

## Chapter-3

---

### MAJOR TRIBAL GROUPS AND THEIR SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION

---

#### 3.1 Introduction

Man and Society has been the subjects of study in India from time immemorial. The *Manusmriti* gives an exhaustive social and structural account of the people of India. The main principles of the social structure presented by Manu are many but mention may be made of some, like i) the principles of *varna*, ii) all human beings are born unequal in their capacity of execution but all are equal in their capacity of enjoyment, iii) that society must be based on division of labour and so on (Vidyarthi & Rai, 1976). The tribal people in India live in the forests, hills and naturally isolated regions. On the basis of above three principles, the tribal life of of Mal subdivision can be highlighted.

#### 3.2 Major Tribal Groups

Andre Beteille (1974) following N. K. Bose's classification, mentions language, religion and the degree of isolation as the main bases of classification of tribes. Beteille, however, considers the manner in which they make their living as the simplest way to arrange them into categories. Bose (1972) classifies the tribal people into three main groups: (1) hunters, fishers and gatherers; (2) Shifting cultivators; and (3) Settled agriculturists, using the plough and plough cattle.

B.K. Roy Burman (1972) opined that tribal communities are divided into five territorial groupings, taking into account their historical, ethnic and socio-cultural relations. These are: (1) north-east India, comprising Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur and Tripura; (2) the sub-Himalayan region of north and north-west India, comprising hill districts of Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh; (3) Central and East India, comprising West Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Chhattishgarh, Andhrapradesh and Jharkhand; (4) South India comprising Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka; and (5) Western India, comprising Rajasthan, Gujarat and Maharastra.

With the establishment of the Kamta-Koch kingdom in the 16<sup>th</sup> century Indo-Mongoloid group of people began to pour in North Bengal. Lepcha, Bhutia, Rabha, Garo and Mech who belongs to tribal community are mainly found in Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri districts. Later on the Santal people began to pour in North Bengal immediately after the suppression of the Santal Rebellion (Choudhury, 1982). Later on when Britishers started tea plantations the Oraons, Malpahari, Kharias, Mundas, Lohars were bought from Chhotonagpur

region. The tribes of Dooars may be conveniently classified on the basis of their features and physique into two broad types- Dravidian and Mongoloid. The Oraons, Malpaharis, Kharias, Mundas, Lohars and Santals may be put under the Dravidian group while Mech, Rabha, Garo and Toto belongs to Mongoloid. H.H. Risley (1891) describes the Dravidians as “the form of head usually inclines to be dolichocephalic, but all other characters present a marked contrast to Aryans. The nose is thick and broad, and the formula expressing its proportionate dimensions is higher than in any known race, except the Negro. The facial angle is comparatively low; the lips are thick; the face wide and fleshy; the features coarse and irregular. The average stature ranges in a long series of tribes from 156.2 to 162.1 centimetres; the figure is squat; and the limbs sturdy. The colour of the skin varies from very dark brown to a shade closely approaching black”. The most important character of the later group are “a relatively short (brachycephalic) head; a broad face; a short wide nose, very low in the bridge, and in extremely cases almost bridge less; high and projecting cheek bones, and eyelids peculiarity formed so as to give the impression that the eyes are obliquely set in the head”.

The major tribal groups of the Mal subdivision are Oraon, Munda, Santal, Lohar, Mahali, Kharia, Tamang, Limbu, Malpaharia and Mech. In the present context, the mentioned tribal groups are discussed in respect of their identity, socio-economic conditions and spatial distribution over different Gram Panchayat areas of Mal subdivision.

### **3.2.1 The Oraons**

Oraon, differently known as Uraon, Oran or Oram, is an aborigine inhabits in various states across in India as well as in Bangladesh. Majority of them living in Chhotonagpur region of Jharkhand are known as Kurukh. Earlier they used to live at Rohta plateau but dislodged by other people and accordingly migrated to Chhotonagpur where they settled in the vicinity of Munda-speaking tribes. Historians indicate this may have occurred around 100 BC. This tribal community in India is also known worldwide as they still believe in following age old custom of human sacrifice. These sacrifices are carried out during the famous Sarhul festival celebrated before cultivation of crops, as a mark of respect to please the local deity. Traditionally, Oraons followed ‘*Sarna*’ Dharma but due to influence of Hinduism, they started their religious beliefs as Hindu. *Sarna* followers perform religious rituals under shade of *sacred grove*. Christian missionaries found depression and starvation in the Oraons and influenced many of them to accept Christianity. Among Christian Oraons, there are both Roman Catholic Oraons and protestant Oraons (Purkayastha, 2012). Common

surname of the Oraons are Oraon, Minj, Lakra, Kujur, Tirkey, Kerkatta, Bhagat, Toppo, Ekka, Tigga, Beek and Xalxo.

### **Social Structure**

There are total of 14 clans in Oraon tribal community like, Gari, Lakra, Kispotta, Runda, Tirky, Toppo, Linda, Ekka, Kuzur, Bek, Kerketta, Bandi, Minz and Khalkho. They are of dark complexion, and have projecting jaws and thick lips, while their forehead is low and narrow, and their eyes are meaningless and vacant (Dutt, 1984). The Oraons opted Christianity during British rule by missionaries. During the agrarian troubles the Oraons turned to Christianity, in order to gain protection from oppressions of their landlords and the money lenders (Dhan, 1967). Oraons prefer to marry an Oraon only. Christian Oraon often mariysnon communities like Munda, Kharia and Santal due to influence of Christianity. Saran Oraons prefer marrying within Oraon following tradition. Marriage is arranged by guardians but opinion of bride and groom are respected. Child marriage is not allowed. S.C. Roy (1970) has listed a number of groups in an Oraon village in terms of their different occupations. The Oraons have also been classified on the basis of their tenure status. They have a rich and vast range of folk songs, dances, tales as well as traditional musical instruments. Both men and women participate in dance which is performed at social events and festivals. They pass their time in music and dance. They sing folk songs in which their life style emerges. Their dances and songs are deeply rooted in their social and cultural life. Mandar, drums, Nagra and Dholak and flute are main musical instruments they use.

### **Economic Activities**

Oraons are primarily agriculturists. Both man and wife live as labourers, and the race is known as chief labouring class of Bengal. They believe that they were created for labour, and have a natural relish for it (Dutt, 1984). Many of them go out as emigrant coolies to various parts of the world. In Dooars of North Bengal, they are basically tea garden workers. There are two types of workers: permanent workers and seasonal workers. Their usual diet consists of rice, *dal* and vegetables. Fish and meat are occasionally consumed. What is striking, however, is that leave, flower, seed, root and fruit are an integral part of Oraon diet.

### **Spatial Distribution**

Distributions of Oraons are noticed almost in all tea gardens and all villages of the Subdivision. Oraons are the major tribal group of the Dooars. In Mal subdivision about

40.31% of total tribal households are occupied by Oraons. In Mal block the share of Oraons to total tribes are maximum (44.71%) among the three blocks. In tea garden areas they are absolute majority in number. Maximum concentrations are to be found at Rangamatee GP (57.89%) followed by Bagrakot (52.80%) and Bidhannagar (52.20). Total share of Oraons households to total tribal households are very poor in non-tea garden areas e.g. Moulani (8.67%) and Lataguri GP (21.20%). Highest share of Oraon households to total Oraon households of the Mal subdivision are found in Rangamatee GP (14.36%). The next position goes to Looksan GP (12.49%) of Nagrakata block. Only 0.07% of the total Oraon households of the subdivision are found to live at Moulani GP. Similarly in Chapadanga and Kranti this community is very poor in concentration.

**Table 3.1** GP-Wise Distribution of Oraon Households, Percentage to Total Tribal Households, and Percentage to Total Oraon Households

GP Name	Oraon Households			GP Name	Oraon Households		
	Total Hslds	% to Total Tribal Hslds	% to total Oraon Hslds		Total Hslds	% to Total Tribal Hslds	% to total Oraon Hslds
Bagrakot	2112	52.8	11.64	Matiali Batabari-I	955	28.94	5.26
Odlabari	589	28.05	3.25	Matiali Batabari-II	876	48.67	4.83
Rangamatee	2605	57.89	14.36	Bidhannagar	783	52.2	4.32
Rajadanga	907	39.43	5.00	Matiali Hat	393	24.56	2.17
Damdin	1497	42.77	8.25	Indong Matiali	1026	36.64	5.66
Tesimla	325	59.09	1.7	Matiali Block	4033	36.66	22.23
Kumlai	803	36.5	4.43	Angrabhasa-I	385	42.78	2.12
Changmari	325	32.5	1.79	Angrabhasa-II	225	34.62	1.24
Kranti	145	36.25	0.80	Sulka para	822	34.98	4.53
Chapadanga	15	30	0.08	Champaguri	1022	21.74	5.63
Moulani	13	8.67	0.07	Looksan	2265	51.48	12.49
Lataguri	53	21.2	0.29	Nagrakata Block	4719	36.3	26.01
Mal Block	9389	44.71	51.76	Mal Subdivision	18141	40.31	100.0

*Source: Compiled by the Researcher*

### 3.2.2 The Mundas

Munda is the tribal community of South East Asia. The Munda Tribes are highly respected people from the time of pre-Independence of India. Birsa Munda is the most respected Munda person who turned into a Prophet and was freedom fighter in the Indian freedom struggle. The Munda are an ethnic tribal group originating in the Chhotonagpur plateau. They originally spoke the Mundari language, which belongs to the Munda sub group of the Austro-Asiatic languages (Riccio et al, 2011). They are likely descended from the Austro-Asiatic migrants from Southeast Asia. The Munda are found across Assam, Orissa,

West Bengal, in addition to Jharkhand. They are also found in Bangladesh. This tribal ethnic group is one of the largest tea tribes in India. Common Munda surnames in the Dooars are Munda, Horo, Nagesia and Baxla.

### **Social Structure**

Social arrangements of Mundas are in basic pattern and thereby very simple. Munda People follow their own indigenous India religion referred to as Sarnaism. Sarnaism reveals the belief in a God called Singbonga, the God of Mundas, who is neither the sun nor a God that would dwell in the sun, though he is in the Heaven of *Sarnaism*. With the arrival of British colonialism, Christian missionaries came to preach to the tribals. A large number of Mundas accepted Christianity. But still, the majority of Mundas saved their religion from annihilation. Today, because of their efforts and strength from their beliefs, the Majority of Mundas adhere to the indigenous religion of their ancestors. The surname of Mundas defines their identity. Many surnames are common among other tribes with minute variations. Some of the surnames are: Aind/Dungdung, Dhan/Baba, Bading, Bage, Bagsuri, Bajrai, Balmuchu, Barha, Barla, Barjo, Baru, Budu, Mundu, Linda, Kandir, Jatrom etc. Munda people are involved in agriculture. For this reason Munda people continue to show respect to the seasonal festivals of Mage, Phagu, *Karam*, *Sarhul*, and *Sohrai* etc.

### **Economic Activities**

Since the primitive times Munda people have been wandering and hunting, later they became settled agricultural cultivators. Munda people are excellent in Basket work and weaving. With the help of reservation policy of Government of India listing Munda people in Scheduled Tribes plentiful of them have been now employed in various government sectors especially Indian Railways. In Dooars of Jalpaiguri district Mundas are engaged in agricultural activities. Most of them have no lands. So they use to cultivate others' land as *bargadars*. Traditional adhiary system is dominated there. Among the tribal groups in this region, the Mundas are mostly educated hence they are engaged in different govt. services. Administrative ranks are also occupied by them.

### **Spatial Distribution**

Mundas are second major tribal groups in the Mal subdivision of Dooars. In Mal subdivision about 10% households of the total tribal households are occupied by Mundas. Maximum concentrations of Mundas in respect of total tribal households are occurred in

Sulkapara GP (53.32%) followed by Looksan (40%) and Odlabari (20%). There are eight such GPs where the Munda households are more than 10% of the total tribal households. Highest share of Munda households to total Munda households of the Mal subdivision are found in Champaguri GP (27.76%). The second and third position goes to Rangamatee (11.12%) and Odlabari (9.33%) respectively. Huge concentration of Mundas occur in Indong Tea Garden mouza and Juranti Tea Garden of Indong Matiali GP; Matiali Tea Garden mouza of Matiali Hat GP.

**Table 3.2** GP-Wise Distribution of Munda Households, Percentage to Total Tribal Households, and Percentage to Total Munda Households

GP Name	Munda Households			GP Name	Munda Households		
	Total Hslds	% to Total Tribal Hslds	% to total Munda Hslds		Total Hslds	% to Total Tribal Hslds	% to total Munda Hslds
Bagrakot	211	5.28	4.68	Matiali Batabari-I	215	6.52	4.76
Odlabari	421	20.05	9.33	Matiali Batabari-II	121	6.72	2.68
Rangamatee	502	11.16	11.12	Bidhannagar	88	5.87	1.95
Rajadanga	206	8.96	4.56	Matiali Hat	225	14.06	4.99
Damdin	312	8.91	6.91	Indong Matiali	150	5.36	3.32
Tesimla	-	-	-	<b>Matiali Block</b>	<b>799</b>	<b>0.47</b>	<b>17.70</b>
Kumlai	167	7.59	3.70	Angrabhasa-I	52	8.33	1.15
Changmari	103	10.30	2.28	Angrabhasa-II	75	12.00	1.66
Kranti	-	-	-	Sulkapara	78	53.32	1.73
Chapadanga	-	-	-	Champaguri	1253	6.43	27.76
Moulani	7	4.67	0.16	Looksan	302	40.00	6.69
Lataguri	25	10.00	0.55	<b>Nagrakata Block</b>	<b>1760</b>	<b>13.54</b>	<b>39.00</b>
<b>Mal Block</b>	<b>1954</b>	<b>9.30</b>	43.30	<b>Mal Subdivision</b>	<b>4513</b>	<b>10.03</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: Compiled by the Researcher

### 3.2.3 The Santals

The Santals are a nomad race, believed to have emigrated from the northern parts of India. The Santals are absolutely the best specimen of the wild tribes in India. Suniti Kumar Chatterjee thought that the word 'Santal' came from *Samantapal* meaning border security. Grierson opined that the word is derived from *Kherwat*. The Santal Parganas of present Jharkhand state is mostly inhabited by the Santals. They spread out in all the districts of West Bengal from there. In Dooars of Jalpaiguri district Santals are found almost everywhere. They are short heighted, well-made, and active man, having a round face, and the thick lips, high

cheek-bones, and spread nose, straight haired. Common Santal surnames are Murmu, Tudu, Hansda, Hembrom, Soren and Santal etc.

### **Social Structure**

The tribal divisions of Santals are: the Saran, Murmu, Marli, Kisku, Besara, Hansda, Tudi, Baski, Hemroo, and Chorai; but they do not materially differ from each other in any respect. The chief God of all these groups is *Sing Bonga*, the Sun-God. The women pay great respect likewise to the elephant, and touch the earth with their foreheads before him, praying him to bless their children, who are seated in perfect confidence at his feet. The Santals are admirer of nature, and never fell down any useful or ornamental tree, which gives them clearings a park-like and unmistakable appearance; and they enjoy life better than other people of their same grade, being immensely fond of music and dancing. Their flute is a simple instrument made of the bamboo, but gives out deep, rich tones; and every village has a dancing ground where the youths and maidens meet in the evening to dance and sing. All marriages in the traditional Santal society are love matches. The selection is said to be preceded by a beastly festival, named *Bandana* which is held in the month of January, and lasts for six days. Polygamy is permitted, but seldom has recourse to; and the wife is always treated with kindness. Divorces are allowed in case of maladjustment. The chief ornaments in use among both sexes are flowers and feathers, and also cowtail-hair necklaces, which are very neatly manufactured. The women also wear on their arms, ankles, and throats ornaments made of brass and bell- metal, which are excessively heavy; and the love of the husband is in this sense, a sore burden to the wife (Dutt, 1984).

### **Economic Activities**

Santals are good hunters, good herdsman, and good agriculturist, and thereby self dependent in everything. But they are mostly settled agriculturalists (Sharma, 2007). Santals always reclaim the jungle they come to inhabit, carefully collect all their products. In Dooars areas the Santals are either agriculturalists or agricultural labourers. The hut of the Santal is well made, and well raised. Its walls are made of matting, or hurdle, or thin sticks smeared over with mud; and owing to his love of colours, a grey appearance is often given to them by their painting with different shades of red, white, and black, according to the owner's fancy. The Santals usually have large family to accommodate in a house.

### Spatial Distribution

The Santals are the third major tribal community of the Mal subdivision. In every GP areas of the three blocks of the subdivision, the presence of the Santal households have been noticed. In Mal subdivision about 8.43% of the total tribal households are occupied by Santals. Maximum concentrations of Santals in respect of total tribal households occurs in Chapadanga GP (64%) followed by Moulani (51.33%), Kranti (36.25%) and Lataguri (18.40%). Almost in all GPs, shares of Santal households to total tribal households are significant in number. Highest numbers of Santal households are found in Damdim (440) followed by Matiali Batabari-I (422). Highest share of Santal households to total Santal households of the Mal subdivision are found in Damdim GP (11.63%). The second and third position goes to Matiali Batabari-I (11.13%) and Rajadanga (7.96%) respectively. In Damdim Tea Garden mouza of Damdim GP and Jogesh Chandra Tea Garden mouza of Changmari GP, the Santals are densely concentrated. So, it may be said that the distribution of Santal households are found both in tea garden based GP areas and non-tea garden based GP areas.

**Table 3.3** GP-Wise Distribution of Santal Households, Percentage to Total Tribal Households, and Percentage to Total Santal Households

GP Name	Santal Households			GP Name	Santal Households		
	Total Hslds	% to Total Tribal Hslds	% to total Santal Hslds		Total Hslds	% to Total Tribal Hslds	% to total Santal Hslds
Bagrakot	202	5.05	5.33	Matiali Batabari-I	422	12.79	11.13
Odlabari	141	6.71	3.72	Matiali Batabari-II	75	4.17	1.98
Rangamatee	103	2.29	2.72	Bidhannagar	221	14.73	5.83
Rajadanga	302	13.13	7.96	Matiali Hat	60	3.75	1.58
Damdim	440	12.57	11.60	Indong Matiali	160	5.71	4.22
Tesimla	75	13.64	1.98	<b>Matiali Block</b>	<b>938</b>	<b>8.53</b>	<b>24.74</b>
Kumlai	275	12.50	7.25	Angrabhasa-I	149	16.56	3.93
Changmari	125	12.50	3.30	Angrabhasa-II	21	3.23	0.55
Kranti	145	36.25	3.83	Sulkapara	157	6.68	4.14
Chapadanga	32	64.00	0.84	Champaguri	297	6.32	7.83
Moulani	77	51.33	2.03	Looksan	267	6.07	7.04
Lataguri	46	18.40	1.21	<b>Nagrakata Block</b>	<b>891</b>	<b>6.85</b>	<b>23.50</b>
<b>Mal Block</b>	<b>1963</b>	<b>9.35</b>	<b>51.77</b>	<b>Mal Subdivision</b>	<b>3792</b>	<b>8.43</b>	<b>100.00</b>

*Source: Compiled by the Researcher*

### 3.2.4 The Lohars

The term 'Lohar' is derived from the Sanskrit word 'lauha-kara', meaning 'a worker on iron'. Lohars are the working group of tribal people in Jharkhand-Bihar region who depends

on the work of ironsmith. *Gadia Lohars* are a nomadic community of Rajasthan. They are also known as Viswakarma and Panchal in Uttar Pradesh and Haryana. At present Lohars are forced to leave their traditional occupation and some of them migrated to nearby towns to involve in the house building activities in grill factories etc. A section of the Lohars in Bihar is brought to Jalpaiguri district for plantation works. In Dooars they are subdivided in three groups namely: Birbhumia, Gobindapuria, and Shersaria. A section of the Lohars has come from Nepal who are known as Kamia (Debnath, 2014). They used to prepare wheels of the bullock carts.

### **Social Structure**

The Lohars are primarily Hindu by faith, though some are Sikh and Muslim. They carry with them a small image of Goddess Kali in a cupboard where small stores and valuables are kept on their cart. They marry only other within their community but select spouses another clan to their own. All marriages are arranged for them by their parents when they are still children but officially marry when they are older. Monogamy is the norm although a second wife is permitted in exceptional circumstances (such as barrenness of the first wife). Divorce is rare but sanctioned as is the remarriage of widows, widowers and divorcees. The number of subgroups varies from region to region. The Lohars are also divided into a number of exogamous gotras or clans of equal status.

### **Economic Activities**

Lohars are traditionally iron workers and blacksmiths, along with a subsidiary occupation of agriculture. They are skilled at making and repairing agricultural implements like the sickle, spade, hoe, axe and plough, as well as buckets, pans, knives, scissors, grills and cages. They also fix iron shoes on the hoofs of bullocks. Some of those living in cities work in government and private service or industrial work. The landless among them are increasingly migrating to urban centres in search of employment. In Dooars of Jalpaiguri the Lohars are engaged in tea garden as labourers. Some of them are associated with their traditional economic activities cited above. Agricultural labours are there due to lack of their own land. A section of Lohars are doing their traditional activities in neighbour towns, states.

### **Spatial Distribution**

In Mal subdivision about 6.51 % households of the total tribal households are occupied by Lohars. Maximum concentrations of Lohars in respect of total tribal households occurs in

Sulkapara GP (22.21%) followed by Angrabhasa-II (21.85%) and Looksan (19.45%). All these three GPs are belonging to Nagrakata block. Highest share of Lohar households to total Lohar households of the Mal subdivision are found in Champaguri GP (17.81%). The second and third position goes to Odlabari (12.38%) and Kumlai (9.28%) respectively. In Tesimla, Chapadanga, Moulani, Kranti and Bidhannagar the Lohars are very rare or totally absent. Huge concentrations of Lohars occur in Tandu Tea Garden mouza of Sulkapara GP; Jogesh Chandra Tea Garden mouza of Changmari GP; Elenbury Tea Garden and Lishriver Tea Garden of Bagrakot GP.

**Table 3.4** GP-Wise Distribution of Lohar Households, Percentage to Total Tribal Households, and Percentage to Total Lohar Households

GP Name	Lohar Households			GP Name	Lohar Households		
	Total Hslds	% to Total Tribal Hslds	% to total Lohar Hslds		Total Hslds	% to Total Tribal Hslds	% to total Lohar Hslds
Bagrakot	225	5.63	7.68	Matiali Batabari-I	226	6.85	7.71
Odlabari	363	17.29	12.38	Matiali Batabari-II	125	6.94	4.26
Rangamatee	144	3.20	4.91	Bidhannagar	25	1.67	0.85
Rajadanga	57	2.48	1.94	Matiali Hat	72	4.50	2.46
Damdin	232	6.63	7.92	Indong Matiali	215	7.68	7.34
Tesimla	-	-	-	<b>Matiali Block</b>	<b>663</b>	<b>0.55</b>	<b>22.62</b>
Kumlai	272	12.36	9.28	Angrabhasa-I	60	6.33	2.05
Changmari	86	8.60	2.93	Angrabhasa-II	57	21.85	1.94
Kranti	-	-	-	Sulkapara	142	22.21	4.84
Chapadanga	-	-	-	Champaguri	522	1.60	17.81
Moulani	4	2.67	0.14	Looksan	75	19.45	2.56
Lataguri	29	11.60	0.99	<b>Nagrakata Block</b>	<b>856</b>	<b>6.58</b>	<b>29.21</b>
<b>Mal Block</b>	<b>1412</b>	<b>6.72</b>	<b>48.17</b>	<b>Mal Subdivision</b>	<b>2931</b>	<b>6.51</b>	<b>100.00</b>

*Source: Compiled by the Researcher*

### 3.2.5 The Mahalis

Mahali is an indigenous tribal community of India, Nepal and Bangladesh. They mostly reside in areas adjacent to Santal Parganas of Chhotonagpur plateau. In Uttar Dinajpur and Rajshahi of Bangladesh they are much primitive than the communities of tea belts of Jalpaiguri district. After tea plantation, the Mahalis were brought to Jalpaiguri district. Mahali people form a difference which is clubbed together with the Munda tribe. They are famous for

some special activities like sweeping, bamboo works, removal of dead bodies, uprooting of trees and jungles etc.

### **Social Structure**

Mahalis are considered to be untouchable to other tribal people. There are five sub tribes of the Mahali tribe: these are Bansphor Mahali, Patar Mahali, Sulukhi Mahali, Tanti Mahali and Munda Mahali. In Nagrakata block they are confined within a few areas. The material culture of the Mahali tribes reveals their existence-oriented economy. They erect their houses with mud, bamboo, wood, *kosi* grasses and tiles. The houses are rectangular in shape. The houses do not have windows. The Mahali follow monogamy in their married life. But bigamy and tri-gamy are also allowed in case of barrenness, widowhood and widowerhood. Cross cousin marriage and parallel cousin marriage are not allowed in Mahali society. The Mahalis believe in nuclear family, the joint family is rare. The nuclear family consists of the father, mother and their unmarried children. The married children establish their own family. Mahalis worship the gods of *Dharambonga*, *Garowa* and *Singbonga*.

### **Economic Structure**

The Mahali economy is based on basketry, collection of forest produce, agriculture, carrying of palanquins and labour. The main means of Bansphor Mahali has been basket making, Patar Mahali-basket making and cultivation, Sulukhi Mahali-cultivation and labour, Tanti Mahali- carrying palanquins and Munda Mahali- Cultivations. In Mal subdivision, the Mahalis were brought by the Britishers to clear the jungles for tea plantation and spread of railway lines. They are efficient to do such works. Now they are engaged in basketry activities in Mal subdivision and tea gardens labours. Some of the Mahalis are engaged in sweeping activities in Mal Municipality town. Economically they are very poor.

### **Spatial Distribution**

Except in some non-tea garden based GP areas, in every GP areas of the three blocks, the Mahalis are to be found to live. In Mal subdivision about 5.70% of the total tribal households are occupied by Mahalis. Maximum concentrations of Mahalis in respect of total tribal households occurs in Tesimla GP (14%) followed by Changmari (12.10%) and Matiali Batabari-I (11.48%). Highest share of Mahali households to total Mahali households of the Mal subdivision are found in Champaguri GP (15.05%). The second and third position goes to Matiali Batabari-I (14.78%) and Champaguri (9.09%) respectively. Huge concentrations of

Mahalis are found in Lishriver Tea Garden mouza of Bagrakot GP and Jogesh Chandra Tea Garden mouza of Changmari GP. In Chapadanga, Kranti, Moulani and Lataguri GPs the Mahali settlements are totally absent. Their numbers are also insignificant in the GPs of Odlabari, Angrabhasa-I and Angrabhasa-II.

**Table 3.5** GP-Wise Distribution of Mahali Households, Percentage to Total Tribal Households, and Percentage to Total Mahali Households

GP Name	Mahali Households			GP Name	Mahali Households		
	Total Hslds	% to Total Tribal Hslds	% to total Mahali Hslds		Total Hslds	% to Total Tribal Hslds	% to total MahaliH slds
Bagrakot	162	4.05	6.32	Matiali Batabari-I	379	11.48	14.78
Odlabari	29	1.38	1.13	Matiali Batabari-II	75	4.17	2.93
Rangamatee	75	1.67	2.93	Bidhannagar	156	10.40	6.08
Rajadanga	47	2.04	1.83	Matiali Hat	124	7.75	4.84
Damdim	169	4.83	6.59	Indong Matiali	127	4.54	4.95
Tesimla	77	14.00	3.00	<b>Matiali Block</b>	<b>861</b>	<b>7.83</b>	<b>33.58</b>
Kumlai	151	6.86	5.89	Angrabhasa-I	21	2.33	0.82
Changmari	121	12.10	4.72	Angrabhasa-II	23	3.54	0.90
Kranti	-	-	-	Sulka para	209	8.89	8.15
Chapadanga	-	-	-	Champaguri	386	8.21	15.05
Moulani	-	-	-	Looksan	233	5.30	9.09
Lataguri	-	-	-	<b>Nagrakata Block</b>	<b>872</b>	<b>6.71</b>	<b>34.01</b>
<b>Mal Block</b>	<b>831</b>	<b>3.96</b>	<b>32.41</b>	<b>Mal Subdivision</b>	<b>2564</b>	<b>5.70</b>	<b>100.00</b>

*Source: Compiled by the Researcher*

### 3.2.6 The Kharias

The Kharias are one of the largest indigenous ethnic groups of India. This tribal ethnic group is one of the largest tea tribes in India. They mainly inhabit in Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Assam and Tripura. All Kharia speak their traditional dialect. The language spoken by them is a branch of Munda language which is similar to Khmer language. They are very close to the nature and the culture of the tribe is influenced by its ecological and cultural surroundings. Common Kharia surnames are Kharia, Kerkatta, Surin, Dongdung etc.

## **Social Structure**

The whole of Kharia tribal societies are segregated into three broad segments, each having different occupations. These are namely the Dudh Kharia, Dhelki Kharia and Hill Kharia. Most of the Kharia tribal families are nuclear. The general trend is that the children of Kharia tribes live separately after getting married. The Kharia tribes adapt to part lineal and patriarchal family. There is wide prevalence of clan system. Popular clans of Kharias are *Badya, Gulgu, Bhuiya, Jaru, Tesa, Soren, Hansda and Hembrom* etc. The whole of the Kharia tribe has been rightly identified by their kinship to a common object, known as totem. They protect these totemic objects being injured. In order to curtail the huge expense of bride price, often it has been found that two Kharia brothers marry the two sisters of the same family. The popular practice is not to marry, within the clan, which is taboo in the Kharia society.

## **Economic Activities**

The Kharia family is an economic grouping: it provides food, shelter and clothing for its members, irrespective of their contribution towards the economic activity. Husband and wife both contribute to the maintenance of the family, but there is division of labour based on sex between them. Thus, the husband goes out for hunting game and fishing, whereas the wife collects fruits, tubers and edible herbs. In Dooars of Jalpaiguri district they basically depend on tea garden as labourer. Some of them also depend on small forest products. Houses are built, constructed and repaired by men; and women maintain them. The women also draw water and cook food. Domestic animals are looked after by men but children are of the responsibility of women.

## **Spatial Distribution**

In Mal subdivision about 5.26% households of the total tribal households are occupied by Kharias. Maximum concentrations of Kharias in respect of total tribal households occurs in Lataguri GP (18%) followed by Moulani (16.67%) and Matiali Batabari-I (13.15%). Highest share of Kharia households to total Kharia households of the Mal subdivision are found in Matiali Batabari-I (18.32%) followed by Champaguri GP (10.47%). In Tesimla, Chapadanga, Kranti, Angrabhasa-I and Angrabhasa-II Kharias are very rare or totally absent. In spite of their overall poor concentration, Kharias are scattered and distributed throughout the subdivision.

**Table 3.6** GP-Wise Distribution of Kharia Households, Percentage to Total Tribal Households, and Percentage to Total Kharia Households

GP Name	Kharia Households			GP Name	Kharia Households		
	Total Hslds	% to Total Tribal Hslds	% to total Kharia Hslds		Total Hslds	% to Total Tribal Hslds	% to total Kharia Hslds
Bagrakot	130	3.25	5.49	Matiali Batabari-I	434	13.15	18.32
Odlabari	31	1.48	1.31	Matiali Batabari-II	155	8.61	6.54
Rangamatee	143	3.18	6.04	Bidhannagar	106	7.07	4.47
Rajadanga	103	4.48	4.35	Matiali Hat	65	4.06	2.74
Damdim	145	4.14	6.12	Indong Matiali	183	6.54	7.72
Tesimla	-	-	-	<b>Matiali Block</b>	<b>943</b>	<b>0.35</b>	<b>39.81</b>
Kumlai	145	6.59	6.12	Angrabhasa-I	39	1.33	1.65
Changmari	113	11.30	4.77	Angrabhasa-II	12	9.23	0.51
Kranti	22	5.50	0.93	Sulkapara	60	10.55	2.53
Chapadanga	-	-	-	Champaguri	248	3.51	10.47
Moulani	25	16.67	1.06	Looksan	165	11.91	6.96
Lataguri	45	18.00	1.90	<b>Nagrakata Block</b>	<b>524</b>	<b>4.03</b>	<b>22.12</b>
<b>Mal Block</b>	<b>902</b>	<b>4.30</b>	<b>38.08</b>	<b>Mal Subdivision</b>	<b>2369</b>	<b>5.26</b>	<b>100.00</b>

*Source: Compiled by the Researcher*

### 3.2.7 The Tamangs

Tamang is the very ancient tribe of the Himalayan regions of Nepal and India. The Tamangs are original people of Yambu valley (Kathmundu). They had self-rule and autonomous roughly two centuries ago. Systematically displaced during the expansion period of Gorkha Kingdom and this practice continues even to the present day. Now Tamang people are settled in Darjeeling district and Mal community development block of Jalpaiguri district. In plains of Dooars they use to do horse riding for better animal husbandry.

#### Social Structure

The Tamangs are divided into different clans. Main clans are *Dong, Henangan, Moktang, Comba, Lopchan, Thing, Bhasur, Lo, Morpa, Tupa, Blon, Singor, Borjyu, Lungpa, Syapa and Thokor* etc. Most of the Tamang people now are moulded with the Nepali speaking people. Once they used separate language and scripts, now they have lost these and speak Nepali language. There are five main worshipping among the Tamang people: *Khyappa Sung, Bhumipuja, Gotpuja, Makar Sankranti, Gurupuja* etc. Tamangs are Buddhist or Hindu in religion. They were considered low caste automatically in the dominant Hindu state and

system, and thus, there is exploitation, marginalization, and oppression of Tamang people. Very peculiar to Tamang people is that there are complex marriage restrictions within their community.

### Economic Activities

Most of the Tamangs are farmers, engaged in agriculture as small holders and day labourers. In Doars of Jalpaiguri district Tamangs are depended on tea garden. They mostly act as tea garden car/ cart drivers of three to four wheelers. A large section of male workers are working as guard or *choukidar* in the factory of the tea gardens. They also work as tourist guide. Female workers are engaged in plucking and processing of tea leaves.

### Spatial Distribution

Tamangs are very poor in number in the Mal subdivision of Doars. In Mal subdivision they account 4.43% households of the total tribal households. Maximum concentrations of Tamangs in respect of total tribal households occur in Matiali Hat GP (26.44%).

**Table 3.7** GP-wise Distribution of Tamang Households, Percentage to Total Tribal Households, and Percentage to Total Tamang Households

GP Name	Tamang Households			GP Name	Tamang Households		
	Total Hslds	% to Total Tribal Hslds	% to total Tamang Hslds		Total Hslds	% to Total Tribal Hslds	% to total Tamang Hslds
Bagrakot	182	4.55	9.12	Matiali Batabari-I	85	2.58	4.26
Odlabari	85	4.05	4.26	Matiali Batabari-II	75	4.17	3.76
Rangamatee	103	2.29	5.16	Bidhannagar	-	-	-
Rajadanga	-	-	-	Matiali Hat	423	26.44	21.20
Damdin	175	5.00	8.77	Indong Matiali	400	14.29	20.05
Tesimla	-	-	-	<b>Matiali Block</b>	<b>983</b>	<b>8.94</b>	<b>49.27</b>
Kumlai	10	0.45	0.50	Angrabhasa-I	-	-	-
Changmari	-	-	-	Angrabhasa-II	-	-	-
Kranti	-	-	-	Sulkapara	65	2.77	3.26
Chapadanga	-	-	-	Champaguri	257	5.47	12.88
Moulani	-	-	-	Looksan	135	3.07	6.77
Lataguri	-	-	-	<b>Nagrakata Block</b>	<b>457</b>	<b>3.52</b>	<b>22.91</b>
<b>Mal Block</b>	<b>555</b>	<b>2.64</b>	<b>27.82</b>	<b>Mal Subdivision</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>4.43</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: Compiled by the Researcher

Maximum concentrations of Tamang peoples are found in the adjacent to hills where Nepali speaking people are more in number. Such GPs are Bagrakot, Odlabari, Rangamatee, Damdim, Matiali Hat, Indong Matiali, Champaguri and Looksan. Highest share of Tamang households to total Tamang households of the Mal subdivision are found in Indong Matiali (21.20%) and Matiali Hat (20.05%). Bagrakot Tea Garden and Indong Tea Garden are two densely Tamang populated mouzas in the Subdivision. They are insignificant or absent in Changmari, Chapadanga, Kranti, Tesimla, Moulani, Lataguri, Bidhannagar, Angrabhasa-I and Angrabhasa-II GPs.

### **3.2.8 The Limbus**

A Mongolian tribe, called the Limbus, a constituent of the great *kirata* race that once inhabited in the lower Himalayas, from the Punjab to the eastern end of Assam, to Burma and Cachar, floated down from the high Himalayas as the great human stream to settle in the South Eastern portion of modern Nepal, Bhutan and Darjeeling district (Sanyal, 2011). The term Limbu is generally used to indicate the people living within the Dud-Kosi and the Mechi river. The Limbus and the Lepchas were the oldest inhabitants between the Tamra and the kosi up to the Mechi. The limbus now live in Darjeeling, eastern Nepal and Sikkim States. Some of the Limbus has settled in the tea estates as tea labourers in Mal, Matiali and Nagrakata areas of Jalpaiguri district.

### **Social Structure**

Limbus are Buddhist but their customs are more inclined towards Brahmanism. Limbus are also Saivas. They worship Mahadeva (Kirateswar) and his consort Gouri. They also worship a host of spiritual beings good or bad by slaughtering buffaloes, pigs and fowls. They worship the god of the forest named *Himareya*. They have two types of Gods – domestic and forest. Domestic Gods are associated with women. Whenever a girl is married she carries her domestic gods with her to her husband's house. The forest god is a stone placed at the foot of the tree worshiped outside the residence. Limbus also rationalise their religious customs in terms of Hindu belief. They eat pork, fowls, buffaloes etc. They are mostly rice eating people. They have no caste system so far as eating is concerned. Drinking is an integral part of Limbu social life. They prepare homemade wine; the Millet beer and distilled liquor. Dancing in social programme is compulsory among the Limbu people. Brothers and sisters of the same parents and cousins should not hold hands during dancing. That is those who cannot be married should not hold each other's hand during dancing. Risley (1891) says that Limbus are

divided into thirteen endogamous sub tribes. A few of them are *Tambling, Nembek, Chongbung, Kambos, Fadopia, Fagurai, Tamarkhota, Samba, Horha* etc. There are three types of marriage amongst the Limbus, 1) by arrangement (*magibiha*) 2) by theft of an unmarried girl (*charibiha*), 3) by absconding with another man's wife (*Jari biha*). Marriage by negotiation is common. The Limbus buy their wives. Sometimes pigs are given to the bride's family in lieu of cash. Widow re-marriage is allowed in Limbu Society.

### Economic Activities

Limbus are cultivators with plough and oxen in Nepal. They cultivate Rice, Millet, and Maize etc. They are good poultry keepers. On the hills they resort to terraced cultivation where they use water of the nearby stream to irrigate the land. In Mal, Matiali and Nagrakata block the Limbus are also engaged in tea gardens as labourers.

### Spatial Distribution

In Mal subdivision Limbus account for 2.23% households of the total tribal households. Maximum concentrations of Limbus in respect of total tribal households occur in Angrabhasa-II GP (35.23%) followed by Sulkapara (8.3%).

**Table 3.8** GP-wise Distribution of Limbu Households, Percentage to Total Tribal Households, and Percentage to Total Limbu Households

GP Name	Limbu Households			GP Name	Limbu Households		
	Total Hslds	% to Total Tribal Hslds	% to total Limbu Hslds		Total Hslds	% to Total Tribal Hslds	% to total Limbu Hslds
Bagrakot	77	1.93	7.18	Matiali Batabari-I	97	2.94	9.05
Odlabari	30	1.43	2.80	Matiali Batabari-II	-	-	-
Rangamatee	29	0.64	2.71	Bidhannagar	-	-	-
Rajadanga	-	-	-	Matiali Hat	85	5.31	7.93
Damdin	98	2.80	9.14	Indong Matiali	195	6.96	18.19
Tesimla	-	-	-	<b>Matiali Block</b>	<b>377</b>	<b>3.43</b>	<b>35.17</b>
Kumlai	12	0.55	1.12	Angrabhasa-I	25	2.78	2.33
Changmari	-	-	-	Angrabhasa-II	229	35.23	21.36
Kranti	-	-	-	Sulkapara	195	8.30	18.19
Chapadanga	-	-	-	Champanguri	-	-	-
Moulani	-	-	-	Looksan	-	-	-
Lataguri	-	-	-	<b>Nagrakata Block</b>	<b>449</b>	<b>3.45</b>	<b>41.88</b>
<b>Mal Block</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>1.17</b>	<b>22.95</b>	<b>Mal Subdivision</b>	<b>1072</b>	<b>2.38</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: Compiled by the Researcher

Highest share of Limbu households to total Limbu households of the Mal subdivision are found in Angrabhasa-II (21.36%), Indong Matiali (18.19%) and Sulkapara (18.19%). In 50% GPs Limbus are traceless. They are completely absent in Rajadanga, Changmari, Chapadanga, Kranti, Tesimla, Moulani, Lataguri, Matiali Batabari-II, Bidhannagar, Champaguri and Looksan.

### **3.2.9 The Malpaharias**

Regarding the origin of the name of Malpaharia, none of the Malpaharias could throw any light. A few of them opined that the name 'Malpaharia' might have been derived from the term 'Mayala' a dirt which came out of the sweating body of '*Sree Rama*' the heroic character of the epic *Ramayana*, during his enquiry of *Sita* kidnapped by *Ravana* (Das, Roychoudhury & Raha, 1966). Chhotonagpur plateau, Malwa or the central India may be their original homeland. They were quite well to do in their parent land where they undisputedly used the forest products at their will and need and used to cultivate the land on the hills as per their requirements. For these activities, they had to pay a little tax to their king. For these easy, plentiful economic resources, they did not face poverty. But when the land and forest were requisitioned by the British authorities, the Malpaharias lost the privilege of using the land and the forest at their own will as in the past. Gradually, a notable percentage of them began to migrate to the adjoining states. Some of them migrated to the foot hills of Northern Bengal. For the reclamation of the forest land and tea plantation they were used by the Britishers. The tea garden labourers were provided with houses in the tea gardens colonies for generations together.

### **Social Structure**

There are three tribal groups of Paharias namely Malpaharia, Kumarbag Paharia and Souria Paharia. The former two groups consider themselves as superior to the third. The Malpaharias consider themselves as belonging to an endogamous stock prohibiting their marital bond with other communities except the Kumarbag Paharias. Monogamy is the general profile of the society and polyandry is prohibited to the Malpaharias. Divorce is not favoured by the Malpaharias and so the frequency is not so high. Due to the dominance of the males in the Malpaharia society, the succession of property is inherited to the masculine line. Among the Malpaharias no clan system has been found among them. The societal profile of the present day family pattern among the Malpaharias is of nuclear type i.e. a family consisting of husband, wife and unmarried or of only married couple having no children. The

religion of Malpaharias may be described as a mixed form built out of amalgamation of tribal animism with Hindu Puritanism. Though at present they have borrowed some Hindu Gods and Goddesses and rites and rituals and though some brahminical concepts have found way into their religion, still they are possessed with more regards and fear towards their own spirits. Christianity spreads among the Malpaharias at present. The Sun (Surya) is considered as supreme deity. They pay their homage to this Supreme God through Surya Puja. For the welfare and protection of the domestic animals such as bulls, cows, calves, goats etc. the Malpaharias perform *Gorbhu or Goalpuja* on the first day of *Jeth* (May-June).

### **Economic Activities**

The Malpaharias of Mal subdivision of Jalpaiguri district are basically engaged as tea garden workers. A significant amount of female workers are engaged as plucking labourers. It is found that every adult person of the Malpaharia family of the tea garden area is earning his livelihood through his labour in this industry. This is so because of the non-existence of the division of labour in the family. Besides tea garden working, few of Malpaharia people are also engaged in agricultural land as labour, and cultivators through *Adhiary* system.

### **Spatial Distribution**

Malpaharias are not found in all GP areas of the subdivision. In Matiali block they live in every GPs. In Mal subdivision about 2.16% of total tribal households are occupied by Malpaharias. In Mal block the share of Malpaharias are maximum (44.28%) among the three blocks. Maximum concentration of Malpaharias in respect of total tribal households occurs in Odlabari GP (9.95%) followed by Angrabhasa-II (8.46%) and Sulkapara (5.56%). In the Patharjhora Tea Garden mouza of Odlabari GP they are in absolute majority. Malpaharia households are totally nil in GPs of Tesimla, Changmari, Chapadanga, Kranti, Moulani, Lataguri, Bidhannagar and Matiali Hat. Again the shares of Malpaharia households to total tribal households are very poor (Less than 1%) in Rangamatee (0.64%), Damdim (0.63%) and Looksan (0.57%). Highest share of Malpaharia households to total Malpaharia households of the Mal subdivision are found in Odlabari GP (21.52%). The next position goes to Champaguri (13.39%) of Nagrakata block.

**Table 3.9** GP-Wise Distribution of Malpaharia Households, Percentage to Total Tribal Households, and Percentage to Total Malpaharia Households

GP Name	Malpaharia Households			GP Name	Malpaharia Households		
	Total Hslds	% to Total Tribal Hslds	% to total Malpaharia Hslds		Total Hslds	% to Total Tribal Hslds	% to total Malpaharia Hslds
Bagrakot	54	1.35	5.56	Matiali Batabari-I	74	2.24	7.62
Odlabari	209	9.95	21.52	Matiali Batabari-II	23	1.28	2.37
Rangamatee	29	0.64	2.99	Bidhannagar	-	-	-
Rajadanga	91	3.96	9.37	Matiali Hat	-	-	-
Damdin	22	0.63	2.27	Indong Matiali	42	1.5	4.33
Tesimla	-	-	-	<b>Matiali Block</b>	139	1.26	14.32
Kumlai	25	1.14	2.57	Angrabhasa-I	35	3.89	3.60
Changmari	-	-	-	Angrabhasa-II	55	8.46	5.66
Kranti	-	-	-	Sulka para	130	5.53	13.39
Chapadanga	-	-	-	Champaguri	157	3.34	16.17
Moulani	-	-	-	Looksan	25	0.57	2.57
Lataguri	-	-	-	<b>Nagrakata Block</b>	<b>402</b>	3.09	41.40
<b>Mal Block</b>	430	2.05	44.28	<b>Mal Subdivision</b>	971	2.16	100.00

*Source: Compiled by the Researcher*

### 3.2.10 The Meches

The Bodos of Jalpaiguri call themselves Mech because they settled on the banks of the river Mechi, a river between Darjeeling and Nepal border (Grierson, 1903). Gait (Census of India, 1891) describes that the Bodos debouched from Patkoi hills into Assam in 1228 A.D. They then spread to Goalpara and Jalpaiguri under the name Mech. In the census report of 1891 Gait describes the Mech of Dooars as an aboriginal tribe. It is said that these tribal people were driven out from the north-eastern corner of India, Burma and Tibet probably by the Chinese. They fled in the Terai-Dooars areas and established their permanent settlement (Sanyal, 1973). However, there are differences in opinion. From the Mech river bank they again shifted towards east crossing Balason and Mahananda, Teesta and Sankosh later. The colonies of Mech, big and small, are now found in all the tracts of Dooars. Common Mech surnames are Saiba, Basumata, Karjee, Narjinary, Brahma and Mochari.

## **Social Structure**

Marriages are usually settled by mothers. A day before the date of marriage, a party from the boy's house goes to the girl's, pay the bride price and bring the girl to the boy's house. Marriage is done in the boy's house. Nobody can marry outside his own tribe and a contravention is punishable. Widow re-marriage is allowed by the society. Son only inherits father's property. Their religious rites consist of sacrifice of animals and birds. The prayers consist of invocation of protection of the people, the crop, and the domestic animals and from all other misfortunes. Offerings are –milk, honey, puffed or flattened rice, eggs and flowers. Sacrifice is generally of hogs, goats, fowls, ducks and pigeons. Fermented liquor is a must in all rituals. Like most of the *Vedic* Hindus, they worship many gods and perform many religious rites. The Meches believe that the tree has souls like their own, every tree is a sort of emblem of life. So tree worship is an important popular custom. They live in joint families.

## **Economic Activities**

More than a century ago the Mech people practised jhum cultivation. The Mech were then nomadic people, and hence permanent cultivation was out of question. Now they are rooted to the soil. They have taken to the permanent cultivation in all seriousness with bullocks and the plough. After the Second World War, economic devastation occurred on them. They had to run into debt and the liabilities increased by leaps and bounds. They were compelled to sell their land. During the household survey through the villages of the Mech, some families were found who are wage-earners in the air fields and the tea estates in the neighbourhood. Many of them are depended on hunting. They are very good-tempered and cheerful and so inured to labour that no amount of work ever make them unhappy.

## **Spatial Distribution**

Though the Mech are the indigenous tribe of Dooars, now they are not found in all GP areas of the Mal subdivision. The Mech are rather concentrated in Alipurduar district. In Dhupguri block of Sadar subdivision of Jalpaiguri district, the Mech villages are to be found. In Matiali block they are totally absent. Besides, in Rangamatee, Damdim, Tesimla, Kranti, Lataguri, Angrabhasa-I, Champaguri and Looksan they are also not present. In Mal subdivision only 1.05% of total tribal households are occupied by the Mech people. Maximum concentrations of Mech people in respect of total tribal households occurs in Angrabhasa-II GP (18.92%) followed by Moulani (7.33%), Rajadanga (6.64%) and Chapadanga (6.00%). In all other GPs shares of Mech households to total tribal households

are very poor or insignificant. Highest share of Mech households to total Mech households of the Mal subdivision are found in Rajadanga GP (32.78%). The second and third position goes to Angrabhasa-II (26.00%) and Sulkapara (11.63%) respectively.

**Table 3.10** GP-Wise Distribution of Mech Households, Percentage to Total Tribal Households, and Percentage to Total Mech Households

GP Name	Mech Households			GP Name	Mech Households		
	Total Hslds	% to Total Tribal Hslds	% to total Mech Hslds		Total Hslds	% to Total Tribal Hslds	% to total Mech Hslds
Bagrakot	33	0.83	6.98	Matiali Batabari-I	-	-	-
Odlabari	53	2.52	11.21	Matiali Batabari-II	-	-	-
Rangamatee	-	-	-	Bidhannagar	-	-	-
Rajadanga	155	6.74	32.78	Matiali Hat	-	-	-
Damdim	-	-	-	Indong Matiali	-	-	-
Tesimla	-	-	-	<b>Matiali Block</b>	<b>0</b>	0.00	0.00
Kumlai	15	0.68	3.17	Angrabhasa-I	-	-	-
Changmari	25	2.50	5.29	Angrabhasa-II	123	18.92	26.00
Kranti	-	-	-	Sulkapara	55	2.34	11.63
Chapadanga	3	6.00	0.63	Champaguri	-	-	-
Moulani	11	7.33	2.33	Looksan	-	-	-
Lataguri	-	-	-	<b>Nagrakata Block</b>	<b>178</b>	1.37	37.63
<b>Mal Block</b>	<b>295</b>	1.40	62.3679	<b>Mal Subdivision</b>	<b>473</b>	1.05	100.00

*Source: Compiled by the Researcher*

### 3.3 Salient features on Spatial Distribution of Tribal Groups

The GP-wise distributions of major tribal people focus the following points:

- The shares of tribal populations to total populations are very high (more than 50%) in Bagrakot, Rangamatee, Damdim, Matiali Batabari-II, Indong Matiali, Champaguri and Looksan GPs.
- The Shares of tribal populations to total populations are very poor (less than 10%) in Kranti, Chapadanga, Moulani and Lataguri.
- All major tribal groups are found in Bagrakot, Odlabari, Kumlai, Sulkapara and Champaguri GPs.
- Oraons and Santals are the two tribal groups found in every GPs. For the agricultural base GPs like Lataguri, Chapadanga, Moulani the Santals are more in number than the

Oraons. Mundas are also found to settle in most of the GP areas and possess second position in number of households.

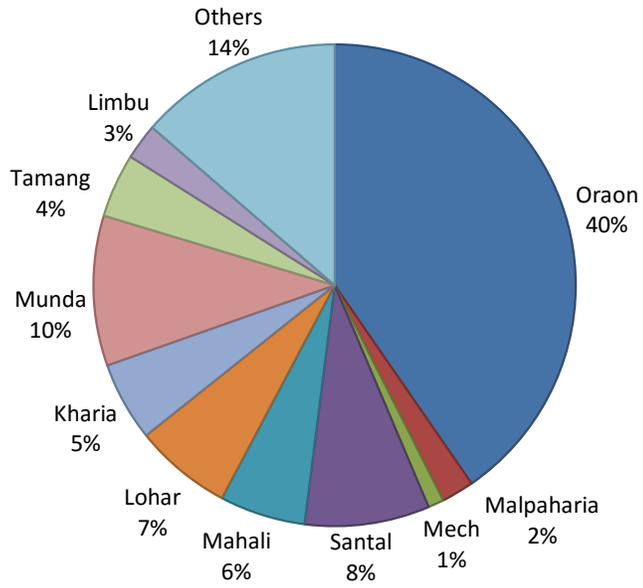
- e) The Lohars, Malpaharia, Kharias and Mahalis are found to live in most of the GP areas. These are the moderately concentrated tribal groups of the Mal subdivision of Dooars.
- f) Meches, Limbus and Tamangs are not found in every GP. Their total shares are also less significant than the other tribal groups.

**Table 3.11** GP-wise Distribution of Major Tribal Households, Mal Subdivision

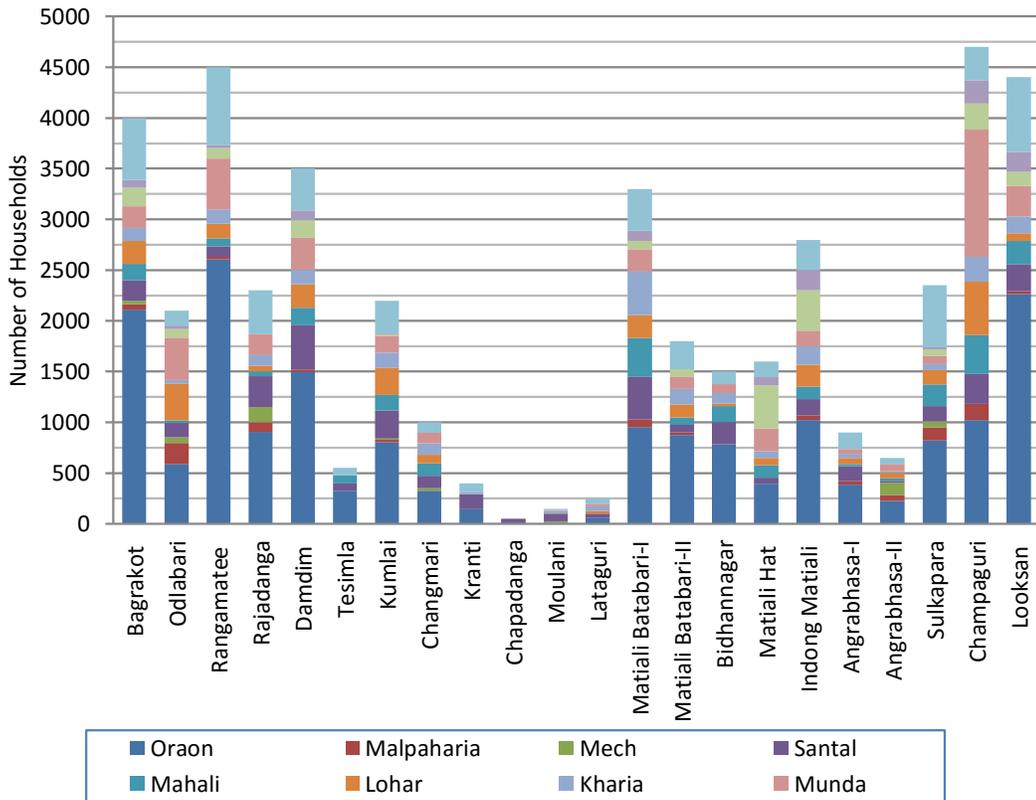
GP Name	Oraon	Munda	Santal	Lohar	Mahali	Kharia	Tamang	Limbu	Malpaharia	Mech	Others
Bagrakot	2112	211	202	225	162	130	182	77	54	33	612
Odlabari	589	421	141	363	29	31	85	30	209	53	149
Rangamatee	2605	502	103	144	75	143	103	29	29	-	767
Rajadanga	907	206	302	57	47	103	-	-	91	155	432
Damdin	1497	312	440	232	169	145	175	98	22	-	410
Tesimla	325	-	75	-	77	-	-	-	-	-	73
Kumlai	803	167	275	272	151	145	10	12	25	15	325
Changmari	325	103	125	86	121	113	-	-	-	25	102
Kranti	145	-	145	-	-	22	-	-	-	-	88
Chapadanga	15	-	32	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-
Moulani	13	7	77	4	-	25	-	-	-	11	13
Lataguri	53	25	46	29	-	45	-	-	-	-	52
Matiali Batabari-I	955	215	422	226	379	434	85	97	74	-	413
Matiali Batabari-II	876	121	75	125	75	155	75	-	23	-	275
Bidhannagar	783	88	221	25	156	106	-	-	-	-	121
Matiali Hat	393	225	60	72	124	65	423	85	-	-	153
Indong Matiali	1026	150	160	215	127	183	400	195	42	-	302
Angrabhasa-I	385	52	149	60	21	39	-	-	35	-	159
Angrabhasa-II	225	75	21	57	23	12	-	-	55	123	59
Sulkapara	822	78	157	142	209	60	65	25	130	55	607
Champaguri	1022	1253	297	522	386	248	257	229	157	-	329
Looksan	2265	302	267	75	233	165	135	195	25	-	738
<b>Mal Block</b>	<b>9389</b>	<b>1954</b>	<b>1963</b>	<b>1412</b>	<b>831</b>	<b>902</b>	<b>555</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>430</b>	<b>295</b>	<b>3023</b>
<b>Matiali Block</b>	<b>4033</b>	<b>799</b>	<b>938</b>	<b>663</b>	<b>861</b>	<b>943</b>	<b>983</b>	<b>377</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1264</b>
<b>Nagrakata Block</b>	<b>4719</b>	<b>1760</b>	<b>891</b>	<b>856</b>	<b>872</b>	<b>524</b>	<b>457</b>	<b>449</b>	<b>402</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>1892</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>18141</b>	<b>4513</b>	<b>3792</b>	<b>2931</b>	<b>2564</b>	<b>2369</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>1072</b>	<b>971</b>	<b>473</b>	<b>6179</b>

*Source: Compiled by the Researcher*

**Figure 3.1** Share of Major Tribal Households in Mal Subdivision



**Figure 3.2** Gram Panchayat-wise Distribution of Different Tribal Households



### 3.4 Inter-community Human Development Index

The Human Development Index developed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is based on three indicators: longevity, education and standard of living. Very often income is considered as the expression of standard of living. Rajasthan was the first state in the country to start 'Panchayati Raj'. They first introduced to determine HDI values in Panchayat Samiti (block) level by adopting indepth studies of national parameters (Joshi, 2008). In west Bengal the the government wing of Development and Planning Department very often studies the block level HDI.

In the present study, ten major tribal groups have been identified. There are differences of their level of development. Attempt has been made to determine level of their development among themselves. Each community in the Subdivision is considered as unit of study in this context.

#### 3.4.1 Methodological framework of HDI

According to UNDP methodology, generally we take three indicators in order to construct HDI. These are health, educational attainment and standard of living. For health we take life expectancy at birth as an indicator. For educational attainment, mean years of schooling and expected years of schooling has been considered. For standard of living income per capita acts as an indicator. Four individual indices are constructed from the primary data base. Following two steps are required to find out HDI values.

**Step-1. Creating the dimension indices:** Minimum and maximum values are set in order to transform the indicators into indices between 0 and 1. Having defined the minimum and maximum values, the sub-indices are calculated as follows: Dimension index (Di):

$$D_i = \frac{\text{actual value} - \text{minimum value}}{\text{maximum value} - \text{minimum value}}$$

**Table 3.12** Goalposts for Human Development Index Indicators and values for Oraons

Indicators	Observed Maximum	Minimum	Indices for Oraon
Life expectancy (Years)	67 (Santal)	20	55
Mean years of Schooling	10 (Munda)	0	6
Expected years of Schooling	15	0	11
Combined education index	0.780	0	
Per capita Income	2000 (Munda)	500	700

### Step-2. Aggregating the sub-indices to produce the Human Development Index:

The HDI is the geometric mean of the three dimension indices. Calculations are done for Oraons (as example).

$$HDI = I_{Life}^{1/3} \cdot I_{Education}^{1/3} \cdot I_{Income}^{1/3}$$

$$\text{Life expectancy index} = I_{Life} = \frac{55-20}{67-20} = 0.745$$

$$\text{Mean years of schooling index} = I_{Schooling} = \frac{6-0}{10-0} = 0.6$$

$$\text{Expected years of schooling index} = I_{exp.schooling} = \frac{11-0}{15-0} = 0.733$$

$$\text{Education Index} = I_{education} = \frac{\sqrt{0.6 \cdot 0.733 - 0}}{0.780} = 0.468$$

$$\text{Income Index} = I_{income} = \frac{700-500}{2000-500} = 0.133$$

$$\text{Human Development Index for Oraon Community is} = \sqrt[3]{0.745 \times 0.468 \times 0.133} = 0.359$$

### 3.4.2 Findings on Inter Community HDI

Byapplying the above methodologies the values of each community in three aspects and averages are gained which is tabulated below.

**Table 3.13** Inter-Community HDI Values and Ranks

Rank	Community	$I_{Life}$	$I_{education}$	$I_{income}$	HDI Average
1	Munda	0.695	0.662	1.000	0.772
2	Santal	1.000	0.456	0.845	0.728
3	Mech	0.875	0.585	0.565	0.661
4	Limbu	0.810	0.543	0.565	0.629
5	Tamang	0.802	0.542	0.345	0.531
6	Malpaharia	0.456	0.405	0.550	0.467
7	Mahali	0.555	0.445	0.225	0.382
8	Lohar	0.565	0.425	0.221	0.376
9	Oraon	0.745	0.468	0.133	0.359
10	Kharia	0.656	0.435	0.110	0.315

*Computed by the Researcher from the primary data*

From the above table it is found that, there are variations in the three parameters among the tribes; but there are acute variations among the tribal communities. However Mundas are top among the tribal communities because of their higher standards of every three aspects. This tribal group is most educated among the tribes and many of them are engaged in different govt jobs and secondary and tertiary activities. The Santals who occupies 2<sup>nd</sup> position

involved in agricultural practices or non-tea garden based economic activities. Mahali, Lohar, Oraon and Kharia people of the Dooars are very poor and mostly engaged in tea gardens as labourer. So their position on the basis of HDI is least among the tribes. Oraonssshare majority among the tribal groups. So average HDI values of tribal people in Dooars has fallen down.

### 3.5 Conclusion

From the above analysis of the spatial distribution of tribal people it can be concluded that almost 16-17 GPs out of 22, the tribals possess a significant share. In every GP most of the tribal communities settled. There are variations in their life styles and development among different tribal groups. Their traditional values are also gradually squeezing. With the advent of tribals of Chhotonagpur plateau some of the aboriginal tribes of Dooars gradually shifted eastwards. So, their presence is very poor in the Subdivision.

### References

1. Beteille, A. (1974): *Six Essays in Comparative Sociology*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, p. 56.
2. Bose, N.K. (1971): *Tribal Life in India*, National Book Trust, New Delhi, p. 52.
3. Chief Electoral Officer, West Bengal (n.d): *Assembly wise Electoral Roll of the Election Commission of India*, published on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2017, Retrieved from [www.ceowestbengal.nic.in](http://www.ceowestbengal.nic.in).
4. Choudhury, A.B. (1982): *Witch Killing amongst Santals*, Kolkata, pp. 15-16.
5. Das, A. K., Roychowdhury, B. K., & Raha, M. K. (1966): *The Malpaharis of West Bengal*, Bulletin of the Cultural Research Institute, Tribal Welfare Department, Government of West Bengal, Kolkata, pp. 5-15.
6. Debnath, M. (2014): *Uttarbanger Prantabhumir Janajati: Etihās o Sanskriti (Bengali)*, Progressive Publishers, Kolkata, pp. 171-173.
7. Dhan, R.O. (1967): *These are my Tribesmen-The Oraons*, Church Press, Ranchi, p. 11.
8. Dutt, S. C. (1984): *The Wild Tribes of India*, Cosmo Publications, New Delhi, pp. 72-78.
9. Grierson, G. A. (1904): *Linguistic Survey of India*, Vol.III, Part-II, pp. 283-304.
10. Joshi, H. (2008): *Human Development Index, Rajasthan: Spatio-Temporal and Gender Appraisal at Panchayat Samiti/ Block Level (1991-2001)*, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, pp. 1-9.
11. Purkayastha, N. (2012): *Oraons in Barak Valley: A Sociological Study*, (Doctoral Thesis), Assam University, India, pp. 73-80.

12. Riccio, M.E., Nunes, J.M., Rahal, M., Kervaire, B., Tiercy, J.M., Sanchez-Mazas, A., (2011): “*The Austroasiatic Munda Population from India and its Enigmatic origin: A HLA Diversity Study*” in *Human Biology*, 2011 June, 83 (3) pp. 405-407.
13. Risley, H. (1891): *The Tribes and Castes of Bengal*, Harvard Library, Vol. 1, pp. 14-20
14. Roy Barman, B. K. (1972): *Tribal Demography: A preliminary Survey*, in K.S. Singh (ed.), *Tribal Situation in India*, Simla, p. 105.
15. Roy, S.C. (1970): *The Mundas and their Country (reprint)*, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, pp. 34-40.
16. Sanyal, C. C. (1973): *The Meches and the Totos: Two Sub-Himalayan Tribes of North Bengal*, The University of North Bengal, pp. 2-18.
17. Sanyal, C. C. (2011): *The Limbus: A South Eastern Himalayan Kirata People*, Sopan Publisher, Kolkata, pp. 11-15.
18. Sharma, K. L. (2007): *Indian Social Structure and Change*, Rawat Publications, Jaipur, India, p. 99.
19. Vidyarthi, L.P & Rai, B.K (1976): *The Tribal Culture of India*, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, pp. 2-5.