

CHAPTER 2

THE REGION AND THE TRIBAL PEOPLE

THE REGION

West Bengal

West Bengal is a land of natural beauty, exquisite lyrical poetry and enthusiastic people. Situated in the east of India, West Bengal stretches from the Himalayas in the north to the Bay of Bengal in the South. This state shares international boundaries with Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal. Hence it is a strategically important place. The State is interlocked by the other states like Sikkim, Assam, Orissa and Bihar. The river Hooghly and its tributaries, Mayurakshi, Damodar, Kangsabati and the Rupnarayan, enrich the soils of Bengal. The northern districts of West Bengal like Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri and Cooch Bihar (in the Himalayas ranges) are watered by the rivers Tista, Torsa, Jaldhaka and Ranjit. From the northern places (feet of Himalayas) to the tropical forests of Sunderbans, West Bengal is a land of incessant beauty. The total area of West Bengal is 88,752 square kilometers. There are 37,910 inhabited villages and 38,024 towns in West Bengal as per 1991 census. Census population of West Bengal is 8,02,21,171 (2001). The density of population as per 2001 census is 904. Sex ratio of West Bengal (females per thousand males) as per 2001 census is 934 and the literacy rate as per 2001 census is 69.22 per cent. The Scheduled Tribe population in West Bengal as per 1991 census is 38,08,760. The percentage of Scheduled Tribe population to total population as per 1991 census is 5.59.

The District of Dakshin Dinajpur

The district of Dakshin Dinajpur is situated in the northern part of the State of West Bengal. The district is the Southern-Western district of Jalpaiguri Division. It is bounded on the South and East by Bangladesh, on the West by the districts of Malda and Uttar Dinajpur and on the North by the district of Uttar Dinajpur. The

district Dakshin Dinajpur is one of the smallest in terms of population and area. Agriculture is the primary activity with not much of industrial efforts in existence. The district is proud for its continuing cultural activities and peasant's movements of the past. The district headquarter is situated at Balurghat. The early history of the district rests on a number of obscure traditions and legends. The Palos, Sen and Mohammedan ruled the district in 1203A.D. The district came under the control of East India Company in 1765 and after 1857, the district came under the control of British Government. After Independence in 1947, the district of West Dinajpur came into being by curving out of a portion of undivided Dinajpur district of undivided Bengal. In the year 1992 the West Dinajpur district was divided into two parts, namely, Uttar Dinajpur and Dakshin Dinajpur. The Dakshin Dinajpur district is one of the most remote and backward in the state of West Bengal and only means of communication to other places is by road. There are no railways in the district.

Just after the partition of Bengal the district began to receive immigrants from East Pakistan (Bangladesh) whose flow has not ceased yet. The district has a population of 12.01 lacs (Family Welfare Statistics: 1995, p.10). The present population of the district consists of tribals and non-tribals including Rajbansis and Palyas with different sects of Muslims and Hindu caste groups. As per the 1991 census, the district of Dakshin Dinajpur has 42 per cent Scheduled Tribe (S.T.) and Scheduled Caste (S.C.) population and 11 per cent urban population as compared to the State average of 35 per cent and 26 per cent respectively. The district has a sex ratio of 944 female per 1000 males, infant mortality rate of 130 per thousand and literacy rate of 38 per cent. The economy of the district entirely depends on agriculture and allied activities. Rice is the main crop of the district followed by wheat, pulses and oil seeds. The climate of the district is characterised by hot summer (beginning mid of March), abundant rainfall (June to September) and humidity. Average rainfall in the area is 1688 mm that varies between 1121 mm till 2177 mm. The district comprises of two Sub-Divisions, namely Balurghat Sub-Division and Gangarampur Sub-Division. There are 8

blocks in the district. The blocks Balurghat, Hilli, Kumarganj and Tapan come under the Balurgat Sub-Division, and Harirampur, Kushmundi, Banshihari and Gangarampur come under the Gangarampur Sub-Division.

The Tapan block is entirely village-based, and the concentration of the tribals is quite high in the block. As per the 1991 census, total population of the block was 186953. The block has a Scheduled Tribe (S.T.) population of 23 per cent. Agriculture is the main economic activity of the block with cultivators (50%) and agricultural-labourers (31%) forming bulk of the total working population. 90 per cent of the cultivators and 77 per cent of the agricultural labourers gain employment in this sector for less than 6 months in a year. The remaining population is engaged in dairy, animal husbandry, small and cottage industries, small business and trade. The Scheduled Tribes of the block are mostly engaged in agriculture either as cultivators or as agricultural labourers. This area is mainly mono-crop zone. The net area under irrigation is 20 per cent. The main crops are rice, mustard and wheat. Open dug wells are the source of drinking water for 68 per cent population in the Tapan block while others depend on tube wells. Around 80 per cent families have their own *katcha* houses.

The Villages

The villages we have studied are situated nearby Bangladesh-India border in the Tapan block of Dakshin Dinajpur district. The names of the villages are Chamtakuri, Dudiakuri, Dakshin Keshrail, Chhiraikuri, Balapur, Haribanshipur, Sondapukur and Satipukur. Chamtakuri, Dudiakuri, Chiraikuri and Dakshin Keshrail are the target villages of the Tagore Society for Rural Development where the Society has been working for more than a decade. The villages, namely Satipukur, Sondapukur, Balapur and Haribanshipur are the non-target villages of the Tagore Society for Rural Development. There are no interventions of the Society in these villages. The villages, namely Chamtakuri, Dudiakuri, Dakshin Keshrail, Sondapukur are within 5 Kilometre away from the Primary

Health Center situated at Balapur and the rest of the villages are within 5 Kilometer away from the Primary Health Center situated at Tapan. All the villages are 0 to 10 Kilometer away from the head quarter of the Tagore Society for Rural Development, based at Balapur. District town Balurghat is on an average 20 Kilometer away from these villages. The villages are linked by mud roads leading in turn to main metal road which links these areas. Accessibility to these villages during the monsoon is constrained. In addition to the Santals, Oraons and Mundas, castes like the Rajbansis, Kayasthas, Goalas, Bhumalis, Ghatoals, Tilis, Bramins and Muslims are some of the other communities found in these villages. Concentration of the tribals in these villages is quite high. A common type of life pattern and cultural habits are noticed among the communities having similar type of economic activities.

Exploitation by the moneylenders has also been observed in both the target and non-target villages. Due to the credit programmes of the Tagore Society for Rural Development, the tribals of the target villages are now getting credits of various natures from the Tagore Society for Rural development. Some of these are; (i) agricultural credits, they get this kind of credit both in the form of kinds and cash. Fertilisers and seeds are also provided to the tribals from the Tagore Society for Rural Development, whereas they need petty cash to meet the other purposes, (ii) consumption credit, merely used to meet the consumption need of the tribals in the lean season and (iii) business credit, if some one is interested to start small business they may avail this kind of credit. The credit need of the tribals of the target villages is not fulfilled totally by the Tagore Society for Rural Development. As a result they have to depend on moneylenders for credits.

THE TRIBAL PEOPLE

The Santals, Oraons, and Mundas represent the tribals in the study area. They have their origin in Chotonagpur, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa. The 1901 census report stated that, 'About fifty years ago it occurred to the manager of a government estate that the waste land might be reclaimed if the Santals were imported and settled there. The experiment proved such a success that the influx has continued ever since---.' According to both Hunter and Thomas the Santals came to this region from the then 'Beerbhoom' which included the present district of Dumka in Bihar (Basak 1992:p.4). A few Mundas and Oraons followed the lead from Ranchi. They have now become fully settled in this area. Most of these people are landless cultivators with no security of jobs and food for every day throughout the year. The routine of life here is quite different from that of their traditional culture.

The major influences that have noticed since their immigration to the present locality are; (i) interaction with other groups belonging to various tribes, (ii) contact with Hindu communities living in the neighborhood, (iii) welfare activities sponsored by the government and non-government organisations. All these factors, in the process of their adoption to the new setting, seem to have changed the tribals' socio-economic and socio-religious life to a remarkable degree. In some areas, they have adopted very effectively resulting into some re-organisation of their traditional way of life, and in some other areas, however, the tradition yet seems to work as an inhibiting factor in their successful adoption. In this perspective the Hindu influences on the tribals are more in performing their social functions. Hindu culture and religious practices have also been found in these tribal communities who identified themselves as Hindu.

Different tribal groups have different cultural backgrounds with their distinct traditional health culture. They have only two things in common, one is their poverty and another one is that they are people of Dravidian origin. Ethno-history of the Santals and Oraons will help us in understanding their traditional health

culture. These tribes have different legends regarding their origins. In regard to their social and cultural life, tribals are different from one group to another. We shall discuss here the ethnic background of the Santals and Oraons and the changes taken place in their society as impact of various socio-cultural forces of the Hindu neighbourhood and different welfare programmes.

The Santals

The Santals are found in India as well as in Bangladesh. In India they are distributed in the States of Bihar, Orissa, West Bengal and Tripura. Their main concentration is in Bihar, mainly in the districts of Santal Parganas, Bhagalpur, Hazaribagh, Purnea, Manbhum, Singhbhum and Munghyr. The Santals constitute one of the largest tribes of India numbering more than three million souls (3,152,545 according to the 1961 census). They are very hardy, simple hearted, efficient agriculturist and excellent hunter. Their history is the history of a hard struggle with the surroundings just to maintain their existence. Their faithfulness and simplicity have made way to the landlords and other employers to exploit them miserably. When the exploitation surpassed all limits, they revolted against the British rulers and the Zamindars. This was in 1871. The upsurge was oppressed brutally by the British; when Bhagirath, the leader of the movement, died in the same year at the Bhagalpur jail.

The Santals have different legends regarding their origins. The Santals traced back their origin to a wild goose (Hasdak) that laid two eggs. From these sprang Pilchu Haram and Pilchu Burth the parents of the race. Bodding has doubted the existence of a Negroid element among them. Hrdlicka has also corroborated this view and has suggested a Mongolian admixture. Peter Schmidt has classed them with the Austro-Asiatic people. Ruggeri has described them as Australoid- Veddics while Haddon has grouped them with the Pre-Dravidians. Guha has described them as Proto-Australoids and Sarkar has regarded them as

Veddics. The Santals speak Santali language. Santali belongs to the Munda family of languages. The Mundari language belongs to the Austro-Asiatic subfamily of the great Austric family. According to Campbell, Santali language has reached a much higher stage of development than any other sister language. It has drawn upon other languages; the influence of Bengali in this language seems to be the most important. The cradle land of the Santals was somewhere in the great mountain. From there they migrated to their present habitat via Hihri Pipri, Chae Champa, Silda, Sikar, Nagpur and Sir. The Santals are primarily agriculturists. Collecting, hunting and fishing were once very important sources of their living but now these have reduced to a subsidiary status. Animal husbandry is known to the Santals, but it plays a minor role in maintaining their food supply. An increase in the population, the loss of land, the need for cash and the exploitation by contractors, money-lenders and land-lords have led a large number of the Santals to migrate to tea gardens, coal mines, factories etc., where they work as unskilled labourers. There are some Santals now who are engaged in various modern occupations.

The Santals cultivate three classes of land: *barge*, *gora*, and *khet*. *Barge* is the land for dwelling, especially in the rear. There they raise sorghum, maize, certain winter legumes, beans and vegetables of different kinds. *Gora* is the highland, which is usually located at a little distance away from the dwelling. There they produce different varieties of millet, several varieties of cotton, some highland varieties of pulses and others. *Khet* or rice fields are terraced on the hill slopes. Three kinds of rice field are distinguished by three different names. The classifications of plots are made according to their relative positions on inclined surface. The plots lying on the lowest level are regarded as the best. Rice is their staple crop. All varieties of rice, except one are transplanted in the *khet*. The only variety that is sown broadcast is cultivated not on *khet* but on *gora* type of land. Hence this variety is known as highland rice. Bullocks and buffaloes are employed for ploughing, leveling and wedding. Cow-dung and ashes are used as manure. They mainly depend on rainfall, though they have an indigenous system

of artificial irrigation with the helps of *bandhs* or embankments constructed across ravines, hollows, or other natural depressions. Both men and women take part in agricultural operations. However, there is a division of labour on the basis of sex. Men do the heavier work, such as, cleaning forests or ploughing, or constructing a *bandh* etc. In agricultural operations women are tabooed from ploughing the field. Otherwise, both sexes take equal part in transplanting, de-weeding, reaping, and threshing. Husking is exclusively a women's business. The Santals are well equipped with all necessary agricultural implements like plough, sickle, scythe, leveler, hoe, axe and adze.

Sal, mahua and bamboo trees play very important role in their economy. These trees not only supply food in the form of flowers, fruits and young shoots but also serve many other purposes. In their quest of food the collection of wild plants, roots, fruits, tubers, flowers, young shoots, resins and mushrooms subsidise their food supply and ensure against the recurrent scarcities in the summer season and also help in warding off the famines that result from crop-failures. The women who act in groups usually do the collection. The Santals hunt any game available, but do not deliberately molest tiger or bear. Only the men who act in groups do hunting. Usually in summer the men of entire village or sometimes even of a group of villages organise hunting expeditions. For hunting purposes, the hills or forests are generally divided into sections, each under the jurisdiction of a *dihri* who may be said to be the spiritual and secular leader of hunt. The *dihri* is usually a Santal who holds no official position but he is elected to the office because of his knowledge of the appropriate sacrifices and formula necessary to assure success and avoid harm on the hunt. Informal one-day hunt do not require the presence of the *dihri* since the hunters return home in the same evening. The annual hunt last for two to four days and in this occasion the presence of *dihri* is a must.

Fishing is another subsidiary economic activity of the Santals. They generally catch fish in streams, artificial ponds, and water reservoir. There are four methods of fishing; netting, use of traps, shooting with bows and arrows and with

the use of vegetable poison. The groups of men generally do fishing though the women can also participate in the fishing. Quite often there are public fishing expeditions in which the men of an entire village or a number of villages participate in groups. The Santals domesticate animals like fowl, pig, goat, cow, buffalo, sheep, and pigeon. They take freely the flesh of all these animals. Traditionally they disliked taking of any milk. But now it is seen that the milk of goat is often given to ailing children and the milk of cow in some places has got an acceptance as a food item. The job of domesticating animals is regarded as a joint responsibility of all the members of the family irrespective of age and sex distinction. The Santals have no special technique of making fire. Some buy matchboxes and others borrow them from neighbors. Sometimes in the forest during their hunting excursions they light a fire by the friction of wood. The Santal ovens are made of mud and are so arranged that the pots may rest on three triangular supports which are raised almost a cubit from the ground. As to the existence of weaving among the Santals there is a controversy. It may be claimed that the crude system of spinning and weaving which went out of use due to the impact of neighboring artisan castes. They also know the art of extracting oil from various seeds, wild as well as cultivated. They are also experts in manufacturing from burnt mussel or snail shells. The household goods include bed sheet, mat, sitting plank, mortar, pestle, husking machine winnowing fan, broomstick, cooking pots etc. The musical instruments of the Santals are flutes, pipes, drums and violins of different shapes and sizes. Bow and arrow or bolt, battle-axe, sword and shield constitute their weapons of war and chase.

The Santals generally eat twice a day and an addition of a third meal is of rare occurrence. The daily menu consists of boiled rice and curry. They seldom take fish or meat and largely depend on vegetable curry. In addition to their domestic animals, they take the flesh of such wild animals like jackals, rats, snakes, lizards, tortoises, crocodiles and different kinds of birds. However, the meat of dogs, cats and horses is regarded with abhorrence. Millets, fruits, roots, tubers, flowers and some plants are regarded as supplementary foods, especially during

the times of scarcity. The principal beverage of the Santals is a kind of rice beer, known as *haria*. They also drink intoxicating liquor distilled from dried flowers of *mahua*. They take tobacco in the form of smoking. Tobacco being rolled into a *sal* leaf is used for smoking and being mixed with a kind of lime is used for chewing.

Santal village is usually small in size. Ten to thirty five families inhabit it. The houses are situated on both the sides of the street. A lengthwise central road, shaded by tall trees, communicates the village with the world around. A dwelling consists of one or more huts and a mud wall generally defines its boundary. Cattle shed, pig-sty, fowl-pen, dove-cot, manure-pit, kitchen garden, and rectangular or square courtyard are the general additions to a Santal dwelling. A small space in one corner of the principal hut is kept apart by a low wall. This place is regarded as the abode of the family deities and ancestral spirits. The huts are generally without windows, though sometimes lattices are provided with. The walls are built of thin stick plastered with mud or only mud and the rafters are of *sal* wood. The roof being provided with a bamboo structure is gable shaped and is thatched with grass or straw. In a typical Santal village, opposite to the house of *manjhi* (headman), there is a place called *manjhithan*. It is believed to be the abode of the spirit of the village. Here the meeting of the village panchayat usually takes place and the headman collects taxes from the villagers. There is another village shrine, known as *jatherthan*, which is a cluster of *sal* trees. It is regarded as the abode of principal deities worshipped by the people.

The working dress of a Santal man consists of *kopni*, a narrow strip of cloth passed between the legs and tied to a string wound round the join. At other times, he wears round his waist a short piece of cloth (*dhuti*). A Santal woman generally dresses with a larger piece of cloth (*sari*). All these cloths are made of cotton. They usually procure their garments from the local or weekly market, or from itinerant traders. Women, sometimes men also, wear their hair long and tied into a knot at the back of the head. Women generally use cow tail hairs to tie their coiffures. Both the sexes are fond of decorating themselves with flowers,

feathers and cow tail hair necklace. In addition to these, Santal women wear ornaments made of brass. At present nickel and silver are becoming popular. The ornaments commonly found are wrestles, armlets, anklets, rinks, tiaras, girdles, earrings and necklaces. The Santals are a people with very good artistic taste, which is well reflected on the decorated walls of their huts. They are also very fond of dance and music. Men and women often dance together arranging themselves in a circular fashion. During dance they sing, while some others, standing in the center of the circle provides the music. Among the musical instruments the chief one is *madol*, which is a double membrane drum. The other instruments are, single, membrane drum, flute and buffalo horn trumpet. Dance and music have essential role in almost all ceremonial or festive occasions.

The internal structure of the Santal tribe is singularly complete and elaborate. There are twelve exogamous clans, (i) Hasdak, (ii) Murmu, (iii) Kisku, (iv) Hembram, (v) Marundi, (vi) Saren, (vii) Tudu, (viii) Baske, (ix) Besra, (x) Pauria, (xi) Chore, (xii) Bedia. The first seven are said to be descended from the seven sons of Pilchu Haram and Pilchu Buri. The five other were added afterwards. All these clans enjoy the same social status except the Besra and Chore who are regarded as somewhat inferior. The members of other clans avoid marriage with the members of these two clans. Each Santal village has a *Jagmanjhi* whose most important duty is to look after the morals of the boys and girls. There is also a *Paramanik* whose function is to attend to the farming arrangements. There is a village priests called *Neua* or *Nayaki*.

The clans are further divided into a number of sub clans (*khunt*), the number of which varies from clan to clan. The number of sub clans varies from thirteen to twenty eight with a total of two hundred and two. This figure is not beyond controversy. The main function of the clan and sub clan organisation is to regulate marriage. A man cannot marry a member of his own clan. The prohibition is more rigid in case of intra sub clan marriage. Normally, a man is prohibited from marrying a girl belonging to his mother's clan but, if he at all does it, he must take care that the girl does not belong to the same sub clan as his

mother's. Both the clans and sub clans are patriarchal. Women adopt their husbands' clan names through marriage. The small social unit is the family, which is generally of two types; the first one, consisting of husband, wife and their children and the second one consisting of grandparents, grand children, married sons with their wife and unmarried daughters. The first one may be called as simple family, while the latter joint or extended one.

Girls are married as adults mostly to men of their own choice. While monogamy is the rule of Santal society though polygamy is common by the custom of the tribe. Pre-marital sex relation between a youth and a girl is tolerated, but if such a relation results into pregnancy then the youth is bound to marry the girl, otherwise he would be severely punished and his father would be levied a heavy fine. Remarriage of widow is permitted. Widow must marry younger brother of her late husband. Divorce is allowed at wish of either husband or wife, which is effected in the presence of the assembled villagers. The Santals have recognised the following six forms of marriage; (i) Regular marriage (bride marriage), (ii) *Ghardi jawae*, (iii) *Itut*, (iv) *Nirbalak*, (v) *Sanga*, and (vi) *Kringjawae* or husband purchase. In regular marriage father of a young man usually negotiate the marriage by engaging a professional matchmaker to look for a suitable girl. The second form of marriage the *Gardi jawae* is resorted to the girl who are ugly and there is no prospect of her being getting married in the ordinary way. Young men who not sure whether the girl will accept them or not, they adopt the third form *Itut*, which compel the girl to marry him. The man smears his fingers with vermilion or common earth and puts it on her forehead whenever he gets such an opportunity in a market place or a similar place and claims her as his wife. The fourth form, '*Nirbalak*' may be described as the female variety of *Itut*. A girl, who cannot get a man, take a pot of haria enters the boy's house and insists on staying there. The man's mother who desires to have a say in the selection of her daughter-in-law may use any sort of personal violence. If she is found enough strong to stand all these trials, she is finally accepted in the family of her choice. This is followed by a formal marriage. The fifth form *Sanga* is used

for the marriage of widow and divorced women. The sixth form, *Kiringjawae* is resorted to when a girl has had a liaison with and becomes pregnant, by a man of her clan whom she cannot marry. In order to avoid scandal someone is procured to accept the post of husband.

Girl after marriage goes to reside with her husband either in her husband's father's family or in the individual family set up by her husband. In some cases the son-in-law is taken as a son who resides in the father-in-law's house and this son-in-law is called as *Ghardijawae*. Such cases occur when a family has got no son but only one daughter or if all the elder daughters are married off to different families or if a family has only one marriageable daughter and minor sons. In the last case the *Ghardijawae* may set up an independent family when the minor brother's-in-law are grown up. After marriage, both husband and wife have the right to divorce. A divorce may be sought on the grounds of adultery, unwillingness, of one of the parties to cohabit with the other, witchcraft and sterility. A woman may seek divorce if the husband cannot give her sufficient food, clothes and ornaments. If a man seeks divorce he will not get back the bride price he originally paid, over and above he is to pay a fine of rupees five and a piece of cloth to the wife. If, on the other hand, the wife seeks divorce and cannot prove sufficient cause, then her father has to refund the money received as bride price. Divorce is affected in the presence of the villagers assembled for the purpose. In case the husband suspects that his wife practices witchcraft then simply handing her over to her parents or nearest relatives divorces her.

In a family the authority rests on the father and normally it is the duty of the other members to obey him strictly. In the absence of the father, the eldest son takes the position. In fact the eldest son in a Santal family is looked upon by the younger ones as the representative of the father and for that reason the status of the eldest brother's wife is often paralleled with that of the mother. Within the family organisation there is a division of labour on the basis of sex and age. It is the duty of a husband to provide his family members with food materials, clothing's and shelter through such activities as cultivation, hunting and fishing. On the

other hand, a wife has to do all the works concerning the household, over and above; she assists her husband in agricultural and fishing operation too. The grown up boys assist their father while the girls are engaged in household work with their mother. The parents with deep love and affection protect the children. The women, though devoid of certain religious and administrative functions, have an important economic status in the family. But she is not considered a mere chattel and she enjoys certain amount of authority and independence within her own sphere.

The kinship terminology of the Santal is a form of classificatory system. The father and father's brother are designated by the same term, *appa*; but this term is modified by a descriptive term indicating younger by *hopen* or older by *gongo*. Thus, mother's and father's brother's wives are also designated by the single term *ayo*. In this case same descriptive terms are prefixed to mean the elder or younger. The customary rule of disposing a dead body is the cremation of the corpse. The dead body is first anointed with oil and then new clothes are put on it. A few of the pots and pans of the deceased are placed along with dead body on the bier. The friends and the relatives of the deceased carry the bier to the cremation ground. The dead body is again anointed with oil and vermilion and then it is put on the pyre. A coin is put into the mouth of the corpse and the whole body is covered by the piece of firewood. Each person attending the funeral puts at least one piece of firewood on the pyre. Next an egg is broken over the pyre. The eldest son or the nearest relative prepares a torch of dried grass bound with thread from his own cloth. After walking three times round the pile in silence he touches the mouth of the deceased with the brand. When the body is nearly burnt the clansman extinguish the fire. The nearest relative breaks of three fragments of bones and washes them in fresh milk colored with vermilion. These are then placed in a small earthen vessel. This pot with the bones is buried somewhere outside the village. The funeral party then returns home after bathing themselves and crunching incense of *sal* resin. They perform purification ceremony, after five days following a death when all the villagers and kinsmen

assemble at the house of the deceased after getting them shaved and bathed. They sacrifice to the ancestral spirits. Afterwards they carry the pot with the bones to the river for final immersion.

There exist taboo in regard to the relation between a man and his younger brother's wife. It is so great they avoid even touching one another's shadow; wife's elder sisters are also avoided. Avoidance also prevails between bride's father and bridegroom's mother and also between bridegroom's father and bride's mother. On the other hand, joking relation exists between a man and his elder brother's wife. They enjoy considerable freedom, so much so that even sexual intercourse between them is not deemed as a criminal offence. A similar relationship exists between a woman and her elder sister's husband. Joking relationship also exists between grand parents and grand children.

The village community is the most important socio- economic and political unit of the Santals. It is governed by a panchayat consisting of seven officials, viz., (i) *manjhi*-the headman, (ii) *paramanik*- the assistant headman, (iii) *naeke*- the village priest entrusted with the duties of worshipping the national deities, (iv) *kudum naeke*- priest of the spirits residing in the hills and jungles of the neighborhood, (v) *jog-manjhi*- entrusted to arrange the communal feasts and guarding the morals of the village youth, (vi) *jog-paramanik*- an assistant to *paramanik*, (vii) *godet*- the messenger to the panchayat. The function of the panchayat is to solve any problem that affects the interest of village community. Inter-village disputes are solved by joint endeavor of the panchayats of both the villages. If the panchayat finds it difficult to take any resolution by itself, then all the villagers may be called and after prolonged discussion resolution may be taken on general consensus. According to the Santal tradition all land belong to the village community and individual property right is not recognised. Lands were annually redistributed so that a few individuals could not monopolize good land. Besides land, individual ownership is recognised in every case, such as, houses, domestic utensils, weapons, implements, cattle and clothing. All the sons of a man inherit private property equally, except that the eldest gets a bullock and a

rupee more than the others. In the Santal Parganas, daughters have no share in property and in the absence of any male issue the property of a deceased person goes to his nearest male agnates, generally brothers. If the father of the deceased is alive, the property reverts to him. In the absence of both sons and brothers, the property goes to the person's brother's sons. But in Mayurbhanj the case is somewhat different. There, daughters inherit the property in preference to all the agnates of the deceased, if there are no sons. His widow inherits the property of a childless man, if his portion was separated from his brothers. The males exclusively inherited the occupancy of land but now in some cases the daughters are also recorded as raiyats and Santal reformists are trying for the recognition of the married Santal girls.

The Santal religion is animistic. The Santals have a great god *Thakur* whom the Santals have long ceased to worship for sufficient reason, as it does neither good nor ill to the mankind. He is identified by some with the Sun whom the Santals regard as god and worship every fifth or tenth year with sacrifices of goats. Besides, *Takhur* they believe in a number of *bongas* or malevolent supernatural beings. Each family has two special gods of his own- the *Orak-bonga* or household god and the *Abge-bonga* or secret god. The popular *bongas* of the tribe are, (i) Marang-buru, (ii) Moreka, (iii) Jaher-era, (iv) Gosai-era, (v) Pargana and (vi) Manjhi. Besides *bongas* they also believe in *rakes* and *ekagudia*- the monstrous beings, *curins* and *bhut*. The chief festival of the Santals is the honest festival celebrated in the month of *Posh* (November-December), after the chief rice crop of the year has been got in. Private families sacrifice pigs, goats, and fowls and a general saturnalia of drunkenness and sexual intercourse prevails. Next important festival is the Baha puja, celebrated in *Phalgun* (February- March), when the *sal* trees come to flower. Other festivals are *Ero-sim*, the sowing festival in *Asar* (May-June), *Horiar-Sim*, the feast of the sprouting of the rice in *Bhadra* (September-October), *Irigundli-nanai*, the offering of the first fruits of the millets '*iri*' and '*gundli*' in *Bhadra*, *Janthar-puja* in *Aghran* (October-November), the first fruit of the winter rice crop; *sankrant puja* on the

last day of the *Posh* when bread, *chira* and molasses are offered to the dead ancestors, *Magh-sim* is celebrated in the month of *Magh* when the jungle grass is cut.

Santal women are believed to practice witchcraft and like *bongas* they can do much harm. It is also believed that such women can influence the *bongas* by their feminine charms and make them do according to their will. To counteract the evil influence of *bongas* and doers of witchcraft, there are specialists known as *Jan guru* and *ojha guru*. They take recourse to divination to discover the cause of misfortune or illness. Once the cause is known, incantations and scarifies are performed to appease the evil doing *bonga* and if it is caused by witchcraft, the alleged practitioners is driven out of the village. The Santal believe in certain natural causes of disease as well as those caused by *bongas* and witches. Most common of the natural causes is the dislocation or twisting of any *sir* (i.e., muscles, nerves, arteries and veins). Rabies, epilepsy, scabies, cancer, ring-worm etc are believed to be caused by different kind of worms that may be fairly large or invisibly small. Among other natural causes there are, bad diet, taking unclean food, exposure in mist and fog and bathing in dirty water. If an *ojha* is called upon to treat a disease, he may give medicine prepared from plants and herbs, as also recite incantations performing scarifies. They recognise a regular science of *ojha* and it is customary for young men of a village to go through the early course of training in *ojha*-science. There is also a special training that follows the preliminary one and lasts for a few years. In special training only a few can succeed and are initiated as full-fledged *ojha*.

The Oraons

The Oraons are presently distributed over the large tract of eastern India. They are also settled agriculturists. They belong to the Dravidian stock of southern India and according to their tradition, it is claimed that their ancestors migrated from Konkan in the west coast to northern India, and then ultimately came to their present habitat at Chotanagpur Plateau, the eastern parts of Sirguja and

Jasshpur and are scattered in Singhbhum, Gangpur, Bonai, Hazaribag and Shambalpur of the central Provinces. The Oraons are mostly distributed in Ranchi district of Bihar presently Jharkhand. The Oraons speak a language of their own, which belongs to the Dravidian family of languages. The influences of Hindi, Oriya, Bengali and Mundari languages are well marked. The Oraons are physically characterized by dark, brown complexion; black, coarse, generally wavy hair, thick beard and much hair on the body, dolichocephalic head; eyes of medium size and of black colour; nose prominent, straight, often depressed at the root; thick lips; slightly projecting jaws; and below medium stature. The Oraons designated themselves as Kurukhs. The name Kurukh is derived from a Dravidian root, meaning man.

The Oraons are predominantly agriculturists. Hunting, fishing, cattle rearing and crafts are practiced in little measure. In former times, in their home land (Chotanagpur) hunting had some economic and more socio religious importance. They used to hunt collectively during three big annual hunting festivals; (i) Phagu sendra (spring hunt), (ii) Bishu sendra (summer hunt) and (iii) Jaith sendra (hunting in the month of May-June). It was a socio religious duty for an able Oraon male to participate in these hunting festivals. At present its economic importance is lost and it has been reduced to almost a ritualistic activity. Besides these, a good many of them have migrated to neighboring districts of Bihar, in Bengal and Assam as labourers in the mines, jungles and tea gardens and also some of them work as labourers in making and mending road.

They cultivate varieties of paddy, millet, pulses and oil seeds. For cultivation of different crops they distinguish different type of soil on the basis of position and fertility. The cultivable land is primarily divided into two classes; *tanr* or up-lands and *don* or low-lands. The *don* land is further sub-divided into three categories; (i) *taria* or upper portion of the slope, (ii) *chaunra* or intermediate portion and (iii) *kudar* or bottom of the slope. In *tanr* land they cultivate coarse rice, millet, pulses and oil-seed usually in rotation. In *don* lands they produce two classes of paddy, *bhadai* rice, which is reaped in October and *aghani* rice, which is reaped in

November-December. The fertility of the soil in general is poor and requires manures for a good harvest. Oraon farmers use indigenous manures as, cow dung, mud of the old tanks and karanj flower mixed with ashes. Good harvest merely depends on the good system of irrigation, which is very little in the Oraon country. There are few embankments for storage of rainwater and irrigation channels leading to the fields, some tanks and wells, but these significantly merge relative to requirement. In almost every village there is a pond or some waterlogged area, which dries up in summer, from which water is drawn by lever system. The Oraon farmer has to depend on rain fall for cultivation. Women are prohibited from hunting and plough, hoeing, leveling and irrigation; these are exclusively male business. But they do sowing, transplanting, harvesting, husking, fishing, collection of fuel and vegetables etc. The principal implement of their main economic activity (i.e., cultivation) is plough, which is made of sal wood, the ploughshare being made of a straight piece of iron, about a foot long and inch broad. A yoke is fitted with the beam of the plough with the help of leather straps- the yoke along with the plough being harnessed on a pair of bullocks. Among other implements there are harrow, leveler, earthmover, husking lever, mortar, pestle and axe. The common livestock of the Oraons consists of cows, bullocks, buffaloes, goats, pigs, fowls etc.

The Oraon village is situated generally on the top of undulation, which is usually a cultivable wasteland. The houses are huddled together by the sides of narrow lanes, which run in all directions. The ground plan is rectangular and the huts are arranged on all sides of a small courtyard. The entrance to the courtyard is made through one of the huts. The roofs are of either two slopes, or four slopes and are made of country-made tiles. No window is provided with, though sometimes lattices are found to occur. The floor and walls are made of mud. An Oraon house is also provided with cattle-shed, pigsty and fowl-pen. An Oraon village consists of two classes of Oraon inhabitation, viz, the *Bhuinhars* and *Jeth-Raiyats*. The former are the descendants of the first settlers who cleared the forests and founded the village. The *Jeth-Raiyats* are subsequent settlers who

came to the village and settled on some *khunt* (family stock) land to which they were related by marriages. In each Oraon villages there are three Oraon officers viz., *Baiga* or *Pahan*, Pujar-assistant of *Pahan* and *Mahato*. The *Pahan* is the central figure in the Oraon village. He is the village priest who propitiates the village deities and keeps the villagers safe from the unwanted attention of the supernatural beings. The *Pujar* in priestly duties helps the *Pahan*. The *Mahato* is the secular headman who helps the landlord in collecting rent and settling disputes regarding rent. The *Mahato* also presides over the village panchayat constituted by the village elders. The authority of the panchayat is supreme in all matters, social or religious, concerning the villagers' complaints regarding marriage, theft, assault, witchcraft and disputes regarding partition of property that are brought to the *Mahato* and the *Pahan* who call the panchayat. Punishments enforced by the panchayat consist of fine, threshing, excommunication and sometimes banishment from the village.

The ordinary clothing of an adult Oraon man is a piece of cotton cloth about a foot in width and three to six yards in length. In addition to the cloth there is always round the waist a girdle of cords. During the festivals, the Oraon male wears a little longer cloth with ornamental border. He covers the upper part of the body with a blanket. Sometimes he wears a red or white turban round the head. The ordinary dress of an Oraon woman is a piece of cotton clothes about 4 yards in length and 1.5 yards in width. An Oraon male wears his hair long, gathered in a knot behind. In the knot they often insert wooden combs, looking glass and numerous ornaments of brass. They also wear earrings, bracelets and other ornaments. An Oraon woman also wears her hair long, gathered not immediately behind but more or less on one side. Often they decorate their hair with the help of flowers and/or feathers. They use a variety of ornaments such as bracelets, bangles, necklace, earrings, nose-pins, hairpins etc. These are usually made of brass and rarely made of silver or gold. Bangles of glass and plastic, necklaces of beads and nickel have now become very much popular. The Oraon women are tattooed in childhood with the three marks on the brow and two on each

temple. Girls when adult, or nearly so, have themselves further tattooed on the arms and back. The young men burn on their forearm.

Boiled rice is the stable diet of the Oraons, though an ordinary Oraon cannot provide for himself a full diet of rice through out the year. Fried edible leaves form common side dishes or vegetables curry. Very few can afford to have pulses. If available, they take any and every fish and the flesh of almost all birds and animals except that of the monkey, asses, horses, elephants and the like. Average Oraons even eats the mouse and crow with relish. Presently such indiscrimination with regard to food is much modified due to Christianity and other religious cross currents in the life of the Oraon. Milk and curdled-milk are taken with much relish, when available, rice-beer (*haria*) is their favorite intoxicating beverage. *Haria* is indispensable in almost all social and religious festivals. Present day Oraons are more addicted to the distilled liquor than their traditional *haria*. The animal, bird, fish or plant that forms the totem of a particular clan, is taboo to the members of that clan. Formerly, when the men of a village would go out on a hunting expedition, it was the prohibition to the villagers to kill any bird or animal until the hunting party returned.

The Oraons constitute an endogamous tribe, i.e., the members are not allowed to marry outside but are expected to marry within the group. The tribe is divided into a number of exogamous totemic clans. There are five sub-tribes among the Oraons; Berga-Oraon, Dhanka Oraon, Kharia-Oraon and Munda- Oraon. The Oraons had a curious system of youth dormitories for bachelors and unmarried girls. In the bachelor's dhumkuria, as the dormitory was called, discipline was very strict, there being an elaborate system of flogging, the smaller boys waiting on the elders, rubbing their limbs and combing their hair. The girl's dormitory was usually in charge of an old woman and its location was not supposed to be known to anyone except its intimates and to those of the bachelor's dormitory. Boys and girls of the same village are not allowed to marry. It is respectable to bring home a bride from a distance. The Oraon practices monogamy as a rule and polygamy as an exception. Polyandry is never permitted. If an Oraon married

a person belonging to other tribe or caste he/she becomes excommunicated from the tribe until the non-Oraon partner is given up and the prescribed purification ceremony is observed. The Oraons also avoid marriage with certain kin. Neither parallel cousin nor cross cousin marriage is permitted. The marriage between two people who have milk relationship is forbidden. The marriage between the members of the two families sharing a ritual kinship is not permissible although they may belong to different clans. They also do not prefer the marriage of the eldest son of a family with the eldest daughter of another family. The payment of a bride price is a rule. Widow marriage is permitted and there is no restriction in selecting husband. If an unmarried girl becomes pregnant arrangements are made for her marriage quickly. She is expected to lead a virtuous life. Divorce is frequent in their society. The sexual life of the Oraon cannot be characterized as even moderately chaste. Premarital sex license prevails widely and generally overlooked by the community until it leads to pregnancy when a fine is imposed on the parties who provide a feast to the elders and are thereby excused from all guilt.

An Oraon family is constituted of a man, his wife and their unmarried children. Formerly, joint or extended families were common, but at present simple family is the present type. Within the family there is division of labour on the basis of sex and age. But a strong sense of cooperation is noticed between the sexes with respect to their principle economic activity. Women are tabooed from hunting and plowing; otherwise in all other activities they help their men counterparts. Still, within the family the husband exercises supreme authority. The Oraon system of kinship terminology is a kind of classificatory of the same term in addressing most, though not all persons of the same sex and generation. The term *ba* (father) not only means one's own male parent but also others whom that parent would call brother; similarly, the *aiyo* (mother) not only applies to one's own female parent but also to all whom his father might marry. Similar is the case with regard to the terms *babu* (brother) and *mai* (daughter). In certain cases, however, a distinction is made in addressing the elder and the younger member of the

same generation. There exist certain rules of avoidance between certain affined kin's. Avoidance prevails between a man and his younger brother's wife and his wife's elder sisters. Such persons cannot even call one another by name. A less rigorous type of avoidance is noticed between a man and his son's wife. Joking relationship exists between grandparent and grand children. Roy (1935) observes that there are reasons to believe in the former existence of a system of marriage or union between such persons, because it is considered as a trivial offence if such persons are found to have illicit sex relation. Such joking relation also exists between a man and his elder brother's wives, and his wife's younger sisters who are consider potentials spouses.

The religion of the Oraons is of a composite nature. The supreme deity is a spirit, known as Dharmi or Dharmesh. Dharmesh is regarded as the husband of Dharti Mata (Mother Earth). They equate Dharmesh with the sun and regard him as the source of light and life. The existence of the world, the gift of children, the growth of the children, the growth of the fruits and animals of the earth are all believed to be due to this almighty. He is worshipped during the harvest season or at any time in performance of a vow. In worshipping the deity they usually sacrifice a white fowl or goat. When sacrifices to the evil spirits in times of sickness and other calamity fail to bring the desired results, a prayer is offered and sacrifices are vowed to him to get the best favour.

The Oraons do not have the idea that their sins are visited upon them, either in this world or next. The Oraons have a belief that there are among them some powerful sorcerers or witches who by some appropriate *mantras* extract the liver of an intended victim without the latter perceiving it. For all these they depend on the witch doctor. In all tribal societies this kind of specialists occupies a high position in the society. They firmly believe in witchcraft and put to death any suspected witch. The Oraon priest is known as *Pahan*. In each and every Oraon villages there is a *Pahan*. He performs all the regular sacrifices to tutelary deities and also act as a witch doctor.

The *Karma* and *Sarhul* are the two important festivals of the Oraons. The *Karma* is celebrated in the season for transplanting paddy saplings in seedbeds and the *Sarhul* is observed at the end of March or at the beginning of April. It is believed that in this season the marriage of mother earth is celebrated. The dead among the Oraons is cremated. The fire is set to the funeral pyre made of wood by a son or a near relative of the deceased. Everyone present places few pieces of wood over the corpse. After cremation the fragments of the bones are gathered and placed in a new earthen jar and brought to the village. The jar is suspended to a post in front of the residence of the dead. Once a year usually in January, bones of all the members of a clan who have died in the village or elsewhere during that year are ceremonially brought and added to the clan crematory which is a pool of water or a stream where the bones of all the clan ancestors are deposited.

The Tribal Population of the Target and Non-Target Villages

Table 1 reflects the details of population and families of the tribal people of the target villages. The total number of tribal families in the target villages is 214. The number of families of the Santals and the Oraons are 120 (56.07 per cent) and 94 (43.93 per cent) respectively. The population of the target villages is 956 of which 492 (51.46 per cent) are males and 464 (48.54 per cent) are females. The Study reveals that out of the total Santal population (516) of the target village's male and female population constitutes 55.04 per cent and 44.96 per cent respectively. The total number of Oraons of the target villages is 440. The number of male among the Oraons is 208 (47.27 per cent) and the female is 232 (52.73 per cent). As regard to the family is concerned, most of the tribal families are of nuclear. This type of family is constituted of a man, his wife and their unmarried children. As high as 71.96 per cent are nuclear family where as only 28.04 per cent are joint or extended family. Among the Santal families, 75 per cent are nuclear family and 25 per cent are joint or extended family. In case of

Oraon families, 68.09 per cent are nuclear family and only 31.91 per cent are joint or extended family.

Table 1

Family and Population in the Target Villages

Tribal groups	Family			Population		
	Joint (%)	Nuclear (%)	Total (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)
Santal	30 (25)	90 (75)	120 (56.07)	284 (55.04)	232 (44.96)	516 (53.97)
Oraon	30 (31.91)	64 (68.09)	94 (43.93)	208 (47.27)	232 (52.73)	440 (46.03)
Total	60 (28.04)	154 (71.96)	214 (100)	492 (51.46)	464 (48.54)	956 (100)

Table 2 reflects the total number of tribal families and population of the non-target villages. The total number of tribal families is 270 having a total population of 1287. The male population of the non-target villages (663; 51.52 per cent) is slightly higher than that of female (624; 48.48 per cent). The total Santal population of the non-target villages' is 1044. The male population is 532 (50.96 per cent) and female population is 512 (49.04). However the total number of Oraons of the non-target villages is 243 of which the number of male is 131(53.91 per cent) and female is 112 (46.09 per cent). They have 65.19 per

cent nuclear family and 34.81 per cent joint or extended family. Among the Santals, 64.55 per cent are nuclear family and only 35.45 per cent are joint or extended family. In case of Oraon households, 68 per cent are nuclear family and 32 per cent are joint or extended family.

Table 2

Family and Population in the Non-Target Villages

Tribal groups	Family			Population		
	Joint (%)	Nuclear (%)	Total (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)
Santal	78 (35.45)	142 (64.55)	220 (81.48)	532 (50.96)	512 (49.04)	1044 (81.11)
Oraon	16 (32)	34 (68)	50 (18.52)	131 (53.91)	112 (46.09)	243 (18.89)
Total	94	176	270	663	624	1287

Literacy in the Target and Non-Target Villages

Social and economic status of the tribal people in the study area is very poor. Educationally also no significant changes have been found among the tribal people of both target and non-target villages. Though some of the tribals now show interest in sending their children to school. But due to poor economic status most of the tribals are not able to bear the cost of education. The light of modern education is far away from the tribal society. Most of the tribal people are not able to explore the benefit of the modern education. The tribal children in most of the cases help their parents in the economic activities and thus they are not able to attend the formal educational institutions. The Tagore Society for Rural Development runs non-formal education center for the tribal children in the target villages so that tribals can avail the benefit of education. The Tagore Society for Rural Development also organises motivational camps for the tribal parents to enhance the interest of the tribal people regarding their child education. In spite of that retention rate of the tribal students even in the non-formal center is very poor and the child education is yet to be included in the priority list of the tribal parents.

Table 3 reveals the educational status of the tribals of the target villages, which is not satisfactory at all. The Study shows that 65.04 per cent of the tribal males in the target villages are illiterate and the female illiteracy is as high as 85.34 per cent in the target villages. Only 15.85 per cent of the tribal males and 10.78 per cent of the tribal females in the target villages are having primary education. Only a few tribal people have education of fifth standard and above. It is reported that only 17.89 per cent of the male population and 3.88 per cent of the female population are having pre-Madhyamik education. There are only two Madhyamik (10+) passed, two Higher Secondary (10+2) passed and two Graduates among the tribal males of the target villages.

Among the Santals of the target villages, it is observed that 63.03 per cent of the Santal males are illiterate and as high as 83.19 per cent of the Santal female are

illiterate. We have found only 16.90 per cent literate male Santals having primary education, while only 12.67 per cent of female Santals are having primary education. It is observed that 17.96 per cent of the Santal males and only 4.74 per cent of the Santal females have pre-Madhyamik education. We have also observed that there are only two each among the Santal males who have passed Madhyamik (10+), Higher Secondary (10+2) and Graduation. Among the Oraons of the target villages the situation is appalling than that of Santals. It is observed that as many as 67.79 per cent of the Oraon males and 87.50 percent of the Oraon females are illiterate. It is also reported that only 14.42 per cent of the Oraon males are having primary education, but only 9.48 per cent of the Oraon females are having primary education. A few Oraons have education of 5th standard and above. There are only 17.79 per cent of the Oraon males reported to have pre-Madhyamik, whereas only 3.02 per cent of the Oraon females are pre- Madhyamik. In case of the Oraons of the target villages no one is there who have passed Madhyamik (10+), Higher Secondary (10+2) or Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Science.

Educationally the tribal people of the non-target villages are poor than that of the target villages. The table 4 highlights the educational status of the tribals of the non-target villages. In the non-target villages 77.83 per cent of the tribal males and 86.54 per cent of the tribal females are illiterate. It is observed that in the non-target villages 17.50 per cent of the tribal males and 12.98 per cent of the tribal females are having primary education. However only 4.52 per cent of the tribal males and only 3.69 per cent of the tribal females are having pre-Madhyamik level of education. There is only one male among the tribal people of the non-target villages who have passed madhyamik (10+).

Among the Santals of the non-target villages, it is observed that, as many as 77.44 per cent of males and 86.72 per cent of females are illiterate. We have found only 18.42 per cent literate male Santals have primary education, while only 13.28 per cent of female Santals are having primary education. It is observed that only 4.14 per cent of the Santal males and 3.91 per cent of the

Santal females are reported to have educational standard up to pre-Madhyamik level. Educationally the Oraons of the non-target villages is slightly in the better position. We have found that 79.39 per cent of the Oraon males and 85.71 per cent of the Oraon females are illiterate. While 13.74 per cent of the Oraon males and 11.61 per cent of the Oraon females are having primary education. However only 6.11 per cent of the Oraon males and 2.68 per cent of the Oraon females are having pre-madhyamik level of education. There is only one among the Oraons of the non-target villages who have passed madhyamik (10+).

Table 3

Literacy in the Target Villages

Tribal groups	Illiterate		Literate							
	M (%)	F (%)	I-IV		V-X		Madhyamik (10+)		High School & above. (10+2)	
			M (%)	F (%)	M (%)	F (%)	M (%)	F (%)	M (%)	F (%)
Santal	179 (63.03)	193 (83.19)	48 (16.90)	28 (12.07)	51 (17.96)	11 (4.74)	2 (0.70)	0 (0)	4 (1.40)	0 (0)
Oraon	141 (67.79)	203 (87.50)	30 (14.42)	22 (9.48)	37 (17.79)	7 (3.02)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Total	320 (65.04)	396 (85.34)	78 (15.84)	50 (10.78)	88 (17.89)	18 (3.88)	2 (0.40)	0 (0)	4 (0.80)	0 (0)

Table 4

Literacy in the Non-Target Villages

Tribal groups	Illiterate		Literate							
	M (%)	F (%)	I-IV		V-X		Madhyamik (10+)		High School & above. (10+2)	
			M (%)	F (%)	M (%)	F (%)	M (%)	F (%)	M (%)	F (%)
Santal	412 (77.44)	444 (86.72)	98 (18.42)	68 (13.28)	22 (4.14)	20 (3.91)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Oraon	104 (79.39)	96 (85.71)	18 (13.74)	13 (11.61)	8 (6.11)	3 (2.68)	1 (0.76)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Total	516 (77.83)	540 (86.54)	116 (17.50)	81 (12.98)	30 (4.52)	23 (3.69)	1 (0.15)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)

Land Holding Pattern of the Tribal People of the Target and Non-Target Villages

Land ownership is a crucial factor in the tribal society. In primitive tribal society lands belonged to the community but now-a-days individual land ownership is recognised. If we analyze the table 5, it is clear that 10.75 per cent of the tribals of the target villages are not having any land. However 57.01 per cent of the tribals of the target villages are having land less than or equal to 2.5 acres and

23.83 per cent of the tribals are having less than or equal to 5 acres but more than 2.5 acres. Only 8.41 per cent of the tribals of the target villages have more than 5 acres of land. Among the Santals of the target villages, 11.67 per cent households are not having any land. However, 55 per cent of the Santal households are having less than or equal to 2.5 acres of land, while 21.66 per cent of the Santal households are having less than or equal to 5 acres but more than 2.5 acres of land. Only 11.67 per cent of the Santal households have more than 5 acres of land. Among the Oraons of the target villages, 9.57 per cent households are not having any land. However, 59.57 per cent of the Oraon households are having less than or equal to 2.5 acres of land, while 26.60 per cent of the Oraon households are having less than or equal to 5 acres but more than 2.5 acres of land. Only 4.26 per cent of the Santal households have more than 5 acres of land.

Table 5

Land Holding Patterns (in acres) in the Target Villages

Tribal groups	Land holding pattern				
	Landless (%)	0-2.5 (%)	2.6- 5 (%)	5.1 and above (%)	Total (%)
Santal	14 (11.67)	66 (55)	26 (21.66)	14 (11.67)	120 (100)
Oraon	9 (9.57)	56 (59.57)	25 (26.60)	4 (4.26)	94 (100)
Total	23 (10.75)	122 (57.01)	51 (23.83)	18 (8.41)	214 (100)

The table 6 shows that 11.11 per cent of the tribals of the non-target villages are not having any land. However 59.26 per cent of the tribals of the non-target villages are having land less than or equal to 2.5 acres and 24.24 per cent of the tribals are having more than 2.5 acres but less than or equal to 5 acres and only 5.19 per cent of the tribals of the non-target villages have more than 5 acres of land. Among the Santals of the non-target villages, 10.91 per cent households are not having any land. However 59.55 per cent of the Santal households are having less than or equal to 2.5 acres of land, while 24.54 per cent of the Santal households are having more than 2.5 acres but less than or equal to 5 acres of land. Only 5 per cent of them have more than 5 acres of land. Among the Oraons of the non-target villages, 12 per cent households are not having any land. However, 58 per cent of the Oraon households are having less than or equal to 2.5 acres of land, while 24 per cent of the Oraon households are having less than or equal to 5 acres but more than 2.5 acres of land. Only 6 per cent of the Santal households have more than 5 acres of land.

Table 6

Land Holding Patterns (in acres) in the Non-Target Villages

Tribal groups	Land holding pattern				
	Landless (%)	<2.5 (%)	2.6- 5 (%)	5.1 and above (%)	Total (%)
Santal	24 (10.91)	131 (59.55)	54 (24.54)	11 (5)	220 (100)
Oraon	6 (12)	29 (58)	12 (24)	3 (6)	50 (100)
Total	30 (11.11)	160 (59.26)	66 (24.44)	14 (5.19)	270 (100)

Occupation of the Tribal People in the Target and Non-Target Villages

The main economic activity of the tribals is agriculture. Though majority of the tribal people have at least a small piece of land, most of them work as agricultural labourers for their livelihood. Sometimes both the tribal men and women do earth work in the road if available. Most of the tribals also rear cattle. The common livestock of the tribals consist of cows, bullocks, pigs, goats etc. The Table 7 shows that 53.27 per cent of the tribal respondents of the target villages depend on cultivation, while 31.31 per cent of the tribal family depends on agriculture labourer. However, 12.62 per cent of the tribal families, for their livelihood depend on both cultivation and agriculture labourer. Whereas only 1.87 per cent of the tribal respondents depend on service for their livelihood, but only 0.93 per cent of the tribals depend on trade.

Whereas among the Santals of the target villages, 58.33 per cent respondents are cultivators, while 32.20 percent of the respondents are agricultural labourer, but only 7.50 per cent of the respondents depend on both cultivation and agriculture labour. However, only 1.67 per cent of the Santals are service-holders and no one among them depend on trade. While among the Oraons of the target villages, 46.80 per cent of the respondents are cultivators, 29.79 percent of the Oraon respondents depend on agriculture labour, but 19.15 percent of them depend on both cultivation and agriculture labour. Whereas only 2.13 per cent of the Oraon respondents are service-holders and the same percentage (2.13 per cent) of them depend on trade.

Among the tribals of the non-target villages, 48.15 percent depend on cultivation, while 40 per cent family depend on agriculture labour. However, 8.15 per cent of tribal families, for their livelihood, depend on both cultivation and agriculture labour. Whereas only 2.22 per cent of the tribal respondents depend on service for their livelihood and only 1.48 per cent of the tribals depend on trade. Among the Santals of the non-target villages, 51.81 per cent of respondents are cultivators, while 39.09 per cent are agricultural labourers and only 5 percent

depend on both cultivation and agriculture labour. However, 2.73 per cent of the Santal families are in service and only 1.36 per cent of the respondents depend on trade. Among the Oraons of the non-target villages, 32 per cent of the households depend on cultivation, while 44 percent of them depend on agricultural labour, but 22 percent of them depend on both cultivation and agriculture labour. Only 2 per cent of the Oraon respondents depend on trade and no one among them depend on service.

Table 7

Occupation of the Santals and Oraons in the Target Villages

Tribal groups	Occupation				
	Cultivator (%)	Agricultural laborer (%)	Cultivator and Agricultural laborer (%)	Service (%)	Trade (%)
Santal	70 (58.33)	39 (32.50)	9 (7.5)	2 (1.67)	0 (0)
Oraon	44 (46.80)	28 (29.79)	18 (19.15)	2 (2.13)	2 (2.13)
Total	114 (53.27)	67 (31.31)	27 (12.62)	4 (1.87)	2 (0.93)

Table 8

Occupation of the Santals and Oraons in the Non-Target Villages

Tribal groups	Occupation				
	Cultivator (%)	Agricultural laborer (%)	Cultivator and Agricultural laborer (%)	Service (%)	Trade (%)
Santal	114 (51.82)	86 (39.09)	11 (5)	6 (2.73)	3 (1.36)
Oraon	16 (32)	22 (44)	11 (22)	0 (0)	1 (2)
Total	130 (48.15)	108 (40)	22 (8.15)	6 (2.22)	4 (1.48)

Annual Income of the Tribals in the Target and Non-Target Villages

The annual income distribution pattern of the target villages reflects heavy concentration of the households in certain categories. The table 9 reveals that among the tribals of the target villages, 58.88 per cent of the households have an annual income ranging from Rs 5001.00 to Rs 10000.00. Like wise we have found that among the Santals, 60.84 per cent of the households have an annual income from Rs 5001.00 to Rs 10000.00. Among the Oraons, we have found that 56.38 per cent of the households have an annual income from Rs 5001.00 to Rs 10000.00. However 15.89 per cent of the tribal households of the target villages have an annual income upto Rs 5000.00, while only 6.82 per cent of the tribal households have income from Rs 10001.00 to Rs 15000.00, and only 8.40 per cent of the tribal households of the target villages have an annual income of Rs 15001.00 and above. Among the Santals of the target villages, only 13.33 per cent of the respondents have an annual income upto Rs 5000.00 and an equal

percentage of the households are having of Rs 10001.00 to Rs 15000.00, but only 12.5 per cent of the households have an annual income of Rs 15001.00 and above. Similarly among the Oraons of the target villages, only 19.15 per cent of the households have an annual income up to Rs 5000.00, while 21.28 per cent of the households are concentrated in the category of Rs 10001.00 to 15000.00 and only 3.19 per cent of the Oraon households have an annual income of Rs 15001.00 and above.

Table 9

Annual Income (in Rs) of the Santals and Oraons in the Target Villages

Tribal groups	0-5000 (%)	5001-10000 (%)	10001- 15000 (%)	15001 and above (%)	Total (%)
Santal	16 (13.33)	73 (60.84)	16 (13.33)	15 (12.50)	120 (56.07)
Oraon	18 (19.15)	53 (56.38)	20 (21.28)	3 (3.19)	94 (43.93)
Total	34 (15.89)	126 (58.88)	36 (16.82)	18 (8.41)	214 (100)

The annual income distribution pattern of non-target villages reflects heavy concentration of households in certain categories. The table 10 reflects that among the tribals of the non-target villages, 60.37 per cent of the households have an annual income from Rs 5001.00 to Rs 10000.00. We have also found that among the Santals, 60.91 per cent of the households have an annual income ranging from Rs 5001.00 to Rs 10000.00. Among the Oraons, 60 per cent of the households have an annual income from Rs 5001.00 to Rs 10000.00. However, 18.52 per cent of the tribal households of the non-target villages have an annual income upto Rs 5000.00, while only 13.33 per cent of the tribal households share ranging from Rs 10001.00 to Rs 15000.00, and only 7.41 per cent of the tribal households of the non-target villages have an annual income of

Rs 15001.00 and above. In the non-target villages we have found that 18.64 per cent of the households belonging to the Santal community have an annual income upto Rs 5000.00 and only 3.18 percent of the Santal households have an annual income from Rs 10001.00 to Rs 15000.00, but only 7.27 per cent of the households belonging to the Santal community have an annual income of Rs 15001.00 and above. While among the Oraons of the non-target villages, only 18 per cent of the households have an annual income upto Rs 5000.00, but 14 per cent of the households are having earnings from Rs 10001.00 to 15000.00 and only 8 per cent of the Oraon households have an annual income of Rs 15001.00 and above.

Table 10

Annual Income (in Rs) of the Santals and Oraons of the Non-Target villages

Tribal groups	0-5000 (%)	5001-10000 (%)	10001- 15000 (%)	15001 and above (%)	Total (%)
Santal	41 (18.64)	134 (60.91)	29 (13.18)	16 (7.27)	220 (100)
Oraon	9 (18)	30 (60)	7 (14)	4 (8)	50 (100)
Total	50 (18.52)	163 (60.37)	36 (13.33)	20 (7.41)	270 (100)