

Encyclopedia of Tribes in Odisha

VOLUME
V



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**

Volume V

Encyclopedia of Tribes in Odisha

Volume V

Editors

A. B. Ota

S. C. Mohanty

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

***Supported by*
Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India**

2021

Encyclopedia of Tribes in Odisha

Volume V

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: 978-93-80705-86-6

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.



Ranjana 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 61st 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 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.

This is our 5th and final Volume containing 71 articles on 05 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 starting from the alphabet 'S' (SANTAL) and ending at 'T' (THARUA) - the last one standing at Sl. No. 62 in the Scheduled Tribes list of Odisha.

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		
(58) SANTAL		
1.	S. C. Mohanty	Santal 1
2.	Harish Chandra Das	Santal 3
3.	K. B. Debi	Santal 8
4.	A. B. Ota, S.C. Mohanty & K. Patnaik	Santal 19
5.	Subash Chandra Karua	The Original Homeland of The Santals and Their Migration to Mayurbhanj: A Critical Analysis 29
6.	A. K. Das	The Santals : A Glimpse into their Life and Activities 36
7.	M. Acharya	Customary Law and Justice : A Case Study among Santals of Balasore District 55
8.	Suresh Ch. Murmu & Nilamadhaba Kanhar	Santal Durbar and Its Democratic Role 62
9.	Gulsan Khatoon	Indigenous Knowledge and Medicinal Practices among The Santals of Dhenkisal Hamlet of Kalinga Nagar, Jajpur District, Odisha 73

10.	<i>Nityananda Patnaik</i>	Concept of Panchamahabhuta and Santal Oral Tradition and Healing Practices	85
11.	<i>H. Samantaraya</i>	Man-Nature-Spirit Complex among The Santals	93
12.	<i>G. N. Mohanty & A. K. Moharana</i>	The Santal Therapy vis-à-vis Animal Based Medicines	105
13.	<i>Ramesh Mohanty</i>	Panorama of Santal Festivals : The Pious Beauty and Precious Sanctity	117
14.	<i>Gangadhar Hansda</i>	Shorae Festival	
15.	<i>Nityananda Das</i>	A Brief Note on the Practice of Witchcraft among The Santhals of Mayurbhanj	124
16.	<i>Siba Prasad Rout</i>	Witchcraft among The Santals of Mayurbhanj	128
17.	<i>Suresh Ch. Murmu & Jagannath Dash</i>	Nature-Based Olchiki and Santal Ethno-Nationalism	133
18.	<i>Shyam Hembram</i>	Sidu-Kanhu : The Santal Freedom Fighters	149
 (59) SAORA			
19.	<i>B. Chowdhury</i>	Saora	161
20.	<i>B. B. Mohanty</i>	Saora	172
21.	<i>A. B. Ota, & S.C. Mohanty</i>	Saora	184
22.	<i>U. N. Patnaik</i>	The Saorao of Ganjam Hills	195
23.	<i>U. N. Patnaik</i>	Saoras of Ganjam Scheduled Areas	202
24.	<i>Purna Ch. Swain</i>	Personality of A Tribal	208
25.	<i>N. C. Dash & P. K. Patnaik</i>	Comparative Demographic Analysis between the Traditional and The Hinduised Saora	212

26.	<i>B. K. Tripathy & Abhilash Nayak</i>	The Invariants in Saora Language : A Critical Discussion	218
27.	<i>U. N. Patnaik</i>	A Saora House	231
28.	<i>B. Choudhury</i>	Doripur : A Magico-Religious Ceremony for Curing Fever among The Hill Saoras	234
29.	<i>S. C. Mohanty</i>	Lanjia Saora : A Socio-Cultural Profile	240
30.	<i>B. B. Mohanty</i>	A Glimpse of Social Life of The Lanjia Saora	251
31.	<i>A. B. Ota, & S.C. Mohanty</i>	Lanjia Saora	260
32.	<i>Nityananda Das</i>	The Birinda of The Lanjia Saoras	269
33.	<i>B. B. Mohanty</i>	Material Culture and Technology of The Lanjia Saoras	275
34.	<i>Purna Ch. Mohanty</i>	Food Habit of A Tribal Community	282
35.	<i>R.V. Sarma</i>	Hunting and Trapping in Saora Economy	288
36.	<i>P. S. Das Patnaik</i>	Pattern of Indebtedness in A Saora Village	297
37.	<i>Nityananda Das</i>	Saora and Panos of Ganjam Agency (A Study into Social Inter-Relationship)	306
38.	<i>Sarat Ch. Mohanty</i>	Social Control & Traditional Socio-Political System of The Lanjia Saora of Koraput	314
39.	<i>R. P. Sarma</i>	Relational Structure of Sabara Women: A Multiplex Network Analysis	324

40.	<i>Tarini Patnaik & Sarat Das</i>	Saora Women: A Study on their Socio-Economic Status	333
41.	<i>H. K. Mahapatra</i>	Saora Riddles	341
42.	<i>G. Mohapatra</i>	The Saora View of 'Good Life' Happy Life' and of 'Development'	346
43.	<i>J. K. Panda</i>	Changing Saora Culture	366
44.	<i>S. C. Mohanty</i>	Stability and Change in the Customary Way of Life of The Lanjia Saora	369
45.	<i>Harihar Das & Devi Prasad Das</i>	Mutation and Permutation in the Culture Scape of PTGS	376
46.	<i>Anadi Mallik</i>	The Lanjia Saora: Aspects of Society, Culture and Development	380
47.	<i>Devdas Mohanty</i>	Institution of Family and Marriage among The Lanjia Saora: Continuity and Change	385
48.	<i>Rabinarayan Swain</i>	Trends in the Religion of a Tribe	396
49.	<i>Purna Ch. Mohanty</i>	A Tribal Market in Parlakhemendi Agency	401
50.	<i>P. K. Nayak</i>	Micro- Perspective of the changing frontiers of forest dependent economy: the Saora experience	406
51.	<i>S. C. Mohanty & P. K. Nayak</i>	Lanjia Saora Mode of Subsistence: Change and Development	413
52.	<i>S.C. Mohanty & B.K. Paikaray</i>	Impact of Deforestation on Tribal Life and Livelihood: A Case Study of The Lanjia Saora of Puttasing in Rayagada District of Orissa	427

53.	<i>S. Jammi Naidu</i>	Impact of Deforestation on Physical and Chemical Nature of Soils in two Tribal Village Ecosystems on Eastern Ghats of Orissa : A Comparative Study	458
54.	<i>S.C. Mohanty</i>	Study of Dropouts among Tribal Children	469
55.	<i>J. K. Baral & R.C.Sahu</i>	The Changing Pattern of Saora Leadership	524
56.	<i>N. Patnaik & H. S. Mishra</i>	Elections and Patterns of Leadership in two Lanjia Saora Villages of Guma Panchayat Samiti in Ganjam District	532
57.	<i>S.C. Mohanty</i>	Social Control, Tradition and Transition in Lanjia Saora Society	549
58.	<i>B. B. Mohanty</i>	Development of PTGS in Orissa: A Case Study of Saora / Lanjia Saora	558
59.	<i>P. K. Acharya</i>	Development of Primitive Tribal Groups in Orissa : An Evaluation	570
60.	<i>P. K. Acharya</i>	Tribal Development Through Micro Project	585
61.	<i>K. C. Tripathy</i>	ABO Blood Group of Lanjia (Tailed) Saora, Orissa	594
62.	<i>P. D. Prasad Rao</i>	Anthropometric and Finger and Palmar Dermatoglyphic study of The Soaras	597
63.	<i>G. N. Mohanty & A. K. Maharana</i>	The World of Saora Medicine: A Note on Belief System, Medicine & Medicineman	605

(60) SHABAR, LODHA

64.	<i>T. Patnaik</i>	Shabar	619
65.	<i>S. C. Mohanty</i>	Lodha	626

(61) SOUNTI

66.	<i>S. C. Mohanty</i>	Sounti	627
67.	<i>B. Chowdhury</i>	Sounti	629
68.	<i>B. B. Mohanty</i>	Sounti	634
69.	<i>A. B. Ota & A. K. Gomango</i>	Sounti	638

(62) THARUA

70.	<i>S. C. Mohanty</i>	Tharua	644
71.	<i>A. B. Ota, S. C. Mohanty & K. Mohanty</i>	Tharua	646

SANTAL*

*S. C. Mohanty*¹

Santal is the third largest tribe in India after the Gond and the Bhil. In Odisha its population as per 2011 census is 8 94 764 including 4 45 700 males and 4 49 064 females. Santals are found distributed mostly in districts of Mayurbhanj, Balasore and Keonjhar. They speak Santali, one of the Munda languages. They have developed a script called *OLChiki*. They are also conversant in Odia and Hindi languages.

The Santal settlements have parallel rows of houses facing the common street. In front of the house of Manjhi, the village Chief, they have *Manjhithan*, the sacred place and the seat of *Manjhi-haram*, the founding ancestor deity. *Jaher*, the sacred grove located in the outskirts of village is regarded as the abode of all Santal deities. The Santal build beautiful multi-roomed houses of definite artistic design having spacious compounds and courtyards. They paint the walls with different colours, mainly red and black. Roofs are either thatched or tiled.

Men wear coarse *dhoti* and *gamuchha* and women wear short check saris mostly of blue and green colour. Women put on tattoo marks.

The Santals are agriculturists. Besides, they work as wage earners, mining and industrial labourers. They also raise livestock.

They are divided into several totemic exogamous clans, *Paris*. Each clan is further divided into sub-clans, maximal lineages, *Bansa*, and minimal lineages, *Kutum*. The kinsmen, at the level of broad groups refer to each other as *kutumpele*, lineal kins and *bandhupele*, affines.

* Unpublished article of 2000 updated in 2020

¹ Former Joint Director and now Consultant (R&P), SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar

Marriage, (*bapla*) is a significant event in Santal life. The common types of marriages permitted in their society are by negotiation, by elopement, by intrusion and by service. They practise junior levirate marriages also.

They observe *Janam Chatiar*, purificatory ritual on the seventh or ninth day of birth, and *natyam*, name giving ceremony within one year. Death rites are observed within ten to twenty days of death. The bone of the deceased is ceremonially immersed in a holy river, termed as Damodar.

Sing Bonga, the Sun God otherwise called *Thakur* or *Dharam* is their Supreme Deity who is revered as the creator of the universe. Their important village deities are *Marang Buru*, *Monreko Tureiko*, *Jaher Era*, *Gosani Era* and *Manjhi Haram*. Besides there are a number of other deities like hill and forest deities, earth goddess (*Basumata*), ancestral spirits (*Hapranko Bonga*), household spirits (*Abe Bonga*) etc. Their festivals such as *Erok-Sim*, *Harihar-Sim*, *Janthan*, *Sahari*, *Magha Sim*, *Baha* and *Iri-Guldi-Sim* are associated with agricultural activities and eating of first fruits.

The traditional village council is headed by the secular chief, *Manjhi* assisted by *Paramanik*, the deputy chief, *Naik*, the village priest, *Jog Majhi*, the Moral Guardian, and *Gadet*, the messenger. At the inter-village level they have inter-village council called *Pirhaor Pargana*.

The Santal are very fond of song and dance that they perform on all ceremonial and festive occasions. They play musical instruments like *Tamak*, *Dhol*, *Bhuang*, *Sarangi* and flutes. Hinduization as well as industrialization and urbanization have brought about changes in their life style.

SANTAL *

Harish Chandra Das ¹

The total population of the Santal in Orissa, according to 1961 Census, is 411,181, out of which the number of female is 208,123 and male 203,058. The table furnished below shows the distribution of the tribe in different districts of Orissa.

Name of the Districts	Population		
	Male	Female	Total
Koraput	431	559	990
Kalahandi	18	22	40
Sambalpur	10	14	24
Bolangir	02	02	04
Ganjam	61	60	121
Sundargarh	861	1,401	2,262
Dhenkanal	927	856	1,783
Puri	98	98	196
Cuttack	1,237	1,154	2,391
Keonjhar	13,601	13,558	27,159
Mayurbhanj	168,151	172,176	340,327
Balasore	17,661	18,223	35,884
Total	203,058	208,123	411,18

It will be seen from the above table that Mayurbhanj district contains by far the largest number of Santal. Next in order of numerical strength is Balasore, etc. it may be noted that the four of the above mentioned districts are contiguous and distribution of the tribe in these areas is extensive.

Language

The language of the Santal, one of the oldest tongues of India, known as Santali, belongs to the Munda group, which according to P.W. Schnuidt, is a

* Published in ADIBASI, Vol. V, No. 3, (Spl. Issue), TRB, Bhubaneswar, 1963-64, pp.65-68

¹ Former Superintendent, Odisha State Museum, Bhubaneswar

member of the Austro-Asiatic sub-family of the Austric family. The Munda language with the exception of Kharia, Sabara and Gadaba, are generally grouped together under the common term *kherwari*.

Social Organization

The Santal people are divided into twelve patrilineal exogamous Paris or sibs, namely, (1) Hasdak, (2) Murmu, (3) Kisku, (4) Haembrem, (5) Marndi, (6) Soren, (7) Tudu, (8) Baske, (9) Besra, (10) Pauria, (11) Ceral, (12) Bedea. Of these the first eleven Paris exist today. According to their folklore, the first seven sibs are descended from the seven sons of Pilchu Haram and Pilchu Budhi, the progenitors of the Santal. The last five are later additions.

The main function of the Sib is to regulate marriage. An individual can marry into any other Sib except his own, and sex relations between members of the same sib are regarded as incestuous. Sib membership is patrilineal and a woman adopts the sib of her husband after marriage.

Every Sib is divided into a number of sub-sibs called *Khut*. The *Khut* functions primarily in the worships of family *bongas* or deities. The members of *Khut* have a greater sense of kinship and solidarity than siblings belonging to different *Khuts*.

The immediate family, headed by the father, is the smallest social unit of the Santal. It usually consists of husband, wife and children, though in many cases parents and married children continue to live together as a joint family. A person with an only daughter may take a *gharjowin*. Levirate and sororate are followed by tradition.

Village and House pattern

The Santal villages have a characteristic pattern. Every village consists of a long street with rows of dwellings on either side. A dwelling consists of one or more huts. The dimensions of the huts are generally 14' X 14' X 8'. Each dwelling has its cattle shed and pigsty. Inside the principal hut of each dwelling, a small space in one corner is set off by low wall. This space is reserved for family deities and ancestral spirits. The huts are without any widow. The walls of Santal huts are built of thin sticks plastered with mud. The roof has usually two sides, with a gable at each end and is thatched with paddy straw.

Material culture

The household furniture of the Santal is very meager. It consists of Charpai or bedstead, a few brass and earthenware pots for storing water, and a few bell-metal dishes. Wooden pestle and mortars and stone hand-mills are found in the houses. The technological equipment is simple. A wooden bar fitted with a flat piece of iron at one end is used for digging out roots and making

holes. The agricultural implements consist of the plough, clod crusher, pick axe and spade.

Hunting is done with bows and arrows. Nets and basketry traps are used for fishing. Besides bows and arrows the chief weapons of offence and defense are pallet bow, spears, battle axe and shields.

Dress and ornaments

The working dress of the male Santal consists of a small Dhoti, about 3 yards long and 30 inches broad. Women drape themselves with Saree, 5 yards long and 36 inches broad. They use very few ornaments. 'Hansli' a kind of necklace is a favourite ornament for the adult women though they invariably wear necklaces of beads. Heavy brass bracelets, earrings made of silver, silver anklets, bangles of various types are worn by the women. Both sexes are fond of adorning themselves with flowers and feathers.

Musical Instruments

The Tamak, a hollow cylinder of wood with one end covered with cowhide and the other end with goat skin, Madal, buffalo horn trumpet, bamboo flute are their main musical instruments. They also use a kind of string musical instrument.

Life Cycle

The critical periods in the life of the individual are marked by rituals. These are four namely, *janamchatar* or birth rite, *cacochaties* or rites admitting one as a full member of Santal society, marriage and death rites.

Janam Chatar is observed when the new-born infant is named. Name giving ceremony generally occurs on the 5th day in the case of a boy and on the 3rd day if the child is girl. The birth-rites have three-fold functions. It purifies the house and the village from the defilement caused by the birth of a child; it admits the child into the sib of its father; and it individualizes a child by giving it a name.

Marriage - The Santal name for marriage is *bapla*. Seven forms of marriage are practiced by them-

- (1) *Kiranbahu bapla* is the most common and respected form of marriage. It can be contracted only in the case of young men and women who have not previously married.
- (2) *Tunkidipil bapla* is resorted to by very poor people. There is no payment of any kind in this marriage.
- (3) *Sanga* marriage is contracted when a widower marries a widow or a divorced woman.

- (4) *Gharjwain bapla* is arranged by a person with an only daughter. In this form of marriage the bridegroom comes to live with the family of the bride.
- (5) *In Kiranjwain bapla* a husband is acquired for an unmarried girl who has been made pregnant by a man, who cannot or does not marry her.
- (6) *It ut Bapla* or marriage by force is rare.
- (7) Marriage by intrusion is practiced rarely.

Rituals of death: On the death of a person, the grief-stricken relatives do a lot of wailing. The corpse is placed on the funeral pyre and covered with a leafy branch. The eldest son of the nearest relatives takes a small stick, wraps it with bit of cloth worn by the dead person and after lighting the pyre with it turns his face away, everyone then throws a piece of firewood on the pyre. After the cremation a frontal portion of the skull are washed and placed in a new earthen pot. On the fifth day after death the remains of bone is immersed in the nearby river. Eleventh day is marked for death ceremony.

Religion

The Thakur, the Supreme Being, is the giver of life, rain, crops and all other necessities. Thakur is sometimes referred to by the Santal as Cando, Sin, Cando Bonga or Sing Bonga. All these names stand for the Sun God. Besides Thakur, there are numerous Bongas or malevolent supernatural beings found everywhere. Other supernatural beings include Sima Bonga, the deity of the village boundary, the Babri Bonga, the deity of the village outskirts, etc.

Thakur is usually not worshiped, though every Santal must offer at least one sacrifice to Thakur in his life time.

Economic Life

Santal economy is based mainly on agriculture. Forest collection, hunting and fishing are subsidiary sources of living. Three kinds of land are cultivated. (1) Barge or the land near the dwelling, (2) uplands, (3) rice fields. The most important crop cultivate near their dwelling is maize; beans, vegetables are also cultivated. The highland fields produce several kinds of millets. The rice is cultivated once a year. Fields are terraced and transplanting of rice plants is done in the rainy season.

Ploughing is done by cows and buffalos. Cultivation is dependent on rainfall. Both men and women take part in agricultural operations.

The Santals collect different kinds of forest roots fruits and tubers that are eaten raw or boiled. The forests not only supply the Santal with food, but also serve many other purposes, such as providing medicines, yielding wood and bamboo for building.

The Santals are very fond of hunting. They hunt any game available. Hunting is done only by men, who go in groups to the forest. Hunting may be formal or informal. Informal hunt does not require the presence of the Dehuris but in the annual tribal hunt, which lasts for three to four days the Dehuris must accompany the hunting group.

The Santa catches fish in rivers and ponds. For fishing they use nets, traps, bows and arrows and vegetable poisoning.

Food and Drinks

The generally eat twice a day. The daily meals consist of *daka* or boiled rice and *utu* or curry. They eat fish and meat when available. Domestic animals are killed on festive occasions. Meat of fowls, pigs, buffaloes, jackals, snakes, lizards, tortoises, crocodiles and some birds are eaten, but meat of dogs, cats and horses are abhorred.

The liquor of the Santal is prepared mainly from boiled rice, which they call *handia*. Liquor from Mahua flower is also prepared. Tobacco constitutes a basic necessity of the Santal. It is used in two ways. First a dried tobacco leaf rolled within a Sal leaf is used for smoking. Secondly, bits of dried tobacco leaves are mixed with lime, chewed and kept in a corner of the mouth.

Concluding Remarks

The Santals are well-known for their simplicity, honesty, straightforwardness, frankness and sincerity in thought and action. But it is regrettable that these virtues are disappearing as a result of culture change. Hinduism has brought appreciable changes in their culture. Hindu gods and goddesses have been introduced into their religious complex. In social sphere a noticeable change has taken place. The role of old occupations has changed, new occupations have been introduced. Growing indebtedness, loss of land has created acute economic problems, which demand a speedy solution.

SANTAL*

*K. B. Debi*¹

The forest-clad, undulating, hilly regions of the District of Mayurbhanj and adjoining areas of Keonjhar and Balasore Districts are inhabited by many Munda-speaking tribes, of which the most important and predominant community is the Santal. Numerically speaking this community is one of the largest tribes of Orissa. According to the 1991 Census their population in the state is 6,29,782. The growth rate over the decade 1981-91 was 18.65 per cent. Out of the total Santal population of 6,29,782 in 1991, 3,21,436 are males and 3,08,346 are females. The District of Mayurbhanj claims 75.27 per cent of the total Santal population of the state. Next to this district comes Balasore, followed by Keonjhar District, which had 11.56 per cent and 7.36 per cent respectively of the total Santal population. The Santal speak a language known as Santali which belongs to the Munda group of the Austro-Asiatic sub-family of the Austric family. At present most Santal can speak and understand Oriya. The Santal of Orissa never claim their present habitat as their original homeland. Rather they are proud of describing a legend which gives Ahiripipiri as their birth place and Chaichampa as their fort located somewhere in Bihar.

In the past, the Santal were nomadic in habit and used to wander from place to place in search of agricultural land. Some scholars link their traditional homeland with central India (Dandakaranya area). Later they came to the Chhotnagpur plateau and the adjoining districts of Midnapur and Singhbhum. At the close of the 18th Century they made their home in Santal Parganas. At present they are spread over a large tract of land within the geographical jurisdiction of West Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Assam and Tripura. They constitute one of the largest tribes in the country as a whole.

* Published in *Tribes of Orissa* (revised edn.), SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar, 2004, pp. 263-272

¹ Deputy Director, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar.

Most Santal settlements are more or less permanent in nature. But sometimes individual families shift their house sites when there is a scarcity of land around the settlements to feed their growing population. Outbreaks of epidemic or fear of witchcraft also make them feel the need to abandon the old house site for a new site. The Santal village consists of a number of households surrounded by agricultural fields and pastures. The villages are large, the average size varying from fifty to a hundred households. Many villages consist of a number of hamlets situated around the main hamlet. The villages are lineally arranged on either side of the road. Adjacent to each village there must be one common ritual place called *jaher* or sacred grove consisting of *sal*, *asan* and *nim* trees in which their village deities reside. The *manjhi-than*, another ritual spot in the village, is located in front of the house of the Manjhi, the secular headman of the village. The *manjhi-than* is the seat of the spirit of the founder headman of the village.

The Santal house may have a single room or a cluster of several rooms constructed according to the needs of the family. Some houses have compounds that are mostly square in shape, the huts being arranged on all sides. They do not have separate kitchens but use any bedroom for this purpose. Generally a separate shed is built for the cattle. In every house, towards a corner of the main room there is a sacred place known as the *bhitar*, a place for the ancestral spirits. In every house on all sides of the rooms there must be one verandah to keep husking lever, and provide sitting and sleeping accommodation at night in summer. The walls are made of wooden logs planted upright and plastered with mud. Roofs are gable-shaped and covered with wild grass, straw or *khaper* (local tiles). The Santal make beautiful houses and decorate their walls in different colours, with figures of human beings, flowers, animals and birds.

The household articles of the Santal no longer consist of their traditional materials like gourd containers, earthenware pots, leaf-cups and plates, etc. Instead there is a greater inflow of modern articles like aluminium and brass utensils, cooking pots, radios, bicycles, watches, etc. Their other household materials consist of some agricultural, hunting and fishing tools, musical instruments, baskets, broomsticks, string cots, etc. which they make themselves or obtain by exchanging agricultural products.

The typical way of dressing of the Santal distinguishes them from the local non-tribals. The men wear a rough *dhoti* or *gamchha*, and women wear green or blue check printed saris made by local weavers. Nowadays mill-made cloths are also used. Petticoats and blouses have become common items of fashion for young women. In the course of their close association with the local non-tribals, Santal women seem to be changing their taste for wearing ornaments. The traditional ornaments, which mainly consist of heavy brass bangles, anklets, armlets and coral beads, are now out of fashion. They attach greater value to plastic, glass and light silver ornaments.

The cicatrization mark on the arm of the male Santal distinguishes them from others not only in this world but also in the underworld. It is a universal practice among Santal to have cicatrization marks. But no ritual importance is attached to it. Tattooing is a common fashion for Santal women. They make tattoo marks of various designs on the arms, wrists and chests.

As regards their sanitary habits, they are very neat and clean. Every day they brush their teeth, take a bath and comb their hair. On weekly market days the women wash their clothing with soap or ash and comb their hair decently. The Santal women keep their houses neat and clean. Every morning they sweep the rooms, verandah and courtyards. Cow dung and other refuse is thrown away. Cleaning the floor of the house with cow-dung diluted in water is a part of women's daily routine work. Just before important festive occasions, the women clean the walls and paint them in different colours. They take care to wash their utensils every day and making them bright.

The Santal depend on rivers, streams and wells to obtain their drinking water. In summer, when the wells dry up, Santal women collect water from *chuha* or holes dug in the sandy bed of the river. Rice is their staple food all year round, supplemented by other cereals such as minor millets, wheat, etc. Vegetable, dry fish or pulses are eaten as side dishes. The Santal relish various fruits available in the area, especially mango and jackfruit, which are eaten both at the green and ripe stages. When Santal catch fish from agricultural fields or other water sources like rivers, ponds or canals, they have a chance to enjoy fish and dry fish. Domestic animals like goats, fowls and pigs are generally slaughtered on festive occasions for feasts. Occasionally the Santal catch birds, which also supply them with meat. Rice beer called *handia* continues to be the traditional drink of the tribe. Although *mahua* liquor and toddy are drunk, *handia* is the favourite drink. It is drunk when old friends and relatives get together at festivals and funerals, births, marriages and betrothals. Before anybody drinks it, *handia* is offered to the ancestral spirits on ceremonial occasions and also when it is brewed at home.

The Santal suffer from various types of disease such as malarial fever, stomach troubles, influenza, scabies, itches, etc. Malaria was hyper endemic throughout the area in the past. In the recent years the government has taken measures to eradicate this disease by introducing a malaria eradication programme. As a result, it has been controlled to a large extent. Incidences of leprosy, T.B. and yaws appear to be negligible. On the other hand stomach trouble and scabies are common due to the lack of safe drinking water, especially in summer. The Santal ascribe various causes, such as natural causes, supernatural agencies and witchcraft for their sufferings. For sickness they first refer to the Ojha, the village medicineman-cum-spirit doctor. By examining the symptoms, the Ojha diagnoses diseases and prescribes herbal medicine in the first instance. When this does not work he applies magico-religious methods to

detect the causes of diseases. Any type of chronic and serious disease is believed to be the evil effect of a spirit. Leprosy and *machhiapatak* are regarded as a social crime for which a leper is driven out of the village and the *machhiapatak* patient is out-casted temporarily until he is cured.

The Santal are divided into a number of clans known as *paris*. Regarding their origin they tell the following story. The first human pair in Santal tradition, namely Pilchu Haram and Pilchu Budhi, committed incest under the influence of rice beer, which Marang Buru, their high god, taught them to brew. Seven sons and seven daughters were born to them who again mated incestuously and gave birth to Santal progeny. To avoid further incest it is said that the descendants of the first seven pairs were divided into seven *paris* and marriage was not allowed among the members of the same pairs. The names of these seven *paris* are Hansda, Murmu, Kisku, Hembrum, Marandi, Tudu and Soren. Later on five more clans were added to the list, namely Baske, Basra, Pauria, Chane and Bedia. At present the Pauria, Chane and Bedia clans are not found in Orissa.

Santal clans are unilineal descent groups whose members trace their origin back to some common mythical ancestor. Usually each of these clans is named after some natural phenomena, animal or other object. Hansda means *hans* (duck), Marandi is a kind of weed, while Murmu resembles *murmu* (cow). Some observe taboos associated with their clan names: thus Hansda do not eat the duck or its eggs and the Murmu do not kill *murmu* (cows). Marandi do not destroy the *marandi* weed which grows in the fields in the rainy season. Except for these instances no taboo appears to be observed by other clan members in connection with their clan names. There is no totemic worship. The members of a clan are regarded as brothers and sisters, and as such marriage or sexual relations among them is taboo. But recently it has been found that the marriage is allowed between clan members. Each clan is again divided into a number of sub-clans, and marriage is prohibited among sub-clan members. Those who disobey this rule are generally excommunicated. Severe punishment is imposed upon them by the hunt council, the traditional supreme court of the tribe. The punishment known as *bitlaha* was prescribed for the culprit but this rarely occurs at present.

Each sub-clan is further divided into a number of groups known as *bansa*. *Bansa* members offer certain sacrifices at definite occasion to the Abge Bonga and have a greater sense of solidarity. All group members inhabiting nearby villages assemble in one place to worship their Abge Bonga every four or five years. They do not have any specific term for the lineage group. *Kutum*, an Oriya term, is used to designate lineage members. They are summoned to attend death, birth and marriage ceremonies. A close kinship tie and greater co-operation among lineage members are observed.

The family, their smallest social unit, is patrilineal, patrilocal and patripotestal. Descent is reckoned through father's line. According to their

residential pattern after marriage a girl leaves her father's house and stays at her husband's place. Most Santal families are nuclear, comprising a husband, wife and unmarried children and sometimes one of the parents. The domestic group generally breaks up into separate houses within the lifetime of the father. However, some extended families consisting of both parents and their married sons and grandchildren are also found. Joint families consisting of several married brothers and their off springs are very rare. Authority within the domestic group is vested in the eldest male member, who is responsible for maintaining family peace and economic stability. Kin relations are classified into two groups, *bandhupele* and *kutumpele*. The *bandhupele* includes persons related by marriage, while *kutumpele* includes uterine kin. Both groups participate in marriage, death and birth ceremonies.

During pregnancy a Santal woman observes certain taboos and restrictions to protect herself and the baby in her womb from all evils. As a protection against ghosts, spirits and witches she is not allowed to go alone to the forest, to touch crops, or to go to the cremation ground. During pregnancy, she does all sorts of household work, but avoids hard manual labour. When labour pain starts the expectant mother is kept confined in a separate room into which male members are not allowed to enter. A traditional midwife called a Mukhi assists her in delivering the child. After birth the midwife cuts the umbilical cord, bathes the child and mother, and puts the placenta, etc. in a pit in the same room. The mother is considered ritually unclean. She remains secluded in the lying-in room till the Janam Chhatiar or the purificatory rites are performed. During this period she is not allowed to enter the kitchen or to touch anybody. The ceremony takes place on the seventh or ninth day of childbirth. On this day all family members take a purificatory bath, clean clothes and houses, and throw away used earthenware pots.

The name-giving ceremony called Nyatam takes place on any day within one year. The relatives and the village elders are invited for the occasion. When everyone has assembled, the midwife takes the child and selects a name from among the dead ancestors of either the paternal or maternal side. Those who are present on the occasion bless the child and give presentations in either cash or kind. The invitees are entertained with festive meals and drink. Children are generally nursed and reared by the mother up to four or five years of age. The mother does not go to work outside the house for about seven to eight months. Thereafter, when she goes out, the child is left in the house under the care of a female relative or grandparents. Puberty marks the beginning of full-fledged womanhood. When a girl attains puberty she is not allowed to enter the cowshed or *bhitar*, the sacred place of the house. When the period is over she takes a full bath and washes her clothes.

The most significant turning point in the life of an individual is the marriage known as *bapla*. Marriage makes an individual a full-fledged member

of the community. From an economic point of view a man obtains a life partner who can help him in all economic pursuits. Santal have definite rules and regulations concerning marriage. The main restrictions on marriage are tribal endogamy, clan exogamy and the exclusion of cross-cousin marriage. Marriage within the clan is tolerated nowadays. However, there are certain clans which never intermarry with one another due to past quarrels.

In the Santal society the illegitimacy of child does not exist. Marriage gives social validity to the illegitimate child. In Santal society a partner is generally acquired by the following methods:

1. Marriage by negotiation.
2. Marriage by mutual consent.
3. Marriage by force
4. Marriage by intrusion
5. Marriage by elopement
6. Widow marriage
7. Hindu type of marriage (*Diku* Marriage)

Of all forms of marriages the most frequent are marriage by negotiation and *diku* marriage. Negotiations are first initiated by the boy's party. The elders of both parties exchange several visits and on such occasions fixing the bride-price forms one of the most common points of discussion. A bride-price is paid in both cash and kind, consisting of few rupees, cow/ bullock, three saris, one to the mother of the bride, one to her paternal grandmother, and the third to her father's sister. If both parties approve the proposal a day is fixed for the marriage. On the wedding day the bride with a party arrives at the boy's place where marriage ceremony is held. The expenses of the wedding depend largely upon the form of marriage. Marriage is a communal affair and members of both the villages and also neighbouring villages participate in it. The parents of the boy and the girl and the village officials play very important roles.

Residence in Santal society is patrilocal. After marriage a bride comes to stay with her husband. But there is another form of marriage known as *ghar-de-jamei* when the boy comes and lives with the family of the girl. This happens if the girl has no brother. Widow marriage is permitted in Santal society. A widow is expected to marry her deceased husband's younger brother. If both agree they marry, otherwise the woman is at liberty to marry any other man she likes. Divorce is socially permitted. It can be initiated by either husband or wife. If a woman leaves her husband and elopes with another man, the second husband will return the marriage expenses and bride-price. If a man wants to divorce his wife he must give compensation fixed by the village elders.

Just like birth and marriage, death also involves many rituals. The Santal believe that the spirit of the dead remains in the house and may cause harm to family members and villagers in general until the death rituals are performed. Therefore they hasten to perform the obsequies as early as possible. Within five to twenty days after death the first purificatory ritual is observed when all the male members of the *kutum* group shave their heads and the women cut their nails, smear turmeric paste and anoint their bodies with oil. All bathe the head. On this occasion various rites and rituals are performed and the spirit of the dead is offered food. If the family is well-to-do, food will be served to all. Otherwise the feast is restricted to the nearest kin groups. The Santal believe in the ceremonial immersion of the bones of the deceased in a holy river, called Damodar Jatra after the name of the river Damodar. Santal now living in different localities has different *ghats* in the nearby river where the last death ritual is performed and the bone of the deceased is immersed.

The main occupation of the Santal is settled agriculture. At present both men and women are engaged in cultivation but mainly as marginal and small farmers and agricultural labourers. The emergence of mining and industrial activities both in and outside their home districts have provided them with some scope for occupational mobility. A good number have migrated to Jamshedpur in Bihar for industrial work and to the Koraput and Keonjhar areas for agricultural work. In industries most of them work as unskilled workers. With the spread of education some have regular Government jobs. Both men and women are active, strong and hard-working. The economic activities of the Santal community are carried out with the co-operation and participation of both sexes.

In the Santal area, land can be divided mainly into three types, i.e. *bila* or lowland, *guda* or upland and *bari* or kitchen gardens. Paddy, being the main crop, is produced on *bila* land. On *guda* land the Santal grow short-duration paddy, *gulji*, *janha*, *til* and maize. Adjacent to each house or a little further away from it there are plots of *bari* land where varieties of vegetables, maize and pulses are grown. The Santal practise mono cropping if the land is unfertile and irrigation facilities are not available according to their requirements. As a result, the return from land is poor. Agriculture, which is mainstay of the Santal, does not provide adequate means for their maintenance round the year. They supplement it by forest collection and wage-earning. When the harvesting of paddy is over, the Santal have sufficient time to be employed elsewhere until the start of the next agricultural season. They generally migrate to the towns and industrial belt to earn their daily wages. Landless Santal are employed during agricultural season as agricultural labourers in the same locality.

With the passage of time the Santal have passed the stage of food gathering and hunting and have become cultivators and agricultural labourers. But the age-old practices have not been completely left behind. Forest collection

is one of the important sources of income. In fact their food is greatly supplemented by roots, fruits and tubers collected in the forests. These include different varieties of green leaves, yams, honey, *mahua* flowers, mushrooms, fruits like the mango, *kendu*, *charkoli*, insects, etc. The forest also provides them with fuel and herbal medicines, tooth twigs, and grass and timber to build houses and make agricultural implements.

The Santal area was once surrounded by dense forest and infested with wild animals but is now becoming deforested day by day, as a result of which game is rapidly dwindling. Besides the restrictions imposed by the government in respect of hunting, wild animals are also responsible for their loss of interest in hunting. The Santal now occasionally go on hunting expeditions in the summer. The last day of the Baha festival marks the beginning of the communal hunting. Elaborate rituals are conducted before the actual hunting begins. A success in such hunting indicates good luck for them and ensures bumper crops for the year. They also hunt birds by using a bow and arrow when they are free from work. Fishing does not form an important source of income for the Santal, but it supplies a delicious menu to their diet. The fishing appliances they use consist of nets and traps. In the rainy season, the agricultural fields become fishing grounds, and everyone who has land catches fish with the help of a basket trap. The Santal keep cows, bullocks, goats, sheep, poultry and pigs for domestic consumption and sale. The goats, poultry and pigs are used in sacrifices, while bullocks and buffaloes are used to plough the fields.

The Santal make various crafts for their daily use. Their cottage industry includes manufacturing wooden materials such as the plough, leveller, husking lever, string bed, etc. Some are skilled enough to make bullock carts, chairs and benches. In bamboo the Santal only make fishing traps, whereas grain containers and other types of bamboo basket are purchased from bamboo workers who belong to the Mahali tribe.

The Santal living in and around the dense forest who have a large number of Asan trees practice tussar rearing. They collect cocoon seeds from the forest and take loans from cocoon traders or co-operatives. However, it is considered a difficult task because the rearers must observe various taboos and restrictions during the raising period. The Asan is believed to be a deity and so sanctity must be maintained and the deity must be propitiated to achieve successful rearing.

The weekly market or *hat* plays an important role in Santal economy. Except those who live in close proximity of towns, others mostly depend on the local *hat* for the purchase of their daily necessities and sale of agricultural and forest produce. Now LAMPS and TDCC centers have been established in the Santal area to provide articles of daily consumption and to purchase their produce at a reasonable rate.

The Santal have well-knit religious organizations. They believe in various deities, ghosts and spirits residing in the hills, forests and streams, and the ancestral spirits guiding every aspect of their lives. Thakur or Sing Bonga or Dharam is their Supreme deity who is identified with the sun and is worshipped with great reverence. He is the creator of the universe and a benevolent deity. There is no specific festival to worship him and he is worshipped at every important festival. He is remembered. Their village deities are Marang, Buru, Moneko-Turiko, Jaher Era and Gosani Era, who reside in the village *jahera*, a holy grove located on the outskirts of the village. The village deities play a vital role in the life of the Santal and control their socio-economic activities. Another important deity or spirit is the Manjhi Bonga who resides in the *manjhithan* which is located inside the village in front of the house of the village Manjhi or headman. Manjhi Bonga is the spirit of the founder of the village. In addition, they worship Abge Bonga or household spirits, Hapranko Bonga or ancestral spirits, Buru Bonga (hill deities), Rango Bonga (forest deities) and Basumata or mother earth. In order to keep them in a good mood, the Santal observe a number of festivals spread over different months of the year. Their most important festivals are Erok-sim, Harihar-sim, Iri-Guldi-sim, Janthar, Saharae, Magha-sim and Baha, which are associated with agricultural operations. Erok-sim marks the beginning of sowing the seeds in the fields. Harihar-sim is observed at the time of the sprouting of seedlings. Iri-Guldi-sim is observed for the offering of the first millet crop. Jantal is a celebration of the first fruit of the winter rice crops. Magh-sim is observed in the month of Magha (January-February), which marks the end of the year. During Baha festival the Santal offer the first fruit of *mahua*, wild flowers and fruits to the *jaher* deities. *Bonga* worship is mainly done out of fear. The Santal have a strong belief in their own religion. Nowadays, however, they have started worshipping local Hindu gods and goddesses.

The smallest unit of traditional political organization is the village council, which is composed of office-bearers and the village elders. The council is headed by a Manjhi or headman, who is assisted by the Paramanik or assistant headman, the Naik or village priest, the Jog-Manjhi or moral guardian of the village youth and the Gadet or messenger. The meeting of the council generally takes place at the *manjhithan*. The village council is an important social unit for the administration of justice. Family and village disputes are referred to it. The topics discussed in the council include cases of divorce, partition of property, adoption of children, quarrels over land, etc. Death, birth and marriage ceremonies are organized by co-operation and participation of the village council. In addition, before any religious ceremonies are begun, the village elders meet together to discuss the feast and festivals. Due to the introduction of statutory panchayat the old system is fading away.

The inter-village council is known as the *pirh* or *pargana*, which deals with matters which cannot be settled at the village level. It is constituted by the

representatives of several villages under the *pirh* or *pargana*. Major offences like incest, adultery and inter-village disputes are discussed at this level. When somebody is dissatisfied with the decision of the village council, he may seek the help of the *pirh* or *pargana* council. Above all these authorities is the hunt council. The annual hunt is organized by a large number of Santal from different villages beyond the *pirh* or *pargana*, which gives them a chance to meet and discuss complicated disputes. Hunting expeditions may continue for three or four days. Spending the whole day in the chase, the hunting party takes a rest at one place overnight where they discuss different problems. Any case previously referred to the village or *pargana* council may be placed before the hunt council for a fresh trial. Excommunication from the community or *bitlaha* can be declared by the hunt council. Inter-village councils and the hunt council are not functioning properly, but the village council still plays a vital role in socio-political matters. Guilty persons are fined by the council and the fine raised from the offender is spent on feasting.

Like other tribes of Orissa, the Santal are fond of dancing and music. They dance and sing when they are in happy mood. Dancing and music are associated with all the rituals and festivals. This is a way to free oneself from the tired and boring life. The Santal dance is a group affair. Boys and girls, old and young, participate in it. Dancing visits are exchanged between different villages. There is no hard and fast rule regarding the time and place for dancing. But they generally dance at night. The dancers do not wear any special dress during their performances. The main musical instruments used by the Santal are the *tamak*, *dhol*, *bhuang*, *sarangi* and flutes. The Santal have different types of songs for different occasions. Devotional songs are sung during religious ceremonies.

Santal women show their artistic talents by decorating their walls with different colours and drawings. The Santal houses are most picturesque among the tribes of Orissa.

The Santal have experienced different socio-economic changes over several decades. They live among various castes and tribes. The influence of Hindu neighbours can be seen in some aspects of their culture. Urbanization and industrialization, and interaction with Hindus, have changed the outlook of the Santal to a great extent. A large number of Santal go outside in search of jobs and work in towns and urban centers, from which they return with new ideas and practices which become a model for the rest.

The material culture of the Santal has changed considerably. Their household articles no longer constitute their traditional materials, which they make or collect from the forest. They frequently visit towns where urban goods are displayed. This increases their desire to enjoy these things. Many well-to-do families have a radio, cycle and wooden furniture. Most Santal of the younger generation wear pants, shirts and *banyan* instead of their traditional coarse cloths. The women wear mill-made saris, blouses, petticoats, and glass or plastic

ornaments in imitation of local Hindu women. The habit of taking tea, smoking *bidis* and cigarettes has been acquired by Santal living in towns and urban centers.

Change in the economic life of the Santal is most remarkable. Because of the sub-division and fragmentation of landholdings owing to families splitting and restrictions imposed by the Government in order to reclaim fresh forest land for cultivation, the owner cultivators have been turned into agricultural labourers and sharecroppers. Many Santal from interior areas have come to Koraput, Jamsedpur or Keonjhar to work in industries and mines. Many of them migrate temporarily to nearby agricultural areas to work as agricultural labourers.

The social and religious life of Santal who live in the villages has been least affected by the outside forces. They follow their traditional customs and manners in respect of death, birth and marriage ceremonies. Here the Santal observe the same rites and rituals with great detail to avoid displeasing the traditional deities. Some local Hindu gods and goddesses have entered the Santal pantheon. Yet in spite of all these changes in their material life, the Santal have remained essentially the same as they were in the past. In fact most of their cultural borrowings are outward and superficial. In recent years, in fact, educated Santal have been organizing socio-cultural associations for the preservation of their traditional culture.

The development of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes is one of the main objectives of the state. There has been a continuous effort since independence by the government to raise their socio-economic standards. Stress has been laid on educational development. As a progressive community in the state, the Santal avail themselves of the maximum facilities provided to them. The opening of residential schools and hostels, and the provision of scholarships, have provided ample opportunity for the Santal to educate their children.

SANTAL *

A. B Ota ¹
S.C. Mohanty ²
K. Patnaik ³

IDENTITY

The Santals, one of the populous tribal communities of India, are mainly found in the districts of Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar and Balasore in the State of Odisha. Besides, they are also found in the neighbouring States like Jharkhand, West Bengal, Bihar and Assam.

The word 'Santal' is derived from two words; *santa* meaning calm and peaceful and *ala* meaning man. In the past, the Santals were leading a nomadic life. Gradually they came to settle down in the Chhotanagpur plateau. Towards the end of 18th Century they migrated to the Santal Parganas of Bihar and then they came to Odisha. They speak Santali language which belongs to the Munda group of Austro-Asiatic sub-family of languages. The Santali has its own script called "Olchiki" invented by Pundit Raghunath Murmu.

According to 2001 census, their population in the State is 7,77,204 out of which the male population is 3,93,386 and the female population is 3,83,818 registering the sex ratio is 976 females per 1000 males. Their decadal growth rate during 1999-2001 is 23.41%. Their literacy rate for males and females is 55.86 % and 24.75% respectively.

By their physical features the Santals have long head, brownish body colour and flat nose. They lead a very simple life. Among the Odishan tribes, the Santals are an advanced community.

* Published in the Photo Handbook on Santal, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar, 2014

¹ Director, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar

² Former Joint Director and then Officer on Special Duty, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar

³ Research Officer, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar

Dress and Ornaments

The traditional dress pattern and personal adornment of the Santal distinguish them from the other communities. The male members wear hand loom loin cloth (*kachha*), banion, shirts and napkin (*gamchha*) and women wear green or blue check saree (*jhelah*). But now-a-days they are using the mill made clothes. The Santal women are fond of wearing ornaments like *pankatha* (hairpin), *sikimala* (coin necklace), *baju* (armlet), *sankhachudi* (wristlet), *satul* (bangles), *painri* (anklets). Previously they were using heavy silver ornaments but now under the impact of modernization the new generation likes to wear plastic, glass and light silver ornaments. Tattooing has become an obsolete past tradition.

SETTLEMENT AND HOUSING

The Santal village is surrounded by agricultural fields, pastures, ponds, graveyard and a common place of worship known as *jaheer era* or *jaheer* in short. Located at the village outskirts the *jaheer* is the sacred grove comprising of *sal* trees within which their deities are believed to be residing. Usually, the Santal villages are large and the number of households vary from fifty to hundred. Their houses enclosed within boundaries are arranged in a linear pattern on both the sides of a wide village street.

Santal houses called *olah* are large, neat and clean as well as attractive with multi-coloured paintings on the outside walls. The bottom of the wall is painted with black soil, the middle portion with white soil and the upper portion with red soil. The houses are multi roomed and thatched with local tiles (*khapar*) or straw (*busub*). The walls are made of wooden planks plastered with cow dung and mud. Each house has a long verandah. Rooms are very spacious. Towards the corner of the main room, there is a sacred place known as *bhitari* where the ancestral spirits are worshipped. The main room is partitioned with a mud wall, which is used for storing grain and other agricultural products and kept on a wooden platform. The kitchen (*dakaolah*) is found at one side of the main room.

The cowshed *pangrigalah* is situated adjacent to the house. The kitchen garden is attached to the house. The houses have rectangular courtyard where the members sit in their leisure time and discuss various matters. The largest house of the village belongs to Manjhi, the secular headman of the village. In front of his house another ritual place called *Manjhi-than* is located. It is the seat of the spirit of founder headman of the village.

Household Articles:

The household objects like string cots, husking lever (*ukhud*), winnowing fans (*hatah*), gourd ladles, earthen pots (*hulutuku*), bamboo baskets (*tunki*), paddy containers (*bandi*), broomsticks (*janah*), different types of musical instruments like flute (*tiriau*), horn trumpets (*sakua*), string instruments (*banam*), double

membrane drums - *tumdah*, *dhak*, agricultural implements like plough (*nahel*), yoke (*aran*), leveler (*angam*), sickles (*datram*), hunting implements like bow (*aah*) and arrow (*sar*), spear (*barchi*), sacrificial axe (*kapi*), knife (*chaku*), fishing traps like *jhimiri*, *tardang*, *janjih* and *dhokra* objects are found in a Santal house.

LIVELIHOOD

The primary occupation of the Santal is settled agriculture. Both men and women are engaged in this pursuit. Seasonal forest collection is one of the important sources of subsidiary income. They collect minor forest produce like roots, fruits, tubers, green leaves, yams, honey, *mahua* flowers etc. that sustains them for 3 to 4 months in a year. They also collect fuel wood, medicinal herbs, grass, bamboo and timber from the forest for their day-to-day use like building their houses and making agricultural, hunting and fishing implements, cooking, treatment of diseases etc. The women prepare leaf plates (*patrakhali*) and cups (*phuluhdana*) out of *salleaves* and make brooms out of the grass and sell them in the local market to supplement their income. The Santals occasionally hunt wild animals for flesh. During the lean or post-harvesting season, they go to the neighbouring industrial, mining and urban areas for wage earning. They are expert in carpentry works and this skill also helps them to supplement their livelihood.

Food & Drinks

Rice is their staple food. Usually they take watered rice (*baskemandidaka*) with boiled green leaves (*alahkorha*) and vegetable curry. They consume vegetables like brinjal (*bengal*), pumpkin (*kahanda*), papaya (*jada*), ladies finger (*bhundi*), tomato (*bilati*), sweet potato (*sankarkenda*), etc. and the non-veg foods like fish (*haku*), meat (*zil*), crab (*katkom*) and dry fish (*rahalhaku*). During rituals and festivals they prepare and take rice cake and mutton or chicken curry. They are very fond of eating fish.

Rice beer (*handia*) is a very popular drink among the Santals. The women usually prepare *handia* out of fermented rice. During festivals and rituals both male and females love to take *handia*. As a matter of tradition they entertain their guest or relatives with this drink. Besides, they also drink *mahua* liquor and date-palm juice. The Santal males like to chew tobacco and are fond of smoking by rolling the tobacco inside a *sal* leaf locally called *pungi*. Now-a-days, the young Santals like to smoke *beedies* or cigarettes available in the market.

Haat (Weekly Market):

The local weekly market or *haat* occupies an important place in the socio-economic life of the Santal. This is the place where they purchase their necessities by bartering or selling their surplus agricultural and forest products. It is also the meeting place where the people, friends and relatives of different villages meet, exchange their feelings and socialize with each other.

SOCIAL LIFE

Family:

Among the Santals, family is the smallest social unit. It is patrilineal, patrilocal and patriarchal in nature. Father is the head of the family and he manages all the family affairs. After marriage, the son is separated from his father and he establishes a new house. After marriage the daughter goes to her husband's house. Though invariably the family structure is nuclear sometimes, extended families consisting of parents and their married sons and grand children are found. Kinship relationships are classified into two groups, viz. *bandhupela*, i.e., the affinal kins related by marriage and *kutumpela* i.e., the consanguinal kins related by blood. Both the kin groups participate in all socio-religious functions of the family.

The tribe is divided into a number of exogamous clans, called *paris*. Each clan is divided into sub-clans (*khut*). Marriage between sub-clans is strictly prohibited. Violation of the rule is punishable by social ex-communication called as *bitlaha*. Totemic worship is also found. Sexual relationship between the clan members is tabooed.

Pregnancy and Child Birth:

A Santal couple always welcomes the birth of a child. There are certain taboos and prohibitions which a Santal woman observes during her pregnancy. The husband of a pregnant woman never kills any animal nor participates in any funeral ceremony. He is also prohibited to touch a dead body. The pregnant woman is not allowed to go to the forest alone and to weep on the death of her relative. Except some hard works, a pregnant woman does all types of simple and easy works. These restrictions are imposed only to protect the baby from the evil spirits. The traditional midwife called *mukhi* is called for delivering the child. After the child birth, she cuts the umbilical cord and puts the placenta in a pit at the right corner of the door in the same room.

Janam Chhatiar

The mother is considered ritually unclean remains secluded in the lying-in room till the *janam chhatiar* or the purificatory rites are performed. During this period she is not allowed to enter in to the kitchen or to touch anybody. The ceremony takes place on the seventh or ninth day of childbirth. On this day, the midwife bathes the new born baby and the mother. All the family members take a purificatory bath, clean clothes and houses, and throw away used earthenware pots. The rite is completed after cleaning their head with soil collected from the crop field. On the same day, name-giving ceremony (*nyutum*) is preformed. On this occasion, the midwife takes the child and with the consent of all the members of the family a name of the dead ancestors is selected either from

paternal or maternal side for the new born baby. All the elders present there to bless the child. They are entertained with festive meals and drink.

Chacho Chhatiar

Chacho Chhatiar is one of the most important ceremonies of the Santals which initiates a person into adulthood and the membership of the society. It enables the individual to take his place in Santal society and participate in its rites and ceremonies. Without this no Santal can be married or cremated.

Puberty Rites

In case of a girl child, when she attains puberty, she is not allowed to enter into the cowshed and the *bhitari*, the sacred place of the house. Pollution is observed for a period of 7-9 days. After completion of the period, each room is smeared with cow dung for purification of the house and the girl cleans her clothes and takes a purificatory bath to come out of pollution.

Marriage (*bapla*)

Marriage (*bapla*) is one of the most significant events in Santal society. It makes an individual a full-fledged member of the community. From the economic point of view a man obtains a life partner who can help him in all economic pursuits. For marriage, some customary rules and regulations are followed. Marriage within the same clan and cross-cousin marriage are prohibited. In Santal marriage, there is no restriction of age. The bride may be younger, older or of equal age with the bridegroom.

Different types of marriages, such as marriage by negotiation (*sangebaryat*), marriage by mutual consent, marriage by capture (*ipituthapla*), marriage by elopement (*gurdaonapam*), widow re-marriage (*sangabapla*), son-in-law in house (*ghar-de-jamai*) and Hindu type of marriage (*dikubapla*) are prevalent in the Santal society. Marriage by negotiation (*sangebaryat*) is the common practice in the Santal community. Levirate and sororate types of marriages are also permitted in their society.

Marriage negotiations are first initiated by the boy's side. The elders of both the parties exchange several visits to fix the customary bride price. The bride price is paid by the boy's side in both cash and kind, consisting of few rupees, cow/ bullock, three saris - one for the bride's mother, one for her paternal grandmother, and the third one for her father's sister. A day is fixed for the marriage. On the wedding day the bride with a party arrives at the boy's place where marriage ceremony is held. The expenses of the wedding depend largely upon the form of marriage. Marriage is a communal affair and members of both the villages and also neighbouring villages participate in it. The parents of the boy and the girl and the village officials play very important roles in this affair.

Divorce

Divorce is a common sequel to Santal marriage. It is granted at the wish of either husband or wife. The husband can demand the divorce if his wife is proved to be a witch, or doesn't obey him or always goes to her father's house. The wife can claim divorce, if her husband cannot provide her adequate food, clothing etc. If the woman divorces her husband to remarry another man of her choice, then the new husband has to return the bride price and other expenses to her former husband and if the husband divorces his wife, then he must pay the woman the compensation fixed by the village council.

Death Rites

In the Santal society after the death of a person, the kin members are invited and they bury the corpse. After returning from the burial ground they take a smoke bath burning the straw at the entrance of the village. The bereaved family members of the deceased do not take any non-veg items during the period of death pollution. The purificatory death ritual is performed within 2/3 days because, the Santals believe that the spirit of the dead remains in the house and may cause harm to family members and villagers until the death rituals are performed. Therefore they hasten to perform the obsequies as early as possible.

Both burial and cremation are in vogue in their society. The bone of the deceased is collected and kept inside an earthen pot and left in the hole of a tree. Before the Makar festival they immerse the bone in the 'Gaya River' which is called Damodar Jatra. Now-a-days, they immerse the bone of the deceased in the Ghats of nearby river of their own locality.

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS & PRACTICES

Religion is considered to be a part and parcel of Santal life. Though basically they are animists, because of their cultural revivalism in the recent times, they have named their religion after the popular name of their village 'sacred grove' as *sarna*.

Like other tribals, the Santals are polytheists. They believe in the existence of a number of deities, ghosts and spirits residing in the hills, forests and streams and their ancestral spirits guiding every aspect of their life. Their benevolent Supreme deity is Dharam or Thakur or Sing Bonga who is identified with the sun and is worshipped with great reverence as the creator of the universe. Though no specific ritual or festival is observed for him, he is remembered and worshipped in every important festival.

Their village deities are Marang Buru, Moneko-Turiko and Gosane Era, who reside in the village sacred grove -*jahera*, at the village outskirts. These deities play a vital role in the day-to-day life of the Santal. Another important village deity is the Manjhi Haram Bonga- the spirit of the founder headman of

the village, who resides inside the village in the *manjhithan* in front of the house of the village headman - Manjhi. The village headman worships the deity in every morning.

At the family level, they worship their family deity and ancestral spirits called Hapram Bonga and Abge Bonga seated in the sacred place named *bhitar* in every house. Besides, they worship deities of nature namely, Buru Bonga (hill deities), Rango Bonga (forest deities) and Basumata or mother earth. Now-a-days, they have started worshipping some local Hindu gods and goddesses.

Like other tribal communities, the Santals also very strongly believe in witchcraft and black magic. They believe that the witches or *diens* who have become so by learning the *dienvidya* (the technique of witchcraft) have the evil powers to cause harm to others and bring natural calamities. The Santals are mortally afraid of the witches.

Naike is the religious headman and the priest of the village who is assisted by Kudam Naike. Ojha, the shaman is the traditional magico-religious healer. He has the power to converse with the spirits through trance.

Fairs and Festivals:

To propitiate their Gods and Goddesses, the Santals observe a number of festivals round the year. As the Santals are agriculturists, their festivals are mainly connected with various agricultural activities and a few are connected with the hunting and collection of forest produce.

Their most important festivals are Erok-sim, Harihar-sim, Iri-Guldi-sim, Janthar, Saharai, Magha-sim and Baha, which are associated with agricultural operations. Erok-sim marks the beginning of sowing the seeds in the fields. Harihar-sim is observed at the time of the sprouting of seedlings. Iri-Guldi-sim is observed for the offering of the first millet crop to the deities. Jantal observed during the month of September is a celebration of the first fruit eating of the winter rice crops to appease the hill God. Saharai, the cattle festival observed in the month of November, is one of the main festivals of the Santals. They worship cattle for increase of cattle wealth. Magha-sim observed in the month of Magha (January-February) marks the end of the year. During Baha festival the Santal offer the first fruit of *mahua*, wild flowers and fruits to the *jaher* deities. Besides these, festivals like Karama and Makar Sankranti are also celebrated with pomp and ceremony for the prosperity and happiness of their community.

AESTHETIC LIFE

Art and Crafts:

The Santals have inherent talents in art and crafts which is reflected in their beautiful wall paintings, housing architecture and wood works. Their doors are decorated with colourful drawings. Inside walls are also decorated with

beautiful drawings by the Santal women. They keep their houses neat, clean and decorative to appease the Gods and Goddesses and get their blessings.

Music and Dance:

Like other tribes Dance (*enej*) and music (*sereng*) are integral part of the Santal life. They dance and sing when they are in happy mood as they love it very much and these are always associated with their festivals and rituals which are always a community affair. Boys and girls, old and young, irrespective of age and sex, participate in such events. Dancing visits are exchanged between different villages. There is no hard and fast rule regarding the time and place for dancing. But they generally dance at night. The dancers do not wear any special costume. Various dances such as Kalasi dance, Danta dance, Rinja dance, Baha dance, Jachur dance, etc. are during different festive occasions. The Santal have different types of songs for different occasions. Devotional songs are sung during religious ceremonies.

Traditionally, the Santal dance is performed with the tune of beating of drums and blowing of the flutes. The musical instruments such as *tamak*, *dhol*, *bhuang*, *tumdah*, *tiriaubanam* (one stringed fiddle), *ghanta* (iron bell), and *singa* (horn trumpet), *sarangi* are used during dance.

SOCIAL CONTROL

The Santals have a well established political organization. It functions at the village, inter-village (*pirh* or *pargana*) and regional (*disam*) levels. The village is considered as the smallest and most important unit at the ground level. There is a traditional village council (*atumonehor*) constituted of functionaries like Manjhi (secular village headman), Jog Manjhi (deputy village headman), Parmanik, (assistant to village headman), *Gadet* (secretary to village headman & messenger), Jog Parmanik (Deputy Parmanik), Naike (village head priest) and Kudam Naike (assistant to village priest). All the household heads are the members of the village council. Manjhi presides over the village council meetings and settles all the disputes relating to theft, conflict, divorce, partition of property, adoption of children, quarrels over land, violation of social customs, tradition, etc. at the village level. The meeting of the council generally takes place at the *manjhithan*.

The inter-village council known as the *pirh* or *pargana* constituted of fifty to sixty villages, deals with matters which cannot be settled at the village level. It is constituted by the representatives of several villages under the *pirh* or *pargana*. Pir Pargana is the secular head of the *pir*, nominated by all the Manjhis of the component villages once in every five years. Along with Pir Pargana, Pir Dihiri and Pir Godet are also two important functionaries at *pirh* level administration. Major offences like incest, adultery and inter-village disputes are discussed and decided at this level. When somebody is dissatisfied with the decision of the

village council, he may appeal to the *pirh* or *pargana* council. It also functions as the hunt council. The annual hunt is organized by a large number of Santals from different villages beyond the *pirh* or *pargana*, which gives them a chance to meet and discuss complicated disputes. Hunting expeditions may continue for three or four days. Spending the whole day in the chase, the hunting party takes a rest at one place overnight where they discuss different problems. Any case previously referred to the village or *pargana* council may be placed before the hunt council for a fresh trial. Excommunication from the community or *bitlaha* for grave offences can be awarded by the hunt council. Guilty persons are fined by the council and the fine is spent on feasting.

Five to ten Pirhs together constitute a Disham, whose secular head is Desh Pargana. He is elected by the Pir Parganas once in every five years. He settles disputes on the cases which are not decided at the Pir level with the consultation of Pir Parganas and Manjhis. In case of serious social offence (*bitlaha*), Desh Pargana is vested with powers to impose both physical and financial punishment to the guilty person considering the severity of the offence. Sometimes, the culprit is excommunicated from the society. Disam Dihiri and Disham Godet also help Desh Pargana in this work for smooth administration at Disham level. But now with the introduction of the 3 tier Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs), the traditional political system is losing its importance.

CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT

The Santals are considered as one of the most progressive tribes of Odisha. Urbanization, Industrialization and frequent interactions with the Hindu castes have changed their life style to a great extent. Now-a-days, many of the Santal youths are moving towards town and urban areas for education and in search of jobs. Occupational mobility has also brought a drastic change in their living pattern.

There has been a continuous effort since independence by the government to raise their socio-economic standards. For their social and economic upliftment, Government has launched a number of development programmes which have brought a drastic change in their way of life by improving their status of education, economy, communication, health and sanitation etc.

Emphasis has been laid on their educational development. As a progressive tribal community, the Santal avail themselves of the maximum facilities provided to them. The opening of residential schools and hostels, and the provision of scholarships, have provided ample opportunity for the Santal to educate their children. Being educated, many Santal persons have now occupied high positions / posts in the Indian and Odisha Civil Services and other Government and Non- Government Sectors.

At present their village is electrified with 'Rajiv Gandhi Vidyut Yojana' and 'Biju Grama Jyoti Yojana'. There is also a lot of change in their leadership pattern. Traditional political leaders are replaced by elected people's representatives. Use of modern medicines, mill made clothes; cosmetics etc. are now a fashion among the Santal youths.

Their material culture has changed considerably. Their household articles no longer constitute their indigenous materials, which they make themselves or collect from the forest. Now, many well-to-do families have radio, cycle, television, mobile phone and wooden furniture. The young men wear pants, shirts and banyan instead of their traditional coarse cloths. The women wear mill-made saris, blouses, petticoats, and glass or plastic ornaments imitating local caste women. The habit of taking tea, smoking *bidis* and cigarettes has been acquired by Santal living in towns and urban centers.

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), Bhubaneswar for preservation of material culture of Odishan tribes including that of the Santal. Artefacts like dress and ornaments, combs, agricultural, hunting and fishing implements, household objects, musical instruments and *dhokra* objects of the Santal tribe as well as a replica of Santal hut have also been displayed in this exclusive museum. Besides, the Santals artists are regularly performing their dances in the Annual Adivasi Mela at the exhibition ground held from 26th January to 9th February and in the National Tribal Dance Festival held during December every year and many such district and state level events exhibiting their talents.

Besides, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar is organizing the Live Demonstration Programmes on Tribal Arts and Crafts in which Santal artists are participating. Now, some talented Santal artists have got national award for their fine Arts and Crafts.

The Santal is one among the few tribes which has its own script *Olchiki*. Their Santali language has been scheduled in the Indian constitution.

THE ORIGINAL HOMELAND OF THE SANTALS AND THEIR MIGRATION TO MAYURBHANJ: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS *

Subash Chandra Karua ¹

The Santals constitute one of the largest² proto – Austroloid³ aboriginal⁴ tribes of India. Since the past they were inhabiting the Southeastern Chotanagpur plateau⁵. The scenery of the main plateau is very attractive with its undulations, abrupt hills and forest tracts. There were groves of ancient mango trees, many of them are of enormous size. This is a prominent feature of the landscape of Chotanagpur. It is one of the most attractive parts of the Indian peninsula⁶. Later, the Santals have migrated to the western district of West Bengal, Santal pargana of Bihar and northern hilly district of Orissa and tea plantation areas of Assam at different times⁷. Majority of them live in different parts of Bihar, Bengal, Orissa, Jharkhand, Tripura and Chhatisgarh.

According to 2001 census of out of 3,68,04,660 people of Orissa the number of Scheduled Tribe is 81,45,081 which comprised 22.13% of the population. In the district of Mayurbhanj the total population is 22,23,456 and the number Scheduled Tribes is 12,58,459 which constitutes 56% of the total population of the district.

Though, the uniqueness of language, traditions and culture of the Santal drew the attention of number of administrators, anthropologists, ethnologists, social scientists and researchers from India and abroad, very little work has been done on the Santals of Mayurbhanj except the work of Charulal Mukharjee⁸. In this paper a humble attempt is made to study the migration and settlement of the Santals in Mayurbhanj state in a broader historical perspective. They are one among the numerically large tribal groups of the Austro-Asiatic race to which the Munda, Hos, Kharria, Bhumijas and some other tribes belong⁹. L.O. Skrefsud points out that the name ‘Santal’ is a corruption of ‘Saontar’. It was adopted by the

* Published in ADIVASI, Vol. XXXVI, No.1, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar, 2006, pp.01-10

¹ Lecturer in History, M.P.C. Autonomous College, Baripada

tribe after their sojourn for several generations in Saont region of Midnapur of West Bengal. Before they went to Saont they had been termed 'Kharwar', the root of which is *Khar*; it is a variant of *hor* or 'man'-the term used by all the Santals¹⁰.

Santal, Sonthal, Saontal or Saontar are grouped as tribal Hindus¹¹ in Mayurbhanj. Out of 62 Scheduled Tribe of Orissa¹², 45¹³ are found in the district of Mayurbhanj. The Santal are found in districts like Keonjhar, Balasore, Sundargarh and Dhenkanal. The district of Mayurbhanj is populated¹⁴ largely by Santals. Among the people of different races and functional affinities, the place of honour, however has been given to the Santals alone who are numerically dominant.

Mayurbhanj is bounded on the north by the district of Singhbhum of Jharkhand and Midnapur district of West Bengal; on the South by the district of Balasore and Keonjhar; on the east by the Midnapur and Balasore district; on the West by the district of Keonjhar and Singhbhum¹⁶. It was the largest and wealthiest of the feudatory states of Orissa¹⁷. The Bhanja rulers are one of the oldest royal families of India and they are the oldest ruling dynasty of Orissa¹⁸. Mayurbhanj had the distinction of being administered by a ruling family in unbroken continuity for more than one thousand years from the 9th century AD till it was merged with Orissa on 1st January 1949¹⁹.

The Santals called themselves 'bir sindic'²⁰ or strong man and 'hor hopon'²¹ or son of the man. E.G. Man points out that the ethnological characteristics of the Santal distinguish them from all other races in India as nomadic and civilized. The men are of middling stature and they are remarkably well made with dark skins. They have strong limbs, some what thick lips and in many instances their cast of countenance almost approximates to the Negro type. They wear their hair, which is long and coarse, tied in a knot on the top of the head, the ends hanging down from the center²². Regarding their physical feature, R.R. Diwakar states that they are short in stature and they possess a broad flat nose with sunken nose ridge. They have wavy hairs, some-times curly, though never frizzy. They share these characteristics with other primitive tribes in the same group²³. Their dialect belongs to that of the Austro-Asiatic group. G.A. Grierison states that their dialect has been derived from old Kherwali language which had a similarity with other Mundari speaking people²⁴.

Santals do not have any written literature, though their traditional legends (*binti*) are current among them²⁵. Their traditional lore has been handed down orally from generation to generation²⁶.

Pilchu halam and *Pilchu budhi* are to be the first human couple (Adam & Eve) of the Santal myth²⁷ who were born from the egg of Hans and Hasin birds. In course of time seven sons and seven daughters were born and as such their family enlarged²⁸. The names of five²⁹ sons were Sandhra, Sandhom, Care, Mane and Acredelhu. The names of four³⁰ daughters were Chita, Kapu, Hisi and Dumni. The names of the rest children are forgotten³¹.

They believed that though they were originated at *Ahili-pipili* or *hilihili-pipili*, but they became the settlers at Chai-champa which was regarded as their home land³². They recite the dong song:

*"Hihili pipili reban Janamlen
Khoj Kaman reban khojlen
Harat reban hara lena
Sasangbeda reban Jate lenho"*³³.

The Bengali version of the Santali song is described as follows.

<i>"Hihili pipirite Khoj kamane Harata dese Sasang beda dese</i>	<i>Jonme chhilam Khoj parchilo Bansa badrala Jatibhag holo"</i> ³⁴
--	---

A. Campbell narrates:

<i>"In Hihiri, mother In pipili, Mother In Haradata, Mother In Khoj Kaman, Mother</i>	<i>I was born I saw the light I grew up I was faught for"</i> ³⁵
---	---

P.O. Bodding narrates:

<i>"In Hihiripipiri In Khoj Kaman In Harat In Sasang beda</i>	<i>We were born we were called for We grew up We became sept."</i> ³⁶
---	--

From Khoj Kaman they went to Chai and then to Champa, where they resided for many years. Their social in division was instituted here³⁷. Regarding the identification of Champa, E.T.Dalton states that he is unable to identify the *Ahiri pipiri*, but Khairagarh and Chai Champa are in the Hazaribagh or Ramgarh district³⁸. L.O. Skrefsud derives the name *Hihiri* or *Ahuri pipiri* from the Hir origin, but others identify it with *Ahuri* pargana in the Hazaribagh district. From Ahuri pargana they moved to Khoj Kaman, then to Hara, then to Sasangbeda, then to Jarpi, then to Koinda, Chai and finally reached Champa. In Champa, they soujourned for many generations and the present social institution of the tribe was also formed there.³⁹

Champa was the capital of Anga⁴⁰ (South East Bihar). It was situated at the confluence of the river of the same name and the Ganges. It is stated in the 'Mahabharata', the purana and in 'the Hari Vamsa' that the ancient name of Champa was Malini⁴¹.

*"Champasya tu Puri champa
Ya maliny – ab bhavatpura"*⁴².

A great calamity took place with this race probably due to the invasions of the Mahammedans. Peace and order disappeared and the reign of terror prevailed.

E.T. Dalton has found the existence of an old fort at Chai, the walls of which were of earth and stone. A space of about five acres of land surrounded the fort. It was the abode of the Santal Raja named Jangra. He destroyed him-self and his family members on hearing the approach of a Mohammedan army under Sayid Ibrahim Alli, a general of Mohammed Tughluq. Ibrahim was also known as Malik Baya and died in 1353 A.D.⁴³

The existence of the fort is also substantiated by J. Phillips who states that while Santals were dwelling in Chai Champa, they multiplied. There were two gates -Ahin gate and Bahin gate of the fort ⁴⁴. The date of the capture of the fort by Ibrahim Alli may be 1340 AD. After that the Santals might have migrated to different directions in-groups in search of the site for their settlement.

It appears that the Santals had first begun to settle in the hilly tracts of Damin-I-koh or Damin estate near Rajmahal hills⁴⁵ in the district of Santal Pargana in about 1790. The Santals faced a little opposition from the Malers (Paharia) who were the natives of this area. The Santals learnt the art of 'kurao' or 'jhum'⁴⁶ cultivation from the Paharias. So long as there were vast forests and low density of population this archaic method of cultivation did not do much harm. But with the shrinking of the forests and rapid growth of the immigrants it caused a lot of harm. Frequent jhumming of hill sides resulted in destruction of forests and soil erosion. The process of converting the forest and wilderness to cultivable land went on very rapidly. As a result various social evils sprang up rapidly. Like other aboriginals the Santals were toys in the hands of the money lenders and dishonest *amalas* (subordinate officials). Further under 'kamiauti'⁴⁷ system, a man borrowing money had to work for the lender until the debt was repaid. The position of the Santals became little better than that of slavery in the hands of the unscrupulous money lenders. Many Dikkus⁴⁸ (Non- aboriginals) had occupied the hilly tracts cleared by the Santal. Many plots of fertile paddy land prepared by the Santals, were occupied by the 'Dikkus' by means of mortgage deeds.

The headman of a Santal village had to beg a permission from the land lord to convert a patch of forest land to a patch of cultivable land. The headman had to pay a sum fixed by the land lord for the said purpose. Though initially the fixed sum was paid, later the landlord began to demand much higher sum as a rent and harassed the villagers⁴⁹. So the Santals were compelled to leave such areas in search of tracts of virgin jungle, where the same process was repeated. Yet they were subject to torture and humiliation of the 'Dikkus'. Their smouldering discontentment on the agrarian issue exploded during the 19th century in the districts inhabited by the aboriginals⁵⁰. It was pointed out by Edward Gate in 1901 that the Santal migrated mostly to the areas rich in laterite soil. They not only migrated to Santal Pargana and many parts of Chotanagpur, but also to the laterite tracts of Malda, Dinapur, Rajasahi and Bogra⁵¹.

The Santal might have learnt the immense utility of Sal tree (*shorea robusta*)⁵² Mohua tree (*Madhuca latifolia*)⁵³ and Karam tree (*Adina cordifolia*)⁵⁴ from their ancestors. For their sustenance these trees were quite significant from two angles - socio-religious and economic. They used to collect various kinds of roots, leaves, flowers, fruits, stems, and resin from the forest, which were consumed by them either as food or as medicine in their day-to-day life. They also sold these forest produce in the market.

Mayurbhanj state extended over an area of 4243 square miles and presented varieties of soil and sights. It had a rich valley. The Meghasani hills or 'the seats of clouds' rose to the height of 3824 ft. in the southern part of the state⁵⁵. Different qualities of laterite soil was found through out the district⁵⁶. Moreover, the Similipal forest of Mayurbhanj district comprising a single compact block represented a virgin and semi evergreen forest with rich flora and fauna. The central core of the forest covered the ridges and ranges of hills and mountains and was undisturbed by any type of polluting factor. The forest growth was thick and impenetrable presenting massive growth of varieties of trees, the chief among them being the Sal trees⁵⁷.

The areas of Bamanghati and Nayabasan consisted of hills, dense jungle and valleys. These forests are quite significant and inaccessible for trade and commerce and were mostly inhabited by the rudest jungle tribes. The soil of northern Bamanghati was very fertile and fit for extensive cultivation. Red and yellow ochre were usually used by the Santals for painting their houses. The Yellowish limestone was also available in the bed of Burabalanga River at Mahulia of Baripada. The clay available on the laterite bed of Baripada was well suited for pottery⁵⁸.

They were in search of such areas where the above mentioned amenities were available. So the dense forest tract of Similipal and laterite bed of Mayurbhanj might have attracted these people for their settlement. Out of their several groups some might have settled in the hilly tracts of Similipal Mountains after the fall of Champa in about 1340AD.

The history of Mayurbhanj reveals that the Santal were living in this land much before 1340 AD. The Bamanghati copper plate inscription of 924 AD issued by Ranabhanja state that he granted four villages in favour of a son of Mahasamanta Mandi located in Uttarakhand which comprised the Vishayas of Karandiya and Devakunda, which are identified with modern Karanjia and Devakunda respectively.⁵⁹

Another copper plate of Rajabhanja (Son⁶⁰ of Ranabhanja) records the grant of Brahmanvasti in the name to Subraman, the son of Samanta Mandi who may be identified with Mahasamanta Mandi of the Bamanghati plate of Ranabhanja. Brahmanvasti may be identified with modern Brahmanvasa, six miles away from Rairangpur of Mayurbhanj⁶¹.

From the above copper plate inscriptions it may be assumed that Subraman Mandi was the son of Mahasamanta Mandi or Samanta Mandi who belonged to the Santal tribe. Mandi or Marndi is a title used only by the members of Santal community. Moreover out of their twelve septs Mandi or Marndi⁶² is the fifth clan of the Santal community. When they were originated in Champa they were wealthy class and they had a fort at Badoligarh⁶³.

If Rana Bhanja, the Bhanja king of Mayurbhanj was ruling during 924 AD, and if the date of copper plate inscriptions is true, the Santals of Mayurbhanj might have settled in Mayubhanj by 924A.D.

Thus it can be concluded that the opinion of Charulal Mukherjee relating to their migration to Mayurbhanj towards the end of the 18th century⁶⁴ may not be acceptable. Two Bamanghati copper plate grants of Rana Bhanja and Raja Bhanja clearly indicates their settlement in Mayurbhanj prior to 924 A.D.

References:

1. B. K. Roy Burman, "Tribal Demography: A Preliminary Appraisal" (ed), *The Tribal situation in India*. (Shimla, 2002), p. 37.
2. JAS, Vol. XVII, No.3 (1951), p. 23
3. JAS, Vol. XIX, No.1, (1952), p.4
4. JAS, Vol. XVII, No.3 (1951), op. cit; p.20
5. JAS, Vol. V, No.314 (1963), p.59
6. J. Houlton, *Bihar the heart of India*, (Bombay,1949), p.126
7. JAS, Vol. V, No.314 (1963), p.59
8. C.L. Mukharjee, *The Santals*, (Calcutta-1943).
9. J. Houlton, op.cit; p.78.
10. H. H. Risley, *The Tribes and the Castes of Bengal*, Vol.II, (Calcutta, 1998), p.224
11. M. Laeequddin, *census of Mayurbhanj*, 1931, (Calcutta, 1935), p.78
12. M. Ahmed, *District census hand book, Mayurbhanj*, (Cuttack, 1967), p.17
13. *Ibid*
14. N. M. Senapati, N.K. Sahu(eds), *Orissa district gazetteers, Mayurbhanj* (Cuttack 1967) p-1.
15. M. Laeequddin, *Village Directory of Mayurbhanj State*, Vol.1, (Baripada, 1940), p.11
16. N. M. Senapati, N.K. Sahu, op.cit; p.2.
17. A. Wright (ed) *Bengal and Assam, Bihar and Orissa*, (London, 1917), p.574.
18. R.D. Benarjee, *History of Orissa*, Vol.1, (Calcutta, 1930) p.187.
19. N. M. Senapati, N.K.Sahu, op.cit; pp.1-2.
20. JPASB, Vol.XXVII, No.2(1931), p.241
21. JAS, Vol.XIX, No.1, (1952), p.31
22. E. G.Man, *Sonathalia and Sonthals*, (Delhi, 1983) p. 13.
23. R. R. Diwakar, *Bihar Through the Ages*, (Bombay,1959), p.78 JAS, Vol.XIX, No.1, (1952),p.4
24. G. A. Grierison, *Munda and Dravidan languages*Vol.IV, (Delhi, 1973), p.30
25. LSS O. Malley, *Bengal District Gazetter, Santal Pargana*, (Calcutta, 1999), p.65
26. JBORS, Vol.11, Part-1, (1916), p.15

27. *Ibid*; p.17, The Santal mission of the Northern churches, The tradition and institution of the Santals, Horkoren Mare Hapramko Reak' Katha, (Lucknow, 1958), p. 4.
28. *Ibid*; p.21, The Santal mission of the Northern churches.... (*Opcit*, p. 6).
29. JAS, Vol.XIX, No.1, (1952), *Op. cit*; p.13, P.O. Bodding, *Traditions and Institutions of Santal*, (New Delhi-2001), p.6.
30. *Ibid*.
31. *Ibid*, The Santal mission of the Northern churches... p. 6.
32. JBORS, Vol.11, Part-1, (1916), p.15.
33. JAS, Vol.XIX, No.1, (1952), p.18. The Santal mission of the Northern churches, (*Opcit*, p. 9)
34. S. B. Sen, *The Santals of Jungle Mahals*, (Calcutta, 1984), p.33.
35. JBORS, Vol.11, Part-1, (1916), p.22.
36. P. O. Bodding, *Op.cit*; p.9
37. JBORS, VOL.11, part-1, (1916), p.22.
38. E. T. Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal*, (New Delhi, 1974), p.449.
39. H. H. Risely, *op.cit*; p.225.
40. R. P. Chand, *The Beginings of Art in Eastern India with Special Reference to Sculptures in the Indian Museum*, (Calcutta, 1927), p.5.
41. H. C. Raychaudhuri, *political history of India*, (Calcutta, 1972), pp.95-96.
42. *Ibid*;
43. E. T. Dalton, *op.cit*; p.450
44. H. H. Risely, *op.cit*; p.226.
45. J. Houlton, *op.cit*; p.74.
46. *Ibid*; p.75.
47. *Ibid*
48. *Ibid*; p.76.
49. *Ibid*; p.78.
50. *Ibid*; p.79
51. *Ibid*.
52. N. M. Senapati, N. K. Sahu, *opcit*; p. 46
53. *Ibid*; p. 45
54. *Ibid*;
55. W. W. Hunter, *A Statistical Account of Bengal, Vol.XIX*, (London, 1877), p.303.
56. N. M. Senapati, N.K.Sahu, *op.cit*; p.14
57. *Ibid*; p.19
58. L. E. B. Cobden Ramsay, *Bengal Gazetter, Feudatory States of Orissa*, (Calcutta, 1982), pp.236-239.
59. N. M. Senapati, N.K. Sahu, *opcit*; p.58. R.D. Benarjee, *opcit*; p.180,
60. B. C. Majumdar, *Orissa in the making*, (Calcutta-1925), p.127
61. N. M. Senapati, N.K. Sahu, *op.cit*; p.59, R.D. Benarjee, *op.cit*; p.181.
62. JAS, Vol.XIX, No-1, (1952), p.16.
63. *Ibid*;
64. C. L. Mukharjee, *op.cit*; pp.25-26.

THE SANTALS : A GLIMPSE INTO THEIR LIFE AND ACTIVITIES *

*A. K. Das*¹

Introduction

The Santals, one of the largest tribes of India are spread over a wide area in Bihar, Orissa, West Bengal, Tripura, Assam and also in Bangladesh, but the majority of them live in Bihar and West Bengal. This Community has attracted the attention of the Administrators, social Scientists and Welfare Workers because of its distinctive position amongst fellow tribals of Eastern India. Perhaps P. O. Bodding was the pioneer who introduced the Santals through his writings to the outside world. Indian anthropologists later on joined to this and many publications were brought out on different aspects of Santal life. Mention may be made about the names of P. C. Biswas, N. Dutta Mujumdar, Maritn Orans, V. K. Kochar, K.K. Dutta and many others.

Anthropologists like B. S. Guha, D. N. Majumder, S. S. Sarkar devoted much thoughts on the racial characteristics of the Santals and assigned their affinity to Proto-Australoid and or Pre-Dravidian stock. A marked resemblance has been noticed with the Veddas of Srilanka and the aboriginals of Australia. Mongoloid strain has also been noticed among some of them.

Demography

The present population of the Santals accounts for more than three and half millions (36, 33,459) constituting 9.55 per cent of the total tribal population of India. They are a numerous in the States of Bihar, Orissa, West Bengal and Tripura where they are recognized as Scheduled Tribes (STs). The State-wise break up of their population in these four States as per 1971 Census is as follows.

Bihar-18,01,304; Orissa-4,52,953; West Bengal-13,76,980 and Tripura- 2,222.

* Published in ADIBASI, Vol. 23, No.1, THRTL, Bhubaneswar 1983-84, pp.16-28

¹ Deputy Director, Cultural Research Institute, Calcutta

Besides those States they are also found in other areas where they are not recognized as STs, hence their population figure is not available from the Census.

It has already been mentioned that 9.55 per cent of the total Scheduled Tribe population of India belong to Santal community. Of the total Santal population (36, 33, 459) the State of Bihar shares 49.58 per cent (18, 01, 304). West Bengal 37.90 per cent (13, 76, 980), Orissa 12.46 per cent (4, 52, 953) and Tripura holds the lowest position with 0.06 per cent (2,222). Let us now examine the position of the Santals in respect to the total population of the States where they are recognized as Scheduled Tribes. In Bihar the Santals constitute 3.20 per cent of the total population; West Bengal comes next with 3.11 per cent followed by Orissa with 2.06 per cent and Tripura with 0.14 per cent of the total population.

In West Bengal 54.35 per cent of the total tribal population (25, 32, 969) are Santals, in Bihar the corresponding percentage is 36.52 of the total tribal population (49, 32, 767), in Orissa it is 8.93 per cent of the total (50, 71, 937), tribals and in Tripura the percentage is only 0.79 among the State tribal population (4, 50, 544).

The following chart will be helpful to get an over view of the demographic situation of the Santal population in four States by their distribution through rural and urban areas.

States	Total (T) Rural (R) Urban (U)	Persons	Males	Females
Bihar	T	1,301,304	899,664	901,640
	R	1,762,591	879,527	883,064
	U	38,713	22,137	18,576
West Bengal	T	1,376,980	697,365	679,615
	R	1,354,823	685,340	669,783
	U	22,157	12,025	10,132
Orissa	T	452,953	225,741	227,212
	R	444,030	221,055	222,975
	U	8,923	4,686	4,237
Tripura	T	2,222	1,198	1,033
	R	2,219	1,186	1,033
	U	3	3	...
All Combined	T	3,633,459	1,823,959	1,809,500
	R	3,563,663	1,787,108	1,776,555
	U	69,796	36,851	32,945

Considering the combined population figures of the four State it is found that there are 992 females per thousand males. But for individual States there appears a variation. In Bihar and Orissa the females are larger in number than the males. Contrary to this the corresponding female population of West Bengal and Tripura are less than the male population.

The preponderance of rural population over urban population is the common feature in all cases. When all States counted together we find 98.08 per cent of the Santal population live in rural areas. The same trend is maintained for individual States. For Tripura of course the urban population is almost absent, there are only three males in urban area. Of the total urban Santals (69,796), 56 per cent are in Bihar, 32 per cent in West Bengal and the remaining 12 per cent in Orissa, it appears that the proportionally high percentage of urban Santals in Bihar is due to impact of industrial complexes developed in and around tribal areas.

Geographical Location

There is a characteristic concentration of this population in certain areas of Bihar, Orissa and West Bengal which appears as the hub for their dispersion to adjoining areas. In Bihar they are mainly found in Santal Parganas, Singhbhum and Manbhum districts. The districts of Mayurbhanj, Balesore and Keonjhar of Orissa are also noted for this population. In West Bengal the districts of Purulia, Midnapur, Bankura and Birbhum are the areas of major concentration. The Santals have been living in these areas through centuries and they have built up a tradition of their own which left impression on the neighbouring population. This tradition may be traced back to proto-historic era.

Language

The Santali dialect belongs to the Austro-Asiatic group of Austric speech family. According to G. A. Grierson the present dialect of the Santals has been derived from the old Kherwari language. In this regard this dialect has similarity with the Mundari speaking people because of their common genesis. The Santals in general are bilingual. Besides their mother tongue they have adopted regional languages which are current in their habitation. Thus in Orissa they can speak in Oriya, similarly in Bihar they speak in Hindi and in West Bengal it is Bengali. This population has no script of its own. There are Santali books written in Bengali, Nagri, Oriya and Roman scripts. A new script has been introduced in recent years known as 'Olchiki' which has an influence of Oriya script.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Santals are very conscious about their cultural identity and heritage. They have consciously or unconsciously built up a sense of solidarity amongst themselves. Their internal solidarity is often based on their principle of likeness that is a shared cultural characteristic which binds them together. Certain external forces have posed a threat to their existence which created internal

solidarity amongst themselves. These forces are often referred to as 'Dilkus'. The money lenders, contractors, political infiltrators and such other exploiters come in this category. There is a myth of their origin which is widely accepted by the members of the community. The essential features of this myth are also shared by the Mundas, Hos and other neighbouring tribes which also help in the formation of a regional solidarity. There is a close linguistic relation among the Santals, Hos, Mundas and Bhumijas which contributes to this solidarity.

There are two events in the history of the Santals of particular importance- (i) the establishment of a Santal colony in Damin-i-kho and (ii) Santal insurrection of 1855.

The Santals settled in the district around Dumka, the present Headquarters of Santal Parganas in the later part of 18th Century and beginning of the 19th Century (1790-1810). The hill tract of Rajmahal lies fifteen miles north of Dumka. The Mal Paharias and the Sauria Paharias were the first recorded inhabitants of this region. On the recommendation of the then Government, Damin-i-kho was formed in 1832-33. The area comprised 1366 Sq. miles. The hill tract was reserved for the Paharia people and about 500 Sq. miles at the foot of the hill were given to the Santals who came from the district of Birbhum. This colony plays an important role in the history of the Santals. It became a place of self preservation at the time of disintegration and ruin.

With the passage of time the Santals in Damin-i-koh faced several adversities at the hands of the money-lenders, traders and contractors. Their grievances could not properly addressed by the Government officials. This disquieting feature ultimately turned into revolt. The rebellion started in June 1855 under the leadership of four brothers Sidu, Kanhu, Chandu and Bhairab from Parheit valley in the heart of the Damin-i-Koh. After sporadic incidents the rebellion was quelled down by the administration in the beginning of 1856. It is said that some ten thousand Santals lost their lives during that confrontation. But this incident brought about a change in the outlook of the administration which initiated certain administrative reforms. A separate district named as Santal Parganas was created. Up to 1911 it was under Bengal, but at present it belongs to Bihar. Since the formation of this district it has become the core of the Santal tradition and activities. It was recognized as a non-regulated district under the control of Deputy Commissioner with four assistants under him, they were vested with civil as well as criminal powers. The Santals of this particular district enjoyed special legislative protection. The Santals Parganas Land Settlements was introduced in 1873 where after the problem of land was stabilized.

Migration

Some scholars traced out of migration and settlement of the Santal community in their present habitats through successive proto-historic and historic era and link up their traditional homeland to Central India (well known

as Dandakaranya area). Later on they came down to the eastern flank of Dandakaranya (at present administratively demarcated in Bihar and Orissa States). They were a people of nomadic habit who wandered from place to place with a tendency to move towards east. What is certain is that they settled within historic times in the Chotanagpur plateau and in the adjoining districts of Midnapore and Singhbhum, and moved towards north at the close of the 18th century and made their home in Santal Parganas. From now on we find them mentioned in Government papers, news papers and other publications. The pull factor behind this migration centered round (i) Jungle clearing for permanent settlement, (ii) demand for manual labour force for mining and quarrying, (iii) for engaging them in indigo and tea plantations and other allied avocations and finally, (iv) demand for agricultural labour force. A good number of them were also engaged in railway construction.

In West Bengal the Santals have a good deal of historical tradition in the districts of Midnapore, Purulia, Bankura and Malda. Their entry and settlement in those areas may be traced back to two hundred years or more. With the growth of collieries in western part of Burdwan the Santals migrated there as colliery labourers. However they do not live in those collieries but live in adjacent villages where they made their permanent settlement. In due course some of their members also became cultivators and/or agricultural labourers. There is a general migration of these populations in interior villages during agricultural season. In addition to the Santals of the district itself the labour hands of this community are also brought from Midnapore and Bankura districts as seasonal migrants. There are particular police-stations in Burdwan district (Ansgram, Galsi, Bhatar, Memari, Raina, Jamalpur, Kalna, Manteswar, etc.) where heavy influx of this migrant population takes place each year. In this process some families get themselves permanently settled in the adjoining areas.

In and around Jhargram Police Station of Midnapore district they came by two ways- one branch came there from the north (Santal Parganas) and the other group came from South-West that is Mayurbhanj area of Orissa.

After the Santal insurrection of 1855 a good number of them migrated to Hazaribagh and crossed over Rajmahal Hills to enter Birbhum and others went to Murshidabad and Malda districts.

Those who went to North Bengal and Assam to work as tea plantation labourers after certain period settled down in the neighbourhoods to develop permanent settlements. In North Bengal the Police-Stations of Naxalbari and Kharibari acquired distinctions in the history or recent peasant movements due to the participation of Santals settlers.

Seasonal Migration

Seasonal migration plays a dominant role in the socio-economic life of Santals. Landless Santal labourers form western Midnapore, Bankura, Purulia and

from some parts of Parganas of Bihar and Mayurbhanj area of Orissa come to Murshidabad, Burdwan, Hooghly and Howrah districts of West Bengal to work in the agriculture and brick fields. These Santal immigrants are generally looked upon as sturdy and dependable workers and find ready employment among the non-tribals of the district. This migration is creating disharmony in their social life both in their village of origin as well as in the place of their migration. In the place of migration they pass a life of detachment where ceremonies, festivals etc., are not observed, certain social norms are also devalued. Simultaneously their family in villages suffers a temporary 'break' owing to absence of certain working members. This temporary disorganization invites some sort of deficiency in the functioning of the family. In addition, the contractors sometimes recruit able workers from younger generation for working in the industrial centers. This creates a vacuum in the village life. Those migrating with the contractors acquire various types of vices which result in maladjustment after their return to the respective villages.

This seasonal migration also brings some better things in tribal's life. This migration appears to have curbed the boundaries of separatism between the Santals and rural peasantry, because they work in close economic relationship to a considerable extent. This migration has also helped to refresh and reinvigorate their distinctive cultural traits and retain their identity in spite of small numbers in the districts as the Santal labourers can come in close contact with those of the Santals of Santal Parganas.

New Settlers

Though not out of context a few major features of the colliery labourers, industrial labourers and tea garden labourers are worth noting. In Burdwan district a good number of Santals have gradually settled down within the last three or four generations in connection with colliery work. They do not however live in the collieries but in villages adjacent to the colliery. Side by side they practise agriculture also in their own land or in others' land as share-croppers. Thus they do not have totally lost their agricultural moorings. In the Chittaranjan Locomotive Workshop, Hindustan Cable Factory and in Durgapur Steel Project some of the Santals work as unskilled labourers. They do not have attachment towards agriculture which results in heavy absenteeism during agricultural season. Tea industry is an agro-based industry, many of the Santals who have once worked as tea garden labourers now have built up permanent villages.

The Santals call themselves 'Hor Hopon' or 'sons of man'. They are a community with distinctive social and religious characteristics. Two major territorial groups are recognized among the Santals—the Santals of Santal Parganas and adjoining regions, north of the Damodar river and the Santals of southern fringe of Bihar, northern fringe of Orissa and South-Western fringe of West Bengal lying south of the river Damodar. The northern Santals are called by southerners as 'Dumka Hor' (that is the people of Dumka, a town in Santal

Parganas of Bihar). The southerners are called by the northerners as 'Bugri Hor' (people who do not use chaste form of language). These two groups have dialectical and certain socio-cultural differences.

Educational Institutions

The Santals had their traditional institutions through which members of the society were made acquainted with their cultural heritage. Those institutions were run in the line of the Guru Schools. Music, songs and dances were the forms of teachings. In the past every clan had its Guru School headed by an old person who had intimate knowledge of their myths, legends and customs.

In the Pre-independence ear due to the activities of different Christian Missions the Santals were brought under the impact of modern education. But this influence was felt mainly by the Christian section of the community. After Independence vigorous step was taken by the States as well as the Centre to propagate education among this population. The programmes included the setting up of educational Institutions and extending various facilities which need no elaboration here.

Let us now examine their literacy position. The percentage of literate and educated persons for the total population in Bihar is 19.94 against 11.64 per cent of the Scheduled Tribe population and 7.51 per cent of Santal population. This gradual decreasing trend of educated persons from State level to tribal population and coming down to the Santals to the least is maintained in the case of other three States. The following chart will reveal the position:-

State	Percentage of literate and educated persons		
	Total population	Tribal population	Santal population
Bihar	19.94	11.64	7.51
West Bengal	33.20	8.92	7.93
Orissa	26.18	9.46	9.06
Tripura	30.87	15.03	9.09

The Santals, though a dominant tribal population in Eastern India but in the field of education their achievement is very low in comparison with Mongoloid and other small tribal groups. The following chart presents a comparative picture of literacy amongst the Santals in different States of Eastern India. Of the total Santals residing in the four States, only 7.86 per cent are literates and educated, the percentage of male literates and educated, the percentage of male literates being 13.11 and females 2.03. If this is taken as a base line of progress then we find that Bihar with largest number of Santals is the only State which could not achieve position higher than the line of progress in respect of total, male, female literacy. A contrary scene is observed in case of West Bengal where the achievement is more than the line of progress in every respect.

In case of female literacy only Orissa could not put a mark above the line; the same is the case with Tripura.

Sl. No	State	Total	Male	Female	Literate and educated persons					
					Total		Male		Female	
					No.	P. C.	No.	P. C.	No.	P. C.
1.	Bihar	1,801,304	899,664	901,640	135,280	7.51	117,158	13.02	18,122	2.01
2.	West Bengal	1,376,980	697,365	679,615	109,241	7.93	95,263	13.66	13,978	2.05
3.	Orissa	452,953	225,741	227,212	41,054	9.06	36,430	16.14	4,624	1.66
4.	Tripura	2,222	1,189	1,033	202	9.09	190	15.98	12	1.16
Total		3,633,459	1,823,959	1,809,500	285,777	7.86	249,041	13.11	36,736	2.03

The above discussion underlines two major factors-(i) the Santal being the most numerous amongst the tribals of Eastern India, could not surpass the line of achievement of the respective area and (ii) amongst the Santals themselves the development could not follow a uniform pattern in all the States. Surprisingly, in Bihar where they cover more than fifty percent of their population and where Christian Missionary activities lasted for a longer period there the performance appeared with a poor show.

The percentage of actual students to the expected students is far below the mark in respect of Primary and Secondary education. A sample survey conducted in the State of West Bengal has revealed that a little below 50 per cent of the students do not take admission in the Secondary stage after completion of Primary education. The roll strength in the Secondary stage also tapers at the higher level due to wastage and stagnation to the extent of thirty to forty per cent. Those few who proceed for Post-Metric education get themselves admitted in the Arts or Commerce stream. That is the reason why we do not find them in the professional fields. Most of them get in white-collar jobs. Due to their poor achievements in the field of education diversification of occupation has not taken place to the desired extent.

Occupational Pattern

The Santals were formerly engaged in collection of forest produce, hunting, fishing and cultivation on hill slopes. Their main trading craft was extraction of oil and manufacture of lime. At present they are mostly engaged in cultivation, but mainly as small farmers, share-croppers and agricultural labourers. In earlier days Indian corn was their staple food but gradually they came to depend more on rice, though they cultivate other cereals also. With the starting of tea industry in 1860-70 in North Bengal and Assam many Santals were employed as labourers. Many of them were engaged in the construction of railways. A good number of them were brought for colliery work although they remained unskilled labourers. Many of them took up the Police and Military service and some of them are also engaged in teaching profession. A very small percentage is engaged in different offices. Though at present many of them depend on land as settled agriculturists but in methods and in use of implements they have not yet reached the level of other neighbouring non-tribals.

Data available in our hand do not permit us to go into the details of participation of workers in different industrial categories for each State separately. By considering the situation prevailing in West Bengal we may, presume that more or less similar things are happening in other States.

In West Bengal 38.45 per cent of the Santal population are workers (529391) as per 1971 Census. Of the total workers, about 90 per cent are engaged in Agricultural sector, Cultivators 33.74 per cent (178627) and Agricultural Labourers 55.70 per cent (294864). Thus is seen that more than half of the working population eke out their existence as labourers. Of the remaining 10 per cent of workers about 5 per cent are engaged in "Livestock, Forestry, Fishing and Plantation" (17,845=3.37 per cent) and "Mining and quarrying" (74,621=1.41 per cent). Of the rest, 2.43 per cent (12,880) are engaged in "other service". The residual 3.35 per cent are shared by five categories of Household Industry (3,655=0.96per cent), other than Household Industry (6,441=1.22per cent), Construction (1,249=0.23per cent), Trade and Commerce (2,573=0.49per cent) and Transport, Storage and Communication (3,795=0.72per cent).

The emergence of agricultural labourers to a larger proportion has been caused due to the transformation of land owning cultivator to land less condition in a progressive way. As because the community as such was least subjected to technical know-how of other non-agricultural sectors, so the diversification and occupational mobility were restricted to a great extent which ultimately curbed down their participation in gainful occupations. A sample survey was conducted in a number of villages in West Bengal to ascertain the occupational change through generations. The findings revealed that in grandfathers, generation most of them were cultivators while agricultural labourers were few in number. In fathers' generation the proportion of cultivators reduced and simultaneously there was an increase in labourers, in ego's generation agricultural labourers became most numerous and the cultivators were reduced to minority. Even in the cases of cultivators the per family, land holding became only 1.50 acres.

Ownership and land use problems

Those who cultivate their own land possess holding sizes mostly (90 %) within a range of three acres. Those lands are again fragmented and in most of the cases these are upland. Because of this situation rain water is drained out and storage facilities are negligible. As the cultivation depends on rain-fed water and irrigational facilities are practically nil the crop outturn is poor. Mon cropping (rice-cultivation) is the general practice. Because of the unfertile nature of land and non-adoption of improved practices to the desired extent they cannot get fullest use of their land. All these limitations have kept them away for getting into commercial cropping by rising of jute, potato and other vegetables. The wheat area in West Bengal is becoming extended gradually but the Santals have not yet taken to this cultivation in a significant way.

Social structure

The Santal tradition relates that the first human couple Pilchu Haram and Pilchu Buri divided them into twelve ancestral clans one of which has been lost. These clans are totemic in nature and exogamic in character. These are further sub-divided into sub-clans. The names of the clans are; Hasdak, Murmu, Kisku, Hembrom, Soren, Marandi, tudu, Baske, Besra, Pauria, Ceral and Bedes. The first eleven clans exist today excepting the last clan. Violation of tribal endogamy and clan exogamy are greatest offences. Those who disobey this rule are expelled from Santal Society. This is the highest social punishment in Santal Society. Those who break clan exogamy are sometimes re-admitted in the society but those breaking tribal endogamy are not pardoned and dealt with before the Hunt Council. Previously the orthodox punishment known as '*Bit laha*' was prescribed but this occurs rarely at present.

Now-a-days three types of families are generally seen among the Santals (1) nuclear family comprising husband, wife and unmarried children constituting a single nuclear household, (2) pyramidal family- generally small extended families of procreation of only one individual in the senior generation but at least two individuals in the next generation and (3) extended family, as per the societal norms of the past but the incidence of such family at present is very limited. This type of family generally comprises the families of procreation of at least two siblings or cousins in each of at least two adjacent generations and normally occupies a single dwelling by the entire large extended family.

The Santals are a patriarchal people and follow patrilineal descent. They have both consanguineal as well as affinal relatives. Their kinship terminologies are mainly of classificatory type. Side by side, descriptive terms are also found. For example, the term for father's brother are the same, the only difference being marked by the addition of descriptive words like *Gongo* (elder) or *Hopen* (younger); so also the terms for father's brother's wife and of the mother are same, only modified by addition of descriptive terms, younger or elders.

Father	Apum Now also Baba
Father's brother	Gongo Apum (Elder)
Hopen Apum (Younger)	
Mother	Ayo
Father's brother's wife	Gongo Ayo (elder)
Hopen Ayo (Younger)	

The strong community fellowship feeling of the Santal is demonstrated in the few very important and crucial stages in the life of the individual. These are marked by the performance of certain rights in which the whole village population participates. Some of these are *Janam Chatiar* ceremonial cleaning after birth *Chacho Chatiar*, ceremony performed for giving full social rights *Bapla* or marriage ceremony, death and funeral ceremony.

Though the '*Janam Chatiar*' a Santal child becomes one of the family but he has no social right. These are given through '*Chacho Chatiar*' when the child is four to twelve years old. This rite is not performed for the families as they are not considered full-fledged members of Santals society.

'Bapla' is the term generally used for marriage by the Santals. Adult marriage is the norm. The essential features of marriage are *Sindurdan* and serving marriage feast hereafter the wife passes into her husband's family.

Inheritance

At present in Santal society the sons generally inherit the property of the father in equal shares. A daughter generally does not get any share of his father's property. When a Santal has no son but only a daughter, then the daughter inherits the self acquired property of her father in some cases. A daughter is generally maintained but his father or brother till her marriage. They also bear all marriage expenses. If a man dies without sons or daughters, the widow is allowed one calf, one *Bandi* (10 to 12 *maunds*) of paddy, *bati* or one cloth, and returns to her parent's house, unless, as sometimes happen she is kept by her husband's younger brother. A widow with minor sons keeps all the property in her possession, the grand father and uncle seeing that she does not waste it. If the widow remarries before the sons are married the grandfather and uncles take possession of all the properties; the mother has no right to get anything, but sometimes a calf is given to her out of kindness.

However, the widow has the right over the property which she brings from her father's house during marriage. She has absolute right over her own earnings and personal belongings. The customary laws of the Santals have not yet been codified. As a consequence of which in litigations the fate of the judgment is decided by the evidence put forwarded by the parties concerned and these often do not lead to flawless decisions. Quite often their cases are dealt with in the court in accordance Hindu Succession Act without putting sufficient weight age to their customary laws.

Political Organization

The present village or political organization of the Santals is a vestigial form of the past traditional political system. In every village there are five officers each with distinct function assigned to him. The headman is known as *Jagmanjhi*, who is assisted by a *Paramanik*, an Assistant *Paramanik* or *Jog Paramanik*, *Naiki* - the village priest and *Gorait* - the messenger. Now a days, the minor disputes are generally decided by the village *Panch*. The '*Manjoi Than*' is the usual place for communal talks and council meetings. Previously, above the village council stood the *Pargana* council which had its jurisdiction over a number of villages. But at present there are some hereditary *Parganaits* and a '*Dihuj*' for each large district which is responsible for calling the annual hunts and who presides over the *Lo Bir* or Santal 'High Court' on the night which

intervenes between the two days of hunting. This ceremonial hunting is generally held in the month of April. This is at present the highest Council recognized by the Santals. All sorts of disputes are placed before the Council for getting judgments and these are followed with strict observance of laws.

The modern panchayati system which has been introduced in the village has put a parallel mechanism and in the face of it the traditional institute is getting lesser importance day by day. With this introduction of Panchayati Raj (new system) an era of friction has been created where traditionalism competes with modernity. But because of the official recognition of the Statutory Panchayat the old system is fading away. In the village level Panchayat there is no reservation for the tribals, as a consequence of which rights and privileges of the Santals are being overshadowed by certain forces of external origin. The dominant political power of the area is getting infused in the local Panchayat bodies and this creates an inevitable conflict between the members of the society and bringing about mutual distrust amongst themselves.

Social Movements

The Santal society has been subjected to many social movements which were of endogenic in nature. These movements were all of reformistic type. Of those Kharwar movement may be mentioned which persisted for a long period. Though basically social movement it had a political undertone which played a great role in the rebellion of 1855. This Kharwar movement was led by different reformist leaders of the Santal society. Of them, name of Bhagrit may be mentioned who played a significant role around 1871. The idea underlying this movement was to emulate some Hindu rituals and practices in the life of the individuals. The emphasis was laid upon physical and mental cleanliness and patience and tolerance in daily life. Characteristically this movement did never get steep popularity or ascendance. In the later part it suffered from splits into different sects, *Babji*, *Babuji*, *safai* and *Samara*. Their common binding factor remained the same. They were the worshippers of *Ram Chando*, the epic hero Ramachandra. A section of the Kharwars later on adopted Brahmanical or Khatriya idealism and thereby adopted sacred thread. They were *Janeodhari* Santals and ultimately this later group formed a sect of their own.

These movements have in many ways disturbed the social contour of the society and injected some sorts of stratifications which were not known to this society previously. Very recently a reversal trend is noticeable in which the splinter groups formed in the past are trying to get into the core-element of the society. Political instruments are being used to establish their lost identity.

Emerging Problems

The gradual pauperization and transformation of the cultivating class to labourers have been caused by a process of deprivation. They have been dispossessed of their assets by alienation of land and dislodged from their

traditional moorings. Because of their illiteracy and poor economic condition they could not avail of the current land reform measures and the safeguards against land transformations could not come to their aid in its true sense. All these factors gradually affected the life and thinking of the population. They became conscious about their deprivation which gave rise to despair and distrust in their mind. Boddington writes, "My impression is that in the heart of a Santal or in the back of his mind a feeling of despair and hopelessness is to be found". They became suspicious about the outsiders and lost their confidence in administrative machinery. This type of situation prevailed for a pretty long time and a socio-political vacuum was created in the Orissa-Bihar-West Bengal tribal zone. This condition was capitalized for political maneuvering and the so called 'Naxalite' movements gained ground in the pockets where they reside. These movements got their roots among the tribals, more particularly among the Santals because of the philosophy of life they nature. They believe that they are here in this world only for a short time; it is just like a visit to a market. Their life is so transient that it can be compared with water drops on the leaves.

The social life of the Santals has a strong religious background. *Thakurjiu* is their supreme deity whom the Santals regard as a good god, the creator and preserver and very casually worships Him at the time of crisis. But they believe in a number of Bongas (Universal National Bongas, the House and Clan Bongas, Boundary Bongas etc). Many of these Bongas are regularly worshipped on community level as well as house hold level but the priest and by head of family with sacrifices of birds and animals to get rid of their vengeance. 'Bonga' worship is mainly done out of fear and this fear complex has engulfed their whole life and activities. That is why some have observed a passive outlook among this population and a sense of rejection towards life.

The Santals have experienced different socio-economic changes through several decades. Santals society at large because of its integrative forces could withstand these changes to a great extent. But in certain areas particularly in the field of economy some sort of maladjustments has appeared. Special reference may be made to land problems. Because of continuous land transfer and fragmentation of holdings owing to split up in the families there has been a substantial change in their economic status. With the decrease in holding sizes and losing their rights to over their land the number of owner cultivators has decreased and simultaneously the proportion of agricultural labourers and share croppers has increased. In this misbalanced condition all economic evils have played their role which ultimately created a social vacuum. There has been increased entanglement to indebtedness, rampant exploitation went on through land grabbing and ruthless eviction from their lands has pauperized them to such an extent that their whole economic fabrics have been shattered. In this frustration and despair external agencies availed of this opportunity to make political inroads in their society. In certain pockets of West Bengal, Bihar and Orissa where the Santals are found there started peasant movements. These

movements crystallized and peasant unions were formed. In the process of these movements some elements of violence were observed which challenged the age old authority. An objective condition which was prevailing in the mental make-up of the society helped a lot in this regard. In the mind of the Santals the glorious struggle of 1855 led by Sidu and Kanhu still persists. They can easily identify their immediate exploiters who are non but the descendants of the 'Dikus' (outsiders). These 'Dikus' are instrumental to bring about riots in the areas of Santal habitations in the past and a Santal cannot disassociate his past experience with the present situation. All these created a ground for lunching peasant movements in the recent past and also at present. The role of the neo-literates among the rural Santals who were once drop-outs had a substantial influence to fanning out the struggle. These neo-literates were a detachment from the society and acquired a posture of elite but to a great extent they were maladjusted having no specific hobs and remaining idle. They were infact an element of 'third culture' created in rural society by the propagation of modern education. It is an element of mixed hues of rural traditionalism and urban elitism but never fitting with the parental cultural matrix.

Side by side economic stratification has arrived in the Santal society where a distinct 'Badu' element has appeared. This happened because of getting urban jobs by those microscopic few who could complete their High School education or Under Graduate courses. They moved to urban centers for livelihood and became partly detached from their rural live and formed society amongst themselves. Their aspiration and level of living are so distinguished from their rural brethren that in most cases they are unable to provide leadership to their own folk in villages.

Though Santals are spread over a large tract of land within the jurisdiction of different States with different social environment and undergone varied changes, though historical phases have still retained their solidarity. This was possible because of their following common cultural traditions, common language, belief in common descent through myths and folklores, with same music dances and songs, having similar world view and similar idea about super natural forces. In spite of their own integrative forces they have been exposed to forces of change which ultimately affected their society.

Due to the impact of modern education there has been gradual transformation in their elite character with the formation of an educated class in their society. This educated class who are mainly in the services are facing various types of difficulties. Due to low rate of female literacy among them educated males often face problems in getting their mates from educated section and this sometimes lead to maladjustment. They sometimes marry outside their own society or religious groups at the cost of the disliking of the community and they suffer from seclusion. There are some incidences where the well qualified Santals have left their society.

The educated Santals who are living urban areas generally lead a secluded life. They cannot maintain regular contact with their community men in rural areas and in this process are gradually becoming detached from their traditional way of life.

In recent years the educated Santals are organizing movements for getting their own script (Ol Chiki) recognized officially in West Bengal. The issue remained animated for several years and that has created different cleavages in the Santals society. Some fought for regional script (Bengali), some favoured Roman script and they believe that the adoption of a new script would lead to further complications in future.

The Santals in general suffer from a complex that they are ignored and not recognized by the non-tribals. This is a factor hindering their integration with greater society. This situation provides ample opportunity to those leaders for exploiting the situation to achieve their end. Because of this they are found to organize different types of movements on different issues from time to time such as, recognition of a particular script, recognition of their language and demanding remaining of the streets by the name of their past heroes.

The popular peasant movements that are being launched in their areas mainly by outsiders could not bring about adequate economic relief. On the contrary these movements disturbed the traditional age-old relationship between the Santal peasantry and non-Santal land owning class. The enmity that was dormant through historical passage suddenly revived in different ethnic consciousness which is often misinterpreted as class polarization.

They have their own traditional Panch to settle socio-religious problems. At present the authority of this institution has been curbed down to a great extent and people rely least on the verdict of the Panch when it goes against their interest. This affects their social cohesiveness and leads to conflicts and tension.

Two most important social evils are their addition to alcoholic drinks and practice of witchcraft. It is a common experience in tribal areas that in all socio-religious activities they become intoxicated with the taking of liquor both home brewed and purchased which compels them to part with a good share of their earning. This ultimately affects their economic life, leading to indebtedness and consequently landlessness.

At present there is a tendency to present Santali songs and dances to the outside World through public gatherings, radio, cinema, etc., where real tone and genuine feature often suffer from distortion. This affects the true presentation of their culture and creates a problem of losing an important facet to their heritage.

Witchcraft appears as a dreadful element in their society. They bear fearful attitude towards it. By taking advantage of this situation some wicked

persons willfully victimize co-villagers by declaring them as witches and establish their rights and privileges by witch hunting. Adequate steps have not yet been adopted to check this belief based on falsification.

Potentials and Problems of Development

The disturbing situation prevailing in the tribal areas can be improved by adopting a rational approach to land use problem. In West Bengal after the introduction of Land Reforms Act the surplus land were vested to the Government. Though a programme has been adopted to redistribute those lands to the tribals on priority basis but the work in this direction has so far been in slow pace. In order to avail of the fullest benefit the land distribution process should be expedited.

But the surplus lands which are available in the State cannot meet up the total requirement and the size and fragmentation of the land distributed pose another problem. The acreage that would be available to a family cannot be an economic unit unless it is utilized in all resources. Fragmentation of plots further stands on the way of efficient management. Hence, emphasis should be laid on the planning of land utilization by adhering strictly to follow-up programmes such as land reclamations, restoring to original vegetations which existed previously, extending irrigational facilities and helping the farmers in their input capacity. Despite all these the quantity of land that should be available in tribal areas cannot satisfy the economic need of the concerned population. Alternative resources are therefore to be found out and utilized. Oil press was previously present in Santal villages, but this is rarely to be found now-a-days. This displacement of the traditional craft was caused by introducing exported edible oils which discouraged local growers to raise oil seeds. As a consequence of it the poor tribals are to buy edible oil (Mustard, Rapeseeds, etc.) from the grocer's shop which in most cases is of sub-standard type. Hence, by introducing oil seed cultivation in tribal areas and installing oil press in their villages the problem can be met partially, it not fully. This is an example how mobilization of economic resources can be made in Santal villages. Introducing sugar-cane cultivation among those tribal farmers and extending facility for extracting cane-juice and making of *gur* (Molasses) will be another proposition to this effect. There are very few farmers among the Santals who cultivate sugar-cane in their fields, even in those few cases the strain which they use are of inferior quality and often suffer from diseases. These should be replaced by improved variety.

The term 'Social Forestry' which has so loudly been talked now-a-days, made little headway in Santal villages. Intensive drive should be made to popularize plantation of certain species like Lemon, Papaya, Drum Stick, etc. It may be interesting to note that a pair of lemon is sold in cities and towns at a price almost equal to that of an orange. Drum Stick and Papaya are becoming dearer in urban areas. So, all these plantations will help the tribals for their

economic betterment. This venture has very little risk in it, if marketing potentiality is properly utilized.

The Santals have their own herbal medicine system. There are herb doctors and medicine-men who can identify local roots, leaves, stems, seeds and fruits of various species of plants and prescribe those for specific ailments. Now-a days because of disuse of the traditional methods many of the plant species have been forgotten. There remains ample scope to find out these species and to test their efficacy in treatment. Like many other oriental herbs which can be used for modern laboratory for preparation of medicine those species found in tribal areas can be utilized for commercial purpose. In this regard growing of herbal plants can be encouraged among the Santals. Many of the herbal plants are being used as basic raw materials for drug laboratories. Cultivation of these medicinal plants has got commercial potentiality.

There is dearth of supply in Kerosene Oil in rural areas; its spiraling price is also affecting the consumers. The tribal buyers are thus hard hit by this price rise. In this regard a substitute for Kerosene Oil can be prescribed which will relieve the present crisis. Plantation of castor in and around homestead may be suggested. Oil extracted from the seeds can be used for home consumption for lighting lamps.

Consumption of fuel in households has become an everyday problem in rural areas. Some sorts of substitute from local resources are to be found out so that tribals may be directly benefited from it.

Due to the absence of storing facilities of green vegetables farmers are to sell out their produce at a low price to the middlemen. Those products are often brought to the urban centers in relayed mechanism which ultimately attribute to the artificial price rise for which the ultimate buyers are to pay exorbitant prices. In this mechanism both the real growers and buyers become looser. This may be checked to a considerable extent by introducing food preservation and processing units in tribal areas. This will provide justice at both the ends.

Scientific poultry keeping should be encouraged. In this regard keeping of fowls will be beneficial to them. Collecting centers for eggs should be within easy reach of the tribals. There is over increasing demand for eggs in urban industrial areas. So if the marketing machinery is established this may encourage the villagers.

Contextually it may be mentioned here that in West Bengal there has been practically no large-scale duckery. In tribal areas there are still ponds and such other water resources where duckery can be established. The real problem which is to be counted in this regard for setting up poultry and duckery lies in the supply of feed. This feed can be procured and by proper research local based materials should be utilized for preparation of compound feed.

In addition, some small-scale industries should be developed in selected tribal pockets where articles for peoples, consumption may be manufactured (cutlery, plastic/polythene goods wooden toys and other wood materials, packaging materials, etc.).

A few suggestions have been made above by looking into the economic potentiality of the tribal areas. Some of the suggested measures are not altogether unknown to the tribal. But the steps that will have to be taken is to intensify the extension work and giving primary economic support to the tribal. There are a few proposals which are quite new to the tribals and for that purpose training is essentially required for engaging the trained personnel in workshops. A few workshops are to be established in tribal areas. In all cases the marketing machinery is to be fully equipped. All these activities of investment/training, marketing, etc. require institutional patronage and the same may be entrusted with the LAMPS (Large size Multipurpose Co-operative Societies) now being operated in tribal areas.

In the past the Santals used to lead a corporate life and felt secured in that system. But due to certain external forces the Santals lost that corporate life and became individualistic and a sense of insecurity emerged. This is the reason why they are not able to make any new economic venture in their individual capacity. The lack of competitiveness did not favour them in the development of entrepreneurship among them. On the other hand those few educated amongst them who are employed in different types of services achieved that aspiration level which does not fit into their traditional value system. In other word it may be stated that two contrary forces are playing part simultaneously in Santal-life one is low achieving motivation and high aspiration level. Hitherto the traditional Santal society was more or less homogenous in nature and maintained tranquility. With the introduction of new social value system the society suffered from several contradictions which dictated them.

Our foremost thinking about the development of the Santals should be laid upon their past tradition from which the future prospect would emerge. Rapid industrialization will in no way help their economy and society. They have been employed as labourers only and industrial sector is one of them. This only helps to exploit the labour potentiality of a society but could not generate economic power for whole-some development in a sustained way. This mechanism has largely failed to instill social security. Because of this failure the Santal society as a whole is suffering from several drawbacks. Her it is not proposed to exclude the employment of the Santals in industrial sector but in doing so it to be taken into account that on the one hand the industry gets the help of the Santal labour for its growth and on the other hand there should be a feedback process which will benefit the Santals too. So, there should be a compulsion on industries to look into the welfare of the tribals so that the measures in this line percolate at the village level. As for example, the Santals

living in industrial areas in no time acquire a characteristic of urban buyer. His consumption habit is also changed. He becomes accustomed to taking sugar, uses soap for toilet purpose etc. After his return to village in the off season or permanently he retires those newly acquired consumer habits which only drains out his hard earned money. Here the industrial sector can help the villagers. The villagers may be taught cultivation of sugarcane and extract *gur* for their consumption, soap manufacturing industries may be started within small-scale, oil press may be set up for producing edible oils. These will save their money and in the process of industrialization they will not lose everything but gain something. All these activities are to be financed and supervised by the welfare units of the industries. If these ideas are translated in good spirit then there will be healthy relationship between the industries and the Santals. A social justice in real sense will then be brought to the villagers. This demand for looking into industrialization in the new perspective.

Santals still practise cultivation of certain crops (Maize, Millet, etc.) of local variety to a very limited extent. For want of encouragement these are gradually failing in disuse. Instead of replacing the said type of cultivation by introducing new crops the indigenous cropping pattern should be retained by introducing hybrid strain. The lost crafts and traditional skill should be revived by looking into its economic prospects.

While drawing up programmes for development for the tribe the basic constraint is faced in the lacking of resource data of the respective areas particularly in the land use and cropping pattern and the existing method of land management. Due to the lack of these data programmes have been drawn at the microscopic level and microscopic planning of the respective areas has been neglected. It is encouraging to note that some realistic approach has recently been adopted to overcome the difficulties. Base line surveys are now being conducted in tribal Sub-Plan. It is expected that with the inflow of basic data on various aspects of economy microscopic planning will get importance in the overall planning system.

CUSTOMARY LAW AND JUSTICE : A CASE STUDY AMONG SANTALS OF BALASORE DISTRICT *

*M. Acharya*¹

Introduction

No society whether simple or complex is lawless, in the former it is unwritten and lacks documentation, whereas in the latter it is written. In the simple, preliterate or pre-industrial societies law is manifested through social customs, norms, sanctions, taboos or negative sanctions and they are backed by physical force. In other words they have enforceability and the customary law is by nature and spirit obligatory.

According to Stephen Fuchs, "Primitive law is more or less identical with ethical norms and public opinion". The ethical precepts and norms are handed down from generation to generation not only through initiation, but also by an informal and occasional education by the elderly members of the tribe. But the observance or primitive law and custom is enforced most effectively by the pressure of public opinion as it is mostly based on kinship bond. Furthermore, the remarkable faithful observance of the tribal law is the felling of inter-dependence and mutual obligation among the members of a particular tribe.

Customary law refers to the rules that are transmitted from generation to generation through social inheritance. In a close-knit simple or tribal society, the people themselves want to live according to customs backed by social sanctions to save them from objections and ridicule of the society and they do not have to resort to the original thinking on every aspect. Customary law acts as a means of informal social control as includes those methods developed by themselves according to the needs of the society and these are mores, traditions and customs. The social control is affected by awarding the obedient and punishing the disobedient or miscreant.

* Published in ADIBASI, Vol. 30, No.3, THRTL, Bhubaneswar 1990, pp.45-49

¹ Lecturer, Nabakrushna Choudhury Centre for Development Studies, Bhubaneswar.

The tribal societies are governed by their customary laws which are framed by taking into consideration their societal values, ethos, customs, norms and belief systems. All aspects of their life are governed by these laws. These set of rules which varies from tribe to tribe are maintained and transmitted from generation to generation mostly by oral tradition. Among the large tribal communities, such as the Kondh, the Saora, the Gond the sub-divisions are many and these sub-divisions in course of time have become separate indigenous and culturally distinctive groups. As such there is marked difference in the customary laws among these sub-divisions.

The present paper is the outcome of field study undertaken among the Santals in Niligiri block of Balasore district during 1988-89.

Techniques of data Collection:

Besides case studies, the data were collected from the field by means of structured schedules and groups discussions.

The study village:

The village Pattamsahi which comes under Niligiri block of Balasore district is situated at a distance of 44 Kms, from district headquarters. The village is named after the late Pattam Majhi who was considered to be the oldest inhabitant and founder of the village. During his days he was appointed as the Chowkidar by the then king of Niligiri. The age-sex breakup of the Santal population in the village is given below:

TABLE-1
Age-sex breakup of the population

SL. No.	Age-group	Population			Percentage to total population (6)
		Male	Female	Total	
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	
1	0-14	34	28	62	38.28
2	15-39	18	27	45	27.77
3	40-59	25	13	38	23.46
4	60+	10	7	17	10.49
Total		87	75	162	100.00

The above table reveals that the total Santal population of the village is 162 and here the males out-number the females. The distribution of population in different age-groups shows that the age-group of (0-14) records the highest percentage (32.28 per cent), whereas the age-group of (60+) the lowest percentage (10.49 per cent).

Primitive law is more or less based on moral and ethical norms (Fuchs, 41). This definition holds good for all the tribal communities including the Santals of the study village. Among the Santals there is a corporate body of legal

institution based on their customs and traditions. Through this institution the customary laws of the society are enforced among the members. The rigid social customs, norms, values, ethos and taboos are considered to be very essential cohesive factors for maintaining a healthy society, and violation of any of these by any person is considered offensive by the society. Apart from the social laws the positive and negative sanctions enforce certain check on an individual for committing any mistake or crime besides playing a vital role in strengthening the solidarity of the community life. In other words, sanction is a social force which brings or impels a person to behave in conformity with the rule recognized by the society.

Positive sanction is the observance of social standards which is approved by the society. The individual is held respect and thereby his position is secured in the society.

Negative sanction is the non-observance of social standards. The person who violates the code is punished. The negative sanction has two aspects, such as, unorganized. While the former means punishment by itself caused due to break of any taboo, the latter refers to oath, ordeal and trial.

Social Taboos

They have certain taboos, the breach of which leads to punishment. These are:

1. If a woman gets upon a thatch.
2. If a woman engages in ploughing.
3. If a woman sprinkles water on his elder sister-in-law after the end of flower festival or on her husband's elder brother.
4. Any unusual behavior with other low caste people.

In case of violation of any of such taboos the offenders has to undergo various types of ritual purifications. In the above mentioned cases, the woman has to go through religious expiration by taking holy water (water holy by dipping *tulsi* leaf mixed with cow-dung). Then she is to lie prostrated before the Jahar Era and Marang Buru, their village deities and promise before them not to repeat this mistake in future.

In other cases, if a man has taken food from any other lower caste people and wants to get himself purified, he has to go to the Jalghat (bathing ghat) where a Santal barber shaves him on receipt of cash. Then he takes a purificatory bath in the river. Thereafter the village elders who have accompanied him fix a twig of Pipal tree on the mud near the bank. After this while the man comes out of Water with the barber, the villagers shout *haribal* thrice. Then the palms of the offender are tied in seven fold by means of a string with the planted twig. The barber sprinkles holy water on the body of the delinquent for the second time amidst

another shout of *haribol*. Then the offender is set free by unfolding the knots and asked to eat a brass coin along with a pinch of cow-dung and some *tulsi* leaves. Following this, he is escorted to the village when the village deities are ceremonially worshipped. After this, the offender is re-admitted to the society and he arranges a feast for the headman and elders on this occasion.

Marriage:

The marriage in their society is performed in accordance with the set of rules framed for that purpose. They perform village and clan exogamy. Marriage between father-in-law and daughter-in-law, husband's elder brother and younger brother's wife is forbidden. There is a belief among the Santals that marrying within one's own clan and own blood relatives brings supernatural anger on those persons who are engaged in such contract, ultimately leading to extinction of the family. When there is any apprehension of occurrence of such type of illegitimate union they try to enforce check through persuasion. In spite of this, if such marriages occur, the offender's are punished by the inter-village Council. In case the village Council fails to arrive at any decision in this regard the matter is referred to Pargana Panchyat, the inter- village Council. As per the decision in the inter-village Council the couple is separated from one another by living a penal feast, each contributing 2 pots of rice beer, 2 hens and one goat. In case they disobey the decision of the council the offenders are excommunicated or ostracized from the village and society. This is called *Bitlaha*.

The payment of bride-price (Gonang Taka) is compulsory in their society which includes 2 calves, 1 pair of bullock, 1 pig and 3 sarees and cash varying from Rs. 3 to Rs. 50 depending upon the economic condition of the household, if the bride-price is not paid within the stipulated date and time the case is referred to the village Panchayat and generally double the amount of actual bride-price is paid after which marriage is solemnized.

In case of breaking of negotiation after fixation of marriage date, the party responsible for such act is liable to return back the articles received by the other party.

Illicit relationship with any consanguineal relations is strongly dealt with and persons involved in such act are not only purified but also are heavily fined, both in cash and kind. The amount of fine paid in cash varies from Rs. 60- Rs.80 besides some heads of pigs and hens and some quantity of rice beer.

Both rape and adultery are condemned in the society. Whoever commits adultery is fined at least Rs.60 besides 2 bottles of rice beer, one pig, one hen and some cash. An outsider involved in such act, is killed instantly when caught. But if he is living in the village as animate, his case is dealt with in similar manner as would have been done for any member of the tribe.

The person who is involved in rape is fined with Rs. 60 in addition to one hen for sacrifice, 2 pots of rice beer and is asked to marry the girl after payment of required bride-price.

If a person is found having pre-marital relationship with a girl, he is asked to marry the girl. Besides, he has to pay a cash fine varying from Rs. 50 to Rs. 100 along with one pig and one hen. Further the married couple if belongs to the same clan may be ostracized.

A few case-studies relating to different types of crime are cited below:

Court- Traditional Panchayat (Jarwa)

Date- February, 1980

Parties- (1) B. Hembrum

Vs.

(2) A.B. Majhi, wife of D. Majhi.

B. Hembrum was in illicit relationship with A. B. Majhi, W/o D. Majhi in the absence of her husband. Both of them were caught red-handed. The Jarwa fined B. Hembrum with Rs. 60, 2 pots of rice beer, 2 *pauti* of rice and hen.

Charge-Rape

Court-Pargana

Place of occurrence- Botisahi

Date-January, 1982

Parties- (1) R. Kisku, (25) of Botisahi

Vs

(2) M. (20) of Botisahi

R. Kisku of Botisahi caught hold of M. in the nearby forest and raped her. On receipt of the complaint the Jarwa passed order to R. Kisku. Then it was referred to Pargana (inter-village council). Parganait (Head) fined R. Kisku with Rs. 50, 2 hens for sacrifice and 3 pots of rice beer.

Charge-Pre-marital sex relationship

Court- Jarwa (village Council)

Place of occurrence- Jambuni

Date of occurrence-1983

Parties- (1) C. Soren (28) of Jambani

Vs

(2) Father of D. Hansda (22) of Jambani.

C. Soren fell in love with D. Hansda and had illicit relationship with her in her house. Father of D. Hansda complained before Majhialam on receipt of complain from her daughter. Jarwa passed order to C. Soren to accept the girl by paying Rs. 70, one Pig, one hen, 30 pots of rice beer (*handia*) as bride-price (gonory) to the father-in-law- and Rs.40 as fine, for violation of social custom. That girl was also accepted by C. Soren.

Legal Status of Women

If a married man has no child, he can marry a second one. Bride price has to be paid in both the cases.

If a man has more than one wife, they inherit the property equally.

The daughter has no share in her father's property, provided there is male child.

In case of death of the husband, the widow inherits everything, if her husband was living separately. But in case of joint living, the widow is given maintenance only.

Divorce

A husband may divorce his wife in the grounds of barrenness, adultery, desertion or failure to full-fill the promises of marriage. A woman may also break the wedlock, due to certain behavior of her husband, like desertion, cruelty, or flagrant ill usage or non-support. A divorced woman is accepted in her parental clan if she remarries another man, the perspective husband will have to give the bride-price to the previous husband as compensation.

A case study is given below:

Case Study No.1

Charge-Divorce

Court- Jarwa (village Council or Panchayat)

Place of occurrence- Botisahi

Date of occurrence-1982

Parties- (1) M. Kisku (22) of Botisahi

Vs

(2) B. Kisku (20) of Botisahi.

B. Kisku having illicit relationship with M. of Botisahi, went to his house and stayed with him for one year. When she becomes the mother of a child, a joint meeting of the villagers and the Panchayat (Jarwa) was called for. The bride-price was fixed and their marriage was regularized. After some days M. again fell in love with another girl of Khuntadia. On receipt of complaint from B. Kisku Majhialam (headman in consultation with the members of the Panchayat fined M. Kisku with Rs. 60 and further warned them for ex-communication in case they are further involved.

Law of Inheritance

When a man dies leaving behind his sons and widow, the property is divided equally among the sons. In the partition of property the person or the son who keeps the widow, gets one more share for her maintenance and generally it is the duty of the eldest son. A reasonable portion of the property of deceased is given to the widow, if she wants to live separately. The property is

only divide after the death of the father. A man having the second wife, who has been socially accepted, then her children also get share at par with the children of the first wife. If a man dies without any issue then the property goes to the same clan members who were closer to that deceased man. In case of the remarriage of the widow, the property of the deceased remains with his brothers. If a widower gets married, then the children of both wives get equal share.

The eldest son supports his old and invalid parents. In case a person does not support, then he is outcasted and some willing party has to maintain the old parents.

In the domain of partition and inheritance, the researcher has found that sons share equally; the daughter succeeds when there is no son to the man who died.

Conclusion

Although the Santals of Niligiri Block have no legal institution, there are social mechanisms which serve the same function as legal institution in civilized society.

The laws and enforcement of justice of the tribe is relatively less crystallized and modernized. The leaders dealing with this stick to old ideas, values and social norms and operate in traditional social structure.

The society is based on customs and traditions or on customary law. The brethren carry on according to customs and obey it to avoid ridicule and embracement.

Notes:-*The researcher has used pseudonyms in the Case-studies.*

Bibliography:

1. Radcliffe-Brown, A. R. 1952, Primitive law- in *Structure and Function in Primitive Society*.
2. Bohannan, Poul 1963, *Social Anthropology*.
3. Fuchs, Stephen 1963, *The Origin of Man and His Culture* - Asia Publishing House, Bombay.
4. Hoebel, E. A. 1958, *Man in the Primitive World*, Mc. Graw-Hill Book Company. Inc., New York.
5. Mair, Lucy1972, *An Introduction to Social Anthropology*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.

SANTAL DURBAR AND ITS DEMOCRATIC ROLE *

*Suresh Chandra Murmu*¹

*Nilamadhaba Kanhar*²

ABSTRACT

After India's independence a very systematic effort is being made by the government to bring the tribal groups to the mainstream population. In this process many rich traditional cultural heritage of our tribes is being lost forever. Different factors such as modernization, rapid industrialization, spread of education, development of communication and acculturation has brought drastic changes in the traditional structure. But many traditional socio-political organizations still play a very significant role in maintaining law and order in the intra and inter village levels. Present empirical study is a humble attempt to highlight the traditional political organization, specially the institution of Durbar of the Santal society. This study was conducted in the Santal villages of Rairangpur area in Mayurbhanj district. Special emphasis has also been made to understand the role of traditional leaders like Pargana and Majhi and their democratic way of decision making by taking the opinion of the fellowmen. They are not only maintaining the law and order but also preserving and reviving the culture of the Santal society.

Key words: Sasang Beda, Durbar, Sarna Dharam, Sakhikate, Patia Bered.

* Published in ADIVASI, Vol. 54, Nos.1&2, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar,2014, pp.84-92

¹ Lecturer, P.G. Dept. of Anthropology, Sambalpur University, Jyoti Vihar- 768019.

² Museum Guide, Tribal Museum, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar-751003.

Introduction

India is a country of more than 600 tribal communities with its peculiar traditional structures. Various factors such as rural-urban migration, globalization, emergence of newly moneyed classes and emergence of modern democratic and bureaucratic institutions have weakened the traditional structure to varied degree depending on the ethnic groups and the area they live in. However, paradoxically most of them are still in favor of practicing their traditional customs and practices to maintain equilibrium in the society.

The tribe, Santal is one of the advanced and numerically dominant tribal communities of Orissa. Santals are also found in the states of West Bengal, Bihar, Assam and Jharkhand. Santal were divided into 12 clans in '*Sasang Beda*'- the so called place of origin. From *Sasang Beda* they migrated towards east and settled in Chotnagpur plateau (Murmu 1994). From Chotnagpur plateau they migrated to different parts of India. Santals have well preserved their traditional socio-cultural practices too. The rise of Santal sub-nationalism through the development of *Olchiki* script and a separate Jharkhand state has made the Santals to think more about the preservation and continuity of their good old culture. Here in this paper, the case of traditional political organization especially the institution of '*Durbar*' has been cited for the purpose. The present study was conducted in Rairangpur area of Mayurbhanj district in the state of Odisha.

Methodology

For the present empirical study various anthropological methods have been used for a depth understanding of the Santal Durbar. Only qualitative data has been collected using observation method (both participant and non-participant), interview method, case study method, FGD etc. Several Durbar meetings were observed to understand the entire process and how final decisions are taken in a very democratic way. Key informants like Majhi (village head) and Parganas were interviewed separately to understand the structure of the organization as well as their role and perception on the institution of Durbar. Besides, common people were also interviewed to have an idea about their level of understanding and direct participation in decision making process. Using Case study method various cases have been collected to justify the institution is still functioning in the Santal society even with the existence of modern legal system. Focused Group Discussions were conducted to cross check and understand the different dimensions of stated problem.

Santal Traditional Political Organization

A political organization may be defined as the aspect of social organization related to the management of public policy, social, cultural and law and order in the society. All society has rules of conduct but rules are not automatically obeyed. They have to be enforced in some way by someone or other, if the rules are held to be important for the society's continuance and well

being. The Santals have their own traditional political organization for the maintenance of law, order & peace in the society.

Describing role of headman, Clyde Kluckhohn and Dorothea Leighton (1974) have mentioned that, “Headman have no power of coercion. Decisions as to community policy can be reached only by the consensus of a local meeting”. In Santal society, the system of administration has been divided into four levels, such as, ‘*Atu*’ or village level, ‘*Saonta level*,’ ‘*Pir level*’ and ‘*Disam level*’.

Hierarchy of Santal Leaders in Ascending Order

Majhi	Saonta Majhi	Pargana	Desh Pargana
Single Village	6-7 Villages	50-60 Villages	At State Level

It is worth mentioning that a “*Patta*” (a license / Identity Card) is issued by the Adivasi Socio-Educational & Cultural Association (ASECA), Rairangapur, Mayurbhanj, Odisha to all *Desh Pargana* and *Parganas* to protect them from the action of police and modern court.

According to an organization called ‘All India Majhi Madowa’ (Bharat Jakat Majhee Madowa), Paschim Medinipur West Bengal, the Santal system of administration has been divided in to seven levels.

Single village	Number of villages	Muluk	Sub-division	District	State level	India
Majhi	Pir Pargana	Muluk Pargana	Tallat Pargana	Jilla Pargana	Desh Pargana	Disom Pargana

Membership in the Village Level:

At the village level, “*Majhi*” or village headman is the highest authority; he is selected once in a year by villagers (only one male from a family). Earlier this prestigious position was hereditary in nature, and it was ordinarily passing to the eldest son of the former headman. *Majhi* does not get salary for this position. Next to *Majhi* is *Parnik*. *Parnik* is a deputy *Majhi*. Then comes the position of *Jog Majhi* (Assistant of *Majhi*). Next in this order is *Godet* who acts as a messenger and lastly, *Atu Mone Hal* (Villagers) who are the permanent members of the traditional village council (Murmu 1994). At the village level, officials are elected and nominated in the month of *Magh* (January and February). In the village Durbar, the penalty money collected from the offenders is usually shared by all in the form of feast. As regards the power of *Majhi*, Datta-Majumdar (1956) mentioned that, “By the police rules of 1856, the *Majhi* or Headman of every Santal village and the *Pargana* or Head of a group of villages were entrusted with police duties”. Time and again various researchers have established the fact that in all village matters, the male Santals of the village meet and *Majhi* or Head

man acts as the president and gives the meeting a firm lead. W. G. Archer (1975) has established that in the village level Majhi or Headman has the power to decide each and every matter and he has also mentioned about the organization of the Santal that at the "Tribe" level which is known as Santal parliament or High Court is composed of the Headman of five villages."

Saonta Majhi

There is a position of *Saonta Majhi* for 6 to 7 villages. He is chosen by the *Majhis* of those 6 or 7 villages. Sometimes, few cases which cannot be decided in the village level Durbar are forwarded to *Saonta Majhi* for its resolution.

Pir Level (Membership)

A *Pir* consists of 50 to 60 villages and it is the middle unit of the system. *Pargana* is the head of the *Pir*. He is called Pir Pargana. He is elected by the *Majhis* of the villages once in every three years. A person can be a *Pargana* for many years if he gets support from the *Majhis*. *Pargana* gets a special share of money which is collected from accused as punishment in the *Pir* level Durbar. *Pir Godet* is nominated by *Pargana*. He acts as a messenger and his duty is to spread message regarding forthcoming Durbars and other meetings.

Disam Level (State Level)

This is the highest level of administration in the Santal Society. Undecided disputes in the *Pir* level are resolved in *Disam* level Durbars and other meetings. It is headed by Disom Pargana who is elected by *Pir Parganas* once in every three years. No specific salary, but a special share is given to him from the amount collected in *Disam* level Durbar from the accused. Another post is *Disam Godet*, who is nominated by *Desh Pargana*. His tenure is also three years.

Role and Responsibility of Traditional Leaders:

In the village level Durbar, *Majhi* (Village headman) presides over the meetings. He summons the Durbar and other village level meetings. He gets the message first regarding *Pir* level and *Disam* level Durbar and other meetings and informs the villagers. *Majhi* gives final decision after consulting villagers (*Atu Mone Hol*) in village level Durbars. *Majhi* is a prestigious position, who has the knowledge of customary laws and regulations. He was also impartial in judgment, honest, expert in argument, efficient in motivation and economically sound. History of the village is preserved in the tradition handed down concerning the headman's ancestry (Culshaw 2004). *Majhi* represents his village in higher level Durbars. Earlier when the Santals were the rulers in their land, *Majhi* had the power to distribute land to the villagers. Now-a-days, *Majhi* also acts as the village priest in few villages.

Parnik is a deputy *Majhi*. In the absence of *Majhi* he presides over the village level durbars and other meetings. He also monitors the works of the office bearers and brings them to the notice of the villagers.

Jog Majhi also plays important role in village level administration. The Santali term '*Jogh*' means 'always ready'. He acts as an assistant of the *Majhi*. His responsibility is to see that whether the discipline is maintained during village dance and no mischief is committed by anybody. During birth, marriage and death rituals, he is the next to *Majhi* to attend and with the permission of *Majhi*, he arranges necessary persons to make the ceremony successful. *Godet* is the other personnel who also play a very important role in the arrangements of Durbar and other meetings. He acts as a messenger and also collects dues from the houses for a feast in connection with village level worships in *Jaher Thaan* and other places. On the advice of *Majhi*, he informs all the villagers about Durbars and other meetings. He functions strictly as per the directions given by the *Majhi*.

At the *Pir* level, *Pir Pargana* presides over the meetings. He is the administrative head of the *Pir*. Undecided village and inter village disputes are brought to his notice and he tries to resolve the cases in consultation with the *Manjhs* in *Pir* level Durbar. His responsibility is to arrange the place and time of the Durbars and send message to all the *Majhis* of the *Pir*. *Pir Godet* is nominated by *Pargana* and his duty is to inform all the *Majhis* regarding *durbar* and other meetings on the advice of *Pir Pargana*. He must immediately pin point the defaulting *Majhi* and guide him for corrective steps. He also makes arrangements of quarterly meeting with all his *Majhis* to discuss various issues of Santal society and culture.

At the *Disam* level, *Desh Pargana* presides over the *durbar* meetings. Undecided disputes in the *Pir* level are resolved in the *Disam* Durbar. Mostly social disputes related to marriage are decided at this level. *Desh Pargana* makes final decision after consulting *Pir Parganas* and *Majhis*. He fixes the date and place of *Disam* level Durbars. *Disam Godet* acts as a messenger and informs *Pir Parganas* regarding forthcoming Durbar meetings.

Durbar and its Importance

Societies are also characterized by internal conflict and competition between persons and groups which need to be worked out or controlled in some way. Conflicts occur in all societies and are not necessarily unfortunate or harmful. Even in Band societies, old and young, sick and healthy, men and women do not want the same thing at the same time. Every culture therefore must have structural provisions for resolving conflicts of interest in an orderly fashion and for preventing conflicts from escalating into disruptive confrontations.

Santal Durbar is a village council ('*Kulhi Durup*' as mentioned by George E. Somers, 1977) in which varieties of issues and disputes in the *Santal* society are resolved. At the village level Durbar, disputes like husband and wife conflict, witchcraft and sorcery, inter family conflict, disputes relating to

marriage, adultery, land, conflicts related to cattle, misbehaviour with a woman etc. are resolved. But in *Pir* level and *Disam* level *Durbar*, inter village disputes related to marriage, inter caste marriage, adultery and undecided disputes in the villages level are resolved. Very serious cases like murder are directly referred to local police station by village head. Most striking feature of this traditional institution is that cases are resolved in the same day of registration. Except the cases which are not decided in the lower level take little time but within one month the victim gets justice in a very democratic way. So *Durbar* plays a significant role in the Santal society.

Process of Decision Making in Santal Durbar

As mentioned earlier, Santals have divided the unit of administration into four systematic levels. So *Durbars* are also held in four levels. In the village level *Durbar Majhi* summons the meetings after receiving a case. *Godet* informs both accused and victims and also witnesses if any on the advice of *Majhi* regarding the time and place of *Durbar*. In the morning *Godet* informs all the villagers about the meeting. A speaker is nominated from the audience before starting the process, whose duty is to ask questions (*Eejhar* in Santali) to the accused, victims and witnesses. The Speaker first asks *Godet* regarding the purpose of assembly. *Godet* replies that "*Majhi* told me to call the meeting". Then *Majhi* elucidates the matter in brief and mentions the name of victim and accused. Similarly in case of *Pir* level *Durbar Pir Pargana* explains the purpose of meeting and in *Disam* level *Desh Pargana* explains the matter in brief. After revealing the names of victim and accused, they are asked to pay an amount of money which is called "*Laj Dah Mandi*" or "*Patia Bered*"; a kind of registration fee. This amount varies from village level to *Disam* level.

Then Speaker solicits the victim, accused and witness respectively about the issue / disputes in detail. They have to take an oath that is "*Dharam Sakhi Kate*" means "Keeping religion as witness". After hearing from both the sides and from the witnesses, *Majhi* consults important and elderly persons, if any in the village *Durbar (Atu mone hol)* and announces final decision. In the *Pir* level *Durbar Pir Pargana* makes final decision after consulting the *Majhis*. While deciding the penalty in cash, presiding authority also takes opinion of the audience and the decision is finalized in a democratic way. If both the parties are found responsible for the dispute, then usually both are punished. If the amount is too much for the culprit, then he/she is given specific time period to pay. If the person does not obey the final decision, he and his family may be prohibited to avail all the facilities in the villages as well as society and no body co-operates with them which is called '*Baron* or *Nim Dhaurah*' (Ex-Communication).

Administration of Fine

In Santal *Durbar*, the decisions are always accompanied by some form of punishment out of which the usual one is the payment of cash fine.

(a) At the Disam Level Durbar

The fine collected at this level is divided into three equal divisions. One share is given to victim, second share goes to *Desh* (*Desh Pargana*, *Parganas*, *Majhis* and other participant) and third share is deposited in ASECA (Adivasi Socio-Educational and Cultural Association). Such fines are usually collected in the form of cash.

(b) At the Pargana Level Durbar

In a similar way, here also fine amount is divided into three equal divisions in the following manner.

- (1) One share for victim.
- (2) Second share for *Desh* (Pargana, Majhis and others).
- (3) Third share goes to ASECA (Adivasi Socio-Educational and Cultural Association).

But in case of village level meetings, fine amount is generally shared by the participants in the form of feasts. No special share is given to *Majhi* who presides over the village level meetings. Victim also does not get any compensation at the village level. When a victim files a case before *Majhi* and says that he/she is not safe in her/his house (Especially in case of husband and wife disputes), it is the responsibility of the *Majhi* to provide her/him food, shelter and protection till the case is decided in the village level Durbar.

Democratic Principles and Laws

Laws and principles in Santal society have not been recorded so far. So they are orally remembered and transmitted from generation to next generation. While making a final decision regarding punishment, earlier resolved cases are taken as precedents. There are democratic rules and regulations which are strictly followed.

- (1) Women are not allowed to participate in the Durbar except as accused, victim and witness.
- (2) Durbars are held in the day time only.
- (3) Weapons and musical instruments are strictly prohibited.
- (4) The persons who used bad languages are immediately punished.
- (5) Drunkard persons are not allowed to speak.
- (6) Nobody is allowed to speak by pointing finger.

Democratic Ways of Resolving the Problems in the Society

Disputes in the Santal Durbar are resolved in a democratic way where public opinion plays a very important role and considered by the leader while making final decisions. Different types of matters / disputes are decided in Durbar. Here are few resolved cases to highlight the nature of conflict and decision making in the Durbar.

Case -1

The first case is from Pahadpur village. This case was resolved in the village level Durbar. Laxman Besra and his wife with two children are the residents of Pahadpur village in Mayurbhanj district of Odisha. Laxman Besra had gone outside for few months in search of work. So his wife and children were staying alone in the village. In course of time Heti Bersa (Laxman's wife) committed adultery with Rajen Hansdah, a person from the same village. When Laxman came back and knew the matter, he decided to divorce his adulterous wife. So he filed a case before Majhi who summoned the Durbar meeting. After knowing the truth final decision was Rajen Hansdah had to marry Laxman Basra's wife and pay the entire amount of bride price to Laxman which was paid during their marriage.

Case -2

Here is another village level Durbar case which happened in Uparbeda village (Mayurbhanj district). A person named Kali Charan Tudu had love affairs with a girl of the same village. Girl became pregnant. But Kalicharan refused to marry her. Girl's parents reported the case to *Majhi* of the village. In the Durbar it was decided that Kalicharan have to marry the girl, otherwise action would be taken against him. So Kalicharan married her and bond was signed by mentioning that if Kalicharan and his family torture her, further action would be taken by the council.

Case-3

A case study about a recent case decided in the *Pir level Durbar* that was attended by Gaichand Murmu, a person of Pahadpur village of Mayurbhanj district in Odisha. A girl from Kundrugutu village was *Jabar Itut* (forcefully putting of vermilion on an unmarried girl's head). In Santal society when vermilion of any colour is put on a girl's head by any male person, she is considered as married in the society. Person who *Itut* the girl was a non-tribal. Girl's parents reported the incident to the village head (*Majhi*) but he failed to resolve the matter at the village level Durbar. They appealed to *Pir Pargana* and in the *Pir level Durbar*, it was resolved and the accused was punished. The fine amount was Rs. 32,000 out of which Rs. 15,000/- was given to the girl as compensation and rest was divided among the *Pargana* and *Majhis* who attended the Durbar. A case was also filed in nearby police station and the accused was arrested.

Case -4

This incident was happened in Pahadpur village. Madhu Purty, a man from Ho community and Dumni Murmu (a lady from Santal community) of the same village loved each other and decided to marry. But tribals strictly follow the principle of community endogamy. As a result, when their parents came to

know about the affair they opposed such marriage. So the couple ran away from the village. After few days they were searched and brought back to the village and girl's parents reported the incident to the village head (Majhi). In the meeting the Santal girl was asked whether she is happy or not with the marriage, she strongly expressed her willingness to go for the marriage. Then marriage was given social recognition in the Durbar and the Ho boy had to pay all the requirements for purificatory rite (20 kg rice, one goat, three cocks and rice beer). A grand feast was arranged with this amount after which the marriage was given social recognition.

Case -5

Jaher Thaan (scared grove) is considered a very sacred place in Santal society and various rules and regulation are observed strictly to keep this place pollution free. Once during *Baha* festival, a person named Dhoni Murmu of Pahadpur village vomited inside the *Jaher* premises due to over drinking of rice beer. As a result, *Jaher* became polluted. In the Durbar, he was found guilty and had to pay for the expenses for the purificatory rite. He was warned not to repeat such conduct in future.

Case -6

This incident had occurred in Uparbeda village of Mayurbhanj district. It was a case of conflict among the joking relatives of the same village. Main cause of the conflict was the passing of bad comments by the boys to the girls. Boys repeated the same for few days. When it became intolerable, the girls in anger slapped the boys and boys also misbehaved with the girls in return. Girl's parents filed a case before the village head. In the Durbar, large numbers of people participated from nearby villages also. In the meeting boys were found guilty and a written bond was signed by the boys and they were warned not to repeat it, otherwise they would be punished heavily in subsequent decision making. In that meeting it was also said in public that joking relatives should not cross the limit while joking.

Case -7

A married woman had an affair with a person of the same village and lived with her lover without complete dissolution of her first marriage. Automatically, the first husband rejected her. But she could not stay with the second husband because of some problems. The woman's parent reported the matter to the *Majhi* to decide with whom she would live. However, *Majhi* in the Durbar failed to decide the matter and forwarded it to *Pargana*. In the *Pargana* Durbar the woman's parents were ordered to return bride price to the first husband and the first husband to return all the gifts given to his wife at the time of marriage by her parents. The second husband was also punished with a cash fine. *Majhi* of that village was also fined by *Pargana* because without objecting to the illegal affair he had indirectly given social recognition to second marriage without final dissolution of first marriage. Thus, the girl finally lived with the

second husband by the decision of the Durbar. This Durbar was presided over by the Pargana Samdev Tudu of Sonaposhi village in Keonjhar district

Case -8

This was a dispute between the husband and wife of Uparbeda village of Mayurbhanj district. Few years after marriage, Laxman and his family started torturing his wife. At last Laxman decided to divorce her. His wife was mentally strong and stayed there in spite of ill-treatment from husband's side. Her parents reported the matter to *Majhi*. In the presence of *Majhis* of both the villages and other seniors, Laxman and his mother were declared guilty. The matter was compromised in Durbar and a bond was signed by both the parents and couple that the husband family members will not torture her in future.

Case -9

This case was published in the Santali monthly news paper 'FAGUN' October -2011, Bhubaneswar. It was the case of conflict between avoidance relations. Laba Marndi son of Madan Marndi and Rano Marndi of Tursibuni village (Chandua Pir, Mayurbhanj) married to Saunri Soren, daughter of Purna Chandra Soren of Katguda Village. The marriage was a love marriage (Guldau Napam). From the very beginning parents of Laba Marndi did not like the girl. Quarrel in the family always occurred and they tortured the girl. Sunari informed the matter to her parents. One day her father came to Laba's house to solve the problem. In course of discussion situation became worse and Laba's mother physically assaulted Purna Chandra Soren. Both of them were avoidance relatives and according to Santal rules they must not touch each other. It was a very serious social crime. Immediately matter was reported to the *Majhi* and inter village Durbar was called. *Majhis* and people of both the villages attended the meeting. In the Durbar mother of Laba was found guilty and he had to pay for the expenses of conducting appropriate purificatory rite. The fine for this crime in the Santal society is one goat, three fowls, 20kg rice, one pot of rice beer (Handia) and *khalah holong* (rice powder). It is believed that this kind wrong deed pollutes the village and also the Santal society. In this case Naeke (village priest) worshipped for village purification and a shaman made a worship to purify the Santal society (Fagun, October 2011).

Conclusion

From the above discussion it is found that leaders in Santal society always take decisions with the consent other members or common villagers in a Durbar. It is the central institution which plays a very important role in the maintenance of unity as well as law and order in the society. With the imposition of the statutory Panchayatiraj institution in the Indian villages, a new administrative head of the village has come into existence. Earlier all the issues were being decided in the meetings presided over by the traditional village head (*Majhi Baba*). But now issues related to implementation of developmental

policies and programmes are being done by the Ward Member. Undoubtedly it has created conflict between two heads in the same village. Position and respect of the traditional head is also declining and people are not taking so much interest to take such position. It is quite gratifying that in spite of modernization and globalization all around, Santals have well preserved all their traditional institutions especially the Durbar and trying best for its revival and continuance.

REFERENCES

- Archer, W. G. (1975): *"The Hills of Flutes: Life, Love and Poetry in Tribal India"*, S. Chand & Co. (Pvt.) Ltd., New Delhi, 1975: p 25.
- Culshaw, W. J. (2004): *"Tribal Heritage: A Study of the Santals"*, Gyan Publishing House, New Delhi, 2004: p 7
- Datta & N. Majumdar (1956): *"The Santal – A Study in Culture Change"*, The Manager of publication, Delhi, Govt. of India press, Calcutta, 1956: p 31.
- 'FAGUN' (Santali Monthly News Paper) dated October, 2011.
- Kluckhohn, C. & D. Leighton (1974): *The Navaho*, Harvard University Press Massachusetts, 1974: p 118
- Murmu, P. (1994): *"A Glimpse of Santali Traditions"*, Smt. Rasmani Murmu, Indakholi, Mayurbhanj, Orissa 1994: pp 8-9.
- Murmu, P. (1994): *"A Glimpse of Santali Traditions"*, Smt. Rasmani Murmu, Indakholi, Mayurbhanj, Orissa 1994: pp 26-32.
- Somers, George E. (1977): *The Dynamics of Santali Traditions in a Peasant Society*", Abinav Publications, New Delhi: p 12

INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE AND MEDICINAL PRACTICES AMONG THE SANTALS OF DHENKISAL HAMLET OF KALINGA NAGAR, JAJPUR DISTRICT, ODISHA

*Gulsan Khatoon*¹

ABSTRACT

Odisha is home to 62 tribal communities. These tribal communities are at various stages of development. They have a vast repository of Indigenous Knowledge reflected in their every day aspects of life and living. Indigenous knowledge has been referred as the unique, traditional, local knowledge existing within and developed around the specific conditions of women and men indigenous to a particular geographic area. This knowledge system is transferred across generations through oral traditions, processes and practices.

This paper outlines an attempt to study Indigenous Knowledge related to medicinal practices among the Santal tribe of Odisha. The study has been undertaken among the Santals of Dhenkisala hamlet of, Jajpur district in Odisha. The paper presents findings from an exploration of different indigenous methods of diagnosis and treatment of diseases, identification of specific plants used in medicine and cure of diseases, and to document their perception of illness and disease by probing through their system of disease classification. This study reflects the Indigenous healing system of Santals, as well, builds a body of information on Indigenous Knowledge systems in the context of Tribes in Odisha.

Key Words: Shaman, Ethno-medicine, Indigenous knowledge, Witch doctor, Anganwadi, ASHA

* Published in ADIVASI, Vol. 55, No.2, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar, 2015, pp.91-101

¹ Research Scholar, P.G. Department of Anthropology, Utkal University, Bhubaneswar

Introduction

Indigenous peoples throughout the world, occupying different agro-ecological zones have generated vast bodies of knowledge related to the management of their environment. This store of knowledge is known by many names. It is termed "indigenous knowledge", "traditional knowledge", "indigenous technical knowledge" (Howes & Chambers, 1980), "local knowledge", "traditional cultural knowledge", traditional ecological knowledge" and "traditional environmental knowledge" (Johnson 1992) denoting slightly different meanings to different users of the concept. There is, however, consensus amongst scientists using various terms that such knowledge that: they are linked to a specific place, culture or society; is dynamic in nature; belongs to groups of people who live in close contact with natural systems; and contrasts with "modern" or "Western formal scientific" knowledge.

Ethno-medicine is a sub-field of medical anthropology and deal with the study of traditional medicines, not only those that have relevant written sources (e.g. Traditional Chinese medicine, Ayurveda) but especially those knowledge and practices which have been orally transmitted over the centuries. The term traditional medicine describes medical knowledge systems developed over centuries within various societies before the era of modern medicine; traditional medicines include practices such as herbal medicine, Ayurvedic medicine, Unani medicine, acupuncture, traditional Chinese medicine, South African Muti, Yoruba Ifá, as well as other medical knowledge and practices all over the globe. In the scientific area no ethno medical studies are generally characterized by a strong anthropological approach more than bio-medical one. The focus of these studies is the perception and contest of use of traditional medicines and not their bio-evolution (Chakrabarty et.al 2012). Traditional knowledge of ethno-medicine generally refers to the long standing traditions and practices of the indigenous community. This knowledge has been orally passed down through generations, and from person to person.

Health is man's most precious wealth; therefore, it has always been a major concern of community development. It is not only an individual concern but also the problem of social as well as national importance. According to World Health Organization (1946) "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Health is not just a biomedical problem, but it is influenced by various social, cultural, psychological and political factors. Disease is a universal problem with mankind. It is fact that health and disease are directly interrelated and their concepts vary from culture to culture especially in tribal and other backward community.

World Health Organization (WHO) defines Traditional Medicine as "the health practices, approaches, knowledge and beliefs incorporating plant, animal and mineral based medicines, spiritual therapies, manual techniques and

exercises, applied singularly or in combination to treat, diagnose and prevent illnesses or maintain well-being". Countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America use traditional medicine to help meet some of their primary health care needs, as for example, in Africa, up to 80 per cent of the population uses traditional medicine for primary health care. WHO, however, also notes that its use is spreading in popularity in industrialized countries. For example, in the United States, 158 million adults use complementary medicine (a field which incorporates traditional medicine but is broader in scope). WHO also notes, that "inappropriate use of traditional medicines or practices can have negative or dangerous effects" and that "further research is needed to ascertain the efficacy and safety" of several of the practices and medicinal plants used by traditional medicine systems. Core disciplines which study traditional medicine include ethno-medicine, ethno-botany, and medical anthropology. The ethno-medicinal system or traditional medicine has two universal categories of disease etiology natural and un-natural (supernatural) causes. Natural illness explains illness in impersonal systematic terms.

Thus, disease is thought to stem from natural forces or conditions such as cold, heat and possibly by an imbalance in the basic bodily elements. Un-natural illness is caused by two major types of supernatural forces. Occult causes which are the result of the evil spirits or human agents using sorcery and spiritual causes which are the results of penalties incurred for sins, breaking taboos or caused by God. In the scientific arena, ethno medical studies are generally characterized by a strong anthropological approach, more than a bio-medical one. The focus of these studies is then the perception and context of use of traditional medicines, and not their bio-evaluation. Ethno medicine refers to the study of traditional medical practice. It can encompass methods of diagnosis and treatment. In some cases it is associated with professional medicine men and women, in others with lay persons who have acquired knowledge from parents or relatives.

Materials and Methods:

To obtain the empirical data for the objectives of this purposed study, key anthropological tools and techniques have been used. Extensive and intensive fieldwork was conducted among the target community for primary firsthand information. The data collection also employed participant observation, interviews, case study, key informant and focus group discussion as techniques.

The study has adopted ethnographic field work approach. More particularly it has followed in-depth interviews, group interviews, life histories and illness stories, participant observation, photography. The study has also used various methods to collect secondary data from District Medical Office, PHCs, Additional PHC and related organizations. The study also adopted in-depth interviews with the help of check lists, from *dhais* i.e. Traditional Birth Attendants (TBAs), *Ojha* or traditional healers, Multi-Purpose Health Workers

(both male and female), *Anganwadi* workers of Integrated Child Development Service (ICDS), etc. The household survey schedule collected data on village social demography, livelihood sources, infrastructure facilities, household disease pattern, treatment sources, and sufferings by different members of the family. The interview notes and field notes were expanded in the same day as initially made.

Study Area and People:

Kalinganagar is situated in Jajpur district of Odisha, India. It comprises Byasnagar municipality, Danagadi block. It is located at latitude: 20° 45' N and longitude: 85° 50' E. It has an average elevation of 51m above mean sea level. The nearest railway station is Jajpur- Keonjhar road and Jakhapura and nearest airport is Bhubaneswar. Duburi, the place famous for number of steel plants is at a distance of 38km from Chandikhol towards the Daitari mines on the Express highway. The study village Dhenkisala is located in Sukinda Tehsil of Jajpur district in Odisha, India.

The people covered under the study belong to Santal community who speak their own language and have own script known as *Olchiki*. The Santals primarily eke out their living from agriculture. However, where they live within or very close to the forest, a significant amount of their cash income is earned by way of selling of Non-Timber Forest Produces (NTFP). In the recent years, with the intrusion of heavy and ancillary industries, many of them have switched to the secondary sectors of employment and earning. Very few of them have secured government jobs or have good jobs in the private sector. A large number of them are found to work as seasonal migrant laborers, especially as agriculture labourers.

The Santals are an exogamous clan based group. The clans are regarded as equal to another clan and there is no class distinction either in status or occupation. Thus, their society is characterized by democratic equality. The Santals have their own religion replete with the notion of supreme God, *Marangburu* deity and a number of other subsidiary deities and spiritual forces -- both benevolent and malevolent. Many of these deities are linked to natural elements like trees, animals, forests, stones, hills, water, stream, river etc. Sometimes they are also found to worship the Hindu Gods and Goddesses. A large section of them claim that they have separate religion which they call *Sari-dharam* (Das and Basu, 1982).

Discussion and Analysis

To understand the knowledge, belief and practices of traditional medicine system it is necessary for us to review the main types of methods of diagnosis and healing. Like other tribes of Odisha, the Santals have their own methods and practices to cure the diseases. Health, hygiene, sickness, diagnosis and disease-treatment comprise a vital aspect of human society everywhere.

They assert that most diseases are caused by supernatural beings. In this connection, the Santal perception and understanding of causes of disease constituted a very important aspect of the study, presented as below.

Causes of Disease

Super Natural Causes:

The people of this area believe in supernatural power and disease or illness caused due to super natural entities. The Santal have strong belief in supernatural being as seen in their socio-cultural life. They also believe that various cosmic forces like sun, moon, *rahu*, *ketu*, and others maintain human life and well-being. According to them, the diseases are caused due to:

- Wrath of some village deities
- Ancestral spirits
- Evil spirits
- Evil eye
- Breach of taboo
- Curse and illness.
- Sorcery

Natural Causes:

The people of the study village also have beliefs that all diseases and sickness do not occur be supernatural causes and human agencies. There are also natural causes of diseases. There are some common diseases like fever, headache, cough, stomach pain, etc. that are caused due to some natural causes. Natural causes of diseases are divided into 2 categories:

- Environmental and climatic causes
- Nutritional causes

Sources of Medicine

Plants, animals, vegetables and minerals with known medicinal properties are found in every eco-climatic region, from rain forests to desert. They provide the basic ingredients not only for traditional medicines, but also for climatic derivatives for modern allopathic medicine (Tribhuwan Robin and Peters Pretthi, 1992:20). The same is also true for the Santals who trace their medicines from their locality.

Preparation of Medicine

Preparation of medicine also has a lot of typical behavior associated with it. The medicine specialist prepares his medicine facing east. It is marked as holy direction. Santal tribe of studied village believe that medicinal plants have certain intrinsic qualities such as hot, cold, bitter, sweet, sour, pungent which are the effective active principles for healing diseases. For instance, cold and cough is believed to be caused due to entry to cold air/water in the body. This imbalance

is then corrected by administering medicinal plants having hot qualities or hot diet is recommended. Certain plants are interpreted among the Santals to have supernatural powers to cleanse impurity and remove evil effect. For instance, Chillies are used to ward off evil eye effect. Chilly in this situation symbolizes fire (hotness) which destroys the evil effect caused on the patient.

Preparation methods of medicine include decoction/drying, and extraction. Plant infusion/smoke, juice, latex, oil, paste, powder etc. were used/applied. Plant juice was most commonly used, followed by decoction, paste etc.

There are many forms in which herbs can be administered, the most common of which is in the form of a liquid; infusions or decoctions, that is drunk by the patient either an herbal tea or a (possibly diluted) plant extract. Whole herb consumption is also practiced either fresh, in dried form or as fresh juice. Infusions are hot water extracts of herbs, such as mint or chamomile, through steeping. Decoctions are the long-term boiled extracts, usually of hard or substances like roots or bark.

Many herbs are applied topically to the skin in a variety of forms. Essential oil extracts can be applied to the skin, usually diluted in carrier oil.

Diagnosis and Treatment of Disease:

The most important aspect of the health care system is the treatment. The treatment of illness is primarily a product of socio-cultural phenomenon rather belief about casually influence how the people decide to treat illness.

Santal of Dhenkisola, Kalinganagar area usually go for the treatment of the disease by 3 methods. But they give more importance to the first two methods to cure disease.

- (1) Herbal method of treatment
- (2) Magico-religious treatment
- (3) Modern method of treatment.

Diagnosis:

Methods of diagnosing diseases differ from culture to culture. Santals identify the disease through different symptoms. And the medicine man/ Kabiraj diagnose the disease using different methods. Specialists among them such as Raudia (Sorcerer), Priest (Pujari), Medicine man/ Sharman (Kabiraj), do the diagnosis and treatment as per their own traditional methods.

A detailed enquiry of the type of sickness or suffering of the patient is done by the “Kabiraj”. The Kabiraj may use one or many of the following during diagnosis:

- Checking pulse rate
- Checking body temperature

- Colour of the eye and body
- Urine test
- Stick method
- Oil method

The medicine man diagnoses the patient by checking pulse rate. If the pulse rate is normal then the patient is not suffering from disease, but if it is not normal then the patient is suffering from certain disease. In case of fever, he checks the body temperature either by touching fore head or neck. If the colour of the eye and body varies then the patient is ill.

Urine test: Diagnosis through urine test is a very interesting feature of Santal diagnosis of disease. For a urine test, the medicine man takes the urine of the patient and put it in a piece of earthen pot and then adds mustard oil drop by drop to the urine. If the oil spread in the urine then it is diagnosed that the patient is ill, and if it does not spread then it is taken as indication that the patient is healthy and normal. He also checks the colour of the urine, if the colour is pale yellow then the patient is suffering from jaundice and if the colour is reddish yellow then the patient is suffering from some other type of disease.

Diagnosis of diseases includes the culturally prescribed symbolic and normative forms of behavior and stylized bodily actions, gestures, trance states, chants, prayers, words and use of certain holy objects by the healers to diagnose the origin and cause of illness and then to employ the necessary therapies in order to rest or know about the health of the patient.

Sticks method: The Raudia possess two sticks when he touches the stick to the body of the victims/patients. If the stick expands in length then it is believed that the patient has been inflicted with some disease. The treatment follows accordingly.

Oil method: Raudia puts oil drop on a sal leaf or in a pot full of water and applies his magical power to know the evil spirit who inflicted the disease. It is believed that, after chanting the mantras, he can see the picture of the malevolent spirit on the drop of oil put either on sal leaf or in water. Based on the observation the Raudia decides the course of treatment.

Diagnosis of the diseases is either psychometric or physical in nature and always involves some of magical performances or rituals. The examination of the patients is not done if sickness is prolonged or severe; the service of the mystic person called Diouan or Raudia is sought. The Diouan with the help of concerned spirit determine whether the patient is under spell of enemy sorceries or has some sort of actual physical illness. In serious sickness like epilepsy or distress the cultural spirits are called in. There are several processes by which a Raudia performs the ritual based treatment practice.

Diseases, Medicine and Healing Practices

Sl. No.	Name of the Medicine	Part of the Plant Root/ Stem/ Leaf Fruits, etc.	Used for the Disease	Practice to use the medicine
1.	Bhuruhada + Dhanualanka	Shrub (Root)	Rheumatism (pain in the joints and legs)	Paste of <i>bhuruhada</i> and <i>dhanua lanka</i> is applied on the affected part at night
2.	Bahada and Amla (+)	Fruit	Cold and headache	Bahada and Amla are ground to a fine paste and its juice is taken twice a day.
3.	Karanja	Bark	To clear the blood flow after child birth.	Paste of Karanja bark is taken for 8 days. It also keeps body warm and healthy.
4.	Bhalia	Fruit	Payo derma (skin disease)	Bhalia fruits are grinded and applied on the affected area.
5.	JhaunPhala	Fruit	Evil eye	Jhaun fruit is tied in a thread around either in neck or arm.
6.	Gangasiuli + Belapatra	Leaf	Malaria	Gangasiuli & Belapatra leaves are grinded to extract the juice taken in empty stomach in the morning to cure malaria.
7.	Sunthi + Pimpada + Black pepper + Amla + Harida + Bahada	Fruit	Cough and cold	Paste of all is taken and a ball shaped pill is made and taken to cure the disease.
8.	Chilly + Lemon	lemon-peel	Diarrhea	Paste of all these is made and taken.
9.	Gangasiuli	Leaf	Malaria	Leaf is grinded & juice is extracted from it.
10.	Sunthi+Pimpada + Black pepper + Rasa sindura + 64 gunda+	-	Rheumatism	Take once a day. - If very serious then twice a day. -Paste of all are taken

	Saptabhasma			as medicine to cure rheumatism
11.	MahaSindh + Pureihi + Phenphena + A saluacheracheli	root	Rheumatism (Batta)	Boil and grind – take out juice and make oil out of it and apply on the body to get relief.

Magico-Religious Treatment

Traditional medicines of India although based on herbalism, are largely depended on incantation of magical verses and sacrificial rites. The magico-religious practice in treating physical and mental ailments were widespread among the tribal community. Magical rites, divinations incantations, etc. in treating human ailments are very common practice among all the tribal communities. A careful study on the efficacy of these magical practices in treating human ailments reveals that the people who believe in this system get really cured.

It is the power of auto suggestions that knowingly or unknowingly happens with the patients who have faith in the magico-religious medicine. They believe that the diseases are due to action evil eye or the wrath of evil spirits or the wrath of Gods and therefore, firmly believe that the priest and magico-religious practitioners (Raudia) of the clan or tribe have the power and knowledge toward off these evil effects or appease the Gods and thereby affect curse to them. This faith knowingly works in their subconscious mind which they give them a confidence and finally get cured.

The power of auto-suggestions was perhaps understood well by the ancient man and this probably has led to the origin and evolution of magico-medicine, incantation and use of “charms” or “amulets” etc. for healing diseases. This practice still exists in almost all traditional medicines of the primitive societies.

Such practices of healing by magical incantations or divine interventions are probably nothing but the applications of man’s psychic energy over his body various functions including self-resistance and natural healing. It might have been started as isolated individual achievements among the ancient people but later they found that they can exercise the psychic power and influence the mental conditions of others. This later evolved into the magico-religious medicine and the priest physicians among the primitive communities. Later, it might have been combined with the herbal medicine and evolved the faith or magic healing along with the administration of herbal medicine as practiced by most of the primitive tribals in the world.

But must be pointed out here that the faith that the common man had in the powers of their priest, shaman and sorcerer has yielded good results and they are able to carry out effective psychic treatments through incantations of

“Charms” etc. This is also true in the power of prayers of faith healing advocated by many religious sects as well as tribal society of the world.

Case Studies

Tinu Hembram, a 31 years old male of village Dhenkisala was suffering from jaundice for quite some time. His body and eyes turned yellow and he had lost his appetite. His loss of appetite, nausea, and vomiting, yellow colour of veins and itching of body made his family concerned. The witch doctor did some *puja* and tried to exorcise the evil spirit from his body. That did not work. Then he went to the shaman (Kabiraj) for the treatment of the disease. He gave the patient, roots of *bendili* plant and asked him to grind the root and extract the juice and take early in the morning before food for 3 days, and avoid oily and spicy food. The patient did the same and his condition improved.

Hemant, a 42 years old male of village Dhenkisala was suffering from T.B for quite some time. He applied many magico-religious practices to cure his disease, but nothing worked. Then he went to the shaman (Kabiraj) for the treatment of the disease. The Kabiraj gave him medicine made out of the mixture of Amla + Bahada + Harida + Cloves + Cinnamon + Cardamom + Duck egg. He grinded all these into a paste, boiled it and added ghee to it. And then he asked the patient to take it twice daily with warm water for 15-30 days. He did the same but the condition remained the same. Then he was advised by one of the villager to go to the ASHA for the treatment of the disease. He went to the ASHA, who took the patient to the hospital for sputum test. The result was positive. So she gave him TB medicine, which was of 6 months course. After completing the course he went to the hospital for sputum test again and then the result was negative, which means his disease was cured by the allopathic medicine. This shows that they give importance to their indigenous method of treatment of disease, but when this fails they opt for the modern medicine as well.

Preservation Techniques

The Santals have certain methods of preservation of their indigenous medicine, which are discussed below:

Juice – Juice should be always prepared fresh. Once prepared, it is generally used within two to three days.

Paste – The dried materials after cleansing from dirt and insects are washed and made into paste. The paste is used fresh. It is preserved for 24 hours adding honey or common salt.

Mixture – The raw materials after cleansing are separately powdered. The powders are mixed with liquor and stored in dry shell containers.

Powder – The dried materials are cut into pieces and powdered with the help of grinding stones. The powders are preserved for a longer period. It is believed that the medicine gets more potency if stored for a longer period.

Pills – It is practically the tablet forms of powder. Sun dried pills and small cakes are preserved for future.

Fomentation – Fresh leaves after heating on fire are applied externally.

Some medicinal plants are preserved or stored after drying it. The parts of plants used as medicines are roots, barks, seeds, etc., are stored in a separate room and periodically they are kept under the sun to avoid fungus and moisture. All the medicinal things like root, fruits, leaf, bark, etc. are kept in separate containers.

The Santals have certain beliefs and taboos about medicinal plants. They are as follows:

- Plants with latex have medicinal value.
- Green plants before flowering are more effective curative agents than the dried parts of the plant.
- Roots are considered as more effective medicine than the aerial parts of the plant.
- Plants for the uses of medicinal purpose in various diseases should be collected in different times in the morning, mid-day or in the afternoon.
- The Santals believed that in combination with the fruits of black pepper, the medicine shows more efficiency. The number of pepper in various forms added in the medicine has great significances in the tribal mind. The Santals prepare medicine in combination of black peppers.
- The tribal have a belief that the violation of any taboo makes the medicine ineffective.

Conclusion:

Tribal health has been widely discussed topic in development research. The social pattern of the tribal population, their community's traditional approach to treatment of disease, ignorance of modern means of treatment and their food habits are among the many reasons of the cause of spread of disease among them. Beside their superstitious belief that god and spirit inflict suffering with disease and by satisfying them the disease can be cured are among the major obstacles in convincing the tribal people about the usefulness of modern methods of treatment. The adverse effect caused thereof can be eradicated by implementation of comprehensive health care program which can also create situation for prevention of the disease, restoration of health condition of tribal's.

The Santals are highly superstitious in nature like other tribal communities. Normally when they fall ill they try to get well by their indigenous method of treatment. But now-a-days, due to impact of modernization they are adopting the modern medicines. This has led to the adoption of multiple health care practices. The government is also taking steps for popularization of modern allopathic system of medicine.

The health status of tribal people is marked by poverty, illiteracy, malnutrition, lack of personal hygiene, poor mother and child health services, absence of health education, lack of modern health care services. To understand tribal health, well-being, knowledge and belief and practices, it requires one to probe into the people's perception of disease, diagnosis and cure under existing social, economic and cultural settings.

References:

- Acharya, S., 2007, "Ill Health, Disease and Indigenous Health Care Systems among the Munda-A Primitive Tribe of Orissa" in *Intangible Cultural Heritage of India-5, Traditional Knowledge in Contemporary Societies; Challenge & Opportunities*, K. K. Misra & K. K. Basa(eds.), New Delhi; Pratibha Prakashan
- Kalla, A.K and Joshi, P.C., 2004, "*Tribal Health and Medicines*" (ed.), Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi
- Choudhury, B., 1985-86, "*Tribals health studies of India: socio-cultural dimension*" Series T-120, New Delhi-110015
- Tribhuwan Robin. D., 1998 "*Medical world of the tribals*" New Delhi, Discovery Publishing House.
- Roy Burman, J. J., 2007, "*Tribal Medicine*", Mittal Publication, New Delhi

CONCEPT OF PANCHAMAHABHUTA AND SANTAL ORAL TRADITION AND HEALING PRACTICES *

*Nityananda Patnaik*¹

PART-I

The paper has three parts; in the first part the concept of Panchamahabhuta (five elements) has been discussed. In the second part the concept of Five Elements have been traced in some Santal textual sources and Oral tradition and in the third part some example of Five Elements as applied to the healing practices have been given.

Concept of Panchamahabhuta

In a funeral hymn mentioned in Rg. Veda (1500 B.C.) it is stated that with the dissolution of the body the eyes go to the sun, the breath to the wind and the soul to the heaven or to the water according to the deeds of the departed. This pre-existent Vedic idea of transmigration of the essential elements of the human body to sun, wind, heaven or water probably influenced the later Aryans to conceive the idea on the reverse order that is the human body is composed of the four natural elements namely, Fire, Wind, Earth and Water which ultimately return to the nature after death. These elements when disturbed and become imbalanced cause illness in the body. These ideas are not only stressed in the Vedas but also in the Avasta to Iranians in relation to human health and disease. From these evidences it can be said that this idea might have come from an earlier belief of the common Indo-Iranian stock.

As pointed out earlier it has been mentioned in the Rig. Veda that Asvins were the custodian of wholesome herbs which preserve the well-being of three

* Published in ADIBASI, Vol. 32, No.4, THRTI, Bhubaneswar 1992, pp.9-14

¹ Former Director, THRTI, Bhubaneswar

humors of the body (R.V. 1.7.4. 12). The same source has reference to Tridosha which enter into the composition of the human body (R.V. 1.3.4.6). Later Atharva Veda recorded Five elements (*panchamahabhuta*) of the body namely, Earth (Khiti), Water (Jala), Fire (Pabaka or Agni), Space (Ganga or Akasha) and Air (Samira or Vayu). There is mentioned that diseases were related to water, air and fire and to desiccation or drying. A similar concept of the five elements is also found in Upanishadas (A.U. 11.5.3). Thus the idea about the Five elements of the body and their disorder causing illness developed in ancient India between 1500 B.C. to 800 B.C.

Tulsidas in the Ramayan which he composed has said,
“Khiti, Jal, Pabak, Gagan, Samira
Panchatatwa re Rachita Sarira”.

(The body is made up of Five Elements namely Earth, Water, Fire, Ether and Air)

While dealing with Panchsangi (Five benevolent) and Panch Kusangi (Five Malevolent) associates, Kabir has further explained the qualities of the Five elements in the following manner. The text in Hindi is translated into English.

“All worldly objects are made up of the Five Elements
(Earth, Air Water, Fire, and Sky).

The attributive element of Earth is Smell and that which holds Smell is Ghrendriya.(Sense of Smell)

That element which Water holds is fluid or serum which is under the control of Rasanendriya. (Sense of Serum),

Brightness or heat emanates from Fire and it is controlled by Chakhyurendriya. (Sense of Vision-Eye)

The attributed factor of Air is Touch which is under the control of Sense of touch.

The sky is the source of sound which is controlled by Srotendriya. (Sense of Hearing).

PART-II

Panchamahabhuta and Santal literature and Oral Tradition

The five elements with which the human body is constituted have gone into the creation of life not only of mankind but of the whole of animal kingdom. The Santal culture is very rich in folktales and folklores. The writers like Mildred Archer, W. G. Archer, P. O. Bodding, C. H. Bompas, A. Campbell, K. P. Chattopadhyay and many others have collected numerous folktales which deal with the genesis and migration of the Santals, their culture and customs, social sanctions, values and standards. The Horkoren Mare Hapramko Reak Katha written by R. Kisku Rapaz gives an elaboration of the creation of the world and

the living beings. How the Five Elements have gone into the creation of the world and living organisms have been mentioned in his Work.

According to the legends and folktales the man was created in the east. In the beginning there was only water and soil under water and, of course, air above water. The sun was rising in the east and giving heat and light. To begin with the Thakur Jiu created the aquatic animals such as the crab, alligator, crocodile, tortoise, earthworm and lobster and many others. Then He created man in dual form out of earth. But a horse descended on water from the Sun and destroyed the human forms.

At this the Thakur Jiu got worried and decided not to repeat his efforts for the creation of man but to give his attention for the creation of birds. He did so and called the birds. He created HANS & HANSIL. He made them out of his own flesh of the chest and breathed air into them which gave life to them.

As soon as they got life they fluttered and then flew away. Finding no place to alight they perched on the hands of the Thakur Jiu. Then the same horse of the Sun "Sin Sadam" came down again to drink water from the sea. While drinking some water formed into foam which floated on the surface of the water, Thakur Jiu asked the birds to perch on the foams and float about in the sea. There was no food for the birds and when they were hungry they asked the Thakur Jiu to give them some food.

Thakur Jiu had no food, but He made attempt to produce food. For this He needed soil from the bottom of the sea. He asked the aquatic animals one by one if any one of them could bring some soil from the bottom of the sea to the surface. Every one of them tried but of no avail. Finally the earth-worm was successful in transporting the soil up to the surface. What he did was this.

He asked the tortoise to stand still at one place on water. Then the earthworm came down up to the sub-soil with his tail end on the back of the tortoise. He began to eat soil with his mouth and allowed it to pass through its body and purged on the tortoise. The earth-worm continued the process for days together until sufficient soil was transported and deposited above to make the earth.

The floating foams gathered round the earth. Thakur Jiu started planting trees on the earth. The trees which came up first were Sirom (*Andropogon Kuricatus*) with which broom sticks are made), Asan (*Terminalia Tomentosa*), Sal (*Shorea Robusta*), and Mohua (*Bassia Latifolia*), with these trees grasses grew all over the surface and the earth became strong enough to hold thick vegetation which came up subsequently.

The earth in the beginning was uneven and the higher places became mountains which separated the land surface from the sea water. The birds "HANS HANSIL" came flying and perched on the bushes of Sirom, where they

built their nest to lay eggs. When they hatched the eggs they found two human beings coming out of the eggs. One of them was a male and the other a female. The birds were in a fix and did not know where to keep them. They flew to the Thakur Jiu and reported the birth of these two creatures and sought his help how to maintain them.

Hearing this Thakur Jiu came down and saw these two beings and blew life into them by which they became very lively. He advised the birds to soak the cotton which he gave with the juice of what they ate and squeeze it in their mouths. They did so and thus the children grew up. When their children were sufficiently grown up they flew away carrying their children on their back to a place called Hiliri and Pihiri where they all lived together for a long time. After sometime the parent birds left their children for good and the Santal tradition is silent about what happened to them afterwards.

The folktale shows how the human body came into being out of earth, water, warmth, (light and fire) sky (ether) and air.

The idea about Panchamahabhuta extant among the Santals can be collected from the local folk sayings and literatures. A few such sayings which convey some ideas about the Panchamahabhuta similar to those mentioned in the funeral hymn derived from Rg. Veda is as follows:

- 1) Hasa Halam Hasara Milaua (The earth-made body will mix with earth).
- 2) Haya Jiwan Hayare Milaua (The air laden life merges in air).
- 3) Nan Halam Da Sengel Lagida (This body is for the fire).

The Santali literature is very rich. No cataloguing and compilation of these literatures has yet been made exhaustively. These literatures are in Hindi, Oriya, Bengali and Roman script. Some of them are also in OL Chiki. Most of the literatures are printed but sufficient copies are not available. Many publications are out of print and no attempt is made for reprinting such valuable publications. Of the two sources which mention about the Five elements in the most abstract manner, Hital is one which is a published work of late Pandit Raghunath Murmu, inventor of OL Chiki script and the other, manuscript by late Ram Dayal Majhi.

Pandit Raghunath Murmu's book HITAL gives an account of the Five elements. The stanzas from 15 to 21 are quoted below. This booklet is written in OL Chiki script.

15. Maranburu Kate Mid tha Etemte An En Jahirain Kate Mid Tha Kenya Tem An En.

(It may be so that you as Maranburu turned left it may be so that you as Jahirain turned right.)

16. Sermata laarean thatam tarak Janpam En Hudur ate Bilit Barandu Gurlsu Achur En.
(The force of these rotations met at the mid sky. As a result the whirl pool was born with thunderous sound).
17. Achur Achur Bilid Bilid Barandu Khanak Am An En.
Sin Bonga Ar Epil Engel Chand Dhartika. (As a result a new world was born and Sun, Stars, Moon, were also born).
18. Serma Marsal Enada Aanga Sirij En
Ana Barandu Rege Atha Jatakthab En
(They took their respective places in the path of that rotation
The sky was lighted with the birth of sun).
19. Elanthale thatam Sin bonga Rem Am Kadtaa thale thatam Dharati taan rem Ak Kad
(you generated fire in the sun and you cooled the earth).
20. Dharati Chetan Sin Yinda Hulan Achur En Taya Khan Haya, Hasa Dhiri the Kam Benao En
(There came day and night thereafter on the earth and therefore air, soil, stone and water were created).
21. Dharti Chetan Jiyi Sirji An Adam An Ked
Hansa Hansii Jiyi Dukin Barandu Anaga En.
(Out of these elements came up life with wealth and happiness which the living beings (Hansa and Hansuli) enjoyed on Earth).

These stanzas show that the human body has grown out of the Five Elements which when balanced and in harmony with one another bestow well-being on the mankind and other living organisms.

There appeared a saintly person, known as Dayal Bada at Basipitha in Udala subdivision. His real name was Ram Dayal Majhi, a Santal and he died at the age of 120 years as the people say, his granddaughter's husband Shir Sida Hembram of Beguniadhia of Udala subdivision as got a manuscript of Dayal Baba and the extract given below regarding Halma Galahan (constitution of the Body) are from this manuscript.

1. Ata Serma Haya Situn
2. Jarage Japud San Salam Anan
3. Serma Daletem Ajam
4. Taker Dalete Halam An Ana
5. Haya Daletam Urum
6. Hayad Chapu Gun Anan
7. Situn Sengel Marsal Anan
8. Manmi Halmare Med Anan
9. Med DeletemYenyel Kana
10. Jaregejapud Tha Kana
11. Anatege Alam Rasa Anan

12. Helem Jaj Jharam Urun (Ma)
13. Rasa AlamUrum Gun Ana
14. Ata Da Aan Kana
15. (Tha) Dhare Dhiri Gata Aman Akan
16. Ana Dege Manmiya Mun Akan
17. Ji Gun Dale Mena Akan

The literary translation of the above mentioned stanzas is given below. Further studies are required for the analysis and explanations of these abstract ideas.

1. Earth, Sky (Ether), Air and Brightness (Fire).
2. Increasing rain-all such creations appealing to mind & soothing to body.
3. Space (Heaven) enables us to hear.
4. Space creates resounding which helps in hearing.
5. Air or wind gives you feeling and realization of things.
6. Air is endowed with the quality of touch.
7. Fire emits light.
8. Man has eyes.
9. Eye sight enables you to see.
10. Rain gives water.
11. The watery substance in tongue is due to rain.
12. Therefore the tongue can taste sweet, sour, hot (chill).
13. The watery substance of the tongue has the attributes of taste.
14. The Earth on which living organism sustains life by air, water, warmth, light (fire), ether and earth is a wonderful place.
15. There is no soil (earth), stone and vegetation all round and they help life to grow healthy and contented.
16. & 17. The man has nose which had given him smelling sense and the air all around helps this sense to function.

There are many such other sources some in the printed form of manuscripts and some in memory of Santals who had personal contact with saintly persons, reformers, thinkers and writers. It is an urgent need to locate these sources and materials and retrieve them and prepare an annotated and classified bibliography on the subject of Five elements.

At the sometime biographic accounts of such saints and thinkers should be collected so that the sources and conditions which impinged upon them to get inspiration and orientation towards a philosophical life can be made known to us. Further, more knowledge can be gained about how the human body (Microcosm) is fitted harmoniously with the world (Macrocosm) both being subject to the rule of Sphere and how disease is caused as a result of disharmony between the human body and universe in which the Five elements play an important role.

PART-III

Use of elements in healing practices among the Santals

Water

Water is an essential ingredient used in the preparation of medicine. The water from different sources has different properties and qualities and therefore, their effects are different. A few examples will make it clear.

The solution prepared out of stale water of *huka* (Basi Huka Pani) and *lupungaragrehet*, *dar* and *sakam* (roots, branches and leaves of young plant of Bahada (*Terminalia Badercia*) is used for the healing of the sores (Garang Ghao).

The medicine prepared out of the roots of pomegranate, white sandal and stale rice water is used in the case of lizard bite.

The water collected from a boat is a remedy for stopping unconscious urination in bed. Another remedy for this malady is the solution of water mixed with soil where the patient has urinated.

The water collected from a Sal tree (*Shorea Robusta*) is cure for burning urine.

A drinking of fresh milk mixed with water will cure the complaints of burning urine or pain at the time of urination due to excessive heat.

The water contained in a snail is used to cure eye trouble. The boiled water mixed with other ingredients is given to parturient mothers for increasing milk yield.

A preparation of goat's milk mixed with honey and water collected from a place having alluvial soil is used as a curative for fever, vomiting any headache. Some alluvial soil which is used by the potters to make pottery is mixed in water and kept for some time for the soil to settle down. The clean water which stands above is used for this purpose.

The water of a tank which has no leakage or any outlet for the water to flow out is administered with rapeseed and the roots of *Achyranthes Aspera* (BUDHI-DATRAM) ground together to the pregnant woman to prevent abortion.

The dews have certain medicinal properties, it is collected early morning from a grass field by passing a clean piece of cloth over the grasses squeezing the soaked cloth into a container. Similar properties are believed to be present in hail-water. Hail stones are collected and kept in a bottle for future use. Even through the hail stones melt the supposed quality remains in the hail-water.

The water kept in an earthen jar previous day has certain special properties to cure headache and bleeding from the nose. Only inhaling such

water and putting a few drops of such water in the nostrils and taking it out work effectively and the headache and bleeding stops.

Soil

Different soils have different medicinal properties.

The soil created by earthworm (Jiamati) and the earth used by the stinging files (Biridi) for making their abode (Biridibasa) are mixed in water and after the soil has settled down the clean water standing above is decanted and given to the patient having excessive thirst. This water brings down the thirst to a normal condition.

Fire

In connection with Santal medicine there are also various household remedies in which the elements of heat of fire and blowing of air are used. Toback is one such remedy. By this method the painful or inflamed spot marked with ashes is pricked with a Red hot needle or the point of a sickle to give relief to the patient. Sekao which is a kind of fomentation is used to give relief to the patient having pain or swelling in some part of the body. The Ojha or medicine man before applying any complicated methods of treatment blows air through his mouth from head to feet of the patient to blow away the evil influence of the Bongas and the witches.

Sunshine is the best remedy for many bodily ailments. The medicine applied for TAN is effective only when the patient has sufficiently bathed in the sunshine.

This is only a brief account of the use of elements in healing practices. More such use of elements under different conditions are in vogue among the sandals.

References

1. Hal Hapan, Man Bada Besra, Semlet Press, Rairangpur.
2. Hital, Pandit Raghunath Murmu, Semlet Press, Rairangpur.
3. Hans Hansli, Man Gunjai Tudu, Pragati Prints, Bhubaneswar.
4. Burusid Vol. I and Vol. II, Kusal Hembrum, Dulai Printers, Karandi Jamshedpur.
5. Man, Malady and Medicine, History of Indian Medicine, Dr. Ray Chowdhury Amiya Kumar, Arunima Printing Works, 81, Simla Street Calcutta.
6. Studies in Santal Medicine and connected Folklore, Rev. Bodding, P.O., Asiatic Society, 1, Park Street, Calcutta-16.

MAN-NATURE-SPIRIT COMPLEX AMONG THE SANTALS *

*H. Samantaraya*¹

Abstract

The present study is based on fieldwork observation over a period of two months in a few Santal hinterland villages of Manada Gram panchayat and Gorumaisani Gram panchayat of Mayurbhanj district, Odisha. The data have been collected during 2003-2004 through interview guide. An attempt has been made to portray the Santal beliefs and practices and understand their worldview, relating to “man-nature spirit complex in the changing scenario. The paper infers that so long the worldview of the Santals assumes its integral position in relation to the greater society, the boundary maintenance of the community will be faster and the language as a tool would help for the retention of cultural identity expressing their cohesive force.

Introduction:

World view is seen as the way society sees the world .This means that the society into which one is born in will determine the way one sees the world. Religion creates one’s society which in turn, will see the world in his/her own way. Religions have a belief in two ways to experience supernatural force: the transcendent dimension and the immanence. Transendent being a belief in an existence above or apart from the material world, while immanence is the ideal

* Published in ADIVASI, Vol. 51, Nos.1&2, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar, 2011, pp.45-55

¹ Lecturer in Home Science, Women’s College, Padampur

that gods or spiritual forces pervade the universe and are present in every aspect of life, as compared with the idea of transcendence. Transcendent and Immanent dimensions of a religion can be very different. A transcendent being can be God because He is beyond this world and His abode is the outerworld. An immanent being includes the supernatural force who is all around the people at all times. They live with the supreme beings and worship them for being in their territory. Religion as a part of culture occupies major segment of the worldview. Religion is a set of belief in supernatural entities. Every religion has two basic components: the spiritual and the ritual. The religions vary mostly on the basis of their ritual components.

Tribal Communities are generally totemic groups. Traditionally they have their own culturally defined territory with the internal boundaries represented by specific clans. Every aspect of tribal life is integrated and interrelated to its tangible and intangible culture and traditions. Santal religion like many other religions can not be defined by its subject matter in a narrow sense as spirit worship, ancestral worship or as a part of nature which are intimately connected with natural life cycle and the seasonal variations. The meanings they attribute to celestial and non-celestial events or objects are mental associations deep-rooted into their age-old traditions. According to their traditions, the Santals have always been wandering from one place to another. It is natural; therefore their religions like their language and culture have always been influenced by the people with whom they come into contact. Prof. Orans (1965) adopted the concepts and designated the twentieth century growth-pangs in Santal Society as a search for the "great tradition". According to the concept, "great tradition" incorporates qualities of a systematic and well-integrated world-view, a self-conscious substructure of ethical mores and a degree of expressiveness regarding its individual excellence *vis-à-vis* the neighbouring communities. Biswas (1995) in his study on Santal Rebellion explained the role of culture in maintaining solidarity. The objective of the paper is to understand the worldview of the Santals and document those as it is presumed that if the data on worldview is not collected now it can be collected never due to the fast change in cultural frontiers.

Methods adopted:

The data have been collected from during 2003-2004 through interview guide. The informal interaction was the major technique adopted for data collection. The interaction with the aged male and female were given importance. An attempt has been made to portray the Santal beliefs and practices of Santals and understand their worldview, religion in the changing scenario. The paper infers that so long the worldview of the Santals assumes its integral position in relation to the greater society. The data were collected from a wider area thickly populated by the Santals. The villages in the interior pockets of

Manada Gram panchayat and Gorumaisani Gram panchayat of Mayurbhanj district, Odisha were selected for this purpose.

Santal life and belief:

In Santal life, *Bongas* or Spirits play an important role in human existence. *Bonga*, the supernatural power, a force, roams around and it is only by coming to terms with them can a Santal be happy. All these *Bongas* in a special sense are a Santal creation, monopoly or prerogative. Their prime concern is only Santal: they have nothing to do with other religion. To keep their day happy and to experience the tribal existence, Santal must not only attune themselves to the village customs but unite in honoring their ethereal protectors. They have two worlds to live in, a world visible and the world invisible but influential. They believe that *Bongas* keep an eye on every item and action of every Santal.

To appease the *bongas* special sacrifices are made periodically in order to overcome the crisis, sickness, failure of crops and any form of anticipatory misfortune. The *bonga* at no account can be polluted. During the period of pollution Santals withdraw their association from *bonga*. A durable dissociation is also likely to displease the *bongas* that might reflect in form of mishaps, therefore, the ritual purification must be promptly performed so that the village may again enjoy their aid. The *bongas* are guardian spirits and a defense force of unalterable law. *Bongas* assist Santals to be themselves and enjoy life with humor and honor and remain active. Further, the worldview refers to a wider area of mental and physical entities of perceived world. It includes the sharing and caring world by the members of a society represented in their myth, lore, ceremonies, social conduct and general values. All of the unobserved but inferred beliefs an individual have about the world and the universe that are hidden aspects of their behavior. A world view is a set of feelings and basic attitudes toward the world rather than a set of formulated opinions about it. World views are mostly learned early in the life and are not readily changed. They have a determinate influence on our observable behaviors, both verbal and non verbal.

The Worldview

The Santals are simple and unsophisticated peoples. Like any other people, they have developed their own worldview, a system suited to deal with the basic dichotomy of human existence- life and death, good and evil from their own perspective. For Santals, the life cycle ritual needs, and other biological and socioeconomic requirements are met through cultural apparatus. Their religious experiences are mediated through their culture and are expressed in terms of symbols, metaphors, myths, legends, folklore, songs, cult, rituals, and so on. They consider *Thakur Jiu* (Life Giver) or Cando Baba (Sun Father) or *Marang Buru* (Great Mountain) the source of all good-omen. *Baric Bonga* is the malevolent spirit that has capacity to devastate and destabilize the socio-cultural system.

Therefore, they need to keep the *bonga* and spirits in good humor to avoid any exigencies or problems of sickness and sufferings.

A Santal newborn is a gift of God therefore every one extends wish for better future. The child has to undergo a set of rituals to be identified and incorporated into the society through observance of rituals and rites. Most of these realities are expressed through the ritual ceremonies performed after a child is born. The ritual of the *janam chatiar* (birth purification and name-giving) is one example where these aspects are enacted through bathing, shaving the head of the baby, divining of *ganang* (unboiled rice) grains, and welcoming of the baby into the community. The puberty rites are unnoticed however the rituals for marriage are celebrated with much pomp and ceremony. The death purification ceremonies like funeral rites of *bhandan*, or *mora karam* (after-death celebration) provide further details of Santal belief system that the dead person goes back to the same spirit-world of life from where he/she has come as a baby and remains defiled and defiling for which reason not only the family needs purification, but the very return of the deceased person to the shadowy world is already defiling because it is regarded as a sinful state, which has been created for the punishment of the sins of greed and pride. Hence, the deceased person needs to be brought back spiritually to his/her own family and is installed as an invisible member as *hap dam* (ancestor). The deceased members are remembered and respected during family occasions.

For Santals there is no clear distinction between the sacred and the profane, the physical and metaphysical bodies, religious and non-religious, spiritual and material areas of life. It is all a continuum. Animals and the material world are at the disposal of human beings for their self-preservation and well-being. Santal life is closely related to nature and to the whole of creation. Land and forest remain united with Santal identity and are very much reflected in their love, poetry, songs, dance, and music. The Santals, for example, address the "supreme being" as *Sinj Cando* (Sun Father), *Nindo Chando* (moon) and *Ipil* (the stars) in different names. Some of them are *Ipil ij* (the comets), *Aran Ipil*, *Budhi Parkam* (the great bear). They believe that, once the first women of Santal, *Piltchum Budhi* takes the corpses of her 12 dead sons to the sky due to some unwanted incident for burying

Santals' perception of time:

The Santals are more conscious about time. The change of day and night is thought with reference to the position of sun. They say '*ber rakap*' when the sun rises and when ever the cock sings *sim rakap* or *simra* or *chand hasur*, but the night fall at the sunset (*ber hasur*). Two meals rhythm the day, the first one *baskedaka* is made of left over from the previous day and rice cakes are made out of cold rice. The house wife cooks in the evening (*ayub*), a more complete meal, *singed daka* which includes rice and vegetables as well as some fish or meat curry when they can afford it. If the production of paddy grain is surplus, a third meal may be

taken at 3 o' clock in the afternoon *tikin*. Women carry this meal and go to the field to serve to their husbands. Starvation shapes the Santal conception of time. Evening (*ayub*) is the time when cattle return to the cowshed and children are put to bed. It is that time when grandmother is singing lullabies. This is the time when crow and bats makes an eerie noise in the trees and follow human being into village Street. It becomes dark (*nut*) but still we hear voices of working women coming from their cookery.

Just before it gets dark old men sitting on the veranda scrutinize the sky in order to study the strange dance of the vulture (*gidi*). These birds are known as bad omen, such as bad crops. Then comes the dark (*nut*) when snakes (*bin*) are seen. Santal men talk about village affairs and the last meal is eaten before going to sleep. The days when the moon is full, Santal boys and girls meet at the dancing ground *akra* and sing till late night. Midnight (*tala nidas*) is the time when witches (*dain*) are roaming. When it is full night witches throw the germ of diseases at the door of their victims' houses while the *Ojhas*- the witch-doctor-cum-medicine man will try, later on, to localize at dawn when they engage in exorcism on behalf of their clients. According to another view the witches disguise as tiger (*chetra*) and jackal (*tuyub*) and kill the men.

Santal Beliefs and Ritual Practices

No human society live without being drawn to some kind of transcending reality, which we call supernatural reality that gives meaning and provides answers to the deeper and fundamental questions about life: It is religion that unites these questions and it is concerned with ultimate truth, absolute beauty, and final goodness. Religion unites human to human, to the transcendent and to the whole of creation.

The Santal's Perception of Supernaturalism

The religion of the Santals primarily refers to their belief and relationship with the Supreme Being, the ultimate destiny of all and everything. However, the application of the name of "God" which is transliterated into foreign terms-like Ishwar or Bhagwan used by the Hindus, or the term Allah used by Muslims, or "God" by Christians – does not seem to be suited to the Santals. For the Santals, the concept of a powerful God who conquers and wins all the time, just as imperial power, does not appeal to their hearts. Santals prefer to think of a God who is fatherly or a God who is tender or motherly. Therefore, the use of terms like, *Thakur Jiu* (Life Giver) or *Cando Baba* (Sun Father) finds some resonance with their own traditional expression. The Santals also believe in the *bonga* (spirits) who take care of and deal with human needs. This implies Santals' religious experience of how human beings relate and share in a greater degree with the invisible world of the *thakur Jiu*. Thus, the *bonga* (benevolent spirits) act as spiritual force to achieve this goal. They remain as intermediaries to create a link

between God and humankind whereas the presence of the malevolent *bonga* represents the sinfulness of this world. In short, for the Santals, religion:

- a) Is an integral part of socio-cultural living; b) Permeates all aspects of life-customs, social behavior, individual and group identity of Santal-nationality;
- c) Lives in the spontaneous awareness of the *bonga* (spirits) as intermediaries between *noa puri* (visible world) and the *hana puri* (the invisible reality of the world of the “supreme being,” the Creator); and d) Moves as a force and a great contributing factor in binding the society through ritual practices and cultural celebrations.

The Belief in Supreme Being

As has already been mentioned earlier, Santals do believe in one “supreme being” whom they call *Thakur Jiu* (Life Giver) or *Marang Buru* (Great Mountain) who is considered to be “supreme” among all the “religious beings.” The most common term used for the Supreme Being these days is *Cando Baba* (Sun Father). Santals do not refer literally to the Sun itself. It is an expression of a divine activity and expression of divine love in relation to human beings. For the Santals, *Cando Baba* is a benevolent deity who organizes the days and nights and is responsible for heat and cold, rain and sunshine and from a dwelling “somewhere in the sky.” The deity blesses with life here on earth but stays far away above the sky. It is underneath the sun, beneath the clouds.

The Belief in Bonga (Spirits)

The Santals also believe in the existence of the spirits called *bonga*. The *bonga* have much influence on daily living of the Santals. To get their continuing care, beside annual sacrifices, the *bonga* are also invoked during all rituals and festivals. Whenever a meal is taken, a small portion of the food is dropped on the floor for the *bonga*, or at the time of drinking of rice-beer, a little is spilt on the ground for *Marang Buru*. “Thus, the Santals live not only in their tribal society but in a greater society consisting of supernatural beings as well. According to the Santal religious beliefs there are two types of *bongas* - the malevolent and the benevolent. The *bonga*-worship is primarily to please and to invoke the powers of the benevolent and to avert the ill will of the malevolent ones. In the worship of *bonga* we can distinguish analytically two interrelated aspects:

The objective aspect of the religious rites is to have an alliance with the benevolent *bonga* and thereby control or even defeat the powers of the malevolent *bonga*; The expressive aspect of the worship is manifested through various seasonal and religious rites, festivals, and rites associated with various social rituals.

The Santals have an innate relationship with their *bonga* and consider themselves living with them. This relationship is mostly of dependence, submission, propitiation, and reverential fear. They offer supplications with rice-

beer and animal sacrifices, in the name of the *bonga*. It is worth mentioning that there are instances among the Santals in the rural villages where persons even in time of serious sickness would not look for medical help but instead turn to the *bonga* to be cured. Birth ceremony has a very critical importance because it bestows social parentage and clan status on the new-born child. It also brings the child into relation with a particular set of family spirits and deities.

Belief in Witchcraft

The Santal belief system also includes the existence of witches. They believe that there are certain people, especially women, who possess special powers and techniques to harm people, cattle, and crops. These so-called witches are involved in doing harmful activities like poisoning, taking out human livers, sending troublesome spirits to certain families, and changing themselves into black cats. Because of such belief in witchcraft practices, the Santals easily suspect one another, and are often led to fight (Oran, 1965). It is presumed essential to have such a belief especially in the pagan world. However, there is also a counter-belief among them, that there are certain people, *Ojha-janguru* (specialists), mainly men, who possess special powers and techniques for detecting witches and nullifying their spells. Thus, whenever Santals get into trouble, they seek the help of these people who, more often, exploit the society. Referring to the sickness and other problems, the Santals believe that they are caused by the evil spirits when they become dissatisfied with the people or when they think that they are being manipulated by some evil-minded people (witches). Therefore, the Santals try to identify the agents of the trouble through the help of *ojha-janguru*, and try to pacify each agent through various sacrifices.

The Jaheera (Sacred Grove)

The sacred grove locally known as Jaheera is an essential part of a Santal village. It is a sacred place of worship. After a village has been set up, a *Jaheera* is installed through special ritualistic ceremony at the outskirt of the village. The main feminine deity of the Jaheera is known as *Jaherayo*. According to the Santals, she resides there along with other important gods such as the *Marang Buru* and *Litemone*. The *Jaherayo* presides over the sacred grove, tends over other *bongas* in the Jheera, and looks after the well being of the villagers especially their physical needs. The spirits of the Jaheera are worshipped during the principal festivals of the community. These festivals are *Sohorae* (Harvest festival), *Baha* (Flower festival), *Erok'* (Sowing festival), and so on for the general welfare of the village, particularly for obtaining good monsoon and good crops and for the better health of the villagers and bovines and other livestock.

Totems:

A totemic groups Santal clans organize them for mutual respect and veneration to their totemic objects. Their myths and legends describe the creation maintenance and destruction, the creation of celestial bodies the earthy objects

and life of earth (Bodding, 1929 and Ghosh, 1994). After creation of earth, *Pilchu Haram* and *Pilchu Burhi* gave birth to seven sons and seven daughters. In later stage they married among themselves and then formed seven exogamous clans. With the passage of time, five more groups were formed and thus 12 clans are found among the Santals. They are Hansdak', Murmu, Hembrom, Soren, Kisku, Tudu, Marndi, Baske, Besra, Chonre, Puria and Bedea. An affiliation or sacred contact is believed to link these clans with their respective totems. Therefore, each of the names of clans is derived from either from the plants or animals species. There is a belief prevalent among the Santals that totems have some connection with the dead or birth of ancestors of the clans. Hansdak clan members claim to be of the highest status as they derived the name of their clan from first ancestors. The term designates wild goose, while dak' in Santali means water. This clan is, therefore, linked to the original state of world and first ancestors. It is the most senior among all the clans of the Santals since it is related to myth of creation. Moreover, swan or goose is not just animal. It builds nest on earth, walks on earth and flies on sky. Next in order are the Murmus who are represented by the Nilgai or the antelope. According to the myth of genesis of these clans, it is said that is antelope first animal to be sacrificed by Santals. Since this time, Santals started hunting and eating animals and subsequently become fond of hunting and eating of flesh. The antelope being purely a land animal is responsible for providing life to human and the swan combines the four elements and stands for humanity and creation of human beings. The Hansdak' and the Murmu are the two superior clans of the Santals. As the story goes, Hansdak' are given the status of advisors and the Murmus are the priest. The *Kiskus* have kingfisher bird as their totem and come third in the hierarchy. They are regarded as kings and are given and royal status. Hembrom are fourth in order and have betel nut as their totem. It is believed that the ancestor of the *Hembrom* clan was born with a betel nut string around his waist. There are also those who believe that their ancestor was actually born under a betel nut tree, which is hard and solid. *Marndis* are linked with grass or type of weed and are traders. The *Sorens* are soldiers or warriors and are linked to the constellation of stars. The *Tudus* are musicians and have accepted owl as their totem. *Baskes* are cooks and associated with the stale rice. They believe to have offered stale rice to the God and are thus prohibited from eating it. *Bedeas* have sheep as their totem and believed to have no personal possessions like the animal they revere. They are not found in now-a-days and believed to have been mixed with the other clans. Lastly are the *Paurias* and *Chonres* who have pigeons and lizard respectively as their totems. It is found that in most of the cases they revere their totem animals and do not do any harm to it and that the only animals the clan members could hunt are not their totem for it is customarily restricted them endangering the totemic species.

So strong are their feelings towards these totemic species that they respect them as their own clan members. If any of the clan members sees a dead totem, he observes the death rituals. Eating or hunting the totem is prohibited.

According to their customary norms, the restriction of marriages among the different clans lies in the nature of the totems and the elements they are connected with. In first place the marriage is forbidden between the water and land i.e. swan (*Hansdak'*) and antelope (*Murmu*). It is restricted between "lower heaven" and lower earth i.e. kingfisher and weed (*Kisku* and *Marndi*) also "upper heaven" (*Hembrom*) and "upper earth" (*Soren*). Secondly marriage is prohibited between three heavenly birds (Owl, Hawk and Pigeon). The totem also defines some relationship between the consumed and the consumer. The Pigeon that is the pray of the Hawk along with the lizard eats rice and the owl also hunts this lizard. Therefore initially the *Chonres* did not marry with *Besras* and *Tudus*. But presently this restriction is no longer followed and the marriages take place between all clan members. These clans are for the divided into several sub-clans, each one upholds a distinctive myth and set of customs that differentiates it from the others, including kinds of food taken, ornaments worn and worship of the spirits of Gods (*Bongas*). Even the sacrifices vary during the rituals from one sub-clan to another. The names of the sub-clan are derived from plants and animals. Out of the 16 sub-clans that were available in the area, nine trace their origins to certain animals. For example, *Chilbinda hansdak'* derived its name from the ancestor who killed an eagle, "*Jihu hansdak*" from *Jihu* or babbler bird. *Sole-Hemborm* does not eat eels as it is believed its ancestor had been saved by it while ferrying a flooded river. The *Kahu-Besras* are prohibited to kill crows. The totem exercises powerful influence on the habit of the Santals. They believe in the supernatural power at a higher rate. In Santal life, *bonga* or spirits play the central role. According to the *bonga* an impersonal and supernatural power, Santal worship their gods and goddess in the *jaheera* (sacred groove). *Jaheera* is also said to be as *sebaoda*. In the *jaheera*, large number of *sal* trees are present. *Marang Buru* and *Jaheerao* are the main god and goddess of Santal. The Santals believe that these deities are present in the *sal* trees. The village priest or the *Ojha* worships in the *jaheera* for the well being of Santals. Santals also believe that ghost and *dain* are also present in some trees like palm tree, *bade dare* tree (banyan tree) etc. So they restrict the children and pregnant women from going near those trees.

The Santals are very superstitious in nature. Before making a house in a certain place, they examine whether that place is suitable for construction of house or not. So in the night they along with *Ojha* go to that place to appease the deities for welfare with *ghatipani*, *jhuna*, *sindur*, two small white coons, a bowl made up of Kansa or bronze and cow-dung. The *Ojha* places brass bowl filled in water with dried rice and vermilion. Then the *Ojha* ties the sacrificial chicken near the bowl and offers some rice to the chicken. The moment the chicken starts taking grains the *Ojha/pujhari* cites *mantras* (hymns) at four corners of the symbolically marked world (*pruthivi*), to invite *dharitri mata*, *marang Buru* and *jaheerayo*. The members accompanying the *Ojha* also cite the hymn as a mark of reverence to the ancestral spirits. Next morning the same group along with the *Ojah* attend the sacrificial spot to find whether wings of the chicken fallen on the spot to decide the spot as suitable for house construction. Similarly, if the wings

of the chicken did not fall down or there is no excreta of the chicken then they believe that the place is not suitable for them and if they will make houses there then the head of the family will die.

The “House-altar”

Every Santal house has an inside a section locally known as *bhitar* marked as an abode of the *Orak’ bonga* (house spirits) also known as *abge bonga* - the *bonga* of the sub-clan. The household head is entitled to offer *puja* to these deities. The names of the *Orak’ bonga* are never said to any outsider nor any female member is allowed to enter the section. Right to offer worship to house deity is a prerogative and inheritable to the son in the main line of descent. The *bhitar* is also used as a sacred place to germinate and to store *handia* (rice beer) offered to satisfy the *bonga*.

The Ancestors (*hapadam*)

Kisku (2000) has made an extensive study on Santal ancestor worship and explained the power of ancestral souls as benefactors of the Santal community. From the rites and rituals as practiced by the Santals, it is quite evident that ancestor-worship is a common feature among them. The dead ancestors are the real benefactors of the families or groups to which they belonged and they are easily approachable by their living kin. Hence, in all important occasions like birth, marriage, or at death the deceased ancestors are remembered and offered sacrifices

The Other World

The Santals believe that the spirits of the dead the other world very much depend on the materials of the living world hence there is an interdependence and material transaction between these two worlds. Depending on the economic strength the ancestral worship can be postponed even to one year. The Santals believe that thicker is the smearing of blood of the birds and animals on the frame and wall nearer to the ancestral abode, greater is the quantum of blessing likely to fall on them. Security is thus extended from other world.

Santal Myths:

Myths on creation of world reveals as follows. The world at the beginning was filled with only water and God found the scarcity of cultivable land. He created all amphibians to make them, search for land and water separately. Then he created seven animals-crabs, crocodile, alligator, eel, prawn, earthworm and tortoise. For creating land, God invited the kings of all these animals to help Him and the latter failed to offer satisfactory answers to the question raised by Him. To His surprise, at the end the earthworm gathered courage and succeeded in creating land. It is said that the King of earthworm after seven days and seven nights ate the bottom of water and excreted on the

back of a mobile tortoise. The tortoise anchored itself on both the side firmly and brought up the earth and thus earth was brought to shape for cultivation. The Santal myth about the creation of world is comparable to myths of other indigenous people in India and abroad. Most of the myths and my themes are on animal and abnormal human capability. Another myth revealed that God has created two heavenly birds namely; *Has* and *Hasil* - from his outer body parts. Then these two birds found to be both hydro-adoptive and land adoptive. It is believed that they flew below the sun and above the earth thus making the contact between both the worlds. After flying several days, they built the nest on the earth and laid eggs. They were cosmic eggs, out of which two creatures; human male and female were born. They were *Pilchu Haram* and *Pilchu Burhi* the ancestor of the human kind. Both these myths relating to creation of world and mankind refer the birds and animal as ancestors. Thus Santal concept of life begins with animals.

The Santal Identity

Every ethnic group or society has its own unique characteristics, value systems, language, religious belief, mores, life-attitudes, culture, customs, and traditions. It has its own approach to life and death, disease and sickness, individuals and community, and above all, a sense of identity. Anyone visiting a Santal village or habitat will easily realize the distinct identity of Santals from their settlement and housing pattern. This sense of identity or cultural self-image defines the traits of solidarity and uniqueness, as well as seeks differences with other groups in the larger society around. However, in many ways, the Santals of Mayurbhanj today can be seen going through an identity crisis for a variety of reasons. The development initiatives taken by various agencies including central and state government have not been successful to bring change in their customs and traditions

The change is a must for every culture and community as well as its resources. It is observed that the Santals are sandwiched between their mythological past and techno-economic dynamics of the present that contribute to their deprivation caused by ignorance and exploitation. Moreover, Santals are now more divided than united due to the fact that some of them have already embraced Christianity and belong to different church denominations, while the vast majority still follows the old traditional pattern of culture and religious practices. The gap among these groups has been widening in the course of history. The Santals today face transition from the sovereignty of the isolated village to the complexities of modern polity, bureaucracy, and economy. Although magic and witchcraft have also figured prominently in Santal religious practices, some authors believe that they have been acculturated by the neighboring Hindus. The Santals strongly believed in the existence of witches in the society, who, motivated by envy and operating through the medium of the "evil eye" or other magical practices, inflicted sickness, death, and other calamities upon members of the village community. By means of divination

practices exercised through the witch-doctor and the *Ojha* (exorcist) and the identity of the witch is revealed. Once the name of the witch is known, that person is often beaten, fined, driven from the community, and not infrequently killed. Witches in Santal society were inevitably females, while the *Ojha* and the witch-finders are males.

In the contemporary world Santals like any other ethnic tribal group is known as a marginalised group. As regards the influence of greater society, the Santals are no exception. This significant cultural transformation challenges the ritual-based cultural matrix. The worldview of Santals in its tradition-dominated socio-political structure tries to retain its identity in its own way. The constitutional recognition for their script *Ol Chiki* has further contributed to their identity. In a sense they are projected as retainers. However, due to constant outsiders' intervention they are trapped in transition. The confrontation in their ritual-based sense of traditional culture and the forces of change and modernisation represented by the political changes and the socio-economic factors contribute to put them in transition. In their worldview they are badly caught in between their adherence to traditions and the planned change. Nevertheless, their rich traditional and cultural heritage can never be overestimated. Their very deep sense of spirituality surges up from the life cycle rituals- birth, initiation, marriage, pain and death. Completed and purified, their sense of equality, solidarity, and the community life, the concept of life and death, of sacredness of human life, of rite of purification, of respect, of veneration for the ancestors, belief in the afterlife, etc., explains the richness of their culture.

References :

- Biswas, A.K. (1995) "Santhal Rebellion: A study of little known facts of their life and culture." *Bulletin of Bihar Tribal Welfare Research Institute, Ranchi*. XXXV, December 1995:13-24
- Bodding, P.O. (1929). *Santal Folk Tales*. Oslo: H. Aschehough & Co Reprint: 1997. New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House
- Ghosh, Arun Kumar (1994) *Santali - A Look into Santal Morphology*. New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House.
- Kisku, D. Barka (2000) *The Santals and their Ancestors*. Dumka: Career Press
- Orans, M. (1965) *The Santal: A Tribe in Search of a Great Tradition*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press

THE SANTAL THERAPY VIS-À-VIS ANIMAL BASED MEDICINES *

G. N. Mohanty ¹

A. K. Moharana ²

The biological needs- essential, supplemental or supportive; of the people require regular or occasional satiation using the material (collected, cultured and processed) and non-material (services of various kinds) outputs. People are material consuming animals (Larkin, Petere & Exline - 1980:170) and a section of it consisting of the tribal communities living in 'ecologically marginal areas' (Vidyarthi -1984:272) are considered to be the denizens of forests (Childyal:- 135-136) because almost all their material needs ranging from food, fuel, fibre, fodder and fictive needs of different kinds including bio medicaments are collected from there. Though most of the latter are plant based a few animal based Medicines have been identified by the tribal for the treatment of disease- a state which limits life in its power, duration and enjoyment (Deodhar - 1969:2). Vaid (1979:144) concedes their medicines include certain *material medica* of animal, vegetable or mineral origin. Diseases whether seasonal, chronic, superficial or deep have been contained by the tribal people through ages. Though diseases may be classified as a) Natural, b) Supernatural, c) Interpersonal and d) Emotional (Press - 1982: 185), tribal people categorize them either as a) Natural or b) Supernatural. They have mastered the art of healing diseases belonging to latter by trial and error methods and have developed a pharmacopoeia of their own for their manifold diseases (Leff). All tribes- primitive or advanced, consider disease as pernicious and detrimental to normal life and cause both transient and intransient illness and disease means unhappiness, fear, tragedy, expenditure, suffering and ultimately death (Behura).

* Published in ADIVASI, Vol.46, No.1, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar, 2006, pp.01-10

¹ Director, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar

² Research Officer, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar

The Santal:

The Santal is an agrarian tribe but has been economically marginalized in urban, industrial and mining areas of Orissa with a strong belief system regarding ill health and disease glued to the traditional parameters based on their social and cultural behaviours. According to them 'the human life is governed by the sun, rain, wind and other elements and when man falls out of harmony with the nature, he becomes susceptible to diseases and accidents'. They also believe diseases are caused by the '*Tijio*' which may be large or microscopic (Basu- 1994: 317). The marginalized Santal, to certain extent, believe that 'health is maintained by certain regularities in behaviour regarding diet, exercise, rest and medication, when necessary' (Mutatkar- 1979-360).

Concept about disease:

The Santal in general, along with other tribes, opine that the causes of sickness are either supernatural or physical. They agree fully with other tribes that 'the supernatural causative agents are a) breach of taboo, b) sorcery, c) spirit intrusion, d) evil eye, e) wrath of Gods and Goddesses and f) ghost intrusion whereas the physical causative agents are a) effect of weather, b) effect of wrong food, c) contact with certain living organisms, d) blood getting impure, e) accidents and natural calamities and h) unknown causes' (Hasan -1979: 144) The tribal people have pharmacopoeia of their own for their manifold diseases, like malaria, yaws, leprosy, scabies, venereal disease, bowel complaints influenza, ophthalmia, cholera, small pox, etc (Roy-1989-85). Santals have developed an advanced pharmacopoeia of their own by incorporating the medicaments (in original forms or their formulations) from *Sidha* and *Ayurveda* systems of medicines. They have also found antidotes for diseases of the so-called civilized world, namely heart attack, loss of hair, asthma, jaundice, spleen inflammation, rheumatism, renal diseases, etc.

Health status:

Orissan Santals excel other tribes of the State in terms of environmental as well as personal hygiene. As regards the sanitary habits, they are very neat and clean and yet suffer from various types of diseases, such as malaria fever, stomach trouble, influenza, scabies, itches etc. (Debi-1990-236). Their standard of health is above that of the other tribes - primitive, agrarian or acculturated. Quoting the study results of Sarkar and Roy Choudhury, the Director of Anthropological Survey of India Mr. Singh (1994:1047) states that 'in the ABO blood group system, they show a preponderance of gene B(26 to 30%) over gene A(17 to 20%) and A2 in a frequency of two percent. R1(82%) and R2(12%) are the most common haplo types in Rh system. The ABH secretor factor is prominent (57%) and sickling is absent. The latter is indicative of almost nonexistence of diseases relating to sickle cell. Their decennial growth rate of 18.65 is appreciable in the context of model family size and the standard of living of theirs may not

convince it due to higher mortality rate among either the infants or the adults. This growth rate is higher than that of the other Kolarian tribes like the Munda (17.00) and the HO(14.37) but less than that of the Kolha(23.99%).

Belief system:

Santals have a strong belief system regarding ill health and diseases, which are glued to traditional parameters, based on their age-old socio-cultural behaviours. However, they are marginalized in urban, industrial and mining areas of Orissa.

They are hard-working and toil excessively as farm and non-farm activities leading to calorie deficiency in terms of body energy. Occupational hazards, like deposition of solid particulates in the respiratory track, consumption of drinking water with soluble and colloidal compounds present at dangerous level (higher amount in terms of Parts Per Million) and injuries – superficial or deep; impair Santals working in mining and industrial areas. Consumption of distilled liquor by the economically marginalized Santals results in lesser investment in procurement of body nutrients (food) resulting in the malfunctioning of the internal organs (kidney, liver, pancreas etc.), respiratory track, limb joints and their peripheral muscles and even visionary deficiency.

The causative agents according to their traditional belief system and that of the marginalized section of Santals along with the method the treatment of diseases have been shown in Annexure-I.

The Folk curer:

Biological needs, among which the treatment of the diseased is one, are satiated through cultural responses belonging to techno- economic, socio structural and ideological types. The first determines the second and first and second together determine the third (Behura- 1997:I). These responses- somatic, psychosomatic or psychic are put into action by the folk curers to contain any departure from health- ill health/disease. The Santal folk curer is usually a shaman who uses medicaments collected /procured from plant and animal sources. The *Ojha* is the Santal medicineman who utilizes somatic (material) Psycho- somatic (both action and material) and psychic (action) medicines to cure the patients suffering from epidemics, chronic diseases and the ailments said to be the results of anger of spirits, gods and goddesses, black magic etc. Another school of medicinemen said to be 'secular', found among them depend more on material medicine. There exists no scientific health provider in Santal society. The so called secular medicinemen are not found to possess traits, like 'seventh issue of the parents, neither born feet first nor twins (Clendering – 1961 : 10). *Ojhas* are said to have experimented on locally available known or unknown medicaments and have refined their findings by acquiring expertise from others(by self-enthusiasm or by inheriting).

Santal Therapy:

The Santal therapy is a folk therapy that aims at curing the patients with simple medicines prepared from the locally available (collected or purchased) medicaments of either biotic (plant or animal) or abiotic (soil, stone, water, ores and chemicals) origin. Like the tribe the therapy has been marginalized too. At certain areas of their habitation (urban, mining and industrial centers) it may be dubbed as nothing but the heavily watered down form of Ayurveda – the Aryan therapy. It is a wide spectrum healing practice based on somatic activities, psychopathic dealings, naturopathy and ‘touch therapy’. The medicines in liquid (elixir, extract, solution, oil etc.), semisolid (paste, ground/mashed objects etc.) and solid (sun dried medicaments or formulations) forms are prepared by the folk curers by easy mechanical means and are devoid of any preservatives, colourants and fortifying agents to compensate any loss of potency due to long storage. The Santal therapy, in general, is used for short duration with no side effect and with little restriction regarding food intake by the patients. The Santal medicines- formulations in particular, do not have longer storage period.

Medicaments:

Medicament literally means a substance used in curative treatment. Most of the ethnic medicines are plant based whereas ethnic groups (tribals) living in arid or semi-arid zones use mostly the animal based medicaments such as bone, skin, blood, flesh, teeth, nails and even milk (Maharana- 1997 :86). Though the Santal habitat does not come under arid or semi-arid zone, the traditional tribal medicinemen (*Ojha*) or the so-called modern tribal medicinemen use certain animal based medicaments directly or indirectly in combination with other plant based or abiotic medicaments.

The animal based medicaments, according to nature and availability are classified either as ‘general’ or ‘charmed’. The former includes egg, fish, tick, centipede, crab, fat of hen, firefly, *Kai*, meat of sparrow and horn bill, cow urine etc. which are easily available and are used by healers- traditional or modern; but the latter are usually used by the traditional ones (*Ojha*) who collect, store, prepare and administer medicines following certain rituals. The rituals observed are fortification of the medicine with holy/ritualistic chants and sometimes with weird movement of the body limbs. Santals still believe that the charmed medicaments (blood of *Sambar*, larvae, scale of pangolin, spike of porcupine, pupa, fat and hair of bear, bile of bat, nose of hyena and even the excreta of vulture etc.) are effective antidotes against diseases and yield amazing results if used by the *Ojha*. They also believe that the so called general medicaments, if used by *Ojha* yield prompt and better results than those used by the family elders or modern tribal medicineman. A Santal patient even prefers to be treated by the *Ojhato* checkmate common and superficial elements by external application of the medicines. Though a traditional Santal’s ‘ignorance of natural law led him to base his medical theories on his religious beliefs’ (Leff), the

marginalized ones despite their educational and economic prowess, succumb to the age old practice of the Ojha and do not mind to visit their houses with ailing infants and youths as the first step to contain the disease. Female folk curers seldom go for the use of animal based medicaments in shape of indigenous formulations. The reason is not due to the fact that 'females are more associated with plants and the males with the animals' (Vidyarthi & Rai 1985: 15) but due to fear of being branded as *Dain* -an evil minded female black magician ready to inflict misery, deprivation and even death on the target.

Sources of Animal- based Medicines:

While collecting / procuring the medicaments, a Santal folk curer prefers to go for colour, strain (indigenous or exotic) and the body condition of the animals. Usually black or any deep coloured animals are targeted for procurement of medicaments. Flesh, egg, milk, blood etc. of the local variety of animals are preferred over those from the exotic / hybrid animals and birds. Ingredients collected from dead animals/ carcasses have lesser potency than those collected from live or freshly killed animals.

The Medicine (Animal based):

A Santal folk curer uses animal based medicines against acute and chronic diseases and against that, which might raise problematic situations if not attended to at the right time. Most of the animal based medicines are used externally whereas a few of them are administered internally either as dietetic medicine or as the medicine proper. Animal-based medicines are considered as strong medicine and are tried over adult male patients to a great extent and adult female patient to a lesser extent. Some of the medicaments have direct external use on infant patients. Infant patients are rarely treated with animal based compound medicines.

The animal based medicaments and their use against different diseases/ailments have been shown in Annexure-II.

Conclusion:

Like any other tribes, Santals are yet to reason out that inadequate housing, clothing, food and insanitary conditions of living which are usually associated with poverty are social causes of diseases and the social medicine - an inspiration to all branches of medicine (Leff), is the right antidotes for quite a number of diseases. Though the 'rural poverty is not a social disease' (Singh - 1969: 18) the social medicine floated under institutional (Govt., Semi -govt. or Corporate) efforts can knock out quite a lot of diseases from the Santal belt.

The animal based medicaments used in Santal therapy are mostly of animal origin that come under the human food chain (domestic animals/birds). Collection of the medicaments of the domestic animals/ birds will not have any negative impact on their population. However, those collected from game/wild

animals result in extinction of the species from the surface of the globe. The short supply of the so called 'Charmed Objects' lead to illegal poaching of wild animals, like bear, *sambar*, hornbill, porcupine, pangolin etc. Santals – both illiterate and literate, have strong belief that the charmed objects are more effective to contain chronic diseases. The efficacy of the animal-based medicines is not scientifically proved. The success of healing of *Ojha* in Santal society 'lies on its valuable psychological function and its social acceptance' which ultimately promote 'will to live' (Chaudhury & Khashmiri- 1989: 95- 100).

At present, the environmental ethics want drastic changes in our material demands and in our cultural and behavioral attitudes of life (Sinha). The material demands linked with healing / curing practices of the Santal can be diverted to the plant based medicaments by empowering the rural as well as enlightened Santals by changing their behavioural attitudes of life.

Annexure-I

Causative agents and methods of treatment using Animal based Medicaments

Disease /Ailment (arranged alphabetically)	Causative Agents		Methods of Treatment
	(As per traditional belief system)	(As per marginalized belief system)	
1	2	3	4
1. Asthma	Evil deeds in past life & evil eye	Dust & Exposure to cold	Somatic medicine fortified with holy chant
2. Bite of poisonous insect/ animal	Evil spirit & evil deed	Carelessness	Touch Therapy
3. Blood dysentery	<i>Tijio/Tiju</i> & Supernatural power	-Do-	Somatic medicine fortified with holy chant
4. Burn wound	Curse of elders & evil deeds	-Do-	Oleo therapy
5. Chest pain/ Chest congestion	Evil spirit & black magic	Weakness & T.B	-Do-
6. Chronic cold	Black magic	Weakness & absence of live ford	Somatic medicine fortified with holy chant
7. Common cold	<i>Tijio/Tiju</i>	Exposure to cold	Oleo therapy

8. Running nose / Cough/cough with sputum	<i>Tijio /Tiju</i> & anger of deities	-Do-	-Do-
9. Eye infection	Tijio /Tiju	Dust, cold, External injury	Lacto therapy
10. Fever (prolonged)	Evil eye, black magic & ire of deities	Exposure to cold & water	Touch therapy
11. Fits	Ire of deities & black magic	Ire of deities & black magic	Somatic medicine fortified with holy chant
12. Headache/ Sinusitis	Evil eye & anger of ancestral spirits.	Exposure to hard sun & carrying load on head	Acupressure
13. Heart attack	Black magic & curse of deities.	-	Somatic medicine fortified with holy chant
14. Hydrocele	Evil deeds & ire of family deity	External pressure on scrotum	Somatic medicine
15. Impotency	Evil deeds of parents, self & black magic	Lack of 'Live' & 'Hot' food.	-Do-
16. Joint pain	Evil eye, ire of deities & ancestral spirits	Heavy work without rest	Oleo therapy
17. Loss of hair	Evil eye & black magic	Absence of care of hair	Oleo therapy
18. Maggot infested septic wound	Evil eye, curse of ancestral spirits & black magic	<i>Tijio /Tiju</i> , fly & black magic	Touch therapy
19. Muscular pain	Black magic	Absence of oily substance in muscle	Oleo therapy
20. Night blindness	Black magic, ire of deities & past evil deeds	Black magic	Diet therapy
21. Non Secretion of milk	Evil eye and black magic	Lack of 'Live' food	-Do-
22. Piles	Black magic & consumption of tabooed food items	Bad food habits	Touch therapy
23. Spleen inflammation	Black magic	-Do-	Somatic medicine fortified with holy chant
24. Sprain	Evil eye & anger of malevolent spirits	Carelessness	Oleo therapy
25. Throat impairment due to embedment of fish bone or bits of sharp bone	Evil eye & consumption of tabooed food items	-Do-	Aero therapy

Annexure-II

Animal Based Medicaments and their use against Disease/ Ailments
(The Medicaments are arranged alphabetically)

SI No	Medicament	Use	Disease/ Ailment	Provider	Remarks
1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Beef	A piece of dry beef is roasted on live charcoal and taken daily once at daytime.	Heart attack	Ojha	The number of doses based on the advice of the provider
2	Bile of Bat	A piece of dry bile is put into the middle of a sweet meat or ripen banana taken orally preferably at morning before breakfast.	Chronic cold & Asthma	Ojha	-
3	Blood of Sambar	A small piece of dry caked blood is mixed with little water thoroughly and taken orally only once.	Blood dysentery	Ojha	Recommended to adult male patients.
4	Cow butter oil	(a) Few strands of green <i>Kuleibaha</i> (a type of coarse grass grown on flat barren land) is ground to a fine paste & whipped with butter oil thoroughly. The whipped mass is applied on head. After two days head is washed (b) Warm butter oil is massaged on joint (c) Warm butter oil is massaged on chest twice daily	(a) Loss of hair b) Joint pain (Vata) c) Asthma & Chest pain	(a) Secular medicine person b) Secular medicineman. c) Secular medicineman	- -
5	Centiped (Tentulipoka)	A live centipede and a small root of <i>Lajkuli</i> (<i>Mimosa pudica</i> , Linn.) are grinded to a paste without water and taken orally in empty stomach once a day for two days.	Spleen inflammation	Ojha	Freshly prepared medicine is always used
6	Chameleon	The dressed chameleon fried with cow butter oil. Cooled and kneaded to a dough like mass. Small pellets are made out of it. Dried. One pellet is taken orally in empty stomach daily for 45 days.	Asthma	Ojha	The provider prepares the medicine covertly.

7	Crab (Fresh water)	The dressed crab is fried with <i>mohua</i> oil without salt and turmeric on low flame. The hot fried mass is taken twice daily along with the principal meals.	Cough	<i>Ojha</i> /Secular medicineman	The use of undressed crab, it is believed, enhanced the potency of the medicine.
8	Egg of hen	(a) A freshly laid egg is put into fresh limejuice before the sticky fluid around the shell dries up. The egg dissolves after a month. Three teaspoon full of the liquid is taken orally in empty stomach (b) The egg is broken to get the egg albumen. The albumen is spread over the wound.	a) Asthma b) Burn wound	a) <i>Ojha</i> b) Both <i>Ojha</i> & secular medicineman	a) Egg of black <i>Ultia</i> is used b) Effective against fresh burn wound.
9	Fat of Hen	The fat is boiled till it melts. The lukewarm fat is painted over the wound with the help of a feather	Born wound	-do-	Fat of black hen or an <i>Ultia</i> is preferred.
10	Fat of bear	(a) The fat is warmed and applied on chest. (b) The lukewarm fat is gently rubbed against joint and muscles adjacent to it	a) Chest congestion b) Joint pain (<i>Vata</i>)	a) -do- b) -do-	- b) The fat is applied when patient retires at night.
11	Fire fly	A live firefly is put into a bowl of steaming rice and eaten at noon time on any Sunday	Night blindness	Both <i>Ojha</i> and secular medicineman	May be repeated in the subsequent Sundays
12	Fish (<i>Kerandi</i> - the small fresh water fish with bitter taste)	A few whole fish without salt & turmeric wrapped in a green Sal leaf. Roasted over live charcoal & eaten before principal food once a day for four to six days	Non - secretion of milk of a nursing mother	-do-	Advised to consume ragi, pulses and cooked drumstick leaves.
13	Hair of bear	A few strands of hair and a small piece of the root of <i>Bichuati</i> is tied with a thread and put around the arm of the patient standing under the thatched roof early in the morning before washing mouth and passing urine.	Prolonged fever	<i>Ojha</i>	A red thread is used
14	<i>Kai</i> (Tree dwelling out)	A few <i>Kai</i> are grinded to a paste with two to three pods of garlic. Warmed a little and eaten once a	Cough with septum/ common cold	<i>Ojha</i> or secular medicineman	Always the fresh paste is eaten

		day along with principal meal at noon.			
15	Larva of a butterfly	Two larvae found engaged in a duel which munching a single ark leaf is collected and dehydrated under the seen. A small nice of it is put into a little water and whipped vigorously. Two drops of the water are put into the nose of the unconscious patient	Fits	Ojha	After cure the patient is to sacrifice a buck
16	Meat of bat	The meat is cooked with salt, turmeric paste with little oil and consumed once a weak for several times according to the advising the provider	Chronic cold	Secular medicineman	-
17	Meat of hornbill	The meat is cooked with salt, turmeric and oil and consumed once a week for several weeks.	Joint pain and muscular pain	-do-	Fresh meat is preferred.
18	Meat of he-sparrow/ he- peacock	The freshly killed bird is dressed without use of water and cooked with little oil without condiments on live charcoal and consumed regularly.	Impotency	-do-	Used preferably in cold months
19	Milk of ewe	Two to three drops of fresh milk are put into the eye in the morning.	Eye infection (reddening of eye due to cold or minor external wound	-do-	Avoided in case of internal damage
20	Milk of nursing mother	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-
21	Nose of hyena	The dried nose is rubbed against rough surface and placed before the nose of the patient for a deep inhalation.	Throat pain due to embedment of the fish bone or sharp bone	Ojha or Secular Medicinemen	If necessary repeated several times
22	Penis of the sloth bear	The penis along with a few <i>Tulasi (Ocimum sanctum)</i> leaves are thrashed repeatedly to a paste like mass. The mass is taken orally at night time along with supper.	Impotency	Ojha	Fresh penis is preferred

23	Pupa from the <i>Tassar</i> cocoon	A pupa retrieved from the cocoon is grinded along with a piece of root of <i>Chitaparu</i> (<i>Plumbago zeylanica</i>), a leaf of Ark (<i>Calotropis procera</i>) and a piece of Dolomite stone to a fine paste like mass. The paste is spread over the swollen scrotum for half to one hour and then washed away.	Hydrosil	<i>Ojha</i>	Discontinued when the scrotum retains the normal size.
24	Quill of porcupine	The sharp end of the quill is gently pressed all over the pre-oiled and massaged forehead.	Headache / sinusitis	<i>Ojha</i> / Secular Medicinemen	Any thick vegetable oil except <i>Kochila</i> (<i>Nux vomica</i>) oil is used
25	Scale of Pangolin	The scale is shaped to a ring with the help of a broken glass or sharp flint and worn on the ring finger of the left hand.	Piles	-do-	Scales above backbone are preferred. Iron tools avoided.
26	Tick	A life tick is collected from the body of a black cow and pressed into the mouth of the patient.	Fits	<i>Ojha</i>	Strangers are avoided while treating the patient
27	Urine of cow	The urine is collected and taken to an <i>Ojha</i> for fortification through rituals. It is then administered to the patient thrice daily.	Chronic cold	<i>Ojha</i>	Urine of black cow is preferred
28	White ant	A small piece of laterite stone (<i>Mankadapathar</i>) & a fatty female white ant are grinded along with a little <i>Mohua</i> / <i>Karanja</i> oil to a paste like mass. Warmed a little and applied over the affected part twice daily for 3 days.	Sprain	<i>Ojha</i> / Secular Medicineman	-
	Complex Medicine				
29	Vulture excreta & putrefied centipede	Excreta of vulture and putrefied centipede (<i>Telunipoka</i>) are ground with a little hard liquor (<i>Mohua</i> or <i>Chauli</i>) and a small piece of tobacco leaf (<i>Dokta</i>) and applied on swollen scrotum.	Hydrocele	<i>Ojha</i>	Repeated several times to bring the scrotum to normal size.

REFERENCES

1. Basu, Salil 1994 'Tribal Health in India' in Self (ed) *Tribal Health in India*, Nanak Publication, Delhi, Pp-317 & 318.
2. Behura, N. K. 1996 Cultural Dimensions of Diseases & Their Treatment (Case Studies from Tribal Societies of Orissa), *ADIVASI Vol.* - P.11
3. Chaudhury, A. K. & 1989 Indigenous health practices & its problems: A study among the Bhoksas of Nainital in Kanehan Roy (ed) *Education & Health Problem in Tribal Development*, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, Pp.95-100.
4. Childyal - *Tribe and Forest*, Pp.135 & 136.
5. Debi, K.B 1990 'Santal' in '*Tribes of Orissa*' Tribal & Harijan Research-cum-Training Institute, Bhubaneswar. Pp.236 & 237.
6. Deodhar, N. S. 1967 'The Concept of Health & Diseases' in Dr.V. N. Bhawe, Dr. N.S. Deodhar & Dr. S.V. Bhawe (ed) *You and Your Health*, National Book Trust, New Delhi, P-2.
7. Hasan, K. H. 1979 *The Cultural Frontiers of Health in Village India*, Sachin Publication, Ajmer, P-144.
8. Larkin, R. P., 1980 *People, Environment & Place: An Introduction to Human*
Petere ,G. L. & *Geography*, Charles E.N.Publishing Company, P-170.
9. Maharana, A. K. 1996 Tribal Medicine & Medicine men: An Exploratory Study of the Didayi of Orissa, *ADIVASI VOL.*, P-86.
10. Mutatkar, R. K. 1979 'Social Customs & Health' in Dr. V.N. Bhawe, Dr. N.S. Deodbar & Dr. S.N. Bhawe (ed) *You & Your Health*, National Book Trust of India, New Delhi, P-360.
11. Press, I 1982 'Witch Doctors' Legacy: Some Anthropological Implications for practice of clinical Medicine' in Noel J. Chrisman & T.W. Maretzki (ed) *Clinically Applied Anthropology*, D.R. Publishing House, P-185.
12. Roy, Kanehan (ed) 1989 *Education & Health Problems in Tribal Development*, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, P-85.
13. Roy, S. C. 1985 *Oraon Religion & Culture*, Gian Pub. House, Delhi, P-11.
14. Sharma, P. V. 1972 *Indian Medicine in the Classical Age*, Chowkhamba Publication, P-2
15. Singh, K. S (ed) 1994 *Scheduled Tribe* (People of India Series) Vol. Anthropological Survey of India, Calcutta, P-1047.
16. Troisi, J. 1979 *Tribal Religion*, Manohar Publication, New Delhi, P-97.
17. Vidyarthi, L. P. 1984 *Applied Anthropology in India* (Principles, Problems & Case Studies), Kitab Mahal, Allahabad, P-272.
18. Vidyarthi, L. P. & 1985 *The Tribal Culture of India*, Concept Publishing Company, Rai, B. K. New Delhi-15, P-101.

PANORAMA OF SANTAL FESTIVALS : THE PIOUS BEAUTY AND PRECIOUS SANCTITY *

*Ramesh Mohanty*¹

‘Dancing and singing’ is the soul of tribal life while the ‘Festivals’, the heart of their group. Dancing together with singing exhibits the beauty of their life but the festivals reflect the dignity and purity of their society. They sing and dance for pleasure while they observe festivals not merely for leisure but for the treasure of peace, love, health, wealth happiness and prosperity. Festivals add colours to their life and living.

Santals are the scion of great Kherwal tribe. They observe thirteen festivals in twelve months in a sequence scheduled around the year. The portrait of all the festival cannot be presented in small article of a few thousand words. Only an honest attempt has been made here to briefly sketch the festivals in the sequence they are observed.

1. EROK SIM

The first agricultural festival Erok sim is observed just before sowing paddy seeds in the fields around the month of May-June. Each householder subscribes fowls which are sacrificed by the village priest at the sacred groove called *jaherthan* in honour of Maran Buru, Jaher era, Monrenko, Pargana, Gosaneera and Manjhi Haram. One bird is offered to each of the deities. The boundary deity is offered a black fowl. Worship and prayer is done for good harvest. A feast is arranged and all Santal men eat together at *jaherthan*. However the meat of the fowls offered to Jaher era and Monrenko can be eaten by the village priest (Naeke) alone. Then all the villagers join together in singing and dancing to conclude the Erok sim or sowing festival.

2. HARIAR SIMKO

When rains come and the paddy plants grow and gradually turn green, the festival is observed in the same fashion as Erok sim.

*Published in ADIVASI, Vol. XXXXVIII, No.2, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar, 2008, pp.62-67

¹ Branch Manager, Bank of India, Bancho branch, Keonjhar

3. IRI GUNDLI NANWANI (The millet festival also called Muchri)

Offering of millet crops to the Santal deities is observed during the August. The village priest (Naeke) after purificatory abulation goes to the field of a *raiya* (tenant) and harvests the ripened crop. Then he goes to the *jaherthan* and cleans it with the cowdung and offers the crop to Jaher era, Monrenko, Moran hor, Gasane era and Pargana for prevention of ailments like stomach trouble or headache after first eating of the crop. The priest returns to village and offers the new crop to the shrine in the headman's house. He takes the rest of the crops to his home. Then the individual Santal families cook and eat the new crop. This festival is observed with great pleasure, sincerity, love and dedication.

4. GAMHA PURNIMA

On the full moon of Shravan i.e., Iri Gundli Nanwani the Santals feed their cows with salt, *mohua* flowers, rice, the corrosive *bhela* fruit and *mutha* grass. The cattle horns are rubbed with oil. Men and women dance around a Karam branch, planted at the *akhara* (the dancing ground.) This is a special Karam dance after which the Karam branch is immersed in water. All wear new clothes, indulge in feasts and drinks not forgetting to feed Brahmins and Vaishnabas.

5. KARAM POROB

This is an extra festival in which the *pooja* of the Karam Bonga is performed around the month of September-October. The male members of the village go after the nightfall, cut a branch of Karam tree and fix it in *kulhi* (village lane). The young men and women dance around the Karam branch till morning. The dance is called 'Runj' i.e., performance of heroic dance. After the dance the branch is immersed in water (tank or spring). No sacrifices are offered but a libation of liquor is poured out to the manes of the village chief and to Maran Buru. This festival is observed for amusement and welfare of the villagers.

6. JANTHAR

The villagers pay for a hog or a ram or a he-goat, which is sacrificed before the *paranathan* by a special priest called Kudam Neake. The priest himself collects all the articles for worship. Only the male members of the tribe are allowed to eat the meat of the sacrificed animal. During this festival the first crop of low land paddy is offered to the deities. So the other name of the festival is Baihar Horo Nanwani. Some also name it as Maamane, a festival of reaping of wetland paddy. Where no such crop is harvested, no function takes place.

The festival is observed for two days. First day is the day of purification. In the morning the unmarried boys repair and clean the small hut of Jaher era at the sacred grove after fasting for a day. Towards evening the villagers assemble at the house of the Naeke and old men and women invoke the tribal gods with prayers. A dance is arranged at the Sacred Grove to invoke and please the deities. Sometimes five men representing the number of gods rub a plantain with

sun-dried rice. They sit on a mat and rub sun-dried rice, given by the priest, in a winnowing fan. Gradually, they get into trance (*jhupur*) reply to questions asked by the villagers pertaining to harvest, diseases, calamities etc. and their solutions.

On the second day (Gardi) morning the Godet collects rice and chicken from all houses of the village. A dance is organized at Jaherthan with women singing and dancing and men accompanying all the way with cymbal and kettledrum. The Naeke walks in the front with puja items together with a pot of rice beer. A bachelor with an earthen pitcher follows the priest. The priest reaps some paddy from a field and offers it with prayer at Jaherthan. Fowls are sacrificed to the five Gods, and the boundary deities propitiated at a separate place with offering of rice beer. When the rituals are over, women return home, while men prepare the dinner, which they eat in the afternoon. The priest himself cooks near the shrine of Jahar Era, offers the meat to five deities of the grove and eats the food himself. During this time the whole village vibrates with music and folk song of the women who have already retuned earlier from *jaher era*. In the evening the men return home dancing and singing with the priest at the head.

7. SOHRAE

Sohrae is the festival of Winter Harvest - the biggest event of the Santal festival calendar. It is also known as Bundhna, in common parlance. This picturesque festival has no specified date. It is held on suitable dates for each village with the stipulation that the festival must conclude before the last day of Pousa (mid-January) in Santal Paraganas. In Mayurbhanj the festival is celebrated for 2-3 days while in Santal Parganas the festival continues for a week.

The festival starts with an initial purification ceremony (*un*) when the Santals clean themselves with a ceremonial ablation. House and courtyards also are scrupulously made clean. Thereafter they take a meal and gather at *jaherthan*.

The cowboys of the tribe make their cows walk on a particular spot on which eggs have been placed. The boy whose cow breaks the egg or smells it is called lucky boy. The feet of the successful cow are then ceremonially washed. Then worship of cows (Gohal Puja) is performed. The young men of the tribe keep vigil and go from place to place to awaken the cows playing with the pipes and kettle drums, beginning with head man's house. On the other hand the maidens deck their hair with flowers and entwine their arms with their sisters. Thus they march to the headman's house where with fresh paddy, grass and lamps they sing special songs around the cattle and then visit all the cowsheds of the village. Cattle are anointed with oil and dubbed with vermilion and a share of rice-bean given to each. On that night the *kulhi* (village lane) resound with various other songs sung by women.

An interesting feature of this day is the fixing of posts all over the village up to the headman's house in the morning. After midday meal the cows and buffaloes are tied to their posts. The feet of these animals are washed and their

horns decorated with garlands. The young men of the village then come in a body and poking the animas and dancing around them. After the "War-Dance" all the villagers assemble at the Headman's house and engage in a picturesque competition by playing with bamboo-staff and shields.

Next follows Hako Katkom meaning the day of catching fish and crabs. It is the religious duty of all Santals to go out for hunting on this day and if they cannot find anything else, they must at least catch fish or crabs. On another special day called Jale, the members of the tribe visit from house to house and exchange greetings.

The whole week of festivities come to end with Bejha (to shoot at a target)- a day of sports. The tribe becomes animated and before the congregation of villagers sports like *lathi* play, target shooting with bows and arrows etc take place. Successful players are cheered and carried to the headman's house on the shoulders of their friends.

Sohrae is not merely a festival of Winter Harvest, it is an invaluable unique occasion of family reunion, social reunion and more ideally old lovers reunion. All married daughters young and old return to the parents. During this visit, rice beer is brewed, household chores are forgotten and the code of sexual conduct is deliberately relaxed. At Sohrae even the old men, young men and women are allowed to meet their old lovers. Even though her husband is present, a woman is not deterred from seeking out her old friend.

8. MOKAR

Mokar Parob is celebrated by Santals on the first day Magh coinciding with Makar Sankranti of the Hindus. But this festival is also called a Sankranti Puja and performed pompously in which *chire* (flattered rice) and molasses are offered to the dead ancestors. The first day is called "Banundi". On this day Santals catch fish and crab and eat. Eating fish and crab on this day is believed to be giving a long lease of life. Tasteful cakes of meat, sun-dried rice-flour are prepared in all households. After bath Santals eat it with *treache*, *til* (sesame) and *chira* (flattened rice). They also drink of rice beer.

Towards afternoon archery competition to shoot a target placed on a banana tree is held. The successful one is cheered and carried to the Headman's house in a procession. There they are entertained with rice beer and fried rice. He who maintains a uniform record for three consecutive years is awarded special prize by the Headman. During the award, melodious and spirited folk songs with dances make the evening unique.

The festival concludes with straw made puppet monkeys made to dance from house to house. Subscriptions are raised to arrange a community feast while the countryside vibrates with music and laughter.

9. MAGH SIM

Santal year ends with the month of Magh. Appropriate ceremonials are performed with cutting of wild thatching grass. Servants are paid their wages and fresh contracts entered into. All village officials resign; *rayats* notify throwing up of lands who are re-appointed amidst drinks of rice beer. Thus Magh Sim is festival of renewal observed at Jaherthan with optimism and expectations for the oncoming year. No specific day is assigned for this celebration. A suitable day is decided upon and the year ending is observed.

10. BAHAR PARAB

With the onset of spring the *sal* and other flowers blossom and the forest turns into a colourful heaven. At this time Santals celebrate Baha Parab or Flower Festival. Among all festivals Soharai & Baha are celebrated with great enthusiasm.

The festival begins with a day of purification called *um* when the young men of the village go to the Jaherthan and build two huts -one reserved for Gosane Era and the other shared by Jaher Era, the presiding deity of the grove, Monerenko (The Fives) and Maran Buru, the chief presiding deity. The priest purifies the shrine with cow dung. All the young men of the village then bathe and purify themselves.

The Naeke (priest) cleans a winnowing fan, a basket, a bow and arrow, a pickaxe, a broomstick and a hunting horn. He daubs them with oil and *mithi*. In the evening the Godet, the assistant of village headman presents the priest with three fowls. Three young men now proceed towards the house of the priest, shaking their heads in a trance and impersonating Jaher Era, Maran Buru and Gosane Era respectively. Jaher Era enters the priest's hut, puts on the bracelet and putting the basket on his head, takes up the broomstick. Monerenko takes the bow and arrow, while Maran Buru holds the pickaxe. The actor deities rush to the sacred grove. There, the Jaher Era sweeps the shrine while the two others supervise. At night they return to the priest's house and the priest with piteous lamentations takes back the insignias the deities wore. They sit on mats, are given a handful of rice each as propitiation and questioned about auguries. This is followed by a general incantation of the gods.

Now the priest washes their feet starting with Jaher Era. Then the deities do so themselves mutually, and the headman, the drummer and the singer, all participate in the ceremony. The priest then makes Jaher Era, Maran Buru and Monerenko sit on the mats and they are entertained with a meal of rice and drinks of rice beer along with others present there. But the singer is allowed a large share of the dinner and not allowed to return home. Group dance with special Baha songs follows.

Early morning on the second day the priest's wife grinds flour. The headman's assistant goes round the village gathering rice, salt and turmeric. All of them move to the sacred grove singing all the way. Here the actors of deities

of the previous day again play their roles. They wear traditional insignia and run into the jungle followed by other youngmen. There, Monerenko shoots at the sprouting *sal* flowers with an arrow. Maran Buru climbs the tree and cuts the branches with flowers while Jaher Era plucks them in his basket. They return to sacred grove gathering *mohua* flowers on the way. Priest receives them and they are enshrined in their respective huts. Fowls are scarified with special incantation in honour of Baha amidst songs and rejoicing. The priest offers the branches of *sal* and *mohua* flowers. After mutual feet washing the actor deities come back to their real self and all return to the village singing and dancing. Through these peculiar songs an invitation is given to all the boys and girls of the village to accept the special gift of a *sal* flower from the priest and to salute him in return. At night the priest stays at the sacred grove with his wife, and eats a special dish of spotted fowl cooked by him.

The third day is the priest's home coming, celebrated amidst general feasting and merry-making. Some people go to *jaherthan* beat the kettledrum and blow horns indicating that the priest is returning home. They tell each other "Let us go and welcome the priest" and march to the grove. The *sal* flower, the winnowing fan, pot of water and the jar of holy water are brought back to the village. The village maidens by this time keep ready the ceremonial water jug, seats of wood and oil in a wooden box of small size. The priest's feet are washed by the maidens of the first house. They are offered *sal* flowers in return. The maidens salute the priest as he sprinkles water on them. This is done in all houses till they reach the priest's house where water is poured on his roofs and a liberal offer of rice beer is made to all present there.

Then the water-festival follows and water is sprinkled on all men. They think that the younger brother's wife and wife's elder sister deserve a great respect and so they avoid to sprinkle water on them. The festivities conclude with songs and dances in which the whole village joins the merry-maker's procession starting from the priest's house & ending with the headman's house

The festival is observed with slight variations from place to place but the essence is all the same.

11. JOM SIM

This is not a regular festival. In a family the festival is observed once in five years. There is no specific date but only after harvest when the Santal's home is full of grains he performs this festival on a suitable date. The festival is the occasion to remember and celebrate the purity of his clan blood. Santal is always conscious not to enter into a marriage with his family, lineage or clan members. They marry in different clan (*gotra*). The traditional rituals are performed and the villagers along with the kith and kin are entertained with feast in which any irregularities and violations committed is reminded and rectified.

This is an expensive affair for a family as all the expenses are borne by the family celebrating it. For this reason this festival is gradually vanishing but it has a great social importance.

12. PATA PARAB

This unique festival is observed on the first day of Baisakha.

The customary practices, in connection with Pata, vary in different areas. Some Santals show the sign of spirit-possession (Jhuper) with the arrival of the time of festival. They go here and there with Khepa searching for the touchstone. They dive in a pond, ransack the forest, search the hill and at last coming upon a stone, shout 'we have found'. And the admiring audience sees that they have unearthed a stone, which they all claim as the symbol of Mahadeo. These people called Bhoktas, then run to the conveners of Hindu festivals Corok and if listened to they are permitted to join with the devotees and take part in the ceremonials.

There are others who arrange their own festivals. Such people go begging from house to house for three preceding days and with the proceeds they buy milk. Then on the eve of Pata they assemble in a field where the devotees erect a hut-temple with the subscriptions collected from the tribe and offer milk, rice and ghee to the deity Mahadeo. A goat is scarified in the field in a place away from the improvised temple. The ceremonials conclude with special songs and dances in which Santals take part with a great deal of gusto.

In other places the festival is observed at the place of village deity. The devotees observe five days of purity and in the name of the deity with a pot on head walk on burning charcoal and thorns. On the last day Uda Parob is held. In an open space near the village deity a pole is fixed on which a *charkhi* is placed & a staff attached to *charkhi* tied with a rope. Below the *charkhi* the devotee pull the rope as the *charkhi* goes round. The ceremony concludes amidst songs and dance.

13. DASAE FESTIVAL:

This festival coincides with Dasahara festival. But the Santals celebrate this occasion not only with the worship of their deities but also with singing, dancing, merry making, feasting and drinking.

The socio-religious significance and beauty of Santal festivals cannot be described in words. For example Sohrae is not merely a festival of winter harvest or renewal of social goodwill but also an athletic event. Baha is not merely a greeting to the flowers of spring, it entwines with marriage and fertility. Happiness and prosperity is the cherished substance of human life and the Santals enjoy life in their festivals. Festivals are only manifestation of pious beauty and precious sanctity of Santal's paradise on earth.

SHORAE FESTIVAL *

*Gangadhar Hansda*¹

The Santals are one of the ethnic groups assumed to be the earliest inhabitants of India. They are a agrarian community who depend mainly on cultivation. They have allied some beliefs and rituals from the time immemorial with their agrarian profession. They have been performing these in every agricultural year, because in these occasions the Santa plunges into their primitive pastoral life to worship their deities (*bongas*), to sing the advent of the agricultural season, to make joy over a bumper crop. The sequence in which the Santals cultivate paddy, their main means of living, to sow it, transplant it, handle it and store it and the way in which they surround it with religion and magical beliefs are obvious signs of their closeness with cultivation. Their tradition reveals that the world atmosphere and entire life cycle is synchronized by *bongas*- the super natural beings. Crops can yield safely with the grace of *bongas* only. So far as the *bongas* are appeased a variety of menace may not come. The Santals know that timely propitiation of their *bongas* means good harvest and prosperity. Their material life is to be guarded by performing various ceremonies and rituals in honour of their *bongas*. They perform a series of seasonal rites and festivals to mark different stages of their cultivation. Basing on the agriculture, they institute inaugural rites and concluding rites before and after their agricultural activities followed by family feast and group dance. In every occasion, the village priest appeals to *bongas* on behalf of the village community and village headman, Manjhi, arranges it. It is very important to note that for Santal there is no individual worship, and it is always communal. For them the lowest entity cannot be less than a family or a sub clan. Thus Santal festivals are group events in nature and a good deal of gathering can always be found in almost all such occasions.

Among various festivals of Santals, Sohrae can be said as the principal annual event. On this day they express gratitude to *bongas* for raining timely and for giving fair weather for having a bumper crop. As they use the service of oxen

* Published in ADIVASI, Vol. XXXXVIII, No.2, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar, 2008, pp.80-83

¹ Madhuban, Baripada

and buffaloes in their agricultural operations, they never forget to honour them in Sohrae festival. Likewise, all the implements that are used in agriculture are washed properly; rice powder and vermilion are applied on those on this day. The Santals nowadays are mostly coinciding this festival with Kalipuja or Deepawali, but infact, the time for this festival is Pus (December-January). By this time they complete entire work of reaping, threshing and storing grains. Sohrae is a five days long festival. The first day is called Gothilok, the second day is called Dakahilok, third day is called Khuntauhilok, the fourth day is called Jajlehilok and the fifth day is called Haku Kakomhilog. In some places it goes upto the sixth day and conclude with Sakrat at the end.

This picturesque festival had no specific date earlier. The villagers in the Kulhi Durup or village meeting decided it. But now with the introduction of Santal Calendar, it is being fixed by some organizations like Adivasi Socio Educational and Cultural Association, mostly in the month of November-December. The village council finally decides the arrangements for the festival. They prepare rough estimate of expenditure for offerings and the contribution per family is fixed accordingly. The Godet or Jogmanjhi has the duty to go from house and collect sacrificial offerings.

On *umhilog*, the first day or preparatory day of the Sohrae, all the villagers assemble in the house of village priest, Naeke. The Naeke places all the ingredients such as cow-dung, sundried rice, rice powder, vermilion, *mithi* (one kind of spice) etc. in a winnowing fan. He carries it in his left hand whereas in his right hand he carries a *lota* (metal pot) full of water and proceeds to the *got*, a temporary resting place of cattle at outskirts of village. Other villagers follow him with fowls, cooking utensils and pot of rice beer. There in the got the village priest cleans a spot with cow dung and water. He prepares a *khand* (an altar) with rice flour, sundried rice and *mithi*. Thereafter in the name of Jaher Era, Moneko, Marangburu, Majhi Haram and Goram, he applies five marks of *sindur* in front of the altar. He then sprinkles some water on the fowls and eggs and marks them with *sindur*. Meanwhile, *hakhen* is uttered with the villagers to bless the festival and to keep them free from harm. After that, Naeke cuts of the fowls head with *kapi* (one type of axe), let the blood drop on egg and rice heap and the heads are placed on *khand*. Thereafter, the *Naeka* offers rice beer in leaf cup over the *khand* and the leftover are drunk as *prasad* by all villagers present.

Then all scarified fowls are cleaned for cooking. After chopping those, their heads are separately cooked by rolling them on flour and baking them on the fire in a skin of leaves. Each one who has observed fasting for the occasion shares it. The Jogmajhi or Gadet with other villagers then prepares *jilsole* (rice cooked with meat) and distribute among all present by afternoon. After the eating is over, villagers began to beat Madal, play Tripo (flute) and sing songs.

Next, the village youths drive their cattle towards the *khand*. Their target is the animals to treads on and breaks the egg or smells it. The cow that touches

the egg first is regarded as the luckiest. Her feet are ceremonially washed and after anointing her horns with oil they smeared it with *sindur*. The owner of the cow is also believed to be of good fortune and is carried over shoulders. Creation of man as per Santal myth has started from the egg of huge goose. Perhaps such an egg is allowed to be broken as a sacred symbol. Everyone then visits village Naeke and Headman's house, where they are given rice beer to drink. Later on, in the evening women and girls taking sun-dried rice, *dhubi* grass and *diya* visit cowshed and perform *chumauna*. They sing-

*"Ne sugi am sugi te Sae Sugi
Ne Rangia am Rangiate sae Rangia
Amem hewe leko haralekodo
Injag orak injag gora perej kok chorang kog.*

The meaning of this song is "Sugil you have brought fortune to the home and the calves are your blessing to me only. Rangi because you are here, my home is flourishing with wealth and cattle."

During night, male members have to keep vigil and awaken the cows beginning from one end of the village to another. The purpose of this act is to get blessings and to celebrate Sohrae festival with their cattle.

Next day, sacrifices are offered to their Ora *bongas* (tutelary god). Close relatives are invited on this occasion and they pass the entire day by eating singing and dancing. During morning and evening hours, they perform *chumauna* of their cattle. Danta is a popular Sohrae dance that is performed in village yards. Women perform *racha al* (one type of *jhoti* drawn with the help of rice powder and ladies finger or Asan paste) in the evening to welcome their cattle. It is painted like an incoming way. On both sides of the painted way bundle of grasses, decorated by flowers are kept.

Married sisters are definitely invited on this occasion. But the concern between brothers and the sisters very often changes after marriage. The brother may be affectionately calling his sister but his wife may not be accepting them with that enthusiasm. The invited sister sensing that feeling sings-

*Dadaday menado Demay- Delamay Dedulubpe
Hilidoy mendo nuydo nukudo chili huyug tam.*

There are also instances where many guests have been invited. But the sacrificial meat may not be sufficient for them. In such a situation they sing -

*Sim koma chinyab chinyab Pela koma sagal sagal
Dakayanj uyuyani hatinj dore ohonj ha, tinj ke*

This means the sacrifices are small in size whereas guests are plenty in number. I am ready to cook rice and prepare meat, but will not distribute it.

The third day is called *khuntau hilog*. Village young men put up poles in front of every house. In the afternoon buffalo bulls or oxen are tied to it. House owner puts *chirchaudal* or an ornamental mimic on top. Youths began to bait the animal by drumming *tumdag*, *tamak*, begin poking and dance around them while trying to climb the pole and take the gift. Such war dance continues for several hours and concludes with the endearing of last gift of the village.

The fourth day is called *jajlehilog*. The Jogmanjhi with the help of youngsters, who had put up the poles now take out them. The house owner offers them rice beer. In the evening boys and girls assemble in village *akhada*. They move from one end of the village to another for collecting rice and vegetables. They even collect vegetables from garden, which under no circumstances is to be disallowed. Santal people feel happy in contributing maximum in this grand feast. They collect rice and vegetables and cook the dinner. Dancing, singing and merrymaking exclusively enjoy the night.

On the last day Santals go for Hakukatkam (fish and crab catching). They believe that catching fish and crab on this day will prolong their life span. Where Sakrat is celebrated on the sixth day, a variety of flour cakes are prepared to eat and distribute among close kins. The next day Manjhi declares the end of Sohrae.

In some places this festival is celebrated for three days only and the Sakrat is separately observed with Mokar Sankrati. Anyway this is the longest festival of Santals. A girl expresses her anxiety for this event before her elder sisters-

Da,ina Da,ina marang da,I Da,ina Da,ina tala dai
Ha,ti lekan parab da,ina parom chalag kan
Dana da,ina ja,ni-jote denna da,ina pander paina
Ha,ti lekan parab de,ibo tal ruware.

Oh sisters, the elephant like festival is passing on. Bring oh sister there lies the rope and *pander paina*, tie it so that it will stay behind with us.

Boys are also equally passionate with the approach of the Sohrae because, they get liberty for many things. During arousing of cattle at night they sing crude songs forgetting as if nobody is present in the village except them. They also urge upon Jogmanjhi to let them be in motion like bulls. In case village headman feels that others are also present in the village then, they should hide from their view -

Kolakodo bayar araglem ho Jogmanjhi
Kuli koko karhar kakome.

A BRIEF NOTE ON THE PRACTICE OF WITCHCRAFT AMONG THE SANTHALS OF MAYURBHANJ *

*Nityananda Das*¹

The practice of witchcraft and witch hunt leading to dastardly murder of witches may look enigmatic in the modern world. Nevertheless those are definite issues in tribal society. Even the advanced Santhals, assimilated Bathudis and detribalized Kurmis believe in efficacy of witchcraft. All natural calamities to men, cattle and crops are attributed to evil doings of the witches. Witches are trained. At the completion of rigorous training witches acquire occult powers from malevolent spirits and gods (*bongas*). Endowed with those powers they reap vengeance on others, for some or no reason, motivated by mischief, or lust. Even a mother as a witch can 'suck' the progenies of her sons. An aunt may 'eat' the nephew, and a near relation or neighbor may be 'devoured' by a witch without the least hesitation. The occult powers and voluptuous in nature and once a witch sets herself against someone there is hardly any escape from death.

The medicine-men (Ojha) fail to cure ailments generated from witchcraft. Recourse is taken to consult the 'Sakha' - the 'witch doctor'. When the calamities are widespread to affect the village community at large and the cause is suspected to be an outcome of witchcraft all able bodied men of the village proceed to consult the 'Sakha'. If Sakha is from a neighbouring village, he may name or give a description of the witch or witches. There after the witch hunt begins. Once a witch is named or described the tribal mind cannot reconcile to

* Published in ADIBASI, Vol. VIII, No.3, TRB, Bhubaneswar 1966-67, pp.63-67

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

anything short of extermination of the witch. The pronouncement of Sakha leads to uncontrollable frenzy and temporary insanity. The person worst affected or any other who is the most charged return to the village and murder the witch, at the earliest opportunity. After the murder the offender does not develop any guilty complex. This is an interesting trait of cultural conditioning of the mind. A normal human being who is reluctant even to hurt someone, otherwise docile, submissive, could commit man-slaughter and remains oblivious of after effects.

An interview with Chandu Majhi, in Rairangpur Sub-Jail alleged to have committed double murder of Punti and Jasmi (alleged witches) at Sagjodi, revealed that there is no abnormal reaction in the accuser's mind. It is a different question as to his guilt to be ultimately proved in a court of law. From the point of anthropological analysis it is clear that Chandu Majhi and Duli Majhiani have no untoward reactions for the alleged acts. Moreover it is said that Chandu Majhi was sitting in a normal manner in the village after the murders till he was arrested by the Police and sent to jail. Similarly Duli completed the act which Chandu began by chopping off the head of the second witch. Sons of the deceased women do not show any serious dislocation in their normal lives. They visit Chandu's house, which in ordinary circumstance would have been avoided by an aggrieved person. The villagers also do not seem to have taken the double murders with any great seriousness. It is of course difficult to know with certainty whether all the villagers of Sagjodi, or Chandu alone consulted a witch doctor, Sakha, before identifying the two witches who were hunted down. This part of the preparation is kept a closely guarded secret. A short study cannot throw light on this but from the opinion samples collected by the research workers in the area as well as in the adjoining areas from the tribals as well as non-tribals clearly convince one to believe that before the actual witch hunt a Sakha is consulted, who gives a description of the witch. The tribal students of Bissoi High School answered this point in affirmative. Once a witch is identified, she is put to death at the earliest opportunity be she a mother, aunt, wife or a close relative. No doubt some past antagonism or altercation, family quarrel, etc., with the witch provide the background to prompt the action of the witch who reaps vengeance through the black magic against her adversary and his family.

In Saghodi case Chandu's mother who was ill for nearly three weeks was visited by one of the deceased witches and it was believed that after each such visit the old woman's ailments were aggravated. After the death of the witches she was recovered. When Chandu's mother was visited in the village after a fortnight of murders she was able to move about though weak. It was known from the interview with the villagers that whatever may be the legal aspects of the two murders, the eradication of the witches have brought solace to the villagers in general and Chandu's mother in particular. The villagers were complaining for some time that their grains were mysteriously disappearing from stocks. There were cattle casualties. No doubt the medical treatment given to the old woman at the instance of the Superintendent of Police, Baripada, and

Sub-Inspector, Bissoi, improved her health. Yet all the villagers of Sagjodi were so much charged with the idea of evil doings of the witches that improvement of Chandu's mother is attributed more to the deaths of the witches. It seemed as if the villagers had some respite from maladies after the witch hunt.

From the study in Bissoi and other areas it could be stated with certainty that there is firm belief in witchcraft among the tribals, which is shared by non-tribals also. It is equally paradoxical that although witchcraft is considered a menace to living beings and a witch is ruthlessly exterminated yet it is acquired by some, through rigorous training. Witches live in the villages and are tolerated up to certain extent. It is widely believed that a witch has a double life, the physical one which is identical to an ordinary human being and another finer one, one which is invisible. The latter can leave the mortal existence anytime, preferably at the dead of the night to establish communion with evil spirits and witches. A witch may be sleeping with her husband and children, yet her finer self would be roaming about around burial grounds and other secluded places. This double life is the whole secret of witchcraft. If proficiency is attended by a witch in this direction training in witchcraft is complete.

One thing is equally certain that witchcraft is a secret trade and only a few choose to traverse in that weird path. Still fewer could attain success. It is widely believed that if anyone fails in completing the training or does not suck the life of a near relation after completion of training then she is doomed to be insane. Dates are not available, if males like the females dabble in witchcraft, although it is believed that some do.

Another aspect which needs further study is the limit, to which a witch is tolerated, and at what point such tolerance is exhausted. Then the entire village community treats witchcraft as repugnant to their existence. It becomes a crime in them. Thereafter a Sakha or witch doctor is consulted and after obtaining clues from him a witch is exterminated. Thus it becomes really enigmatic that the witches are dealt so ruthlessly, yet there are witches among all the tribal communities who flourish like ordinary individuals, sharing in all aspects of material life of community. The tragic end which an identified witch meets does not prove to be adequately deterrent to the cult of black magic.

It was told by experienced police officers who investigate cases of murders of witches, others who participate in trials etc., that even the highly educated persons in the area believe in witchcraft like illiterate villagers. A welfare officer who is a tribal himself while suffering from typhoid first believed the disease to be an outcome of witchcraft, and confined to the treatment by medicine-man (Ojha), in spite of persuasion by fellow officers to consult a physician. After chloromycetin was administered he still doubted the efficacy of the drug in curing his disease. A bright young student of the high school is reluctant to go to his home during vacations lest an evil eye befall him. A former

leader does not venture to return alone to his home after night fall for fear of witches.

Anthropologists all over the world have studied the prevalence of witchcraft and sorcery among the tribes. They have analyzed the cultural conditioning of tribals to the belief in witchcraft. It has been clearly shown from those studies that primitive mind is in perpetual dread for unknown. Vagaries of nature, diseases, pests and epidemics are attributed to wrath of the supernatural beings who control human destiny. There are a host of benevolent super natural beings who bestow prosperity and happiness. There are equally malevolent ones who are apt to exploit human frailties to let loose a reign of terror. A witch or sorcerer develops power to have communion with those malevolent forces. With that he or she perpetrates anti-social activities. When a witch is exterminated all feel relieved. The civilized law of course treats such killings as murders only, whatever be the context. Motive is no ground for consideration under Indian Penal Code. A murder of a witch is therefore, considered the same as any other murder in the eye of law. Yet it is well known that a man accused of murdering witches, used to confess his guilt and was the least penitent of his action. Rather he felt elated that he had done something for the good of the community at large. If the tribal jurisprudence would be followed a person accused of killing a witch would be treated as a hero just as a head hunter's trophies give him a social status and position in community.

However in modern times witchcraft and murder of a witch could not be tolerated. Only before a few centuries Britain had many scenes of public trails of witches. Witches used to be burnt alive. Romans, Greeks and Anglo Saxon firmly believed on the efficacy of witchcraft. Civilized men and women all over the world attributed many of their maladies to witchcraft which are further fortified by a large number of superstitions and omens. Hence, to consider the tribals to be witch ridden and believers in occult forces of black magic is negation of basic values of tribal life. Nevertheless the murders committed in Mayurbhanj lead to a feeling that such offences should be put to an end. Witch-hunts and cold blooded murders no doubt produce horror and inclemency. It surprise many that advanced Santhals who migrate to all parts of the country and are in high position with large percentage of literacy among the tribals still continue to hold steadfastly to the belief in witchcraft.

Archer in his account of witchcraft among the Santhal in 'Man in India' Vol. XXVII, June 1947 has given several instances to show that this belief is extensive as well as firm in Santhal society. Some girls are seduced to the trade of witchcraft by elder witches and at the completion of training are to cook the liver of one of their family members to attain success. Further quoting from Boding, Archer gives details of initiation profession and action of a witch, and her double role, one in existence with the mortals, and the other in parlance with gods,

Bongas. All writers on Santhal culture have equally described the role of witchcraft as focal point in the culture of the tribe.

Witchcraft and sacrificing human beings to acquire potency and fertility is an age-old tradition in tribal society. No doubt due to dread of the forces of law number of human sacrifices or witch hunts have declined. Nevertheless sporadically those occurrences made the administration conscious of this trait of tribal life.

In mining and industrial belts due to hospital facilities and wider contacts with outsiders such murders are rare. Even in Badampahar mining area there are very few cases of witch hunt, in contrast to other parts of Rairangpur subdivision of Mayurbhnaj district.

It may therefore be reckoned that knowledge of modern medicines and contacts with others diminish the dread for witches and efficacy of witchcraft. A complain which is frequently heard and having some truth in it, is that the allopathic dispensaries are few in tribal areas. Treatment of diseases by doctors is a costly affair. Doctors exact a good deal from patients for administering drugs and injections. Free medicine is only in theory. Hence, except well-to-do persons others cannot resort to medical treatment. Therefore, the tribal medicine-man, (Ojha) continues to have his sway over the tribals. Ojha's failure to cure any ailment lead to consulting the witch doctor 'Sakha' and then to witch-hunt. Hence, it is time to consider and rethink that propaganda and publicity coupled with free and effective medical facilities will go a long way to eradicate the belief in efficacy of witchcraft and murdering witches. For that purpose the extension officers and other official and non-official agencies in the tribal areas can do a good deal. They can propagate the futility of witchcraft before modern medicine, etc. Health facilities may have to be extended to interior areas through mobile dispensaries and treatment should not be a costly and exacting affair. With those there is hope that such murders will decline soon and the tribal mind will be weaned away from the pernicious impact of witchcraft. The Ojhas and Sakha will have little business and thereafter the witches will also give up the lure of acquiring occult powers to generate evil consequences.

WITCHCRAFT AMONG THE SANTALS OF MAYURBHANJ *

Siba Prasad Rout ¹

Introduction

The life of the tribals like other communities is closely knitted around religion and magic. The tribals inhabiting the inaccessible tracts of hills and forests in inhospitable climate governed by capricious whims of natural agencies like sun, rain and wind, and leading an insecure life devoured by wild birds and beasts believe in the power of the supernatural and unseen forces. Living on the bosom of nature they depend on the mercy of the unseen powers and forces which guide them in every walk of their life. Thus religion and magic, regarded by Durkheim as sacred and profane reign regulate the life of the tribals.

Magic as defined by Somerset Maugham "is not more than the art of employing consciously invisible means to produce visible effects. Magic has but one dogma, i.e., the scene is the measure of the unseen". According to Sir James Frazer, "Magic is a spurious system of natural law as well as a fallacious guide of conduct. It is a false science, as well as an abortive art". He draws a distinction between homeopathic magic and contagious magic'. Homeopathic magic can be directed on the image or shadow of a person who may not be available at that moment, while contagious magic may be directed against nail-pairing or any other part and parcel of the person. An identical but functional distinction is drawn up between black and white magic, the former aiming at bringing disease, death and destructions in the society, while the later used to release mankind from the grip of such misfortunes and calamities caused by black magic.

Witch and witch doctor, etc., are agents of magical performance, and witchcraft is a kind of black magic. A person practicing witchcraft is called a

* Published in ADIBASI, Vol. VIII, No.4, TRB, Bhubaneswar 1966-67, pp.6-22

¹ Junior Research Officer, Tribal Research Bureau (TRB), Bhubaneswar

witch, and the supposed psychic emanation which is believed to cause injury to health and property is called witchcraft, which can be mastered by learning some incantations in rigorous training period invoking certain deity or spirit.

Similar is the case with the witch doctors who are benevolent magicians, and are believed to diagnose and combat the evil effects of witchcraft with the help of incantations and spells.

The problem

Rev. Lal Behari Dey, in his book "Bengal Peasants life" has maintained that witchcraft is prevalent among the lower castes in Bengal and Bihar and with the spread of education the belief is getting weaker day by day. However, among the Santals, the belief is still very strong leading to barbaric murders. The present article describes the extent of belief of Santals in witchcraft, the *modus operandi* of the witches, the role and status of a witch in the society, the social control mechanism to check witchcraft and other points of interest relating to witchcraft.

A study on this problem is a formidable one, as the tribals are hesitant to disclose anything on the practice of witchcraft. Only after persuasive interviews and gaining confidence they could say something about the practice of witchcraft and the basic beliefs associated with it. It was revealed that windows are not provided in the houses lest a witch may suck the blood from a sleeping person by a straw. Similarly an informant who had earlier denied any knowledge of witchcraft told that his three sons died as a witch removed their hearts.

Study area and the villages

The study was conducted in two villages, namely, Mahuldiha and Kantabani in the Bamanghaty subdivision of Mayurbhanj district. The villages are situated at a distance of three kilometers from Rairangpur town and are predominantly inhabited by Santals. Mahuldiha had a population of 228 out of which 180 are Santals and 48 are non-tribals, and out of 47 families 41 are Santals. In Kantabani out of the total population of 236, only 92 are Santals and the rest are Mahanta and Jhara. The total Santal families number 20 while the rest 24 families belong to Mahanta and Jhara.

Mahuldiha is a road side village where the Santals have been much influenced by the non-tribals of Rairangpur, the sub-divisional headquarters. Some of the Santals of this village are educated and are serving as teachers in schools, work as lawyers and are engaged in other professions. On the other hand, the village Kantabani is relatively backward and is situated about two to three Kilometers from the main road. The inmates of this village have not taken to other occupations, except cultivation of land.

For comparative analysis, the Santals of village Bhagbatpur in Baripada suburb were also interviewed. The chief method of collecting data was by

interviewing various groups in different villages. As witches are not to be publicly identified it was not possible to collect data directly from the witches about their activities. During the field study data were collected by observing and participating in the rites and rituals associated with witchcraft.

The Ojha of Kantabani was helpful in permitting us to observe the rites he performed to cure witch-attacked patients.

To substantiate the data collected by interviewing the tribals, cases of murders committed due to belief in witchcraft were also collected from Rairangpur police circle and from Shri R. Roy, Superintendent of Police, Baripada, who was very kind to provide necessary help to facilitate the study. In a subsequent visit a case of double witch hunt in the village Sagjori in Bisoi Police-Station was also studied.

Witchcraft among Santals

As has been mentioned previously the belief of witchcraft is not confined to the Santals alone but is deeply rooted in the belief system and thought-pattern of the tribals other than the Santals and the non-tribals who inhabit the area. Bathudis, Kharias and Mundas of Mayurbhanj strongly believe in the activities of the witches, so also the neighbouring non-tribals like Mahanta, Sundhi and Pano, etc., dread the witches. Cases of murders collected from the police records also corroborate the view that the belief in witchcraft is common to all the neighbouring tribes and castes. The fact that Santals have no term of their own for 'witch' and they use the Oriya terminology 'daini' and 'nazar' (evil eye) lead to the supposition that the Santals might have learnt witchcraft from the Oriyas in good old days. The predominance of experts, *Ojha* (medicine-man) and *Sakha* (witch-diviner-cum-witch doctor) in non tribal communities of the area and the name of the Hindu deities like Rama, Laxman and Sita mentioned by Ojhas during their magical performances, and such deities like Kalimata and Durga propitiated by witches strongly support such supposition.

Origin of witchcraft

Santal folk-lore depicts the origin of witchcraft in Santal society and how such art become exclusive possession of the women. In good old days women were very powerful in the society and they exercised great deal of control over their husbands. Men used to woo women during their youth, but with the decline of age they became lazy and spent their time by drinking and feasting leaving the entire burden of the family on women. This enraged the women who lost all respects for men. Once all the men assembled and decided to find out a method to control the women. They went to *Sing Bonga*, their supreme deity, and prayed for teaching them some technique by virtue of which they would be able to subjugate their women. *Sing Bonga* was pleased and asked them to come on an appointed day to learn the art. The secret was, however, revealed to the women who had stealthily followed the men and heard the order of the *Sing Bonga*.

Hearing everything the women returned to their village unnoticed by their husbands and behaved very nicely with them on pretention to such an extent that the men thought of forgoing the desire of learning the art from the *Sing Bonga*. On the appointed day the housewives fed their husband with delicacies and made them to drink liquor to such an extent that they slept like logs. The women got themselves dressed like men and went to *Sing Bonga* begging for the boon. Thinking that they were men *Sing Bonga* taught them the art of witchcraft. The women returned home and started misbehaving with their husbands more than they used to do beforehand. When men went to *Sing Bonga* and prayed to learn the art the real truth could be discovered and since the women had already mastered the art of witchcraft it could not be taught to men. With much grief, *Sing Bonga* taught men the art of *Ojha* to neutralize the evils done by the witches. From that day, women become powerful witches and were dreaded by all.

How to detect a witch

It is not always possible to detect a witch in Santal society. In case of calamity and misfortunes overtaking a village the delegation from the whole village goes to consult the Sakha who by his power of divination can detect the witches creating troubles and announces their names. A woman with red-eyes is often suspected to be a witch by Santals. If the presence of a woman makes a child to cry and feel restless, or if the look of any woman on somebody's food brings stomach-complaints the woman is taken as a witch without any doubt. In cases where a woman becomes widow at an early age or her elder sons die without suffering for a long time, the villagers suspect her to be a witch.

Training of witches

Evans Pritchard, in his book "Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande" states that among the Azande there is no training for the witches. The Azande believe that witchcraft is a substance in the body of the witches and is inherited. Such a physical trait is transmitted by unilinear descent from the parents to their children.

Among the Santals, however, witchcraft is acquired. It is learnt through rigorous training. Those who volunteer to master the art may go and approach a veteran witch secretly to learn the art. Generally the Guru (witch master) pretends that she does not know it and avoids the disciples until she is convinced that they would be loyal and faithful to her and they sincerely desire to learn the art. The Guru must be convinced that the intending candidates are not persons of power and prestige so that they may not try to overpower her or defy her; after which only training is given to them. The trainees must be absolutely fearless and should have patience and perseverance to undergo training. On the other hand, in many cases persons are made to learn witchcraft by the witches. Young girls or women with weak temperament are induced to witchcraft. Whenever a witch gets a chance to meet such a candidate in a lonely place on the way to or

from the market or in the field doing agricultural work she begins to sing the enchanting witch-songs to attract her. The songs are so sweet that those create a kind of insanity in the mind of the listener who feels a passionate inclination to learn the songs. Thus she falls prey to the witch who teaches her the songs which are part and parcel of the witch-training. The more a person learns these songs psychologically she loses the balance of her mind and becomes a witch.

It is believed that a witch cannot but check her temptations in teaching the witchery to others. Her knowledge about the art is liable to be ineffective if it is not taught to others. Greater the number of disciples a witch have, greater is her power and prestige in the circle. It is also believed that if a witch fails to impart the art of witchcraft to anybody else, she may, thereby, open the doors for calamities to her own family. All these factors are responsible for tempting the witches to attract others to be their pupils.

Sex of the witches

It is commonly believed by Santals that only females can be witches. The Oriya term 'Daini', used by Santals to designate a witch is a feminine term, which leads to the presumption that witches are all females. The Santals folk-tale also further substantiates the fact that witchcraft is the exclusive possession of the females. Thus only the intending female and candidates are given training in witchcraft and not the males. If any man happens to know or see the operations of which he is severely warned not to disclose it to others under threat of penalty. In the two village of Rairangpur area the informants said that only women were witches and not men, but one or two persons in Sagjori, and some tribal students of Bisoi High School gave to understand that also men may be witches. The position may be explained in the following manner. Though women are witches, the men also can inflict disease or illness by practicing black-magic. Some men having 'evil-eyes' or 'evil-mouth' may bring sickness to others and in one case in Roruan Police Station a man was murdered on the ground of playing witchcraft. Here it is necessary to distinguish witchcraft from '*nazar*'. While the art of witchcraft is acquired by undertaking regular training no training is necessary to possess 'evil-eye' or 'evil mouth'. Having 'evil-eye' or 'evil mouth' is a physical trait which a man inherits by birth, rather than acquiring it by training. The term witch is thus applied to women though, in loose sense, some may refer to persons having 'evil-eye' or 'evil mouth' or practicing black-magic as sorcerers or witches without keeping mind the real connotation of the term.

Age and marital status

Any woman whether adult or minor, and married or unmarried may be accepted as a trainee by a witch. A girl of about ten years old and able to remember the *jharni* (spells and incantations) may learn witchcraft. In the village Kantabani, it was said that the daughter of a witch aged about ten years was given training in witchcraft by her mother. Girls of marriageable age are also

frequently inclined to take up training from the witches, and in some cases the woman may also volunteer for such training.

Time and place for training

It is believed that at the dead of the night, after all the villagers fall asleep, the witches step out on their nocturnal journey. The training is given preferable on new-moon night without the knowledge of the villagers. To ensure strict secrecy the training is given in a secluded place away from human habitation so that others may not get a chance to keep a watch over their activities. Generally burial grounds of the village or any other secluded or deserted field or forest near the village is considered ideal for the training ground; but at times witch-songs and incantations (*jharni*) are also taught to young girls on the way from market or in the field while working together.

Promises made

Before the training is imparted, the trainees are given stern warning not to disclose the art before anyone. They are also made to promise that they would have the least hesitation to kill their near and dear ones after the completion of training. The girls are to promise that they would eat the *kalija* (heart) of their elder brother or father, while the married women are to promise to kill their husband or eldest child. They should also guarantee that they would complete the training and would not leave it half way. They are threatened with death or serious misfortunes if they fail to complete the training course. It is also believed that the persons who leave the training course turn mad and become imbecile.

Training of a witch

The training is inaugurated on Sohorai festival day on the new-moon in the month of Kartik. At the dead of the night, when the whole village falls into deep slumber and there is none awake to watch over the activities of the witches, the witches start on their nocturnal journey. They go from door to door giving signals to the trainees to come out of their house and join the night's sojourn. When they leave their bed their dummy remains lying on the bed so that their husband or other relatives may not suspect anything's. Some informants stated that the candidate remains at home, but her spirit goes out, while others opine that the *bhut* (spirit) act as a proxy at home while the self goes out. It is also believed that one of the *bongas* tamed by the *guru* is made to remain in the house as a substitute for the person going out for training.

The witches assemble once in every week on Sundays or at longer intervals. When they come out of their houses they strip off their clothing and become completely naked. They wear a girdle of brooms and join the witch-expedition holding the witches' light kindled on tiger's skull or produce light by rubbing the middle finger thumb. When all assemble at one place the Guru and other witches sprinkle magical water on the village dogs so that they may not

bark at the time of their journey and proceed to the *jahira*, or *manjhithan* to hold their meeting. The witches carry with them an old winnowing fan containing a black chicken, *arua* rice incense and other offering materials. They worship Kalimata, Durga and invoke a series of *bongas* and sacrifices chicken. They perform their dance which is known as witch dance to please the deities and by their magical spell they wipe out the footprints and all other traces of dance when they leave the place. The offerings are cooked and eaten on the spot. The trainees are introduced to the *bonga* who approve them. It is said that a trainee admired by a *bonga* is formally married to him, who pays a token bride-price to her and applies vermilion on her forehead. She is then taught the *jharins* to invoke the *bongas* in succession. She is made to pat the tigers and comb their fur. The tigers are supposed to be husbands of the witches and it is believed the witches tame tigers at home in disguise of dogs. The witches are supposed to eat night-soil and birds, frogs or any other prey which comes on their way.

The big trees standing at the outskirt of the village are often used as transport by the witches to go to distant place, and when the witches return they place back the trees to the original site.

Tests after training

After the completion of training the witch Guru examines to know to what extent a trainee has mastered the various rites and the *jharini* songs, and what number of *bongas* she has been able to satisfy. She is asked to experiment her witchery on trees or animals. If a living tree can be burnt or an animal is put to death by the play of witchcraft, the trainee is believed to have mastered the art with proficiency. She is then asked to extract *kalija* (liver) of her elder brother or father (in case of an unmarried girl) or of her husband or eldest son, and thereby put him to death. The liver is offered to the *bongas* and is eaten by the witches including the trainee. If the trainee resents to do so she is made to suffer by the ill temper of the *bongas*. She may either turn mad and leads a miserable life or is punished by death; but if she does so without hesitation she is proved to have attained proficiency as a bonafide witch.

Gradation among the witches

The more the number of *bongas* employed the greater is the power of a witch. If a witch has the proficiency of mastering powerful *bongas* she becomes very powerful and may inflict any harm by commanding the *bongas*. Such a witch attains the status of a *nanzom*. A *nanzom* is so powerful that she is dreaded by all including the *Ojha* and the *Sakha*. She attains such status by experience and proficiency and unlike other witches she walks on her palms with her head down and legs stretched upwards during her nocturnal expedition. If anybody is attacked by a *nanzom* there is no chance for him to recover. Treatment by a *Sakha* or an *Ojha* fails to produce any effect, and the victim must die. Such witches are,

however, very few in numbers and unless one is destined to die he may not fall a prey to the attacks of a *nanzom*.

Modus operandi of the witches

The witches are believed to undermine the security of the society. Once one becomes a witch the whole village is at her mercy. She can inflict disease and death on anybody out of personal animosity and may make the victim suffer from various ailments. The witches not only 'eat' persons and induce sickness by bringing smallpox, cholera and epidemic, but are also responsible for destroying crops, killing cattle, and the like. A witch develops a kind of psychic state of mind and is tempted to indulge in antisocial activities. She does not distinguish between her close kins and the distant ones in exercising her witchery. Rather it is believed that one of the victim's inner family members must be a witch to initiate disease or death in the victim. Moreover, a mother-witch has the least hesitation to kill her son; an aunt, her nephew; a sister, her brother; a daughter, her father; a wife, her husband and the like. There are cases of mother being murdered by son on the suspicion that she as a witch was responsible for inflicting sickness on her grand-son. In Kantabani, the *Ojha's* eldest daughter-in-law is believed to be a witch who is supposed to have 'eaten' her husband and elder son. It is said, that if a witch looks at somebody, the heart, liver, and lungs of the person become visible to her, and she cannot check temptation in extracting the hearts, etc., from the body of the person and thereby making him ill. An informant of the village Bhagabatpur in Sadar subdivision narrated that she undertook the witch's training when she was unmarried. She had one brother. After she completed her training she was asked by the *bongas* and her Guru to face the ordeal of 'eating' her brother's heart. Whenever she looked at her brother, his heart was clearly visible to her and she was frightened by it. She felt very uneasy and refused to kill her only brother. She revealed the matter to her villagers, and promised that she would prefer to forgo the witchery than killing her own and the only brother. Thereafter she forgot the rites of the training. She was not made to suffer by the *bongas* and her Guru because as she broke the secret in public the Guru apprehended that if any suffering is caused to the girl she might disclose the name of the Guru and thereby exposing her in the public. Now the girl is married and leads a normal life in her village.

The witches also possess "evil-mouth", and if by chance they utter some evil words (which they are tempted to do) those would hear immediate effect. It was narrated by an old man of Bhagabatpur that once a young boy of village who had some education went to the field to attend the call of nature. When he sat near a bush he heard the whispering voice of a witch teaching witchcraft to her daughter at the other side of the bush. The boy was curious enough to hear the '*jharni*' songs and hiding himself he heard the songs and could remember those. When he returned to the village he always remembered the lines of the songs and could not but recite those. He saw his father and recited the witch-

songs but in no time the father fell ill and died. When he recited the same lines on seeing his brother and sister, the latter also died. The boy was so much aggrieved that he committed suicide to refrain from such baneful activities.

Another informant in Kantabani narrated that a small girl aged eight to ten years was given witch training by her mother. Once while sitting with her father she told him that she could see the hearts of their bullock which was grazing in front of them, and wanted to extract those. The father became curious about the matter and in order to test her daughter permitted her to do so. The girl extracted the hearts of the bullock by the power of witchcraft and as a result the bullock which had no complaint and was grazing merrily before a few minutes fell on the ground and became senseless. This led the father to be confirmed that his daughter was a witch. He threatened his daughter to regenerate life in the bullock, least he would kill her. The girl again set back the hearts of the bullock by dint of her witchery and the bullock was cured.

A witch does not destroy the victim immediately but makes him to suffer by infusing sickness so that he may ultimately die. The killing of a victim is either done by the witch herself or by the *bongas*. A *bonga* may itself bring death and destruction or does it by providing a death dealing agent in its place. A witch employs the following methods in bringing death and disease of others.

(i) A witch may extract the hearts, lungs and liver from the body of a victim and rolling it in *sal* leaves, she preserves it for offering to *bongas*. As soon as these are extracted, the victim falls ill, and when these are cooked offered to *bongas* and are eaten, the person dies.

(ii) A witch is very fond of suckling human blood. At the dead of the night a witch may extract blood from the body of the victim using a piece of straw. This is one of the reasons for which the Santals are afraid of keeping windows.

(iii) A witch may take the form of a black cat and at the dead of the night roam in every house. If she licks the saliva of a sleeping person, the person falls ill and succumbs to death. The witch, in the guise of a cat may also lick the hair of a victim, after that the victim's hairs begin to fall down and he/she suffers from fatal diseases which may ultimately bring death.

(iv) Some witches possess "evil eye" and "evil mouth". If they cast their "evil eyes" on somebody the person suffers from stomach complaints, headache, fever, etc., and if they utter harmful lines by looking at somebody the person is sure to suffer from fatal diseases.

(v) The witches are also capable of endangering the prosperity & wellbeing of the village. It is believed that the witches purchase the seeds of sickness from powerful *bonga* merchants, and if they bury some of these seeds in the village lanes, or sprinkle it in well this may bring cattle-disease, epidemic, cholera, smallpox, famine and other calamities of serious nature. In the village Sagjori

where the double witch hunt has been committed, it was reported that last year the witches were responsible for “blowing off” the harvest of paddy, and though the villagers had a bumper harvest, they had to face acute shortage of grains.

The witches have their well defined areas of operation beyond which their powers are ineffective. It was also reported that the witches generally play their witchery on their own tribesmen, but the non-Santals of their village or of the neighbouring villages fall prey to the powers of a witch.

Diagnoses and Remedy

Once a person is attacked by a witch he starts suffering from fever, headache, stomach pain, general breakdown of health, and other complaints. If someone's hairs begin to fall, it is also believed to be due to witchcraft. General calamities like breaking out of cholera, small-pox, famine and cattle-death in a village are also attributed to witchcraft.

In cases of personal sufferings the sufferer's relatives go to an *Ojha* for medicine. Anybody from out of some temperament including a vision of some God or spirit may take up the profession of an *Ojha* or *Sakha*. Some may also be attracted to the profession for love of profits and may undergo training in the necessary rites and penances and incantations and spells under some guru. They can find out through their magical rites the reasons of sickness and can identify the witches responsible for inflicting illness. They not only perform divination, but provide medicine to subdue sickness, or neutralize the ill effects of the witches by performing magical rites or by sacrificing fowls and offering other materials to please the *bongas*. A *Sakha* is primarily a diviner but an *Ojha* is more a medicine-man than a diviner. They gain considerable prestige in the society for their benevolent activities in detecting witches and curing disease and sickness.

When a man goes to consult an *Ojha* he takes some oil with him. The *Ojha* anoints oil and vermilion on a *sal* leaf and utters incantations. If the disease is caused by a witch, it is believed that the reflection of the witch would fall on the *sal* leaf. The *Ojha* may then sacrifice chicken to please the *bongas* and induce the witch to take back the suffering from the sufferer. In cases, where the hearts of a person is eaten partially by a witch the *Ojha* may transplant the hearts of a chicken or a goat in the body of the patient so that he gets back his life. In cases of sickness *Ojha* may blow off the evil by reciting incantations. In Kantabani the *Ojha* used to cure the patients suffering from ache or pain by keeping a few grains of *arua* rice on the aching portion and curing the aches by uttering incantations. Everyday ten to twenty persons suffering from various complaints used to come to him for medicine and he earned not less than ten rupees per day.

The *Sakhas* are diviners. While individuals go to consult *Ojhas* for personal complaints the *Sakhas* are always consulted by the villagers for mass misfortune. When a calamity of serious nature affects the village and undermines

the security of all the villagers, a delegation from the village goes to consult a *Sakha*. It is said that some *Sakhas* are so proficient that on arrival of the persons they can foretell the reasons of their coming, the name of their village, and other relevant facts. A tribal student of Bisoi High School narrated an incident which occurred in his village some years ago, when he was a child. A large number of cattle died in the village, and the villagers went to consult a *Sakha*. When they arrived in the *Sakha's* house, the *Sakha* could foretell that they went there to know the reason for cattle epidemic which broke out in their village, and gave a detail description about the setting of their village, the location of the village burial-ground, the type of husking-lever one of the villagers had, and other details which were true and vivid, though the *Sakha* had never seen their village.

When approached, the *Sakha* by virtue of his magical performances can tell the name of the witches who were responsible in causing the calamity or can give a detail description about the appearance of the witch, the type of house she dwells in, the trees and plants on the four directions of her house, etc., which give sufficient clue to identify her.

The Santals take recourse to various means for dealing with the witches. The witches are shunned, despised and warned, or fined or are ostracized from the village. In some cases the anger on witches leads to witch-hunting. The witches are punished by the following methods:-

(i) When one suffers and after consulting an *Ojha* is confirmed that some witch is responsible for his illness, he brings the matter to the notice of his villagers. The village elders assemble. Now they have not known the name of the witch: only they have known that some witch of some house has brought the illness. One evening a group of village elders headed by the headman walk around the village lanes shouting in a tone of threatening to the witch "Beware, so and so is ill, and unless he is cured within a few days the culprit will be dealt severely". At this threatening the witch may think it better to leave the patient.

(ii) In some cases, after the witches are detected, they are beaten severely or are humiliated in the public. It is reported that in one case of cattle epidemic in a village the women folk of the village were indiscriminately insulted. The women of every household were to carry the dead bullocks to the field and were made to carry a knife with them, which symbolizes beef-eating. Beef-eating has been discouraged in the public among Santals since long and by humiliating the village women by this way it was believed that the witches would feel offended and give up their bashful art.

(iii) In certain cases, the witches after detection were fined by the village elders. As reported in the daily newspaper 'Samaj' dated the 7th November 1963, a widow, suspected to be a witch, was fined two hundred rupees. Ganga Naek and his daughter suffered from fever continuously for a long period. They

consulted an Ojha for diagnosis, who said that Kuli Kolhuni a widow witch had caused fever to them. Ganga Naek made an appeal to the villagers and a council consisting of village elders was summoned. According to the decision of the village council the widow was fined two hundred rupees.

(iv) When the villagers apprehend that a certain witch is an agent of constant mischief and a source of great danger to the security and prosperity of the village, the witch may be ostracized from the village.

(v) The last and the safest way to get rid of a witch is to kill her. Witch-hunting, though considered a criminal offence in the eyes of law, is approved by the unwritten code of the Santals. To them a witch is a thorn to the progress of the society at large, and for her anti-social activities she should be punished with death. Thus any case of witch-hunt is backed by the approval of the society, and after killing a witch not only the murderer, but all the villagers feel secured and safe. Witch-hunts are quite frequent in the district of Mayurbhanj, and more particularly in the Bamanghati subdivision of the district where the Santals are quite numerous. Cases of witch murder are seldom reported from the Sadar and Udala sub-divisions but their number in Panchpirh subdivision is not negligible. Cases of witch-hunts brought to the Law Courts proves that the belief in witchcraft leading to witch-hunt is still going strong in the minds of the tribes like Kolha, Munda, Kharia and Bathudi and among the non-tribal communities. A majority of such cases are, however, reported from Rairangpur Police Circle Office show that in 1964 there were three cases of witch-hunt in the area, while the figure increased to five in 1965.

Witches are killed either by striking their necks with axe, or with other heavy tools, or by strangulation by means of a rope or cloth.

Cases of witch-hunt

Some cases of witch-hunt in Bamanghati and Panchpirh sub-divisions are given below:

- (1) In Bisoi Police Station of Bamanghati subdivision a man killed his step-mother suspecting her to be a witch who was said to be 'eating' his sons.
- (2) An old woman of Kunjakachha in Bisoi Police Station was suspected to be a 'man eating' witch. Salumajhi's son of ten month's old died on the 7th July, 1963, and after consulting the Ojha, Salu suspected Sal Majhiani, an old woman to be a witch who was responsible for killing his son. On the 8th July, 1963, when Sal Majhiani was returning from the village Paunsia after the day's toil, Salu Majhi killed her and buried her near a hill.
- (3) On the 14th January 1964, a young widow named Sita Bewa of Patijhari village, in Bisoi Police Station, suspected to be a witch was murdered by Hira Naek and Singa Naek.

- (4) In the year 1964, Bikram Majhi killed Mangi Majhiani, a widow of village Allapani in Bisoi Police Station, by dealing a blow with an axe on her while she was returning from a forest. Mangi Majhiani was suspected to be witch.
- (5) In Jashipur Police Station an old woman suspected to be a witch was murdered by three persons. On a festive occasion she was invited and given liquor to drink. When she got intoxicated and lost her senses the accused killed her and threw the dead body in a tank.
- (6) In the month of April, 1966, it was reported that Nani Majhiani of village Bisipur in Karanjia Police Station was killed for being a suspected witch.
- (7) In the month of May, 1966, Chakua Majhi and Salkha Majhi killed Sakar Majhiani by strangulating her with a piece of cloth. The woman was suspected to be a witch and the villagers were not pleased with her. Three cases of double murder on the ground of witchcraft are described here.
- (8) In the month of August in 1966, an old woman named Salge and her daughter of village Ranipokhari in Sarat Police Station of Panchpirh subdivision were murdered by Salge's son-in-law, on the ground that Salge was a witch and was responsible for inflicting sickness in some of her kins.
- (9) In September, 1966, Mangu Sardar of Parabdeha village, in Roruan Police Station of Panchpirh subdivision was believed to be witch who practiced witchcraft on the villagers. The victim's brother murdered Mangur Sardar on the ground of witchcraft and his son as the latter was witness to the murder.
- (10) Double witch hunt in Sagjori - Sagjori is a small village in the Bisoi Police Station in Bamanghati subdivision of Mayurbhanj. The village is situated amidst paddy fields two kilometers away from the Police Station. It has 19 families of which 17 are Santals and 2 are Purans. A small stream flowing nearby provides drinking water for the village.

It was reported in a news paper that a double murder was committed in the village, the motive being witch-hunt. A study was made to assess the facts by interviewing the villagers including the relatives of the deceased persons and the mother of the accused.

It was revealed that Chandu Majhi's mother was suffering from fever since three weeks. Prior to the day of the murder, Chandu did not administer any medicine to her. It was gathered that Chandu Majhi went and consulted some Ojha or Sakha who might have told about the suspected witches responsible for the ailment of his mother.

The villagers also suspected two women to be witches from the omen that though they had a fairly good harvest last year a major portion of it disappeared mysteriously. The villagers perhaps consulted an Ojhaor Sakha who attributed the cause to witchcraft. During the period when Chandu's mother (aged about 60 years) fell ill, all the village women came to see her. Two of them once exclaimed that the old woman was getting weaker day by day and may not survive longer. They were reported to have asked Chandu Majhi's mother secretly to pay money to cure her, but the latter expressed inability to pay on the ground of poverty. Chandu Majhi's mother complained that the two widows namely, Jasmi Majhiani and Puntti Majhiani, were responsible for her illness, because whenever they came to see her, she felt restless and her fever rose with vomiting. All these factors perhaps prompted Chandu Majhi to kill Jasmi and Punit.

It was stated by the villagers and the Police Officers that after killing two witches Chandu did not suffer from serious mental agony. He was sitting on the verandah of his house keeping his axe beside him and smoking tobacco till he was arrested. The Superintendent of Police, Baripada, sent Chandu's mother to the local dispensary and it was found out that she was suffering from malaria. When medicine was administered she was cured, but she maintained that the death of the witches did cure her sickness.

Conclusion

From the forgoing account it is clearly evident as to what extent the Santals believe in witches; how the witches inflict disease death and destruction in the society; how witches are dreaded, the methods of diagnosing the diseases caused by witchcraft, and the remedial and preventive measures taken by the Santals to get rid of the witches. An analysis of the data collected on witchcraft may be able to provide the following inferences.

(1) The belief in witchcraft is not only found among the Santals, but is also deeply rooted in the belief system of the primitive Kharias, advanced Mundas and Hos, acculturated Bathudis, Mahantas and Puranas, and in the mind of caste-groups like Telis, Gonds and Sundhis of the locality.

(2) The Santals, like the Azandes, believe that a witch has two selves; the physical self is the normal self which acts like any ordinary person, but the finer self equipped with the techniques of witchcraft leaves the physical self and goes out at the dead of the night on nocturnal expeditions.

(3) A witch brings sufferings through malevolent spirits called *bongas* and by the occult powers acquired through rigorous training. When asked by a *bonga* or when desired to victimize anybody the witch make no distinction between near and dear ones and the distant relatives. As a witch, a mother may 'eat' her son, a wife, her husband, an unmarried girl, her father or brother, and the like. W. G. Archer, in his article. "The Santal treatment of witchcraft" published in

"Man in India", Volume-XXVII, June, 1947, No. 27 has stated that a victim should be killed by one of the witches of his inner-family, and in case a witch is not available in his inner-family one of the members of that family is forced or attracted to witchery so that after the training she as a witch, may kill or initiate the killing of her close kins. The witch-hunt cases described earlier also make it clear that in most cases the witches are widows. The Santals always suspect widows to be witches as they believe that they might have 'eaten' their husbands to satisfy the *bongas* after the completion of the witch-training. The Santals always correlate personal quarrels, conflicts, accidents and the like, with persons and this may lead them to suspect those persons as witches. It was found from Sagori that correlation of the visits of certain women and the rise of fever of Chandu's mother led Chandu to suspect the two women to be witches.

(4) The Santals believe that the witches undermine the security of the society. They always expect a smooth and steady life free from diseases and calamities. However, not all their expectations and aspirations may be crowned with success, and any deviation, any failure or frustration, or any disease or death is attributed to the evil motive of the witches.

(5) Though the witches cause immense trouble to the society, each Santal village is believed to have more than one witch. It is also interesting that the wives of the important persons of a village are often reported to be witches. All the villagers are afraid of witches, but they do not dare to protest them in public and incur their displeasure. Even an *Ojha* may be afraid of witch or a *nanzom*. In the village Kantabani, it was reported that the *Ojha* was afraid of her eldest daughter-in-law who was a witch. Though she is suspected to have 'eaten' her husband, her son and is believed to have caused prolonged sickness to her husband's elder brother, the *Ojha* did not have the courage to protest her. In their daily life the witches live with other village woman and no stigma of hatred is attributed to them ordinarily. A witch is also not rejected for marriage. The girl of Bhagabatpur, who underwent witch training but discarded the profession and did not suffer from any dejection in leading a marital life.

(6) *Ojhas* and *Sakhas* work as agents to safeguard the society from the depredations of the witches by diagnosing sickness and administering medicines to cure those diseases by means of divination, and prescribe preventives to check the witchcraft. They control and subjugate malevolent and pernicious spirits, ward off the evil-eyes, and safeguard people's health and happiness.

(7) Once a witch is detected in connection with some serious calamities the Santal mind cannot reconcile it. Death is the only means of get rid of a witch for good. A witch is murdered not only for personal safety but for the general well-being of the village. So every witch-hunt is backed by the approval of the whole village, though a selected person or persons actually kill a witch. After killing a witch, the killer suffers from no guilty complex or from no serious state of

psychological imbalance. His logic makes him strong to rationalize that he committed the murder not out of malice or personal hatred, but to eliminate an unwanted person and a social evil for the well-being of the society.

A trip to Sagjori revealed that the villagers did not look to be so serious about the double murder committed in their village. The sons of the deceased women also did not seem to have been over-stricken with grief and sorrow for the death of their mothers. They behave like any other man of the village and expressed no sigh or sorrow for the loss of their mothers. They came to the house of Chandu Majhi, the accused which any aggrieved person would not normally do. Bikra Majhi and Pandu Majhi might be rationalizing thinking that by losing their mothers they have also got rid of two witches. It is also quit likely that the witch-hunt was covertly approved by the entire village.

(8) The efficacy of witchcraft is not doubted by the Santals as well as by other tribal and non-tribal communities. In an interview the tribal students of Bisoi, expressed that the presence of witch in the society is beyond doubt and that the witches are also jealous of handsome and educated boys, and intend to eat them. The school teacher informed us that the father of a tribal student once wanted that his son should not go to the village during vacation lest a witch may caste her evil-eyes to make him mad or unable to read, write and remember anything. An Assistant Engineer's wife was also once believed to have been attacked by a witch. After the attack she ate the food cooked for five persons. An Ojha was called in and when he administered medicine and blew off the spirit the woman was cured. A welfare worker, working in Bisoi also believed that he was attacked by a witch through he actually suffered from typhoid. When the treatment of Ojhas bore no fruit he was sent for medical treatment.

This being the situation it cannot be said that the Santals may soon consider witchcraft as a myth than a reality. With the spread of education the belief is no doubt getting weaker in the minds of the Santals, but want of increased medical facilities and non-availability of medicines in the hospitals may be factors forcing the Santals to take the help of their traditional medicine man-cum-witch doctor (*Ojha*) for curing diseases. To free the Santals from the age-old belief about the witches, and to convince them about the ineffectiveness of the *Ojhas* in curing diseases it is required that increased medical facilities should be made available to them. Once the tribals feel that the modern medicine can cure them, they may begin to consult the doctors. Prolonged propaganda discouraging the belief in witches and witch-hunting may also help in changing the outlook of the tribals and may drive out the age old belief from their mind.

NATURE-BASED OLCHIKI AND SANTAL ETHNO-NATIONALISM *

Suresh Chandra Murmu ¹

Jagannath Dash ²

Abstract

Santal language has been one of their important ethnic-markers. For centuries the hegemony of state language has impacted the Santali language. The nature-based OL-CHIKI script invented by Pt. Raghunath Murmu, seems to be an essential part of tribe-caste contrast and continua. With the conscious assertion of language and documenting the social and cultural elements, it has further aroused a spirit ethno-nationalism and revitalized their social group cohesion through socio-cultural identities as a form of 'culture reborn'. Thus, at the pristine level, any development in tribal culture is nature-based that emerges spontaneously from within.

Introduction

The Santal tribe with its rich socio-cultural heritage is one of the very important tribal communities of India. Santals are mainly concentrated in the states of Odisha, Jharkhand, Bihar, West Bengal and Assam. They speak the language belonging to the Munda group of languages of the Austro-Asiatic family. Previously, all Santal writings were in local Odia, Bengali, Devanagari or Roman scripts. Already there has been a good number of works by foreign scholars and non-Santal writers on dictionary, grammar, folklore etc., which are mostly intended for research purposes. Roman script was being extensively used for writing of most of the Santali books. But most of the creative literatures were written by the native speakers using either Bengali or Devanagari scripts. The use of different scripts for writing Santali has hindered the development and use of Santal language. This, in turn, has effectively marred the progress of Santali language and literature in several fields such as philosophy, history, religion, science, novel, prose, poetry etc (Website.wesanthals.tripod.com/id43.html)

* Published in ADIVASI, Vol. XXXXXII, No.1&2, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar, 2012, pp.86-96



¹ UGC-JRF, P.G. Dept. Anthropology, Utkal University, Bhubaneswar, Odisha

² Professor, Dept of Anthropology, Utkal University, Bhubaneswar, Odisha








Pandit Raghunath Murmu (5th May 1905- 1st February 1982) from the village 'Dahardih' (Dandbose) in the present district of Mayurbhanj, Odisha invented "Olchiki Script" in 1925. When Pt. Murmu was studying in Gambharia L.P. School (1912-1913), in the beginning it was very difficult for him to understand the Odia medium of teaching. At one stage he decided to stop reading but his father *Nandalal* encouraged him to continue and kept on saying that nothing is impossible. For his upper primary studies he was admitted into Bahalda U.P. School which was 11 Kms away from his village. He was staying in the house of Ananta Majhi, a Police Inspector in the village 'Banadungri' with some of his friends. Pt. Raghunath Murmu was an average student and therefore he was being taught privately (tuition) by a teacher named Madan Mohan. While reading history he came to know about the Arya and Non-Aryan civilizations. He learnt that Non-Aryans were uncivilized and the present Kolha, Kandha, Santal, Juang tribes etc have descended from them. He asked the teacher, "if we have descended from Non-Arya or Anarya people, then are we the people of uncivilized community"? The teacher replied, "yes, you belong to uncivilized people". (Murmu, 2000). Like an arrow, it struck his heart and he was determined to do something for the Santal society and from that very day first of all he started developing the script. Mr. Sauna Murmu, maternal uncle was his friend and advisor with whom he always discussed regarding the progress of his work. Sauna Murmu had continuously encouraged him in this epoch making work. He was so much submerged in this work that few letters of the script were already developed while he was reading in the M. K. C. High School at Baripada.



















Another very important event of this script invention was the role of God Bidu and Goddess Chandan. 'BIDU-CHANDAN' used to come to him in dream and as Raghunath Murmu believed, with their supernatural inspirations and blessings he succeeded in his work (Ibid). In 1925 newly invented OL-CHIKI script had its maiden display in a meeting (Mahasabha) which was organized at 'Chemenjuli' (Bihar) (Besra, 1996). But at that time nobody had given any serious attention to it. Pt. Murmu did not feel perturbed by this.






According to Pt. Raghunath Murmu 'Ol' means, "without creating any sound, only looking through eyes by drawing the picture of things in mind and 'Chiki' usually prefers to pictorial representation." The OL CHIKI script, also known as 'Ol Chemet' (learning of writing in Santali, 'Ol' means writing and 'Chemet' means learning). OLCHIKI has 30 letters, the forms of which are meant to evoke natural shapes. These include 6 (six) vowels (Raha Alang) and 24 consonants (Keched Alang). It has 5 basic diacritics, and the combination of diacritics 'Mu Tudag' and 'Gahla Tudag' gives rise to another diacritic, called 'Mu-Gahla Tudag'. According to famous Linguist Norman Zide, "The shapes of the letters are not arbitrary, but reflect the names for the letters, which are words, usually the names of objects or actions representing conventionalized form in the pictorial shape of the characters" ([www.wikipedia.org/..Olchiki alphabet](http://www.wikipedia.org/..Olchiki%20alphabet)).

The great novelties and usages in Santali language are as result of the natural derivation of the forms for words, where, sounds generating out of actions or movements from animated or unanimated objects or sounds associated with living and their corresponding words are robustly approximated. Therefore, Pandit Raghunath Murmu tried to infuse this concept of natural formation of Santali words into OLCHEIKI. When Pandit Raghunath Murmu devised the script, he carefully selected the shapes of the scripts from the nature and the surroundings which are long familiar to the Santals, and is close to them. The selection of shapes for OLCHEIKI letters is directly based on the shapes of objects or actions which the sounds for the letters represent, or with which sounds for the letters are in some way associated. Naturally, the sources for the shapes of letters were fire, soil, water, air and sky (as conceptualized in the Hindu literature as Kshiti, Up, Teja, Marut and Byoma) – an environment that surrounds the Earth. This is an indigenous concept and has multiple objectives. It greatly helped them to remember the letters easily as they are retrieved from the corresponding image of the nature. It can be observed that the shapes of most of the letters are either oval or round. This is due to the nature of origin of letters, whose shapes are often derived from the shape of an object or action in the natural environment. For example, the word /AT/ means Earth and the shape of letter “” /AT/ derived from the round shape of Earth. Similarly, /UD/ means mushroom and so it looks the shape of the letter “” /UD/.”(Website. We santhals. Tripod.com/id 43.html).

Here is the list of symbols and meaning of all letters given in OLCHEIKI Script & its writing system:

 /A/	Shape of burning fire
 /AT/	Shape of Earth.
 /AG/	Shape of mouth during vomiting which produces the same sound as the name of the letter.
 /ANG/	Blowing air.
 /AL/	Writing. Shape of pen
 /AA/	The shape of working in the field with a spade.
 /AAK/	Sound of swan or shape of a bird.

 /AAJ/	The shape of a person pointing towards a third person with right hand (saying he).
 /AAM/	The shape of a person pointing towards a second person with left hand (saying you).
 /AAW/	Opening lips.
 /I/	Bending shape.
 /IS/	The shape of plough.
 /IH/	Shape of hands ups.
 /INJ/	The shape of a person pointing towards himself or herself with left hand.
 /IR/	The shape of sickle used for cutting or reaping.
 /U/	Shape of gourd used for serving food (serving spoon).
 /UCH/	Shape of a peak.
 /UD/	Shape of mushroom.
 /UNN/	Flying bee sound.
 /UY/	A dumb (Konda) cook while responding to someone by putting his both hands over his ears.
 /E/	Overflowing rivers changing course. Sliding of land, clay etc.
 /EP/	Taken from the shape when a person gives something to another.
 /EDD/	Derived from the word "Onday Nonday" means 'there and here'. Using index finger indicating here and there.
 /EN/	The picture of thrashing grains with two legs.
 /ERR/	A picture of a path that turns to avoid an obstruction or a danger.

 /O/	Shape of mouth when sounding this
 /OTT/	The hump of a camel.
 /OB/	Curly hair
 /ONG/	Nasalized
 /OH/	Sign of pain.

As mentioned above, each and every letter of the OLCHIKI script has a meaning in the Santal language. Morphemes in Santal language derived from natural sounds such as- '*sar-sor*' became '*sade*' (any sound), '*huhu*' became '*hoi*' (wind), '*hud-hud*' became '*hudur*' (thunderbolt), '*raat-rot*' became '*rapud*' (breaking sound), '*dhau-dhau*' became '*dhagau*' (flame), '*rar-ror*' to '*raro*' (river having stone), '*jhar-jhor*' to '*jharna*' (river), '*jhal-jhal*' to '*jani*' (a type of plant), '*sorr*' sound became '*sar*' (arrow), etc. Names of the birds and animals have also been derived from their sounds. For example; from '*chened-chened*' it is '*chene*' (bird), *kah-kah* became *kahu* (crow) [this one is little bit similar with the Odia word '*Kau*' for the crow], from '*koh-koh*' to '*koh*' (crane), '*tud-tud*' became '*tud chene*' (a type of bird), from '*renj - renj*' to '*rerenj*' (an insect) etc. Few more may be added like '*may-may*' became '*merom*' (goat), '*bheh-bheh*' to '*bhidi*' (sheep) etc. Agriculture oriented morphemes are also present which are derived from feature of the instruments, for example '*kanba*' (a part of plough) because of its '*S*' like structure which is called '*kalbung*' in Santali.

OLCHIKI is alphabetic, and does not share any of the syllabic properties of the other Indic scripts. Santali language contains some phonetics which is generally not used in English and neighboring Indian languages, and hence, learning of the correct pronunciations of OLCHIKI letters is very important. There is problem in the proper representation of Santali words with Indic scripts (Bengali, Devanagiri and Odia). Firstly, in Indic language, some phonetics like checked consonants /k/, c', t'/ do not exist. If one attempts to suppress the inherent vowel of consonants /KA/, /CA/, /TA/ and /PA/ in any Indic script, it would only produce /k/, /c/, /t/, & /p/, respectively. Secondly, there is a difficulty of representing the Santal vowels. Currently, the Santali language does use eight or nine vowels that can be short or long nasalized, where as the Indic scripts provide only six vowels. By modifying the vowels of Indic scripts using diacritic marks, the Santali vowels can be represented to some extent, but when such vowels are used in the beginning of a word, they tend to approximate with closest vowels of the Indic scripts. Thirdly, there no mechanism to represent the glottal stop of Santali sounds which Santals use very frequently (Website: wesanthals.tripod.com/id43.html).

There is also the problem with Roman script. Missionaries (first of all Paul Olaf Bodding, a Norwegian) brought the Latin alphabet, which was better at representing some Santal stops, but vowels were still problematic (www.wikipedia.org/..Ol.chiki alphabet). The Roman script cannot distinguish the short and long vowels. It is worth mentioning that the Santali long vowels are pronounced much longer than those of English and other Indic languages. Another problem with Roman script is that it does not have any explicit mechanism to represent the glottal stop.

Therefore, to retain the beauty, specialty, peculiarity and sweetness of Santal language, there is need to use a script that can represent all sounds of the Santali language accurately and naturally appealing to all Santals, and it is definitely the OLCHIKI script that fulfils these requirements.

OLCHIKI and Rise of Santal Intellectual Capacity

In modern societies intellectuals do not form a clearly defined group. Traditionally, the role of the intellectual has been that of the thinker and truth seeker. Intellectual life flourished under two conditions: the relative independence of intellectuals themselves, and the unique position they held in societies that were largely illiterate (Marshall, 1998). Invention of OLCHIKI script has definitely helped in the development intellectual capacity among the Santals. After its invention existing strong unity became stronger. Consciousness towards the preservation of rich and beautiful culture and also revival of the declining elements like Sarna Dharam has increased. Pt. Raghunath has written more than 150 books covering traditional songs, novel, short stories, religious sermons, myths and legends, books on Santali grammars, primary books for learning OLCHIKI, books on great persons in Santal society and Santal movement. Important books of Pt. Raghunath Murmu are *Ol Chemed*, *Lecture Serenj*, *Parsi Poha*, *Hor Serenj*, *Hital*, *Bidu Chandan*, *Darege Dhan*, *Kherwal Bir*, *Sidu-Kanhu Santal Hul*, *Bakhen*, *Nel Jong Lagid Ol*. Gradually many educated Santals participated in the process of the development and spread of OLCHIKI script among the Santals of India. Intellectuals in Santal society can be divided into two groups; such as educated elites who became politicians later on and the second group is composed of traditional village heads (Manjhi), Pir Parganas and few gentle men from the Santal society. The first group was a medium to the people highly educated and well acquainted with rules and regulations of modern society. And the second group was the experts of the Santal society and culture.

OLCHIKI and Santal Ethno Nationalism:

Before Independence:

With the childhood interest to do something for the society and continuous effort and hard working, Pt. Raghunath Murmu invented OLCHIKI script for the Santal language in 1925. Ol Guru Raghunath Murmu had first of all informed Sauna Murmu (Uncle of Raghunath) about his new creation and it was

highly appreciated by Sauna. Sauna Murmu was the only person who continuously encouraged and gave psychological strength to Raghunath Murmu during hard times of the script creation process. They finally thought of spreading it to the general public. Interesting part is that these two initially encouraged their relatives residing in different villages to learn the script.

In 1933 Pt. Raghunath Murmu was appointed as the head master in Badam Talia U.P. School in Mayurbhanj. His uncle Sauna Murmu was also a teacher in the same school. They started the work of development and spread of OLCHIKI among the Santal. Few important issues on which they planned to concentrate were opening of Santali schools, every child to be in the school, discussion with the parents of children, demand for government support to economically poor students and regarding the religion and literacy for the overall development of society and culture. Raghunath and Sauna started visiting different villages and through direct interaction with the people tried to make them understand regarding the importance of education and its future implications. Pt. Murmu was very contented and it hardly perturbed him during his struggle of language assertion.

In 1925 at Chemenjuli a well-known village in Bihar a mass meeting on the rules and regulations of the Santal society was organized. Participants were village heads (Manjhi), Parganas and Santal Gentlemen. Among them important persons were from Bisui Pir Mr. Lakhan Majhi, Kadon Pir Masang Majhi and Tonto Majhi, and Fakir Majhi. Raghunath and Sauna had also attended the meeting. Raghunath in his speech mentioned about the OLCHIKI and its need for the Santals. But unfortunately most of the participants did not appreciate at that time. It was very embarrassing moment for Raghunath and Sauna.

Gradually Santals started realizing the importance of OLCHIKI script for the community especially the Manjhis, Parganas and educated mass. This was like a booster for Raghunath Murmu and Sauna Murmu. Pt. Murmu realized that for the development of the script, it was utmost necessary to bring it in printed form. He was also concerned about the declining trends of the rich cultural heritage due to the impact of alien culture. In 1935 he invented wooden typing/printing machine for OLCHIKI script. Publication of books and periodicals in OLCHIKI was needed at that time for its development. Wooden printing machine was displayed in Baripada science exhibition in February 1939 and its representative was Sauna Murmu. Many visitors appreciated the machine and at the same time came to know about the newly invented script. On the second day of the exhibition Mayurbhanj King Maharaja Pratap Chandra Bhanj Deo, his ministers, few Britishers and school Superintendent visited the place. Sauna Murmu explained in detail to the king about the machine, its inventor and OLCHIKI script. A beautiful poem was typed with that wooden machine in OLCHIKI script which was composed by Pt. Raghunath Murmu and the meaning was nicely explained by Sauna to the King;

*"Jaanaam aiyodoy rengej rehon
Unigay hah-raa
Jaanaam rol da nidhaan rehon
Onatege mah-raang
Senaed-em mened khan
Parsi manang senaetaam
Parsi senae-m mened khan
Ol manang senae taam".*

Meaning: Even if your mother is poor, she is the only person, who takes care of you. Even if your mother tongue is not developed, you proceed and develop through it. If you want to develop, develop your language first. If you want to develop the language, develop your writing (script).

Gradually OLCHIKI was developed and spread among the Santals particularly in eastern regions of India. People were not only learning the new script but also enhancing the sense of solidarity and consciousness for the society and culture. That was the time when Santals were facing lot of problems like poverty, land alienation, indebtedness, exploitations from the non-tribals and British authority. Formation of new state of Odisha in 01-04-1936 from Bihar was seen by few Santali writers as intentional breaking of the growing unity and solidarity of the tribal communities. But Mayurbhanj was not included in Odisha at that time and it was under the King's rule.

In 1939, Pt. Raghunath Murmu called a meeting at Bodam Talia village to form an Association named 'Ol Samiti'. At that time major changes like new state formation and change in political structure were taking place. In that gathering more than 5000 people participated. Important personnel chosen were President of Samiti: Sambra Charan Tudu (Mayurbhanj), Vice-President -Lakhan Majhi (Kaduani), Secretary - Dinu Murmu (Dahardih), Sunaram Soren (Hesla), Bhuglu Tudu (Soso), Baydanath Hansdah (Soso), Kusal Murmu (Khararda), Kasu Murmu (Kulgi). The leading female participants were Jauna Murmu and Arpana Murmu. After the formation of Ol Samiti, they decided to write an application to Maharaja of Mayurbhanj and also started a signature campaign in support of OLCHIKI script. When they met Maharaja Pratap Chandra Bhanja Deo, he asked them, why they need the tribal script? They replied that it is for the development of Santal language. He wrote on the application that, "I donot feel the need of this script."

Pt. Raghunath Murmu came to realize that most of Santal songs have been composed with the mixture of Bengali and Odia language. Traditional songs of Sohrae, Karam, Baha, Danta, Dasain, Pata festivals etc. have the elements of neighboring non-tribal languages. In 1936 Pt. Murmu wrote a book "Hor Serenj" containing the traditional songs of Santals. Initially it was published in Bengali but later on in OLCHIKI script. Another instrumental contribution of Pt. Raghunath Murmu was a play "Bidu Chandan". This was being performed by the artists of Dandbose (Dahardih) everywhere to convey the masses how God

Bidu and Goddess Chandan helped Pt. Murmu in the creation of OLCHIKI. So this kind of effort was being made by Santal intellectuals for overall development of OLCHIKI script and in developing awareness among the Santals.

In this process of ethno nationalistic movement, regular meetings, rallies and discussions were held in different places. In 1942 at Dandbose Pt. Murmu called a meeting during Raja Festival where people not only from Mayurbhanj but from Bihar also participated in large numbers. Intellectuals from Bihar were Champai Murmu (Rajhdoha, Bihar) and Muniram Baskey (JomJola, Bihar). On this occasion the historic speech of Sunaram Soren on the importance of script in the survival of a language was very significant. Another important non-tribal from the palace of Maharaja was Dewan Khitish Chandra Niogi whose crucial advice to spread the movement from Mayurbhanj to Bihar, Bengal, Odisha and Assam was very useful. He advised the Santal intellectuals of Mayurbhanj to discuss the matter with the Santals of other regions and put the demand before the Govt. Muniram Baskey also formed an organization “Kherwal Jarpa Samiti” in Bihar.

In 1946 with the effort of Pt. Murmu and Muniram Baskey, “Chandan Press” was established for publication of books in OLCHIKI script. First book published from this press was “Nel Jong Lagid Ol” written by Pt. Murmu. Then a monthly newspaper “Sagen Sakam” was started. One important book by Raghunath Murmu was “Ol Chemed” which had been published for easy learning of the script. Another monthly newspaper “Adivasi Sakam” by Jaypal Singh (who founded Adivasi Mahasabha in 1936) started from Chandan Press.

Pt. Raghunath Murmu and His Disciples:

Raghunath Murmu left teaching profession on 06-02-1946 and completely dedicated his life for the OLCHIKI script and preservation of Santal society and culture. He started visiting Santal villages of Odisha, Bihar, Bengal and Assam with his disciples. They were showcasing Bidu-Chandan play, singing awareness songs composed by Raghunath Murmu, making and encouraging people to draw wall painting in the theme of OLCHIKI script related to Santal culture.

Lakchar Serenj (Awareness song):

Song -1

*“Ol menah taamaa
ror menah taamaa
Dhorom menah taamaa
aamhon menaam.
Ol-em aad leray
ror-em aad leray
Dhorom mem add leray
aamhom adoh.”*

Meaning:

*You have script, you have language
You have religion and you are there.
When you lose your writing, language
And religion, you will be lost forever.*

Song- 2

*Aamaah orah lagid, aamaah duar lagid
Jahain da bae neled, aamgem neled.
Aamaah jati lagid, Aamaah dhorom lagid,
Jahain da bae nenel, aamgay nelmay.*

Meaning: Nobody will take care of your house, you have to. Nobody will care for your caste/tribe, religion but you have to take care of it.

After Independence of India:

India got independence on 15th August 1947 from the British rule and before it, the state of Myurbhanj became part of Odisha. Till 1949 Mayurbhanj was not included with the state of Odisha and Bihar. Then in 1948, started the formation of different groups, some claiming amalgamation with Odisha and some wanting to keep the state independent. By September Maharaja saw that the administration had become chaotic and the ministry divided in this issue. Sri Sarat Chandra Das went to Delhi with Maharaja Pratap Chandra Bhanjdeo on 16th October 1948 and the Maharaj signed there the instrument of the merger. Officially, the state of Mayurbhanj merged with Odisha on 2nd January 1949.

Merging of Mayurbhanj with Odisha was opposed by most of the Santal leaders including Sunaram Majhi. Formerly Santal leaders' demand was in favor of independent Mayurbhanj. While the negotiation of Congress leaders of Odisha proved unavailing, Sunaram Soren felt convinced that if Mayurbhanj would cease to remain a separate entity, then its merger with Bihar would serve the cause of the tribal population better. Sunaram's arguments touched the tribal people in every nook and corner of the state making their agitation more popular and vigorous. It is very interesting to note that movement of OLCHIKI was expanding and development was getting political back up. Santals were using the political rank-path to fulfill the desired goals. Somehow, it was being diverted towards the act of state formation (Das, 2010).

In 1964 "Adibasi Sawnta Seched Lakchar Semled" (Adibasi Socio-Educational and Cultural Association) was founded with its head office at Rairangpur, Odisha. This organization has several branches in different parts of Odisha. With the effort of ASECA an OLCHIKI press named "Semled Press" was started in 1966 for the publication of books and periodicals. In Bihar also ASECA was founded at Chakulia in 1966 (Regd.No. -33/66-67) with its own press called "Marshal Press". Later in the states of West Bengal (17-6-1967) and Assam

(November, 1981) ASECA was founded and started seriously the work of script and language development.

Gradually, with the opening of Santali printing press many Santali writers started writing on different aspects of Santal society and culture. Writers are not only from Odisha but also from the states of Bihar, Bengal and Assam. Exams were conducted by ASECA, Rairangpur. Finally in 1992 Government of Odisha appointed OLCHIKI teachers in 30 schools. In course of time several Santali organizations and associations came in to existence all over India. Mention may be made of All India Santal Council (AISC), All India Santali Writers' Association, Santal Bhasa Morchha, All Odisha OLCHIKI Students' Union, All India Santali Welfare and Cultural Society, All Adibasi Students' Union Assam, Adim Owar Jarpa, Bhubaneswar, Raj Gal Mahila Samiti Bhubaneswar, Kherwal Itun Asra Jhargram etc. Many literary and cultural societies have already been established to promote art, literature and culture through this language all over India. Around 200 hundreds magazines and journals are published (weekly to yearly). Many books are being published in their own personal efforts. About 500 writers are engaged in promoting this language and literature. Santali language has also found a place in mass communication media; the All India Radio (AIR), Kolkata relaying a daily news bulletin in its half an hour program and other cultural programs are being broadcasted from AIR Cuttack, Jamshedpur, Ranchi, Chainbasa, Bhagalpur, Dumka, Keonjhar, Baripada and other centers. Doordarshan Kendra Kolkata is also telecasting half an hour Santali program once in a week.

On 17th December 1999, many leaders of the important Santali Organizations gave a Memorandum for inclusion of Santali language in the 8th schedule of the Indian Constitution to Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Bajpayee. In 22 December 2003, Santali language has been included in the 8th Schedule of the Indian Constitution. All India Sahitya Academy, New Delhi included Santali language in 08-07-2005 and awarded the Santal writers for outstanding contributions. State of Jharkhand has given the Santali the second state language status in 19-8-2005. Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL) Mysore has also undertaken the project for translating the books in to Santali language. OLCHIKI script was added to UNICODE Standard in April, 2008 with the release version 5.1 (Unicode Range: U+1C50-U+1C7F). Translation work of the Indian Constitution in to Santali is being done by the Santal experts. So every possible effort is being made especially by the educated class of Santals society to preserve, revive and develop OLCHIKI script, language & culture.

Conclusion:

However, Santali, as a language, is as old as the Santals and its year of origin cannot be traced back but as a script, it is a recent development. As the Santals and OLCHIKI script exist in an ambit of Hindu or caste fold surrounding, they are not free from the outside impact. Therefore, all its implications and

development are only to be deciphered in the context of the contemporary Indian or Odia society and culture. This may be an essential part of tribe-caste contrast and continua. Santals are speaking in Santali since time immemorial, but the development of its script brought in a kind of consciousness and arouses a spirit, which made the Santals a conscious linguistic social group. It furthered the process of reviving all its vanishing cultural traditions. By the help of the script, written documentation of the social and cultural elements are possible which ultimately united the Santals all over the nation and a kind of ethno-nationalism evoked in the whole process. It also mitigated the problem of their socio-cultural identity. By revivalist attitude, Santals came out as a community or culture reborn. However, such a process of transformation has no artificiality in its formation. Like that of the OLCHIKI script, all its developments are nature-based, emerged spontaneously from within. It is definitely a turning-point for the social anthropologists, linguists and sociologists.

References:

- Besra, Damayanti(1996) :“Pandit Raghunath Murmu”. Academy of Tribal Dialects and Culture, Bhubaneswar.: p-7
- Kalpana Das (2010) “Tribal Revolt of 1949 in Mayurbhanj” in Odisha Review, August.
- Murmu, Arjun(2000):“Guru Gomke”. Pt. Raghunath Murmu Ol Itun Asra, Kulgi Odisha.
- Murmu, Pt. Raghunath(1988) : “Ronor: A Santali Grammar in Santali”. ASECA, Rairangpur, Odisha.
- Murmu, Arjun(2000):“Guru Gomke”. Pt. Raghunath Murmu Ol Itun Asra, Kulgi Odisha.
- OLCHIKI script. Website:wesanthals.tripod.com/id43.html www.wikipedia.org/OL_Chiki_alphabet

SIDU-KANHU : The Santal Freedom Fighters *

*Shyam Hembram*¹

Before the advent of the British in India, the Santals tribe lived in Indian States of Jharkhand, West-Bengal, Bihar, Odisha and Assam. In those days particularly the Santals resided in the hilly districts of Manbhum, Barabhum, Chhotanagpur, Palamau and Birbhum. They were engaged in their agrarian way of life by clearing the forest and also by hunting and seasonal forest collection for subsistence. But as the agents of the new colonial rule claimed their rights on the lands of the Santals, they retreated to reside in the hills of Rajmahal. After a brief period, the British operatives along with their native counterparts, so to say, their upper caste landlords and zamindars jointly started claiming their rights in this new land as well. The Santals felt cheated. Taking the advantage of their innocence and ignorance many Santals were made bonded labourers. Zamindars and the money lenders who first appeared to them as businessmen and traders allured them first by goods and lending goods and money to them on loans. However, when a Santal tried to repay these loans, but was never settled. In fact through the corrupt practices of the money lenders, the compound interest accumulated on the principal amount of the loan which multiplied to large sums. For repaying the entire accumulated amount an entire generation of an indigent Santal family had to work as slaves. This dispossession and exploitation turned the Santals into rebels and finally they took an oath to launch an attack on the most visible symbol of authority, i.e., the British rulers.

Sidu Murmu and Kanhu Murmu, hailing from the village Bhognadih in Sahibganj district, now in Jharkhand, had long been brooding over the injustices perpetrated by the oppressors over hundreds and hundreds of their tribesmen.

* Published in ADIVASI, Vol. XXXXIV, No.2, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar, 2015, pp.69-70

¹ AFA-cum-Under Secretary, ST & SC Development Department, Govt. of Odisha

The situation finally reached a flash point and, not surprisingly, a small episode that took place in July 1855 triggered one of the fiercest uprisings that the British administration ever faced in India. The emergence of Sidu and Kanhu, the youthful, dynamic and charismatic leaders, provided a rallying point for the Santals to revolt against the oppressors. On the 30th June 1855, a large number of Santals assembled in a field in Bhagnadihi village of Santal Paragana. They declared themselves as free and took oath under the leadership of Sidu Murmu and Kanhu Murmu to fight unto the last against the dishonest British rulers as well as their unscrupulous agents. The militant mood of the Santals frightened the authority. A Police Agent confronted them on the 7th July and tried to put the Murmu brothers under arrest. The angry crowd reacted violently and killed the Police Agent and his companions. The event sparked off a series of confrontations with the ruling East India Company's Army and subsequently reached the scale of a full-fledged rebellion. At the outset, Santal rebels, led by Sidu and Kanhu, made tremendous gains and captured and gained control over a large tract of the country extending from Rajmahal hills in Bhagalpur district to Sainthia in Birbhum district. For the time being, British rule in this vast area became completely paralyzed. Many moneylenders and native agents of the Company were killed. Local British administrators took shelter in the Pakur Fort to save their lives. The Santals initially achieved some success but soon the British found out a new way to tackle these rebels.

When the battle began, the British officer ordered the troops to fire without loading bullets. The Santals, who did not suspect this trap set by the British war strategy, charged with full potential. This step proved to be disastrous for them. As soon as they neared the foot of the hill, the British army attacked with full power and this time they were using bullets. There were heavy casualties. Thereafter, attacking every village of the Santals, the British troops made sure that the last drop of revolutionary spirit was annihilated. They forced the Santals to come out of the forest. In a conclusive battle which followed, the British soldiers of the East India Company equipped with modern firearms and war elephants, came down heavily on them. The courage, chivalry and sacrifice of the Santals were countered by the rulers with veritable butchery. Out of 50,000 Santal rebels, 15,000 and 20,000 were killed at different locations. The Company was finally able to suppress the rebellion in 1856, though some outbreaks continued till 1857. The Santals showed great bravery and incredible courage in the struggle against the foreign rulers.

The Santal bravery in those crucial times is exemplified by the fact that as long as their battle drums continued beating, the whole party would stand up and allow themselves to be shot down. There was no sign of yielding. Once forty Santals refused to surrender and took shelter inside a mud house. The troops surrounded the mud house and fired at them but Santals replied with their arrows. Then the soldiers made big hole through muddy wall, and the Captain ordered them surrender but they again shot a volley of arrows through the hole

and Captain again asked them to surrender but they continued shooting arrows. Some of the soldiers were wounded. At last when the discharge of arrows from the door slackened, the Captain went inside the room with soldiers. He found only one old man grievously wounded, standing erect among the dead bodies. The soldier asked him to throw away arms, but instead he rushed on him and killed him with his battle axe. It is believed that Sidu was captured by the British forces through treachery and Kanhu through an encounter at Uparbanda and was subsequently killed in captivity.

The Santal Hul, however, did not end in vain. It had a long-lasting impact. Enactment of Santal Parganas Tenancy Act was the outcome of this struggle, which provided some sort of protection to the indigenous people from the ruthless colonial exploitation. After realising the mistake, it was tried to appease the Santals by addressing their genuine grievances. Santal territory was born. The regular police was abolished and the duty of keeping peace and order and arresting criminals was vested in the hands of the Santal traditional leaders – the *parganait* and the village headman.

Although the revolution was brutally suppressed, it marked a great change in the colonial rule and policy. The day is still celebrated among the Santals with great respect for the thousands of the Santal martyrs who sacrificed their lives along with their two celebrated leaders to win independence from the oppressive rule of the zamindars and the British operatives.

In the memory of the two legendary fighter of the Santal tribe, Sidu and Kanhu Murmu a University is named upon them. Indian Post has also issued a Rs 4/- stamp in 2002 honouring them.

“As and when there will be intolerance towards the tribe, it will be fought with bravery and self respect, dignity and cultural unity will be protected.”

S A O R A *

*Bhagirathi Chowdhury*¹

The Saoras also called Savaras or Sabaras constitute a major tribe in the State of Orissa. The tribe having references in the epigraphic records and ancient literature of India is very widely distributed throughout the State of Orissa. Their distribution in the State is as follows:-

Name of the district	Population		
	Total	Male	Female
Puri	26,118	12,567	13,621
Kalahandi	1,543	912	631
Koraput	36,329	18,235	18,094
Sambalpur	82,575	40,485	42,090
Bolangir	31,071	16,132	14,939
Boudh-Kandhamal	1,562	814	748
Ganjam	96,128	47,185	48,943
Sundargarh	647	298	349
Dhenkanal	12,365	5,750	6,615
Keonjhar	8,410	4,226	4,184
Cuttack	12,549	6,448	6,101
Mayurbhanj	2,087	1,109	978
Balasore	160	101	59
Total	3,11,614	1,54,262	1,57,352

The great majorities of Saoras have lost their own language and now speak Oriya. But the Lanjia Saoras have preserved their ancient tongue and very few of them speak any other. Saora is an Austro-Asiatic language of the Munda family. It is said that it is closely allied to Gutob and Parenga, and has some affinities with Kharia and Juang languages.

* Published in ADIBASI, Vol. V, No.3, (Spl. Issue), TRB, Bhubaneswar, 1963-64, pp.101-06

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

Division of the Tribe

The tribe has several sub-divisions- (1) Lamba Lanjia, (2) Jadu, (3) Mane, (4) Raika, (5) Sarada, (6) Kindal, (7) Arsi, (8) Juari, (9) Kancher, (10) Kurumba, (11) Sudha, (12) Jati, (13) Jara, (14) Kampo.

These sections having different occupations have become endogamous groups. The Lamba Lanjia Saoras are mainly shifting cultivators although wet cultivation is resorted to in terraced fields along the hill valleys. The Jadu Saoras who live in Badakemidi area of Ganjam district are not magicians, as the name denoted, and are treated lower as they do not revere the cow. The Mane Saoras found in Ajoygada Mutta of Ganjam district, work on brass. The Raikas who inhabit Rayagada Mutta of the same district abstain from eating animal flesh. The Kindal or Tankla Saoras work in bamboo for basket. The Arisi who eat beef, are considered low by other sections. The Juari Saoras have earned efficiency in cutting date palms. The Kanchers are good archers and the Kurumbas are primarily shifting cultivators. All these sections speak Saora Language. The Sudha and Jati Saoras who pose themselves as high, are mainly wet cultivators and speak Oriya only. The Kampo Saoras speak Telugu language. Besides these there are Kumbits who are potters, the Gontaras who work on bell metal and the Luaras who are blacksmiths in the Saora land of Ganjam and Koraput districts. The Lamba Lanjia Saoras about whom this paper mainly deals with, are still in the real primitive stage.

The Lamba Lanjia Soaras are mostly found in Parlakemidi subdivision of Ganjam district and Puttasingi area of Gunupur Taluk in Koraput. This is one of the most inaccessible parts of the State of Orissa. Here the ranges of high hills cross the area. The hilly forests with small streams and rivulets provide the Saoras with various things which they require for their livelihood. But the free movements are intercepted by the presence of man-eaters and Malaria with acute shortage of water during summer. The Saoras have got a stratified society. The chief of the village called Gamang is the secular head recognized by administration. He is assisted by Dol-Behera and Mondal. Others are called *royats*. The religious head is called Buyya. The Gamangs, Buyyas, Dol-Behera and Mondal with their families constitute the Saora aristocracy. They have got marital relationship within their own group.

The clan organization which is common to tribal societies is totally absent among the Saoras. Instead there are extended families called the 'Birinda' which consists of descendants from a common ancestor for 4-5 generations. Marriage is prohibited within a Birinda the members of which are related by blood. A woman after marriage does not change her Birinda. After her death, her Birinda members may claim to perform her funeral rites of Guar and Karjya.

Marriage and Family Life

Lanjia marriage is not an elaborate affair. As marriage within the *birinda* is forbidden, they have to seek bride from other *birindas*. Arranged marriage is the most common form of marriage. They also have marriage by capture and by service. For the arranged marriage the groom's parents and relatives take the initiative. As mentioned earlier, negotiations begin according to social and economic status of the parties. A Gamang's daughter may be married to another Gamang's son while a Gamang's son can marry the daughter of a *royat*. They have preference to marry the maternal uncle's daughter. In an arranged marriage the groom's father accompanied by some kinsmen visits girl's house with a pot full of wine that is accepted and drunk in the presence of the important men of the village. It is customary to seek the opinion of the concerned girl. Callings at the girl's house continue for several times and every time one or more pots of wine are carried for them. On one of such occasions an arrow is taken and the engagement is finalized and in another visit the bride price is discussed and fixed. Bride price is generally paid in kinds, such as grains, liquor and cloth. In some localities cash is also demanded. On the appointed day groom's men visit the girl's house with nine pots of wine for betrothal. They are entertained with festive meals of rice, meat and liquor. This is followed by dancing and singing. After one year or so, the bride is brought to groom's house. There is dance, drink and eating and from that day they become husband and wife.

Among the Saoras sororate and levirate are prevalent and polygyny is very widely prevalent. Many Saoras have got more than one wife. Among them taking of more than one wife is a sign of prosperity, and it implies expansion of hill cultivation and greater accumulation of food grains. Saora women have respectable position in their society. Being an important economic asset they cannot be treated as chattels. Of course, they work very hard and men are mostly dependent on the women for their existence. They get equal prominence in their festivals and ceremonies.

Saora homes are full of children. The parents are very fond of children. They fondle their children whenever they can. In ceremonies and festivals small children get the same share of rice and meat as the elders. The children are allowed to take part in ceremonies and also to smoke and drink from early childhood. On the other hand, they assist their parents in all the occupations and attain skill and proficiency in tribal vocations and crafts. They can skin a buffalo, climb high hills, fetch water, do agricultural operations, tend cattle etc.

Death rites

The Saoras cremate their dead, but persons dying of cholera and smallpox are buried. A cremation is a family function; some members collect wood for the pyre, the family *ldaibois* (girls trained to act as assistants in funeral rites) fetch water and prepare turmeric. In the meanwhile the corpse is carried by the women with all the clothes of the deceased for cremation. The musical band

accompanies the procession. Next day they visit the cremation ground to examine the ashes to find the sign of the cause of the death. If they fail to find it out, the shaman is invited to divine the cause. In the evening a fowl is sacrificed at the cremation ground and it is cooked with rice and bitter leaves. Each mourner takes a cup of this food to his own home and offers it to the ancestors. This ritual is called *Limma*. Later on at any time from a few months to several years, the Guar ceremony is observed to admit the shade of the deceased to the company of the ancestors with freedom of the underworld. On this occasion menhirs are planted and buffaloes are scarified in an elaborate ritual. This is generally followed by three successive Karjya ceremonies in every second or third year to commemorate and honour the dead of that particular period. This ceremony observed in March or April, after the harvest has been finished and continues for three successive days, when a number of buffaloes for each dead are sacrificed. This is celebrated with communal dance in which neighbouring villagers participate. Sometimes a minor ceremony called *Sikanda* is performed in order to postpone the expensive Karjya ceremony to a later date. The last ceremony performed for the dead is the Lajap. It is a minor ceremony celebrated at the time of big rice harvest to show that the work for the dead is now over and to persuade them to give good crops in future.

Religion

The Saora pantheon consists of innumerable malevolent and benevolent deities and the deified ancestors who are constantly watchful of the doing of the living generation. Any omission or negligence on the part of the living Saoras is followed by disease, death or trouble to the family, and to the society. According to their belief system disease are caused by the deities, deified ancestors and the working of the sorcerers. These deities presiding over field, forest, hill and house reside in the underworld along with dead ancestors.

Among Saoras there are innumerable shamans, shamanins and priests who work as ambassadors to the world of the gods and convey the pleasure and displeasure of the deities and the dead ancestors by dealing with them. Through them food, dress and other nourishments are offered to appease the deities and ancestors in different occasions.

The Saoras observe a number of ceremonies at different states of cultivation and other economic pursuits. They perform *Kurrualpur* before forest clearings are made for shifting cultivation, *Jammolpur* for ceremonial taking out of the seeds from the store-bins for sowing, *Jatrapur* and *Lambapur* for the protection of the plants from the wild animals and also for the success of crops. There are a number of harvest festivals observed for different crops such as *Abbanadur* in April or May before eating or distilling Mohua flowers, *Buriyanadur* for the small millets in August, *Enladanadur* for the new cucumbers, *Ganugayandur* for all kinds of roots in July, *Kondemanadur* for coarse rice in September, *Kurojanadur* and *Osanadur* for millets, *Rogonadur* for the harvesting of

the red gram, *Tankunadur* for the stone of the mango and *Udanadur* for the ripe mangoes. When the crops have been stocked at the threshing floor, a pig or fowl may be offered to the dead for guarding and increasing the quantity.

Most of these ceremonies mentioned above are communal in nature. Besides these, they have innumerable religious rites for curing diseases. Various types of animal such as pig, buffalo and fowl, and liquor are offered. In some localities where Hindu influence is strong, buffalo sacrifice has been given up. Most of the festivals are marked by heavy drinking and dancing. They make drawings on the walls of houses called *idital* in honour of the dead, to avert disease, to promote fertility and on the occasion of certain festivals.

Christianity

Christianity as a new religion has entered into the Saoras in the recent years. The main cause of conversion as ascertained from the converts is their age old religious practices with numerous sacrifices leading to indebtedness. By conversion they get relief from this heavy expenditure and save something to live well. The converts have changed their dresses and like to learn Oriya. They are changing their outlook and coming forward to mix with the outsiders. They have given up original dance and music, but spend Sunday in attending Church.

Dance and Music

The Lanjia Saoras dance during their ceremonies and marriage and not very frequently like Oran, Kisan or Santal. Both men, women, children, adults and old jumble together to dance to the accompaniment of the beating of the musical instruments by men alone. It consists of continuous forward and backward movements. Sometimes the dancers move up and down along the streets led by the drummers. Coloured clothes of cotton and silk are tied as turbans by men and wrapped around the chests of women. White feathers of fowl are fixed with turbans of males while women hold peacock plumes in their hands. The male dancers generally carry swords, sticks, umbrellas, etc. and blow whistles and make peculiar sounds. Their dance which is more of religious significance than for merriment is never accompanied by songs. But they have got songs which they sing while working in the field or at leisure time to the accompaniment of music of the string musical instruments.

Houses and Settlement

"The Saora has an eye for beauty" says Elwin while describing the location of the Saora villages. No doubt a traveler to Saora land is struck by the setting in which the Saoras built their houses. They select the slope, top or foot of the hill or hills with prospects of axe cultivation, but they are not nomads. No definite plan is followed in the setting up of houses. In some villages houses are built in rows leaving a street in between, sometimes rows are one above the other like terraces and all the rows facing the same direction, and in many cases

the houses are jumbled up and there are narrow lanes to which the houses face. There are villages with four to five families and also large villages having, more than hundred families. A village may consist of several wards: Gamang's ward, Dol Behera's ward, Mandal's ward and the ward for the commoners.

Saora houses are rectangular in size, and built with high plinth and verandah. The walls are made of stone and mud. The houses with straw-thatched roof are proportionately low. About three-fourth of the room is covered with a wooden platform about three to four feet high where grain-bins and other possessions are stored. The hearth is located under this platform. The household utensils are kept near the hearth. From the roof hang a number of objects, basket, gourds, bundle of cloth, umbrella, spears, bows, arrows and pots. The dedicated pots and gourds, basket containing the special cloths of the dead or tutelaries are hanged against the walls which are decorated with *ikons* in honour of the gods and ancestors. The houses of the village headmen are very large. At the time of building a new house, rice and wine are put in the hole dug for the first pillar to be erected in the name of Labosum, the Earth God.

As regards household articles the Saoras possess very few. Earthen ware vessels are generally used in cooking and for storing water. Use of brass and aluminum pots are seen among the well-to-do Saoras.

Dress and Ornaments

The traditional cloth of a Saora woman is a waist cloth with gray borders which hardly reaches the knees. In chilly weather they cover the upper part of body with another piece of cloth. The dress for a man consists of a loin-cloth about six feet long and ten inches wide. This may be plain or decorated with red tassels at the ends. This is tied around the hip, passing through the private parts. The ends hang in the front and at the back, the latter being longer for which they are called Lamba Lanjia. These cloths are woven by the Doms from the yarn hand-spun by the Saoras themselves. At present in some places they have taken to mill-made clothes and ready-made dresses. The converted and acculturated Saora women of Udayagiri area cover their upper parts with a blouse or a saree. The males put on shirts, shorts and even trousers generally when they go out.

The Saoras do not use huge bundle of necklaces of beads and metals. 'The Saoras' says Elwin 'are not good at ornaments'. A few necklaces of beads, round wooden plugs and later on spiral ring of metal in the ear-lobes, hair pins of bell-metal, rings made of brass, bell-metal or aluminium in the fingers and toes, little rings in the alae of nose, metal bangles, and metal anklets are worn by the Saora women. Saora women put ornaments in the ears, nose, and round their wrist. Most of these ornaments are purchased from local markets.

Musical Instruments

The Saora musical instruments consist of four varieties of drums, namely the hemispherical *dollun*, the *tuduman* (a simple tom-tom), kittle drum called *dagadan* and *kadingan* (hide-gong), brass horns, brass gong, cymbals made of brass and a bundle of reeds which are beaten by hand with a clattering din. They have also string instruments, namely *gogerajan*, *memerajan* and *kuranrajan* played on at leisure time to the accompaniment of songs and sometimes at some religious ceremonies.

Hunting and Agricultural Implements

In hunting they make use of guns which are locally manufactured, bows and arrows and a variety of axes and knives. They use the bullock-driven ploughs for wet cultivation, digging stick and hoe in shifting cultivation.

Production

Their main source of livelihood is shifting cultivation. In any available hill valley they practice wet cultivation in terraced fields, where two crops of paddy can be grown in a year. The Saora terraces reveal their magnificent workmanship. This is supplemented by the collection of jungle products such as edible roots, tubers and leaves. Hunting is popular among them.

They grow several varieties of millets, pulses, oil-seeds, turmeric and ginger in the clearing (*bagad*) on the hill slopes by axe cultivation. Paddy is mainly grown in wet land. Vegetables except brinjals, plantain and pumpkin are seldom grown either for own consumption or for cash. Tamarind and *Karanja* plants are plenty in the area. During summer they collect these and sell for cash. Sometimes oil is extracted from *Karanja* seeds for their own use. They grow sago-palm and collect *mahua* flowers for wine. It is said that the Saoras in general grow comparatively more than many of the neighbouring tribes, but they lead a miserable life due to chronic indebtedness to meet the expenses of innumerable feasts, rituals, festivals and treatment of diseases.

Consumption

The main item of Saora food consists of gruels of rice, millet or pulses added with edible leaves. They do not know any other method of cooking. Even meat, fish or vegetables added with turmeric, salt, chilly and onion are boiled with water. Sometimes they fry fish and flesh in burning amber. They do not know the use of oil or fat in preparing food. To them rice is a delicacy. Most of them exchange it for cash. They are fond of fish and flesh of buffalo, pig, goat and many wild animals. In food there are local variations in the Saora country. The Saoras of Badakemendi and Rayagada avoid the flesh of buffalo and pig.

From November to June there is some food in the Saora homes. They can eat two square meals of gruel with chilies. From June to September they eat

various types of roots and leaves. For them the autumn is the period of acute food shortage. They mainly depend on a powder prepared from the trunk of the Sago-palm tree. They do not need cash to purchase liquor. They grow plenty of Sago-palm trees and collect Mahua flower in huge amount for distilling liquor at home for their own use. Both men and women smoke tobacco.

Distribution, Trade and Exchange

Besides the exchange of articles and animals among themselves at the time of religious ceremonies, the Saoras sell some of their products for cash in the local weekly markets. Here the buyers are the local Dom and Kumuti agents of the big merchants from the plains. The transactions which take place between the Saora seller and the Dom and Kumuti buyers are mere exploitation. On the way to a market, Doms and Kumutis wait for the Saoras to purchase their products. When the latter come with baskets of grains, vegetables and other articles they are way laid for bargain. Sometimes the stuff is weighted with bigger measures and immediately mixed up with the stuff already accumulated there. The Saora has then no option except to be satisfied with whatever money is paid by the buyers. Then he goes to the market to buy a few *annas* worth of tobacco, salt and chilly. The Doms and other local traders sell animals like buffalos, cows, pigs and fowls to the Saoras who always need these for their religious ceremonies at a higher rate. He may pay the cost at once or may keep a portion on credit to be paid in kinds where the rate of interest comes to 100 per cent. Besides their transactions in the market, the major part of the Saora dealings is in the threshing floor and at doors. The traders visit the Saora villages to sell the required articles on exchange for grains and to realize the debt in kind. Thus they are cheated and exploited by the local traders in their transactions.

Shifting Cultivation

The Saoras clear the hill-tops or hill slopes for shifting cultivation. They use the swiddens for two to three years and return after a rest of five or six years. Here they grow rice, pulses, beans, millets and turmeric. Before any clearing is made, a shaman offers a pig or a fowl to Labosum (Earth God) and the Gods of the hillside. Men assisted by women and children do the clearing. When the felled materials dry up in April or May, firing begins. The ashes are not distributed over the swidden. Shortly before the rains, sowing of seeds is started. First pulses and beans, one from each are put in a hole. This is followed by the sowing of castor seeds. When all these have sprouted, they sow all the other seeds such as millets, mountain rice mixed together. Then comes the heavy task of weeding and guarding the ripening crops from birds, monkeys and other wild animals. When the crops ripen they harvest one after another.

SAORA *

*B. B. Mohanty*¹

The Saora are one of the oldest known tribes of Orissa, so widespread that they are found in all the districts of the state. But their main concentration lies in a contiguous hill tract in the Parlakhemundi sub-division of Ganjam District and Gunupur sub-division of Koraput District which forms a compact area of Saora land. They are called by various names such as Savara, Sabara, Saur, Sora, etc. and have a racial affinity with the proto-Australoid physical features which are dominant among the aborigines of central and southern India.

Being one of the most primitive and ancient community, frequent references to the Saora are found in Hindu mythology and classics. They are widely found all over central India, comprising Bihar, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and West Bengal. In north-eastern states like Assam and Tripura they have a sizable population in the tea plantation zones, where the Saora work as labourers.

The term Saora appears to have two connotations, one derived from the Sagories, the Scythian word for axe, and the other from Saba Roye, the Sanskrit term for carrying a dead body. Both of them fit well with their habit of always carrying an axe over their shoulder and their primitive occupation of hunting and living on the spoils of chase. More often, the Saora find mention in the Sanskrit literature, the epics, the Puranas and other religious texts.

Their mother tongue 'Sora is an uncultivated language, and has no recognized standard. 'It varies considerably not only between villages but also between individuals', says Rammurti, the authority on the Saora language. It belongs to the Mundari branch of the Austric family of languages. There are no doubt poetic themes in the language. Verrier Elwin says: 'The Saora who give the impression of being rather matter of fact and prosaic are surprisingly picturesque and metaphorical in their speech'.

* Published in *Tribes of Orissa* (revised edition), SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar, 2004, pp. 273-294

¹ Deputy Director, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar

The Saora are one of the major tribes of Orissa. Their population in different census years is given below:

1951	-	1,91,401
1961	-	3,11,614
1971	-	3,42,757
1981	-	3,70,061
1991	-	4,03,510

The above census figures show that the tribe is on the increase. According to the 1991 Census they constitute 5.74 per cent of the total tribal population of the state. On the basis of their numerical strength they occupy sixth position among the 62 tribal communities. Within a span of ten years from 1981 to 1991 the tribe registered a growth rate of 9.04 per cent. The sex ratio based on the latest census figures comes to 1015 females per 1000 males. The Saora are educationally very backward. According to the 1991 Census the literacy level among them is 25.58 per cent as compared with 22.31 per cent for the total tribal population and 49.09 per cent for the entire population of the state. Their percentage of literacy showed an increase of 25.58 per cent over their earlier figure of 14.50 per cent recorded in 1981 Census.

In appearance the Saora resemble the other pre-Dravidian tribes. They have long heads and flat noses with expanded alae. The brow ridges are prominent but not too much like the Kondhs. They have depressed nasal roots with marked facial prognathism. The hair is wavy and curly, but persons with straight hair are also found. Some have epicanthic folds in the eyes. Skin colour is generally brown to dark brown, though there are many fair-complexioned individuals with yellowish shades. The Saora are not strongly built like the Kondh, but have better body built in comparison to the tribes of north Orissa. The most noteworthy point is their efficiency in climbing and walking on hills.

There is a peculiarity about the dress of a Saora man, which consists of a loin-cloth about six feet long and about ten inches wide. This may be plain or may be decorated with red tassels at the ends. This is tied around the hips and hangs down in two strips, the one in the rear being longer. Occasionally a man wears a single necklace of beads. The traditional dress of a Saora woman is a waist cloth with grey borders which hardly reaches the knees. The skirt is about three feet in length and about two feet in breadth. In chilly weather a woman covers the upper part of the body with another piece of cloth. These cloths are woven by the Doms from yarn hand spun by the Saora themselves. At present in some places they have taken to mill-made clothes and ready-made dresses. Converted and acculturated Saora women cover the upper parts of their body with a blouse or a sari. The males wear shirts and shorts, even trousers, generally when they visit the market or relatives in other villages. Saora women do not use huge bundles of necklaces of beads and metals. They wear a few necklaces of

beads, round wooden plugs, spiral rings made of brass, bell-metal or aluminium in the fingers and toes, little rings in the alae of the nose and metal anklets. All varieties of these ornaments are purchased from local market.

Saora villages are situated in the most inaccessible areas and in many cases lie hidden in forest-clad hills, making it difficult to reach them except along steep zig-zag hill paths. They build their houses on the slopes or foothills. They generally live in small villages, the average size varying from a few households to around 200. In the case of large villages they live in several hamlets. Whether large or small, Saora villages have been long established at their present sites. Unlike their *podu* or shifting cultivation their settlement pattern has nothing nomadic about it. The terraced field exhibiting the Saora's skills in contour bunding, revetment and water management is located close to the settlements at one corner. When founding a new settlement they select high lands and hill slopes which are free from water-logging and lie near the natural water sources.

Saora villages do not conform to any particular type of settlement pattern. Houses are often built in rows with a street left in between. In some villages there are several rows of houses with streets crossing each other at right angles. Sometimes houses facing the same direction are arranged in rows one above the other like terraces. In many cases the houses are jumbled up, and there are narrow lanes and small openings on to which the doors of the houses open.

Saora houses are rectangular in shape and fairly high. The plinth is high while the roof is proportionately low. There may be a single door or in some houses a back door, right in line with the front door. There is a high front verandah. The walls of the houses are made of stone and mud. In some areas walls are built of bamboo splits or wooden planks thickly plastered with mud on either side. The walls are coloured red with red earth. Inside the house is a large loft resting on wooden pillars and covering about three-quarters of the house, which is used for storing most of the household articles from food grains to tiny tidbits and clothes. The open space is meant for husking grains with pestles and dining. The hearth is located under this loft at one end adjoining a wall. The fire is kept burning constantly. The household utensils are kept near the hearth. In winter and the rainy season all family members and visitors sleep under the loft. In summer some people may sleep on the verandah.

From the roof hang a number of objects like baskets, gourd vessels, bundles of clothes, umbrellas, spears, bows, arrows and earthenware pots. Agricultural implements are piled up at one corner of the house. The dedicated pots, gourds and baskets containing the special clothes of the ancestors and tutelary deities are hung on the wall, which is decorated with *italons* or *ikons* representing men, archers, gunmen, mantle-bearers, kings, queens, elephants, horses, dogs, etc. The fowls are usually allowed to find shelter in the living room. Sometimes a fowl pen and a shelter for the pigs are provided on the verandah. A cowshed is built on one side of the house.

The village chiefs and other well-to-do Saora build larger houses with a spacious verandah fitted with carved doors. A Saora with more than one wife must construct a separate house for each wife. When constructing a new house, rice and wine are ceremoniously put in the hole dug for the first pillar to be erected in the name of the earth goddess. The household contents of the Saora show a very poor picture. Earthenware vessels are generally used in cooking and for storing water. Brass and aluminium pots are used among the well-to-do Saora. They sleep on mats made of palm leaf. Some village headmen use a charpoy. A large number of baskets of different sizes are also seen.

The economic life of the Saora rests largely on shifting cultivation and terrace and wet cultivation to some extent. Their other means of subsistence are occasional hunting, fishing and forest collection round the year. The economic composition and employment status of the Saora as a whole at the 1991 Census reveals that workers comprise 41.04 per cent of their population. Among the workers, cultivators constitute 42.59 per cent and agricultural labourers 46.76 per cent. The remaining 10.65 per cent are engaged in other economic pursuits.

The Saora are the best terrace cultivators. The terraced fields in which water flows throughout the year are locally called *sarroba* and are exclusively meant for paddy cultivation. The upper terraces which are dry are locally called *jyanum* and used for cultivating *ragi* (*elusine corocana*), *biri* (*phaseolus mungo*) and *kulthi* (*dolichos biflorus*). The terraces are built right up the beds of the hill streams and extend many hundreds of feet from the depths of the valleys to the hill slopes, in some places rising up to the hill tops. The terraces are works of great engineering skill. The platform of each terrace is flat throughout and the fall of each terrace is packed with stones. The construction of the terraces is so ingeniously and skillfully done that no soil is carried down with the water that flows from the higher terraces to the lower. The terrace fields are privately owned and handed down from father to sons. These are valuable assets to the Saora and are sometimes mortgaged to local money and paddy lenders who are mostly from the Pano community.

Two varieties of paddy are grown in the terrace fields, an early variety and a late variety called *badadhan*. The calendar of agricultural operations connected with terrace fields are given below.

Agricultural operations of terrace cultivation

Early variety (month)	Name of work	Late variety (month)
(1)	(2)	(3)
December	Preparation of seed bed	June
February	Transplantation	July
April	Weeding	September
May-June	Harvesting	November-December

Ragi is cultivated in dry fields. No manure is applied in these fields. *Ragi* transplantation starts after the first shower of rains, and weeding and harvesting are carried out in the months of July and October respectively. The Saora also grow pumpkins, cucumbers, beans, pineapple, tobacco, maize and ginger in their kitchen gardens.

The Saora observe certain rituals in connection with terraced cultivation. The principal one is connected with transplantation. Before the seedlings are pulled up for transplantation a ritual is performed in the seed bed. On this occasion dried fish and fowl are offered to a deity called Jatra. The belief is that the deity will be pleased, protect the plants from pests and ensure a good harvest. In addition to wet or terraced cultivation the Saora practise shifting cultivation quite extensively. The shifting cultivation is known as *bagada chas*, and each and every family has a few patches of swiddens, either on the hill slopes or on the hill tops, providing mainly minor millets and pulses.

Among the Saora the swiddens are owned individually and are handed down on a hereditary basis although there is no legal document in support of their ownership rights. They conceive of themselves not as belonging to their ancestral swiddens but rather as owning them. In their attitude there is all the proud possessiveness of the landowners in the plains who vigorously defend their rights against any illegal encroachment. The land itself, timber, fruit trees and game animals are as dear as life to the Saora. Generally speaking the focal point of all activities in Saora society is land, and the root cause of Saora *fituri* is land alienation.

Every Saora village has a well-defined boundary and its inhabitants carry on shifting cultivation in the hills located within the village boundary. Some hills are close to the village and others are at a distance. Traditionally the hills are distributed on the basis of the *birinda* or extended family. Members of a particular *birinda* used to have swiddens exclusively on one hill and no outsider was allowed to share the hill for purposes of shifting cultivation. But with the increase in population and out-migration, change has been noticed in this pattern. Today cases of outsiders cultivating hills belonging to a *birinda* other than their own are not unknown.

A piece of land is used for cultivation for two to three years during which period different crops are sown in succession. Then the land is abandoned so that it can recuperate. A mixed crop of cereals, minor millets and pulses such as *elusine corocana*, *penicum liliare*, *penicum italicum*, *sorghum vulgare*, *penisetum typhoideum*, *calanus cajan* and *dolichos bifloru* are grown in the swiddens. This practice of growing mixed crops is dictated by their food habits and the ecological conditions. The shortening of recuperative cycle, which is due to the shortage of land and population explosion, has caused more damage to the vegetation in the swiddens. The Saora work the soil using a hoe called a *gubla*. Unlike the Juang of northern Orissa, they do not use ploughs in the swiddens.

The monthly calendar of agricultural operations connected with shifting cultivation is given below:

<u>Months</u>		<u>Nature of Work</u>
November-December	:	Clearing the forest, debushing
March	:	Firing
April	:	Dibbling, sowing
June	:	Weeding
August-January	:	Watching, harvesting

Certain rituals are connected with shifting cultivation. A ceremony is performed on the day of sowing. Before the seeds are mixed and broadcast the village *buyya* and *kudan* worship the hill gods by offering them liquor and sacrificing a fowl and goat. A minor ritual which involves the offering of either a fowl or a goat to the hill god called Barusim is observed towards the end of August after the *kangu* is harvested. The next ceremony follows before the *jane* is threshed or the *kandula* harvested. On this occasion fowls are offered to the hill gods. Among the Saora there is a belief that if these ceremonies are performed they will get good crop from the swiddens.

The principal food of the Saora is gruel (*pej*) prepared from rice, *ragi*, *jana* or *ghantia*. They also eat vegetables grown in the kitchen gardens, and fruits, roots, leaves, tubers and honey collected from the forest. Non-vegetarian food is relished much more than the vegetarian diet, and no festival is observed or guest is entertained without non-vegetarian food. The social life of the Saora is based around the idea of a harmonious relationship with the living as well as the dead, and there is a continuous process of reciprocity. This process is manifested in different social organizations, and community life is pregnant with this ideal. The ceremonies and festivals of the Saora are occasions when social bonds are commented.

The smallest social unit among the Saora is the family, which is mostly of nuclear type. Generally a family comprises parents and unmarried children. They have no exogamous totemic clan, phratries or moieties. Saora society has been divided into several sub-divisions based on occupation, social status, food habits and many other customs and manners. According to Thurston's (1909) classification the Saora have been divided into two broad classes, that is, the Hill Saora and the Plains Saora. The following sub-divisions are included among the Hill Saora

1. *Savara*, *Jati Savara* (Savaras par excellence) or *Mallah Savara* - The members of this section regard themselves as superior to other divisions who eat the flesh of the buffalo but not of the cow.
2. *Arsi*, *Arisi*, or *Lambo Lanjiya*- Arsi means monkey and *Lambo Lanjiya* means long tailed. These are the names by which the members of

this section are called, in reference to the long piece of cloth that the males allow to hang down. Their occupation is said to be weaving coarse cloths as well as agriculture.

3. *Luara or Muli* - The members of this section are workers in iron, who make arrow heads and other articles.
4. *Kindal* - The members of this section are workers in iron, who make arrow heads and other articles.
5. *Jadu* - Said to be a name among the Saora for the hill country beyond Kalakote and Puttasingi.
6. *Kumbi* - Members of this section are potters who make earthenware pots which are used for cooking or for hanging up in houses as the fetishes of ancestral spirits or certain deities.

The low country Saora have been divided into two groups:

1. *Kapu* - denoting cultivator, or *Pallapu*
2. *Sudho* - good

Thurston has noted further that the pure Saora tribes have restricted themselves to the tracts of hill and jungle-covered valleys. As the plains are approached traces of amalgamation become apparent, resulting in a hybrid race, whose appearance and manners differ but little from those of the ordinary denizens of the low country. The Kapu Saora are said to retain many Saora customs, whereas the Sudho Saora have adopted the language and customs of the Oriya castes.

Sitapathi, another noted scholar who had worked on Saora, found as many as twenty-five sub-divisions among them. Some of the important sub-divisions are :

Arsi Sor : Arsid is a Saora word meaning baboon. According to the Jati Saora they eat baboons.

Jadu Sor : They live in inaccessible areas of Kalakote and Puttasingi area and are in the habit of eating cows.

Kindal Sor : They are basket-makers and work with bamboos.

Kumbi Sor : They are pot-makers.

Luara Sor : They work with metals and are called blacksmiths.

Kampu Sor : The Saora who live in the vicinity of Telegus.

Sudha Sor : The Saora who live in the vicinity of Mahendragiri.

Kudumha Sor : They are potters.

Jati Sor: They eat the flesh of buffaloes and pigs.

Bobilli Sor : They live in and around Bobilli.

Lamba Lanjia Sor : They are really the primitive section of the community. They are called *Lanjia* because of their manner of wearing the loin cloth in which a long tail hangs behind. They are also called *Malua* as they live

in the highlands or *mala*. This *Lanjia* group is numerically superior than other groups. The other sub-divisions are :

<i>Based Sor</i>	<i>Jura Sor</i>	<i>Mani Sor</i>
<i>Bimma Sor</i>	<i>Kimsod Sor</i>	<i>Mull Sor</i>
<i>Dandiya Sor</i>	<i>Luang Sor</i>	<i>Mulla Sor</i>
<i>Gantra Sor</i>	<i>Mala Sor</i>	<i>Sarda Sor</i>
<i>Jaro Sor</i>	<i>Mara Sor</i>	<i>Tenkali Sor</i>

The Saora are unique due to their lack of any clan or sub-organization of the sort common to most tribal societies of the country. Without a clan they lack the complementary institutions of totemism and taboos in marriage relationships. Instead there are extended families called *birindas*. The *birinda* is not a well-defined structure, but consists of the descendants of a common ancestor four or five generations back. Marriage is prohibited within a *birinda*, whose members stand to each other as blood brothers. They participate in the Guar and Karja ceremonies with their contributions. When one dies the *birinda* performs the funeral rites and even the Guar ceremony, after which the dead is admitted to the underworld. The *birinda* also inherits the property of a heirless member. A remarkable feature among the Saora is that a woman from birth to death belongs to her father's *birinda*. Her *birinda* membership does not change by virtue of her marriage. After her death the members of her own *birinda* may claim the right to perform her funeral rites and Guar. Such claims are ungrudgingly accepted by her husband's family. Nevertheless the *birinda* is not synonymous with the clan or *gotra* where members living in distant places observe common rules of exogamy. There are totems deriving from flora and fauna, and associated rites linked with these totems. In the case of the Saora *birinda* members live in one village and membership is limited to four to five generations, or even less. It thus resembles the Hindu *sapinda* or *kutumba*. On rare occasions someone may migrate to another village, but he retains the membership of his own *birinda*, and after his death his bones, etc. must be brought to his original village.

The Saora love their children very much. When a woman proves to be barren, the man may marry another woman or adopt a child. A pregnant woman does her usual work up to the time of delivery. When the labour pains start she is confined in a room which is generally a corner of the house. At the time of delivery, an experienced elderly lady of the village or of the adjoining village officiates as midwife. She rubs the abdomen of the pregnant woman with castor oil, and this process facilitates an easy delivery. The umbilical cord is cut by the midwife with a sharp arrow. The placenta is then buried in a pit in one corner of the courtyard of the house. Then the mother and the new-born baby take a bath in tepid water. The pollution period is observed for seven days. On the seventh day the woman takes a bath and cooks food which is shared by the females of the house. Generally they prefer the names of ancestors for the child.

Saora marriage is not an elaborate affair. It is rather queer that people who spend most of their resources in series of festivals and ceremonies for trivial reasons celebrate marriage in such a simple way. Out of the different forms of marriage prevalent in their society, viz. marriage by arrangement, capture or service, the Saora have accepted the first form as the rule and others as exceptions. Polygamy in the form of polygyny is widely prevalent. The Saora say that if a person has more fields to clear, he can have several wives, as each wife can clear a patch of land, thus increasing the economic condition of the family.

The parents and relatives of the groom take the initiative in arranged marriages. Generally negotiations are undertaken according to the status of the two parties. In some cases it is noticed that a man from a lower *birinda* has married a woman of a higher *birinda* by offering more pots of liquor to the bride's parents. The bride-price is locally known as *panshal*, the amount of which varies between Rs.60.00 to Rs.80.00 and eight pots of country liquor. The Saora generally prefer to marry the daughter of their maternal uncle. The boy's father, accompanied by some kinsmen, visits the girl's house with a pot full of wine. If the girl's parents approve the proposal the wine pot is accepted and drunk in the presence of some important people of the village. However, in this type of marriage the opinion of the girl is also sought. Thereafter, the groom's father, accompanied by some kinsmen, visits the bride's house on more than one occasion with one or more pots of liquor. On one such occasion an arrow is taken and the engagement is finalized, while on another occasion the amount of bride-price is discussed and finalized. The bride-price is paid generally in both cash and kind. On the appointed day, the groom's party visits the girl's house for the betrothal, taking along nine pots of wine. On this occasion, they are entertained with festive meals consisting of rice, buffalo meat and liquor. One year thereafter, the bride is brought to the groom's house. The day is celebrated by dancing and drinking, and from that day, they are recognized as husband and wife.

The Saora also practise both sororate and levirate forms of marriage, i.e., a man can marry his deceased wife's younger sister and woman can marry her deceased husband's younger brother.

The Saora cremate their dead; except that those dying of cholera and smallpox are buried. As cremation is a family function, some members collect wood for the pyre. The girls who are trained to act as assistants in funeral rites fetch water and prepare turmeric paste. Then the corpse is carried to the cremation ground accompanied by a musical band. On the day following the cremation, the family members of the deceased visit the cremation ground to examine the ashes and discover a sign of the cause of death. In the evening, a fowl is killed at the cremation ground and cooked with rice and bitter leaves, a meal shared by the mourners of the village. Then, after a year or two the Guar ceremony is observed. On this occasion menhirs are planted and a large number

of buffaloes are sacrificed. This is generally followed by three successive Karya ceremonies every second or third year to commemorate and honour those who have died in that particular period. This ceremony is generally observed in the month of March or April which is generally treated as out of season for agricultural operations.

Possibly the religion of no other tribe is as elaborate as that of the Saora. It is true that without understanding their religion, one cannot understand any other aspects of their life. The concept of a supreme god is almost non-existent among the Saora. In different parts different gods are considered supreme. Moreover, there can be no standard catalogue for these gods, for its composition continually changes as new ones are introduced and old ones forgotten. But all the varied aspects of their environment are associated with some god or other. The Saora gods differ from one another in composition, function, character and nature. Some are benevolent, some neutral and some malevolent. All these gods and spirits make constant demands on the living. If their demands are not met they can cause harm. Malevolent spirits are therefore looked after more than their benevolent counterparts.

Sonnum or *Sunnam* is the general name for the Saora deities and spirits. The deities are called different names such as Labo Sum, Rude Sum and Karuni Sum, etc. The word *sonnum* is used in a general sense when applied to any deity or spirit, and in a restricted sense when applied to a particular order of deities. Besides these the Saora worship a number of evil spirits and malevolent deities. In addition, those who die in the house appear in dreams and direct that they should be given the offerings. Sometimes these devils enter cattle sheds and make cows and oxen ill in order to make their displeasure known.

The Saora are very famous for their wall paintings which are like icons. Inside the house on the walls one often finds a group of elaborately drawn sketches, which are of religious significance and therefore called *italons* or icons. The exact symbolic meaning of the icons, which consist of various sketches of human beings, horses, elephants, gunmen, aeroplanes, cycles, sun, moon, etc., are very difficult to understand. An icon is painted to flatter and please the gods and ancestors so that they may spare the members of their household from their invidious attention. At frequent intervals one icon may be replaced by another depending on the circumstances and the god or ancestor who may be pestering a household at the time.

Saora society is full of shamans called Kudan (male) and Kudanboi (female). They play a great role in curing all types of illness. A shaman is a diviner-cum-medicine man who can establish direct communication with the unseen world in a trance and cure all types of illness caused by the wrath of evil spirits. Shamanism is very interesting as every shaman has a female tutelary and every shamanin has a male tutelary. The relationship between these two sets of pairs is the same as that between husband and wife.

The ceremonies and festivals of the Saora are either celebrated by individual families or the whole community. The ceremonies and rites relating to the birth of a child, marriage and death are observed by individual families, whereas those relating to various agricultural operations, the harvesting of crops, and the biennial or triennial Guar (filling up of stone slabs in memory of the deceased) are observed by the village community.

Some of the important festivals observed by the Saora are as follows:

1. *Buroy-n-a-Adur* (relating to a kind of millet)
2. *Ganugey-n-a-Adur* (relating to sweet potato)
3. *Kondam-n-a-Adur* (relating to a kind of corn grown on the hills)
4. *Kuroj-n-a-Adur* (relating to a kind of gram)
5. *Osa-n-a-Adur* (relating to a minor millet)
6. *Rago-n-a-Adur* (relating to red gram)
7. *Tanku-n-a-Adur* (relating to the storing of a mango fruit)
8. *Uda-n-a-Adur* (relating to the ripening of mango fruit)

Besides these ceremonies, which are mostly connected with agriculture operations, a ceremony called Guar is observed in honour of deceased relatives. This ceremony is very expensive since it entails among other things the sacrifice of a buffalo.

The religious functionaries who cater to the spiritual needs of the Saora consist of a Buyya, who presides over agricultural festivals, and Kudan, the shaman who combines the functions of priest, prophet and medicine men. His female counterpart is the Kudanboi. The position of the Buyya is ascribed, whereas for the Kudan it is achieved.

Ideally Saora villages are self-governing and the traditional panchayat plays an important role in maintaining law and order and village solidarity. In every village the people are under the influence of two elders, the Gomang or secular headman and the Buyya or religious headman. The offices of both are hereditary and occupied by the members of one and the same family. In addition to these offices, which are indigenous, there is an astrologer called Disari in the village, a post which is achieved rather than ascribed. Anyone who acquires knowledge of stars and predicts events can function as an astrologer. The annual cycle of festivals and the date and time of holding them are decided unanimously in the village meeting. Cases relating to the partition of property, sale and mortgage of land, divorce and other social matters are also decided there. The Gomang must preside over every village meeting, initiate discussions and take decisions in consultation with the elders of the village. Ordinarily for any usual offence, the accused must pay by way of a fine two pots of liquor and one goat, etc. and to feed the villagers with these. The exact quantity, however, depends on the gravity of the offence.

The Saora are a very artistic people. Their artistic skills are not only revealed in their wall paintings but also in their dance and music. Every Saora is a musician who can coin a song then and there and sing it. Both women cultivate the art of dancing and singing as a matter of natural habit. In their songs, one can find a great deal of humour, romance and melody in combination of the words. In Saora dances, groups of men and women mix together and the drummers and dancers advance towards each other in alternation to the rhythm of the music. Colourful costumes are worn while dancing. Other decorations include white fowl feathers and peacock plumes. Old coloured cloths of cotton and silk are tied as turbans by men and wrapped around the chest by women. While dancing they carry swords, sticks, umbrellas and other implements and blow whistles and make peculiar sounds.

The musical instruments of the Saora are not many but consist of drums of various sizes, flutes and string instruments. The drums are of three types, a kettledrum, a double membrane drum and a large drum shaped like a bowl. There are also brass cymbals, brass gongs and hide gongs. All these noisy percussion instruments are usually used at certain agricultural festivals. Fiddles are popular at weddings. There is a two-stringed fiddle consisting of a bamboo stem with half a coconut serving as a resonator. It is played by running a bow across it. A second kind of two-stringed instrument, somewhat like a guitar, also has a bamboo stem, but here the resonators are two gourds. A third musical instrument, very popular at weddings, is a rasp. This is made from a segment of bamboo and has a slit cut longitudinally down its middle portion. The slit is corrugated, and when scraped with stick emits a grating sound.

The Saora, who have very little knowledge about environmental sanitation, do not keep their villages clean. Rather, their villages look dirty, as cow dung and other refuse like household dirt and animal excreta, etc. are thrown here and there in the street. Also, in the rainy season the village streets become muddy in the absence of a proper drainage system. All these conditions are excellent for mosquitoes and flies to germinate. As a result the Saora suffer from various diseases, of which malaria, gastro-intestinal disorders, diarrhea, dysentery, and hookworm and roundworm infections are common. They also suffer from malnutrition, which is very marked among the children.

The problems faced by the Saora are many and deep-rooted. Reduction in the productivity of swiddens over the years and the ban imposed by the government on cultivating these lands have become serious problems, which are threatening to shatter their economy. Added to this is their unchecked exploitation by the Dombs, one of the neighbouring scheduled castes.

SAORA *

A.B. Ota ¹

S.C. Mohanty ²

ABSTRACT

They are an ancient folk who have been mentioned in old mythologies and Sanskrit literatures. Being hardy highlanders they live in remote mountains of southern Orissa. They are so enterprising that they have tamed rugged mountains by making picturesque terraces with ingenious water management systems for paddy cultivation and by raising vast orchards. They are artists by nature who can compose and sing songs instantly and make beautiful wall paintings (ikons) which have made them famous over the world. They worship innumerable gods and spirits and appease them by conducting elaborate and expensive rituals and ceremonies. They are called Saora or Soura.

They inhabit a contiguous mountainous territory stretched across Rayagada and Gajapati districts of Southern Orissa which can be called the "Saora country". It is a picturesque land where ranges of hills criss-cross the area, small streams and rivulets flow in all directions and nature with all its endowments present with its naked revelations. Here the Saora living since generations have been deriving subsistence from the resource bases of the hills and forests in multiple ways for satiating their small needs. One of the main modes of living devised and adopted by them, is swidden cultivation, a primitive mode of agriculture. A variety of crops, cereals pulses, tubers and plants are grown in the swidden fields with the help of few simple implements, the methods employed being crude, the process - being labour Intensive and the productivity being low. Subsistence living regularly gets supplemented by forest collections and in some cases by wage earning. With the depletion of forest growth and the underwoods, swidden cultivation did not pay, dividends and the Saora started preparing terraced fields in the foot hills and gradually ascended the hill slopes, step wise, converting them into rice fields in an ingenious way. In these days, they have raised cashew orchards in podu ravaged hill slopes from which comes a good part of their income.

They have been identified as one among the 13 PTGs of Orissa and therefore receive special attention for development and protection from the welfare Government. The cumulative impact of conversion, modernization and development has brought noticeable changes in their archaic life style in present times.

* Published in the Photo Handbook on SAORA, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar, 2010

¹ Director, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar

² Research Officer, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar

IDENTITY

The “Saora” or “Savara” are a great ancient tribe. They are not only numerically important but also a historically and culturally significant tribal community of the State. They have been mentioned quite frequently in Hindu mythology and ancient classics, epics, *purans* and various other scriptures. Especially in Orissa, they have been very intimately associated with the cult of Lord Jagannath, who according to a legendary tradition originated as a tribal deity and was later brought to Puri under royal patronage.

The tribe is called by various names such as Saura, Sabara, Sahar, Saur, Sora, etc and has their racial affinity with the proto-Austroloid stock, which is dominant among the aborigines of Central and Southern India. They are widely found all over the Central India comprising the States of Bihar, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and West Bengal.

The term Saora appears to have two connotations, one derived from the Sagories, the Scythian word for axe, and the other from Saba Roye, the Sanskrit term for carrying a dead body. Both of them fit well with their habit of always carrying an axe over their shoulder and their primitive occupation of hunting and living on the spoils of chase.

They speak an ancient Mundari dialect of their own called ‘Sora’. It is an uncultivated language, and has no recognized standard. It varies considerably not only between villages but also between individuals’, says Rammurti, the authority on the Saora language. It belongs to the Austric family of languages to which Mundari belongs. There are no doubt poetic themes in the language. Verrier Elwin says: ‘The Saora who give the impression of being rather matter of fact and prosaic are surprisingly picturesque and metaphorical in their speech’. Recently a script has been invented for this language.

Their population as per 2001 census was 4,73,233 accounting for 5.81 percent of the total tribal population of the state. Their decennial growth rate (1991- 2001) was 17.28 per cent and sex ratio, 1007 females per 1000 males in 2001 showing numerical superiority of their women over men. Educationally, they are backward with only 41.13 per cent literacy in 2001.

In appearance the Saora resemble the other pre-Dravidian tribes. They have long heads and flat noses. The brow ridges are prominent but not to a great extent like the Kondhs. There is a depression at the root of the nose. Facial prognathism is marked. The hair is generally wavy and curly. Some individuals have epicanthic folds in the eyes. Skin colour is generally brown to dark brown, though there are quite a number of fair complexioned individuals with yellowish shades. The Saora are not strongly built like the Kondh, but they are better in body build in comparison to the tribes of north Orissa. The most remarkable point is their efficiency in climbing and walking on hills.

They are distinguished by their characteristic style of dressing especially the long ended loincloth of males about six feet long and about ten inches in breadth that hangs at the front and back-the rear end being longer than the front end. This may be plain or may be decorated with red tassels at the ends. Occasionally a man wears a single necklace of beads.

The traditional dress of a Saora woman is a waist cloth with gray borders which hardly reaches the knees. The skirt is about 03 feet in length and about 02 feet in breadth. In chilly weather a woman covers the upper part of her body with another piece of cloth. These cloths are woven by the Dom weavers from the yarn, hand spun by the Saora. They wear a few necklaces of beads, round wooden plugs, spiral rings made of brass, bell-metal or aluminium in the fingers and toes, little rings in the alae of the nose and metal anklets. Now men wear dhotis, shirts, banyans, pants and women wear sarees, blouses, petticoats etc.

SETTLEMENT & HOUSING

The Lanjia Saora villages are found in the inaccessible interiors and in most cases lie hidden in the forests making it difficult to reach them except through zigzag footpaths. Their villages are generally small, the average size varying from 200 to 800 people. Whether small or big, the Lanjia Saora villages are long established in their present sites. The settlements have come up in undulating terrain and houses remain scattered. When founding a new settlement they select high lands and hill slopes which are free from water-logging and lie near the natural water sources.

Close to the settlements megaliths are erected to commemorate the dead kins. Two wooden posts, called Gasadasum or Kitungsum installed at the entrance of the settlement, represent the guardian deity of the village. The terraced fields exhibiting the Saora's skills in contour bunding, revetment and water management surround the settlement presenting an enchanting view.

Saora villages do not conform to any particular type of settlement pattern. Houses are often built in rows with a street left in between. In some villages there are several rows of houses with streets crossing each other at right angles. Often houses facing the same direction are arranged in rows one above the other like terraces. In many cases the houses are jumbled up, and there are narrow lanes and small openings on to which the doors of the houses open. In these days due to the impact of development and modernization, many remote Lanjia Saora settlements have got a facelift. Approach roads connect them and inside they have concrete street roads and paths. Modern *pucca* houses have replaced their tiny old huts

A typical house is a one-roomed thatched rectangular dwelling having stone and mud walls with low roof and high plinth front verandah. The walls are coloured with red earth. There may be a single door or in some houses a back

door, right in line with the front door. Inside the house a large loft resting on wooden pillars and covering about half of the interiors, is used for storing most of the household articles from food grains to tiny tidbits and clothes. Under this loft lies the hearth at one end touching a wall. The fire is kept burning constantly. The utensils are kept near the hearth. The open space is used for husking grains with pestles and dining. From the roof hangs a number of objects like baskets, gourd vessels, clothes, umbrellas, spears, bows, arrows and earthenware. Agricultural implements are piled at one corner. The pots, gourds and baskets containing the ancestors' clothes and tutelary deities are hung on the wall, which is decorated with *ikons* for which they are famous.

Sometimes a fowl pen and a shelter for the pigs are provided on the verandah. A cowshed is built on one side of the house.

LIVELIHOOD

The Saora depend upon land and forest for their subsistence. Their livelihood rests primarily on slash-and burn agriculture i.e., shifting cultivation and importantly on terrace cultivation. They are, traditionally shifting cultivators and at the same time have expertise in terrace cultivation. They exhibit a high degree of indigenous skill, ingenuity and technological outfit for preparing the terraces with inbuilt water management system. Mainly they grow rice in terraced fields and a variety of minor millets, cereals, and pulses in the swiddens.

Every Saora village has a well-defined boundary and its inhabitants carry on **shifting cultivation** in the hills located within its boundary. Traditionally the hills are distributed on the basis of the *birinda* or extended family. Members of a particular *birinda* used to have swiddens exclusively on one hill and no outsider was allowed to share it for shifting cultivation. The shifting land is called *bagado* and the cultivation is called *bagado chas*. Each and every family has a few patches of swiddens, either on the hill slopes or hill tops. The land itself, timber, fruit trees and game animals are as dear as life to the Saora.

For shifting cultivation a hill slope is divided into several plots, demarcated and distributed for cultivation. The farmer who has been cultivating a particular plot of land continues to own it as long as he is capable of cultivating it. When he fails to do so, the plot is allotted to someone else who has needs it. In no case are the plots left fallow nor is a plot already owned by one capable of cultivating it, allotted to anyone else. Thus, individual ownership of the swidden plots is recognized on a hereditary basis.

A piece of land is used for cultivation for two to three years during which period different crops are sown in succession. Then the land is abandoned to recuperate. A mixed crop of cereals, minor millets and pulses such as *elusine corocana*, *penicum liliare*, *penicum italicum*, *sorghum vulgare*, *penisetum typhoideum*,

cilanus cajan and *dolichos biflorus* are grown. This practice of growing mixed crops is dictated by their food habits and the ecological conditions. The shortening of recuperative cycle, which is due to the shortage of land and population explosion, has caused more damage to the the swiddens. The Saora work the soil using a hoe called a *gubla*.

In recent times settled agriculture has taken precedence over shifting cultivation – their traditional mode of subsistence which no longer remained profitable under the cumulative impact of deforestation, ecological imbalance and decline of land /man ratio due to pressure of growing population. Since plain cultivable land is scarce in their area for undulating nature of the hilly terrain and population growth, they have tried to find an answer to this problem by mastering the art of making and cultivating **terraced paddy fields** on the lower hill slopes and bottoms called *saroba*.

The terraces are built right up the beds of the hill streams and extend many hundreds of feet from the depths of the valleys to the hill slopes, in some places rising up to the hill tops. The terraces are works of great engineering skill. The platform of each terrace is flat throughout and the fall of each terrace is packed with stones. The construction of the terraces is so ingeniously and skillfully done that no soil is carried down with the water that flows from the higher terraces to the lower. The terrace fields are privately owned and handed down from father to sons.

Now, their settled agricultural practices mainly revolve around their *saroba*;, which they regard to be their valuable productive asset. The Saora are the best terrace cultivators. The terraced fields in which water flows throughout the year are locally are exclusively meant for paddy cultivation. The upper terraces which are dry are locally called *jyanum* and used for cultivating *ragi* (*elusine corocana*), *biri* (*phaseolus mungo*) and *kulthi* (*dolichos biflorus*).

With the simplest implements such as a hoe and a small axe, they are able to raise crops in their *bagado* and *saroba* sufficient to maintain their families. Their success in agriculture depends upon their extensive knowledge of the crops suitable for cultivation on the hill-slopes, upon the geographic conditions of the locality, and last but not the least, upon hard work with a team spirit.

Being trees lovers, the Saora they take all care to preserve the fruit plants like date palm, mango, jackfruit, tamarind, Mohul, Salap, Ramphal, Sitaphal etc in their villages, hills and swiddens. Besides, they raise orchards and kitchen garden in their backyards.

Presently, following the diminishing returns from agriculture, shifting cultivation and forestry they have found a dependable supplementary source in **horticulture**. They have started growing new horticultural crops introduced by themselves as well as the development agencies. Like the terrace cultivation, the

horticulture programme, introduced as an alternative to swidden cultivation, has become popular.

Now besides the development of kitchen gardens and backyard plantations, mixed orchards and commercial cash crops, cashew have been raised in wastelands and hill slopes covering parts of degraded swiddens. The **cashew plantation** drive has been very popular for its low maintenance and high profitability. Now, they are growing cashew on their own initiative and many families own cashew orchards from which comes a good part of income. Helping them to enhance their level of income, it has emerged as a gainful pursuit, gradually pushing shifting cultivation to the back stage.

They supplement their earnings by occasional hunting, fishing, wage earning and round the year forest collections. They also rear animals like bullocks, buffaloes, cows, pigs, goats and poultry for agriculture, ritual and consumption purposes.

A very remarkable features of their socio-economic life is their traditional system of labour cooperative called *ansir*, which ensures them supply of labour for labour intensive operations like swidden cultivation, house construction, terrace making and a host of other activities in the village.

SOCIAL LIFE

The Saora society is divided into as many as 25 subdivisions such as Kapu, Jati, Sudho, Jadu, Jara, Arsi, Duara or Muli, Kindal, Kumbi, Basu, Lanjia, etc. It is based on occupation, food habit, social status, customs and traditions. According to Thurston's (1909) classification the Saora have been divided into two broad classes, that is, the Hill Saora and the low country Saora.

The Saora social organization is distinguished by absence of exogamous totemic clans, phatries, and moieties unlike most tribal societies of the country. Without a clan they lack the complementary institutions of totemism and taboos in marriage relationships. The main exogamous unit is the extended family descended from a common male ancestor. This unit is called *birinda*, which is based on patrilineage.

Marriage is prohibited within a *birinda*, whose members stand to each other as blood brothers and sisters. They participate in the *guar* and *karja* ceremonies with their contributions. When one dies the *birinda* performs the funeral rites ie, the *guar* and *karja*, after which the dead is admitted to the underworld. Even when a *birinda* member migrates to another village he retains his own *birinda* membership, and after his death his bones, etc. are brought to his original village for final mortuary rites The *birinda* also inherits the property of a heirless member.

A notable feature of the *birinda* is that a woman from birth to death belongs to her father's *birinda*. Her *birinda* membership does not change even after her marriage. After her death her own *birinda* members may claim the right to perform her funeral rites and *guar*. Such claims are ungrudgingly accepted by her husband's family.

The family is mostly nuclear and the well to do practise polygyny. Generally a family comprises parents and unmarried children. The Saora love their children very much. If wife proves to be barren, her husband may marry another woman or adopt a child. A pregnant woman does her usual work up to the time of delivery. When the labour pains start she is confined in a corner of the house. At the time of delivery, an experienced elderly lady helps as midwife. Then the mother and the new-born baby take a bath in tepid water. The pollution period is observed for seven days. On the seventh day the woman takes a bath and cooks food which is shared by the women of her family. Usually they prefer the names of ancestors for the child.

Saora marriage is a simple affair. Out of the different forms of marriage prevalent in their society, viz. marriage by arrangement, capture, elopement or service, the Saora have accepted the first form as the rule and others as exceptions. Polygyny is widely prevalent. The Saora say that if a person has more fields to clear, he can have several wives, as each wife can clear a patch of land, thus increasing the economic condition of the family.

The parents and relatives of the groom take the initiative in arranged marriages. Generally negotiations are undertaken according to the socio-economic status of the two parties. In some cases it is noticed that a man from a lower *birinda* has married a woman of a higher *birinda* by offering more pots of liquor to the bride's parents.

The boy's father, accompanied by some kinsmen, visits the girl's house with a pot of wine. If the girl's parents approve the proposal the wine pot is accepted and drunk in the presence of some important people of the village. However, in this type of marriage the girl's opinion is also sought. Thereafter, the groom's party pays several visits to the bride's house with pots of liquor. On one such occasion an arrow is taken and the engagement is finalized, while on another occasion the amount of bride price (*panshal*) is discussed and finalized.

The bride price is generally paid in both cash-the amount of which varies from time to time and kind ie, eight pots of liquor. On the appointed day, the groom's party visits the girl's house for the betrothal, taking with them nine pots of wine. On this occasion, they are entertained by the bride's family with a feast of rice, buffalo meat and liquor. One year thereafter, the bride is brought to the groom's house. The day is celebrated by dancing and drinking, and from that day, they are recognized as husband and wife.

In the past, marriage by capture (*Ding Ding Boi*) had been fairly common in the Saora society. But now-a-days very few cases of capture are taking place because this practice is not considered very honourable. The Saora also believe that their dead ancestors do not appreciate this practice

Remarriage of widows, widowers and divorcees is permitted in their society. They also practise sororate and levirate forms of marriage, i.e., a man can marry his deceased wife's younger sister and woman can marry her deceased husband's younger brother.

The Saora cremate their dead, but those dying of cholera and smallpox are buried. The corpse is carried to the cremation ground accompanied by a musical band. On the next day, the family members of the deceased visit the cremation ground to examine the ashes and discover a sign of the cause of death. In the evening, a fowl is killed at the cremation ground and cooked with rice and bitter leaves and the meal is shared by the mourners of the village.

After a year or two the elaborate and expensive *guar* ceremony is observed. On this occasion menhirs are planted and a number of buffaloes are sacrificed. This is generally followed by three successive *karja* ceremonies every second or third year to commemorate and honour those who have died in that particular period. This ceremony is generally observed in the month of March or April when agricultural activities are over.

MAGICO-RELIGIOUS LIFE

There is no other tribe whose magico-religious domain is as elaborate and complex as that of the Saora. Without understanding their magico-religious beliefs and practices one cannot understand any other aspects of their life. There is no standard catalogue for their gods, for its composition keeps changing, as new ones are introduced and old ones forgotten. But in general the Saora pantheon includes numerous gods, deities and spirits-benevolent and malevolent. Malevolent spirits are therefore taken care of more than their benevolent counterparts. They are worshipped with fear and anxiety. People offer sacrifices for safety and wellbeing of the family members.

The Saora deities are generally called *sonnum* such as Labo Sum, Rude Sum and Karuni Sum, etc. All these gods and spirits make constant demands on the living. If their demands are not met they can cause harm.

The religious functionaries who cater to the spiritual needs of the Saora are Buyya, who conducts agricultural festivals, Kudan and Kudanboi ie, the male and female shamans who combine the functions of priest, prophet and medicine men. In the Saora society the Kudan and Kudanboi play a great role in diagnosing and effecting remedies for all kinds of trouble and ailments. A shaman is a diviner-cum-medicine man who can establish direct communication

with the unseen world in a trance and cure all types of illness caused by the wrath of evil spirits. Every shaman has a female tutelary and every shamanin has a male tutelary. The relationship between the shaman and tutelary is the same as that between husband and wife.

Most of the festivals revolve round agricultural cycle and lifecycle rituals. These are either celebrated by individual families or the whole community. The ceremonies and rites relating to the birth of a child, marriage and death are observed by individual families, whereas those relating to various agricultural operations and the biennial or triennial *guar* – the secondary death rites are observed by the village community.

In their society, the most potent factor for ensuring social conformity is the fear of religion, which forms an indispensable part of Saora life and acts as a powerful deterrent against violation of established customs.

SOCIAL CONTROL

The homogenous Saora village is an independent, autonomous and self-sufficient socio-political unit with remarkable cohesion and continuity. The traditional village organization possesses, a well-defined territory, a hierarchy of responsible and respectable aristocracy and leadership and a traditional village council composed of family heads, called “Birinda Neti”. The organization is based upon democratic principles.

There are a secular headman (Gomango/Naiko), a sacerdotal headman (Buya /Karji /Jani), headman’s subordinates- (Mandal / Dal Behera), messenger (Barik), astrologer (Disari) and Shaman (Kudan /Beju). By virtue of their knowledge, experience, service and specialization in their respective fields, they have been holding positions of respect and authority in the village. The offices of both Gomango and Buya are hereditary.

The matters concerning the village are decided in village council meetings held under the chairmanship of the Gomango in presence of other leaders and the family heads. It decides the date and time of holding the annual cycle of rituals and festivals, cases relating to the partition of property, sale and mortgage of land, adultery, marriage, divorce and other customary matters. Decisions are reached mostly by consensus and not by majority vote. Punishment for various offences consists of impositions of fines on the offender in forms of cash, liquor, goat, fowl etc. that are offered to the gods and spirits and then consumed in a community feast.

Till the recent past, the village headman was yielding vast powers for the maintenance of law and order, peace and good government in the village. The other leaders were guardians of the cultural, religious and economic norms for their traditional society. Now after the imposition of statutory democratic set up like election, and *panchayatiraj*, the situation has changed.

ASTHETIC LIFE

The aesthetic life of the Saora manifests through colourful dance, typical music and the wall paintings, *anital*, in particular. The icons are so skillfully dreamt and drawn that these have made them famous among the scholars and artists of the country and aboard.

The Saora are a very artistic people. Their artistic skills are not only revealed in their wall paintings but also in their dance and music. Every Saora is a musician who can coin a song and sing it as and when required. Both men and women cultivate the art of dancing and singing as a matter of natural habit. In their songs, one can find a great deal of humour, romance and melody in combination of the words.

In Saora dances, groups of men and women mix together and the drummers and dancers advance towards each other in alternation to the rhythm of the music. Colourful costumes are worn while dancing. Other decorations include white fowl feathers and peacock plumes. Old coloured cloths of cotton and silk are tied as turbans by men and wrapped around the chest by women. While dancing they carry swords, sticks, umbrellas and other implements and blow whistles and make peculiar sounds.

The musical instruments of the Saora are not many but consist of drums of various sizes, flutes and string instruments. The drums are of three types, a kettledrum, a double membrane drum and a large drum shaped like a bowl. There are also brass cymbals, brass gongs and hide gongs. All these noisy percussion instruments are usually used at certain agricultural festivals.

Fiddles are popular at weddings. There is a two-stringed fiddle made of of a bamboo stem with half a coconut serving as a resonator. It is played by running a bow across it. A second kind of two-stringed instrument, somewhat like a guitar, also has a bamboo stem, but here the resonators are two gourds. A third musical instrument, very popular at weddings, is a rasp. This is made from a segment of bamboo and has a slit cut longitudinally down its middle portion. The slit is corrugated, and when scraped with stick emits a grating sound.

CHANGING SCENE

Since the remote past the Saora lived undisturbed in their remote mountainous habitat. In modern times, the rapid changes in administrative set-up and political climate of the country and their exposure to the external modern world have influenced the Saora way of life. For example, abolition of intermediary system has set the Saora free from the clutches of the oppressive feudal lords and their subordinates.

After independence, the welfare Government has taken a very benevolent attitude towards improving the lot of the downtrodden tribal people of this country including the Saoras. Various protective, welfare and development measures initiated by the Government have resulted in exposing the Saora more and more to outside contact and pressures of ever-advancing and powerful social, economic and political forces.

During the 5th Plan, Tribal Sub Plan (TSP) approach was adopted and Saora was identified as one among 13 Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PTG) in Orissa. For their all round development of two Micro Projects, one located at Chandragiri in Gajapati district and another at Tumba in Ganjam district have been established. The Micro Projects have adopted the basic approach of Tribal Sub Plan, that is, location specific and community specific holistic development of the target area and the people. The objective is to raise the living conditions of the Saora and change them from a primitive and pre agricultural stage of shifting cultivation to modern agriculture and the culture of such other beliefs and practices.

These Micro Projects and other development agencies like the local C.D. Blocks, D.R.D.A., I.T.D.A. etc besides implementing various income generating schemes have also tried to develop critical and essential infrastructures and services those are incidental to income generation, like road communication, education, health care, drinking water, housing etc. in this remote tribal pocket in order to improve the general living standards of the people. Many of these schemes, especially those on agriculture, soil conservation, irrigation, horticulture, drinking water, and housing have fared well and yielded good results because of popular acceptance.

This development intervention has affected their dependence on traditional archaic mode of subsistence derived from shifting cultivation and forest collection in favour of better gainful economic pursuits. Though they have not totally stopped shifting cultivation, they have found a profitable alternative in accepting modern agricultural and horticultural practices and more particularly in cashew plantations introduced by the Micro Project raised in their unproductive waste lands, high and dry lands and denuded hill slopes. Of course the Saora beneficiaries deserve major part of the credit, as they, shedding their ignorance, initial suspicions and inhibitions have come foreword to accept and derive benefit out of these schemes for their own betterment.

The impact of the political change, election system, adult franchise and local self-government have triggered off various political processes and generated new leadership among them.

THE SAORA OF GANJAM HILLS *

U. N. Patnaik ¹

The Saora is carefree. There may be marks of patient resignation apparent on his face on a close study but his action and deportment is carefree. The presence of a stranger throws a shadow across his face especially if such stranger is inquisitive or solititious. If the stranger is uninterested in the Saora, the Saora is more so in him and they may pass each other at close quarters without leaving any impression on the Saora. The Saora knows sometimes a foe by instinct and then it is very hard for him to get over the mistrust of such other person. Left to himself, the Saora is carefree and quite cheerful. He plays on his *Saringi*, beats the *Changu*, and when there is company the group starts dancing to the tune of the *Saringi* or the *Changu*. Labourers at work on the road, break out for lunch. After lunch there is a moment's respite for smoking and then someone starts playing on the *Saringi*. The others listen, and then spontaneously start dancing. A group goes to meet an official. If the official is interested in the Adibasi he knows that they would express their goodwill towards him by a dance. He casually enquires if there is a *Saringi* in the company. Out comes the musician with his *Saringi*. The youngsters dance, the rest follow suit till the entire party forgets itself in the peculiar melody of the *Saringi* and the dance which it inspires.

The usual present of a rupee is just what is considered to be the goodwill present of the official. At dead of night when all are asleep the hill side resounds with the beatings of a *Changu* and if one is curious he would see a fire burning on a hill top with a Saora standing by it, beating his *Changu*. It is a puzzle as to whether this *Changu* beating is to scare away wild animals or scare out the feeling of loneliness of the *Bogodo*. When groups go to attend fairs and festivals the *Saringi* and the *Changu* are not silent. The wailing notes and the rhythmic beating of the *Changu* keep the pace of the company as battle drums and bag pipes do. While returning from the hill or from work the home coming is not silent but is to the tune of the *Saringi* or the flute.

* Published in ADIBASI, Vol. V, No.1, TRB, 1963-64, pp. 6-13

¹ Member of Orissa State Civil Service

In all religious functions music and dancing have their place. In addition a bell metal dish or plate of large size is tied to the neck of the boys who go on beating it to the tune of the drum and *Changu*. The dance has nothing of art in it. It is just stepping heavy and hard as if with the hope to catch the rhythm of the tune. Then women and children take part in such dances. All of them if not dead drunk, are at least well drunk. It is not the art; it is the rhythm which the Saora likes. He catches the rhythm and forgets himself in it.

The Soara is wiry. He can stand any amount of sun shine and the heat of the summer. He is also accustomed to the biting winter which he goes through with the scantiest clothing. Outdoor during the day in the winter he has no clothing except his loin cloth.

During nights he needs no improvement to it since the burning hearth keeps him warm. If he has to go out on work, or to watch the crop in the field he has just a cotton *chadder* of 10 or 11 counts and this keeps him warm enough. He is so ill clad that it is difficult to take courage and ask him if he feels the winter.

During the rains, the Saora is a sight to see. He does not venture out and if he does and is caught in a rain, he runs to the nearest tree, shrivels up and shivers. He cannot stand drenching. Is it due to the fact that he rarely takes a bath, or maybe it is due to his scanty clothing or it might be due to the diet of mango, tamarind seeds, *solpo* (sago palm) dust and jungle greens which he takes during the months of June to August. This needs closer study if not research.

The Saora is fond of snakes - and pursues one relentlessly till he catches and kills it. Even Cobras are eaten. As a dish, the cooked snake is the most delicious one to a Saora. The other inhabitants of the areas who do not eat snakes say with a sneer "the snakes fly at the smell of a Saora".

Rats and mice of the fields which are fat and in plenty go to the Saora's kitchen whenever one is caught and is eaten with relish. All wild animals and wild birds are always welcome.

The vegetable and the vegetarian food is however the normal menu. The kernel of the mangoes is dried and powdered. The powder is washed several times till the 'kasha' (acrid) taste is washed out. The powder is then made into a paste and cooked. The heart of the Sago palm (*solpo*) is split, the pieces left to dry and then the pulp is beaten to a fine powder. The powder is cooked with edible roots, and leaves of a number of trees. Asparagus beans, climber beans, maize and *juar* are boiled and eaten. All the different vegetables that grow on a *bagod* (swidden) are boiled and eaten. It is very uncommon to see a Saora eating boiled grams or millets and rice singly. Invariably some edible green is mixed and the food is boiled to the consistency of porridge. Salt, chilies and onions are added when the food is partaken. Even the setting of the table is peculiar.

All the cooked food is placed in the centre and the group sits round. Each holds a deep leaf platter. One person starts serving with a dry bitter gourd ladle or as it is known in Oriya '*Donka*'. Some salt and chilly is kept on a leaf platter or *dona* and Saora eats with something like a spoon made out of a thick leaf. He does not eat with his hand and fingers. Occasionally salt and chilly is added for taste and the food is repeated in a 2nd or 3rd round. The Saora is a poor eater and usually is satisfied with the first Donagul. Everyone is cheerful and the eating goes on with plenty of chatting and talking. Not infrequently important decisions are taken at such table talk.

This table setting is gradually giving place to the Oriya way of things.

Food is being cooked on the field in Dekchis (aluminium cooking pots). Aluminium plates are being used and sometimes, cups. The deep leaf platter is giving place to aluminium plates. The tribal way is giving place to sophisticated way of cooking.

The ashes of a Saora should rest on his native soil. If he dies elsewhere and his ashes are not brought to the village of his nativity, the spirit will not only lose its interest in the village but is likely to cast a malefic eye on any living villager who passes that way. This is of course does not apply to deaths in the Assam tea garden where many a Saora dies every year. When a Saora dies for some reason in a village where he had gone earlier, it is the duty of his native villagers to go and get his ashes and dispose them of in the customary manner. On the death of a visitor or a relative, the villagers send word of the mishap to the native village of the deceased after cremating the dead body. The villagers of the deceased on getting the news start arrangements to get the ashes of the cremation. The ashes are called the bones.

The close relatives and the family members of the deceased go to the Gomang (headman) or to the Bhoya (tribal-cum-official head) and tell him of the fact and request him to go with them. Thus 8 or 10 people accompanied by an old woman start for the village where the death has taken place. Drums are beaten and pipes are blown on this journey and liquor or '*Solopo*' is partaken moderately at the commencement and during this journey. The usual bows and arrows are carried as well as some matchlocks. They go to the house where their relative had stayed before his death. On reaching the house, the matchlock is fired once or twice into the air. Thereafter the villagers of that village accompany them to the cremation ground. A piece of bone is picked out from the ashes and placed in a new earthen pot. The pot is then covered. The old woman accompanying the party carries the pot on her head. Then amidst weeping and wailing the party related to the deceased starts on the homeward journey. The weeping is usually calling the deceased, "O' Son, where have you gone. 'O' Father, have you left us. 'O' Brother, why have you left us, what happened to you who has devoured you, which spirit has taken you from this earth and so on." The old woman is required to do most of the weeping and wailing.

On reaching the native village, the parties with others go to the village cremation ground weeping, bury the piece of bone at any corner, partake drink and return to the village.

The tomb stones are to be found in the close proximity of almost every Saora village. The stones are planted in the ground and stand straight which recall the description of the stone hedge of *Briton*. There is however no cross stone on top of two upright stones. This presents a curious sight and one moving in the Saora area is struck by the imposing sight.

These stones represent the "*Goo-Aar*"; in the Saora language *Goo*-stands for burying or planting and *Aar*-stands for stone. The stones are planted more as tomb stones with of course a tribal importance attached to the ceremony which attends the planting and the peculiar significance it has. A big stone is planted for a deceased in a family. The ceremony is not performed every year nor is it done according to convenience. Availability of funds seems to be the important factor in deciding if the *Goo-Aar* is to be performed in a particular year. Absence of disease, illness or deaths in the village, bountiful crops is all factors which lead to the performance of the ceremony.

A day well in advance is fixed and it is usually done 15 days ahead of the day fixed. As soon as this is fixed distillation of rice arrack starts and preparations are set on foot to distil a large quantity of rice arrack. This liquor is so strong that the Oriyas say if you drink *Souda*, you will catch the *Khanda* (sword). These 15 days ahead of the day are spent in drinking, dancing, beating of drums etc. The dancing is continuous and the villagers go about, even women and children, beating drums, cymbals, bell metal big bowls etc. The *Mohuri* is blown, the *Saringi* accompanies and two peculiar time marking instruments are also used. One of these is a bamboo on which notches are cut, across which another smaller bamboo piece is vigorously rubbed to mark time. The other peculiar instrument is a collection of reeds or thin bamboos tied together at one end and holding this bunch at one end with the left hand, the dancer beats on it with the right hand marking the time. Even small children of 4 to 5 years age join the dancing. The village dog also catches the infection and moves up and down. The dancers start at one end of the street, go to its other end and again return. There is not much of singing probably because everyone is so drunk that no singing is possible. This is the Saora dance. In such dancing the Saora forgets himself during the 15 days ahead of the fixed date for the *Goo Aar*.

The close relatives of the villagers are invited from far and near, and they send one or two buffaloes in advance for use on the occasion. These buffaloes are taken care of by the villagers till the day of the ceremony. During the intervening period, the villagers go to the adjoining hills and forests in search of stones. Straight stones are carefully selected and brought and kept. On the day fixed everyone drinks and even small children are dead drunk. All join in the dancing without an exception. The *Gomang* and *Bhoya* or if they are young, two to three

elderly persons refrain from drinking. This is because there should be some persons in full possession of their senses in order to receive the guests and to treat them with respect. The rest are all drunk that day.

The Saora is dressed in his best. Feathers are tucked in his red turban. Everyone is fully armed in the tribal style, swords, *tangi* (axe), bow and arrows, guns, hunting knives are held aloft and brandished by the dancers. The minors sling a bell metal pot (*konsa*) from the neck and beat on it. Other children play on the two instruments described above. Some beat drums slung from the neck, the women dance in age groups and the total picture is just interesting to behold.

The guests are similarly attired and equipped and plenty of drink is made available to them. There are occasionally serious disturbances caused in case there is any inequitable supply of liquor. Such disturbances sometimes end in free hand to hand fight even resulting in casualties. The priest and medicine man is the *Kudan*. He is believed to be infrequent communion with the tribal Gods and with the spirits of ancestors. He knows medicine and adds spiritualism with medicine. He officiates as the priest at the place of *Goa-Aar*. Cooked rice, *Dal* and several other dishes are prepared and kept at the place of offering. The names of the deceased are uttered and the offerings in leaf platters are shown to the spirit of a deceased while uttering the name. Then the rice and curries are given to sacrificial buffaloes to eat, while two persons hold the animal by two-horns. The name of a deceased is uttered while the buffalo is made to eat. When the buffalo starts eating a third man who is ready with an axe delivers a blow on the head of the animal with all the force he can muster. The animal rolls down and immediately its hooves are cut. This process is repeated till all the buffaloes collected for the occasion are killed. After the slaughter is finished, the tongues, the hooves and the ears of the dead animals are cut and the blood collected is poured at the place where the stones are planted. Thereafter the meat of the animals is collected, mixed with blood and cooked with *kangua* or *suan* rice. This is eaten by all the people assembled.

The sight of a *Goo-Aar* is awe-striking. The non-*adibasis* and strangers carefully avoid going near the celebration. Although the non-*adibasi* feudal head levies some *abawabs* for other festivals or functions he dares not demand anything on this occasion because of the dangers that attend any attempt to collect the *mamool* as it is called.

The Saora woman is generally shorter in build and innered to hard work from the age of 7. She works with the '*Gobla*' on the hill slope; she goes to cut Ragi, Red gram, Rasi etc. on the *Bogodo*. She joins the community paddy cutting (*ansara*) operation. She attends to the cattle shed and keeps it clean. She assists the mother and sisters in carrying utensils to the spring, for cleaning, in fetching water, in collecting fuel and in collecting edible roots and herbs. Her usefulness to the family starts strictly speaking even earlier. When the girl is even 5 years old, she is kept in charge of the baby so that the mother and elder sisters are free

to attend to work that requires more strength. She is seasoned by hard outdoor work more than a boy of her age and is able to carry loads heavier than what a non-Saora adult is able to carry.

With nothing on the upper part of the body except a few bead or reed necklaces with small nose rings of gold or brass on the nostrils and long silver screw daughing from the lobes of the ears, a hair pin or more often a red ribbon or rag along the forehead keeping the hair down and with a coarse towel like cloth from below the navel upto about 4 inches above the knee joint, makes up the picture of a Saora belle. Sometimes, she has silver or aluminium bangles on her wrists, sometimes a silver chain is sitting loosely on the waist cloth round the waist. Anklets of silver are used by prosperous persons while usually a German silver or aluminium set is used by the common girl. The girls have muscular bodies and are capable not only of all the work of a housewife, but are capable of as much field work as an adult male field hand. The woman is not fond of gossip, and is as busy as a bee all the year round. She is actually the person who works in the Bagodo besides doing all the feminine duties in the house.

It is for the above reasons that a woman among the Saoras is respected most. Another reason is that the females are larger in number than the males in the tribe. The woman is therefore not unjustified when she takes pleasure in feeling a sense of superiority complex over the male. Sex urge is not very great with either sex. Sex appetite is considerably less and the married life among them means a sort of partnership in agriculture and household management. It is for the reasons mentioned above that it is a good business proposition to have a number of wives and to allot each a Bagodo. The woman, who is fully under the influence of superiority complex, naturally does not take for a mate a male older than herself. She selects a male who is younger in age if the choice is left to her. If on the other hand the choice is with the male on account of his affluence, he does not hesitate to take a younger woman as his consort. There may be another reason. The man by his reckless life of dissipation probably loses his virility.

His continuous work in the heat of the summer, his dissipation through drink, probably contributes to the loss of virility at a comparatively early age. The fact however remains that a Saora woman prefers a husband younger than her and a male similarly does not run after girls but carefully selects fully grown maidens who would be good housewives and field hands.

There are the following three kinds of marriages among the Saoras. The most common form is the same as among the Oriya inhabitants. The parents start the negotiations after hearing of a suitable match in a neighbouring village. There is consideration in such marriage which is fixed up at the negotiation stage. The most important bride price is the number of pots of liquor which should pass from the groom's side to the bride's side.

The next form of marriage is called *pangs* (slightly silent) which means

giving liquor. When a man selects a bride, he talks it over with his relatives and friends; the entire village becomes aware of his intention or his affections. The villagers start in a body with a number of pots of liquor for the house of the girl. The pots are placed at the door of the girl and the carriers stand by or sit nearby. This offer is to be accepted by either the parents of the girl or their neighbours.

If any such persons come to take the drink, the party sits together and drinks and during this bout, the negotiations start. If on the other hand none of these villagers comes to drink, it is inferred that the proposal is not favoured and the party returns home with the liquor. If the liquor is accepted, it is taken on one or more such occasions. The talks are resumed till the girl expresses her consent to the proposal. Then on such an indication the girl's parents and villagers go to the house of the groom, drink liquor there and finalise the negotiation.

The third form of marriage is known as *Danda Boi*. A Youngman takes a fancy for a girl of another village. He tells his friends and all of them are on the lookout for an opportunity of kidnapping the girl. They individually and collectively watch her movements always searching for a convenient opportunity. When the girl goes to do Government work or when she is going to or returning from a market or a visit, the young man goes stealthily and catches her by the arm. Immediately his companions catch hold of her and drag her towards their village. If they are not noticed by the villagers of the girl, she is taken to the house of the groom. If on the other hand her people come to know, they start with *lathies* (sticks) and other weapons and if they are of superior might they rescue her effectively. If they fail or if the kidnapping is not interfered with, the girl is left at the house of the young man. She is persuaded by the villagers to agree to marry the young man.

The girl quite often resents the kidnapping and refuses food and drink for a few days. She is treated during this period practically as a prisoner though no serious restrictions are placed on her liberty and movements.

Word is then sent to the villagers and parents of the girl. They come and persuade the girl to remain with the kidnapper. If she agrees, which she very often does, she remains as wife with her kidnapper. If on the other hand, she had already her affection placed on some other person, she refuses to stay with the man and then she is allowed to go with her people. If she agrees there are eating and drinking and they live as man and woman.

If the girl does not agree there is a complaint to the *mutha* head and he after hearing the sides awards compensation in favour of the parents of the girl. He never forgets to levy for himself some amount on such occasions for the trouble he takes.

SAORAS OF GANJAM SCHEDULED AREAS *

*Udaynath Patnaik*¹

There are several ways of pronunciation of the name of this tribe in English and in the local vernaculars. The correct pronunciation in English is Saora and this is the way the Saora himself pronounces the word. In Telugu the word is pronounced 'Savara' and in Oriya 'Saura.' But neither of them is correct. The Saora is mentioned in the Ramayan as existing in the hilly areas of South India when Rama with his consort and brother was doing the 'vanavas.' Plini and Ptolmi mention the 'Sauri' and the 'Saora'. There are several other authorities also who trace the Saoras to the period of Rig-Veda.

The language of the Saoras is included in the Munda family, according to Mr. Grierson in his Linguistic Survey of India. According to him, the language has been influenced largely by Telugu and is closely related to Kharia and Juang.

The Saora is of light build, generally short in stature and dark in colour. He has a wiry physique with a narrow forehead and blunt nose. The women are dark in colour and are also lithe and wiry. The women have curly hair and blunt noses. The tribe is, therefore, capable of strenuous field work, exposed to the sun and the biting winter.

There are several classes of Saoras which can be called more or less castes rather than tribal subsections. They are the following:

(1) Jada Saoras (Highlanders). Their habitat is Gumma and Kolakota; (2) Mane Saoras live in Ojaigodo and Serango (3) The Jathi Saoras or the Lomba Lanja Saora live in Gumma, Ojaigodo and Serango ; (4) The Kindal Saoras or the Sorada Saoras live in Rayagada and Jirango *muthas*. They are the people

* Published in the Inaugural Volume of ADIBASI that took birth in the name of "Orissa Tribes Research Journal", (the 1st Edition of Adibasi,) Vol.1, No.1, 1955, pp.7-11.

¹ Member of Odisha State Civil Service

who do the basket weaving in the area; (5) the Luara Saoras and Muli Saoras are to be found in every important place in one or two houses. They are the blacksmiths ; (6) the Malla Saoras are to be found at several places. They are agriculturists but at some places they do basket weaving, etc. (7) The Bhimo Saoras are to be found in Leobo, Engersingi, Jirango and the Mandasa *malias*. (8) The Sudda Saoras are to be found in Ramagiri and Udaygiri. They are not tribals in the strict sense of the word and they live on agriculture only. They have copied the Oriya habits, customs and manners and also the Oriya religion partially, (9) Kampu Saoras live in the down hills of Parlakhimedi agency. (10) The Based Saora is also a class which lives down-ghats in the Parlakhimedi *taluk*. (11) The Mutha Saora is practically the Sudda Saora down the hills. They are to be found in the plains *muthas* of Parlakhimedi agency.

The first three classes of Saoras mentioned above, are the original Saoras who have been able to retain their cult, habits, manners and customs without any ad-mixture. These three classes do not eat beef and they look down upon the castes and tribes which eat beef.

The Saora scoops out every possible depression alongside a *nala* or on the slope of a hill and converts it into a paddy field. In the former case, long and high embankments are constructed along the *nala* side and the *nala* is choked practically. In the latter case, the Saora prepares a layout of paddy area by terracing. He is very skillful in this and so terraces the fields that there is never a fear of rapid drainage, water-logging or destruction of the bund of the terraced field. Without using any technical equipments and without any technical training, the Saora so lets out water from the higher fields to the lower across the contour terrace bund that water spreads out evenly in the field and passes down into the field next below in a smooth manner. The ingenuity of the Saora in terrace cultivation is simply admirable.

Next comes 'Podu' cultivation, known elsewhere as axe or Jhum cultivation. This is condemned on all hands as pernicious and as tending to denude the natural forests growing on the hill-sides, and the hill slopes. The method of this cultivation is very interesting. The method of the Saora in this cultivation is different from that of the Khond. The latter raises a single crop or a small number of crops on the hill side and lives on this 'Bogodo,' as it is called, only for a short period to watch the crop when it is maturing, from the attack of the wild birds and animals. Hill-gram, Sua, Kueri and pumpkins are practically the major crops raised by a Khond on the *bogodo*.

The 'Bogodo' of the Saora is a much more interesting affair, although the geographical features of both the varieties of 'bogodo' are almost common. The preliminaries of cutting up hill sides for *bogodo* are also common. The following are the interesting features about the *bogodo* of the Saora which deserves mention.

During the month of May, before the monsoon sets in with all its virulence, the Saora starts his *bogodo* or *podu* cultivation. He invites the entire population of his street and the men, women and children work on the hill side with the 'Gobla', as it is called. The 'Gobla' is an instrument tapering towards the handle with a sharp iron spike of the length of 3 to 5 inches, fixed with an easy angle at about 4" from the stout end. The people stand in a row and go on scraping the hillside beginning from the bottom. Boulders are not interfered with and even stones of smaller size are let alone. Close to the boulders, wherever there are any, pumpkins are planted along with any other creeper vegetable. Plantains are also planted close to such boulders. The idea is that the depression near about the boulders would retain moisture for longer periods so as to allow these plants to thrive. These creeping plants are planted first in small patches and then castor is sown all over the area. Along with castor, *juar* is also broadcast. After these, a number of seeds of vegetables are sown practically all over the area. If there is a cool corner anywhere, turmeric and ginger is planted. If there is a stream-passing by, a few oranges find their place there. The cereals and millets which are shown on a *bogodo* of a Saora along with oilseeds, chilies, yam, plantains and other orchard plants all number about 22.

When the plants start flowering, the Saora shifts himself into a house built on the *bogodo*. Very often the Saora continues in the village but takes his food on the *bogodo* which his family members bring up. In a number of cases, which are not few, the Saora takes his residence in the *bogodo* house for the entire period during which the crops are harvested. Maize is the first crop which he gets. Then follow asparagus, beans, vegetable marrow, lady's finger, gourds, pumpkins, ash pumpkins etc. in quick succession. During the six months beginning from August, the Saora gets plenty of vegetables, millets etc. for his kitchen. Some of these like maize, asparagus etc., which stand drying, are dried and kept for the lean months of the year. The pumpkins are consumed, partly in the kitchen and partly disposed of at a nominal price. The runner beans are consumed in a like manner as well as the *juar* and the hill-gram. The quantity of hill-gram, *juar* and maize however form the bulk of the produce and after domestic consumption, they go to increase the economic resources of the family.

The Saoras, on account of their uncertain methods of cultivation, are probably unable to devote much attention on domestic animals. Although there are ample facilities for rearing fowls, the Saora does not take to it and he prefers to purchase a full sized bird for *puja* purposes, even at a cost of Rs. 20 in kind. Cows are used on the yoke and the yield of milk is so scanty that it is insufficient for the calf. They do not utilize the milk of cows except for offering milk and raw rice to their deities on certain occasions.

The Saoras are not fond of a bath and would avoid one as long as possible. A child, after its birth, is however, given two baths a day for about one month. They are indifferent to clean their teeth daily and do not have the other clean habits. The men, women use the oil pressed from the castor and *mohua* seeds by an indigenous wooden press. They rarely use oil or fats in their diet.

Their wearing apparel is very scanty. Men use a loin cloth 8 to 10 feet long which is wound round the waist and across the seat covering the private parts. This loin cloth hangs down in the front and the rear and this leads us to the origin of the term 'Lanja Saora'. Even among 'Lanja Saoras,' there are two classes, the 'lanjas' and the 'lomba lanjas.' These two ends of the loin cloth hanging down on the front and the rear are embroidered in colours and frills of embroidery adorn them. The colour adopted is the red. There is no apparel on the body of the Saora male and on the head; he invariably has a red turban, preferably of silk and into this turban thrusts a bunch of feathers of wild birds. Thus clad, with a bow and arrow in the left hand, a *lambo* (long) stick in the right, with an indigenous pipe protruding from the lips and gold *noli* on the ears with one or two necklaces across the neck makes the picture of a well-to-do typical Saora man.

The Saora woman has just a loin cloth round her waist; has sometimes brass anklets on her ankles, brass or silver chains round her waist, bead or reed necklaces round the neck, a small nose ring on the nose, a peculiar ear screw in the ears with the lobe holes enlarged by a local process and with curly hair shining with castor oil. This sums up a Saora woman in prosperous conditions.

The Saora, men, women and children, take to drink as a national habit. The *sloop* juice is partaken freely by the womenfolk but they do not take *mohua* liquor so much. The 'londa-moddo' which is a preparation peculiar to the Saora areas is a very strong drink and all men do not partake of it. Drink is not taken to as a habit by the entire population. Only people beyond the age of 45 or 50 years take daily doses while the others take it whenever they get it. Every ceremonial, the 'Anthra' system of cultivation, the *podu*, the marriage and death ceremonies, the 'nuakia' are all occasions when the drink is required.

The Saora has no business habits. He is the easiest victim of the businessmen of the area who are invariably the Panos, and the Oriya businessmen, next in order. The following few paragraphs will describe the business talents of the Pano and the exploitation the Saora is subjected to. These paragraphs were the result of personal investigations carried on by the author in the latter half of 1954.

"Heard the exploitation of Lazze Mondal by a Pano of Kethung. Had seen earlier the sale negotiations of a half-arm (shirt) for 2 baskets of turmeric worth about Rs. 6, fixed at Rs. 2 in cash."

"It is also complained that a Pano purchases some standing crop like turmeric and harvested *ragi* and postpone payments till the next crop. The next crop is taken again by the Pano on his assuring that he would pay for both. Sometimes he pays only for one crop and sometimes he just refuses to pay. The Saoras are not bold to challenge the Pano on account of the latter's superior intelligence."

"The Saora is completely dependent on the Pano and the only reason is that the Pano provides a market for the produce of the Saora. The Saora is shy of going to the nearest market and even there he is mercilessly fleeced if he ventures there. He goes to the market with high hopes but there meets with a horrible combination from the purchasers. He offers to sell at the rate he is used to selling to the Pano and this Oriya businessman takes advantage of and forces the Saora to sell at lesser rate. If the Saora blinks or hesitates, the purchasers fix their own price, force it on the Saora. The Saora in the end finds that he would have been a gainer had he sold his produce to the Pano. The Pano concentrations play another trick. One Pano offers a price, a second offers something less, a third lowers it further and the last one combines all the Panos of the concentration and surrounding concentrations and all combined see to it that there is no purchaser for the produce. The Saora is more afraid of the Oriya and ultimately he sells the goods just for a song to the Pano."

XXX Mondol purchased one pair of bullocks from one XX (Pano). The maximum cost of the pair would be Rs. 200/. He mortgaged land with a seed capacity of 1 *putti* 16 *mans* i.e. 2 *mounds*, 28 *seers* which would cover land about Ac. 2-30. The annual out turn of the land would be about 20 *puttis*, i.e. 30 *mounds*. Leaving the cost of cultivation at 10 *mounds*, per year, the net out-turn is 20 *mounds*. This is divided between the lender and loanee which works out to 10 *mounds* in each case. The Pano, therefore, gets Rs. 50/- a year. He has already got crops at the above rate for 2 years and is to get 6 more crops, according to the contract. The total amount he could get towards principal and interest works out to Rs. 400/- in 8 years.

The Pano offers to sell fowls at a very small profit if it is in cash. The Saora is invariably inclined to purchase it in kind and the kind payment is to be in Margasira when the *bogodo* yields fruit. In such cases the price of a fowl is 7 *manos* of *jonna*, or *sua* or *amgu*, *ragi* or *ghantia*. This may be given at the first harvest after the loan or at subsequent harvests.

Pigs are sold not in cash but in barter. The payment is 1 *putti* of *jiniso* for a pig worth about Rs. 5/-. The payment is as in the case of fowls."

They, on account of economic pressure, borrow money from the Panos. But this does not mitigate their hatred of the Pano whom they call 'Jum-tum-maram' (beef-eater). These Saoras do not allow the Pano to take up residence in their villages. The Pano, even though he is called the *bariki* of the village i.e. the

choukidar or the village servant has to live at a distance from the village and should appear in the village only when called or when business requires him. These Saoras do not inter-dine with Panos nor will they drink with them.

The Saoras live in families in a village and in some cases; they also invite relatives to a newly formed village. It is not unusual to find two to three families of Saoras living in one house. The sons, after marriage, do not go to a new house as is the custom with the Khonds but they prefer to live with the parents as long as it is possible. The cooking is done in common as well as dining. One of the reasons for this over gregariousness of the Saoras seems to be that by such living, a man is able to get sufficient field hands for his fields.

The Saora is shy of strangers and he is suspicious of every one. He is very secretive and even his own kith and kin do not get hints of what the man is up to even if it is a case of murdering another person. He is not easily vindictive and revengeful but once his blood is roused, it is difficult to control him.

That the Saora has less sex vice and sex sensitiveness is apparent from the customary forms of abuses indulged in by the Saoras. The common abuses are 'Asunjuma' (eat night soil), Kinsod (dog), Vang Botham (may the tiger eat you).

PERSONALITY OF A TRIBAL *

*Purna Chandra Swain*¹

During my field study in the winter of 1964, I had an opportunity to study the personality of a Saora in the village Kuttam in Parlakimedi Sub-division. The subject was an old man of 55 years named Jagu Gumang;. The questionnaire was prepared by me and was checked by Dr. N. Patnaik, the Lecturer-in-charge of our study team. The questionnaire was administered on the subject in presence of Dr. Patnaik. The interview was completed in two sittings. Jagu was at his best spirits while answering the questions. When I visited him with my Lecturer-in-charge he offered us two logs of wood to sit upon. He had finished his meals and was relaxing on his verandah. He had completed his work in the field and was satisfied about it. There was enough time to go to the Salap tree, so he was not in a hurry. There was no anxiety because he knew me and my purpose earlier. The interview was not new to him as he had been interviewed before. I offered him a 'PEEKA' which he readily accepted and enjoyed it to the last puff. The sum total of the interview is reproduced hereunder.

Jagu Gumang was not born in Kuttam. His forefathers lived in Abarda, where Jagu saw the light of the day. When Jagu was only 5 years old, Abarda area was declared as reserved forest. So, Jagu's father shifted to Gumma and made a temporary hut in the kitchen-garden of Gurunda Brahmin.

His father served under Madan Paika of Gumma as a *khamari*. Jagu had his mother's sister living in Kuttam who was well up and called Jagu and his mother to stay with her. But Jagu's mother made a hut in the lower ward of Kuttam and stayed there. However, Jagu stayed with his aunt. By this time Jagu's father was working as a *khamari*, his mother was working as a wage labourer and he himself, though a boy of only 6 years was tending cattle for his bread. In this way 4 years elapsed.

When Jagu was 10 years old his father made a mud hut at the upper ward (Uper Sahi). Jagu's family now lived in this new house, for not less than 9 years. When Jagu was at the last phase of his teens his father breathed, his last.

Jagu was young and he wanted to marry a girl from his own village. He

* Published in ADIBASI, Vol.7, No.1, TRB, 1965-66, pp.61-66

¹ P.G. Student of Anthropology, Utkal University, Vani Vihar, Bhubaneswar, Odisha

took Salap wine to the girl's house according to the custom. The girl was beaten at this. But she was bent upon marrying Jagu. Jagu was asked to pay Rs. 50 before the marriage was solemnised. He borrowed the amount from the Bisoi of Gumma. For this loan he had to sign a hand-note to serve as a debt bondage labourer at the rate of Rs. 12 per annum.

After his marriage his mother stayed with him only for a short period. When she died he shifted to the lower ward (San Sahi) of his village, where he is staying at present. he and his wife worked hard to earn a happy living.

During his stay at Bisoi's house as a *khamari* he made the best use of his merits. There was a large tract of jungle on the foot-hill, lying unattended. He made up his mind to make terraces on the foot-hill and grow crops. He brought his plan to action. When he used to come home for his meals and rest from Bisoi's house, he instead of taking rest, used to remove stone boulders for making terraces. He worked hard without rest. His wife helped him in looking after the household affairs, which left Jagu at ease to go on with his plan. Jagu worked in this way for 4 years.

By this time the terraces were ready and Jagu started growing crops on them. With the completion of terraces Jagu was blessed with a son. After 4 years more he was fortunate enough to see the face of another male child. When the sons started growing in age Jagu worked hard to supply them with enough food and comfort. He used to stay at his field till late in the evening.

His wife was afraid of staying alone with the two young children in the lower ward (San Sahi), which consisted of one house and that was of their own. Jagu's wife requested him to shift to upper ward (Uper Sahi). Jagu shifted to the upper ward. By this time he had a daughter and another son. Jagu stayed at upper ward for 6 years. The behaviour and dealings of upper ward Saoras were foreign to Jagu. Jagu did not like all those. He was working in Bisoi's house and staying for a major part of the day at Gumma with other Hindus. So his ideas were moulded in a different fashion. When the dealings of the villagers became bitter almost a year before last, he returned to his old house at the lower ward and staying there to date.

Jagu brought his eldest daughter-in-law from Libi and paid Rs. 60 to the girls' father. The middle daughter-in-law fell in love with his son and came to stay with them. Jagu was happy at the girls' work and behaviour and paid Rs.108 to the girls' father. He got his daughter married in Pedigila. His youngest son who is at his teens is not yet married.

Jagu understands the value of education. He sent his youngest son to the school at Gumma. But when he was hard pressed by work, he could not allow his son to continue his studies further.

Jagu eats thrice daily. In the morning he takes his meal at about 8 A.M.,

lunch is taken at about 2 P.M. and dinner by 8.P.M. Every evening he visits his Salap tree for Salap liquor (Eli). The Salap tree happens to be 2 miles away from his house and after drinking Salap some days he reaches home by 8-30P.M. Before his arrival, his family members used to finish their dinner and keep Jagu's dinner in a bell-metal pot and curry in the gourd container. When Jagu arrives at the house he finds, most of the days, his family members sleeping after dinner. He himself finishes his dinner and after cleaning the utensils he goes to bed.

Jagu understands the value of food. According to him Mandia is an energy-giving food grain that is good in summer and rainy seasons. Next to Mandia comes Jana, which is good to take in winter season. Kandula is valued most by Jagu as energy-giving item of food but he complains that after taking Kandula a man feels like taking more fluid. Rice has its importance to Jagu but he feels that rice gets digested sooner than that of Mandia or Kandula. Moreover, rice requires curry to eat with. Other food items can be eaten without curry. Kolatha, though good, sucks the blood of the man. Ganga and Kosila are very light diet and is eaten mostly by children and persons with low physical standard. Jagu has no habit of eating Jhudanga. It is a cash crop for him. He sells all his Jhudanga after keeping sufficient quantity for seed. He likes beans and Mung *dal*. Jagu, however, does not grow Mung. He says that if he grows Mung, he has to keep watch as it is eaten away by cattle. So he purchases Mung *dal* when needed. He likes cabbage and potato among the vegetables. Tomato though liked by him is not taken as it tastes sour. Jagu does not take milk or milk products. The only oil he uses is Til oil. Jagu is addicted to Salap liquor. He takes it three times when available. When he does not get it he does not bother much. But without Salap his body aches and he does not get any taste in his food. When he gets more fatigued he likes to take Mahua, which refreshes him.

Jagu, after getting up from his bed, cleans his teeth. For cleaning teeth he uses tooth sticks. After cleaning teeth he cleans the tongue and cleanses the mouth with water. Whenever he feels call of nature he answers to it. After attending to call of nature, he purifies himself with leaves. He uses leaves, as water is not available everywhere: He urinates any where he feels urinating. Not attending to call of nature, he thinks, does not bring any disease. Jagu takes bath once a day, generally after the work is over at about 4 P.M.

If any member of his family suffers from cough or wound or boil, he takes him to the local dispensary. If anybody suffers from fever, he believes that some ancestor is angry with him and causing the disease. He offers sacrifices either pig or fowl to the ancestor for getting cured from fever.

Jagu loves all his family members equally. He distributes work among his sons and when the work finished in time he feels proud of them. When there is any deviation he gets angry and calls names, but he never beats his sons. He pulls down his daughters-in-law when they do not cook food properly.

Jagu had no training in field. His father did not teach him the agricultural practices. He observed others making terraces and made terraces for his own use. He, however, has taught his sons the work that he does. He has taught his sons to make plough, yoke and leveler. His sons are now able to make bow and arrow, gourd containers without any trouble.

JaguGomang has seen many places outside his village. He has visited Parlakimedi, Aska, Berhampur, Kapuguda, Rusulkunda, Bauni, G. Udayagiri, Khajuripada, Narayanpur, Jiranga, Rayagada, Manjusha on different occasions. Parlakimedi he visited twice, once when he was sent by the Bisoi of Gumma with some flower plants to Maharaja's palace and once again in connection with a case in R.D.O's office. Aska, Rusulkunda and Berhampur he visited on his way to G. Udayagiri to attend a conference where only Europeans were present. He was called to the conference to perform Saora dance with his friends. He along with 30 other Saoras attended another dance performance at Rayagada. He saw innumerable people gathered both at G. Udayagiri and Rayagada. He met with other tribals, who came for dance there. But Jagu was at a loss as he could not talk with the other tribals due to their foreign tongue. Kapuguda, he visited when he was sent by Dhani Sena of Gumma as an impressed labourer. He had to carry some agricultural products to Dhani Sena's father-in-law in Kapuguda. Narayanpur, Jagu visited when he was employed by Madan Mohan Bisoi of Gumma as a debt bondage labourer (Khamari). Jagu visited Bisoi's father-in-law's house in Narayanpur. It took Jagu 12 hours to reach Narayanpur. During his term of debt bondage (Khamari) Jagu was sent to Jiranga to collect oranges for Bisoi. Jagu dreams, but he does not remember the text of the dreams. He does not dream in the day time as he never sleeps in day time. Generally, he dreams Bisoi, Dhani Sena, Oxen, Buffaloes and his ancestors. His ancestors ask him in the dream to give pig or buffalo (Podhua) to them as they are starving.

His Aspirations in Life

Jagu wants to hoard money and purchase more low-land for paddy cultivation. By purchasing land he can increase his agricultural returns and instead of a deficit family budget he can have a surplus family budget. These things he can do only by hard labour, he believes. To him, there is no other way of getting more money except by hard labour.

Jagu is at the age of 55 now. He wants to purchase paddy fields enough for his 3 sons before his death. He has planted jack fruit, banana, mango, turmeric, *salap*, orange, papaya and tamarind. He wants to plant few coconut trees also. He feels that after his death his sons should not be in want. He always sees the welfare of his sons for the present and for the future.

COMPARATIVE DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS BETWEEN THE TRADITIONAL AND THE HINDUISED SAORA *

*N. C. Dash*¹

P. K. Patnaik

In the present paper an attempt has been made to find out the basic demographic differences between the traditional Saora (Lanjia Saora) and the Hinduised Soara (Suddha Saora). For the purpose of study, two traditional Saora villages and one Hinduised Saora village in R. Udayagiri Block of Ganjam District were selected. Door to door census along with the interview technique was adopted for data collection during a period of 15 days stay from 15th to 31st December, 1982.

Before coming to the demographic analysis, a brief description of the villages and the tribe under study is necessary. Munising, the Hinduised Saora village is situated one Kilometers North-West of Chheligada township. The State High way No. 16, Bhubaneswar – R. Udayagiri-Parlakhemundi, runs through the small township of Chheligada. Kulapathar, one of the traditional Saora villages is situated 3 Kilometer North-West of Munisingh. Munigadihi, the other traditional Saora village is located 3 Kilometers South-West of Munisingh. Munisingh is nearly 1800 feet above the sea level just as Chheligada. But the traditional Saora villages are above 2,000 feet amidst the dense forest. Locationally, Munisingh, Kulapathar and Munigadihi form almost a triangle.

The Saora are one of the aboriginal tribes of Orissa. They are mainly distributed in Ganjam District and also found in Koraput, Sambalpur and Bolangir districts. Culturally speaking, the tribe at present has two broad divisions- the traditional and the accultured. The traditional ones are the Lanjia

* Published in ADIBASI, Vol. XXIV, Nos.3&4, THRTI, 1984-85, pp.18-24

¹ Anthropology Department, B.J.B. College, Bhubaneswar

Saora. The acculturated Saoras are of two types- the Hinduised and the Christianized. In the present paper we have discussed about the traditional (Lanjia) and the Hinduised (Suddha) Saora. Only the Lanjia Saora speak the traditional dialect which is a Austro-Asiatic language of the Mundari family. All the other groups who have almost forgotten the traditional dialect speak local Oriya fluently. So far as the Saoras of Munisingh are concerned, very few speak the traditional dialect, particularly the aged people. They are so much Hinduised - the process might have taken few generations - that the outsiders even confuse whether they belong to tribe. It is a fact that they were wrongly included under the Hindu caste in the 1971 census for which they were deprived of the facilities provided by the Government to tribal people for a few years. They ultimately had to take the help of the Court of law to avail of the ST facilities. Basically Suddha Saoras are plain dwellers closer to the other caste people and mainly live on agriculture. They also accept wage earning in lean seasons. Those who do not possess wet land, work as agricultural labourers in the nearby villages. Few of them go for wood cutting to the jungle and sell them in Chheligada market. On the contrary, the Lanjia Saoras live in the hill tracks amidst dense forest far away from the modern people. They are basically shifting cultivators and food gatherers. Very few of them take up wage earning.

The marriage and family pattern of the Suddha Saora is very much similar to that of the castes. Out of 25 families 14 are joint families and rest of 11 is nuclear families, whereas in both the Lanjia Saora villages all the families are nuclear. Arranged marriage is common in case of Lanjia Saora. Sororate and levirate are often practiced. The system of polygamy among the Lanjia Soara, is now not so common and there is none in these two villages. The age at marriage in case of Lanjia Saora is higher than that of the Suddha Saora. It is roughly 19 years in case of Lanjia females and 18 years in case of Suddha females.

Suddha Saoras are more aware of the family planning norms and economically better off than their counterparts. Their educational standard is also higher. The rate of literacy is nearly 24%, while among the Lanjias it is roughly 4% only (see **Table-3**). On the whole the world view of Suddha Saora is wider because of the above reasons than that of the Lanjia Saora.

With the above existing socio-economic and educational conditions, how the Lanjia and the Suddha Saora differ demographically has been discussed in this paper.

At the outset, population distribution by age and sex has been analyzed. The population distribution (see **Table-1 &2**) gives an interesting picture.

TABLE-1
Percentage Distribution of Population by Age and Sex

Age group	Suddha Saora			Lanjia Saora		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
0-4	8.05	9.40	17.45	7.55	6.60	14.15
5-9	6.71	7.38	14.09	7.55	5.66	13.21
10-14	5.37	6.71	12.08	6.60	4.70	11.32
15-19	6.04	5.37	11.41	5.66	4.72	10.38
20-24	4.03	5.37	9.40	5.66	3.77	9.43
25-29	4.03	4.70	8.73	4.72	2.83	7.55
30-34	4.03	2.68	6.71	0.94	2.83	3.77
35-39	2.68	1.34	4.02	3.77	2.83	6.60
40-44	1.34	0.67	2.01	3.77	2.83	6.60
45-49	1.34	1.34	2.68	3.77	1.89	5.66
50-54	1.34	2.68	4.02	2.83	0.94	3.77
55-59	1.34	1.34	2.68	1.89	0.94	2.83
60+	2.01	2.68	4.70	2.83	1.89	4.72
Total	48.22	51.68	(100)	57.55	42.45	(100)

TABLE-2
Percentage Distribution by Broad Age Categories

Age Group	Suddha Saora		Lanjia Saora	
	Population	Percentage	Population	Percentage
0-14	65	43.62	41	38.68
15-44	63	42.28	47	44.34
45-59	14	9.40	13	12.26
(15-59)	(77)	(51.68)	(60)	(56.60)
60+	7	4.70	5	4.72
Total	149	(100)	106	(100)

The child population in case of Suddha Saoras is comparatively more than that of the Lanjia Saora; 43.62% and 38.68% respectively. But in all other categories, the proportion of Lanjia Saora is more. In the fertile age group (seeing the reproductive capacity of the Saora we have taken 15-44 as the fertile group) the proportion of Lanjia Saora is 44.34% and that of Suddha Saora is 42.28%.

TABLE-3
Distribution of Literates among the Suddha & Lanjia Saoras

Percentage	Suddha Saora			Lanjia Saora		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
	31	5	36	4	-	4
% to total population	20.81	3.36	24.16	3.37	-	3.77
% excluding 0-4 age group	25.20	4.07	29.27	4.26	-	4.26

TABLE-4
Distribution of Marital Status of the Suddha and Lanjia Saoras in the Fertile Age Group and above

Suddha Saora								
Age Group	Unmarried		Currently Married		Widowed		Total	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
15-44	11	5 (16.7)	22	23 (76.7) (82.0)	-	2 (6.7)	33	30
45+	-	-	6	5 (18.0)	3	7	9	12
Total	11	5	28	28 (100%)	3	9	42	42
Lanjia Saora								
Age Group	Unmarried		Currently Married		Widowed		Total	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
15-44	11	4 (19.1)	13	15 (71.4) (75.0)	2	2 (9.5)	26	21
45+	-	-	7	5 (25.0)	5	1	12	6
Total	11	4	20	20 (100%)	7	3	38	27

TABLE-5
Distribution of Birth and Death during December 1981 - December 1982

Suddha Saora				Lanjia Saora			
Birth		Death		Birth		Death	
Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
3	4(Infant)	1	0	2	2 (Infant)	0	1
-	-(Adult)	1	2	-	-(Adult)	1	1

Again in the economic active age-group the distribution is 56.66% among the Lanjias and 51.68% among the Suddha Saoras. So far as the aged distribution is concerned the proportion is almost the same in both the groups. The above picture shows that the Suddha Saora has a younger population compared to the Lanjia Saora. Because of this distribution the dependency ratio is comparatively more among the Suddha Saora (see Table-6).

As we compare the fertile age group, the Lanjia Saora exhibits higher proportion where as the child-women ratio is comparatively low in case of the Lanjias (see Table-7). The analysis of Table-4 shows that the proportion of currently married females in 15-44 age groups is 71.4% in case of Lanjia and 76.7% in case of Suddha Saora. Further, among the currently married females, 75% in case of Lanjias and 82% in case of Suddhas are in the fertile age group. In case of unmarried distribution, the proportion is comparatively more among the Lanjia Saora in the same age group. So, either way we see the vulnerable females (females responsible for the births) are comparatively low in proportion among

the Lanjia Saora. The age at marriage is comparatively high among the Lanjia Saora. It is nearly 21 years for males and 19 years for females. But among the Suddha Saora it is nearly 20 years and 18 years respectively. The age at marriage among the Lanjias is high because of the following factors:

- (a) Since bride price is still practiced, the youngmen decide to marry after being capable to pay the required amount.
- (b) Elderly girls are preferred as brides because they can perform household work efficiently and would help better in the shifting cultivation.

In general the socio-economic condition of the Lanjias is such that youngmen prefer elder brides. At times, the age of the bride is equal or more than that of the groom. Widow marriage is prevalent among the Lanjias which is occasionally found among the Suddha Saora. The widow distribution in **Table-4** shows interesting features. In the fertile age group the widows are more in proportion among the Lanjia Saora. But in the aged group (60 years and above) it is seen that the number of widowers is exceptionally more among the Lanjias whereas the numbers of widows among the Suddha Saora is comparatively very high. This interesting distribution speaks of the mortality differentials. The Lanjia females die more in number compared to the Suddha females whereas the Suddha males die more compared to Lanjia males. This is because of the fact that the Lanjia females and the Suddha males are more exposed to risk.

The birth and death rates (**Table-6**) and particularly the birth rates show remarkable difference. These rates are calculated taking into account the previous year's live-births and deaths. It is seen that birth rates of the Suddhas and the Lanjias are 47 and 38 per thousand respectively. If we compare the finer measurements (**Table-7**), it is the Suddha Saora who shows higher rates of fertility than the Lanjia Saora. So, it can safely be said that the Suddha females are more fertile although they are exposed to the modern family planning programmes. Three important factors are combinedly responsible for this:

- (a) Comparatively low age at marriage among the Suddha Saora.
- (b) The Suddha Saora are better fed, particularly the expectant mothers get free food from the Mahila Samiti.
- (c) The proportion of joint families among the Suddha Saora is very high (56%) which indirectly contributes to the higher fertility rates.

So far as the death rate is concerned, it is almost same in both the groups being 27 among Suddhas and 28 among Lanjias. But the infant mortality rate is higher in case of Lanjia Saora, because Suddha Saora are closer to the medical facilities. Taking the birth and death rates, the natural growth rate is calculated. It is seen that the growth rate of the Suddha Saora is 2% and that of the Lanjia is 1% only. Further the analysis of the finer measurements of fertility (**Table-7**) speaks of higher growth rate among Suddha Saora compared to the Lanjia Saora.

TABLE-6
Distribution of Demographic Measurements

Measurements	Suddha Saora	Lanjia Saora
Sex Ratio (S.R.) M/F	935	1356
Dependency Ratio (D.R.)	0.93	0.78
Crude Birth Ratio (C.B.R.)	47	38
Crude Death Rate(C.D.R.)	27	28
Natural Growth Rate (N.G.R.)	2%	1%
Infant Mortality Rate (I.M.R.)	143	250

TABLE-7
Distribution of Finer Fertility Measurements

Measurements	Suddha Saora	Lanjia Saora
General Fertility Rate (G. F.R.)	233	174
General Marital Fertility Rate (G.M.F.R.)	304	235
Total Fertility Rate (T.F.R.)	6.8	5.5
Gross Reproduction Rate (G.R.R.)	3.5	2.8
Child Woman Ratio (C.W.R.)	867	714
a-P0-4/F15-44		
b-P5-9/F19-49	875	777

All the above analysis show that in spite of higher educational and economic standards, more exposure to the modern family planning programmes and medical facilities the Suddha Saoras are still in the beginning of the demographic transition. It is rather seen that the Lanjia Saoras having little exposure exhibit lower fertility rates compared to their advanced counterparts. So we conclude by saying that the male exposure of the modern facilities does not necessarily affect the demographic behavior.

References

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|------|--|
| Agrawala, S. N. | 1973 | India's Population Problem |
| Barclay, W. G. | 1958 | Technique of Population Analysis |
| Das, N. C. | 1979 | "Fertility Study of A Juang Village" <i>The Eastern Anthropologist</i> , Vo. 32, No. 3 |
| Das, N. C. | 1979 | "Demography of the Gonds" <i>Man in India</i> , Vol. 59, No.3 |
| Das, N. C. | 1981 | "Fertility Differentials by Educational Standards". <i>Orissa Educational Journal</i> , Vol. 13, No.4. |
| Mohaptra. L. K.
& Das, N. C. | 1977 | "Social Structure and Demography of The Tribes of Orissa", Tribal Problems of Today and Tomorrow. |
| Tribal Research Bureau | 1964 | The Tribes of Orissa. (A Special Issue of Adibasi). |

THE INVARIANTS IN SAORA LANGUAGE : A CRITICAL DISCUSSION *

B. K. Tripathy ¹
Abhilash Nayak ²

Abstract

This paper on the invariants in Saora language is a modified part of the research report based on the empiric investigation in Rayagada district of Odisha. The lexicology of Saora language has been discussed from linguistic point of view. The language as we have seen is very rich in terms of its morpho-syntactic features. As there is a mismatch between many of the forms recorded by Ramamurti and the empiric data available with us, wider research is required to crosscheck and validate the data. It could be possible that the data provided in Ramamurti's Manual are purer than that of ours as the impact of the neighbouring languages cannot be ruled out. The initiative for Multi-Lingual Education covering ten prominent tribal languages (Saora included) of Odisha launched by the Odisha Primary Education Project Authority is a welcome proposition in the process of standardizing the language, enhancing its functional load and ensuring its prolonged life. The Saora community should be encouraged to do research from within on its language as it would bring out the nuances of the languages missed out by the external researchers. It is opined that more in-depth empiric research would explore the unexplored areas in the language.

Introduction

Out of the 6000 plus languages spoken in the world, 4500 are indigenous. Though many of these have more than one million speakers, they run the risk of

* Published in ADIVASI, Vol.52, No.1&2, 2012, SCSTRTI, pp.10-21

¹ Professor, P.G. Department of English, Sambalpur University, Odisha

² Regional Director, IGNOU Regional Center, Koraput, Odisha

dying unnatural deaths. Lack of facilities for standardization and government patronage push them to brink of extinction. The hegemony of the dominating languages over the dominated continues unabated despite the sporadic initiatives for their standardization. Speakers of the dominated languages are often found in a complex relationship with the speakers of the dominating languages, as they apparently facilitate the weakening and extinction of their own languages, which require urgent attention. With this plight of the minor languages in the backdrop, the UNESCO apprehended that half of the languages spoken today would disappear by the end of this century and initiated the Endangered Languages Program to promote and safeguard endangered languages and linguistic diversity as an essential part of the living heritage of humanity.

Odisha is home to about 62 tribes who constitute large aboriginal proto-Australoid populations. They are designated as *adivasis* (original inhabitants). They are predominantly forest dwellers but a substantial number of them started living in the towns and cities because of resource scarcity in their native villages and also due to the allurements of urban culture and expectation of better living. Most of these tribes have their own languages but only a few have their scripts. Linguistically, the tribes can be categorized into three of the four major language families spoken in India: Indo-European, Austro-Asiatic and Dravidian. Kharia, Juang, Gadaba, Ho, Munda and Saora are among a few of the most ancient tribes whose dialects belong to the Austro-Asiatic linguistic family, while those of Paroja, Oraon and Kondh belong to the Dravidian linguistic group. Most of these languages are endangered. Srivastava (1984) endorses this when he puts the tribal languages in the doubly disadvantaged group 'minority and powerless'. In a number of cases minority languages (especially tribal languages) are facing rapid attrition. These factors are: (a) language policies; (b) modernization; (c) speakers' attitudes towards their languages; (d) separation of the link between language and identity or a change in the speech community's perception of its identity (Pandharipande, 2002: 218). The Saora language also, being a minority language, in spite of having a population of more than three million and strong cultural heritage, is 'potentially endangered' (Moseley, 2011).

The Saoras are one of the most ancient but dominant tribes in the southern part of Odisha. Though geographically they are distributed across many States, like Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Assam, they are concentrated in the Gajapati and Rayagada Districts of Odisha and Srikakulam district of Andhra Pradesh. Saora (also Saora, Saonras, Shabari, Sabar, Saura, Savara, Sawaria, Swara, Sabara) is spoken by some 310000 native speakers (2007). It has several dialects and contains loanwords from Hindi, Odia, and Telugu. Yet in many areas it retains the power to assimilate these to Sora syntax and morphology. The Saora language has a script of its own called *Soran Sompen* (*Akshara Brahma*), invented on 18th June 1936 by Shri Mangei Gomango who was well conversant with English, Telugu and Odia. The 24 letters installed inside the OM shaped *Akshara Brahma* are the

initial letters of 24 Saora deities. The *Akshara Brhama*, therefore, is no way less than a pantheon for the Saoras. In addition to these twenty four letters, the Saora numerals from one to twelve, its year of invention and recognition (1952) have also been included in the *Akshara Brahma*. Shri Gomango established a religious order dedicated to *Aksara Brahma* to lead the people of his tribe from ignorance to enlightenment, from darkness to light. As the script has been based on a Hindu mythology, it is yet to find wide acceptance among the non-Hindu speakers spread in other places (Nayak, 13, 1995). Emerson enumerates the use of this script in various religious contexts like a variety of printed materials, tracts, almanacs, invitation cards, and similar ephemera. Despite the enormity of the literature and text books produced in this language till date, the extent and quality of research carried out on this language is meager. However, like any other standard language, the language exhibits its richness in terms of its morphology and syntax. The present paper aims at highlighting the features of the invariants found in this language in terms of their conformity with and divergence from the features usually associated with the invariants in other language. The invariants in any language exhibit peculiar characteristics: they remain constant or unvaried even with the changes of number, gender and case or with the change of tense. But in this language we come across a few features which are not in tune with the common perceptions regarding the invariants. Among the invariants in Saora, we have the adjectivals, adverbials post-positions, conjunctions and interjections.

Saora Adjectival

The adjectivals in Saora, despite coming under the group of invariants, show some strikingly divergent features, which seem to be unique to this language. The Saora adjectivals are uninflected forms that occur with nouns, mostly in pre-nominal positions, in typically endocentric modification of structures or predicate adjectives. The nouns following the adjectives take the prefix 'a' and the adjectives lose their endings '-n' or '-on'. This prefix before the noun is often found to be linked to the preceding adjective to indicate the relation between the two (the noun and the pronoun). If the adjective ends with the vowel 'a' or 'a', then this vowel is assimilated to the prefix 'a'. Similarly if the noun begins with the prefix 'a', then the vowel is elided and is assimilated to the preceding prefix 'a'.

drin(g)-je-dan(g) a-tan(g)-arajan(g) a-jaa
lonely road unripe fruit

| (R) *pəlun-ə- 'talij -that (is) white that cow, i.e. a white cow*
pəlu:-ta-ən - white cow

In this example 'talij-ən' has been contracted into 'ta-ən' and 'pəlu-n' has lost its ending 'n'. The adjectives also lose their endings 'n/ən' when they are used predicatively. In these cases the adjectives either take the intensifier

'boiboi/bob-boi(very much) or are used independently. In these constructions, we often notice the absence of the verb, which is either silent or not marked.

kuncelboi-boilangi
that girl very beautiful
That girl (is) very beautiful.
(R) *unte-mandra: boiboisuda*-that man (is) very big.

Both in our data and in Ramamurti, we find the use of 'dam/dəm' as an intensifier.

kunanibboi-boidinga-(dam)
that tree very tall
That tree (is) very tall.

Adjectives like 'lan(g)am (handsome)', 'langi-n(beautiful)', 'dan(g)da-n' and 'dan(g)di-n'(young woman)' are virtual equivalents of compound nouns like 'langa-mar', 'langi-boi', 'dan(g)da-mar' and 'dan(g)di-boi'. So the words derived from these adjectives also retain the distinction of gender. Both the Saora nouns and adjectives show vowel (tamme-new), consonantal (papur-old) and nasal (mettang-soft) endings.

On the basis of their functions, the Saora adjectivals can be classified into the following categories.

Adjectives of quality:

bandrap-angry, (M) *lama-soft*, *bansa-good*, *dangda-young*, *langa-beautiful*

Adjectives of quantity:

alanbitti- a lot of wealth, *bo-salen(g) daa-* a pot of water, *asodamali-*a little of liquor

Adjectives of comparison:

sukru-natlin(g) mangda-n calaki
sukru than/from Mangda clever
Mangda is cleverer than Sukru.
sabitri-atlin(g) sabitalanga-dəm
Sabita is more beautiful than Sabitri.

In Saora we do not have different forms of adjectives for different degrees as we find in English and some other languages. In order to express an adjective in comparative degree, the speakers use two independent clauses with two semantically opposite adjectives.

aninbodo-dam, nenbala-ti
he healthy/strong, I strength not
He is strong but I do not have strength/I am weak.
(R) *amənsuda:, nensanna*

he big, I small
I am smaller than him.

Sometimes the speakers use the intensifier 'bob-boi/boi-boi' (very) or 'agada'(more) before the adjectives to express the comparative degree of the adjectives. Often, 'dam/dəm' is also found to be used with the adjectives to express the adjectives in the comparative degree.

gaman(g)-dam/agada-gaman(g)-more rich or richer
anga-dam/agda-langa-more beautiful

Though Ramamurti mentions the existence of a comparative form (jin-jin-lanka:n-ə-ra:- a taller tree), it has not occurred in our data.

To express the forms of the adjectives in the superlative degree, the Saora speakers use the phrases 'sabi-atlun(g)'/ 'at-lin(g)' (of all) before the adjectives. This could be due to the influence of the speakers of the neighbouring language Odia in which 'sabutharu' (of all) is frequently used with the adjectives to indicate their superlative degrees.

aninsabi-atlin(g)/atlun(g) langa-dam.
She all than beautiful
She is the most beautiful of all (the girls).

Participial Adjectives:

Participial adjectives in Saora are formed by prefixing 'a' and suffixing 'tin' or 'tin-an' to the root verb. In this case also, the noun following the adjective takes the prefix 'a' before it.

a-dimat-tin-an-a-paci a-de-gon(g)
sleeping child wake not
Do not wake the sleeping child.
a-benle a-jir-tin-a-anti a-binta-gong
flying running bird aim not
Do not aim at the flying bird.

Nominal Adjectives:

sindri-n-a-munaara-n-a-kurci
cotton bag wooden chair

Numerical Adjectives:

It is pertinent to note the changes that occur in both the nouns and numerical adjectives when they co-occur. The plural marker 'ji' is often omitted from the nouns when there are numerical adjectives before them and the adjectives refer to a number which is two or more than two. Like English and Unlike Odia, the numerals do not take any suffix with them to express their

number. Of course, the simultaneous use of the plural marker 'ji' with both the numerals and the corresponding nouns is not rare.

galjipaci- ten children (Odia: *dashajanapila*)
bagunjimandranji- two men

Mangei Gomango uses 'er-th', 'ber-th', 'jar-th', 'ur-th', mer-th', tur-th', gur-th', tam-th', 'tin-th' and 'gar-th' for the ordinals from first to tenth. But they seem to be more anglicized than original'. In our data, we have not come across instances like these.

Adverbials:

An adverb in Saora, like the adverbs in other languages is found to be used to modify the meaning of a verb, an adjective or another adverb. However, as regard the position of the adverbs we find a strong influence of the neighbouring Odia language. Like the Odia adverbs they are also found in pre-verbal and post-nominal/post-subject positions. In terms of their structures, the Saora adverbs can be classified into the simple ones and the derivatives. The simple adverbs are mostly one word adverbs. They are used independently without any suffixes or particles attached to them.

(d)*riban-*yesterday, *muui-*day before yesterday
 (R) *nam/lemi-*now *bijo/bijodi-*tomorrow

The derivatives are formed by adding the following particles/suffixes to some nouns, adjectives and adverbs.

ba:n/ban: *a-bon-ban-*near the head, *a-don-ba:n-*near the body (R) *ə-kən'dun-ba:n-*behind him
dom/dam: *bansa-dam/langa-dam-*very well (R) *boi-'boi-dəm-*exceedingly
ga:mle/gam: *sarda-gamc-*gladly, (R) *kadin-ga:mle-*silently
ge: *asai-ge(i)-*like coal (R) *kumab-ge-*like ashes
goi: *ette-goi-*in that manner, (R) *enne-goi-*in this manner
le: *lisa-le/lisa-gam-*slowly, (R) *bansa:-le:* well (*bansa-gam* is also possible)
dale: *a-sui-dale/a-sui-dam-*generously
loge: (R) *uai-lo-ge-*loudly

We also find compound and reduplicated adverbs in this language. The compound adverbs are mostly compound nouns behaving as adverbs, being used as adverbs of place and time.

dil-dinna- every day
*riyen-riyen-*quickly
*julu-julu-*afterwards
 (R) *jar-jar-*around
 (R) *kote:n-'kote:n-*then and there
*anan(g) anan(g)-*sometimes

On the basis of their meanings and functions, the adverbs in Saora can be classified as adverbs of time, place, manner, degree, frequency, affirmation and negation.

Adverbs of time are either simple or compound ones. Though they are often found with 'n/ən' in their ends, they being the invariants do not undergo any changes with the change of tense and number of the verbs.

at-kulin-at last
togald-ən-in the morning
miin-num-ən-last year

It is to be noted that the adverb 'lemi/lami/nam (R)' is used to indicate different shades of meaning like now, today etc. It is also used as component of two other adverbs (lemin-tan-still and lemi-a-miin-num-this year). Adverbs of place can also be simple or compound.

julu-n-behind, *pada-n-outside* (R)*jaitan-down*, *dilli-n-in* Delhi

Ramamurti records a peculiar use of the archaic prefixes like 'mid-', 'bar-and 'er-' with 'da' to mean 'in one place', 'in two places' and 'in three places' respectively but similar samples have not been found in our data. To express the adverbs of manner, the Saora speakers normally use the particle 'gam'/gam-le' (Saora equivalent of English -ly) with the adjective. Besides this, suffixes like '-e' and '-goi' are found to be used with the adjectives. Of course, we come across some natural adverbs of manner (which are not derived). The use of reduplicated forms for expression of manner has also been attested.

Bigda-separately, *lis-lisan-slowly*, *sub-sub-gam-falsely*, *ette-goi-like* that

Adverbs of frequency are either simple adverbs or compounds. Use of reduplicated form is also not very uncommon.

ba:r-ba:ran-again, moreover, *arjai-often/everyday*, *angijja-never*, *bo-tan(g)ar-once*

It has been noticed that the word 'tan(g)ar'(meaning *road*) is compounded with the numerical adjective to indicate the frequency of some action(once, twice, three times....). The informants could not explain the reason behind this peculiar use of the word 'tan(g)ar'. Adverbs of degree and quantity are also one worded or compounds formed with the addition of 'dam/gam'(very rare) to the adjectives or intensifiers. Some of them are also reduplicated forms.

aso-ala-le-more or less/almost
(asokan-little alan-a lot)
kuddab-gam-completely
(R) *bade'-bade-enough*
agda/agada-much
okka-only

Interrogative adverbs:

Interrogative adverbs in Saora are simple, compound or derived in their structures. The simple interrogative adverbs are one word adverbs whereas the compound ones are formed by the addition of post-positions to the adverbs. When they are derived, they are formed by the addition of suffixes to the existing adjectives or adverbs.

anan - when

yangam-how

itin-what

butin-who

butin-adon(g)-whom

butin-ate-whose

itin-asan-why

Adverbs of affirmation and negation in Saora are often used in isolation because they are used in response to questions that need 'yes/no' as answers. So they can also be called as sentence adverbs.

au/a a-yes, *sari-right*, (R) *u?u*-yes

ijja-no, *sari-ti/te*-wrong, (R) *amədoi(əga:sa)*-not at all

The Saora speakers of Andhra Pradesh use 'oa' or 'an(g)a', those of Gunupur area use 'padia' whereas speakers of Gudari area use *ijja/ijjasoi/orikka* to mean 'not at all.'

Conjunctions in Saora show two broad divisions: the Coordinating Conjunctions and Subordinating Conjunctions. Though most of the Saora conjunctions are simple, derived and compound conjunctions have also been attested. The Coordinating Conjunctions in Saora can be the Cumulative or Copulative Conjunctions, Adversative, Disjunctive or Alternative Conjunctions and Illative Conjunctions.

Cumulative/Copulative Conjunctions:

paravatin dakuntinskula-n il-le-ji

Parvati and Kunti school went

Parvati and Kunti went to school.

Ramamurti mentions 'ba:r', 'ba:r-ən', 'ja:', 'gamle' as the other variants of 'da' but we have recorded the use of 'ba:r' and 'anan' and the other forms have not been observed.

Mangdan da Harinbagun-jigada-n il-le-ji

Mangda and Hari both went to the forest.

Adversative Conjunctions:

Aninlami-a-dina it-tai-bin gam-e-tin mantram an-i-ai-tin

He today comes to said but not come

He had said that he would come today but he did not come.

Aninadonga-n dal-tedelijjaitta

He health in good not still came

He was ill/not in good health, still he will come.

Disjunctive or Alternative Conjunctions:

Raman siiṅkiskula-n it-te

Rama home or school went

Raman will go to home or school.

In this language the conjunction 'ki' is also used to express the sense contained in both 'either...or' and 'neither...nor'.

lami/lemisavitri-n kigurubarinmoinna a-ni-ai-le-ji

Today Savitri or Gurubarinone not come

Today neither Savitri nor Gurubari has come.

Ramamurti records the use of 'ja:', 'ja:-ja:', 'ude-ude', 'de-e', 'de ete', 'popo' as the variants of 'ki'(or). The use of 'ki' as a disjunctive conjunction is a clear instance of the influence of the neighbouring language Odia.

Illative

riban/rubanyangam-de-lengur-re gamle-n-den tan(g)aransal-dale

Yesterday certainly rain as road become muddy

It must have rained yesterday as the road has become muddy.

amananin-a-don(g) kani-l-e antasan/untasananin an-ni-ai-tin

You him scolded hence he not come

You scolded him, hence/so he has not come.

Mohanty records the use of '-ntasan', '-ntasakka', 'saliti' and 'unti-asan' as the variants of this conjunction whereas Ramamurti mentions 'untē-ə-m'me:le', 'untē-əpse:le' and 'untē-əsaṇ' as its variants. 'Kan-te-asan/kantasan' (therefore) is another illative conjunction in this language.

The Sub-coordinating Conjunctions in this language also can be broadly classified into:

A) Conjunctions of Time:

nen a-dolaia mudaanin jagananda-e-tin

I reach before he place left

He had left the place before I reached.

(nen) a-anda-le-nensikkoi/a-uttareaningna-i-tin

left I after he entered

He entered after I (had) left.

Anga-te(when)', 'akadi(while)', 'samayi(at any time)' are some other Sub-Ordination Conjunctions of time attested in this language.

B) Conjunctions of Reason:

Nenbarab-da-lingamle-n-de aningatra-jin-tin

I angry became because he insulted

I became angry because he insulted me.

Ramamurti records 'iten-asan' as the variant for this. 'Yan-a-san' (why) is also used as a subordinating conjunction indicating reason.

C) Complementary Conjunctions:

nener-galamanin mii-nu-man uandako-ne-tin

I not know he last year where stay

I do not know where he lived last year.

D) Conjunction of Result or Consequence:

anindaka-n sarda de-li gamle/da rapti-a-gij-in-t-in

He so much happy became that cannot see me

He was so happy that he could not see me.

'Pantikoi (as soon as)' is another subordinating conjunction that indicates result or consequence.

E) Conjunctions of Concession:

aninkar-ran bara-ne-t-in etijaanin a-baransel-le

He hard worked though he his-work failed

He failed in his work though he worked hard.

'Degon(g)/jəna/ jəna-de are used as the variants of this conjunction. Delija' (although) is also found to be used as a Subordinating Conjunction indicating concession.

F) Conjunction of Comparison:

nenatlun(g)/atlin(g) aninagadadengi

I than she more tall

She is taller than me.

G) Conjunction of Condition:

amankarran(g) bara-lin-en-de maprusai-t-am

You hard work if God help you

God will help you if you work hard.

Ramamurti also records the use and existence of some other conjunctions like 'mu-nən-kan'(by the by)', 'ju:lu'/'tette-sitəle'/'tenne-sitəle'/'ən-səriŋsəle

ten(then)', or 'ete'e:te(whether) and '-be'/'-le-be'/'de-le-be'(till) which can be used to introduce or connect clauses of equal or unequal cadre but they have not been attested in our data.

Post-Positions:

The pos-positions in Saora are equivalents of the English prepositions. They are used with the nouns and pronouns in the formation of different cases and in other contexts where it is necessary to relate one linguistic item to another. Though most of them are simple ones, a couple of them are formed by the addition of prefixes or suffixes.

andale/(R)omd"-le/'sedia-le (except)

amanandalenen bar maina-te

you except I again none

I have none (to call my own) except you.

asan/(R)əm'me le/əp'sele(for)

It is used as a case marker for the dative

nen-asananindingalagga-ne-tin

I for he much pain

He took so much pain for me.

atlin/atlun(than)

It is used as a casemarkers in the ablative.

nen-atlin/atlunaninagdadinga

I than he more tall

He is taller than me.

ruan/(R) 'batte'/'ruan'/'tudu-le'(with)

sitanruanlakminandi-ne-tin

Sita with Laxmi played

Sita played with Laxmi.

dang-di(upto)

anindeulandangdiil-le-ji da jar-nai-ji

he temple up to went and returned

They went up to the temple and came back.

ban/(R)'adəm-ba:-n(near/at)

garjan-ban-len a-garjan(g)-ji

village near our their village

Their village is near ours.

Instead of calling it a post-potion, Starosta calls it a Noun Auxiliary because it forms an integral part of the noun and precedes the nominal or personal suffixes.

(S) garja-ba-n-to, at the village

grja-ba-nsəri-from the village

In Saora there are many widely used post-positions like battu/batin'(by), len/(R)'le:-ən' / -do:ən/ pəlati'kui/ə-berna(on), lin(g)an/ lun(g)an / (R) le:-ən/ -'de:e-n(in), akandun-ban (afterwards), padan (outsside), a-lun(g)an/ (R)le:-ən/ 'er-'su:le-bel (within), atrandi/ (R)ə-tə'ra:ndi:n, -le:n(in the midst/ amidst), barre/ (R) batte (in exchange of), sikoi-den/a-uttare/ (R)ə-'de:le:n, ə-tiki (after), amanen(g)/ (R) muka:-le(n) (towards), ammuda / (R)'enrə-de:n/ m'man (before), anruka(by), tarann(g)di/ (R)təra :ndi:n/ təra:ndi: len (between), adayar/ (R)jar-jar, ə-pai-pai and unji-se-ən (around).

Interjections

The interjections in Saora are very limited in number.

O-O(joy)

oi/itingai-What? (surprise)

ai/agai-alas! (sorrow)

itin a ganroi-What a shame!

Ijja – No (disapproval)

Sari -alright (approval)

Conclusion

The language as we have seen is very rich in terms of its morpho-syntactic features. After more research, it would be possible for scholars to explore the unexplored areas in the language. As there is a mismatch between many of the forms recorded by Ramamurti and the data available with us, wider research is required to crosscheck and validate the data. It could be possible that the data provided in Ramamurti's Manual are purer than that of ours as the impact of the neighbouring languages cannot be ruled out. The initiative for Multi-Lingual Education covering ten prominent tribal languages (Saora included) of Odisha launched by the Odisha Primary Education Project Authority is a welcome measure in the process of standardizing the language, enhancing its functional load and ensuring its prolonged life. People from the Saora community should be encouraged to do research on this language as it would bring out the nuances of the languages missed out by the external research scholars.

References

- Emerson, Michel (2009). *Proposal for encoding the Soran Sompeng script in the UCS*. International Organization for Standardization. Pp.1-5
- Mahapatra, Khagehwar. (1978-1979). "'SoraN SompeN': A Sora Script". Unpublished conference paper. Delhi, Mysore.
- Mohanty, Gopinath. (1973). *Saora Langauge* (Odia).
- Moseley, Christopher (2011). *Encyclopedia of the World's Endangered Languages*. Pp.341-342
- Pandharipande, Rajeswari V. (2002) "Minority Matters: Issues in Minority Languages in India". *International Journal on Multicultural Societies (IJMS)* Vol. 4, No. 2.
- Nayak, Abhilash.(1995). A Morpho-Syntactic Study of the Saora Language Spoken in the Koraput District of Odisha. Unpublished PhD Dissertation: Sambalpur University, Odisha.
- Ramamurti, G. V. (1931). *A Manual of So:ra Language*. Madras: Superintendent, Government Press.
- Srivastava, R. 1984. "Linguistic minorities and national language". In Florian Coulmas, ed., *Linguistic Minorities and Literacy: Language Policy Issues in Developing countries*, 99-114. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Starosta, Stanley. H. (1967). "Sora Syntax: A Generative Approach to a Munda Language". Doctoral Dissertation: University of Wisconsin.
- Tripathy, Bijay K. (1993). "Structural Description of Sambalpuri". D Litt. Dissertation: Sambalpur University.
- Zide, Norman. (1996). "Scripts for Munda languages", in Peter T. Daniels and William Bright, eds. *The world's writing systems*. New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press.

A SAORA HOUSE *

*U. N. Patnaik*¹

The Saora house is a thatched hut of small size with earthen walls and pillars, posts, beams and rafters of upsized timber. The door frame is also of the same material and the door-leaf, except in the case of a prosperous Saora, is of sliced bamboo woven together. The plinth of the house is generally high enough to allow free drainage but houses with low plinth are not rare to see.

The verandah is kept neat and clean and it is in great use. Paddy and other grains are husked there. Grains are sorted before they are taken to the kitchen. Siali ropes are twined there and mats with date leave are woven here. The men and women sit there for a chat during spare time, smoking. The men sleep on the verandah during the summer season. It is the sick room during the day and close to it on the village street the new born baby has its bath daily twice for a month. The house-wife and the girls of the house plaster it frequently with mud and keep it always neat and clean.

The door-leaf has a peculiar contrivance which answers the purpose of locking. The contrivance is common and even though every house has it there is no fear of theft and house breaking. There is a hole in the top centre of the door frame through which the hand is thrust in and a bolt fixed in the inner side is pulled into position to prevent the door from opening from outside. While opening, the bolt is moved to a side and the door opens. The bolt is a piece of wood about 6" long. Where the family can afford it, a lock is put on the door

* Published in ADIBASI, Vol. VI, 1964-65, No.1, pp.49-50

¹ Member of Orissa State Civil Service

which has its staple and chain. The houses of the Gomang, Bhoya and the Bodo Rait have invariably locking arrangements with chain and staple.

The main room is a small passage like room. It is carved out by partitioning a room into the living room and the kitchen. There is a partition between these two and generally wooden posts fixed in the ground form the partition. It is mud plastered in the majority of cases and is about 3' high. There is a shelf like arrangement made of wooden planks placed lengthwise across a number of posts throughout the length of the room. The hearth or fire place in the kitchen has a continuous fire burning and one sees a few pots and a number of bitter gourd "lokas" in the kitchen.

The floor of this main room has two holes at which the girls of the house pound corn or husk it in the morning even before it is light, for the breakfast of the family. The husking is done by a cylindrical wooden piece about 3' in length and 4" in diameter. The stouter end is used for adding weight to the pounder while the thinner end with an iron band round it is used in husking. The girl wields it squarely and makes a sharp hissing sound when the blow lands on the grain. There is yet another contrivance for husking. It is a wooden *chakki* two circular slabs of hard wood each about 10" thick. The upper slab is held in position by a small wooden spike or projection fixed to the slab below. The grain is pushed in a cavity in the upper slab and then the slab is turned round and round. This is just a *chakki* as we call it but of hard wood and made by the Saora himself. The Saora is not a stone cutter and has to meet his needs in the above manner.

A portion of the main room alongside the rear wall is the place where drinking water and water for the kitchen is kept. Wooden posts of a height of 3' to 4' are driven into the floor. There is plank decking over these posts over which the water is kept in earthen pots. Rarely brass utensils are used and whether it is of brass or of earth, the pot is kept scrupulously clean. Just a few feet above the pots are kept the 'Dumba Dumbi' of the house. These are the family Gods and are kept in earthen pots of small size. These contain drawings or effigies of the Gods and they are indoor Gods of the Saora.

At the very entrance of the main room a bamboo hangs breadth wise suspended from the rafter. Slung from this bamboo one sees the halters of the cattle, the "make noises" of the goats, the plough ropes, etc. Where ever the man is lucky he has a packet of elephant dung strung from this bamboo. Pieces of dried buffalo flesh are also to be seen so slung. The bows and arrows are struck in the thatch of the roof within reach. The *globla*, the sickle, the *barsi*, the knife are all stuck into the roof. The "Powder flask" usually a buffalo horn with a metal cap is also there. Spare *globla* handles are either slung from a bamboo rafter or are stuck into the roof. Fibers collected from the forest used for twining rope are also there.

Towards the centre of this main room are suspended the seed grains of the Saora. Seed maize and seeds of asparagus beans, pumpkin, etc. are tied in leaf

packets and suspended. On top of these seed grains are some spare dry and hollowed gourds for use as pitchers for keeping or fetching water or as handles for serving cooked food.

On a second floor formed by the decking over the fire place there is the granary of the Saora. The grains are kept in big split bamboo receptacles. These as well as all other items in the two rooms are smoked to a shining dark brown colour. The fowls of the family are driven into a trap like contrivance in the space below the water space. Goats, if any, are tied along with the cattle. The cattle shed are either a separate hut or an extension in the back of the house accessible from outside.

There are no plates and cups in use and no metal plates or dishes. Leaf cups, platters, known as Dona, serve the purpose. The living room which is the main room accommodates all the members of the family during the rains and winter. There are no pets except a dog and the dog sleeps in the house or on the verandah or in the cattle shed. The house of the Saora does not require to be spacious. He has few wants. He lives for the day or at best for the morrow. The vegetables fetched from the Bogodo, the corn and grain as harvested all go straight to the kitchen. The produce of the Bogodo in excess of daily requirements is kept either green or dry for sale to the peddlers who come with salt, tobacco, etc., to the Bogodo for barter. The house with the cattle is to be exact, a "Noah's Arc".

DORIPUR : A MAGICO RELIGIOUS CEREMONY FOR CURING FEVER AMONG THE HILL SAORAS *

*Bhagirathi Choudhury*¹

The hill Saoras who are commonly known as Lanjia Saoras and also Malua Saoras, constitute the most primitive section of the great Saora Tribe in Orissa. They are widely distributed in the Agency tracts of (undivided) Ganjam and Koraput districts. In spite of sustained activities of the Christian missionaries during the last forty years or so, attempts of the Government to provide special provisions for their upliftment and occasional migrations as labourer in tea-gardens in Assam, the hill Saoras have remained in a very primitive condition far away from the touch of modern civilization. Only a few of them have been converted to Christianity. The rest have retained their customs and practices intact. They speak a dialect belonging to the Mundari family of the Austro-Asiatic languages and very few can speak any other language.

They are primarily shifting cultivators, although, wet cultivation is also resorted to in terraced fields whenever available. The hilly forests provide them with varieties of edible roots, fruits and animals for hunting to supplement their dietary requirements. Liquor is obtained from the *mohua* and *salap* (sago-palm) trees. The petty traders belonging to Dom community visit the Saora villages with the articles of daily use for barter.

Like many other primitive tribes they attribute the causes of natural calamities, diseases and unnatural deaths to the deities, dead ancestors and

* Published in ADIBASI, Vol. VI, 1964-65, No.1, pp.29-34

¹ Research Assistant, T.R.B. Bhubaneswar

sorcery. The deities and the dead ancestors, who are supposed to be in search of food and drink in the underworld are watchful about the negligence and wrong-doings of the people and bring about diseases and other troubles. Thus diseases are believed to be caused spiritually and are treated spiritually according to established procedure of diagnosis and sacrifice. The ceremony of “Doripur” described here is one of the magico-religious rites for curing fever. In the month of April, 1963, this ceremony was celebrated in the village Jangjangal of Gumma Panchayat Samiti in (undivided) Ganjam district. It is a typical Saora village surrounded by hills on all sides. There are altogether twenty families out of which seven families are Christian converts since 1959.

Saku Mandal of the village has two wives who are the sisters of a co-villager, Upi Saora by name. He has five children through them. Both the wives and all the children were suffering from fever one after another. On two previous occasions Suku had consulted the village shaman and sacrificed a fowl and a pig to Dorisunum (the god of the cattle grazers who brings fever to the people). Lastly the youngest son of the junior wife suffered severely. This necessitates diagnosis by a shaman. On the ninth day of April 1963, the first wife requested the village shaman to diagnose the cause of the sickness. The shaman expressing his anxiety enquired very seriously and sympathetically about the ailing persons and at once sat down for diagnosis with the help of a winnowing fan and the rice brought by Suku’s wife. A wick was lighted. The shaman holding the wick in his left hand, rubbed rice grains round and round with incantations to invoke the deities, ancestors and his tutelary to locate the agent of sickness and to determine the sacrifices required. Being possessed by his tutelary, his hand got stuck to the winnowing-fan and Suku’s wife had to apply much strength to detach it. Then the shaman became the vehicle of his tutelary and informed her that Dorisunum was responsible for the sickness. When enquired about the remedy, he readily prescribed the ceremonial sacrifice of a buffalo.

Ceremony

Suku at once arranged all the articles required for the rite. He consulted the Gamang (the secular head of the village) and village elders and decided to perform the ceremony on the 15th April, 1963.

Rite in the Courtyard – At about 8A.M., the ceremony was started in front of Suku’s house. A new earthen pot containing rice, salt, onion and chili; a winnowing fan containing three basketful of rice (about two kg.) a brass, a ring, a bow with arrows, a leaf-cup filled up with medicinal bullets and a leaf hat were placed on the ground and two bamboo splits were placed in front of Suku’s ailing wives and children who were sitting in a row facing the shaman. Eight leaf cups were then prepared and spread on the ground by the shaman.

The commencement of the ceremony was then marked by the beating of the drum by Suku and recital of incantation and offering of wine in the leaf cups by the shaman to deities and ancestors. Then he threw rice in four directions and upon the patients. A wick was lighted. He put on the leaf hat, picked up the bow and arrow while calling the dead and deities began to dance to the accompaniment of beating of the drum. He picked up the 'bullets' one by one on the tip of his arrow, shot them in four directions, then at the buffalo and also at each patient after heating them in the flame of the lamp. Then the shaman picked up the bamboo splits and heated them in the flame of the wick. While dancing he invoked Turkadora (servant or Dorisunum) to accept the 'combs' as his presentation. He combed the head of each patient for three times. Then holding the earthen pot containing chilli, rice, salt and onion, he called on Dorisunum saying:

"I am offering you rice, salt, chilli, etc. and going to sacrifice a buffalo to you. You take these and prepare your meal near a water source".

Then he moved the pot over the head of each patient with a prayer for their recovery.

Rite inside the House - After the conclusion of the rites in the courtyard, the shaman conducted another rite inside the house. Two leaf cups containing rice, another cup with chili, salt and onion and a basketful of rice covered with a new cloth were placed near the mortar. A wick was also lighted. In the meantime, the eldest son of Suku brought the hairy tip of the sacrificial buffalo's tail and handed it over to the shaman. The Shaman then invoked the deities and offered wine to them. Reciting spells he signed the tail of the buffalo. He mixed the ashes with rice and threw them upon the sick persons. The venue of the ceremony was then shifted to the outskirts of the village.

Rite the outskirts of the village - At the entrance of the village, the shaman arranged his altar under a Mohua tree. Some women at a short distance were seen busy in preparing hearths and carrying water for cooking the feast, while several others sat down to stitch leaf-cups. Near the altar two women were engaged in cooking the food separately for the deities. Several young men gathered under another tree to kill the sacrificial animal, which was dragged to that place.

Sacrifice of buffalo and distribution of meat - Killing of buffalo by the Saora is a pathetic sight to new visitors. The mode of killing which I saw in several villages revealed the Saora's knowledge in buffalo anatomy. With the blunt end of an axe a single blow was administered to the joint of the head and the vertebral column. The animal making pitiable noise crumpled down, and another person pierced the heart with a long time knife to let out blood. Although the animal was still groaning under such torture, one person cut

down the horns with an axe and others started skinning. When the skinning was over, the blood discharged from the heart was collected in a pot.

A cup of blood, a front leg and the head were handed over to the shaman, who placed these near the altar. Two legs and one-third of the lung, heart and liver were taken by the owner. A small quantity of flesh and the rest of the lung, heart and liver were used for preparing the food for the deities and deads. One leg, the entrails and some strips of flesh were given for feasting at the spot. The remaining quantity of the meat was distributed equally among the families who contributed rice for the feast and participated in the ceremony.

Preparation of Food – Following items of food for the feast and for the worship were prepared separately:- Rice and millet mixed together were boiled in water to prepare porridge.

- (a) Flesh mixed with rice was boiled in water.
- (b) Some portions of lung, liver and heart mixed with rice-flour were boiled with blood and water.
- (c) Flesh being added with salt chilli and turmeric was boiled in water.
- (d) Some portions of liver, lung and the heart were roasted in burning amber.

After cooking, there was the important task of cutting the boiled flesh into pieces for distribution.

The Worship - In the meantime, the shaman invoked the deities and the ancestors and offered wine and rice mixed with the blood of the buffalo. Then he himself began to beat the drum, slowly at first and then more rapidly and prayed the deities, especially to Dorisunum, to accept the food to bring health and happiness to the family and also to the village. While reciting spells he poured water on the head of each patient. Different items of cooked food were handed over to the shaman. After invoking the dead and the deities, he offered these items along with wine. After this he himself took wine and went on calling the ancestors and the deities and passed into a trance. He became possessed by a number of deities and dead ancestors. The long conversation, which took place between the audience on the one hand and the shaman acting as the vehicle of the unseen powers on the other is briefly noted below:-

Turkadora, the servant of Dorisunum came first and it was declared that he sucked the forehead, neck, back, hands, legs and great toes of each patient. The earthen pot containing rice, onion, chili, salt and flesh of the buffalo was offered to him. He wanted his stick, which was at once given. Holding the stick with his right hand and keeping the pot on the head, the shaman acted as if walking with these materials for Dorisunum, his master. Then he was

possessed by another servant of Dorisunum and informed about the arrival of his master. He asked for water to drink and went away.

After this Dorisunum himself came and demanded “why you first gave me a fowl and then a pig but not a buffalo at the first instance. Do you know that I was in need of buffalo for my cultivation? When you did not comply with my demand for a buffalo, I attacked most of the members of the family”. To cool down his anger all persons sitting by his side flattered him, and offered wine with great care and devotion. Suku, the head of the family celebrating the rites, conveyed him the difficulties he had to undergo to get a buffalo on credit. When a cloth was handed over to him, he exclaimed “This is not a good cloth and you are giving me only one piece. What I will say when my daughter will ask for one? Take this back and get two nice pieces immediately”. Suku immediately replied, “I have given you a nice cloth, but you considered it to be bad. Please be satisfied with it. If dissatisfied come with me to my home and select one”.

Dorisunum said, “Very good, I am satisfied with it and let me wear it”. The shaman representing Dorisunum, got up and put on the cloth and sat down and said to Suku, “You promise to give another buffalo after his recovery of your wives and children”. Suku replied, “Please help me to harvest a good crop so that I would be able to give one”. Dorisunum asked for wine which was at once given and went away. There was silence and everybody had some palm wine.

Then the shaman was visited by a series of ghosts one after another. Some of these ghosts came to take wine and food, some made fresh demands for sacrifice, and some of them warned their relatives about their negligence, carelessness and breach of taboo. Most of them were persuaded to depart after taking wine. At last came the ghost of Indam, the last Gamang of the village and father of the present Gamang. He was offered wine immediately. After tasting it he said “Oh, this palm wine is very bitter, I won’t take it. Give me Mohua liquor”. At once *mohua*-liquor was given to him. While drinking it he enquired about the welfare of the village. He asked why they had not made the clearing for the year. The Gamang who was sitting by his side told how everything was going on well except a few people suffering from disease. He asked his son to look into the welfare of the village. After taking wine, he went away.

After this, the shaman rubbed his eyes as if waking from a heavy sleep. He stretched his arms and legs, spat on his hands and wiped his face and thus broke his trance and became normal. Once again, he sat down to invoke the deities and deads who were offered wine. He removed the ring worn by Suku’s sick son and placed it on the altar. While reciting incantations he sprinkled

water over the patients. He then gave one share of offered food to each of the patients who were required to eat it there and then.

Distribution of Food - The different items of food prepared separately for offering, were distributed into a number of shares in leaf cups. The Gamang, the Mandal (assistant to Gamang) and the Buyya as village officials received ten shares each. The shaman (who is also the Buyya of the village) received ten shares of cooked food and a leg of the buffalo. The owner who is also the Mandal of the village got ten shares extra and the head of the buffalo besides his share of flesh taken earlier. All families who contributed rice for the feast received one share each. Then all who were present near the altar proceeded towards the cooking place to attend the feast. When the ceremonies were going on, several persons carefully distributed the festive meals into a number of leaf cups. In the presence of Gamang, the shares were distributed at the rate of one share for each member in the family. The rest were distributed among the persons present. Elderly persons got four shares each, while children were given only two shares each. The feast was concluded with drinking of wine at 2P.M.

Conclusion

The most acute problem faced by the Lanjia Saoras, inhabiting the inhospitable Agency tracts, is disease. This has resulted in the development of an elaborate system of magico-therapy. The consequent ceremonies bring heavy pressure on the Saora economy. This is the root cause of their indebtedness and conversion to Christianity. They cannot go to hospital to take medicine to cure diseases, because of their fear of offending ancestors and deities. However, their constant contact with the converted Saoras, who visit hospital for treatment, causes reaction in their minds. This provokes them to evade the indebtedness and misery by changing their faith.

LANJIA SAORA : A SOCIO-CULTURAL PROFILE *

*S. C. Mohanty*¹

The “Saora” or “Savara” is a great ancient tribe of India as well as one of the oldest known tribes of Orissa. They are not only numerically large but also a historically and culturally significant tribal community of the State. They have been mentioned quite frequently in Hindu mythology and ancient classics, epics, *purans* and various other scriptures. Especially in Orissa, they have been very intimately associated with the cult of Lord Jagannath, who according to a legendary tradition originated as a tribal deity and was later brought to Puri under royal patronage.

According to Singh, “The History of the Saora from the earliest times has been narrated by many writers, notably Thurston, Bell, and Elwin. The name of the tribe has been known for about two thousand years. Pliny makes mention of Suri and Ptolemy of Sabari. Ptolemy particularized his description by saying that the tribe dwelt in the south west region of the Gangetic delta and at a short distance from the sea coast, making identification of the tribe with the Saora of Orissa possible. The name of the Saora also occurs both in the Mahabharata and the Katha- Sarit Sagar.” (1984: 1)

The tribe is called by various names such as Saura, Sabara, Sahar, Saur, Sora, etc and has their racial affinity with the proto-Australoid stock, which is dominant among the aborigines of Central and Southern India. They are widely found all over the Central India comprising the States of Bihar, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and West Bengal. They speak an ancient Mundari dialect of their own called ‘Sora’.

The nomenclature ‘Saora’ appears to have two connotations one derived from the ‘sagories’, the Scythian word for axe and the other from ‘Saba

* Published in Tribal Customs and Traditions, Vol. 1, SCSTRTI, 2009, pp.179-188

¹ Research Officer, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar, Odisha

Roye', the Sanskrit term for carrying a dead body. Both of them fit well with their habit of carrying an axe always on their shoulders with their primitive occupation of hunting and living on spoils of hunting.

Numerically, the Saora constitute one of the major Scheduled Tribes of Orissa found in almost all the districts. But their main concentration lies in a contiguous mountainous territory forming a major part of the agency tracts of the Eastern Ghats in Rayagada and Gajapati districts in Southern Orissa, which can be called, the "Saora Country". Their population in the state as recorded in successive Census enumerations from 1951 to 2001 is given below.

1951	-	1,91,401
1961	-	3,11,614
1971	-	3,42,757
1981	-	3,70,060
1991	-	4,03,510
2001		4,73,233

The census data show that the population of the tribe has been growing over period of time. Their population growth rate during the period 1961-71 was 10 percent; during 1971-81, 8 percent and between 1981 and 1991, 9.04 percent and between 1991 to 2001, 17.28 percent. Their sex ratio was 1030 in 1981, 1015 in 1991 and 1007 in 2001 showing numerical superiority of their women over men.

They were educationally backward. Their percentage of literacy as recorded in 1961 census was only 7.80 per cent. Over period of time it has successively improved to 10.20 per cent, 14.47 per cent, 25.58 per cent and 41.10 percent in 1971, 1981, 1991 and 2001 Censuses respectively. Their level of literacy as recorded in 2001 is higher than that (37.40 percent) for all STs.

The Saora society is divided into as many as 25 subdivisions such as Kapu, Jati, Sudho, Jadu, Jara, Arsi, Duara or Muli, Kindal, Kumbi, Basu, Lanjia, etc. It is based on occupation, food habit, social status, customs and traditions. According to Thurston's (1909) classification, the Saora are divided into two broad classes, that is, the hill Saora and the low country Saora. Under the hill Saora category the following sub-divisions are included.

1. *Savara, Jati Savara* – they regard themselves as superior and eat the flesh of buffalo but not cow.
2. *Arsi, Arisi, and Lambo Lanjia* – their occupation is weaving coarse clothes as well as agriculture.
3. *Luara or Muli*– this section makes arrow heads and other iron articles.
4. *Kindal* – they make baskets for keeping grains.

5. *Jadu* – said to be a name among the Saora for the hill country beyond Kalakote and Puttasingi.
6. *Kumbi* –are potters who make earthen pots used for cooking or for hanging up in houses as fetishes of ancestral spirits or certain deities.

The Low Country Saora is divided into two groups:

1. *Kapu* – (denoting cultivator) or *Pallapu*.
2. *Sudho* – (good/ pure).

It has been further noted by Thurston that, the pure Saora tribes have restricted themselves to the hill and jungle tracts and valleys. But as the plains approach traces of amalgamation become apparent, resulting in a hybrid race, whose appearance and manners resemble those of the ordinary plains people. The Kapu Saoras are said to retain many of the Saora customs, whereas the Sudho Saoras have adopted the language and customs of the Oriya castes.

The “Lanjia Saora” who are called the “Hill -Saora” by ethnographers like Verrier Elwin, constitute an archaic section of the tribe. They inhabit the enchanting and mountainous “Saora Country” in Southern Orissa. They are famous for their expertise in terrace cultivation, shifting cultivation, elaborately religious lifestyle, artistic skills for producing beautiful wall paintings i.e. pictograms popularly known as icons and their peculiar traditional male dress-style in which the ends of the loin cloth hangs like a tail at the back. Therefore their neighbours call them “Lambo Lanjia” meaning, “having a tail”.

As stated above, the **Lanjia Saora** represent a primitive section of the Saora tribe inhabiting a contiguous mountainous territory stretched across Gunupur Sub-Division of Rayagada and Parlakhemundi Sub-division of Gajapati districts of Southern Orissa where the bulk of their population is concentrated. This picturesque territory with its undulating terrain, rolling hills, terraced paddy fields, perennial hill streams and patches of lush green forests lies at an average elevation of 2000’ above the sea level. It forms a natural geographic unit, comprising fertile valleys of the River Vamsadhara and its tributaries between the mountain ranges of the Eastern Ghats.

The climatic condition of the region is more like that of the Deccan plateau. Because of its elevation, the area experiences a mild and moderate climate, with a short and mild summer, moderate monsoon and a long winter. The hot summer lasts from March to May and chilly winter reigns from October to February. June to October is the time for monsoon. Seventy-nine percent of the rainfall occurs during the monsoon, i.e. June-October. The months of July and August are the rainiest months. The average annual rainfall over this hill tract is 67.05”. The spatial distribution of rainfall in this area is largely influenced by the Eastern Ghats.

In the absence of separate census enumeration for the Lanjia section, their exact population is not known. However, their population in the areas covered by two Micro Projects viz, LSDA, Puttasing and LSDA, Serango is 9661 as per the survey conducted by SCSTRTI during 2001-02. By 2007 this has increased to 11215 (5597 males and 5618 females) showing numerical dominance of women over men according to another socio-economic survey conducted by SCSTRTI in collaboration of the concerned Micro Projects during 2007 for preparation of Conservation-Cum- Development Plan for Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs) for the 11th Five-Year Plan. Similarly their level of literacy has gone up from 27.23 percent in 2001-02 to 32.22 percent in 2007.

The Lanjia Saora by their appearance resembles the other pre-Dravidian tribes. They have long heads, flat noses with expanded alae. There is a depression at the root of the nose. Facial prognathism is marked. The hair is wavy and curly but individuals with straight hair are also found. The skin colour is brown to dark brown. There is a speciality about the dress of a Saora man, which consists of loincloth about six feet long and about ten inches in breadth. This is tied around the hips, which hang down in two strips, the one in the rear being longer. The traditional dress of Saora woman is a waistcloth with gray borders, which hardly reaches the knees. The skirt is above three feet in length and about two feet in breadth. In winter or cold weather she covers her upper part of the body with another piece of cloth tied at the back with a knot.

The Saora women are not fond of adorning with bundles of necklaces that are made of beads or metals. A few necklaces of beads, round wooden plugs, spiral rings made of brass or bell-metal or aluminium in the fingers and toes, little rings, in the alae of nose and metal anklets are worn by the women. All these ornaments are available in their local weekly markets. Now men wear dhotis, shirts, banyans, pants and women wear sarees, blouses, petticoats etc.

The Saora habitats are located amidst most inaccessible hill region clad with thick forest, making it very difficult to reach there, through zigzag steep hill paths. They generally live in small villages and construct their houses on the hill slope or at the foot of the hills. Whether small or big, the Lanjia Saora villages are long established in their present sites. The settlements have come up in undulating terrain and houses remain scattered. It might have linear streets and sometimes houses might be located here and there depending upon places and slopes available. Close to the settlements megaliths are erected to commemorate the dead kins. Two wooden posts, called Gasadasum or Kitungsum installed at the entrance of the settlement, represent the guardian deity of the village. In these days due to the impact of modernization and development intervention, many remote Lanjia Saora settlements have got a facelift. Approach roads connect them and inside they have concrete street roads and paths. Modern *pucca* houses have replaced their tiny old huts.

The Saora houses are single roomed and rectangular in shape and are fairly high. Though the plinth is sufficiently raised from the ground, the roof is proportionately kept low. There is a high front verandah. The walls of the houses are made of stone pieces set in mud. The walls look reddish because of red earth plaster, which is locally available and is used for plastering. From the roof hang a number of household assets like baskets, gourd vessels, clothes and umbrella. Things like spears, bows and arrows are fixed in the walls. Agricultural implements are kept in one corner of the house. The sacred pots, gourds and baskets containing sacred objects, like special clothes of the ancestors and tutelaries are hung against the walls, which are painted with *ikons*. On the side of the house a cowshed is constructed.

The well-to-do Saoras build bigger houses fitted with carved doors and having spacious verandah. A Saora having more than one wife has to construct separate houses for wives. At the time of constructing a new house rice and wine are ceremonially offered to the earth goddess and a pit is dug in which the first pillar is fixed.

Saora economy is primarily based on shifting cultivation and is supplemented by terrace cultivation. They also resort to occasional hunting, rare fishing and round the year forest collection for their subsistence. The Saoras are the best-terraced cultivators. The terraced fields in which water flows throughout the year are locally called, *Sarroba* and are exclusively meant for paddy cultivation. The upper terraces, which are dry, is locally called as *Jyanum* and used for cultivating *ragi* (*elusine corocana*), *biri* (*phaseolus mungo*) and *kulthi* (*dolichos biflorus*).

In the little garden around the residential houses they grow maize, tobacco, chilly and vegetables, like pumpkin, gourd, bean, brinjal, etc. during rainy season. Papaya, banana, lemon and orange plants are also grown in the kitchen garden. Coconut plants, which are also found in the area, are recently introduced. In and around the village settlements jackfruit, mango, tamarind, *mohua*, date-palm and sago-palm trees which are individually owned are seen.

Every Saora village has a well-defined boundary and its inhabitants carry on shifting cultivation on the hills located within the village boundary. Some hills are close to the village while others lie at a distance. Traditionally the hills were distributed on the basis of *Birinda* or extended families. Members of a particular *Birinda* used to have swiddens exclusively in a hill and no outsider was allowed to share the hills for shifting cultivation. An individual who has been cultivating a particular plot continues to own it as long as he is capable of cultivating it. Thus individual ownership of swiddens on hereditary basis is in vogue among the Saoras.

Certain rituals are attached to shifting cultivation. A ceremony is performed on the day of sowing. Before the seeds are mixed and broadcast, the

village *Buyya* and *Kudan* worship, the hill-Gods by offering them liquor and sacrificing fowl and goat.

A small ritual, which involves the offering of either a fowl or a goat to the hill God called Barusum, is observed towards the end of August after *Kangu* is harvested. The next ceremony follows before *Jana* is threshed and *Kandula* is harvested. On this occasion fowls are offered to the hill-Gods. Among the Saoras there is a belief that if these ceremonies are performed they will get good crop from the swiddens.

The principal food of the Saoras is gruel (*pej*) prepared out of rice, *ragi*, *jana* or *ghantia*. Besides, they take vegetables grown in kitchen gardens and fruits, roots, leaves, tubers and honey collected from forest. The non-vegetarian food is much more relished than the vegetarian diet and no festival is observed and no guest is entertained without non-vegetarian food.

The smallest social unit in the Saora society is the family which is mostly of nuclear type. Generally a family comprises parents and their unmarried children. They have no exogamous totemic clan, no phratries and moieties, except the local patrilineal descent groups or lineages called *Birinda*.

The Saoras are unique due to the absence of clan or sib organization, that is common to most of the tribal societies in the country. Without clan they lack in the complementary institutions of totemism and taboos in matrimonial relationships. Instead there are extended families called *Birindas* which consists of descendants from a common ancestor for 4-5 generations. Marriage is prohibited within a *Birinda*. The members of a *Birinda* stand to each other as blood brothers. They participate in *Guar* and *Karya* ceremonies with their contributions. The *Birinda* also inherits the property of an heirless member. A remarkable feature is that among the Saoras, a woman from birth to death belongs to her father's *Birinda*. Her *Birinda* membership does not change by her marriage. After her death the members of her own *Birinda* may claim to perform her funerary rites. Such claims are accepted by her husband's family ungrudgingly. Nevertheless, *Birinda* is not synonymous with clan or *gotra* where members living in far off places, observe, common rules of exogamy.

The Saora love their children very much. When a woman proved to be barren, her husband may marry another woman or adopt a child. The pregnant woman does her usual work up to the time of delivery. When the labour pain starts, she is confined to a corner of the house and an experienced elderly woman acts as a midwife and rubs her abdomen with castor oil. This leads to easy delivery. The umbilical cord is cut by a sharp-edged arrow by the midwife. The placenta is buried in a pit in one corner of the courtyard of the house. Then the mother and the new born baby take bath in tepid water. The pollution period is observed for seven days. On the seventh day the woman

takes bath and cooks food, which is shared by the females of the house. Generally they prefer the names of the ancestors for naming the child.

The Saora marriage is not an elaborate affair. It is rather queer that the people, who spend most of their resources in observing a chain of expensive rituals and festivals, celebrate their marriage in a very simple way. There are various ways for acquiring mates. Some of them are, marriage by negotiation, by capture and by service. Of all these types, marriage by negotiation is the most common and considered prestigious in the society. The arrangements are made by the parents and relations of the groom who take initiatives in the matter. In a stratified society of the Saoras, negotiation is made between two parties having equal economic and social status. For a son of *Gomang* (secular village head) another *Gomang's* daughter may be arranged and a *Royat* (commoner) may not venture to propose for a *Gomang's* daughter.

The Saoras do not observe village exogamy except where the village is inhabited by the members of one *Birinda*. In big villages having more than one *Birinda* marriages are often arranged within the village.

The Saora cremate their dead. But persons dying of cholera and small-pox are buried. As cremation is a family function, *Birinda* members participate in it. Some members collect wood for the pyre and the girls who are trained to act as assistants in funeral rites fetch water and prepare turmeric paste. Then, the corpse is carried to the cremation ground in a procession accompanied by a musical band. The next day, they visit the cremation ground to examine the ashes with a view to find a sign of the cause of death. In the evening a fowl is killed in the cremation ground and cooked with rice which is shared by the members of the village. Then after a year or two the *Guar* ceremony is performed. On this occasion, *menhirs* are planted and large numbers of buffaloes are sacrificed.

Perhaps, the religion of no other tribe is so elaborate as that of the Saoras. It is true that without understanding their religion, one cannot understand other aspects of their life. The concept of Supreme God is almost absent among them. In different parts, different Gods are considered Supreme. Moreover, there can be no standard catalogue for these Gods, for the list continually changes as new ones are introduced and old ones are forgotten.

All the varied aspects of their environments are associated with some God or other. The Saora Gods differ from one another in composition, function, character and nature. Some are benevolent; some are neutral and some others malevolent. All these Gods and spirits have constant demand on the living beings. If their demands are not met they may cause harm.

Sonnum or *Sunnam* is the general name for the Saora deities and spirits. The deities are called in different names such as *Labosum*, *Rudesum* and

Karunisum etc. The word *Sonnum* is used in a general sense when applied to particular order of deities and spirits. Besides these, the Saora worship a number of evil spirits and malevolent deities.

The Saoras are very famous for their wall-paintings known as 'ikons' or 'italons'. Inside the house on the walls one often finds a group of sketches of religious significance elaborately drawn and are therefore called *ikons*. The exact symbolic meaning of the *ikons* which consists of various sketches of human being, horse, elephant, gunman, aeroplane, bi-cycle, sun, moon, etc. are very difficult to understand. An *ikon* is done to flatter and please the Gods and ancestors so that they may spare the members of the household from their invidious attention. At frequent intervals the *ikon* may be replaced by another depending upon the exigency of the circumstances.

The religious functionaries who cater to the spiritual needs of the Saora are *Buyya*, who presides over agricultural festivals, *Kudan*, the Shaman who combines the functions of priest, prophet and medicineman. His female counterpart is called the *Kudan Boi*. The position of the *Buyya* is ascribed, whereas that of the *Kudan* is achieved.

Ideally speaking, the Saora villages are self-governed and the traditional panchayat plays an important role in maintaining the law and order and village solidarity. In every village the people are under the command of two elders, *Gomang*, the secular headman and *Buyya*, the religious headman. The offices of both the persons are hereditary.

In every village meeting the *Gomang* has to preside over and initiate discussions and take decisions in consultation with the elders of the village. Ordinarily for any usual offence, the accused has to pay by way of fine in shape of two pots of liquor and one goat or pig etc. and to feed the villagers with these. The exact amount of fine depends upon the gravity of offence.

The Saoras are very artistic people. Their artistic skills are not only revealed in their wall-paintings but also in their dance and music. Irrespective of sex they cultivate the art of dancing and singing, as a matter of natural habit. In their songs one can find a great deal of humour, romance and melody. In Saora dance, group of men and women, jumble up together and while dancing the drummers and the dancers advance towards each other alternatively with the rhythm of the music. Colourful costumes are used while dancing.

The musical instruments of the Saora are not many which consist of drums of various sizes and flutes and string instruments. The drums are of three types, a kettle drum, a double membraned drum and a large drum shaped like a bowl. There are brass cymbals, brass gongs and hide gongs. All these noisy percussion instruments are usually used at some agricultural festivals. At marriages, fiddles are popular. There is a two stringed fiddle

consisting of a bamboo stem with half a coconut shell serving as a resonator. It is played by running a bow across it. A second kind of two stringed instruments, somewhat like a guitar, also has a bamboo stem, but here the resonators are two gourds. A third musical instrument, very popular at marriage is a rasp. It is made from a segment of bamboo and has a slit cut longitudinally down its middle portion. The slit is corrugated, and when scraped with a stick, emits a grating sound.

The Saoras who have very little knowledge about environmental sanitation do not keep their villages clean. Rather, their villages look dirty as cow-dung and other refuses like household dirt and animal excreta etc. are thrown here and there in the street. As such, the people suffer from various diseases of which malaria, gastro-intestinal disorder, diarrhea, dysentery, hookworm and roundworm infections are common. In these days this scenario is changing under the impact of external agencies and modernization.

Like their magico-religious life, dress-style, artistic talents and terrace cultivation skills, another important feature is their keenness to maintain their group solidarity and their cultural identity by adhering to the ethics, values, morals, customs and traditions, which are unique. Their interpersonal relations are governed by fixed status and well-defined customs, which are applicable to all aspects of social life. The ethical percepts and norms are transmitted from generation to generation through the informal process of socialization.

The problems faced by the Saoras are manifold and deep rooted. Diminution of productivity of swiddens over the years and the ban imposed by the Government against shifting cultivation and hunting has affected their economy. Added to this is unchecked exploitation by the Dombs, their Scheduled Caste neighbour, over them. The timid and industrious Saora have endured all the evils for centuries. Sometimes when things have gone beyond their limit of tolerance they have rose en masse to register their protests. But by and large, they have remained a simple, shy and peace loving folk.

Since the remote past the Lanjia Saora lived undisturbed in their remote mountainous habitat. In modern times, the rapid changes in administrative set-up and political climate of the country and their exposure to the external modern world have influenced the Saora way of life. For example, abolition of intermediary system has set the Saora free from the clutches of the oppressive feudal lords and their unscrupulous subordinates and this has contributed to the modernization of their political organization.

After independence, the welfare Government has taken a very benevolent attitude towards improving the lot of the downtrodden tribal people of this country including the Saoras. Various welfare measures initiated by the Government have resulted in exposing the Saora more and more to outside contact and pressures of ever-advancing and powerful social, economic

10. Francis, W. 1907 *Gazetteer of Vizagapatam District*, Vol.I
11. Mohanty, B. B. 1988 A Glimpse of Social life of the Lanjia Saora, *Adibasi*, Vol. XXVIII, No.2, pp. 16-21.
12. Mohanty, B. B. & S. C. Mohanty 2009 Tribal Customs and Traditions, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar
13. Mohanty, S. C. 1992 Birinda-the Agnatic Lineage System of the Lanjia Saora, *Orissa Review*, Vol. XLVIII, No.6. pp 24-28
1994 Social Control, Tradition and Transition in Lanjia Saora Society. *Adivasi*, Vol. XXXIV, Nos. 1&2, pp. 56-61.
14. Mohapatra, G. 1983 The Soura View of Good Life and Development, *Adibasi*, Vol. XXIII, No.2, pp. 30-40.
15. Munro, A. C. 1955 Saora Children and Work, *Adibasi* Inaugural Number, p.39.
16. Panda, J. K. 1965-66 Changing Saora Culture, *Adibasi*, Vol.7, No.1, p 71.
17. Patnaik, N. 1980-81 *Jagannathpur: A Changing Saora Village*.
1989 *The Saora*, (Popular Series on Tribes) THRTI, Bhubaneswar
18. Patnaik, N. & H. S. Mishra 1976 Election and Pattern of Leadership in two Lanjia Saora Villages of Gumma Panchayat, Ganjam, *Adibasi*, Vol. XVI, No.3, pp. 1-15.
19. Patnaik, U. N. 1955 Saora of Ganjam Scheduled Areas, *Adibasi*, Inaugural Number.
1963-64 The Saora of Ganjam Hills, *Adibasi*, Vol. V, No.1, pp. 6-13.
1964-65 A Saora House, *Adibasi*, Vol.VI, No.1, pp.49-50
20. Rowney, H. B. 1982 *Souras*, The Wild Tribes of India, pp. 93-94,
21. Roy, S. N. 1927 Savaras. *Man in India*, Vol.7, pp.177-336
22. Russell, R. V. 1916 *Tribes Castes of Central Provinces of India*, Vol.III, Part-III, pp.464-81.
23. Singh, Bhupinder 1984 Levels of Leadership in Saora Society, *Souvenir, Adibasi Exhibition*, Bhubaneswar, pp. 20-28.
24. Ibid 1984 *The Saora Highlanders*, Bombay, Somaiya Publication, Pvt., Ltd.
25. Thurston, E. 1909 *Castes & Tribes of Southern India*, Vol.III, pp. 357-415

A GLIMPSE OF SOCIAL LIFE OF THE LANJIA SAORA *

*B. B. Mohanty*¹

The Lanjia Saoras, a section of the great Saora tribe are one of the primitive tribes of Odisha. The tribe 'Saora' or 'Sabara' is known to all in India as mention of it is made in our ancient literatures. It would perhaps mean that the Aryans designated all the jungle tribes with whom they come in contact as Sabaras. Cunningham has corroborated that in ancient times by whenever the name Sabara is mentioned; it meant all the aboriginals who are now called Kolarians. Nevertheless, the Sabara entered over a vast territory from Uttar Pradesh in the west up to Odisha in the East. The Hill Kharia of Dholbhum call themselves as Sabaras and the Juang of Keonjhar do not hesitate to trace their origin from the Sabara. From these references it is rather difficult to accurately delineate the geographical dimensions of Sabara tribe.

The Saoras are mostly concentrated in the Parlakhemundi subdivision of Ganjam district and Puttasingi area of Gunupur subdivision of (former undivided) Koraput district. This is one of the most inaccessible parts of the State of Odisha. Here ranges of hills criss-cross the area, small streams and rivulets flow in all directions around the valleys, nature with all its endowments present in its naked revelations, tigers and malaria intercept free movement, money lenders and petty traders move from dawn to dusk, and plainsmen are afraid of spending nights in this area. Elwin has rightly described the Saora country as one of the most picturesque lands in the country. But all its beauty is marred by unhealthy climate. Anopheles mosquitoes are plenty in the area and fever is a common feature of the land. Added to it are the habits of Saoras, who throw all their dirt and debris on the village streets. The excreta of the pigs and dirt emit foul odour and provide breeding grounds for the germs.

* Published in ADIBASI, Vol. XXVIII, No.2, 1988, pp.16-21

¹ Research Officer, THRTI, Bhubaneswar, 751003

The high hill ranges do not permit opening up of new roads. There are mainly five principal roads from (a) Berhampur to Parlakhemundi, (b) Paralakhemundi to Serongo, (c) Gunupur to Puttasingi, (d) Khajuripada to Nuagada and (e) Chelligada to Ramagiri. All these roads are fairly good roads which are open throughout the year.

The hills of the Saora country are between 3000' - 4000' in altitude. On the North Serongo and Ajayagada highlands stand as great barriers, Mahendragiri and Devagiri stand as two posts. The Juntang hill towards the South follows them. Bad Deo and Ratni ranges surround Udayagiri area. Down below is the Puttasingi valley with terraced fields and patches of forests. In Udayagiri area there is still some thick patches of forests. The road from Udayagiri to Parimal and Jhalarsingi and Parimal to Nuagada pass through thick patches. But in other parts forests have largely vanished. The hills look desolate due to expansion of shifting cultivation and the thick woods which once had varieties of wild animals have thinned down. Broadly, the vegetation is of moist type in which *Shorea terminalia* *Adina* series are dominant. As Sal regenerates abundantly in the clearings; it dominates over other miscellaneous species. Besides that there are various types of grasses and creepers seen in the forests.

The soil of this region is determined by relief vegetation and parent rock materials. It is classified into lateritic or ferralitic soil formed under tropical rainy climate with a pronounced dry season (Gaussen, Legris & Viar, 1967).

The bio-climate of the area is hot and humid. The whole year can broadly be divided into three seasons. The winter starts from the month of November end, continues up to February. The summer starts from March and lasts up to June. The Rainy season begins from July and continues till September. May is the hottest month of the year, mean daily maximum temperature being 32-3°C (90-1 °F) and the mean daily minimum temperature 26.8°C. With the onset of monsoons in the third week of June the day temperature gradually decreases and the night temperature continues as it is in summer. At the end of September temperature decreases progressively and rapidly. December is the coldest month with mean daily minimum temperature of 16.2°C (61-2°F) and the mean daily maximum temperature of 26.9°C (80.4°F).

The average rainfall of the area is 1295.6mm (55"). It increases from the as the month progresses. The South-West monsoons reach the area by the second week of June and the whole area gets maximum rainfall during its period. August is the rainiest month and the average rainy days in a year are 65 days.

Population

The Saoras are found in almost all the districts of the State. However, they are mainly concentrated in the districts of Ganjam and Koraput. The total population of the Saoras in different census years is presented below:

Census year		Population of Saora
1951	..	1,91,401
1961	..	3,11,614
1971	..	3,42,757

These above census figures show that the population of the tribe is increasing. Within a span of ten years from 1961 to 1971 the tribe has registered a growth rate of about 10 percent. The total number of literates among the Saoras is 34,802 according to Census 1971 and the percentage of literates to total tribal population is only 10.15.

Divisions

The Saoras have at least got 10 divisions depending upon their nature of occupations. These distinguished categories are: (1) Lamba Lanjia, (2) Jadu, (3) Mane, (4) Raika, (5) Sarda, (6) Kindal, (7) Arsi, (8) Juari, (9) Kanchor, (10) Kuruma. Besides there are Sudha and Jati Saoras, and Jara Sabaras who speak Odia, and Kampoo Saoras who speak Telugu. These sections have become separate units by endogamy and according to their particular occupation, they are considered high and low by the other sections. The Jadu Saoras are not magicians, as the name denotes, but are treated low as they do not revere the cow. They live in Bada Kemidi area. The Mane Saoras of Ajaygada *mutta* work on brass and sell the products to other Saoras. The Raikas who live in Rayagada *mutta* do not eat animal flesh. The Kindal or Tankala Saoras are basket makers and work on bamboos. They exchange and sell the baskets for food grains and other household articles. The Arsi Saoras are considered low like Doms as they eat beef. The Juari Saoras cut date-palms and are found in Jirang and Ramgiri areas. The Kanchor of Badkemundi is good archers and the Kurumba Saoras are shifting cultivators. In addition to these sections, there are Kumbits who are potters, the Gantar who work on bell metal and the Luar are black-smiths. Of all these sections, the Lanjia, as they are called by others, are in a real primitive stage. They are called Lanjia because of the manner of putting on the loin-cloth in which a long tail hangs behind. They are also called Malua as they live on the uplands or Mala. The Lanjia group is numerically superior to other sections.

Physical Characteristics, Language and Dress

The somatoscopic features as found among the Saoras are as follows.

Height – medium

Skin colour – brown to light brown

Build – athletic

Head form – long

Face – long, generally some with marked zygoma.

Forehead – high and ascending

Nose profile – straight

Nose shape – broad
Eyes – narrow but not oblique
Head hair – plenty wavy to deep wavy
Body hair – scanty

The language of the Saoras belongs to Munda group of language as distinguished from the Dravidian and Aryan linguistic families. So, linguistically, the Saoras stand apart from the Koya and other Dravidian speaking tribes. The Saora language is very difficult and peculiar in its structure which is called 'Sora'. Late Gidugu Ramamurti Pantulu has published a dictionary of the Saora language.

During olden days, the women folk used to wear just a skirt and the men only loin cloth. These textiles were woven in those days by the local Dom weavers from the yarn hand-spun by the Saora themselves. This type of dress pattern is found now-a-days in the most interior areas of Sagada and Puttasingi valleys.

Settlement Pattern

The settlement pattern of Saora villages do not confirm to any definite pattern. It is mostly of compact type as the houses are built on different uneven terraces on the hill slopes. The houses are jumbled up here and there and narrow lanes and alleys running up and down the terraces between houses.

Now-a-days, the traditional houses have undergone several transformations. However, in remote and inaccessible areas the old type houses are seen. Generally, the houses are rectangular in shape built over a high plinth. The size of the house is 4.4 m. x 4.1 m. and the height of the house is approximately 3 m. The floor is made of beaten earth and the walls are made mainly of bamboo or wooden pillars plastered with mud. The walls of the house are coloured with red earth. The roof of the house is made of bamboo and wooden rods which are proportionately tied with *siali* creeper and is thatched by a variety of grass collected from forest.

The Saora houses are single roomed and inside the room there is a big shelf with strong stands covering three-fourth of the room. On this shelf all the articles of the house starting from food grains to small tidbits are kept. The open space inside the room is meant for husking grains and for dining. The hearth is always placed in far corner of the house close to a wall. The inner walls of the house are decorated with icons in honour of their Gods and ancestors.

Economic Life

The economic life of the Saoras mainly centers on agriculture. They practice two types of agriculture – shifting cultivation on the hill slope and terrace cultivation on the gentle slopes at the foot hill. They supplement their income from land by foraging and food gathering. Mango, Mahula and

mushrooms constitute important collections in seasons. Minor forest produce such as Karanja and Tola seeds from which oil is extracted, grass used for making broom-sticks and many types of medicinal herbs which they collect during their leisure time meet their own needs at home and form an important supplementary source of income.

The wild animals have become scarce as a result of shrinkage of forests and therefore hunting has become an occasional pursuit among the Saoras.

The Saora are the best terraced cultivators. The terraced fields in which water flows throughout the year are locally called *sarroba* and are exclusively meant for paddy cultivation. The upper terraces which are dry is locally called as *jyanum* and used for cultivating Ragi (*elusine corocana*), Biri (*phaseolus mungo*) and Kulthi (*dolichos biflorus*).

The terraces are built right up the beds of the hill streams and extends many hundreds of feet from the depths of the valleys to the hill-slopes and in some places rising up to the hill-tops. The terraces are works of great engineering skill. The platform of each terrace is flat throughout and the fall of each terrace is stone pocked. The construction of the terraces is so ingeniously and skillfully made that no soil is carried down with the water that flows from the higher terraces to the lower.

The terrace fields are privately owned and handed down from father to sons. These are valuable assets to the Saoras and sometimes mortgaged to local money and paddy lenders who are mostly of 'Pana' community.

Two varieties of paddy are grown in the terrace fields, the early variety called *Ambadhan* and the late variety called *Badadhan*. The calendar of agricultural operations connected with terrace fields are given below.

Agricultural Operations of Terrace Cultivation

Early variety (month)	Name of work	Late variety (month)
December.	Preparation of seed bed	June
February.	Transplantation	July
April.	Weeding	September
May-June.	Harvesting	November-December

Ragi is cultivated in dry fields. No manure is applied in these fields. The transplantation of *ragi* starts after the first shower of rains and weeding and harvesting in the months of July and October respectively.

The Saoras grow pumpkin, cucumber, bean, pineapple, tobacco, maize and ginger in their kitchen gardens.

The Saoras observe certain rituals in connection with terrace cultivation. The principal one is connected with transplantation. Before, the seedlings are pulled up for transplantation; a ritual is performed in seed bed. On this occasion

dried fish and fowl are offered to a deity called Jatra, The belief is that the deity will be pleased and protect the plants from pests and ensure a good harvest.

Shifting Cultivation

In addition to wet or terrace cultivation the Saoras practice shifting cultivation extensively. The shifting cultivation is called "Bagada chasa" by them and each and every family has a few patches of swiddens either in the hill slopes or at the hill-tops yielding mainly minor millets and pulses.

Among the Saoras, the swiddens are owned individually on hereditary basis although there is no legal document in support of their ownership rights. They conceive of themselves not as belonging to their ancestral swiddens but rather as owning them. In their attitude there is all the proud possessiveness of the land owners in the plains who vigorously defend their right against any illegal encroachment. The land itself, the timber and fruit trees, and animals are as dear as life to the Saoras. Generally speaking, the focal point of all activities in the Saora society is land and the root cause of Saora *fituri* is land alienation.

Every Saora village has a well defined boundary and its inhabitants carry on shifting cultivation in the hills located within the village boundary. Some hills are close to the village and others are at a distance. Traditionally the hills are distributed on the basis of Birinda or extended family. Members of a particular Birinda used to have swiddens exclusively on a hill and no outsider was allowed to share it for shifting cultivation. But with the population growth and out migration changes are noticed in this pattern. Today cases of outsiders cultivating hills belonging to a Birinda other than their own are not unknown.

A piece of land is cultivated for two to three years when successively different crops are sown. Then it is abandoned so that it could recuperate. A mixed crop of cereals, minor millets and pulses such as *elusine corocana*, *penicum liliare* and *penicum italicum*, *sorghum valgare*, *penisetum typhoideum*, *cajanus cajan* and *dolichos biflorus* are grown in the swiddens. This practice of growing mixed crops is dictated by their food habit and ecological conditions. The shortening of recuperative cycle, which is due to the shortage of land and population explosion, has caused more damage to the vegetation in the swiddens.

The Saoras work the soil by a piece of hoe called *gubla*. Unlike the Juang of North Odisha, they do not use plough in the swiddens.

The monthly calendar of agricultural operations connected with shifting cultivation is given below: -

Months	... Nature of work
November-December	... Forest clearing, Debushing
March	... Firing
April	... Dibbling, sowing
June	... Weeding
August-January	... Watching, harvesting

Certain rituals are attached to shifting cultivation. A ceremony is performed on the day of sowing. Before the seeds are mixed and sown broadcast the village *Buya* and *Kudan* worship the hill-Gods by offering them liquor and sacrificing fowl and goat. A small ritual which involves the offering of either a fowl or a goat to the hill-God called *Barusim* is observed towards the end of August after Kangu is harvested. The next ceremony follows before Jana is threshed and Kandula is harvested. On this occasion, fowls are offered to the hill-Gods. Among the Saoras there is a belief that if these ceremonies are performed they will get good crop from the swiddens.

The principal food of the Saoras is gruel (*pej*) prepared out of rice or *ragi* or *jana* or *ghantia*. Besides, they take vegetables grown in kitchen gardens and fruits, roots, leaves, tubers and honey collected from forest. The non-vegetarian food is much more relished than the vegetarian diet and no festival is observed and no guest is entertained without non-vegetarian food.

Social Organization

The social life of the Saoras is knit around harmonious relationship with the living as well as dead and there is a continuous process of reciprocity. This process is manifested in different social organizations and the community life is pregnant with this ideal. The environment in which the Saoras live makes them feel helpless without a strong bond of corporate living that gives way to corporate thinking. The ceremonies and festivals of the Saoras are the occasions when the social bonds are strengthened.

The smallest social unit among the Saoras is the family which is mostly of nuclear type. Generally a family comprises of parents and unmarried children. They have no exogamous totemic clans, no phatries and no moieties. The main exogamous unit is the lineage which is called 'Birinda'. The members of a Birinda which is based on patri-lineage believe to have descended from a common male ancestor. A woman does not change her Birinda membership even after her marriage.

Life Cycle

Birth - The Saoras love their children very much. When a woman is found to be barren, her husband may marry another woman or adopt a child. The pregnant woman does her usual work up to the time of delivery. When the labour pain starts she is confined in a room which is generally a corner of the house. At the time of delivery, an experienced elderly lady of the village or of the neighbouring village officiates as the midwife. She rubs the abdomen of the pregnant woman with castor oil and this process facilitates easy delivery. The umbilical cord is cut by the midwife with a sharp edged arrow. The placenta is then buried in a pit in one corner of the courtyard of the house. Then the mother

and the new born baby take bath with tepid water. The pollution period is observed for seven days. On the seventh day, the woman takes bath and cooks food which is shared by the females of the house. Generally they prefer the names of the ancestors for naming the child.

Marriage - Lanjia Saora marriage is not an elaborate affair. It is rather queer that the people who spend most of their resources in a series of festivals and ceremonies, on trifle causes, consummate marriage in such a simple way. Out of the different forms of marriages prevalent in their society viz. marriage by arrangement, capture, service, the Saoras have accepted the first form as the rule and others as exceptions. Polygamy in the form of polygyny is widely prevalent among them. The Saoras say that if a person has more fields to clear, he can go for several wives, as each of the wives can clear a patch of land, thereby enhancing the economic condition of the family.

In arranged marriages, the parents and relations of the groom take initiative. Generally, negotiations are made according to the status of both the parties, in some cases it is noticed that a man from lower Birinda has married a woman of higher Birinda by offering more pots of liquor to bride's parents. The bride price is locally known as "Panshal". The amount of *panshal* varies between Rs.60.00 to Rs.80.00 and 8 pots of country liquor. The Saoras generally prefer to marry the daughter of their maternal uncle. The father of the boy accompanied by some kinsmen visits the girl's house with a pot full of wine. If the girl's parents approve the proposal the wine pot is accepted and drunk in the presence of some important persons of the village. However, in this type of marriage, the opinion of the girl is also sought for. Thereafter, the groom's father accompanied by some kinsmen visits the bride's house on more than one occasion with one or more pots of liquor.

In one of such occasions an arrow is taken and the engagement is finalized. On another day, the amount of bride-price is discussed and finalized. Bride-price is paid generally in both cash and kind. On the appointed day, groom's men visit the girl's house for betrothal taking nine pots of wine. On this occasion, they are entertained with festive meals consisting of rice, buffalo meat and liquor. One year thereafter, the bride is brought to the groom's house. The day is celebrated by dancing and drinking and from that day, they are recognized as husband and wife.

The Saoras also practice sororate and levirate forms of marriage, i.e., a man can marry his deceased wife's younger sister and woman can marry her deceased husband's younger brother.

Death Rites - The Saoras cremate their dead. But persons dying of cholera and small-pox are buried. As cremation is a family affair, some members collect wood for the pyre. The girls who are trained to act as assistants in funeral

rites fetch water and prepare turmeric paste. Then the corpse is carried to the cremation ground accompanied by musical band. On the following day, the family members of deceased visit the cremation ground to examine the ashes and to find out the sign of the cause of death. In the evening, a fowl is killed in the cremation ground and cooked with rice and bitter leaves which is shared by the mourners of the village. Then, after a year or two, the Guar ceremony is observed. On this occasion menhirs are planted and a large number of buffaloes are sacrificed. This is generally followed by three successive 'Karja' ceremonies in every second or third year to commemorate and to honour the dead of that particular period. This ceremony is generally observed in the months of March or April which is generally treated as off season for agricultural operations.

Religion

Perhaps the religion of no other tribes is as elaborate as that of the Lanjia Saoras. From the olden times the Saoras of Odisha are associated with cult of "Lord Jagannath". Elwin has travelled through the length and breadth of the Saora country and has described the beliefs and practices of the Saoras at length. In his opinion, it is true that without understanding the religion of this tribe, one cannot understand any other aspects of their life. The Saoras believe in number of Gods and Goddesses which are invoked and propitiated to grant prosperity and happiness to them. These Gods are worshipped in different ways at different times. Besides, the Saoras believe in ancestral spirits who are constantly watchful of the doings of the living generation. Any omission or negligence, breach of taboo and customary law on the part of the living generation is punished by disease, death or trouble to the family and to the villagers. According to the Saoras, the diseases are caused due to the anger of the deities, ancestors and black-magic of the sorcerers. The religious functionaries of the village is known as Kudan (Shaman) who also work as ambassador to the world of the Gods and convey the pleasure and displeasures of the divines to livings. The Saoras offer food, drink, meat and liquor to the Kudan at different occasions.

LANJIA SAORA *

A. B. Ota ¹

S. C. Mohanty ²

INTRODUCTION

The Saoras are one of the most ancient tribes of India. Frequent references to the tribe are found in Hindu mythology and classics. More often, they find mention in the Sanskrit literature, the epics, the *Puranas* and other religious texts. They are called by various names such as Savara, Sabara, Saur, Sora, etc. and have a racial affinity with the proto-Australoid stock which is dominant among the aborigines of central and southern India. Their dialect called *Sora*, comes under the Austro-Asiatic family of Munda group of languages. They are widely found all over Central India comprising Bihar, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and West Bengal.

The Saora is also an oldest known major tribe of Orissa. They are found all over the State but, are largely concentrated in the highlands of Gajapati District and Gunupur subdivision of Rayagada District forming a contiguous territory i.e., Saora Country.

Lanjia Saora, besides their traditional style of dress and ornaments and dialect, are distinguished by certain other cultural traits :-

- Their women greatly enlarge their ear lobes to wear rounded wooden pegs & have a characteristic tattoo marks down the middle of forehead.
- Have scattered housing pattern on hill slopes.
- Install the village guardian deities represented by wooden posts at the entrance of the village.

* Published in the Photo Handbook on Lanjia Saora, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar, 2007

¹ Director, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar

² Research Officer, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar

- Pursue shifting cultivation and prepare stone bounded terrace fields ingeniously with inbuilt water management system for rice cultivation.
- Have their typical traditional labour cooperatives, *ansir*, for helping each other for strenuous and labour intensive works.
- Have no clans but lineage organization called *Birinda*.
- Have male and female shamans to serve their magico- religious needs.
- Famous for their attractive wall paintings, *Idital*.
- Observe *Guar*, the secondary burial ritual to commemorate the dead by sacrificing buffaloes and by erecting menhirs.

HABITAT

Lanjia Saoras inhabit the Saora country in Gajapati and Rayagada Districts. Lying to the western side of the Eastern Ghats, this is a picturesque territory with rolling hills, undulating meadows, lush green forests, roaring rapids, darting hill streams, enchanting waterfalls, gaping valleys, terraced paddy fields and varied flora and fauna. The Lanjia Saoras with their colourful costumes and adornments, scintillating dance and music display their spirit of freedom and spontaneous joy of life in close harmony with nature.

SETTLEMENT& HOUSING

Lanjia Saora love to live on slopes. Therefore their villages are situated on the hill slopes or foothills- often inaccessible, and mostly lie hidden in forest-clad hills. When founding a new settlement they select high lands and hill slopes which are free from water-logging and lie near the natural water sources. They generally live in small villages. In large villages they live in several hamlets. The terraced paddy fields exhibiting the Saora's skill and ingenuity in contour bunding, revetment and water management radiate in all possible directions.

In Lanjia Saora villages, the houses are either scattered or arranged in rows. "All around the villages are little gardens...Not too far away are the burning grounds (swiddens) and groups of menhirs. In the streets and down the paths leading to the village boundary is shrines for gods or ancestors. ... Everywhere are sago or date palms, and many villages are well shaded by great trees..... There is nothing of normal about these substantial villages, with their strongly built houses, the endless stone walls piercing the forest on every side, the wonderfully constructed terraces, the menhirs whose number often suggests considerable antiquity". (Elwin, 1955; 38-39)

Lanjia Saora houses built on a general plan upon high plinth are rectangular in shape. The roof is proportionately low. The walls of the houses are

made of stone and mud or of upright pieces of wood or bamboo and covered with a thick plaster of mud. The walls are painted red with red earth and the veranda is painted black.

There may be a single **door** or in some houses a back door, right in line with the front door. There is a high front verandah. The verandas, are rather narrow, usually at least three feet, and may be as much as six feet above the ground, and are reached by a flight of stone steps. Built into the veranda there is often a pigsty though this may be located on the back veranda instead.

Inside the house is a **large loft** resting on wooden pillars and covering about three-quarters of the house, which is used for storing most of the household articles from food grains, utensils and clothes to tiny tidbits. The open space is meant for husking grains with pestles and dining.

The ever **burning hearth** is located under this loft at one end adjoining a wall. The household utensils are kept near the hearth. In winter and the rainy season all family members and visitors sleep under the loft. In summer some people may sleep on the verandah.

From the roof hang a number of objects like baskets, gourd vessels, bundles of clothes, umbrellas, spears, bows, arrows and earthenware pots. Agricultural implements are piled up at one corner of the house. The dedicated pots, gourds and baskets containing the special clothes of the ancestors and tutelary deities are hung on the wall, which is decorated with *italons* or *ikons* representing men, archers, gunmen, mantle-bearers, kings, queens, elephants, horses, dogs, etc. A cowshed is built on one side of the house.

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

Lanjia Saora social organization is unique for lack of any clan or sib organization that is common in most of the tribal societies of the country. Their smallest social unit is family and the largest, the extended family called *birinda* constituted of the descendants of a common ancestor up to four or five generations back.

Marriage is prohibited within a *birinda*, whose members stand to each other as blood brothers and sisters. They participate in the *Guar* and *Karja* rituals with their contributions. When one member dies the *birinda* performs the funeral rites and even the secondary *Guar* ceremony, after which the dead is admitted to the underworld.

Significantly, a woman's membership of her father's *birinda* does not change after her marriage and she remains as such till her death after which her own *birinda* kins may claim the right to perform her funeral rites. The same principle applies to those migrated to other places. After death their bones, etc.

are brought to their original villages for performing the last rites. The *birinda* also inherits the property of an heirless member.

Lanjia Saora **marriage** is a plain and simple affair. Among different forms of marriages prevalent in their society, viz. marriage by arrangement or negotiation, by capture or by service, they have accepted the first form as the rule and others as exceptions.

Polygyny is widely prevalent. The Saora say that a man having more fields to cultivate, must have several wives. Industrious Saora women work hard to enhance family income.

To marry the selected woman, the man pays the bride price (*panshal*) in both cash and kind. On the appointed day, the groom's party visits the girl's house for the betrothal, taking along nine pots of wine. On this occasion, they are entertained with feasts consisting of rice, buffalo meat and liquor. After one year, the bride is brought to the groom's house. The day is celebrated by dancing and drinking, and from that day, they are recognized as husband and wife.

The Lanjia Saora society also permits sororate, junior levirate types of marriage and divorce and remarriage of widows, widowers and divorcees. That means a man can marry his deceased wife's younger sister and a woman can marry her deceased husband's younger brother.

Lanjia Saora **family** is mostly nuclear and patrilineal, generally comprising parents and unmarried children. Women and children being treated as important social and economic assets, enjoy special position in the family as well as the society. Besides housekeeping and child rearing women work hard to undertake a major part of subsistence activities as well as trade and barter.

Children from a very tender age start to help their parents in all works and develop self-sufficiency. Therefore women and children are loved, respected and allowed a great deal of freedom. Lanjia Saora say, "Life is not worth living without children"

The Saora **cremate their dead**. The corpse is carried to the cremation ground accompanied by a musical band. The next day, the bereaved family members examine the ashes at the cremation ground to discover sign of the cause of death. In the evening, a fowl is killed there and cooked with rice and bitter leaves and the meal is shared by the mourners of the village.

After a year or two the *Guar* ceremony is observed. On this occasion menhirs are planted and a large number of buffaloes are sacrificed. This is generally followed by three successive *Karja* rituals every 2nd or 3rd year—generally observed in March or April, to commemorate and honour the dead.

ECONOMIC EXISTENCE

Traditionally, for the Lanjia Saora, **shifting cultivation** (*Bagado Chas*) has been their way of life. Most of them possess a few patches of swiddens inherited individually, to grow a mixed crop of cereals, minor millets and pulses as dictated by their food habits. In their attitude there is all the proud possessiveness of the landowners in the plains who vigorously defend their rights against any illegal encroachment. The land itself, timber, fruit trees and game animals are as dear as life to the Saora. Generally speaking the focal point of all activities in Saora society is land and they strongly resist land alienation.

Every Saora village has a well-defined boundary and its natives carry on *podu* cultivation in the hills located within the boundary. Traditionally the hills are distributed among the *birindas*. Members of a *birinda* possess swiddens exclusively in one hill and no outsider is ordinarily allowed to share it.

Normally a *bagado* plot is cultivated for three consecutive years for growing different crops and left fallow for 8-12 years for rejuvenation for sustaining the next cycle of cultivation. The more the regenerative fallow period, the better is the fertility and productivity. Now these conditions are deteriorating day by day. With the depletion of forest and soil, this practice has become uneconomical. Now the Saora have learnt in a hard way that this age old mode of subsistence would no longer sustain their growing population. While trying to reduce their dependence on this less productive enterprise and looking for alternatives, they are yet to abandon the practice altogether.

Settled Terrace Cultivation

The Lanjia Saora are expert terrace cultivators. They exhibit a high degree of indigenous skill, ingenuity and technological outfit for preparing the terraces with inbuilt water management system. The terraces- works of great engineering skill- are built right up the beds of the hill streams and ascend hundreds of feet from the depths of the valleys to the hill slopes and even up to the hill tops. Each terrace is flat and the fall of each terrace is packed with stones. The terrace fields are privately owned and inherited from father to sons.

Their settled agricultural practices mainly revolve around their *Saroba*. The upper terraces which are dry are locally called *jyanum* and used for cultivating *ragi* (*elusine corocana*), *biri* (*phaseolus mungo*) and *kulthi* (*dolichos biflorus*). In the lower terraces where adequate irrigation is available they raise a second paddy crop in *Saroba* during summer months.

Horticulture

The Lanjia Saora love trees and take care to protect the fruit plants like date-palm, tamarind, jackfruit, mango, *Mohul*, *Ramphal*, *Sitaphal*, *Salap*, etc in their villages, hills and swiddens. Besides, they raise kitchen garden in their backyards or in the vicinity of their houses and orchards if suitable sites are available. They

usually grow pumpkin, cucumber, bean, pineapple, tobacco, maize and ginger in their kitchen gardens. Presently, following the diminishing returns from agriculture, shifting cultivation and forestry, they are seeking for a dependable alternative in horticulture. They have started growing new horticultural crops introduced by themselves as well as the development agencies. This programme, introduced as an alternative to swidden cultivation, has become popular.

Now besides the development of kitchen gardens and backyard plantations, mixed orchards and commercial cash crops, they have raised cashew in wastelands and hill slopes covering parts of degraded swiddens. The **cashew plantation** drive has been very popular for its low maintenance and high return. Now, they are growing cashew on their own initiative and so, many families own cashew orchards from which comes a good part of their income.

With the gradual degradation of forests and natural environment, and growth of population their dependence on traditional sectors such as, hunting, shifting cultivation, animal husbandry and collection of minor forest produce have declined. They have taken up pursuits like settled cultivation, horticultural plantations and wage labour. Now they are exhibiting a trend of seasonal migration, in the lean seasons, to far-off states like Maharashtra, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh etc to earn higher wages by their engagement in unskilled and semi-skilled avocations such as carpentry, masonry, plumbing, auto-driving, machine operation, construction works, tea garden works and the like. They return to their homes before the onset of agricultural season bringing with them the new ideas and modern skills as well as the accumulated savings from their incomes.

Marketing

The Lanjia Saora are generally self-sufficient in meeting their minimum needs and they procure few items from external sources. The sources are local hawkers, peddlers, weekly markets and towns. They also trade or barter their surplus produce to these sources.

A number of weekly markets sit on different week days in and around the Saora Country. They love to visit those markets to trade their products and buy their necessities like salt, chilies, tobacco, dry fish, cosmetics, clothes, etc. Market day is a holiday for them. They get an opportunity to meet their friends and relatives and spend happy times together

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

Apparently there is hardly any tribe who has such complex religious beliefs and practices and such elaborate and dynamic pantheon of countless deities and spirits- both benevolent and malevolent as that of the Lanjia Saora. They are worshipped with fear and anxiety and offered sacrifices to provide safety and wellbeing of the people. Religion permeates all aspects of their life.

Sonnum or *Sunnam* is the general name for the Saora deities and spirits. They have no concept of a supreme deity. In different parts different gods are considered supreme. Moreover, there is no standard catalogue for these gods, for the list continually changes, as new ones are introduced and old ones forgotten. But all the varied aspects of their environment are associated with some god or other. The gods differ from one another in composition, function, character and nature. Some are benevolent, some are neutral and some are malevolent.

All these gods and spirits make constant demands on the living. Those who die in the house appear in dreams and demand certain offerings. Sometimes devil spirits enter cattle sheds and make cows and oxen ill in order to make their displeasure known. If their demands are not met they can cause harm. Malevolent spirits are therefore more feared than the benevolent ones.

In this mystic domain of “man-nature and spirit complex”, there are very important intermediaries between humans and supernaturals. They are shamans – both male and female, called *Kudan* and *Kudan Boi* respectively. They act as diviner-cum-medics who can establish direct communication with the unseen world in a trance and cure illness and ward off mishaps and misfortunes caused by the wrath of evil spirits. Interestingly every shaman has a female tutelary and every shamanin has a male tutelary. The relationship between them and their respective tutelary is the same as that between husband and wife.

To keep the gods and spirits in good humour the Saora make their famous wall paintings, or icons known as *italons*, *anital* or *idital* inside the house. The icons, which contain sketches of human beings, aero planes, cycles, plants, animals, hills, forests, sun, moon, etc., are very difficult to understand.

An **icon** is painted to flatter and please the gods and ancestors so that they may spare members of the concerned family from their invidious attention. Periodically an icon may be repainted or replaced by another depending on the circumstances and the conduct of the god or ancestor. These unique beautiful wall paintings expressing the unique artistic talents and skills of the Lanjia Saora and are done by the artists who may be a shaman or anyone who knows the art.

To appease the unseen, the Saora perform many ceremonies festivals and rituals. The ceremonies and rites connected with child birth, marriage and death are observed by individual families, whereas those relating to various agricultural operations, and the biennial or triennial secondary mortuary rite-*Guar* (laying of stone slabs in memory of the deceased) are observed by the village community. Performing *Guar* is an expensive affair involving sacrifice of buffaloes, drinking, dancing, feasting, and entertaining friends, relatives and villagers. While the shaman conducts the magical rites, another religious functionary called *Buyya*, presides over agricultural festivals. Some of the important festivals observed by the Saora are as follows:

1. *Buroy-n-a-Adur* (relating to a kind of millet)
2. *Ganugey-n-a-Adur* (relating to sweet potato)
3. *Kondam-n-a-Adur* (relating to a hill grown coarse variety of corn)
4. *Kuroj-n-a-Adur* (relating to a kind of gram)
5. *Osa-n-a-Adur* (relating to a minor millet)
6. *Rago-n-a-Adur* (relating to red gram)
7. *Tanku-n-a-Adur* (relating to storing of mango fruit)
8. *Uda-n-a-Adur* (relating to ripening of mango fruit)

AESTHETIC LIFE

The Lanjia Saora are a very artistic people. Being children of nature they derive inspirations, ideas and ingredients from their natural environment for their creations. Their artistic talents and skills find expression in their colourful and enchanting **wall paintings, dance and music.**

Every Saora is a musician who can coin a **song** instantly and sing it. Both women and men cultivate the art of dancing and singing as a matter of natural habit. In their songs, one can find a great deal of humour, romance and melody in combination of the words.

Lanjia Saora dance creates riot of colours, rhythm and music that fills their sylvan surroundings and echoed in the hills. Men and women dance together. The dancers and musicians including pipers, flutists, violinists, gong players cymbal players, drummers, etc. advance towards each other in alternation to the rhythm of the music.

Their dance costumes are colourful. Men and women dance wearing colourful attire with white fowl feathers on their heads and holding peacock plumes in their hands. Men tie turbans of coloured silk or cotton and wrap a long piece of the red cloth around their chest. While dancing they carry umbrellas, sticks, swords, other implements and blow whistles and make peculiar sounds.

They play a variety of **musical instruments** such as drums of various sizes, flutes, pipes, cymbals, clarinets, gongs, rasps and string instruments. The **drums** are of three types, kettle drum, double membrane drum and large drum. There are also **brass cymbals, pipes and clarinets, brass gongs and hyde gongs.** The noisy percussion instruments are used at certain agricultural festivals.

Fiddles are popular at weddings. There is a two-stringed fiddle consisting of a bamboo stem with half a coconut shell serving as a resonator. It is played by running a bow across it. A second kind of two-stringed instrument, somewhat like a guitar, also has a bamboo stem, but here the resonators are two gourds. A third musical instrument, very popular at weddings, is rasp. This is made from a segment of bamboo and has a slit cut longitudinally down its middle portion. The slit is corrugated, and when scraped with stick emits a grating sound.

SOCIAL CONTROL

Traditionally, Lanjia Saora villages are self-governing and the traditional *panchayat* plays an important role in maintaining law and order and village solidarity. In every village the people are under the influence of two elders, *Gomang*- the secular headman and *Buyya*- the religious headman. The offices of both are hereditary and occupied by the members of one and the same family. Officials designated as *Mondal* and *Dalbehera* assist them in handling the village affairs. Besides, there is the village astrologer called *Disari*, a post which is achieved rather than ascribed. Anyone who acquires knowledge of stars and predicts events can function as an astrologer.

The annual schedule of festivals is decided unanimously in the village meeting. Disputes relating to the partition of property, sale and mortgage of land, marriage, bride price, divorce, adultery, and other social matters are decided in the traditional panchayat as per customary rules and principles. The *Gomang* presides over the meeting, initiates discussions and take decisions in consultation with the village elders. Ordinarily the offender is asked to pay the penalty in kinds of pots of liquor and goat, etc. and to feed the villagers with these. The quantum of penalty depends on the gravity of the offence.

CHANGING WORLD

Since the remote past, the Lanjia Saora lived undisturbed in their remote hill habitat. In modern times, exposure to Christianity, the changing socio-cultural, political and economic climates as well as the external modern world have influenced the Saora way of life.

After independence, the welfare Government is initiating various welfare measures to improve the lot of the Saora. During the 5th Plan, Tribal Sub Plan (TSP) approach has been adopted and Lanjia Saora identified as one among 13 Primitive Tribal Groups (PTG) in Orissa. For their all round development two Micro Projects, one located at Puttasing in Rayagada district and another at Serango in Gajapati district have been established. The Micro Projects have adopted the basic approach of Tribal Sub Plan, that is, location and community specific holistic development of the target area and the people.

The objective is to raise the living conditions of the Lanjia Saora and change them from a primitive and pre agricultural stage of shifting cultivation to modern agriculture and the culture of such other beliefs and practices. The impact is visible in changes effected in their way of life. Now the Lanjia Saora are passing through a phase of transition

THE BIRINDA OF THE LANJIA SAORAS *

*Nityananda Das*¹

The Lanjia Saoras here after called Saora are the most backward section of the great Saora tribe who live in the Agency tracts of Ganjam district and in Pottasingi P. S. area of Koraput district in the State of Orissa. They inhabit the Eastern Ghats hill ranges varying from 3000-4000 ft. Their population according to 1941 Census was estimated in Ganjam Agency 95, 479 and in Koraput 52, 518. In 1961 Census the population is 1, 31, 000. They are called by this name on account of the manner of putting on their loin-cloth with an end hanging like a tail from the waist. They are also called Maliah (Mal-hill), Jati Saora. The Tribe has been described in the ancient literature as a component of the great Sabara stock that extended from Gujrat in the west to the coastal plains of modern Orissa in the coast. Cunningham has considered the Bhils also as Sabaras. In Sanskrit Sabara or Sabara means a mountaineer barbarian or savage. In fact, the Aryans designated almost all the Jungle tribes as Sabaras.

The Saoras of Orissa owe their importance to a legend which connects them with Lord Jagannath of Puri. It is said that the Sabara king Viswabasu was worshipping lord Jagannath in his mountain Kingdom. An Oriya king could not succeed to persuade him to part with the deity to be installed in the temple at Puri. Then he sent secretly an emissary in disguise who succeeded in transferring the deity to Puri. Authenticity of this legend cannot be documented, but it has its impact on the social and religious life of the people and even today a section of the priests in Jagannath temple of Puri are considered to be of Sabara origin.

Elwin has described the religion of the tribe magnificently in 'Religion' of An Indian Tribe', which made them known all over the world. To the students of anthropology and religion, his book opens up a new chapter. Never before, the religions of any tribe has been studied in such detail. There is hardly any

* Published in ADIBASI, Vol. VII, No. 2, 1965-66, pp. 5-12

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

contemporary tribal community who has such elaborate religious organization, beliefs and rites like those of the Lanjia Saora. Elwin is right in saying that without understanding the religion of the tribe one cannot understand any other aspect of their life. There is hardly any other contemporary religion having so many super-natural beings all functioning, all important, all demanding their rights and exercising their influence over the living beings.

Nevertheless there is another very important aspect of Saora culture which puts the tribe on a unique position in ethnographical map of the world, the absence of "clan" or "sib" in their social structure. A clan or sib consists of blood relations of one side only who are joined into an exogamous unit. A common residence, mystic tie or descents from an animal or plant or material object were stated to be characteristics of a clan. Rivers defined a clan "as an exogamous division of a tribe the members of which are tied together by a belief in common descent, common possession of a totem or habitation of a common territory. Lowie omitted totemism as an integral component of a clan due to its absence in many tribes of America, Africa and Asia. Besides, he dropped common territory as there are instances of a clan spreading over a large area.

In Notes and Quarries of Anthropology, a clan is defined "as a group of persons of both sexes, membership of which is determined by unilateral descent, actual or putative with ipso facto obligation of an exclusive kind".

A Clan or Sib therefore has the principal function in regulating marriage, inheritance of property and other social, economic and political events like funeral, warfare exchange, barter, etc. In the history of anthropological thought there is special importance of clan or sib. Morgan and Tylor advocated that clan is the primary social organization of all people while family evolved later. This view of Morgan was adopted by Engels who became one of the founders of Marxism. Hence there rose a controversy on this issue. From the researches among the contemporary backward people it was well established that some of the most primitive tribes like Onges of Andaman, Bushmen Hottentots of Africa and some Eskimo groups do not have clans but they have well organized families as the unit of social organization. In this respect, the Lanjia Saoras of Ganjam and Koraput, who are certainly a real primitive tribe confined to a specific geographical habitat do not have exogamous clans or sibs and associated totemism.

They have families as the unit of social organization, and Birindas are groups of extended families controlling marriage, inheritance and other social functions.

The Gamang of Pottasing when interviewed stated that Birinda consists of descendants from a common ancestor for 3 to 4 generations. From the village Sagada it was learnt that not all the descendents of a common ancestor are in one Birinda for all time to come. In course of time some separate and form another

Birinda. Enquiries from Parlakimidi agencies showed that the Birinda structure is a loose union of families. In a Birinda there may be twenty to thirty families or only 5 to 10 families. In Udayagiri agency where Hinduisation has been felt to a greater extent, Birinda is gradually transforming into Gotra, by adopting a Gotra names from Hindu society.

The function of Birinda is clear. Marriage within the Birinda is strictly prohibited. The members stand to each other as brothers and sisters. "It is highly objectionable for a man to take a woman from the same Birinda" said the Gamanga of Patilli. This not only offends living beings but dead too. It may so happen that the two neighbors in a village may belong to two different Birindas. Hence taking a girl from the neighbor's house for marriage is possible, while in different villages there may be members of one Birinda among which matrimony is not possible. The members do not associate any Guardian Angel with the Birinda and totemic rites connected with plants and animals are not there. The dead ancestor's within living memory, not supernatural beings are considered to be founders of the Birindas.

The Birinda brotherhood is called upon to participate in the birth and death rites not only as visitors but are expected to contribute for expenses which are of course reciprocated. Saora have a large number of funeral rites out of which first funeral rite called 'Guar' and the second funeral rite called 'Karjya' are the most important. These ceremonies are not only elaborate affairs but drain away a good part of Saoras' resources as one or more buffaloes are sacrificed. Birinda members have to donate some cash for the sacrificial buffaloes. Well-to-do kins may contribute a full animal. All these payments are reciprocated by the receiver to the giver when similar occasion arises. In Liabo village at the Guar ceremony of Sirpini two buffaloes were supplied by his Birinda men of two different villages. One of those villages was of her brother's and the other of her sister's. With proper observance of these ceremonies the dead can only be admitted into the under worlds of ancestors and Gods.

When someone dies issueless the Birinda members inherit his properties. A *panchayat* of the Birinda brotherhood convened for this purpose, decides who of the members should inherit it. It becomes obligatory for the inheritor to perform the first funeral Guar ceremony for the deceased. It will be worthwhile to state that in Saora culture a great emphasis is laid on this ceremony. Without the performance of this ceremony there is no peace to the soul of the dead, as he cannot be admitted to underworld. Such a soul not only becomes source of trouble to his family members but also to the general communal life. As such a soul cannot get a place among the ancestors of underworld. It has to move about between the land of living and dead, around human habitations and bring in epidemics, diseases, pests and man-eating tigers.

Another important aspect is the woman retaining her father's Birinda after marriage. In different societies it is obligatory for a woman to change to the

clan or Gotra of her husband after her marriage. In a patriarchal society where inheritance is through the father's line we do not find any incidence of two clans or Gotras within one family. But the Saoras having patriarchy and patrilocal residence permit a woman to retain the membership of her parents' Birinda after her marriage. After her death the members of a woman's Birinda may demand her dead body to be cremated in their village, not in the village of her husband. When it does not become feasible, a portion of the ash after cremation is taken to their own cremation ground and ceremonially buried. This is the vital trait through which woman maintain their social position in the Saora Society. Her brothers and sisters belong to her Birinda, as also the children of her brothers, but not of the sisters. Her own children do not belong to her Birinda but to her husband's Birinda. Therefore, her own children could be married to her brother's children. Cross cousin marriages are therefore common.

Another interesting institution in Saora society is marriage of a step-son and a step-mother. Saoras marry several wives. It may so happen that at the time of death of the father, there may be very young junior wives. There may be grown up sons from senior wives. As those sons and the step-mothers belong to different Birindas, one of the sons can keep as mistress one of the young step-mothers on his father's death. Such a marriage is called 'Yayangkoi'. The spirit of the deceased father then admonishes them in dreams and threatens them to cause harm if a proper ceremony is not held. The son then buys a buffalo, two bangles and a new cloth. The buffalo is ceremonially sacrificed and offered to the spirit of deceased father. In the ceremony, one of the older relations acts as the dead father. After the ceremony the step-son and his step-mother are recognized as man and wife.

Birinda members are exogamous and strictly observe incest taboos. It was gathered that there are sometimes violations of the incest taboo where somebody develops affairs with another member of opposite sex within a Birinda. On such occasions there is strong social disapproval and the offenders may have to leave their home and hearth. Often they use to run away to the tea gardens in Assam and do not return to their village during their life time. But such instances are rare. At Manumgul village one has kept his sister as mistress and they have issues. They are considered outcastes and do not have normal social intercourse with others.

In a small Saora village there may be members of one Birinda or sometimes two to three Birindas. In big villages there are several such Birindas. In big village there are several such Birindas. In Sagada there are nine Birindas among 110 families. In 100 families at Kalakote there are as many as eleven Birindas. While in Tabarpotta all the seven families belong to one Birinda, and they have members of their Birinda in Patta, another village in the neighborhood, from which they have all come to settle in the present site. In multi-Birinda villages there is free mixing of unmarried boys and girls while in mono-Birinda village

absolute restrictions are perceptible, as all the inmates are agnatic kins. Hence in the former case quite a larger number of marriages take place within the village.

Saora memory being short it is difficult to gather genealogy beyond three generations. Besides, I had no opportunity to make detail studies on this line in various regions of Saora land. From the few genealogies collected at Sagada, Rejingtal and Taraba it could be found that a Birinda divides and each unit becomes an independent unit with the increase in number of members. A too unwieldy growth could not absorb all the obligations and restrictions. That is why it divides. Migration of a Birinda member to another settlement or village also affects the structure. After three generations (sometimes more or less) the migrants cut off social ties with their agnates, though they may refer them as "Sudh" and do not observe the regulations and obligations towards them, as own Birinda members like attending Guar and Karjya ceremonies with animal and grains. Marriage restrictions may still be followed except in exceptional cases when someone takes a mate in tea-gardens, or while working as Goti (servant) in the family of the girl. Then it is argued that the Birinda has already been cut off and no penalty is fixed for the breach. This has happened in case of Parjon in Potta village who eloped with a girl named Japni from Tabar Potta, whose families were once upon a time members of one Birinda.

When a group of Saoras call at another village with a marriage proposal, they may discuss in detail all possible genealogy of the members to find out probabilities of their Birinda ties. If no such link can be established beyond three generation, then it is granted that there is either no tie or if any, exists, it can be ignored. This is a pragmatic approach to proceed with negotiations without unnecessarily hindering the same.

Birinda is a democratic force in Saora society. Its members are all equal in their rights and privileges. No doubt older members have some say but not to any great extent to impose any arbitrary decision on the younger. Birindas are knit around the general, social and political structure of a village. They all abide by the decision of the Gamang and Bhuiya in secular and religious affairs. It has no such function as the Kondh agnatic territorial clans have in claiming a particular Soil (area) as their own. In this aspect Saora Birinda is a loose union of members.

Saoras dread like the Hindus and few other tribes to die issueless. For them life after death in the other world is more important than life in the world. For entry into the underworld of deads, proper ceremonies (Guar and Karjya) have to be performed by the children and other kinsmen of the dead. Birinda membership is a security against the contingency of one dying issueless. If one dies issueless the Birinda members can claim his properties but simultaneously should perform the funeral ceremonies. Besides, Birinda also cuts down a good deal of disputes over inheritance of the properties of the deceased. If anyone inherits such properties without the complementary obligations, he draws the vengeance from the dead and is sure to face calamity. Security in this world and

in the underworld is thus achieved through the Birinda structure. It helps in curbing bride price as well as dowry. As the woman retains the membership of her own Birinda after her marriage and her Birinda agnates have a right to claim her body after death and perform funeral rites, she continues to be a part and parcel of the family to which she is born. She claims her personal possessions during and after her marriage. Hence, there is lesser social necessity to pay a heavy bride price to get a girl and corresponding dowry to be paid to her during marriage.

From the above study it can then be revealed as to how a simpler society without clan or sib orients itself to discharge all the social functions and religious obligations. It has devised the Birinda structure which practically functions in all respects as a clan in controlling social and psychological frontiers, but simultaneously cuts down multiple restrictions of totemism leaving a free hand to the Saoras to plan their social events. In its various aspects a Birinda is a loose association of its members, but simultaneously fosters a strong bond among them. In fact, Birinda structure enables the Saoras to lead a less complicated life arranging their own houses according to necessity and demands.

MATERIAL CULTURE AND TECHNOLOGY OF THE LANJIA SAORAS *

*B. B. Mohanty*¹

“Man may be conceived as living in a five dimensional world. First, there is the world of nature that which offers resistance to human effects and whose powers and laws he must obey. Secondly, there is the conceptual or symbolic world by which he interprets and envisages the natural world. Thirdly, there is the world of cultural reality, the man made world of artifacts and social facts which is the creation of society. Fourthly, there is the ideal world of nature and actual world of culture, the deal world of utopians and the intelligible world of ideal forms. Fifthly, there is the private world which the ego inhabits and which he does not share with others” (Foster, G. M.:1965). The culture study of any community without the study of the functional importance of material objects and the role these play in other aspects of life such as economic, political, religion, educational and social is incomplete.

The Saoras are numerically one of the largest tribal communities of Orissa found in all its 13 (former undivided) districts in varying number. But their main concentration is in the districts of Ganjam and Koraput. It is only in these two districts that the primitive section of the tribe which is known as Lanjia Saora is found. The Paralakhemundi subdivision of Koraput district (now a new district named Gajapati) from the contiguous and compact Lanjia Saora habitat. The Saoras of other districts are very much influenced by the caste Hindus among whom they live and have become Hinduised, more or less, in their way of life. This paper gives an account of the material culture of the Lanjia Saoras who are mentioned henceforward simply as Saoras.

Population

It is not possible to mention the exact population of the Lanjia Saoras as Census of India does not give section-wise population of the tribes. However,

* Published in ADIBASI, Vol. XXIX, Nos. 3&4, 1989, pp.24-28

¹ Research Officer, T.H.R.T.I, Bhubaneswar

the total population of the Saoras in the state according to 1981 Census is 3,70,061 which accounts for 6.26 percent of the total tribal population (59,15,067) of the state. By their numerical strength, they occupy the 3rd position among all the Scheduled Tribes. Their level of literacy is 14.47 percent according to 1981 Census.

Habitat and Settlement Pattern

“The Saora has an eye for beauty”, says Elwin (1955) describing the location of the Saora villages. Any traveler to the Saora land is struck with the settings in which the Saoras set up their villages. It would be fair to quote a paragraph of Elwin here. “It would be hard to find a more excitingly lovely place than Thordrangu, dinging to the hill-side with a superb view of the lower hills and plains. Talasing too is built on the brow of a hill and from its cliffs you can look across to the splendid height of Juntangbaru. Bodokhara another beautiful village - a cup of the hills of great rocks overlook it. Sagada is a valley surrounded by steep hills and terraced fields, the eye is enchanted by quiet beauty of the scene. Tumul must be one of the loveliest places in India, where you look across green carpeted terraces and waving palms to range upon range of near and distance hills”. To add to it the views of hill ranges from Manimgul, the paddy fields from Kalakote are superb. Ajoygoda is situated in a basin from where the giant Debagiri hill rises to one side. There are villages having scenic paddy fields like Kalakote and terraced fields like Boraising, Tumukur and Sagada. There are also picturesque villages like Tobarpatta and Jung-Jung without paddy fields.

The Saoras generally prefer to build their hamlets on high lands and hill slopes which are free from any water logging problems. Other considerations which facilitate the selection of site are nearness to forest and hill springs. While engaged in shifting cultivation the well-to-do Saoras build small huts on the swiddens. They continue to live most of the time in those huts till the crops are harvested. Sometimes, they take their cattle to those huts. During these days the villages look empty.

The Saora villages do not confirm to any particular type of settlement pattern. Saora houses are often built in rows leaving a street in between. Sometimes there are several rows of houses with streets in between two rows, crossing each other at right angles. Sometimes, the houses are arranged in rows one above the other like terraces and all the rows face to the same view. In many cases the houses are jumbled up here and there and there are narrow lanes and small openings to which the doors of the houses open.

There are small villages of 4 to 5 families like Laiba and Tobarpatta. There are large villages like Barangasing, Boramsing, Patilli, Sogada, Tumulo, Parisal and Tipising, consisting of 100 or more families. A village might have

several hamlets. At the entrance to the Saora village there are gate keeping Gods who are offered food and animal flesh during festivals. They ward off epidemics, burglars and other mischievous elements. The Saora thus take adequate precautions to save their settlements from unwanted elements. Although their villages are beautifully situated and houses are neatly arranged, those are the dirtiest of the tribal villages. The houses are well kept and colour washed. The floors look like cemented but simultaneously they throw all darts, peelings, debris and cow dung just near their houses. During February and March, the village is full of corns of millets and other such stuffs. The Saora urinate just near their houses. Added to these are the pigs, fowls and cattle's who continuously move about and make the place dirtier. No Saora thinks of cleaning his village streets. There are small gardens adjoining the houses where they grow tobacco, gourd and maize. Such gardens are not seen in large compact villages like Sagada or Tumulo.

Saora houses are rectangular in shape and are fairly high. The plinth is high while the roof is proportionately low. There may be a single door or in some houses there is a back door, just in line with the front door. There is a high front verandah sometimes six feet in height. The verandah may be narrow. The headman or some well-to-do Saoras make it wider. The walls of the house are made up of stone and mud. In Udayagiri area, where there is dense forest, the walls may be built up of bamboo or wooden planks and plastered with mud. The walls are coloured red with red earth.

Inside the house lies a big shelf with strong stands. On this shelf which covers about 3/4th of the house, are kept all the articles of the Saora beginning from food grains to tiny tidbits and clothes. The open space is meant for husking grains with pestles, and for dinning. The hearth is located at one end adjoining to a wall, underneath the shelf. A fire burns at all times for which the house interiors are thus full of smoke. In winter and rainy seasons, all the family members sleep under the shelf. In summer some may sleep on the verandah. Usually all the inmates, parents, their children and even the visiting relatives sleep in the same room as they do not have separate dormitory houses for the unmarried boys and girls like other tribes such as the Juang, the Bonda, the Dongria Kandha etc. The plough shares are piled at one corner may be near the back door when there are two doors. Dried buffalo meat is hung from a pillar for future consumption.

On the walls there are *ikons* representing men, archers, gunmen, mantle bearers, kings, queens, elephants, horses, dogs etc. which the Saora consider important and near it hang from the roof several pots of rice, grains and some herbs and leaves. These *ikons*- all for the Kitungsum, the God who created the Saora, are an integral part of their religious beliefs and practices.

The house is kept as a fortress for the family to which their ancestors visit frequently. The village chiefs and other well-to-do Saoras build huge double roofed houses with spacious verandahs. Their doors and frames are decorated. Sometimes a Soara has more than one house for different wives. They sleep on mats made of palm leaves. The chiefs however have got some wooden furniture. String beds are not uncommon, as in case of the other tribes.

A Saora house contains varieties of articles, and in this respect they are far better than other tribes. There are varieties of clothes preserved for generations, some being very old and tottering. There are baskets of various sizes which they purchase from Tankla Saoras or from the Doms. In these baskets they store food grains, and carry their stuffs to the markets for barter or sale. Artistic designs in basketry are not very much observed among the Saora. Besides, there are metal and earthen pots. Every well-to-do Saora house may contain a bell-metal pot, purchased from local traders. Besides, there may be earthen pots of different sizes. In some they store water, others are used for cooking, and some others are used for varieties of purposes. The Saora do not have potters in their community. They depend for these on the potters in the plains. The Doms supplies these pots at their door steps if they could not have gone to a market to purchase these. They also keep varieties of knives as a Saora will always carry a knife fixed to his loin cloth wherever he goes. A list of some household articles are given below with their English equivalent names-

<u>Local Name</u>		<u>English equivalent</u>
Lab-dangi	:	Earthen Pitcher
Ding-Ding-Dangi	:	Pot for cooking rice
Kudu-Gini-Gini-Koo	:	Gourd container
Gharana	:	Wooden pressure
Mari	:	Seed container
Tudu	:	Basket
Madi	:	Basket
Sanure	:	Leaf Umbrella

Dress and Ornaments

The traditional dress of the Saora consists of a loin cloth for the males and a simple skirt for the females. The skirt is put around the waist and the upper portion of the body is left uncovered. In this respect they differ from other tribes except the Bonda of Malkangiri who also do not cover above their waists. The clothes are hand spun and are woven by the Dom. The male loin cloth is about sixfeet in length and about 10 inch in breadth. There may be longer pieces. The cloth may be plain or be decorated with red tassels at the ends. In Badakhimidi and Rayagada areas, the decorated pattern is not seen. In Serongo area they are rare, but in Gumma and Puttasingi areas, these types of clothes are seen plentily. This cloth is tied around the hip, passing through the

private parts. The ends hung in the front and at the back like a tail, the later being longer for which they are called Lamba Lanjias.

The female skirt is about 3ft in length and nearly 2ft. in breadth. There are brown borders and some designs at the ends. Women tie their skirts around their hips with the belly projecting. The length of the cloth is sufficient to wind around the legs and the breadth reaches up to the knee. At the present time, the Saora have taken to mill-made clothes and females are seen with a second piece wound around their bodies. Those who have returned from Assam Tea Gardens and Christian converts are seen with blouses and sometimes *sarees*. The males generally do not put on anything except their loin clothes. But now-a-days, they have taken to different modern dresses available in the local markets or brought from Assam such as shirts and short trousers. These clothes do not fit at all. It is rather interesting that while the males have taken to other varieties of dresses, the females still cling to their traditional skirts. While going to towns or to meet some important persons, the Saora males put on such modern dresses. During dances they tie a turban and wind some coloured clothes around the body. On the turban they fix feathers. The coloured clothes which they tie as turbans are called "Mane Gamchha", and these clothes are dedicated to the God - "Mane Sunum". These are to be brought out on special occasions.

Unlike the Bonda, the Saora do not have such huge bundle of necklaces of beads and metal. They do not have also metal head dresses like the Koya. In the words of Elwin, "The Saoras are not good at ornaments". A list of ornaments used by both the sexes is given in the following table.

Ornaments used by Saora Women

Name	English Equivalent	Materials used
Drinatang	Nacklace	Gold or Silver
Tangam	Beads	Beads
Piprang	Earring, ear ornaments	Silver
Anangulu	Ornaments	Any metal
Kudu	Bangle	Silver
Andudak	Anklet	Bell-metal
Yen-Sing	Finger ring	Brass or Bell metal
Danusig-ji	Toe ring	Bell-metal
Sikidi	Waist chain	Silver or brass
Danang-bub	Coloured tassel	Thread

Ornaments used by Men

Kudupi	Nose ring	Silver or Brass
Pangalu	Ear flower	Gold or Silver

It is a fact that the Saoras purchase any type of beads and ornaments and put on these without leaving for symphony and symmetry. Women may have brass or aluminum rings in their fingers which may number up to ten in each finger. Metallic necklaces are very common. In the legs they also put on bangles of bell metal and brass. The most peculiar ornament is the round wooden plugs put on the earlobes of the women. From childhood the females begin wearing small wooden plugs in the ear holes and as they grow up gradually the hole gets enlarged. Adult women sometimes have wooden plugs of 4" to 6" diameter. The *pinna* is pierced and small metal rings are worn. In the hair they put on bell-metal hair pins. In the nose there are generally three rings two on the alae and one on the septum. The well-to-do men put on gold necklaces and earrings. The Saora purchase their ornaments from the market and keep those with personal care. After death the dead ancestors may demand to see those personal belongings from the living.

Agricultural implements

Agricultural implements of the Saora are few. They practise both plain and swidden cultivation and as such two different sets of implements required for both the type of cultivation are seen in a Saora house. 'Irtub' or 'Isha' is the traditional wooden plough. Its trunk, handle and neck are made up of one piece solid wood usually from 'Sarangi' tree. This wood is hardy and light. The blade of the plough is much narrower than those used in the villages in the plains. Another type of plough called "Patta-Irtub" which is used by them is quite different from the plough mentioned above. Although the work and method of operation of both types are the same but the latter is made of three pieces of wood and the former, one wooden piece. Besides the plough, other implements used in plough cultivation are yoke, leveler, spade and sickle, etc.

In comparison to plough cultivation, implements used for shifting cultivation are very simple which consists of an axe for felling trees and a digging stick or hoe for dibbling the rock bed. A hoe is a forked piece of wood tipped with a pointed iron.

The Saoras know how to make the agricultural implements, except the iron parts which they purchase from the local markets. Sometimes, they get these made at home whenever blacksmiths visit their villages during agricultural seasons. A list of their agricultural implements is given in the following table.

Agricultural Implements

Name	Saora Equivalent	Material used for construction
Plough	Irtub or Isha	Wood, Iron
Yoke	Rasang	Wood

Leveler	Hinsa	Wood
Spade	Koddada	Wood, Iron
Bill-hook	Kondatur	Iron
Sickle	Kadtib	Wood Iron
Rope	Artap	Siali fibre
Axe	Areadrums	Wood Iron
Crowbar	.....	Iron
Digging Stick or Hoe	Lalaboi	Wood, Iron

Hunting and Fishing Implements

Hunting as a subsidiary occupation has lost its importance in the Saora subsistence economy since long due to deforestation and consequent scarcity of games. However, occasionally they go for hunting to distant forests. The implements used for hunting are bow and arrow, axe, etc. The bow and the arrow shaft are made by themselves and the iron parts are either purchased from local market or made by the blacksmith.

Musical Instruments

The Saora being fond of dance, song and music like other tribes possess a good number of musical instruments, the main among which is 'Tamak' (drum). It is a cup shaped hollow wooden structure with a diaphragm made of buffalo or cow hide. They beat the drum with sticks using both the hands. Another musical instrument is a bamboo flute of about one foot length and one inch diameter. Some holes are perforated along its length for playing the wind. The other musical instrument possessed by the Saoras is a buffalo-horn trumpet. It is about one foot in length having a small hole in the middle for blowing air. 'Sarangi' is another type of string instrument which most of the Saora youths like to play. It consists of four parts. The base part is made up of hollow bamboo tube, two bamboo pegs and a coconut cell and some strings. The other part of the instrument consists of a bow shaped structure in which some strings of horse hair is tied from one end to the other. The operator holding the base part of the instrument in his left hand and the other part in the right hand plays the instrument to produce musical sound. Sometimes a bunch of arrow shafts are beaten to produce musical sound. During festivals and leisure times when Saora men and women dance, they play these instruments. Generally, the instruments are played by the men folk and the women dance with the rhythm of the music by singing songs.

FOOD HABIT OF A TRIBAL COMMUNITY *

*Purna Chandra Mohanty*¹

The tribal community described in this paper is the Saoras of Gunupur Agency in the (former undivided) district of Koraput. They are one of the important tribes of the State. Numerically, they constitute the second largest tribe, first being the Khonds. The section of Saoras in my study area are known as Lanjia Saora for the manner of putting on the loin cloth with an end hanging at the back like a tail (*lanja*). The hill ranges of Eastern *ghats* on which Saoras live, are extended up to Ganjam district. In Gunupur area, Pottasingi is an important place. The Headquarters of a Panchayat is located here.

The present paper is based on a study in the Lanjia Saora village - Rijintal about 7 kms from Pottasingi. While discussing the food habits of the Saoras an attempt has also been made to analyze the manner of different types of food preparation and their nutritional value.

Food is the hub of primitive life. Like other jungle tribes traditionally, the Saoras are also hunters and food gatherers. Food quest is the propelling force behind cultivation, collection of forest produce and hunting. Traditionally, the Saoras have to arrange feasts for counter-acting any breach of tribal law. Offerings are made to Gods to seek their blessings. The daily time table and routine revolve around the axis of food. Many of the rituals and ceremonies have food quest and harvesting as their basis. Food is the means to satisfy not only hunger but it also has a social significance too. The Saoras attach great importance to the production and the gathering of food as one of the main links of social cohesion within the village community. They assist one another in the production or acquisition of food. Food is consumed by the family. At feasts and ceremonies, however, all households of a village join in a common lunch or dinner. Thus, the communal feast ensures group solidarity.

* Published in ADIBASI, Vol. IX, No.3, 1967-68, pp.20-25

¹ Junior Research Officer, Tribal Research Bureau, Bhubaneswar

A Saora takes 'Peja' (gruel of Jana, Ghantia, Kangu, and Kosala) in the morning and goes to the forest or to the field. If there is more work on 'Bagada', his wife supplies him the lunch there, otherwise, the Saora comes back home by 1 p.m. or so and again takes Peja (occasionally, Saoras take rice, especially in harvest time). In the afternoon he does some minor works and thereafter in the evening takes his dinner - 'Peja' or rice. A Saora does not get curry with every meal. Salt and chilly are his prime side dish. However, the Saora has a taste for the curry and whenever possible takes curry meal. Sometimes it so happens that all the family members are required in the field for work. At that time food is cooked in the field and eaten by all the members of the family dining together. Sometimes Saoras go to the distant places for cultivation. There they cook and eat together. The pot of gruel (Peja or rice) is kept in the centre and all the members squat themselves around with *sal* leaves in their hands. Then one after another takes 'Peja' from the common pot and pour it into their leaf plate. Self service is done at 'Bagada'. However, in the house when Saora takes his meal, the youngest lady serves the food. But there is no hard and fast rule for this type of serving. Sometimes the first or second wife also serves. A man feeling hungry goes to the place of hearth where the cooked food is kept and serves himself. Water is taken after the meal with the help of the gourd spoon (*danki*) and the hand and mouth washed with water.

When some member of the family is absent, other members of the family take their meal leaving his share. When the person returns, he finishes his meal and cleans the utensil and goes to bed, if it is night, without disturbing other members of the family.

Food occupies very important place in the life of Saora. From dawn to dusk they are engaged in procuring food. They either go to the forest to collect roots and tubers or engage themselves for the most part in the most un-economic kind of cultivation, i.e., 'Bagada'. They give food as gift to God to receive his blessing as men are cured by satisfying God with sacrifices. Thus, food overshadows the complexities of the Saoras' life.

Food in a simple society is not only a means to satisfy hunger but also one of the cohesive forces in the community. The more the conditions for getting the food are inhospitable, the more will be the communal interest in food. Of course, among the Saoras, we do not find such intensive communal activity for food production. Where gathering is the only for procuring food, we find intensive communal activity. Even now also the Saoras whenever they go to collect roots and tubers in the forest they go in groups. Food production has indeed a social significance, for it is one of the life giving forces of the society. The quest for food is the motive force behind cultivation, collection of roots and tubers and hunting. Whatever Saora collects or produces, he tries to make it more tasteful and delicious. So he prepares different items for his dish.

Preparation of Food

Every Saora family prepares the following items for the meal:-

Name of the food	Preparation
Rice	Either of rice, Jana or Ganga
Jau	Either of Mandia or Salop
Peja	Either of Jana Ghantia, Kangu of Kosala Boiled food of Kandula, Jhudanga of Bargudi
Curry	Vegetables-Pumpkin (Boitialu), gourd, aru, bean (<i>simba</i>).
Meat Curry	Meat either of buffalo (<i>podo</i>), pig (<i>kambu</i>), fowl, goat, birds, snakes, hare, peacock, bear, tiger, deer, <i>kutura</i> .
Fish Curry	Dry fish curry and dry meat curry

Now we will see how the dishes of different types are prepared.

Rice :

Saora use earthen pot for cooking. First water is kept in an earthen pot over burning hearth and when water gets boiled the rice is put inside the pot. The rice, however, is not washed before putting into the pot. When the rice gets boiled the water is taken out and the rice is ready for serving. Sometimes they add vegetables with the rice. Jana rice is also prepared in the similar fashion.

Salop Jau :

First of all Jana, Ganga or Ghantia rice is boiled. When the rice is boiled enough, *salop* solution, after being stained is added to the boiled rice and again heated moderately. Heating more, after adding the *salop*, spoils the taste of the *jau*. Required quantity of salt is added before the pot is taken out of the heart.

Mandia Jau:

Mandia is first powdered. Then the water is heated in an earthen pot. When the water gets boiled the *mandia* powder is mixed with water and a thin paste is made and added to the boiled water and stirred at regular intervals. Then required quantity of salt is added. When the mixture gets cooked, the pot is taken out of the hearth and eaten when cooled down.

Jana Rice:

As in the case of rice, water is boiled first and when water gets boiled, the Jana rice is put into it without washing. When the rice is boiled properly, the pot is taken out of the hearth. In this case it will be interesting to note that unlike rice the excess water is not taken out of Jana rice. But in some cases the rice water is also taken out. It depends on the taste of the individual.

Peja:

Peja is the staple diet for Saoras. As the people are, so is their diet-very simple way of preparing. For preparing Peja, first some water is taken in a pot and heated on a burning hearth. When water reaches little below the boiling point, some *ghantia*, *kangu*, *kosla*, or *jana* is put into the pot. The mixture is stirred and when cooked well, is taken out of the hearth. No salt is added. The important factor in this case to note is that more than one variety of food crops are mixed and cooked.

Pumpkin and Gourd Curry:

Pumpkin and gourd are cut into small pieces first and then boiled. When the pumpkin gets boiled, required quantity of salt and chilly are added. To make the dish more palatable, sometimes onion is added, if available. Some Kandula or Jhudung is also mixed with the pumpkin curry.

Dry Fish Curry:

Dry fish is put in turmeric water and then boiled. After boiling salt and chilly are added. In order to increase the taste of curry, little tamarind is added which makes the curry little acidic and thereby palatable.

Fish Curry:

The fish, if big, is cut into pieces. Scales or gills are not taken out. First water is boiled. When water gets boiled the small pieces of fish are put into the boiling water. Required quantity of salt, chilly and turmeric are put into the curry. Saoras do not favour the idea of frying the fish before making curry. They believe that if the fish is fried, the fish will get mixed with the soup (*golijiba*). Sometimes pumpkin, gourd or any other vegetable are also added to the fish curry.

Meat Curry:

Meat is first cut into small pieces and kept in a pot and after adding little water is boiled over the hearth. When the meat is boiled, required quantity of salt, chilly and turmeric are added. Sometimes pieces of gourd are also added. If available, onion or garlic is added. Enough of soup is left with the curry. Saoras like to take the soup with the rice, while eating. When there is meat or fish in Saora house, he generally prepares rice, as rice fits well to meat or fish curry. Meat is prepared by men and is cooked by women.

Among the various items, Saoras take only few items like 'Peja' and rice which remain constant throughout the year whereas the other items are seasonal. So far the curry is concerned, salt and chilly are used throughout the year. Other dishes are seasonal and occasional. When the stock of rice falls short they either borrow or substitute rice with some other cereal crop available with them. Sometimes they consume those items which are gathered from the forest, i.e.,

various kinds of fruits, nuts, roots, leaves and tubers. The powder of *sagu* seed is most important item in this category.

The economic life is concerned with the production and consumption of foods. Before using the new crops like *kandula*, *jana* or mango, they first propitiate the deity concerned and then only they eat the particular crop. As for example, before gathering raw mangoes from the trees in the forest they propitiate a deity with a pig or fowl and then start gathering. This shows how the food producing and consuming aspects of Saora are strictly tinged with religious fervor and strong religious bias over the producing and consuming aspects. This is an indication of the exertion of minimum human ingenuity. Saoras use the available food sparingly and save for the future. They try to exhaust those food stuffs which will be spoiled if these are kept for longer. They try to do their best not to waste the cooked food. But unfortunately, they are ignorant of food preservation. The only way known to Saora is to keep a lead or any other covering over the cooked food. Saoras preserve uncooked food stuff for a long time. This category generally includes dry meat and *valia* (cashew nut). When the meat is available more than their requirement then they dry some portion. The meat, when completely dried, is stored for future use. During rainy season the Saoras use the dry meat as their food.

It is found that the Saora community has no social arrangements for supplying food to its members during the time of food scarcity. It is the responsibility of the family as the primary social unit. When the family is charged with the responsibility of securing its own food, there is competition between different families in the community in this regard. Under the above circumstances, the status of a Saora family is always determined in accordance with the food they have and consume.

Daily Food and its value among Saoras

After discussing the food types, let us see the daily food habit and its value among Saoras. To Saoras, *kandula* and *mandia* have nutritious food values. Rice and *Jana* come next. Rice is no doubt a favourite food of Saora but they do not get it in plenty. They like most to take rice with curry. According to Saora, *Ghantia* and *Ganga* are energy giving food stuff. Saoras are aware of the food values of milk and ghee, but they rarely take these.

Food value is always judged by the time a particular food takes to get digested. The food that gets digested earlier is believed to have less food values by the Saora. For instance, *kangu* and *kosala* are believed to have less food value as it is digested faster.

Sometimes food value is considered in accordance with its availability. When food is scarce, Saoras accept the unwanted foods. During the food scarcity the roots and tubers are valued much. Although the Saoras like to take meat still they do not consider that it has food values. The reasons for this are given in

many ways. One of the reasons is that the meat comes from the old and weak buffaloes. Moreover, the meat is not tasteful as the buffaloes do not get sufficient fodder. Saoras value pork more than buffalo meat because while cooking pork some oil comes out of it whereas no oil comes out from the buffalo meat. Pleasure and change of diet induces Saoras to take meat. The other important reason for taking meat is that it is offered to God and they must eat the offerings to God. The same belief is found with other animals like goat, cow and chicken. Fish has no food value although they like to eat it. It is due to limited supply and availability. Fish while cooking in their way, gets mixed up with the soup. Although it has no food value, still they eat it whenever available.

Saoras use *salop* (sago palm powder and juice) as their food and drink. They consider that the *salop* has much food value. *Salop* is taken every day, if available. It is a habit with Saoras, good or bad to visit the *Salop* plant thrice in a day once early in the morning, afternoon and in the evening. *Salop* is always welcomed because it causes stimulation. Sometimes they take Mahua liquor, if available. Fowl meat has little food values to Saoras. They believe that they take fowl only because it is sacrificed to God. On questioning about its food values, it was replied that fowls are birds and they eat only rubbish and insects. So they do not like its meat. In this village every household keeps some chicken but they never take its meat unless it is sacrificed to God. Saoras do not take eggs. The eggs are used only for hatching and even they do not sell the eggs.

In addition to the above mentioned food, Saoras take a variety of roots and leaves from the jungle. They like mango and jackfruit the most. Also they take orange and date. In these areas Saoras produce plenty of oranges but they do not take and sell all of these.

Out of the above mentioned foods, Saoras generally take 'Peja' and rice regularly. But they like curry, veg or non-veg if it is available. During summer they take *mandiajau*. *Salop* remains constant for the whole year as food and drink and it plays an important role in the food habit of Saoras.

HUNTING AND TRAPPING IN SAORA ECONOMY *

R.V. Sarma ¹

"The inveterate romanticists will find in them a people after his dreams. The romanticists among the anthropologists and Philanthropologists (a term used by Verrier Elwin) still fondly nurse the belief that the individuality and culture of some tribes can be preserved in its purity while they are set on the course of economic development. The Saora are a fine specimen of independent and gay people with their own religion, social system, culture and economy". Thus described Singh (1984) in his introductory remarks of the book published based on the field work conducted among the Saoras.

Saora is a 'primitive tribal group' inhabiting the hills of Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. However, a wide range of variation of the phonetic expression of the name of the community is noted by different scholars (Elwin 1955). Elwin observed that Saoras were an important and widely scattered tribe and perhaps the confusion about the name was due to the fact that from the earliest period, the Saoras are broken up into different sections.

Saora inhabiting different parts of the county do not exhibit cultural homogeneity. External forces made considerable inroads into the cultural life styles of Saoras inhabiting West Bengal, Assam and other places. However, as has been noted by Singh (1984) in the case of Saoras of Ganjam and Koraput district of Orissa, the Savaras inhabiting the hill tracts of Srikakulam and Vizianagaram district of Andhra Pradesh too retained mostly their 'primitive' traits in all walks of their life. The continued interest in the activity of hunting as an economic and recreational activity, both at once, illustrates the point.

* Published in ADIBASI, Vol. XXXI, Nos. 3 & 4, 1991, pp.31-36

¹ Lecturer, University of Hyderabad

In Andhra Pradesh Savaras are concentrated in the Srikakulam and Vizianagaram districts. In Srikakulam, their population is 22.8% out of the total tribal population. Jatapu, a tribe whose population (42.8%) outnumbers the Savaras in the district and has been living in close association with Savaras. While Savaras live in small settlements on the hill slopes, Jatapu settlements are at the foot of the hills. Jatapu consider themselves to be superior by virtue of their food habits over the Savaras, but share bond friendship, extend fictitious Kinship, participate in certain rituals and live in total harmony with Savaras.

Studies on Savaras of this part of the country are few and far between. Elwin (1955), Srivastava (1971), Suryanarayana (1978), Singh (1984) made significant attempt to study religion, problems of education, the institutions of marriage, family, kinship and leadership respectively of this community. Earlier, Sitapati (1938-43) and Rama Murthy (1938) published ethnographic notes covering particularly the social organization and Saora language, respectively. No significant attempt has been made to understand the Savara economy in detail. Recent study of Murali Manohar (1985) however, throws some light on the economy of the tribals of the district of Srikakulam in general. But the place of hunting and trapping in Savara economy has been totally neglected.

It is attempted in this brief paper to present some details on this aspect basing on the field work conducted for about three and half years amongst this community.

Hunting and trapping is an important activity among Savaras. It is evident from the following observations: 1. The frequency of hunting operations. 2. The special desire that is generally expressed by any male member to possess the weapons used in hunting. 3. The frequent remembrance of those who had shown excellent hunting skills. 4. The frequent remembrance and grief expressed over the death of *Veta Kukka* (hunting dog) which played a heroic role in the past hunting expeditions. 5. The keen desire by almost all families to domesticate at least one dog for hunting. 6. A general interest and curiosity shown in the health of the dog that proved to be heroic in the hunting expeditions by all members of village but not definitely the least important one. 7. The cultural adjustment to provide 'free time' for hunting.

Hunting is carried out in the 'leisure' time. Much of the hunting is said to be possible only during the month of January and May. This is because: 1. Owing to the physiographical conditions they would not be busy with agricultural work. 2. The forest growth is not very thick and so tracing of the animal/ bird is easy and 3. Some 'leisure time' is available on account of religious sanctions. Savara men and women are to observe a total work holiday on the days when some agricultural activities of the next season are initiated and also on the day earlier to collection of different types of forest produce.

Types of Hunting/ Trapping

Savaras distinguish between different types of hunting/trapping. They are primarily A. *Roppudu Veta*, B. *Ratri Veta* and C. Trapping of wild Fowl. Techniques, time and planning of activities differ according to the nature of animal/bird they wish to capture/kill. An account of different types of hunting and trapping activities are presented below.

Roppudu Veta (hunting by chasing)

Roppudu Veta is very popular and is aimed at hunting of *Pedda jantuvulu* (big animals) like deer, antelope, boar, wild pig and bear. It requires a big group with minimum of 8- 10 members. There is no maximum limit. All the members who wish to join are accommodated. This is carried out during day time. The group consists of 3-6 members with skills in shooting, throwing of *ballem* (spear) and other sharp edged weapons. Others are unskilled. Though one of the members acts as a leader, he is guided by the advice and suggestions of others, particularly the other skilled persons.

Planning for Hunting

This type of hunting activity is more secretive these days, since hunting of wild animal is prohibited under law. Intention of planning for hunting is not made public in advance. Small group of 2-3 persons discuss and plan first in the evening, earlier to the day of hunting. This is later communicated in person to other members of the village secretly. It is felt that if public announcement is made, it would be carried over to the forest officials intentionally or unintentionally and that would bring problems to them. The actual plan of hunting activity and preparation for hunting starts only a few hours before going for such expeditions. The plan particularly covers two aspects: 1. which part of the forest would yield the game; and 2. who would take which role in the activity.

With regard to the first, discussion and consultation will be made with all the people who had gone into forest a day or two earlier for collection of forest products, firewood or for acquiring wood for agricultural implements. If any of the villagers report having seen some animals or heard the *Arupu* (cry) or observed footprints or excreta, elaborate probing is made and accordingly a decision is made. However, a preference is always given to go in search of those animals, meat of which is more delicious and the kill of which would give them better returns. With regard to taking of appropriate roles, discussion is made with regard to who would use which weapon. It takes a long time before arriving at a final decision in this regard. Normally, more than one member in the group who propose to join the hunting expedition possesses the required skill of using a specific weapon. This leads to debate and decision among the group members.

However, in this context it is interesting to note that the 'experts' do not by themselves express the desire to handle a particular instrument. Group members have to propose the name. Even then he would not readily accept. He

would refuse and propose another person's name. Only after a prolonged effort he would get convinced.

All the members take an early breakfast and start before the dawn. All the members carry some weapon or other. One or two younger men are, however, assigned the specific work of supply of drinking water to the group members.

As soon as the group reaches a particular area, members search for foot prints or the excreta of the animals in order to confirm the habitation of the animal in that area. Once the habitation of the animals is ascertained, the skilled persons take positions at different places. The unskilled persons from the other end chase the animal shouting loudly towards the place where the members of the team wait to shoot. The animals are shot at or injured by throwing spears and such other weapons. At the same time dogs which accompany the team are also pressed into service. The dogs chase the injured animals and further cause injuries resulting in the death of the animals.

***Ratri Veta* (Night hunting)**

There are two type of *ratri veta* (night hunting), in both of which usually persons with hunting skills only take part. However, one or two youngsters trying to acquire skills in shooting or throwing *ballems* (spears) also follow the elders. In any case, the night hunting groups will be small, consisting of 5-6 persons. Unlike the *Rappudu Veta*, this type of expeditions requires strict maintenance of silence among the group and so it is expected that the group consists of very few members. If there are more members, they form small groups and go in different directions. However, no member is forced to join this group or that group. This sometimes results in unequal distribution of members. In case too many members opt to join one particular group, the activity is cancelled, as no one can say 'no' and displease any person who wishes to join the group. Since it is generally agreed that they will not be successful, if the group is big, they would prefer to cancel the hunting expedition.

One type of game that is chased out in the night time is essentially the small animals like rabbits and birds like peacocks. The members do not go into the forest interiors, but venture only where there is thin growth of forest. For shooting peacocks, early morning is preferred. At the cock's crow, around 4 a.m., 3-4 persons go in the direction from which they hear the peacock's screech. Ultimately they wait under the tree on which the bird takes rest. When the bird comes down in the morning, it is shot at or killed with some other weapon.

People take an early dinner and go in hunting expedition to catch rabbits. In this case also a small group is preferred and no sharp weapons are needed. Guns fitted with powerful torch lights are preferred, as rabbits run fast. The colour of the rabbits is usually white and their eyes glitter strikingly. This makes location of the animals easier. As and when they come across the animal,

torch lights are focused. When the animal becomes steady facing the powerful light, it is shot immediately. If the target is missed, other members of the group try to chase and hit the animal with sticks. Sometimes the animal may get injured with the bullet, but may escape into a bush. In that case, dogs are pressed into service at the day break. The dogs smell the blood sprinkled at the spot and lead the members to the place where the animal lies dead.

Hunting of big animals carried out during nighttime is very risky and cumbersome. A pit of about 4-5feet is dug at the place where the animals are supposed to visit frequently. 3-4 members hid in the pit. The pit is covered with big logs. However, some space is left in between the logs to project the guns to shoot the animals. Some water is stored in a trough at a distance of 5-6 feet from the pit. The water is a trap for the animals. The members observe the water level in the pot and ascertain if any animal visited that place. Once they are sure, the following night 3-4 members wait in the pit and shoot the animal that comes to drink the water. Two or three persons who accompany the team, particularly the probationers, climb up trees and watch carefully. This type of hunting is very difficult because the members have to remain vigilant and sleepless throughout the night. But the result is more rewarding than other types.

Trapping of Wild Cock (*Adavikodi*)

Unlike the other type of game, this is essentially the concern of the individual. Sometimes two or more members may participate but they belong to the same household. Moreover, unlike the other game where the members are mostly young, the trapping of forest cock is attempted under the guidance of an experienced person. This is also carried out during the day time. The essential requirements of this hunt are: (1) a net and (2) a trained *adavi kodi* (wild cock). The net is spread out in the forest inhabited by wild cocks. Their habitation is ascertained by their cries in the early morning. If any egg or egg shells are found in that particular area, the habitation is further confirmed. After spreading the net, the domesticated cock is directed to cry and invite its species. As and when the cocks approach, they are trapped in the net.

Success rate in Hunting/ Trapping Expeditions:

Every hunting expedition is not rewarding. Success rate in *roppudu veta* is particularly poor, compared to *ratri veta*. There are large number of beliefs associated with successful hunting expedition. The failure of the operation is mostly attributed to those beliefs, rather than to the skill of the hunters. The variation in the beliefs in the different villages and the stories of origin of those beliefs suggests that these are group sentiments rather than 'beliefs'. For example, in the village Manapuram, a few years back the people killed a bear by hitting on its head with an axe. The bear was earlier shot by a gun. After some time the person who was an 'expert' in shooting become incapacitated. All the hunting expeditions after this incident did not yield any result for five successive

years. Since then, the villagers held the belief that 'once the animal is injured with a bullet, it should not be hit on the head with any axe. The only way to kill it is to cut the neck with knife'. A similar kind of story runs in Manda colony, where it is believed that if any member applied oil to his hair either on the day of hunting or a day before, he would miss the aim.

In the *roppudu veta*, in a period of five months (January- June), in the year 1987, 13 expeditions were undertaken and only five times they were able to kill a game. They were fortunate to get a deer killed by a *chindave* at one time. The *chindave* disappeared with the cries of the group, leaving the dead animal near a bush. This rate of success was considered to be rare by the villagers. During the previous two years, only eight animals could be killed during the same period. *Ratri veta* aimed at killing of *pedda jantuvulu* is more rewarding. During the period of five months from January to June, hunting activity of this type was carried out on nine occasions. Twice, the teams were successful. On one occasion, the team successfully killed two wild pigs. During the same period, in the same village, successful hunting of one rabbit and four peacocks was reported. The success rate in the case of rabbits is by far poor (one in 16 times), while it is the maximum in the case of peacocks (four out of seven times).

Hunting/Trapping as an Economic Activity

Except the trapping of wild cock other games are not very much commercialized. In the case of trapping of cocks, the birds caught are usually sold in the weekly markets. Thus, it becomes a direct source of income. At least the members in seven households in the three villages surveyed are preoccupied with this activity during the summer season. The average earnings from this activity during the three month period (February-April) were reported to be Rs. 60 per month. But the maximum earning is observed to be Rs. 310 for a total period of three months in the case of *Savara Masadu* of Manda colony. Though the activity is economically rewarding, only few individuals undertake this activity because of two reasons:-

- (a) Only few possess the trained wild cock. The wild cock is captured only by accident and
- (b) Only few persons know how to make the nets to trap the birds.

The economic returns of the hunting expeditions of other types are difficult to measure. The game assumes economic significance only when the meat of the animals is considered as rich contribution to their diet. The meat is not consumed all at once but preserved after drying it in sun for further use. The meat thus is used as a substitute to the side dish for a number of days. As such it reduces the expenditure on some other food items. The economic significance of hunting needs to be observed at a different level also. The Saora economic organization is based on reciprocity and is intrinsically associated with their socio-cultural life. Reciprocal exchange of goods, services and cash

occur at many occasions. Invitations to dinner/lunch on the occasions of marriage or celebration of other ceremonies mean an obligation of the part of the invitee to give/ present/contribute something in kind or cash to the host. Many a times, such give and take of goods/grains/ cooked food items take place between families without assigning any special reason. In such reciprocal relations, however, the giver and receiver, both are conscious of quantity of items given/received. A person receives and returns in kind or cash of the same value which he has received earlier. The meat of the game is not wholly consumed by family members themselves. Part of the meat (or the cooked meat) is distributed to others within the village, kinsmen in neighboring villages or Jatapus with whom they have bond friendship. It is always expected in such cases that those who receive would definitely return 'something' which would not be of just equal value but significantly "higher". This is because they have presented something which is rare and delicious. Thus, hunting gives rise to "economic" calculations among the tribesmen and their neighbours.

Now improved communication facilities, settlement of non-tribals in Savara villages have brought out changes in Savara economic life. Transactions involving money are increasing. Hunting is gaining the economic value, as the demand for the meat of different animals and birds is increasing in the neighboring towns. However, Savaras do not always exploit the situation and take the meat for sale in the neighboring towns at a high price for fear of being caught by the police. The meat is, however, secretly consumed and sold at low price sometimes. Otherwise, the meat is sold to the non-tribals who have settled in the village or in the neighboring villages. It is also common in these days to exchange the meat for other commodities which the *Konda Vyaparulu* brings to their villages.

Generally, Savara have a tendency to sell meat of the peacocks. Peacock meat is not considered by them as a rare delicacy. Secondly, only a few persons are involved in the peacock hunt. Thus, there is more likelihood for arriving at a decision to sell the meat.

Sale of a part of the meat of other big animals like wild pig, antelope, deer and wild goat has also been reported in the area of field work. It has been reported that the total earning from the sale of the meat of these animals at different times during the months of January to May, 1987 was Rs.1450. The sale of deer's skin and horns or peacock feathers too fetch money for the Savaras. The earning from the sale of such items was reported to be Rs.200 in the same village. Thus the total earnings from hunting come to Rs.1650. The average income from hunting and trapping of animals per household (total 22 households) comes to Rs. 75. But the contribution of hunting towards the economy of six (27%) households in the same village varied from Rs.30 to Rs. 475. The average income from this source is Rs.165 for these households. This income for these six families constituted about 5.08% of their total income from shifting (*podu*) cultivation and

forest produce together for the same year. It is again 10.52% of the total earnings from *podu* cultivation and 11.57% of the total earnings from the sale of forest produce, separately.

Summing up

The hunting and trapping of animals is not a major subsistence activity of Savara in these days. With regard to the significance of such activity the Saora is, perhaps, more sincere in his reply, as he say: "We give only small quantity of meat to the VDO or BDO or his staff. But it is a testy food item. We don't receive cash for it directly. Such transactions help to strengthen the bond. But for strong friendship he would not have got us a housing colony or free supply of seeds or repair of our tank. The returns are delayed, but they are much and much more".

"Occasionally we send meat of wild pig or peacock to our brothers (Missionaries). Brothers would be very happy, because they can buy anything in market but not peacock meat or meat of wild goat or wild pig. Brothers oblige by visiting us and giving medicine when we call them in the mid night. Would the Doctor at the PHC come that time and if not obliged, how much money would be demand?"

"I make it a point to send some portion of the meat of wild animals whenever killed to the '*Guruvu*'. He gives me money whenever I request for. The amount could be small. But it is given when I badly need to save my honor. It would carry more value at such time than its real value."

Thus the economic value of hunting and trapping among Savars cannot always be expressed in quantitative terms. Nevertheless, increase in communication facilities and possibility of sales within the village to non-Savaras in recent times have brought out some changes. Hunting and trapping substantially contributes to the economics of at least some households in the three Savara villages surveyed.

Notes

- (1) See, Kar, R. K. (1981), Savaras of Mancotta: A Study of effect of Tea industry on Tribal life.
- (2) In Srikakulam and Vizianagaram district of Andhra Pradesh they are called 'Savaras'.
- (3) Savaras consume the meat of *Nalla bakkalu* buffaloes, and Jatapu not.
- (4) Field-work was conducted during the years 1983-87.

- (5) Savaras make a distinction between *Konda vyaparulu* and *Konda sahumkarulu* (petty traders and wholesale business men). The prefix Konda refers to hill, and so it is to indicate those doing business on the hills.
- (6) Members of the 'Brothers of Saint Gabriel' who started a voluntary organization with head quarters at Hyderabad.

References

- | | | |
|---------------------|-----------|---|
| Elwin, Verrier | (1955) | <i>The Religion of an Indian Tribe</i> , London, Oxford University Press. |
| Kar, R. K. | (1981) | <i>The Savaras of Mancotta: A study of the effects of Tea industry on the tribal life</i> , New Delhi, Cosmo Publication. |
| Rao, Muralikrishna | (1988) | <i>Marketing in Tribal Economy</i> , New Delhi, Inter India Publications. |
| Sitapati, G. M. | (1938-39) | The Saora and their Country, <i>Journal Andhra Historical Research Society</i> , Vol.12, pp. 2, 3 & 4. |
| | (1940-41) | Vol. No. 13, pp. 384. |
| | (1942-43) | Vol. No. 14, p. 1. |
| Singh, Bhupinder | (1984) | <i>The Saora Highlander: Leadership and Development</i> , Bombay, Somaiya Pub. Pvt. Ltd. |
| Srivastava, L. R. N | (1971) | <i>Identification of Educational Problems of Saroa of Orissa</i> , New Delhi, NCERT. |
| Suryanarayana, M. | (1978) | <i>Marriage, Family and Kinship of the Saoras of Andhra Pradesh</i> , (Unpublished Ph. D. thesis), Waltair. |

PATTERN OF INDEBTEDNESS IN A SAORA VILLAGE *

Pravansu Sekhar Das Patnaik ¹

The study of indebtedness was undertaken in course of conducting the survey of submersible villages under the Salia Medium Irrigation Project in Banpur Tahasil of Puri district. In the village there are 168 Saoras who belong to the great Saora tribe largely concentrated in Ganjam Agency of South Orissa. In this Background the problem of indebtedness has been studied in the village Sundari to know the economic adjustment of the people in their present economic set-up and the various factors and forces which have induced them to incur loans from private agencies. The study also reflects certain aspects like, capability of the people in paying off their outstanding debts and their fate.

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

The village has twelve Saora families with a total population of 63, out of which 24 are males and 39 are females. About three to four generations back, one of these families migrated from village Manjusa near Paralakemundi and came to this place. They call themselves Bhima Saora and belong to single Bhima 'Birinda'. Birinda is the exogamous extended lineage (kinship) unit among the Saora as the Saora unlike other tribes have no clan system.

Presently, the Saoras of this village have totally given up their traditional occupation of shifting cultivation and have adopted plain land cultivation like their neighbouring castes and tribes. Now, paddy cultivation is their main source of living. Besides that, cereals, fruits, flowers, leaves, roots and tubers supplement their diet. Majority of the families are engaged in agriculture.

* Published in ADIBASI, Vol. IX, No.1, 1967-68, pp.40-49

¹ Junior Research Officer, Tribal Research Bureau, Bhubaneswar, Odisha

In this area there are only two varieties of land, such as *bila* (wet land) and *padar* (up land). The Saora villagers do not possess any wet land. Upland is found in abundance in their area. Total area of upland owned by the people is five 'bati' and ten 'mana'. The extent of utilization of total land in the possession of the villagers is shown in the table below:-

Land Utilization

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

(An acre is equivalent to roughly 2 *manas* and one 'Bati', to 20 *manas*/10 acres)

Cultivable Land Lying Fallow

Out of 10 *mana* of cultivable land, 3 *mana* of land are not cultivated because of forest growth. Two *mana* of land have been left uncultivated by one family since 1964 because those lands will be submerged in the Salia irrigation project. All these cultivable lands are lying scattered in and around the village within a radius of two miles.

Size of Agricultural Holdings

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

Distribution of Agricultural Land

Total No. of Households	Number of Households with				11-15 <i>mana</i>	15-22 <i>mana</i>
	No land	1-3 <i>mana</i>	4-6 <i>mana</i>	7-10 <i>mana</i>		
12	2	2	2	2	3	1

Out of 12 families, 2 households do not possess any agricultural land. Two land owners hold 1 to 3, 4 to 6 and 7 to 10 *mana* of land, each. The table shows that only three families or 25% of the land owners own 11 to 15 *manas* of land. Only one family or 8.3 percent of the landowner holds 15 to 22 *manas* of land. Average size of the holding per family is about 9 *manas* of land.

Despite the fact that each family possesses about 9 *manas* of land, the condition of each family is not very promising because all the lands are *padar*

lands where from only a single paddy crop is raised in a year and other cash crops and cereals, etc. grown in these are paid up to the local 'Sahukars' towards repayment of outstanding loans. Since the river Salia is flowing much below the level of the village, the river cannot be utilized to irrigate the lands. Hence the villagers solely depend on rainfall.

Except agriculture, they have got other sources of livelihood like forest collection, wage-earning, *baramasia* (annual contractual labour).

Forest Collection

By tradition Saora is a forest dweller. Forests being the very fountain of life for the tribe have shaped their habitat and economy. Most of the activities pertaining to food quest are performed in the forest. The Saoras consume grain and other crops which grow luxuriantly on the *padar* lands. Fruits, flowers, leaves, roots and tubers which supplement their diet are obtained from the forest. Wild animals from deer to mouse which are found in the forest and near perennial streams are hunted for eating. Fish, a delicacy in Saora's diet, are caught from small streams, ponds and water holes lying in the interior pockets of forest. They collect materials such as bamboo, timber, thatching grass, rope, etc., from the forest for constructing their houses and firewood for cooking and warming their dwellings. They sell firewood in the neighbouring villages. The clean castes, though living in the close proximity of the forest do not generally go for forest collection and depend on the Saoras and other tribes for supply of firewood which cost nearly Rs. 0.75 *paise* per bundle. Bamboo, timber, thatching grass, etc. are also procured and sold by the tribesmen in the neighbouring villages. Thus forest is the major source of income for the Saora and almost all the families are engaged in forest collection. The average income per family from this source is about Rs. 150 to Rs. 200 annually.

Wage Earning

Out of 2 families, 8, work as casual labourers for 8 months and the remaining families are wage earners throughout the year. This is their main source of income during the lean months. Males, females and children above 14 years go for wage earning. Generally, they prefer to work for agriculture and for house construction in the neighboring villages. They get their wage on daily payment basis. The prevailing rate of wage for male is Rs. 1.50 p. and for female and for children, Rs. 1.25 p. On a rough calculation the average income from wages per family is about Rs. 120 over a year.

Annual Contractual Labour (*baramasia*)

It is not a major source of income for all the families. Only two persons are engaged as *baramasia* at Janteswar. They get 8 *maunds* of paddy and one cloth annually. In the morning they are provided with breakfast. A *baramasia*

earns about Rs. 180 annually. The Saoras in this locality do not like to remain as annual labourers because, it is very difficult to assess the income of the families, which depend on agriculture and they cannot correctly state the quantity of agricultural produce. The produce are not measured or weighed, but are kept at home and subsequently paid to the Sahukars towards repayment of outstanding debts. It is also difficult to make any assessment of the income of the families, who depend on forest collection and wage earning, etc., which do not ensure steady and regular income.

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

Number of Families with Monthly Income of						
Community	Total No. of families	Rs. 1.25	Rs. 26.50	Rs. 51.75	Rs. 76 - Rs. 100	Rs. 101 - Rs. 124
Saora	12	5	3	2	1	1

Expenditure

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

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

No. of Families with Monthly Expenditure of								
Community	Total No. of families	Rs. 1.35	Rs. 36.60	Rs. 61.84	Rs. 85+	Rs. 109	Rs. 109	Rs. 133
		+	+	+		+	+	
Saora	12	5	3	2	1			1

An analysis of Saora's sources of income and the items of expenditure reveal their standard of living. There is an excess of expenditure over income in case of all the families. Hence, cent percent of the families are having deficit budgets. In other words nobody is able to meet their expenditure from their meager income. Hence, almost all the families are in bad debts.

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

Indebtedness

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

It is necessary to say that the Soaras are so ignorant and illiterate that they are unable to tell exactly the amount of their debt. They do not maintain regular accounts nor are they told by their creditors about their outstanding debt amounts at the end of every year. Moreover it is very difficult to get any information regarding debt by direct questions. They are living in acute poverty and therefore, there is greater possibility of them falling easily into the clutches of the local money-lenders and a lesser possibility of getting out of debt due to their low income. However, an attempt is made to show the debt position of the villagers in the table below for the year 1965-66.

Position of the Villagers for the Year 1965-66				
Total No. of Families	Name of Indebted Persons	Debt in Kinds	Debt in Cash (Rs)	Year and month of bringing loan
12	Sanya Saora	2 quintals of paddy	200	1965-66 Falguna&Chaitra
	Ania Saora	2 quintals of paddy	200	Ditto
	Giria Saora	4 quintals of paddy	300	Asar
	Dama Saora	30 K.G. of paddy	40	Magha
	Kula Saora	50 K. G. of paddy	140	Magha
	Arjuna Saora	2 quintals of paddy	120	Jestha
	Pandia Saora	4 quintals of paddy	500	Aswin & Falguna
	Kalia Saora	50 K.G. of paddy	40	Chaitra
	Guna Saora	35 K. G. of paddy	40	Chaitra
	Haria Saora	85 K.G. of paddy	50	Chaitra
	Barikia Saora	25 K.G. of paddy	40	Chaitra
	Gadua Saora	2 quintals of paddy	200	Magha
Total		18.75 K.G.	1,870	

The average debt per family in kinds and in cash is about one quintal and fifty-seven Kg. paddy and Rs. 155.83 in cash or about Rs. 230 in total in cash and kinds

The incidence of debt analyzed from this angle bears some relation to the average debt per family. Where the percentage of cash loans is higher than grain loans, the average debt per family is also found higher. The reason is that Saoras find it more difficult to repay the cash loans which remain outstanding. The following table indicates the proportion of grain and money loans in the village.

Proportion of Grain Loans and Cash Loans

Name of the village	Total No. of families	Total debt	Grain loans	Money equivalent to grain loans	Percentage Col. 4 to total debt	Cash loan	Percentage of to total debt
Sundari	12	Rs. 28.70	18Qu. 17 K.G	Rs. 1,000	34.9	Rs. 1870	65.1

The Saora take cash loans only when they purchase articles of consumption directly from local markets. Ordinarily they resort to barter system. Out of 12 families in the monthly income group of Rs. 1 to Rs. 75, the extent of indebtedness among 10 families exceeds Rs. 230. Among the rest 2 families, earning more than Rs. 75 per month, the extent of indebtedness exceeds Rs. 300. The cause of increase in the extent of indebtedness with the rise in income may be attributed to the fact that such higher income families have greater credit worthiness as their income is the security against loans.

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

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

Purpose of Loan

Ordinarily Saoras do not borrow if they get normal yield of crops in successive years. With the produce they somehow manage their consumption needs and preserve the seeds for sowing. They are able to meet their cash requirements either by selling cash crops, firewood, leaves, etc. in the neighbouring villages or in the weekly markets. The ratio hangs on a delicate

balance as they are petty cultivators. A slight failure of the crop immediately pushes them below the margin and compels them to borrow either for maintenance or seeds. Crop failure and fall in agricultural returns were the factors for which the villagers suffered a lot last year.

The statistical analysis of the purposes for which loans are contracted shows that over 80 percent of borrowings are for domestic consumption and seeds. This high percentage of loans for the said purposes may be due to the poor yield of crops. The next important purpose for which they incur loans is rituals and festivals. About 8 percent of the total debt is incurred for meeting expenditure on these. Next to it is marriage for which they also incur loans. About 6 percent of the total debt was incurred for meeting expenditure on marriages. If one has not collected some money by selling his surplus cash crops, he has to take cash loan either from a well-to-do Saora or from the Sahukars. Nearly 2 percent of debt is found to have been incurred for purchasing cattle or on miscellaneous items like payment of fines for forest offences or purchase of utensils, etc.

Security for Loans

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

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

Sources of Loan

Lack of communication, inaccessibility and an altogether strange social environment prevent any public finance institutions for extending credit facilities in this area. Hence, there is no Credit Co-Operative Society or Graingola in and around the village. Only those persons who live either in the village or near about and too have an intimate acquaintance with the Saoras take the risk of advancing loans to them. However, the money lenders of Banpur and other neighbouring villages like Janteswar, etc., do their business to a considerable extent. The investigation reveals that about 80 percent of the money-lenders belong to Banpur who belong either to Khandayat or Teli castes. About 20 percent of the money lenders belong to other neighbouring

villages who are either Teli or Karan by caste. They are well aware of the character and credit worthiness of each of their clients. They charge high rate of interest. They visit at the time of harvest for recovering their dues. The legislation to control high rate of interest is of little help to the Saora as the money lenders do not maintain any regular accounts nor do they give any receipt to their debtors for their repayments.

Interest

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

Generally the loans in kinds are repaid in kinds. When that is not possible, cash crops are appropriated towards the interest. The following is the rate of interest paid in kinds:-

- 1 Adda is equivalent to half seer
- 1 Adda mustard = 2 Adda paddy
- 1 Adda Niger = 2 Adda paddy
- 1 Adda Biri = 2 Adda paddy
- 1 Adda Mung = 3 Adda paddy
- 1 Adda Koltha = 1.5 Adda paddy

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

Time of taking Loan

Living from hand to mouth, they frequently resort to loans even just after the harvest. At harvest they repay the outstanding debts. Thereafter in the months of 'Magha' and 'Faguna' (December-January) they go to the money lenders to get loans in cash to celebrate various festivals and to perform marriage ceremonies. Sometimes to meet the emergencies like performing 'Sradha' ceremony they also approach the money lenders for seeds. During these months loans are mostly incurred in kinds.

Payment of Previous Loans

The study in this village reveals that all the 12 families have received compensation for the loss of their lands for construction of Salia Irrigation Project. The total amount of compensation received by 12 families is Rs. 33,800

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

Conclusion

An analysis of the distribution of debt burden shows that almost all the Saoras owe a debt of over Rs. 230 (including grains). From their average income, their economic handicaps and the inability to save, it is clear that these people will not be able to be free from indebtedness in the near future. The position is further aggravated due to the drought conditions in 1965-66 during which they have incurred money loans. Under the pressing circumstances, they were not able to pay off their old debts- not even a single family.

The high rate of indebtedness and the pattern of life were shaken consequently on the execution of Salia Medium Irrigation Project. Since 1963, compensation was received for their loss of land amounting to Rs. 33,800. It has been found that the cash compensation has been mostly utilized in other things and paying off the old debts of 'Sahukars'. Moreover, the imminent prospect of losing about 102 acres of *padar* lands which is going to be submerged also affected their interest for cultivation and land use. Therefore, at the present moment they feel insecure and whatever cash compensation was left has been mostly used for the maintenance of the families. The picture therefore shows the growing indebtedness of the tribal villagers which has emerged due to interplay of multiple factors coupled with overall backwardness. The tribals of this village who have given up quite a good number of their cultural traits to adapt to their present environment have now been subjected to the malady of displacement. Government wants to rehabilitate them provided they pay Rs. 500 as 'Salami' which they are unable to pay. The payment of cash compensation was certainly a shortsighted policy as they have spent out the whole of it for meeting their bare subsistence needs.

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

SAORA AND PANOS OF GANJAM AGENCY *

(A Study into Social Inter-Relationship)

*Nityananda Das*¹

In 1960 there was a rioting of Saoras against the Panos of the village Bhramarpur in R. Udayagiri taluk (Tahasil). It was reported that the Saoras of village Rogoisingi attacked the Panos of Bhramarpur and looted their property, burnt a few houses and one old man also died. The law and order problem was dealt by the police and Magistracy. Many Saoras of adjoining villages were arrested and prosecuted. It necessitated posting of a contingent of armed police at Bhramarpur. By taking some repressive measures the conflagration was controlled. Some of the Saoras involved in rioting were ultimately sentenced to various terms of imprisonment. The dispute between Panos and Saoras was on account of some cultivable land cultivated by the Panos for a considerable period of time. The Saoras of Rogoisingi claimed back the land in 1959.

This was opposed by Panos. They sought legal advice and the law on adverse possession was on their side. Saoras on the other hand were aggrieved as they felt the land originally belonged to them. Their forefathers had pledged the land to Panos towards some outstanding debts. They felt that during all these years of possession the debt would have been fully cleared. If there was any amount outstanding that could be settled. Panos on the other hand being landless had to solely depend on the land. Their trading activities had declined due to various reasons. Due to Hinduization, conversion to Christianity and wider contacts, Saoras had given up buffalo sacrifice in the area. The Panos' reluctance to concede to the claims of Saoras, was widely resented.

Saoras of adjoining villages met in a conference and decided to forcibly take possession of the land. The resistance of Panos resulted in the rioting.

* Published in ADIBASI, Vol. IX, No.3, 1967-68, pp. 44-52

¹ Assistant Director, Tribal Research Bureau, (now SCSTRIT), Bhubaneswar

In this context the Tribal Research Bureau made a study of the situation relating to the conflict between Panos and Saoras regarding the ownership and possession of the land of the Saoras of Ganjam district. The study findings reflects the socio-economic relationship between the Panos and Saoras.

The Panos are said to be a parasitic group solely living as petty traders. They originally came to the agencies as weavers. Being a low untouchable caste in the plans they had to lead an arduous life in the difficult terrains of the agency area. Before a few decades these areas were considered extremely unhealthy and inaccessible. The administrative machinery did the minimum to govern the area through intermediaries known as Bissoyi and Patro. Saoras were not conversant in Oriya and required agents to liaison with authorities and outsiders. Panos worked as such and won confidence of Saoras. In course of time they found the profession of weaving not very lucrative and became petty traders.

For illness Saoras offer sacrifices to their innumerable gods and spirits who torment them with heavy demands of animal sacrifices. The dead seeking admission to the underworld also demands sacrifices. If those are not conceded they generally inflict diseases and disaster on the living beings. Panos took advantage of the situation to provide sacrificial animals to Saoras. The *mamuls* or levies by Mutta-heads brought misery and dejection. Crops they grew, fruits borne on the trees on the hills mostly found their way to the Mutta-heads and their assistants. During the lean months, when most of the food grains are exhausted and malaria and other diseases became widespread. The curing of diseases required larger number of animal sacrifices. The Panos come to their door steps to help Saoras. They advanced grains, animals and cash. When the debt swelled Saoras allowed Panos to cultivate their lands towards the repayment of those debts. The agreements were oral. Thus Saoras virtually passed on the ownership of lands to Panos. Very often finding no other alternative to survive in their home land Saoras migrated to tea gardens in Assam. This resulted in undisturbed possession of their land by Panos.

Gaudas (herdsmen) also came to the agency in search of better pasture. They established contacts with Saoras and advanced cash to them to meet their urgent needs. Under similar circumstances as in case of Panos described above Saoras allowed them to have possession of their land. Thus most of the valuable paddy fields passed from the Saoras who were more interested in shifting cultivation on the hill slopes. They were also obliged not to come in direct conflict with Panos and Gaudas who were closer to the non-tribal Mutta-heads. The Mutta heads allowed them possession after receiving some fees and usual *mamuls*.

Some Saoras of Rogoisingi returned from tea garden by acquiring new values. Tea gardens also taught them ways of modern life. They returned with some savings, and were naturally interested to get back their land under the possession of Panos. Panos, however, were not prepared to concede to such demands. This was the reason for the conflict and antipathy of Saoras. Saoras of

Rogoisingi in the meantime were converted to Christianity and acquired new outlook. They were no more interested to be callous and complacent.

During the sowing season of 1960 some Saoras forcibly started transplanting paddy in the disputed land. This was obstructed by Panos by use of force. This was the immediate cause for the conflagrations. One afternoon, the Saora of village Rogoisingi and their kinsmen from far and near attacked Panos of Bhramarpur. By the same time another incident took place at Barnsingi in Parlakimedi taluk. A few Saoras who returned from tea gardens, demanded back their land in possession of Panos of village Asrayagada. When Panos were reluctant to comply, Saoras wanted to take possession of the land by use of force. Besides these two major incidents, there were many other cases of minor skirmishes between Saoras and Panos arising from possession of land.

From a study of these incidents it was found out that such disputes should not be judged strictly from the point of view of law and order. It is a fact that Saoras have parted with their land before several decades and at present those are held by Panos, Gaudas and others by adverse possession. Saoras acquiesced the position for many years. When consciousness arose among them they are now unwilling to accept the situation with usual timidity. Spread of education, activities of social workers, missionaries, and various development programmes have expanded their outlook. They have acquired new values and they feel that the land which they have parted under duress, morally belong to them, though due to adverse possession legal ownership has passed to others.

Land problem in tribal areas has been a subject matter of study for nearly a century. It is a fact that by cunning and superior wit, the non-tribals have acquired tribal lands. The backward tribals being unable to repay their debts were obliged to accept the situation.

The Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes (Dhebar) Commission in course of their itineraries in various States was told by tribal leaders, social workers and administrators that the various laws and regulations forbidding alienation of land from tribals to non-tribals have been the least effective to check the process. The tribals continue to part with their land mostly by oral agreements. The creditors remain in possession of the land. Whenever the dispute reaches authorities, the tribals themselves accept the position and under the rule of adverse possession the non-tribals acquire ownership. Sometimes the tribals pledging their land to non-tribals, continue to work for the creditors and cultivate the same plots of land. Whenever any enquiry is instituted these tribals give evidence that they own those lands not the creditor. Thus the operation of law becomes in fructuous, in spite of the best wishes of the authorities.

It is worthwhile to discuss the debt bondage (Goti) system prevalent in its most virulent form in certain parts of Koraput. (Ref- the table below)

Total Population in Different Areas and Number of Gotis and Sahukars

Sl. No.	Area of Investigation	Villages Studied	No. of families	Total Population	No. of Gotis	No. of Sahukars
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Kumbhikota	3	111	398	19	6
2	Laxmipur	2	418	1,374	26	15
3	Kakiriguma	4	829	3,282	176	83
	Total	9	1,358	5,054	221	104
1	Potangi	2	-	685+225	39+8	20
2	Pokali	2	-	670	31	15
3	Chandaka	2	-	616	25	13
4	Sunki	2	-	496	10	7
5	Ampasali	2	-	382	16	9
6	Kunduli	1	-	590	37	11
7	Nandapur	1	-	2,000	40	23
8	Padua	3	-	1,395	18	12
	Total	15	-	7,059	224	109
1	Semiliguda	3	-	1,233	31	15
2	Koraput	6	-	2,419	55	31
3	Dasmantapur	5	-	141	31	21
	Total	14	-	5,062	117	67
1	Narayanpatna	5	604	2,268	79	23
2	Bandhugaon	5	564	2,422	88	29
3	Almanda	2	297	1,361	35	16
4	Kumbriput	2	158	625	36	6
	Total	14	1,623	6,656	237	74

The practice of Goti originated from heavy indebtedness among the tribals. They were first deprived of their lands which were pledged to the creditors. Thereafter finding no other alternative to survive they pledged their services to the latter. The Goti system was widely criticized even before independence. The Partially Excluded Areas Enquiry Committee, constituted by the erstwhile provincial Government of Orissa, recommended for its immediate abolition. Accordingly in 1948 a regulation was issued prohibiting the practice of debt bondage. However the lacunae in the regulation and other social conditions stood on the way of its effective implementation. As per a study conducted by TRB in some selected areas of Koraput, by 1962, there were 799 Gotis bound to 354 Sahukars or creditors. The table above gives the picture.

It is clear that although the law prohibits debt bondage, the social condition did not permit a *goti* to free himself from bondage. Once an old man who has worked as a *goti* for last twenty years objected to the enquiry on his status. He said that officers and social workers come to enquire about his

condition, but they could not improve it. They go back from where they come, and thereafter he had to again seek employment with his Sahukar. Then the Sahukar would refuse to entertain him, as he was suspected to have told something to the authorities against the Sahukar. This brought misery for the old man from which the authorities and social workers could not save him. Thus he was reluctant to give any further information. This attitude of the old man, explains the condition of the *gotis* and their world view. He feels that legally, the Sahukar has no right to keep him bound for years or generations. But his nurture and environment make him quite helpless to find any other avenue for escape.

Distribution of Gotis and Sahukars

Sl. No.	Area	No. of Villages	Gotis		Sahukars	
			Tribal	Non-Tribal	Tribal	Non-Tribal
1	Kumbhikota	3	19	-	3	3
2	Laxmipur	2	21	5	7	8
3	Kakiriguma	4	157	19	3	47
Total		9	197	24	13	58
1	Potangi	2	36	11	2	19
2	Pokali	2	18	13	-	14
3	Chandaka	2	16	9	2	11
4	Sunki	2	6	4	-	7
5	Ampasali	2	13	3	3	7
6	Kunduli	1	34	3	2	9
7	Nandapur	1	30	10	-	23
8	Padua	3	11	7	2	10
Total		15	164	60	10	100
1	Semiliguda	3	28	3	2	13
2	Koraput	6	55	-	4	27
3	Dasmantapur	5	25	6	7	14
Total		14	108	9	13	54
1	Narayanpatna	5	76	3	2	21
2	Bandhugaon	5	88	-	-	29
3	Kumbhariput	2	35	1	2	4
4	Almanda	2	35	-	-	16
Total		14	254	4	4	70

There is quite a bit of resemblance between the *gotis* who have been deprived of their lands and are bound to Sahukars in Koraput and the Lanja Saoras in Gnjam Agency.

In Rogoisingi there was congregation of missionaries belonging to different denominations, viz, Canadian Baptists, Roman Catholics and Lutherans on the 13th August 1967. The purpose was to bring in a compromise among Panos of Bhramarpur and Saoras of Rogoisingi. Some of the Saoras who were

convicted and sentenced to prison terms on charges framed in 1960, have now returned to their villages. The echo of Bhramarpur incident in 1960 was required to be counteracted. The Saoras of the village being now converted to Christianity and the Panos who are Christians were to be made friends through the auspices of the missionaries. The missionaries re-emphasized the necessity not to disturb the status quo possession affecting the law and order. Panos of Bhramarpur who are in possession of the land are to enjoy those under the terms of settlement and Saoras were chided not to interfere with that.

Such a truce perhaps may not be lasting one and there is every chance of eruption of conflict in future date. It is a fact that Panos and other non-tribals who are in possession of Saoras' land have no other alternative way of living. Trading in sacrificial animals has declined in Udayagiri area. Karja and Guar, the expensive funeral ceremonies necessitating sacrifice of buffalos have been given up. Similarly, Doripur and Yuyunpur which require compulsory buffalo sacrifice are no more in vogue. Hinduism and conversion to Christianity have changed the traditional beliefs of Saoras of this area. Panos, therefore, have been deprived of a bumper trade in buffalos. Social workers and the Bhoodan movement have inculcated new ideas and Saoras are now bringing their produce to markets instead of disposing those to Panos at their door steps. Therefore, Panos and Gaudas mainly depend on cultivation. Thus the conflicts between Panos and Saoras need not be viewed purely from the point of view of law and order but from the point of socio-cultural situation and the corresponding change of social values. Some of those unrests among tribes in many tribal areas come to surface and draw immediate attention of others. But there are many situations which remain dormant. But they are actually more important. In the past there have been a good number of conflagrations in the Saora country necessitating police action. There had been periodical agitations which could be easily suppressed as consciousness among Saoras was not much. But as the situation stands now it may become difficult to view these land disputes as local issues. It is therefore necessary to make a through survey of such disputed lands in different villages by competent revenue officials in collaboration with social workers and social scientists. With adequate data base it may be possible for State Government to provide alternative land wherever necessary to Saoras in lieu of land they have been deprived of. It is also worthwhile to rehabilitate Panos and Gaudas in agency area with allotment of suitable land. Until and unless Panos are properly resettled they will foil development programme in the area. As intelligent they are, they will definitely exploit Saoras and no amount of administrative pressure will relieve Saoras from their attachment with Panos. But at present who has studied the socio-economic life of Saora could assert that the relationship is one of symbiotic rather than parasitic. Even after conversion Saoras are remaining obliged to Panos who are earlier converts and are functionaries under the church. Hence it is not correct to say that by casual propaganda, etc. foundation of Saora and Pano relationship would be shaken up.

The basic concepts of Saoras have been changing fast. There are now young men who have been educated in cities. They feel detested with life in their homes. In the recent Panchayat election Saoras are being elected as Sarpanches and ward members. Two Saoras who were former social workers are elected as chairman of Panchayat Samitis. Interviews with some of them show how they are keen to wrest powers from the non-tribals. 'We Adibasis' have been the dominant feeling among them. Their dissatisfaction over the State of affairs in Saora land is openly discussed. The partisan attitude of local officials to help non-tribals over the interest of Saoras is decried. In the past Saoras have risen in defiance of law and order. Special officers appointed by Government from time to time have reported on the cause and motive behind those unrests. It is now time to review those and solve the local problems in relation to the felt needs.

In my report on Saoras in 1958, it was indicated that any ameliorative measure for Saoras, would not succeed, without corresponding measures to improve Panos. Panos are not strangers in Saora land. Rather they are the only group who are the closest to Saoras. Panos have been described as parasites, exploiting Saoras in various ways. Since two decades all sorts of propaganda have been directed to dislodge Saoras from the influence of Panos. Yet the former hold steadfastly to the latter, though very often reduced in intensity. Hence a close study has revealed that Pano-Saora relationship is not one of parasitism, but symbiosis. Panos help Saoras during the lean months.

They bring various articles to the doorsteps of Saoras and also advance credit on oral promise to pay back. Old and infirm animals are exchanged. Bare necessities of life like salt, tobacco, dry fish, and clothes are freely advanced. Sacrificial animals are provided, when Saoras distracted by illness are in immediate need for those. No doubt Panos get back their advances with high rates of interest. But the service which Saoras get from Panos has not been substituted by any official or non-official agencies. Paddy loans from grain golas etc. are difficult to obtain. The procedure is cumbersome and time taking. The repayment is not accepted in cash or by substitution. In Pottasingi Panchayat, the grain *gola* has hardly loaned out 5% of paddy stock during the last five years. The paddy was transferred to the plains, as Saoras were not interested in borrowing. Mainly Panos borrowed some paddy, sometimes in the names of Saoras. Of course Saoras prefer millets and maize for their diet to paddy but difficulty in repayment stands as the main hurdle.

It is therefore; clear that Saoras and Panos maintain a symbiotic relationship for mutual benefit. Saoras engage Panos as errand men and liaison agents with outsiders. Panos are interpreters to visiting officials. Panos were converted fairly early and they are appointed as preachers by the church. Christian Saoras have to look to them in discharging religious functions in marriage and funeral etc. thus the hold of Paons does not diminish. Hinduization and other contracts generate some antipathy for Panos, but Saoras very find that Gaudas,

and Kumutis are more oppressive than Panos. Even local officials have often little sympathy for Saoras and Saoras efforts to get redress to their grievances from them lead to bewilderment. Thus they find in Panos, the intimacy and friendship which they are unable to find among others. This being the secret of Panos' bond with Saoras it is difficult to wear Saoras away from Panos.

It is not prudent to assume that with the introduction of development measures, the Saora-Pano relationship would break. Panos are fairly intelligent to adjust to the changes. They take new role befitting to the situation. With the increase in the rate of conversion Panos work as preachers and priests, and retain their hold on Christian Saoras. Similarly Panos are school teachers in Saoras area and dominate in village affairs. As secretaries and ward members or sometimes as Sarpanchs they dominate the Panchayats. Social workers as well as right thinking administrators fervently desire to break the unholy tie of Saoras with Panos and others. But they have not succeeded, as they assume the tie as one of parasitism. A parasite could be eliminated by various drugs. But when the relationship is symbiotic accruing mutual benefit to both the partners the tie is hard to be snapped through outside pressure and propaganda.

Thus the proper course now would be to gear up the administrative and welfare machinery to substitute the fiduciary role of Panos, Gaudas and others with Soras. Panos and Gaudas have formed an integral part of the population in Saora land. Hence they could not be eliminated from the area. We have to first accept this position, without any dogmatic bias. That being accepted, the task would be simpler. Panos are mostly landless. They have taken to conversion and education early. They have wider contacts with officials, traders and missionaries. Thus they have greater bargaining power as a splinter group. The point that no improvement would be possible in Saora land without participation of Panos, Gaudas and Paikos is a priori. Keeping this in view young men among Saoras are to be mobilized and guided to take up leadership in the area. They are to be associated in all enterprises like sale purchase scheme, grain golas, educational institutions etc. with the active participation of Saoras the schemes may be reshaped. By that the world view and interpersonal relationship of Saoras with outsiders can be enhanced to accept innovations and changes. Here the attitude of officials, particularly petty ones has to be harnessed, so that Saoras, do not look at them with awe and antipathy. At present Saoras consider official agencies as impersonal and alien. Till this attitude persist the tribes in general and Saoras in particular remain indifferent to introduction of new measures due to lack of their confidence. Winning confidence is a laborious task and, needs tact and a good deal of social engineering. Those should be our guide line in improving the situation in Saora land.

SOCIAL CONTROL & TRADITIONAL SOCIO-POLITICAL SYSTEM OF THE LANJIA SAORA OF KORAPUT *

*Sarat Chandra Mohanty*¹

Every society has developed some mechanisms of social control for ensuring regulated life of persons as its members. The mechanisms are manifested in simple forms through folkways, mores, sanctions, and customs and in elaborate forms of law, backed by enforceability, authority and power structure and administration of justice. The simple society represented by the Saora is no exception to this.

Ralph Linton (1936) holds the view that, when the individuals have adjusted and organized individual behaviour either consciously or by trial and error, towards group consciousness and a feeling of 'esprit de corps', it has transformed itself into a society with some degree of social solidarity. To ensure its continued existence, the society must have some agencies of control to regulate adult behaviour and inculcate in the young the mores and folkways of the group. In simple tribal societies, kinship units, like family, lineage, clan, phratry, moiety, band or village community, inter-village organizations and the tribe as a whole has been largely responsible for the development of social solidarity and the regulation of social behaviour.

The real social group exists only when it functions as a unity. This unity comes into being when the individual members are bound by certain bonds or ties which make their lives and behaviour closely interdependent and infuse into their minds the feelings of oneness, solidarity and communal interests. The group creating bonds in the tribal society are: 1. Kinship and

* Published in ADIVASI, Vol. XXXVI, Nos. 1 & 2, 1996, pp.40-46

¹ Research Assistant, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar

blood ties, 2. Marriage, 3. Common and simple magico-religious beliefs and practices, 4. Common language/ dialect, mores and folk traditions, 5. Common territorial affinity, 6. Common economic life, 7. Loyalty to common authority, 8. Common social institutions, 9. Common political system and law and order machinery, 10. Mutual give and take and interdependence, 11. Common living, experiencing and acting together. These bonds keep the individuals emotionally attached to the community and create a common group identity that holds the members together. Some of these factors in respect of the Saora society responsible for maintaining their social control and solidarity shall be discussed in the context of the political system and law and order machinery.

To Durkheim, social solidarity is a moral phenomenon which can be studied best through an analysis of the very factor which brings about the principal forms of social solidarity and that is law or customary law. In an undifferentiated tribal society an act is criminal when it offends strong and defined states of collective conscience. The collective or "common conscience" according to Durkheim is the totality of beliefs and sentiments common to average citizens of the same society and forms a determinate system which has its own life.

The "Saora" or "Savara" are a great ancient tribe. They have been mentioned quite frequently in Hindu mythology and ancient classics, epics, *purans* and various other scriptures. Especially in Orissa, they have been very intimately associated with the cult of Lord Jagannath, who according to a legendary tradition originated as a tribal deity and was later brought to Puri under royal patronage.

The tribe is called by various names such as *saura*, *sabara*, *sahar*, *saur*, *sora*, etc and have their racial affinity with the Proto-Australoid stock which is dominant among the aborigines of Central and Southern India. They are widely found all over the Central India comprising the States of Bihar, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and West Bengal. They speak an ancient Mundari dialect of their own called 'Sora'.

The Saora constitute one of the Scheduled Tribe of Orissa. They are found in almost all the districts of the State. But their main concentration lies in a contiguous mountainous territory forming a major part of the agency tracts of the Eastern Ghats in Rayagada (formerly undivided Koraput district) and Gajapati districts of Southern Orissa which can be called, the "Saora Country".

Numerically, they constitute the third largest tribe in Orissa. Their total population in the State, as per 1981 census is 3,70,061 which accounts for 6.26 percent of the total tribal population of the State. They have registered a decennial growth rate of 8 percent between 1971 and 1981. Their sex ratio comes to 1030 females per 1000 males showing numerical superiority of their women over men. They are socially, economically and educationally backward. Their percentage of literacy as recorded in 1981 census is only 14.47 percent.

The Saora tribe is divided into a number of sub-tribes, such as Kapu, Jati, Sudho, Jadu, Jara, Arsi, Luara or Muli, Kindal, Kumbi, Basu, Lanjia, etc. The "Lanjia Soara" who are called the "Hill-Saora" by some noted ethnographers like Verrier Elwin, constitute a primitive section of the tribe. They inhabit the "Saora Country" in Southern Orissa as described above. They are famous for their expertise in terrace cultivation, shifting cultivation, elaborately religious lifestyle, artistic skills for producing beautiful wall paintings, pictograms popularly known as icons and their peculiar traditional male dress-style in which the ends of the loin cloth hang like a tail at the back. The term "Lanjia" meaning "having a tail" has been bestowed upon them by their neighbours referring to the fashion of wearing long-tailed loin cloth by their male folk.

Many prominent authorities like, Thurston, Dalton, Campbell, Taylor, Cunnigham, Macpherson, Russell, Fawcett, Risley, Munro, Ramamurty, Singh, Sitapathi Pantulu, Elwin have written about the Lanjia Saora. The most vivid account of the tribe have been given by Elwin in his famous book "Religion of an Indian Tribe" in which, he has described their complex and elaborate magico-religious beliefs and practices that has made the tribe known all over the world.

Like their magico-religious life, dress-style, artistic talents and terrace cultivation skills, another important feature is their keenness to maintain their group solidarity and preserve their cultural identity by adhering to the ethics, values, morals, customs and traditions which are unique. In this respect the Lanjia Saora are a well-organized group. They understand the essentials of moral law. They have their own conceptions of right and wrong, good and bad. Their interpersonal relations are governed by fixed status and well defined customs which are applicable to all aspects of human social life. Their traditional society is mostly governed by their customary law corroborated by ethical norms and public opinion. The ethical percepts and norms are transmitted from generation to generation through the informal process of socialization. They are well aware of the fact that social group depends on an orderly social life through proper observance of social norms and customs.

Verrier Elwin (1955) wrote "the ethical codification is of external actions rather than of virtues and dispositions, it is not burdensome, but exact, not heroic but meticulous and though it is unwritten, and in a way untaught, it is known to every child. It defines the limit within which one should walk and so long as these limits are observed, it is an insurance against ghostly evils. These conditions sometimes lead to a self-conscious scrupulosity, sometimes to an irritating assumption of complacency, but on the whole they help the Saora to live well."

The most important factor of ensuring social conformity is the fear of religion. Religion forms an indispensable part of Saora life. The fear of supernatural punishment acts as a powerful deterrent against violation of established customs. The only remedy in case of violation is the speedy

expiation of the sin and the propiation of the angry deity or spirit. "Punishment by the Gods is a more serious matter. All the Gods punish any diversion from the formalist path of safety, the breach of a taboo leads to almost immediate, and certainly automatic, retribution. But the greater Gods such as 'Uyungsum' and 'Darammasum' are said to punish men for 'Sin'. (Elwin : 1955).

The type of law established in the Saora society is an index of the strength of collective conscience based on common beliefs and sentiments. 'Law' according to Raddiffe-Brown (1952) is a means of "social control through the systematic application of force of the politically organized society". Citing the views of Pospisil (1971) it can be said that in the Lanjia Saora society, "law manifests itself in the form of a decision passed by a legal authority (council, chief, and headman) by which a dispute is solved, or a party is advised, or by which approval is given to a previous solution of a dispute. This form of law has two important aspects; A decision serves not only to resolve a specific dispute, which represents the behavioral part played by the authority while passing the sentence, but it also represents a precedent and an ideal for those who were not party to the specific controversy. They regard the content of decision as a revelation of ideally correct behaviour."

The Lanjia Saora being a primitive tribe have no written law but have their own norms and customs supported by social and supernatural customs. There are no political bodies, law making and enforcing agencies like legislature, police, executives, judges, lawyers and courts. But they have evolved their own systems, mechanisms, institutions and organizations for ensuring social control and administration of law and justice. Their politico-jural system is not a matter of law, as we see it but of tribal customs and practices comprising the obligations imposed on the individuals to ensure conformity.

"Customary laws are traditionally established practices which are honoured automatically without outside insistence or interference. Internal force and validity of the society make them faithfully observe the customarily hallowed practices and to punish those who infringe the time-honoured traditions. It is also observable fact that the ongoing processes of social change, contact with outside agencies, changed notions of value systems cause changes in the customary laws and practices." (Goswami, 1979). The present taboo against beef-eating and restrictions against marriage by capture in the Lanjia Saora society are examples of their changing attitudes and value systems reflected in their collective conscience in respect of customs and practices, under the changing environment of modern times.

The significance of socio-political aspects comes from the fact that a substantial part of the law functions through the political system and its institutions, and it is difficult completely to separate law and political organization. Political organization is defined "as the organized ways of

applying force to the maintenance of ordered relations between categories or groups of people. (Beals and Hoijer, 1971). Like other societies, the political organizations of the Saora do more than dealing with conflicts involving the social order; it also provides means for taking group decisions and administering programmes. This organization centers around an indigenous leadership which 1) command respect and allegiance of the tribes-men, 2) maintain peace and harmony among the group, 3) organize and direct community enterprises and 4) conduct group activities like agitation, raids etc.

“In the distant past when the Saora society comprised of patrilineal bands of multi-family aggregates, it might have had the characteristics of an egalitarian society. The ‘Birinda’ system of social organization points to the earlier extended patrilineal band organization. It may be surmised that in course of time, when population increased and the Saora changed from migratory to sedentary habits, villages grew and they settled down in the villages on permanent basis.” (Singh, 1984).

The Saora still have an organized political set up mostly confined to the village level. In each Saora village, there is a secular headman (Gomango / Naiko), sacerdotal headman (Buyya/Karji/Jani), headman's subordinates (Mandal/Dalbehera), messenger (Barik), astrologer (Disari) and Shaman (Kudan / Beju). By virtue of their knowledge, experience, service and specialization in their respective fields, they have been holding positions of respect and authority in the village. In the recent past, the village headman yielded vast powers for the maintenance of law and order, peace and good Government in the village. The other leaders were guardians of the cultural, religious and economic norms of their traditional society.

Singh (1984) wrote, “With elaboration of political organization, the egalitarian character of the society was modified. The present Saora society conforms to the characteristics of rank society”. The offices of the ‘Gomango, Buya, Mandal are held by the eldest male members of the respective families. The Gomango presides over the village meetings and the Buya and other leaders take active part in the discussions”. Although the Gomango and the Buya are men of great influence and wield authority and power, they are not authoritarian in their decisions on problems concerning the village affairs. Every decision taken at a village meeting is arrived at democratically in consultation with village elders. In this sense, the Saora society resembles an egalitarian society. But there is a degree of difference between members of the general public and the secular and religious headman, which detracts from its egalitarian character.

The homogenous Saora village is an independent, autonomous and self-sufficient socio-political unit with remarkable cohesion and continuity. The village organization also has a well-defined territory, a hierarchy of responsible and respectable aristocracy and leadership and a traditional village council

composed of family heads called "Birinda Neti". The organization works on democratic principles. The matters concerning the village are decided in village meetings held under the chairmanship of the Gomango in presence of other leaders. The meetings are attended by the family heads whose attendance in the meetings are obligatory. Decisions are reached mostly by consensus and not by majority vote. Punishment for various offences consists of impositions of fines on the offender in forms of cash, liquor, goat, fowl etc. which are offered to the gods and spirits and then consumed in a communal feast.

Buya, the sacerdotal head acts as a mediator between the villagers and the supernatural. He supplicates the deities for their blessings and benevolence for the village community. Every activity of the village like the transaction of the landed property, construction of new houses, wedding rituals, agricultural operations, detection of crime, communal festivals and ceremonies etc. are considered to be religious affairs.

Supernatural sanctions operate the machinery of social control and play a significant part in promoting conformity with accepted moral standard of the contemporary society. The religious belief and practices exhibit two main characteristics of Saora social life. In the first place each village seems to be autonomous and self-sufficient. People show loyalty to Gomango and Buya. They believe that the spirits of departed leaders are most important. They appear in dreams and warn the ruling Gomango and Buya against any violation of Saora norms and customs and ritual practices. In the second place, the Soara style of life is believed to be sanctioned by the supernatural world and any disturbance in the regularity of their life causes anxiety and illness and invokes the wrath of the spirits, resulting in suffering, disease, draught and other calamities.

Prior to independence, the Saora areas in Ganjam district were being administered by the feudal chiefs, *zamindars*, *bissoyis*, *doras*, *patros* and their managers, agents and subordinates. The British agents occupied the area in 1766 through conquest and treaties. Each hill-tract called Maliah' was divided in to a number of administrative units known as 'Mutha'. The Mutha administration was functioning under a Mutha Head called Muthadar, Bisoyi or Patro. The Bissoyis were maintaining a set of subordinate officers namely, *paiks*, *naiks*, *adhikari*, *hudadars*, *sardars* etc. stationed at strategic places inside the territories to administer the area, maintain law and order and collect revenues and taxes.

Maltby's account (1882) shows that there were eleven Bisoyis in Parlakhemundi agency area. Each of them was in charge of a small fort with their small private armies who were acting as police of the region to prevent the Saoras from raiding the plains. They were collecting *mamool* or dues from the Saora in kinds of grains, fruits, vegetables, animals, pots and minor forest produces. They were also implementing the barbarous custom of free and forced labour called "Bethi Paiti".

Under British administration, the Bissoyis were taken as service 'Inamdars' holding their respective Muthas in proprietary rights on the condition of keeping the Saora quiet. They were maintaining a number of Paiks (soldiers) and Pessaniyas armed with matchlocks and were entitled to receive *mamools* from the *royats* as their remuneration. In addition to that, the Bisoyis and their staff were granted with rent-free lands for their services. Their offices were hereditary. But the Bisoyis and their agents were tyrants and exploiters of the tribals. They were quite demanding and resorting to violence, oppression and terror if any one dares to refuse them. The Saoras were mortally afraid of these tyrants. Even today Saora old men remember them and their ghastly deeds with hate and contempt.

The administrative arrangement for the Saora living in Gunupur area of Koraput was different. It formed a part of Jeypore Zamindari ruled by the Maharaja of Jeypore. There were no feudal chiefs, landlords, and overlords, Mutha-Heads or their agents to oppress the tribals. The Saoras were paying their taxes directly to the Government.

The Saoras of Parlakhemundi area according to Elwin (1955) were "not successful in defending themselves against the Paiks, the servants of the Bissoyis, who come round with violence and threats and to collect one tribute for the Bissoyi's and another for themselves. This results in a very wretched physical condition and timidity and depression. The Paiks came round like raging lions and collected dues for the Bissoyis (together with what they can snatch for themselves)".

The village administration at that time was entrusted to the village level officials such as, Gomango or Mandal (secular chief), Buya (religious chief), and their assistants like Dalabehera, Barik, etc. "The Gomango and the Buyas are not only the wealthiest but were also recognized in the past by the Government and used to receive an official turban which was a greatly prized possession. The Gomango was the intermediary between the Government and the people, and it was by his orders that the villagers went to work for officials and the local lords known as 'Bissoyi'. His presence was essential at all village functions. In Koraput, he was the arbiter in matrimonial disputes and he had the final say in the allocation of rent. Where the Buya priest, in his secular capacity, was head of a separate quarter in a village, he could be almost equal to the chief in importance." (Singh, 1984).

The term "Gomango" is synonymous with the lineage head. It also means rich and important person. The offices of Gomango, Mandal, Buya, Dalabehera and Barik are hereditary and succession is based on the rule of primogeniture. Gomango is the secular head in charge of politico-socio-cultural activities of the village and in the past he was the revenue chief at the village level serving as a link between the village and the Mutha Head or the State administration. A position equal to him is held by the religious head, Buya,

who presides over religious functions and holds an influential position in village meetings. Besides, there is Disari, the astrologer who forecasts auspicious time for conducting rituals and ceremonies in respect of marriage, death, birth, agriculture and communal festivals.

The village officials are men of high social prestige, wealth and status. Even though the offices like those of Gomango, Buya, Mandal and Barik, etc. were abolished after independence and these traditional leaders have no official status at present, the Saora continue to honour them and their role in village affairs still continue to be decisive.

Elwin (1955) writes, "The Saora recognized four different kinds of male religious functionary, each with his special duties and rewards. The Buya is a village official who performs the office of priest in most of the Ganjam villages. The Kuranmaran is the Shaman-Diviner, medicine-men and celebrant at every kind of sacrifice. The Idaimaran is an acolyte who assists the Shaman and performs menial duties at the funerary ceremonies. The Siggamaran has the duty of cremating the corpse and performing other duties at a funeral. The official Buya, who is often called the Sadi Buya (the priest who has been given a turban, called Sadi, by Government), is generally the head of one of the quarters of a village and in the Ganjam villages, acts as second in command to the Gomango. The priest officiates at the harvest festivals, and has his part to play at marriages, funerary rites and other sacrifices sales and mortgages of land and liquor yielding trees, partition and other dispositions of property, and divorces effected in the council of village elders, presided over by the Gomango and Buya, by means of long and tedious proceedings, involving various religious ceremonies. In the old days the village chief and priest had quasi-magisterial functions, and the authority to settle a number of criminal and civil cases and to impose fines."

Intra-village affairs are decided inside the village with the intervention of village leaders and council of elders. Inter-village disputes relating to boundary issues, trespassing into lands and forests, trespassing of cattle, marriage by capture or elopement, interpersonal quarrels, etc. are decided in a joint meeting of village leaders and elders on both the sides, sometimes with intervention of the leaders of a third friendly village.

The general atmosphere of Saora religion is one among the forces making for a good orderly social life. Saora religion may not aim at making people better, nor it rewards or punishes good or bad conduct, but it forms the natural soil in which good human qualities grow. The general tradition of how men should behave towards the gods emphasizes the way they should behave towards their fellowmen. It is dangerous to show proud behaviors before the gods, because humility is the most ideal of human virtues. The stress of duty, the importance of hard work and doing one's share, the charm of hospitality, the need to avoid violence and lies, the priority of community over the

individual, these things are not only demanded by the religion but as well by the community through its customs and traditions.

The way in which the Saora institutionalisms maintain social discipline, is by the pressure of public opinion, expressed in every possible way and in all the time. As this opinion is inexorable, it does not ask the people to be religious but it insists that they should conform to the rules of "Ersi (sins) and "Ukka" (social offences). There is no sympathy for the person who breaches them and suffers supernatural punishments. Human penalties are inflicted by the traditional tribal council for violation of customs of "Ukka". But the most dreaded penalty of ostracism or social excommunication which is used with so devastating effect by the tribal leadership and councils in other tribal communities is rarely resorted to by the Saora leaders.

Bibliography & References

- | | | |
|----------------------------|---------|--|
| Baral, J. K. & R. C. Sahoo | 1980-81 | Fight between Liliputs, <i>Adibasi</i> , Vol. XX, Nos. 1-4, pp.61-67 |
| Beals R. L. & Harry Hoijer | 1971 | <i>An Introduction to Anthropology</i> , The Macmillan Company, New York. |
| Choudhury, B. | 1963-64 | Saora, <i>Adibasi</i> , Vol. V, No.3 pp101-106. |
| Das, N. | 1965-66 | The Birinda of the Lanjia Saora, <i>Adibasi</i> , Vol. VII, No. 2 pp. 5-12 |
| Elwin, V. | 1955 | <i>The Religion of an Indian Tribe</i> , Bombay, Oxford University Press. |
| | 1964 | <i>The Tribal World of Verrier Elwin</i> , Oxford Publishing House. |
| Gluckman, M. | 1968 | <i>Politics, Law and Ritual in Tribal Society</i> . Basil Blackwell, Oxford. |
| Goswami M. C. | 1982 | <i>The Customary Law and Practices of the Pati Rabha of Assam</i> . The Law Research Institute, Eastern Region, Gauhati. |
| Hoebel, E. A. | 1954 | <i>The Law of Primitive Man</i> , Cambridge Mass, Havard University Press. |
| Mohanty, B. B. | 1988 | A Glimpse of the Social Life of the Lanjia Saora, <i>Adibasi</i> , Vol. XXVIII, No. 2, pp. 16-21 |
| Mohapatra, G. | 1983 | The Saora View of Good Life and Development, <i>Adibasi</i> , Vol. XXIII, No. 2, pp. 30-40 |
| Panda, J. K. | 1965-66 | Changing Saora Culture, <i>Adibasi</i> , Vol. VII, No. 1,p.71 |

- | | | |
|----------------------------|---------|--|
| Patnaik, N. | 1989 | <i>The Saora</i> , THRTI |
| | 1970 | Changing a Community's Culture, <i>Man in India</i> , Vol. 50, No. 2 pp. 189-96 |
| Patnaik, N. & H. S. Mishra | 1976 | Elections and Patterns of leadership in the Lanjia Saora Villages of Gumma Panchayat, Ganjam, <i>Adibasi</i> , Vol. XVI, No. 3, pp. 1-15 |
| Patnaik, U. N. | 1963-64 | The Saora of Ganjam Hills, <i>Adibasi</i> , Vol. V No. 1, pp. 6-13 |
| | 1955 | Saora of Ganjam Scheduled Area, <i>Adibasi</i> , Inaugural Number. |
| Pospisil, L. | 1971 | <i>Anthropology of Law</i> , Yule University, Harper and Row, New York. |
| Radcliffe-Brown, A. R. | 1933 | <i>Social Sanctions</i> , Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, Mac Millan Co. New York Vol. III, pp. 531-534 |
| Roucek, J. S. | 1965 | <i>Social Control</i> , New York, D. Van Nostrand. |
| Roy, S. Et.al | 1990 | <i>Tribal Customary Laws of North East India</i> , B. R. Publishing Corpn., New Delhi. |
| Roy, S. N. | 1927 | Savaras, <i>Man in India</i> , Vol.7. No. 4, pp.16-58. |
| Singh, B. | 1984 | <i>Levels of Leadership in Saora Society</i> , Adibasi Exhibition Souvenir, BBSR, pp. 20-28. |
| | 1984 | <i>The Saora Highlanders</i> , Bombay, Somaiya Publications. |
| Sumner, W. G. | 1907 | <i>Folk ways</i> , Ginn & Co. New York. |
| Thurston, E. | 1909 | 'Savaras' Castes and Tribes of Southern India, Vol.VI, Madras, pp. 304-347. |
| Aparajita, U. | 1988 | Traditional Political Organization of the Saora, <i>Adibasi</i> , Vol. XVIII, No. 2, pp. 29. |

RELATIONAL STRUCTURE OF SABARA WOMEN: A MULTIPLEX NETWORK ANALYSIS *

*R. P. Sarma*¹

The Sabaras are the fourth largest tribal community in Odisha after Konds, Gonds and Santals. Their references are found in the epics of the Ramayan and e Mahabharat and it is believed that they are one of the ancient aboriginal tribes of this country. The Sabaras are known by the different names in different parts of Odisha as Saura, Soura, Savara or Sahara. In their language they call themselves "Sora" and their language as "Sora Langam". About 13 per cent of Sabara population of the State is found in the district of Koraput. They live in aboriginal conditions and modern civilization has not yet made any impact on them.

The Sabaras are classified into two types: Lanjia Sabaras and Sarada Sabaras. "Lanjia" in Oriya language means 'tail'. These Sabaras both men and women wear a four inch wide piece of cloth in their loins hanging about eight inch long both front and back side as tails; hence they are known as tailed Sabaras. In some regions they are termed as Malia or Jungle Sabaras. The Sarada Sabaras are little more civilized than the Lanjias, hence they call themselves "Sarada" or pure.

Objective of the Study:

The main objective of study of Sabara women in this paper is twofold: Firstly to examine their family structure and economy as it is and analyze their economic activities concerning with their life style. Secondly to make network analysis of their social structure with regard to (a) family relation and the processes of lending and borrowing among themselves (b) collection and sale of forest products and (c) purchases for the family.

* Published in ADIBASI, VOL. XXX, No. 1, 1990. pp.12-19

¹ Reader in Economics, Berhampur University, Odisha

Sample Size:

The village Gadiabang, 4 Kms from the sub divisional town of Gunupur in the district of Koraput has been selected for the study. Even though the village is nearer to urban civilization, its impact on the Sabara community is very little. There is a Primary Sevashram School operating from 1965; a tube-well at the entrance of the village and the village is well connected by a *pucca* road.

According to 1981 census the village consisted of 32 households with a population of 130; at present there are 51 families with a population of 203. At random 11 housewives have been sampled out from the four rows of houses constituting the total village for investigation. In the first round of the survey the basic data with regard to their family structure and economic activities were extracted with the help of the village teacher who speaks their language. On the second round the 11 housewives were again enquired about their contracts among themselves for preparation of networks. Name, age and marital status of the 11 sample women are presented in Table 1.

Family Structure:

The Sabara families are smaller in size. The average family size is 3.90 persons. Of the 11 families investigated, only three families have four children each and the rest have single child. On an average the number of children per family is less than two. Among the sampled housewives nine are from the families of the same village and two belong to other villages. Marriages are decided with the initiation of the female partner; parents generally never interfere, boys and girls are free to select their life partners.

TABLE-1
Family Structure of Sabara Women

Sl. No. (1)	Name (2)	Age (3)	Marital status (4)	Children (5)	Infant Mortality (6)
1.	Galuri	30	1	4	.....
2.	Addi	35	1	4	M
3.	Labari	28	1	1	M
4.	Mangidi	40	2	....	....
5.	Body	27	1	1	M
6.	Admi	43	W	4	....
7.	Dengun	30	S	1	M
8.	Saintary	21	1	1	....
9.	Manjai	60	1	1	M
10.	Lossari	28	1	....	....
11.	Thupali	28	2	1	....

W: Widow, 1: First marriage, 2: Second marriage, S: Two wives, M: Mortality.

The women select lads as their partners younger than their age. The sample investigation shows that the mean age of the husbands is 26 years in comparison to wives, 34 years. The range of age difference is as wide as 25 years.

Eight housewives have thin gold rings in their nose and silver rings in the upper ears. They were given ornaments at the time of marriage by their parents. No housewife purchased any other ornament since their marriage. These eight ladies have large holes in their ears without any ornaments. Previously they were using bubs prepared of a particular wood as ornaments; as one set of bubs become loose for the ear holes, they were being replaced by another set of bubs with higher diameter; and in the process the ear holes become very large. The younger maids today neither use wood bubs nor other ornaments in their ears.

Cultivation:

The Sabaras are not accustomed to settled land cultivation and most of these tribals in the interior area still have no settled land cultivation. Only few families in the village have settled land cultivation, which are provided by the Government by clearing the forest. Two of the sampled families have converted the dry land provided by the State into fields suitable for cultivation of paddy. The Sabaras of this village do not use any standard agricultural methods for cultivation. They still use the archaic method of loosening the earth with hand implements, throwing seeds on it and then turn up to the field only at the time of harvest. In the entire village there are two pairs of bullocks for the purpose of cultivation provided under the I.R.D.P. scheme of Government of Odisha recently. The average settled land holding of the sample families is 1.69 acres and yield of paddy is only 1.03 quintals per acre.

Shifting cultivation locally known as "*Podu*" is their way of life and it is the main occupation of the Sabaras. This type of cultivation is taken up on the slope of the nearby hills. The area of *podu* land per family ranges from 1.5 to 4.5 acres. The area depends on the ability of the family members to clear the forests. Both men and women work together for all *podu* operations, even the single widows take up *podu* on their own. On *podu* land mainly maize (locally known as "*Jonna*") is cultivated, which is their staple food. Rice meal is taken occasionally which is regarded as luxury. They grow an *arhar* variety called "*Kandul*" on both plain and *podu* land which is a good cash crop. The yield of maize on *podu* land is also very low; it is around 40 Kg per acre. On the basis of requirement of one Kg. of rice/*Jonna* per individual per day, the total agricultural production from the plain and *podu* land supports a family of four for about three months in a year.

Collection of Firewood:

Firewood collection is the main occupation of the Sabara women which provides them minimum sustenance throughout the year. Both the sexes collect firewood but the collection of Mahua flowers is done exclusively by women and

children. Mahua flowers are mainly stored for preparation of wine throughout the year and the surplus is exchanged for eatables and household purchases. One head-load of firewood collected by women is sold at Rs. 6, while tow loads on balance over the shoulder of a man gets twice the value of a head-load.

Pattern of Consumption:

The Sabara families live very simple life. Daily food requirements are limited to the three following items only. This is the average daily expenditure for a family of four, which includes two children. On this estimate a family's annual expenditure comes to Rs. 2,300 only.

Maize 3 Kgs.	Re. 6.00
Salt	Re. 0.25
Chilies	Re. 0.25
Total	Re. 6.50

The Sabaras are not accustomed to vegetable curries and occasionally take beef by boiling it with salt. Both men and women never use upper garment while in the village. When women go to the town, they cover their bust with a *chadar* or wear a blouse. A blouse is used for several years. A two meter piece of cloth is worn by the women above the knee. Since there is no night lighting provisions in their houses they take their dinner in the dim fire wood light of the hearth. The younger generations of girls now use frocks, *ghagras* and *choli*. Many young men now switched over to wearing half pants instead of cloth.

SOCIAL NETWORK

In a community the social and economic relations are interlinked and each influences the other. An individual typically participates in a social system with many others who are significant reference points in one another's decisions. The nature of relationships, a given member has with the other system members effect an individual's perceptions, beliefs and actions. Development of a community mostly depends on social behaviour than on economic inputs. The use of economic inputs must be on the basis of social behaviour at a point of time. Social behavior can be analyzed either on the basis of attributes or on the relational perspective so far as the former approach has been utilized by the social scientists to analyze the socio economic behaviour of a community. The two approaches are not mutually exclusive but complementary to each other. Relational measures capture emergent properties of a social structure that cannot be measured by aggregating the attributes of individual members.

In this paper an attempt has been made to prepare a set of three sociograms on the basis of network of social relations. The first sociogram indicates a relational network among the 11 Sabara women based on frequent

lending and borrowing of food grains and other material of household use. About 50 per cent of the network actors, the sample women have family relationship in one form or the other. The inter-relationship among the 11 actors is presented below in the form of an Adjacency Matrix K.

This is binary matrix of relations such that $X_{ij} = 1$, if there is an age or relation and 0 if there is no edge between them. The V 's, 1 to 11, are the network members. The number of 1's in the corresponding row or column of the matrix indicates the degree of the member or actor. Higher the degree of an actor more is the popularity of the actor in the net work structure.

	V 1	V 2	V 3	V 4	V 5	V 6	V 7	V 8	V 9	V 10	V 11
V 1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
V 2	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
V 3	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0
V 4	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
V 5	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0
V 6	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	1
V 7	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0
V 8	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
V 9	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
V 10	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
V 11	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0

As it can be verified from the matrix that the actor 6 has the highest degree of 7 that is, it is directly connected to the 7 of the 11 members in the network. The graph of the network is presented in figure 1. The number inside the circle indicates the serial number of the sample women given in table above.

The density of this network is 0, 31; which is a ratio of actual linkages to the total number of possible linkages in the network. In this network the total numbers of possible relations are 55, but the actual relations are 17. Higher density more closely the members of the network are related. A clique is a closely connected sub-graph or a social circle in a network. Six cliques can be identified in fig. 1, in the form of triads. They are (1,8,2) or (10,3,6), (3,7,5), (4,5,6), (5,6,7,) and (10,6,5). Since a clique is a closely related social circle any one of the cliques can be selected for injection of new ideas and concepts to be spread in the entire network.

The second sociogram is based on the social linkages with regards to the main economic activity. The main economic activity of the village is collected of fire wood from the forest and sale these in the town, cutting and sale of fire wood are mostly done on the same day. The second network of social relations in their main economic activity is presented in figure 2.

The second network is in several ways different from the first. The first one was a planar graph while the second is a non-planar. A graph that cannot

be drawn on a plan without a crossover between its edges is called non-planar graph. In the figure-2 the edges between the actors 2,5 and 4,6 cannot be drawn without the crossover. The density of the network remaining the same the structure of the second network is different. In the second network there is one isolated member No.9; not linked with the rest of the network members. Actor 3 is a pendant vertex, that is, it is linked to a single member of the network in the second sociogram in comparison to its position of degree 3 in the earlier network.

The third sociogram is prepared for analysis based on the household purchases. Both for the purchases made inside the village from the peddlers and for the marketing in the town linkages are established for the third network. Since the purchases are very few the relational structure is also simple and limited. This third network is a different one from the earlier two. Graph theoretically the first two networks are same because it contained same number of vertices and edges, even though they are different in structure; but in the third network the edges or linkages are fewer. Hence the density of this third network is 0.20. In this network there are two isolated members, 9 and 11.

Reachability:

Reachability is another aspect of network analysis a social scientist uses to manipulate the behavior of the network members. Through how many steps or links an actor is reachable in the network is the main concern of the network analyst. In a complete network, i.e. when all the network members are directly linked with each other, any member can be reached with a single link. But in the lower density networks reachability requires more than one step.

A three step reachability matrix is compiled for the first sociogram.

K =	2	6	3	3	3	3	3	4	0	7	2
	6	2	3	1	5	10	1	4	1	3	0
	3	3	6	4	11	13	4	2	2	8	2
	3	1	4	2	9	11	2	1	2	4	1
	3	5	11	9	10	13	10	2	1	12	4
	3	10	13	11	13	10	12	2	1	15	7
	3	1	4	2	10	12	2	1	3	4	1
	4	4	2	1	2	2	1	2	0	2	1
	0	1	2	2	1	1	3	0	0	2	1
	7	3	8	4	12	15	4	2	2	6	2
	2	0	2	1	4	7	1	1	1	2	0

Each element in K 3 matrix indicates the number of three step paths through which a member is reachable from another member. For instance $K_{25} = 5$; this indicates that the members 2 and 5 can reach each other in three step links in five ways. From the network No.1, it can be verified that the five paths are:- 1 (e5, e6, e8), 2(e5, e10, e13), 3(e5, e7, e12), 4(e3, e4, e8), 5(e5, e15, e14.).

The zero elements in the matrix show that two members in the network cannot reach each other in three step link.

Network Multiplexity:

A network compounded of two or more types of relations is called a multiplex network. In this paper three separate networks have been worked out for the 11 sample Sabara women of Gadiabang. A synthesis of the three networks is presented below as a multiplex network. The members of the network who are linked in the similar way in all the three networks are naturally more influential in the community and a social scientist takes up these active members for the initiation of development process.

The relations presented in the matrix below show that these relations are common to all the three sociograms presented earlier. How the multiplex network is different from the rest of the three networks can be visualized if it is seen in a graph form. This is shown in Fig. 4. This multiplex network is a disjoint one. There are three isolated members 7, 9 and 11, who are not connected to the network. There are two sub-graphs, the largest with 6 actors and the smallest one with only two actors. In the larger sub-graph there is one clique with three members, viz. 4, 5 and 6; these three are the most influential in the entire network of Sabara women in the village.

The multiplex matrix of the three networks is given below:-

M=	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Conclusion:

The study reveals the following facts, on the basis of which we have to evolve a strategy to develop the tribe in general and their women in particular.

- (1) The Sabara community is at an ultra under development" level. The Planning Commission in 1985 put the cut-off point of Rs. 6,400 of household income for the identification of poverty line. This amount now stands at Rs. 8,500 calculated on the basis of average 6.6 per cent increase in price index during the 7th five-year Plan Period. As there are no savings or borrowings of any significant nature, the daily household

expenditure of Rs. 6.50 can be accepted as household income of these Sabara families. According each Sabara family has a total annual income of Rs. 2,300. This means the poverty of a Sabara family in the village is down 75 per cent below the cutoff point.

- (2) There is a primary school in the village since 1965 but literacy is zero. There is a tube-well but the water is not used by the villagers. There is a *pucca* road connection from the town and a local bus operates twice daily through the village but so far modernity has not touched villagers.
- (3) The Sabara women dominate in the family and contribute equally to the family income alike their husbands. There is no complete social network among the Sabara women as it is commonly believed, but there are many social circles inside the networks. The network densities are low, but it is higher than the network densities of urban communities.

Suggestions:

As it shows that there is very meager impact of modernization on the Sabara community in spite of several planned strategies of rural and tribal development evolved and experimented by our planners since 1951. My suggestions may be regarded, as further addition to the strategies already there in sufficient number, but I feel these are worth for an experiment.

- (1) There is a school, with two teachers working there since last 25 years but there is not a single adult who can sign his or her name. In the 1981 census the literacy of tribals in Orissa is 13.95 per cent. Assuming that the tribal literacy was zero in 1951, it shows that during the last 30 years only about 14 per cent of the tribal could be made literates. The children are not being sent to the school because the parents feel that the education is of no use to the family immediately; instead they prefer to engage them in the household work which is believed to be more productive. Further it is found that the children are not at all interested to learn a "foreign" language or other than their mother-tongue which is neither spoken nor understood by anybody in the village. I suggest that the Sabaras may be taught in their own language through Oriya alphabets in order to increase the educational level of the community. There is no need to develop a separate script for the Sabara language to add to the eleven types of scripts we are having in India today, they can be taught in their language through Odia script easily. Both the parents and children would be more interested in their process of education. Once they know the Odia script gradually they will be attracted to learn Odia when they realize that it is necessary for them. The estimated Sabara population now is about 4.5 lakhs in the State. Hence a suitable education programme may be developed for the Sabaras in their own language.
- (2) Most of the school teachers today in the tribal villages neither attend school and even if they go occasionally nor reside in the village with family. Instead

of a teacher a multipurpose work may be appointed to do the job of a teacher, health and medical visitor and a development worker concerning the village. The teacher should be given necessary training in the respective field and more important is that he should stay in the village itself with family. This will have a good demonstrative effect' on their pattern of consumption and attitude towards life.

- (3) The network analysis shows that there is a strong social circle among the Sabara women in the village. Out of 11 sample women, 27 per cent, that is three women, viz. Mangidi, Body and Admi-the numbers 4, 5 and 6 in the networks-form a strong social circle. Economic development requires a change in the way people think, feel and act. Development as an objective and as a process embraces a change in the fundamental attitudes to life and work. If the closely related three Sabara women are motivated and their outlook influenced it will spread to the entire community through the social networks. Development cannot take place if there is no urge for it. Lack of interest in material advance seems to be one of the main reasons of under development of these aboriginal tribes. When these Sabara women were asked about their requirement for improvement, four of them told to provide land for cultivation and the rest reluctantly stated that they need money to repair or construct houses. Nobody demanded any modern amenities or household goods. Unless aspirations are aroused for development among them, spoon feeding of projects by dumping money cannot make any headway to develop them. They have to be motivated through the initiation of a social circle, especially through the women folk of the community. This approach may be slow, and desired results may not forth come immediately, but once caught up the community will progress rapidly. We have lost 40 years expecting quick results and once we stop expecting quick results initially; this new approach will get unexpected results.

References

- (1) Census of India (Orissa) 1981, Part IX (IV), Special tables for Scheduled Tribes.
- (2) A. G. Frank, "Dependence, class and politics in Latin America (Monthly Review Press, New York, 1972.)
- (3) R. Nurkse, "Problems of Capital Formation in Underdeveloped Countries". (Oxford University Press, 1967), PP.58-59.
- (4) Gunnar Myrdal. Asian Drama, An Enquiry into the Poverty of Nations. (Penguin Books, 1968), Pp.851.
- (5) P. Streeten, The Frontiers of Development Studies, (Mac Millan. 1972), Pp .30.
- (6) P.T. Bauer, Dissent on Development, (Harvard University Press, 1972), PP. 78f.

SAORA WOMEN: A STUDY ON THEIR SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS*

*Tarini Patnaik*¹

Sarat Das

Status, though difficult to conceptualize and often elusive for empirical grasp, yet its idea is essential to an understanding of social stratification, social mobility and the line. In the past, status was a juristic term connoting the individual rights and duties as relevant to him/her condition and station in life. In the past, status was a juristic term connoting the individual rights and duties as relevant to him/ her condition and station in life. In the 19th century social upheavals had shaken the old order to its foundation. This came with Max Weber who pointed out that status, class or income and political power are the three major dimensions of social stratification. A different interpretation has distinguished the work of Anthropologist, Ralph Linton. According to him, status is primarily a position in a social structure involving rights, duties and reciprocal expectations of behaviour, none of which depends on the personal characteristics of the status occupants.

Generally, status is of two types i.e. ascribed and achieved. Ascribed status is that which is inherited, such as sex, race or ethnicity or overtime, age and is crucial to define the basic patterns of people's lives. Achieved status, on the other hand, is acquired through personal effort or chance possibly from occupational or educational attainment.

Professor R. H. Lowie prescribed four determinants to assess the status in its multifarious dimensions. These are i) Actual treatment, ii) Legal status, iii) Opportunity for social participation, iv) Character and extent of work.

* Published in ADIVASI, Vol. XXXVI, Nos.1 & 2, 1996, pp.61-65

¹ Research Assistants, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar

This article deals with the socio-economic status of the Lanjia Saora women. Social and economic status mostly determines the behavioural make up of an individual and provides an insight for him / her future success.

Therefore, the knowledge about the social and economic status of the Saora women will be helpful to the social scientists to foresee the behavior in changed conditions that has occurred after launching of different developmental programmes. It is also highly essential on the part of the planners to measure the present status of the women section which will help them to know the gap and the quantum of efforts required. The present status of the Saora women is delineated on the basis of the data collected from a Lanjia Saora village.

In Orissa, Saoras are one of the major tribes. The Lanjia Saora belong to the primitive section of the tribe, Saora. They are found in great compactness in the Parlakhemundi sub-division of Gajapati district and Gunupur sub-division of Rayagada district. The tract stretching from Parlakhemundi town to Gumma and beyond up to Serango and this country has a radius of about 20 kms. From both these central places there are many Saora villages which are located in the fertile valleys. The total population of the tribe as per 1981 census is 3,70,061 which constitute 6.26 percent of the total population of the State. On the basis of their numerical strength they occupy third position among 62 tribal communities. The sex ratio as per 1981 census comes to 1030 females per 1000 males. Educationally the tribe is backward. The percentage of literacy among them is 14.47 as compared with 34.23 percent for the entire population of the State as per 1981 census. However, they show an increase in their literacy rate by 4.32 percent over the earlier figure of 10.15 percent recorded in 1971 census.

The economic life of the Saoras is primarily based on *podu* cultivation and terrace cultivation with occasional hunting and food gathering. Especially, the Saoras of Parlakhemundi are the best terrace cultivators. In their society, family is patriarchal; the residence is patrilocal and descent, patrilineal. Membership in the family is acquired by birth but girls after their marriage leave parent's family and stay with their husbands. The Saoras are unique due to the absence of clan. The *birinda* as patrilineage has its structure and function.

Among the Saoras the women have their distinct position. They have freedom in selecting their mates. The institutions, like marriage and family bestow a significant status on them. Though generally, monogamy is common, polygyny is also permitted. It is mainly resorted to for the expansion of shifting cultivation in which Saora women work more than men and they constitute the major work force. It is a sign of prestige and prosperity for the Saora men to have more wives. Thus, women help in enhancing the social and economic prestige of men. Another remarkable feature among the Saoras is that a woman belongs to her father's *birinda* (extended lineage) even after her marriage. In widow remarriage and divorce equal opportunities are given to both the sexes.

The Saora society being patriarchal, the status of women is expected to be low. But in reality women in their society are neither ill-treated nor suppressed to a subservient position. There is no absolute dominance of man, though in theory he is the head of the household. Women have a high and honoured place in the society. The Saoras believe that growth of the family largely depends more on women. So they consider that greater sin is committed when a woman is killed. A person killing a woman should offer 8 buffaloes where as 7 buffaloes are prescribed in case a man is killed. In religion also Saora women have a distinct position. The existence of female 'Shaman' called 'Kudanboi' justifies importance of women in religious life. The Saora men also pay due respect to their women. Once someone is engaged to a girl, he should not even touch her before marriage is consummated.

So far as the legal status of the Saora women is concerned, she cannot sell properties or enter into an agreement to transfer of property rights in any manner. Of course, she can sell her personal and self acquired assets with the consent of the husband. They also have right over certain movable properties and immovable assets to a limited extent by virtue of marriage, personal endeavour and by way of receiving gifts and compliments. Thus, though husband is the customary owner and inherits property, it is the women in the family who virtually control the family purse and play a decisive role in respect of control and management of the family assets.

In the economic front, Saora women play a more significant role. The Saora males appear to be less capable and less enthusiastic in economic activities than the females. The women are very hard-working, laborious and active. As the Saoras are shifting cultivators, the help of women is indispensable to them. Cleaning the shrubs in swidden (*podu*) lands, manuring, hoeing, dressing, reaping, winnowing the crops after harvesting etc. are exclusively done by the women in addition to their household works. Even Saora women plough the terraced lands.

Thus, Saora women for their substantial economic role are regarded as assets to families of both parents and in-laws. After giving a brief account of the socio-economic status of Saora women in their social structure, an attempt has been made to analyze primary data to assess their present status.

The objective of the study was to find out the major socio economic problems that Saora women confront in their day to-day life. Three types of schedules were administered for data collection from primary sources.

- a) Village information schedule
- b) Household schedule
- c) Individual schedule

A sample of 111 females were selected using purposive sampling. The selection was based on age, marital status, educational standard and land holding. One female from each of the household was selected.

The study was conducted in Tumula, a village on the Gumma hills in Serango P.S. of Parlakhemundi subdivision in Gajapati district. The village is about 45 k.ms. away from the Parlakhemundi sub-divisional headquarters.

Demography of the Village:

(i) Households:

Total	111
Non-Converted	46 (41.45%)
Converted	65 (58.55%)

The village is homogeneous in composition inhabited by 111 Lanjia Saora families. Out of these 111 households (58.55 %) are converted to Christianity.

(ii) Population:

	<u>Non-Converted</u>	<u>Converted</u>
Total	241	348
Male	103	156
Female	138	192

The population distribution above shows that females outnumber the males, the sex ratio being 1,274 females per 1,000 males as against 1,030 females per 1,000 males as per 1981 census.

(iii) Education:

	<u>Non- Converted</u>	<u>Converted</u>
Total Literates	50 (20.75%)	153 (25.98%)
Male Literacy	41 (39.80%)	130 (50.19%)
Female Literacy	9 (6.53%)	23 (6.96%)

The above figures indicate that 34.46 percent of the population is literate. Further, it is seen that converted Saora show a higher rate of literacy than the non-converted Saora. This implies the influence of Christianity.

(iv) Land Holding:

Marginal Farmer	107 (96.39%)
Small Farmer	4 (3.61%)
Big Farmer	Nil (0.00%)

The above figures show that majority of the families are marginal farmers which deprives them from being economically sound through agriculture.

(v) Income:

Below Poverty Line	- 71 households - (63.96%)
Above Poverty Line	- 40 households- (36.04%)

(Taking poverty line for the rural area as Rs. 9,000)

About 64 percent of the families have their annual income below Rs. 9,000 which implies that they have not crossed the poverty line.

Social-Economic Status of the Sample Women:

(a) Age:

Between 10-14 years	12 (10.81%)
Between 15-19 years	90 (81.08%)
60 and above years	9 (8.11%)

The above figures show that most of the respondents were between the age-group of 15-59 years.

(b) Marital Status:

Unmarried	36 (32.44%)
Married	62 (55.85%)
Widow	12 (10.81%)
Divorced	1 (0.90%)

The above table shows that majority of the respondents are married.

(c) Mean age at Marriage:

Between 15-19 years	2 (2.67%)
Between 20-24 years	47 (62.67%)
Between 25-29 years	21 (28.00%)
Between 30-34 years	5 (6.66%)

The above figures indicate that age at marriage is highest in the age group 20-24 years.

(d) Education :

Illiterate	95 (85.59%)
Just literate	2 (1.80%)
Having school education	14 (14.41%)

The above figures indicate that about 86 percent of women are illiterate but 14.41 percent having school education can be trained to take the leadership for the rest. Below the age group 29 years not a single women is even found to be just literate. Adult education may prove fruitful to this group of women.

(e) Economic Activities:

Cultivation	52 (57.77%)
Shifting cultivation	83 (92.92%)
Agricultural wage earning	25 (27.77%)

Non-agricultural wage earning	0 (0.00%)
Forest collection	72 (80.00%)
Service	0 (0.00%)

Average Annual per-capita Income:

Cultivation	Rs. 200
Shifting cultivation	Rs. 1,260
Agricultural wage earning	Rs. 150
Forest collection	Rs. 1,000
Per capita annual income	Rs. 1,718.28

Out of 111 sample women, 90 women (81.08%) of the age group 15-59 years constitute the work force. Their work participation in different economic sectors shown above reveals that they are exclusively engaged in primary sector of economy i.e. cultivation, shifting cultivation, agricultural wage earning and forest collection. Not a single woman is found employed in any secondary or tertiary sector. In course of interaction with the respondents it is found that shifting cultivation is a part and parcel of their life and they have no confidence in their ability to take up non-traditional work. Heavy pressure on land leads to under-employment and low per capita income. Forest degradation and reservation also act as a set-back on their economy, as next to agriculture they get their subsistence from forest. It is also found during the study that forest collections are mainly marketed by the women at the Gumma weekly market. They are found exploited by the local traders.

The extent of influence of women on their husbands in decision making is shown below:-

Decision Areas	Mean Score	Rank
Marriage of children	3.98	III
Education of children	3.53	IV
Expenditure pattern	4.91	I
Construction of house	3.04	V
Adoption of new shifting land	3.98	III
Debt & payment of loans	2.85	III
Health & Hygiene care	2.75	IX
Religious matters	2.95	VII
Family planning	3.01	VI
Household task	4.52	II
Dowry payment	1.98	X
Litigation matter	1.01	XI

The Saora women have influence more or less on their husbands on above items and they exercise it on three most important areas i.e. expenditure pattern, marriage of children and adoption of new agricultural lands.

Sources of information utilized by the Saora women:

Information sources	Mean score	Rank
Radio	3.01	VII
V.L.W.	3.95	V
Anganwadi	4.01	IV
Family	8.25	I
Friends & Relatives	7.01	II
Tribal Development Agency	3.02	VI
Village Leaders	6.82	III

The above figures reveal the intensity of the use of different information sources by the Saora women. The three most important information sources utilized by women are family, friends and relatives and village leaders. Among the institutionalized sources, Anganwadi comes first followed by V.L.W., Tribal Development Agency and Radio. No doubt, the above finding is real in the sense that family, village leader and peers are very close to them. On the other hand, the institutional sources have some bottlenecks in rearing and educating them. However, to maintain high degree of fidelity in communication more information support should be provided to Saora women by the institutional agencies.

Conclusion

The study illustrates an all-round socio-economic status and living pattern of Lanjia Saora women. On the whole, women in the Lanjia Saora society occupy a dignified position enjoying considerable freedom in social life. They do not have the feeling that they are inferior to men. They do not face evils, like adultery, rape, beating, bride burning etc.; neither they feel insecure in their in-laws' house. The Lanjia Saora women share the duties and responsibilities of maintaining the daily life of their families on equal terms with the male folk.

On the other hand, the economic scenario of Saora women continues to be significantly dominated by agriculture, terrace cultivation and allied activities. Saora women in particular constitute a laborious work force that was found to have enormous potentiality without proper avenue for its utilization. Moreover, the Saora women are quite responsive and have influence on their husbands. It is a positive sign which the developmental agencies can explore to fortify their efforts to ensure acceptance of the development programmes by the tribal families.

Lastly, the Lanjia Saora women are in that stage of development which is primarily growth-oriented economic development. The first and foremost need is economic development which should then be followed by development of linkage between economic development and social change.

References:

- | | | | |
|-----|------------------------|------|--|
| (1) | Devendro, Kivan, | 1985 | <i>Status and Position of Women in India</i> , Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., Bombay. |
| (2) | Elwin, V. | 1995 | <i>The Religion of an Indian Tribe</i> , Oxford Univ. Press. |
| (3) | Evans-Pritchard, E. E. | 1965 | <i>The Position of Women in Primitive Societies and other Essays in Social Anthropology</i> , Faber & Faber Ltd., 24- Russel Square, London. |
| (4) | Patnaik, N. | 1989 | Environmental Changes Affecting Tribal Women, <i>Adibasi</i> , Vol. XXIX, No.3&4, THRTI, Bhubaneswar. |
| (5) | Patnaik, N. (Ed.) | 1989 | <i>The Saora</i> , Popular Series on Tribes, T.H.R.T.I., Bhubaneswar, Orissa. |

SAORA RIDDLES *

*Hrushikesh Mahapatra*¹

It is very well known that study of riddles is very important for the study of life and culture of a community. Like myth, legend and folktale, riddle is an important component of folklore. The composition of a riddle is made up of two parts. One part is question and the other part is answer pertinent to the question. Usually in the question part a fact is concealed by means of either metaphor or a simile where as the answer part of the riddle reveals the secret. Because of this concealment, riddle attains its unique beauty, significance and form. Riddle stimulates the inquisitiveness and intellectual curiosity in men. The cultural background of the riddle is very vast and varied.

Here is a study of the riddles of a primitive section of the Hill Saoras of Orissa (Odisha) that has been collected from Serango of Parlakhemundi area in Gajapati district.

Saora riddles are closely related to their life. Scholars have divided the riddles into two groups one of culture and the other of utility. The division under culture involves folk riddles and literary riddles and those under utility are for explanations, jokes, celebrations and recreations.

Social Setting of the Saora Riddle

(a) It seems that riddles may be asked throughout the whole year. But mainly during autumn, inspired by the old people, boys and girls come together for questioning and answering riddles.

(b) The evening is the appropriate time for riddles. Sometimes, to break the monotony during work, they utilize working hours for questioning and answering riddles to relax and refresh.

* Published in ADIVASI, Vol. XXXV, Nos.1 & 2, 1995, pp.32-34

¹ Research Associate, Academy of Tribal Dialect and Culture, Bhubaneswar-751 001

(c) Riddles are indulged in mainly by children or young people of both the sexes. Two individuals or two teams may ask riddles to each other. It is clear from the social setting of the Saora riddles that riddles are mainly considered as a form of entertainment and therefore are indulged in the evening and during the less busy month of the year i.e. autumn.

The Saora term for riddle is 'Digur' or 'Adigur'. The specialist in riddle is called as 'Digurmar'. He/She is liked by the young Saora folk. It has been observed that Saora girls are more conversant in riddles than the boys.

The riddles of the Saoras have been classified as under.

1. Related to natural phenomena.
2. Related to animal world.
3. Related to food and vegetable world.
4. Related to human body.
5. Related to jokes.
6. Related to domestic life.

In the following paragraphs each of the aforesaid groups of riddles is given.

1. Riddles related to Natural Phenomena

- (a) *Raja aon rupti adi Samabe, taglen Mangili gi gi li binden gitadi ? - Tutuee.*
(One can see the king's sons but can never count them, what is it? -Stars)
- (b) *Tar tangana amangtin, Je tongan tikite ? - Taagi.*
(The white bullock is followed by the red bullock, what is it? -Fire)

2. Riddles related to the Animal World:

- (a) *Raja asi kiditang? - Yantan.*
(King's Chain, what is it? -Black ants).
- (b) *Yagi muyun Janang, bagu muyun janang achhuda, abga gaden daku, itin ate? - Gullu.*
(The growth during three to four years is not reducing or increasing, what is it? -Snail).
- (c) *Kunde amanara ra ra Malin dakutin? - Pander.*
(It has bulging eyes, what is it - Rabbit)
- (d) *Bamnara ganurja game, tarbuja game, gablena gablesite ? - Banum.*
(It always stands the rain, cyclone and sun but never breaks, what is it? White ant – Moundi)
- (e) *Edalin dakutin Kudun aaglenji den yaptin ? - Padur.*
(The dry leaching wholes are concealed when filled with water, what is it? -Crab hole in the field).

3. Riddles Related to the Vegetable World and Food

- (a) *Agur dangan jatan, yaga dangan lanka ? - Alae*
(The red pot below, the black pot above, what is it? 'Valia', a type of oil nut).
- (b) *Asudamar taramdin, asanamar ya ya ren dakutinji ? - Sarugae.*
(An elderly man surrounded by youngsters, what is it? – Arum).
- (c) *Mane gan ousalan tarang din ajelub, tarangdin ajangan alungan ajelun ? Bhada.*
(Flesh below the skin, is the bone containing flesh, what is it? - Mango).
- (d) *Laden atal tal li li site ? - Sindi*
(Lady's necklace beads are in bundles, what is it? – Date palm).
- (e) *Rajana abanda anti ja ah gae ? - Pedida.*
(Birds are unable to drink water from the king's pond, what is it? - Coconut water).
- (f) *Ranjana alantada butija galraptie? - Paidi.*
(No one can drink water from the king's spring, what is it? – Green Coconut water).
- (g) *Raja abaengu atentie? - Arresim.*
(King's brinjal without stalk, what is it? - an Egg).
- (h) *Dubula tongan endungte, Yaga tangan lulesite, itin ate? - Kan-Lae.*
The white bullock is sleeping, the black bullock is roaming, what is it?
- Pumpkin).
- (i) *Sabayindi nasauti kadabbling dakutin? Kintéal*
(It stands always with the shaking sword, what is it? – Banana leaf).
- (j) *Atinbaru lingan sering, pudri ganamur tin lasotinai? - Abagur.*
(Who ascends from the hill top releasing smoke? – Mahua flower).
- (k) *Rajana akadip butin abling ruptite? - Kintéal.*
(Who can tell the name of the king's Sword? – Banana leaf).

4. Riddles Related to the Human Body:

- (a) *Lungar lingan tar piden tare site? - 'Jah'*
(The white mushroom of the rainy season are dazzling within the cave, what is it? – Teeth).
- (b) *Aboe manra tabdang erete eraite ?- Madd.*
(It moves to and fro within the twinkle of an eye, what is it? - an Eye)
- (c) *Bada gadubar abur aboi aruken? - Kuyu - Kuyu.*
(The hill is full of ups and downs, what is it? - Hair style)

5. Riddles Related to the Jokes

- (a) *Bamnara irebenden etigai soulagte ? - Ungulu.*
(Where ever a man goes another follows him, what is it? – Shadow).
- (b) *Rajana arta edele arabtibe? - Tangar*
(King's rope cannot be turned, what is it? – Walking on the hill road).
- (c) *Aboi bangu rungligan, atom tumle jilibinden Urubinden a bongay? - Kinsoal.*
(Which cannot be straightened with a bamboo pipe? - Dog's tail).
- (d) *Yung ladib, itin ate? - Bajlana.*
(It is like Sun rays, what is it? - Spitting).
- (e) *Yagi abban galji ajingan? - Ara.*
(It has three heads and ten legs, what is it? - A man ploughing with two bullocks).

6. Riddles Related to Domestic Life

- (a) *Sodamar bintalenden engange, sanamar binta – lenden Yagte? - Sannar.*
(Bigger hunting parties miss the game, where as smaller parties gain it, what is it?--Comb).
- (b) *Gamlinbin gantin, unglin bin dugte? - Sanag.*
(It moves in to the room and also outside the room, what is it? -Door).
- (c) *Kudana jaljal diasingen jaler dakutin ? - Janah.*
(That cleans the house, court yard and back yard, what. is it?-Broom stick).
- (d) *Kuda lingan gablena gablesite, tagija game, Mayuja game? - Donki.*
(It rests on the fire place, without fire it is cool, when cooked it resists the heat, what is it? – Pot earthen or metal).
- (e) *Kadia tangan lasote, dubula tongan edaiate, itin ate ?- Along.*
(Replace the black bullock by white bullock, what is it? – Straw).
- (f) *Atagin tagin upte? - Satua.*
(It does not distinguish between hot and cold, what is it? – Laddle).
- (g) *Aerte anang aduloee, ayartinayen among abe? - Daba.*
(It goes with empty stomach and returns with full belly, what is it? - Carriage of water in the earthen pots).
- (h) *Aboi nin aonal ling, yagi unji tangataji? - Taagding.*
(Three/four persons are dancing on a point, what is it? - Rice pounder).
- (i) *Asudamar gable site, asudamar endugte? - Tudu.*
(Bigger ones are sitting idle while the smaller ones are roaming about, what is it? – Small baskets).

j) *Arsin ajang rujudang ajadang?* - Randa.

(The monkey's bone is undulating, what is it?--drying of paddy).

(k) *Antar jumte, antar asangten dangee yamle tangseng leni dakutin ?* - Gurudiar.

(It rolls round with a stick, feeds and clears the bowl, what is it? - a Grinder).

(l) *Alungan aurnta jan gan daku, baeran ajelun daku?*- Alsing.

(Bones are covered by flesh, what is it – thatch of a house (Kachha).

From the examples mentioned above it is clear that the riddles of the Saoras reflect the different stages and conditions of life like a parody. Their use of riddles reveals the depth involved in their meanings. These are both thought stimulating and highly entertaining. When the Saoras thatch their house they replace the old straw by the new straw. It is indicated by the riddle, "*Kadia tangan losote, Dubula tangan odaete.*"

For different fruits and foods taking different shapes, sizes, and colours, they have composed their riddles. During summer, mango is an important food item for them. It is explained in the riddles, "*Manegan ausalan tarandin din ajelub, tarong din ajangan alungan ajelin.*" The food 'egg' is explained in the riddle, "*Raja abaengu antentie*". The Saoras have planted coconut trees in the hills. The riddles related to these plantations are also in vogue. It is explained in the riddles "*Rajanaabanda anti ja ah gae*" and "*Rajana alontoda buija galraptie*". Similarly different aspects of Saora life are explained in different riddles.

There is a conscious recognition of the fact that riddles act as a functional device for social entertainment and they are considered as criteria of Intellectual skill and wit as well. Like any other riddles, the Saora riddles also perform the educational function because of the nature of its very content.

It will be an understatement to say that riddles are basically recreational in nature. On the contrary, it evokes the loftiest of ideas in a Saora mind. To have a clear cut understanding of their life in their very context, proper understanding and explanation of their riddles are necessary.

References

1. Bhagabat Durga – "An outline of Indian Folklore" (Calcutta, 1958 March).
2. Dundes Allan--"The study of Folklore" Prentice-Hall Inc Englewood Cliffs N.J. 1965.
3. Thama Raj. Y – "Riddles reveal life activities (Article) in the *Journal of Folklore*, August-1988 (Indian Publication).

THE SAORA VIEW OF 'GOOD LIFE' HAPPY LIFE' AND OF 'DEVELOPMENT' *

G. Mohapatra ¹

Development is a very complex process in tribal areas. It is emphatically oriented towards ensuring a happy and prosperous life to the families and the communities. The development planners and administrators in India have all the good intentions, sincerity and devotion to the cause of a happy and prosperous life for the society. But usually they have assumed the universal applicability of their own ideas to such things. This assumption on their part may not only conflict with the majority view of happy and prosperous life but it may also violently clash with the minority views of happy and prosperous life. And here, we are concerned very much with the view of the cultural minorities, a major segment of which is composed of tribal people of India. Their view point, their evaluation and assessment in terms of their goals towards a happy and prosperous life may not be decisive in formulating the development plan for a region. But these should be taken into consideration with a concern and sympathy for their well-being to the extent these do not run directly counter to the national goals and objectives of development. In other words, it is to be explored and assessed if the tribal people of a region share the same goals and objectives of development as the planners and administrators have, and if so, to what extent, before a particular set of changes are introduced in a region supposedly to serve their best interest.

This insider's view of development or any change or of anything happening in the tribal society or in villages and cities is always emphasized by Anthropologists. They distinguish between "etic" view from an outsider or an observer, on one hand, and an 'emic' view of the insider or participant, on the other. An Anthropologist is conscious of the social and moral values of the cognitive

* Published in ADIBASI, Vol. XXIII, No. 2, 1983, THRTI, pp.30-43

¹ Reader in Anthropology, B.J.B. College, Bhubaneswar

system of a tribal or any other culturally autonomous group, which may be very much different from his own or from that of vast majority of his country. But he also knows, that because of differences in the value system and in the cognitive system of the people concerned, the development process cannot go as straight as in other areas and a different development strategy has to be adopted for them. He also appreciates the fact that the concepts of good life or moral life, happy and prosperous life in a tribal community may be different from one another but they are involved in one another and hence are independent and affects the process of development of course, in a changing situation in which most of the tribes find themselves today. These concepts may be varying between the young and old or between those who have adopted Hindu or Christian way of life and those who have tried to stick to their hoary traditions or between the educated and illiterate sections of the same tribal people.

The good life, in the view of any people, belongs to the moral order, one leads a good life by observing social and religious norms and this conformity to the norms ensures him appreciation in this life from his neighbours, friends, relatives and from his people in general. If there is a conception of after life with rewards and punishments for conducting this life, a good life in conformity with the norms including religious norms ensures him reward in the form of cherished objects comforts or attributes in the afterlife. If approaching god or merging in Godhood is also a cherished religious goal, this becomes the highest reward to be sought through leading a good life on earth. Leading a happy life, on the other hand, is oriented towards enjoying or having the capacity to enjoy good things of life. These good things may be conceived of differently in different cultures, but these invariably ensure personal or familial euphoria usually through good food, drinks, comfortable housing, good dress, having plenty to feast upon with friends and relatives, enjoying good health and perhaps reveling in sex, having servants to order about or having dependants over whom one has lot of control, progressive reduction of volume of manual labour or dirty work. This happy life may conflict with social, religious and moral principles of a society under certain circumstances. But this cannot flout the norms continuously over a long period. For in the last eventuality the material means to such well-being may be withdrawn or effectively reduced and thus may not sustain the bases of such a happy life for any length of time.

We have yet to clarify the concept of prosperous life, as the invariant goal of development, whether in the context of tribal or non-tribal, is always prosperity of the families and communities concerned. Prosperity in life refers to the achievement of desired goals. This may be material acquisition, prestige attainment in a stratified society. Enjoyment of leisure is a concomitant of prosperity. Indulging in politics or social service without remuneration is similarly a possible utilization of leisure, following from material prosperity. Often material prosperity can be utilized as a lever for enhancing one's social position. That means, economic advancement may secure higher position and

prestige in the society to the extent that these positions can be achieved as distinct from the inherited positions.

Scope

After having discussed the concepts of good life, happy life and prosperous life in relation to development in a particular region or in a particular ethnic group, we may take up the case study of the Saora of Ganjam Agencies. This case study may show how the sponsored development process through the Government agencies, as conforming to the requirements of good life, happy life and prosperous life of Saora, as they visualize. It is also possible to examine whether the ends and means of sponsored development came into conflict with the indigenous concepts of good life, happy life and prosperous life. Further, as the Saora of Ganjam Agencies are no longer, homogenous communities of Lanjia Saora or primitive Saora, it has been necessary to examine the issues with reference to Lanjia Saora, the Hinduised Sudha Sabara and the Christianised Saora living in rural areas of Ganjam district.

Methodology

The first Research Project has been carried out for Ph.D thesis on the subject of “Sudha Sabara : a study of Hinduization of a tribal community in Orissa” by the author. The second Research Project on “Social Ecology of persistence of Shifting Cultivation in Saora Hills” was conducted by the Research Assistants, Shri R. N. Pati, Shri N. Jena and Shri R. N. Behera under the guidance of Dr. L. K. Mohapatra, Professor and Head of the Department of Anthropology, Utkal University, Vani Vihar, Bhubaneswar, during the year 1977-79. The first project took me to 16 villages under C.D. Blocks of Gumma, R. Udayagiri and Nuagada, for intensive study. The techniques of observation, group interview, individual interview and case studies have been used for compilation of their conceptions of good life, happy life and prosperous life and of the development process in general. However, it must be acknowledged that the result of this study as embodied in this paper cannot be considered to be fully representative of the various sections of the Saora population of Ganjam.

The Saora of Ganjam Agency

The Saora, Sabara or Sahara numbering 342, 757 in 1971 are found all over Orissa State. But the Saora of Ganjam agency areas and the adjoining areas of Koraput district occupy a compact region of hills and valleys. We are concerned in this paper with the Saora of Ganjam Agencies. They number so many in the Tribal Development Agency region of Parlakhemundi subdivision. This tribe is not a homogeneous one although its major subdivisions share a common cultural heritage. In the present context, it would be appropriate to divide the tribe into three sections, i.e. (i) the Primitive or Lanjia Saora , (ii) the Hinduized or ‘Sudha Sabara’ (iii) the converted or Christian Saora. Again, the primitive section consists of the endogamous social groups like, Arsi, Kindal, Mane, Malia and

Lanjia. However, the common identity of the Lanjia Saora is expressed in their lineage 'Birinda' or 'Kheja' organization, in religious beliefs and rituals such as, participating in the worship of common spirits and ghosts and in their pre-occupation with supernaturalism pervading the social and economic life. The second section consists of the endogamous groups of Saora like, Jurei, Jara, Jati, Bima, Sarda, Mala, Sunapania who are in different stages of Hinduization. The groups take on the appellation of Sudha Sabara exhibiting, in degrees, certain cultural features of Hindu castes. Despite the divisions, their identity is marked by excluding the Lanjia Saora in matters of marital and commensal relations. Further the identity is expressed in having the social organization, similar to the caste-councils, for regulation of social life along the line of local Hindu castes. The third section, Christian Saora, is drawn from different groups of Saora. The adoption of new religion has segregated them from other two sections and other local castes. But the Christian Saora is not a homogeneous group, what they are supposed to be under the Christianity. The groups observe lineage (Birinda) exogamy; hold their group identity under the Christian section, congregate under separate church establishment in order to isolate their ethnic identity as distinct from that of the Pana Christians.

Summing up in a most general way, the Saora community of the 'Saora Land' is not homogeneous tribe, on the levels of cultural autonomy, economy, literacy, goal orientation and holding uniform attitude towards the outside world and the sponsored development. On the levels of economy the Lanjia Saora are more backward than the other two sections of Saora. In agricultural adoptions, the Christian Saora have more progressive attitude than the 'Sudha Sabara'. The incidence of literacy is more in the varying degrees, in the last two sections than the Lanjia Saora. On the basis of such cultural differentials; an attempt is made to project and describe their conception of good life, happy life prosperous life and of development.

1. Lanjia Saora

The Lanjia Saora hardly make any attempt at the critical assessment of the usefulness of customary practices and beliefs which are thought to have been shared from generations. To them, no good life is possible or should exist beyond the norms, which have established stable social relations and have been instrumental for appropriate interactions among themselves and with members of other social categories.

The Lanjia Saora considers it to be good life when they do not evade "Ukka" (customs in vogue) and commit 'Ersi' (actions causing wrath of the god or the supernatural powers). Elwin has described that 'Ersi' includes incest and breaches of religious norms. The fear of 'Ersi' encourages the strict adherence to the socio-religious practices, so that the spirits and ghosts would not cause diseases, epidemics, cattle-diseases, crop-diseases, truancy of rainfall and so forth. The 'Buya' (Priest) and the 'Beju' (Shaman) are the intermediaries, between

the individuals and such unseen powers, who by dint of their professional lore are capable of ensuring good life. The intermediaries, also, conceive of having familial relationship with their tutelaries of opposite sex in the underworld. Each of the intermediaries interprets and translates the desires and activities of the spirits with the help of his / her tutelary. The supernatural powers are supposed to take active interest in human affairs, the key to good life is to know, in advance, the desires of the men gods and spirits and their social conditions in the underworld and are to be invited together for participation in the social gatherings and functions.

On the other hand, the 'Ukka' or the patterned behavior regulates individual conduct and its violation is punished by the authority of their community. The breaches of 'Ukka' include telling lies, stealing, commitment of adultery, non-repayment of debt, forcible occupation of swidden that had been cleared by another individual not living with one's wife at the 'Bagad' (patch of shifting cultivation) for certain period of the year, non-return of gifts and such other things. The Lanjia, however, in the changing situations, would not go against the 'Ukka' at any cost, although the formal authority inflicting punishment in the breaches of 'Ukka' is weak. In the Lanjia society, there are also no formal socio-political institutions to restrain the individuals from resorting to deviant modes of behavior.

The religious functionaries are expected to observe 'Ukka' even more rigorously. These functionaries commit 'Ersi' by violating 'Ukka' and this has severe social consequences, as they arouse the wrath of their tutelary deities. The wrath of tutelary spirits would culminate in causing crop failure, scanty rain, more diseases, epidemics and all conceivable catastrophes. The maladies so caused are meant for wiping out the community.

The consequences of the breach of norms and commitment of 'Ersi' are far-reaching to the extent of wider extensions and the community consensus does not appreciate such type of antisocial behavior. They threaten their social stability *enmasse*. The customary and patterned behavior, the social behavior in confirmation to the 'Ukka' have made their tribal system a living one through generations, isolating them from their neighbours. As such, 'Ukka' and 'Ersi' constitute their moral values. These are the guidelines for leading good life in Lanjia society. Further, the oral traditions lack precise formulation of their social code of conduct. There is no society where the individuals are left to make moral choices without referring to social prescriptions which vary in range and rigidity. No Lanjia Saora would lose sight of those two light posts - 'Ukka' and 'Ersi'. The 'Ukka' and 'Ersi' would explain the way the Lanjia Saora evince an ambivalent evaluation of moral and good life in the changing situations.

The principles of social life and moral life of the Lanjia Saora are partly derived from the geography and ecology of the Agency terrain where they live in small villages which are mostly on hill slopes. The main-stay of their life is

swidden cultivation ('Bagada' or 'Angwal') and terrace cultivation. Generally, they lease out the wetland, and terrace suitable for paddy cultivation. The swiddens occupy a significant place in Lanjia Saora socio-economic life. From swiddens they harvest 16 or more types of crops like paddy, oilseeds, vegetables, pulses, green leaves and a variety of fibres for home-use and the surplus, if any, is exchanged. The types of crops and the cropping pattern are so associated with their economic life that the principal meal for six months is obtained from this source. It is the place of spending their time with family and lineage members, of negotiating for betrothal and of worshipping Gods and spirits for the wellbeing of the individual and the community. The Lanjia Saora shifts their habitation temporarily (from June-July to January-February) from the village to 'Bagada'. They live there with their family members till the harvesting of all crops are over. The 'Bagadas' are prepared in such a way that the lineage members occupy the neighbouring patches. Such type of habitation gives an idea that the Lanjia Saora lineages are concentrated in the hill-slope villages from February to June and scattered over a wider area of swiddens from July to January. It seems as if the villages with their polygynous families are flown over the hill-tops, hill brows and hill-slopes where the preparation of swiddens is possible. The swidden accommodates their polygynous families scattered over during these months. In view of the importance of swiddens in Lanjia Saora life, the practice of shifting cultivation not only provides them the type of cereals, vegetables and green leaves for their food, but it inculcates a form of social life embedded in their economic and other social institutions.

The comparative absence of specialization and consequently of the division of labour (other than age and sex) has made them more dependent on their kin members economically and socially. The extensive agricultural operations in swiddens require a number of labourers at a time for the purpose of clearing, dibbling, weeding (Gubula) harvesting and carrying the produce to the village. As such, the demand of labour, outside their community, must be met by payment to which the poor Lanjia Saora shirks for monetary transactions in exchange of labour. Rather, labour-exchange has been institutionalized and differently been patterned in their society. They have 'Ansir' (age-grade labour organization), 'Snayam' (help to kins and bond-friends) or 'Ganadi' (without expecting any return), 'Jirjir Badi' (crop-wage), 'Danadi' (timely help of labour to the consanguineal and affinal kins expecting the same in return) and 'Kudadi' (labour exchange between two families). 'Copatang' (the families co-operate in turn taking cattle to forest for grazing) and some other are the age-grade labour organizations and voluntary labour associations. These are at the base of helpfulness, generosity, amiable temper, co-operative attitudes and other dimensions of Lanjia Saora social life. Such social attitudes are extended to the extent of the fact that when other members of his lineage are starving, storing of food is socially ostracized.

The Lanjia society is unstratified or egalitarian in that sense of equi-distribution of economic benefits, especially in food materials. Helpfulness and generosity in Lanjia society follow from some of the independent and other social variables, such as typical variety of crops are produced from the soil-type in the agencies; resource and produce cannot be changed to a great extent in the existing conditions. Irregularity of monsoon causes crop failure, irregularity of good crops and estimated harvesting of the seasonal nature of the produce in addition to the channels for transportation fetch them irregular income. The nature of the utilization of the produce by the community and its size, and the limit of social interaction with other ethnic categories; contribute to the factors of upholding the lineage solidarity and ethnic cohesiveness.

They upheld a very high morale of economics; that the economic advantage at the expense of his lineage or community members is against the social norms. Violation of such norms progressively reduces the individual's social wellbeing, and consequently the individual cannot make capital for happy life out of it. The social arrangements for property relations and its inheritance in Lanjia Society put a strong brake against the economic individualism. All landed property jointly owned are termed as 'matam'. The landed property like swiddens, and terrace fields are inherited and distributed jointly. As such there are 'Khejamatam' (swiddens and terrace fields inherited by the lineage members), 'Jojulmatam' (common inheritance from the lineages of great grand-fathers), 'Salalmatam' (swiddens and terrace fields are created by joint labour), 'Sagu Chasha' (joint claim over the income from *matams*).

The group solidarity and social cohesion of the Lanjia Saora society is further expressed in holding the property of 'Garajang Andruku' (village ownership). The members of different lineages and religious groups living in the village have the claim of joint ownership and inheritance of the property of 'Garajang Andruku'. As an agricultural community, the property relations in the Lanjia society are the major concerns and have been variously expressed in their social life of lineage identity and village unity. There are reasons for standing against the conclusion that the lineage members of Lanjia society remember and recognize the ancestors till 5 or 6 generations after which the social principles of lineage of 'Kheja' exogamy, thin out. The amorphous character of Lanjia Saora society is assumed from the fact that the Lanjia Saora migrate very often from one locality to another terrain in search of fresh swiddens. But the property relations and the equi-distribution of income from the 'matam' sources among all the lineage members, however they live in distant places, cement the band of 'Kleja' or 'Birinda' continuum. The social solidarity of Lanjia Saora is in no way weaker than the tribal peoples having centralized political organization for regulation of their cultural and social autonomy.

The Lanjia socio-cultural life is very close to the pantheon of supernaturalism so much so that their daily activities are believed to be

regulated and controlled by the spirits, shades and dead ancestors. They exert heavy pressure on Lanjia purse. Without their support the Lanjia are withdrawn from the sources of happy life. The ghosts, spirits and ancestors are supposed to partake of the items of Lanjia happy life. The ghosts, spirits and ancestors are supposed to partake of the items of Lanjia happy life. In this sense the Lanjia try to widen the gap between their natural and supernatural world by means of sacrifice, offerings, appearing them by fulfilling their demands and by other methods announced by the suitable intermediaries between them and the belief in supernatural powers. The villages and local areas are supposed to be protected from the spirits other than their own. 'Saheeb Sum' (foreign god) in the form of wooden idol are worshipped to drive away the alien spirits. In the months of March to May, the Lanjia are seen busy in using up the little excess of their produce after paying off the old debts. In no case, the pending demands of the Gods should be deferred. The months are remembered with and awaited for good food, excessive liquor-drinking, dancing, and laxity of sex on the festive occasions, frequent visit to the markets or shanties in the plea of purchasing or disposing of the produce. The occasions are often associated with the religious purposes to secure the family members free from diseases, to celebrate regular festivals of *Kandul Nua*, (first eating of Kandula, a pulse), *Amba Nua* (first eating of mango), *Karja* and *Guar* (death anniversary of ancestors), *Jamal purpur* (seed worship) and other individual and lineage, worship in the village and swiddens. The occasions are marked with the regular features of drinking, dancing, and eating along with the village members, lineage members and members of other villages. There is hardly any feast limited to the participation of an individual, or members of a family. Merry-making is a part of the religious activities; the tutelary spirits, spirits those guarding individual and village well-being are supposed to participate in the merry-making. There are occasions where are 'gramadevi' (village deity), Saheeb Sum (foreign gods), *Jhalia* (a god for village and individual welfare), *Barsum* (hill god), *Rusisum* (the spirits of *rishis* supposed to have lived in the hills) and a good number of gods are worshipped to do away with the bad omens. In other words, the happy life for Lanjia is to enjoy disease-free body for himself, for his family members and for the members of his community. To them the happy life would only be ensured by the supernatural powers if they are properly pleased.

The Lanjia Saora are very fond of children. They do not think the female children to be liability, rather they are considered as assets to his household and agricultural works. They become happy if they see their children are disease-free. They would go to any length to the extent of mortgaging the crops standing in fields and other properties to meet the expenses of curing their ailing children and forgetting over barrenness. No Lanjia divorce or think of second marriage if only female children are born to the first wife. One of the considerations for marriage and for polygynous families might be to have more children and more

women for more acquisition of swiddens. It would be hasty to count that polygyny and shifting cultivation are positively correlated.

The happy life in the perspective of material enjoyment life food and dress varies on the basis of age and sex in their society. The younger generations are more sensitive to the fashionable dress and houses with two rooms than the older generations. Besides, the younger generations do not feel to change the older pattern of arrangements of materials in the houses. The Lanjia Saora gods enclosed in pots are hung down from the roof, neither of the generations raises objection to the indoor sacrifices of animals for curing of diseases or fulfilling the promises made for the gods. Irrespective of age, the members of own village or of other villages together enjoy the feasts with the presence of their lineage and affinal members on the occasions of curing of diseases, driving out the bad spirits, propitiating the dead ancestors or taking of positive steps for village wellbeing for the next year. On the day of feast, the whole village including the children and the Panos (scheduled caste) living near the village seems to be busy in connection with the occasion. None go for other works. They enjoy the day with food, drink, and dance in the presence of their respective age-grades. The months from January to June there is hardly a week when there would be no feast in the village. The months from July-November-January are dull seasons for congregational feasts, although there are plenty of individual worships in the swiddens or terrace field.

The Lanjia Saora think themselves to be prosperous, when they adequately meet the religious demands amidst their relatives and friends, and help them, in return, on those occasions. Nothing tortures the Lanjia Saora than to be idle during the seasons of swidden and terrace cultivation. They hardly take interest in the daily wages, nor prefer to take reference from the neighbouring communities in connection with their economic life. The purpose of attainment of material prosperity cannot be totally ruled out, but such achievements are in conjunction with religious beliefs, ritual for spirits of dead ancestors, 'Snayum' 'Matam' and such other social organizations and gatherings where the spirits of the communal solidarity is dominant. To them, the material prosperity should be shared with other members of the community. The prosperity to them would be displayed by entertaining the community and lineage members with good feasts, drinks on the religious and marriage occasions. A Lanjia becomes prosperous and moves up in the scale of social positions, when he has a number of wives and swiddens; and if he has meticulously fulfilled all the demands of the gods and ancestors by sacrificing animals and holding feasts.

II. Sudha Sabaras

This section of Saora is found in different stages of socio-religious integration with the neighbouring Hindu Society. The process can be viewed from two points of social behavior leading towards the common goal to secure a

social position in the caste hierarchy or towards leading a Hindu way of life. The process of alienation from their primitive brethren in connection with the manifested behavior of magico-religious and social activities is almost obvious to the outsiders. The section is very much conscious of the existing segregation between themselves and the Lanjia Saora in matters of settlement pattern, in swidden cultivation, in dress, in matters of food habit, the speaking language, in social relations mainly of marital and commensality.

They usually settle in plains land or 'padar' around which the land gradually slopes down towards a water course. Plains slopes down towards a water course. Plains land around the village is suitable for harvesting *ragi*, mustard, *til*, blackgram, horsegram, 'Kandula' - *arhrara* of country variety and other pulses and cereals more than their family requirement. They make cash out of it. They do not practice shifting cultivation because it is the mainstay of the Lanjia Saora, and it is associated with their way of life. In the consideration of Hindus it is inferior type of cultivation which fetches low social prestige. It is below the dignity of Hindi peasantry. The groups of Sarda, Jati, Jara and some of Jurei Sabaras also practice swidden cultivation as a source of additional income or a source of earning cash. Lanjia are known for their peculiar dress of long and narrow loin cloth having a long tail like flap hanging down across the waist at the back. Their women put on a black skirt of 'Beda' around their waist leaving the upper part of the body bare.

The Sudha Sabara shows a contrast in dress and put on the dresses similar to the neighbouring Hindus and the untouchables. The language of Sudha Sabara is not completely free from the chaste Saora language with the accents. Whereas, the Sunapania group speak local Oriya with some peculiar accents. The Sudha Sabaras adhere to the types of food they should take, as prescribed by their respective group councils 'Kula Mela'. The 'Kula Mela' in their respective meetings, restricts the commensality and marital relations with the primitive groups of Saora and the deviants are fined and punished. The significant function of the 'Kula Mela' is to keep records of their group principles and to add or to drop out the new or old principles standing in the way of upward social mobility in the region.

On the other hand, the Sudha Sabara make an effort, to integrate and identify themselves with the Hindu caste society. The proceedings of the Kulamela which act as directives of customs and ideology of the respective groups bear the testimony of their affiliation with the wider Hindu society. The Sudha Sabaras are no more a local group. They are wide-spread from the agency to the plains areas. As the section of the Sudha Sabar are different endogamous groups, only 3 of them hold 'Kulamela' regularly at the interval of 2 or 3 years. They abide by its mandatory principles, and are in a position to enforce the norms and morality of Hindu cultural life. It seems, the groups are going nearer to caste society and are more or less influenced by the ideology of caste

stratification. On the moral plane, they try to reinterpret at the level of their individual interests the conceptions of hell and heaven, belief in 'Karmaphala', purity and pollution, after-life, 'papa' and 'punya' (sin and religious record), 'Dana' and 'Dakshina', 'Mokhya' (salvation) and other traits of Hinduism that would influence the social behavior and activities of individuals in this life. The belief in conformation to the religious and social norms in this world is not only taken to be the good life, by the other Hindus, but the conformists are amply rewarded in their after-life. The highest reward in the after-life, in Hinduism, is taken to be the 'mokshya' or salvation or merging with godhood or no birth hereafter. Ofcourse, there is belief in gradation of celestial life depending upon the activities and good life (basing on Hindu standards) led by an individual in this world. As such, the individuals spend a substantial portion of their economic possessions towards the attainment of individual good life after death. In view of securing them in the other world, the criteria of good life in this world are to earn 'punya' by giving 'Dana' (permanent parting) and 'Dakshina', (payment for such parting), by observing death and birth pollutions and by engaging Brahmins in the marriage and mortuary rites in order to make the union sacrament and to give solace to the dead respectively. Often they even desire to spend a considerable amount of their income on pilgrimage, holding feasts on the occasions of local fairs, festivals (Balijatra, Dola, Gamha Purnima, Durgapuja 'Osha', 'Brata' (religious fastings) and on other occasions coming under Hindu calendrical year. As the social relations are extended beyond the lineage and local groups to the Hindu neighbours the investment is often made in securing the ritual services of the barber, the washer man and the Brahmin. Besides the religious norms, the social norms of Hindu life, though cannot be separated from it, are equally rigid to gain the appreciation of good life. It includes the marriage within the group, restriction on movement of women, desire to procure male children for continuing the 'vansha' (lineage) and getting 'pinda' (religious offering of rice-balls to the ancestors), restrictions on inter-dinning, obligation to entertain the territorial members of 'Khandas' (regional group) on the occasions of expiations of cow killing, of 'patak' (worms in wounds) and of such others which are believed to seal the doors of heaven for the victims in their after-life. The Sudha Sabar make investments on these several ritualistic occasions to earn good life not only in their earthly life but also in the after-life.

The Sudha Sabara are economically better off than the Lanjia Saora. The natural resources are manipulated to the extent of wet cultivation, horticulture, intensive cultivation, growing more cash crops, getting income from the petty-job works. It incites them to search for new avenues of income which are prestigious in the views of Hindu neighbours. The Sudha Sabara, out of their scanty income cherishes to have two-roomed houses with a courtyard inside and wide verandah in front of the house. Following the Hindu model of house plan, village plan and plan for the installation of deities, they seek for out houses, linear arrangement of houses in rows and temples at the two sides of the village.

The verandah and the house are considered to be ritually pure for the fact that every Hindu house is a temple and should not be polluted by possession of materials considered ritually impure. The household members must not do away with by sprinkling emulsion, transplanting Tulsi plant (*occimum sanctum*) in front of the house and by preserving oblations of the great god, like Shiva, Jagannath, Thakurani and other Hindu gods. The household members must not override the decisions of the eldest males and females: and the females should follow the dictates of the males. They consider those to be happy familial life which ensures them caste-endogamy, abhorrence from extra marital relations and obedience of females to males and children to their parents.

Both younger and older generations are not so casual about dresses. To them, the dress not only is a requirement for the body but it has its own prestige symbol before the neighbours and outsiders. Without it, one is not more than a Lanjia Saora. Even living in the same house, the older members do not object to the fashionable dress put on by the youngsters. They also take delight in taking good food like mutton, fish and liquor, although these are not prescribed for good Hindu life. The last item is virtually in conflict with the local Hindu customs whereas the other two items of food are not objected by the local Hindus. The 'Kula Mela' prohibits ideally, the use of liquor in any form. But in actuality in each and every 'Kula' feast on the occasions of marriage, death and festivals, liquor is used lavishly that takes the merriment to climax. The females also participate in drinking liquor on such occasions. The social norms are, on some occasions, evaded for happiness at individual and group level.

Acquisition of land (Padar and Joba), storing of paddy and saving of money in hard cash are the few selected criteria of prestigious position in local hierarchy. The growing trend among the Sudha Sabara is to engage agricultural labourers, to entertain the Government Officials on tour and to participate in the local politics which are being considered prestigious as it is in vogue with the local Hindu castes. Irrespective of their economic status they cherish to have in fact, the resources that raise their social status to the level of the local Khandayats or the Paikas, who do not confirm to the textual *varna* model. They do not lose any opportunity to extend their interpersonal relationship with the local Gauda (cattle herders) and the Paikas. The later caste is known to have historically associated with the Muthadars, the heads of Muthas (definite tracts of agency areas). The individual Sudha Sabara would prefer the caste-based social status to individual economic well-being. They tend to merge their identity with the Hindu peasants by taking up the practice of plains land cultivation and orchards (orange and banana) which are caste-free occupations.

At the group level, efforts are being made to remain alert to the organization of local festivals and to hold meetings of 'Kula Mela' and their sizeable participation in it. The acquisition of social prestige in the local hierarchy is not an individual mobility rather it is a group concern. Similarly at the

individual level, the concern is to acquire landed property, to maintain the life of a present austerity and to participate at the helm of Government affairs. The Sudha Sabara make possible efforts to take the local leadership in agricultural innovations and in making success the regional festivals of 'Balijatra' and 'Manikeswari' and in showing active interest in the teetotalism in having monogamous form of marriage in accepting hypergamy and in having 'Jatipanch'. Besides that, they expose their knowledge ability in Keeping abreast of the stories from the epics, in describing the experiences and of their sacred visits and pilgrimages, in conceiving dreams about the after-life in the other world and in trying to quote them before other world and in trying to quote them before other local castes and categories for the purpose of emphasizing their segregation from the Lanjia Saora. To them, achievements in these sectors of social life are the indication of prosperous life. Naturally, they hope for such designs of Hindu pleasant way of livings which ensure them happy and prosperous life.

III. The Christian Saora

The conversion of Saora into Christianity lacks self-motivations and complete change of belief; rather it may be described as lineage-conversion and village-conversion. The data show that the majority cases of conversion have economic profit behind them. Conversion of 'Kheja' members is in most cases, followed by the conversion of lineage or village-head. Besides the influential persons, village-heads and the agents of mission persuade the individuals to change their religious faith into Christianity.

At the instance when the Saora fail to cure some of the endemic diseases or long-ailments the missionary agents come to their rescue. Taking this opportunity the later persuade them to forsake their belief on their age-old practice of worshipping spirits and dead ancestors for a cure. The agents of mission cure them by applying medicines getting in return from them a promise of conservation after the cure. In view of such conversions by the simplicity of words, they continue to show reverence to their primitive social and religious beliefs and rituals in matters of drinking of liquor, offering liquor to the respective gods in swiddens, public dancing, lineage exogamy, easy divorce, attending and observing the death feasts, marriage feasts, village feasts of 'Jhalia' dance, 'Jamalpur' 'Ambanua', 'Kandula', 'Nua' and other traditional festivals, which are contrary to the Christian practices. Of course, the venue is the premises of the churches. They also, stick to the broad principles of Christianity those observing 'X'mas, congregational worship, monogamy, weekly attendance of church, and discarding the worship or giving habitation to their traditional gods in their houses and 'Ikons'.

The good life to them is to live in obedience to the principles of church-life or 'mandali' (limit of subdivisions of Roman and Catholic Church organizations in this area). The traditional worship of different gods in the old

Lanjia Saora pantheon has been summarized to one god, the Lord Jesus, and he is prayed on different occasions to make them free from the clutches of 'Satan', a synthesized name of all evil spirits ghosts and gods under the traditional order. They are more or less free from the belief in the existence of 'underworld' or 'other world' where the present life is regarded or condemned after death. Rather, the good life to them is in conformity with the socio-religious norms, humanitarianism, helpfulness, co-operation these are demanded by their traditional solidarity and group cohesion.

The happy life, to the Christian Saoras, is the enjoyment of present life with the available or derived materials. It is of individualistic enjoyment. Although they live with Lanjia Saora in the same village or in the village of their own, the house pattern and the material possession of the household is somewhat different in arrangement, in neatness, in constructing additional room and separate kitchen, etc. The Lanjia Saora observe restriction for certain items of food, but the Christian Saora enjoy eating of food that is locally prohibited to other sections of the Saora tribe. In matters of dress, the newly converts of interior area of Kerdang (under Nuagada block) put on Lanjia Saora dress of loin cloth 'Katcha' and skirt 'Beda'. The merriment in feasts, extramarital relations, enjoying good health and disease-free familial life are the individual happy life which they have borrowed from the western values of Christianity.

To the Christian Saora, the prosperity of life is the acquisition of land, money and social status which should be invested for further promotion of life in this world. They invest labour and money for cultivation of high yielding variety of paddy during the months of January to May. They hire land from the Lanjia Saora and Sudha Sabara for this purpose. They avail the state concessions of subsidy for different schemes granted by different financing agencies. The younger generations are very active in gaining economic benefits, even to the extent of partially replacing the pans and the intermediaries and traditional exploiters. The adoption of new religion and the social actions oriented towards such life, help them to march towards the prosperity.

Summing up, the direction of change or social transformation of the Saora Society is not in accordance with the scheme of sponsored development. The planners conceive the social change based on the change of traditional economic relations which would result in (a) more money income of individual families from the higher production of mono-crop or cash crop, (b) appreciation of further investment for profit and investment, (c) minimum standard of food, housing and education, (d) utilization of time for economic benefit through fuller employment, and above all, the individual families are to get such economic benefits. The programmes are sponsored by different specialized agencies to produce better and abrupt results. To name a few of such methods of the sponsoring development are different government agencies like the ITDA, the Co-operative Department, the Central Government assistance scheme, the CARE

feeding and others. The successful cases are discontinued leaving the tribe to take further initiative in such organizations, and the failure cases are not deeply thought of instead, are usually reinterpreted under a new name.

Discussions

The economic interactions, in Saora tribe should be conceived in different dimensions and are so diffused that their isolation from the whole of social relations is a naught. This is a characteristic feature of all tribal societies, especially of those which are not homogenous group. Nevertheless, homogeneity in the matters of kinship, religious manifestation and value orientation derived out of such socio-religious organizations or 'social milieu' is taken to be the base for such assessment. Man is double. He is not merely a bio-psychical being; he is also a social and cultural being. He is an organism and hence his actions are limited. As a social and cultural being his actions are collective representations tradition, codes, and themes in culture. The social change as desired in the sponsored development must not ignore the social milieu or the context which their social relationships or their Socio cultural elements clustered around it.

The economic relations and interactions between the sections of Saora and between the Saora and neighbourhood pose a complex situation when one thinks of sponsoring development in this area. The section of Sudha Sabara thinks themselves a separate category nearer to the caste society. They segregate themselves from the Lanjia Saora and Christian Saora by limiting, in every possible way the social and economic relations. There are instances of certain case studies that the Sudha Sabara refused to avail of the financial assistance on the plea that such assistance is meant for the tribals like the Lanjia Saora. There are few villages in the agency tract where Sudha Sabara live in the same hamlet with the Lanjia and Christian Saora. The economic co-operation between the Lanjia and Christian Saora is very intense so much so that both of the communities co-operative in cultivation of swiddens, in the diversion of water resource to the terraced fields, in sharing the produce of 'matam' and 'Garjang' 'Andruku', sleeping in the same hut of the 'Bagadas' at night, in exchanging raw-food grains, tamarind, banana, beef, in participating in communal hunting and their co-operation is emphasized in so many ways beyond the economic activities. Excepting religious isolation, to an outsider, the Christian Saora are thought to be the part of Lanjia community. They share sentiment which was manifested in the recent Saora fituaries at Bhramarpur, Gumma, Nuagada against the Christian Panos. Both the communities have less social status in the regional hierarchy in comparison to the Sudha Sabara. Besides other factors, the feeling of solidarity between the Lanjia and Christian Saora opens up a new avenue that is manipulated by the later community. The differentials of economy, literacy and world view between the two communities have brought two significant changes of relations in consequence of differentials of

manipulations of the sources of sponsored development that economic subordination of the former and social domination of the later over the former.

The time from January to May is a busy period for both the sections of Sudha Sabara and Lanjia Saora. During this time, the Lanjia Saora are to meet their 'Kheja' people on different occasions of feasts like 'Karja', 'Guar' festivals of 'Pausa,' 'Kandula Nua' 'Amba Nua', sacrifices of animals towards the fulfillment of desires of the spirits, dead ancestors and other social functions thereto. The socio-religious obligations are manifold so that they are to arrange money to meet the expenses of marriage ceremonies, the expenses of participation in feasts and repayment of gifts and sacrifices held for the security of the village, community and so on. The interesting feature is that the agricultural operations either in terraces and swiddens are taboo on such occasions of the feasts. The Lanjia engage themselves, if at all, for temporary economic gain such as road construction to meet the religious or marriage expenditures. Similarly the Sudha Sabara are busy in attending the regional and local 'Kulamela' in organizing the 'Balijatra' for twenty one days, setting out of pilgrimage if possible, and holding marriages etc. The summer period is thought by the two communities to be a recess season after agricultural operations. They desire to spend the seasons for clearing the arrear work. In contrast, the Christian Saora utilize the period for further economic gains. In this time the government agencies with their objectives and targets, try to launch their programmes in the area. The Christian Saora take full advantage of the opportunities for taking loan advanced under the schemes of dug well, of bee-keeping of goatery of cultivation of high yielding paddy, of orchard, of construction of road and of other development projects of the national and state Government as well. They have two objectives development of economic status would bring social status in a wider plane, and the other is to seize exclusive and political dominance in the agency areas.

There is a series of consequences of the latter aim. Their preponderant number in the tract has made possible on their part, to occupy more of the elected seats in Gram Panchayats, Panchayat Samitis and Board of directors of different financial agencies which are readvancing loan with subsidy. The sectional imbalance of change in the Saora tribe has partially replaced the Panos as intermediary between not only the Saora and plain people, but also between different agencies of the Government. Again, the Christian Saora conceptualize the prosperity of life in the economic gain coupled with saving and investment. In fact, they acquire land by clearing forests, purchasing from the Lanjia and Hindu peasants. The settlement camps are crowded with the cases of petitions for recording of land that was sold by them some years ago. There are also movements and demonstrations for getting the swiddens recorded in the cultivator's name, for utilization of forest resources without interference, for cancellation of reserved forests, for getting back land from the non-tribals that was transferred 20 to 30 years back and many others that would help them to take political leadership in the region. The motive was for attainment of social

prestige in secular field which would probably compensate the loss of social prestige at the local level being surrounded by the dominant Hindu neighbours.

Besides the local political leadership they try to extend to the national level. The competition for the same would be limited within the tribe as they desire. And there should be no interference in economic and political spheres from other ethnic categories other than the Saora, in their land. For this purpose they fuse their identity with the Lanjia Saora as the common inhabitant of the tract and should exclude others participating in the sponsored development in the area. As such, the historical isolation is added by the political and economic isolation of the Saora land, a reserved tract for a preserved category. The direction of social transformation is otherwise, lost in the half-way, as they are not assumed by the sponsored development.

After a precise description of the Saora view of good, happy and prosperous life at the levels of individual and group, an effort is made to isolate some of the independent factors; those are in conflict with the sponsored development. In a wider plane of isolation and continuum, the features of a tribal society are the – (a) isolation in terms of subjective awareness and 'objective reality' (b) a value system of equality, (c) belief in close relations between the supernatural and man. Besides, the peasants and tribes share common denominators like (a) self-sufficient economics with symbiotic relations with other ethnic categories (b) segmentary and functional lineages which are emphasized by the kinship reference and inheritance and (c) the religious pantheon is structured with a pragmatic consideration of fertility in crops and women and so many other socio-economic traits (Sinha 1959: 1965: 57: 83:). In Indian context, not only the tribes are separate ethnic categories, but also they are cultural categories. It is conceived that the peasants are made out of tribal people. The process of transformation presents a scale where at different points the different styles of life are located (Bailey 1960; Redfield, 1941: 292 1953.6:29). The typological scale further exemplifies that some tribals are loosely assimilated with the Hindu peasantry; their association tends them towards a social mobility emphasizing super ordination and sub-ordination pushing them beyond their lineage and local groups (1943- Ghurye, 1959-Srinivas, 1966-Mendelbaum, 1966-Bose, 1973-Mazumdar). To one's dissatisfaction the categorization of Indian tribes in the scale has made them an amorphous. From the point of view of the national system, these intermediate and other grades of variation of tribal societies may be reduced to three types i.e., 'marginal', 'associative' and 'assimilative' (1960-Mahapatra).

The Saora can be located in the three social types of the scale, that the Lanjia Saora in the 'marginal', the Christian Saora and Sudha Sabara in the associative category marching towards the assimilation with the national system and Hindu peasantry. However, the sections of the tribe are distinguished by the retention of some of the typical socio-cultural features of ideal type of tribal

society. The sections can be distinguished, from each other on the basis of their encompassing the moral community, holding of cognitive value, extending the social interactions. Taking all the three bases together, the Saora react independently of the sponsored development.

First of all, the feeling of inclusiveness is the structural aspect of the Lanjia Saora community which is centered around the kinship and is magnified by such segmentary lineage relations. The relations are buttressed by the economic co-operation, helpfulness, social participation and those give rise to their social solidarity and social identity. The efficient use of co-operative actions and material resources, as fore thought by the agencies of the sponsored development, time, energy tools, material environment and objectivity of social relations, have lost sight of the intrinsic goodness and moral life of the primitive Saoras. Their moral life is manifest actions and set of facts that they seek to translate in their daily life. As the sponsored development includes accumulation of individual wealth and power, it is in direct opposition to the good life of the Lanjia Saora. They religiously limit the materials for their happy and prosperous life also. The Lanjia Saora do not consider development beyond their lineage and local groups. The prosperous life in terms of economic individualism is not conceived at the expense of lineage solidarity and local groups.

The infrastructures of agricultural development, health and family planning programmes do not appeal to them as they are not related to their Bagada cultivation, and worshipping of the dead ancestors, tutelaries and so forth. In the sponsored developmental programmes, they do not obtain the scope for the manifest actions of good, happy and prosperous life. They do not conceive the happiness without the cultural participation of the gods and spirits in drinking liquor, in eating good food and enjoying the merriments in the presence of their kin members of this world and of the underworld. Besides, their village and lineage they conceive of development of the region that they should be in the unrestrained possession of swiddens and celebration of their seasonal festivals which might express their traditional and emotional life. The assumed vertical mobility of Lanjia Saora community is in fact, in conflict with their horizontal mobility, a range of movement of the homogeneous group and similar degree of intensity is in process of transfer from one relation to another and from the cultural autonomy of un-specialization to the subordination though the short-run economic prosperity is the promise.

On the other hand, to the Sudha Sabaras and Christian Saoras, the prosperous life of economic individualism should be used for the group cohesion or attainment of solidarity lending towards the status mobility in the hierarchical order in the former case, and political leadership in the later case. The scope for full employment and utilization of time, envisaged in the sponsored development, are conceived differently by the Saora. The Lanjia Saora use the time for meeting his affinal and other relations before proceeding to the Bagada

fields in the winter seasons; the Sudha Sabaras spend the time towards the individual preparation for achieving Khandayat caste status and for the life after death. The investments are also made for the prosperous life in the other world. It seems that the Saora could not reconcile between the 'emic' view of prosperity and prosperous life with the 'etic' view of happy and prosperous life with the 'etic' view of happy and prosperous life inherent in the sponsored developments.

Secondly, the agencies of the sponsored development approach the community with the specialized interests of uniplex relations to deal with the single activity. The approach of the agencies should be reinforced with other relationships. They are accustomed with the diffused and multiplex relations. As a supplicant, whether they are agencies or tribals, the relations must be sought diffused to make them moral relations. The sponsored development programmers must not close the eyes to the fact of the Saora Society that is founded upon multiplex relationships. (It may be pointed out that the abolition of Muthadari system in the agency is not adequately replaced or provided for by the functions other than the Muthadars used to charge besides the revenue collections). The sponsored development process should be free from the thought of a routine process in which all the steps contingencies and structural variables are manipulated. The Saora is not fully sure of their good crop and annual shortage of food although the sponsored development agencies ensure them, with every possible measure of irrigation, pesticide, stock of food grain in warehouses and spreading of TDCC fair price shops in the area because, they are from two different moral communities.

Any morality presupposes an order and certain standards. The Sudha Sabara tend towards the 'salvation religion' (Hinduism) being emulated with the sacred lore and 'sacred faith' on one hand, and being peasants are in constant touch with the nature and more susceptible to supernatural forms on the other. To them, the idea of sponsored development with all the good intentions is essentially an urban one lacking religiosity. Moreover, the idea of development of his family and lineage members is at the first instance to abide by the strict principles of conservatism which are contrary to the family planning programmes and agricultural programmes. They hope to experience a style of life that is reduced to the bare minimum of need, opposed to rivalry of interest, asceticism congruent with the capitalistic attitude. To them, the development of the region should confer opportunity to acquire a social status equated with that of Khandayats (a militia class) in the regional hierarchy of a caste society.

The social change, in the form of exogenous social movement in the scheduled tribal areas, aiming to reinforce productivity and economic betterment presuppose the 'spacio-temporal perspective', 'objectivity and inside view' of the Saora cultures. The matrix of responses to the sponsored development in different sections of the great tribe of Saora is roughly delineated that the primitive section of Lanjia elite section of Christian Saoras tend to crystallize the

feeling of 'sub nationalism' perpetuating the selected aspects of their culture'. On the other hand, the Hinduized groups Sudha Sabaras offer the tenet, 'emulation – solidarity conflict' because of the differentials of emulations or Hinduization. The similar assumptions are proved in a most general way that:

- (1) The economic opportunities made available to the visual groups should permit a broad base and should be ahead of the political opportunities.
- (2) "and if political and other privileges are withdrawn in the near future, there is even a greater possibility of increasing the forces of solidarity of tribesmen qua tribesmen in India of the future".

Bibliography

- Bailey, F. G. (1971), *The Peasant View of Bad Life in Peasants and Peasant Societies*, Edited by Teodor Shanin, pp.302-303.
- Nisbert, A. Robert. (1975) *The Sociology of Emile Durkheim*, Heinemann, London, pp. 256-60
- Shalins, D. Mastiall. (1968) *Tribesmen*, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey.
- Fitwis, (1945), V. Elwin and Saora, *Man in India*, Vol. XXV, Ranchi pp, 64-68
- Bennet, G .G. etal, (1954), Acculturation: an exemplary formulation, *American Anthropologist*, Vol.56, No.6, Part-I.
- Elwin, V. (1955)*The Religion of an Indian Tribe*, Oxford Univ. Press London,
- Sinha, S (1959), *Tribal Cultures of Peninsular India as a Dimension of Little Tradition in the Study of Indian Civilization. A preliminary statement in Traditional India : Structure and Change*. Ed. by Milton Singer, pp.301-311.
- Ibid (1965)Tribe – Caste and Tribe – Peasant continuum in Central India – *Man in India* Vol.45, No.1, pp.57-83
- Bailey F.G., (1960) *Tribe, Caste and Nation*. London, Oxford University Press.
- Redfield, R. (1941) *The Folk Culture of Yogatan*. The University Press, Chicago
- (1953) *The Primitive World and its Transformation*, University of Chicago Press
- Ghureya, G. S., (1943) *The Aborigino Socialled and their future*, Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics in Poona.
- Mahapatra, L.K., (1960) *Towards a Typology of Socio-cultural Changes in Tribal Area and Rural India*, Paris.
- (1974) Determining Social types on the Tribe-Peasant continuum, in *Journal of the Indian Anthropological Society*, Vol.9, No.1-A, pp.81-82.

CHANGING SAORA CULTURE *

*J. K. Panda*¹

This paper is based on field investigation of the village Gumma in the Parlakhemindi subdivision of Ganjam district. The Saoras of this village are migrants from Khillimunda, a Saora village, six miles to the north of Gumma. The date of their migration is not known; but their migration must have been in the distant past. The reason of migration has been gathered to be as follows:

Bisoye of Gumma wanted a few Saoras to work on his farm as agricultural labourers. He contacted the Saoras of Khillimunda and brought four families of Saoras from that village and allowed them to settle down in his own village. These four families in course of time multiplied, now we have on the whole eleven Saora families living in this village. My observation in respect of culture contact is confined to these eleven Saora families. I have shown below, what changes are noticed in the culture of these groups of Saoras after they had settled down in the Gumma village.

Gumma is a multi-caste village. The different caste groups living in this village in order of their numerical strengths are - Paika, Sundi, and Dhoba. Paikas are wealthy and powerful people who occupy high position in the village administrative machinery. Bisoye, the head-man of Gumma administrative unit (Muttha) comes from this group. He was the Government representative in this Gumma agency area. All his assistants come from his own caste. The village has many wards. Except the ward occupied by Saoras other wards are heterogeneous in caste composition. The Saoras have their own ward, situated close to the other wards of the village.

Mainly three forces are operating in this contact situation which is responsible for culture change among Saora. These are:-

* Published in ADIBASI, Vol. VII, No.1, TRB, 1965-66, pp.71-74

¹ Junior Research Officer, Tribal Research Bureau (TRB) , Orissa, Bhubaneswar

1. The Hindu society of the village.
2. Administrative machinery.
3. Christianity

These three forces are not mutually exclusive in bringing about changes in various aspects. The changes that are brought about by these forces in the Saora culture are as follows:

First of all I would take up the Hindu society and its impact on the Saora culture. The Saoras who came from Khillimunda and settled down at Gumma did not sever their relationship with their parent village. Even after migration they continued their contact with Khillimunda. They took advice from the people of Khillimunda at the time of need. They referred matters relating to their customs to the Gamang and Buya of the village. They also developed new contact with the people of Gumma in which they lived. As time passed they were considered not as migrants, but as villagers of Gumma. They were allowed to co-operate with other people of the village in various festivals observed in common by the villagers. They also contributed money and material to such festivals like others. Two examples of village festivals in which they participated with others may be mentioned here.

One is Dola festival, which is observed in the month of March. On this occasion the village God is brought out from the temple in a procession. Saoras join in this procession. They hold umbrella and other articles required for this purpose. They consider it as the festival of their own village and other villagers of the village consider the Saoras as participants on equal terms with others. The second festival is in respect of village feast organized on the occasion of the full-moon day, in the month of Kartika. On this occasion Saoras co-operate with other villagers and take their rightful share in working and feasting.

The Saoras have also been integrated with the secular life of the society. They have representatives in village factions. Large number of Saoras are included in the faction of Paikas which is headed by Bisoye. Other Saoras have joined with some Harijans (Scheduled Castes) and some other with Paikas to form a faction of their own. While studying the factions it was noticed that the Saoras participate in them as individuals rather than as members of a specific community. All their secular relationship is not confined to the village alone, but cuts across village boundaries and spreads to nearby villages. The Saoras in matters relating to their tribal custom and religion refer to Gamang and Buya of Kutam. They are no more loyal to the Gamang and Buya of their parent village. They have cut off all such connections from Khillimunda and have renewed such connection with Kutam, their neighbouring Saora village. The Saoras of Gumma have more intimate relationship with the Saoras of the three neighbouring villages than with any other Saora village. For the communal feasts in any of these villages the Saoras of Gumma supply fuel wood and

turmeric very liberally. The service in the feasts follows the Hindu pattern. The upper castes are served first and the Saoras are served afterwards. The Saoras do not object to this rather they have accepted this as a matter of fact.

In cases where food is served to all people at a time, each caste group is allotted separate place to sit and food is served to them separately. But generally low caste people are not allowed to eat while the high caste people are taking their meals in a feast. In this situation the Saoras are considered as a low caste group and accordingly they are given food after the high caste Hindus have partaken of their meals.

The villagers solicit the cooperation of the Saoras in community enterprises, such as building roads, digging wells, building community centres, etc. These are the projects in which Government contributes 50 per cent of the cost and the rest 50 per cent is raised from the people as voluntary contribution. While working for these secular developmental activities the Saoras show greater solidarity with their co-villagers than with their tribal kinsmen from other villages. They work as an integrated group with the high caste Hindus of Gumma in respect of political affairs, community enterprises and village festivals and are in the process of representing themselves as separate caste group of the village. On the other hand, they have not been able to lose contact with their tribesmen in respect of marriage and death rites and other tribal social customs.

The Saoras of this village have a curious feeling of attraction and repulsion towards Christianity. When they see some of the work done by missionaries in the Saora villages for educational upliftment and for improving their health and hygienic conditions, they feel attracted towards Christianity. Side by side, they share with their Hindu neighbours the hatred towards Christianity as an alien religion and any idea of conversion is regarded as very obtrusive.

STABILITY AND CHANGE IN THE CUSTOMARY WAY OF LIFE OF THE LANJIA SAORA *

*S. C. Mohanty*¹

Lanjia Saora is one of the primitive groups of the Saora tribe. Apart from Orissa the Saora are widely distributed in many parts of central India, such as, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and West Bengal. In Orissa, the Lanjia Saora are concentrated in Rayagada and Gajapati districts.

In the absence of separate enumeration for the Lanjia Saora their exact population is not known. However their population comes under the main Saora tribe. As per 2001 census the Saora population in Orissa was 4,73, 233. Their population growth rate during the period 1961-71 was 10 percent, during 1971-81 was 8 percent and between 1981 and 1991, 9.04 percent and between 1991 to 2001, 17.28 percent. Their sex ratio was 1030 in 1981, 1015 in 1991 and 1007 in 2001 showing numerical superiority of their women over men.

They are educationally backward. Their percentage of literacy as recorded in 1961 census was only 7.80 per cent. Over period of time it has successively improved to 10.20 per cent, 14.47 per cent, 25.58 per cent and 41.10 percent in 1971, 1981, 1991 and 2001 Censuses respectively. Their level of literacy as recorded in 2001 is higher than that (37.40 percent) of all STs. They belong to Proto-Australoid racial stock and speak a dialect called *Sora* that comes under the Austro-Asiatic family of Munda group of languages.

Their settlements are located in undulating terrain and houses remain scattered. Close to the settlements megaliths are erected to commemorate the

* Published in Tribal Customs and Traditions, Vol.1, SCSTRTI, 2009, pp.252-55

¹ Research Officer, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar, Odisha

dead kins. An ordinary house is a one-roomed thatched rectangular dwelling having stone and mud walls with high plinth verandah.

The guardian deity of the village is represented by two wooden posts, called *Gasadasum* or *Kitungsum* installed at the entrance of the settlement. The Lanjia Saora pantheon includes numerous gods, deities and spirits, benevolent and malevolent. They get worshipped with fear and anxiety. People offer sacrifices for safety and wellbeing of the family members. Most of their festivals revolve round agricultural cycle and lifecycle rituals. *Guar* is celebrated to commemorate the dead.

The subsistence economy of the Lanjia Saora rests primarily on shifting cultivation and importantly on terrace cultivation. Occasional hunting, fishing and round-the-year forest collection supplement it. They exhibit a high degree of indigenous skill and technological out-fit preparing the terrace beds and in their water management system. Mainly rice is grown in terraced fields and mixed crop of minor millets, cereals and pulses are raised in the swiddens. They have their traditional system of labour cooperative known as *ansir* which ensures smooth conduct of agricultural activities. In a way it is the hallmark of Lanjia Saora economy. Their ordinary meal consists of rice or millet gruel. They enjoy alcoholic drinks and smoke tobacco.

The aesthetic life of the Lanjia Soara is reflected through their colourful dance, typical music and the wall paintings, *anital*, in particular. The icons are so skillfully dreamt and drawn that these have made them famous among the scholars and artists of the country and abroad. Traditionally the men used to wear loincloth and women a skirt. The latter use ornaments to adorn their ear, nose, waist and ankle.

The Saora society is divided into as many 25 subdivisions based on occupation, food habit, social status, customs and traditions. The Lanjia Saora is one of them. *Gomango* is the secular head of the village. He is assisted by *Buya*, the ritual head. *Disari* is the village astrologer. The other important functionary is the shaman called *Kudan*, male, and *Kudanboi*, female. The family is mostly nuclear; the well to do practise polygyny. *Birinda*, extended family is characteristic of the Saora social organization. Women even after marriage continue to belong to the brother's *birinda*.

Since the remote past, the Lanjia Saora lived undisturbed in their remote hill habitat. In modern times, the rapid changes in administrative set up, political climate of the country, economic system and religious ideologies, development administration and their exposure to the external world have influenced their way of life. For example, abolition of intermediary system after independence set the Saora free from the clutches of the oppressive feudal overlords and their cruel subordinates and modernized their political organization. On the other side, even before the time of independence, many outsiders infiltrated into the

Saora country as soon as it was opened up with development of road communications, market centers and establishment of Government and non-Government agencies and started exploiting them. Often when the situation became unbearable, the Saora rose in revolt in what are called "fituri" but the British authorities suppressed them with an iron hand. The discontentment and frustration among the Saora grew in the absence of strong internal leadership and sympathetic attitude of the feudal chiefs and foreign rulers.

After independence, the welfare Government took a very benevolent attitude towards improving the lot of the downtrodden tribal people of this country including the Saoras. Various welfare measures initiated by the Government resulted in exposing the Saora more and more to outside contact and pressures of ever-advancing, powerful, social, economic and political forces. The impacts of the political change, election system, adult franchise and local self-government have triggered off various political processes and generated new leadership among them. The modern leadership and the associated aspects of political participation and specialization which are new to them, has been emerging as manifestations of the socio-political change.

The Saora are undergoing a phase of transition. Three centuries ago they passed from autonomy and self-sufficiency to subjugation of feudal chiefs and foreign rulers. Prior to that they were more or less independent and their allegiance to the Kings and Zamindars were marginal and nominal. At that time the traditional village leaders, *Gomango, Mandal, Dalbehera, Buya, Barik* and the like were running the village administration with the backing of the village council. This indigenous socio-political system had received the recognition from the then Kings and Zamindars whose policy was to collect revenue, customary gifts and labour from the tribals and not to interfere with their life style.

"With the coming into being of Muthas, the Bissoyi overlords intervened between the Gomangos, Mandals, etc., and the Zamindar. Following the descent of peace in the area after 1834, the character of the Bissoyis and the Patros, described as 'wardens of the marches' anciently established in a species of feudal tenure, underwent gradual change into landed aristocracy consisting intermediaries between the Government and the Saora. They occupied this position for nearly a century. They were more than mere intermediaries. They exercised the powers of the Zamindar, the magistracy and revenue-collecting agency. Equally important was their informal standing among the Saora who were almost totally devoid of contact with the outside world; the Saora got used to looking up to the Mutha-heads for leadership in intra-village disputes, arbitration in land matters, etc." (Singh: 1984).

During British occupation, the feudal chiefs and the British Government were more concerned with revenue matters, law and order problems, civil and criminal disputes than with the traditional needs of the Saora. Soon after independence, the intermediary system was abolished and *panchayatiraj* system

was introduced. The Saora as the citizens of free India have been made to participate in the democratic system through elections. This new system in its early phases has marginal impact on the Saora. The people who still have loyalty to their traditional village leaders choose in many places, their *Gomango*, *Mandal* or *Dalabehera* as elected representatives to Grampanchayat and other elective bodies. For instance, Saora Sarpanches who were traditional village chiefs headed the Puttasingi, Patili and Sagada Gram Panchayats. Late Sridhar Gomango, the powerful chief of Sagada continued as Sarpanch, in Sagada Panchayat, for a pretty long time. After his death two of his Christianized fellowmen Mansi Raika and Ansu Raika became the Sarpanch and Naib Sarpanch of Sagada Gram Panchayat respectively.

However, due to spread of education, activities of social workers and missionaries, development programmes and exposure to external world, a new kind of modern leadership is emerging gradually in these days. The indigenous village leadership and council of elders are losing their importance. The Panchayatraj institutions and community development programmes requiring capabilities of a different order have started throwing of emergent leadership which has yet to gather momentum. But there are still the traditional leaders and their successors who have switched over to take up new roles.

Singh (1984), who, made an elaborate study of Saora leadership, observed "... the village councils with the Gomango and the Mandal as the secular heads, the Buya, Disari as the religious functionaries, never went out of existence. But, meantime, new far-reaching changes have been ushered in. Statutory Gram Panchayats and Panchayati Raj institutions have made their appearance. While (traditional) village councils linger, the Gram Panchayats have made a dent into the prestige and status of the traditional leaders. Panchayats and Panchayat Samities having become the new recipient of power and resource, the sphere of activity of village councils has undergone shrinkage. Some traditional leaders, unable to reorient themselves and confined to village councils, are fading out. Some others, particularly the younger, not set in a rigid mould, have exhibited adaptability, and been taking to the new institutions. There are signs of emergence of Saora leadership at the Panchayat and Panchayat Samiti levels".

Against the onslaught of modernization in terms of coming of Christianity, better means of communication, culture contact, education, introduction of formal system of dispensation of justice and acculturation, the Saora apparently remained clear with their traditional conduct rules in private and public behaviour. The patrilineal ethos of their social organization had certain inherent characteristics, which helped them to retain its originality. There are specific peculiarities of the Saora customs like the supernatural sanctions, strong public opinion, the concept of *ersi* and *ukka* etc. which maintain law, order and discipline within the society. Each Saora individual is aware of the other's rights and privileges and thus does not like to infringe upon the rights of others.

Secondly, individuality of a Saora is not considered separately from the background of his family, extended family or *birinda*, which thrust the responsibility of maintenance of discipline among each and every family member. The Saora customary law is self-regulatory in the sense that a Saora considers that to insult a fellow being, to show disrespect or dishonour to others amounts to causing offence towards supernatural powers, which may bring disastrous consequences.

The indigenous legal system of the Saora is simple, informal and effective. Whereas the modern legal system which is truly based on evidence and lengthy and complicated procedures does not take into consideration any human factors in life. A rapist or murderer may be punished by imprisonment or may get away with his crime under the 'benefit of doubt' for lack of strong evidence but there is no consideration about compensating or rehabilitating the victims or their dependent family members. In stark contrast, the Saora customary law assesses the extent of loss and damage inflicted upon the victim, his family, his social status, his economic status, his ritual status and his community as well. The punishment given to the offender mainly by imposing fines serves two purposes. Firstly, it is a punishment bringing disgrace, social ridicule, and economic hardship to the offender. Secondly, the fines collected from the offender is paid to the victim or his relatives in part as compensation and the remaining part is spent for holding communal feast which conveys the approval of the community to this act and strengthens group solidarity.

The tribal council makes arrangement for the marriage of an unwed Saora mother with her lover or anyone who is willing to marry her while punishing her lover. Sex and pregnancy are taken as quite natural human phenomena and no stigma is attached to it if it is not incestuous. In their small and simple society, where everybody intimately knows about his neighbours and kinsfolk, there is no scope to hide an offence and so, the word of mouth is taken as truth and evidence. In this highly personalized system corrective actions and dispensation of law and justice following an act of a breach of norm is very quick and efficient. On the other hand, in the modern legal system the word of mouth never holds true in the court of law and there is no consideration for compensating or rehabilitating the victim or his dependents. No provisions are made for the marriage of an unwed mother or victims of rape, physical assault, theft, trespassing, encroachment which are adequately taken care of under customary law and justice of the Lanjia Saora.

Yet the Saoras have been subjected to both the kinds of contrasting legal systems that exist side by side in contemporary India since the British Raj. The people are availing the best and worst out of both the systems. Elwin (1955) wrote, "Another force, even harder to assess, yet of the first importance, is the influence of the reign of law and ordered Government. The Saoras have now lived for well over a hundred years under the provisions of the Indian Penal

Code, and there can be no doubt that it has gradually, imperceptibly moulded their ideas as well as controlled their actions. Previously, they were unabashed cattle thieves, plunderers and marauders and they had no hesitation about their deeds of theft and violence. Today they are restrained from them, not only by the fear of punishment and the existence of superior force, but because they have been subjected for a very long time to the quietly persuasive education of the working of the law. Whatever defects there may be in practice, every police investigation, every trial before the courts, is an education in certain aspects of the moral life, and it has certainly had its effect upon the Saora conscience".

However, before their humanistic and compassionate customary system of law and justice are pushed back by the modern system, the elites and individuals belonging to the Saora and non-Saora societies should be made to realize the importance of their own age old traditional and indigenous system which are suited to their way of life unlike the modern jurisprudence which still remains complex and formidable even to the educated mass. "The prime distinction between the two being that the latter stigmatizes a person in the society if he has gone through the entire system of jurisprudence, ultimately alienating the individual, whereas the traditional councils make all efforts to reestablish the person who has wronged. Since our Constitution gives provision for upkeep of our personal law, it will be a good exercise to delve into and assess the respective legal system" (Roy: 1990).

BIBLIOGRAPHY & REFERENCES

- | | | | |
|----|-------------------------------|---------|--|
| 1. | Baral, J. K. &
R. C. Sahoo | 1980-81 | Fight between Liliputs - Panos vs. Souras of Ganjam district in Orissa, <i>Adibasi</i> , Vol. 20, Nos. 1-4, pp. 61-67. |
| | | 1989 | The Changing Pattern of Saora Leadership, <i>Adibasi</i> , Vol. XXIX, No. 1, pp. 1-6. |
| 2. | Chowdhury, B | 1963-64 | Saora. <i>Adibasi</i> , Vol.V, No. 3, pp. 101-106. |
| | | 1964-65 | Doripura-A Magico-Religious Ceremony curing fever among the Hill Saoras. <i>Adibasi</i> , Vol. VI, No.1, pp. 29-34. |
| 3. | Das, H. C. | 1965 | Changing Economy of Saora Community. <i>Orissa Hist. Res. J.</i> Vol. XIII, No.4, pp. 39-42. |
| 4. | Das, Nityananda | 1965-66 | The Birinda of the Lanjia Saora. <i>Adibasi</i> , Vol. VII, No.2, pp. 5-12. |
| | | 1967-68 | Saoras and the Panos of Ganjam Agency (A study into social inter-relationship), <i>Adibasi</i> , Vol. IX, No.3, pp. 44-52. |

5. Das, Nityananda & B. Chowdhury 1964 Economy of Saora Ceremony. *Vanyajati*, Vol.12, No.1, pp. 17-24
6. Dasgupta, C. C. 1938 Human Sacrifices and the Sabars of Orissa. *Man*, Vol. 38, No.15
7. Francis, W. 1907 *Gazetteer of Vizagapatam District*, Vol. I
8. Mohanty, B. B. 1988 A Glimpse of Social life of the Lanjia Saora, *Adibasi*, Vol. XXVIII, No.2, pp. 16-21.
9. Mohanty, S. C. 1992 Birinda -the Agnatic Lineage System of the Lanjia Saora, *Orissa Review*, Vol. XLVIII, No.6. pp 24-28
- 1994 Social Control, Tradition and Transition in Lanjia Saora Society. *Adivasi*, Vol.34, Nos. 1&2, pp. 56-61.
10. Mohapatra, G. 1983 The Soura View of Good Life and Development, *Adibasi*, Vol. XXIII, No.2, pp. 30-40.
11. Panda, J. K. 1965-66 Changing Saora Culture, *Adibasi*, Vol. 7, No.1, p 71.
12. Patnaik, N. 1980-81 *Jagannathpur: A Changing Saora Village*.
- 1989 *The Saora*, (Popular Series on Tribes) THRTI, Bhubaneswar
13. Patnaik, N. & H. S. Mishra 1976 Election and Pattern of Leadership in two Lanjia Saora Villages of Gumma Panchayat, Ganjam, *Adibasi*, Vol. XVI, No.3, pp. 1-15.
14. Patnaik, U. N. 1955 Saora of Ganjam Scheduled Areas, *Adibasi*, Inaugural Number.
- 1963-64 The Saora of Ganjam Hills, *Adibasi*, Vol. V, No.1, pp. 6-13.
- 1964-65 A Saora House, *Adibasi*, Vol.VI, No.1, pp.49-50
15. Russell, R. V. 1916 *Tribes Caste's of Central Provinces of India*, Vol.III, Part-III, PP.-464-481.
16. Singh, Bhupinder 1984 Levels of Leadership in Saora Society, *Souvenir, Adibasi Exhibition*, Bhubaneswar, pp. 20-28.
17. Singh, Bhupinder 1984 *The Saora Highlanders*, Bombay, Somaiya Publication, Pvt. Ltd.
18. Thurston, E. 1909 *Castes & Tribes of Southern India*, Vol.III, PP 357-415.

MUTATION AND PERMUTATION IN THE CULTURE SCAPE OF PTGs *

*Harihar Das*¹

Devi Prasad Das

The theory of evolution believes in the mutation and permutation of building blocks of genes which brings in bewildering biological species from unicellular amoeba proteus to human being with complex structure of genetic arrangement. Adaptability to accompanying eco-habitat sets the tune of genetic configuration of biological species. In this continual process, we see natural selection plays a pre-dominant role in accommodating or rejecting the viability of existence of a particular species. The 'One' that fails to closely follow the competitive process of existence vis-a-vis the eco-habitat, it is out rightly rejected by the dynamic laws of evolution. Starting from the origin of the living world long ago biological species come and go notwithstanding the changes in the matrix of the nourishing world. It points out the elimination of the Dinosaurs and other giant animals once dominated the world.

The same process of accommodation and rejection is found in the components of ethnic cultural moorings of the world that provides the required basis of sustenance to man. The changes set in by different agencies may be cross-fertilization of cultures, changes in geographical and eco-habitat, technological factors and social legislations. The mutation in ethnic society without having an outside window beyond their encysted habitations is influenced by this change provoking agencies. They sneak into the placid ethnic society slowly yet steadily.

The present article focuses upon the micro and macro level changes visible in the Lanjia Saora tribe, a Primitive Tribe of Orissa. It attempts to make a comparative analysis of the virgin Saora tribe and the acculturated Saora in the matters of language, religious beliefs and practices, life style, family life, economy, occupation, health care, festivals, values and motives.

* Published in ADIVASI, Vol. XXXVII, Nos. 1 & 2, 2007, pp. 158-60

¹ Elwin Gabeshana Parishad, Bhubaneswar

Virgin Saora Tribe

Language

Saora language is of Austro-Asiatic type belonging to Munda group (Elwin, 1955) as they are one of the principal Munda speaking tribe (Haimendorf, 1982). In this language there is repetition in their speaking of words and the second word as a synonym to the first word is always repeated as 'Tangli – Mangli' (cattle) or Jojongi – Yoyongi (ancestors) and the like. The tribe also uses riddles. The Lanjia Saoras speak their mother tongue though often it is deformed under the influence of Telgu or Oriya languages. A few of them can speak any language other than their own. The Saora language is flexible, always ready to coin new words, well adapted to the instant needs.

Religious Beliefs

Saora religion is largely a matter of personal relationship. The Saoras have strong religious beliefs and practices. They call *Sum* to any God. Elwin has counted as many as 171 Saora Gods. Elwin remarked on their religion, "The great advantage of Saora religion is that it enables a man to do something about his worries. It personifies them which in itself makes things easier and tells him that there is a way of putting things right".

Life style

Saora life is very simple. Basically the males put on a loin cloth hanging down in front and back and the females put on a towel sized cloth to cover their bodies. So far as their food habit is concerned they eat whatever they get at hand. They can kill and eat any animal food in the jungle. Many people have started cultivating rice in their terraced fields. But they grow millets in their swiddens on the hill slopes and it constitutes their staple food.

Social Organisation

Elwin comments "The most remarkable thing of the organization of Saora society is its lack of organization." It has no exogamous totemic clans, no phratries, and no moieties. The only unit of kinship is the extended family or lineage descended from a common male ancestor and called Birinda. The Birinda regulates sex and marriage as an exogamous unit. Saora marriage is a simple affair. The groom visits the bride's home with wine and if the latter accepts and tastes it the engagement is made and a few days after, marriage takes place. Premarital sex is not uncommon but violation of customary rule invite imposition of negative social sanctions through community action.

Economic Life

The Saoras possess three kinds of farmlands – (i) *Saroba*, the the most valuable terraced paddy fields¹, (ii) *Baseng*– the less fertile up and dry land and (iii) *Bagado*. (swidden). Mainly variety of minor millets, cereals, pulses, oilseeds and vegetables are grown in the swiddens (*Bagado*) and *Baseng*:

The Saoras are experts in terrace cultivation in which they produce paddy only. They grow a variety of cereals, pulses, oil seeds and vegetables in their *Bagado* (swiddens) and uplands (*Baseng*). Besides they supplement their livelihood by raising horticultural plantations, seasonal forest collections and animal domestication.

The land mark of their economic existence is their traditional labour cooperative (*Ansir*) through which fellow villagers, kith and kin come forward to help a needy family for labour intensive works.

Health Care

The Saoras have strong beliefs in the efficacy of magico-religious remedies for various kinds of ailments. The Shamman – the magico-religious specialist locally called Kudan (male) or Kudanboi (female) goes into trance, communicates with the aggrieved god or spirit and conducts appropriate ritual sacrificing animals to appease it and relieve the client of his/her trouble. They also administer herbal remedies.

Festivals

They observe a series of festivals round the year connected with their social and economic activities. In these occasions they worship their deities and spirits offering food and animal sacrifices. Festivals are observed with traditional dancing, drum beating and liquor drinking. A common feast is arranged for all after each ceremony that is enjoyed with either buffalo or goat meat. Village priest, Buyya and magico-religious specialists – Kudan and Kudanboi play an important role in the performance of community festivals.

Values and Motives

The Saora concept of values, ethics and morality is high. They do not conceal the crime they commit. Generally they regard life as precious gift of god. Killing a woman is an unpardonable sin. They hate a person who is very proud and a person who is a miser. They are proud of their group solidarity and maintain the traditions of mutual hospitality and co-operation. Scandal mongers and greedy people are disliked by all. They disapprove jealousy and love to maintain social equality. Mutual cooperation is preferred to competition. Unlike Hindus they do not believe in ultimate rewards and punishments. Behaviour towards God is extended in the same way as behaviour towards fellow beings.

Saora Tribe under Mutation

The present generation Saora tribe is undergoing the process of acculturation effected by various agents of planned change and modernisation. Rapid changes are taking place in their life style due to changes in their eco-habitats. Earlier the process of mutation was very slow but the ongoing process of globalization, the information technology revolution, planned development intervention and several other internal and external factors have made their cumulative impact in the transformation of Saora culture. This has caused the tectonic plates of Saora ethnicity to be impacted heavily. It is worthwhile to take note of the changes in their traditional society and ethnicity in all the fields

The Saora today have been acculturated to an extent. The Shudha Saora and the Christian Saora are more acculturated than their primitive counterparts like the Lanjia Saora. While the Sudha Saora moves towards the Hindu Society, the Christian Saoras go by the Christian way. These processes have started centuries ago. In present time globalization brings the two groups of Saora under one platform. The development intervention by the Government brings socio – economic changes in varying degrees among all the Saora.

Mutation and permutation is an indication of the mobility of Saora society. The changes are brought about by planned process. It is mostly directed to make the people to move further from their age-old culture. The sustainability of the development process, the most powerful changing agent is based upon imported ideas. The Saoras by and large lag economic prosperity as compared with the mainstream society. The PTG development approach by the Government with more emphasis on family oriented development approach will bring skewed change in the time to come. It is high time to give adequate safeguard for their cultural base as well as cultural identity at the same time enabling them to make the best of both the worlds.

References

- I) *Indian Culture and Personality* by S. K. Panda , Published by Discovery Publishing House , Delhi
- II) *Understanding Change* by S. C. Dube, Published by Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., Delhi
- III) *Tribals and their Culture*, Volume – I, II, III by G. K. Ghosh, Published by Asish Publishing House, Delhi

THE LANJIA SAORA: ASPECTS OF SOCIETY, CULTURE AND DEVELOPMENT *

*Anadi Mallik*¹

Introduction:

There are as many as 62 tribal communities in Orissa. The Saoras are one of them. They are known in various names, such as Savar, Sabara, Saora, Sora etc. They are subdivided in various groups. The sub-divisions are (1) Lamba Lanjia or Lanjia Soara. (2) Jadu. (3) Mane, (4) Raika, (5) Sarda, (6) Kindal, (7) Arsi, (8) Juari, (9) Kancher, (10) Kurumba, (11) Sudha, (12) Jati, (13) Jora and (14) Kampo. The Lanjia Saoras are chiefly concentrated in Paralakhemundi subdivision of undivided Ganjam (Gagapati) district and Puttasingh area of undivided Koraput (Rayagada) district. They have been identified as one of the primitive tribal groups considering their habitat, technology methods of getting food, low literacy rate etc. Their language is called, the Sora. Linguistically, they belong to south Munda branch of Austro-Asiatic sub family of Austric family. They show their racial affinity with the Proto-Australoid group as per the available data.

Tracing back to Puranas and Epics one can find many references of this primitive group. In Mahabharat it is described as that Jara Savar who mistook Lord Krishna for a deer and killed him with his arrow. In many religious texts, they are described as Kirat, Nisad and Pulinda. The legend says that one called Biswavas, a Saora king, was the original worshiper of Bhagaban Vishnu in form of Lord Jagannath.

The clan organization is totally absent in the Soara community. Instead of clan organization they have their extended families called, Birinda, which

* Published in ADIVASI, Vol. XXXV, Nos. 1& 2, 1995, pp.55-57.

¹ Deputy Director, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar

consists of descendants from a common ancestor of four to five generations. Marriage is completely prohibited within a Birinda as its members are blood-related. A woman after her marriage does not change her Birinda. Even after her death her Birinda members may claim to perform her funeral ceremony.

Population:

As per 1981 census the total population of Soara community in Orissa was 3, 10,060 of which 1, 82,344 were males and 1, 87,716 were females.

Occupation:

The Lanjia Soara practice wet cultivation in plain lands and terraced cultivation on hill lands. Besides that they also have slash and burn or swiddens cultivation which is also known as shifting cultivation in hill-tops and hill slopes. They use swidden for 2 to 3 years for cultivation. Then they leave it for 5 to 6 years and shifted to other patches. Again after 5 to 6 years they return to the same piece of land for cultivation. They grow rice, pulses, oil-seeds, beans, minor millets and turmeric in the shifting cultivation patches. The rice is their staple food. They also depend on the forest produce to eke out their livelihood. They collect Mahua flowers for preparation of liquor and Karanja seeds for oil. The Soara terraced fields reveal their skill and workmanship.

Economic life:

The Lanjia Soaras have a very a low economic status. As they live on hill-tops, hill slope valley and terrains little amount of cultivable land is available for agricultural purposes to support their economic life. They mostly depend on forest wealth. As a matter of fact, their life centers round the forest. They earn their livelihood through the collection of fire-wood, edible roots and tubers, leaves and creepers. In the past the collection of Tamarind, Karanja seeds and broom-stick from the forest was their major economic activity but at present due to degradation of forests these produce is not available plentifully as before. So the life of Lanjia Soaras seems to very hazardous without getting much return from forest. On the other hand, excess drinking habit, performance of traditional festivals round the year and treatment of diseases through worship and sacrifice make them poor as these involve heavy expenditure. To meet these expenses they run to *Sahukars* and middle-men and borrow money which they could not repay. Thus they suffer from chronic indebtedness and also are exploited by *Sahukars*. As mentioned earlier the shifting cultivation is the major source of their livelihood and a substantial portion of income comes from this source.

Social life:

The most common form of marriage among them is the arranged marriage. But marriages by capture and by service are also prevalent. In an

arranged marriage the groom's parents and the elders take initiative. As the intra Birinda marriage is forbidden they have to seek bride form other Birindas.

Levirate types of marriages are also prevalent among them. Polygyny is widely practiced among them. The Saoras marry more than one wife. As a sign of prestige polygyny enhances social status among them.

In their society, a Saora woman occupies a distinctive position in the family life. She performs household works, rears children, prepares food, collects fire-wood from the nearby forest etc. They also get equal prominence in their festival and ceremonies. Being an economic asset of the family, the women is highly respected and honoured in the family. Even, a Saora marriage cannot be fixed without the consent of the girl.

The older people exercise greater influence over the younger people. Through the socialization process, younger people acquire their knowledge through training and learning the methods of cultivation, social norms, behavior and values. Both the boys and girls participate in village functions and get equal share along with elders. Boys assist their parents while working in the fields, in climbing hill tops, in fetching water, in tending cattle, in ploughing fields, in skinning animals etc. Whereas girls help their mothers in cooking, taking care of children, preparing beads, necklaces, plastering of walls and floors and the like.

Leadership Pattern:

The Lanjia Saora society appears to be a stratified one. The chief of the village is called the Gamango one. The secular head controls the village administration. He is assisted by a set of traditional officials called the Buyya, the Dal-Behera, the Mandal, the Disari and the Barik. The office of the both leaders Gamango or Buyya is hereditary. The Buyya should have a sound knowledge of religious custom and practices. The Disari, in many villages acts as an astrologer and the Barik acts as a messenger. Prior to the introduction of local-self Government, the village was an independent unit and the village councils consisting of above officials were exercising enormous power over the village administration. But after the introduction of Panchayat Raj system, the traditional village council went under several changes and its dominance, over village administration slowly diminished. At present, under the influences of the elected leaders, the traditional leaders are losing their importance.

Cultural Life:

Dancing and singing are their pastime while smoking and drinking are their personal habit. The most interesting feature of their personality is that they can compose songs then and there on the dancing ground. A Lanjia Saora is always in habit of carrying an axe on his shoulder while going somewhere.

The other impressive features of this community are that during ceremonial dances, coloured clothes of cotton and silk are tied as turban men. Women hold peacock-plumes in their hand while dancing. The traditional dress of the Saora male members consists of long loin-cloth approximately six feet long and ten inches broad. It is tied around their waist passing between thighs to cover the private part of the body. The traditional cloth of a Saora woman is waist cloth with gray boarders and it hardly reaches the knee level in chilly weather they cover the upper parts of the body with another piece of cloth. The Soaras are well known for their wall paintings.

Religion and Customs:

They perform several religious rites. Most of the rituals are of communal nature. During worship various animals like pig, buffalo, fowls etc. are sacrificed before deities along with offering of liquor. They believe that any negligence or omission in religious practice causes harm to the family. They feel that without blessing of ancestral cults nothing can go rightly in this world. So they appease them with sacrifice for benefit of the family, community, and village and for better harvest of crops. They observe a good numbers of festivals. The important festivals are Kurruualpar, Jammalpur, Purred, Jatrapur, Lambapur etc. It is seen that Saoras some have adopted Christianity as their religion. A close observation of village life in rural Orissa reveals borrowing of certain Saora cultural traits in the Hindu social system.

Developmental Activities:

For all round development of Lanjia Saoras living around Puttasing area of Gunupur sub-division under Gunupur I.T.D.A of Rayagada district, a Micro-Project has been functioning since 1984. The project area is consisting of 19 village of Sagada Grampanchyat having 594 Lanjia Saora families. The project headquarter is located at Puttasingh which is 7 Kms. away from Sagada Gram panchayat. The total population of project is 3544 of which 1826 are males and 1718 are females. There are 17 Adult Literacy Centers to impart education to these people. As many as 528 adult are taught in these centers. As per the available data of the Project it is found that the percentage of literacy among Lanjia Saoras is 33.86 per cent which was 5 per cent at the inception of the project. In order to accelerate the development among them an amount of Rs.1, 04, 66,487 have been spent right from the inception of the project. As the Lanjia Saoras live in the inaccessible area attention has been paid for the development of communication facilities in which an amount of Rs. 28, 58, 498 has been spent. Considering the availability of vast stretches of barren lands and uncultivable waste land next priority has been given for horticulture plantation both in Government land and private land. Usufructuary rights over plantation have been given to them. An amount of Rs.21, 64, 925 has been spent

for development of horticultural plantation. Education as the key input of development has received a greater attention and as a result, the literacy standard of the Lanjia Saora has been raised from 5% to 34%. Development of soil conservation measures like cashew plantation, land development, stone wall terracing and land reclamation have been taken to arrest the soil erosion and an amount of Rs.6, 58, 498 has been spent in this sector. In order to increase the standard of living of the target group and amount of Rs. 27, 35, 538 have utilized under Income Generating Schemes and an amount of Rs. 51, 35, 690 have been spent on supporting infrastructural development.

Apart from the above programmes, other programmes, like Agriculture (Rs. 1, 80, 736) Irrigation (Rs.5, 61, 399), Rural electrification (Rs. 80, 236), Health care (Rs. 26, 740), Cooperation (Rs. 722), Training and publicity (Rs. 26, 340), Drinking water supply (Rs.2, 05, 889) and construction of buildings (Rs. 3, 66, 643) have been implemented for the development.

In spite of all efforts, the achievements do not commensurate with the investment. As per the available data from the Micro-Project it is found that about 67 per cent of the families live below the poverty line. Sincere efforts are required to accelerate the pace of development among them.

Bibliography

- | | | |
|-------------------|---------|--|
| N. Pattnaik (ed) | 1989 | <i>The Saora</i> , Tribal and Harijan Research-cum-Training Institute, Orissa. |
| Chowdhury, B. | 1963-64 | <i>Saora, Adibasi</i> , Vol. V, No. 3, Tribal Research Bureau, Bhubaneswar |
| Panda, Santosh K. | 1977 | Indian Culture and Personality (Soara): Highlanders of Eastern Ghats, Discovery Pub. House, Delhi. |
| Singh, Bhupinder | 1984 | <i>The Saora Highlanders: Leadership and Development</i> . Bombay, Somaiya Publication, Pvt. Ltd. |

INSTITUTION OF FAMILY AND MARRIAGE AMONG THE LANJIA SAORA: CONTINUITY AND CHANGE *

*Devdas Mohanty*¹

"Marriage and the family being two aspects of the same social reality, viz., the bio-psychical-cum-social drives (needs) of man, are coeval with each other and with culture, because without the family there could be no preservation of the species and culture; and without marriage there could be no family. ." (Majumdar and Madan; 1999:67)

Westermarck, "On the basis of a detailed study of the institution of marriage, concluded that the family was the outcome of male possessiveness and jealousy, and a growth in property and of the sense of property. So, man, and not woman, becomes the central figure in the scheme of development here. However, it is also true that Morgan also dated the origin of the family only after man's role in begetting children became known, and the right of passing property to his own, rather than to his sister's or mother's children, had been recognized and accepted." (Majumdar and Madan; 1999; 55). On the contrary, Briffault "roots the institution of the family in yet another institution, viz., the mother-right, that is, the supreme authority of the mothers." (Ibid)

The Lanjia Saora community is one of the thirteen primitive tribes of Orissa. They inhabit hilly terrain of Rayagada and Gajapati districts. In the following discussion, the institution of marriage and family among the Lanjia Saoras is discussed in the lines of traditional ethnographic account *vis a vis*, change, it had undergone in the modern times. Our field observation in the Saora region and day to day conversation with Saora friends, youngsters, elders gradually unfolds the dynamics of the institution.

* Published in ADIVASI, Vol. XXXV, No.2, 2005, SCSTRIT, pp.38-48

¹ Research Scholar, Department of Sociology, Sambalpur University, Odisha

Family:

A Lanjia Saora family as a basic socio-economic unit is mostly nuclear type consisting of a husband, wife and their unmarried children. As soon as a daughter marries, she leaves her natal home and lives in her husband's home. A married boy immediately after marriage settles with his wife building a new home. Vitebsky (1993; 69) wrote, "The final `leaf of the lineage is the household. Generally it contains a nuclear family: of husband, wife (or some more wives) and children. Each son as he marries finds separate household taking with him a complete replica of his father's ancestor cult (later to include his father and mother too when they die) while the youngest son generally brings his wife to his parents house and remains in it after their death".

But instances of joint families are also observed among the Saoras particularly in case of rich village headmen (Gomangs). In Rejingtal village, Jani Gomang has eleven children, from his three wives. Two of the co-wives being uterine sisters. All of them lived together for a long time in two houses. As his children are now grown ups and subsist the family income, he said, "It is comfortable to have three houses, one for each wife, to avoid recurrent quarrels (*rudi*) between them, now a days".

As the property is shifted in the male line, a Saora family is patriarchal, patrilineal and patrilocal. According to P. Vitebsky (1993; Ibid), "No member of the family express any hostility or aggression towards the other as all of them are tied together by the bond of economic relationship and co-operative help. Among the sons no one is considered superior to the other and all sons work together on the fields of their father. Therefore, it is the co-operative system and not the process of ingratiation which forms the dominant technique of adjustment among the members in a Saora family."

Lineage:

An extended family, composed of a number of families connected as descendants from a common male ancestor is the main exogamous unit in the Saora society. It is the patrilineage (*birinda*) "A village usually contains several patrilineages (*birinda*). The imagery of the lineage's internal structure is arboreal, with `trunks' or `branches' (*aneb*), `twigs' (*sipa*) and `leaves' (*ola*)... The lineage's male core is descended from a single male ancestor who is listed by every member in the rites of their personal ancestor cult, since he is equally the ancestor of all. While this ancestor may be three, four or occasionally more generations away, more recent ancestors are listed on most occasions only by their own lines, that is by their own direct descendants" (Vitebsky 1993:68)

The male descendants of a patrilineage are related as patrilineage brothers and sisters (*brinda buyangji, tanarji*). "Spatially, the lineage is fixed. Each lineage possesses its own cremation-ground (*kintalod*) and group of

upright memorial stones (G-an-a-ar, 'Stone-planting site') to which a new stone is added at each funeral (*gu-ar*, stone planting') conducted by the lineage. One must marry a member of another lineage and women usually move into their husband's home on marriage, so that the male core of the lineage stays put while women come and go (Vitebsky, 1993:68-9).

A women's affiliation to her father's lineage (*birinda*) is limited depending on her position in her husband's home. Her membership within the lineage of her father remains intact until she produces children at her husband's home. Until she has grown up children, to her credit in her husband's place, her status as member of her in laws lineage (*birinda*) is not legitimized. Till then, her lineage (*birinda*) membership remains in ambiguity. Women, who had returned back to their natal home owing to some family conflicts, barrenness or being widowed are enumerated along with the lineage members of their fathers. Ladies died at their in laws place without producing any offspring are accepted within the lineage fold of their father and brothers. In this case a second stone planting is performed in her father's stone planting site by brining (*pang*) her bones (*fang*) from her husband's village.

Marriage:

There is no word (in Saora) meaning 'marriage' as such, covering both these ways in which a man and a woman may come to live together (Vitebsky, 1993:48). During several field visits in the Lanjia Saora countryside, the present author has often seen marriage parties and kin groups on hill paths with head loads of food-grains. They are on their way to attend the marriage ceremony of relatives. When questioned about their destination, the answer comes forth "sidrung ban" i.e. to the marriage. 'drung' denotes to extend and 'si', to "hand" in Saora. Marriage is "extending of hand" by the partners. People often reply "Jumdarban" referring "to attend the (marriage) feast".

Love marriage:

Kinship ties and affinal obligations require coming of delegations from different villages for dancing (*tongseng*) and feasting (*jumdar*) in mortuary ceremonies like Guar, Karja, Lajab etc. Relationships develop between young men and women on these occasions. "Young people form and develop liaisons especially during reciprocal work parties (Onsir), when men and women may suddenly down tools and chase and tickle (*gatarshi*) each other, (Vitebsky; 1993:48)". Working together since childhood years in adjoining hill sites, youngsters develop intimacy, which often grow into settling as life partners.

"Most people have a history of several affairs (*dari*) before they settle down with the partner with whom they raise a family. Setting up house together is recognized as a declaration of intended permanency but in the early years there are many break ups. Most marriages originate in this free choice

way. Dari marriage is not marked by any ceremony and does not involve any dowry or bride price. But the desire of a girl's parents or brothers to interfere or hold on to her can be intense, especially if the family is wealthy. This tendency is compounded by the simultaneous availability of a pattern of arranged marriage (Pangsals, 'taking wine') involving bride-price and favored by the better off (Vitebsky; 1993:48)

Marriage by Negotiation:

Lanjia Saora villages are tied together with a close network of information and communication. Weekly markets (Santa) at Puttasings and Jaltar, facilitate regular personal contacts between villagers. In the village waterside (*daban*) while collecting water at dawn and dusk ideas and information are exchanged between elderly women about the perspective brides and grooms in the neighboring villages.

Negotiation is made particularly between the families having more or less equal socio-economic standing. The deterrent is otherwise very rarely observed in cases where a rich man's (Gomang) lineage has affinal relationship with a poor, labour class (Parja) lineage.

In the event of an arranged marriage, the proposal always culminates from groom's side. The boy and his family members look for beauty and working capabilities in the would be bride. Information in this regard is sought through indirect sources. The bride should be young enough to toil in the fields of her husband for long years. Integrity of character is sought for as regards to the nature of the would be groom. Most importantly his economic well being is ascertained in terms of cultivable fields and fruit bearing trees, so that the daughter faces no financial or food crisis in her in laws home.

Ritual in Marriage Negotiation:

Bringing (*pang*) wine (*sal*) for marriage used to be the old customary way of negotiation. In this way, the boy's father with his lineage (*birinda*) members and village elders visit the girl's house with pot full of palm wine (*alisal*) or Mahua liquor (*abasal*) depending on the seasonal availability. In the absence of girl's family members at home, they secretly tuck an arrow (*ambu*) in the roof of girl's house and hang the wine pot on the doorway. This act is carried out particularly at noon time, when the inmates of the girl's house ate out in their fields. Secrecy is maintained to avoid embarrassment (*garoi*) and loss of face due to non-acceptance of the proposal by the girl's family.

Coming back home, from the fields, the family members of the girl become aware of the proposal. In no time, the proposer's identity is ascertained from the fellow villagers. If the proposal is considered to be a perspective option for the girl, then the wine is shared by the family members and

neighbors. In public it is proclaimed that the wine was thrown away and was not accepted. This customary rejection of proposal in public asserts the higher social standing of the girls and their family.

After a gap of several days wine is again brought by the boy's family for the second time and is left hung on the roof of the girl's front verandah without any body's knowledge. This is to express strong intention, eagerness and sincerity of purpose to have marital ties with the girl's family. This time; it is a vital stage in which her brothers and parents ask the girl for her opinion. In case of getting the positive nod from the girl, the boy's party is invited to arrive with more wine at an appointed day for working out the marriage contract.

The final approval and acceptance of the proposal for marriage rests with the girl. This reflects the position of Saora women and the freedom they are entitled to in the choice of their marriage partners.

Negotiating a Marriage Contract:

On getting the invitation from the girl's house for settling the marriage contract, the boy's delegation consisting of elderly people of the village come to the girl's house with more wine on the appointed day. Women of the boy's village often accompany the delegation but remain at a distance from the site where discussions and deliberation between the parties are held. On their way to a negotiation, once I asked such a delegation about the purpose of their mission, their reply was "Garboi irte" i.e. for begging the bride, we are going.

To make the contract publicly approved and accepted, the village elders along with the relatives of the would be spouses hold their discussions on the verandah (*pindang*) of the girl's house with sharing of wine. On this occasion girl's consent is publicly sought. Accordingly the boy's party is obliged to bring wine a couple of times prior to the marriage. Thus, the marriage contract henceforth binds both the parties for the marital ties.

During the time lag between the day of contract and marriage, the boy visits the girl's house as a customary obligation to inquire about the wellbeing of the latter's family. He stays in her house for a day or two and is offered good hospitality during these courtesy visits. In between, if the would be son-in-law doesn't turn up to ask for the wellbeing of the girl's family, words will go round that the boy is not of good natured and is not very happy with the proposed girl. During this period, in case the would be life partners happen to meet each other away from the eyes of the elders, at hat , or in common gatherings they exchange pleasantries together. This time lag is best served as getting to know each other more intimately before settling down as life partners for all times to come.

Compensating a broken marriage Contract:

A widow or widower can be remarried in the Saora society and most likely, the second husband is her deceased husband's younger brother (junior levirate). Sometimes this marriage draws the wrath of the angry Sonum (in this case the spirit of her dead husband) who may afflict the partners with recurrent illness. The person who wants to marry the deceased's spouse should make friendship (*gading*) with the departed soul (Purada) by performing a rite. In this ritual, the sick shares the ritual food with the angry Sonum and offers animal sacrifice for his dead counterpart in order to avoid any future illness.

In Regingtal, the author had observed a friendship (*gadding*) rite in 1997 performed by Puma's second wife to get rid of her bone and joint affliction caused by Puma's deceased wife. The sick lady offered cooked rice and meat to the angry Sonum who appeared through the shaman in trance. The living wife also made her dead co wife wear a bangle to make a bond in friendship. In the dead Sangria's widow viz. Sungari's second marriage to a lineal brother of her deceased husband resulted in family conflicts as the newly married partners dilly-dallied the performance of *gading* (making friendship) rite.

A socially recognized marriage can be broken often as a result of love affairs continuing between the wife and her former lover. In this case compensation (Danda) is given to the husband, who losses her for recovery of the bride price. The compensation is paid by the lady herself or by the new man claiming her. Compensation is given in terms of cash and buffalo for a grand feast hosted to the villagers. Prior to her marriage, if the girl wants to break the contract made by her brothers and parents out of her love for a particular man, she gives compensation (Danda) from her personal savings accumulated from the sale proceeds of *mahua* (Aba), red gram(*raga*), and other forest produce.

Marriage Norms:

Lineage exogamy must be abided by be it a love (Dari) marriage or an arranged marriage. The patrilineage brotherhood (*birinda*) being the extended family comprising descendant families of a common male ancestor has still its stronghold even in case of Christian converts to exercise social control over the institution of marriage. Any marriage within the *birinda* is condemned as incestuous. The offending parties are separated from the *birinda* and all the jointly shared household equipments from a pestle to a winnowing fan (Ayer) are separated in to two halves symbolizing the gravity of the guilt. The stone planting site (Ganwar) of the family is separated from that of the ancestral lineage. This reflects that ancestors even disown the unruly descendant.

Incestuous Marriage: Case Studies :

Surendra Sabara, a young Christian convert of Ragaising village had to

marry one of her lineage sister out of love in 1999. Though this Christian family had no functional stone planting site to be separated from, the social pressure was so much that the couple had to leave the village to the work sites at Arunachal Pradesh. The author had once observed a recently divided stone-planting site (Ganwar) at the village Baseng Garjang in the family of Adi, a shaman. It was culminated out of an incestuous marriage by her son who was disowned by the lineage for his sin.

The value system provides that one must marry a member of another lineage. The patrilineage membership of daughters does not change but remains intact even after marriage.

A typical Lanjia Saora village consists of several patrilineages (*birinda*). Affinal relatives in many instances belong to one's own village and village exogamy, as a rule doesn't hold well. Marital ties outside the village are equally in vogue as there is always close contact and cooperation between the villages.

"There is an ambiguity about cross-cousins (father's sister's or mother's brother's children) and parallel cousins outside the lineage (i.e. mother's sister's children). All of these are called *mar-onger*, male, '*mar-onsel*' (female) and often addressed as '*brother*' and '*sister*'. People often say that these too are forbidden up to the third generation, but in practice there are many such liaisons and marriages. "(Vitebsky; 1993:48). In practice, if there is a strong preference to get mother's sister's son (*man-onger*) or mother's sister daughter (*mar-onsel*) in marriage, the family ties are traced up to third grandfather (*yagi juju*) and beyond that it is not forbidden.

Tribal Exogamy :

"Since around the 1920s many young Sora have gone to pick tea in Assam, some 600-900 miles away, usually for a year at a time, and this is also a common way of escaping for a while from an embarrassing situation at home. In recent years they have also worked on road building projects in North-Eastern Frontier Agency (NEFA) area. Here and in Assam they meet members of many other tribes, learn some Hindi as a lingua franca and live, according to their own account, in a strong, casteless frontier society. This migrant labour helps to integrate the Saora into the Indian caste economy (Vitebsky; 1993:32).

Staying away from home in an alien land at a young age paved the way to develop social ties and love affairs with persons belonging to several ethnic groups, as they live as neighbors in labour colonies. Many Saora returnees confess openly that attachment with "wine and women" ultimately mars any ambition of bringing home cash. Tribal endogamy could not be preserved as young Saora men returned back from these worksites to their native villages with wives from different tribes such as Mompa, Adi, Saikia etc.

In village Ragaising, our informant, Sayintu is living here since three decades with his wife belonging to Mompa community. Mangalu of Aredul is already settled in a worksite at Arunachal Pradesh with his wife from Adi community. Though his family pays visits to his natal home in Aredul, the Adi wife finds it difficult to cope with this socio cultural environment of Saora country.

Polygyny:

Jani, a wealthy Gomang of Rejingtal village opined that he had to marry three wives in order to have more children for inheriting and looking after his vast resources of land (Laba). But now Jani manages peaceful and cooperative relationship between the wives. He answers "If I bring a kilogram of potato from the hat, I equally distribute it between three wives for their children." I choose one son from each wife and gets them admitted in the residential school (Ashram) at Puttasing" Giving equal treatment to wives underlies Saora character. Inheritance of property is assigned not only on the basis of number of wives but also on the basis of equal division of land according to the number of male off springs.

Apart from well to do persons, poor persons also go for acquiring mates one after the other like our respondent Disamo in Aredul. He has already three wives to his credit. It is his individual persona of a fun loving and care free character. The dead Arenchu Sabara of Rejingtal is much talked about because of his seven wives.

In the changing order, practicing polygyny is no easier as before. Many factors are responsible as a barrier in the desire of having more than a mate. A couple of youngsters have confided that they are very much interested to bring their beloved ones as their second wife but for the fear of social boycott from the Christian community. Catholics and Baptists as well, preach in strongest terms against the practice of polygyny. Under the laws of Panchayati Raj Act, Jaganta the young man of Manengul was only able to stand for the post of Sarpanch in the election to local bodies only after one of his wife passed away of malaria. The candidature for sarpanch only allows persons with single wife to contest for the election. Implementation of laws of the state and conversion to Christianity has created a barrier in the practice of polygyny.

Capture marriage:

Getting a wife by means of capture(*ding ding*) is a practice in remote past, the reminiscences of which is only found in the rarely held dialogues through Saora shamans (*kudan / kudanboi*). During many trance dialogues attended in villages like, Manengul, Rejingtal, Aredul, the present author has witnessed formerly deceased's talking through the shaman in trance, reflects on being a member of a bride capture party and the ensuing fight, he had to

encountered on the incident Capture marriage remained only in the form of a cultural memory in the Saora psyche.

Love-cum-elopement marriage:

There are ample opportunities, for young girls and boys to mix freely and become friends as members of a labour cooperative team, as members of dancing parties where they dance joke and feast together on numerous occasions. When they fall in love, relationships are developed and nurtured up till the marriageable age. If either of the family don't agree to acknowledge the love because of reasons like, unmatched socio-economic standing, long standing family disputes on land, accusation of sorcery or due to lack of bride price then both the boy and the girl together disappear to other village to stay at one of the relatives place. This kind of Dari (love) cum elopement marriage was very common in the past and hardly found at present. Love marriages are particularly not encouraged by girl's family for most of them have already history of giving gifts to their relatives on different occasions and look forward to compensating their own economic loss by receiving gifts in the marriage of their own children. Sampana of Aredul was very unhappy about his daughter Susanti's love affairs with a boy of Dungdungar village for the above reason.

Marriage among converts:

In the present day scenario, under the influence of Christianity, Sago palm (Ali) or Mahua (Aba) is a beverage of disrepute which can only be shared by a close circle of friends away from the eyes of Christian priests and converts. Thus bringing liquor (Pangsal) marriage is now a cultural memory and churches serve as an outlet to develop relationships.

The young entrant of the church acquires knowledge of roman script to read the Saora Bible. Bringing wine for marriage negotiation (Pangsal) is being replaced by sending three letters in succession by the groom to the would be wife expressing his desire to marry. The letter is sent either through post or a common friend. Sending the proposal letter thrice is a modern replica of the old custom of Bringing (Pang) liquor (*sal*) thrice for marriage negotiation.

In the first letter the bride is addressed as sister (*tanan*) and the boy expresses his desire (Isum) to marry her. She is requested to reply back (*abyarai*) immediately (*umeng*) stating her opinion. The first letter is never replied back, to ascertain the intensity of the desire with inner implications of inviting the other two letters.

Getting the second letter in succession the girl discloses the proposal in her family which necessitates the parents to enquire about the integrity of the would be groom and his family. Information is collected regarding his financial and social standing in the village Sometimes the priest of the church is

consulted with the proposal for his suggestion.

Among the Lanjia Saoras, there is an ever growing inclination to have marital ties with the people of villages close to the road that connects the region with Gunupur town by motorable road. Going in marriage to uphill villages in the wild countryside (*jadu desa*) is now looked down as too hard a life in isolation. Giving in marriage to their daughters in villages close to the roadside gives comfort and certain advantages to the parents. At different intervals, when the family members, friends and relatives of the bride visit the hat, Panchayat office, hospital, church or on their visit to Gunupur town, few hours of rest and hospitality in daughter's house with free meal is availed of at daughter's place and her well being is ascertained.

Considerable independence and free hand is assigned to the girl to have her own choice of the life partner. In this case parents do not interfere. But if the girl goes on denying the incoming proposals then it becomes a mental worry for the parents. It makes the parents apprehensive of elopement and an economic drain due to the loss of bride-price and reciprocal gifts.

When the third and final letter from the boy meet with positive response from girl's side, the elder males of both the side gather at girl's place to discuss about the date and bride price for the marriage. Formal talks are held between the would be bride and the father in law expressing their desire to enter into the relationship.

The missionary churches serve a noble purpose by conducting marriage classes. In these sessions adolescent boys and girls undergo teachings from the priests and nuns about the appropriate marriageable age, happy post marital life, sex education, period of safe motherhood. These classes enable the new couples to prevent inadvertent miscarriages and post delivery complications. Till the recent past, almost every Saora household had a record of high infant mortality rate due to marriage at a premature age, malnutrition, miscarriage of the foetus, unsafe delivery at home etc. But for the health awareness activities of Christian missionaries, the reproductive and child health care practices among the Saoras have improved considerably.

On the event of a Christian marriage, churches play a pivotal role. All the church goers of the village gather in the church on the day with the presence of priest and other church functionaries. Both the would be spouses wear ceremonial white attire. Religious sermons and prayers are held for the happy and peaceful future life of the marriage partners. A grand feast is given to the villagers and invitees.

Marriage gifts and prestations are offered to the bride by her maternal as well as lineal relatives. Villagers also give gifts. Mother's brother and father's

sister's husband always give gifts as a mark of customary obligation and reciprocity. The gift items consist of cash money, brass pots, saree, paddy, steel pots, utensils etc. In this case, there is either positive or neutral reciprocity as the above relatives are obliged to give either equal or more than they had got from the host in their marriage ceremonies.

In case of a well to do Gomango's (rich man) daughter being married, her in laws expect to have gold ornaments, brass pots, sarees, enough of food grains (Paddy), brought to their home with the daughter in law. For the bride it is a matter of social prestige and economic status to meet the expectation of the in laws. On the other hand without much gifts and prestations, it is shameful (*goroidagi*) for the Gomang's daughter to arrive as a bride in her in laws house. In this case the Gomang's name is discussed in a poor light.

An institution as important as marriage in the social structure of Saora society has gone through so many changes in course of its changing cultural history. When we talk of 'change' in the context of a important life cycle ritual like "Marriage" Saora had witnessed it in the form of three letters (*chiti*) being send as proposals to the bride in place of liquor and gifts. The spirit remains the same as it was in the olden times.

References

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|------|--|
| Elwin, V. | 1955 | <i>The Religion of an Indian Tribe</i> , Bombay, Oxford. University Press. |
| Jha, Makhan | 1994 | <i>An Introduction to Social Anthropology</i> , Delhi, Vikash Publishing House Pvt. Ltd. |
| Vitebsky, P. G. | 1993 | <i>Dialogues with the Dead: The discussion of mortality among the Saora of Eastern India</i> , Cambridge University Press. |
| Majumdar, D. N.
& Madan, T. N. | 1999 | <i>An Introduction to Social Anthropology</i> , Mayur, Paperbacks |

TRENDS IN THE RELIGION OF A TRIBE *

*Rabinarayan Swain*¹

The purpose of this paper is to study the religious behaviour of the Saora in the R. Udaygiri Block of Parlakhemindi subdivision of Ganjam district.

1. For making an assessment of the traditional religious behaviour and the inherent contradiction in it responsible for change,
2. For analysing the forces of change,
3. To know how secular factors are converted to religious tendencies.

Gamang is the village headman of a Saora village. He was appointed by a Muthadar to collect *mutha* (revenue) from villagers. These Muthadars were appointed by the native chiefs who were Zamindar of the area and were responsible to pay *peshcus* (land revenue) to the Government. The administrative machinery of the villages were controlled by native chiefs. The entire organization was feudal in character with the Zamindar, Muthadar and the Gamang forming the hierarchy in descending order.

The economy of this area is mostly agricultural. There was no definite land policy in this area before the last settlement operations. The villagers cultivated land by clearing forests which was measured by a Muthadar for collection of land revenue. There was no law regulating the activities of the Muthadar. Taking advantage of his position, he exploited the people as he chose. He had even a right over the fruits and vegetables that a villager in his Mutha produced. For sale and purchase, the Muthadar exercised his right of giving permission for export and import from and to a particular village. In short, the economy of this area was dependant on the arbitrary action of the Muthadar.

* Published in ADIBASI, Vol. XII, Nos.1-4, TRB, 1970-71, pp.110-13

¹ Junior Research Officer, Tribal Research Bureau (TRB), Bhubaneswar, Orissa.

Hindu Trends

The Muthadar was also a money-lender to the villagers. At the time of their need, they had to run to the Muthadar for loan by mortgaging their produces, cows, bullocks, carts, buffaloes or lands. The interest charged was exorbitant. If any Saora was unable to repay his loan, he had to serve the Muthadar as a bonded labour. Once started the debt bondage service would go on for generations without end. The influence of the Muthadar continues, almost unabated, even after the abolition of the Muthadari system and promulgation of regulations prohibiting debt-bondage. If the Muthadar is a Hindu, the religious activities of the villagers get an Hindu orientation. On the occasion of religious festivals, the Muthadars invite important personalities from the villages who are enamored by the rituals and given to belief that the Hindu are better able to keep contact with the supernatural forces. Some typical cases, illustrating this are cited below.

At Udayagiri there are three temples:-

- (1) Patitapaban temple
- (2) Mahadeb temple
- (3) Manikeswari temple

The Manikeswari temple is the oldest one. The deity in the temple is Goddess, 'Manikeswari'. 'Patitapaban' temple was constructed by a Saora in the year 1917. The deity in the temple is Lord 'Jaganath'. The literal meaning of 'Patitapaban' is, the saviour of the down trodden.' The prevalent belief in the locality is that the 'Saoras' are down-trodden and that the Lord Patitapaban would restore them to their rightful place in society. The Saoras very often carry milk, ripe plantain, coconuts for offering to the Lord Patitapaban. During the course of my talk with the Saora villagers I learnt that the Saora of Udayagiri area have a great faith on the Hindu Gods. It was reported that by offering prayers to Patitapaban, a Saora got the post of a Police Constable.

Saoras also come to worship Lord Siba in Mahadeb temple. They also offer coconut, ripe bananas and milk to Lord Siba. On weekly "haat" days, a quite good number of Saoras visit the temple and offer their "lemptum", which means, 'Namaskar'. Masa, my informant, told me that Saoras of Sabarapalli have a great faith on Lord Patitapaban and the villagers of Tumun, which is also a Saora village, have greater attachment towards Lord Siba in the Mahadeb temple. The story runs that a Saora of village Tumun asked for the Lord Siba to have a male child and he got it. Since then the Saoras of Tumun are having an enhanced faith in Lord Siba.

I saw a photograph of Goddess Durga in the house of one of my Saora

informant, in village "Tumun". He told me that he had kept the photo as he felt that it was the photo of Galbesum'- the village God whom the Saoras worship in 'Nuakhia' festival. He explained me his feelings that their God Galbesum is seated on a tiger. So, the photo of Goddess Durga represented the god Galbesum. It appeared to me that those who were attracted towards Hinduism had not the slightest idea about Hindu pantheon.

Like Hindus, the Saoras perform *homa* (common Hindu ritual of offering to fire) before their Goddess Uguingboi, the wife of sun God (called Thakurani Maa), on the Nuakhia day. While the Hindus use cow ghee and mango wood in a *homa*, the Saoras offer Karanja oil and caster wood. The Saoras offer "Bela" leaf, vermillion and camphor to their Goddess 'Uyuingboi'. To cure small pox and cholera, the Hindus perform *pujas* to the Thakurani. The Saoras worship their Goddess Uguingboi for the same purpose.

'Guar' is an important mortuary ceremony of the Saora. In Saora language 'Guar' stands for buying or planting and for stones. In ritual sense 'Guar' means planting of stone to commemorate the dead. Once this ceremony was of the utmost importance. It was very expensive to perform. The general belief among the Saoras was that by performing the ceremony, the soul of their deads take their place among gods. While performing the 'Guar' ceremony, the Saoras had to sacrifice buffaloes. Now in my study area they have abandoned this ritual. (The Hindus have also abandoned the sacrifice of buffaloes on the Devi Pujas). The Saoras have given up beef eating totally as they now consider it to be a sin to kill a cow or bullock. However, some of the low caste Hindus take beef. A group of Saora, called Arsi Saora also take beef. In imitation of the Hindu beliefs, the Arsi-Saora are treated as a degraded group by other Saoras.

All the Hinduised tendencies, described above, are prevalent more in the areas where the traditional chiefs like Muthadar and the Gamang are Hindus.

Influence of Christianity

The influence of Christianity is also equally strong in the areas where the missionaries are working and have been able to convert a substantial section of the Saoras. The members of the Canadian Mission visit this area regularly. In the village Attarsingi, where most of the Saoras have been converted about fifty per cent of the Christians are Baptists and the other half are Catholics. Conversion to Christianity has been very rapid in this village. Year by year, the Saoras are embracing Christianity in increasing numbers and giving up their own indigenous tribal religious beliefs and practices.

I was told that economic motivation has been responsible for this conversion. The Saora traditional religious practices are very expensive and to meet such expenses, they had to incur heavy loan from the local money lenders

which, was impossible on their part to repay. As a result of this they were being victims of debt-bondage for generations and, in addition, had to part with their products at a very low price. The Christian Missionaries have impressed on the Saoras not to believe on ghosts and spirits and be saved from their heavy expenditure on this score. They advise the Saoras to invest their income in a much better way which would ultimately help them to lead a prosperous life.

I met the Pastor of the Baptist Church at Attarsingi and talked to him. According to him, by embracing Christianity, the Saoras of the village have given up the habit of drinking wine. The marriages of the Christian Saoras are being performed in the Churches. (There were two Churches in the village-one for the Catholics and the other for Baptists). I talked to one Saora girl by name Miss. Sara Raika in Oriya. She appeared to be amply satisfied by her change of religion. By becoming Christian and coming in contact with the missionaries, she had been able to earn more and make some savings. To my question, she replied that she had to spend more money on fashionable articles, which are necessary to maintain social prestige. She further informed me that for the last twenty-two years, conversion to Christianity has been going on. They do not observe their traditional religious practices but only once in a week on every Sunday they gather together in the Church and offer prayer in their own language or in Oriya. Miss Raika appeared to have been very much impressed with her new religion and intends to dedicate her entire life for the cause of Christianity.

The following are the religious functions that a Christian in Attarsingi village follows:-

- (1) Prayer on Sunday.
- (2) Marriages are performed in the Church.
- (3) Name giving ceremony of a new born is held in the Church - after 8 days of the birth of the child.
- (4) The dead body is enclosed in a coffin before being buried. A prayer is held in the Church that the soul be in peace.

By following these religious practices, the community has been saved from heavy expenditure and the consequent economic prosperity.

I wanted to know why there were two Churches in the village-one for Catholics and the other for Baptists. Miss Raika told that it was- because Pastors of both the sects wanted to establish their missions separately. Miss Raika also told me that there were differences between the Catholic and the Baptist Pastors because of keen competition among themselves to attract more converts.

The traditional Saora religious practices to ward off diseases were very expensive, yet the cure was uncertain. The medical institutions set up by the missionaries have been offering free medical service to the villagers. The efficacy of modern medical treatments has attracted people towards Christianity. I interviewed Sundar Raika in the market who related how a man beaten by a snake was cured by the Father and then he became a Christian.

The missionaries have also established educational institutions and the Saoras of Attarsingi are taking advantage of these institutions. They send their children to the school for education. The schooling is done in the Church.

By coming in contact - with the Christian Missionaries, the Saoras have learnt about better sanitation and clean habits. In appearance the Christian Saora is distinguished from the others by his cleanliness.

The most surprising fact that appeared before me was that there was not much improvement in the structure of houses in the village Attarsingi where a large number have taken to Christianity than those of other Saora villages where there has been no conversion to Christianity.

Owing to easier religious practices, better educational facilities, free medical treatment, knowledge about sanitation, use of fancy articles giving them a sense of social prestige, by following the advice of the Father in giving up wine which helped them to maintain better health and better relationship in the community, the Saoras of Attarsingi feel themselves privileged by their conversion to Christianity.

A TRIBAL MARKET IN PARLAKHEMENDI AGENCY *

*Purnachandra Mohanty*¹

The study of marketing and exchange was undertaken in course of conducting the survey of Gumma Tribal Development Block under the Parlakhemendi Subdivision in the district of Ganjam. In this Block there are 12 Grama Panchayats with a vast majority of tribal population. The tribals mentioned in this paper are typical Lanjia Saoras who live in most inaccessible areas and worship innumerable deities and deified ancestors in a number of ceremonies. Every stage of cultivation and other economic pursuits is started after performing a rite.

The marketing and exchange system was studied against this background in order to know the habits concerning sale, purchase and consumption of the Saoras. An attempt was also made to ascertain the role of middlemen in a tribal market.

By its very nature tribal economy affords restricted scope for exchange transactions. The basic needs of Saora are few and strictly limited in variety. Coarse grains, wild roots and tubers, salt, chilly, a strip of cloth, tobacco and country liquor are the prominent items in their consumption budget. Even for these limited wants the tribals are not required to resort to exchange except for salt, cloth, chilly and sometimes for cattle. Saoras produce most of their food grains. Wild root, fruit and meat are their supplementary food. Every bit of material used in his household is a local product. His hut itself is the result of his personal labour. The iron implements are no doubt brought from the local market but all wooden agricultural implements are made by the Saora.

The self-sufficient character of Saora economy, thus (though shaken by modern forces) restricts the scope of exchange transactions. Physical and social

* Published in ADIBASI, Vol. XII, Nos. 1-4, TRB, 1970-71, pp. 45-49

¹ Junior Research Officer, Tribal Research Bureau (TRB) , Orissa, Bhubaneswar

factors operating in the tract further reduce the volume of buying and selling. Whenever a Saora family needs tobacco leaf or salt his neighbour comes to his help. The limited use of money as medium of exchange leads to barter economy. Food grains are the major medium of exchange and the comparative lack of the use of money reduces the exchange transaction to the minimum.

From the trader's point of view Saora villages are not an attractive or profitable market. Most of the primitive Saora habitats lie in clusters and situated on inaccessible hilltops where transport is costly and dangerous. There are however, another set of forces working in the opposite direction. During recent years a number of Saora villages have adopted settled cultivation with improved methods. The change has necessitated more exchange transactions. Saora now wants more iron implements, cattle and more seeds. Besides these he needs more cash for payment of land revenue and purchase of certain other goods. This has shaken the very foundation of self-contained Saora economy. The Saora is now seen buying from the market his requirements like tobacco, spices and oil which he himself used to produce in the past.

The growing contact with the outside world has created a new outlook and generated new wants. There is now a growing demand for fancy articles like glass bangles or beads, mirror, comb, ribbon, metal utensils, soap, tobacco paste (*gurakhu*), lamps and boxes. As a result the volume of buying has increased in recent times. After the harvest the Saora carries the crops to the Kumuti (local money-lenders) for payment of interest for the outstanding loans. This is his regular practice. After paying the loan to the Kumuti very little is left for marketing. Even if he takes some grains from his food stock, the Pano and the Paiko once again stand on the Saora's way of free transaction. On the weekly market day the the Pano and Paiko intercept the Saora on the way. As soon as they see a Saora coming to the market with food grains they catch hold of him and acquire his commodities at a very low price. The Pano and Paiko take the Saora to a nearby bush and measure out the grain with a measuring pot larger than the standard size but when they sell something to him the measure is much below the standard size. Such cheating reduces the Saora's due to almost one eighth of what he would have got by fair transaction. With this background, a descriptive account of a Saora market is presented below.

Local Market :

The local market known as Gumma-Hat is 20 K.ms. away from the sub divisional headquarters, Parlakhemedi. It is held once a week, i.e., on Thursday. It is in a central place approachable to a large number of Saora villages under the subdivision. The area, being walled by mountains and sections thereof cut off by deep valleys, renders communication difficult. Daily market under these circumstances is not possible. Moreover, the Saora purchase their bare necessities for a month or so at a time. So the market at

Gumma is conveniently held once in a week.

The market starts at 6 A. M. and is over by 11 A. M. Both buyers and sellers make their way to the market early in the morning on market days. People carry the articles for sale on the head or by means of 'Bhara'. A few bring their merchandise on bullock carts when such transportation is possible. The Saoras carry small packages of food grains, fruits, roots and vegetables to the market to sell them and buy some essential commodities in return. Rarely do they come with their livestock like fowls, goats and buffaloes. Work is almost suspended in the village during the forenoon of the market day. Men and women of all age groups come freely to the market. Some non-tribal dealers bring ready-made dress and clothes for them. Some other Hindu dealers come with stationery articles and metal utensils and iron implements from Parlakhemedi. Both in weight and measurement they charge high price for commodities but the Saora returns cheerfully from the market amply satisfied with the purchase he has made. In this market there were only three Kumuti shop keepers, almost enjoying a monopoly charging whatever they chose. Even a napkin was sold for Rs. 2.50 which would ordinarily cost only Rs. 1.25 *paise* in Parlakhemedi town 20 Kms. away from Gumma.

Besides buying and selling, Saoras also borrow from the Kumutis in the market and pay interest. On the market days they are found paying interest to them. The Kumutis have employed some Paikos to measure the crops. The Paikos use a large measure and take a handful of grains with the measuring pot every time. As a result the Saora always remains a defaulter in the payment of interest. The Kumutis knowing the time of harvest come to market and ask them to pay the interest. They and the Panos also know exactly when the Saora is in want and offer loans to them. In this way the Kumutis lend money and go on collecting interest year after year.

The local Panos and Paikos know the necessities of the Saoras. They charge high price for the commodities which are badly required. Sometimes the sellers charge high price when they know that the Saora has sufficient money and food-grains. Generally Saoras do not like to go out during rainy season. So they make all their purchases before the rain starts.

Besides market, the Saoras also get their requirements from their own village. Here commodities are exchanged on barter. The local Panos and Paikos visit Saora village every alternative day with commodities like chilly, salt, onion, beads, pots, baskets and mats and exchange them against crops.

Commodities entering the Tribal Market :

The following list of Saora's sale and purchase gives a rough idea of his exchange activity

Name of the Crop	Articles sold by the Saoras		Articles purchased by the Saoras
	<i>In Saora Language</i>	<i>English Equivalent</i>	
1. Jana	Kambur	Millet	1. Salt
2. Harada	Kandula	Arhar	2. Cloth
3. Jhadunga	Kandrurm	Runner beans	3. Chilly
4. Ghanti	Kero		4. Onion
5. Bargudi	Cecinal		5. Oil
6. Sag	Wap	Spinach	6. Tobacco
7. Mandia	Sitilli	Ragi	7. Bidi
8. Rasi	Gengelly	Jute	8. Country Cheroot
9. Lau	Aung	Gourd	9. Beads
10. Sima	Arkal	Beans	10. Earthen Pots
11. Kandamula	Argai	Sweet Potato	11. Baskets
12. Sweet Root		Sweet Root	12. Iron Implements
13. Mahula	Mahua		13. Ornaments
			14. Rope
			15. Chicken
			16. Gudakhu
			17. Utensils
			18. Dry Fish
			19. Hair Pins & Clips
			20. Stationery Goods

Weights and Measures :

Weights and measures followed in the local market are given below with their metric equivalents.

Weights	1. Bisa	:	1 Kg. 70 Grams
	1. Seer	:	910 Grams

Measures	4 Adas	:	1 Mana = 3 KG (Approx)
	20 Manas	:	1 Pauti

The above mentioned weights and measures generally operate in local market but the Saora, is least concerned with the weights and measures. He simply stands, takes the goods, pays the amount but does not take account of the weights and measures. Cloth is however, measured by yard and feet, but in some cases it is measured by hand.

Market is not only a place for selling and buying, it is also a place for communal gathering. Saoras of different villages assemble in the weekly market, meet and greet their friends from other villages. They send important messages to their near and dear friends living in other villages. Information like child birth, marriage, etc. are sent to the relatives in this manner.

Market is visited by men and women. When there is pressure of work in the field, women visit the market and men keep themselves engaged in the field. The Saoras carry *salop*, a kind of liquor from Sago palm tree and *Peja* with them when they go to the market. After marketing, they visit the sweet stalls and purchase sweets and some oil-fried cakes for their children. Then they take *salop* and *peja* sitting in a group under a tree.

Middlemen exploiting Saoras figure prominently in the local market. The middlemen purchase the tribal products at a lower price and sell in town at a higher price. The Saoras who toil the year round for the production of their food grains do not get the benefit of selling them due to their inability to go to the town. While doing field investigation the prices of different commodities were observed as follows:-

Sl. No.	Name of the-article	Price per Each (Rs.)
1.	Loin Cloth	5.00
2.	Napkin	2.50
3.	Sickle	0.50
4.	Rope (Pagha)	0.50
5.	Coconut	0.50
6.	Orange	0.10
7.	Salt	0.25 per Kg.
8.	Chilly	5.00 per Kg.
9.	Brinjal	0.50 Per Kg.
10.	Ginger	1.20 Per Kg.
11.	Turmeric	2.00 Per Kg.
12.	Kerosene oil	0.75 Per Kg.
13.	Millet (Mandia)	1.50 Per Kg.
14.	Onion	0.50 Per Kg.
15.	Rice	0.75 Per Kg.
16.	Chicken	6.00 each.

The above list would indicate that the price of the articles sold by the Saora is much lower than the market price at Parlakhemendi but those which are purchased by him fetch a much higher price.

MICRO- PERSPECTIVE OF THE CHANGING FRONTIERS OF FOREST DEPENDENT ECONOMY: THE SAORA EXPERIENCE *

*P. K. Nayak*¹

1. What is forest to the 'Philosopher' is what is city to the 'savage'. The Philosopher and the savage think alike. The Philosopher rambles in the forest while the savage fumbles in the city. The difference between the 'Philosopher' and the 'savage', between "we" and "they", the "development thinker" and the "target population" (tribals for our purpose) is verily not one of contexts but of levels. The spatial-contextual attributes of living while exaggerate the differences, the real manifestation can be attributed to the levels at which we and they operate. Relatively speaking, "we" are not on our own; "they" are on their own. That makes the difference. Policy implications need to be linked with this shift in thinking at a paradigmatic level especially when as an alternative, we place more emphases on enabling the poor tribals to reinforce their existing strategies and develop.

2. The forester's forest is the tribal's farm house. Forest is their home land; they live and die in forest. Forest nourishes their life and living. Forest is their mother; forest is their father. They identify themselves as sons of forest. They are men and sophisticated men of the forest. They love living very close to forest, not necessarily out of techno-economic compulsions but out of sheer volitions. They entertain the ideology of ascending the hills and exploring into the forest. Good life and happy life to them lies in performing regular journey to the forest. People's natural space and social space are relatively coterminous. Natural time and social time move hand in hand in their case. Day time is work time and night time is bed time. The day breaks, they are in the woods; the night falls, they are in the dormitory. The harmony of nature and culture is best exemplified in the forest based tribal communities. The problematic of modern man is his act of fully against the warranted harmony of nature and culture.

* Published in ADIVASI, Vol. XXXII, No.2, 1992, pp.35-43

¹ Professor, Dept. of Anthropology Utkal University, Vani Vihar, Bhubaneswar

3. We as outsiders classify forest on the basis of the nature and quantum of forest growth, distribution of dominant plant species, utility of each such species, etc. But the tribals as insiders classify the physical and biotic nature of the forest in social terminology. The social basis gives hierarchical meaning to the forest. The individual at an early age gets acquainted with its natural-physical make-up by process of cultural labeling. They classify forest in to resources-rich and resource poor forest, healthful and health-loss forest, mother's brother and sister's son's forest, grandmother and granddaughter's forest, forests of the god-kings, etc. Each forest has a nomenclature of its own and is presided over by a spirit. The physical map of the forest within the limits of the village settlement and the wider territorial units remains in the minds of the people. They know their unsheathed forest world intimately well. And about the characteristic contest of each forest they have in their own way researched relatively more empirically than the empiricist scientist. How best we tap people's own knowledge and ingrain and infuse them in an integrated way into our development efforts is the development rhetoric of the day.

4. Trees and their products have become more valuable for the tribals. Trees have increasing importance and potential as savings and security for the poor tribals and therefore they retain the trees as part of their livelihood strategies and use them to meet contingencies. Trees can be compared with bank deposits. Trees are the poor people's savings banks. Trees provide the resources to deal with seasonal shortages. Trees are also the sources of recurrent flows of food, fodder and other useful material. When these flows are counter seasonal they help households get through the slack and lean months. When large sum is required, often suddenly, say for medical treatment and where only a small sum is needed and people are poor or desperate, trees play a part in which cases they are either sold or mortgaged.

5. An empirical enquiry was undertaken in December 1991 under the auspices of the M. A/ M. Sc. Field Training Programmes of the Department of Special Assistance in Anthropology, Utkal University, among the Saora villagers of Chandragiri area, Ganjam district of Orissa. I accompanied the students of the special group, 'Development Anthropology' to the field and supervised their work. The present paper is an outcome of my personal observations into the Saora society during the field trip and guidance of the student's data collection in three Saora villages (they were Lanjia Saora villages, but they have dropped the prefix Lanjia since 1981 under the aegis of the All Orissa Sabara Samaja) within a distance of 3 to 5 Kms. from the field camp at Chandragiri.

The Saora, since generations living in hill slopes and mountain terrains have been deriving nourishment from the resource bases of hills and forests in multiple of such way satiating small needs and making a bare minimum living. One of the main modes of living devised and adopted by them is swidden cultivation, a primitive mode of agriculture. A number of varieties of crops,

cereals, pulses, tubers and trees are grown in the swidden fields with the help of a small number of implements; the methods employed being crude, the process being labour intensive and the productivity being low. Subsistence living regularly gets supplemented by forest collections and in some cases by wage-earning outside the community. With the depletion of forest growth and the under woods, swidden cultivation did not pay dividends and the Saora started preparing terrace fields in the foot hills and gradually ascended the hill slopes, step wise, converting them into rice fields by stone building method in an ingenious way. Thus the hill terrace served the purpose of growing crops, cereals and pulses, in *kharif* season, and some of the plots also once again in Rabi season. Use of plough and draught animals like buffaloes, cows and bullocks in the process of cultivation along with adoption of transplantation technique made their entire system of cultivation complex. When one takes stock of the year round activities of the Saora, it becomes evident that the agricultural outfit of the people is par excellent unique among the cultivating tribal communities of Orissa.

Up until the time the hill tops and hill slopes were having verdant forest growth, the Saora were exploiting the hills and swiddens with mirth and fury. Swidden cultivation was their way of life. Establishing small settlements nearer to the swidden fields was the practice; and moving the settlement alongside moving into virgin swidden plots was the norm.

Kins and affines in small group of families were living together forming a solidarity group and the Saora world was defined in terms of the limits of their kinship boundary. The social basis of their solidarity principle used to be animated by regular ritual practices and ceremonial observances and individual basis of any sort of socio-economic and religious consideration was being sacrificed at the altar of the community. Even, Gamango, the headman, did not have chance of outdoing anything at the cost of the community living. Men and women, both were partners in the process of raising crops in the swiddens. Sexual dimorphism in the pursuit of the swidden economy was almost blurred and the Saora women did form the central pillar of the reproduction-production-continuum. Song and dance, riddles and myths, feasts and festivities revolved round the cycle of swiddens. Youths enjoyed youthful exuberance and the elderly sang the glory of the dead. Self-respect and self-esteem during the life time were as much valued as commemorating the deeds of the deceased in a large gathering of kinsmen. They were proud of their king and in principle, believed in social status hierarchy for the sake of social order and reinforcement of the mechanism of social control. Might be people had wants but not miseries. They were working while dying. They did never display sign of disgust in their work however arduous it was, did not falter even when there was crop failure and did not have the disappointment even when there were calamities, vermin and pests. They were embodiment of high morality,

dignity, valour, truthfulness and astuteness. They loved freedom and independence as much as they loved their own lives.

Cultivation of streambed land becomes the craze of the Saora. Whosoever acquired this type of land prepared himself to settle there permanently without further drifts to any other place and the offspring's were encouraged to acquire such type of land during their life time. Thus more or less, the settled agricultural way of life of the Saora did mark the beginning of a new chapter in the socio-economic and culture history of the people. Change in technological sphere of agricultural activities and the labour co-operative system in the continuum scale had its socio-economic fall outs. It initiated a process of low level of stratification in the socio-economic sphere. The Saora households who did own such settled agricultural land wielded more socio-economic powers and were considered privileged than others, especially those who were rendered landless. This stratification got further fillip from above and outside by gaining royal patronage. Eventually, the new mode of agriculture bifurcated further the male and female labour. Women could be employed only at the transplantation and harvesting phases. Tilling the land, leveling the land and a host of other main activities like stone walling etc. were the men's job, which were considered primary and paramount. Male dominance surfaced as an epiphenomenon and it gave rise to other social formation like the tendency for forsaking the preferential marriage relationship (frequency of marriage in two lines being more) and evolving a prescriptive system of marriage, where the marriage partners, were not necessarily the sister's son and mother's brother's daughter. Thus economic grades and social strata is not manifested.

Development of Agriculture:

In the recent years, beginning with 1980, the Saora have got the impetus of improving their agricultural practice coming in contact with the non-tribal caste neighbours and the Tibetan resettlers. The alien but innovative traits, particularly the skill and technique of agriculture have diffused into the Saora community, and there is greater acceptance of these even at the level of individual cultivators. The Saora have by now realized the benefit of having dug-wells in their respective crop fields. Some of them having been skeptical of the Government machinery's sincerity in delivering them the goods have taken personal initiative in digging out wells for irrigation purposes at their own cost. Relatively, the leading cultivators have adopted the new techniques and others are usefully imitating them. The spread of innovative ideas in the interior Saora villages have been effected on their own initiative, under the economic development programme of the Sabar Samaja, so to speak an indigenous form or regional development organization, where agriculture has been given top priority and in the zonal annual and monthly meetings of the Samaja, they are reviewing the agricultural situation and taking account of the new agricultural activities pursued from time to time by the Saora villagers. The leaders discuss

in the meetings how to develop abandoned waste land and how to utilize land for multiple cropping for alleviating poverty and hunger. Vegetable crops like Potato, Tomato, Cabbages, Cauliflower, Carrots, Brinjals, Pepper, Sweet Potato etc. are being raised by them along with maize and mustard seeds. Thus additional income from agriculture by raising vegetable crops and other cereals and pulses has in a big way weaned the Saora villagers away from the stronghold of swidden cultivation. At the same time of course, the depletion of natural resources in general and forest growth in particular surely have been the limiting factors to their propensity for all those exercises in the swidden.

However, the Saora hills and forests have been over exploited in the process of pursuing generations of swidden cultivation and have been converted in to bald, naked hillocks devoid of tree vegetation. Increasing demand of wood for fuel and timber in the growing towns-areas has further added to the systematic denudation of forests. For the loss of the forest coverage, Saora are not to be blamed alone, the non-tribal neighbors of the Saora also have rapacious roles. External factors and forces have changed the traditional ecological set-up. External causation of destruction of forest is in fact more alarming than internal tribal. Stocked forests are restricted to few areas and vast stretches of hill slopes both have been converted into barren land or weeds and under woods, have taken over the thick woods. The remnants of old forests are also under constant pressure due to illegal felling of trees and cutting of wood. The one time close association of forest and the Saora is showing a declining trend. Yet the share of forests economy of the Saora villagers is decisively of very high proportions. The data in the appended table reveal this, and seen from the point of view of the Saora themselves, the evidence suggested the degree of their dependence on forest and hence draws our attention to promoting alternative development measures keeping the forest and the people at the center.

TABLE
Flow of per Household Average Annual Income in rupees from
swidden+ Dry Upland+wet Rice land+ Trees Owned+ Forest Collections of
Three Saora Villages of Chandragiri Area

Name of village (1)	Income of Swidden (2)	Income from Upland (3)	Income from wet Land (4)	Total (a) Agricultural Rice income
Padhigam (21)	1832.11 (0.86)	..	..	<u>1832.11</u> (42.83%)
Konkarda (10)	1915.17 (0.45)	263.52 (1.15)	506.25 (0.70)	<u>4684.94</u> (64.18 %)
Jagarnathpur (14)	755.32 (0.46)	1478.93 (0.40)	549.15 (0.39)	<u>2783.40</u> (51.57 %)

Income from trees owned			Income from forest collections			Total (c)	Total Income from land and forest (a)+(b)+(c)
Consumed	Sold	Total (b)	Consumed (other than firewood)	Sold	(Sale of firewood only)		
(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)
34.05	517.42	<u>605.47</u> (14.15%)	337.23	437.69	<u>1065.00</u> (57.88%)	<u>1839.92</u> (43.01%)	4277.50
88.00	905.00	<u>993.00</u> (13.60%)	608.50	82.50	<u>930.00</u> (57.37%)	1621.00 (22.20%)	7298.94
199.98	947.30	<u>1147.23</u> (21.25%)	283.24	362.61	<u>820.00</u> 55.94	1463.65 (27.16%)	5396.48

Analysis:

1. Padhigaon is a landless village. Neither do they have dry upland or wet rice-land. Their main mode of subsistence is Swidden supplemented by forest collections. However, the annual income per household from Swidden in their case is more or less than with that of Konkarda, although the Swidden land holding status of Padhigaon is almost twice that of Konkarda, whereas although the Swidden land holding status of Jagarnathpur is same that of Konkarda, income is less than half Konkarda, Jagarnathpur is relatively an exposed village and Swiddens have been over exploited and that is why the yield is abysmally very low.
2. Income from dry upland is also more in Konkarda, more than that of Jagarnathpur. The yield from dry upland is more or less same in both the villages, but the difference in income is due to the higher landholding status of Konkarda, almost three times more than that of Jagarnathpur.
3. Income from wet Riceland in Konkarda and Jaganathpur is same but the landholding status of Konkarda is two times more than that of Jagarnathpur. This suggests that the yield from wet rice land is more in Jagarnathpur than that of Konkarda and in fact the wet rice land of Jagarnathpur are relatively older than that of Konkarda and therefore have been better processed for more yield.
4. The total agricultural income of Konkarda is more than that of Jagarnathpur and obviously that of Padhigaon. It constitutes 64.18% in Konkarda, 51.57% in Jagarnathpur and 42.83% in Padhigaon.

5. Income of trees is more in case of Jagarnathpur (21.26), but in Padhigaon and Konkarda, it is almost same constituting respectively 14.15% and 13.60%. It may be mentioned here that in Jagarnathpur there are more number of trees and they are well retained and well maintained.
6. Income from that forest collection is significantly more (43.01) in Padhigaon than those of Konkarda (22.20%) and Jagarnathpur (27.16%). However, in all the three villages income by selling firewood only constitutes more than 60% of the total income from forest collection and on an average, each household gets, Rs. 1000 each year from the sale of firewood which supplements their income and meets their small sum contingencies to a great extent.
7. Total income of Konkarda from land and forest is Rs. 7298.94, the highest among the three villages and is relatively well-to-do for the people of Konkarda enjoy appreciable benefits both from the forest and the dry wet land strategically situated in the middle, at the interior and being Padhigaon and at the exposed end being Jagarnthpur. Moreover, the natural resource bases of Konkarda are qualitatively better than the other two villages, added to it the small and sufficient household composition of the village.

NOTE:

1. Among the trees owned by the Saora villagers, the following are the most important economic trees, the products of which are partly meant for direct use and partly meant for sale to meet the contingencies, *mohua (abaho)*, date palm (*cindeijowa*), tamarind (*tintah*), *karanja (karajha)*, *salap (arrah)*, mango (*udahjowa*) and jackfruit (*panasa*) etc.
2. Among the variety of forest collections, besides, gathering some of the above mentioned trees products, they collect the following minor forest produce either for direct use or for sale: *barada saga (baradajong)*, Karadi (*uruhkoradah*), mushroom (*boteih*), Siali patra (*rawahareng*), Silia rope (*rowahluar*), *pita konda (godowai)*, Chhate san (*alanjong*), tubers (*jawam*), Khamba alu (*sudan sai*), Lac (*samiya laimb*), firewood (*area*), flowers (*tarah*) etc.

LANJIA SAORA MODE OF SUBSISTENCE: CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT *

*S. C. Mohanty*¹

*P. K. Nayak*²

Introduction:

The term subsistence connotes a marginal level of human existence. In an economy called subsistence economy the provisions are just enough to meet bare necessities and there is hardly any surplus.

The Lanjia Saora represent a primitive section of the Saora tribe. They inhabit a contiguous mountainous territory stretching across Rayagada and Gajapati districts of Southern Orissa. They are, traditionally shifting cultivators and at the same time expert terrace cultivators. They depend upon land and forest for their subsistence and supplement their earnings by occasional hunting, fishing, wage earning and round the year forest collections. They exhibit a high degree of indigenous skill, ingenuity and technological outfit for preparing the terraces with inbuilt water management systems. They mainly grow rice in terraced fields and a variety of minor millets, cereals, and pulses in the swiddens. The remarkable features of their socio-economic life are their traditional system of labour cooperative called Ansir, which ensures them supply of labour for labour-intensive operations like swidden cultivation, house construction, terrace making and terrace cultivation, and a host of other activities in the village. Nayak's precise account of the tribe's way of life with reference to swidden and terrace cultivation deserves mention here. "The Saora since generations living in hill slopes and mountain terrains have been deriving nourishment from the resources bases of the hills and forests in multiple of such ways satiating small needs and making a bare minimum living. One of the main modes of living devised and adopted by them is swidden cultivation (1992:36). They raise a variety of crops in their swidden with the help of a small number of implements.

* Published in ADIVASI, Vol.42, No.1&2 & 43, No.1&2,2002 & 2003, pp.83-96

¹ Research Officer, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar

² Director, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar

The methods employed are crude, the process is labour-intensive, and the productivity is low. "Up until the time the hilltops and hill slopes were having verdant forest growth, the Saora were exploiting the hills and swiddens with mirth and furry. Swidden cultivation was their way of life. Establishing small settlements nearer to the swidden fields was the practice; and moving the settlement site alongside moving into virgin swidden plots was the norm. With the depletion of forest growth and the under woods, swidden cultivation did not pay dividends and the Soara started preparing terraced fields by stone bunding method in an ingenious way" (Ibid, 1992:36).

After independence, the Lanjias were exposed to tribal development programmes. During the 5th Plan, Tribal Sub Plan (TSP) approach was adopted and Lanjia Saora was identified as one of the 13 Primitive Tribal Groups (PTG) in Orissa. For their all round development two Micro Projects, one located at Puttasing in Rayagada district and another at Serango in Gajapati district, have been established. The Micro Projects adopted the basic approach of Tribal Sub Plan that is, location-specific and community specific holistic development of the target area and the people. The objective was to raise the living conditions of the Lanjia Saora and change them from a primitive and pre-agricultural stage of shifting cultivation to modern agriculture and allied pursuits.

Change and Development: A Case Study of LSDA, Serango

Lanjia Saora Development Agency (LSDA), Serango was set up in 1979. It has implemented some income generating and infrastructure development schemes for the Lanjia Saora of 21 settlements of the Agency area primarily aiming at reducing the incidence of shifting cultivation and restoring the degraded hill slopes as well as the natural environment by way of providing alternatives in shape of modern agriculture, profitable horticulture and allied pursuits along with land development, input assistance, irrigation facilities etc. it has also tried, within its limited means, to develop critical and essential infrastructure and services which are important for income generation, such as, road communications, education, health care, drinking water, housing etc. in this remote tribal pocket. Many of these schemes, especially those on agriculture, soil conservation, irrigation, horticulture, drinking water, and housing have fared well and yielded good results because of popular acceptance.

Besides the Micro Project, other development agencies such as, the T.D. (later C.D.) Block of Gumma, TDA (later I.T.D.A) and D.R.D.A. OF Parlakhemundi also have undertaken some development works in the sectors like road communication, drinking water, agriculture, horticulture, irrigation etc. The overall impact of the exercise undertaken by all these agencies is conspicuous in the process of transition set in motion in the area and in people's way of life. this change has reduced their dependence on traditional mode of subsistence derived from shifting cultivation and forest collection, and led them to engage in gainful economic pursuits. Though they have not totally abandoned

shifting cultivation, they have found a profitable alternative in modern agricultural and horticultural practices, more particularly, in cashew plantations introduced by the Micro Project in their unproductive wastelands, high and dry lands and denuded hill slopes. Of course, the Lanjia Soara beneficiaries deserve a major part of the credit, as they shedding their ignorance, initial suspicions and inhibitions have come forward to accept and derive benefits out of these schemes for their own betterment. The results of this exercise in planned change based upon the findings of a socio-economic survey conducted recently i.e., during 2001-02, in this area will be analyzed in the following.

Community Benefit Oriented (CBO) Programme:

The present position compared to that existing 15 years ago shows that significant progress has been made in the provision of essential infrastructure in sectors like road communication, education, childcare service (I.C.D.S. Anganwadi Programme), drinking water, irrigation and electrification within this period. These facilities have been improved by the up-gradation of existing ones and creation of new ones as the case may be. Most remarkably, all the 21 settlements now have 111 units of drinking water sources of different kinds as against 13 units existing in 13 settlements in 1980. At present there is no drinking water problem in these localities. Similar trends are noticed in case of growth of irrigation facilities (33.33%), educational institutions (250%), road works (30.77% & 2100% respectively for village link roads and internal street roads), village electrification (1300%) and community centers (1700%). The interiors of the picturesque Saora villages dotted across the hills and the valleys surrounded by enchanting hill streams, plantations, swidden patches and terraced fields have got a new look on account of the presence of schools; Anganwadi centers; community centers (Kothaghar); concrete or metalled street roads; irrigation structures; electric installations; sanitary wells, tube well, cisterns and pipelines with public water taps most of which have been developed by the Micro Project. Electricity has reached 13 villages, though the quality and conditions of service leaves much to be desired and domestic electrification is yet to start for prohibitive cost of energy. Negative growth is only noticed in case of non-formal education centers being run by the Micro Project and this is due to their closure after the functioning of Anganwadi centers in the area.

Major gaps in many other essential infrastructure sectors include the absence of health care, veterinary, postal, telecom, banking, agriculture, cooperation and marketing services. However, the situation has improved between then and now. The Lanjia Saora now demand better services and facilities for roads, education, electricity, irrigation, drinking water (especially the piped water supply that has become very popular after its introduction in 2 villages and in response to the popular demand two more projects for two villages are nearing completion).

Individual Benefit Oriented (IBO) Income Generation Programmes:

In the ongoing exercise, strengthening of agriculture supported by land development, irrigation, modernization and technology up-gradation of farming practices, horticulture and agro-forestry, have been kept in the center stage as core programmes for their economic development with due emphasis on allied sectors like animal husbandry and cottage industry.

The basic objective of these infrastructure and economic development programmes is to wean the PTG away from their forest based subsistence activities such as the *podu* cultivation and rehabilitate them through settled agriculture, horticulture, agro-forestry and such other practices ensuring the best utilization of the available natural and human resources and by providing them productive assets generating adequate income generation, a better and dependable livelihood. After more than two decades of conducting the exercise the time has come to assess the achievements. Undoubtedly, the development intervention has made a cumulative impact on the life and culture of the Saora. It is evident from the achievements made in different fields as found on analysis of the relevant data. In order to assess the extent of progress made in various sectors the data of the recently undertaken socio-economic survey has been matched with that of 1980 and 1982 (as the case may be depending upon availability of the data) that is the initial phase of the Micro Project.

Expansion of Farmland for Settled Agriculture vis a vis Shifting Cultivation:

Some tangible results in this regard are evident from the comparative positions between 1982 and 2002. During this period the population and number of households in all the 21 settlements have increased by 78.62 percent and 57.29 percent respectively. As compared to this, the number of land holding households has increased at the faster rate of 81 percent bringing about corresponding reduction in the number of landless households at a negative rate of 46.26 percent. This indicates that more and more Lanjas are taking to settled cultivation and abandoning swidden cultivation: the growth rate of shifting cultivator households has been much slower (45.89%) during this period.

Year	Total No of Households (HHs)	Total Population	No. of Landless HHs	No. of HHs Possessing Farmland	No. of HHs dependent on Shifting Cultivation
1982	789 (100)	2863 (18.63%)	147 (18.63%)	642 (81.37%)	778 (98.60%)
2002	1241 (100)	79 (6.36%)	79 (6.36%)	1162 (93.63%)	1135 (91.45%)
Growth Rate (1982-02) (%)	57.29	78.62	-46.26	81.00	45.89

The implementation of soil conservation and land development programmes has led to the expansion of farmland area. In 1982, the total farmland area was only 433.51 acres forming only 4.80 percent of the total land area of 9031.51 acres. By 2002, it expanded to 1830.50 acres accounting for 20.27 percent of the total land area. This growth rate (322.25%) is more than two times that of the shifting cultivation area, which is 175.46%.

Year	Total Land Area of all the 21 Settlements (Ac)	Total Farmland Area (Ac)	Total Area (Aprox) Covered under Shifting Cultivation (Ac)
1982	9031.51 (100)	433.51 (4.80%)	683 (7.56%)
2002	9.31.51 (100)	1830.50 (20.27%)	1881.39 (20.83%)
Growth Rate (1982-02) (%)	(100)	322.25	175.46

The expansion of farmland area has changed the equation of average landholding size per household and per capita from 0.67 to 1.57 Ac and from 0.18 to 0.36 Ac for the landowning households (growth rates 134.32% and 111.11%) respectively. The corresponding figures for all households are also higher, i.e., from 0.55 to 1.47 Ac and 0.15 to 0.36 Ac (growth rates 167.27% & 140%).

Year	Average Land Holding Size (Ac)			
	For Land Holding Households(HH)		For all Households (HH)	
	Per HH	Per Capita	Per HH	Per Capita
1982	0.67	0.18	0.55	0.15
2002	1.57	0.38	1.47	0.36
Growth Rate (1982-02) (%)	134.32	111.11	167.27	140.00

With this kind of development, the profile of categories of farmers according to their landholding size has also changed.

Year	Total Number of Households	Number of Landless Households	Number of Landholding households into Successive Categories of Farmers				
			Marginal		Small	Medium & Big	Total
			Up to 1Ac	1-2.5 Ac	2.6-5 Ac	5+Ac	
1982	789 (100)	147 (18.63)	500 (63.37)	115 (14.57)	27 (3.47)	Nil (0)	642 (81.37)
2002	1241 (100)	79 (6.36)	463 (37.31)	600 (48.35)	95 (7.65)	4 (0.32)	1162 (93.63)
Growth Rate (1982-02) (%)	57.29	-46.26	-7.40	421.74	251.85	400	81.00

It is seen that during 1982, the bulk of the landholding households (77.95%) came under the marginal farmer category and the rest (3.42%) were small farmers with 2.6-5.0 acres of land. there were no medium farmers and big farmers having more than 5 acres of land. this situation has changed by 2002. Farmers holding 1-2.5 acres of land form the majority (48.35%), showing a growth rate of 421.74 percent and pushing down the marginal farmers having less than 1 acres of land from the majority rank (63.37%) in 1982) to 2nd position (37.31%). The number of small farmers has increased 3.5 times from 3.42 percent to 7.65 percent (growth rate 251.85%). Four new medium farmers having land above 5 acres have appeared on the scene in the meantime against nil in 1982. Their growth rate is a phenomenal 400 percent.

Value Addition to Farmland by the Provision of Irrigation

Water is the primary input for successful agriculture. The Lanjia Saora is already endowed with the indigenous skill of water management associated with land terracing in their difficult terrain. As they are fully aware of the value of water for settled agriculture, the irrigation facilities created by the development agencies have gained a high level of popularity. In most cases, the Saora farmers have come forward to demand construction of irrigation structures, presenting definite proposals suggesting the location, sources and type of structure feasible.

To meet their needs a number of irrigation structures have been built. In 1982 there were only 72 dug wells sunk with assistance from ITDA, Paralakhemundi irrigating 38 acres of land and accounting for only 8.77 percent of the total farmland (433.51 Acs). In the mean time 24 mini irrigation projects (M.I.P.s) and water harvesting structures (W.H.S.) have come up in 13 villages covering a total ayacut of 265.27 acres. i.e. 14.49 percent of the total farmland area. Including the ayacut of the 72 dug wells the total ayacut comes to 307.15 Acs. i.e., 16.78 percent of the total farmland area (1830.50 Acs) by 2002. The growth rate in terms of ayacut is a whopping 708.29 percent.

Development of Horticultural Assets:

The Lanjia Saora are plant lovers. They take every care to preserve the fruit plants like date palm, mango, jackfruit, *mohul*, *salap*, Tamarind, etc. in their villages, hills and swiddens. Because of this, the horticulture program introduced as an alternative to swidden cultivation has become very popular. Now besides the development of kitchen gardens and backyard plantations, mixed orchards and plantations of commercial cash crops, cashew have been raised in wastelands and hill slopes often covering parts of swiddens. Especially the cashew plantation drive has received overwhelming popular response for the low cost of maintenance and high profitability. It has turned into a people's programme and gathered momentum. They are now growing cashew on their own initiative without depending on external assistance that they received in the

initial phases. At present, more than 80 percent families own cashew orchards from which comes a large part of their income. Helping them to enhance their level of income, it has emerged as a major economic pursuit. The largest number of Saora households (52%) depends on it as their primary sources of livelihood and another 15 percent, as their secondary sources. As a result, the practice of shifting cultivation is becoming less popular.

Year	Trees			Backyard Kitchen Garden		Orchards		Total		Average Area of Plantation	
Total No. of Households (HHs)	No of HHs having	Total No of Trees	Avg per HH	No of HHs having	Area (Ac)	No. of HHs having	Area (Ac)	No. of HHs having	Area (Ac)	Per Capita/ HH (Ac)	Per Capita (Ac)
<u>1982</u> 789	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	X
<u>2002</u> 1241 (100)	1241 (100)	119973	97	1125 (90.65)	161.2 (1.79)	1132 (91.22)	875.35 (9.69)	1240 (99.92)	1036.6 (11.48)	0.83	0.20

The available data show that horticulture plantations in the form of kitchen gardens, backyard plantations and orchards now cover 11.48 percent (1036.59 acres) of the total land area and almost all the households i.e., 1240 (99.92%) possess plantations of one kind or other. The average area of plantation per household and per capita comes to 0.83 Ac and 0.20 Ac respectively. The average number of trees per household is as high as 97 and most of it are cashew plants.

Growth of Animal Resources:

The Saora are fond of raising livestock such as goats, sheep's, pigs and poultry birds. They also rear bullocks and buffaloes, not for milk but for agricultural purposes. Livestock add to their household assets, provide them with animal food as and when required and add to their household income.

During 1982 the population of livestock in the area was 2560 at an average of 3.24 animals per household. By 2002, the population multiplied more than 2 times to reach 5614 showing a growth rate of 119.30 percent and raising the average per household to 4.52. It is worthwhile to mention that animal wise the figures indicate differential growth rates. Within this period the population of pigs, cows, buffaloes and other kinds of animals has declined while that of the goats, sheep, bullocks and poultry birds, increased. This indicates a change in the people's needs and preferences for different kinds of animals.

Now 82 percent of the households possess livestock. Among all the animals the bullocks were in majority in 1982 but by 2002 poultry birds have come to occupy this position. However, the population of bullocks still remains large as they, along with cows and buffaloes are used as draught animals in

settled agricultural operations. Their population growth follows the trend of farmland expansion, and for that matter, the growth of household landholding size showing increase in activities relating to settled cultivation.

Possession of Livestock												
Year	Number of Households		Number of Different Categories of Animals									
Total Number of Households	Hav-ing	Not Hav-ing	Pigs	Poultry	Sheep	Goat	Cow	Bull-ock	Buff-alo	Others	Total	Average Per HH
1982 789	x	x	226	563	2	436	346	776	136	75	2560	3.24
2002 1241 (100)	1019 (82.1)	222 (17.9)	70	2881	7	1008	170	631	115	-	5614	4.52
Growth Rate(%)			-69	411.7	250	131.19	-51	-19	-15	100	119.3	39.51

Rise in Net Worth of Households:

The data on the average value of household assets possessed by the Saora households during 1980/82 is not available for comparison. However, the factors analyzed so far in respect of growth of landholding size, value addition to farmlands by irrigation provisions, growth of horticultural assets and population of domestic animals possessed by the households establish the fact that the net worth of the Saora households has risen much above 1980 levels. Moreover, during the recent survey, the improvement in the asset ownership position of the Saora households was conspicuous. Now in every village including the remote villages, some small and beautiful designed pucca houses have replaced old huts. Besides land, trees, houses and animals, they now possess modern articles like radios, flashlights, bicycles, watches, wooden and plastic furniture etc. The additional income from cashew plantations, settled agriculture and wage earning has helped them to acquire such assets. Hence, the average value of household assets has gone up to Rs. 72,900/- and the per capita value, to Rs. 17,690.55.

Improvement of Household Economic Conditions:

Under the circumstances of planned change and economic development discussed above, the household economy of the people has risen above the levels of pre-project period. The data reveals that in 1980 the average annual household income from all sources was only Rs. 995/-. The major chunk of it (52%) came from traditional secondary sources like collection and sale of minor forest produce, wage earning and animal rearing. Earnings from the primary sources i.e., settled and shifting cultivation contributed the remaining on the higher side i.e., Rs. 1217/-. Consequently, people being unable to make both ends meet with such meager income incurred debts and suffered from the evils of chronic indebtedness in the form of bondage and exploitation. Not a single Saora family could therefore cross the poverty line.

This situation has been changed. By 2002 the average household income has risen to the level of Rs. 12847/- and the per capita income, to Rs. 3117/- recording the growth rates of 1191.13 percent and 1497.89 percent respectively. Incomes generated by the primary sources largely constituted by agriculture and horticulture and horticulture account for 54 percent and the rest 46 percent comes from the secondary sources like shifting cultivation, wage earning, animal husbandry, forest collection, small business, service, and other semi-skilled jobs that has emerged in the mean time effecting occupational diversification. Their growth rates have been 1355.09 percent and 1039.12 percent respectively.

This rise in the income level has influenced the pattern of expenditure. In 1980, when the level of income was very low, a major part of it (83%) was going towards meeting the barest minimum needs such as food. But now, in tune with the rising income level, the expenditure on food increased by 672.74 percent from Rs. 1011/- to Rs. 7814/-, but in term of its percentage to the total household expenditure it has gone down from 83 percent to 63 percent. This means there is scope for spending on other items like housing, rituals, customary gifts and social obligations, health care, clothes and ornaments, purchase and improvement of assets like land, bullocks, plantations, household articles, implements, utensils, entertainment, children's education and the like. Hence quite visibly, the spending on such non-food items has increased from 17 percent to 37 percent of the total expenditure at a growth rate of 2092.48 percent that is much higher than that on food.

Year	Total Number of House-holds (HH)	Annual Income (average)				Annual Expenditure (average)				Number of BPL House-holds
		Primary Sources (Rs)	Secondary Sources (Rs)	Total per HH (Rs)	Per Capita Income (Rs)	Food (Rs)	Others (Rs)	Total Per HHs (Rs)	Per Capita (Rs)	
1980	813	478.69 (48.11)	516.31 (51.89)	995 (100)	195.10	1011.23 (83.03)	206.68 (16.97)	1217.9 (100)	238.8	813 (100)
2002	1241	6965.4 (54.22)	5881.4 (45.78)	12846.8 (100)	3117.5	7814.2 (63.29)	4531.4 (36.71)	12345.6 (100)	2995.9	598 (48.19)
Growth Rate(%)	52.64	1355.09	1039.12	1191.13	1497.89	672.74	2092.48	913.67	1154.55	-26.45

The improvement in the economic conditions of the Lanjia Saora is conspicuous. 52 percent of them have crossed the poverty line. To put it otherwise, the number of below the poverty line (BPL) households in 2002 i.e., 598 shows a negative growth rate of 26.45 percent as compared with all the 813 BPL households in 1980. This is no mean achievement.

Growth and Diversification of Occupations

The occupational pattern of the Lanjia Saora during 1980 shows their exclusive dependence on traditional economic pursuits. The largest number of households (95.74%) pursued shifting cultivation (78.4% as primary occupation and 17.34 percent as secondary occupation) followed by wet cultivation (73.9%), forest collection (60.7%), wage earning (48.7%) and animal husbandry (19.9%).

The development intervention has effected diversification and mobility in their occupational structure. In the traditional sectors, shifting cultivation has gone down to the third position with 91.45 percent households pursuing it, majority of whom (87.55%), as secondary occupation and only 3.62 percent, as primary occupation. Forest collection has taken the first position engaging 97.1 percent households but only as a secondary means of livelihood. In the second rank comes settled cultivation taken up by 93.63 percent of households (41%, as primary and 52%, as secondary). In this order, animal husbandry ranks fourth engaging 82.1 percent of the households but in the secondary sector.

Comparatively, the number of dependent households has reduced marginally within this period for two traditional sectors that is, *podu* cultivation from 95.74 to 91.45 percent and wage and labour from 48.7 percent to 45.93 percent. On the other hand, it has increased remarkably in agriculture (from 73.9% to 93.63%), forestry (from 60.7% to 97.1%) and animal husbandry (from 19.9% to 82.1%) promoting it as a major secondary livelihood pursuit.

Year	Agriculture			Horticulture			Shifting Cultivation		
Number of Households	Prim-ary (P)	Secon-dary (S)	Total	(P)	(S)	Total	(P)	(S)	Total
1982 789	-	-	- (73.9)	-	-	-	- (78.4)	- (17.34)	- (95.74)
2002 1241	573 (41.34)	649 (52.3)	1162 (93.63)	642 (51.73)	184 (14.83)	826 (66.56)	45 (3.62)	1090 (87.55)	1135 (91.45)

Occupational diffusion has taken place with the emergence of new sources of livelihood like horticulture (66.56%) and a host of skilled and semi-skilled trades and services in the secondary sectors such as small business, masonry, carpentry, blacksmithy, auto-rickshaw driving, tailoring and salaried jobs. The Saora by now have understood that, engagement in horticulture is a paying job. In the agricultural season, they remain engaged in cultivation dividing their time between agriculture, horticulture and forest collection activities. In the lean season and in their spare time, they take up wage earning. There are 75 persons who have acquired skills of carpentry, masonry, blacksmithy, tailoring, etc. They derive extra income practicing their respective trades. Some people (4 in number) earn extra money pursuing small business of horticulture, agriculture and forest produce. 15 persons with education from primary to high school level are employed in institutional (Government and non-Government) service.

The Saora are an enterprising folk. Since the past, they have been temporarily migrating to far-off places outside the state, like Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Maharashtra etc. to earn higher wages working as contractual labourers in construction works, tea estates and other establishments. Now this trend has picked up with many of them going out in search of better wages and

employment during lean months and returning home in busy agricultural season bringing new skills, ideas and extra money. Very prudently, they spend their savings out of all sources of income viz agriculture, horticulture and wage for acquisition of permanent, productive and personal assets like farmland, draught animals, modern implements, articles, dress, ornaments and furniture, and also for raising *pucca* houses and plantations.

Wage & Labour			Service			Only in Secondary Sectors				
Primary (P)	Secondary (S)	Total	(P)	(S)	Total	Forestry	Animal Husbandry	Carpentry Masonry & Black-Smithy	Small Business	Driving & Tailoring
-	-	-48.7	-	-	(0.7)	(60.7)	(19.9)	(0.12)	-	-
28 (2.26)	542 (43.67)	570 (45.93)	12 (0.97)	3 (0.24)	15 (1.21)	1204 (97.1)	1019 (82.1)	70 (5.64)	4 (0.32)	5 (0.4)

Growth of Population & Literacy:

Planned change produces a multiplier effect spreading to the interlinked sectors. Improved living conditions also manifest in growth of population, literacy and education. In the present case the growth of population and households shows a negative trend between 1980 and 1982 i.e., the initial phase of the project. Later, with the intensification of development activities the population rose to 5114 in 2002 at the rate of 22.28 percent whereas the growth rate of the Saora tribe between 1981 and 1991 censuses was only 8 percent. But the average household size came down from 5.14 to 4.12 leading to smaller nuclear families.

The progress made in the field of literacy and education is remarkable. Till the late seventies the project area had a very low level of literacy i.e., a miserable 1.9 percent. With the proliferation of educational institutions and exposure to the agencies of change during the eighties and nineties, the people's level of awareness about the benefits of education has risen. Within a short span of time following the inception of the Micro Project i.e., by 1982-83, the level of literacy of the Lanjia Saora of the project area shot up to 8.31 percent at a remarkable growth rate of 201.27 percent. Now it is 23.89 percent that is higher than that for all tribes in the state (22.31%) and in Gajapati district (18.54%) as per 1991 census. Between 1980-2002 and between 1982-2002, the literacy growth rates have been 1446.84 percent and 241.63 percent respectively. In terms of absolute numbers the number of literates has increased from 238 in 1982 to 1222 at the growth rate of 413.44 percent.

To look at an important indicator of development i.e., women's literacy, the figures on sex-wise break up of literates for 1980 is not available for comparison. In 1982, there are only 23 female literates against 215 male literates. By 2002 the number of female literates rose to 377 accounting for 14.43 percent of the total females (higher than 5.48% tribal female literacy recorded in 1991 census

for Gajapati district) as against 845 males (33.77%) and registering a phenomenal growth at the rate of 1539.13 percent. The growth rate of male literates has remained in the lower side i.e. only 293.03 percent for this period. However in numerical strength as well as percentage wise, the male literates have always maintained superiority over the females.

The position regarding spread of education shows that in 1982 only 25 percent of Saora children of school going age (5-14) were attending schools. In 2002 their percentage has increased to 40.71 percent. In absolute numbers this growth rate is 41.84 percent.

Year	Households		Population			Literacy			Education	
	Number	Size	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Children of School Going Age (5-14)	
									Total Number	Number in School
1980	813	5.14	-	-		-	-	(1.9)	-	-
1982	789	3.63	-	-	2863 (100)	215	23	238 (8.31)	1351 (100)	337 (24.94)
2002	1241	4.12	2502 (100)	2612 (100)	5114 (100)	845 (33.77)	377 (14.43)	1222 (23.9)	1174 (100)	478 (40.71)
Growth Rate (%)	52.64				22.28	293.03	1539.13	413.44	-13.10	41.84

Looking at these figures one can say that there is some improvement in the situation but not up to the expectations, as more than three fourths of the tribesmen remain illiterate and 58 children among every 100 of school going age, majority of whom are girls stay at home to idle away their time in play or to lend a helping hand to their parents in livelihood pursuits. For the situation to remain like this the tribal parents alone are not responsible. A major part of the blame should go to the people's economic conditions which render the children's services essential in undertaking various economic pursuits and, also to the miserable conditions of most of the schools running without any teacher or with a single teacher, who more often than not, remains absent.

Conclusion:

Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru said that the results of tribal development should not be judged by statistics or by statistics or by the amount of money spent but by the quality of life that has evolved. Socio-economic development is a device to improve the quality of life of the people. "it encompasses a spectrum of activities and human mobilization to make people stand on their own feet and break away all the structural disabilities which chain them to the condition in which they live" (Behura, 1989;4). Moreover, quality of life depends on the availability of as well as access to the most basic needs such as, water, food, clothing, shelter, health care and primary education. The quantity of these needs is based upon (i) command over existing resources, (ii) development of human resources and (iii) development of technology.

For the Lanjia Saora of the Serango area the process of socio-economic transformation has been set into motion. The signs of change are visible. Yet there is still a long way to go. The level of literacy and education, health care and such other essential facilities needs to be raised further. There are 79 (6.36%) landless households and 463(37.31%) marginal farmer households with less than 1 acre of land. to provide at least 2 acres of farmland to each household has not been possible for the pressure of growing population and the fixed land area as well as the undulating physiography of the terrain limiting the scope for expansion. Of course, by adoption of soil conservation and land development measures, modern agricultural and horticultural techniques and practices, productivity has increased. Horticulture, in the form of cashew plantation has emerged as a profitable enterprise. But a note of caution should be sounded here. Plantation of cashew is monoculture. The eco system maintains itself upon interdependence of a variety of species. The impact of growing a single plant species on a large scale in the area on the natural environment needs to be studied in order to avoid calamities, if any, in future.

While the cashew plantation drive fared well, some other horticultural programmes such as coffee and banana plantations and cultivation of spices have not succeeded in the same way for want of technical and marketing support. However, on the brighter side, the initiation to “the settled agricultural way of life” has marked “the beginning of a new chapter in the socio-economic and culture history of the people. The alien but innovative traits, particularly the skill and technique of agriculture have diffused into the community and there is greater acceptance of these even at the level of individual cultivators. The spread of innovative ideas in the interior villages has been effected on their own initiative under the economic development programme” (Nayak, 1992:37). Whatever tangible achievements made had been possible due to people’s own initiatives and their active participation in the programmes.

Lastly, one must consider the impact of this development intervention on shifting cultivation. The data analyzed in this paper indicate that (i) over these two decades the shifting cultivator households have grown at a slower pace than all the households and the landholding households reducing their proportion from 99 to 91 percent in the total composition, (ii) similarly, the swidden cultivation area has expanded at a rate that is less than half of that of farmland area. (iii) parts of the swiddens are now coming under cashew plantation, (iv) the extent of dependence on shifting cultivation as a source of livelihood is also growing less with the majority of shifting cultivator households (87.55% out of total 91.45%) taking it up as a secondary sources of livelihood and (v) the average household size has declined, too; all of it indicating a shift from this labour-intensive mode settled agriculture, horticulture and other new pursuits has helped in weakening of the stronghold of shifting cultivation on people.

References:

- Banerjee, N. K. (1992) "An Appraisal of Shifting Cultivation in India : Agro Economic Problems of Tribal India", Ed. M.L. Patel,
- Behura, N. K. (1990) "Shifting Cultivation –A cause of environmental degradation". *ADIBASI*, Vol. XXX, No. 4, pp. 1-7.
- Bohidar, N. (1973) "Problem of Shifting Cultivation with special reference to Baliguda Division" *ADIBASI*, Vol. XIV, No. 4, pp.29-36.
- Chandrasekharan, K. S. (1983) "Forest Policy and Tribal Development". *ADIBASI*, Vol. XXII, No. 3, pp. 16-31.
- Govt. of India (1960) Report of the Scheduled Area and Scheduled Tribes Commission, Vol.I, p. 145.
- LSDA, Seranga "Action Plan: 1978-79 to 1982-83" (Unpublished).
- Mohapatra, K. and K.B. Debi (1973) "Shifting Cultivation in Orissa". *ADIBASI*, Vol. XIV, No. 4, pp. 11-28.
- Mohapatra, L.K. (1953) "Shifting Cultivation in Orissa". Report of the Second Conference for Tribes and Tribal (Scheduled) Areas, Lohar Daga.
- Ibid (1984) " Swidden Cultivation in India", in Swidden Cultivation in Aisa, Vol. I, U.N.E.S.C.O.
- Nayak, P. K. (1992) "Micro Perspective of the Changing Frontiers of Forest dependent Economy: The Saora Experience, *ADIBASI*, Vol. 22, No. 2, pp 35-43.
- Project & Corporate Consultants (PCC) (1993) "Report on Evaluation of Serang Micro-Project Agency in Ganjam District". (Unpublished).
- Roy Burman, B. K. (1988) "Shifting Cultivation: A Closer Look", New Delhi: IASSI (Unpublished) (Quoted by Behura, 1990:3).
- Tripathy, D. P. (1958) "Shifting Cultivation in Orissa". Orissa Govt. Press, Cuttack.

IMPACT OF DEFORESTATION ON TRIBAL LIFE AND LIVELIHOOD: A CASE STUDY OF THE LANJIA SAORA OF PUTTASING IN RAYAGADA DISTRICT OF ORISSA *

*S.C. Mohanty*¹

*B.K. Paikaray*²

Background

Today a serious matter of worldwide concern is the phenomenon of degradation of the natural environment as a direct consequence of deforestation precipitated by a situation of over-exploitation of natural resources. Large tracts of moist tropical vegetations are disappearing fast from the earth's surface day by day. Now more than anybody else, the tribal folks who have been the denizens of forest since time immemorial stand at the receiving end of the disaster as the worst victims.

Tribal communities living close to the nature since the hoary past have developed a symbiotic relationship with the forest. They depend heavily on the forest for their livelihood. To them forest is not merely a perennial and renewable natural resource for fulfillment of their basic needs but also the very foundation of their culture exemplifying the age-old serene pattern of coexistence between man and nature. Their worldview folklore and religion are woven round the forest. Therefore their social and economic well being can not be ensured ignoring their age old dependency on the forest eco system.

In India this age old harmony of man with nature has been affected since the time of colonial administration. The major reasons are population growth,

* Published in ADIVASI, Vol. XXXIX, Nos.1, 2009, pp.52-75

¹ Research Officer, SC & ST Research and Training Institute, Bhubaneswar

² Research Assistant, SC & ST Research and Training Institute, Bhubaneswar

industrialization and urbanization, development and especially the commercial exploitation of forest resources based upon the policy of treating the forests as national wealth and its continuance even after independence. This has started a trend of massive deforestation on one hand and erosion of tribals' traditional rights and their nature of relationship with the forest on the other making them the worst victims of deforestation. The Orissan tribes are no exception.

The gravity of the situation of deforestation can be assessed from the fact that, at the time of independence nearly one fourth (23%) of India's land area was under forest cover and now it has come down to less than one tenth. It is said, India has been losing on an average 1.3 million hectares of forests every year. In absolute terms of the extent of the area of deforestation, Orissa comes among the top three most affected states. Forests that covered nearly 40 percent of the state's land area has dropped below 20 percent.

In Orissa, the majority of forest dwelling tribals are socially, economically and educationally backward and relatively underexposed to the outside world. They live in the remote hilly areas, many of them primarily being dependent on shifting cultivation and minor forest produce (MFP). In other words, they depend on the forests for their very survival. Consequences of deforestation have subjected them to untold miseries and sufferings.

Present Study

With this backdrop this study has been undertaken to assess the effects of deforestation among a Primitive Tribal Group (PTG) i.e., the Lanjia Saora of Puttasing of southern Orissa who live in a simple society and inhabit remote forest areas in a state of semi-isolation and thrive upon a subsistence economy based on land and forest.

This exploratory study has covered one hundred households in 12 selected Lanjia Saora settlements inhabited exclusively by the Lanjia Saora and located in Puttasing area of Rayagada district. 11 of these villages are inside the micro project, LSDA area and the remaining one just lying on the periphery of the project area. 100 Lanjia Saora households belonging to these 12 villages/hamlets were covered under the study.

The quantitative data on aspects like population, literacy, marital status, health status, occupations and employment, traditional skills, indebtedness, livestock, agriculture, horticulture and shifting cultivation, and collection of MFP, household income and expenditure pattern etc. has been collected by administration of a set of Household Schedules. Qualitative data, on socio-cultural, economic and environmental impact of deforestation has been gathered through personal interviews, group discussion, non-participant observation, interaction with key informants and community leaders and

recording of case studies with the help of an Interview Guide. In both the ways an attempt has been made to elicit comparative data on important aspects of the problem as they were in the past, 10-15 years back and the changes, if any, occurred at present i.e., at the time of this study. Relevant secondary data has been elicited from available references.

The Study Area

The study area of Puttasing is a rugged, mountainous highland country predominantly inhabited by the Lanjia Saora. This picturesque territory with its undulating terrain, rolling hills, terraced paddy fields, perennial hill streams and patches of lush green forests lies at an average elevation of 2000' above the mean sea level. It forms a natural geographic unit, comprising fertile valleys of the Vamsadhara and its tributaries between the mountain ranges of the Eastern Ghats. The soil type is red laterite on the hills. Brown to black soil is seen on the hill bottoms and valleys. Due to shifting cultivation and deforestation, soil erosion is evident on the denuded hills. The flora of this region is predominantly composed of moist peninsular Sal (*Shorea robusta*) forests in the valleys and hill ranges standing at an elevation of 590' to 5000'.

The contribution of forest to the economic life of the Saora is very significant. In the past the area was under thick forest cover, but now only patches of vegetations are left. It has been observed that while practising shifting cultivation, they spare fruit trees like Mohul, jackfruit, tamarind, mango, etc. This has given a clue to development agencies in dealing with the problem of shifting cultivation. Recently by the efforts of the micro project, LSDA, Puttasing, horticultural plantations and more particularly, cashew plantations have been raised on the wastelands and barren hill slopes.

In the past it was a wild country rich in natural wealth of flora and fauna. Tigers, jackals, bears, leopards, panthers, wild dogs, elephants, porcupines, Sambars, wild pigs and goats, fowls, deers, common langur and *bander*, bonnet monkeys, peacocks, pythons, cobras were roaming in its wilderness. Now the fauna is almost depleted with the forest.

The climatic condition of the region is more like that of the Deccan plateau. Because of its elevation, the area experiences a mild and moderate climate, with a short and mild summer, moderate monsoon and a long winter. The spatial distribution of rainfall is largely influenced by the Eastern Ghats.

The Tribe: Lanjia Saora

The Lanjia Saora represent a primitive section of the great ancient tribe "Saora" or "Savara". They are not only numerically important but also a historically and culturally significant tribal community of the State. According

to a legendary tradition, they have been intimately associated with the cult of Lord Jagannath, who originated as a tribal deity and was later brought to Puri under royal patronage.

The tribe have their racial affinity with the proto-Australoid stock and speak an ancient Mundari dialect of their own called 'Sora'.

Numerically, a major Scheduled Tribe of Orissa, the **Saora** are found in almost all the districts of the State. But their main concentration lies in a contiguous mountainous territory of the Eastern Ghats in Rayagada and Gajapati districts in Southern Orissa, which can be called, the "Saora Country". Their population as per 2001 census was 4,73,233 accounting for 5.81 percent of the total tribal population of the state. Their decennial growth rate (1991- 2001) was 17.28 per cent and sex ratio, 1007 females per 1000 males in 2001 showing numerical superiority of their women over men. Educationally, they are backward with only 41.13 per cent literacy in 2001.

The exact population of the **Lanjia Saora** is not available. However according to a survey made by SCSTRTI in 2007, their population in the two Micro Projects areas viz, LSDA, Puttasing and LSDA, Serango is 11,215.

The Lanjia Saora are famous for their expertise in terrace cultivation, shifting cultivation, elaborately religious lifestyle, artistic skills for producing beautiful wall paintings or pictograms popularly known as icons and their peculiar traditional male dress-style in which the ends of the loin cloth hangs like a tail at the back. The term "Lanjia" meaning "having a tail" has been bestowed upon them by their neighbours referring to the fashion of wearing long tailed lion cloth by their male folk.

The subsistence economy of the Lanjia Saora rests primarily on slash-and burn agriculture and importantly on terrace cultivation. It is supplemented by wage earning and round the year forest collections. Individual ownership of the swidden plots is recognized on a hereditary basis. They exhibit a high degree of indigenous skill, ingenuity and technological outfit for preparing the terraces with inbuilt water management system. Mainly they grow rice in terraced fields and a variety of minor millets, cereals, and pulses in the swiddens. Among many remarkable features of their socio-economic life is their traditional system of labour cooperative called *ansir*, which ensures them supply of labour for labour intensive operations like swidden cultivation, house construction, terrace making and terrace cultivation, and other activities in the village.

The Saora social organization is distinguished by absence of exogamous clans. The main exogamous unit is the patrilineally extended family descended

from a common male ancestor, called *birinda*. Women even after marriage continue to belong to their brother's *birinda*.

The Lanjia Saora pantheon includes numerous gods, deities and spirits, who are worshipped with fear and anxiety. People offer sacrifices for their safety and well-being. Most of the festivals revolve round agricultural cycle and lifecycle rituals. To commemorate the dead *Guar* is celebrated. In their society, the fear of religion is the most potent factor for ensuring social conformity and it acts as a powerful deterrent against breach of established customs.

Their aesthetic life manifests through colourful dance, music and wall paintings (*anital*) in particular. The icons are so skillfully dreamt and drawn that have made them famous among the scholars and artists in India and abroad.

Their traditional village organization possesses, a well-defined territory, a hierarchy of responsible leadership and a traditional village council composed of family heads, called “Birinda Neti”. There are a secular headman (Gomango/Naiko), a sacerdotal headman (Buya / Karji / Jani), headman’s subordinates- (Mandal / Dal Behera), messenger (Barik), astrologer (Disari) and Shaman (Kudan / Beju). The village affairs are decided in village meetings held under the chairmanship of the Gomango. Decisions are reached mostly by consensus and not by majority vote.

In modern times, rapid changes in administrative set-up and political climate of the country and their exposure to the modern world have influenced the Saora way of life and contributed to modernize their political organization. Various welfare measures initiated by the Government have also enhanced their contacts, outlook and awareness. The Lanjia Saora have been identified as a Primitive Tribal Group (PTG) in Orissa. For their all round development, two Micro Projects, one located at Puttasing in Rayagada district and another at Serango in Gajapati district have been established. The impact of the political change, election system, adult franchise and local self-government have triggered off various political processes and generated new leadership among them.

Impact of Deforestation on Environment

The forests as whole function as the biomass system that maintains the ecological balance to provide a life support system for the animal kingdom. This balance disappears with deforestation as it leads to environmental deterioration. Today the disastrous consequences of deforestation manifests in shapes of soil erosion due to inadequate tree cover, drought due to loss of ground water stock, floods due to run off water, and landslides due to the denudation of hills.

Now the Lanjia Saora of Puttasing, have come to realize that the destruction of forests leads to the deterioration of human beings, especially those belonging to the weaker sections like themselves who has been depending on nature for their very survival. Consequently, the environment degradation hits them harder than any other. Their community leaders have expressed such views during informal interviews and group discussions.

In their perception:-

- The area under forest coverage as well as the forest density has reduced very highly by 60-75 percent.
- Forests that surrounded their villages 2-3 decades back have receded 2-10 kms now.
- Deforestation has highly affected their natural environment. It is visible in deterioration of the soil through the ongoing process of soil erosion, loss of soil nutrients, fertility and moisture.
- The felling of evergreen trees with large leaves that protected land from the sun and retained soil moisture, leads to the lowering of the water table, reduction of moisture in the atmosphere and the consequent decrease in rain or erratic rainfall.
- The consequences of the ecological imbalance hit them in shapes of, drying of water sources, unpredictable climatic conditions, rise in atmospheric temperature, flood and draught, acute shortage of drinking water, decrease in yield from agriculture and horticulture, scarcity of food for crop failure, shortage of fodder etc.
- The equation of their age-old dependence on the forest has been disturbed by deforestation.

Destruction of forests is not merely disappearance of trees but of the resource on which the tribal economy, culture, social life and religion depend. Consequently, the destruction of their habitat does not merely deprive them of their very life support system but sets a new destructive process in motion that is harmful to their life and culture.

Impact on Socio-Economic Sphere

Tribals are inseparable from forest not only ecologically but economically too. The denizens of forest traditionally depend on the forest flora and fauna for their livelihood and thrive on a subsistence economy derived out of hunting, food gathering and shifting cultivation as they have few viable economic alternatives and employment opportunities. They collect various kinds of Minor Forest Produce in different seasons and satisfy their numerous needs from the forest with the help of most simple implements and without any external technological aid. Therefore it is now important to know how

deforestation has affected their age-old dependence on the forest and its consequences.

Though, Orissa is comparatively rich in forest resources, the living standards of its people and especially the tribals is very low since, majority of the forest dwelling tribes are economically backward, pre-literate and underexposed to the outside world.

The Lanjia Saora have lived with the forest for centuries and built up a symbiotic relationship with forest in context of their social, cultural and economic life. They inhabit clusters of villages mainly in the interior hilly areas, depending primarily on shifting cultivation and minor forest produce (MFP). As they have been depending on the forests for their very survival from time immemorial, wanton destruction of forests has not only disturbed the ecological balance but also put pressure on the diminishing forest resources. Consequently, they find it difficult to pursue their traditional occupations and sustain their livelihood as their perennial source of subsistence is dwindling in these days.

In this situation, it becomes imperative to understand the magnitude and direction of the impact of deforestation on the socio-economic condition and life of the tribals especially with reference to their occupational position, social and cultural life, living standard and economy as a whole.

The present study observes the socio-economic condition of the Lanjia Saora as affected by the consequences of deforestation.

Population, Marital Status & Literacy in Study Households:

The 100 study households have a total population of 662 (322 males and 340 females) giving an average household size of 6.6. It also shows the females outnumbering males; (sex ratio 1056 females for 1000 males).

Because the Lanjia Saora practise polygyny for a family badly needs more women workers for *bagado chas* (shifting cultivation) and other economic activities, there are more married women (38.82%) than men (35.40%); more unmarried men (61.80%) than women (55.88%); very low incidence of divorce (0.60%); very low incidence of separation involving women only (0.30%); and more widows (4.12%) than widowers (2.18%).

Their Total Literacy (30.66%) and Female Literacy (17.35%) are low.

Skills & Occupational Pattern; Continuity & Mobility

With the rapid depletion of forests leading to deterioration of natural environment, their traditional life support system i.e., their economic resource base has been squeezed. Their dependence on traditional sectors such as,

hunting, shifting cultivation, animal husbandry and other forest based subsistence activities including collection of minor forest produce have declined slowly in course of time following the trail of deforestation. Gradually, they have taken up pursuits like settled terrace cultivation to grow paddy, horticultural plantations and wage labour. Now the Lanjia Saora are exhibiting a trend of temporary seasonal migration, especially in the lean seasons, to far-off states like Maharashtra, Assam, Arunchal Pradesh etc to earn higher wages by their engagement in unskilled and semi-skilled avocations such as carpentry, masonry, plumbing, auto-driving, machine operation, construction workers, tea garden workers and the like. They come back to their native places before the onset of agricultural season bringing with them the new ideas and acquired modern skills as well as the accumulated savings out of their incomes. The following Statements show the position in respect of the Study Households.

TOTAL POPULATION OF STUDY HOUSEHOLDS		S K I L L S						
		T R A D I T I O N A L			M O D E R N			
		Stone Bunding	Saora Painting	Saora Dance	Mason	Carpe- ntry	Photo- graphy	Weaving
Males	322	49	-	1	23	2	1	1
Females	340	-	3	-	-	-	-	-
Total	662	49	3	1	23	2	1	1

- Many Saora men are skilled in their traditional art and techniques of stone bunding that is required for preparing terraces for paddy cultivation, dry and upland cultivation, horticultural plantation and water management.
- While terrace making is men's job, women carry on with their famous tribal artistic traditions i.e., the wall painting of icons called *idital* or *inital*. Of course with the advent of modernity and Christianity this visual folk art is losing ground and only few Saora men and women keep this rich tradition alive. Lately, the State Government of Orissa in ST & SC Development Department has imparted training to thirty young Lanjia Saora boys and girls with the help of a Lanjia Saora Wall Painting Expert and the Art Teachers of B.K. College of Arts & Crafts to preserve and promote this declining tribal folk art tradition.
- The Saora dance with song and music is another folk tradition suffering from the same fate of decline and decadence like the wall painting. Now few Saora men and women possess skills in this age-old

performing art because the younger generation lacks interest to continue the tradition.

- Acquisition of modern skills like masonry, carpentry, photography, weaving etc. is a recent phenomenon brought about by their mobility and exposure to the modern world when the decline of their traditional economic base effected by deforestation and environmental degradation pushed them forward to look for greener pastures outside the cocoon of their natural habitat as stated earlier. It is interesting to note that only men possess these new skills because generally they move out leaving their women and children behind to take care of their home and hearth.

STUDY HOUSEHOLDS (Percentages in Brackets)			MAJOR OCCUPATIONS (ENGAGEMENTS IN MANDAYS) (Per Capita Average in a Year given in Brackets)				
Break up	Total Popula- tion	Working Population (15-59 Yrs)	Terrace Cultivation	Shifting Cultivation	Horticul- ture	Forest Collection	Total
Males	322 (100)	146 (45.34)	5 971 (41)	6 454 (44)	4 268 (29)	4 964 (34)	21 657 (148)
Females	340 (100)	174 (51.17)	8 024 (46)	8 578 (49)	5 726 (33)	6 090 (35)	28 418 (163)
Total	662 (100)	320 (48.34)	13 995 (44)	15 032 (47)	9 994 (31)	11 054 (35)	50 075 (157)

- Less than half of the population (48.34%) of the study households belonging to the age group of 15–59 years comes under the category of Working Population.
- Corresponding to the sex ratio and marital status, women maintain superiority over men, both numerically and percentage wise
- The average engagement of the Working Population in major economic pursuits like Terrace Cultivation, Shifting Cultivation, Horticulture and Forest Collection keeps them occupied for less than half of a year. It means they remain under-employed and hence temporarily migrate outside in search of wage and employment as stated earlier.
- Sector wise each and both the sexes spend the largest number of days in average in Shifting Cultivation followed by, Terrace Cultivation and Forest Collection and the minimum in Horticulture. Thus forest based subsistence activities, in combination of Shifting Cultivation and Forest Collection, still remains their major economic pursuit in terms of the extent of engagement for their age old dependence on forest.

- In terms of average engagement in these avocations women work more than men in each and all sectors.

Agriculture

Agriculture is the mainstay of the Lanjia Saora economy. In recent times it has taken precedence over shifting cultivation – the traditional mode of their subsistence which no longer remained profitable under the cumulative impact of deforestation, ecological imbalance and decline of land / man ratio due to pressure of growing population. Since cultivable land is in short supply in their area for undulating nature of the hilly terrain and population growth, they have tried to find an answer to this problem by mastering the art of preparing and cultivating terraced paddy fields on the lower hill slopes and bottoms. Yet, they still have to continue with shifting cultivation to supplement their earnings from settled (terrace) cultivation, forest collection, wage earning, and other economic pursuits. They exhibit a high degree of indigenous skill, ingenuity and technological outfit for preparing the terraces with inbuilt water management system. Mainly they grow rice in terraced fields and a variety of minor millets, cereals, and pulses in the swiddens.

Now, the Lanjia Saora of Puttasing area possess three kinds of productive assets of agriculture – (i) Saroba: the terraced paddy fields for wet land settled cultivation, (ii) Baseng: the up and dry land and (iii) Bagado for shifting cultivation. The Baseng and Bagado are meant for growing a variety of cereals, pulses, oilseeds and vegetables.

Cultivable Land Holding Pattern

The following statement reveals that -

Cultivable lands include all kinds of farmlands excluding the swiddens.

Among the 100 study households, only 3 (3%) are landless.

Small Farmers form the majority group (38.14 %) among all categories followed by that of Medium Farmers (23.71 %). The bulk (60 %) of the landowning households fall under Marginal and Small Farmers category. The Big Farmers are in minority (16.49 %).

The average size of landholding per landowning household is 2.73 Acs. For the Marginal, Small, Medium and Big Farmers it is 0.64 Acs, 1.74 Acs, 3.54 Acs and 6.61 Acs respectively.

Total Study House holds	Land less House holds	LANDOWNING HOUSEHOLDS classified into successive CATEGORIES OF FARMERS						Observations
		Items	Marginal Farmers (> 1Ac)	Small Farmers (1.1-2.5Ac)	Medium Farmers (2.6-5Ac)	Big Farmers (5.1 >)	Total	
100	3	No of Households	21 (21.64)	37 (38.14)	23 (23.71)	16 (16.49)	97 (100)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultivable lands include all kinds of agricultural & Horticultural lands excluding the swiddens • 3 % of the Households are landless • Small Farmers form the majority group among all categories • Bulk of the landowning households fall under Marginal & Small Farmers category
		Total Area of Landholding (Saroba & Baseng) (in Acs)	13.38	64.30	81.53	105.82	265	
		Average Landholding Per Household (in Acs)	0.64	1.74	3.54	6.61	2.73	

Trend of Agricultural Production

Settled agricultural practices of the Lanjias mainly revolve around their *saroba*, which they regard to be their valuable productive asset. The following statement reveals that almost all of the study households (97%) possess and cultivable wet lands in shape of *saroba* at an average of 1.63 Acres per farmer household. Where adequate irrigation is available, they raise a second paddy crop in *saroba* during summer. *Baseng* – the up and dry land is not as productive as the *saroba*. However majority (91%) of the study households have pieces of *basengs* in an average of 1 acre per household, which, as shown in the following statement, they utilize for mixed cropping like they do in their swiddens (*bagado*).

The comparative picture of agricultural production in the past and present given in the following statement shows that:-

- Production of paddy crop from the *saroba* in terms of total quantity has come down by -11.38 percent.
- In case of the annual yield from the *baseng*, the rate of decline is higher than *saroba*. Among all the different categories of crops grown in *baseng* as well as the *saroba* the rate of fall is the highest (-19.79%) for the oil seeds.

Category of Farmland	Number of Farmer House-holds (HH)	Total Area of Land holding Average Per HH (in Acs)	Cropping Pattern	Annual Yield (in Qtls)					
				PAST (About 10 Yrs Ago)			PRESENT		
				Total Yield (!00)	Average		Total Yield (% Of Change)	Average	
					Per HH	Per Acre		Per HH (% of Change)	Per Acre (% of Change)
<u>Saroba</u> (Terrace & Plain Lands)	97	<u>158.41</u> (1.63)	Paddy	1607.5	16.57	10.2	<u>1424.5</u> (-11.38)	<u>14.69</u> (-11.35)	<u>8.99</u> (-11.43)
<u>Baseng</u> Up & Dry Land	91	<u>97.51</u> (1.07)	<u>Cereals:</u> <i>Maize, Ganga, Bajra, Kunda-dhan Kangu, Suan, Ragi, Jana, etc</i>	154.77	1.70	1.59	<u>134.58</u> (-13.04)	<u>1.48</u> (-12.94)	<u>1.38</u> (-13.21)
			<u>Pulses:</u> <i>Kandul, Kulthi, Mung, Biri, Bargudi, Jhudung etc.</i>	82.47	0.91	0.85	<u>69.92</u> (-15.21)	<u>0.77</u> (-15.38)	<u>0.72</u> (-15.29)
			<u>Oil Seeds:</u> <i>Til, Mustard, Castor etc.</i>	28.95	0.32	0.30	<u>23.22</u> (-19.8)	<u>0.26</u> (-18.75)	<u>0.24</u> (-20)
Total	97	<u>255.92</u> (2.64)		1873.7	19.32	7.32	<u>1652.22</u> (-11.8)	<u>17.03</u> (-11.85)	<u>6.46</u> (-11.75)

People's Response on the Situation

The above Statement shows that the Lanjia farmers generally know the reasons for decrease of their farm output. They mainly attribute the reason to (i) Deterioration in the Quality of Soil, (ii) Uncertain Agro-Climatic Conditions manifested in erratic and inadequate rainfall. Since their farmlands lack assured irrigation facilities, they are bound to be dependent on the natural agro-climate to reap a good harvest. Deterioration of the natural environment over period of time has become a matter of major concern for them.

All the respondents (100%) agree on the point that their farm outputs are shrinking for Loss of Soil Fertility. The soil has not remained as fertile as it has been in the past. In addition to that nearly half and one third of them have identified other important causative factors like Soil Erosion and Uncertain Agro-Climate with Inadequate and Erratic Rainfall.

Further opinions emerged on the state of affairs in the group discussion

- In the past, when they lived in the vicinity of lush green forests, the rainfall was abundant and the soil, fertile. Shifting cultivation and forest collections produced enough to feed lesser number of bellies. As these traditional sources started drying up day by day, their dependency on wet terrace paddy cultivation has increased.
- Population is increasing. Cultivable land holdings are becoming smaller after family partitions.
- There is little scope for expansion of farmland area for the stiff hills and the undulating terrain of their habitat.
- Now agricultural yields do not sustain many of them for a full year. Therefore they have to take recourse to seasonal migratory labour.
- One third of them know that destruction of natural vegetations and population rise lie at root of the present problems.

Total Number of Respondent Farmers	Farmland Category	Stated Reasons for Decrease of Farmland Yields (No of Respondents)		
		Deterioration of Natural Environment		
		Deterioration of Soil Quality		Uncertain Agro-Climate
		Soil Fertility Declining	Erosion of Fertile Soil	Inadequate & Erratic Rainfall
97 (100)	Saroba	53 (54.64)	31 (31.96)	13 (13.40)
	Baseng	47 (48.45)	19 (19.59)	21 (21.65)
	Total	97 (100)	50 (51.55)	34 (35.05)

Horticulture

The Lanjia Saora love trees. Therefore they take all care to preserve the fruit plants like date palm, mango, jackfruit, tamarind, *mohul*, *salap*, *ramphal*, *sitaphal* etc in their villages, hills and swiddens. They save the fruit bearing and other useful trees while they clear off all other vegetations for starting the cycle of shifting cultivation in their swiddens. Besides, they raise kitchen garden in their backyards or in the close proximity of their houses and orchards if suitable sites are available.

Presently, following the gradual decline in agricultural production and forest produce they are looking for dependable supplementary sources in horticulture. They have started growing many new varieties of economic species including vegetable crops introduced by themselves as well as the development agencies like the concerned ITDA, DRDA and LSDA as evident from the following Statement.

It is worth-mentioning here that the horticulture programme introduced by the development agencies as an alternative to swidden cultivation has become popular among the Lanjia Saora. Now besides the development of kitchen gardens and backyard plantations, mixed orchards and plantations of commercial cash crops, cashew have been raised in wastelands and hill slopes often covering parts of *podu* ravaged and degraded swiddens. Especially, the cashew plantation drive has received overwhelming popular response for its low maintenance and high profitability. Now, they are now growing cashew on their own initiative without depending on external assistance that they received in the initial phases. Presently more than 80 percent of families own cashew orchards from which comes a good part of their income. Helping them to enhance their level of income, it has emerged as a economically gainful pursuit. As a result, shifting cultivation is gradually being pushed to the back stage.

- The data given below shows that, horticultural plantations in shape of kitchen gardens, backyard plantations owned by 96 study households and orchards raised by 83 households out of total 100, now cover a total land area of 157.46 acres at an average of 1.64 acres per household which also includes the cashew plantations raised in the degraded swiddens. That means almost all the study households possess horticultural plantations of one kind or other.
- The harmful impact of ecological imbalance effected by deforestation is also noticed in gradual downslide of horticultural production (- 20.5%) particularly in their backyards and kitchen gardens where they mostly raise conventional crops as it is happening to agricultural production

but the deficit in made up by newly introduced crops like cashew, zinger, pineapple, coconut, tomato, cauliflower, beans etc.

Category of Farmland	Number of Farmer House-Holds (HH)	Total Area of Land holding Average Per HH (in Acs)	Plants /Crops Raised		Annual Yield (in Qtls)					
					PAST (About 10 Yrs Ago)			PRESENT		
			Traditional	New	Total Yield (100)	Average		Total Yield (% Of Change)	Average	
						Per HH	Per Acre		Per HH (% of Change)	Per Acre (% of Change)
<u>Kadung Sing</u> Backyard & Kitchen Garden	96	<u>9.11</u> (0.10)	Gourd, Pumpkin, Maize, Cucumber Papaya, Drumstick Bean, Chilies, Mango, Jackfruit, Tamarind, <i>Sitaphal, Ramphal</i>	Brinjal, Cabbage, Ladiesfinger, Cauliflower, Tomato, Coconut, Lemon, Banana Orange, Guava	407.5	4.24	44.7	<u>324</u> (-20.5)	<u>3.38</u> (-20.3)	<u>35.56</u> (-20.5)
<u>Kota</u> Orchard& Swiddens	83	<u>148.35</u> (1.79)	Banana, Cucumber Lemon, Pumpkin, Gourd, Guava, Beans, Chilies, Jack fruit, <i>Salap Karanj Sitaphal, Ramphal, Mohul, Datepalm Mango, Tamarind</i>	Brinjal, Cabbage, Bean, Ladiesfinger Zinger, Culiflower, Tomato, Radish, Coconut, Lemon, Pineapple, Orange, Guava, Cashew , Mango, Jackfruit	1662.2	20	11.2	1851 (13.8)	22.30 (11.3)	12.48 (11.5)
Total	96	<u>157.46</u> (1.64)			2069.7	21.6	13.1	<u>2175</u> (5.09)	<u>22.66</u> (4.95)	<u>13.81</u> (6.0)

- These new horticultural crops and especially, the cashew have reversed the trend of negative growth registering a notable rise of +14 percent for the orchards and +5 percent in total horticultural production nullifying the -20.5% decline in the yields of backyards and kitchen gardens over the past decade.
- Formerly they were producing horticultural crops to meet their own consumption needs. After being aware of the fact that fruits and

vegetables fetch a good price in the market, now they have started raising modern HYV species and coming to the local weekly markets to sell their horticultural produce and buy their provisions with the sale proceeds. This trend has begun since 10-15 years.

- The respondents said that the area under horticultural plantations has grown in the mean time and more particularly for the popular acceptance of the cashew.

Shifting Cultivation

Shifting cultivation is an archaic agricultural system in which forests are cleared by felling and subsequent burning and are cropped discontinuously by (i) rotation of plots (ii) employing family and cooperative labour as chief input, (iii) application of crude technology using simple implements such as hoe, digging stick, knife, axe, sickle etc, and not using draught animals and (v) leaving a fallow period larger than the period of cropping.

Mostly the forest-dwelling tribals, resort to this archaic mode of cultivation, where enough plain lands are not available for settled cultivation. The most remarkable feature of shifting cultivation is that though the yield is low, a variety of cereals, pulses, millets, oil seeds and vegetables are grown in one plot which is not feasible in the plain land cultivation. The existence of this primitive agriculture as a way of life since the hoary past is a proof of its deep impact on the tribals' psyche. It has undoubtedly evolved as a reflex to the physiographical character of their habitat on specific adaptation to forest and hilly environments.

So long as the land man ratio remained favourable, this practice did not pose so much of a problem. However, the growth of population and depletion of forests have disturbed the equilibrium. The reduction of fallow period has led to soil erosion and deterioration and permanent damage to land, which again led to extension of its coverage to larger tracts of forestland. Studies made by T.H.R.T.I, show that this practice is uneconomic for high requirement of seed and labour and low returns.

Traditionally for the Lanjia Saora, swidden cultivation (Bagad Chas) has been their way of life. With the depletion of forest growth and the underwoods, swidden cultivation does not pay dividends. Now the Saora have learnt in a hard way that this ageold mode of subsistence would no longer sustain their growing population. While they are trying to reduce their dependence on this less productive enterprise and looking for alternatives, they are yet to abandon the practice altogether.

ITEMS	ANNUAL YIELD (Approx in Qtls) Average per Acre (Growth Rate) / Average per Farmer							
	1 st Year (Amengal)		2 nd Year (Asenal)		3rd Year (Asenal)		TOTAL	
Total Area (Aprox in Acs)	62.75		33.10		32.80		128.65	
Number of Farmers	37		36		27		100	
Average Area per HH (Ac)	1.69		0.92		1.21		1.29	
Cropping Pattern	Past	Present	Past	Present	Past	Present	Past	Present
Cereals	106.05	72.80	38.65	27.97	18.40	12.95	163.10	113.72
<i>Kangu, Ganga, Ghantia Suan, Ragi, Jana, Maize</i>	1.69	1.16 (-31.36)	1.17	0.84 (-28.21)	0.56	0.39 (-30.36)	1.27	0.88 (-30.71)
	2.87	1.97	1.07	0.78	0.68	0.48	1.63	1.14
Pulses	34.30	21.95	10.35	7.40	5.28	3.33	49.93	32.68
<i>Kandul, Jhudunga, Pea, Bargudi, Black gram, Horsegram, Greengram</i>	0.55	0.35 (-36.36)	0.31	0.22 (-29.03)	0.16	0.10 (-37.50)	0.39	0.25 (-35.90)
	0.93	0.59	0.29	0.21	0.19	0.12	0.50	0.33
Oilseeds	17.65	11.40	6.40	4.70	3.10	2.35	27.15	18.45
<i>Til, Castor, Mustard,</i>	0.28	0.18 (-35.71)	0.19	0.14 (-26.32)	0.09	0.07 (-22.22)	0.21	0.14 (-33.33)
	0.48	0.31	0.18	0.13	0.11	0.09	0.27	0.18
Spices	4.77	2.92	2.17	1.60	1.64	1.06	8.58	5.58
<i>Turmeric, Ginger, Cinnamon*, Chilies,</i>	0.08	0.05 (-37.40)	0.06	0.05 (-16.67)	0.05	0.03 (-40.00)	0.07	0.04 (-42.86)
	0.13	0.08	0.06	0.04	0.06	0.04	0.08	0.05
Vegetables	14.70	11.55	6.40	5.50	3.60	2.63	24.70	19.68
<i>Pumpkin, Cucumber, Kankad, Ghiagerda, Maragudi, Gadagai</i>	0.23	0.18 (-21.74)	0.19	0.17 (-10.53)	0.11	0.08 (-27.27)	0.19	0.15 (-21.05)
	0.40	0.31	0.18	0.15	0.13	0.09	0.25	0.19
Total	177.47	120.62	63.97	47.17	32.02	22.32	273.46	190.11
	2.83	1.92 (-32.15)	1.93	1.42 (-26.42)	0.97	0.68 (-29.89)	2.13	1.48 (-30.52)
	4.79	3.26	1.77	1.31	1.18	0.83	2.73	1.90

The above statement clearly depicts the declining trend of their traditional mode of subsistence i.e., shifting cultivation. Normally a *bagad* plot is cultivated for three consecutive years and left fallow for 8-12 years for rejuvenation. Since its fertility and for that matter, the productivity decreases gradually for erosion of topsoil and its nutrients, the area under cultivation between the 1st and 2nd and 3rd (*asinal*) year decreases and so also the number of cultivator families. Thus the fertility factor depends on the soil quality, agro-climate and the regenerative fallow period. The more the fallow period, the better is the fertility. Now these conditions are deteriorating day by day. The consequences are visible in the data presented in the statement below.

Farmers' Major Perceived Reasons for the Production Downslide

Soil Fertility Declining	28 (75.67)	17 (47.22)	17 (62.96)	62 (62)
Erosion of Fertile Soil	17 (45.95)	16 (44.44)	15 (55.55)	48 (48)
Inadequate & Erratic Rainfall	19 (51.35)	19 (52.77)	12 (44.44)	50 (50)
Shorter Fallow Period	16 (43.24)	10 (27.78)	16 (59.25)	42 (42)

- Underlined crops are no longer cultivated
- * Marked crop recently introduced.

- There is gradual reduction in the cultivated area and the number of farmers from the 1st year (*amengal*) to the 2nd and 3rd year (*asinal*) *bagado chas*.
- Over a period of 10-15 years, the over all quantum of production has decreased by 31 percent, the rate of decline being the maximum (-32.15 %) in the 1st year followed by those in the 3rd year (-29.89 %) and then in the 2nd year (-26.42 %).
- Looking at the negative growth rate of yield for all the three successive years of cultivation of different categories of crops it is found that it is the highest (-42.86 %) in case of spices like Turmeric, Ginger, Cinnamon, Chilies etc. Next in the descending come the pulses (-35.90 %), oilseeds (-33.33 %), cereals (-30.71 %) and the lowest being the vegetables (-21.05 %).
- Huge decline of yield is noticed in the 1st Year *bagado* for spices (-37 %), pulses and oilseeds (-36% in each case); in the 2nd Year *bagado* for pulses (-29%), cereals (-28%) and oilseeds (-26%) and in the 3rd Year *bagado* for spices (-40%), pulses (-38%) and cereals (-30 %). It shows that

spices, cereals and pulses are the worst affected crops during all the three-year cycle of *bagado chas*.

- For spices, pulses, and vegetables the highest decline is seen in the 3rd Year *bagado*.
- For declining fertility of *bagado*, cultivation of a variety of crops have been stopped.

Peoples' Response on Causative Factors

As evident from the Statement, largest number of shifting cultivators (62%) knows that the yield from their *bagado chas* is declining with the decline of soil fertility. 50 percent of them attribute this to uncertain agro-climate with inadequate and irregular rainfall; 48 percent, to soil erosion and 42 percent, to shorter fallow period.

The time of fallow period varies with the subsistence need and the socio-economic status of the farmer as it determines the extent of his dependency on *bagado chas* be it profitable or not. A poor farmer with limited means of livelihood has no choice other than exploiting whatever *bagado* he possesses more frequently to keep his body and soul together than a well-to-do farmer. So he cannot afford to leave his *bagado* fallow for regeneration for a longer period. In the past the fallow period for poor Saora farmers were 5-8 years and for the well to do it was 7-12 years as the land man ratio was better for smaller population. The situation has changed over period of time. The fallow period has been coming down to 3-5 years and 5-8 years for both the categories of farmers.

Many hill slopes are now degraded for continuous exploitation and become unfit for *bagado chas*. These are coming under cashew plantation, which is a popular programme for its profitability. The people are aware of the fact that the deteriorating ecological conditions would hardly sustain their traditional *bagado chas* but the poorer among them have little choice.

Firewood Collection

The Lanjia Saora generally collect firewood for their own consumption from their Bagado and surroundings. In the past, vegetations existed almost in their backyards. In an average they were to move within a radius not exceeding one kilometer to gather fuel for their kitchen. With gradual destruction of vegetations and degradation of their Bagado this distance has been increasing day by day. Now it has increased to more than 2 kms for the people of the study villages. Obviously this distance increases in the summer months more than those of monsoon and winter days.

Season	Average Distance Covered (kms)		Engagement <u>No of Persons / Mandays</u> =Average per Person				Quantity (Qtls) <u>Total Quantity / 100 Households =</u> Average per Household / (Rate of Decline)				
			Collection		Processing		Collected		Consumed		Sale Barter
	Past	Present	Men	Women	Men	Women	Past	Present	Past	Present	
Summer	1	2.5	146	174	141	171	515	322	455	320	Lanjia Saora do not Sale Fire Wood They gather only to meet consumption needs
			2123	2113	678	511	5.15	3.22	4.55	3.20	
			14.54	12.14	4.81	2.99		(-37.47)		(-29.67)	
Winter	1	2	146	174	143	174	781	580	760	571	
			1631	2089	895	717	7.81	5.80	7.60	5.71	
			11.17	12.01	6.26	4.12		(-25.74)		(-24.87)	
Monson	0.80	1.75	146	174	145	167	992	834	851	821	
			1176	1923	510	517	9.92	8.34	8.51	8.21	
			8.05	11.05	3.52	3.09		(-15.93)		(-3.52)	
Total	0.93	2.08	146	174	143	170	2288	1736	2066	1712	
			4930	6125	2083	1745	22.88	17.36	20.66	17.12	
			33.76	35.20	14.57	10.26		(-24.13)		(-17.13)	

- The data presented above indicates that both the sexes shoulder the burden of firewood collection almost equally with small seasonal variations.
- For processing the firewood i.e., chopping, splitting and slicing the stock to make it ready for use, men are more engaged than women in all seasons.
- With depletion of the vegetations, the quantity of annual collections and domestic consumption per study households has come down by -24 percent and - 17.13 percent respectively within last 10 - 15 years.
- Deficit in firewood is adjusted by farm refuses e.g., crop residues, dry leaves etc.
- Though the people know about the demand-supply gap, it has not yet turned so acute. They also understand that with the receding tree line and increasing population the firewood is going to be scarce in future. Their womenfolk who have to keep their hearths burning are more alarmed than their men about the impending crisis.

Collection of MFP

The consumption pattern of tribals, indicate that the MFP items constitute important source of sustenance. The MFP provide raw material for their cottage industries. During drought and adverse climatic condition, tribals' dependence on MFP increases. In the area where job opportunities are few and viable economic alternatives are all but non-existent, this dependence is significant. Their subsidiary occupation involves total dependence on MFP for survival for at least three lean months in a year.

As forest dwellers the Lanjia Saoras derive a part of their subsistence out of forest based activities. They collect an endless variety of seasonal minor forest produce like small timber, bamboo, thatching grass, fodder, fruits, roots, seeds, tubers, mushrooms, leaves, flowers, fibers, leaves, barks, herbs, etc mostly, to meet their consumption needs. Only a few surplus items of fruits, flowers (Mohul), seeds and broomsticks are sold out after meeting their domestic requirements.

All of them depend on MFP for their food, fodder, wild medicinal herbs, house building materials, and other needs. With depletion of forests these items are in short supply.

Our data as presented above show the link between deforestation and reduced availability of MFP, additional workload and greater hardship. Because of the non-availability of MFP, the forest dwellers require more human power to collect even the minimum required for survival.

The distance between the MFP collectors and the source i.e., the forest has increased in the mean time between past 10-15 years and the present for all items. That brings about the hardship to cover larger distance and spend more time in this activity. The Lanjia Saora women shoulder the responsibility of collecting the MFPs more than men. Therefore this section of the population undergoes the maximum hardships because of deforestation. Today, given the distance of the forest from the village, they have to walk for an additional 3 to 4 hours a day to collect MFP. This, to some extent turns their otherwise difficult work at home into a secondary occupation. But they continue to walk this distance and also work at home in order to survive.

The reduction in the procurement of MFP between past and present is visible in all categories. The highest decline is in gums (-50 %), followed by broomsticks (-42 %), seeds, fruits and leaves (-39 % in each case), and the lowest, being in flowers (- 12 %). For other categories the rate of decline ranges between 16 percent and 36 percent. As a result their average household consumption of all these items have come down by 50 percent to 9 percent and created deficits by imbalancing the equation of demand and supply.

Type of MFP English Name / Local Name	Collection Time & Season	Average Distance Covered (kms)		Engagement Total Mandays /Total Persons / Average per Person				Quantity (Approx. in Qtls) Total / Number of Households / Average per Household					
				Collection		Processing		Collection		Consumption		Sale /Barter	
		Past	Present	M	W	M	W	Past	Present	Past	Present	Past	Present
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	11	12	13	14	15	16
Small Timber <i>Sargi, Piasal, Sisu, Bahada, Harida, Aam Gambharii, Mohul, Karad</i>	Summer Winter Monson	3	5	380	-	530	-	456	307	411	329	nil	nil
		2	4	134	-	91	-	77	62	91	91		
		-	-										
		2.5	4.5	2.83	-	5.82	-	5.92	4.44 (-25)	4.52	3.61 (-20.1)		
Bamboo	Summer & Winter	5.87	10.2	341	363	223	254	2285 Nos	1774 Nos	2221 Nos	1792 Nos		
				142	162	152	182	100	100	100	100	-	-
				2.4	2.24	1.47	1.39	22.85	17.74 (-22.4)	22.21	17.92 (-19.3)		
Grass (Non Fodder) <i>Allang, Raalu</i>	Summer & Winter	1.45	9.45	194	126	165	224	421	327	421	327	-	-
				147	163	147	163	89	73	89	73		
				1.32	0.77	1.12	1.37	4.89	4.48 (-22.3)	4.89	4.48 (-22.3)		
Fodder	Winter Monson	0.99	2.21	783	845	823	1078	634	491	634	491		
				141	152	89	124	93	81	93	81		
				5.55	5.56	9.25	8.69	6.82	6.06 (-22.5)	6.82	6.06 (-22.5)		
Barks <i>Siali, Kumbri Talangeng, kandrudal, Radelud, Baruda, Suger</i>	Summer Winter Monson	2.91	3.22	210	279	134	151	11.52	7.70	11.13	8.45		
		2.56	2.87	117	159	96	123	91	78	95	86		
		1.88	2.45										
		2.45	2.84	1.79	1.75	1.39	1.23	0.12	0.09 (-25)	0.11	0.09 (-18.2)		
Plants / Creepers <i>Siali, Radelud Talangeng</i>	Summer Winter Monson	2.85	4.08	129	232	112	227	5.78	3.99	5.56	4.76		
				116	169	72	144	89	81	94	87		
				1.11	1.37	1.55	1.57	0.06	0.05 (-16.7)	0.05	0.05 (-0.0)		
Fruits <i>Aam, Kusum Anla, Bahada Jamu, Harida Kendu, Karanj Jangjingel, Tol, Char, Tentuli</i>	Summer Winter Monson	1.88	3.92	596	653	285	462	174.24	104.42	151.7	97.75	22.6	6.7
				146	164	143	164	98	95	100	99	57	39
				4.08	3.98	1.99	2.82	1.78	1.09 (-38.8)	1.52	0.98 (-35.5)	0.4	0.17 (-57.5)
Roots & Tubers <i>Margudigai, Gadagai, Daregai, Patadgai, Kathakanda, Pitakanda</i>	Monson	1.66	5.56	321	461	172	398	36.80	26.85	31.5	28.78		
				137	168	95	161	96	91	98	99		
				2.34	2.74	1.81	2.47	0.38	0.29 (-23.7)	0.32	0.29 (-9.37)		

Leaves <i>Sargi, Mohul Siali, Kirido, Kandrumdalo Bradajop, Adrangjop, Titindarangjop Urbangdjop</i>	Winter Monson	1.31	3.3	168	315	105	175	12.65	8.38	11.35	9.83		
				101	153	76	103	94	99	97	100		
				1.66	2.06	1.38	1.7	0.13	0.08 (-38.5)	0.12	0.1 (-16.7)		
Flowers <i>Mohul</i>	Summer	1.28	3.14	181	225	174	321	36.15	31.17	24.18	25.98	11.97	5.10
				96	132	93	129	85	81	77	89	61	42
				1.88	1.70	1.87	2.49	0.43	0.38 (-11.6)	0.31	0.29 (-6.45)	0.19	0.12 (-36..8)
Seeds <i>Tol, Sargi, Banabhalla, Karanj, Neem</i>	Summer	1.42	3.70	272	306	208	311	25.85	17.49	21.04	14.01	4.81	3.48
				128	137	132	151	98	95	99	97	37	39
				2.12	2.23	1.57	2.06	0.26	0.18 (-30.8)	0.21	0.14 (-33.3)	0.13	0.12 (-7.7)
Mushrooms <i>Sargio, Dasra Jamu, Sraban Bauns, Alenga Taraphul, Bali Alampai,</i>	Monson	2	4.69	119	454		305	14.48	9.35	13.35	11.53		
				103	167		97	100	98	97	100		
				1.15	2.72		3.14	0.14	0.09 (-35.7)	0.14	0.12 (-14.3)		
Herbs <i>Srujel, Durire Manjuati, Arka Barad, Kumbri Raktukolta Kdatidara</i>	Summer Winter Monson	1.71	4.70	272	311	167	293	4.25	2.41	4.15	2.67		
				119	153	103	137	77	63	87	89		
				2.28	2.03	1.62	2.14	0.05	0.04 (-20)	0.05	0.03 (-40)		
Resin <i>Desedai</i>	Summer	1.67	5.02	78	212	154	213	4.47	2.63	3.17	2.81		
				81	103	94	103	63	57	59	61		
				0.96	2.05	1.63	2.07	0.07	0.05 (-28.6)	0.05	0.04 (-20)		
Gums <i>Bel, Panas, Aswastha, Mohul</i>	Summer Winter Monson	0.96	4.03	43	139	52	88	0.76	0.51	0.73	0.48		
				107	131	77	139	47	49	45	48		
				0.40	1.06	0.67	0.63	0.02	0.01 (-50)	0.02	0.01 (-50)		
Broom stick <i>Janon</i>	Winter	1.63	4.58	91	227	53	232	10.39	5.80	8.82	4.96	1.57	0.84
				103	163	27	86	87	84	84	89	13	11
				0.88	1.35	1.96	2.7	0.12	0.07 (-41.7)	0.1	0.05 (-50)	0.12	0.07 (-41.7)
Others (Specify) <i>Tabang</i>	Monson	5.87	10.2	62	213		102	9.63	5.96	9.16	5.07		
				43	117		71	57	53	51	55		
				1.44	1.82		1.43	0.16	0.11 (-31.3)	0.18	0.09 (-50)		
TOTAL				34.19	35.43	35.1	37.9	1857.97	1351.48				

Most of our respondents kept repeating that the problem itself is the result of deforestation and the consequent lack of access to MFP. The data given above seem to confirm this. The first indication is the difference between the past and the present in the collection, consumption and sale of MFP. This is

attributable primarily, if not exclusively, to the difference in the forest area available and the consequent difference in access.

Possession of Livestock

The Lanjia Saora rear certain kinds of animals to meet their agricultural and consumption needs. When natural vegetations were abundant there were hardly any problem to maintain their domestic animals. Now the population of these animals is decreasing with depletion of forests and decline in agricultural production. This diminishing trend is visible in the comparative data presented in the following statement.

Types of Animals	Number		Reasons for Change (Percentage of Response)				
	Total Animals / Total Households possessing / Average per Household		Shrinkage of Grazing Sources	Shortage of Fodder	Drying up of Water Sources	Shortage of Manpower for tending Livestock	Fear of Taboos & Social Sanctions
	Past	Present (Growth Rate)					
Bullocks	330	252 (-23.64)	81.18			18.82	
	88	85					
	3.75	2.96					
Buffaloes	23	12 (-47.83)	66.67		83.33		
	10	6					
	2.3	2					
Cows	141	89 (-36.87)	58.97	38.46	23.07	17.94	
	45	39					
	3.13	2.28					
Goats	178	97 (-45.51)	78.57	32.14		21.43	46.42
	43	28					
	4.13	3.46					
Pigs	160	35 (-78.13)			26.83		65.85
	41	14					
	3.90	2.5					
Poultry	548	341 (-37.77)	34.57 % premature death for unknown disease				
	81	76					
	6.76	4.48					
Total	1380	826 (-40.14)	71.35	35.30	44.41	19.39	56.13
	100	100					
	13.80	8.26					

- The animal population has decreased significantly (- 40.14 %) with the average livestock per household shrinking from 14 to 8 animals over last 10 -15 years.
- The highest negative growth rate (-78.13 %) is seen in case of pigs followed by buffaloes (-47.83 %) and cows (-45.51 %), the lowest (-23.64 %) being the bullocks.
- The people revealed the reasons for this situation. The largest number (71.35 %) of respondents cited about shrinking of sources for grazing the animals along with drying up of water sources and short supply of fodder caused by deforestation. Particularly, the populations of buffaloes, cows and goats have been affected by these factors.
- Pig rearing that has been quite common in the past has suffered a major set back on the advent of Christianity. Christianized Saoras are tabooed against this practice.
- The village councils in some villages have banned goat rearing in order to protect the economic cashew plantations, which have started in a big way over past decades.

Indebtedness & Bondage

It is a well-known fact that the deficit caused by decline of traditional forest based subsistence activities on account of deforestation drives the gullible tribals into the vicious circle of indebtedness and bondage. Once a tribal incurs debt from a local *sahukar*, he is trapped in a net from which he cannot wriggle out very easily. He and his children live in debt and die in debt. Indebtedness in most cases leads to bondage and land alienation. The exorbitant rates of interest charged by the local private moneylenders makes the repayment of loan impossible and invariably the cunning moneylender deprives the client of his income from his available sources of land, MFP and other produces and finally acquires the client's land and or other valuable economic assets. The worst victims are the poorer and landless sections who have no other options.

This kind of situation was prevailing in the study area till the recent past. But now, thanks to the tribal and rural development programmes, the circumstances have changed. Nationalised Banks and Self Help Groups (SHGs) have come to their rescue overshadowing the dishonest private lenders. The level of awareness of the people has also increased.

Source	Number of Loanee House-holds	Position of Indebtedness (Average per Household)				
		Total Amount of Loan (Rs)	Total Amount Repaid (Rs)	Total Amount Outstanding	Whether Land or any Economic Asset alienated for repayment	If Indebtedness caused Bondage
State Bank of India	2	$\frac{4\ 000}{2\ 000}$	Nil	$\frac{4\ 000}{2\ 000}$	Land	No
Indian Bank	13	$\frac{5\ 39\ 533}{41\ 502.5}$	$\frac{3\ 23\ 400}{24\ 876.9}$	$\frac{2\ 16\ 133}{16\ 625.6}$	Land	No
Self Help Group	2	$\frac{9\ 500}{4\ 750}$	Nil	$\frac{9\ 500}{4\ 750}$	Nil	No
Private	2	$\frac{6\ 400}{3\ 200}$	$\frac{3\ 400}{1\ 700}$	$\frac{4\ 500}{2\ 250}$	Nil	No
Total	19	$\frac{5\ 59\ 433}{29\ 443.8}$ (100)	$\frac{3\ 26\ 800}{17\ 200}$ (58.42)	$\frac{2\ 34\ 133}{12\ 322.7}$ (41.58)		

The above statement shows that presently, Indian Bank, State Bank of India and SHGs have advanced fairly larger amounts of loans to the people than the local moneylenders. The position of repayment of loans by the loanees is also good i.e., 58.42 percent. Large inflow of institutional finance has pushed the greedy private financiers to the backstage, removing their grip over the vulnerable sections. As a result there is not a single case of bondage and alienation of land or any valuable economic asset to the private lenders on account of indebtedness.

Household Income

The data on average annual income of the study households presented in the following Statement is self-explanatory. Between past and present, the average income rose by 45.78 % whereas the expenditure has gone up by 47.55% increasing the deficit in household budget.

The highest component of income i.e., 29.84 percent in the past and 28.89 percent in the present comes from settled agriculture including terraced cultivation of paddy and mixed cultivation in up and dry lands. Yet there is one percent fall between then and now for decline of the rate of production.

Following settled agriculture, the second highest income is reported from both the sub-sectors of horticulture combined together i.e., backyards & kitchen garden and other horticultural plantations including mixed orchards and cashew plantations in backyards, wastelands and *podu* ravaged hill slopes. While the income from backyards & kitchen garden sub-sector have marginally decreased from 6.05 percent to 5.48 percent that from mixed orchards and cashew plantations etc. have registered a significant growth from 13.02 percent to 17.74 percent. Both the sub-sectors taken together, the total contribution of horticulture sector to household income has risen from 19.07 percent to 23.22 percent negating the trend of decline in other sectors. As mentioned earlier, this is happening for the popular acceptance of modern horticultural schemes by the people in general and the spread of cashew plantations in particular.

Forest collections constituted the third largest source of household income (14.82%) in the past. With gradual depletion of forest resources over period of time, the quantum of income from this age-old perennial source has been reducing day by day down grading its position to the 5th (10.93 %) below that of wage and labour (15.16 %) and service (12.40%) which were in the 5th and 6th position in the past. That means following the decline of forest resources, people are looking for alternatives in other avenues like wage earning to supplement their income and make up the deficit.

Sl. No.	Sources of Income	Average Amount of Annual Income (Rs)	
		Past (10 Years)	Present
1.	Agriculture	4 09 168 (29.84%)	5 77 634 (28.89 %)
2.	Shifting Cultivation	1 57 103 (11.46%)	1 23 657 (6.19%)
3.	Horticulture (a) Orchard etc.	1 78 592 (13.02%)	3 54 705 (17.74 %)
	(b) Backyard & Kitchen Garden	82 895 (6.05 %)	1 09 650 (5.48 %)
4.	Animal Husbandry	25 865 (1.89 %)	18 985 (0.95 %)
5.	Forest Collection	2 03 295 (14.82%)	2 18 577 (10.93 %)
6.	Hunting	5 810 (0.42 %)	1 775 (0.09%)
7.	Fishing	1 476 (0.11%)	1 110 (0.05 %)
8.	Wage and Labour	1 51 275 (11.03 %)	3 03 035 (15.16 %)
9.	Rural Industry	1 680 (0.12%)	2 050 (0.10 %)
10.	Trade / Barter	4 350 (0.33 %)	6 575 (0.33 %)
11.	Gift / Exchange	17 135 (1.25 %)	33 495 (1.67%)
12.	Service	1 32 695 (9.68 %)	2 47 855 (12.40%)
	Total	13 71 339 (100 %)	19 99 103 (100 %)
Average per Household (Growth Rate)		13 713. 39	19 991. 03 (45.78 %)

Like that of forest collections another important age-old forest based source of subsistence ie, the shifting cultivation has been declining. Consequently its contribution to household income has come down from 11.46% to 6.19% over past 10-15 years downgrading its rank from 4th to 6th.

Moreover, deforestation and the ban on hunting have affected the incomes from allied sectors like animal husbandry hunting and rural industry that is largely dependent on forest produce. While animal husbandry has gone down from the 7th to 8th position and the hunting, from 9th to 11th position, rural industry has improved its rank from the 11th to 10th, but its share has gone down from 0.12 percent to 0.10 percent. In case of hunting the income has reduced by almost 80 percent making it a mere ritual activity and for animal husbandry the rate of decline is about 50 percent.

Fishing has never been a significant economic activity for the Lanjia Saora. In terms its contribution to household income it is negligible. As such it holds the lowest rank in the past as well as in the present. This too has declined by more than 50 percent.

Thus it is found that the shares of earning from large number of economic sectors i.e., 7 out of total 12 has declined over past 10-15 years. Sectors like shifting cultivation, animal husbandry, forest collections, hunting and fishing have registered major decline and the remaining 2 i.e., agriculture and rural industry have shown marginal decline. Conversely, significant growth of income has been reported from sectors like horticulture, wage earning and service and marginal growth, from gift and exchange. Interestingly, there is no change in the income from trade and barter which has remained constant at 0.33 percent though its rank has moved up from the 10th to 9th during this period.

Household Expenditure

The data on average annual expenditure of the study households presented in the following statement speaks for itself. The quantum of expenditure has increased on all the 18 heads.

Among all the heads the highest average household expenditure has been on fooding and the second highest on house construction and maintenance and as such both have maintained their 1st and 2nd positions not only in the past but also in the present circumstances. A decade ago the total share of expenditure on both the heads accounted for (30.43% + 23.84% =) 54.27 percent of the all-total average household expenditure. This has marginally increased to 57.53 percent at present. Always it has remained over 50 percent.

Sl. No.	Heads of Expenditure	Average Amount of Annual Expenditure (Rs)	
		Past (10 Years)	Present
1.	Agriculture	97 967 (7.1 %)	1 15 832 (5.69 %)
2.	Shifting Cultivation	99 895 (7.25 %)	1 08 176 (5.32 %)
3.	Horticulture	61 390 (4.45 %)	83 745 (4.12 %)
4.	Rural Industry	2675 (0.19 %)	3 780 (0.19%)
5.	Dress & Ornaments	67 423 (4.89%)	96 751 (4.76 %)
6.	Rituals & Festivals	53 875 (3.91%)	67 386 (3.31 %)
7.	Drinks & Intoxicants	17 810 (1.29 %)	23 765 (1.17 %)
8.	Entertainment of Guests	16 905 (1.23 %)	28 185 (1.38 %)
9.	Treatment of Diseases	19 785 (1.43 %)	33 190 (1.63%)
10.	Education & Training	27 885 (2.02 %)	49 638 (2.44 %)
11.	Purchase of Durable Assets	26 870 (1.95%)	64 584 (3.17 %)
12.	Land Revenue	719 (0.05 %)	1 219 (0.06 %)
13.	Construction & Repair of House	3 28 690 (23.84%)	5 18 875 (25.50 %)
14.	Litigation	9 300 (0.67 %)	8 500 (0.42 %)
15.	Gift & Exchange	28 655 (2.08 %)	47 680 (2.34 %)
16.	Fuel & Fodder	5 714 (0.41 %)	8 753 (0.43 %)
17.	Fooding	4 19 635 (30.43 %)	6 51 655 (32.03 %)
18.	Repayment of Loan	93 600 (6.79 %)	1 25 800 (6.18 %)
	Total	13 78 793 (100 %)	20 34 514 (100 %)
	Average per Household (Growth Rate %)	13 78 793	20 34 5. 14 (47.55%)

The expenditure on payment of land revenue has been the lowest among all the heads. Consistently, it has held the lowest i.e., the 18th rank then and now.

Expenses on agriculture, shifting cultivation and horticulture has come down in percentage terms i.e., from 7.1 %, 7.25 % and 7.25 % in the past to 5.69 %, 5.32 % and 4.12 % respectively in the present. While agriculture and horticulture have retained its 4th and 7th ranks respectively, shifting cultivation had stepped down from its 3rd rank to 5th rank indicating its decline from the position of a major traditional subsistence activity.

Besides that, the other heads, which have held their ranks consistently over period of time, are dress & ornaments (6th), rituals & festivals (8th), education & training (10th), treatment of diseases (12th) and rural industry (17th). However in percentage terms their share has changed nominally both on the

positive and negative side except that of rural industry, which has remained constant at 0.19 percent.

The study households are not only spending more on construction and improvement of their houses, they have also raised their expenditure for acquiring modern and durable assets. This has caused the upgradation of rank of the head for purchase of durable assets from 11th to 9th, while in its share has increased from 1.95 percent to 3.17 percent.

The data establishes a trend: the pattern of average annual expenditure of the Lanjia Saora study households have not changed much over the past decade. Yet signs of modernization is visible in increased spending on house construction and maintenance, acquisition of durable household assets, treatment of diseases, gift and exchange, education and training and fooding.

Conclusion

The fact remains that; traditionally their life depended upon balanced utilization of natural resources. This balance is disturbed by deforestation. As the things stand today, the situation looks grim but not worse.

Since generations the Saora have been living in their remote mountainous abode deriving subsistence from the resource bases of the hills and forests. Employing crude and labour intensive methods and a small number of simple implements they were satiating their small needs and making a bare minimum living. The main modes of living devised and adopted by them were swidden cultivation, hunting and food gathering. In those days, the nature's bounty was abundant and the population was small. So long as the hilltops and hill slopes were having verdant forest growth, the Saora were exploiting the hills and forests with mirth and furry and *bagado chas* was their way of life. Establishing small settlements nearer to the swidden fields was the practice; and moving the settlement site alongside moving into virgin swidden plots was the norm. As forests started receding swidden cultivation and forestry did not pay dividends and the Saora started preparing terraced fields for paddy cultivation. They learnt in a hard way that their age-old mode of subsistence would no longer sustain their growing population. They also sought alternatives in horticulture and seasonal migratory labour.

Experiencing the environmental hazards of deforestation on their livelihood pattern and culture, they have realized the indispensability of restoration of the degraded natural environment around their habitat for which they are willing to contribute their part actively by planting commercial as well as traditional species in their surroundings and degraded swiddens. This is a welcome trend and a positive sign. The popularity of cashew and other horticultural programmes bear testimony to that.

References:

- Behura, N. K. (1990), Shifting Cultivation- A cause of environmental degradation. *Adibasi*, Vol. XXX, No.4, pp.1-7.
- Chandrasekharan, K. S. (1983), Forest Policy and Tribal Development. *Adibasi*, Vol. XXII, No.3, pp. 16-31.
- Chowdhury, B., (1963-64), Saora. *Adibasi*, Vol. V, No. 3, pp 101-106.
- Das, H. C., (1965), Changing Economy of Saora Community. *Orissa Hist. Res. Jr.* Vol. XIII, No.4, pp. 39-42.
- Elwin, Verrier, (1955), *The Religion of an Indian Tribe*, Oxford, Bombay.
- Fernades, W & G. Menon, P. Viegas, (1988), *Forests, Environment and Tribal Economy*, New Delhi, Indian Social Institute.
- Govt of India, (1960), Report of the Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes Commission, Vol. I, pp. 145.
- Mohanty, S. C., (1992), Birinda – The Agnatic Lineage System of the Lanjia Saora, *Orissa Review*, Vol. XLVIII, No.6. pp 24-28.
- Ibid, (1993), Social Position and Property Rights of Kutia Kondh Women. *Adivasi*, Vol. XXXIII, No. 2, pp. 16-21.
- Mohapatra K. and K. B. Debi, (1973), Shifting Cultivation in Orissa. *Adibasi*, Vol. XIV, No.4, pp.11-28.
- Nayak, P. K. (1992), Micro-Perspective of the Changing Frontiers of Forest Dependent Economy: The Saora Experience, *Adivasi*, Vol.28, No.2, pp. 35-43.
- Patnaik, N. (1989) *The Saora*, (Popular Series on Tribes) THRTI, Bhubaneswar
- Roy Burman, B.K. (1982) *Report of the Committee on Forests and Tribals in India*
- Ibid, 1988, *Shifting Cultivation: A Closer Look*, New Delhi: IASSI (Unpublished) (Quoted by Behura, 1990:3).
- SCSTRTI, (2007), Conservation-cum Development (CCD) Plan for the PTGs of Orissa for the 11th Five-Year Plan for LSDA, Puttasing & LSDA, Serang, (Unpublished)
- Singh, Bhupinder (1984) *The Saora Highlanders*, Bombay, Somaiya Publication,

IMPACT OF DEFORESTATION ON PHYSICAL AND CHEMICAL NATURE OF SOILS IN TWO TRIBAL VILLAGE ECOSYSTEMS ON EASTERN GHATS OF ORISSA: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

*S. Jammi Naidu*¹

Abstract

This paper reports the degradation of physical properties and loss of soil nutrients due to deforestation and shifting cultivation in two tribal village ecosystems named Bidyadharapur (outside the forest) and Arakhapada (inside the forest) on Eastern Ghats in undivided Ganjam district of Orissa.

It also reveals the physical and chemical nature of soils at the mouth of a natural stream (at distance intervals of 100 meters) which takes its origin from the hilly slopes of Arakhapada (where shifting cultivation was practiced) and channelized to fall in the crop fields of Bidyadharapur.

Key Words:

Water holding capacity, texture, bulk density, porosity, particle density, P^H, total organic carbon, available potassium, organic matter, total Nitrogen available phosphorous, shifting cultivation fields, crop fields, village ecosystem, Lanjia Saora Tribe, Suddha Saora Tribe.

* Published in ADIVASI, Vol.45, No.1, SCSTRTI, 2005, pp.77-88

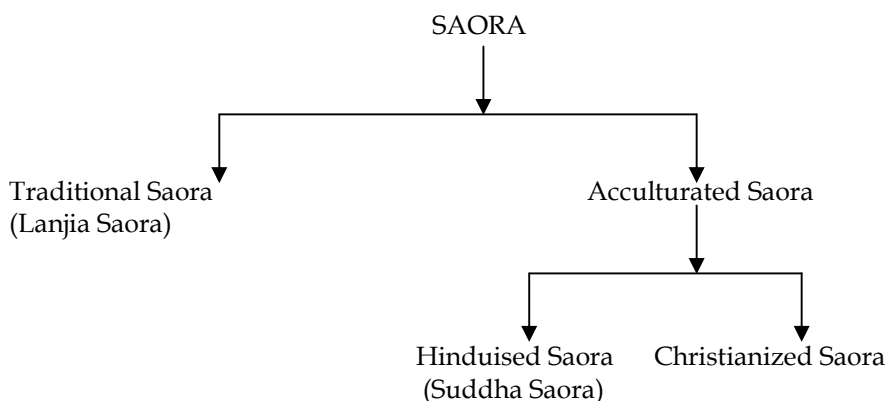
¹ Head of the Department, Zoology, Gunupur College, Gunpur, Odisha, 765002

Introduction:

A Tribal village along with its natural environment can be considered as an ecosystem (Nisanka and Misra 1990; Nayak et al 1993).

Arakhapada and Bidyadharpur villages lie at a distance of nearly two kilometers from each other. Arakhapada is situated in a forest environment on a higher altitude and Bidyadharpur is situated on plains outside the forest. A tribe called Lanjia Saora inhabit Arakhapada and Suddha Saora tribe in Bidyadharpur. The Lanjia Saora of Arakhapada village ecosystem practice shifting cultivation (on nearby hilly slopes) and cultivation on valley land, whereas the tribals of Bidyadhar practice only low land cultivation on plain lands.

According to Das and Patnaik (1984-85), the origin and relationship of Lanjia Saora and Suddha Saora is shown in the following table.



During heavy rains, the water current of a natural stream carries eroded soil along with the nutrients from the hilly slopes of shifting cultivation of Arakhapada to the paddy fields of Bidyadharpur.

Materials and Methods:

The natural environment of village Arakhapada is forest, whereas that of Bidyadharpur is plain crop lands, both of which are adjacent to each other. In order to study the impact of deforestation on the nature of soil, the physical and chemical analysis of soils from shifting cultivation fields, paddy fields, *ragi* fields and fallow lands of the two village ecosystems is shown in the appended tables.

In addition to this, in order to acquire knowledge on the impact of deforestation, shifting cultivation and soil erosion the physical and chemical nature of soils and their related crop productivity was studied. The soil

samples were taken at a distance interval of 100 meters up to 700 meters from the mouth of the natural stream in eight equal divisions (from 0-700 meters).

Soil samples were taken from triplicates and were thoroughly mixed and air dried. From each spot, two samples were taken: one from the top level and the other from 30cm bottom level by soil excavation. Then these soils were subjected to physical and chemical analysis in the laboratory.

- i. Soil of virgin forest floor near shifting cultivation field were collected which was designated as control, similarly soil samples of shifting cultivation fields after one year, two year and three year crop were also collected. These soils were collected only in Arakhapada village ecosystem.
- ii. Soil samples of paddy fields, ragi fields and fallow fields were collected from both the village ecosystems for analysis in the laboratory.

The physical and chemical properties of the soils are analyzed below.

Texture of 2 mm sieved soils (Mechanical analysis) was analyzed using a Bouyoucut hydrometer, a large measuring cylinder and a stirrer (Piper 1950, Widdell et al 1979). The maximum water holding capacity of the soils was determined by Circular Brass Method (Wilde et al 1979). Bulk Density, porosity and particular density of solids were determined following Wilde et al (1979). Soil P^H was determined with the help of a Glass-rod-electro P^H meter taking 1:2 soil water solution.

Organic carbon was determined by Walkley and Black method as discovered by Jackson (1967), soil organic matter was determined by loss of ignition method (Allen et al 1976).

Soil elements such as total nitrogen, available phosphorus and potassium were determined following Allen et al (1976). Available phosphorus was estimated colorimetrically by Molybdenum Blue Method using a C1-27 digital spectra photometer. Available potassium was extracted with the help of ammonium acetate and analysed with the help of a flame photometer. Total nitrogen was estimated by Kjeldahl Digestion Procedure (Allen et al 1976).

Results and Discussion:

Nutrient status of the cultivated fields & fallow lands:

The results of the physical analysis of the soils collected from different shifting cultivation and crop fields are depicted in **Table-01**.

It revealed that, the soil of the un burnt (control) field, that is the forest soil, was better in all respects, but after first year crop till the 3rd year, the soil gradually become infertile. Bottom soil (30 cm depth) was less affected than the

top soil. The water holding capacity of the shifting cultivated soils revealed that, it increased in first year and then decreased up to 3rd year. The textural analysis showed that, the sand percentage of the soil increased in shifting cultivation fields in both top and bottom. Silt and clay contents of both top and bottom soil decreased in percentage in shifting cultivation fields (*Table-01*).

The analysis of water holding capacity of the soil of agriculture fields, such as paddy, ragi and fallow land revealed that, it was more in Bidyadharpur than that of Arakhapada, the sand percentage of the soils was less; but clay and silt contents were more in Bidyadharpur than that of Arakhapada. Soil porosity percentage was more in Bidyadharpur; but the bulk density was almost similar in both the village (*Table-01*)

Table-02 shows the chemical properties of the soils of Bidyadharpur and Arakhapada villages including the shifting cultivation fields of Arakhapada. The P^H of the forest soil was almost neutral; but decreased after 1st year crop; but increased subsequently reaching almost neutral. The soils of the paddy andragi fields and fallow land were slightly alkaline. The soil PH was more than 7 except for Arakhapada paddy field top soil (*Table-02*)

Table-02 also shows that the quantity of total organic carbon, available phosphorus, organic matter, total nitrogen and available phosphorus is maximum (in both top soils and bottom soils) in the control shifting cultivation fields and the same gradually decreased from control to 1st year, 2nd year and 3rd year shifting cultivation fields. This reveals the fact that the virgin forest soil contains maximum quantity of soil nutrients. But due to the practice of shifting cultivation in the succeeding 1st, 2nd and 3rd years and because of soil erosion, the gradual decrease in soil nutrients comes to the picture.

If we observe the soil nutrients in paddy fields, *ragi* fields and fallow land (in table-02) of Bidyadharpur and Arakhapada in both top and bottom soils, the quantity of nutrients are more in the soils of Arakhapada (inside the forest) compared to that of Bidyadharpur (outside the forest). This may reveal the fact that the root-soil-complex system of the forest plants entraps the soil nutrients without giving any scope for soil erosion and loss of nutrients, which suggests one of the burning examples of impact of deforestation on the nature of soil and on the structure and functioning of the above two village ecosystems.

Table-03 shows the physical characteristics of the soil of the 8 sites. Textural analysis of the soil indicates that there was a little fluctuation in the sand silt & clay contents of the soils in all the sites. The water holding capacity of the mouth soil was maximum whereas other soils show no particular trend. No significant difference was observed in the bulk density, porosity and particle density of the soils collected from different segments.

Table-04 indicates the chemical properties of the soils. There was no remarkable change in the P^H of the soils at different segments. The quantity of organic matter, total organic carbon, available potassium, total nitrogen, available phosphorus is maximum at 0 (zero) meter segment and gradually declines if one proceeds through 100 m, 200 m, 300 m, 400 m, 500 m, 600 m, and 700 m segments (700 m segment being the minimum quantity of soil nutrients). This trend is applicable to both top and bottom sample-soils at each and every segment. This reveals the fact that, the soil nutrients of the eroded soils of shifting cultivation fields of Arakhapada are being carried by the water current of the natural stream and transported to the paddy fields of Bidyadharpur.

The gradual decline in the quantity of soil nutrients in the succeeding segments from the mouth (zero segment) of the stream may be due to the fact that, the silting quantity eroded soil particles rich in soil nutrients, gradually declines from zero meter segment to 700 meter segment, because of various physical phenomena like gravity of soil particles, resistance offered by the soil of paddy fields and decline in the speed of the water current. The cause of this declining pattern of soils nutrients may be due to deforestation, shifting cultivation, soil erosion and transport of these soil nutrients by the water current of the natural stream to the paddy fields of Bidyadharpur.

Table-05 reveals that the total above ground biomass of paddy and paddy grain productivity is maximum at zero segment (8.74 & 4.45 t dry wt. ha¹ respectively) and minimum at 700 meter segment. (1.37 and 0.43 t dry wt ha¹). This keeps a +ve correlation with the quantity of soil nutrients present in the above 0 to 700 m segments.

Conclusion:

1. Due to deforestation and shifting cultivation the quantity of soil nutrients gradually declined from control podu though 1st year, 2nd year and 3rd year *podu* fields.
2. The quantity of soil nutrients of crop fields (paddy field, *ragi* field) and fallow land are comparatively higher in Arakhapada village ecosystem than that of Bidyadharpur village ecosystem due to entrapping of soil nutrients by the root-soil-complex system of the forest plants.
3. Because of deforestation, shifting cultivation (*podu*), soil erosion and transport of soil particles rich in soil nutrients by the water current of the natural stream, there is quantitative declining pattern of soil nutrients from zero meter segment to 700 meter segment having similar +ve correlation with the quantity of paddy grain productivity and above ground biomass productivity of paddy plants in the corresponding segment (zero m to 700 m segments).

Acknowledgements:

1. The author is thankful to the people of Bidyadharpur and Arakhapada, for their whole hearted cooperation.
2. I express my deep sense of gratitude to Prof. (Dr) Malaya Kumar Mishra, D. Sc (H.C.) F.T.E, F.I.A.T., P.G. Dept. of Botany, Berhampur University, Berhampur-7, Dist. Ganjam, Orissa for his sincere guidance in this piece of research work.
3. The author also acknowledges the education and Youth Service Department, Govt. of Orissa, which accorded two years study leave for research (Ph.D) work on environment and forest.
4. I, acknowledge my gratefulness, to the Controller of Examination, Berhampur University, Berhampur, Dist-Ganjam, Orissa, for his permission to publish such articles in reputed journals (Letter No. 7076, Dt. 30.09.2000, Exam Confidential Section, Berhampur University).

References:

- Allen, S. E., H. M. Grimshaw, J. A. Parkinson, C. Guaraby and J.D. Roberts. 1976, *Chemical Analysis*, PP.411-466. In S. B. Chapman (ed) *Methods in Plant Ecology*. Black Well Scientific Publications, Oxford.
- Das, N. C. and P. K. Patnaik. 1984-85, Comparative Demographic Analysis between the Traditional and Hinduised Saora. *Adibasi*, 24: pp.18-24.
- Jackson, M. S. 1967. *Soil Chemical Analysis*. Prentice hall of India, New Delhi.
- Nayak, S. P., S. K. Nisanka and M. K. Mishra. 1993. Biomass and Energy Dynamics in a Tribal Village Ecosystem of Orissa, India. *Biomass and Bioenergy*, 4: pp.23-34.
- Nisanka, S. K. and M. K. Mishra. 1990, A Ecological study of an Indian village Ecosystem, Biomass Production and Consumption. *Biomass*. 23: pp.117-136.
- Piper, C. S. 1950, *Soil and Plant Analysis*. University Adelaide. Australia. Pp-368.
- Wilde, S. A., R. B. Corey, J. G. Gyer and G. K. Voight 1979. *Soil and Plant Analysis for Tree Culture* (5th Edn.) Oxford and IBH.

Table-1
Physical Analysis of Soils Collected from Different Agricultural Fields of Arakhapada and Bidyadharpur

Sites	Water holding capacity (%)		Texture						Bulk Density		Porosity (%)		Particle density	
	T	B	T	B	T	B	T	B	T	B	T	B	T	B
Shifting Cultivation Fields														
Control unburnt	45.4	49.0	65.6	60.6	19.0	20.0	15.3	19.3	1.28	1.29	40.34	38.83	2.66	2.59
1 st Year	50.0	46.8	74.3	63.6	15.0	19.0	10.6	17.3	1.23	1.47	42.00	35.26	2.56	3.05
2 nd Year	47.5	47.2	68.6	67.3	16.0	16.0	15.3	16.6	1.25	1.29	39.97	37.28	2.51	2.28
3 rd Year	31.1	37.7	82.0	79.0	9.0	7.0	8.9	13.9	1.42	1.40	31.32	32.25	2.60	2.59
Crop fields														
Paddy Field														
Bidyadharpur	54.6	50.3	50.0	44.0	16.0	13.0	33.9	42.9	1.25	1.26	38.69	39.3	2.43	2.51
Arakhapada	41.1	42.5	73.6	75.3	9.0	6.0	17.3	18.6	1.29	1.35	35.51	34.27	2.39	2.53
Ragi Field														
Bidyadharpur	40.8	47.7	67.0	53.6	8.0	10.0	24.9	36.9	1.49	1.32	34.41	33.44	2.86	2.39
Arakhapada	37.9	46.4	77.3	54.0	6.0	12.0	16.6	33.9	1.45	1.32	29.51	37.14	2.54	2.62
Fallow Field														
Bidyadharpur	48.4	48.0	62.6	58.6	10.0	13.0	27.3	28.3	1.23	1.29	41.44	39.19	2.53	2.62
Arakhapada	44.0	33.8	69.6	50.6	9.0	10.0	21.3	39.3	1.31	1.29	32.75	37.41	2.31	2.50

SC=Shifting Cultivation control is the forest soil not subjected to *podu* in the near past, T=Top, B=Bottom (30 cm.)

Table-2
Chemical Analysis of Soils Collected from Different Agricultural Fields of Arakhapada and Bidyadharpur

Sites	pH		Total organic carbon (percent)		Available Potassium (kg/ha)		Organic matter (percent)		Total nitrogen (percent)			Available Phosphorous (kg/ha)		
	T	B	T	B	T	B	T	B	T	B	T	T	B	B
Shifting Cultivation Fields														
Control unburnt	6.82	6.67	2.47	1.16	3.15	126	4.26	2.00	0.247	0.116	49.44	23.22	17.00	13.00
1 st Year	6.54	6.76	1.92	1.14	279	100	3.31	1.97	0.192	0.114	38.38	22.90	7.00	4.95
2 nd Year	6.70	6.85	1.69	0.74	200	87	2.92	1.28	0.169	0.074	33.38	14.90	6.90	4.00
3 rd Year	7.05	6.69	1.13	0.58	147	77	1.94	1.01	0.113	0.058	22.52	11.68	4.90	3.00
<i>Crop fields</i>														
Paddy Field														
Bidyadharpur	7.30	7.89	0.80	0.28	105	52	1.39	0.48	0.081	0.028	16.12	5.54	11.50	3.50
Arakhapada	6.53	7.29	1.43	0.63	158	82	2.46	1.08	0.143	0.063	28.60	12.56	33.50	11.00
Ragi Field														
Bidyadharpur	7.95	7.63	0.34	0.12	134	82	0.59	0.21	0.034	0.012	6.83	2.50	5.40	10.80
Arakhapada	7.15	8.17	0.55	0.30	265	390	0.94	0.52	0.055	0.030	10.98	6.08	15.40	26.80
Fallow Field														
Bidyadharpur	7.61	7.65	0.45	0.19	111	62	0.78	0.33	0.045	0.019	9.10	3.89	4.80	6.80
Arakhapada	8.19	8.17	0.65	0.30	130	76	1.12	0.52	0.065	0.030	13.00	6.06	18.00	17.00

Control is the forest soil not subjected to *podu* in the near past. SC=Shifting Cultivation, T=Top, B=Bottom (30 cm. depth)

Table-3
Physical Analysis of the Soil Collected from the Crop Fields from the Mouth of the Stream at 100 m interval located at Bidyadharpur

Distance (m)	Texture						Water holding capacity			Bulk Density		Porosity		Particle Density	
	Sand		Silt		Clay		T	B		T	B	T	B	T	B
	T	B	T	B	T	B									
0	47	53	26	16	27	31	56.4	63.8		1.30	1.26	39.4	45.2	2.68	2.95
100	63	59	14	16	23	25	48.5	48.1		1.35	1.31	36.7	39.3	2.70	2.70
200	51	59	14	8	35	33	54.8	60.4		1.39	1.37	30.7	36.4	2.44	2.75
300	65	65	8	8	27	27	48.0	47.5		1.30	1.40	43.3	35.6	2.97	2.80
400	53	53	16	10	31	37	52.7	64.3		1.30	1.42	39.6	33.3	2.68	2.70
500	53	54	17	14	30	32	50.9	60.9		1.30	1.31	36.3	36.6	2.68	2.76
600	56	58	16	12	28	30	49.3	56.8		1.33	1.35	38.0	37.9	2.69	2.78
700	59	61	14	11	27	28	47.6	52.7		1.36	1.39	39.6	39.3	2.70	2.80

Table-4
Chemical analysis of the soils collected from the crop fields from the mouth of the stream at 100 m interval located at Bidyadharpur

Distance (m)	pH			Organic matter %			Total organic carbon %			Available potassium (kg Ha ⁻¹)			Total nitrogen (kg ha ⁻¹)			Available phosphorus (kg ha ⁻¹)		
	T	B		T	B		T	B		T	B		Percent	T	B		Ppm	
0	7.6	7.2		3.79	2.12		2.20	1.23		177.5	122.5		.220	.123		20.0	20.0	40.0
100	7.4	7.3		2.04	1.12		1.18	0.65		102.5	102.5		.118	.065		19.0	12.0	24.0
200	6.8	7.3		1.98	0.69		1.15	0.40		92.5	97.5		.115	.040		12.0	7.0	14.0
300	6.3	6.9		1.82	0.59		1.06	0.34		82.5	70.0		.106	.034		02.0	4.8	9.6
400	7.2	7.4		1.41	0.56		0.82	0.32		72.5	65.0		.082	.030		1.6	2.0	4.0
500	6.8	5.8		1.35	.46		.78	.27		64.5	60.0		.078	.027		1.4	1.8	3.6
600	6.8	6.8		1.59	0.41		.69	.24		58.5	57.0		.069	.024		1.2	1.6	3.2
700	6.8	6.8		.78	.38		.45	.22		54.5	54.0		.045	.022		1.1	1.4	2.8

Table-5

Above Ground Biomass of Paddy Grown in the Fields which received Eroded and Transported Soil in Bidyadharpur Village Ecosystem at 100 meters interval.

T dry wt ha⁻¹

Distance (m)	Grain	Straw	Residue	Total biomass
0	4.448	3.601	0.424	8.473
100	2.367	3.314	1.420	7.101
200	2.704	2.124	0.483	5.311
300	1.62	1.134	0.324	3.078
400	1.345	1.345	0.374	3.064
500	0.550	0.756	0.206	1.512
600	0.419	0.702	0.336	1.457
700	0.428	0.623	0.320	1.371

STUDY OF DROPOUTS AMONG TRIBAL CHILDREN

(Case Studies of two High Schools in Gajapati District) *

*Sarat Ch. Mohanty*¹

(I)

Introduction

Educational status of the Scheduled Tribes in Orissa depicts a dismal picture although a lot of money is spent in this sector. Ashram Schools, Girls Hostels, Ekalavya Model Residential Schools, +2 Colleges have been established in the tribal areas. In these schools facilities like free lodging, boarding and other provisions are given to tribal children to pursue their studies. But inspite of these facilities all the students who take admission in these schools do not continue to complete their studies. Some of them dropout before completing the course.

Dropout is a major problem that hinders the progress of tribal education. It is a matter of concern and needs serious attention. Several factors, such as social-cultural, economic, educational, linguistic, regional, administrative and the like are responsible for this state of affairs.

To assess the situation of dropouts, a study was undertaken by SC & ST & RTI during the year 1999. Two High Schools, one Boys High School and one Girls High School, running under ST and SC Development Department in the remote Tribal Sub Plan (TSP) area of South Orissa were selected for the study. The Boys High School is located at Badakalakote and the Girls High School named Guma Girls High School is located at Krushna Chandrapur (K.C. Pur). Both the schools come under Guma block and Serango Police Station in Gajapati district.

* Published in ADIVASI, Vol. XXXXX, Nos. 1&2, 2010, pp. 150-91

¹ Deputy Director, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar.

For collection of relevant primary data from different sources four sets of schedules were administered. One schedule was used for eliciting information on the educational institution. Other schedules focused on the teachers, the dropout children and the parents of dropouts. The findings have been presented in the following chapters.

(II)

The Schools Studied: Functioning and Problems

From the district headquarters at Paralakhemundi, the Guma Girls High School and the Badakalakote High School lie at distances of 25 kms and 32 kms respectively. Both the schools are accessible from Paralakhemundi by all weather *pucca* road with private bus communication.

Guma Girls High School is situated at the village Krushnachandrapur but not at Gumma. But Badakalakote school lies in the Badakalakote village. Both the schools are situated on the village outskirts. Being located by the side of the road. They are easily accessible. The block headquarters, local market centers, health centers are available within a radius of 4 kms of these schools.

Both the schools are residential admitting boarders and day scholars.

1. BADAKALAKOTE GOVERNMENT HIGH SCHOOL

This school was established in 1971 as a Residential Sevashram. It was upgraded to Ashram School in 1982 and then to High School in 1988. It received recognition as such in 1990. Its campus covers an area of 9.02 Ac., which have been recorded in the name of the institution. The sanctioned strength of teaching and non-teaching staff is 15 and of class IV staff is 5.

It is a residential co-education school running in its own *pucca* building. There is only one room in the main school building, which have been partitioned for use as Headmasters chamber, office and teachers common room. It is inadequate to serve any of the purposes. Facilities like teacher's common room, student's common room, library and room for playing indoor games do not exist. Of the remaining rooms seven are used as classrooms for class IV to X one each as science laboratory and storeroom respectively. The school campus is enclosed within boundary walls.

The school is electrified. Two wells and one tube well comprise the water sources, one of which is presently out of order. The school has no latrine but one urinal commonly used by the students and the staff.

The school provides vocational training in such trades as tailoring, carpentry and agriculture. For want of accommodation no separate workshops have been set up. The equipments have been kept in the storeroom.

A small garden raised in an area of 1.5 Acs inside the campus is enclosed by green fencing. It has fruit bearing trees like cashew, coconut, lemon, guava, mango, jackfruit, papaya, drumstick, banana etc and flower plants like rose, zinnia, dahlia, marigold, etc. Cultivation of vegetables, like brinjal, beans, radish, cauliflower, ladies finger, pumpkin, cucumber, sweet potato, green leaves, tomato, chilies etc. have been taken up. The fruit and vegetable produce of the garden partly supplements the diet of the boarders.

The school has a library with a total collection of 1187 books consisting of 20 reference books, 1130 Oriya books, 36 Hindi books and 1 English book and few magazines and news papers. But there is no separate room earmarked for library and reading room for the students.

Some indoor and outdoor game articles such as volleyball, football, cricket, javelin, short foot, discus, carom board, ludoo, chess are available. Except the indoor game articles, which are in bad condition the outdoor game articles are used by the students.

The school has a science laboratory containing apparatuses like optical instruments, measuring cylinders, different varieties of flasks, physical balance, thermometer, pinhole camera, barometer, tuning fork, electrical equipments, solar lamp, solar cooker, petrol engine, dissecting box etc. These are used while teaching science to the students.

Students are supposed to be provided with reading and writing materials and stipend. But there is no regularity in receiving the same. During the year 1998-99 the D.W.O., Gajapati district had supplied reading materials such as 230 nos. of course books, which were distributed among 180 students. No writing materials were supplied during the year.

As regards stipend, the prescribed rate was Rs.200/- P.M. per student boarder in 1998-99. A total allotment of Rs.3, 69,000/- was received during that year for 180 boarders to meet the cost of fooding, clothing and medicines. However, a sum of Rs.10/- deducted every month from the stipend amount of each student for ten months and kept separately to be utilized for purchase of a pair of dress. Students and parents say that this meager amount of 100/- is quite inadequate to meet the cost of cloth and stitching charges for a pair of dress, which costs between Rs.200/- to Rs.300/- at the present market price. Hence the parents spend the balance from their pockets to make up the deficit.

Govt. in ST&SC Development Department provides stipend only to the boarders. Recently considering the plight of the day scholars, the local block office is providing a token annual stipend @Rs.100/- and Rs150/- for boys and girls respectively for those reading in class 6th and 7th and @Rs.150/- and Rs.200/- for the boys and girls respectively reading in class 8th, 9th and 10th. No stipend is given to the day scholars of 4th and 5th classes.

During 1998-99 the school availed 126 days as annual holidays and 5 non-working days. It also observed two festivals such as Ganesh Pooja and Saraswati Pooja.

Late coming of students to schools after enjoying the holidays is also observed. Last year (98-99) during *puja* holidays, 67 ST boys and 9 ST girls and during 'X' mas holidays 117 ST boys and 19 ST girls came late by one day. The major reason of higher rate of late coming during 'X' mas holidays is that they help their parents for harvesting crops. Students remain absent from school for various reasons. Important among them are teachers' conduct, health problems of the student and their family members, participation in socio-religious ceremonies, festivals and rituals, language barriers, fear of examination, assistance to parents in economic and domestic activities and taking care of babies when parents are working outdoors.

(i) Students' Attendance Pattern:

To find this pattern, data analysis has been made covering all the classes i.e. from class-IV to class X for the year 1998-99.

Class IV:

The total student strength in class IV is 38 comprising 33 boys and 5 girls. Among them except one SC and one OC girl, all other (36) belongs to ST category. The school has remained closed for summer vacation during May and June. It opened the session in July. In this month 25 ST students have registered full attendance for all the 23 students including one each SC and OC student have registered attendance varying from the lowest of 3 days to the highest of 22 days. This variation of attendance is the outcomes of different dates of their admission into the class, since this month is the admission month.

In the month of August, only 6 students all of whom belong to ST category have shown irregular attendance varying between 15 days and 21 days as against the total working days of 27.

During September the cases of irregular attendance has come down to 3, which includes 2 ST students and one OC student. The deviation is between 6 to 19 days. The month of October had only 14 working days as it covered a part of the Puja holidays. In this month all students have full attendance.

For November the cases of irregular attendance have remained 4. Among them one is an OC girl and rest 3 are ST students. But their period of absence is between 1 & 2 days.

The number of working days in December had come down to 16 for 'X' mass holidays. During this month only 3 students (2 ST+1 OC) did not have full attendance. Their period of absence was between one day and seven days.

There were 22 working days in January. In this month not a single student registered full attendance. Their period of absence was from 7 to 8 days. This has happened due to late coming to school on its reopening after 'X' mass holidays. This time being the time of crop harvesting the boys and girls used to overstay at home for helping their parents.

In February 11 students had irregular attendance that varied from 1 day to 8 days. The principal reason as indicated above is the crop harvest.

During March the cases of irregular attendance were 8. The highest absentee was for 19 days and the lowest, one day.

The number of defaulters in April was 14, which included one OC girl. Their period of absence varied between 1 day and 14 days. The month marked the closure of the educational session.

To sum up the highest default in regular attendance of the class IV students is noticed in January, which is the time of 'X' mass holidays and crop harvest. The lowest default is reported in September. October is the month of no default in which all students have registered full attendance.

Class V:

The class had 29 students in the roll. Among them 3 are girls of whom one is SC and 2 are OC. The rest 26 are boys belonging to ST category.

Following the trend noticed in class IV the highest irregular attendance is noticed in this Class in the month of January when none of students reported full attendance probably because their parents needed their help for crop harvesting. This is followed by the month of July with 17 cases of irregular attendance (as it is the admission month) and then by month of February with 11 cases of default, by August with 9 cases, by March and April with 8 cases each, October with 7 cases and September with 6 cases. The lowest irregular attendance is found in November and December when only 3 students in each month did not register up-to date attendance in the class.

Class VI:

In this class there are total 90 students in the roll. Of them 88 are ST (85 boys and 3 girls), 1 is a SC girl and the remaining one is an OC boy.

In continuance of the earlier trend, the highest default in attendance is noticed in the crop harvesting month of January with cent percent default, followed by July (70 cases) February (65 cases), November (57 cases), March (56 cases), April (49 cases), August (46 cases) October (39 cases) December (34 cases), and September (28 cases).

Class VII:

A total number of 56 students (52 boys and 4 girls) had enrolled in this class. Except 1 SC girl and 1 OC boy rest 54 belong to ST category.

The trend of cent percent cases of irregular attendance occurred in the month of January. Incidences of default in the descending order is followed by February and March (37 cases each), November and April (33 cases each), July (27 cases) and the lowest incidence is reported in September where only 24 students have failed to register full attendance.

Class VIII:

Among total 53 students of this class 46 are boys and 7 are girls. Category wise break up shows 51 ST students (45 boys and 6 girls), 1 SC student (girl) and 1 OC student (boy).

Slight deviation in the earlier trend of cent percent cases of attendance default is observed in the January for this class. During October 43 out of total 53 students have defaulted. Yet it is the highest number as compared to those of other months. The next higher default months are July (32 cases) and April (30 cases). During March, February, November, August and September the default cases remained within the range of 22-26. Lower incidence has been registered during December and October when it remained below 20.

Class IX:

There are total 35 students comprising 33 boys and 2 girls. All of them belong to ST.

Conforming to the trend, all the students have shown irregular attendance in the harvesting month of January, followed by February (22 cases), April the closing month of the session (19 cases) and July the admission month (18 cases). For the month of August, November, December and March the number of cases of irregular attendance ranged from 14 to 16. The lowest incidence i.e. 8 cases of irregularity have been reported in October.

Class X:

This class has 31 students i.e., 27 boys and 4 girls. Among the boys 3 are SC and the rest, ST. All the girl students are also from the ST category.

The previous established trend of higher incidence of irregular attendance in the harvesting months of January and February seems to have been deviated by the students of this class. Because of the burden of studies for appearing at the H.S.C. Board Exam only small number of students has defaulted in attendance. The highest cases of default are found in the month of February (12 students) and the lowest, in September (3 students).

(ii) Assets and Facilities required to attract Tribal Students:

The matter was discussed with the students and teachers of the school. In their opinion modern audio-visual gadgets like, T.V., Tape Recorder, Radio, Video Player, etc. should be provided. There is also need for musical instruments, modern games articles etc. besides certain facilities like play ground, septic latrine and transport. In their opinion such provisions will go a long way in attracting larger number of tribal children to the school.

(iii) Common Diseases affecting the Students:

Diseases like diarrhea, dysentery chicken pox, malaria, common cold, influenza, viral fever and skin diseases usually affect the school students. During their illness they are treated in the local Primary Health Center at Gumma.

(iv) Staff Position:

The sanctioned strength of 15 teaching staff comprising of 1 Headmaster 4 trained Graduates teachers, 4 Matric C.T. teachers, 2 Classical teachers (one for Sanskrit and one for Hindi) 3 Sectional teachers and 1 PET is in position, at the time of study. Regarding the non-teaching staff one post of junior clerk is lying vacant after the transfer of the last incumbent. There is 5 regular class IV staff including 1 Daftary and 4 Attendants all of whom are in position. Besides two temporary classes IV staff designated as Attendant-cum-Cook are working for the school hostel.

(v) Hostel:

This High School being a residential one is attached with a hostel for boys. Like the school building, the hostel building is *pucca* with asbestos roofing. There are total 6 rooms of which 4 are used for accommodating students and one is a storeroom and remaining one is kitchen. It may be noted here that, there is no room for the teacher in charge of the hostel and no common room for the boarders. Because of shortage of rooms students are not always accommodated single class wise. In one room class VI students are accommodated. In another room class IV and class V students are accommodated. Class VII and Class VIII students live in one room. For class IX and class X students one room has been provided.

The hostel is electrified. There is one well and one tube well inside the campus to supply drinking water. The tube well needs repair. No latrine and urinal facilities are available for the boarders.

The sanctioned strength of boarders in the hostel is 180, which have been filled up at the time of study.

As regards the daily routine for boarders it starts at 5 A.M. and ends at 10 P.M. They get up at 5 A.M., finish their morning ablutions and prayer by 6 A.M., attend gardening between 6.15 A.M. to 7 A.M. and take up studies till 9.30 A.M. By 10 A.M. they finish their morning meals and go to school to attend prayer class and lessons thereafter. The school hours end at 4 P.M. then play time starts. After the play they come back to the hostel at 5.30 P.M. to say their evening prayers. The study hours in the evening begin at 6 P.M. and ends by 9 P.M. after which they take their night meal by 10 P.M. and go to bed.

1. GOVT. GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL, GUMMA (At Krushnachandrapur)

The school is located on the side of road leading to Gumma from the district headquarters, Paralkhemundi. It lies in the area of the village named Krushnachandrapur (K.C.Pur) coming under the jurisdiction of Serango Police station and Gumma block and Grampanchayat. It's nearest market center and primary health center is at Gumma lying at a distance of 3 kms. District headquarters is 25 kms away from the school.

The school started as a Kanyashram since 1984 to provide teaching facilities to girl students from class 1 to class VII. In 1988 it was upgraded to girls high School with teaching provisions from class IV to Class X.

Girl students from far-off places like Koithapadar (Rayagada district) Jerango, Attarsing (R.Udayagiri), Pottar (Ramgiri), Jhullasahi, Likarsing, Jangajang, Mandalsahi, Budisila, Baragar, Bettarsing, Munising, etc situated within a radius of 100 kms.

The school is residential and functioning in its own building, enclosed within a compound wall. It is interesting to note that though the school has two separate buildings, both are constructed for hostel and there is no building for accommodating classroom and office. Hence a part of one of the hostel building is being used to hold classes and the office in which the Headmistress and the clerk are sitting. As such there is no teachers' common room, students' common room, library room and room for playing indoors games. The science lab and the store have been accommodated in one room in each case and another seven rooms are used for holding classes from class IV to class X.

No latrine is present in the school except one common urinal, which is presently not in a useable condition. To meet the water supply requirements of the students and staff living inside the school, there are two wells and three tube wells installed within the campus.

The school has provisions for vocational training in tailoring and embroidery, music and agriculture. After the retirement of the music teacher, the vacancy has not been filled up and therefore music classes are suspended.

A small kitchen garden has been raised within the campus in which different varieties of fruits, flowers and vegetable plants have been cultivated.

The library contains 931 books of which 2 are English, 10 are Hindi and the rest 919 are Oriya. It is also a regular subscriber of the Oriya daily, Sambad. These books are temporarily issued to the students of different classes between 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Games and sports facilities are available for ring ball, carom, ludo, volleyball, badminton, *kabadi* and *kho-kho*. The Physical Education teacher looks after the sports training activities of the students.

The school has limited science apparatus, maps and charts to aid in teaching science to the students. These include petrol engine, barometer, flasks, test tubes, beakers, magnets, mirrors, lenses, microscope, physical balances, spring balances, model telephone and camera, various salts and chemicals, human skeleton, anatomical models, maps, charts, globes etc. The science teacher stated that some of the articles are damaged and need replacement.

The holiday pattern of the school as observed during the session 1998-99 indicates that 95 days were holidays besides 19 non working days. The school has conducted excursion for a groups of 70 students who visited places like Puri, Konark and Nandankanan during 1996-97. Since then no excursion has been held for want of funds and other requirements.

In the school festivals and national days like Independence Day, Republic day, Utkal divas, Thakkar Bapa Jayanti, Guru divas, Ganesh Puja and Saraswati Puja are observed.

Various causes for the students' absence from the school are teacher's conduct, sickness, rituals, fear of examination and family problems. This was gathered in course of discussion with the students and teachers.

(i) Stipend and other provisions for students:

The ST and SC Development Department of the State Govt. provides allotment of funds from time to time to the school for the purpose of disbursement of stipend and other provision to the students. During the year 1998-99 the total amount of allotment received by the school for this purpose was Rs.4, 05,000/- of which rs.3, 86,574/- was utilized and the unspent balance of Rs.18, 426/- was surrendered.

The stipulated amount of stipend per student during the year 1998-99 was rs.225/- per month, which have been raised to Rs.325/- p.m. from the current session (1999-2000). This amount is linked with the attendance of the students. Students reporting full attendance in a month are entitled to get the full amount. For the students short of attendance the amount is proportionately reduced depending on the number of days they have attended the school. This

amount is due to each student for 10 months in a session excluding the two months during which the school remains closed for summer vacation.

Out of this stipend amount of Rs.225/-, Rs.10/- is kept apart for providing a pair of school uniforms to each student. For ten months this amount becomes Rs.100/-, which is paid to each student for buying the school uniform. At the present market rates this amount is not sufficient for the purpose. So the parents bear the difference from their own pocket.

The remaining amount of stipend is spent for providing two principal meals and other requirements like medicines, toilet items, cosmetics etc. to the students. The provision being meager the students say, they always bring some extra money from their parents to meet the deficit.

(ii) Health and Hygiene:

As the school is located in a backward hilly area with inhospitable climate and also have inadequate sanitary facilities, the students remain susceptible to many diseases like malaria, jaundice, typhoid, viral fever, and gastro-enteric disorders, common cold, scabies, itches etc. Sick students go to the nearby Primary Health Center at Gumma for treatment.

(iii) Staffing Pattern:

The staffing pattern of this residential school comprises both teaching and non-teaching staff. The sanctioned strength of teaching staff is 15 which include one Headmistress, 4 trained graduate teachers (TGT), 4 Matric CT teachers, one I.A. C.T. teacher, one Sanskrit teacher, one Hindi teacher, one PET, one Tailoring teacher and one Music teacher. All positions are filled up except that of the Music teacher. The present strength of teaching faculty is 14 as against the sanctioned strength of 15.

As regards the non-teaching staff there is one clerk and four class IV staff engaged in the school and the hostel.

(iv) Facilities required for attracting students:

Suggestions received from teachers and students in this regard are outlined below.

1. Adequate provisions for reading and writing materials, dress, food, medicines, etc. for the students.
2. Regular organization of parent-teacher-student meet to generate awareness about the utility of education.
3. Recruitment of dedicated and meritorious scholars as teachers to improve the standard of teaching.
4. Regular provisions for imparting orientation training to the teachers on tribal language and culture.

5. Adequate facilities for vocational training, games and sports.

(v) Students Attendance Pattern:

The information as collected from the school records for the education year 1998-99 have been summarized class-wise and month wise in the table 2.1. The overall situation indicated that the Girl students of this school have shown better attendance than that of the students of Badakalakote High School, whose case have been presented earlier. There is a marked departure in this school in the trend of irregular attendance during crop harvesting months of December, January and February noticed in case of the students of Badakalakote High School. The girl students of this school have clearly deviated from this trend and registered better attendance in these months. As regards the trend of irregular attendance in the admission month of July as observed among the students of Badakalakote High School, the same is also noticed here. The number of cases of attendance default is cent percent in case of the students of class IV class V, class VI class VII and class X in this month. For the remaining two classes, class VIII and class IX only 2 out of total 21 students and only 1 out of total 15 students respectively have reported regular attendance.

The class wise analysis shows that among the students of all the classes the students of class IX have registered the highest, cent percent regular attendance in all the months except July and January in which 2 and 15 students respectively have defaulted. On the other side some of the students of class IV and class VI have recorded irregular attendance in all the months.

(vi) Hostel:

The school hostel occupies 9 rooms of which one each is used for kitchen and store and the remaining 7 accommodate the boarders. It is electrified. For water supply, there are 2 wells and 3 tube wells inside the campus. Latrines and urinals are provided for the boarders.

The daily routine of boarders starts at 5 a.m. in the morning when they get up. By 6 a.m. they finish their morning ablutions and Morning Prayer. They take up gardening between 6 a.m. to 6.30 a.m. Morning study hour is observed from 6.30 a.m. to 9 a.m. The morning meal is served between 9.10 a.m. to 10 a.m. Then they dress up to attend classes at 10.30 a.m. The classes close by 4 p.m. 4.30 p.m. to 5.30 p.m. is their playtime. 6 p.m. is the time of evening prayer. Their evening study hour is from 6.30 p.m. to 9 p.m. At 9.30 p.m. evening meal is served to them and they go to bed by 10.30 p.m.

(III) Dropout Situation

It is a well-known fact that the chronic problem dropout hinders the progress of tribal education. Dropout takes place when a student abandons his/her studies before completing the course successfully. It is like a traveler lost midway before reaching the destination. This phenomenon is noticed in the schools functioning in the tribal areas. The two schools covered under the present study are no exception to this trend.

The basic purpose of this study was to look into the problem of tribal dropouts. The data reveals that the trend of dropout of tribal students is noticed in all the classes in varying degrees between 0 to 66 percent in both the schools.

Further analysis of data shows that dropout takes place in two different phases-(i) within the session and (ii) at the end of the session. A student enrolled in a particular class may leave the school anytime before the annual examination. Such cases may be categorized as **Intra Session Dropouts**. Then there are cases of students who failed in the annual exam for reasons like non-appearance in the exam or failure to secure the minimum pass marks in the exam. The existing rules do not allow these failed students a second chance. That is to say they are not allowed to get the stipend and continue as boarders in the residential school to read again in the same class. These unsuccessful students automatically dropout as their poor parents hardly have the means to finance their studies in the same class for the second time. These kinds of dropouts, occurring in the pre and post annual exam phases, may be categorized as **End Session Dropouts**.

The dropout data for all the classes in respect of the two schools studied have been presented separately in Table 3.1 and 3.2. The data have been arranged in a particular manner to facilitate a two-dimensional i.e. vertical and horizontal analysis of facts and to see if it leads to corresponding vertical and horizontal patterns. The dropout rate has been calculated against the class enrolment figures.

(A) INTRA-CLASS DROPOUTS (VERTICAL PATTERN)

The vertical pattern involves calculation of individual class wise dropouts with reference to the total number of students enrolled in each class during a particular educational session. The total drop out figure for the class is arrived at by adding up the number of **Intra Session Dropouts** and **End Session Dropouts**. Leaving behind these dropouts the remaining students continue their study regularly, appear the annual examination and successfully pass the examination to get promoted to the next higher class.

Gumma Girls high School (Ref. Table 3.1)

It is evident from the data appearing in table 3.1 that a total number of 16 tribal girl students enrolled in class IV in 1992-93. One of them (6.25) dropped out at the end of the session (End Session Dropout) and the remaining 15 appeared at the annual examination, passed successfully and were promoted to the next higher class i.e. class V for the next session (1993-94).

In class V the total number of S.T. students was 18 during the session 1993-94. Among them 15 came by promotion from class IV and the remaining 3 were new entrants who took admission in class in that year. Remarkably there was not a single dropout among them and all of them successfully cleared the annual class promotion exam to enter into class VI in the following session.

During the next 1994-95 session of class VI, with the above existing class promoted 18 students joined a large batch of 30 new ST students raising the total strength of students in the class to 48. But many of them did not fare well. The large enrolment was followed by large dropouts. 20 (41.67%) students left within the session (Intra Session Dropouts) and another 12 (25%) ended up at the end of the session (End Session Dropouts) for their failure in the class promotion exam. Thus out of total 48 students of class VI in 1994-95 as many as 32 (66.67%) i.e. two third of them dropped out and the rest 16 graduated into the next higher class i.e. class VII for the next session (1995-96).

For the next year's session (1995-96) of class VII the total number of ST students enrolled were 19 including the 16 old students coming up from previous year class VI and 3 newly admitted students. Unlike that of preceding year's class VI, the dropout rate in this class remained low at only 21.05 percent. Interestingly, all the 4 students who abandoned their studies were only End Session Dropouts who failed to clear the annual class promotion examination and there was no Intra Session Dropout. Thus there remained 15 students who successfully made their way into next years (1996-97) class VIII.

In 1996-97 a large group of 20 new ST students took admission in class VIII and shared the class with the 15 old students who had graduated from the lower class. The total student strength in the class rose to 35. But incidences of dropouts were less i.e. only 5 (14.28%) cases of Intra-Session Dropouts and another 5 (14.28%) cases of End Session Dropouts reported, making a total dropout rate of 26.57 per cent. The rest of 25 students were successfully promoted to the next higher class (class IX) for the following year (1997-98).

A newly enrolled ST student joined with 25 old students in class IX for the session (1997-98). Of the total 26 students 7(26.92%) gave up their studies in different phases and the remaining 19 passed to class X for the succeeding session (1998-99). The 7 dropouts included 2 (7.69%) "Intra-session Dropouts" and 5(19.23%) "End Session Dropouts".

For class X during the next year -1998-99, there was no new entries and the 19 old students promoted from previous years class IX continued. Only one of them (5.26%) left in the mid session because she failed to clear the test exam. to qualify for her appearance in the forth coming HSC Board Examination.

The rest 18 students appeared in the HSC Board Examination 1998-99. Only 6 of them (33.33%) could pass out and the remaining 12 (66.67%) failed. This pass rate in HSC Examination (33.33%) matches with the corresponding figures (33.48%) for the students of Welfare Department schools in the State in 1998-99. However, the dropout rates for class VIII in 1996-97 (28.57%), class IX in 1997-98 (26.92%) and class X in 1998-99 (5.26%) remained lower than the corresponding rates for same classes for the same year in respect of Welfare Department schools of the state which has been recorded as 44.39 percent, 50.53 percent respectively which is undoubtedly a positive sign.

To make a ranking of classes in order of the rate of dropout, class VI with 66.67 percent dropout remains at the top, followed by class VIII (28.57%) class IX (26.92%) and class VII (21.05%). That means, except the case of class VI which has the highest rate of dropout the rate exceeding more than 50% the dropout rate remained between 20-30 percent for next three higher classes such as class VII, VIII and IX. In case of the first and the last classes i.e. class IV and X the dropout rate falls below 10 percent i.e. 6.25 percent and 5.26 percent respectively. This leaves only one class V that has come out with flying colours without having any dropout. These facts establish a pattern that dropout rate is the lowest in the primary level (class IV.V), highest at the M.E. level (class VI & VII) and moderate at the higher level (class VIII, IX, X).

Further analysis of the breakup of phase wise dropout rates under the dichotomy of Intra Session and End Session categories reveal that, both the highest Intra Session and End Session Dropouts have occurred in class VI i.e. 41.67 percent and 25.0 percent respectively which tops the list among all classes for total dropouts. Intra-Session Dropout is found only in other three higher classes-class VIII, IX and X which is less than 15 percent (14.28%, 7.69% and 5.26% respectively). It shows a diminishing trend from class VIII to IX. It is important to note that no Intra Session Dropout is found in three lower classes i.e. class IV, V, VI and VII.

Following the largest End Session Dropout in class VI, the second highest dropout of the same category is noticed in the next higher class-class VII (21.05%). In respect of class IV, VIII & IX, the rates are 6.25 percent, 14.28 percent and 19.23 percent respectively. That means higher rate of End Session Dropout occurred in class VI, class VII and class IX varying between 19-25 percent. This trend implies that as the students move up to higher classes i.e. from primary level to ME level and then to High School level, they find it increasingly difficult to cope up with higher courses of study and their rate of

failure in the annual class promotion examination increase which leads to dropout before and after the examination at the end of the session. The 0 percent End Session dropout in class V and negligible 6.25% dropout in class IV corroborates the trend.

Badakalakote High School (Ref. Table 3.2):

The data presented in Table 3.2 show the position of enrolment and dropout of students in Badakalkote High School by monitoring the movement of the batch of students admitted in class IV in 1992-93, from this entry level to the last class i.e., class IX in 1998-99 along with new batches of students enrolled in different classes in between the entry and exit points.

The class wise (vertical) dropout pattern, so far as the number of dropouts are concerned, shows the highest dropout ie.17 out of total 54 students in class VI in 1994-95 followed by the higher classes such as (class IX in 1997-98) (14 out of 43), class VIII in 1996-97 (13 out of 32) and class VII in 1995-96 (12 out of 44). These figures for the remaining lower classes i.e. class, IV & V and the top class-class X are remarkably very lower i.e. 2 out of 23, 3 out of 23 and 2 out of 29 respectively as compared to other five classes. Interestingly the lowest number of dropout has occurred in the first and the last class i.e. class IV and class X.

Looking at the percentage of dropouts to the total number of students enrolled in each class, one finds the rate varies between 6.9 percent the lowest for class X and 39.4 percent the highest for class VIII. The second third and fourth position is taken by the 3 higher classes-class IX (32.56%), class VI (31.5%) and class VII (27.3%). While for the above 4 higher classes the dropout rate remains high between 25 to 40 percent, the same for the remaining two lower classes class IV and V and the highest class-class X is significantly lower as it lies below 15 percent. The lowest rate of dropout has been recorded in class X (6.9%) followed by class IV (8.7%) and class V (13.04%).

It is worth mentioning here that the ST students dropout rates for class VIII in 1996-97 (39.4%), class IX in 1997-98 (32.56%) and class X in 1998-99 (6.9%) have remained lower than the overall dropout rates of the Welfare Department High Schools in the State for the corresponding sessions.

As compared to the Intra-session Dropouts, the rate of End Session Dropout is much higher both number wise and percentage wise. Such cases have been found in respect of 4 classes viz, class-VIII (39.4%), class VI (25.9%), class VII (22.7%) and class IX (20.93%). The rate has remained within the lowest of 20 percent and the highest of 40 percent. Number wise, it is 14 out of total 54 students in class VI, 13 out of 32 in class VII, 10 out of 44 in class VI and 9 out of 43 in class IX. There are no such dropout in the 2 lower classes -class IV & V and the highest class- class X. This data transpires that the End-Session

Dropout trend has started from the middle level at class VI and continued till the higher level of class IX.

Comparison of Class wise (vertical) Dropout Pattern of the Two Schools:

The data given in Table 3.1 and 3.2 suggests a pattern regarding the class wise total dropout rates in both the Schools. Higher rates of dropouts have taken place in 4 middle and higher level classes such as class VI, VII, VIII & IX, the figures varying between 27.3 percent to 39.4 percent for Badakalakote High School (BKKHS) and between 21.05 percent to 66.67 percent for Gumma Girls High School (GGHS) in respect of all these 4 classes.

The highest class wise dropout rate of 66.67 percent recorded in class VI (1994-95) of GGHS is much above the highest dropout rate of 39.4 percent of class VIII (1996-97) of BKKHS. As such the class wise dropout rate of BKKHS has never exceeded 40 percent whereas the same for the GGHS has exceeded sixty percent and so remained the highest among both the schools.

Except the wide gap between the class wise highest dropout rate of the schools, the other 3 middle and higher level classes recording the 2nd, 3rd and 4th highest dropout rates, have displayed similarity in their respective dropout rate with a small difference which are 21 to 26 percent for GGHS and 27 to 33 percent for BKKHS.

For the two lower classes- class IV & V, which are, in fact upper primary classes and the highest class- class X, the dropout rates are very low, say, below 13 percent in both the schools. For BKKHS these are between 6.9 to 12.04 percent and for GGHS, 0 percent to 6.25 percent only. The lowest rate is 0 percent in class V in GGHS and 5.26 percent in class X in BKKHS.

The dropout rates for class VIII, IX & X for the sessions 1996-97, 1997-98, 1998-99 respectively of both the schools have remained below that of the corresponding state figures for Welfare Department High Schools.

To account for the total dropouts as against total enrolments in all the seven classes of both the schools, it is seen that of the 90 ST students enrolled in all these classes in consecutive academic sessions starting from class IV in 1992-93 to class IX in 1998-99 in BKKHS, more than two third i.e., 63 (70 %) have dropped in between their journey from class IV to X. Among these dropouts the biggest chunk is occupied by the End Session Dropouts numbering 46 (51.11%) of the total enrolments and the Intra Session Dropouts numbering 17 (18.89 percent of the total enrolment), comprise a minority group. For the GGHS the total number of dropouts i.e., 55 may be smaller than those of BKKHS (63), but percentage wise it is little higher i.e. 75.34 percent when calculated against its total enrolments of 73 ST students in all these 7 classes. Further in the breakup of End Session and Inters Session Dropouts, both the

groups have an equal share i.e. 27 and 28 in number respectively accounting for 36.98 and 38.36 percent respectively of the total enrolment figure.

In respect of total dropout rates against total enrolment of ST students, both the schools stand close to each other the rate hovering around 70-75 %. That means among every 5 students admitted in the schools in class IV to IX in successive academic sessions from 1992-93 to 1997-98, only 1 has reached the class X stage in 1998-99 and made himself / herself eligible to appear the annual H.S.C. Exam conducted by Board of Secondary Education, Orissa.

H.S.C. Examination Results (1999):

Next comes the results of the HSC Exam (1998-99) to see the rate of success of the ST students of both the schools. As evident from Table 3.1 and 3.2, class X students (27) of BKKHS and (18 of GGHS appeared at the Annual HSC Exam. 1999. Of them 13 (48.15%) and 6 (33.33%) passed out. It appears that in this final test the students of BKKHS with one among every two candidates becoming a success have outperformed their female counterparts of GGHS who had one successful among three candidates.

This rate of success in H.S.C. Exam in 1999 is lower than the total pass rate of ST students of all the Welfare Department schools of the State which is 60.36 percent in that year. However, by comparing the results of both the schools i.e. 33.33 percent and 48.15 percent with that of all the ST students in all the schools of the State, which is 33.48 percent for 1999, it may be said that the ST students of both the schools have not performed so badly.

(B) CROSS- CLASS DROPOUTS (HORIZONTAL PATTERN):

Different batches of students enter into an educational institution at different successive levels between the base level and apex level. Their supposed target is to go up to the top most level, pass the final test and exit with the credit of acquisition of a formal educational qualification which may lead them to the next higher level of education or to a profession. Likewise, batches of students joining a high school like the 2 High Schools studied, through their admission in different classes starting from class IV to class IX are supposed to continue till they reach their destination- class X in which they are to appear and pass the final test of the HSC Exam and become a matriculate. For a Matriculate, this formal educational qualification makes him/her eligible to compete for entrance into next higher level of education such as the +2 level or any other vocational course or alternatively into a profession. But all students do not achieve this success. Some of them discontinue within the course and go away. The remaining ones who continue sincerely taste success at the end.

The purpose of the foregoing analysis is to find the rate of discontinuance and continuance of batches of students who have entered the school at different successive levels (classes) starting from the lowest level of class IV to the highest of class X and how many of them have reached the destination by becoming matriculates. This involves batch wise monitoring of the movements of students horizontally across classes from the lowest to the highest class. The tables 3.1 and 3.2 have been drawn in a manner to facilitate both class wise (vertical) and cross class (horizontal) pattern analysis.

Gumma Girl's High School:

As evident from Table 3.1 a total number 16 ST girl students entered the school by their admission into the lowest class i.e., Class IV in the academic session 1992-93. Only one of them gave up and the remaining 15 went up to the next higher class-class V (1993-94). In class V none of them dropped out and all of them successfully reached the next station-class VI (1994-95) where a majority of them numbering 9 (56.25%) left for their failure to pass the annual class promotion exam. Only 6 (37.5%) of them continued in class VII in 1995-96: one of them could not cross the barrier of annual class promotion exam and was forced to leave while her 5 class-mates from class IV stage successfully went up to reach class X level.

Thus out of the batch of 16 students admitted in class IV (1992-93) as many as 11 students (68.75%) dropped out at various successive stages such as 1 (6.25%) dropped out in class IV, 9 in class VI (56.25%), 1 in class VII and the remaining 5 (31.25) went up to the finishing stage of class X. All these 5 students appeared at the HSC Exam. (1998-99). 3 of them passed the exam and acquired matriculate qualification. In the class IV (1992-93) batch of 16 students, only 3 (18.75%) could become matriculates.

In the next higher class- class V during the following academic session (1993-94) a small batch of 3 new students took admission who joined with the 15 old students who came by class promotion from the lower class- class IV of the previous session. All 3 of them successfully graduated to class VI (1994-95). At this stage one of them (33.33%) was left out of the race as she was failed in the annual class promotion exam to get into class VII. The rest 2 (66.67%) not only went to class VII (1995-96), they also continued their ascent till they reached at the finishing line the, class X (1998-99) and appeared at the H.S.C. Exam.(1999). But unfortunately none of them could pass this final test. Hence for their batch the rate of discontinuity (dropout) remained at 33.33 percent, rate of continuity till the end point at 66.67 percent and the rate of success in the final test was 0 percent.

The class VI (1994-95) already has 18 old students in its roll who came by class promotion from the lower class. With them joined a large number of

new students numbering 30 who entered into the class by admission. This group of 30 earned the distinction amongst all the batches for their largest dropout rate- 22 dropouts (73.33%) at class VI level (i.e. 20 or 66.67 percent Intra-Session dropouts and 2 or 6.67 percent End Session dropouts), 1 End Session dropout at class VII (1995-96) level, 2 dropouts (1 End session and 1 Intra session) at class VIII (1996-97) level and 1 Intra-Session dropout at class IX (1997-98) level. Thus the total number dropouts were 26 (22 Intra-Session and 4 End Session) out of 30 students. That means 87 percent of the students of this batch abandoned their studies between class VI to class IX i.e., 73.33percent deserting within academic sessions (Intra Session Dropouts) and 13.33 percent leaving at the end of the session for their failure in the class promotion exam. This batch comprised the largest number of deserters categorized as Intra-Session dropouts.

Leaving behind the 26 dropouts the 4 (13.33%) survivors who finally continued till the end of the race at class X level could not taste success in the H.S.C. Exam (1999). All of them appeared and failed. This batch's rate of discontinuity is 87 percent; rate of continuity is 13 percent and the rate of success in the final H.S.C Exam is 0 percent.

During 1995-96 session of class VII, 3 new faces enrolled and sat with the 16 early birds who came up from class VI. But 2 of them dropped out at the end of the session for their failure in the annual class promotion exam. And only one of them remained in the race. The lone crusader went on climbing the steps to land at the topmost level (class X). Unfortunately all her persistent efforts did not bear fruit when she faced the final test H.S.C. Exam (1999). For this the 1995-96 batch of 3 students, the rate of dropout remained at 66.33 percent and the rate of success in the H.S.C. Exam at 0 percent.

In class VIII (1996-97) there were 20 new entrants of whom 4 (20%) deserted within the session and an equal number 4 left at the end of the session for their disappointing annual exam results. Thus 40% dropped out at their entry level (class VIII) and the rest 12 were promoted to class IX. In class IX ((1997-98) another 6 (30%) students dropped leaving the remaining 6 to go to class X stage. There again 1 student deserted in the middle of the session. Then there remained only 5(25%) students to appear at the final test. Of the 5 students 2 passed out and 3 failed. This batch recorded a 10 percent success rate in the HSC Exam and 75 percent dropout rate.

For class IX (1997-98) the number of new enrolment was just one. This single student continued till class X level, sat in the HSC Exam. (1999) and came out successful. In this case continuity and pass rate is cent percent which looks like an exception.

To sum up the highest dropout rate i.e. 87 percent is recorded in case of the 1994-95 batch of 30 students enrolled in class VI, followed by the 1996-97

batch of 20 students of class IV (68.75%) and then the 1993-94 batch of class V (3 students) and the 1995-96 batch of class VII (3 students) both having a dropout rate of 66.67 percent. Surprisingly there is no dropout in case of the single student admitted in class IX in 1997-98. Except this class IX case, the batch wise dropout rate remained high between 67 percent to 87 percent.

Considering the batch wise pass rate in the HSC Exam. 1999, the single new entrant in class IX (1997-98) passed out registering a 100 percent pass rate, which appears to be an exceptional case. For other 5 different batches, the pass rate is 0 percent in case of 3 batches 1993-94 (class V), 1994-95 (class VI), 1995-96 (class VII) and for the remaining two batches, 1992-93 (class VI) and 1996-97 (class VIII) it is 18.75 percent and 10 percent respectively.

Badakalakote High School (Ref. Table 3.2)

23 ST students were admitted into class IV during the session 1992-93. As many as 20 (87%) of them dropped out (8 Intra Session and 12 Ends Session) before reaching the finishing line in class X. Only the remaining 3 (13.4%) continued till class X level, appeared at the HSC Exam. 1999 and 2 of them (8.7% of total 23 students) passed out.

The next, 1993-94 batch of new entrants of class V comprising only 2 students could not go far. All of them left in the middle of the session (Intra session Dropouts) i.e., one in class V and one in the next higher class- class VI. They registered 100 percent dropout rate and 0 percent success rate.

There was heavy influx of 34 new students in class VI in 1994-95. But only 7 (20.6%) of them could go to the level of class X and majority of them numbering 27 (79.4%) abandoned their studies midway. Of the 7 students who reached class X and appeared at HSC Exam of 1998-99, 5 passed out. This batch's dropout rate was 79.4 percent; continuity rate was 20.06 percent and success rate in the HSC Exam was 14.7 percent.

During 1995-96, 07 new students enrolled in class VII. 05 of them (71.43%) deserted before reaching the class X level. Of the only 2 who continued till class X, one again dropped before appearing at the HSC Exam. For this batch the rate of continuity was 14.3 percent, rate of dropout was 83.7 percent and rate of success in the HSC Exam. was 0 percent.

No new students enrolled in class VII during 1996-97. In the next session of class IX, 24 new faces joined with the existing 19 old students. 8 of the new batch left leaving other 16 to move up to class X and appear the final test. Only 16 of them (25%) were successful in the HSC Exam. 1999. For this batch the dropout rate remained low at 33.33 percent, continuity rate at 66.67 percent and success rate in HSC Exam. at 25 percent. It is indeed a better record than those of other batches described before.

(IV)

Factors responsible for Dropout

The study discovers a host of factors responsible directly and indirectly, for causing dropouts of tribal students in the two residential High Schools located in the interior tribal pocket of Gajapati district. All the factors may be classified under two broad heads- (i) Institutional and (ii) Socio-Economic. The findings are based upon data gathered through administration of three sets of schedules among (i) selected 24 tribal dropouts (16 boys and 8 girls) living in several villages, (ii) 19 parents of these dropouts and (iii) 21 teachers i.e., 9 female teachers and 12 male teachers working in the 2 High Schools covered under the study. In addition to that, relevant information about various aspects of these 2 schools, their hostels, teachers etc. collected through another institutional schedule has been incorporated in the following analysis of causative factors of tribal dropout.

1. Institutional Factors:

The factors inherent to the Educational institutions such as the two high Schools studied, have many various related to the school, hostel, teachers, etc. which covertly influence the tribal students enrolment, continuity and dropout in the concerned educational institutions are discussed below.

- **Location of the school, Distance from student's native place and Student's Home sickness**

Both the schools studied are residential high schools provided with hostel facilities for the tribal students belonging to distant villages. As per the existing norms, the students belonging to the village where the school is located are not allowed to be admitted as boarders in the school's hostel. They are required to take admission in the school as day scholar. Only students coming from distant villages are taken as boarders.

Our data shows that student boarders in Badakalkote High School (BKKHS) came from several villages lying at a distance of 5-25 kms from the school. For the girl student boarders in Gumma Girls High School (GGHS), this distance factor is much larger i.e., between 5 to 100 kms. Girls came from far off villages namely, Pottar and Bettarsing (Ramgiri area), Attarsing (R. Udayagiri area), Jangajang (Nuagad area), Munising, Kaithapadar and Ukarsing (Rayagada area) situated at a distance of 100 kms, 95kms, 99kms, 85 kms, 75 kms, 65 kms and 70 kms respectively from the school. As such the girl students of GGHS come from a much greater distance than the boys of BKKHS.

Tribal boys and girls are generally shy in nature. By their process of socialization, they remain emotionally attached to their home, family, village, friends, kith and kin with whom they interact freely. By taking admission in these residential schools, they find themselves in an alien environment in which they are to live for several years till completion of the course being cut off from their near and dear ones. The greater the distance between the school and the child's native place, the lesser is the degree of child's interaction with the parents, siblings, friends and relatives. This isolation has psychological implications for the tribal child. He feels like "fish out of water" and develops "homesickness" which is one of the most important psychological causative factors of dropout.

The facts of our study are that, out of 24 tribal dropout children interviewed in course of this study, 12 (50%) came from a distance of 11-20 kms and the remaining 12 from a distance below 11Kms.

Among these 24 dropout children, 18 were admitted as boarders and the remaining 6 were day scholars. 15 (83.60%) of the 18 boarders admitted that they developed homesickness while staying in the schools. Most of their parents agreed on this issue. Of the 19 parents covered under this study 13 (68.5%) said that their children abandoned their studies for homesickness. Even 6 of the dropout children have admitted themselves that they have gave up their studies due to "homesickness".

- **Infrastructure Problems:**

Certain infrastructural deficiencies and inadequacies, both internal and external, are there in these two schools. Such problems affect the students, teachers as well as the day to day functioning of the educational institutions and consequently cause loss of interest of the tribal students to continue their study in the schools.

As discussed in Chapter-II, both the schools started as residential U.P. Schools and subsequently upgraded to High Schools since last 10-12 years. But existing infrastructure facilities do not commensurate with the up gradation of schools' educational level. Certain deficiencies still remain.

Both the schools have *pucca* buildings and campus enclosed and protected by boundary walls. BKKHS though has a separate school building having rooms for holding classes from Class-IV to class X it has no separate rooms for Headmaster's chamber, teachers' common room, science laboratory, library and reading room and workshops for vocational trades like tailoring, carpentry and agriculture, taught in the school. However to manage the work the Headmaster, teachers and the office are accommodated in a single room in the school building, similarly, the science laboratory and the store room take one room each in the building. The provision for vocational training in different

trades are affected as there is no room for setting up workshops and the equipments are dumped in the storeroom without serving any useful purpose.

For the GGHS, the problem of accommodation is more acute. It has two separate hostel building but no school buildings at all. Hence a major part of both the hostel buildings are utilized for holding classes and accommodating the other requirements of the school. Instead of having 3 separate rooms for headmaster's chamber, office and teachers' common room, these are squeezed into one small single room. Store and science laboratory occupy one room each. Due to non-availability of residential quarters for the Headmistress, she occupies one large room in a hostel building. To add these four rooms with the 7 classrooms a total number of 11 rooms in both the hostel buildings are occupied for non-hostel purposes, leaving few rooms for the 180 girl boarders who face congestion and discomfort in the few rooms left out for their accommodation. However another hostel building is now under construction. This may solve the accommodation problem in future.

Further there are lack of other essential facilities like developed playground, students, common room, library and reading room, rooms for indoor games, septic latrine and urinals, workshops for vocational training and teacher's common room.

It is worth mentioning here that, all children and especially the tribal children love to play. Provision of adequate facilities would encourage their playful activities in indoor and outdoor games and keep them attached to the school institution. Conversely, lack of proper games and sports facilities may lead to their lack of interest in the school. Further, the library facility, which is an important element of education and the training in vocational trades which leads to economic self-sufficiency, diversification and mobility should not be neglected. Other infrastructure facilities are nevertheless important. These deficiencies combined together hamper the progress of school, teachers and students. The worst victims are the students who lose interest in their study, school and teachers, as they do not feel like being at home and finally quit.

The parents of the dropout children have reacted to this problem. 6 of the 19 parents (31.58%) cited "inadequate facilities in the schools" as one of the reasons for the dropout of their children and 4 parents (21.6%) suggested for provision of better and adequate facilities in these schools to check dropouts.

Both the schools have also not been provided with modern audio-visual educational aids like, television, tape recorder, radio, video player, slide projector, computer etc. These modern gadgets would not only have enhanced the interest and attention of students but would also have helped them to widen the horizons of their knowledge. In these days of hi-tech IT revolution, these gadgets help the students to acquire extra and up to-date knowledge of different subjects side by side with entertainment, that makes learning a

pleasure. These gadgets would have greatly fascinated the tribal students, who hardly have the chance to operate such devices for their socio-economic backwardness and thus helped their retention in the school and their academic improvement.

The 21 teachers including the Headmaster of BKKHS and the headmistress of GGHS who were interviewed in course of our study, suggested that, provision of developed playgrounds, and modern sports and games articles for promotion of indoor and outdoor games, audio-visual educational aids like radio, TV, tape recorder, video players, computers etc., toilets for teachers and students in the school as well as the hostel would be very helpful in increasing the attraction of students to the school. It would increase their rate of retention in the school and thus check their dropout.

Another important chronic problem is the poor state of maintenance of the existing infrastructures. The Parlakhemundi Division of the PWD, which is entrusted with the responsibility of construction, repair and maintenance of Govt. buildings including these two schools, does not pay proper attention. This negligence shows its ugly face in leaking roofs, water seepage, cracked walls, damaged plaster and floorings, choked drainage, damaged toilet, rickety wooden structures and fixtures in both the schools which make the life of the inmates miserable and diminishes their interest in the schools. The problem calls for adequate financial and technical provisions for periodic repair and maintenance of existing infrastructures of both the schools.

Similarly the schools need required furniture and equipments backed with repair, maintenance and replacement of damaged ones. This will give comfort to teachers and students and help smooth running of the schools.

- **Health Problems and Existing Health Care Facilities:**

Children's education is intimately linked with their state of health. One cannot expect sick children to go to school and read well. Tribal children are no exceptions. But by their very process of socialization, they are more pain streaking and adaptive to difficult circumstances. Yet the difficult living conditions to which they are subjected to makes them susceptible to various kinds of diseases and nutritional deficiencies.

The heads of the two educational institutions have reported that the students of their schools often suffer from some common diseases like, malaria, chicken pox, measles, viral infections, gastro enteritis, jaundice, typhoid, scabies and itches, eczema, roundworm, hookworm etc. Malaria is chronic due to unhealthy malarial climate of the area.

Children when fall ill at home get relief under the loving care of their parents, brothers and sisters, who make arrangements for their treatment.

These children in residential schools, living away from their near and dear ones desperately feel the absence of the security of their home when they become sick. Of course teachers and their school friends look after them at this time, but it is not the same as they get at home. They are taken to the nearest health center for treatment. The existing financial provisions are not adequate to meet even the cost of treatment of minor ailments. This amount is met from the meager stipend amount of the boarders. If the sickness is serious, acute and prolonged the cost of treatment is higher. Then the problem of attending the patient and providing for the expenses arise. In such cases, the parents/guardian are informed to take away the sick child to home, which is difficult, time taking and sometimes endanger the life of the patient.

The nearest health center for both the schools is at Gumma, which are 3 kms from GGHS and 6 Kms from BKKHS. For shifting sick students poor communication facilities between BKKHS and Gumma enhances the sufferings of the ailing students. The Gumma health center, like other health center functioning in the remote tribal areas, lacks medicines equipments and staff. Except for the treatment of minor ailments the patients in acute and serious cases are advised to go to the Christian Hospital at Serango or to the District hospital at Parlakhemundi, which is a costly affair for the poor tribal patients. So they fall an easy prey to the local quacks or resort to their traditional magico-religious methods of treatment, which is nevertheless expensive.

The doctor of the local health center is required to visit the schools once in every month to make health check up of students and prescribe treatment for the sick ones. But this provision is followed more in breach.

Ill health is a major barrier to children's schooling. The Head Master, Head Mistress and the teachers of both the schools have identified ill health of tribal students as one of the important reasons of their long absence from the school and poor academic performance eventually leading to their dropout.

In our study the 18 dropouts who were boarders were asked about their case and treatment at the time of their sickness while in school. All the 18 of them said that their friends, classmates and fellow boarders in the hostel have taken care of them at the time of illness. Only in 7 (39%) cases they have been sent to their homes where their parents, guardians and relatives have taken up the responsibility of attending to their treatment.

3 (16.67%) dropout boarders have reported that no care was taken of them at the time of their illness in the school hostel. 2 dropout boarders cited their ill health and sickness as one of the reasons for leaving the school.

Their parents were also found to be aware of poor health care facilities. As many as 11 of the 19 parents (68%) interviewed in this study, stated that

their children have overstayed at home during holidays and vacations because of their bad health and sickness. 15 of them (79%) have complained against the poor health care facilities for their children in the school.

- **Holiday Pattern and School Timings:**

For all the departmental schools including these two schools, a prescribed holiday pattern is followed during the academic sessions. As reported by the school authorities, BKKHS had observed 126 days as holidays, and GGHS had 95 holidays during the academic session 1998-99. These holidays include 3 major vacations like the summer vacation, Puja vacation and X mass vacation besides other holidays, local holidays and the holidays announced during the visit of VIP as to the schools.

The prescribed holiday pattern does not entirely match with the annual festival calendar of the local tribe, Saora. The school authorities have reported that, tribal students go home to observe local festivals like, Makar, Nuakhai, Sivaratri, Christmas etc. and remain absent from the school neglecting their studies. As they are fond of enjoying the celebrations, feasts and festivities with their kith and kin for days together they are usually reluctant to return to school. Often they come back under pressure from their parents.

15 parents of dropout children out of total 19 covered under the study said that their children came home during the school holidays. 10 of them revealed that their children came back to attend social and religious functions and festivals even if these day did not coincide with the school holidays and they overstayed at home before returning to school.

15 of the 19 parents expressed their dissatisfaction with the school holiday pattern. 13 parents disapproved the school timings.

All the dropouts (boarders only) interviewed in course of our fieldwork confessed that they rushed to home leaving the school to enjoy the festive occasions in company of their family and friends.

- **School Curriculum, Medium of Instruction:**

Both the High Schools are affiliated to the Board of Secondary Education (BSE), Orissa, which prescribes the curriculum for the high school level of education and conducts the High School Certificate (HSC) Examination for the students at the end of the course. Except the language subjects like English, Hindi and Sanskrit the medium of instruction for all other subjects is Oriya, the *lingua franca* of the State. The Saora children who read in these two high schools find it difficult to understand lessons in Oriya language as they come from a different linguistic background. The Saora tribe has language of their own called "Sora". This language is classified under the Mundari group of languages spoken by various other tribal groups of Orissa. It is different from

Oriya, an Indo-Aryan language. Sora being their mother tongue they communicate freely using this language within their cultural sphere. The younger students of lower classes more acutely feel the language problem. Their reading writing and understanding in Oriya language develops gradually, as they go up to successive higher classes. Tribal teachers who can make the students understand the lessons by translating into the tribal language are not available adequately. The non-tribal teachers posted in these two schools are not conversant in the local tribal language. This causes a communication gap between the teacher and the taught (pupil). The inevitable consequence is alienation of the students and their poor academic performance. This is a chronic problem hampering the progress of tribal education, which is well known to all concerned.

The above problem of tribal students' understanding of the subjects taught in the school is further intensified by the problem of curriculum. One and the same curriculum is prescribed by the BSE, Orissa for all the affiliated schools in the urban, rural and tribal areas of the state. The socio-cultural, economic and family background of the student, which build the capacity and provide scope and environment for the student to understand and grasp the lessons properly and perform better in the exam. are not the same for the students of the urban rural and tribal areas. The result is obvious; a wide gap exists in the academic achievements between tribal students and their urban counterparts with the former lagging behind the latter. Our study has tried to get into this matter. The students and teachers of both the schools have identified the language problem as one of the problems causing absenteeism among tribal schools, which leads to their poor academic performance and ultimately, ends in their dropout.

However majority of parents of dropouts covered under the study are not aware of the language problems faced by their children in school. Only one among the 19 parents knows about this problem. He suggested for imparting education to tribal students in tribal language particularly in lower classes. Only two parents voted in favour of posting tribal teachers and another 2 parents said if required number of tribal teachers are not available, non tribal teachers having orientation in tribal language and culture may be preferred who in their opinion should be able to bridge the communication and cultural gap between the teachers and the taught.

Among all the 21 teachers interviewed only 2 belong to ST, another 2 are SC and the rest 17 are non-tribals. All of them come from Oriya language background having no working knowledge in the local Saora, language. Obviously 9 of them reported about facing difficulties in communicating with their students, 6 of them complained about getting poor response from their tribal students and the rest 6 avoided giving any reply.

The majority of teachers i.e. 19 realize the usefulness of the knowledge of tribal language and culture for the teachers working in tribal areas in establishing effective communication links with the students.

The tribal students seem confused about the problem. 9 of the 24 dropouts pointed out this language problem. 5 of them identified this language problem blocking their educational achievement and leading to dropout.

Then comes the problem of curriculum, which is another impediment in the educational achievements of tribal students. In the opinion of teachers, certain subjects like English, M.I.L. (Oriya), Mathematics and Geography are found to be difficult for the students to understand. 7 teachers felt that English is a difficult subject for the students of class IX and X. Another 6 teachers said that students of all the other 5 classes i.e., from class IV to VIII find English a tough subject for their understanding. Teachers varying in numbers from 3 to 6 hold M.I.L. (Oriya) as a difficult subject for the Saora students of all the classes as their mother tongue is different. The numbers of teachers who consider the subject, Mathematics and Geography difficult for students of all classes does not exceed 4. General science is a difficult subject for student of all the classes as reported by 3 teachers. But History, Hindi and Sanskrit are not considered difficult for all classes.

Because the subjects were found to be difficult for the tribal students, the teachers have to take extra classes on these subjects to help the students to understand the lessons. 7 teachers have reported about taking extra classes in Mathematics and 6 teachers have done so in English. The number of teachers who have taken extra classes in subjects like MIL, Hindi, history, Geography and General Science are 5,2,5,3 and 5 respectively. None of them claimed to have taken extra-classes on the Sanskrit subject. For the dropouts the intensity of problem of digesting various subjects is larger. All the 24 students except one considered English as the most difficult subject. 21 students found Sanskrit difficult. Next in the order come 19, 18 and 10 students who faced difficulties in understanding Mathematics, Science and Civics subjects. The smallest number of students i.e., 2 in each case had problems with history and Oriya. Only for 4 students Geography was hard to digest. When the dropout students were asked to state reasons for which they find difficulties in understanding some subjects, majority of them i.e., 19 put the blame on their teachers. They said teachers neglected these subjects. 7 of them indicated about the problem of non-availability of textbooks. As many students faced difficulties in understanding the above subjects for various reasons, they could not follow the lessons. They performed badly in the class as well as in exams. It led to dropout in cases of 17 students. Further confirming this observation, majority of parents interviewed i.e. 16 out of 19 hold the view that their children gave up their studies for this problem as they were failed in the exam.

- **Right Type of Teachers:**

The teacher plays key role in the sphere of education. For the students he or she is friend, philosopher and guide and also a role model. He should be the right person in the right place.

Finding right type of teachers to interact with the tribal students has remained a problem. Adequate numbers of trained and educated tribal persons with the right aptitude; motivation and orientation who can establish better rapport with the tribal students are still not available. The demands are being met by recruitment of non-tribal teachers who come from distant non-tribal areas and find it difficult to cope up with the adverse circumstances in the interior tribal areas. They also have their psychological problems of adjustment for their non-tribal background. Many of them suffer from the chronic malady of maladjustment and alienation and lose their job satisfaction. This affects the students in the long run.

Among the 21 teachers contacted, 12 i.e. 3 males and 9 females are from GGHS and 9 males are from BKKHS. This shows that male teachers are posted in Girls High Schools with whom girl students may feel shy to interact. These male teachers are not allowed to stay in the school campus where the Lady teachers and girl students stay. The GGHS is located in a lonely place 2 kms away from the nearest habitation. The male teachers have to arrange private accommodation for themselves, which is hard to find in such remote place. This inconvenience reduces their level of motivation in the school.

18 of the 21 teachers of both the schools have been provided with residential quarters inside school campuses. The remaining 3 reported of managing their accommodation in rented houses, located away from the school.

For the 18 teachers who have got government residential quarters, the only advantage is that they live within the campus. They also face disadvantages as their quarters are in bad shape for want of periodic repair and maintenance. Often they have to spend money from their own pockets to execute emergency repairing to make these habitable for them and their families. Thus the problem of accommodation persists more or less for the teachers who have got government quarters and who have not.

The teachers come under various age groups. The largest number of teachers i.e., 9 (4 males and 5 females) belongs to the age group of 31-40 years followed by 6 (4 males and 2 females) in the age group of 21-30 and 4 (3 males and 1 female) in the age group of 41-50. The remaining 2 (1 male and 1 female) who come under 50 + age group are none but the Headmaster of BKKHS and the Headmistress of GGHS.

Data on their marital status show that 16 (10 males and 6 females) are married and the remaining 5 (2 males and 3 females) are unmarried. However, majority of 12 teachers have not brought their families to their respective places of posting. They stay alone leaving their families behind in distant places for which they rush to see their families and to discharge their familial responsibilities frequently at the earliest opportunity. This hampers their attendance and teaching responsibilities.

The native places of these teachers lie at a distance varying from 33 kms to 350 kms. Majority of them i.e. 12 are natives of different localities in Gajapati district where both the schools are situated. Rest of them is from the neighboring Ganjam district except one lady teacher of GGHS who comes from the most distant place of Bhubaneswar. 9 of them (4 males and 5 females) come from Parlakhemundi town who have kept their families in Paralakhemundi town where better facilities for their children's education, health care, transport; marketing, etc. are available. Though, many of them have got residential quarters in the schools, they rarely stay there. They prefer to commute by bus between Parlakhemundi and their respective schools. Bus services being irregular and uncertain in this area particularly for the teachers of BKKHS, the concerned teachers' attendance and teaching performance are affected. It has been observed during our fieldwork that the teachers who commute by bus from Parlakhemundi hardly reach the school before 11.30 A.M. though the classes start by 10 A.M. They also leave by 3 P.M. without waiting till the closing hours of the classes i.e., 4 P.M. Further they are forced to remain absent on the working days when the bus services are disrupted. This irregularity and absenteeism of teachers directly affects the students and the school environment.

As students suffer for their teacher's irregular attendance and absenteeism, they come forward to speak about its implications. 19 dropouts were found to be aware of the problem of their teacher's irregularity and absenteeism. 10 of them said that because of this, their teachers could not take classes regularly. 8 of them reported that their courses could not be completed in time. 17 dropouts were very categorical in their remarks that this absenteeism of their teachers directly hampered their studies.

The teachers who have not brought their families to their respective places of posting were asked the reason for doing so. 8 teachers said it was for the health problem that their family is likely to suffer if they come and live in the unhealthy climate of this interior tribal area. Their children's educational problems, accommodation problems, individual family problems and distance factors have been stated as the reasons by 3, 3, 2, and 2 teachers respectively. These are nevertheless genuine problems and it calls for provision of better facilities in these areas for sustaining the teachers' interests.

These problems create hurdles for the teachers to adjust with the environment of the school and the place of posting. Particularly the teachers, who live alone in their place of posting leaving their families behind or commute by bus daily, suffer from the psychological problems of loneliness and insecurity. Their liking for the place, school and students as well as their job satisfaction diminishes. Especially, the non-tribal teachers who come from non-tribal areas and urban areas do not feel at home in these interior backward areas with an alien socio-cultural environment. Some of them consider it as a “punishment posting” and struggle hard to get out of the place. Their problems affect the school and students.

During our interaction with the teachers of both the schools, most of the teachers tried to hide their feelings and problems. Only 4 of them confessed that they do not enjoy their job in the school. 6 teachers admitted that they don't like their place of posting and 2 of them said that they are trying for their transfer from that place.

So far as the level of education and training of these 21 teachers are concerned, all of them are educated and trained in their respective fields. There was not a single untrained teacher. There are 7 C.T. Teachers (3 Matriculates, 2 Intermediates and 2 Graduates), 9 Graduate B.Ed. Teachers, 2 Post-Graduate M.Ed. Teachers, 1 Graduate B.P.Ed. Teacher and 2 Graduate Teachers with Hindi training. Besides having such formal qualifications, 2 of them have undergone orientation training in Tribal Language Culture and Development conducted by SCSTRTI, and 2 of them have participated in DPEP teachers training programmes. It is desirable that all of them should attend the Tribal Culture and Development Orientation Training Programmes conducted by SCSTRTI, regularly, and the Tribal Language learning Programmes conducted by ATDC, which will help in bridging the cultural and communication gap between the teachers, students and their parents, and also help their adjustment in the difficult situations in the tribal areas.

15 teachers said that they have not received any kind of special training to teach tribal students. So they experience difficulties. But they have no disliking for the subjects given to them for teaching. 20 teachers claim that they completed their courses within the stipulated periods of the academic sessions. Because the tribal students cannot pick up the lessons, 17 teachers reported that, they have to take extra classes to complete the course. In case of 4 teachers they take extra classes even during vacations.

19 teachers hold the opinion that all the teachers working in tribal areas should have a sound knowledge of local tribal language and culture. 13 teachers believe in practical usefulness of such knowledge. But they said that they have not been given such opportunity. They also believe in the usefulness

of visiting the surrounding tribal villages and establishing rapport with the local tribal people, especially with the parents of children of school going age. 13 of them said that they make such visits at times. 3 of them claimed that their visits were fruitful in one way or other.

There is a provision to organize meeting of parents and teachers in the school at regular intervals to sort out the problems of tribal students. But this is observed more in breach. Teachers differ in their response to the question whether such meetings are organized at all and if organized how many times it is done in a year. 13 teachers said that such meetings are organized and the rest 8 replied in negative. Among the 13 who replied affirmatively, 10 said that it was done only once in a year and the rest 3 indicated twice in a year. Again all of them stated that there is no good response from the parents to organize such meetings. With such difference of opinion, it is difficult to ascertain the truth.

Among the teachers there are only 2 ST male teachers. Of the remaining incumbents, 2 are SCs, 2 are STs and the majority i.e. 15 belongs to unreserved category. The students feel the absence of tribal teachers. 15 of the 24 dropout students stated that they want tribal teachers of their own community with whom they can interact freely and frankly and can take into confidence.

Because of non-availability of tribal teachers and the cultural and language barriers between tribal students and non-tribal teachers, some students experience difficulties in understanding lessons given by their teachers. 10 dropout students are reported to have faced such difficulties. 16 of them were shy and afraid of their teachers. So they could not ask their teachers to clarify their doubts within the class hours. 6 of them have ventured to approach their teachers for clarification of their doubt beyond school hours. 11 of them tried to manage by consulting their classmates and seniors. The remaining 7 could not go anywhere and their problems remained unsolved.

Regarding assignment of home tasks by teachers to the students as a follow up action to classroom teaching, only 11 of the 24 dropouts said that their teachers gave them home tasks. For the remaining 13 there was no regular assignment of home tasks. But all of them said that their teachers were not checking their home task notebooks regularly. As a result, the students could not know about the correctness of their answers. But 20 of them admitted that sometimes their teachers were punishing them for negligence or mistakes concerning their home tasks. Further a majority of these 16 ex-students complained that they did not get their teacher's help in solving their problems.

These ex-students also alleged about the laxity of their Headmaster / Headmistress regarding regular inspection of classes. Sometimes, the heads of the institutions remained absent and taking the opportunity, the teachers

dropped classes or otherwise neglected their duties. 5 ex-students were found to be aware of the fact that the supervising authorities like, the District Collector, Inspector of Schools, Officers of ST & SC Development Department, Ministers and Local Peoples Representatives rarely visited their schools.

Students also face another problem from their teachers. Some teachers engage the tribal students to attend to their personal domestic works. 16 dropouts revealed that their teachers exploited them to help in their domestic chores. 13 ex-students were engaged for house cleaning and sweeping, 12 ex-students for clearing utensils, 6 ex-students for washing clothes and 11 ex-students for raising kitchen garden. Moreover 11 students supplied water for domestic use. 2 girl students helped in cooking and 4 girls were given baby care duties. Tribal students because of their tough socialization do not hesitate to take up any kind of manual job. So except one student all of them served their teachers without any complaint. Only one of them refused for his sickness

The question here is when these children have come to schools to read and build their future leaving their home, should their teachers exploit them and should they be asked to serve their teachers neglecting their studies? The consequences may be serious. 7 of the dropouts have reported that they have left the school because of their teacher's highhandedness in engaging them in their personal works. 2 boys have complained against the harassment by their teachers for which they have given up their studies.

That the unexpected conduct of teachers sometimes causes problems for the students, which eventually ends in their dropout, is also known to many parents. 11 of the 19 parents of dropouts put the responsibility for the dropout of their children on their teachers, Head Masters and Head Mistresses. 6 parents have identified "teachers hostile behavior" as one of the reasons for their children's dropout. Hence to remedy the situation 6 parents suggested for posting good, honest and sincere teachers, 2 for tribal teachers, 2 for teachers having knowledge of tribal language and culture and 1 for teachers from very distant places so that they cannot go home frequently neglecting the students.

- **Stipend and other Provisions:**

As stated in Chapter-1, the stipend amount for boys and girls who were boarders was Rs.200/- and 225/-p.m. respectively till 1998-99. Out of this amount Rs.10/- is kept apart for 10 months of a session to meet the cost of a pair of school uniforms. As this saved amount of Rs.100/- is not enough for the purpose the shortfall is met by the parents.

The remaining amount of stipend is utilized for the provision of their fooding toiletries and medicines. At the present market price this meager amount is hardly enough to keep the tribal students at the subsistence level.

Considering this, Government has raised the stipend amount to Rs.300/- and Rs.325/- for boys and girls boarders respectively from the session 1999-2000. It is also complained by the school authorities that this stipend amount is not released timely, putting the boarders and their teachers to hardship.

The stipend money is not enough to provide 2 square meals to tribal students. So the students always pressurize their parents to give them some extra money for their pocket expenses. 15 of the 19 parents of dropouts stated that because of insufficient stipend amount they had to give extra money from Rs.500/- to Rs.1000/- per year to their children. 16 of them said that they are not at all satisfied with the amount of stipend being given to their children. 9 of them strongly advocated in favor of raising the stipend amount. 4 of the 24 dropouts interviewed in course of our study, even stated about inadequate stipend and other provisions as a reason for discontinuation of their studies.

Besides the stipend, other provisions like textbooks, other reading and writing materials like notebooks, white papers, pens, pencils, erasers etc. are also supplied to tribal students free of cost. The concerned D.W.O. i.e., the D.W.O. Gajapati, supplies these items for the students. The students do not take away the textbooks supplied to them when they leave the school. The old and new books are circulated among students of all classes. But new books are not supplied regularly. As a result the students share the existing books among themselves and it hampers their study. Regarding supply of required stationeries the problem is more acute. Sometimes these are supplied and sometimes not. Whatever supplied are so insufficient that students either bring money from their parents or ask their parents to buy for them. It is reported by both the school authorities that during 1998-99 they had not received any writing materials. For the GGHS the DWO, Gajapati had supplied 230 nos. of textbooks during 1998-99, that has been distributed among 180 girl students.

Apart from the stipend, dress and reading and writing materials, the other provisions for tribal boarders are toiletries (oil and soap), essential medicines, cot, mosquito net, blanket, kerosene, lantern etc. While the cost of food, dress, medicines and toiletries are met out of stipend money, other items are provided out of separate grants. When the stipend amount is inadequate for providing two principal meals there is little money left for medicines, dress and toiletries. Tribal students, their parents and teachers complain about this.

Among the 24 dropouts contacted during our study 18 were reading as boarders. All of them reported that they have received books, and toiletries occasionally and in small quantity while continuing as borders. They never received all the textbooks at a time and these books were in old and damaged condition. The toiletries included 10 ml of bathing oil and 1 or 2 soaps for bathing and washing clothes in a month. 16 of them reported to have received

blankets and 17 have got money to buy school uniforms. The number of the students who have got mosquito net, cot, lantern and kerosene were 5,3,5 and 4 respectively. But they said, 2 students were sharing a cot that was given to them when they were promoted to higher classes. So also the mosquito nets, lantern and kerosene were provided to a group of students, not individually.

10 of the dropout boarders complained that they faced difficulties for want cots, 3 for want of blankets, and 3 for no light provisions for night reading. For such inconveniences and discomforts, they lost interest in continuing their studies and ultimately left the school.

- **Hostel Facilities:**

Both the high Schools are residential schools with hostel facilities. Students from far off and near places stay in these hostels. As stated earlier, in GGHS there is no separate school building. So parts of both the existing hostel building are used to accommodate, classes, office, Headmistress's room, store, laboratory, workshop, Headmistress's living quarters etc. and the remaining rooms are left to the boarders. This results in overcrowding and congestion. In BKKHS the school and hostel buildings are separate. Since there is no encroachment of hostel space, the position of boarders here is little better.

The pattern of accommodation of boarders in both the hostels as gathered from the 18 dropouts is that in each room 20-30 students were packed. The boarders belonged to different classes, different communities and different villages. This condition prevailed for the students of lower classes i.e. from class IV to class VIII. For the students of class IX and X separate rooms are provided to give them space and comfort to concentrate in their studies to appear at the HSC Exam.

Regarding the type of food and frequency of serving in these hostels, all the 18 dropouts who were boarders were unanimous, that they were getting 2 principal meals comprising rice and *dal*. According to 4 of them vegetable curry was being served to them once in a week. 3 of them got this item twice in a week and 6 of them, thrice in a week. For the remaining 5, it was an occasional item. The same thing happened for serving of eggs. For majority i.e. 13 boarders it was occasional, for 2 thrice in a week, for 1 twice in a week and for the rest 3 once in a week. Serving of meat was rare. Only 6 of them reported to have taken meat occasionally. They were never served with fish, sweets and milk. Besides 2 meals in a day no Tiffin was being given to the boarders.

Growing children need balanced food in adequate quantity. The quality and quantity of food given to the boarders leaves much to be desired. The main reason for this, is the meager amount of stipend out of which the expenses for boarder's fooding are met. The victims are the innocent tribal boys

and girls who remain semi-starved and under-nourished. When the 18 dropout boarders were asked to give their opinion on the quality and quantity of food in the school hostels, majority of them remarked insufficient (11), not tasteful (17) and not better than the food they were getting at home (14).

After school hours and playtime, students are supposed to devote their time to study. But this does not happen for the boarders in these schools. They are called upon to do odd and menial jobs in the hostel. All the 18 boarder dropouts said that they were assigned works like cleaning and sweeping hostel rooms, kitchen and utensils, and raising the kitchen garden. Besides 13 of them were engaged for fetching water from the well for cooking, 11 of them for collecting firewood and distribution of food, 2 of them for marketing and mess management and 8 of them in rendering assistance to the hostel cooks in cooking and serving food. These engagements reduced the boarders' study hours and thus hampered their studies.

None of the ex-boarders felt bad about their engagement in manual works. But they were not happy about the accommodation problem, insufficient and bad-taste food, shortage of bedding, cots, lighting, some teachers' harsh treatment, lack of leisure and recreational facilities which caused maladjustment to the school environment in case of 3 ex-boarders and paved way for their discontinuation of studies.

For some of them the school environment was not so congenial. The majority of parents i.e. 15 out of 19 are not satisfied with the quality and quantity of food provided to the boarders in the hostel, 14 about bad room accommodation, and 16 with the inadequate dress, reading and writing materials. Hence 10 conscious parents demanded for increasing the amount of stipend and provision of better and adequate food for students in these schools in order to make the students "feel at home" and not quit the school.

2. Socio-Economic Factors

The socio-economic factors working against the educational progress of tribal children are embedded in the very environment in which the little ones are born and brought up. This environment in the tribal area, which builds human capacities and shapes attitudes, aptitudes, ambitions and aspirations are not quite conducive to the institutionalized formal education. Tribal people with their own value system ethos and world view are still not quite aware of the benefits of education. For their socio-economic backwardness they struggle hard to eke out a hand to mouth existence and their children are considered economic assets in their families who are required to help their parents in economic pursuits. Sending them to schools for a long time, means loss of working hands. Moreover, the socio-cultural and economic environment in the tribal area which is the first school of informal education for the tribal children

teaches them to do hard work but lead a carefree life, with very limited ambitions. Therefore the rigorous routine life and formal environment in the educational schools do not suit the tribal children. They find it difficult to adapt to this new environment. When they come to schools some of them manage and some do not. Those who fail to adapt give up and leave.

But the fault does not lie with the innocent children alone. The inherent institutional deficiencies described previously and their socio-cultural and economic background is responsible for their failure. Their family, parents, siblings, friends, relatives, family economic conditions and the child, himself or herself, mainly represent their socio-cultural and economic background in respect of their education.

- **Parents:**

The study covered 19 parents of dropouts. Majority of them i.e. 11 are illiterates, who know little about the value of education. The remaining 8 have little education. 6 of them read upto primary level and 2, up to secondary level. That means these 8 little educated parents themselves are school dropouts. Hence, it is not surprising that their children also followed their footsteps.

4 parents desired their sons to read up to college level. 6 parents hoped that their sons should get education up to secondary level. One of the illiterate parents could not think of education for his son beyond primary level. Regarding the education of daughters, only 4 parents were willing to educate them up to secondary level. The remaining 4 parents had no idea about the educational standard their children should achieve. It is evident that the outlooks of the parents differ on the education of sons and daughters. While sons are expected to achieve higher education, daughter's education is less desirable. Moreover none of the parents envisaged university or technical education for their children as they had no idea about that level of education and its value.

With their typical socio-economic background, the tribals evaluate actions and engagements in terms of earning a livelihood, which is directed towards meeting their limited wants. Their educational aspirations do not therefore transcend their cultural boundaries. They can think of higher educational attainments of their children only when they will desire a better standard of living that may come with higher education. These 19 parents were asked, what occupations they expect their sons and daughters to take up in future. 2 of them said their sons should become cultivators like themselves. 11 of them wanted their sons to take up any kind of salaried job. About daughters' expected occupations, these parents fumbled. They were not quite sure. 4 of the parents stated with a bit of hesitation about some kind of salaried job, But the general opinion was that daughters are best suited to get married, produce

children and manage the household rather than going out for any other kind of job. Without women there can be no home. Their society and culture have prescribed distinct roles for men and women. They cannot think of changing it.

What these parents think about the kind of education imparted to their children in schools? Is this kind of education suitable for their children? Only 4 parents replied affirmatively and 2, negatively. The rest majority (13) said they “do not know”. All these show the level of awareness of tribal parents. However there are also some good signs. 8 of the parents took the initiative to send their children to schools. In another 7 cases the local schoolteacher persuaded them to do so. 3 parents followed the advice of their village headman and the remaining 1 was influenced by his neighbour in this matter.

As the tribal parents love their children very fondly, they feel their absence in home when they are sent to schools. In spite of several constraints like own engagements, distance to schools, traveling expenses etc. they try to visit their children in schools, whenever they find opportunity. When asked about such visits, 12 of the parents said that they had visited their children in schools; 8 of them frequently and 4 of them occasionally. Among the frequent visitors, one was a weekly visitor, 4 were monthly visitors and 3 were quarterly visitors. The occasional visitors included those who came to see their wards 1-3 times within an academic session.

Had they taken interest about their children’s studies and contacted their teachers to sort out their problems? The majority of them i.e. 15 answered negatively. Only the remaining 4 of them said “yes”. Were the teachers helpful? It was asked to the 4 parents who said that they had contacted the teachers. Two of them said “yes” and two of them, “no”. The next question was did they think that their children were reading well up to their expectations. Six said “yes” and the rest 13 said “no”.

These parents were further asked to identify the agencies that they consider responsible for their children’s dropout. Their honest answers were surprising. 8 parents did not hesitate to hold themselves responsible along with other agencies. 11 parents shifted the responsibility to the teachers. Friends and relatives were held responsible by 7 parents. However, majority of parents felt that their children themselves were also responsible for their dropout.

Regarding their action for readmission of their dropout children, only 2 of them said that they had tried by persuading their children, but in vain. Rest 17 of them was indifferent.

Yet these parents were found having some level of awareness though in varying degrees regarding different aspects of promotion of tribal education. They proposed for increasing stipend money (9 parents), posting tribal teachers

(2), providing better facilities (4) imparting teaching in tribal language in lower classes (1) posting good and honest teachers (6) creating awareness among and educating the tribal parents (4) provision of stipend to failed students for a second chance (3) regular inspection of schools (3) and creation of job opportunities after education to check the dropout (5)

- **Family, Friends and Relatives:**

Family is the first environment and the first school of tribal culture for the tribal child. It influences the personality of the child and teaches him/her to behave imitating others. The child's learning process and educational aspirations stems from his /her family background. After the family, there are other agencies with whom the child interacts very closely. The important among them are the child's friends and relative. They play their roles in shaping the behavioral pattern of the child.

The 24 dropout children studied came from 19 families. The size of these families varied from small to large. 5 families were small families comprising up to 5 members. The medium sized families (6-10 members) numbered 11. Large sized families comprising more than 10 members were only 3. Thus medium sized families were found to be common.

All these families have children of school going age. Though some children are attending schools and some are not, presence of school dropouts is a permanent feature for these families. 12 families have one dropout each and the rest 7 have more than one. The total number of dropouts in these families is 30 comprising 20 boys and 10 girls. The largest chunk of dropouts is primary level dropouts numbering 20 (14 boys and 6 girls) and the rest 10 are secondary school dropouts (6 boys and 4 girls). This record of educational achievements of family members might have some impact on the school going children.

Certain activities in the family indirectly create conditions for the school going children to dislike the education and give up studies. Children are sent to school to stay there, concentrating in their studies and visit home only during holidays and vacations. If they are disturbed in the midseason, they lose track and lag behind. Some families hardly realise this. They bring their children home in the mid-session, to attend fairs, festivals ceremonies and also to attend some family business as and when required. Such interruptions divert the child's mind from education. Of the 19 families of dropouts, 17 have admitted that they have withdrawn their children from schools for social occasions and other reasons.

When students lose interest in their studies, they tend to overstay at home when they come back home during vacations and other occasions. 17 of the dropouts admitted that they had overstayed; 3 of them by 1 day, 5 of them

a couple of days, 4 of them a week, 3 of them a fortnight and 1 a month. The reason of such overstay, as given by their parents were for visiting relatives in 7 cases, to attend social religious functions in 10 cases and to enjoy the company of friends in 3 cases, among other reasons. These overstay and avoidance of schools is a prelude to dropout.

Some parents are aware of the consequence of the influence of family, friends and relatives on their school going children. In the opinion of 2 parents, the responsibility for their children's dropout might be put on their brothers, sisters and other family members, 6 of the parents think that due to the influence of friends and relatives their children dropped out. Besides 2 parents pointed out, mishap in family and other social reasons caused dropout of their 2 respective children.

However, the dropout children's' versions are little different. 14 of them believed that it was their respective families i.e. their parents brothers and sisters, who took the initiative to send them to schools. All the 24 dropouts admitted that, they were visiting home not only during holidays, but also during festive occasions and as and when called by their parents, of course with prior permission from the school authorities.

Contrary to the opinion of some of their parents, these dropouts except one of them do not think that their brothers, sisters, friends and relatives are responsible for discontinuation of their school education. Only one of them stated that, he felt lonely and isolated when his intimate friend who was also reading in the same school, left the school. After the friend's departure, he gave up and come back home. Moreover 5 of them put the blame on their parents and unavoidable family circumstances. They said their parents' unwillingness and mishap in the family caused their discontinuation of school education.

Another important social factor responsible for dropout incase of 1 girl student is early marriage. It is well known that tribal children who attend schools are little over aged. Many tribal girls and boys reading in high schools come within the age group of 12-18. A girl in tribal society above 16 years of age is considered fit for marriage. Either her parents and relatives arrange her marriage or the girl falls in love with a boy and elopes with him. The tribal society grants liberty to boys and girl to choose their mates freely without parental interference. Sometimes the boys and girls fall in love with each other, while reading in schools and go away to start their conjugal life, leaving the education behind.

- **Economic Condition:**

Perhaps the major hurdle to the progress of tribal education lies in the economic condition of tribal families. On one hand they cannot afford the cost

of their children's education and on the other, they cannot afford to lose their children's helping hands in their perpetual struggle for existence, by sending them to schools. When they admit their children in residential schools they lose both ways. Though Government have subsidized the cost of tribal education, in spite of implementation of several development programmes, the improvement of the economic conditions of the tribal, have not been speedier enough to minimize their economic dependence on their children.

The economic condition of the tribal people in our study area is no better. The data collected in respect of the 19 families of 24 dropout children gives a picture of the existing situation. Cultivation and wage earning form the mainstay of these families' economy. The largest chunk of them i.e. 17 has taken up cultivation as their primary occupation and the remaining 2, as secondary occupation. 11 families supplement their income out of wage earning, which they pursue as their secondary occupation as agricultural income is not sufficient to meet their consumption needs. Only 2 families earn their livelihood out of salaried jobs and for these families, agriculture is pursued as secondary source of livelihood. One family earns out of the job of political leadership and agriculture. After depletion of forests in the area the age old economic pursuit of collection of minor forest produce, has almost ended as none of the 19 families have reported about their engagement in this traditional gainful activity. It is significant to say that like forest collection activities, the shifting cultivation practices of the Saora for which they were known till the recent past seems to have declined considerably. Only 5 families have reported about their dependence on shifting cultivation as a secondary means of livelihood.

In spite of their dependence on agriculture and allied activities, the return is poor for several well-known reasons among which possession of small and less fertile land holdings is one. None of these target families possess wetlands more than 2.5 acres. To be specific, 15 families are marginal farmers having up to 1 Ac of wetland. Only 3 families have within 1.1 to 2.5 Acs. These families also possess some dry lands, swidden plots, orchards and kitchen gardens. The number of families having dry lands, orchards, kitchen gardens swiddens and orchards up to the extent of 1 Ac in each category is 13, 14, 18 and 14 respectively. There are 2 and 3 families with dry lands and swiddens within 1.1 Ac. to 2.5 Ac. Another 3 families have dry lands between 2.6 Ac. to 5 Ac. There are 2 families having dry land and orchards within 5.1 Ac. to 10 Ac.

Except from the wetlands and orchards the income from other categories of landholdings is small and uncertain. This is reflected in the income level of these families. 9 families come under annual income range of 13,000/- to 30,000/-, 7 in the range of 31,000/- to 60,000/- and the remaining 3 in the range of 61,000/- and above.

Agriculture-the main economic activity is labour intensive enterprise. Hence parents depend on their children's assistance. While boys are usually assigned outdoor jobs girls take up domestic chores as well as outdoor economic activities.

In this context questions were put to the 19 parents of dropout children as to whether they utilize the services of their children even though they are school going or not. All of them except one said that their children help them in various indoor and outdoor activities. The children who remain away in schools also render assistance when they come home during vacations. Sometimes, they bring their children from the schools to help them especially during busy agricultural seasons.

Regarding the kind of activities undertaken by their children, parents responded that they engaged their daughters for fetching water (9 cases), washing clothes and utensils (7 cases), sweeping, cleaning and plastering houses (9 cases), baby care (8 cases), cooking (7 cases), fetching firewood (10 cases), processing and storing food grains (6 cases) and agricultural and horticultural activities (14 cases). For their sons the kinds of works were baby care (5 cases), cattle grazing (8 cases) collection of fire wood and fodder (7 cases) and farm activities (16 cases).

When school going children are diverted to economic activities their studies hamper and it ultimately leads to their dropout. The majority of their parents i.e. 14 out of 19 admitted that their children discontinued their education for economic reasons.

The dropout students were found to be aware of the economic reasons that caused their dropout. As many as 11 ex-students felt that they gave up their studies for their economic backwardness. Particularly in case of 6 girls, they had to leave for unavoidable family circumstances.

- **The Dropouts: Themselves**

A child is a product of his/her own environment. Nature and culture mould his/her conduct and personality. When he/she is put into a non-traditional field like the formal education, he /she evaluate the benefits in terms of satisfying his/her needs. When any immediate benefits are not foreseen, he/she loses interest. Sometimes there are many hurdles to be overcome. The attraction of the carefree life in home becomes stronger. His/her lack of interest in pursuing studies becomes visible in her absenteeism, overstay at home and poor performance in examination. Then time comes, when he/she abandons the school in the middle of a session or dropout at the end of the session because of failure in the annual class promotion examination. Sometime he/she leaves under compelling circumstances related to family,

economy and socio-cultural factors. But in some cases he /she drops out for his/her own reasons. In that case he /she invents excuses against leaving the school. Some cases of dropout of this kind have been found during out study.

2 of the 24 dropouts interviewed said that they did not like to stay in the school hostel because; they did not pull on well with their fellow boarders. 1 of the dropouts was unhappy for non-availability of a hill stream nearby for his bathing. 2 of them said that they left the school for fear of punishment by their teachers as they were not reading well. One of them said that he did not like to waste time in school as he was not a good student.

Their parents found the fault with them. 13 of the 19 parents said that they had sent their children to schools for education. But they gave up their studies on their own decision.

(V)

Summary Findings and Conclusion

The two residential high schools i.e., one co-education school at Badakalakote and one girls high school at Gumma are established in Gumma block and Serango Police Station of Gajapati district. They lie at a distance of 32 Kms and 25 kms from the district headquarters Parlakhemundi.

The schools are running in their own building. There are some infrastructure inadequacies like non-availability of separate rooms for Headmaster's /Headmistress, teacher's common room, office room, library, workshops, students' common room, latrine, urinal etc. The existing buildings are also in a poor state of repair and maintenance.

Tribal students who continue as boarders get stipend from the Govt. Till 1998-99 the rate of monthly stipend for boys was Rs.200/- and for girls , Rs. 225/-. From 1999-2000 the amount has been raised to Rs.300/- and Rs.325/- respectively. This amount is not adequate to meet cost of food, toiletries, medicines and school uniforms. Moreover it is not received regularly.

The sanctioned strength of the teaching staff is 15 in each of the schools. All the posts are filled up except one in Gumma Girls high School.

Because of harsh climatic conditions and inadequacy of existing health care facilities in the area, the tribal students of these schools suffer from some common diseases like, malaria, typhoid, diarrhea, dysentery, influenza, skin diseases etc. They usually receive treatment from the Primary Health Center at Gumma and the Christian Hospital at Serango.

The record of attendance of students in both the schools for the session 1998-99 shows that, larger incidences of irregular attendance is seen in the month of July, the beginning month of academic session when students are enrolled in the schools. Irregular attendance is also reported in the month of December, January and February, the time for 'X' mass celebrations, other local festivals and crop harvesting. Agriculture being a major labour intensive operation the children are usually required to stay at home to assist their parents. Comparatively the girl students of Gumma Girls High School have better records of attendance than the boys of Badakalakote High School.

As regards the dropout pattern and the movements of batches of tribal students who entered in various classes starting from class IV to X between 1992-93 to 1998-99 were monitored to find out how many of them left and how many actually continued till class X, finally appeared the H.S.C. Examination and passed. While calculating the class wise vertical dropout rate in Gumma, Girls High School it was found that class VI in 1994-95 sessions with 66.67 percent dropout rate topped list among all the classes. In case of other classes, it was below 30 percent except class V (1995-96) where it was 0 percent. It was evident that dropout rate is the lowest in the primary level i.e. class IV and V, highest at the middle level i.e., class VI and VII and moderate at the higher level i.e., class VIII, IX & X.

In Badakalakote High School the highest dropout is recorded in class VIII (39.4%) and the lowest, in class X (6.9%). For the other classes it varied between 8 - 33 percent.

To account for the total dropouts as against total enrolments in all the seven classes of both the schools, it is found that out of the total 90 ST students enrolled in different classes in successive session between 1992-93 to 1998-99 in Badakalakote High School, more than two third i.e., 63(70%) have dropped out at different stages. Among the dropouts, who left the school after their failure in annual class promotion exams, and the remaining 17 (18.89%) are mid-session dropouts. For Gumma Girls High School, this dropout rate was higher at 75.34 percent with 55 students dropping out of total enrolment of 73 ST students. Among these dropouts the "end session" and mid-session" dropouts have almost equal shares. Thus the total dropout rates against total enrolment in all the classes between 1992-93 to 1998-99 in both the schools were closer between 70-75 percent. That means among every 5 students entered into both the schools in different classes, only 1 could go to the level of class X and remaining four left on the way.

As regards the performance of ST students in the H.S.C Exam 1998-99 it has been observed that out of total 27 class X students of Badakalkote H.S and 18 class X students of Gumma Girls H.S. who appeared the exam, only 13

(48.15%) and 6 (33.33%) respectively passed out. That means the students of Badakalkote have recorded a better success rate in the H.S.C. Exam than their female counterparts of Gumma Girls H.S. This pass rate is lower than that of the ST students of all the Schools of the State for 1998-99, which is 60.36 percent. But it is not bad when compared with the pass rate of ST students in all the Welfare Department Schools of the State in that year which is 33.48 %.

The horizontal dropout pattern has been calculated by watching the movements of various batches of students entered the school in different successive classes from class IV to X between 1992-93 and 1998-99 till they reached the highest class i.e. class X and appeared the H.S.C. Exam. 1999. In respect of Gumma Girl's H.S. it is observed that in the batch of 16 students admitted in class IV during 1992-93, 11 (68.75%) students dropped out leaving only 5 (31.25%) to reach the level of class X who also appeared the H.S.C. Exam. 1999 and 3 (18.75%) of them passed out. For another 3 batches comprising 3, 30 and 3 students who entered in class V, VI, VII in 1993-94, 1994-95 and 1995-96 the dropout rates were 66.67 percent (2 students), 87 percent (26 students) and 66.67 percent (2 students) respectively. The remaining 1 (33.33%), 4 (13.33%) and 1 (33.33%) respectively reached class X and appeared the HSC Exam. But their pass rate was 0 percent as none of them were successful. Another batch of 20 students joined in class VIII in 1996-97, 15 (75%) of them left and the rest continued up to class X and sat in the HSC Exam. 1999. Only one student was admitted in class IX in 1997-98. She continued up to class X, appeared in HSC Exam. 1999 and passed out recording a pass rate of 100 percent.

The horizontal dropout pattern for Badakalakote H.S. reveals that various batches of students composing 23, 2, 34, 7, 24 and 1 were enrolled in class IV, V, VI, VII and IX between 1992-93 to 1997-98 respectively. Leaving behind the dropouts such as 20 (87%), all the 2 (100%), 27 (79.4%), 6 (86%) and 8 (33.33%) the remaining 3 (13.04%), 0 (0%), 7 (20.06%), 1 (14.3%), and 16 (66.67%) respectively continued till they reached class X and appeared the HSC. Exam 1999. Their corresponding pass rates were 8.7 percent (2 students), 0 percent, 14.7 percent (5 students), 0 percent and 25 percent (6 students) respectively.

A host of factors are found to be responsible for causing tribal dropouts in forms of wastage and stagnation. These factors have been categorized under two broad heads (i) Institutional and (ii) Socio-Economic.

The important institutional factors are (a) School's location in terms of distance from the students home, (b) Infrastructural inadequacies in the schools (c) Students' health problems and existing health care facilities, (d) Existing holiday pattern and school timings, (e) Problem of curriculum and medium of

instruction, (f) Problem of getting right type of teachers, (g) Existing stipend and other provisions and (h) Existing hostel facilities.

Regarding the location factor it is found that students from distant places are admitted as boarders in these schools. Local students read there as day scholars.

The boarders of Badakalakote High School come from a distance of 5-25 Kms and those of Gumma Girl's High School come from a distance of 5-100 kms. When the tribal students come and stay in the school away from home, they feel isolated and homesick. Most of the dropout children of both the schools and their parents admitted that they suffered from homesickness, which eventually caused their dropout.

Certain infrastructural inadequacies like lack of accommodation for library and reading room, workshops, teacher's common room, students common room, room for indoor games, developed playground, septic latrines, modern educational aids, and audio-visual gadgets and poor state of maintenance of existing infrastructures not only causes inconvenience to the students and teachers, it is also reflected in lack of interest and attachment of the tribal students in the educational institution.

The tribal students, because of their poor state of health and nutrition, suffer from some common diseases like malaria, typhoid, stomach trouble, skin diseases, viral infections etc. when they fall ill their friends and teachers take care of them and they receive medical treatment from the local health center at Gumma. The costs of medicines are met from their monthly stipend amount, which is very small. If the sickness is prolonged and the cost of treatment is higher the responsibility of treatment is transferred to their parents. In some cases, the care and treatment of sick students are not attended to properly neither in school nor at home. Since a sick student cannot become regular and attentive in his/her studies, he/she ultimately gives up.

Prevalent school timings and holiday pattern do not suit the local conditions and tribal cultural pattern. Therefore the attendance of tribal students goes down during specific periods in a year such as, at the time of crop harvesting, various labour intensive operations associated with shifting cultivation, social feasts and functions and annual rituals, fairs and festivals. Higher incidence of default in attendance in both the schools has been noticed in the months like July, January and February. Majority of parents are dissatisfied with the existing school timings and holiday pattern.

The prescribed curriculum and medium of instruction form a bottleneck in the progress of tribal education. Imparting education in the regional language-Oriya, which is different from the mother tongue of tribal

students, creates problems for the tribal students, especially for those reading in lower classes in understanding the lessons properly. Non-availability of tribal teachers or the tribal students, who can make the students understand the lessons by translating in tribal language, makes the situation worse. Similarly the curriculum prescribed by the Board of Secondary Education, Orissa is not relevant to the tribal way of life. Most of the tribal students find difficulty to grasp subjects like MIL (Oriya), English, General Science and Geography for which the teachers have to take extra classes. Students complained about negligence of teachers and non-availability of textbooks being responsible for poor understanding of the subjects. The implications are communication gap between the teachers and students, poor academic performance of the students and finally the dropout of the tribal students.

Lack of right type of teachers for the schools functioning in the tribal area is a major problem. Tribal teachers or teachers with right motivation, and orientation in tribal language and culture are not available. Moreover there are also some male teachers posted in the Girl's high School. The non-tribal teachers also have their own problems of adjustment in the interior tribal area. Lack of regular supervision by the inspecting authorities makes them irregular and insincere in their attendance and works. Teacher's absenteeism is found to be chronic in both the schools as many teachers do not stay in the schools and commute daily, from the nearby town Paralakhemundi where their families live. These daily commuters reach the school after 11 am and leave by 3 p.m. Moreover, recruitment of disinterested teachers and their superiority complex acts contrary to the study atmosphere and causes setbacks to the educational development of tribal students. Some teachers reportedly engage tribal students in personal works. There is very little interaction between teachers and guardians to sort out the problems of the students. Majority of parents are not happy about the conduct of teachers. The victims of this situation are the tribal students and their education.

The stipend and other provisions for tribal student boarders are inadequate to meet their basic needs. Till 1998-99 the amount of stipend was Rs.200/- and Rs.225/- pm for the boys and girls students respectively. Since 1999-2000, the amount has been enhanced to Rs.300/- and Rs.325/- respectively. Out of this amount the student's fooding, school dress, medicines and toiletries are to be provided. At the present market prices, it becomes tough job to provide even two square meals a day to the boarders with this amount. Hence the students remain poorly fed and pressurize their parents to give them some extra pocket money. Majority of parents, teachers and students complained about the hardship faced by them for the meager stipend money, which is also not received timely. Besides, the stipend, the free books, stationeries and other facilities to be provided to the tribal students are also not received regularly and in time. As a result their studies are affected.

The hostel facilities for the tribal students in both the schools need improvement. Overcrowding of students in hostel rooms, lack of required number of cots, bedding mosquito nets, lighting arrangements, toilets etc. cause inconvenience for the students. The quality, quantity and taste of foods served to the boarders leaves much to be desired. They are served two principal meals in a day containing rice and dal. Vegetable curry, non-veg item, sweets and milk are occasional items. Majority of students grumbled about the food. Moreover, the students are often engaged in odd and menial jobs like fetching water and firewood, cleaning rooms and utensils, marketing, cooking and distribution of food, mess management, transportation of provisions for the mess etc., which also hampers their study. Some students and their parents are not satisfied with the existing arrangements in the school hostels.

The socio-economic situation in the tribal area plays crucial role in turning the children and their parents away from the domain of education. The key players in this field are parents, family, friends and relatives, the students himself/herself and their household economic conditions which have profound influence in shaping, the attitude, aptitude, ambition, aspiration, character and conduct of the tribal children. These are discussed under socio-economic factors responsible for causing dropouts.

Due to several socio-economic and cultural factors, the attitudes of tribal parents are not quite favorable towards their children's education. As most of the parents are illiterate and few have little education, they have very low level of awareness about the benefits of education for their children. The majority with their limited outlook could at best think of educating their children up to the secondary level, so that their sons can get a salaried job. Regarding their daughters the general opinion is that they are best suited to get married and become housewives.

The role of family, friends and relatives are nevertheless important in matter of education of tribal children. In all the 19 families covered under the study there are school dropouts. All these families interrupt their school going children's studies time and again by recalling them from the schools to attend emergencies, socio-religious functions and economic activities. They also allow children to overstay at home after vacations neglecting their studies. Many dropouts think that their family, brothers, sisters, friends and relatives are partly responsible for discontinuation of their studies.

Lower economic status of tribal families and their dependence on children for assistance in household works and economic pursuits is a major factor for causing dropouts. All the 19 parents of dropouts interviewed, admitted that they have taken the help of their children in their indoor and

outdoor activities. Majority of the parents are aware of the fact that their children had to discontinue their education for economic reasons.

A part of the responsibility for discontinuing education often lies with the child himself /herself. Some children prefer the carefree life at home to the rigorous routine in the school. Negligence in study, poor academic performance, fear of punishment and failure in exams create conditions for them to give up their studies and return home. Many parents know about this. They hold their children responsible for this outcome.

Conclusion:

Ever since independence, there have been continuous national efforts for promotion of tribal education in accordance with the constitutional provisions. But the achievements in this field do not commensurate with the investments and expectations. In spite of several promotional provisions like special residential and non residential schools in the tribal areas, reservation of seats in the educational institutions, provisions of scholarships, stipend, dress, reading and writing materials, free hostel accommodation, mid day meals etc, the level of literacy among the ST population of the state that remained at 22.21 percent as against 61.67 percent among the non ST and non SC population of the state as per 1991 census. Sex wise, the level of literacy for ST females is lower at 10.21 percent. It means there are still many impediments to the spread of tribal education and particularly the education of tribal females.

High level of dropout of tribal students is a major obstacle for the spread of tribal education. This is a disease caused by several factors, which have been discussed in the preceding pages with reference to the two high schools in an interior tribal sub-plan area. These findings of a micro-level study call for appropriate ameliorative measures to arrest such wastages by way of stagnation and dropouts.

Some suggestions are given below

1. Mismatch of school timings and holiday pattern with the local calendar of festivals and subsistence activities is a major cause for absenteeism of students which leads to their dropout at the end. In both the schools, higher incidence of student's absenteeism is found in the months of July, January and February which is the busy season for subsistence activities and communal fairs and festivals. So it will be better suited to the local conditions if the academic session begins in the middle of February and ends in December with provision of vacations in the months of July, January and first half of February. This issue needs handling by adoption of a flexible approach.

2. The distance factor between the school and students' home causes a feeling of alienation and homesickness among the students. Though it will be ideal to establish more educational institutions in the tribal areas to cut down this distance as much as possible, considering the financial constraints, this is not an easy task. However, some remedial measures like encouraging parents and relatives of distant villages to visit their wards in residential schools and the students to visit their native place at least 4 times during an educational session by reimbursing their cost of traveling would go a long way in tackling this psychological problem.
3. The existing infrastructure inadequacies in these schools which have a negative impact on the tribal students also deserve attention. Meaningful use of audiovisual aids, promotion of games and sports activities with provision of developed play ground library facilities and gardening facilities should be made to improve the school climate and strengthen the attraction of tribal children to the educational institution.
4. The health and nutritional problems of tribal children, which in many cases lead to their dropout, also deserve urgent attention. Existing provisions for fooding, medical treatment and health care are inadequate for the purpose. There is need for nutritional supplements, better fooding and accommodation, reimbursement of cost of medical treatments and regular health check up by doctors for the tribal students to improve their health conditions.
5. The bottlenecks created by the prescribed medium of instruction and curriculum need to be removed. Attempts should be made to impart education through the mother tongue- the local tribal language, particularly in the lower classes. Steps should be taken to transform the subject (content)- dominated syllabus into subject-work- oriented syllabus, which adequately reflects the tribal way of life and environment.
6. Meaningful use of audio-visual aids and innovative teaching methods to infuse knowledge of subjects and allied skills should be encouraged to improve the level of education and arrest the problem of dropouts.
7. Introduction of basic education along with agriculture and forestry would enhance the attraction of tribal students to the schools. It will also strengthen their adaptive capacity in respect of their local environment.
8. There is need for integration of general education with the art and culture of the local tribal communities to make it socially more acceptable and meaningful. Steps should be taken to prepare the syllabus and textbooks

in tribal language and culture to make it more relevant to the tribal students.

9. Arrangements should also be made for special coaching beyond normal school hours in subjects like English, General Science, Oriya and Geography that are considered difficult by the students.
10. To sustain the interest of tribal students in their studies, the teaching methods and classroom environment should be made lively and attractive.
11. The teachers should check home tasks given to students regularly.
12. Teachers should give special attention to improve the standards of the weak students.
13. Recruitment of right type of teachers with the right aptitude, orientation and motivation would help reduce the communication and cultural gap between tribal students and teachers.
14. It will be better to have tribal teachers. If trained and educated tribals are not available for the purpose in required numbers, non-tribal teachers having orientation in tribal language and culture may be appointed. More interested and committed persons who take up their duties and responsibilities sincerely should be selected.
15. No. male teachers and only female teachers should be posted in Girls High Schools.
16. Teacher's absenteeism and negligence of teaching responsibility, which directly affects the students, need to be checked by regular supervision. Besides the Inspector of Schools, the local district level officers such as the Collector, ADM, Sub-Collector, P.A., ITDA and DWO should inspect the High Schools and check the work and attendance of teachers and initiate disciplinary action against the delinquents.
17. The existing stipend and other provisions like books, stationeries, dress, etc, are not only inadequate but are also not provided in time. It will be better if all these except the monthly stipend are provided to the students at the time of enrolment.
18. The living conditions of boarders in the hostel need improvement. This calls for provision of better room accommodation, fooding, furniture, bedding, toilet facilities, recreational facilities, common rooms, sick beds, rooms for indoor games etc.

19. Library facility also needs improvement. Library well stocked with reference books and reading rooms should be provided.
20. The schools should be brought under participatory management comprising the teachers, parents, local N.G.Os, local officials, tribal leaders and elites.
21. Mid-day meals should be provided to all the students including the boarders and day scholars as the existing stipendiary provisions hardly give two square meals a day to the boarders.
22. It is a well-known fact that tribal parents depend upon the assistance of their children for their economic backwardness. Therefore they do not like to send their children to schools. If some kind of assistance can be given to the parents to compensate the economic loss, they would be interested to send their children to schools. Incentives in kinds rather than cash may be effective in this regard. For this purpose, provision of food stuffs costing not less than Rs.100/- per family per month may be made subject to the condition of regular attendance of the school going child.
23. The major reason for dropout is withdrawal of stipend and hostel facilities to the students who failed in the annual exam. Such students should be given a second chance. Teachers are required to make special efforts to improve their standards and elicit better performance from them.
24. Lack of interaction between tribal parents and teachers acts against the educational interest of the tribal students. Strict provisions should be made to organize parents- teachers- students meet on regular basis, say at least 2 times within a session. Teachers should take the initiative to revitalize the state of school- community relationship.
25. Enhancement of the level of literacy and awareness of the tribal parents is an essential precondition for checking dropouts. Vigorous promotion of adult literacy programmes with the help of local NGOs would be helpful to improve the conditions.
26. Another major cause of dropout is the migratory habit of tribal people of the study area in search of better wage and employment. Many people in the area go to North Eastern states like, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh to work as unskilled labourers as they earn better wages there. When parents go away they either take with them their children discontinuing their studies or leave them alone in the schools. In the absence of parents the left behind children feel insecure and they leave the school to take shelter with their relatives. Sometimes, some high school boys lured by the prospects of earning money move to North Eastern States with their

friends and relatives giving up their studies. This has to be stopped by creating opportunities for better wage and employment for the tribal people in the area through proper implementation of tribal development programmes.

References

- | | | |
|--|------|---|
| Govt. of Orissa,
Tribal Welfare Dept. | 1994 | <i>Tribal Education in Orissa in the context of Education for all by 2000 AD-A Status Paper</i> |
| Koilash | 1993 | <i>Tribal Education and Occupation</i> , Kanak Publications, New Delhi. |
| Mathur N. N. G. | 1994 | <i>Problems of Tribal Education</i> , Shiva Publishers, Udaypur |
| Panda, B. K. | 1996 | <i>Functions and Organisation of Tribal Schools</i> , Anamika Publishers, Delhi. |
| Shah, V. P. &
Tara Patel | 1985 | <i>Social Contexts of Tribal Education</i> , Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi. |

Table-3.1
ENROLMENT AND DROPOUT OF TRIBAL STUDENTS IN GUMA (K.C. PUR) GIRL'S HIGH SCHOOL

Class-IV (1992-93)			Class-V (1993-94)			Class-VI (1994-95)			Class-VII (1995-96)			Class-VIII (1996-97)			Class-IX (1997-98)			Class-X (1998-99)				
E	D/O	E	D/O	E	D/O	E	D/O	E	D/O	E	D/O	E	D/O	E	D/O	E	D/O	E	D/O	H.S.C.Exam. Result		
ES				IS		ES		T				IS		ES		T				IS	A	P
16 (100)	1 (6.25)	15 (93.75)	0 (93.75)	15 (93.75)	BCP (93.75)	-	9 (56.25)	9 (56.25)	9 (56.25)	6 (37.5)	1 (6.25)	5 (31.25)	BCP (31.25)	-	-	5 (31.25)	BCP (31.25)	-	5 (31.25)	-	5	3
		N (100)	-	3 (100)	BCP (100)	-	1 (33.33)	1 (33.33)	1 (33.33)	2 (66.67)	-	2 (66.67)	BCP (66.67)	-	-	2 (66.67)	BCP (66.67)	-	2 (66.67)	-	2	0
					N (100)	20 (66.67)	2 (6.67)	22 (73.33)	8 (26.67)	1 (3.33)	1 (3.33)	7 (23.33)	BCP (23.33)	1 (3.33)	1 (3.33)	5 (16.67)	BCP (16.67)	1 (3.33)	4 (13.33)	-	4	0
									N (100)	2 (66.7)	2 (66.7)	1 (33.33)	BCP (33.33)	-	-	1 (33.33)	BCP (33.33)	-	1 (33.33)	-	1	0
									N (100)		4 (20.0)	4 (20.0)	8 (40.0)	12 (60.0)	1 (5.0)	5 (25.0)	6 (30.0)	6 (30.0)	1 (5.0)	5 (25)	5	2
														N (100)	-	-	1 (100)	1 (100)	1 (100)	-	1	1
16 (100)	1 (6.25)	18 (100)	0 (100)	48 (100)	20 (41.7)	12 (25.0)	32 (66.67)	19 (100)	4 (21.05)	35 (100)	5 (14.3)	5 (14.3)	10 (28.6)	26 (100)	2 (7.7)	5 (19.23)	7 (26.9)	19 (100)	1 (5.26)	18 (100)	6 (33.33)	
Dropout rates of ST Students in Welfare Department Schools in the State														44.39		50.53		47.7				
Result of HSC Examination, 1999 (Percentage of pass) for ST students: STATE Welfare Deptt.. Schools																				60.36 33.48		

Note: Figures indicate number of students, Percentages are given in Brackets

Abbreviations- E-Enrolment, ES-End Session, IS -Intra Session, T -Total, D/O- Dropout, A- Appeared, P- Passed, N-New, BCP- By Class Promotion.

Table- 3. 2
ENROLMENT AND DROPOUT OF TRIBAL STUDENTS IN BADAKALAKOTE HIGH SCHOOL

Class-IV (1992-93)				Class-V (1993-94)			Class-VI (1994-95)			Class-VII (1995-96)			Class-VIII (1996-97)			Class-IX (1997-98)			Class-X (1998-99)				
E	D/O	IS		E	IS	ES	T	E	D/O			E	IS	ES	T	E	IS	A	P	F			
	E	D/O	IS						ES	T													
23 (100)	2 (8.7)	21 (91.3)	BCP (82.6)	2 (8.7)	2 (8.7)	6 (26.1)	8 (34.8)	BCP (47.8)	2 (8.7)	-	2 (8.7)	BCP (39.1)	5 (21.74)	BCP (17.4)	1 (4.35)	1 (4.35)	BCP (13.04)	3 (13.04)	-	3 (13.04)	2 (8.7)	1	
		N 2	BCP (50.0)	1 (50.0)	1 (50.0)	-	1 (50.0)	0 (0)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
			N 34 (100)	-	8 (23.5)	8 (23.5)	26 (76.5)	-	7 (20.59)	7 (20.59)	BCP (55.9)	7 (20.6)	12 (35.3)	5 (14.7)	-	BCP (20.6)	7 (20.6)	-	7 (20.6)	5 (14.7)	2 (5.9)		
							N 7 (100)	-	3 (42.46)	3 (42.86)	BCP (57.14)	1 (14.3)	3 (42.7)	-	1 (14.3)	BCP (28.6)	2 (28.6)	1 (14.3)	1 (14.3)	-	1 (14.3)		
													N 24 (100)	-	7 (29.16)	BCP (70.8)	17 (70.8)	1 (4.17)	16 (66.7)	6 (25.01)	10 (41.67)		
Total 33 (100)	2 (8.7)	23 (100)	54 (100)	3 (5.55)	14 (25.9)	17 (31.5)	44 (100)	2 (4.55)	10 (22.7)	12 (27.3)	32 (100)	13 (39.4)	43 (100)	5 (11.6)	9 (20.93)	14 (32.56)	29 (100)	2 (6.9)	27 (100)	13 (48.15)	14 (51.85)		

Note: Figures indicate number of students, Percentages are given in Brackets

Abbreviations- E-Enrolment, ES-End Session, IS-Intra Session, T-Total, D/O-Dropout, A-Appeared, P-Passed, N-New, BCP- By Class Promotion

THE CHANGING PATTERN OF SAORA LEADERSHIP *

J. K. Baral ¹

R.C. Sahu ²

Introduction

During British days tribal areas were mostly secluded. Except Christian missionaries and a few government officials, hardly did any other outsiders enter into the areas. However, after independence tribals began to be exposed to the forces of modernization though in a slow and halting pace. This has led to some changes in tribal societies including the pattern of tribal leadership. Old age has lost its importance as a factor of leadership. Young and educated tribals are slowly creeping into power structures. Similarly a tribal imbued with "cosmopolitaness" is being preferred as a leader. In tribal communities leaders are generally selected through "consensus". So far this principle of consensus has not faced serious challenge. Factionalism is yet to seriously afflict the tribal society. In tribal village leadership is characterized by "polymorphism". However, if the village is either modernized and/or large on size, it is likely to be characterized by monomorphism.

In the present paper we have tried to know if the changing pattern of tribal leadership mentioned above is also evident in the Saora society. Saoras one of the largest tribal groups of Orissa, lives in (former undivided) Koraput and Ganjam districts. Our observations are based on our study of the Saoras of the Ganjam district only.

Traditional -vs - Modern Leaders

In the past the head of the Saora village called Gomango was the most important leader of the village. In managing the village affairs he was assisted by a committee of some persons-usually five- including the Jani the religious head.

* Published in ADIBASI, Vol. XXIX, No.1, 1989, pp. 7-11.

¹ Professor & Head, P G Department of Political Science, Berhampur University

² Assistant Director, Adult, Continuing Education and Extension, Berhampur University

The committee of elders was democratic in structure and it encouraged free discussion. But in cases of division within the committee the decision of the head prevailed. The Jani, apart from performing *puja* which invariably required offering sacrifices, was also consulted by the villagers for their health problems. For them he was the doctor who administered country medicines made of herbs to the patients.

The introduction of Panchayatiraj has seriously undermined the status and powers of the traditional village head. At present the important persons in Saora villages are the Ward Members and Sarpanchas. While there is one Sarpancha for many Saora villages, at least each Saora village of an average size has a Ward Member. The Ward Member, being an elected leader, has emerged much more powerful than the traditional head. He is link between the villagers and external authorities. Further, he plays an important role in distributing governmental benefits among the villagers. Moreover, being the most important vote bank of the village, he has some leverage *vis-a-vis* the leaders of upper layers like M.L.A., Block Chairman and Sarpanch. This linkage factor has made the Ward Member influential at the cost of the village head.

Because of increased exposure of Saoras to the forces of modernization like education and communication media there has taken place a significant change in the attitude and values of Saoras. Their blind beliefs are yet to disappear. But it is evident that they have been able to give up at least a few of these. Their attitudes towards authorities have similarly undergone some change. Some of them have either given up drinking altogether or are taking less wine than they were drinking in the past. In fifties and sixties family planning was unheard of in the Saora society. However, with the passage of time, their suspicion and inhibition about it are slowly melting away. Almost in every Saora village today there are some men and women who have undergone family planning operation. They have come to believe that modern medicines are more efficacious than country medicines. In fact many of them have developed fondness for injection and tablets. This has greatly weakened the influence of Jani as the village doctor. In fact, in course of interview, the Jani of Guar confessed that his mantras and medicines were no longer working and that he failed to cure last year the wife of Labanya Mandal, the Ward Member of the village.

In the past age, the village leaders were invariably elderly persons whose voices carried weight. However, with the passage of time, age has lost much of its traditional importance in determining Saora leadership. Many Sarapanchas and Ward Members today are either young or middle-aged persons. Further, education and external exposure are increasingly becoming salient features of Saora leadership today. For example, Dandapani Nayak, the present Saranpanch of Tumba, served in the Navy for 15 years before he entered into politics. Though a Saora he was elected uncontested. Apana Gouda, who was the Sarapanch of Tumba for nearly 20 years, did not dare contest him. His educational and naval

background lent great strength to Dandapani's candidature for the post of Sarapanch. Similarly, Rusi Mala Bishoyee, the informal but effective leader of Banpur, is an educated, young Saora serving as a peon in the office of the Tumba Development Agency.

Young and educated Saoras started entering local politics mostly during the last decade. But since long the post of M.L.A has attracted young and educated members of the Saora community. All the Saora M.L.As elected from Ramagiri Constituency since 1971 have been young and educated. Starting with Gorsango Sabar who has been elected thrice, other Saora M.L.A. like Chakradhar Paika and Haladhar Karjee are both educated and young. None of them, in his first attempt to become M.L.A, was more than 40. Two of them (Paika and Karjee) have passed M.A. However, as contrast to the post of M.L.A, the post of Block Chairman has mostly been occupied by less educated and elderly Saoras. But, as more and more young and educated Saoras will be attracted towards politics, the hold of middle-aged and older Saoras on Blocks and Grama Panchayats will gradually decline. A common characteristic of Saora leaders at different level is their relatively good economic background. Most of these M.L.A, Block Chairman and Sarapanchas are economically much better off than other members of the community. Good economic background besides lending the leaders concerned prestige and influence is of much help to him at the time of election. This is line with general trend of elite recruitment in our society.

Functions of Leaders

Village elders including the village head continue to have a big say in the social, cultural and religious activities of the village, although in course of time, in these matters also the role of modern leaders is on increase. In the field of conflict-resolution, modern leaders are today much more influential than traditional leaders. The modern Saora leaders tend to accompany villagers if the latter have works with local authorities or in towns and cities. But they are yet to excel in this role. They lack necessary education, exposure and self-confidence. However, in course of time, their performance in this role will improve.

It is now difficult to find out the sphere of village life which is free from the influence of modern leaders. At the beginning of the introduction of Panchayatraj there was a clear-cut division of functions between traditional and modern leaders. Day by day this compartmentalization of functions is slowly giving into the overlapping of functions increasingly in favour of modern leaders.

Our study shows that Saora leadership is generally polymorphic. In other words, a Saora leader performs more than one function. However, in relatively more modernized villages, Saora leaders are seen to be increasingly less polymorphic and moving towards mono-morphism, it is rare, contrary to the assertion of B. Singh, that in such villages Saora leaders have become

monomorphic. The reality is that as a village moves on the modernization path, there is a gradual decrease in the number of functions that Saora leaders had been performing since long. But this decrease would stop somewhere, particularly in a backward society like Saoras before they are confined to one function each, in other words, even in modernized and large Saora villages, the leaders are seldom one-function men, though they are not performing as many functions as they used to do in the past.

Oligarchic Leadership

In Saora society leadership has been confined only to a few families which are usually interrelated by social bondage or some other tie. In many cases one who was the traditional leader changed over to the new leadership position or got one of his family or close relations placed in the position. In many Saora villages both the traditional leader and new leader belong to the same family or to the same kin group. Another feature of modern leadership in Saora villages is that for years together the same man continues to stay in an elective post without any contest. Between 1967 and 1984 four Panchayat elections have been held and in the two Saora villages of Bodokurango of Tumba Gram Panchayat and Jaganathpur of Chandargiri Gram Panchayat, the same persons have been elected unopposed. Chelligada Gram Panchayat comparatively a big Saora village and located by the side of the National Highway, presents a good example of oligarchic leadership in the Saora society. From 1967 till today the Chelligada Gram Panchayat has had four Sarapanchs and all of them belong only to two families of the village. Chakradhara Paika, a member of one of these two families, was elected as M.L.A. for one term (1974 to 1977). He is M.A in political Science, and has a Law degree.

Besides political power, the members of the families of Saora leaders are better placed to gain other powers and benefits. They have better prospects in the Job market, and they have slowly started entering business. The family of Gorsango Sabar who was a M.L.A from Ramagiri Constituency for 3 terms between 1971 and 1984 is quite illustrative. Laxman Sabar, his elder brother, is a gazetted officer of the State Government while Petua Sabar, his younger brother, is a Contractor of the Gumma Block.

Internal Dikku

Before independence the Saora were being exploited mostly by Pano Christians. This process continued for some years even after independence. The implementation of developmental schemes in tribal areas created a new class of exploiters, comprising the official of Block, Bank, Police and a few other government officers whose primary job is to help tribal in being developed. In recent years another group of exploiters has emerged on the scene. Ironically enough they are Saora themselves. Some Saora leaders have succeeded in enjoying a share of the spoils at the cost of their fellow members. A Saora leader

collects money from the members of his community by promising jobs and transfer and by distributing control dealership and tribal certificates. He may also join hands with clean caste leaders and officials of the area in exploiting Saoras. It has been alleged that Gorsango Sabar, an ex-M.L.A., was regularly collecting money from the local B.D.Os and Engineers. But it is obvious that the latter were paying these amounts out of the developmental money at their disposal. Thus, in the real sense it was the money, meant for the development of Saoras, which found its way into the packets of the M.L.A.

However, in fairness to Saora leaders we may point out that misappropriating development fund is not their monopoly. It is an all India phenomenon and the persons involved belong to high castes as well as other castes including the depressed communities. Further, it is the higher level leaders, particularly the M.L.As and Block Chairmen, who get a large share of such bad money and the number of the Saora M.L.As and Block Chairmen in Ganjam is very small (in the whole district there is only one Saora M.L.A and 5 Saora Block Chairmen).

Outside Leaders

In the past, Saoras had little contact with the external world. It is the Panos living nearby who acted as mediators between them and outsiders. This pattern has to a great extent, changed in the mean time. Many outsiders with different motivations and functions are now living in Saora areas. They include developmental functionaries like Block and Bank personnel, school teachers, doctors, contractors and the activities of voluntary agencies. Apart from delivering some immediate benefits to Saoras, they are helping, directly or indirectly in increasing their awareness, efficiency and participation. In the long run the latter benefits may prove to be much more productive than what they get in the form of money. Of these persons the school teachers stay closest to Saoras. Because of day today contact and physical proximity Saoras regard the school teacher as their main adviser on village matters as well as political and developmental issues. To a lesser extent, this is also true of other external actors whose success in terms of winning the confidence of Saoras significantly depends on their individual character and functioning style.

The external actors living in Saora areas have not been an unmixed blessing. Some of them have turned out to be exploiters of tribals. They try to earn by taking advantage of the ignorance and illiteracy of tribals. In this respect, the worst offenders are the school teachers and Block officials. Many teachers draw salary for months without attending schools. The officials of Education Department whose job is to supervise these teachers close their eyes primarily because they have a share in the booty. A large part of the developmental money, thus, goes to the pockets of the elected leaders and officials of the Block and other related departments.

Ethnic Tension

If two Saora leaders, competing against each other happen to belong to two different sub-groups, their fight is likely to take ethnic character. The contest between Gorsango Sabar, the Congress Candidate and Chakradhara Paika, an opposition candidate, was of this type. The Lanjia Saora voters tended to vote for Gorsango Sabar who is a Lanjia Saora, and Suddha Saoras generally cast their votes for Chakradhar Paika who is a Suddha Saora. As Lanjia Saoras are much more numerous than Suddha Saoras, Gorsango Sabar more than his opponent tried to exploit this ethnic factor. A similar trend was repeated in the last Assembly election, though with the difference. The non-Lanjia Saoras including Suddha Saoras, Bhimo Saoras and Jurei Saoras backed Haladhar Karjee who is a Jurei Saora. But unlike the past Gorsango failed to get most of the votes of Lanjia Saoras. Kirtan Sabar, a Lanjia Saora is the influential Chairman of Gumma Block. Being unhappy with the failure of Gorsango Sabar to sincerely work for his constituency Kirtan revolted against him and succeeded in persuading a large number of Saora voters to side with Haladhar Karjee. Thus, ethnicity is potentially an important factor of Saora leadership, but its potency would decline in some situations.

New Mood

For Legislative Assembly seats there is reservation for Harijans and tribals. But for the post of Sarpanch and Panchayat Samiti Chairman there is no such reservation. In Ganjam district only one Assembly seat (Ramgiri) is reserved for tribals. As the local tribals happen to be Saoras, it is always a Saora who has been representing this constituency in the Assembly from the beginning. Many Saoras also live in other Assembly constituencies like Parlakhemundi, Mohana and Chikiti. But so far no Saora leader has ever dared to contest in the Assembly election in any of these three constituencies.

In the initial stage of the establishment of the Panchayati Raj in Orissa influential clean caste persons were nominated as Chairman of some Panchayat Samiti though most of the local people were Saoras. Even after these posts were contested the Saoras did not have courage to offer themselves as candidates. However in course of time the pattern has changed and some of these Panchayat Samitis today have Saoras as Chairmen. An illuminating example of the assertiveness on the part of Saoras is Gumma Panchayat Samiti. From 1961 to 1984 Gumma Block had always a clean caste Chairman belonging to either the Bishoyee family of Gumma or the Bishoyee family of Gaiba (during British time the Bishoyee of Gumma and Gaiba were the local rulers). However, in 1984 Kirtan Sabar, who for a long time was the Sarpanch of Kolakote Panchayat of Gumma Block, declared his candidature for the post of Block Chairman. He was so popular and so sure of winning that neither Gumma Bishoyee nor Gaiba Bishoyee had the courage to contest him. This cleared the way for the unopposed victory of Kirtan Sabar. Today in four other Panchayat Samities of

Parlakhemundi sub-division, the Saoras are holding the posts of Chairmen. As said earlier in some Gram Panchayats which for a long time had clean caste Sarapanchas, young and educated Saoras have been elected as Sarapanchs. A case in point is Dandapani Nayak, the Sarapanch of Tumba.

Conclusion

Saoras are changing. So is their leadership structure. The powers and prestige of traditional leaders are on wane, while those of modern leaders are on increase, although it is not strictly a zero-cum game. In the new power structures that emerged at different levels after Independence, all of those located even in Saora areas are not fully controlled by Saoras. Many of these are dominated by clean caste people. It is only a few Saoras elites like M.L.A. or a few Panchayat Samiti Chairmen who exercise some powers. Most of other modern Saora leaders at the Gram Panchayat and village levels have powers more in name than in practice. They are generally content with their official designation and marginal benefits. Their ignorance, poverty and long-existing fear for outsiders greatly inhibit them for asserting themselves. However, their difference would tend to be overcome by education, higher post and long tenure of office. While education enables a Saora leader to be familiar with rules and regulations and to communicate better, long tenure gives him confidence to assert himself. A higher elective post provides a Saora leader with ample powers to assert himself vis-à-vis Government officials and clean caste leaders. Educated Saoras are slowly being attracted towards politics although their number, to date, is very small.

Expect a few at the higher level of power structure, Saora leaders, in general, have very limited view of the world around them. They are familiar with the names of Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi. But they do not know any other names at the centre. They are ignorant of Biju Patnaik, an Ex-Chief Minister of Orissa and Janaki Ballav Patnaik, the present Chief Minister of Odisha. They remember the name of their local M.L.A., although many of them have not seen or talked to him. One Naib-Sarapanch, Bhimo Saora by caste said, 'Rajib Gandhi is the Chief Minister of Orissa'. They have little idea about the political dynamic at different levels.

The Saora leaders are aware of the poverty and backwardness of Saoras. But to them development mostly means getting Government loan for buying bullocks and goats, to start small business or to reclaim land. They possess little knowledge of perspective, objective and strategy of tribal development.

Though they are aware of large-scale pilferage of developmental funds by Government officials they, in general, lack courage and articulation to protest against this. On the other hand, some of them have shown the tendency of themselves pocketing a part of this money in league with these officials. Having realized that Indian democracy number matters in power-game, they have started challenging the traditional monopoly of clean caste leaders in local power

structures. But they are yet to develop the required consciousness, motivation and courage to make serious efforts for the removal of poverty, ignorance and exploitation of Saoras.

References

- Patnaik, N.: 1974, "Political Modernization in Traditional Society: A study in Political Anthropology of Four Villages in Mysore and Orissa", NIRD, Hyderabad, unpublished Manuscript, P. 125.
- Patnaik, N.: 1969, "Profile of Leadership in Ruruban: A Present Community in Orissa", *Behavioural Sciences and Community Development*, Vol. 3, No.1, Hyderabad, pp. 991-1000.
- Panda, K. C.: 1980, "Factionalism in Tribal Villages of Orissa," *Man in India*, Vol. 60, Nos. 1-2, Ranchi, P. 68.
- Singh, Bhupinder: 1984, "The Saora Highlander: Leadership and Development", Somaiya Publications, Bombay, P.160.
- Mohapatra, Sitakanta: 1976, "The Insider Diku: Boundry Rules and Marginal Man in Santal Society", *Man in India*, Vol. 56, pp. 37-49.
- B. B. Jena, J. K. Baral and K. S. Padhy, "The Tribal Voters: A case study of Ramagiri Assembly Constituency", in B. B. Jena and J. K. Baral, eds. *Election Politics and Voting Behaviour in India* (Discovery, Delhi, 1989), P.79.

ELECTIONS AND PATTERNS OF LEADERSHIP IN TWO LANJIA SAORA VILLAGES OF GUMA PANCHAYAT SAMITI IN GANJAM DISTRICT*

*N. Patnaik*¹

*H. S. Mishra*²

Introduction

This paper is based on a study taken up in Ragedi and Tahajang villages of Gumma Panchayat Samiti. These are medium sized villages predominantly inhabited by the Lanjia Saoras. Ragedi is a ward of Kalakota Grama Panchayat and Tahajangjs of Tarangada Grama Panchayat. The points of differences outnumber those of the similarities between these two villages.

The theme of the study in these two villages is related to the mode of election to the offices of Grama Panchayats and Panchayat Samiti and types of leadership which entered into the political arena of statutory local Government. The report also contains brief observations of election campaign and voting behaviours of the Saoras of Gumma Block in general and of the study villages in particular during the last Lok Sabha election.

Past Revenue Administration in Ganjam Maliahs

When Ganjam was a part of Madras Presidency during British regime its highlands were divided into several hill tracts called Maliahs which were under the Divisional charge of the Senior and Special Assistant Agents and the Goomsur General Deputy Collector. The Maliahs which were under the Senior Assistant Agent consisted of Parlakimedi highlands with an area of 354 square miles and population of 52, 309 according to the Census of 1891.

* Published in ADIBASI, Vol. XVI, No. 3, October 1976, pp. 1-15

¹ Director, THRTI, Bhubaneswar

² Junior Research Officer, THRTI, Bhubaneswar

The Kimedi Maliahs (Parlakimedi, PeddaKimedi and China Kimedi) were formerly ruled over by the chieftain of Parlakimedi. But a portion of these Maliahs was assigned to a younger branch of the ruling family in 1607. After about 169 years, that is, in 1776 this portion which was assigned to the younger branch of the Parlakimedi chieftaincy was subdivided into two territories, one of which remained with the elder brother, whence the name Pedda Kimedi and the other portion fell to the share of the younger brother of the ruling family, whence the name China Kimedi. During British rule Parlakimedi Zamindar and other Kimedi Zamindars held their respective Maliahs under Sanad on service tenure. As stipulated in the Sanad the Kimedi Zamindars used to pay Nazarana annually to the British Government.

The Maliahs which were under the chieftain of Parlakimedi were subdivided into 11 minor territories called *muttahs*. They were:-

1. Gumma and Gyba
2. Serango
3. Ajayagada
4. Rayagada
5. Narayanpuram
6. Namanagada
7. Kamalsingi
8. Jirango
9. Gundahati
10. Koipuram
11. Labanyagada

Each of these Muttahs was under a Muttah-head called by various names such as Bissoyi and Patro. The headquarters of each of the Bissoyis was situated in a strategic position in the Muttah and served as a fort. The Bissoyis were established in a species of feudal tenure by the Parlakimedi chieftain for keeping the inhabitants (which were almost entirely Saoras) of their respective Muttahs under control. The British authorities designated the Bissoyis as the "Wardens of the Marches".

Each Bissoyi had maintained a number of Huddadars who represented the rank and file of the feudal order. The Huddadars were classified into five hierarchical orders. In order of hierarchy they are:

1. Dandasena
2. Majhi
3. Dalapati
4. Pradhan; and
5. Dalei

To assist the Huddadars in their work the Bissoyi had appointed a number of Paiks or Pesenias who formed the militia of the feudal order. Each Huddadar was allotted 7 to 8 Paiks who were not classified by any hierarchical order. The functions of Bissoyi, Huddadar and Paik are stated below.

Bissoyi

As stated, Bissoyi was the administrative head of his Muttah. His main work was to collect land revenue and house tax from the Saoras inhabiting his Muttah. He was also in charge of developmental programmes such as construction of roads, and digging of tanks and irrigation channels. For example, the Bissoyi of Gumma Muttah constructed the road from Parlakimedi town to Gumma village. Without Bissoyi's signature in the sale deeds no land transactions in the Muttah were valid. The Bissoyi was also responsible for settling inter and intra village disputes.

Huddadar

The work of Huddadar was to supervise the works of Paiks and to carry out Bissoyi's orders. It was also his responsibility to look to the comforts of high-ranking persons and their entourage during their tour in his area and arrange supplies for their camps and porters to carry their luggage. He was also responsible for their safety. He supervised the timely collection of Tanning (land tax collected in the shape of kind), *sistu* (land tax in cash), and *tarnia* (house tax) from the *ryots*. In payment for the services rendered the Huddadar was allotted two or three villages and the entire amount of *tanning*, *sistu* and *tarnia* collected from these villages was his service charges. He also enjoyed a share from the Peseni collected by the Paiks from the *ryots* towards their own remuneration. Besides these payments the Huddadar was given some Inam lands by the Bissoyi and these land were tax free.

Paik

The Paiks were the militia-men of the Bissoyi who assigned them to the Huddadar to help them in land revenue collection from the *ryots*. He also allotted two or three villages to each Paik for his maintenance. Besides military services the Paiks also served as messengers to the Huddadars. Whenever any village failed to pay the *tanning*, *tarnia* and *sistu* in time (usually payment of these dues was made by the *ryots* in December-January) the Paiks visited these villages and served notice of the Bissoyi on the defaulters and arranged quick collections of the dues from them. If the Bissoyi had any message to be communicated to the Huddadars he got it done through the Paiks.

For the services rendered to the Bissoyi and Huddadars, the Paiks were paid in kind at the rate of 10 *manas* of grain yearly per household from the villages which were allotted to them. The Paiks themselves collected their due

called Peseni from the *ryots* of the villages which were assigned to them. In addition to Peseni the Paiks held Inam lands which were given by the Bissoyi for the services they rendered to him.

Gomanga

The lowest position in the echelon of the feudal order was that of the Gomanga who served as the head of the village. There was a Gomanga in each village and his duties were to collect *tarnia*, *tanning* and *sistu* from the *ryots* of his village. The Bissoyi fixed the amount of the dues to be paid by each village and the Gomanga collected it and paid to the Paik in charge of his village. The Gomanga was also responsible for deciding disputes and maintaining law and order in his village. If the dispute was of complicated nature beyond his control he referred it to the Bissoyi who settled it with the help of his courtiers at the headquarters. The Gomanga's duty in this respect was to escort the aggrieved parties to the Bissoyi's court and explain the dispute to the Bissoyi at the time of arbitration. If it was an inter village dispute the Gomangas of the disputed villages convened a common meeting and settled the matter in the presence of the elders of the disputed villages. Failing to adjudicate the case the Gomangas referred the matter to the Bissoyi whose decision was final.

Types of Revenue

As stated above there were mainly three types of revenue collected from the *ryots* such as 1. Tanning, 2. Tarnia and 3. Sistu. The land revenue collected in the shape of paddy from the Saora villages was called Tanning. The land revenue and the house tax collected in cash from the non-tribal villages were called Sistu. The house tax collected in cash was locally called Tarnia. It means that Sistu consisted of Tanning and Tarnia in cash. As exceptional cases some Saora villages paid Sistu not Tanning. For example, the cluster of nine Saora villages included in Kalakote Illaka (area) paid *sistu* to the Bissoyi of Gumma Muttah. Some of the non-tribal villages which paid Sistu to the Bissoyi of Gumma Muttah are Nilakanthapur, Adanguda, Tamaranda, Parida, Bapangadi Laaba which lie in the plains. Previously the Saora villages which were included in Kalakota Illaka were paying Tanning of 100 *gadisa* (12,000 kgs.) of paddy to the Bissoyi of Gumma Muttah. C.F. Mac Cartie, the acting Principal Assistant Agent of Ganjam in 1881, felt that the amount of Tanning paid by the Saoras of Kalakota Illaka was exorbitant. Reducing the amount he made it payable in cash at Rs.450. Besides land revenue, each household was liable to pay house tax of Rs.1.50 per year. The Gomanga collected the house tax (*tarnia*) at the time of Dasahara and credited to the treasury of the Bissoyi.

Besides land revenue and house taxes the *ryots* of big Saora villages provided goat, honey, vegetables and pulses to the Bissoyi and his staff on festive occasions. They also supplied thatching grass or straw to the Bissoyi for

thatching purpose. The Saoras at that time were subjected to Vetti or forced labour without payment. The Bissoyi and his staff of all categories such as Huddadars and Paiks employed the Saoras as labourers in various agricultural operations and in domestic works such as thatching houses without paying any labour charge to them. However some food was provided to the labourers during work. The system of Tanning continued till the land revenue settlement was conducted in the Parlakhemindi Maliahs by Shri Udayanath Patnaik who abolished it and in its place introduced payment of revenue in cash at the rate of Re.1 per Putti of paddy paid as Tanning. The amount of land revenue was fixed on village basis and it was the responsibility of the Gomango to settle the revenue on household basis and collect the same from each household timely and pay the revenue of the village to the Bissoyi.

The system of *dal*, that is, payment of *mamool* in kind such as vegetables, minor millets, cereals, honey, goat, etc., was abolished at the time of Udayanath Patnaik's settlement. What the *ryots* were liable to pay was only land revenue in cash at the rate settled by him village wise.

Peshkush

According to the terms and conditions laid down in the Sanad, each Zamindar was allowed to collect a fixed amount of Peshkush from each of the Muttah-heads and to appoint, subject to the approval of the Divisional Officer, certain of the Muttha officials, all punishments, however, were in the hands of the Divisional Officer. No chieftain was allowed either to interfere between the Bissoyis and their subordinates and *ryots*, or to rent out any Muttah to low country bidders and collect in caprice any *mamool* directly from the hill people. If any chieftain violated or challenged the legality of the Government orders and increased his Peshkush, his Agency Sanad was cancelled and the Maliahs which were under his control were attached and handed over to a new chieftain appointed by the Government. After Independence the Bissoyi of each Muttah paid the Peshkush to the Tahsildar and this practice continued till the abolition of all Intermediary system including Muttah system in 1971.

ABOUT THE STUDY VILLAGE

1. Ragedi

Ragedi is situated 5 Kms. to the west of Gumma. A fair weather jeepable road constructed by the Kalakota Grama Panchayat connects the village with Gumma. The village lies by the side of a rivulet called Marandaguda which dries up entirely in summer season. Lacking a bridge over it, the village remains cut off from any vehicular traffic during rainy season when the rivulet is in spate.

There are 43 Saora households whose primary source of livelihood is agriculture and wage earning. 31 households have land of their own. The holdings vary from half an acre to three acres. The remaining 12 households are landless. Both the categories of households practise shifting cultivation in the nearby hill slopes. About one fourth of the households have gone to Assam to work in tea gardens.

All the households have been converted to Christianity and most of them have well ventilated, spacious and substantial houses. The old pattern of house which is single roomed small in size, low and without any window is conspicuous by their absence in the village. The village is far advanced in the locality in this respect and also in the matter of keeping the houses and the surrounding spotlessly clean. Every household has its garbage pit and the refuse from the house and the kitchen are dumped in it. It is a special feature of the village which is not noticed in any other Saora village in the vicinity.

The educational standard of the people of the village is as low as in any other Saora village. Out of 43 heads of households only two persons have studied up to under-metric and four persons are barely literate. People have now been conscious of the importance of education. There is a demand by the villagers for a primary school in the village. The nearest school which is located in Linga is at a distance of 2 kilometres from the village and apart from the distance which has to be covered by walking the rivulet Marandaguda which flows between these two villages has to be crossed. Going to the school in rainy season is entirely out of question.

There are two public institutions in the villages. One is Mahila Samiti which was organised by the Gumma Tribal Development Block and the other is Church which is exclusively a people's work. Recently the people of the village have organised a youth club. It started functioning since 23-1-1977. In a public meeting held at the Church on the eve of the 23rd January 1977 the people unanimously selected Sadan Savar, 45 years old as President and Aransa Savar 25 years old as Secretary of the Club. One of the important functions of the Club is to look to the sanitation of the village. Unlike other Saora villages which look very shabby Ragedi wears a very neat appearance. The people have formed a habit of using the refuse dump dug by the members of the Youth Club at the village outskirts. The people have altogether given up drinking and smoking. For many such reforms in the life of the Saoras the credit goes to the Youth Club. Ragedi is becoming an ideal Saora village in the area.

One can notice a modern outlook on life of the people of the village. It is more conspicuous in their religious beliefs and practices. This is how a change has come about in their religious life. About 30 years ago an important person of the village Dibasa Karji suffered from fever and his family members

resorted to very expensive rituals for his recovery but failed. The bereaved family not only had lost its leading member but also was drowned in debt which was incurred to meet the ritual expenses. This case was an eye opener to others who started questioning the religious methods of curing illness. It coincided with the time when the Christianity was gaining ground in the locality and many neighbouring villages had given up divination and taken to scientific practices for curing illness. The successful stories narrated by the preachers of Christianity were very much convincing to the people of the village. The Ward Member and the Karji of the village were the first to adopt Christianity and allopathic curative practices. Subsequently all others of the village followed the suit. Under the leadership of the pioneers, a Church building was built in the village in 1955 and it has now become the central place of all new ideas and activities.

2. Tahajang

Tahajang is situated by the side of the road running from Parlakhemedi town to Gumma. It lies at a distance of 8 Kilometres from Parlakhemedi and 19 Kilometres from Gumma. The bus plying on Parlakhemedi-Gumma road passes through the village. The village is included in the Tarangada Grama Panchayat. It has three hamlets: (1) Tahajang proper, (2) Majhi (middle) Tahajang which is situated in the centre of the cluster of the hamlets and (3) Lower Tahajang. The village consists of 47 Lanjia Saora households all converted to Christianity. There is a small stream flowing by the side of the village. Except in the rainy season when the stream contains some water it remains dry in other seasons.

The settlement pattern and houses of Tahajang are not very much different from those of any ordinary Lanjia Saora villages. Single roomed low huts without windows which are typical of Lanjia Saora houses dominate the village scene in Tahajang.

Out of 47 households 20 households are landless and the remaining 27 households own land varying from half an acre to 5 acres with the exception of the present Ward Member who owns 10 acres of land. The landless and the land holders alike carry on shifting cultivation in the nearby hills and grow a mixed crop of minor millets, pulses and oilseeds such as Janna, Kangu, Suan, Ghantia, Kandula and Rasi. Those who have land in the planes grow Mandia, Kulthi, Biri, Suan and Ganga in higher elevations (Padar land) and paddy in the low lying lands (Bila lands). The staple food of the people is *ragi*.

The people collect minor forest produce such as Karanj seeds, Mahula and grasses for making brooms and sell them to the local merchants at a nominal price. The collections of mango, green leaves and tubers are exclusively meant for home consumption. The juice from the Salap trees

supplies their alcoholic drink and the turmeric from their swiddens is their principal cash crops.

There is an Upper Primary School (up to Class V) in the village. Neither the teachers nor the students are regular in their attendance. As a result the School remains closed for most of the days. No one in the village has studied up to Upper Primary standard and most of the people are illiterate.

There is a Mahila Samiti in the village organized by the Gumma Tribal Development Block. It is as useless as the School. No woman has derived any benefit from the Samity ever since it was established in the village.

The church built by the villagers themselves is not as active as its Ragedi counterpart in bringing about change in the traditional life style. A mid-wife appointed by the Christian mission is present in the village. But her impact on the life of the people is negligible. People adopted Christianity under the spell of its mystic power of alleviating human suffering and healing illness. This is how Christianity was appealing to the people of the village. Suku Savar of the village suffered from some mental illness some years back and became mad. His family members worshipped the deities and sacrificed fowls, goats and pigs and performed all kinds of rituals prescribed in their traditional religious system for his quick recovery but in vain. In such a crisis some Christian Saoras of neighbouring villages suggested to the family members of Suku Savar to convert him to Christianity and pray Jesus Christ for his recovery. His family members did so and in addition applied scientific remedy in place of the then customary treatments. Suku Savar responded to the medical treatment and got well. The case of Suku Savar strengthened the faith of the people on Christianity and they adopted it *en masse*.

What is most striking in the comparative analysis of village life in Tahajang and Ragedi is that although the former is nearer to Parlakemedi town and is located on the bus route, it is least affected by the urban influences and road communication. Conversely Ragedi which is far from the urban centre and away from bus service exhibits an urban style of life. It may be assumed that the change which is noticed in the life style of the people of Ragedi may be attributed to the influence of Christianity. Then the question which may be raised in this context is that why did not the Christianity have the same impact on the people of Tahajang? Further probing into the socio-economic situation particularly to the leadership pattern which motivates change may throw light on this problem. The paper discusses below the nature of leadership which participated in the election system and the manner in which the people's representatives to the statutory Panchayat and Lok Sabha were selected.

Panchayat Elections

Selection of Ward Member-Ragedi

Ragedi and three neighbouring villages constitute a ward. They are Tuburuda (18 households), Ukuruda (4 households) and Pindaolu (10 households). Including 43 households of Ragedi there are thus 75 households. Having about 375 population in the ward.

In 1961 when the statutory Grama Panchayat was introduced in the Gumma Block, people of different villages selected their own Ward Members to represent their respective Grama Panchayats. The ward to which Ragedi belongs is included in Kalakota Grama Panchayat. For convenience sake this ward is called Ragedi ward. All adult male members of this ward gathered at the church in Ragedi and unanimously selected Ragina Gomanga who was the Gomanga of Ragedi as Ward Member. Being very old Ragina did not agree to shoulder the responsibility. When the Gomanga was unwilling to accept the offer, the people then selected Daipa Savar, an elderly and important person of Ragedi as Ward Member. Daipa accepted the offer and is now continuing as Ward Member ever since he was first elected in 1962.

Sarpanch Election, Kalakota Grama Panchayat

Like Ragedi ward, all other wards of Kalakota Grama Panchayat had selected their respective Ward Members unanimously. All the Ward Member and a few older persons from each village gathered at Kalakota to select Sarpanch of the Panchayat. The Ward Members and all others present there selected Kirtan Savar of Tumkur for this post. Kirtan Savar was reluctant to accept the offer because he was much younger than the village elders present in the meeting and considered himself inexperienced. Since the verdict of the people was strongly in his favour he accepted the offer against his will. The qualities which conducted in his favour are his wide contact with general public and the leading politicians of the State. His knowledge in Oriya language, and his modesty and devotion to service to tribal communities are equally counted among the best leadership qualities which he is endowed with. Like the Ward Members he also continues as Sarpanch uncontested though all the successive elections from the inception of the Grama Panchayat in the Gumma Block.

Selection of Ward Member, Tahajang

Tahajang itself is a ward included in Tarangada Grama Panchayat. The people of Tahajang selected unanimously Chakra Gomanga, the Gomanga of the village as the Ward Member. Chara Gomanga, one of the older members of the Gomanga lineage succeeded him. In his case also there was no contest and he was selected by general consensus of opinion. The people of his ward wanted him to continue as Ward Member in the next term. But he was

unwilling to continue any further. Therefore the people of Tahajang decided unanimously that Majhila Savara, another important person of the village should be their Ward Member. Majhila Savara continues as the Ward Member of Tahajang.

Sarapanch Election, TarngadaGramapanchayat

In the first election there were two contestants-Radhaballava Das and Gurli Agadu. Radhaballava was elected to the office of Sarpanch. The election was on majority-minority pattern. For the next term Mukuling Patra, a local merchant of Tarangada was selected uncontested. The 1975 election was a contested one. The contest was between Laxmikanta Gauda of Kurulunda and Mukuling Patra of Tarangada. Laxmikanta Gouda was elected by majority vote. He is continuing as Sarpanch of Tarangada Grama Panchayat.

Chairman Election: GummaPanchayatSamiti

The Gumma Panchayat Samiti to which Kalakota and Tarangada Grama Panchayats belong started functioning since 1962. At that time the Samiti was constituted by four nominated persons to serve as members of the Panchayat Samiti. The Persons who were nominated were: (1) Chaitana Dandasena of Gumma, (2) Radhamohan Bissoyi of Seranga. (3) Nila Savara of Kalakota and (4) K. Apparao of Jeeva. The elected member was Musuli Naidu of Jeeva. Formerly Jeeva Panchayat was a part of Kashinagar Panchayat Samiti. But after 1961 when the *panchayats* were reorganized Jeeva was included in the Gumma Panchayat Samiti. Musuli Naidu was an elected Ward Member of Jeeva Panchayat. When his Panchayat Samiti was included in the Gumma Panchayat Samiti he was taken in as one of the members of the Samiti.

For the office of Chairman of Gumma Panchayat Samiti there was a contest between Chaitana Dandasena and Musali Naidu. It was an indirect election which means that the five members of the Samiti were to elect their Chariman and Vice-Chairman. The members elected Chaitan Dandasena as Chariman and Radha Mohan Bissoyi as Vice-Chairman. After a few days Musuli Naidu became the Sarapanch of Jeeva Grama Panchayat.

Chaitan Dandasena held the position of Chairman from 1962 to 1968. In 1968 election, there were 5 candidates in the field. They were 1. Bipin Naik, Dom by caste of Seranga, 2. Barik Pujari, Ex-Huddadar of Gaiba, 3.Chaitan Paik, Ex-Militia-man of Gumma, 4.Musuli Naidu, Sarapanch of Jeeva and 5. Radhaballava Das of Tarangada. There was keen contest among the candidates and Barik Pujari was elected to the office of Chairman by majority vote.

Barik served the full term of office till the year 1971, when there was a fresh election for the same office. The candidates who were in the field are 1. Barik Pujari (Former Chairman), 2. Bipin Naik, a Dom from Seranga who

contested the Chairman election in 1968, and 3. Bhikari Pattanayak of Gumma, a new entrant to the political arena. Bhikari Pattanayak won the election and was in the office of Samiti Chairman from 1971 to 1975.

Unlike the previous three elections, the 1975 Chairman election was not contested. Bhubananda Bissoyi, Ex-Bissoyi of Gumma, Barik Pujari of Gaiba and two Doms of the same village filed nominations to contest the election. Prior to the election all the Saoras who are numerically preponderant in the Samiti, gathered in Kalakota and decided unanimously to vote for Bhubananda. Knowing this that they would surely be defeated the two Dom candidates and Baric Pujari withdrew their candidature and Bhubananda Bissoyi was selected by general consensus of opinion as the Chairman of Gumma Panchayat Samiti, Bhubananda Bissoyi is continuing now in the same position.

It is very clear in the successive Gramapanchayat elections that generally the mode of election of candidates for the offices of Ward Member and Sarpanch was unanimity and general consensus of opinion. Contest or election by majority vote is traced in the cases where the non-tribal candidates have entered into the political arena of Panchayat election. Cases of contest for the lower and middle order offices have occurred in Tarangada Grama Panchayat which is situated near Parlakhemedi, an important urban centre in the locality, accessible to all whether road on which bus service lies regularly and composed of non-tribal and tribal communities.

Contrasted to this there is not a single instance of contest for such levels of offices in Kalakota Grama Panchayat. The selection of Ward Members and Sarpanch in all successive elections was by general consensus of opinion. In fact, the persons who were chosen in 1962 continued in their respective offices through 1968, 1971 and 1975 elections up to the present time on the strength of unanimous verdict of the voters. Moreover in a political arena where a single community of face-to-face type is in overwhelming majority any contest between parties for political position is bound to be dull and of insignificant order. The reason is that the element of unanimity characteristic of numerically preponderant face-to-face community will inhibit the forces of division of its verdict and the party which enjoys the good will of the face-to-face community's choice will bag all its votes as is done in the case of an uncontested election.

Kalakota Grama Panchayat which is the epitome of Saora culture exhibits a kind of village unity and cultural homogeneity that is unparalleled in the rest of the Saora country. Generally speaking, consensus of opinion by which selection of people's representatives is made is common in those areas of the Saora country which are least affected by non-tribal political elements and urban influences. In this respect the Saora villages in Gumma Block are like

face-to-face communities, which hold the value of unity unanimity and consensus much above the value of contest, factionalism and conflict.

Another feature which is discernible in the successive elections to the office of Chairman of Gumma Panchayat Samiti is that the verdict of the Saora voters was in favour of the erstwhile Muttah-head (Bissoyi) and his administrative staff and militia men. The verdict of the majority, that is, the Saoras in Gumma area in the matter of elections to positions of power in statutory Grama Panchayat was on the side of the erstwhile Bissoyi, his relations and his Huddadars, Naiks and village Gomangas even after its liquidation is one of the significant features of face-to-face communities.

KNOWLEDGE ABOUT PARTY POLITICS AND PARTICIPATION IN LAST LOK SABHA ELECTION

Awareness of Party Politics

The political party which is known to the majority of the Saoras of Gumma Block is 'Congress' in totality not in parts as 'Ruling Congress' or 'Congress for Democracy'. They have no idea about what is ruling party and what is opposition party. They confessed that in all general elections either to legislative assembly or to parliament, they have been unanimous in the matter of casting vote for Congress. In their mind except Congress there is no other political party in existence in the country. To them congress is synonymous with Indira Gandhi. Voting for congress means to them voting for Indira Gandhi. They stress that they are men of Congress. In other words, they are men of Indira Gandhi. When asked about Mahatma Gandhi the majority of the Saoras replied "they have heard only the name of Indira Gandhi and don't know who the other Gandhi is".

Election Campaign

During Lok Sabha election, one public meeting was studied. It was held at Gumma and Shri Mohan Naik presided over it and also addressed the public who attended the meeting. The chief of the District Level Congress organization sent prior intimation about the meeting to the Chairman of the Gumma Panchayat Samiti. On getting the news, the Chairman convened a meeting of the Sarpanchs and Ward Members to inform them about the meeting and arrange for a large gathering of people on this occasion. The Sarpanchs and the Ward Members informed the people of their respective Panchayats and wards and asked them to attend the meeting in large number.

The news about the meeting did not reach many villages. For example, the people of Tahajang were not aware of it because the Ward Member of this village who was supposed to inform the people of his ward was unaware of the meeting. In rural and tribal areas the political parties make known to the

people their programmes of public meetings and speeches and their manifestos through the medium of statutory Grama Panchayats. In spite of wide publicity by the Ward Members and Sarpanchs the attendance in the meeting was less than 100 people. The reasons for poor attendance were their low political consciousness and their pre-occupation in heavy agricultural operations in shifting cultivation.

Except this meeting neither the Congress party candidate nor the Janata party candidate had visited the Gumma area even for once on election campaign. Three Congress posters which were posted in Ragedi and Tahajang by the Congress President of the Block constituted the whole of election campaign in the study villages.

Voting Behaviour

A large majority of the Saora voters were unaware of the parties which sought for their vote. Though some leading members of the Saora Community had known that the Congress party was contesting the election, but none in the study villages could tell the other party with which the Congress party was contesting. The people in general were not able to tell the names of the candidates who stood for election to the Lok Sabha from their constituency whiles the majority of the Saoras of Gumma Block were ignorant about the contesting candidates. Some of them thought vaguely that the contest was between Indira Gandhi and Biju Patnaik.

The Saoras had no idea about the symbol of the Janata Party. But they had some vague idea about the symbol of Congress party. Some respondents said that it was bullock and others guessed it to be cow. But very few could tell the exact symbol of the Congress party.

On the day of polling the Ward Members escorted the voters of their respective wards to the polling booths. It was observed that more than 60 per cent of the voters from the study villages had been to the polling stations to exercise their franchise. But about 20 per cent of them were not able to do so since their names were not present in the voters list. At the booth the Saoras of different villages talked with one another that they would cast their vote for Indira Gandhi without referring to the party at all. Many a Saora voter stamped the ballot papers twice or thrice amounting thereby to a large number of cancellations of ballot papers. On the whole the observation of the Lok Sabha election in Gumma Block reveals that the concept of political party is beyond the cognition of the Saoras. As feudal order is personified in the form of Raja, Bissoyi and Huddadar, the political party is personified in the form of some political luminaries in their cognitive orientation.

Appendix-I

1962-1968

Type of election	Name of candidates	Age-group	Caste/Tribe	Position held in Feudal order	Economic condition	Mode of selection
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Ragedi Ward Member	Daipa Savara	Middle aged (45)	Saora	..	Poor	Unanimity
Kalakote Gram Panchayat Sarpanch	Kirtan Savara	Young	Saora	..	Moderate means	Unanimity
Tahajang Ward Member	Chakra Gomango	Old	Saora	Gomang	Moderate means	Unanimity
Tarangada Gram Panchayat Sarapanch	Radhaballav Das	Middle aged	Oriya (Brahmin)		Rich	Majority vote
	Gurli Agadu	Middle aged	Pano	..	Moderate means	
Gumma Panchayat Samiti Chairman	Chaitana Dandasena, Chairman	Middle aged	Oriya (Paika)	..	Rich	Majority vote
	Radhamohan Bissoyi, Vice-Chairman	Middle aged	Oriya	..	Rich	Majority vote
	Nila Savara	Middle aged	Saora	..	Moderate means	..
	K. Appa Rao	Middle aged	Telugu	..	Rich	..
	Musuli Naidu	Middle aged	Telugu	..	Rich	..

Appendix-I

1968-1971

Type of election	Name of candidates	Age-group	Caste/Tribe	Position held in Feudal order	Economic condition	Mode of selection
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Ragedi Ward Member	Daipa Savara	Middle aged (45)	Saora	..	Poor	Unanimity
Kalakot Gram Panchayat Sarpanch	Kirtan Savara	Young	Saora	..	Moderate means	Unanimity
Tahajang Ward Member	Budda Gomango	Old	Saora	Relations of Gomango	Moderate means	Unanimity
Tarangada Gram Panchayat Sarpanch	Mukuling Patra	Middle aged	Oriya (Brahmin)	..	Rich (Merchant)	Uncontested
Gumma Panchayat Samiti Chairman	Barik Pujari	Middle aged	Oriya	Huddadar	Rich	Majority vote
	Bipin Naik	Middle aged	Dom	..	Moderate means	..
	Chaitan Paik	Middle aged	Oriya	Paik	Moderate means	..
	Radha-ballava Das	Middle aged	Oriya Paik	..	Moderate means	..
	Musuli Naidu	Middle aged	Telugu	..		..

Appendix-II

1971-1975

Type of Election	Name of candidates	Age-group	Caste/Tribe	Position held in Feudal order	Economic condition	Mode of selection
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Ragedi Ward Member	Daipa Savara	Middle aged (45)	Saora	..	Poor	Unanimity
Kalakot Gram Panchayat Sarpanch	Kirtan Savara	Young	Saora	..	Moderate means	Unanimity
Tahajang Ward Member	Majhila Savara	Old	Saora	..		Unanimity
Tarangada Gram Panchayat Sarpanch	Mukiling Patra	Middle aged	Oriya	..	Rich	Uncontested
Gumma Panchayat Samiti Chairman	Bhikari Pattanayak	Middle aged	Oriya		Moderate means	Majority votes
	Barik Pujari	Middle aged	Oriya	Hudadar	Rich	..
	Bipin Naik	Middle aged	Dom	..	Moderate means	..

Appendix-II

1975

Type of Election	Name of candidates	Age-group	Caste/Tribe	Position held in Feudal order	Economic condition	Mode of selection
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Ragedi Ward Member	Daipa Savara	Middle aged (45)	Saora	..	Poor	Uncontested (Unanimity)
Kalakota Gram Panchayat Sarpanch	Kirtan Savara	Young	Saora	..	Moderate means	Unanimity
Tahajang Ward Member	Majhila Savara	Old	Saora	..	Richman	Unanimity
Tarangada Gram Panchayat Sarpanch	Laxmikanta Gauda	Middle aged	Milkman	..	Moderate means	Majority vote
	Mukling Patra	Middle aged	Komti		Merchant	..
Gumma Panchayat Samiti Chairman	Bhubanana-nda Bissoyi	Middle aged	Oriya	Muttah-Head (Bissoyi)	Rich	Uncontested

SOCIAL CONTROL, TRADITION AND TRANSITION IN LANJIA SAORA SOCIETY *

*Sarat Ch. Mohanty*¹

The "Saora" or "Savar" are a great ancient tribe. They have been mentioned quite frequently in Hindu mythology and ancient classics, epics, *purans* and various other scriptures. Especially in Orissa, they have been very intimately associated with the cult of Lord Jagannath, who according to a legendary tradition originated as a tribal deity and was later brought to Puri under royal patronage.

The tribe is called by various names, such as Saura, Sabara, Sahar, Saur, Sora etc. and has their racial affinity with the Proto-Austroloid stock which is dominant among the tribal communities of Central and Southern India. They are widely found all over the Central India comprising the States of Bihar, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and West Bengal. They speak an ancient Mundari language of their own, called 'Sora'.

The Saora constitute one of the sixty-two Scheduled Tribes of Orissa. They are found in almost all the districts of the State. But their main concentration lies in a contiguous mountainous territory forming a major part of the agency tracts of the Eastern Ghats in Rayagada and Gajapati districts of Southern Orissa which can be called, the "Saora Country."

Numerically, they constitute the third largest tribe in Orissa. Their total population in the State, as per 1981 census is 3,70,061 which accounts for 6.26 percent of the total tribal population of the state. They have registered a decennial growth rate of 8 percent between 1971 and 1981. Their sex ratio comes to 1,030 females per 1,000 males showing numerical superiority of their women over men. They are socially, economically and educationally backward. Their percentage of literacy as recorded in 1981 census is only 14.47 percent.

* Published in ADIVASI, Vol. XXXIV, Nos.1&2, 1994, pp.56-61

¹ Research Assistant, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar

The Saora tribe is divided into a number of sub tribes, such as Kapu, Jati, Sudho, Jadu, Jara, Arsi, Luara, or Muli, Kindal, Kumbi, Basu, Lanjia etc. The "Lanjia Saora" who are called the "Hill-Saora" by some noted ethnographers like Verrier Elwin, constitute a primitive section of the tribe. They inhabit in 'Saora Country' in Southern Orissa described above. They are famous for their expertise in terrace cultivation shifting cultivation, elaborately religious lifestyle, artistic skills for producing beautiful wall paintings, pictograms, popularly known as icons and their peculiar traditional male dress-style in which the ends of the loin cloth hang like a tail at the back. The term "Lanjia" meaning "having a tail" has been bestowed upon them by their neighbours referring to the fashion of wearing long-tailed loin cloth by their male folk.

Many prominent authorities like, Thurston, Dalton, Campbell, Macpherson, Russell, Taylor, Cunningham, Fawcett, Risley, Ramamurty, Sitapati, Pantulu, Munro, Singh, Elwin have written about the Lanjia Saora. The most vivid account of the tribe has been given by Verrier Elwin in his famous book "Religion of an Indian Tribe" in which, he has described their complex and elaborate magico-religious beliefs and practices that has made the tribe known all over the world.

Like their magico-religious life, dress-style artistic talents and indigenous terrace cultivation skills, another important feature is their keenness to maintain their group solidarity and preserve their cultural identity adhering to the ethics, values, morals, customs and traditions which are unique. In this respect the Lanjia Saora is a well-organized ethnic group. They understand the essentials of moral law. They have their own conceptions of right and wrong, good and bad. Their inter-personal relations are governed by fixed status and well defined customs which are applicable to all aspects of human social life. Their traditional society is mostly governed by their customary law corroborated by ethical norms and public opinion. The ethical precepts and norms are transmitted from generation to generation through the informal process of socialization. They are well aware of the fact that the survival of the individual as well as the whole social group depends on an orderly social life through proper observance of social norms and customs.

Verrier Elwin wrote "the ethnical codification is of external actions rather than the virtues and dispositions, it is not burdensome, but exact, not heroic but meticulous and though it is unwritten, and in a way untaught, it is known to every child. It defines the limit within which one should walk and so long as these limits are observed, it is an insurance against ghastly evils. These conditions sometimes lead to a self conscious scrupulosity, sometimes to an irritating assumption of complacency, but on the whole they help the Saora to live well". (1955; 570-71)

The most important factor for ensuring social conformity is the fear of religion. Religion forms an indispensable part of Saora life. The fear of supernatural punishment acts as a powerful deterrent against violation of established customs. The only remedy in case of violation is the speedy expiation of the sin and the propitiation of the slighted deity or spirit. "Punishment by the Gods is a more serious matter. All the Gods punish and diversion from the formalist path of safety, the breach of a taboo leads to almost immediate, and certainly automatic, retribution. But the greater Gods such as 'Uyungsum' and 'Darammasum' are said to punish men for Sin (Elwin: 1955).

According to Singh (1984:3) "Supernatural sanctions operate the machinery of social control and play a significant part in promoting conformity with accepted moral standards of the contemporary (Saora) society. Failure to comply with the ethos and value system arouses the wrath of superhuman beings and creates conditions for divine punishments during the life-time of the culprits."

The Saoras have developed their own concepts to distinguish between "offences" and "sins". The former affects the human being and the latter offends the supernaturals. They have two terms to present this dichotomy-"Ukka" (social offence) and "Ersi" (sins). For example, while breach of the incest taboo is a dreaded sin, other kinds of sexual offences are only crimes, not "sins".

The implications of violation of "Ukka" are confined to human and social level and it rarely invokes supernatural sanctions. It is not as dangerous as the breach of "Ersi" which provokes the anger of the supernaturals. While "Ukka" may get away with some social punishment but there is no appeal against the supernatural punishment that follows the breach of "Ersi" which not only affects the "sinner" but also the whole village. The only remedy is through elaborate and expensive diagnostic and propitiatory rituals to identify and appease the concerned Gods and spirits. Therefore, when a serious sin is committed by a Saora, the whole village rise in unison to take corrective measures to ward off calamities.

Elwin (1955; 512) observed, that when a Saora breaches an 'Ersi', and directly he realizes that what he had done, he takes action to put things right. This involves confession, in many cases to a Shaman, and in all cases to the spirit whom he has offended-Sometimes a man does not realize that he has broken a taboo until he falls ill and begins to wonder why; more often he does realize it and this realization makes him actually ill. Similar views are also held by Aldrich who said "the breaking of a convention is a very serious thing to the primitive's mind; his ideas of right and wrong are clear cut and immutable, white is white and black is black with him there are no delicate shades of grey between them, as with the civilized. He lives under a code of morals to know that he has broken a

commandment puts him at once in a state of terror; it splits him physically; and he naturally flies to the priest to unburden himself of his guilt. With these ideas firmly fixed in his mind, I have no doubt whatever that he really falls physically ill under the weight of guilty secret, and that he recovers when the burden of sin is removed" (1931;220). The Lanjia Saora fits into this description.

The general nature of Saora religion is one among the forces that ensures a good orderly social life. Soara religion may aims not at making people better, and supposedly rewards or punishes good or bad conduct but it provides the natural atmosphere in which good human qualities are nourished. The general manner as to how men should behave towards the Gods also emphasizes that they should behave towards their fellowmen in similar manner. It is dangerous to show proud and bad behavior before the Gods, because humility is the most ideal of human virtues. The stress of duty, the importance of hard-work understanding one's own responsibility, the charm of hospitality, the need to avoid violence and lies, the priority of community over the individual these things are imperative as per the norms of their religion and the community expects everyone to adhere to these values.

The way in which the Saora society exerts its discipline is by the pressure of public opinion, expressed in every possible way, and always. As this opinion is inexorable, it does not ask the people to be religious but it insists that they should conform to the rules of "Ersi" and "Ukka". There is no sympathy for the person who breaches them and thereby suffers from supernatural punishments. Human penalties are inflicted by the traditional tribal council for violation of customs of "Ukka". But the most dreaded penalty of ostracism or social excommunication which is inflicted with devastating effect by the tribal leadership and councils in other communities is rarely resorted to by the Saora leaders.

The proper observance of a taboo or sacrifice is expected to be rewarded with good health, good harvest, well-being and general prosperity. Elwin wrote, "Ultimately, a good life is to be believed for its own sake, for it is the way of happiness because it is the only kind of life that agrees with his religion and because it brings peace and welfare to the community, respect and honour to the individual" (1955; 574).

The Saora society expects everyman to be a Bangsamaran (Good man) rather than a Rankamaran (Bad man).

Since the remote past, the Lanjia Saora lived undisturbed in their remote hill habitat. In modern times, the rapid changes in administrative set-up, political climate of the country, economic system and religious ideologies, development, administration and their exposure to the external modern world have influenced the Saora way of life. For example abolition of intermediary system has set the Saora free from the clutches of the oppressive feudal over lords and their

cunning subordinates and this has contributed to the modernization of their political organization. Many outsiders have infiltrated into the Saora country as soon as it was opened up with the development of road communications, market centers and establishment of Government and non-Government agencies and have started exploiting the natives. Often in the past, when the situation became unbearable, the Saora rose in revolt in what are called "Fituri" but the British authorities suppressed them with an iron hand. The discontentment and frustration among the Saora grew in the absence of strong internal leadership and sympathetic attitude of the feudal chiefs and foreign rulers.

After independence, the welfare Government took a very benevolent attitude towards improving the lot of the down trodden tribal people of this country including the Saoras. Various welfare measures initiated by the Government resulted in exposing the Saora more and more to outside contact and pressures of ever-advancing and powerful, social, economic and political forces. The impact of the political change, election system, adult franchise and local self-Government have triggered off various political processes and generated new leadership among them. The modern leadership, the associated aspects of political participation and specialization which are new to them have been emerging as manifestations of the socio-political change.

The Saora are passing through a phase of transition. Three centuries ago they passed from autonomy and self-sufficiency to subjugation under the feudal chiefs and foreign administrators. Prior to that they were more or less independent and their allegiance to the Kings and Zamindars were marginal and nominal. At that time the traditional village leaders - Gomango, Mandal, Dalbehera, Buya, Barik and the like were running the village administration with the backing of the village council. This indigenous socio-political system had received the recognition from the then Kings and Zamindars whose policy was to collect revenue, customary gifts and labour from the tribals and not to interfere with their traditional life style.

"With the coming into being of Muthas, the Bossoyi overlords intervened between the Gomangos, Mandals, etc., and the Zamindar. Following the descent of peace in the area after 1834, the character of the Bissoyis and the Patro described as "wardens of the marches" anciently established in a species of feudal tenure, underwent gradual change into landed aristocracy consisting of intermediaries between the Government and the Saora. They occupied this position for nearly a century. They were more than mere intermediaries. They exercised the powers of the Zamindar, the magistracy and revenue collecting agency. Equally important was their informal standing among the Saora who were almost totally devoid of contact with the outside world; the Saora got used to looking up to the Mutha-heads for leadership in intra-village disputes, arbitration in land matters, etc." (Singh. 1984: 160).

During British occupation, the feudal chiefs and the British Government were more concerned with revenue matters, law and order problems, civil and criminal disputes than with the traditional needs of the Saora. Soon after independence, the intermediary system was abolished and Panchayat Raj system was introduced. The Saora as the citizens of free India have been made to participate in the democratic system through elections. This new system in its early phases has marginal impact on the Saora. The people who still have loyalty to their traditional village leaders choose in many places their Gomango, Mandal or Dalabehera as elected representative to Grampanchayat and other elective bodies. For instance, the Puttasing, Patili and Sagada Gram Panchayats were headed by Saora Sarpanchas who were traditional village chiefs. Late Sridhar Gomango, the powerful chief of Sagada continued as Sagada Sarpanch for a pretty long time. After his death two of his Christianized fellowmen Mansi Raika and Ansu Raika became the Sarpanch and Naib Sarpanch of Sagada Grama Panchayat respectively.

However, due to spread of education, activities of social workers and missionaries, development programmes and exposure to external world, a new kind of modern leadership is emerging gradually these days. The indigenous village leadership and council of elders are losing their importance. The Panchayat Raj institutions and community development programmes requiring awareness and capabilities of a different order have started throwing of emergent leadership which has yet to gather momentum. But there are still the traditional leaders and their successors who have switched over to take up new roles.

Singh, who made an elaborate study of Saora leadership, observed "the village councils with the Gomango and the Mandal as the secular heads, the Buya and Disari as the religious functionaries, never went out of existence. But in the meantime, new far reaching changes have been ushered in. Statutory Grama Panchayats and Panchayati Raj institutions have made their appearance. While village councils linger, the Grama Panchayats have made a dent into the prestige and status of the traditional leaders. Panchayats and Panchayat Samitis having become the new recipient of power and resources, the sphere of activity of village councils had undergone shrinkage. Some traditional leaders, unable to reorient themselves and confined to village councils, are fading out. Some others, particularly the younger, not set in a rigid mould, have exhibited adaptability, and been taking to the new institutions. There are signs of emergence of Saora leadership at the Panchayat and Panchayat Samiti levels". (1984;165).

Against the onslaught of modernization in terms of coming of Christianity, better means of communication, culture contact' education, introduction of formals system of dispensation of justice and acculturation, the Saora apparently remained clear with their traditional conduct rules in private and public behavior. The patrilineal ethos of their social organization had certain

inherent characteristics which helped them to retain its originality. There are specific peculiarities of the Saora customs like the supernatural sanctions, strong, public opinion, the concept of 'Ersi' and 'Ukkal', etc., which *per se* maintain law, order and discipline within the society. Each Saora individual is aware of the other's rights and privileges and thus does not like to infringe the rights of others. Secondly, individuality of a Saora is not considered separately from the background of his family, extended family or Birinda which thrust the responsibility of maintenance of discipline among each and every family member. The Saora customary law is self-regulatory in the sense that a Saora considers that to insult a fellow being, to show disrespect or dishonor to others amounts to causing offence towards supernatural power which may bring disastrous consequence.

The indigenous legal system of the Saora is simple, informal and effective. Whereas, the modern legal system which is truly based on evidence and lengthy and complicated procedures does not take into consideration any human factors in life. A rapist or murderer may be punished by imprisonment or may get away with his crime under the 'benefit of doubt' for lack of strong evidence but there is no consideration about compensating or rehabilitating the victims or their dependent family members. In stark contrast, the Saora customary law assesses the extent of loss and damage inflicted upon the victim, his family, his social status, his economic status, his ritual status and his community as well. The punishment given to the offender mainly by imposing fines serves two purposes. Firstly, it is a punishment bringing disgrace, social ridicule, and economic hardship to the offender. Secondly, the fines collected from the offender is paid to the victim or his relatives in part as compensation and the remaining part is spent for holding communal feast which conveys the approval of the community to this act and strengthens group solidarity.

The tribal council makes arrangements for the marriage of an unwed Saora mother with her lover or anyone who is willing to marry her while punishing her lover. Sex and pregnancy are taken as natural human phenomena and no stigma is attached to it, if it is not incestuous. In their small and simple society where everybody intimately knows about his neighbours and kinsfolk, there is no scope to hide an offence and so, the word of mouth is taken as truth and evidence. In this highly personalized system, corrective actions and dispensation of law and justice following an act of a breach of norm is very quick and efficient. On the other hand, in the modern legal system, the word of mouth never holds true in the court of law and there is no consideration for compensating or rehabilitating the victim or his dependents. No provisions are made for the marriage of an unwed mother or a rape victim.

Yet the Saora have been subjected to both kinds of contrasting legal systems that exist side by side in contemporary India since the British Raj. The people are availing the best and worst out of both the systems. Elwin wrote,

“Another force, even harder to assess, yet of the first importance, is the influence of the reign of law and ordered Government. The Saoras have now lived for well over a hundred years under the provisions of the Indian Penal Code, and there can be no doubt that it has gradually, imperceptibly molded their ideas as well as controlled their actions. Previously, they were unabashed cattle thieves, plunderers and murderers and they had no hesitation about their deeds of theft and violence. Today they are restrained from them, not only by the fear of punishment and the existence of superior force, but because they have been subjected for a very long time to the quietly persuasive education of the working of the law. Whatever defects there may be in practice, every police investigation, every trial before the courts, is an education in certain aspects of the moral life, and it has certainly had its effect upon the Saora conscience” (1955:569)

However, their humanistic and compassionate customary system of law and justice are pushed back by the modern system, the elites and individuals belonging to the Saora and non-Saora societies should be made to realize the importance of this traditional and indigenous system which is suited to their way of life unlike the modern jurisprudence which still remains complex and formidable even to the educated mass. “The prime distinction between the two being that the latter stigmatizes a person in the society if he has gone through the entire system of jurisprudence, ultimately alienating the individual, whereas, the traditional councils makes all efforts to re-establish the person who has wronged. Since our constitution gives provision for upkeep of our personal law, it will be a good exercise to delve into and assess the respective legal system.” (Roy, 1990:149)

The ethical system of the Lanjia Saora attains its growth and maturity within the limits of the tribe. Discipline and conformity reinforces the rule of external law commanding the Saoras’ ungrudging loyalty, the problem of social discipline articulated to its three subordinate problems of institutionalism, formalism and rigourism is fundamental to their ethical system. This originality and uniqueness of their culture has to be preserved and promoted while initiating planned changes.

References

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|---------|--|
| Aldrich, C. R. | 1931 | <i>The Primitive Mind and Modern Civilization</i> , London, P.220. |
| Baral, J. K, &
R. C. Sahoo | 1980-81 | The Changing Pattern of Saora Leadership, <i>Adibasi</i> , Vol. XXIX No.1, pp.1-6. |

- | | | |
|------------------|---------|---|
| Elwin, V. | 1955 | <i>The Religion of an Indian Tribe</i> . Oxford University Press, Bombay. |
| | 1964 | <i>The Tribal World of Verrier Elwin</i> , Oxford University Press. |
| Mohanty, B.B. | 1988 | A Glimpse of Social Life of the Lanjia Saora, <i>Adibasi</i> , Vol. XXVIII, No. 2, pp. 16-21. |
| Mohapatra, G. | 1983 | The Saora View of Good Life and Development, <i>Adibasi</i> , Vol. XXIII, No. pp.30-40. |
| Panda, J. K. | 1965-66 | Changing Saora Culture, <i>Adibasi</i> , Vol. VIII, No. 1, p.71. |
| Patnaik, N | 1989 | <i>The Saora</i> , T.H.R.T.I. |
| | 1970 | Changing a Community's Culture; <i>Man in India</i> Vol. 50, No.2, pp.189-196. |
| Patnaik, U. N. | 1963-64 | The Saora of Ganjam Hills, <i>Adibasi</i> , Vol. V, No.1 pp.6-13 |
| | 1955 | Saora of Ganjam Scheduled Area, <i>Adibasi</i> , Inaugural Number. |
| Roy, S. | 1990 | <i>Tribal Customary Laws of North East India</i> , Delhi, B.R. Publishing Corporation. |
| Roy, S. N. | 1927 | Savaras, <i>Man in India</i> , Vol. 7, No. 4, pp.16-58. |
| Singh, Bhupinder | 1984 | Levels of Leadership in Saora Society, <i>Souvenir, Adibasi Exhibition</i> , Bhubaneswar, pp. 20-28 |
| | | <i>The Saora Highlanders</i> , Bombay, Somaiya Publications. |
| Aparajita, Upali | 1988 | Traditional Political Organisation of the Saora, <i>Adibasi</i> , Vol. XVIII, No. 2, pp.29. |

DEVELOPMENT OF PTGs IN ORISSA: A CASE STUDY OF SAORA / LANJIA SAORA *

*B. B. Mohanty*¹

The present paper is based on empirical data collected from the field on Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs) in which the author was associated and the data gathered from secondary sources. The paper has two parts, the first part deals with socio economic features of the Saora / Lanjia Saora and the second part development of PTGs in Orissa with particular reference to Saora / Lanjia Saora. In the following paragraphs the most common name of the tribe 'Saora' has been used instead of 'Saora' and 'Lanjia Saora'.

The Saora and Lanjia Saora are notified as PTGs in Orissa. The Saora are one of the oldest known tribes in the Country, widely found all over eastern/southern/central India, comprising Bihar, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and West Bengal. In Assam and Tripura, they have a sizable population in the tea plantation zones, where the Saora work as labourers. In Orissa they are found in almost all the districts of the State with higher concentration in Gajapati District and Gunupur sub-division of Rayagada District. They are called by various names such as Savara, Sabara, Saur, Sora, etc. and have proto-Australoid physical features. They speak a dialect called 'Sora' that belongs to the Austric family of languages to which Mundari belongs.

Being one of the most primitive and ancient communities, frequent references on the Saora are found in Hindu mythology and classics. More often, the Saora find mention in the Sanskrit literature, the epics, the Puranas and other religious texts.

The term 'Saora' appears to have two connotations, one derived from the Sagories, the Scythian word for axe, and the other from *Saba Roye*, the Sanskrit term for carrying a dead body.

* Published in ADIVASI, Vol. XXXXVII, Nos.1&2, 2007, pp.79-88

¹ Former Deputy Director, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar

Population

The Saora are one of the major tribes of Orissa. Their population in different Census period is given below:

1951	-	1, 91,401
1961	-	3, 11,614
1971	-	3, 42,757
1981	-	3, 70,061
1991	-	4, 03,510
2001	-	4, 73,233

According to 2001 Census they constitute 5.81 per cent of the total tribal population of the State. Within a span of ten years from 1991 to 2001 the tribe has registered a growth rate of 17.28 per cent, the sex ratio being 1007 females per 1000 males. The literacy level among them is 41.13 per cent (excluding 0 – 6 age group) as compared with 37.37 per cent for the total tribal population of the State. The population and other demographic statistics on Lanjia Saora, a section of the Saora tribe are not available separately in the published Census figures.

Physical Features, Dress & Ornaments

In appearance the Saora look like other pre-Dravidian tribes. They have long heads and flat noses with expanded alae. The hair is wavy and curly. Skin colour generally varies from brown to dark brown, though there are quite a number of fair-complexioned individuals with yellowish shades.

The dress of a Saora man, particularly Lanjia Saora, consists of a loin cloth about six feet long and ten inches wide. The piece of cloth may be plain or may be decorated with red tassels at the ends. This is tied around the hips and hangs down in two strips, the one in the rear being longer. Occasionally a man may be found wearing a single bead necklace. The traditional dress of a Saora woman is a waist cloth with grey borders which hardly falls up to the knees. It is about three feet in length and two feet in breadth. In chilly winter a woman covers the upper part of the body with another piece of cloth.

Settlement Pattern

They generally live in small villages; many of them are situated in the most inaccessible areas and lie hidden in forest-clad hills, making it difficult to access them except along steep *zig-zag* hill paths.

Saora villages do not conform to any particular type of settlement pattern. Houses are often built in rows facing a common street, in some villages there are several rows of houses with streets crossing each other at right angles, in case of others houses facing the same direction are arranged in rows one above the other. In many cases the houses are jumbled up, and there are narrow lanes and small openings on to which the doors of the houses open.

Saora houses are rectangular in shape with fairly high plinth and low roof. There may be a single door in front or in some houses a back door, right in line with the front door. The walls of the houses are made of stone and mud, while in some areas walls are built of bamboo splits or wooden planks thickly plastered with mud on either side. The walls are coloured red with red earth.

The household articles consist of baskets of various sizes, gourd vessels, bundles of clothes, umbrellas, spears, bows, arrows and earthenware, agricultural implements etc. The cowshed is built on one side of the house.

Economic life

The economic life of the Saora revolves round shifting cultivation, terraced/wet cultivation and horticulture to some extent. This is supplemented by hunting, fishing and forest collection round the year.

The Saora are the expert terrace (*sarroba*) cultivators. The terraced fields are exclusively meant for paddy cultivation in which water flows all over the year. These fields are considered their precious possessions of. Both early and late varieties of paddy are grown in the terraces. The terraces of the upper region are dry and locally called *jyanum* used for cultivation of *ragi* (*elusine corocana*), *biri* (*phaseolus mungo*) and *kulthi* (*dolichos biflorus*). The terraces which exhibit works of great engineering skill of the Saora are built right up the beds of the hill streams and extend many hundreds of feet from the depths of the valleys to the hill slopes, in some places rising up to the hill tops. The terrace beds are flat and the fall of each terrace is packed with stones. The construction of the terraces is so skilfully done that no soil is tickled down with water that flows from the upper ones to the lower. The terrace lands are privately and individually owned and the ownership rights passes from father to sons.

The Saora also grow pumpkin, cucumber, bean, pineapple, tobacco, maize, chilli and ginger in their kitchen gardens.

The Saora worship a deity called *Jatra* and observe certain rituals in connection with terrace cultivation with the belief that the deity will be pleased and protect the plants from pests and ensure a good harvest.

In the recent past the Saora were practising shifting cultivation (*bagada chasa*) quite extensively by slash and burn method. But, now a days such practice has been reduced considerably for various reasons. Every family possess few patches of swiddens, on the hill slopes/ hill tops, wherein mainly minor millets and pulses are grown.

Among the Saora the swiddens are community land but allotted to individual families according to its capacity and the concerned family remains in cultivating possession of the land as long as it is cultivated. These lands are inherited down the male line on hereditary basis as per the customary rule although there is hardly any legal document supporting their ownership rights.

In the Swiddens, mixed crop of cereals, minor millets and pulses such as *elusine corocana*, *penicum liliare*, *penicum italicum*, *sorghum vulgare*, *penisetum typhoideum*, *cajanus cajan* and *dolichos biflorus* are grown in succession. A piece of land is cultivated for two to three years, and then it is abandoned for recuperation. A hand hoe called *gubla* is used to work the soil for sowing seeds. Unlike the Juang of northern Orissa, they do not use ploughs in *podu* fields. The swidden cultivation works are very labour intensive and involves round the year activities beginning with forest clearing in the month of November-December till harvesting in the months of November-January next year.

All activities concerning shifting and terrace cultivation are done on cooperative labour called *Ansir* on reciprocal basis by division of labour by sex.

Certain rituals are observed to appease the hill god *Barusim* in different stages of shifting cultivation. On the day of sowing and before crops like *jana*, *kangu*, *kandula* are harvested, the traditional shaman *Buyya*, *Kudan* perform the rituals with sacrifice of fowl /goat and offerings of liquor. The Saora believe that if these ceremonies are performed they will get good harvest from the swiddens.

The Saora relish both vegetarian and non-vegetarian dishes. The staple food of the Saora is gruel (*pej*) prepared out of rice, *ragi*, *jana* or *ghantia*. They also eat vegetables grown in kitchen gardens and fruits, roots, leaves, tubers and honey collected from the forest. Non-vegetarian food is enjoyed much more than the vegetarian diet, and no festival is observed or no feast is arranged or guest is entertained without non-vegetarian food.

Social System

The hallmark of the Saora social life is marked by their belief in continuous and harmonious relationship between the living and the dead, built in the process of reciprocity that is manifested and exhibited in different social aspects of their community life, ceremonies and festivals.

Saora society is divided into several sub-divisions based on occupation, social status, food habits and many other customs and manners. According to Thurston's (1909) classification the Saora have been divided into two broad classes, that is, the Hill Saora and the Plains Saora. The sub-divisions of the Hill Saora are:-(1) *Savara*, *Jati Savara* (Savaras par excellence) or *Mallah Savara*, (2) *Arsi*, *Arisi*, or *Lambo Lanjiya*, (3) *Luara* or *Muli*, (4) *Kindal*, (5) *Jadu*, (6) *Kumbi* and the low country Saora have two groups:- (1) *Kapu* or *Pallapu* & (2) *Sudho*

Sitapathi, another noted scholar, noticed as many as twenty-five sub-divisions among them. Some of the important sub-divisions are :*Arsi Sor*, *Jadu Sor*, *Kindal Sor*, *Kumbi Sor*, *Luara Sor*, *Kampu Sor*, *Sudha Sor*, *Kudumha Sor*, *Jati Sor*, *Bobilli Sor*, *Lamba Lanjia Sor*. The other sub-divisions are : *Based Sor*, *Jura Sor*, *Mane Sor*, *Bimma Sor*, *Kimsod Sor*, *Muli Sor*, *Dandiya Sor*, *Luang Sor*, *Malla Sor*, *Gantra Sor*, *Mala Sor*, *Sarda Sor*, *Jaro Sor*, *Mara Sor*, *Tenkali Sor*.

The smallest social unit among the Saora is the nuclear family, comprised of parents and unmarried children. They do not have exogamous totemic clan, phratries or moieties. Extended or joint families are rare. Polygynous families are often found. Family is patrilocal, patrilineal and patripotestal. The family acts as an independent socio-economic unit, where the interpersonal relationship among the members is based on mutual love and affection, reciprocal help and economic cooperation.

The Saora are unique in the sense that they lack clan or sib-organization common to most of the tribal communities. Instead the extended families called *birinda* performs all the functions of clan. The *birinda* is not a well-defined structure, but consists of the descendants of a common ancestor traced up to four or five generations. The *birinda* regulates marriage, inheritance, partition of property and other important matters like distribution of swidden plots among the member households. A remarkable feature among the Saora is that a woman from birth to death belongs to her fathers' *birinda* even after her marriage.

Saora marriage though not an elaborate affair is an important event of life. They perform adult marriages now-a-days and observe *birinda* exogamy and village exogamy where the village is inhabited by members of one *birinda* strictly. Out of the different forms of marriage prevalent in their society, viz. marriage by arrangement (*Jing Jing Boi*), capture (*Ding Ding Boi*), elopement (*Ding Dung Tak*) or service (*Lu Tap*), the Saora have accepted the first form as the rule and others as exceptions. Polygamy in the form of polygyny is widely prevalent as it increases work force of the family enabling the person to clear more patches of *podu* fields, thus helps increasing the economic condition of the family. Of all types of marriage, marriage by negotiation though expensive is held prestigious in which parents of the boy and girl take initiative but in other types of marriage the initiative is taken either by the boy or the girl.

In arranged marriages generally negotiations are made according to the status of the two parties. Visits are exchanged several times between both the parties for fixation of date of marriage and bride price (*panshal*). Bride price in the form of cash, grain, liquor and clothes are paid. The amount of bride price varies between Rs.60.00 to Rs.80.00 and eight to twenty pots of country liquor, 15 kg. of rice, 70 kg of paddy, few bangles and a new *saree* for brides' mother. Before marriage bride price is paid.

Among the preferential forms of marriage the Saora practise cross-cousin, sororate and levirate forms of marriage. Divorce and remarriage of widow, widower and divorcee are permitted.

The Saora generally cremate the dead, except those dying of cholera and smallpox are buried. Then, after a year or two of death the *Guar* ceremony is observed. On this occasion menhirs are planted and a large number of buffaloes are sacrificed. This is generally followed by three successive *Karya* ceremonies

every second or third year to commemorate and honour those who have died in that particular period. These death rituals are very expensive.

Religion

The religious beliefs and practices of the Saora are very elaborate and complicated in the sense that every aspect of their life is governed by worship of deities / spirits connected with some religious activity or other. *Sonnum* or *sunnam* is the general name for the Saora deities and spirits. The concept of a supreme God is almost non-existent as in different localities different gods are considered supreme. They have strong faith in ghosts, spirits and existence of life after death. They also believe in the acts sorcery and black magic. The Saora gods and spirits differ from one another in composition, function, character and nature. Some are benevolent, some neutral and some malevolent. All these gods and spirits frequently appear in dreams and make constant demands on the living. If their demands are not met they can cause harm either to cattle or to human beings or to crops. Malevolent spirits are therefore dreaded more and appeased timely and carefully more than their benevolent counterparts.

The Saora are very famous for their wall paintings which look like icons. Inside the house on the walls one often finds a group of elaborately drawn sketches of religious significance and therefore called *italons* or icons.

Saora society is full of shamans called *Kudan* (male) and *Kudanboi* (female), the medicineman-cum-sorcerer. They play a vital role in curing all types of diseases. A shaman is a diviner-cum-medicine man who possesses divine power to establish direct communication with the unseen world in trance and cure all types of illness caused by the wrath of evil spirits. Every shaman has a female tutelary and every shamanin has a male tutelary. The relationship between these two is the same as noticed between husband and wife.

The other religious functionary who caters to the spiritual needs of the Saora is called *Buyya*, who presides over agricultural festivals. The position of *Buyya* is ascribed and that of the *Kudan* it is achieved.

The ceremonies and festivals of the Saora are of two types, one relate to individual families and the other, to whole community. The rites and ceremonies relating to child birth, marriage and death are observed on individual family basis, whereas those concerning agriculture and the biennial or triennial *Guar* (planting of menhirs in memory of the deceased) are held at the village level.

Political System

Ideally, Saora villages are self sufficient units and the traditional *panchayat* plays an important role in maintaining law and order and village solidarity. The traditional village chief is called *Gomang* or secular headman and *Buyya* is the religious headman. The offices of both the functionaries are

hereditary and occupied by the members of one and the same family. Besides, there is an astrologer called *Disari* in the village, the post is achieved rather than ascribed. Anybody who acquires knowledge about stars and predicts events and fixes dates of events can function as an astrologer.

II Development of PTGs in Orissa

On the eve of 5th Plan period while reviewing the Tribal development Programmes, it was felt necessary to identify the extremely backward and disadvantaged groups/sections among the tribes and devise special development programmes for them in order to bring them at par with general tribal population as they needed special attention. On the basis of the guidelines issued by Govt. of India, PTGs were identified for the States having tribal population with the approval of Govt. of India. So far, 75 tribes/ sections of the tribes have been identified as PTGs in the Country. The State -wise position of PTGs reveals that Orissa having 13 PTGs tops the list followed by Andhra Pradesh 12; Bihar 9; Madhya Pradesh 7; Tamil Nadu 6; Kerala, Gujarat & A&N Island (UT) 5 each; West Bengal, Maharashtra 3 each; Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh 2 each and Manipur, Tripura & Rajasthan 1 each.

So far, 13 communities have been identified as PTGs in Orissa. The following table depicts the name of the PTGs and their location.

Sl. No.	Name of the PTG	Location (District)
1	Bondo	Malkangiri
2	Didayi	Malkangiri
3	Dongria Kondh	Rayagada
4	Lanjia Saora	Rayagada, Gajapati
5	Saora	Gajapati, Ganjam
6	Kutia Kondh	Kalahandi, Kondhmal
7	Juang	Keonjhar
8	Paudi Bhuiyan	Sundergarh, Anugul, Deogarh
9	Lodha	Mayurbhanj
10	Hill-Kharia	Mayurbhanj
11	Mankirdia	Mayurbhanj
12	Birhor	Mayurbhanj
13	Chuktia Bhunjia	Nuapada

Since the Primitive societies are characterized by simple life style, smallness, homogeneity, distinctiveness in culture, economy, eco-settings and confronted with problems like hunger, malnutrition, chronic and endemic disease, illiteracy and ignorance, exploitation and unemployment, it was felt necessary to formulate unique programme for each group which is area and culture specific.

To look after the development of PTGs exclusively, special projects called Micro Project have been set up in each of the PTG inhabited area. In Orissa 17 such projects have been grounded for 13 PTGs, of which 13 are located within the Tribal Sub Plan (TSP) area and 4 outside the TSP area.

During the Fifth Plan period 9 Micro Projects, during Sixth Plan period 1, during the Seventh Plan period 5 and finally during the Eighth Plan period 2 were grounded.

According to the base line survey conducted by SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar, in 2001-02, these special projects cover 19 part Blocks, 69 Gram Panchayats, 547 villages/hamlets, 70 657 (Male-34 425, Female-36 232) PTG population and 16 361 PTG households.

Some important statistics on development status of PTGs inhabiting the Micro Project areas as per the findings of the survey conducted by SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar is mentioned below.

All PTGs OF 17 MICRO PROJECTS

• Population	70 657
• Population (below 14 years)	29 357 (41.55)
• Population(15 years and above)	41 300 (58.45)
• Unmarried	31 587 (52.27)
• Married	25 041 (41.44)
• Widow/Widower	3 494 (5.78)
• Divorcee(Except CBDA,DDA,KKDA (L)	310 (0.51)
• Literacy rate	13 453 (19.04)
• Illiteracy	57 204 (80.96)
• Work Force (Except BDA,DKDA Chatikona &Parsali)	31 596 (55.26)
• Earners (Except BDA,DKDA Chatikona &Parsali)	31 820 (55.65)
• Dependants (Except BDA, DKDA Chatikona &Parsali)	25 355 (44.35)
• Primary Occupation (Household) Agriculture	7 156 (43.74)
Horticulture	859 (5.25)
Shifting Cultivation	3 987 (24.37)
Wage	2 557 (15.63)
Service	179 (1.09)
Business	41 (0.25)
Forest Collection	870 (5.32)
Shifting Cultivation + Animal Husbandry	379 (2.32)
Others	333 (2.04)
• HH having Land	10 690 (65.34)
• HH having no Land	5 671 (34.66)
• Average Land per HH (Except DDA)	1.13Ac
• HH having Tree	10 366 (78.52)

• HH having no Tree	2 355 (17.84)
• HH having Livestock (Except BDA & CBDA)	10 966 (67.03)
• HH with house& house site (Except CBDA)	13 171 (83.14)
• HH with house& no house site (Except CBDA)	1 686 (10.64)
• HH with house site & no house (Except CBDA)	770 (4.86)
• HH with no house site & no house (Except CBDA)	215 (1.36)
• Average income per household (Rs)	9 177
• Per capita income (Rs)	2 125
• Percentage of expenditure on food (Rs)	59.54
• Average expenditure per household (Rs)	8 311
• Per capita expenditure (Rs)	1 924
• Average value of household assets (Rs)	28 343

Development of Saora/Lanjia Saora

For development of Saora and Lanjia Saora, 04 Micro Projects, one each at Rayagada, Ganjam and two in Gajapati districts were set up during fifth and sixth Plan periods. Their location, area, coverage etc are given below.

Sl. No	Name of the Project	Year of inception	PTG	Area (Sq. Kms)	No.of villages/ hamlets	PTG Population	Remarks
1	SDA, Chandragiri Gajapati district	1978	Saora	1159	32	4714	Completed 29 years
2	TDA, Tumba Ganjam district	1978	Saora	28.49	58	3723	Completed 29 years
3	LSDA, Serongo Gajapati district	1979	Lanjia Saora	30	21	5114	Completed 28 years
4	LSDA, Puttasing Raygada district	1984	Lanjia Saora	35	21	4547	Completed 23 years

Present status of development of the Lanjia Saora / Saora inhabiting in above 4 Micro Project areas on some selected indicators as per the base line survey of SCSTRIL, (2001-02) Bhubaneswar is given below.

Sl. No	INDICATORS	SDA, Chandragiri	TDA, Tumba	LSDA, Serango	LSDA, Puttasing	Average (All PTGs)
1	Literacy rate	27.90	22.13	23.90	30.99	19.04
2	Land holding Per household	1.65	1.89	1.57	1.74	1.13
3	Percentage of Landless HH	20.75	29.18	6.36	11.99	34.66
4	Annual income per household	9671	12386	12846	15843	9177

5	Per capita income	1965	2828	3117	2672	2125
6	Annual expenditure per household	9426	11970	12345	14573	8311
7	Per capita expenditure	1898	2733	2995	2458	1924
8	Average value of HH assets	23578	35394	72900	39188	28343
9	Percentage of earners	53.03	58.62	53.61	56.91	55.65

The above table which is self explanatory reveals that in respect of most of the 9 selected development indicators the Saora / Lanjia Saora record a better average than the averages for all PTGs. However, the SDA, Chandragiri records lower averages in respect of per capita income, per capita expenditure and average value of household assets than the averages for all PTGs.

Project wise comparison on the above indicators shows the following:

- The literacy rate is highest in Puttasingi (30.99 %), followed by Chandragiri (27.90 %), Serongo (23.90 %) and Tumba (22.13 %) in descending order.
- The average land per household is highest in Tumba (1.89), and lowest in Serongo (1.57). The second and third position is held by Puttasingi (1.64) and Chandragiri (1.65) respectively.
- The percentage of landless household is highest in Tumba (29.18), the second place held by Chandragiri (20.75), the third Puttasingi (11.99) and the last being Serongo (6.36).
- In respect of annual income per household Puttasingi tops the list (15843) followed by Serongo (12846), Tumba (12386) and Chandragiri (9671).
- Similarly, per capita income is highest in Serongo (3117), next comes Tumba (2828), Puttasingi occupies third place (2672) and the last being Chandragiri (1965).
- Puttasingi records highest percentage (14573) of expenditure per household followed by Serongo (12345), Tumba (11970) and Chandragiri (9426) in the descending order.
- Like-wise per capita expenditure is highest in Serongo (2995) followed by Tumba (2733), Puttasingi (2458) and Chandragiri (1898) in the descending order.
- The average value of household assets is highest in Serongo (72900) followed by Puttasingi (39188), Tumba (35394) and Chandragiri (23578).

- Finally proportion of earners is highest in Tumba (58.62 %) followed by Puttasingi (56.91 %), Serongo (53.61 %) and Chandragiri (53.03 %).

On the whole the above picture broadly reveals that in comparison to Lanjia Saora of LSDA, Serongo and LSDA, Puttasingi, the Saora of TDA, Tumba and SDA, Chandragiri are less advanced although the later two Projects were set up earlier than the former two. On the basis of the development profile of each of the four Projects as depicted in above paragraphs, it is somehow clear that LSDA, Serongo ranks first, followed by LSDA, Puttasingi, TDA, Tumba and SDA, Chandragiri in the descending order.

Assessment of Impact

Under the TSP Strategy, Micro Projects were funded fully out of grants received from Govt. of India under Special Central Assistance (SCA). Such funding forms an additive measure to State Govt. efforts. In addition to programmes of Micro Projects, the ITDA/DRDA and other line departments of the State Govt. also implementing their schemes in the Micro Project areas. Above all, the efforts of the people themselves including their human and financial resources constitute a major input for improvement of their socio economic condition. Some of the noticeable changes are mentioned below:

- Most of the Project villages which are once located in inaccessible areas are no more inaccessible. The area has been opened up with connectivity with Project, GP Headquarters and market centres, in many cases with all weather roads. However, a few villages of TDA, Tumba, LSDA, and Puttasingi which are located in most inaccessible areas are yet to be provided with road connectivity. Most of the village lanes have been made cement concrete with drains on either side.
- The villages look neat and clean with proper drainage facility. In case of many, the straw thatched roofs of the houses have been replaced with fire proof asbestos roofs. The people have become gradually conscious about sanitation and cleanliness of the surroundings; therefore, garbage and waste materials are seldom thrown here and there on the street.
- The recently constructed houses have more space, may be with more than one room with windows for proper ventilation and lighting.
- Many villages have been provided with electricity, safe drinking water from tube well, well and pipe water supply by gravitational flow.
- Dependence on *Podu* cultivation has been reduced considerably, most of the barren hill slopes were now covered with horticultural plantations, like cashew both by the Govt. initiatives and peoples' cooperation.
- Mono cropping pattern of terraced fields have given rise to double or multi cropping with adoption of improved technology and provision of more and more irrigation facility.

- In addition to agriculture, horticulture (cashew crop) has become a major source of income of the Lanjias of Serongo and Puttasingi area in recent years, as major portion of their income is derived from the sale of cashew.
- Among the Lanjia Saora, with the increase of income, capacity to spend more, particularly on petty luxurious items, modern clothing, treatment of disease and entertainment of guests and relatives has increased. The survey data of SCSTRTI (2001-02) shows that the per capita income and per capita expenditure among the Lanjia Saora of LSDA, Serongo are highest among all the PTGs inhabiting other Micro Project areas.
- Any outsider or researcher who has visited the Lanjia Saora area recently and 30 years back will be impressed by the changes that have taken place among the people in their living conditions over these years although the process is slow.

Conclusion

Most of the Projects have completed more than 25 years of existence with unaltered project area and villages, even some of them are about to complete 30 years. Considering the size of the target population of each of these projects and quantum of money spent for their development the project period appears to be quite long. Plan after Plan from the Fifth Plan to Eleventh Plan the project period is being extended, and the people are still called Primitive. Some of the scholars in the field are of the opinion that the word Primitive be replaced by some other. Therefore, the major concern is how long such Projects need continuance in order to bring the target groups at par with general tribal population for removal of the term Primitive associated with their name need serious thought and consideration at the appropriate level.

References

- Aiyappan, A., 1948, SAVARAS, *Report on the socio-economic conditions of the Aboriginal Tribes of the Province of Madras*, Govt. Press, Madras
- Census of India, 2001, Directorate of Census Operations, Bhubaneswar.
- Thurston, E., 1975, *Castes and Tribes of Sourthern India*, Vol. VI, Cosmo Publications, New Delhi, pp 304-47.
- Mohanty, B.B., 2004, Saora, Tribes of Orissa, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar.
- SCSTRTI, 2001-02, Base-Line Survey among the PTGs of Micro Projects (17 reports) (Unpublished)
- SCSTRTI, 2006, *Data Hand Book on STs & SCs of Orissa*.

DEVELOPMENT OF PRIMITIVE TRIBAL GROUPS IN ORISSA : AN EVALUATION *

*P. K. Acharya*¹

Introduction:

For more than 50 years, the Government has been taking measures to uplift the overall living standard of the tribal people. During these years it has experimented with different tribal development approaches and finally adhered to the Tribal Sub-Plan approach. 'Micro Projects' have been set up for undertaking measures especially for the development of the 'Primitive Tribal Groups' (PTGs) in various states. Each Micro Project functions with hundred percent funding received from the Central Government under the Special Central Assistance grants. A group of administrative as well as field staffs headed by a special officer implement the development measures as reflected and approved in the Annual Action Plans. The measures are undertaken following the guidelines provided by the Government from time to time.

The elaborate arrangements for the development of PTGs have contributed to some extent in the creation of infrastructure and improvement of socio-economic condition and living standard of the tribes. But the progress made has been far from the expectations. These demands for a critical study on different aspects, such as fund utilization, monitoring and supervision, capacity development and overall administration, of the development programmes implemented by the Micro Projects for the PTGs. Keeping this in view, an evaluative study on the functioning of the Lanjia Saora Development Agency (LSDA), Puttasing, a Micro Project in Orissa, was conducted during 1999-2000. Basing on the findings of the study, a critical analysis has been made in this paper on the loopholes in the pattern of funding from different agencies and the lacunae in the modes of expenditure of these funds for undertaking various developmental activities. The paper has limited itself to an analysis of 16 years of

* Published in ADIVASI, Vol. XXXXII, No.1&2 & Vol. XXXIII, Nos.1&2, 2002 & 2003, pp.97-109

¹ Reader, Nabakrushna Chowdhury Centre for Development Studies, Bhubaneswar

receipt and expenditure of funds, i.e. from 1983-84 to 1998-99. Besides, for the purpose of analysis of receipt and expenditure of funds, the data have been classified into three phases-Phase-I (1983-84 TO 1989-90), Phase II- (1990-91 to 1993-94) and Phase III- (1994-95 to 1998-99). Some suggestions have also been made to plug the financial loopholes and thereby helping in better utilization of funds for tribal development.

Brief Profile of LSDA:

The Micro Project, LSDA was established at Puttasingi in 1984 by the State Government. Since inception, its development activities have been limited only to the Sagada Gram Panchayat that covers 21 villages inhabited by the Lanjia Saora, one of the 13 PTGs of Orissa. Within these villages, 726 Lanjia Saora households are settled comprising a population of 4372 (Acharya & Mishra, 2000). Geographically the project area covers 39 sq.km. and lies roughly between 19° and 19°5' North latitudes and between 83°-55' and 84° East longitudes. The Project area is at 1600 ft. above the sea level and is covered with rugged hills and hill slopes interspersed by small villages. The Micro Project has its own Society whose main objectives are: (1) to accelerate the economic development of the Lanjia Saoras in the project area, (2) to execute schemes for the benefit of the Lanjia Saoras either directly or in coordination with such agencies as the Block Office, Agro-Industries Corporation. Co-operative Bank, Commercial Banks, Departments of the State and Central Governments that are engaged in this direction in the field, and (3) to review the progress and effectiveness of the programmes relating to development of the Lanjia Saoras.

The Micro Project has a Governing Body consisting of 9 members at the apex of its organizational structure. The Governing Body reviews, decides and approves the development activities, expenditure and action plan of the Micro Project for each financial year. Apart from the Governing Body, the Micro Project has a special officer who is its financial as well as administrative authority. He receives the funds released to the Micro Project and is accountable for its proper utilization and expenditure. He looks after the day to day affairs of Micro Project and the ministerial staffs of Micro Project cooperate with him in accounting and administrative matters. The Special Officer is also responsible for the effective implementation of development programmes. He is answerable for the managerial lacunae found during implementation of the programmes. For proper execution and management of the development programmes, a team of technical as well as field staff assists him.

Pattern of Funding:

Since 1983-84, a special fund has been received every year by the LSDA for undertaking development programmes for the Lanjia Saoras of the Micro Project area. Table-1 shows that the grants are available from three sources, i.e. (i) Scheduled Tribe (ST) and Scheduled Caste (SC) Development Department, Orissa, Bhubaneswar (ii) Integrated Tribal Development Agency, Gunupur and

(iii) District Rural Development Agency, Rayagada. Funds from Scheduled Tribe and Scheduled Caste Development Department are available from 1983-84 to 1988-99. The annual grants of the Integrated Tribal Development Agency are available from 1990-91 to 1997-98 and similarly from the district Rural Development Agency, money has been released from 1994-95 to 1998-99. It is thus observed that the funding agencies have provided funds at different phases of time. In phase I, the Scheduled Tribe and Scheduled Caste Development Department (SSD) has started providing the funds. In phase II, the integrated Tribal Development Agency has begun its funding whereas the funding of the District Rural Development Agency has been initiated in phase III.

As far as the actual payment of grants is concerned, **Table-1** further shows that there has never been a regular rise in the release of annual grants to the LSDA. In phase I the allotment for the year 1983-84 is Rs. 1.38 lakh, which has increased to Rs. 1.50 lakh in 1984-85 and further to Rs. 5.00 lakh in 1985-86. In 1986-87, the allotment was reduced to Rs. 2.80 lakh. In 1987-88, the allotment was raised to Rs. 25.13 lakh that is nearly nine times more but in the subsequent year, the grant has been drastically reduced to Rs. 8.2 lakh. In 1989-90, the grant has been further decreased to Rs. 4.5 lakh. Thus there is a repeated fluctuation in the receipt of grants. As revealed from Table -1, the situation has not improved during the phase II and III. The inconsistency and repeated fluctuation in receipt of funds have continued till the end of phase III and this has become one of the major hurdles for the LSDA to make a proper planning and implementation of the programmes.

It is further evident from Table-1 that irregular rise and fall have occurred in the receipt of funds that have been released by all the three funding agencies. While in phase-I there is inconsistency in the funds released by the SSD Dept, in phase II and III, the funds allotted by the same agency shows a gradual year wise decline. Since the SSD Department is the major funding agency for the Micro Project, irregular rise and fall in funding during phase-I and gradual reduction in funding during phase-II and III have greatly affected the development activities undertaken by the Micro Project. Like the SSD Department, both the other two funding agencies, i.e. the Integrated Tribal Development Agency, Gunupur and the District Rural Development Agency, Rayagada have also never been consistent in increasing or decreasing their grants to LSDA. In the opinion of the LSDA staff, the irregular rise and fall in funding occur due to lack of coordination among the three funding agencies in taking decisions regarding the extent of release of funds to the LSDA. The lack of required cooperation and collaboration between the three funding agencies has never been helpful for effective implementation of the development schemes.

For implementation of development schemes and programmes, the Micro Project prepares an Annual Action Plan every year. The Annual Action Plan portrays the programmes of action to be undertaken and the funds to be utilized for implementation of such programmes. The Annual Action Plan, after

approval by the Governing Body of the Micro Projects, is submitted to the SSD Department for release of the grants. An analysis on the funds projected in the Annual Action Plans and the funds released by the SSD Department reveals that the grants actually released by the Department have always been perceptively less (30 to 50 percent) than the funds projected for release in the Annual Action Plans (**Table-2**). Due to drastic reduction in the release of funds every year, the Micro Project has faced a lot of difficulties in implementing the programmes of action as per the Annual Action Plan. The financial planning for implementing the schemes / programmes is mismatched with the extent of funds received and as result of this some schemes have been either not implemented at all or partially implemented.

The mismatching of financial planning and implementation of schemes/ programmes is further accentuated due to delayed release of funds. The first installment of grants has not been provided in the beginning of a financial year, i.e. April/May, since 1994-95 and the delay in release of the first installment of grants has been, on an average, 4 to 5 months every year. Such delay in the release of funds has affected the functioning of the Micro Project in several ways resulting into (1) irregular payment of salary to staff, (2) untimely supply of teaching learning materials to the learning centre (3) non-implementation of some seasonal based agriculture and nursery schemes. And (4) delay in beneficiary selection, input supply, monitoring and supervision.

Pattern of Expenditure:

It is evident from **Table-3** that during phase I, a sum of Rs. 6.93 lakhs was received as the average annual grant by the Micro Project and the same amount was also available for expenditure and was spent actually. Thus there exists parity among the amount of funds received, amount of funds available for expenditure and amount of funds spent during phase I. This situation however has not continued during phase II and phase III. In phase II, the average annual amount of funds received is Rs. 12.32 lakh whereas the average annual amount of funds available for expenditure is Rs. 12.38 lakh and the average annual amount of funds spent is Rs. 13.28 lakh. In this phase, the average annual amount of funds available for expenditure is marginally more than the average annual amount of funds received. But the average annual amount of funds spent is perceptively more than the average annual amount of funds available for expenditure. Thus a lack of coherence among the amount of funds received, amount of funds available for expenditure and the amount of funds spent in 1993-94 of phase II. Table-3 further shows that in phase III, the average annual amount of funds spent has been Rs. 24.45 lakh although the average annual amount of funds available is Rs. 20.13 lakh and the average annual amount of funds received is Rs. 24.26 lakh. The lack of coherence among the amount of funds received, amount of funds available for expenditure and the amount of funds spent has thus continued up to the end of phase III. This indicates that the

LSDA has not attempted seriously to bridge up gap between these three financial dimensions during phase II and III.

An analysis of the average annual amount of funds spent with regard to different heads of expenditure shows that during phase I, the average annual amount of funds spent is Rs. 6.93 lakh. Out of this, 28.54 percent was spent towards administrative charges, 58.10 percent for other development programmes and the rest 13.36 percent on income generating schemes (Table 3). This indicates that the ratio of the average annual amount of expenditure on income generation schemes, other development programmes and administrative charges during phase I is 13:58:29. During phase II and III, the same ratios are 49:31:20 and 57:27:16 respectively. It is thus evident that in phase I, from financial point of view, income generating schemes have been given less priority than other development programmes and administrative expenses. The present economic backwardness of the Lanjia Saora people in the Project Area may be attributed to the low investment made towards income generation schemes during phase I which constitutes nearly half of the entire study period.

For fruitful utilization of money, there is a need for economic planning of the expenditure to be incurred on different items under each of the three major heads. As far as the administrative expenses of the Micro Project are concerned, it is seen from **Table-4** that during the whole period of study, the average annual expenditure on this head is Rs. 2.77 lakh. Out of this, 96.48 percent is towards establishment expenditures like salary, allowances and contingency expenses of the office. Towards electrification of the office and staff quarters 1.11 percent is being spent. Similarly, 0.44 percent of the average annual expenditure on administrative charges has been spent towards leave salary and pension contribution of the staff, 0.45 percent towards fencing the Micro Project office with barbed wire, 1.07 percent towards wages of typist and watch man posted on contract basis and 0.45 percent for purchasing spare parts and fuel for the office motor cycle. The expenditure on wages of the contractually appointed typist and watchman has been made only on the years 1997-98 and 1998-99. Since there has already been a person serving as junior clerk-cum-typist on regular basis, the expenditure on contractual appointment of another typist does not appear cost effective. Moreover, expenditure on fuel for vehicle has not been made from 1983-84 to 1996-97, which evinces no use of the office vehicle during this period. In this context, the posting of one driver in the Micro project appears illogical and the expenditure towards his salary seems to be wastage. That apart, without the use of the office vehicle, the monitoring and supervision work of the LSDA has been grossly affected.

The funds earmarked for expenditure on other development programmes have been spent on various items such as construction and maintenance of office building and staff quarters, education programme, health programme, development work like construction of roads, co-operation, publicity and exhibition, drinking water facility, rural electrification, and making

of Lanjia Saora model house. From **Table-5**, it is revealed that from 1983-84 to 1998-99 the average annual amount of expenditure made out of the grants received from the ST & SC Development Department on other development programmes is Rs. 3.80 lakh. Out of this, the percentage share of expenditure on education programme is 32.32 and the same on development work is 58.48. The percentage shares of expenditure on health programmes, publicity and exhibition and drinking water supply are limited to 1.02, 1.95 and 1.67 respectively. Similarly the percentage share of expenditure on electrification of villages is as low as 1.30 percent. It is further evident from Table 6 that during the period from 1983-84 to 1998-99 the LSDA has received some amount of grants from the District Rural Development Agency at the rate of Rs. 1.03 lakh per year. The entire amount so received has been utilized only for development work, i.e. road construction. The funds received from the ITDA have not been utilized by the LSDA for implementing other development programmes. It appears from this analysis that the Micro Project has given more importance to educating the Lanjia Saora people and improving the communication facilities in the project area and thereby less importance to health, drinking water supply, publicity, exhibition and electrification.

Out of the funds received from the SSD Department the integrated tribal Development Agency, and the District Rural Development Agency certain amount has been spent for implementing some of the income generating schemes for the Lanjia Saoras living in the project area. The data presented in Table 6 reveal that when the whole period from 1983-84 to 1998-99 is taken into account, out of the funds received from the ST & SC Development Department a sum of Rs. 2.94 lakh is being spent as average annual amount of expenditure towards income generating schemes like agriculture, horticulture, soil conservation, irrigation, plough bullock and nursery. Out of this expenditure, 74.21 percent has been utilized only for horticulture scheme. In this scheme, plantation of various fruit bearing plants like banana, coconut, mango, cashew, pineapple, lemon etc. has been given priority. Apart from this 7.52 percent of the average annual amount of expenditure has been spent on agricultural scheme, which includes provision of seeds, manure and pesticide. For the soil conservation scheme, 11.84 percent has been spent whereas for raising nursery, 5.96 percent has been spent. The irrigation and plough bullock schemes have been neglected and hence, the percentage shares of average annual amount of expenditure of these schemes are below one percent.

Phase wise analysis of data indicates that in phase I, the average annual expenditure on income generating schemes is Rs. 0.93 lakh. Out of it, 34.86 percent was spent towards agriculture scheme, 38.86 percent for horticulture scheme, 25.17 percent for soil conservation scheme and 1.11 percent towards plough bullock scheme. It appears from this that during phase I, only agriculture and horticulture schemes have been given priority. In phase II, the average annual amount of expenditure on income generating schemes was Rs. 4.30 lakh

and the entire expenditure has been made for implementing the horticulture scheme only. In phase III, the average annual amount of expenditure was Rs. 4.46 lakh. Since horticulture scheme was also given importance during this phase, 64.61 percent of it has been utilized for implementing this scheme. Besides 5.38 and 17.09 percent of the average annual amount of expenditure have been spent towards agriculture and soil conservation schemes respectively. Unlike the earlier two phases, in phase III, 0.64 percent of the average annual amount of expenditure has been spent for irrigation scheme and 12.28 percent for nursery scheme.

From the figures presented in **Table-6**, it is found that out of the funds received from the Integrated Tribal Development Agency, the average annual amount of expenditure on income generating schemes, during the whole period of study is Rs. 1.93 lakh. The expenditure is however is limited to only two schemes, i.e. agriculture and horticulture with percentage shares of 25.39 and 74.61 respectively. This shows that horticulture scheme has been given priority over other schemes and therefore more money has been invested to implement it.

It is further observed from the data reflected in Table 6 that the amount of fund provided by the District Rural Development Agency towards income generating schemes has been spent for implementing only the horticulture scheme. This shows that the funds received from the funding agencies for implementing income generating schemes have been invested primarily on horticulture scheme and partly on agriculture or agriculture related schemes like soil conservation and irrigation. As a result, other income generating schemes like petty business, bee keeping, poultry, dairy, processing of minor forest produce or surplus agricultural produce etc. have not been implemented for the Lanjia Saoras. This indicates that the alternative avenues of supplementary income have not properly explored for raising the economic status of the tribe.

Major Lacunae:

The above discussion has revealed the following major lacunae in the pattern of funding and expenditure.

1. Repeated rise and fall in release of annual grants by the funding agencies
2. Lack of coordination among the funding agencies regarding the amount of grants released to the LSDA under different heads of expenditure.
3. Amount of funds spent is more than the amount of received by LSDA.
4. Delay in the release of funds to the LSDA.
5. Negligence in earmarking of funds towards supervision and monitoring.
6. Extremely low earmarking of funds towards expenditure on developmental activities relating to health, nutrition, sanitation, publicity, rural electrification and safe drinking water supply.

7. Expenditure not incurred towards implementation of alternative avenues of supplementary income.
8. Funds not earmarked towards expenditure on spread of vegetable cultivation and establishment of processing units relating to minor forest and surplus agricultural produces and the products of horticulture schemes.
9. Funds not earmarked for expanding the avenues of marketing the tribal products both before and after processing. The aforesaid lacunae act against the overall functioning of the LSDA and result in (a) inability to sustain the development activities, (b) unwarranted excessive expenditure on a few sectors of development neglecting the other sectors and (c) lack of integrating the development activities resulting into adoption of a piece meal rather than a holistic approach.

Policy Recommendations:

In order to bring in an all round development of the Lanjia Saoras, it is recommended that:

1. The funding agencies should not be inconsistent in releasing funds to the LSDA. There should never be a fall in the release of funds. The funds to be released for a financial year should be 5 to 10 percent more than the funds released for the previous financial year.
2. Before release of funds, the funding agencies should sit together and take a combined decision regarding the release of funds under different heads of expenditure. Care should be taken to see that out of the total funding, the ratio of percentage shares of funds to be released towards income generation schemes; other development programme and administrative charges should be fixed in advance. Based on field experience, it is felt that the said ratio should be 45:35:20 for income generation schemes, other development programme and administrative charges respectively.
3. The LSDA should restrict its expenditure to the extent of funds received every year for its functioning. The Government Body of the LSDA and the funding agencies should ensure that the LSDA does not spend beyond the amount of funds received by it.
4. Continuous supervision and monitoring of development activities are vital to the success of LSDA. The LSDA should therefore mention in the Annual Action Plan the details of its supervision and monitoring activities for approval of the Governing Body. It should also earmarked specific amount of funds towards supervision and monitoring expenses.
5. The funds to be released towards horticulture scheme may be reduced to limit it to the maintenance of backyard plantation and fruit bearing plants. A separate amount of funds should be kept for establishing units for processing

the minor forest and surplus agricultural produces and products of horticulture schemes.

6. Funds should be released to enhance the communication and transport network and to expand the marketing avenues of tribal products.
7. Part of the funds received for agricultural schemes may be earmarked for the spread of vegetable cultivation especially where irrigation facility is available.
8. Funds should be released to tap the natural sources of water including rainwater for expansion of irrigation facilities.
9. A separate amount of funds should be released for undertaking development activities relating to health, nutrition, sanitation, housing, rural electrification, publicity and safe drinking water supply.
10. Funds should also be released for implementing the alternative avenues of supplementary income that may be locally feasible and cost effective.
11. There should be regular flow of funds to the Micro Projects from different sources. It is possible to ensure this by releasing funds on quarterly basis without waiting till the fag end of each financial year, which will also confirm to the government policy of incurring development expenditure uniformly over the year barring seasonal exceptions.

References:

- ACHARYA, PRASANTA K. and RASHMI MISHRA 2000. Evaluation of Lanjia Saora Development Agency. Puttasingi, Rayagada District, Orissa, Mimeo, Bhubaneswar: NKC Centre for Development Studies.
- MOHANTI K. K., PRASHANT K. MISHRA and M. R. ACHARYA 1996. Development intervention: Study of the Lanjia Saora of Orissa Mimeo. Bhubaneswar: Centre for Development Studies.
- T.H.R.T.I., 1989 Evaluation of the Micro Project- The Juang Development Agency Gonasika, Keonjhar, Mimeo, Bhubaneswar: Tribal and Harijan Research-cum-Training Institute.

Table-1
Year and Phase-wise Grants Received by the Micro Project from various sources

Year / Phase	Sources and amount (in Rs.) of Annual grants received			
	ST & SC Development Department	Integrated Tribal Development Agency	District Rural Development Agency	Total
1983-84	138000 (100.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	138000 (100.00)
1984-85	150000 (100.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	150000 (100.00)
1985-86	500000 (100.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	500000 (100.00)
1986-87	280000 (100.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	280000 (100.00)
1987-88	2513000 (100.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	2513000 (100.00)
1988-89	820000 (100.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	820000 (100.00)
1989-90	450000 (100.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	450000 (100.00)
Average Annual Grants (phase-I)	693000 (100.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	693000 (100.00)
1990-91	1200000 (88.130)	161700 (11.87)	0 (0.00)	1361700 (100.00)
1991-92	1090000 (76.28)	339000 (23.72)	0 (0.00)	1429000 (100.00)
1992-93	864000 (75.25)	284108 (24.75)	0 (0.00)	1148108 (100.00)
1993-94	895000 (90.32)	95931 (9.63)	0 (0.00)	990931 (100.00)
Average Annual Grants (phase-II)	10,12,250 (82.13)	220185 (17.87)	0 (0.00)	1232435 (100.00)
1994-95	1450000 (48.74)	382625 (12.86)	11,42,600 (38.40)	2975225 (100.00)
1995-96	1396000 (50.68)	677250 (24.58)	6,81,552 (24.74)	2754802 (100.00)
1996-97	956000 (35.99)	806340 (30.36)	8,94,000 (33.65)	2656340 (100.00)

1997-98	968000 (56.52)	344500 (12.12)	4,00,000 (23.36)	1712500 (100.00)
1998-99	963000 (47.75)	0 (0.00)	10,66,440 (52.55)	2029440 (100.00)
Average Annual Grants (Phase-3)	1146600 (47.27)	442143 (18.23)	836918 (34.50)	2425661 (100.00)
Total Period (1983-84 to (1998-99)	14033000 (66.79)	3091454 (14.11)	4184592 (19.10)	21909046 (100.00)
Average Annual Grants (Total Period)	914562 (66.79)	193216 (14.11)	261537 (19.10)	1369315 (100.00)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate the percentage

Sources: Official records of Lanjia Saora Development Agency, Puttasing.

Table-2
Funds Received and Funds Projected in Annual Action Plans
of the Micro Project

Year	Funds Projected in Annual Action Plan (in Rs.)	Funds Received from ST & SC DD (in Rs.)	Excess (+) or less (-) received (in Rs.)	% of less / more payment
1983-84 to 1990-91	DNA*	-	-	-
1991-92	2037745	1090000	(-) 947745	46.5
1992-93 to 1994-95	DNA*	-	-	-
1995-96	2410800	1396000	(-) 1014800	42.1
1996-97	1535800	986000	(-) 579800	37.8
1997-98	1462560	968000	(-) 494560	33.8
1998-99	1500000	963000	(-) 537000	35.8

DNA= Data not available

Note= Figure in parenthesis indicate the percentage

Sources= Office records of LSDA, Puttasing

Table-3
Phase wise Average Amount of Funds Utilized on Major Heads of Expenditure

Phase	Amount Received (in Rs.)	Amount available for expenditure (in Rs.)	Amount spent on major heads of expenditure (in Rs.)			
			Income Generation Scheme	Other Development Programmes	Administrative Charges	Total
Phase -1 1983-84 to 1989-90	693000	693000	92591 (13.36)	402654 (58.10)	197755 (28.54)	693000 (100.00)
Phase-2 1990-91 to 1993-94	1232435	1238954	650095 (48.95)	409273 (30.82)	268630 (20.23)	1328007 (100.00)
Phase-3 1994-95 to 1998-99	2425661	2012534	1395280 (57.08)	655166 (26.80)	394070 (16.12)	2444516 (100.00)
Total Period 1983-84 to 1998-99	1369315	1241843	63905 (45.67)	483218 (34.54)	276825 (19.79)	1399100 (100.00)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate the percentage
Sources: Official records of Lanjia Saora Development Agency, Puttasing.

Table-4
Phase wise Average Annual Expenditure on Administrative charges
During 1983-84 to 1998-99

Phase	Amount of Average Annual Expenditure (in Rs.) on Administrative Charges						
	Estt charges (Pay, allowance, etc)	Electrification to office and staff quarters	Leave salary and pension contribution	Fencing of office	Wage of typist and watchman	Motor cycle spare parts and petrol	Total
Phase -1 1983-84 to 1989-90	190243 (96.20)	1901 (0.96)	2758 (1.40)	2853 (1.44)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	197755 (100.00)
Phase-2 1990-91 to 1993-94	264526 (98.47)	4114 (1.53)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	268640 (100.00)
Phase-3 1994-95 to 1998-99	376689 (95.59)	3912 (0.99)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	9516 (2.41)	3954 (1.01)	394071 (100.00)
Total Period 1983-84 to 1998-99	267078 (96.48)	3083 (1.11)	1206 (0.44)	1248 (0.45)	2947 (1.07)	1235 (0.45)	276824 (100.00)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate the percentage

Sources: Official records of Lanjia Saora Development Agency, Puttasing.

Table-5

Funding Agency	Average Annual Expenditure (in Rs.) on Other Development Programmes									
	Building Program	Education Program	Health Program	Development Work	Co-Operation	Publicity/Exhibition	Drinking Water	Electrification	Lanjia Saora Model House	Total
ST & SC DD	12214 (3.21)	122857 (32.32)	3863 (1.02)	222247 (58.48)	47 (0.01)	7396 (1.95)	6329 (1.67)	4954 (1.30)	166 (0.04)	380073 (100.00)
DRDA, Raygada	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	103160 (100.00)
ITDA, Gunpur	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate the percentage

Sources: Official records of Lanjia Saora Development Agency, Puttasing.

Table - 6
Funding Agency wise Average Annual Expenditure on Income Generation Schemes during (1983-84 to 1998-99)

Funding Agency	Amount of Annual Expenditure (in Rs.) on income generation schemes						
	Agriculture	Horticulture	Soil Conservation	Irrigation	Plough Bullocks	Nursery	Total
ST & SC DD	27881 (7.52)	21334 (74.21)	34027 (11.84)	898 (0.31)	449 (0.16)	17124 (5.96)	293714 (100)
DRDA, Rayagada	0 (0.00)	158378 (100)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	158378 (100.00)
ITDA, Gunupur	49051 (25.39)	144165 (74.61)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	193216 (100.00)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate the percentage

Sources: Official records of Lanjia Saora Development Agency, Puttasing.

TRIBAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH MICRO PROJECT *

*P. K. Acharya*¹

Abstract:

Under the Tribal Sub-Plan approach, the Government of India has set up several Micro Projects for all round development of the Primitive Tribal Groups in the country. Each Micro Project has its own administrative structure, annual action plans and budgets for implementing schemes and programmes for the development of the selected tribal populations. Over the years, crores of rupees have been spent by the Micro Projects. But have they achieved their targets of improving the living standards of the tribes? This paper has analyzed the functioning of Lanjia Saora Development Agency, a Micro Project established in 1984 at Puttasingi in Rayagada District of Orissa and has assessed the achievements made by it relating to development of the Lanjia Saoras. Furthermore, it has identified some factors that have acted as loopholes in the functioning of the Micro Project and has therefore mentioned some measures to plug these loopholes.

Since the 5th Five Year Plan (1974-79), the Government of India has introduced the Tribal Sub-Plan approach to bring in a holistic development of the tribes. As an integrated component of the tribal Sub-Plan approach, micro projects have been set up especially for the development of the primitive tribal groups. In Orissa, 17 micro projects have so far been established to develop 13 Primitive Tribal Groups. Lanjia Saora Development Agency set up at Puttasingi of Rayagada district is one among them. It concentrates all of its activities to develop the Lanjia Saora settled in 21 villages of Sagada Gram Panchayat. This paper has been prepared basing upon an evaluative study undertaken during November 1999 to July 2000 to assess the achievements and functioning of the

* Published in ADIVASI, Vol. XXXV, No.1, 2005, pp.37-44

¹ Reader in Social Anthropology, Nabakrushna Choudhury Center for Development Studies, Bhubaneswar

Lanjia Soara Development Agency, Puttasingi between the period from 1983-84 to 1998-99 in making an overall development of the Lanjia Saoras.

Objectives:

1. To examine whether the guidelines for the development of Primitive Tribal Group are clear and adequate, and to suggest changes in the guidelines, if necessary.
2. To develop broad indicators for assessing the level of development of Sagada Gram Panchayat in 1998-99 and to find out the contribution of the Lanjia Soara Development Agency towards achievement of the existing level of development.
3. To assess the factors contributing to the success and failure of Lanjia Soara Development Agency, especially in its functioning.
4. To recommend appropriate strategies for improving the functioning of Lanjia Soara Development Agency.

Methods Adopted:

Sagada Gram Panchayat has 21 villages with 726 households and all of these have become beneficiaries of multiple development schemes implemented by the Lanjia Soara Development Agency during the period from 1983-84 to 1998-99. Keeping this in view, all the 726 households have been taken as the universe of study and from among them 50 percent (i.e. 363 households) representing all the 21 villages have been selected by random sampling method for primary data collection. However for data collection on maternal malnutrition 1/6th (i.e. 121 households) of the universe has been selected by random sampling method. Thereafter, from each sample household the head of the household has been taken as the respondent for interview. The primary data have been collected by applying interview, participatory observation and focused group discussion methods and by using some schedules. The secondary data have been gathered from official records, research based books and journals.

Major Findings:

1. During the period for 1983-84 to 1998-99, the Lanjia Soara Development Agency was funded by three agencies, namely the Scheduled Tribe and Scheduled Caste Development Department of the Government of Orissa, the district Rural Development Agency of Rayagada and the Integrated Tribal Development Agency of Gunupur in Rayagada district.
2. Among the three funding agencies, the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Development Department was the major contributor with nearly 67 percent share of the average annual grant received by the micro project during the period from 1983-84 to 1998-99.

3. In case of all the three funding agencies, there was repeated variation in the year wise allotment of grants, for which it was difficult for them to work according to the action plan. Moreover, there was lack of combined decision among the three funding agencies as to what extent and on which development sector each agency would allocate funds for these projects.
4. The present economic backwardness of the Lanjia Saora people in the micro project area was primarily due to very low expenditure on income generating schemes i.e. 13.36 percent of the average annual expenditure during the phase 1 (1983-84 to 1998-90).
5. There was a lack of economic planning in the expenditure. As there was already a regular junior clerk-cum-typist, the expenditure on appointing another typist on contract basis appeared illogical. Furthermore, in view of the office jeep remaining out of order, the expenditure incurred towards salary of driver seemed unwise. On the other hand, the money on other development programmes was mostly directed towards the spread of education and road communication and therefore other sectors like health, rural electrification and publicity were very much neglected. Similarly, among the income generating schemes, maximum expenditure was incurred for implementing the horticulture programme. Consequently, expenditure on schemes like irrigation, plough bullock, soil conservation and agriculture was very much limited and there was no expenditure towards implementation of schemes like Goatery, dairy, bee-keeping, leaf-plate making, broom stick making, rope making or running petty business.
6. As far as implementation of the schemes is concerned, in horticulture scheme, cashew plantation was given top most priority. In nursery scheme, priority was given on raising the orange and *kageji* lemon seedlings. In agriculture scheme, "supply of agricultural implements" was totally neglected, while the "supply of seeds, pesticides and fertilizers" was given maximum priority. There was a regular implementation of the soil conservation scheme whereas similar attention was not given towards implementation of irrigation scheme.
7. An assessment of the development programmes and schemes implemented by the Micro Project revealed that the availability of health care services, except the immunization coverage, within the project area was poor. The gross accession ratio (i.e. percentage of villages having the facility) of Health Sub-Centre and Primary Health Centre was zero for the villages of project area. This resulted in the occurrence of 2,381 maternal mortality ratio, 341 maternal mortality rate, 440 infant mortality rate and 726 under 5 mortality rate during 1998-99.

The micro project had made sufficient provision of safe drinking water through establishment of tube wells and drinking water wells so that 84.02 percent of the tribal households could avail it during 1998-99. However, similar attention was not given to improve the sanitation aspect of the project area and hence no household was found to have latrine.

The incidence of malnutrition during 1998-99 was 65.94 % among mothers and 83.60 % among the children of 1 to 5 years, which speaks about inadequate availability of the nutritional as well as healthcare services in the project area. This is evident from the fact that the gross accession ratio with regard to Anganwadi Centre was only 19.05 in the project area.

For extending the pre-primary education, non-formal education and adult education facilities, the micro project had set up 16 Gyan Mandirs. Besides, seven primary schools, established by the School Education Department, were also functioning. The gross accession ratio for Gyan Mandir was 76.19 and the same for primary school was 33.33. However, the gross accession ratio for upper primary school, high school and college was zero. Consequently, in 1998-99, the percentage of 6 to 11 years population enrolled at primary level of education was 44.16 percent with a figure of 53.65 percent for boys and 34.72 percent for the girls. At upper primary level of education, the percentage of 12 and 13 years population enrolled was 25.14 percent with a sex wise break up of 37.93 percent for the boys and 12.50 percent for the girls during the same year. At the secondary level of education the percentage of 14 to 16 years population enrolled during 1998-99 was 17.44 percent with a sex wise variation of 25.77 percent for the boys and 6.67 percent for the girls.

The total literacy rate for 1998-99 for the project area was found to be 42.00 whereas the male (15+) and female (15+) literacy rates were 49.84 % and 19.26 % respectively. It is indicated from these findings that the impact of the literacy schemes was significant among the tribal population in general although the females were far behind the males in literacy rate. The absence of upper primary schools and high school within the project area was the major stumbling block for increasing the percentage of enrolment at upper primary and secondary levels of education.

The micro project had neglected to implement women oriented schemes and involve females in health and education programmes. Probably because of this, the percentage of females (15+) correctly being aware of the micro project and its activities was as low as nearly 47 percent in 1998-99. Besides taking seedlings from the micro project, all total 50,585 plants were raised by the tribals and out of them 21,685 were surviving till 1998-99.

The irrigation facility provided by the micro project for the tribal people of the project area was very much limited. Moreover, the micro

project did not take up implementation of the welfare schemes like beekeeping, goatery, piggery, vocational training and India Awas Yojana.

By the year 1998-99, 47.93 percent of the beneficiary households were found to have crossed the poverty line by taking Rs. 12,500.00 annual household income as the poverty line indicator. However, when Rs. 12,500.00 annual household income, availability of daily at least two square meals to all members of household, enrolment of all school going age children, and availing the minimum healthcare facilities such as immunization and safe drinking water were taken together as parameters for crossing poverty line, only 19.56 percent of the beneficiary households were found to have crossed the poverty line in 1998-99. It shows that owing to the large scale implementation of plantation schemes, the annual household income of the tribal beneficiaries had improved but similar improvement had not taken place in other spheres of social life.

8. The major factors that had affected the functioning of the micro project greatly were: (i) wide deviation of actual expenditure on different schemes and programmes from the expenditure projected in the action plan, (ii) delayed payment of funds, (iii) absence of financial institutions as well as markets within the project area, (iv) lack of working capital to run the "Lanjia Saora Farmers' Cooperative Society". (v) violation of guidelines, (vi) lack of regular posting of technical staff, (vii) non-regularization of the service of the field staff, (viii) non-payment of medical allowance and non-provision of rewards as well as incentive for exhibiting excellence in the assigned tasks to the field staff, (ix) lack of recording of the extent of economic exploitation of the tribal people, (x) negligence in proper maintenance of the official data, (xi) lack of road communication and transport facility to most of the villages, (xii) lack of provision of toilet, teaching and learning materials, games and sports equipments, vocational training equipment, first aid box, height and weight measuring instruments, and safe drinking water equipment to Gyan Mandirs, (xiii) adherence to supernatural beliefs and dependence on indigenous healers with regard to healthcare, and (xiv) parental discouragement to girl's education.

Policy Recommendations:

Keeping in view the aforesaid major findings, following policy recommendations have been made for the development of PTG

Modification in Guidelines:

- (i) The available land suitable for dry /wet cultivation in each village should be distributed not to all as has been mentioned in the guidelines for development of Primitive Tribes but only to the households having aptitude and interest to pursue agriculture.

- (ii) The planning of irrigation system should not follow, rather precede, the planning of cropping pattern so that the cropping pattern is designed in accordance with the extent of water available in *khariff* and *rabi* seasons.
- (iii) A definite plan is to be worked out as regard the types of supplementary sources of income to be provided to the people. In selecting the types of supplementary sources of income, it is to be seen that adequate number of women specific sources of income are included.
- (iv) Cultivation of green leaves and other vegetables should be encouraged by providing the beneficiaries with necessary awareness, guidance, inputs, training and market facility.
- (v) Village wise estimation of the products from agriculture, horticulture, backyard plantation, vegetable cultivation and minor forest produce collection is to be made every year and a plan is to be worked out for the purchase, storage, processing and sale of these products involving the project staff and the local tribe, especially the females.
- (vi) Village wise month wise record of the extent of malnutrition is to be maintained by the project staff and accordingly a plan is to be worked out for provision of necessary supplementary food and treatment to the persons affected by malnutrition.
- (vii) Necessary equipment and training are to be provided to the Multi-Purpose workers of the Gyan Mandirs to organize games and sports among students and to impart vocational knowledge and training to the students and villagers on different supplementary sources of income to be introduced by the micro project in the locality. Inter Gyan Mandir academic, games and sports competitions should be organized.
- (viii) The annual action plan of the micro project should limit to 25,45 and 30 percent of its total expenditure towards administrative expenses, income generation schemes and other development programmes respectively. The action plan should be approved by the Governing Body of the micro project two month prior to the commencement of every financial year. Nearly 60 percent of the funds required as per the annual action plan of the micro project is to be provided by the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Development Department and the rest 40.00 percent should be provided by the District Rural Development Agency and the Integrated Tribal Development Agency of the district in which the micro project is located. The administrative expenses of the project are to be met totally from the grants allotted by the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Development Department.

Strengthening of Development Process:

- (i) A special grant of Rs. 5 lakh should be sanctioned as the initial working capital of the Lanjia Saora Farmer's Cooperative Society. The society is to keep within 5 percent of its profit for increasing its working capital.
- (ii) The micro project should set up processing units to sell the tribal products in a processed way.
- (iii) Weekly markets are to be set up at two places within the project area.
- (iv) Communication and irrigation facilities are to be expanded on priority.
- (v) All primary schools located within the project area should be upgraded to upper primary schools. Hostel facility should be provided to two more schools by the S C and ST Development Department.
- (vi) The facilities available under the District Primary Education Programme and the Mid-Day Meals scheme should be provided to the students at Gyan Mandir.
- (vii) In order to improve their organizational activities, each Multi-Purpose Worker and field worker should be provided with a bicycle and Rs. 50.00 monthly towards its maintenance cost. Further, the micro project is to bear all the medical expenses required for the treatment of its staff suffering from illness. Every year, a sum of Rs. 5000.00 is to be spent for giving financial rewards or incentives to the Multi-Purpose Workers and field workers for showing excellence in the tasks assigned to them.
- (viii) A sum of Rs. 2 lakh should be kept as working capital for continuing the nursery scheme. The micro project is to negotiate with the authorities of the District Rural Development Agency, Rayagada and the Integrated Tribal Development Agency, Gunupur for the sale of the seedlings raised at its nursery. The profit obtained from such sale is to be kept for increasing the working capital.
- (ix) The annual grants extended to the micro project by the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Development Department should in no case be less than Rs. 20.00 lakh for the next five years.
- (x) There should be always a regular appointment of the technical staff of the micro project.
- (xi) The micro project is to take necessary official measures to motivate the authorities of Gramya Bank or any nationalized bank to open branches within the micro project area.

- (xii) The micro project should be provided with a separate grant Rs. 10.00 lakh which should be kept as fixed deposit in a bank so that the micro project can taken loan against it for its own functioning specially when the grants would not be received in time.
- (xiii) The micro project is to keep proper records on the extent of malnutrition, land alienation, bonded labour and indebtedness in different villages and percentage of enrolment, attendance and dropout at schools and Gyan Mandirs. It should also keep record on the village wise extent of collection of minor forest produce and products under horticulture schemes. The official records showing data on action plan, approval of the plan by Governing Body meetings, allocation of funds, expenditure incurred under different items, and achievement made in different sectors of development that should be preserved for further evaluation study. Necessary precautions should be taken by the Special Officer as well as the Clerk of the micro project to prevent missing of these records. The annual action plan should not only project the scheme and item wise financial requirement, it should also highlight the targets to be achieved and the steps to be taken to achieve the targets. This should be thoroughly discussed and approved at the Governing Body meeting where the technical staff of the micro project who would design the annual action plan should participate in the discussion.
- (xiv) The Special Officer is to be permitted to modify the action plan in consultation with the technical staff in exigency situation and take post-facto approval of it at the next Governing Body meeting.

Awareness Generation and Capacity Building:

- (i) The micro project should have its own audio-visual system to organize awareness programmes on different income generation schemes as well as other development programmes at selective places.
- (ii) Audio-visual recording of the women-specific sources of income like leaf plate making, rope making, tamarind powder making etc. should be demonstrated during awareness programmes.
- (iii) Messages on healthcare, nutritional care, population control, girls literacy etc. should be conveyed to the people through audio-visual system in awareness camps.
- (iv) A selected group of a least 30 tribal educated women with entrepreneurial aptitude from different villages is to be sent every year by the micro project to visit different places of the state where the women Self Help Groups (SHG) are successfully functioning. These tribal women should later on be motivated and provided with adequate

training and necessary input to take up different income generation schemes introduced for them by the micro project.

Selected Bibliography:

- Acharya, P. K. and R. Mishra (2000). Evaluation of Lanjia Saora Development Agency, Puttasingi, Rayagada District, Orissa. Report submitted to S.C. and S.T. Development Department, Govt. of Orissa, Bhubaneswar: NKC Centre for Development Studies.
- Bhowmick, P. K. (1984). Strategy for development of Primitive Group : A Case Study of the Lodhas of West Bengal, (in) Development Strategy: Primitive Tribal Groups (ed, by Tigidi and Rao), Hyderabad: Tribal cultural Research and Training Institute, Tribal Welfare Department.
- Elwin, V. (1945). Saora Futuris, *Man in India*. Vol. 15, pp.64-68.
- Government of Orissa (1990). Tribes of Orissa. Bhubaneswar : Harijan and Tribal Welfare Department.
- Government of Orissa (1995). District Statistical Hand Book, Rayagada. Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Government of Orissa.
- Mallik, A. (1995). The Lanjia Saora: Aspect of Society, Culture and Development. *Adivasi*. Vol. XXXV. No. 1 & 2. P. 55, June and December.
- Mohanti, K. K. and P. K. Mishra (1996). Development Intervention : Study of the Lanjia Saora of Orissa. Bhubaneswar: Naba Krushna Choudhury Centre for Development Studies.
- Pattnaik, N. (ed.) (1989). The Saora. Bhubaneswar: Tribal and Harijan Research-cum-Training Institute.
- Report on Evaluation of Serang Micro Project Agency in Ganjam District (1992). Bhubaneswar : Project and Corporate Consultants (p) Ltd.
- Report on Evaluation of Serang Micro Project Agency in Ganjam District (1993). Bhubaneswar : Project and Corporate Consultants (p) Ltd.
- Tigidi, A. K. and K. M. Rao (ed.) (1984). Development Strategy : Primitive Tribal Groups. Hyderabad: Tribal Cultural Research and Training Institute.

ABO BLOOD GROUP OF LANJIA (TAILED) SAORA, ORISSA *

*K. C. Tripathy*¹

Serological studies in India, particularly of ABO blood groups have covered some important aboriginal populations. On the basis of the above studies it is possible to assess the ethnic position of tribal population. During the physical survey of Saora ABO blood group of 25 adult persons of Lanjia Saora could be typed from the village Savarpalli, three miles away from R. Udayagiri town in the district of Ganjam, Orissa.

Saora also called Savars from an important ingredient of the tribal population of Orissa. They are found in most of the districts of the State of Orissa, their main concentration being in Ganjam and Koraput districts. The Saora of coastal region and western Orissa have adopted functional relationship with the Hindu societies and have no dialect of their own while Saoras living in high hills have a definite language. These two groups though imperfectly mingle with each other in physical features, yet are distinguished from each other in their customs, practices, traditions and language. In 1941 census, the total population of Saora was 316362 of which 177518 were recorded in Ganjam and Koraput districts. In 1961 census, the population counted separately gives 131000 and 46000 of Saora and Savars, respectively.

The present paper intends to study ABO blood group distribution among Saoras of R. Udayagiri in the district of Ganjam, Orissa. The Saoras referred here are known as Lambo Lanjia or Lanjia (tailed) due to their peculiar type of putting on their loin cloth hanging one end as a tail. As they occupy high hills they are also called as 'Malua'. This group is the most important of the Soars and numerically the largest division, eight of which were recorded by Elwin.

* Published in ADIBASI, Vol. 7, No.2, TRB, 1965-66, pp.13-16.

¹ Department of Anthropology, Utkal University, VaniVihar, Bhubaneswar, Orissa.

Later field investigations revealed that many of these sections are the same only having different names in different regions. There are five sections among the Saoras, each of which is an endogamous group.

Material and Method—ABO blood sampling of 25 adults Lanjia Saoras were typed with great difficulty and slide method for the purpose was followed. Anti-A and Anti-B serum obtained from Haffekine Institute, Bombay was utilized during the taste.

TABLE 1

Tribe	O	A	B	AB	Total
Lanjia Saora	7	10	5	3	25
Percent	28.0	40.0	20.0	12.0	100

The blood group A (40 percent) was found to be predominating. Distribution of O (28 percent) group is the next highest in percentage and B and AB are in still lesser percentage 20 percent and 12 percent, respectively.

TABLE 2

Distribution of ABO Blood Group and their Gene frequencies

Tribe	No.	O	A	B	AB	P	AB	Total
Lanjia Saora	25	7	10	5	3	--	--	--
Percent	100	28.0	40.0	20.0	12.0	0.295	0.163	0.529

Figure on ABO blood group of Juang, Gadaba, Khond, Sabar, Gond, Santal are taken from the article "Further studies on ABO Blood Groups from Orissa" written by S. S. Sarkar. Percentage and gene frequencies have been worked out by the author.

TABLE 3

*Distribution of ABO Blood Group among some Orissa Tribes
(Blood type from male members)*

Tribe	O	A	B	AB	Total
Juang	26	24	62	10	122
Gadaba	16	39	30	6	91
Khond	15	9	16	5	45
Sabar	17	19	25	12	74
Gond	12	5	6	2	25
Santal	2	2	8	2	14
Lanjia Saora (present study)	7	10	5	3	25

TABLE 4
Distribution of p, q, r Gene Frequencies among the Orissan Tribes

Tribe		O	A	B	AB	Total	p	q	r	Author
Juang	Number	26	24	62	10	122	--	--	--	Sarkar
	Percent	21.3	19.6	50.8	8.2	--	0.55	0.121	0.147	
Gadaba	Number	16	39	30	6	91	--	--	--	Sarkar
	Percent	17.5	42.9	32.9	6.6	--	0.070	0.114	0.132	
Khond	Number	15	9	16	5	45	--	--	--	Sarkar
	Percent	33.3	20.0	35.5	11.1	--	0.043	0.070	0.181	
Sabar	Number	17	19	25	12	73	--	--	--	Sarkar
	Percent	23.2	26.0	34.2	16.4	--	0.070	0.087	0.152	
Gond	Number	12	5	6	2	25	--	--	--	Sarkar
	Percent	48.0	20.0	24.0	8.0	--	0.041	0.045	0.219	
Santal	Number	2	2	8	2	14	--	--	--	Sarkar
	Percent	14.2	14.3	57.1	14.3	--	0.049	0.147	0.119	
Lanjia Saora	Number	7	10	5	3	25	--	--	--	K. C. Tripathy
	Percent	28.0	40.0	20.0	12.0	--	0.295	0.169	0.529	

Analyzing the Table No.2 p and r frequencies show the high doses of gene 0.295 and 0.529 respectively while q shows slight lower to both of them. Rightly speaking the three genes are distributed in the proportion such as p being double the q and r roughly four times more than q. other table have been given to study the mode of blood group distribution of Lanjia Saora and thereby tracing the racial affinity of the tribe with the other Orissa tribes.

Comparative studies of blood group between hill Saora (Lanjia) and the lowland Saora (Sa-ara) will be made in future to trace their genetical relationship, whether these two groups of Saora tribes are same or they are different, owing to their geographical isolations.

Bibliography

- Sarkar, S. S. - Further studied of 'ABO blood groups from Orissa', *Science and Culture*, Vol. 25 pp.694-695, June 1960.
- Ibid. - *The Aboriginal Races of India*.
- Mourant, A.E. - (1954) *The Distribution Of Blood Group*, Scientific Publication, Oxford.
- Das, N. & B. Chowdhury- Economy of a Saora Ceremony, *Vanyajati*, Vol. XII, January - 1964, No. 1.

ANTHROPOMETRIC AND FINGER AND PALMAR DERMATOGLYPHIC STUDY OF THE SOARAS *

*P. D. Prasad Rao*¹

Introduction

The Soaras are well known people in the Anthropological field. They constitute a major bulk of the tribal population in the State of the Orissa. They are commonly found in the Gnajam and Koraput districts, but sporadically distributed throughout the State. Concerning their social and religious institutions and economic pursuits numerous papers have been published but no systematic Anthropometric studies have been made of this interesting tribe.

The synthesis of the present paper deals with the statistical analysis of the data on their bodily measurements and the study of the finger and palmer prints. The study is based on a random sample of 110 adult males of whom the Anthropometric measurements and Somatoscopic observations were made; but only 100 adult male Soaras were considered for the Dermatoglyphic study. The data were collected from the villages Siripur, Nuapalli, Rusulgarh, Baramunda, Badagada and Ghatikia—all within a radius of 8 to 10 miles from the New Capital, Bhubaneswar in (undivided) Puri District.

(I) *Anthropometry*—The following measurements were taken:-

(1) Maximum head length, (2) Maximum head breadth, (3) Minimum frontal diameter, (4) Maximum bizygomatic breadth, (5) Bigonial Breadth, (6) Nasal height, (7) Nasal breadth, (8) Morphological or total facial length, (9) Stature and (10) Auricular head height.

The following indices have been worked out of the above measurement:-

* Published in ADIBASI, Vo. X, Nos. 3&4, 1968-69, pp. 15-24

¹ Post Graduate Department of Anthropology, Utkal University, Bhubaneswar

- (1) Cephalic index, (2) Nasal index, (3) Length-height index and index, (4) Breath-height index and (5) Facial index.

The measurements were strictly taken according to techniques described by Wilder and Martin. The finger and palmar print data were analyzed according to the procedure prescribed by Cummins and Midlo.

Analysis of Anthropometric Measurements

Table—1
Classification of Stature (in cm.)

Class	Range	Frequency	Percent
Pigmy	X—129.9	0	0.00
Very short	130—149.9	8	7.27
Short	150—159.9	53	48.18
Below medium	160—163.9	26	23.63
Medium	164—166.9	13	11.81
Above medium	167—169.9	6	5.45
Tall	170—179.9	4	3.63
Very tall	180-199.9	0	0.00
Giant	200--X	0	0.00

Analyzing the stature of the persons studied, it was noticed that majority of cases (71.81 percent) are between 150—163.9 cms. in stature, i.e. between short and below medium. The average stature was found to be 161.81 ± 0.45 cm., the maximum being 177.8 cm. and the minimum 146.3cm. The percentage of very short, medium, above medium and tall are 7.27, 11.81, 5.45 and 3.63 respectively.

Table—2
Statistical Constants of 110 Male Measurements (in cm)

Measurement	Maxi- mum	Mini- mum	Mean \pm S.E.	Standard Deviation \pm S.E.
1	2	3	4	5
Head length	20.1	17.4	18.89 ± 0.04	0.46 ± 0.03
Head breadth	15.6	12.8	14.18 ± 0.04	0.42 ± 0.02
Auricular Head Height	14.8	9.3	11.98 ± 0.08	0.94 ± 0.06
Min. Frontal Diam	11.3	9.3	10.52 ± 0.03	0.38 ± 0.02
Max. Bizygomatic breadth	13.8	11.2	12.94 ± 0.05	0.53 ± 0.03
Bigonial Breadth	11.5	9.0	10.38 ± 0.05	0.56 ± 0.03
Total Facial length	12.4	9.9	11.19 ± 0.04	0.41 ± 0.03
Nasal Height	5.6	3.7	4.71 ± 0.03	0.32 ± 0.02
Nasal Breadth	4.5	3.0	3.89 ± 0.04	0.43 ± 0.03
Stature	177.8	146.3	161.68 ± 0.45	4.72 ± 0.32

Table – 3
Statistical Constants of Indices

Indices	Maximum	Minimum	Mean + S.E.	Standard Deviation+ S.E.
1	2	3	4	5
Cephalic Index	81.6	69.8	76.18 \pm .42	4.41 \pm .23
Altitudinal Index	80.7	51.1	66.05 \pm .27	3.0 \pm .20
Breadth-Height Index	107.0	70.9	88.86 \pm .50	5.25 \pm .36
Nasal Index	98.2	60.8	76.55 \pm .59	6.21 \pm .42
Total Facial Index	105.6	73.8	87.82 \pm .60	6.34 \pm .46

Classification of Indices

(A) Cephalic Index

Class	Range	Frequency	Percent
Hyper Dolichocephalic	X- 69.9	3	2.72
Dolichocephalic	70.0-75.9	60	54.54
Mesocephalic	76.0-80.9	44	40.00
Brachycephalic	81.0-85.4	3	2.72
Hyper- Brachycephalic	85.5-X	0	0.00

The mean cephalic Index is 76.18 \pm .42 with the maximum of 81.6 and minimum of 60.8. Dolichocephaly (54.54 percent) appears to be predominant. Mesocephaly occurs in the next highest range of 40.00 percent. Brachycephaly and Hyper-Dolichocephaly are in the equal percentage of 2.72. The mean head length and breadth are 18.89 \pm .04 and 14.18 \pm .04 cm. respectively. Head length and breadth varies between 20.1 and 17.4 cm; 15.6 and 12.8 respectively.

(B) Length Height Index

Class	Range	Frequency	Percent
Chamaecephalic	X--57.6	4	3.63
Orthocephalic	57.7 – 62.5	20	18.18
Hypsicephalic	62.6--X	86	78.18

The mean length-Height Index of head is 66.05 \pm .7; the range of variation being between 80.7 and 51.1. Hypsicephaly (78.18 percent) appears to be predominant. The percentage of chamaecephalic and orthocephalic elements are 3.63 and 18.18 respectively. The mean Head- Height is 11.98 \pm .08 the maximum being 14.8 cm. and the minimum 9.3 cm.

(C) Breadth – Height Index

Class	Range	Frequency	Percent
Tapeinocephalic	X – 78.9	22	20.00
Metriocephalic	79.0 – 84.9	23	20.90
Acrocephalic	85.0--X	65	59.09

The mean breadth-height Index is 88.86 ± 50 with the minimum of 107.0 and minimum of 70.9. Acrocephaly (59.09 percent) occurs as highest concentration. Tapeinocephaly and Metriocephly are 20.00 percent and 20.90 percent respectively.

(D) Nasal Index

Class	Range	Frequency	Percent
Hyper- Leptorrhine	$X - 54.9$	0	0.00
Leptorrhine	55.0 – 69.9	2	1.81
Mesorrhine	70.0 – 84.9	56	50.90
Platyrrhine	85.0 – 99.9	52	47.27
Hyper--Platyrrhine	100.0--X	0	0.00

The mean Nasal index is 76.55 ± 59 with the maximum of 98.2 and the minimum 60.8. Mesorrhine occurs as the highest concentration of 50.90 percent while that of Platyrrhine is 47.27 percent. Leptorrhine occurs in 1.81 percent only. No cases of Hyper-leptorrhine and Hyper-Platyrrhine are noticed. The mean nasal height and nasal breadth are 4.71 ± 03 and 3.89 ± 04 cm. respectively. The range of variation of the nasal height is between 5.6 and 3.7 cm. while that of the nasal breadth between 4.5 and 3.0 cm.

(E) Total Facial Length

Class	Range	Frequency	Percent
Hypereuryprosopic	$X - 78.9$	12	10.90
Euryprosopic	79.0 – 83.9	29	26.36
Mesoprosopic	84.0 – 87.9	31	28.18
Leptoprosopic	88.0 – 92.9	30	27.27
Hyperleptoprosopic	93.0--X	8	7.27

The mean total facial index is 87.82 ± 0.60 , the maximum being 105.6 and the minimum 73.8. It is noticed that Mesoprosopic (28.18 Percent) element is predominant. While both the Euryprosopic and Leptoprosopic elements are strongly present in the order 26.36 percent and 27.27 percent respectively. The Hypereuryprosopic and Hyperleptoprosopic elements are low. The mean total facial length is 11.19 ± 0.04 cm. The maximum being 12.4 cm. and the minimum being 9.9 cm. The meanzygomatic breadth is 12.94 ± 0.05 cm. The maximum is 13.8 cm. and the minimum, 11.0 cm.

(II.) Finger Prints: -The following analysis presented in Table-4 to 6 is based on 1,000 finger prints of 100 adult male Soaras.

From the table, it is clear that the finger prints show unlike frequencies on the different digits when combined. On digits I, II and IV whorls are more

frequent, the frequency ranging from 67 percent in digit IV to 45 percent in digit II. The frequency of ulnar loops is more in digits III & V ranging from 62 percent to 70 percent respectively. The frequency on the digits I, II and IV are 54.00 percent, 34 percent and 32 percent respectively. The radial loops show the maximum frequency on digit II (7 percent) and show sharp reduction on the digits I, III and IV. It is to be seen that there were no radial loops on the digit V. The arches show greatest frequency on digit II (10%) and less frequencies on the other digits. On the whole the whorls are seen on both the right and left hands where as ulnar loops are more common in the right hand in the digits III and V. It is interesting to note that radial loops are more on the left hand digit II than any other digit and arches are also common on the same digit.

Table-4
Frequency of Finger Prints Patterns

Digit	Hand	Whorl	Loops		Total	Arches
			Ulnar	Radial		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I	R	55.00	41.00	-----	41.00	4.00
	L	43.00	54.00	1.00	55.00	2.00
	R+L	49.00	47.50	0.50	48.00	3.00
II	R	45.00	41.00	5.00	46.00	9.00
	L	47.00	34.69	7.15	41.84	10.20
	R+L	46.00	37.84	6.07	43.92	9.60
III	R	23.00	73.00	1.00	74.00	3.00
	L	32.00	62.00	1.00	63.00	5.00
	R+L	27.50	67.50	1.00	68.54	4.00
IV	R	67.00	32.00	1.00	33.00	-----
	L	56.12	39.62	1.02	4.64	3.06
	R+L	61.56	35.81	1.01	36.82	1.53
V	R	27.00	72.00	-----	72.00	1.00
	L	30.00	70.00	-----	70.00	-----
	R+L	28.50	71.00	-----	71.00	0.50
All digits	R+L	42.51	51.93	2.11	54.04	3.72

Sarkar (1954) proposed that an approximate whorl: loop ratio of 60:40 is probably a characteristic of the Veddis or Australoid. This is confirmed by the finger prints data of the Australian aborigine (Cummins and Setzler, 1951). The Saoras show mean ratio (42.51 percent, 51.93 percent) approximately in the present study.

The following table shows the pattern intensity index, Arch/ whorl index of Dankmeijer and whorl/ loop index of Furuhashi.

Table--5

Frequencies of Pattern types in percent				Pattern intensity Index	D.I.	F.I.
Whorl	U.L.	R.L.	Arch	14.91 8.72 78.66		
42.51	51.93	2.11	3.72			

The pattern intensity index is 14.91 which bears resemblance with Sabara (14.07) and Juang (14.06) worked out by Sarkar.

Finger prints of Orissan Aborigines (All fingers combined)

Table – 6

Tribe	Whorls	Loops	Arches	Indices		
	Percent	Percent	Percent	P.I.	D.I.	F.I.
Juang (Male)	42.00	56.64	1.36	14.06	3.25	74.15
Female	38.82	57.65	3.54	13.53	9.09	67.34
--Sarkar--						
Sabar (Male)	42.43	55.89	1.68	14.07	3.96	99.12
Female	24.72	67.42	7.86	11.63	31.82	36.67
Khond (Male)	41.97	52.89	5.14	13.68	18.12	79.52
--Sarkar--						
Khond (Males) (Rao)	29.08	65.26	5.63	12.95	14.24	62.37
Juang (male) --- (Rao) --	50.54	48.11	1.00	15.02	2.01	105.93
Saora -Present study	42.51	54.04	3.72	14.91	8.72	78.66

(III) Palmar Prints -The following analysis is based on the 200 palmar configurations of adult male Saoras. The following table shows the frequency of the three main line formulae as in the right and left hands of the Saoras.

Table – 7

Frequency of three typical formulae in percent

Formulae	Right	Left	Mean
	Percent	Percent	Percent
11,9,7,	58.00	30.00	44.00
9,7,5,	23.00	37.00	30.00
7,5,5,	19.00	33.00	26.00

From the above table it is clear that 11, 9, 7- more common (occurring in 44.00 percent) in right hand than the left hand. The formulae 9, 7, 5, - and 7, 5, 5, - are occurring in 30 percent and 26 percent respectively and are common in the left hand.

Table –8
Frequencies of the types of Palmar configurations

Configuration area	Frequency of the pattern in percent		
	Right	Left	Mean
Hypothenar	21.00	19.00	20.00
Thenar/Inter digital I	9.0	11.00	10.00
Inter digital II	4.00	----	2.00
Inter digital III	68.00	58.00	63.00
Inter digital IV	44.00	62.00	53.00

The Saoras show a large percentage of patterns in inter digital III (63 %) due to the high incidence of the main line formulae 11, 9,7 – in many cases.

The following table shows the frequencies of the pattern formulae o.o.L, O.L.O.,Q.O.O., o.1.o., o.1.d., O.O.D., O.L.D. of the combination of the three inter digitals II, III and IV.

Table –9

Formulae	Frequency of the pattern in the percent		
	Right (%)	Left (%)	Mean (%)
O.O.L.	14.00	20.00	17.00
O.L.O.	27.00	4.00	15.50
o.o.o.	----	----	----
o.1.o.	23.00	31.00	27.00
o.1.d.	2.00	8.00	5.00
O.O.D.	11.00	11.00	11.00
O.L.D.	4.00	----	2.00

From the above table it is clear that the combination formulae o.1.o. occurs in many cases(especially in the left hand) in 27.00 and O.O.L. and O.L.O. formulae occur in 17 percent and 15 percent respectively. The remaining combinations show insignificant percentages.

Axial Triradius:

The following table shows the positions of the axial triradius as observed in the Saoras.

Table – 10

Axial triradius	Position of the Axial Triradius		
	Right	Left	Total
t	77	86	163
t'	5	3	8
t''	2	---	2
tt''	13	10	23
tt't''	3	--	3

Among the Saoras the axial triradius is seen more or less equally on both right and left hands in the position of t (carpal axial triradius). It occurs in 5 cases in right hand and in 3 cases in left hand in the position of t' (middle axial triradius). In 13 cases of right hand and 10 cases of the left hand it occurs in the position of tt'' (carpal triradius with central triradius). In only 3 cases in the right hand it occurs in the position tt't'' (carpal axial triradius with central triradius).

Summary:

From the analysis of the Anthropometric data and somatoscopic observations, it was observed that majority of the people are short statured (53%) with light brown to medium brown skins. The hair on the head is, cymotrichous (wavy) in most of the cases; and they show slight growth of hair on the beard and moustache. There is no epicanthic fold of the eye present among these people and the eye slits look straight. The head form shows dolicocephaly in most of the cases (54.54%) with a sporadic occurrence of mesocephals. The head vault is high and majority of them are hypsicephalic (78.18%). The physiognomy of the face is, that most of them are having medium to narrow type of faces (mesoprosopictopleptosopic) with jutting malars. The noses are mesorrhine to platyrrhine in type with straight to concave profiles. The bulk of the people exhibit medium lips with no eversion.

From the analysis of the finger and palmar prints data of these people, it shows that whorls are seen both in the right and left hands where as ulnar loops are more common in the right hand digits III and IV. The pattern intensity index is 14.91. The mainline formulae 11.9.7-- is more common among these people. Thus in many respects the Soaras resemble more with other Orissan tribes like Khond, Juang, Munda etc. who are of proto Australoid ethnic stock.

References:

- Cummins H. and C. Midlo (1943): *Finger Prints, Palms and Soles. An introduction to Dermatoglyphics*, Philadelphia.
- Rao, P.D. Prasada (1959): *The Dermatoglyphics of the Khonds of Araku Valley (Visakhapatnam District, Andhra Pradesh)*.
Proceedings of the 46th Indian Science Congress, Delhi.
- Rao, P.D. Prasada (1964): *Anthropometric and Dermatoglyphic study of the Juangs in Orissa, India*.
- Anthropologica*, Vol. VI, N. S No. 2, pp. 223-34. Sarkar, S.S. (1954): *The Aboriginal Races of India*, Calcutta.

THE WORLD OF SAORA MEDICINE: A NOTE ON BELIEF SYSTEM, MEDICINE & MEDICINEMAN *

*G. N. Mohanty*¹

*A. K. Maharana*²

People (human beings) are not only intelligent but also social animals, which through ages have developed the technique to harness the natural resources for their very existence. People are using animals (Larkin, Petere, Exline, 1980:170) and a section of it living in so called marginal areas like mountain slopes, rain forest lands, desert fringes etc. The tribes, eke out a living with much difficulty at the expenses of their body energy. The tribes according to the general features like a) eco-system, b) traditional economy, c) supernatural beliefs and practices and d) recent impact due to developmental activities may be classified into six cultural types, such as 1) Hunters, 2) Primitive Hill Cultivators, 3) Plains agriculturists, 4) Simple artisans, 5) Cattle herders and 6) Industrial-Urban type (Vidyaarthi-1984:272). Tribes belonging to each such group have almost similar socio-cultural patterns and similar efforts to handle social, economic and cultural as well as health related problems.

The Saora a tribal community of around 4.70 lakhs strong, belonging to the cultural type of 'primitive hill cultivation', are of smaller body stature, hard working and though not strongly built like the neighbouring Kandha, have better body construction compared to the North Orissan tribes. They are very efficient in climbing and walking on hills (Mohanty, 1990:246). The geographical attributes and natural environment have made the Saora expert in the fields of

* Published in ADIVASI, Vol.45, No.1, 2005, pp.01-11

¹ Director, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar, 751003

² Research Officer, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar, 751003

collecting (of dry matters of plant origin) as well as culturing (of grass as well as arbour) activities.

The very word Saora owe to 'Sagories', a Scythian word meaning axe and 'Saba-Roye', a Sanskrit word meaning carrying a dead body (hunted animal) links the tribe with hunting and collecting activities in the distant past. Saoras practice 'Intensive Subsistence Farming' and the 'Natural Stuffs' available nearby, not only provide them adequate nutrients but also pull the community through peak and lean seasons. The period of sufficiency and deficiency (in terms of availability of nutrients) and protection and exposure (in term of facing the nature's wrath) put the Saora into various forms of body ailments -seasonal, chronic, superficial or deep.

Like any other tribe the Saora measures health or ill health of a person in terms of food intake and work output. They almost equate health with happiness and disease / ailment with a goony and sorrow. To them health is a boon and ill health (disease / ailment) a bane of nature consisting of outer physical environment as well as the unseen environment comprising of deities, spirits, evil forces etc. However, at present they are buying the idea that man made environment (accumulation of silage water, farm yard and cattle shed refuse etc.) is one of the causants of the disease. They are yet to reason out that diseases occur and spread due to harmful bacteria, microbes and germs.

The Saora classifies ailments / diseases according to the time period of suffering. Almost all short duration ailments are clubbed together as 'Natural' diseases and longer duration ailments as 'Supernatural' diseases. They do not consider a person impaired temporarily by wound, muscle cramp, allergy, joint pain, cough, joint inflammation and even bone fracture a patient. The modern classification of disease namely, a) Natural, b) Supernatural, c) Interpersonal and d) Emotional (Press, 1982:185) is partly supported by the Saora belief system (existing of first two types of diseases). Their thought process also agrees that disease is a disorder in body and is less somatic rather than a 'disorder in organism and may either be somatic or psychic' (Deb Burman, 1986: 185). Unlike the Santal, the Saora rarely come into the term that the action of sorcerer on some part of the body and some objects once connected with the body of a person is one of the causes of diseases' (River 1924: 5-18). They believe that sorcerers are in possession of super natural power that counters evil powers but not the evildoers. They also believe that the sorcerers of their community never indulge in black magic. They rather help warding off the evil powers.

Diseases:

Saora suffer from different kinds of diseases because of induction of external agents into their internal organs (effect of food on digestive tracts as well as smoke and dust on respiratory tracts) and on body surface. Cuts- minor or deep, sprain, inflammation of joints, ringworm, fungal infection, infection at the

corner of mouth and finger nail etc. that are easily identified because of their visual observation. These ailments / disorders / diseases are very common in Saora belt.

Any impairment of the internal organ is considered as the work of supernatural power and is hard to cure. The gynecological problems / disorders are very common among the Saora females. These ailments along with the pediatric problems are considered as the work of the evil eye or machination of evil unseen forces.

Other common diseases are malaria, gastro-intestinal disorder, diarrhea, dysentery, respiratory troubles (bronchitis), hookworm and roundworm infections, skin diseases etc. Yaws, leprosy, tuberculosis and filaria are not found among them (Patnaik, 1989:27). Of late stray cases of TB are found in Saora belt. The reason might be excessive labour not in commensuration with the food intake at the distant swidden fields.

Cases of sexually transmitted diseases are not found in Saora belt because the tribe does not indulge in sexual excesses (extra marital or unnatural) secretly on hills or in lonely places for fear of offending the gods and thereby inviting their anger in shape of misery and disaster (ibid- 1989:39). Occasional bout of diseases like measles, malaria, diarrhea etc. in the form of epidemic are felt in the Saora belt because of the filthy environment. The tropical climate (of the Saora belt) and poverty (of the Saora) help to produce a very great numbers of diseases. The warm moist climate not only help insects that transmit parasites to breed well but also produce staple food (roots, fruits, cereals etc.) which have very low protein content but provide bulky diet with low energy (Byrne & Bennett- 1986:1). These cultured and collected dry matters are processed / cooked un-hygienically by the Saora and consumed. This indirectly promotes occurrence of diseases in epidemic or endemic form. It is also observed that some social and economic factors like beliefs, practices, education, occupational pattern, food habits etc. cause the spread of diseases.

Medicine:

Saora medicine is indigenous in character and is classified under the sub section of 'Folk Medicine' in the domain of 'Traditional Medicine' as distinguished from the Modern Medicine (Mohanti-1996:V). It can also be termed as 'Oral Traditional Medicine'. The medicines in general, are water based and are very simple in terms of ingredients used, methods of preparation as well as their administration to the patients. The ingredients (medicants) are handpicked by the providers (secular or traditional) from locally available bio-sources like plants and animals (Annexure-I). Some of the abiotic ingredients like water, soil, pebbles are used for preparation of simple or complex medicines. In such medicines water is used as a base. Saora never use oil, fat and even honey as base material while preparing complex medicines.

Unknown to the 'Ayurveda' system of medicine, Saoras use medicines in form of Mani, Mantra and Ausadha. Mani-not the precious gemstone but a body adoration made out of some 'Charm Objects', is kept close to the skin to facilitate cosmological effects and enhance the will power of the patient to survive. Mantra is the 'Action Medicine' usually prescribed by a traditional healer who fortifies the Mantra with weird dance, shriek and gyration of the limbs to the tune of the traditional musical instruments. Ausadha is either uni or multi ingredient material medicine administered internally or externally to mitigate diseases.

Usually secular medicine is administered internally or externally to mitigate diseases. The secular medicine man (Gamanga-the village head man or Buye-the village priest) prepares the simple medicines while the traditional medicine man (Kudan or Kudanboi) collects, prepares and administer simple or complex medicines following some rituals (Annexure-II). Being water based the Saora medicines do not have longer 'life spans'. For this reasons several batches of the same medicine is prepared frequently for its continuous use. Simple mechanical means like pounding, threshing, grinding, whipping, squeezing is used for preparation of medicine. As the Saora utterly lacks the sense of pre-cleaning of ingredients and the apparatus / tools, the prepared medicines get contaminated.

The methods of administration of medicine to the patient are equally important as the medicine itself. Some of the medicines are used as the surface applicants against superficial diseases like sprain, itch, allergy, minor wounds etc. and some are taken internally through digestive and respiratory tracks as well as through other body openings like ear or nose. Saoras use vegetable oils (derived from the seeds of Nimba, Karanja, Mustard, Coconut, Mahula etc. as well animal fat externally to contain 'deep rooted' diseases like chest congestion, spleen inflammation etc.

Medicine man:

The traditional Saora medical provider is known as Kudan or Kudanboi. The former stands for a male shaman while the latter is his female counter part. They are respected and revered. The so-called secular medicine man is respected for their position in the society. Usually a Saora medicine man treats patients belonging to his community. As every Saora village has a Kudan or Kudanboi a patient does not venture outside for treatment. The skepticism prevailing among the members of other communities, about the efficacy of the Saora folk medicine and its providers, prevents the Saora medicine man to handle cases of the non-Saora patients. It is strange to find that the Kudan or the Kudanboi express their inability to handle patients suffering from 'diseases of white man' (modern diseases like AIDs, restlessness due to stress and strain, cancer, silicosis, obesity etc). Some ailments like malnutrition, loss of appetite; diabetics etc. are never treated by Saora medicine men successfully. Their medicines meant for treating

snakebite is not always successful. They have amazing ability of curing the pediatric as well as female patients with gynecological problems.

The traditional Saora medicine men attach a string of food restrictions to their patients. Some of the food restrictions agree with the modern therapy while some others are not to the tune of the diseases that asked for special nutritional supplements consisting of animal as well as vegetable proteins. In case of a TB patient the animal protein is withdrawn. Pregnant women are advised to take little food with almost no protein content. Similarly they are forbidden to take food rich in Calcium. A person with the fractured bone is advised not to take animal protein but vegetable proteins like legumes, lentils and pulses. According to the traditional Saora medicine man the 'live food' like meat, fish, egg and milk has capability of producing blood in the body. The production of more blood results draining it out by vomiting. It is the reason behind withdrawing animal protein from the menu of a TB patient. In fact the Saora *materia-medica* does not have any effective antidote against TB. Similarly consumption of food rich in protein and calcium results in the formation of bigger baby in the womb, which in turn gives unbearable pain at the time of delivering the child. This advice badly affects the health of the pregnant mother and the baby in her womb.

Resistance and Change:

The life of the Kudan or Kudanboi is not appreciated by the present day Saora. The medicines prepared by them are not hygienic. Their administration to the patient demands observation of certain taboos and prescriptions. The medicines have shorter 'life span'. The medicants are not readily available. As a result the Saora, enlightened or illiterate, prefer to go for modern medicare facilities. The preference for the latter usually requires money. A Saora utterly lacks it. The Saora of older generation prefers traditional healthcare facilities while their younger counterpart goes for modern health practices. While the two systems are at the logger's head any institutional favoritism shown to one system would produce results anathema to the general health condition of the tribe (Saora). It is high time for the Government to promote the traditional medicine of the Saora with institutional backing in a modern way. Their psychological medicines may be molded into physiological medicine.

For management of ethnic medicines and health practices steps should be taken for the betterment of the ethnic providers. The ethnic health providers be enlightened and empowered with knowledge on physiology and hygiene. They may be trained in preventive as well as dietetic medicine. There should be a proper planning so that the society (human society) can adjust itself to the changing socio-technical environment and can use this environment to make maximize the welfare of its members' (Mishra, Sudarsan and Rao-1974:2)

References:

- Byrne, M. & Bennett, F. J. 1986 *Community Nursing in Development Countries*, Oxford University Press, London. P.I.
- Deb Burman, P. 1986 *Disease-Is individual or Societal? In B. Chaudhuri (ed) Tribal Health, Socio-Cultural Dimension*, Inter India Publications, New Delhi, p.p:185,186.
- Larken, Petere & Exline 1980 *People, environment & place: An introduction to Human Geography*, Charles E.N. Publishing Company, p: 170.
- Mishra, P.R. 1974 *Regional Development Planning in India*, Vikash Publishing Sudarsana & K.V. Rao House, Delhi, p: 2.
- Mohanti, K.K. 1997 *Adivasi*, Vol. XXXVII No. 2, Dec. 1997, Sch. Castes & Sch. Tribes Research & Training Institute, Bhubaneswar.
- Mohanty, B.B. 1990 *Saora*, in *Tribes of Orissa*, Tribal & Harijan Research-cum-Training Institute, Bhubaneswar, p: 246.
- Patnaik, N. 1989 *The Saora*, Popular Series on Tribes -4, Tribal & Harijan Research-cum-Training Institute, Bhubaneswar, p:185.
- Press, I. 1982 "Which Doctors Legacy: Some Anthropological Implications for practice of Clinical Medicine" in Noel J. Chrisman & T.W. Maretzki (ed) *Clinically Applied Anthropology*, D.R. Publishing House, P.185.
- Rever, W.H.R. 1924 *Medicine, Magic & Religion*, Kegan Paul, Trunch Trubner & Co., London, pp: 8-18.
- Vidyarthi, L.P. 1984 *Applied Anthropology in India* (Principles, Problems & Case Studies) Kitab Mahal, Allahabad, p:272.

Annexure-I

Ingredients used in / as Saora Folk Medicine

Local (Saora)	Regional (Oriya)	English / Scientific
Plant Origin		
Aadi	Gaba	Jatropha curcas
Amba	Amba	Mangifera indica
Amensang	Haladi	Curcuma longa
Aangtadu	-	-
Beri	Dhau	Artocarpus lakoocha
Dadaire	Bhanga	Cannabis sativa
Danghumcharji	Champa	Micholia champaka
Dongjel	Mahi	Odinanodier
Dudumjing	Bisalya karani	Tridaxpo cumbins
Dhanuamaricha	Dhanua lanka	Capsicum minimum
Dukta	Dhuan patra	Nicotina labacum
Gulbanga	Mahakala	Trichasanthe spalmeta
Grururi	Patal garuda	R. Serpentina
Gdahangsar	Gangasiuli	Nyctanthesar borescen
Iswarjata / Sujang	Satabari	Asperagusra cemosia
Kimbhekgilngada	Chitaparu	Plumbagobey lanicia
Kintada	Jada	Racenus commnis
Kinta	Kadali	Musa paradisiaca
Kamburi	Pani sahaj	-
Kadabtidar	Sisal	Sisal
Khara	-	-
Kutamba	Bana piaj	Wild Onion
Kare	Pitakeruan	Holarrhenaanti dysenterica
Krarjame / Karaanja	Karanja	Pongamia glabra
Kimbhekgilngada	Lajkuli	Mimosa pudica
Langre	Patrasiju	Opuntiadillenii
Labtar	Banamali	Jasminumangusti folium
Limba	Nima	Azadirachta indica
Lamda	-	-
Madure	Ghikuanri	Aloe vera
Mahula	Mahula	Madhuca latifolia
Orlbalgin	Mutha	Cyperus retundus

Paraka	Arakha	Calotropis gigentia
Resang	Bhuin nimba	Andrographis paniculata
Prebangama	Sweta lata	-
Sursarji	-	-
Samakji	Bana tulasi	Ocimum mericanum
Sargi	Sala	Shorea robusta
Surgaijim	Sahada	Stribulusaspar
Tusharnag	Bahada	Terminalia bellerica
Tamla	Guharia	Acacia leucophloea
Tarabajit	Mandara	Hibiscus rosa-sonesis
Utaal	-	-
Valia	Bana valia	Semecarpus anacardium
Animal Origin		
Gadhia Naka	Gadhianaka	Nose of wolf
Bira Hada	Bira hada	Collar bone of tiger
Bagha Dudha	Bagha khira	Milk of a tigress
Sambiri Kumbulan	Chhota pahadi musa	Small field rat
Bhalu Basa	Bhalucharbi	Fat of bear
Kai	Kai	Tree dwelling-nest building ant
ChheliDudha	Chheli khira	Milk of she-goat
Abiotic Origin and Others		
Pani	Pani	Water
Pathar	Godi	Pebble
Tamba Paisa / Mudi	Tamba paisa / mudi	Copper coin / ring

Annexure-II

Traditional Medicines used against Diseases / Ailments

Sl. No	Ingredients	Method of Preparation of Medicine	Administration	Remarks
1	Are	The gum is collected by insertion.	Surface application of the gum on affected part twice a day to treat <u>sore</u>	The <u>sore</u> is cleaned with salt water before application of gum.
2	Beri	-	The twig is used as tooth brush twice daily to relieve <u>toothache</u>	Cold water & sour fruit avoided
3	Bisalya-karani	A few leave are pressed between palms	Surface application of the pressed mass on <u>bruise</u>	Bruise is kept away from dust & water.
4	Danghum-charji	A few seeds are grinded to a fine paste with little water.	Surface application of the paste on penis at night time <u>checks early orgasm.</u>	Hot food & animal protein is avoided.
5	Dongjel	The bark is pounded with water and boiled.	The warm pounded mass is placed on <u>deep wound</u>	Sour food, fermented beverage & dry fish are avoided.
6	Dukta	A piece of <i>dukta</i> (dry) is chewed and the saliva is collected	Surface application of the saliva on <u>hornet / wasp / bee sting.</u>	-
7	Gaba	-	Surface application of the warm oil on abdomen to relieve <u>delivery pain.</u>	Kudanboi / Bejuni attends the patient.
8	Grururi	A small piece of root is grinded to a paste	Surface application of the paste on <u>snake bite</u> once only	Kudan/Kudanboi attends the patients
9	Iswarajata	The root ground to a fine paste & whipped with water	Oral administration to contained <u>non-secretion of milk</u> of a nursing mother.	The Kudanboi / Bejuni attends the patient
10	Jada	-	The warm oil is massaged over the abdomen twice a day to relieve <u>stomachache</u>	Chili, dry fish & constipating foods avoided.

11	Kadali	21 small pieces of pith are soaked in a glass of water for one hour.	The water I taken orally once only to mitigate <u>delivery pain</u>	Bejuni handles the patient.
12	Kakat-bodang	With a little water the root rubbed against a rough stone to get a paste.	The paste is applied on the corner of nail to cure <u>nail infection.</u>	The affected nail is cleaned with warm water first.
13	Kaaranjaa	-	The warm oil is massaged over the abdomen to cure <u>spleen inflammation.</u>	Non-Veg food is avoided.
14	Karranjaa	-	The <u>corn</u> is cleaned with a knife and warm oil is put on it.	Dry fish and dry meat avoided.
15	Kurumk-unjdin	The root is washed well and pounded to extract juice.	Fresh juice is applied on the eyes four to five times a day to cure <u>eye infection.</u>	Chilly, smoke & sun ray avoided. An expert healer attends the patient.
16	Kutamba	The bulb is roasted.	The roasted bulb is pressed hard on the <u>corn</u>	ditto.
17	Lamda	2 pieces of root & one piece of bark are wet ground to a paste.	A spoonful of paste is taken orally twice daily to check <u>swelling of scrotum.</u> One piece of root is tied around neck also.	Animal protein, pumpkin, gourd potato, & brinjal are avoided.
18	Mahula	The oil is warmed.	The warm oil is applied twice on <u>infection at the corner of mouth.</u>	Green vegetables, papaya & milk yielding roots are taken in large quantities.
19	Oralbalgin	A piece of root is grinded to a paste.	A little of the paste is taken orally and the rest is applied on the body to cure <u>malaria.</u>	Cold wind, rice beer, soaked rice and non-veg food items are avoided.
20	Paraka	The latex is collected.	The <u>ring worm</u> is scratched with a piece	Dry fish / meat is avoided.

			of stone or neem wood. The latex is applied over it.	
21	Pulta	A few leaves are pounded well.	The pounded mass is placed on the forehead twice a day to contain <u>headache</u> .	-
22	Sargi	The dry resin is powdered and put on live charcoal.	The smoke is inhaled through mouth twice a day to cure <u>sore throat</u> .	Cold water, pulpy fruits & cool breeze is avoided.
23	Surgaigin	The bud is plucked to get resinous fluid.	The fluid is applied on eyelid twice a day to cure <u>eye infection</u>	Smoke, hard sun ray and chilly are avoided. An expert medicine man attends the patient.
24	Utaal	A narrow funnel is made out of the leaf.	The nozzle of the funnel is put into the nose and pressed gently to check <u>nose bleeding</u> .	It is pressure therapy and is used by an expert medicine man.
25	Valia	A few nuts are warmed.	The warmed nuts are rubbed against the skin with little mahua oil to check <u>heel cracking</u> and <u>skin flaking</u> .	Fatty / oily food items are prescribed to the patient.
Multi & Plant Based				
26	Gulbang, Resang & Grururi	The roots of the three plants are grinded to a paste with little water.	The paste is taken orally twice a day for a month to mitigate <u>asthma</u>	Ripe pulpy fruits, smoke, fog, dust & chill wind are avoided
27	Gulbang, Resang & Grururi	Ditto	A spoonful of the mix is taken once a day for two weeks to cure <u>rheumatism</u> .	Ripe pulpy fruits, smoke, fog, dust & chill wine are avoided
28	Gulbang, Resang & Grururi	The roots of the three plants are grinded to a paste with little water.	A spoonful of the mix is taken once thrice daily in empty stomach for two weeks to cure <u>stomachache</u> .	Chilly, dry fish & constipating food items are avoided.

29	Oralbajin, Khabe, Madure & Ameng-sang	Equal volumes of the roots are grinded with little to a paste and filtered to get the extract warmed.	A spoonful of the liquid is orally administered along with the surface application of the rest on the affected limb to cure <u>paralysis</u> .	A traditional medicine man attends the patient.
30	Grururi, Limba, Danghum-charji & Tusharnaj	The roots of the first three & the fruit of the last (the healer decides their proportion) are grinded to get a sticky mass. The mass is made into several small balls and dried.	Two balls are stirred with a cup of Mohua liquor and taken thrice daily for cure form <u>tuberculosis</u> .	Non-veg food items, potato, bamboo, shoots, pumpkin & soaked rice are avoided.
31	Bhang & Sujang	A little of the former is grinded with a finger long root of the latter.	The paste is taken once a week at night <u>to check early orgasm</u> .	Hot & non-veg food items are avoided.
32	Kimbhek-gilngada, Tarbajit & Sursurji	The roots of the three (proportions of the ingredients is decided by the traditional medicine man) are grinded and mixed with a cup of milk or Mahua liquor. Whipped well.	A cup of the mixed is taken once only for <u>termination of unwanted pregnancy</u> .	A female traditional provider treats the patient.
33	Dongjel, Kamburi & Laangre	The bark of the former two along with the root of the third are pounded & boiled in water. The water is decanted.	The warm pounded mass is placed over the <u>deep wound</u> & tied loosely with a piece of clean cloths.	Soaked rice & dry fish / meat is avoided.

34	Krarjame, Khare & Amengsang	A finger long Amengsang and a piece of khare bark are grinded with oil of Krarjame.	The oily paste is applied on scabies once a day after bath for at least seven days.	The patient is advised to take sufficient green leaves & <i>ragi</i> .
35	Susubadangin, Salap, Kadabtidar, Tamla, Sulsuldijap, Angtadu & Pitakonda	A small twig of the former, a piece of the latter along with the roots of other plants is pounded to a paste like mass.	After setting the fractured bone the paste is applied on the limb. Bamboo splits are placed over it & tied firmly with a piece of cloth.	Fish, meat & liquor are avoided. <i>Ragi</i> , root crops & pulses are taken in sufficient quantities.
36	Predangma & Dukta	A piece of dry Dukta is stuffed inside a very narrow funnel made out of the dry leaf of the former. Ignited.	It is used as a cheroot and a mouth full of smoke is blown into the eyes of the patient twice daily to cure night blindness .	Traditional medicine man attends the patient.
37	Kare & Sugel	Equal quantities of roots of both are grinded with a little water.	The paste is taken orally twice a day in empty stomach for one day only for deworming the stomach .	Pulpy fruits, puffed rice and jiggery are avoided.
(Uni and Animal bases)				
38	Gadhia Naka	The dried Gadhia Naka is rubbed against dry rough surface.	The rubbed portion is inhaled deeply to get relief from pain due to embedment of fish bone into the inner wall of the throat .	
39	Birahada	-	The birahada is worn around neck to get rid of fear from seen and unseen forces .	The treatment is based on 'Touch Therapy'.
40	Bagha dudha	A few dry flakes of milk of a tigress is dissolved in water.	The dissolved milk is taken orally during nighttime to checkmate the no secretion of milk of a nursing mother .	A traditional female provider treats the patient.

41	Sambiri-kumbulan	The Sambirikumbulan is killed and dried under the sun.	The dried object is tied around neck for protection against <u>spirit intrusion.</u>	It is a preventive medicine based on 'Touch Therapy'.
42	Bhalubasa	The Bhalu <i>basa</i> is warmed.	The warmed <i>basa</i> is massaged around the joint to get relief from <u>joint pain, sprain and rheumatism.</u>	Fomenting of the affected joint is avoided.
43	Kai	A few <i>Kai</i> is pressed between the palms.	The sticky mass thus obtained is inhaled deeply thrice a day to relieve <u>nose stiffening.</u>	Exposure to cold wind and water is avoided.
(Multi -both plant and animal)				
44	Samakjing & Chhelimuta	A fistful of the samakjing leaf is grinded to a paste & whipped with a cup of Chhelimuta Filtered.	Two drops of the fluid are put into the affected ear to get rid of <u>ear pain</u>	Consumption of custard apple is avoided.
Other Ingredients.				
45	Tamba <i>paisa</i> or Tamba <i>mudi</i>	An old brass / copper ring or coin is tied to a thread along with a small pouch containing seven grains unboiled rice (<i>arua</i> rice).	The thread is worn around the neck to contain <u>mouth infection.</u>	The treatment is based on 'Touch Therapy'.

SHABAR *

T. Patnaik ¹

The Shabar are a tribal community distributed in the coastal districts of Orissa. They are supposed to be a part of the great Savara tribe to which the Saora belong. It is held that a section of the Saora migrated to the coastal districts in the remote past and forgot their own language and culture in course of time. These acculturated sections of the Saora are known as Shabar. They have no language to their own and no tradition that they ever possessed one. They have adopted the language of their neighbours and speak Oriya. At home they speak with an inflexion which is supposed to have been influenced by their aboriginal tongue. They worship Hindu gods and have those functional relationships with the Hindu diety which characterise a caste. On the other hand, the primitive section of the Saora chiefly resides in the forests and hills of the districts of Ganjam and Koraput. They have their distinct language and culture and possess all the characteristics of a primitive tribe.

The Shabar, who are supposed to be part of the great Saora tribe, have been classed on racial, cultural and particularly linguistic grounds among the Munda groups of the aborigines of India, sometimes called the Kolarian group.

The tribe is divided into different exogamous groups known as *vansa*. Each group has its own totem of animal, fruit or plant origin. The main divisions of the tribe are:

1. Jara Shabar - Descendants of Jara, who killed Lord Shri Krishna.
2. Vasu Shabar - This Vasu Shabar is represented in Hindu tradition as a devotee of Lord Jagannath. The tradition goes that a Brahman called Vidyapati was sent in search of the God Shri Krishna by Raja Indra Dymna. He found Vasu Shabar secretly worshipping the deity. The

* Published in *Tribes of Orissa* (revised edn), SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar, 2004, pp. 285-291

¹ Research Officer, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar

Brahman won the confidence of Vasu Shabar, became enamoured of the daughter of the Shabar and married her. The name Vasu has since been further Aryanized into Viswa-Vasu.

It may be mentioned that during the Rath Yatra (Car Festival) and bathing festival (Snan Yatra) of Lord Jagannath, the descendants of Vasu Shabar remain in sole charge of the deities and form an important class of Sebakas. These Shabar, attached to Puri temple, are known as Daitas. Customarily, the Daitas transfer the Brahma or inner contents of the deities from the old image to the new one at the time of Naba-Kalebar. Due to the nature of their employment in the temple of Lord Jagannath at Puri, they are now regarded as equal in rank to other high castes, with whom they occasionally have marital relationships. The Daitas are only found in Puri.

3. Patra Shabar - They are leaf clad Shabar of the Puranas.
4. Ghumura - These Shabars play a musical instrument known as *ghumura*
5. Kirata - They are descendants of the demon Kirat.

The Shabar are distributed in all the districts of Orissa, their main concentration being in the districts of Ganjam, Kalahandi, Cuttack and Dhenkanal. The population of the Shabar, which was 3,29,207 in 1981 further increased to 3,73,545 in 1991. Thus, their growth rate during the period 1981-91 was 13.47 per cent. According to the 1991 Census, they constitute 5.31 per cent of the total tribal population of the state. They have a sex ratio of 1014 females per thousand males. According to the 1991 Census, 21.00 per cent of the Shabar are literate as compared with 22.31 per cent for the tribes in the state as a whole, and 49.09 per cent for the whole population of the state. The literacy percentage was 12.90 in 1981. In physical characteristics the Shabar are of dark complexion, sometimes approaching black, and short in stature.

The dress and ornaments of the Shabar are just like those of their neighbouring non-tribal lower caste people. The male dress consists of a *dhoti*, which is also used as a wrapper during the winter for protection against the cold. They also wear shirts called *anga*. The women wear saris, mostly white in colour. A blouse is worn on special occasions. The women wear brass ornaments. Other ornaments consist of garlands of beads, and glass and brass bangles known as *kharu*. Children of either sex do not wear any clothes up to four or five years. Then they wear a loincloth. After puberty they start wearing lower and upper garments.

The Shabar have no village in the strict sense. Properly speaking, groups of people live together and form a settlement known as ward or *sahi*. These settlements are isolated and situated on the outskirts of the clean caste villages or

near forests. The houses are rectangular in shape and are not arranged in rows or in any order. The materials used in building houses are *sal*, *kendu*, *mahua* and other wood, thatching grass and mud. Ordinarily the house has only one room, which is used for all purposes including cooking. In some houses, however, the only room is divided into two halves by a partition wall, one part being used for sleeping and the other for cooking. Traditional Shabar houses are very dark and have no windows. The cooking is generally done in an earthen oven made on the southwestern side. The Shabar perform a religious ceremony when occupying a house. A fowl is sacrificed by the head of the family to the deceased ancestors or *butha burhi* for the happiness and prosperity of the family in the new house. They give a feast on this occasion. Every Shabar settlement or village has its own communal house known as the *bhagat ghar*. This is used as the guesthouse of the village and also as the courthouse where cases are decided by the religious and secular leaders.

The material culture of the Shabar is poor. Their household articles mainly consist of earthenware vessels, metal plates, wooden ladles, gourd vessels, palm-leaf mats, etc. Their main sources of livelihood are wage-earning, collecting edible roots, herbs and fruits from the jungle, agriculture and wine-making. Their traditional occupation is cutting wood and selling it in the nearby villages. They are landless. They cultivate small *baris* that have been settled in their favour by the government and are hence their private property. They do not have their own plough and cattle and thus hire them from their neighbours. They plough *bari* soon after the rain starts and sow paddy, maize and millet. Agriculture is not their main occupation, and they do not practice shifting cultivation. They work as labourers throughout the year. Shabar women also work as menials in the nearby towns. They struggle hard to earn their livelihood and because of their continuous poverty fall a prey to the Sahukars (local merchants).

The family is the smallest social unit in Shabar society. The Shabar are monogamous but polygyny is not unknown. Descent, lineage and inheritance of property are traced through the father's side, i.e. are patrilineal. Property is shared by sons after the death of their father. However, the eldest son gets a little more than others. This is known as *jestha ansa* (eldest share). During the lifetime of the father, a portion of landed property is given to the married sons for their maintenance. Daughters are entitled to maintenance only until their marriage. Widows are entitled to maintenance as long as they do not marry. In the absence of any heir, one can adopt a boy of one's own community as one's son. An adopted son has a full claim to property. Family life in Shabar society is very pleasant. The father is respected by his children and he acts as their guide and guardian. The relationship between mother and children is very strong. The mother realizes the practical difficulties of her children. After the daughters marry, they leave their family and live in their husband's family. A married daughter visits her father's house on auspicious occasions and during festivals.

The husband is respected and honoured by the wife. They have a rule of avoidance according to which they do not have any joking relationship with the husband's father, husband's elder brother, daughter's husband, wife's elder sister, etc. A joking relationship is permitted with the wife's younger sister, elder brother's wife, wife's younger brother, etc. A man may marry his wife's younger sister and widow of the deceased elder brother. The maternal uncle (*mamu*) plays an important role in the social structure of Shabar society. Sororate and levirate are prevalent.

The successive stages of development in the life cycle of a person are birth, early childhood, adolescence, adulthood, old age and death. These essential events in the life of a Shabar are associated with ceremonies and rituals.

Birth is an occasion of much sociological importance in Shabar society. Barren women occupy a lower position in the society and are treated as inauspicious. Birth is always welcome in the Shabar society and a male child is preferred to a female child. From conception to the final purificatory rites, a number of rituals and restrictions are observed in the family. A *sada* ceremony takes place for the pregnant woman in either the seventh or ninth month when she is adorned with new clothes and fed delicious food. An elderly woman who may be a Shabar or from any other caste or tribe is called to serve as midwife (Dhai). The naval cord is cut with a knife and buried outside, at a corner of the house. This is done by the Dhai. There is pollution for nine days. During this period the father does not shave his beard or take a bath. On the ninth day, the mother and baby are given a ceremonial bath and the father shaves his beard. The mother is considered unclean for twenty-one days, at which point the purification ceremony is performed and a feast given to the villagers to mark the occasion. The child's first rice-eating ceremony takes place in the ninth or eleventh month before teething sets in. The name-giving ceremony takes place when the child grows. He learns all aspects of community life in his family environment by imitation and participatory observation. They have no village dormitory, so the child learns everything from the elderly people of the village and the family.

Marriage is an essential ritual and several procedures are followed in a Shabar marriage. Marriage by arrangement is the regular type. Marriage by choice is now prevalent due to the influence of other higher castes. Generally the age of marriage for boys is from 17 to 20 years and for girls from 13 to 15 years. Village and totem exogamy are practiced, as all the villagers are considered to be agnates. Breaches of this rule are severely dealt with. Marriage within the totemic group is prohibited for they trace their descent from the same ancestor.

The marriage proposal comes from the boy's side. The following procedure is adopted in a regular Shabar marriage. (1) Kanya Dekha (bride-seeing), (2) Kunia (relative), (3) Nirbandha (negotiation), (4) Bahaghara

(marriage). Proposals for the marriage are made by a middleman (Bhalaloka). The selection of the bride is done by the parents or by the brothers if the parents are dead. Before the bride-seeing or Kanya Dekha ceremony, the middleman informs the parents of the two parties. On an appointed day the groom's father and other relatives from his village visit the bride's village to see the bride. After seeing the bride, the groom's father places Rs.1/- or Rs.2/- in the hands of the girl but he never gives his consent at once. After returning to his own village and consulting his relatives, he gives his consent to the middleman, who in turn informs the bride's parents.

A date is then fixed for the second stage, Kunia (relative), by the bride's parents. On the appointed day the groom's parents go to the bride's house with sweets, new clothes and about two rupees in cash to give to the proposed daughter-in-law. The barber carries the presents to the bride's house. After a few days, the bride's father with his relatives visits the groom's house to see his son-in-law and pays him about Rs.2/-. From this day on both parties are sure of the marriage. The negotiations take place in the bride's village. The following materials are sent by the groom's father: (1) one and half a seer of sweets, (2) two new saris (one for the bride, the other for the bride's mother), (3) a new *dhori* for the bride's father, (4) *usuna* (boiled) rice, (5) vegetables worth Rs.3/-, (6) a pair of silver leg ornaments (*bala*), (7) a hand ornament (*magar*), (8) cosmetics (scented oil, vermilion, toilet soap, etc.) and (9) one areca nut. This is called the bride price.

Generally the marriage is arranged soon after the negotiation. Marriage takes place in the month of Fagun and Baisakha and on all days except Saturday and the birthday of the boy or the girl. The marriage date is fixed by the groom's father in consultation with a clean caste astrologer. The wedding continues for three days, the Mangan (day before marriage), the Bahaghar (marriage proper) and the Chouthi (4th day). On the day before marriage (Mangan), the groom accompanied by a group of married women and a band of musicians goes to their village deity with new clothes and ornaments. The shaman priest of the deity, known as the Kalisi, bathes the deity and offers the fruits, etc. given by the groom's party. The Kalisi then touches the deity with the new ornaments and clothes. A *ghee* lamp is then lighted near the deity. At night a feast is given to the relatives.

On the day of marriage the bridegroom visits the bride's house with the party. A Brahman (priest) is employed to conduct the marriage ceremony, which takes place on an elevated platform known as the *vedi*. The bridegroom is asked to apply vermilion to the forehead of the bride seven times with his little finger and vice versa. Then the groom's hand is tied with that of the bride in a ceremonial knot or *hataganthi*. In a widow marriage the hands are not tied. A feast is then served to all the guests and villagers of the bride's village. The next day the couple is sent to the groom's house, and seven married women perform

a ceremonial worship (*bandapana*) of the couple. The next day the couple meets together. On the seventh day the bride goes to her father's house and remains for about a month.

In a Shabar marriage, bride price is prevalent which is paid at the time of negotiation. An analysis of the marriage rites and ceremonies of the Shabar shows that they are influenced by their caste neighbours to a great extent. Widow remarriage is permitted. This second marriage is known as *dutia*.

The Shabar believe in life after death. After death the corpse is taken to the graveyard on a bedstead (*kokei*) carried by four male Shabar. Before the corpse is placed on the bedstead a *ghee* lamp is shown near its face, i.e the wife of the eldest son. The corpse is cremated with the head pointed to the north, or buried if the economic condition of the family is poor. If a man dies of smallpox or cholera, he is thrown into the jungle. The death ritual is observed for ten days. A feast is served to the villagers on the tenth day.

Every Shabar village has its own socio-political organization known as Gaon Sabha. The socio-political organization of the tribe as a whole is arranged like a ladder. The Chhatisa is at its head. Next to the Chhatisa are the Pada Sabha (inter-village organization) and Gaon Sabha (village organization) in descending order. The Gaon Sabha is the lowest socio-political organization of the tribe and has two hereditary leaders, the Nahak and the Behera, the secular and religious leaders respectively. The Behera is the chief of the organization. All Shabar villages have their own village organization. The village elders assist them when the council is in action. The village organization decides cases like adultery, marriage, divorce and other minor quarrels arising in the village. Breach of tribal law is also punished. No fee corresponding to the court fee is paid to summon the council. In serious matters the guilty are kept under a social ban. In minor cases the guilty are fined and the fine goes to the common fund of the village, which is known as *kotha*. Refusal to pay the fine or to obey the decision of the council is referred to the Bada Behera of the inter-village organization, known as the Pada Sabha.

Several villages combine together to form the inter-village organization. The chief of the organization is the Bada Behera whose post is hereditary. He is assisted by the Nahakas and Beheras of all the villages representing the council. This decides cases like adultery, intermarriage, interdining and breaches of tribal law. The council fines the guilty party, and the fine goes into the common fund of the accuser's village. No fee is paid for summoning the council.

The Chhatisa is the highest socio-political body and court of appeal. It has the special power to frame rules and regulations for the tribe as a whole. The Bada Behera, the chairman of the council, levies fines and punishes the guilty in consultation with the Nahaks and Beheras present. He is also able to

excommunicate those who do not obey the decisions of the Chhatisa from the tribe. Fines go into the common fund of the complainant's village. On the last day of the session, a great feast is arranged and all the leaders and village elders join in. If the fine collected is more, part of it goes towards the common feast, to which all the participating villages contribute jointly.

The Shabar's socio-political organization has become more formal due to the introduction of the Panchayati Raj. The traditional leaders have now been replaced by the elected ward members. Even cases arising in the village are now taken to the civil court, due to the emergence of village touts. The Shabar have become thoroughly Hinduised, and even Brahmans serve them as priests for the worship of the gods. They worship a female divinity called Mangala, who is the prototype of the Hindu Kali. At the end of every village under the shade of a tree, Mangala is installed and decorated with vermilion. This deity is worshipped by the shaman priest or Kalisi. They also worship other Hindu gods and goddesses.

Songs and dances lay a vital role in Shabar life. But now this is vanishing day by day, due to the influence of the neighbouring clean caste Hindus. They observe all festivals with their clean caste neighbours. The important tribal festivals of the Shabar are Raja Parab and Gamha Purnima. Shabar dances are only held during festivals and on other auspicious occasions. In most places Shabar women do not now take part in dances, due to the influence of Hindu manners and customs. But the general rule for dancing at Gamha Purnima is that men should dance with women irrespective of their social position or relationship. The Gamha Purnima dance is mainly observed by the Patra Shabar and women freely join in. The dance is accompanied by the *ghumura*, a kind of drum. The dances are always accompanied by songs. Shabar songs can be broadly divided into two parts, such as *bhendia* and *jamudal*. *Bhendia* songs are highly obscene, while *jamudai* songs are mainly mythological.

Traditional Shabar culture is now totally integrated. Their cultural contact with the advanced Hindus have made them slowly but steadily reach the apex of civilization. They are becoming more modern in their outlook by dropping out their traditional customs and culture, due to the impact of rapid industrialization, political modernization and socio-economic transformation.

L O D H A *

*S. C. Mohanty*¹

Lodha was known as a criminal tribe until the revocation of the criminal Tribes Act in 1956. It is widely accepted that the tribe derived its name from the word *lubdhaka* meaning the *fowler* or *trapper*. They claim their ancestry to Byadha or Kirata, the Savara king Viswabasu and consider Lord Jagannath as the supreme deity. They take pride in giving their identity as *Lodha Savar*.

They are found in a contiguous area stretching from northwest of the Chhotnagpur plateau to the southeast of the river basin of Subarnarekha. In Orissa, according to the 2011 census, their population is 9785 and sex ratio is 1013. In 1981 their literacy was 8.40 % and that has substantially increased to 43.08 % in 2011. They are mainly concentrated in Suliapada and Morada Blocks of Mayurbhanj district.

They used to have one-roomed houses with raised verandah in the front. Inside the house, close to the hearth there is a raised earthen platform called *isan*. This is said to be the seat of the family deity. A few household artifacts for multipurpose use are found in a Lodha house.

Apart from pursuing cultivation Lodhas eke out their living by rearing and collecting cocoons, selling firewood and preparing ropes out of *sabai* grass. The Lodha women are hard working and at the same time clever. Almost all Lodha men and women are adept in agricultural activities like transplanting, weeding and harvesting.

They have exogamous totemic clans like *Bhotda*, *Malik*, *Bag*, *Nayak*, *Dandapat*, *Paramanik*, *Ahori*, *Bhuria* and *Kotal*. They practise clan exogamy. Child marriage is still prevalent among them. After marriage the ladies put vermilion mark on forehead and iron bangle around the wrist. The practice of brideprice is still in vogue in their community.

The local people look at the Lodha with suspicion.

* Unpublished article of 2000 updated in 2020

¹ Former Joint Director and now Consultant (R&P), SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar

S O U N T I *

*S. C. Mohanty*¹

Sounti in Odisha is a local term which means "gathering things". The community is believed to have originated out of a union of persons out casted from different communities in the past. They have synonyms like Bedajal and Berdajhal.

They are concentrated in the districts of Keonjhar and Mayurbhanj. According to 2011 census their population is 1 12 803 and literacy rate 59.58 per cent. They speak Oriya.

Sounti settlement are traditionally uniclan and homogeneous. In multi ethnic villages they live in separate hamlets with other Hindu castes.

Cultivation is their primary occupation and they supplement their economy resorting to other vocations like wage earning, livestock rearing, forest collection and household industry such as leaf cup plate making. They are non-vegetarians and rice is their principal diet. They are addicted to homemade rice beer and smoke tobacco.

The community comes under one totemic gotra *Nageswar* (cobra) and is divided into number of exogamous clans (*Khilli*) like *Doldasia*, *Bardia*, *Saru* and *Tangsaria*, etc.

Family is predominately monogamous, though polygyny still exists in a few cases. It is generally nuclear, patrilocal and patrilineal. They prefer marriage by negotiation. Payment of bride price is obligatory. Remarriage of widows, widowers, divorcees, junior levirate and sorrorate are permitted. A Brahman

* Unpublished article of 2000 updated in 2020

¹ Former Joint Director and now Consultant (R&P), SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar

priest conducts the wedding ritual with the Vedic rites. The wedding ritual is performed in the bride's natal residence and the nuptial rite (*Chaturthi*) is held at the groom's house on the fourth day.

The Sounti observe puberty rites. The pollution period lasts for seven days. The girl remains in seclusion. Purificatory rite is observed on the eighth day. The community observes Sadakhia rite during ninth month of pregnancy to satisfy the pregnant woman's desire for delicious food items. A midwife from Ghasi community attends the mother during childbirth and is remunerated with some cash, food and a saree. The birth pollution is observed for twenty-one days and concludes with the purificatory rite (*Ekusia*) and the name giving ceremony. They perform tonsure ceremony after one year of the childbirth. They practise both cremation and burial to dispose off their deads. The bereaved family observes death pollution for ten day. A Brahman priest conducts the mortuary rite on the tenth day according to local Hindu customs.

The Sounti are Hindus by faith. They worship village deities like *Thakurani* and *Mangala* and Hindu deities like *Siva* and Raghunath and observe Hindu festivals. Their major festivals are *Raja*, *Gamha*, *Makar*, *Dassara*, *Dipavali* and *Nuakhia*. *Dehury* is their traditional priest.

The Sounti have their own traditional community council headed by village chief and influential elders. It settles family disputes and acts as guardian of traditional norms and customs.

The Sounti claim a higher social rank of par with the clean castes and believe Khandayat as their progeny. They avail the services of Brahman, barber and washerman. They have forgotten their old tradition of dance and music and have adopted Samkirtan following the local religious traditions of Hindu castes.

S O U N T I *

*Bhagirathi Chowdhury*¹

The Sountis (also spelt as Saunti) mainly found in Keonjhar and Mayurbhanj districts and the adjoining areas. Their distribution in Orissa as per 1961 census is given below:-

Name of the district	Population		
	Total	Male	Female
Keonjhar	30, 891	14, 924	15, 967
Mayurbhanj	11, 450	5, 847	5, 603
Koraput	439	232	207
Sambalpur	29	13	16
Ganjam	350	158	192
Sundargarh	71	39	32
Dhenkanal	23	11	12
Puri	322	179	143
Cuttack	65	23	42
Balasore	769	349	420
Total	44, 409	21, 775	22, 634

According to their own tradition as mentioned in the Census Report of Mayurbhanj State. 1931, the tribe took its origin in the 16th century from one Joygobinda Das of Puri, though said to be a Khandayat by caste. According to Mr. O' Malley as quoted in the same report "the nucleus of the caste consisted of persons outcasted from respectable Oriya castes who were allowed by the Chief of Keonjhar to settle in Manamata, one of the villages in his State. Their numbers grew rapidly as they received other out-castes with open arms. The only qualification for admission was that the new comers must have belonged to some

*Published in ADIBASI, Vol. V, No.3, (Spl. Issue), TRB, Bhubaneswar, 1963-64, pp.131-134

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

caste from whom Brahmins would take water". Thus, the name Sounti was derived from the word 'Saunta', meaning 'gathered in'. Whatever may be the story of their origin, they are considered ritually clean having some functions connected with the Ruler of the state in the past. Their institution of 'Berdhahal', the head of the tribe, has now become functionless since independence. As a result of their services to the Rulers and Zamindars, they received titles which become territorial or functional groups later on. Out of 126 groups, a list of 97 has been given in the Census Report of Mayurbhanj State, 1931. These titles are known as Khili and said to be exogamous. Their Gotra is Nagasa. In their ceremonial customs and manners they follow the Brahminical system and employ Brahman, Barber and Washerman for ritual services.

Marriage

Marriage among them is mostly adult and there is no bar for child marriage. Polygamy is permitted and widow remarriage is allowed. The parents take the sole responsibility of arranging marriages for their children. Proposal always comes from the boy's side. Several visits are exchanged by both the parties for negotiation. An astrologer is to be consulted to compare the stars of the boy and the girl. If he declares in its favour, bride price amounting to rupees four to ten in cash is paid before marriage. A date for marriage as found in the Oriya Panji is fixed. On the appointed day the bride-groom in a procession of friends and relatives, with the musical band of the Dom or Ghasi community goes to the bride's house. Here the marriage is performed by the Brahmin according to Vedic rites. Previously when they had dance, the party was welcomed by dancing and singing. After the marriage rites, the couple returns to the groom's village. A Sounti marriage party consists of a large number of males and females both old and young. A party from the girl's village also escorts the couple and it becomes a costly affair for both sides to entertain the guests. Divorce is allowed on reasonable grounds.

Birth rites

The birth pollution among the Sountis remains till the purificatory rites are observed on the ninth or twenty-first day. During the period of pollution no outsider takes food or water from any family of the Kutumba (which is equivalent to lineage in the village). On this day houses are cleaned and the washer man is required to wash the used clothes of the whole lineage. All the male members of the lineage and the new baby are shaved by the barber. All the used earthen vessels are replaced by new ones. The mother takes her bath and wears a new cloth and her nails are pared by the barber. On this occasion, the kinsmen and friends are invited and entertained at a feast. The baby is dressed for the first time and name is given by the tribesmen present.

Death rites

Funeral and mourning rites usually follow the local Hindu customs of the neighbours. They practice both burial and cremation according to economic condition of the deceased's family. If they can afford to arrange wood, they can burn all the dead except those dying of smallpox and cholera. When a person dies, a corpse is carried on a wooden bier by the male members of the tribe. They carry a winnowing fan, a pot, fire, axe, etc., with them. Before cremation or inhumation, the corpse is washed and anointed with oil and turmeric. It is laid down on the pyre or let down into the pit with face upward and head towards the north or west direction. When they return back from the burial ground after taking bath, all the cooking earthen pots are removed from the kitchens of all the families of the lineage. Then all members of the lineage go to take bath. The mourning continues for ten days during which whole lineage is considered ritually unclean. On the ninth day houses and clothes are cleaned. The lineage male members are shaved. On the tenth day a *Sradha* is performed where a Brahman officiates to offer food to the soul of the deceased. In the night the soul is brought back to the house and offered food. On the eleventh day a feast, if the deceased's family can afford, is given to the kinsmen and relatives who come with presentations.

Religion

As regards their religious beliefs and practices, they have no distinctive features of their own. They follow the same festival as followed by their Hindu neighbours. The Raja Parba, Gamha Punein, Makar Sankranti, Dasara, Kali Puja are some of the important festivals observed by them. Along with other Hindus they worship chief village deities, Basuki (Earth Goddess), etc., at the time of taking new rice and while transplanting and re-ploughing the paddy seedlings.

Like some of the local Hindu people they believe in the magic and witchcraft. Among them some work as shaman and village priest.

They had dances and songs at the time of marriage and festivals. But these have been totally stopped now. At leisure, while working in the agricultural field, they sing songs. Here the boys form one group and the girls another. Previously *Changu* was their musical instrument. Young boys or girls in a group go to the neighbouring villages on dancing expeditions. Now this has been given up. Kirtan as a type of recreation has been accepted by them.

Houses and Settlement

It is not easy to find exclusive Sounti villages. They mostly live in the midst of Hindus and other tribes such as Bhumij, Gond, Kharia, etc. In such villages they occupy a separate ward. This type of settlements are seen in Keonjhar and Mayurbhanj districts where most of them have taken to wage-earning as landless day-labourer or farm-servants. But in typical Sounti village such as Palasa in Keonjhar district, they own land and do permanent cultivation, which is supplemented by wage-earning.

The houses in a Sounti settlement are generally built in rows with a common street running in between. In some villages they also occur here and there in a scattered fashion. Well-to-do Sounti families build their houses around the four sides of a courtyard. Behind the houses are the kitchen gardens protected either by mud walls or fences. Fruits trees are seen in the kitchen garden.

Each house consists of one room, which is rectangular in size with no window and not more than one door. Most of the families possess more than one room. The houses with two or four-sided gable roofs thatched mostly with straw or wild-grass and occasionally with *naria* tiles, have mud walls washed with red earth. The houses have spacious verandahs generally in front. Those who possess cattle, a shed is invariably built, very close to the house.

Household Articles

In respect of furniture, they are very poor. In a household, one can find one or two stringed wooden cots. They either weave or purchase the mats made of leaves of wild date palms for sleeping purposes. Wooden furniture's are very rarely found in some households. Discarded and torn-up clothes stitched together are used as bed. They use earthenware vessels for cooking food and storing water. Plates and pots of bell-metal, aluminium are used in taking meals. These entire utensil and other cooking implements are purchased from the local markets. It is common to find steel trunks, cotton umbrella, torch light, wooden boxes in Sounti houses. Some well-to-do families have got bicycle also.

Dress and Ornaments

Old men wear a piece of mill-made *dhoti* or napkin which rarely covers the knee. Young men, though wear napkin and banyans while working in the field, put on long *dhoti* shirt, shorts and even shoes, if they can afford. When elderly men go out they use another napkin or a banyan as an upper garment. Aged women wear long sarees which also cover the upper parts of the body. Young girls use blouse and inner petticoat when they go out.

A very limited number of ornaments are worn by women. They have glass or metal bangles for the wrist, rings for the fingers, toes and nose, necklaces and chains for the neck, anklet for legs, clips, pins and flower designs for the head hair. Most of these ornaments are made of cheap metal and are purchased from the local markets. Only wealthier section possesses ornaments made of gold or silver. Wearing of thread in the neck and rings in the ear lobes are occasionally seen among the boys.

Occupation

As most of them are landless, they work mostly as contract-labourer and day-labourer or agricultural labourer for the local cultivators who require them. Those who have land, do the cultivation themselves. But in most cases amount of land is not sufficient to meet the cost of their living. So some of them work as part-

time labourers and some do petty business such as buying rice at a cheaper rate from one locality and selling at a higher price in another place. Hunting and collection of jungle products have been given up due to depletion of forests. They do not even find scope for their annual hunt in the month of Baisakha (April). Fishing as a leisure time pursuit is done according to availability of scope. There are also some who serves as school teacher, peon etc. But their number is negligible.

Food

Their staple food is rice which is taken throughout the year in whatever quantity it may be available. Generally rice is taken twice daily on ordinary days and thrice on the days of heavy work. From rice-flour cakes are prepared and taken especially on holidays. Non-vegetarian food is much more relished but they are handicapped by their low-income. Fowls are sacrificed at the religious ceremonies of the village and are eaten. On festive occasions meat or some vegetable curry constitute a side item. Ordinarily, *sag* (green leaves) is the common item. Unclean food like beef, pork, etc. is avoided. But they take white-ants and termites. They abstain from taking rice-beer and wine. Those who violate this taboo are out casted.

They do not take food or water from the hands of Kudumi, Teli and untouchable castes. Brahmins accept uncooked food and water from their hands but never from their kitchen. Washerman's and barber's services are available to the Sounti. Brahmins are required to officiate in their marriage and death rites.

SOUNTI*

*B. B. Mohanty*¹

The Sounti are found in eleven of the thirteen districts of the state of Orissa, but their main concentration is in the districts of Mayurbhanj and Keonjhar. The total Sounti population according to the 1991 Census is 96,251, 1.37 per cent of the total tribal population of the state. They had a growth rate of 41.81 per cent during the period 1981-91. The literacy percentage, which was 8.00 in 1981 Census, increased to 38.92 by 1991. The sex ratio is 1072 females per thousand males. Details about the origin of the tribe have been given in the Census Report for Mayurbhanj State, 1931, according to which the tribe originated in the 16th century, when its founder, one Joygobinda Das of Puri, said to be of the Khandayat caste, was allowed to settle in Manamata, one of the villages in Keonjhar, near Musakhanj. According to Mr O. Malley, 'The nucleus of the caste consisted of persons outcasted from respectable Oriya castes who were allowed by the chief of Keonjhar to settle in Manamata, one of the villages in his State. Their number grew rapidly as they received other castes with open arms. The only qualification for admission was that the new comers must have belonged to some castes from whom Brahmans would take water' (Census of Mayurbhanj State, 1930-1937).

The name 'Sounti', which seems to have been derived from the word Saunta, meaning 'gathered in'. In Keonjhar and Mayurbhanj they received special attention from the rulers of the state. The Sounti were invited to all state and social functions, and in recognition of their special services to the state they were honoured with famous titles. In the District of Mayurbhanj there are separate villages or hamlets inhabited exclusively by Sounti. In Keonjhar District,

* Published in *Tribes of Orissa* (revised edn), SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar, 2004, pp. 291-293

¹ Deputy Director, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar

on the other hand, they live side by side with other caste Hindu neighbours like the Gauda, Kamar, etc.

Among the Sounti the selection of a house site is the most important factor before the construction of a new house. Before the site is selected, a rectangle is drawn at the centre of the proposed site, vermilion paste is placed at the centre of the rectangle, followed by a handful of rice covered by a leaf lid. Next morning, if the rice is found intact, the site is considered auspicious. Houses, which are generally two roomed, are built round a central courtyard. Single-room houses are very rarely met with. Cattle sheds are built close to the dwelling house. Goats, poultry and other domesticated animals are either accommodated in the bedroom or in a separate shed built close to the house. The dress of the men consists of *dhotis*, which are about 8' long, while women wear coloured saris 12' to 15' long. Various types of silver ornaments, such as necklaces, bangles, earrings and anklets, are worn by the women. The use of glass bangles can be observed nowadays.

There does not seem to be any restriction imposed on a parturient woman except that she is not allowed to cross a river. She does her normal duties until the labour pains start. The Sounti observe a ceremony called Sadakhia during the advanced stages of pregnancy, when the woman is offered with some delicious food of her choice by the father. The living room is converted into a lying-in-room where the child is delivered. The assistance of experienced old women is generally sought for a safe and easy delivery. However, nowadays, if there are complications, the patient is taken to the hospital. According to Sounti tradition the umbilical cord of a male child is cut with an arrow blade and of a female child with a knife. A period of pollution of 21 days is observed by all lineage members. During this period no outsider takes food or water from any family members of the lineage group. The first stage of purification falls on the ninth day, when the house is cleaned and daubed with cow-dung. Members of the household are shaved and the washerman washes the clothes. But the woman is not allowed to cook until the second stage of the pollution is over, which falls on the twenty-first day. On this day the house is cleaned again and all the used earthenware vessels are replaced by new ones. The mother takes bath and puts on new clothes. A feast is arranged which is shared by kinsmen and relatives. The celebration ends after giving a name to the child.

Marriage within the *khilli* is prohibited. Adult marriages are most common, although there is no restriction on child marriages. Monogamy is the general rule, but a few cases of polygamy in the form of polygyny also occur. Widow marriages are also allowed. Selection of spouse is always the responsibility of the parents. But the initiative for negotiation starts from the boy's side. Several visits are exchanged by the parties before the selection of spouses. Then an astrologer is called to match the horoscope of the boy with that

of the girl. If he declares in favour of the match, then negotiation immediately takes place by paying a bride-price, which is generally in cash amounting to ten rupees. Then a date convenient to both the parties is fixed for the marriage by consulting the Oriya Panji. The betrothal ceremony is held at the house of the girl, on the occasion of which a feast is arranged.

On the day of the marriage, a procession consisting of the bridegroom, his relatives and friends goes to the house of the bride accompanied by a musical band. At the bride's house the groom is ceremonially received by the mother and other old women of the house. A feast is given to the marriage party before the Vedic wedding rituals start. Then the priest performs the marriage on the altar on which both bride and groom sits. Here a *homa* is arranged and the palms of the bride and groom are tied together by the priest. The Vedic rites, which generally take a longer period, end when the fathers of the boy and girl offer their son and daughter to each other. Next day, the groom returns home with the bride. On the day of the return a feast is arranged in the groom's home. On the fourth day a ceremony called Chaturthi and on the eighth day another ceremony called Athamangala are observed.

Divorce is permitted in Sounti society on reasonable grounds. When a divorced woman marries a second time her first husband must be compensated. However, if the fault is not with the woman, the husband is required to pay a sum of Rs.4/- and a piece of cloth to the woman at the time of the divorce.

The dead are either buried or cremated although the latter practice is more frequent than the former. The funeral and mourning rites look quite similar to that of the neighbouring caste Hindus. A period of mourning is observed for ten days. The news of the death is immediately conveyed to the kinsmen and others in the village. Soon after the kinsmen assemble in the deceased's house, the corpse is carried on a wooden bier, a piece of ladder made especially for the purpose, or a piece of cot to the cremation ground. The corpse is washed and anointed with oil and turmeric, and then laid down on the pyre or pit with its face pointing upwards and its head towards the north or west. After cremation the kinsmen proceed to a pond or river, where they are shaved by the barber and after a bath return home. On their arrival at home the cooked earthenware pots are removed from kitchen and thrown out. The same day evening relatives and kinsmen are given food by the deceased's family, which consists of bitter rice. From the next day up to the tenth day the eldest son of the deceased carries some food in a leaf cup to the cremation ground and offers it to the soul of the deceased. During the period of pollution, which lasts for ten days, people are considered ritually unclean. All activities connected with agriculture are suspended. On the ninth day they are shaved again and the house and clothes are cleaned. On the tenth day a *sraddha* is performed in which the officiating Brahman priest offers food to the departed soul. In the night the soul is brought

back to the home and offered food. On the eleventh day new earthenware pots and vessels are purchased and a feast is arranged for kinsmen, villagers and visiting relations.

The economic life of the Sounti mainly centers around agriculture. Those who possess some land have taken to cultivation. But for the majority of people who have no land, wages are the main sources of income. Generally, the poorer section of the people work as labourers in the fields of well-to-do persons in the village. Otherwise, they work as labourers in different construction sites in the area. Rice is their staple food, and is eaten throughout the year. They also eat vegetable curry occasionally, whenever vegetables are available. Non-vegetarian food is relished much more than vegetarian food. In the rainy season they catch fish from nearby *nalas* and rivers. Very rarely they hunt animals in the forest. Meats of various types of birds such as parrot, fowl, peacock, etc. are eaten.

There is nothing very striking so far as their religious beliefs and practices are concerned. The festivals and rituals that they observe are the same as those observed by their Hindu counterparts. Some of the important festivals they observe include Raja Parab, Gamha Purnima, Makar Sankranti, Dasahara, etc. Among the deities they worship, Basuki, the village deity, is the chief and is worshipped at Nuakhia, transplantation, harvesting, etc. Earlier they had music and dances at weddings and festivals. The boys and girls formed groups and used to dance together to the accompaniment of music. Nowadays this aspect of their culture has totally ceased topped and been replaced by *kirtan mandalis*.

S O U N T I *

A. B. Ota ¹

A. K. Gomango ²

IDENTITY

The term 'Sounti', in Odia language, means 'to gather in'. It denotes the name of the community that has evolved gradually by assimilation of families originated from respectable caste Hindu communities from whom the Brahmans accepted water but were out casted by the then feudal chiefs of various Gadjat States for committing social crimes. These families have fled from their native places and have taken shelter under the ruler of Keonjhar who settled them in Manamata village of his State. In course of time, their number grew forming a new community named Sounti. They are referred to as Bedajal and Berdajhal and also as Sounti by their neighbouring communities. Some also wrongly equate them with the Sauntia- a Scheduled Caste community of Odisha, where as they claim to be the offshoot of Khandayat caste. Their mother tongue is Odia and they use its script for both intra and inter group communication.

Numerically the Sounti is a small tribe in Odisha. They are distributed in all the districts of the State, but their major concentration is in the district of Keonjhar and Mayurbhanj. According to 2001 census their population in the State is 92, 734 out of which 46, 338 are males and 46, 396 are females. The community's sex ratio is 1001 females for 1000 males. Their population has registered a negative decadal growth rate of -3.65% when compared with 1991 Census data. Their literacy rate is 44.37% out of which male literacy is 59.76% and female literacy is 29.13%.

Dress and Ornaments

Their dress pattern is very simple and resembles with that of the neighbouring castes. The Sounti males wear a piece of loin cloth (*dhoti*) which is

* Published in the Photo Handbook on Sounti, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar, 2014.

¹ Director, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar

² Deputy Director, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar

about 8' in length and a banyan to cover the upper part of the body. On market days or at the time of visiting the relative's house, they wear shirts. On the other hand, the females wear coloured and printed sarees of about 12' to 15' in length. Women of well-to-do or educated families wear sarees with blouse and petticoats. They also wear varieties of ornaments consisting of necklaces, earrings, anklets, finger rings, toe rings and bangles made of silver to beautify themselves. Some of them also wear golden ornaments. They are also very fond of wearing coloured glass bangles and hair pins purchased from local markets.

SETTLEMENT & HOUSING PATTERN

Traditionally, the Sounti settlements are exclusively homogeneous and uni-clan in structure and where they dwell in multi-ethnic villages, their houses are situated in a separate hamlet keeping distance from the main settlement and maintaining their own cultural identity. In the district of Mayurbhanj there are separate villages or hamlets inhabited exclusively by the Sounti. In Keonjhar District, they live with other caste neighbours like the Gauda, Kamar, etc.

Individual Sounti houses are arranged in linear pattern in parallel rows running in both the sides of the village street. At one end of the village under bunch of shady trees, the shrine of their village deity *Basuki* is installed.

Among the Sounti for the construction of a new house, the selection of a house site is the most important factor. For this purpose, they consult their traditional priest, Dehury for selection of an auspicious site through the rice divination method. A rectangle is drawn at the center of the proposed site and vermilion paste is placed at the center of the rectangle, followed by a handful of rice covered by a leaf cap. Next morning, if the rice is found intact, the site is considered auspicious.

Individual houses built round a central courtyard, consist of two rooms with mud or brick walls, thatched either with paddy straw or with wild grass having narrow veranda both on the front and rear side with a shed at the back side to shelter their domesticated animals. In between these constructions lies the central courtyard. The bigger room is used as their living room and to store their grains and the smaller one is used as the kitchen. The rooms have no windows for ventilation.

Their household assets are very few and limited to some aluminum pots, plates, vessels and some earthen wares, winnowing fans etc. which are stored in the kitchen. They keep their used clothes on a string which hangs in both sides of their roofs in the living room. They keep their agricultural implements such as ploughs, yokes, levelers, hoes etc. in their front veranda and axe, pick-axe and crowbar in their living room.

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

The community Sounti is divided into a number of exogamous clans (*khilli*). Clan members use their respective clan name as their surname. Each *khilli* is further sub-divided into several exogamous patri-lineages (*bansa*) like Doldsia, Bardia, Saura and Tangsaria etc. The members of *abansa* believe to be the descendants of a common human ancestor and hence consider themselves as brothers and sisters. They have only one *gotra* i.e. Nageswar (cobra)- a snake and revere it as their totemic animal. Family is the smallest social unit which is mostly nuclear, patriarchal, patrilocal and patrilineal. Inheritance of ancestral property follows the rule of equigeniture in male line only. Families having no issue or male successor may adopt a son from the nearest agnatic lineages who can inherit the property.

Life Cycle

Pregnancy & Childbirth

The Sounti observe the pre-delivery ritual *sadakhia* on the 9th month of pregnancy in which the kinsmen and relatives offer delicious sweetmeats to the pregnant woman. The birth of a child is usually arranged in a separate temporary enclosure at the rear veranda which is used as the lying-in-room. They engage an experienced woman from Ghasi community as the mid-wife to assist the expectant mother during child birth for ensuring easy and safe delivery of the baby. According to their custom, the umbilical cord of the new born baby is cut using an arrow blade for a male child and with a knife for a female child.

The birth pollution continues for twenty one days. During this period they observe post-delivery ritual -*uthiary* on the 9th day of the child birth. On this day, the walls and floor are cleaned and purified using cow dung paste. The mother and the new born baby take a ceremonial bath. The final purificatory rite - *ekusia* is performed on the twenty first day. On that day the new born baby is given a name and new dresses are presented to the mother and her baby. In the evening, the family hosts a feast to the lineage members, friends and relatives. After that the mother is purified and she is allowed to resume her routine household chores including cooking of meals for the family. They observe the tonsure (*mundan*) rite when the baby attains about one year of age.

Puberty Rites

The Sounti observe puberty rites for adolescent girls on attainment of their first menarche. This pollution lasts for seven days. The menstruating girl is secluded in an isolated room for a period of seven days during which she is looked after by her mother or by an experienced woman. During this period she is tabooed to look or talk to any male person and move outside or do any work. At the dawn of the eighth day, she takes a purificatory bath in the nearby village stream or pond anointing turmeric paste and oil and wears new dresses presented by her family. Thereafter, she resumes her routine activities.

Marriage

In the Sounti community adult marriage and monogamy is common though child marriages are found in rare cases. Polygyny is permitted when the first wife is found to be barren or mentally unsound. Marriage arranged through negotiation is considered as the most prestigious mode of acquiring a spouse. The other modes of marriages are by mutual consent and by elopement. In arranged marriages, a mediator (*dandia*) from the groom's side is engaged to initiate the marriage proposal visiting the bride's side. If the proposal is accepted by the bride's parents, they consult their traditional astrologer to fix an auspicious date and time according to the *Odia* almanac for holding the wedding ceremony. Then they conduct the betrothal rite (*pindhani*) in which the groom's parents present sarees, ornaments and some cosmetics for the bride. Payment of bride price is made in shape of cash.

On the appointed day, the groom proceeds to the bride's residence in a marriage procession, composed of his friends, relatives, villagers of both the sexes dancing and singing to the tune of music played by their traditional musicians. The party is cordially received by the bride's family near their village entrance. Wedding rites are conducted in the bride's house where a Brahmin priest conducts the proceedings. The bride's parents offer dowry in shape of various household articles and brass and aluminum utensils etc. to the couple. A non-vegetarian marriage feast is hosted by the bride's father to the kinsmen, guests and villagers. On the next day, the groom returns home with the bride. The marriage is consummated on the fourth day (*chaturthi*). They also observe another rite called *athamangala* on the eighth day of the marriage.

Junior levirate, junior sororate, re-marriage of widows and widowers are permitted in their society. Divorce is permitted on the grounds of maladjustment, impotency, adultery or cruelty with the approval of the society. If the divorce takes place for the man's fault, he is liable to pay the divorce compensation to the woman concerned as mutually fixed by both the sides.

Death Rites

The Sounti practise both burial and cremation to dispose of their dead bodies. The death news is immediately conveyed to the kinsmen and relatives and they assemble soon to participate in the funeral. The dead body is anointed with oil and turmeric water and the pallbearers carry the corpse to the cremation ground on a bamboo bier or on a string cot. All the kinsmen participate in the funeral procession. The dead body is kept on the pyre keeping its head towards north and face upward. The elder son sets fire on the pyre. After the funeral is over, the kinsmen take bath after shaving their hair and beard by their barber and return home. All the used earthen wares are thrown away and in the evening the bereaved family arranges a feast to their kinsmen with boiled bitter rice. Death pollution continues for ten days and during the mourning period, the

eldest son offers food in a leaf cup for the departed soul near the cremation ground. On the ninth day, the house with all their used clothes is washed and the family members and their lineage members are shaved again. All agricultural operations, observance of rituals and festivals, entry into sacred places, worship of deities, relishing of non-vegetarian foods and giving alms etc during this period are prohibited. The purificatory rite is performed on the tenth day with the help of a Brahman priest. On the eleventh day, the bereaved family hosts a feast for the kinsmen, relatives and villagers.

LIVELIHOOD

The Sounti are primarily agriculturists and their economic life revolves around farming and allied pursuits. Paddy is their major crop which they raise in their low lands. In their highlands they produce *ragi* and other minor millets like *kosla*, *kangu* and *janna* etc., pulses like *kulthi* (horse gram), *biri* (black gram), *mung* (green gram) *arhar* and oilseeds like *til*, mustard etc. In their kitchen gardens they raise maize, chili and varieties of vegetables. Most of them are poor marginal farmers and share croppers. They engage themselves in different pursuits like wage earning both in agricultural and construction sectors to earn their livelihood. Their women and children contribute substantially to their family economy by collection of minor forest produce, fuel woods etc. They also domesticate cows, goats and fowls. They occasionally practise hunting and fishing in nearest rivers and *nalas*.

The Sounti are non-vegetarians and relish on fish, dry fish, chicken, eggs mutton and etc. but do not take beef or pork. Rice is their staple food. They eat pulses like *moong*, *kulthi* and *biri* and also roots and tubers. Mustard and sesame oils are used for cooking. Both men and women consume home-made rice beer (*handia*). They drink milk. Some of them smoke *bidis* and chew betel leaves.

REIGIOUS BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

Being a Hinduised tribe, the Sounti profess Hinduism with admixture of elements of animism. They worship Hindu deities namely Mangala, Thakurani and Basuki as their village deities who are propitiated by their sacerdotal head Dehury during observance of various rituals and festivals. They observe all Hindu festivals and rituals round the year. The major festivals they observe are Raja, Gamha, Makar, Dusserah, Kali Puja, Dola Yatra, Holi Parab and Nuakhia.

The Sounti believe in black magic and existence of benevolent and malevolent spirits who cause well-being and diseases to human beings and domesticated animals. They seek the help of their shaman belonging to their own community to appease these supernatural powers to protect the village from all mishaps and calamities.

They have their own folk-tradition of music and dance. Now-a-days, following the caste traditions, they perform *sankirtan* during observance of various rituals and festivals.

SOCIAL CONTROL

The Sounti possess their own traditional community council at the village level headed by the village chief and some influential community members who are assisted by their sacerdotal head Dehury and the village messenger Dakua to deal with their customary affairs. The council adjudicates cases pertaining to family disputes, theft, rape, incest, divorce etc. It also makes arrangements for organization and management of village level rituals and festivals. They have no regional community council. Therefore to settle the divorce cases, the heads of the family of both the bride and the groom with their agnatic kith and kin and relatives assemble at the groom's village to take part in the decision making process. Their traditional community council acts as the guardian of their traditional norms and customs. Their traditional community leaders are duly respected by their fellowmen in their society.

CHANGING SCENE

The close culture contact of the Sounti with the neighbouring tribes and castes coupled with various welfare and development measures taken up by the government for their upliftment after independence has brought about noticeable changes in their way of life. In the post-independence era, the State Government, in its pursuit to bring about the socio-economic development of the tribal communities, have launched several special policies and programmes which include legal aids, rehabilitation of victims of exploitation and atrocities, health care, housing and drinking water facilities, establishment of special employment exchanges, reservation in employment, economic development, establishment of residential schools and hostels etc.

The establishment of schools for the tribal students by the ST & SC Development Department and School & Mass Education Department of Odisha Government in their area and implementation of Right to Education Act (2010) are significant interventions for desired transformation of the Sounti tribe in the social sector. Development of essential infrastructure facilities and socio-economic support through different development agencies has brought changes in the way of life of the tribe. The Sounti women have been roped into SHGs and getting financial assistance from ITDA and DRDA which has opened up new arena of economic opportunity for better livelihood. The impact of planned change and modernization are visible in their life style. Still, in their socio-cultural system they have retained some basic tribal features which distinguish them from other ethnic groups.

THARUA *

*S. C. Mohanty*¹

Tharua is an artisan community called by other names like, Tharua-Bindhani, Tharua-Kumbhar, Majhia-Kumbhar or Maghia-Kumbhar etc. They are sparsely distributed in the districts of Dhenkanal, Bolangir, Balasore and Mayurbhanj. According to 2011 census their population is only 9451 and level of literacy is 50.44%. They are an Odia speaking tribal community.

They live either in uni-clan homogeneous villages or in separate hamlets of a multi-ethnic village.

The Tharua are traditionally artisans. Pottery is their traditional occupation and some of them are proficient in stone cutting and engraving. They supplement their economy by cultivation and wage earning. They are non-vegetarians and rice is their staple food. They chew and smoke tobacco.

The community is endogamous and divided into a number of exogamous totemic septs, such as, *Kachima*, *Latha*, *Supala*, *Ahadar*, *Kanyari*, *Dhakitanga*, *Bhuiyan* and *Tetenga* etc.

Family is nuclear, monogamous, patrilocal and patrilineal. A few cases of vertically extended families are also seen. Marriage through negotiation is the common practise. Other modes of marriage are by capture, by mutual consent, by service, junior levirate and sororate, cross cousin marriage, remarriage of divorcees, widows and widowers are permitted. A Brahman priest conducts the wedding ritual at the bride's residence assisted by a barber. The nuptial rite is celebrated at the groom's house. Bride price is in vogue. A few cases of polygyny are also found in their society.

* Unpublished article of 2000 updated in 2020

¹ Former Joint Director and now Consultant (R&P), SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar

They observe puberty rites for girls, who are kept in seclusion for seven days. They observe some restrictions. Birth pollution lasts for twentyone days at the end of which namegiving ceremony is performed. The newborn baby is given a name by an astrologer. They also observe the rite of ear piercing for boys administered by a *Vaishnab Guru*. The Tharua practise cremation for the dead. Death pollution is observed for ten days. The purificatory rite, *Dasa* is conducted by a Brahman priest. The barber and washerman also serve the community. The Tharua profess Hinduism. They worship Hindu deities, visit sacred shrines and observe Hindu festivals. Lord *Viswakarma* is their principal deity worshiped during *Viswakarma Puja* along with their pottery wheel. They worship their village deities such as *Raudia*, *Thanamatho*, *Maisasuri*, *Handia*, *Gamho* and *Kuli* and observe festivals like *Raja*, *Makar*, *Dipavali*, *Randia*, *Gamaha*, *Magha Parab* and *Viswakarma Puja* with pomp and ceremony. Their traditional priest officiates over their socio-religious functions.

They have their own traditional community council. The regional head is called *Behera*. The council is headed by *Behera*, headmen of villages, and the influential village elders. It adjudicates family disputes, inter and intra-community conflicts and acts as the guardian of their customary rules and regulations.

As an artisan tribe they have retained their glorious heritage of folklore, folksongs and dance, more or less.

THARUA *

A. B. Ota ¹

S. C Mohanty ²

K. Mohanty ³

IDENTITY

The tribe Tharua is an endogamous community inhabiting northern Odisha, mainly in the Balasore district and is sub-divided into two subgroups i.e. Tharua Bindhani and Tharua Kumbhar. The Tharua Bindhani are also known as Jhadua Bindhani and Chapua Bindhani. They are called Tharua as they speak a language called “Thara” – an admixture of Odia and Hindi. In fact, the terminologies like, Jhadua, Chapua and Tharua are one and the same which are given to them by their neighbours. The Tharua do not like to be called as Tharua. Rather they boast of their status being Aryan. Constitutionally, they are a Scheduled Tribe. They use surnames like Behera, Kanyari and Bindhani and claim to be the original settlers of the area.

They are numerically a very small tribe. Their population in the state has almost doubled from 453 in 2001 census to 9451 in 2011 census. The sex ratio of the tribe is 1002. As per 2011 Census their literacy rate is 50.44 percent. However, their females are lagging behind with 40.22 percent literacy, while 60.73 percent males are literates. Their poor economic condition doesn’t encourage them to educate their children. They prefer their children to pursue economic activities, to supplement the family income.

They reside in Mayurbhanj, Balasore, Nowrangpur, Keonjhar, Bolangir, Kendrapara, Kandhamal, Jajpur, Gajapati, Kalahandi, Koraput, Sundergarh,

* Published in the Photo Handbook on Tharua, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar, 2016

¹ Commissioner-cum-Director, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar

² Officer-on-Special Duty & Former Joint Director, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar

³ Statistical Assistant, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar

Kalahandi districts. Numerically, being an rural artisan community, they are not found in large concentration in one place and live sporadically by two to three families in different villages.

Now they speak the local Odia language and use Odia scripts for both inter-group and intra-group communications.

Personal Adornments

Their dressing pattern is very simple and lacks any cultural distinction. The males adorn themselves with *dhoti*, *lungi* and shirts. Women wear *sari*. The married women put on vermillion and glass bangles. Use of silver and brass jewellery is common among them. Gold ornaments are rare and used only by the women of well to do families. They wear both glass and metal bangles, beads or metal necklaces, ear rings, toe rings and armlets on the arms. At present they wear modern ornaments used by the non-tribal women in the locality.

SETTLEMENT AND HOUSING

The Tharua being tribal artisans generally live in small numbers in multi-ethnic villages. Their settlements are surrounded by vegetations having perennial water sources nearby. They live separately in isolated wards where they install their *sala* (workshop) either in the open-air or attached to a side of their house. The *sala* is a straw-thatched shed lying at the lower-level of the main roof of house. Their small *kutchra* huts are scattered randomly connected by *zigzag* foot paths.

Their mud huts display their stark poverty. The house building materials consist of locally available resources like loamy soil, bricks, wood and bamboo shafts, country made tiles, straws etc. Individual house is built on a rectangular ground plan having mud or brick walls and gable shaped low roofs thatched with straws or country made tiles having verandahs both in front and rear sides. Generally, a Tharua hut consists of two rooms. The bigger room is used as the living room and the smaller one, as their kitchen. Very poor families, who have only one room, enclose a part of the front or back verandah to use it as kitchen. The entrance door is made of wood. Mostly their houses have no windows.

The mud walls are polished with white or red clay and the floor is polished with cow dung paste by their women. They have a small kitchen garden at the back side that is fenced with bamboo splits. Fruits, vegetables and minor millets are grown here for domestic consumption. They construct a shed near their house to accommodate their livestock such as cow, buffalo, goat, sheep and fowl.

Their household articles are scanty, consisting of clothes, earthen pots, few aluminium utensils, grinding stone, husking lever, string cots, low wooden stools, tools, weapons and implements, etc. Their housing condition and their household belongings portrays a dismal picture of their poverty indicating the bare minimum living standard.

LIVELIHOOD

The Tharua is a tribal artisan community. The Tharua Bindhani professes black-smithy, primarily making iron implements and the Tharua Kumbhars make terracotta pottery. But now-a-days, both the groups have taken up black smithy, carpentry and stone works.

In the rural area the Tharuas Bindhanis make and mend the iron implements used for agricultural purposes such as, the ploughshare, axe, sickle, knife, scythe, spade, crowbar and other articles. For doing this they are paid *bartana* (annual customary remuneration) in kinds of food grains by their clients. For making new implements, they are sometimes paid separately and is always supplied with the iron. They make and repair all these items in their workshops. Their women help men by blowing the bellows and dragging the hot iron from furnace, while the men wield the hammer. They purchase charcoal to fire the furnace at present. In the past, they were preparing charcoal by cutting and burning trees. From their traditional occupation they derive a meager income.

Since, most of the Tharua families are either landless, marginal farmers or share croppers for their meager sustenance they take up other pursuits like wage earning, small business etc. They are mainly engaged as agricultural labourers. Forest regulations have forced them to abandon the idea of collection of forest produce from even distant forests. Consequently, they suffer from acute economic deficit and struggle hard to keep their body and soul together.

Tharua women and children play an important role in economic activities. They contribute substantially by participating in iron works, cultivation, wage earning etc. besides their normal household chores.

Food Habits

The dietary habit of the Tharua is simple. They are non-vegetarians but, do not take beef as they consider it a ritually unclean food. They cannot afford eating meat, fish, and egg regularly due to their poor economic status. Consequently, they relish on red ants, mouse and termite like the local tribals. Only during festive occasions and social functions their menu includes chicken and mutton curry.

Rice is their staple food but now-a-days, they are also taking *chapatti* supplemented with pulses like *tur*, *kesari*, *moong* etc. They usually take two meals a day along with some food as breakfast. Rice, *chapatti*, *dal* and vegetable curry constitutes their principal meal. Mustard oil, groundnut oil and rapeseed oil are used by them as cooking medium. Milk and milk products are only served to children. Locally available seasonal fruits are also eaten by them.

They drink *handia* (rice beer) and country liquor -*mahua*. They prepare rice-beer (*handia*) on all socio-religious occasions and offer it to the deities as ritual food.

Mahua liquor is often purchased from the local liquor-vender. Rice-beer is also offered to the ancestral-spirits on festive occasions.

SOCIAL LIFE

The Tharua tribe is endogamous, which have several clans like *Anaki* and *Sal* and is divided into a number of exogamous septs (*bansas*) namely *Kachima*, *Latha*, *Supala*, *Ahadar*, *Kanyari*, *Dhakitanga*, *Bhuiyanand* *Tetenga* etc. Among them descent is patrilineal. They follow patrilocal rule of residence after marriage.

Family

They have patriarchal family. Most of the families are nuclear in structure while some are vertically extended. Joint families are rare. Medium sized families are of common occurrence. Husband and wife relationship is characterized by mutual cooperation and understanding in every field. Husband enjoys the dominant position but wife also acts as a partner in day to day activities. Wife does not utter her husband's name as a mark of respect. Avoidance relationship is maintained between father-in-law and daughter-in-law, man and his younger brother's wife and wife's elder sister. Joking relationship prevails between a man and his wife's younger brother and sister and elder brother's wife.

In Tharua families the elders are respected. Small children are fondly taken care of. Grandparents are very fond of their grandchildren. All brothers help each other, act unitedly both during family functions as well as at the time of crisis. Inheritance of property goes only in the male line following the rule of male equigeniture. But sometimes, the youngest or the eldest son gets extra share if father so desires and all sons agree. Daughters are not given any share of the ancestral property but get some of their mother's personal property. If a man dies without any male heir then his widow may enjoy his property and following her death her daughters inherit the same. In the absence of any issue the property goes to the deceased's lateral kins. Among them succession to the positions of authority always goes in male line. The eldest son succeeds to the position of his late father.

Women play important roles in socio-religious and economic activities. But, they are debarred from participating in political activities. They are free to move without any restrictions.

Life Cycle

Pregnancy, Childbirth and Afterwards

Pregnancy and childbirth are welcome events in the Tharua society. Certain pre and post-delivery restrictions are imposed on the pregnant woman regarding her food and movement for the safety and wellbeing of the mother and child. She is prevented from consuming eggs and twin fruits. Before delivery, parents of the pregnant woman present delicious food items for her and for her

female relatives of the village. Their poverty compels the pregnant woman to attend to her routine duties till the advanced stage of pregnancy.

There is no specific room for delivery. Delivery normally takes place in the living room. An elderly and experienced woman of the community or of lower caste known as *kushurain* (mid wife) assists in the delivery process. After delivery, the mother and child take rest by the side of nuptial fire called *antudijola*. The mother is given fried rice and garlic to eat. The umbilical cord is cut by the midwife and is buried in the front yard of the house. Now-a-days, delivery is taking place in the hospitals.

The period of birth pollution continues for 9 days. After that they observe the purificatory rite, *narta* during which houses are cleaned and *antudijola* is extinguished. The traditional service of washer man is required to wash the mother's clothes. A barber pares off her nails. The mother also takes purificatory bath on that day.

On the 21st day, the final birth purificatory rite (*ekosia*) is performed when a *Gosain* (priest) is called to invoke goddess *Mangala* and pray for the welfare of the newborn baby. From that day onwards the mother is allowed to enter into the kitchen to cook food. On the *ekosia* ceremony the kinsmen are served with a feast.

On the 30th day, the First Cereal Eating ceremony and the Name Giving ceremony (*sarehi*) are observed. The relatives are hosted a feast. A name is selected for the baby in consultation with the astrologer by rice divination method. At the age of 10 to 15 years, a *baisnab guru* administers *karna mantra* to the child.

Puberty

A girl on attaining her first menstruation is kept secluded for seven days. She is neither allowed to take bath nor to see the male members and move outside. On completion of a week she takes purificatory bath and puts on a new *saree*. After that, she goes to worship goddess *Thakurani* accompanied by her female friends.

Marriage

Adult marriage and monogamy is generally practiced but in certain special cases polygyny is allowed where the first wife is found to be barren or physically handicapped. They rarely go for cross cousin marriage. In some cases they allow junior levirate and junior sororate. Child marriage is an old custom which is no more practiced. Boys upon reaching an age of 21-28 and girls of 19-22 years of age are considered fit for marriage.

The marriage arranged through negotiation is considered as ideal and prestigious. The other modes of marriage practiced by them are by love (*bhalapai*), by consent (*rajiruja*), by service (*gharjoinee*), by capture (*jhika*), by elopement (*udalia*) and by intrusion (*dhuku*). Junior levirate, junior sororate and remarriage of widow, widowers are also permitted in their society.

In case of marriage by negotiation, the initiative is generally taken by the groom's side. For the selection of bride a mediator is engaged. Before finalizing a marriage, horoscope matching of prospective bride and groom by an astrologer is a must. If their horoscope matches, then only they proceed for negotiation. *Pindhani / nirbandha* (betrothal) rite is performed in the bride's village.

The groom's father along with some relatives visits the bride's house for settling the bride price (*panabhanga*) that is paid both in cash and kinds, before or after marriage. It includes ornaments, clothes, food grains, vats of liquor etc. In return, the girl's side also gives presents like some utensils, ornaments, clothes for the bride and bicycle, radio, watch for the groom. In all the occasions the visiting side is entertained. After fixing the marriage date, all the relatives of the families concerned are formally invited to attend the wedding ceremony. Generally, Monday, Wednesday and Friday are considered auspicious for marriage.

Marriage ceremony takes place at the bride's house. The rituals are performed by a low grade Brahman priest with the assistance of the barber. One day before the marriage, *Dehamangalana* ceremony takes place. Here both of the groom and bride are anointed with turmeric paste and given ceremonial baths at their respective places. On the day of marriage, the groom goes to bride's place in a procession. The marriage party is given a warm welcome by the bride's father. Both the groom and bride accompanied by relatives are brought to the marriage altar for attending the wedding rituals. One of the important rituals is *sindurdan* (groom putting vermilion on the bride's forehead) and another *nandimukhi sradha* (ancestor worship). Wedding rituals usually take place during night. Both the groom's and bride's parents host community feasts. Consummation of marriage takes place on the fourth night (*chauthi*) after going through certain rites.

Divorce is sanctioned socially. One can seek divorce on the grounds of adultery, barrenness, cruelty, handicaps and maladjustment. Remarriage for widows, widowers and divorcees is allowed.

Death

Both cremation and burial are practiced for disposal of dead body depending upon the situation such as economic condition and cause of death. Dead bodies of those who die of cholera, smallpox, snake bite, small children, pregnant women whose womb is incised after removal of foetus are buried. In cases of natural death they go for cremation.

After death, the corpse wrapped in a new cloth and is carried by the kinsmen to the cremation or burial ground on a cot like bier. The eldest son lights the pyre or fills the pit. After moving seven times around the pyre, he puts fire on the mouth of the dead or pours the first shovel of soils on the pit. All the accompanying relatives return home after taking bath on the way. They wear fresh clothes.

Death pollution lasts for 10 days. The eldest son, who has lit the pyre, offers food to the deceased during these days. On the tenth day the *dasa* ritual is performed by a low grade Brahman priest. The old earthen pots are thrown away. Washer man washes the clothes. All male members cut their nails and hair. The priest performs *homa* and offers food to the deceased. The next day a feast is given to the relatives. Bones collected from the cremation ground are immersed in the holy river for salvation of the departed soul.

MAGICO RELIGIOUS LIFE

Tharua religion is an admixture of Hinduism and Animism. The Tharua pantheon, besides their tribal deities, includes many Hindu Gods and Goddess, like *Mangala*, *Manasa*, *Sitala* etc. Biswakarma is their patron deity. Like all the sections of blacksmiths, the Tharua trace their origin to Biswakarma, the celestial architect and consider him as their patron deity. He is ceremoniously worshipped with great reverence during Biswakarma puja in the month of 'Bhuda' (August-September). During this festival each family cleans the '*sala*' (workshop) and offers *puja* to their black smithy implements. The head of the family offers *puja* and sacrifices a chicken to appease the deity.

For general prosperity of the village, they worship *Raudia*, *Thanamatho* and *Maissasuri*. Dharam deota is worshipped during Magh puja. Their ancestral deities, *badabadia* are worshipped on all important occasions. They believe in the existence of ghosts and benevolent and malevolent spirits like, *churel*, *danawa* etc and appease them with the help of their witch doctor. They believe in the efficacy of magic and witchcraft.

They conduct rituals with the help of the low grade Brahman priest. They also observe Hindu fairs and festivals like *Dola Purnima*, *Sivaratri*, *Rathajatra*, *Durgapuja*, *Chaitra* and *Sravani*, *Sankranti* etc. They visit Puri on pilgrimage to worship Lord Jagannath. Like the neighbouring tribes, the Tharua perform dances and sing songs during Karma festival. In the evening both men and women congregate in a common place, sing and dance to the tune of the *madal* (drum).

SOCIAL CONTROL

They live in heterogeneous villages in small numbers forming a part of multi-ethnic society. Being a marginalized artisan community, they depend on the neighboring castes and tribes for their sustenance with religious and political linkage with other communities. They are served on various occasion by the Brahman Priest, Barber and Washer man. Besides putative relationships also exists with other caste members. Therefore, they do not have any traditional community council of their own at the village level where the inter-caste *panchayat* of the village adjudicate cases pertaining to inter and intra-community rifts. The

traditional village chief decides petty social disputes in consultation of the community elders in the meetings of the council.

But at the regional level for a group of 8 to 10 villages, they have their own traditional community council headed by a chief called *Behera* who is selected by nomination and is assisted by village the component village elders and elites and a messenger (*Dakua*). The *Behera* along with the village elders adjudicates important customary cases relating to family disputes, theft, rape, adultery, molestation, divorce, marriage, intra community rifts and decides about arrangement of community feasts and fairs. In January every year the regional Tharua council is convened to discuss about the problems faced by the community. The community messenger *Dakua* assists the council in convening its meetings and communicating its decisions.

The meetings of the regional council start with the sacrifices of three red fowls over three leaf-cups of rice. It is believed that for trial of offences and breach of customary rules this ritual compels the alleged to confess the truth. The convicted person is liable to pay the fine and bear the entire expenses incurred for the session of the council.

The functioning of the traditional regional council is declining after superimposition of the statutory Gram Panchayat system after independence. But it has so far retained its stronghold in the domain of customary affairs of the community.

CHANGING SCENE

After independence changes have occurred in the way of life of Tharua due to the impact of modernization and various welfare measures carried out by the government. Implementation of income generating and infrastructure development schemes have benefitted them more or less. Their traditional outlook has changed and they have accepted modernity as a way to development. They have started adopting new vocations apart from pot making and black smithy to add to their income. They have also received government assistance to carry out other vocations.

Integrated Tribal Development Agencies established by government in tribal dominated pockets has brought many visible changes in their socio-economic condition. Government has set up many residential schools and hostels with reservation for tribal students which has led to increase in their literacy rate. Apart from that, implementation of Right to Education Act, construction of Anganwadi centers, P.D.S centers, provision of housing under I.A.Y and Mo Kudia etc. have also benefitted them.

The impact of political change, election system, adult franchise and local self-government, various political processes, implementation of PESA has

triggered off and generated the process of change among them. This development intervention has changed their dependence on traditional mode of subsistence derived from pottery and blacksmithy. Though they have not totally abandoned their traditional occupation, they have found profitable alternative in other vocations.

In respect of health and family planning the picture is grim. They frequently go to their traditional healer in case of illness instead of availing modern health care services. The Rate of institutional delivery is low. They take the help of their traditional midwife for child birth. They also are not very interested to adopt modern family planning.

Yet, the Tharua are no longer isolated from the outside world. They are slowly and gradually trying to come into the mainstream of the society. Their traditional social institutions are declining but they have kept their cultural identity intact.

Encyclopedia of Tribes in Odisha

(Five Volumes contain Literature on 62 Tribes including PVTGs)

VOLUME-I

BAGATA | BAIGA | BANJARA | BATHUDI | BHOTTADA | BHUYAN
BHUMIA | BHUMIJ | DESUA BHUMIJ | BHUNJIA | BINJHAL
BINJHIA | BIRHOR | MANKIDI | MANKIRDIA | BONDO

VOLUME-II

CHENCHU | DAL | DHARUA | DIDAYI | GADABA | GANDIA | GHARA
GOND | HO | KOL | KOLHA | HOLVA | JATAPU | JUANG

VOLUME-III

KANDHA GAUDA | KAWAR | KHARIA | KHARWAR | KANDHA
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

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

CRPF Square, Bhubaneswar-751003

Website: scstrti.in, E-mail: scstrti@yahoo.co.in

Telephone: 0674-2563649/251635

