity from the Bindhya Hill and placed on the Narsinghanath Hills in Sambalpur district. If she is satisfied no calamity will fall on the Binjhals. She is represented by a stone in shape of a woman.

Another Binjhal Deity is Lakshmeswari who is staying in a temple in the village Khaira in Padampur Police Station. Seven three-headed spears represented the Goddess. The Binjhals also worship "Dangar Devata" the God of mountain.

Dance and Music:

Each tribe has peculiarity in its original dance and music. Among the Binjhals, Karam dance is very much charming. The dancers, drummers and singers all wear red turban on head. Peacock feathers are tied over the turban. They all wear red shirt, coloured cloth and ornaments on arms, necks and hands. At first boys enter to the ground and dance. The girls dance. Then both boys and girls dance and sing mixing together.

MATERIAL CULTURE

Housing and Settlements

The Binjhal house is rectangular in shape. The walls are made of mud. The floor and walls of the house are very cleanly washed with a solution of mud and cow dung. These are thatched with straws or tiles. On the whole the houses appear to be quite clean in spite of the disorderly arrangement of furniture.

The house of the Jhankar, the village priest is generally bigger than the common men. In some village they have two storied mud houses.

Household Implements:

Few furniture are found in Binjhal houses. Generally they sleep on the floor but have stringed cots for the use of guests. For husking paddy they have a heavy wooden hollowed mortar which is thrust in the floor, and a long wooden pestle, whose lower end is mounted with an iron band. Generally cooking pots are made of clay and ladles are of brass and bell-metal. Utensils for taking food are of bell-metal or aluminum. They possess all sorts of baskets, winnowing fans, etc. which are available in the area. Each and every Binjhal must have on Olia (grain bin) made of straw for storing paddy and other cereals.

Dress and Ornaments:

Adult Binjhal males wear cotton cloth called Dhoti and another cloth which they hang over their shoulders is known as Karia. Women wear hand-woven Sambalpuri *sarees*. The children remain naked up to five or six years of age, then they wear torn loin cloth of one to one and half foot in length.

The Binjhal women adorn their bodies with various ornaments. They use necklaces of beads, silver and nickel. Among silver necklace, coined and Hansuli necklaces are mostly preferred. On the hand, they wear big bangles of silver or nickel. The Binjhals of Omari section do not wear glass bangles.

Main occupation of the Binjhals is agriculture. Hence agricultural implements such as plough, yoke, sickle, etc. which are found in the houses of Oriya agriculturists are also found in their houses. They also use several types of fish traps for catching fish. They are made of bamboo strips.

The Binjhal material culture resembles that of Oriyas. In dress, ornament, hair style it is very difficult to distinguish them from non-tribals of that area.

ECONOMY

Consumption

Rice is the staple food of the Binjhals. Generally they take food twice a day, mid-day meal from 11 to 12 A.M. and evening meal from 6 to 7 P.M. Sometimes they also take morning meal before going to work. Their meal consists of rice, vegetables and occasionally meat or fish. Sometimes, fried rice or rice cakes are prepared for the children. In past they were indiscriminate in their diet. They were eating snakes, rats, carnivorous animals and pork. But now they are not taking these items.

Rice-beer is the important drink of the Binjhals. Marriage ceremony and festivals cannot be enjoyed without drinking.

Cloths, the Binjhal use, are purchased from the market. They also purchase ornaments and utensils and a few required materials.

Productions

The economy of Binjhals is based on agriculture. Majority of them are agriculturists. Those who have lands cultivate it which is the only means of their subsistence. Those who are landless are labourers. Day labour is called Mulia and those who work on annual contract basis are called Halia or Goti. They are paid annually. Besides this they are given two pieces of cloth every year. The Halia can also borrow money from his employer. No interest is charged on the amount so borrowed. Loans are paid back in cash or paddy. It can also be adjusted with the dues of the Halia. A Halia on termination of his contract with the employer is free to make contract with another. The contract is usually done from one Pusa Purnima to another Pusa Purnima. Those who are day labourers are paid either daily or weekly according to the local wage rate.

Paddy is the major crop of the Binjhals. It is raised both by transplantation and broadcasting. They also grow pulses, summer and winter vegetables. Among the vegetables tomato, brinjal, cucumber, pumpkin, chilly are most important.

Broadcasting Method

The Binjhals plough land and sow seeds before onset of rains in the first part of the month of June. In the month of August they again plough the land slightly for killing the weeds. Generally from the month of November to December they harvest paddy.

Transplanting Method

By this method they sow seeds in a plot of land attached to their houses. The land in which paddy will be transplanted are ploughed two times, once before raining and again after raining. In the month of August when the paddy plants become one or two feet high they transplant in the prepared paddy field. Besides they also produce till sugar-cane, etc.

The Binjhals do not purchase many things from outside except a few, such as salt, kerosene, cloth, dry fish, tobacco etc. Fuel is collected from the jungle. They use one type of oil, prepared from the seed of "Mahul". This is known as *tol* oil.

The economic condition of the Binjhals is not so poor as that of jungle tribes whose economy is based on hunting or crude type of agriculture. The Binjhals have adopted advanced type of agriculture. They have irrigation facilities and they know the use of manures.

Concluding Remarks:-

The Binjhals are an advanced and civilized tribe who have resemblances in appearance, dress, customs and economic practices with the non-tribals of Sambalpur district. They are progressive farmers and more or less self-sufficient in comparison with other caste people. School education is gaining ground among them. After some years they may be assimilated among the non-tribals.

B I N J H A L*

*S. C. Mohanty*¹

BINJHAL, the term is a combination of two local terms *Bin* (without) and *Jhal* (sweat) which literally means a "hardworking people". According to their legend, the King of Puri had granted their ancestors the Bora Sambar estate of Sambalpur district in recognition of their bravery and skill in archery. They have legends about their migration to Orissa from Central India.

As per 2011 census their population is 2 17 395 (1 06 515 males and 1 10 880 females) and sex ratio is 1041. Their total literacy rate is 63.71%. It is 75.74 percent for males and 52.27 percent for females. Majority of them live in western Odisha in Baragarh, Bolangir, Sonapur, Nuapada and Sambalpur districts. They have given up their own Dravidian language and started speaking *Sambalpuri Oriya*.

Their village settlements are generally small in size and have linear patterns. Their dwelling houses have two small rooms with verandahs in the front and the back.

They earn their livelihood pursuing settled cultivation, hunting, gathering, fishing, animal husbandry and wage labour. Majority of them are landless and marginal farmers. They are non-vegetarians. Their staple food is rice. They have a habit of drinking *mohua* liquor and toddy. Men wear dhotis and women sarees. Women are fond of tattooing and wearing beads and ornaments made of silver and brass.

They worship Hindu gods along with a number of natural spirits. Goddess *Bindya Basini* is their supreme deity. They observe festivals like *Bada Karama*, *Harali Parab*, *Pusa Punei*, *Magha Paraba*, *Makulbhaja Paraba*, *Diwali*, *Dasara* and *Nuakhia*.

* Unpublished article of 2000 updated in 2018

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They are divided into a number of exogamous clans (*Vansas*) named *Amri*, *Nag*, *Khusal*, *Duguka*, *Kanati*, *Mahalinga*, *Bagha*, *Marthi*, *Endja*, *Bantakar*, *Keshra*, etc. The clans break up into agnatic lineages like *Surya Bansi*, *Nag Bansi*, *Hillchip*, *Chauhanand Rajput*. They use surnames like *Lartha*, *Endja*, *Mullick*, *Negi*, *Lahar*, *Samni*, *Kharsel* and *Majhi*.

Their families are nuclear, patrilocal and patrilineal. Inheritance and succession go along the male line. They prefer adult marriages, monogamy, and select spouses by negotiation, service, intrusion, and capture. They allow cross-cousin marriage, junior levirate and sororate and remarriage of widows, widowers and divorcees. They also sanction divorce on grounds of maladjustment, cruelty and adultery.

They observe birth pollution for seven days, the name giving ceremony on the sixth day (*Chhathi*) and *Ekusia* ceremony on the twenty-first day. Puberty rituals (*Pushpabati*) rituals are also observed for girls. A girl of six or seven years gets symbolically married to a *mohul* tree (*Kundanbari*). They bury the dead and observe mortuary pollution for ten days. They arrange the community feast (*Karanjia*) on the eleventh day and perform the final death rites (*Barkosia*) after one year.

BINJHAL*

*K. B. Debi*¹

The Binjhals are recognized as one of the Scheduled Tribes of Orissa and Bihar States. According to Russell and Hiralal (1916) the community is synonymous to Binjhwars inhabiting Raipur and Bilaspur area of Madhya Pradesh and are offshoot of the Baiga tribe but are comparatively civilized than the latter group. 'O' Malley also refers to the Binjhals as *Binjhwars*.

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

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

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

* Published in Tribes of Orissa (revised edition), SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar 2004, pp. 91-98

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

The goddess *Bindhyabasini* had twelve sons who were very good archers. They later were known as *Barabhai Bentakar* (twelve brother archers). Once they were out in the forest for hunting. While following a wild boar they shot an arrow, which struck the door of the temple of Lord Jagannath at Puri. Nobody could pull it out from the door. Even the king of Orissa harnessed his royal elephants but could not succeed. Twelve brothers one day came to Puri in search of their arrow and they pulled it out very easily. The King was very much pleased with them. He gave them the Borasambar Estate of Sambalpur district and the title *Bariha*, which symbolizes the strength of the wild boar. Since then they use *Bariha* as their surname.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Generally the Binjhals take their meals twice a day, once during mid-day and again in the evening. After harvest however they prefer to have another meal in the morning. Cooked rice soaked in water serves their morning meal and at noon and evening hot boiled rice is taken. Rice cake and fried rice are prepared as breakfast items for the children.

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

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

The Binjhal is an endogamous tribe, which is divided into a number of exogamous divisions called *Vansas*. *Amri*, *Nag*, *Khusal*, *Duguke*, *Kamati*, *Mahaiinga*, *Bagha*, *Marthi Endja*, *Bentakar* are some of their *Vansa* names. The main function of *Vansais* to regulate marriage. The members of a *Vansa* are considered as blood related kins and so sexual relations between members of the same *Vansa* are

tabooed. The descent is traced through male line only. They use *Lartha*, *Endja*, *Mullick*, *Negi*, *Lahar*, *Samni*, *Kharsel* and *Mahi* as surnames.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The birth of the child usually takes place in a separate room. In case of difficult delivery a midwife of the local maternity center is called in to attend. An

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

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

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

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

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

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

The tribe permits mainly the following four types of marriages.

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

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

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

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

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

Performance of marriage ceremony differs from place to place. In some Binjhal villages a trunk of *Mahua* tree having two branches is planted on the marriage altar. Under this branch a dagger and some rice are kept in a winnowing fan. The dagger represents the bridegroom and winnowing fan, the bride. Both bride and bridegroom move around the trunk one by one. A plough is placed on a yoke on the marriage pandal. Some relatives climb up the trunk and pour water on the couple. Next day the bride and bridegroom are carried to the marriage post on the shoulders of the relatives. They are seated under the marriage post. The priest ties their legs with a new thread. The newlyweds are given bath after which the bridegroom shoots seven arrows at an effigy of a deer made of straw. The brother-in-law of the groom takes away the seventh arrow and hides it under his cloth and pretends to be dead. The bridegroom goes in search of the arrow and finds it from the clothing of his brother-in-law. Thus the marriage comes to an end.

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

Divorce is socially permitted among the Binjhals but it is rarely practised. It generally takes place due to maladjustment or misunderstanding between the

spouses. Sometimes infidelity or sterility of the wife also leads to divorce. If the wife is found guilty her parents have to return the bride price. When the husband is at fault the bride price is forfeited.

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

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

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

The Binjhals are primarily an agricultural community. They practise settled agriculture. For them land is not only of great economic value but it also accords social prestige. Many Binjhals are landless and work as labourers in the farm of the Pandras and Kultas who are big farmers in the locality. Those who work on daily wage basis are called *Mulia* and those who make contract to work for the whole year are called *Halia*. The latter are paid annually in addition to the privileges of borrowing money from the landowners. Loans are paid back in cash or kind. It can be also adjusted with the dues of the *Halia*. A *Halia* on termination of his contract with the employer is free to contract with another landowner. The contract is usually done for one year starting from one *Pusa Purnima* (the full moon day of December-January) to the next. Those who work as daily labourers are paid either in cash or in kinds of paddy daily or weekly.

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

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

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

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

The Binjhals have their own festivals. *Karma* is observed on the 11th day of *Bhadrab* (August-September) when the deity, *Karamasani* is worshipped for their good fortune. On that day the unmarried boys bring *Karam* tree representing the deity. While returning from the forest in a procession the boys and the girls sing amorous songs and dance to the tune of musical instruments. The *Karam* tree is planted in the center of the village. The priest known as *Jhankar* worships *Karam Devta*. Unboiled rice, milk, sweets and liquor are offered to the deity. Then *Jhankar* narrates the story of *Karamasani* to the villagers. This is followed by dancing, singing and beating of drums, which continues till the immersion of the *Karmsani* on the following day.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

BINJHAL*

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IDENTITY

The Binjhal one of the 62 tribal groups living in Odisha, who come in between settled agriculturists and hunter-gatherer stages of economy. They are largely found in the Bargarh district or more particularly in the undivided Sambalpur district of Odisha. Besides, they are also scattered in the neighbouring districts like Bolangir, Sundargarh and Kalahandi.

The community name 'Binjhal' is the combination of two terms 'Bin' and 'Jhal'. 'Bin' means 'without' and 'Jhal' means 'sweat' which connotes that they are capable of taking great strains, facing hazards and doing hard labour without sweating. Some of the Binjhals say that, their name is derived from *Bindhyabasini*, their tutelary deity. According to ethnographers namely, Russell and Hiralal (1916), the community is synonymous to Binjhvars inhabiting Raipur and Bilaspur area of Madhya Pradesh and are offshoot of the Baiga tribe but are comparatively civilized than the latter group. 'O' Malley also describes them as *Binjhvars*.

Linguistically, they are said to be of Dravidian origin or an ethnic group branched out from a tribe inhabiting Raipur and Bilaspur districts of Chhattisgarh. In Orissa they speak in the Sambalpuri dialect of Oriya except a few Binjhals of Sundargarh district who have retained their own dialect. The Binjhals living in Kalahandi district have adopted Laria as their mother tongue. They use Bariha or Singh Bariha as their surname.

* Published in the Photo Handbook on Binjhal, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar, 2015

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They are of medium statured, long-headed with a tendency towards mesocephaly. They have a very high nasal index suggesting a flat nose on a broad face. Their skin colour varies from dark brown to fair.

Regarding the origin of this tribe, ethnographers have different opinions. Some opine that, the Binjhal came from the Bindhya, Satpura and Aravalli hills of Madhya Pradesh to their present habitat in the district of Sambalpur, Odisha, where they are mainly found. According to Russell and Hiralal (1916:Vol.II, 329), the Binjhals are the off-shoot of the primitive Baigas but are comparatively a more civilized tribe. O'Malley (1932:88) who refers them as Binjhal or Binjhvars is of opinion that they are of aboriginal descent who appears to have been among the earliest inhabitants of the district of Sambalpur, Odisha. The tradition of the Binjhal associates them with the Vindhya hills and their former habitat is believed to have been Ratanpur in Chhatisgarh, from where they moved east ward in the district to Borasambar area of Sambalpur district. The legend is that their original ancestors (twelve archer brothers) were the sons of Vindhyabasini. The popular epithet - 'Bariha' by which a Binjhal takes pride in calling himself is derived from the heroic pursuit of 'Barha' a wild boar as narrated in the legend

Population

The population of Binjhal as per 1991 census was 1,19,929 (Males 60,979 and Females 58,950) registering a sex ratio of 967 females for 1000 males. This has decreased marginally by -1.51% in 2001 census in which there are total 1,18,116 persons of the tribe including 59,635 males and 58,481 females with the sex ratio improving to 981 females per 1000 males. In 2011 census their population has risen to 1 37 040 comprising 68 810 males and 68 230 females registering a sex ratio of 992 females per 1000 males and decadal growth rate of 16.02 per cent. Their population is largely concentrated in the districts of Sambalpur and Bolangir.

Literacy

The literacy rate of the Binjhal as per 1961 census was very low i.e., 8.20 percent (males 14.45% and females 2.05%) indicating that importance was not given for education and more particularly for female education. It rose up marginally to 10.50 percent in 1971 (males 18.26%, females 2.98%), up to 13.80 percent in 1981 (males 23.84%, females 3.83%), jumped up to 24.13 percent in 1991 (males 36.35%, females 11.68%), substantially went up to 41.49 percent in 2001 (males 52.71%, females 25.50%) and in 2011 it has reached 57.16 per cent (68.07 percent for males and 46.21 per cent for females). In the present day context the people both male and female have shown interest to educate themselves which is indicated by the pattern of growth in their literacy rates over successive censuses.

Dress and Ornaments

The Binjhal are identified by their traditional dress, ornaments and tattoo marks. Males wear coarse *dhoti* around their waist which goes down to the knee.

One end of the *dhoti* is kept hanging like a tail from the waist at the back. In addition they tie a napkin around the waist and invariably carry a bow and arrows as weapons as a mark of their heroic pursuit when they go to interior regions. Binjhal women wear coarse *saree* (*kopta*) around the waist covering up to the knee. One end of the *saree* is thrown over the shoulder cross wise to cover the upper portion of the body. They use bangles called *bandasia*, *chudi*, *kataria* and *khagla* (neck band) which are made of silver. *Khagla* is their favourite ornament although in addition to that they use necklaces of beads. Use of *bahasuta* and *bahatoda* around the arm and *painru* made of silver around the heels is a mark of tradition. The children go naked up to five or six years, then they use rags as napkins. School going children wear shirts, frocks, shorts. Now-a-days, with the change of time, the affluent women are using gold ornaments and the males wear shirt and banyan when they go to the market or relative's house. Glass and plastic bangles and silver necklaces have become very much popular among the Binjhal women.

SETTLEMENT AND HOUSING

Binjhals live in medium sized villages inhabited by at least twenty families and maximum by fifty families. Their settlement pattern is of linear type i.e., the houses are situated on both sides of the village street. Exception to this type is also noticed. At times seven to eight families have a common courtyard.

They have small houses consisting of one or two small rooms with verandah both in front and back side of the house. Some people construct small kitchen room but most of the people enclose one portion of the verandah to be used as kitchen while on the other side paddy is pounded. The walls are plastered with mud and cow dung. The gable shaped and straw thatched roof is supported by bamboo and wooden structure. Traditional village houses were small and without any window for passage of light and ventilation. Interestingly, like some other tribal groups the Binjhals keep their fowls and goats in the living room. Cattle are sheltered in separate sheds.

They live in unhygienic condition. Their small houses having no window lack ventilation and lighting. The keeping of fowls and goats in the bed room makes it dirty. As the courtyard belongs to a number of families nobody cares to clean it. The garbage dumped at the backyard makes the surrounding filthy.

The Binjhal households have a variety of possessions. They possess some important and productive economic assets like agricultural implements, domestic animals, silver and brass metal articles for their daily use, storage bin to store seeds of different kinds. For husking paddy the Binjhals have a heavy and hollow wooden mortar, which is thrust into the floor with a long wooden pestle whose lower end is fastened with an iron band. They use earthen cooking pots. Ladles and utensils are made of brass and bell metal or aluminum. They use several types of basket

traps for catching fish. The affluent ones have modern accessories like T.V., electric fan, radio, bicycle or bikes etc.

SOCIAL LIFE

Being an endogamous tribe the Binjhal is divided into a number of exogamous divisions called Bansas (clans). The clan structure is very strong. These Bansas regulate the sex and marriage and it a taboo to have sexual relationship among the members of the same Vansas. Bagh (tiger), Nag (cobra), Amori (immortal), Endga (male sexual organ), Duduka (of little intellect), Keshra (bison horn), Khusal, Duguke, Kamati, Mahainga, Marthi and Bentakar are some of their *bansa* names which are used as surnames also. Other surnames are Lartha, Mullick, Lahar, Samni, Kharsel, Mahi, Bariha, Singh Bariha etc.

Each Bansais divided in to a number of patri-lineages, which embrace all the agnatic male descendants of a common ancestor, their wives and children. These lineages have names like Suryabanshi, Rajput, Chauhan, Nagbanshi etc. After marriage a woman loses the membership of her paternal lineage to become a member of her husband's lineage. Again a lineage is sub-divided into a number of families. The descent is traced through male line only.

The Binjhal family is mostly nuclear and patrilineal. It consists of a man, his wife, unmarried sons and daughters and sometimes the brothers, sisters and the grandchildren. The family property and surnames are transmitted from father to son. The family functions as an economic and social unit under the supervision of the father who is the head of the family. On important issues the father may consult his wife and grownup children before taking his decision. After the death of the father the eldest son becomes the head of the family.

Women play a great socio-economic role in the Binjhal family. They participate in agricultural operations, animal husbandry, fishing, collection of firewood from the forest, besides, attending to routine household chores like fetching of water for domestic consumption, cooking, child care and housekeeping. But the Binjhal women do not enjoy equal status with their male counterparts. A woman has no right to inherit property so long as there is at least one male issue of her parents. She cannot take part in the deliberation of tribal councils at different levels. Yet for her major contributions for the family, she holds an influential position. She is always consulted in any vital issue. She enjoys the liberty of selecting her spouse and if she cannot pull on well with her husband she can divorce him and remarry another man of her choice.

In a Binjhal family, both the husband and wife bear the responsibility of rearing the children, giving them training and arranging their marriage. Grandparents are paid due respect by the younger members in the family. The relationship between grandparents and grandchildren and between younger brother and his elder brother's wife, between a girl and her elder brother's wife's

brother is of joking. The relationship between the elder brother and his younger brother's wife is of avoidance. They are not allowed to touch each other. The father-in-law and mother-in-laws are respected by a daughter-in-law who does not utter their names. A married woman addresses her husband not by his name but as father of so and so.

LIFE CYCLE :

Child Birth

In the Binjhal society, pregnancy and child birth is one of the most important events in the life of a woman. The main purpose of marriage is to make a family by begetting children to continue the family line. More over to become a mother is the ever cherished desire of a married woman in a tribal society. A child is a binding force who bridges the relationship between the husband and wife. Like all other societies, in the Binjhal society, children are the source of joy and future hope of the parents. They became the economic assets of the parents.

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

When a child is born, birth pollution is observed for a period of 21 days. The first purificatory rite (*chathi*) is held on the 6th day and on the second(*ekusia*), on the 21st day as post-delivery rituals. Till the observance of *chathi* rite the mother is not allowed to touch anything or enter the kitchen. On the sixth day, both mother and child take a purificatory bath. Their clothes are washed and the house is cleaned. The occasion is celebrated by a feast hosted for the kith and kin.

The name giving ceremony is held either during the *chathi* on the sixth day or on *ekusia* on the 21st day. The service of *Gunia's*(sorcerer) is sought for to select the name of the child. Generally a male child takes the name of his grandfather or great grandfather and a female child, the name of her grandmother or great grandmother. The *Gunia* utters *mantras* and shakes some paddy in a winnowing fan. He then utters the name of the ancestors and throws paddy on the floor. He repeats the act till two paddies fall jointly and the name uttered at that time is selected for the child. Then the elders present there bless the child and take part in the feast hosted by the family.

The mother takes care of the child. When the mother goes out to attend out-side chores, she leaves the child in care of grand parents or elderly children in the family. As long as the child is breastfed, the mother may arrange a substitute to feed it when she has to go out. Weaning take place at the age of 2 to 3 or after the

second child is born. Even after this, occasional suckling is not denied to the child. No efforts are made to teach the child to talk nor it is given any toilet training. The child learns the habits by observing others as he/she grows up.

Puberty

A girl among the Binjhal tribe, at the age of 6 to 7 years is traditionally made to marry to a *Mahua tree* in a ceremony called Kundanbari. When the first menstruation (Puspabati) occurs in the girl, she is kept confined into a room for 7 days. During that time she never comes out in front of any male member of the village. After 7 days she takes a bath with turmeric paste and puts on a new *saree* and bangles. She is also given a special garland. The occasion is celebrated with feasting and marry-making by other girls of the village.

Marriage :

The Binjhal are endogamous and follow the rule of exogamy at clan and lineage levels. The clans and the lineages primarily regulate marriage alliances and indicate descent and social status. Cross-cousin marriage with mother's, brother's, daughter is not allowed and hence, punishable in their society. Junior levirate and sororate marriage is allowed. Monogamy is the usual form of marriage but in some cases polygyny including sororal and non-sororal polygamy is permitted. Child marriage is not preferred.

They prefer adult marriage. A boy can marry at the age of 18-22 and a girl between 16-20 years. Marriage by negotiation "biha" is commonly preferred and practised by them. Other modes of acquiring mates that are also in vogue are marriage by service (*ghar join*), love marriage (*udlia*), marriage by capture (*ghicha*) and marriage by intrusion (*paisa mundi*). Bride price is customary and it is paid both in cash and kinds before the marriage ceremony.

The wedding rite is performed at the bride's residence and a feast is hosted by both the families. In the evening bridegroom along with his party returns to their village. The nuptial ceremony (*asthamangala*) is performed at the groom's residence on the eighth day. A married woman can be recognized if she wears *lac* bangles.

Divorce

Divorce though rarely occurs is permitted by the Binjhal society. It generally takes place due to maladjustment or misunderstanding between the spouses. Sometimes infidelity or sterility of the wife also leads to divorce. If the wife is found guilty her parents have to return the bride price. When the husband is at fault the bride price is forfeited. Children of a divorced couple mostly remain with their father. Remarriage is allowed for widower, widows and divorces.

Death

Like many other tribal communities, the Binjhal bury the dead. They have a strong belief that when a man dies his soul roams in and around his family and take rebirth as grandson. The death ritual among the Binjhal is observed for ten days. All socio-religious observances of the bereaved family remain suspended during this period. On the third day following death the first purification ceremony called *Telais* observed. The house and courtyard are washed with cow dung mixed in water and the old earthen cooking pots are thrown away. The male mourners get themselves shaved by a barber and take a purificatory bath. The female mourners pair nails and take bath after anointing turmeric paste.

For the final mortuary rite on the 10th day, the members of both the paternal and maternal side of the deceased are invited to attend the ritual. A community feast (*karanjia*) is arranged on the eleventh day. After one year the secondary death ritual (*barsokia*) is observed.

LIVELIHOOD

The Binjhal pursue settled cultivation, hunting and gathering, animal husbandry and fishing in the streams and rivers. But they are settled agriculturists. Agriculture is their main source of livelihood. For them land is not only of great economic value but it also accords social prestige. Some of them also work as agricultural and construction labourers. The majority of them being marginal landholders, the number of agricultural and casual labourers is increasing. Presently some members of tribe are found to be engaged in services in Government and Non-Government establishments and actively participate in modern politics. Some of them work as daily labours and agricultural labourers.

The principal crop grown by the Binjhals in their fields is paddy. Besides, they cultivate pulses, summer and winter vegetables such as brinjal, tomato, chilly, cucumber, and pumpkin in their *Bari* (backyards) land. Some Binjhal farmers also grow *til* and sugarcane.

Food & Drinks

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

They are mostly non-vegetarian (*ambissi*) rice and wheat are their staple cereals. They usually use mustard oil for cooking but sometimes use Mahua oil (*tole-tel*). They are in the habit of eating snake, rat, pork and red ant, besides fowls, goats and pigeons. A small section of them who have become 'Bhagat' (devotees) have turned pure vegetarians (*bissio*).

Both men and women occasionally consume alcoholic beverages either homemade or brought from the market. During social and religious functions they drink liberally and smoke tobacco. Men mostly use narcotics like *guraku* (a paste prepared with tobacco dust mixed with molasses) and smoke cigarette, *bidi* and an indigenous cheroot (*pika*). The people also chew betel leaves and offer it to the guests who visit to their house as a mark of respect.

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

The Binjhal profess a religion of animism with admixture of elements of Hinduism as they have been considerably influenced by the religious beliefs and practices of the caste Hindus. Bindhya Basini is their supreme deity. Her original abode lies in the Bindhya Hill of Madhya Pradesh. Their mythological ancestors – *Barabhai Bentakars* (twelve brothers who were archers) brought the deity from Bindhya hills and installed her on the Nrusinghanath Hills in Sambalpur district where a stone in shape of a woman represents the deity. She looks after the welfare of the Binjhals and protects them from all dangers.

Besides Bindhya Basini, they worship deities like Nrusinghnath, Ramji, Karam Sani, Durgran, Baralgudha and Ghasin Devi. Other important deities whom they worship are *Dongar Devta* – the forest god as well as *Mulen Devi* and *Dula Devta* who are their family deities. A few bangles kept in the corner of house represent *Mulen Devi*. She is offered sweets, fruits and sacrifices. A barren she-goat is sacrificed to her when the first child of a couple in the family is born. *Dula Devata* is worshipped on all important occasions in the family. Due to their contact with their Hindu neighbours, they have adopted a number of Hindu gods and goddesses and pay reverence to Lord Jagannath, Siva, Laxmi, Kali etc. The cult of ancestor worship is prevalent among them.

They also worship a number of natural spirits as well as their family, clan and village deities. They have their sacred specialists from their own community or from other communities who perform their life cycle rituals and worship their deities. Their traditional priest is known as *Jhankar*

Festivals :

The Binjhal observe a number of festivals which include their traditional festivals and a number of Hindu Festivals like Karma, Harali Parab, Pusa Punei or Madhen Parab, Magh Parab, Mahula Bhaja Parab, Nuakhia, Dola Purnima, Janmastami, Dasara and Diwali. The festivals have socio-religious significance. These festive occasions are celebrated with merry making and both the men and women singing and dancing by beating of drums throughout the night.

Their important festival- Karma is observed on the 11th day of Bhadrab (August-September) when the deity, Karamasani is worshipped for their good fortune. Badakarmas held once in every three years in which after worshipping Karamasani, a party of young boys and girls of a group of villages go on a dancing

trip to five adjacent villages. They stay one night in each village and dance there. The host villages make necessary arrangements for their food and accommodation.

The Harali Parab meant for welfare of the children is held in the month of Srabana (July-August). On that day different types of cakes and porridges are prepared. Pusa Punei or Madhen Parab is observed in the month of Pausa (December-January) after the harvest of paddy crop. The village deity is worshipped with offerings of rice, pulses and animal sacrifices. In the Magha Parab, Dangar Devta is worshipped by offering sweets and fruits and sacrificing fowls and goats.

Makulbhaja Parab is held in the month of Chaitra (March-April) marks the occasion of first eating of Mahua flower. The village deity is worshipped on this occasion by offering Mahua flower.

SOCIAL CONTROL

The affairs of the Binjhal were being managed by their traditional village *panchayat* composed of the village elders and functionaries viz, the Ganat who officiates in marriage and other social functions, Jhankar who serves as village priest and Chowkidar - the village Watchman. They held meetings to deal with the problems that affect their social life. A decision in the village meeting was being made by the consensus of all members present there. The offender was being punished with fine in cash and kind which were being utilized for a common feast.

But since the last century, they have formed their village and inter-village councils which handle their customary matters. Each village has a traditional council of village elders (*beheran*) called *gram jatipanchayat* headed by the secular chief-Behera to look after the matters relating to the customary rules and welfare of the community. This village council is very powerful and deals with cases like intra-community disputes and issues like divorce, adultery, rape, elopement, violation of traditional norms or customary rules of their society, disrespect or insult to the traditional village council and theft etc.

Beyond the village level, they have an apex council known as "Saolakh Vindyagiribasi Binjhal Samaja Sangathan", constituted to ensure unity among members of the community and to bring reforms to their society in the context of the changes occurring in their society in the present times. An annual meeting of the apex council is held for three days every year at Padampur to discuss matters relating to inter-community disputes, divorce, illegal transfer of land etc and other matters those could not be resolved at the village level. This council has the right to ex-communicate persons who committed grave offences, but in case of minor offences the council imposes fines to the offender.

CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT:

For all round development of the tribals, the basic approach of the Govt. in its Plans and Programmes is to strengthen their socio-economic base by way of modernizing their means and sources of livelihood such as agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry and allied activities by making them more productive and profitable and there by gradually minimizing their dependency on forest based subsistence activities. The goal is to raise all the target families above the poverty line by raising their socio-economic and educational status and bringing about improvement in their quality of life without sacrificing the best values of their age old culture.

In this early 21st Century when the world is rapidly moving to the age of high technology, the Binjhals cannot remain isolated from the process of external influences and changes. The way of life and world view of the Binjhals has been changing by their exposure to the changing world. They are now aware of the development programmes being implemented by the government and non-government agencies and coming forward to avail the opportunities. It has effected changes in their life style especially in the sectors relating to education, health and sanitation, communication, livelihood, environment, housing, infrastructure etc. Introduction of modern agriculture by way of supply of improved variety of seeds, irrigation, market support for disposal of produce combined with various poverty alleviation and food, health and livelihood security, women empowerment programmes, etc. have brought remarkable visible changes in their socio-economic life.

Their overall literacy rate including that of their women has increased which indicates that there is a growing interest developed among them to come into the fold of education. Regarding health care, the Binjhals are becoming inclined to use modern medicines for any critical ailment. They are aware of the good effect of family planning and many of them adopted it. The use of modern appliances like radio, televisions and other modern sophisticated gadgets shows that the Binjhals have developed a passion to change their style of life, living and livelihood in tune with the changing times.

BINJHIA*

Prasanta Kumar Mohapatra¹

The Binjhia migrated from Nagpur region since many generations back and settled in the Gangpur State. They came in search of cultivable land through the province of Bihar and finally settled in the region which was known as Gangpur State. The concentrations of the Binjhias are found in the villages lying in the northernmost region of Sundargarh district such as Biramitrapur, Jalangbir, Kardega, Bankuba and Ranakota, etc. They also inhabit the contiguous areas of Bihar Province as these villages lie on the border of the two provinces viz. Orissa and Bihar. Population distribution is given in the following table:-

Sl. No.	District	Population		
		Male	Female	Total
1.	Bolangir	40	42	82
2.	Sundargarh	1,157	983	2,140
3.	Keonjhar	3	5	8
Total		1,200	1,030	2,230

The language they speak is known as Jaspuri- a crude type of Hindi. They have, in course of time, incorporated many Oriya words into their language. They also speak Oriya and Hindi languages. The dresses they wear are similar to those of the local Hindu people. The houses are thatched by indigenous tiles prepared by themselves which are known as Khaparas. Usually two rooms and one elaborate verandah on the front constitute the entire house. They also construct cowsheds and poultry sheds. They do not eat beef and are not habituated to rear pigs.

*Published in ADIBASI, Vol. V, No.3, (Special Issue), TRB, Bhubaneswar 1963-64, pp.163-64

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The Binjhias are divided into seven exogamous units and call them as *gotras*. They are Matha, Majhi, Karji, Padhan, Badek, Mirdha and Paras-Ganjhu. Cross cousin marriage is prevalent and father's sister's daughter is mostly preferred. Marriage rituals are similar to those of the local Hindu people and Brahmins are called upon to perform the marriage ceremony. They also use the local Harijans as drummers in their marriage ceremonies. Bride prices constitute 3 to 4 Khandis of rice (1 *khandi* equivalent to one *maund*), clothing for all the members of bride's house and one goat.

The festivals observed by the Binjhias are Hindu festivals like Ratha Jatra (car festival), Gahma Purnima and Dashera. The only festivals observed by the local tribals and Binjhias is Karma festival. Girls and women fast on this occasion and worship the branch of Karma tree. Dancing and drinking continue for the whole day. The festival is observed, as the Binjhias say, for the welfare of women folk. On other festive days like Ratha Jatra and Dashera, the Binjhias worship no god but they butcher cocks and goats and eat and go to see the festivals observed by the Hindus nearby. Gramsiri or the village goddess is worshiped by the Kalo-the village priest of Binjhias.

The Binjhias depend on the cultivation of *gurji*, paddy, maize and *ragi*, pulses like *kolath*, *arhad*, *mung*, *biri*, *ganegi* and oil seeds like *til* and *rasi*. They also grow vegetables like brinjal, tomato and chillies. The Binjhias say that formerly they were habituated to taking wheat and oat more than rice but the soil here is not suitable for cultivating wheat and oat. Gradually they had to abandon the habit.

With regard to their relations with Binjhals they say that they have absolutely no connection with Binjhals. They have heard about the Binjhals but never had any contact with them. They say that the Binjhals eat snake, beef and other dirty things and they are in no way similar to them.

BINJHIA*

S. C. Mohanty¹

BINJHIA are considered as an offshoot of the primitive Baiga tribe. They are an agricultural tribe. As per 2011 census their population is 2 17 395 (1 06 515 males and 1 10 880 females) and sex ratio is 1041. Their total literacy rate is 63.71%. It is 75.74 percent for males and 52.27 percent for females. They are largely concentrated in Sundergarh district of Western Odisha.

The typical Binjhia settlements are large and homogenous with different exogamous clan members living in separate clusters.

Binjhia are basically agriculturists. They also take up wage earning and forestry. Their farmlands are owned by lineages. They are still following barter system at the village community level as well as in the weekly markets. The small shops in the village are called *Kuchuni*. Women take an active part in all forms of socio-economic transactions.

They worship a number of natural spirits. Their village deity, *Budharaja's* abode is located in a thick patch of forest at one corner of the village. They have the cult of ancestor worship - *pitrupuja* at the clan and lineage levels. They observe festivals like *Badakarma*, *Khandadhua*, *Durga Puja*, *Holi*, *Diali*, *Puspunein*, *Nuakhai*, *Bhai Jiuntia* etc. *Jankar*, their traditional village priest conducts rituals and propitiate the deities.

Their social, economic and religious life is strongly influenced by a strong bond of kinship among clan members. The structure of clan starts at level of an extended family called *dibiri*. A cluster of *dibiries* comprising a local group of families up to three generations form a *jama* - a minor lineage. Several *jamas* in a village constitute a major lineage - *Khumuri*. The latter make a small clan - *barga*. The clan is composed of *bargas* and headed by a *Gauntia*.

They prefer cross-cousin marriage and allow levirate, sororate and remarriage of widow, divorcees. Their birth pollution ends on the 6th day with the observance of name giving ceremony. They practise burial of the dead in grounds reserved for different lineages. Performance of death rites is a community affair wherein the lineage and the clan heads play leading roles.

* Unpublished article of 2000 updated in 2018

¹ Research Officer, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar

BINJHIA*

*H. S. Mishra*¹

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

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

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

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

* Published in Tribes of Orissa (revised edition), SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar 2004, pp. 99-100

¹ Research Officer, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

BINJHIA *

A. B. Ota ¹

A. Mall ²

IDENTITY

The Binjhia / Binjhoa, is a numerically small Scheduled Tribe of Odisha. They identify themselves as Vindhyaniwasi or Bindhyabasini Khyatriya. They are spread over the states of Bihar, Odisha, West Bengal and Madhya Pradesh. This tribe is mainly concentrated in the districts of Ranchi and Gumla of Jharkhand State.

They believe that their original homeland is Kolangiri located in the Vindhya valley in the former Central Provinces (now divided as Madhya Pradesh and Chhatisgarh States) from which they had gradually moved eastwards to Chhotanagpr, Keonjhar, Sundergarh and Barasobmar estate of Bargarh districts. But after settling down at Chhotnagpur, they were called as Binjhia by their neighbours. They are also known as Binjhawars in some areas, particularly in the Chhatishgarh area. Their popular myth tells that they are one of the important communities, which had close association with Lord Ram. In Odisha, they are mostly found in Sundergarh district and sparsely distributed in the adjoining areas. They live along with other tribes and castes in the plains.

As per 2011 census, the Binjhia population in Odisha is 11 419, of which males number 5787 and females, 5632. Their sex ratio is 973 females per 1000 males and decennial growth rate is 20.47%. Their literacy rate in 2011 census is 57.85% i.e. 69.98% for males and 45.25% for the females.

* Published in the Photo Handbook on Binjhia, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar, 2015

¹ Director, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar

² Deputy Director, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar

The Binjhia speak a crude type of Hindi known as Jaspuri in Chhatishgarh. Those living in Odisha do not have a separate language of their own. They speak a dialect that is a crude mixture of Odia and Hindi. Now, most of them speak Odia language and use Odia script. They can also understand and speak Sadri language.

Dress and Ornaments:

The dress pattern of the Binjhia is very simple. The males wear *dhoti* and *kurta* and the females wear *saree* and blouses like other neighbouring castes. Like other tribes, the Binjhia women adorn themselves with varieties of ornaments made of gold, silver, brass, nickel and aluminum. They are also fond of wearing different types of bead necklaces around their neck. The male children use shirts and pants and the girls use frocks, skirts and *salwars* purchased from the local market. The adult males of older generation keep long hair and knot them at the back and put on sacred thread and bead necklace around their necks. The Binjhia women make tattoo marks in the upper side of the palm, arm and forehead as a symbol of beauty.

SETTLEMENT AND HOUSING

The Binjhias mostly reside in multi-ethnic villages, but in separate hamlets maintaining their distinct ethnic identity. They like to construct their houses adjacent to their paddy fields. Their houses are rectangular in shape consisting of two rooms and a verandah in front. The walls of the house are either made of mud or wooden/bamboo frame plastered with mud and cow dung. The gable shaped roof is either thatched with straw or *khappar* (country made tiles).

Site selection for construction of a new house is done by the traditional priest (Pahan / Kalo) who puts some rice in the selected site and covers it with a banyan leaf. The next morning, if the grains are found undisturbed, they consider the site auspicious for construction of a new house. After selection of the site, the Pahan conducts *puja* at that place and fixes a pole and a branch of a mango tree on the ground as an auspicious sign before laying the foundation of the house. The well-to-do persons in their society construct *pucca* houses. The Binjhias paint their walls in different colours on the belief that, it obstructs the evil energy to enter in to the house.

Household Materials

Bell metal, aluminum, iron and brass utensils, earthen pots of different sizes, bamboo baskets, agricultural implements and some fishing and hunting weapons are found in a Binjhia house for day-to-day use. Coming in contact with other caste people, now they possess modern gadgets like TV, fans, two wheelers, cell phones etc and these have become very popular among them.

LIVELIHOOD

Agriculture is the mainstay of the Binjhia economy. They are very laborious. Labour cooperatives are found among them. They grow paddy, maize, *ragi*, pulses, oil seed in their fields to get their food. They also keep cattle for cultivation and milking purpose. Though Binjhias are agriculturists, they also work as daily labourers in industries, construction sites. They sale minor forest produce collected from the jungle to supplement their income. They prepare ropes and mats from the *sabai* grass. Besides, they prepare umbrella from the *siali* leaf and broom stick from *berna* grass and sell these in the market for cash. Now, many among them prefer to work in industries and mining quarries that fetch them more income.

Food and Drinks:

They are non-vegetarians but do not eat beef and pork. Beef eating is strictly prohibited. Their staple food is rice. Watered rice is very popular among them which they like to take in the morning with onion, salt and tamarind. Besides, they take *suan* and *ragi* gruel, different types of pulses, vegetables, fish, meat, egg in their meal. They collect different types of fruits, roots, tubers, leaves from the forest, hunt birds and animals and catch fish from the streams, canals and ponds for their consumption. They grow various types of vegetables and fruits in their kitchen garden. Unlike some of the tribal communities, they take cow's milk.

They prepare cakes from rice, and beer (*handia*) from rice, *ragi*, *suan* and consume these items during festive occasions. They also prepare a non-alcoholic drink from the bark of *charei-gudhi* tree for their consumption. They believe that taking the flesh of birds like pigeon (Peruan) and dove (Pondki) cures tuberculosis and that of bat cures asthma. The kids and women are prohibited to take flesh of any kind of sacrificial animals and birds.

Now-a-days, they have added *chapati* prepared from wheat, *ragi*, maize or *bajra* to their traditional menu. They do not take non-vegetarian food items during Diwali and Nuakhai Festivals. They like to chew betel and tobacco and some of them also smoke tobacco.

SOCIAL LIFE

The Binjhia is an endogamous community. They are divided into several *gotras* (clans) such as Kaensa, Kainsaba, Nag, Amrut, Dadual, Kusha, Bhairab, Kapil, Kashyap, Koshik, Agnihotri etc. These clans are ranked in a hierarchical order with the Nag and Kaensa occupying the highest position and others remain lower to them. Amrut and Bhairab *gotras* are accorded the lowest position. The Nag *gotra* is divided into three distinct sub groups such as Pradhan, Ganju and Badek. Marriage or sexual relationship within one's own clan is strictly prohibited

because members of the same clan regard themselves as brothers and sisters as the descendants from a common ancestor.

The Bhunjia tribe has patrilineal, patrilocal and patriarchal pattern of family. Any son can inherit the father's traditional social position. The inheritance of paternal property and succession goes from father to sons. The oldest son receives a bigger share. The daughters are not entitled to have share in their parental property. In absence of a male child, the father has the right to make a gift of his property to his wife and daughter. Parents without any issue may adopt the nephew or keep the son-in-law as *gharjammai*, who may inherit their property.

Both nuclear and joint families are found among the Binjhias. Though patrilocal rule of residence is followed after marriage, neolocal residence is becoming common now-a-days because of change of place by employment and migration. However, at present the rules are not strictly followed. The eldest member acts as the head of a group of paternal families. A widow generally enjoys the right over the property of her husband until her death, but forfeits her claims if she leaves the house by remarriage.

The Binjhias claim themselves superior to other tribes and claim the status of a clean caste in the local social hierarchy, next to Brahman and Gosain and equal to the Rajputs. However, they accept water from Brahman, Gauda, Bhuinya, Bhokta, Agarua and Rautia. But the Binjhia women do not take cooked food from any other caste except Brahmin caste. Sometimes, they enter into the bond of rituals kinship such as *Dharam Bhai* with members of other communities irrespective of their social status.

The Binjhias keep good relations with their neighbors who belong to Munda, Oraon, Bhumij, Gond, Kumbhar, Kamar, Tanti, Rautia, Khadia, Ahir, Muslim and Brahmin communities who help each other at the time of need and participate in the socio-cultural functions and community feasts.

Life Cycle:

Pregnancy and Childbirth

Family is one of the important units of social organization. After marriage, every couple expects child in due course of time. When a married woman becomes pregnant, she has to observe some socially prescribed taboos such as to visit the jungle and to take the flesh of sheep (*bhedi*) and goat (*boka*), big fish, spicy food, alcoholic drinks and the like. A sorcerer (*guniya*) is called to examine the omens and declare the future events that may be crucial in the life of the expected child.

Experienced and elderly women from Ghasi or Domb community act as midwives at the time of delivery of the baby. The presence of the elderly woman of the family or the neighbourhood is also needed during this time. After the delivery, the umbilical cord is cut by the midwife and buried outside the house.

Then, the newborn baby is bathed and the mother cleans her body with tepid water. A pot full of rice bear (*handia*) is presented to the midwife for her service.

The special foods like rice, *dal* and various cooked vegetables are fed to the parturient mother and she is restricted to take watered rice, sour items, spicy food, brinjal, parched rice and beer. She is given gourd and papaya for lactation. It is believed that if the mother takes the milk of the tiger with gruel, then lactation will be more. The baby takes the mother's milk for one year.

They observe birth pollution for 21 days. During this period, the family is tabooed against attending any socio-religious function and the mother is not allowed to do any household chores. On the twenty-first day, purificatory rites are observed followed by the name giving ceremony. A name is given to the baby by a Brahman priest after performing due ceremonies.

The first rice feeding ceremony is performed when the baby becomes seven to eight months old. They give non-veg items to the kids after he attains two years of age, but they are totally prohibited to take any types of intoxicants. In case of male child, a sacred thread ceremony is performed before he attains the age of twenty without which he cannot marry.

Puberty

The Binjhia girls usually attain puberty at the age of 13 to 15 years. At that time, the girl is considered unclean and is restricted to take part in any social and religious activities or touch any household articles. She is kept secluded in a room. Pollution period is observed for 5-7 days. During this time, children and men are not allowed to go to the girl and the girl is not allowed to go out and do any manual work. A ceremonial bath takes place after the pollution period is over and then, she is allowed to resume her routine activities.

Marriage

The Binjhia practice clan exogamy, monogamy and adult marriage. Normally marriage takes place when a boy attains the age of 20-25 years and the girl, 18-20 years. Though there are several modes of selecting a bride, marriage by negotiation is common among them and considered prestigious way of acquiring a mate, though it is an expensive affair. Still, marriage by capture, marriage by elopement, love marriage is in vogue in their society. Cross cousin marriage is also allowed among them. Marriage with father's sister's daughter or a girl from mother's sept is preferred.

In arranged marriages, an intermediary negotiates and settles the matrimony. One day before and during the day of marriage, the parents of the couple do not take food from any body's house and non-veg items. On the wedding day, the bride groom accompanied by a party comes to the house of the bride. The wedding rite is performed by a Brahman priest (Purohit). Putting

vermillion on the bride's forehead (*sindurdan*) and knotting the clothes of the bride and bridegroom together are essential rituals of marriage. A grand feast is arranged for the guests after the marriage ceremony is over.

The payment of bride price (*dam-gani*) is in vogue among the community. It includes 4 to 5 quintals of rice, clothes for bride's family members, pots, ornaments and a goat and some cash for drink. Coming in contact with other neighbouring communities, dowry (*daija*) system are now introduced in their society, which includes a few paddy containers, baskets, pots and ornaments depending upon the economic condition of the bride's parents.

Polygyny, widow remarriage and divorce are permissible in the Binjhia society. Divorce may be initiated either by the wife or the husband on the grounds like barrenness, adultery and laziness. In case of fault of the wife, her parents have to pay compensation to the husband before divorce is allowed. A younger brother can marry the widow of his elder brother. After death of his wife, the husband can marry his wife's younger sister but not her elder sister.

Death Rites

After the death of a person, they cremate the dead body. The dead bodies of the children and persons dying of unnatural causes are buried. The head of the dead is placed towards north and the pyre is lit by a senior kin of the deceased.

The period of mourning and pollution lasts for ten days. In the deceased's family, cooking is restricted up to ten days until the purificatory rites are over. During these days, they take cooked food from their neighbors belonging to their own community, except non veg items. On the 10th day, barber shaves the male relatives of the deceased and mortuary rites are performed according to Hindu traditions. The Brahmin priest performs the death rituals and it extends up to the twelfth day. A feast is arranged for the guests and relatives by the deceased's family. In some cases, five bones of the dead are collected from the funeral pyre and thrown in the Triveni at Prayag or in the Ganges at Kashi after few days. Some also offer *pinda* to their dead at the river Gaya.

RELIGION, RITUALS AND FESTIVALS

The Binjhia are followers of the Sarna religion and worship the Sarna deity called Gramsiri installed under a tree in their sacred grove, normally lying at the outskirts of the village. The priest (Pahan/ Kalo) conducts the communal worship of this deity by sacrificing a black goat and hen. Any Wednesday is selected as an auspicious day to conduct worship in honour of Sarna deity. Women and husband of a pregnant woman do not visit the sacred grove or Sarna.

The Binjhias worship their respective clan deities called Bansa Deota and Samalai Maa - the chief tribal deity of the whole region. They also worship Hindu

Gods and Goddesses. As the ancestors of this tribe are believed to be the inhabitants of Kolangiri in the Vindhya valley, they worship Vindhyabasini Devi who is the patron goddess of this tribe. Their traditional community priests (Pahan/Kalo) as well as the Brahmin priests officiate in different rites, functions and festivals. The Addha and Baiga assist the traditional priest (Pahan/Kalo) in different religious activities. They also maintain temples for worship. The religious places and temples are painted with pictures of gods and goddesses, birds and animals in different colours by the Binjhias.

They believe in the existence of ghosts, witches and malevolent spirits which may bring misfortunes, miseries and diseases to them.

The Binjhias observe Hindu festivals like Askhya Tritiya, Raja, Dusera, Gamha Purnima, Ratha Yatra, Holi, Diwali, Sri Ram Navami and Makar festivals. At the time of Dusera, they sacrifice animals and arrange feasts. Besides they also observe the festivals like Bhai Jiuntia, Pua Jiuntia, Karma, Sarhul, Janisikar etc. Their most important festivals are Sarana Puja, Rath Yatra, Diwali and Karma Puja which are celebrated with pomp and ceremony. Each festival is enjoyed by preparation of special meals.

Music and Dance

Their folk songs and tales are still retained. Festive occasions are celebrated with dancing and singing by using musical instruments like drums, flute and string instruments etc.

SOCIAL CONTROL

In the localities of the Binjhia, both traditional village council and statutory Gram Panchayat are in operation. Yet their traditional community Panchayat constituted by the male representatives of each family and their village level community functionaries still continues to be effective. The traditional chief of the village called Ganju presides over the village council meetings. The post of Ganju is hereditary. One of the eldest persons of the village acts as the Vice-President and he is called Sian Ganju. Besides, the functionaries like the Katwal / Dakua – the village messenger and the village priest (Pahan/Kalo) and other members participate in the village council meetings.

The traditional community *panchayat* decides the matters relating to incest, beef eating, ill treatment to parents, adultery, theft etc. It generally awards the punishment to the offender in shape of cash and kinds which is utilized for arranging a community feast along with conducting some prescribed rituals. If one violates the rule of community endogamy, he/she is permanently out-casted from the society.

Now the Binjhias are represented by their elected leaders in the statutory Gram Panchayat and the cases of disputes except those relating to their customary

affairs are solved in that forum. In the present time, the officials of the Gram Panchayat appear to be more powerful and influential as they deal with the government and the planning and implementation of development programmes. Now, the Binjhias are politically more conscious and active than before.

DEVELOPMENT AND CHANGE

Due to modernization, development of infrastructure and other facilities and their prolonged contact with other caste people, changes are occurring in the socio-economic and political life of the Binjhia. Their literacy level has remarkably increased and their children are now enrolled in the schools to get education. Their means of livelihood has also changed. They have shifted their occupation from agriculture to industrial and other works. Though in the economic field, the Binjhias have made some progress, still they lag behind the non-tribals in the field of education.

The village level conflicts excluding their customary matters are now decided at the statutory Gram Panchayat level. They use both traditional and modern medicines for treatment of diseases. They use modern goods and services like electricity, radio, *gobar* gas, cell phone, TV, computer which have made their life comfortable.

Development interventions by the government and non-government agencies in their areas have certainly brought noticeable changes and development in their livelihood pattern and socio-cultural life providing them an opportunity to integrate themselves in the mainstream of the society at large. Yet they are struggling hard to preserve the time-tested values of their age old culture against the onslaught of planned change and modernization.

BIRHOR / MANKIRDIA *

*S. C. Mohanty*¹

BIRHOR/MANKIRDIA is an aboriginal group of people, simple and shy. They trap and eat monkeys and thus called as *Mankidia*, *Mankidi* or *Mankirdia*. In their tongue *Birhor* means *men of jungle*. The *jaggi*, settled group and the *uthulu*, nomadic group are the two main sections. The latter group is found in Oisha. They are of Kolarian origin and belong to Proto-Australoid group.

They speak Munda. They also speak Odia and are multilingual in habit. They claim to be the descendants of Sun. They are mostly found in forest areas of Sundargarh, Sambalpur, Keonjhar and Mayurbhanj districts. As per 2011 census their population is 2 17 395 (1 06 515 males and 1 10 880 females) and sex ratio is 1041. Their total literacy rate is 63.71%. It is 75.74 percent for males and 52.27 percent for females.

Birhor is a nomadic tribe. They are transhumants. They shuttle between market and forest. They repeatedly change their settlements, *tanda*. They select their settlement sites on the basis of proximity to sources of water and the local weekly market, and aboveboard, availability of *siali* fibres, jutes and monkeys. They construct cone shaped leaf huts, *kumba*, and dwell there.

The shrine for their clan god and dormitory houses is also made of leaves.

They pursue hunting and gathering economy, make ropes and rope made crafts out of *Siali* fibres and *jutes*, and when needed they work as labourers. They have minimum assets like coarse clothes, a few silver bead ornaments, earthen and aluminum utensils, bamboo baskets, axe, knife, bow and arrow, monkey catching nets and date palm mats.

They practise monogamy and proceed with marriage negotiations for adults only. Payment of bride price is prevalent. They believe in rebirth, bury the dead, observe life cycle rituals and lead a life of 'be happy and merry'.

* Unpublished article of 2000 updated in 2018

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THE BIRHOR AND THEIR WORLD VIEW *

*Dharanidhar Prasad Sinha*¹

In the present paper an effort has been made to examine the world view of the Birhor on three broad aspects:-

- (i) The Birhor themselves,
- (ii) The Birhor and their supernatural world and,
- (iii) The Birhor and their natural world.

The material for this paper have been drawn from the larger report written by the author in the basis of field investigation which he carried among the Birhor in 1957 in two of their settlements. One of them was the colony of the wandering Birhor founded recently for their rehabilitation by the Government at Jahengutua situated at Bishunpur Police Station, at a distance of 84 miles from Ranchi town. The other was their original leaf-hut settlement at Banari situated at a distance of five miles away from the former. The data incorporated in this paper are based mainly on observation, interview and the case histories of the selected Birhor of these settlements. These have been supplemented with their folk tales and anecdotes. It should however, be noted that in course of the field work only male members of different age grades were interviewed. The paper therefore has a limited scope.

The Setting of Birhor Life:

The Birhor settlements lie on the plateau of Chotanagpur, especially in the area which is covered with dense forest. The average elevation is some 2000 to 3000 feet and in order to reach them one has to go off the track through bushes and shrubs and small cliffs. The settlement which is called in the native dialect, 'Tanda', invariably is situated close to a stream or river. Wandering people, as most of them are, hardly think of digging well which is the general source of water supply for the most of the neighbouring tribals of the area. Their huts (*kumba*) which are made of leaves are purely temporary and it does not take a day even to erect one such hut single handed. The huts are of conical shape, hardly 5 to 6 feet

* Published in ADIBASI, Vol. III, Nos. 3 & 4, 1959, pp.17-25

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high, with an arched narrow entrance. One has to creep in to get inside. It is not possible to stand inside a hut except at the centre. A Tanda has nearly 10 to 20 *kumbas* (leaf huts). It comprises of a small migratory group; perhaps just sufficient to live about a year or so on the resources of the forest coming in a radius of 3 to 4 miles.

The Birhor numbered 2542 individuals in the state of Bihar during the last Census in 1941. At the time of Census they were distributed in Hazaribagh, Ranchi, Singhbhum and Palamau Districts of Chotanagpur Division. The population of the Birhor in 1891 was 1234 only. But since then the Birhor have wandered in the above mentioned districts as also in the contiguous district of Manbhum.

The Birhor have long since been called as expert rope makers and monkey hunters. During recent decades they have acquired another occupation of making wooden tubes. They make ropes from the bark of trees, hunt wild monkeys to eat their flesh and sell their hide and manufacture *kathauts* made of wood. These goods have a great demand among the neighboring tribes and the Birhor find a constant market. There are some slack seasons, especially rainy season when the production and sale of their manufactured goods decline and as a result they pass on a very difficult time. Their means of subsistence are too low to allow a saving which may sustain them for even a short period of time.

Very recently, since 1955, the Government of Bihar has attempted to rehabilitate a section of the migratory Birhor. A colony of 16 families was founded and lands were provided to them @ 5 acres per family for cultivation, but up till the time of writing this paper not all lands were reclaimed. Some families had, however, started kitchen garden for growing vegetables. This scheme was to supplement their traditional economy.

The huts in the Tanda are scattered. The hut of Ora Bonga, the clan god, is situated a little away from the huts of the Birhor. Even at the newly built colony where the houses are mud-built, the house of Ora Bonga is a leaf hut, Kumba. There are more than one clan inhabiting a Tanda and hence several huts for the clan gods, but all the settlers are invariably related either by consanguineal or affinal relationship.

Every Birhor Tanda has a Mukhiya (head man), Mati (priest and/or witch doctor) and a Kotwar (watch man) who are officials of the settlement. Since S.C Roy wrote on the Birhor in 1925 it seems the traditional name of the headman (*pradhan*), priest (*naya*), convenor of meetings (*digwar*), and witch doctor (*sonkha*) have undergone change. Some of the roles have been fused, such as that of the Mati, Naya and Sonkha; and some posts as that of Kotwar and Digwar have gone out of use. The services of the Mati in a Tanda are required on all rituals and religious ceremonies. His supernatural powers make him especially qualified to deal with the cases of illness which are presumed to be inflicted by evil eyes or sprits. The Mukhiya is always an experienced elder who helps in solving the

problems of the settlers. It is his responsibility to offer sacrifices to Ora Bonga for the security and peace of the Tanda, and in case, some calamity occurs he is accused for not propitiating the god to ward off the evil.

The Birhor themselves:

In course of the field work we came across one instance that the people got stirred and confused. It was like this. Charwa (52) who was until recently a settler at the newly built colony had engaged his son to work in a sand loading operation at Banari, 5 miles away, where the Birhor lived in their traditional leaf hut. In connivance with Charwa's son, a young boy of Banari kidnapped Budhu's wife from Jehangutua. Later one evening Dunga's son fell down and became unconscious. Everyone ran to the boy. Manjira, Budhram and other Matis of the settlement began to use their charms, but of no avail. In this confusion, everyone suspected Charwa, whose son had helped another boy in the recent scandal. All began to whisper, and soon every one cried, "This unfortunate incident was because of him". Charwa also learnt about it after he returned home from the forest. He was quiet, and quietly he slipped away from the settlement in the dead of night along with his belongings. The following morning people discovered him gone, and found the boy getting around.

In the Birhor world an individual is nothing. The consciousness of self, which the anthropologists find so dominating in complex societies, is simply lacking among the Birhor. This is obvious in the life-histories, folk-lore and in the anecdotes of the Birhor. From the preceding instances, it is clear that the role of an individual is insignificant among them. Neither the father of the ailing child, nor the man who was suspected to have inflicted the evil, could find ways for themselves. While the former sought help from the settlers who willingly came to his rescue, the latter silently fled away from the colony. One thing, very evident from the occasions witnessed was that a Birhor had very little of interest in initiating a problem however helpful he may think it to be for his own self. A Birhor does not fear; but he always takes things lightly. In the preceding case it was only when the settlers gathered round the ailing boy and began to whisper about the suspected evil eyes of Charwa, that the matter created confusion. Otherwise it might have gone un-noticed. There is an allied incident to attest it.

The wife of Budhu- a young Birhor of 24, of the same colony escaped from her husband's house. Budhu was extremely sorry for his wife, and more for the bride-price he had paid for her; which he said was extremely difficult to recover. He was helpless. He could not even assert himself to his people to fight for him and to get back his wife. Neither the settlers showed any anxiety, as it was evidenced on the former occasion. But this did not seem to reduce in any way the corporate and homogeneous life of the Birhor.

The Birhor have little worry about their impulses. Though they don't have vigorous sex life, as in some other tribes of the country, they do not have the

problem of sex. So far it does not lead to an incestuous relationship, sex license is given. But the Birhor restrain themselves from such acts, because of their belief that over indulgence is harmful. They give here, an impression of a strong self-confidence and ego-identity, which too again is evidenced from the life histories. In contrast to the sex, the Birhor have many anxieties about women; to be more precise, about their wives. Without wife a Birhor is scarcely a person. She is an asset, in many ways. She gives a status to her husband and lends help in all his spheres, right from economic to ritual. The link between husband and wife is very close at some important rituals. A Birhor does not dream of a divorce and in fact, it is extremely rare. It is a pride for a Birhor to have two wives and those who happen to get their elder brother's widow are considered fortunate. A Birhor does not have strong attachment with his parents nor there are many reasons for having conflict with parents. Even after marriage, when a Birhor man builds his separate hut, he remains in close association with his parents. In case, where the parents are invalid, the sons look after them, collect food and fuel for them and do all the rest without any reluctance. Usually a daughter goes away after marriage, but in some cases she stays with her husband in her parent's settlement, she plays a similar role, as the son does. Parents, on the other hand, do not interface with their children, grown up sons and daughters and allow them to be quite independent. Invalid children are, however, a source of great anxiety for the parents.

What is more important for a Birhor is his relationship with the people of the Tanda (the settlement). All the inhabitants of a Tanda go to the forest together for collecting fruits and barks of the trees. The hunting, which they often undertake, necessarily warrants a co-operative effort of all the settlers.

The Birhors of a Tanda face the world together as a single group. When one is threatened all are supposed to come to his support and usually they do so. A Tanda at this level is thus a unit. In case, there is a conflict within the Tanda, which is again a rare event, the Tanda splits, and one group moves down to another place. A Birhor looks to his Tanda as a ritual unit also, where all the Birhors are united among themselves in religious bond.

All this, however, does not deny the extension of Birhor world which primarily concentrates round his Tanda. A Birhor well recognizes his fellow brethren who live at different places and whom they meet frequently at the market places and occasionally while on a trip to find bride or meet relatives. But this is not so much important. A Birhor's interest lies somewhere else; not in his relations with other men but in his relation with God and nature.

The Birhor and the Supernatural World:

The Birhor recognize a powerful spirit world around them and of a mysterious spiritual force or energy behind various animate beings, inanimate objects, natural or artificial and even in certain things, such as a spoken word, an expressed wish, a name or a number. Their sense of awe or fear of the unseen spirit world has led

them to devise methods by which they expect to enter into friendly relations with the more important spiritual powers. The Birhor have personified these powers as *bongas* or *bhuts* and *deos*—spirits and deities, and assigned to each of the more important ones a symbol, a habitation and a name, and a suitable periodical sacrifice by which to conciliate them and enter into communion with them. In such cases as those of omens and dreams in which the spirit involved is not known, the Birhor seek to protect themselves with the help and advice of the *matís* (witch doctor), who are supposed to be always in communion with gods and spirits.

To the Birhor the gap between God and man is very narrow. When a Birhor goes to forest he is said to carry God along with him. He stays day and night in the dense forest alone, cutting woods, skinning trees and making wooden tubes. In a local proverb forest is the home of the Birhor.

Whenever the Birhor shift their Tanda from one place to another, they first send two or three people, mostly *matís* (witch doctors), to conduct a pilot survey, choose a place and see if the gods or spirits will not be disturbed by their camp there. Only when the conditions are found favourable, Birhors shift their Tanda to that place carrying with them the Bongas residing in the Tandás. It is taken for granted that their Bongas will lead them to a safe abode. There is one interesting incident to note in this regard. When the Birhors of a Tanda stationed at Manjira were asked to settle down permanently at the above mentioned colony, they first showed reluctance, later with much persuasion they agreed. But when they agreed, the neighboring villagers dissuaded them, saying that, the selected place for settlement was inhabited by malevolent spirits. They became afraid. But in order to be sure, they planned for a test to find out whether or not the place in question is a good one. They sent three people one day prior to the scheduled date of their movement along with monkey nets, bows and arrows, and few chickens. They sacrificed the chickens and left the things overnight unguarded. Next morning they were convinced that the place was undisturbed by the malevolent spirits and a good one for their habitation. In the evening the whole Tanda moved to the place selected for their settlement.

The Supreme God of the Birhor is known as *sing bonga*, who does not take active interest in human affairs, but does not ordinarily cause harm to people. *Sing bonga* is invoked when the Birhor go out on hunting and is always offered a white fowl. *Burhi Mai*, the Mother Goddess, stands next. She is supposed to be much interested in man and brings good luck, children and health, if properly propitiated.

The god which ensures success in hunting expedition is called *chandi* and he must be propitiated with sacrifices to ensure success in hunt. *Bandar Bir*, (baboon god), and *Hanuman Bir* (monkey god) are other spirits which bring success in catching monkeys.

Besides these three supernatural beings, a Birhor, propitiates his clan spirit and Tanda spirits, called *Manita Bhuts*, who look after his welfare and the welfare of his clan and the Tanda people. There are many tutelary deities and spirit of the Birhor, but mention must be made of the ancestor spirits. According to the Birhor, death, unless caused by violence, results from the misdeeds of evil spirits. A Birhor after observing a ceremony includes all dead ancestors in the rank of ancestor spirits. But persons dying of un-natural death make a separate cadre of spirits, called the *Haproms*. If, however, these Haproms are not regularly given food and drink, they prevent success in hunting or invite outside spirit to cause sickness in the family.

A Birhor is always pervaded with super-natural influences. He closely observes the gods and spirits and does not want to work against them. He desires to live together undisturbed, without disturbing the gods or spirits and without being disturbed by them. In a sense the Birhor regard the gods and spirits as their equals who possess or have acquired a certain sanctity or rather 'sacredness' and superior power, but are inclined to be friendly if kept in good humour and supplied with food and shelter in due time.

The Birhor and the Natural World:

The Birhor live in forest. They depend on forest produce for their living. It is the nature, which they regard as the care-taker of their life and living. A Birhor goes to forest to collect raw-materials for ropes, wild roots and fruits to eat and to hunt monkeys for meat and skin. They use skin for making drums which add gaiety to their devices. The migratory Birhor do not cultivate land. It is a taboo; for they think that to cultivate land is to trouble the Dharati Mai – the Earth goddess. The Bihors believe that, when they take out the bark of the trees to make ropes, they do not hurt the trees; rather they help them in their growth. What the Birhor precisely means is that they do not exploit nature.

The Birhor have in many ways close association with the hills. Besides it being the main source of their economy, every clan of the Birhor has a hill as its ancestral home. In course of their wanderings they happen to come across their ancestral home, after several years; but they do not climb the hill straight. Either they change their route, or worship the ancestral home –god, before climbing the hill. The Birhor have totemic clans. Most of the clans derive their name from animals and plants.

There are Bihors who have taken to settled life are called *Jaghi* Bihors, and they practice cultivation. Agriculture has certainly brought a change in their economic life, but it does not seem to have affected their relationship with nature. They feel that they are not exploiting nature; rather they feel that they are taking help of earth in order to lead a better life. But this does not exclude them from offering prayers and sacrifices to the Earth Goddess. Offerings have to be made to

keep Earth Goddess pleased who in exchange of offerings keeps the land always fertile.

As has already been said, the migratory (Uthlu) Birhor are still in the hunting and gathering stage of economic life. The continual rain and the thundering sound of the clouds and lighting present a difficult problem to them. The Birhor always fear rain, lighting and storm which wash off small leaf-huts and the few belongings that they have and even stop their food quest. The Birhor have, however, tried to devise magical ways to conciliate with these natural forces. Whenever there is a fear of rain, the youngest member of the family puts some wild flower into an earthen pot, fills it with water and covers the mouth with a leaf which is tied up with a string round the neck of the pot. The pot is finally buried in the ground. It is believed that this is sure to stop rain. Similarly at the sound of thunder or at the sight of flashes of lighting a Birhor woman throws a pestle, a Birhor man throws an axe into the open space in front of his hut to prevent the thundering sound of cloud. A similar process is followed by them to stop the storm.

The World and the World View of the Birhor:

Looking back to what has been described in the foregoing pages, a conclusion may be drawn as follows;

The Birhor are an isolated people. They know that their community men live at distant hills. They frequently come across their neighboring tribe and the Hindu peasants in market places. But as they are not of very mixing nature they do not have any close alliance with these people.

A Birhor thinks less of himself, and more of his co-inhabitants of his Tanda. He is vitally associated with supernatural beings in his day to day affairs. A Birhor is not self-centered, he closely identifies himself with the Birhor of his own and other settlements, and also with the visible and invisible supernaturals. He is of course often confronted with natural problems, but he knows many effective ways of neutralizing evil effects of spirits which surround him and also saving himself from various natural calamities which the nature poses in the forms of heavy rain, storm, thunder and lighting. He works in the most friendly ways to his benefit in nature utilizing its productions and resources for his living.

THE BIRHOR *

*N. Patnaik*¹

Introduction

Many tribes of India depend upon hunting and food gathering for their subsistence. The means of livelihood is such that these hunting communities are invariably nomadic. Some of them have very little contact with any other communities while some others are in contact to some extent and have developed a symbiotic relationship with them. The Birhors, a nomadic tribal community of northern Orissa, fall to the category of such a hunting and food gathering group having reciprocal economic relations with their neighbouring peasants.

The main concentration of the Birhors is in Bihar where their population was 3,464 in the 1971 Census. Their number in Orissa during the same Census period was 98.

It may be noted that the local people identify the Birhors in various ways. In the district of Kalahandi and Sundergarh they are called as Mankidi whereas in Mayurbhanj and Sambalpur districts they go by the name Mankirdia. In fact, both the Mankirdia and the Mankidi are one and the same and they both are none but the Birhors. But in the 1971 Census the Birhor, the Mankidi and the Mankirdia have been enumerated separately because they have been enlisted as separate tribal groups in the list of Scheduled Tribes of Orissa. Taken together the Birhors including the Mankidis and Mankirdias numbered 1,307 persons in 1971 Census.

Their distribution in different districts of the State according to **1971 Census** is given in the **Table.1**(next page).

The reason for calling Birhors as Mankidi or Mankirdia is that they are skilled in catching monkeys. When the monkeys create havoc in the rural areas and destroy crops, the local people employ the Birhors to catch and kill them. The Birhors belong to the Austro-Asiatic language group and according to their mother tongue the Birhor means 'men' (Hor) 'of the forest' (Bir). They are dark skinned, short statured, long headed, wavy haired and broad nosed people.

* Published in ADIBASI, Vol. XXVII, Nos.2 & 3, 1987, pp 1-17

¹ Director, THRTI, Bhubaneswar

TABLE-1
Distribution of Birhor Population (1971 Census)

Sl. No. (1)	Name of the District (2)	Total Population (3)
1.	Sambalpur	241
2.	Sundergarh	221
3.	Keonjhar	104
4.	Mayurbhanj	486
5.	Balasore	41
6.	Balangir	23
7.	Koraput	22
8.	Cuttack	4
9.	Kalahandi	154
10	Ganjam	11
	Total	1,307

There are two types of Birhors - the Uthul, i.e. nomadic Birhors and the Jagi, i.e. settled Birhors. It is to the nomadic section of the tribe that our attention is directed in this report. The Birhors move from place to place in different groups in a specified area within the State.

Each group comprises on an average 10 to 15 households. Some of the households may be related to one another by blood and others by marriage. A Birhor camp is called 'Tanda', which is generally set up in a place close to the forest and near some market centre and peasant village.

Material Culture

The Birhors distinguish three seasons in a year; rainy, winter and summer season. The change of place is frequent in summer season than in other two seasons. In fact, the Birhors stick to a place where they set up their *Tanda* and stay for all the four months in the rainy season (June to September). Their *Tanda* is located in a place which is very close to a market centre and also to the mountain ranges covered with thick forest. With the destruction of the forests, it is becoming very difficult now-a-days to find such a place. Under such circumstances nearness to the market centre is given more preference to that of the forest while selecting a place for setting up the *Tanda*.

In winter season the Birhors feel the need for changing the camp two or three times. But such changes are more frequent in the summer season because of shortage of food supply in a particular place. The barks of *Siali* creepers which is the main forest produce to which their subsistence and livelihood is intimately attached are available in plenty in rainy season and therefore shifting of *Tanda* is not necessary in this season.

Table-2
Seasonal Change of Locations of Tanda

Sl.No. (1)	Name of the Place of Tanda (2)	District (3)	Season (4)
1	Nilgiri	Balasore	Rainy
2	Kendumundi	Mayurbhanj	Rainy
3	Melana	Keonjhar	Rainy
4	Satkosia	Mayurbhanj	Winter
5	Dhokota	Keonjhar	Winter
6	Gudabhanga	Mayurbhanj	Winter
7	Dongadiha	Mayurbhanj	Winter
8	Hathikocha	Keonjhar	Winter
9	Nadinocha	Keonjhar	Winter
10	Marichapal	Keonjhar	Winter
11	Tamaka	Keonjhar	Summer
12	Kalipani	Cuttack	Summer
13	Angul	Dhenkanal	Summer
14	Daitari	Keonjhar	Summer
15	Nandara	Keonjhar	Summer
16	Patalikota	Keonjhar	Summer
17	Harichandanpur	Keonjhar	Summer
18	Janghira	Keonjhar	Summer
19	Jaikeshi	Keonjhar	Summer

The situation in the summer season is different. In this season the forest growth is affected by the hot sun and forest fire. Moreover, the wanton destruction of the forest by some tribal communities who practise shifting cultivation and by the non-tribal people who gather fuel wood from the forest make it difficult for the Birhors to get the required amount of bark in one place and therefore they are forced to change their camp two or three times.

The Birhors make their huts in leaves. A hut which is called 'Kumbha' is conical in shape having an oval shaped base covering in circumference about 50 feet living space inside. The height of the Kumbha at the center is 5 feet.

There is an entrance in the middle on the long side of the hut which is 3 feet in breadth. The Kumbha is divided into three compartments. On the right side of the entrance is a space set apart for the Kitchen. During rains when cooking is not possible outdoors, the foods are cooked at this place. The central part is used for sleeping. On its left side there is a place which is used for storing things. In the rear portion of the hut, the goat-pen is present on the right side and the fowl-pen is present on the left side. The pet-dog of the family finds its place either in the sleeping portion or in the rear end of the hut according to its convenience. A door

called *Bagdir* made of twigs woven in leaves is used to close the entrance when the family members are out on hunting and gathering in the forest.

The *Kumbha* is made of saplings thatched with twigs having leaves. A wooden beam supported by two forked wooden poles stuck to the ground holds the frame of the *Kumbha* in position. Rafters laid on either side of the beam are covered with twigs with leaves. Wooden splits one inside and the other outside the *Kumbha* are tied to each other by means of *Siali* barks to keep the rafters intact. The hut is thatched very skillfully to make it rainproof.

A household has its own *Kumbha* in which parents and children sleep at night. Besides, there are two other types of *Kumbhas* in every *Tanda*. One *Kumbha* known as *Dhingala* is used by the unmarried boys for sleeping at night and the other *Kumbha* known as *Kudi Ada* is for the unmarried girls.

The *Tanda* is heterogeneous in clan composition and each clan has a small hut of its own set apart as the Shrine of the clan deity. The clan members offer food and worship the deity in this place.

As the Birhors led a nomadic style of life they keep their household belongings to the minimum so that they can move from place to place conveniently. The **Table 3** gives a list of their household articles, domesticated animals, processed products and miscellaneous items of objects which were found in a *Tanda* during our field work. This inventory concerns five Birhor households of a *Tanda* which was located at Kendumundi, a multi-caste village 17kms. Away from Karanjia on the Karanjia-Thakurmunda road in Mayurbhanj district.

TABLE 3
Inventory of Household Belongings

Name of the Item	Guni Mankirdia	Ram Das Mankirdia	Akala Mankirdia	Kailas Mankirdia	Kasia Mankirdia	Total
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
<i>Food stuffs</i>						
Rice	2Kgs.	1Kg.	3Kgs.	2Kgs.	3Kgs.	11Kgs.
Oil	100 Gms.	50 Gms.	200 Gms.	100 Gms.	250Gms.	700 Gms.
Maize	..	..	..	..	1Kg.	1Kg.
Spices	Rs.2	Rs.1	Rs.3	Rs.2	Rs.3	Rs.11
Dried Monkey Meat	1Kg.	..	2Kgs.	..	1Kg.	4Kgs.
<i>Processed products</i>						
Rope	20 Mtrs.	..	..	10Mtrs	20Mtrs.	50Mtrs.
Broom	1	1	..	..	1	3Nos.
Sling	2	1	1	1	2	7Nos.

Halter	1	2	1	3	2	9Nos.
Mat	1	2	2	2	6	13Nos.
Net (Monkey catcher)	1	1	2	1	1	6Nos.
Net (Squirrel catcher)	1	1	..	1	1	4Nos.
Adornments						
Ornament	1 Pair ear-ring rolled gold)	..	1 Necklace (rolled gold)	..	..	..
Talcum powder	1 Pkt. (50 Gms.)	..	1 Pkt. (50 Gms.)	..	..	2Pkts. (100Gms.)
Clothes (Nos)	6	6	8	6	7	33 Pieces
Comb	..	1	..	..	1	2Nos
Animals & Birds						
Goat	1	8	2	3	4	18 Nos.
Poultry	..	1	2	..	4	7Nos.
Dog	..	..	2	1	1	4Nos.
Utensils						
Cooking Vessels (big)	2	1	2	3	2	10 Nos.
Cooking Vessels (small)	2	2	2	..	1	7 Nos.
Aluminium utensils	..	3	3	4	4	14 Nos.
Bell bowl	..	..	..	..	2	2 Nos.
Tools and Weapons						
Knife	2	2	1	1	1	7 Nos.
Axe	2	4	2	2	2	12 Nos.
Wooden flattened stick	3	2	..	..	4	9 Nos.
Vegetable cutter	..	..	..	..	1	1 No.
Miscellaneous						
Ladle made of coconut shell	..	1	..	..	..	1 No.
Monkey hide	2	1	..	..	2	5 Nos.
Bamboo items						
Basket (big)	2	3	2	2	4	13 Nos.
Basket (small)	1	1	..	1	3	6 Nos.

Bottle	4	3	..	2	1	10 Nos.
Bag	1	..	..	..	1	2 Nos.
Bamboo yoke	1	2	1	1	2	7 Nos.
Bamboo stick	..	..	1	..	..	1 No.
<i>Containers</i>						
Made of net	1	..	1	1	..	3 Nos.
Snail shell	20	..	..	..	..	20 Nos.
Peacock tail	1	..	..	..	2	3 Nos.
Water container	3	..	2	..	2	7 Nos.
Sac	..	..	1	1	1	3 Nos.
<i>Others</i>						
Low wooden Stool	1	..	..	..	2	3 Nos.
Fuel	5Kgs.	..	10Kgs.	..	5Kgs.	20Kgs.
Lamp(earthen)	1	1	..	1	1	4 Nos.
Bolster	1	..	..	..	5	6 Nos.
Grain measuring pot	..	1	..	..	2	3 Nos.
Musical Instruments	..	..	3	..	3	6 Nos.
Halter meant for goat	1	8	2	..	4	15 Nos.
Umbrella (cloth)	..	..	1	..	..	1 No.
Glass	..	..	1	..	..	1 No.
Torch	..	..	1	..	..	1 No.
Spoon	..	..	2	..	2	4 Nos.
Leaf cups and plates	..	..	2	..	10	12 Nos.
Plate (Aluminum)	..	..	..	1	5	6 Nos.
Match box	..	..	..	..	1 Pkt.	1 Pkt.
Herbal medicines	..	..	..	..	1 Boxful	1 Boxful

Economic life

The main occupation of the Birhors is the making of ropes out of the bark of Siali creepers (Lama Bayer), which are used for different purposes. A list of the types of ropes and cost per unit and the manner of use is given in Table 4.

TABLE 4
Outturn of Ropes made by Birhors

Sl. No.	Local Term	Birhor Term	Cost per Unit	Use	Daily Outturn
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
1.	<i>Sika</i> (Sling)	<i>Sikur</i>	Rs.5.00 per pair	Attached to carrying pole for carrying things on shoulder	2 pairs per head.
2.	<i>Pagha</i>	<i>Pagha</i>	Rs.1.00 per piece	Rope for tethering cattle.	20 pieces per head
3.	<i>Barkai</i> (Rope for drawing water)	<i>Barehi</i>	Rs.4.00 per piece	For drawing water by means of water pots from wells.	10 pieces per two persons
4.	<i>Pandachhati</i> (Halter for buffalo)	<i>Kadadogha</i>	Rs.5.00 per two piece	Rope to tether buffaloes	8 to 10 pieces per head
5.	<i>Chhelipagha</i> (Halter -goat)	<i>Meromloda</i>	5 paise per piece	For tying goats	20 pieces per head
6.	<i>Jaunli</i>	<i>Dhaunri ..</i>	Rs.2.00 per four pairs	For tying cattle at the time of harvest	10 to 12 pieces per head

The Birhors also make small baskets (Tupa) out of the *Siali* bark which are used for passing oil seeds. Except the baskets and the ropes used for tying the buffaloes which cannot be prepared by women, all other types of ropes are made by both men and women. One load of *Siali* barks is sufficient to turn out ropes and baskets worth Rs.20 and person can exhaust a single load of barks in two days. On an average a Birhor turns out finished products of barks, worth Rs.10 to Rs.12 per day.

The animals and birds which the Birhors are fond of keeping at home are goats and chickens. They keep these animals and birds to sell in the market for cash and to offer them to their deities on ritual occasions.

The Birhors are skilled monkey catchers they use nets made of *Siali* creepers for catching monkeys. They eat the flesh of the monkey and sell the skin for cash. Use of turmeric in the preparation of curry out of monkey's flesh is a taboo among the Birhors. It is believed that the use of turmeric will make them unsuccessful in their monkey hunting. Sometimes they catch birds with the help of snares, and squirrels, hares and deer with the help of traps and nets. The birds and animals caught are generally disposed of in the neighbouring villages or at the market place for cash.

Many Birhors know how to do the weeding, transplanting and harvesting of paddy and find employment in agricultural labour during such operations. In many places they earn substantial amount of money from this source. Sometimes they collect roots and tubers, fruits and flowers from the forest for consumption purposes. But there are other types of forest products such as resin which they collect for selling to the local people for cash. They also catch mongoose and peacock and sell them to the local people who like to keep them as pot animals and birds.

The staple food of the Birhors is rice. With the sale proceeds of ropes and forest produce they buy their weekly requirements of rice, corn, millet and other things from the market. They collect various types of green leaves from the nearby places and mushrooms and various types of fruits such as *Kendu*, Jack-fruit and Mango from the forest for their own consumption. Whenever time permits during their trip to forest for collection of barks, they dig out roots and tubers and also collect honey which supplement their principal cereal diet.

In many places cocoons are available in forest and the Birhors are well acquainted with these places. The cocoons add to the income of the Birhors in the form of cash which they use for buying clothes.

Although the Birhors tap different sources for their livelihood they run deficit of their food supply almost every year. During the scarce period they eat mango kernels which are preserved at home for use in such difficult times.

The weekly budget of a Birhor family may throw more light on their living conditions. For this purpose the weekly income and expenditure of the family of Sandu Mankirdia stationed at Kendumundi is given below. The budget relates to the period from 19th to 25th August, 1984. The family of Sandu Mankirdia comprises his old mother brother and brother's wife and his daughter.

The **income of the week** was drawn from the following sources -

1. Sale of bark products		
(a) <i>Tuppa</i>	4 Jhala (12 pieces)	Rs.20.00
(b) <i>Sika</i>	3 Pairs	Rs.15.00
(c) <i>Pagha</i>	4 Pieces	Rs.4.00
(d) Pandachhati	3 Pairs	Rs.15.00
(e) Chhelipagha	4 Pieces	Rs.2.00
2. Income from wage earned by Sandu's daughter-9 <i>pailas</i> of paddy		Rs.11.25
3. Saving from previous week		Rs.12.00
	Total	<u>Rs.79.25</u>

Items of expenditure are as follows-

1. Food stuffs	Rs.20.00
Rice 6 ½ Kg.	Rs.0.50
Dal	Rs.2.00

Brinjal	Rs.0.50
Potato	Rs.0.25
Onion	Rs.0.50
Spices	0.25
Salt	0.50
Mustard oil	10.00
2. Drink	2.00
3. Items of fried-food and mutton curry taken with wine	1.25
4. Tiffin	13.00
5. Clothes and ornaments	0.50
6. Tobacco	0.40
7. Kerosene	-
Total	<u>Rs.51.75</u>

The Birhors do not have any stable income from week to week. The maximum amount of weekly income is of the order of Rs.60 and the minimum Rs.20. A Birhor family having five members like that of Sandu Mankirdia needs at least 7 Kgs. of rice per week which costs Rs.20 to Rs.25. This means that when the weekly income is limited to Rs.20 to Rs.25 the Birhors purchase rice much less in quantity than what is required per week in order to buy other items which are badly needed in daily life.

Among the Birhors a man needs three pieces of cloths annually for his use. One piece is worn, another piece is used for covering the body and in case the cloth which is worn gets wet it is replaced by the third piece which is kept at home. A piece of cloth costs Rs.12 to Rs.15 and a man needs about Rs.40 annually towards the cost of his cloths. In case of a woman she needs only two pieces in a year which costs Rs.60. The male folks have now started wearing shirts and the female folks, petticoats and blouses which increase the expenses of the Birhors on clothing. A woman wears bangles and hair-pins to keep the tassel in position in the hair bun.

The Birhors use different types of oil for different purposes such as coconut oil used in the body and also for dressing hair mustard oil for cooking food and *Mohua* oil (Tola) for lighting lamps. The Birhors are conversant with the techniques of extracting oil from *Kusum* and *Mohua* seeds by using wooden oil press. The process of extraction is that they break the seeds in to small pieces and boil them. Thereafter the boiled powdered seeds are kept in small baskets. Two fully filled in baskets are kept one upon the other and both are kept between the two planks of wood which comprises the oil press. One end of these two planks is tied tightly and inserted into a groove made for this purpose in a tree and the other end of the lower plank is kept to rest on a big piece of stone above the ground and the filled inoil-seeds baskets are pressed by lowering the upper plank so as to tightly press the baskets until the oil comes out.The oil which is extracted from the seeds is collected in an earthen pot which is kept below on the ground.

The Birhors use earthen vessels for cooking food. They also use earthen pitchers for storing water. They buy these earthen vessels from the weekly market from the potters on payment of cash. A big earthen pot costs Rs.3 and an earthen pitcher costs Rs.1.50. A household needs two pitchers and two or three earthen pots. They go on using these vessels until they break. Generally, two earthen pitchers and two to three earthen pots which are required in the minimum in a Birhor family having four to five members, last for three to four months. During the transit from one *Tanda* to the other the belongings which are carried by them to the new camp include the earthen vessels.

Aluminium pots and pans are in use in all the Birhor households. One bowl, one plate and two to three cups constitute the aluminium vessels in a Birhor family. Leaf cups are still common in all the Birhor households for taking cooked food. Brass pots and plates are almost conspicuous by their absence among them. Inventory of household articles in a Birhor *Tanda* located at Kendumundi shows that there were only two brass plates found in the whole of that *Tanda*.

Bamboo baskets are needed to store things at home. The Birhors get the baskets at the weekly market from the basket makers on payment in cash. A basket of minimum size costs Rs.2 and two baskets of this size last for a year or so. The Birhors use mats for sleeping. Palm leaves are used for weaving the mats which is the work of the women.

The Birhors of Kendumundi *Tanda* don't know the use of bow and arrow and therefore do not have them. The only weapon which has multipurpose use is axe. Local blacksmiths supply these axes and an axe costs about Rs.5 and lasts for about five to seven years. It is sharpened periodically by the local black smiths on the market-day and each time it costs 50 paise per sharpening. In some houses people have knives. A knife costs Rs.1 and is used for peeling of the bark from the *Siali* creepers.

Cloth umbrella is a new household item which may be found in one or two households in a *Tanda*. For instance, there were only two such umbrellas found in two households out of a total of nine households which comprise the Birhor *Tanda* at Kendumundi. The people use country lamp fed with kerosene in all the households. But a few of them use lantern. The inventory shows that there were two lanterns in the *Tanda* at Kendumundi. The lantern requires kerosene worth 50 paise per night whereas the house can be lighted for two nights with a country lamp at the same costs.

The Birhors have neither mortar and pestle nor country husking lever. Whenever they get the wages in paddy, they dry it at home and thereafter take it to some house in the nearby village to get it husked.

Our observation of the economic life of the Birhors shows that they lead a life which is full of hazards and hardships and below the level of subsistence. Even

though they live from hand to mouth they appear to be very joyful and contented. Almost in every evening both the boys and girls join together and spend time in singing and dancing in accompaniment of music from flute and drum.

Social Organization and Social Control

The family which is the smallest social unit among the Birhors is invariably of nuclear type. It comprises father, mother and unmarried children. In some cases either the widow mother or the widower father lives with their married son in his family. The grown-up sons and daughters work for the family with their parents until they are married. But they sleep at night in their respective dormitories.

The next higher social unit is clan which regulates marriage. Clan is exogamous and any sexual union within the clan is incestuous. Our study of the Birhor *Tanda* located at Kendumundi shows that it was composed of the following five clans.

1. Singhkili
2. Hembrum
3. Nagpuria
4. Majhi and
5. Sikria

As the *Tanda* is multi clan in composition, inter clan marriage within the *Tanda* is in vogue among the Birhors. The genealogy which was collected from different households of this *Tanda* shows that the male members have brought their wives from several *Tandas* such as Dhardhara and Mahuldia of Mayurbhanj district; Nilgiri of Balasore district; Dhudaram and Ghatgaon of Keonjhar district; Kaliapani and Tamka of Cuttack district and Kamakhya Nagar of Dhenkanal district. Cross cousin marriage is not practiced among the Birhors. But marriage of Sororate and Levirate types are in vogue.

Whenever the people of a *Tanda* want to shift to a new place, all the families of the *Tanda* move *enbloc* and set up their *Tanda* there. Before the huts are constructed, a ritual is performed by sacrificing two goats and five chicken and offering prayers to ancestors. A man can leave his parent *Tanda* at will and join a new *Tanda* elsewhere. There will be none to obstruct him to do so. He is also at liberty to return to his parent *Tanda* at will where he will be received by the inmates of the *Tanda* cordially. It is the practice that the new comer offers drink to the people of the *Tanda* and to the *Tanda* headman for their acceptance of his coming and living with them in the *Tanda*.

There is a headman in each *Tanda* called *Mukhya* or Big man and this post is normally hereditary. The *Tanda* headman combines with him the functions of religious headman (Dehuri) and in this capacity he worships the deity and associates in all the ritual performances. There is no system of any payment to the Secular-cum-Religious headman for the services rendered by him. But sometimes

he is given wine and tiffin particularly on market days by his *Tanda* members as a gesture of fellow feeling, generosity and hospitality. It is noteworthy that harmony and friendship is maintained throughout among the households in a *Tanda*. If any conflict arises between some households, the *Tanda* headman settles such conflicts through his personal intervention and arbitration.

The Birhors follow the practice of social boycott which is called *Chindal* or *Began*. The person who is kept under boycott is not allowed to mix with others and all kinds of help which he was ordinarily getting from others are withdrawn. It is a sort of punishment for a correct measure to bring a deviant or any person suffering from certain ritually unclean illness back to normal position.

The situation which invokes social boycott is incestuous sexual union between brother and sister or persons belonging to the same clan. Persons who commit such offences are kept segregated until they pay the fines levied on them by other members of his *Tanda*. Generally, the fine comprises 1 Kg. of rice, some turmeric and Rs.10 in cash. The ritual involved for readmitting the deviant into the *Tanda* includes clean shaving of his head and giving him a clean bath.

When any person develops maggots in the sore of any part of the body, this person is also put under social boycott until the sore is headed and the above mentioned ritual is performed accompanied with a common feast in the *Tanda*. The person who was put under boycott meets the expenses of the ritual and feast.

As regards the inter-caste and inter-dining the Birhors eat cooked food in the houses of Santals and Kolhas but the reverse is not in vogue. The communities which they avoid in this respect are Muslims, Harijans and Kharias. Any breach of the commensal rules leads to social boycott and the consequence arising there from.

Life Cycle

The Birhor idea of life is a continuous process from birth to death through infancy, adolescence, youth marriage and old age and lastly death. He regards himself as the supreme creation of earth and has been bound by supernatural influences. The death, which brings life to an end takes him to the unseen world where a man is transformed into spirit and starts influencing the human beings of this world.

Birth

The birth is a matter of great rejoice among the Birhors. Pregnancy is very much welcome. An important woman is considered inauspicious. A couple having children enjoys a higher status than a childless counterpart in Birhor society. The father is addressed as *Aba* and the mother as *Mai* and those who are addressed as such feel proud of themselves whereas those having none to address them as such feel depressed. When a baby is born in a Birhor household, it is believed that one of the ancestors has taken rebirth and therefore the family's fortune and well-being

have come back with greater potency and vitality. Among the Birhor a male child is preferred to a female child because the latter leaves her parents after marriage and therefore is of limited economic utility.

Some of the symptoms of pregnancy are stoppage of menses, feeling of weakness and nausea. With the abdominal protuberance, the pregnancy becomes conspicuous. During pregnancy a woman observes some restrictions and is relieved from doing hard work and cooking particularly in the advanced stage. Most often she is not allowed to go outside or come in contact with dead body and move near the shrine (Sal). She is forbidden to take consecrated meat. While going out of her house she must cover herself completely with her clothes, lest enemies or persons with evil eye should do here some harm.

As soon as the woman feels labour pain, an old woman of her lineage having experience in delivery is immediately called for. In difficult cases some herbal medicines are given to the pregnant woman. As soon as the child is born the old woman who was attending on her informs the husband thereafter, and it takes no time for others to know about the birth of the child. The umbilical cord of the child is cut by means of a sharp snail.

After birth, the mother and the child are considered unclean. It is interesting to note that with the birth of a child the whole *Tanda* comes under ritual pollution as does the family in which the birth took place. The whole *Tanda* is considered impure and all the rituals are suspended for the period. On the 7th day the *Dehuri* (priest) comes and performs the ritual which is meant for the final purification of the *Tanda* members and for the preliminary purification of the new child and his parents.

On the 21st day a ritual is observed and only the kin members are invited to participate. On this day the mother is led to the nearby source of water where her women relatives smear her with turmeric paste mixed with *Mohua* oil and all the accompanying women take ritual bath there and return to her house. Coming to the house she throws the old used earthen pots and cooks in new pots which have been brought previously. The father shaves the baby with a razor. In the meantime the *Dehuri* worships the clan deity and the supreme deity *Logo Bir* and *Budhi Mai* and a black cock and a white one are sacrificed. The sacrificial meat is cooked and a small feast is arranged. On the following day a name is given to the baby by the elderly women of the *Tanda* and another feast is arranged to feed the assembled relatives and guests.

Marriage

Marriage is considered a significant event in one's life. One cannot think of adult life without being married. The marriageable age in the case of a girl is 14 to 18 years and in the case of a boy is 20 to 25 years.

In a marriage ceremony the girl's parents meet all the expenses and the boy's parents pay the bride price which comprises Rs.12.00 and three pieces of clothes. The guests and relatives invited to the marriage ceremony contribute according to their might.

There is no specified month in which the marriage takes place. Generally the best time for marriage is after the rains when people have some savings in hand and the guests and relatives are entertained without difficulty. Before marriage the boys and girls have to spend at least two years in their respective dormitories and there after the marriage is thought of. Most of the marriages are of arranged type in which negotiation is held between the parents of the bride and the bridegroom to settle details regarding the bride price, the date of marriage, the number of guests and relatives to be invited and the bridal feast.

The day on which the marriage takes place, the bridegroom's party consisting of bridegroom, his friends and relatives come to the bride's house. The marriage is solemnized there in the presence of the *Tanda* elders. The Bridegroom smears vermilion on the forehead of the bride which symbolizes solemnization of marriage. The bride's father provides cooked food and drink to the bridegroom's party.

The family observes mortuary pollution for a period of ten days. On the tenth day, the head of the household (male member) goes to the burial ground and calls the spirit to his own hut and sets fire to the small leaf hut erected there for the spirit. An earthen lamp is kept burning and is covered under a winnowing fan in the house till he comes. As soon as the man bearing the spirit enters the house, the light under the winnowing fan goes out which indicates the entry of the spirit of the dead into the hut.

Sometimes in the mid-day all the lineage members and the pall-bearers get purified by the *Dehuri* (priest) who arranges a ritual in front of the shrine of the clan deity (*Ora Bonga*) and sacrifices a cock and offers *mohua* wine and cooked food. Thereafter, he sprinkles water all over the *Tanda* and over the lineage members. In the evening a feast is arranged and the elderly persons of the *Tanda*, lineage members and other invitees participate in the feast. After the feast is over, all the invitees give consolation to the members of the bereaved family and leave for their respective *Tandas*.

The boys and girls of both the parties dance and sing in great joy and happiness to the tune of their drums and other musical instruments. After the marriage ceremony is over, the bride and the groom with the party return to the latter's *Tanda* where the father of the groom arranges a feast for them.

Death

When the death of a person takes place in any house other members of the house send the news to all the people of their lineage. The natural death according

to the Birhors, is that which comes when a person is very old. If any person dies prior to the old age it is believed to be due to the machination of the evil spirits and sorcerers. On getting the death news the near and dear ones come to console the bereaved family and make necessary arrangements for the burial of the corpse. The women-folk smear turmeric paste on the face of the dead body and a piece of new white cloth is covered all over. A wooden frame of the type of a ladder is made and the dead body is laid on it and is carried to the burial ground (Gachhad) by four lineage members and others accompany them.

A trench of about six feet into three feet into five feet in dimension is dug by the relatives in the burial ground. It is dug in such a way that the head can be kept in the south-west direction. The new white cloth is spread on the floor of the trench on which the dead body with face upward is laid. Thereafter the trench is filled up with soil. Big stones are kept on the pit so that the jackals and other animals may not dig out and eat up corpse. After the burial is over all the pall-bearers and the accompanied members go to a place, where water is available and take bath there.

Religious Beliefs and Practices

The Birhors believe in many gods and goddesses. According to them some of these supernatural beings are benevolent and others, malevolent who create trouble and cause illness and death. They also worship their ancestors at home on several ritual occasions. Generally, ancestor worship is practiced with the purpose of enjoying good health and for being successful in hunting and collection of forest produce without meeting any accident.

Logo Bir and *Budhi Mai* are the two main and supreme deities of the Birhors. It is believed that their abode lies in the thicket of Similipal hill ranges and they are worshipped in different months particularly in the months of Aswina (September-October) and Pausa (December-January). In the month of Margasir (November-December) the ancestors are worshipped at home and in the month of Bhadrab (August-September) the deity *Karma Thakur* is worshipped. The main idea of worshipping such deities is to get their blessings for the general well-being of the people and for getting food all the time and also for success in their various economic activities without falling into any accident and illness. **Table 5** and **Table 6** give description of different deities and the months in which they are worshipped.

Every clan has its own clan deity for which a small leaf hut is constructed in the *Tanda* and food and prayer are offered to the deity on all ritual occasions.

The Birhors have fallen victims to family planning programmes. The demography of the tribe does not show any alarming increase in population which warrants limitation of Birhor population. According to the 1971 census the population of the Birhors was only 92. In such a situation there appears to be no

need for the Birhors to adopt family planning practices. But it is found that many Birhors have been sterilized in order to get financial assistance. During our field work we have met with two such instances in the Kendumundi Birhor *Tanda*. Some unforeseen events and drastic consequences took place soon after they were operated upon and people attributed these mishaps to the Vasectomy to which these two Birhors were subjected. In both the cases they lost their wives within a period of three weeks from the date of operation and thereafter one of them lost all the children and the other who had two sons and one daughter lost all his sons. Both of them were young and capable of bearing children. The Birhors, strongly believed that their supreme deity got angry with these two people for undergoing operation and punished them by causing death to the members of their families with the objective of leaving none to continue in the progeny. There was no escape from this divine punishment and as a result the family planning practices are dreaded in the Birhor community. One of the vasectomized victim pathetically expressed during the interview that he was very keen to get married second time but no woman was willing to marry him because in the Birhor society barren women are looked down upon.

TABLE - 5

Sl. No.	(1)	Name of the deity	(2)	Direction in which deity's abode is located	(3)	Name of the worshipper	(4)	Ritual designation of the worshipper	(5)	Village to which worshipper belongs	(6)	Month in which deity is worshipped	(7)	Article of offering	(8)	Purpose of worship	(9)	Remarks	(10)
1.		<i>Logo Bir</i> (The Supreme Deity)		North-West direction of the village Kendumundii.e, somewhere in the Similipal forest		<i>Deturi</i> and other members of all the Bansas.		<i>Deturias</i> also, every head of the household		Male members of all the <i>Tandas</i> .		November-December		Ten cocks and two bucks are sacrificed on behalf of all the <i>Tanda</i> members		Overall well-being		<i>Logo Bir</i> and <i>Budhi Mai</i> are the husband and wife and others except <i>Chandi</i> are their children. They all have a society of their own. The <i>Deturi</i> of the <i>Tanda</i> worships these deities on behalf of all people of the <i>Tanda</i> . All the family members of <i>Logo Bir</i> serve as the custodian of the Birhor society and provide security, food and drink to the people. They also save the people from danger and other calamities. As the people say, "we are moving in dense forest and have no permanent settlement. There is none to help us when we are in distress and in danger. You are our everything, we pray you to keep us out of danger and mishap and grant us good health and long life".	

TABLE - 5 (Contd...)

Sl. No.	Name of the deity	Direction in which deity's abode is located	Name of the worshipper	Ritual designation of the worshipper	Village to which worshipper belongs	Month in which deity is worshipped	Article of offering	Purpose of worship	Remarks
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
2.	<i>Budhinai</i> (Wife of <i>Logo Bir</i>)	North West	<i>Dehuri</i> and other members of all the Bansas.	<i>Dehurias</i> also every head of the household	Male members of all the <i>Tandas</i>	November - December	Ten cocks and two bucks are sacrificed on behalf of all the <i>Tanda</i> members	..	Brings good luck and good health to children.
3.	<i>All Mai</i> (Daughter heir)	Ditto ..	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	..	Overall well-being. No such specific reason worshipped as the daughter of <i>Logo Bir</i> and <i>Budhi Mai</i> .
4.	<i>Sita Mai</i> (Daughter of <i>Logo Bir</i>)	Ditto..	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	..	
5.	<i>BhandarBir</i> (Son of <i>Logo Bir</i>)	Ditto ..	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	..	Brings success in catching monkey
6.	<i>Chandi</i> (Not a member of <i>Logo Bir</i> family)	Somewhere in Simulpal hills	<i>Tanda</i> priest	Dehuri	<i>Tanda</i>	All through the year before starting for hunting.	One white cock	..	To ensure success in hunting

TABLE 6
[Clan Deity (OraBonga) of the Hembrum Clan]

Sl. No.	Name of the deity	Direction in which deity's abode is located	Bansa/clan of main worshipper	Ritual designation of the worshipper	Tanda to which the worshipper belongs	Month in which deity is worshipped	Nature of offering	Main reasons	Remarks
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
1.	Karambonga	The Shrine (stl) is situated in the backside of the worshipper's Kumbhas	Hembrum	Household head of each Bansa/ Clan (Males only)	Elderly male members of each <i>Tanda</i> who belongs to Hembrum clan	August - September	Two bucks Mohua wine, Sun-dried rice.	For curing illness particularly fever	If someone falls ill, he promises before the karambonga to offer sacrifices to get rid of the illness. In an auspicious day in the month of August-September, the Dehuri worships the deity at the shrine and offers prayer and food and sacrifices animals and birds as promised earlier by the <i>Tanda</i> members.
2.	Nasanbonga	Resides in the same shrine	Do	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	Pig(Sukuri)	For healing such diseases as fever, cough, cold, fests and giddiness	The worship in the case of this deity is same as that of Karambonga.
3.	Rajakodin bonga	Ditto	Do	Ditto	Ditto	November-December	Cock(Sims)	To get rid of typhoid and malaria	He is believed to be the supreme clan deity. Cocks are sacrificed to appease him.

Strategy for Development

The Birhors lead a nomadic style of life. As the seasons change they move from one place to the other. But in all the seasons they try to have the *Tanda* very close to forest. The Similipal hill ranges, around which most of their *Tandas* are situated, are vitally linked with their economic life. They collect Siali bark from the forest to make various types of ropes which are in great demand in the farming community. The transactions between the Birhors and the local peasants take place at the weekly markets, it is for this reason that they set up their *Tandas* near such market places for conveniently disposing of their finished goods and forest produce for cash income.

The Birhor are skilled monkey catchers. When there was no restriction to catch monkeys in the reserved forests they set nets in some convenient places in the forest to catch monkeys. They eat monkey flesh and sell the monkey skin to the Scheduled Castes for cash. Sometimes when the monkeys create havoc in the villages and destroy crops their help is sought on payment of money to catch and kill the monkeys.

As they live close to the people who carry on agricultural practices, they have observed various agricultural operations and most of them have experience in ploughing land, showing seeds, transplanting seedlings and other types of agricultural works such as weeding, manuring and harvesting. Both men and women of their community are employed by the farmers on wage basis to help them in various agricultural operations. The income from agricultural labour is seasonal and therefore not very substantial.

The occupations which feature prominently as substantial sources of income among the Birhors are rope making which is their primary source of livelihood and goat keeping. The Birhors buy young she goats from the weekly market at a nominal cost of Rs.40 to Rs.50 and raise them properly to bear kids which they sell when they attain full growth. These grown up goats are in great demand in the rural areas and therefore fetch substantial amount of money to the Birhors. Sometimes they also buy goats of one year old at Rs.60 to Rs.80. After rearing them for a year or so take them to market place for sale. These goats also fetch them very substantial income which varies from Rs.140 to Rs.160 per goat.

It is the opinion of the Birhors that they no longer want to move from place to place. Instead they are very eager to settle down permanently in some places and carry on cultivation of paddy. They have expressed that they need land, plough, bullocks and seeds for this purpose. From our discussions with them we found that they were interested in having tile roofed permanent houses in place of leaf thatched huts.

Some time back the Project Administrator of Karanjia Integrated Tribal Development Agency supplied 25Kgs of jute to each of the Birhor households of Kendumundi *Tanda*. They accepted the jute and manufactured ropes and sold them

at the local market. Since such kind of help did not continue, the Birhors reverted to their old practice of making ropes from *siali* barks. They pointed out that as compared with bark-made ropes the jute made ropes fetched them a higher price and there was no need for them to move from place to place in search of fibers. As the help from the ITDA did not come forth on a continuing basis they had to go back to their nomadic way of life in order to get the raw materials for making bark-ropes.

The strategy that emerges from this study for the development of the Birhors is their rehabilitation in agricultural colonies which should be set up close to market places and not far from places where they set up their *Tandas* around Similipal hill ranges. Each household should be allotted adequate land with title rights over it. The beneficiaries of each colony should be provided with plough bullocks, seeds, fertilizers and any other inputs required for growing crops. The most important point in any rehabilitation is people's participation in all works concerning the settling up of the colony. Therefore the beneficiaries of each colony should be motivated for their physical and emotional involvement in clearing the land and irrigation works, digging wells, constructing houses, building approach roads and schools. The cost of materials including labour charges should be borne by the Government and payment made daily at the end of the work and in no case contractors should be employed for any work in the colony.

The Birhors are excellent rope makers. As they would settle down in a colony permanently they may not get *siali* bark in sufficient quantity throughout the year. In that case jute may be supplied to them on a regular basis for making ropes. Goat rearing is another avocation in which they have gained vast experience. Each household should be provided required units of goats for rearing. These two subsidiary occupations will not only fetch them sufficient cash to meet their expenses on clothes and daily necessities but also help effectively in stabilizing their new sedentary mode of living in the colony on a permanent basis.

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BIRHOR*

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The tribal India presents a spectacular diversity. Many tribal groups in India are still in food gathering stage and some others practise shifting cultivation while the rest are settled with agriculture and allied pursuits. The food gathering communities also go for hunting in their food quest. These groups, few in number usually had minimal contact with other communities and depend upon the forest for their subsistence needs. With the opening up of tribal areas following operation of River Valley Development Projects, Mining and Industrial Establishments and the like, many tribal communities who lived in relative isolation came in close contact with other tribes and castes and have developed a symbiotic relationship with them. The Birhors fall into this category having economic relations with the local peasants. They pursue a semi-nomadic way of life. The term Birhor means, forest (*Bir*) people (*Hor*). They are, morphologically, a dark-skinned, short statured, long headed, wavy-haired and broad-nosed people.

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

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

There are two types of Birhors, the *Uthals* i.e., nomads and the *Jagi* i.e., settlers. The *Uthals* move from place to place in groups within a specified area.

* Published in Tribes of Orissa (revised edition), SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar 2004, pp. 101-106

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Each group comprises on an average 10 to 15 families. Some of the families are related to each other consanguinally and others, affinally. A temporary Birhor camp is called *Tanda*. It is generally set up in a place close to the forest and not far away from market center and peasant villages. *Kumbha*, the leaf huts in which the Birhors live are dome shaped, having an opening for entrance. It is made of twigs with leaves of *sal* tree, woven in a framework of wooden saplings tied together with *siali* fiber. The height of *Kumbha* found in Karanjia sub-division of Mayurbhanj district in Orissa, is about five feet. It covers a circular space having a circumference of 46 feet. Besides the *Kumbhas* belonging to the individual families, there are two other units, *Dhugala*, used by the unmarried boys and *Kudi Ada*, used by the unmarried girls for sleeping at night in every *Tanda*.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Marriage is very colourful event in a Birhor's life. It takes place when a girl attains 14 to 18 years of age and a boy, 20 to 25 years. The bride price paid to the bride's parents comprises Rs.171- and three pieces of clothes. The marriage is solemnized by smearing vermilion on the forehead of the bride by the groom. Prior to marriage the Birhor boys and girls have to spend atleast two years in their respective dormitories and thereafter the marriage is contemplated. Arranged marriage is common. Besides, marriage by elopement and marriage by exchange are also practised.

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

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

The common diseases found among the Birhors are Malaria, fever, dysentery, cold and cough, headache and small-pox. In addition to these diseases, they suffer from chronic skin diseases like scabies, itches and eczema. Illness of any kind is believed to be caused by malevolent deities and spirits. The witches and sorcerers also cause illness through the black magic.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Birhor family is invariably of nuclear type. It comprises father, mother and unmarried children. In some cases either the widow mother or the widower

father lives with the married son in his family. The next higher social unit is clan that regulates marriage and prohibits incestuous sexual union. Although a large number of clans are found among the Birhors, a study conducted at the Kendumundi *Tanda* found the following clans:

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

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

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

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

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

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

constructed in the *Tanda* and food and prayers are offered to the deity on all ritual occasions.

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

LIVING CONDITIONS OF THE BIRHORS IN ORISSA AND STRATEGY FOR THEIR DEVELOPMENT *

*P. K. Mohanty*¹

The Birhors, a primitive tribe exclusively found in Orissa, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh fall into the category of hunting and gathering group having trade relations and exchange transactions with the local peasants. Instead of settling down at one place permanently, the Birhors move from place to place within a circumscribed area and therefore are known as a nomadic tribe.

The local people in Orissa indentify the Birhors in various ways. In the district of Kalahandi and Sundargarh they are called as Mankidi whereas in Mayurbhanj and Sambalpur districts they go by the name Mankirdia. In fact both the Mankridia and Mankidi are none but the Birhors. The Birhors including the Mankidis and Mankridias number 1,307 persons in Orissa (1971 census). During the said census period the growth rate was 21.98 per cent and sex ratio was 938 females to 1,000 males.

There are two types of Birhors- the Uthul i.e. nomadic Brihors and the Jagi, i.e. settled Birhors. The Birhors move from place to place in groups in a specified area. Each group comprises on an average 10 to 15 households.

Living Conditions

The Birhor settlement called Tanda, is temporary and set up in a place close to the forest near some market centre and peasant village. They move from place to place in small bands consisting of five to ten families along with their household belongings in and around the forests. Their abodes are conical leaf huts with small entrances. The leaf roofs keep the huts airtight and warm. The women folk keep the hut very neat and clean and the inside floor of the hut is plastered as often as needed. For water for their daily use the Birhors depend primarily on

* Published in ADIBASI, Vol. XXVI, No. 2, 1986, pp.4-6

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streams and rivulets. But often the women folk draw water from the wells in aluminium and earthen vessels and it is their daily routine.

There is no definite pit for throwing away the rubbish and refuse. After sweeping the hut and goat pen the refuse are thrown at a distance from the hut to keep the area clean and healthy. Leaf cups and leaf plates are used for eating cooked food and are thrown away after use.

The staple food of the Birhors is rice. With the sale proceeds of ropes and forest produce they buy their weekly requirements of rice and other things from the market. They buy food grains including minor millets and eat the same in addition to cooked rice. They collect various types of green leaves and fruits such as Kendu, Palm and Mango from the forest for their consumption. Whenever times permits during their trips to the forest for collection of barks, they dig out roots and tubers and also collect honey which supplement their principal cereal diet. In many places cocoons are available in the forest and the Birhors are well acquainted with these places. The cocoons add to the income of the Birhors in the form of cash which they use for buying their clothes.

Greensand vegetables are always boiled with a little salt and turmeric paste required amount of chilly is added according to taste. The flesh of different types of animals and birds are taken, of which the flesh of the monkey is very delicious to them. Meat is usually cooked by boiling and adding salt, oil, chilly and turmeric paste and also taken by roasting. The extra meat is stored by baking or drying it in the sun. While preparing curry of the flesh of the monkey, turmeric paste is not added due to religious taboo. Fruits and nuts are taken raw but the roots and tubers before being eaten are either boiled or roasted on fire. Although the Birhors tap different sources for their livelihood, they very often than not run deficit of their food supply. During the scarce period they eat mango kernel, which are preserved at home for use during such difficult times.

The Birhors are addicted to country liquor (Handia) which is prepared by them or purchased from the local Scheduled Caste people. But on festive occasions and during observance of religious rites, *mohua* wine is drunk and offered to guests and relatives. Tobacco is very much popular among the Birhors. It is smoked and chewed by powdering and mixing it with a little lime. Even though the habit of taking tobacco is confined to men and women, the children also are found to be using it.

A Birhor male needs three pieces of clothes annually for his use. Regarding use of clothes they explain like this. One piece is worn, another piece is used for covering the body and in case the cloth which is worn gets wet it is replaced by the third piece of cloths which is kept at home. A piece of cloth costs Rs. 12 to 15 and a man needs about Rs.40 annually towards the cost of his clothes. A woman needs only two pieces of sarees in a year and a sum of Rs. 60 is required to meet the cost of these two pieces. The male members have now started wearing

shirts and the female folks are using petticoats and blouses which have increased the expenses of the Birhors on clothing.

A woman wears bangles and hair pins to keep the tassel in position in the hair bun. They use different types of oil for different purposes. Coconut, Mahua and Kusum oils are anointed on the body and also used for dressing hair. Mustard oil is used for cooking food and Mahua (*tola*) oil is used for lighting lamps. The Birhors know the techniques of extracting oil from Kusum and Mahua seeds by using wooden oil press. They break the seeds into small pieces and boil them. The boiled seeds are kept in small baskets. Two such baskets filled with the boiled seeds are kept one upon the other in between two planks of wood which comprises the oil press. One end of these two planks is tied tightly and inserted into the grooves made for this purpose in a tree. The other end of the lower plank is rested on a big piece of stone above the ground and the filled in oil seed baskets are pressed tightly by lowering the upper plank until oil comes out. The oil is collected in an earthen pot kept below on the ground.

DISEASES AND THEIR TREATMENT

COMMON DISEASES- The common ailments found among the Birhors are malaria fever, dysentery, cold and cough, headache and smallpox. In addition to these diseases, they suffer from chronic skin diseases, like scabies, itches and eczema, herbal medicines and prescribe the dose.

Causes of Diseases- Illness of any kind is believed to be caused largely by malevolent deities and spirits. Any breach of social norms and religious taboos cause ill health. The witches and sorcerers also cause illness through black magic.

Medical Therapy- As soon as one falls ill, the common practice is to consult the traditional medicine man (Raulia), who has experience in herbal medicines and prescribes the dose.

Whenever a person sustains any injury or sore boiled *mohua* oil is applied over the wound which heals the injury within two to three days. There are different reasons for headache such as hard oil in the forest insomnia and cold and cough. For this a paste made out of garlic and mustard is applied to the forehead of the patient which results in stoppage of the ache in no time. Similarly, the barks of the Kusum tree are fried and applied to aching part of the body and kept for an hour together that provides relief.

A concoction prepared out of the bark of the Danda tree, the Hatana tree and the Sal tree taken twice daily in an empty stomach continuously for two days cures indigestion.

Though fever (Rua) is a common ailment among the Birhors it is believed to be caused by the evil eye or black magic of an enemy. A medicine prepared by the medicine man by mixing the dust of the roots of the Dorul tree, Sogal tree, the

Raipan tree, the Saram tree and the Hatilutum tree taken by the patient once in a day cures fever. But in chronic cases of fever the medicine-man is requested to cure the patient through divination. The person suffering from cold and cough (Khu) takes three to four times a day a mixture prepared out of the roots and barks of the *siali* creeper continuously for two days that cures him.

Mental Therapy- If the herbal medicine fails the patient loses patience and seeks help of the diviner. Hence the Raulia is requested to personify the evil spirit and prescribe the required therapy.

The Birhors have fallen victim to the family planning programmes. The demography of the tribes does not show any appreciable increase in population. Rather, the tribe is very small so far as its population is concerned. In such a situation there appears to be no need for the Birhors to adopt family planning practices. But it is found that lured by the handsome financial assistance many Birhors have undergone sterilization operation. During our field work, I have come across two such instances in the Kendumundi Birhor Tanda in Mayurbhanj district, Orissa. Some events and drastic consequences took place soon after they were operated upon and the people attributed these mishaps to thevasectomy operation, which these two Birhors were subjected to. In both the cases they lost their wives within a period of three weeks from the date of operation and there after one of them lost all the children and the other who had two sons and one daughter lost all his sons. Both of them were young and would have been capable of procreation but for their operation. The Birhors strongly believed that their supreme deity got angry with these two people for undergoing operation and was bent upon taking away the lives of all the people in their families leaving no one to continue their progeny. There was no escape from this divine punishment and as a result the family planning practices are dreaded in the Birhor community. One of them pathetically expressed during an interview that he is very keen to get married again but no woman is willing to marry him because in the Birhor society barren women are looked down upon.

Strategy of Development

The tribe as a whole has retained a nomadic style of life. With change of seasons they move from place to place in search of livelihood. They try to put up their Tanda very close to the forest. The Similipal hill ranges around which most of their Tandans are situated are vitally linked with their economic life. They collect *siali* creepers from the forest to make various types of ropes which are in great demand in the farming community. The transactions between the Birhors and the local peasants take place at the weekly markets.

Having come in close contact with the peasant, they have observed various agricultural operations and most of them have acquired knowledge in ploughing the land, sowing the seeds, transplanting the plants and other agricultural activities such as weeding, manuring, harvesting, etc.

The following occupations feature prominently as substantial sources of income for the Birhors. One is rope making which is their primary source of income and the other is goat rearing. The Birhors buy young she-goats from the weekly market at a nominal cost of Rs.40 to Rs. 50 and raise them properly to bear kids. They sell them when they attain full growth. These grown up goats are in great demand in the rural areas and therefore fetch substantial returns to the Birhors. Sometimes they also buy goats of one year old at Rs.60 to Rs. 80. After rearing them for a year or so they sell them in the markets. These goats also fetch them a substantial income which varies from Rs. 140 to Rs.160.

A group of Birhors in a Tanda at Kendumundi in Mayurbhanj district of Orissa were asked about their choice of different occupations. Majority of them opined that they no longer want to move from place to place. Instead, they are eager enough to settle down permanently at some place and carry on cultivation and goatery. They expressed that they need land, plough, bullocks and seeds for carrying on cultivation of paddy along with goatery which need no recurring expenditure. From the interview it was also found out that they were interested in having tile roofed permanent houses in place of leaf thatched huts.

The Birhors are excellent rope makers. If they would settle down in a colony permanently they may not get *siali* bark in sufficient quantity throughout the year. In that case jute may be supplied to them on a regular basis for making ropes. Goat rearing is another avocation in which they have gained vast experience. Each household should be provided with required units of goats for rearing. These two subsidiary occupations will not only fetch them good income to meet their expenses on clothes and daily necessities but also will help to settle down permanently giving up their nomadic way of life.

THE CHANGING LIFE STYLE OF THE BIRHOR: FROM NOMADIC LIFE TO SETTLED LIFE *

*Trilochan Sahoo*¹

Introduction:

This paper is an outcome of the empirical research on development activities based on the socio-cultural life style of a Primitive Tribal Group (P.T.G.), the Birhor. My experiences, association and participation with the development activities during the period 1987-88 to 1992-93 for the two nomadic bands of the Birhor tribe, living in the locality of Kendumundi and Durdura village in Panchapir subdivision of Mayurbhanj district have been discussed. My acquaintance with this little known jungle-dwelling semi-nomadic tribe and their distinctive cultural traits made me enthusiastic to take up the challenge of their planned development as a Special Officer of the Hill Kharia & Mankirda Development Agency (HKMDA), Jashipur, Mayurbhanj.

At the outset, I traced-out two bands of Birhor, one at the village, Kendumundi of Karanjia Block and another at the village Durdura of Jashipur Block in Karanjia Subdivision of Mayurbhanj district. Kendumundi is located at the periphery of Similipal forest and Durdura, at the gateway of Similipal National Park. Each of the villages has a weekly market. There are hill streams flowing through the fringes of the villages where the leaf hutments (Kumbha) of the Birhor amidst thinly populated *sal* trees are seen in the proximity. The village forests are combined with the territory of Similipal forest.

Life and Culture:

My encounter with the Birhor confirmed me that their life and culture are largely influenced by four vital things i.e. forest, water sources, village market and peasants.

* Published in ADIVASI, Vol. XXXVI, Nos. 1 & 2, 1996, pp.47-60

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Identity:

These simple, wandering and god-fearing people identify themselves as Birhor, the 'jungle man'. Their neighbours call them as Mankirdia or Mankidi since they frequently catch, kill, eat, and often sell the monkeys. The names Mankirdia or Mankidi appear to be non-connotative referring to the Birhor. In fact both the Mankirdia and Mankidi are one and the same tribe and both are none but the Birhors (Mohanty, 1990). They are listed separately under three different names such as Birhor, Mankirdia or Mankidi in the list of Scheduled Tribes of Odisha. This anomaly needs to be corrected.

Origin:

The Birhors are an aboriginal group originating from the same Kolarians like the Mundas, Santals, Hos and Bhuiyans. However, they themselves believe that they are descendants from the sun (Imam, 1986). Strangely, they can be considered as a living legend of different stages of human evolution characterized by nomadic life, hunting and food gathering activities.

A man of today would hardly believe that about more than one and half century back, a group of tribal (Birhor) men in Indian soil were reported to be cannibals. "In British-India the Birhors were accused by their neighbours of revolting cannibalism by hastening the end and devouring the flesh of their dying parents and other relations (Ray, 1925)." Assuring me that they had themselves given up the practice, they admitted that their fathers were in the habit of disposing of the dead in the manner indicated, e.g. by feasting on the bodies but they declared that they never shortened life to provide such feasts with their own blood-relations being served up to them. The "Raja of Jashipur said that he had heard, when a Birhor thought his end is approaching, he himself invited his kindred to come and to eat him "(Dalton, 1864)". However the Birhor of today refute that their forefathers ever had had the custom of man eating.

Cultural Landmarks:

Nomadism and group life, leaf hutments dwelling, neither rich nor poor but equality, livelihood from monkey catching and *siali* rope-making, hunting and forest food-gathering along with barter system are the distinctive cultural landmarks of the Birhors.

Language:

Ethnologically the Birhors belong to Proto Australoid group of people. Their dialect belongs to the Munda (Austro-Asiatic) language including the Santal and the Ho languages. They also speak colloquial Odia language for inter group communication with Odia people. Their language is considered as the vehicle of their cultural ethos and ethnicity. Their time and place reference at the time of

conversation shows nothing but their mobility and uncertainty in habitation attributed to a distinct nomadic life style.

Dress and Ornaments:

It is observed from their appearance that a typical Birhor man is of short stature, dark complexion with long head, broad-flat nose, thick lip, wavy hair, loose arm and bow-like leg. A Birhor man wears a coarse loin cloth round the waist hanging down the knee and a napkin of the same variety around the neck, hanging the two ending parts down the shoulder at the chest and back sides of the body. A woman wears a piece of short coarse cloth round the waist which hangs down up to knee and another piece of cloth barely covers her upper part of the body. When noticed by a stranger, a Birhor woman may not cover her bare breasts as they think it not as the symbol of sex but as a source of baby food. The use of modern dress like *saree*, *dhoti*, pants, shirts, under-wears and banyan etc are of recent intervention by frequent contacts with other culture groups and forces of modernization. The children under 5 years are found to be naked and from 5 up to 10 years of age use only a piece of loin cloth round the waist leaving the upper part of the body naked. Women from older generation tattoo around their arms, chins, nose and feet. They wear bracelets, anklets, nose and ear rings made of brass or iron. The Birhor girls pierce their ears and noses and wear in their lobes, the befitting dry sticks of wild *tulsi* plant or date-palm. Women adorn their bun with flowers and leaves from jungle during festive occasions, now-a-days hardly will we find the women folk of younger generation with tattoo mark and wearing ornaments made of brass and iron.

Subdivision:

Keeping the residence in view, the Birhors may be split with two social groups. They are the Jaghis (settlers) and the Uthuls (nomadic). The former type is not found in Odisha. They are found only in the states of Bihar and Madhya Pradesh where they lead a settled peasant life.

Migration and Population:

The latter type (Uthuls) who are of wandering nature are found in the States of Assam, Bihar, Odisha, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal. They mostly move in the hills and forest tracts of the north western region of Odisha particularly in the districts of Sundargarh, Sambalpur, Keonjhar and Mayurbhanj. At times, they are also found in the districts of Balasore, Cuttack and Dhenkanal. As per 1981 census the population of Birhor including Mankirdias and Mankidis was 1349. The corresponding population figures in 1971 and 1961 census were 1307 and 2138 respectively. As they are migratory in nature, the possibility of their movements across different states during census operation may not be ignored. This might be the cause of decline of Birhor population by 831 persons over the decade (1961-1971).

The scenic Chhotanagapur plateau is said to be their place of origin. From there they might have been migrated to different parts of Odisha and ultimately chosen temporary habitations around the hill tracts in the said districts. Sometimes these people wander long distances in the jungle to take advantages of the season's best crops or game, for instance the Birhor wander from Odisha to Hazaribagh district (Prashad, 1961). Often they go out of the State and come in after two to three years (Mohanty, 1990).

Food Groups:

The Birhor divide themselves into different food groups and each food group moves from place to place in search of forest food resources and wild games to eke out their livelihood. They tell, "We are mother-landless. Nor even we have any immovable properties. Natural forests are our food granary". The Birhor move about in small bands sharing monkeys, tracking hare, deer and collecting rope fibers for making ropes for sale, also for collecting honey and bee wade (Prashad, 1961). Here a question arises, "Why do the Birhor change their dwelling place"? The following assumptions may be supposed to be the answers.

They change their dwelling place under the following circumstances.

- a) During exhaustion of food resources and short supply of *siali* fibre when monkeys are noticed in the adjacent forest areas of a *tanda*, the Birhors tempt to change their current habitat.
- b) When the market demand of handicrafts like rope, *sika*, and *topa* are found to be diminished in the locality, they search for another market demand by changing their place of residence.
- c) When a person or his family members suffer from repeated illness or meet unnatural deaths or conflicts and cleavages occur among *tanda* members leading to homicide, they prefer to leave the residence.
- d) When clandestine affairs like adultery, premarital illicit sex relations, violation of mores of the tribe become conspicuous and ex-communication from the *tanda* is ordered, for the sake of searching prospective bride they normally change their dwelling place.
- e) Last but not the least, when the kinship bond of a person badly requires his presence for observance of the rites and rituals at another *tanda* at a distant place, then he shifts to the designated place.

Tanda:

The temporary settlement of Birhor is called *tanda*. About 50 people from 10 to 15 families compose a food group and live in a *tanda*. A new *tanda* is set up in a place close to the forest, water source as well as market centre. Prior to setting up a *tanda* at a new place Dehuri, the *tanda* priest observes a ritual for testing the feasibility of the place. He puts up three handful of sun dried rice in a clean circle shaped place washed with cow dung in the afternoon. The very next day the

Dehuri examines the place and declares the same as suitable, if the rice and vermilion is found intact. The frequency of change of *tandas* of Birhor is more in summer and winter than in monsoon. In a *tanda* each family owns a Kumbha- the leaf hut. It is a cone-shaped construction from sapling-dried branches covered with fresh leaves of the *sal* (*Shorea robusta*) trees and *siali* (*Lama bayer*) creepers. The uniqueness of a Kumbha is that it keeps the Birhor reasonably warm in winter, cool in summer and serves as a wind and waterproof residence during rains. The circumference of Kumbha at the ground level is about 50' and its height at the centre is 5'. It is windowless and there is a *bagdir* (Door shutter of 3' x 3' size) made of twigs and leaves. The Birhors get into the Kumbha by creeping. It is a single room multipurpose hut providing accommodations for men and domestic animals, kitchen and dining. In a *tanda* each clan must have a mini Kumbha set apart at the back of the main Kumbha for the abode of the clan deity. Besides, there may have two large Kumbhas as the bachelor's dormitory, in each *tanda*. The bachelors' dormitory for boys in the *tanda* is known as *dhingla* whereas for the girls it is called *kudiada*. The boys and girls use their respective dormitories for sleeping at nights. The presence of Birhor becomes conspicuous when a scenario of amalgamation of Kumbhas in a locality catches the eyes of the neighboring people.

The *tanda* is heterogeneous in clan composition. (Patnaik&Mohanty) "Association of each *tanda* group is based on the need for association of food quest. The families that constitute a *tanda* do not belong to the same clan or kinship group. Chance or more often marital connections seem to have originally brought them together in a *tanda*. Even this cohesion is not as strong as it would appear as any family may leave its old *tanda* and join a new one whenever it feels like it. (Prashad, 1961)". Thus it is not obligatory on the part of any Birhor to live with a particular food group for all time to come. They exercise the freedom to decide and join with any new *tanda* of their choice. Of course in choice of a new *tanda*, a Birhor prefers the merits of staying with his kith and kins both as affinal and consanguineal, keeping in view the necessities of the rites and rituals associated with their lifestyle during adversity and distress. The composition of a food group or a *tanda* is always limited to ten to fifteen Birhor families since large number of families adversely affects their economy.

Economy:

The economic activities of the Birhor are primarily based on natural forest, hunting and food gathering. "Our observation of the economic life of the Birhors shows that they lead a life which is full of hazards and hardships and below the level of subsistence. Still they appear to be very joyful and contented, almost in every evening both the boys and girls join together and spend time in singing and dancing in accompaniment of music from flute and drum".(Patnaik&Mohanty). But luxury and comforts are yet a distant dream which never turns true for the Birhors. "Their economic life is being geared and shaped by the Similipal hill range around which most of their *tandas* are situated. Primarily two occupations

feature prominently as substantial sources of income for the Birhors: one is rope making and the other is goat rearing. (Mohanty, 1990).

These naturally shy people live mostly upon trapping and hunting wild animals and birds and gleaning forest food and *siali* fibres for preparation of ropes. In the weekly markets they are found selling ropes and forest produce. Natural forest is their main source of livelihood. Pandu Nayak, the Dehuri of the Kendumundi *tanda* told, "As a mother is to a child so is the forest to the Birhors. A child lives on mother's milk, we exploit the mother forest and its resources like various edible fruits, roots, tubers, leaves, flowers, mushrooms, honey, wax, games etc to keep our bodies and souls together. The foresters accuse us as destroyers of forests. But we usually do not cut trees, especially fruit bearing trees. We cut the matured *siali* creepers which arrest the natural growth of big trees like *sal*, *mahul* etc and thereby we help the trees to grow more. See, we never root out the *siali* creepers but cut them leaving 3' length above the roots for their recovery. Our main avocation is collecting *siali* fibres and preparing ropes, sling (*sikur*), small baskets (*topa*) etc and selling or bartering those handicrafts in the weekly markets or often at villages to earn our breads. We also do trapping and hunting of wild games, forest food gathering, goat and hen rearing and agricultural wage earning. Besides, we braid jute fibres supplied by the local peasants and make rope from them and barter our labour with grains the value of which do not exceed to Rs. 10.00-15.00 per day. We are landless, we move freely amidst the beauty of the natural forest. We, all the four Birhors are equal since we have neither property nor have feelings of rich and poor".

We have observed that the Birhors are naturally shy, timid and poor but never indulge in stealing, rather prefer to starve. A Birhor keeps two or three goats and hens to meet the ritual expenses and sacrifice purposes. At times they sell these domestic birds and animals to meet urgent needs for domestic consumption, purchase of cloths etc. At the dawn the Birhor leave their *tanda* for forest for food gathering and hunting and return to *tanda* after the sunset. Women folk generally go to the approachable forests for collection of fuel, green leaves, *siali*, *sal* and *kendu* leaves, *sal* seeds, *mahua* flowers etc. They also assist in rope and other crafts making, leaf cup and plate making, weaving mats of date-palm leaves and preparing brooms out of forest grass.

Rope Making:

The craft of rope making and their marketing are significant aspects of Birhor economy. Amidst thick bushes in the dense forests, the expert eyes of the Birhor easily identify the seasoned *siali* creepers for harvesting good variety of fibres. The Birhors chop the *siali* creepers and then strip off the barks from the creepers to get the fibres. Then they collect and carry the fibres on their shoulders and return down to the *tanda*. The next morning the workshop for the craft sits beneath the *sal/ mahul/* banyan trees. Men as well as women sit on the date-palm-leaves-mat under the shade of trees, tear the fibres into the small sizes of coarse

thread and then braid and twist them to get the finishing products of ropes, slings, nets, bags and small baskets (*topa*). The craft activities of processing and production continue till the raw materials are finished. Then the Birhors proceed to forests for collection of *siali* fibres and monkey catching. Forest gleaned items such as green leaves, roots, tubers, fruits, mushrooms and seasonal collections of *mahua* flowers, *sal* seed, *kusum* seeds, *karanja* seeds, *kendu* leaves, honey, wax, *tassar* cocoon, resin etc scantily supplement the earnings of Birhor. These meager earnings of Birhor are incapable of meeting the costs of their basic needs of food and dresses. The above precarious economic conditions justify the hand to mouth existence of the Birhors.

Hunting:

Still another significant aspect of Birhor economies is the hunting expeditions. The seasons starting from October to early part of June of a year widen the scope of hunting games by the Birhors. During this period, they appear in cheerful mood with the expectation of availing animal protein, fats of the hunts and also their skins, the selling of which fetch substantial amount that provide them condiments and oil for preparation of dishes. The Birhors too have ritual worships to appease the God of hunting (Sendra Bonga) for successful hunting. The Birhors in a *tanda* may have an abode of Sendra Bonga beneath three adjacent big *sal* trees. They sacrifice cocks and worship the Sendra Bonga annually to appease him before the commencement of annual religious-hunt (Disum Sendra) for successful hunting. Annually they have a great religious hunt during spring season or at the approach of summer. The hunt is performed by groups of men from different adjacent settlements.

They move in a circle armed with clubs, axes, sticks, bows, arrows and nets. They fix nets between trees keeping them wide at the middle with the support of sticks. All the people form a semi-circle and beat the branches of trees and bushes to disturb the monkeys and other games and slowly step by step they come closer towards the nets. The games like hare, deer, monkey etc. get confused and easily caught in the nets. The games they hunt include bear, mongoose, squirrel, deer, mole, hedgehog, hare, monkey, elk, civet, cat etc. The birds they catch are jungle fowl, partridge, dove, pigeon, peacock etc. They also catch birds with the help of snares and animals using traps and nets.

The Birhors are very fond of dishes prepared out of monkey's meat. That is why they love monkey hunting and go to forest for the same at least once in a week. They are not only expert in monkey hunting but also skilled in catching monkey alive. Here is a legend the extracts of which reproduced from (Ray, 1925:425-27) which tells how the Birhors started catching and eating monkeys.

The story goes like this.

Hanuman, the monkey god, came to Lanka to rescue Sita. When he appeared within the *garh* (fort) of Ravan, his men tried to catch Hanuman but

failed. At last Ravan ordered them to call some Birhors as they lived in jungles and might be more skillful in catching the monkey god. The Birhor made nets and caught Hanuman. Hanuman asked Rama, "Who will dispose of my body when I am dead?" Rama replied, "Those who entrapped you and your race". Since then the Birhors have started eating the flesh of monkeys and baboons".

I have heard a little different story at Kendumundi *tanda* which says that the Birhors are the progeny of the demon king Ravan. The Hanuman set fire in Lanka and burnt down the houses of their forefathers. Since then they are killing the monkeys, the progeny of Hanuman and eating their flesh. They have taken an oath that they would construct their houses on the day they were able to finish the lives of all the monkeys from the surface of the earth.

At least once in a week, a band of males except very old and sick in a *tanda* proceed to forest for monkey hunting and catching. It largely influences the food habits of the Birhors. It is the main source of getting animal proteins for them. They are very fond of monkey meat, the poor man's protein. They never sell monkey's meat but its skin. They often sell living monkey especially the small one. During pollution period they usually do not hunt monkey. They use axes, nets, sticks and clubs in monkey hunting. After catching the monkeys they put them in the *ghejma* (a net bag made of *siali* fibres which is specially designed to arrest the living monkey). In all hunting expeditions they worship Sendra Bonga and the process and methods of hunting is the same as that of the annual hunting except the participation of men from neighbouring *tanda*. The meat of the hunt is equally distributed among all the families in a *tanda*, even a man who does not participate in the hunting due to sickness or old age gets a share. They preserve the surplus monkey meat through the process of basking in the sun shine for the future use.

Property:

As they are a group of wandering people, they have no immovable property like house site, house and arable land. For most of the Birhors, their property include axe, knife, earthen urns and pots, bamboo baskets, slings, nets, snares, date-palm leaf-mats and two to four numbers of goats and cock (for few family). The assessment of Birhor property reveals that they are the poorest among the Scheduled Tribes in the Indian Soil.

Depletion of forests and injections of forest authorities over uses of natural forests are posing serious threat to monkey hunting and *siali* rope making, the two prime sources of Birhor livelihood.

At times Birhors were invited by the forest people as well as public of other villages to kill monkeys to save their crops from damages. As reports received, the Birhors had failed to kill the monkeys except a few because the technique of monkey hunting in forests had not been applicable in other area.

Market:

Market plays a significant role in the life of Birhors. Though their primitive mode of transaction is of barter type, still weekly market plays pivotal role in their cultural life. The prime importance of market for Birhor is disposed of their handicrafts and monkey skins and minor forest collections and to procure the daily necessities like rice, salt, oil and clothing and often readymade foods and drinks. The other significant aspects in attending the markets are for collection of articles for the religious worships, for getting information on availability of prospective brides or bridegrooms at other *tandas*, to know the ample availability of *siali* fibres and monkeys in other areas, to circulate the news of births and deaths among the clan members leaving apart in other nearby *tandas*. In other words the market acts as a source of information centre, helps in the economic transaction of goods and commodities and makes arrangement for the wider interacting networks on socio-religious system of Birhor.

Social Life:

The Birhor family is of nuclear type comprising of father, mother and unmarried children. In the *tandas* at Kendumundi and Durdura, the clans bearing names like Hembrum, Majhi, Nagpuria, Singhkhili, Sikaria are found.

Family and Marriage:

Marriage among different clans of a *tanda* is permitted. Sexual relationship and marriage among members of the same clan is tabooed. Among the marriage types monogamy is the usual practice. In both the *tandas*, there was not a single marriage of polygamy type. But marriages of two brothers with two sisters, marriage by exchange, sorrorate and levirate types were found. Marriage by elopement was not noticed though I had observed the negotiations of two marriages. They do not give cognizance to child marriages. The boys and girls enjoy the freedom to choose their mates. The most significant aspect in selection of a groom is to examine his activeness, strength and ability of hunting and earning for which he has to live together with the bride's family in the same *tanda*. The payment of bride price (Rs. 12/ and three pieces of clothes) is in vogue among the Birhors. Clandestine sexual relations among them before marriage may be tolerable but after marriage they are found chaste.

Religion:

In a Birhor *tanda*, they have three traditional elites namely Nayak (the secular head of the *tanda*), Dehuri (the priest/religious headman) and Dakua (the messenger). At Kendumundi *tanda*, the functionaries like Nayak and Dehuri were the same person whereas at Durdura they were two brothers, one as Nayak and the other as Dehuri. While changing dwelling places and for smooth management of *tanda* life, social control, socio-religious events etc the role of these functionaries cannot be dispensed with. For dealing with community affairs the functionaries are not paid anything but for private affairs they are paid with refreshments like

rice, bear, foods and feasts. The decision of *tanda* head is binding upon all the residents in all the matters except religious events, wherein the Dehuri plays a pivotal role.

The Birhors are animists. But they have a religion of their own and in addition they believe in magic, witchcraft to bring prosperity or adversity, a good or bad life, a state of good health or sickness etc. Their religious system is ideational as it is based on supernatural beliefs which label the sun, moon, water, earth, fire, forest and other natural objects as Gods. Their supreme deity is "Sun" and they believe that they are the descendants from the Sun. They equate the spirits of their ancestors with the benevolent Gods and please the former by offering godly treatments for their well-being. According to Birhors the witch (*diner*), evil spirits (Bhut) are treated as malevolent gods.

So far I have given an account of my experiences with the life and culture of Birhors. Now I must turn to throw some light on the strategies that I had adopted in the execution of rehabilitation and total development programmes for the Birhors.

PLANNED DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTION

According to Nehru, the tribals should develop in the lines of their own cultural genius. This principle was followed in the tribal development policy. The Birhors have a culture of nomadic life for which execution of development programmes for them is undoubtedly a difficult task. Hence keeping their culture and indigenous skills in view, I examined the Birhors and the natural resources available to them at the villages, Kendumundi and Durduraduring the year 1987 and came to know that they would be able to stay in both the *tandas* hardly for six months at a stretch. The Birhors had also indicated their tiredness and reluctance for moving from place to place to for their subsistence. They also wanted to stick to a permanent settlement provided that they would have the provisions of basic needs like foods, cloths, shelters, education and livelihood.

Early Attempt:

At the outset two Nursery Schools were opened during 1987 at both the *tandas* to win the confidence of the Birhors and initially the same started functioning in their respective leaf-dormitories. All the Birhors were illiterate. Hence one boy and one girl from Ho tribes of the said villages who were acquainted with Birhor dialect were selected to teach in the Nursery School. All the Birhor children from 3+ to 10 years of age were taught in the Nursery School at morning. Since the Birhor children up to 5 years were naked, they instantly provide with uniform dresses and also reading and writing materials at free of cost. The adults were taught at their leisure time. Besides, expectant mothers, nursing mothers and the children at both the Nursery Schools were distributed with nutritious foods at morning after teaching every day. There was repeated

health checkup of the Birhors along with supply of life saving medicines to the patients as per the doctor's advice in addition to the observance of their own traditional rituals and worships associated with the treatment of illness. The immunization as a continuous process was ensured.

Role of District Administration:

After 3 months of operation of Human Resources Development Programmes (HRDP), Shri G.C. Pati, I.A.S., the then Collector of Mayurbhanj district visited the *tandas* at Kendumundi and Durdura. An informal meeting with the Birhor of each *tanda* was arranged. The effective implementation of the HRDP was reviewed and the following decisions emerged in the meeting. Since, the Birhors had a pitiable socio-economic condition, all possible attempts should be made to raise their socio-economic status and they should be persuaded for a sedentary life. Each Birhor family must have at least 10 cent of house site under R.L.E.G.P. (Indira Awas Yojana). Distribution of ration cards and sanction of old age and widow pensions to the eligible Birhors should be made at the shortest possible time. The ongoing HRDP should continue uninterrupted.

The district administration took keen interest and instructed all district level officials to cooperate in all the Birhor development programmes on a war footing. I sincerely coordinated the works of the line departments and reported the Collector fortnightly about their operational progress and lapses. I had to work for the welfare of Birhors with the spirit of a social worker rather than a government officer, "service to mankind is service to god" was the motto that accelerated the pace of all development activities like distribution of ration cards to all the 27 Birhor families in these two *tandas*, provision of old age and widow pension facilities, organization of health camps and audio-visual programmes etc.

Follow up Action:

After expiry of six months when the *siali* fibres and monkeys in the adjacent village forests were exhausted, the construction works of 27 houses for the Birhors were started in both the *tandas* and they were engaged in the construction works of their own house on payment of wages. There was break for two days, once in a week in the house construction works so that the Birhors would be able to attend their forest food collections and monkey catching as well as marketing in the village *hat* and thereby sustain their cultural life intact.

I always kept myself informed about the movements and activities of the Birhor since they were habitual wanderers and thus some of them might leave the *tandas* at any point of time. There was instance of slipping away of two Birhor families from the Kendumundi *tanda* for fear of immunization, hard construction works and intra-familial conflicts and I personally searched them out and brought them back to *tanda* after much persuasion. For the first time in their life, the Birhors at Kendumundi and Durdura *tandas* continued to stay for one year at a stretch and that somehow convinced me that a little more sincere attempt for enhancing the

conditions of these poverty stricken people might turn them out to be the permanent settlers of the place.

It is needless to say that all their ritual formalities were strictly observed during site selection and construction of *pucca* houses. Every Birhor family was allotted with one house under the Indira Awas Yojana, *patta* for the house sites and ration cards. Besides, all the eligible old, widow, destitute women and physically challenged persons were granted old age pension and widow pension.

During the 2nd and 3rd years of operation of development programme, 11 more Birhor families migrated into the *tandas* and to accommodate them 11 new houses were constructed. With this the Birhors were cautioned that no further provision of accommodation would be extended for any new entrant in these *tandas* as it would adversely affect their economy. In the course of their short stay for one year in both the *tandas*, the Birhors had exploited the adjacent village forests within their reach of 5 Kms. Hence the able bodied Birhors (one per family) were provided with bicycles to cover up the distance of natural forests beyond 5 Kms. They were provided with jutes in lean periods or difficult situation @ 30 kg per family under rope making scheme. All the heads of family of Birhors had opened savings Bank account in their names and the amount of Rs. 500/- sanctioned in favour of each of them deposited under the de-linking income-generating scheme of rope making. In addition to this, the Birhors were depositing their saving account according to their capacity. To encourage more savings among them, the Birhors were not permitted to withdraw from their accounts without the prior permission of Special Officer, HKMDA.

The other economic assistance provided to the Birhors was as follows. Two young Birhors, one from each *tanda* were assisted Rs. 3000/- to run the rope trading with a view to check the exploitation of the middleman. Two young ladies from both the *tandas* were trained and given sewing machines to take the advantages of the weekly *hats* to add to their incomes. Fruit bearing trees like mango, banana, papaya, drumstick, lemon were planted and vegetable cultivations were done in their kitchen garden and for such horticultural operations each of them were given a set of agriculture / horticulture implements. Sisal plantations were developed in 125 acres of land in the adjacent areas of both the *tandas* with an aim to generate and harvest fibre raw materials that would facilitate their rope industry. To supplement their income each Birhor family was given four numbers of country variety goats and four numbers of graded buck to each *tanda*.

Under infrastructure development programmes, one tube well in each *tanda* was sunk and installed for drinking water purpose and one well at each *tanda* was dug to water the kitchen gardens. All the houses at Durdura *tanda* were electrified under *kutiryoti* scheme. Both the *tandas* streets were developed and linked with the village main roads. The HRD programmes were continued uninterrupted. The students at Nursery School who were of 6+ years of age were

promoted and sent up to nearby primary schools and admitted in their Hostels run by Welfare Department.

Self Evaluation of Development Works:

The findings about the assessment of various development works taken up during three years (1987-88 to 1989-90) for the Birhor are as follows.

Income Generation Benefits:

All the Birhor families had savings pass books and their balance amounts vary from Rs. 500/- to Rs. 5000/- at that time. This indicates that their economic conditions have improved in comparison to their previous one. About 25 families out of 38 were benefited by the goat rearing scheme which had supplemented their income by additional average amount of Rs. 1000/- per family per year. The rest 13 families covered under the scheme had squandered away the investment due to superstition, carelessness and callous attitudes.

Most of the Bihors have reaped the benefits from backyard plantations and kitchen garden. They obtained supplementary nutrition from consumption of vegetables and fruits like papaya, banana, and drumsticks that were grown in the kitchen garden. Besides, there were families who sold banana and earned Rs. 200 to Rs. 500 per family annually.

The Sisal plantations provided regular jobs for four Bihors for three consecutive years. In addition to these, majority of the menial works in the plantations were done by the Birhor which had generated about 10,000/- man days labour (equivalent to the earnings of Rs. 1,25,000).

Free supply of jutes under rope making scheme gave them an average additional income of Rs. 200 per month. The other significant return from the scheme was that it helped the Birhor to sustain their livelihood in difficult situations and when Siali fibres were exhausted in the adjacent village forests. Further the scheme had encouraged the Bihors for savings as they had to deposit the cost of jute which was acting as a revolving fund.

Of all those two Bihors, who were assisted under small business of rope trading had been benefited the most. Always their balance in their passbooks were Rs. 5,000 and they were reported to be crossed the poverty line. Both these two families had taken mortgage of lands of other tribals and communities and also were doing share cropping in other lands.

The two young women trained in tailoring and provided with sewing machines were able to earn Rs. 50.00 per week as supplementary income. In most cases the intention of supply of bicycle was defeated. Due to their neighbours' envy and conspiracy, the hope of owning bicycles by the Bihors was shattered. Forest authority at times hackled and snatched away their bicycles when they entered into the core area of tiger project for collection of fibres. In course of time a

feeling was created that cycles were not necessary for them but a luxury item. Except few, majority of them disposed of the cycles surreptitiously.

Benefits under H.R.D.P. :

Introduction of supplementary nutrition programmes initially by HKMDA and subsequently the continuance of the same by I.C.D.S. imprint a positive impact in the minds of the expectant and nursed mothers and children. Likewise free treatments and distribution of life savings medicines benefited them much as a result of which the occurrence of diseases such as malaria and skin infection was reduced to a satisfactory extent.

Under education programme all the adults from the age group 15-35 years received informal education and were able to read and put their signature in Odia. In the Nursery Schools 27 students were registered and were reading. There were 17 students (who had received their preliminary education at Nursery School) reading in standard I and II in the primary schools and staying in hostel run by Welfare Department.

Audio-visual programmes on health, sanitation, education, plantation, cottage industry, fairs and festivals and entertaining films, cinemas at frequent intervals had inspired them to enjoy sedentary life.

Social Service Support:

The attention of Birhors towards moving to a new place after expiry of the 1st six months in the year 1987-88 at the *tandas* at Kendumundi and Durdura were diverted by introducing supply of jutes and providing works on daily wage basis in the construction works of houses as well as in plantation works. These new jobs fetch them a comparatively good income and enable them to have two square meals a day and thus arrested their nomadic life.

For the first time their names found place in the voter list and they had exercised their franchise. They were also provided with 10 Kgs of PDS rice per month at a cost of Rs. 2 per Kg in the Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) area. The older people, especially the *tanda* heads were appeased by the alluring grant of old age pensions. Ownership of immovable properties like house sites, pucca houses and plantation sites and movable properties like goats, bicycle, sewing machines, radios etc bound the minds of Birhors in favour of permanent settled life. The largest attractions for women and children for sedentary life were the supplementary nutrition as well as colorful audio-visual programme that kept them entertained. They gave up their desire to leave the new rehabilitation colonies at Kendumundi and Durdura apprehending deprivation of all the Governmental facilities.

In a nutshell the economic benefits they derived, the social services supports extended to them as well as the attractions of education, health, nutrition and the colourful entertainment programmes helped the Birhors to give up their wandering habits. In order to examine the gravity of the impact of economic

development programmes on the Birhors, no new economic benefits were given to them although the HRDP were continued during the 4th and 5th years (1990-91 and 1991-92). The aim of this experiment was to break spoon feeding, to abolish pauperism and to observe how the Birhors would manage to sustain their livelihood without the support of government measures.

PROBLEMS:

Land Identification:

Attempts were made to provide at least two standard acres of land to each Birhor family. The government waste lands were selected and demarcated for distribution among the Birhors but the neighboring people who claimed these lands under their unauthorized occupation started revolting against not only the Birhors but also me (the then Special Officer). Since the Birhors were naturally shy and timid, they dared not to take possession of lands at the cost of cultivating enmity with their more advanced neighbours i.e., the Santals, the Hos and others. No agricultural lands could be distributed among the Birhors. And thus the Birhor's dream of owning lands faded out. By that time Collector Mayurbhanj was no more the Chairman of HKMDA and my approach and proposal for distribution of arable lands among the landless Birhors before the then Chairman HKDM-cum-P.A. Karanjia ITDA yielded no tangible results.

Temporary Absconding:

At the same time I was also equally shocked with the absconding news of three Birhor families from their *tanda*. I investigated the matter and came to know that two families had been to Tata area in Bihar in search of a prospective bride. This happened as there was dearth of prospective brides in both the *tandas*. The third family was said to be left the *tanda* for repeated illness of its family members. The illness was due to (as they believed) the spirit of the evil ghost residing inside the *pucca* house which could not be driven out despite all the ritual treatments. The man made a Kumbha to stay at the *tanda* but in vain and the family members left the *tanda* forever. In the Tata area, the prospective groom's family, his brother's family and the prospective bride's family stay in the same *tandas* for six months. In course of staying together, the bride's father was convinced about the ability of the groom and then the couple married and returned along with their parents and brother's family to Kendumundi *tanda*.

Besides, there were other cases of the Birhors leaving *tandas* temporarily. There were eight to ten families who frequently left their houses from the colonies and stayed near the dense forests inside Similipal for 3 to 4 days in a week for collection of fibres, forest foods and hunting and came down to their respective *tandas* for sale of articles and procurement of daily necessities.

Lack of Follow up Action:

After my departure from the HKMDA, the sisal fibre had to be harvested. The Birhors were supposed to be trained in extraction of fibres from sisal leaves and preparation of rope and various articles out of sisal fibres under the technical guidance of D.I.C. Mayurbhanj with a view to fetch better income. But instead of arranging any training for the Birhors for improvement of the crafts on sisal fibre, the sisal leaves were sold at a throw away price and the meager amount distributed among the Birhors. Had they been trained and asked to produce the handicrafts of rope and rope product articles out of the sisal fibres they might have got 4 times more income than what amount they got from sale of sisal leaves. The very purpose of sisal plantation for the income generation of Birhors was shattered. This was not the end of the story. The vast field of sisal plantations after the harvesting were found with no development of suitable alternative plantations and thus kept fallow. This is a sorry state of affair as the Birhors would be left out without any possibility of alternative income generation scope.

Changing in Administrative Structure:

The Project Administrators of ITDAs were made as the Chairman of Micro Project instead of the Collector of their respective districts. This caused nonattendance of district level officers in the Governing Body meeting of HKMDA and thus there were no fruitful discussions on planning and execution of development schemes for the Birhors. When the Collector was the Chairman of HKMDA, there were inflow of funds to the micro project from DRDA, Mayurbhanj and ITDA, Karanjia and integration of schemes for the total development of the Birhors was possible. The Chairmanship - P.A., ITDA could make development arrangements of lesser relevance.

Inadequate Funds:

About 50 percent of Grant-in-Aids received (Approximately 5 lakhs per annum) were spent on administrative expenses leaving 2.5 lakhs for expenditures on development programmes. With the meager amount, the project authority had no choice to execute the ongoing schemes in piece meal approach for all round development of the Birhors. It had produced the blunders of incomplete results, like a drop of water to quench the thirst of a person.

Untrained Staff: The field assistant and other field staff were not given any orientation training in their respective fields. As such their performances were not in consonance with the expectations.

Missing Links in Planning:

Lack of planning to follow up the ongoing programmes and introduction of new one to cater to the development needs of the Birhors and execution of the same adversely affected the rehabilitation schemes after my departure from HKMDA, Jashipur.

Inter-Ethnic Conflict:

The Birhors were getting assistances under various income generating schemes on cent percent subsidy whereas the other scheduled tribes on 50 percent subsidy. This naturally made the latter envious. They played conspiracy so that the Birhors would leave the rehabilitation colonies and the vacant house would be captured and the lands be grabbed by them.

Want of Evaluation:

Concurrent evaluation had not been done as a result of which the errors in planning and execution of schemes were repeated over successive years. This is a sorry state of affairs as we are departing from the main goal of successful rehabilitation of the Birhors. The post of Special Officer, - the key official of the development works for Birhors, was kept vacant for about one year (1994-95). The Special Officer ITDA, Karanjia was in charge of S.O. HKMDA who hardly found spare time to look after the development works of the Birhors.

Injunction of other Department:

Injunctions of the Project Tiger Authority, Similipal Mayurbhanj Forest Department over trespassing, hunting and forest collections inside the project area have squeezed the scope of earning of Birhors. Their consumption of animal protein, especially from monkey's meat and income from *siali* rope making has been considerably reduced. However, the Birhors have been clandestinely catching and hunting monkeys and other games, collecting forest foods and *siali* fibres inside the Project Tiger area. They reported before me that they were often caught red handed and their cycles, nets, axes etc were temporarily snatched away and they were beaten by the Forest Guards and then released.

Blooming Economy:

The market demands of ropes, *topas*, and *sikas* had decreased because the sedentary life of Birhors supplied more articles than the requirements of the consumers in the locality. As a result they were forced to dispose of their handicrafts and other articles comparatively at a cheaper rate.

The Birhors were found actively engaged in wage earnings during seasonal agricultural operations and other allied works. Some of them had started share cropping with their neighbours. Four Birhor families had taken mortgage of lands of others on annual payment of money and cultivated the land. This indicates that the Birhors are slowly adjusting with the changing situations. Thus their rehabilitation through land based scheme appears to be effective and help them to lead an impressive prolonged settled life.

Impact of development works and the new income opportunities for the Birhors had brought forth money economy and increase of wants and expenditure. If no systematic and suitable family wise need based planning for development,

provisions of arable lands, improvement of indigenous crafts and development of plantains fields would be done, the Birhors, who have been accustomed with staying in *pucca* houses and settled life be forced to lead nomadic life and once again be returned to the state of homelessness and uncertain roaming. From my recent visit to Kendumundi, I observed this that the time is not far from now. A stitch in time always saves nine. Right now we may prepare comprehensive plans for the Birhors and execute the same so that rehabilitation programme of Birhors will be purposive and resolute.

Suggestions:

Each Birhor family should be allotted with two acres of waste land without further delay. After distribution of the land, it should be developed as arable lands. Provisions of irrigation should be made and the Birhors should be provided with agricultural inputs like certified seeds, fertilizers etc along with crop demonstrations. All these should be executed through the composite land based irrigation scheme.

Cashew plantations may be taken up in the fallow lands where *sisal* were harvested and *siali* creeper inter cropping be encouraged there. The fallow fields may be used for *sisal* plantation and the Birhors should be trained through DIC, Mayurbhanj for extraction of *sisal* fibres and preparation of ropes and various other articles out of *sisal* fibres. Marketing for the goods may be arranged.

The Birhor women should be organized under Mahila Samrudhi Yojana and all the Birhor family heads should be covered under a comprehensive Life Insurance Policy as they are working in dense forest areas where there are life risks at any point of time. The project tiger authority may be requested to take a liberal view on moving of Birhors inside the project tiger area since it is the prime occupation of Birhor to depend on forests, a means of livelihood.

The Birhors should participate in all the labour intensive development works on payment of wages. All the integrated development planning should be made by pulling funds from DRDA, Mayurbhanj, I.T.D.A., Karanjia and HKMDA (Micro Project) Jashipur.

The Field Assistant of HKMDA should be trained in the field of agriculture, horticulture and livestock and learning the Birhor language. Likewise all the field staff should be trained in their respective fields and Birhor language.

For the greater interest of the PTGs, Government kindly consider the reappointment of district Collector as Chairman of Micro Projects since large districts are now divided to small ones for effective administration and supervision of development works and Let the PTGs take the advantages of it.

A social scientist should be associated with this micro project for preparation of Annual Action Plan and evaluation of schemes after the end of

every year so that the errors committed in a said year are sorted out prior to preparing the comprehensive action plan for its successive year.

The allotments of Grant in Aid should be placed with the agency separately for meeting the cost of the following.

- i) Development programmes,
- ii) Establishment charges so that the funds meant for the former purpose would not be spent for the latter.

Government Officers who are at the verge of retirement should not be posted as the Special Officer of the Micro Project and this post of should not be kept vacant for a longer period.

Field Director, Project Tiger, Similipal and Forest Department Authorities in Mayurbhanj district may be requested to recruit forest guards and labourers meant for the Forest Project works from among the local Birhors. The qualification and age of the prospective candidates may be relaxed and they may be trained after selection.

The Governing Body of HKMDA, Jashipur may be reconstituted with the Collector, Mayurbhanj as Chairman, Field Director, Project Tiger; Similipal may be taken in as Co-vice-Chairman. Apart from this, two Birhors (one male and one female) should be included as members.

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MANKIRDIA : QUEST FOR DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTIONS *

*Trilochan Sahoo*¹

Abstract

The Mankirdia is a semi-nomadic Primitive Tribal Group (PTG) mostly found in and around the Similipal hills. They are 1050 in number as per 2001 census. Their skill of rope making, trapping and eating monkey identifies them as 'Mankirdia'. They are primarily a hunting and food gathering community. They speak a form of Munda language. They wander inside forests in small bands and stay at different tandas-the make shift shelters, comprising of temporary dome shaped leafhuts, known as kumbhas. A bigger leafhut in their tanda is used as their youth dormitory. To eke out livelihood they shuttle between forests and markets for collecting siali fibers and selling ropes respectively. They are identified as a PTG and enjoy the benefits of development interventions and welfare measures. A Micro Project named The Hill-Kharia and Mankirdia Development Agency, Jashipur, Mayurbhanj specially set up for their all-round development has successfully settled two bands of Mankirdias, one at Durdura village of Jashipur Block and another at Kendumundi village of Karanjia Block in Mayurbhanj district. This Agency's area of operation is limited. The Mankirdia living beyond the Micro Project area move to different places of Rairangpur, Karanjia, Baripada, Kaptipada, ITDAs of Mauyrbhanj district and the adjoining Nilagiri ITDA area of Balasore district. In such areas, they are relatively deprived of the development interventions. Today, they lead a life of impoverishment coupled with illiteracy, landlessness, homelessness, relative deprivation etc. The free movements of these nomads deep inside the forests have been checked by enforcement of forest and biosphere rules. Such unfortunate situation is adversely affecting their forest dependent subsistence activities. Yet establishment of another Micro Project for the dispersed Mankirdia population beyond the existing Micro Project area is not feasible. They need to be assisted under the "Central Sector Scheme of Development of PTGs" launched by MOTA, GoI, New Delhi in 1998 and also through NGO Interventions. Besides, the concerned ITDAs and DRDA should also extend and prioritize their development programmes.

* Published in ADIVASI, Vol. XXXXVII, Nos.1&2, 2007, pp.150-157

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Ambiguous Identity:

In the Tribal World of Orissa the Mankirdia tribe also called Mankidi or Birhor is one of the most primitive and little known forest dwelling and wandering tribe. They belong to the Munda linguistic group (Austro-Asiatic sub-family). Some of them also speak Odia. A typical Mankirdia has the physical characteristic features of a short stature, dark complexion with long head, broad flat nose, thick lips, wavy hair, loose arms and bow-like legs. The Mankirdia are simple and shy in nature. They catch and kill monkeys from the forests and eat monkey's meat. In the Scheduled Tribes list of Orissa they have been notified separately as Mankirdia, Mankidi and Birhor.

Population Structure of Birhor, Mankirdia & Mankidi

Sl. No.	District/ Area/Gender	Population (2001 Census)			
		Birhor	Mankidi	Mankirdia	Total
1	Baragarh	8	-	3	11
2.	Balasore	-	9	108	117
3.	Bolangir	9	-	24	36
4.	Deogarh	35	-	134	169
5.	Sambalpur	208	-	-	208
6	Sundargarh	186	13	24	223
7	Mayurbhanj	1	79	682	762
8	Kendujhar	-	7	31	38
9	Cuttack	76	-	-	76
10	Jajpur	-	9	36	45
11	Jagatsinghpur	1	9	-	10
12	Ganjam	81	-	-	81
13	Kalahandi	71	-	-	-
14	Khurda	22	-	6	28
15	Nabarangpur	4	4	-	8
16	Nuapada	-	-	2	2
T O T A L	Rural	663 (94.44%)	126 (96.92%)	1039 (98.95%)	1828 (97.13%)
	Urban	39	4	11	54
	Males	362	74	542	978
	Females	340	56	508	904
	Total	702	130	1050	1882
	Sex ratio	939	757	937	924

In Orissa, the Birhors are found in the rural areas of Sambalpur and Sundargarh districts. The Mankidi and Mankirdia are concentrated in rural areas of Mayurbhanj district. As per 2001 census more than 97 % people of the tribe live in rural areas. Their sex ratio is 924 females per 1000 males. Likewise about 99 %

of Mankirdia population belongs to rural areas. Their sex ratio is 937 females per 1000 males. About 23 % Birhor and only 7 % Mankirdia are literate. The following Statement shows data on population and sex ratio of the said three tribes in 16 districts of Orissa, as reported in 2001 census.

An analysis of the contour of their cultures, physical features and dialogue will help us to conclude that they are the one and the same tribe. My field observations over a period of more than half a decade in the forest areas of Mayurbhanj and Deogarh districts confirm this.

These hunters and gatherers with three different names in Orissa and its adjoining states share one and the same cultural life, speak the same Mundari language and also intermarry within and beyond the territory of Orissa. In fact both the Mankirida and Mankidi are one and the same and both types are none but the Birhor (Mohanty, 1990). I prefer them, as they would like too, to be named as Birhor. An attempt for rationalization of their names as one tribe invites further anthropological investigations.

Ancestry and Origin:

The nomadic hunter-gatherer exemplifies the past life of men in the forest in primitive conditions. Bulu Imam observes, "They are an aboriginal group originating from the same Kolarian sources as their more advanced brothers, the Mundas, Santals, Hos and Bhuiyans. However, they believe that they are the descendants from the Sun" (1986:73). Roy's observation supports this theory in his monograph "The Birhor" (1925). He puts forth- the Mankirdia/Birhor tribe is an offshoot of the Kol. They frequently changed their temporary dwelling within the forest and eked out livelihood as hunter and gatherer. The scenic Chhotanagpur plateau is said to be their place of origin. From there they might have migrated to different parts of Orissa and ultimately chosen temporary habitations around the hill tracts."

Nomadic nature & makeshift settlement:

The Mankirdia wander in the forest of Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar (undivided), Maharashtra, and West Bengal. Generally they are seen in the forest tracks of northwestern Orissa comprising the districts, such as Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Sundargarh, Deogarh, Sambalpur, Balasore, Jajpur and Dhenkanal.

Sometimes, the Mankirdia travel a long distance in the jungle to take advantages of season's best crops or game. Often they go out of the State and come in after two or three years (Mohanty, 1990). Prashad (1961) have seen them wander from Orissa to Hazaribagh district. I have found them in 1989-90, staying out of State in and around TATA Nagar for about a year mainly for marital purpose and then returning to the Mayurbhanj district.

Invariably, their *tandas*, are seen in and around the Similipal hills of Mayurbhanj and Balasore districts. I have found their *tandas* in the fringes of the Similipal in Karanjia, Jashipur, Thakurmunda and Rairangpur block areas in Mayurbhanj district. The data of a recent survey (2006) made by Anwesana, a local NGO of Mayurbhanj, on the locations and population of Makirdia *tandas* in Balasore and Mayurbhanj districts is given in the following table.

Mankirdia Population in Balasore and Mayurbahanj Districts

Sl No	Name of District /Block/GP	Name of Village	Total HH	Population			Children (0-14)
				Total	Male	Female	
Balasore							
1	Oupada Block/ Rairngch. GP	Halpur	07	22	10	12	7
2	Sore Block/ SingakhuntaGP	Sarilia	08	30	17	13	9
3	Oupada Block/ Gadasahi GP	Kusudia	31	110	53	57	53
4	Nilagiri Block/ Chatrapur GP	Chhatrapur	20	80	46	34	39
5	Khaira Block/ Baunsagaria GP	Bagiapur	06	21	13	8	8
Mayurbhanj							
6	Bisoi Block/ Bautibeda GP	Chhatani	16	56	30	26	19
7	Kaptipada Block / Jamadiha GP	Balipasi	12	57	38	19	34
8		Uthanisahi	28	117	66	51	58
9	Khunta Block/ Lakhanasahi GP	Dengan	42	169	88	81	76
10	Khunta Block/ Dengam GP	Malibasa	27	100	46	54	48
11	Samakhunta Block/Bhaluki GP	Ambadali	6	17	10	7	4
Total		11 villages	203	779	417	362	355

The Mankirdia in Karanjia ITDA area put forth the following reasons for their frequent changes of dwellings. They divide themselves into different groups on the basis of kinship ties and move from place to place in search of forest resources, especially, abundant availability of the mature *siali* creepers and monkey population and the prospect of marketing of ropes. Short supply of *siali* creepers and disturbed monkey populations at an approachable distance in the forest and diminishing demand of rope among the peasants and other people of the locality warrants them to shift. Superstition for unnatural death of a relation, constant conflict with *tanda* members, seeking for a prospective bride, violation of

incest taboo, observation of rites and rituals of a close relation at other *tanda*, etc. often force the Mankirdia to leave his *tanda* and to join with other groups. During rains the Mankirdia stick to a place to avail the employment opportunity in the agricultural operations of the local peasants.

Large number of families in a *tanda* adversely affects their forest and market based subsistence. So ordinarily a *tanda* comprises 10 to 15 families numbering about 50 people. After observing the ritual testing of suitability of the site by the priest, a new *tanda* is set up at a place close to forest, water source and weekly *hat*. Most often the *tanda* is found in the fringe of a peasant village.

House Pattern; Dome-Shaped Leaf Hut (*kumbha*):

Leaf hut (*kumbha*) of the Mankirdia is a cone-shaped structure made of saplings and dry branches covered with fresh leaves of *sal* (*shorea robusta*) trees and *siali* creepers. Its ground circumference is about 50' and the height at the center is 5'. It is windowless but has a door (*badgir*) shutter of 3'x3' size made of twigs and leaves. They enter into the *kumbha* by creeping. The *kumbha* accommodates men, domestic animals and birds and also has the kitchen inside it. A small *kumbha* lying behind the main unit is the abode of their ancestral god, *alabonga* as they believe that their ancestral spirits live with them. The main *kumbha* is destroyed before a Mankirdia shifts from a *tanda* but the tiny one is not. Rather the material in it is carried respectfully to a new *tanda*. Another big rectangular *kumbha* standing within the *tanda* called *Kudi-ada* serves as girls' dormitory. As the Mankirdia, "the *kumbha* keeps them warm in winter, cool in summer and it is both wind and waterproof".

Shrinking Population

The Mankirdia have a small population of 1050 persons in the State of Orissa and in the District of Mayurbhanj they number 682 persons (2001 census). Surprisingly the populations of Birhor in 1981 and Mankidi in 1971 were missing in the Mayurbhanj District and from there only one Birhor person returned during each of 1991 and 2001 censuses. The populations of all the three listed tribes, namely Birhor, Mankirdia and Mankidi, taken together number 1882 persons and 762 persons in the Orissa State and Mayurbhanj District, respectively in 2001 census. The populations of the three tribes in the State of Orissa during four past censuses of 1961, 1971, 1981 and 1991 show an increasing trend including a sudden about three times numerical jump from 1352 persons in 1981 to 3466 persons in 1991, which again reduced to about half i.e. 1882 persons in 2001. Whereas their population status in the Mayurbhanj district indicate a swelling trends in 1971, 1991 and 2001 censuses except in 1981 census showing a shrinking trend from 486 persons in 1971 to 379 persons in 1981. The population figures of the three separately listed tribes over last five successive censuses (1961-2001) in the State of Orissa and Mayurbhanj district are given in the table below:-

Population of Birhor, Mankidi and Mankirdia Tribes in different censuses

Census	Birhor		Mankidi		Mankirdia		Total	
	O	M	O	M	O	M	O	M
1961	273	38	627	131	169	2	1069	171
1971	98	3	333	-	876	483	1306	486
1981	142	-	205	123	1005	256	1352	379
1991	825	1	1150	392	1491	321	3466	714
2001	702	1	130	79	1050	682	1882	762

(Source: Census, 1961, 1971, 1981, 1991 & 2001),
 O - Orissa State, M - Mayurbhanj district

The Census operations during the last four decades show a jumble of swelling and shrinking trends of the Mankirdia, Mankidi and Birhor population. The population growth of Birhor shrinks and Mankirdia swells during 1961-1971 and it is vice versa during 1981-91. The population growth of Mankidi shrinks in two consecutive decades (1961-71 and 1971-81) and swells in the next decade (1981-91). But surprisingly during the decade, 1991-01, the population trends of all the three ST entries indicate negative growth rate. The population trends of Birhor are growth negative (-) 64.10 % during 1961-71, amazingly growth positive (+) 480.98 % during 1981-91 and again a growth negative, i.e. -14.91 % during 1991-01. The population growth of Mankirdia is amazingly high, (+) 418.34 % during 1961-71, which is reduced but a positive growth of 14.73 % during 1971-81 and 48.36 % during 1981-91 and finally it is declined with a negative growth rate of - 29.58 % during 1991-01. The population of Mankidi is growth negative, (- 46.89) during 1961-71, (- 38.44) during 1971-81 and (- 88.70 %) during 1991-01 decades but only during 1981-91 it indicates a positive growth, i.e. 460.97 %.

It is alarming that the population growth of the said three ST entries, both individually and together, in Orissa is growth negative during the 1991-01. The population growth of all the three tribes taken together shows a rising trend in 1961-71, 1971-81 and 1981-91 decades but for the first time, it shows a declining trend (- 45.70 %) in the last census of 2001. (See table below).

Decade (Census)	Population Growth Rate in Orissa (%)			
	Birhor	Mankidi	Mankirdia	Total
1961-71	- 64.10	- 46.89	418.34	22.26
1971-81	44.90	- 38.44	14.73	3.44
1981-91	480.98	460.97	48.36	156.36
1991-01	- 14.91	- 88.70	- 29.58	- 45.70

The reason of such fluctuations in the population growth rate among the Birhor, Mankidi and Mankirdia tribes could be due to their similar culture and nomadic habitat which identify them differently at different places and may be

due to faulty census enumerations. Needless to say that they not only roam in different places within Orissa but also beyond its boundary spreading to the neighbouring areas of West Bengal, Bihar, Chhatisgarh. They are semi-nomadic, live in leaf hutments, eat monkey meat and eke out their living mostly out of making and marketing *siali* ropes. Their ethnic features and language are one and the same. Census figures may mislead us to conclude that the Birhor population was dwindling during 1961-71 and so also Mankirdia population in 1961-71, 1971-81 and all of them in 1991-01. Do their populations really decline? My field observations during 1986-1993 on two groups of about 100 Mankirdia people, one at Durdura village of Jashipur Block and another at Kendumundi village of Karanjia Block of Mayurbhanj district do not corroborate the trend. It needs reaffirmation through a study of demography of Birhor, Mankirdia and Mankirdia in Orissa and its adjoining states.

Rope Craft- The Lifeline of Mankirdias:

The craft of rope making is the life line of Mankirdia economy. They harvest good variety of fibres by chopping and stripping the bark of seasoned *siali* (*Lama Bayer*) creepers collected from forest. On an open air workshop, which sits in front of *Kumbhas* and most often beneath big trees, they tear the *siali* fibres into different sizes and thin thread and braid and twist them to get the finished products of ropes, slings, nets, bags and small baskets (*topa*).

In this craft making, they use small and simple tools like axe, knife, bamboo club and knife-sized bamboo/wooden blade. At times, they use jute as raw material to prepare ropes to meet requirements of local peasants among whom these products have a good demand. With the help of the ropes, the later operate their agricultural implements and tie their cattle and draw water from the wells. The small *siali* baskets help contain oil seeds placed between two wooden planks which are pressed for extraction of oil in crude method by the tribals. The Mankirdia women, preferably the old generation weave mat out of date-palm leaf for their own use but not for sale.

Shuttling between Forests and Markets:

The Mankirdia can't live without forests and markets. They frequently visit forests mainly for collection of *siali* creepers /fibres, the raw material used in the craft of rope making. For them, the other MFP collections, which catch their eyes while collecting *siali* fibres, are additional, casual and seasonal. Monkey hunting inside the forest is a masculine job, planned and done occasionally. They venerate the natural forest for their safety from the attack of the dangerous wild animals and the boon of catching games, collecting *siali* fibres and successful hunting. Annually they have a great religious hunt in the forest, known as *disum sendra*. Often they use to live in makeshift hutments in the forest for about half a week or so for making forest collections and return to the *tanda* for preparation of ropes and baskets.

In the weekly market days, they go to markets without fail for disposal of ropes and procurement of their daily provisions in return. The other attractions are meeting friends and relations. The bachelors and spinsters seek in the market the possibility of meeting with their beloved ones from different *tanda*. Under the impact of modernization, the Birhor minds are tuned with the monetized market economy but they still practice barter. Occasionally, they are seen in village streets trying push-sale of ropes and small baskets in exchange of rice and *mudhi* (puffed rice), the popular fast food of Mayurbhanj district.

Forest provides them free supply of raw materials, i.e., *siali* fibres. Their skills of processing fibres help make ropes. The market facilitates their rope selling. The eventual movements from forest to market have a direct bearing on their livelihood round the year. While making movements inside forests in search of raw materials for rope making, they roam in the Similipal area by supplying ropes according to the market demand of the goods in the adjacent peasant dominated villages and that shows the dynamism of the Mankirdia people; shuttling between forests and markets, in and around the Similipal National Park, in Mayurbhanj and Balasore districts of Orissa. This dynamism has created their awareness on the forest and wild life conservation rules and therefore, they never venture to move into the core area of the Project Tiger. Hence, instances of infringements of forest rules by the Mankirdia by trespassing into the interior or core area of the National Park are rare and when done, they are booked and victimized with seizure of their simple tools like axes and small knives inclusive of their forest collections.

Development Interventions:

The Mankirdias living outside the Micro Project area in Mayurbhanj district cry for help. They suffer from landlessness, houselessness and joblessness as their forest based traditional livelihood has been declining for operation of stringent forest conservation laws. They live on the edge of starvation. No agencies help them, as they suffer from ailments resulting from lack of proper nutrition and inaccessible health services. The National Park Authority has strictly enforced forest rules. In the pre-project scenario, the Mankirdia had a free hand in exploiting the resources of the Similipal forest. In the aftermath of the National Park, the tribals' rights over the forest resources have been snatched away without providing them any alternative source of livelihood. Without being a permanent resident at any place, they are being deprived of social opportunities like ration card, voter identity card and all the governmental development and welfare measures meant for the deprived tribals.

These left out Mankirdias are silently observing resettlement and development programmes of their brethren at villages, Kendumundi and Durdura, who have got community houses, tube wells, Anganwadi Centers

communally and Indira Awaas houses, kitchen gardens, voter identity cards, ration cards, BPL cards, old age pensions individually under different IGS programmes. Some of them have crossed poverty line; turned literate, sharecroppers, petty traders, tractor drivers and sent their children to schools. All of them have given up their wandering habit and lead a settled life. These observations have influenced the left out Mankirdias to claim for availing such benefits extended by the Government.

It is learnt that due to influence of the Mankirdia development programmes launched by the HKMDA, Jashipur, Mayurbhanj district in 1986-93, some development programmes initiated through other Government and Non Government organizations at Chatani village of Rairangpur ITDA, Chatrapur village of Nilagiri ITDA and other villages of Kaptipada ITDA. A few Mankirdia families have been allotted with 4 decimals of homestead lands, Indira Aawas houses and assisted for development of kitchen garden and their children are admitted in Sevashram and Ashram Schools. Some are reading in non-formal schools / *chatashalis* run by NGO, named Anwesana in Udala area. The meager and piecemeal development assistances given to the Mankirdias can't fulfill their development needs. Though they are included in the PTGs, due to their smallness in size and scattered population, it is not possible to establish another Micro Project like HKMDA, Jashipur for their all round development.

Needless to say that the Mankirdia, who are out of reach of the development and welfare programmes, live in extreme conditions of backwardness, poverty and deprivation, educationally, economically and socially. All of them are below the poverty line. The literacy of the Mankirdias found beyond the Micro Project areas is leveled at less than 1 per cent. To add to their plights, the incidence of malnutrition and ill health is extremely high among them. All the Mankirdias are houseless and live in leaf huts. It is high time for the district administration with the help of Rairangpur, Karanjia, Baripada, Kaptipada and Nilagiri ITDAs and also the DRDAs and Similipal National Park authorities to conduct special surveys of Mankirdias found in the area and prepare suitable action plans and prioritize the programmes for total development of the Mankirdia including the Birhor and Mankidi people.

The Mankirdias are small in number, differently developed with respect to their brethren in (HKMDA) Micro Project area and of remote habitat with poor administrative and infrastructure back up. They are characterized by low level of literacy, declining population, economic backwardness and pre-agricultural level of technology. They constitute the most vulnerable tribe among the Scheduled Tribes of Orissa in general and Mayurbhanj and Balasore districts in particular.

Ministry of Tribal Affairs, GoI, New Delhi has launched a special scheme, namely "Central Sector Scheme - Development of PTG" in 1998. Funds under the scheme would be available on 100 % basis for the protection and development of

PTGs which are not specifically covered under any existing schemes, SCA to TSP and Article 275 (1) of the Constitution. The Funds under the scheme could be used for helping the Mankirdia beneficiaries to cope with extremely adverse situations that threaten their survival. They badly need protection against various forms of exploitation. The activities under the proposed scheme may include development measures like allotment of homestead land, house, farm land, development of kitchen garden, poultry and goat rearing, skill development training for rope making, organization of Self Help Groups, health, nutrition and education and provision of services and inputs along with awareness generation and confidence building. The district administration should come forward to extend all the opportunities like old age/widow pensions, ration cards, voter identity cards and other welfare measures meant for BPL families. In absence of a special Micro Project for the total development of these PTG people who are dispersed in different ITDA areas in Mayurbhanj and Balasore districts, there is need for selection and deployment of a suitable NGO and field functionaries who possess a degree of enthusiasm, empathy, integrity, sensitivity and experiences of development programmes with the Mankirdias, and also willingness to take up the hard work under the "Central Sector Scheme- Development of PTG". A proposal for the total development of the PTG need to be prepared through Government and Non-Government organization in collaboration and the same to be sent to MoTA, GoI through ST & SC Development Department, GoO for sanction of funds. The concerned ITDAs, District Administration and the local NGOs should assist the Mankirdias, the weakest among the weaker sections.

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MANKIRDIA*

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The Mankirdia constitute a semi nomadic section of the Birhor tribe. They are primarily a hunting and food gathering community. For their traditional skill of rope making, trapping and eating monkey, their neighbours call them 'Mankidi' or 'Mankidia'. In the district of Kalahandi and Sundargarh they are named Mankidi whereas in Mayurbhanj and Sambalpur districts they go by the name Mankirdia. They catch and kill monkeys from the forests and eat monkey's meat. When these monkeys create havoc in the rural areas and destroy crops, fruits and vegetables, the local people employ the Mankirdias to catch them.

They are one of the most archaic and little known forest dwelling and nomadic communities of the state as well as the country. They wander inside forests in small bands and stay at different *tandas*- the temporary make shift settlements, comprising of temporary dome shaped leaf huts, known as *kumbhas*. They speak a Munda language and some of them are also conversant in Oriya.

The typical physical characteristic features of Mankirdia are short stature, dark complexion with long head, broad flat nose, thick lips, wavy hair, loose arms and bow-like legs. They are simple and shy in nature.

The nomadic hunter-gatherer group exemplifies the past life of human beings in the forest in archaic conditions. The scenic Chotanagpur plateau is said to be their place of origin. From there they might have migrated to different parts of Orissa and ultimately chosen temporary habitations around the hill tracts. Besides Orissa, they are found in Jharkhand, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. In Orissa, small wandering bands of Mankirdia are largely found in Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Balasore, Jajpur, Deogarh, Sundergarh and Sambalpur districts. They are mostly found in and around the Similipal hills. They number 1050 persons as per 2001 census. About 99 % of them are ruralites. Their sex ratio is 937 females per 1000 males. Only 7 percent of them are literates.

* Published in Photo Hand Book on PTGs: Series -IV (2008)

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Their traditional style of dress and ornaments are plain and simple. They follow the same pattern as the neighbouring Munda speaking tribes like the Santal, Munda, Kol, Ho, etc. Men use coarse handloom loin cloth and women wear similar *sarees*. These white coloured clothes have coloured check pattern and are woven by local weavers. Women put on few ornaments made of glass, beads and cheap metal. Often women fix a wooden comb in their hair knot.

Habitat & Settlement

The Mankirdia wander in the forest tracts of Orissa, Jharkhand, Chatisgarh, Maharashtra and West Bengal. Generally they are seen moving in the jungle areas of northwestern Orissa comprising the districts, such as Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Sundargarh, Deogarh, Sambalpur, Balasore, Jajpur and Dhenkanal.

Sometimes they travel long distances in the jungle crossing the State and district boundaries in search of games and natural resources i.e., the *siali* creepers and minor forest produce. For instance they wander from Orissa to Hazaribagh district. It has been observed that often they go out of State and come back after two or three years. It has also been found that the Mankirdia bands had moved out of State and were camping in and around TATA Nagar in Jharkhand State for about a year mainly for marital purposes and then they had returned to the Mayurbhanj district after that.

The temporary settlement of Mankirdia is a small one, called *tanda* - the leaf hutments. After observing the ritual testing of suitability of the site by the *Dehuri*, the priest, a new *tanda* is set up at a place close to forest, water source and weekly *hat*. Most often the *tanda* is found in the fringe of a village.

Large number of families in a *tanda* affects adversely to their forest and market based economy. So it houses 10 to 15 families comprising about 50 people. Some of the families are related to each other consanguinally and others, affinally. In a *tanda*, besides the *kumbhas* (leaf huts) belonging to the individual families, there are two other huts, called *Dhugala*, used by the unmarried boys and *Kudi Ada*, used by the unmarried girls for sleeping in night. In one more *kumbha* the *tanda* deity is installed.

More often their *tandas* are traced in and around the Similipal hills of Mayaurbhanj and Balasore districts. One can see their camps in the fringes of the Similipal forest close to the areas of the Karanjia, Jashipur, Rairangpur and Thakurmunda blocks in Mayurbhanj district.

Their movement from place to place is more frequent in summer than in other seasons. But in rainy season they set up their *tanda* and stay all the four months in a locality preferably near a peasant village. In winter season they change the camp two or three times. The frequent change of settlement is primarily made in search of forest produce. Moreover, the wanton destruction of the forest by some tribal communities who practise shifting cultivation and by

non-tribal people who gather fire wood and forest produce from the forest make it difficult for the Mankirdia to get the required amount of forest produce i.e., the *siali* bark with which they make ropes. But the general pattern of movement is that a Birhor *tanda* is confined to one or two places in the rainy season and it more frequently shifts in summer months.

The Mankirdia wandering in Karanjia area have their own reasons for frequent change of camps. They divide themselves into different groups on the basis of kinship ties and move from place to place in search of forest resources, mainly for abundant availability of the mature *siali* creepers and monkey population and the prospect of marketing of ropes.

The other reasons could be short supply of *siali* creepers and disturbed monkey populations at an approachable distance in the forest and diminishing demand of rope among the peasants and other people of the locality. Superstition over the issue of unnatural death of a relation, constant conflict among *tanda* members, seeking for a prospective bride, violation of incest taboo, observation of rites and rituals of a close relative at other *tanda*, etc. often force the Mankirdia to leave one *tanda* and join with other groups. During monsoon the Mankiridias stick to a place to avail the seasonal employment opportunity in the agricultural operations of the local farmers.

Whenever, the people of a *tanda* want to shift to a new place all the families of the *tanda* move together to the new place where they set up their new *tanda*. A man can leave his parent *tanda* at his will and join a new *tanda* elsewhere. He is also at liberty to return to his parent *tanda* where he will be received by the inmates of the *tanda* cordially. It is the customary practice that the newcomer offers drinks to the headman and the fellowmen of the *tanda* for his readmission.

Housing

Kumbha, the leaf huts in which the Mankiridia live are dome shaped, having an opening for entrance. It is made of twigs with leaves of *sal* (*shorea robusta*) tree, woven in a framework of wooden saplings tied together with *siali* fiber. The height of *kumbha* as found in Karanjia area of Mayurbhanj district in Orissa, is about 5 feet. It covers a circular space having a circumference of 46 - 50 feet. During the rainy season they build an earthen ridge around the outer circumference of the *kumbha* to prevent seepage of water into it. It is windowless but has a door (*badgir*) shutter of 3'x3' size made of twigs and *sal* leaves. The structure is leak proof.

The Mankiridia enter into the *kumbha* by creeping. The *kumbha* accommodates humans, domestic animals and birds, and the scanty household belongings. Their belongings include few clothes, cooking and serving pots and utensils, few implements made of wood and iron used for rope making. A portion inside it serves as kitchen and store. They are so skilled in constructing the *kumbha* that a Mankiridia family takes few hours to collect the required raw materials and

build a *kumbha*. The Mankirdia say, “the *kumbha* keeps them warm in winter, cool in summer, and it is wind and waterproof”.

A tiny *kumbha* erected behind the main one is used as the abode of their ancestral deity, *Alabonga*. They strongly believe that the spirits of the deceased live with them in the *tanda*. The main *kumbha* is destroyed before a Mankirdia abandons a *tanda* and migrates to another locality. But the ancestor’s tiny *kumbha* is left intact. Rather the sacred materials kept within it are carried respectfully to be placed in a new tiny hut in the new *tanda*.

Livelihood

The primary occupation of the Mankirdias is making of ropes out of the bark of the *siali* creepers (*Lama bayer*), which are used by the local peasantry for different agricultural and domestic purposes. Various kinds of ropes prepared by the Mankirdia are listed below.

The craft of rope making is the lifeline of Mankirdia’s subsistence economy. They produce good variety of fibers by chopping and stripping the bark of seasoned *siali* creepers. In an open-air workshop, which sits in front of their *kumbhas* and most often beneath big trees, they tear the *siali* fibres into different sizes, make thin threads and braid and twist them to get the finished products of ropes, slings, nets, bags and small baskets (*topa*). The *topas* are used for oil pressing in an indigenous way. It helps contain oil seeds placed between two wooden planks which are pressed for extraction of oil by crude method by the tribals.

Local term	Mankirdia term	Manner of use	Daily out turn
1. <i>Sika</i> (Sling)	Sikur	Used in carrying poles for carrying things on shoulders	2 pairs per head
2. <i>Pagha</i> (Halter for cattle)	Pagha	Rope for tethering cattle	20 pieces per head
3. <i>Barjao</i> (Rope for drawing water)	Barehi	Used for drawing water by means of pots from wells	10 pieces per two persons
4. <i>Panda chhati</i> (halter for buffalo)	Kodadgha	Ropes in which buffaloes are tethered	8 to 10 pieces per head
5. <i>Chheli Pagha</i> (Halter for goat)	Meronijoda	For tying goats	20 pieces per head
6. <i>Jaunli</i> (Rope used during harvest)	Dhaunri	For tying cattle at the time of harvest	10 to 12 pieces per head

Except the oil press baskets and halters used for tying the buffaloes, which cannot be prepared by women, all other types of ropes are made by both the

sexes. The women folk, more particularly, the old generation weave mat out of date-palm leaves for their own use but not for sale. On an average a Mankirdia produces items worth Rs.100/- to Rs. 140/- in a day.

In this craft making they use small tools like axe, knife, bamboo club and knife-sized bamboo/wooden blade. At times, they use jute as raw material to prepare ropes to meet requirements of local peasants. Now-a-days some Mankirdias are making fancy items like hand bags out of jute and *siali* strings. These products have a good demand among the local peasants. The later use these products with their agricultural implements and tying cattle and to draw water from the wells with the help of the ropes.

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

During their trip to forest for collection of barks, they dig out roots, fibres and also collect honey which supplements their diet. In many places *tussar* cocoons are available in forest and the Mankirdias are well acquainted with these places. The sale of cocoons adds to the income of the Mankirdias in the form of cash, which they use for buying their clothes. The Mankirdia rear domestic animals like, goats, fowls, dogs etc to supplement their food and income

Many Mankirdias have learnt some of the techniques of agricultural operations such as weeding, transplanting and harvesting of paddy. The local people very often employ them as labourers during agricultural season. The wage earned from this pursuit by both the sexes adds to their family income.

Although the Mankirdias tap different sources for their livelihood, they run deficit in their food supply many a times. During scarce period they eat mango kernels, which are preserved at home for consumption in difficult times. The staple food of the Mankirdia is rice. With the sale proceeds of ropes and forest produce they buy their weekly requirements of rice and other provisions from the market. They also buy corn and minor millets in harvest seasons and eat these in addition to cooked rice. They collect various types of green leaves, mushrooms and various types of fruits such as *Kendu*, palm and mango from the forest for their own consumption. During festive occasions they prepare and eat non-veg dishes, various kinds of cakes and other delicious items. They like the most to eat the flesh of monkey. When they kill monkey and have some surplus meat, they dry it under the sun and preserve it for future consumption.

They are also fond of alcoholic drinks like their traditional rice beer (*handia*) and *mohuli* liquor. Handia is their most favorite drink which women prepare at home. They also buy and consume drinks available in the market places. Mankirdia males smoke and chew tobacco

The subsistence activities of Mankiridia revolve around forests and the markets. Therefore they venerate the natural forest for their safety from the attack of wild animals and for a successful hunt and availability of forest produce. Annually they have a great ceremonial hunt in the forest, known as *Disum Sendra*. Often they use to live in makeshift hutments in the forest for about half a week or so to perform the forest collections and return to their *tanda* for preparation of ropes and baskets.

In the weekly market days they visit markets without fail for disposal of ropes and procurement of their daily provisions. The other attractions are meeting friends and relatives and enjoying tasty snacks and drinks. The bachelors and spinsters seek in the market the possibility of meeting with their beloved ones from different *tandas*. Under the impact of modernization the Birhor minds are tuned with the market economy but they still practise barter. Occasionally, they are seen in village streets trying push-sale of ropes and small baskets in exchange of rice and *mudhi*(puffed rice) - the popular fast food of Mayurbhanj district.

Forest provides them with free supply of raw materials, i.e., *siali* fibres to make ropes and baskets. The market provides them the outlet for selling or bartering their products on one hand and buying their requirements on the other. Their livelihood depends upon regular interaction with the forest and market.

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

Social Life

The Mankirdia perceive life as a continuous process from birth to death, through the phases of infancy, adolescence, youth, marriage, family life and old age. The death, which brings life to an end, takes him/her to the unseen world where a man is transformed into a spirit and starts influencing the fate of living human beings. Hence, they have the "Cult of Ancestor Worship"

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

During pregnancy a woman observes some taboos and prohibitions regarding her food, work and mobility. She is relieved of doing hard work and particularly, cooking. Most often she is not allowed to go out or come in contact

with a dead body and move near the shrine. She is forbidden to take consecrated meat. While going out she must cover her body completely with her clothes, lest enemies or persons with evil eye may cause harm.

After the birth of the child, which often takes place with the help of a traditional midwife, the whole *tanda* is considered polluted for a period of 7 days and the family in which the birth takes place observes pollution for 21 days.

Marriage is very colourful event in a Mankirdia's life. It takes place when a girl attains 14 -18 years of age and a boy, 20 - 25 years. Prior to marriage the Mankirdia boys and girls have to spend at least 2 years in their dormitories to learn the lessons of life from their seniors after which the marriage is arranged.

Marriage within the *tanda* is in vogue as the *tanda* is multi-clan in structure. Cross-cousin marriage is absent but marriages of sororate and levirate types are in vogue. Arranged marriage is common. Besides, marriage by elopement and marriage by exchange are also practised. For all regular kinds of marriage the customary bride price is paid by the groom's side to the bride's parents. It usually comprises some amount of cash and three pieces of clothes. Their society permits divorce, remarriage of widows, widowers and divorcees.

There is no specified month for holding wedding ceremonies. Generally the best time for marriage is after the monsoon when people have some savings in hand and the guests and relatives can be entertained without difficulty. On the wedding day the groom accompanied by his friends, relatives and *tanda* members goes in a merry procession to the bride's *tanda* where they are accorded a warm reception by the bride's side. With pomp and ceremony the marriage is solemnized by the groom smearing vermilion on the bride's forehead. At this time the boys and girls of both the parties dance and sing in great joy and happiness to the tune of their drums and other musical instruments. After the wedding ceremony is over, the bride and the groom with the party return to the latter's *tanda* where the groom's father arranges a feast for them.

The Mankirdia **family** is invariably of nuclear type. It comprises of father, mother and unmarried children. In some cases either the widow mother or the widower father lives with the married son in his family. The next higher social unit is clan that regulates marriage and prohibits incestuous sexual union. A number of clans are found among the Mankirdias, some of which are *Sinkhili*, *Hembrum*, *Nagpuria*, *Malihi*, *Sikria*, etc.

In a Mankirdia family men and women supplement and complement each other as equal partners. While men take up harder jobs like hunting, women accomplish relatively lighter tasks besides shouldering their routine responsibilities of housekeeping, child care, processing, cooking and serving food. Children help their parents and there by learn the art of living in their respective

gender based domains. Even the aged people do not sit idle. They do whatever they can to contribute to the family budget.

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

Magico-Religious Life

The Birhors are polytheists. Basically they worship the elements of nature. They believe that Gods and spirits who create trouble and illness and death are malevolent and others who bring progress and prosperity and overall well being to the society are benevolent.

Like most of the neighbouring Munda speaking tribes they worship the Sun God as their Supreme God. In the thicket of Similipal hill ranges the abode of their two supreme deities such as *Logobir* and *Budhimai* lies.

They worship their ancestors for the purpose of enjoying good health and achieving success in hunting and collection of forest produce without meeting any accident. They are worshipped regularly in different months. Every clan has its own deity for which, a small leaf hut is constructed in the *Tanda* and food and prayers are offered to the deity on all ritual occasions.

Social Control

For all practical purposes the Mankirdia *tanda* is an autonomous socio-political unit. The headman of the *Tanda* is called *Mukhya*. His post is hereditary. The headman often acts as the priest. In this capacity he worships the deities and officiates in all the ritual performances. He does not receive any remuneration for his services except a major share of the sacrificial meat. But he commands respect and allegiance of his fellowmen.

Customary matters relating to the *tanda* and its members are discussed and decided in the meetings of the traditional Tanda council. The male household heads of the *tanda* are members of the council which is headed by the *Mukhya*. They punish the sinners and offenders by social boycott, which they call *chindal* or *began*. The situation which invokes this kind of social sanction is incestuous sexual union between brother and sister or persons belonging to the same clan who are also considered as brothers and sisters by blood or with the members of the communities whom the Mankirdia consider socially inferior to them. When any person develops maggots in the sore on any part of the body he is also boycotted

until the sore is healed and a purificatory ritual is conducted accompanied with a common feast in the *tanda*.

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

Music, Song & Dance

Like other tribes of Orissa, the Mankirdia are passionately fond of music, songs and dancing through which their artistic talents find expression. They dance and sing when they are in happy mood. Dancing and music are associated with all the rituals and festivals. This is a way to free oneself from the tired and boring life. They may sing, dance and beat the drums unceasingly the whole night. Their music, songs and dances closely resemble those of their neighbouring tribes viz, Munda, Kol and Santal.

The principal varieties of dances they traditionally perform are known as the *Dong*, the *Lagre*, and the *Mutkar*, the *Kadur* (with *Gena*) and the *Karam*(with *Khemta*, *Jhumar* and *Hansda*) dances. Each of these dances is associated with appropriate songs known respectively as the *Dong siring*, the *Lagre siring* and *Mutkar siring* etc. The characteristic Mankirdia dances- the *Dong*, the *Lagre* and the *Mutkar* are really wedding dances performed in accompaniment to marriage songs on occasions of weddings. *Lagre* songs are mostly worded in Hindi. Devotional songs are sung during religious ceremonies.

For dance and music they use various kinds of musical instruments like the *dholak* or *madal*, *tomka* or *nagra* (kettledrums), the *tirio* (the bamboo flute with 3 or 5 or 7 holes along its length and stopped by the fingers), the *kendera* (banjo) with a wooden body and a sounding board covered with the lizard skin and strings played with a bow, and clappers and ankle-bells (*ghungurs*) both made of brass.

Dancing is associated with all happy occasions like birth, wedding, feasts and festivals. Dancing is usually accompanied by singing and drumming. The males play musical instruments and females dance to the rhythm singing songs.

The Mankirdia dance is a group affair. Boys and girls, old and young, participate in it. There is no hard and fast rule regarding the time and place for dancing. But they generally dance at night. The dancers do not wear any special dress during their performances. Mankirdia dances, even today, are a source of healthy recreation.

Planned Change

The Mankirdia pursue a semi-nomadic way of life. For their livelihood they are very much dependent on forest and more particularly the Similipal forests

which is now a National Park and a Tiger Project. Usually, they set up their *tandas* very close to forest. Their *tandas* are seen in and around the Similipal forest.

Due to operation of forest and wild life conservation rules and regulations, the free movements of these nomads deep inside the forests and for that matter, their subsistence activities have been checked. As they are yet to graduate into a settled economy, they are left without any viable alternative.

Now the Birhors are thinking to give up their wandering habits and settle down permanently upon agriculture and allied pursuits. Presently, they have been identified as one among the 13 Primitive Tribal Groups (PTG) of Orissa. A Micro Project named Hill-Kharia and Mankirdia Development Agency (HK&MDA) headquartered at Jashipur in Mayurbhanj district is working for bringing about their all-round development since 1987.

This Micro Project has setup two Mankirdia settlement colonies, one at Durdura village of Jashipur Block and another at Kendumundi village of Karanjia Block under Karanjia ITDA in Mayurbhanj district in which it has successfully rehabilitated two bands of Mankirdias. In these colonies the Mankirdia families have been provided with community houses, wells, tube wells, Anganwadi Centers at the community level and Indira Awaas houses, kitchen gardens, Voter Identity Cards, Ration Cards, BPL cards, Old Age Pensions and also the benefits of different Income Generating Schemes etc. individually.

The community has shown a good response to their development programmes initiated by the micro project and other agencies. By the impact of these interventions some of them have crossed the poverty line; turned literate, sharecroppers, petty businessmen, tractor drivers and sent their children to schools. All of them have given up their wandering habit and lead a settled life.

This Agency's area of operation is limited. There are other bands of Mankirdias still wandering outside the Micro Project area. They are seen in few localities of Karanjia, Rairangpur, Kaptipada, Baripada ITDAs of Mayurbhanj district and the adjoining Nilagiri ITDA area of Balasore district and the Similipal National Park. In these areas, for not being permanent residents they are relatively deprived of the development interventions. There they lead a life of impoverishment coupled with illiteracy, landlessness, homelessness, etc. Influenced by the progress of the Mankirdias rehabilitated in Kendumundi and Durdura colonies by HK&MDA these wandering bands also want to settle down.

BIRHOR*

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INTRODUCTION

Birhor is a wandering, simple, shy and god-fearing and little known forest dwelling tribal community. They live in bands. They are a semi nomadic and hunter-gatherer group of people, who represent the early stage of human life in the forest environment. The term Birhor is derived from two words, 'Bir' meaning forest and 'hor' meaning man and thus they call themselves as 'man of forest'. On the basis of residence, the Birhor tribe divides themselves into two broad social groups, the Jaghi (settled) and the Uthlu (nomadic). They are an aboriginal group originating from the same Kolarian stock like, the Mundas, Santals, Hos and Bhuiyans. They themselves claim that they are the descendants from the Sun. The tribesmen are an offshoot of the Kol. Their language belongs to the Munda group in Austro-Asiatic sub-family, which includes the Santal and also Ho tongues. Most of them are also conversant in Oriya.

As per 2001 census, the Birhor population in Orissa state was very small i.e., a group of 702 persons (340 females and 362 males). The population of Birhor is growth negative, i.e. -14.91 % during 1991-2001. Their sex ratio is 939 females per 1000 males. Only 23.20% (29.97% males and 16.24% females) of them are literates.

A typical Birhor has a short stature, dark complexion with long head; broad and flat nose, thick lips, wavy hair, loose arms and bow-like legs.

* Published in the Photo Handbook on Birhor, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar, 2010

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The Birhor are simple and shy. They catch and kill monkeys from the forests and eat monkey's meat. While they call themselves Birhor, the men of forest, other people call them 'Mankirdia' or 'Mankidi'. All the said three names, like Mankirdia, Mankidi and Birhor are listed separately as Scheduled Tribes of Orissa. These hunters and gatherers with three different names share one and the same cultural life, speak the same Mundari language and also intermarry. An analysis of the contour of their cultures, physical features and dialogue provides considerable ingredients that they are the one and the same tribe. Govt. of India and Govt. of Orissa have taken cognizance of the Birhor community as a Scheduled Tribe and the community has also been identified as a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) for developmental purpose.

The traditional costumes of Birhor are plain and simple. They follow the same tribal dress pattern, like the Santal, Ho, Kol, etc. Birhor men wear small dhoti (*kachha*) or napkin (*gamchha*). Small children remain naked or use narrow piece of cloth which cover the genitals. Women wear handloom sarees (*sali*). The clothes of the Birhor like the neighbouring tribes have coloured check pattern and are woven by the local weavers. Now-a-days, the Birhor men are wearing modern dresses, like pants, shirts and banyans and women, wearing under garments, like *sayas* and blouses. The women decorate their bodies with tattoo marks. And adorn themselves with few ornaments, coin necklaces (*madli*), bangles (*chuli*), etc. made of glass, beads and cheap metal. At times, women love to fix a wooden or plastic comb, tree branches and flowers in their hair knot, especially during festive and ritual occasions.

MOBILE SETTLEMENT

The scenic Chotanagpur plateau is said to be their place of origin. From there they might have migrated to other places of Orissa and live in temporary settlements around the hill and forest tracts. Currently, they are found in Chhatishgarh, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Orissa. They wander in forests in small bands, live in temporary leaf hutment, which they call 'Tanda'. They form small groups, each group composed of 10 to 15 families, having kinship ties. They move from place to place in search of mature *siali* creepers and monkey for marketing of *siali* ropes to eke out their livelihood. When they move they carry their sick old and disabled relatives, baskets, mats, animals, birds and other belongings to their new place of settlement.

In Orissa, they are found moving in small bands from place to place in the district of Angul, Balasore, Deogarh, Dhenkanal, Jajpur, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Sundergarh and Sambalpur. But principally their temporary settlements are dispersed in and around Similipal forest and hills and even close to these areas bordering forests in Balasore, Keonjhar and Sundargarh districts. At times they travel a long distance in the forests and hills across the bordering states gleaning

forest based foods and *siali* fibers-the raw materials for preparation of ropes and in search of potential mates for marriage. For example, they move from Mayurbhanj district in Orissa to Hazaribagh district in West Bengal and TATA Nagar area in Jharkhand and return after two or three years.

The Birhor prefer to set their *tanda*, in the outskirts of a village and nearer to the forest, water sources and local markets. Also location of village market in the vicinity attracts the Birhor for setting up their *tanda* for sale of their rope products. Aftermath of observing the said preferences and suitability of the site through a ritual testing, they set up *tanda* which comprises of a small number of 10-15 leaf hutments and accommodates more or less 50 people of 10-12 families.

The families in a *tanda* comprises of both consanguinal and affinal kins. In a *tanda*, every family constructs its *kumbha* (conical leaf hut). Besides, the Birhor community construct one smaller *kumbha* for the accomodation of the spirit of ancestor of each lineage and two bigger dormitories (leaf huts), one called Dhugala and another called Kudi Ada, for the sleeping accomodation of the bachelors and spinsters at night, respectively.

Mostly in Orissa Birhor *tandas* are located in and around the Similipal hills of Mayaurbhanj and Balasore and forest areas of Keonjhar and Sambalpur districts. Their settlements are seen in and around the Similipal National Park bordering the village areas of Karanja, Jashipur, Rairangpur, Bisoi, Bangriposi, Udala, Khunta, Morada and Thakurmunda blocks in Mayurbhanj district and Nilagiri block of Balasore district. They shift their *tandas* from place to place more frequently in summer and winter than in rainy season. During the monsoon they set up their *tandas* and spend the time in one place close to a peasant village and a weekly market. They adjust with frequent changes of place of settlement primarily in search of forest based food and raw materials for rope making. Shrinking of forest resources and diminishing market demands for ropes compels the Birhor to change their settlements frequently from place to place in the days except the rainy season. During this time they seek wage earning in agriculture operation of the local peasants as they find limited scope in exploiting the forest resources.

The recurrent changes in the settlement of Birhor *tanda* takes place due to the inadequate availability of forest based raw material in the vicinity of forests for making rope and diminishing demand of such produce in the locality. The other reasons of such change of residence are superstition over the issue of unnatural and premature death of *tanda* dwellers, disputes and conflicts among the inmates, family disputes relating to marriage, violation of incest taboo, observance of rites and rituals of a close relative residing in other *tanda*, etc.

Leaf Hut (Kumbha) :

The Birhors call, their leaf hut as *kumbha*. It is a cone shaped leaf hut of short height made of saplings and dry branches covered with fresh leaves of *sal*

(*shorea robusta*) tress and *siali* creepers. Its ground circumference is about 50' and the height at the center is 5'. It is windowless but has a door (Badgir) shutter of 3'x3' size made of twigs and leaves. They build an earthen ridge around the outer circumference of the *kumbha* to prevent seepage of water and entry of reptiles into it. The Birhor are skilled in constructing the *kumbha* quickly within two to three hours. Only two persons take few hours to collect the required materials such as *sal* branches and leaves and construct the structure. The roof of *kumbha* is examined from time to time by observing the sun beam from inside. They keep constant watch on the leaf roof of the *kumbha* and repair it as and when required so as to keep it warm in winter, cool in summer and water proof during monsoon.

The *kumbha* provides shelters to men, domestic animals and birds. The central place of the *kumbha* serves as the kitchen during rains. A separate *kumbha* is set up for the expectant mother for child birth. The *kumbha* environment lacks sanitation. Still the delivery of child takes place there. Food is served to the new mother and care and nursing of the newborn baby are done there. Besides, the *kumbha* accommodates a few household belonging such as scanty clothes, cooking and serving pots and utensils, few implements made of wood and iron used for preparing ropes. The Birhor enter into the *kumbha* by creeping.

In every *tanda*, at the back of the lineage headman's Kumbha, there is a small shrine of their ancestral deity, called Alabonga. They strongly believe that the spirits of the deceased live with them in the *tanda*. At the time of abandoning a *tanda* the Birhor comes out of *kumbha* by making a hole at the back of *kumbha* and destroy it and then proceed in search of a new *tanda* at a different location.

The Birhors move in bands with their ancestral deities and scanty household belongings and the livestock. Whenever, the members of a *tanda* want to shift to a new place, all the families of the *tanda* move together to the new place where they set up their new *tanda*. Aman can leave his parent *tanda* at his will and join a new *tanda* elsewhere. He is also at liberty to return to his parent *tanda* where he will be received cordially. It is the customary practice that the newcomer offers drinks to the headman and other inmates of the *tanda* for his readmission.

LIVELIHOOD

Crafting ropes from *siali* bark, a raw material collected from the forest, is the lifeline of Birhors. Thus the livelihood of the Birhor mainly depends on the forest as well as the local market. They can't live without forest and can't manage without going to the market. They frequent forest mainly for collection of *siali* fibres from white collecting *siali* fibres they also gather other MFPs which they come across.

The crafting of rope is a major aspect of Birhor economy. They harvest good variety of fibres by chopping and stripping the bark of seasoned *siali* (*lama*

bayer) creepers. On an open air workshop, set up in front of *their Kumbhas* and most often beneath the trees, they tear the *siali* fibres into different sizes and thin threads and braid and twist them to get the finished products of ropes, slings, nets, bags and small baskets (*topa*). Now-a-days, some Birhor are making fancy items like hand bags out of jute, plastic and *siali* fibers. In this craft they use small and simple tools, like axe (*tangi*), knife (*chhuri*), bamboo club (*thenga*) and knife-sized bamboo/wooden blade (*hanta*). At times, they use jute as raw material to prepare ropes to cater to the requirements of local peasants. These products have a good demand among the local peasants. The women folk preferably the older generation weave mat out of date-palm leaves for their own use.

They visit weekly market for disposal of ropes and for procurement of their daily provisions. The other attractions of going to market is meeting, gossiping and interacting with friends and relations. At the market the bachelors and spinsters seek the opportunity of meeting with their beloved ones from different *tanda*. Under the forces of modernization, the Birhor minds are tuned with the market economy but they still practice barter. Occasionally, they are seen in village streets trying pushing-sale of ropes and small baskets in exchange of rice and *mudhi*, fried rice, the popular fast food of Orissa.

Forest provides them free supply of raw materials, i.e., *siali* fibres. Their skills in processing fibres help crafting ropes. The market facilitates their rope selling. The eventual movements from forest to market have a direct bearing with their livelihood round the year. While making movements inside forests in search of raw materials for crafting ropes, they revolve round the forest by selling and supplying ropes to the local farmers. The custom made *siali* oil seed containers (*tapa*) are used for extraction of oil in crude method by the tribals. On an average daily earning of a Birhor hardly exceeds to Rs.30/- to Rs. 40/-.

The Birhors are expert monkey catchers. They use large nets made of *siali* fibers for catching monkeys. Previously they used to kill monkeys, eat their meat and sell the skins to the local skin traders for cash. Dueto forest and wildlife conservation laws this has declined to a great extent.

Often they use to live in makeshift hutments in the forest for about half a week or so for forest collections and return to their *tanda* for rope making. Previously they used to catch birds, snares, squirrels, hare and deer with the help of traps (*kuleibasi/patampasi*) and nets (*hanujhali/ghejma*), but this has stopped now for forest regulations.

The birds and animals are skinned and their tanned skins are sold in nearby villages or at markets for cash. Often the skins are used for preparation of musical instruments. In many *sal* and other trees in the forest *tussar* cocoons are available and the Birhor pick and sale these cocoons which add to their income.

The Birhors rear domestic animals like, goats, fowls, dogs, etc. to supplement their food and income.

Due to cultural contact with the peasant community many Birhors have learnt some of the agricultural activities such as weeding, transplanting and harvesting of paddy. The local peasants very often employ them as labourers during agricultural season.

Food :

The rice is the staple food of Birhor. With the sale proceeds of ropes and forest produce they purchase their weekly requirements of rice and other provisions from the local market. They also buy corns and minor millets in harvest seasons and eat these in addition to cooked rice. They collect various types of green leaves, mushrooms and fruits such as Kendu, palm and mango from the forest for their own consumption. They also dig out roots, tubers and collect honey, which supplements their diet. During festive occasions they prepare and eat non-veg. dishes, various kinds of cakes and other items. They are quite fond of eating the flesh of monkey. When they kill monkey and have some surplus meat, they dry it under the sun and preserve it for future consumption.

The Birhors are also very fond of rice beer (*handia*). They occasionally take alcoholic drinks, especially, *mohuli* liquor. Handia is their most favorite drink which women prepare at home during festive occasions. They also buy and consume drinks available at the weekly market. Birhor males smoke. Two men holding two pieces of sticks in their hands make fire by rubbing one flat stick kept on the ground against the other moving in vertical position. Both males and females of the Birhor community chew tobacco.

The economic life of the Birhor is full of hardships with meager earning and food scarcity. They live from hand to mouth. Yet, they seem to be happy and relaxed in market days and festive occasions. Ill health and malnutrition is a problem for their expectant and nursing mother and children. The services of ICDS, like supplementary nutrition programme and health care do not reach the Birhor *tanda*. The children suffer from different kinds of skin diseases. The swelling bellies of most of their children indicate high incidence of malnutrition.

SOCIAL LIFE

The Birhor believe life as a continuous process from birth to death. After birth the life goes through successive phases, like infancy, adolescence, youth, marriage, family life, old age, and finally ends in death.

During pregnancy a woman observes some taboos and prohibitions regarding her food, work and mobility. She is relieved of doing hard work and particularly, cooking. Most often she is not allowed to go out or come in contact with a dead body and move near the shrine. She is forbidden to take consecrated

meat. While going out she must cover her body completely with her clothes to ward off other's evil eye, which may cause harm.

In the Birhor society the birth of a baby in a family is a matter of great rejoices. The couples blessed with baby remain happy and the issueless couples remain unhappy. Since both men and women contribute to their family incomes, the Birhor society hardly see any difference in the birth of a girl or a boy. The child birth takes place in a separate *kumbha* which is built for the purpose. A traditional midwife helps in the delivery. After the birth of the child, the whole *tanda* is considered polluted for a period of 7 days. The family in which the birth of a baby takes place observes pollution for 21 days.

Marriage in Birhor society is regulated by the principle of endogamy and monogamy. It is a very colourful event in the life of a Birhor. It takes place after a girl attains puberty at the age group of 14 -18 years and a boy reaches the age of group of 20-25 years. At the pre-marriage age the Birhor boys and girls enjoy the dormitory life and there they learn the lessons of life from their seniors, which facilitate smooth and easy post-marriage life. Marriage within the *tanda* is permitted in case the *tanda* is multi-clan in structure. Two brothers marrying to two sisters and marriages of sororate and levirate types are in vogue. Arranged marriage is common. Besides, marriage by elopement, marriage by exchange and service are also practised. Bigamy is never seen. In all regular and arranged marriages, the customary bride price is paid by the groom's side to the bride's parents. Usually, the bride price comprises some amount of cash and three pieces of clothes. The Birhor society permits divorce, remarriage of widows, widowers and divorcees.

There is no specified month for holding wedding ceremonies. Generally the best time for marriage among the Birhor is after the monsoon when people have some savings in hand and the guests and relatives can be entertained without difficulty. On the wedding day, the groom accompanied by his friends, relatives and *tanda* members goes in a merry procession to the bride's *tanda* where they are accorded a warm reception by the bride's side.

With pomp and ceremony the marriage is solemnized by the groom smearing vermilion on the bride's forehead. At this time the boys and girls from both the sides dance and sing in great joy and happiness to the tune of the music by playing the drums, flutes, *banam* and other musical instruments. After the wedding ceremony is completed, the bride and the groom with the bridal party return to the boy's *tanda* where the groom's father hosts a feast for all.

The Birhor family is invariably of nuclear type. It comprises of father, mother and unmarried children. In some cases either the widow mother or the widower father lives with the married son in his family. The Birhor tribe is divided into a number of clans, such as Sinkhili, Hembrum, Nagpuria, Malihi, Sikria, etc. The clans regulate marriages and prohibit incestuous sexual union.

In a Birhor family men and women enjoy equal status. Comparatively, the male folk take up harder work, like hunting climbing trees while women accomplish relatively lighter tasks including fibre processing, rope making, housekeeping, childcare, processing, cooking and serving food. Children are socialized to help their parents and thereby learn the art of living in their respective gender based domains. The Bihors take care of the aged and old people. Some able old people do not sit idle. They do whatever they can to contribute to the family income.

When a Birhor dies, his family members arrange for sending the news to all their lineage members and relatives living in other *tandas*. Premature and unnatural deaths in Birhor society are believed to be caused due to the machination of evil spirits or sorcerers. Generally the corpse is buried in a trench with the position of the head in southwest direction. The pollution is observed for a period of ten days. On the 10th day Dehuri (priest) conducts purificatory rites and sprinkles cow dung mixed water all over the *tanda* and over the lineage members. In the evening a mortuary feast is arranged for all persons of the *tanda*, lineage members and other invitees. The death, which brings life to an end, takes him/her to the unseen world where the life is transformed into a spirit and starts influencing the fate of living human beings. At times, the rebirth of deceased members is believed to have happened in a family and it is only confirmed by the Dehuri when the purificatory rite after birth of a baby is conducted.

MAGICO-RELIGIOUS LIFE

The Bihors believe in animism. Their faith and worship revolve round the nature. They classify their deities in to two groups, the benevolent group, i.e. who bestow progress and prosperity and wellbeing to people and society and the malevolent ones, who cause trouble, illness and death. They worship the Sun God as their Supreme deity. They believe that in the thick and deep forest the abode of their two supreme deities, namely the Logobir and Budhimai lie. Forest is their lifeline. Therefore, they venerate the natural forest for their safety from the attack of wild animals and for a successful hunt and availability of forest produce. Annually they have a great ceremonial hunt in the forest, known as Disum Sendra, which begins with a ritual worship of forest deity.

Like other Kolarian tribes, they observe new fruit mango and *mahua* flowers eating ceremonies in which they worship their deities. In addition to that they always worship their ancestor spirits. Therefore, every clan members in a *tanda* construct a small leaf *kumbha* which serves as a shrine of the ancestral deity. Food and prayers are offered to the deity on all ritual occasions and women during pollution period are forbidden to touch the shrine. They worship their ancestors regularly in different occasions for up keeping good health and achieving wellbeing of family and clan members.

At the concluding part of every marriage ritual, the Dehuri while officiating as priest, gets into trance and tells the about the future fortunes and misfortunes of the newlywed couple. In case of indication of misfortunes, he prescribes remedial measures for their protection and wellbeing. The Dehuri of a *tanda* also act as a traditional healer. As and when required he identifies in trance the cause of illness, evil eye and untimely loss of life and prescribes remedies through rituals and sacrifices to ward off the misfortune. Similarly, in other times, the Birhor depend on the *Dehuri*, who prescribes traditional medicines for curing ailments. The *Dehuri* chants *mantras* and often goes into trance to identify the cause of diseases and prescribe remedial measures. At times he is seen selling raw herbs in weekly market. He acts as a traditional herbal healer and provides instant herbal remedies for common ailments for the outsiders.

TANDA COUNCIL

Every Birhor *tanda* is a self-governed socio-political unit. The traditional *tanda* council enforces social control. It comprises of the Naik, the traditional secular head, Dehuri, the religious head and all the household heads in a *tanda*. It handles their customary affairs. The post of Naik is hereditary. Sometimes, he acts as Dehuri, the priest, and worships the deities and officiates in all the rites and rituals. He does not receive any remuneration for his services. He is offered food and drinks along with a share of the sacrificial meat. In the *tanda* he is respected by all his fellowmen. He is responsible to enforce customary laws, norms, mores in the settlement and his decisions are binding on all the fellowmen. All matters, economic, social, religious, etc. relating to the *tanda* and its members are discussed and decided in the meetings of the traditional *tanda* council. The council imposes fines for the minor violations. But if the offence is grievous, like breaking of incest taboo, it imposes the major punishment of '*chindal*' or '*began*', i.e. excommunication from the *tanda* to the offender. Formation of maggots in the sore on the body of person is considered as the effect of sins and the affected person is socially boycotted till his sore heals after which he undergoes a purificatory ritual and hosts a feast to the *tanda* members for his readmission.

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

PERFORMING ARTS

The Birhor are very fond of music, songs and dances. Their artistic talents are manifested in their performing arts. They dance and sing in their leisure time and at times of the rituals and festivals. In festive occasions, they sing, dance and beat the drums and blow the flutes continuously throughout the night. Their

music, songs and dances closely resembles with those of the other tribes like the Ho, the Kol, the Munda, and the Santal.

The principal varieties of dances they traditionally perform are known as the Dong, the Lagre, the Mutkar, the Jadur (with Gena) and the Karam (with Khemta, Jhumar, and Hansda). Each of these dances is associated with appropriate songs known respectively as the Dong siring, the Lagre siring and Mutkar siring etc. The characteristic Birhors dances- the Dong, the Lagre and the Mutkar are really wedding dances performed in accompaniment to marriage songs on occasions of weddings. Lagre songs are mostly worded in Hindi. Devotional songs are sung during religious ceremonies.

For dance and music they use various kinds of musical instruments like the *dholak* or *madal*, *tomka* or *nagra* (kettle drums), the *tirio* (the bamboo flute with 3 or 5 or 7 holes along its length and stopped by the fingers), the *kendera* or *banjo* with a wooden body and a sounding board covered with lizard skin and strings played with a bow, and clappers and ankle-bells (*ghungurs*) both made of brass.

Dancing is a must in all happy and socio-religious occasions, like births, weddings, feasts and festivals. It is invariably accompanied by singing and drumming. The males play the musical instruments and females dance to the rhythm singing songs.

The Birhors dance is a group affair. Boys and girls, old and young, participate in it. There is no hard and fast rule regarding the time and place for dancing. But they generally dance at night. The dancers do not wear any special dress during their performances. Birhors dances, even today, are a source of healthy recreation.

CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT

The development intervention for the Birhor/Mankirdia started in 1987 by of Govt. of India as well as Govt. of Orissa through establishment of a Micro Project, namely, Hill-Kharia and Mankirdia Development Agency (HK&MDA) headquartered at Jashipur in Mayurbhanj district. Since then it is working for the all-round development of about 60 Birhor/Mankirdia families at two villages (Durdura village of Jashipur Block and Kendumundi village of Karanjia block) coming under Karanjia ITDA in Mayurbhanj district. There they have been identified as a PTG and provided development inputs by ST&SC Development Department, Govt. of Orissa under the aegis of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Govt. of India. In the above two villages, the Birhor have been provided basic infrastructure, like houses under Indira Awaas Yojana, community houses, wells, tube wells, supplementary nutrition feeding centers, kitchen gardens, and social welfare measures, such as voter identity cards, ration cards, BPL cards, old age/widow pensions and assistances under different Income Generating Schemes, individually and in group mode through SHGs.

The Birhor community has shown a good response to the development programmes initiated by the micro project and other agencies. By the impact of these interventions some of them have crossed the poverty line; turned literates, sharecroppers, businessmen, tractor drivers and sent their children to schools. All of them have given up their wandering habit and lead a settled life.

There are about 209 Birhor families in Mayurbhanj and Balasore districts, who live beyond the Micro Project area. They, being aware of the development interventions by Govt. of Orissa for Birhor/Mankirdia desire for a settled life and the development interventions. But development benefits hardly reach them according to their requirements making their very survival at stake. However, the district administration of Balasore and Mayurbhanj districts and some NGOs, especially ANWESANA, a local NGO of Mayurbhanj district have come forward and tried to extend helps to the Birhor by initiating some development programmes, like, housing, nutrition, education, etc.

To control the death and diseases of the Birhor people and to ensure food security among them, Grain Banks have been established with the financial support by Anwesana/Action Aid NGOs. At Kusudiha village in Oupada Block a house-cum-store room for the Grain Bank has been constructed with the contribution of labour from the Birhor people and material from Anwesana. The NGO also extends the food grain support to the Grain Bank to ensure food security at the village during crisis period. The Grain Bank house serves different purposes, like a place for preprimary education, storehouse of food grains and raw materials for rope making and shelter for people during heavy rains. Often it is used as a dormitory for the bachelors. Through the skill development training programme the Birhor have learnt the use of hand operated machine for preparation of rope out of *sabai* grass.

To address the problems of malnutrition, support and assistance are extended for the development of kitchen garden. Seeds of fruit bearing trees, like papaya, banana, drumstick etc. and vegetables, like chilies, pumpkins, *poi*, gourd, and carrot and green leaves, like *palanga*, *methi*, are being distributed. The people are trained to develop their kitchen garden and consume the fruits and vegetables to check their malnutrition and sale the surplus for cash.

As many as 209 landless Birhor families were provided financial assistance for goat rearing with insurance coverage. Now all the Birhor families of Kusudiha village rear 5-6 goats each due to the development intervention. Goat rearing generates additional income to their families.

By contact with the local peasant culture the Bihors have learnt the technique of paddy cultivation. Some of them have turned paddy sharecroppers. The Birhor of Bageipur village in Khaira block of Balasore district and Dengam village in Khunta block, Durdura village of Jashipur block and Kendumundi village of Karanjia block of Mayurbhanj district are doing paddy share cropping.

The development intervention includes checking economic exploitation of the Birhor by other people. The Grain Bank at Mahalibasa has helped the people to sale their produce in correct measures. It also helps in rope making activities.

Animators of Aneswasa had helped to promote the immunization, health checkup and supplementary nutrition programmes for the Birhor at the village level. Previously the people were not in favour of medical treatment of expectant mothers and nursing mothers and newborn babies. After motivation, now they have accepted these modern health and nutrition provisions.

In the Grain Banks at Kusudiha and Dngam villages the nursery schools are running. The Aneswasana provided teachers and free mid-day meals for the children in the age group 3-6 years. This is done under the First Generation Learning Programme (FGL). The successful students have been sent to Residential Sevashrams (Primary Schools and hostels run by ST & SC Development) for formal education.

Baya Mankirdia, is the first Birhor matriculate belonging to Baliposi village of Jamudiha Gram Pachayat in Kaptipada block. Has was given educational support, supplied with reading and writing material and motivated to continue his study. His dream is to become a teacher and teach his little brothers and sisters and contribute to educational advancement of his own community.

The traditional architecture of Birhor leaf hut is being changed from the conical to rectangular shape. The roof of the hut is now thatched with straw instead of leaves but the leaf walls are retained. Regular contact of the Birhor with the local peasants and weekly markets has helped them in adopting the latter's agricultural practices, learning their language, slowly following their faith and way of life, etc., and that is leading to a situation like tribe-peasant continuum.

In spite of some development assistance extended through the government and NGOs, most of the Birhor families are reported to be below poverty line. The development interventions made for the Bihors so far seem to be inadequate to meet their basic needs. Central and State Governments in collaboration with NGOs should extend all possible human development interventions for the settlement of semi-nomadic Bihors.

BIO-CULTURAL DETERMINANTS OF FERTILITY OF THE MANKIRDIA: A SEMI-NOMADIC TRIBE OF ODISHA *

*Nirmal Chandra Dash*¹

Abstract

This is an empirical attempt to study the bio-cultural factors influencing human fertility among the Mankirdias: a semi-nomadic primitive tribe. They are sparsely distributed mostly in Mayurbhanj district of Odisha. Data have been collected from 156 ever-married women of the reproductive age group (15-49 years) during 2009. The present paper deals with the actual fertility scenario of the Mankirdia women. Efforts are made to study the bio-cultural variables and societal factors affecting fertility. It is noticed that the Mankirdias are extremely poor and thrive on a food gathering and hunting economy. The observation of fertility gives an impression that though the mean age at marriage is low (15 years), the average fertility of the women is not so high i.e. 3.2 (mean conception). This community is far away from the reach of the modern family and health services provided by the government. However, it is observed that the prolonged breastfeeding and prevalence of widespread traditional contraception methods are identified as the factors responsible for affecting such a low fertility of the present population. Hence, trends of fertility need to be monitored regularly and appropriate measures should be taken to raise the socio-economic status of the Mankirdias and of the women in particular.

Introduction

The Scheduled Tribes constitute a significant proportion of the total population of Odisha. According to the 2011 Census, Odisha has more than 9.59 million tribals constituting about 22 % of the total population of the state. Tribes differ socio-culturally in various ways and degrees from the general population and also among themselves. The tribes live in the forest ranges and naturally isolated regions and are known by specific names. The tribes are recognized as Aborigines, *Adivasis*, *Girijans*, etc. They are considered as the 'early settlers'.

* Published in ADIVASI, Vol. XXXXXI, Nos.1&2, 2011, pp.1-9

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Most of these tribal communities are faced with similar health situations accentuated by widespread poverty, illiteracy, malnutrition, poor health and hygienic condition. The variation in the social and economic practices brings out a difference in the level of fertility between various populations. Thus for better understanding the causes of differential fertility, the present study is undertaken to contemplate on both the socio-economic and bio-cultural features of the tribe. The focus of this paper is on a specific tribal community, the Mankirdia, who are socially retarded and economically backward. They are one among the 13 Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PTGs) of Odisha.

The local people use to call the Mankirdias in different names. In Kalahandi and Sundargarh districts they are called "*Mankidi*" whereas in Mayurbhanj and Sambalpur districts they are named "*Mankirdia*". Actually they belong to the Birhor tribe. The reason for calling the Birhors, as "*Mankidi*" or "*Mankirdia*" is that they are skilled in catching monkey (locally termed as *mankad*). They use nets made of *siali* creepers for monkey catching. They eat the flesh of the monkeys and sell the skin to the local skin traders for cash. The Mankirdias fall into the category of hunting and gathering groups having economic relations with local peasants. They pursue a semi-nomadic way of life.

Mankirdia are found in large numbers in Bihar and in few numbers in Odisha, 1180 as per 2001 Census (2011 data for individual tribes are not published). Their primary occupation is making ropes out of the bark of the *siali* creepers (Lama Bayer), which are used by the local peasantry for different agricultural and domestic purposes. Rice is their staple food. During their trip to forest for collection of barks, they dig out roots, fibers and also collect honey which supplements their diet. The Mankirdia family is invariably of nuclear. They are polytheists, (Patnaik, 2008). In this paper the bio-cultural variables influencing fertility among this primitive semi-nomadic tribe are highlighted.

Data Collection

The data for the present paper are collected from seven villages under five blocks of Mayurbhanj district of Odisha. The total number of Mankirdia households covered for data collection is 156 during 2009. The survey was designed to collect data on the socio-cultural background, reproductive history and family welfare, etc of the tribe. The ever married women were interviewed to collect data on reproductive health and when required their husbands were also interviewed. The respondents were also interviewed to collect data on their background characteristics. The ever married women of age-group (15-49 years) of the community were the respondents.

Results and Discussions

Human fertility refers to the actual reproductive performance of women which operates more or less within a biological framework. Though reproduction is a biological and universal phenomenon, several socio-cultural factors and

physical environmental conditions influence the fertility level of a population. There are factors, which manifest directly through the body physiology of human beings and some others do so through intermediate factors such as behavior, culture etc. The socio-cultural theories have focused on the attitude and motivational factors at community level for explaining the reproductive behavior (Davis, 1956; Carlson, 1966). Visaria and Visaria (1995) described how fertility behavior of women determined by number of social and biological factors.

Table-1 illustrates the socio-cultural background and the economic status of the respondents. Majority of the respondents were between 15-19 years (23.1%) of age followed by the age group 25-29 years (20.5%). This shows that demographically it is a young population. The table highlights the poor socio-economic status of the respondents. Only 31 percent of the respondents work as daily labour while the rest are unemployed or depends upon minor forest collection. Majority of the respondents do not possess any transport (73.1%) or electronic item (86.5%). About 80 percent of the families have their monthly income less than Rs 1000/-. Thus the average monthly family income is Rs 1099/-. It is also evident from the table that most of the respondents are illiterate (98%). The age at marriage, which is an important socio-cultural and demographic variable influences the child bearing period and also determines the fertility level. The mean age at marriage of the Mankirdias is 15.04 years which is notably below than the legal age at marriage in India i.e. 18 years.

Table 1: Socio-Economic Characteristics of the Respondents

Sl. No	Variable	Frequency	Percentage	
1	<i>Possession of Transport</i>	Yes	42	26.9
		No	114	73.1
2	<i>Possession of any electronic item</i>	Yes	21	13.5
		No	135	86.5
3	<i>Occupation</i>	Unemployed	59	37.8
		Daily Labour	48	30.8
		Rope making	23	14.7
		Minor forest collection	26	16.7
4	<i>Monthly income of the family</i>	< Rs1000/-	125	80.1
		Rs1000/-Rs2000/-	31	19.9
		Rs2001/- Rs3000/-	-	-
		> Rs3000/-	-	-
5	<i>Average monthly family income</i>	Rs1099/-		
6	<i>Educational Status</i>	Illiterate	153	98.1
		Lower primary	2	1.3
		Upper primary	-	-
		Middle Exam	-	-
		High School	1	0.6

7	<i>Age of Respondents (Age groups in years)</i>	15-19	36	23.1
		20-24	30	19.2
		25-29	32	20.5
		30-34	9	5.8
		35-39	24	15.4
		40-44	12	7.7
		45-49	13	8.3
8	<i>Mean age at marriage</i>	15.04 years		

Bio-Cultural Variables

Beside the socio-cultural variables, various biological factors also influence human fertility. The plausible causal biological pathways influencing human fertility are being manifested in the present study.

Age at Menarche

Age at menarche, one of the important biological determinants of fertility shows a range varying between 10-18 years among the girls of 24 countries of the world (Shah, 1958).

It is observed from Table - 2 that the maximum percentage of Mankirdia women menstruated at the age of 13 years (54.5%) and 15 years (30.8%). The mean age at menarche is 13.6 years. Lower socio-economic condition, malnutrition, environment, etc are the reasons for the marginally high menarcheal age of the Mankirdia women. Various studies indicate that menarcheal age is influenced by food habit, nutrition, occupation, education, environmental, genetical, socio-economic factors, etc (Tanner & Keffe, 1967; Bhasin, 1990; Balgir, 1994; Biswas & Kapoor, 2003). The different bio-cultural variables which directly or indirectly influence the level of fertility are being highlighted.

Table 2: Age at Menarche

Age in years	Frequency	Percentage
10	-	-
11	12	7.7
12	2	1.3
13	85	54.5
14	2	1.3
15	48	30.8
16	6	3.8
17	1	0.6
Total	156	100
Mean age at menarche - 13.6 years		

Age at Marriage

The relationship between age at marriage and fertility is well known (Nag, 1982; Pandey and Talwar, 1987). Table-3 represents the first age at marriage.

Table 3: Age at Marriage

Age Group in years	Age at Marriage	
	Frequency	%
< 13	7	4.5
13-15	97	62.2
16-18	48	30.8
19-21	2	1.3
> 21	2	1.3
Total	156	100
Mean	15.04 years	

Table-3 shows that maximum percentage of women get married between 13-15 years (62.2%) and 16-18 years (30.8%) which indicates that the practice of girls getting married soon after puberty is still existent in the Mankirdia population. The mean age at marriage is 15.04 years which is also much below the legal age at marriage of the Indian girls (18 years).

Age at First Conception

Though age at conception and age at first child birth are biological phenomenon, its socio-cultural dimensions are governed by personal, social and cultural setup. It is the age at which the female eventually enters into the actual fertility performance.

Table 4: Age at First Conception

Age Group in years	Age at First Conception	
	Frequency	%
< 13	2	1.3
13-15	51	32.7
16-18	90	57.7
19-21	10	6.4
> 21	3	1.9
Total	156	100
Mean	16.2 years	

Table -4 shows that the mean age at first conception is 16.2 years. Thus the gap between the mean age at first conception and mean age at marriage is about one year which highlights that due to early marriage biologically their reproductive system are not fit for conception, Kallan and Udry (1986) have opined that the effect of age at marriage, most likely operated through biological and maturational factors. However some cases of fertility regulation (traditional & modern) is also prevalent in this tribal society as reported by some respondents.

Age at first childbirth

The age at first child birth is very important for any individual. This is in accordance with Dissanayaka (1997), who established the prevalence of using

contraception at the beginning of child bearing which makes a difference in the age at first child birth

Table 5: Age at First Childbirth

Age group in years	Age at First Childbirth	
	Frequency	%
< 13	-	-
13-15	34	21.8
16-18	82	52.6
19-21	34	21.8
> 21	6	3.8
Total	156	100
Mean	17.2 years	

The mean age at first child birth of the Mankirdia woman is 17.2 years, at which the women truly enters into motherhood (Table-5).

Fertility Performance

Human fertility is responsible for the biological replacement and maintenance of the human species. Table -6 presents the fertility performance of the ever married women. The total number of conception, live-births, pregnancy wastage (abortions and stillbirths) is some of the major findings of the study.

Table7: Fertility Performance of the Ever Married Women (EMW)

Number	Conception		Abortion		Stillbirth		Live-birth	
	No of EMW	%	No of EMW	%	No of EMW	%	No of EMW	%
0	17	10.9	147	94.2	146	93.6	20	12.8
1	15	9.6	4	2.56	5	3.2	19	12.2
2	27	17.3	3	1.9	3	1.9	25	16.0
3	25	16.0	2	1.3	2	1.3	35	22.4
4	23	14.7	-	-	-	-	14	9.0
5	24	15.4	-	-	-	-	15	9.6
6+	25	16.0	-	-	-	-	28	17.9
Total	156	100	156	100	156	100	156	100
Total no of	Conception-506		Abortion-16		Stillbirth-17		Livebirth - 473	
Mean (per woman)	3.24		0.10		0.11		3.03	

Number of Conception

The total number of conception of the 156 Mankirdia women is 506 and the average number of conception per woman is 3.24. The frequency of women having two conceptions is the highest (Table-7).

Number of Live-births

The total number of live-births of the 156 Mankirdia women is 473 while the average live-births per woman is 3.03. The frequency of women with three live-births is found to be the highest.

Pregnancy Wastage

Stillbirth and abortions are considered as pregnancy wastage in the present study. Out of the 156 women, 9 women have experienced pregnancy wastage. Thus 5.8% of the women have pregnancy wastage. The total number of pregnancy wastage is 33. Thus the average pregnancy wastage per woman is 0.21. However, out of 506 conceptions, the total number of pregnancy wastage is 33 which indicate that 6.5 % pregnancy wastage has actually occurred among the women of this community.

Breastfeeding and Fertility

Breast feeding lay the foundation of healthy psycho-social development, besides providing perfect nutrition for infant.

Table -8: Breast Feeding

Initiation of breastfeeding	Frequency	Percentage	Duration of breastfeeding	Frequency	Percentage
1 st day	34	21.8	6 months	5	3.2
2 nd day	69	44.2	6 mth- 1 year	47	30.1
3 rd day	41	26.3	1-2 years	89	57.1
No response	12	7.7	> 2 years	15	9.6
Total	156	100	Total	156	100
Average duration of breastfeeding - 15.5 months					

In the present study, it is observed that the Mankirdia women considered breastfeeding as readily available and easy to feed children but due to certain taboos and basically due to ignorance maximum mothers initiate breastfeeding on the second day. This finding is in concordance with the other primitive tribes of Odisha (Dash, 2010). Vimala and Ratnaprabha (1987) have observed among the tribal communities of Andhra Pradesh that in spite of the existing taboos and ignorance about the beneficial affect of breastfeeding 95 percent of the women breastfed their babies. This is also in accordance with the present study. Table -8 highlights that maximum mothers breast their children for 2 years and more than two years primarily because breastfeeding is reliable and economical. The advantage of breastfeeding for the prevention of pregnancy is not perceived well. Lack of breast feeding is believed to cause compromised child growth.

Generally, the birth intervals and breastfeeding is closely related and shorter breastfeeding durations result in higher fertility levels (Goswami, 2009).

Breastfeeding is the major determinant of prolonged postpartum amenorrhea, the birth interval and the resumption of next menses in societies where it is universal, prolonged and of high intensity (Singh and Negi, 1985; Srinivasan et al, 1989; Babu, 1996). The present findings indicate that 30.1 percent had breast fed their children for a year or more while 3.2 percent discontinued within six months. The average duration of breastfeeding was found to be just more than 15 months (15.5 months). Thus prolonged breastfeeding and postpartum sexual abstinence are factors that account for fertility control. The effect of prolonged exclusive breastfeeding practice even without any supplementation is manifested in the present community.

Family Planning and Fertility

Whenever fertility is considered, the role of family planning measures becomes an important part to be analyzed.

Table - 9: Family planning (Permanent)

Family Planning method	Sterilization method		Traditional method	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Availed	11	7.1	69	44.2
Not availed	145	92.9	87	55.8
Total	156	100	156	100

It has been observed (Table -9) that the prevalence of sterilization method of family planning is very poor. The data revealed that 92.9 % did not adopt the sterilization method. Among the users of the family planning method maximum percentage of the women were noted to have used traditional method and only 7.1% preferred sterilization. The use of other modern method of contraception is not prevalent among this remotely located primitive tribal community. They widely practice traditional contraception methods to prevent pregnancy (Table-9).

Thus the main measures of fertility control include the traditional contraception method and the effect of prolonged breast feeding or the natural method of fertility regulation.

Conclusion

The present study focused mainly to examine the bio-cultural variables those determine the fertility. At the societal level, the factors such as possession of transport, electronic item, monthly & average family income which reflects the poor socio-economic and educational background of the present tribe are discussed. Menarche, a biological determinant of fertility, implies the beginning of the fecund life of a woman, but in actual practice, it starts from the time of marriage. The mean age at marriage of the women of the present study is only 15 years which is much below the Government norms for minimum age at marriage of the Indian girls i.e. 18 years. The early age at marriage, which is one of the cause

for longer fertile life is due to lack of education. However, it is observed the fertility of the Mankirdias is low.

The observation of fertility by different bio-cultural variables gives an impression that though the mean age at marriage is low, the gap between the mean age at first conception & the mean age at first child birth is 1-2 years which establishes the fact that biologically their reproductive system is not fit for conception and some cases of fertility regulation is also being observed among the women. The average fertility of the women in the present study is 3.24. Pregnancy wastage is an important biological factor to affect the fertility of a woman during her natural reproductive span. In the present study 5.8 % of the women have pregnancy wastage. In a bid to reduce fertility, studies relating to its social inter-related factors have been of major importance to natural planners. In the present study, the social factors such as education, occupation, income etc. were studied to analyze the effects on fertility and the bio-cultural factors were also identified which influence the fertility of the Mankirdia Tribe.

Duration of breastfeeding has been found to be closely associated with fertility. The study showed that prolonged breastfeeding, playing as a natural factor of fertility regulation, had a significant effect in reducing fertility. Despite of the low age at marriage and poor prevalence of the permanent or modern method of fertility regulation, a restrained average fertility is manifested in the present study. Prolonged breastfeeding and prevalence of widespread traditional contraception methods are identified as responsible factors affecting the fertility of the present population. However, trends of fertility need to be monitored regularly and appropriate measures should be taken to raise the status of women.

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BOND O*

*S. C. Mohanty*¹

Bondo otherwise known as Bondo Paraja is one of the most primitive tribes of Orissa. They call themselves as *remo*, which means 'man'. Once upon a time they were the warriors of the king of Chakrakote of Bastar in Madhya Pradesh. Thus they claim royal association and ancestry.

Today they are found in the Khairput Block of Malkangiri district on the north west of river Machkund bordering Andhra Pradesh. They speak *remo*, a south-Munda language. They were the first tribal group in the country to be recognized as the Primitive Tribal Group (now redesignated as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group) for whose development the first micro project named Bonda Development Agency (BDA) was constituted in the Bonda Hills of Malkangiri (then Koraput district) way back in 1977.

The Bondo numbered 2565, 3641, 4677, 5338, 5895, 7315, 9378 and 12231 in censuses of 1941, 1951, 1961, 1971, 1981, 1991, 2001 and 2011 respectively. The corresponding decadal growth rate was 41.9%, 28.4%, 14.13%, 10.43%, 24.09%, 28.20% and 30.42% respectively. It indicates that, over the years there has been a variable decline in their decadal growth rates which improved gradually after development intervention. However, as per census 2011, their total population of 12 231 persons includes 5669 males and 6562 females resulting in a sex ratio of 1158. Their total literacy rate is 36.61%. It is 45.65 percent for males and 28.84 percent for females.

There are two culturally distinct groups of Bondo: the lower Bondo and the upper Bondo. The lower Bondo live in the foothill villages and are relatively acculturated. They are mainly settled agriculturists and wage earners. Whereas the upper Bondo live in the inaccessible mountainous areas with an elevation varying

* Unpublished article of 2000 updated in 2018

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from 1500 ft. to 4000 ft. well known as the Bonda-hills. They are distributed in 31 villages in an area of 130 sq. kms. They continue to maintain their age old customs and traditions.

Their villages are situated on hilltops nearer to perennial streams. The houses are quite spread out. A village is an important social unit, members of which are related to each other as *sorubhai*, meaning 'dining brothers'. Marriage within the village is strictly forbidden. They have two roomed thatched houses having cattle-shed close-by.

The megalithic platform called *sindibor* is found in the centre of the village. It serves as a community centre for the village elders and socio-political and religious heads. The village deity resides in *hundi*, their main shrine. A sword, *patkhanda*, kept hidden in a banyan tree at village Mudulipada is a royal insignia that gets worshipped every year in January-February. They believe in sorcery and black magic. *Dissari* is their astrologer-cum-medicineman. The girls' dormitory is called *Selani dingo* and that of the boys' dormitory, *Ingersing dingo*.

The Bondo women used to have their shaven heads, wear scanty self-woven scarf (*nodic* or *ringa*), prepared out of *kereng* fibre, adorn themselves with colourful bead necklaces and ornaments, and decorate their shaven heads with flowers and jungle beads.

They pursue shifting cultivation in addition to growing rice in the stream beds and raise other cereals, pulses and oil seeds by ploughing the upland. The Bondo rice is fine, scented and delicious. Besides they domesticate cows, goats, pigs and poultry birds.

Monogamy is commonly prevalent whereas the relatively well to do prefer polygyny. In most cases the wife is older than the husband. Bride-wealth is paid in shape of cattle, liquor and a rupee in cash. The women are free to accept or reject a marriage proposal.

They have their traditional village council where *Naik*, village headman, *Challan*, assistant to headman, and *Barik*, messenger are the main functionaries.

The Bondo men are very suspicious and they always move armed with bows and arrows, and knife. They are well known for their aggressiveness. On the contrary, the Bondo women are very affectionate, loving, responsible and industrious. They are respected and honoured in the society.

B O N D A *

*Umacharan Mohanty*¹

In the district of Koraput, on the high hills to the north-west of the river Machakund, which flows in the border of Orissa and Andhra, live the 'wildest, rudest and possibly the most interesting tribe' which is known as Bonda or 'the naked people'. The scanty dress of Bonda women and the homicidal tendency of Bonda males have made them most fascinating and thus they stand in sharp contrast from the neighbouring castes and tribes of Orissa. With a population below five thousand (the total population of the tribe is 4,677 out of which 2,435 are male and 2,242 are females) they have concentrated on or near the high hills, named after the tribe as Bonda Hills. Though few in numbers the tribe has successfully retained the distinctive features of its culture, chiefly on account of its geographical isolation and more perhaps due to its stubborn and independent spirit. The Bondas call themselves 'Remo' and speak a very difficult Austro-Asiatic language belonging to Mundari group. They have linguistic cultural and perhaps racial affinities with Gadabas, the Parengas and the Didayis but none of these have retained their original culture so un-affected, with the passage of time as the Bondas. According to Fuhrer-Haimendorf, the Bondas belong, "not only in language but also in culture, to that large group of Austro-Asiatic peoples who in Neolithic times developed an advance and complex culture characterized as it seems by the shouldered-stone cult, rice cultivation on terraced and irrigated fields, the art of weaving, the keeping of cattle for purposes of slaughter and sacrifice, and the erection of megalithic monuments in the shape of menhirs, stone-circles and dolmens. It is the culture which to some extent still survives among such Austro-Asiatic people as the Gadabas, Saoras, Mundas and Khasis and has close affinities to the Austronesian civilizations of the Malayan Archipelago".

* Published in ADIBASI, Vol. V, No.3, (Special Issue), TRB, Bhubaneswar 1963-64, pp.55-56

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The Bonda Village

Elwin had divided the Bonda settlements into three groups, viz. the Bara-Jangar group, situated on 3,000 feet high hills, which consist of twelve original Bondo settlements with Mundulipada as its capital; secondly the Gadaba group of village, 'the most difficult' and the most attractive of Bondo village' which are influenced by the Gadabas; and finally the plain villages laying along the foot of the Bonda Hills on the western side.

Amidst picturesque scenes stand the charming Bonda villages which 'stretches along or climbs up a hill side' surrounded by the groves of mango, and jack fruits. There are no regular streets within the village while individual houses are scattered in confusion though these are situated close to each other. The villages are not fortified but in some cases, these are surrounded by bamboo fences. Near to the village are the beautiful gardens of plantain, castor, peeper and brinjal while little below stretches the paddy fields prepared on the beds of streams. The megalithic platform called *sindibor* is built either in the centre of the village or at a convenient place. *Sindibor* is the centre of religions and social life of the village. Here young and old sit and gossip and discuss communal affairs. The shrine of *Hundi* the presiding deity of village is erected very often near the *sindibor*. The dormitory houses of the Bondo villages are not very conspicuous, these being the same as individual huts of the village.

The Bonda Houses

The Bonda houses are individual huts with some enclosure either in its front or around it. The walls are of mud mixed with straw or these are of plastered bamboo. The roof is supported by a number of wooden pillars and is thatched with grass. The fence in front verandah is used for grinding, husking grain, cleaning rice and millet, making mats and often as a bed-room. The first room is used for cooking and sleeping while the ante-room is used for storing grains. In the corner of the inner room is kept the branch of *Eugenia Jambolana* with a gourd depending from it which represents the house god. The flat ceiling under the main slanting roof is used for storing all types of goods and grains. Each house has one wooden door which is provided with a lock. Inside the house there are a few pots placed on slightly raised platforms near the wall. The house hold articles are extremely limited in their houses save a few bows and arrows, axe billhook and a few agricultural tools and fishing traps.

Dress and Ornaments

The dress of Bonda women is most remarkable. Even in the face of rapid change of the modern world, Bonda women still go unabashed with scantiest clothes which they weave in their own primitive looms out of the Kerang fibre, collected from the forest, and coloured yarn purchased from the bazaar. These clothes are only eight to ten inches in width and two to three feet in length. Women wear no garment except this strip which they tie round their middles in

such a way as to leave the left thigh bare, the both in front and behind. The cloth can be shifted round the body to suit the exigencies of the movement. Bonda women are extremely fond of ornaments and they cover their nudity to a great extent through ornamental devices. Thus a mass of brass and bead necklaces which hang down to the naval and a number of heavy brass circular collars cover their upper portion. They shave their heads completely and wear round it a number of bands-simple Palmyra strips or woven and plaited fillets. They use no nose ornaments and a few rings with chains or brass buttons, are deemed sufficient for the ear. On both hands they wear a number of broad brass bangles.

Economic Life

Bondas are mainly agriculturists. Games were plentiful in old days in the Bonda hills but with the growth of population and on account of Podu cultivation forests have been completely stripped off. At present they rarely hunt except at festival time. Fish is also rarely available. They collect wild vegetable bamboo shoots, mushrooms, but roots and tubers are not main features in their food. Gruel of *ragi* and rice are the staple food of the tribe. They keep cattle, goats, pig and poultry. They do not drink milk but eat carrion with great avidity. They drink enormous quantity of wine called *Salap*, the juice of Sago palms.

The Bondas are expert cultivators. The irrigated and terraced paddy fields on the high hills prove their skill in rice cultivation. Here every little stream is turned into beautiful rice beds where water is channelized carefully to the transplanted paddy fields. They cultivate the fairly level grounds with the common plough and raise dry rice, *Eleusine Corocana* and oilseed Niger. Besides these, they have their own hill-clearings where they practice Podu. According to customary practices these clearing become individual property and each household owns a number of sites on the hill sides which are cultivated in rotation. The clearings are almost like fields as hardly there is scope for substantial regrowth. The bushes and grass of the Podu land are burnt in the months of March and April. After the breaking of rains different kinds of millets including *Eleusine Corocana*, *Panicum Milliare*, *Panicum Italicum* with *sorghumou Igare* and *Penisetum typhoideum* are sown all mix together. After broadcasting, they proceed to plant pluses such as *cajancess indicus* and *Dolichos biflorus*, cucumbers, gourds and castor trees. In the second year only small millets are sown but after third year these patches may be cleared and fired but are sown very causally.

The Bondas sell very little in outside markets except the peeper, tobacco or plantains grown in their gardens. In summer they sell a good quantity of jack-fruits in the Mundiguda weekly market. They also sell a large quantity of broom-sticks in the nearby markets. They purchase a few articles from the market such as ornaments, beads and cooking pots.

In spite of their primitiveness and so-called poverty, the Bondas enjoy a high degree of economic self-sufficiency. The geographic isolation has been a

blessing in disguise as the Bondas are less exposed to exploitation by outsiders. Very rarely they borrow money from outsiders. Occasionally they come down to plains villages for labour and with the construction of Duduma and Balimela dams for Hydro-Electricity, the Bondas have got opportunity for wage labour. Batches of Bondas are seen engaged in earth work and forest clearance in such areas.

Social Life

The Bonda society is broadly divided into two moities the Ontal (cobra) and the Killo (tiger). These are called Bansas and are totemistic in nature. There are a few more Bansas but these appear to have come afterwards. Thus the traditional Bansa organization represents clan exogamy and dual organization. But at present the Bansa exogamy is not strictly adhered to, as the Ontal group is numerically, much superior to killo group. Thus the Bansa exogamy has broken down on account of practical exigencies. Along with this weakened Bansa organization there is another type of exagmous pratilineal clan organization which is called Kuda. These Kudas take their names from the village functionaries, such as the Badnaik, Challan, Dhangra-Majhi, Kirsani and Sisa while a few Kuda such as the Dora, Jigri and Mandhara have been created perhaps due to inclusion of some other communities within the tribe. The Kuda organization appears to be bit stronger than the Bansa organization and every Bonda puts the title of his Kuda after his name. Finally the village is the most important social unit members of which are related as Soru-bhai to each other. The marriage within the village is strictly forbidden. The headman of the village is called Naik and the priest of the village is called Sisa.

In old days Bonda girls had pit dormitories outside the village. But at present the dormitory houses are within the village. The girls sleep in Selani-dingo while the unmarried boys sleep in *ingersin*. The boy's houses are mostly wretched low thatches or the verandah of some house. The Bonda dormitory is chiefly a short of matrimonial agency. Pre-marital sexual license is strictly forbidden in the Bonda society. But young boys are allowed to visit the girls' dormitories of different villages in the night and join in fun, music and dance with girls of such villages. Thus they get opportunity to establish intimacy with marriageable girls and finally select their sweet heart by forcing bangles into their hands. Thus the real aim of Bondo dormitory is marriage.

The marriage system

The selections of spouses are left completely to the choice of children. Once such selection is made the consent of the parents are subsequently obtained and marriage rite is performed. The regular marriage called *Sebung* is very expensive. A complicated series of ritual visits by both the parties, the payment of bride-price (*sagur tanka*), the exchange of ceremonial gifts, the sacrifice of a buffalo, escorting of the bride to the grooms' house, and the formal wedding of the happy pair are the essential features of *Sebung* marriage. Only a few rich people undergo

the process of *Sebung* marriage. Besides, there are two less expensive forms of regular marriage called *damung-jang* and *tessagur* where ritual visits and exchange of gifts are minimized and buffalo sacrifice is dropped. In few cases marriage is performed through elopement or through intrusion. But majority of the Bonda marriages are performed through capture known as *gubaigodo-rungone*. Widow marriage is permitted in Bonda society but one interesting feature of this type of marriage is that it is often celebrated with the husband's elder brother.

The Bonda domestic life is affected by two very unusual factors- the first is that the wife is often older than the husband. Older girls prefer to marry younger boys who would earn for them when they grow old. Secondly the husbands are found at time intrigues with the younger brother's wife. Presence of these two factors sometimes leads to family quarrels and divorce. Disparity of age also leads to polygamy in some occasions.

Usually the Bondas, cremate their dead except the exceptional cases of death during pregnancy or caused by smallpox or cholera. After cremation an oval ring of stones is made round the ashes and these are covered with light shades.

The Bondas are extremely aggressive. The internal Bonda feeds end in murder and serious casualties while they occasionally raid the villages of outsiders and take away the poultry, *solap* wine and other food articles. Sometimes, Bonda miscreants plunder the weekly markets. Age-old isolation, poverty and intoxication and fear of sorcery are the chief reasons of Bonda criminality.

B O N D A *

*A. B. Ota*¹

*S. C. Mohanty*²

Introduction

In the remote highland country of the mighty Kondakamberu ranges of Eastern Ghats rising on the east of Malkangiri district lives the brave and beautiful human race called "Bonda". Hardy highlanders as they are, they sparsely inhabit the upland towards north-west of the river Machkund confined within the group of high hills named after them - Bonda Hills. In the lap of nature, amidst rolling hills and tropical forests, the Bonda habitat - a wild and picturesque territory rich in flora and fauna lies at about an altitude of 3000 ft. above the sea level.

Identity

Their neighbours call them 'Bonda'. But they say they are 'Remo'- the Man. Their unique style of personal appearance distinguishes them from rest of the world. Bonda men wear a narrow strip of loin cloth (*gosi*). It is the women's attire that is so remarkable. A taboo backed by legends prevents women against clothing themselves above the waist. They make up this very patent deficiency by wearing a mass of brass and bead necklaces and by large heavy circular collars (neck rings) of brass and aluminum. These ornaments cover the breasts and hang down to the navel.

The only short strip of loin cloth women wear is called 'Nadi' or 'Ringa'. This is a striped and coarse coloured cloth of 3' - 4' x 1' tied to the waist thread (*thumiya*). It barely covers their lower parts. Using their simplest and indigenous primitive loom Bonda women weave this cloth themselves during their spare time out of natural *kerang* fiber applying vegetable dyes.

* Published in the Photo Hand Book on PTCs: Series -III, 2007

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Bonda women look majestic in their unique and spectacular fashion of traditional adornments. Their traditional costume consists of a large mass of necklaces of coloured beads, coins and cowries which adorn their shaven heads and hang down from neck to the navel totally covering their upper parts. Besides they wear a variety of ornaments such as aluminum neck rings, ear rings, nose rings, finger and toe rings, bangles of glass and aluminum, metallic anklets, head bands made of grass or beads, etc. They shave their heads and adorn it with coloured beads.

Settlement

Hill Bonda settlements are situated on high level lands such as hill tops and hill slopes surrounded by bounties of nature. Access is difficult through zigzag hilly tracks. The villages may be large and small. Large villages often have small hamlets around. Within the village there are no regular streets and the houses are scattered adjacent to each other. The village meeting place - '**Sindibor**' is built at a convenient location within the village. Girls' dormitory house (Selani Dingo) exists either at the middle or at the end of the village. The shrine of Hundi, the village presiding deity is found at the entrance. Patkhanda Mahaprabu, the Creator and the Supreme God is represented by a long sword kept in a banyan tree in Mudulipada village. Perennial hill streams flowing close to the village are used as source of water. Little away from the village lies the village cremation ground.

Housing

Bonda live in small thatched huts. The walls are made of bamboo frame plastered with mud and cowdung. Walls may be painted with coloured earth. The roof is thatched with a kind of wild grass called 'piri'. Now due to shortage of 'piri' some people are using tiles, tin or asbestos sheets. Some houses have a wide verandah in front or around. This serves the purpose of sleeping and gossiping. This may be open or enclosed with mud walls. The entrance door is often made attractive by wood carving and wall colouring. The interior is partitioned into sleeping-cum-cooking part and store part. Domestic articles are scanty only to meet the bare necessities. There are a few earthen pots, bows and arrows, agricultural tools etc.

The domestic animals like cows, bullocks, buffaloes, goats, fowls etc are sheltered in separate sheds either attached to or little away from the house.

Some Bonda homesteads are enclosed within fences made of bamboo wattle. A kitchen garden (*dinrbui*) is raised in the backyards or in the vicinity. Here fruit bearing trees like jackfruit, mango, guava, lemon etc are planted and a variety of seasonal vegetables are grown. It is protected by bamboo wattle fencing.

Routine Life

In the Bonda highlands climate remains mild even during the summer. Bonda get up early in the morning to start their daily routine life of struggle for

existence. They rise before the sunrise to finish their morning works and get ready to toil hard outdoors for subsistence. Finishing the household works Bonda men, women and children move out to work in their fields carrying their lunch with them.

Hard working Bonda women get up little earlier than men to attend to various domestic chores. Virtually being the backbone of Bonda Society they play a pivotal role in running their family. They shoulder a major part of the work load of the family including child care, plastering cleaning and maintenance of the house, taking care of domestic animals, routine cleaning of the cattle sheds, cleaning of clothes and utensils, fetching of water and firewood, processing, cooking and serving of food, weaving *ringa*, making leaf plates and broomsticks, visiting weekly markets for sale, barter or purchase etc apart from undertaking routine subsistence works. Therefore their society respects them.

Bondo derive their subsistence from out of shifting cultivation (Klunda or Dongar *chas*) as well as settled cultivation (Jhola *chas*) where ever wet lands are available in the rugged and undulating terrain. While working in the field, they take lunch brought from home. Sometimes they cook food and eat there. By the afternoon they come back home.

Men climb the Salap (Sago Palm) tree to have a refreshing drink of Salap juice to which they are strongly addicted. Bonda men are aggressive by nature and they are skilled archers. They always go out with their arms such as bow, arrows, knife and axe. Under intoxication they become more aggressive and violent which often leads to homicide.

Reaching home from the field women resume their routine household works. They take care of children; gather firewood for the kitchen to cook the evening meal. Bonda women work for their family from dawn to dusk. During leisure hours they flock together to while away some time in chit-chatting.

Among the Bonda all people irrespective of age and sex work according to their capacity. Children, old men and women do not sit idle. Those above 10 years of age help their parents in indoor and outdoor activities. Girls take care of their younger siblings during the absence of parents.

In winter after the sunset people gather in the streets and sit around fire to get relief from cold. During festive occasions and whenever they want, young men and women rejoice by dancing wearing their gorgeous costumes. Their dances are performed during day and night. Others enjoy the show from a distance.

Livelihood

In the rugged terrain of their habitat the Bonda toil hard to eke out their subsistence. Primarily the Bonda are agriculturists. They practise shifting

cultivation (*klunda chas*) extensively. Here they grow cereals, pulses and oilseeds such as- *kangu, suan, jana*, oats, black gram, maize, niger etc. Irrigated and terraced paddy fields are used for cultivation of paddy by transplantation method. In their kitchen gardens they grow maize, tobacco, fruits and vegetables. Their livelihood is supplemented by animal domestication and seasonal forest collections.

Bonda come down the hills in different week days to visit the weekly markets in the adjoining plains held at Mundiguda, Kudumulguma, Govindpally, Mathili, Lamtaput, Onkadely, Khairput, Panasput, etc. Here they come in contact with the outside world. Here they sale or barter their surplus agricultural produce, minor forest produce and brooms and procure their provisions. The market transactions are done mostly by Bonda women. Besides, they meet their friends and relatives from villages far and near and enjoy happy moments while relishing the taste of sweets and snacks from the food stalls. These markets sit during morning hours. By afternoon they return to their home in the distant mountains.

Magico -Religious Domain

Bonda are polytheists. They believe in the existence of a number of Gods and spirits. They worship mostly the deities of nature like the Patkhanda Maaparabu - the Creator of universe, Hundi or Bursung - the Mother Earth and the village Goddess, Kapurchuan - the deity of stream, Dhartani - the deity of cowshed, Uga and Renung bor - the forest deities, Doliang - the spirit of mango tree, Kaliarani - the spirit of low-land paddy fields and Vinding Sagar - the spirits of musical drums.

The village Priest - Sisa or Pujari conducts worship of these deities on various occasions. Besides, there are many dreaded evil spirits. All of them need to be kept in good humour through rituals and sacrifices. Gurumai -the Shaman, detects spirits causing sickness and other troubles with the help of rice divination, communicates with them in trance, and appeases them by conducting rituals and sacrifices.

Social Control

Bonda villages are traditionally autonomous. Social discipline is maintained by a set of traditional functionaries - Naik- the village chief, Challan - the organiser of village meetings and Barik - the village messenger. The Barika belongs to Dom caste.

Naik is an elderly person of the village with knowledge and experience. He presides over the village council meetings at Sindibor and adjudicates cases concerning village affairs. Cases violating social customs, traditions and conventions are brought to the assembly and decided. Punishment is given to the offender in accordance with the gravity of the case.

Dance Traditions

In sharp contrast to their aggressiveness the Bonda have finer aspects of life that finds expression in their age old tradition of dance and music. Grown up boys and girls become members of youth dormitory. They dance for themselves on different occasions wearing colourful dance costumes. While boys play musical instruments the girls holding bunch of peacock feathers dance to the tune.

Changing Scene

Bonda no longer remain isolated in their remote mountainous abode. Winds of change have entered into their territory. They have been identified as one among 13 Primitive Tribal Groups of (PTGs) of Orissa. The 1st Micro Project of Orissa named Bonda Development Agency is functioning at Mudulipada - the heart of Bonda country since 1977 to bring about their all-round development. It is effecting changes in their life style. Change is taking place in road links, housing, livelihood patterns, health and hygiene. Priority has been given to spread of education. Residential schools for boys and girls are running at Mudulipada.

The Bondas have now gradually adopted the cultivation of wheat, potato, high-yielding paddy, pulses, vegetables, etc. Now it is up to them to decide upon their way of life not at the cost of their unique cultural identity.

BOND O *

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

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

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

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

* Published in Tribes of Orissa (revised edition), SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar 2004, pp. 107-113

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

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

A Bondo hut consists of two rooms. The larger apartment, which is used as sleeping- cum-cooking room, is about 8 feet wide and 6 feet long, with some raised platforms at each corner to keep utensils and water containers. The smaller apartment, which is about 5 feet in length and 4 feet in width, is used as a granary. In between the two rooms is an interconnecting door. A verandah about 5 feet wide encircles the house on all sides. This serves the purpose of sleeping and gossiping. Those who can afford to do so enclose the verandah with clay walls. Other than an entrance door and a door in between the two rooms, there are no doors or windows in the hut. The walls are made of mud mixed with straw or plastered bamboo. The roof is supported by a number of wooden pillars, beams are fitted, and bamboos are tied in different ways to make the roof gabled, and the latter is thatched with *piri* (a type of grass). Wooden racks and a shelf are fitted to the walls in the smaller room over which grain-containers are kept. Each house is constructed by individual family members. The auspiciousness of a house site is confirmed by the Disari (astrologer-cum-medicine man) through the process of rice divination and then a wooden pillar 4 feet in height called *muldei*, is posted at the centre of the site to represent the ancestral spirits. At the time of final entry to the house, the *muldei* is offered ritualistic food by the Disari. The Bondos do not maintain their houses properly. Household articles are extremely limited and meet only the bare necessities. These consist of a few earthenware pots, a bow with a bunch of arrows, a billhook, and a few agricultural tools and fish traps.

The Bondos use scanty clothes to cover their private parts only. The dress of a Bondo woman is remarkable. Men wear a *gosi*, a loin cloth 3 feet in length and 1.5 feet in width, whereas women use a *ringa* or *nadi* about 2 feet in length and 1 foot in width. This is a striped and coloured cloth tied to the waist thread (*thumiya*). Using their indigenous loom Bondo women weave *ringa* out of *kerang* fibre collected from the forest. Bondo children go naked upto 6 to 7 years of age. A wrapper is used on chilly nights. While on a visit or during feasts and festivals, the men wear dhoti and black shirts, while the females put on their usual *ringa* and cover the upper part of the body with an extra bunch of bead necklaces. Bondo

women look majestic in their traditional dress and ornaments, which consist of a large number of bead necklaces which hang down to the navel and a number of necklaces of different colours and aluminium bands around their necks, head bands made of grass or beads, aluminium bangles, nose rings, anklets, etc. They shave their heads completely and wear a number of bands around it.

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

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

Though the forests have been depleted to a great extent, as forest dwellers the Bondo are still in the habit of going to distant forests to collect bamboo, wood, bark, wild grass, fruits, greens and mushrooms. In their leisure hours they trap birds and animals. They also undertake ceremonial hunting in a group in the month of March-April. After the prey is killed it is equally distributed among all the families in the village.

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

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

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

The family is the smallest social unit among the Bondos. It comprises a man, his wife and their children. Most of the families are of nuclear type. The extended or joint family is rare. This nuclear segmentation is due to the non-availability of adequate space in the old hut and the desire to build a separate house after marriage. The family being patrilocal, the daughter instead of living in

the natal house goes to reside with her husband. The Bondos are patrilineal in respect of the inheritance of property. As a result, only the male heirs inherit property not the females. In a family the normal pattern of relationship between the head of the family and the other members is one of super ordination and subordination. The traditions and mores of the society are transmitted to the young by the elders in the way of formal or informal institutions.

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

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

Thus, finally the village became the most important social unit. Though there are different *kudas* in a village who live separately with their identity, they share a common *sindibor* (village deity), and obey a common leader or *naik* and a magico-religious head or *sisa*. They are tied together into a common brotherhood. The boys and girls of the same village are therefore treated as brothers and sisters.

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

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

After the birth of a child the family and its kin group observe birth pollution for nine days. On the ninth day the purificatory rite is performed. Chicken, tobacco, cooked rice and liquor are offered to the ancestors by the head of the family. On this occasion the Disari is summoned, and he also offers sun-dried rice and sacrifices a chicken to appease the ancestors. On the 15th day following birth the Dubakaige ceremony is performed, at which the maternal grandfather offers a feast to the lineage members of the child. In course of time the child, male

or female, grows up and becomes more and more responsible. No special ceremony is held for the boy's initiation.

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

The most interesting feature of Bondo marriage is that the wife is often older than the husband. Older girls prefer to marry younger boys who will earn for them when they grow old. When the wife grows old the husbands are sometimes found intriguing with the younger brother's wife. This leads to family quarrels and divorce. The disparity in age also leads to polygyny in some cases in later years.

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

Bondo religion at present is a mixture of both Hinduism and animism. They have firm belief in Patkhanda Mahapraphu whom they consider to be the creator of the universe. Hundi or Bursung (Mother Earth), Sindibor (the village Goddess), and Kapilchuan (the deity of the stream) are also conceived as their high gods and goddesses, for they are responsible for the existence of the animal kingdom. Singrai is their village deity. Uga and Renungbor are forest deities. Dhartani is the deity of the cowshed. The different *kudas* or clans also have

different gods and goddesses, and their procedure of worship also differs from one another. Lamtachuan, Doliang, Garbeda, Kaliarani and Vinding Sagar are the spirits of streams, the mango tree, low-land paddy fields, a hill and a musical drum respectively. These are benevolent spirits but require to be appeased periodically with adequate rituals. There are also evil spirits such as Gunam, Kamini, Raskuda, Devta, etc. who are dreaded. The spirits of dead ancestors, called *muldei*, are housed in a small wooden post four feet long in the main room of the house. They are classed apart and offered rituals as and when festivals occur or when the inhabitants suffer. Patkhanda Mahaprabhu, otherwise known as Singi-Arke (Sun-Moon), is represented by a sword three feet long and kept in the hollow of a banyan tree in the village of Mudulipada. The Barajangar group of villagers offers rituals ceremoniously during the Magha festival.

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

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

Bowing and genuflection are the various means of obeisance used to satisfy the supernatural powers. Sun-dried rice is the only sacrificial food offered to the deities. Liquor is tabooed from use in all rituals except for the rituals offered to the ghosts and dreaded spirits. Even religious functionaries are tabooed from using liquor while performing rituals. Various animals like the buffalo, pig, goat, lamb, and fowl are sacrificed to appease the deities. The Bondos believe in chance and luck, and associate them with the divine will of Patkhanda Mahaprabhu.

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

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

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

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

The Bondos are extremely aggressive. Their strong sense of equality and independence, age-old isolation, poverty, indulgence in excessive liquor consumption and fear of sorcery are the chief reasons for their committing criminal acts. Until the beginning of the fifth five-year plan, very few developmental programmes were taken up in the Bondo Hills. Only at the beginning of the fifth five-year plan, with the new concept of the sub-plan, was concerted attention given to ameliorating the socio-economic condition of the Bondos. Under the new strategy, a micro-project was started in year 1976-77 to look after the development of the Bondos exclusively.

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

MARRIAGE & FAMILY :

A STUDY ON THE BONDO OF ORISSA*

*B. B. Mohanty*¹

I

Towards the south-west of Jeypore at a distance of about 70 Kms. lies a picturesque landscape forming a part of the eastern-*ghat* hill ranges covered with thick vegetation which is the abode of many Dravidian and Mundari speaking tribes such as the Gadaba, the Bondo, the Didayi and the Saora. Among these groups and other tribal communities found elsewhere in the state, the Bondo are considered as one of the primitive tribes. Because of their long occupation, the region occupied by them in the eastern-*ghats* is commonly known as 'Bondo Hills.' Here, the nature with all its bounties and endowments has favoured the Bondo to flourish and lead a kind of life they cherished through ages. In terms of both socio-economic development and contact with the outside world they not only lag far behind their other tribal brethren, but also, they are one of the few select band of tribal groups found in the country, who are known to have preserved their respective core culture to a large extent undisturbed by the effects of massive development intervention that is going on in the area for quite some time.

Distribution and Demography

Under the present administrative divisions, the area inhabited by the Bondo comes under Khairput Block of newly formed Malkangiri district. Based on the location of settlements, socio-culture affiliations and geo-physical diversities the Bondo villages lying in the Bondo territory can broadly be divided into three groups of villages such as:-

- 1) Barajangar group or Barajanagar *des* comprising twelve original Hill-Bondo settlements forming a confederacy for politico-jural purposes.
- 2) Gadaba or Gadaba-Bondo group consisting of six Hill-Bondo villages greatly influenced by the Gadaba culture and dialect.

* Published in ADIVASI, Vol. XXXIV, Nos.1&2, 1994, pp.28-36

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- 3) Plain Bonda group of twenty-four villages located in the plains of Khairput Block completely distinct from the other two groups.

At present there are 25 Hill-Bondo villages distributed under three Gram Panchayats (GPs), namely Boddural, Ondrahal and Mudulipada and many plains Bondo villages distributed in four GPs, namely Khairput, Kudumuluguma, Govindapalli and Muniguda.

Numerically, the Bondos are a small group compared to other tribal communities mostly confined to Khairput Block of Malkangiri District. The population of the tribe from the year 1941 onwards are mentioned here under-

Census Year	Bondo Population
1941	2,565
1951	3,641
1961	4,677
1971	5,338
1981	5,895

The above population figures reveal that the Bondo population has shown steady increase during the last five decades. But their growth rate is little slow in comparison to that of the total tribal population of the state. Their decadal growth rate during 1971-81 was 10.93 percent as against 16.68 percent for the total tribal population of the state. In the total population 5,895 (1981 census) the females outnumber the males, the sex ratio being 1,113 females per 1,000 males. The rate of literacy among them is alarmingly low i.e., only 3.61 percent as compared to 13.96 percent for the total tribal population of the state. The present paper is prepared on the basis of the data collected in connection with a larger study on "Traditions and Customs of the Bondo" taken up during the year 1993-94.

II

MARRIAGE

In the social organization of the Bondo, marriage is an important institution which lays the legal foundation for the family. It is the most remarkable and memorable event for a Bondo during his life time, as his cherished dream comes true by acquiring a mate. It is a kind of indissoluble bond which does not break ordinarily, as only death of either of the partners can break such tie.

Marriage Rules

The marriage rules of the Bondos, are very elaborate and framed on the basis of three sets of relationships, that is, the relationship of a man with his village community, with his *soru-bhai* and with his clan (*kuda*) members.

The Bondo villages are almost like sacred entities with well-defined and demarcated boundaries, guarded by many benevolent deities and spirits. These sacramental fellowships between the members of a village backed by moral and religious values force them to lead a disciplined life and maintain brotherhood making the village an exogamous unit. Besides, the boys and girls of a village whether belong to a single or several *kudas* who are attached to one *sindibor* (the sacred meeting place of the village council) are considered as brothers and sisters. Therefore, marriage cannot take place among them under any circumstance. The marriage rules are observed so strictly that the boys of one village are not allowed to visit the girls' dormitory (*Selani dingo*) of the same village in the evening, as that visit may lead to marriage with some girl of the same village. Such union is viewed as a serious offence of incest. But in certain exceptional situations deviation of the customary rule of village exogamy is also made as mentioned by Elwin and Haimendorf in their descriptions about the Bondo. According to them, when the village is composed of some immigrants who have not been fully integrated with the original inhabitants and who for all ritual purposes form a separate entity, then marriage between the members of two different groups is possible.

In addition to village exogamy, the Bondo also observe *soru*-exogamy rigidly. *Soru* means food, in Tamil literature. But to a Bondo it is a kind of sacred food offered ceremonially to Patkhanda Mahaprabhu - their supreme deity. The persons belonging to a group of specific villages who share this food are attached to one another by a sacramental fellowship or *soru*-brotherhood. Elwin writes "A man's neighbours are his *sorubhai*, brothers who have eaten the same sacrificial food, a privilege that is rigidly restricted to the members of the same village (1950:24). Due to this ritual tie, marriage between these families is forbidden. For example, initially, members of two villages - Mudulipada and Dantipada were sharing *soru* among themselves. But due to the increase of population, the village Mudulipada gave rise to two more settlements, namely Bandhaguda and Podeiguda, the members of which now share *soru* with the inmates of Mudulipada and Dantipada. These four villages which are ritually attached to one another by sharing a common *soru* are held as *kutumb* villages; hence, matrimonial relationship between the members of these villages is not permissible.

Apart from *soru*-fellowship that forbids marriages between its members, the rule of exogamy is very rigidly adhered to by the members of different *kudas* or clans. The *kuda* or *monda* which is very conspicuous in Bondo social organization are exogamous patrilineal clans. A Bondo is proud of his own clan name. There are nine different *kudas* such as Badnaik, Challan, Dhagera-Majhi, Kirsani, Muduli, Sisa, Dora, Jigiri and Mandra found in the Bondo society. The latter three names are said to be recent inclusions. Formerly, the villages were uni-clan in composition as evident from their names. For example, Mudulipada was the stronghold of Mudulis and the Kirsaniipada, of the Kirsanis. But in course of time, due to population growth both in and out migration took place in these villages which resulted in multi *kuda* composition of the Bondo villages. The members of one

particular *kuda* are said to have descended from a common ancestor and, as such, regarded as consanguineal kins. Therefore, marital alliances between boys and girls of the same *kuda* are forbidden. Formerly, as the *kuda* was more or less coterminous with the territorial division, while observing village exogamy, it automatically meant that marriage had taken place outside one's own *kuda*. But now under the changed situation, they are very particular about both village and *kuda* exogamy as a Bondo is restricted by customary rule not to marry a girl within his own village even if she belongs to a different *kuda*. However, in the village Andrahal marriages have been reported between the members of different *kudas* living in the same village. This is due to the fact that Andrahal is a big village where different *kuda* members live in separate wards maintaining their separate identity for all socio-religious purposes independent of others. This case may be taken as exception to the general rule.

Another ritual-relationship known as Moitor or Mahaprasad that exists at the family level also regulates matrimonial relationship between the concerned families. It is a kind of ritual friendship based on intimacy, mutual help and support that develops into a permanent tie, between two persons of similar temperament of more or less of the same age group. Informal and casual friendship between two persons, in course of time if develops into a very rigid bond then a permanent shape is given to such relationship when they call each other as Moitor. Such relationship once established continues for generations between the two Moitor families, and marriage between the members of these two friendly families is not permitted according to their customs.

Age at Marriage:

The Bondo have a peculiar tradition with regard to determination of age at marriage for boys and girls. The girls marry at the age of 16 to 18 years after attaining puberty and adulthood and the boys, at the age of 8 to 10 years when they are still in the childhood stage. In Bondo marriages parity of age between the marrying couple is not a factor to be considered, where the wife is older than the husband and the margin of age difference between the two in certain cases may exceed more than 8 to 10 years. Their society does not take into account such factors as maturity and adulthood. Capability of maintaining a family and performing sexual act, etc. required for a boy while considering him fit for marriage.

The explanations to the custom of marrying immature boys to the matured girls mostly come from the women folk as they feel that a boy becomes old when he develops beard and mustaches on his face and no girl would like to marry such a person. Haimendorf has put forth some reasonable explanations to this quoting the opinion of some of the Bondo ladies. He mentions that "such uneven matches were of the girls fun making.....they like marrying small boys for them who have young husbands to work for us when we are old.... a stronger motive may be girls' desire to prolong the happy days in the dormitory." (1943:172).

Pre-marital Sex:

The customary rule of the Bondo does not permit pre-marital sex. The boys and girls though enjoy complete freedom in their society and spend the night together with intimacy in the youth dormitory; the instances of pre-marital sex are rare. Such intimacies never lead to sex as the girls never like it. To them pre-marital sexual intercourse implies a serious intention; it is most equivalent to a betrothal. Haimendorf, observed that pre-marital sex act is of rare occurrence among the Bondo. "The Bondos believe that occasional intercourse in the girls' dormitory does not lead to pregnancy; only if a boy and girl live together for a year or two will they have children (1943:170)". Commenting on the reaction of the society on pre-marital sex and pregnancy he further writes that, "But even pregnancy resulting from adventures in the *selani dingo* is no very great misfortune; most likely the girl's lover will marry her, but if he does not, neither he nor the girl will draw upon themselves a fine or any other unpleasantness. It is said that in such a case the girl has no difficulty in finding someone else to marry her and accept the child as his own. In neither event are wedding ceremonies hurried, for there is no objection to the child being born in the house of the girl's parents (1943:170-171).

Now-a-days, the Bondo culture has been subjected to many changes under the influence of increasing outside contact and mobility and many age-old customs and traditions have been given up. Therefore, whatever liberty was allowed with regard to pre-marital sex has been completely withdrawn. Now the society lays more emphasis on the chastity of the girls prior to their marriage.

SelaniDingo : The Matrimonial Agency

Of all varieties of experiences a Bondo may have in his life time, the one that relate to his days in the dormitory is unforgettable for these days are his happiest moments of life. Perhaps, no other tribal societies in Orissa other than the Juang of north Orissa have such a well-organized youth dormitory system as that of the Bondo. In each village there are two dormitories, one for the girls, called *selani dingo* and the other for the boys called *ingersin dingo*. The former is well maintained unlike the latter and chiefly acts as the matrimonial agency. The Bondo children enjoy utmost freedom in selecting their life partners and in such matter the parents or the guardians do not interfere at all. For right selection of life partners, they allow free mixing of the boys and girls, in order to know each other's habit, temperament, likes and dislikes form a close quarter. *Seleni dingo* acts as the common meeting ground for them.

The Bondo society has imposed certain restrictions on the boys in respect of their visit to girl's dormitories. A boy cannot visit the girl's dormitory of his own village. He is also not permitted to go to these places of other villages where his own *kuda* and *sorubhai* members are living. He is only allowed to visit the girl's dormitory of those villages with which matrimonial relationship can be forged.

During the rainy season, the girl's dormitory, *selani dingo*, roars into activity in the evening every day, when the unmarried girls charmingly dressed eagerly wait to welcome the boys of other villages. The boys, in groups, well-dressed walk miles to reach their destination and on their arrival they greet each other with smiles on their face. The girls entertain the boys with food and drink and in return the boys give them presents like bamboo combs, plaited grass or Palmyra hair bands. Till late night playing and singing, fun making and gossiping continues between them and in the morning the boys return to their respective villages with the promise of meeting once again in the evening. Visits to girl's dormitory continue for days together and in course of such visits a boy may fall in love with a girl. When love intensifies and the boy becomes sure that his marriage proposal will be accepted, then he while holding the middle finger of his beloved girl puts a brass bangle on her palm. The girl may accept it to confirm her consent, or else she may throw it away to convey her disapproval of the proposed marriage. Therefore, love affairs do not always lead to marriage and out of many only few succeed. The unsuccessful boys never lose their hearts and they continue their effort by moving to girl's dormitories of other villages.

Types of Marriage

The Bondohave two types of marriages; (1) marriage by mutual consent (*sebung*) and (2) marriage by capture (*guboi*). Among these, the former type is more common.

Marriage by Mutual Consent

Marriage by mutual consent, though held as prestigious in their society, is very expensive. Therefore, it is, more or less, a well-to-do family's affair. It is very elaborate and involves several stages such as, dormitory visit by the boys and selection of girl, formal approval by the boy's parents, exchange of visits by both the parties several times with presentation, fixation of amount of bride price to be paid and finally consummation of marriage. Marriage is celebrated in an auspicious day fixed by Dissari, the village astrologer. The groom's party goes to the bride's village carrying with them several pots of cooked food and beer to bring the bride. The food and drink is served to the bride's relations present there who in turn also entertain the members of groom's side with the same type of food. Next day, the bride is brought to the groom's house. In both these places customary rituals associated with marriage are performed. At the end, a sumptuous feast is arranged by the groom's family to entertain all those who are associated with the marriage, that include *kuda* members *sorubhais*, Moiter friends, maternal relatives and other distinguished guests.

Marriage by Capture

This type of marriage is less expensive, less elaborate and simple than the above type. Most of the secondary marriages are performed by capture of divorced or

married women and widows. Capture of unmarried girls is rare. The main features of this type of marriage are forcible capture of a bride followed by her and her parent's approval and payment of bride-price. According to Haimendorf, "The capture is usually a mere pretense, for a Bondo girl cannot easily be married against her will and even if taken by force to capturer's village she will run away at the first opportunity unless she likes him and he has her consent. However, a marriage by capture must be followed by the payment of usual bride price (1943:171-172)". In this type of marriage, expenses on feast are minimized as no bullock is killed, besides gifts and visits are reduced. The circumstances that compel a Bondo to resort to this type of marriage are narrated below:

- i) When a boy fails to select a girl during his visit to *selani dingo*.
- ii) When a boy grows old with the emergence of beard and mustache
- iii) When a man goes for second marriage.
- iv) When a widower or divorcee wants to remarry.
- v) When a physically handicapped person wants to marry.
- vi) When poor man who cannot afford to pay the usual amount of bride-price and meet the marriage expenses wants to marry.

Sometimes, in this type of marriage, if attempts are made to marry forcibly an unwilling girl, the situation may lead to quarrel and conflict between the two concerned families taking a violent shape, even resulting in murder of person(s) from either side.

There are many cases of marriage by capture noticed in the Bondo societies. In village Dantipada one E. Sisa, an orphan and poor person who was brought up by his maternal uncle captured a girl named S. Toki of village Challaniguda and married her. He resorted to this practice as he could not afford the expenses of 'Sebung' type of marriage. Another case of kidnapping of a married woman was reported in village Dumuripada. A man of this village captured the girl named M. Toki of village Badapada while she was working in Donger (swidden land) and paid double the bride-price as compensation to the former husband of the kidnapped lady.

Preferential forms of Marriage

Generally speaking, the Bondo customary law does not prescribe any preferential or obligatory forms of marriage. Marriage between the cross-cousins and parallel cousins is not permitted as they are regarded as brothers and sisters. Elwin, commenting on the freedom a Bondo with regard to his marriage writes, 'A Bondo boy has unprecedently wide field from which to select his future wife, he is not tied down ... by obligations to a cousin or other relative or by his elders tiresome desire that he should marry many or improve the family status by marrying well. (1950:73)".

They do not practise sororate but to some extent, senior levirate. In the latter type, a man may marry his deceased younger brother's wife with her consent. This is an opposite of junior levirate practiced by other tribes in which the younger brother marries the widow of his deceased elder brother. Verrier Elwin has put forth reasonable explanations about this as "among the Bondos an elder brother's wife would probably too elderly to be attractive, whereas the younger brother's wife though possibly older than her own husband, would be more of an age with the elder brother and so more available for an affair (1950:117)". There are instances among the Bondo that the elder brother has forcibly married his younger brother's wife after she has deserted her husband and gone back to her parents.

Polygamy

The practice of Polygamy though permitted in the Bondo society is very rare. A Bondo ordinarily does not like to invite trouble and put himself into difficulty by acquiring more wives. To him, more the number of wives means, more the number of houses to be built, more the number of children to rear and more the quantity of food stuff to produce. Moreover, polygynous marriages are rarely successful due to frequent quarrels among the co-wives. However, a man may go for a second wife, when extra hand is needed in agricultural works, or the first wife is barren or too old to satisfy the sexual urge of the husband. The first wife does not grumble and conveys her approval to her husband's second marriage for the first two reasons but if the motive is sexual gratification she disapproves the proposal. The co-wives stay in separate huts with their children and very rarely they tolerate each other and live as co-operating housewives.

For this reason, in most of the Bondo villages very few polygynous families are seen. In Mudulipada X. Muduli has two wives; the first one G. Toki was acquired by negotiation and the second one K. Toki through capture. Here the motive for second marriage was to obtain an extra hand to expand the area of cultivation and get more food stuff for family consumption. In the same village one Y. Muduli brought a second wife due to the barrenness of his first wife. Both the cases are examples of successful polygynous marriages as these were performed with the approval of the first wife.

Bride Price

Payment of bride-price is a unique practice found among the tribal societies in Orissa. This custom is rigidly followed among the Bondos too. Whether the marriage is made by negotiation or by capture, may it be a rich or poor man's affair, the payment has to be made otherwise, marriage cannot take place. The amount of bride-price negotiated between the two parties is paid soon after the marriage is over or within a reasonable time-frame. It is paid both in cash and kind, which consists of some heads of cattle, few pots of liquor and some cash. The amount of bride-price to be paid is fixed by taking into consideration the types of marriages to be performed and the economic condition and social position of

groom's family. Generally, lesser amount of bride-price is paid in case of marriages made by capture of a widow or divorced woman in comparison to marriage performed through mutual consent. In case of marriage made by capture of married women became double the amount of usual bride price is paid.

Divorce and Remarriage

The Bondo marriages are more or less stable, therefore, divorce, though socially permitted is of rare occurrence. They regard breaking of the wedlock a very serious matter which requires careful thought and consideration before it is effected. Like marriage, divorce is a family affair. Both men and women are at liberty to divorce each other on reasonable grounds. Besides, divorce can be effected unilaterally by either of the spouse or by mutual consent. The grounds for effecting divorce for both men and women are adultery or illicit sexual act; cruelty, harassment, ill-treatment and physical assault, laziness, non-cooperation in economic activities, sexual disability and incapability, incurable diseases, unfaithfulness and physical and mental disabilities etc. When divorce is effected with the initiative of husband, he cannot claim to get back the brides price, but in the opposite case the husband gets back the bride-price. After divorce, the wife has no claim over the children.

In Bondo society widows or widowers and divorcees are allowed to remarry. They enjoy equal status as that of others. A young widower may visit the girl's dormitory, but a widow, young or old is not allowed to do so. In case of widow marriage she has no right to take any of her children with her to the house of her new husband.

III

BONDO FAMILY

In every human society, ranging from most primitive to most modern, family is the basic social institution. Murdock (1949) regards family as a 'social groups'; Mead (1931), 'a status giving group', and Lowie (1950), 'an association which includes adults of both sexes having socially approved sexual relationship'. In the Bondo society family is the basic social unit forming a cultural superstructure over a biological foundation. It comprises both young and old of either sex tied together by kinship bonds and marriage rules. The family functions as (1) Legitimate sexual unit, (2) Controlled reproductive unit, (3) Educational unit and (4) Economic unit that are essential for survival and perpetuation of individuals and the society.

Structure and Composition

Among the Bondo, the family is mostly nuclear composed of married couple and their dependent off springs. Joint or extended families are very rare. The ideal structure of the nuclear family often disintegrates owing to death and

marriage of any individual thus giving rise to various broken forms of family. The different forms of nuclear family found among the Bondo are given below:

- (a) Households having married couple and their unmarried children.
- (b) Households having married couple only
- (c) Households having only siblings
- (d) Households having either husband or wife with unmarried children
- (e) Households with a single member

Generally the ideal form of generationally enlarged or extended family structure is not seen among the Bondo. Besides, the system of joint family which is made up of co-laterals that is, the brothers of one generation, together with their sons in the next generation, or sons of third generation is also not found among them. But as a matter of obligatory duty, a Bondo is bound by tradition to shoulder the burden of his parents when they become invalid due to old age, prolonged disease or permanent physical or mental disability. In such situations the general practice is that the old persons are provided food and other necessities by their sons and their burden of maintenance is shared equally by them. This indicates that in Bondo society although a son after marriage gets separated from his parents and establishes a separate residence, the tie with his natal family which is built on kinship bonds and strong emotional feelings does not break. Apart from the societal custom of establishment of new residence after marriage, the other reasons which discourage the growth of extended family among them are lack of space in the paternal house to accommodate more members and the carefree and individualistic attitude of the Bondo to lead an independent life.

In order to find out the average size of the Bondo family and its structure and composition a survey was conducted in seven villages covering 414 households and 1510 population. The data revealed that on an average a Bondo household is composed of 4 members confirming to nuclear family structure. The composition of different kinds of Bondo families as found out during the study is given below, in the following table.

The table indicates that out of the six categories of Bondo families, the largest are the unbroken and complete type of the households (282 households - 68.3%) given at serial 1 and 2. Among the 'broken' forms, the category i.e., "Household with either husband or wife with children" (Sl.3) accounts for maximum number of households (66 households - 16.06 percent). Besides, the other broken forms include 25 or 6.1 percent single member households and there are only two households with siblings only. The sixth category is composed of households with either husband or wife or both with or without children with dependant collaterals or parents. Although the inclusion of dependant parents and collaterals in the nuclear family do not seem justifiable, but these cannot be taken as examples of extended family. It is because, sometime when the parents die leaving behind young children, it becomes the duty of the elder brother to look

after them and arrange their marriage after which they get separated. In other cases as mentioned earlier, the old parents are taken care of by their sons as a matter of duty no matter whether they stay with them or separately in their own huts. Therefore, in both these cases their inclusion in the family is temporary and they are not the permanent members of the nuclear family.

Composition of Bondo Family

Sl. No	Categories	No. of families	Percentage
1	Household with husband and wife	58	14.9
2	Household with husband and wife with children	224	54.2
3	Household with either husband or wife & children	66	16.0
4	Households with siblings only	2	0.1
5	Household with single member	25	6.1
6	Household with either husband or wife or both with or without children with dependent collaterals or parents.	39	9.4
	Total	414	100.00

The family, apart from being nuclear is largely monogamous as they practise polygyny rarely. During the study only six out of 414 families were found to be polygynous. Generally, persons having more economic assets in the form of land, go for a second wife not for the sake of sexual enjoyment but to increase the wealth of the family. Besides, in certain conflicting situations a man may also go for a second wife to reestablish his prestige and honour. All secondary marriages are performed through capture of divorced woman or widows which involves a lower rate bride price. But under no circumstances an unmarried girl is eloped.

Pattern of Residence

The composition of household is entirely dependent upon the rules of residence. Besides, the location of marital residence is governed by various other factors, as economic, property and inheritance pattern. Among the Bondo, the residence after marriage is established by custom and it does not allow any individual choice or preference. Among them the residence after marriage is patrilocal or neo-local. The newlywed couple lives in the same village where the husband's paternal kins live. This means that a woman consequent upon her marriage breaks all ties with her family of orientation and gets admitted to the *kuda* (clan) of her husband automatically. The patrilocal residence pattern helps a Bondo man to keep intimate relationship with his paternal kins and the community members of the village which promotes strengthening of group solidarity. On rare occasions, a couple after marriage shift their residence to another locality or village. But such migration does not deter them in fulfilling their rights and obligations which they owe to their kin and the community

members of their village of origin. They remain in constant touch with their paternal kin groups and participate in all socio-religious functions by participating and contributing their share.

Descent

The Bondo society is organized, based on the principle of uni-lineal descent which emphasize the father's side of the family. The family is patrilineal, in which the members inherit their social identity through descent reckoned in the father's line. To a Bondo, patrilineal kinship membership is hereditary that is achieved by birth only and not by any other means. By virtue of his birth in a particular family a man becomes the biological as well as jural descendant. Under the patrilineal descent system, a Bondo male inherits his name, property, liabilities, family secrets, social status from his father.

Authority

Among the Bondo, both in the management and decision making process, at the family, village and clan levels, the males enjoy considerable freedom and authority. In the family, the senior most male member acts as the head of the household who controls family budget and takes important decisions in the matters of settlement of marriage proposals, observance of birth and death rituals, property transactions, etc. Though he enjoys absolute authority in taking decisions regarding family matters, yet the views of other members and more particularly that of his wife is given due weightage.

Functions of the Family

Among the tribesmen, the family functions as a reproductive, consumption, production and educational unit. Generally, in tribal societies, the father exercises guardianship over the children till they become major. At this stage, the adult unmarried boy is partially independent. After he establishes his new home and hearth after marriage he becomes fully independent. But in the Bondo society, a boy even after his marriage continues to remain under the control of his father for some time. According to their custom, generally a boy of 8 to 10 years old marries a grown up girl of 16 to 18 years age. Although they live separately after marriage, the boy who is a child at that time is not strong enough to perform the heavier works independently and as such depends fully on his parents for his requirement of food grains without contributing his required quota of labour input. Because of the economic dependence on the father the boy does not enjoy much freedom and rather remains under the control or the father till he attains adulthood and becomes capable enough to sustain himself and his wife.

The family functions as a unit of economic co-operation maintaining a balance between production and consumption. Whatever is produced is consumed leaving hardly any surplus. Based on the principle of division of labour among the sexes, the family members barring the small kids perform their respective

economic duties. The family also functions as an institution of socialization of children. The parents not only rear their children with utmost fondness and care, but also more importantly they guide children while they learn to earn their own living in conformity with social customs and values. In the family, the child while grows, develops his basic personality structure through its interaction with the adult members.

On the whole, the foundation of the Bondo family is built on intense love and affection, mutual help and co-operation between its members. And such rigid bond helps them to live together under one roof and beyond the family, as a compact social group.

IV

The social life of the Bondo which is guided and regulated by their deep rooted customs, traditions and ethical values has, more or less, remained unaffected from the impact of modern trends of civilization. But to some extent, they have changed in their attitude and outlook. An outsider is no more taken as a stranger and greeted with shower of arrows. Neither they neither fly away to jungle nor hide themselves in the house on seeing an outsider. However, the attitudinal changes, so far have not made them to deviate them from their traditional way of life and have little impact on their customary practices.

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POLITICAL ORGANISATION AND ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE AMONG THE BONDA *

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Among the sixty-two tribal communities found in the State of Orissa, the Bondo are considered as one of the most primitive tribal groups. They are found in the Khairput Block of Malkangiri district. The Bondo live along with other tribal groups, like the Gadaba, the Didayi etc in the Eastern Ghats. They were well-known for their homicidal tendencies. For their long occupation in a definite territory in relative isolation in this region, their habitat is popularly known as Bondo Country or Bondo Hill.

Based on the location of settlements, geo-physical diversities, and socio-cultural affiliations, the entire Bondo country can be divided broadly into three groups of villages. They are the *Bara-jangar* group, the *Gadaba* group and the Plain group. The *Bara-jangar* group comprises twelve villages namely, (1) Mudulipada, (2) Kirsani Pada, (3) Tulaguram, (4) Bandapada, (5) Bandiguda, (6) Bausupada, (7) Salanpada, (8) Gopurpada, (9) Pindajangar, (10) Kichapada, (11) Dantipada and (12) Pandraguda. These twelve villages are said to be the original Bondo settlements and form a confederacy for politico jural purposes. The *Gadaba* group covers six villages namely, (i) Andrahal, (ii) Dumuripada, (iii) Katamguda, (iv) Antamguda, (v) Bodbel and (vi) Bodapada. The Bondo of these villages are greatly influenced by the Gadaba culture and dialect and therefore, they are known as Gutob-remo or GadabaBondo. Under the Plain group, there are five villages such as (i) Kadamguda, (ii) Pandraguda, (iii) Puchaguda, (iv) Similiguda and (v) Fat-Kanguda. The inhabitants of these villages have completely discarded their traditional culture coming in contact with the neighbouring Hindu castes.

* Published in Tribal Customs and Traditions, Vol.1, SCSTRIT, 2009.

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Barring a few, most of the Bondo villages are homogeneous in composition. Even in heterogeneous villages the majority of households belong to Bondo, who live amidst other local communities, like, the Gadaba, the Mali, the Rana, the Paiko, the Dom, the Teli, the Lohara and the Brahman.

Bondo settlements function as independent political units to provide protection to its members and safeguard their rich cultural traditions. Based on the rigid democratic principles, the customary laws and values are enforced among the people through their traditional village Panchayat. Each and every member who strongly abides by these rules, contributes substantially to the maintenance of peaceful and coherent social order. The customs, traditions, values and norms of the society are transmitted from generation to generation through the process of socialization and interaction among the individuals and groups and maintained by oral traditions.

At the village level, Bondos have their own traditional council, which is in charge of deciding intra-village disputes and looking after other village affairs. Over and above it, there is a confederacy formed of 12 villages to discharge functions of higher order, which cannot be settled at the village level. The villages namely, Tulaguram, Baunsapada, Kirsanipada, Gopurpada, Pindajangar, Mudulipada, Dantipada, Chedanpada, Bondapada, Bandiguda, Pandraguda and Kichhapada which constitute the *Barajngar des* are said to be the original Bondo settlements. Besides this group that constitutes the most important Upper Bondo villages, the other two groups of villages fall to the Gadaba group and plain group. Mudulipada is said to be the capital of *Barajangar* group. The headman of this group of villages is called *Bad Naik* who is also otherwise known as Raja. The *Bad Naik* hails from *Bad Naikkuda* and belongs to Mudulipada village. The post is generally held for a period of three years and selection to this post takes place during the *Susu-gige* festival. The *Naiks* of all the twelve villages, who gather at Mudulipada during the festival, select the *Bad Naik*. The mode of selection of *BadNaik* is same as that of the *Naik*, which is described later in this chapter. During the feudal regime he was the most powerful man in the Bondo country. But now he has almost lost his importance among the people.

The Bondo, generally speaking, are not deviants of their own rules. They follow the rules of exogamy, taboos on incest or adultery with utmost sincerity in order to avoid supernatural aggression and public criticism. They are by nature, simple and innocent, who in their hard toil from dawn to dusk, rarely find any time to indulge in any quarrel or dispute with others. To a Bondo, his fellow tribesmen are not strangers to him. He is tied with some sorts of social relationship with each of them. Moreover, they are not that ambitious to grab other's wealth and women. They have high regard for their customary rules and social presumptions; therefore a Bondo feels proud to be called as *Remo*.

Village Functionaries:

In each and every Bondo village, there is a set of office bearers who work under different capacities to enforce and maintain law and order among the inhabitants of the village. They are, *Naik, Challan, Sisa, Disari, Pujari* and *Barik*.

Naik:

Naik is the secular headman of the village. He is a man of high prestige, power and authority. His post is achieved but not ascribed. Formerly the *Naik* was being selected from the *Bad Naik kuda*, but this practise has been stopped long since and persons of other *kudas*, capable of holding such post are appointed to the job. The attributes such as adequate knowledge and experience in customs and traditions of the society, high economic status, good character, personality and cordial behaviour, promptness and intelligence, ability to interact with outsiders, etc. are considered essential for selection of a man to this prestigious post. Besides, he should be a man of higher age group, preferably middle aged or old. Normally, the *Naik* holds the office for a period of 3 years after which he may again be reelected based on his competence and previous good work or another new man is elected to the post.

The appointment and reappointment of *Naik* is done during the festival of *susu-gige* in the month of *Pusha*. For the consecration of seeds and the worship of *Patkhanda Mahaprabhu*, the *Naik*, designate is asked to sit on the *sindibor*. One of the elderly members of the village puts a mark of rice as well as vermilion on his forehead. Then, each of the adult males present in the function tie a cut-piece of a red cloth on his head. Following this *Sisa*, the village priest performs a ritual, before the *Patkhanda Mahaprabhu* by killing either a fowl or a goat. Then everyone thumps the new *Naik* on his back and congratulates him. A *Naik* can also be removed from his post during this festival.

The main functions of the *Naik* are to maintain peace among the villagers and regulate their behaviour as per the societal values, norms and customs. Besides, he takes leadership in collecting contribution from the individual households for organizing communal functions and celebrations. He was, in the past, responsible for collecting land revenues to be deposited in Tahasil office. He keeps account of the fines collected from the offenders, and when the amount becomes substantial, it is spent on communal feasts in which all villagers participate. When any Government official or outsiders visit the village, he acts as the chief spokesman on behalf of the villagers. Being the most respected and important person of the village, he remains present in marriage negotiations, important celebrations, property transactions, etc. of the villagers. The *Naik* is allotted some wetlands for his valuable service to the village community.

Challan:

The *Challan* is the chief secular assistant of *Naik*. He is a Bondo and his post is hereditary. Like the *Naik*, formerly the *Challan* belonged to only *Challan*

kuda, but now persons of other *kuda* are also holding such posts. He assists *Naik* in discharging his functions effectively. The *Naik* gets the first hand information about any good or bad event that happened in the village through him. He also provides important clues to the *Naik* in revealing truth and detecting the real culprit. He is not paid any remuneration towards his service, but invited to participate in all communal feasts and festivals.

Barik:

The *Barik* is the village messenger who works according to instructions of the *Naik*. He enjoys the lowest status among the secular functionaries. He is not a Bondo but a scheduled caste called Domb. Due to limited number of Domb families in the Bondo country, one *Barik* serves a group of villages. During the *susu-gige* festival the appointment or reappointment of *Barik* takes place. Generally a *Barik* works for three years, but if his conduct is not satisfactory, he can be dismissed even before the completion of his term.

The *Barik* is required to perform varieties of duties. As per the decision of the *Naik*, the *Barik* moves door to door to inform the villagers, the date and time of village council meetings. Besides, during the annual hunting expedition, he organizes the party and leads the team into the forest. Through him, messages are interchanged between the villages. In the event of any murder committed, he is called upon to run to police station to lodge F.I.R. He works as the attendant to the visiting dignitaries to the Bondo country. Besides, he functions as interpreter between the Bondo and outsiders in different situations ie, when anybody wants to have some information from the Bondo or at the time of trial of any criminal case in the court. In other words, the *Barik* acts as the middleman between Bondo who do not understand and speak Oriya properly and the outside world. In recognition of his service each household contributes some grains annually towards his remuneration.

Apart from these secular functionaries, the religious functionaries, like *Sisa* and *Disari* play important roles. In the village council meeting for adjudication of cases, their presence is not only essential but due weightage is given to their opinions also. The interdependence of both the secular and sacerdotal village functionaries is very much marked among the Bondo while discharging their respective responsibilities. All of them work as a team.

Sisa or Pujari:

Every Bondo male is a potential *Pujari* (priest), as he performs rituals to appease deities and ancestors at his own home in each and every festival, which does not require much skill and specialization. But the person who specializes in this domain and willing to shoulder the responsibility becomes the *Sisa* (priest) of the village. He performs rituals and sacrifices in all communal functions and public occasions. His office is not hereditary. Elwin who holds this view, stated, "the *Sisa*, as the village priest is called, may be deposed if he does not do his work

properly and every year he has to offer himself, along with the other village officials, for reappointment.”(1950:159).

Disari:

While the *Sisa* is the village priest, the *Disari* is the astrologer-cum-medicine man of the village. He also acts as village shaman. He enjoys higher position and is considered more important than the *Sisa*. His activities do not remain confined to one village only. If he is reputed for having a good knowledge in indigenous medicines and in curing diseases, he may be sought after by the people of neighbouring villages. He is believed to have possessed divine powers and is considered as the link between the living world and the alien world of evil and hostile spirits. His post is hereditary.

Sindibor: the Village Meeting Place:

The village council holds its meetings in a specified place, called *sindibor* conveniently located within the village under shady trees. It is a sort of raised stone lounge prepared under the shade of a mango or jackfruit tree. The platform is made of sufficient number of stone slabs arranged horizontally on the ground in a rough circle to facilitate sitting, and there may be other long stone slabs fixed vertically in a slanting manner along the border end of the circle to serve as back rests. Each and every village has a *sindibor* of its own, and the *sindibors* of different villages do not exhibit any definite pattern. In some villages these may be located at the centre of the village, while in others these are found at any other place. They also vary in number, shape and size from village to village.

The *sindibor* occupies unique place in Bondo social life and caters to multifarious secular and sacred needs of the tribe. It is dedicated to *Burusung* deity, the Mother Earth. On every important occasion like ceremonial eating of new crops, fruits and during harvest operations, this deity is worshipped by *Sisa*. Although the *sindibor* is considered a sacred place, it is used very casually. On the use of *sindibor*, Elwin says, ‘there is no taboo on women, even on menstruating women, and men and boys are usually to be found lounging, chatting, bathing, cooking or lying fast asleep on one or other on the village platform’ (1950:169). Besides, Bondos have found it a convenient place not only for making various tools and implements, but also for warming up in the chilly winter morning by sitting around the fire. The visitors are offered seats here for chitchat. Among all its functions, the more important is its use as the meeting place of the village elders for discussion on different matters relating to activities and welfare of the village and for settlement of disputes. Above all, it provides the platform to mitigate differences and sort out problems through arguments and discussions among the people which develop togetherness among them in promoting village solidarity.

Traditional Village Council: Functions

All kinds of intra-village disputes are brought before the village council for solution. The council holds its meeting in the *sindibor* presided over by *Naik*, who with the help of other office bearers and knowledgeable elderly persons of the village decides each case on its merit after listening to the arguments and counter arguments of both the parties. Long ago, this body was even deciding the cases of homicide, but after the establishment of Police Station at Mudulipada, these cases are reported there. The judgment delivered by the village chief is final and binding. Under no circumstances it can be challenged or revoked. But in exceptional cases wherein at a later date if it is proved that the judgment has been influenced by tampered then, it can be modified.

Adultery, rape, murder, violation of rules of exogamy, grievous bodily injuries, trespassing, killing of domesticated animals, encroachment of other's property, theft, black-magic, etc are considered as serious offences. In these cases the culprit is firmly dealt with and heavily punished. The minor offences include quarrel, scolding innocent persons in filthy language and physical assault without causing any injury, ill treatment to elders, deliberately allowing the animals to graze over other's land etc. for which the offender is punished lightly.

The Bondo believe that an offender may escape from the eyes of the human beings without being punished, but he is always subjected to supernatural aggression and punishment. A man who commits incest with his own or *soru* sister is believed to suffer from blindness, whereas a murderer becomes a patient of rheumatism and for black magic, the person responsible suffers from leprosy. They also think that if a person while committing sin is seen by another person, then some amount of pollution is transferred from the real offender to the witness who is also subjected to anger of supernatural beings like the former.

But Patnaik and others while commenting on authority of the headman hold a different kind of view. According to them, "the village headman has less authority and goes by the consensus of public. During adjudication of case he only argues, submits the point of view of both the parties and persuades the people either this way or that way and never gives any order or verdict, which has no support of the public. (1984:54)

The Bondo laws are neither written nor codified. The offenders are punished according to their prescribed customary rules. Generally, the guilty persons are fined either in cash or kind or in both. The amount of penalty varies according to the gravity of the offence. The penalty collected from the offenders includes animals such as, bullock, buffalo, pig, goat, etc. The fines collected from the offenders are regarded as the property of the village council. With these collections feasts are organized in the village on different occasions. Their traditional village council is empowered to excommunicate the offenders

considering the gravity of the offences. For petty offences, warning, threatening, ridicule, etc, are the prescribed punishment.

Normally, guilt is established through oath and ordeal. The accused is asked to take oath in the name of *Patkhanda Mahaprabhu*, their supreme deity and confess the truth to establish his innocence. The other means for revealing truth is done through cross-examining the witnesses and interpretation of circumstantial evidences.

Bondos were well known for their homicidal tendency. They are by nature, individualistic, freedom loving, aggressive and independent minded people. Added to these, their excessive drinking habit, carrying of deadly weapons always with them, bad temper, endurance and patience, suspiciousness, fear of supernatural powers, poverty and hardship, etc., keep them always under a state of mental irritation. Therefore, for petty incidents, which could have been ignored by a normal individual, they do not hesitate to commit major offences, like homicide or physical assault causing serious injuries to another person. It is worthwhile to mention that, whenever a Bondo commits any crime, he must be heavily drunk. Otherwise, a Bondo without any intoxication is a nice person.

The motives for committing offences like murder may be due to disputes over property and marriage, domestic quarrels, fear of prosecution, sorcery, revenge and other unmotivated quarrels.

The case studies cited below reveal the situations, which provoke Bondos to commit offences.

Case Study-1

Unmotivated murders in a drunken state:

One C. Muduli, son of S. Muduli of village Mudulipada, who has two wives, is one of the few rich persons among Bondos. He murdered one S. Sisa of village Sileiguda, with whom he had no previous enmity. The incident happened years back in the month of January. During the harvest of *ragi*, one day, both C. Muduli and S. Sisa went to the hillside to drink sago-palm juice from the tree owned by the former. They were heavily drunk and while returning back to their respective villages, on the way, they quarreled under intoxication for unknown reason. As a result, C. Muduli killed S. Sisa by shooting arrow at him. After the incident, the matter was reported to police and C. Muduli was imprisoned.

Case Study-2

Murder for Dispute over Cattle:

This case study relates to another incident of murder relating to dispute over grazing of cattle. In village Bandhaguda, one A. Dhangada Majhi, son of M. Dhangada Majhi was in charge of herding cattle for that day which

was a Friday. When he returned to his village with the cattle in the evening, it was found that a goat belonging to one S. Dhangada Majhi was missing. When A. Dhangada Majhi was asked about this, he told that the goat was taken away by some wild animals in the jungle. After one week, on Saturday, when the turn of S. Dhangada Majhi came for herding, he took the cattle to jungle and when he returned in the evening it was found that the bullock of A. Dhangada Majhi was limping. A. Dhangada Majhi got angry with this and refused to take the limping animal and demanded a good one from S. Dhangada Majhi. As per the discussion made between them, S. Dhangada Majhi took that limping bullock and in exchange gave one good bullock to him by purchasing the same from Mundiguda market on payment of Rs.760/-. Then after 8 days or so, A. Dhangada Majhi forcibly took away another bullock from the house of S. Dhangada Majhi saying that he was not satisfied with the bullock given to him as it was not as good as the bullock owned by him previously. Since, S. Dhangada Majhi is a boy of 15 years age, he reported this to his elder brother B. Dhangada Majhi, who interfered and told A. Dhangada Majhi to return the bullock forcibly taken from his younger brother as he has already given him one. When A. Dhangada Majhi refused to return the animal, there occurred a nasty quarrel between the two. As both of them were fully drunk and the time was evening, A. Dhangada Majhi could not control himself but suddenly stabbed B. Dhangada Majhi and killed him on the spot.

Case Study-3

Breach of Contract:

One O. Badnaik an orphan of Badpada was working as a bonded labour under S. Sisa of the same village as he had no other means to pay the money borrowed from him. Once O. Badnaik while he was holding the radio of M. Dhangada Majhi of village Bandhaguda, it slipped from his hand and fell down. M. Dhangada Majhi charged him Rs.500/-, which he paid after borrowing from S. Sisa. After working for about six months O. Badnaik demanded a *lungi* and a shirt from his employer who refused to comply. Then, O. Badnaik quarrelled with his employer and refused to work under him further. He also demanded that he might be paid at the rate of Rs.15/- per day for the entire period of six months. S. Sisa became angry about such demand and one day while he was drunk shot arrow at O. Badnaik and injured him. The case was handed over to police.

Case Study - 4

Dispute over Property:

In the village Podeiguda, A. Dhangada Majhi, son of H. Dhangada Majhi and Y. Dhangada Majhi, son of A. Dhangada Majhi are parallel cousins. A. Dhangada Majhi was enjoying the property of the D. Dhangada Majhi, the 3rd younger brother of his father who died without any heir. The latter was

not giving any share to Y. Dhangada Majhi when he was young. But when Y. Dhangada Majhi grew up and demanded his share, A. Dhangada Majhi quarreled with him and killed him in a drunken state.

Case Study-5

Domestic Quarrel:

Years ago, one P. Kirsani, son of M. Kirsani of Podeiguda village was beating his wife S. Toki during the festival of *Chait Parab* due to some domestic quarrel. At that time, another person named, S. Mandra of the same village went to his house and told him not to beat her, and otherwise he would report the matter to the woman's father. Incidentally, both the persons have married in the same village Bodbel. P. Kirsani, who was drunk, got angry over such threatening, and stabbed S. Mandra with a knife. Immediately after stabbing, he ran away to Bodbel to his in-law's house for his safety. S. Mandra was then hospitalized for about a fortnight and got cured by spending about Rs.1800/-. The father of P. Kirsani wanted to effect a compromise to the issue, and as per the decision of the village council the offender paid one plot of *beda* land and one bullock to S. Mandra as compensation. Besides, both of them jointly contributed another bullock to host a feast for the villagers.

Case Study -6

Dispute over Cattle:

The incident relates to killing of a cow, which happened during the year 1992 in the month of November. One L. Kirsani of Podeiguda village hired a cow for threshing paddy from L. Muduli of Mudulipada village. After threshing while he was coming to return the cow to its owner, the cow slipped into the crop field and started grazing over a plot of *Pada* land with standing ragi crops. That piece of land belonged to one A. Dhangada Majhi of village Bandhaguda who was also working there. On seeing the cow grazing over his land he got angry, shot an arrow to the animal instantly and killed it on the spot. After being informed about this, L. Muduli came with some of his villagers and demanded a cow from the killer. But A. Dhangada Majhi refused to accept their demand, instead, claimed compensation from them towards the damage of his crops. Next day morning, when A. Dhangada Majhi was away from home, L. Muduli came with some men and took away three cattle from the former's house.

Then, A. Dhangada Majhi went to village Mudulipada with some of his villagers to settle the dispute. It was finally decided that A. Dhangada Majhi would give a cow to L. Muduli. After M. Dhangada Majhi promised before the *Patkhanda Mahaprabhu* to this effect, L. Muduli returned him his cows. Then, the meat of the killed cow was distributed among the elderly persons

of the two villages. Besides, A. Dhangada Majhi paid Rs.5/- to the village council members of Mudulipada as a token fine.

Case Study - 7

Sorcery:

This case study relates to one D. Kirsani of village Bandiguda who had two children. But both of them died one after another due to some disease. The people in the village told him that his sons died because C. Kirsani of the same village performed black magic. C. Kirsani was well known in the area for his art of sorcery and black magic. D. Kirsani almost believed this. One day while he was returning from the Mundiguda market dead drunk, the death of his children came to his mind and in order to take revenge he immediately took his bow and arrow and rushed to the house of C. Kirsani who was not at home at that time, but an orphan boy named S. Challan of village Andrahal who was staying with him informed D. Kirsani that C. Kirsani had not returned from *dongar*. D. Kirsani asked the boy to go to *Dongar* and call C. Kirsani, as he wanted to see him. But S. Challan refused to go and rather told D. Kirsani to go to *dongar* himself to meet him. This made D. Kirsani angry, and he immediately shot an arrow to S. Challan, which pierced the right side of his chest. Thereafter, he went away telling S. Challan not to reveal anything to C. Kirsani. Later on, late in the night, C. Kirsani was informed about the incident. Next day, C. Kirsani took S. Challan to hospital for treatment where he died. A case was registered in Mudulipada police station. The matter did not end there, the people of Bandiguda expelled C. Kirsani from the village and he is now staying at Chhallanpada in one of his relative's house.

Case Study-8

Trespassing:

In village Badapada, one M. Kirsani had kept sago-palm juice (*salap*) in an earthen pot at the foot of the tree in his *dongar* for sale in the Mundiguda market. Another O. Kirsani of his village saw this while he was passing by. He could not resist his temptation but drank the juice from the pot. But to his misfortune, some people could see this happening and they informed the owner about it. On knowing this, B. Kirsani, the younger brother of M. Kirsani caught hold of the culprit and confronted him? O. Kirsani did not admit the charges and refused to pay any money. The quarrel between the two took violent turn, when O. Kirsani pierced a sharp knife into the chest of B. Kirsani. The injured was taken to the hospital and he survived. Then the case was handed over to police.

The analysis of the above case studies reveals many interesting facts about the Bondo criminality as mentioned below:-

1. For petty offences and mistakes, which could have been easily solved through discussion, crimes of serious nature are committed.
2. A person at the time of committing crime is found to be in a drunken state and the time sequence of occurrence of such crime is evening.
3. In most cases, instead of causing harm to the person at guilt, the innocent person who wants to settle the dispute through negotiation is either killed or seriously injured. This shows the inconsistency of their mind, aggressiveness and lack of judgment capacity.
4. Although traditional village council exists in each village, these organizations in most cases have failed to play any effective role in preventing the people from taking law in to their own hands.

The political organization of the Bondo has undergone transformation and changed over the years. After the establishment of Police Station at Mudulipada, all cases of murder and disputes resulting in physical assault and injuries are being reported to Police Station before the traditional village councils take notice of such incidents. Besides, after the introduction of Panchayat Raj system, the ward member has started functioning in each and every village, but ironically, he in attitude, behavior and work follows more of traditional values than modern.

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MODERNITY AND PRIMITIVENESS: A CONFLICT IN THE BONDO LIFE *

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D. Mukhopadhyaya

The Bondo is one of the primitive tribes of Orissa, living in Khairput Block of Malkangiri district. They have their own socio-cultural set-up, customs values, way of life, food habits etc. Most of them live on the Bondo-Hills (3,000 fts. to 4,000 fts. altitudes) located towards the remote south-western tip of the Malkangiri uplands and north-west of river Machkund.

Anthropologists and Ethnologist like E. Thurston (1909), C.A Henderson (1911), C.Von. Furer Heimendorf (1945), Verrier Elwin (1950) etc. have regarded Bondo as the member of Austro-Asiatic tribal group. They were migrated and settled in the wild Bondo-Hills (previously known as Jeypore Hills). Their language Remo falls under the south-Munda language groups, having a special identity. Now they are trying to acquaint with Oriya language for social interaction with outsiders.

Bondos are traditionally cultivators and follow shifting cultivation (*podu*) as well as wetland cultivation with their traditional agricultural implements. Mainly they used to grow cereals, pulses, millets and now-a-days they harvest oil seeds and various kinds of vegetables. For food, the Bondo mostly depends on different kinds of tubers, bamboo-shoots, green leaves, seasonal fruits etc. Their staple food is *Entra* which is prepared from *ragi* and millet. Very few Bondo families eat rice along with curry and only in special occasions or festivals they eat rice. The Bondos are very fond of meat, but do not use milk and consider it as impure substance.

Bondos are well known for their special kind of dress, which covers only lower private parts of their body. For the males it is known as Gosi and Ringa for

* Published in ADIVASI, Vol. XXXIX, Nos.1&2, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar 1999, pp.59-62

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the females. The Ringa (2' X 8') is something more than just a bit of cloth. The Bondo women are very fond of ornaments, especially golden coloured ornaments and necklaces of multi-coloured beads.

An interesting marriage system prevails in the Bondo society. Marriageable age of the male Bondo is nine or ten years, that is before starting of their adolescent period. The wife will be generally 15 to 20years older than the husband. As soon-as the son marriages, he builds his own house and resides with his wife separately from his family. Like few other tribal communities, the dormitory system is widely prevalent in the Bondo society.

The child rearing practices of the Bondos are of very primitive type. Irrespective of sex a child is always welcomed to the Bondo family. During pregnancy a Bondo woman has to observe many restrictions in respect of her diet, movements etc. She delivers the child insides the room in her sitting posture holding tightly the rope which is hung from the roof as support during child birth. Only an experienced old woman who also cuts the *lundi* (umbilical cord), is allowed to help her inside the delivery room. Generally the name of the child is given accordingly to the day he or she born. The Bonds are less concerned about their health care system. Neither they follow regular bath, nor they clean their teeth regularly and wash their hands before or after eating. In any disease they try to satisfy some deities. This may be due to their poor socio-economic conditions.

The religion of the Bondo, at present, is a mixture of Hinduism and Animism. The Bondos believe that the Patkhanda Mahaprabhu, the supreme deity, has his abode in the heaven. He is Omnipresent, Omniscient and Omnipotent. Like other tribal groups, the Bondos also observe many socio-religious festivals which are closely related to seasons and agricultural cycles. Though they observe festivals like other groups, yet there are some peculiar performances observed. The important festivals they observe are, Kure (Banda fun), Kumbuguda (Dasara), Gewarsung (Diwali), Pushaparab, Chaitparab, Jhatiparab etc.

Population Distribution

The Bondos are a small tribal group confined to 33 villages of two Gram Panchayats -Mudulipara and Andrahal under Khairput block of Malkangiri district. The population of hill-Bondo available from the year 1981 and onwards in respect of the Bondo settlements covered under the Micro Project, The Bondo Development Agency (BDA) is given below-

Year	Male	% of Growth	Female	% of Growth	Total	% of Growth
1981	2,034	...	2,173	..	4,207	..
1991	2,284	12.29	2,433	11.97	4,717	12.12
1996	2,428	06.30	2,885	18.58	5,313	12.64

Source: Office of the Bondo Development Agency (B.D.A), Mudulipara.

EDUCATION

The dynamics of change is a continuous and universal process associated with the change of time. Human societies-both primitive and modern are more or less affected by this process. Education plays an important role in the process of modernization. In this paper a case study about certain important educational structures and problems of Bondo community was made through direct survey of the total Bondo area. Like other primitive tribal groups, the Bondos are apathetic to education of their children. According to the Census, 1991, the literacy percentage was 3.46 (male- 6.38 per cent and female-0.86 per cent). According to the survey conducted by B.D.A in 1996, it was found to be 7.80 per cent.

Existing Educational Facilities:

Though the Department of Education and the Harijan & Tribal Welfare Department (H. & T.W.D) of Orissa are engaged for the educational upliftment of the Bondo community, yet the quality and quantity is not satisfactory.

Primary Education- Only ten primary schools are established by the Education Department at selected ten villages. Apart from Bondapara primary school, rest nine schools have no buildings of their own. Except Patraput and Dumuripara schools where the posts of teachers are filled up in rest of the schools these posts have remained vacant for a long time. According to the villagers and some NGOs, the teachers come to school almost twice or thrice in a month for one or two hours. Hence the enrolment number is virtually an official record.

In this respect the effort of H. &T.W.D. schools are successful to some extent. A primary standard Sevashram was established by the department at Mudulipara in the year 1960 and a Kanyashram in the year 1996.

Middle-English School Education (Lower Secondary School) - As per norm of the Government of India, there should be one M.E. school for every four primary schools in the tribal locality. There is no M.E. school established by Education Department insideBondo locality, though there are ten primary schools. The H. & T.W.D. runs two M.E. schools at one place i.e. Mudulipara.

Mudulipara Kanyashram- Feeling the need of M.E. education for girls, the Welfare Department established a school for girls at the gate way of Mudulipara and Dantipara in the year 1996. The boarding school provides all facilities for the education of girls. The enrollment and teacher strength of the school is as follows:

No of Teachers

Male - one (Headmaster, B .A. B .Ed)

Female-five (including one tribal teacher)

No of Students

ClassesI-VII-160

(As per physical verification of official records on 15-10-1998)

The peculiar thing noticed by the researchers is that the headmaster of the Kanyashram takes classes at Mudulipara high school which is one Km. from his own school. No teacher of the school can speak or understand the Bondo language. Though there are 160 girls according to the official record, they hardly come to school.

High School Education - The sevashram which is established by the Welfare Department at Mudulipara was upgraded to high school status in the year 1988. That was the only high school in Bondo-Hills area. The school has classes from I-X, under the control of one headmaster. The teacher pupil ratio of the school is 11 :370 (as per physical verification of the official record on 14-10-1998). The school building and hostel accommodation is not sufficient. The teachers and staff members face a dual problem. On the one hand there is scarcity of staff quarters and on the other hand, there are no houses which can be rented for accommodation.

College Education- There is no facility for college education in Bondo-Hills area. Very few students cross the barrier of H.S.C Examination. Vikrama Dev Collage at Jaypore is situated miles away from the Bondo-Hills.

GOVERNMENT PROGRAMMES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THE BONDOS

At the beginning of the fifth five-year plan, when the tribal sub-plan came into effect, special attention was given to the all-round development of the primitive tribal communities of India and some Micro-Projects were established for their development . The Government started Micro-Project (1976-1977), at the Bondo Hills known as Bondo Development Agency (B.D.A.). With the help of the B.D.A limited progress has been made in the Bondo life. Some attempts were made to make the Bondos literate and educationally developed. Yet the efforts made by the Government is unsuccessful which can be found from the literacy rate. The persons employed in the teaching job are unable to adjust with the culture and people of the area. There are some Anganwadis and Non-Formal education centers which provide education at Bondo-Hill areas but they do not function well due to some reasons or other.

EDUCATIONAL PROBLEMS

The object of tribal development is to make the socio-economic transformation smooth, so that the tribal communities can maintain their identity avoiding social disintegration and assimilate themselves with the mainstream of national live. Education playsan important role to establish the bridge between different social gaps. Keeping all these views in mind various educational programmes have been implemented yielding little result. Unfortunately, some problems stand as barriers in the educational progress of the Bondos. These problems may be broadly classified under four heads:-

Home Environment- The home environment of the Bondosis not congenial for education due to various socio-cultural factors. Their dress pattern, health care, socio-religious practices, family relationship, child rearing practices, homesickness etc. are some of the major causes.

School Environment- Due to various types of shortcomings of the schools, the educational programmes could not yield a satisfactory result in Bondo-Hill areas. The existing school facilities, like infrastructure, hostel condition, teaching-learning materials are very poor in quality and quantity. Moreover, insufficient staff, unwillingness of the teachers, language problems and cultural barriers is the main hurdles in educational progress. The teachers serving in Bondo-Hill areas do not know tribal language, customs, etc. which creates a huge gap between teachers and students and ultimately leads to an unhealthy atmosphere in school.

Psycho-Social Constraints- The researchers feel that the psycho-social problems are one of the main obstacles for the education of the Bondos. These constraints may be due to their early marriage systems, excessive drinking habits, homicidal tendencies, aggressive personality, religious beliefs, poor communication systems, lack of modernity and social awareness etc.

Socio-economic Status- It is said that the socio-economic status of the family plays an important role on educational success of the child. The economic standard of the Bondos is so poor that they do not get daily meal. The Bondo children have to assist their parents in various domestic and livelihood activities. But in name of the so called development we are developing a beggarly attitude among this innocent tribe by giving them some dole from the Government funds.

SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

It is evident from the preceding study and opinions collected from different segments of the population that the education of the Bondo-Highlanders has been confronted with numerous problems. The possible solutions of these problems may be as follows:

- (i) Parental awareness should be created in the field of education, health and outer world by Government as well as private efforts.
- (ii) Efforts be made to change their unhealthy social customs and practices.
- (iii) Various economic programmes should be launched to raise their economic standard. It will be helpful, if they are trained with modern agricultural practices, handicrafts and utility products and sell these in fair price.
- (iv) More residential schools should be established specially in Bondo-Hill areas, with all types of facilities like food, dress, medical treatment, learning kits etc.

- (v) Primary school teachers in the Bondo-Hill areas should be appointed preferably from among the Bondos. For this purpose qualifications and experience should be relaxed.
- (vi) For Bondo students primary books should be prepared in the Bondo language in Oriya script.
- (vii) Finally, Bondo students should be gradually exposed to the outer society by frequent arrangement of excursion, study tours, cultural competition, festivals etc.

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EARLOBE ATTACHMENT AND EYE BROWS AMONG THE BONDA OF KORAPUT DISTRICT IN ORISSA *

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The paper deals with the earlobe attachment and eye brow ridges among the two sections of Bonda of (former undivided) Koraput district of Orissa. Altogether 200 males have been observed. The Bonda is the most primitive, wildest, rudest and interesting tribe of Orissa found in Malkangiri sub-division (now a district). The modern civilization has not changed them very much. They remain unaffected maintaining their primitive social customs and traditions. On the basis of their habitat the Bonda have been subdivided into two sections namely, Tala Bonda (Lower Bonda) and Upar Bonda (Hill Bonda). The Upar Bonda lives in mountainous and hilly ranges of Bonda Hills. Generally marriage between the two sections is not in vogue. The two sections are marked by their difference in name, dress, way of living, food, behaviour and culture.

Earlobe attachment

Observation on the earlobe of the Bonda was made under two categories-attached and free. **Table-1** shows that highest frequency (55.00 per cent) in attachment in earlobe is observed among the Tala Bonda. Among the Upar Bonda it is found to be 42.00 per cent. The studied group shows non-significant (3.3830) difference so far as this character is concerned. The present study satisfies the earlier hypothesis of Dutta (1963), Dutta and Ganguly (1965) and Das (1967).

TABLE-1
Earlobe Attachment

Group	Sex	Number	Attached		Free	
			Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Upar Bonda	Male	100	42	42.00	58	58.00
Tala Bonda	Male	100	55	55.00	45	45.00

* Published in ADIBASI, Vol. XXVI, No.1, 1986, pp. 16-18

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Eye Brow Ridges

For the study of eye brow two distinct categories were used: - Continuous- where both the eye brows are connected by hair follicles; and separated- where the eye brows are not connected.

Table-2 shows the distribution of eye brow ridges among the Bondas. It is evident that 31.00 per cent of the Tala Bonda and 15.00 per cent of the Upar Bonda have connected eye brows. In this respect the difference between the two groups is significant (7.2276).

TABLE-2
Eye Brow Ridge

Group	Sex	Number	Connected		Separated	
			Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Upar Bonda	Male	100	15	15.00	85	85.00
Tala Bonda	Male	100	31	31.00	69	69.00

Summary

As there is no published physical anthropological report on this primitive group, it can be stated on the basis of this investigation that in respect of both attached earlobe and connected eye brow the Tala Bonda shows higher frequency. In case of earlobe attachment the group shows non-significant difference whereas in case of eye brow ridges they show significant difference. The previous hypothesis of more attached earlobe in tribal population is also proved by this study.

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TRIBAL MEDICINE AND MEDICINEMEN: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF THE BONDO OF ORISSA *

SCSTRTI ¹

(I)

INTRODUCTION

The Habitat

Like other primitive tribal groups of the state of Orissa, the upper Bondo inhabits a contiguous area in the Khairput block of Malkangiri District. Their greater attachment to the natural environment, simple lifestyle urge to fulfill basic needs and limited world view have made the Bondo to carve out a niche for themselves in the tribal landscape and the tribal societies of the country. The Bondo habitat popularly known as the Bondo country consists of two clusters of almost uniethnic villages situated on an appendix like hill range of the eastern *ghats* mountains that as a boundary between Malkangiri plains in the east and the Machhkund river valley in the south east.

The Bondo country is a high land rising in most cases to 3,000 feet in height. It is covered with thick vegetation of sub tropic and semi-evergreen type. The climate of the habitat is characterized by pleasant summer, cold winter and heavy rains during monsoon with almost no soothing touch of autumn. The rain gauge stationed at Patraput the periphery of the Bondo country records the average annual rainfall as 2096 mm. and the number of rainy days a year as 81. The natural drainage system of the area consists of Biswakunda and Bana pacheri *nalla*- the two perennial streams that also meet the potable water requirement of the people. A natural barrier *Bana pacheri* by name, was guarding the Bondo area from the onslaught of modernity and civilization.

From among the two clusters of Bondo villages the Bara Jangar cluster has retained greater homogeneity with 14 uniethnic villages and only two villages

* Published in ADIVASI, Vol. XXXVII, No.2, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar,1997, pp.33-71

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with a few Dom settlers. The Andrahah group of villages is multiethnic in character with the majority population belonging to the Bondo. The other ethnic groups found in these villages are the Dom, the Bisoi, the Gadaba and the Didayi. Both the clusters come under the jurisdiction of Khairput Block with the Block Headquarters stationed at the foothill of the Bondo hills. The block comprises the eastern part of the Malkangiri District. Mudulipada is the never centre of the whole Bondo country. A High School, a Dispensary, a police station, a post office and the most important of all the headquarters of the Bondo Development Agency (BDA) are situated here at Mudulipada. The agency is meant for the socio economic development of the

Demography and Economic Profile:

According to 1981 Census the total Bondo population was 5,895 and was higher by 557 souls in comparison with the 1971 census figure of 5,338. The decadal growth rate was calculated at 10.43 percent. The growth rate for the period 1961-1971 was found to be 14.13 percent with the total population of 4,677 recorded in 1961 census. The negative growth rate indicates that despite exposure to modern medicines and health care practices the tribe is conforming to other factors responsible for low population growth, like depletion of life supporting natural resources and increase of homicidal tendency among the Bondo males. The other reason behind the negative population growth rate might be due to the age old customary rules regarding marriage among younger males and elder females.

The 1961, 1971 and 1981 census figures indicate that there was no steady increase in the literacy rate of the tribe. It was 2.1 percent in 1961 and decreased to 1.4 percent in 1971 but again increased to 3.61 percent in 1981. During the same period the general tribal scenario reflected the literacy rate as 7.3 percent in 1961. It increased to 9.46 percent in 1971 and increased still further to 13.96 percent in 1981.

(II)

SOCIO-CULTURAL PROFILE

The 'Bondo' is one of the Primitive Tribal Groups (PTG) of Orissa State. They identify themselves the 'Remo' which means man. This Austro Asiatic Mundari language speaking tribal group lives in hilly and mountainous region located in the North-west of Machhkund River. The Bondo highland as it is known is located between 18° 30' north latitude and between 82° 10' to 82° 30' East longitude respectively. The Bondo habitat is easily approachable through a 14kms. Long road constructed by the Government in order to connect the Bondo high land with Khairput Block headquarters located at Khairput.

Livelihood

Since time immemorial Bondos have been depending on food gathering as a source of subsistence. Food gathering in the forest is done by both male and

female members of family. They use various implements for collection of tubers. From among the implements special mention may be made of the digging stick having an iron piece at the working end. They collect everything which are edible and available in their respective growing seasons. The Bondo women collect more than half of their food materials from forests surrounding their habitats. They depend on forest for several necessities such as food, fire wood, fodder, fibres, leaves, herbal medicines, small timbers for making agricultural implements, musical instruments, household effects, etc.

The Bondo economy is centered round rudimentary agricultural pursuit. The agricultural practices of refined form are adopted by a few privileged ones having plain wet land at their command. Most of the Bondo families supplement their family income with sale proceeds of Minor Forest Produce (MFP) collected by them and rearing and selling of domestic animals and birds. No Bondo, as a matter of fact, pawn their labour for wage earning. However, at present, a few Bondo individuals both males and female earn hard cash from the contractors and the Government officials handling developmental works. Agricultural labour as a source of income is non-existent in their area. Very little gender specific division of labour is noticed in their economic life. The Bondo villages situated near the Machhkund reservoir have acquired a new economic activity. Able Bondo males catch fish from the reservoir not only to supplement their principal diets but also to sell the surplus in nearby villages. Supply of medi-care services is still considered a charitable activity and income derived from this sector is almost insignificant as it is confined to a few consumables, like cloths, fruits, cereals and domestic birds and animals either dead or alive.

Bondos are famous for their practice of slash and burn type of cultivation. The efforts made and energy spent after it are much greater in proportion to the yields obtained. They cultivate more than one patch of land and in each patch under shifting cultivation they raise different crops.

The land is an important asset of the highland Bondos. The land can broadly be divided into three categories, namely (i) agricultural land, (ii) homestead land and kitchen garden within the village boundaries and (iii) forest and waste land over which the Bondo exert communal ownership. Land ownership is also inclusive of the possession of trees such as sago-palm, jack fruit, papaya and tamarind standing on it. Some families have traditional right over trees in the jungle and unoccupied lands because they have been using them since their forefathers. A member has the liberty, to a limited extent, to pluck fruits from the trees belonging to a member of his lineage. The rightful owner seldom protests, as this advantage is reciprocal and mutual.

The Crops and Food- Food items are grown in two crop seasons. In rainy season lands are used for *kharif* crops. Paddy and smaller millets like *mandia*, *suani*, maize, *kangu*, *kankadanki* etc. are grown in *kharif* season along with

vegetables like bean, gourd, pumpkin, brinjal, yam, arum and cucumber are also grown as *kharif* crops. The *rabi* crop also known as dry crop or Chait crop or winter crop is grown in the month of October and November and is harvested in the month of February and March. The Bondo raises *niger*, *kandul*, *danger rani* and other pulses, like horse gram and black gram in this season. A number of Bondo families grow vegetables, like brinjal, chilli, tomato, long bean, etc. both for own consumption and for cash.

The Food Items- The Bondo has an idea of festive food comprising delicacies of larger quantities along with non-vegetarian items. Few special types of foods like 'Kirmoor' cakes are offered to children in special occasion. They do not have any conception regarding better, nutritive, hygienic and sacred food. They do not know or even feel the deficiency of vitamins and minerals in their daily menus. A few food taboos are observed with regard to observance of socio-religious rites or ceremonial consecration of new crops.

Ragi gruel is the staple food of the Bondo people without which a day is very difficult for them to spend. When there is a stock of *ragi* inside the house the family members never fail to relish it. Rice is the second important staple food of the community. Usually they consume boiled rice prepared from paddy. The smaller millets like *suan*, *kangu*, etc. are husked to obtain rice. It is relished by the tribe to a great extent.

Bondos are very fond of non-vegetarian food items. They often consume beef. Meat of the rat or the mouse is very much sought after by them. Apart from that pork, meat of fowl and mutton are equally important to them on different occasions. Egg, fish, insect and meat of different kinds of birds are additional non-vegetarian items which they eat when it is available.

Not only the surplus grains are preserved on the ceiling rack of the house but also a number of other food items like pith of the sago-palm, seeds of the jackfruit, kernel of the mango, dry *karid* etc. they also preserve certain kinds of leaves like *vendeomot* for future consumption. It is dried, powdered and preserved. Tender leaves of the tamarind are also kept in the same process but *ranuliamont* leaves are first boiled, then dried and powdered before storing. Mango pickles are kept in earthen pots. Dry fish and dry meat are usually used after two to three months of storage. Beer and sago-palm saps cannot be preserved for more than a week. Wine is kept for special occasions. It can be kept without any wastage for months together. Females keep an eye on the preserved food materials.

Consumption of intoxicated liquor is a noteworthy characteristic feature of this highland community. They consume it in enormous quantities. The whole social system of the tribe is intimately linked with this habit since time immemorial. It is the essence of labour, festive occasion, dispensing hospitality, to satisfy the magico-religious heads and witch doctors. It is an ideal offering to their

spirits and guests. On festive occasions the Bondo keeps sufficient quantities of intoxicated liquor for own consumption and for entertaining the guests. The commonest intoxicant in the Bondo hill is the fermented juice of the sago palm. Traditional rice beer is another type of drink favoured by almost all Bondos belonging to different age and sex groups. Two types of beer namely 'Pendum' and 'Li' are consumed. Pendum is prepared by mixing rice along with sprouted millet. It is easier to prepare whereas 'Li' is comparatively difficult to prepare and needs special training.

All over the Bondo area tobacco is grown abundantly. The tobacco leaves are used for both smoking and chewing. Both men and women smoke. They powder it on the left palm through the right thumb and put it in their mouth. When guests arrive they are offered tobacco leaves. Tobacco paste (Gudakhu) is purchased from market and used by young ones and adults alike.

Material Culture

Since time immemorial, the material achievement of men reflects the advancement in social life and culture. The highland Bondo is far behind the acculturated tribes in this regard. Their material culture is primitive but very effective in yielding results. Their hunting and agricultural implements, food and culinary practices, musical instruments and dancing gears as well as other household assemblages are very simple and inexpensive.

Housing - Bondo huts usually stand on slop or at the top of the hill and are seldom within a hill pocket. No particular system is followed in constructing a hut. It reflects the economic condition of the owner. Almost all the materials required for construction of a hut is collected from the forest either by the owner himself or by a band of labourers who are usually treated with a drink or a feast. A Bondo house is always rectangular or square in size and the roof is covered with a typical jungle grass locally called 'Pirhi' or 'Dab Pirhi'. Leaved of date palm tree may be substituted for the grass. Bamboos and strong logs needed for the house are obtained from forests. A Bondo hut consists of one to two rooms. The walls are made of mud. In some cases it is reinforced with bamboos and twigs. Strong wooden pillars are installed to support the roof.

Verandah is enclosed by mud wall or bamboo strip fence. Door of the main house is closed by a shutter made of heavy wooden planks. Shutter attached to a wooden frame of rectangular size, stands vertically on the floor. The verandah is spacious and is used for sitting, drinking, enjoying the heat of the fire and cooking. One or two holes are made on the floor to husk the grains. Almost all the families have their family courtyard fenced by bamboo strips. Presence of a Sindibor, consisting of a few flat stones arranged horizontally and vertically indicates the presence of the house of a respectable person nearby. Married sons

have their own huts, A little kitchen garden is attached to a Bondo hut. The hut not only provides shelter to man but also to pigs and fowls.

Dress and Ornaments- Bondos are very traditional in their dresses and ornaments. A Bondo male uses a loin cloth (Gosi) of about 3 to 4 ft. long and more than half a feet wide. Women use a type of skirt called 'Ringa' which has vertical colored strips. At the time of pregnancy a Bondo woman wraps her stomach with a piece of plain cloth. Latter on it is used for carrying baby.

Their ornaments are heavy and simple but are more enchanting and fascinating. Starting from the head up to the neck they put on a few kilograms of ornaments made out of aluminum, brass and beads. According to the Bondo, a girl having a strong and stout body, breasts like wood apples and covered with many traditional ornaments and dressed with a well stripped 'Ringa' can win the heart of a toughest boy. A Bondo woman does not wear but hang the skirt by means of a strong thread or chain around the waist. A headband made of a typical thin grass and thin fibre is used by a girl. Few other ornaments used by the females are *sunuangmi*, *usuruli*, *same*, *orti*, *sumure* and *lubidag*. A Bonda male uses small rings in his nostril. He puts on a loin cloth around his waist. *Usu*, a narrow sharp knife is tucked to the waist cloth.

Hunting Weapons-Socio religious compulsions and special interest in non-vegetarian diet, compels the Bondo to depend on forest games. Hunting implements are made of bamboo, wood, creeper, fibre, latex and iron. From among all the weapons special mention may be made regarding bow and arrow. An arrow with a blunt wooden head is known as 'Bita'. It is used to shoot birds. Their sharp knife *usu* with a peculiar bent handle is quite helpful at the time of hunting. The list of hunting weapons includes rat trap 'Tunarkum' - snare-Urat, axe - *tangi*, and a bamboo strip container.

Musical Instruments- Very limited number of musical instruments are used by the Bondo. They are made of bamboo, string, cattle skin, wood and brass. These musical instruments are played on different festive occasions or in the youth dormitory at night.

Agricultural Implements- A limited number of agricultural implements are used by the highland Bondo. These implements include plough, yoke, sickle, hoe, axe and land leveler. Most of them are either made by the users themselves or purchased locally.

Almost all Bondos know mat-making out of thin bamboo splits. A Bondo meets his extra expenses by selling mats. Baskets of different sizes are prepared for different purposes. Traditional measuring baskets like *padi* and *karli* adorn the raft of every Bondo house. Baskets are also made from creepers, fibres and leaves.

Other Household Effects- The Bondo household effects are usually made of leaves, bamboo, wood, creeper and earth. Utensils are made of aluminum and brass. Baskets of various sizes, heavy wooden grinder (*puniri*), and heavy grinding stone for powdering ragi (*janta*), husking pestle (*tinga*), a few gourd shells (*gurab*), wooden planks, leaf umbrella and a few long sticks are found in a house. In a few houses cattle skins and bamboo mats are also found.

Partition and Inheritance

No dispute is recorded regarding partition of property among brothers. As a rule, after the father's death, the sons divide all the paternal properties among themselves equally. The 'Beda' and 'Pada' lands are shared but the 'Dangar' land and trees are communally owned. In few cases the produce is shared. Widows have an absolute authority on the personal property of the deceased husband till she leaves the family. The orphans are given the rights to enjoy the properties of the deceased father. When an issueless man dies, his property goes to his nearest consanguineal kin. Regarding inheritance of material goods and house, the needy among all the brothers is given preference. But all these are done after the death of parents. Regarding the inheritance and partition rarely a conflict or a quarrel occurs among brothers or relatives.

The Religion

The striking characteristic feature of the Bondo religion is its distinctiveness and belief in mystical powder. They have immense faith in spirit world. The religion is the hard core of the life and no one in the Bondo community ventures to trespass the regulations of social control. Breaching of the social traditions and customs invites a lot of the social sanctions and puts the victim in unavoidable peril. According to the diagnosis of the traditional astrologer-cum-medicine man prescribed ritualistic observances are performed. The spiritual and emotional life of these people controls the day to day life. Magic and religion are followed simultaneously. No religious deeds can be performed without magical deeds and magic is performed for religious purposes for appeasement of the deity.

Maha Prabhu - the benevolent Supreme Deity, is considered most powerful. He is permanent, unchallenged, always benevolent and impartial. He is never feared but propitiated and evoked according to the necessity. Bondos have unlimited faith on the benevolent actions of the sun. The sun hardly puts somebody into difficulty. He rather creates a lot of opportunities for the people. Sindibor is the magico-religious centre of a Bondo village. It has considerable importance. The unknown spirits, it is believed, take shelter here. The importance of a Sindibor varies from one village to other.

The Magico Religious Specialists - Bondos appease their Gods and Goddesses as well as their ancestor spirits by offering sacrifices and observing rituals. The community level magico-religious head known as 'Sisa' is responsible

for offering such sacrifices. The post is hereditary. If the acting 'Sisa' does not have a son, the post may go to some other person from his own lineage and clan.

Feasts and Festivals- The most exciting and colourful ceremony is Chait parab, locally known as 'Giagige. Most of the festivals are observed in the early summer when the people are free from agricultural pursuits and the houses are packed with food stuffs and the streams are teemed with fish and the forests with hunting games. In the summer people ceremonially eat mango after observance of first fruit eating rite. This is an occasion to celebrate and go for ritual hunting of animals apart from mango eating. This ceremony has great ritualistic value for food gathering, fishing and shifting cultivation operation too. This ceremony starts on a suitable Sunday in the month of April and continues for a fortnight. A lot of Gods and Goddesses are propitiated on this occasion and people enjoy dance, good food and intoxicating drinks.

Ailments and Curing Practices- The cause and cure of a disease, the Bondo believes, is interlinked with magico-religious deeds. They believe that their evil ancestral spirits, if annoyed, destroy standing crops, kill cattle, destroy wealth by sending tigers and natural calamities to the family and the lineage. They believe the sickness is due to faults against rituals and spiritual orders. Diseases caused by the ancestral spirits and other spirits are very troublesome. The rituals associated with this involve heavy expenses. The Bondo observes a lot of taboos in life which vary from individual to individual, occasion to occasion and place to place. The elements of Bondo magico-religious practices are very strong and they treat their spirits very carefully with respect and honour. The active intimacy of the people with different Gods, Goddesses, deities, spirits and unseen world is revealed from expression of reverence and respect.

Inter-Ethnic Relations

On few occasions when highland Bondos go to the tribal markets situated in distant plains, they meet few other tribal and Scheduled Caste people. Apart from that a few Dom families live in some Bondo villages. In some villages a few Kamar (black smith) families also live. They make agricultural and household implements. Near Machhkund river a few Didayi families are found. They have less cultural contact due to unfriendly behaviour and hostile nature of highland Bondos. The main business of Dom is to supply basic necessities to the highlanders at a higher cost. Apart from that they purchase skins of the dead domesticated animals and surplus food stuff from highland Bondos at a cheap rate and sell the same in the low land at a higher price. There are a number of Bondos having reputation for their magical and medicinal expertise.

Political life of Highland Bondos

The political life of the highland Bondo is based on democracy and veered around certain hereditary and elected political posts. The latter is an outcome of

the Panchayati Raj system. Among the traditional political leaders, mention may be made of Naiko (the secular head), Chalan (the deputy chief) and Bariko (peon-cum-helper to Naiko and Chalan). The legal authority is vested on Naiko. The post is hereditary but he may be impeached for noncompliance of duties and responsibilities. These village officials regulate and work for the people under their jurisdiction. As a rule, these persons are not associated with the magico-religious practices but they help the magico-religious specialist in different spheres. Very often this judicial machinery, in presence of other magico-religious heads, discuss the cases against an individual or a community. It has some social control over the villagers. Disputes regarding property, quarrels and conflicts are also discussed in the traditional council.

Modern Panchayat System

About a decade ago, Government has introduced Panchayati Raj System among highland Bondos. This new polity is headed by a Sarapanch as the head who is assisted by a number of members. These Panchayat authorities are acting as the administrative agents and playing the intermediary role between the Government and the people. But nowhere in the highland it is running with real power and objective. Impact of this system is quite negligible in other village in comparison to the Gram Panchayat headquarters.

The Quality of Life

It is a well-known fact that Bondos are dirty and object to washing. Most of them lay on the ground covered with ash of fire and dust. Very often their body is smeared with mud while working in the field. They do not either brush their teeth or take bath; neither wash their bodies nor change dresses frequently which they use. According to their traditions there is a celebration known as head washing (Mond dhowani) on occasion of Dashara. Till the recent past, the highland Bondos were not using soap but a type of bark for washing the head. They do not wash with water after defecation but wipe with leaves. Village streets are very often used as public latrine and cow-dung heaps are found in almost everywhere inside the villages. Courtyards and sometimes houses of Bondos are also quite dirty.

It is observed that the highland Bondo women do not keep hair on their heads. The head of children of three to four years are also found shaved leaving a tuft of hair at the top. In every family they have their own razors and scissors and the women are very quick and careful with these instruments. Young boys keep bobbed hair to make them attractive. They wear plastic combs and head bands to make them more attractive.

(II)

DISEASES / AILMENTS / DEFICIENCIES

The World Health Organization (WHO) has endorsed health as one of the fundamental human rights. It can be defined as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not mere absence of disease or infirmity (Deodhar-1969:1). A person cannot always inherit but acquire it through culture as a learned process which has no relationship with biological inheritance. Absence of a perfect harmony between the internal and the external environment of man consisting of physical, chemical and biological surroundings causes a disease to occur. Disease is a departure from a state of health and has been defined as a state which limits life in its power, duration and enjoyment (Deodhar-1967:2). The ailment and the illness are the various forms of a disease whereas the deficiencies of any sorts in the body system either induct a disease at first stage or make it easier for other diseases to affect the body in the second or subsequent stages.

The Bondos' concept of disease is as primitive as the tribe itself. Anybody who is incapable to perform work i.e. income linked work, according to them, is supposed to suffer from disease. They believe ailment as a physical condition that requires rest for recouplement. They do not consider deficiency as a form of disease. On the contrary, it is termed as non-availability of sufficient food to fill the belly. Certain gender and age group orientation is noticed in the Bondo school of thought regarding disease and its various forms. A male with open wound on his body or with pain in joints, if attends to economic pursuits uninterruptedly, he cannot be considered as a diseased person. Similarly if a young man with a muscular body capable of consuming a lot of food and fails to give the desired work out put due to certain unseen reasons is branded as a lazy man rather than a diseased one. If a man delivers goods in lesser quantity he is considered as an ailing person. With the same yardstick a Bondo does not measure the health of the Bondo women belonging to various age groups. Output not only in terms of goods but also of services determines the health of a Bondo woman. She may not assist her husband in the agricultural field to the full extent but non-performance of household work proves her as a diseased person and little work output or seeking the assistance of the additional hands renders her as an ailing woman. The mentally retard persons, the xanophobists and the polio-stricken persons are not considered as diseased ones but regarded as recipients of divine curses.

The technological base of the Bondo society is simple but its concept about diseases is more or less the same as other Indian tribes. Though they do not agree with the Santal views of the diseases cause by a 'Tijio' which may be large or microscopic (Basu, 1994: p-317), they believe in occurrence of diseases as the work of evil spirits, anger of clan Gods and *bongas*, breach of taboos etc. they believe in the existence of malevolent and benevolent powers that guide the human fate to adversity or prosperity. In case of accidents and seasonal bodily disorders the Bondo points its accusing finger to the whim of nature or carelessness of the

persons. "Disease, in general usage, is a disorder in organism. Disorder may either be somatic or psychic (Deb Barman 1986: 185) and the Bondo belief regarding disease almost confirms to the above opinion. When accidents or body disorders occur repeatedly and in a cyclic order the Bondo shift their belief from human error and whim of nature to wrath of angry benevolent Gods or mischief of the malevolent spirits.

The Bondo not only classify the diseases according to causes by which it occurs but also categories of the body maladies according to the response to the treatments. Their classification may not vary as wide such as (a) Natural diseases (arthritis, obesity, liver problem etc.) (b) Supernatural diseases (Gods will, punishment of Gods or Saints will), (c) Interpersonal diseases (Sorcery, evil eye) and (d) Emotional diseases (results from a fright or emotional shock or from uncontrolled anger) (Pross-1982: p-185) but based on certain observations. As both the folk curer and the patient have common belief system and are at the same level of socio-cultural as well as economic causations, their inferences about the diseases are the same. Although the emic classification of diseases is emphatic among the Bondo highlanders, the same can be etically interpreted and classified broadly into two categories such as (a) the physical diseases and (b) the spiritual diseases. The natural diseases, as Pross observed, are the physical diseases and the spiritual diseases are the supernatural, interpersonal and emotional diseases.

The Bondo believes that the physical diseases respond to the medicines that includes certain *material medica* of animal, vegetable or mineral origin (Vaid-1979: p-144) but the spiritual diseases respond either to sorcery, black magic, evil eye, spirit intrusion, etc. the unseen medicine which is rarely assimilated to the body system through external application or internal administration or to above said unseen medicines coupled with visible medicines that can be administered to the patient either externally or internally.

Both the Bondo folk healers as well as the lay men are yet to visualize the role of the vitamins and minerals to ward off diseases and deficiencies. Indirectly, they admit that fresh vegetables, meat and fish have more 'Life' than their stale counterparts. They also believe that over-cooked and over-spiced food lacks vitality, potency to supply energy against all clinical odds. They do not know that certain minerals are essential to body metabolism and growth as well as creation / secretion of body fluids. They do prescribe certain cereals and food items in connection with certain ailments. Thus they prescribe animal proteins, mainly meat to a patient suffering from excessive bloodlessness. They too provide dishes with cereals rich in iron and calcium such as *ragi* to the lactating mothers. While administering such food they fail to take an account of the capability of the digestive system of the patient.

Bondos have a soft corner for green and leafy vegetables as well as semi ripen fruits. The green tinge of these edibles, they believe, retains 'Life' from the plants from which it is obtained. Similarly the quality of the meat is measured in

terms of redness it possesses. They do not hesitate to consume caked blood and swallow pieces of liver raw for the reason that these items are more red than the meat. It is one of the ways of intake of colloidal iron into the body system.

Apart from the causes, the Bondo to believe the existence of two broad categories of diseases namely (a) the physical diseases responding to material medicines and (b) the spiritual diseases responding either to psycho-somatic medicines or psycho-therapy. It is interesting to observe that there exists a thin flexible boundary between the two systems of treatment. At present, due to greater culture contact, Bondos do not hesitate to add the names of more and more diseases into the physical category. However, the diseases from which the women and children suffer are clubbed into the spiritual category.

Many diseases and ailments which are found in the highland are due to imbalanced interaction between the body and natural environment. This imbalance is not so acute to usher in disease, like yaws, leprosy, filaria, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) etc. The Bondo though have earned notoriety for ignoring their personal hygiene, these diseases are not reported among them. Epidemics, like smallpox and cholera very rarely break out in the Bondo hills. Their common ailments are malaria, skin and eye diseases, gastro-intestinal disorder, worm infection, cuts and wounds and bronchitis (Patnaik-1989:76). The modern or civilized diseases like STDs, AIDs, nervousness, insomnia, cardiac failure, hyper-tension, diabetes, etc., are not reported among them. However, the lower Bondo and a few well-to-do upper Bondo are quite aware of these. The change in food habits and adoption of modern life style which is still a taboo in the Bondo society has increased the incidence of ailments.

The Bondo tribe may not be considered as a declining but more or less a static tribe. This may be due to the prevailing social practice of marriage between elderly women and younger men. The Bondo are so much individualistic that the society as a whole fails to exercise on them any influence for a change in their temperament from aggression to peacefulness (Patnaik-1989 p-77). The strong sex of the tribe succumbs to this temperament leaving the family members to lead an insecure life devoid of adequate nourishment for the body and mind. The women folk though have voice in family affairs, at times, act as the mute spectators to the deeds of their husbands, fathers and brothers loss of male life partners to choose the path of committing suicide. This tendency was unknown in Bondo country in the past but is becoming today an issue of great concern. This new disease has another partner now-a-days. It is the social disease that requires the panacea like social and economic security and peaceful environment conducive to develop both mind and body.

(III)

MEDICINE MEN AND CURING PRACTICES

If medicine is a social institution (Encyclopedia of Social Sciences) then a medicine man is an office bearer in the society. He diagnoses the patient and prescribes medicines. A Bondo medicine man knows the medicinal qualities of different parts of the plants, the matters of animal origin and abiotic objects. He acquires the knowledge either from his father or from an elderly person of his tribe. The tribe has a pharmacopoeia of its own for diseases that occur commonly in its habitat. However, the medicine man has little knowledge about occurrence of different diseases. For example, all sorts of pains are considered as similar in their origin and their antidotes are the same. Their power of reasoning towards fever is limited to one cause. Thus, the diseases may be many but the medicine men of the area club them together because the ailments have similar visible effects on body system and they start treating them accordingly.

Different Schools

The Bondo medicine men can be divided in to three schools according to their methods of diagnosis of the diseases and the prescription of medicines / antidotes. The first school of medicine men is the shamans who strongly believe the diseases as the work of evil spirits and unsatiated spirits. They are addressed as 'GURU' and are easily identified by their body appearances and abnormal activities. The second school of medicine men are the expert artists who intermix medicine and sorcery. The Dissari, as they are called by others, gives 'SHORENG' - the medicines and prefers to conceal the composition of the medicines prepared. The third school of medicine men consider medicine as a matter and not as a social institution. These three schools of medicine men profess their trades because of their common belief system of diseases caused by malevolent supernatural beings.

Gender Specification

The Bondo Medicine men are usually males. A good medicine man, for his ability to heal the ailing persons, attains the status of a folk hero. A Bondo woman may practice medicine both material and institutional but she is seldom addressed as a 'Gurumai' or 'Dissari' though during pre and post marriage period she may learn the symptoms of the diseases and prepare and prescribe medicines. The enlightened medicine men who have greater leaning towards material medicine do not hesitate to reveal the quantity and type of the ingredients used in medicine. Despite their revelation, an ordinary Bondo fails to attain the status of enlightened ones because of long association of the latter with the 'materia medica' and scope of watching the activities of their 'GURUS' from close quarters. From among the three schools, the former is exclusively hereditary and is good at spiritual medicine. The latter school is an enlightened one with strong belief on 'herbal medicines. In between these two extremes, the middle school prescribes herbal medicines under fortification with spiritual medicines.

Good and Bad Medicine men

Though there are two types of medicine men - good medicine men and bad medicine men (Deb Burman-1986, 185), there are no reports of existence of bad medicine men in the Bondo country. This shows that the primitiveness in belief about occurrence of diseases is not adulterated with thoughts of existence of agencies who induct ailments by introducing an evil spirit into the victims body. The good medicine men of first two schools cure sickness using two sorts of materials (a) visible approach or medicine associated with the god or supernatural beings and (b) herbs (Ibid, 186). The latter is the weapon of the medicine men belonging to the third school. The medicine men of the highland particularly belonging to the first school, adopt exorcism to drive out devils but treatment of a disease supposed to be caused by the induction of an evil spirit through black magic is the belief that has been crept into the minds of the lower Bondo. In such case they do not hesitate to go to the non Bondo healers.

Social Status of Medicine men

The medicine men have carved out a niche for themselves in a tribal society. They are respected, consulted for any abnormalities observed in the inner body as well as in the outer environment that influence the condition of the human body and at times an avoidance relationship is maintained for fear of possession of bad medicine'. If the son of a medicine man has no knowledge of medicine, he cannot become a medicine man on hereditary basis.

In the Bondo country the medicine men are classified into three broad groups namely the Guru, the Dissari and those laymen who have mastered the use of certain plants animals and minerals. No specific name has been given to the medicine men of latter category. In a Guru one finds the heredity of both the medicinemanship and the medicine man. A Dissari is an astrologer-cum-medicine man who prescribes indigenous medicines and performs magical rituals. He has a good knowledge about the causes of diseases and the treatments. He is a good psychopath too. He is more vigorous, vocal and action-oriented than the Guru. There is little transparency in their curative practices. The Bondo traditional medicine man both the Guru or the Dissari are not selected out of the common lot for certain traits like being the twins, the seventh sons or babies who come into the world feet first. Calendaring has recorded the existence of general belief among the aborigines that the persons having above traits possess healing qualities (Cleanering-1961; p-10). The medicine men of late are literate, widely travelled and are more open in their dealings. They may not have a social status at par with the Gurus and the Dissaris but have sufficient influence to stack their position in secular functions. Though their healing activities are quite transparent, they start their mission with the stories of instructions received in a vision from the deities and ancestral spirits to heal different diseases.

The Gurus and the Dissaris can easily be identified by their lean and hungry like body appearance with unkempt long lock of hair. Strangely, they are not habituated with attending to their personal hygiene. They have higher social status and are found not dependent on healing practices to earn a livelihood.

The Curing Practices

The curing practices of the Bondo medicine men are as varied as their schools. The Gurus hardly get themselves cleaned before attending to the patients. They chant mantras—a chain of words in poetic rhythm, boding their heads and waving hands towards abode of village, forest, hill and stream deities and even towards the sun occasionally clapping and raising the pitch to high or low tone. During the process they use vermilion and incense sticks. They also draw lines on soft soil or sand in front of the house of the patient. After the completion of the ritual some Gurus touch the offering items to the patients. Others take out a little earth from the *pooja* site and apply on the body of the patient. The Gurus also promise offerings like black buck, black cock and cocoanuts to the malevolent spirits on behalf of the patients. The practice of the use of effigy (Ibid: ii) is not in force in the highland but exorcism do occur among the Bondo. The Gurus are also good exorcists. They usually treat patients suffering from smallpox, chickenpox, high fever, loss of body weight associated with weakness etc. these diseases according to them are due to the wrath of deities and unsatisfied ancestral spirits.

The Dissari usually takes care of seasonal and endemic diseases and body disorders caused by visible agents. When a person faces accidents repeatedly or in cyclic order the Dissari applies some herbal medicines but to boost the morale of the patient he performs some rituals too. These rituals may not have any clinical effect but boost confidence and build up the will to survive. They like Matis, combine the use of medicinal herbs and other substances with exorcism to cure diseases (Matis-Ojhas) (Roy, 1985-11). It is also learnt that like the Ojhas the Dissaris do not have any specially sponsored *bongas* (spirits) through which the forces of evil and sorceries are countered. (Troisi-1979:97).

A close observation of the 'Gurus' and the 'Dissaris' in action leads one to infer that the success of healing of magic man in a tribal society lies on its valuable psychological functions and on its social acceptance (Roy -1989:95). The so called elite medicine men of the tribe have a good knowledge about the *material medica* in vogue among them. They are the real force behind the addition of the newer medicinal ingredients to their existing list. It is felt that supportive efforts to them, by Government, will make them able to transfer the spiritual medicine to physical medicine.

The folk healers as they are called have little room for preventive medicines they believe that efficacy of a treatment depends largely upon the belief of the patients on their modus operandi. The Bondo medicine men usually succeed in containing certain seasonal physical diseases due to development of

“ethiological theories consonant with local world view, technological competencies and social structure”, (Pross-1980:45-57).

Indigenous Medicines : Its Preparation and Administration

The Medicine ; Definition and types-The main instruments of treatment of diseases, according to Brhat Samhita is Mani, Mantra and Aushadha. The utilization of these three instruments to ward off a malady is nothing but an institution, in action. The encyclopedia of social sciences therefore refers medicine as a social institution. It advocates that that medicine should be studied as such.

The indigenous medicines practiced by different tribes of the country were more medicinal and less dietetic, more curative and less preventive by nature. Of late the acculturation process and entrepreneurial activities of certain individuals have painted the tribal medicine with the preventive hue (as in case of Santals) and with the dietetic hue (as in case of Saoras). The later version of tribal therapy has more restrictions-restrictions of assimilation of the foreign matters into the body system, than the allowance of use of the medicinal ingredients for fortification of body functions.

The Bondo medicine is not different from any primitive tribe medicine. It is curative in nature and almost free from food and other restrictions. Like the medicine men of the tribe the Bondo medicine may also be classified as (a) Mantra, (b) Aushadha fortified with Mantra and (c) Aushadha. The ‘GURUS’ use Mantras, the Dissaris both Aushadha and Mantra and the medicine men only the Aushadha. It is seen that the latter also go for a stage show of uttering a few words sometimes in Oriya and addressing even to non-traditional natural objects like stars and clouds in a low pitch of voice hardly audible to the patient or his attendant to arouse the ‘will of survival’. The visual effect of their action may be the driving force for curing the patient from the body ailments. In general, medicines prescribed by the performing medicine men are valued much by the Bondo than the medicines prescribed by their advisory counter parts.

The tribal people have pharmacopoeia of their own for their manifold diseases, like malaria, yaws, leprosy, scabies, venereal diseases, bowel complains, influenza, ophthalmia, cholera, smallpox etc. (Roy 1989, p-85). The unhygienic living conditions and lack of personal cleanliness have not acted as agents for the spread of dreaded diseases in the highland. Absence of these diseases and the diseases of civilized man (Frazier. 1957, p-62) has not fattened the Bondo pharmacopoeia. On the other hand it is enriched with *materia-medica* suitable for treating common diseases and ailments. It also recognizes psychotherapy but is totally silent about physiotherapy.

The Bondo indigenous medicine is diagnostic but not systematized and is confined to only one concept i.e. healing the patients from his maladies. For this they use simple medicines derived out of different parts of the plant. For enriching

the medicinal qualities or minimizing the side effects due to existence of other ingredients with properties supportive to the existing ailment the indigenous medicine is mixed with other ingredients. The Bondo being a primitive society is inclining very slowly towards complex medicines.

The Belief System

The Bondo believes that plants or at least certain parts of it with strong or sweet smell, emitting resinous fluid or latex when hurt and producing white as well as striking adored smoke on incineration have medicinal properties. The ritual medicine men also consider that a tree struck by lightning or having a luxuriant growth with good foliage, despite hostile natural conditions, acquires medicinal properties naturally. They also believe that any biological species with striking deviation in appearance, colour, foliage etc. from among their general counterparts can be used as a medicine. The potency of the freshly prepared medicine decreases on storage, they believe. Some of the medicine men, the traditional ones in particular, believe that the medicine become ineffective if its ingredients are made public. Secrecy in selection of medicinal plants and in preparation of medicine is maintained by them.

The Medicines

The plants used by the Bondo for medicine are never cultured but collected from nature. These plants have different properties but the medicine men of the highland must have hit upon the utilization of one or two properties. For example, the Adamant creeper (*Cissuaquadrangalarislinn*) is anthelmintic, digestive, depurative, haemostatic, aphrodisiac and union promoting but the Bondo medicine men have recognized the last property that is exclusively used in curing bone fractures. A Bondo patient never uses prepared and stored medicines for long time. Fresh medicine is prepared to last for not more than three uses / applications. Strongly very few medicines used by Bondo are of animal origin.

Preparation of Medicines

The Bondo medicines, as mentioned earlier, are simple and never have the complex formulations. It is prepared by pressing, grinding, decanting, incinerating and filtering of medicinal ingredients. Very few medicines are mixed with additives to enrich the medicinal quality and the retainers to check the loss of potency due to long storage. Most of the Bondo medicines are water based and some of the medicines used externally are oil based. Though the Bondo are avid alcoholics, the alcohol is not used in any form of medicine. The usual tools / gears used by a Bondo medicine man consist of a knife, a digging stick and the grinding stone usually made of fine grained stone such as chloride stone or granite. The traditional medicine men have gourd shell containers to store dried roots, barks, seeds and fruits with medicinal properties.

The simplicity of the medicine can be judged by the fact that the so called oil based medicines contain no oil at all. On the contrary the affected area is massaged with oil and then the medicinal extract is applied there upon. No orally administered medicine has oil or essential oil in it.

A Bondo patient is treated in his / her home and a Guru, A Dissari or a secular medicine man never uses his house as a dispensary. The healing man of the highland is yet to quantify the ingredients of the medicines. By sheer experience he decides upon the number or quantity of medicinal ingredients and prepares the medicine. Before the administration and preparation of medicine he also considers the body condition and body weight of the patient as well as the time of occurrence of the disease mentally. A good medicine, according to him, is one which yields positive results at the shortest time.

One of the basic goodness of the Bondo medicine is the absence of any side effect on the patient. If the advice of the medicine man is strictly followed, a Bondo believes, the patient gets cured. If he has doubts about the medicine or if he has done any offended the deities the medicine fails.

Administration of Medicine

The traditional medicine men administer the medicine in two ways. They transmit invisible medicine by uttering words addressed to unseen forces or by body gyration or by administering physical medicine (those having mass and volume) by external application or internal assimilation. The secular medicine man who chiefly deals with physical medicines also follow the path of the latter too.

The physical medicines applied externally are strong and have repetitive use. These medicines are made to assimilate with the body through massage, annointment and through 'pressure adhering'. These medicines are applied on the ailing affected part of the body. Sprain, wounds, fractures and body pains are treated by this method. Internal administration of the medicine is effected by inhalation and use of dietary track. The cold, and cough and headache of some kind are treated with inhalation f medicated fumes / smokes. The 'Soft' medicines which are supposed to have capability of healing the internal body organs are taken orally. Needless to say that the medicines falling into the latter category are small in number.

The Bondo believes that the diseases are either superficial or deep. For the former, a wide variety of treatments are recommended but for the latter the Bondo resort to psychotherapy i.e., exorcism and the like. They too believe that external administration of medicine is for superficial diseases and internal administration for grave or deep ailments. This belief system has led the Bondo medicine man to resort to a kind of surgery i.e., inflicting a minor wound above the bone fracture and filling it with the paste of 'adsang'. This intramuscular administration of semisolid medicine (paste) is very uncommon among the other tribes of the State.

A short list of the treatments prescribed for different diseases / ailments is annexed at the end.

Prescriptions and Taboos

Prescriptions- In rural and tribal India, the medicine as an institution, starts to work when a disease occurs. Diseases / ailments demand the services of the healers the medicine men who drive out the maladies from the body of the patient and at times fortify him against the recurrence of the body disorders while the great weapons of modern medicine are aimed at the patho-physiology of disease and its susceptibility to pharmaceutical, immunological or surgical attack (Bryant-1969; p-59), the illiterate and improvised medicine men armed with crude medicines prepared out of dry matters obtained from animals. They mix pharmacy with psychopathy and they not only prescribe medicines but also deliver a few words as advice to the patients for leading a meaningful life.

A Bondo medicine man not only prescribes medicine but also acts like a chemist-cum-druggist. The medicine men are also the patent holders of certain formulations. They transmit the secrecy of the medicines to their eldest sons or to the close confidants. The more open secular medicine men make oral prescriptions to the patient or his relatives and instruct the method of preparation or use. Certain medicinal plants are only available in the deep woods and the secular medicine men do not hesitate to tell the location of the plants where it exit.

The prescriptions are not only indicative of the medicines and their causes but also of other items which are also considered as medicines. The Gurus and the Dissaris ask for animals and birds, other edible items as well as utility items like coconut, areca nut, vermilion, turmeric powder, peacock feather, short fine towels and pieces of cloths. Their prescriptions also favour certain colours, patterns and the likes. Thus a black cock or a black buck is always preferred. Black or red cotton pieces have preferential acceptance than the cloths of other colour. Similarly striped cloths override plain or checked cloths. At present these preferential attitudes have been diluted by the easy availability of the substitutes.

The changed environment has ushered in some sorts of 'ad hocism' in their prescriptions. The traditional medicine system at present is acting like a link between the disease and the clinical medicine. In certain places it is being utilized as the 'First Aid'. The scientism has engulfed both the medicine men (traditional or secular) and the patient. The Bondo is coming closer towards the broad definition of health and its maintenance, like 'health is maintained by certain regularities in behaviour regarding diet, exercise, rest and medication, when necessary, (Mutatkar-1979; 360). It has culminated in phasing out of certain taboos, induction of some others but fortification of a whole lot of existing taboos.

Taboos-The regularization of the human behaviour and patronizing it culturally to suit the man and his outer environment has given birth to the

institution of taboo. The taboo, is the stricter form of *mana* which is embedded to the human mind for ritualistic observation. These taboos are found more prevalent in stratified or complex societies. Being an unstratified and simple society, the Bondo observe a few taboos. These taboos are bi-faceted i.e., dietetic and behavioural and strictly adhered to by the elders and those who are yet to see or feel modernity through vertical and horizontal mobilization of men materials and information.

The taboos in circulation among the Bondo are non-administration of medicines before spiritual submission of the medicine man. Before collecting the medicines from the natural surroundings the medicine man purifies his soul by chanting the names of the village deities and spirits residing in their abodes, like hills, forests, streams etc. There is no taboo relating to consumption of food and human action.

Currently the consumption of stale meat, in case of patients suffering from skin diseases is tabooed. The change in the Bondo tradition also prohibits culturing of certain medicinal plant, like *adsang* near their houses. It is even not allowed to grow near their villages.

An Overview : Resistance and Change

In and outmigration of population to and from the Bondo country has widened the world view of the tribe and the medicine men who attend to the diseased ones and their attitude towards the disease, treatment. Apart from it the arrival of goods and services aimed at enhancement of quality of life has opened a new chapter in Bondo life style. On the question of acceptance or otherwise of the traditional herbal medicines, the Bondos are a house divided. The elderly ones and those living in remote villages have strong faith on indigenous medicines. Certain compulsions, like belief in age old customs and practices, non-availability of alternative medicines in and around their villages and excessive reliance on medicine men of the locality have made people to desist from modern medical facilities. A microscopic group, mostly consisting of those who are out of their original habitats for earning bread from nontraditional economic pursuits are skeptic at least about the method by which the medicine is administered and the man who prescribes it. The majority of the Bondo population prefers to undergo traditional treatment when fell ill but switch over to the modern medicines when the latter fails to yield results. Almost all Bondo people have taken traditional medicines or consult traditional medicine man in one case or the other.

The herb based Bondo medicine is not only confined to the locally available plants, but also has assimilated the dry matters obtained from alien plant species into its healing practices. The coconut shell, betel leaf, lantana leaf and bark as well as the leaves of eucalyptus tree are being prescribed by the medicine man to treat appropriate ailments. Certain plants like *Actinoptesis dichotoma*-Bedd available locally but not recognized by the Bondo medicine men as a medicinal

plant until first half of the eighties is now prescribed by the medicine men for treatment of snake bite. It is due to interaction with a Government official hailing from Central Orissa. The Bondo *material medica* is also enriched by the inclusion of ingredients, like kerosene oil, white mud etc. the traditional medicines in vogue in the high land also incorporate the remnant of certain animals like snail, dog etc.

Despite the enrichment of the Bondo *materia-medica* with new medicinal ingredients the preparation of medicines, method of administration and rituals followed by the medicine men remains the same. The Bondo medicine man still gives or prescribes simple medicines like pastes, extracts and powders of different parts of herbs, creepers, trees etc. compound medicines obtainable from dry matters of more than two plants through processes of sublimation, distillation, absorption and adsorption are still unknown to the Bondo medicine men. A few Bondos old or middle aged ones with greater contact with the plains, have started preparing extracts of mixed plants through simple mechanical process. They also insist upon washing the ingredients in clean water and process the same pre-cleaned utensils and in other household utility gears. One or two Bondo youths with school education up to class 9th standard, at present, act as medicine man purely on philanthropic basis. These people are not institutionalizing the healing activities with customary rituals and offerings. They believe in personal hygiene and also advise their patients to maintain personal hygiene.

The belief on rituals and offerings to the deities as prescribed by very old and hereditary Bondo medicine are respected in cases of treatment of psychiatric patients and those suffering from unknown diseases. Their prescriptions are always accepted not only by the persons with little faith on herbal medicines but also by those who usually cut jokes at the ill clad, intoxicated and foul odor emitting medicine men. It is strange to find that very little number of plants, animals and abiotic objects are identified by the Bondo medicine men and the quantification of the ingredients for treating the maladies are yet to be done. Moreover, the so called enlightened medicine men who by contact with non-Bondo population are adding up different plants to the short list of medicinal ingredients with the spread of story of seeing them in a vision. They also spread the rumour that their village deity or deities residing in the hills and forests came in their dreams and commanded them to treat the ailing brethren as per their instructions. Induction of each new ingredient to the existing *material medica* force the medicine men to create faith among the population. This is one of the causes of observance of rituals and offerings to the deities.

Appeasing of angry deities or getting rid of evil spirits still makes a Bondo patient or his kith and kin to cough off a fortune. The whimsical yet psychologically weak Bondos still express their gratitude to the unseen forces by offering them edible items. This act at present, is done at family level clandestinely to curtail expenditure curtail expenditure.

The driving force behind the persistence of the tribal herbal medicine is its availability in the locality and easy method of administering them into the body system. As a result only a few maladies have been invented by them. They are also yet to reason out the other medicinal properties of the known medicinal plants. Their concept about good health is confined to the body condition by which a person is able to do work. The so called new diseases that have invaded the Bondo belt are in existence since time immemorial but their identification were not done by the local medicine man. The dreaded diseases like leprosy, yaws and venereal diseases are not found in this area so also the rich mens' diseases like high blood pressure, cardiac failure and diabetes. Changes in food habits, life style, cross culture contact as well as external attempts to make them free from tradition bound practices and ushering in new health hazards. The future health scene of the Bondo is very gloom. Unless attempts are made to make them more health conscious and for proper utilization of locally available 'cultured' and 'natural' goods for human consumption, the Bondo will succumb to the advent of the ills of the modern civilization.

The right step towards the change of traditional medicine for the better management of health care practices is to document all the medicinal ingredients used in whole of the Bondo country and analyze the drugs giving due importance to the indigenous knowledge of the traditional medicine man. There should be a drive for propagation of the existing knowledge in its refined form through trained resource persons belonging to the tribe. Preventive and after-care medicaments should be made available to as many Bondos as possible. This will enable a Bondo to get Medicare facilities at a lesser cost and at a lesser 'waiting period' by this the Bondo on the other hand, will develop a sense of responsibility to save trees, bushes and herbs which they usually consign to the flames to practice shifting cultivation.

Apart from the streamlining of the medicine system the modernity should have its Mida's touch on the medicine men. A code of conduct should be thrust upon them. Persons with acute homicidal tendency and habit of being intoxicated at the simple occasions should be debarred from prescribing the herbal medicines. Their wrong diagnosis and prescriptions may lead a patient to reap 'wrong fruits from the right medicinal plants though out his life time. The patient may succumb to the mistakes committed by them.

END NOTE:

The paper has been prepared by Shri A. K. Maharana, Research Officer, based on field work conducted by him among the Bondo of Malkangiri district. The Social-Cultural profile in Chapter-II has been contributed by Dr. A. C. Sahoo, Officer-on-Special Duty. The study, an exploratory one, was conducted under the supervision of the Director.

ANNEXURE I
Tribal Medicine at a Glance (Tribe-BONDA)

Sl No	Name of the Plant		Parts used	Property of the parts used	Disease /Ailment	Method of		Food & other restrictions, if any	Remarks	
	Botanical / English	Local				Medicine Preparation	Administration			
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)
1	-	Buntame	-	Leaf	-	Burn wound	Fresh coconut shell burnt to ooze oil. Then rubbed with the Buntame leaf. The paste is used as medicine	Wound is cleaned with a clean cloth to remove dead tissues. The paste applied for 2 to 3 days	-	Recommended by the secular medicinemen
2	-	Tasing bilei.	-	Root	Bitter in taste, sedative & anodyne.	Stomach pain	The root is chewed raw & the juice is swallowed. The fibrous residue is applied on the stomach.	Oral intake and surface application twice a day in the morning & evening after food (may not be principal meal)	Hot foods & fibrous foods are to be avoided	Ditto
3	Mimosapudica, Linn.	Lajkuli lara.	Lajakuli lara	Leaf	-	Snake bite	Handful of leaves ground with sugar & diluted with water to obtain a thin solution.	The fluid is taken orally once	The patient is not allowed to walk or run. Hot food is disallowed	Ditto
4	Actinopteris dichotoma, bedd	Mayur-chulla.	Mayur-chulla	Root	Astringent, coating, acid, anthelmintic, etc.	Snake bite	-	Seven hair like roots are chewed and swallowed	The patient will not run & take hot food	Ditto
5	-	Lue	-	-	-	-	Resinous fluid is derived from the root.	Once cupful of the fluid is taken orally once	-	Ditto
6	-	Praun	-	Vine	-	Headache	No medicine is prepared from the vine.	External application only. The healer bites hard on the forehead, till a cracking sound is heard. The vine is	-	Recommended by the secular medicinemen

7	(a) Tamarindus indicus, Linn. (b)- (c) Achyran the asspera, Linn	(a)Tentuli (b)Timang li (C)Gilsar.	(a)Tentuli (b)Amar- poi	(a)Tentuli (b)Amar- poi	(a) Root & flower. (b)Bark (C)Root	(a)Acidic (b)- (C)Coagulant, Germicide.	Difficulty in delivering the child	The root, bark and flower of same volume are mixed and grinded to a paste.	then tied around the head that is then massaged with Castor oil in morning hours The patient to inhale the paste. A little of it is applied on the forehead and the vagina. lips	-	The patient's grandmother applies the paste on body as mentioned
8	(a) Diospyros melanoxylon Roxb. (b)-	(a)Kendu (b)Amar- poi	(a)Kendu (b)Amar a-poi	(a)Kendu (b)Amar a-poi	(a)Tender leaf. (b)Ditto	(a)Diaueticpothe linic and styptle (b)-	Blood dysentery (b)-	Equal quantities of tender Kendu&Amarapoil eaves are ground & the juice extracted	Half a cup of the juice is taken twice daily	Dry fish and dry meat is prohibited	Recommended by secular medicinemen
9	(a) Tridax porcum bens. (b) Lantana camara, Linn	(a)Bisalya - karani (b)Naguar i	(a)Bisaly a-karani (b)Nagu ari	(a)Bisaly a-karani (b)Nagu ari	(a)Leaf (b)Flower	-	Common wound.	4-6 leaves are rubbed with 2-3 flowers on palm. The paste is used as medicine.	The paste is applied externally on the wound & a piece of cloth tied on it	-	Ditto
10	Vitis quadrangu- laries	Adsang	Had- simkhala	Had- simkhala	Root	Anodyne & union promoting.	Deep wound	A root of about 2 inches long is washed & grinded to a paste	Half of the paste is taken orally in the name of God and other half is applied on the wound	Acidic food avoided & the patient is advised to take complete rest.	Prescribed both by traditional & secular medicine men
11	-	Tangia- sina	-	-	Bark	-	Ditto	Washed fresh bark is grinded	It is pasted on the wound	-	Prescribed by all healers
12	Jatropha curcas, Linn	Dumba jada.	Baigaba	Baigaba	Tender branches	Anodyne	Sprain	(i)Tender branches are heated & rubbed on the sprained part. (ii) Branches are scoured & twisted to ooze liquid	(i)External massage with the warm twigs. (ii)The branches are gently rubbed on the affected part	Complete rest is advised. Ditto	Prescribed by both secular and traditional medicinemen. Ditto

13	-	Ballsanda	-	Leaf	-	Removal of evil spirit	A Handful of leaves are made into a thick paste	The paste is placed before the patient's nose and advised to inhale deeply.	Ditto	Ditto
14	Kerosene	Kerosene	Kerosene	Oil	Inflammable pungent & disinfectant	Lice Infection	Half cup of Kerosene massaged on head	After two hours the head is washed with soap.	Ditto	Ditto
15	-	Sunugar	-	Leaf	-	Headache	A few leaves are pressed by hands to make a crude paste	The paste is applied on the forehead in the morning	If the head reels castor oil massaged on head	Ditto
16	-	-	-	-	-	Fever (not related to cold)	The healer applies a little ash on patient's hand & forehead. Then he holds the patient's left hand thumb & evokes the deities calling by their names. He promises offerings & gives his medicine to the patient	The patient is subjected to psychotherapy and is given the prepared medicine.	-	The Guru or Dissari treats the patient.
17	-	Gisinga	-	-	-	Fever due to cold	-	The Gisinga vine is tied around neck.	Light food is prescribed	Ditto
18	Tobacco (Nicotina tobacum)	Dokta	Dhuan patra	Leaf	-	Stiffening of nose	Tobacco leaf is finely powered	The powder is inhaled	Exposure to cold is prohibited	Both traditional and secular medicamen
19	Madhucalongi folia	Mohul	Mohul	Oil of seed	Emollient & Laxative	Burn wound (superficial)	-	Dead tissues are removed & painted with mohua oil then powder charcoal sprinkled over it.	Wound is kept open. Dry fish & dry meat is prohibited	Ditto

20	<i>Carica papaya</i> , Linn.				Fruit latex	Anthelmintic, Anlyne and Digestive	Ring worm	The unripe fruit is wound to ooze enzymatic milk like fluid	The affected area is scraped with a clean dry stone or wood. When it emits blood or fluid the milk is applied	Wound is kept open. Dry fish & dry meat is prohibited	Both traditional & secular medicinemen
21	Non-biotic medicinal ingredients are used.	-	-	-	-	-	Tap/thread worm (in case of adults)	-	About half a cup of kerosene taken orally about one hour after dinner before going to bed	-	Prescribed by the Guru or Dissari.
22	(a) <i>Diospyros melanoxylon</i> (b) <i>Psidium guajava</i> , Linn. (c) <i>Punicagranatu</i> .	(a)Kendu (b)Pijuli (c)Dalimba	(a)Kendu (b)Pijuli (c)Dalimba	(a)Leaf (b)Tender fruit (c)Tender fruit	Diuretic, ophthalmic & styptic.	Loose motion with blood & mucos.	A few leaves of kendu ground along with tender guava and Punica. Granatu into a thick paste	The paste is whipped with water to a thinner consistency. Half a cup of it is taken orally thrice daily (morning, noon & evening)	Heavy & fibrous food is prohibited	Prescribed by all types of medicinemen	
23	<i>Racenus communis</i> (Castor).	Jada	Jada	Leaf	-	Hydrozil	Castor leaf baked on live charcoal & applied with Castor oil is put on the swollen scrotum	Surface application. When the leaf is not put the patient is advised to wear loin cloth tightly.	Advised not to do heavy work	Ditto	
24	Banyan (<i>Ficus bengalensis</i>)	Bara	Bara	Latex	Refrigerant, Anodyne, Depurative, etc.	Boils	The latex is derived from the tree & used fresh	Applied quickly on the boil & covered with a paper	Advised not to do heavy work	Prescribed by all types of medicine men	
25	<i>Terminalia chebula</i> .	Harida	Harida	Seed	-	Cough	The seed is roasted and powdered.	About quarter palmful of the powder is chewed & taken orally in night	Sago-palm juice is prohibited	Ditto	
26	-	-	Tanglasina	Bark	-	Deep wound (by axe or arrow)	Freshly cut bark is rubbed on stone to obtain a paste.	The wound is applied with the paste. It stops bleeding	-	By all types of medicinemen	

27	<i>Vitis quadrangularis.</i>	Adsang	Hada-sinkala	Root & branches	-	Bone fracture.	The root and branches are grinded and made a thick paste	A small cut is made near the fractured & filled with the paste & then bandaged.	-	Ditto
28	Tamarind (<i>tamarindus indica</i>).	Tentuli	Tentuli	Root	-	Difficulty in delivering the child.	-	A small root of tamarind tree is fixed to the ear of the women	The patient is advised to sleep flat on a mat.	A guru or a Dissari attends to the patient
29	-	Tentuli	Tentuli	Fruit pulp	-	Consumption of poison.	A thin paste of tamarind is prepared	The patient is forced to drink the tamarind water till he vomits. It is done repeatedly.	-	All types of medicinemen attend to the patient
30	Banana (<i>Musa Pradisataca</i> , Linn)	Kadali	Kadali	Shoot	-	Removal of placenta	-	The shoot is tied loosely to the neck & the woman is kept under observation. The shoot removed soon after the placenta drops	-	A Guru or a Dissari attends the patient
31	(a) <i>Racenus communis</i> (b) <i>Schleichera trifuga</i> .	(a) Jada (b) Kusum	(a) Jada (b) Kusum	Oil	-	Coma	-	Equal volumes of castor & kusum oil is mixed and massaged on the body.	-	A Guru or a Dissari attends the patient.
32	(i) <i>Schleichera trifuga</i>	Kusum	Kusum	Oil	-	Infection in between fingers of the foot	-	The infected part is washed with warm water, wiped & applied with kerosene then kusum oil applied	-	Prescribed by all types of medicinemen
	(ii) <i>Terminalia chebula</i>	Harida	Harida	Fruit	-	Ditto	The fruit is roasted and rubbed over the infection	-	-	Ditto

33	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Piles	The fresh water snails are fried with edible oil	The fried snails are eaten by the patient	Mutton & soaked rice is avoided	Ditto
34	(a)Schleichera trijuga. (b)Pongamia glabra.	(a)Kusum (b)Kararij	(a)Kusum (b)Kararij	-	(a)Kusum (b)Kararij	Oil	-	-	-	Scabies s	Both the oil is mixed and warmed	The affected part is washed with hot water and painted with the oil mix	Dry meat is avoided	Ditto
35	-	Sawa	-	-	-	Twig	-	-	-	Pain on urination	The green twig is split and used for medicinal purpose.	The split is worm around waist and around left wrist	-	A Guru or a Dissari attends the patient
36	Bamboo (Bambus avulgarish).	Bauns	Bauns	-	Baunsa	Dust	-	-	-	Ear infection (causing pus formation)	Bamboo is suddenly split & the Bamboo dust is collected from the knot.	The dust is mixed with clean water. A few drop of that water is put on the ear.	-	Ditto
37	-	Noongasa	-	-	-	Latex	-	-	-	Reddening of eye	The latex is obtained from the tree	The latex is applied on the edges of the eye lid	-	The Guru & the Dissari treat the patient
38	-	Noon-gasa	-	-	-	Latex	-	-	-	Skin irritation	Ditto	The latex is applied on the irritated part	-	Ditto
39	(a)Magnifera indica. (b)Eugenia jambolana.	(a)Amb (b)Jamu	(a)Amb (b)Jamu	-	(a)Amba (b)Jamu	Leaf	-	-	-	Malaria	Equal quantities of mango and Eugenia jambo-lana leaves are boiled & the patient inhales the vapor along with the smoke of burning sal resin	Inhalation of vapour and smoke. A little of water is sprinkled over the head of the patient	-	Ditto

40	Vernoniaanthe liminica.	Sindhri- semu.	Nanda- baguli	Leaf	-	Toothache	A few mature green leaves are pressed with the palm and thumb	The pressed mass is put at the root of the affected tooth	-	Prescribed by all types of medicinen.
41	(a)Phyllanthu semblica, (b)Buchananiala nzaz. (c)Holarrhenaan ti dysenterica	(a)Sinkhar (b)Jarab (c)Kringe	(a)Anita (b)Cher- keli (c)Keruan	Bark	-	Stomach- ache	Equal quantities of the 3 types of barks are powdered and boiled in water.	After cooling the water is filtered and taken orally, (two times a day)	-	Ditto
42	Mallotus philippensis.	Sindur	Sindur	Leaf	-	Irregular menstruati on or excessive discharge	Dough of ragi powder wrapped with sindur leaf and roasted to prepare cake	The cake is taken orally on Sunday	-	A Dissari or a Guru attends the patient.
43	-	Sipur	-	Leaf	-	Loose motion due to fear	The freshly plucked leaf is used as drug	The leaf is inhaled.	-	A Dissari or a Guru attends the patient.
44	-	-	-	-	-	Epilepsy	-	The left hand's little finger is pierced with a needle. The oozed blood is licked by the patient	-	Ditto
45	Eucaliptus Globulus	Neelgiri	Neelgiri	Leaf	-	Nose bleeding	The leaves are grinded and its juice is extracted	A little of the juice is taken orally. Raw cow dung is inhaled	-	Ditto
46	-	Srippa	-	Leaf	-	Chest pain	The leaf is burnt & in hot condition put on chest	Massaged on chest.	-	Ditto
47	Daturacalba	Dhala Dhatura	Dhala Dhatura	Latex	Galacta-gogue.	Non- secretion of milk of lactating mother	The latex of the plant is licked by the patient	The licking of the latex is done twice a day (morning and evening)	-	Ditto

48	-	Bureiki	-	Leaf	-	Stung by bee or hornet	The freshly plucked leaves are used	The sting of the bee or hornet is removed from patient's body. A few leaves are rubbed against the stung mark.	-	All types of medicine men prescribe the medicine.
49	-	-	-	-	-	Tongue infection (Scarring and reddening)	-	Raw goat milk is applied on the affected tongue twice a day after food.	Hot food is prohibited.	Ditto
50	-	-	-	-	-	Eczema	Dog's bone is cleaned and burnt to obtain bone charcoal	The charcoal is powdered and applied on freshly cleaned eczema.	-	Ditto
51	-	Gundurri	-	Leaf	-	Scabies	A few leaves of Gundurri tree is grinded with turmeric	The paste is applied on washed affected area.	-	All types of medicinenen prescribe the medicine.
52	-	Biloichili	-	Fruit	-	Bodyache due to cold	The fruit ground with mustard or sesame seed	Paste cubes taken orally (A cube at a time twice after food).	-	Ditto
53	-	Dana	-	Bark	-	Indigestion	A bark's paste is made baked in sali leaf	The baked mass is rubbed on the abdomen.	-	A Guru or a Dissari treats the patient.

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BONDA HIGHLANDERS: TRADITION AND DEVELOPMENT *

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Introduction:

The “Bonda Poraja” is one of the 62 Scheduled Tribes as well as one of the 13 Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs) of Orissa. They are popularly known as ‘Bondo’ or ‘Bonda’. They are an Austro-Asiatic tribe. They speak “Remo Sam” a south Munda language.

The Bonda is a small community which numbered 2565, 3641, 4677, 5338, 5895 and 7315 in Census of 1941, 1951, 1961, 1971, 1981 and 1991 respectively. During the Census of 2001 they numbered 9378 including 4598 males and 4780 females showing a sex-ratio of 1040 and a decennial growth rate of 28.20 percent.

On the basis of the location of their habitats, there are two distinct groups of the Bondas, i.e. the ‘Hill Bonda’ or the ‘Bonda Highlanders’ called as *Jangaria Remo* and also identified as a PVTG of Odisha and the lower Bonda known as *Lamlook Remo*. The Hill Bonda residing in the area of Micro Project (for the development of the PTG - Hill Bondas) named Bonda Development Agency (BDA) numbered 5530 persons having a sex ratio of 1158 females per 1000 males and registering a growth rate of 9.50 percent over the decade 1991-2001 as per the Socio-Economic Survey of 2001 conducted by the Scheduled Castes & Scheduled Tribes Research and Training Institute (SCSTRTI), Bhubaneswar, Odisha.

Settlement:

The Bonda Highlanders claim to be the autochthons of Bonda Hills locally known as *Jangara Hills*, forming a part of the Eastern Ghats Mountain ranges stretching in Eastern India. Their habitat lies in inaccessible mountains with an elevation varying from 500 meters to over 1200 meters spread over a geographical area of about 130 sq km. There are a number of perennial hill streams, mountain peaks and valleys throughout the territory.

* Published in ADIVASI, Vol. XXXXVII, Nos.1&2, 2007, pp. 59-66

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The Bonda villages are situated on the hill tops, hill slopes and foot hills nearer to some perennial hill streams for supply of water for agriculture and domestic consumption. The megalithic platform called *sindibor* is found in the centre of the village. It serves as a community centre for the meetings or group discussions of the village elders and traditional leaders. The village deity resides in *hundi*, their main village shrine. The girl's dormitory, *selani dingo* and the boy's dormitory, *ingersing dingo* are essential components of Bonda village.

The individual houses are scattered and spread out with no regular streets inside. The Bonda houses are small with mud walls having two rooms with gabled type thatch sloped on four sides. Cattle sheds are constructed separately but close to the house.

Distinguishing Features of Appearance:

Bonda women with shaven heads look different from others. It is an age-old practice that one woman shaves the head of another by a locally made razor. Women wear a short cloth called *nodicor ringa* woven by themselves. They also wear ornaments made of aluminium and brass metals and heavy mass of bead necklaces covering their neck and upper portion of the belly. Men grow long hair and put on loin cloth which hang down to the waist and are always armed with weapons including bow and arrows, knife and axe whenever they move out.

Social Organization:

Family is nuclear, patriarchal and patrilocal. Marriage within the village is strictly forbidden. Monogamy is common whereas, relatively well-to-do prefer polygamy. In most cases the wife is older than the husband. Bride price is paid in the shape of cash and kinds of cattle, liquor etc. The women are free to accept or reject a marriage proposal in the dormitory attended by the unmarried boys of other villages. There are a number of cases of divorce and widow remarriage.

Political Organisation:

The Bondas have a rudimentary form of political organization. They have their traditional village council where *Naik*, the village headman, *Challan*, the assistant to headman and *Barik*, the messenger and *Sisa*, the priest, are the main functionaries responsible for handling socio-political matters and socio-religious rites in the village. *Dissari* is their astrologer-cum-medicine man. They believe in sorcery and black magic.

The village council sits on the village *Sindibor*, a stone platform inside the village to decide various customary matters and to settle disputes. These posts are usually hereditary within the same lineage group. Adultery, rape, disputes over land, trees, theft, disrespect to traditional norms, taboos, any kind of physical attack / attempt to murder are considered as offences. At the time of dispute, the rival parties or individuals are summoned. The village elders try to persuade them to forget their enmity and become friendly by sprinkling water (*waidak*) on them.

Usually the culprit for is charged some fine or asked to offer animals as compensation to the victim and to the community to settle the dispute. Punishments are given, but no reward is there for the good work. Only an extra specific portion of the hunted animal or bird is given as a reward to the individual who wounded or hit it first during the communal hunting.

In the old days the Bonda customary law was mainly revengeful and to much extent it still exists. A Bonda, who kills anybody during a quarrel over a gourd of wine, land or a man who takes revenge from a family or clan due to some past enmity, does not feel guilty. He thinks, what he has done is right.

Religious Beliefs and Practices:

A sword *Patkhanda*, kept hidden in a banyan tree in the sacred grove at Mudulipada, the capital of the Bonda highlands, is a royal insignia that gets worshiped by offering goat, cock, un-boiled rice with turmeric and coconut etc every year in January-February by the villagers of *Barjangar* group of twelve Bonda villages and their headmen. On this day the seeds of different crops are sanctified to get a good harvest. The Bonda community and their families worship the Earth Goddess - *Bursung/Hindi* and hill slopes, the sacred groves, the hill streams (*singraj*), swiddens (*podu* lands) and the terraced paddy fields annually for increasing the fertility of their lands.

Economic Organization:

Like many other tribal communities in the state the Bondas largely depend on agriculture - both shifting (swidden) cultivation on the hill slopes, settled cultivation on the foothills, up and dry lands and streambed terraced paddy fields for their livelihood. They raise millets, pulses, oil seeds and vegetables in their swiddens by mixed cropping on rotational basis consecutively for three years and allow these to remain fallow for a couple of years for vegetative recuperation and addition of fertility by natural process. Scented long varieties of paddy are cultivated through transplantation of seedlings in the terraced paddy fields. In their backyards maize and vegetables are raised during rainy season followed by chili, tobacco and other vegetables. Collection of various miner forest produce; domestication of animals including cows, goats, pigs; fishing and hunting provide them supplementary livelihood. The women weave their short waist cloth (*nodic*) around two to three feet in length and hardly ten inches in breath, with the help of their traditional loom and yarn of different colours.

Bonded Labour:

Coupled with the economic inequality there is a strong element of social inequality, which is institutionalized in the particular system of indebtedness. In almost every Bonda village there are a few socio-economically dominant households, known as 'Sahukaras', who monopolized the means of production and possess substantial quality of grains and cattle etc. They advance loans to their needy co-villagers against the mortgage of various productive assets like jackfruit

and *salap* trees, cultivable land etc. Those who do not have the means to repay the loan serve as bonded labours of the Sahukar till final repayment of the loan. It may be noted here that almost all loaners depend on their Sahukars for their survival as well as for various social obligations. Since the loans are seldom used for productive purposes, the Sahukars collect his recovery installments in shape of grains as well as cash while the loanee remains in debt for ever more often leading to debt bondage. The Bonded laborers remain ever exploited even over generations by their Sahukars.

Cosmo Vision:

In the remote past the Bonda highlanders had relations with the royal family of Nandapur, who later shifted their capital to Jeypore. During the *Dasara* festival, the *Naik* of Mudulipada and headman of the *barjangar* group of twelve Bonda villages accompanied by the *Mandra* of Dantipada used to participate in the celebrations at Jeypore with some gifts (*bheti*) of rice, millets, two cocks and a goat to the royal family. Both of them were honoured by the gift of one *patapagadi* each as an insignia of royal patronage to the Bondas. The royal symbol *Patkhanda*, the supreme deity kept on the banyan tree in the sacred grove at Mudulipada village is propitiated immediately after the return of the *Naik* and *Mandra* from Jeypore.

Bonda highlanders are less affected by the march of civilization because of their isolation from the outside world. However, some Bondas have the experience of working in tea garden in Assam and Manipur. Further, quite a good number of them have the experience of even life imprisonment or remaining in jail during the period of trial due to the high incidence of homicide in their community and have gained some idea about the world outside.

Dependency on Nature:

The Bondas primarily depend on natural resources, like forests and forest products including trees, flora and fauna, perennial streams, land including hill slopes for carrying on their age old traditional form of swidden cultivation, up and dry land and well irrigated terraced rice fields, hunting and fishing from the perennial streams for their existence. The community, lineage/clan groups and individual families control the resources. The entire village territory with traditional boundary is under the control of the village community. The hill slopes, where they practice swidden/shifting cultivation belong to the lineage groups/clans. The backyards, some up and dry lands and terraced rice fields belong to individual families. Traditional ownership is inherited by the clan or family. However in some cases, swidden plots are owned and inherited by the individual family. These resources like lands, trees are highly valued as a bank balance and a portion of it can be mortgaged by an individual family/lineage, group or village community to meet contingencies like consumption, social obligations such as payment of bride price, expenses for marriage and funeral rites, treatment for injuries and for court cases for committing murder etc.

Indigenous Knowledge:

The economic activities, social obligations and religious rites of the Bonda combined in a coherent and dignified way of life is well suited to the people living at this stage in such remote hills only with the availability of natural and material resources. They are adept in providing for their own wants on food, shelter, clothing and primary health care and are an unusually self-sufficient community. For food they mainly depend on agriculture and forest products. They practise slash and burn swidden cultivation on hill slopes, raise various millets, pulses, oil seeds, vegetables almost in a mixed cropping pattern in the first year of the clearing of the hill slopes, follow crop rotation in following two years and allow the patch to remain fallow for vegetative recuperation after the third year. In the foothills, dry and up lands, they cultivate the land with bullock driven rudimentary wooden ploughs and raise various crops following mixed cropping and crop rotation methods. In the well-irrigated terraced rice fields they raise varieties of scented and fine rice of longer duration by raising seedlings and transplantation in the field after proper puddling and leveling. In the backyard kitchen garden they raise maize, beans, cowpea and pumpkin in the rainy season followed by chili, tobacco, tomato, brinjal etc during the winter with the residual moisture. Tree crops such as jackfruit, mango, papaya, banana, *jafra* (seeds producing edible colour having commercial importance and sago palm and sometimes forest crops like bamboo are planted by individual farmers in their backyards. Manures like cow dung and compost are applied in the backyards and sometimes in the dry and up lands. They also allow the paddy straw to rot in the paddy fields to add fertility to the soil. To protect the standing crops in the backyards against cattle dry stonewalls are built and sometimes live fencing with sisal and other indigenous species are done. Stone bonding on the hill slopes, terracing in the streambeds and leveling of paddy fields are done to add/retain soil fertility and check soil erosion by rainwater.

By experience they know the capability of land or soil and accordingly grow different crops as per the suitability of soil, water retaining capacity etc in different seasons and climatic situation. To maintain fertility they practice crop rotation, cropping sequence allowing fallow period in the cropping cycle of swiddens. To avoid the risk of climatic failure they practice mixed cropping on hill slopes/swiddens and up lands. They raise chilly and tobacco and winter vegetables in the backyards after harvesting maize in the rainy season by utilizing the residual moisture. Their skill and knowledge in terracing and leveling the streambeds for rice production by raising seedlings and transplantation is really unique. They have the knowledge of transplantation of paddy in the terraced valleys during summer before the onset of monsoon so that the paddy plants can grow and withstand the flood water after rain sets in.

The Bonda know the art of wine making. For drinking and cooking, water is collected from the nearby stream. Liquor is distilled from fermented *mohua* flower, mango and jack pulp, banana, molasses etc and beer is brewed from

cooked corn/millet. The juice of sago palm tree is also taped, collected and boiled before drinking.

For shelter they select dry and up land either on hilltops or foothills and construct low thatched houses with mud walls to protect themselves from the rain, cold and the heat of summer. For clothing the women are expert and skilful in weaving traditional short skirt that they weave with their traditional loom and mill made coloured yarn.

The *Dissari* the traditional village medicine-man-cum-astrologer knows the utility of some herbs and plants for curing different diseases found in the area.

While collecting various forest products they always try to give scope for natural regeneration of different species. There are patches of bamboo and other forest, which are not over exploited by them.

Gender Issues:

In the Bonda society, division of labour among sexes and among different age groups of the same sex is followed according to their tradition. Men and women share various activities. Men usually undertake arduous and more risky jobs like cutting the trees to clear the forests for swidden cultivation, watching the standing crops in the night, ploughing the agricultural fields, hunting in the forests, tapping the juice of sago palm tree, climbing the jackfruit trees for plucking fruits, collecting bamboo and other household materials etc. Both men and women together work in the fields for sowing, spading and weeding, harvesting and threshing, storing, lifting various productions to the market for sale/barter. While Bonda men undertake harder works, the women work for longer hours, right from the dawn to the dusk. Women grind and husk the grains, fetch water from the spring, cook, take care of their babies in addition to working in the hill clearings, terraced paddy fields and collection of fuels, fruits, edible roots and tubers, bamboo shoots, mushrooms, leaves etc from the forests, catching fish and crab from the springs and weaving their loin cloth with the help of their traditional loom and sale of their products in the weekly markets. Women contribute significantly to the family income and control the expenditure and manage the establishment of family.

The adult male members of the family participate in the socio-political, socio-religious activities in the village. They also take part in the village council and religious performances at the community level.

The main issues related to the Bonda men is their bad temper, revengeful attitude, excessive freedom and drinking habit which lead them to commit homicide and spend most of their life time in jail for murdering the opponent.

There is high incidence of vulnerable widows and women headed households and destitute children due to the high incidence of homicides.

Status of Bonda Women:

A female child is equally accepted as an asset by the parents. As she grows, she takes care of her younger brothers and sisters and assists her parents economically by working with them in the agricultural fields including terraced paddy field, hill slopes uplands and kitchen gardens. Besides, she collects edible roots, tubers, mushrooms and house building materials, fruits, broomsticks and firewood etc. from the nearby forests; catches fish and crab from the perennial streams; assists her mother in all household activities including taking care of the domestic animals and birds and bartering and selling of all marketable agricultural and horticultural crops, vegetables, forest collections and purchasing their necessities from the weekly markets in the foot hill villages and transporting the articles on their heads. Besides, in a well-to-do family she assists her mother in other transactions like advancing grain loan to needy co-villagers and receiving payment back and calculating the interest on advance. Her advice in the family affairs are given due importance too.

At the age of 12, before attaining womanhood, she attends the common unmarried girls' dormitory (*lingersin dingo*) where she interacts with her peers; sings; dances and spends the night with other mates of the village till her marriage. She spends considerably for a longer period in groups than a male child who usually gets married at an earlier age. As a maiden, she is free to move out and sing songs and dance with young boys from other villages who visit the dormitory. After marriage the groom's party pays bride price in the shape of two cattle and some cash to the parents of the bride. This system adds to the prestige of the woman. Her husband is penalized by her parents and brothers in case she is ill-treated. She is free to live without her husband in case, she is ill-treated or neglected continuously or the husband is found always drunken, lazy or extravagant without hearing her advice and counsel or if he is found impotent and in such cases she can remarry. No man can venture to outrage the modesty of any girl or woman without coming to grief and paying heavily.

The Bonda women are never considered inferior even though the society is male dominated or patriarchal. Moreover, her seniority in age, experience, the managerial skill in almost all household activities, affection, sacrifice and service to the family, her industriousness and hard work are supported by her husband literally. She has got considerable control over her household.

She is very simple and joyous having a pleasing personality. She is very conscious of her responsibilities and duties for the wellbeing of the family. Though she is illiterate and traditional, yet with her pleasing personality and affectionate tone she is able to intervene and can bring reconciliation between two warring individuals/groups.

In spite of the above the Bonda women are not traditionally permitted to inherit their share of the parental property nor they can own the landed property of their deceased husbands if they have no male child. Very often the woman is

threatened and compelled to marry a boy much younger to her in age against her will to save her parents and other family members. There are a number of instances where a woman is forcefully captured by another man while her husband is in the jail either serving sentence or under trial for committing murder or any other crime. These destitute women feel helpless as the traditional social systems sometimes fail to provide adequate means of support or protection.

Development Intervention:

During the Fifth Five Year Plan (1974-79) under the newly emerged Tribal Sub Plan (TSP) approach, the Bonda Poraja was identified as a Primitive Tribal Group (PTG). For improving socio-economic condition of the Bonda highlanders (the Hill Bondas) the Government of Orissa with the assistance of Government of India started operating a Micro Project named as Banda Development Agency since May 1977 at Mudulipada which concentrated its activities under the following three broad areas:

1. Family oriented income generation from agriculture, horticulture, land development, animal husbandry and fishing and allied sectors, release and rehabilitation of Bonded Laborers etc.
2. Human resources development such as establishment of non-formal education centers, awareness generation through exposure, audio visual aids, medical care and drinking water facilities etc.
3. Infrastructure development including construction of interior village roads, staff quarters, establishment of a Large Sized Multipurpose Cooperative Society (LAMPS) and administration.

As a result of the development interventions of the Bonda Development Agency, various departments of the Government and some Non-Government Organizations including ASRA since 1983, there have been spread of education, awareness, wider exposure and interaction with various change agents and others communities outside their country.

The Bonda has taken up various high yielding crops by utilizing natural resources including underground water through dug wells. More and more lands are reclaimed, terraced and developed for settled agriculture. Some of them have successfully taken up cultivation of horticulture plants like lemon, orange, litchi, banana, new vegetables such as tomato, beans, brinjal, potato crops and other off-season vegetables and spices such as ginger, cardamom, black pepper. Cashew plantation has been gaining popularity in the denuded swidden fields on hill slopes.

The following observations of Prof. Haimenderf (1981) substantiate the above success story. "It is to the credit of the Government of Orissa that this ancient aboriginal tribe has been protected from the incursions of outsiders and is being enabled to persist in its ancestral life style. This respect for the values and tradition of this remarkable people is being combined with an imaginative policy

of improving the economic base of Bonda life by the introduction of improved varieties of crops and the active encouragement of horticulture and the cultivation of vegetables previously unknown to the Bondas. New method of land use and the utilization of natural resources of water promise to increase the yield of the land and thereby facilitate the production of surplus, which will enable the Bondas to hold their own in the market economy of the adjoining low lands. I greatly admire the diplomatic skill with which the project Leader Sri Sahu is convincing the Bondas that the adoption of new agricultural methods and some changes in their economic priorities need in no way disturb their life style and will ultimately benefit them and their children. Visiting in his company some of the Bonda villages I could see clearly that he and his staff have been able to gain the confidence of the Bondas. This is a no mean achievement in the first stage of the project, which inevitably confronts the local tribal with many new ideas."

The Agency gave priority in spreading of education and generation of awareness among the Highlanders as hardly any Bonda children attended the village Primary School, although there were already eight Primary Schools run by Education Department and one Residential Sevashram run by the Tribal Welfare Department at Mudulipada. Language was the greatest problem for interaction and communication with the Bonda people. Only those male persons serving sentence in jail, under trial booked or under criminal offence get an opportunity to learn speaking in Desia-Oriya while interacting with fellow jail inmates. Hardly any Bonda women knew the language of the neighborhood. An innovative programme was introduced in opening Non-Formal Education (NFE) centers by posting Lady Teachers or husband-wife team as teachers in different N.F.E. centers. They lived with the villagers, learned Remo language from them, talked to them in their language, gained their confidence and taught them and their children to speak in Desia-Oriya. Besides imparting Pre-Primary Education to children and Citizenship Education, they also created awareness for better health care, sanitation, evil effects of drinking and motivated elders including women for effective co-operation, participation and involvement.

It may not be out of place to mention here that now the parents and children have been showing interest for education. There are already two High Schools including one for the girls run by ST & SC Development Department at Mudulipada and a number of Primary schools by Education Department. Besides the above, about 100 Bonda children including 50 girls aging 5-15 years are reading in the KISS Tribal school managed by KIIT Bhubaneswar. Among them, one Hadi Dhangadamajhi, son of Mangala, village- Bandhaguda, of Bonda Hills has brought pride to the country by winning Championship in the International Rugby Tournament held at London in September 2007. Miss KajolSisa, granddaughter of released and rehabilitated Bonded Labour Shri Lachhmi Sisa of Bandhuguda reading in class IX in the KISS Tribal school is keenly interested for Computer education. Another Buda Batri, son of Sukra Batri, a released bonded labour from village Padeiguda is serving as a Primary School Teacher in the hills after passing H.S.C. Examination along with other educated Bonda youths.

The then Commissioner for Sch. Castes and Sch. Tribes, Government of India visited Bondas during October 16-20, 1984. His tour notes, communicated vide memo No.2768/HTW dated 19.3.85 reveals the following. "We were happy to note that the achievements of BDA were encouraging. Good works had been done in the fields of agriculture, horticulture and Non -Formal Education. We appreciated the dedicated service and right approach of the Project Leader Tangible results in the field of education in Bonda Hills had been achieved only by the Ashram School of the H &TW Department. The Primary Schools of the Education Department were reported to exist in paper only though teachers had been deployed and were drawing salary. All these schools may be placed under the control of the H&TW Department through Bonda Development Agency".

The women have become more responsive and change prone and self-confident. There is a change in their traditional outlook and a growing resentment against the practice of elderly women marrying boys much younger to them, shaving their heads and decorating with beads and grass *turabu* and putting on a very scanty self-woven cloth *nodic* around their waist and over loading their necks and hands with heavy mass of ornaments and beads. They have now taken up non-traditional occupation like service, weaving with improved looms, tailoring, hill broom binding with plastic wires etc for additional income. A number of Women Self-Help Groups have also been organized.

Boys who have attended schools are not keen to marry at an early age. The propensity of the youth to commit homicide has gone down due to spread up of education, knowledge in the neighboring language for interaction with the outer world and rising level of awareness among them.

To conclude, there have been remarkable changes in the quality of life of Bondas including their clothing, food habit and food preparation, dwelling houses, and health and keeping the village surroundings neat and clean. They are now conscious enough to discriminate between good and bad for them and counter exploitation boldly, accept change and participate actively for a better sustainable, prosperous and peaceful future with their improved and interpersonal relationship, if opportunities are made available to them. However, the need of the hour is to "train and build up a team of their own people to do the work of administration and development (Pt. Nehru)."

LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT IN SITU IN BONDA HILLS *

L. K. Mahapatra ¹

R. P. Mohanty ²

(I)

Development *in situ* Approach

When the case of development of the hill tribes practising shifting cultivation was discussed immediately after independence, many authorities wanted to bring them down the hills for their resettlement without giving any deep thought or importance to their social customs and cultural moorings. As a result, the noble idea behind the goal of making them settled cultivators for sustainable development often came to an anticlimax. Many of them simply bolted back to the hills. For many decades the shifting cultivators were being coaxed or coerced to come down to be rehabilitated in the forest or distant valleys below the hills. But in most of the cases, enough land was not available and the people, for a number of reasons, did not like to move to another ecological setting.

In this context the author Mahapatra, while working in 1953-54 among the hill Bhuyan people, noticed that in some of the oldest rehabilitation colonies like Daleisara in Bonai sub-division of Sundergarh district of Orissa (established to provide colony facilities along with agricultural land to shifting cultivators by bringing them down from the hill habitat) were met with limited success. Many of the villagers on the hill slopes or on the hilltops remained where they were. The only change was that some families of the old hill villages chose to come down and lived in the rehabilitation colonies. Some of them reverted back to their old hills. But all of them in the 1950's had retained their hill swiddens as a standby in case they decided to go back to the hills. (cf. Mahapatra, 1960).

Soon enough the scarce land resources in the valleys down the hills were no longer available for offering sufficient land for settled cultivation. But,

* Published in ADIVASI, Vol.XXXXVIII, No.1, 2008, SCSTRTI, pp. 1-17

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meanwhile, the swiddeners, who stuck to their hill villages since early 1950's, were reduced to destitution with famished bodies, because of semi-starvation conditions, as a result of the rigorous application of forest laws and forest reservation regulations leaving very little land around their revenue villagers in the hill slopes. This happened with greater impact since after 1980, when the Government of India adopted the forest Act and promulgated stringent measures towards forest conservation. Therefore, he has been claiming not only for the Bhuiyan but also for other hill tribes that if the Government of India had decided in the 1960's or even in the 1970's to rehabilitate the shifting cultivators *in situ* (KIS), that is, in their old hill ranges, crisis would not have reached such devastating proportions for the hill tribes of Bonai area in 1989, when he visited the area last (1997: viii-ix). He had pleaded for considering the actual productivity of swidden cultivation, which sometimes was higher in money value than the single crop raised in the hills. (cf. Mahapatra, 1990).

Similarly, Sachchidananda has also gone into the colonization schemes for resettlement of tribal swiddeners and notes that in Tripura, the tribal households bifurcated to take advantage of the colonization schemes for resettlement and at the same time to maintain the old way of life. The house in the colony was merely an additional shelter but not a substitute for their home on the hills. He finally concludes that the household was geographically bifurcated but its economy was the same (1983: 78-81).

Further Sachchidananda reports that failure of rehabilitation schemes is because of a number of factors. He says in certain colonies in Orissa, the tribals are engaged as agricultural and hired labourers, although the purpose of the colonization scheme was to convert them into permanent cultivators. This was not possible because of the "administrative inability to make available irrigational facility and other inputs in time. Agricultural programmes were not organised to orient the tribal farmers towards the agricultural practices with which he was not acquainted". In Bihar, he reports that when the Government wanted to rehabilitate the Maler or Sauria Paharia in the plains, there was a strong resistance and protest from the said tribe, as a result of which the Government had no other way than to abandon the scheme. The reasons as to why they did not like to come down the hills for resettlement for a better quality of life (QOL) are mainly cultural ones, which are analyzed by Vidhyarthi (1987: 335-36) in the following manner:

- (a) They are already well-settled in the forest economy and feared that they would not have the alternative means of subsistence in the plains;
- (b) Swidden cultivation is the pivot of their economy and their life, rituals and moral order revolve round it. They do not disturb the orders they set;
- (c) They believe that their spirits and *gossaisyans* are settled in and around the village on the hills which ought to be worshipped in the tradition of the hill culture;

- (d) The Maler have developed a pattern of social life including sexual behaviour which they think is possible only in their forest habitat;
- (e) Due to their historical animosity and towards the Santal, the Maler refrain from settling down in the valleys, dominated by the Santal;
- (f) The Malers have experienced the ravages of famine down on the plains but they could easily escape their devastating effects owing to their forest settlement. As a result they fear that if they go down they would have to face such famine situation in future too; and
- (g) The Malers look at any scheme of the Government with great suspicion, as they have received nominal or minimal benefit of the programme implemented for them.

This situation is also in no way different in Bonda hills, as their attitudes and life support woven around the forest ecology and economy are similarly conditioned. When the Bonda were asked about their view of being settled on plains for a better life, the following direct and indirect revelations came out as the culturally important constraints:

- (i) The Bonda people were having so many apprehensions in their mind, which some of their elites expressed in a counter question: why so and what is the need for settling in plains?
- (ii) They believe that the *Remo* (the Bonda themselves) are the first human beings who took their birth in remote past in their habitat, where they are their own masters. As a result, neither they want to leave their original place, nor like to settle with the outsiders in the plains. (Here, the question of dominance by the plains people, socially, culturally and morally, was at the back of their mind)
- (iii) They claim that they cannot move to the plains as there is no *biri* or swidden fields for growing some particular traditional crops, which are not only required for their own consumption but also for a number of rituals for their gods and spirits. Besides, these were also the main ingredients for brewing country liquors. Such liquor and spirits most often are required for appeasing of different benevolent and malevolent deities and spirits, which make their life comfortable and safe from diseases, epidemics and loss of production.
- (iv) They, of course, cannot bring down their forests, streams, hills, graveyards, etc. where their gods and goddesses, spirits and ghosts (of benevolent and malevolent nature) live. They cannot abandon them on the plains for their personal benefits. If they do so, the benevolent ones may become angry and malevolent and the malevolent ones may be even more destructive to ruin their crops, human and animal lives, village settlement etc. on plains.

- (v) The Bonda have some particular path ways, hills, trees, streams, etc. through which they go or cross, on their way to work; such secluded place is suitable for capturing a girl for marriage, catching a prey in the communal or individual hunting, or for gathering tubers, yams and *taro* etc. They also catch fish in the hill streams by blocking water. They then put a graphical question to the investigator: how they would be able to bring these physical surrounding to the plains to resettle in the rehabilitation colonies down the hills.

Hence, there is multi-faceted resistance of many hill tribes to resettlement or rehabilitation on the plains or away from their hill habitat. Two strong sets of problems are unsettling for them. The first one is the strong emotional, spiritual and moral attachment of the hill tribe to their habitat and way of life in the hills and forests, on which their life support system is based, and secondly, the administrative inadequacy and insensitivity in providing sufficient and timely life-supporting inputs for acceptable modes of income generation and for settled cultivation or any other viable means of livelihood.

On the other hand, one cannot leave the people to impoverishment, disease, malnutrition and destitution on the hills. So, it is imperative to rehabilitate the hill tribes *in situ* (RIS) if the local resources are regenerated, supplemented or optimally used for improving Quality of Life (QOL) after a thorough and scientific assessment of alternate ways of living without degrading the Quality of Environment (QOE). After all, for rehabilitation *in situ* of a hill tribe depending on cultivation primarily, availability of land, quality of land and land tenure system are the three important variables, basing on which a model for development *in situ* (DIS) can be devised.

Basing on this background and Bonda self-image, a Project on development *in situ* for the hill Bondas was undertaken in 1990-91 titled "Model Feasibility Survey in Bonda Hills, Koraput District, Orissa, for extensive Terracing and Alternate Land Use Modules for Rehabilitation of Shifting Cultivators *in situ*." It is found out that the Bonda were used to making terraces on the hill slopes through indigenous processes that required very arduous labour in the rocky hill terrain. Hence, through extensive terracing of their available suitable land and through the introduction of alternate land use modules, it is possible to maximum the output for a higher Quality of Life (QOL) in the hills. If such a scheme of rehabilitation *in situ* for the hill Bonda is found to be feasible, and successful, based on (i) scientific assessment of the local land, water and other resources, and (ii) identification of aspirations perception and choices on alternate land use modules and their preferred priorities and modalities of such development *in situ*, this scheme could be adopted as a model for other tribal swidden areas at least in Central and Eastern India, where land in the valleys or plains is extremely scarce for *ex-situ* rehabilitation of the swidden cultivators. (cf. Mahapatra, 1994).

(II)

The Hill Bonda

The hill Bonda are one of the most primitive and aggressive tribal people of Orissa as well as Eastern India. They numbered only 4,677 in 1961 Census which grew to 5,329 in 1971 Census registering a decadal growth rate of 14.13 per cent that was very low as compared to other Scheduled Tribes of Orissa. By 1981 Census, their population increased to 5895 registering a much lower decadal growth rate of 10.43 per cent. According to a recent study conducted by Bonda Development Agency in 1996, the Bonda constitute a total population of 5313.

These people are distributed in two Grampanchayats, namely, Mudulipada and Andhrahal, comprising 32 villages in Khairput Block of the Malkangiri district. All of these 32 villages are located on different hilltops or on hill slopes within the Eastern Ghat range at a height of about 3000ft. - 4000ft. above the sea level. The whole area is traditionally claimed by the hill Bonda as their own land or country, and covers approximately 130 sq. kms. These 32 villages are collectively known as Bonda Hills (Bonda *ghati*).

The Bonda or *Bonda Poroja* call themselves *Remo* meaning 'man' and speak a "difficult Austro-Asiatic language" (Elwin, 1950:1) known as *Remo Sam*, meaning human language.

They are self-sufficient and *allopatriic* in nature. Normally they do not like to come down the hills and keep contact with the plains people. They are even hesitant to come down the hills to avail of medical facilities at Khairput, a distance of 14 kilometers downhill through dense forests. (Mohanty: 1993:51)

The Bonda extensively practise swidden cultivation in hill slopes and paddy cultivation in terraces in the beds of the streams or in the valleys. They also largely depend on the forest for their subsistence.

Coming to their education one finds their literacy only 2.1 per cent in 1961, which was reduced to 1.4 per cent in 1971. It, however, increased to 3.3 per cent in 1981 (Patnaik and Choudhury, 1984) which has marginally increased to 4.2 during 1991.

Some of the most important features of the Bonda are:

- (ii) Rude and ruthless manner of expression;
- (iii) Spirit of independence and sense of freedom;
- (iv) Aggressive and violent propensities;
- (v) Excessive consumption of Sago-palm wine and other country liquors and homicidal offences;
- (vi) Unconventional dress pattern of the womenfolk;
- (vii) Dormitory organization;
- (viii) Declining growth rate;
- (ix) Extremely low level of literacy;

- (x) Primitive agricultural technology;
- (xi) Extreme sensitivity to personal slight, even among family members and kinsmen;
- (xii) Unique marriage institution i.e. marrying of younger boys to adult girls.

To undertake the present development *in situ* project, four (12.5%) of the total 32 villages in two micro-watershed areas were selected for socio-economic studies and conducting group interviews of villagers in these villages to know about their aspiration preference, choice of occupations and alternate land use patterns that may provide a higher quality of life for them. Apart from this, scientific study by different natural scientists like Hydrologists and Geologists, Soil Chemists, Botanists, and Agronomists was conducted in the whole of the two micro-watershed areas extending from Andrahal, Dumuripada areas in the north to Kirsanipada and Banuspada in south and to Bandapada and Tulagurum in the west. Soils were tested at different places for finding out the suitability of different economic crops, groundwater availability and facility, construction of wells in weirs, crop rotation, soil conservation method, etc. The import of these scientific findings was not put before the village group to discuss the possibility of alternate choices on alternate land use measures.

Land Rights

Land is the basic and foremost basis of livelihood in the Bonda hills, whether the Bonda are swiddeners, terrace cultivators or both. But as flatter land is very scarce in the hills, where present, these should be shared, used and managed for raising highly profitable crops. Alternatively, more flat land has to be created by converting the gentler slopes into terraces. The Bonda is extremely jealous and excessively attached to his land and trees. He cannot stand infringement of his rights over land and trees. He has, therefore, come to value the record of rights or *patta* given by the government to the villagers. In the traditional mode of access to land such written records of rights were not known or considered necessary. The clans and lineages 'owned', controlled, managed and distributed the land resources. Nowadays the Bonda are apt to complain if distributed the land is not granted record of rights for their land. At any rate, without the understanding of land use patterns and the system of land tenure, no planned development can take place. Hence let us first discuss about the status of land records in the Bonda hills as follows:

- (a) That land survey and settlement operations have not been done for all the 32 villages.
- (b) That in many cases the settlement operations were found incomplete or defective in 1991, as;
 - (i) In some villages *gochar* or grazing land, cremation or burial ground, road etc. have not been provided in the settlement records;

- (ii) In none of the village land under collective or joint ownership and land under shifting cultivation was surveyed and recorded;
- (iii) Not all the houses of all the 32 villages have been given *patta* even for their homesteads;
- (iv) The small number of paddy terraces, which can be counted just standing at a slope, are also not recorded properly and the owners have not been granted *patta* for that;
- (v) The Bonda have constructed terraces even beyond 10° or 30° slope, but these have not been recorded by the Government and the owners have not been given *patta* for that.

In this context, Mahapatra had sought the Government's approval of granting owner's *patta* or Records of Rights (ROR) to all the tribal people beyond 10° slope upto 30° slope, up to which gradient either they have constructed terraces for paddy cultivation or they can construct terraces or cultivate otherwise. Such *rayotwari* rights have been granted in favour of tribal peasants in Kashipur tahsil of Rayagada district. The Government could develop agro-forestry or induce the tribal peasants to raise plantation of permanent tree crop beyond 30° slope and the local tribals should have usufructuary rights over the product.

Fortunately in early 1990s in Kashipur area of the present Rayagada district the tribals under the IFAD Project were provided with record of right up to 30° slope and usufructuary rights beyond 30° slope, but for the Hill Bonda it could not be implemented, as their land settlement operations were supposed to be completed by 1991. Mahapatra, while directing the Development *in situ* Project at Nabakrushna Choudhury Centre for Development Studies, Orissa, he wrote to the then Chief Minister about the need to grant record of right up to 30° slope to the hill Bonda. The Chief Minister, however, conceded the rights of the Bonda peasants to land cultivated beyond 10° slope in 1991. The Chairman, COATS, Shri P.M. Moahapatra, who was the Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister, was instrumental in bringing about the consensus between the Revenue, Forest and Tribal Welfare Departments; but the Chief Minister's order is yet to be worked out for the benefit of the hill Bonda people.

- (c) The land under swidden cultivation and the hill slopes are owned clan-wise and are parceled out among the lineages, which have, however, never been surveyed and demarcated clan-and-lineage wise. Apart from this, as mentioned earlier the lands used for grazing and burial ground and such other common property resources are owned communally by different clans or villages, but these have not been recorded as such. As elsewhere, whatever has not been recorded as privately owned has been mostly shown as government land, under the principle of *res nullius* or *eminent domain*.

As a result of this, it would be difficult to plan out any action programme relating to land for the common purpose of village or clan people. If the clan lands are settled in their names and *patta* is issued to the heads of owner clans and economic crops are grown under development *in situ* approach, there may be competition among different clan groups for adopting these crops and to take advantage of the scheme.

Fortunately, the Panchayat (extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996, extending the provision of Part IX of the constitution, provides *inter alia* that the Gram Sabha “shall be competent to safeguard and preserve the tradition and customs of the people, their cultural identity, community resources and the customary mode of dispute resolution” and the Bonda must be enabled to derive the benefits.

- (d) Hills or swiddens though owned and occupied by clans are cultivated by individual households as demarcated by the clan elders. When a clan has plenty of land at its disposal, its members are free to cultivate any amount of land depending upon their needs and available work force. Thus, a household may cultivate a piece of his clan land for a number of years continuously, but cannot claim ownership rights over the cultivated patch or right of use when shifted elsewhere.
- (e) Even though the hills are owned clan-wise the right of control and management of paddy terraces is held by individual households, and this right is also inheritable by descent. However, there are some common lands meant for the communal purpose which are owned exclusively by the clan.
- (f) The land survey and settlement rules do not provide for recording of these rights. Tree ownership rights are so jealously enforced by individual owners that murders committed for infringement of these rights are very often the highest in number in most villages in Bonda hills. Hence the rules should be modified keeping tree ownership in tribal areas in mind.
- (h) The traditional community leaders, *Naik* (clan headman of the dominant founder clan) who heads the village, *Sisa* - village priest (clan head of the *Sisa* clan) and Chalan or hereditary assistant to the village head are entitled to some special land beyond what they own or use as members of their clan. This special land consisting of swidden and wet terrace land for the official position, change hand when the incumbent is succeeded by another. Even, a blacksmith (a Telugu in origin), who was sponsored by the villagers of Badapada, several decades ago, had been allotted swidden (*biri*) and wet terrace land as inducement to settle in the village to serve a number of villages. Every household contributes some portion of their harvested crops to the blacksmith. These traditional rights have to be recorded in order to maintain the polity and moral economy.

- (h) At the seminar, the Hill Bonda Sarapanchs and other young people who participated were very much interested in securing individual *patta* rights over all types of land without giving much importance to the clan or lineage rights. But further study and consultation with a larger body of senior Bondas must determine to what extent such collective rights in land and other common property resources may be restricted or adopted otherwise to meet the changing ecology and government regulation, without contravening the Panchayat (Gram Sabha) powers as given under (c).

(III)

Land Use

The whole of upper Bonda areas have been surveyed in 1975 and 1989 through satellite imagery or aerial photo mechanisms. Looking at the table below, it may be found that in 1989, out of the total 35910.25 hectares of land only 85 ha. is built up, i.e. under village settlement (ca. 0.24% of the total area). The agricultural lands under *jhola* cultivation, terrace cultivation and shifting cultivation come to 3.45, 1.48 and 16.73 per cent of the total land, respectively. The same table also reveals that 1853.25 ha. (5.16%) is dense forest and 5174.25 ha. (14.41%) is open forest. Plantation is very low, covering only 3.50 ha. or 0.01 per cent. But waste land including barren rocky area and hills with shrub/grass cover together constitute about 58.47 per cent of the total area. Hence, cultivable land with sufficient soil cover is very scarce in Bonda land.

When a comparison is made between 1975 and 1989 findings, out of the total 35910.25 ha. of land of the whole Bonda area, in 1989 village settlement has increased by 5 ha. or 6.25 per cent. wet terraces by 23 ha. (1.89%), dry terrace by 58.25 ha. (12.26%), plantation by 3.5 ha. (100.00%), groves by 20 ha. (533.3%) and barren land by 2790.75 ha. (97.59%). On the other hand, dense and open forests have decreased by 16.75 ha. (0.90%) and 63.25 ha. (1.21%) respectively. Hills with shrub/grass cover have also decreased by 4851 ha. (21.48%).

Thus, the following satellite data suggest that during the lapse of 14 years two important land use classes have increased rapidly, i.e. shifting cultivation and barren rocky area, which is mainly due to the interference of human beings who cut more and more forest for swidden cultivation, erosional factors and other such activities. At the same time forest land, i.e. dense forest, open forest and waste land (hills with shrub/grass cover) have decreased. However, *jhola* and dry terraces have marginally increased during this period, that only 23 ha. of irrigated terraces and 58.25 ha. of dry terraces, in total 81.25 ha. or 5.8 ha. per year in the average, have been constructed spontaneously out of their own resources, but it does not indicate their fast progress, unaided by the Government in agricultural development.

TABLE
Change in Land-Use Categories in 1975-89

Land-Use Class	1975 Area inhect.	% age of total area	1989 area in hectares	% age of total area	Change in & use inhect.	Change in % of total area of 1975
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Village	80	0.22	85	0.24	5	6.25
Jhola (Stream and terrace) Cultivation	1217	3.39	1240	3.45	23	1.89
Dry Terrace Cultivation	475	1.32	533.25	1.48	58.25	12.26
Shifting Cultivation	3979	11.08	6009.25	16.73	2030.25	51.02
Dense Forest	1870	5.21	1853.25	5.16	-16.75	-0.90
Open Forest	5237.50	14.58	5174.25	14.41	-63.25	-1.21
Plantation	0.00	-	3.50	0.01	3.50	100.00
Groves	3.75	0.01	23.75	0.07	20.00	533.33
Hills with shrub/grass cover	22581	62.88	17730.25	49.37	-4850.75	-21.48
Barren area	467	1.30	3257.75	9.10	2790.75	597.59
Total	35910.25	100.00	35910.25	100.00	-	-

Source : Mahapatra & Mohanty, 1997

But this is indeed, a seal of their commitment and determination to reduce the difficult terrain into terraces for permanent cultivation. In view of extreme scarcity of suitable flat land, only members of the founder or dominant clans get an opportunity to have terrace constructed by investing a lot of manpower, even over generations. On the other hand, the significant increase in shifting cultivation area shows that the Bonda do not find any other suitable alternative to absorb the natural population growth and the lower yield of cultivation due to bringing more of marginal land under shifting cultivation under privation threat.

The Bonda have traditionally five types of land, which are cultivated for different crops. These are;

- (a) Swidden or *Biri* for shifting cultivation,
- (b) Hill slope or *Sine Liung*,
- (c) Dry terrace or *Rang SongLiung*,
- (d) Wet terrace of *Dak Liung*, and
- (e) Kitchen Garden or *Dingiabur*.

Swidden or *Biriis* that land where slash and burn cultivation is carried out with hoe; the hill slope or *Sine Liung* is the land where the same cultivation is done with plough. This land is ploughable as it lies on the gentler hill slope.

The dry hill terraces or *Rang Song Liung* are developed in hill depressions for paddy cultivation, usually above the source of hill streams. It is cultivated with ploughing and transplanting of paddy seedlings. The wet terraces or *Dak Liung* are those paddy fields constructed in the stream bed which are watered by perennial hill streams throughout the year.

The kitchen gardens or *Dingiaburs* are usually found near the households and are fenced with bamboo and other local fencing materials to keep away pigs and cattle.

Swidden Cultivation

Generally a steep hill slope is cleared for swidden cultivation up to the gradient the cultivator can negotiate. Hence a cultivator often clears a swidden patch from the middle of a hill to its top depending upon the availability of unused forest growth.

For swidden cultivation generally a patch is cultivated for three years and then abandoned for about 3-15 years depending upon the quality and availability of land. In the first year of cultivation millet (*same*) is mainly produced with minor crops of pulse varieties, like *widar*, *gibegangmusri* etc.

In the second year of cultivation *Suan* or *Rigdar*; a poor millet crop is raised with all the pulses or beans grown in the first year. In the third year of cultivation *Suan* is again grown as the main crop and the minor crops of this year includes other pulses like *Khankadaki*, *blackgram*, besides *gibegang*.

Hill-slope Cultivation

As in swidden cultivation, gentler hill slopes are also cultivated for three years and then abandoned for 3-15 years for regaining fertility of soil. In the 1st year of cultivation sesame or *alsi* oilseed is mainly produced, followed by millet or *Same* in the second year and *Suan* or *Rigder* in the third year as the main crops. In the second and third year of cultivation *khankadaki*, *gibegang* and black gram are produced as the minor crops. But in the first year of cultivation no minor crop is produced apart from the main crop of oilseed *alsi*.

Terrace Cultivation

In the dry and wet terraces, they produce indigenous varieties of paddy that take more than 8 months to mature. They do not raise any other crop in the terraces, as according to them, crops other than paddy would debase the sanctity of the land. It would also affect the productivity of the prized paddy crop.

Cultivation in Kitchen Garden

The Bonda traditionally grow maize in large quantity in their kitchen garden, which helps them to starve off hunger in the lean season. Other traditional crops grown here include tobacco, arum, pumpkin and other vegetables. However, due to repeated persuasion of the Bonda Micro Project, some Bonda households of villages near the headquarters of the project, were also growing potato, tomato, brinjal, ladiesfinger, cabbage, cauliflower, radish, turmeric, ginger etc. in the late 1980's. But they do not sustain it for long when there is slackness of efforts by the Micro Project.

(IV)

Productivity and the Problems of Life

We have noted above how the shifting cultivation has increased in extent in the hills as known from the barren and rocky areas extending considerably over the last one and half decades to an alarming stage. But area under terrace cultivation has increased very marginally. Even though the Bonda cultivate more and more land under swidden as well as settled cultivation in the hills, the income they derive from cultivation along with other sources is found to be very meager and insufficient for leading a comfortable life.

(1) The study conducted by the authors in 1997 reveals that the average per household per income comes to Rs.1701.02 (Non-saleable consumed non-timber forest produce has not been taken into consideration for computing the income). Hence, most of the households are below the poverty line and belong to destitute category.

(2) As a result of this, loans are taken for meeting costs of social obligations and life cycle rituals (29.03%), subsistence (27.42%), treatment of diseases (20.97%), fair and festivals (6.45%), agricultural improvement (6.45%) customary fines for antisocial activities (4.54%) and for expenses associated with crime and prison sentences (4.54%), incurred by members of the household.

(3) Loans are contracted at 50 per cent compound interest in cash loans and 100 per cent compound interest in loan in kind. Hence, as the interest is compounded at the very high rate, it becomes highly impossible for the Bonda to repay the loan in time. As a result, usually the defaulting Bonda becomes a bonded labour under the creditor. It is found that on an average 6.55 per cent of the household heads per village have become bonded labourers for not being able to repay the loan. The fact that bonded labourers serve only the Bonda creditor-masters does not relieve their misery.

(4) On an average 25.31 per cent of households are under debt and the average amount of loan comes to Rs.388.06 per household, which is almost one fourth of the average per annum income per household.

(5) As the Bonda are found to be very poor, they spend about 70 per cent (i.e. 69.95) of the total income on food alone and more than 86 per cent (86.4%) of their total income on both food and drink and narcotics and hence can hardly meet their expenditures like clothing, health, education etc.

The problems of the Hill Bonda largely arise from the constraints of their habitat, but also substantially from their culture and social imperatives and stressed by lack of education and awareness of acceptable & available alternatives.

(V)

Inventory of their Resources

The important scientific findings on land, geology, geomorphology, soil etc. of the upper Bonda regions basing on which action plan could be formulated are as follows:

(1) The upper Bond region is a part of the Eastern *ghats*. Therefore, the rock types mainly belong to the khondalite group consisting of khondalite, quartzite and basement granites. The extensive weathering of the lithic units later gave rise to the landforms such as buried *pediplains*, valley fills etc. Due to weathering and leaching in khondalite regions, laterite cappings are formed on the plateau regions with some traces of manganese ore.

(2) The geomorphological features of the upper Bonda regions comprise five geomorphological units. These are as follows:

- (a) Residual hill,
- (b) Denudational hill,
- (c) Plateau,
- (d) Buried pedi plains
- (e) Valley fills.

(3) The soils of upper Bonda area are mostly sedimentary in nature. The drainage texture is coarse and the soils are permeable enough to allow a good infiltration. They are perennial to semi-perennial in nature and here the soils are mostly red in colour due to enrichment with iron. The soils of the denudational and residual hills are skeletal in nature and have little value for agricultural crops.

The soils of the valley fills are deep to very deep, poorly drained to ill-drained in the reclaimed gully land and low land terraced paddy fields. These are hydromorphic soils, developed mainly under wetland paddy fields.

The soils of the foothill region are moderately deep to deep which are mostly unbanded and at places are suitable for agricultural crops.

In flat-topped hills, like Andrahal hill, the soils are shallow to moderately deep, coarse, loamy in texture and red to brown in colour and are acidic in nature.

(4) The surface/groundwater was surveyed and identified for utilization in Bonda Hills for irrigation in the 4 villages studied.

Permanent ground and surface water is not very abundant in Bonda hills because of its undulating geographical and geological structure. The mostly perennial water streams in the valley regions are found at both the sides of paddy field terrace beds and finally meet broad water streams that run through Tulaguram and Andrahal valley areas. Though most of the streams flowing in this area are perennial, during summer the flow of water is reduced to minimal. Hence, it is not possible to use this water for agriculture purpose in summer.

From a ground level check on spot, it is observed that drip and sprinkler irrigation is possible from the available perennial water streams. If small dug-well like structures are constructed at both sides of the terrace beds and the water from such perennial streams is stored in it, then it is feasible. Otherwise, water harvesting structures could also be constructed at some sites mainly at Andrahal, Tulagurum, Badapada and Mudulipara. It is suggested that Water Harvesting Structures (WHS) can be made at Andrahal, Tulagurum, Mudulipada and Badabel and the water from such structures could provide irrigation facility to 15-20, 10-15, 20-22 and 10-12, acres of land, respectively. Apart from water harvesting structures at Tulagurum, a weir can also be constructed which would irrigate approximately 5-10 areas of land in the locality.

At Goiguda, it is not possible to construct any Water Harvesting Structure; rather the area is suitable for a weir, which will hold back the stream water. This irrigation facility may cover a total land of approximately 20 acres. (cf. *ibid*).

(VI)

Bonda Perceptions and Development Priorities

“The Bonda loves to make money and wants to have as much money as possible by the means he understands, manipulates and controls. If such *Rabi* crop yields good money, dry terrace farming in both *Kharif* and *Rabi* seasons, and even construction of dry terraces on large scale upto 30⁰ slope, will be within their reach. Fortunately, the Bonda people are already highly motivated to construct terraces on the hill slopes. But they are afraid that the terraces constructed with arduous labour and expenditure of time and loss of earning may not be recorded as their property with *patta* rights. This fear is well-founded, as during the last Survey and Settlement Operations, their cultivated land (not swiddens) only below 10⁰ slope had been recorded as their private property. The new dry terrace may be constructed even upto 30⁰ slope and the ownership rights for such lands should be easily conferred on them as in Kashipur Tahasil of Rayagada district.

Then only swidden lands upto 30° slope may be reduced to terrace in Bonda Hills". (Mahapatra & Mohanty, 1997).

Many of the former jail-birds, who are the opinion leaders and willing innovators, have shown their interest to take the jobs like *tailoring*, weaving of carpets, clothes and mats etc. This would be a successful programme for them as well as for the young Bonda boys and girls also. They are confident that they can take to these occupations as they have been already imparted training on these sectors during their imprisonment, (cf. *ibid*).

"Many people suggested that government should facilitate with further training and some inputs for preparing different liquors and spirits for marketing. They are experts in this and make money by selling *salap* palm wine in the weekly markets. But unless the production is controlled and channelized only to the market outside Bonda Hills this may lead to higher homicidal offence by making drinking of liquor even more widespread". (*ibid*)

Many of the former jail-birds suggested that they should breed animals like cattle, goat, pig, and poultry for commercial purpose among themselves as also in outside markets.

Most of the people suggest that bamboo cultivation can be done in unused or uncultivated hill slopes on clan basis. This produce may be commercially viable and the profit should go to the respective clan fund.

Bamboo cultivation on the higher slopes should be considered as perennial crop for the purpose of clan rights. On slopes above 30°, clan rights must be respected, not merely individual cultivators rights of use. Marketing of minor forest produce collected by women and children can be marketed through the Micro-Project. (cf. *ibid*)

Most of the people feel that as education does not provide any immediate economic benefit, there is no need for educating their children. This conclusion of the Bonda is culture-and-ecology based. The government may however seize this situation by organizing awareness programmes on the benefits of education and the diverse opportunities for educated youth. This may succeed in arresting the negative attitude of the Bonda a modern education.

Some pointed out that they do not like to educate their children as educated persons drift away from their own people and culture. Pride in their culture and heritage and the basic virtues of their traditional society should be imparted in the school system in order to curb the process of alienation of the educated Bonda. Some programmes like advanced agriculture and cooperative institution and accounting may be introduced to make education more ecology and tribal-friendly.

Many of the Bonda pointed out that sending a child to school means loss of an economic asset. Hence, they suggested that a provision should be made to compensate the loss by paying at least Rs. 5.00 per day per child, which is the usual wages earned by a child. This would not at all be discouraging in the initial phase. By doing this Government would spend only Rs. 1500/- per annum per Bonda child (for 300 days of school attendance). It is known that in the 1950's and 1960's there was the practice of giving such incentives to tribal families in Koraput district. This may be revived, and it will surely lead to retention of Bonda children up to High School completion. (cf. *ibid.*)

"It will be wrong to think that the Bonda are not convinced of the efficacy of modern medicine or of the medicine system prevalent in the plains. The Ayurvedic doctor at Mudulipara at the Government dispensary and the homoeopathic doctor of the local N.G.O. (ASRA) are visited by the Bonda for their ailments. Anti-malaria pills and other medicine for the care of the pregnant mother and the infant through the I.C.D.S. outlets are also accepted by the Bonda. This, however, does not mean that the Bonda continues to use the medicine for the entire course. Without check-up and follow-up action at the individual level, the use of modern medicine is highly problematic". (*ibid.*)

Even if the traditional leaders and traditional medicine may not be able to cure them, they still have boundless faith in their old system. This is very strange in the tribal world, where the tribal victims usually rely on the doctor's surgery and operations in such cases. As in the case of countries like Indonesia and Bangladesh and elsewhere, the traditional midwives have been reoriented in scientific procedure and health care. The traditional healers for serious cases of injuries and body damages could be given scientific orientation to treat them supplementing with traditional medicine.

Facilities for treatment with an additional Primary Healthy Centre in Bonda Hills with hospital beds with three specialists: one for surgery, one for medicine and another for gynecology and obstetrics will not only improve the healthcare and bring down child and maternal mortality, but also will arrest impoverishment of the Bonda. The Bonda patients and victims of accident have to be carried down the hills to Khairput or Koraput in serious cases. The relatives and the villagers must have been fed a sumptuous meal with beef or pork for which purpose cattle or pigs have to be bought or procured by raising a heavy loan with high interest. This has to be repeated again when the human carriers come back after admitting the patient in the hospital. The Bonda are very conscious of this process of impoverishment but they cannot think of any solution in their ignorance and isolation. (cf. Mahapatra&Mohanty, 1997).

Concluding Observations and Recommendations

In view of the existence of the poorest of the poor among the Bonda with land lost or mortgaged to other Bonda, or cultivating only swiddens (having no

terraced plots), or having been reduced to bonded labour status, there is need for development of the Bonda with social and economic justice. If the new terraces to be constructed, the poorest of the poor have to be accommodated by involving the counsel and wisdom of the clans representing the village population, as government subsidies, inputs and technical advice will be an important contribution in the construction process.

It is essential that every Bonda household should have terrace paddy fields in order to raise their standard of living. If the programme of development were undertaken to construct terraces wherever possible up to 30° slope in the whole Bonda region, there would be terraces for paddy cultivation in almost all upper Bonda villages. The present day landless and immigrant clan members may have more equitable distribution of land resources, which will surely enhance their quality of life, not merely their dignity and social prestige. (ibid, 1997).

“Unless and until the land question is taken up and resolved in line with the social and cultural institutions of the Bonda, there may not be any stable chance and viable options for sustainable participatory development of the Hill Bonda. This will effectively curb the efforts of disturbing forces from across the borders, which seek to breed fear, distrust and alienation among the Bonda as against the government and regional society of Orissa”. (ibid, 1997).

Specific Recommendations

(1) Patta right should be granted to the Bonda cultivators up to 30° slope instead of 10° slope. The Survey & Settlement operation in the Bonda hills be carried afresh to confer *patta* rights on the Bonda farmers for lands under swidden cultivation, terrace cultivation of any type, or any other cultivation upto 30° slope and for recording the rights over permanent trees. By doing this and providing inputs like implements and subsistence allowance for constructing terraces under technical supervision of soil conservation experts, there will be no need to persuade them to stop swidden cultivation up to 30° slope, as the Bondas are very much interested to construct terraces for paddy cultivation. Similarly, the land under occupation by specific clans may be demarcated and placed at the disposal of respective clans for redistribution or for common resource development.

(2) Fruit bearing trees and other useful forest trees like jackfruit, mango, tamarind, bamboo, *kendu*, *mahua*, *simili*, *asan* etc. on which the Banda are very much dependent, can be grown under social or agro-forestry above 30° slope in demarcated clan territories with responsibility for maintenance, use and development by the clans.

There can be an example of such clan-managed use/development of permanent tree or forest cover above 30° slope. As the whole Bonda area is

suitable for bamboo cultivation, this cultivation should be done in the unused or uncultivated hills or above 30° slope of the cultivated hills. It is interesting to note that at Chitrakonda, one notices that lakhs of bamboos are processed and sent to Rayagada paper mill but unfortunately, the local tribal do not get any benefit as the Government leases out the bamboo forest to the contractors. The profit on sale of bamboo must be handed over to the Bonda owners.

(3) “Although it may not be true in all cases of swidden culture that swidden cultivation is still a way of life, it is not to be gainsaid that the tribal swiddener strongly believes in supernatural powers and beings and their control over prosperity, health and misfortunes. Moreover, the supernatural powers and beings have been interwoven with the swidden operations, swidden crops and swiddener community as a whole. The priests and shamans in the communities still wield influence, authority and the power to sway the minds of the swidders. Usually they belong to dominant clans, lineages and well-to-do families and hold power along with the village headman, clan or lineage head. Their understanding, co-operation and participation in the processes of development *in situ*, as outlined above, must be sought, cultivated and sustained for at least a generation. Moreover, the rituals of the community, clan and lineage reinforce and sustain the solidarity of the groups and community as a whole. Therefore, there should not be a rupture with the symbolic-ritual nexus of the swiddener community”. (Mahapatra, 1994).

We may, therefore, “anticipate the threat to their cultural and moral uniqueness and continuity, if swidden cultivation and its associated rituals and sentiments are wiped out at one stroke. Hence, we have to reassure them at the proper stage of agro-technological development that their symbolic and ritual unity and integrity may be preserved by allowing each clan to cultivate one small patch of swidden every year for collective rituals and identity renewal.” (Mahapatra & Mohanty, 1997).

(4) They claim that even though double cropping is recommended for the Bonda cultivators, it is a cultural taboo for them. They assert that they worship the paddy seed in the annual *chaiti* festival before it is grown ceremonially in their fields. Since this festival cannot be observed twice in a year, they cannot go for double cropping. However, this cultural constraint should first be eradicated through awareness generation programme followed by demonstration of double cropping in some specific patches of some Bonda elite cultivators before double cropping is introduced for all. The seed-bed for raising the seedlings for the second crop, for example may be especially ritually sanctified by invoking the Bonda deities and spirits.

(5) The Bonda traditional technology requires collective labour with a number of plough cattle and ploughmen at the time of preparation of fields before transplantation of seedlings. The Bonda plough is a pointed one, and is not

suitable for turning up the soil extensively. For this reason a large number of plough bullocks and men churn the mud flat in Bonda hills. Hence, if such collective labour is not available for any reason, a broader ploughshare and changed technology have to be adopted to meet the emerging situation.

(6) Traditionally the Bonda rotate their traditional crops in the same patch of swidden and hill slope to raise productivity of the soil. Hence the Bonda cultivators can easily understand and adopt crop rotations for the non-traditional crops as will be suitable for the soil types.

(7) When the Bonda had adopted a difficult process of irrigation by Tenda system during 1980's, which was by their admission labourious and difficult work, they may easily adopt the recommended mechanical irrigation options. However, interest should first be created through demonstration and awareness programme.

(8) As out of their own interest some Bonda have planted banana, lemon etc. in their kitchen gardens, the cultivation of these crops could be easily developed not only in their kitchen gardens but also in hill slopes upto 30° slope as permanent horticulture.

(9) Majority of the old Bonda farmers opine that it would be difficult on their part to take up any modern job. Hence it is suggested that Government should take positive initiatives to train them on how to get maximum benefit out of their own traditional cropping practices. Most of them are at the opinion that once the marketing of vegetables is taken up by the Government, more and more of them would come forward to grow any modern crops for the market.

(10) As the Bonda generally love to breed cattle, pigs, goats and local poultry, largely as a form of wealth, also for selling them locally for sacrifices, the worldly wise jail birds and others wanted facilities for breeding them for commercial purposes. For this purpose, a veterinary stockman centre and livestock promotion may be organized in the Bonda hills.

Acknowledgement: The Project on the Bonda was conducted by NK Choudhury Centre for Development Studies, Orissa, under direction by Professor L.K. Mahapatra, field supervision by Dr. Manoranjan Acharaya, then Lecturer at the Centre, and field studies primarily by the second author of this paper Dr. Ramesh Prasad Mohanty of the Centre for Development Studies.

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PERSISTENCE AND CHANGE IN BONDA SOCIETY *

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No culture in this world is static. All cultures change; some with greater speed, and others in a relatively slow pace in different times and places. Culture change is rapid in complex societies than the primitive ones, since there are more alternatives. Cultures change through external contact, direct or indirect, and borrowing from other cultures or else by internal invention and development. While accepting the innovations and new cultural patterns from alien cultures, the societies carefully modify these in such a manner that they suitably fit to their own system. In this context, Barrow says, "A highly integrated culture may resist change. On the other hand, once new patterns are accepted in such a society, culture change may rapidly take place, with factional splits developing in the process. Vested interests and ideological traditions may either resist or encourage such a change." (1979: 388)

Among the tribes of Eastern India, Bondos are considered one of the most primitive tribes, due to their relative isolation with the outside world. They are by nature tradition bound and show a considerable doggedness in adhering to their own cultural values. Even after independence, for a considerable length of time, they remained confined to their own habitat and surroundings, except once in the weekend when they come down to plains with their produce to market it to the traders through barter. This was the only opportunity for them to be in touch with the outsiders.

Of course, on rare occasions, they were coming in contact with certain visitors who dared to visit their country with lot of inquisitiveness to know about them. Otherwise, for two reasons they remained mostly alien to outside world. Firstly, access to Bondo country was not easy for many years. The only route was the 13 K.Ms long *zig-zag* foot path and one has to climb several hills and pass

* Published in Tribal Customs and Traditions, Vol.1, SCSTRTI, 2009, pp.85-89

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through dense forests infested with wild animals to reach their picturesque valley. The other reason was nothing but some highly exaggerated and cooked stories about their violent behaviour and homicidal tendency which raised unnecessary suspicion, uncertainty and fear in the minds of general public that prevented them to visit their country. Bondos were, then, dreaded as wild animals. But, the other side of the fact is that, till this date, there is hardly any incident, when a Bondo has killed any stranger or visitor within and outside their country. Other factors, which favoured them to maintain cultural stability, are their limited number and confinement to one territory. They are very few in number and found only in the Khairput block area of Malkangiri district.

Agencies of Change:

Prior to independence, Bondos were not exposed to outside world at all. They were leading a secluded life within their own territory. Even, their neighbouring tribes, like the Gadaba and the Didayi with whom they have intimate relationship through ages could not be able to make any impact on them. After independence, Panchyati Raj system was introduced in the country and T.D. Blocks were set up in the tribal areas. The Block Headquarters located at Khairput covers the area inhabited by Bondos. The programmes of the Block mostly aimed at economic development of the tribe, but those had some impact on them.

During the Fifth Plan period emphasis was given by the Government for identification and development of primitive tribes in the country. This resulted in setting up of a Micro Project in Bondo area to look after their socio-economic development. This is the first Micro Project named Bonda Development Agency (BDA) set up for the development of a Primitive Tribe. The project, which started in the year 1976-77, has since completed more than three decade of its operation. Adequate funds, staff and autonomy were provided to the Agency for formulation and implementation of different need based socio-economic programmes to bring about all round development of the tribe and the area. Besides, one ITDA was also set up at Malkangiri covering a meso area, which also covers the Bondo country for implementation of developmental programmes. Prior to the establishment of the Micro Project, one Ashram School, one Ayurvedic Dispensary and one Police Station were functioning at Mudulipada. Among all the public institutions, the Sevashram School that was established in the year 1959 was the most important agency of social change. The establishment of so many public institutions brought many outsiders including the government servants to the Bondo country to stay there with their families for a longer period of time. These people in course of their stay and work became friends through their interaction with them and introduced innovative ideas among the native folk. Besides, those Bondo who have returned from Assam and jails have acted as agents of change. Further, the works of Christian Missionaries and Voluntary Organizations have also influenced the social life of the Bondo.

Change:

In spite of the influences of various alien forces, changes among the Bondo are not so remarkable as found among some other tribes of Orissa. Perhaps, this is the only tribe who has managed to keep their core culture almost intact in spite of continued outside interference and development intervention. Changes have come about at a much faster pace in their habitat and surroundings, than among the people themselves. The Bondo hill, which was once densely forested and rich with wild animals, has been completely devoid of vegetative cover due to repeated practice of shifting cultivation. There exists hardly any virgin forest except stray patches here and there. This has given rise to devastating consequences. Now the people have to cover comparatively more distance for collection of firewood, other minor forest produce and grazing of the animals. Extinction of animal fauna has also considerably affected the protein intake of the people. Further, environmental degradation has resulted in scarcity of water in the Bondo country both for the purpose of irrigation of low lands and drinking.

In recent year, the Bondo culture and economy have undergone transformation under the impact of external agencies and internal inventions. Changes are more conspicuous and striking in the economic front than social sphere. Due to the concerted efforts and extension work of the Government Agencies, of which the B.D.A. Mudulipada deserves special mention, some innovations could have been successfully introduced among the Bondo in the fields of agriculture and horticulture. Now, the people have adopted cultivation of high yielding varieties of paddy, wheat and potato. In the cultivation of *ragi*, many people are now following transplanting method in preference to their traditional style of broadcasting, as the former is found to be more economical and profitable. A few of them are now practising double cropping in the suitable patches, besides growing spices like ginger. The use and utility of chemical fertilizer and pesticides is no longer unknown to them. In the field of backyard plantation and kitchen gardening, many new varieties of vegetables have been successfully introduced. They are now growing vegetables, like cabbage, tomato, radish, and arum etc. The fruit trees, such as lemon, orange, banana, *lichy*, guava, *sappeta*, etc are now much popular among them.

Their social life, which is guided and regulated by their deep-rooted customs, traditions and values, has more or less remained unaffected from the modern trends of civilization. However, they have changed considerably in their attitude and outlook. An outsider is no more looked as a stranger and greeted with shower of arrows. They neither flee away to jungle nor hide in their houses on seeing him. Rather he is received cordially and all gather around him at *sindibor* either to answer his queries or to put forth their demand before him.

The Bondos now seem to have changed their outlook in adhering rigidly to certain customs and practices. In spite of their strong belief that their race would

extinct if the ladies do not remain half-clad and shave their heads, some parents have allowed their daughters to grow long hair and wear *saris* in some villages located close to Mudulipada. But when these girls will go to their in-law's house after marriage, they have to shave their heads and wear traditional dress and ornaments. Otherwise, they have to remain spinsters throughout their life.

Among Bondos, certain changes are noticed in their dress and ornaments over the years. The women of well-to-do families are now wearing ornaments made of silver and gold. Men, particularly of younger generation have started wearing shorts and shirts. In chilly weather they cover their bodies by woolen shawls. Those who have returned from Assam are even wearing coats.

Unlike the Kandha and the Saora, the Bondos are fortunate that they are free from exploitation by outside agencies. But their own men, the affluent exploit the poor. Although *goti* system has been abolished by law and there is provision made by Government for rehabilitation of bonded labourers, yet due to lack of awareness and fear of harassment by the employer, the victimized persons were not coming forward for help. But, now the situation has started changing slowly. Many bonded laborers have been made free and suitably rehabilitated. Although the practice is still in vogue, these incidents are becoming lesser day by day.

The patriarchal structure of the society is still intact among Bondos. Like that, the rules of exogamy, inheritance and descent have not changed. Due to the improvement of economic condition and rising of consciousness, marriage by capture is less frequent among Bondos than before; as such kidnapping of bride often leads to quarrel and conflict among two groups resulting in loss of human life. Some changes have also been noticed in their customary practice involving transaction of property. In sale and mortgage of valuable fixed assets like land, some of them particularly those who have some education, are going down the hills to make their document registered.

Education is not only a key factor to human resource development but also it induces individuals to accept innovations without much resistance. To provide facilities of education to Upper Bondo children, a Sevashram (Primary School) was established at Mudulipada way back in 1959 and after two decades of its existence it was upgraded to Ashram School (M.E. School). Finally, during the year 1988 it was promoted to a High School. The intention behind the establishment of such a school could not be fulfilled for many years, as hardly any Upper Bondo children availed such facility. But now the position has somewhat changed. It is quite encouraging in consideration to the fact that during the year of 1992-93 out of total enrolment strength of 231, as many as 131 belonged to Bondo community. More over in the meantime a residential Kanyashram (Girls M.E. School) has been established at Mudulipada to promote the education among

tribal girls. If this trend continues, some achievement in the field of education could be made in the future years.

Bondos have a very strong traditional political organization to manage their internal problems. But after the establishment of a Police Station at Mudulipada, the judicial role of the traditional village council is considerably weakened. Today all cases of murder and assault are reported directly to Police Station and the poor fellows are subjected to complications of modern legal system. Due to lack of knowledge about modern jural system and different penal provisions of modern law and shortage of money to fight such cases in the court, they have no other way but to remain helpless with lot of worries and anxieties.

The customs and traditions of the Bondo do not provide any scope for development of aggressive behaviour and homicidal tendency among them. Rather, it is their individualistic attitude to life added with such other factors as isolation, excessive drinking habit, practice of carrying deadly weapons, short temper, lack of endurance and patience, constant struggle with an unyielding environment that shape their character and personality to develop such an attitude in them. Otherwise, they possess many virtues and good qualities required to be an ideal individual in the society.

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BINJHIA | BIRHOR | MANKIDI | MANKIRDIA | BONDO

VOLUME-II

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COND | HO | KOL | KOLHA | HOLVA | JATAPU | JUANG

VOLUME-III

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DONGRIA KANDHA | KUTIA KANDHA | KISAN | KOL LOHARAS
KOLI, MALHAR | KONDA DORA | KORA | KORUA | KOTIA
KOYA | KULIS

VOLUME-IV

LODHA | MADIA | MAHALI | MATYA, MATIA | MIRDHAS | MUNDA
MUNDARI | OMANATYA | ORAON | PARENGA | PAROJA
PENTIA | RAJUAR

VOLUME-V

SANTAL | SAORA | SHABAR, LODHA | SOUNTI | THARUA

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ISBN : 978-93-80705-82-8