

GOND



An Agrarian Tribe of Odisha



**Scheduled Castes & Scheduled Tribes Research
and Training Institute (SCSTRI)**
CRPF Square, Bhubaneswar

2023

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**Trilochan Sahoo
Badal Dhangadamajhi**

**Scheduled Castes & Scheduled Tribes Research
and Training Institute (SCSTRTI)
CRPF Square, Bhubaneswar**

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FOREWORD

As a pioneering tribal research organization, the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Research and Training Institute (SCSTRTI), Odisha, Bhubaneswar has been undertaking a series of ethnographic studies on different Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes of Odisha. The present research work “Monograph on Gonds”, a Scheduled Tribe of Odisha is the outcome of a research project undertaken by SCSTRTI with financial support from Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Govt. of India. Now being published as a book titled “Gond; An Agrarian Tribe of Odisha is one of the several monographs prepared by the SCSTRTI, Odisha.

A Research Team headed by Sri T. Sahoo, Consultant, and three Investigators namely Sri K. K. Turk, Sri B. Dhangadamajhi, and Sri Kondalu Sarathi have conducted the study on Gond. The field investigation was carried among Gonds in villages of North Odisha (Telkoi Block of Keonjhar district) and South Odisha (Raighar block of Nabarangpur district). The monograph was prepared by T. Sahoo, Consultant and Sri B. Dhangada Majhi on the basis of first hand ethnographic information collected from the fields and relevant data from secondary sources also.

In this book data has been presented in 10 chapters, which describes different aspects of Gonds society such as habitat, demography, education, economy, social organization, life cycle, religion, fairs and festivals, art and crafts, dance and music, political life, intercommunity relationship, development and change. The book provides a comparative picture of culture of mostly Dharua Gond people of Nabarangpur district in South Odisha with that of the culture of the Raj Gonds of Keonjhar district in North Odisha. While majority of the former speak a mixture of Gondi, Holva, Leheri, Hindi and Odia, the latter speak in Odia. As regards of their religious life the Gonds in Nabarangpur area, by and large, have retained their faith in their own tribal deities, animism, totemism,

ancestor worship, but most of the Gonds of Keonjhar, though retain their socio-religious traditions, have been greatly influenced by Hinduism. The interaction between the Gonds of Odisha and the caste Hindus recreates a novel culture, i.e. unification of the little tradition with great tradition. The occupation of both the groups of Gonds is farming. Educational advancement and occupational mobility have enlightened them and thus, the Odisha Gonds' cultural society have been trying for their cultural revitalization and total development of their tribal society.

I take this opportunity to extend my warm thanks to all my colleagues who have taken pains to bring out this monograph. Particularly, I am grateful to Prof. (Dr.) A.B. Ota, Former Advisor-cum-Director, SCSTRTI & Special Secretary, for his support and guidance in this exercise. Sri. S.C. Mohanty, Consultant (R) deserves my special thanks for his painstaking efforts to edit the draft of this book. Hope, this book will be useful for administrators, scholars as well as general public to know about the Gonds of Odisha and their culture. The book would not have been possible without the co-operations and support from various persons and institutions. I am thankful to all of them.

SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar
October 16, 2023

Indramani Tripathy
Director

PREFACE

Different Censuses and Tribal Research Institutes have produced a series of ethnographic studies on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes of this country. These exercises are done for the welfare and development of weaker sections of people and their communities. The ethnographic studies are required to establish the identity of the various communities including their sections.

Discovery and documentation of cultural characteristics, social norms, values and standards, which Gond society has developed over many generations, are goals of this ethnographic study. The Gonds are a Scheduled Tribe (ST) community in Odisha. The study is primarily based on interacting with the people of Gond tribe by observing and viewing their real-life situation with a view to portrait their culture.

This ethnographic study makes an assessment of Gonds' society, culture and their state of change and development. Like other tribes, the socio-cultural boundaries of Gonds are not always rigid. Rather, they are changing. Ethnographic studies are required to keep track of these changes alongwith the tradition in vogue. This ethnographic account of Gonds may be useful for preservation of their culture as well as planning and development interventions.

For this ethnographic work, Sri K.K. Turk, Sri B. Dhangadamajhi and Sri Kondalu Sarathi have taken pains for field investigation during the COVID - 19 pandemic situation. Sri S. C. Mohanty, Consultant (R), Dr. P. Pattnayak, Curator, OSTM, Dr. P.K. Mohanty, OSD and Dr. J. Nayak, OSD, Governor's Secretariate and Dr. S. Mohanty, Asst. Curator, OSTM have extended helps and provided research inputs for this study. We avail this opportunity to express gratitude to all of them.

I take this opportunity to express thanks to all the colleagues, officials, institutions, Gond people and other persons, who cooperated in this research study. Hope, this book will be useful to the accadmicians, administrators, researchers and general raders.

SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar

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Gond People of Sonepur & Timanpr villages
Raigarh, Nabarangpur District

Gond People of Sinduria village,
Telkoi, Keonjhar District

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INTRODUCTION

1.1 Backdrop:

“In Hindu epics, like Ramayan and Mahabharata, three major Indian tribes, Bhil, Kol, and Gond have been widely appreciated” (Singh & Sharma, 2019: P. 1064). There are different kinds of tribal societies. They share certain similar traditions and characteristics, like i. common ancestor, ii. common property (natural resources like land, forests, pastures and water), iii. egalitarianism – absence of concepts like rich and poor, iv. all people do all kinds of works themselves and v. celebration of festivals and rituals to appease gods, goddesses and ancestors. Gond people belong to one such type, who settles over a large area in numerous villages or habitations in different states of India.

The Gondi (Gōndi) or Gond people are a Dravidian people of central India, spread over the states of Madhya Pradesh, eastern Maharashtra (Vidarbha), Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and Western Odisha. Numbering about eleven million people, they are the second largest tribe in Central India. They are a designated Scheduled Tribe in Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Telangana, Odisha and West Bengal. The Gonds are also known as the Raj Gond. The term was widely used in 1950s, but has now become almost obsolete, probably because of the political eclipse of the Gond Rajas (<https://gondsamajma-hasabham.wordpress.com/blog/>).

As per the annual report of the year 2002-2003 of Govt. of India's Ministry of Tribal Affairs, there are 62 tribes in Odisha, out of which Gond is one. The Gonds are also called Gond, Gondo. Here the discussions below and in the successive different chapters

provide a sketch of their culture, lifestyle, beliefs, decision making and continuity and social changes of the Gonds living in Odisha.

1.2 Literature Review:

“A literature review surveys books, scholarly articles, and any other sources relevant to a particular issue, area of research, or theory, and by so doing, provide a description, summary, and critical evaluation of these works in relation to the research problem being investigated” ([https://libguides.usc.edu > writingguide > literaturereview](https://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/literaturereview)).

Here the literature review is designed to provide an overview of sources we have explored while researching on Gond tribe and to show to the readers how our research corroborates within the larger field of study.

A book titled “Papers on the Aboriginal Tribes of the Central Provinces” was published in 1866. The book was edited by Richard Temple and the paper on Gond was written by Stephen Hislop. The paper reported the origin and myth of Gond people in Gondi language with English translation. Then scholarly discussions of Captain C.I.R. Glass Ford, Major Lusi Smith, Sir Richard Temples, Sir C. Grant and Kolbell Word enlightened Gond culture.

Later Captain Foresyth presented a detailed discussion on spread of Gonds in his work “The Highland of Central India”. Thurston’s work, “Caste and Tribes of Southern India” (1909) and R.V. Russell’s work “Tribes and Caste of Central Provinces of India” (1916) presented concise descriptions about the Gond. Two books, “Raj Gond Maharajas of Satpura Hills” (1913) and “Territorial Systems of Rajput Kingdoms of Medieval Chhatisgrh” (1919) by C.U. Wills contained some relevant information on Gond community. In the year 1938 W. Grison’s and V Wilfrid’s book “Maria Gonds of Bastar” was a valued contribution to the Gond literature.

Further, great contributions to the Gond literature, especially on their life and living including folk literature came from the studies of the famous Anthropologist Verrier Elwin through a series of works like “Leaves from the Jungle” (1936), “Phulmat of Hills – A Tale of the Gonds” (1937), “The Baiga and the Agria”

(1942), "Maria Murder and Suicide" (1943), "Folk Songs of the Maika Hills" (1944), "Folk Tales of Mahakoshala" (1944), "The Pradhans of the Upper Narmada Valley" (1945) and "Muria and their Ghotul" (1947).

The appreciable work of R. V. Russell and Hiralal, "The Castes and Tribes of the Central Provinces of India", Vol. III, London, 1916 presented a precise, but impressive note on the Gond tribe.

Census of India, 1961 through their works on Ethnographic Notes on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes published A Monograph on Gonds. It was a compilation of available information on Gond Tribe of Andhra Pradesh through village survey and alongwith bibliography. The Monograph discussed Gonds' identity, origin, language, settlements, dress and ornament, food and drinks, life cycle, economic life, religion, festivals, inter-community relationship, etc.

Nayak, T.B. (1965) in his article "Gond Leadership" in Advasi, Vol.7, No. 1, TRB. Orissa, Bhubaneswar had discussed the heroics of the Gond Kings and their leadership through Gondwani tales and songs where the kings were always referred to as Kshatriyas, the relations of the Gonds with other communities and the Gonds' panchayats or committees for the settlement of tribal disputes.

The Book of Stephen Fuchs, "The Gond and Bhumia of Eastern Mandla", Bombay, 1968 threw lights on both the communities highlighting their inter-community relationship.

"The Gonds of Andhra Pradesh, Tradition and Change in an Indian Tribe" (1979) by Christop von Furer-Haimendorf presented a comprehensive account of social and cultural life in Adilabad district in the then Hyderabad State, now part of Andhra Pradesh. He drew an intimate picture on the life of village community. The book contains graphic descriptions of seasonal festivals, weddings, funerals and the rites in honour of the clan deities, pharties and clan system, tribal justice and social values with special emphasis on the economic and social changes among the Gonds.

Michael Yorke, School of Oriental and African Studies in his article, "Kinship, marriage and ideology among the Raj Gonds: a tribal system in the context of south India" in Contributions to Indian Sociology, (NS) Vol. 13, No. 1 (1979) discussed about the status of unmarried boys and girls, clans and descent, phratry, relationship among the family members.

Besides, the works of other scholars such as D. N. Mjumdar, M.P. Buradkar, and C. Haimeendorf and Urmila Pingel depict the then living conditions and situations of the Gond and their cultural life. Of these, Haimendorf and Pingel's book, "Gonds and Their Neighbours" (1979) was a prized publication on Gond society and culture.

D. Hajra (1983) in his article "The Gonds" in Adibasi, THRTI, Vol-XXIII, No-2, 1983 (Pp. -1 to 11) provides information on geographical location and spread of the Gonds, their population and population density, transformation and problems of identification, historical background, educational institutions and literacy position, occupational pattern, land use and ownership pattern, family and kinship pattern, inheritance and other related institutions, political institutions, major economic potentials of the tribal region, major social problems, potentials and problems of development.

The article of D. R. Pratap (1983), "The Gonds of Southern Region", in Adibasi, THRTI, Vol-XXIII, No-1, 1983, deals with the Gonds of South India. This region which includes the States of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, parts of Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Odisha is covered by Gond population,. It provides observations on the life style of the Gonds, their demography, physical type and anthropometry, history, language, economy, social structure, religion and development trends.

Kalyan Kumar Chakravarty (1997) in his article "Tribal Identity: Extinction or Adaptation of The Gonds in Tribal Identity: Extinction or Adaptation", Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya, Bhopal, India discussed social changes among the Gonds. This article justifies the relevance of Gonds highlighting the numerical strength of the Gonds in the country, impacts of

tribal polity, local self-government in pre and post independent era and tribal policy, agro forestry programmes, industrial evolution, crime and punishment and concludes with cultural order and ideological response.

Shamrao Koreti's article, "Socio-Cultural History of the Gond Tribes of Middle India" in *International Journal of Social Science and Humanity*, Vol. 6, No. 4, April 2016 sketched the socio-cultural history of the Gonds of middle India (Gondwana) since 17th to mid-20th century. It reports the divisions of the Gond community. The Raj Gonds, the ruling class among the Gonds, have developed their social, religious, and cultural history. Internal dynastic struggles resulted in Maratha intervention, which defiles the cultural identity of the Gonds. With the advent of new rulers and changed circumstances the Gond rulers could not retain their kingdoms, but their socio-cultural history remains unchanged.

In the state of Odisha the contribution of scholars and writers to the Gond literature in English is slim. Likewise Gond literature in Odia language is rarely found in different magazines, mostly limited to Adivasi Published by SCSTRTI and Banaja published by ATLC, Bhubaneswar.

B. Choudhury's article on Gond in *Adibasi*, No 3, 1963-64 (Special Issue), TRB, Orissa, Bhubaneswar (Pp. 157-160) has given a short note on the Gond Tribe of Odisha. He has precisely portrayed Gond history, location, population, social divisions, marriage and religion with a comparison between the two sections, the Hinduised Gond and the Primitive Gond.

The book on Gond tribe in Odia language titled as "Gond Sanskruti O Loka Sahitya" (Gond Culture and Folk Literature) was Published in 1998 by Adivasi Bhasa O Sanskruti Academy, Welfare Dept., Bhubaneswar. This book, being first of its kind, contained detail data on Gond history, family and social life, death ritual, religion, fairs and festivals, oral literature along with a concluding chapter on tradition and change.

The article of S.C. Mishra, 2007 (Gond Janajatinka Par-baparbani: Eka Drustipata" (in Odia Language) published in Ba-

naja, ATDC, ST & SC Development Department, Govt. of Odisha, Bhubaneswar (pp. 116 -130) was based on his investigation among the Gonds in Sonpur village of Raighra area in Nabarangpur district of Odisha. In this article he has discussed the different festivals of Gonds as they observe round the year and provided a calendar of Gond's fairs and festivals. Besides, in his another article, "(Gond Janajatinka Jivan Saili O Sanskrutire Mulyabodha" (in Odia Language) in Banaja, ATDC, ST & SC Development Department, Govt. of Odisha, Bhubaneswar (pp. 84-91), that was based on his investigation among the Gonds in Raighra area of Nabarangpur, Odisha he has discussed the cultural values of the Gonds as they were reflected in every aspect of Gond's life and living; family, clan, society, village council, economy and religion and fairs and festivals.

Shiba Mishra, (ed.) in the magazine 'Mandei' (2007) published by District Council of Culture, Nabarangpur published on the eve of District's Famous and popular Festival, Mandei, has contributed two important articles in Odia language (1. "Gond Narira Dinacharjya" by Ms. Hamalata Majhi and 2. "Gondamankara Jubagraha: Ghotulra Atita and Bartaman" by S.C. Mishra) and another in English (3. "Pattern of Worship of Village Deities in Gond Community" by Dr. H.P. Tulo). These articles discuss significant aspects of Gonds culture like position of women in Gond society, Ghotul, Dormitory House, the Gonds' center of learning for youths and the rituals of the Gond village deities that help guards the safety and security of the village and people.

The work of Panda & Sahoo (2012), "Gond, A Scheduled Tribe of Odisha", is also a first of its kind, a photo hand book on Gond, which highlights their cultural ecology, habitat and housing, food and drinks, ornaments and adornments, institutionalizing self and other kin, social transactions, decision making process and social control, fairs and festivals, culture change and persistence, development initiatives and conservation of culture as well.

1.3 Research Method:

Research methodology follows use of specific procedures or techniques with a view to identify, select, process, and analyze

information about the study. This research methodology section speaks of use of tools and techniques for data collection and interpretation and report generation, which intends the reader to make critical evaluation of the study's overall validity and reliability.

Ethnographic data on Gonds of Odisha were collected both from primary and secondary sources. The primary source was a 15-Day field work conducted among the Gonds in three villages of two different regions of Odisha namely Nabarangpur district in south Odisha and another 15-Day field work in Keonjhar district in north Odisha. For the research study cluster sampling method was used to identify districts and villages, where relevant information on the population, history and culture of the Gond tribe can be obtained. The study covered two villages namely Sonpur and Timanpur of Raighar Block in Nabarangpur district and another village namely Sunduria in Karamangi GP of Telkoi block in Keonjhar district. Besides, three Gond villages (Kusumpur, Kurabeda and Khutgaon) from Nabarangpur district and three Gond villages (Aluni, Karamngi, Padang of Karamngi GP in Telkoi block of Keonjhar district) were taken for the random observation purposes. Stratified random sampling was used to analyze the social and economic aspects of the sample Gond households.

For the smooth conduct of the research, primary data were collected by administration of a simple structured household schedule containing the questionnaires relating to social and economic conditions of Gond tribe. Focus Group Discussions (FGD) were held among community members in each village to understand the history, origin and identity of Gond tribe. Personal interviews were made to collect data on the life cycle, distinctive socio-cultural features and religious life. Non-participant observation was done to observe the settlement pattern and religious life of Gond tribe. Key Informant Interviews (KII) were taken with the stakeholders including elected members of Gram Panchayat, ANMs, Community Resource Persons, etc. under GPLF (Gram Panchayat Level Federation), SHG Presidents and Secretaries, Welfare Extension Officers at block level. Secondary source of data were gathered from different offices including Panchyat Offices,

Aanganwadi Offices, Welfare Offices, reports and publications. For the reliability and validity of the data, Literature Review has been done from different sources including website.

One Consultant was engaged to prepare Framework for Ethnographic Study, make review of the literature and guide the field work, data analysis and drafting the report. Besides, three Research Assistants were engaged for data collection from the field and data analysis. The Framework for Ethnographic Study was used to generate questions for data collection on different socio-cultural aspects of Gonds. The duration of the entire Research Project was for 6 months (from May to October, 2021).

1.4 Name, identity, origin and history:

The root of the name Gond is unknown. The Gonds call themselves Koitur. Others call them by the name Gond. The tribe is known by the names like Koitur and Gond. These names are generic terms used to address the same community. Now the Raj Gond is considered to be a section of Gonds. On the basis of the social status there are some distinction between the Raj Gonds and common Gonds. Still marriages between Gonds and Raj Gonds are being held. In the past some families of Gonds enjoyed royal status as they ruled over the region known as Gondwana. These royal families prefixed the word 'Raj' to their Gond name and claimed superior social status over the other Gonds. After losing political power, social status the Raj Gonds became equal with common Gonds. A similar view is expressed by C.B. Lucie Smith. Captain Forsyth opines that Raj Gonds were the result of alliance between Rajputs and Gonds. W. V. Grigsoll believes that Raj Gond is the new name adopted by Gonds in the process of Hinduisation (Haimendorf, 1948, Vol. III, Book I-p. 5).

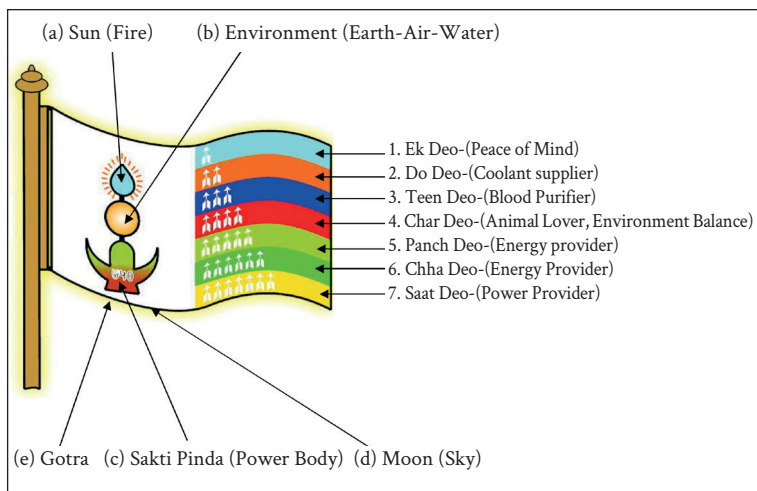
The term Gond has been used by outsiders to designate all the people belonging to the Koitur group. The Gonds use Majhi, Naik, Tandi and Dharua as their surnames. The word Gond could also have been originated from the word Khond, another central Dravidian speaking tribe which has some linguistic and cultural

affinities with the Gond (Russell, 1916). Grierson stated that the Telugu people called the Konds, Gonds. The Raj Gonds are famous for their rich mythology, as flourishing rulers of the medieval period of Indian History. At present, they are not in a position to recollect their history and origin.

Constitutionally the Gonds, Gondi have been declared as a Scheduled Tribe of Odisha. The name, Gond is derived from the Telugu word Konda meaning the - hills. During the British Rule, the Gonds challenged the British Administrators in several wars occasionally. Thus history recognized the Gond tribe as a warrior community. But now it is an agrarian community.

The flag produced below is accepted by the Gonds community of India. This flag is made by Gond Mahasabha to identify the community at large, and thus universally accepted by all the Gond population. The flag is used by Gond tribes in their meetings, ceremonies, festivals and also used as an identity of Gond house, colony, and villages.

The epitome of the Flag of Gond Tribe, which also signify their seven Gotras, explains the following.



Source: (<http://adivasi resurgence.com/2018/10/11/whats-in-a-surname-reflections-on-adivasi-history-of-northern-chhattisgarh/>)

The following constituents are there in the flag which indicates some important features.

- (a) Sun (Fire) – The sun gives energy (urja) to the Mankind.
- (b) Environment (Earth-Air-Water) – There is importance of water, air and soil in our daily life. Gonds tribe believes that without them we can't live.
- (c) Sakti Pinda (Power Body) – According to Gond beliefs the worship of Sakti Pinda will provide power.
- (d) Moon (Sky) – Moon sky is another element of life which is attached to the Power Body. It indicates about the universe.
- (e) Gotra – According to the Gond system there are 750 lineages in Gond community and these Gotras are divided into "Saat-Deo/Seven-Deos".

Recently the Gond Tribes' Association, Nabarangpur has adopted a Community Flag with 7 colours for their identity. It is a rectangular cloth of length 36" and width 27" half of which contains white cloth with emblem of Salo and Gangor spirit and the rest half with cloth of 7 colours of equal size, each having special meaning. White stands for devotional spirit, sky blue for purity, deep blue for friendship, violet for valor, red for peace, yellow for fraternity and green for progress.

The Gonds are a Dravidian speaking tribe - having a language of their own called Gondi which has been classified under the central Dravidian group of languages. Linguistically Gondi is said to be related more to Tamil and Kanarese than to other important languages of south India. But it is evident that Gondi as spoken in southern part of the Gond territory, particularly in south Bastar in Madhya Pradesh, Chandrapur in Maharashtra and south Koraput in Odisha with its extension in Andhra has been much molded due to the influence of local Telugu. The Gonds, wherever they have retained their own language and maintained their cultural identity, use the term 'Koitor' or 'Kai' as self-designating term. On the other hand, the term 'Gond' has been in use by the outsiders to designate all the Koitor group of people. The term 'Gond' might have its origin from the name 'Khond', another central Dravidian

speaking tribe of Odisha which is having some linguistic and cultural affinities with the Gond. The different sections of the Koitor (i.e., Gond) of Bastar are though designated by various terms like Maria, Muria, Dorla, etc. the name Gond still remains unfamiliar to them with the exception of the Hinduised Gond immigrants from Chhattisgarh in north Bastar.

Since a large variety of groups has been classified as the Gonds of various categories, it is rather a difficult problem to establish the true Koitor identity to a group included under a Gond category, and at the same time to isolate a non-Koitor group (if so included) from the fold of the Gond. For obvious reasons, it is rather difficult for so large a group like the Gond spreading over so vast an area to have a homogeneous population by retaining all through a uniform racial, cultural and linguistic affinity sharing it in common among all of them. Under such circumstances while dealing with the problem of identifying a group under the Gond fold, some important issues emerge. We know the great Gond group in its entirety (including various sub-groups) is but composed of a large number of endogamous groups under various labels and quite a few of them are undoubtedly of non-Gond origin (Hajra, 1961: Pp. 1-2).

It is a fact that the Gonds are the great warriors. Observation at villages with Gond population in Keonjhar reveals the following historical identity. The Gonds of Keonjhar in Odisha state claim that the king of Keonjhar brought them and engaged them for the internal security of the princely state for their bravery. One of the important customs of Gond is that during festivals and ceremonies men wear a pancha and tie a turban on the head. This dress pattern distinguishes a Gond from other people.

The Gonds are, historically speaking, the most significant tribe of India. From the beginning of the mediaeval period of Indian history up to the rise of the Maharattas the entire belt of Central India was ruled by Gond Kings and Chiefs. The remnants of a martial and chivalrous tradition can be traced among the Hinduised Gonds even at the present time.

Further, the article of Hajra (1983: P. 4) provides the historical accounts of the Gond Tribe as follows. "Little is known about the origins of the Gonds. They belong to the strata of aboriginal peoples of India who pre-date the Aryan and Dravidian speakers of the country. ... As their language is Dravidian, the Gonds may have passed through lands to the south where the Dravidian languages are found. DNA evidence suggests they might have branched off from early Proto-Australoids who apparently traveled from Africa to Australia along the coastal margins of India. But Gond migrations before they reached their present homeland remain shrouded in the mists of time. Scholars believe that the Gonds settled in Gondwana between the 9th and 13th centuries AD. The core region of Gondwana can be considered to be the eastern part of the Vidarbha region of Maharashtra, the parts of Madhya Pradesh immediately to the north of it, and parts of the west of Chhattisgarh. From the 14th century onwards, Gond history comes into focus with Muslim writers describing the rise of Gond states in the region. Between the 16th and mid-18th centuries, when Gonds were at the height of their power, Gond dynasties ruled in four kingdoms (Garha-Mandla, Deogarh, Chanda, and Kherla) in Central India.

Following the 1740s, the rising tide of Maratha power swept over the Gonds. The Gond rajas were overthrown and their territory annexed, except for some of the more remote hill areas that held out against the invaders. Local Gond zamindaris or estates survived in the region until relatively recent times."

Koreti (2016) highlighted the socio-cultural History of the Gonds of Middle India (Gondwana) from 13th to mid-18th century. The four major Gond kingdoms which ruled over Middle India were i.e. Garha Mandla (1300 AD. to 1789 AD), Deogarh (1590 AD to 1796 AD), Chanda (1200 AD to 1751 AD) and Kherla (1500 AD to 1600 AD). The Garha-Mandla Kingdom in the north extended control over present Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh. The Deogarh-Nagpur kingdom dominated over Nagpur plains. While Chanda-Sirpur covered parts of old Chandrapur & Bhandara District. Kherla lies in Satpura terrains. They maintained a relatively independent existence until the middle of the eighteenth century.

The Gonds were the major tribes in Middle India. Gonds were subdivided into Raj-Gonds, Khatola-Gonds, Madia Gonds, Dhur Gonds, Dadve Gonds, Mokasi Gonds, Gaita Gonds, and Koyas etc. The ruling class among the Gonds was known as Raj Gonds. The Raj Gonds were the direct descendants of those dynasties which ruled over Middle India. The above mentioned kingdoms developed their social, religious, and cultural history during those long years. Each of these Gond Raja kingdoms separately passed through three successive stages: the first one of comparatively peaceful expansion and consolidation; the second of contact with Mughal emperors or their subordinates and nominal allegiance to the Mughal Empire; and the third of internal dynastic struggles which eventually resulted in Maratha intervention. This intervention defiles the ethnic and cultural identity of the Gonds in middle India. With the advent of new rulers and changed circumstances the Gond rulers could not hold the kingdoms, but socio-cultural history remains unchanged till the date.

On account of the Dravidian characteristics present in Gondi, the traditional language of the tribe, it has been asserted by many about the probable migration of the Gonds towards the north from the Godavari valley. Of late there are various myths, folk-songs and traditions found current particularly in Bastar and elsewhere which are indicative of such inference. Russell (2016) states, 'there is no reason however to doubt that the Gonds came from the south through Chanda and Bastar'. The political scene of Central India beginning from sometime during the fifteenth century was, eventful and significant in matters of rise and advent of Gond's supremacy; they continued to enjoy the status of a ruling race up to the middle of eighteenth century. A number of Gond kingdoms came into existence during this period, the important ones being Garha-Mandla (Garha remained near Jabalpur), Kherla (in Betul), Deogarh (in Chhindwara) and Chanda (now Chandrapur). All of them are now in Madhya Pradesh except the last one which is in Maharashtra. Towards the middle of eighteenth century all the Gond kingdoms collapsed one after another on account of successive onslaughts of Muslim and Maratha armies

and lack of unity and want of proper leadership among the rulers. During the time when the Gond rose to political power and Gond Kingdoms flourished, some important changes were also brought in the social field as marked in Gond society. Consequently an aristocratic class among the Gond emerged out. Besides the rulers, there were Gond feudal chiefs and zamindars and an appellation 'Raj' was added to this class of members as a mark of differentiation from the ordinary class of Gonds. As a result, these people refrained from marrying freely with the ordinary class of Gond, restricted only to hypergamy type of marriages in some cases. But in later period such term as Raj-Gond was being applied in a symbolic way on various counts, mainly as an epithet used for an acculturated group under Hindu influence (Hajra, 1983: P. 4).

There are historical legends among the Hinduised Gonds of Odisha to indicate that their ancestors came to the State as martial people and were settled on land as feudal chiefs. (B. Choudhury: 1964. P. 157). The English translation of the excerpt of "Gond Itihas" from the book "Gond Sanskruti O Loka Sahitya" (in Odia language) edited by Mishra (ATLC, 1998 p. 1-10) gives the following account of history of Gond tribes in Odisha state. These tribes are found mostly in Raigarh, Jharigaon, Umarkot Grampanchayat in Nawarangpur district of Odisha. During 1400 A.D the ancient Gond tribes were living in the plateau of Godavari river near Satpura hill range from where they have shifted to different areas of Odisha due to war between Mughal and Maratha. Because they inhabited scatteredly today they are recognized as special tribe, out of which many of them who have been developed from primitive stage (Madia Gond) to developed stage. In about 2500 square miles in North-Western part of Nawarangpur the Raj Gond, Dhurua Gond, Madia Gond live. They have a specific lifestyle and culture. Field study reveals that their life style and culture found to be conservative for years together.

Gonds are a Dravidian group. It is thus assumed that they are spread from south towards central and eastern parts of India. During 9th century the Gonds had settled in Gondwana state. Gonds are sons of the soil. In Nuapada areas two types of Gonds

are found. They are Odia Gond and Laria Gond. Religiously, the Gonds are conservative. Religious conversion has not been reported from among them. They are a ruling community. Among the tribals, their position is priest and they are known as a cultivating group. They are believed to be born from Lord Shiva's chick, and thus claim to be his son. They are simple, laborious and work loving. Since 14th or 15th century they emerged as dominant ruling dynasty. During the period from 14th to 18th century they have established 4 big estates namely Gadhamandala (now Jabalpur region), Kherlagada (now Betul region), Deogada and Chanda in Central India.

Initially, they supported local self-government. Later in course of time they became kings' supporters. Being influenced by the power of kings they established marital relationship with warrior kings and earned reputation of Raj Gond. Historical evidence revealed that in 10 Garhs out of 18 Garhs from Adilabad in Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, and in western Odisha was ruled by the Gond Kings. As the time passed, keeping their occupation in view, they were known as Raj Gond (Administrators), Madia, Muria, Dharua, Jagata, Neti, Paroti (cultivators or forest dependents).

Gonds are numerically preponderant in south and western Odisha. They are a majority group in Kalahandi and Nuapada districts. In western Odisha states the land lords were administered by Gond Kings (Raj Gond). Gond people of Southern and Northern Odisha mainly (Keonjhar and Mayurbhanj) depended on agriculture and forest resources. Thus while in western Odisha the Gonds were rulers in south and north Odisha, they were cultivators and forest dwellers.

During 14th Century the Gond Rulers had established a powerful oligarchic form of government in western Odisha. As for example, Patanagarh was established taking 8 such Garahs. During British Rule and King's Reign the influential Gonds were the real land lords and village chief administrators. Later the Gond dominated in Madhya Pradesh and Odisha states. The warrior Gonds were recognized by the regional royal families. Many tribals were

made principal rulers in Atharagadas of Sambalpur and Ratanpur Estate. Out of 18 Garahs of Western Odisha, Gond Kings ruled in 8 Garahs. As per the historical evidence Chohanbir Ramai Deo, the King of Patanagarh, had killed Damai Gond the Gond ruler and invaded his estate. Further, some Kshatriyas of Garajata (area ruled by Kings) and Mogalbandi (area ruled by Mogals) states in Odisha defeated the local ruling tribal Chiefs and established their own kingdoms.

Tungabansha dynasty ruled Bonai state in western Odisha. Tungabansha King "Binaya Tunga" in his Sanand called himself as 18th Gond Monarch. (Saha, A.P. 1976, *Life in Medieval Orissa*, 600-1200 AD. Chaukhamba Orientalia, Varanasi). Sulki Raja "Kalastamha Deb" in his Sananda had given self-esteem as Gandamadhinath (Leader of all Gonds). From these above mentioned two Sanadas (Royal Revenue Records) it is revealed that Gond people since long had occupied a significant position in the history of Western Odisha (ATLC: 1998, p. 6).

Patna state was formed with 8 Garahs including 3 Garahs like Komanagarh, Gudagarh and Kholagarh. These 3 Garahs are now known as Khadial state, which is now called Nuapada district. Nuapada district was a Sub-Division in the erstwhile Kalahandi District. It became a separate district of Odisha with effect from 1st April, 1992. Kalahandi state was ruled by Kondh Kings. Nagabanshi Kshatriyas defeated the Kondh Kings and invaded their state. Khadial state was ruled by Chowhan kings. Then many Gountia (village chiefs) of Kalahandi state were positioned by Gonds and Bhataras. The village secular and religious chiefs of about 50% villages in Khadial state were Gonds. Even now-a-days, both Kalahandi and Nuapada districts have representation of Gonds as Gontia or village chiefs (ATLC: 1998, p. 6).

1.5 Physical Characteristics:

The Gonds are usually classified as Proto-Australoids by race. Though the Gond groups exhibit some homogeneity in language and culture, there is a considerable diversity of physical

appearance. An Anthro-somatoscopic study conducted by the Tribal Cultural Research and Training Institute, Hyderabad (1980) reveals that the Raj Gonds are predominantly dark brown to brown complexioned; some of them are lighter complexioned. The hair is low or deep waved, black to dark brown in colour. They are of medium height, with a mean height of 161.3 cms. The heads are dolichocephalic with a mean value of 74.45 cm. The nose is broad to very broad with a mean value of 85.03. They have a receding forehead with a prominent chin. Lips are of medium thickness and slightly averted. In dermatoglyphics studies, they have a lower pattern intensity index (13.20). They have the highest rate of colour blindness (6%).

Ethnographic accounts on Gonds (Census, 1961:P.7)) reveals the following characteristics of Gonds. "During the field study, 24 adults were studied (14 males & 10 females). ...The colour of the skin ranges between chocolate to brown and brown to yellow brown. The nature of hair is mostly low waves. The most striking feature of the Gonds is that the root of the nose is deep; the nose is flat followed by wide nostrils and the cheek bones are prominent. In all the cases the eye slit is straight and epicanthic fold is absent. Prognathism is absent; chin and lips are medium. The average height of 14 males is 5' 5 1/2" and that of females is 4' 10". ... The following extract shows the observation of Haimendorf. (The Raj Gonds of Adilabad, 1948, Vol. III, Book I, - P. 40).

Professor Haimendorf distinguished three physical types among the Raj Gonds of Adilabad of which the most prevalent type is characterised by a broad and rather flat face, high cheek bones, a small short nose which widens rapidly from a narrow depressed ridge on weak and not very full mouth and a small pointed chin. Medium stature and a rather slender build are frequently associated with this type. The nose is broad to very broad with a mean value of 85.03. It is short in length, with shallow mansion depression, and straight in profile. The forehead is receding while the chin is prominent, medium or square in shape. The lips are of medium thickness and slightly reverted.

The Gonds of Keonjhar belong to Dravidian racial group.

They are physically characterized by strong and developed body of variable heights. Average height is approximately, 5' 5" for male and 5' 3" for female. Their hands and legs are well developed muscular systems. Their head is the short and broad, ears, small. Rounded and big eye, eye brow is prominent. Generally there is presence of epicanthic fold, curved, small and coarse hair. The males have flat face and predominant zygomatic bones; nose is short, broad, thick lips and depressed at its middle. Jaw is prominent. Skin colour ranges from chocolate to brown and brown to dark. Some of the men and women have fair complexion. Their heads are medium sized having brown ting. The forehead is flat and short. Flat feet have thick fingers. Hand's fingers are thick. The nature of hair of men is short, straight and women have long, straight and wavy hair.

1.6 Dress & ornaments, hairstyle & tattooing:

Dress and ornaments help to identify, locate, beautify as well as represent any community or its individuals. With this functional definition, the pattern of dress and ornaments of the Gonds may be discussed.

In the past, Gond women used to wear traditional cotton saree (Tekra Patta). The cotton saree was made and sold by Ganda weavers, a SC community. The Gond women wrapped a length of saree around the waist, with one end thrown over the right shoulder with the knot on the left side of the shoulder and another end up to the knees of the legs. They did not wear inner garments like blouses and sayas. They did not wear footwear. During festivities they wore new cloths even young children also. Married women wore the handmade comb (which is made from the mahula branches) on their heads. They consider black color to be unpleasant and inauspicious. Most of the time they wear white, red, green, blue sarees.

Gond men wore white traditional dhoti or loin cloth. The dhoti is wrapped around the waist and then drawn between the legs and tucked into the waist. They put on a turban on the head and towel on the shoulders. The priest wears a white or yellow dhoti. Now-a-days, due to the influence of modernity Gond men

and women using sarees, shirts, slippers, shoes, jeans, inner wear etc. They purchase the modern clothes and dress from the nearby weekly hats or urban markets. Now in study villages, traditional dress is used by the elderly men and women but the young generation prefers modern dresses. The Gonds living in the midst of the Hindus in Northern Odisha put on dress and ornaments like that of the lower castes of the Hindu society. Males get their hair cut in regular intervals, once in a month or two months. Now shaving is also in practice. Women comb their hair and knot it in the back.

Going back to the traditional costume of the Gond community, it was very easy to notice the attires of boys and girls revealing equal status. Both grow their hair long, fix combs on buns and use jewelries, and adorned themselves with decorations. The boys often outshine the girls in decoration. They wear beads, tusks of boars, feathers and anything colourful that is available. They decorate them with dressed hair, in which they fix combs, mirrors, balloons, and even paper fans.

In the past, Gond women in Keonjhar area used to wear traditional coarse cotton sarees (Khadada Luga) which was made by a weaving community called Patra Tanti or Pana Tanti belonging to the nearby villages. The Pana Tantis used to sell coarse cotton saree visiting village to village. The Gond women were not using inner garments, like sayas and blouses. In the past they used to keep long hair making a Khosa (knot) and were used to take bath using telo kadua (kind of soil) on head and khara powder (ashes) were being used for the washing of cloths. Gond males used to wear handmade cotton dhoti around the waist and another dhoti or red towel (Gamuchha or Korla) on the shoulder. The Gond men in study village say that they used to grow long hair as their women folks did.

But at present, women folks are wearing colorful sarees, sayas, blouses and young girls are fond of wearing dresses like frocks, salwar suits, chudidhar, frocks, patialas, tops, leggings and also sarees etc. Widows wear white sarees until the completion of annual shraddha of the deceased husband as per the social rule. After completion of annual shraddha of her deceased husband, the widow is allowed to wear any coloured saree. The men folk are

wearing colourful pant, shirt, dhoti, lungi, Punjabi, slippers, shoes, jeans, T-shirts, innerwears, etc. buying these from the nearest weekly market or Telkoi market or Keonjhar town. In ordinary time they wear simply a dhoti and towel on shoulders. The young boys use pants and shirts and use slippers or leather shoes of modern designs. Occasionally men wear ornaments like chains, rings, etc.

Gond women of Keonjhar area are very much fond of adorning themselves with ornaments to look beautiful. The Gond women dress themselves beautifully by adorning themselves with various artistic ornaments made up brass, aluminum. The women also wear bangles made of glass. They also use nose ring, ear rings made of metal. But in occasions like marriage or any festivals they wear ornaments made out of silver and gold. They usually purchase important ornaments from the weekly market or from the Keonjhar market.

Most traditional ornaments, especially those made of bronze, silver and gold are now rarely used in our study villages. The women folks wear different ornaments in different part of the body from the head to feet. The following statement furnishes different types of ornaments used in different parts of the body by the Gonds women in the past and at present.

Ornaments used by Gonds in Keonjhar Area

<u>Ornaments for head and hair</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Guji Kathi (hair clip) made of Silver ● Jhumpa (wear in Khosa) made of Silver 	<u>Ornaments for ears</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Kano Jhumuka ● Kana Phula
<u>Ornaments for Nose</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Notho (Silver) ● Dandi (Gold) ● Nako Guna 	<u>Ornaments for Neck</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mangal Sutra (Local Market) ● Gini Mali (Gold)
<u>Ornaments for Arms</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bahuti (silver) ● Kankana 	<u>Ornaments for Hands, fingers & wrists</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bola(Iron/ Bronge/Cupper) ● Chudi (Glass, Fibre) ● Ring (Silver/Gold)
<u>Ornaments for waist</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Anta Suta (Silver) 	<u>Ornaments for fingers and toes</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Jhutia (Silver)

Source: SCSTRTI Field Study, 2021

In our study villages, elders say that male folks used to wear Nali in ear in past days which looks like ring and made up of Gold or silver. But at present, wearing of Nali is not seen.

In the past, the Gonds of Nabarangpur area were using different types of ornaments to decorate themselves. In these days, they are acquainted with modernity for which their traditional ornaments are declining. The females wear ornaments made from gold, silver and brass. During festivities they wear a brass neck band locally known as Paduka. They even wear the coin necklace made of 10, 25, 50 paise coins. They wear bangles namely 'Pahula' in their hands made of brass and 'Katria' and 'Bandria' made of silver. The Pahula is hollow whereas the other two bangles are solid. Their foot ring is called 'Jhuntia'. At the time of marriage they wear ear ring named madhujhara, and plain rings on the helix and lobes of the ear. They wear nose-ring called 'Guna' and 'Jharadandi' in the middle lower part of nasal septum and 'Mullu' in foot. But now-a-days, they are wearing anklets. Traditionally, they used to wear 'Holi' a silver bracelet, silver chain and pendant in necklace.

Being influenced by the neighboring Hindus, now-a-days, married women are wearing a chain namely kendi mala and mangalasutra. Due to modernity boys are also wearing ear-rings. The Gonds are modern in dress and ornaments. A few decades back Gonds were using cotton and terricotton. At the time of marriage during the mangan they are wearing yellow Saris. In marriage mandap they are wearing red colored and varieties of sarees. The traditional wears like dhoti, lungi (a wrapper) and towel have been replaced by modern dresses. Now, the youths prefer to wear jeans, T-shirts and trousers. (Panda & Sahoo, 2012: p.14).

The Gond men also put on turbans, and bracelets on their hands and beads of imitation coral on their necks. Women put on metal or glass bangles on the wrist, imitation corals and glass beads on a lavish scale round their neck. Combs are stuck on the hair. On the festive occasions, when they dance they adorn their heads with paper-made flowers, peacock's plumage and coloured feathers of birds (Choudhury, 1964).

In study village it is observed that though the older generation continues to wear these ornaments, their popularity has declined. Traditional jewelers are no longer affordable. Most traditional ornaments, especially those made of bronze, silver and gold are now rarely in use by Gonds in study villages. Ornaments are made for every part of the body, including for the toes and hair. These ornaments are classified according to the part of the body for which they are intended.

The Ornaments used by females for fingers, legs and toes are Muda, Chapahin, Goti paenri and Bichia and for waist, Karden (silver). In their forearms and wrists they use Pohanchi (Silver), Banria, Pata and Aiti. In their necks they wear Suta (silver) and Rupiyamala in nose, Puli (gold). The ornaments used in ears are Bari (top of the ear) and Kulaan (lower part of the ear). Hair is dressed with Chapka (hair clip) and Jijra Kosa (hair knot). Gond males also use ornaments such as Bari (upper part of the ear), Muda (gold) lower part of the ear, Kantimala (for neck), Bahanta (for arms) and Chudan (for wrist).

Tattooing

Typically, the Gond women of Nabarangpur area decorate their body surface with tattoo marks. It was considered auspicious to have tattooing before puberty. Women bear tattoos marks preferably on the chin, forehead and upper arm in simple designs. In the past, tattoos were usually made on the hands, feet (below the knees) and on the forehead. The tattoo maker was called the Ajia Jati in Gondi language. According to some Gond people, they belonged to the Kinner community and they went from village to village for doing tattoo work. The style of the tattoo was simple and point by point type.

According to the opinion of the women folk, the reason for making the tattoo was that during the reign of the kings, when the kings saw the beautiful girls of the village, they were forcibly abducted with the intention of making them their maids. So the Gond women used to make a tattoo on their foreheads, legs and hands at the age of 14-15 years. According to some, if there was no

tattoo, her soul would not join the other spirits of her community after death. So with this belief they were having tattoo marks on their bodies. Now this practice of tattooing is not in vogue in the study villages.

In the past, among the Gonds of Keonjhar area, tattoos (Guda) were usually made on the hands, feet (below the knees) arms, ankles and hands. It was a women's' fashion of the past which has been discarded by the younger generation at present. In the study village old women say that Gudiani (female tattoo maker) was visiting village to village and to make tattoo designs on arms, ankles and hands etc.

1.7 Language:

Language, is the vehicle of culture. Apart from the function of communication, transmission and conservation of culture, language has other functions such as setting the limits to intimate group interaction..... In contrast to the viability of Santali, thousands of speakers of Saora and Kui and Gondi have completely given up their native tongues and adopted Oriya which is matched on the social side by disclaiming relationship with their brethren still clinging to the original, tribal language (Aiyappan, 1964:p.5-6).

Each and every tribal group is characterized by its own language. Gondi is a South-Central Dravidian language, spoken by about two million Gond people, chiefly in the states of Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Chhattishgarh and in various adjoining areas of neighbouring states. Although it is the language of the Gond people, only about half of them still speak it. Gondi has a rich folk literature, examples of which are marriage songs and narrations. Most of the Gondi dialects are still inadequately recorded and described. The more important dialects are Dorla, Koya, Maria, Muria, and Raj Gond. Gondi is typically written in the Devanagari script or Telugu script, but has its own writing system, the Brahmi- based Gondi script, designed by a Gond in 1928 and evolved since. However, most Gonds are illiterate and do not use any scrip. (An introduction to Languages of India, VP Singh / <https://dbrau.academia.edu/VickySingh>).

The mother tongue of the Gonds is generally Gondi though most of them know Telugu also. Gondi has no separate script of its own. According to the linguistic classification of Sir George Grierson, Gondi is classified under the intermediate group of Dravidian Family. The Gonds use the self-designatory common generic term, 'Koitor'. The Gond is a generic term, which is not linguistically a homogenous group. It comes under some endogamous and linguistically distinct groups. The origin of the term Gond is unspecified. Gondi is spoken by Gond people in seven Indian states like Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Chhattishgarh, Andhra Pradesh, Telengana and Odisha. But it is spoken differently in each State. In each place, the dialect has been influenced by the dominant State language. Gondi appears to be losing ground to neighbouring languages with written traditions, such as Hindi, Marathi, Telugu and Odia.

Mother tongues of the Gonds according to 1961 Census are Gondi, Telugu, Koya, Hindi, Marathi, Lamani/ Lambadi, Mathuri, Ko Jami, Tamil, Manne, Kannada, Bhil, Urdu, Gujarathi, etc. Most of the Gond people speak Gondi dialect, closely related to the Dravidians. A few of them use Indo-Aryan dialect including Hindi and Odia. In Odisha, their dialect is getting assimilated with the dominant neighbouring Odia language as they often speak Odia. (Ancestral Language: Classification according to Grierson, persistence of ancestral language as mother tongue and folk traditions).

Gondi belongs to the Dravidian family of languages and is closely related to Tamil and Kannada. Clearly, the Gonds are not physically related to the Dravidian-speaking peoples of India, thus at some time they must have abandoned an earlier language in favor of Gondi. There is, however, no evidence of what this language might have been. It is the Gondi language, as much as anything else, that lends a sense of cultural uniformity to the diverse tribal groups that make up the Gonds. Even so, many Gonds are bilingual or trilingual, speaking Hindi, Marathi, or Telegu as well as their mother tongue. Some Gond groups have totally abandoned Gondi and speak the language or dialect common in their locality. (Encyclopedia.com)

The total number of Gonds (including the Koya and all the Gond categories) was found to be 5,154,536 in 1971, whereas only 1,900,161 persons returned in the same census as Gondi speakers (including 1,688,284 Gondi and 211,877 Koya). That is, about 36.86 per cent of the Gonds have retained their own language as mother-tongue and the rest, i.e., about 63.14 percent of them have adopted some other languages by replacing their traditional one, if we accept that Gondi being spoken exclusively by the members of their own group. (Hajri,1983: P.)

Gondi has more speakers than many official languages listed in the Eighth Schedule of Indian Constitution. Despite so many people speaking the language, Gondi is in the 'vulnerable' category on UNESCO's Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger. (Bilingualism and multi-lingualism, regional language and State language)

. The inter group communication of Gonds was purely in their own mother tongue. But when they communicated with outsiders they used mixed type of colloquial Hindi, called Chhattisgarhi in Madhya Pradesh. Gondi lingers only as a relic of the aged Gonds. The children and the young adults are able to speak or understand Gondi well. The 1991 and 2001 censuses put the figures of Gondi language speakers at 2.1 and 2.7 million respectively. But there is a big area of Gondi speakers under Maoist control where no census is done, so realistic number should be higher than government figures. This census figure includes Dorla, Gondia, Maria and Muria in Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Orissa. Gondi is one of the non-scheduled languages spoken in India mainly in its central part, i.e., in Madhya Pradesh and in the adjoining states of Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra. (Koreti, 2016)

As a Dravidian language Gondi according to Grierson stands, closer to Tamil and Kanarese than to Telugu. A large number of Hindi words have been adopted into the vocabulary of Gondi in Central India and Telugu and Marathi words in Adilabad and Chanda districts. Gondi has no written characters and literature.

The Gondi spoken by the Raj Gonds of Adilabad differs from the Gondi spoken in Bastar, Betul and Chanda. A distinctive feature of Adilabad Gondi is the frequent substitution of an initial 'S' for the initial 'H' of the Baster and Chanda dialects. Thus in Adilabad Gonds pronounce 'sile' (for no) but the Bastar Gonds pronounce 'halle' (for no) and 'Surana' (to see) instead of 'Hurana'. In the nominative the Gonds of Betul usually drop the initial 'n' inherent in the first and second person of the personal pronoun and say 'ana' (I) and 'imma' (thou) and the Gonds of Adilabad use the full form '-nana' (I) and 'nime' (thou). The Chanda Gonds, like the Hill Maria say 'lon' (house), while the Adilahad Gond pronounces the word clearly as 'r', 'ron'. Thus the language of the Gonds is basically the same though it differs in pronunciation and absorption of local languages in its fold.

Most of the Gond people speak Gondi dialect, closely related to the Dravidians. A few of them use Indo-Aryan dialect including Hindi and Odia. In Odisha, their dialect is getting assimilated with the dominant neighbouring Odia language as they often speak Odia. (Panda & Sahoo, 2012: P.4)

The Gonds of Kalahandi and Koraput speak Gondi- "a dialect belonging to the Dravidian family. Field investigation in Keonjhar area shows that the Hiduised Raj Gond people speak Odia language. In the past they used to speak Gondi language but now they have forgotten Gondi and speak Odia language due to contact with the Odia speaking people.

1.8 Distribution of Population:

Odisha is the 9th largest State in India by area constituting 4.7 % of the geographical area and the 11th largest State by population. As per 2011 census data, population of Odisha is 4,19,74,218 comprising of 2,12,12,136 males and 2,07,62,082 females, contributing 3.7 % of the population of the country. Out of the total population, 83 per cent lives in rural areas against national average of 68.8 per cent. The density of population is 270 per sq.km. The sex ratio of the State stands at 979 against the national ratio of 943. However, urban sex ratio of Odisha remains lower at 932 as against

the rural sex ratio of 989. Sex ratio among scheduled tribes is 1029 females per 1000 males.

Odisha has the highest percentage of ST population after the North Eastern states. As per the Census 2011, the state of Odisha has the third highest percentage of tribal population in the country. The total Scheduled Tribe population returned in Census 2011 is 95,90,756. Of this, 89,94,967 live in rural areas and 5,95,789, in urban areas. ST population constitutes 22.85% and SC, 17.1% of total population of the State. Literacy rate in Odisha is 72.9%, of which male literacy is 81.6 % and female literacy, 64.0%. Literacy rate of ST is 52.2% whereas in case SCs, it is 69 %. The State has 45 % of its geographical area as scheduled area. The tribals who comprise more than one-fifth of the population of the state are located in the districts of Gajapati, Kandhamal, Keonjhar, Koraput, Malkangiri, Mayurbhanj, Nabarangpur, Rayagada and Sundergarh which have more than 50% tribal population. The uniqueness of the Odisha is that there are 62 scheduled tribes including 13 Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) which is the highest among all the states of the country. Their population is spread over 30 districts and 314 blocks. According to their origin and habitat they are variously designated as Adimajati (primitive castes), Janajati (folk communities), Girijana (hill folk), Vanyajati (forest dwellers) etc. Among them, there are 12 major tribes such as Kondha, Gond, Santal, Soura, Kolha, Munda, Paraja, Bhuyian, Kisan, Oraon, Koya and Gadaba. There are 93 Scheduled Castes. Some of the major SCs are Bauri, Dhoba, Dom, Ganda, Hadi, Kandara, Pana, Ghasi, Gokha and Chamara. The following Table gives a comparative picture of Administrative and Demographic Profiles of Odisha and the study districts (Nabarangpur and Keonjhar).

Gonds' population distribution means the pattern where they live. Gonds are a major tribe of India. Next to Bhils, Gond is the second populous tribe in India. A majority of tribal population is concentrated in the nine provinces of India; Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan and West Bengal. Nearly 12% inhabit in the north-east region, approximate 5% in the southern region and 3% in the northern provinces of India (Singh & Sharma, 2019: P. 1064).

Table 1.1: Administrative & Demographic Profiles of Odisha and Study Districts

PARTICULARS	Magnitude (Number / Percentile)		
	Nabaranpur District	Keonjhar District	Odisha State
Administrative Details			
Geographical Area (in Sq. Kms)	5294	8303	1,55,707
Forest Area	1583.4 sq. km	3543 sq. km	61,204.17 sq. km
Sub-division	1	3	58
Tehasil	10	13	317
CD Blocks	10	13	314
Municipality / Corporation	2	4	40
NACs	1	1	67
Gram Panchayats	169	297	6,236
No.of villages	885	2137	51,349
Demographic Profile			
Total population	13,55,251	18,01,733	41,974,218
Male population	6,04,812	9,06,487	21,212,136
Female population	6,16,134	8,95,246	20,762,082
Rural population	11,33,321	15,49,491	34,970,562
Urban population	87,625	2,52,242	7,003,656
ST Population	6,81,173	8,18,878	9,590,756
Gonds Population	1,67,052	80,693	8,88,581
SC Population	1,77,384	2,09,357	7,188,463
ST %	55.79%	45.4%	22.80
SC %	14.53%	11.6%	17.10
Overall Sex Ratio	1019	988	979
Total Literacy Rate	38.53%	68.24%	72.90%
Male Literacy Rate	57.31%	66.75%	81.60%
Female Literacy Rate	35.80%	49.97%	64.00%
ST Literacy Rate	39.50%	44%	52.20%
SC Literacy Rate	37.50 %	64.15%	69.00 %

Source: District Profile of Odisha 2014-15, (Census 2011)

As per the 1971 Census, the Gonds numbered, a little over five millions distributed over a wide tract of land that forms more or less a contiguous area and are found spread over mainly in the States of Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Odisha. The area of their distribution may broadly be said to lie between the Vindhian Mountains in the north and the Godabari gorges in the south and between some eastern-most districts of Maharashtra in the west and a few western-most districts of Odisha in the east (Hajra, 1964: P.1).

According to 1971 Census the total population of Gonds in India was 48,12,164 accounting for 12.78 per cent of the total tribal population of the country. The majority of them ie., 78.38 per cent are found in Madhya Pradesh, 10.38 per cent in Odisha, 6.89 per cent in Maharashtra, 3.27 per cent in Andhra Pradesh and the rest in the other States. 1971 Census data presented in the Table below records the Gonds as a numerically preponderant tribe in the states of Madhya Pradesh, followed by Odisha, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh.

Table 1.2: Gonds Population in Four Highly Concentrated States (1971 Census)

Sl. No.	States	Population	% to State's total Population
1	Madhya Pradesh	8,387,403	20.14
2	Odisha	5,071,937	23.11
3	Maharashtra	2,954,249	5.86
4	Andhra Pradesh	1,657,657	3.81

Source: Census of India, 1971

The Gond is numerically the most dominant tribe of India. According to 2011 Census Gonds number is 1,13,44,629 persons accounting for 13.45 per cent of the total Scheduled Tribes population of India. The Gond has been notified as scheduled tribe in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, Uttaranchal and West Bengal. They are concentrated in Gondwana, the middle region of India, including the Satpuda Plateau, a portion of the Nagpur plain area and the Narmada Valley. The

state of Madhya Pradesh shows the highest percentage (43.69%) of Gond population followed by states like Maharashtra (19.47%), Odisha (9.97%), Karnataka (6.47%), Andhra Pradesh (5.04%) and Bihar (1.57%).

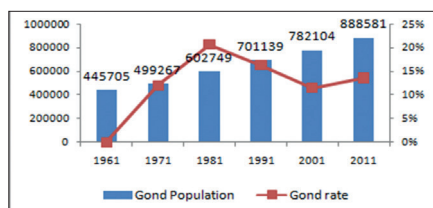
As per 1961 census, the total population of Gonds in Odisha was 4,45,705 out of which 2,21,629 are males and 2,24,076 are females. The majority of Gonds returned from Kalahandi (1,04,405) followed by Sambalpur (93,875), Bolangir (72,289), Koraput (55,272), Keonjhar (39,322), Sundargarh (34,849), Dhenkanal (20,379), Mayurbhanj (16,659) and Phulbani (8,087).

According to 2011 census, the total population of Gond in Odisha was 8,88,581 persons out of which 4,38,624 were males and 4,49,957 were females. Their population growth was 13.61 % over the decade, from 2001 to 2011. Sex ratio among them was 1026. During all the Censuses from 1961 to 2011 the sex ratio of Gond tribes was in favour of females. Thus as per the successive census records their females outnumbered their males. Their work force comprised 51.48 % of the total population.

Table 1.3: Numerical strength of Gond in Odisha during different Censuses

Gond Population	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
Total	4,45,705	4,99,267	6,02,749	7,01,139	7,82,104	8,88,581
Decadal Growth	1951-1961	1961-1971	1971-1981	1981-1991	1991-2001	2001-2011
	NA	12.02 %	20.73 %	16.32 %	11.55 %	13.61 %

Source: Census of India ' 1961, 1971, 1981, 1991, 2001 & 2011



The above table furnishes data on Gond population growth in Odisha over a period of last 5 decades, i.e. from 1961-71 to 2001-2011. The decade (1971-1981) recorded highest Gond population

growth of 20.73 % followed by 16.32 % during 1981-1991, 13.61 % during 2001-2011, 12.02 % during 1961-1971 and the lowest, i.e. 11.55 % during 1991-2001.

The following table presents data on distribution of Gond Population in different Districts of Odisha as per 2011 Census.

Table 1.4: Distribution of Gond Population in different Districts of Odisha as per 2011 Census

Sl. No.	District	Population (In Descending Order)	% to Total Population
1.	Nowrangapur	1,67,052	
2.	Nuapara	1,33,859	
3.	Bolangir	1,08,128	
4.	Kalahandi	94,465	
5.	Keonjhar	80,693	
6.	Sundergarh	54,458	
7.	Sambalpur	54,324	
	Sub Total	6,92,979	78.00%
8.	Jharsuguda	45,984	
9.	Baragarh	32,457	
10.	Mayurbhanj	30,996	
11.	Anugul	29,276	
12.	Deogarh	15,606	
13.	Kandhamal	11,657	
14.	Dhenkanal	10,000	
	Sub Total	1,87,286	21.00 %
15.	Other 16 Districts	8,316	01.00 %
	Odisha (30 Districts)	8,88,581	100.00 %

Source: Demographic Profile of STs in Odisha, 2018, SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar

As revealed from the above table, Gonds are highly concentrated in 7 districts like Nabarangpur, Nuapada, Bolangir, Kalahandi, Keonjhar, Sundargarh and Sambalpur where their number in each district is above 50, 000 persons. Out of their population of 8,88,581 persons, 6,92,979 (78%) persons live in these districts. Gond population in between 10,000 and 49, 000 are reported from 7 districts such as Jharsuguda, Baragarh, Mayurbhanj Angul, Deogarh, Kandhamal and Dhenkanal, where their total number

is 1,87,286 (21.00 %). In the remaining 16 districts the Gond population is insignificant in number (8,316 persons accounting only 1.00 per cent of the total population).

Nabarangpur is the home to about 48 tribal communities. The major tribes residing this district are Bhottada, Gond, Paroja, Kandha and Omanatya. According to 2011 census, the total population size of Nabarangpur is 13,55,251, among whom the ST population accounts for 55.79 % and the SC, 14.53%. Sex ratio of the district is 1019 and the literacy rate, 38.53%. The following table presents the Male and Female population of 13 important tribes of the district who constitute 97.07% of the total tribal population of the district. The rest of 35 categories of tribe constitute only 2.93%.

Table 1.5: Population of 13 Scheduled Tribes having more than 2,000 Population in Nabarangpur District (2011 Census)

Sl. No.	Name of the Scheduled Tribe	Total Population		
		Male	Female	Total
1.	Bhottoda / Bhotra	1,60,520	1,64,905	3,25,425
2.	Gond / Raj Gond	82,724	84,328	1,67,052
3.	Poroja / Paraja	35,958	38,295	74,253
4.	Khond/ Kandha	26,632	28,625	55,257
5.	Omanatya / Amanatya	5,293	5,452	10,745
6.	Saora / Savar	3,531	3,838	7,369
7.	Holva	2,444	2,414	4,858
8.	Sounti	1,968	1,930	3,898
9.	Shabar, Lodha	1,624	1,717	3,341
10.	Gadba	1433	1,499	2,932
11.	Bhunja	1078	1,039	2,117
12.	Banjara / Banjari	990	1,017	2,007
13.	Kandha Gouda	1027	976	2,003
Total Population		3,25,222 (97.07%)	3,36,035 (97.07%)	6,61,257 (97.07%)
Grand Total Population of 48 STs in the District		3,35,028 (100%)	3,46,145 (100%)	6,81,173 (100%)

Source: Odisha District Gazetteer, Nabarangpur, GAA, GA Deptt., Bhubaneswar, 2018

According to the 2011 census, Kendujhar district has a population of 1,801,733. The district has a population density of 217 inhabitants per square kilometre. The district's population

growth rate over the decade 2001–2011 was 15.42%. Kendujhar has a sex ratio of 987 females for every 1000 males, and a literacy rate of 69%. The ST population of the District is 55.79 % and the SC is 14.53%. The following table presents the population figure of 16 major tribes in the district who 98.52.0% of the total tribal population of the district. The rest of 39 tribes constitute only 1.48 %.

Table 1.6: Population of 9 Major Scheduled Tribes in Keonjhar District (2011 Census)

Sl.No	Major Tribes	Population
1	Kolha	251944
2	Bhuiya	104049
3	Gond	80693
4	Bathudi	78964
5	Sounti	72752
6	Santal	71992
7	Munda	48871
8	Juang	26707
9	Shabar Lodha	26256
10	Bhumij	14386
11	Saora	9660
12	Mirdhas	5128
13	Ho	5074
14	Oraon	4510
15	Kisan	3494
16	Matya	2342
Total Population		8,06,822 (98.52%)
Grand Total Population of 55 STs in the District		8,18,887 (100%)

Source: Odisha District Gazetteer, Keonjhar, GAA, GA Deptt., Bhubaneswar, 2018

1.9 Literacy & Educational Level:

Education is a medium for development. Gonds society had appreciated their traditional education system. Their education system is found to be one of the oldest education systems of the

tribal world. Before implementation of modern education system, the Gond community managed their own traditional education pattern through Ghotul and after the decline of the Ghotul they adopted teaching by a local teacher.

Ancient /old education system :- Before independence Gond people were very poor in education. They used to study at night under a tree. Few people were interested for attending classes. Educational classes were given by a local teacher. This education system was very low in academics and very rich in religion, cultural values, discipline, and customs and moral. Teachers were paid tuition fees in kinds like groceries (rice, oil, etc.).

Ghotul education system: The term Ghotul is derived from “Gho” that is referred as “Knowledge” and “tul” means “reserve”. Ghotul is a religious and social Center for Gond tribal society and is a village dormitory for unmarried girls and boys. Here the young adults can gain knowledge about their social roles and responsibilities before marriage. They also learn about the culture and legends of their tribe. Here, the young members are taught various lessons in matters such as discipline, cleanliness and hard work. The boys and girls are also taught to serve the public, take the pride in the appearance and respect their seniors and themselves. Ghotul has an important social sanction in the society and is one of the major social institutions. In the tribal society, none of the important social function can happen without the active participation of the members of Ghotul. The boy-members act as acolytes during the festivals whereas the girl members as bridesmaids at the time of weddings. The participation of Ghotul members continue till the death ceremonies in their society. The males were given education on agriculture and forest based activities.

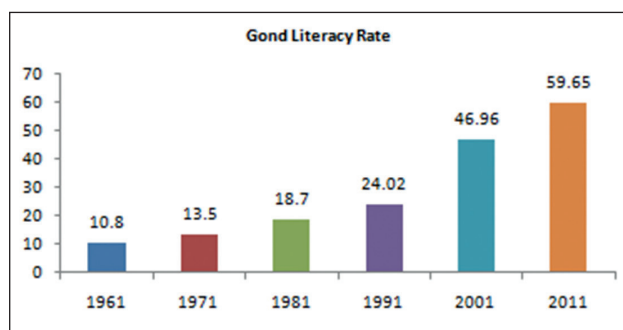
As per 1971 census among all the major States like Andhra, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Odisha, where the Gonds form the dominant tribal group, their literacy percentage was the highest in Odisha, (12.17 %) and next came, Maharashtra (11.70 %). The lowest literacy percentage of 3.71 was recorded among the Gonds of Andhra Pradesh. Gond literacy which was 10.80 % in

1961 jumped to 59.65% in 2011. Their female literacy was 2.23 % only in 1961 which moved up to 48.03 % in 2011. Similarly, Gond male literacy also moved from 19.41% in 1961 to 71.64 % in 2011. Literacy rate among the Gond tribe in Odisha as recorded during different Censuses from 1961 to 2011 is furnished in the Table below.

Table 1.7: Gond Literacy Rate during different Censuses

Literacy Rate	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
Total	10.80	13.50	18.70	24.02	46.96	59.65
Male	19.41	23.16	31.38	37.31	63.27	71.64
Female	2.23	3.98	6.33	10.76	30.81	48.03

Source: Census of India ' 1961, 1971, 1981, 1991, 2001 & 2011



As per the field study data (2021), literacy among the Gonds in Raighar areas in Nabarangpur district is 84.10 %. Male literacy is 90.00 % and female literacy is 77.00 %. Among the literates, 23.50 % studied up to primary level, 44.10 % up to upper primary level, 12.90 % up to High school level and 14.10 % up to Plus II level and 5.00 % up to graduates and above. A comparison of 2011 census data with the data of the present survey shows that Gonds literacy has jumped from 59.65 % in 2011 to as high as 84.10 % in 2021. During the same period while male literacy has increased from 71.64 % to 90 %, the female literacy has significantly increased from 48.03 % to 77.00 %. It is also mentioned that a total of 12 Gond children (6 boys and 6 girls) are reported to be enrolled at Anganwadi

Table 1.8: Literacy & Educational Level among Gonds in Study Villages

SL. No	Village	Gender	Illiterate	Primary level	Upper Primary level	HSC	Intermediate / Plus two	Graduate	Total Literates	Total Persons
1	Sonepur	Male	5	12	18	7	11	2	50	55
		(%)	9.1	24	36	14	22	4	90.9	100
		Female	12	10	7	3	7	3	30	42
		(%)	28.6	33.3	23.3	10.0	23.3	10	71.4	100
Sub Total		Persons	17	22	25	10	18	5	80	97
		(%)	17.5	31.3	12.5	22.5	6.3	82.5	100	
2	Timanpur	Male	6	8	30	7	3	1	49	55
		(%)	10.9	16.3	61.2	14.3	6.1	2	89.1	100
		Female	9	10	20	5	3	3	41	50
		(%)	18	24	49	12	7	7	82	100
Sub Total		Persons	15	18	50	12	6	4	90	105
		(%)	14.3	55.6	13.3	6.7	4.4	85.7	100	
Total		Male	11	20	48	14	14	3	99	110
(%)		10	20	48	14	14	3	90	100	
Female		21	20	27	8	10	6	71	92	
(%)		23	28	38	11	14	8	77	100	
Persons		32	40	75	22	24	9	170	202	
(%)		15.8	23.5	44.1	12.9	14.1	5.3	84.2	100	

Source: SCSTRTI Survey, 2021.

centers under pre-primary education. Table at prepage shows the literacy and educational level among the Gonds of two study villages (Sonepur and Timanpur) of Raighar blocks in Nabarangpur district.

Sonepur has one UP school and one Ashram school at Rajaputi at a distance of 1 K.M for up to 8th class. For the higher education Timanpur Ashram School (4 K.Ms) and Kurabeda High School (3 K.Ms) is available. For a graduate degree, students go to Umerkot town Penndrani Collage (30 K.Ms). This collage has Arts, Science and Commerce streams. The students, who wish to pursue a Post-Graduate Degree, travel to Bikram-Deo Autonomous collage at Joypore (110 K.Ms). In the study villages Graduates few are found. Only 4.9% and 3.5% graduates are there in the Sonepur and Timanpur villages, respectively. Further, there are several more educational facilities available nearby like Aadarsha Vidyalaya (2 K.Ms) from Sonepur and Kalinga Model School (18 K.Ms) and Navodaya Bidialaya (140 K.Ms). Most of the tribal students prefer KISS (Kalinga Institute of Social Science), Bhubaneswar for their education.

As per the field study data (2021), the literacy level among the Gonds at Sinduria village in Telkoi block of Keonjhar district area is 91.2 %. Male literacy is 92.9 % and female literacy is 89.4 %. Among the Gond literates, 4.00 % studied up to primary level, 49.2 % upper primary level, 25.80 % high school level and 16.90 % Plus II level and 4.00 % are graduates and above. A comparison of 2011 census data with the data of the present survey shows that Gonds' literacy has jumped from 59.65 % in 2011 to as high as 91.20 % in 2021. During the same period while male literacy has increased from 71.64 % to 92.90 %, the female literacy has increased from 48.03 % to 89.40 %. The Table blow shows literacy and educational level among the Gonds of the study village (Sinduria) of Telkoi block in Keonjhar district.

Table 1.9: Literacy Rate of the Sinduria village (N=136 Population)

Village	Gender / %	Illiterate	Primary Level	Upper Primary Level	Matric	Intermediate	Graduate	Literate	Total Population
Sundaria	Male	5	1	30	17	14	3	65	70
	(%)	7.1	1.5	46.2	26.2	21.5	4.6	92.9	100
	Female	7	4	31	15	7	2	59	66
	(%)	10.6	6.8	52.5	25.4	11.9	3.4	89.4	100
Total	Persons	12	5	61	32	21	5	124	136
	(%)	8.8	4	49.2	25.8	16.9	4	91.2	100.00

Source: SCSTRTI Survey, 2021

There are good education facilities provided by the state Govt. in the study village. The study village has an Ashram school (1st to 8th class) 300 mtr. from the village with residential facilities for both boys and girls. One ME school and one High School are also there in the village, which cater the educational needs of the villagers in general and the Gonds in particular. A Navodaya Vidyalaya is situated at 220 km away from the study village. Besides one EMRS one Adarsha Vidyalaya are available at a distance of 87 km and 32 km from the village respectively. Besides, higher education facilities are available at a distance of 10 km at Belamunda +2 College and a degree college at Telkoi block 30 km from the village. Further, KISS is an Educational Institution in Bhubaneswar, which is extending education facilities to some of the tribal children of the village. For the university education the villagers depend on Utkal University and Ravenshaw University.

The phenomenal increase in the literacy and educational level among the Gonds is due to the educational programmes of the Government Odisha and especially the amenities provided by ST & SC Development Department. Besides, education through mother lounge (Gondi) at primary level (class 1 to class V) has attracted Gond children to attend schools.

The present educational situation of Gonds shows that males and females have equal participation in education. Whenever a family can afford education for a child, the male child is always preferred. The following education situations are observed among Gonds.

1. Women Education advancement - Govt. schemes and facilities have given more importance to education of the girl children, as a result spread of education among women noticed.
2. Male education backwardness - On the other hand due to family financial problems and family pressure some male children are forced to leave the education in the middle without completing it.
3. Lack of Career Counseling – Another reason for not pursuing a good academic carrier is lack of proper guidance for building careers for the future and higher studies. Students are not able to decide what to do after completing their 10th class and intermediate education.

HABITAT & HOUSING

2.1 Natural Habitat

Natural habitats of Gonds include land and water areas, which are characterized by certain environmental conditions. The following discussion speaks of the Geographical spread of the Gonds and their natural habitat.

The Gonds are mainly divided into four tribes: Raj Gonds, Madia (Maria) Gonds, Dhurva Gonds and Khatulwar (Khutwad) Gonds. Deogaonkar (2007: 15-16), quoting Mehta (1984), lists the major areas of the Gonds to be: 1. The Bastar region in Madhya Pradesh on the Godavari Basin, 2. The Kalahandi region of Odisha, 3. The Chandrapur region of Maharashtra, 4. The Adilabad region of Andhra Pradesh, 5. The Satpuda and Narmada regions of Madhya Pradesh, 6. The Raipur region in Madhya Pradesh including Sambalpur in Chattisgarh, and the Sagar region in Madhya Pradesh and 7. The Ellichpur region in the Amravati District of Maharashtra (Vahia & Halkare, 2013:29 - 30).

‘Southern Region’ is a geographical region inhabited by the Gond populations to the South of Vindhyas approximately lying between 16° and 20° N Lat. and 78° to 83°E Long. Broadly areas covered by Gond population in the region are the States of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, parts of Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Orissa (Pratap, 1983; P.1). The Gond is the most predominant tribal community of India inhabiting the mountainous tracts of Central and Southern India popularly known as Gondwana land. The country of Gondwana includes the Satpura plateau and a section of the Nagpur plain and Narmada valley to the South and West.” There is however no district or State situated in Central India which does not contain some Gonds and it is both on account

of their numbers and the fact that Gond dynasties possessed a great part of its area that the territory of the former Central Provinces was formally known as Gondwana or the country of Gonds (Russell and Hiralal, 1916: P.41).

Gond habitat may be referred to as a habitat for humanity. The recent demographic history treats them as immigrants to Odisha. As a petty business community, their nativity is traced to Madhya Pradesh. In course of time, they have come over to Odisha through forest routes. They are concentrated in the state of Odisha in districts like Nabarangpur, Sundargarh, Sambalpur, Bolangir and part of Kalahandi (Panda & Sahoo, 2012: P. 2). Now let us discuss the Natural Habitat of Gonds in Odisha through the natural habitats in the study areas covering Nabaranagpur and Keonjhar districts. Both the districts are covered under Fifth Scheduled Areas of Odisha and enjoy pride of places in the geological and anthropological map of the State.

2.1.1 Natural Habitat of Odisha:

The State of Odisha is located between the parallels of 17.49'N and 22.34'N latitudes and meridians of 81.27'E and 87.29'E longitudes. Odisha is bounded by West Bengal in the north east, Jharkhand in the North, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana in the South, Chhattisgarh in the West; the State is open to the Bay of Bengal on the East. Odisha spreads over an area of 1,55,707 sq km and is divided into four geographical regions – the Northern plateau, central river basins, eastern hills and coastal plains – and ten agro-climatic zones. Almost one-third of Odisha is covered by forests which make up about 37.34% of the total land area of the state. These forests cover most of southern and western Odisha. The eastern plains adjacent to the coast are covered by farm lands (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia).

The forest cover of Odisha extends over an area of 58,136.869 square kms. Odisha's forests yield large quantities of teak and bamboo. Teak, apart from medicinal plants and Kendu leaves contribute substantially towards Odisha's economy. Odisha a state in eastern India, is extremely diverse and gives the state

abundance of natural beauty and wildlife. The districts in the interiors are thickly covered by tropical moist deciduous and tropical dry deciduous forests. The hills, plateaus and isolated areas of the north-eastern part of the state are covered by the tropical moist deciduous forests whereas the dry deciduous forests are located in the southwest region of the state. Some of the trees which grow in abundance in Odisha are bamboo, teak, rosewood, sal, piasal, sanghvan and haldi. There are 479 species of birds, 86 species of mammals, 19 species of amphibians and 110 species of reptiles present in Odisha. The state is also an important habitat for the endangered olive riddley turtles and Irrawaddy dolphins. Koraput district of southern Odisha has been identified by Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of UN as Global Agricultural Heritage site which is among only other three sites in the world.

As said earlier, the Gonds with large concentrations live in most of the districts of Odisha, like erstwhile Koraput, Kalahandi and Bolangir districts and Sambalpur, Sundargarh, Keonjhar and Mayurbhanj districts. The Gonds of Odisha can be divided into two entirely different groups. The erstwhile Koraput district includes the present districts such as Koraput, Rayagada, Nabarangpur, Malkangiri.

The Gonds of Sundargarh, Sambalpur, Bolangir and a part of Kalahandi have been highly acculturated by the influence of Hindu society and have attained the status of a warrior caste. The Gonds of Kalahandi, Koraput and Phulbani may be taken to belong to the primitive section whereas the rest can be taken to belong to the acculturated section. The acculturated Gonds live in villages inhabited by other castes and tribes. They especially live along with Kandh, Bhuyan and Gouda. The primitive Gonds live in homogeneous villages (B. Choudhury, 1964:p.157). The Gonds represented in this monograph live in two districts namely Nabarangpur (South Odisha) and Keonjhar (North Odisha).

2.1.2 Natural Habitat of Nabarangpur district:

Nabarangpur district is recognized for its tribal culture. Its largest tribes are the Bhottadas and Gonds. The district is located

at 81° 52' to 82° 53' E Longitude and 19° 09' to 20° 05' N Latitude. Its total geographical area is 5294 Sq. kms. Its boundary stretches in the north to Nuapada and Kalahandi districts, in the west to Bastar district in Chhattisgarh, in the east to Kalahandi and Rayagada districts and in the south to Koraput district.

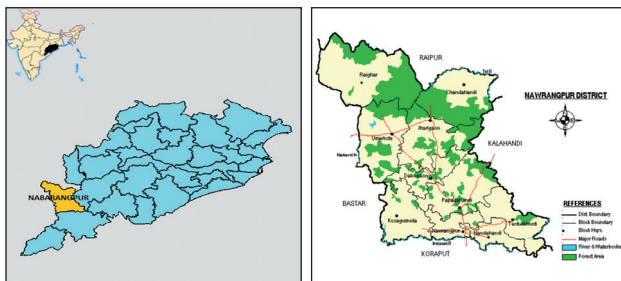
Nabarangpur with her mountains of Panabeda, Mutha in Chandahandi Block, and Jharigam Block that run from East to Westward, number of rivers and rivulets, enchanting water falls of Chandandhara and Gosaindhara, undulating meadows of the rivers Tel, the Bhaskel (the Bhasar) and the Indravati basins, picturesque paddy fields attracts the onlookers. Nabarangpur with her aboriginal people who have been living here since time immemorial have accepted the new comers who have come here for their living (Taradatt, ed. 2016: P-1).

The river Indravati flows in between Nabarangpur and Koraput districts. In the north, the Panabeda area, recently renamed as Chandahandi is only 500 ft (150 m) above sea level. There is a river confluence, which has been located just 16 km. away from Raigarh and lays just before Kundie at the hamlet Bangapara of Hattigam revenue village. Its climate and social life are similar to that of the neighbouring Kalahandi district. The highest peak is Podagda, which has historical significance as well. The rest of Nabarangpur district is mainly flat with a few pockets of low hills. There are patches of thick forests mostly comprising sal trees. Out of the total geographical area of the district i.e. 5294 sq. kms., the forest area is 2519.28 sq. kms (47.59 %). Most of the forests are either pure sal forest or misc. sal forest along with associates like Kendu, Kadamba, Amba, Jamu etc. The district gets monsoon rains in the months from July to September. The north-east monsoon is not effective in the area. The average annual rainfall over the district is 1569.5 mm. During the summer its climate remains dry but pleasant.

Raja Chaitanya Deo, the then ruler of Nabarangpur, helped digging tanks and ponds in every village for the betterment of his Prajas (subjects). Consequent upon rehabilitation of the displaced

Bengali refugees in Umerkote and Raighar areas, Government made settlements under Dandakaranya project and under their livelihood enhancement programmes provided them tanks for pisciculture. Hence a lot of tanks are found in Umerkote and Raighar areas. Besides, every panchayats of this district have their own tanks and ponds.

Map of Nabarangpur district



Source- Google Map

2.1.3 Natural Habitat of Keonjhar district:

Keonjhar is a landlocked district situated in the northern part of Odisha. The entire Keonjhar district is situated within $21^{\circ} 00'53''\text{N}$ & $22^{\circ} 09'43''\text{N}$ latitude and $85^{\circ} 11' 0''\text{E}$ and $86^{\circ}-21'30''\text{E}$ longitude. It is bounded by Singhbhum district of Jharkhand and a part of Sundargarh district in the north, part of Mayurbhanj and Balasore districts in the east, Bhadrak and Jajpur districts in the south and Dhenkanal and Angul districts in the west. The geographical area of Keonjhar district is 8303 sq. kms. Out of this, the forest area of this district is 3374 sq.kms (40.63%).

The district is having a chain of mountains on its western and southern borders with distinct slopes towards river Baitarani in the north and Brahmani in the south. The altitude of these hill ranges varies from 600 mtr. to 900 mtr. and the highest point of this division is the Mankadanacha peak (1117 mtr.) that is situated on the western border overlapping Koira valley of Bonai forest division. The soil of the area belongs to two major categories i.e. Alfisol and Vetrisol. Hilly country has immature soil, and the parent rock continues its influence.

The Rivers of the district emerge out of the hilly tracts and flow into the plains with great velocity, charged with large volume of water during monsoon. In summer they are almost dry. There are a large numbers of hill streams in the district which form major water sources. The River Baitarani is the largest River in the district. It originates from the Guptaganga hills about 2 km from Gonasika village at an elevation of 900m. Geologically Keonjhar is very rich for its mineral reserve. It can be broadly divided in to two distinct physiographic units i.e. i) Eastern alluvial plains of Anandapur and a portion of Sadar and Champua Sub-division and (ii) Western mountainous terrain containing lofty hills with intervening narrow valleys. This area is covered by dense forest and characterized by high hills namely Gandhamardan I & II, Gonasika, Meghanada, Thakurani, Mankadanacha etc. About half of the area of this district is covered by forests of Northern tropical deciduous type trees which include Sal, Asan, Jamu, Arjuna, Kusum, Kangada, Mahua, Mango and Kendu.

The district of Keonjhar is highly rich in mineral resources and has vast deposits of iron, manganese and chromium ores. About 30% of the district's total area is covered with tracts of dense forests. Keonjhar also contains one of the oldest rock formations in the world, which covers an area of 100 sq. kms. The temperature in the district begins to rise rapidly in the spring with the highest temperatures recorded in the month of May when it usually go up to 38 °C. The maximum recorded temperature however is 43.3 °C. The weather cools during the monsoon in June and remains cool until the end of October. The temperature in the month of December can drop down to 7 °C. The minimum temperature recorded was 1 °C. The average annual rainfall is 1910.1 mm. (Taradatt, ed. 2016: Pp.1, 2).

2.2 Village settlements, neighbourhood and water source:

The village settlements in the study areas of Nabarangpur and Keonjhar districts are hetrogenous in nature. There are people belonging to different castes, classes and religions. But most of their inhabitants are connected with agriculture and its

allied occupations. The village settlements, its neighbourhood and water sources of study areas of both the districts are mentioned below.

2.2.1 Study Area in Nabarangpur district (Southern Odisha):

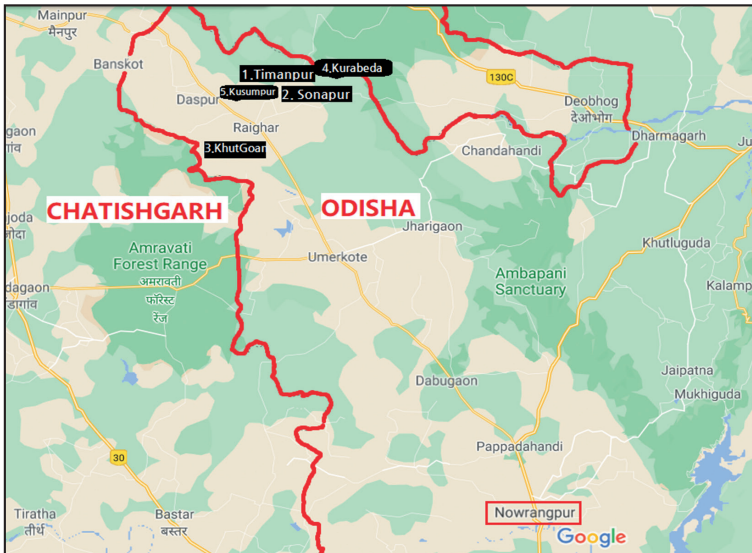
Nabarangpur district is one of the southern most districts in the State of Odisha. It is constituted of one revenue Sub-Division namely Nabarangpur. The District has 10 C.D. Blocks and tahasils, namely Nabarangapur, Papadahandi, Tentulikhunti, Nandahandi, Kosagumuda, Dabugaon, Umerkote, Jharigaon, Chandahandi and Raighar. There are 169 GPs, 888 inhabited villages in the district. The entire district is covered under Schedule Areas of Odisha.

Raighar C.D. Block is located in the northern part of Nowrangapur District at a distance of 80km. from District H.Q. It is surrounded by the State of Chhattisgarh from the west, north and south and Umarkote C.D Block from the east and south-east. It is located in the Eastern Ghats highland of Odisha. The total geographical area of the Block is 700.14 sq. km out of which 196.74 sq. kms is forest area. It has 24 GPs including two study GPs, Kurabeda and Timanpur where in two study villages (Sonpur and Timanpur) and 3 observation villages (Rajaputi, Kusumpur and Kurabeda) are located. Languages spoken in this area are Gondi, Odia, Hindi, Bengali and Halabi. In this area dominant Scheduled Castes are Ganda, Namasudra, Chamar, Dom and dominant Scheduled Tribes are Gond, Khond, Paroja, Holva, Bhottada. The total population of the block is 1,57,346 persons out of which 1,02,300 (65.02 %) are STs and 28,224 (17.94 %) are SCs.

Study Village 1 (Sonpur)

The Gond people select their habitation close to their fields and the village goddess. Generally, the name of every Gond village is connotative and carries some meaning. So also the village Sonpur is named after Goddess Sunadei or Yaya (Maa) who is a village Goddess. The village comes under Kurabeda GP. It is situated 5 km away from the Raighar block headquarters. Kuttul, a bunch of sal trees at one side of the village road, serves as a land mark and entry

Maps Showing Study Villages in Raighar Block of Nabarangpur District



Legend: Study Villages and observation Villages are indicated in black colour

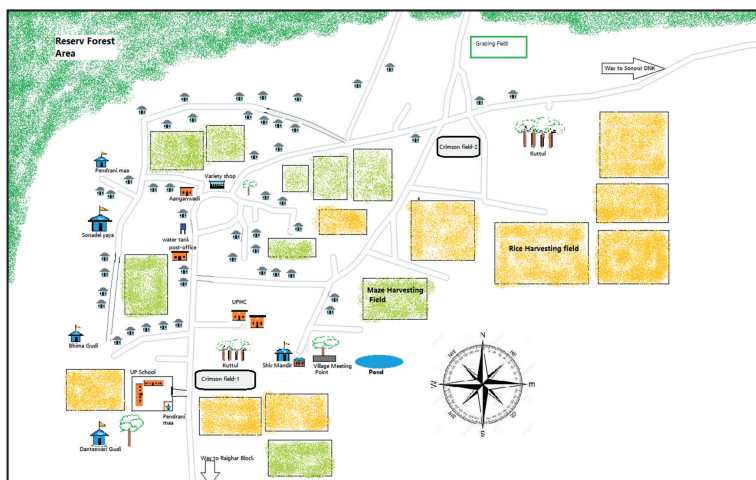
Source- Google Map

point of the village. Similarly, there is another Kuttul, at one side of road at the village exit point. The presence of the Kuttul ensures outsiders to identify and enter into this Gond village. Sonpur is a plain area which is surrounded by paddy and maize corn fields, Nilgiri trees and thick reserve forests. As per geo-coordinate of the village, Sonpur is at Latitude 19.91666 North and at Longitude is 82.07841 East. The village is situated at 549 ft. above the sea level.

The village area is identified with “KUTUL” (a bunch of sal trees at the entry and exit points of the village). The existence of Gudies of Maa Sunadei, Maa Danteswari, Bhima at village protect, safeguard and ensure wellbeing of its people. The village has 2 wards and Gouda Sahi, Ganda Sahi, and Lohra Sahi. The houses are built in scattered form. The village has 6 Gudies or temples. Pen-drani Gudi, is the shrine of the village guardian deity. The village has 2 cremation grounds, which are surrounded by trees. 1st one is situated at the village entry point, which is used for the deceased people, who die naturally. The 2nd crematorium is situated out-

side the village, which is used for the deceased people, who meet unnatural death. The village is surrounded by the reserve forest. It has a Post Office, Aanganwadi Center, UP School, High School and Community Health Center. Beside the Shiv Temple and under a big Baniyan tree, village meeting ground is located. The village has a big pond, water tank (for safe drinking water supply), bore well with pump set for irrigation, rice harvesting ground.

Map of Study Village Sonpur



Source: Field Survey, 2021 (Map not to scale, and prepared by Transact Walk & Observations at Village)

According to our study, the total numbers of households of Sonpur village is 282, out of which 179 (63.48 %) are ST (Gond), 19 (6.74 %) are SC (Ganda) and the remaining 84 (29.80 %) are OBC (Kalar, Mali, Gouda and Lohar). The population of the village is 1401 including 694 males and 707 females. The percentage of ST population is 64.1% (the highest) followed by OBC 29.9 % and the SC 6%.

The Gonds are the only ST community of the village. Similarly, the Ganda is the only SC community. In the OBC category, there are 4 communities, like Kalar, Gouda, Mali and Lohar. Among the OBCs comprising 84 households, the Kalar forms the majority with 74 households. The Gonds are a numerically preponderant group in the village. Table below shows ethnic groups

wise household and population composition at the study village Sonpur.

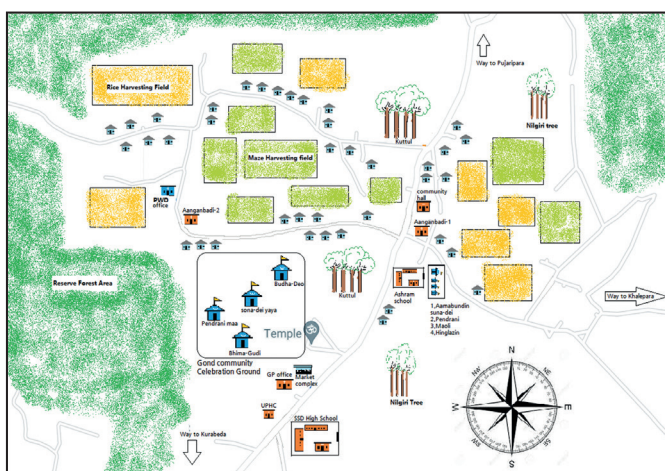
Table 2.3: Household and Population Composition of Ethnic Groups in Sonpur Village

SL. No	Ethnic Groups	No. of Households				% to Total Households	Population				
		ST	SC	OBC	Total		ST	SC	OBC	Total	%
1	Gond	179	-	-	179	63.48 %	898	-	-	898	64.10%
2	Ganda	-	19	-	19	6.74 %	-	84	-	84	6.00%
3	Kalar	-	-	74	74	26.24 %	-	-	419	419	29.90%
4	Gouda	-	-	3	3	<1.00 %	-	-			
5	Mali	-	-	2	2	<1.00 %	-	-			
6	Lohar	-	-	5	5	<1.00 %	-	-			
Total		179	19	84	282	100%	898	84	419	1401	100%

Study Village 2 (Timanpur)

Usually, the names of Gonds villages carry some meanings. Thus, the village Timanpur is named after “Timan-pura”. “Timan” means a cup hole and “pura” refers to filling up. The village is named as they found a pipe is always filled with water. The village is 12 kms. away from Raighar block. It comes under the Timanpur GP.

Map of Study Village Timanpur



Source: Field Survey (Map not to scale, and prepared by Transact Walk & Observations at Village)

Situated 548 ft. above the sea level, Timanpur is a plain area surrounded by agricultural fields, maze fields and forests. The village has 2 wards and Pujari Sahi, Gaontia Sahi and Borigondi Sahi. As per the geocoordinate its latitude is 20.27 North and longitude is 85.84 East. The village area is identified with 'KUTUL' (a grove of sal trees). It has two Aanganwadi Centers, one UP School, one SSD high school, one water supply house, one community health centre, one PWD office, one Grampanchayat office and one community hall.

Timanpur has 4 Goddess temples situated within the boundary in front of SSD high school. There are shrines of village God and Goddess in front of Timanpur Ashram School. Behind the Grampanchayat office there is a Gond community celebration field. The village has 2 cremation grounds, which is surrounded by trees. Both exist inside the village.

As per our study, the total numbers of households of Timanpur village is 264, out of which 196 (74.20%) are ST (Gond only), 3 (1.10%) are SC (Ganda) and the remaining 65 (24.60%) are OBC (Gouda, Mali, Lohar and Others). The population size of the village is 1317. The percentage of ST population is 73.90 % (the highest) followed by OBC (25.10 %) and the SC, (1.00 % only). The Gond is the only ST community and the Ganda is the only SC community of the village. In the OBC category, there are 4 communities, including Gouda, Mali, Lohora and others.

Table 2.4: Household and Population Composition of Ethnic Groups in Timanpur Village

SL. No	Ethnic Groups	No. of Households				% to Total Households	Population				
		ST	SC	OBC	Total		ST	SC	OBC	Total	%
1	Gond	196	-	-	196	74.20%	973			973	73.90%
2	Ganda	-	3	-	3	1.10%	-	13		13	1.00%
3	Gouda	-	-	33	33	24.60%	-	-	331	331	25.10%
4	Lohar	-	-	2	2						
5	Mali	-	-	28	28						
6	Others (Job)	-	-	2	2						
Total		196	3	65	264	100.00 %	973	13	331	1317	100.00 %

Among the OBCs comprising 65 households, the Gouda forms the majority with 33 households. The Gonds are a numerically preponderant group in the village. Table below shows ethnic groups wise households and population composition of the study village Timanpur.

On the whole, the study covers two villages. Besides, observations were made in 3 villages from adjacent Gram Panchayats. As per our village survey 2021, in two study villages, out of the total 546 households, the ST constitutes 68.80 %, SC, 3.60 % and other castes, 27.60 %. In study villages, the households of Gonds constitutes 68.7%, Kalar, 13.6%, Gouda, 6.6%, similarly Mali, Ganda, Lohar and other castes, 5.5%, 4.0%, 1.3%, .4% respectively.

Table 2.5: Distribution of Households among different Ethnic groups in study villages

SL. No	Ethnic Groups / Community	Sonpur Village			Timanpur Village			Study Households	%
		ST	SC	OBC	ST	SC	OBC		
1	Gonds	179	-	-	196	-	-	375	68.7%
2	Kalar	-	-	74	-	-	-	74	13.6%
3	Gouda	-	-	3	-	-	33	36	6.6%
4	Mali	-	-	2	-	-	28	30	5.5%
5	Ganda	-	19		-	3	-	22	4.0%
6	Lohora			5			2	7	1.3%
7	Others (Job)						2	2	0.4%
8	Total Households	179	19	84	196	3	65	546	100%

Source: Village Survey, 2021

As per our village survey 2021, total population of both the study villages is 2718 and on the average, the size of ST population in these villages is around 1871. Similarly, total population in observed villages is reported to be 2515 and average size of ST population is 2061. The female population (1397) is higher than male population (1321) in the study villages and on the contrary, the male population (1273) is higher than the female (1242) in the observed villages. The table below presents that the ST households account for 68.7%, SC, 4.0% and OBC, 27.3% whereas at observed villages, the ST, SC and OBC households account for 79.3%, 8.3%

and 12.4%, respectively. Similarly, at observed villages, ST population accounts for 81.90 %, SC, 7.5.30 % and other castes, 10.60 %. Table below reflects data on ethnic distribution of households of the study and observed villages.

Table 2.6: Ethnic Group wise Gender, and Households distribution of Population in study villages

SL	GP	village	Category	Male	Female	Total population	%	House Holds	%
Study Village									
1	Kurabeda	Sonpur	ST	431	467	898	64.1%	179	63.5%
			SC	38	46	84	6.0%	19	6.7%
			OBC	225	194	419	29.9%	84	29.8%
			Population	694	707	1401	100%	282	100%
2	Timanpur	Timanpur	ST	456	517	973	73.9%	196	74.2%
			SC	8	5	13	1.0%	3	1.1%
			OBC	163	168	331	25.1%	65	24.6%
			Population	627	690	1317	100%	264	100%
	Total Study Popu- lation SC OBC Population		ST	887	984	1871	68.8%	375	68.7%
			46	51	97	3.6%	22	4.0%	
			388	362	750	27.6%	149	27.3%	
			1321	1397	2718	100%	546	100%	
Observation Village									
1	Ganjapara	Rajaputi	ST	226	238	464	63.1%	70	55.6%
			SC	76	84	160	21.8%	30	55.6%
			OBC	73	38	111	15.1%	26	20.6%
			Population	375	360	735	100%	126	100%
2	Ganjapara	Kusumpur	ST	600	583	1183	94.8%	219	95.2%
			SC	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0%
			OBC	35	30	65	5.2%	11	4.8%
			Population	635	613	1248	100%	230	
3	Kurabeda	Kurabeda	ST	203	211	414	77.8%	76	73.1%
			SC	14	14	28	5.3%	8	7.7%
			OBC	46	44	90	16.9%	20	19.2%
			Population	263	269	532	100%	104	100%
	Total Observed Population SC OBC Population		ST	1029	1032	2061	81.9%	365	79.3%
			90	98	188	7.5%	38	8.3%	
			154	112	266	10.6%	57	12.4%	
			1273	1242	2515	100%	460	100%	

Source: Village Survey, 2021

The study villages reveal a close link between a village and its Kuttul (sacred grove) and Pendrani Maa (guardian deity). These are the symbolic representation of Gond's village. While the Kuttul is the symbol of the village identity, Pendrani Gudi stands as the village guardian deity. The Gonds believe that their villages are not free from magical risks, and thus they are unprotected. The Gonds have strong faith on the village deity who can protect them from danger. The symbolic representation of the village guardian deity, Pendrani Maa, is first to be put up as a pillar during the establishment of a new village. The pillar is worshipped and later, Pendrani Gudi is developed as a village shrine.

Water source in study areas of Nabarangpur : The study villages in Raighara area of Nabarangpur are in the vicinity of the reserve forest, but there natural water sources like springs, streams and rivers are conspicuously absent. The water sources of the study villages include safe drinking water tank, tube wells and open wells and ponds. There are 4 tube wells at Sonpur village and 5 tube wells at Timanpur village. There are two ponds in the study villages. Dug wells and open wells are also available there. Ponds and open wells are used for the farming and other purposes.

92.1% people are dependant on the pipe water supply. Only 7.9% of Gonds use tube well and bore well water for drinking purpose. The area is rain fed. Due to lack of irrigation facilities in drought years crops are affected most. The table below indicates the sources of water in our study villages.

Table 2.7: Water Source in Study Villages

(N=38)

Villages	Magnitude	Pipe water	Tube well / bore well	Open well	Pond	Total HHs
1. Sonapur	Numbers	17	1	0	0	18
	Percentage	94.4	5.6			100%
2. Timanpur	Numbers	18	2	0	0	20
	Percentage	90	10			100%
Total	Numbers	35	3	0	0	38
	Percentage	92.1	7.9			100%

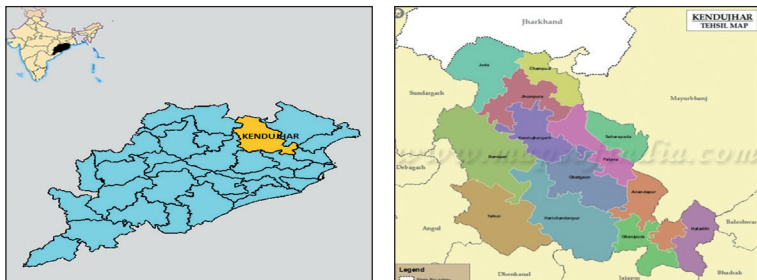
Source: SCSTRTI Field Survey, 2021

2.2.2 Study Area in Keonjhar District (Northern Odisha):

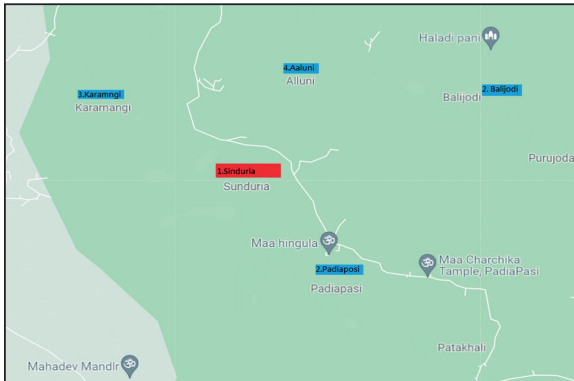
The district of Keonjhar is situated on the northern part of the State. It is surrounded by Jharkhand in the north, Jajpur district in the South, Dhenkanal and Sundargarh districts in the West, Mayurbhanj and Bhadrak districts in the East. The district lies between 350 11' and 860 22' longitude and 210 11' N and 220 10' N latitudes and situated around 480 feet above the sea level. The district occupies an area of 8303 sq kms out of which about 37.30 per cent of the area i.e. 3100 sq. kms is covered by forests of northern tropical moist deciduous type.

Keonjhar District has three sub divisions namely Anandpur, Champua and Keonjhar. There are 13 tahsils, 13 blocks, 297 GPs, 2132 villages, 4 Municipalities and 1 NAC functioning in the District. Part of the district (Champua and Keonjhar Sub Divisions) is covered under Scheduled Areas of Odisha. The district is a hilly tract and is home to about 55 tribal communities. The major tribes residing this district are Ho, Bhuiya, Gond, Bathudi, Sounti, Santal, Juang, Shabar and Bhumij. The Gond people settle down in a low land area of this district. Two Integrated Tribal Development Agencies (Keonjhar ITDA and Champua ITDA) are functioning in the district for socio-economic development of tribal people. The Juang and Paudi Bhuyan of the District have been identified as a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs). For socio-economic development of two PVTGs, Juang and Paudi Bhuyan, Government of Odisha has established two Micro Projects namely, Juang Development Agency (JDA) at Gonasika and Paudi Bhuyan Development Agency (PBDA) at Banspal.

Map showing location of Keonjhar District



Map showing location of study villages of Telkoi Block in Keonjhar District



Source: Google Map

Legend: Study Village and observation Villages are indicated in red and blue colour, respectively.

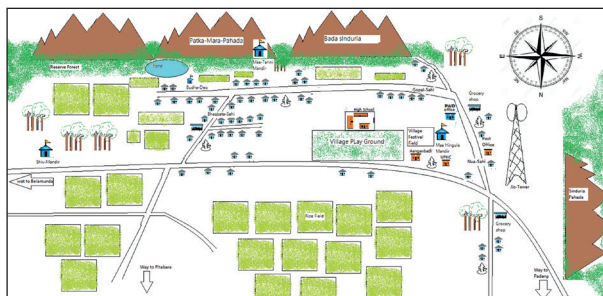
Telkoi C.D. Block is located in the northern part of Keonjhar district at a distance of 80 kms. from the district headquarters. It is surrounded by Bansapal and Harichandanpur blocks on the north, Harichandanpur block on the east, Dhenkanal district on the south and Angul district on the west. It is located in the Eastern Ghats highland of Odisha. The total geographical area of the Block is 559.49 sq. kms out of which 100.17 sq. kms. is forest area. There are 22 GPs, 145 villages and 17,679 families in this Block. The Scheduled Tribes of the Telkoi Block are Gond, Kolha, Bhyan, Juang, Saora, Santal, Bathudi, Munda, Kisan, Kora, Kandha, Ho, Koli, Malhar. Its total population is 95,718 including 47,631 males and 48,087 females. The sex ratio of population in the Block is 1,010. Its total literacy rate is 65.79%. The male literacy rate is 64.96% and the female literacy, 47.51%. Schedule Tribes (STs) of the block number 50,406 persons (52%) and Schedule Castes (SCs), 10,903 persons (11.4%) of total population (Census 2011).

The Telkoi block is covered by the Harichandanpur-Telkoi reserve forest. The hottest month is May (summer) with maximum mean temperature of 39° C and minimum mean temperature of 26°C. The coldest month is December (winter). The maximum mean temperature is recorded as 25° C while the minimum mean

temperature is 11°C. The average rain fall of the block is 18 mm. annually. Its flora comprises main species like shorea robusta, anogeissus lotifolio, terminalia crenulato, madhuca latifolia, diospyros melonoxylon, lannea coromandilica etc. Bamboo, sal, pia-sal, biyan, sanghvan mahula, kusum are the main trees found in the Telkoi block. Fruits like dates, mango, jackfruit, banana, palm trees are found in the forest. Its fauna consists of animals like bear, rabbit, rat, pig, bat, parrot, pigeon, elephant, dragon fish (magur, siali) and monkeys.

Study village profile (Sinduria): The Village Sinduria comes under Karamangi GP of Telkoi Block in Keonjhar District. The village is named after “Sinduria-Pahada”. It is located 30 kms away from the Telkoi Block headquarters and 80 kms from Keonjhar district headquarters. This village is situated in the middle of Harichandanpur-Telkoi reserve forest. The geo-coordinate of the village Sinduria is Latitude 21.206353 East and Longitude is 85.484830 East. The village lies 520 ft above the sea level. It is surrounded by Padiapasi (South), Alluni (East), Karamangi (North) villages as well as 3 hills named Patkamara Pahada, Bada Sinduria and Sinduria pahada. Sinduria has pucca road connectivity to the nearby hamlet and revenue villages. Village is surrounded by many paddy fields. The forest is enriched with flora and fauna and has variety of trees like mahul, sal, pia-sal, kaju, jack fruit and mango. The Mahul tree is the most important tree of the village. In the forest animals like Deer, rabbit, elephant, and monkey and forest pig are found in large numbers. Reptiles found are Naga, Dhamana etc.

Map showing the study village Sinduria in Telkoi Block of Keonjhra district



The village is protected by Goddesses Maa Hingula and Maa Mangala. Maa Tarini is enshrined in the Pataka Mara Pahadda. The village has Bhagbat Sahi, Gopal Sahi, Hadi Sahi and Nua Sahi. It has 5 tube wells, one High School, one Post-Office, one Aanganwadi Center and some grocery shops.

There are 160 households in this village. The STs with 80 households (50%) are the dominant groups followed by SCs (26.3%) and OBCs (23.8%). The total population of the village is 731, out of which 356 are males and 375 are females. The females outnumber the males. The ST population is more than half of the total population which is 50.1% followed by 30.1% OBC and 19.8% SC.

Table 2.9: Composition of Households & Population in Sinduria Village, Keonjhar

SL.	GP	village	Category	House holds	Population		
					Male	Female	Total
1	Karamangi of Telkoi Block, Keonjhar District	Sinduria	ST	80	187	179	366
			%	50	51.1	48.9	50.1
			SC	42	74	71	145
			%	26.3	51.0	49.0	19.8
			OBC	38	95	125	220
			%	23.8	43.1	56.9	30.1
TOTAL				160 (100%)	356 (48.7%)	375 (51.3 %)	731 (100%)

Source: SCSTRTI Survey, 2021

A sample of 30 households with 144 populations of Gonds has been surveyed in the study village. The sex ratio of Gond is 946 females per 1000 males. Among the total population, 49.3% people are in the working/productive age group between 18 and 45 years and 15.3% people are in between 25 and 60 years. While the share of population which crosses the 60 years age mark is 11.1% and the remaining 24.3 % are children below 18 years living in the village. It is found that the village has more than half of its population in its workforce. The Gond population structure in the village reveals that about 11% are old people and

24% are children, who need special development and health care. Table below shows the age-group wise classification of Gond population in the study village.

Table 2.10: Gond Population Structure of Study Village Sinduria (N=144 Population/30 HHs)

Sl. No	Gender	Above 60	Between 18-45	between 45-60	Between 0-18	Total
1	Male	9	37	12	16	74
	%	12.2	50	16.2	21.6	100
2	Female	7	34	10	19	70
	%	10	48.6	14.3	27.1	100
3	Total	16	71	22	35	144
	%	11.1	49.3	15.3	24.3	100

Source: SCSTRTI Survey, 2021

The study village have all categories of ethnic groups like STs (80 HHs/50 %), OBCs (42 HHs/(26.25%) and SCs (38 HHs/23.75%). The Gond and the Kolha are STs. The Gond with highest number of households (79) is the dominant tribal group of the village. There are 5 other communities such as Gouda, Mahanto (Kudumi), Kamara, Barika and Sundhi of OBC category. In this category, Gauda with highest number of households (30) is the dominant caste group. Two communities like Patratanti and Haddi who are the SCs live in this village. In the SC category, while the Patratanti caste has 37 households, Haddi caste has one household only. Thus the numerical preponderant groups of all categories in the village are Gond (ST), Patra Tanti (SC) and Gauda (OBC).

Traditionally, by their occupation, the Gonds are warriors and farmers, Kolhas are forest gleaners, Goudas are cattle herders, Mahantos are farmers, Kamars are the iron-smiths, Barikas are the barbers, Sundhis are wine makers, Patratantis are weavers and Haddis are drummers. The Haddis beat drums and perform in all the festivals and rituals of the villages. The population of Mahanto, Kamar, Sundhi, Barika and Kolha are numerically insignificant in the study village. They are not considered as the son of the soil as

they were bought to the village for rendering various services. The table below shows the ethnic composition of the study village.

Table 2.11: Ethnic Composition of study village, Sinduria
(N=160)

SL.	Caste	Ethnic Category	No. of Households	Traditional Occupation
1	Gond	ST	79	Warriors, Farmers
2	Kolha		1	Forest-Dwellers
Sub Total			80 (50 %)	-
3	Gauda	OBC	30	Milk-Man &Cattle Herders
4	Mahanto		5	Farmers
5	Kamara		3	Iron Smiths
6	Barika		3	Hair-cutters (Barber)
7	Sundhi		1	Alcohol- Makers (Distillers)
Sub Total			42 (26.25%)	-
8	Patra-Tanti	SC	37	Weavers
9	Haddi		1	Drummers & Sweepers
Sub Total			38 (23.75%)	-
Total Households			160	

Source: SCSTRTI Survey, 2021

Water sources in the study villages of Keonjhar: The village Sinduria of Telkoi, Keonjhar district has good drinking water system. The village has a PWD water supply office provided by the State Govt. Our Investigation reveals that safe drinking water through pipe water is available for 100% people. There are 7 numbers of bore wells in the village. There are two ponds in the village the water of which is used for the rituals and daily use purposes. The pond is used by 56.7% of people. For the agriculture and allied activities the villagers mainly depend on rain water. Sometimes, the well is used for the irrigation purposes. Table below shows the different kinds of water sources in the study village.

Table 2.12: Water source in the study village (N=30)

Village	Magnitude	Pipe water	Tube well / bore well	Open wells	Ponds	Total HHs
Sinduria	Numbers	30	28	3	17	30
	Percentage	100.0	93.3	10	56.7	100.0

Source: SCSTRTI Survey, 2021

2.3 Housing Pattern:

2.3.1 Housing Pattern of Sonpur & Timanpur villages in Nabarangpur District:

The aforesaid two study villages- Sonpur & Timanpur of Nabarangpur district are purely Gonds inhabited villages. Usually, Gonds avoid living with the other communities. They prefer an independent dwelling area as far as feasible. When they live with others, they share the settlement with service castes like Gouda, Ganda, Lohar etc., by observing distance from their dwellings.

A typical Gond village has several hamlets. Each consists of homesteads that houses extended families. Gond people live in clusters. Each village has about 196 Gond huts and is surrounded by their agricultural fields. Their villages are about four kilometers away from one another. In planning of a Gond settlement, the houses are arranged and constructed in a linear pattern as an ethnic marker. As a result of the increasing population and expansion of families, the random distribution of big houses becomes essential. With the passage of time they started decreasing the linear type of houses with kitchen garden, cattle shed and front court yard. Now their houses in a settlement are scatteredly distributed.

The Gonds plan and design their houses as per their socio-cultural necessity. In the past, before a house is constructed the Gonds used to consult their foreteller. Usually, houses are rectangular shaped, built of mud and thatch or even earthen tiles. Before construction of a new house the Gonds choose an auspicious place. The four corners of the selected place are smeared with water soaked un-boiled rice and in the eastern side an auspicious pole is installed by the Pujari (priest). Before installation of the pole, the Pujari worships and ties mango leaves around the pole, breaks a coconut and pours rice, dal, green grass and milk in the hole. There incense sticks and resins are offered. The house-plan is designed so as to ensure that its entrance faces towards any direction except to the north. The Gonds believe that north is inauspicious because the head of dead is kept in north direction for cremation.

Traditionally, there is a prime importance of east side in the Gond culture. Houses face to the east side. In the past the Gond houses were mostly kaccha and thatched structures built with clay, sand and rock pieces. The roofs were made of chhapara (walisi in Gondi). The floor was made of clay and mud. Cow dunk paste was used to paint on the floors. A white rock was used to paint the houses. The length of the house is usually varied between 10ft-14ft, and the breadth, between 8ft-12ft. The height of the house was 7ft approximately. The door of the house was 4-5ft. and there was no window. Only a small ventilator was there in the house for passage of air. The kitchen room is separately built besides the house. A cow plays very prominent role in the Gond community. From agriculture and allied activities to performance of the rituals of the Gond community the cow plays a big role. Therefore, the cattle shed was attached to the house in the past.

The modern Gond houses are constructed using bricks, cement and clay. The length of the houses varies from 15ft to 18ft and the breadth, from 12ft to 14ft. The roofs of the modern houses are thatched with country tiles (khapara) or GI sheets (tina). Generally, the colour of the houses is blue. And there is a "Verranda" surrounding the house. The kitchen and cattle shed are still there like that of the old house. There is a rack inside the house to store household articles. The doors of the houses are made of wood and black in colour. Cow dunk paste is still used to paint the ground floor. Now a-days, Gonds put the official flag and logo of the Gond community on the walls of their houses.

The homestead consists of a living room, kitchen, veranda and a special room for women to use during menstruation period. Every house has a shrine for clan god in one corner of a room. Besides dwellings, it contains stables and sheds. Their house building materials are made up of locally available resources like loamy soil, bricks, wood, and bamboo shafts. The houses of Gond contain little furniture like cots and a few wooden stools. Also mats are used for sitting and sleeping purposes. Majority of Gonds are relatively poor farmers or agricultural labourers. They

have few material possessions. The kitchen contains cooking utensils, brass and earthenware pots and baskets for storage. To-day, well-to-do Gonds build their houses out of stone and furnish them well.

As regards to the types of houses, a majority of 55.3% Gond households have kutcha houses. While 15.8 % households have pucca houses, the remaining 28.9% households have semi pucca houses. The semi pucca houses are made of sand, bricks and cement with tile roof. The table below indicates house types of Gond in the study villages of Nabarangpur district.

Table 2.13: Gonds House Types in Study villages (N=38)

Villages	Magnitude	Kutcha	Pucca	Semi-Pucca	Total HHs
1. Sonpur	Numbers	12	2	4	18
	Percentage	66.7	11.1	22.2	100%
2.Timanpur	Numbers	9	4	7	20
	Percentage	45.0	20.0	35.0	100%
Total	Numbers	21	6	11	38
	Percentage	55.3	15.8	28.9	100%

Source: SCSTRTI Field Survey, 2021

It is seen that 97.4% households have electric facilities. Table below reveals the availability of electricity facilities in the Gond households in the study villages.

Table 2.14: Electricity Facility in Study villages (N=38)

Villages	Magnitude	Having Electricity	Not Having Electricity	Total HHs
Sonapur	Numbers	18		18
	Percentage	100		100%
Timanpur	Numbers	19	1	20
	Percentage	95.0	5.0	100%
Total	Numbers	37	1	38
	Percentage	97.4	2.6	100%

Source: SCSTRTI Field Survey, 2021

2.3.2 Housing Pattern in Sinduria village of Keonjhar District:

The houses of Gond are located in a scattered manner without any symmetrical order. A few numbers of houses, which are in linear mode, face the street of the village. Many houses have been constructed in their own land separately. Their houses have been constructed with North-South, East-West orientation. According to them, the 1st door of the house should be opened in east direction. They live with their kin groups.

The Gond house has a rectangular ground plan. The house has a boundary wall and reflects their financial status. Most of the houses have thatched roofs. Some households have pucca houses with cemented floors and walls with tiled Jhikar Sit and concrete roof. Some Gond houses are L-Shaped. A big house has 4 rooms, each room measuring about 8' to 10', in length and about 6' to 8' in width, but it varies from room to room. There is a small room of about 5' to 6' length and 4' to 6' width. In this type of houses, the first room is called Bata Ghar. The second room, called Bhadi Ghar is used for the purpose of storing grains and performing rituals and worships. Generally, sleeping is not allowed at Bhadighar. The third room is little bigger than the second room, which is used for sleeping with a window for ventilation. The fourth one is used as kitchen room. It is located beside the sleeping room. It is seen that if family is large, then the Bhadighar is also used for sleeping purpose. Socio-religious functions are performed in Bhadi Ghar and sometimes in the kitchen room. Household deities are worshipped in the Bhadi Ghar. Ancestors' worship is done inside the kitchen.

However, most of the Gond families live in two roomed houses, in which bigger room is for sleeping purpose and smaller room is used as kitchen. All the kitchen rooms have at least one window for ventilation. Some houses are rectangular shaped having 3 side closed and one side is open. Kitchen garden is located towards the open side. The houses are enclosed within wooden fences.

There are verandahs or pinda at both outside of the house

entrance and outside of all the rooms. The verandah space is mostly used for sitting or other household works. There is no single house without verandah. The members of the house sit, gossip and sleep on the verandah. The height of the verandah is above 1 foot, length 10' to 30' feet and width 1.5' to 2.5'.

It is observed that some households have kitchen gardens inside the wooden fence or side of the house. In the kitchen garden, they used to grow vegetables such as papaya, pumpkin, ladies finger, kalara (bitter gourd), jhudung (beans), garlic, ginger, turmeric etc. Besides the kitchen garden or in front of houses they have animal sheds where the animals like goat, cow and sheep, poultry birds etc. are kept.

For the construction of a house materials, like wood, wooden poles, mud, straw, bata (bamboo slit), siali rope, wood slit, wooden bar, jhikar or tile are used. For the construction of pucca house, well-to-do families use materials such as brick, cement, sand, iron, etc. Most of the construction materials like wood, bamboo, fiber for ropes, stone, etc. are available in the nearby forest.

For construction of a house, the ritual for laying foundation is done by the household head. A sacred wooden pole, bound with mango leaf and a new cloth with thread are wrapped around the pole is planted. The household head (father or mother) offers coconut and worships the deities. Thereafter, foundation work starts. Usually the super structure of the house rests on six wooden poles. The walls are made of mud which support to the super structure. Before construction they make a skeleton of house using wood. Mud is plastered on the wall structure. Sun dried bricks are also used to make walls of the house. At the middle of roof, its height is maximum and then slope begins. The roof is made of wood splits, wooden bars, bamboo splits and straw. They use locally made Jhikar or tile for the roof. The walls and floors are plastered with cow dung, white mud and wall paintings are made for making the house attractive. The doors are made of wood caeved with designs.

When construction of house is completed, they consult a Brahman and fix a date for its inauguration or first entrance to the new house. Brahman and Barika are invited by the head of the house. The Brahman priest performs the homo to make the new house auspicious for peaceful living. On this day every one of the family wear new cloths. Brahman and Barik also get new cloths and paid their remunerations which varies from Rs 2000/- to 3000/- and 1500/ to 2000/- rupees, respectively. After completion of the worship, the prasad (religious food) is distributed among all. Then the Gond family members can enter and live in that new house.

The following table represents types of houses in the study village. The study village has three main types of houses in the village i.e. kutchra, pucca and semi pucca. The table shows that the study village has 66.7% kutchra, 20% pucca and only 13.3% semi pucca households in the village.

Table 2.15: House Types of Sinduria Village (N=30)

Sl.No	Village		Kutchra	Pucca	Semi-Pucca	Total
1	Sinduria	Numbers	4	6	20	30
2		Percentage	13.3	20	66.7	100%

Source: SCSTRTI Field survey, 2021

Electricity:

The study village is covered under the national solar power village scheme. Table below reveals that all the Gond households of Sinduria village have been electrified.

Table 2.16: Electricity Facility in Study village Sinduria (N=30)

Villages	Magnitude	HHs Having Electricity	HHs Not Having Electricity	Total HHs
Sinduria	Numbers	30	0	30
	Percentage	100	0	100

Source: SCSTRTI Field Survey, 2021

2.4 Household Articles:

2.4.1 Household Articles in the study villages of Nabarangpur district:

For the information and communication purpose, only 73.7% households have TVs in their houses and 86.8% households have mobile phones and fans as well. For the transport, 31.6% households have motor bikes and 94.7% households own bicycles. Under Ujjala Yojana 88.9% of households have been provided with cooking gas. Though covered under Ujjala Yojana, most of the Gond households are still using firewoods collected from the forest. The Gonds living style is simple. Therefore, there are no ACs, Coolers or other luxurious items and valuable assets in their households. The table below shows the modern assets owned by Gond households of the study villages.

Table 2.17: Household assets of the study village (N=38)

Villages	Magnitude	TV	Motor-Bike	Cycle	Mobile	Fan	Cooking Gas
1. Sonapur	Numbers	10	5	17	15	16	6
	Percentage	55.6	27.8	94.4	83.3	88.9	33.3
2. Timan-pur	Numbers	18	7	19	18	17	10
	Percentage	90	35	95	90	85	55.6
Total	Numbers	28	12	36	33	33	16
	Percentage	73.7	31.6	94.7	86.8	86.8	88.9

Source: SCSTRTI Field Survey, 2021

“Grooving soil for cultivation is done by iron ploughshare. A few of them are experts in preparing agricultural implements like wooden ploughs, leveling bars, threshing poles, de-husking platform and balancing bar for lifting and transportation. They purchase sickle, crowbar, spike and spade and also seeds from local market. The village cattle herds are grazed and kept in field during lean season”. (Panda & Sahoo, 2012:9).

2.4.2 Household Articles in study village of Keonjhar district:

The following table represents the modern household assests owned by the Gonds of Sinduria village. Gond people from

93.3% households use mobile phone, 83.30% households use TV, 86.60 % households use Fan and 76.60% use Gas.

Table 2.18: Household assets of the study village (N=30)

Villages	Magnitude	TV	Motor-Bike	Bicycle	Mobile	Fan	Gas
Sinduria	Numbers	25	5	10	28	26	23
	Percentage	83.3	16.6	33.3	93.3	86.6	76.6

Source: SCSTRTI Field Survey, 2021

The following table indicates the household articles possessed by Gonds in Sinduria village in Telkoi area of Kenojhar district.

Table 2.19: Household assets of the study village (N=30)

Local names of Articles	English Term	Material Used	Uses
Handi	Pot	Aluminum	Storing Water
Kadei	Frying Pan	Aluminum	Frying food, Curry
Tawa	Tawa	Aluminum, Iron	Roti Making, Fish Fry
Balti	Bucket	Plastic, Aluminum	Water storing
Gora	Water Storage Pot	Aluminum	Storage for drinking water
Bada Dekchi	Bigger Pot	Aluminum	Cooking Rice
Dekchi	Small Pot	Aluminum	Cooking Dal
Thali	Plate	Steel	Eating Rice, Dal, Curry and Fried foods
Gina / Tatia	Bowl	Steel	Eating Curry, Fry
Kansa	Big Bowl	Steel, Bronze,	Eating Pakhala (watered rice)
Nata/ Dhala	Small Pot	Steel, Copper, Aluminum	Washing feet of guests with water , toilet washing
Chatu	Spoon	Steel, Aluminum	Stirring rice/ Curry fry
Glass	Glass	Steel, Copper, Plastic	To drink water
Mug	Mug	Plastic	To take Bath
Kula	Kula	Bamboo	To shake rice to clean
Pai	Traditional Measuring Pot	Copper	To measure rice, paddy
Panaki	Iron Knife	Iron	To cut vegetables, Spinach
Dauli or Daa	Sickle	Iron blade with wood handle	Paddy plant cutting

Kodi	Spade	Iron blade with long wooden handle	To dig soil in kitchen garden or in agricultural land
Sabala	Crow bar	Long iron rod with one end sharpened	To dig soil
Juadi	Yoke	Wood	Wooden beam normally used for fastening a pair of oxen during ploughing
Langala	Plough	Wood & Iron blade	For tilling the soil
Mohi	Earth leveler	Wood	Earth leveling after ploughing
Duli	Paddy Storage Bin	Bamboo	Storage bin plastered with cow dung & sundried for preservation of paddy
Basta	Paddy storage gunny bag	Jute/Polythin thread bag	To store grain
Dhenki	Paddy Dehusking Lever	Wood & Iron	To extract rice out of paddy

2.5 Sanitation, disease and treatment:

To attain good health Gond people need to cultivate certain habits. Sanitation is an integral part of healthy living and deals with cleanliness of their body, house, village and surroundings. The Gonds practice certain sanitary habits relating to personal hygiene, environmental cleanliness, drainage, disposal of human excreta and cow dungs and control of diseases as follows.

Among the Gonds, the health and diseases are concerned with the proper functioning of the body. A healthy person seems to do his or her routine work without exhaustion. He/she needs to take proper diet and perform work with maximum efficiency to be considered as a healthy person. Any person with physical abnormality like paralysis, polio etc is considered to be ill. If a person is unable to do routine work with maximum efficiency, lacking concentration, losing appetite and feeling lazy then he is also considered ill. Health and illness are related to many factors like climatic change, improper food intake, unhygienic living conditions, intake of stale food, animal bites, etc. Unsatisfied soul of dead ancestors, clan deities, evil intrusions, sorcerer's witchcraft

are also believed to be the cause of illness (Tejashwee, Pradhan and Deshlahara, 2016: Pp. 27-28) .

Given in the following is the situation on sanitation disease and treatment as found among the Gond community in the in Study villages.

2.5.1 Sanitation, disease and treatment in Study villages in Nabarangpur:

Sanitation: Regarding sanitation facilities the Gond villages do not have drainage system. The agrarian Gonds use pits for dumping cow dungs, straws, grass and debris. Bathing near the water stand posts often makes the area muddy and dirty. Animal sheds close to the houses during rains become breathing grounds for mosquitoes and malaria. About 47% houses do not have bathrooms. 26.5 % households have bathrooms, but they do not use these. Therefore, Gonds of 63.5 % households take bath either in the village pond or tube well or even water tap post. The table below shows availability of bathrooms in Gond houses and their use.

Table 2.20: Availability & use of Bathrooms by Gond Households (N=38)

Villages		Bathroom not-available	Bathroom available and used	Bathroom available but not used
Sonapur	Numbers	7	4	7
	Percentage	38.9	36.4	63.6
Timanpur	Numbers	11	6	3
	Percentage	55	66.7	33.3
Total	Numbers	18	10	10
	Percentage	47%	26.5	26.5

Source: SCSTRTI Field Survey, 2021

Most of the Gond households (76.5 %) have been provided with toilet facilities in their houses. Their members use toilets. Besides, 21 % households have toilets, but they do not use these. About 10.5% houses do not have toilets. Therefore, Gond people of 31.5 % households go to nearby jungle or filed for defecation. The

table below shows availability and use of toilet facilities in Gond households.

Table 2.21: Availability & use of Toilets by Households

(N=38)

Villages		Toilet not available	Toilet available and use	Toilet available but not used
Sonapur	Numbers	1	12	5
	Percentage	5.6	70.6	29.4
Timanpur	Numbers	3	14	3
	Percentage	15	82.4	17.6
Total	Numbers	4	26	8
	Percentage	10.5	76.5	21

Source: SCSTRTI Field Survey, 2021

Gonds take bath daily. Most of them use soaps for bath weekly or fortnightly or as and when required. Women take head bath once in a month. The house surroundings are kept neat and clean by womenfolk. The study village do not have washerman and barber. So the Gond people wash their clothes with washing soap and cut their hair themselves.

Disease & Treatment: Though the body structure of the Gond people appears to be healthy, they are not free from diseases. They suffer from diseases like malaria, scabies, tuberculosis and digestive tract diseases. The incidence of disease is relatively more among the children, women and old persons. Generally, the Gonds ignore their small ailments such as cold, cough and fever. Only when a disease continues for a long period, they go to local Gond traditional healers. Only in cases of serious health problems, they go to the Government dispensaries and prefer to take injections and modern medicines for cure. Common disease of this area especially among the Gonds is skin disease. Most of the Gond people are seen with patches of itch on some part of the body. Generally, this disease is found more among adults than among children. In the past small pox was common in an epidemic form and used to take a heavy toll of lives in the village and the neighbourhood. With the introduction of small pox vaccination

in the locality, the incidence of the disease is reduced to a few cases. The Gonds consider the disease of small pox as a symbol of the wrath of village deity and refuse to give any medicine to the affected persons. Rather, they prefer to undergo a ritual for appeasement of the village deity.

During field study the researchers interacted with one traditional medicine man, namely Ramachandra Majhi (Markam Gotra), aged about 60 years of Rajaputi village of Ganjapara GP in Raighar Block of Nabarangpur district. He has acquired the traditional knowledge for treatments of all diseases, but he has specialization on snake bite, diarrhoea and bone setting.

Snake bites: First, the medicine man tests the pulse of patient's hand and examines the patient's condition. In the area where the snake bites, the snake teeth are extracted with the help of a long hair. Then the snake's venom is removed by mouth. During this time, the medicine man has khaini (dhungia) inside his mouth. Once the patient is well, the coconut, ripe banana, lamps etc. are given to the medicine man for worship with the belief that this will prevent the future snake bite.

Loose motion: It is treated with a mixture of raw banana paste and molasses.

Bone settings: If bones of hands and feet are broken, it is treated with application of a paste of jungle roots (not disclosed) and wrapped by clothes. The medicine man does not receive any remuneration for this service because he believes that this medicine does not work by getting paid for it. Only one bottle of mahuli wine and 10/- rupees is accepted for worship of deity.

Herbal Medicines: They collect roots and tubers which are not only used as food but also for medicinal purposes. Traditional medicine in Gond community relies on the use of local plants and herbs to cure a number of ailments. Local healers rely on ancient palm leaf texts to make prescriptions, which combine the use of these natural medicines with specific rites to effect a cure.

2.5.2 Sanitation disease and treatment in the Study village in Keonjhar:

Sanitation: The study village Sinduria does not have proper drainage system. As a result, during and after the rainy season the roads get muddy and it becomes difficult to use the road. As regards use of bathrooms, in our sample of 30 Gond households, 15 (50 %) have bathroom facilities and the remaining 15 (50%) do not have it. Out of 15 households having bathrooms, 9 (60%) use their bathrooms and the remaining 6 (40 %) do not use the same. Therefore, on the whole members of 21 households, including 6 households having and 15 households' not-having bathrooms, prefer to go to ponds and pipe posts for bathing. Table below shows availability of bathrooms and extent of their use in the study village.

Table 2.22: Existence of Bathrooms and Extent of their use in the Study village (N=30Hhs.)

Villages		Bathroom not available	Bathroom available	Bathroom available and used	Bathroom available but not used
Sinduria	Numbers	15	15	9	6
	%	50.0	50.0	60.0	40.0

Source: SCSTRTI Field Survey, 2021

As regards use of toilets, out of 30 Gond households, 22 (73.3 %) have toilets and the rest 8 (26.7 %) do not have toilets. Out of 22 households having toilets, while 17 (77.3 %) households use the same and the remaining 5 (22.7 %) do not use of their toilets. The table below gives a picture of existing toilets and the extent of their use.

Table 2.23: Existence of toilets and Extent of their Use in Study village Sinduria (N=30Hhs.)

Villages		Toilet not available	Toilet available	Toilet available and used	Toilet available but not used
Sinduria	Numbers	8	22	17	5
	%	26.7	73.3	77.3	22.7

Source: SCSTRTI Field Survey, 2021

Disease and treatment: The study village in Keonjhar is facilitated with an ANM Sub Centre. It is providing primary health care facilities to the villagers and schools students as well. The Gond community of the village is well aware about the hygiene and diseases. The common diseases among the Gond tribe are cold, cough and normal fever. Beside that, some people suffer from high level sugar and diabetes. During the study period there were 10 pregnant women in the village and none of them are found suffering from malnutrition.

According to elder people of the study village, in the past, there was a traditional 'Baidya' in the nearby village, who was providing treatment to the villagers. He was giving medicines like, "Dakharista" for body pain, "Ashokarista" for strength, "Murtyu khya", for strong body, "Bhaskar Labana" for digestion and the like.

At present there is a Baidya namely Shree Raghunath Hembram at the village Aaluni of Karmangi GP, of Telkoi block in Kendujhar district. This village is located at a distance of 10 kms. approximately from the study village. The Baidya collects branches, leaves, flowers, fruits of trees from the forest and use it for the treatment for people. Every day he provides treatment to 15-20 peoples including Gonds. The time for treatment starts from morning at 5 a.m. to late evening. Among his treatments mention may be made about diseases like malakantaka, diabetes, jaundice, paralysis, snake bite and dog bite, etc.

ECONOMIC LIFE

Economy is the base of all activities in human life and living. Like most of the tribes, the Gonds depend mainly on their age old traditional agriculture besides forest and forest produce. To start with let us read the riddle on history of Gond economy below.

“Uthle Gond Chhatar Teke,
Basle Gond Patar Bike”. (Gondi)
“Prospective Gonds put on royal crowns,
Work-shy Gonds live on forest means.”

(English Translation)

The above riddle is a common usage among the elderly Gonds. It reflects Gonds' history of occupational change from the prestigious royal position to the low status of marginalized forest forager. In the past the Gonds were not only the village and regional chiefs, but also were Kings of the state. In course of time they were defeated by Hindu, Mogal and Maratha rulers and lost their royal position. The then socio-political milieu forced them to be the forest dwellers and adopt forest economy and cultivation. Their economic conditions weakened and they depended on forest collections and cultivation to eke out their livelihood. At present the Gonds tribe is a peasant community. They work mostly in forest environment for sustenance. Their subsistence agrarian economy is supplemented by wage labour, forestry, livestock, hunting, household industry and other economic activities.

The findings of an investigation in Nuapada district of Odisha present a brief sketch of the economic conditions of the Gonds as follows. Nuapada district is a hilly area. The Gond people settle down in the low land areas of this district. Their economic condition bases upon three categories. First category – the higher

class Gond people, those depend upon different seasonal and non-seasonal agricultural activities, the second category – they basically depend upon cattle herding, and the third category depends upon the forest products and activities like – collection of honey, medicinal plants, roots and also hunting and fishing that contribute but sparsely to the food supply and they belong to the labour class who often work in other's plough field on the basis of daily wage. The female members of the family engage themselves with spinning of yarns from the bark-fibre of a deciduous flowering shrub, colourings with vegetable and other natural dye, and weave clothes, which are both durable and artistic in effects. They also prepare handicrafts like bamboo jar and some pots, with expertise, which is made from the leaves of different type of plants; the local market are very much favourable to them to sell their products and earn some money (Mendaly, 2015).

Most of the Gonds are agriculturists and choose to live on the riverbeds close to forests. Most of them possess agricultural lands. Those who have a good portion of the land cultivate rice, maize, jawar (cereals) and green dal (pulses). Tending goats and cattle are also common. Poor Gonds work in the fields of the richer Gonds. There is not much work available for them except in farming seasons. If at all there is any work, men and women get the lowest wage. They love hunting and wild meats are their favorites, but restrictions of forest department against hunting have deprived them of such activities. With this summary of Gonds livelihood, the following discussions highlight on Gond economy as observed in the present study and previous works of other researchers.

3.1 Workforce/ Division of labour:

Previously only older women were allowed to go for the labour works. Now, the modern young Gond women are allowed to go for the outside works. Most of their women are engaged in agricultural labour and forest collections.

According to the 1961 Census, 62.03% of the Gonds were workers, the figures for males and females being 65.19% and 58.83%, respectively. The high participation rate of females indi-

cated that women also worked along with their men to maintain family. Among the workers 61.47% were cultivators while in the total population of Gonds they constituted 38.13%. The number of total workers (2 27 500) exceeded the total working age group population, which indicated that the children and students might be included as the workers.

As per 2011 Census among the Gonds of Odisha, the workforce numbered 4 57 458 persons, out of which 2 54 785 (55.7%) were males and 2 02 673 (44.3%) were females. Among them 2 21 531 (48.4%) were main workers and 2 35 927 (51.6%), marginal workers. Except 1971 census, there was a phenomenal increase of Gonds workforce over different successive Censuses. Over a period of 5 decades (from 1960 to 2011) the Gond workforce became doubled in number, from 2 27 500 in 1961 to 4 57 458 in 2011. Table below presents data on Gonds workforce in the state during different Censuses.

Table 3.1.1: Work Force of Gonds of Odisha during successive Censuses

Workers	Census Year					
	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
Total	227500	159468	281772	338358	386221	457458
	100	100	100	100	100	100
Male	142988	146254	185948	210079	221083	254785
	62.9	91.7	66.0	62.1	57.2	55.7
Female	84512	13214	95824	128279	165138	202673
	37.1	8.3	34.0	37.9	42.8	44.3
Main Workers	NA	NA	225252	271918	213457	221531
	NA	NA	79.9	80.4	55.3	48.4
Marginal Workers	NA	NA	56520	66440	172764	235927
	NA	NA	20.1	19.6	44.7	51.6
Working Age Group (WAG) Population	193838	203329	323868	412445	440030	NA
WAG Population – Total Workers	33662	43861	42096	74087	53809	NA

Source: Census of India 1961, 1971, 1981, 1991, 2001 & 2011

N.B: Working Age Group Population for 1961 & 1971=15-44 yrs, For 1981, 1991 & 2001=15-59 yrs.

It is observed during the field study in Nabarangpur district that out of the 231 Gond persons in our study villages, only 126 (59.2%) are workers and 105 (40.8%) are non-workers including children, students, housewives and old persons. Among the workers, 116 (92.1 %) persons are farmers and agricultural labourers and 10 (7.9 %) are service holders.

Table 3.1.2: Workers & Dependents among Gonds in the Study villages of Nabarangpur district

SL. No	Age Classification	Agriculture Labour/ Farmer	Students	House-Wife/ Non- Working Group	Service	Total Population
1	Above 60	7		3		11
2	Percentage	3.3		1.4		5.2
3	Between 45-60	45		17	6	68
4	Percentage	21.1		8.0	2.8	31.9
5	between 18-45	59	9	3	4	75
6	Percentage	27.7	4.2	1.4	1.9	35.2
7	Between 0-18	5	29	25		59
8	Percentage	2.3	13.6	11.7		27.7
9	Grand Total	116	39	48	10	213
10	Percentage	54.5	18.3	22.5	4.7	100.00

Source: Field Study in Nabarangpur district, SCSTRTI, 2021

These dependents are of three categories - 1. old persons, 2. school going children and 3. children below 6 years. Every child above the age of 8 years is a contributor to the family income. Though everyone in the family works, the economic conditions of most of the families remain poor. The children seem to work but usually they do not show interest in the work. Some of the Government officials and outsiders who are in touch with Gonds are of the opinion that most of the later are work-shy. If there is a plateful of meal for 'today' they do not seem interested to work for future. They waste most of their earnings on the expensive mahua liquor, which is a regular habit of their daily life.

Generally, the women do housework, such as sweeping the house, fetching water, cooking, caring for children, going to the forest to fetch firewood and men go to the market to buy

household items. The men plough on the farmland and the women do the planting and picking up the grass on the land. Cutting and bringing the paddy from the farm to harvesting floor on their head or shoulders is done by both men and women.

Hard works like land preparation, leveling, spraying and water management is the concern of males in paddy and maize cultivation. Also women folk plays a greater role in the agriculture sector. The agricultural practices like transplanting, weeding, harvesting is done by women in the field. In paddy, maize and vegetable cultivation, the engagement of Gond labour is as high as 80% and womens' participation in agriculture is about 50%.

Out of the total 136 Gond persons in the study village of Keonjhar district, 91 (66.9 %) are workers and 45 (33.1 %) are non-workers. The workforce among the males comprises of 85.7 % and among the females, 83.3 %. Among the workers, 47.1 % are farmers/agricultural labours, 7.4 % are service holders, who are engaged in the Govt. and private jobs in various sectors like teaching, construction and administration and 12.5 % are wage labours including the migrants. Besides, among all persons 34 (25 %) are students, who at times help in the agricultural fields of their families. Table No. 3.1.3 & its relating Table No. 3.1.4 show the work force of the study village.

Table 3.1.3: Workers & Dependents among Gonds in the Study village of Keonjhar district (N=136)

SL. No	Age Classification	Agricultural Labour/ Farmer	House wife/ Non-Working Group	Student	Service	Wage Labour	Total Population
1	Above 60 Yrs	11	4			1	16
2	Percentage	8.1	2.9			0.7	11.8
5	45-60Yrs	16	2		1	3	22
6	Percentage	11.8	1.5		0.7	2.2	16.2
3	18-45Yrs	37	3	9	9	13	71
4	Percentage	27.2	2.2	6.6	6.6	9.6	52.2
7	0-18Yrs		2	25			27
8	Percentage		1.5	18.4			19.9
9	Grand Total	64	11	34	10	17	136
10	Percentage	47.1	8.1	25	7.4	12.5	100

Source: SCSTRTI Field Survey, 2021

Table 3.1.4: Gond Male & Female Participation in Work Force, Keonjhar District

Sl. No	Gender	Farmer/ Agricultural Labour	Service	Wage Labour (Migrant Included)	Non Working Group	Student	Total Workers (Col. 3+4+5)	Total Population
1	Male	29	15	16	3	7	60	70
	%	21.3	11.0	11.8	2.2	5.1	85.7	
2	Female	35	19	1	8	3	55	66
	%	25.7	14.0	0.7	5.9	2.2	83.3	
Total Population		64	34	17	11	10	91	136
%		47.1	25	12.5	8.1	7.4	66.9	100

Source: SCSTRTI Field Survey, 2021

In the Gond economy the family is the unit of production. All the members of the family whether husband or wife, parents or children together form the workforce. The allocation of labour and decision for food quest are taken at the family level. They get the co-operation of individual of other households too. Some of the children go to the field and help their parents in the house work and collection of various fruits from the village forest. The youth take part in their agricultural operations to help their parents in preparing field, sowing, harvesting etc. While the women engage themselves in harvesting crops, the old men and old women stay at home. The whole family works for its livelihood. The role of youths, both male and female, is most important during the time of agricultural operations. Thus, the family plays a significant role in their agro- economy.

The co-cooperativeness that characterizes the activities of the Raj Gond of Keonjhar constitutes one of the most striking aspects of their pattern of labour. Many types of works are done by them collectively or in a group. Their economy is rooted through community relations. The village community as a whole can easily be regarded as a co-operative unit. The villagers have close economic relations. Most of them have economic interests in common like grazing the cattle, working in agricultural fields etc. The young boys of the village go with their cattle jointly especially for security. At the time of transplantation of paddy their singing rows can be seen in the muddy fields. They transplant in each other's

fields on a reciprocal basis. In this co-operative work, kinship plays a very crucial role. The Gond's kins men co-operate in various sets of agricultural works.

3.2 Agriculture:

Agricultural Practices among the Gonds of Raighar in Nowrangpur:

In the past, the Gonds were mostly a race of hunter-gatherers and practised rudimentary agriculture and pastoral activity. After the annihilation of the forest and restrictions on hunting, the Gonds have been compelled to change their food habit in last few decades. They have now taken up settled cultivation of paddy and other millets in low land and are producing most food items while continuing with forest collection. Although they cultivate rice as their staple food item, they grow maize, millets and suan (a kind of millet), etc.

Now, Gonds are settled agriculturists. Prior to the settled cultivation, they were the lords of the thick forest living by hunting and food gathering. The opening of improved means of communications followed by constant interaction with the plains people inculcated in them a desire for a settled life by putting an end to their wandering life. However, they do not remember when they actually took up settled cultivation. But it is almost definite that they have moved from the food gathering stage to settled agriculture. (Hassan, Vol. I, Bombay: 1920,p. 229).

Agriculture forms the core of Gond's economic life. Most of them possess privately owned agricultural land. Paddy and maize are their principal crops. Besides, they do vegetable cultivation in the backward. Both men and women participate in the family agricultural work. Agricultural operations, which require hard work, like ploughing, digging, thrashing and such other works are done by men. Women help them in lighter agricultural operations such as weeding, crop cutting etc.

They use bullocks and plough for tilling the soil. Before they till the land, some grains, fowls and pigs are sacrificed as a token of

reverence to the presiding deity and ancestral spirits. Blood of the sacrificed animals is smeared and sprinkled on the seeds which are distributed among the villagers. They sow these ritualised seeds in their ritually purified fields for bumper crops. They mainly produce rice. Besides rice cultivation, a few of them grow potatoes, tomatoes, brinjals, beans, leafy vegetables, maize, small millets, ragi, mustard, black gram (mung), horse gram, etc. All crops including cereals and pulses are cultivated in rainfed fields. Generally they consume vegetables. Occasionally, they sell vegetables for cash to meet other household needs. They are multi-crop growers.

The agricultural operations start with first ploughing in May. Grooving soil for cultivation is done by iron ploughshare. A few of them are experts in preparing agricultural implements like wooden ploughs, levelling bars, threshing poles, and balancing bars for lifting and transportation. They purchase sickle, crowbar, pike and spade and also seeds from local market. The cultivable land is ploughed with plough at least two times and after that organic manure is applied. Then once again the land is ploughed. The farmers anticipate the first rain either at the end part of June or beginning of July. When tilled land is watered with rains, ploughing operations are repeated with wakur (a harrow with a horizontal blade covered at the end and fixed to a wooden board. After the completion of second ploughing, seeds are sown.

The weeding operations are conducted in August. After this the farmers remain busy up to the end of November till the crop is harvested. The harvested crop is tied into bundles and kept in the midst of the field. To separate the corns from the straw, the bullocks are made to walk over the bundles. Then the thrashed corn is separated from the stalks by winnowing and then it is collected in jute/gunny bags. The bags and straws are carried to home by bullock cart. The paddy is stored either in dulle (large basket) or gunne (small basket) which are made of bamboo. After the harvesting is over they stack the straws in their backyards for future use.

Agricultural productivity is very low mainly due to the absence of irrigation facilities. Another reason is that they rarely

use fertilisers as they cannot afford to buy them. In spite of certain natural impediments many facilities have been provided by the Government to achieve better standards of production. If one wants to give away the land on lease basis, there are no rigid rules for this and he depends on the honesty of the tenant of the Gond community. The crop is shared equally or as agreed by parties ie. the tenant cultivator and the owner of the land. The tenant can take two-third of the produce if he bears all the expenses of cultivation. When the tenant and owner equally bear the expenses, they can equally share the produce. The spirit of co-operation is impressive during the agricultural operations. All households do not have bullocks and bullock carts. Those who possess carts provide these to their neighbours at the times of need with minimum charges. Bullocks are usually spared at the time of ploughing sometimes freely and at times with minimum charges.

On the auspicious day of the festival Akshaya Trutiya they start their annual paddy cultivation. They plough their fields once or twice and sow seeds. When the plants grow to a certain height, they store water in the fields and pay no further attention until the time of harvest. Just before the harvest, the villagers go to watch their crops in the field against the destructions by wild animals like elephants, wild boars and birds etc. They have an interesting belief relating to the paddy cultivation as follows.

Before the start of paddy cultivation, they use to grow a pot-herb in their kitchen garden known as machha shaga. As per the growth of the green leaves of pot-herb the Gonds predict the conditions of cultivation for the year. If the pot-herb grows in good condition then there will be good harvest, if the pot-herb shows patches being infected by pests then the paddy will be affected by insects and if the leaves are burnt then there will be the chance of drought.

They grow some kind of pulses like black gram (moong dal) and green gram (biri dal). Each house in the village is attached with a kitchen garden, where the Gonds grow tobacco, mustard and vegetables. Maize and millets are also grown in the garden. Now,

their main occupation is agriculture or agricultural labourer. Their method of cultivation is old. Except the seasonal and non-seasonal agricultural activities, the Gonds depend upon cattle herding.

Agricultural Practices among the Gonds of Keonjhar:

The primary occupation of the Gonds of Keonjhar area is agriculture. Their secondary occupation is daily labour, fishing, food collection from the village forest. They pursue agriculture with the help of bullocks and use organic manures along with fertilizers, pesticides. A few Gond families are farming with modern equipments like power tillers and tractors. The lands are owned by them. Gond men and women have almost equal participation in agricultural pursuits. For agriculture they mostly depend upon rains.

Among a sample of 30 Raj Gond households, 50 % are marginal farmers, 33.3%, small farmers, 13.3 %, semi medium farmers and 3.3 %, medium farmers. Not a single Raj Gond household is reported to be a large farmer. The total agricultural land of the study village is 350 Ac. Only 47.1 % people are dependent on agriculture and allied activities. Rice is produced as the main agriculture produce of the village. Besides, they produce biri (green gram), kolatha (horse gram), and mugga (black gram) for self-consumption during the rabi (winter) season. They also produce some vegetables like brinjal, ladiesfinger, tomato, pumpkin, raddish, simba (bean), jhudunga (legume), bitter gourd, green chili, yam, matar (peanuts) and beans in their own backyards or kitchen gardens for their own consumption and sale of surplus for meeting their household expenses. The villagers own a good number of farm lands but due to lack of proper irrigation facilities they are unable to take up vegetables cultivation round the year.

They possess both sarada lands (low land) and dalua lands (upland). The sarada lands are more fertile than dalua lands where the Gonds produce different varieties of paddies. In dalua land (upland) they cultivated paddies like Chingdi, Asubodana, Sarubhojani, Arnnpurna, Lalata, Pala, Brahamanibai. In sarada land (low land) they cultivate paddies like Gangaram, Dhusara, Kanda,

Khoda, Bhuta, Suryakanti etc. having higher production and give more profits. At present they also use high yielding seeds, fertilizers, pesticides etc. They domesticate some animals like cows and bullocks for the purpose of agriculture and supplementary income.

They carry out agricultural works with the help of bullocks, buffaloes, plough and other agricultural implements like plough shares and levelers for leveling their agricultural lands. At the time of harvesting they use sickle, bullock-cart, bullocks etc. Some farmers are cultivating with modern equipment like power tillers and tractors. Previously they used cow dungs, ashes, green manures in their agricultural field for better production. Besides these, now they apply different kinds of fertilizers such as urea, gromer, potash, etc. At present with the advice of the Village Level Worker (VLW) they adopt scientific farming practices with use of high yielding seeds, fertilizers, pesticides etc. in order to get more profits and additional income.

The Gonds plough their fields after Maghapudi festival in February (Magha). The fields are made fertile by using fertilizers, cow dung and manure in the month of May (Baisakha). The Paddy seeds are sown after the sowing initiation ceremony, Akhaya tritiya, in the month before the heavy rain in June (Jyestha). Deweeding is done in the months of June-July. The plants are allowed to grow without the weeds and the grasses. Sometimes paddy seeds are sown in small plots of land. The seeds grow into plants there. In the meantime large fields are made ready by tilling and leveling. The plants are taken to the large field and transplanted there. Then they apply different types of fertilizers. Irrigation facility is not available in this village. So they make arrangements in their fields for preservation of water.

In the month of November-December (Kartika-Margasira) when the crop is ripened it becomes yellow then they harvest the paddy crops. After Nandachida ceremony, the people cut the paddy in the month of January (Pousha). They reap the corn and bind the stalks of corn into sheaves. Then they load them on the bullock carts and carry them to the thrashing yard. They separate the paddy from the straw either by beating them off or by making them crushed

under the foot of bullocks. After harvesting, they preserve the paddy in a traditional packing known as 'pudga' (straw bins). After the Dhana Nuakhai festival held in the month of September (Bhadra) they eat the new paddy. During this festival the new paddy is offered to deity by every family. Then they cook new rice and all the villagers eat this. These crops are used for their consumption after which they sell the surplus in the market to meet their other needs.

3.3 Animal husbandry, Fishing & Hunting :

The Gonds domesticate cows, bullocks and buffalos for milk. They also keep goats, sheep, pigs and ducks and poultry birds for meat. During exigencies, they sale these animals and birds in nearby weekly markets. Fishing also contributes to their food supply. They have stopped their hunting activity in the forest aftermath of the implementation of Forest Rights Act, 2006 and Rules, 2012.

The Gonds of the study villages is found very poor in animal husbandry. They have only small numbers of hens and cocks, bullocks, goats. Only finger count goats are found in the villages, as the SHG loan is provided for goat rearing. Out of 30 sample households, 24 (80%) households own animals and birds and the remaining 6 (20%) households don't. Those who do animal husbandry as secondary occupation, their animals and birds are of insignificant numbers.

Gonds in Nabarangpur area go for organized fishing. They catch fish individually and in group by the help of bamboo nets and traps and also sell them for maintaining the family. Hunting adds to their subsistence. They prepare their own bows and arrows as hunting implements. These implements safeguard them and their cattle wealth from wild animals. Their traditional communal hunting activities have gone down due to paucity of games as well as forest and wildlife conservation laws.

Like the Gonds elsewhere, the Gonds of Keonjhar district catch fishes in rainy season from their agricultural fields and water sources by using fishing hook and net for their own consumption as well as sale for extra income. Often three to four persons join together to catch fishes.

3.4 Forest Use:

The forest is considered as the lifeline of Gonds. They collect forest produce to supplement their food and income. For a Gond family, the paddy yield does not suffice to feed them for the whole year. Therefore, for their food quest they resort to seasonal forest collections, i.e. the collection of roots and fruits like tumid (kendu fruit), charkoli (one type of forest plum), mango, tamarind, dates in large quantities and also honey collection occasionally. These roots, fruits and tubers from the forest substantially helps the Gond to meet their food requirements. Young green shoots of bamboo are also eaten. The women folk collect a large variety of wild greens from the fields, jungles and the edges of water bodies. These greens are cooked and eaten with rice. They also collect other kinds of forest produce like mahua flower and seed, jhuna (resin) etc. Mahua flower and mango fruit are the two largely collected forest products by the Gond tribe.

They collect roots and tubers which are not only used as food but also for medicinal purposes. Traditional medicine of the Gond relies on the use of local plants and herbs to cure a number of ailments. Local healers refer the ancient palm leaf texts to make prescriptions, which often combine the use of these natural medicines with specific rites to effect a cure.

The study villages are covered by the forests. The forests have rich flora and fauna. Flora like mahula, kaju (anacardium occidentale), sal (shorea robusta), dhaura (anogeissus latifolia), saguan (teak), kendu (diospyros melanoxylon), charkoli, jambu (syzygium cumini), katha siali (phanera vahlii), gambhari (gmelina arborea), piasal, sisu (dalbergia sissoo), bahada (terminalia bellirica), gangasiuli (night jasmine) (harsingar) are found in the forest. Burds like peacock, saguna (vulture), parrot, falcon, bat and owl are found in the forest. Animals such as tigers, elephant, jhinka/porcupine (hystrix indica), blue cow (nelagai), rabbit, spotted deer (miriga), bajra kapta (maniscrassicaudata), bear, deer (hiran) and fox (bilua) are seen in the forest. In case of reptiles, ajagara (python molurus), rana (venomous krait) and naga (cobra) are the main

species found in the forest. The ancestors of the Gonds used to get the meats of rabbit, hiran (deer) and baraha (wild pigs) meat by hunting in the forest. Now due to forest restrictions hunting is banned. The Gonds have abandoned hunting as a sport. Now-a-days, they go for hunting as a ritual activity.

3.5 Service, business/enterprise

To eke out their livelihood some of the Gonds are engaged in small businesses. Some Gond women are running grocery shops in the village. Some of Gonds work in government offices, and under other contractors to earn their living. A few forge metal goods in cottage industries to add to their earning.

Among the Raj Gonds, there are three variety shops in the study village run by them. There is a torch repair shop in the village which is run by a Gond boy. A fast food counter is there at the middle of the village. Three Gond people of the village, work as carpenters and manufacturer of wooden chairs and doors. For the business purpose they buy mahua flowers from the forest dwellers and store them to sell at a good price later.

3.6 Wage earning & migration:

Gonds, who are poor, landless or marginal farmers, make a coping strategy to come out of their precarious economic conditions. They mostly depend on wage earning for their livelihood. These labourers are engaged in different agricultural activities, like ploughing, digging and leveling earth, showing seeds, weeding, harvesting paddy, etc. on receipt of daily wages. Some of them are engaged in construction works under the contractors and works under MGNREGP. Now some of the Raj Gonds have become poor. They usually prefer to work as daily labourer in agricultural activities available in their locality. Some of them, both male and female, also work as daily labourers at the time of construction and repair of roads and building, house construction and digging ponds. In the past labourers were paid wages for the work in shape of kind (rice) worth of Rs. 20/- to Rs 25/-. At present they are getting wage @ Rs. 200/- to Rs 300/- per day/per labour for work in the village.

The debt burden pushes Gond workers to migrate. Most of the youngsters of the village prefer to migrate if they are not engaged in study or work. They migrate to different places of outside states like Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra in search of work. The study found that 12.5% people have migrated from the village. They are unregistered labourers at GP or Block level. About 11.8% male prefer to migrate. The extent of migration in case of female labours is only 0.7% as they are rarely allowed to migrate. Most of the people choose textile work at the work place.

3.7 Income, expenditure & indebtedness:

3.7.1 Income & expenditure pattern & indebtedness of Gonds in study villages of Nabarangpur

The Gonds principally earn their income from different sources like agriculture, wage earning and forest collections. Besides, animal husbandry, fishing, etc. supplement their income. Among a sample of 38 Gonds households in two study villages, there are land owning rich, middle class and poor and marginal farmers. The annual income of 18.4 % households was more than 1 lakh. While the annual income of 39.5% households lies between Rs. 51,000/- and 70,000/- and 15.8 % households lies between Rs. 71,000/- and 1 Lakh. For the remaining 26.3 households annual income lies between Rs. 10,000/- and Rs. 50,000/-. The average annual income of Gonds was estimated to be Rs 67,700/- per household. The table below shows the income pattern of the Gond households in two study villages.

Table 3.7.1: Annual Income Pattern of Gond Households in Study Villages (N = 38)

SL. No	Study Villages	10,000-50,000	51,000-70,000	71,000-1Lakh	Above 1Lakh	Total Households
1	Sonepur	4	6	4	4	18
		22.2%	33.3%	22.2%	22.2%	100.0%
2	Timanpur	6	9	2	3	20
		30%	45%	10%	15%	100%
Total		10	15	6	7	38
		26.3%	39.5%	15.8%	18.4%	100.0%

Source: SCSTRTI Survey, 20021

As against the average annual income of Rs 67,700 per household from different sources, a Gond household spends a large part of income on food and dress, i.e. Rs. 40,500/- (59.8%). The spending on education is Rs. 6000/- (8.9%). Similarly, the expenses on rituals and entertainment is Rs. 5,500/- (8.1%). The expenses on health and medicines is Rs. 4,700/- (6.9%). A Gond household spends around 16.2% of its annual income amounting to Rs. 11,000/- on loan repayments and other emergency expenses.

Table 3.7.2: Household Expenditure Pattern in Study Villages in Nowrangpur

Sl. No	Expenditure Sectors	Amount Spent per Household (Rs.)
1	Education	6 000 (8.9 %)
2	Food & Dress	40 500 (59.8 %)
3	Health & Medicines	4 700 (6.9 %)
4	Ritual & Entertainment	5 500 (8.1 %)
5	Loan repayments & other emergencies.	11 000 (16.2 %)

Source: SCSTRTI Field Survey 2021

Gond indebtedness is an acute problem. This indebtedness is mainly due to the fact that the people are compelled to part with their agricultural produce at the peak of the harvesting season when the price is at the lowest. They are again compelled to buy or borrow at a time when the price is at its highest (Mohapatra, 1964: 25). This was the picture of indebtedness among the Gonds of Sundargarh, Sambalpur, Bolangir and northern part of Kalahandi. At present this cause of indebtedness among the Gonds still exists.

As per the survey in Raighara area of Nabarangpur district during the last year out of 38 Gonds sample households, 13 (34.21%) have incurred loans from private sources i.e. mostly from SHGs, relatives and neighbours. Among them 04 households have borrowed up to Rs. 2, 000/-, 07 have borrowed between Rs. 2000/- and 5,000/- and 02 have borrowed above 10,000/-. They borrowed mainly to meet the expenses on the rituals, health, education and litigation.

3.7.2 Income & Expenditure Pattern & indebtedness of Gonds in the Study Village in Keonjhar:

The average annual income from different sources of a Raj Gond is Rs 83,000/- per household. They mostly derive their income from paddy cultivation. The annual income of 56.7 % households was more than 1 lakh. While income of 16.7 % households is between Rs. 51,000/- and 70,000/- and of 10 % households is between Rs. 71,000/- and 1 Lakh, of the remaining 16.7 % households is between 10,000/- and 50,000/-. The average annual income of Gonds was estimated to be Rs 67,700/- per household. The table below shows the income pattern of the Gond households in the study village, Sinduria.

Table 3.7.2.1: Annual Income Pattern of Gond Households in Study Villages (N = 30)

Sl. No	Study Village	10,000 - 50,000	51,000 - 70,000	71,000 - 1Lakh	1 Lakh above	Total Households
1	Sinduria	5	5	3	17	30
	%	16.7	16.7	10	56.7	100

Source: SCSTRTI Field Survey 2021

A Gond household spends a large part of income on foods, i.e. 54.2%. The average percentage of spending on education is 7.2% and similarly for the entertainment purpose, it is 8.6%. The expenditure on health is found as low as 5.9%. A Gond household saves around 16.9% of his annual income in insurance and bank. To conclude, the financial status of a Gond household, is hand to mouth.

As per the survey in Telkoi area of Keonjhar, the Raj Gond farmers avail loan from the LAMPS in Karamangi village in which 30 farmers of the village are registered members. These farmers including some women farmers are getting loans from the LAMPS as per their years of membership. The loan repayment of a Gond household is around 7 % (at 1% rate of interest). The Rate of interest is lowest because most of the households have availed loan through the SHG and LAMPS at 1% rate of interest.

Table 3.7.2.2: Expenditure pattern of study villages (N = 30)

Sl.No	Expenditure Sectors	Amount (in Rs.)
1	Education	6000
	%	7.2
2	Food	45000
	%	54.2
3	Heath	4900
	%	5.9
4	Entertainment	7100
	Percentage	8.6
5	Income	83000
	%	100
6	Total Expenditure	69000
	%	83.1
7	Savings	14000
	%	16.9
8	Loan repayment	6000
	%	7

Source: SCSTRTI Field Survey 2021

3.8 Food & Drinks

In the past the staple food of the Gonds was two minor millets known as kodo and kutki. These were either boiled to a soup or cooked as a dry cereal. Both the diets of millets were preferred for the first two meals of the day and the dry cereal was eaten at night, often with vegetables. These vegetables were either grown in kitchen gardens or collected from forests along with roots and tubers. Honey was also collected from forests for consumption. Rice and meat were luxury items that Gonds enjoy during feasts and festivals. Most of the Gonds liked the dishes of meats. Animals sacrificed in rituals and ceremonies are fondly consumed. Animal meats from hunting and seasonal edible items collected from the forest supplemented their diet. Gonds abstain from the flesh of animals those were their clan totems. Gonds grew

tobaccos for smoking and distilled liquors from the mahua flowers for consumption.

Now the dietary habit of the Gonds is simple. Their staple food is rice, gruel of millet and maize. The Gond women de-husk paddy by hand with help of mortar and pastel to get rice. Then after cleaning it they cook the rice. They pound pulses with the help of hand driven stone grinders to prepare dal. Their food comprises of watered rice, mix-vegetables curry, dal and pickles. At times they take fresh fish or dry fish. Besides rice and wheat, they also eat ragi and other minor millets like kodo, suan, gurji and various kinds of mushrooms, roots and tubers.

They are non-vegetarians and eat pork and other non-veg items. However, they cannot afford to eat meat, fish, or eggs on a regular basis. During festive occasions their menu is added with chicken and mutton curry. The meat of the game animals occasionally supplements their diet. The Hinduised Gonds claim not to eat beef.

Gonds take two principal meals a day, and a third minor meal. The morning meal mainly consists of boiled rice (muka in gondi) with amti or saru leaf dish (gunde) and mandia pej (millet soup). During the midday, they take mandia pej. The evening meal consists of boiled rice and a curry of mixed vegetables or pulses and spinach.

Mandia Pej: Preparation of this drink is very simple. Powdered ragi is mixed with stale water of boiled rice and kept in a covered container for a couple of days. Once this soup gets sour, it is ready for consumption. It not only helps to cool the body, but also proves refreshing after a day's hard work. While going to work as a daily labourer, they carry a container full of 'mandiapej'.

In the mixed veg curry (hitapula) vegetables like radish, rice powder, tomato, garlic, ginger, onion, red chili, mushroom, pumpkin, brinjal, chana matar (pea nut), etc. are mixed. Puplin (biridal), kadein (kolotha dal/ horse gram), taro root (saru), leaf dish (gunde), all these dishes have been prepared with sal seed oil, paste of red chili, ginger, garlic, salt, turmeric prepared with the

help of plain big grinding stone. Usually they use fire wood and earthen pot for cooking. Their usual cooking medium is mustard oil, but at times they use groundnut, mahua, til and pesi (linseed) oil. Now some of them use aluminum and steel utensils, refined or mustard oil and all masala ingredients and LPG for cooking. Their diet rarely contains any milk or milk products. Milk is only given to their children.

Occasionally, whenever they can afford, they eat meat, chicken curry (haowi) and fish in any day of the week without any restriction. During all festivals they eat meat, chicken and fish except beef, as main dishes. All these dishes are taken with boiled rice. It is observed that in Gond community some of them who are followers of Sanatan Dharma are vegetarians.

The seasonal variation is noticed in Gonds' food habit. During the lean period, roots, tubers, green leaves and wild fruits are important items of their food which is given below:

- Leafy vegetables (spinach):
- All kind of green leafy vegetables, in Gondi they call it kusuri.
- Chorta Kusuri: collected during monsoon from agricultural field
- Chatibaji/hina kusuri: collected in summer from agricultural field
- Kadwar: collected in summer from agricultural field
- Bahad: collected in summer from the forest
- Keda-kusuri: collected in monsoon from the forest
- Gutkad: collected in all season from the forest

All these spinach items are fried and eaten with boiled rice or mandia pej. The Gonds also eat the food items collected from forests such as pita kanda, madura kanda, adur kadak (bamboo roots) and mushrooms. During summer season they almost subsist on palm fruits, mangoes, jackfruits, plums and Kendu, char koli, sindi koli etc.

Regarding non-veg items, the Gonds eat meat of wild animals, like snake (danda), birds, frog, wild rat, sindipoko, pig, rabbit, deer, red and white ants, except the meat of tiger and bear.

The Gonds take tea and locally brewed liquor, mahuli, jaggery liquor and salap juice. Use of handia (rice beer) is conspicuously absent among the Gonds. Indigenously distilled mahuli liquor is an ideal drink of Gonds. In Gondi it is called eduk dadang. The drink is prepared from the mahua flowers through distilling process. Occasionally, both male and female can drink but males are more addicted than the females. Gonds use mahuli liquor during fairs and festivals, marriage functions and rituals, worship of village deities, household deities, and deities of nature and also for refreshment of guests. The drink costs Rs. 60/- per litter in the study villages. Now some of them like taking beer.

They smoke country cigarette (bidi) home made by rolling locally available tobacco in tender Sal or Kendu leaf. They have the habit of chewing dhungia and khaini. Now they are smoking cigarettes and taking gutka.

The diets of Raj Gond of Keonjhar are standardized. They depend on seasonally available foods. They take very simple and healthy food in their daily menu. They take rice, dal, curry, watered rice etc. In summer season fruits such as jack fruits and mango are the principal diet of Gonds. They also take some other non-veg food like red ant, termite, crab, meat, fish etc. Liquor is the main drink.

It is pertinent to mention here some indigenous knowledge systems relating to life and living of Gonds on their agriculture, food processing, seed and food preservation and preparation of drinks.

Generating organic manure: In the Gond village cattle herds are grazed and kept in the field during lean season strategically with a view to generate organic manure and to increase the fertility of soil.

Prediction of Good harvest or drought: The Gonds have an interesting belief regarding the cultivation of paddy: "Before the start of paddy cultivation, they use to grow a pot-herb in their

kitchen garden known as Machha Shaga. As per the growth of the green leaf of pot-herb the Gonds predict the harvest of the year. If the pot-herb grows in good condition then there will be good harvest; if the pot-herb show patches infected by pests then the paddy will be affected by pests and if the leaves will be burnt then there may be the chance of drought.”

Seed & Food Preservation: They have their own traditional inventory and pattern of preserving grains and seeds for future use as well as for consumption. After harvesting different crops, they process and bask them in sunshine for a few days and then they prepare grain bins with hay ropes to be kept on a raised bamboo platform to preserve paddy, maize and other cereals and minor millets harvested. Dry fish, meat, chicken, pumpkin, seeds of jack-fruit, beans seeds etc. are preserved over the chuli (hearth) inside the kitchen with the help of bamboo sticks for use in future.

Distillation of Mahuli: The Gonds collect mahua flowers. Then they bask these under sunshine to make dry. They keep mahua flowers by adding some amount of water within the container and leave it until the bad smell comes out of it and it is the sign to know that it is ready to prepare alcohol. They separate mahua flowers from the water. They prepare alcohol within their house only. They heat the mahuli water in a big aluminum container keeping one clay pot over it and cover the face from both sides (up and down) using clay or cow dung. They make one hole in a clay pot from which they connect one bamboo pipe to the outside connected to another empty pot or jarkin. Then they keep another aluminum pot over the clay pot with some amount of water by leaving it opens at its upper part. The alcohol vapour from the middle clay pot passes to the empty jarkin or pot through the connected pipe. When the water boils they are able to know that their alcohol is completely ready. They also practice the same process for distillation of jaggery liquor, but among them the mahuli liquor is more popular than the jaggery liquor in our study villages.

Salap (salpi in Gondi): The Gonds plant the salap tree in front and back of their houses. In mature salap tree seeds come

out from branches. This condition indicates that these branches are ready for salap extraction. Owner of the salap or persons with knowledge about salap making climb the tree and cut the half of the branch with the help of the knife then leave it for two or three days. After that one clay pot is hanged under the branch. Gradually the salap juice oozes out from the branch and collected in the pot. The new salap juice will be worshiped at the pond close to the village then it can be used for drinking and selling. To a Gond family, salap tree is an asset. Both males and females drink salapa juice.

The Gonds of Nabarangpur consume salap juice and also sale it for cash. Currently the price of salap is 10/- per mug in the study village. According to them those, who own salap trees and sale salap juice get an additional income which varies from Rs. 15 000/- to Rs. 20 000/- per annum.

3.9 Market, Trade & Barter:

Mostly the weekly hats (market) meet the Gonds' basic day-to-day necessities. In Raighar area there are 4 weekly markets in villages namely Kusumpur (Tuesday), Timanpur (Friday), Raighar (Sunday) and Kurabeda (Wednesday) which are located within a distance of 10 kms from Sonpur and Timanpur, the study villages. Also, the Gonds of the study villages depend on the daily market at Raighar for purchase of rations and clothes for observance of the rites and rituals. They sale their agricultural and minor forest produce in the weekly markets. The Gonds visit the markets for purchase of daily necessities. The market place is also the meeting place for friends and relatives and also for communication among them for religious, social and economic purposes.

In the Raj Gond areas of Keonjhar district weekly markets of the study villages are held once in a week at Belamunda on Sunday and Akul on Thursday. They do not have daily market nearby. The nearest daily market sits at Telkoi, 28 km away from these villages. Weekly market is locally known as 'Hata', 'Bazar'. In the Gonds areas, weekly market plays an important role in the life of the people. It provides the villagers with an opportunity to sale their agro-forest produce and to purchase those that they need. In

the market two kinds of commodities enter that is general purpose of commodities which are primarily produced inside the region and special purpose commodities brought from outside the region. Among the former mention may be of rice, corn, oil, baskets, leaf mats, vegetables, ropes etc. The latter are mill-made cloth, tailored garments, mirrors, cosmetics etc. They also sell their agro-products at weekly hats. Weekly markets also help to increase their economic condition. The weekly hats are the most powerful channel of communication for social, economic and religious purposes among the Raj Gonds.

In Gond community the general type of exchange or reciprocity of labour can be seen at the times of different agricultural operations, especially transplantation, weeding and harvesting of paddy. The close and distant kith and kin come together to help each other. After completion of the work the guest workers are offered a feast by the host.

They get their agricultural implements manufactured or repaired by the Lohars (Iron smiths) who in return receives an annual payment which is customary or even in cash or in kind. The changing economy has influenced the system and now apart from the principle of reciprocity and kinship payment of remuneration operates. The labourers are employed on daily wages basis to work in the farmand whose wages are paid in cash. The Raj Gonds exchange their products having equal value with those products they receive. They sold rice at Rs. 1885/- per quintal to the state Govt. last year as per mandi price. Some of the farmers are forced to sell the rice to the local buyers, which varies from Rs 1300/- to Rs.1400/- per quintal. Barter system was there among the Gond tribe of the village. They used to trade goods for goods as medium of exchange. Now they prefer payment in cash.

SOCIAL ORGANISATION

The social institutions of the Gonds have been studied here in relation to functional aspects of the social organizations having both vertical and horizontal dimensions. The social organization primarily deals with the significant grouping of individuals. Social organization usually has been taken as synonym for social structure. The Gond community was a vast and widely spread. It was divided into number of sections which differed in their nature. These sections were ordinarily endogamous and consisted of clans that were grouped into exogamous phratries within them (Koreti, 2016: 289).

4.1 Phratries

A phratry, as it is known in anthropological terminology, is a major exogamous, patrilineal descent group. Each Gond phratry (Saga in Gondi) traces its descent to one of the four groups of gods who emerged from the primeval cave after their release by the hero Lingal.

The basis of Gond social structure is a system of four phratries, each one is sub - divided in to clans and the origin of this system is attributed to a divine culture hero. The social structure of the Southern Gonds is different from Gonds of other regions. It is based on mythologically decreed four-phratry organization. Each of these four exogamous phratries consists of a number of clans and members belonging to clans of a particular phratry are considered brothers and sisters. The four phratries trace their descent to four, five, six and seven mythical brothers from whom the members of the phratry are considered to have sprung up and they are named as four brothers phratry (Nalwen Saga) (Pratap, 1983:8).

The phratry is divided into a number of exogamous clans (Pari in Gondi). A clan comprises of a group of people, who believe that they are descended in the male line from a common ancestor. Thus, marriage between members of the same phratry or clan is prohibited. Breaking of this rule is considered as incest and subject to excommunication. It is also believed that the delinquents would be penalized by the gods.

Pari-Pandi-Kupar-Lingo (2nd Dharma Guru) of Gonds had divided the life system of the Gond tribe into 5 main parameters such as 1. Saga (Phratry) – the social life, 2. Ghotul – the sacraments life, 3. Pen Keda – Pen Sakti Place (the spirit power place), 4. Punem – the path of truth, and 5. Muthwa – Gond Dharma Guru. The first parameter deals with organization and function of social life which govern the Gond society. The organizational aspect covers Phratry and clans and lineages and the functional aspects relates to marriage and progeny. Thus, according to the 2nd Dharma Guru Religious Saint the phratry system governs social life of Gonds.

On the basis of assignment of Deos to different social divisions of Gonds the 3rd Dharma Guru Rai-Lingo had modified them in to four Sagas (Phratry) under the leadership of 4 Deos, 5 Deos, 6 Deos and 7 Deos. While 4 Deos and 6 Deos are considered Sama (even) Saga Deos, the 5 Deos, and 7 Deos are treated as Bissam (uneven) Saga Deos. The table below shows the four-fold division of Gonds society as per their major Deos of the Sama and Bisama groups.

Table 4.1: Division of Gond Society in 4 Phratryes

Sama Saga Deo	Bisama Saga Deo
<u>Phratry No. 2</u> 2. Do Deo + 4.Char Deo + 8.Aath Deo = 210	<u>Phratry No. 1</u> 1. Ek Deo +5. Pachh Deo + 9.Noo Deo =210
<u>Phratry No. 4</u> 6. Chha Deo+10.Dus Deo +12. Bara Deo = 120	<u>Phratry No. 3</u> 3.Teen Deo +7.Sath Deo +11.Gaira Deo =210

Source: Youtube Review

The phratry is governed by two basic principles, i. e., descent and fraternal solidarity. Descent is vertical axis following the division of the Gond society into four phratries originating from their four epical ancestors. This system binds the living male members together which form an agnatic group while the horizontal dimension revolves on the basic principles of fraternal solidarity between the contemporary members of the agnatic group and their wives. The phratry regulates marital relations and corporate activities in the social and economic and ritual relations of their life (Pratap, 1983; P.9).

As per the research findings of Ghanashyam Gond of village Chanavari, Nikitisimada, the Paharia Gonds do not have Deo system. They have only two phratries (Paternal phratry with even numbers like 2,4,6,8,10 etc. and Maternal phratry with uneven numbers like 1,3,5,7,9). The statement below indicates different groups of the paternal phratries and maternal phratries.

Table 4.2: Bifurcation of Gond Society in to Paternal Phratries and Maternal Phratries

1 st Phratry	2 nd Phratry
Harro, Hedopi, Hichami, Hiram, Hidko, Jarlam, Kamare, Kariyam, Kamro, Keram, Korcha, Kumeti, Kobachi, Markam, Matalami, Marppi, Netam, Nuti, Padda, Padoti, Parchapi, Poya, Pudo, Salam, Sori, Tata, Tekam, Topa, Tumreki, Ulaka, Usendi & Watt	Achala, Bago, Darro, Dhawa, Dugdha, Goti, Kallo, Karanga, Khurashyam, Kola, Koroti, Koudo, Kunjam, Marai, Nuroti, Neroji, Nareti, Padagota, Potoe, Shyam, Sebata, Tulai, & Taram

Source: Gond Samaj Niayambali (Odia), 2018:p-19

Investigations in the study areas reveals that the phratry (Saga) system is weak in Odisha where the Gonds have forgotten their phratry system. They have given importance to their clan system only. The social structure of Gonds in the Southern Odisha (Raigarh Block area of Nabarangpur district) is different from the Gonds of northern Odisha (Telkoi Block area of Keonjhar district). While the former identified themselves mostly as Durua Gonds the latter claim to be Odia and / or Raj Gonds.

4.2 Clan system

4.2.1 Clan system of Gonds in South Odisha

The Gonds used the term 'Pari' to express their group. The clan among the Gonds was a unilateral group consisted of family members of which bear the same clan-name. Members of the clan believed that they have been descended from a common ancestor. The clan being patrilineal a man passes on his clan name to his children. A woman keeps her father's clan-name till she is married. A married woman is not regarded as a member of her father's clan. It is only the male who automatically takes the patronymic on birth, preserves it till death and transmits it to his children. It is a permanent feature of the Gond community (Koreti, 2016: 289).

The Gond society is vertically divided into four major exogamous Phartries, patrilineal groups known as saga. Each group is further sub-divided into a number of clans like, Naitam, Narkam, Vet, Mori, Sori, Jagat etc. Most of the clans of Gonds are of totemic origin bearing the names of animals or plants. The clans members observe totemic taboos. Usually, they do not kill or injure the totem animals and avoid eating of their meat. The totemistic clans are exogamous. Besides this, there are certain brother clans between whom marriage is prohibited. Structurally the Gonds kinship system and the Hindu system seem to be similar. But the Gonds see their clan system as totally separate one. Continuity of the clan cult is a significant feature of Raj Gond social organization. So in Gond society marriage is vitally linked with the social development of individuals as an integral part of the clan system.

According to Gondwana Mahasbha Rules (2018: P.20) there are seven clans and Bongshas among the Gonds. They are indicated in the Table 4.3 as follows:

Each clan has multiple gods which varies up to seven. One clan is distinguished from another based on the number of gods it has. Gonds identify themselves through their Deo (Deity), Dia (Lamp) and Kowdi (Cell). Their Deos (Deities) and Prime Debaghara (Abode of Deities) are as follows.

Table 4.3: Social Division (Clans / Lineages of Gonds in different Regions / Places

Sl. No.	Region / Place	Gotra / Clan	Lineage	Brothers
1.	Deo Garh Chanda	Gotra Paraswar	Surjya Bongsha	6 Bhai Jagata (1-Dhuruwa, 2-Pokhara, 3-Patta, 4-Bhoya, 5-Gadatiya & 6- Dhoba Banabasa Majhi).
2.	Buragarh	Gotra Atri	Samabongshi Porre	5 Bhai (1-Netam, 2-Kamera, 3-Manji, 4-Ray & 5-Bhuleter)
3.	Lanjigarh	Gotra Kasyap	Gangabangshi Netam	4 Bhai (1- Netam, 2-Tekam, 3-Marapachi & 4-Kebachi).
4.	Dham-dagarh	Gotra Sandiliya	Gagrambangsha Markam	5 Bhai (1-Tedi Markam, 2-Dudi Markam, 3-Sahad Markam, 4-Seta Markam & 5-Saal Markam).
5.	Shama-hargarh	Gotra Andil	Jadubangshi Neti	3 Bhai Neti.
6.	Alanka Bhubana Matha	Gotra Pulasta	Kadambangshi Oti	6 Bhai (1-Dongara Gachha, 2-Dahi Dora, 3-Bhadra, 4-Bisariha, 5-Bohiga & 6-Sil).
7.	Garh Mandla	Gotra Puhupo	Nagabongshi Marai (Marawi),	7 Bhai (1-Gutam, 2-Kunjam, 3-Pusam, 4-Purkam, 5-Saya (Sahi), 6-Ray & 7-Kandare).

Source: Information compiled from Gondwana Mahasbha Rules (2018)

Table 4.4: Grouping of Clans on the basis of numbers of Deities & their Abodes

No. of Deos	Name of Clan Ancestors	Prime Deoghara (Abode of Deities)
Three Deo	Sori, Markam & Khusaro	Dhamdagharh
Four Deo	Netam, Tekam, Kariam, Sindaram	Lanjigarh
Five Deo	Padoti, Pradam, Puram, Kile, Nahaka & Namurta	Bhoragarh
Six Deo	Katalam, Ujka, Oti (Goiha Oti), Korram, Kodwa, Tumereki, Komora, Patta, Arakara, Tailor Salam, Pusam, Powle, Tataram, Jira, Matra, Gawade & Kumeti	Chandagarh
Seven Deo	Kunjam (Bokoda Oti) Sebata, Marai (Mandabi), Taram, Panda, Khurashyam & Shyam.	Mandalagarh

Source: Information compiled from Gondwana Mahasbha Rules (2018)

They maintain their identity accordingly. Marriage between members of the same clan is banned. This is observed strictly. When one meets someone, he asks, how many gods the other person has in his clan. This is how they identify each other's clan.

Taking in to account of clan and lineage the Gonds are distributed in to 7 sections. The ancestors of each section were named as Gadil, Atri, Kashyap, Pulaha, Puhupu, Bharadwaja, Pulastya. Gadil and Atri were believed to be originated from Fire, likewise Kashyap from Water, Pulaha from Air, Puhup from Moon, Bharadwaja from Earth and Pulastya from Nag (Snake). The totems of their Gotras are Khusre, Crocodile, Deitam, Pardoti, Ati, Dhanka, Neitam (Dog), Dhari (Pandab), Payam (Turtle/Kainchha), Atri (Goat) and some others have totems like Bakdi, Kram (Jungle cock), Bendra (monkey). The Gonds have cultivated the habit of cultural value not to kill or eat their totems. Rather Gonds respect and protect these totemic objects, animals and birds.

Though the Gonds of Adilabad and Raigarh are separated by many other groups over a very long distance it is very interesting to note that a number of common totemistic clans exist between them, such as, Maravi, Naitam, Pusam, Povarn, Kurrarn, Vet, Tekarn which indicate that in spite of regional diversity the southern and northern Gonds have a common kinship system.

Clan Cult: Clan Deity also known as **Kuladeva** or **Kuladevi** is an ancestral tutelary deity in Gond community, who is often the object of one's devotion, and as a watch over the ancestral family (kula) and children from misfortune. Gonds clan deity is minor-deity or a spirit who is a guardian, patron, or protector of a particular place, geographic feature, person, lineage, nation, culture, or occupation. The etymology of "tutelary" expresses the concept of safety and thus of guardianship. It is reported that there are as many as 750 clans in Gonds Community. The study village has 4 clans and their clan deities are:-

- Oti :- Kuanri Budda
- Marai:- Rakasin Budda

- Markam:- Hinglazin Mata
- Naitam:- Kuanri Maoli

Agnatic principle confirms a boy to clan membership by birth. But he is introduced to his clan God ritually before his marriage. Till his marriage he is considered a minor with no authority; he is neither entitled to speak in council meetings nor allowed to set up a separate household. When a man dies unmarried, he is believed not to be joined with agnates.

Until marriage a Gond girl is only a daughter of her natal clan. It is therefore essential in Gond society that all girls are married. The girl becomes a member of that clan in which she is primarily married. The Gond men may have more than one primary marriage and it is the reason for the prevalence of polygyny. Soon after marriage a bride is introduced to the clan deity of her husband. She will never lose the membership in spite of secondary marriages to members of other clans (Pratap, 1983:10).

Unmarried girls cannot take part in the rituals to appease the clan deity of her parents. So there, her membership is a nominal one of being a daughter only. The desire to have a primary marriage and a clan identity is vital to herself and her parents. Thus the Gond girls marry at the earliest opportunity, even before attaining puberty.

The household is part of a clan and phratry, the membership of which is based on the principle of agnation and the marrying in of wives. Men are members of their clan from birth, but a woman is only a daughter of her clan and has no rights of membership. On her primary marriage she is introduced to the clan gods of her husband and becomes a member of his clan, while retaining a residual membership of her natal clan (Yorke, 1979:86).

The presence of phratry system for regulation of marriage among them is another common feature of the tribe by which a group is divided into a few exogamous divisions, each incorporating a number of clans within it. Each of such phratries, unusual cases, is referred to in terms of the number of gods called pen deve,

etc., which are supposed to be worshipped by the concerned members. Each clan under a phratry has, in its turn, a set of clan-gods, the number of which corresponds to that by which the phratry in question is designated. The Gond also practise cross-cousin marriages which are found to be of preferred types (Hajra, 1983:3).

“In Gond society primary marriage is therefore crucially bound up with the social development of individuals as an integral part of the continuity of the clan cult-a feature central to Raj Gond social organization” (Yorke, 1979). The members of each clan worship a deity known as “Persa Pen” (Great God) and in some cases the shrine of this deity lies within the ancestral clan land. Today the clans are widely scattered but the permanent framework still regulates their marriage, death and other such ritual functions.

Puja (Story telling traditions, informal education): The oral transmission of history of Gonds tribe and their gotra/clan is termed as Puja. The Gonds have 7 Gotras (Sapthasaga). Every Gond has its own gotra/clan Pargania (Ethnic Bard/Traditional Singer & Tale Tellers). They go to their respective Gonds clients (Jajamans) houses and tell them origin and history and development of their gotra and tribe. Parganias are a branch of Gonds. They serve their elder brothers, Raj Gonds, by holding umbrellas over their heads and carry their flags. The term Parghania is derived from Pragana means area of 12 villages, where the Gond was the King. The Parghanias are also called so because they do Parghaiba (coming to houses and welcoming the new born child, newly married couples in auspicious occasions like birth and marriages). Besides, the Parghanias worship deities, umbrellas and flags. Their surname/title is Pradhan mainly in the states of Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh.

In Kalahandi (erstwhile) the symbol of the Parghanias is Kendera (a traditional string musical instrument). In Gond language the kendera is called kinkiri. In the villages such as Margaon, Kushmal, Malpada, Ankapur and Dhamarabandha of Nuapada area, the Puja Syastem is practiced among the Gontia Gonds. The Parghanias play kinkiri and recite the history of their clients' gotras

and lineages. Outsiders are not allowed to hear this Puja. In the special festive occasions the Parghanias go to their clients' house. The clan members welcome the flag and umbrella of the Parghania and render hospitality to him with food. In the evening the flag and umbrella are worshipped. After the Gond deity like Chatrub-huja Budha Deo, Linga Deo and Jangha Deo are worshipped, the Parghania recites or tells the history of Gonds gotra for about 5/6 hours. The subject matters of the Puja include origin of god and deity, ethnic status, migration.

According to the Gonds in the study villages, their clans and gotras were created by Pahandi Pari Kuarpen Lingo (Dharma Guru of Gond). There are a total of 750 groups and one group is given three marks (it may be trees, animal or birds). This means that there are 2250 signs of 750 groups. In the study villages, mostly Gonds people are found from Naitam, Kunjam, Marai, Markam, Oti groups. The people of the Naitam group obey the dog, Marai obey the cobra snake, Markam obey the turtle, Kunjam and Oti obey the goat. The people of the Markam group believe and obey the three signs (peacocks, mango, and turtles) and the people of other groups could know one name of the mark and they could not remember the other two names of their group sign. They believed that Marai group has migrated from Gadmandala, Naitam from Lanjigarh & Chandagarh, Oti from Hiragarh, Markam from Damdagarh; Mandala was the capital of the above Garh regions, which is located in Madhya Pradesh. People of all the above groups depend on farming. They cannot marry among same gotra, but can marry in a different gotra.

Till date the Gonds' clan system continues as an integrating force. Generally, it is operating effectively and specially on ritual occasions. It is noticed in the field that the traditional authority is decaying while the rigidity and the strength of Gonds' descent group system has persisted intact.

4.2.2 Clan system of Gonds in North Odisha:

Clan is a group of people all of whom descended from a common ancestor. The clan name is usually described through the

patrilineal line, i.e from father to the sons. As per the information provided by the Gonds of the study village, the Gond tribe has been divided into 5 clans namely Tin Deo, Char Deo, Panch Deo, Chha Deo and Saat Deo. People of each Deo group believe that they are descendants of a saint and they have their own recognized symbol. Names of the clans/saints from whom the Gonds descended, numbers of Deos worshiped by each Gond Clan, and their recognized symbols are given in the Table below.

Table 4.5: Distribution of Gonds Clans as per deities and Totems

Clans / Saints from whom Descended	No. of Deities assigned for Worship	Totem Symbol
Basistha	Tin Deo	Tiger
Kasyap	Char Deo	Tortoise
Parasar	Panch Deo	Falcon
Bharadwaja	Chha Deo	Elephant
Nagasya	Saat Deo	Snake

4.3 Family & Kinship

The basic functions of the family are to: (1) regulate sexual access and activity; (2) provide an orderly context for procreation; (3) nurture and socialize children; (4) ensure economic stability; and (5) ascribe social status. Families further impart affection, care, and adaptive functions. In short, family is considered the supporter of couple, the source of nurturance and the elemental education of children, the link to the market place, the place of remediation that takes the wayward back, and the hospice where infirm and dependent members seek solace (<https://www.encyclopedia.com>).

The functional definition of kinship given by sociologists is that 1) it assigns guidelines for interactions between persons and defines proper, acceptable role relationship between father-daughter, brother-sister etc. 2) it determines family line relationships, gotra and kula and 3) it decides who can marry with whom and where marital relationship are taboo. (<https://www.yourarticlelibrary.com>).

These functional definitions of family and kinship are universally applicable to all societies, small and big including the

Gonds tribe. In small societies, kinship is the most important social bond. Most of the social groups are organized on the basis of kinship. Relationship between the individuals is mainly governed by the kinship norms. With these functional definitions, our investigation among Gonds in North and South Odisha tries to report about their family and kinship system operating at village level.

4.3.1 Family & Kinship of Gonds in South Odisha:

The Gond family is the smallest social unit. It is a unilateral social group and consists of parents and their children, both male and female. Unmarried daughters retain their membership in the family till their marriage. In the recent past, among the Gonds most of the joint families have been split in to nuclear families. Thus now the Gonds have both nuclear and extended families. At times nascent and broken families are seen. The authority is vested with the senior most male member of the family. Children are treated with love and affection. In all times, a husband is respected by his wife and children. There are avoidance relationships between son-in-law and mother-in-law and between father-in-law and daughter-in-law, between a man and his wife's elder sister and younger brother's wife. Friendly relationships is maintained between a man with his wife's younger sisters and brothers and with his elder brother's wife and with grandchildren. Conflicts and clashes arise within the family due to possession and division of properties. Inter family linkages inside and outside the community is found to be pleasant. Usually, members of the same lineage group live in the same habitation. There is close co-operation in all the fields of life in the family and lineage.

The study reveals that most of the Gonds practise monogamy. Remarriage of widows and divorces are in vogue in the Gond community. A widower can marry his wife's younger sister (junior sororate) with the consent of both the families. In case the wife's younger sister is unwilling for the marriage, the man goes for non-sororal polygyny. Gond society considers wife's elder sister as mother. Thus a widower can't marry his wife's elder sister. Aftermath of divorce, a man can remarry with the consent of families

and approval of Jati Samaj. After death of husband, a widow can remarry to her husband's youngest brother (junior levirate) with consents of the families of both the sides. A man's elder brother is like his father. A widow is not permitted to marry her husband's elder brother.

Mostly, nuclear families are found in the Gond community. A nuclear family consists of father, mother, sons, and daughters. Joint family is rarely seen among Gond community. Joint family consists of grandfather, grandmother, father, mother, uncle, aunty, brother and sister, etc. In case of Gharjian marriage, the groom use to live in the bride's parents' house. Among Gonds, in other forms of marriages like love marriage, arranged marriage and poisam-undi, the bride resides in the groom's parents' house (patrilocal). In the nuclear family, the father of the house is the head and all the decisions are made by him but if the father dies, the mother becomes the head of the house in the joint family, the head of the family consults with everyone when making any decision.

The Gonds use both descriptive and classificatory terminologies while addressing and referring their relations, both affine and consanguine. A statement indicating the kinship terminology of Gonds is given in the following table.

Table 4.6: Kinship Terminology of Gonds

Sl. No	Kinship Terminology in English	Terms of Reference (Gondi)	Terms of Address (Gondi)
1	Father	Buba, Baba	Buba, Baba
2	Mother	Yaya, Ya	Yaya, Ya
3	Elder Brother	Hajar Tamur, Dada	Hajar Tamur, Dada
4	Younger Brother	Hidar Tamur	By Name
5	Wife's younger Brother	Harndu	By Name
6	Wife's elder Brother	Harndu	Bod Dada
7	Husband's younger Brother	Mudihadal, Susra	Dada
8	Husband's elder Sister's Husband	Dada	Dada
9	Husband's younger Sister's Husband	Babu	Babu, by Name
10	Elder Sister	Didi	Didi

11	Wife's elder Brother's Wife	Didi	Didi
12	Husband's elder Brother's Wife	Didi	Didi
13	Wife's younger Brother's Wife	Nuni	By name, Noni
14	Younger Sister	Hidar Hadal	By name
15	Father elder Brother	Pepi	Badu
16	Father's younger Brother	Kaka	Kaka
17	Father's elder Brother's Wife	Pedi	Badai
18	Father's younger Brother's Wife	Kaki	Kaki, nana
19	Father's elder Sister	Mami	Mami, Poe
20	Father's younger Sister	Mami	Mami
21	Mother's Brother's Wife	Mami	Mami
22	Father's Sister's Husband	Mama	Mama
23	Mother's Brother	Mama	Mama
24	Husband's Father	Mama	Mama, baba
25	Father's Sister's Husband's Son	Samdi	If junior then by name, senior then Dada
26	Father's Sister's Husband's Son's Wife	Noni, Didi	If senior then Didi, junior then Noni
27	Mother's Brother's daughter	Noni, Didi	If senior then Didi, junior then Noni
28	Wife's younger Sister	Harandar	By name, Noni
29	Wife's elder Sister	Didi, Dedsash	Didi
30	Father's Father	Dadi	Dadi
31	Mother's Father	Ajo	Ajo
32	Father's Mother	Aji	Aji
33	Mother's Mother	Kako	Kako
34	Husband's Mother	Mami	Mami
35	Husband's elder Sister	Ded sash	Didi
36	Grand Son	Nati Pekao	Nati Pekao
37	Daughter's Son	Miari Nati	Nati
38	Grand Daughter	Natian	Natian
39	Daughter's Daughter	Miari Natian	Natian
40	Husband's younger Sister	Noni, Nanad	Noni, by name
41	Wife's elder Sister's Husband	Dada	Dada

42	Wife's younger Sister's Husband	Babu	Babu, by name
43	Husband's younger Brother's Wife	Noni	Noni
44	Daughter-in-law's Father	Padi, Samdi	Padi, Samdi
45	Daughter-in-law's Mother	Padiad, Samdini	Padiad, Samdini
46	Elder Brother's Wife	Angge	Angge
47	Younger Brother's Wife	Buari, ya	Noni
48	Elder Sister's Husband	Hane	Dada,Hane
49	Younger Sister's Husband	Hane	By name
50	Husband	Mudial	If the couple has children then the Wife calls her Husband by their children's Name
51	Wife	Aad	
52	Daughter-in-law	Buari, ya, bachi	Ya, bachi
53	Daughter's Husband	Hane, bacha	Bacha, by Name
54	Son's Son	Mari Nati	Nati
55	Son's Daughter	Mari Natian	Natian
56	Brother	Tamur	Dada for elder and by name for younger
57	Sister	Helad	Didi for elder and Noni for yonger
58	Brother's Son	Bhatijal	By name
59	Brother's Daughter	Bhatijin	By name, ya
60	Sister's Son	Bacha	By name
61	Sister's Daughter	Bachi	By name,ya
62	Paternal GrandFather's Father	Badu	Badu
63	Paternal GrandFather's Mother	Badi	Badi
64	Maternal GrandFather's Father	Maa	Maa
65	Maternal GrandFather's Mother	Mami	Mami

Source: SCSTRTI Field Study, 2021

The following are some kinship usages as noticed among the Gonds.

Teknonymy: Wife never utters the name of her husband. She uses to call her husband in the name of their child i.e. Jyoti's father.

Avoidance Relationship: There is avoidance relationship between wife and husband's elder brother (Dedhosur). Touch is prohibited between them and she is allowed to talk from a distance, but rarely and she does not wash her husband's elder brother's plate after meal.

Joking Relationship (Tahi Tapara-): Teasing or fun making are permitted between grandfather (Jeje) /grand father-in-law (Aja) /grandmother (Jeji) /grandmother-in-law (Aaee) and grandson or grand-son-in law (Naati)/granddaughter or granddaughter-in-law (Naatuni). Joking relationship exists between a person and his younger sister-in-law and younger brother-in-law in the Gond society. They use to call this relationship Tahi Tapara.

The relationship of parents with children: Primary marriage legitimizes the children as affiliated to both the parents and members of the father's clan cult group. There is a reciprocal duty for the parents to arrange the marriage and maturity ritual for their children and to provide the sons with land and cattle. And the sons are obliged to perform the mortuary rites for their parents (Yorke, 1979:111).

4.3.2 Family & Kinship of Gonds in North Odisha:

Family is the smallest unit that consists of father, mother and their children. In Gond society, mostly family are nuclear, patriarchal and patrilineal in nature. Joint family and extended families are rarely found.

As a patriarchal society, the authority in the Gond family rests with men. Father is the head of the family. All members in the family obey and respect him. After death of father, mother is considered as head of the family. Family members have their own responsibilities. They have mutual love with each other. The elders

of the family like mother, elder brother, and elder sisters take the responsibility of socializing their younger ones in the family. The elders in the family guide the children to learn about their customs, traditions and about their culture.

Usually the married persons live in separate house; if they have more brothers in the family. In Gond society, the father's properties are equally shared among all the sons. No daughters get share from father's property. But in the case of physically handicapped and unmarried daughter, she gets a share. The father's property is divided among the sons only after all sons are married. If father is dead, then the property is distributed among the sons equally.

Women usually do household chores, such as cooking, sweeping, bringing water from water supply tap, taking care of children, household worship, house cleaning, etc. The men plough the agricultural land, take care of cow, oxen, goat and sheep. The women do the planting, weeding and both women and men cut the paddy plants and bring paddy from land to harvest. The sons and daughters help parents in their works.

Both male and female folks can go to weekly markets to buy vegetables and other necessary articles. Only male persons go to attend funerals in neighboring villages. Only male folks can do the worship in their agricultural land.

The kinship Institution is found in every society and it plays very important role in every family. Kinship means relationship. Among the Gonds of the study village kinship terminologies are used in nuclear and joint families and also for referring and addressing affines and consanguines. In the Gonds society, there are two types of kinship system found. Consanguineous or blood related kinship is the relationships formed on the basis of blood or blood relationship for example father, mother, children, son, daughter, grandfather, grandmother.

Affinal kinship is formed on the basis of marriage. When a person is married, a new relationship is formed between two

families such as sister-in-law, brother-in-law, mother-in-law and father-in-law, etc. On perusal and analysis of Gonds kinship terminologies, it is revealed that they use both classificatory and descriptive terminologies to address their different affines and consanguines. The kinship terminologies which are quite alike the typical Odia society is given in the statement below.

Table 4.7: Kinship Terminologies of Gonds of North Odisha

Sl. No	Kinship Terminology in English	Terms of Reference	Terms of Address
1.	Father	Bapa	Ba
2.	Mother	Maa	Maa
3.	Son	Pua	Babu or by name
4.	Daughter	Jhio	Nini or by name
5.	Elder Brother	Bada Bhai	Dada
6.	Younger Brother	Sana Bhai	By Name or Babu
7.	Elder Sister	Bada Bhouni	Dei, Nani
8.	Younger Sister	Sana Bhauni	Nini or By name
9.	Father's elder brother	Bada Bapa	Boba
10.	Father's elder brother's wife	Bada Maa	Mama
11.	Father's younger brother	Kaka	Kaka
12.	Father's younger brother's wife	Kaki/khudi	Khudi
13.	Father's sister	Piisi	Apa
14.	Father's sister's husband	Piisa	Piusa
15.	Mother's Brother	Mamu	Mamu
16.	Mother's brother's wife	Main	Main
17.	Mother's sister	Mausi	Mausi
18.	Mother's sister's husband	Mausa	Mausa
19.	Husband	Swami	By name of elder daughter or son's Bapa
20.	Wife	Stree	By name of elder daughter or son's Maa or by name
21.	Husband's father	Sasura	Dada
22.	Husband's mother	Sasu	Maa
23.	Husband's Younger brother	Diara	Babu/ by name
24.	Husband's Younger sister	Nananda	Jhio, By nick name
25.	Husband's elder sister	Dedh Sasu	Nani
26.	Husband's elder sister's Husband	Nona	Jain
27.	Husband's younger sister's husband	Bhai	Bhai

28.	Husband's elder or younger brother's son	Putura	Nick name given to him only or babu
29.	Husband's elder or younger brother's daughter	Jhiari	Nick name given to her or Nini
30.	Wife's father	Sasura	Bapa
31.	Wife's mother	Sasu	Maa
32.	Wife's elder brother	Bada Sala	Nona/Bhai
33.	Wife's elder brother's wife	Bhauja	Nani
34.	Wife's younger brother	Sala	By Name
35.	Wife's elder sister	Dedh Sasu	Nani
36.	Wife's younger sister	Sali	By name
37.	Grandfather (Father's Father)	Jeje bapa	Jeje
38.	Grandmother (Father's Mother)	Jeje maa	Jeji
39.	Grandfather (Mother's Father)	Aja	Aja
40.	Grandmother (Mother's Mother)	Aai	Aai
41.	Grandfather's father	Badu	Badu
42.	Grandfather's mother	Bodei	Bodei
43.	Grandfather's grand father	Gose bapa	Gose bapa
44.	Grandfather's grand mother	Gose maa	Gose maa
45.	Grand Son	Nati	Natia
46.	Grand Daughter	Natuni	Natuni
47.	Grand Son's son	Puti	Puti/ By name
48.	Grandson's daughter	Putin	Putin/ By name
49.	Daughter's Son	Nati	Natia
50.	Daughter's Daughter	Natuni	Natuni
51.	Son-in-law's father	Samudi	Samudi
52.	Son-in-law's mother	Samuduni	Samuduni
53.	Daughter-in-law's father	Samudi	Samudi
54.	Daughter-in-law's mother	Samuduni	Samuduni
55.	Elder Brother's wife	Bhauja	Bhauja
56.	Younger brother's wife	Bhai bohu	-
57.	Elder Sister's Husband	Bhinei	Bhai/Bhinei
58.	Younger Sister's Husband	Jain	Babu
59.	Son-in-law	Jain	Jain/Pua
60.	Daughter-in-law	Bohu	Bohu
61.	Brother's Son	Putura	Babu or by name
62.	Brother's daughter	Jhiari	Nini or by name
63.	Sister's son	Bhanaja	Bhanja or by name
64.	Sister's daughter	Bhaniji	Bhanji or by name

The kinship usages as noticed among the Gonds in Keonjhar district (North Odisha) is similar to that of the Gonds residing in Nabarangpur district (Souh Odisha).

4.4 Marriage, divorce & inheritance

Functionally, marriage is a union between two adults of opposite sex for having conjugal relation, co-operation and sexual satisfaction with the spouse. The basic reason for the formation of family is marriage. It regulates socially sanctioned sex gratification. The bio-physical need is also highly necessary for survival of the culture. Co-operation and division of labour is also an important criteria in their marriage as they are dependent on agriculture and wage labour. The Gonds have been following their customary rules and regulations for marriage.

Gond society follows the principle of exogamy which allows its members to take wife from outside his clan or gotra. On the contrary, it strictly observes the rule of endogamy and does not allow its members to marry outside the tribe. Also the system of hypergamy or hypogamy is not allowed. While widow and widower re-marriage is allowed in their society, there is no restriction for a man's remarriages when his first wife is alive. Inheritance of property and position in Gonds society is by and large goes through the male line. With the aforementioned commonality, the following discussions give a picture of marriage, divorce and inheritance of Gonds in the two study areas of Odisha.

4.4.1 Marriage, divorce & inheritance among Gonds in South Odisha:

The Gond practise endogamy at the community as well as village level and strictly follows clan exogamy. Gonds society prohibits marriage between the same clan members. Only members from different clans can marry. Marriage upkeeps discipline, culture and helps protect lineage. Among the Gonds a common marriage is the union of a man and a woman based on mutual choice, sanctioned by the ceremonial exchange of vows, with the approval of the tribal council, witnessed by the relatives of the

partners and the village community, and concluded with a festive wedding dinner. Gonds traditionally marry on reaching physical maturity. Gonds society permits adult marriages. For marriage, the selection of mates is based on mutual choice, subject to the approval of the tribal council. Age at marriage varies from sixteen to eighteen years in case of girls and eighteen to twenty-two years for boys.

Their marriages are generally arranged, but they also have marriages by elopement, by mutual consent and by service. Monogamy is common. Polygynous marriages take place under special circumstances, with the consent of the first wife. Application of vermillion on the forehead, wearing of glass bangles and bead necklace are the symbols of a married woman. Bride price payment is prevalent and it is made in shape of cash, kinds and ornaments. Patrilocal residence is the normal rule of residence after marriage. If there is difficulty in adjustment with the in-laws after marriage, a man and his wife may set up his own house. Divorce (*chadri*) is permitted and may be obtained with the assent of their tribal council. Divorce is allowed for adultery, misconduct and sometimes also for barrenness. There is no divorce compensation; if there are children they could stay either with the father or mother. Remarriages of both widows and widowers are allowed with the consent of the village headman. In such remarriage no elaborate ceremony is observed. In the post-independence period, some changes have been reported in the institution of marriage. Child marriages have been abolished. They no longer prefer marriage by capture. Amount in bride price has decreased and women now have the right to ask for divorce.

Gonds typically choose their marriage mates and their tribal council approves the matches. The groom's father pays the bride price. Gond weddings include many significant ceremonies. The main part of the wedding occurs when the bride and groom walk seven times around a wedding post. Newlyweds live with the groom's family until it is possible for them to move into a house of their own. Sometimes, Gond matches are made when a groom and bride elope. These marriages must be approved later by their

relatives and the village council. Also the council can approve divorces. A girl and a boy in love, running away is an accepted custom. Once they come back, the Panchayat meets to discuss the terms and conditions of the marriage. Marriages are also arranged by the parents. Depending up on the financial conditions of the families the bride groom's parents have to give the bride's parents some amount of money.

Educated and service holder Gonds with approval of Gond cultural society, Odisha, Bhubneswar are trying to change their old marriage traditions and adopt the Hindu marriage rituals. Also some Gond families have been enrolled as members in Gayatri Paribar. Thus kinship and marriage customs among the Gonds reflect broader regional patterns. Their society permits cross-cousin marriage (e.g., marriage with one's mother's brother's daughter) that is a typical of South Indian tradition. Groups that have been influenced by northern peoples such as the Marathas, however, follow northern customs in determining marriage partners. Similarly, northern Gonds allow "levirate" marriages, in which a widow remarries the younger brother of her deceased husband. This is not allowed in southern India. Now a days, the Gonds increasingly follow the Hindu custom of arranged marriages when the children are still young.

Types of marriages: Most of the Gonds practies monogamy. In addition to the negotiated marriage, other forms of marriage among the Gonds include elopement of an unmarried girl with a boy, or the capture of a girl and her forced marriage to her captor. Such marriages must later be legalized by the relatives and village councils of the partners. (Encyclopedia.com).

They do not practise hypo-gamy but cases of hyper-gamy are reported. Cross-cousin marriages from the mother's side, junior sororate and junior levirate are preferred. In case of levirate marriage, if a man's deceased brother's wife is much older than him, the marriage is not held. Among the Gonds in the Nabarangapur district, the marriage traditions of two broad categories are in vogue such as 'Biha' and 'Bandhan'. In 'Biha' the prospective bride's

family members and relatives along with the bride come to the bridegroom's father's house for solemnizing marriage on a fixed date and after consummation of marriage, leave the bride in her husband's house and return home. As per the 'Bandhan' tradition, the groom's party goes to the bride's father's house in a procession for marriage and bring the bride to their home after the marriage is performed.

However, in Gond society six types of marriages are reported. They are 1. arranged marriage (mahala biha), 2. marriage of girl during her pre-marriage visit to her would be husband's house (era dashana biha/thengauturani biha) 3. widow remarriage (mithana biha), 4. marriage by elopement (udulia biha), 5. marriage by service (larnsadi) and 6. marriage by intrusion (paisamundi biha).

Mahala biha (arranged/negotiation marriage): This marriage is very common among the Gonds. It is held through negotiation following a series of ritual processes like proposal of boy's family (saga), acceptance by girls family (chinahri), cognizance of both families and relatives and pre-marriage visit of girl to boys house (janhari), grinding of turmeric and rice followed by a feast to all (haldi kutuni), (telchigani), (ligan) marriage rite in alter, tikina, bhojibhata (feast) and (jhia bida) farewell to daughter.

Era dashana biha / Thengauturani biha (marriage of girl during her pre-marriage visit to would be husband's house): During the event of janhari when the boy's family does not allow the girl to return to her parents' house and keep her forever, in such a situation, the girl's family has no option but to make arrangement for the marriage with the approval of the Gond society.

Paisamundi biha (marriage by intrusion): Love between the boy and girl and consent of both to be life partners forms the basis of Paisamundi biha marriage. In this form of marriage the girl with her bag and baggage leaves her parents' house without informing them and comes to her lover's house and stay there. Later, both the families of bride and bridegroom take decision for finalization of the marriage.

Udulia biha (marriage by elopement): When parents of both the lovers (boy and girl) do not agree for the formers' marriage, then both of them elope with each other and go to reside in boy's maternal uncle's house. Later after some days their parents with the consent of the elders come to an understanding to give recognition to the marriage and make arrangement for the same.

Mithana biha (widow remarriage): Consequent upon the death of her husband a widow remarries to another man preferably to her deceased husband's younger brother.

Larnsadi (marriage by service): Marriage by service (larnsadi), a universal traditional custom of Gonds is one of the social institutions that have economic consequences. A Gond family having only daughters or one or two sons who could not collectively undertake agricultural operations of the large family holdings extending upto 50 to 100 acres bring a poor Gond boy on promise of marriage to their daughters after a specified period of service in their agricultural lands. Many Gond families remain as either vertically or horizontally extended joint families to facilitate corporate economic activity of the kin without the need for hired farm hands which are very scarce also (Pratap, 1983; P. 7 -8).

Most of the Gonds practice monogamy. In case of the death of a wife, for taking care of children and family, the husband can marry his wife's younger sister with consent of both families. There is no provision to marry wife's elder sister. If wife's younger sister of a man does not agree to marry him, then he can go for non sororal polygyny. The father of the groom has to pay the bride-price, the amount of which depends on the position and wealth of the two families. Gonds who are too poor to pay the bride-price and the wedding expenses contract a Service marriage. Usually families with no sons prefer such a marriage arrangement.

Domestic Unit: Gond marriages are as a rule happy and lasting when husband is able to provide a frugal livelihood for wife and children and wife is efficient in her household tasks and field works. Gonds men and women are affectionate toward children and enjoy happy family life.

Divorce is permissible among the Gonds. Both wife and husband have rights to ask for divorce if they have strong reasons. Divorce case is sent to the village Jati Samaj for consideration and decision. The Gonds society permits divorce and separation for various reasons. For example, a man may obtain a divorce for barrenness, extra marital affairs, cruelty, quarrelsomeness or negligence to work. Likewise, a woman may elope with another man if her husband is a bad provider, a drunkard, or a wife beater, or if he is habitually unfaithful. After separation, father takes care of the male child and for girls, mother will take care of. These matters are settled by Jati Samaj of village constituted of Headman (Gountia), Pujari, some old knowledgeable persons and now the ward members also included. Compensation will be given by the husband to wife including whatever she had brought during marriage. There is no specific fixed amount for compensation in Gond Samaj.

Remarriage of widows and divorcees are permitted in Gond society. After husband's death the widow can remarry the husband's youngest brother with the consent of both the families. There is no provision to marry husband's elder brother. It is believed that husband's elder brother is like father.

Inheritance in Gond society passes through the male line. If a Gond has one son, the inheritor of the family property is son after the father. If a Gond has more sons, then the properties are divided equally among all the sons. In the past, girls were not being given a share of the properties, but now, they get the share. It is done in the presence of the family members and Jati Samaj. In the past the eldest son enjoyed the privilege of ancestral worship for which he was receiving a larger share but not now. The son who moves elsewhere, forfeits his rights over paternal property. A widow has rights over the property of her deceased husband. She can sale or mortgage it. If young, the widow may be remarried to a close relative of her deceased husband, preferably, younger brother. A widow who remains in the house, her share of property is inherited by her youngest son.

Consequent upon the Gharajamai Marriage, the groom inducted to his father-in-law's residence and Gotra and inherits the property as a son. An issueless family may adopt a son with written agreement and sanction of Gonds Samaj. Adopted son inherits the property of the family. When a man, who have daughter but no son dies, one of his relative's son shave his head for the performance of death ritual. That person, like a son, gets some portion of the deceased man's property.

4.4.2 Marriage, divorce & inheritance among Gonds in North Odisha:

Marriage plays important role in Gond's life. Marriage not only satisfies the biological need, but also it gives status in their society. Usually Gonds practise monogamy.

In the past among the Gonds' marriageable age was 19-28 years for the boy and 18 to 25 years for the girl. Now it is 25 to 27 years for the boy and 20 to 22 years for the girl. Second marriage is not permissible in their society. The informants opine that if a married woman remains issueless after 5-6 years of marriage, then she is called as Banja (barren) and her husband may be permitted for second marriage. According to them, the barren woman takes the responsibility to find a bride for her husband. Then the village elders (Panch Koria) talk to the bride's family and arrange the marriage.

Marriage by negotiation is commonly prevalent in their society following the rule of clan exogamy. This type of marriage is arranged by the middle man (bhol lokia). In this type of marriage, mainly they follow the Hindu practices of marriage along with their tribal customary practices.

Junior sororate marriage is also permissible in Gond society. In the case of death of wife, husband's family requests his deceased wife's family for marriage of their younger daughter. With their consent the marriage is finalized.

Their society also allows junior levirate marriages. In this case, the younger brother who marries his deceased elder brother's

widow gets two shares of paternal property ie. his own share and his deceased elder brother's share. If any child of his deceased elder brother is there, the child is recognized as his son or daughter. There is no provision for the widow to marry husband's elder brother. They believe that husband elder brother is equal to father.

Gharajwain marriage is also in vogue in the Gond society. The Gond family prefers gharajwain marriage if they have one or two daughters only. They go for gharajwain marriage for one of the daughters to whom they like the most. The property registered in the name of daughter rather than the name of the son-in-law in the presence of members of their society.

Case -1, Krupa Badanayak from Salabeda village of Keonjhar district has married to Parbati Nayak, D/o- Late Bainsidhar Nayak of Sinduria village and aftermath of the marriage, he lives in the residence of his father-in-law.

Marriage by elopement is in vogue in Gond society. When a Gond girl and a boy elope from home to get married and if they are from different clans then the Gond society approves the marriage. Then both the boy's family and girl's family decide to call them back and allow them to get married.

Inter-caste marriage which violates the community rule of endogamy is strictly prohibited in the Gond society. If a boy or girl marries outside the Gond community, their family is socially boycotted in the village. They are not allowed to participate in any of the village festivals or rituals. The boy or the girl is considered as dead in the family and his or her family observes death pollution. Then they give a feast to the elders of the society (Panch Koria) as per their financial ability. Then the concerned family may participate in all ritual and festivals in the village. The fine amount for breaking the Gond principle of endogamy will be decided in the annual meeting of the village council or Gonds Mahasabha.

Divorce is disallowed in the Gond Society. The husband cannot divorce his wife if the wife suffers from chronic sickness or diseases or she is barren. However, in case of barrenness, he is

permitted to marry a second wife with the consent of the first wife, who is responsible to find a suitable bride for her husband. Both first wife and second wife have equal rights and enjoy conjugal life in the family.

According to the informants of the study village, if the married woman left the husband's house for some reason and refused to come back, the husband can give divorce to his wife after taking written permission of Gond society. They think that if divorce is not given formally, then sometimes the later may claim a share of her ex-husband's property. If any extra marital affair is detected and the matter is not settled amicably, it is referred to the Gond society. After filing a divorce paper in court they are permitted to get divorced. No divorce case among the Gonds couples is reported in the study village.

Inheritance of property in Gond society does not only refer to the property and things owned but also the rights which constitute the ownership. Inheritance of property on the other hand means transfer of status, based upon a pre-existing relationship between the predecessor (the former holder) and the successor (one who succeeds). Transmission of property follows the same line as transmission of status.

The value of the assets passed by a household reflects its wealth. The property of a Gond household generally comprise, some land, a hut, two or three heads of cattle and a few agricultural implements and few utensil etc. Whatever wealth is possessed by an individual family is distributed among all the male members of the family. Among the Gonds the rule of inheritance of property is patrilineal. The property of a deceased person is equally shared among his sons. If the head of a house is issueless, the matter is decided by the tribal council and the deceased's property goes to the nearest paternal kin. The right of ancestor worship and socio-religious position is inherited by the eldest son.

After the death of father, the unmarried daughter is to be looked after by her brother till her marriage. It is the responsibility of her brother to arrange her marriage. A widow enjoys the right

over the property of her husband during her life time but forfeits her claim, if she remarries outside. A daughter may inherit the property of her father if she leads the life of a spinster but a married daughter loses all rights on her paternal property. A daughter inherits the property of her father, who has no male issues. The traditional practice of inheritance continues without any resentment from any side.

The important traditional offices in a Gond village are village-headman, Gointia, Pradhan, Naik, Pujari, Dehuri, Messenger and other office bearers, who constitute the tribal council. The succession to such important offices in the Gonds society goes along the male line, i.e. from father to elder son. The wife and daughters have no such privileges, whatsoever.

4.5 Status of Gond Women

The conceptual framework to analyse women's status comprise the seven roles women play in life and works: - parental, conjugal, domestic, kin, occupational, community and as an individual. In order to appraise the social status of women in these diverse ecological areas, the findings have been divided in to subsequent categories: - (a) a girl; daughter; a unmarried woman; (b) a married woman; (c) a widow; (d) divorcee; and (e) a barren woman. Role of women is not only of importance in economic activities, but her role in non-economic activities is equally important also. The tribal women work very hard, in some cases even more than the men. All the tribal societies in the study area are patriarchal in which men dominate in public life. However, in their own world women have a freedom, and a self-expression (Bhasin, 2007: p.1).

Findings of different research scholars on status of Gonds women differ from each other. According to Sarkar (Adivasi) women have a lower status than men. They enjoy the freedom of choosing their life partners and in seeking divorce. They do not have share in the parental property after the father's death. They are very hard working both within as well as outside the house. Women are not allowed to worship the clan deities and cannot cook the offered food for the gods. Some restrictions are imposed

on a married woman and a she is expected to be faithful to her husband. They have no role to play in the political arena.

The Gond family is mother-centric. The position of mother in the Gond family is the highest. Obedience to mother's orders by all members is mandatory. Virtues like peace, discipline, mutual cooperation and help carry their socio-cultural value system. (Mishra, 84-91 Banaja, Odia).

Our findings mentioned below on the status of Gonds women reveal a similar picture in the two different study areas of Odisha.

4.5.1 Status of Gond Women in South Odisha:

Though the Gond woman enjoys freedom in selecting mates, divorce and dances, her status is definitely inferior to that of the males. The Gond woman cannot cook or offer any food offered to the clan Gods. An unmarried girl cannot take part in the rituals of the clan deity *persa pen*. Though the unmarried Gond girl enjoys unrestricted freedom, the moment she is married, she is subjected to number of restrictions and has to be more faithful to her husband. In spite of working very hard in the fields, as well as cooking food for the family, tending cattle, fetching water and doing all sorts of odds jobs, a woman cannot inherit any property from her parents or from her husband. A married woman has to observe avoidance of her son-in law and also her husband's elder brother (*Raigarh*). Such restrictions make the position of Gond woman inferior to that of their men. (Pratap, 1983; P.10).

4.5.2 Status of Gond Women in North Odisha:

Women, especially mother and wife have a special position in the family. They exclusively bear all responsibilities and remain in charge of all the domestic matters. The wife takes equal share of the hard struggle of life of her husband and works with him. Besides bearing and taking care of children and attending the household chores, she does different economic activities in the paddy fields in production of crops and kitchen garden for growing vegetables and collection of minor forest produce in the forest. Thus Gonds

women play a pivotal role in the socio-economic life of the family. Further, our field investigation in Telkoi area of Keonjhar district reveals a similar observation by Koreti (2016) on the status of Gonds women in society.

In the traditional Gond society, the place of a woman was practically that of equality with the opposite sex. She lived her life shoulder to shoulder with the male sharing in all works, including earning of livelihood. Most of the domestic works centered round her. She looked after the children, reared livestock and cooked food for the family. In all the major issues in the family, the husband consulted his wife and often honoured her opinions. A woman was excluded from certain ritual observances. Despite all these, the Gond woman enjoyed a respectable status in the society because she played an important role both in production and reproduction process. However, in present days her position is deteriorating with the changing globalised circumstances (Koreti 2016:289).

4.6 Village Youth Dormitory (Gotul):

Gotul is a combination of two words, Go means Deity and Tul means place. As per the Gondi language the term 'Gotul' refers to the abode of deity. It was believed that Gotul was created by the ancient deity, Lingopen (Culture Hero) with a view to impart training to the youth on song, dance, discipline, culture, tradition, religion, value systems, sanctity, etc. It is a center of learning. It was the village youth dormitory (Gotul) that was a very important institution in the Gond society. There were separate dormitories for unmarried boys and girls, viz., Dhanqria, Ghotal (Boy's dormitory) and Dhanqri Ghotal (Girl's dormitory). The dormitory was not only a common sleeping place for the young people, but also a training institute to learn tribal myths, mythology, dance, music and many other qualities which would make them useful members of the community. The dormitory with its elaborate system, strict discipline and duties, was meeting the needs of the villagers for labour in agricultural operations, in house construction at a nominal payment.

The Gonds of Bastar (of Chhatishgarh) and Raigarh area of Odisha have the institution of common sleeping houses known as Gotulghar, which are conspicuously absent among the Raj Gonds of Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh. The boys and girls have two separate houses called Dhanqria Ghotal (Boy's dormitory) and Dhanqri Ghotal (Girl's dormitory) in Raigarh, where every unmarried boy and girl above 12 years of age have to sleep at night. In Bastar and Raigarh the boys and girls have a regular organisation, the captain of the boy's dormitory being called Kotwar and the vice-captain, Mukwan; while the captain of the girls' is called Belosa and the vice-captain, Delosa. The boys and girls sing and dance together and are also taught about the tribal rituals and etiquettes at the Gotul. The boys and girls become intimate and ultimately settle their marriages. (Pratap, 1983)

Five decades ago (up to 1971) Gotul was found effective in Madia or Maria Gond villages of Raigarh area. Gotul was used as a center of learning for the young boys and girls. Their unmarried boys and girls got scope for learning their culture and custom, tradition, value systems and personality development with love, affection, intimacy and basic foundation of future marriage life. Gotul was used as a community house for the bachelors and spinsters. Especially it was leveled as a center of culture, entertainment and socialization. Here guests were treated. But this vital institution no more exists in the study villages of Gonds in southern and northern Odisha. However, in these days in some Gonds villages one may find the modern youth associations organized by Block Development Office or tribal development organizations, like ITDA, OTELP, etc. for undertaking the development and welfare programmes.

PHOTOGRAPHS CHAPTER – I



Religious Symbol



Religious Symbol



Gond Couple



Tattoo Marking



Gond Woman's adornments



CHAPTER – II

Habitat, Settlement & Housing



A Gond Village in North Odisha



Water Source: Sanitary Well & Tube Well at Village Rajaputi, Nabarangpur District



Tank & Pond at Village Rajaputi

Safe Drinking Water



Typical Gonds House



Gond (Gontia) House at Rajaputi Village



'U' Shaped Gond House in Telkoi Block of Keonjhar District



Legend based Rituals govern Gond Paintings on Walls & Floors in Sinduria Village of Keonjhar District



Agricultural Implements of Gonds in Nabarangpur District



Circular Grinding Stone



Husking Lever & Hole



Gourd Container



Paddy Husking Lever (Dhenki) operated by Gond Women in Keonjhar District



Toilets provided to Gonds under Sanitation Programme in village Sonpur of Nabarangpur District



Traditional Healer of Village, Telkoi,
Keonjhar District



Traditional Healer of
Nabarangpur District

CHAPTER – III Economic Life



Agro-Forestry; the Mainstay of Gond Economy



Bullock Carts as the main basis of
Transporting Agro-Products



Animal Husbandry significantly contributes
to Gond Economy



Duck Rearing



Cattle Rearing

Gonds' Food & Drinks



Gond Woman preparing
Mandia Pej for drink



Meals Ready in
the Gond Kitchen



Distillation of Mahuli Liquor
at Home



Juice extraction from a mature
Salap Tree



Kurabeda Weekly Hat,
Nabarangpur



Belamunda Weekly Hat,
Telkoi, Keonjhar

Indigenous Knowledge System of Gonds



Oil Extraction from Sal, Mahul and Neem Seeds



Mahua Liquor Distillation by a Gond in Keonjhar District

CHAPTER – III Social Organization



Wall Painting identifies Clans of Gond



Parghanias play Kinkiri and recite Gotra history of their Gond clients



Gond Woman Making Date-Palm Mat



Mondei Festival of Rural Nabarangpur

LIFE CYCLE RITUALS

Human life passes through four critical stages such as birth, initiation, marriage and death. Rituals connected with these stages of life are called “Life Cycle Rituals” or “Rites-de-Passage”. These rituals are also called as “Transitional Rituals” because when one individual passes from one stage to another, such stages are ritualized. Beliefs and rituals found to be main components of every religion are socially framed and accepted. Religion consists of two elements, a theoretical and a practical. The theoretical element constitutes the belief in power that is higher than man and an attempt to propitiate to please them is known as religious practices. The rituals are traditional methods of dealing with crisis in social life.

The Gonds’ social life also passes through birth, initiation, marriage and death. During these stages they observe four important life cycle rituals. Different taboos are observed by the Gond society in different rituals. Gonds society observes pollution in case of births and deaths. Their traditional tribal priest, known as Dehuri/Pujari is invited to officiate in these rituals. The followings are detailed observance, as recorded in both the study areas in North Odisha and South Odisha, on each of the stages of the Gonds life cycle, which are most important aspects of their socio-cultural life.

5.1 Life Cycle of Gonds in South Odisha (Raigarh Block of Nabarangpur District):

Birth: For Gonds the life of a new human being begins at the time of birth. This starts with labour and ends after the ritual of purification a week or so later. A human birth is the coming together of five elements, earth, air, fire, water and sky or ether which is given

life by god, Bhagvan. Combined, these substances and force are elemental, like a seed that can multiply (Yorke, 1979: 85).

Prediction of Conception: The ambition of every Gond woman is to bear a baby. Barrenness in a woman is considered inauspicious. Pregnancy and birth are surrounded with protective rites against magic spells and evil influences. Gond people consider the birth of a child as a blessing of God. Stoppage of menstruation and abdominal swelling are the indication of pregnancy. Previously the Gonds did not have any preference for boys or girl. Now they prefer a male child than that of a female child. A Gond family feels more pleasure when blessed with a male child. The elderly Gondwomen predict about the sex of the baby by observing the hand, palm, waist and face of a pregnant woman. If the color of a pregnant woman's palm is red, waist is slim and face is thin then the baby will be a son otherwise it will be a girl. Pregnant women observe certain taboos as a protection against magical spells and evil influences. They observe some restrictions on food, drinks and movement. In the past, Disari (Shaman) examined the pregnant woman by pressing a vein of her hand and forecasted the time of delivery. Also, elderly women also forecast the delivery time by counting the months from stoppage of menstruation of the pregnant woman. Now Asha or Anganwadi Worker helps the pregnant lady to take her to nearby PHCs when the delivery time approaches.

It is believed that difficult child birth is caused due to bad work in previous life of the parents. In the past, miscarriages happened due to the actions of evil spirits. They do not practice abortion. But now, based on their difficult situations some of them are experiencing miscarriage and abortion. If a woman remains issueless, she prays and makes vows to their ancestral deity to be blessed with a child. If her prayers fail and she continues to be barren then her husband marries another girl to get a child.

Child Birth : Child birth takes place in a separate room. Just after the child birth, an elderly woman or a midwife cuts the umbilical cord with a knife or scissor. In the past, they used majia (pot shred)

for this purpose and washed the baby and mother. The placenta is kept in a dana (a sal leaft basket) and buried within the household premises. The Gonds say if they throw the placenta outside the house then the Disari (Shaman), Guniamay use it in a black magic. An elderly woman or grandmother of the family makes fire on the earth where the dana (placenta) is buried. She massages the body of the baby with joda (mustard) oil. They believe that massage of the baby will make him/her healthy and strong. From that day male members are prohibited to walk on the earth where the dana is buried. Previously, both mother and baby were being given bath two times daily with warm water. But now ASHA Karmi advises not to take daily bath.

There is no definite period of birth pollution. Family members do not touch the mother during post delivery period until she takes the final purificatory bath. Even preparing and serving food are done by the neighbors, not by the family members. A separate room is given to mother and child. The baby and mother are given the final purificatory bath on the day when the remaining umbilical cord completely falls off. It may be on the 9th day of birth. On this day the hair of the baby is cut by the uncle. After worship by the Pujari - the priest, the mother can enter the kitchen and cook food and resume her routine domestic works. Those who have helped in child birth (elderly women /Dhai) are presented with new cloths (Sarees) by the family members. Previously, they preferred delivery at homes. But now with the help of ASHA and Anganwadi Workers they prefer institutional delivery.

The lactating mother observes some food restrictions. She cannot eat curry of bitter gourd, mushroom, kunduru, saru, brinjal, corn, biri dal etc. They believe that these vegetables are not good for baby's health. Kolothadal (Horsegram dal) is given to her for cleaning the remaining dust of belly. After that she can take food as usual.

Naming Ceremony (Padartasana): In the past, after delivery of a baby, the name giving ceremony was taking place after 3 or 9 days. But now it is observed after 21 days. On that day all the family

members take their bath. The head of the new born is also shaved. Both mother and new born baby take bath. Then the family members and the Dehuri go to the shrine of village deities for worship and a name is given to the baby by performing the Ekusia ritual. The name giving ceremony is known as Padartasana in Gond language. Father's sister plays the main role in this ceremony. She beats a steel plate at the time of ritual and announces the name of the baby. Family members, kin members and neighbours are invited to attend the ritual. The head of the family hosts a feast for the invited guests. The guests present gifts in cash or kind to the baby. If the new born baby inherits any bodily mark of any of his ancestor, then the baby may be given the same ancestor's name. When the baby attains the age of about one year or so, the grandmother (either parental or maternal) first feeds the baby cooked rice. The rice is prepared by the grandmother and first offered to the ancestral deity for the wellbeing of the baby.

Puberty: Gond children grow up as part of family, clan and village community and slowly learn the ways of their community people. As a sign of adulthood the males undergo shaving of the beard, mustache, and eyebrows. The girl is considered full-grown after her puberty (first menstruation). When a girl reaches puberty, her parents consider that she is eligible for marriage.

During the first menstruation, the girl is allowed to sit in a corner of the house. The family members observe pollution for 7 days. In the past, during menstruation, the girls used torn pieces of cloth. Now they use sanitary napkins. The ladies of the family serve her hot dishes. Sometimes her friends give company. On the 7th day, her mother or other elderly women of her family take her to the nearest pond, apply turmeric on her body and help her to take bath. The other family members clean the house with cow dung. On this day, elderly women and their kin members are invited for a dinner. Till then the girl cannot enter other rooms as they believe that their ancestors reside in the house. She is refrained from doing household work and also not allowed to move outside the house during these periods. In every month, pollution is observed until the discharge is stopped.

Marriage: Marriage is an inevitable event in the life of the Gonds and it regulates their sexual life. Marriage not only satisfies the biological urge but also gives them status in society. A man in the event of his or her marriage gets a life partner who can help him in economic pursuits. In Gond society sons are recognized as protectors of the clan and the daughters are considered as the producer of the clan. Hence, a marriage rite is considered very important, special and sacred one. The Gonds Samaja believed that marriage is a union blessed by Budha Deo (the supreme deity). Gonds strictly adhere to the rule of clan exogamy and tribe endogamy till today. The social practice of marriage among Gond always stood on two popular beliefs or ideas. Firstly, marriage was considered as “Bondage” that not only unites the couples (man and woman in marriage), but also binds two families, two clans and villages with the thread of love, cooperation, sympathy, mutual help and respect for ever. The tribal endogamy reflects the unity and solidarity within the tribe. Secondly, marriage also was viewed as independence from the perspective of parents or guardians. This idea upheld that arranged marriage for the matured sons and daughters is considered as the responsibility of the parents or the guardians. Further, the idea of freedom also implied that parents transferred their family responsibility, such as looking after the household, management of properties, conducting socio-religious rituals of the community, hospitality of the guests etc. to their family members as well as married daughters.

Gonds tradition of pre-marriage ritual (Kanabara):

Interestingly, the Gonds in some areas have a tradition of pre-marriage (Kanabara) ritual for girls, which precede their actual marriage rites. As for example, Kanabara ritual is observed for the Gond girls of Nupada area. Similar to

[illegible]

the Kundabera ritual of the Chuktia Bhunjia PVTG, a section of the Bhunjia tribe, the Odia Gond tribe of Nuapada area follows a tradition of pre-marriage ritual (Kanabara) for every girl at the age of 8 - 10 years. This ritual is a must to make the girl eligible for her actual marriage. Unless this ritual of the girl takes place, no Gond boy is allowed to marry her. The girl's father consults with the priest (Pujari) and selects a good date and time for holding this ritual. Two days before the fixed date, he invites all friends and kins folk and declares about his daughter's Kanabara ritual. All the villagers cooperate in preparation of Mandap for holding the function.

Further such pre-marriage rituals are also found between two Gond spinsters (Kuanri Jhias) in Dhenkanal District. As for example, it has been a distinct tradition practiced among the Gond community at village Kusumundia in Kantapal GP of Kankadahad Block, Dhenkanal since long. On the eve of Raja Festival two spinsters of the village get married, one as bride and the other as bridegroom, with pomp and ceremony amidst music, songs, fireworks and feasts in the presence of women and girls exclusively. Besides, the priest and the barber also participate in this ritual. In the morning, the women folk assemble in the bride's house and make necessary arrangements for the marriage ritual and lead the procession up to the house of the groom. After the wedding ritual the bride spends the night spent with the groom in the latter's house. Next day, she returns to her own house. After one month of the marriage both the girls become friends (Sangata) for all times to come (Sambad Odia daily newspaper dated. 14.6.2021). The Gonds in Raighar area of Nabarangpur district and Telkoi area of Keonjhar district do not observe any such pre-marriage rites for their girls.

There are 5 types of marriage among the Gonds such as Mahala Bibha (Arranged Marriage), Thenga Utrani Bibha, Uduolia Bibha, Paisamundi Bibha, Mitihana Bibha and Gharjoin Bibha. The Mahala Bibha is very popular and common. This marriage has 3 steps, like Samdan, Chinari and Janari. In the last phase before completion of the marriage the Jhakar (Pujari) is invited to worship Goddess Mother Earth to respect her and express gratitude for

her creation. The groom before wearing the date palm turban (head-gear) prays for permissions from Gods and parents. When the groom asks permission of his father, the later gives advice that you, wearing this turban, will marry but time to come you should not deceive your wife. If you will deceive your wife in future, it will defame the king, state, you and me. The songs sang during turban wearing carry values of the family, society and the disciplined conduct. Deities are remembered in course of wearing dresses by both the bride and the groom (Mishra, 2008: Pp 84-91).

The field investigation reveals five types of primary marriages practiced among the Gonds of Raighara area. They are i. Bidingsitarle (capture of wife/forced marriage), ii. Poisamundi (bride lives in the groom's house prior to the marriage), iii. Udulia (love marriage), iv. Lamsena / Gharjian (groom lives in the bride's father's house prior to the marriage) and v. Mahala Biha (arranged marriage). Mahala Biha is the most ideal form of marriage where the ritual is strictly observed as per the Gond tradition. Mahala Biha is arranged through negotiation of both the families of boy and girl and where marriage procession by the groom and betrothal take place following traditional rules, and regulations. With the consent of both the families as well as the groom and the bride, the chalbarat (marriage procession) takes place. The process of marriage among the Gonds, though have some commonalities with the other tribes in India, usually passes through some identical stages accompanied by specific rituals and practices. Some of the major stages of marriage are elaborated as follows.

Bride Search (Kodiad Khojkila Andana): After a Gond boy attains marriageable age, the parents with the consent of the boy search for a bride, preferably 2-3 years younger than the boy. They send message to their relatives in far off places to find a suitable bride. When they come across with such a girl, they proceed to the girl's house with the marriage proposal. This stage is known as "bride search". If the parents from both sides agree with the proposal with all corresponding conditions then the next step was planning for marriage. In the early days, parents' decision regarding choice of a bride or a groom was respected by their children.

But in these days, such priorities are less frequent. In the earlier days, the Gond grooms party used to pay usually 3 visits (Mahala) to bride's house with specific purpose for each visit. These visits were known as "Three tier betrothal visits". The three tier visits were as follows :-

(1) Saga Mahala/Ghar Mahala (the first betrothal): The 'Ghar Mahala' is organised by both the parties of the marriage as pre-planned. The groom's side with all their relatives move to the bride's house along with some gifts, such as: cloths for the bride and her family members, beverages (preferably homemade wine, toddy), habitual items (tobacco, cigars etc.), cakes and other eatables, and arrive there usually in the evening. There they conduct some rituals and offer the gifts and the eatables to bride's relatives gathered there and go to sleep. Then in the next morning, the bride's family organizes a feast for the guests. After the feast, the guests bid farewell to the bride's family which is known as "Juhar Bhet" and return home. This social event is conducted in order to increase familiarity between the two sides and to strengthen their relationship.

(2) Second Betrothal/Chinhari Mahala (Visit for Public Recognition): Alike the previous stage, this event is also conducted as pre-planned by both the sides. This Mahala is organized at the community level, involving the community leaders from both the marriage parties. In this Mahala, the groom's side along with all their relatives and community leaders and goods like wines, tobacco, cigars, cakes, fried rice, etc. go to the bride's house, and their usual arrival time is evening. Like the previous one, they share a part of those eatables and drinks with their friends in the bride's side and go to sleep.

In the next morning, all the members of the bride's village along with the community leaders are called to attend the Chinhara meeting. Then the meeting begins with worship by offering coconut, incense and wine brought by the groom. The news of marriage is announced before the community members for approval. Then, all the participants of the meeting share the food along with wine

and other items brought by the groom's party. Now, the whole community is aware of the legitimatised marriage relationship. Then, the groom's party is offered a meal which is attended by selected community members. The groom's party returns to their village after offering the usual namaskar (juhar bhet).

(3) Shubh Mahala/ The Third betrothal: This visit (Mahala) is meant to finalise the plan for the marriage. In this Mahala, as usual, the groom's party visits the bride's house with coconut, incense and mahua wine for the purpose of worship. This time there is no need of eatables and drinks for the bride's side as such. After worship, in a community level meeting all the arrangements of the marriage ceremony along with the date of marriage are conveyed to the community members. With this, the preparation for marriage begins. Both the parties invite their relatives and community members. Making of marriage headgear out of date palms, pot making, wine making are some of the major preparations involved in the marriage preparations among the Gonds.

Marriage Rites: Marriage rite is celebrated for more than 3 days. Basically, marriage ceremonies are conducted in five phases which can be presented as under with their specific features:

Chalbarat (marriage procession by the groom): Some days before the marriage, "haldi kutni" (turmeric preparation) ritual starts. The village priest initiates the ritual by grinding raw turmeric and worshipping deities. Then the spinsters first touch the turmeric and then adult women prepare turmeric paste to anoint the groom's body. Day before of the marriage two people (Mahalakaris) are sent by the groom's family to the bride's family to help the bride's villagers in marriage preparation. On the marriage day the invitees and neighbours visit the bride's house with gifts to see the bride before marriage and wish her happy married life. The groom wearing traditional marriage costume goes in a procession to the bride's house along with his friends and relatives. They are bound to arrive there before the time fixed for marriage. Violation of this norm usually invites some monetary penalty for the groom's family. On arrival at a specific place at the bride's village outskirts, the bride's people welcome the groom's party.

First day at the bride's house: At forenoon of the marriage day Deo Tela (inviting and worshipping) takes place in which some turmeric and till oil mixture, two mango leaves and some rice are kept in "bijla parala" with a lighted candle and covered to keep the light burning. After worshipping the village deity in shrine, the "bijla parala" is preserved as a symbol of the ritual. Some boys from both of the marriage parties collect a bundle of mahua and sal tree branches (madwa dal) from the nearest forest. As per the tradition, they need to carry a towel on one of the boy's shoulders. In a corner of the towel a 'Jandrilai', some jaggery and some money are tied. They preserve the mahua and sal tree branches in safe place in the bride's house for use during the marriage rituals.

Groom welcome ceremony: The bride party organizes a grand welcome ceremony for the groom's party at the centre of the village. In this ceremony, the couple is given royal treatment amidst singing and dancing with the beat of 'Gandbaja', a traditional music of Gonds. 'Mahalakari' acts as the messenger of the people who offer candle, vermilion, turmeric powder and mahua wine with a bronze plate to the groom's party.

Samadi Bhet (mutual felicitation): Relatives of both the parties gather at the appointed place in the bride's village and sit facing each other to greet and felicitate each other. This event called 'Samandi Bhet' is also blessed by the village priest through a small prayer to the village deity offering candle, incense, coconut, turmeric, rice and mahula wine. Then, men and women from both the sides greet each other with garlands. A boy from groom's side known as Dandia and a girl from bride's side known as Dandwi representing as the proxies of groom and bride also greet each other with garlands followed by the same process by the real couple.

Mandwa Dal Ritual: It is a popular ritual among the Gonds before the real marriage is held. In this ritual, a group of boys from both the sides take hold of a side of their "mandwa dal" gathered earlier. Then virgin girls of each side take the hold of the other sides of the branches from the opposite and a tug war like competition is held between the two groups. This event of amusement and funfair takes place and people enjoy this. Often this event is marked with

songs and dances which continue till late night. After the event, they take dinner together.

Second Day- Lagna (Preparation for Marriage): On the marriage day, the bride observes marriage fasting. The virgin girls of the bride's village conduct a marriage bath for the groom and the bride with water mixed with turmeric. Then the bride wears the cloths and ornaments brought by the groom. In the same way, groom also dresses himself with all traditional marriage costume. Then the 'Lagna' is organised and an alter is prepared for the marriage. Before starting the event, the marriage priest (Dosi) places four earthen pots at the four corners of the square-shaped 'Mandwa' (alter) and four burning candle lights are placed on them. The alter is encircled seven times with a special thread known as 'Satbandhan' or seven fold bondage. A new pot filled with turmeric water and attached with a bunch of sal/siali leaves to its mouth is tied at the centre of the roof of alter. Interestingly this water is secretly brought by the bride's sister-in-law for this purpose. This water is known as 'Maa Pani'.

The 'Lagna' (auspicious moment) is conducted by the 'Dosi' who calls the bride and the groom and makes them sit on the mat prepared for the 'Lagna' ritual. As per the custom, the groom and the bride drop some mixture of turmeric and rice on the knee and shoulders of their respective sister-in-laws and take blessings from them touching their feet. Then, the rest of the turmeric powder and rice are poured upon each of the couple. Then the Dosi wraps the heads of the groom and the bride with white towels and puts marriage headgear reciting some prayers in a low voice. Meanwhile, the women present there sing and whistle in regular interval.

Then the Dosi makes the bride stand facing towards the south direction with the bronze plate filled with coconut, light and rice etc. accompanied by the groom from behind. The sister-in-laws carry the four pots placed earlier in four directions of the alter. The Mandwa dal is earlier arranged cross-directionally. Then the couple makes seven rounds around the marriage alter. With each round (vanwar), the groom gives a fire touch (seka) to the bride.

After completion of the seven rounds the thread wrapped around alter is removed. Then the pot tied at the top of alter is brought down and the coin placed in the pot earlier is offered to the elder brother of the bride. Then the turmeric water is poured over the heads of the couples after tying the Bijlaparla to their heads. Then “lagna pichudi”, a small cloth wrap that contains a mango leaf and seven seeds of rice is tied to their waists. Then, the Dosi takes the couple to “Dulha chhapar”, the house meant for newly married couple, and brings them back to bride’s father’s house and declares the marriage solemnized. Then “Tikan Mandi” (marriage feast) is initiated by the Dosi and enjoyed by all. The bride’s parents give the marriage gifts to her for better married life.

Third Day (Bride Farewell): During farewell of the bride (daughter) her village community, kinsfolk and family members feels very sad because she is leaving her parents’ house and going to live in her husband’s house. By mutual consent of both the sides the Binda (departure) happens. It may take place in morning or evening. In the presence of family members especially the bride’s brother, the bride and the groom leave the house. Then villagers and bride’s family accompany the bride up to the end of the village. At the departure spot the village head and some knowledgeable persons give advice to the newly married couple and the groom’s family members of for a peaceful married life by showing good behavior to elders, taking care of family members as well as to obey the Gonds’ customs and traditions. After that the couples take blessing from the elders of the bride and leave for the groom’s village.

After reaching the groom’s village they halt near the village square. The groom’s family will welcome them with their traditional music, songs and dance. After worship of deities by the Dosi (Priest) with rice and turmeric near the main door of the groom’s house, the newly married couple enters the house. After that, the relatives and guests presents gifts (tika) in cash or kinds to the couple.

According to Gonds, there is no custom of paying bride price or dowry in their society. In the past, the bride was bringing a cow and a new saree (made by Ganda weavers, belonging to SC).

But now-a-days, the girl's parents of may give gifts. There are no demands from the groom's side. In the past, married Gond women fixed combs (made of the wood of mahula branch) on their hair and they did not put sindura (vermilion) on their foreheads. But now, due to influence of other castes, some of them put sindura (vermilion mark) on their foreheads and wear sarees of different designs.

Death Rite: The Gond people believe that every human being has two souls: the life spirit and the shadow (Elwin 1945, 1991). The life spirit goes to bada devta but the shadow still stay in the village after the erection of stone memorial. Gonds believe that the first and foremost duty of shadow spirit is to watch over the moral behavior of the people and punish those who go against the tribal law (Mendaly, 2015). The Gonds believe that a human being has a life-force and a spirit. On death, the life-force is reincarnated into another earthly existence, but the spirit remains in the other world. All Gond death rituals are undertaken for the welfare of the spirit, performed to ensure its smooth passage through the spirit world and its acceptance by the ancestral spirits of the clan (Encyclepedia.com).

The Gonds of the study areas in Nabarangpur and Keonjhar districts go with the aforementioned belief on life after death. In the Gond community of Raighar in Nabarangpur, after the death of a person, the message is sent to kith and kin. The entire kith and kin like daughter and sons-in-law come over to console the bereaved family. After a while, the dead body is kept outside of the house. Only the male members of the family and close kin members arrange the articles for funeral at the burial ground. The dead body is covered by a new white cloth. Before carrying the body to cremation ground (Mashani), women pour oil and turmeric on the dead body. If a man is dead then his wife must be break her glass bangles immediately. A new bamboo is cut in to two pieces and tied upside down and corpse is laid on it. After turmeric is applied on the dead body it is bathed and taken to the burial ground. When the dead body is carried, women threw lia (puffed rice) and cowry (shell) over it. The women proceed up to Mashani (burial ground),

but all the rituals are done by the male members. The relatives give shoulders for carrying the dead body to the cremation ground. The relatives of the deceased and the accompanying persons dig holes together and move the corpse around three times and put the head of the dead body in the north direction inside the pit. The corpse is covered with four or five large pieces of wood. Again, they are leveled with large stones on the ground. Now some are cremating the dead bodies. The eldest son of the deceased lights the pyre during cremation. Then everyone take bath in the river or pond for purification. On the way back from cremation ground, the deceased person's son's father-in-law holds a shovel's upside down at house and others after bath come home to touch the shovel. Then a small amount of oil is applied to the body and a clay pot is set to dry palm of hand and leg after that they entered home. Till the tenth day they observe taboos on taking specific foods, outside movements and wearing of new clothes. There is no cooking for ten days. During that time relatives prepare the food for them for ten days. They cook rice, pulses, vegetables etc. and put these at the place of burial every day as they believe that the dead man's spirit will eat the food.

Bones of the deceased are thrown into the rivers or ponds. They believe that by doing so, the spirits of the deceased are mixed with water or fish. Pita khia (eating bitter food) is done on the ninth on the tenth day (Dosa). On the tenth day the purificatory ritual is performed at the bathing ghat (place) of the village pond. The men of the dead persons's house are shaved by the uncle. All the relatives assemble at one place and male members cut their nail and hair and shave their bread like the Hindus. However, unlike Hindu barber who serves the bereaved family, they serve themselves. Then they take bath in the pond and after that a small market will sit in front of deceased house or square of the village streets.

The deceased's son and his uncle's son buy vegetables for Dosa. Their priest performs puja to liberate the soul of the deceased. Then a feast is given to villagers and relatives.

In case of unnatural or immature death the dead bodies are disposed of as follows.

- i. The bodies of the victims of accidents are dumped outside of the village crematorium and death rite is not observed for such cases.
- ii. In case of death of a new born baby the corpse is placed in a clay pot and buried in a hole in the house premises and Dosa is not celebrated.
- iii. When a man dies unmarried, his soul is believed not to be joined with agnate. The corpse is disposed of by burial. The elaborate part of the death rites is not observed. The death rite is completed within two days.
- iv. Any child, unmarried person, and individual dying for epidemic is buried without ceremony.

5.2 Life Cycle of Gonds in North Odisha (Telkoi Block of Keonjhar District):

The observance of life cycle rituals of Gonds of North Odisha is a little different from that of the Gonds of South Odisha and it is more similar to that of the local Hindus. The life cycle rituals of Gonds of Telkoi Block of Keonjhar District runs through phases like birth, initiation, marriage and death.

Birth: Conception or pregnancy of a married woman is usually determined with the discontinuance of the monthly menstrual cycle. After receiving the news, the parents of the pregnant woman make a visit to her house. During the conception period she observes certain taboos. There is a belief that during the conception period the food the woman wishes to eat is the desire of the unborn child, which is expressed through the voice of its mother. So on the seventh month of pregnancy her parents' family provides delicious foods for their daughter.

During the pregnancy period she observes some taboos on food and travel. She eats boiled food, rice, dal and meat, vegetable and green leaf curries. She is not allowed to drink watered rice. She is prohibited to visit graveyard, undertake agricultural works, heavy household works and cross river beds. She is not permitted to observe solar and lunar eclipses. It is believed that if she sees eclipses, the foetus will suffer from physical deformity.

After the birth, the baby is bathed with warm water and soap. The mother and child live in a separate room for 21 days as they are considered impure. Their lineage members are polluted. After the delivery the mother eats rice, ghee and baked brinjal only for seven days. After seven days a purification ceremony is performed. On this day the baby is bathed by applying oil and turmeric. The washer man washes the cloths of the mother. To purify themselves they sprinkle tulshi water inside the house. The barber comes to their house for cutting nails. After cutting nails the mother of the baby takes bath and puts on new saree and the barber paints the borders of women's feet with alata (spirit and water mixed with red colour liquid). Both the Dhai and Barber's wife receive a saree and fruits each. The maternal uncle gives a name to the new born baby and the ceremony is concluded with a feast.

First eating of rice: The new born baby's first eating of rice is performed when he/she becomes seven months or one year old. This ceremony is also named as Arnnachuani. For this event the maternal uncle of the baby is invited. He comes with new cloths, plate or disk, bowl, glass and spoon and rice or rice cakes for the baby and assists the later to eat on its own. No feast is given on this day.

Ear Piercing: When a Gond girl attains age of about 4 to 5 years her ears are pierced. The experienced persons of the village pierce the girl's ear by a brass ear phuda fascia (ring). After 5 to 7 days, the neem (*Azadirachta indica*) sticks are applied to the pore of the ears. Then she wears earrings.

Puberty: At about 12 years of age, the Gond girl usually attains first menstruation. At this time, the girl stays in a separate room inside her house for 6 days. She takes bath in the early morning everyday up to 6 days. During this period she is not allowed to see the faces of men at home or outside. She is not allowed to go out. She is forbidden to touch any person or things in the house. She takes food cooked at home. There are no food restrictions for her. On the morning of the seventh day, she goes to the pond or river with her friends to take purificatory bath. The old clothes she

used are taken to the pond for washing by washer man. For this purpose, rice and vegetables are given to the washer man. When the girl returns home, she wears new cloths. Depending upon the financial condition of the girl's family a small feast is hosted for the villagers and relatives. The invitees bless the girl and present gifts like dress or money. In the past, seven mothers and sisters used to bless the girl and give 4 anna (chari anna), 5 anna (pancha anna) as gifts.

Marriage: In Gond society monogamous marriage is usually practiced. A man is allowed to marry a woman with her consent. The Gonds practice adult marriage and the marriageable age is 18 years to 25 years for boys and 15 to 20 years for the girls. They have certain rules and regulation of marriage. The ways of acquiring mates among the Gonds in Telkoi area of Keonjhar district are mainly, (i) marriage by negotiation and (ii) marriage by elopement. In the study village, arranged marriage is socially sanctioned. The procedure of marriage among Gond society of studied village is an elaborate one.

When a Gond boy attains the marriageable age, his parents search for a suitable bride for him. The parents request their friends and relatives to find a suitable girl. When the girl is found the parents asks the boy to see the girl and inform the mediator. The mediator will inform the girl's family that the prospective goom will go to see the girl. On the appointed day the boy goes to see the girl with his friends. They are greeted with washing the feet at the girl's home. Breakfast and tea are served to them. The boy talks to the girl. If the boy likes her, he gives his views to his family members. The parents consult the Panji to see if the horoscopes of the boy and the girl match. If OK then the the boy's family informs the mediator about the consent of the boy. Then mediator intimates this to the girl's family and that the boy's family wants to see the girl. On the scheduled day, the boy's side ie. father, mother, uncle, son-in-law, panch koria (elders of society) go together to see the girl. There they are greeted after washing their feet. They are entertained with tea and breakfast. The women from the boy's house talk to the girl and observe the girl's behavior. Non-vege-

tarian meals are arranged for them. At the time of return, the girl comes and bowing down touches feet of everyone. At that time, the boy's father and mother give the girl 200 - 500 rupees. The ritual is called munhadekha (seeing the face of the girl).

After returning home, if the boy's family agrees then the mediator informs the girl's parents and invites them to visit the boy's house. When the girl's family comes, they are given water to wash their feet. Then they are given tea and breakfast. Non-vegetarian meals are arranged for them. They observe the boy's house and behaviours of the family members. The boy's family gives new clothes to all the girl's family members. Then they return to their home. After both the families have agreed, the boy's family proceeds with Chuda Panaga, a ceremonial marriage proposal from the boy's family to the girl's family.

Chuda Panaga: The mediator (bhol lokia) informs the girl's family about the date of the visit of boy's side to put forth the ceremonial marriage proposal. On the scheduled day the boy's fraternal uncle, brother-in-law, mediator and some relatives go to the girl's house. They take chuda (flattened rice), guda (jagery) and pitha (cake) with them. They consider chuda as sacred, because it is made from paddy directly. After bandapana (ceremonial welcome), the chuda (flattened rice), guda (molasses) and pitha (cake) is distributed among the villagers. Celebration of chuda panaga gives cognizance that the girl is fixed to marry someone. When both families have agreed formally, the Brahman priest is called and the lagna is decided for Nirbandha day and wedding day.

NIRBANDHA (Pindhani): On this day, the boy's party composed of his father, paternal uncle, Panch Koria (Elders of the society), Bhol Lokia (mediator) and relatives visit the girl's family. Customary gifts like khaja (rice-sweet), fruits, gua (betel nut), turmeric, a box containing of nirbandh dresses like saree, saya (inner garment), blouse and other articles such as vermillion, kajal (paste of black colour), talcum powder, necklace, bindi, bangles, paunji (chain worn in foot), oil, soap, shoe, etc. are taken with them. They are greeted by washing their feet. After bandapana (lamp welcome)

of all these articles, girl's family receives these. The girl wears the dress and articles brought for her by the boy's family. She bows down and touches the feet of the boy's party members and get blessings from them. The paternal uncle or father of the boy and the girl's uncle bind the sacred gua (betel nut) with new towels. They beat seven times together holding a stone and break the betel nut into pieces. Two halves are distributed among both of the samudis (boy's father and girl's father). They consider gua (areca nut) as sacred. This gua is used for the marriage invitation. The sweets and fruits brought by the boy's family are distributed to all the persons present in the ceremony. The bride's parents arrange a feast to entertain the boy's party. After enjoying the feast, the boy's party returns home. Now-a-days, if both the families decide, this nirbandh ritual is observed on the day of marriage. Gua (betel nut) is offered first to the deity, Maa Hinguala, Mahapate and then all the invitation cards are touched with the auspicious gua before they are distributed. Earlier only Gua and turmeric powder were touched to the invitees, but now days it is rare.

There are many rituals performed in the groom's house as well as in the bride's house at the time of marriage. The rituals begin one day before marriage which are as follows:

Patra Anukula or Sala puja: Before a day of marriage a chhamunda (tree branch and leaf shed) is made by the village youth in front of groom's and bride's house by erecting 4 or 6 wooden poles. The chhamunda is covered with berry leaves. Mango leaves arch (Amba Torana) is hanged from pole to pole. During the day time, the sister-in-law or aunt takes arua (un-boiled) rice, incense, lamps, vermilion and white thread to worship the willow tree. The white thread is wrapped around the willow tree seven times. She then collects seven bundles of willow leaves and seven bundles of tooth sticks. The tooth sticks are tied in the middle of the leaves, which the sister-in-law or aunt carries on her head to home.

In the evening, the groom's sister goes with other girls after repeated whistle to collect water from seven houses in one brass bowl (kalasa). An arrow (kanda) is placed inside the bowl. She

carries the bowl (kalasa) on her head putting a new dhoti below it and brings it to the altar. The water bowl (kalasa) is hung in a sika (sling) on the Chhamunda. In the evening, a danaa (willow leaf) is filled with turmeric paste, anla (gooseberry), willow sticks, yellow sari (haldi luga) is put in a pot called Mangala Handi and is sent to bride's home.

Ceremonial Bath (Koili Buda): Early in the morning of the marriage day, the ritual of Haldi (turmeric) and Ghee is performed in the houses of bride and groom. Turmeric powder comes from the groom's house for the bride's ceremonial bath. The ritual of applying turmeric and oil is done by seven married women whose husbands are alive. Among them, one is a sister-in-law, who witnesses the marriage ritual process. After bath, the bride wears new saree, saya, blouse etc. Then she is taken in to the house. After the bride's bath, the groom takes bath and wears new dress in his home. Then the sister-in-law escorts the groom in to the house. He sits on a new mat (sapa). The sister-in-law gives the bridegroom a handful of rice. The groom will put the the rice in a new clay pot.

Manguluti Khiri (Auspicious rice payaas): In this ritual the groom and bride are fed manguluti khiri. At the manguluti khiri feeding place, mango leaves are put in to the pot (kalasa) and coconuts are kept on it. Arua rice is placed on a brass plate and the lamp is lit. While feeding manguluti, all the mothers and sisters in the village gather in the house. The sister-in-law cooks khiri. Sweets, Fruits etc. are also brought. The groom sits on the lap of sister-in-law who feeds the khiri first to the groom. Then the rest of the family feeds one by one and bless him. The same process is followed for the bride at her home.

Mati Baran: Bride's and groom's elder sister-in-laws or paternal aunts, who witness the marriage process, wear new clothes. New dhoti, vermilion, jhuna (resin), guda (molasses), yarn, milk, flowers, bell leaves, plough share, bamboo splits (Baunsa Patia), crown (head gear), bow, cow dung, etc., are kept on a kula (winnowing fan) and carried on head to the ground. Dehuri carries brass shields and bells. Women (Maa Bhouni) from the village also accompany.

At that moment, the Hadi musicians play drums. There the Dehuri smears the soil with cow dung and then worships. After worshipping the soil Dehuri digs in the place. The sister-in-law sits facing opposite to Dehuri and then she ties a handful of soil in the corner end of her sari. The yarn is wrapped around the plough share. Then, without looking back, she comes home with an iron plate and tying the soil on her shoulder and putting the kula on her head. The seven mothers and sisters (Sata Maa Bhouni) take out the kula from her head and place it on the altar. Then the seven mothers and sisters keep together the plough share on the altar. The kula is placed on the Chhamunda. The altar (bedi) is constructed by Barika. A kalash is placed in the middle of altar and turmeric (haldi), oil (tel) are applied on it and a lamp (dipa) is placed there.

Baranugaman: Inside the kitchen, the bridegroom puts one handful of rice in the end part of his mother's sari. According to lagna (auspicious moment), the groom leaves his house without looking back. Music of drum (Baja) is played uninterruptedly when the groom is walking through the village. The groom worships goddess, Mahapate and Maa Hingula, by placing one hand-full of arua rice and gua near the shrine. Then the groom leaves the village. Earlier the groom used to go by riding a white horse and the bride in sabari (palanquin) or by walking. But now-a-days, the groom goes by car. When groom enters inside the car his sister-in-law greets him by throwing rice to four directions. His mother and sisters also throw rice on the car after making repeated whistles by mouth. The car leaves carrying the bridegroom. Bara mahali, who is a brother or relative-brother wearing the same dress like the groom except the crown goes with the groom. When the marriage procession of the groom reaches near the bride's village, Nandi Sradhha puja is held at the bride's home. The Barik (Barber) applies alata on the bride's feet. After performing the pitru matru puja, arua rice mixed with turmeric powder is kept in a brass plate and incense lamps are placed by the bride in a corner of the kitchen. Then she bends down her head which touches the floor. This is considered to be her last worship in her birth place after which she is not allowed to worship at her father's home.

Bata Barani: When groom arrives at the venue of marriage, the ceremony of welcome (Barani) is performed. The bride's sister-in-law or aunt, comes with a brass plate containing arua rice, flowers and sandal paste in a leaf pot (chaupati), lamp (dipa), turmeric mixed water, cow dung and a new towel. Brahman priest chants mantra. The sister-in-law washes groom's feet. A coconut is touched for seven times on the head of groom. She decorates the groom with kajal in his eyes, sandal paste on forehead and flowers on ears. Then she shows a mirror in front of the face of the groom. After that, she, holding the new towel, haldi (turmeric), flowers and cow dung, waves her hands seven times clock wise and throw the same to the backside of the groom. Then brother-in-law of the groom carries to the groom and escorts him to the sitting place nearby the altar (bedi). There the sisters of the bride feed chuda (flattened rice) to the groom and the younger brothers of the groom feed chuda to the bride. After that the priest starts the marriage ritual on the altar (bedi). Homa, the customary fire is lit and the priest chants the mantras. The bride's father gives his daughter's hand to the groom with the promise that bridegroom will take care of his daughter. This ritual called Hata Ganthi (binding of hands of the bride and groom). Khai (puffed rice) as a symbol of prosperity, is offered to the Homa (sacred fire) which is called khaipoḍa. During Hata Ganthi, the bridegroom walks seven rounds around the holy fire of homa with chanting of mantra by the priest. There is also a custom of Saḷa bidha when bride's younger brother gives a blow on the back of the bridegroom. The hand knot is opened by the younger sister of the bride (shaali). For this, she claims gifts like cash, dress or jewellery before opening the knot. Then the groom applies Sindura on the forehead of bride, which is called Sinduradaan.

Koudikhela: It is a custom of playing Kauḍi/ Kauri, (conch shell) which is played by the newlywed couple after the marriage ceremony is over. The groom holds the kaudi in his palm first and the bride tries to open it pressing her fingers in to his hand. Then bride holds a kauḍi in her hand and bridegroom tries to touch the kaudi in his little finger. If he cannot touch, then bride ask him to fulfill her wish.

Gruhaprabesa. After kaudi khela, they take food. Then the bride and groom depart from the bride's home. The bride's family sends necessary gift articles for the bride with her. The newlywed couple arrives at the groom's home where his family members give them a ceremonial welcome called Gruhaprabesa to let them enter home. The next day a non-veg feast is arranged by the groom's family. On 4th day, chaturthi puja is observed in the day time by closing all doors by the Brahman priest. The newly married couple and the priest stay inside the puja room. A lamp (dipa) is lit and kept burning uninterruptedly for the whole night. Early in the morning, they wake up and groom goes to the nearby pond or river to throw the lamp (dipa) and then return home after taking bath. The clothes of the couple are washed by Dhoba (washer man). Then the couple visits Shiva temple together.

Juin Bahuda: After seven days of marriage, the bride and groom are invited by the bride's family to come to the latter's house. There they stay for three days and return to groom's home. New clothes, sweets, pitha (cakes) and a bowl of molasses (guda) are sent with the couple. The bride feeds molasses (guda) to her father-in-law and mother-in-law. The sweets and pitha are offered to the deity in the kitchen and then distributed in the family as well as among the neighbours.

Death Rites: Gonds practice both burial and cremation. The study village does not have designated crematoria (masani). If the deceased is less than 12 years old, he or she will be buried in a forest near the village or in a fallow land. The dead body of a person above 12 years of age will be cremated or to buried depending on the option of the deceased's family members. Usually during continuous rains the corpses are buried. If the corpse is buried, the shovel is taken away. A 4 – 5 foot pit is dug. The corpse is laid with it's head towards the east and the legs towards the west. This practice has been going on since time immemorial. The eldest son, the youngest son, the grandson, the nephew, the blood relatives will first pour the soil over the corpse in the burial pit and then the others follow. The body is buried with a kind of thorn (banar kanta) in the side of

the body to protect the corpse from wild animals. Then everyone will go to the dam or river to take a bath.

In case of death of the head of the family or an old person the bereaved family members continue to cry at home. The body is covered with new white cloth and kept in the place where the person died. Incense is placed near the corpse. The death news is communicated to lineage members and relatives soon by messengers and phone calls. After receiving the sad news the kith and kin congregate in the house of the deceased to attend in the funeral. Kokei is made of 6 pieces of wood. Family members, relatives and villagers carry the corpse to the burial/cremation ground. Only men go to crematory and the women go upto the village end and return. The place between home and village end is washed with cow dung. Puffed rice and coins are thrown on the path on which the dead body is being carried.

If the wife of deceased person is present, then while taking the body for burial or cremation, the female lineages members break the bangles (chudi) from the hands of the widow and wipe out the vermillion mark from her forehead. Her gold ornaments are kept at home but her Mangal Sutra, Mali, etc. are taken with the corpse. Villagers arrange wood and burnt the corpse in the forest; some of the cremation is done in their own land. The eldest son set the fire in the pier and then after he takes bath and return. When everyone comes to bathe, fire is set on near the door of the deceased's house. Raw lemon twigs are burnt in the fire and the smoke comes out of the scalp. Then everyone is given a handful of mudhi to eat before their departure. The eldest son, who set the fire to the deceased's face, is restricted to visit the temple up to the tenth day.

In the evenings, one of the other clan members cooks rice, dal, and vegetables in clay pots. The eldest son offers the food in a pot outside the dining room to the spirit of the deceased, who was head of the family. After that the family members take the food. The eldest son offers the food to the deceased's spirit for 10 days. Members of the deceased's family are not allowed to use oil, turmeric or to eat non-veg food until Dasakriya is performed. In

the evening of the same day, the elders of the house and the village fix a date for the holding Dasakriya, and all the friends and relatives are informed accordingly.

The purificatory rite (Dasakriya) is observed on the tenth day. Lineage members cut their hair and shave their beard. The female members pair their nails. All their houses and utensils are cleaned and used earthen vessels are thrown away. Then everyone will bathe in the pond or dam. The washer man takes the used cloths to wash for which he is given rice, vegetables and money which varies from Rs. 500/- to Rs.1000/-. After the clothes are cleaned and brought in, food is arranged for the washerman.

On that day, arua (parboiled) rice, honey, ghee, lamps, incense, coconuts are taken in a pot to the pond or river bank. The eldest son comes wearing a new white dhoti. Brahman priest chants mantras. A family member brings bones from the crematorium. According to the priest's instructions, the eldest son worships on the bank of a pond or river. After the puja is over, the bones are immersed. They put ashes in a brass shield and put them in the grave. The grave is meant for the cremation of the dead household heads or aged persons in the family only. Worship is performed for the wellbeing of the spirit of the dead. After this process, the eldest son, who has set the fire to the deceased, becomes free from pollution and returns home. The door of the house is worshiped with ghee, arua rice, vermilion, incense etc. Then everyone is allowed to eat bhoga in leaf plate. Invited friends bring in new clothes, vegetables, rice and homemade cakes like arisha pitha (cake made of rice and ghee) in the dasa day. If members from other clans come, arrangements are made for them to eat and stay in another house.

In the evening of the tenth day, rice and dal are cooked in a clay pot by another clan members and the eldest son of the deceased offers the food first to the deceased's spirit at the outside of the house. Then everyone in the house takes food. Cooked pots are thrown out of the house after eating. Then everyone in the house goes to take bath and returns.

In the morning of the 11th day, all the clothes are washed by the washer man. Ghee is offered and mantras are recited by

Brahman priest at the place where the person died. Then the ghee is eaten by everyone in the house. Homo is then performed. The person who lits the fire performs the homo in the presence of the priest. After the homo puja is over, the Brahman bhojini is given first. The Brahman is given sacred foods like chuda (flattened rice), mudhi (fried rice), dahi (curd) and kadali (banana) to eat. Then a bhoji (feast) is served to everyone in the family. On that day after taking bath, the widow wears a new white cloth (saree) and bola (bangles) made of iron or brass in both of her hands. On the same day, outside the house, other clan members (panch koria) of the village construct a hearth. Basil water is sprinkled on the hearth. This is followed by worshiping the hearth by offering incense, coconut, banana and honey. Usuna (par boiled) rice, dal, and non-veg curry items like fish or meat or shrimp are cooked for serving the lineage members and guests. Eating of non-veg items on that day is called as "aainsa khunta". After the feast all the lineage members and guests return to their homes. The girls of beavered family or clan who have married in other villages arrange a feast (Jhiania bhoji) on the 12th day for the families and relatives only. Teraanla is celebrated on the 13th day. On that day, everyone in the house eats pitha (cake made of arua rice powder).

Annual Shradha: After one year of the death, the beavered family observes annual Shradha (a memorial function to offer homage to the deceased person). The Brahman priest and relatives are invited to participate in a homo puja inside the house. The person who had set fire to the deceased does the homo puja under the guidance of Brahman priest. On this occasion a small feast is arranged for all. No religious activities are observed by the deceased's family until the annual Shradha is over. If so required, at times the annual Shradha may be pre-poned and held at the end of three or seven months of the death.

Similar observance is also noticed among the Gonds in Nuapada district of Odisha. After death their dead bodies are either buried or cremated. Death pollution is observed by all lineage and family members for three or ten days. When a person is dead, his eldest son performs the funeral rites. Till twelve days death pollu-

tion is observed by the close relatives and family members of the dead person. The members are prohibited from cutting hair, nail and they do not use oil and take spicy food for twelve days. They also take non-veg items without turmeric and oil. On the tenth day some rituals are performed with the help of Brahmin priest. Sons and grandsons shave their heads, all the relatives cut their nails and purify themselves. A New cooking vessel is used on that day and a feast is arranged for the clan member and relatives, who pray for the peaceful journey of the departed soul. In Keonjhar district on the 11th day, the ritual to purify the kinsfolk takes place. On the 12th day, food and rice beer, some cloths and money are offered by the son-in-law son and elder son of the dead to the priest. In some cases the rich Gonds employ Brahman priest to conduct the entire ritual. Following the Hindu tradition, after a year of the death of a person they celebrate his Shradh ceremony.

Some changes are noticed in their mortuary practice as well as their ceremonial feast, which is quite common in Hindu castes as well as other tribes. Mainly they were influenced, by Hindu rituals and they adopt same practice which is followed by Hindus in present days (Mendaly, 2015).

5.3. Cult of dead:

Ancestor worship of the Gond is closely related to the Megalithic tradition. Generally the custom of megalithic practice performed by the male head of the family. In his absence, next senior male person performs it. In every Gond dominated village in Nuapara district, we found the evidence of living megalithic tradition as a form of burial practice (Mandeyla, 215).

The Gond family bond symbolizes their duty and obligation for caring the old parents till their death and thereafter by observing mortuary rites associated with the ancestral worship. Elaborate and costly ceremonies, including sacrifices are performed at funerals by those who can afford it. Memorial pillars are erected to honor the dead. Gonds believe that the ancestral spirits watch over the moral behavior of the living and punish the offenders. They are believed to be the guardians of the Gond community (Encyclopedia.com).

The Gonds erect the memorial pillar or menhir in memory of the deceased; and it is called as “Uraskal” in Gondi (Elwin, 1991). They maintain this practice, which is different in variety. During the time of erection they sacrifice a sheep, goat or black cock and the size of menhirs depends upon the reputation as well as personality of the person. Gonds believe that their ancestors live in this pillar and they are responsible for the protection of their clan; and if they stop the tradition it is a kind of disrespect to their ancestors and they may face number of problems. Usually they worship the memorial stone or menhirs during the subsequent days: (i) the day of Amabasya and Purnima, because they believe that in that particular day the evil spirit is more powerful, (ii) before cultivation of the crops, (iii) before going for hunting, (iv) during the time of marriage ceremony, (v) when a child is born in family, (vi) during the time of natural calamity and (vii) if any serious problem which is not solved by them, the maximum duration of worshipping of the pillar is twenty to twenty five years (Mendaly, 2015).

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

Tribal religion is based on oral traditions. The tribes express their beliefs in everyday language. Their rituals are aimed at solving day to day problems of life. Objects of worship are elements of nature such as trees, rivers, mountain, sun, moon and earth. Rituals are mostly performed collectively and transmitted across generations orally. Tribal “World View” is grounded in the natural events and life-experiences... Faith in supernatural is structured in a tribal society. Almost all the tribal religions across India believe in the existence of spiritual powers. The most important problem of life is to deal with these powers to ensure individual and collective well-being. The solution for this is to seek conciliation and communion with the more definite and potent personal spirits and to deal with the more indefinite and impersonal forces by way of control, expulsion or avoidance through appropriate rites, ceremonies, spells and taboos. Religion of a tribe is simple. Religious beliefs and behavior are not treated as something apart from other kinds of beliefs and behavior. Religion pervades all aspects of their life. Tribal life and society cannot be fully understood without understanding their religion. (Joseph, 2012: p.323).

About 89 per cent of the tribals claimed to profess Hinduism (1961 Census). The frequent contacts of the tribals with their Hindu neighbors caused most of the tribals in India follow some or other form of Hinduism. On the contrary, there is also an impact of tribal religions on the practices of certain Hindu groups living in tribal villages.

With this introduction on the tribal religious concepts, and on the overall observations on tribal religion in India, let us discuss here in this chapter the religious beliefs and practices of Gonds of

Odisha on the basis of information collected from the Gonds in our study areas of Odisha as well as from the secondary sources.

6.1 Religious Beliefs & Practices of Gonds:

6.1.1 Religious Beliefs & Practices of Gonds of South Odisha:

Gond religion revolves round the concepts of the creator of the universe and the protector of people at community level. As the Gonds' believe goes, 'Baradeo' or 'Bhagavan', or Sri Shambu Mahadeo (also known as Persa Pen) is the Great God of Gonds tribe, who is creator of the universe and giver of life and death. The Gonds worship this high god. Baradeo oversees activities of lesser gods such as clan and village deities, as well as ancestors. Gonds believe that earth, water and air are ruled by Gods.

Regarding the protector of people at community level a Gondi poem's stanza and its English translation is as follows.

"Jayamata Thakurani Jagatara Mata,
Dustha Arambhile Mago Hoila Sambhuta". (Gondi)

"Triumph of Thakurani, Mother of the World,
With epidemics spread the Mother appeared".

(English Translation)

This is the initial stanza of the Gonds religious song recited by the Priest (Pujari) to invite the village deity ritually so as to control the epidemics (small pox) and to ward off the ghosts (Daani). The Gond society has a strong faith on this ritual celebration before the village deity at community level.

The Gonds are semi-Hinduised aboriginals. They worship their own tribal gods and sylvan deities. Side by side they have adopted Hindu customs and thus worship Hindu gods. These village deities like Durga, Sunadei, Maa Mangala, Tarini, Sidhamata, Gadachandi, Bisri Thakurani, etc. are also worshipped by their priests, called 'Pujari' and 'Dehuri'. The worship of the Gram Devati is conducted with great pomp and show. At times goats and hens are sacrificed to appease her.

The most distinctive feature of Gond religion is the cult of the Persa Pen, or the clan deities. Each Gond clan has its Persa Pen, who protects all clan members in return for their ritual offerings and worship. The Persa Pen is essentially good but can be dangerous and violent. Many Gonds believe that the play of the Pardhan bard on his fiddle is necessary to control the deity's fierce powers.

In addition to Baradeo and the clan deities, the Gond pantheon has a number of other deities and spirits who are to be worshiped at the appropriate time. Each village has its Village-Guardian and Village-Mother deities who must be worshiped whenever the village community performs a ritual such as a seasonal celebration or a sacrifice. Besides, there are family gods to be propitiated. Gods of the field and gods of cattle must receive their offerings to ensure a productive harvest. Disease must be warded off by appeasing deities such as Shitala Mata, Goddess of Smallpox. Every hill, every river, every lake and specific trees are inhabited by a spirit who may be benevolent but may also be unpredictable and harmful. The ancestor spirits, who reside with the clan deities, are also worshiped. Gonds' relations with the gods and the spirits lie mainly in the hands of priests and individuals with special supernatural powers. The village priest (Dehuri/Pujari), whose office is usually a hereditary, performs the sacrifices and rituals for village festivals. Family ceremonies and sacrifices are carried out by the family head.

Virtually all aspects of Gond ritual life, from the greatest festivals to the building of a new house and cattle shed are accompanied by worship and sacrifice. The offerings depend on the particular deity involved. Usually the offerings require fruits, coconuts, flowers, coloured powder and threads and animal or bird sacrifice. But certain deities, especially female ones, demand blood sacrifice.

The above observation on Gond religion is similar to that of Panda & Sahoo as briefed below.

The Gonds are animists. They believe that the hills, rivers, lakes and trees are the abodes of their ancestors. Sacrifice is the

most important event of their religious activities. xxx The clan and village deities are given equal importance. They worship all supernatural entities in all occasions to ward off the diseases and pestilence, natural calamities and also to get blessings for good harvest and ample forest produce.

Each Gond clan has its guardian spirit known as Persapen. It guards clan members from external injury and evil spirits. He is essentially benevolent spirit but can be also be dangerous and violent if disturbed, dishonored and shown no suitable reverence in festive occasions. The clan priest (Katora) manages and maintains the shrines and ritual objects of the Persapen. He is the custodian of the sacred spear point, often ritual tridents and organizes annual festival. He is the connecting link between kin and ancestors and helps the community to pass on the desire of the spirits and the vice versa. At the outskirts of every village there are wooden carved pillars stuck into the ground as memorials of their departed souls of past chieftains. The carvings reveal interesting life events of the ancestors and chiefs. The Kotara is empowered to explain the meaning symbolically engraved on such wooden poles. The Gonds believe that when a “Pradhanbard” plays his fiddle, the deity’s fierce powers can be controlled. The style in which he praises to the brevity of deities is typical. They worship their village mother Goddess in all festivities who is propitiated as the village protector. They also worship their tutelary deity and guardian deity who protects cattle and cattle wealth on important social occasions. Deities, like Shitala Mata (the God of Smallpox), if venerated properly, help to ward off the ailments. Certain deities, mostly the female, demand raw blood of chickens, goats and at times he-buffalos. In an interval of nine or twelve years, the Gonds offer a pig to the God - Narayan Deo in a ceremony known as Laru Kas meaning pig’s wedding. They perform this ritual as a source of healing against ailments (Panda & Sahoo, 2012: P.19-20).

6.1.2 Religious Beliefs & Practices of Gonds of North Odisha:

In Gond society religion performs an important social role. The Gonds are polytheists. There are three main deities in the

Gond family. They are Budha Deo, Jangha Deo and Linga Deo. All the Gonds rever them as their tutelary deities. Budha Deo, who is also known as Lord Shiva, is called as the greater deity and Bada Deola is his abode. Linga Deo is Jagat Pita (father of world) and his abode is Amuha Deola (enclosed shrine). The abode of Jangha Deo is known as Bhandara Ghara. The earth is believed to be created by them. In Gond folk tradition, Gonds worship a high god known as Bada Deo, whose other names are Bhagavan, Kupa Lingo and Persa Pen. Bada Deo oversees activities of lesser gods such as clan and village deities, as well as ancestors. They mainly believe and worship different Gods, Goddesses, deities, ancestral spirits and other natural objects, living and non-living, like different types of animals, trees, mountains etc. Majority of Gonds worship nature. For their belief system of nature worship, they are said to have acquired few amount of scientific knowledge.

This religious belief occupies important place in the Gond community so that they have periodical worships and ancestral worships. Gonds' customs, social institutions, economy and culture is duly influenced by their religious belief. They also have knowledge on the natural cause of disease. According to Gonds belief, they worship dieties in different occasions for the wellbeing of the people, domesticated animals as well as development of their economy. They worship Dhrama Deveta, Grama Devata and Gramshree. They believe in ghosts, evil spirits, witchcraft and socercy. However, the religious belief of the Gond community largely influences all aspects of their people. Besides, they have belief on effectiveness of natural objects. The natural objects like river, plant, mountain, stone, sand, etc. have super natural powers and thus they worship mountain god, river god and goddess, and other natural goddesses for their well being, mental integrity, peace etc.

But after the major influence of Hinduism they have started following Hindu religion, which retains the animist beliefs of nature and ancestor worship. The Gonds of Odisha are Hinduised to a considerable extent. The Gond tribe of the study village is accepting the rituals and festivals of the Hindu religion. To a Gond,

the mother Goddess (Devi) is a very crucial deity. Their supreme deity is the Jangha. They believe that in the fight for owning the God, Hindus could take the upper portion and they got the lower portion from navel down to the feet of Lord Jagannath to which they worship as Jangha.

The religion of the accultured Gonds is a system of tribal beliefs and practices mixed up with Hinduism. As practised in the villages, there are a number of Gods such as Jangadeo, Lingadeo and Buradeo, who are entirely their Gods in the sense that only the Gonds worship them. There are also some malevolent deities who can cause considerable harm which includes disease, death, loss of cattle and other property, if no offering is made to them.

In addition to worship of the tribal gods they also worship Jagannath, Krishna, Rama, Ravana and other Hindu deities. They also worship Durga, Kali along with the Earth Goddess, ghosts and the deities presiding over forest and crops. Some of them also read Bhagabata, Ramayan, Mahabharat and other sacred books. All most all the Gonds participate in the Hindu festivals like Raja, Holi, Makar Jatra, etc. They have a number of religious observances connected with the first eating of crops and some jungle products. They perform various religious rites connected with agriculture and other economic pursuits.

Due to the frequent contacts of neighboring Hindus and the influence of Hinduism on Gond religion, various aspects of their life, material, social, economic, linguistic and religious practices have undergone changes. They use to worship the supreme deity, which is of Hindu origin. Hindu deities like Siva, Laxrni, Parvati, Durga, etc. have been adopted by the Gond people. As such, they worship some of these Hindu gods and goddesses. Following the Hindu custom, new cloths are bought for the Gonds household members in different religious festivals. The socio-religious aspect of the movement consisted in the adoption of certain Sanskritic beliefs and practices such as the introduction of various Hindu deities in the Gond pantheon and wearing sacred threads. The Arya samaj has actively campaigned to convince the Gonds to

declare the latter as Hindus. However, a number of Hindu deities, festivals, customs, and conceptual rites have not been included in Gond religion although all aspects of their life have been affected by contact with the neighbouring Hindus.

Religious Taboos: The Gonds observe some socio-religious taboos on their daily life for protection against the malevolent spirits and especially against the impersonal power. The various taboos prevalent among the Gonds are considered to be the best way of keeping one self out of harms by the way of avoiding a direct or indirect contact with the malevolent powers.

There are certain taboos relating to the religious festivals. In the 'Dasa' festival unmarried Dehuri can't worship the deity. If he does, then he will be punished by the deity. If Dehuri doesn't obey certain rules on each festival, he also will be punished. There are also restriction for women not to see the worship in Dasa and puja.

During pregnancy a woman is not allowed to wear new cloth and enter into the shrines and temples. This taboo is meant to protect the mother and the child from evil eye and evil spirit and to protect them from any physical and mental disability. She should not do any heavy work and should not cross the river (water god). Women during their periods are to be refrained from any religious activities.

After the death of a person his family members and other kins should not enter into shrines and temples and should remain absent from all the religious functions. During the death pollution period they should observe certain taboos like not combing their hair, not using soap and oil and avoid eating non-veg and oily food. Violation of this taboo may cause the wrath of the ancestral deity and spirit.

Magic, Witchcraft and Evil Eye: Apart from the various benevolent and malevolent spirits, the Gond believe in the mischievous impersonal spirits and evil powers, which are not objects of worship but which have to be scared away through magic.

These powers are believed to be connected with various natural objects. Magic is reserved only for the specialist. The Gonds also distinguish between white and black magic. Magic which produces evil is known as black magic. On the contrary socially and psychologically benevolent are white magic. Gond, who practices magic, is believed to possess special power through which he is able to perform certain things that are outside the knowledge and power of the common man. The magician has superior knowledge of magical properties of common object. He also knows how to find out the cause. He does this by taking recourse to divination maintaining that the body is possessed by spirit, who speaks through him indirectly. Among the Gond only men can become magician. A female who develops intimate familiarity with the bongas is looked down upon as a witch. The Hindu influence on the Gond magic institution can not be denied. The mantras used by the magician are not in 'Gondi' but in 'Sanskrit'.

The Gonds look upon most of the diseases as some thing unnatural ascribing them to the action of evil spirits and forces, witch and evil eye. They acknowledge the natural cause of certain illness. They can also point out to the material nature of common diseases. When a person falls ill his relatives first try to apply the medicine they know of. If these medicines don't work, they go to Raulia (medicine man), who identifies the disease and prescribes the herbal medicines. When the illness persists the patient and his relatives suspect that some supernatural agency is at work which they call magic. They believe that the ultimate cause of a prolonged disease lies on supernaturals and it is only the magician who can reach that realm. They have a belief that magician can diagnose the cause of disease. When the magician is called he first enquires for how long the patient has been ill and what type of treatment he has received. Then he checks the patient's eyes, back and tongue. Various magical spells, songs and mantras are said to have the power to drive away all evils. If the patient does not recover, the magician takes recourse to divination so as to ascertain the ultimate cause and origin of disease. Among the Gonds, divination is not performed only for the cause of disease, but also for other misfortunes. When

any misfortune happens for domestic animal, they perform magical practices and divination to effect cure. If divination shows that the illness is due to natural cause, medicine will be administered. Devination is also applied in case of anticipating trees to bear large number of fruits and the time the trees to bear less fruits.

If in spite of the treatment done by giving medicines the patient does not recover, the suspicion of witchcraft comes to the surface. Then they resort to performance of divination. The oil mark placed by the magician on the sal leaf stands for a witch as possible cause of a sickness. During the performance the magician announces the presence of witch which caused the illness. Witches are said to be thorns of the Gond social fabric and believed to cause the misfortune. The art of witchcraft gives women power to transform themselves to cause harm. Witches are said to cause harm through contact. This method can't be resorted to without her bonga's permission and unless one member of the victim's finally is a witch. Another method is for a witch to take the form of black cat entering her victim's house at night while he is sleeping to lick saliva from his mouth. After some time the victim falls ill. Once witchcraft is suspected, the village officials are immediately informed and it becomes serious community affair.

According to Gond, there are various procedures through which magical effects are said to happen. The evil eye and bad omens may also cause disease and misfortune. Gond women possessing an evil eye may direct some evil spirits that can ruin a person and harm his family members, domestic animals, crops and house. Gond children and women are more susceptible to be the victim of an evil eye than the adults and men. So women and children do need special protection. At times some persons are suspected to have the evil eye temporarily. Evil eye may go to crop field and can destroy it entirely. Evil eye to pregnant women may directly cause a miscarriage, difficult labour or a physical deformity to the baby in the mother's womb. If the evil eye looks at a man's eating food, he will suffer from indigestion. To avert the evil eye, women put on iron ring.

Omens : Even in the routine affairs of life the Gonds assign supernatural reasons to certain events in the natural phenomena. They believe that these natural phenomena may have a foretelling significance. According to Gond tradition omen reading plays a great part in a new settlement of village, constructing new house, commencement of journey and in other aspects. The following are some of the omens as believed and experienced by the Gonds.

- a) While making a journey for any work, if they see a cat crossing path on their way, they think that it is bad and the purpose of the journey will not yield good result.
- b) If the hair of a woman, if untied and kept open then it is inauspicious and not good for any work.
- c) If they see a sterile woman in auspicious work and function, it causes bad luck for them.
- d) The presence of widow in the events like marriage and other socio-religious functions is inauspicious.
- e) If a dog cries frequently for a long period, it indicates the death of a person in the village.
- f) If a fox crosses the road from left to right then it is good luck for them, but if the fox crosses road on reverse direction then it is bad luck for them.
- g) If a wolf barks uninterruptedly then it is an indication of death of a man.
- h) If a goat rides on the roof it is considered luckless.
- i) The year, in which the evening star is prominent and the morning star is more manifest, this indicates approach of a famine.

6.2 Myths & Legends :

Myth is regarded as representing metaphorically a world-picture and insight in to life generally and may, therefore, be considered as primitive philosophy or metaphysical thought. xxx Myth may play different parts in different cultures and may

fulfill varied functions in the same culture. Connection exists between myth and ritual. It is indeed evident that ritual grows out of myth and that myth inspires and revitalizes ritual” (Elwin, 1954/2006:15).

With this functional definition of myth, now let us find examples of Gond myths and legends and examine how Gond ritual grows out of their myth and how the latter inspire and revitalize the former. Needless to say that their beautiful paintings are based on nature, which reflects their myths and legends. In both the study areas of North and South Odisha, the research team did not find any good story tellers among the Gonds in their villages, who can tell their folk tales, myths and legends. The elderly Gonds in the study village of Keonjhar district said that there were some old myths in the past. They could remember only two small stories about the origin of Gonds and their migration to Odisha. With the passage of time, other myths and legends have been lost. However, from the secondary source, a selection of works of Elwin (1954/2006), Mishra (1998) and Down to Earth (2021), the following myths and legends of Gonds have been collected and reproduced here. These curious myths and legends relate to creation of earth, origin and migration of Gonds, formation of lac and white soil, the beginning of worshipping god and tattooing, learning the art of cultivation and the coming of death.

Myth on Creation of Earth: There is a great ancient story behind the creation of earth and the gods worshipped by the Gonds. There are three main deities in the Gond family. They are Budha Deo, Jangha Deo and Linga Deo. The earth is created by them. Budha Deo is otherwise known as Lord Shiva. In the ancient age when earth was not created, the whole world was full of water. A tortoise named Chakarmala lifted up the sky in his hand. Once Budha Deo thought about the necessity of soil. He told his bearer Karuki who is a crow to search for the soil. Karuki could not find any sign of soil for 12 years. Lastly he met a fish named Aragala at the Indali Sea. Then Karuki met Chakaramal to consult Aaragala. Karuki told Chakaramala everything about that matter. But he was helpless to do anything. Chakaramala asked for Bhima from Budha Deo

through Karuki. Karuki told everything at Budha Deo. Then Budha Deo squeezed suds from his body and made twelve statues on twelve palasha leaves. After twelve months, Budha Deo gave them life. The lord Bhima was created. Chakaramala gave information to Bhima about soil. He told the Bhima that the soil is turned in to clay, by being moistened in water for a long time. An earthworm, which had remained hungry for twelve years, swallowed all the soil. The earthworm was known as Nala-Nila-King. If he would all the soil, then it would be possible to find out the soil.

Budha Deo thought about this matter and created Linga Deo to help all the Bhimas. They came to Chakaramala again. Linga Deo answered all the questions of Chakaramala. Chakaramala was happy with Linga Deo and gave him the power. Then he entered his leg in to the water and told Linga Deo to follow him. After that Linga Deo found out Nala-Nila-King and forcibly embraced him. Then the earthworm could not find any way to go out and floated on the water surface. Bhima chased him for twelve years but could not catch him. Budha Deo made another statue of a beautiful lady from the sordes of Linga Deo. The beautiful statue was named as Parjiren otherwise known as Devi Durga. Devi Parjiren and Linga Deo both went to search the worm. On the south Devi restrained the way. Bhima obstructed another sides except south. Nala-Nila-King could not find any way to enter in to the body of Pajiren. Devi Pajiren captured him and handed over him to Bhima. Bhima bound the worm at the tip of the mountain Bindhya and rocked up him for vomit. Then King Nila vomited the soil 21 times and the earth was created. By the efforts of Budha Deo, Linga Deo, Devi and Bhima the creation of earth could be possible. Budha Deo made a statue in the name of Devi. Jangha Deo is mainly worshiped by Gond at the village Bhoipali in the district of Sundargarh. This myth is an English translation of Gondi myth as mentioned in Odia book of Mishra (1998).

Myth on origin of Gond and worship of God: When the world was first made, there were no men or gods. Bara Pen came to earth and went everywhere but he could find no living creature. At last he went to live on Gurighar Hill. In that jungle there was a wild

cow. He caught it and kept it with him. It had no calf, yet milk flowed from its udders and he was fed on it. One day the cow's two forefeet struck a rock and were injured. Bara Pen washed the feet daily and applied medicines on the wounds. One day as he was washing these, from the wound on the right foot came a boy and from the wound on the left foot came a girl. Bara Pen looked after the children and fed them with the cow's milk. When the children grew up, they married each other and Bara Pen said, "From today regard me as a god and worship me. As you were born from a cow's foot (god), so you will be called Gond" (Elwin, 1954/2006:96).

According to the learned Gond people of Keonjhar, another legend claims their origin from the King Santanu of Mahabharat. The King Santanu had married Ganga Devi with certain terms and conditions as follows. Ganga Devi would remain with Santanu till he would not interfere in her activities. In their conjugal life Ganga Devi delivered eight sons and she threw the seven sons into the river Ganga just after their birth. But she was intervened by king Santanu at the time of throwing her eighth son into the river Ganga. On that intervention of her activity, she deserted king Santanu and the newly born eighth child, who grew up and later was known as Bhishma of Mahabharat. As per the legend the seven babies thrown into the river Ganga were protected by the Goddess of water and looked after by Neta and they were the ancestors from whom the present Gond population descended.

Another tale told by Gond people relates to the history of their migration and the place where the Gonds used to live. The people living around the Gonduki river are known as Gond. At present Gonds are mostly reported from the Gondwana land which is situated in Madhya Pradesh. Gondwana land is mostly populated by Gonds, from where they might have been migrated to different parts of India. The Gonds, who have migrated via Bastar towards east entered Odisha and at present live in Bolangir, Kalahandi, Sambalapur, Sundergarh, Kandhamal, Keonjhar and Mayurbhanj districts of Odisha.

Myth on Tattooing: (Chacharguda, Koraput District) In the days when people did not get themselves tattooed, after their death

Jam Deota could not tell whether they were male or female. He said, "If only women had some sort of mark on their bodies, I could recognize them". He made black stuff and iron needles and tattooed some marks on his own daughter-in-law's body. She looked very nice and when the pain was soothed Jam Deota sent his son and daughter –in–law to the world of men. He gave them a fiddle and said, go and play this, singing from village to village, show the women your marks and make the same marks on them. They did as he commanded. These marks are a woman's wealth; these are the only things she can take with her after death (Elwin, 1954/2006:170).

Myth on formation of white wash: In Machaguda lived a Gond in ancient times. He had no children, but many cattle. He was very rich. One day came the Tengamar thieves who beat up and robbed every village. When the old man heard they were coming he took his herds to the forest and hid making himself a small nut. He could not get any grain and lived on the milk of his cows. He made a pit in the ground and put some of the milk there to form curds.

The old man stayed in the forest for a long time, then he fell ill and died. His cattle were scattered. The villagers took some of these cattle and the tigers took the rest. In the place where the old man had put the curds the earth turned white. One day a woman and man of Pawanguda went to that hill for wood and tied it in bundles by the pit. The woman saw the white earth and picked it up; she found it soft, spat on it, mixed it on her hands and found that when it dried it was very white. She thought it would look well on the wall of her house. She took it home and used it as a white wash (Elwin, 1954/2006:67).

Myth on formation of lac: The chief of Koplhapur had five sons. His fields were the biggest in the village. He had twenty one farm hands. All together there were twenty seven ploughs working on his land. One day one of his servants beat his wife in a temper and she ran away to her parents' house. He let her be there and did not go to fetch her. But the Chief abused him and said, go and get your wife.

The man took five friends and they went to his father-in-law's house. He spent two days there and on the third day they all went back with the wife. They passed a field on the bank of which was a kusum tree. They sat below the tree to cook their mid-day meal. In the field was a rat and they hunted it, digging it out of his hole. When they got it out, it escaped and they ran after it. One of them hit it with his stick and broke its skin. It ran bleeding up the trunk of the kusum tree. They threw stones at it from below and the rat jumped from branch to branch in panic, dropping blood everywhere. At last the travelers gave up the hunt and after eating their meal they went home. Wherever the rat's blood fell, insects grew and thus the blood turned into lac (Elwin, 1954/2006:268).

Myth on Learning Art of Cultivation: According to Gond myth, Mahadeo created earth after the flood. Next he created nature, birds, animals and finally man. The Gonds are the first son of Mahadeo and Parvati. In the past, they were hunters and gatherers. It is believed that Gonds are voracious eaters but remained in empty stomach as Mahadeo could not provide them with sufficient food. So Parvati advised Siva to instruct Gonds to start cultivation of paddy. They arranged bulls, made a plough, plough-share and sent Bhima to Kuvera (the god of wealth) for a demonstration for paddy cultivation. From Mahadeo, the Gonds learnt the techniques of farming. This is an english translation of Gond myth in Odia from the book of Mishra (1998).

Further, two fascinating legends relating to "Origin of Gond people" and "Custom of widow remarriage in Gond Society" appeared in the News column of "Down to Earth", published on Wednesday, 1st October 2014, which have been reproduced below.

1. Legend of Kachchargadh (The fascinating story of how the Gond tribe came into being):

In the beginning, the world was populated by the Koyatur (born of the Koya or womb of human beings). All humans had a common identity as Koyatur. Among them was Kali* Kankali, a widow with 28 children. They were living in the hermitage of Raitad Jango, a female community leader. One day, the children of Kali

Kankali wandered off from the hermitage and got lost among the hills of Kachchargadh where they were found by Sambu Madhav** and his wife Gaura. Gaura took care of the children, but they began to pester her for breast-feeding. To distract the children, Sambu released a ghorpad (monitor lizard). The children chased the lizard into a cave, and Sambu closed the mouth of the cave with a rock. The children remained imprisoned in the cave for 12 years, and Gaura threw them food through a hole in the roof.

Meanwhile, Kali Kankali found out about the incarceration of her children and asked Sambu to release them. Sambu said that he would release the children only if a teacher could be found who would teach the children to behave better. Enraged, Kali Kankali attacked Sambu riding on a lion. Gaura released a pack of wild dogs on Kali Kankali. Seeing the dogs, the lion ran away and Kali Kankali fell on the ground, losing her strength. When Raitad Jan-go found out, she went to her brother Payandi Pari Kupa Lingo, who was meditating in a cave nearby, and asked him to ensure the release of the children. Lingo talked to Sambu. The latter agreed to release the children but on condition that Lingo would take the responsibility to educate them. He, however, expressed inability to move the rock he had closed the cave with. Lingo realised that the only way the children could be freed was if they could themselves push away the stone blocking the entrance of the cave.

So he fetched Hira Suka Patalir, a musician and 'kingri' (tribal musical instrument) player from the village Dhanegaon, who sat near the entrance of the cave and started playing "veer rasa" music to inspire the children with courage. When the children heard the music, they pushed the stone, and it fell on Patalir and killed him on the spot. Lingo then took the children – who went on to become the founders of the various Gond clans – under his tutelage. Lingo thus became the first teacher (adi guru) of the Gond tribe. The children instructed by him in culture formed the Gond tribe, who were different from the rest of the Koyatur of the world.

Note :

The legend of Pari Kupa Lingo and the Kachchargadh caves was first recorded in written form by British clergyman and

scholar B B Chatterton in his 1916 book 'The Story of Gondwana'. It has also survived in the oral traditions of Gond tribal groups.

* Not to be confused with the Hindu deity Kaali.

** Books on Gondi mythology say that the name Sambu Madav may be the origin of the names 'Shambhu' and 'Mahadev' attributed to the Hindu deity Shiva. But in Gondi religion, Sambu Madav is a tribal head or father – unlike the immortal Hindu deity, Gondi history records a succession of Sambu Madavs (Webpage: <https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/legend-of-kachchargadh--46696>).

2. Legend of Jango (Why a Gond woman is never widowed):

Raitad, the sister of Payandi Pari Kupa Lingo, was a young married woman. Her husband died suddenly one day after being bitten by a snake. Having been widowed, Raitad was asked, according to the community tradition, to take on the title of 'Kankali' (inauspicious) and face ostracism.

Raitad, unwilling to be thus ostracised, declared that she was not responsible for her husband's death. She called a meeting of the elders and demanded that either they change the custom of branding widowed women as inauspicious, or ask Gond men to acquire immortality so that women are not widowed.

Seeing the justice of her arguments, the elders formed new rules, allowing widowed women to remarry. Women were allowed to remarry both within their deceased husband's clan, and outside it. However, if a woman married outside the clan, the right to perform her last rites was reserved for the clan of her first marriage, of which she was deemed to be a permanent member. In case a woman was past the marriageable age or not willing to marry, she was allowed to stay in the husband's family as a member. In such a case, she had the option of declaring a symbolic marriage with a small male child – mostly a grandchild – of the husband's family, thus earning a right to living with the family and being supported by it.

Either way, a widowed woman was not to be branded as a Kankali or made to undergo the privations connected with

widowhood. She was allowed to lead a normal life. Due to these new rules, it is said that a Gond woman is never widowed. Raitad, who had rebelled against the customs of the community, came to be called Jango (rebel) after this change in tradition.

(Webpage:<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/legend-of-kachchargadh--46696>).

The Coming of Death: When Mahaprabhu first caused men to be born, there were fifty-three crores of them. But then none were born and none died to increase or lessen the number, for they were immortal. Mahaprabhu made the life-fly, an immortal fly, and when it bit a man he could not die.

Mahaprabhu gave the throne of Jamapur to Jama Raja, who ruled for twelve years, but in all that time he did not receive a single report of life or death. Jama Raja was annoyed at this and he went to Mahaprabhu and said, 'You made me a Raja, but no one comes to me, no one reports to me; what kind of kingdom is this? Mahaprabhu took some dirt from his body and made a crow and said to it, 'Go to the land of men and find the life-fly, catch it and bring it to me. The bird flew to the world and brought the fly. Mahaprabhu shut it up in a room. After this, when Jama Raja's messengers went for men's lives, they were able to take them away. Then many people died and many were born. (Elwin, 1954/2006:88).

6.3 Religious Functionaries:

In Gonds life and living, religion plays a vital role. Belief in magic and tantra gives them relief from tensions and physical relaxation. Prayer, worship, rites and rituals, magic and sorcery, etc. are believed to bring success in their life. For bumper crops, good rain, successful hunting, cure of diseases etc, they worship different gods and deities for their grace and blessings. Thus their religion is linked with conception, pregnancy, birth, love and marriage, leadership, songs, dance, house construction, selection of village sites and agro-horticulture activities. For their religious activities they depend on their sacerdotal functionaries like Pujari, Jhakar and Gaita (Samrath). Pujari worship god and deities. Gunia and Sirah do magical and sorcery rites (Mishra, 2008).

While the village and clan priests perform sacrifices, diviners and magicians deal with the supernatural in another way. Gonds believe that most diseases and misfortunes in life are caused by evil spirits and the displeasure of the gods. They turn to sooth sayers and diviners to find out the cause of their problems and the appropriate remedies to be taken. If these practitioners cannot help, the services of magicians and shamans must be sought. Magicians believe that through magical formulas they can control the actions of the deity or spirit who is the cause of a particular affliction. Shamans are individuals who fall into a trance and give voice to the demands of the offended god or spirit. Like many tribes in the area, Gonds believe in the evil eye, black magic, and witchcraft. Witches, usually women, who are said to bring sickness and misfortune to the community. They are widely feared and, when discovered, are driven away from the village or even killed (Encyclopedia.com).

In every village there is a village priest known as Dehuri or Pujari, etc. He appeases the evil spirits and the sylvan deities of the tribals with sacrifices of pigs, goats and fowls. The villagers do not conduct any auspicious work without worshiping the village deities. The village deities are worshipped on the occasion of every religious ceremony, especially on the occasions like the outbreak of epidemics, famine, drought, etc. The services of the priest, Dehuri or Pujari in all religious worships and ceremonies are inevitable. For the services he renders, he gets remuneration from the villagers. At some places he is given a piece of land for cultivation. The positions of all Gond religious functionaries like Shirha (Kalisi), Jhakar, Disari and Pujari is hereditary.

6.4 Pantheon of Gods & Deities:

The Gonds in Nabarangpur area recognize a supreme deity to whom they attribute pre-dominant position among all religious beings. According to their tradition they believe in supreme deities whom they call Budha Deo, Jangha Deo and Linga Deo. But Sindura Gouri is their village deity to whom they worship at different occasions. They believe that the supreme deity is very powerful and play important role in their life. At the time of showing seeds

and also first ploughing they worship the deity. They believe that the supreme deity is the creator and the sustainer of the universe and if he is unhappy then throughout the year they will suffer from many difficulties. To please the deity the villagers offer animal sacrifices.

Gonds have been influenced by their Hindu neighbours. They also do believe in Hindu religion and worship many Hindu Gods and Goddesses, like Shiva, Ganesh, Durga, Kali, Laxmi, Saraswati, etc. Among the Hindu festivals they perform Durga Puja, Ganesh Puja, Saraswati Puja and Mangala Osa.

In Keonjhar area Gonds worship three main deities. They are Budha Deo, Jangha Deo and Linga Deo. All the Gonds rever them as their tutelary deity. Budha Deo otherwise known as Lord Shiva is called as the greater deity. Bada Deola is the resident of Budha Deo. The resident of Linga Deo is Amuha Deola. He is called as the Jagat Pita. The residence of Jangha Deo is known as Bhandara Ghara. The earth is created by them.

According to Gonds there are three types of gods. Some deities are good, who are kind, benevolent to man. Some others, who are angry with some human deeds, and who are satisfied with man's praise, prayer and enjoyment and who are always intolerant. Bhoga is the lower-level deity, who seeks Rudhi's bhoga. If they do not satisfy them, they will cause the misery of the people.

Their other gods and deities of Gond pantheon are as follows:

1. Baradeo, whose alternate names are Bhagavan, Kupa Lin-go, Badadeo and Persa Pen. Baradeo, oversees the activities of lesser gods such as clan and village deities.
2. Budanga Bada - Budanga Bada is considered as the supreme deity of the village. On various occasions there is an importance of this God. The Gond Pujari is the official priest of the Budanga Bada. Besides the villagers worship the God some times.
3. Mahapate/ Gram Siri – Goddess Mangala is considered as the village deity of Sundaria village. Goddess Mangla is established at the "Pataka Pahada" hill. The Gond Pujari and

villagers worship the Goddess on the various occasions and festivals.

4. Maa Hingula – Goddess Hingula is another superior Goddess of the village. She is established at the heart of village and is worshiped by all the communities of the village Sundaria.
5. God Bhima – God Bhima is considered as the agricultural God of the Gond tribe. People worship the God for the better harvest in the agriculture. The God is installed under a sahaja tree near the forest.
6. Shiva – At the village entrance, the temple of God Shiva is established. People of the village pray to the God. On the day of Maha Shiv Ratri they worship the God Shiva.

According to the clan categories of Gond, Gods and Goddess are classified. They are Aadidebata, Chatrubhuj, Budhadeo and Adimata. This fact is available from Gonds genealogy and clan system as furnished in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1: Share of Gods and Goddesses according to Gond Clan system

SL. No.	Gond Barag/ Clan	Gods & Goddesses assigned
1.	Markam	Bramha, Bishnu, Maheswar
2.	Netama	Tejraj, Bhujraj, Jangraj, Mund Raj
3.	Morahi	Adimata, Nirakar, Niranjana
4.	Neti	Tinideo-Bramha, Bishnu, Maheswar
5.	Jagat	Lankeswari, Kanteswari, Duarshani
6.	Otti	Ragu, Kanabhainra (3 Gods)
7.	Porti	Bira, Sira, Mankar, Uthan Deo, Bhim Khutani, Budha Baburae , Gangadi Deu (7 Gods)

Source: Field Study, SCSTRTI, 2021

According to the ancestors, they are the origin of god and goddess. But as per the opinion of Gond priests, Chara Chaurasi, Sahala Bhauni Gangadi and Barabhai Baburai are their gods and goddesses. “Pahara Bhauni”, refers to all the mountains and hills which are living place of gods and saints. Chari Rusi (four saints),

used to live in mountains. These four saints are Ganga, Gangra, Jadu and Kadam.

Bara Bhai Baburai: The following Table 6.2 provides the names of Bara Bhai Baburai Gods and the flowers used for their worship.

Table 6.2: Share of Gods and Goddesses according to Gond Clan system

SL. No.	God's name	Flowers used in worship
1.	Bahiya Babu	Nageswar Phula
2.	Agnirai Babu	Nageswar Phula
3.	Pabanrai Babu	Malati Phula
4.	Tilakrai Babu	Sebati Phula
5.	Jagatrai Babu	Sebati Phula
6.	Bhagatrai Babu	Champa Phula
7.	Khadagarai Babu	Nageswar Phula
8.	Chandanrai Babu	Tagar Phula
9.	Sundarraai Babu	Malati Phuls
10.	Indarraai Babu	Chandan
11.	Tike Babu	Dayana
12.	Babu Ray	Bundura Phula

Source: Field Study, SCSTRTI, 2021

Sahala Bhauni Gangadi: There is a prime importance of number 16 in Odia culture. Puri Gajaparti Maharaja's 16 rules of villages, 16 drums are played in Dannda Nach, the 16 dancers perform Odissi Dance, moreover. Likewise, there are 16 Gond Goddesses exist in Gond religious belief. The names of these Gods are 1. Budhimaa, 2. Nanimaa, 3. Sundarimaa (Sindaraji), 4. Gundimaa, 5. Indradee, 6. Sindradee, 7. Kamaladee, 8. Bimaladee, 9. Tikenani, 10. Bhagabati, 11. Pradesiani, 12. Seja Gharen, 13. Bhandara Gharen, 14. Padamata, 15. Khuragundi and 16. Padama. Among them, Budhimaa, Gundimaa, Sindaraji, Padamata, Padamaa and Seja Gharen are famous for treatment of the air-borne diseases. Budhimaa herself is

a Goddess of chickenpox. If chickenpox (rubella) seen in someone's body it is believed that Gundimaa has caused it. By comparison with the stages of chickenpox the Goddess are visualised. When the patient's entire body turns into red then it is believed that Sindhraj debi has entered inside the patient's body. Podama and Podamata are deities of smallpox. In the evening Goddess Bhudi goes to pluck flower by holding a basket. The meaning pluck the flower means carry the patients on stretchers. It is believed that if someone falls ill, this is because of the wrath of the goddess. To cure the disease it is believed that they have to enchant to please the goddess. Now-a-days, somehow this belief is fading away.

Indradi and Sindradi are two rivers among 16 sisters of Gangadi. Kamaladi is Laxmi and Bimaladi is Durga. Pradeshiani Bhandara is a famous village Goddess. They are worshiped as a prime goddess in some areas. Goddess Bhandar Gharian is worshipped by Gond priests all over Nabarangpur and Nuapada. In that way in Baster patna or Basterain goddess Danteswari is worshipped by Gond and Bhatra.

The 16 goddess-sisters are famous for the cure of diseases, giving them courage and securing their state and ancestry. By keeping an eye of Gangadi, Gonds worship the rivers. The village goddess is named as Gangadi. But goddess river Ganga is worshiped all over India. Gonds usually prays their forefathers' Duma and waterfall and ponds during the immersion bones. As believed in Hindu culture when the souls leaves body they float in the river Ganga.

The Gonds in Madhya Pradesh and Koraput's Raighar worships Gaura, Gauri, Thakurdao, Rahnaha, Gurughosain, Anakuanri, Banadrurga.

"Naga Barana" is a kind of Gotra of Gonds in Kalahandi, Athasaga. The Gotra of Gonds are different and they are used to enchant it during funeral. As a sign, if they touch any untouchable at any time, they use to spray milk and water on their heads. The Gotars are classified according to Saga:-

Sl. No.	Gotra	Athasaga
1.	Marahi Raja Nang	Raj Bhandar
2.	Markam Dudha Nang	Dudha Bhandar
3.	Jagat Gokhara Nang	Dudh Bhandar
4.	Netam Pani Nang	Pani Bhandar
5.	Sori Dhuli Nang	Dhuli Bhandar
6.	Oti Gunchi Nang	Atha Bhandar
7.	Neti Tamba Nang	Soa Bhandar
8.	Porati Patalada Nang	Soa Bhandar

From the above classification it is stated that the Markam (Sl. 2) and the Jagat (Sl.3) category Gonds are two kinds of brotherhood. As a result they can't marry to each others. In the same way the Netis and the Portis can't inter-marry. During the worship of Duma certain rituals and primary regulations are observed.

6.5 Ghosts & Spirits:

The Gond community believes in the power of the spirits. Thee spirits are said to be constantly manifest themselves to men. It is very important to analyse the role and function of these spirits and powers as believed in Gond society. They are as follows.

Village Gramasiri: Every village has a patron deity called Gramasiri or Grama Devi. Generally they worship God on the form of rock and different types of animal statues. In the village Gonds worship several Gods as Sindure Gouri, Patala Gouri, Dasand and Badam. Sindure Gouri is their main deity to whom they worship in various occasions. Gonds pray her for the welfare of their society. They worship to please the Devi. Gonds believe that if Devi is angry on them then the villagers will face many difficulties. So they worship the deity very candidly and thoroughly.

Ancestral Spirits & Household Spirits : In Gond society ancestral worship is sometimes used in a very wide sense to refer to any sort

of rituals performed in honour of dead persons of their family. Another class of spirits which are benevolent is the household God. These are considered as the personal spirit of the Gonds. In the event of disease or any other distress in the household the Gonds pray their household spirits. These spirits are inherited patrilineally. They are kept in a small place in their house. In the evening the household head washes his hands and legs and worships the spirits for sometimes for the wellbeing of the family members.

Malevolent Spirits: In Gond society there are both benevolent and malevolent spirits. Many malevolent spirits live in the village site and specifically in water sources, mountains and forest areas. People have the belief that water spirits cause injury or death of a man. Like this in mountain and forest areas also such spirits exist. Gonds have the idea that especially the cute babies and nice children and pregnant women are affected by the spirits.

Impersonal Spirits and Powers: The Gonds have faith on impersonal spirits and powers. The impersonal spirit is evil to the people and domestic animals and also affect the new corn field. To save the people from such impersonal spirits and powers the village Dehuri utters mantra and spray water with tulasi leaf around the village. By doing so, the impersonal powers and spirits can't cause any harm to the people as well as the animals.

6.6 Aesthetic Life

Like other tribes, the aesthetic sense among Gonds prevails so intensely that most of the original things they use reveals their striking artistic insights. All their life, events, performances and entertainments are touched by aesthetics. Gonds have a rich tradition of arts and crafts that includes mat making, wall and floor paintings, performing arts like songs, dances and music.

6.6.1 Dance & Music:

Gonds celebrate most festive occasions with song and dance. Both men and women enjoy wearing ornaments of silver and beads and bird feathers. Women also like to wear colored glass bangles and marriage necklaces made of small black beads. They often

tattoo their bodies. Gonds enjoy singing and dancing. Some also enjoy cock-fighting (fight between two roosters, with spectators placing bets on the outcome).

Deo Vandana Dance: Among the dances of Gonds, Deo Vandana (to appease the deity) is the main dance. Among the fairs and festivals, Marka Paana Jatra (New Mango eating ceremony) is famous. This festival continues for 4 days to observe the worship of Budha Deo, the Creator. To appease Him in the evenings of 4 days a musical instrument Dumuri (like Lord Shiva's Dambaru, musical instrument) is played and Deo Vandana dance is performed. Unlike other tribal dances, this Gond dance has retained its originality, not affected by influences of modern dances. Old Gond people claimed that dance is their cultural tradition. Madri Vandana is a sacred dance. This dance starts invoking the Budha Deo deity (Mishra, 2008).

Gusadi Dance: This dance performed by men wearing costumes decorated with peacock feathers on head along with cotton clothes around their waist and body smeared with ash is a distinctive feature of Gonds. They enjoy the festivities throughout the night with sharing drinks and dancing with the rhythm of drum beats and blowing music. During dance performance they use musical instruments like double humdrums/ drums, harmonium, wooden bells beaten by sticks, etc.

Dandar Nach (Dance): It is held in the month of December-January. In this dance, both male and female can participate. During dance they wear costume like a turban on their heads (attached with wings of birds or chicken) and ghungura on their legs. They also use small sticks of bamboo. The dance is performed in accompaniment of the musical instruments such as Guta Mandar and Dudra.

Cherchera Nach (Dance): This dance is held on the eve of Push-pune, which comes during months of December-January. During the dance they wear costume like dhoti and ghungura on their legs and tie bells on their waist. A musical instrument in which the palm leafs are pierced with thrones around the Tumba (a kind

of pot) and played with the help of the mouth. They dance in the village moving from house to house.

Bhursundi Nach (Dance): The dance takes place in the month of September on the evening of Nuakhai. The people wear dhoti and napkin and they move from house to house throwing grass on the roof of each house. By doing so, it is believed that the mosquitoes will leave the house. This dance is performed by males only. While performing this dance they collect rice, money, etc.

Mati Mandar Nach (Dance): Mati Mandar is a kind of musical instrument, which is played in this dance performance in occasions like marriage, festival, etc. During the dance performance they wear costumes such as a kind of lehenga on their waists, turbans fitted with horns and feathers on their heads and ghunguru on their legs. They dance to the tune of Dhols (Drums).

Khanda (Sword) Dance: The Gonds of Keonjhar perform khanda (sword) dance on the eve of Dashera Festival. They worship their swords and shields (dhals) before the deities, Linga Deo and Jangha Deo. Both men and women participate in this dance. They wear colourful costumes like dhoti, langas, banyans, napkins and turbans. In the hands they carry swords and dhals (royal insignias) while dancing to the tune of madalas and dhols (drums).

6.6.2 Art & Crafts:

The skill of art and crafts of tribes of Odisha in general and the Gonds in particular is quite appreciable. Like other tribes, the Gond artisans apply their indigenous knowledge and prepare various kinds of attractive as well as useful articles from the locally available raw materials and objects like leaf, bark, wood, metal, bamboo, earth, etc. This activity helps them in spending their leisure times and supplementing their livelihood also.

Mendaly (2015) gives an overall idea on the art and crafts produced by Gonds of Nuapada in Odisha which reads as follows. The female members of the family engage themselves with spinning yarn from the bark-fibre of a deciduous flowering shrub, colouring it with vegetable and other natural dyes and weave clothes,

which are both durable and artistic. They also prepare handicrafts like bamboo jars and pots, made from the leaves of different type of plants; the local markets are very much favourable for them to sell their products to earn some money.

Gonds also make musical instruments. They carve memorial pillars in wood and stone for their dead. They often decorate houses with carved doors and panels. Some Gonds are experts in preparing agricultural implements like wooden ploughs, levelling bars, threshing poles, de-husking platforms and balancing bars for lifting and transportation.

Gond artists learn to document their culture through painting which provides insights on how the mundane and often ignored values of tribal communities could be captured to present the realities in a very aesthetic manner. They try to reconnect with people, community, art, culture and belief systems intertwined with nature. The art and culture of tribals' always play a pivotal role in reflecting the culture and tradition of a particular community or area. Tribal painting is one such exotic and historically rich form of art which has earned special mention for itself.

Gond Painting in Nuapada District: In most of the Gond houses traditional wall paintings are noticed. They paint designs in red and black on the walls of their houses. These drawings often show celebration of festivals and depict animals, birds, human figures, hunting and dancing. Gond houses are beautifully decorated with *digna* and *bhittichitra* during weddings and other festive occasions. The Gond paints the inner and outer walls of their house with *Digna* which is the traditional geometric pattern, while *bhittichitra* is a composition of likenesses of animals, leaves and flowers. This type of painting in Nuapada is known as Bana Painting. Vegetable and mineral dyes used for colour are derived from flowers, leaves, clay, stones, rice, and turmeric. These practices reflect the unique culture, customs and traditions of Gond tribe and are instrumental in maintaining the health and stability of their community.

A large number of cave paintings have been discovered from western part of Odisha in which we can find the influence of tribal communities. These cave paintings show motifs and animal

art similar to those still being produced in the community art of the villages in this area. The village people believe that this cave art was painted by their ancestors. Such traditional belief of Gonds still exists in Nuapada which is clearly revealed from their paintings. Their painting is locally known as “Bana or Jhotichitra”. It is a type of traditional wall painting. The tribal households of this region are decorated with these paintings as the people invest their spare time in such creative activities. They traditionally paint on mud wall of their houses. They have created unprecedented depiction of their natural and mythological world, traditional songs and oral histories. Often this painting depicts the various celebrations, rituals and man’s relationship with nature. Many a time the paintings symbolize super natural entities and deities in the form of trees and animals (Mohanty, K.C. and Behura N, 2008; p.15). The huts of Gonds are decorated with Bhittichitra (wall Painting) and Digna painting (Geometrical painting) which springs from the community belief. The Gonds of Nuapada paint inner and outer walls and floor of their homes. These paintings are often made during special occasions. The paintings “Bana” made by this tribe carry religious significance. These are drawn on wall surface during religious and other cultural occasions such as harvest, child birth, marriage etc. Besides during the construction of a new dwelling hut, these paintings are created in a dark corner inside their hut and outside also (Tripathy B., 2005). These paintings are very much famous and unique for their elegance, charm, iconography, aesthetic and ritualistic association (S. Mendaly: 2015, Pp. 433-435).

Gond Paintings in Keonjhar District: Gonds paint some of their community traditions. At first they paint the image of their Deo (deity) or clan symbol. Some animal paintings are made during the festivals. Some Gonds make their paintings on the walls of the house. Others do paintings in the courtyard. The Gond tribes are divided into seven sections. They are known through the Deos or the clans. Their clan begins with one Deo and ends with a Seventh Deo. The symbol of one Deo is Buradeo, the second Deo is Lingadeo, the third Deo is a Tiger, the fourth Deo is a Tortoise, the fifth Deo is a Chanchana (Vulture), the sixth deo is an Elephant and the seventh Deo is a Cobra. They draw on all these clans/deities.

Painting of graphic picture of Peacock: This kind of peacock picture they paint on the outer walls of their houses. If anyone has painted a peacock without branch leaves picture in his house, it is understood that there is a girl in that house and that girl is old enough to marry. On the contrary, if any house wall has painting of a picture of peacock with branch and leaves along with picture of the clan or Deo, it is understood that there is a girl in that house and that the girl has been engaged for marriage. Those who came to make friends or in search of bride, could understand about the information on marriage, clan of that family through this picture.

Painting of graphic picture of a Deer with a leg inserted in to steel jug: They consider the deer to be the deity of the forest. This is because the Gonds lived in the forest and cultivated all kinds of crops such as: biri, kolatha, harada and all kind of dal crops and so on. But all these crops were being eaten by animals. To this end, all the people of the village came together and decided to collect a steel jug from everyone's house. All these steel jugs were kept on the way by which the animals came to eat crops. Then everyone was watching the crop. Just when the deer came to eat the crops, they chased the deer together. If a deer's leg was stuck in the steel jug while running, they caught that deer. The deer was taken to the village to be fed and worshiped every day. The Gond believed that animals no longer come to eat crops from that day onwards.

Painting of a graphic picture of Godhi (Giant Lizard): On a rainy day Gonds worship Godhi by drawing its graphic picture before going to forest for collection of Jhori poka (soft worm with tinny wings). It is so, because they go to the forest to collect the worms, which come out of the holes of termite mound raised on the ground. They eat the worms. The termite mound is also the residence of snakes. Some times, on that place snakes and lizards (godhi) get into fight. Noticing godhi the snake disappears and does not come back to that place. So they worship godhi as a preventive measure from the snake bites.

Painting of Sun God: If the sun does not show up for 2-3 consecutive days on a rainy day, they draw and worship the Sun in

the courtyard of the house. By doing so, they believe that the Sun would appear in the sky and they would get the sunlight.

Painting of Holey Cow: The Gonds first lived in the forest and also kept cows. For some reason the cows developed phatua (hoop infection) disease in their legs, which were bleeding and spreading and these which looked like the shape of human heads. So they thought, Gond people might be originated from mother cows. With that belief they began worshipping cows. When painting a cow, they draw a circle near the hoof of one of her legs. They worship the same painting by drawing it in a room of the Bhandar house, where valuable properties are stored. After the puja by the family head, the cows affected by phatua disease are offered to eat grass.

The Gonds perform a kind of ritual for preventing and curing the phatua disease of the cows. The worship is started by the village chief, the Dakua and the Dehuri. In whose house the cow is first infected with phatua disease, a cow painting is drawn in his house by the family head. The village chief and Dehuri are summoned. All the household heads of the village collect cow dung, incense sticks, lamps, sindura, jhuna, coconuts, plantain, honey and some grass. On the instructions of Dehuri, the village Chief begins the ritual at the end of the village. The worship place is made so that both sides the village are blocked. Approximately 10 - 15 square feet of mud is piled in the area. They are then taken out on the muddy road. They go out and eat grass and return home in the evening. The Gonds believe that this kind of worship cures phatua (hoop infection of cow) disease. The worship is still performed now with the belief that the phatua disease will be cured within 9-11 days.

FAIRS & FESTIVALS

Fairs and Festivals are important traits of Gonds culture. These are diligently allied to their religion and rituals. Gonds observe traditional festivals which constitute an integral part of their social life. These festivals relate to their strong beliefs in the supernatural power and community solidarity.

Celebration of festivals includes feasts. One particular custom is the Dandari stick dancing undertaken by young people in the two or three weeks following Dasahara. Bands of young people, dressed in their newest and best attire, travel from village to village entertaining the people with dancing, music and singing. In doing so, they perpetuate a custom initiated by the legendary heroes of the Gond epics. The dancing is seen as a religious duty as much as an occasion for fun and entertainment. (Encyclopedia.com). The following discussion tries to capture the Gonds' traditions of colourful fairs and festivals.

7.1 Fairs & Festivals of Gonds in South Odisha:

The Gonds of Raigarh, Kundai, Jharigaan, Umarkote areas of Nabarangpur district of Odisha celebrate different festivals in different months round the year. Gonds believe in existence of many deities. In every month they observe the festival to please one or the other deity for their community wellbeing. Their religious beliefs are natural and supernatural, and based on belief in the souls of the ancestors. They believe that natural objects like trees, drums, firewood, hills, mountains, animals, fire, water, sun, air, etc. are the abode of Gods. Their festivals are meant for social harmony, unity, friendship, and above all, the desire for a happy and healthy life by pleasing the gods.

The important festivals that are celebrated throughout the year are Madayatratra, Mandeī Yatra, Hareli Parab, Bidul or Bihan Yatra, Budapen or Aam Khapani Yatra, Nuakhia Yatra, Ankuarin Thakurani Yatra, Dela Yatra, Amus Yatra, Paradesini Maa Thakurani Yatra, Kundi Yatra, Mati Yatra, Charu Yatra, Duma Yatra, Parada, Akhita Puja, Baru Puja, Chauladua Yatra, Diali Parab, Kotar Manat Yatra, Rabaneswara puja, Holi Parab, Ratha Yatra etc.

The Gonds' pilgrimage is almost a devotional process in which the offering sacrifices to the satisfaction of the god is traditionally practiced. Usually the sectarian groups of the Gonds and the Jhankars, do worships. During the puja, the veins are perforated by invoking the deity on their bodies. The Disaris plan the yatra keeping in view a good weather.

The Gonds worship basil, groom, ostrich (ashwattha) and palash trees. The worship of earth, mountain, wood or tree by Gonds shows their gratitude to the nature. Worshiping the Maa Basumati / Darni (Mother Earth or Earth Goddess) is one of their wonderful foundation and reforms. They rever Maa Basumati on every festival and Yatra. Especially when they build new house, the practice of worshiping the mother earth is mandatory with a ritual.

Chaitra is the festive month for the Gonds. In this month they worship the Mother Earth and wish good luck for them, their families, society and all living beings. During this month they celebrate Mati Yatra, Bihan Yatra (Chaitra Amabasya), Budhapen (Debata) Yatra and Amba Yatra.

Amba Nuakhia (new-mango eating) Festival:

Every year from the fifth day of the month of Chaitra Shuklapaksha (Lunar fortnight) to the eighth day of the month, the Amba Nuakhia festival is celebrated. They worship the Lingopen (Budhadeo), first of all as the creators of the Gond tribe, the god of dance, music, the discovery of musical instruments, the creators of the first ghotul (Dhangidi Basa and Shikshakendra) and new mangoes with white flowers, shuklabhogo khoi (fried rice) and coconuts inviting the deities to eat. Then all eat mangoes.

On the second day, the Gonds sacrifice to please mother Rakhyasini. Shields and swords (a symbol of the goddess) are placed in the hands of the devotee. The goddess fights a man and defeats him. During this battle, sacred musical instruments are played for the goddess. These include trumpets, dapra (dhap-small size), nagara, tudbudi (a small leather covered musical instrument, played by sticks), dudra, (wooden instrument) and madal (drum).

In the evening of the third day, the souls of the ancestors are invoked and new mangoes are offered, followed by chicken sacrifices. The Gonds believe that the ancestral spirits help the family during the time of grief and danger, so offering the new mango to them is a must. On the fourth day (on the eight day of Chaitra Shuklapaksha), the villagers consider their ancestors to be the ones who fulfill their desires. On this day many people gather and worship their ancestors, perform dances and sing songs. In the night, the village Gudi (Shrine: small-sized hut) is pleased by playing a sacred instrument (a drum like instrument as Lord Shiva's favorite Dambaru. In addition, the clay mandar (clay mardala), khut mandar (wooden mardala), which are called gutapara, dudra, tomak, nishan, mahuri (trumpet) are played. On this occasion, men and women celebrate the mango nuakhia with joy by performing the Mati Mandar dance, the Gutapara dance (Anandana Nat).

Budaben Yatra:

On the first day of the lunar month of Baishakh (Suklapaksha), the Gonds celebrate the Budaben Yatra. The Budadeo is worshiped as the goddess of the Gond society. It is also known as Jangideo (deity) and Lingapen (the deity Shiva). According to Gonds the Budadeo is the creator of Gond tribe and the whole creation is borne at his command. The Budhadeo Yatra is celebrated in almost every Gond settled village in Nabarangpur district. Two types of worships are performed in honor of the Budhadeo; For example: (1) General worship, (2) Karsar worship or Yatra. General worship is held every year. It is celebrated as a family worship in every family in the village. The head of the family serves as the master in this worship. This worship is Sweta or Shukla puja. Worship

is done with coconut, bel leaves, wet un-boiled rice and flowers. Karsara Yatra, the old-fashioned trip, takes place at an interval of every three years. It is celebrated in grand style. Friends and relatives come from all around. This is a three-day festival. A place of worship (Budhakhala) is built for the Budhadeo. Depending on the region, it is celebrated in the month of Chaitra or Baishakh. For this puja, the symbol of the Budhadeo is a stick (a straight stick adorned with silver leaves and a multi colored flag), the bamboo pots and the sword kept in charge of the priest. These three sacred objects are worshiped in the sacred arena of Budhadeo. After the worship, Shirha (Kalisi) hangs on the body of the Budhadeo (arises and shakes his head in agitation under the influence of the Shirha deity). During the rise of the goddess, the women sang in the midst of a variety of musical instruments. It is customary for a man to dance with the Budhadeo's stick in both hands and dance with the Shirha. The women sing in different rhythms in the name of the Budhadeo.

This traditional song lasts for three days. It is a grand and sacred festival of the Gond tribe. It is also called 'Amakhapani Yatra.' After offering new mangoes to Budhadeo during this Yatra, the Gonds eat new mango. The importance of this Yatra (festival) is paramount because the Gonds belief that everything will be good if Budhadeo is satisfied.

Bihana Yatra:

During the month of Baishakh, the Gonds mostly celebrate agricultural festivals. These include the Ankuangring Thakurani Yatra, the Bijeputni or Bihan Yatra, Akhita Yatra, etc. For Bihana Yatra or Biddul Yatra seeds are collected from each house. Women are prohibited from celebrating this festival. Even menstruating woman's husbands are prohibited from going to the seed Yatra site. On this Yatra day, the priest will take the seeds of various grains from all houses, mix them, sow them in land, worship them and invoke the gods. He prays to the god of rain and requests, "O Rain-God, Hooda Mahaprabhu! Peer achha yai, angjani achha yai" (O lord! Behold, let there be good rain, and rice). The Gonds begin

their agricultural works from this Bihana Yatra. The Bihan Yatra/Biddul Yatra takes place after our Khapani Yatra. The Yatra takes place near 'Gadi Mai'(Devadevi Patho). In the center of some villages 'Gadi Mai' is established. Archita is worshiped as the Gadi Mai (the food grower, the goddess of food like Mahalakshmi). On the day of the Bihan Yatra, the predetermined villages within the 'Gadi Mai' area bring seeds from their houses and dedicate them to the Gadi Mai. After everyone is gathered, the spirit of the goddess enters in the body of Shiraha at the behest of the priest of Gadi Mai. This is called Shirha sitting. After Shirha sits down, the priest prays to Gadi Mai, (kneeling, wearing a white shawl, dedicating flowers and saffron) and says- "Go Maa Gadi Mai, we are going to start sowing rice now, if you give seeds in our hands, we will show these in the field. Maa Gadi Mai if pleases, seeds don't get bad. Gadi mai, who has entered in Shiraha's body bring something from the seed with her own hand and give it to the priest after that the priest accepts it. Worship is then performed. At the end of the Puja, it is decided to tie the seeds and take them to the village by four men.

Since it is a pre-agricultural process, the new branch of one tree is taken in a cart as a symbolic institution and the other branch is tied to it as a gamble. Two people holding the gambler work on the plough and one person works as a driver and the last one walks behind the vehicle. Once the symbolic vehicle reaches the village, it is taken to every house in the village. It is called as Gadi Maa vehicle (cart). With the hope of a good harvest that year, with the grace of Gadi Maa, before taking the seeds, the vehicle is worshipped with arua (unboiled) rice, water, incense and lamps by the women of the house. Then they take a seed pod. The women happily feed four men. After returning to the village and distributing the seeds, they gather the food they have collected and gather near the Gadi Maa holding the food and eat happily. Farmers in the villages add the worshipped seed with the more seeds available at home and prepare to sow seeds on the third day, especially during the Baishakh Shuklapaksha.

Bidara Yatra (Sowing Yatra):

This is another festival called the Sowing Yatra. In some Gond villages, the Sowing Yatra or the Bidara Yatra is celebrated in the month of Joshtho (June). It is believed to have been taken from non-indigenous people by the Gonds. This Yatra can be called a rain invasion Yatra. The head Jhankar of the village follows certain rituals. Five chickens are sacrificed to appease the land god. During the Bidara Yatra, the Gonds worship to appease their Ishtadev Thakudeo (Budhadeo/ Lingopen). After the puja, the villagers organize a feast and eat. It is also an agricultural festival.

Ratha Yatra (Gundicha Parab)

Similarly, the Gonds of Nabarangpur district have taken up the Ratha Yatra (Chariot Festival of Lord Jaganath) for many years. This is called as 'Guncha' (Gundicha Parab). During the Yatra held from the 2nd to 10th day of the month of Ashadha Gond men and women in their beautiful and traditional attire go to the places of Ratha Yatras, e.g.-Raigarh, Umakote and Jharigaon. In the Umerkot area, the moving idol of Maa Pendrani is boarded by a plane and kept in a chariot on the left side of Lord Jagannath, and is worshiped at the Mausai Maa temple as the village goddess from the day of Ashadha Shukla Trutiya to Dashami. Maa Pendrani Devi a virgin deity is famous as the Gonds' goddess. The Ratha Yatra is a beautiful combination of Bidagdha (Aryan) and Loukika (tribal) traditions in Nabarangpur district.

Amush Yatra

In the month of Ashadha (July), the Gonds celebrate the 'Amush Yatra'. Amidst the heavy rains in the month of Ashadha, the Gond tribe performs the Yatra to protect the paddy fields from insect attacks and also to protect the cattle from the infections by worms and diseases. It is also called the Baurani (Baulani) Yatra. During the Yatra time the Gond farmers go to the paddy fields and burn incense and also plant wild twigs whose medicinal properties destroy the worms in the paddy field and worship with planting the raw twigs of Kendu, Bhalia and Devadin (flower bud). These

twigs with leafs, which have medicinal value get decomposed and act as insecticide and save the paddy in the field from diseases.

Hareli

During the month of Shravan, the Gonds celebrate the traditional Hareli Festival which is also an agricultural festival. The festival is usually celebrated on the day of the Shravan Amabasya. On this day, the farmers worship their implements; e.g., ploughs, boards, shovels, and spades. The fruits grown in the garden are picked up by the Jhankar (Pujari) of the village and the green vegetables and fruits are eaten after these are offered to the main deity (Gramdevi: every village has one Pithasin goddess). This ritual is mandatory. It is forbidden to eat these vegetables and fruits before the Shravan Amabasya. The offering of this vegetable to the village chief goddess is called 'Bhajibanoni'. After each family in the village makes offerings to the goddess at their homes, the family members start eating fruits, vegetables, and twigs.

On the occasion of the Hareli festival, each farmer worships in his paddy field by offering Khira (milk) in a brass pot (kasla), a fire in a thick straw rope, a forest Bhalia branch with pots, incense and lamp. Gonds believe that by doing so their crops are protected against various pests and diseases and made healthier and more nutritious. Plough worship is performed on this day. On the occasion, the milkman of the village goes to the forest with cow, oxen and collect various types of roots, herbs; for example: Rasna Jodi (a medicinal shrub with a kind of fragrant leaf), the stem (root) of the earthworm (Sindibuta) and the stem (Gandha), which looks like onions (wild onion). On the eve of the Shravan new moon all of these roots are cooked in clay pots. At ten or eleven O'clock on the day, all the villagers bring some rice, salt and chili from their houses in a single bowl to the place where all the cows and cattle are kept in the village. This place is called "Kherka Danda". At that point, the milkman gives cooked root to all the owners of the cows. To this cooked stems with Lathi Kandha (a kind of vine, which the gardener produces round fruit on its branches, whose leaves are like a potato leaf) let the cows be fed with salt mixed with leaves,

as a result, cows are protected from various diseases. After that, milkman goes to everyone's house and ties the valia branch to the house and as per the rules milkman leaves everyone's house with rice, pitha (cake).

Balyatra (Dhankonda Yatra)

After the Ganesh Puja, the head of different villages gather for the 'Balyatra' (Dhankonda Yatra) to determine whether the Nuakhai festival will be celebrated on the ninth day of Bhadrav Shuklapaksha or any other day. The 'Balyatra' succeeds the Nuakhai festival. On this day of the Yatra, all the deities of a particular area (a number of villages under one deity) are worshiped by offering rice.

Nuakhai

In the month of Bhadrav, the paddy ripens. After puja, they take out the juice from Nuadhan (new paddy) and offer it to the village deities. They celebrate Nuakhai in the presence of their friends and relatives. Some children from each village are selected and invited to attend the festival. On that day, people wear new clothes and make new chuda (flattened rice). If the rice ripens in large quantities during the month of Bhadrav, they take out the rice from the crop and cook it with milk to make khir.

The priest of every family in the village worships the deities (home deities/ supreme deities) and the Duma (ancestral soul) for his family. He first offers Arua (un boiled) rice, white flowers and rice stalks to the deities. Then Nua chuda, Khiri or Navana are offered to the gods by preparing a kind of clean pure leaf, especially on the leaves of Kudai. Everyone in the family attends this puja. Nuakhia is arranged after the puja is over. The Gonds believe that since Nuakhia is a holy and auspicious day and there is a system of offering new rice and vegetables to the gods and goddesses in Nuakhia day, so non-veg food is forbidden on that day and all take delicious vegetarian food. After eating the navarnna, in the family the elders shave their heads and ask for their blessings. Then people from all over the village go out to the village streets and

exchange good wishes. Then the villagers play a variety of games with pleasure.

Gedi festival

The next day of the Nuakhai festival, the Gedi festival is celebrated. Gedi (Ranpa: a long piece of wood or bamboo stalk that grows from the ground, a foot and a half high, where the children put their feet, sing a kind of song and dance). During this Gedi festival, children climb the gedies and go to every house in the village and ask for rice, cakes and money. They sing “Taya Taya Bhushundi, Kede mede tele”. The Gonds believe that the insects leave the place when they hear the song. The girls of the village come together to sing, dance, and perform a dance called Shua Nach, asking for rice and money from the village. Non-veg items are cooked at home on the next day of the Nuakhai festival. Unmarried boys buy coconut, incense, and chicken eggs with the money they collect on that day.

Dasahara Festival

In the month of Ashwin (Dashara), the Gonds worship the mother (Thakurani). During this month, Paradesini Mata, Rakhyasuni Mata and above all Danteswari (Maoli Mata) are worshiped. Prior to the Dasahara Festival, as per the custom, the Gonds used to decorate the sticks of the famous goddess Danteswari with the cultural heroes of the Gonds and the sticks of the warrior Dhurua at the Bhagawati peetha of the king of Jaipur. They take the Dasahara Pada and bring it back after ten days of Puja Archana. During Dasahara Puja, the Gonds voluntarily offer sacrifices to their Matas. The family, the village, the surrounding area, the trees, the animals, the pitha, the river, the canals, the hills, the mountain, the fire, the rain and all the elements of nature are involved. The priests, the Shirha, Pujari pray to protect them from disease, danger and disaster. In this month, unmarried girls celebrate Barupuja for nine days. Unmarried girls meet in one of the villages. They cultivate a large amount of soil in the shape of a soup made of sargi donna leaves and grow there a variety of seeds. After nine days of bathing and cleansing, the group of girls worships the sala donna. The puja is held from the second day to the tenth day

of Ashwin Shuklapaksha. On the last day of puja, Dashahara falls. On that day, everyone takes the grain to the river or the pond. Worshipping there, the sprouted rice, maize, mung, bean, mandia saplings are worn on the head and dressed in traditional customs, ornaments and they go to distant places to witness the Dasahara festival, and all the girls laugh that day. It has been a long time since the earthen idol of Durga was worshiped in the Raighar/Kundai and as a result, the Gonds' tradition has become a thing of the past.

Chaura Dhuani Yatra

In the month of Kartik, the Gonds, like other tribal groups, celebrate the "Chaura Dhuani Yatra". In addition, they celebrate the Mati Yatra/Charu yatra. First, the farmers gather on their own land to worship the clay mother in order to harvest the ripe paddy on the land. Chickens and cocks are sacrificed. This is called Charu Yatra.

In this month, the rice is extracted from the harvested paddy and the rice is first washed in water and cooked. Before that it was a rice washing ritual. The rice is washed and cooked during the Yatra and offered to the village deity, the deity of the house, and the cow. Sacrifices are made during worship. People believe that by sacrificing, the gods are satisfied and that evils, diseases, etc. are eliminated. Friends come from outside. The people after being clean wear new clothes. All in the family enjoy feasts.

Diali

During the month of Pousha (November), the Gonds celebrate the Diali Festival. During the festival, cows are taken for bath and then Bandapana is done with turmeric. On this day, people cook a variety of vegetables, twigs, and rice khiri, which were grown in garden and put them in a new kula (supa) to feed the cows. The Gonds celebrates the "Diali festival" by expressing gratitude for the service of the cow to the people. Milkmen are given clothes and money. In this month, the Gonds once again pray for permission to harvest, worshipping Duladeo and Maa Ranhaa Devi -the wife of Duladeo (there are many myths about this deity).

Kotar Manti Yatra or Khala parva

In the month of Poush, the Kotar Manti Yatra or 'Khalapara' is celebrated. The area where rice is harvested is usually called the cutter. The festival is celebrated on the last day of the threshing. In the threshing floor, chickens and sheep are sacrificed. Then a feast is organized there. On this day, the daughters of houses are given gifts of some new rice for their consumption. On the full moon day of Poush the Gond boys and girls celebrate the festival by collecting rice, green leaf, dala and vegetables from every house in the village and organize a feast on the banks of the river or pond.

Mondei Festival

The best festival of the Gond tribe is 'Mondei Festival', the festival of joy, love, social gathering, dance and worship. In particular, the Mondei festival is celebrated from the month of Magh to Chaitra. This festival is also called Paradeshini Yatra, Kundi Yatra or Sadubhai Bhet Yatra. This festival is basically an ancient and traditional festival of the Gonds. Gond society, in particular, believes in many deities. According to Sian (the elderly and the wise), the Mondei festival is celebrated in the family and village to please the gods to cure any disease.

The Mondei festival is celebrated with great pomp and ceremony in the areas of Umargaon, Deobhandari, Bhandarkote in Raigarh. It is celebrated at the place where the Bhairab deity is worshiped in Nabarangpur district. Mundibeda Mondei is a wonderful symbol of Gond culture. The Mondei festival is usually celebrated in the name of Baudadewa or Budhadeo (Budhapan), Mata Mai, Maoli (Danteswari Devi) and Bhima Devata and his wife. It is believed that all these gods and goddesses are very powerful, benevolent and have a high place in the Gond society. Apart from these, there are many deities in every village, like Sano Deos in the forest, tree, hill, mountain, river, cave, cremation ground, etc. They are known as Pathoyarin Duma, Gadi Bhima Deo, etc. They are also worshiped at the Mondei (Badadeo Mondei, Maat Mondei, Bhima Mondei).

Fifteen days before the Mondei festival, the villagers of the village where Mondei will be celebrated hold a meeting under the leadership of the village priest (Jhankar) and the village chief (Gauntia: Gatiya). The village priest is the main leader. At his behest, the people who bring the news to the forefront of the good of the village (known as Katawali Gond-the king's nominee now a hereditary successor) call for a meeting in the village. In the meeting, the date of the observance of Mondei is fixed. The levy is fixed. The chief then announces the name of the village of Jhankar. The priests of the villages where the gods and goddesses will be attended are invited to the Mondei by sending "Phula Dabla" (Sala badadona). The village messenger announces the day of the Mondei celebration at the weekly market. It is an ancient practice and recognized as an influential media of public relations.

10-12 days before the Mondei festival, the villagers decorate their houses and places of Mondei with Jhoti and Chitas (white rice colour paintings). Some even buy new clothes. On the eve of Mondei, people from different villages dressed in their traditional attire worship the deity at the place of Mondei. This worship is called Yatra. All the families in the village make wooden planes, angaa, kurcha (handmade stools of Sal or Shisu wood) for the ishtha debata (lineage god) of their home, Danka (decorated with emblems of the gods, silver, various colored flags), Gapa (bamboo leaf-dyed ear rings). Deo Tangia is washed, decorated and brought to the village. At noon, Jhankar (the chief priest), invites the gods (Padghani) by playing the drum and mahuri (trumpet). When the priest comes home, the women of the house wash their feet in devotion, put yellow turmeric on their foreheads. When they go to Mondei, the god of their house, they carry all the planes, sticks, angagapas, etc. of the village to fulfill their desires.

From other villages Mata lathi, Maoli lathi, Kuanri Maoli lathi, Kasi Bundin Mata lathi, Duma's (symbol of the ancestral soul), Tangia, Lingapen (Budhadeo's), Anga (symbol of dressed clothes) are collected and placed at a short distance from Mondei's place, such as the plane and stick of the beautiful Mata, and the Gapa of Mata Pendrani. They are invited by the chief priest of Mondei and others to play the musical instruments again at the shrine.

It is believed that these goddesses return to their homeland once a year to meet and worship the goddesses of their families and families who are worshiped in other villages, to meet them and to worship them. Here the human image of the tribe is reflected in the deity, and the tribal deity is said to share the same sorrows and joys. After the sticks and other symbols of all the deities are shaken, they all join together and urge Sihira (Gunia) to be possessed in his body. The villagers seek revenge by expressing their sorrows after the deity is defeated in Sihira's body. Everyone in the village is told to stay healthy. Then there is the institution of worship. People whose prayer before the deity are fulfilled after the puja, make sacrifice of chickens, pigs, swans, sheep, bucks and other animals according to their economic capacity to please the gods. In the evening, they prepare a feast on the meat of the sacrificed animals. Then, all the planes, sticks, Deo Tangia, Gapa are taken to the village priest's house in a grand ceremony with playing of musical instruments. The priest stands before the people, who are invited from other villages. At night, after eating, the village young men and women, old and young, all gather in the street of the priest's house, playing with sticks, planes and chains.

It is believed that the gods touch those who hold them. This playful tradition and ritual is prevalent in the society. The girls also take part. Mondei is a celebration of social harmony. The day is celebrated with full of joy. There in the area many stalls are installed and markets are opened for sale of goods and commodities. Every family, villagers are ready to go on a walk with their invited guests. In the next morning, the villagers worship the gods, sticks, planes and the goddess Pathyarin, Duma, and Bhima with coconuts, flowers and incense lamps in their homes. Some even make sacrifices.

On the day of Mondei Yatra, the priest is invited to visit the village along with some of the village chiefs. Then all the planes, sticks, quilts, anga, gapa, etc., are taken to the mound of the village amidst the tunes of musical instruments such as mahuri, nishan, nagara, tidibidi, wood mandar, khut mandar, dud. The religious place is filled with joy and happiness for all.

After a while, the Shirhas sit down and the invited heads of the village and other villages bow down and invoke the gods in their bodies. Others, including the village priest (Jhankar), mourns the loss of the deity. He promises to do well to others in the front of the rising god, Shiva.

Shirha later calls on the names of the chiefs of his village and other villages. They worship the gods with incense, lamps, and offerings. Priests, Shirha and others adorn the garlands, sticks, planes, limbs and curls with garlands. In the end, Badadeo and the other deities travel around the temple on three occasions, including the hanging of incense, and music. Later, in the middle of Mondei, the priest, the vein, and the goddess rest near Gudi. Invited guests from other villages spend the night at the homes of their friends and relatives. At night a feast is organized there for all the devotees.

It is the traditional festival of the Gond tribe. People come to the market on Mondei days to buy their necessities, especially clothes, utensils and jewelry. Dancings continue at night. Other attractions of the festival are its cultural and social aspects. Mondei tradition is very old. Many legends about the creation of Mondei can be heard from the people. It is the largest festival of the Gond tribe. The villages of Umar, Deoverandi, Mundibeda (Raighar area), Lasagumuda, Kodinga, Dabugaon, Podagarh, Dhodra are famous for the 3-Day festival.

Pahajini Yatra or Mata Yatra

During the month of Falgun (spring season) when menseals (Milimila) disease spreads, the Gonds celebrate the Pahajini yatra or Mata Yatra as they believe that if the Mata is satisfied by worshipping Thakurani, she will not cause the disease. The Pahajini Yatra is celebrated in every three years with great pomp and ceremony and the symbolic stick of the Thakurani is taken out of the village temple. Shirha wakes up the Thakurani in his body, carries a fire pot on his head, covers the incense smoke, and walks around every house in the village with the tune of music and eatables. The priest sprinkles turmeric on everyone's home and wishes everyone a speedy recovery. On the same way, in the Nabarangpur district

and nearby Gonds preserve their culture, customs and traditions by celebrating festivals throughout the year (S.C. Mishra, 2007: Pp. 116-130).

The details of the Gond festival calendar vary from region to region. Many of the important celebrations are connected with the agricultural activities. Some Hindu festivals, such as Holi, Dasahara, and Diwali, are also celebrated. The Gonds, however, observe and celebrate the feasts in their own manner, complete with sacrifices. Besides, Pola, a cattle festival, and Nagpanchami - the snake festival, are also celebrated by the Gonds along with the other people of the area. A statement indicating different fairs and festivals observed in Raighara area of Nabarangpur district is given below.

Festival Calender of Gond Tribe of Nabarangpur, Odisha

Name of Odia Month	Name of the Festivals or Jatra	God/Goddess Worshipped	Worshipping place
Baishakh	Ankuanrin Thakurani Jatra	Basumata: Mati Maa	Gaon Gudi (Village Shrine)
	Bijaputani or Bihan Jatra	Basumata	
	Akhit Jatra (Akshyaya Tritiya)	Basumata	Jami (Farm Land)
Jyestha	Bidari Jatra	Istadev Thakurdeo
	Gonchha (Gundicha / Rath Jatra)	Balabhadra, Subhadra, Jagannath
Asadho	Aamus Jatra (Baunrani Jatra)	Apadevata Mana	Gaon Sesa Munda (Village Last End)
Shravan	Hareli Parab (Sravan Amabasya)	Krushni Upakaran (Agriculture Implements) Puja	Gaon Gudi (Village Shrine)
	Bhaji Banoni: Saaga, Daala, Phala

Bhadrab	Aamus or Baurani Parba	Apadevata	Village Last End
	Bali Jatra (Dhankenda & Rice husks) Jatra	Village God-Rice Husks Offered	
	Nuakhia	Household Goddess / Isthadevi (Supreme Deity)	In the House
	Gedi Parba	Gedi Deo (Devta)	Middle of the village
Aswin (Dashera Mas)	Matapuja	Paradesini Mata, Rakshyasuni Mata, Danteswari (Mauli Mata), Nadi Jejing	
Kartik	Chaur Dhuani Jatra	Household Deity	
	Mati Jatra, Charu Jatra	Mati Mata (Earth Goddess)	
Margashira (Pongmas)	Diali Parba (Diwali)		
	Katar Manti Jatra	Khala Devta	
Pousa	Chher Chhera Parab	_____	
Magha	Paradesini Mata Jatra	Paradesini Mata	
	Kunda Jatra or Sadu Bhai Bhet Jatra	Household Deity	
	Mandei Parab	Bura Deo/All God and Goddess/ Bhairab Deo/Bima Deo / Mauli Mata	
Phalgun	Parad (Bentha Jatra)	_____	
	Mata Jatra (Pahachani Jatra)	Thakurani Mata (This Festival is observed for protection from Small Pox)	

Chaitra	Mati Jatra (Earth Goddess)	Basu Mata (Earth Goddess)	FarmLand
	Bihan Jatra (Chaitra Amabasya)	Village Goddess	
	Budhadeo Jatra	Budhapen	
	Aam Khapni Jatra (New Mango Eating Festival)	Budhapen / Village Deity	

Source: S.C. Mishra 2007: "Fairs & Festivals of Gond Tribe", in Banaja, 2007, ATDC, Bhubaneswar (Pp. 129 -130)

Usually, the Gond Festivals relate to important agricultural activities and seasonal events and human life cycle events from birth to death and aftermath. The Gonds observe two major festivals, such as Keslapur Jathra and Madai. While the celebration of 'Keslapur Jathra' is marked with worshipping the Snake deity – Nagaba, the Madai festival is celebrated to mark the occasion of meeting relatives settled in other parts of the country. The Chaitra festival held in the month of March is very common for new fruit eating ceremony as well as sowing new crops. Their festive life is always filled with animal sacrifices made by ritual head of the village, Dehari. During the festivities the Gond women wear coloured glass bangles and necklaces made of small black beads and coins and silver. Like all the Hindus, the Gonds celebrate the grand festival of Mother Goddess Durga during Dusshera with glee and gaiety. Silver jewellery and decorative turbans form essential part of the costume of the Gond dancers.

7.2 Fairs & Festivals of Gonds in North Odisha (Keonjhar District):

The Gonds of Keonjhar district observe different festivals in different seasons. These are named as Chaita/Mahul Jatra, Bihan China, Akshya Trutiya, Asadha Khena, Haruali Unansa, Dansara, Nuakhai, Dasahara or Boel Jatra, Chaula Dhua and Charu Puja. The festivals show a little difference from those of their brethren living in Nabarangapur district (South Odisha). The following are some the important festivals observed by the Gonds of Keonjhar district.

Chaita / Mahul Jatra

It is observed in the first Tuesday of bright lunar fortnight in the month of Chaitra March/April for one day. The village deity Gangadi in her Gudi (shrine) at the village outskirts is worshiped. The village Jhakar and Chief keep rice, incense stick, lamp, vermilion, flower, cock and liquor in a new bamboo basket and come out of village accompanied by other villagers. There they put vermilion on a stone, offer flowers and rice and call the Gram Devi. A cock is sacrificed before the Gram Devi and offered with liquor and baked mahula. Then the village chief does Payendhara (poured water) in the names of his ancestors (paternal and maternal) of 3 generations. After that, the Gond people are allowed to eat mahul. It is believed that anybody who eats mahul before the puja his family will face the wrath of deity. His children will suffer and his animals will die. Observance of this festival is the sole responsibility of the village Chief and he incurs all the expenditures of the Puja.

Bihan China

It is an agrarian festival observed in any day of the bright lunar fortnight of the month of Baishakha (June). Dharni Debi and Pahar Bhandar (Mountain Rock Cave) near the Gudi are worshiped in the festival. Jhakar (Priest) and village Chief in accompanied by the villagers go to the Pahar Bhandar in the afternoon with paddy seeds, rice, incense stick, lamp, vermilion and flower and worship Dharni Debi and Pahar Bhandar. Other people also provide rice, oil, turmeric, salt, cock. Rice is kept near Debi for eating of cock, pigeon, ram and then these animals and birds are sacrificed. The Jhakar near the Gudi demonstrate cultivation and sowing the paddy seed. The Jhakar collects soil from the cultivated areas and smear the same in the bodies of all. Then he distributes a handful of paddy to everybody. All take these seeds and mix the same with their own seeds for sowing during the Akshitrutiya day. It is believed that if the puja seeds are sown; there will be a bumper harvest. All devotees offer the heads of the scarified animals and birds to the deity and bring the headless body parts for cooking and eating at the foot hills.

Akhi Trutiya

It is also an agrarian festival. This festival is observed on Akhya Trutiya Day. On this day all take bath and carrying seeds and cow milk in a new bamboo basket go to the field. There they remember their respective ancestors and pour the milk on the soil and then cultivate and broadcast the seeds. Cultivation and sowing seeds in Akhya Trutia day is believed to provide better yield.

Ashadha Khenā

This festival is observed in the bright lunar fortnight in the month of July. It is done for de-weeding. In this festival Gangadi Debi is worshipped. On a fixed date the Jhakar and other Gond people go to the Godi of Gangadi Debi and sacrifice cocks, rams, pigeons and cocoanuts before the deity amidst the drum beating. During the course of the worship, the spirit of the deity enters in to the body of the Sira (Shaman). The Jhakar appeases the Shaman and keeps her calm. The Shaman at times drinks the blood of the scarified animals and birds. The headless bodies of the scarified animals and birds are taken by the devotees to their home for consumption. Before this festival the farmers do de-weeding in the paddy field only once and after the puja they do the same twice.

Haruali Uansa

This Festivalis observed by Gonds once in a year in black moon (Amabasya) day of the Sravan (July) month. In this festival Mati (Earth) and Dullha deities are worshipped. This festival is also observed by the family having a still birth. On this festive day all install branches of wild turmeric and other species in their own lands and offer milk to the deity. Such branches of tree are also put in the roof of the houses. Ghosts, snakes, etc. don't enter the houses after the puja. Before celebration of this festival no family of the village is allowed to cut paddy from the field.

Dansara Jatra (New rice offering to Village Deity Festival)

It is observed in black moon day, the last day of the waning moon fortnight in month of August (Bhadrab). Early in the morning the Jhakar goes to the paddy field filled with tender paddy bunch

and cuts the paddy bunch. Then he recalls all the village deities and other gods and inserts the paddy bunch in the roof of the village Gudi and repeats the same in the roof of each of the villagers. While doing so he collects paddy, rice and money for preparation of pudding (khiri) with the new rice, which is offered to all gods and deities. He after the offering distributes pudding among all the devotees of the village.

Nuakhai

It is a main festival observed by Gonds and other people of the western Odisha. The village Chief, Jhakar and others unanimously decide and fix an auspicious day for celebration of Nuakhai. Then the village Choukidar (Watchman) spread the news in the village by beating drum. On the day preceding the Festival Day, the Jhakar observes fasting and goes to the corn field and cuts paddy. He presses the paddy and prepares chuda (parched rice). He prepares a mixture of chuda, milk and sugar and offers the mixture in a leaf cup to the deity. Then others eat new rice at home after worshipping their family deity and ancestors (Duma). All in the family wearing new dresses sit together, touch the new rice in the forehead, remember their Duma and eat the new rice with joy. At the end of the feast they rever their ancestors. Then they enjoy a feast comprising of rice, dal, curry, puddings and visit the elders in the neighborhood to show respect called 'Juhar Veta'. They share the food with the friends and relatives. Nuakhai Basi ie, the next day of Nuakhai also is observed with joy and amusement with consumption of foods like rice, mutton, and chicken along with liquor. They believe that if they spend these two-days' festival with pleasure, the rest of the days of the year will be spent in glee and delight.

Dushera or Boil Festival

It is celebrated in the month of September/October between Astami to Dashami. This festival reflects faith and loving devotion of Gond community towards God. Gonds celebrate their legacy every year during the Dasara. On that occasion, all the living heirs of the crown in each generation are honored by carrying them on

a pallak (royal cart carried on shoulders). On the day of Astami, the village priest (Jhankar) goes to the God and Goddess place and prays their sword, lathi (long stick) and weapons. It is seen that the priest who prays to the God and Goddess usually belongs to Gond Community in Kalahandi district. They bring sword, lathi and all weapons to the river bank and clean it. They gather all the weapons at a place. At that place priest performs a ritual and sacrifices a white gourd. At 9-10 O'clock they return home and gather their weapons at someone's home. After keeping their weapons they sacrifice a hen, a rooster or a sheep. Starting from this date till Dashmi they keep "Aakanda Deep" in front of Goddess sword, stick and weapons. This is called as "Khanabasa".

On the day of Dhasami, after taking bath in the morning the priest worships Goddess of weapons and sticks and then inserts flags on it. They wear a red dress to umbrella and put Red Tika on weapons. At around noon they shift the swords, flags, the umbrella and the weapons to another room. During the process of shifting people come out for prayers to the umbrella. After shifting they keep it in a place and worship the umbrella with swords and weapons. Priest worships Goddess umbrella and the weapons with rice, candle, climber leafs, red pigment and flowers. For the worship of the umbrella rice and candles are collected from every Gond household. Coconut is served as "Bhog" in front of the umbrella. Besides that if anyone have made any wish to sacrifice any animal, they sacrifice a hen, a rooster or a pigeon. On this day an uncountable numbers of animals are sacrificed in front of the umbrella. A sheep is also sacrificed in front of the umbrella when they take it outside. The worship continues till 2/3 PM.

In the evening at around 4 O'clock everyone gathers in front of the umbrella. The priest prays to the umbrella to recall the God and Goddess. The spirit of Goddess already exists in that umbrella. During the recall of Goddess people play Tasa, Mahura and Drums. With the music Goddess's soul enters inside a specific man's body. The man wears a red dress which is made of sea shells and bangles and holds weapons like sword and trident (trishul). After that the Goddess sits on a table and a swing made of nails

while performing a dance. There are 50/60 nails inserted on a swing as well. The goddess sits on that chair and swings on that swing. Some other Goddesses thrust the sharp trishul inside their jaws. They don't feel pain or not a single drop of blood comes out of their body while swinging on the nail swing, sit on the nail chair or thrust with trishul, because the Goddess soul exits inside their bodies.

After that the Goddess visits all the households of the village with umbrella, while holding sword and lathi. This is called as "BOIL BULA". In the honour of the Goddess and umbrella every house prays them with candles. Coconuts and sacrifices are offered to them during the visit. The Goddess drinks the blood of the sacrificed animal. A red piece of towel is used to hide the Goddess's face while she drinks the blood of the animal. During the household visit Goddess throw rice to the households. As a result any ghost, evil spirit cannot enter into the house. The members of the house express their problems to the Goddess. Goddess solves all the problems. As demonstrated the Goddess visits all the households and every household worships to the Goddess. Afterwards everyone returns to the Goddess place with Goddess. Thereafter umbrella, sword, lathi and weapons are kept in the place. The soul of the Goddess returns to the umbrella. While keeping the umbrella in that place a sacrifice of sheep has to be made. They cook the meat of that sacrificed animal and eat the same in the dinner. This festival is celebrated once in a year. People wait for this moment to serve desired food to Goddess for their wishes.

Chaula Dhua or Pithori Jatra

It is celebrated in the month of December during "Sukla pakhya". After harvesting of paddy, everyone mill the rice and eat it after cooking. Everyone eats rice after cooking but without washing it. The priest in a meeting with others fixes a day to observe the rice washing festival. In this festival village Goddess Gangadi and other Gods and Goddesses are worshipped. Every family worships their ancestors "Dumma". On that day the priest goes to the village Goddess temple with rice, candle, red pigment

and cake. A drawing (jhooti) made of rice paste, drawn there. Rice after washing is cooked in a new utensil. Khir and cakes are also prepared. After that the priest serves that cooked food to the Goddess and worships with red pigment and candle. On this day they sacrifice roosters, hens and also pigeons. After that they return home. They worship their own God goddess with Dumma inside their house and serve rice, khir, cake with a rice paste jhooti. From this day they throw away the old cooking pots and cook with new pots. They believe that before the end of the Pithori jatra if anyone cooks rice after washing it, they will have to face the anger of Goddess and the consequent misfortune. That is why they first serve the washed cooked rice to the Goddess and then cook it after washing. In Gond community no one breaks their customary law and if anyone breaks it, he/she have to face the consequences.

Besides their own festivals, the Gonds of the village also celebrate various Hindu festivals such as Prathamastami, Kartika Purnima, Sivaratri, Ganesh Puja, Rakhipurnima, Holi and many more.

POLITICAL LIFE

The main functions of a community's political system are to guide people, provide security, prevent crime and protect them, to maintain order and integration of society by determining and administering norms, values, traditions and customs and to adapt and change elements of social, economic, religious behaviour necessary for achieving collective goals.

History throws light on Gonds village governance. In the long past the Gonds were the chief administrators of their region. For smooth administration, the Gond Kings appointed their representatives viz Makadam, Gountia, Jamindar (landlord) at different levels of their villages. From villages to the capital of the Kingdom, their administration was people centric based on discipline and traditions and customs. After defeat of the Gond Kings by the Hindu Rulers like Chouhan and Parmar, the former lost their kingdoms but the latter did not interfere in the former's socio-political affairs at lower level due to their numerical majority. Thus the Gonds continued to retain their powers and control over the lands at village/pragana (conglomeration of 12 villages) levels. The Hindu kings gave recognition to the Gonds' traditional administration of villages and praganas. The Gonds knew that they are the primary administrators of their lands and thus said, "Gonds is Land Lord in Kings Kingdom". But during 14th and 15th Century, after invasion of Muslim Rulers, the Gonds became unhappy. They started scarifying pigs near the village Gudi (Shrine) and deity to keep the Muslim Kings (who believe pigs as profane) away from the Gond villages and local areas and their direct administration. Therefore, the Gonds' Jamindaris and status of village chiefs could be retained intact.

With this historical backdrop of Gonds' political system our agenda here is to discuss about their village council, inter-village council, apex council, traditional leadership pattern and modern leadership and institutions. These institutions are working in an integrated manner so as to ensure smooth functioning of the Gond village life and maintaining group solidarity.

The Gonds of Bastar and Odisha have caste Panchayats which settle inter-tribal and intra-tribal disputes. The members of the Panchayat are selected by mutual consent and enjoy office till they enjoy the confidence of people by their good conduct. Inter-tribal and intra-village disputes are settled by a joint session of the two Panchayats. The guilt or established either by direct eye witness or by ordeals like putting one's hand in boiling oil or lifting a red hot crowbar. The offences those are dealt by the panchayats are adultery, taking another man's daughter or wife, being sent to jail and eating jail food, eating with a man of lower caste etc. Ex-communication is the severest punishment awarded to the guilty. Feasts have to be arranged by the the communicated person for his/her re-admittance of into the community (Pratap, 1983: P. 12).

8.1 Village Council:

Gonds live in villages and each village has a headman called Mukhia or Mahji or even Nayak. The villagers chose members to form the traditional village council (Panchayat). The village council, composed of the headman, the priest, the village messenger, watchman, and four or five elders. In Keonjhar area the Gond village council is headed by Padhan. The other members of the council are Pujari/ Dehuri, Dakua (Messenger), Bahaka (Assistant Pujari) and 3 elderly persons. Next to the Chief, the priest of the village, Dehuri, assumes immense importance as a leaders in a Gond society.

The village council takes care of the socio-religious and other tribal affairs of the village. It is responsible for the smooth functioning of the village and upholding Gond customs and traditions. Generally, the village council headed by the chief settles

the disputes relating to land disputes, drinking of alcohols, stealing, indebtedness, adultery, elopement, girl capturing (physical capture), family disputes, etc. as per their customary rules. Besides, more important village affairs like socio-religious functions are discussed in the village council meeting and decided upon by all the male members of the community.

Anybody, who deviates the decisions of the council, is penalized with cash fines and socially banned including ex-communication from 1 to 12 years. As for example, anybody, who impregnates a girl, the village Disari has to gather information from both the boy and girl. Then the boy is fined Rs. 500/- and asked to give a feast to all the villagers.

To substantiate the functions of the village council on the matter of settling disputes among Gonds and violation of socio-cultural norms and values at village level the following case studies are placed below.

Case Study: 1

(Gond Village Council's decision on inter-caste marriage between a Gond girl and a boy of Kamar Caste.)

Informant: Shri Maheswar Nayak, Village, Podanga, Telkoi Block, Keonjhar District.

In the year 2016, Ms. Dhedi Nayak D/o Mr. Balia Nayak of Gond tribe of village/GP Podang, Telkoi Block developed love affairs and eloped with Mr. Gania Panthei a Kamar caste boy of the same village. Both them left the village, got married and returned to Podang village after few months. This case of inter-caste marriage was placed before Gond village council of Podang village. The council took a stringent action against the father of the girl and his family and ordered the punishment of temporary excommunication to the family forthwith. Latter the village council sat and decided that the girl would cease her membership in the Gond society, and imposed a fine of Rs.9,999/- to her father for disobeying the rule of tribe's endogamy. Besides, her father had to observe death rites of his daughter while she is alive and to arrange a feast

for all Gond people of the village including seven representatives from seven Gond villages' Palli Councils. Henceforth, he and his family should disown their daughter and sever all relationships from her forever. Both the parties respected the village council's verdict. There after, the village council lifted the punishment of excommunication from Mr. Nayak and allowed the Gond girl and the Kamar boy to live in the boy's parental house at the village Podang.

Case Study: 2

(Gond Village Council's decision on Inter-caste marriage between a girl of Gond tribe and a boy of Hadi Caste.)

Informant: Shri Maheswar Nayak, Village, Podanga, Telkoi Block, Keonjhar District.

In the year 2015 a Gond girl Ms. Pratima Nayak D/o Mr. Kau Nayak and Mrs. Kain Nayak, of village/GP Sinduria of Telkoi Block developed love and eloped with Mr. Kabulu Tania of Hadi caste of the same village. They got married and returned to the village after some days. The case of inter-caste marriage was reported to Gond village council, Sinduria which ordered temporary excommunication of the father of the girl and his family. Then the village council sat and decided that Mr. Kain Nayak would pay a fine of Rs.7,000/- as his daughter married outside the Gond tribe, and breaching the customary rule of tribe's endogamy. Besides, he had to observe death rites of his daughter though she is alive and arrange a feast for all Gond people of the village as well as 7 representatives from 7 Gond villages' Palli Council. Henceforth, Nayak and his family disowned their daughter and severed all relations from the girl forever. The Gond girl and her husband along with his entire family members were excommunicated and driven out from the Sinduria village. Since the decision of the village council was mandatory, both the parties obeyed it.

Case Study: 3

(Gond Village Council's decision on Conflict and quarrels between two Gond Families.)

A meeting was held on Wednesday, 05.01.2021 in Sonapur village. The meeting was convened for resolving the dispute be-

tween the two parties in the village. First party was Mr. Rajaraj Gond, S/o Mr. Ghasia Gond and second party was Mr. Ramji Gond, S/o Mr. Kalu Gond. The two had been at constant quarrels for the past two days which led to violent behavior and breach of peace in the neighborhood. In order to resolve the dispute, it was decided in the presence of the village elders and the head of the village and Mr. Maheshwar Dhurua, as to how the brotherhood between the two could be maintained forever. Mr. Maheshwar Dhurua pleaded with both of the parties that they would not make this mistake further and if such misconduct repeated both of them would have to pay a fine of Rs 5,000 / - each to the village council. The decision was taken by all the gentlemen of the village and the meeting was adjourned.

Case Study: 4

(Gond Village Council's decision on illicit relationship between a minor Gond boy and minor a Gond girl.)

Informant: Shri Maheswar Dhurua, Village, Timanpur, Raighar Block, Nabarangpur District.

Mr. Balanchan Andy (Gond), a resident of Sonepur, lodged a complaint against the illicit sexual relationship between Mr. Aitu Gond S/o Hada Gond a minor Gond boy and a minor Gond girl in the village. The village council under the leadership of village Head, Mr. Maheswar Gond met on Friday, 05/10/2018, at 1.00 pm at Sonepur. The village council decided that Mr. Aitu Gand, when grows up would marry the girl and take care of her. With this verdict of the village council the meeting was concluded.

Even today, the value of obedience to village council's decision is enlivened in the Gonds society. The council up keeps the implication of the following values and norms which are being practiced since long.

- Showing respect to the elder persons.
- Abiding and supporting the verdicts and decisions of the village Chief.
- Respecting the village norms and rules.

The Gonds have a tradition of managing their village affairs through Panchayats under the leadership of village Pradhan, Nayak, Gaontia, who are assisted by the Pujari or Pantara and Dakua. These leaders and the judicious elders of the village constitute the village Panchayat to deal with offences and disputes such as theft, assault, partition of property, divorce, breach of clan rules, sexual

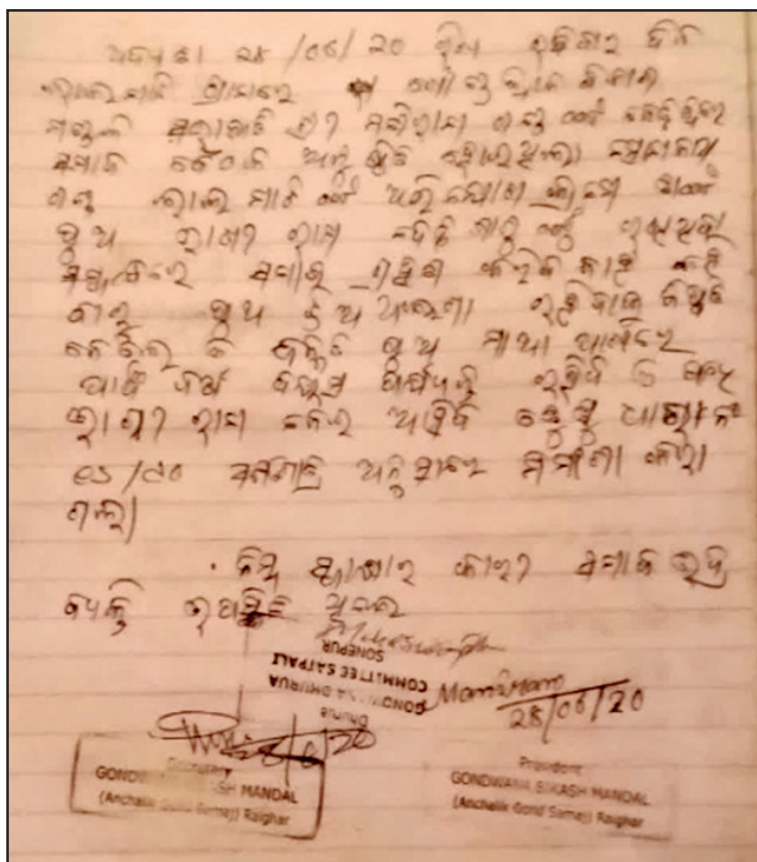
offences within the village. In these cases where the disputes relate to two or more villages the matter is dealt with by the Inter-Village Council.

In the study areas of Telkoi Block of Keonjhar district there is Inter-village Council, namely Sinduria Satpalli Gond Council, which has been constituted of seven villages such as Sindaria, Padiapasi, Pudeijhalu, Aluni, Pattakhali, Balijodi and Karamangi. Similarly, in the study areas of Raighar Block of Nabarangpur district the Inter-village Council namely Gondwana Dhurua Committee, Satpalli, Sonapur has been constituted of seven villages such as Sonapur, Munigadhi, Marangpalli, Lal Para, Kusumpur, Rengabati and Nakaitisimunda. The traditional head of the Satpalli Gond Council is Pradhan or Nayak as the case may be from place to place. Now the Satpalli Gond Council head is known as Sabhapati (President) who is supported by a Upa Sabhapati (Vice-President), Sampadaka (Secretary) and Koshadhakya (Treasurer). All the members of Inter-village Council are democratically selected by the Gond people of its constituent 7 villages. Once a year the Palli level Gond community meeting is organized for various purposes. There is not a particular date and time for the Palli Mahasabha meeting. But it has to be hold before the Block level Gond Mahashaba meeting, usually in the months of the summer. The venue for the meeting changes every year. Every year one of the seven villages is chosen as venue for the “PalliMaha Sabha” meeting. The women are not allowed to attend the meeting. Only women of the venue village related to cases are allowed to attend the meeting. Additionally, as and when any urgency arises special meetings are convened for settlement of dispute at the concerned village. The following two cases, which were adjudicated by the Gondwana Dhurua Committee Satpalli, Sonapur, Raighar, Nabarangpur district are collected from the field and placed below.

Case Study: 5

(Gond Village Council's decision on Live-in relationship between a Gond boy and his wife's elder sister.)

Informant: Shri Maheswar Dhurua Gond, Village, Timanpur, Raighar Block.

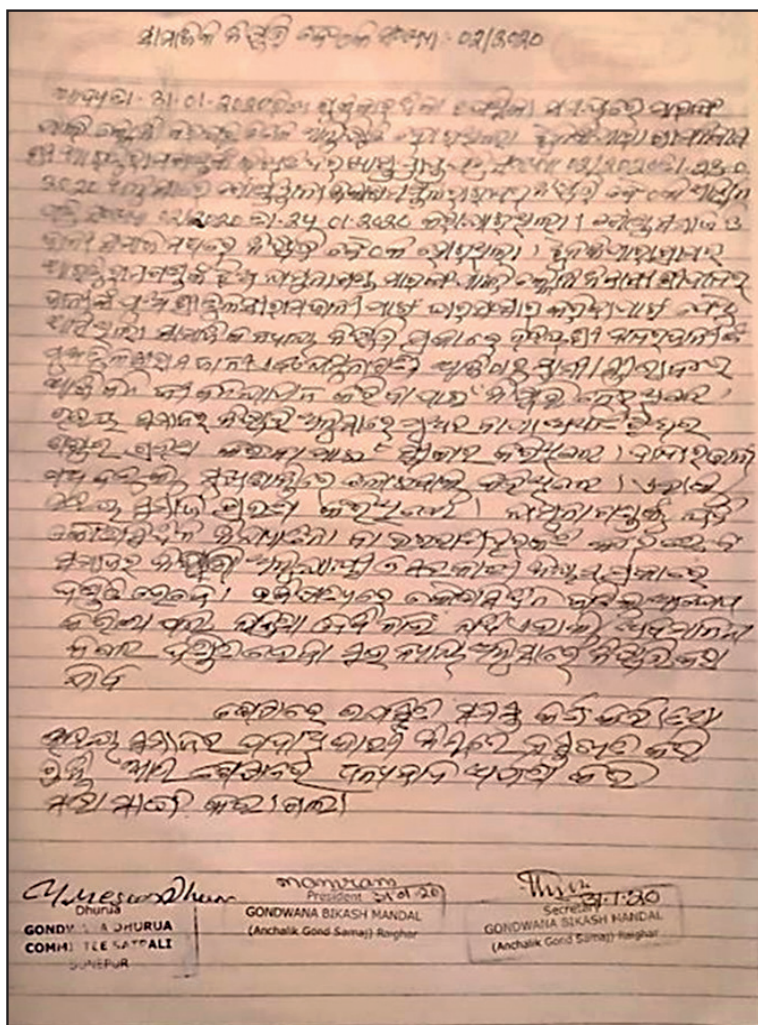


As per Mr. Somanath Gand's complaint, his son (Mr. Bhagiram), who had kept his elder sister-in-law in his house and enjoyed conjugal life, a meeting of inter village council was held in Lalmati village on Sunday dated 28/06/2020 under the chairmanship of Mr. Maniram Gond, President of Gandwana Development Zone. In the meeting it was decided that Gond Samaja never allows conjugal life between a man with his elder sister-in-law as it violates the principle (vide Section no-16/90 of Gond Samaj Rules) of Gond kinship relationship (sorrorate marriage, which allows only a man's marriage with his younger sister-in-law, but not the elder sister-in-law). Therefore, the Inter-village Council decided that Mr. Bhagiram and his elder sister-in-law would stay apart because society would not accept their relationship and their newborn son

would stay with the mother until he attends age of five and then Mr. Bhagiram would be allowed to bring the son for staying with him. The decision was mandatory. So Mr. Bhagiram and his elder sister-in-law obeyed the verdict of the Samaj and stayed apart.

Case Study: 6

(Gondwana Dhurua Committee Satpalli, Sonepur's decision on inter community marriage between a Gond girl and a Kondh boy.)



Informant: Shri Maheswar Dhuria Gond, Village, Timanpur, Raighar Block, Nabarangpur District.

Mr Aituram Gond of Jhankipara village had made a complaint in Gondwana Bikash Mandal, Raighar that Mr. Tulais Jani S/o Mr. Dandar Jani (Kandha Tribe) of Sarangpalli village had illicit relations with his daughter Ms. Jamuna Gond and married her later on. Gondwana Bikash Mandal (Anchalik Gond Samaj) Raighar held a meeting on dt. 31.1.2020 at Sarangpalli. In the meeting President, Secretary and elderly Gond people and Jani (Kandha Tribe) were present. They heard the case and took a judicious decision that both the community, Gond and Jani (Khond) Samaj, would accept the marriage. The father of Mr. Tulais Jani declared in the meeting that he had accepted the Gond girl as his daughter in law. In future he or his son would not torture the girl and promised to keep the girl in his house and all will live peacefully. If he would break his promise he and his family would be penalised as per the decision of both the Samajas. The decision of council was signed by the President and Secretary of Gondwana Bikash Mandal (Anchalik Gond Samaj) Raighar and all the Jani (Kandha) and Gond members present in the meeting.

8.3 Akhila Bharatiya Gondwana Gonds Mahasabha, Odisha (Apex Council)

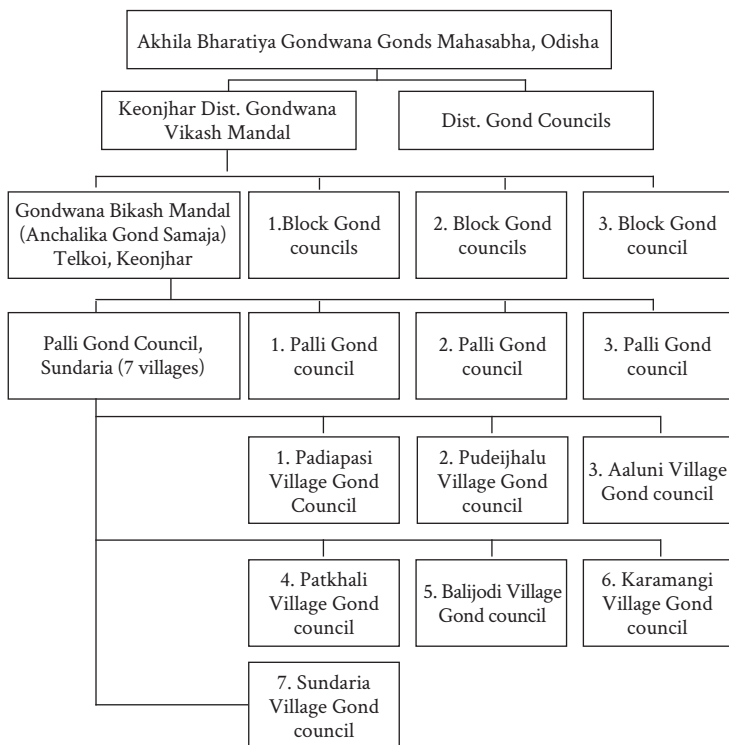
The Akhila Bharatiya Gondwana Gonds Mahasabha, Odisha (Apex Council) operates at the State level which comprises of members from all Gonds Councils of different districts. Again one District Gonds Council is constituted taking representatives from all Gondwana Bikash Mandal (Anchalika Gond Samaja) coming under its jurisdiction at the Block level. Further one Block Gonds Mahasabha at block level is constituted of several Palli Mahasabhas at village level.

The Odisha Pradesh Committee of the Akhila Bharatiya Gondwana Gonds Mahasabha, Odisha (Apex Council) oversees the functions like, Medha Anwesana, Matrimony, Community Programmes, etc. for preservation of Gond culture and development of its people. The Apex Gond Council, Odisha sits once in every 5

years, Gond Mahasabha at district level sits once in every 3 years and Palli Mahasabha sits once in a year for smooth functioning of the Gond society.

A hierarchal structure of Odisha State Gond Mahasaha (Akhila Bharatiya Gondwana Gonds Mahasabha), Odisha is placed below.

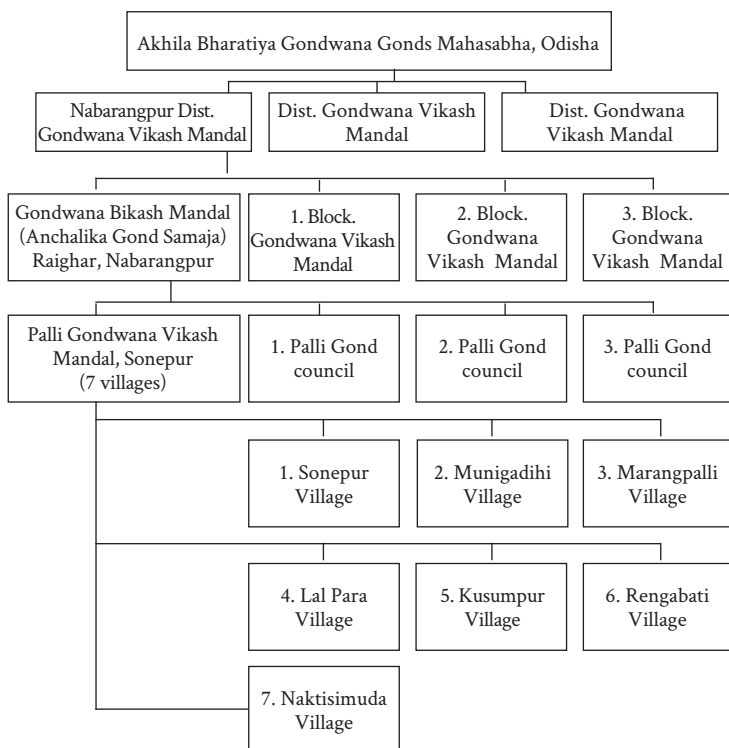
Figure -1 (For Study Areas in Keonjhar District)



In Nabarangpur district at village level a total of seven villages constitute a Palli Gondwana Vikash Mandal. As for example Palli Gondwana Vikash Mandal, Sonapur is constituted of seven village councils. All the Palli Gondwana Vikash Mandals of Raighara Block form Gondwana Bikash Mandal (Anchalika Gond Samaja) of Raighar Block, Nabarangpur district. Likewise all Gondwana Bikash Mandals (Anchalika Gond Samajas at Block level) constitute Nabarangpur district Gondwana Vikash Mandal. Similar

is the Gond Mahasabha structure of Keonjhar district. Further all 30 District Gondwana Vikash Mandals forms the “Akhila Bharatiya Gondwana Gonds Mahasabha, Odisha”, the Apex Gond Council at the State level. It forms a Central Level Gond Community. The President of the Central level Gond council is called “Rastriya Adhakhya”.

Figure -2 (For Study Areas in Nabarangpur District)



As per the information collected from the study areas in Raiighar block of Nabarangpur the present list of members of Raiighar Gondwana Vikash Mandal (Anchalika Gond Samaja), is as follows:

1. Shri Parshuram Majhi (President) Khalepara
2. Shri Debadas Gond (Vice President Zone-1) Hatahurundi
3. Shri Buduram Gond (Vice President Zone-2) Jangalapara

4. Shri Sugadi Gond (Vice President Zone-3) Mahand
5. Shri Maniram Gond (Vice President Zone-4) Guchaguda
6. Shri Phagnuram Gond (Secretary) Amapara
7. Shri Ghanashyam Gond (Secretary) Nakti Simda
8. Shri Gobindachandra Gond (Joint Secretary) Kadabhatta
9. Shri Pilisai Gond (Treasurer) Sonepur

The Raighar Gondwana Bikash Mandal (Anchalika Gond Samaja), Raighar, Nabarangur has modified the following rules in 2018 under social control and administration of customary law and justice to up keep the Gonds culture intact.

- i. Disputes relating to the affairs of boys and girls, wife and husband, are to be settled first in the village community council. No case will be forwarded to police station directly.
- ii. Man/woman practising witchcrafts and black magic and giving advise for human sacrifice (Andakera) and practicing Guni Garedi/ Pangania (Tanaha/Tanahi) if identified will be given punishment and imposed fine up to Rs.12, 000/-.
- iii. If any Gond girl marries a boy of an impure (water not touchable) caste or the vice versa, the girl is excommunicated and her father is imposed with a fine of Rs. 12.000/- and the boy's father is imposed fine of Rs. 60, 0000/- for purificatory rites and a feast. The family is excommunicated till the girl is out of the family. If the girl left the house then the family has to pay Rs. 20,000/- for readmission in to the Gond society.
- iv. If any Gond girl marries to a boy of clean (water touchable) caste and she resides in boy's house then her father and boy's father are imposed with a fine of Rs. 12.000/- each and both the families give feasts separately.
- v. Marriage by capture in Gonds society is prohibited. Violation of this norm will attract a cash penalty of Rs. 30,000/-.
- vi. Wife can not be allowed to remarry if her husband is alive. Violation of this norm the offender will be imposed penalty of Rs. 15,000/-.

- vii. Love between and desertion by a married man and a married woman (if one among them is from water not touchable caste) is seriously viewed by Gonds society. Such case, if detected, the offender is awarded a punishment of Rs. 1,00,000/- fine. If one of them is from water touchable caste, the fine is Rs. 60,000/-
- viii. Reconversion to the Gond religion is permissible.
- ix. Illegal termination of pregnancy is a serious crime like homicide. The guilty will be imposed a fine of Rs. 10,000/- and/or excommunicated from society. His family will be asked to pay fine of Rs. 12,000/- and give a feast.
- x. If a Gond person beats another Gond person by shoes then he/she will be fined Rs. 1500/- The person who is beaten may undergo purificatory rites with less expenditure in presence of Dharua/Gointa/Nayak (positioned as Brahman priest in Gond society) / Panch. When a Gond person beaten by a person of other community, the culprit is fined of Rs. 5,000/-. When a Gond person beats a person of lower caste, he is purified by Panch by breaking a coconut only.
- xi. Killing of cow, children and sister are heinous crimes in Gond Society. The guilty person has to beg rice by visiting 7 houses and to pay penalty of Rs. 551/- to be purified by Dharua/Naik with sprinkling of Sonwani (a mixture of gold washed water, sandal wood paste and flowers) or water collected from five Gotras/Lineages.
- xii. Violation of rules of Gond society and/or provocation of doing so leads to excommunication of the delinquent or imposition of fine up to Rs. 10, 000/- or even both taking in to consideration on severity of the offence.

Recently a meeting of the Gond Cultural Society, Keonjhar district framed a set of rules and regulations which was unanimously adopted at the Gujarati Bhavan on February 7-9, 2021. The same are mentioned below. The Gond Cultural Society has

informed all the chairpersons, and staff of all the village and village committees of Kendujhar district to adhere to these principles for smooth functioning of the Gond society.

1. A sum of Rs. 300 / - has been fixed for the marriage certificate. Out of this amount, the village committee and the district committee will be given a share of Rs. 100 /- each.
2. The marriage certificate will be issued on the day the “Chuda Palanga” is thrown.
3. The marriage shall take place on the day of the service.
4. The bridegroom party (Barat) shall not exceed 50 persons. The bride has to look at her best during this time, because of posterity more than anything else. Whatever the bride’s house will give as presentation according to its ability is acceptable.
5. No one cannot claim dowry. Dowry is not acceptable in Gond society.
6. No more than 10 people will go for selection bride .
7. The wedding feast will be at a lower cost.
8. Rs. 6,000 / - has been earmarked for atonement of other caste marriages.
9. The atonement of the postmortem will no longer take place in society. It has been abolished.
10. If anybody after consuming alcohol starts nuisances at home, in the village, at weddings, in meetings, etc., shall be punished with fines. If necessary, the society will not cooperate.
11. The groom is quite a special category in Gond society. So he will go for wedding in the guise of a hero with a sword in his hand.

8.4. Traditional Leadership Pattern:

The social organization of Gonds takes cognizance of administration and leadership. Their leading persons are Village

Chief (Nayak / Gointia), Pujari/Disari (Jhankar), Chalan, Paika and Ganda. Nayak is the pivot of the village administration. In all level be it social, community, family and religion, he has achieved excellency in gentleness and delivering justice. He is a leading man in the village. Usually the position of Nayak is inherited. But in some villages if the inherited person is not suitable for the village head position, then selection will be made. The Nayak also plays significant role in activities like delivering justice in village panch meeting, caste council, shrines, marriage functions, fairs & festivals, death rites, divorce, birth rites, feasts, inauguration of house, sale & purchase of land, etc. All villagers trust him. Justice given by him is respected by all. Nayak helps people in their joys and sorrows and prosperity and adversity.

Each of these officials resides in the village and perform their assigned duties and responsibilities as per the traditions and customs of the village administration. The Chief of village (Nayak or Pradhan or Gontia) upholds the traditional values system and administers to keep unity of other officials and the village community and for the wellbeing of the society. All the rules framed for the smooth functioning of the village society should be obeyed by all.

Besides the village head, in every village elderly persons are nominated as the members of the village council. Some of the traditional rules and customs also influence the village council in which the other community people live along with Gonds.

In some areas, the Gonds are reported to have lost their tribal solidarity and leadership. The traditional leadership based on age, experience and specialization, is overtaken by the new leadership based on education, wealth and political affiliations. The powers of the traditional tribal village council as reported by the people are gradually weakening due to the emergence of the modern statutory Gram Panchayat system. The new leaders within the tribe command respect as reformist and accultured Gonds. The Pradhan, Nayak or Pujari are there to officiate in several religious ceremonies only.

8.5 Modern Leadership and institutions:

In the current political situation, the Gond community, despite its numerical strength, is less vocal and less powerful in the decision making process. This is attributed to their disunity and educational and economic backwardness. Their traditional political structure has been weakening due to modern Panchayatiraj system. The social esteem of the traditional leaders is losing grounds. They are being marginalized at the rise of the politically affiliated members representing the Panchayatiraj system (Panda & Sahoo, 2008: P. 17).

As per the 73rd amendment to Indian Constitution now there are three tiers Panchayatiraj system operating in all over Odisha. Further, PESA Act, 1996 extended this to the Scheduled Areas of Odisha. As such in both the study districts which come under Schedule Areas of Odisha have three tier Panchayati Raj system- Grampanchat at GP level, Panchat Samiti at block level and Zilla Parishad at district level. All the functionaries like Chairman, Vice Chairman of Zilla Parishad, Chairman, Vice Chairman and Samiti members at Panchayat Samiti level, Sarpanch, Nayab Sarpanch and Ward Members at the Panchayat level have been elected by the people. Gram Sabhas and Palli (Ward) Sabhas have been given power to make plans for the village development, selection of beneficiaries for all government programmes and schemes.

As such the statutory Panchayats and elected members are also becoming important in the Gond villages. The village councils are under a local judicial council which controls all villages under Panchayats in the Mandal/Panchayat Samiti. The Gram Sabhas and Palli (Ward) Sabha is a civil body created to maintain sanitation in the village, to build and repair roads, clean wells and facilitate other civic amenities.

The local the judicial council, 'Nyaya Panchayat' has power to decide civil and criminal cases. In criminal cases it can fine up to Rs. 50/- and in civil cases it can deal with suits of Rs. 100/-. The exercise of leadership and authority is increasingly falling into the

hands of the panchayats. The types of cases which come up before these courts in some Gond areas can be seen from the breakup of the following cases:-

1. Marriage cases (relating to adultery abduction, break of promise and non-payment of bride price)
2. Disputes over property.
3. Quarrels resulting in violence and serious injuries.
4. Accusations of witch-craft and malignant curses.
5. Quarrels over the conduct of rites.
6. Disputes over ex-communication.

“In the present political situation the Gonds are, despite their numbers, politically powerless, which is partly because of this tribal disunity but also because of their comparative lack of education and drive, and their great poverty. Those few Gonds who are members of the legislative assemblies or even the national parliament (Lok Sabha) are either alienated from their tribal culture or easily manipulated by other politicians” (quoted from webpage noted below). (<https://www.everyculture.com/South-Asia/Gond-SociopoliticalOrganization.html#ixzz7B8fX6Lka>).

INTER-COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIP

Inter-community relationship exists between two or more ethnic groups. It refers to the way the communities in the neighbourhood behave towards each other. This behavioral attitude could be harmonious, cordial, reverential or chaotic, disorderly and un-cordial. An effective inter-communal relationship promotes peace, helps to implement development programmes and eradicates hostility.

This usefulness of the theme justifies the behavioural culture that helps development of a community and its area. The intercommunity relationship maintained by the Gonds with other ethnic groups like general castes, OBCs, SCs and other Scheduled Tribes are discussed below within a three-fold parameters, like i) services of other service providing castes or communities extended to the Gonds, ii) social distance practices existing between Gonds and non-Gonds and iii) establishment of ritual kinship between Gonds and other ethnic groups.

9.1 Ceremonial Relationship: Service by Service Castes / Providers

9.1.1 Service by Service Castes / Providers to Gonds in South Odisha:

The Gonds are cooperative, hospitable and friendly. They maintain harmonious relations with the neighbouring communities. The Gonds have already been integrated with the clean caste Hindus and claim a place in the caste hierarchy as a ritually clean group. They have close interactions with the local castes and tribal people in their day to day life. The Brahman and other upper caste members do not accept water and food from the Gonds. On the other hand the Gonds treat the scheduled castes like Dom and the

Ghasi (sweeper caste) as jal-achal groups and do not accept water and food of any kind from them. They are endogamous so marital alliance with any other caste or tribe is prohibited. They have shared their water sources with other ethnic groups excluding the scheduled castes. They have a separate burial ground in the nearby village forest. All the communities of the village celebrate community festivals collectively. Modern inter community linkages are also maintained with those who serve them as teachers, administrators, doctors and businessmen.

The Gonds have been accorded a high status in the locality. The earlier records of Gond Raj place them above other castes and tribes. Each Gond village has its own service provider “caste groups” such as the Gouda (cowherd), Agria (blacksmith), Ganda (drummers) and Pradhan (Bards and Singers). But the royal insignia of Gonds makes them ethno-centric and claim higher social status with reference to other castes and tribes in the locality.

There is symbiotic relationship between Gonds and Pradhans. The well to do Gonds depends on Pradhans for ritual services at the time of death. Some Gonds need the services of Pradhans on the occasion of death of a family member and at the time hearing the mythology. For their services the Gonds pay them in cash or kinds or even both to the Pradhans. The Pradhans while serving the Gonds can touch their gods but the Gonds do not enter into the house of Pradhans. Also the Gonds do not accept food from Pradhans and other lower caste groups and communities.

In the past and at present in interior villages, the Gonds are not served by the traditional village barbers and washer-men. In different places they have their own water sources. Though they work for Brahman and other higher castes, they are allowed to enter up to the cattle shed and the courtyard of the Gonds’ residence. For sanctification of pollution caused by birth or death, holy river water is often obtained from Brahman priests.

In the study villages different communities such as Gond (ST), Kolhar (OBC), Mali (OBC), Lohara (OBC), Gouda (OBC) and Ganda (SC) are living. The majority of Gonds depend mainly

on farming. Some of them are doing jobs and small businesses. The Ganda (SC) people make musical drums by using cow hide and they play drums during village festivals, Puja and Yatra. The villagers pay them in kinds, like rice, beans, pulses, vegetables etc. The Gandas serve during rites and rituals on the occasions of death, marriage and name giving ceremony. Mali community people make wreath of flowers and offer these to gods and goddesses mainly in temples, shrines, and to people of other castes during the occasions of life cycle rituals observed in the villages. Besides, they make mudhi (puffed rice) and move from village to village for sale of these food items. Loharas make and mend all kinds of iron products such as ploughs, shovels, knife, axe, sickle etc. and get remuneration. The Kolars help the Gond to pick up and carry gods and goddesses during the worship from one place to another. They are given a piece of land for this work. Goudas take care of the cow in the village and they are paid for it by the villagers. The priest or Pujari is from Gond tribe, who worship village gods and goddesses. The Priest, who conducts marriage, is called as Dosi. Gond messengers who go to other villages to communicate the news of death, marriage are called Paika. For their works they are given a piece of farm land each.

9.1.2 Service by Service Castes / Providers to Gonds in North Odisha:

The Hinduised Gonds who claim themselves to be Kshatriya, have styled themselves as Hindus by copying many Hindu customs and practices. They get the services of the Hindu Brahman, barber and washerman. The Brahman accepts water from their hands. But they have certain customs and practices of their aboriginal origin for which they are treated as tribals. However, none of these customs and practices is in violent conflict with the Hindu society. (Choudhury, 1964)

The Gonds have been living along with the clean castes since generations. Brahmans, barbers and washer man are rendering traditional jajmani services to Gond community. Some times, Gonds take the help of Brahman priests for their life cycle rituals

including Dashah, Shraddha, etc. For their services, they are paid in shape of cash and dry foods.

The service provider groups also provide service to the Gonds at the time of their need. The Gonds avail services from Barber (Barik) for conducting the first hair cutting of the baby, marriage rites for applying alata to the girls' feet, death rites for shaving the participants during Dasah, and so on. For all these services, the barber is paid in shape of cash and dry foods.

The Gond community also gets the services from the washerman (Dhoba). The Washer man renders services ie, cleansing of clothes for conducting purificatory rites relating to birth, puberty, marriage and death pollutions. He assists in ceremonial bath or cleaning Koilibuda clothes in the marriage day. The washer man gets payment in shape of cash and kinds and dry food for his services. The Gond community also gets services from the Hadi community (SC), who play drums during different religious activities and social functions, and is paid in cash and/or kinds by Gonds.

9.2 Social distance practices between Gonds and neighbouring communities:

The Gonds have been accustomed to a high status in the society for centuries. They are very proud of their martial and feudal tradition. Koreti (2016: 289) has quoted Fuchs (1960: 20), "The segmentary characteristic of the Gond tribe have withered considerably in the light of caste organization. Now the Gonds have a very high appreciation of caste, and strongly claim their position as equal to that of the higher castes in the country. Likewise, they observe the rules of commensality and social distance with other ethnic groups".

9.2.1 Social distance practices in Gond villages of South Odiha:

The aboriginals who have retained their tribal identity and resisted their assimilation within the Hindu fold fared better on the whole than the assimilated groups and were not treated as untouchables, even if they indulged in practices, such as the eating of beef, which Hindus considered polluting. Thus the Raj Gonds,

some of whose rulers vied in power with Rajput princes, used to sacrifice and eat cows without debasing thereby their status in the eyes of their Hindu neighbours. The Hindus recognized the tribes' social and cultural separateness and did not insist on conformity to Hindu patterns of behaviour, and this respect for the tribal way of life prevailed as long as contacts between the two communities were of a casual nature. The tribal people, though considered strange and dangerous, were taken for granted as part of the world of hills and forests, and a more or less frictionless coexistence was possible because there was no population pressure, and hence no incentive to deprive the aboriginals of their land (Haimendorf, 1982:34).

Closely linked with each individual Gond clan is a lineage of Pardhans, bards and chroniclers, who play a vital role in the worship of the clan deity and many other ritual activities. The Pardhans, though themselves not Gonds and of a social status lower than that of their Gond patrons, are nevertheless the guardians of Gond tradition and religious lore. The recent deflection of their interests and energy to other enterprises will undoubtedly have an adverse effect on the preservation of Gond traditions. A role similar to that of Pardhans is being played by another and much less numerous group of bards and minstrels known as Toti. These too have hereditary ritual relations with individual Gond lineages and act as musicians and story-tellers (Haimendorf, 1982:15).

The progress of education among Gonds and other tribals gradually moved them into a position which enables them to meet members of other communities though still not on equal terms with the later.

The concept of ritual purity and pollution is in practice among the Gonds of all areas in Odisha. This is observed in families during the occasions, like birth and death and cow killing. In each of these cases, the pollution ends after a period followed by the purification ceremony and a feast.

The Gonds maintained social distances from the Gandas and the Loharas. In the past, the Gonds were not sitting with the

Gandas and the Loharas. The latter sat separately in the wedding feasts. They were not allowed to share water from one well. The Gonds did not take cooked food and water from them. Now though the Gonds are sitting with the people of different castes but they do not accept the cooked food and water from Gandas and Loharas. Unmarried Gond boys and girl (before puberty) can accept water and cooked food from Ganda (SC) community. After puberty and marriage the Gonds can't accept water or cooked food from Ganda community. The Gonds feel polluted if they accept food and water from an untouchable low castes. In case they touch an untouchable at any time, milk and water is poured on their heads for purification.

The weekly market where non-tribal traders and the local tribals, other castes and Muslim people have their stalls side by side the Gonds also set up their stalls for sale of vegetables, fruits, pulses, and various grains and other manufactured goods. Their customers are mainly non-tribals and government servants. They sell their products for cash, and the income is used for the purchase of the goods, they need. No discrimination is noticed during the transactions. The markets, whether weekly or daily, indicate a secular atmosphere and no cases of harassment from any quarters are reported. At the times of need, the villagers borrow from each other without any social discrimination or economic favours irrespective of their caste and community.

9.2.2 Social distance practices in Gond villages of North Odiha:

The Gonds reside in multi caste villages. The houses of other communities' are located little away from Gond community in separate street. The roofs of their houses are not attached to the houses of the Gond tribes. According to the Gond informants, in the local social hierarchy the Gond occupy the position higher than that of the communities like Gouda, Mahanta, Sundhi, Barika, Keuta, Dhoba, Kolha, Pana, Hadi, etc. and lower than the Brahman community. They consider their social status equal to that of their tribal brothers like Bathudi, Bhuyan and Sounti communities in their locality.

Local Social Hierarchical Position Conceptualized by Gonds

Sl. No	Caste/Community Hierarchy as Perceived by Gonds Community	Rank in Social Hierarchy
1.	Brahman	1
2.	Gond, Bathudi, Bhuiyan, Sounti	2
3.	Gouda	3
4.	Mahanta	4
5.	Barika	5
6.	Sundhi	6
7.	Dhoba	7
8.	Kolha	8
9.	Pana	9
10.	Hadi	10

In the past, Gonds were forbidden to touch the people of Kolha, Santal, Mahant, Sundhi, Hadi and Pan. If any Gond touched them, he would bathe and take Tulasi water for purification. The Gonds believe that the lower castes and communities like Pan, Hadi or Kolha are impure and they purify their birth, death by themselves only, and are not sanctified by Brahmans. Thus even today, Gond people enter home after taking bath, if they touch them. The Gonds do not accept water from the Sundhi, Kolha, Pan, Hadi, Santal, etc. Brahmans and Gauda women do not accept water from Gonds. All communities accept dried food or uncooked food from the Gond community. The Gauda, Bathudi, Bhuyan, Sounti, Mahanta, Sundhi, Dhoba, Barik, Kolha, Pana, Hadi communities accept cooked food from Gond.

Except Brahmans, Gaudas, Bathudis, Sountis, Bhuyans, no other community is allowed to enter the Gonds house. The Gonds also enter the house of Bathudi, Sounti, Bhuyan, while other groups do not enter their houses. No community other than Brahmans is allowed to enter the kitchen of Gonds.

All the community people are allowed to use common water sources. Everyone is allowed to go the village temples. But the

communities like Pan, Kolha, Hadi etc. cannot go to the temple of the goddess of the Gond community; they offer dried items from outside of the temple. These communities worship through Dehury (Gond). During the Hingula pilgrimage, the Pan and Kolha communities worship from a distance offering dry food. Everyone can go to the tea shop or grocery store, no restriction is imposed. Sharing of public transport is no more an issue between higher caste and lower caste people. The communities, such as Mahanto, Pan, and Kolha, are invited for the Dashah or marriage feast, where they were not allowed to dine together with other communities. They sit separately at a little distance.

9.3 Ritual Kinship:

Putative kinship like dharambhai, sangata, soi, sakhi etc., is prevalent in the Gond society. But such relationships however rarely cut across their own society or community. Ritual kinship or bond friendship is seen between Gond and members of other communities. Usually the Gonds make bond friendship with the members of the communities of Bhuyan, Sounti, Bathudi, Gouda, Mahanta, Kolha etc. Bond friendship between a Gond man and other community's man is called as Sangata, whereas that between Gond female and other community's female is called as Soi. This sangata or soi relationship is made with the hope that both may get each other's help during their good and bad times.

In South Odisha (Nabarangpur district areas), the Gonds can make friends with people of all castes in the village including Ganda and Lohara even though they cannot take cooked food and from them, but can take dry foods. All the villagers and Jati Samaj will be present when making friend (sangata). The village priest (Pujari/Dosi), Gontia and chiefs will be notified at the time of the making friend and all members of the two families will be present. The location is determined by the parents of both the families. When making friends, a lamp is placed in a clay pot and the nature goddess is worshiped by the Pujari (Dosi) as a witness. The two friends will stand on a small wooden stool and the two will put flowers on their ears and touch their feet. After that, they both

will touch the feet of the elders who are present and they will be blessed. Members of their families will also join. Everyone present will be a witness. The banquet is held on that day. If the friendship is made with Ganda or Lohara person then Gond people cook the feast. If friendship is made with Kalar, Mali and Gouda then feasts made by them are accepted by the Gond people. Both the friends put new towels on each other's shoulders during the making friendship event. After this, they help each other at the times of joy and sorrow.

In North Odisha (Keonjhar district areas), if a Gond man wants to make bond friendship with a man of other community, then they fix an auspicious date. They choose one of the houses of both. On the scheduled day his family members and relatives of both the sides remain present there. Both the members take bath applying turmeric by their respective family members in front of the house. They wear new cloths and exchange sacred nirmalya or mahaprasad brought from Jagannath Temple of Puri to solemnize the relationship and then both become Sangatas. The process is same as above for a female member of Gond with other community's female member and both become Soi. A feast is arranged jointly by both the parties. If a Gond person makes bond friendship with a person of Bhuyan, Sounti and Bathudi tribes, then there is not any prohibition of taking cooked food from them by the Gond.

CONCLUSION, CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT

The concluding chapter restates Gond culture and society briefly. Besides, it highlights the change and development of Gond society and conservation of their culture with concluding remarks that the interaction between the Gonds and the caste Hindus recreates a novel culture, i.e. unification of the little tradition with great tradition.

10.1 Resume of Gond Culture & Society:

On the basis of the discussions made in the preceding chapters, a resume of Gond society and culture is stated in the following. This will hopefully refresh the memory of esteemed readers before they switch over to the discussions on the topics, (i) change and development of Gond society and (ii) conservation of their culture and finally, end with concluding remarks.

Introduction:

The Gond is numerically the most dominant tribe of India. They are a Scheduled Tribe in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Telangana, Odisha and West Bengal. The name, Gond is derived from the Telugu word 'Konda' meaning the - hills. The Gonds have a language of their own called 'Gondi'. In the past Gond tribe was a warrior community. Now it is an agrarian community. As per 2011 Census, the total population of the Gond tribe in India is 11,344,629, which accounts for 13.45 per cent of its total Scheduled Tribes population. Total population of Gond in Odisha was 8,88,581 persons out of which 4,38,624 were males and 4,49,957 were females. Sex ratio among the Gonds was 1026. Their work force comprised 51.48 % of the total population. The

traditional wears of Gonds like dhoti, lungi (a wrapper), towel and turban have been replaced by modern dresses. Their traditional ornaments have been replaced by modern ornaments. The Gond's tattoo, the ageold tribal art is now on the brink of disappearing.

Habitat & Housing:

Gond habitat may be referred to as a habitat for humanity surrounded by forest environment. As per their legends the Gonds have come over to Odisha through forest routes. At present they are concentrated in Odisha in the districts like Nabarangpur, Sundargarh, Sambalpur, Bolangir and part of Kalahandi. The Gonds live with their kin groups. Their houses are located in a scattered manner without any regular order. A few numbers of houses, which are in linear mode, face the street of the village. Their houses have been constructed with North-South, East-West orientation. A Gond house has a rectangular ground plan. Some Gond houses have constructed in L-shaped pattern. The house has boundary wall. Some households have pucca houses having cemented floor and wall with tiled, Jhikar Sit and concrete roof. Most of the houses have thatched roofs. Gond villages do not have proper sanitation and drainage system. Health and illness of Gonds are related to many facts like climatic change, improper food intake, unhygienic conditions, animal bites, etc. Unsatisfied soul of dead ancestors, clan deities, evil intrusions, and sorcerer's witchcraft are also believed to be the cause of illness. They suffer from diseases like malaria, scabies, tuberculosis and digestive tract diseases. Generally the Gonds ignore their small ailments. Only when a disease continues for a long period, they go to local traditional healers first. In cases of serious illness, they go to the Government dispensaries.

Economic Life:

The Gonds mainly earn their livelihood from different sources, like agriculture, wage earning and forest collections. Besides, animal husbandry, fishing, etc. supplement their income. They cultivate rice, maize, jawar (cereals) and green dal (pulses). Tending goats and cattle are also common. They love hunting and wild meats, but injunctions of forest department have deprived

them of such activities. Gond women do housework, help in agriculture activities and also go to the forest to fetch wood and men plough on the farm and do strenuous works. The co-cooperativeness characterizes economic activities of Gonds. The forest is considered as the lifeline of Gonds. They collect roots and tubers which are not only used as food but also for medicinal purposes. To eke out their livelihood some of the Gonds are engaged in small businesses. Some of Gonds are also government servants and some others work under contractors. Under the precarious condition of indebtedness some young Gond workers are compelled to migrate to other states like Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra for work. The average annual income of Gonds is estimated to Rs 67,700/- per household. The staple food of Gonds is rice and gruel of millet and maize. They take two principal meals a day, and a third minor meal. The Gonds take tea and locally brewed liquor, mahuli, jiggery liquor and salap juice. They smoke country cigarette (bidi made by rolling tobacco in tender Sal or Kendu leaf). They use to chew dhungia and khaini (powder of lime and tabacoo leaf). Now they are smoking cigarette and taking gutka. The Gonds attend the weekly markets for purchase of daily necessities, meeting friends and relatives and also for sharing message of socio-religious occasions. Their transactions through barter system have been replaced by cash.

Social Organization:

The Gonds have forgotten their phratry system. They have given importance to their clan only. A clan comprises of members, who are descended in the male line from a common ancestor. Each clan is exogamous and has multiple gods, which vary up to seven. Gonds identify their clan through the Deo (Deity), Dia (Lamp) and Kowdi (Shell). The Gonds family is the smallest social unit. It consists of parents and their children. Gonds have both nuclear and extended families. Most of the Gonds are practicing monogamy. In Gond society there are six types of marriages such as arranged marriage, capture marriage, widow marriage, marriage by elopement, marriage by service and marriage by intrusion. Marriage in Gond society is governed by rules of endogamy (marriage within

the tribe) and exogamy (marriage outside the clan). Now-a-days the Gonds increasingly follow the Hindu custom of arranged marriages. A bride-price is paid by the father of the groom. Remarriage of widows and divorces are prevailing among them.. Divorce is permissible among the Gonds and both wife and husband have rights to divorce. They use both classificatory and descriptive terminologies to address their different affines and consanguine relations. The kinship terminologies are quite alike the typical Odia society. Inheritance of property and position in Gonds society is by and large through male line. The position of mother in the Gond family is the highest. Gond women enjoy the freedom of choosing their life partners and in seeking divorce. But they have no rights to get share of parental property, to worship the clan deities and to take part in the political arena. Virtues like peace, discipline, mutual cooperation and help carry their socio-cultural value system.

Life Cycle Rituals:

The Gonds observe four key life cycle rituals on the occasions of birth, initiation, marriage and death. They observe birth, puberty and death pollutions. Their traditional tribal priest, known as Dehuri/ Pujari, officiates in marriage and death rites. Kanabara (pre-marriage rite) is mandatory for all Gond girls of 8-10 years in Nabarangpur area. Another peculiar pre-marriage ritual is also performed between two Gond spinsters (Kuanri Jhias) in Dhenkanal area. Gonds practice both burial and cremation. They observe death pollution for 10 days. The purificatory rite (Dasakriya) is observed on the tenth day. Among the Gonds in Keonjhar raea, Brahman (Priest), Barik (Barber) and Dhoba (washer man) render their services for the death rites. Following the Hindu tradition, after a year of the death of a person they perform his Shradh ceremony. The Brahman and relatives are invited to participate in a homo puja inside the house. Ancestor worship of the Gond is closely related to the megalithic tradition. Generally this practice performed by the male head of the family. In his absence, next senior male person does the job.

Religious Beliefs & Practices:

Gondi religion is a mixture of Hinduism and tribal beliefs and practices. They worship tribal deities such as, Bara Deo, Janga Deo and Linga Deo. They believe that Bara Deo is the creator and protector of the universe. Besides, they worship village deities, known as Gangadi, Thakurani, Mayali, Sitala Mata and Sunadei, Maa Mangala, Tarini, Sidhamata, Gadachandi, Bisri Thakurani, which are represented by stone slabs and mud platforms. The Dehuri/Jhankar /Pujari (tribal priest) officiates in the communal tribal festivals to appease these deities. The cult of Persa Pen (clan deity) is the most distinctive feature of Gond religion. Each clan has its Persa Pen, who is worshipped for protection of clan members. The animist Gond believes that the hills, rivers, lakes and trees are the abodes of their ancestors. They worship all supernatural entities in all occasions to get rid of the diseases and pestilence, natural calamities and also to get good harvest and ample forest produce. Gonds believe in malevolent and benevolent spirits and the power to communication directly with the spirit. They believe in the evil eye, black magic, and witchcraft. Witches, usually women, are said to bring sickness and misfortune to the community. There are Hindu influences on the Gond religious and magical institutions. The mantras used by the priests and magician are not in 'Gondi' but in 'Sanskrit'.

Fairs and festivals:

The Gonds observe their own fairs and festivals along with those of the Hindus such as Budharaja Parab, Chhatra Yatra, Mande, Rathajatra, Dasahara, Laxmipuja, Makar Mela, Nuakhai or Nabarna, Pausa Purnima, Sivaratri and Dolajatra or Fagua. Gonds celebrate most of the festive occasions with song and dance. For all these religious activities they depend on functionaries like Pujari, Dehuri and Jhankar. Pujari worships god and deities. Gunia and Sirah perform magical and sorcery rites. Gond ritual grows out of their myth. Their beautiful paintings are based on nature, which reflects their myths and legends and relates to creation of earth, origin and migration of Gonds, formation of lac and white

soil, the beginning of worshipping god and tattooing, learning art of cultivation and the coming of death. Gonds have a rich tradition of arts that includes mat making, wall & floor paintings, and performing arts like songs, dances and music. The Gond artisans prepare various kinds of attractive and useful articles from raw materials like leaf, bark, wood, metal, bamboo, earth, etc. They paint designs and drawings in red and black on the walls of their houses during weddings, festivals, entering in new house, which often celebrate and depict animals, birds, human figures, hunting, and dancing.

Political Life:

The Gonds of Odisha have caste Panchayats headed by Nayak which settle inter-tribal and intra-tribal disputes. The other members of the Panchayat are by and large selected by mutual consent and enjoy office till they show good behaviour. Inter-tribal and intra-village disputes are settled by a common sitting of the two Panchayats. The cases that are adjudged by the panchayats relate to adultery, taking away another man's daughter or wife, property dispute, quarrels, dinning or drinking with man of lower caste, etc. Ex-communication is the severest punishment. Feasts are arranged for the return back of the excommunicated person into the community fold. The village council takes care of the socio-religious and other tribal affairs of the village. The Apex Council of Gonds, Akhila Bharatiya Gondwana Gonds Mahasabha, Odisha, operates at State level which comprises of members from all Gond Councils in different districts. Again one District Gonds Council is constituted taking representatives from all Gondwana Bikash Mandal (Anchalika Gond Samaja) coming under its jurisdiction at the Block level. Further one Block Gonds Mahasabha at block level is constituted of several Palli Mahasabhas at village level. The Odisha Pradesh Committee of the Akhila Bharatiya Gondwana Gonds Mahasabha, Odisha (Appex Council) oversees the functions like, Medha Anwnesana, Matrimony, Community Programmes, etc. for preservation of Gond culture and development of its people. After implementation of PESA Act, 1996 and emergence of modern Panchayatiraj system the Gond traditional political structure has been weakening. The social esteem of the

traditional leaders is losing grounds. They are being marginalized at the rise of the politically affiliated members representing the Panchayatiraj system.

Inter - Community Relationship:

The Gond people maintain harmonious relations with the neighbouring communities. They have already been assimilated with the clean caste Hindus and claim a place in the caste hierarchy. They interact with the local castes and tribal people in their day to day life. The Brahman and other upper caste members do not accept water and any food prepared in their homes. The Gonds treat the Dom and the Ghasi (sweeper caste) as jal-achal groups and do not accept water and food from them. They share their water sources with other ethnic groups. They have a separate burial ground. All the communities of the village celebrate festivals collectively. Modern inter community linkages are also maintained with those who are service holders like teachers, administrators, doctors and businessmen. Now the Gonds strongly claim their position as equal to that of the higher castes. In the local social hierarchy the Gond occupy the position higher than that of the communities like Gouda, Mahanta, Sundhi, Barika, Keuta, Dhoba, Kolha, Pana, Hadi, etc. and lower than the Brahman community. They consider their social status equal to that of their tribal brothers like Bathudi, Bhuyan and Sounti communities in their locality. The service provider groups like Brahmin, Barik and Dhoba also provide ritualistic service to the Gonds at the time of their needs. The Gond people, maintain social distances with other communities like, the Ganda, Hadi, Pan, Shundi, Lohara. Kolha, Santal, and Mahanta.

10.2 Socio-cultural Changes:

Change is inevitable for all nations or communities. Over the times, various changes have occurred in Gonds' livelihood and life style due to the impact of Hinduism, urbanization, industrialization, modernization, spread of communication and education and development initiatives taken by Government agencies, social activists or acculturated leaders. The development and welfare pro-

grammes of government have brought livelihood enhancement of some Gond families in the study areas. In spite of the development interventions among the Gonds and their areas, some of them and their areas are not yet found economically prosperous. These require further efforts of tribal development agencies so as to integrate them into the nation by bringing them on par with other people. The following observations of Mohanty (1964), Mishra (2008), Panda and Sahoo (2012) and Vahia & Halkare (2013) epitomize that interactions with other ethnic groups also have brought significant changes in the Gonds' life and living.

The maximum acculturation in the Kondhid race has taken place among the Gonds of Odisha. They are hardly distinguishable from the Odia cultivators and as a race they have taken very avidly to education. They worship several Hindu deities like Bhima, Mangala and Basuki and observe several Hindu festivals and as distinct from Kondhs anywhere, worship two deities Jangha and Linga who are probably the names of legendary ancestors like those of the Kotia Uduranga, Buro Saonto and Kango. They sometimes employ Brahmin priest, have no youth dormitory, no system of marriage neither by capture nor by forced entry. But they still have the tribal priest, the Dehuri and attach great importance to their Gramsiri, worship ancestors on a particular day, worship local sacred mountains and their chief festival which too is in honour of the Goddess, takes place as among Kondhs, in Pousha though it has been Hinduised and is called Gouri Osha. The ancient totems are remembered then, each family preparing a clay image of its animal totem and the old system of an entire village holding a communal ritual jointly at one place is clearly evinced when all the totems are placed together and worshipped. Thus in the northern-most border of Orissa in Mayurbhanj the Gonds still retain remnants of the tribal characteristics of Kondhs in the southern districts (Mohanty, 1964: p-37).

“Up to 1920 in Raighara area of Nabarangpur the Ghotol (Youth Dormitory) of Gond was functioning. The youth dormitory was a center of learning for youths of both the sexes. This Institution had played a significant role in their socialization

process. After 1970 the Ghotol tradition lost its social relevance and ceased its functions. Impact of other cultures, modernization, development programme including education and progress are the causes of obsolescence of Ghotul culture” (Mishra, 2008).

Sociologically, the Gonds ruled large parts of Central India before the rise of the Mughal Empire. Several forts and other relics from the Gond Kingdom suggest their dominance over Central India during this period. The fact that they built forts and not castles also suggests a lack of desire to move from agricultural roots to urbanisation. Their current lifestyle is also indicative of farming traditions rather than aggressive kingdom-building. The impact of acculturation since their original roots and their subsequent integration into respective state linguistic and religious traditions has resulted in a recent strong desire to revive their original traditions and preserve their group identity (Vahia & Halkare, 2013:29).

Since the pre British times, Gonds as a land owning community, were holding the position like Jamindar, Gontia, Raja and Makadam. The British Rulers and other Kings defeated the Gonds kings and thus their lands were transferred to other people. As a result the Royal Gonds became poor forest dwellers and eked out their livelihood by MFP collection and selling. In course of time they were interested for social changes. Local kings continued with the social welfare programmes of the Gonds.

The Gonds of plain areas are Hinduized due to acculturation. Most of them have adopted Hindu ways of life and a few began to live in Hindu multi caste villages. Yet, they maintained the identity of their own. Most of the Gonds living in the rural part of Odisha are dichotomized into the traditional group and the acculturated Hinduized groups. The Hinduized Gonds get the services of Brahmin priest, barber and washer man. The traditional section is being served by its own tribal priest. One observes the syncretism among the Gonds of plains. The Hinduized section observes death pollution for 10 days. They erect menhirs to commemorate the dead. They are polytheists. The Hinduized Gonds abstain from eating beef and drinking liquor (Panda & Sahoo, 2012: P.22).

Aftermath of Indian independence, some remarkable changes have occurred in Gonds' life cycle rituals. The concept of ritual pollution has been adopted in cases of deaths and births. Some of the rites for removal of pollution observed by the higher caste Hindus are being imitated. Though their traditional tribal priest, known as Jhankar is invited to officiate in some of the rituals, they often also obtain the services of the Brahmin, along with the barber and washer man for performance of life cycle rituals.

In Nuapada, Kalahandi, Keonjhar and Nabarangpur districts and also in other areas the Gonds have retained their tribal religion. In the study areas, no Gonds are reported to have been converted in to Christianity or other religions. In the matter of inter caste interaction the Bhunjia still worship deities, the Doms give lamp threads, and cloths, the Goudas provide water, the oilman provides oil, the Kumbhar gives earthen lamps, the Keuta gives fried rice. All are associated with the religious activities relating to the village deities. The village unit and solidarity is retained.

Nearly 60 % of Gond villages in Nuapada and Khariar areas had Gontia from Gond community. Now Gontia system has lost its importance. But in socio-religious matters the traditional leaders like Gontia, Jhakar (Priest), Disari (Shaman), Nariha/Gouda (Waterman/messenger), Makdam (Judge), etc. continue to take part in settlement of disputes and deciding village matters.

The Gandawana Bikash Mandal, Raighar (Gonds Mahasabaha) of Nabarangpur has amended its previous Constitution of 1994 and brought out new rules in its 3-day long meeting held during 4-6 April, 2018 for the community welfare and development. It has prescribed to say no to sale or lease of lands to others. If necessary one may do the same with own community members only. Gonds have to save the forest as it is the property of tribals and it provides them kendu leaf, sal seeds, mahua, resin, lac and roots and tubes and herbal medicines. Liquor production, sale and consumption are prohibited. No girl student pursuing education is allowed to marry till completion of her education and bright future. Deviation of the rule will lead to penalty of Rs. 5051/- (Art. 4/21 (A & B)).

The Akhand Gondwana Samaja, Raighar, Nabarangapur,

district, a registered organization, has initiated some cultural reforms for up keeping tribal solidarity and prevention of land alienation and conservation of forest- the lifeline of tribals. These reformative rules are mandatory for the Gond people of the areas under the jurisdiction of the organization. Deviation to the following reformative rules are being seriously viewed and penalized.

- i. Making and selling wine and consumption of alcohol for social purposes is banned. The making and selling wine is punishable by a fine of Rs. 10,000/-.
- ii. Conservation of the village forest and the protected forest is the responsibility of the village committee.
- iii. Land cannot be sold, mortgaged or partially cultivated to individuals of other communities.
- iv. Gonds should marry within their community but in different Gotra.
- v. Ghotul and Goadan customs are banned.

Further, in Odisha the Gond Cultural Society has been doing some constructive welfare works in the areas of education, social movements, administration, politics, business, and economic upliftment. In Gond society drinking and superstitions have been banned. Gonds' villages with low literacy are reported to have less traditional songs and dances. In some other villages these are slowly losing their significance.

Now Gonds in large numbers have been educated, got employment and participated in politics and involved in administration. Acculturation and westernization have made them advanced. The progress of Gonds society has been marked significantly, but people in rural areas are lagging behind and thus remain underdeveloped.

Nayak (2015) has observed the changes of behavior and attitudes among the progressive Gonds. "In other communities people drink liquor. But in Gond society liquor drinks people. In other society educated and established and prosperous people

share and inspire other brethren of their community. But in Gond Samaj prosperous and economically well-established people with Government and other services maintain distance from their own Gond people and keep distance from the community. They hesitate to share for fear of hamper of their prestige” (Nayak, 2015: Pp. 10-11/English translation of Odia version).

10.3 Development programmes:

Development of tribal population and their areas in India has been a key priority of the government and non-government agencies. The Constitution of India has advocated the policy of positive discrimination and affirmative action with a view to ensure a better quality of life for the tribal population. As for example, there is affirmative action for reservation in legislature, government jobs and educational institutions in proportion to the tribal population. Special protection is also given to and administrative mechanism adopted in Scheduled Areas and tribal areas. Keeping in view the same, considerable attention has been given to the development of tribals and their areas in Odisha in general and in the study areas in particular.

For the upliftment of Gond people and others, some initiatives have been taken in the study villages. Most of the development works has been taken for the welfare and overall development of the village. TDCC is purchasing forest products from the study villages. The Panchayati Raj Institutions play a major role in the socio and economic development of people at the grass root level. The Panchyatsamiti is working on various schemes for the better livelihood of the villagers. In the study villages the change can be seen in most of the villages in terms of village roads, water supply, sanitation, water drainage and street-lighting. Construction and maintenance of roads within the village is the responsibility of the GP. Convergence of various development programmes has been a priority for the Government; it is mostly conspicuous by its absence in the programmes undertaken by the GPs. People are able to get works under MGNREGS and NRLM. RWS scheme are there to provide drinking water facilities in the study villages. Most of the villagers are having Job Card and getting works under Central

and State Govt. Besides this villagers are also getting toilets and some development funds from central Govt.

The establishment of schools by the STs & SCs Development Department and Department of Education, Govt. of Odisha has been a noble intervention for desired transformation of the Gonds in social sector. Similarly, extending infrastructure facilities through development agencies and units like Anganwadi Center and PDS centers, etc. at village level, the Govt. of Odisha tries to create a sustainable socio-economic support system ranging from food security and safe drinking water measures, mobile health units and empowering the Gond community.

Towards ensuring the livelihood enhancement and women empowerment, the Gond women have been roped into SHGs by extending financial assistance by Nabarangpur and Keonjhar IT-DAs and DRDAs. Individual assistance to women entrepreneurs for running grocery shop, petty business has opened up new arena of economic opportunity for individual family and also for community.

In different regions the Gonds' livelihood, language, customs and traditions vary. At one end there are Gond Kings who administer and at the other end the forest dwelling Gonds sale leafs to eke out their livelihood. Now due to spread of education the Gond community has progressed a lot. They have proved their excellency in different professions, like Service, Politics, Agriculture, Business, etc. However, majority of Gond people live in rural and forest areas and deprived of progress and improvement. Education and awareness can bring them advancement and livelihood enhancement (Mishra, 2008).

Education at the primary level is available in most of the Gond inhabited villages. Most of the children till the age of twelve study and then drop out from the school. They are now benefitting from the residential schools run by the ST & SC Development Department, Odisha. The educated Gonds like to work in white collar jobs. Some of them are government employees; a few of them have received assistance under the IRDP, MADA and ITDA programmes.

Now they live in a clean and hygienic environment. They maintain body cleanliness and always wear clean and neat clothes, maintain clean and healthy surroundings. For minor ailments they make use of indigenous medicines and for major sicknesses they go to the hospital.

Though some of their villages have electricity, most of them have not availed of the facility due to their economic constraints. They use fuel as well as cow dung cakes for fuel. In the absence of adequate irrigation facilities they mainly depend on natural rainfall for growing crops. They do not like using chemical fertilizers to enhance crop productivity as they are of the belief that if they will use the chemical fertilizers the land will not yield much.

Government Development Programmes undertaken in villages of Karamangi G.P, Telkoi Block in Keonjhar District

Sl. No.	Development Programme	Total Number
I	1. Water Project (Infrastructure Dev.)	
	i. Water Conservation	1
	ii. New Tank	3
	iii. Micro irrigation Project	1
	iv. Renovation of Pokhari	2
	v. Check Dam	8
	vi. Dug Well	1
	vii. Farm Pond	12
	viii. Rain Water Management	2
	2. Housing & Other (Infrastructure Dev.)	
	i. Construction of IAY House	14
	ii. Construction of PMAY-G House	156
	iii. Stone Bonding	2
	iv. Field Bonding	6
	v. Poultry Shed	1
	Construction and Impvt. of Road	23
II	i. Land Development of Bhagabata Hemram & 10 Others & Land Dev. At Pudheijhul & 18 others	2
	ii. Lemon Grass	2
	iii. Plantation	1

While undertaking field work in the villages of Karamangi GP in Telkoi block of Keonjhar district the research team had collected the following data on development programmes of the GP from WEO, Telkoi. Needless to say that more than 60 % people of the areas are Gonds, who have a lion share on the development programmes meant for the people of that area. A list of development programmes, both infrastructure and income generating is stated in the Table.

In addition to the above, the welfare schemes in the study villages include distribution of free food grains to the poor, free gas cylinders to women, for the uplift of people from the lowest rung of the society. It is the need of the hour to ensure an equitable development of society.

There are requirements of the Educational Infrastructure, Health Infrastructure & Income Generating Scheme of the Govt. in Raighar Block of Nabarangpur District especially for the all-round development of tribal population, mostly Gonds. As estimated by the research team, the following are the educational and health requirements in the study area in Nabarangpur district.

The Raighar Block is a TSP Block that consists of 26 G.Ps. Around 1.5 Lakh people are residing in this Block out of which more than 75% are tribals. Majority of the tribals are Gonds. As per the present status of educational infrastructure, there is 32 High Schools in Raighar Block having total enrollment of ST students in class 10th nearly 1500 and more than 1300 students are passing out from 10th class annually. And for these passed out students there is only 03 Higher Secondary Schools having nearly 200 sanctioned seats for tribal students for taking admission in class 11th of various streams. Hence many of the ST students of this Block are facing problem to get admission for higher education. Thus there is an urgent requirement to open some more Govt. Higher Secondary Schools for the better educational future of the tribal population and to bring them to the main stream of the society.

It is very unfortunate that the Community Health Centre which was to be situated mostly at the Block Headquarters is

actually situated at Hatabharandi which is 30 kms away towards back nearest to the Chhattisgarh boarder. Most of the population depends upon the nearest Block i.e. Umerkote for medical purpose which is also 30 kms away from the Raighar. Therefore, it is required to take necessary steps for sanctioning one more CHC at Raighar Block Headquarters for quick medical treatment of mostly tribal population.

Although the people are covered with general Income Generating Schemes of the Govt. there are also special income generating schemes under ITDA, Nabarangpur for the tribal population. The Scheme is guided by the old SGSY Guidelines of the Govt. whereas the SGSY has already been converted to Odisha Livelihood Mission under the Administrative Department of Mission Shakti. If we compare the OLM IGS and IGS under ITDA, the OLM has far better prospectus for the people. So the tribal people are not showing interest in the IGS under ITDA due to lack of extra privileges for being a tribal. Hence necessary steps may be needed for the modification of guidelines of IGS under ITDA like IGS under OLM for the economic development of the tribal population.

10.4 Conservation of Culture:

The conservation of culture refers to the measures taken to extend the life of cultural heritage while strengthening transmission of its significant heritage messages and values (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2009).

Conservation is the care and protection of these resources so that they can persist for future generations. So the ST and SC Development Department, Government of Odisha under the aegis of Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India has established a Tribal Museum (Odisha State Tribal Museum) in the premises of the SC and ST Research and Training Institute, CRPF Square, Bhubaneswar for preservation and conservation of the material culture of different tribes.

Gonds' cultural objects or material artefacts relating to their

life-cycle, economy, settlements, social status etc. are collected, preserved and exhibited in the Museum for educational and research purposes. The different articles and objects like ornaments, personal belongings, hunting weapons, fishing implements and musical instruments of Gond tribe have been displayed in the different showcases in the tribal Museum. In the Museum Complex a Gond Hut has been constructed and their household materials are displayed there which shows their ingenious skill in architecture. These objects or specimens have their own cultural value. Besides, the live performance of Gond dance in the Annual Adivasi Exhibition and display of the replica of Gond house in the ITDA stall in the Exhibition ground are intended at conservation of cultural material of the Gond and acquaint the visitors about their dwelling and living.

The District Council of Culture, Nabarangpur organizes district level function like annual cultural festival, 'Mondei' & Pallishree Mela. It is a leading festival of the district unique in its aim of spotting tribal hidden talents in the field of art, culture and sports at the grass-root levels as well as to promote the rich cultural heritage of this region. The Festival procession brings out "Mondei Mashal" coupled with tribal folk dances and music. Similarly, the District Council of Culture, Keonjhar organizes Gonasika Mahotsav & Pallishree Mela to focus, among others, the rich tribal cultural heritage of the district. In the observance of both the festivals, the local Gond people participate and their cultural heritage have significant contributions to the festivals.

Special Development Council (SDC), Bhubaneswar under the administrative control of ST & SC Development Department, Govt. of Odisha has been making constant efforts for preservation and promotion of tribal shrines, tribal dances, songs and cultures and their sacred groves in 9 tribal dominated districts including Keonjhar and Nabarangpur, where Gonds are a major tribe. In both the areas of Keonjhar and Nabarangpur ITDAs, steps have been taken by SDC, ATLC, and TRIFED for preservation and promotion of tribal art, crafts, language, shrines, songs, dance, sacred groves and culture by providing financial support for tra-

ditional costumes and articles and training on skill development. The Gonds as a major tribe have been receiving a lion share for the aforementioned schemes.

With the passage of time due to modernization some of the cultural items are vanishing. The preservation of cultural items indicates the ecological adaptation of the community. Any Gond social groups have to be analyzed from the interaction between ecology, population, technology and organization of the community (Panda & Sahoo, 2012: P. 25).

10.5 Conclusion:

Long ago the Gonds were a cultured and royal community. In course of time, they had lost their kingdoms to dominant powers. Previously the Gonds were docile, modest, honest and painstaking, happy and hearty. They were managing their affairs traditionally and independently. Their society observed gender equality. Widows were allowed to remarry. Women had rights to divorce. Loyalty to their tribe, traditions, value systems, organizations was praiseworthy and worthy to be followed by elite class.

Now many of the Gonds are farmers, forest foragers and economically backward. Interactions between the Gonds and other communities led by the Hinduism, industrialization, urbanization, modernization, etc. has brought about noticeable changes in the traditional life style of the Gonds. In urban areas there is hardly any difference between Gonds and the non-Gonds in socio-religious gatherings. The Gonds have accepted a number of elements in their household materials, costumes, food habits, personal cleanness and purity. They have adapted new things which have initiated significant changes in their traditions, customs, values, life cycle rituals, religious beliefs and practices, in the light of the Hindu way of life. Still the Gonds possess the same spirit and truthfulness as it was in the past.

The influences of high castes Hindus have great impacts on the life cycle rituals, religious belief and practices and fairs and festivals of the Gonds. On the contrary, where the people of other

communities live with the Gonds in the same villages, there the formers have shared the same village community life and living in the matter of socio-religious affairs. As for example, the worship of Gond's village deity and observation of Mandeï and village community festivals as well as participation in the life cycle rituals by other castes groups indicate a blending of Gond culture with other cultures. The interaction between the Gonds and the high caste Hindus recreates a novel culture, i.e. unification of the little tradition with great tradition.

Forest Rights Act and PESA Act and legal protection against tribal land alienation (Regulation II, 1956 as mended in 2002) along with Government development programmes and schemes has been found very beneficial to the tribal and forest dwellers in general, and the Gonds in particular, in respect of safeguarding their political and economic interests.

Providing services and rendering help to the needy Gonds are not enough. Building of internal strength empowers the people. Mass awareness among the Gonds may be generated for their commitment and continuous enthusiasm to learn about the schemes and programmes of Governments, which will certainly pave the way for a better tomorrow.

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CHAPTER – V

Life Cycle Rituals

Marriage



Welcoming the Groom at a Gond Village



“Lagna at Mandwa” (Auspicious Moment at Altar) in Gond wedding Celebration



Gond Bride & Groom moving sacred seven rounds around the Marriage Altar

Death Rites



Dasha Rites of a Deceased Gond



Tradition of Mass Tonsuring; Homage to the Deceased Soul

CHAPTER –VI &VII

Religious Beliefs & Practices and Fairs & Festivals



Gond Dehuri worships Village Deity,
Telkoi in Keonjhar District



Ancestor (Persa Penu)
Worship at Home



Maa Pendrani, the Presiding Deity of Gonds



Mati Mandar Nach (Dance)
by Gond Artists



War Dance in Dasharah;



Gond Woman Making
Date-Palm Mat



Worship of Giant Lizards to
prevent snake bites



Worship of Deer Deity to protect crop damage



Worship of Mother Cow - The Gond Progenitor



It is one of the several monographs prepared by the SCSTRTI, Odisha. The book provides a comparative picture of culture of mostly Dharua Gond people of Nabarangpur district in South Odisha with that of the culture of the Raj Gonds of Keonjhar district in North Odisha. While majority of the former speak a mixture of Gondi, Holva, Leheri, Hindi and Odia, the latter speak in Odia. As regards of their religious life the Gonds in Nabarangpur area, by and large, have retained their faith in their own tribal deities, animism, totemism, ancestor worship, but most of the Gonds of Keonjhar, though retain their socio-religious traditions, have been greatly influenced by Hinduism. The interaction between the Gonds of Odisha and the caste Hindus recreates a novel culture, i.e. unification of the little tradition with great tradition. This ethnographic account of Gonds may be useful for preservation of their culture as well as planning and development interventions.



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