

## **CHAPTER-IV**

# **SOCIAL CONDITION OF THE TRIBAL POPULATION**

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The term 'status' refers to the place or position occupied by an individual in its respective family or community and social status refers to the position of a person in the society or the role played by a person in the respective society. On the other hand, condition refers to those elements which help to determine the position of an individual and the social condition of the tribal people includes all those social parameters (e.g. definite structure of the tribal society, their language, religion, family type, education, food habit & clothing, social practices etc.) which ultimately determines the social position of an individual in the society or social ladder. Actually, the term condition is used in broad aspect which includes both the factors as well as the combined effect of those factors i.e. the position that an individual or a community or a group occupy.

Every tribal community has a distinct social structure and their social cohesion is very strong. Generally, the tribal society is divided into a number of clans and each clan is further sub-divided into separate lineage. Each lineage is comprised of several families. So, family is considered as the smallest unit of the tribal social structure. The members of the family cooperate with each other and tied by the thread of love, affection and sincerity.

The tribal people lived a very simple life away from the larger society in the remote and inaccessible areas. They build their houses with the material available in the local area. So, *kancha* house with thatch or mud was very much common. They possess very few household articles.

The tribal people are very tradition bound. They love to clad themselves with their traditional attire and ornaments. Tattooing is practiced by different tribal groups. They celebrate different festivals and perform different rituals. Birth, marriage and death—the three most significant events of life which are of much social and cultural values. The tribal people commonly believe that every living and non-living beings are invested with holy spirits. Besides, they believe in evil spirit too.

But, in recent time, much changes have taken place in the tribal life due to their cultural contact with non-tribal population, educational development and post-independence tribal development plans. Hence, the present chapter attempts to study the social condition of

tribal population and also find out the disparity, if any, in the social condition among the seven selected tribal groups of the district of Dakshin Dinajpur.

## 4.1 General Information about the Respondents

### 4.1.1 Ethnic Composition of the Respondents

The total population of the district is 1676276 persons of which 16.43% belongs to the Scheduled Tribe group. The district is also very rich in diversity of tribal groups. As per Census 2011, 38 different tribal groups have been identified in this district. Among them seven tribal communities i.e. Santal, Oraon, Munda, Bedia, Mahali, Mal Pahariya and Lohara together constitute around 94% of its total tribal population. For this study, the above mentioned seven tribal communities have been included within the sample. The table 4.1 shows the ethnic composition of the respondents as well as the percentage share of individual tribe to total Scheduled Tribe population of the district. In terms of percentage share of individual tribe to total Scheduled Tribe population, Santal ranks first, followed by Oraon, Munda, Bedia, Mahali, Mal Pahariya, Lohara etc. Table 4.1 shows that among the respondents, 39.01% are Santal, 28.47% Oraon, 7.90% Munda, 10.23% Bedia, 4.26% Mahali, 4.86% Mal Pahariya and 5.27% Lohara.

**Table 4.1 Ethnic Composition of the Respondents**

<b>Tribal Groups</b>	<b>% of Individual Tribe to Total respondents</b>	<b>% of Individual Tribe to Total ST Population of District</b>
Santal	39.01	59.45
Oraon	28.47	15.77
Munda	7.90	9.97
Bedia	10.23	5.57
Mahali	4.26	0.99
Mal Pahariya	4.86	0.98
Lohara	5.27	0.78

*Source: Field Survey, 2017-2018 & Census of India, 2011<sup>1</sup>*

### 4.1.2 Sex Ratio of Seven Tribal Groups

In India, the sex ratio is always higher for male. The sex ratio refers to the number of female per thousand male. As per Census 2011, the average sex ratio of India is 940 female per thousand male. In this situation, the tribal people are really exception in India as the tribal sex ratio is comparatively higher than the general sex ratio. In fact, in case of some tribal communities, sex ratio is in favour of female. In Dakshin Dinajpur (Table 4.2), among the seven selected tribal communities, the sex ratio of Santal, Lohara and Mal Phariya is in

favour of female. In case of Oraon, Munda, Mahali and Bedia, the sex ratio is not in favour of female but higher than the national average.

**Table 4.2 Sex Ratio of Different Tribal Groups of Dakshin Dinajpur, 2011**

Name of Tribe	Total Population	Total Male	Total Female	Sex Ratio
All Tribe	275,366	138025	137,341	995
Santal	163,696	81,424	82,272	1010
Oraon	43,427	22,191	21,236	957
Munda	27,475	13,818	13,657	988
Bedia	16,153	8,302	7,851	946
Mahali	2,749	1,394	1,355	972
Mal Pahariya	2,704	1,334	1,370	1026
Lohara	2,136	1,051	1,085	1032

*Source: Census of India, 2011<sup>2</sup>  
Computed by researcher*

The detailed study of sex ratio in Dakshin Dinajpur reveals some important facts. It is evident from the table 4.3 that the sex ratio for 0-6 age group is 957 girls per thousand boys while the district's average sex ratio 956 female per thousand male. The child sex ratio for Scheduled Caste population is 956 girls per thousand boys which is better than its general sex ratio (944 females per 1000 males). But, for Scheduled Tribe population, the situation is reverse as the child sex ratio (968 girls per thousand boys) for the tribal people is much lower than their average sex ratio (995 females per thousand males). The lower sex ratio is an indication of the increasing incidence of death of girl child among Scheduled Tribe population. Female foeticides and higher number of girl child's death is a common occurrence in India's mainstream society. But the backward, illiterate, primitive tribal society was free from this social evil. Their approach towards the girl child was much different from the mainstream population. Hence, it is observed that the sex ratio is higher for tribal society. But, the lower child sex ratio is a matter of grave concern as it indicates that the tribal society is going through a negative change.

**Table 4.3 Sex Ratio of Different Categories of Population of Dakshin Dinajpur, 2011**

Category	General Sex Ratio	Child Sex Ratio (0-6 yrs)
Total Population	956	957
Scheduled Caste	944	956
Scheduled Tribe	995	968

*Source: Census of India, 2011<sup>3</sup>  
Computed by researcher*

### 4.1.3 Sex Composition of the Respondents

The study further presents the sex composition of the respondents (Table 4.4) to give an idea about the characteristics of the respondents as the inferences are drawn on the basis of their responses. Out of the total respondents, 36.49% are male and 63.51% are female. However, the community-wise composition represents a varied picture. In case of Mal Pahariya, 41.67% respondents are male and 58.33% female while among Mahali, 9.76% are male and 90.24% female. Among the respondents, the proportion of female is higher as the survey is done mainly during day time when the males went to their work and mainly females were available at house.

**Table 4.4 Sex Composition of the Respondents**

Tribal Groups	Percentage Distribution		Total
	Male	Female	
Santal	35.71	64.29	420
Oraon	40.07	59.93	302
Munda	37.78	62.22	90
Bedia	36.27	63.73	102
Mahali	9.76	90.24	41
Mal Pahariya	41.67	58.33	48
Lohara	36.54	63.46	52
<b>Total</b>	<b>36.49</b>	<b>63.51</b>	<b>1055</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2017-2018*

### 4.1.4 Age-Wise Distribution of the Respondents

Age-wise distribution of respondents gives an idea about the informants from whom the data is collected. As this study is solely based on the use of primary data, so it is important that information is collected from diverse population covering different age-groups.

The age-wise distribution of the respondents shows (Table 4.5) that only 1.90% out of the total respondents are below 20 years and 7.20% are of above 60 years while rest belongs to 20-60 years age-group.

The inter-tribal disparity is also evident from the table 4.5. In case of Santal, Mahali and Lohara— majority of the respondents belong to 20-30 years age-group while in case of Bedia, Munda and Oraon, the majority of respondents belong to 31-40 years age-group. Among Mal Pahariyas, the majority of the respondents belong to 41-50 years age-group.

**Table 4.5 Age-Wise Distribution of the Respondents**

Tribal Groups	Age-Group (in %)						Total
	<20	20-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	>60	
Santal	2.62	32.62	26.43	20.95	11.19	6.19	420
Oraon	0.99	23.18	34.44	24.17	9.60	7.62	302
Munda	1.11	24.44	32.22	17.78	15.56	8.89	90
Bedia	0.98	25.49	34.31	15.69	13.73	9.80	102
Mahali	4.88	36.59	29.27	17.07	12.20	0.00	41
Mal Pahariya	2.08	16.67	18.75	33.33	16.67	12.50	48
Lohara	1.92	32.69	23.08	25.00	11.54	5.77	52
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.90</b>	<b>27.96</b>	<b>29.57</b>	<b>21.71</b>	<b>11.66</b>	<b>7.20</b>	<b>1055</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2017-2018*

#### 4.1.5 Family Type of the Respondents

The family has been defined by Murdock as “**a social group characterized by common residence, economic cooperation and reproduction. It includes adults of both sexes, at least two of whom maintain a socially approved sexual relationship, and one or more children, own or adopted, of the sexually cohabiting adults**”.<sup>4</sup> Vidyarthi & Rai have pointed out some features of family. These are— “i) **Family is the fundamental instrumental foundation of the larger social design, ii) Some version of family as a type of social organization exists everywhere, iii) Participation in family activities by all the individual members is its quality, iv) Everyone (member of family) is duty-bound too assume a direct role or responsibility in family, v) Family acts as a source of force on an individual to adjust to work or with the need, vi) Family is a functional unit for all such purposes as reproduction, socialization, social control, social order, economy, etc.**”<sup>5</sup>

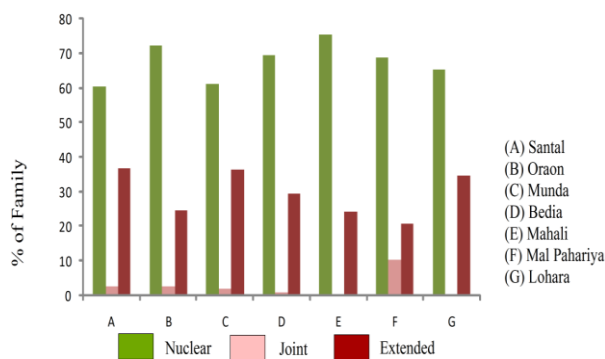
The classification of family can be done from different aspects. The present discussion classifies the family on the basis of its composition. Broadly three different types of family have been identified among the respondents. These are nuclear family, extended family and joint family. The nuclear family consists of father, mother and their child. The joint family is composed of two or more nuclear families, the members of which have blood relation e.g. two married brothers live together with their families.<sup>6</sup> Sometimes, it is called fraternal joint family when two married sons even after the death of their father stay together.<sup>7</sup> On the other hand, the extended family is actually the extension of nuclear family where the parents live with the family of their married children. It also consists of two or more nuclear families.<sup>8</sup>

Table 4.6 reveals that majority of the respondents (66.07%) are staying in nuclear families while 31.37% families are of extended type. The proportion of joint families is very low (2.56%) and among the Mahalis and Loharas, no joint family is noticed. The proportion of nuclear family is higher among all the tribal communities as in tribal society the tribal youth form their own separate family immediately after marriage. This tradition makes the youth independent as well as self dependent from very early age. It also increases the sense of responsibility between the husband-wife and for smooth running of the family, they shares the work load and even the female participate in earning activities. Among the seven tribal communities, the percentage share of nuclear family is highest among the Mahalis while extended family is highest among the Mundas (Figure 4.1).

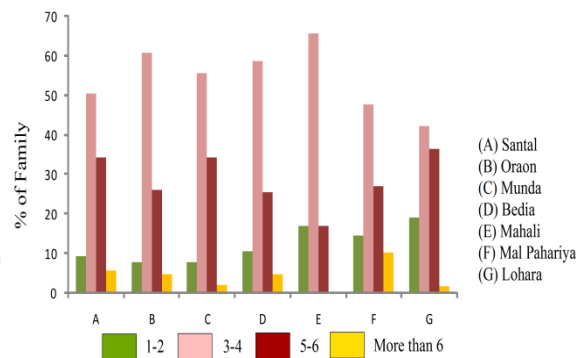
**Table 4.6 Family Type of the Respondents**

Tribal Groups	Percentage Distribution			Total
	Nuclear	Joint	Extended	
Santal	60.48	2.62	36.90	420
Oraon	72.52	2.65	24.83	302
Munda	61.11	2.22	36.67	90
Bedia	69.61	0.98	29.41	102
Mahali	75.61	0.00	24.39	41
Mal Pahariya	68.75	10.42	20.83	48
Lohara	65.38	0.00	34.62	52
<b>Total</b>	<b>66.07</b>	<b>2.56</b>	<b>31.37</b>	<b>1055</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2017-2018



**Figure 4.1 Family Type of the Respondents**



**Figure 4.2 Family Size of the sample households**

#### 4.1.6 Family Size of the Respondents

In the study area, the average family size of the respondents is 4.21 persons. Table 4.7 shows that out of the total families surveyed, 10.05% families have 1-2 members, 54.79%

families have 3-4 members, 30.24% have 5-6 members and 4.93% families have more than 6 members.

The inter-tribal comparison shows (Figure 4.2) that the family size of the majority of the families for all the seven tribal communities is 3-4 members. In case of Mahali, 65.85% families have 3-4 members while the same for Oraons is 60.93%, for Bedias, it is 58.82%. However, families with more than 6 members are comparatively higher for the Loharas and Santals. The extended structure of the family is responsible for larger size of their families.

**Table 4.7 Family Size of the Respondents**

Tribal Groups	Percentage Distribution				Average Family Size
	1-2	3-4	5-6	>6	
Santal	9.52	50.48	34.29	5.71	4.28
Oraon	7.95	60.93	26.16	4.97	4.24
Munda	7.78	55.56	34.44	2.22	4.28
Bedia	10.78	58.82	25.49	4.90	4.13
Mahali	17.07	65.85	17.07	0.00	3.27
Mal Pahariya	14.58	47.92	27.08	10.42	4.38
Lohara	19.23	42.31	36.54	1.92	4.19
<b>Total</b>	<b>10.05</b>	<b>54.79</b>	<b>30.24</b>	<b>4.93</b>	<b>4.21</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2017-2018*

## **4.2 Discussion of Selected Social Parameters for Assessing the Social Condition**

In the discussion of social condition, main focus is laid on their access to food, clothes, shelter i.e. house type and education. The food, cloth and shelter are the three basic human needs. Next to these are education and health. Among these five, health itself is a broad aspect in determining the overall level of development of a community. Hence, the present research work discusses the health aspect in separate chapter.

Besides, their language, religion, marriage type and concept about homeland are also included in present discussion as the speaking of distinct language, following of social norms and sense of belongingness to a common territory are considered as some important characteristics of tribe by different academicians (Refer to chapter-I). Here, the inclination of following the social norms is studied by considering their marriage type and religious practices. So, to assess the social condition of tribal people of Dakshin Dinajpur, the present discussion has concentrated on their use of language, religious belief & practices, marriage



type, access to adequate food & cloth, house type, educational attainment, concept about homeland and finally experience of social discrimination.

#### 4.2.1 Sense of Belongingness to their Original ‘Homeland’

The tribes of Dakshin Dinajpur are not the native people of this district. It is already discussed in chapter-III about the traditional homeland of the seven selected tribal communities and it is observed that they mainly belong to the different parts of Chota Nagpur plateau region. While discussing the characteristics of tribe, it is mentioned by different scholars that the tribal people have a sense of belongingness to a particular territory which is regarded as their ‘homeland’. As the tribal people are very tradition bound, this sense of belongingness is also related with their identity. Hence, the present research work aims to study the perception of the respondents regarding their ‘homeland’.

Table 4.8 reveals that 67.68% respondents consider their present place of residence as their ‘homeland’ while 15.83% respondents have no idea about their ancestral place of residence. About 10.71% respondents consider Bangladesh as their ‘homeland’. Some of them came to this district in 1947 at the time of India’s Independence and others in 1971, at the time of Bangladesh Liberation War,’71. Only 5.50% respondents consider Chota Nagpur as their ‘homeland’. Thus, the study clearly reveals that majority of the tribes of Dakshin Dinajpur have lost their sense of belongingness to their original homeland.

**Table 4.8 Perception about ‘Homeland’**

Tribal Groups	Percentage Distribution					Total
	Same District	Other District	Chota Nagpur	Bangladesh	No Idea	
Santal	76.67	0.24	2.38	5.00	15.71	420
Oraon	64.24	0.33	8.94	11.92	14.57	302
Munda	45.56	0.00	2.22	24.44	27.78	90
Bedia	60.78	0.98	4.90	24.51	8.82	102
Mahali	63.41	0.00	2.44	12.20	21.95	41
Mal Pahariya	91.67	0.00	0.00	2.08	6.25	48
Lohara	48.08	0.00	25.00	5.77	21.15	52
<b>Total</b>	<b>67.68</b>	<b>0.28</b>	<b>5.50</b>	<b>10.71</b>	<b>15.83</b>	<b>1055</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2017-2018*

#### 4.2.2 Language: A Part of Tribal Identity

Language is considered as the part of tribal identity. Sometimes, a particular tribal

community is distinguished from others in terms of language. Risley said that the “**distinction between Dravidians and Kolarian stocks...rests solely upon linguistic peculiarities, and does not correspond to any differences of physical type.**”<sup>9</sup> Language is also used as an important criterion to differentiate tribes from non-tribal population. Xaxa discussed that “**Tribes are differentiated from non-tribes not on the basis of religion alone..., the most important have been language and social organization**”.<sup>10</sup> The uniqueness of the tribal communities is easily represented through the use of mother tongue. So, while studying about the social condition of tribal people, it will not be out-of-context to discuss about the use of language among the tribal people of Dakshin Dinajpur.

All languages spoken in India belong to four main language families. These are— Indo-European, Dravidian, Austric and Sino-Tibetan. Among them, the Indo-European is the largest group, which accounts for about 74% of the total population of the country, followed by Dravidian (24%), Austric (1.2%) and Sino-Tibetan (0.6%).<sup>11</sup>

The Austric language is considered as the language of the tribes as it is exclusively spoken by the tribal people. The name of this language family is given by P. W. Schmidt, after the name of his native country Austria.<sup>12</sup> The Austric language family can further be classified into two groups— Mon-Khmer and Munda. However, some tribal languages also belong to the Tibeto-Burman (a sub-group of Sino-Tibetan family), Dravidian and Indo-Aryan language families.

The tribal communities can be divided into two categories on the basis of their maintenance of the mother tongue. These are—

- A. **Homogeneous Tribes**— The tribal communities whose 80% or more than 80% members have single mother tongue, are called homogeneous tribes. This group is further classified into—
  - i. **Ancestral Homogeneous Tribes**— Those who maintain their ancestral mother tongue are called ancestral homogeneous tribes e.g. Santal (98% in Bihar and 89% in West Bengal claim Santali as their mother tongue).
  - ii. **Assimilated Homogeneous Tribes**— The majority of this category of tribes have shifted to non-tribal mother tongue e.g. the Bhumij in West Bengal (85% claims Bengali as their mother tongue).

**B. Composite Tribes**— The composite tribes are those who claim more than one mother tongue. It is observed that at least 20% members of such communities declare some other languages as their mother tongue. This group may further divided into two types.

- i) Some composite tribes claim more than one tribal language as their mother tongue e.g. Munda in West Bengal (29% Munda, 17% Mundari, 5% Santali, 2% each for Sadan and Madhesi, (Nagpuria), 38% Bengali (Telugu and Sindhi)).
- ii) Some composite tribes have a trend to shift towards non-tribal language e.g. the Gond in Bihar ((30% Sadan, Khortha, Kurukh), 37% Oriya, 22% Hindi, 5% Bhojpuri, (Magahi, Chhatisgarhi)).<sup>13</sup>

#### ***4.2.2.1 Mother Tongue of the Seven Major Tribal Groups of Dakshin Dinajpur***

The largest tribal group of this district is Santal and their mother tongue is Santali which belongs to the Munda branch of the Austric language family. Santali is the single tribal language of this district which is included under the Eighth Schedule. The Scheduled status of this language encourages the Santals to maintain their ancestral language.

In Dakshin Dinajpur, majority of the Oraon respondents claim Kurukh as their mother tongue. In this district, the Oraon people use the term Khyandra as synonymous to Kurukh. However, some respondents have no idea about their mother tongue as they claim Sadri as their mother tongue. Sadri is not a tribal language, rather it is a tribal vernaculars, a blending of the major regional languages i.e. Hindi, Bhojpuri and Magahi.<sup>14</sup> The tribal people use this language for inter-tribal communication. In the Ranchi-Jharkhand region, Sadri is extensively used as the lingua franca.<sup>15</sup> In West Bengal, some tribal people in the tea-garden areas of North Bengal, South 24 Pargana, Purulia, Bankura Maldah interact with each other in Sadri and some has started to consider it as their mother tongue and those who speak in their ancestral mother tongue consider it as ‘**Second mother tongue**’<sup>16</sup>.

The mother tongue of the Munda tribe is Munda, Mundari. These two tribal languages belong to the Munda sub-family of the Austric family but they are not same. In Dakshin Dinajpur, the Census report has recorded 7322 Munda speaker and 1887 Mundari speakers.<sup>17</sup> However, the present study finds only Munda speaker because the Munda respondents who speak in their mother tongue consider it as Munda not Mundari. At present Sadan or Sadri is also claimed as their mother tongue.

The ancestral mother tongue, claimed by the Bedias of Dakshin Dinajpur is Kurmali. The language Kudmali or Kurmali belongs to Indo-Aryan language family.<sup>18</sup>

The ancestral language of Mahali tribe as claimed by the respondent is Mahali or Mahili.<sup>19</sup> In Census report (2011), Mahili is recorded as a dialect of Santali.<sup>20</sup> So, it can be stated that this language belongs to the Austric family.

The mother tongue of Mal Pahariya is Malto.<sup>21</sup> Like the Kurukh language, Malto is also a part of Dravidian language family.<sup>22</sup> In Dakshin Dinajpur, the respondents also claim Malpaharia as their mother tongue. The Mal Pahariya tribe mainly uses this vernacular while interacting with the family members. In this district, the use of Malto is limited within very few Mal Pahariyas, mostly among the elderly people of this community.

The mother tongue of the Loharas is Ho in Bihar, which belongs to the Munda sub-family of the Austric family.<sup>23</sup> In Dakshin Dinajpur, very few respondents consider Ho as their ancestral language while some respondents mention Lohara as their mother tongue, which is recorded as a dialect of Ho language in Census report, 2011<sup>24</sup>. So, the Lohara language is also originated from Munda sub-family of Austric language family. Besides, few consider Kol and Santali as their mother tongue.

#### ***4.2.2.2 Present Pattern of the Use of Language among Respondents***

Language is directly related to the identity of the tribes as most of the tribal groups are characterised by a particular language<sup>25</sup> which is considered as their mother tongue. It is one of the most important attribute of tribal ethos. However, at present the situation has widely changed. The tribal people are now not only confined to their ancestral language. They have to learn the regional non-tribal language especially in tribal minority areas. In tribal majority areas, the people belong to the same linguistic group live in contiguous area. Thus, they get the opportunity to use their mother tongue in their everyday life. Consequently, it resists the incidence of language shift. But in tribal minority areas, the tribal people live surrounded by the non-tribes and have to interact with them regularly for many purposes. Hence, it becomes necessary to learn the regional language which serves the purpose of contact language. In such case, the linguistic assimilation is taking place rapidly, which leads to the language shift among the tribes.

The present work attempts to do an in depth study on the use of language of the tribes of Dakshin Dinajpur. In this district, the dominant language is Bengali which must be known

to the tribal people to interact with the non-tribal neighbours. Besides, Hindi is also spoken by some tribal people. Actually, they are migrating to other states in search of work for which it is required to know Hindi. Now-a-days, English is one of the most widely used language of India and all the Indians including the tribes are trying to learn this language. Hence, it can be observed that the tribal people of this district can speak more than one language.

It also causes bilingualism or multilingualism among them. More interaction between the tribals and non-tribals increases the case of bilingualism. It is observed that bilingualism is more among the tribes compared to the non-tribes.<sup>26</sup> Table 4.9 shows that in the study area, majority of the respondents (70.78%) are bilingual. About 13.09% respondents are multilingual and multilingualism is highest among the Oraons. Besides, Kurukh and Bengali, a large number of Oraon can speak Sadri also. About 16.13% respondents are monolingual and monolingualism is highest among the Mal Pahariyas followed by Mahalis and Loharas (Figure 4.3). This single language is most of the time Bengali, very few speak Sadri too. Tribal monolingualism is observed only among 0.67% Santal. It implies that their ancestral mother tongue is gradually losing its acceptability among the tribes. To know whether there is significant difference among the seven tribal communities regarding their ability to speak different languages, the Pearson Chi-Square is applied. The result of Chi-Square confirms that there is significant difference among the seven tribal groups in terms of their ability to speak different languages (**Pearson Chi-Square = 925.755, Degree of Freedom = 12, p= .000 i.e. <0.05**).

**Table 4.9 Ability to Speak Different Languages**

Tribal Groups	Percentage Distribution			Total
	Monolingual	Bilingual	Multilingual	
Santal	4.50	86.71	8.78	1799
Oraon	13.06	62.08	24.86	1279
Munda	16.10	67.79	16.10	385
Bedia	34.92	60.57	4.51	421
Mahali	46.27	50.75	2.99	134
Mal Pahariya	53.81	43.33	2.86	210
Lohara	38.99	54.13	6.88	218
<b>Total</b>	<b>16.13</b>	<b>70.78</b>	<b>13.09</b>	<b>4446</b>

**Pearson Chi-Square = 925.755, Degree of Freedom = 12, p= .000 i.e. <0.05. Hence, it is statistically significant .**

*Source: Field Survey, 2017-2018*

The language shifting is further emphasised as in the study area 63.86% respondents know both tribal and non-tribal languages while 35.87% speak only non-tribal language, mainly Bengali (Table 4.10). During survey, it is observed that some respondents do not want to admit that their ancestral language is different from Bengali. To them, their mother tongue is inferior to the regional language Bengali. Hence, a person's ability to speak Bengali is considered very prestigious to the tribal people and those who do not know Bengali are regarded as backward. Similar mentality is observed among the four major tribal communities in western Odisha.<sup>27</sup> In this district, about 91.90% Mal Pahariyas are the non-tribal language speakers who cannot speak their ancestral mother tongue. Among the respondents, only 0.27% speaker can speak a single language which is their mother tongue and they all are the Santals. In the study area, Santals are the highest to speak both tribal and non-tribal languages (Figure 4.4).

**Table 4.10 Language Spoken by the Respondents**

Tribal Groups	Percentage Distribution			Total
	Only Tribal Language	Both Tribal Language & Non-Tribal Language	Only Non-Tribal Language	
Santal	0.67	91.38	7.95	1799
Oraon	0.00	54.10	45.90	1279
Munda	0.00	59.22	40.78	385
Bedia	0.00	23.28	76.72	421
Mahali	0.00	52.24	47.76	134
Mal Pahariya	0.00	8.10	91.90	210
Lohara	0.00	41.28	58.72	218
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.27</b>	<b>63.86</b>	<b>35.87</b>	<b>4446</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2017-2018*

In the study area, the percentage of mother tongue speaker is highest among the Santals while it is lowest among the Mal Pahariyas. To know the extent of maintenance of mother tongue among the different tribal groups,<sup>28</sup> the Language Vitality Index is prepared (Table 4.11). Higher the index value, higher is the retention of ancestral language. The average Vitality Index value for the tribal people of Dakshin Dinajpur is 64.13 which implies that more than 1/3<sup>rd</sup> tribal people has shifted from their tribal mother tongue to non-tribal language. Language shifting is highest among the Mal Pahariyas while it is lowest among the Santals. The Santals are the largest tribal community of this district. Moreover, the functional load and functional transparency<sup>29</sup> of Santali language is comparatively higher than the other tribal languages spoken in this district. One of its reasons is that among the other tribal languages spoken in this district only the Santali is included in Eighth Schedule

and it motivates the Santals to speak in this language. Besides, they themselves are eager to maintain their linguistic identity. All these factors are responsible for high language retention of the Santals. But, for other tribal communities, the language shifting is very rapid. Though the use of mother tongue helps them to maintain their uniqueness and is directly related to their identity, yet they have started to shift from their ancestral language. As a result they have started to lose their control on their root and it leads to the decadence of their cultural traits. Moreover, if it continues, it may cause a sort of identity crisis among them.

**Table 4.11 Language Vitality Index among the Tribes**

<b>Tribal Groups</b>	<b>Total Population</b>	<b>Total Tribal Language Speaker</b>	<b>Language Vitality Index</b>
Santal	1799	1656	92.05
Oraon	1279	692	54.10
Munda	385	228	59.22
Bedia	421	98	23.28
Mahali	134	70	52.24
Mal Pahariya	210	17	8.10
Lohara	218	90	41.28
<b>Total</b>	<b>4446</b>	<b>2851</b>	<b>64.13</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2017-2018  
Computed by researcher*

Why the tribal people are shifting from ancestral mother tongue and towards which languages this shifting is directed? The tribal people are not shifting towards Bengali only, some are also shifting towards some tribal vernaculars of non-tribal languages like Sadri, Malpaharia. This district is a tribal minority area. Therefore, the tribal people must have to know the regional language Bengali to interact with the neighbours. Besides, the medium of education is also non-tribal languages which compel them to learn Bengali. At the preliminary stage, they learn Bengali as a contact language. After understanding the advantages of learning Bengali in their daily life, they have started to accept it as their prime language. Gradually, it results in the language shift among them. Sadri is another language which is accepted by the respondents in lieu of their mother tongue. Sadri is used as link language for inter-tribal communication for years. The extensive use of Sadri language is observed in Ranchi-Jharkhand region, in tea garden areas of North Bengal and also in some other parts of West Bengal. Even some tribal people in Dakshin Dinajpur have started to accept Sadri as their mother tongue. The main reason of accepting Sadri is that it helps to maintain their separate identity to some extent.

#### 4.2.2.3 Bengali Claimed as Mother Tongue

In the study area (Table 4.12), almost all the respondents can speak Bengali though importance of Bengali is not same to them. About 35.87% respondents claim Bengali as their mother tongue as it is the first language their child can learn to speak and as a result can better express his emotions in this language. 63.86% respondents use it as contact language i.e. to interact with the non-tribal people. Majority of the Mal Pahariyas considers it as their mother tongue (Figure 4.5). It indicates that tribal people of Dakshin Dinajpur have started to shift from their ancestral mother tongue to regional language.

**Table 4.12 Bengali Claimed as Mother Tongue**

Tribal Groups	Percentage Distribution			Total
	As Contact Language	As Mother Tongue	Not Applicable	
Santal	91.38	7.95	0.67	1799
Oraon	54.10	45.90	0.00	1279
Munda	59.22	40.78	0.00	385
Bedia	23.28	76.72	0.00	421
Mahali	52.24	47.76	0.00	134
Mal Pahariya	8.10	91.90	0.00	210
Lohara	41.28	58.72	0.00	218
<b>Total</b>	<b>63.86</b>	<b>35.87</b>	<b>0.27</b>	<b>4446</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2017-2018*

#### 4.2.2.4 Language Used by Respondents to Interact with Children

It is clear from the above discussion that the tribes of Dakshin Dinajpur have widely accepted the regional language. It can be proved further by the fact that new generation parents speak the non-tribal language with their children so that they can learn Bengali properly from the very beginning. Table 4.13 reveals that about 36.88% respondents who have children speak only Bengali, 3.51% speak Sadri while 26.34% speak ancestral language with their children. But, the 33.26% respondents try to maintain a balance and use both the languages. Besides, a new trend has been observed. A large number of tribal people, especially the tribal children of present generation learn the regional language first and when they grow up, learn their ancestral language. Among the seven tribal communities, the use of ancestral language to interact with children is highest among the Santals while it is lowest among the Mal Pahariyas (Figure 4.6).



**Table 4.13 Language Used by Respondents to Interact with Children**

Tribal Groups	Percentage Distribution				Total
	Ancestral Language	Bengali	Both	Sadri	
Santal	44.39	9.36	46.26	0.00	374
Oraon	14.89	49.65	28.01	7.45	282
Munda	22.62	45.24	26.19	5.95	84
Bedia	11.22	62.24	19.39	7.14	98
Mahali	11.43	68.57	20.00	0.00	35
Mal Pahariya	6.52	86.96	6.52	0.00	46
Lohara	20.41	38.78	38.78	2.04	49
<b>Total</b>	<b>26.34</b>	<b>36.88</b>	<b>33.26</b>	<b>3.51</b>	<b>968</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2017-2018*

Due to different reasons, the tribal people are not speaking their ancestral mother tongue with their children:

- 48.08% respondents do not talk in tribal language with their children for educational purpose as in this district, there is no school where the medium of instruction is tribal language.
- 16.15% respondents speak Bengali because this language is required to interact with the surrounding people.
- 27.69% respondents talk in regional language as some of their community men do the same.
- Surprisingly, 5.38% respondents do not speak their ancestral mother tongue as they themselves do not know the language.

Hence, it can be concluded that they are not accepting it whole heartedly but forced to adopt it as no other choice is left to them because there is no single school in the district where the medium of instruction is any of the tribal languages. Fuchs has already warned us that the tribal languages have started to decline rapidly and are probably in the stage of extinction.<sup>30</sup> It is true for Dakshin Dinajpur too. Thus, the language shift is making the tribal people move away from their root. As a result they may suffer from identity crisis in future. Ironically, language which was considered as the part of identity, now some of them are ashamed of that identity.

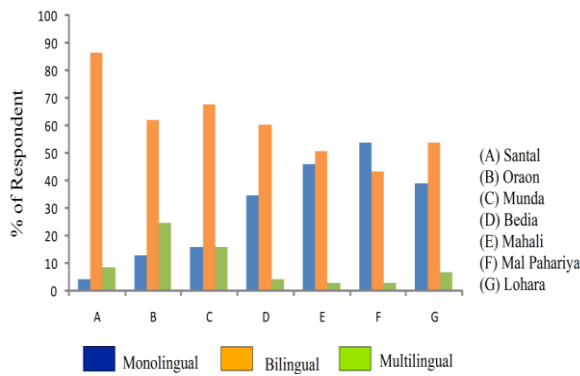


Figure 4.3 Ability to speak different languages

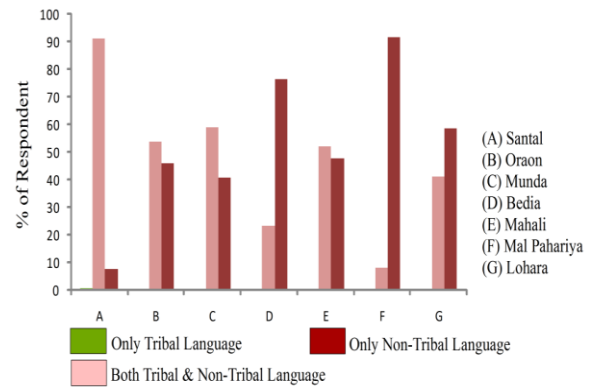


Figure 4.4 Languages spoken by the Respondents

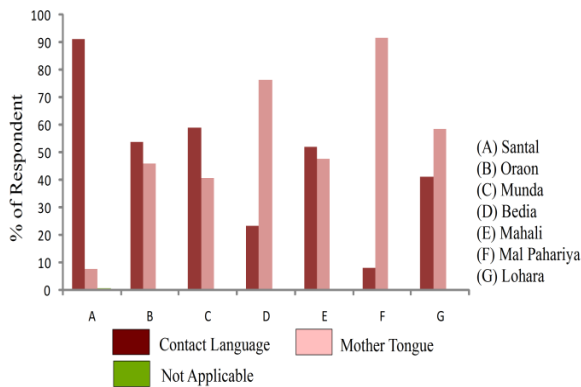


Figure 4.5 Bengali Claimed as Mother tongue

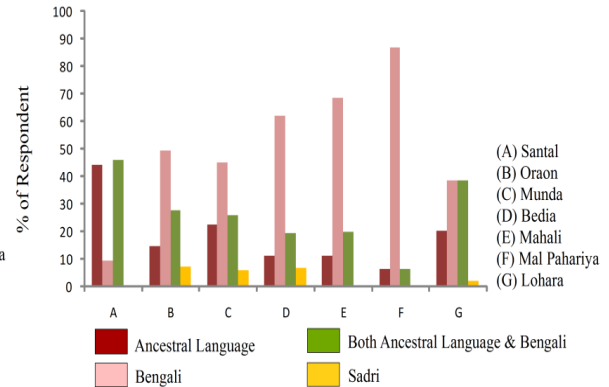


Figure 4.6 Languages used to interact with Children

### 4.2.3 Religion and Magic

Etymologically, the word ‘religion’ is originated from the Latin word ‘*rel(ig)io*’ which is actually evolved from either the original ‘*leg*’ that means to put together, enumerate or notice, or from the root ‘*lig*’ meaning to unite.<sup>31</sup> Actually, religion is that belief which binds all the members of a community together.<sup>32</sup> This belief arises from some critical situations of life which are difficult to deal with or from something which cannot be explained with logic. It will not to be exaggerated to say that where logic ends, religious belief arises.

Religion has immense importance in the life of tribal people. In India the different Census Reports used the term animism to describe the tribal religion. The term animism is derived from the word ‘anima’ which means ‘soul’. So, animism is the ‘belief in the soul’. It is the primitive form of religion and magic is its integral part.<sup>33</sup> Anderson stated that animism is actually the base of all religion i.e. Hinduism, Christian, Islam, etc. All the religion were once at the stage of animism during its evolution.<sup>34</sup> Fuchs has explained that “**Animism is the doctrine that inanimate objects as well as living beings are endowed with**

**indwelling spirits of various kinds. Indeed, belief in such spirits and their veneration and worship is common to all Indian tribes. Mountains, rocks, rivers, trees, etc. are believed to be inhabited by deities and spirits. The whole world is populated by a host of spirits, good or evil”.**<sup>35</sup>

Though the tribal religion was described as animism in different Census Reports, some Census Commissioners expressed their dissatisfaction regarding the procedure of defining tribal religion as animism because it is difficult to differentiate Hindu from Animist. Therefore, Ghurye prefers to describe the tribal people by religion as ‘**Backward Hindus**’<sup>36</sup>. Vidyarthi & Rai have outlined some specific features of tribal religion in the framework of sacred beliefs (belief in different supernatural powers), types of spirits (faith in spirits who may be Protective, Benevolent, Malevolent and Ancestral), sacred geography (it refers to those sacred places where tribal rituals and ceremonies are performed), sacred specialists (religious authority) and sacred performance (those performances performed for god). However, they opined that in broad aspect, the religion of tribal people of India is Hindu as majority of them declare themselves as Hindu. In the Census of 1961, only a small percentage (4.19%) of tribes declare them as tribal by religion while rest have introduced them by any of the major religion like Hindu, Christian, Buddhism etc.<sup>37</sup> However, no unanimous decision regarding the tribal religion has drawn yet.

#### ***4.2.3.1 Present Religious Faith of the Respondents***

The study attempts to focus on the religious beliefs of the tribes of Dakshin Dinajpur. It is reported by some of the aged respondents that years ago, all the tribal groups professed animism i.e. tribal religion. But when they came in contact with the so called mainstream people and their religion, many of them started to change their religious belief. A large number of respondents prefer to recognise them as Hindu because they want to be the part of Hindu society. Some people also accept Christianity where the Christian Missionaries convince them. Besides, Islam is also accepted by the tribal people though the present study did not find any Muslim tribe here. During the field survey (Table 4.14), 58.10% respondents declare themselves Hindu and 11.37% Christian. Besides, 30.52% respondents are included under the category of tribal religion though the respondents do not use the term tribal religion. Most of the time, their community name is used as synonymous to their religion. This group of respondents is actually Animists who are still professing their

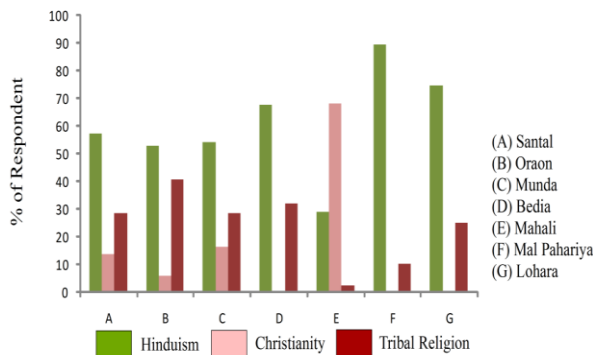
ancestral religion and do not want to merge with the dominant non-tribal religion. Very few respondents use the term ‘Sarna’ for their religion. The religious belief of Hindu tribe is quite confusing as it is observed that they have started to worship Hindu goddess and adopt Hindu practices and rituals besides their tribal gods and tribal practices. It shows that the tribal people are changing in respect of religious faith and they have an inclination for Hindu religion.

Among the seven tribal communities, the Mal Pahariyas are highest to declare them as Hindu while majority of the Mahalis declare them as Christian. But, the highest percentage share of families professing tribal religion is observed among the Oraons (Figure 4.7).

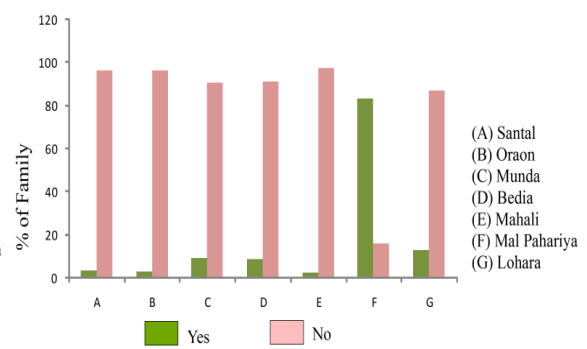
**Table 4.14 Present Religious Faith of the Tribal People**

Tribal Groups	Percentage Distribution			Total
	Hinduism	Christianity	Tribal Religion	
Santal	57.38	13.81	28.81	420
Oraon	52.98	6.29	40.73	302
Munda	54.44	16.67	28.89	90
Bedia	67.65	0.00	32.35	102
Mahali	29.27	68.29	2.44	41
Mal Pahariya	89.58	0.00	10.42	48
Lohara	75.00	0.00	25.00	52
<b>Total</b>	<b>58.10</b>	<b>11.37</b>	<b>30.52</b>	<b>1055</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2017-2018



**Figure 1.7 Present Religious Faith**



**Figure 4.8 Change of Ancestral Religion**

#### 4.2.3.2 Change of their Ancestral Religion

While discussing about the religious belief of the tribal people of Dakshin Dinajpur, it will be logical to find out the perception of the respondents regarding their ancestral religion. Has any change taken place in their religious beliefs or what they profess at present remains same from times immemorial? When the respondents are asked about the religious belief of

their ancestors, almost all the respondents presently professing either Hinduism or Christianity, replied that they have not changed their religion and what they profess presently is continuing from times immemorial (Table 4.15). Only 9.69% respondents admitted that their previous religion was animism and they are converted to either Hindu or Christian religion. And this conversion is highest among the Mal Pahariyas as 83.72% of them have shifted to Hindu religion from their traditional tribal religion (Figure 4.8).

**Table 4.15 Change of their Ancestral Religion**

Tribal Groups	Percentage Distribution		Total
	Yes	No	
Santal	3.68	96.32	299
Oraon	3.35	96.65	179
Munda	9.38	90.63	64
Bedia	8.70	91.30	69
Mahali	2.50	97.50	40
Mal Pahariya	83.72	16.28	43
Lohara	12.82	87.18	39
<b>Total</b>	<b>9.69</b>	<b>90.31</b>	<b>733</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2017-2018

#### **4.2.3.3 Worshipping of Gods and Performing Religious Practices**

Most of the tribal people of Dakshin Dinajpur have claimed to follow either Hinduism or Christianity and only 30.52% profess tribal religion. The study of their religious practices will help to know their religious beliefs. Like the major religions, the tribal religion has its own version of religious activities. They believe in some supernatural powers and different types of spirits, worship different gods and goddess, perform certain rituals and celebrate several festivals which are specifically related to a particular tribal group. For example, those who are Santal by religion worship *Maran Buru* at *Manjhir Than*. Similarly, *Karam Puja* is a very important festival among them. However, both are not the part of Hindu religion. But, it is observed that majority of the Santal people who declare themselves as Hindu are also continuing their tribal practices. They worship their tribal gods and celebrate the tribal festivals too. That means they still maintain their tribal beliefs. However, in front of non-tribes, they do not mention about their tribal practices. Their Hindu identity is also very important to them. There is no idol of tribal deities. They are not idolater. To prove them as Hindu, they have started to worship some Hindu gods and practice Hindu rituals. Yet, there are a few respondents who declare their religion as Hindu but do not worship the Hindu gods. It is evident from table 4.16 that in the study area, 13.27% respondents worship

tribal gods, 20.28% worship Hindu gods and 10.62% worship Christian gods where as the rest worship Hindu or Christian gods besides tribal gods. However, the religious practices are not same for all the tribes. Among the Bedia, Mahali and Mal Pahariya, no one is worshipping only the tribal gods, rather majority of them worship both tribal and non-tribal gods and a considerable part has shifted to either Hinduism or Christianity also.

It is noticed that in front of non-tribes, they prefer to introduce themselves as Hindu and only mention the name of only Hindu gods. But after further intimacy, they speak about their ‘**sacred believe**’<sup>38</sup>. Actually, the tribes of this district are going through a transitional stage. They are worshipping Hindu gods and celebrating Hindu festivals to be the part of the Hindu society and at the same time continuing the tribal practices. But there are some respondents who deny all sorts of tribal association and claim them as Hindu or Christian. Among the seven tribal groups, the Santals are the highest (20.95%) to worship tribal god while Mal Pahariyas are the highest to worship both Hindu and tribal gods (Figure4.9).

One thing should be mentioned here that there is no idol of tribal deities. They are not idolater. But they are found to be getting so much influenced by the idol-worshipping of the Hindus that a Santal respondent has developed an image of their supreme god *Maran Buru* and has started to worship daily. Though this is an exceptional case yet rightly express the psychological conflict of the tribes. However, all the tribes do not intend to shift towards the religion of the larger society rather they want to bring certain changes in their religious practices to make it respectable to the non-tribes who consider the tribes as uncivilized.

**Table 4.16 Worshipping of Gods**

Tribal Groups	Percentage Distribution					Total
	Hindu God	Tribal God	Christian God	Both Hindu & Tribal God	Both Christian & Tribal God	
Santal	21.43	20.95	12.62	43.81	1.19	420
Oraon	12.58	13.58	5.30	67.55	0.99	302
Munda	12.22	4.44	16.67	66.67	0.00	90
Bedia	33.33	0.00	0.00	66.67	0.00	102
Mahali	29.27	0.00	68.29	2.44	0.00	41
Mal Pahariya	10.42	0.00	0.00	89.58	0.00	48
Lohara	46.15	13.46	0.00	40.38	0.00	52
<b>Total</b>	<b>20.28</b>	<b>13.27</b>	<b>10.62</b>	<b>55.07</b>	<b>0.76</b>	<b>1055</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2017-2018

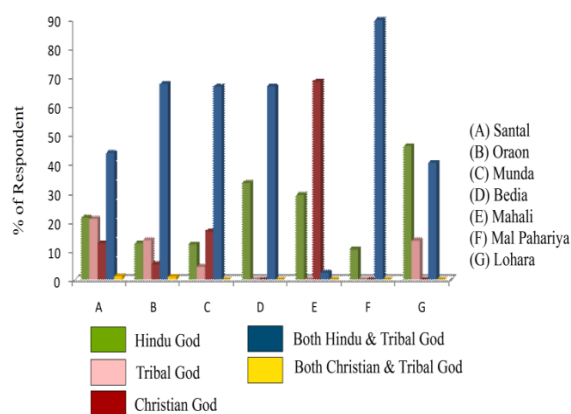


Figure 4.9 Worshipping of Gods

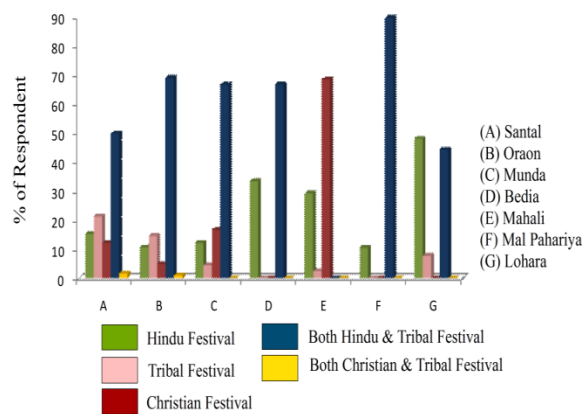


Figure 4.10 Celebrated Festivals

#### 4.2.3.4 Celebrated Festivals

Like the worship of god, the celebration of festivals is also associated with a particular religious belief. However, for the tribal people of Dakshin Dinajpur, their religious beliefs and celebration of festivals differs to some extent. Therefore, it is observed that while tribal religion is professed by 30.52% respondents, only tribal god is worshiped by 13.27% respondents and only tribal festivals are celebrated by 13.46% respondents which shows that a considerable part of the respondents who declare their religion as tribal religion, have started to worship or celebrate some other religious gods or festivals (Table 4.17). Actually, the tribes of Dakshin Dinajpur are living with the non-tribal people for years and having regular interaction. As a result, they are influenced by the non-tribal religious practices and have started to adopt some rituals and practices. Like the worship of god, again the Mal Pahariyas are highest to celebrate both Hindu and tribal festivals while the Santals are highest to celebrate only tribal festivals (Figure 4.10).

Table 4.17 Celebrated Festivals

Tribal Groups	Percentage Distribution					Total
	Hindu Festivals	Tribal Festivals	Christian Festivals	Both Hindu & Tribal Festivals	Both Hindu & Christian Festivals	
Santal	15.24	21.19	12.14	49.76	1.67	420
Oraon	10.60	14.57	4.97	68.87	0.99	302
Munda	12.22	4.44	16.67	66.67	0.00	90
Bedia	33.33	0.00	0.00	66.67	0.00	102
Mahali	29.27	2.44	68.29	0.00	0.00	41
Mal Pahariya	10.42	0.00	0.00	89.58	0.00	48
Lohara	48.08	7.69	0.00	44.23	0.00	52
<b>Total</b>	<b>17.35</b>	<b>13.46</b>	<b>10.33</b>	<b>57.91</b>	<b>0.95</b>	<b>1055</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2017-2018

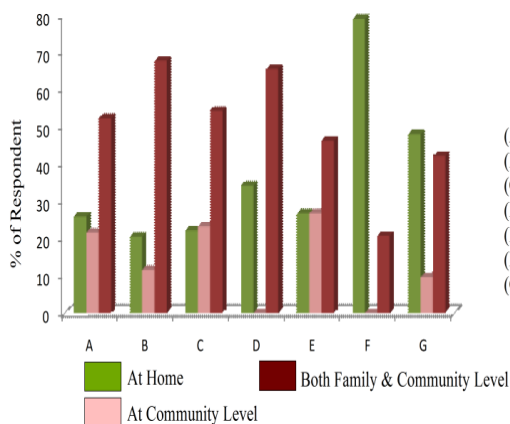
#### 4.2.3.5 Nature of Worship

With every religion, the performance of different religious practices is quite obvious. In this district the tribal people too, whatever be their religious belief, perform some religious rituals and practices. The practice of such religious ceremonies may be done at home by the family members of the respective family or it may be performed at community level with other members of the community. Most of the tribal gods and goddesses are worshipped at the community level while Hindus of this area, regularly worship gods at individual household. The Christians also go to the church to offer their weekly prayers. Hence, at present, the nature of worship among the respondents (Table 4.18) shows that 28.44% worship at home, 15.45% at the community level. But, the majority of the respondents perform the worship at their home with family members as well as with the community members at community levels. The Mal Pahariyas are mostly worship god at home while Mahalis worship at community level (Figure 4.11).

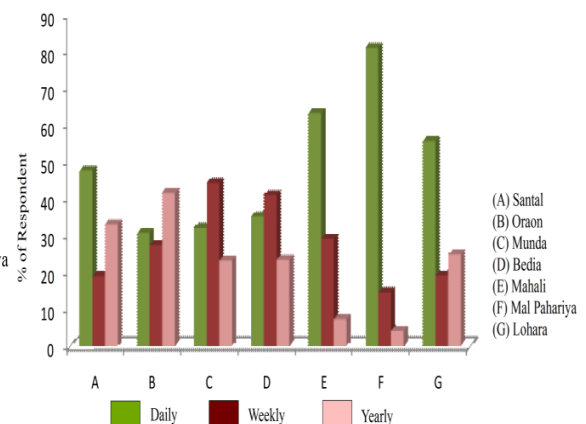
**Table 4.18 Nature of Worship**

Tribal Groups	Percentage Distribution			Total
	At Home	At Community Level	Both At Home & With Community	
Santal	25.95	21.67	52.38	420
Oraon	20.53	11.59	67.88	302
Munda	22.22	23.33	54.44	90
Bedia	34.31	0.00	65.69	102
Mahali	26.83	26.83	46.34	41
Mal Pahariya	79.17	0.00	20.83	48
Lohara	48.08	9.62	42.31	52
<b>Total</b>	<b>28.44</b>	<b>15.45</b>	<b>56.11</b>	<b>1055</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2017-2018



**Figure 4.11 Nature of Worship**



**Figure 4.12 Frequency of Worship**



#### 4.2.3.6 Frequency of Worship

The study finds out that there was no concept of regular worship among the tribes. They were not accustomed with daily worship of gods. The community head fixes a day when all the community men gather at the ‘*majhir than*’ or the place like that to offer *puja* to the respective deities. Generally, this *pujas* are associated with particular occasions like the beginning of an agricultural season, at the end of harvesting, etc. But, the Hindus and the Christians of this area offers worship either daily or weekly and some special prayers yearly also. As majority of the tribal people have adopted the Hinduism or Christianity, they have started to adopt their practices also. Table 4.19 reveals that 42.94% respondents offer *pujas* daily and 25.97% weekly. Actually, higher the amount of accepting Hindu or Christian practices, higher the incidents of offering daily worship which was not the actual practice of the tribes of this region. Therefore, it is observed that the Mal Pahariyas are highest to offer daily worship (Figure 4.12) as majority of them declare them as Hindu.

**Table 4.19 Frequency of Worship**

Tribal Groups	Percentage Distribution			Total
	Daily	Weekly	Yearly	
Santal	47.86	19.05	33.10	420
Oraon	30.79	27.48	41.72	302
Munda	32.22	44.44	23.33	90
Bedia	35.29	41.18	23.53	102
Mahali	63.41	29.27	7.32	41
Mal Pahariya	81.25	14.58	4.17	48
Lohara	55.77	19.23	25.00	52
<b>Total</b>	<b>42.94</b>	<b>25.97</b>	<b>31.09</b>	<b>1055</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2017-2018

#### 4.2.3.7 Religious Authority for Worshipping Hindu Gods

To perform the religious rituals, the role of religious authority is important. Generally, among tribes, the community head performs the worship. In case of household deities, the family head performs the *puja*. But, now the trend has slightly changed specially in case of those who accept Hindu practices. The very few Hindu tribes are now appointing Brahmin priest as “**the employment of Brahmins for religious services is regarded as a sign of good caste standing**”<sup>39</sup>. In the study area (Table 4.20), 17.87% families have started to appoint the Hindu priest to perform the *pujas*. Majority of the Bedias mainly appoint the Hindu priests. It indicates that the change of religion is more rapid among the Bedias compared to the other tribal communities.

**Table 4.20 Religious Authority for Worshipping Hindu Gods**

Tribal Groups	Percentage Distribution					Total
	Hindu Priest	Community Head	Family Head	Self	Not Applicable	
Santal	12.29	15.25	14.83	25.42	32.20	420
Oraon	20.00	13.51	35.68	17.84	12.97	302
Munda	22.73	6.82	18.18	27.27	25.00	90
Bedia	46.88	0.00	35.94	17.19	0.00	102
Mahali	10.00	0.00	5.00	12.50	72.50	41
Mal Pahariya	4.76	2.38	54.76	38.10	0.00	48
Lohara	7.41	25.93	40.74	25.93	0.00	52
<b>Total</b>	<b>17.87</b>	<b>11.29</b>	<b>26.33</b>	<b>22.57</b>	<b>21.94</b>	<b>1055</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2017-2018

#### 4.2.3.8 Belief in Ancestral Spirits

The tribes firmly believe in spirits which may be benevolent or malevolent. The ancestral worship is the part of tribal religious practice and it is observed that whatever be their religious identity, about 81% respondents are still continuing this practice (Table 4.21). Surprisingly, majority of the Mal Pahariyas, even after shifting to Hindu religion still are the largest to continue ancestral worshipping (Figure 4.13).

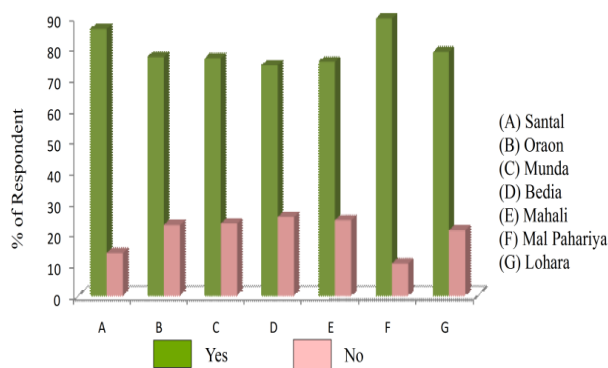
To find out the differences among the seven tribal communities regarding their beliefs in ancestral spirits, the Pearson Chi-Square is applied. The result of Chi-Square shows that there is significant difference among the seven tribal communities as far as their beliefs in ancestral spirit is concerned (Pearson Chi-Square= 17.405, Degree of Freedom=6, p= .008 i.e. <0.05).

**Table 4.21 Belief in Ancestral Spirits**

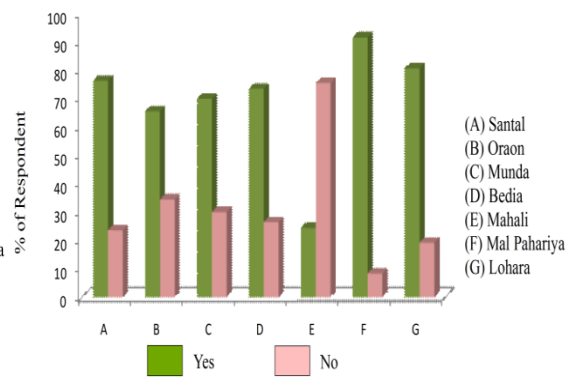
Tribal Groups	Percentage Distribution		Total
	Yes	No	
Santal	86.19	13.81	420
Oraon	77.15	22.85	302
Munda	76.67	23.33	90
Bedia	74.51	25.49	102
Mahali	75.61	24.39	41
Mal Pahariya	89.58	10.42	48
Lohara	78.85	21.15	52
<b>Total</b>	<b>81.04</b>	<b>18.96</b>	<b>1055</b>

**Pearson Chi-Square= 17.405, Degree of Freedom=6, p= .008 i.e. <0.05. Hence, it is statistically significant .**

Source: Field Survey, 2017-2018



**Figure 4.13 Belief in Ancestral Spirits**



**Figure 4.14 Belief in Magic**

#### 4.2.3.9 Belief in Magic

Among the tribals, magic is an inseparable part of their religion. It is practiced mainly to placate the spirits.<sup>40</sup> They believe that every being of this entire world is controlled by the supernatural powers whom the tribal believe to influence through magic and sorcery.<sup>41</sup>

In the study area, the tribal people too strongly believe in magic and sorcery (Table 4.22). Among the respondents, 71.37% believes in magic and sorcery and again the Mal Pahariyas largely believe in such activities (Figure 4.14). There is significant difference among the seven selected tribal communities in their beliefs in magic or sorcery and it is proved by the result of the Pearson Chi-Square (**Pearson Chi-Square= 66.777, Degree of Freedom=6, p= .000 i.e. <0.05**).

**Table 4.22 Belief in Magic**

Tribal Groups	Percentage Distribution		Total
	Yes	No	
Santal	76.43	23.57	420
Oraon	65.56	34.44	302
Munda	70.00	30.00	90
Bedia	73.53	26.47	102
Mahali	24.39	75.61	41
Mal Pahariya	91.67	8.33	48
Lohara	80.77	19.23	52
<b>Total</b>	<b>71.37</b>	<b>28.63</b>	<b>1055</b>

**Pearson Chi-Square= 66.777, Degree of Freedom=6, p= .000 i.e. <0.05. Hence, it is statistically significant .**

Source: Field Survey, 2017-2018

#### 4.2.4 Marriage

The institution of family is based on marriage. Marriage is not only the union of two persons, rather it is viewed in broad aspect by considering it as the union of two families.<sup>42</sup> It is also considered as a way of biological and psychological satisfaction of an individual as well as the method of ensuring the existence of a particular group and its culture.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, marriage has some economic significance too. It acts as the base of the division of labour between male and female where the household chores are performed by the wife and the husband goes out to earn the livelihood for the family.<sup>44</sup>

##### 4.2.4.1 Marital Status of Respondents

The institution of marriage is comprised of the elements of marriage, divorce, remarriage and widowhood.<sup>45</sup> And marital status refers to the position of an individual in this institution. Marriage assigns several responsibilities which are jointly performed by the couple.

Table 4.23 represents the marital status of the respondents. Majority of them are married while a significant portion (9.95%) is widow or widower. Widowhood is more among the female which is due to the fact among the tribes also the husband is always elder than wife. It is evident from the following table that the incident of divorce is also observed among the tribal people of the district. Actually, marriage is not a religious practice among them. So, they easily come out of an unhappy married life.<sup>46</sup>

**Table 4.23 Marital Status of the Respondents**

Tribal Groups	Percentage Distribution				Total
	Unmarried	Married	Widow/Widower	Divorced	
Santal	2.14	88.57	8.57	0.95	420
Oraon	2.32	87.09	9.60	0.99	302
Munda	0.00	86.67	13.33	0.00	90
Bedia	0.00	93.14	6.86	0.00	102
Mahali	2.44	80.49	17.07	0.00	41
Mal Pahariya	0.00	81.25	18.75	0.00	48
Lohara	0.00	90.38	9.62	0.00	52
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.61</b>	<b>87.77</b>	<b>9.95</b>	<b>0.66</b>	<b>1055</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2017-2018*

#### 4.2.4.2 Age of Marriage among the Respondents

Most people deem that the tribes are backward but in the case of age of marriage, they are found more advanced compared to the larger society as in the traditional tribal society adult marriage is more prevalent except in Bedias and Loharas.<sup>47</sup> But under the influence of Hindu culture, the child marriage is now practiced among them. Mainly those tribal communities (Santal, Oraon, Munda) of Choto Nagpur region who live in close contact with the Hindu people have started to marry their girls at early age.<sup>48</sup>

The age of marriage is an important determinant of social condition of the tribal people and also highlights the change, brought about in tribal society. The table 4.24 shows distribution of the respondents as per their age of marriage. In the study area about 45% respondents got married at the age of below 18 years which is really very disappointing. Among the Mal Pahariya and Bedia, the practice of early marriage is maximum. But, the Mundas are in comparatively better situation as about 60% respondents got married above the age of 18 years. Actually, the age of marriage is directly related to spread of education. Those who are educated understand the need of marriage after maturity.

**Table 4.24 Age of Marriage among the Respondents**

Tribal Groups	Percentage Distribution						Total
	<15	15-18	18-21	21-24	24 & Above	Not Applicable	
Santal	14.76	26.19	30.00	8.57	18.33	2.14	420
Oraon	16.56	27.15	27.15	7.62	19.21	2.32	302
Munda	12.22	28.89	24.44	7.78	26.67	0.00	90
Bedia	20.59	25.49	26.47	11.76	15.69	0.00	102
Mahali	14.63	34.15	39.02	4.88	4.88	2.44	41
Mal Pahariya	22.92	43.75	20.83	6.25	6.25	0.00	48
Lohara	19.23	32.69	26.92	9.62	11.54	0.00	52
<b>Total</b>	<b>16.21</b>	<b>28.06</b>	<b>28.15</b>	<b>8.34</b>	<b>17.63</b>	<b>1.61</b>	<b>1055</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2017-2018

Though in India the legal age of marriage for women is 18 yrs and for men, it is 21 years, a considerable number of respondents got married below the legal age. The mean age of marriage of the female and male respondents is 16.5 years and 22.87 years respectively (Table 4.25). Comparing the mean age of marriage of different tribal groups, it is found that the Mundas are in better condition as they have the highest mean age of marriage while the Mal Pahariyas have the lowest mean age of marriage. In India, the mean age of marriage is lowest for Hindus.<sup>49</sup> The study reveals that the majority of the Mal Pahariyas recognise

themselves as Hindu. Hence, it can be stated that the Mal Pahariyas have imitated the custom of early marriage from the Hindus.

**Table 4.25 Mean Age of Marriage among Respondents**

Tribal Groups	Mean Age Marriage	
	Female	Male
Santal	16.83	22.83
Oraon	16.26	23.08
Munda	17.07	24.62
Bedia	15.99	23.54
Mahali	16.78	22
Mal Pahariya	15.36	19.3
Lohara	15.81	21.47
<b>Total</b>	<b>16.5</b>	<b>22.87</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2017-2018  
Computed by researcher*

The ANOVA is applied here to find out whether there is significant difference among the selected tribal groups regarding the age of marriage. The result of ANOVA (Table 4.26) shows that there is significant difference among the seven tribal communities regarding their age of marriage.

**Table 4.26 Result of ANOVA: Age of Marriage**

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Degree of Freedom	Mean Square	F	Significance
Between Groups	416.385	6	69.398	2.898	.008
Within Groups	24689.724	1031	23.947		
Total	25106.109	1037			

*Computed by researcher*

#### ***4.2.4.3 Age Difference between Husband and Wife***

In the tribal society, the groom is generally older than the bride. However, there is no strict rule regarding this. The opposite may also happen. The age gap between the spouses is important for healthy family life. However, the age-gap should not be wide. Table 4.27 reveals that in the study area, the age difference between the spouses of the majority of the respondents is 5-10 years while about 8% respondents have age difference of more than 10 years and only 20.47% respondents are found to have the age difference of less than 5 years.

**Table 4.27 Age Difference between Husband and Wife**

Tribal Groups	Percentage Distribution						Total
	<5	5 to 10	10 to 15	15-20	>20	Unmarried	
Santal	22.86	49.52	20.95	3.57	0.95	2.14	420
Oraon	18.54	50.00	22.19	5.63	1.32	2.32	302
Munda	20.00	47.78	27.78	2.22	2.22	0.00	90
Bedia	22.55	46.08	21.57	7.84	1.96	0.00	102
Mahali	26.83	39.02	24.39	4.88	2.44	2.44	41
Mal Pahariya	10.42	66.67	20.83	2.08	0.00	0.00	48
Lohara	13.46	55.77	23.08	5.77	1.92	0.00	52
<b>Total</b>	<b>20.47</b>	<b>49.86</b>	<b>22.18</b>	<b>4.55</b>	<b>1.33</b>	<b>1.61</b>	<b>1055</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2017-2018

#### 4.2.4.4 Preference for Marriage

In case of marriage every tribal community has its own rules and regulations, for example marriage within same community (endogamy) and clan exogamy. The study attempts to find out whether they are strictly following the social norms or changes has occurred in this sphere also. Besides, religion is another important aspect in the present tribal society as the same tribal group is now of different religious belief. Does the religion impose any restriction in case of marriage among the tribal people?

##### 4.2.4.4a Preference for Endogamy

The tribal people are generally endogamous. Marriage outside their own community is strictly restricted in order to maintain their cultural identity. In fact, if any one violates this rule, there is a provision to punish them. In the study area (Table 4.28) 93.18% respondents prefer marriages within same community and endogamy is mainly preferred by the Oraons, Santals and Mahalis. Now-a-days, this rule is little bit relaxed. A few cases are reported where the tribal youths marry people from other tribal communities or even with the non-tribes. Maximum percentages of marriage with non-tribes are preferred among the Mal Pahariyas. Among the respondents, 5.97% respondents have no such preference regarding marriage and they are mostly the Loharas and Mundas (Figure 4.15). In this district, different tribal communities are living together for years. They also come in close contact with the non-tribes. Hence, the year long association with the people from outside their community has brought some changes in their mentality and they have started to accept such marriages.

**Table 4.28 Preference for Endogamy**

Tribal Groups	Percentage Distribution			Total
	Endogamy	Exogamy	No Restriction	
Santal	95.24	0.48	4.29	420
Oraon	96.03	0.66	3.31	302
Munda	86.67	0.00	13.33	90
Bedia	89.22	1.96	8.82	102
Mahali	95.12	0.00	4.88	41
Mal Pahariya	83.33	6.25	10.42	48
Lohara	86.54	0.00	13.46	52
<b>Total</b>	<b>93.18</b>	<b>0.85</b>	<b>5.97</b>	<b>1055</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2017-2018

#### 4.2.4.4b Preference for Clan Exogamy

The tribal communities are divided into number of clans which are exogamous i.e. marriage within same clan is prohibited. Those respondents who prefer marriage within same tribal community, also try to strictly maintain this rule of clan exogamy even today. It is evident from the table 4.29 that almost all the respondents (94.03%) stated that marriage within the same clan is not practiced in their family. Clan exogamy is mostly preferred by Bedias, Santals, Oraons and Mahalis. However, there are 5.97% respondents who have abandoned the method of clan exogamy as there is no restriction among them regarding clan while selecting the life partner. It is observed that such type of restriction is lowest among the Mal Pahariyas out of the seven tribal communities (Figure 4.16). Probably, it may be the impact of Hindu culture. Like the Hindus, they have adopted the system of relationship exogamy where marriage restricted within few generations.<sup>50</sup>

**Table 4.29 Preference for Clan Exogamy**

Tribal Groups	Percentage Distribution		Total
	Other Clan	No Restriction	
Santal	96.67	3.33	420
Oraon	95.36	4.64	302
Munda	93.33	6.67	90
Bedia	99.02	0.98	102
Mahali	95.12	4.88	41
Mal Pahariya	62.50	37.50	48
Lohara	84.62	15.38	52
<b>Total</b>	<b>94.03</b>	<b>5.97</b>	<b>1055</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2017-2018



#### 4.2.4.4c Religious Preference for Marriage

Religion also influences the decision of selecting life partner. The tribal people of this district are now following the religious restrictions too. Table 4.30 reveals that majority of the respondents express their preference for marriage with same religious faith and in case of this, their present religion is followed. It is observed that all the Mal Pahariya respondents express their preference for marriage with people from same religious community. The religious restriction is comparatively lower among the Mundas and Mahalis (Figure 4.17). A considerable percentage of these two communities have converted to Christianity who still prefer to marry within same community but many of them do not follow the religious restriction.

**Table 4.30 Religious Preference for Marriage**

Tribal Groups	Percentage Distribution		Total
	Same Religion	No Restriction	
Santal	94.76	5.24	420
Oraon	96.69	3.31	302
Munda	92.22	7.78	90
Bedia	99.02	0.98	102
Mahali	92.68	7.32	41
Mal Pahariya	100.00	0	48
Lohara	96.15	3.85	52
<b>Total</b>	<b>95.73</b>	<b>4.27</b>	<b>1055</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2017-2018*

#### 4.2.4.4d Preference for Marriage Arranged by Parents

Different types of marriage are practiced in the traditional tribal society. All these marriage types are not equally preferred. In fact, the choice of marriage varies from one community to other. Among these, marriage arranged by parents and marriage by mutual consent of the boy and girl are two important ways of marriage. Hence, the preference of the respondents between the two ways is studied.

It is observed (Table 4.31) that 72.70% respondents prefer their marriage to be decided by their parents while 18.39% prefer marriage by mutual consent of bride and groom. Figure 4.18 compares the preference of seven tribal groups for arranged marriage. To find out the inter-tribal disparity regarding their preference for marriage decided by parents, the Pearson Chi-Square is applied. The result shows that there is significant difference among the seven

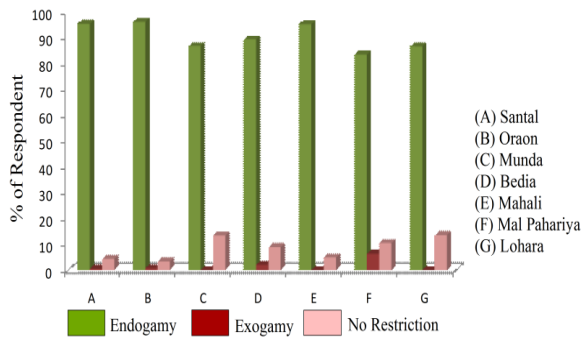
tribal communities regarding their preference for marriage arranged by parents (**Chi-Square statistic= 48.895, Degree of Freedom= 12, p= .000 i.e. <0.05**).

**Table 4.31 Preference for Marriage Arranged by Parents**

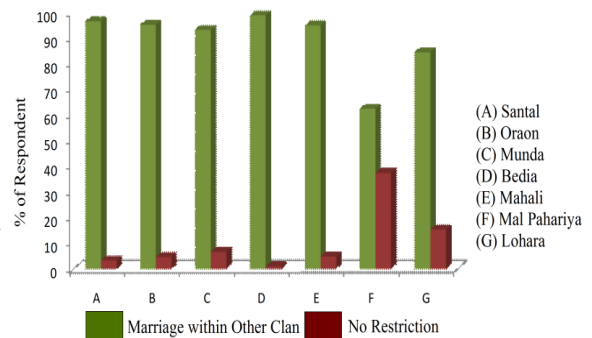
Tribal Groups	Percentage Distribution			Total
	Arranged by Parents	Mutual Consent of Bride & Groom	No Restriction	
Santal	65.00	24.76	10.24	420
Oraon	80.13	13.91	5.96	302
Munda	72.22	11.11	16.67	90
Bedia	79.41	7.84	12.75	102
Mahali	80.49	12.20	7.32	41
Mal Pahariya	77.08	20.83	2.08	48
Lohara	69.23	28.85	1.92	52
<b>Total</b>	<b>72.70</b>	<b>18.39</b>	<b>8.91</b>	<b>1055</b>

**Chi-Square statistic= 48.895, Degree of Freedom= 12, p= .000 i.e. <0.05. Hence, it is statistically significant**

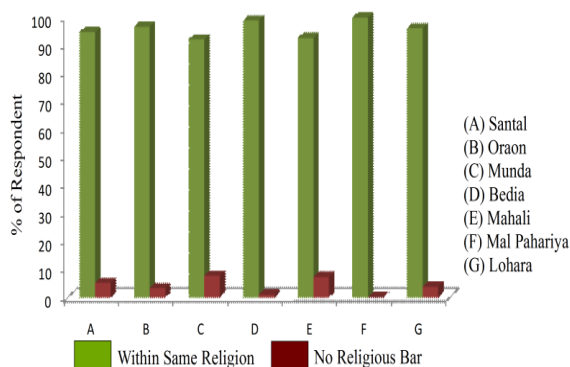
Source: Field Survey, 2017-2018



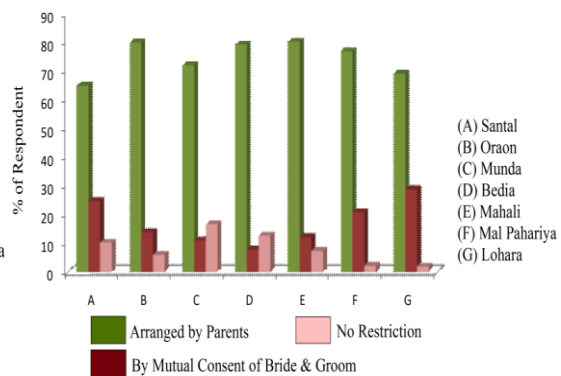
**Figure 4.15 Preference for Endogamy**



**Figure 4.16 Preference for Clan Exogamy**



**Figure 4.17 Religious Preference for Marriage**



**Figure 4.18 Preference for Marriage Arranged by Parents**

#### ***4.2.4.5 Practice of Bride Price***

The practice of bride price is a unique feature of many of the tribal societies. It is the price which the bridegroom pays to marry the bride. The amount is determined by the mutual consent of both the family at the time of fixing the marriage, which may include consumable and capital assets. Generally, higher bride price is paid for woman who possesses different qualities. Higher bride price leads to the up gradation of the social status of woman.

The bride price is sometimes considered as the indicator of the higher status of tribal women. However, the reality is slightly different. It has very little implication on the improvement of the status of woman. Actually, this amount is paid to the bride's father in order to compensate his economic loss owing to the movement of the girl to in-law's house. So, women are again considered as economic commodity.

The practice of bride price has some disadvantages. It makes the divorce complicated. If the woman wants to come out of her wedlock, she has to return the whole amount of bride price while in case of man, it is the loss of bride price. Besides, the higher bride price some time leads to the development of some ill practices like polyandry<sup>51</sup> or marriage by capture<sup>52</sup>.

It is already discussed in chapter-III that previously bride price was practiced among all the seven communities though the present situation widely differs. In the study area (Table 4.32), the bride price is steadily practiced only among the Santals while in case of other tribal groups, it is either previously practiced or presently practiced as a custom. About 36.97% respondents opined that bride price is never practiced among them which shows that the tribal people are moving away from their own tradition and they are not only moving away, rather have started to forget own culture. Only 49.05% Santals are still continuing this practice though rest of the people has either practiced it as a custom or abandoned this practice. In Santal marriage, some amount of money, paddy, a cow and three handi full of *Hariya* is given to the bride's father. In case of other tribal communities, bride price is mainly practiced just as a custom except Mal Pahariyas, 92% of them consider it as non-existence in their community. Besides, there are 3.98% respondents who consider bride-price as a previous practice though abandoned at present and they are mostly Bedias.

**Table 4.32 Practice of Bride Price**

Bride Price	Percentage Distribution							Total
	Santal	Oraon	Munda	Bedia	Mahali	Mal Pahariya	Lohara	
Steadily Practice	49.05	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	19.53
Previously Practice	0.24	6.29	2.22	14.71	0.00	6.25	3.85	3.98
As a Custom	25.95	50.33	57.78	37.25	68.29	2.08	71.15	39.53
Never Practice	24.76	43.38	40.00	48.04	31.71	91.67	25.00	36.97
<b>Total</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>302</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>1055</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2017-2018

#### 4.2.4.6 Practice of Dowry

It is generally assumed that when the tribal people come in contact with the main stream population, they get the opportunity to learn how to live a better standard of life. Because the main stream population is always considered to be of superior culture compared to the tribal folk. However, the effects of this contact are not very encouraging all the time.

Dowry is an evil practice which is introduced in the tribal society after they come in contact with the larger society. It is completely opposite of the traditional tribal practice of bride price. It is the amount may be in cash or kind or both which the bride's family has to pay to the bridegroom at the time of marriage.

Now-a-days, this illegal practice is very much prevalent among the respondents. Only 19.05% respondents stated that dowry does not exist in the tribal society. Though rest of the respondents stated that dowry is practiced in tribal society. About 28.72% respondents stated that this is an age old practice while about 52.23% respondents stated that it is a recent custom.

The table 4.33 shows that dowry is more or less practiced by all the tribal groups of the district though it is lowest among the Santals and highest among the Mahalis and most of the Mahalis consider it as an age-old practice. A large number of Mal Pahariya, Munda, Bedia and Santal stated that practice of dowry has started recently among them.

Like the practice of bride price, in the practice of dowry too, the seven tribal communities differ significantly. The result of the Chi-Square confirms that dowry is not equally practiced among all the tribes (**Pearson Chi-Square= 94.551, Degree of Freedom= 12, p= .000 i.e. <0.05**).

**Table 4.33 Practice of Dowry**

Tribal Groups	Percentage Distribution			Total
	No Existence	Previously	Recently	
Santal	27.86	18.81	53.33	420
Oraon	10.93	33.44	55.63	302
Munda	13.33	35.56	51.11	90
Bedia	15.69	43.14	41.18	102
Mahali	7.32	58.54	34.15	41
Mal Pahariya	27.08	4.17	68.75	48
Lohara	13.46	40.38	46.15	52
<b>Total</b>	<b>19.05</b>	<b>28.72</b>	<b>52.23</b>	<b>1055</b>

**Pearson Chi-Square= 94.551, Degree of Freedom= 12, p= .000 i.e. <0.05. Hence, it is statistically significant**

*Source: Field Survey, 2017-2018*

#### 4.2.5 Study on the Dieteries of Tribal People

While discussing about the social condition of the tribal people, it is necessary to describe their food habits as it is an important tool to describe their present situation. Long ago, most of the tribal people lived in the isolated hilly and forested areas and depended very much on the nature for all aspects of life. Generally, it is assumed that as this primitive people live a backward life, hence, there food habit will also be likewise. However, it is observed that the food habit of the tribal people depends on their level of development and of course on the availability of different food items in that area.<sup>53</sup> The discussion about the dieteries of the tribal people of Dakshin Dinajpur will helps to know about their level of development.

##### 4.2.5.1 Principal Food

The food habit of the tribal people of this district is not much different from the non-tribal people. Table 4.34 reveals that rice is the staple food of all the respondents. The daily average intake of rice among the respondents is 464 gram and it is highest for the Mahalis. The use of other cereals is comparatively lower. Few respondents take wheat at night instead of rice. The daily average intake of wheat is only 37 gram and it is highest for the Mal Pahariyas. But, the presence of both rice and wheat in the diet list is a rare occurrence. The consumption of pulses is very less among the respondents, only 13 gram per day per person and it is highest for the Bedias. Vegetables, mainly, the green leafy vegetables and different roots which are available in the surrounding areas present in their daily diet. The average daily intake of vegetables is 174 gram per person and the Mahalis eat higher amount of vegetables. They eat both vegetarian and non-vegetarian food items. The non-

vegetarian food (fish, egg, meat) is much favoured by them. Consumption of fish and egg are comparatively more frequent. In Dakshin Dinajpur, the presence of plenty of rivers, ponds, bogs makes it easier to catch fish and this is how they can add fish to their diet in spite of its high price. Only in lean season, the intake of fish is interrupted. The average daily consumption of fish is 27 gram per person. In most of the household, the rearing of poultry birds is common which influence their food habits. Among all the food items, meat is their favourite. They try to consume it as frequent as possible. However, due to higher price of the meat, the people from lower income group consume it occasionally. Generally, in festivals or when the relatives visit, meat is prepared. It completely depends on the economic condition of the family. The average daily intake of meat is 16 gram per person. Per capita consumption of mustard oil is 19 ml per day. Milk is also rarely consumed by the tribal people here. The average daily intake of milk is only 23 ml and it is highest for the Bedias. Though 56.02% sample household rear cow, they do not use it for self consumption. Rather they sale milk to the milkman in half of its market price for extra earning.

**Table 4.34 Food Habits of the Respondents**

<b>Average Daily Intake of an Adults (in gms)</b>	<b>Santal</b>	<b>Oraon</b>	<b>Munda</b>	<b>Bedia</b>	<b>Mahali</b>	<b>Mal Pahariya</b>	<b>Lohara</b>	<b>Average</b>
Rice	491	441	400	478	560	408	455	464
Wheat	33	40	41	46	42	44	24	37
Pulses	12	16	12	15	5	9	17	13
Vegetables	190	157	159	180	230	120	179	174
Fish	24	32	26	30	30	20	25	27
Meat	15	15	13	18	30	9	15	16
Mustard Oil (in ml)	19	20	18	20	30	9	18	19
Milk (in ml)	15	27	33	43	14	23	17	23

*Source: Field Survey, 2017-2018*

If we look at the food consumption pattern of the tribal people and focus on their nutritional value, we can see that they intake large amount of carbohydrate everyday while the presence of protein and fat in their daily diet is negligible. One of the main reasons of their high carbohydrate intake may be their heavy physical activity as most of them are engaged in agricultural activity or work as labour and carbohydrate is the easy source of calorie. Another reason is the low price of cereal crops. At present, the Government is also distributing rice through Public Distribution System at subsidised price of Rs. 2/3. However, there is very little difference among the selected tribal communities regarding their average intake of different food items.

#### 4.2.5.2 Number of Meals per Day

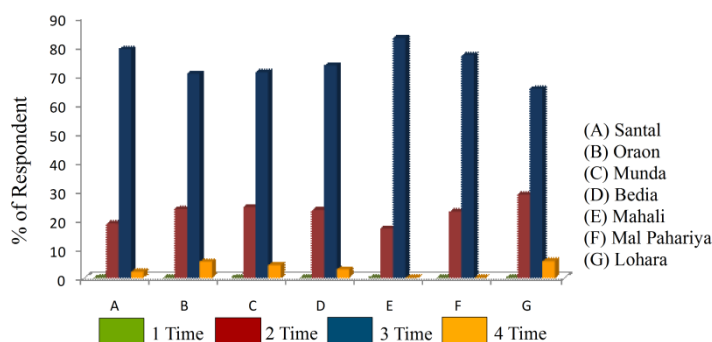
For a healthy life, people should have access to sufficient nutritious food and the level of accessibility is very roughly judged by the number of meals taken per day by an individual. It has direct relation with their economic condition. Table 4.35 shows that only 3.41% out of total respondents are able to take four time meals. Majority (74.79%) of them take three time meals in a day. 21.80% respondents manage only two time meals which means that they are depriving of their very basic need as they are not able to manage the sufficient food for them. Fortunately, there is no one among the sample respondents who takes only one time meal every day.

Among the major tribal groups of the district (Figure 4.19), the Santals are in comparatively better condition as 2.14% of them take at least four time meals and 79.05% take three time meals. On the other hand Loharas are in the poorest condition. It is observed that about 29% Loharas take two time meals. This is rightly expressing the situation that even in this period of high economic growth, a section of the society hardly manages adequate food for their sustenance.

**Table 4.35 Number of Meals per Day**

Tribal Groups	Percentage Distribution				Total
	1 Time	2 Time	3 Time	4 Time	
Santal	0	18.81	79.05	2.14	420
Oraon	0	23.84	70.53	5.63	302
Munda	0	24.44	71.11	4.44	90
Bedia	0	23.53	73.53	2.94	102
Mahali	0	17.07	82.93	0.00	41
Mal Pahariya	0	22.92	77.08	0.00	48
Lohara	0	28.85	65.38	5.77	52
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>21.80</b>	<b>74.79</b>	<b>3.41</b>	<b>1055</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2017-2018



**Figure 4.19 Number of Meals per Day**

#### 4.2.5.3 Practice of Drinking Alcohol

The *Hariya* or the rice beer is described by the tribal people as an important element of their culture. In all the social and religious occasions, the use of *Hariya* is natural. They offer it to god first and then consume it. It is observed that both the tribal men and women, drink this liquor during the ceremony. They consider it as the part of the tribal tradition. However, it does not mean that all of them consume it just as ritual. Majority of the tribal people are now seen to be addicted to *Hariya*. They also drink other types of country-brewed liquor and if possible foreign liquor too.

The tribes of Dakshin Dinajpur are also very much fond of such homemade liquor, *Hariya*. In every occasion, this liquor is essential. However, people now try to give up this habit specially, after the spread of education. Still, in 80.66% sample households at least one member is addicted to such liquor and in most of the cases, they are the male member of the family.

The addiction to liquor is much higher among the Oraons followed by Santals and Bedias. While among Lohara, Mal Pahariya, Mahali and Munda the addiction to alcohol is comparatively lower than the other three. To find out the real situation of the tribal people of this area regarding the addiction to *Hariya* or country liquor, the proportion of addicted members of a family to the total members of the family is calculated. It is evident from the table 4.36 that a considerable number of tribal people are presently not consuming *Hariya* as in 19.34% families, no one is addicted to *Hariya*. But still a large number of people are addicted to alcohol which is highly detrimental to health. The proportion of addicted member of a family to the total family members reveals that 52.23% families ranges between 0.001-0.400 while the rest of the families ranges above 0.400. Actually, spread of education is not up to the level among the tribes and a large number of respondents are still illiterate. So, they are not very aware of the harmful effects of consumption of alcohol.

**Table 4.36 Proportion of Number of Addicted Members to Total Family Members**

Tribal Groups	0	0.001-0.400	0.401-0.600	More than 0.601	Total
Santal	17.38	53.33	15.95	13.33	420
Oraon	16.89	55.63	18.54	8.94	302
Munda	21.11	50.00	10.00	18.89	90
Bedia	19.61	48.04	16.67	15.69	102
Mahali	26.83	39.02	17.07	17.07	41
Mal Pahariya	29.17	54.17	6.25	10.42	48
Lohara	30.77	44.23	19.23	5.77	52
<b>Total</b>	<b>19.34</b>	<b>52.23</b>	<b>16.02</b>	<b>12.42</b>	<b>1055</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2017-2018

Computed by researcher



#### 4.2.5.4 Addiction to Tobacco

Besides, Hariya and other liquors, the tribal people are addicted to tobacco also. There are only 21.33% families where all the members are free from the intake of tobacco (Table 4.37). But, among the rest of the families, at least one member is addicted to tobacco. The proportion of the addicted members to the total members of the family shows that 62.46% families ranges between 0.001-0.400 while the rest of the families belong to the value of above 0.400.

**Table 4.37 Proportion of Number of Tobacco Addicted Members to Total Family Members**

<b>Tribal Groups</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.001-0.400</b>	<b>0.401-0.600</b>	<b>More than 0.601</b>	<b>Total</b>
Santal	21.19	63.33	10.95	4.52	420
Oraon	19.21	67.88	8.94	3.97	302
Munda	18.89	61.11	14.44	5.56	90
Bedia	20.59	59.80	11.76	7.84	102
Mahali	31.71	41.46	17.07	9.76	41
Mal Pahariya	25.00	64.58	4.17	6.25	48
Lohara	28.85	46.15	23.08	1.92	52
<b>Total</b>	<b>21.33</b>	<b>62.46</b>	<b>11.28</b>	<b>4.93</b>	<b>1055</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2017-2018*

*Computed by researcher*

#### 4.2.6 Clothing

The traditional attire of tribal people is also a part of their social life. Earlier, the tribal people were not very much accustomed with the use of cloth and the concept of it. The use of cloth is not as compulsory in tribal society as in the larger society. While some tribes like Nagas dressed themselves in artistic way using bright colours, some other tribes like Jaroas remain naked. The tribes did not consider nudity as obscene. However, at present, almost all the tribes dressed themselves in different ways. So, the familiarity of the tribal people with clothing is not much old. It is the effect of the interaction with the so called civilized society. They consider clothes as a cover to protect body from severe cold or extreme hot weather. So, the use of clothing was not compulsory to all the tribe. But, when they come in contact with the larger society, they “**were made to feel ashamed of themselves and compelled to dress themselves**”<sup>54</sup>. Later, the different tribal groups decided their own dress patterns which are considered as their traditional dress. Gradually, it becomes the part of tribal culture.

#### 4.2.6.1 Perception about Traditional Dress of Seven Tribal Communities

The present work, therefore, aims to find out what is the concept of the respondents about their traditional attire. The tribal people loved to clad them in their traditional attire and decorate them with traditional jewelries, flower, leaves etc. Now-a-days, the dressing pattern of the tribal people has changed drastically and “**A change of dress often means a new psychology, a scorn of the traditions of one’s tribe, a sense of being ashamed of it**”  
55

The opinion of the respondents regarding the practice of traditional dresses varies considerably (Table 4.38). The majority of the Santals are of the opinion of having traditional dress ‘*panchhi*’, ‘*parat*’, etc. In case of Mahali and Lohara, 63.41% and 44.23% respondents stated that they have distinct traditional dresses. But the majority of the respondents among Munda, Oraon, Mal Pahariya and Bedia are of the opinion that there is no such traditional attire in their communities. The Mal Pahariyas (97.92%) strongly oppose to the idea of having traditional dress of their community.

The application of Chi-Square helps to find out the inter-tribal disparity in the concept of seven tribal groups about their traditional dresses. The result of Chi-Square confirms that there is significant difference among the tribal communities in their opinion about traditional dress (**Pearson Chi-Square= 467.183, Degree of Freedom= 6, p= .000 i.e. <0.05**).

**Table 4.38 Perception about Traditional Dress of Seven Tribal Communities**

Tribal Groups	Percentage Distribution		Total
	Have Traditional Dress	Have No Traditional Dress	
Santal	90.71	9.29	420
Oraon	26.16	73.84	302
Munda	22.22	77.78	90
Bedia	16.67	83.33	102
Mahali	63.41	36.59	41
Mal Pahariya	2.08	97.92	48
Lohara	44.23	55.77	52
<b>Total</b>	<b>51.85</b>	<b>48.15</b>	<b>1055</b>

**Pearson Chi-Square= 467.183, Degree of Freedom= 6, p= .000 i.e. <0.05. Hence, it is statistically significant .**

Source: Field Survey, 2017-2018

#### 4.2.6.2 Practice of Wearing Traditional Dresses

It is also aimed to study the present situation of practice of wearing traditional dresses. It is observed (Table 4.39) that 50.64% of those who are of the opinion that they have traditional dresses, wear their traditional dress at present though not in everyday life. Majority of them wear occasionally. Most of the respondents follow the local Bengalee's dress pattern.

**Table 4.39 Practice of Wearing Traditional Dresses**

Tribal Groups	Percentage Distribution		Total
	Yes	No	
Santal	50.66	49.34	381
Oraon	65.82	34.18	79
Munda	50.00	50.00	20
Bedia	35.29	64.71	17
Mahali	23.08	76.92	26
Mal Pahariya	100.00	0.00	1
Lohara	39.13	60.87	23
Total	<b>50.64</b>	<b>49.36</b>	<b>547</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2017-2018

Among the tribal communities, the practice of wearing traditional dresses is comparatively higher among the Santal, followed by Lohara and Oraon. So, it can be stated that tribal people are now changing their dress pattern and they are now attracted to the modern trend of dresses.

Practically, the tribal people are very tradition-bound yet in the study area, half of the respondents are not wearing traditional dresses. Why are they then changing their habits of wearing traditional dresses? The study finds out four main reasons.

- a) Majority of the respondents stated that these dresses are not available here.
- b) These dresses are comparatively expensive.
- c) Few respondents do not like the style of their dresses.
- d) Another reason is that the tribal people are ashamed of wearing such dresses because the non-tribes criticize them.

#### 4.2.6.3 Practice of Wearing Traditional Jewelry

Tribal people are also very much fond of jewelry. Both metal and flowers are used to decorate them. Silver jewelry is most widely used. Every tribal group has their own traditional jewelry and in the study area, all the respondents admit that. Both tribal men and

women beautify themselves with different ornaments. Now-a-days, the use of jewelry has decreased among them as it is expensive and majority of the tribal people cannot afford this. Even those who are capable of buying jewelry, are not wearing the traditional one. Table 4.40 shows that in the study area, only about 20.09% respondents are still using some traditional jewelry while majority do not use that. The practice of wearing traditional jewelry is comparatively more among the Santal, Mahali and Oraon.

The result of the Pearson-Chi-Square shows that there is significant difference among the seven selected tribal communities in the practice of wearing traditional jewelries (**Pearson Chi-Square= 190.945, Degree of Freedom=6, p= .000 i.e. <0.05**).

**Table 4.40 Practice of Wearing Traditional Jewelry**

Tribal Groups	Percentage Distribution		Total
	Yes	No	
Santal	40.24	59.76	420
Oraon	6.29	93.71	302
Munda	3.33	96.67	90
Bedia	5.88	94.12	102
Mahali	29.27	70.73	41
Mal Pahariya	2.08	97.92	48
Lohara	3.85	96.15	52
Total	<b>20.09</b>	<b>79.91</b>	<b>1055</b>

**Pearson Chi-Square= 190.945, Degree of Freedom=6, p= .000 i.e. <0.05. Hence, it is statistically significant .**

*Source: Field Survey, 2017-2018*

#### **4.2.6.4 Affordability for Clothes**

For a decent living, cloth is one of the three basic needs of human being. At present, for the tribal people also, the importance of cloth is no more different than the mainstream population. In order to know the social condition of tribal people, it is necessary to study whether they are capable to fulfill this basic need either wearing the traditional dresses or modern outfit.

The study reveals (Table 4.41) that about 87.77% respondents are capable to purchase sufficient required clothes for them but rest are not able to fulfill this basic need. This clearly indicates the poor condition of the tribal people.

The intertribal comparison reveals that Bedias are in comparatively better situation while Mal Pahariyas, Mahali and Loharas are in very poor condition. To find out whether the

tribal communities differ significantly from each other regarding their affordability for clothes, the Pearson Chi-Square is applied. The result of Chi-Square shows that the tribal communities differ significantly as far as their capability to fulfill their need of cloth is concerned (Pearson Chi-Square statistic= 25.549, Degree of Freedom= 6, p=.000 i.e. <0.05).

**Table 4.41 Affordability for Clothes**

Tribal Groups	Percentage Distribution		Total
	Yes	No	
Santal	91.67	8.33	420
Oraon	87.09	12.91	302
Munda	86.67	13.33	90
Bedia	90.20	9.80	102
Mahali	78.05	21.95	41
Mal Pahariya	70.83	29.17	48
Lohara	80.77	19.23	52
<b>Total</b>	<b>87.77</b>	<b>12.23</b>	<b>1055</b>

**Pearson Chi-Square statistic= 25.549, Degree of Freedom= 6, p=.000 i.e. <0.05. Hence, it is statistically significant.**

*Source: Field Survey, 2017-2018*

Now, it is important to know how the people who are unable to purchase necessary clothes manage their requirements. The study reveals that 34.11% of the respondents, unable to purchase cloth, request old clothes from the wealthy people while 15.50% respondents lend clothes from their relatives or friends. It is observed that rest of the respondents who neither beg nor lend clothes from other, try to manage by wearing old and torn clothes.

#### **4.2.7 Quality of Dwelling Places**

A proper place of shelter is another basic human need. But, it is observed that the “**aboriginal dwelling is generally always damp, insufficiently ventilated, overcrowded and devoid of most rudimentary sanitary facilities**”<sup>56</sup>. Therefore, it is necessary to throw light on the housing condition of the tribal people of Dakshin Dinajpur as the quality of dwelling place or house type is directly related to the socio-economic condition of an individual. Here, the housing condition is studied from different aspects.

##### **4.2.7.1 Ownership of the House**

For a family, it is very important to have its own house. The ownership of even a small house gives a sense of secured shelter. Ownership of house provides the right to stay in a permanent shelter without the fear of being driven away. Besides, the possession of house is

an economic support. At present situation, in rural India, the ownership of house is very important not only psychologically but economically also. In the study area (Table 4.42), almost 97% families live in their own house while a very negligible portion stays in either relative's house or rented house and the situation of seven selected tribal communities is more or less same. The study reveals very little difference among the selected tribal groups regarding their ownership of house.

**Table 4.42 Ownership of House**

Tribal Groups	Percentage Distribution			Total
	Own House	Rented House	Relative's House	
Santal	97.14	0.24	2.62	420
Oraon	98.01	0.00	1.99	302
Munda	97.78	0.00	2.22	90
Bedia	99.02	0.00	0.98	102
Mahali	95.12	2.44	2.44	41
Mal Pahariya	97.92	0.00	2.08	48
Lohara	94.23	1.92	3.85	52
<b>Total</b>	<b>97.44</b>	<b>0.28</b>	<b>2.27</b>	<b>1055</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2017-2018

#### 4.2.7.2 House Type

On the basis of type of materials used for roof, wall and floor, a house can be categorised into *kancha*, *paka* and partial *paka*. Basically, the use of material determines the durability of house and the level of comfort is also associated with it. Furthermore, the type of house has a strong correlation with the socio-economic condition of the tribal population because the quality of the house depends on financial condition. A *kancha* house is made of some short-lived or temporary materials. In the study area, straw, tin, tile, asbestos etc. are generally used as roof material while the floor of the *kancha* house is always made of mud. The wall of the house may be of thatch, mud or tin among which thatch is the cheapest. Naturally, it is more used by the poor people. On the other hand, a *paka* house is made of concrete which surely lasts for long time. Moreover, it provides better protection from bitter cold in winter, scorching heat in summer and violent rainfall. The third type is the partial *paka* house which is actually the combination of *kancha* and *paka* house. In case of partial *paka* house, the roof, floor and wall, any one of the three is made of *kancha* material.

Table 4.43 reveals that in the study area, 71.85% tribal houses are *kancha*, 23.89% are partial *paka* and only 4.27% houses are *paka* which clearly exhibit the poor economic

condition of the majority of tribal people. However, the tribe-wise comparison (Figure 4.20) shows that among the Mal Pahariya and Lohara respondents no *paka* house is found during survey. The percentage share of *kancha* house is the lowest among the Mahalis though *paka* house is highest among the Mundas.

**Table 4.43 House Type**

Tribal Groups	Percentage Distribution			Total
	<i>Kancha</i>	Partial <i>Paka</i>	<i>Paka</i>	
Santal	74.05	21.90	4.05	420
Oraon	75.83	19.54	4.64	302
Munda	63.33	28.89	7.78	90
Bedia	70.59	23.53	5.88	102
Mahali	41.46	56.10	2.44	41
Mal Pahariya	64.58	35.42	0.00	48
Lohara	78.85	21.15	0.00	52
<b>Total</b>	<b>71.85</b>	<b>23.89</b>	<b>4.27</b>	<b>1055</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2017-2018

#### 4.2.7.2a Nature of Roof

For roof, the tribal people use straw, tile, asbestos, tin and concrete. There was a time when straw was the most widely used roof material in this district while presently only 0.47% respondents use straw to make the roof of the house (Table 4.44). But, as its durability is less, people now shifted to other materials. Presently, tin is used in 92.99% tribal houses while 4.36% houses have concrete roof and unfortunately Mal Pahariya and Lohara have no concrete roof house (Figure 4.21).

**Table 4.44 Material used for Roof**

Tribal Groups	Percentage Distribution					Total
	Straw	Tiles	Asbestos	Tin	Concrete	
Santal	0.71	0.00	1.67	93.57	4.05	420
Oraon	0.33	0.66	2.65	91.39	4.97	302
Munda	0.00	0.00	0.00	92.22	7.78	90
Bedia	0.00	0.00	0.00	94.12	5.88	102
Mahali	0.00	2.44	4.88	90.24	2.44	41
Mal Pahariya	2.08	0.00	0.00	97.92	0.00	48
Lohara	0.00	3.85	1.92	94.23	0.00	52
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.47</b>	<b>0.47</b>	<b>1.71</b>	<b>92.99</b>	<b>4.36</b>	<b>1055</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2017-2018

#### 4.2.7.2b Nature of Wall

The tribal people of this district use mud, thatch, tin and brick to construct the wall of the houses. Among them (Table 4.45), the use of mud is much common, about 59.34% tribal houses have mud wall. Actually, the earthen houses are part of the tribal culture, especially, the Santal mud houses are very attractive. The wall and floor is plastered with cow dung. The walls are beautifully painted with different colours and decorated with designs which make it so attractive. The tribal people themselves construct the mud houses and if require, they request their neighbor or relatives to help them in exchange of which they help them in their need. This type of exchange of labour is very common among the tribes. About 5.31% respondents use thatch as wall material. Now-a-days, 4.83% respondents have started to use tin for constructing wall. About 17% houses use brick and 13.46% use combination of above materials to construct the wall. Among the Mal Pahariyas and Loharas though there is no *paka* house yet brick wall is noticed in 25% and 11.54% houses respectively (Figure 4.22).

**Table 4.45 Material used for Wall**

Tribal Groups	Percentage Distribution					Total
	Mud	Thatch	Tin	Brick	Combination of Any Material	
Santal	64.05	4.52	2.38	12.62	16.43	420
Oraon	70.20	2.98	0.99	14.57	11.26	302
Munda	40.00	14.44	5.56	25.56	14.44	90
Bedia	46.08	5.88	16.67	22.55	8.82	102
Mahali	17.07	2.44	24.39	46.34	9.76	41
Mal Pahariya	60.42	4.17	0.00	25.00	10.42	48
Lohara	50.00	11.54	11.54	11.54	15.38	52
<b>Total</b>	<b>59.34</b>	<b>5.31</b>	<b>4.83</b>	<b>17.06</b>	<b>13.46</b>	<b>1055</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2017-2018

#### 4.2.7.2c Nature of Floor

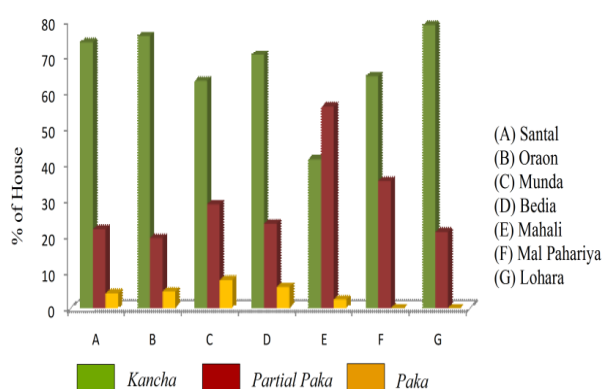
Table 4.46 shows that the floor of the 79.53% houses is made of mud while 10.33% houses have concrete floor. About 3.70% houses have covered the floor only with brick at present and if possible, they will plaster the floor with cement in future. Majority of the Mal Pahariya and Lohara have mud floored house while cemented floor is highest among the Mahalis (Figure 4.23).



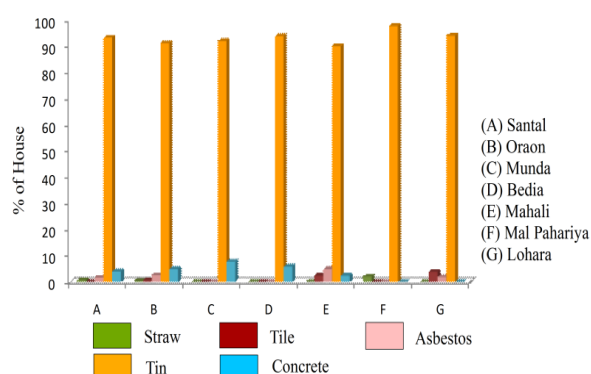
**Table 4.46 Material used for Floor**

Tribal Groups	Percentage Distribution				Total
	Mud	Brick	Concrete	Combination of Any Material	
Santal	80.95	2.38	8.10	8.57	420
Oraon	82.45	3.64	9.93	3.97	302
Munda	72.22	5.56	13.33	8.89	90
Bedia	77.45	6.86	13.73	1.96	102
Mahali	46.34	2.44	34.15	17.07	41
Mal Pahariya	87.50	6.25	4.17	2.08	48
Lohara	86.54	3.85	5.77	3.85	52
<b>Total</b>	<b>79.53</b>	<b>3.70</b>	<b>10.33</b>	<b>6.45</b>	<b>1055</b>

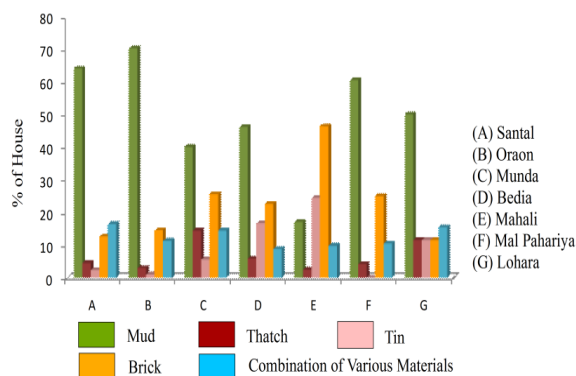
Source: Field Survey, 2017-2018



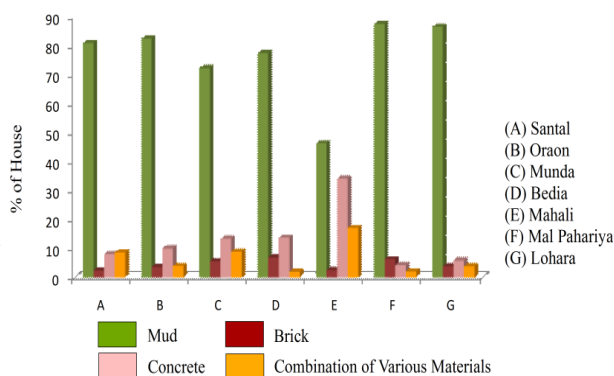
**Figure 4.20 House type**



**Figure 4.21 Material used for Roof**



**Figure 4.22 Material used for Wall**



**Figure 4.23 Material used for Floor**

### 4.2.7.3 Number of Rooms

When discussing about housing condition, it is equally important to know the availability of rooms or the number of rooms in a house as it gives an idea of the number of person living per room. The average family size of the tribal people of this district is 4.21 persons per family. Out of the total surveyed household (Table 4.47), about 21.52% are single room

households which imply that more than four persons are living in a single room in a very congested way. Moreover, this single room is not meant for sleeping only, rather it has multipurpose uses e.g. cooking, storing crops and sometimes for keeping domestic animals too. However, 52.99% sample households have at least two rooms and 10.24% families are staying in houses having four or more rooms.

The application of Chi-Square helps to find out the inter-tribal disparity. The result of Chi-Square shows that there is significant difference among the selected tribal groups in terms of number of rooms per family (**Pearson Chi-Square=46.148, Degree of Freedom= 18, p= .000 i.e. <0.05**).

**Table 4.47 Number of Rooms**

Tribal Groups	Percentage Distribution				Total
	1	2	3	4 & More	
Santal	15.00	52.38	19.05	13.57	420
Oraon	23.18	55.30	11.59	9.93	302
Munda	23.33	53.33	18.89	4.44	90
Bedia	23.53	52.94	11.76	11.76	102
Mahali	34.15	43.90	14.63	7.32	41
Mal Pahariya	39.58	47.92	6.25	6.25	48
Lohara	30.77	55.77	11.54	1.92	52
<b>Total</b>	<b>21.52</b>	<b>52.99</b>	<b>15.07</b>	<b>10.43</b>	<b>1055</b>

**Pearson Chi-Square=46.148, Degree of Freedom= 18, p= .000 i.e. <0.05. Hence, it is statistically significant.**

*Source: Field Survey, 2017-2018*

#### **4.2.7.4 Status of Kitchen**

Status of kitchen also reflects the level of basic accommodation of the house. In a house, it is necessary to have a separate and proper place for cooking. Generally, in a poor family, it is very difficult to arrange a suitable accommodation for cooking. It is observed that people sometimes cook in their bedrooms or at verandah or use the open space or front yard for cooking. Separate kitchen is not very much available in poor tribal families also. In the study area (Table 4.48), it is observed that a large number of respondents do not have any stable settings for cooking. It is observed that 10.52% respondents cook in open place who face great difficulties during rainy season when they have to arrange a temporary set up either at veranda or in bed room. The veranda is used by 46.54% families for cooking which also does not provide a proper set up for cooking. In the study area only 35.64% families have separate kitchens.

The result of Pearson Chi-square reveals that there is significant difference among the seven tribal communities in terms of the place of cooking (**Pearson Chi-Square= 32.888, Degree of Freedom=18, p= .017 i.e. <0.05**).

**Table 4.48 Status of Kitchen**

Tribal Groups	Percentage Distribution				Total
	Separate Kitchen	At Veranda	Having Shed but Open at Four Sides	Open Space	
Santal	33.57	45.95	8.10	12.38	420
Oraon	37.09	50.33	4.97	7.62	302
Munda	44.44	41.11	4.44	10.00	90
Bedia	31.37	45.10	11.76	11.76	102
Mahali	51.22	36.59	2.44	9.76	41
Mal Pahariya	33.33	39.58	18.75	8.33	48
Lohara	26.92	55.77	3.85	13.46	52
<b>Total</b>	<b>35.64</b>	<b>46.54</b>	<b>7.30</b>	<b>10.52</b>	<b>1055</b>

**Pearson Chi-Square= 32.888, Degree of Freedom=18, p= .017 i.e. <0.05. Hence, it is statistically significant**

*Source: Field Survey, 2017-2018*

#### 4.2.7.5 Sanitation and Open Defecation

A house must have proper sanitation facility i.e. have bathroom and latrine. However, the number of tribal houses having bathroom facility is so negligible that the study mainly focuses here on the latrine facility and practice of open defecation. Actually, the tribal

**Table 4.49 Type of Latrine**

Tribal Groups	Have Latrine Facility (in %)				No Latrine Facility (in %)	Total
	Sanitary Latrine	Pit Latrine	Ring Slab Latrine	With Government Assistance		
Santal	19.51	6.91	5.28	68.29	41.43	420
Oraon	18.83	1.79	9.42	69.96	26.16	302
Munda	21.43	5.71	8.57	64.29	22.22	90
Bedia	18.18	1.30	27.27	53.25	24.51	102
Mahali	41.94	9.68	19.35	29.03	24.39	41
Mal Pahariya	0.00	2.70	8.11	89.19	22.92	48
Lohara	6.45	0.00	9.68	83.87	40.38	52
<b>Total</b>	<b>18.74</b>	<b>4.20</b>	<b>10.21</b>	<b>66.85</b>	<b>32.23</b>	<b>1055</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2017-2018*

people are not very much accustomed with the use of latrine rather open defecation was a common practice among them. This statement can be supported by the fact that out of the total sample, 32.23% families have no latrine facility and 67.77% families have latrine facility (Table 4.49). Out of those who have toilet facilities, 18.74% have sanitary latrine constructed by themselves, 66.85% have constructed under Government scheme after getting some financial aid. This Government scheme is started very recently. Hence, number of tribal families having latrine may be regarded as a good indicator of the development of tribal people.

However, it is not a complete picture of tribal situation as it is observed that 12.6% respondents in spite of having toilet are still preferring open defecation. It is evident from the table 4.50 that 31.75% respondents have defecated regularly in open space and 13.08% respondents practice open defecation frequently.

In order to find out disparity among the selected tribal communities regarding their habit of open defecation, the Pearson Chi-Square is applied. The result shows that there is significant difference among the tribal communities in terms of habit of open defecation (**Pearson Chi-Square= 53.223, Degree of Freedom= 12, p= .000 i.e. <0.05**).

**Table 4.50 Practice of Open Defecation**

Tribal Groups	Percentage Distribution			Total
	Never	Frequently	Regularly	
Santal	46.43	12.38	41.19	420
Oraon	60.60	13.91	25.50	302
Munda	64.44	11.11	24.44	90
Bedia	65.69	13.73	20.59	102
Mahali	41.46	31.71	26.83	41
Mal Pahariya	70.83	8.33	20.83	48
Lohara	53.85	5.77	40.38	52
<b>Total</b>	<b>55.17</b>	<b>13.08</b>	<b>31.75</b>	<b>1055</b>

**Pearson Chi-Square= 53.223, Degree of Freedom= 12, p= .000 i.e. <0.05. Hence, it is statistically significant .**

*Source: Field Survey, 2017-2018*

## 4.2.8 Basic Amenities— Electricity, Fuel, Drinking Water and Proper Drainage System

### 4.2.8.1 Electricity

In the present era, the use of electricity is almost inevitable as its applicability has been multiplied several times. The electrification of an area has close association with the development of agriculture, industry, communication, infrastructure etc. while the household consumption leads to the improvement of education, health, in a word to say, the level of living is improved by the consumption of electricity. Hence, it is regarded as one of the basic amenities which are essential for better living. India is declared as 100% electrified villages recently though it is far away from the 100% electrification of each and every household. In the study area (Table 4.51), it is observed that 81.90% of the total sample households have electric connection while about 18.10% families are still outside the ambit of the electrification.

**Table 4.51 Electrification of Tribal Houses**

Tribal Groups	Percentage Distribution		Total
	Yes	No	
Santal	75.71	24.29	420
Oraon	85.43	14.57	302
Munda	85.56	14.44	90
Bedia	93.14	6.86	102
Mahali	90.24	9.76	41
Mal Pahariya	72.92	27.08	48
Lohara	84.62	15.38	52
<b>Total</b>	<b>81.90</b>	<b>18.10</b>	<b>1055</b>

**Pearson Chi-Square= 27.672, Degree of Freedom= 6, p= .000 i.e. <0.05. Hence, it is statistically significant**

*Source: Field Survey, 2017-2018*

Among the seven tribal groups, majority of the Bedias have electricity connection while Santals are at the lowest level (Figure 4.24). In order to find out the inter-tribal disparity, the Chi-Square method is applied. The Pearson Chi-Square value shows significant difference among the tribal communities in terms of having electricity connection in households (**Pearson Chi-Square= 27.672, Degree of Freedom= 6, p= .000 i.e. <0.05**).

### 4.2.8.2 Types of Fuel used for Cooking

The type of fuel used for household consumption i.e. cooking has direct bearings on the health of the women. Though this issue is neglected most of the time yet it has significant

impact on deciding the level of living of an individual. LPG is regarded as a safe source of fuel while fuelwood, dry leaves, coal etc. have harmful effect on the health condition. The table 4.52 represents that the tribal people of this area mostly use fuelwood and dry leaves as fuel while gas is used by only 2.84% of the sample households. About 33.18% sample households have started to use LPG beside firewood and leaves. A large share of them is mainly the beneficiaries of ‘Ujjwala’ scheme. During survey, many of the beneficiaries of this scheme express their inability to buy second cylinder which means that they will again depend on fuelwood and dry leaves. So, it can be stated that till now a large number of tribal people depend on unsafe sources of fuel. It is observed that among the seven tribal groups, the use of LPG is comparatively more among the Mal Pahariyas, Bedias and Santals (Figure 4.25).

It should be mentioned here that the tribal people had a very close relation with forests. They collect woods and dry leaves from forest to use as fuel. Most of the time, it is observed that they do not have much knowledge about the safe and unsafe source of fuel. Rather they feel attachment with forests and stopping them from collecting fuelwoods seems to them as the violation of their traditional right. Definitely, the tribal right on forest product should be sustained but the use of fuelwood should be stopped considering its harmful effects on health as well as environment.

**Table 4.52 Use of Different Types of Fuel**

Tribal Groups	Percentage Distribution					Total
	LPG	Dry Leaves	Fuelwood	Fuelwood & Dry Leaves	Fuelwood, Dry Leaves & LPG	
Santal	3.33	2.14	17.14	47.14	30.24	420
Oraon	2.32	0.33	11.92	51.32	34.11	302
Munda	2.22	0.00	14.44	47.78	35.56	90
Bedia	3.92	0.98	12.75	41.18	41.18	102
Mahali	0.00	0.00	2.44	51.22	46.34	41
Mal Pahariya	4.17	0.00	2.08	56.25	37.50	48
Lohara	1.92	3.85	21.15	55.77	17.31	52
<b>Total</b>	<b>2.84</b>	<b>1.23</b>	<b>13.93</b>	<b>48.82</b>	<b>33.18</b>	<b>1055</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2017-2018

#### **4.2.8.3 Drinking Water and Its Purification**

The source of drinking water is another determiner of the level of living which acts as an important element of social condition. In Dakshin Dinajpur, among the tribal people (Table 4.53), tube well is the main source of drinking water which may be own or neighbor’s or

Government tube well and a very small number of families access the Government supply water. Among the sample households, 65.88% families collect drinking water from Government tube well while 29.10% families have their own tube well. Only 2.27% respondents drink Government supply water and it is observed that wherever the supply water is available, people use it for drinking purpose leaving the other sources which implies that they have the concept of safe source of drinking water and they rely on Government supply water. Running water is used by only those who are financially sound. Unfortunately, no respondents among the Mahalis, Mal Pahariyas and Loharas have been able to arrange running water for their personal use (Figure 4.26).

**Table 4.53 Source of Drinking Water of the Respondents**

Tribal Groups	Percentage Distribution					Total
	Own Tube well	Neighbour's Tube well	Govt. Tube well	Own Running Water	Govt. Supply Water	
Santal	26.90	0.48	65.00	2.86	4.76	420
Oraon	20.86	0.33	76.49	1.32	0.99	302
Munda	46.67	3.33	47.78	2.22	0.00	90
Bedia	55.88	1.96	40.20	1.96	0.00	102
Mahali	39.02	2.44	58.54	0.00	0.00	41
Mal Pahariya	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	0.00	48
Lohara	30.77	0.00	67.31	0.00	1.92	52
<b>Total</b>	<b>29.10</b>	<b>0.85</b>	<b>65.88</b>	<b>1.90</b>	<b>2.27</b>	<b>1055</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2017-2018

The study also focuses on the distance, the tribal people have to cover to collect their drinking water. It is observed (Table 4.54) that only 31.28% tribal families collect water from own source either tube well or running water located within premises. About 61.52% families collect water located within 100 m of premises. But, the rest of the families collect water beyond 100 m of premises, sometimes 500 m away from home.

The Chi-Square is done to find out the inter-tribal disparity regarding the distance, the tribal people have to cover to collect their drinking water. The result shows that there is significant difference among the seven tribal groups regarding the distance of the source of drinking water (**Pearson Chi-Square= 104.083, Degree of Freedom= 12, p= .000 i.e. <0.05**).

**Table 4.54 Distance from the Source of Drinking Water**

Tribal Groups	Percentage Distribution			Total
	Within Premises	Within 100m of Premises	Beyond 100m of Premises	
Santal	28.33	65.00	6.67	420
Oraon	22.85	68.54	8.61	302
Munda	47.78	47.78	4.44	90
Bedia	63.73	35.29	0.98	102
Mahali	31.71	65.85	2.44	41
Mal Pahariya	6.25	70.83	22.92	48
Lohara	34.62	55.77	9.62	52
<b>Total</b>	<b>31.28</b>	<b>61.52</b>	<b>7.20</b>	<b>1055</b>

**Pearson Chi-Square= 104.083, Degree of Freedom= 12, p= .000 i.e. <0.05. Hence, it is statistically significant**

*Source: Field Survey, 2017-2018*

The study also finds out that till now majority of the respondents (Table 4.55) are not conscious about the purification of water as they do not purify the drinking water. But, at present, water purification should be done which protect them from different type of water-borne diseases. Only 6% tribal families drink purified water, who either use water purifier or boiled water or purchase locally available purified water. Among the seven tribal communities, the Mundas are comparatively more conscious about the purification of drinking water while no one among the Mal Pahariyas drinks purified water.

**Table 4.55 Purification of Drinking Water**

Tribal Groups	Percentage Distribution				Total
	Not Purified	Purchase Purified Water	Boiled Water	Filtered	
Santal	93.33	2.86	1.90	1.90	420
Oraon	93.38	2.32	2.98	1.32	302
Munda	92.22	2.22	3.33	2.22	90
Bedia	95.10	2.94	0.00	1.96	102
Mahali	97.56	2.44	0.00	0.00	41
Mal Pahariya	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	48
Lohara	92.31	0.00	7.69	0.00	52
<b>Total</b>	<b>93.84</b>	<b>2.37</b>	<b>2.27</b>	<b>1.52</b>	<b>1055</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2017-2018*

#### **4.2.8.4 Source of Water for Daily Needs**

The use of water for other purposes includes washing, bathing, etc. which requires a large amount of water. The tribal people collects the water for other purposes from tube well,



pond, river or sometimes they use the combination of the above sources. The majority of the respondents use pond water (Table 4.56). It depends on the availability of the pond in that village. It is observed that sometimes, in spite of having tube well, they prefer to use the pond water for other purposes. The study also reveals that 29.10% families have own tube well yet 23.03% respondents use the water of their own tube well for other purposes. Among the seven tribal communities, the Mal Pahariyas mostly depends on ponds for their needs of water (Figure 4.27).

**Table 4.56 Source of Water for Daily Needs**

Tribal Groups	Percentage Distribution						Total
	Own Tube well	Own Running Water	Pond	River	Govt. Tube well	Combination of Others	
Santal	19.76	2.14	29.52	3.10	24.05	21.43	420
Oraon	11.26	1.66	47.68	0.33	9.93	29.14	302
Munda	45.56	2.22	22.22	2.22	21.11	6.67	90
Bedia	50.98	1.96	24.51	4.90	11.76	5.88	102
Mahali	58.54	0.00	7.32	0.00	29.27	4.88	41
Mal Pahariya	0.00	0.00	91.67	0.00	4.17	4.17	48
Lohara	17.31	0.00	42.31	0.00	13.46	26.92	52
<b>Total</b>	<b>23.03</b>	<b>1.71</b>	<b>36.21</b>	<b>1.99</b>	<b>17.35</b>	<b>19.72</b>	<b>1055</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2017-2018*

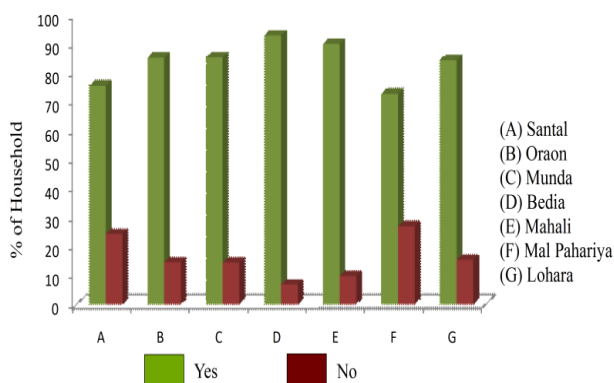
#### **4.2.8.5 Drainage System**

Proper drainage facility has been regarded as one of the basic amenities. Each and every household should have proper drain to discharge the sewage away from the home, which should be collected centrally by the local authorities for the treatment of the storm water as it is the breeding ground of several diseases. Unfortunately, in the study area (Table 4.57), 78.10% sample households have no drainage facility. So, they discharge the sewage in the open space near their house. Most of the time, it is observed that where the tube well is located, near it, the storm water is stored in a small pit near the tube well which causes water contamination. 18.67% families have constructed drain though uncovered and only 3.22% respondents constructed covered drain. Among the seven tribal communities, the situation of drainage system is comparatively better for Bedias, Mundas and Santals (Figure 4.28). However, the majority of the people are unaware of the importance of having proper drainage system and it includes the authorities also as the drain is constructed mostly in urban areas and the rural people are deprived of having this facilities in this district.

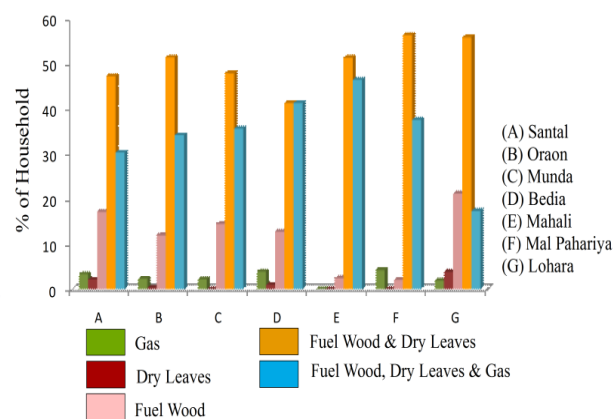
**Table 4.57 Drainage System**

Tribal Groups	Percentage Distribution			Total
	Uncovered Drain	Covered Drain	No Drainage Facility	
Santal	20.48	2.38	77.14	420
Oraon	14.57	5.30	80.13	302
Munda	23.33	5.56	71.11	90
Bedia	29.41	2.94	67.65	102
Mahali	4.88	0.00	95.12	41
Malpahari	10.42	0.00	89.58	48
Lohara	17.31	0.00	82.69	52
<b>Total</b>	<b>18.67</b>	<b>3.22</b>	<b>78.10</b>	<b>1055</b>

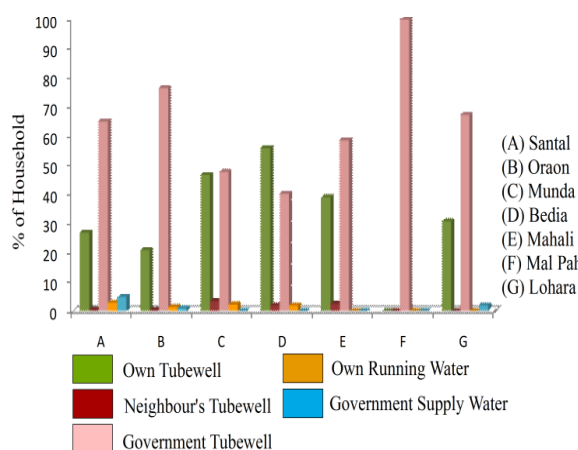
Source: Field Survey, 2017-2018



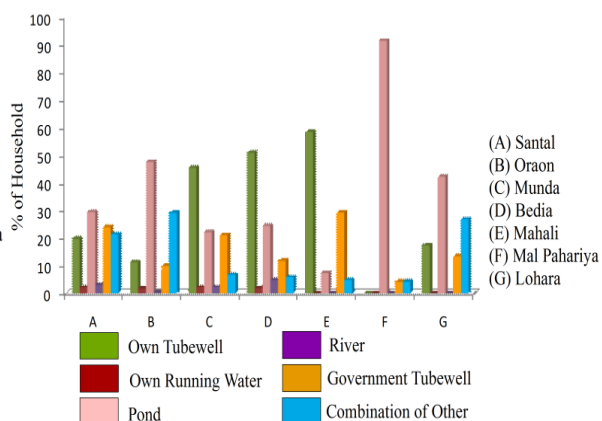
**Figure 4.24 Electrification in tribal households**



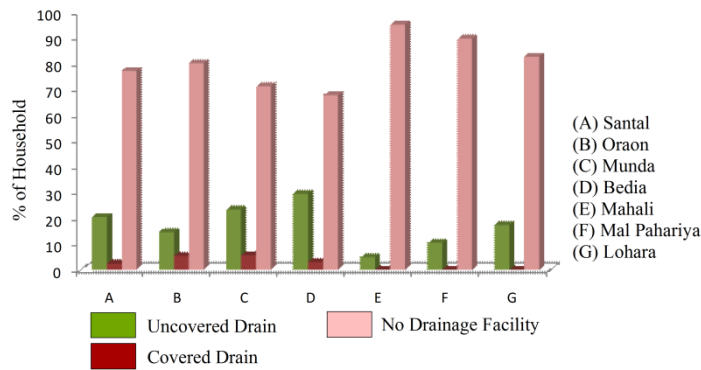
**Figure 4.25 Use of Different types of Fuel**



**Figure 4.26 Source of Drinking Water**



**Figure 4.27 Source of Water for Daily Needs**



**Figure 4.28 Drainage facility**

## 4.2.9 Education

“Literacy is considered throughout the world as an indicator of the spread of education in society”.<sup>57</sup> In order to know the level of educational achievement of the tribal people of Dakshin Dinajpur, the present study attempts to assess the level of literacy among them. Now, who are considered as literate? According to Census of India, a person aged 7 years and above who can read and write with proper understanding in any language is considered as literate. No matter if he receives any formal education or not.<sup>58</sup> Presently, 57.02% of the tribal people of the district (Census 2011) fit to this definition where as among the total sample population 67.16% are literates. The literacy rate is highest among the Bedias and lowest among the Loharas.

Being only literate is not enough for the development of a community. Rather the focus must be laid on attaining higher level of education as it is education which increases the knowledge, improves the ability to take right decision, widens the scope of employment, betters the level of income and broadens the accessibility to better food, cloth, shelter, health care. In a word, education is the key factor to live a better life, at least provides better scope to improve the level of living.

### 4.2.9.1 Educational Attainment of the Sample Population

The present study, therefore, intend to enquire the level of educational attainment of the sample population (Table 4.58). It is very frustrating that the illiteracy is still very high among the tribal people of the district and those who are literate is not persuading for higher education. Majority of the literates have a qualification of below VIII standard. The percentage share of secondary, higher secondary and above is very poor. Now, is the situation remaining same as it was before or it is improving? In order to get a clear picture of the educational attainment of the tribal people, it will be logical to divide them into two

categories i.e. age 25 & below 25 years and age above 25 years which probably represents two generations. The data reveals that the level of educational attainment is better for the group of 25 years and below age which is an indication of the improvement of the prevailing situation. It is observed that while the illiteracy rate for above 25 years is 45.16%, the same for 25 & below 25 years is 19.60%.

Among the seven tribal groups, illiteracy is highest among the Loharas, both for the 25 & below 25 years and above 25 years while average illiteracy is lowest for the Bedias. However, separately, lowest illiteracy is observed in the age-group of 25 years and below for the Oraons and in the age-group of above 25 years for the Mahalis. To find out the inter-tribal disparity in educational attainment considering both age-groups, the Chi-Square is applied. The result of Chi-Square proves that there is significant difference among the tribal communities in terms of educational attainment (**Pearson Chi-Square=127.946, Degree of Freedom= 30, p= .000 i.e. <0.05**).

**Table 4.58 Educational Attainment of the Sample Population**

Tribal Groups	Percentage Distribution						Total
	Illiterate	I-IV	V-VIII	IX-X	XI-XII	Graduate & Above	
<b>Santal</b>	<b>37.02</b>	<b>18.62</b>	<b>21.12</b>	<b>13.90</b>	<b>4.56</b>	<b>4.78</b>	<b>1799</b>
25& Below	22.16	22.49	25.50	18.82	5.57	5.46	898
Above 25	51.83	14.76	16.76	8.99	3.55	4.11	901
<b>Oraon</b>	<b>29.24</b>	<b>18.84</b>	<b>21.34</b>	<b>18.14</b>	<b>5.86</b>	<b>6.57</b>	<b>1279</b>
25& Below	15.60	20.81	20.64	24.66	9.23	9.06	596
Above 25	41.14	17.13	21.96	12.45	2.93	4.39	683
<b>Munda</b>	<b>30.39</b>	<b>21.30</b>	<b>22.86</b>	<b>16.36</b>	<b>5.19</b>	<b>3.90</b>	<b>385</b>
25& Below	17.71	24.00	24.00	21.71	6.86	5.71	175
Above 25	40.95	19.05	21.90	11.90	3.81	2.38	210
<b>Bedia</b>	<b>24.94</b>	<b>14.96</b>	<b>28.50</b>	<b>14.73</b>	<b>8.79</b>	<b>8.08</b>	<b>421</b>
25& Below	16.92	15.38	24.10	18.97	13.33	11.28	195
Above 25	31.86	14.60	32.30	11.06	4.87	5.31	226
<b>Mahali</b>	<b>26.87</b>	<b>15.67</b>	<b>26.12</b>	<b>21.64</b>	<b>4.48</b>	<b>5.22</b>	<b>134</b>
25& Below	23.44	18.75	25.00	21.88	6.25	4.69	64
Above 25	30.00	12.86	27.14	21.43	2.86	5.71	70
<b>Mal Pahariya</b>	<b>29.52</b>	<b>30.48</b>	<b>23.33</b>	<b>12.86</b>	<b>3.33</b>	<b>0.48</b>	<b>210</b>
25& Below	15.74	26.85	30.56	21.30	5.56	0.00	108
Above 25	44.12	34.31	15.69	3.92	0.98	0.98	102
<b>Lohara</b>	<b>45.87</b>	<b>16.97</b>	<b>22.02</b>	<b>10.55</b>	<b>2.75</b>	<b>1.83</b>	<b>218</b>
25& Below	29.91	19.63	27.10	16.82	4.67	1.87	107
Above 25	61.26	14.41	17.12	4.50	0.90	1.80	111
<b>Total</b>	<b>32.84</b>	<b>18.96</b>	<b>22.33</b>	<b>15.43</b>	<b>5.24</b>	<b>5.20</b>	<b>4446</b>
25& Below	19.60	21.47	24.22	20.81	7.37	6.53	2143
Above 25	45.16	16.63	20.58	10.42	3.26	3.95	2303

**Pearson Chi-Square=127.946, Degree Of Freedom= 30, P= .000 I.E. <0.05. Hence, It Is Statistically Significant.**

*Source: Field Survey, 2017-2018*

#### ***4.2.9.2 Reasons of Poor Educational Attainment***

From the above discussion, it is very clear that the tribal people of the study area are backward in educational attainment. Several reasons are responsible for their poor educational attainment. These are—

##### **a. Cultural Background**

The tribal people are not very much familiar with the present education system which confines the pupil within the four walls of school to grasp some unknown content most of which has no connection with the tribal world. For years, these people are living their lives in close contact with nature and learn the rules of life directly from nature. They have their age old oral tradition which one generation learns from others. It may seem backward from non-tribal perspective but the tribal people are accustomed with this system. But the **“Current literacy programmes lead to a total break with the tribal society and culture. Tribal societies, by and large, find it difficult to relate the structure and the content of education to their ways of life”**.<sup>59</sup> As a result, they do not find it interesting and their performances do not reach up to the level.

##### **b. First Generation Learner**

The study of inter-generational education may also throw some light on this issue. Here, the literacy status of the respondents is studied considering the literacy status of previous two generations. The study reveals (Table 4.59) that out of the total respondents (1055), 37.35% are first generation learners i.e. the respondent is the first in his family to enter in the sphere of education. About 19.72% respondents are second generation learners i.e. his or her father was literate. In the study area, only 4.83% respondents are third generation learners i.e. his father and grandfather were literate and hence, he must be encouraged to educate himself. Among the respondents, 38.10% have still now not entered to the sphere of education, may be their next generation will be the first generation learners.

Among the seven tribal communities, the Mal Pahariyas are mainly the first generation learners. Among the Loharas, the share of first generation learner is lowest but illiteracy is highest among them i.e. a large number of Lohara families remains out of the ambit of education.

**Table 4.59 First Generation Learners among Respondents**

Tribal Groups	Percentage Distribution				Total
	First Generation Learner	Second Generation Learner	Third Generation Learner	Still Illiterate	
Santal	33.33	20.95	3.81	41.90	420
Oraon	41.39	18.54	6.62	33.44	302
Munda	41.11	14.44	3.33	41.11	90
Bedia	46.08	28.43	2.94	22.55	102
Mahali	29.27	21.95	7.32	41.46	41
Mal Pahariya	52.08	6.25	2.08	39.58	48
Lohara	15.38	19.23	9.62	55.77	52
<b>Total</b>	<b>37.35</b>	<b>19.72</b>	<b>4.83</b>	<b>38.10</b>	<b>1055</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2017-2018

### c. Medium of Instruction

As per the Article 350A of the Constitution, the linguistic minority groups are provided the right to get the primary education in their mother tongue.<sup>60</sup> But, in Dakshin Dinajpur the medium of instruction in all the school is either Bengali or English or Hindi. There is no school where any tribal language is used as the medium of instruction. It becomes difficult for the tribal children to start their elementary education in completely different language. However, most of the respondents do not feel the problem of medium of instruction. Table 4.60 shows that 85.15% out of the total literate are of the opinion that non-tribal languages do not create any obstacle to their educational attainment. However, 14.85% respondents consider that the medium of instruction other than mother tongue causes difficulties in their educational attainment.

**Table 4.60 Medium of Instruction Causes Difficulties in Education**

Tribal Groups	Literate (in %)		Still Illiterate (in %)	Total
	Yes	No		
Santal	24.18	75.82	41.90	420
Oraon	7.96	92.04	33.44	302
Munda	15.09	84.91	41.11	90
Bedia	6.33	93.67	22.55	102
Mahali	16.67	83.33	41.46	41
Mal Pahariya	0.00	100.00	39.58	48
Lohara	21.74	78.26	55.77	52
<b>Total</b>	<b>14.85</b>	<b>85.15</b>	<b>38.10</b>	<b>1055</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2017-2018

#### d. Involvement of Tribal Children in Household and Other Activities

This is one of the important reasons of poor educational attainment of the tribal children. Besides education, the tribal children have to involve in different household duties and helping parents in their earning activities. When both father and mother go outside for work, at that time they have to look after their younger siblings too. For a child, it is the prime time for learning. But a large number of tribal children of different ages have to perform different household activities. Many of them also participate in some economic activities to earn money. These badly affect the education of the tribal children and increase the dropout rate among them.

The table 4.61 represents the engagement of children of 6-16 years age-group in different activities. It is evident from the table that even in this 21<sup>st</sup> century a large number of the tribal children (55.29%) of the study area are either performing household activity or earning activity. But, there are 2.46% children who have to perform more than one type of activities.

**Table 4.61 Involvement of Tribal Children in Household and Other Activities**

Tribal Groups	Engage in Any Activity (in %)					Total	Not Engage in Children Any Activity (in %)	Total (6-16 yrs)
	Household Activity	Earning Activity	Help Parents in Earning Activity	Other Type	More Than One Type			
Santal	27.99	3.82	6.36	0.25	2.54	40.97	59.03	393
Oraon	48.99	8.10	7.29	0.40	2.43	67.21	32.79	247
Munda	40.74	2.47	4.94	0.00	0.00	48.15	51.85	81
Bedia	59.14	5.38	18.28	0.00	1.08	83.87	16.13	93
Mahali	24.00	4.00	0.00	4.00	4.00	36.00	64.00	25
Mal Pahariya	61.36	13.64	20.45	0.00	2.27	97.73	2.27	44
Lohara	23.08	3.85	5.77	0.00	7.69	40.38	59.62	52
<b>Total</b>	<b>38.93</b>	<b>5.45</b>	<b>8.13</b>	<b>0.32</b>	<b>2.46</b>	<b>55.29</b>	<b>44.71</b>	<b>935</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2017-2018

#### 4.2.9.3 Problems of Dropout

Dropout refers “to the premature withdrawal of pupils from the educational cycle at a particular stage of instruction”<sup>61</sup>. Though the number of literate is increasing, yet the number of higher educated person is not increasing proportionally to the literacy rate. Hence, it is necessary to study the issue of dropout in depth.

Here, the dropout issue is studied at three level— primary (I-V), middle level (VI-VIII) and secondary level (IX-X) considering the total sample population of all ages and only 6-16 years separately. The dropout rate among 6-16 years (Table 4.62) helps to understand the present situation while dropout rate of all ages (Table 4.63) represents the overall dropout situation of tribal population of this district. The maximum number of students has discontinued their study at middle level for all ages as well as 6-16 years population. At present the tribal students are availing different facilities in school, both monetary and material. Books, copies, school dress, bi-cycle etc. are distributed at free of cost. Mid-day-meal is provided to all students so that not a single child has to read with appetite. The dropout rate is much improved among the children of 6-16 years yet it is still persisting.

**Table 4.62 Dropouts Based on 6-16 Years**

Dropout	Percentage Distribution							
	Santal	Oraon	Munda	Bedia	Mahali	Mal Pahariya	Lohara	Average
At Primary	1.53	1.62	4.94	0.00	0.00	9.09	3.85	2.14
At Middle	5.09	1.21	3.70	1.08	12.00	6.82	11.54	4.17
At Secondary	0.76	1.62	0.00	2.15	0.00	2.27	0.00	1.07
Currently in School	82.95	89.47	80.25	92.47	88.00	75.00	73.08	84.60
Never Attended	9.67	6.07	11.11	4.30	0.00	6.82	11.54	8.02
<b>Total</b>	<b>393</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>935</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2017-2018*

**Table 4.63 Dropouts Based on Population of All Ages**

Dropout	Percentage Distribution							
	Santal	Oraon	Munda	Bedia	Mahali	Mal Pahariya	Lohara	Average
At Primary	10.01	11.73	12.73	8.08	8.21	22.86	10.09	11.11
At Middle	15.12	15.72	18.44	19.95	19.40	15.71	15.14	16.19
At Secondary	6.67	9.77	8.05	8.31	11.94	8.57	4.13	7.96
Not Dropout	31.18	33.54	30.39	38.72	33.58	23.33	24.77	31.89
Never Attended	37.02	29.24	30.39	24.94	26.87	29.52	45.87	32.84
<b>Total</b>	<b>1799</b>	<b>1279</b>	<b>385</b>	<b>421</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>218</b>	<b>4446</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2017-2018*

#### **4.2.9.4 Reasons of Dropout**

The study attempts to find out different reasons of dropout, which are mentioned by the respondents from their personal experiences. This study includes the dropouts of 6-16 years



age-group only. Presently, the Government has improved the educational facilities. Yet, a considerable number of tribal children discontinue their education. Therefore, the present research work aims to find out the probable reasons of dropout (Table 4.64). Out of which four reasons i.e. financial crisis of the family, working to support the family, lack of interest among the students and early marriages are very crucial. Out of the total dropouts, 28.99% discontinue their study due to financial crisis, 21.74% discontinue due to early marriages and 1.45% stop their education to support their family by getting involved in earning activities. But, the majority of the tribal children discontinue their study because of lack of interest in study. This is really alarming why a large number of tribal children find no interest in education. This issue demands a greater concern. The study attempts to enquire these four reasons in details.

**Table 4.64 Reasons of Dropout**

Reasons	Percentage Distribution							Total
	Santal	Oraon	Munda	Bedia	Mahali	Mal Pahariya	Lohara	
For Work	3.45	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.45
Financial Crisis	24.14	18.18	57.14	0.00	66.67	25.00	37.50	28.99
Lack of Interest	48.28	63.64	42.86	33.33	0.00	75.00	25.00	47.83
Early Marriage	24.14	18.18	0.00	66.67	33.33	0.00	37.50	21.74
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>69</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2017-2018*

#### **a. Financial Crisis**

About 29% respondents opined that due to financial crisis, the tribal children are not able to continue their study. However, the Indian Constitution aims to provide the elementary education free of cost. In article 45 of Directive Principle of Indian Constitution, there is provision of free and compulsory education of satisfactory quality to all children up to the age of 14.<sup>62</sup> In India, the cost of elementary education is almost nil yet the parents mentioned about the high cost of education which contradicts the reality. Further study tries to find out the truth:

- i) The total income of the tribal families is very low. Out of the total surveyed households, the monthly family income of 41% sample household is less than Rs. 5000 (Table 5.30). To them it is important to increase the number of earning members. So, they engage their children in work at very early age which results

the discontinuation of education. That means to support their family to fulfill the basic needs of life, the tribal children can not avail the benefit of free education.

- ii) Besides, it is the cost of private tuition which becomes indispensable in the education system of this area increases the cost of education (Table 4.65). The respondents consider that the school education is not sufficient for their children. Out of the total children of school going age (6-16 yrs) who presently continue study, 37.97% have private tuition to help in their studies.

**Table 4.65 Private Tuition among Tribal Children**

Tribal Groups	Percentage Distribution		Total
	Have Private Tuition	Do Not Have Private Tuition	
Santal	37.53	62.47	393
Oraon	40.41	59.59	247
Munda	37.93	62.07	81
Bedia	36.27	63.73	93
Mahali	39.02	60.98	25
Mal Pahariya	27.08	72.92	44
Lohara	40.38	59.62	52
<b>Total</b>	<b>37.97</b>	<b>62.03</b>	<b>935</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2017-2018*

#### **b. For Working to Support Family**

There are different reasons of poor educational achievements of the tribal people. One important reason is the involvement of tribal children of school going age in household activities and other activities. In table 4.61, it is already mentioned that 55.29% tribal children of school going age (6-16 years) are presently engaged in different types of work either household or earning or other type of activities.

The study also attempted to throw light on the child labour issue. Generally, the children aged 5-14 years are considered here. To save the future of children, the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986 was passed. Yet child labours are observed in India and it is highest among the Scheduled Tribe people.

In the study area, it is observed that so many tribal children of 5-14 years age are involved in different activities. They are engaged in agriculture and allied activities, shops, restaurants, houses etc. The major share of these children is mainly work in agricultural sectors while many work in the shops (Table 4.66).

**Table 4.66 Incident of Child Labour**

Tribal Groups	No. of Child Labour	Child Labour (in %)		Total Children (5-14 yrs)
		Agriculture & Allied Activities	Shop Labour	
Santal	10	88.00	20.00	315
Oraon	4	75.00	25.00	196
Munda	3	66.67	33.33	69
Bedia	5	60.00	40.00	73
Mahali	0	0.00	0.00	21
Mal Pahariya	3	66.67	33.33	32
Lohara	3	66.67	33.33	37
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>75.00</b>	<b>25.00</b>	<b>743</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2017-2018

### c. Early Marriage

An early marriage is another cause of high drop out among the tribal people, especially for the girl child. Out of the total dropouts (6-16 years), 21.74% discontinue their study due to marriage. Early marriage is a common practice among the tribe of this district. It is observed that out of the total respondent 16.21% got married at the age of below 15 years and 28.06% at the age of 15-18years (Table 4.24). After marriage, it becomes difficult to continue further studies especially for female. For male, the incidence of early marriage is comparably less visible.

### d. Lack of Interest in Education

A large number of dropouts (47.83%) have stopped their education themselves as they do not find any interest in study. To continue study, a student's interest is most important. If a student does not find interest, after some time, the whole thing seems nothing but a burden to him. Now the question is in spite of getting family support why the tribal children are not motivating to continue further study? The study further attempts to find out the reasons of lack of interest among the tribal students.

#### i) Medium of Instruction

Every tribal community has their distinct mother tongue. Naturally, the tribal children are accustomed with their mother tongue. The Indian Constitution in Article 350A makes this provision that the medium of instruction for the children at primary level must be the mother tongue. But, in Dakshin Dinajpur, in all the schools the medium of instruction is other than tribal language, mainly Bengali. Hence, the medium of instruction creates

difficulties for the tribal children to understand the subject matter. Consequently they lose interest in education and become unwilling to go to school.

However, the study has documented some contradictory perception of the respondents regarding the medium of instruction of studies. When the respondents are asked if it causes an obstacle to their children's educational attainment, they answered negatively. But when they are asked why they speak Bengali to their children, they have stated that it will help their children to understand the lessons in school and to communicate with their teachers.

#### **ii) Content of the Subjects**

It is observed that the content of the subjects has a vital role to influence the level of interest of the children. The stories written in the books or the examples used to explain the subject matter are most of the time not relevant with the tribal life. So, the tribal children can't relate with the contents and it seems boring to them. Eventually, they lose their interest in studies.

#### **iii) Mentality of the Teachers**

Teacher's attitude and mentality is a prime factor behind the lack of interest of the students. Most of the teachers in local schools belong to other than tribal community and they have very little knowledge about the tribal life and culture. Many a time the teachers can't realize the problems faced by the children due to language differences. As a result the teacher himself fails to arise interest among the tribal students.

All these factors adversely affect the educational attainment of the children and sometimes drive them to discontinue their study in the midway of attaining higher educational qualification.

### **4.2.10 Social Discrimination**

#### ***4.2.10.1 Discrimination by Non-Tribes***

Discrimination is a way of excluding or separating people from larger section and thus depriving them from the enjoyment of their basic human rights. It is observed that an individual or a community or a social group is discriminated sometimes on the basis of their race, religion, ethnicity, caste, creeds, colour, gender etc. The Constitution of India guarantees that all of its citizen is equal before law yet it is observed that discrimination is practiced against different social groups. The existence of hierarchy in the social structure of India leads to the initiation of social discrimination. In order to maintain the social

hierarchy, the different social groups differentiate between them. Actually, in the social ladder, some groups are pretend to be superior to the other groups and to enjoy their superior status, they deliberately make differences between the different social groups.

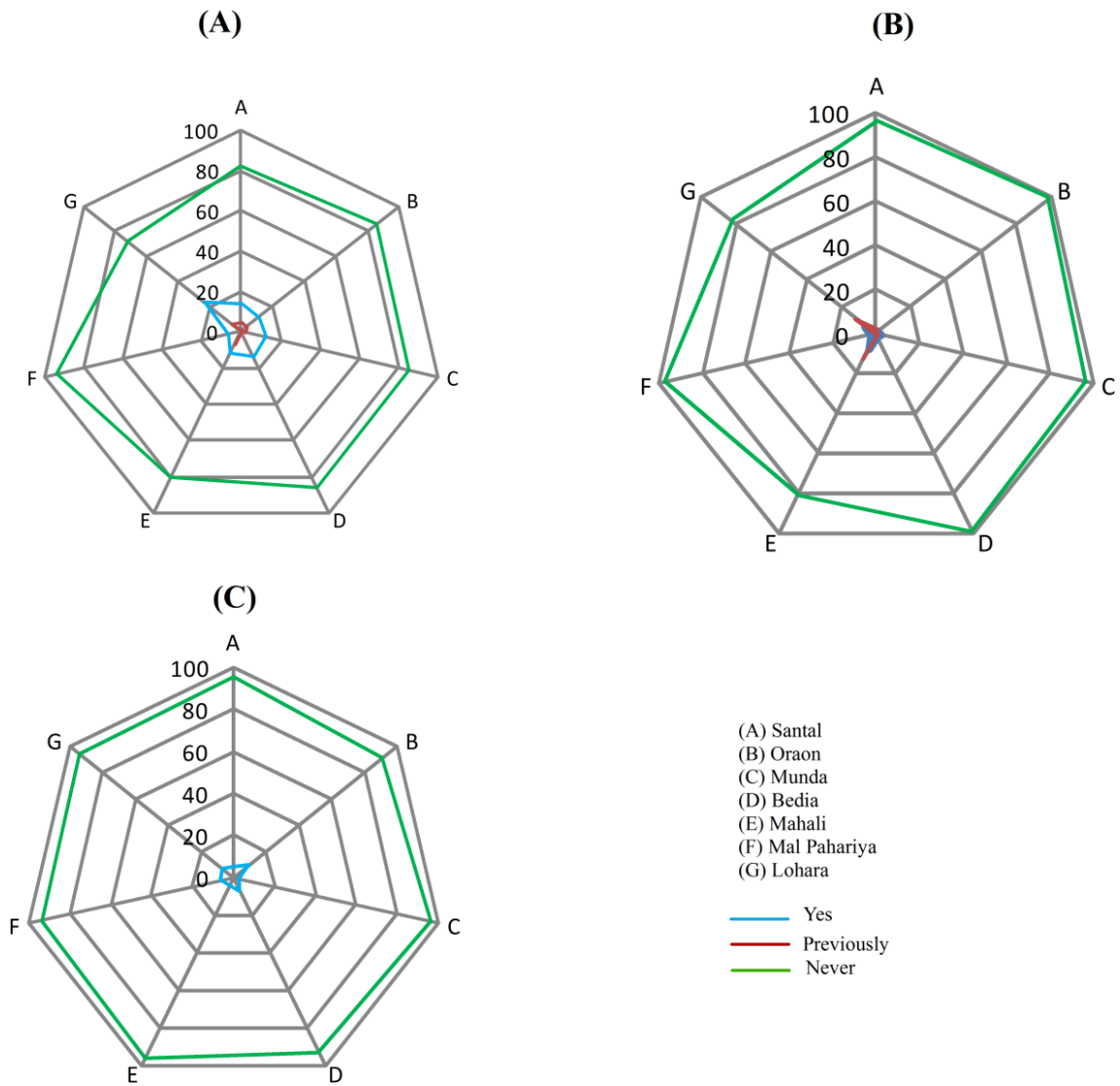
The Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes are the worst sufferer of social discrimination. Sadly, this social discrimination is still continuing. The present research work has also found that tribes of this district are socially discriminated (Table 4.67). About 12.71% respondents opined that they are socially discriminated by the non-tribes while 3.6% respondents stated that it happens no longer. At present, they are not discriminated and enjoy the equal status. Among the seven tribal groups, the Loharas are the highest to experience discrimination (Figure 4.29A). Probably, the percentage share of the respondents experiencing discrimination may be higher. Actually the tribes are generally shy. So, sometimes they hesitate to admit the existence of social discrimination against them. Moreover, the researcher herself belongs to the non-tribe group which may resist them to express their opinion clearly. And this is further established by some well educated respondents who stated that the non-tribes discriminate against the tribes but due to the unawareness as well as simplicity of the tribes, most of the time they do not feel that they are discriminated. The respondents mention different reasons of such social discrimination.

- 8.63% respondents state that they are discriminated because they belong to Scheduled Tribe group.
- 5.12% opine poverty is the main reason of such discrimination.
- 1.14% each express that they are considered as backward and unclean by the non-tribal people.
- Lastly, 0.28% considered the presence of wide spread illiteracy as the reason of such discrimination.

**Table 4.67 Social Discrimination by Non-Tribes**

Tribal Groups	Percentage Distribution			Total
	Yes	Previously	Never	
Santal	13.57	4.52	81.9	420
Oraon	10.59	3.64	85.76	302
Munda	12.22	2.22	85.56	90
Bedia	13.72	0	86.27	102
Mahali	12.2	7.32	80.49	41
Mal Pahariya	6.25	0	93.75	48
Lohara	23.07	5.77	71.15	52
<b>Total</b>	<b>12.71</b>	<b>3.60</b>	<b>83.70</b>	<b>1055</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2017-2018



**Figure 4.29 (A) Discrimination by Non-Tribes  
 (B) Discrimination by Other Tribes  
 (C) Discrimination within Same Tribal Community**

#### 4.2.10.2 Discrimination by Other Tribes

The study further attempts to find out whether the different tribal groups discriminate against other tribes. In this district, several tribal communities are residing for years and interacting for different purposes. All the selected tribal groups are endogamous and endogamy is still continuing at present. However, there is no concept of superiority of particular tribal communities to other. The study also supports that as 95.92% respondents stated that they were never discriminated by other tribal communities (Table 4.68). Only 1.99% respondents opined that they are discriminated by other tribe while 2.09%

respondents have considered it as a previous occurrence. According to the respondents the reasons of such discrimination are—

- 3.41% consider that owing to their poor economic condition, they are excluded.
- 0.76% opined that they are considered as lower tribe. They are mostly the Mahalis and Loharas (Figure 4.29B). It is already discussed in chapter-III that Mahalis are originated from Santals after being outcasted from the main branch. It may be the reason of considering the Mahalis as lower tribe by few Santals.

**Table 4.68 Discrimination by Other Tribes**

Tribal Groups	Percentage Distribution			Total
	Yes	Previously	Never	
Santal	1.67	2.38	95.95	420
Oraon	1.32	0.00	98.68	302
Munda	2.22	1.11	96.67	90
Bedia	0.98	0.00	99.02	102
Mahali	7.32	12.20	80.49	41
Mal Pahariya	2.08	0.00	97.92	48
Lohara	5.77	11.54	82.69	52
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.99</b>	<b>2.09</b>	<b>95.92</b>	<b>1055</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2017-2018*

#### **4.2.10.3 Discrimination within Same Tribal Community**

The different tribal communities are divided into different clans but these are not hierarchical division. Hence, any individual is not discriminated due to their identity of clan. However, at present, economic condition and illiteracy are the main reasons of social discrimination within the same tribal group. About 6.26% respondents have stated that discrimination practiced against them by people from their own community but it is only a recent phenomenon as it did not happen previously (Table 4.69). 2.27% respondents opined that they are discriminated by the people of their own community due to their poor economic condition while 1.99% considers illiteracy and backwardness as the reasons of discrimination. This reveals that among the tribal society a creamy layer is developing which attempts to maintain distance from their same community men. Such type of discrimination is highest among the Oraons (Figure 4.29C). Thus, the tribal society is getting divided on development ground.

**Table 4.69 Discrimination within Same Tribal Community**

Tribal Groups	Percentage Distribution			Total
	Yes	Previously	Never	
Santal	4.90	0.00	95.10	420
Oraon	9.62	0.00	90.38	302
Munda	3.33	0.00	96.67	90
Bedia	7.32	0.00	92.68	102
Mahali	4.17	0.00	95.83	41
Mal Pahariya	6.62	0.00	93.38	48
Lohara	6.67	0.00	93.33	52
<b>Total</b>	<b>6.26</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>93.74</b>	<b>1055</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2017-2018*

In this chapter, the social condition of the tribal people of Dakshin Dinajpur is discussed in detail. The study highlighted the use of traditional language among the different tribal communities as well as the present shift to non-tribal languages. Similarly, their present religious belief and the perception about the past religion are also discussed. The study focuses on the use of traditional dresses and jewelries of different tribal groups. At the same time, the status of their educational attainment, food habits and housing condition is analysed here.

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