

Empirical Ethnographic Study on the Social Status of PURAN (BHANJA PURAN and TAMUDIA PURAN) community of Mayurbhanj district of Odisha

I . Background

During 1978, Govt. of Odisha in consultation with the Tribes Advisory Council (TAC) of the State, recommended to Govt. of India (Gol), for inclusion of PURAN community in the Scheduled Tribes (ST) list of Odisha vide their letter No. 31386, dt.18.11.78. No ethnic status report was enclosed with the proposal except a brief ethnographic note on the community as cited below.

"It has been ascertained that traditionally 'Puran' with another tribe called 'Kharia' (Sl. No. 29 of 1976 list) are aborigines of Mayurbhanj district of the State of Orissa. They say that they and the family of the Raja (Bhanj) were all produced from a Pea-fowl's egg, the Bhanj or the family of the Raja from the yolk, the 'Purans' from the white and the 'Kharis' from the shell. They reside in Bamanghati and Panchpirh sub-divisions of Mayurbhanj district. Hence, it is recommended that 'Purans' should be included as a separate tribe in the Orissa list."

The Office of the Registrar General of India (ORGI) examined the proposal in 1985 and expressed their inability (vide their letter No.8/1/84-SS (Bihar) Dated 15th Feb., 1985) to support the proposal as no information was available with them showing that Puran possess tribal characteristics. Again in 1993 ORGI reiterated the same view vide their Letter No. 8/1/93-SS (Gen) dt 29.1.93

Later, acting upon a petition Dt. 16.11.1993 received from Sri Chhatish Chandra Dhal, the then M.L.A, Baripada for inclusion of PURAN (BHANJA PURAN and TAMUDIA PURAN) in the list of STs of Odisha, the State Govt. in Tribal Welfare Deptt. vide their letter No.34716/TW, Dated 23rd Dec 93 requested the Director, THRTI (TRI of Odisha, now SCSTRTI), to conduct a study on the socio-economic status of the BHANJA PURAN & TAMUDIA PURAN and send a report with his considered views for placing before the next T.A.C meeting.

In compliance to the above, THRTI conducted a broad based field study during March and April 1994 on the ethnic status of BHANJA PURAN and TAMUDIA PURAN in Baripada, Bamanghati (Rairangpur) and Panchpir (Karanjia) areas of Mayurbhanj district and submitted the descriptive report to the Tribal Welfare Deptt, Govt. of Odisha vide its letter no.857 /THRTI Dtd 7th April 1994. In the forwarding letter **Director, THRTI maintained that "The findings of the study shows that the communities possess the characteristic features of Scheduled Tribe and may be considered for inclusion in the Scheduled Tribe list of Orissa."** In the conclusion part of this report the following was reported in favour of their inclusion in the ST list of the State.

The data presented in this report about the ethnic status of the Bhanja Puran, and Tamadia/Tamudia/Tamura Puran Communities of Mayurbhanj district establishes the following important characteristic features of both the endogamous Puran communities.

- I) *They are distant ethnic groups, distinguished from other groups by their separate dialect, dance, rituals, food habits, marriage and other social customs.*
- II) *They are socially, economically and educationally backward. Their literacy level in our study villages is only twenty percent which is much below that of the general population of the State which is 48.55 percent as per 1991 Census.*

- III) They are the aboriginal inhabitants of Mayurbhanj like other aboriginal tribes such as the Bhuyan, Bhatudi, Santhal, Bhumij, Kharia etc. who have already been recognized as Scheduled Tribes except the Purans.
- IV) They have a lowly status in the traditional inter-community hierarchy and the clean castes maintain social distance from them for their tribal life-style and certain unclean habits, practices and social customs which have been described in this report. On the other hand they have free social interaction with the neighbouring tribes like, Bhuyan, Bathudi, Bhumij etc. whom they treat as their equals.
- V) The present social status in the inter-community hierarchy of their locality have remained at par with those of the neighbouring tribes like the Bhuyan, Kharia, Santal, Bhumij etc.
- VI) Their legendary traditions, the observations of the earlier ethnographers like Dalton, Risley, Laeequddin and the distinctive tribal way of life of both the communities indicates towards their tribal origin.
- VII) Besides their legendary origin, their socio-cultural life-style has many things in common with the local Mundari group of tribes. Particularly they bear close cultural resemblances with the Bhuiyan tribe.
- VIII) Both the communities have consciously tried to elevate their social status by Hinduising and modernizing themselves over period of time like other neighbouring tribal communities and have become partly successful. But they have not yet achieved the status of a clean caste.

In view of all the above fact, it appears that, the Bhanja Puran and the Tamadia/Tamudia /Tamaria/Tamura Purans are probably an off-shoot of the Bhuiyan tribe.

Considering their socio-economic backwardness and aboriginal life-style they may be recognized as a Scheduled Tribe of Orissa and necessary developmental assistance may be liberally extended to them to bring about their all round socio-economic development.

On dated 28.1.2002, a communication from Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA), Gol vide letter no. 12016 /20/2001 –TA (RL) to the State Govt., SC & ST Dev. Deptt was received. Therein, it was stated that “...the Registrar General of India (RGI) with whom the matter was taken up for comments has inter-alia not agreed with the recommendation of the State Government on the ground that it (PURAN) does not possess tribal characteristics.... The State Government is requested that a detailed report justifying the recommendation for inclusion of Puran community in the list of Scheduled Tribes of Orissa may kindly be furnished to this Ministry at the earliest so that further action can be taken in the matter”

Then in response to the State Govt. Letter No. 40934/SSD, dt. 07.11.2002, Director, SCSTRTI submitted a three-page ethnic status report with annexures on “PURAN (BHANJA PURAN & TAMUDIA PURAN)” community as per the prescribed format of Govt. of India to ST & SC Development Deptt. Govt. of Orissa vide his letter No.3025 /R.79/86, Dt.24th December 2002 **recommending for inclusion of PURAN (BHANJA PURAN and TAMADIA PURAN / TAMUDIA PURAN / TAMURIA PURAN / TAMARIA PURAN) in the S.T. list of Orissa.**

Further in 2005, in compliance to the State Govt. Letter No. 35864/SSD, dt. 07.10.2005, Director, SCSTRTI submitted another ethnic status report on PURAN: (BHANJA PURAN & TAMUDIA PURAN) to the Govt. vide his letter No.514-R-79/86 Dt.8.3.2006 in the format prescribed by Govt. of India **recommending again for inclusion of the PURAN (BHANJA PURAN and TAMADIA PURAN / TAMUDIA PURAN / TAMURIA PURAN / TAMARIA PURAN) as new entry in the S.T. list of Orissa.**

Again in 2006, ORGI examined the report of SCSTRTI (2002) and commented on the State Government’s proposal for inclusion of Bhanja Puran, Tamadia/Tamudia/Tamaria / Tamuria

Puran vide their DO letter no. 8/1/2006-SS (Orissa) and those were complied. **But ORGI wrongly wrote TAMALIA PURAN in place of TAMADIA PURAN in their comments in 2006 and also in 2008 which needs to be corrected.**

- (i) Earlier this office had offered its comments and disagreed vide letter no 8/1/1984-SS(Orissa) dt.21/7/1984 on the ground that Puran community with its two sections, namely, Bhanja Puran and Tamudia Puran were highly Hinduised and did not possess tribal characteristics. Subsequently, in the year 1995 in response to a proposal on inclusion of Puran in the STs list of Orissa received from the SCD(R/Cell), Ministry of Welfare, this office reiterated its earlier stand vide letter no.8/1/1995-SS (G), dt.16/11/1995 that “-----in the absence of any information regarding Puran possessing tribal characteristics, this office is inclined to hold the same view expressed earlier.”
- (ii) The Status Report furnished now by the State Govt. mentions that the Bhanja Puran and Tamudia....Puran are two sections of one Puran community (p1).Both the sections speak a dialect of their own ; have separate exogamous division (clan or sept), and they enjoy separate social status (p.3). In conclusion, the Report has mentioned that both the sections have consciously tried to elevate their social status by Hinduising and modernizing themselves and have become partly successful. But they have not yet achieved the status of a clean caste.
- (iii) According to the Census of Mayurbhanj State (1931, vol. I, Report), the Bhanja Puran have for a long time been considered to be a section of the Bhuinyas in the State. They are now recognized as a separate community by themselves, and are distinguished from the ordinary Purans who are otherwise known as Tamaria (p.198). The Bhanj (seem to be same as Bhanja) Puran is distinct from Tamria Puran. The Bhanj Puran is a progressive aboriginal tribe gradually advancing in education and enjoying special social privilege in Mayurbhanj. They are also influentially connected with land (p.209). Again, the Puran has been said to be distinct from Bhanj Purans. They do not enjoy the same social privilege as the Bhanj Puran (p.214). Apart from Bhanja Puran and Tamaria (or Tamuria) Puran, there is a section among Bhumij (a notified ST in the State) known by the name Tamuria/Tamaria (p.216).
- (iv) It is revealed that Bhanja Puran, a section of Bhuinyas; Puran who are also known as Tamaria; and Tamuria / Tamaria a section of Bhumij are apparently quite distinctive from one another. Although Bhanja Puran and Tamudia Puran are mentioned to be the two sections of the Puran community, at least, at present they do not seem to constitute one single tribe. Whereas, Tamuria/Tamaria (which are apparently same as Tamudia/Tamadia) are a section of another Scheduled Tribe (i.e.Bhumij)
- (v) As long back as in Census, 1931, the Bhanj Puran was reported to be a progressive aboriginal tribe gradually advancing in education and enjoying special social privilege in Mayurbhanj.The Status Report furnished by the State Govt. also mentions that both the sections of Puran have consciously tried to elevate their social status by Hinduisation and modernization, and have become partly successful, although they have not yet achieved the status of a clean caste.

“In view thereof, this office is not in a position to favour the proposal”

In **2007**, in the meeting of the **Tribes Advisory Council** held on 10.4.07 the matter of inclusion of **PURAN/BHANJA PURAN/TAMDIA PURAN/TAMUDIA PURAN/TAMURIA PURAN/TAMARIA PURAN** (and 02 other communities) in the Constitution (ST) Order was discussed under Agenda Item No.3 where in it was stated that SCSTRTI has examined the socio-economic background of the communities and has recommended for their inclusion in the Constitution (ST) Order. The proposal was approved and then sent enclosing the report of SCSTRTI to Govt. of India, Ministry of Tribal Affairs vide letter No. 33302, Dt. 24.8.07 reminding that the proposal has already been sent earlier vide Govt. letter No.1551, dt.19.01.07.

Once again in **2008**, ORGI examined the report of SCSTRTI (2005) and reiterated their earlier comments of 2006 declining to favour the proposal as communicated vide their DO.

letter No. 8/1/2006-SS (Orissa) dt.02.09.2008. Their comments were complied by SCSTRTI and the compliance report along with relevant Annexures was sent to the State Govt. vide SCSTRTI letter No.884/R-8/05/ Dt. 28.04.2009. The text of the compliance is cited below.

- Recently this institute has submitted a formatted Report on the Ethnic Status of **PURAN : BHANJA PURAN & TAMUDIA PURAN**) along with copies of available relevant ethnographic references to Govt. vide its letter No.514 dt.8.3.06 recommending that “Govt. may consider about the inclusion of **PURAN (BHANJA PURAN AND TAMADIA PURAN/TAMUDIA PURAN/TAMURIA PURAN/TAMARIA PURAN)** in the ST list of Orissa”. This report is an outcome of a broad based Field Study undertaken in eight villages inhabited by these communities to gather relevant primary data during 1994. These study villages located in different parts of Mayurbhanj district come under six blocks i.e. Suliapada, Morada, Karanjia, Sukruli, Rairangpur and Bahalda.
- The findings of this broad-based Field Study supported by relevant ethnographic references indicates that the **BHANJA PURAN** and **TAMUDIA PURAN** who constitute two distinct endogamous sections of the Puran community have affinity with the Bhuyan tribe and possess a number of tribal characteristics.
- The **TAMUDIA PURAN** are different from the **TAMUDIA BHUMIJ** because they speak different languages and differ from each other in their clan systems, food habits, social customs and traditions, relative positions in the local social hierarchy, traditional occupations etc. For example, while the traditional occupation of the **TAMUDIA PURAN** is marginal farming, wage earning, collection of minor forest produces, that of **TAMUDIA BHUMIJ** is wood sawing and oil pressing.
- In view of the above cited facts and findings, this institute maintains its position in favour of inclusion of the **PURAN (BHANJA PURAN and TAMADIA PURAN/TAMUDIA PURAN /TAMURIA PURAN /TAMARIA PURAN)** as new entry in the S.T. list of Orissa.

This said formatted ethnic status study report of 2006 of SCSTRTI was self-explanatory. A copy of the report was enclosed with the compliance report at Annexure-XXI for reference and consideration. It appears that this report has neither been sent to ORGI nor examined by ORGI though the same has been sent to MoTA, Gol by the State Govt. in 2009 and 2011 as explained below.

Consequently, in **2013**, the State Govt. in their letter No. 10017/SSD Dtd. 02.03. 2013 intimated to the Director, SCSTRTI that in spite of the compliance to the comments of ORGI (prepared by SCSTRTI) sent to MoTA at first vide the State Govt. letter No. 17196, dt.21.05,2009 and later vide letter No. 33416, dt. 21.10.2011, the MoTA has intimated in their letter No.12026/8/2006-C&LM-1 Dt.13-02-2013 that the proposal has been rejected by RGI on two occasions earlier because the “State Government has not given any further evidence or such material that could throw fresh light on the issue to justify the proposal. Hence the Ministry is not able to process the proposal further.” Therefore, Director, SCSTRTI is requested to furnish fresh broad based study report on the community (**PURAN**) along with further justifications for onward transmission to GOI, MoTA.

Thereafter in **2016**, Sri Chhatish Chandra Dhal, Ex-MLA, Baripada and others submitted a memorandum dtd. 31.08.2016 to Hon’ble Prime Minister of India for special consideration of the case of inclusion of **PURAN /BHANJA PURAN/TAMUDIA PURAN** in the Scheduled Tribe list of Odisha referring to recommendation of Govt. of Odisha to Govt. of India vide Letter No. 31386 /HTW, dt.18.11.1978 and No.33302 dt.24.08.2007. In the memorandum they cited that “The census report of Mayurbhanj State,1931(Vol. II table), mentions that in the Sl. No.4 “Bhanj Puran” and Sl. No. 23 “Puran”, “Tamudia”, were included in Tribal Hindus list who were returned as aborigines in successive censuses in the Ex-Princely State of Mayurbhanj and in the Census of 1931 the Purans were bracketed together with Bhuyan, Bathudi, who are now recognized as S.T. excluding Puran/Bhanja Puran and Tamudia Puran. The Purans’ culture and heritage are similar with the Bhuyan and Bathudi. **Most importantly it was further stated that**

the “PURAN community in (the neighbouring) Jharkhand State have been approved by the Union Cabinet as Scheduled Tribes.”

Further in **2017**, the State Govt. vide their letter No. PCR–(A)-09/14-9488/SSD dt.20.05.2017 forwarded to the Director, SCSTRTI a number of public grievance petitions praying for inclusion of “PURAN” community in the ST list of Odisha sent to the State Govt by MoTA vide letter No. 19020/06/2015-C&LM, dt.06.02.2017 and requested for furnishing a fresh broad based ethnic status study report on the said community.

In compliance to the instructions of the State Govt. a fresh broad based ethnic status study on the said community was conducted during December 2017 and January 2018, and the study findings are presented below

II . Coverage of the Study

The study was carried out in 04 blocks of Mayurbhanj district covering 05 villages (03 villages of TAMUDIA PURAN and 02 villages of BHANJA PURAN in Mayurbhanj district). The details of the area covered under study along with number of households, population, and ethnic composition of studied villages is given below

a. Study Villages, Location, Ethnic Composition, PURAN Households & Population

District	Block	Study Villages	Ethnic Composition	No. of Puran House holds	Puran Population
Mayurbhanj	1-Morada	1. Baliadhipa	Santal, Tamudia Puran	59	303
	2-Baripada	1. Karatpata	Mahanta, Sabar, Bindhani, Santal, Tamudia Puran	51	333
	3-Suliapada	1. Gandhasali	Dhoba, Bhanja Puran	132	685
		2.Chakdara	Bhanja Puran	30	149
	4. Tiring	1.Rengalbeda	Brahman, Lohar, Patra Tanti, Tamudia Puran	139	548
Total	04	05		411	2018

Data on Households, Literacy, Occupation, Land Holdings, Income & Livestock of Puran Households in 05 Study villages has been presented in **Annexure - I**

b. Objectives

The objective of the present study is to carry out a fresh empirical ethnographic study of Puran community differently known as Tamudia Puran/Tamadia Puran and Bhanja Puran. It is to find out whether they possess necessary characteristic features of a Scheduled Tribe as prescribed by Government of India to be considered for inclusion in the Scheduled Tribe list of Odisha as given below.

c. Methodology:

- The task has been accomplished by undertaking empirical ethnographic study for gathering and analyzing relevant information on ethnological traits, socio cultural practices, deity, rituals, customs, mode of marriage, death ceremonies, method of burial of dead bodies etc. of the target community.
- For collection of empirical data, tools like structured interview guide, checklists as well as village schedule have been used. By administering the tools, individual and key informants have been interviewed and group discussions held and household census have been made in the selected study villages to elicit relevant information.

- During the empirical study, the data collected from one or more than one study village(s) has been cross checked in other study village(s) to ascertain the reliability of the data.
- Data from the secondary sources / references has also been consulted and analysed with the empirical data for drafting the report and arriving at the conclusion regarding the eligibility of the target community for inclusion in ST list of Odisha

III . Study Findings

1. Introduction

The Bhanja Puran and the Tamudia or Tamuria or Tamarica or Tamadia Puran are two endogamous sections of one Puran community who are concentrated mostly in Mayurbhanj district of Odisha and also found scatteredly in few villages of Lathikata block of Sundergarh district. There they live amidst the aboriginal tribes like the Bhuyan, the Santhal, the Bhatudi, the Hill-Kharia, the Sounti, the Gond, the Bhumij, the Rajuar and the Kol (now STs in Odisha) with whom they share many common socio-cultural traits. Both the sections i.e. the Tamudia and the Bhanja appear to be socially, economically and educationally backward for which they have been claiming the status of a Scheduled Tribe in Odisha.

2. Location, Distribution etc.

In Odisha, the major concentration of both the communities lies in Baripada Sadar Sub-Division comprising the Suliapada and Morada block areas. Some Bhanja Puran families also live in Sukruli Block area of Panchpirh Sub-Division and some families belonging to both the communities are also found in Rairangpur and Bahalda Block areas of Bamanghaty Sub-Division. Their population is also thinly distributed in the neighbouring district like Sundergarh and the neighbouring states like Jharkhand and West-Bengal. Those areas were formerly under the jurisdiction of ex-Mayurbhanj State. Hence, in this regard the Sadar Sub-Division area of Mayurbhanj may be taken as their homeland. Data collected about approximate distribution of the community given at Annexure-III

Their homeland lies in an underdeveloped Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) inhabited by major aboriginal tribal communities as stated above. Since the recent past this area was under thick forest cover and was **relatively geographically isolated from other areas**. But now except the Similipal National Park, there are only denuded and degraded forest lands.

3. Nomenclature & Etymological meaning

The community call themselves PURAN. Their neighbors also call them as PURAN. In their land Record of Rights (RORs) the TAMADIA PURANS are recorded differently as PURAN and TAMUDIA/TAMADIA PURAN and the BHANJA PURANS are recorded as PURAN and BHANJA PURAN. Both the groups use TAMADIA/TAMUDIA or BHANJA as a prefix to their community name when they need to distinguish themselves from each other.

In the Census report of Mayurbhanj, 1931 the names of both the PURAN communities have been recorded as PURAN, BHANJA PURAN and TAMARIA PURAN

“The name of the community is the Puran. Its synonyms are the Bhanja Puran and the Tamadia Puran.” (Singh, K.S.: POI, Vol.XVI, Pt. I, Odisha, 2012, p.334 & Vol.XXXIII, Pt.I, West Bengal, 2008, 212)

‘The Purans are also known as PURA and BHANJ PURAN. The name PURAN means old and according to them they are the oldest inhabitants in the world. They also hold that BHANJ PURAN signifies that they are the original inhabitants of Mayurbhanj.’ (Singh, K.S.: POI, Vol.XVI, Pt. II, Bihar, 2008, p.782).

According to their legendary traditions, thirteen children were born out of the union of a man of royal family and a tribal woman (may be Bhuyan, Bhumiij or Munda) and to name them the Brahman Pundits consulted the Purim – the ancient Hindu scriptures and accordingly they were named Puran. (Report of SCSTRTI, 1994)

As per their another legendary tradition, in the past the King of Mayurbhanj attacked the Bhuyangarh covering the Bhuyan and Juang *pirha* areas and killed the Bhuyan chief and annexed the territory to his State. Complying to the request of the widow of the dead Bhuyan chief, he took the responsibility of upbringing his two minor sons. The eldest boy became cultured and disciplined while the youngest boy became wayward. So the King sent the youngest boy to live among the tribals in Puran Nagar of Tamad area of Jharkhand and his descendants became Tamadia Puran some of whom later migrated to Mayurbhanj later. The descendants of the eldest son who settled down in Mayurbhanj were distinguished as Bhanja Puran. (Report of SCSTRTI, 1994).

4. Origin and Migration

It is believed that PURANS, those who had migrated to Mayurbhanj from Tamad region of Jharkhand are known as TAMADIA/TAMUDIA PURAN while the section who stayed in Mayurbhanj are regarded as BHANJA PURAN.

There are a number of accounts about their origin and history of migration. The following had been reported in the first descriptive report of SCSTRTI (1994) in this regard.

The origin of the community is obscure. They have various legendary traditions which indicate to a respectable parentage and linkage with the royal families in the past. These legends can be classified into two groups. One group indicates their birth from the union of male member of a royal family and a woman of lower status belonging to Bhumiij or Munda or Bhuiyan community. There were thirteen children born out of the union. From them thirteen clans originated. At present the whole Bhanja Puran community is grouped under thirteen exogamous septs and the Tamudia Puran community into twelve exogamous septs represented by distinct surnames such as Thayal, Si, Dhal, Pat Bandha, Tung, Tipiria, Dhungia, Bhanj, Raj, Bhoi, Dandpat, Deo etc. For naming these thirteen children the King consulted the Brahmin Pundits. The Pundits had a difference of opinion but unanimously agreed to give the name of "Puran" since they referred the "Puran"- the ancient Hindu scriptures for this purpose. Thus the descendants of these children constituted the Puran Community.

*Another group establishes their tribal origin. It says that there was a tribal chief ruling over a piece of small territory called Bhuyangarh covering the Juang and Bhuiyan *pirha* areas of present Keonjhar district. The then King of Mayurbhanj attacked the territory, killed the chief and annexed the territory to his state. At that time, the widow queen of the defeated tribal chief requested the king to take care of her two minor sons. The King complying to her request, raised both the boys with all care and protection. The eldest boy come disciplined, cultured and refined while the youngest was a wayward boy. So, the King sent him to live among the tribals in Puran Nagar of Tamad area, which was formerly under the ex-Mayurbhanj State and presently under Ranchi district of Bihar (now Jharkhand). His descendants became the Tamadia Puran and later migrated from Tamad area to other areas of present Mayurbhanj district to be distinguished as the Tamadia Purans by their neighbours and the Bhanja Purans who are the descendants of the eldest son and settled down in and around Baripada - the capital of the ex-Mayurbhanj State. Since they settled in Mayurbhanj, they distinguished themselves in the name of "Bhanja Purans".*

Corroborating the above legendary traditions, Risley (1891:180) believed that the name 'Puran' is a synonym for Bhuiyan in Mayurbhanj. In the Census Report of 1931 of Mayurbhanj State it has been mentioned at page 214 that "In 1901 Census, Purans were included in Bhuiyans". At page 162-163 of the said Census report it has been recorded about the Bhanja Purans that "To all intents and purposes, however, they are believed to be very

nearly allied to the Bhuiyans'. According to Dalton (1872: 159) "There is a tradition that Kharias with another tribe called Purans were the aboriginals of Mayurbhanj".

As per our present (2017) empirical study, an origin myth narrating their migration to Mayurbhanj was narrated by our key informants in one of our study village. According to that, during the reign of kings, a war was fought between the King of Mayurbhanj and a King of Jharkhand. In those days Purans had the reputation as efficient hunters. So, the king sent them to the war as warriors. After the war was over Purans returned home. To their utter surprise, they found that even during their long absence their wives had given birth to a number of children. They came to know that in their absence, king had developed illicit relationships with their wives. So, expressing their resentment to the king, many of them went back to Tamad of Jharkhand and settled down there. After a long time, they again came back to their homeland, Mayurbhanj and came to be known as Tamadia Puran. Those who stayed back in Mayurbhanj were known as Bhanja Puran.

Citing another anecdote on their origin, our informants in another study village narrated that in the long past, all the communities from outside arrived one by one here in Mayurbhanj to settle down. Puran community is said to have arrived at the last. They are said to be the last migrants with the arrival of whom, the inflow of migrants was completed (*pura*). From this term completion (*Pura*) their community is known by the name "Puran".

Informants in the study villages of BHANJA PURAN opined that perhaps several generations back their forefathers had migrated to this place from Jharkhand. Even now they have marital ties with the Puran families in Jharkhand.

The ex-princely State of Mayurbhanj (presently a district in Odisha borders Jharkhand and West Bengal. There have been inter-migration of different communities including the PURAN community across the political boundaries. The sections of the communities like PURAN, MUNDA and BHUMIJ etc. who have migrated from the Tamar region of Chhattisgarh to the districts of Northern Odisha are usually called in Odisha by the suffix TAMADIA/TAMUDIA/TAMARIA /TAMURIA/ TAMODIA/ TAMULIA etc.

Therefore, in the Census of Mayurbhanj State (1931, p. 163) it has been reported "...Purans are ordinarily called *Tamaria Purans*. Like the *Tamaria Bhumij*, their original home was probably in Tamar in the district of Ranchi. The *Bhanja Purans*, who considered Mayurbhanj to be their original home, regard these *Tamarias* as outsiders who have migrated into the State from time to time. The *Tamaria Purans* however, contend that they were originally in Mayurbhanj and formed a part and parcel of the *Bhanja Puran* community, that they migrated to Tamar, and have eventually returned to their original home." ... "In 1901 Census Purans were included in Bhuiyans." (p.214)

It is learnt that the original inhabitants of Puran community who remained in the villages of Rajgharana of Tamar Parganas of Jharkhand are recognized as Puran and their language is Puran Boli.

It is reported that "They believe that they were the original settlers of Bhanjabhum Janapada. They claimed themselves as the descendants of the royal family of Mayurbhanj. In course of the state formation the Mayurbhanj kings associated themselves from the Purans." (Singh, K.S.: POI, Vol. XVI, Pt. I, Odisha, 2012, P. 335)

"... there is a myth, which they believe to be true regarding their origin. The myth says that they have originated in Mayurbhanj district of Orissa from a peahen's yolk and the Kharia originated from the shell. When Samrat Ashok attacked Kalinga (Orissa) in ancient times, the Puran Raja fled to the jungles of Tamar and Bundu of Ranchi district of Bihar where they met the then Paraganait of the region, who was pleased at their bravery and intelligence in hunting. He brought them to this place and settled them and the place

was named *Puran Nagar*. There they established the goddess *Basins* or *Baisna Devi* whom they worship and the ritual is conducted by a *Puran priest*.... They are at present distributed mainly in the villages of *Amlsha, Naodi, Sarjamdi, Bojdi, Darda, Kujiamba, Purannagar, Rangamati, Piskahatu, etc.*, of *Tamar block*, in the villages of *Narhi, Sindhri, etc.* of *Arki block*, in the villages of *Barendra Dulani, Chatom, Ranglang, Jilingserang, Pandadihi, Moholdihi etc.*, of *Sonahatu block* and *Gosainidhi village* of *Bundu block* of *Ranchi district*. They speak corrupt *Oriya* and *Panchpargania* among themselves and with others; they speak in *Hindi* and *Panchpargania* and use *Devanagari* script. Previously both the sexes used to wear *pagra* (small earring) as a symbol of the *Puran jati* but now they have almost given it up. (Singh, K.S.: POI, Vol. XVI, Pt. II, Bihar, 2008, P. 782)

“The *Bhanja Purans* for a long time were considered to be section of the *Bhuinyas* in the state. They are now recognized as a separate community by themselves and are distinguished from the ordinary *Purans* who are otherwise known as *Tamaria*” (Laequddin, Md. : 1937, *Census of Mayurbhanj State-1931*, Vol. I)

5. Surnames, Titles, Social Divisions & Groupings

As per our present study findings, *PURANS* are divided into two endogamous units viz. *TAMADIA/TAMUDIA* and *BHANJA* and within their community they are divided into various exogamous clan groups. They use their clan names as their surnames. *TAMADIAS/TAMUDIAS* have as many as twelve clans such as i. *Tipiria*, ii. *Tunga*, iii. *Dhungia*, iv. *Shi*, v. *Dhir*, vi. *Pata Bandha*, vii. *Deo*, viii. *Thoyal*, ix. *Raj*, x. *Bhoi*, xi. *Dhala*, xii. *Bohu Bhuja*. They have five totemic gotras named after the name of birds and trees such as *Sal* (name of a tree), *Kerketa*, *Sun bird*, *Rain bird* and *Kharia*. *BHANJA PURANS* stated that they have as many as thirteen clans. Most of their clan names are akin to that of *TAMADIA PURANS* except three viz. *Dala Nayak*, *Maha Nayak* and *Bhanja*. They too use their clan name as surname. They have gotras in the name of birds (*Sun Chadhei*) and tree (*Sal*) similar to that of *TAMUDIAS*.

This finding is endorsed by our previous empirical study report (1994), according to which *Both the communities have exogamous groupings distinguished by their respective surnames. These clans or septs are called “Khilli” like those of the aboriginal tribes such as Juang, Bhuiyan and the Hill-Kharia. All the Bhanj Purans are grouped into thirteen spets namely (1) Tipiria, (2) Tung, (3) Thayal, (4) See or Si, (5) Patbandha, (6) Raj, (7) Deo, (8) Dhir, (9) Dhungia, (10) Dhal, (11) Bhoi, (12) Bhanj, (13) Dandpat or Bahupuja. The Tamudia Puran have twelve groups i.e. all the above named exogamous groups of the Bhanja Purans except the thirteenth one (Dandpat or Bahupuja). All these septs are strictly exogamous but they do not remember any totemic object or ancestor associated with them.*

All the kin groups have equal social status except in certain occasions, roles and functions. For example, the members of “Dhir” khilli perform priestly functions for inaugurating the kitchen site during communal feast and for conducting the rituals of the secondary marriages of widows, widowers and divorcees. The members of “Thayal” khilli can only conduct purificatory rituals for the out casted persons who want to be readmitted into the community. If there are multiple marriage ceremonies being conducted in a village, the bride-groom belonging to “Si” khilli are entertained first. Then comes the bridegrooms of “Dhala” khilli followed by “Deo”, khilli. The bride-grooms of the remaining khillis are treated at par...

Again the above findings are endorsed by *Mayurbhanj Census Report of 1931* and *K.S. Singh, POI*.

Mayurbhanj Census Report of 1931 (P.198)

They are divided into some 12 septs, according to the number of different titles they carry with their names. Each of these septs is exogamous. The following are different titles borne by

the Bhanja Purans:—

- | | |
|-------------|----------------|
| 1. Dhal. | 7. Raj. |
| 2. See. | 8. Thyal. |
| 3. Bhanj. | 9. Deo. |
| 4. Tiperia. | 10. Patbandha. |
| 5. Dhungia. | 11. Dhir. |
| 6. Tung. | 12. Bhoi. |

K.S. Singh, (POI, Vol. XVI, Pt. I, ODISHA, 2012, P.334, & Vol. XXXIII, Pt. I, BENGAL, 2008, P. 212) “They use surnames like Dhal, Thyal, Deo, See, Tung, Tipria, Dhir, Raji, Patbandha, Dandapat, and Dhungia. They have a number of gotra like Nag, Sal, Kapti-Parnuk, Kerketa, Saro, Mayur, Sun etc.”

6. Language

They speak a dialect of their own called **Puran Boli** that is a corrupt form of local Oriya and Panchpargania having some elements of tribal languages, such as those of the Hill Kharia, Kol and Juang. Though most of them are conversant to speak and understand the local Odia language spoken by other communities of that area, they use their own language to communicate within their own community. The neighbouring communities find difficulty to understand the dialects of the Tamudia Puran and Bhanja Puran which are verbally different from the local Oriya language. Since they do not have a script of their own they use Odia script both for writing and for intra and inter group communication.

Further according to our study report of 1994, among both the communities, their respective dialects differ. The Bhanja Purans do not easily understand the dialect of the Tamudias whereas the latter do not have so much of difficulties in understanding the dialect of the former. It seems that their present dialects are relics of their original dialect which they were using in the past and have forgotten in course of time.

According to K.S. Singh (POI, Vol. XVI, Pt. I, ODISHA, 2012, P.334), the Bhanja Purans “...speak Odia and ‘Bhanja-Bhumia’ dialect of Bhanjabhum, now merged in the political and administrative jurisdictions of West Bengal, Jharkhand and Odisha. They can also speak Jharkhandi Bengali and use Odia script in Odisha. As they speak **Bhanja-Bhumia** local dialect among themselves and Bengali and Odia with others, in some of the villages they are considerably influenced by the local Kudmali, and Santhali also.” “They are trying to develop their own Puran language.” (Ibid, P.338)

7. Personal Appearance

In the past like the neighbouring tribes, their male folks used to wrap a loin cloth of coarse cotton covering the private parts hanging down like a tail in front and back from a thread tied round the waist. The upper part of the body is left bare. They used to purchase cotton clothes from the neighboring weavers viz. Patra Tanti. Men used to sport long hair.

Puran women used to wear coarse cotton saree, short in length covering upper part of body up to the knee. They bore tattoo marks particularly on their hand and cheeks. It was believed that tattoo as a symbol is the only thing the dead carry with them from the living world to the other world. It is a common belief among the neighbouring tribes also. Tattooing was a womens’ fashion of the past which has been discarded by the younger generation at present. Women folk used to wear varieties of ornaments made of iron and bell metal. Wearing of iron bangle (Katri) and anklets (Khadu) made of bell metal is the symbol of a married woman. Ladies also like to wear necklaces of coins and glass beads of red color. Now a days, their dress pattern resembles that of their neighboring castes.

8. Settlement & Housing

Though they live in exclusive Puran settlements and in multiethnic villages side by side with the Bathudi, Gond, Bhuyan, Kharia, Brahman, Karan, Gopal, Keuta, Teli communities etc., their wards are located separately at a distance from the wards of other communities. They like to settle in relative isolation. In villages of Bhanja Purans, informants explained that they like to live in groups at a distance from other caste settlements in the village.

In their wards, houses are dispersed and located besides lanes and by lanes of the settlement. In our study villages in Baripada Sadar subdivision in one villages of Bhanja Puran and one villages of Tamudia Puran the settlement pattern was linear and in other two villages it was scattered. In our single study villages in Rairangpur subdivision the settlement pattern was largely linear and only few houses were scattered.

Their Houses are mud-walled and straw thatched having two to three rooms with a verandah in front, raised high above the floor. The veranda is used for sitting and storing grain sacks and bundles of Sabai grass. The walls and floors are routinely besmeared with a solution of cow dung and earth. In these days, the members of BPL category have been provided with pucca houses under various Government Housing Schemes.

As stated in our previous empirical study report (1994), *"Their housing pattern conforms to the regional rural housing pattern adopted by other communities. In Karanjia area the Bhanja Puran houses are arranged in parallel rows having a spacious street in between. In Rairangpur area the Bhanja Puran houses are scattered here and there and the Tamadia Puran houses run in parallel rows. In Baripada Sadar area the houses of both the community does not run in parallel rows but are located irregularly like those of other tribal communities. The well-to-do families have spacious multi-roomed thatched houses with spacious courtyards and the poor sections have small single roomed huts with scanty household belongings."*

9. LIFE CYCLE

a) Child birth

Pregnancy and child birth is a welcome event in the Puran family. In the past they preferred a baby girl to a baby boy. Now a days, they don't have any preference for the sex of the child. The birth of a male or a female child is welcomed without any discrimination.

During pregnancy it is taboo for the pregnant lady to take foods such as red ants (*kurkuti*), egg, onion, winged white-ants (*kalae*), baked fish and crab, honey, stump of water lily (*kain kanda*) and sacrificial meat. The pregnant lady is not allowed to stay outdoors during lunar and solar eclipse lest the new born may suffer from squint eye. She is not allowed to sleep on her back and not directing her head towards west or north direction. She is tabooed against crossing the rope of goat or cow, to stitch leaves or clothes and also to go outside in the afternoon or evening hours. According to K.S. Singh *"The sadbhakshan (desired food) ceremony is performed after nine months of pregnancy."* (POI, XVI, 2012, p.335)

Prior to the delivery, a pregnant lady is served with cooked rice, garlic and dal of horse gram. A branch of Kendu wood is posted outside the door-way of the house to keep away any evil eye from creating troubles for delivery and the new born. After delivery, the naval cord is buried outside the house. The nuptial fire (*entudi*) which is lit for giving warmth to the new born is made by burning the wooden shaft of a plough and the Sal wood in the case of a male baby. For a girl baby the fire is made by burning only Sal wood. With application of oil, the child gets the warmth from the fire lit for the purpose.

Purificatory rite is observed on the ninth day of the child birth which is known as Narta. On that day, the nuptial fire (*entudi*) is thrown outside. They clean their clothes and the house. In the evening, a feast is hosted by the family for friends and relatives. The maternal

relatives come with the gift of a cow or she goat for milk nourishment of the newborn. Guests are served non-vegetarian food with rice beer (Handia). The name giving ceremony is held either on the ninth day or as per the convenience of the household. The name of the baby is given after the name of an ancestor (grandfather, father, grandmother). In some cases, the name of the baby is kept after the name of the day he/she is born.

“After child birth umbilical cord was traditionally cut by the Hari women. The ritual of narat is observed on the seventh or ninth day with the help of Barik and Dhoba.” (Singh, K.S.: POI, XVI, 2012, p.335)

b) Puberty Rite

The community observes puberty rites for adolescent girls. It is known as Juan or Gharjog. A girl attaining her first menarche is secluded in an isolated room for a period of seven days. During this period, she is tabooed to look at male persons and to attend any household chores. Formerly when child marriage was prevalent among them, attaining the first menarche in in-laws house is dealt with by hiding the girl in a secluded place of the house. She is not allowed to look at nor touch anybody. On the 7th day she takes her purificatory bath to get rid of pollution.

Informants in the villages of BHANJA PURAN shared that when an adolescent attains her first menarche, the parents of the girl communicate the news to one traditional leader of their settlement who is known as Mahaldar. The girl is confined to a secluded place in her house for seven days. On the early morning of the next day, the ladies of the village take her to the nearby stream or river avoiding any body to see her and make her to take her purificatory bath there. After she takes bath, she makes an effigy of God Siva on the sands of the river bank and offers her prayers and comes back home ritually purified.

c) Marriage

The PURANS practice community endogamy and clan exogamy in marriage. Adult marriage and monogamy is the common practice among them. In the past polygyny was being permitted in rare instances of barrenness and serious sickness of the first wife.

Their customary marriage rules and practices closely resemble those of the neighbouring tribes. For example (i) the initiatives taken by the boys side to arrange the match, (ii) the institution of bride-price, (iii) acquisition of mates by negotiation (Bahaghar), by elopement (Ghini Pala), by exchange of brides, by intrusion (Dhuk Pasa) and by trial (Sindur ghasa), (iv) Provisions for cross cousin marriage, son-in-law in house (Ghar Jamain) types of marriage, Junior levirate, sororate and polygyny (v) widespread practices of remarriage of widows, widowers and divorcees (Sanga Ghar), (vi) no restriction against divorce and remarriage and (vii) rigid rules of clan exogamy as found in the Bhanja Puran and Tamudia Puran community are indication of their tribal way of life which have many things in common with the Juang, Bhuyan and Hill-Kharia tribes.

The common and prestigious form of marriage is **marriage by negotiation (Bahaghar)**. Like the neighbouring tribes, the groom's family takes the initiatives to search for a bride and put the proposal before the selected bride's family by engaging a middle man (Raibaria or Ghatakdar) who is usually a close relative of the groom's family. He serves as a go between for both the parties. This practice is followed by the Bhuyan & Juang tribes

During the process, family members of both the sides visit each other's house to know about each other and proceed further. When the groom's family visits the would be bride's village, the groom's father is asked by the villagers of the bride "What is the purpose of your coming to our village?" The latter answers by using metaphors such as "there is a flower bloomed in this village. I have come to pluck the flower." Then the bride's family will reply "the blooming flower is under guard by the gardener and his wife. You have to pay for it." Then bride price (Chalau) is negotiated between the two

parties keeping in view the socio-economic status of the groom's family. After the bride price is negotiated, groom's side sends pot full of sweets to the bride's house. On this occasion the date of the marriage is fixed by both the parties. Now a days, the bride price is symbolic amounting to Rs.15/- only. The negotiation is finalized after payment of bride price. Even to this day Bride price (Chalau) is still in practice though symbolically.

The day before the wedding day, a marriage pandal is made using the wood of Sal, Mahua, Mango, Black berry and Bamboo in both the places (in the house of the bride and that of the groom). The roof of the pandal is thatched with Sabai grass and paddy straw. A small pit is dug close to the pandal which is symbolises a pond.

On the wedding day, in the groom's house he is anointed with turmeric and takes bath. This is known as Lagna Haldi, after which the boy embarks on his procession to the bride's house accompanied by his kinsmen, friends and villagers for marriage. They come with ritual objects (clothes and cosmetics, oil, turmeric, comb etc.) for the bride and her family members along with a she-goat (who is not pregnant ever). All the things, brought by the groom's side are accepted by the bride's family. In the morning of the marriage day kin members of bride's side with their sword, bow and arrow go to their village pond to fetch water before sunrise. The water is used by the bride for purpose of bathing.

On the marriage pandal in the bride's house, rituals like putting of vermilion mark on the forehead of bride is done. The traditional priest Dehuri conducts the wedding ceremony and joins the hands of both the bride and groom together. Later the exchange flower garland between them takes place. An iron wristlet (*katri*) and vermilion mark are the symbols of a married woman. Community members of the settlement and the groom's party are hosted a feast at the bride's place. Marriage is consummated after seven days.

Marriage by intrusion (Dhukposa) is allowed in case of both boy and girl. When a girl madly falls in love with a boy, she forcibly intrudes into his the house and starts living in his family expressing her desire to marry the boy. In such case, consent of the boy is taken and if he agrees then a meeting of families and community members of both the sides is held to obtain social approval for their marriage. It is same with the case of the boy.

Marriage by elopement takes place when both the girl and the boy fall in love with each other and leave the village without anybody's knowledge and live together outside in a friend or relative's house. After a few months they come back home and are accepted in the family and village as married couple after hosting a feast for the community members.

The Purans also practice junior levirate marriage and also junior sororate marriage. Remarriage is permitted in case of premature death or barrenness of the wife only after taking permission from the community. In such case no marriage ceremony is performed. The couple starts living together which is called 'Sanga'. A widow and a divorcee can remarry with the permission of the community leaders of the concerned village.

Divorce is permitted in case of a recurrent quarrel between the husband and wife or any other kind of marital incompatibility or mal-adjustment. Either of them can divorce each other with the permission of the community. In such case, the male divorcee is called Chadra and the female is called Chadri.

There are no instances of inter caste marriage found among the Tamudia Purans, while among the Bhanja Purans we found two such cases in our study villages. In one such case a Puran girl got married to a Santal boy while in another case a Puran girl married to a boy of Raju caste. Barring rare deviations, the rule of community endogamy is strictly followed.

"They are endogamous and practise gotra and lineage exogamy. Junior sororate and Junior levirate marriages are allowed. The marriageable age for girls is between sixteen and eighteen years and for boys between twenty and twenty-five years. The bride price was prevalent, but now dowry has been introduced. There are different ways of acquiring mates

like *anusthanik bibaha* (marriage by negotiation), *rajaraji* (marriage by love), exchange marriage, *sali-biha* (junior sororate) and *bhaj rakha* (junior levirate) etc. Monogamy is the rule. *Sangha* (divorce and remarriage) and widow remarriages are prevalent. The symbol of marriage is vermilion on the forehead, *katri*, and iron bangles." (Singh, K.S.: POI, XVI, 2012, p.335)

"The *Bhanja Purans* first search out the bride. One day before marriage the bridegroom's party reaches the bride's house. On the marriage day the bride's relatives and the *kanyakara* guests are received with the sanction of the village headman. After the husband's applies vermilion on the bride's forehead and she wears the *katri* bangles, the marriage rituals are completed which are conducted by the *Brahmans*. Feast is given in both the houses." (Ibid.:2012)

"They are *patrilocal*. *Charachhari* or divorce is permissible, through *chhar-patra* in which the husband has to return the gift materials which he received during marriage. The causes of divorce are barrenness, adultery, cruelty, insanity etc. For illegitimate children the *dash babu* of the *Puran Samaj* accepts the social fatherhood in the gatherings." (Ibid.: 2012)

d) Death

The *Tamudia Purans* generally bury their dead. In case of death by leprosy, the dead body is thrown far away from the village. After burial of the dead, when kin members return from the burial ground, they are made to taste bitter water prepared from *Neem* leaves. The daughter of the deceased prepares cooked rice which is called *fula bhata* for consumption. On the second day, the bereaved family members are required to eat sweet which is called *mitha ghara*.

The *Bhanja Purans* stated that they cremate their dead. They do not have Hindu custom of giving preference to the eldest son or male heir of the deceased to set fire on the face of dead body. Any male relative present at that time can perform this ritual. Other Hindu customs such as collecting the ashes of the deceased from the cremation ground and offering cooked food to the departed soul for ten days are also not followed. Only in case of death by tuberculosis and leprosy, they bury their dead to prevent spread of the disease. Dead body of small child is also buried. In case of burial, the purificatory rites are observed on the 15th day, while in case of cremation it is done on the 10th day. For burial or cremation, they use forest land for the purpose in the outskirts of the village. After burying of the dead, a stone is kept on the burial spot which is known as *Hargadi*.

The period of mourning is observed for ten days. During this period, it is tabooed to take non-vegetarian food. On the tenth day (*Pani Dasani*) affinal and consanguinal relatives come and contribute financially to help the family of the deceased. On that day, the males of the family and lineage shave their hair and beard. Barber and washer man offer their ritual services on the occasion. The house is also cleaned and besmeared with a solution of cow dung mixed with water.

Small figures of elephant, horses made of clay with human figures mounted on it are offered with rice and cooked vegetables to the deceased. On the night of the tenth day they place all these clay figures and along with cooked rice and vegetables on a wooden plank. The kin members of the deceased go to the outskirt of the village to offer these to the departed soul. With a lighted lamp they call the soul of the deceased thrice and offer the objects there. When they come back home they knock the roof top of the house thrice. The men would ask the women indoors, "Who are awake" (*Kie jagal*) ?" ; the women would answer "*Bhim Jagal*" (*Bhim* is awake). Then the women from inside the house would ask, "What have you brought ?" ; the males would answer, "We have left sorrow and brought happiness". Women by then had kept rice floor on the floor of the house. Then light will be shown to ascertain the mark left on the rice floor. The foot marks of cat, rat would signify that the soul has come in the form of these animals. This is called *Chaen*

daka. On conclusion of the mortuary rites, the guests, relatives and fellow villager are entertained in a feast by the family of the deceased.

They don't have bone immersion ritual. In rare cases of cremation of the dead, the bones are immersed in nearby river. They don't have annual commemoration (*sradha*) ceremony for the deceased.

"The death pollution is observed for a period of ten days. They cremate the dead bodies. The entire lineage members of the village observe pollution." (Singh, K.S:2012)

10. Economic Life

The traditional occupation of Puran in the past was hunting and food gathering. They had the reputation as excellent archers. They used to collect forest produce such as Mahua flowers, varieties of fruits, roots, tubers (*pitalu*), nuts and berries (Kendu, Char etc.), Sal resin, lac etc. Now a days, they undertake marginal farming and mostly cultivate paddy in the monsoon months either as land owners or share croppers. Making ropes out of Sabai grass (*bobei daudi*), collection of Sal leaves for making leaf cups and plates and selling of firewood substantially supplement their family income. In addition, they earn wages as menial labourers in agricultural works, earth works, construction works, nursery raising etc. Purans also domesticate animals like cattle, goat and chicken, the sale of which provides them an additional source of income particularly to meet emergency needs.

Our study data presented in **Annexure- I** indicates that they are economically backward. The average annual household income of our study households ranges from Rs. 10 309.35 to Rs. 22,600 per annum. Thus the average household income is Rs.16 377.13. Therefore, the majority of the studied households i.e. 391 out of total 411 (95.13 percent) are BPL households. As regards possession of land holdings, among the total 411 study households, less than 50 percent i.e. only 204 households own marginal land holdings measuring 193.9 Acres in total. Thus the average size of land per land owning households comes to only 0.95 Acre. As evident from **Annexure- I**, among our 05 study villages, except in one village, the the average size of land per land owning households ranges from 0.35 to 0.42 Acre. It is quite obvious that the agricultural produce from such very marginal land holding hardly sustains a family for a year for which they resort to share cropping, seasonal forest collections, *sabai* rope making, wage earning etc to keep their body and soul together.

The above facts are endorsed by our first descriptive report (1994) and K.S. Singh (2012) as cited below

"Traditionally they are a community of rural peasantry. Agriculture which have been the mainstay of their economy, is no longer a source of dependable livelihood for the community because majority of them are landless agricultural labourers and marginal farmers. Whatever cultivable lands they had possessed in the past have been alienated to the neighbouring prosperous communities and unscrupulous moneylenders over period of time under hard circumstances of chronic poverty and indebtedness.

The collection of minor forest produce like Mohul, resin, honey, sal leaves, Kendu leaves, edible items etc., which supplemented their livelihood in the past when their area was under deep forest cover has gradually declined considerably in course of time following deforestation.

Now the bulk of them earn their livelihood from wage earning, selling flattened rice, making sabai ropes and by working as annual contractual labourers (Barmasia), domestic servants (Bhatia) and cattle herders. The cottage industry of Sabai rope making has turned out to be a major source of subsistence for money for poor Puran families in which all the family members are engaged. They cultivate the Sabai grass, process it, prepare the ropes and sell them to local traders. All the works are done

manually without the help of any machine. It involves hard work and sometimes under burning sunlight. A family after a full day's hard work hardly earns more than thirty to forty rupees in this trade. The traders and middlemen often cheat them in the transactions and enjoy the fruits of their hard work."

"Most of them are marginal farmers and agriculturists. Very few have got more landed properties. They are very expert in preparing rope from the sabai-grass, which they collect from the local markets. Now Sabai-grass rope making has become their primary occupation. They work as agricultural labours and as contract labours in forest department and road constructions. They have direct links with weekly markets. They exchange their goods for other goods but prefer money. The number of daily casual workers and rope makers are increasing. Wages are paid in cash and kind." (Singh, K.S: 2012)

"They are excellent sabai grass rope makers. In local markets the Puran 's ropes are sold at higher price than those of others" (Ibid.:2012)

11. Food Habits

Now a days, they take parboiled rice along with cooked vegetables and edible leaves, thrice daily. Among non-vegetarian food they are very fond of relishing boiled snails (*genda*), red ant (*kurkuti*), winged flying ants (*kalei pok*), snake fish (*kuchia*) etc. They also love to prepare cake from Mahua flowers popularly known as Mahula latha and a gruel from Gundul (a type of cereal). Like other tribes in North Orissa, they are very fond of brewing rice beer (Handia) and relishing it as a beverage.

As stated in our descriptive report (1994), "Their staple food is rice. They are fond of non-veg food items prepared out of fish, mutton and chicken. Besides they also take ants, snails, snake fish (Kochia), flying ants, tussar worm, honey bee etc. as their food like the primitive tribal communities for which the caste Hindus look down upon them. Their food is supplemented by the edible fruits, roots, leaves and tubers collected from the forest round the year. Taking beef and pork is strictly tabooed for all. The women are tabooed against taking the meat of the ritually, sacrificed animal which the male members can only take. This is a tribal custom prevalent among most of the tribes like the Juang, Bhuiyan etc.

The Tamudia Purans prepare, drink and sell the Handia (rice beer) beverage as the local tribals do. The Bhanja Purans consider this to be an unclean practice and therefore maintain social distance from the Tamudia Purans.

The women of both the communities can chew but cannot smoke tobacco. There are also prohibitions for their women against drinking distilled liquors such as the "Mohuli".

According to K.S. Singh (2012), "Although they are non-vegetarians, they do not eat beef. Rice and pulses are their staple food. They use mustard oil and Mahua seed oil for cooking. They take different kinds of green vegetable, roots and tubers. They also take different types of fishes. They take various kinds of seasonal fruits. They drink tea, milk and handia. They usually purchase mahua liquor from the market, and on special occasions both the males and the females drink."

12. Magico Religious Beliefs and Practices:

The magico-religious life of the Purans is more inclined towards tribal animism than towards the complex religion of the caste Hindus. Dharam Devta - the Sun God and the Basuki Mata- the Earth Goddess are revered as their supreme deities who are invoked first in all rituals. The Juang, Bhuyan and Hill-Kharria also have the same supreme deities.

In every Puran village there is a presiding the male deity and a female deity called Gram Devati or Gram Thakurani and “Badam” respectively. In some villages they have different names. Their seats lie under the shades of tall trees at the village outskirts in the sacred grove called “Gram Sal” or “Gan Than”. No one is allowed to cut tree or take timber from the grove. In case of violation of such rules the culprit is punished by the deity with disease and misfortune. The sacred grove area is always protected from misuse or encroachment. In one Puran settlement, informants stated that in one instance, someone cut a branch of a tree from the sacred grove (*gan than*) and brought home the timber for personal use. After a few days the person died for violating the norm, without any known reason.

Both the deities are communally worshipped by all the communities residing in the village for the wellbeing of the villagers and the livestock of the village. The village priest called “Dehury” belonging to any of the tribal communities remains in charge of worshipping them. Foods are offered and animal sacrifices are made to appease the deities during all important communal rituals and festivals. No one eats a new seasonal crop before offering the same to these village deities. There are no idols and images. Only some stone blocks, earthen pottery items and votive objects are kept at the “Sal” or “Than” to represent the deities. Dehury is the religious head of the village whose position is hereditary.

There are also regional deities at the Pirha level. All the villages under the Pirha contribute a bucks and chickens for sacrifices before the presiding deity of the *pirhas* during an annual festival called “Pirha Puja” which is similar to the Pirha Puja traditions of the Juang and Bhuyan.

They also worship the deities like Sital Mata, Mangala Mata, Basuli Mata etc. by sacrificing goats and chickens to ward off epidemics and natural calamities. During “Muchhuni- mara Puja” they appease the village Goddess by offering chicken and eggs which is an exclusive Tribal trait.

They observe a number of festivals round the year. They stated that their main festival is Jantal held in the month of Pausa. *Asadhi* festival is celebrated in the month of Asadha, after which earth work in the agricultural fields starts. During *Asadhi* and *Jantala* they offer animal sacrifices to the deities. In the month of Chaitra, Mahula and Mango flowers are offered to the deities before eating. In the month of Bhadrav new paddy is offered to the deities in Nuakhai festival. New eating ceremonies are also observed to offer new fruits and edibles to all the deities in the sacred grove before first eating.

In the cattle shed, Guhala Budhi is worshipped. On the occasion of Kalipuja they observe (Bandana Parab) on the next day and Gobardhan puja in Gamha Purnami in which they offer chicken to the deities for the wellbeing of the cattle stock. During these festivals they worship their cattle and livestock. During the festival of Pana Samkranti, the Purans brand their cattle with a sword mark so that it will be easier to trace the animal if it is lost.

Puran too conduct a ritual known as Bhagabati puja. On this occasion all the unused objects (old brooms, baskets, worn out clothes and shoes etc.) of the household, are tied and dragged to the outskirts of the village. All the inhabitants of the settlement gather there for a ritual to ward of the evil spirits. They believe that by performing this ritual they drive away the evil spirits from home that causes measles.

Like many neighbouring tribes they have the “Cult of Ancestor Worship”. In all important festive occasions, ancestors (*Ista*) are worshipped in the kitchen at home by offering ritual foods (*agabhata*). On these occasions, family members take food only after offering it to the ancestors. The God Badam is also worshipped in the kitchen of the house.

Like all the tribes of North Odisha, Karama is one of their major festivals which they celebrate with pomp and ceremony in the month of Bhadrab. Two branches of Karama tree are brought for worship and immersed in the nearby river in the next day after the ritual is over.

Besides, they also observe certain other major regional festivals like, Makar, Dassara, Raja, Laxmi Puja, etc.

Further as regards their magico-religious beliefs and practices the following have been reported in our past descriptive report (1994).

“They strongly believe in magic, witchcraft and sorcery. Other communities are afraid of the Puran community who are alleged to be experts in the art of black magic. There is a local saying- “Bhuyan Kali” (A Bhuyan quarrels), “Gondo Meli” (The Gonds rebel) and Puran Pangni” (The Puran practices black magic). As a matter of coincidence the Purans are equal in social status with the Gond and Bhuiyan with whom they have free social interaction.

The Puran community strongly relies upon magico-religious practices for getting remedy from diseases, calamities, personal disasters and misfortunes. Taking a patient to local hospitals is a recent phenomenon. When all magic-religious exercises to cure a patient fail, he is brought to the medical centre at the eleventh hour.

The magical practitioner-cum-medicine man is called Raulia or Gunia- the same term is used by the Juang and Bhuiyan. There are also Shamans called “Kalasi” who are invoked to detect the supernatural cause of misfortunes and prescribe remedies.

All the above mentioned cultural traits points towards their tribal way of live that is closely akin to those of the Juang, Bhuiyan, Bathudi, Hill-Kharia etc.”

“They worship deities like, the Mangala, Gram devta, Baram, Kalimuri, Kali, Durga, Kudra etc. They observe the festivals like Nuakhia, first eatings of paddy or any new things, Rajja, Bandana, Tusu, Dari etc.” (Singh, K.S.:2012)

13. Folk Traditions

The Tamudia Purans have the folk tradition of song and dance. They have their song and dance groups of males and females in their villages. In all their festivals men and women, girls and boys dance together locking their hands at the back forming semicircular lines while males beat drums (*madal*), sing and whistle loudly standing at the center. The dancers put one step forward and one step backwards. While singing, they sing songs in their own Tamudia dialect, Puran Boli. These songs are called Jhumar songs and the dance, Madal dance. It appears to be tribal in character and it is identical with the dance and songs of the neighbouring communities like Bhumij.

The Bhanja Purans have retained their folk songs like *Karam geet, Tusu geet, Jhumar geet, Dari geet, Nuya thatiyare jhia, Sita Thakurani Kahar Jhia* etc. They participate in Chou dance and Paika dance in Chaitra Parab. Now in their villages they have formed “Samkirtan” Parties.

“They share many tribal traits. They discovered the cultural commonness with the local tribes and also with their songs and dance.” (Singh, K.S.: 2012)

14. Political life

In the feudal dispensation of the past, the Puran community of Mayurbhanj had their own traditional caste Panchayat called “Puran Sabha” or “Jati Samaj” at the village level to deal with the customary issues relating to their own community. The senior most male member of the major Puran clan of the village designated as Mahaldar or Pradhan headed the council. His position was being recognized by the King. The traditional village council served as the guardian of their customary rules and adjudicated cases pertaining to family disputes, theft, extra-marital affairs and divorce etc.

At the regional level, particularly in Baripada Sadar area, the Purans had a traditional regional chief called “Das Babu” who is usually called to decide serious issues of the

Purans. The post was not hereditary but selective. The “Das Babu” was being assisted by a body of jury members who are the “Mahaldars” of the component villages. The body was the apex body to finalize the cases of divorce, separation, partition of joint property, adultery, marriage disputes, breach of important taboos, readmission of socially boycotted persons etc. Though this traditional judicial body was competent to award fines and punishments, it was trying to bring peaceful, amicable and mutually agreeable settlements and reconciliations to the issues under their consideration. This traditional system closely resembles the socio-political system of the Juang and Bhuyan tribes

Now, this feudal system has been abolished. But the former officials and leaders still command respect from their fellowmen.

“They have their own samaj or caste panchayat, which is also known as Mahal where Barua, Dash Babu and Mahaldar etc. are high offices. The Samaj or Mahal councils decide cases concerning Chhar patra or divorce, and other social crimes including the birth of illegitimate child etc. The caste council adjudicates cases of different kinds like machhiapatak (sin due to generation of maggots in the sore), cattle killing and imposes the samaj bhoj (feast to the society). The Samaj Mahal punishes by excommunicating the guilty persons.”(Singh,K.S.:2012)

15. Inter-community relationship

In this regard the following was reported in our past empirical study report of 1994.

In Mayurbhanj district, the homeland of the Puran community, the inter-caste and community hierarchy is not very sharp as it is found in other areas and especially in coastal areas where caste-Hindus constitute the numerical majority. It is so because in Mayurbhanj, the aboriginal tribes who form a major segment of the population have numerical superiority over caste Hindus at the village level and they mostly live in multi-community villages. As regards the Puran community, they form the majority in most of the multi-community villages in Suliapada, Morada, and Bahalda Block areas.

Despite their numerical superiority, the upper castes like Brahmin, Karan, Gopal, Khandayat, etc. look down upon them as a lowly community and maintain social distance from them for their tribal way of life and unclean practices like animal sacrifice, tribal marriage system, practice of divorce, junior levirate and widow remarriage, trading of handia beverage, ritually impure food habits, use of cows as draught animals etc. The upper castes neither accept food and water from them nor dine with them in the communal feasts. In communal feasts the upper castes sit in separate rows. The upper castes do not allow the Purans to draw water from their private wells and ponds. However, no such prohibitions are enforced for drawing water from stream, and community ponds, wells and tube wells provided by the Government. The labourers of the Puran community who work under clean caste landlords are given food in separate aluminium pots. When the Brahmins and other upper caste guests come to attend the Dasah (the death rites) feasts, marriage feast or any other feasts hosted by a Puran, they do not take the food prepared by the Puran. Brahmin cooks are engaged to cook food for them separately.

However, there is no strong stigma of untouchability derived from the concept of ritual pollution by touch for the Puran community that is practiced by the clean castes towards the local Harijan communities like Ghasi, Domb, Hadi etc. Since like other tribal and low caste communities, the Purans have given up certain unclean and derogatory practices associated with their aboriginal life-style in course of their conscious attempt to Hinduise and modernize themselves by adopting the customs and traditions of their clean caste neighbours with the aim of securing a prestigious berth in the traditional inter-caste and inter-community hierarchy, they are treated by other communities as a community of semi-Hinduised peasants and accorded the status of a Pani Chhuan Jati

i.e., a community from whom the upper castes may accept water. But in actually practice the higher castes hesitate to accept cooked food and water from the Purans.

As per our present study findings, in the past, Purans and Santals were not accepting water from each other. But now a days, they mix and mingle with each other freely and accept water and food from each other barring their women. Women also don't have access to each other's house while for males there are no such restrictions.

In the village feasts Purans and Santals inter-dine together. Puranas usually do not go to Hindu temples. They have putative relationship with Santals which helps them at the time of distress and difficulty. In the village social hierarchy Purans are ranked at the bottom of the social rung at par with Santal, Kharia, Bhuyan and Patratanti from whom the higher castes maintain social distance in certain respects. As such the **Purans suffer from relative social isolation.**

"They have traditional inter-community relationship with local artisans, functional and agricultural communities. They take water and food both in kachcha and pucca from upper castes but they traditionally do not take water from the communities like Munda, Santhal, Kudumi etc. who were considered by them as untouchable." (Singh, K.S: 2012)

"They have ceremonial friendship with members of other communities, which establish very effective social bond, locally known as phoola, sahi, and sangata, etc." (Singh, K.S.: 2012)

Caste Hierarchy in the Study Villages

Sl. No	Caste Hierarchy as Perceived by Village Community	Rank in the Social Hierarchy	Traditional Occupation
1.	Brahman	1	Priesthood
2.	Karan	2	Writers' Caste
3.	Raju	3	Farming
4.	Gauda	4	Milk Man
5.	Barika	5	Barber
6.	Kudumi	6	Farming
7.	Bindhani, Lohar	7	Blacksmithy
8.	Shabar	8	Agriculture
9.	Bhumija	9	Agriculture
10.	Santala, Puran, Patra Tanti, Kharia, Bhuyan	10	Agriculture
11.	Dhoba	11	Washer man

16. Literacy

Owing to a poor socio-economic status the Purans are not able to embrace higher education. Since they are not notified as a ST or SC in the State, Census data on their literacy is not available. However, their literacy figures in our study villages in the past (1994) and present (2017) is stated below

Study Year	No. of Study Villages	Puran Literacy rate (%)			ST Literacy Rate in Odisha (1991 Census)			ST Literacy Rate in Odisha (2011 Census)		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1994	08	30.68	9.43	19.64	34.44	10.21	22.31			
2017	05	58.68	53.27	56.16				63.7	41.2	52.24

As evident from the above statement that, the total literacy rate of the Purans in our study villages of 1994 was lower than the total literacy rate of all STs recorded in 1991 Census and in case of our study villages of 2017 it is slightly higher than the total literacy rate of all STs recorded in 2011 Census. The fact remains that the **Purans are educationally backward** as compared to the literacy rate of the total population of the State that is 72.87 % in 2011

VI. Eligibility for ST Status:

The PURAN community is claiming the ST status. To be considered for the ST status a community is required to possess the following 05 criteria as prescribed by Govt. of India.

1. **Primitive traits,**
2. **Distinctive culture,**
3. **Geographical isolation,**
4. **Shyness of contact with the community at large and**
5. **Socio-economic backwardness**

It is pertinent to weigh and assess, how far the characteristic features found among the PURAN as per our study are in sync with the above 05 criteria. In this context it deserves to be mentioned here that **these criteria for scheduling of tribes may have become obsolete considering the processes of transition and acculturation in the present context. There is a need to revisit the criteria in order that apparent historical injustice can be addressed in a practical and contextual manner.**

(i) Primitive traits & (ii) Distinctive culture:

- ▶ They are the aboriginal inhabitants of Mayurbhanj and live amidst the aboriginal tribes like the Bhuyan, the Santhal, the Bhatudi, the Kharia, the Gond, the Bhumij, and the Kol (now STs in Odisha) with whom they share many common socio-cultural traits. All these tribes have already been recognized as Scheduled Tribes except the Purans which means that the **Purans have become victims of historical injustice.**
- ▶ They are distinct ethnic groups, distinguished from other groups by their separate dialect, dance, rituals, food habits, marriage and other social customs.
- ▶ According to one of their legendary tradition they have taken birth from the union of male member of a royal family and a tribal woman and according to their another legendary tradition their ancestor was a Bhuyan chief who was defeated and killed by the then King of Mayurbhanj.
- ▶ Corroborating the above legendary traditions, Risley (1891:180) believed that the name 'Puran' is a synonym for Bhuiyan in Mayurbhanj. **The Census Report of 1931 of Mayurbhanj State** (P. 214) states that **"In 1901 Census, Purans were included in Bhuiyans"** and at pages 162-163 of the said Census report it has been stated about the Bhanja Purans that **"To all intents and purposes, however, they are believed to be very nearly allied to the Bhuiyans"**.
- ▶ According to Dalton (1872: 159) **"There is a tradition that Kharias with another tribe called Purans were the aboriginals of Mayurbhanj"**.
- ▶ **"The Bhanja Purans for a long time were considered to be section of the Bhuinyas in the state. (Laequddin, Md. : 1937, Census of Mayurbhanj State-1931, Vol. I)**
- ▶ The Purans have exogamous social groupings (clans) distinguished by their respective surnames. These clans or septs are called "Khilli" like those of the aboriginal tribes such as Juang, Bhuyan and the Hill-Kharia.
- ▶ They speak a **dialect of their own** called **Puran Boli** such as those of the Hill Kharia and Juang tribes.

- ▶ Their customary marriage rules and practices closely resemble those of the neighbouring tribes. Those are (i) community endogamy and clan exogamy, (ii) the initiatives taken by the boy's side to arrange the match, (iii) the institution of bride-price, (iii) acquisition of mates by negotiation (Bahaghar), by elopement (Ghini Pala), by exchange of brides, by intrusion (Dhuk Pasa) and by trial (Sindur ghasa), (iv) Provisions for cross cousin marriage, son-in-law in house (Ghar Jamain) types of marriage, junior levirate, sororate and polygyny (v) widespread practices of remarriage of widows, widowers and divorcees (Sanga Ghar), (vi) no restriction against divorce and remarriage which are **indication of their tribal way of life** having many things in common with the Juang, Bhuiyan and Hill-Kharia tribes.
- ▶ They take ants, snails, snake fish (Kochia), flying ants, tussar worm, honey bee etc. as their food like the primitive tribal communities for which the caste Hindus look down upon them. Their women are tabooed against taking the meat of the ritually, sacrificed animals which the male members can only take. This is a tribal custom prevalent among most of the tribes like the Juang, Bhuyan etc. The Tamudia Purans prepare, drink and sell the Handia (rice beer) beverage as the local tribals do.
- ▶ The magico-religious life of the Purans is more inclined towards **tribal animism**. Dharam Devta - the Sun God and the Basuki Mata- the Earth Goddess are revered as their supreme deities. The Juang, Bhuyan & Hill-Kharia also have the same supreme deities.
- ▶ Under the shades of tall trees at the village outskirts, they have the institution of the **sacred grove** called "Gram Sal" or "Gan Than" like those of the neighbouring tribes in north Odisha.
- ▶ The traditional tribal priest called "Dehury" routinely worships their deities and also conducts their life cycle rituals. Foods are offered and **animal sacrifices are made** to appease the deities during all important communal rituals and festivals.
- ▶ During "Muchhuni-mara Puja" they appease the village Goddess by offering chicken and eggs which is an exclusive tribal trait.
- ▶ Like many neighbouring tribes they have the **"Cult of Ancestor Worship"**. In all important festive occasions, ancestors (Ista) are worshipped in the kitchen at home by offering ritual foods (*agabhata*).
- ▶ Like all the tribes of North Odisha, they observe Karama as one of their major festival.
- ▶ They **strongly believe in magic, witchcraft and sorcery and rely upon magico-religious remedies** from diseases, calamities, personal disasters and misfortunes.
- ▶ The Tamudia Purans have the **folk tradition of song and dance**. The Bhanja Purans have retained their folk songs.
- ▶ They have free social intercourse with the neighboring tribal communities especially the Bhuyan, Kharia, Bathudi and Bhumij, whom they consider to be their equals and with whom they have many things in common. They freely mix, take food and enter each other's house.
- ▶ Their present social status in the local inter-community hierarchy has remained at par with those of the neighbouring tribes like the Bhuyan, Kharia, Santal, Bhumij etc.
- ▶ Their legendary traditions, the observations of the earlier ethnographers like Dalton, Risley, Laeequddin and the **distinctive tribal way of life** of the Purans indicate towards their tribal origin.

- ▶ Besides their legendary origin, their socio-cultural life-style has many things in common with the local Mudari group of tribes. Particularly the bear close cultural resemblances with the Bhuiyan tribe.
- ▶ In view of the above facts, it appear that, **the Bhanja Puran and the Tamudia/Tamudia/Tamaria/Tamuria Purans are an off-shoot of the Bhuyan tribe.**

Thus in Odisha the Purans possess indications of primitive traits and distinctive culture.

(iii) Geographical isolation:

Their homeland lies in an underdeveloped Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) area inhabited by major aboriginal tribal communities as stated above. Till the recent past this area was under thick forest cover and was relatively geographically isolated from other areas. Now the situation has changed. The Purans though not geographically isolated, they **still suffer from relative social isolation**. The upper castes look down upon them as a lowly community and maintain social distance from them for their tribal way of life and unclean practices like animal sacrifice, tribal marriage system, practice of divorce, junior levirate and widow remarriage, trading of handia beverage, ritually impure food habits, use of cows as draught animals etc. The upper castes neither accept food and water from them nor dine with them in the communal feasts. Physically they are not treated as untouchables.

(iv) Shyness of contact with the community at large:

As per our study findings, the Purans are ranked low in the local social hierarchy. They are treated at par with the tribes like Santal, Kharia, Bhuyan etc. For their tribal way of life and certain unclean social customs and practices, higher castes maintain social distance from them in certain matters. But no stigma of untouchability is attached to them. Therefore the Purans feel shy to interact with the neighbouring higher castes. Being conscious of their lower social status, they usually avoid to attend the feasts and functions and enter into the houses of the higher castes. **This indicates their shyness of contact with the community at large**

(v) Socio-economic backwardness:

The data presented in our past and present clearly indicates that the **Purans are Socially, economically and educationally backward**

Thus in Odisha the Purans fulfill all the 05 criteria prescribed for the ST status.

(Photographs of Puran community in support of their "Primitive Traits" and distinctive culture are annexed with this report)

VII. Conclusion & Recommendations

- ▶ The Puran community is distributed in north Odisha and neighbouring areas of the States of Jharkhand and West Bengal. About their prolonged struggle to get recognized as a Scheduled Tribe in all these three States, K.S. Singh (POI, Vol.XVI, Pt. I, Odisha, 2012) have reported the following.

The Bhanja-Puran Samity made a representation to the Central Govt. to include them in the Scheduled Tribe list. The Bhanja Puran Samity was headed by Shri Pratap Chandra Dhal, the headmaster of Nagripada High School who organized the Purans of West Bengal and claimed that they were the original settlers of the Bhanjabhum region. They share many tribal traits. They discovered the cultural commonness with the local tribes and also with their songs and dance. Similarly in Odisha under the leadership of Shri

Sukhadu Dhal, Gourchandra See and Kulman See of Mayurbhanj district they sent representation to the Central Govt. for their inclusion in the Scheduled Tribes list.

- ▶ It is reliably learnt that **for the Jharkhand State, the ORGI has supported the proposal of inclusion of the PURAN community in the ST list of that state** vide their letter No. 8/1/2013-SS (Jharkhand), dtd. January, 2014. **The National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) in its 62nd Meeting held on dt. 17.12. 2014 has also agreed to this proposal.**
- ▶ When the PURAN community of the neighbouring Jharkhand State are on the verge of getting ST status in that State, **it will be a historical injustice to deny the same status to the same community living on the other side of border in Odisha** as they belong to the same cultural region and in the recent past the Puran inhabited territory of Jharkhand which was a part of Bhanja-Bhumi was under the ex-princely State of Mayurbhanj.
- ▶ **The Purans have become victims of historical injustice** because all their neighbouring tribes like Santal, Kharia, Bhumij, Bathudi, Bhuyan, Kolha, Lodha, Mahali, Munda, Kol-Lohara etc are enjoying the benefits of ST status since decades except the **Purans who in spite of possessing all the prescribed tribal traits are deprived of the same ST status. Only the Bhanja-Puran has been notified as OBC at Sl. No. 185 of the OBC list of Odisha.**
- ▶ **Keeping in view the above facts it may be considered to include PURAN (BHANJA PURAN and TAMADIA PURAN / TAMUDIA PURAN / TAMURIA PURAN / TAMARIA PURAN) in the S.T. list of Odisha as a new entry.**

(Dr. A.B. Ota)
Director & Special Secretary

References

Singh, K.S.2012 People of India, ODISHA, Vol. XVI, Part One, A.S.I, Seagull Books, PP 334-338.

(Annexure- II)

Laequddin, Md. 1937, Census of Mayurbhanj State-1931, Vol. I, Calcutta (p.198)

ANNEXURE- I

**DATA ON HOUSEHOLDS, LITERACY, OCCUPTION, LAND HOLDINGS, INCOME & LIVESTOCK OF TAMADIA PURAN /TAMUDIA PURAN/BHANJA
PURAN HOUSEHOLDS IN 05 STUDY VILLAGES**

SL No	Name of the Villages	No. of Households (HHs)	Total Puran Population of the village			No. of Literates			Major Occupation	Total Annual Household Income (in Rs.)	Average Annual Household Income (in Rs.)	No. of Land less HHs	No. of Land owning HHs	Total Land Holdings of the Puran (Ac)	Average land holding size per land owning HH (Ac)	Total No. of BPL HHs	Livestock
			M	F	T	M	F	T									
1	Baliadhipa	59	167	136	303	82	70	152	Rope making, Daily Wage, Cultivation	9 93 000	16 830.50	53	06	2.3	0.38	54	Hen, Cow, Goat, Bullock
2	Karatpata	51	168	165	333	85	69	154	Cultivation, Rope making Daily Wage, Govt.Job	9 88 000	19 372.54	43	08	3.4	0.42	47	Hen, Cow, Goat, Bullock
3	Gandhasali	132	361	324	685	194	179	373	Cultivation, Rope making, Daily Wage, Govt.Job	26 39 000	19 992.42	88	44	16.5	0.37	130	Hen, Cow, Goat, Bullock
4	Chakdara	30	76	73	149	42	34	76	Rope making, Cultivation, Daily Wage	6 78 000	22 600.00	15	15	5.3	0.35	27	Hen, Cow, Goat, Bullock
5	Rangalbeda	139	309	239	548	195	120	315	Cultivation, Daily Wage	14 33 000	10 309.35	08	131	166.4	1.27	133	Hen, Cow, Goat, Bullock Sheep
	Total	411	1081	937	2018	598 58.68%	472 53.27%	1070 56.16%		67 31 000	16 377.13	207	204	193.9	0.95	391 (95.13%)	

Total Average annual Income per HH -: Rs. 16377.13

Total Literacy Rate -: 56.16% Male Literacy Rate -: 58.68 % Female Literacy Rate -:53.27 %

Total Land Holding House Hold -: 204 HH Average land per land owning HH-: 0.95 Acre

Empirical Ethnographic Study on the Social Status of PATRA TANTI community of Balasore and Mayurbhanj districts of Odisha

I . Background

- In the S.C. list of Odisha, (a) **PATRATANTI** along with PATIAL, PATIKAR, PATUA is notified at S.L. 76, (b) PANTANTI is notified at Sl. 73 and (c) BUNA PANA along with PAN, PANO, DESUA PANA is notified at Sl. 69. All the three are one and the same community.
- During 1977, complaint was received that PATRA TANTI, PANA TANTI, and PATASALIA TANTI do not possess the characteristics of Scheduled Castes. Hence, they may be excluded from the SC list. Acting upon that, the State Government in Tribal and Rural Welfare (TRW) Department vide their Letter No. EMP- (i) -62/77- 1340 /TRW, Dt. 13.01.1978 asked the Director, Tribal & Harijan Research & Training Institute (THRTI), (now SCSTRTI) Bhubaneswar to conduct a detailed investigation on the ethnic status of PATRATANTI, PANATANTI and PATASALIA TANTI and submit views on the exclusion of these communities from the SC list of Orissa.
- In compliance, THRTI conducted an empirical ethnic status study in 03 different villages of Mayurbhanj district and submitted the report to Govt. vide Letter No. 1466/ R-72/79, dt.18. 06.1980. The salient findings are analysed in brief below.
 - 1) The nomenclature PATRA TANTI is common to two different weaver castes who have different origins and who traditionally weave different kinds of clothes.
 - 2) The first one called **PATRA TANTI** (□□□□□□ □□□□□□) / **PATASALIA TANTI** / **PATUA** is a weaver caste of Odia origin who belongs to general caste category like the other weaver castes viz, Rangani, Bhulia, Kostha etc. The name 'Patra', 'Patua' or 'Patasalia' is derived from the word 'Pata' meaning 'silk cloth' because their traditional occupation is weaving silk or *tassar* cloths. Their social and economic status is very high as compared to the neighbouring Scheduled Castes and **they are not treated as untouchables.**
 - 3) The second one called **PATRA TANTI** (□□□□□□ □□□□□□) / **PATRO TANTI** (□□□□□□ □□□□□□) / **PATARA TANTI** (□□□□□□ □□□□□□) / **PATAR TANTI** (□□□□□□ □□□□□□) / **PANA TANTI** though originated from the PANO (SC) caste who are still an untouchable caste in Odisha, are **entirely a different caste of weavers of coarse cloths who have no socio-cultural relationship with the Panos.** As per the Census Report of Mayurbhanj State, 1931 they were untouchables in the past but **now they have been able to remove their stigma of untouchability and occupy a fairly high position in the society.** At present they are served by the Brahmins, washer men and barbers. They have also free access to Hindu temples and common wells. They maintain social distance from the Panos and other Scheduled Castes in matters of acceptance of cooked food and water, interdining etc.
- In the mean time, during 1978, in the meeting of the State Harijan Welfare Advisory Body held on Dt. 16.11.1978, it was discussed that "many persons belonging to PATARA TANTI (□□□□□□ □□□□□□) community, who are not untouchables, are returning themselves as Scheduled Caste taking the advantage of the existing entry "PATRATANTI" in the Orissa

Scheduled Caste list.” After the discussion it was decided to recommend to Govt of India “to exclude the existing entry “Patratanti” from the Orissa list.” Accordingly, the State Government submitted the proposal to Govt of India for exclusion of PATRATANTI from Sl. No. 76 of the SC list of the State vide letter No. 31386, dt, 18.11.1978.

- While the matter the matter is pending with Govt. of India and being processed with the approved modalities for inclusion / exclusion of communities in the ST /SC lists, Hon’ble National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) held a public hearing on this case during November 2012.
- Thereafter during 2015, in the meeting of Scheduled Castes Welfare Advisory Board, held on 05.06.2015, the proposal of Shri Bishnu Charan Das, Hon’ble Member placed at Agenda No.15 regarding non-deletion of Patra Tanti (Sl. No. 76) from SC list of Odisha was considered and it was decided that a proposal to MOSJE, GOI would be sent to keep the deletion proposal at abeyance till such time a broad-based study is made by SCSTRTI.
- Subsequently, vide letter No. 8385/SSD/PCR(C)-1/2015, dt. 22.04.2015, Director, SCSTRTI, was requested by the State Government to furnish his considered views on the proposal to exclude the Patratanti caste from the Scheduled Castes list of Odisha.
- In compliance, SCSTRTI requested the District Welfare Officers (DWOs) of 04 districts i.e. Mayurbhanj, Bargarh, Keonjhar and Baleswar districts to furnish information on the exact locations of Patratanti community in respect of their districts followed by several reminders from 2015 to 2017 that went in vein. Therefore SCSTRTI gathered the information from its own sources and undertook the broad based empirical ethnographic study on Patratanti in the months of September and December 2017 in Balasore and Mayurbhanj districts.

II . Coverage of the Study

The study was carried out in 04 villages coming under 04 blocks of Mayurbhanj district and 03 villages coming under 03 blocks of Balasore district. The details of the villages covered by the study along with number of households, population and ethnic composition of studied households is given in the following **Statement**.

Study Villages, Location, Ethnic Composition of PATRA TANTI Households & Population

District	Block	Study Villages	Ethnic Composition	No. of PATRA TANTI Households	PATRA TANTI Population
1.Mayurbhanj	1.Kuliana	1. Andhari	Kamara, Patra Tanti, Santal	23	123

	2.Gopabandhu Nagar	1. Bhandagaon	Patra Tanti, Bhumij, Santal	55	245
	3.Khunta	1. Jamsuli	Patra Tanti, Santal	31	167
	4.Morada	1. Anua	Kudumi, Gauda, Puran, Kamar, Patra Tanti, Bhumij, Santal	32	137
2.Balasore	1.Nilagiri	1.Mardarajpur	Brahman, Chasa, Teli, Raju, Gauda, Barik, Patra Tanti, Dhoba, Pano, Santal	20	104
	2.Jaleswar	1. Khuada	Brahman, Chasa, Suda, Teli, Raju, Barik, Patra Tanti, Dhoba, Pano, Santal	30	143
	3.Remuna	3. Jarakapada	Chasa, Gauda, Barik, Kumbhar, Patra Tanti, Dhoba, Pano, Santal	20	98
Total	07	07		211	1017

The Data on Households, Literacy, Occupation, Land Holdings, Income and Livestock of Patra Tanti Households in 07 Study Villages is given in **Annexure - I**

III. a. Objective

The objective of the present study is to carry out a fresh ethnographic study of Patratanti community notified as SC so as to examine whether ethnographically they possess the required characteristic features as prescribed by Govt of India to be eligible to continue in the Scheduled Castes list of Odisha.

It is important to understand that the hallmark of the caste society is its structural stratification. Historically, occupational specialisation and cultural variation had been the main reasons for caste segmentation. The Scheduled Castes popularly known as 'Harijan' bore a clear identity and their social status was; determined by the persistence of stigma of untouchability – an easily identifiable phenomenon in the society. Poverty and educational backwardness were concomitant but not determinants of the social discrimination against them. In the traditional society, the Scheduled Castes, did not receive the services of Brahmin priest, village Barber and village Washer man. Their entry into temples was resisted by the conservative elements.

b. Methodology:

- Relevant information is gathered and analysed on ethnological traits, socio cultural practices, life cycle rituals, mode of marriage and death ceremonies, religious life, and interethnic relationship etc. of Patra Tanti.
- For collection of empirical ethnographic data, tools like structured interview schedule, checklists as well as village schedule have been used. Individual and key informants have been interviewed with the help of the tools. Group discussions along with household census have been made in the study villages to elicit relevant information.
- In course of the empirical study, the data collected from one or more than one study village(s) has been cross checked in other study village(s) to ascertain the reliability of the data.
- Data from the secondary sources / references has also been consulted and analysed with the empirical data for drafting the report and arriving at the conclusion regarding the eligibility of the target community to remain in the SC list of Odisha

IV. Study Findings

1. Nomenclature & Etymological meaning

As per the report of SCSTRTI (1980) stated earlier, the nomenclature PATRA TANTI is common to two different weaver castes who have different origins and who traditionally weave different kinds of clothes.

The **first one** called **PATRA TANTI** (ପତ୍ରା ଡାଣ୍ଡି ଡାଣ୍ଡି ଡାଣ୍ଡି) / **PATASALIA TANTI** / **PATUA** is a clean weaver caste of Odia origin like the other weaver castes viz, Rangani, Bhulia, Kostha etc. The name 'Patra', 'Patua' or 'Patasalia' is derived from the word 'Pata' meaning 'silk cloth' because their traditional occupation is weaving silk or *tassar* cloths. Their traditional occupation is weaving silk (*patā*) clothes. The term Patra Tanti is coined from "Pata" (silk cloth) and "Tanta", (the loom). "Tanti" is the Odia term meaning a 'weaver'.

The **second one** called **PATRA TANTI** (ପତ୍ରା ଡାଣ୍ଡି ଡାଣ୍ଡି ଡାଣ୍ଡି) / **PATRO TANTI** (ପତ୍ରା ଡାଣ୍ଡି ଡାଣ୍ଡି ଡାଣ୍ଡି) / **PATARA TANTI** (ପତ୍ରା ଡାଣ୍ଡି ଡାଣ୍ଡି ଡାଣ୍ଡି) / **PATAR TANTI** (ପତ୍ରା ଡାଣ୍ଡି ଡାଣ୍ଡି ଡାଣ୍ଡି) / **PANA TANTI** though originated from the PANO (SC) caste are entirely a different caste of weavers of coarse clothes **who have no socio-cultural relationship with the Panos.**

Our present report is dealing with the second caste of weavers called PATRA TANTI (ପତ୍ରା ଡାଣ୍ଡି ଡାଣ୍ଡି ଡାଣ୍ଡି) or PATAR TANTI (ପତ୍ରା ଡାଣ୍ଡି ଡାଣ୍ଡି ଡାଣ୍ଡି) or PANA TANTI or BUNA PANA. As per our present study they identify themselves as Patra Tanti or Tanti in short. Their neighbours call them as Patra Tanti, Pana Tanti and Tanti interchangeably. In their land records their caste (*jati*) name is mentioned differently as Patra Tanti, Pana Tanti and Tanti.

Sir H.H. Risley (1891: Vol. II, P. 172) has described as "Pattar, a sub caste of Tantis in Bengal..." He has described the "PAN-TANTI" as "a class of Tantis or weavers in Chota Nagpur who allow widows to marry, eat fowls, drink wine, etc.,..."

In Mayurbhanj Census Report :1931(Vol. II), the following have been stated about two different weaver castes of equivalent nomenclature i.e. (i) PATRAS / PATRA TANTI and (ii) PATAR TANTI / PATRA PAN / PATAR PAN/ PAN TANTI /BUNA PAN

(i) **PATRAS / PATRA TANTI**

"At one time Patras as spelt in English created a confusion in the caste name which is really Patra. They are weavers of silk and Tassar cloths. (P. 175)

"The Patras are a sub-caste of the Tantis of Oriya origin. They weave silk and Tassar cloth, as opposed to the Ranginis who weave only cotton fabrics." (P.176). "... among the Patras, etc., males and females almost in equal numbers follow their particular occupation of tassar spinning and weaving" (p. 345)

(ii) **PATAR TANTI / PATRA PAN / PATAR PAN/ PAN TANTI /BUNA PAN**

"The Pans are divided into two branches, viz., Jena Pan and Pan Tanti or Patar Tanti. The former is an unclean caste, while **the latter has become clean Sudras.**" (P. 166)

"Sir Edward A. Gait states that in Orissa States 'the Pan ranks higher ; he is largely employed as a weaver and calls himself Patra Pan or Buna Pan.' These Patra Pans, or more correctly Patar Pans, are known as Pan Tantis,..." (p. 167)

“...these Pan Tantis returned themselves as Patar Tantis in the State, Patar being the title they have adopted to their names.” (P. 175)

“The Patar Tantis, or simply the Patars, of Mayurbhanj, as elsewhere, are **the Hinduised section of the Pans, and are wholly distinguished from their kinsmen the Jena Pans in their habits and customs.** The traditional occupation of the community is weaving which still holds with a large majority of them... In Mayurbhanj, the members of the community shortly call themselves “ Patar ” which is the title they bear with their names.” (P. 203)

The study report of SCSTRTI (1980) endorses the above facts

“PATIAL, PATRATANTI / PATRA TANTIA : Concentrated in the rural areas of Balasore district of Orissa, **Pan Tanti** and **Patra Tanti are the synonyms of the community...** Their traditional occupation is weaving” (Singh, : Scheduled Castes, Vol. II, 1995, p.1084)

According to **K.S. Singh** (2013) “The Patra Tanti is a scheduled caste community of Odisha. They are probably an off-shoot of another caste found in large numbers in Odisha, who in due course of time developed a new life style and status and identified themselves as Patra Tanti. **They are also known as Patial, Patikar and Patua in different areas.**

2. Origin and Migration

Patra Tantis in our study villages of Balasore district stated that they are living there since many generations beyond memory. Some of them informed that in the past, during drought and extreme hunger, their caste men migrated to this region from Mayurbhanj at different points of time. In the small hamlet of Jarkapada, in the vicinity of Balasore Industrial area, informants stated that during a heavy flood in Mayurbhanj their forefathers had migrated to Balasore and settled there. As these migrations happened long back in history they are not able to tell the exact time of migration.

In **Mayurbhanj Census Report :1931(Vol. II)**, the following have been stated about the migration of Pan Tanti or Patar Tanti to the ex-State of Mayurbhanj from other areas.

“The ... Patar Tanti of Sambalpur have migrated to Mayurbhanj to an appreciable extent.” (P. 167)

“1,293 persons, or more than 4 per cent of the Pan Tantis, are immigrants,... 639 Pan Tantis returned Singhbhum as their birth-place, while 236 and 279 of them are born in Midnapore and Keonjhar. Balasore, Nilgiri and Sambalpur contributed to the number of immigrants by 44, 34 and 26 persons respectively. 35 persons in the aggregate are returned as born in Cuttack, Manbhum, Ranchi, Sareikela, Monghyr, Bamra and Gangpur.” (P. 63)

3. Population and Distribution

In the SC list of Odisha, (i) **PATRA TANTI is listed as PATRATANTI along with PATIAL, PATIKAR, PATUA at Sl. No. 76**, (ii) **BUNA PANA is listed at Sl. No. 69 along with PAN, PANO, DESUA PANA and (iii) PANA TANTI is listed as PANTANTI at Sl. No. 73.**

District wise distribution of PATRATANTI and PANTANTI populations in Odisha (1961-2011) is given in the **Annexures – II & III.**

4. Surnames, Titles, Social Divisions & Groupings

Patra is their surname though they establish marital relation with *Tantis* bearing the surnames viz. Raul, Gayan, Das.

Mayurbhanj Census Report :1931(Vol. II), : "...Pan Tantis returned themselves as Patar Tantis in the State, Patar being the title they have adopted to their names." (P. 175)... In Mayurbhanj, the members of the community shortly call themselves " Patar " which is the title they bear with their names." (P. 203)

"They use Patra as their surname" (Singh, K.S: 2013)

In the study villages of Balasore district, it is found that the community is endogamous and is divided into various exogamous lineage groups having one *gotra* i.e. *nagasa*. In Mayurbhanj districts, some informants term their *gotra* as *malasya*.

In the study villages of Mayurbhanj district, the Patra Tanti are endogamous and are divided in to a number of exogamous lineage (*bansa*) groups viz. Khichingia, Hunjar, Das bhaya, Urmakudi, Kadali badia etc. The main function of the lineage groups is to regulate marriage alliances and to indicate descent and ancestry.

Mayurbhanj Census Report :1931(Vol. II) : "The community is subdivided into a number of exogamous septs some of which as commonly known in Mayurbhanj, are (1) *panch bhaya*, (2) *sat bhaya*, (3) *das bhaya*, (4) *brahmania*, (5) *kumbharia*, (7) *bagti*, (8) *oormarkudi*, (9) *khichingya*, (10) *baramkulia*, (11) *kesrali*, (12) *baldi*, (13) *bhanjara*, (14) *hunjara*, (15) *barkhandia*."

"As a caste they form an endogamous group. And marriage cannot take place outside the community. The caste is divided into a number of *gotras* like Nageswar, Kasyapa, etc." (Singh, K.S: 2013)

"Pana Tanti and Patara Tanti (Patro Tanti)..... are not separate castes. They have same type of *gotras*. No distinction is observed in respect of their socio-religious observances." (Report of SCSTRTI, 1980)

5. Language

They speak Odia language. But in the past, they had a typical dialect viz. *Tanti Bhasa* of their own which was a corrupted version of Odia language commonly used by their forefathers in earlier times. Later they are ridiculed and looked down upon by other castes because of this dialect. Gradually they had to shun its use. Nowadays, they speak Odia similar to that of their neighboring communities.

"They speak the Indo-Aryan language, Oriya, and use the Oriya script for inter and intra group communication" (Singh, K.S, 1995)

"They speak Odia among themselves as well as with outsiders. Some of their males can also speak in Hindi to some extent. In writing they use the Odia script." (Singh, K.S.: 2013)

6. Personal Appearance

They wear clothes similar to that of other castes in their neighborhood. No peculiarity is observed among them with regard to dress, ornaments, hair style to distinguish them from others. Tattooing (*khada*) was prevalent among women in the past. Use of ornaments are rarely seen among women folk due to their low economic status. Girls are seen using jewelry (ear rings, nose rings etc.) made of cheap metals available in the local hat.

In the past males used to wear loin cloth made of coarse cotton while women used to wear saree made of coarse cotton. Nowadays, male youths are wearing trousers and shirts and elderly people wear *lungi* or *dhoti*. Males who are Vaishnavites are often seen wearing a sacred thread around their trunk though it is not mandatory for them.

“They used to wear coarse cotton clothes in the past, but now in some places they have started wearing silk cloth made from *tussar*.” (Singh, K.S.:2013)

7. Settlement & Housing

They reside in multi caste villages where their hamlets are located a little away from the other hamlets inhabited by upper castes. Due to paucity of space and increasing population more houses are accommodated in the villages reducing the distance between hamlets of upper castes and lower castes. They mix and mingle freely with other caste communities in the village. Their houses are mud walled and straw thatched. Now-a-days, some of them have *pucca* houses built under Government housing schemes.

“They live in multiethnic villages of Mayurbhanj and Balasore districts.” (Singh, K.S: 2013).

8. Life Cycle

a) Child birth

A male child is preferred to a female child. Male child is perceived as an income earner who would be able to take care of the family in future.

On the seventh day of the birth of the child, a purificatory rite is performed by the family members to remain free from birth pollution which is known as *uthiari*. The ninth day ritual after birth of the child is known as *narta/nalta*. On that day mother takes a ritual bath and become free from birth pollution. Males of the household shave their beard while females pair nails. Walls and floors of the house is besmeared with cow dung. On the twenty first day, a ritual (*ekoisia*) is performed, taking the new born close to a water site (*ghata*). On that day, name giving ceremony is observed in which, the child is named by the head of the family in consultation with elderly kinsmen. On the occasion, a feast is hosted for the close kins. First rice feeding ceremony (*aran prasana*) for the child is observed either on the 21st day or on the first birthday. On all these occasions, except the *ekoisia* they do not need the services of Brahman priests, barber and washerman. For performing *ekoisia* rites they hire the services of a Brahman priest.

“Birth pollution is observed for nine days. They clean their house and get their clothes washed by a washer man and a barber cuts the nails of the mother on the ninth day known as *narta*. The mother takes a ritual bath. On the twenty-first day the *ekusia* rite is performed with the help of a Brahman to propitiate Goddess Mangala for the welfare of the child.A name for the baby is generally proposed by elders of the family” (Singh, K.S:2013)

b) Puberty rite:

Patra Tantis observe puberty rites for adolescent girls attaining puberty. She is kept secluded from the male members of the household. On the seventh day she is taken to the water site in company of women from neighboring households. After the bath she visits the village temple to become free from pollution.

K.S. Singh (2013) reported “A girl on attaining puberty is kept segregated for seven days. She has food inside her room and is not allowed to see any male member. On the seventh days, she takes a bath, wears a new sari and goes to worship Goddess *Thakurani*.”

c) Bride price

Payment of bride price, is prevalent in Patra Tanti community. On the day of negotiation (*pindhani*) bride price (*pana bhanga*) is negotiated either in terms of cash or paddy between both the families as per the economic condition of the groom's family.

"-----*Nirbandha* or *pindhani* (betrothal) takes place at the girl's house. A few days later the boy's father with some relatives visit the girl's house to settle the bride price and dowry which are paid both in cash and kind before the actual marriage or just after marriage. This occasion is called *panabhanga*." (Singh, K.S.:2013)

d) Marriage

The customary rules of caste and village endogamy and lineage exogamy is commonly observed in marriage. The preferred marriage circle is within their own village or the neighboring village. Monogamy is usually practiced. Though marriages arranged by negotiation (*pindhani*) are a common practice, rare instances of love marriage are also reported. In a recent case in Darkoli village, a girl from Karana community got married to a Patra Tanti boy out of love.

Prior to the marriage, groom side visits the bride's family with sweets, clothes and ornaments for the bride. The ritual is known as *pindhani*. On the day of negotiation rings are exchanged between the families and the marriage date is fixed which is known as *lagna dhara*. Apart from the custom of bride price, the practice of dowry (offering of gifts by bride's family to groom's family) as found in the other castes is also found in the marriage of Patra Tanti. However, payment of dowry is paid both in cash and kind as desired by the groom's family. Dowry amount is settled between both the families depending upon the socio-economic status of the bride's family.

In the past, the priest, barber and washerman from their own caste were rendering services for conducting the marriage rites in presence of their traditional caste leader, Gaundia. But now-a-days, the Patra Tantis are availing the services of low grade Brahman priests, barber and washerman for the purpose. The marriage is solemnized in a marriage pandal in the house of the bride. Rituals like exchange of garlands between bride and groom, putting vermillion mark by the groom, solemnizing the marriage with ritual fire (Homo) are some of the common wedding rituals.

A married woman is recognized by vermillion mark on her forehead and an iron bangle (*katri*) she wears.

Divorce

In case of recurrent quarrel between husband and wife village elders are taken into confidence before a divorce between husband and wife is granted. In case of death of the husband, junior levirate marriage is allowed in consultation with the village elders. Remarriage is permissible in case of divorcees, widows and widowers.

Mayurbhanj Census Report :1931(Vol. II) : "Marriage is both adult and infant. Marriage "pan" (bride price) varies according to the marriage is adult or infant. The marriage ceremony usually takes place at the bride's house. The marriage party consists of both males and females. Divorce and widow remarriages are allowed. In the case of divorce, the wife is entitled, according to the caste rules, to a minimum of 6 months' maintenance." (p. 203)

Singh, K.S. (2013) reported "The caste is divided into a number of *gotras* like Nageswar, Kasyapa, etc. Marriage cannot take place in the same *gotra*. ---Monogamy

is the rule but in some cases a person can have another wife if his first wife is found to be barren or invalid. In some cases, they allow junior levirate and sororate marriages.”

e) **Death**

In Balasore district, informants stated that they burn their dead and the funeral pyre is lit by the eldest son of the deceased. In Mayurbhanj, majority of them bury their dead. A selected few who can afford, cremate their dead. Cremation ground of the Patra Tantis is located a little away from that of other castes of the village.

The period of grief and mourning is observed for 11 days. The tenth day mortuary rite (*dasaha ghata*) is marked by cleaning the house and shaving of hair and beard by close kin members of the deceased. Purificatory rite is completed on the 11th day with a feast offered to the kinsmen. In the past, the services of priest, barber and washer man were being managed by their own caste men. But now they hire for the purpose the services of Brahman, barber and washerman. They observe annual commemoration ceremony (*barsika sradha*) in honor of the deceased. Those who can afford, immerse the bone of the deceased in the rivers like Ganga and Subarnarekha.

Mayurbhanj Census Report :1931(Vol. II) : The period of mourning lasts for 10 days. They usually bury their dead, but cremation is not uncommon. The ceremony of “return of spirit” is observed with cooked rice besmeared with turmeric, kept in a handi (earthen cooking pot) which is allowed to rest on a stand (made of 3 pieces of stick) on the outskirts of the village. Some of the survivors call the departed spirit to return, and they hurriedly return home, by breaking the earthen pot to pieces.” (P. 203 & 204)

“They both cremate and bury their dead, depending on their economic condition. Those dying of unnatural causes and those dying unmarried are generally buried... *Sudhakriya* (purificatory rites takes place on the sixteenth day when their clothes are washed by the washerman and the barber shaves and pares off the nails of the male members and the females get their nails pared. A Brahman priest performs the *hom* and offers *panda* (food) to the deceased. The next day the kinsmen are entertained in a feast.” (Singh, K.S.: 2013, P.1206)

9. **Economic Life and Food Habits**

Like other Tanti communities, the traditional occupation of Patra Tanti / Pana Tanti is weaving. In these days, availability of mill made synthetic clothes at cheaper price has brought down the demand for handloom clothes, the Tantis weave. Thus, their traditional occupation of weaving is no more a sustainable source of livelihood for them though few of them are still doing it. At present their primary occupation is cultivation. In the village, Khuada, our informant stated that most of them do share cropping (*bakhara*) as their primary occupation. They also cultivate land on lease (*sanja*) basis mostly in Mayurbhanj district. Many in the village earn their livelihoods as mason and daily wage earners. Many young men migrate to places (Gujarat, Haryana, Kolkata etc.) outside Odisha for labor work. Introduction of stitching machines for making leaf-cups and plates are found in some of the study villages which is a good earning source for the women folk.

As given in **Annexure-I**, in our study villages some of them possess small patches of farm land as owners and take up settled cultivation as their principal occupation. In these villages only 53 households (25.11percent) out of total 211, possess land and the remaining majority of them i.e. 158 (74.89 percent) are landless. The average land per land owning household ranges from 0.36 acres to 0.49 acres. Besides cultivation they

supplement their income by wage and agricultural labour, animal husbandry, and small business like selling of Sabai ropes and cups and plates made of Sal leaves. Few of them have taken up occupations like service, petty trade, masonry, carpentry, driving etc.

They are economically backward. The average annual household income of studied households ranges from Rs.21563/- to Rs.36600. Therefore, out of 211 studied households 186 households (88.15 percent) are BPL households.

The total **literacy rate** in the study villages (excluding children below 6 years) is 67.71 percent. While male literacy rate is 73.30 percent, female literacy, 62.21 percent.

They like to take non-vegetarian food. Rice is their staple cereal and they take parboiled rice with water and cooked vegetables thrice daily. They also relish on fish, meat, dry fish. Like other tribes in north Odisha, they brew country beer 'handia' at home for drinking.

Mayurbhanj Census Report :1931(Vol. II) : "The traditional occupation of the community is weaving which still holds with a large majority of them." ... "They generally take clean food with exception of fowl, handia, red ant and winged termite which they take. Unlike the Jena Pans, they in Mayurbhanj, do not take carrion or even beef, though it is reported some of their kinsmen in Keonjhar do take the latter." (P. 203) ... "The Patar Tantis, by their intelligence and capability, have now taken to other persuasions ... such as carpentry, masonry work and skilled labour of sorts including cultivation." (P. 204)

"The traditional occupation of Pana Tanti is weaving which is still practiced by some members of the community. Both the sexes participate in this type of work. Their main items of products include coarse dhoti, saree and *gamchha*. The demand for such type of cloth is very low now-a-days as the hand-woven coarse cloth has gradually been replaced by mill made cloth. For this reason some of the Pana Tantis have adopted agriculture as their main economy." (SCSTRTI, 1980)

"The Patra Tanti are traditional weavers. They used to weave coarse cotton clothes in the past but now in some places they have started weaving silk cloth made from *tussar*. Women help the men in reeling while the men do the weaving, which is their secondary occupation. But there are some who have adopted other means of livelihood like cultivation, regular service, rickshaw pulling, wage earning, etc." (Singh, K.S.: 2013, p.1206.)

10. Religious Life

Patra Tanti identify themselves as Sivakula Tanti claiming their ancestry from the Hindu God, Siva. They take pride in expressing that the cloth woven by them is used by the God Siva. In some villages in Balasore they worship the village deity viz. Badam Debi. In some villages of Mayurbhanj, they worship Garam under a Sal tree as their principal village deity. The deity is worshipped for the wellbeing of the village. During observance of Chatu Samkranti in the month of Chaitra, animal sacrifices (goat and cock) are offered to appease her. Manasa Devi is worshipped as the household deity. Some of them also worship the images of Hanuman, Kali, Laxmi, Jagannath, Mangala at the household level.

Ancestors (Ista) are worshipped in north eastern (*aisanya*) corner of the house. On the occasion of Makara Samkranti and Kalipuja, they make offerings to their ancestors. Annual commemoration rites (Pinda) are also offered in memory of the ancestors on this occasion.

Rituals and Festivals like Raja, Gobardhana puja, Dusshera, Kali Puja, Makara Samkranti, and Mangala Osa is observed with gaiety. In the villages of Mayurbhanj, along with

above festivals, Asadhi puja and Karama festival is observed by those who undertake vows to conduct it.

Now a days, in many villages of Patra Tanti in the Balasore district, they follow the tenets of Abhiram Paramhansa which has served in lessening social distance along caste lines. This has also instilled a feeling of brotherhood among the village folks. In the month of May villagers observe a grand ceremony for thirty days with Sankirtana in which persons from all castes mix and mingle with one another. The festival ends with a community feast.

Mayurbhanj Census Report :1931(Vol. II, P. 175) : “In Mayurbhanj there are some Pan Tantis, or Patar Tantis, who loosely identify as Sivakul Tantis and the Matibansa Tantis.”

“They profess Hinduism and worship a number of Hindu Gods and Goddesses to ward off danger or to gain material prosperity. Their deities include *Vishnu, Jagannath, Siva, Laxmi, Saraswati, Balaram, Subhadra, Krishna* etc. They also worship village deities like *Mangala, Manasa, Sitala*, etc. along with other communities. In conducting rituals, they take the help of the priest (*pujari*) who belongs to some other community. They also participate in Hindu fairs and festivals like *Doljatra, Sivaratri, Rathajatra, Durgapuja, Raja, Makar Sankranti*.” (Singh, K.S. :2013)

11. Folk Traditions

They don't have any folk tradition of their own like folk dance or songs.

12. Political life

In Mayurbhanj, Patra Tanti have their own traditional caste council at village level headed by a leader known as Gaundia. The position of Gaundia is hereditary. Gaundia takes a leading role in marriage, death, festivities and in solving intra family disputes in the village. As head of the traditional caste council, he acts as a guardian of their traditional norms and customs and adjudicate issues pertaining to family disputes, extra-marital affairs and divorce etc. and awards punishment in cash or ex-communication from the community. They don't have any regional community council.

“The traditional caste *panchayat* which existed in the past does no longer function properly. Previously, a meeting would be held once a year to discuss the various issues of the caste.” (Singh, K.S:2013, p.1206)

13. Inter-community relationship

In Mayurbhanj district Patra Tantis perceive their caste higher than the Adibasis (Santal tribe) of their village. It is evident from the local social hierarchy given in the following statement that Patra Tanti occupy at present a lower middle position just above the Scheduled Castes like Pano and Dhoba and below the touchable service castes like Barika, Kamar, Kumbhar and Gouda etc.

It has been observed that in present times, social discrimination due to the stigma of untouchability does not exist for Patra Tantis. Now upper castes engage them in agriculture and household works requiring menial labour viz. besmearing of house, storing and processing of paddy, fencing, house thatching etc. Now a day's temple entry is allowed and dry offerings are accepted from them in the village temple. In village feasts they dine together along with other castes of the village. In these days, Brahmans, Bariks and Dhobas from far off villages offer ritual services to them. Discrimination on caste lines was a thing of the past. **They hardly face any physical discrimination on caste lines.**

However, informants by and large expressed that in the present age of democratic governance people have been empowered by their voting rights. The upper castes, who were discriminating Patra Tanti as untouchables before are now accepting them in their company, in social gatherings and in religious ceremonies. Their opinion is taken into consideration while taking decisions in political meetings.

Caste Hierarchy in the Study Villages

Sl. No	Caste Hierarchy as Perceived by Village Community	Rank in Social Hierarchy	Traditional Occupation
1.	Brahman	1	Priesthood
2.	Karana	2	Writers' Caste
3.	Chasa	3	Farming
4.	Teli	4	Oil extraction, Farming
5.	Raju	5	Farmer
6.	Kudumi	6	Farmer
7.	Gauda	7	Milk Man
8.	Kumbhara	8	Potter
9.	Kamara	9	Blacksmith
10.	Barika	10	Barber
11.	Patra Tanti	11	Weaving
12.	Dhoba	12	Washer man
13.	Pana	13	Disposal of the dead animal
14.	Bhumija	14	Agriculture, Wage earning
15.	Santal	15	Agriculture, Wage earning

According to Mayurbhanj Census Report :1931(Vol. II), The "Pan Tanti or Patar Tanti"... **has become clean Sudras.**" (P. 166) "... The Patar Tantis, or simply the Patars, of Mayurbhanj, as elsewhere, are **the Hinduised section of the Pans, and are wholly distinguished from their kinsmen the Jena Pans in their habits and customs.**" (P. 203)

"The Pana Tantis **are no more treated as untouchables** but years ago it was found that their position was different... it is seen that **at present they are served by the Brahmins, washer men and barbers. They have also free access to Hindu temples and common wells.** However water and cooked food are not accepted from their hands by the clean castes. On the other hand they also do not take water from the hands of Pana and other Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes except the Hinduised section of tribal groups... Pana Tanti otherwise known as Patara Tanti (Patro Tanti) now occupy a fairly high position in the society. Though this community originated from the Panas, a still untouchable caste in Orissa have been able to remove their stigma of untouchability." (SCSTRTI : 1980)

"In the local caste milieu, they occupy a position between the high and low castes. Others treat them as a clean caste. They treat certain castes like the Karan, Raju, Khandayat, etc. as higher to them while castes like the Dom, Hadi and the Kurunga as inferior to themselves. **Acceptance of cooked food and water from the lower ranking castes is never allowed. They use the services of the Brahman, Dhobi and the barber during socio-religious ceremonies. They claim a position among the Sudra group of the varna system"** (Singh, K.S:2013, p.1203)

As regards to the inter community relationship of Patra Tantis, Singh, K.S (2013) reported "They live in multiethnic villages forming part of a composite rural society. Being weavers, day labourers, etc. they are largely dependent on their neighboring land-owning people belonging to various castes and communities in their daily life. Traditionally, the other linkages which used to be maintained with their neighbors was through participation in religious festivals and village politics. Moreover, as a result of the heterogeneous type of

settlement pattern they have established other socio-cultural linkages with various castes and communities living in the area, whose services and cooperation they sometimes use during birth, marriage and death rites. Commensal relationship like acceptance and non-acceptance of cooked food and water also exist with different castes and communities on the basis of certain local caste hierarchical norms, and caste context. They do not allow intercommunity marriages. Ceremonial friendships of different kinds with various castes have been established.” (Ibid, p.1207)

V. Summary Findings

- During 1977, complaint was received that PATRA TANTI, PANA TANTI, and PATASALIA TANTI do not possess the characteristics of Scheduled Castes. Hence, they may be excluded from the Scheduled Caste (SC) list. Acting upon that, the State Govt. vide their letter dated 13.01.1978 asked the Director, THRTI, (now SCSTRTI) to conduct a detailed ethnic status study of PATRATANTI, PANATANTI and PATASALIA TANTI and submit views on the exclusion of these communities from the SC list of Orissa.
- In compliance, THRTI conducted an empirical ethnic status study in 03 different villages of Mayurbhanj district and submitted the report to Govt. vide Letter No. 1466/ R-72/79, dt.18. 06.1980. The salient findings of the study are analysed in brief below.
 - 1) The nomenclature PATRA TANTI is common to two different weaver castes who have different origins and who traditionally weave different kinds of clothes.
 - 2) The first one called **PATRA TANTI** (ଠାଟାଟାଟା ଠାଟାଟାଟା)/ **PATASALIA TANTI / PATUA** is a weaver caste belonging to general caste category like the other weaver castes viz, Rangani, Bhulia, Kostha etc. The name ‘Patra’, ‘Patua’ or ‘Patasalia’ is derived from the word ‘Pata’ meaning ‘silk cloth’ because their traditional occupation is weaving silk or *tassar* cloths. Their social and economic status is very high as compared to the neighbouring Scheduled Castes and **they are not treated as untouchables.**
 - 3) The second one called **PATRA TANTI** (ଠାଟାଟାଟା ଠାଟାଟାଟା) / **PATRO TANTI** (ଠାଟାଟାଟା ଠାଟାଟାଟା) / **PATARA TANTI** (ଠାଟାଟାଟା ଠାଟାଟାଟା)/ **PATAR TANTI** (ଠାଟାଟା ଠାଟାଟାଟା) / **PANA TANTI** though originated from the PANO (SC) caste (still an untouchable caste in Odisha), are **entirely a different caste of weavers of coarse cloths who have no socio-cultural relationship with the Panos.** As per the Census Report of Mayurbhanj State, 1931, they were untouchables in the past but **now they have been able to remove their stigma of untouchability and occupy a fairly high position in the society.** At present they are served by the Brahmins, washer men and barbers and have also free access to Hindu temples and common wells. They maintain social distance from the Panos and other SCs in matters of acceptance of cooked food and water, interdining etc.
- In the mean time, during 1978, in the meeting of the State Harijan Welfare Advisory Board held on Dt. 16.11.1978, it was resolved that since many persons belonging to PATARA TANTI (ଠାଟାଟାଟା ଠାଟାଟାଟା) community, who are not untouchables, are taking the advantage of the existing entry “PATRATANTI” in the SC list, this entry needs to be excluded. Accordingly the State Government submitted the proposal to Govt. of India to exclude the existing entry “Patratanti” from Sl. No. 76 of the SC list of the state.
- While the matter is being processed by Govt. of India under the approved modalities for inclusion / exclusion of communities in the ST /SC lists, Hon’ble National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) held a public hearing on this case during November 2012.

- Thereafter during 2015, in the meeting of Scheduled Castes Welfare Advisory Board, the proposal of one Hon'ble Member regarding non-deletion of Patra Tanti (Sl. No. 76) from SC list of Odisha was considered and it was decided that a proposal to MoSJE, Gol would be sent to keep the deletion proposal at abeyance till a broad-based study is made by SCSTRTI. Accordingly, Director, SCSTRTI, was requested to do the needful.
- In compliance, SCSTRTI requested the DWOs of Mayurbhanj, Bargarh, Keonjhar and Baleswar districts to intimate the exact locations of Patratanti community followed by several reminders from 2015 to 2017 that went in vein. Therefore SCSTRTI gathered the information on its own and undertook the broad based empirical study on Patratanti during 2017 covering 04 villages coming under 04 blocks of Mayurbhanj district and 03 villages coming under 03 blocks of Balasore district.
- The salient study findings are briefed below
 - 1) It transpires from our past and present empirical studies as well as available references, **there are two different weaver castes bearing the similar nomenclature** i.e. (i) **PATRA TANTI** (□□□□□□ □□□□□□) and (ii) **PATRA TANTI** (□□□□□□ □□□□□□) or **PATAR TANTI** (□□□□□ □□□□□□) **who have different origins and who traditionally weave different kinds of clothes.**
 - 2) The **first one** i.e. **PATRA TANTI** (□□□□□□ □□□□□□) have synonyms like **PATASALIA TANTI, PATUA, PATIAL, PATIKAR** who are traditionally weavers of silk or *tassar* (Pata) cloths. Their social status is high and they are not treated as an untouchable caste. Hence, they do not deserve the status of a Scheduled Caste.
 - 3) The **second caste of weavers called PATRA TANTI / PATRO TANTI** (□□□□□□ □□□□□□) or **PATAR TANTI** (□□□□□ □□□□□□) or **PATARA TANTI** (□□□□□□ □□□□□□) or **PATRA PANO** have synonyms like **PANA TANTI** or **BUNA PANA**. As per our present study they traditionally weave coarse clothes and identify themselves as PATRA TANTI or TANTI in short. Their neighbours call them as PATRA TANTI, PANA TANTI and TANTI interchangeably. These caste names have been mentioned in their land records.
 - 4) Though the **PATRA TANTI / PATRO TANTI** (□□□□□□ □□□□□□)/ **PANA TANTI / BUNA PANA** have originated as **an endogamous weaver sub caste of PANO** caste (who are still treated as an untouchable Scheduled Caste), they have **been able to acquire the status of a higher caste and have become clean Sudras**. In their habits and customs they are quite different from the PANOs and there is no socio-cultural relationship between both the communities. **They do not deserve the status of a Scheduled Caste.**

VI . Conclusion

- In the SC list of Odisha, **PATRATANTI is listed along with PATIAL, PATIKAR, PATUA at Sl. No. 76.**

- **As per the findings of the study made by SCSTRTI in 1980 and of the present (2017-18) study, the PATRATANTI do not at present, suffer from any kind of social discrimination arising out of the stigma of untouchability as they have acquired the higher social status of a clean Sudra caste.**
- During 1978, in the meeting of the State Harijan Welfare Advisory Body held on Dt. 16.11.1978, it was decided to recommend to Govt of India “to exclude the existing entry “Patratanti” from the Orissa list.” Accordingly, the State Government submitted the proposal to Govt of India for exclusion of PATRATANTI from Sl. No. 76 of the SC list of the State vide letter No. 31386, dt, 18.11.1978.

Hence, exclusion PATRATANTI from Sl. No. 76 of the SC list of Odisha which was decided and recommended by SHWAB way back in 1978 is corroborated by the study findings of SCSTRTI. However, the observations of SCSTRTI may be placed before the next meeting of SCWAB to take a considered decision in this matter.

**DIRECTOR &
SPECIAL SECRETARY**

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ANNEXURE- I

**DATA ON HOUSEHOLDS, LITERACY, OCCUPATION, LAND HOLDINGS, INCOME & LIVESTOCK OF PATRA TANTI HOUSEHOLDS
IN 07 STUDY VILLAGES**

SL No	Name of the Villages	No. of Households (HHs)	Total Patra Tanti Population of the village			No. of Literates			Major Occupation	Total Annual Household Income (in Rs.)	Average Annual Household Income (in Rs.)	No. of Land less HHs	No. of Land owning HHs	Total Land Holdings of Patra Tanti HHs (Ac)	Average land holding size per land owning HH (Ac)	Total No. of BPL HHs	Live-stock
			M	F	T	M	F	T									
1	Andhari	23	61	62	123	35	31	66	Weaving, Labour, Govt. Job	6 30 000	27391.30	17	06	2.6	0.43	20	Hen.
2	Bhandagaon	55	130	115	245	73	62	135	Daily labour, Cultivation, Petty shop, Govt. Job.	1186 000	21563.63	42	13	6.4	0.49	44	Hen, Cow,
3	Jamasuli	31	84	83	167	46	40	86	Cultivation, Labour	6 93 000	22354.83	15	16	6.3	0.39	29	Hen, Cow, Goat, Bullock
4	Anua	32	65	72	137	36	29	65	Cultivation, Labour, Rope Maker (Sabai grass)	7 57 000	23656.25	28	04	1.5	0.37	26	Hen, Cow, Goat,
5	Mardarajpur	20	53	51	104	45	44	89	Cultivation, Labour	7 32 000	36600.00	14	06	2.2	0.36	20	Hen, Cow
6	Khuada	30	68	75	143	64	60	124	Daily labour, Masson, Cultivation, Govt. Job, Carpenter, Driving, Petty shop,	1072 000	35733.33	22	08	3.5	0.43	27	Hen, Goat
7	Jarakapada	20	50	48	98	47	32	79	Daily labour	465000	23250.00	20	00	00	00	20	Hen, Cow
Total		211	511	506	1017	346 (67.71)	298 (58.89)	644 (63.32)		55 35 000		158 (74.88)	53 (25.12)	22.5	0.42	186 (88.15)	

Annexure – II

District-wise Distribution of Population (1961-2011) of Patial, Patikar, PATRATANTI, Patua

SI No	Name of the Old & New district		Year					
			1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
1	Balasore	Balasore	8737	2519	3276	3517	3291	2324
2		Bhadrak	-	-	-	-	336	35
3	Bolangir	Bolangir	-	2	49	3566	105	64
4		Sonepur	-	-	-	-	969	1137
5	Cuttack	Cuttack	1689	174	1184	1562	707	152
6		Jagatsingpur	-	-	-	-	57	24
7		Jajpur	-	-	-	-	1033	400
8		Kendrapara	-	-	-	-	20	35
9	Dhenkanal	Dhenkanal	40	168	321	264	145	32
10		Anugul	-	-	-	-	93	16
11	Ganjam	Ganjam	188	84	664	385	508	1363
12		Gajapati	-	-	-	-	17	16
13	Kalahandi	Kalahandi	-	2	13	196	3	9
14		Nuapara	-	-	-	-	9	-
15	Keonjhar	Keonjhar	6865	3023	3106	4450	4625	3185
16	Koraput	Koraput	4	44	587	637	220	250
17		Malkangiri	-	-	-	-	143	121
18		Nowrangpur	-	-	-	-	46	87
19		Rayagada	-	-	-	-	62	29
20	Mayurbhanj	Mayurbhanj	26 094	16 626	23 305	28975	36 626	21 712
21	Phulbani	Kandhamal	488	43	79	279	10	33
22		Boudh	-	-	-	-	461	279
23	Puri	Puri	1	145	231	441	164	140
24		Khurdha	-	-	-	-	538	237
25		Nayagarh	-	-	-	-	24	-
26	Sambalpur	Sambalpur	46	-	851	3756	115	140
27		Baragarh	-	-	-	-	4601	4244
28		Deogarh	-	-	-	-	13	73
29		Jharsuguda	-	-	-	-	166	139
30	Sundergarh	Sundergarh	219	651	1129	1855	1935	737
	Total		44 371	23 481	34 795	49 883	57 042	37 013

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

Annexure – III

District-wise Distribution of Population (1961-2011) of PANTANTI

Sl. No.	Name of the Old & New District		YEAR					
			1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	Balasore	Balasore	1168	2882	838	1497	1373	2535
2		Bhadrak	-	-	-	-	94	72
3	Balangir	Balangir	306	59	38	13	15	27
4		Sonepur	-	-	-	-	7	10
5	Cuttack	Cuttack	611	2922	1584	2231	444	1743
6		Jagatsinghpur	-	-	-	-	10	311
7		Jajpur	-	-	-	-	521	937
8		Kendrapara	-	-	-	-	20	146
9	Dhenkanal	Dhenkanal	1173	1933	693	251	267	201
10		Anugul	-	-	-	-	71	268
11	Ganjam	Ganjam	273	415	143	466	149	784
12		Gajapati	-	-	-	-	3	5
13	Kalahandi	Kalahandi	25	142	13	19	27	35
14		Nuapara	-	-	-	-	4	2
15	Keonjhar	Keonjhar	3587	6195	3775	3007	5172	4321
16	Koraput	Koraput	611	868	573	342	350	1190
17		Malakangiri	-	-	-	-	21	266
18		Nowrangapur	-	-	-	-	79	147
19		Rayagada	-	-	-	-	195	22
20	Mayurbhanj	Mayurbhanj	8547	13 958	9024	5140	7967	12 013
21	Phulbani	Kandhamal	353	720	371	100	30	66
22		Boudh	-	-	-	-	19	7
23	Puri	Puri	675	1021	744	467	102	115
24		Khurda	-	-	-	-	177	1084
25		Nayagarh	-	-	-	-	104	60
26	Sambalpur	Sambalpur	5997	3008	1184	1544	356	288
27		Baragarh	-	-	-	-	36	59
28		Deogarh	-	-	-	-	190	14
29		Jharsuguda	-	-	-	-	292	232
30	Sundergarh	Sundergarh	9549	8890	8208	9135	6579	10 960
Total			32 875	43 013	27 210	24 212	24 674	37 920

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

Empirical Ethnic Status Study of Mali /Thanapati /Gandhamali community of Kalahandi, Bolangir, Jharsuguda, Bargarh and Subarnapur districts in Odisha.

Background

The Thanapati / Gandhamali / Mali community of Western Odisha filed a representation before Government of Odisha for their inclusion in the Scheduled Tribes (ST) list of Odisha. Considering their request, an empirical ethnic status study was conducted on these communities in two phases during 2018.

Coverage of the Study

The study has been carried out in 05 districts of Western Odisha namely Kalahandi, Bolangir, Jharsuguda, Bargarh and Subarnapur covering 26 villages under 20 Blocks. The details of the area covered under the study along with number of households, population and ethnic composition of studied villages and target community is given in Annexure -I.

In Annexure -II, the data on Gandhamali/Thanapati/ Mali Study Villages, Population, Households, Literacy & Economic Status has been presented.

Objective

To make an empirical ethnographic study on Thanapati / Gandhamali/ Mali community of Western Odisha so as to examine whether they possess the essential characteristic features to be eligible for the status of a Scheduled Tribe in Odisha.

Methodology

- Relevant information has been collected and analysed on ethnological features, socio cultural practices, life cycle rituals, mode of marriage and death ceremonies, religious life and inter-ethnic relationship etc. of Thanapati / Gandhamali/ Mali community of Western Odisha.
- For collection of empirical ethnographic data, tools like structured interview schedule, check lists as well as village census schedule have been used. Individual and key informants have been interviewed with the help of the tools. Group discussions along with household census have been undertaken in the study villages to extract relevant information.
- In course of the empirical study, the data collected from one or more than one study village(s) has been cross checked in other study village(s) to ascertain the reliability.
- References on Thanapati / Gandhamali/ Mali community of Western Odisha which has been consulted and cited in the report.

Study Findings

IDENTITY & NOMENCLATURE

The term 'Mali' is derived from the Sanskrit word 'Mala' meaning garland. Traditionally Mali is a functional caste of flower gardeners, garland makers and vegetable growers and employed as priests in Lord Siva temples in Western Odisha. They propitiate the Lord by adorning the statue of Lord Siva represented by His *Linga* (Phallus) with flowers, which the Brahman priests disdain to perform as they consider the procedure of the worship as derogatory. This is endorsed by reputed ethnographers as cited below.

According to Risley (Vol. II, 1891; 60), Mali, Malakar, a caste employed in making garlands and providing flowers for the service of Hindu temples...Like others of the higher castes the Malakars claim to have originally come from Mathura in the reign of Jahangir. They are few in number, but in every Hindu village there is atleast one representative, who provides daily offerings of flowers for the temples and marriage tiaras for the village maidens."

"With the village priests may be mentioned the Mali or gardener. The Malis now grow vegetables with irrigation or ordinary crops, but this was not apparently their original vocation. The name is derived from *mala*, a garland, and it would appear that the Mali was first employed to grow flowers for the garlands with which the gods and also their worshippers were adorned at religious ceremonies ... The Mali was thus a kind of assistant in the religious life of the village, and he is still sometimes placed in charge of the village shrines and is employed as temple servant in Jain temples. ... on account of the purity and sanctity of his occupation Brahmans would take water from him." (Russell & Hiralal: 1916, Vol.-1, pp. 54-55)

"Mali, Marar, Maral -The functional caste of vegetable and flower-gardeners ... the derivation of Mali from *mala*, a garland, makes it a plausible hypothesis that the calling of the first Malis was to grow flowers for the adornment of the gods, and especially for making the garlands with which their images were and still are decorated. Thus the Malis were intimately connected with the gods and naturally became priests of the village temples, in which capacity they are often employed ... To Hindus of all ranks, including even the Brahmans, he acts as a priest of Mahadeo (Lord Shiva) in places where no Gosain is to be found, and lays the flower offerings on the *lingam* by which the deity is symbolized." (Ibid: 1916, Vol.4, pp. 159,162)

As stated by K. S. Singh (People of India, Vol. V), "The word mali is derived from the Sanskrit word mala, meaning garland. According to Risley (p.1891), the Mali trace their descent from a garland-maker of Raja Kans at Mathura. He states that according to a legend once Krishna asked the garland-maker to provide a garland for himself, 'on being told to fasten it with a string', he, for want of any other, took off his Brahmanical cord and tied it, on which Krishna most ungenerously rebuked him for his simplicity in parting with it, and announced that in future he would be ranked among the Sudras. (p 2151) ... The Mali in Orissa have synonyms like Phulia, Sagbaria, Gandha and Rathor... Social divisions exist at the gotra level. They have gotras such as Nageswar and Kashyap which help regulate marriage alliances and indicate one's ancestry. They use surnames like Pakuri and Makuri." (p. 2153)

The Gandhamali / Thanapati are an endogamous section of Mali community. They are numerically a very small and minor community thinly dispersed in Kalahandi, Bolangir, Jharsuguda, Baragarh, Boudh and Subarnapur districts of Odisha.

This is endorsed by K. S. Singh (People of India, Vol. VI., P. 3487) wrote, "Thanapati constitute a section of the Mali caste. "the Thanapati were earlier known as Gandhamali... They are distributed in the Boudh, Sambalpur, Kalahandi and Dhenkanal ares of Orissa."

ORIGIN AND MIGRATION

Thanapati are also known as Gandhamali. Ethnographers like K. S. Singh (People of India, Vol. VI., P. 3487) believed that they were early settlers of Chorda village of Sonepur area from where they have migrated to Kagaon area of Bolangir district during the reign of Ramchandra Deo-II in the year 1765 and from there they have migrated to the neighbouring areas of Boudh and undivided Sambalpur, Kalahandi and Dhenkanal districts.

SOCIAL DIVISIONS

The Mali community is divided into a number of endogamous groups such as Gandhamali / Thanapati, Phulmali, Kosalia Mali, Sagabika Mali and Pondra Mali etc. which are further divided into various totemistic exogamous divisions and *barags* as follows.

Subgroups and clans:

The Thanapati / Gandhamali section is divided into various *barags/banshas* such as *Badamali, Guru, Gountia, Beheramali, Dheheri, Barik, Bhoga, Jhakar, Ghumur, Bania, Balduria, Saria, Choudhry, Angiras, Somarath, Patel, Bhukta, Beheria, Thakur and Pande* etc. which are further subdivided into various totemistic clans (*gotras*) like *Nagashwar*, (cobra), *Kachhap*, (tortoise), *Kashyap* (an ancient saint), *Baraha* (wild Pig), etc. They use *Thanapati, Gandhamali, Mali, Mahapatra, Deheri, Pudiamali, Mohanaik, Gountia, Badamali, Guru, Deheri, Beheramali, Behera, Barik and Naik* etc. as their surname. Some of them also use their *barag* name as surname to glorify their identity.

LANGUAGE

The community Thanapati / Gandhamali / Mali speak the Indo-Aryan language Odia which is inter related both genetically and structurally with Western Odia (Sambalpuri) as their mother tongue and use its script for intra and intergroup communication. Some of them are well conversant in Hindi and speak it for intergroup communication.

PERSONAL APPEARANCE

There is no exclusiveness in their dress pattern that completely resembles with that of their neighbouring castes. The male members traditionally wear cotton loin cloth (*dhoti*) with a napkin (*gamucha*) on their shoulder. Women wear cotton *saree* with undergarments -*saya* and blouse. Little children below seven years of age usually go naked.

Females are very much fond of adorning themselves with ornaments to look beautiful. They wear *guna, kanphula* and *ganthia* on their ear lobes, and *phasia* in their ear helix, *notha* in their nose septum and *dandi* in their nose helix which are made of gold. The other ornaments they use are *panlamali, gunjumali* and various types of coloured bead necklaces around their neck, *khadu* and glass bangles on their wrists, armllets (*tad*) on

their arms, *paunji* and *bala* on their ankles and toe rings (*jhuntia*) on their leg fingers. Tattooing is an old trend of beautification and the females of the community have the tradition to have beautiful emblem of tattoo marks (*god/chita*) such as stars, moon, sun, ladder, dots, creeper and flowers etc. on their legs, hands and breast etc. done by Ghogia women in exchange of grains.

The male members of the community have the tradition of wearing sacred threads on their shoulder. They observe sacred thread wearing ceremony (*Bodu*) when a boy attains twelve years of age. As performance of sacred thread ceremony is very expensive, poor families usually hold the ceremony at the time of marriage ritual as it is an important tradition and one cannot get married unless he has not gone through the *Bodu* rite.

HABITAT, SETTLEMENT AND HOUSING

The community Thanapati/ Gandhamali/ Mali dwell in multiethnic settlements located in plain areas of Kalahandi, Balangir, Jharsuguda, Baragarh and Sambalpur districts in Odisha inhabited by various ethnic groups such as *Brahman, Kshyatriya, Khandayat, Karana, Bairagi, Chasa, Kultha, Marwadi, Gouda, Dumal, Bhandari, Bania/Sunari, Kansari, Kosta, Lohra, Keuta, Kumbhar, Gond, Mirdha, Munda, Shabar, Kandha, Bhuyan, Bhumij, Kuda, Binjhal, Kharia, Sahara, Banjara, Teli, Sundhi, Kalar, Bhulia (Meher), Dhoba/Dhobi, Chamar, Dom, Ganda, Ghasi, Pap* etc.

As a clean caste community they prefer to construct their house close to or near the houses of caste Hindus such as Brahman, Khandayat and Gouda or Dumal. Individual houses are arranged in linear pattern keeping wide space in between as the village street. Their houses are either straw thatched or roofed with country tiles namely *jhikar* or *naria* tiles. Some among them have GCI or asbestos roofs. These are made of mud walls polished with red or white clay having front and rear verandah. Houses usually have two rooms with windows to provide ventilation and light.

LIFE CYCLE

I) Pregnancy

The Thanapati /Gandhamali/ Mali community observes pre-delivery ritual *sadali* after seven months of pregnancy in which the pregnant woman is presented with delicious foods and sweetmeats according to her choice, first from her parents family and latter followed by her husband's family and kins.

The pregnant woman is subjected to certain prohibitions for her and her foetus's wellbeing such as exposure during solar and lunar eclipses, touching the corpse, going alone in dark night or to the cremation ground, sleep alone, wear black saree or black dresses, eat the flesh of the ritually scarified animals, brinjal, ladies finger and root vegetables and visit Shiva temple and shrines of goddesses - specifically goddess *Durga, Chandi* or *Kali* etc.

II) Child Birth

They engage an experienced midwife (*dhaimaa*) of their own community for attending the parturient woman to facilitate easy and safe delivery of the child. The naval cord is cut off using a broken earthen splinter (*khappar*) or a new razor blade and the placenta is

disposed of in the corner of the living in chamber, placing it in a new earthen pot covered with a lid or within the cow dung in the compost pit. The new born baby is given a bath in tepid water anointed with till oil mixed with rice husk and *ragi* or gram powder and then given honey to lick. The baby is given light massage in warm hands anointed with till oil. Birth pollution continues for twenty one days and during the pollution period visiting sacred shrines, worshipping the deities, giving alms to beggars, participating in social functions and observing the rituals and festivals are tabooed.

They observe the first purificatory rite *Sathi* on the sixth day of birth. The mother and the new born baby take ceremonial bath and the washer man (*dhoba*) takes the polluted clothes of the mother for washing. The house is cleaned and polished with cow dung paste. The lineage members cut their hair and shave the beards that are done by the barber, wash their clothes and take bath.

They observe the second purificatory rite called *barapatri* on twelfth day of birth or after falling of the naval stump. Up to this time the family is prohibited to cook food for them and the lineage members provide them their meals.

The final purificatory rite called *ekosia* is observed on the twenty first day. Some families distribute sweets among children and well-to-do families host a non-vegetarian feast to lineage families on this occasion. Their traditional astrologer (*ganak*) prepares a horoscope for the new born forecasting the future of the baby. On this day they observe the name giving ceremony and the new born is given a name preferably, the name of their ancestor by adopting the rice divination method. They observe the first rice feeding ceremony (*bhat khuan*) when the baby attains one year of age and tonsure ceremony (*mundane*) when the baby is more than three years old.

Some well-to-do families observe *Satyanarayan Puja* conducted by Brahman Priest. They conduct the first feeding ceremony in Siva temple and the child is given first feeding of *bhoga* of Lord Siva as he is destined to be a worshipper of the Lord in his future.

III) Puberty rite

The community has no tradition of observing puberty rite for adolescent girls on attainment of their first menarche.

IV) Marriage

In Thanapati / Gandhamali / Mali community, adult marriage and monogamy is the norm. But polygyny occurs in rare cases when the first wife is found to be barren or physically or mentally incapacitated. The community is divided into various exogamous *barags* or *banshas* which are further divided into many exogamous clans (*gotras*). Therefore marriage within the same *barag* and same clan is strictly tabooed.

They consider marriage arranged through proper negotiation as an ideal and prestigious mode of acquiring a life partner. They engage a mediator (*dandia*) to carry forward the marriage proposal. In their society, the groom's party first visits the bride's residence to put forth the marriage proposal. They take with them some fruits and sweet meats and present it to brides' parents. If the latter is satisfied then they communicate their consent to the bride's parents through the *dandia* asking for invitation from the boy's side to come

to their residence to select the groom. Both the parties exchange several visits before the finalization of the proposal. When the bride's parents are satisfied with proposal then they express their consent for the matrimony after which the betrothal (*mangni*) rite is performed at the bride's residence. Some also perform *pindhani* rite during negotiation by offering a golden ring to the bride. Those who do not perform this rite during negotiation hold it during performance of marriage ceremony. The groom's father consults their astrologer (*ganak*) to fix the marriage date according to Hindu almanac and after that he communicates the marriage date to bride's parents.

On the wedding day the groom, accompanied by his parents, relatives and lineage members proceeds to the bride's residence in a marriage procession where the marriage rites are conducted by a Brahman priest. The wedding rites include items like *gododhua*, *galseka*, *homa*, *hataganthi*, *satapheri*, *pindhani*, *sindurdan*, and concluded with *bandapana*. The bride's family entertains the marriage party with a sumptuous vegetarian wedding feast. After that the newlywed couple returns to the groom's residence and on that very night the marriage is consummated. The couple visits bride's father's residence (*leutani*) on the third day or on any convenient day after marriage but returns to the groom's home on the same day.

The other modes of marriage prevalent in their society are by service (*gharjoian*), by exchange (*badal*) and by mutual consent (*rajikhusi*) etc. Cross-cousin marriage is permitted but parallel cousin marriage is strictly tabooed. Junior sororate (*sali biha*), junior levirate (*diar biha*) and remarriage of widows and widowers (*ditia biha*) and divorcees (*chhadra chadri biha*) are allowed in their society. Payment of dowry is not prevalent among them but the bride's parent can give some presentation to their daughter according to their financial status for use in her family life.

V. Divorce

In their society divorce is socially permitted and either party can divorce his/her spouse on the grounds of maladjustment in conjugal life, cruelty, misbehavior, extramarital relationship, adultery, impotency, barrenness, frigidity, suffering from incurable disease, mental or physical disorder for either of the couple. Divorce seeking partner has to obtain prior permission of his/her respective village level community council (*gudilgadhi*). The council settles the matter. Divorce is permitted if the couple has completed minimum two years of conjugal life. If the husband divorces his wife without sufficient grounds, the wife may claim compensations for her maintenance. The husband keeps the children after the divorce but the mother can keep the breastfeeding child for nourishment.

VI. Death:

Thanapati / Gandhamali / Mali community previously practiced burial to dispose of their dead. The dead bodies of pregnant woman and small children are also buried. At present they practice both burial and cremation. They have their separate crematoria for their community. The death news is communicated to lineage members and relatives soon by a special messenger and after receiving the news they congregate in the house of the deceased to take part in the funeral. The pall bearers make a bier by using the used cot - upside down- of the dead. They place the corpse on the reverse side of the cot and carry

it to crematoria for disposal followed by the lineage members and females. The pall bearers stop at the outskirts of the village and all the mourners return from there.

For burial, the pall bearers dig a pit in the burial ground and for cremation they arrange logs for pyre. They revolve the dead seven times around the pit or pyre and finally place the dead on it keeping the head towards north and face up wards. The eldest son throws first handful of earth on the pit in case of burial or for cremation he puts fire on the pyre. After the burial or cremation is over all of them take bath and return. After returning to the home the eldest son takes another bath for purification. All of them purify themselves by smokes of burning *neem* leaves and resin.

Death pollution lasts for eleven days. During the pollution period, relishing on non-vegetarian dishes, use of oil, ghee, curd etc. giving alms to beggars are tabooed.

On the third day, they observe the *telpani* rite. After observing this rite they are allowed to use oil in preparation of their food. The purificatory rite *dasa* is observed on the tenth day near a pond or stream where the lineage members cut their hair and shave their beard by a barber. The female member's pair their nails and throw their used clothes and wear new clothes provided by the bereaved family. All their houses and utensils are cleaned and used earthen vessels are thrown away. They observe final purificatory rite *Gangabhoji* on eleventh day and the bereaved family hosts a non-vegetarian feast to all the lineage members and guests. The eldest son conducts the mortuary rites.

VII. LIVELIHOOD

Priest hood in local Lord Siva temples is the traditional occupation of Thanapati/ Gandhamali /Mali community and the income derived from this profession is the mainstay of their economy. It is supplemented by allied pursuits like flower gardening and garland making, cultivation, wage earning, livestock rearing and petty business etc. They produce paddy, *ragi*, maize, *arhar* (*Kandula*) and varieties of seasonal vegetables. They rear cow, goat, sheep but not pigs as they consider it polluting.

The socio-economic status of surveyed Thanapati / Gandhamali / Mali households are presented below. (Ref. *Annexure - II*)

- No. of land owning households are 568/778 (73.01%).
- Average size of land holdings per land owning households- 1.66 Acs.
- Average annual income per household in Rs. 42 263.23.

Food and Drinks

Thanapati/ Gandhamali/ Mali are non-vegetarians. Rice and *ragi* are their staple cereals. They relish on fish, dry fish and mutton but do not take chicken, beef or pork as they consider it as unclean food. Intake of alcohol drinks is strictly prohibited in their society. They smoke *bidi* and chew tobacco paste.

VIII. RELIGIOUS LIFE

As a caste Hindu community they profess Hindusim. They worship all Hindu Gods and observe all Hindu rituals and festivals. Lord Siva and his consort Goddess *Parbati* are their

principal deities. Besides, their pantheon includes Lord *Jagannath*, *Rameswar*, *Krishna*, *Balagopal*, *Ganesh*, *Hanuman*, and *Mangala*, *Samalei*, *Ramachandi*, *Laxmi* & *Saraswati*, etc.

Sivaratri is their major festival. Besides, they also observe Hindu festivals namely *Ganesh Chaturthi*, *Rathayatra*, *Raja*, *Gamha (Jhullana Purnima)*, *Sabitri Amabasya*, *Chaita punia*, *Akhitritya*, *Makar Sankranti*, *Laxmipuja*, *Janmastami*, *Dola*, *Holi*, *Saraswati Puja*, *Mahalaya*, *Diwali*, *Nuakhai*, *Kumar Purnima*, *Dasera*, *Bhai Juintia* and *Rasa Purnima* etc. With great reverence they observe *Namajagyan* and *Astaprahari* in their villages in the month of *Chaitra*.

Their community priest *Jhakar* worships their village deity *Mangala* and Brahman priest worship their other deities and conduct their life cycle and other rituals.

IX. SOCIO POLITICAL LIFE

The Thanapati / Gandhamali/ Mali community have their respective traditional community councils called *Jati Ganga* or *Jati Samaj* at the apex level headed by a *Sabhapati*. At the regional level they have inter village councils such as *Gadi* or *Gudi* covering different groups of villages each headed by a *Anchal Adhikari* or *Sampadak*. All the office bearers hold their office by election for a term of five years.

These councils adjudicate cases of their society under their respective jurisdictions pertaining to family disputes, intra and inter village rifts, theft, rape, adultery, divorce, inter community or intra clan marriages and violation of their customary rules and delivers verdict unanimously which is regarded as final. The disobedience of the verdict is treated as a serious offence and the offender may be awarded punishment to the extent of expulsion from the community. The councils possess the authority to readmit the offender into community after due penance. Likewise events like *gobadha*, *machhiapatak* and imprisonment are regarded as serious unclean incidents and the affected incumbents are out casted and can be readmitted after due purification. These councils also conduct and organize village level rituals and festivals.

The sessions of these councils sit annually at the time of Chaita Punia and also as and when so required or at time of emergency. The cases which cannot be resolved by the regional councils are referred to the apex council

X. SOCIAL POSITION (DESCENDING ORDER) & INTER COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIP

1. Brahman
2. Kshyatriya
3. Karan
4. Khandayat
5. Bairagi
6. **Mali /Thanapati/ Gandhamali**
7. Chasa
8. Kulta
9. Marwadi
10. Gouda
11. Gudia

12. Teli
13. Dumal
14. Bania/Sunari
15. Bhandari/ Barik
16. Kansari
17. Kosta
18. Lohra
19. Tior
20. Keuta (SC)
21. Kumbhar
22. Kalar
23. Sundhi
24. Gond (ST)
25. Mirdha (ST) / Kuda (ST)
26. Munda (ST)
27. Shabar/Sahara (ST)
28. Kandha (ST)
29. Bhuyan (ST)
30. Bhumij (ST)
31. Binjhal (ST)
32. Kharia (ST)
33. Banjara (ST)
34. Bhulia (Meher)
35. Pap (SC)
36. Dhoba/Dhobi (SC)
37. Chamar (SC)
38. Dom (SC)
39. Ganda (SC)
40. Ghasi (SC)

- It is evident from the regional inter community hierarchy that Thanapati / Gandhamali / Mali community is placed in a higher position, just below the higher castes such as *Brahman, Kshyatriya, Karan, Khandyat, Bairagi* and above all the remaining communities inhabiting their localities.
- In multi ethnic settlements they dwell among the caste Hindus such as *Brahman, Kshyatriya, Karan, Khandayat* and *Bairagi* and the walls of their house and roofs are adjacent to each other as they are treated as a higher clean caste.
- Because of their higher caste status they do not suffer from the stigma of untouchability and hence do not face any social disability in multi caste settlements.
- Being priests of Lord Siva temples they possess free access to village temples, water sources, village shops, tea stalls and share with the higher castes the common pendal during village meetings and functions. As a distinct higher caste they possess their

own crematoria and no other community can share that. They are entitled to avail the traditional *Jajmani* services of Brahman, Barber and Washer man of their locality.

- Being a high ranked priestly community they maintain social distance from the lower ranking castes and more particularly from the Scheduled Castes. Therefore, they do not accept water and cooked food from them and do not allow house entry to them. They accept cooked food and water from Brahmans only. Except the Brahman, all the communities in the locality accept water and cooked food from them.

XI. LITERACY

In our 26 study villages, the total literacy rate of Thanapati/ Gandhamali /Mali community is 76.51 %. Gender wise it is 77.51 % and 75.37 % for males and females respectively. This is higher than the corresponding figures of total ST population of the State that is 52.24 % (total), 63.7 % (males) and 41.2 % (females) respectively as per 2011 Census.

XII. CONCLUSION

- Taking into account the facts and findings presented above it is very clearly evident that socio-culturally the Thanapati, Gandhamali and Mali community enjoy the social status of a higher caste community.
- In the local social hierarchy they are placed in a higher position just below the higher castes like Brahman, Kshyatriya, Karana, Khandayat and above the other *jala chala* (water acceptable) castes and *jala achala* (water not acceptable) castes / communities including Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.
- Traditionally, they serve as priests of the local Shiva temple and so wear sacred threads.
- As such they do not possess distinctive tribal traits and are distinguished from the tribal communities by their exclusive socio-cultural characteristics of a higher caste.

Therefore, it is recommended that the Thanapati/ Gandhamali /Mali community does not deserve to be included in the Scheduled Tribes list of Odisha as a separate entry.

**Advisor-cum-Director &
Special Secretary**

Empirical Ethnographic Study on the Social Status of **KALANDI / KALINDI/ KALANDI KULA / KALINDI KULA** Community of Balasore and Bhadrak districts of Odisha

Background

- In the year 2002-03 a study was conducted by SCSTRTI on the ethnic status of **KUDUMA, KODAMA, KODMA, KALANDI, KALINDI, KALANDI BAISHNAB, KALINDI BAISHNAB, KANDRA BAISHNAB, and KANDARA BAISHNAB** in five villages of **Jaleswar, Bhogarai and Basta** block areas of **Baleswar** district
- The study villages were multi ethnic in composition in which the above cited community were being treated as an untouchable caste more or less and therefore occupied a very low position in the local social hierarchy.
- The report further cited that the name **KALANDI** or **KALINIDI** is also associated with the mythology of **Lord Srikrishna**. The child Lord was living in Gopapura – the kingdom of the cow herders. There was a great holy lake in the said kingdom named **Kalandi Hrada**. The people living around the lake and their descendants were named after it. A section of the community who became ardent devotees of the child **Lord Srikrishna (Bal Gopal)** and later were initiated into the cult of Vaishnavism were called **KALANDI / KALINDI BAISHNAB or KALANDI KULA BAISHNAB** meaning the Vaishnavites whose ancestors lived on the banks of **Kalandi** lake .They are also called **Kandara Baishnab** and **Kuduma Baishnab** in different localities and entered as such in the revenue records as these names are synonymous and thus refer to one and the same community, notified as **KANDRA / KANDARA** in the SC list of the State.
- Explaining the interrelationship between these above cited castes the report states that “the names and phonetic variations of the names of the studied community i.e. **KUDUMA, KUDMA, KUDAMA, KODMA, KODOMA, KODAMA, KADMA, KADAMA, KUDUMA, KODUMA, KALANDI, KALINDI, KALANDI BAISHNAB, KALINDI BAISHNAB, KUDUMA BAISHNAB, KANDRA BAISHNAB, KALANDI KULA BAISHNAB** (henceforth to be referred as “the community” in this report) are found to be synonymous with the notified S.C. community **KANDRA / KANDARA**
- Elucidating the ethnographic account of the community the report concluded that **KUDUMA / KODMA/ KODAMA / KALANDI / KALANDI BAISHNAB / KALINDI BAISHNAB / KANDRA BAISHNAB / KANDARA BAISHNAB** who are found to be synonymous with the notified S.C. community **KANDRA / KANDARA**, as they have the same socio-cultural and economic features, may be considered for inclusion as synonyms of **KANDRA, KANDARA** at Sl.42 in the S.C. list of Orissa.
- The report further added that “the other synonyms such as **KADAMA** and **KALINDI** may also be considered for inclusion with the above cited synonyms in the S.C. list at Sl.42.
- Thereafter, a proposal was placed before the state government to include **KUDUMA, KODMA, KODAMA, KALANDI, KALANDI BAISHNAB, KALINDI BAISHNAB, KANDRA BAISHNAB, KANDARA BAISHNAB** as synonyms of **KANDRA, KANDARA** at Sl.No.42 in the list of Scheduled Castes of Orissa. As mentioned in the said report, as per alphabetical list of communities prepared by ST&SC development department. **KADAMA** and **KALINDI** have also been recommended earlier for inclusion in the SC list as synonyms of **KANDRA, KANDARA** at Sl.42.

- In the meantime, **KADAMA** and **KUDUMA** have been included in the **SC list of Odisha as synonym of Kandara at Sl. 42 vide the amendment made by Govt. of India in 2007 leaving aside the other synonyms including KALANDI/KALINDI etc.**

Present Study

- The members of the Scheduled Caste (SC) communities enjoy a special constitutional status that entitle them to several benefits of protection, promotion, welfare and development brought about by a host of legislation, policies and programmes in matters of education, employment, public representation, socio-economic discrimination and exploitation etc. This has led to a situation where in a number of deserving communities who have not found place in these lists have been clamouring for the status of the Scheduled Castes.
- The situation is complex. The task is not so easy to determine if a particular community qualifies for the status of a Scheduled Caste because the Constitution has neither given any definition nor prescribed any criteria for identification of SCs except that a Scheduled Caste should belong to Hindu, Boudha, Jain or Sikh religion only. Considering the situation, the Govt. of India have laid that for SC status the sole criteria is persistence of the stigma of untouchability with accompanying socio-economic disabilities.

Objective:

- Thus, the objective of the study is to examine whether the **KALANDI KULA / KALANDI / KALINDI** community deserves the status of SC as synonym of the notified community **KANDARA / KUDUMA** with reference to the above criteria

Methodology:

- The task has been accomplished by undertaking empirical ethnographic study for gathering and analyzing relevant information on ethnological traits, socio cultural practices, deity, rituals, customs, mode of marriage, death ceremonies, method of burial of dead bodies etc. of the target community.
- For collection of empirical data, tools like structured interview guide, checklists as well as village schedule have been used. By administering the tools, individual and key informants have been interviewed and group discussions, held and household census have been made in the selected study villages to elicit relevant information.
- In course of the empirical study, the data collected from one or more than one study village(s) has been cross checked in other study village(s) to ascertain its reliability.
- Data from the secondary sources / references has also been consulted and analysed with the empirical data for drafting the report and arriving at the conclusion regarding the eligibility of the target community for SC status as synonym of the notified community **KANDARA / KUDUMA**

Population of Kandara (SC) Community in Odisha (from census 1961- 2011):

Since **KALANDI / KALINDI / KALANDI KULA** has not yet been recognised as a SC but it is a fact that it is a synonym of the notified community **KANDARA / KUDUMA**. The district wise distribution of Kandara population as per census from 1961- 2011 is given in the following statement.

Sl. No.	Name of the Old & New District		YEAR					
			1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	Balasore	Balasore	50100	53650	70041	90413	79037	99849
2		Bhadrak	-	-	-	-	31343	35821
3	Balangir	Balangir	41	267	69	486	353	341
4		Sonepur	-	-	-	-	257	354
5	Cuttack	Cuttack	128781	157204	196414	241609	50701	57083
6		Jagatsinghpur	-	-	-	-	46159	49888
7		Jajpur	-	-	-	-	62850	69677
8		Kendrapara	-	-	-	-	114660	129116
9	Dhenkanal	Dhenkanal	154	111	79	378	55	60
10		Anugul	-	-	-	-	360	304
11	Ganjam	Ganjam	4507	5705	7470	32158	12447	13852
12		Gajapati	-	-	-	-	1226	1045
13	Kalahandi	Kalahandi	475	309	567	605	610	779
14		Nuapara	-	-	-	-	107	34
15	Keonjhar	Keonjhar	108	202	171	390	271	427
16	Koraput	Koraput	1067	1121	1712	2583	1133	1346
17		Malakangiri	-	-	-	-	611	514
18		Nowrangapur	-	-	-	-	433	394
19		Rayagada	-	-	-	-	1658	1894
20	Mayurbhanj	Mayurbhanj	802	766	913	1202	1467	1754
21	Phulbani	Kandhamal	55	272	33	122	187	512
22		Boudh	-	-	-	-	57	5
23	Puri	Puri	25537	29994	37474	45206	35115	40543
24		Khurda	-	-	-	-	13558	14438
25		Nayagarh	-	-	-	-	5272	5647
26	Sambalpur	Sambalpur	308	610	748	1434	359	373
27		Baragarh	-	-	-	-	1181	1198
28		Deogarh	-	-	-	-	14	18
29		Jharsuguda	-	-	-	-	387	398
30	Sundergarh	Sundergarh	104	169	673	552	1900	2053
Total			212039	248380	316367	417138	463768	529717

Study Findings

Study Villages, Location, Ethnic Composition, KALANDI/KALANDI KULA Households & Population

District	Block	Study Villages	Ethnic Composition	No. of Kalandi Households	Kalandi Population
1. Bhadrak	1. Basudebpur	1. Sudarsanpur	Brahman, Khandayat, Teli, Kumbhara, Gauda, Tanti, Kamara, Barika, Dhoba, Baishnaba, Kalandi, Gokha, Kandara, Pano, Mahuria	18	75
		2. Iram	Brahman, Karana Khandayat, Teli, Gudia, Gauda, Paduhan, Bachada, Radhi, Keuta (Majhi), Dhoba, Kalandi, Kandara	15	50
2. Balasore	2. Simulia	1. Biranchipur	Kalandi	14	50
		2. Kalaspur	Brahman, Khandayat, Banika, Gopala, Tanti, Chamara,	14	65

			Kalandi, Pano, Santal		
3. Remuna	1. Athantara		Brahman, Gola, Gauda, Keuta, Tanti, Barika, Kalandi Kandara,	20	68
			Baishnaba, Kalandi, Kandara	100	410
			Radhi, Kalandi, Kandara, Pano	5	22
4 Basta	1. Bhagi Chakurai		Brahman, Raju, Gola, Radhi, Keuta, Dhoba, Baishnaba, Kalandi, Kandara, Pano, Santal	22	90
	2. Basu Chakurai		Brahman, Kumbhar, Gauda, Keuta	7	29
5 Bhogarai	1. Kaurda		Karana, Raju, Kalandi, Kandara, Hadi, Dama	35	140
	2. Tengeramari		Brahman, Karana, Gola, Kurunga, Tanti, Dhoba, Baishnaba, Kalandi, Hadi	40	157
02	05	11		290	1156

From among the above 11 study villages, 06 villages were taken as main villages for collection of ethnographic data on different socio-cultural aspects of the Kalandi community and in the remaining 05 villages the data was cross checked. Hence, the data relating to occupation, income pattern, land holding and literacy status of the Kalandis was collected from these six main villages only viz. Kalaspur, Biranchipur, Sudarsanpur, Iram, Mandarpur and Tengeramari.

Literacy;

Details given in **Annexure-I** as per which the level of total literacy of Kalandis in the 06 main study villages is 83.39 %. For males it is 87.15 % and for females, 79.51 %.

Socio-Cultural Aspects	Northern Orissa (Balasore and Bhadrak districts)	References	Remarks
1	2	3	4
1. Nomenclature (Name of the Community)			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As they identify themselves As others call them As Recorded in Govt Records (RORs, etc.) 	Kalandi / Kalandi Kula Kalandi Kandara Kula/ Kalandi/ Kalandi Kula / Kandara/ Kudma	Writing on KALANDI VAISHNAB, (the Vaishnavite section of Kalandi) Singh reported that "Some express the view that Kalandi is a synonym of Kondara, a community of Orissa, but this is not widely accepted" (Singh K.S, 1998) According the earlier ethnic status report of SCSTRTI (2002) as cited above, "The name KALANDI or KALINDI is also associated with the mythology of Lord Srikrishna . The Child Lord was living in Gopapur – the kingdom of the cow herders. There was a great holy lake in the said kingdom named Kalandi Hrada . The people living around the lake and their descendants were named after it. A section of the community who became ardent devotees of the child Lord Srikrishna (Bal Gopal) and later were initiated into the cult of Vaishnavism were called KALANDI /	As per the present study it is confirmed that the same community is referred as Kalandi, Kalandi Kula, Kandara and Kudma at different points of time in different regions which have been recorded in their land records.

		<p>KALINDI BAISHNAB or KALANDI KULA BAISHNAB meaning the Vaishnavites whose ancestors lived on the banks of Kalandi lake. They are also called Kandara Baishnab and Kuduma Baishnab in different localities and entered as such in the revenue records as these names are synonymous and thus refer to one and the same community, notified as KANDRA/KANDARA in the SC list of the state”.</p>	
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2. Etymological meaning of the Name

- According to the present study findings, ‘Kalandi’ refers to a mythological place associated with the God Srikrishna and ‘Kula’ refers to ancestry or the Clan
- Regarding the meaning of the term Kalandi, members of the community explained that the term came into use on account of their place of original habitation which is said to be on the banks of Kalandi lake, the mythical birth place of Srikrishna, the Hindu God. Relating their caste to this origin they derive pride from the glorious history.
- The famous Odia lexicon (Dictionary), *Purna Chandra Odia Bhasha Kosha* (vol. II) endorses this view. According to it “KALANDI” or “KALINDI” means the River “KALINDI” or River “JAMUNA” (p. 1552) or “those who frequent the banks of the River JAMUNA” (p. 1560).
- They are of the view that in the past, a generation from their fraternity felt that use of the term “Kandara” is demeaning, lowly and attached with social stigma. To rid their caste of from this demeaning and lowly caste name, Kandara has been replaced with Kalandi.

3. Origin & Migration

Socio-Cultural Aspects	Northern Orissa (Balasore and Bhadrak district)	References	Remarks
1	2	3	4
	<p>Mythological origin given in Para 1 (Nomenclature)</p> <p>Further, on their origin and migration history, they are of the view that they are residing in the present localities since many generations beyond memory. Some others are of the opinion that they have migrated from the neighbouring Bengal and Mayurbhanj district since many generations.</p>		<p>Except the mythological origin, their origin is obscure and there is no reliable information on their migration history.</p>

4. Social Divisions

2	3	4
They are a single homogenous community having no social divisions		They are a single homogenous community having no social divisions

5. Surnames

2	3	4
Use of one surname ‘Das’ is in vogue	Writing on Kalandi Vaishnab, Singh maintained that “They all use Dasa as their surname.” (Singh, K.S, 1998)	Use of one surname Das is in vogue .

6. Clans / Septs		
Northern Orissa (Balasore and Bhadrak districts)	References	Remarks
2	3	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All of them belong to a single gotra, <i>nageswar</i> The Baishnavite section among them belong to either <i>Achyuta gotra</i> or <i>Kasyapa gotra</i> and are considered descendants of the great sages. 	<p>On the clan of Kandaras Singh reported that "Their gotra is Nagasa....." (Singh, K.S,1995)</p> <p>Writing on the clans of Kalandi Vaishnab, Singh reported "This endogamous community is divided into a number of clans (gotra), like Nagasya or Nagaswa and Bharadwaj". (Singh, K.S.,1998)</p>	<p>Members of the Kalandi caste belong to single gotra viz. <i>nageswar</i></p> <p>The Baishnavite section among them possibly borrowed the clan names such as Achyuta, Kasyap and Bharadwaj from the Brahmins</p>

7. Language		
2	3	4
Their language is Odia. Their manner of speaking was once different from that of other communities in the neighbourhood. Nowadays, they speak Odia similar to that of other neighbouring communities	"They speak the Indo-Aryan language, Oriya and use the Oriya script for inter and intra group communication" (Singh, K.S,1995)	They speak Odia language

8. Personal Appearance		
2	3	4
<p>In the past males used to wear loin cloth made of coarse cotton while women used to wear saree made of course cotton. Nowadays, male youths are wearing trousers and shirts and elderly people are wearing <i>lungi</i> or <i>dhoti</i>.</p> <p>Use of ornaments by the female folk is rare for their lower economic status. Girls are seen using cheap jewellery (ear rings, nose rings etc.) made of cheap metals available in the local hat.</p> <p>Males who are Baishnavites are often seen wearing a sacred thread around their trunk though it is not mandatory for them.</p>		<p>No peculiarity is observed among them regarding dress, ornaments, hair style, tattooing etc. to distinguish them from their neighbours</p>

9. Pattern of Settlement & Housing		
2	3	4
<p>They live in multi caste villages and occupy a separate hamlet located a little away from the wards of higher castes. The upper castes look down upon them as lowly, impure and unclean and hence, do not visit their hamlet.</p> <p>Their houses are mud walled and straw thatched. Nowadays, some of them have <i>pucca</i> houses under Indira Awas Yojana.</p>	<p>On Kalandi Vaishnabs Singh observed "The majority of them live in separate hamlets but share public places with others" (Singh, K.S, 1998)</p>	<p>Kalandis live in separate hamlets (<i>sahi</i>) at a distance from the hamlet of upper castes of the village as the latter maintain social distance from them considering them to be impure and unclean caste.</p> <p>As beneficiaries of Indira Awas Yojana and Biju Pucca ghar Yojana, most of them have now <i>pucca</i> houses in place of straw thatched, mud walled houses of the past.</p>

10. Life Cycle			
Socio-Cultural Aspects	Northern Orissa (Balasore and Bhadrak district)	References	Remarks
1	2	3	4
ii) Child Birth	<p>As in any other caste, male child is preferred to female child in Kalandi family.</p> <p>During birth of a child the pollution period lasts for 10 days. After seven days the mother takes a bath which is called <i>uthiari</i>. After the 9th day the purificatory rite is called <i>narta</i> after which the mother is considered free from pollution. On the tenth day the ritual fire is extinguished which is called <i>entudi utha</i>. On the same day a purificatory rite is observed by cleaning and besmearing the house and washing of the clothes.</p> <p>The twenty first day of the child birth is celebrated as <i>ekoisia</i> and the <i>nahaka</i> (astrologer) from among them is summoned for the name giving ceremony of the child. Since the Kalandis are treated as an unclean caste, the Brahman priest, barber and washer man of the village do not serve them as they will be outcasted by the higher castes. Such instances of violating customary norms and becoming outcaste have come to notice in the study villages.</p> <p>First feeding of the child is called <i>arna prasana</i> or <i>arna chuanni</i> is held during the onset of sixth month for a male child, while for a female child it is held on the beginning of the seventh month</p>	<p>On birth rituals observed by Kalandi Vaishnabs, Singh reported "The rituals associated with birth and childhood are panchuaty (purification on the fifth day of birth), sathi (purification on the sixth day), barayatra (purification on the twelfth day), ekusia (name-giving ceremony on the twenty-first day), barshapuran (birthday) and diksha." (Singh, K.S, 1998)</p>	<p>Life cycle rituals during birth, puberty, marriage, death are observed similar to that of other Hindu castes. However, rituals are observed less elaborately owing to financial limitations of the Kalandi / Kandara caste people.</p>
iii) Puberty	<p>Among the Kalandis, puberty taboos were not adhered to in the past. Now the taboo is observed for seven days, in which the girl remains confined to a secluded place of the house and is considered polluted. She is not allowed to look at any male and go near the cooking area. Only after the seventh day, she takes bath and is free from the pollution. Thereafter, she is allowed to mix with other family members.</p>	<p>On Kalandi Vaishnab Singh pointed out that "At the onset of puberty, a girl is confined for seven days" (Singh, K.S, 1998)</p>	<p>They observe puberty rite.</p>
iv) Marriage	<p>Customary rules of caste endogamy and village exogamy is widely practised among the Kalandi/Kandaras. Inter-marriage between Kandara, Kalandi and Kuduma are common as they are the same community.</p> <p>A section of Kalandi Kula community in Sudarsanpur village, who has since generations embraced Baishnavism expressed that, they will never give their daughters in marriage to non Baishnavites of their caste as they consider the later lower to them in the social hierarchy.</p> <p>Kalandi Baishnabas perceive that conversion of Kandaras, Kalandi/Kalandi Kulas and Kudmas to</p>	<p>On the marriage of Kalandi Vaishnab Singh observed that 'Adult marriage, arranged through negotiation, is prevalent among them, and though monogamy is the usual form</p>	<p>The Kalandis practise caste endogamy and village exogamy, adult marriage and monogamy. Their wedding rites have been imitated from the neighbouring caste Hindus but observed less</p>

	<p>Baishnavism has enhanced their social status vis a vis their caste brethren who has not yet embraced the cult.</p> <p>Monogamy, adult marriage and marriage by negotiation is common among the Kalandis. Instances of love marriage are also found wherein cases of inter caste marriage is observed though in rare instances</p> <p>In case of arranged marriage consent of the girl is taken before marriage, though it is not mandatory. In former times the custom of bride price was prevalent in their community which is known as <i>kanya pani</i> or <i>kanya mula</i>. But nowadays, practice of dowry has entered into the system.</p> <p>Prior to a fortnight or a month of the marriage day, a negotiation (<i>swikruta</i>), is held between both the sides viz. groom and bride side which is regarded as an agreement to conduct the marriage ritual on an appointed date.</p> <p>Marriage ceremony is performed by conducting various rites akin to those of higher castes though the rituals are not as elaborate as in other Hindu castes. Rituals like <i>swikruta</i>, <i>homa</i>, <i>sindura pindhani</i>, <i>hastaganthi</i>, <i>chaturthi</i> are observed. Wedding feast is hosted by both the families.</p> <p>The Brahman priest, barber and washer man of the village do not serve them for conducting the wedding proceedings for reasons stated earlier. Since generations, Kalandis have their own <i>baishnaba purohita</i> (priest) and barber to render such ritual services.</p> <p>Symbol of marriage in a woman is conspicuous by the use of bangles, vermillion in the forehead and use of toe rings. Absence of the use of vermillion and bangles symbolises widowhood.</p> <p>In one study village it was found that in poor families, arranged marriage of daughters are negotiated with grooms coming from North India as far as Aligarh and nearby places. In those instances, the groom bears all the marriage expenses. Due to paucity of girls in their region they establish contact with the seasonally migrant Kalandis in their work site in North India and come here in search of bride and bear all expenses to take girls in marriage.</p>	<p>of marriage, polygyny (both sororal and non-sororal) also occurs. Married women put vermilion on their forehead and wear bangles (chruri) and toe-rings (<i>jhuntia</i>) as symbols of marriage.” (Singh, K.S, 1998)</p> <p>On Kalandi Vaishnab Singh reported that “Marriages are endogamous at the community level and exogamous at the village level.” (Singh, K.S,2012)</p>	<p>elaborately. The bride price system of the past has been replaced by dowry. Service castes like Brahman, barber and washer man do not serve them in this regard for their unclean and lowly social position. There are instances of girls of poor families marrying the grooms from North India who bear all the wedding expenses to acquire the bride.</p>
<p>v. Divorce</p>	<p>Divorce of wife is socially permissible though such instances are very rare. Either of the partners can go for divorce on the grounds of barrenness of wife, cruelty, adultery etc. There is no compensation involved in diverse. Remarriage of widow, widower and divorcee is permitted in their society.</p>		<p>Customs relating to divorce, remarriage are similar to other castes in the village</p>

<p>vi. Death</p>	<p>Kandaras or Kalandis cremate their dead. However, in the changing times, the practice of burial of the dead is gaining ground for high expenses involved in cremation and shortage of firewood. Burial generally in their homestead land is the common practice among the Baishnavite section where they build a small shrine like structure (<i>samadhi</i>) in memory of the dead.</p> <p>Cremation is done in the village cremation ground usually located in the nearby village forest where separate space is assigned to different castes of the village.</p> <p>The period of mourning for the dead is observed for thirteen days ending with the purificatory rites (shaving of hair and beard by kith and kin of the deceased in a nearby water body). On the seventeenth day a feast is hosted for the near and dear ones marking the end of the pollution period. The eldest son of the deceased performs the death ritual for the adult deceased and the priest (<i>Kula Purohita</i>) from their own caste performs the necessary death rites.</p> <p>Like other castes, they too perform annual <i>shradha</i> ritual for the ancestors.</p> <p>Generally, they do not observe any ritual for bone immersion of the deceased. However, some relatively well-off families perform bone immersion rite. They immerse the bone of the deceased in nearby river viz. Subarnarekha or Hoogli in Kolkata</p>	<p>Death customs are retained, more or less like that of the other castes in the village.</p> <p>Nowadays burial of the dead body is preferred to cremation due to high expenses involved in cremation. Annual <i>shradha</i> is performed. Bone immersion ceremony is not held except for a few well-to-do families.</p>
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11. Livelihood		
2	3	4
<p>The Kalandis of Basu Chakurai and Bhagi Chakurai villages, stated that these villages were established by a Bengali landlord (<i>jamindar</i>) named Chakrabarty and therefore named accordingly as Chakurai. Since the past they used to cultivate the lands of the land lords as share croppers and that was the only source of their livelihood. Some of them possess a small piece of cultivable land (20cent to 50cent) in their name.</p> <p>Most of them being landless thrive upon sharecropping. The prevailing rate at present paid to the landlord is Rs. 3000/ per annum per acre of land. At other times of the year both male and female members of the household are engaged as wage labour in farm and nonfarm sectors.</p> <p>The study findings as presented in <u>Annexure- I</u> reveal that in the 06 study villages 41 out of total 88 i.e. 46.59 % of Kalandi households are landless. Among the remaining 47 landowning households the average land holding size is 0.58 Acres which means majority of them are marginal farmers. Their average annual household income is Rs 34, 394/ and among total 88 study households, majority i.e. 75 (85.22 %)</p>	<p>On the occupational pattern of Kalandi Vaishnab, Singh reported that 'Both the traditional and primary occupation of the Kalandi Vaishnab is settled cultivation. Some of them are engaged as share croppers, wage labourers and industrial workers while</p>	<p>The Kalandis by and large, are land less. They derive their subsistence either by share cropping in the fields of land owing class of the village or by wage earning and small trade. Begging is a past tradition. Some of them who render priestly services to their own caste members</p>

<p>are under BPL economic category. This speaks of their economic backwardness.</p> <p>Besides, they domesticate chicken, goats, and cows.</p> <p>In many villages Kalandis confessed that because of being land less, traditionally their main occupation was begging. They beg by chanting the epics and mythologies like Ramayana, Mahabharata, Chaitanya Charita and Hari Bansa. As a source of living, begging is considered to be honourable for the Baishnavites. Nowadays, the younger generation consider this profession as lowly and undignified.</p> <p>Some of them who render priestly services to their own caste members hereditarily, get some extra income to supplement their livelihood.</p> <p>Now, many of the unemployed Kalandi youths have migrated to cities like Chennai, Surat, Haryana, Kolkata, Goa, Bangaluru and work in construction sites and industrial establishments as skilled, semi-skilled or unskilled workers. They work there as carpenters, masons, security guards or as menial labourers. They earn in the range of Rs.8000/- to Rs.12 000 a month. Those who stay back in the village are either engaged in cultivation or in small trade.</p>	<p>some of the educated persons are employed in different organizations including government offices” (Singh K.S,1998)</p>	<p>hereditarily, get some extra income to supplement their livelihood. 85.22 % of the Kalandi families of the study villages are under BPL economic category which speaks of their economic backwardness.</p>
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12. Food & Drinks		
1	2	3
<p>The staple food of Kandaras/Kalandis is boiled rice accompanied by veg and non-veg dishes. Nowadays, the practice of taking food three times a day viz. breakfast, lunch and dinner consisting mainly of watered rice (<i>pakhal</i>) and cooked vegetables particularly potatoes and edible leaves is common.</p> <p>They are not addicted to alcoholic drinks.</p>		<p>The food pattern of Kalandis are akin to that of other Hindu castes in the village and consists of watered rice and cooked vegetables taken thrice daily.</p>

13. Religious Life			
2	3	4	
<p>Being a caste group, they follow Hinduism, worship all Hindu deities and observe Hindu festivals. Their pantheon is composed of Hindu Gods and Goddesses. They take pride in expressing that a stick (<i>lathi</i>) is being worshipped in the Jagannath temple of Puri as a symbolic memory of their relationship with the Great God. They explain that they are regarded as people of Hari, the God (<i>harinka loka</i>).</p> <p>In this region (Balasore), they worship Radha Krishna or Hari as their supreme deities due to the influence of Baishnavism that has its stronghold in this district. For many of them Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is the Great God and an incarnation of Lord Vishnu</p> <p>Portraits of deities such as Mangala, Radha Krishna, Jagannath, Siva Parvati, Chaitanya, Hanuman are generally worshipped at the household level. In some households <i>salagram</i> is worshipped as family deity and ancestors are worshipped in the northeast corner of the house. Priest (<i>kula</i></p>	<p>On the Kandara caste, Singh reported that “They profess Hinduism and worship the Hindu Gods and Goddesses. Istadevata and Esani are considered family deities. Mangala Thakurani, Chokogopala, Bhagabati etc are the village tutelaries.” (Singh, K.S, 1995)</p>	<p>As Hindus they worship Gods and Goddesses of Hindu pantheon and observe all local festivals. Ancestor worship is also in vogue.</p> <p>Nowadays entry to the village temple except the <i>sanctum sanctorum</i> is allowed to</p>	

<p><i>purohita</i>) from their own caste performs rituals for the ancestors on occasions of annual <i>sradha</i>, Makar Samkranti etc</p> <p>The priest from their own community is groomed and supported financially by the community members to render necessary ritual services to Kalandi families. The priesthood is inherited and passed along the male lines.</p> <p>Celebration of festivities similar to those of other castes is observed as per the Hindu calendar. However, in this region of North Odisha, they observe festivals like Dusahera, Kalipuja, Makara Samkranti with great pomp and gaiety.</p> <p>They have no tradition of dance, song and music of their own.</p>	<p>On the festivals of Kandararas, Singh further observed that “They also observe festivals like Rajo, Ratha jatra, Kali puja, Makar Samkranti, Nuakhia, Karma, Durgapuja Dol Jatra, Janmastami, Pusapunej etc</p>	<p>them though cooked offerings for the deities are not accepted from them. They have their priest (<i>kula purohita</i>) from their own caste and this position is hereditary.</p>
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14. Socio-Political Life		
2	3	4
<p>Kalandis /Kandararas neither have traditional village council nor any inter village council. A few years back under the leadership of one Sudarsan Jena of Baliapal and Durga Jena of Bhogarai they had formed a larger collective of Kandara/Kudma/Kalandi caste people. They put forward before the Govt., the demand for considering Kudma, Kalandi and Kalandikula Baishnava as a scheduled caste. They could mobilise National commission for Schedules Castes and Scheduled Tribes along with Govt. machinery at the centre. As a result, they got success in getting scheduled caste status for the Kudma community. The movement could not sustain further to pursue as much the other two terms (Kalandi and Kalandikula Baishnava) fit to be considered for Scheduled Caste status.</p> <p>At present there is no caste council or apex caste committee functioning to handle the customary affairs of the Kalandis.</p>		<p>They have no traditional caste panchayat at the village or regional levels to handle the customary affairs.</p>

15. Social Position			
1	2	3	5
<p>(i) Position in local Social Hierarchy</p>	<p>Caste names are arranged in descending order as per their commonly perceived social status/rank in a multi caste village (Refer – ANNEXURE-II)</p> <p>According to other communities Position in caste hierarchy is perceived on the basis of the concept of purity and pollution in respect of food habits, occupation, education standard, economic status of the community and other habits. Unclean food habits, defiling occupation, poverty and dearth of economic resources at one’s disposal place a caste in a particular rung of the social order.</p> <p>According to the community itself The Kandararas/Kalandis under study consider themselves placed at a higher rank in the social hierarchy. They regard a few other castes viz. Hadi, Pano, Sundhi as lower to them and maintain social distance from them. They place these lower castes in the lowest rung of the social hierarchy. Informants in the village Bhagichakurai expressed it in the following words,</p>	<p>Singh wrote that “They place themselves in the middle position in the local social hierarchy but by others they are treated at par with the Scheduled Caste people i.e. they are placed in the lower stratum of social hierarchy (Singh, K.S, 2012)</p>	<p>Kalandis are placed at the bottom of the social hierarchy in the village.</p> <p>They still are victims of untouchability and social discrimination by the upper castes of the village</p>

	<p>One loses his /her caste in two ways: By squatting on a Sundhi's Varanda (<i>pinda</i>) and by eating rice (<i>bhata</i>) from a Hadi</p> <p>In the village Kaurda, Balasore an elderly informant explained to us that Kandaras/ Kalandis in the coastal belt eat fish and other aquatic lives which the upper caste people despise. Therefore, communities other than their own perceive them as lowly owing to their unclean food habits.</p> <p>In the former times landlessness pushed them to begging for subsistence which was one of the reasons for them being looked down upon by the higher castes. In addition to that defiling occupation and illiteracy placed them at the lowest rung of the society.</p> <p>Being a caste within the fold of Hinduism, they disregarded Hindu purity norms in the past and did not observe life cycle rituals such as birth, puberty, death as per the caste Hindu traditions. Therefore, they were perceived as unclean by their neighbouring upper castes</p> <p>The members of the Baishnavite section (Kalandi Kula Baishnaba), who are equally disadvantaged like that of their Kandara and Kalandi brethren usually recite a couplet explaining their inability to get government benefits as SC though they genuinely deserve it. They say that they are no better placed than their Kandara counterparts.</p> <p>The couplet runs like this:</p> <p><i>"Bara jati, tera gola Baishanaba hele sabu sarila"</i></p> <p>It means "one may belong to any caste, but he loses his caste when he becomes a Baishnab"</p>		
<p>(ii) Inter-Community Relationship</p>	<p>According to our findings, the advent of Baishnavism in this area was in the 18th century. Many of their caste members (Kandara) embraced Baishnavism and brought refinement in their ways of life in respect of food, clothing etc. Yet there was not much improvement in their lowly social status.</p> <p>In earlier times persons of lower castes were not allowed to sit even on the veranda of upper caste people. In case someone from the lower caste sit there or touch them by mistake the upper castes used to take bath with cow dung water to purify themselves. Though the taboo is not as strict as it was in the past, it is still there in latent form.</p> <p>In the past when Kalandis were being invited to community feasts (on the occasion of birth, marriage, death etc.) in the village in which they used to get food towards the end of the feast and sitting at a distance from the upper castes. After the feast is over they used</p>	<p>Singh observed that "a caste priest or a Brahmin priest known as purohit is called to officiate at the life cycle rituals and to worship the Hindu Gods and Goddesses" (Singh, K.S,1995)</p> <p>On water</p>	<p>Though social position of the untouchable castes viz. Kalandi/ Kalandi Kula has improved to certain extent, they are still regarded as socially inferior by the upper castes on many aspects. They are regarded as a <i>jala achala</i> (water not</p>

	<p>to clean their dish / feasting site. Nowadays, labourers from outside the village are hired by the host to undertake the task. Even to this day they are not allowed to dine together with the upper caste people.</p> <p>Exchange of water between communities and use of water from common source are allowed due to spread of education but women of upper caste still do not accept water from lower caste Community like Kalandi</p> <p>As children and youngsters of higher caste and that of Kalandis mix and mingle with each other as class mates and play mates, the taboo of touching each other is no more adhered to with rigidity. Acceptance of uncooked food from each other is no more looked down as breach of societal norms.</p> <p>But cooked food offered by Kalandis are neither accepted by upper castes nor allowed as offerings in the temple. Non-acceptance of water and food from Kalandis is more stringent in case of women from higher castes. Women from the upper castes would never accept food, be it cooked or uncooked from a Kalandi and in case of male members the restriction is gradually diminishing.</p> <p>Case Studies:</p> <p>(i) Narrating an incident, an informant reported a recent conflict in their village on the non-acceptance of cooked food by upper castes from a Kalandi caste person.</p> <p>Sandhyarani, a Kalandi widow and marginalised woman from the community was an applicant for the post of Anganwadi worker for the village. All the community members from Kalandi caste supported her candidature. On the other hand, members of higher castes in the village strongly opposed her to occupy the post on the plea that the food cooked by her would not be accepted by their children enrolled in the centre. They are of the view that they wouldn't let their children eat food cooked by a lower caste lady in the Anganwadi center.</p> <p>As soon as officials from the block office visited the place and talked to the villagers on the sorry state of the widow, the members of the upper caste had to agree to the decision and she was finally appointed as the Anganwadi worker</p> <p>(ii) In another recent incident of the practice of untouchability in the village Basu Chakurai a barber of the village who came to serve in a purificatory rite in the Kalandi hamlet has been penalised. His action has made the upper castes angry and they socially boycotted the barber (Barik) who is now debarred to serve in any ritual of the upper castes</p> <p>Respondents in study villages stated that owing to</p>	<p>acceptability, Singh wrote that Kandaras "-- ---accept water and Kachcha and pucca food from communities like the brahman, Gauda, Karan,Bania, Khandayet,M ali,Suda, Chasa etc.But avoid receiving these from communities considered lower than them" (Singh, K.S.1995)</p> <p>Singh reported that "Kandaras are largely landless and work as daily- wage labourers. They cultivate land on a share cropping basis." (Singh, K.S.1995)</p>	<p>acceptable) caste vis a vis the upper castes who are considered as <i>jala chala</i> (water acceptable) castes.</p> <p>Clean castes still maintain physical and social distance in matters of acceptance of cooked food, inter-dining, temple entry, use of cremation ground etc.</p>
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	<p>modern education and strengthening of policies of democratic governance like liberty, equality etc. discrimination on caste lines has only been reduced to certain extent.</p> <p>Informants of higher caste and Kalandi community as well agreed that now-a-days, there is not much restriction on house entry for lower caste person into the house of the higher castes. For practical purposes the upper caste depends on the lower caste. Members of the later enter the house of the upper caste for doing menial tasks assigned to them by the higher caste members.</p> <p>Currently, informants don't remember any such incident/conflict in the village concerning either caste groups (higher castes and Kalandi) on sharing village well / tube well of the village. There is no restriction for the use of bathing <i>ghat</i> in the village pond or for the use of well. However now-a-days each hamlet has got their own water source/tube well.</p> <p>Entry to the village temple is no more restricted for the Kalandi Kula. Even offerings meant for the God/Godess are accepted from them. The Brahman priest takes care not to take the offering from their (Kalandi Kula) hands because of pollution. The offering is placed on the ground and is taken by the priest for offering. Only offerings of dry food and un skinned fruits are received from the lower caste people</p> <p>Access to tea shop and grocery shop in the village is no more restricted for them. But after drinking tea they are expected to wash their own utensil.</p> <p>During village meetings the Kalandis do participate and express their opinion in the decision-making process. But in the meeting, they sit at a safe distance from the other high caste members of the village.</p> <p>Sharing of public transport is no more an issue between higher caste and lower caste people</p> <p>In the village festivals members of the Kalandi caste participate with equal fervour but keep themselves detached from the upper castes</p> <p>Brahmans, barbers and washer man of the village are not permitted to render traditional <i>jajmani</i> services to Kalandi community and other inferior sections in the village and hence, they manage with their own. Any of these service castes violating this norm is socially boycotted and debarred from serving the higher castes. Recent instance of this nature found in the village Basu Chakurai.</p> <p>There are a few instances of ritual kinship /bond friendship found between Kalandis and members from other castes. In the village Bhagi Chakurai there are three such cases.</p>		
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Kalandi lady has ritual ties with an elderly person of Raju caste as daughter and father. They had an exchange of <i>mahaprasad</i> from Puri to solemnize this relationship • A member of Khandayat caste has ritual relationship (brother) with the wife of a Kalandi man. • Formerly, a Kalandi lady had ritual brother-sister relationship with a man of Gouda caste of the village 		
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17. Summary Findings

- (i) Kalandis identify themselves as Kalandis or Kandaras while their neighbours call them interchangeably as Kandara, Kalandi, Kalandi Kula, Kuduma etc. In their land records their caste name has been recorded variously, such as, Kalandi, Kalandi Kula, Kandara, Kuduma etc.
- (ii) As per the study findings, 'Kalandi' refers to a mythological place associated with the God Srikrishna and 'Kula' refers to ancestry or the Clan.
- (iii) Regarding the meaning of the term Kalandi, the community members explained that the term came into use on account of their place of original habitation which is said to be on the banks of Kalandi lake the mythical birth place of Lord Srikrishna for which they derive pride from the glorious mythology.
- (iv) They are also of the view that in the past, their fore fathers felt that use of the term "Kandara" is demeaning, lowly and attached with social stigma. To get rid of the stigma the name Kandara has been replaced with Kalandi.
- (v) Except the mythological origin, their origin is obscure and there is no reliable information on their migration history. Some of them opined that they have migrated from the neighbouring Bengal and Mayurbhanj district since many generations.
- (vi) They are a single homogenous community having no social divisions. Members of the Kalandi caste belong to single *gotra* viz. *Nageswar*. The Baishnavite section among them have clan names such as Achyuta, Kasyap and Bharadwaj which are possibly borrowed from the Brahman caste.
- (vii) They speak Odia language
- (viii) They live in multi caste villages and occupy a separate hamlet (*sahi*) located a little away from the wards of higher castes. The upper castes look down upon them as lowly, impure and unclean and hence, do not visit their hamlet.
- (ix) Their houses are mud walled and straw thatched. Nowadays, some of them have *pucca* houses under Indira Awas Yojana, Biju Pucca Ghar Yojana etc.
- (x) Life cycle rituals during birth, puberty, marriage, death are observed similar to that of other Hindu castes. However, rituals are observed less elaborately owing to financial limitations of the Kalandi / Kandara caste people.
- (xi) The Kalandis practise caste endogamy and village exogamy, adult marriage and monogamy. Their wedding rites have been imitated from the neighbouring caste Hindus but observed less elaborately. The bride price system of the past has been replaced by dowry. Service castes like Brahman, barber and washer man do not serve them in this regard for their unclean and lowly social position.
- (xii) **Intermarriage between Kandara, Kalandi and Kuduma are common as they are the same community.**

- (xiii) Most of them are land less. They derive their subsistence by share cropping, wage earning and small trade. Begging is a past tradition. Some of them who render priestly services to their own caste members hereditarily, get some extra income to supplement their livelihood. 85.22 % of the Kalandi families of the study villages are under BPL economic category which speaks of their economic backwardness.
- (xiv) As Hindus they worship Gods and Goddesses of Hindu pantheon and observe all local festivals. Ancestor worship is also in vogue. Nowadays, entry into the village temple except the *sanctum sanctorum* is allowed to them though cooked offerings for the deities are not accepted from them. They have their priest (*kula purohita*) from their own caste and this position is hereditary.
- (xv) They have no traditional caste panchayat at the village or regional levels to handle their customary affairs.
- (xvi) The Kalandis are placed at the bottom of the social hierarchy in the village. They still are victims of untouchability and social discrimination by the upper castes.
- (xvii) Nowadays, due to the cumulative impact of development, democratic institutions, protective legislations, spread of education and awareness among the people, social discriminatory practices have noticeably reduced and therefore the social position of the untouchable castes viz. Kalandi/ Kalandi Kula though has improved to certain extent, they are still regarded as socially inferior by the upper castes in many aspects.
- (xviii) They are treated as a *jala achala* (water not acceptable) caste vis a vis the upper castes who are ranked as *jala chala* (water acceptable) castes. The clean castes still maintain physical and social distance from the Kalandis in matters of acceptance of cooked food, water, inter-dining, temple entry, use of cremation ground etc. The Brahman priest, barber and washer man of the village who render traditional *jajamani* services to the caste Hindus do not serve the Kalandis.

Conclusion

- Villagers in our study villages showed us instances of RORs recording two different caste names (*jati*) for the same person. In one of the RORs the person's caste (*jati*) is mentioned as Kandara while in another, the caste of the same person is recorded as Kalandi Kula.
- In order to get rid of the social stigma of untouchability, during land settlement (*Bandobast*) in the long past, some of the Kalandis could make necessary changes in their caste name, replacing Kandara with Kalandi Kula in their RORs. Again, in the last settlement (1980s) some of them replaced Kalandi Kula with Kandara with the intention to avail the SC reservation benefits.
- Kalandi / Kalindi / Kalandi Kula / Kalindi Kula, are neither included in the ST/SC nor in the SEBC list. As per our study findings on the life and living of the community, the socio-economic and culturo-religious traits of the Kalandi /Kalandi Kula community are akin to those of Kandara / Kudma caste of these districts. It is ascertained from them as well as from other neighbouring communities that they are one and the same community called in varied names viz. Kalandi / Kalindi /Kalandi Kula / Kalindi Kula in different localities and at different points of time. Therefore, it is recommended that the caste Kalandi or Kalandi Kula may be considered to be included in the scheduled caste list of the state.
- SCSTRTI undertook a study and prepared a report in 2002-03 on the ethnic status of the Kalandi/Kudma/Kandara caste. The report has concluded that KUDUMA / **KODMA/ KODAMA / KALANDI/ KALINDI/ KALANDI BAISHNAB/ KALINDI BAISHNAB / KANDRA BAISHNAB / KANDARA BAISHNAB** who are found to be synonymous with the notified S.C. community **KANDRA / KANDARA**, as they have the same socio-cultural and economic features, may be considered for inclusion as synonyms of **KANDRA, KANDARA** at Sl.42 in the S.C. list of Orissa.

- Considering this report, Govt of India notified **KUDUMA / KODMA / KODAMA as synonym of KANDRA, KANDARA** at Sl.42 in the S.C. list of Orissa in 2007. Later, during 2014, Govt. of India did not support the proposal of inclusion of **KALANDI / KALINDI as synonym of KANDRA, KANDARA in the SC list under the ground that no published ethnographic literatures are available to indicate the synonymy of Kalandi / Kalindi with Kandara (SC).**
- It is well established by our past (2002-03) and present (2017) empirical study findings that **KALANDI/ KALINDI / KALANDI KULA / KALINDI KULA is a synonym of KANDRA, KANDARA, KUDUMA etc.** As such they freely inter-marry among themselves. Since the people called **KALANDI / KALINDI / KALANDI KULA / KALINDI KULA** are little known and very small in number, there are no published ethnographic literatures available on this community except that of Anthropological Survey of India i.e. People of India edited by K.S. Singh that is quoted in the report. Hence, non-availability of published ethnographic literatures should not be taken as a ground to deprive a genuine synonym of a community notified as SC from its legitimate Constitutional status.
- Since **KANDARA and KUDUMA are enjoying SC status, it is a historical injustice that the same status is denied to their synonym KALANDI.**
- Like the **KANDRA, KANDARA, KUDUMA etc. the KALANDI/ KALINDI / KALANDI KULA / KALINDI KULA still suffers from the stigma of untouchability with accompanying social disabilities and therefore remained socio-economically backward. Thus, it fulfils the eligibility criteria for SC as prescribed by Govt of India.**

Recommendation

In view of the above facts and findings, KALANDI/ KALINDI / KALANDI KULA / KALINDI KULA who suffer from the historical injustice for non recognition of their SC status, deserves to be notified as SC as a synonym of KANDRA, KANDARA, KUDUMA etc. at Sl.42 in the S.C. list of Odisha.

DIRECTOR & SPECIAL SECRETARY

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ANNEXURE- I

**DATA ON HOUSEHOLDS, LITERACY, OCCUPTION, LAND HOLDINGS, INCOME & LIVESTOCK OF KALANDI KULA HOUSEHOLDS
IN 06 MAIN STUDY VILLAGES**

SL No	Name of the Villages	No. of Households (HHs)	Total Kalandi Kula Population of the village			No. of Literates			Major Occupation	Total Annual Household Income (in Rs.)	Average Annual Household Income (in Rs.)	No. of Land less HHs	No. of Land owning HHs	Total Land Holdings of the Kalandis (Ac)	Average landholding size per land owning HH (Ac)	Total No. of BPL HHs	Livestock
			M	F	T	M	F	T									
1	Kalaspur	14	35	31	66	30	26	56	Cultivation, Wage Labour	3 81 700	27 264.28	0	14	16 .00	1.14	10	Hen, Cow, Goat, Bullock
2	Biranchipur	08	20	23	43	17	19	36	Cultivation, Wage Labour	2 90 000	36 250.00	0	08	6.33	0.79	08	Hen, Cow, Bullock
3	Sudarsanpur	11	48	47	95	48	34	82	Petty shop, Migrant Labour out of state	3 96 000	36 000.00	11	0	-	0	11	Hen, Cow, Bullock
4	Iram	14	52	44	96	44	34	78	Cultivation, Daily Labour, Petty Shop	3 97 000	28 357.00	14	0	-	0	07	Hen, Cow, Bullock
5	Mandarpur	06	22	23	45	18	18	36	Cultivation	2 22 000	37 000.00	01	5	0.99	0.19	04	Hen, Cow, Bullock
6	Tengeramari	35	80	81	161	67	67	134	Petty shop, Cultivation, Migrant Labour out of state , Orchestra singer, LIC Agent, Daily Labour	13 40 000	38 285.71	15	20	4.39	0.21	35	Hen, Cow, Goat, Bullock
	Total	88	257	249	506	224	198	422		30 26 700	34 394	41	47	27.71	0.58	75	

Total Literacy Rate -: 83.39 %

Male Literacy Rate -: 87.15 %

Female Literacy Rate -: 79.51%

ANNEXURE - II

Caste Hierarchy in the Study Villages

Sl. No	Caste Hierarchy as Perceived by Village Community	Rank in the Social Hierarchy	Caste Hierarchy as Perceived by Kalandi/Kalandi Kula	Traditional Occupation
1.	Brahman	1	Brahman	Priesthood
2.	Karana	2	Karana	Writers' Caste
3.	Khandayat	3	Khandayat	Military service & Farming
4.	Raju	4	Raju	Farming
5.	Gola	5	Gola	Farming
6.	Baishnaba	6	Baishnaba	Priestly functions for the lower caste
7.	Teli	7	Teli	Oil extraction, Farming
8.	Sunari	8	Sunari	Goldsmith
9.	Gudia	9	Gudia	Confectioner
10.	Mohanta	10	Mohanta	Farming
11.	Kumbhara	11	Kumbhara	Potter
12.	Radhi	12	Radhi	Preparation of flattened rice (<i>chuda</i>), puffed rice (<i>mudhi</i>) and fishing
13.	Keuta	13	Keuta	Fishing
14.	Tanti	14	Tanti	Weaving
15.	Kamara	15	Kamara	Blacksmith
16.	Barika	16	Barika	Barber
17.	Dhoba	17	Dhoba	Washer man
	Others		Others	
18.	Kalandi Kula Baishnaba	18	Kalandi Kula Baishnaba	Priestly function for their own caste members, Farming, Labour
19.	Kalandi/Kalandi Kula	19	Kalandi/Kalandi Kula	Farmer, Farm Labour
20.	Kandara	20	Kandara	Farmer, Farm Labour
21.	Pano	21	Pano	Disposal of the dead animal
22.	Sundhi	22	Sundhi	Liquor brewing
23.	Hadi	23	Hadi	Disposal of the excreta
24.	Adivasi (Santal/Bhumija/Bathudi)	24	Adivasi (Santal/Bhumija/Bathudi)	Farmer, Farm Labour

**ETHNIC STATUS OF
SAVAR /NALUA SAVAR / SABAR KELA OF PURI, CUTTACK, JAJPUR &
BHADRAK DISTRICTS WITH REFERENCE TO THE NOTIFIED COMMUNITIES -
SAVAR (ST), SHABAR (ST) & KELA (SC), NALUA KELA (SC)**

I . Background

Utkal Shabar Mahasangha, Odisha submitted a memorandum to the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Odisha vide Grievance petition registration No. CMOFF/P/2016/05355 Dt. 22.08.2016 for issuance of Scheduled Tribe (ST) certificates in favour of **SAVAR/SHABAR/SABAR/NALUA SABAR/SABAR KELA/ NALUA KELA**. Accordingly, Director (SC) Welfare vide letter No.18610/PCR(A) 15/14/SSD, Dt. 07/10/2016 to SCSTRTI stated that SAVAR and SHABAR are already included in the ST list of the state at Sl. Nos. 59 and 60 respectively and NALUA KELA included in the Scheduled Caste (SC) list of the state at Sl. No. 45. But no community like "**SABAR/NALUA SABAR/SABAR KELA**" has been included in the ST list of Odisha till date. Therefore, SCSTRTI is requested to furnish its considered view on this matter.

Before that the same memorandum was submitted to the Commissioner-cum-Director, SCSTRTI that was received on dt. 01.07.2016.

In compliance to the above request it has been planned to undertake in the current year a broad based empirical ethnographic study to determine the ethnic status of NALUA SAVAR who are variously referred as SABAR/NALUA SABAR/SABAR KELA with reference to the claim of their synonymity with the notified communities viz, SAVAR (ST), SHABAR (ST), KELA (SC) and NALUA KELA (SC). The main objective of this exercise is to ascertain the legitimacy of their claim to be included in the Scheduled Tribe list of Odisha.

Prior to 2002 though Kela was listed as a S.C. at Sl. No. 45 of the SC list, certain other individual Kela groups such as Bajikar, Ghusuria, Mundapotta and Sabakhia were enlisted separately at Sl. Nos. 6, 33, 62 and 79 respectively in the S.C list of Odisha. In 2002, vide the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order (Second Amendment) Act, 2002; the Sapua Kela, Nalua Kela, Sabakhia Kela and Matia Kela have been included as sections of Kela at Sl. No. 45 of the SC list of Odisha.

In the year 2003 vide letter no. 468/R.66/02/SCSTRTI Dt.25/03/2003, SCSTRTI submitted a three-page ethnic status report on "NALUA KELA" community as per the prescribed format of the Govt. of India in compliance to the Govt. Lr.No.30488/ SSD. /Emp.I(C) 20/02 Dt.23.08.02. The above report made the following key observations

- It is a distinctly endogamous community of birds and games trappers leading a wandering life.
- Upper caste Hindus treat the NALUA KELA as an untouchable community for their unclean food habits, defiling profession and wandering way of life.
- The higher castes do not accept food and water from them.
- They don't get the services of Brahman priest, Barber and Washer man.
- They are treated as an unclean caste, placed at the lower rung of the social ladder and treated as an untouchable caste in the traditional caste society. The clean caste keeps social distance from them.
- The community is socially, educationally and economically backward.

II . Present Study

a. Coverage of the Study

The present study was carried out in five NALUA SAVAR /SABAR/NALUA SABAR/SABAR KELA inhabited villages in the districts of Puri, Cuttack, Jajpur and Bhadrak. As many as 463 households of the community are covered under the study. To be specific the study covered 01 village in Puri district, 01 village in Cuttack district and 02 villages in Jajpur district and 01 village in Bhadrak district. The data on the location, ethnic composition, households and population of the target community in our study villages has been furnished in the following statement.

Study Villages, Location, Ethnic Composition, Households & Population of SABAR/NALUA SABAR/SABAR KELA

District	Block	Study Villages	Ethnic Composition	Nalua Kela/Nalua Sabar	
				No. of Households	Population
1.Puri	Brahmagiri	Ambapada	Brahman, Karan, Khandayat, Chasa, Teli, Gauda, Kumbhar, Kamar, Barika, Dhoba, Nalua Kela	18	106
2.Cuttack	Mahanga	Gopalpur	Brahman, Karana, Khandayat, Muslim, Gauda, Kumbhar, Dhoba, Pano, Nalua Kela	229	1404
3.Jajpur	1-Rasulpur	1.Mugapala	Brahman, Khandayat, Teli, Gudia, Kumbhar, Kamar, Radhi, Barika, Dhoba, Nalua Kela	89	389
	2- Korei	2. Khamana	Brahman, Khandayat, Chasa, Teli, Gauda, Gudia, Kumbhar, Kamar, Radhi, Barika, Dhoba, Pano, Nalua Kela	66	408
3.Bhadrak	Chandabali	Patuli	Brahman, Khandayat, Chasa, Teli, Gauda, Kumbhar, Kamar, Barika, Dhoba, Pano, Nalua Kela	61	319
Total	05	05		463	2626

Data on Households, Literacy, Occupation, Land Holdings, Income & Livestock of Nalua Sabar Households in 05 Study villages has been presented in **Annexure - I**

b. Objective

The objective of the present study is to carry out an ethnographic study of the community variously known as SABAR/NALUA SABAR/SABAR KELA to find out that they possess necessary characteristic features as prescribed by Government of India to be considered for inclusion in the Scheduled Tribe list of Odisha as given below.

1. **Primitive traits,**
2. **Distinctive culture,**

3. **Geographical isolation,**
4. **Shyness of contact with the community at large and**
5. **Socio-economic backwardness**

c. Methodology:

- The task has been accomplished by undertaking empirical ethnographic study for gathering and analyzing relevant information on ethnological traits, socio cultural practices, deity, rituals, customs, mode of marriage, death ceremonies, method of burial of dead bodies etc. of the target community.
- For collection of empirical data, tools like structured interview guide, checklists as well as village schedule have been used. By administering the tools, individual and key informants have been interviewed and group discussions held and household census have been made in the selected study villages to elicit relevant information.
- During the empirical study, the data collected from one or more than one study village(s) has been cross checked in other study village(s) to ascertain the reliability of the data.
- Data from the secondary sources / references has also been consulted and analysed with the empirical data for drafting the report and arriving at the conclusion regarding the eligibility of the target community for inclusion in ST list of Odisha

III. Study Findings

1. Nomenclature & Etymological meaning

The community call themselves SABAR/NALUA SABAR. Their neighbors' call them as NALUA, NALUA KELA, KELA, etc. – these names used interchangeably. In the RORs they are recorded variously as KELA, NALUA KELA, SABAR, SHABAR, NALUA SABAR, NALUA SHABAR, NALAKAR SABAR, SABAR KELA, SHABAR KELA etc. **However, as found during our study, in majority of RORs the entries of caste names are KELA & NALUA KELA.**

Some of these names like NALUA SABAR, NALUA SHABAR, NALAKAR SABAR, SABAR KELA, SHABAR KELA seem to be erroneous because authentic references are not available on their existence except in the RORs. During our study we have found RORs of the same person and persons belonging to the same paternal kin group in which their caste names have been recorded differently as KELA, NALUA KELA, SABAR, SHABAR, NALUA SABAR, NALUA SHABAR, NALAKAR SABAR, SABAR KELA, SHABAR KELA etc. as the case may be. Few examples of such cases have been given in the statement at **Annexure - II**

Moreover, the name SHABAR KELA is self contradictory as in Odisha SHABAR is ST and KELA is SC. As such SHABAR and KELA being ST and SC respectively are two different social entities and while **KELA has a social group called NALUA SABAR that is also SC** (at Sl. No. 45 of the SC list) in Odisha, there are no authentic ethnographic literature to show that **the SHABAR tribe have any synonym or sub sect called NALUA SABAR, NALUA SHABAR, NALAKAR SABAR, SABAR KELA, SHABAR KELA.**

Excluding these wrong names, there remains only three names ie, “KELA”, ‘NALUA’ and ‘NALUA KELA’ by which the community is commonly referred to owing to their traditional weapon of bamboo cylinders and sticks (*Nala*) they use for trapping/hunting birds which is their age old occupation.

The NALUA or NALUA KELA is one of the several endogamous groups of the generic community called KELA. The famous Oriya lexicon, *Purnachandra Odia Bhashakosha* traces the Origin of the term 'Kela' from 'Kela' meaning sports or from the southern state of Kerla from which the community have probably migrated and described the community called 'Kela' as "A wandering tribe living on begging, jugglery, snake

charming and catching birds; the Indian gypsies" (Vol. II, 1932:1762).

"The Kelas do not constitute a single homogenous community. 'Kela' is rather a generic term encompassing a number of distinctly endogamous groups who live in different parts of Orissa in small and varying numbers bearing different names according to their respectively different occupational specializations. *Purnachandra Bhasakosha* provides the names of eight groups of Kelas such as (i) Sapua or Nageswaria, (ii) Goudia, (iii) Sabakhia or Mundapotta, (iv) **Nalua**, (v) Matia, (vi) Bajikaria, (vii) Airi Gouda and (viii) Chaulia Kela. Das and Chowdhury (1967: 34-35) have furnished an exhaustive list naming 13 groups namely, (i) Sapua/Goudia/Ahir, (ii) Nageswaria, (iii) Kondra, (iv) Mundapotta, (v) Sabakhia, (vi) **Nalua**, (vii) Pathania, (viii) Dum Duma, (ix) Ghusuria, (x) Matia, (xi) Bajikaria, (xii) Malikata and (xiii) Adbharia/Kajua." (*Mohanty, G.N. & S.C. Mohanty, 2004, Adivasi, Vol. 44, Nos. 1 & 2, pp. 25-26*)

"Traditionally, the Sapua, Nageswaria, Kondra, **Nalua**, Pathania, Mundapotta, Bajikaria, Matia and Sabakhia Kelas are **hunters and food gatherers**. They have developed expertise in catching and trapping various kinds of wild animals. They catch snakes, rats, lizards, and trap birds. While the Sapua, Kondra, Mundapotta and Sabakhia Kelas catch variety of snakes rats, lizard and birds, the Nageswaria only catch the Cobra (Nag) and so bear the name Nageswaria. **The Nalua specialize in trapping birds and animals using a trap called nala, and hence called, 'Nalua'**. The Pathania Kela catch monkey." (ibid)

According to K.S. Singh, KELA is "A generic group, they encompass various acrobatic communities like the Bajikar, Matia, Patharia, Naik, **Nalua**, Malikota, Dum Duma and Mundapotta. According to Thurston (1909), the Kela is a small class of Oriya jugglers. Their community name is derived from the word *keli*, meaning dancing (*khel* means play)." (1995: 705)

Purnachandra Odia Bhasakosha describes "NALUA" as the person who uses "the fowler's trap for capturing birds" and "NALUAKELA" as "A class of Kelas using the telescopic *nala* for fowling" (1934, vol. 4, p. 4169)

K.S. Singh, has described 'KELA, NALUA / NALUA KELA' as "A community of bird trappers in Orissa...The name Nalua Kela is derived from the word "*Nal*", meaning a stick which attests to their traditional way of catching birds by using sticks. Kela is a generic term for any acrobat and for people who lead semi-nomadic life." (1995: 706)

It transpires from the above data and analysis that the nomenclatures like NALUA SABAR, NALUA SHABAR, NALAKAR SABAR, SABAR KELA, SHABAR KELA etc are wrong, self contradictory as well as confusing while the real name of the target community is NALUA KELA briefly called NALUA or KELA and as stated above both KELA and NALUA KELA have been notified as SC at SL. No. 45 in the SC list of Odisha.

2. Origin and Migration

"The origin of the Kelas is obscure. However a legendary tradition is presented by the elderly persons of the community about the birth of the Kelas. It says there was no caste called 'Kela' in the beginning. In those days a metal worker named Dhatudagdha Kela had six beautiful daughters and no son. Six young men who wanted to marry these girls were refused by the girl's father. The disappointed young men approached the king for a verdict. King found the girls were willing to marry and ordered the marriages to be solemnized. These marital unions gave birth to various castes like Tamli, Khuruda, Kalandi and Kela." (*Mohanty, G.N. & S.C. Mohanty, Adivasi, Vol. 44, Nos. 1 & 2, pp. 26*)

As regards the origin of NALUA KELA our empirical data of the present study indicates that irrespective of their present place of habitation they trace their origin to the legendary tradition of *Neela Kandara*, the Blue Hill, where the famed Sabar king *Biswabasu* was worshipping Lord Jagannath, then known as Nila Madhaba. They claim their ancestry from the Sabar king, Biswabasu. They opine that they are original inhabitants of their present place of habitation.

3. Population and Distribution

District wise distribution of Kela population in Odisha (1961-2011) is given in the following Statement

Sl. No.	Name of the Old & New Districts		Year					
			1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	Balasore	Balasore	1361	2583	3614	4493	1805	2303
2		Bhadrak	-	-	-	-	3577	3087
3	Balangir	Balangir	-	85	311	464	76	194
4		Sonepur	-	-	-	-	528	547
5	Cuttack	Cuttack	4205	9192	5861	7615	1508	2206
6		Jagatsinghpur	-	-	-	-	1413	1404
7		Jajpur	-	-	-	-	4162	4718
8		Kendrapara	-	-	-	-	1306	1565
9	Dhenkanal	Dhenkanal	262	710	1095	1093	777	906
10		Anugul	-	-	-	-	436	924
11	Ganjam	Ganjam	204	298	420	667	576	1252
12		Gajapati	-	-	-	-	-	0
13	Kalahandi	Kalahandi	4	-	12	-	35	6
14		Nuapara	-	-	-	-	35	19
15	Keonjhar	Keonjhar	312	224	316	293	464	525
16	Koraput	Koraput	31	16	33	333	17	2
17		Malakangiri	-	-	-	-	61	19
18		Nowarangpur	-	-	-	-	7	0
19		Rayagada	-	-	-	-	4	0
20	Mayurbhanj	Mayurbhanj	201	44	49	85	19	223
21	Phulbani	Kandhamal	37	44	16	30	24	155
22		Boudh	-	-	-	-	82	54
23	Puri	Puri	697	1380	1525	2742	475	1078
24		Khurda	-	-	-	-	1909	2368
25		Nayagarh	-	-	-	-	202	359
26	Sambalpur	Sambalpur	450	35	80	92	19	24
27		Bargarh	-	-	-	-	198	320
28		Deogarh	-	-	-	-	6	6
29		Jharsuguda	-	-	-	-	6	6
30	Sundergarh	Sundergarh	-	-	30	14	28	26
Total			7764	14 611	13 344	17 921	19 755	24 296

4. Surnames, Titles, Social Divisions & Groupings

NALUA SABAR/SABAR/NALUA KELA /SABAR KELA has no social divisions. They use Patra, Das, Guru, Behera, Sing, Mahapatra as their surnames.

The community is endogamous and is divided into various exogamous lineage groups(*kutumba*)residing in a village. They have only one *gotra* i.e. *nagasya*

According to Singh, K.S (1995) “Patra, Singh and Guru are the common surnames used by them. (Nalua Kela)”.... “The Nalua Kela are divided into a number of totemic gotras such as Gongai, Nago, Bhadogolia, etc. Each gotra is further divided into a number of lineages which are exogamous units. (People of India Vol.II, P.706)

5. Language

They speak a corrupted version of local ‘Odia’ language which is their mother tongue. They have named this dialect as “Bhatuk”. They also use Odia script both for intra and inter group communication. Singh (1995) reported that “The Oriya language is spoken at home and the Oriya script is used for writing. Some of them are also conversant with the Bengali language.”

6. Personal Appearance

Their dress pattern resembles that of the neighboring castes. Tattooing was a rare trait in the past which has been discarded by the younger generation at present.

In the past their male folks used to wrap a loin cloth of coarse cotton which they call as Ghagada. Males used to wear ear bulbs (Kundala) and bead necklaces made of stone. Female folks used to wear printed cotton saree and ornaments made of brass and bell metal in their nose, neck, wrist and ankle.

7. Settlement & Housing

Though they live in multiethnic villages, their wards are located separately at a distance from the wards of other communities.

Their houses are arranged in dispersed pattern located besides lanes and by lanes of the settlement. In the entrance or inside or outside of their settlement a small shrine is dedicated to the presiding female deity of the community named differently in different settlements. Their Houses are mud walled and thatched consisting of two to three rooms with a verandah in front, raised high above the floor. The veranda is used for sitting, dining and sleeping purposes. The walls and floors of the house are routinely plastered with a solution of cow dung and earth. In these days, the members of BPL category have been provided with pucca houses under various Government Housing Schemes.

8. Life Cycle

a) Child birth

Pregnancy and child birth is a welcome event in the Nalua family. They don't have any preference for the sex of the child. The birth of a male or a female child is welcomed without any discrimination and it is celebrated amidst drinking of date palm-sap (*tali*) and merrymaking with song and dance. Birth pollution is observed in three phases on the 7th, 12th and 21st days subject to area variations. On the seventh day known as *uthiari* both mother and the infant take bath and the mother resumes her routine household duties. On that day, the nuptial fire (*entudi nian*) is extinguished and thrown outside. There is some variation in observance of the final purificatory rite in different areas. The Naluas living in Cuttack, Jajpur and Bhadrak districts observe the rituals of *baratra* on the 12th day during which a feast with *tali* drinks is hosted for the friends, relatives as well as the community members of the settlement. On the 21st day the final purificatory rite i.e. *ekoisia* rite is conducted by the Naluas in all the four study districts (Puri, Cuttack, Jajpur and Bhadrak) during which the new born is made to lay on a banana leaf and their traditional community leader (Sardar) names the baby. In case of a female child the name giving is

solemnized on the seventh day of the birth of the baby. Only the Naluas of Puri district, who do not observe the *bararatra* rite host the feast on the day of *ekoisia*.

Singh, K.S (1995) has reported “After the birth of a child, pollution is observed and purificatory rituals like *sasthi*, *uthiari*, *baroratre* and *ekusia* are performed on the sixth, seventh, twelfth and twenty-first days after the birth. The child is named on *ekusia*.”

b) Puberty Rite

The community observes puberty rites for adolescent girls. A girl attaining her first menarche is secluded in an isolated room for a period of seven days. During this period she is tabooed to look at male persons and to attend any household chores. On the morning of the 8th day, the girl, anointing her body with turmeric paste and oil is taken to the nearby stream or pond to take purificatory bath with the help of seven women and then she is taken to the shrine of their patron deity after which the pollution period ends. In the evening her family hosts a feast to the lineage members, relatives and guests.

Singh, K.S (1995) wrote, “The puberty (*rajathala*) ceremony is celebrated on the seventh day after menarche and after the ritual, the girl customarily visits the Siva temple...”

c) Marriage

NALUA SABAR/SABAR/NALUA SABAR/SABAR KELA is an endogamous community and have only one *gotra* i.e. *nagasya*. In a settlement, the community is divided into several lineages (*kutumba*). In marriage, caste endogamy and lineage exogamy is practiced. Monogamy is strictly a common practice. Not a lone instance of inter caste marriage is heard of in the study villages. Marriages are arranged through negotiation. Formerly marriage by service was a common practice. Our informant in two study villages narrated us the past practice in acquiring mates. Initially the elders of boy's family visit the girl's village and ask for water to drink from the would-be bride's family. If it is offered by the later then, it is assumed that the bride's family has the consent for the proposal. The occasion is marked with relishing of food and drinks viz. *tali* (sap of date palm) by close kin members of both the families. Subsequently the boy lives in the house of his would-be in-laws for six months. During this period the boy has to demonstrate his expertise in trapping and hunting birds and earning livelihoods for the family. Once the girl's family is satisfied with the ability of the boy then the proposal is accepted by the girl's family. Accordingly, Sardars of both the villages are consulted to fix the marriage date.

In the past, payment of bride price was prevalent among the Nalua community. Once the marriage is fixed, groom's side offers bride price in kinds of rice, paddy, date palm toddy, goat, chicken, birds etc. for a feasting prior to the marriage. This is known as *khauni peula* meant for a community feast. The day, the bride price is offered by the groom's side, the kin groups of both the sides make merry with singing and dancing in the village. However, now a days, payment of dowry is in vogue and is paid by bride's side, both in cash and kind as desired by the groom's family. Dowry is settled depending upon the socio-economic status of the bride's family. Regarding their customary practices on payment of dowry (Singh, K.S:1995) viewed that, “At the time of marriage, dowry is paid either in cash or in kind or both.”

On the marriage day, the groom comes to the bride's place with his kin-group and Sardar of his village. On the marriage pandal both the groom and the bride are made to sit on a mat made of date palm leaves. In presence of their caste priest (Babhan), barber (Bhandari), Sardar and other elderly members, marriage is solemnized with exchange of garlands. Sardar used to recite a couplet in Odia viz. “*upare dharma debata, tale basuki mata, Budiki pani piile, tor kubar*” meaning “with the Sun god above, and the Mother earth

below (as witness, this marriage is consummated). In case of adultery/infidelity (the guilty will be punished)". The marriage ceremony is concluded with feasting and drinking of date palm toddy(*tali*). This is known as *danda baha*.

In instances, in which the bride belongs to a very poor family, they prefer to bring the bride to the groom's house and marriage is solemnized and consummated there. This type of marriage is known as *tola baha*.

A married woman is recognized by the ornaments she wears in her nose, ears, wrist etc. while a widow is identified bereft of any ornaments.

Remarriage of widows, widowers and divorcees are not permitted in Nalua society. In case of death of husband junior levirate (*diarabaha*) marriage is allowed with the approval of the Sardar.

Divorce is not allowed in their society. In case of recurrent conflict between husband and wife Sardars intervene to resolve the conflict.

Regarding their marriage customs (Singh, K.S:1995) wrote, "Divorcee, widow and widower remarriages are permissible. Widows and widowers are allowed to marry the younger brother or sister of the deceased."

d) Death

The NALUA bury their dead. After death the body of the deceased is anointed with turmeric and is given a bath before being taken to the graveyard (*danda*). They have their separate burial grounds usually located at a distance from that of other castes. In case of accidental death, they bury the dead body much deeper into the surface to get rid of the contagion. The period of mourning and death pollution continues for nine days. During this period, consumption of non-vegetarian foods is tabooed. The purificatory rite is observed on the tenth day. Their traditional community priest (*babhan*) officiates in the death ritual. After observance of purificatory rites, the bereaved family hosts a feast to guests, relatives and lineage members on the eleventh day. Annual commemoration ritual (*sradha*) is also observed for the ancestors.

Singh (1995:) narrated, "The dead are buried and death pollution is observed for eleven days. Mortuary rites like *tel*, *dasa*, *barapatri*, *barsakriya* and *sudhikriya* are performed."

9. Economic Life and Food Habits

Naluas are non-vegetarians. Rice is their staple cereal and they take it with *dal* and vegetable curry. They relish bird meat, chicken, eggs, dry fish etc. They are fond of date palm toddy (*tali*).

As stated by our informants traditionally, their main occupation was hunting and catching birds. In the past they used to move in groups and camp in forest. Apart from trapping and hunting birds, they also collected forest produce like medicinal herbs and roots and their women helped them in processing, storing and selling of the produce. With the introduction of Animal Welfare Act 2006, hunting and catching of birds is considered illegal and it served in weaning away Naluas from bird trapping and hunting.

Besides their traditional occupation of trapping birds using "Nala"; their womenfolk sell bangles, vermilion, *alata*, combs etc carried in a cane basket (*tokei*) to the women of neighbouring castes wandering from village to village. Therefore during Durga Puja, they worship Goddess Durga, putting the Nala and *tokei* before the Goddess.

This has been endorsed by **K.S. Singh**. "The trapping of birds is their traditional and primary occupation even now. A few of them are engaged in service or business and some are wage labourers. Their women sell glass bangles and cosmetic articles" (1995)

At present most of them possess small patches of cultivable land holdings as owners or share croppers and take up settled cultivation as their principal occupation. In the study villages a total of 74 households (15.98 percent) possess land and 389 (84.01 percent) households are landless families. The average land per land owning household ranges from 0.19 acres to 0.60 acres in the study villages. Besides cultivation they supplement their income by wage and agricultural labour, animal husbandry and small business.

They are economically backward. The average annual household income of studied households ranges from Rs.14,999/- to Rs.19,573 per annum. Therefore, out of 463 studied households 449 households (96.97 percent) are BPL households. Owing to a poor socio-economic status they are not able to embrace higher education. The total literacy rate in the study villages is 44.36 percent. While male literacy rate is 48.99 percent, female literacy rate is at 39.52 percent

10. Religious Life

SABAR/NALUA SABAR/SABAR KELA professes Hinduism. The presiding Goddess of their hamlet is installed under a tree at the entrance of their settlement. In our study villages, they are worshipped in different names viz. Banadurga, Bateswari, Khudrasuni, Basuli etc. in different villages. On festive occasions the village deity is offered with animal sacrifice viz. chicken, goat etc. In some study hamlets the team found the temple of God Nila Madhab, being the principal God occupying a central place in their hamlet. He is worshipped by their caste priest the 'babhan'. Besides, they worship all the Hindu deities and observe all Hindu festivals and rituals. Their major festivals are Nuakhai, Makara Samkranti, Gamha Purnami, Janmasthmi, Dasahara/Durga Puja, Kali Puja and Dola jatra. On the occasion of Nuakhai, ancestors are worshipped. As house deities they worship gods and goddesses of Hindu pantheon viz. Jagannath, Hanuman, Laxmi etc.

Singh, K.S (1995 : 707) has stated. "The Nalua Kela profess Hinduism, and family deities like Mangala, Sarala, Laxmi and Bimala are worshipped. Barunei, Thakurani and Siva are the village tutelary deities. They observe different festivals like Raja, Ratha Jatra, Dussehra, Kali Puja, Makara Samkranti, Pouse pusnei, Dol Jatra, Janmastami and Durgapuja, but Dussehra is their major festival"

As they live in multiethnic settlements, the village Brahman priest worships the deities in the village temples visited by the clean castes. Since, the community is placed in the lower rung of the social hierarchy and suffer from the stigma of untouchability they are tabooed entry into the village temples.

11. Folk Traditions

Our Key informants in the studied Nalua hamlets shared with us that they have a folk tradition of song and dance known as "sabara sabaruni" and "chadheia chadheiani" which they perform in groups. They form their song and dance groups of male and females in their villages. They dance and recite songs expressing their occupational tradition as bird trappers/hunters and rich mythological heritage as descendants of Biswabasu Sabar who used to worship Nila Madhaba in the Blue Hills (Nila Kandara).

Singh, K.S. (1995) reported that "Bhajan songs are sung by men. They also participate in village *kirtans*."

12. Political life

Naluas have their own traditional caste council known as *desa sabha* at the village level, headed by a *Sardar* who is assisted by a *Thikabhai*- their traditional messenger. The position of *Sardar* and *Thika Bhai* is hereditary.

The intervillage caste council is known as *Barabhai*. *Sardars* of near by villages represent their village in the intervillage caste council (*Barabhai*). In case, disputes pertaining to caste remain unresolved for a long time at the village caste council (*Desa Sabha*) it is referred to inter village caste council (*Bara Bhai*) and is resolved there. The meetings of the caste council at village as well as intervillage level is known as *Bichad*.

The traditional caste council serves as the guardian of their customary rules and adjudicate cases pertaining to family disputes, theft, extra-marital affairs and divorce etc.

Singh (1995) reported that “Intra community disputes are settled by their traditional caste council known as the *Jati Yana Panchayat* and also by the regional council known as the *Bara Paragana Panchayat*. The head of the village council is the *Behera*; the messenger (*dakua*) and the *bhadralok* are his assistants. The council also takes up social reform measures and organizes religious functions and social ceremonies”

13. Inter-community relationship

The Naluas are considered as *Kela* and an impure caste by their caste Hindus neighbors for their lowly occupation as bird catchers and therefore suffer from the stigma of untouchability in their villages. Caste Hindus in the village consider them lowly and physically untouchable because they hunt and eat birds like pigeon, heron, bat etc. In multi caste villages they live in separate wards located at a distance away from those of the caste Hindus. The higher castes like *Bramhana*, *Karana*, *Khandayat*, *Gauda*, *Gudia*, *Barika*, *Kumbhara*, etc do not accept cooked food and water from them. In the community feasts they are not allowed to interdine with caste Hindus. They are also debarred from entry to the houses of other castes in the village. To this day they still suffer from the stigma of untouchability.

On the other hand, the Naluas also maintain physical and social distance from other SC communities like *Hadi*, *Pana* etc. over whom they claim social superiority. From the latter, they do not accept cooked food and water, do not interdine with them and do not allow them house entry.

Owing to their unclean social status they are not allowed entry to the village temples, to draw water from wells and use bathing ghats used by clean castes. They have separate water sources for use in their hamlet.

The village, *Brahman* priest, barber and washerman who serve the clean castes do not serve them and they have their own caste men as service providers like the *babhan*- the priest and the *bhandari*, the barber and the *dhoba*, the washer man. They are not allowed to mix and mingle with other caste members during village feasts and festivals.

They are not allowed to share the village crematoria used by the clean castes. They have their separate burial ground where they bury their dead.

They are not allowed to share the village pandal with the clean castes in village meetings but are allowed to participate in the proceedings sitting in a separate row keeping distance from the clean castes.

In this regard Singh (1995) reported, “The Nalua *Kela* accept water and food (*Kachcha* and *pucca*) from the *Gouda*, *Karan*, *Bania*, *Khandayat*, *Mali*, *Suda* and *Chasa* and such other communities.”

The relative social status in the social ranking of the communities inhabiting the study villages in hierarchical descending order as gathered from the field is given below.

Caste Hierarchy in the Study Villages

Sl. No	Caste Hierarchy as Perceived by Village Community	Rank in the Social Hierarchy	Caste Hierarchy as perceived by Nalua/Kela/Nalua Kela/ Nalua Sabar	Traditional Occupation
1.	Brahman	1	Brahman	Priesthood
2.	Karana	2	Karana	Writers' Caste
3.	Khandayat	3	Khandayat	Military service & Farming
4.	Chasa	4	Chasa	Farming
5.	Teli	5	Teli	Oil extraction, Farming
6.	Gauda	6	Gauda	Milk Man
7.	Gudia	7	Gudia	Confectioner
8.	Badhei	8	Badhei	Carpenter
9.	Kumbhar	9	Kumbhara	Potter
10.	Kamar	10	Kamara	Blacksmith
11.	Barika	11	Barika	Barber
12.	Radhi	12	Radhi	Preparation of flattened rice (<i>chuda</i>), puffed rice (<i>mudhi</i>) and fishing
13.	Dhoba	13	Dhoba	Washer man
14.	Pana	14	Nalua Kela/Nalua Sabar	Hunting/Bird Catching, Farming
15.	Hadi	15	Pana	Disposal of the dead animal
16.	Nalua Kela/Nalua	16	Hadi	Drummer, Sweeper

V. The Present Situation & Conclusion

The key concern of the community living in the villages under study as ascertained through investigation is that during settlement operations their caste name is variously recorded as Kela, Sabar, Nalua Sabar, Nalua, Nalua Kela, Nalua Shabar, Nalakar Sabar, Sabar Kela etc in their RORs. Owing to this variation, they are confronted with situations as briefed below which they want to be resolved.

- i. In cases of persons having RORs where in their caste name has been recorded as SABAR or SHABAR have in some areas obtained caste certificates as ST
- ii. In cases of persons having RORs where in their caste name has been recorded as KELA or NALUA KELA have obtained caste certificates as SC.
- iii. In cases of persons having RORs where in their caste name has been recorded as NALUA, NALUA SABAR, NALUA SHABAR, NALAKAR SHABAR, SABAR KELA, they are facing difficulties in getting caste certificates as SC or ST as these names do not find place in the SC or ST lists of Odisha.
- iv. Moreover, the persons getting ST certificates as belonging to SABAR community are wrong ones as SABAR is not notified as ST in Odisha. On receipt of complaints against

issuance of such wrong caste certificates, the competent authorities are cancelling the certificates.

- v. Very keenly they feel that the community names like KELA, NALUA, NALUA KELA by which their neighbours call them is derogatory and discriminatory which gives them the identity and rank of an unclean and untouchable caste i.e. a Scheduled Caste in the local caste hierarchy. In the study villages, our informants stated that they feel humiliated when the upper castes in their locality identify them as Kela. Such caste identities is demeaning as opposed to their proud and glorious mythological tradition as the descendants of Biswabasu Sabar. They claim that as such they belong to the Great Sabar/Shabar community and therefore their true mythological caste identity as SAVAR / SHABAR be restored. Accordingly, their various caste names recorded in their RORs as stated above be corrected as SAVAR / SHABAR who are notified as ST in the State and caste certificates be issued to them as belonging to the ST. Thus they will no more be treated as an untouchable Scheduled Caste community.

VI. Conclusion:

The NALUA community is claiming the ST status as SABAR/SAVAR/SHABAR as against their present status of KELA, NALUA, NALUA KELA. To be considered for ST status a community is required to possess the following 05 criteria as prescribed by Govt. of India.

1. **Primitive traits,**
2. **Distinctive culture,**
3. **Geographical isolation,**
4. **Shyness of contact with the community at large and**
5. **Socio-economic backwardness**

It is pertinent to weigh and assess, how far the characteristic features found among the Nalua/Nalua Kelas are in sync with the above 05 criteria.

Primitive traits & Distinctive culture:

- Traditionally, the Nalua/Nalua Kela/Nalua Sabar were hunters and food gatherers but other sections of the Kela community such as Sapua, Nageswaria, Kondra, Pathania, Mundapotta, Bajikaria, Matia and Sabakhia Kelas were pursuing the same subsistence activities. All these Kela sections except Nageswaria, Kondra, Pathania have been notified as SCs in Odisha. Now for imposition of Wildlife conservation laws all these Kela communities have almost given up their past occupation of trapping and catching birds and animals and taken up agriculture as marginal farmers, share croppers or wage earners along with petty business, service etc.
- Their language is Odia which is not a preliterate language.
- Traditionally they have the institution of bride price *khauni peula*, the common practice of marriage by service. But in these days bride price has given way to the dowry system and marriage by negotiation has become the common practice.
- Like most of the tribes, the Nalua society permits junior levirate (*diara baha*) in case of death of husband.
- They have their own folk dance and song traditions though in Odia language.

Geographical isolation: Their settlements are located in multi caste villages in the coastal districts of Cuttack, Puri, Khordha, Kendrapada, Jagatsinghpur, Jajpur and Bhadrak etc and are not geographically isolated like the remote tribal pockets of south & northwestern Odisha.

Shyness of contact with the community at large: Shyness of contact with the upper castes is observed in their separate settlements located at a distance away from that of the settlements of other castes in the multi caste villages. The latter treat the Naluas as a lowly, unclean and untouchable caste and maintain social distance from them in many spheres of social interaction and do not permit acceptance of cooked food and water from them, inter-dining, house entry, temple entry, use of water sources, crematoria and the like. Hence the Naluas show shyness in their contact with the higher castes. Of course, several other sections of the Kela community living in Odisha face the same situation.

Socio-economic backwardness: Socio economic backwardness is clearly visible from their low income and land ownership pattern. Only 15 percent of studied households own land with a meager average of less than half an acre. Almost 97 percent of households belong to BPL category, earning an average income of less than Rs. 20,000 per annum.

Thus the Nalua/Nalua Kela/Nalua Sabar fulfils the last two criteria fully and the first two criteria very marginally.

On the other hand, as prescribed by Government of India, a community to be considered as Scheduled Caste is required to possess two characteristic features such as social discrimination and socio-economic backwardness due to the stigma of untouchability. The studied community Sabar/Nalua/Nalua Kela/Nalua Sabar fully conforms to both the characteristic features to be recognized as a Scheduled Caste community.

VII. Recommendation

Taking into account the facts and findings of the ethnic status study and analysis thereof on the characteristic features of the community as well as their plight in the present situation regarding the problem of issuance and verification of caste certificates as stated above, the State Government may take a considered view regarding the claim of their (Sabar/Nalua/Nalua Kela/Nalua Sabar) inclusion in the ST list of Odisha.

(Prof. A.B. Ota)
Director & Spl. Secretary

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ANNEXURE- I

**DATA ON HOUSEHOLDS, LITERACY, OCCUPTION, LAND HOLDINGS, INCOME & LIVESTOCK OF NALUA SAVAR/SABAR/NALUA
SABAR/SABAR KELA HOUSEHOLDS IN 05 STUDY VILLAGES**

SL No	Name of the Villages	No. of Households (HHs)	Total Nalua Sabar /Nalua Kela Population of the village			No. of Literates			Major Occupation	Total Annual Household Income (in Rs.)	Average Annual Household Income (in Rs.)	No. of Land less HHs	No. of Land owning HHs	Total Land Holdings of the Nalua SABAR H.H.(Ac)	Average land holding size per land owning HH (Ac)	Total No. of BPL HHs	Livestock
			M	F	T	M	F	T									
1	Ambapada	18	54	52	106	41	32	73	Hunting, Petty shop, Cultivation.	2 69 000	14 944.44	15	03	1.8	0.6	15	Hen, Cow, Bullock
2	Gopalpur	229	782	622	1404	332	254	586	Hunting, Daily labour, Petty shop, Cultivation, Govt.Job.	3 89 1000	16 991.26	200	29	6.7	0.23	226	Hen, Cow, Goat, Bullock
3	Mugapala	89	180	209	389	89	72	161	Daily labour, Hunting, Cultivation, Govt. Job	14 79 000	16 617.97	70	19	4.6	0.24	86	Hen, Cow, Goat, Bullock
4	Khamana	66	205	203	408	82	67	149	Daily labour, Hunting, Cultivation, Petty shop.	10 84 000	16 424.24	53	13	5.0	0.38	62	Hen, Cow, Goat
5	Patuli	61	155	164	319	63	43	106	Hunting, Daily labour, Cultivation	11 94 000	19 573.77	51	10	1.9	0.19	60	Hen, Cow, Goat
Total		463	1376	1250	2626	607	468	1075		79 17 000		389	74	20.0		449	

ANNEXURE- II

VARIATIONS IN CASTE NAMES IN THE RORs OF THE SAME PERSON OR PERSONS OF SAME PATERNAL KIN GROUP

SI No	Name of the Joint Tenant	Father's/ Husband's Name	Village Name	Tahasil	District	ROR/ Khatian No	Caste name recorded in RoR
1a	Upendra Patra Rabindra Patra	Naran Patra	Denga	Brahmagiri	Puri	22	Shabar
1b	Upendra Patra Rabindra Patra Sashi Patra Jadu Patra	Naran Patra Nila Patra	Denga	Brahmagiri	Puri	23	Nalua Shabara
2a	Bimali Patra(Wife)	Bhanja Patra	Pualigorada	Puri Sadar	Puri	147	Shabara
2b	Bimali Dei(wife) Bhramar Patra	Bhanja Patra Ram Patra	Pualigorada	Puri Sadar	Puri	161	Shabara Kela
3a	Kubera Patra	Bhobani Patra	Pualigorada	Puri Sadar	Puri	1	Kela
3b	Kubera Patra	Bhobani Patra	Pualigorada	Puri Sadar	Puri	76	Shabara Kela
4a	Hari Patra	Gauranga Patra	Deulabasta	Jatani	Khordha	229	Nalua Kela
4b	Hari Patra	Gauranga Patra	Deulabasta	Jatani	Khordha	04-11	Nalua Shabara
4c	Natabar Patra	Hari Patra	Deulabasta	Bhubaneswar	Puri	244	Kela
5a	Jogi Behera Dukhei Behera	Pashu Behera	Nahanga	Kendrapara	Cuttack	137	Nalua Kela
5b	Jogi Behera	Pashu Behera	Nahanga	Kendrapara	Cuttack	136	Kela
6a	Narayan Ch. Behera Goutam Behera	Rupakara Behera	Nahanga	Kendrapara	Cuttack	199	Nalua Kela
6b	Narayan Ch. Behera Goutam Behera	Rupakara Behera	Nahanga	Kendrapara	Cuttack	199	Kela
7a	Ranjan Kumar Das	Bhramara-bar Das	Gopalpur	Mahanga	Cuttack	980/ 182	Kela
7b	Rajan Das Draupadi Das Damayanti Das Dalayanti Das Padmabati Das(Wife)	Bhramara-bar Das	Naiguan	Salepur	Cuttack	396	Nalua Kela

8a	Maheswar Das	Bhramar Das	Angula	Soro	Balasore	004-27	Kela
8b	Maheswar Das	Bhramar Das	Angula	Soro	Balasore	331	Shabara
9a	Gaja Das	Suka Das	Angula	Soro	Balasore	91	Kela
9b	Rambha Dei	Gaja Das	Angula	Soro	Balasore	372	Shabara
10a	Kangali Das Burundu Das	Fogu Das	Angula	Soro	Balasore	473	Kela
10b	Burundu Das	Fogu Das	Angula	Soro	Balasore	281	Shabara
11a	Baraju Das Jogi Das	Atala Das	Tilo	Banta	Bhadrak	484	Kela
11b	Indramani Das Dayanidhi Das	Baraju Das	Gohira	Banta	Bhadrak	10	Nalakar Shabara
12a	Narana Das Angad Das Bailochan Das Kandua Das Khudi Das Bachu Das Sarang Das Khirad Das Nabha Das	Anu Das Gudu Das Jambab Das Nishakar Das Ugresen Das Muralee Das Bauna Das	Kalyanee	Dhamnagar	Bhadrak	318	Kela
12b	Kshirod Ch. Das	Muralidhar Das	Anlauti	Banta	Bhadrak	496/ 143	Shabara
13a	Pratap Das Banha Das Dhani Das	Jhamil Das	Meradha	Katia	Jaipur	132	Sabara
13b	Akshyaya Kumar Das Angad Das Babrubahan Das Purendra Das Latika Das Gadadhar Das Dulekha Das Manika Das Abanti Das Ghadi Das Tulia Das Nadia Das(wife) Jalandhar Das Ankura Das	Pratap Das Parasu Das Banchha Das Golekha Das Golekha Das Dhani Das	Meradha	Dasaratha- pur	Jaipur	35	Shabara

Empirical Ethnographic Study on the Social Status of Kandha Bagua community of Kalahandi and Bolangir districts of Odisha

I. Background

Some members of Kandha Bagua community have submitted a representation dated 25.05.2014 to the Government in ST & SC Development Department with a request to include their community in the Scheduled Tribes list of Odisha. Acting upon this, ST & SC Development Dept referred it to this institute to look into the matter and furnish considered views on inclusion of Kandha Bagua community in the Scheduled Tribes list of Odisha.

To determine the ethnic status of Kandha Bagua community an ethnic status study was conducted in three villages such as Sinang and Chianpadar of Narla block in Kalahandi district and Tupaudar of Muribahal block in the Bolangir district during the month of February 2018

II. Coverage of the Study

The study has been carried out in two villages of Narla block of Kalanhandi district and one village of Muribahal block in Bolangir district. The details of the area covered under the study along with number of households, population and ethnic composition of studied villages and target community is given in Table - 1.

Table-1

District	Block	Study Villages	Ethnic Composition	No. of Kandha Bagua Households	Kandha Bagua Population
1. Kalahandi	1.Narla	1. Sinang	Gauda, Sundhi, Kandha (ST), Gond (ST), Bagua, Domb (SC)	32	105
		2. Chianpadar	Gauda, Kandha (ST), Shabar (ST), Bagua, Domb (SC)	26	111
2. Bolangir	1.Muribahal	1. Tupaudar	Mali, Gauda, Barika Kandha (ST), Bagua Ganda (SC)	23	70
Total	02	03		81	286

III. Objective

The objective of the present study is to carry out an empirical ethnographic study on Kandha Bagua community so as to examine whether they possess the characteristic features to be eligible for the status of a Scheduled Tribe in Odisha.

IV. Methodology

- Relevant information is collected and analysed on ethnologic features, socio cultural practices, life cycle rituals, mode of marriage and death ceremonies, religious life and inter-ethnic relationship etc. of Kandha Bagua.

- For collection of empirical ethnographic data, tools like structured interview schedule, checklists as well as village schedule have been used. Individual and key informants have been interviewed with the help of the tools. Group discussions along with household census have been undertaken in the study villages to extract relevant information.
- In course of the empirical study, the data collected from one or more than one study village(s) has been cross checked in other study village(s) to ascertain the reliability.
- Data from the secondary sources such as ethnographic accounts and documents on Kandha Bagua community is not available for reference and comparison.

V. Study Findings

1. Nomenclature & Etymological meaning

They do not know why they are known as Bagua and the meaning of the term Bagua. They identify themselves as Bagua or Pragania and are also so called by their neighbouring castes and tribes. In some of their land records the community name is recorded as Bagua, Pragania, Bhogia and Ghogia. However it seems that the community name has been wrongly recorded as Pragania, Ghogia and Bhogia.

2. Origin and Migration

Kandha Bagua in our study villages of Kalahandi and Bolangir district stated that their ancestors had migrated from the Nandapur areas of Koraput district many generations back which is beyond their memory and settled down in the Kandha villages.

3. Population and Distribution

Being numerically a very small community not yet recognized as a ST or SC community their population figures are not available in Census. It is ascertained from the Kandha Bagua community that they are staying only in these three studied villages and nowhere else. The total number of households of Kandha Bagua community in the study villages as given in Table -1 are 81 and their population is 286 of which 146 are males and 140 are females. Their total literacy rate is 17.67 % and for the males it is 23.01 % and for the females, 12.19 %.

4. Surnames, Titles, Social Divisions & Groupings

In the study villages of Kalahandi and Bolangir districts they use only Pragania as their surname. They are an endogamous community and is divided into various exogamous lineage (*bansa*) groups such as Luha, Tupa, Jani, Pradhani, Beska, Bahanka, Dharua, Dhamania, Bag, Suna, Kumar, Munda etc. The community members belong to only one *gotra* i.e. *nagaysa*.

5. Language

They do not have a separate language of their own but speak Odia in western Odisha style which is an Indo-Aryan language. They claim that being younger brothers of the Kandhas their forefathers were speaking in Kui language. Later they were ridiculed and looked down upon by other castes because of this language. Gradually they stopped speaking Kui and started speaking Odia of western Odisha type similar to that of their neighboring communities.

6. Personal Appearance

Their pattern of dress and ornament does not have any peculiarity to distinguish them from other communities. They wear clothes similar to those of the neighbouring communities of the study area. However it is observed that some elderly men grow long hairs on the head. Tattooing (*bona*) in hands was prevalent among women. Women of Bairagi community used to make the tattoo marks in their hands. Use of ornaments are rarely seen among their women folk due to their low economic status. The elderly women wear ornaments namely Panla Mali and Khapla made of aluminum in neck. Girls use ornaments like ear rings (*chiorni*) and nose rings (*naktu* and *nakphul*), finger rings (*mundi*), necklaces made of cheap metals and bead necklaces (*mali*) etc. available in the local markets.

In the past males used to wear white cotton loin cloth and *gamcha* (napkin) and women used to wear saree known as Kapti all these made of coarse cotton. Nowadays, male youths are wearing trousers, pants, shirts, T-shirts and Lungi and younger women wearing cheap fine saree and blouse. But some elderly men are using Lungi, Dhoti, Gamcha and Banyan. Some males are wearing a sacred thread though it is not mandatory for them.

7. Settlement & Housing

They live in multi caste villages where their hamlets are located a little away from the wards inhabited by the upper castes, but they live near the Kandha hamlet. Due to limitation of space to accommodate increasing population their wards are getting expanded by construction of more houses which is reducing the distance between hamlets of upper castes and theirs. They mix and mingle very freely with Kandha community in the village. Their houses are small in size, mud walled and floored and roofs made of earthen tiles (Khapar). Nowadays, some of them in Tupaudar village have small *pucca* houses built under government housing schemes.

8. Socio Cultural Traits

a. FAMILY

In the Bagua community, family is patrilocal and patrilineal in nature. Majority of the families are of nuclear type and few joint or vertically extended families are found. Father is the head of family. Inheritance of paternal property is patrilineal based upon the rule of equigeniture. Usually daughters do not inherit paternal property.

b. LIFE CYCLE

Child birth

In Bagua families a male child is preferred to a female child because, in future he will shoulder responsibility of the family by earning and take care of the old parents and perform family rituals. Pregnancy of a married woman is an welcome event in Bagua family.

Elderly and experienced Bagua women assist in child birth. Soon after the child birth the elderly woman or the mother in law cuts the unbiblical cord of the new born with a knife or blade. The placenta is buried near the backyards of the house. They massage the baby with castor oil (*jada tel*) and bathe him/her in tepid water. Then family members give the mother boiled horse gram water (*garam kolatha pani*) to drink. Then the mother also takes bath keeping two hands over cow dung water container and rubs hands on her cheeks, ears and head.

On the seventh day of the birth or onwards after felling of umbilical stump (*naimundi*) of the baby, a purificatory rite (*sati*) is performed by the family members. On that day, they clean their house and get their clothes washed by themselves. But on the twenty-first day of the birth of a male child and the thirtieth day for girl child, both mother and the child take a ritual bath and wear new cloths. Then the family is considered free from birth pollution and the mother touches pots or utensils known as Ghanachuan to cook food.

Name Giving Ceremony is observed on the 21st day (*ekosia*) in which the child is named by the head of the family or the maternal uncle (*mama*) in consultation with the elderly people of the community. On this occasion, a feast is hosted for the close kins.

Breast milk is fed till the child takes solid food. According to them after four months First Rice Feeding Ceremony (*bhaat khuan*) is performed. They feed the child Khiri made of cooked rice adding molasses and milk. The first rice is feed by the child's parents. They pierce the ear of the girl child at the age of 7 years. They also shave first hair of the child at Harishankar or Nurshingnath temples as per their convenience.

Puberty rite

Bagua observe puberty rites for adolescent girls puberty called *kachla*. The menstruating girl is kept secluded for seven days in a temporary enclosure of the house or in a separate room if available. During this period she is considered impure and nobody physically touches her or the vice versa. During this time she avoids to see the face of any male members and takes rice and vegetarian dishes only. On the day of the termination of pollution i.e., usually on seventh day she is taken to a pond, river or well for bath. She takes purificatory bath applying turmeric paste on her body and head and now-a-days, they also use soap. After bath she is provided with a new saree to wear and then she returns home.

Marriage

In the Bagua society monogamy is the rule and polygyne is rare. The rule of residence after marriage is patrilocal. Since this small community resides in three of our study villages only their matrimonial alliances are confined within these villages only. As they are strictly an endogamous community, so far no inter caste marriage has been reported in the community. In case it happens according to their customary rule the couple will be excommunicated.

Usually arranged marriage (*bhiha*) through negotiation is preferred. Parents with the help of relatives and community members arrange the marriage. Payment of bride price Kanyamul is prevalent among them.

On the Mangin day they visit the bride's house with sweets, cakes (*pitha*), saree, bangles, and some *mahua* liquor etc. On that day the maternal uncle of the groom fix Kanyamul / Jhola (bride price) that consists of Rupees one to five in cash and some measures of rice. The marriage date is fixed in consultation with the bride's parents.

Marriage takes place in groom's house. Three days before the marriage day the bride and bride groom take bath in their respective houses in turmeric mixed water. On the wedding day the bride Kanya comes to groom's village with her relatives and friends after getting invitation from groom's side. The bride takes bathe with water kept in a pot in which mango leaves are put. Before marriage the groom sits on the lap of his Nona (father's sister) where a jackfruit branch (Mahulkena) is already planted in front of house under a structure covered with black berry branch (Jamdal). They apply turmeric paste and oil to Mahualkena and groom takes bath there. His mother then touches his cheeks with palms of two hands

and then sprinkles water on his two cheeks using mango twigs. Then groom wears *dhoti* and puts on his head a white napkin (*gamcha*) as *pagoda* (turban). Again while the groom sitting on the shoulder of a community member her mother touches his two cheeks. Then he gets down from the shoulder, enters into the house and sits in front of a pit (Kotensal). There they put rice *tika* on the forehead of the groom and the rice *tika* with vermillion on the forehead of the bride. The maternal uncle first makes *hatganthi* and then their parents. Then members present there throw turmeric mixed rice over bride and groom. Guests and relatives give gifts in cash or kind to the couple. The groom's family hosts a non-veg feast for relatives, guests and their community members. Mark of vermillion on the forehead and glass bangles are the marriage symbols for women. However, it is found that married women do not use vermillion regularly.

Other types of marriages like junior levirate (Bhauja Bhiha), junior sororate (Sali Bhiha) and cross-cousin marriage, love marriages (Udhilia), exchange marriage (Adalbadal Bhiha), Gharjuain Bhiha (son-in-law in house) are permissible though such cases are few. Divorce is granted with social approval. Remarriages of widows, widowers and divorcees are also permitted in their society.

Death

They bury the dead in the community's burial ground. Some of them who can afford go for cremation. The eldest son of the deceased at first puts soil on the dead body in the burial pit and then others help to cover the pit putting soil into it. People from other lineages or Bannthu barg (kins folk) give *mitha bhath* (food prepared without oil, salt, and turmeric) for three days to family members of the deceased. On the third day, the Bandhu Barag and the lineages members of the bereaved family observe *chotkaram* i.e., *telmakha* that means they apply oil on feet and hand to purify themselves. They eat bitter food prepared by mixing *neem* leaves known as *pitkhia*. On that day, they offer coconut, incense and rice in the burial ground to appease evil spirits (*duma*) so that they do not disturb the soul of deceased and he stays there happily and peacefully till the final death ritual is over.

On the 10th day final death ritual called *dasa* is performed. On this day, people belonging to other lineages of the community shave the head of the eldest son near a pond. After bath he wears a new white *dhoti* and covers his head with *gamcha* and comes back to house. They lit a lamp (*dipa*) in front of house and there they apply castor oil (*jada tel*) on their feet and head. Then they purify themselves by warming their hands over charcoal fire putting resin (*jhuna*) in it and touching their own ears and nose. On that day they sacrifice a small fowl in the name of dead person and they touch it and bury it near house. They do not eat non-vegetarian food on the day of *dasa*. They arrange a small feast in which the family members of the deceased eat first and then other members of the community eat.

They also observe Egar or Bar Patri on the 11th or 12th day. On that day they host a non-vegetarian feast for community people. They do not observe death anniversary (Sradha). Those who can afford go to Harshankar, Nursingnath and River Ganga for bone emersion and there they also shave head.

9. Economic Life and Food Habits

Since time immemorial, the traditional occupation of Kandh Bagua is accepting 'dan' customary gift from Kandhas living in different villages. Traditionally *dan* is received in kinds of crops such as paddy, Kandul, Aarhar, horsegram, Kulath, other agriculture products, as well as hen, goat, clothes. Now it is in cash.

For the purpose of receiving *dan* the Kandha villages are traditionally grouped into several *praganas* which have been distributed among different Bagua (Pragania) families. Regularly the Praganias visit the Kandha villages of their respective *praganas* for receiving *dan* on the occasions of different festivals and functions such marriage, death, birth, crop harvesting etc. While receiving *dan* they recite names of Kandha deities namely Barabhai, Bhima and wish for prosperity, well being and peace of concerned Kandha families. Sometimes they make night halt in the Kandha villages during observance of socio-cultural functions by Kandh people and at that time they do not enter into the house of Kandhas but stay outside.

According to the Kandhas the Baguas are considered as their Bhata. The Bhata used praise feudal rulers, traditional village chiefs and wished for their prosperity and peace. For this they get some gift in cash or kind. In this manner the Kandha Bagua also get gift *dan* from Kandha patrons.

The income from *dan* is not sufficient to sustain them. Hence they go for wage earning. Some of them raise poultry.

They are economically very backward. The average annual household income is Rs. 10 432/- only. Most of them are landless and all of them come under BPL category.

Rice is their staple food. Besides they take different vegetable curry, Dal and non-vegetarian items prepared out of fish, dry fish and meat. They do not take pork or beef. They drink *mahua* liquor by buying it from the local vendors. They also chew tobacco and smoke *bidi*.

10. Religious Life

Their main deity is Bhima. They worship Bhima and other household deities. They participate in worship of Dharani Deota, (Earth Goddess) – the principal deity of Kandha and twelve number Barbhai Bhima deities such as Aie Bhima, Jai Bhima, Sagadia Bhima, Nangul Bhima, Kulti Bhima, Sarag Bhima, Mancha Bhima, Jala Bhima, Stal Bhima etc. on different occasions like Nuakhai in Bodh (Bhadra), Dasara in Asin, Chait Parab, Semikhia (Eating of new Simb) in Magsir, Kandul Nua and Aamkhia in Chait. Besides, they also worship village deity Grama Devi who resides in *gudi* hut or small temple.

On different ritual occasions they offer Phulalia (puffed rice), flowers, Chandan (paste of sandal wood), Dhup (incense) to propitiate the village deity and household deities like Kalisundari, Padasan, Jarasandhen, Pathasan, Karmasan, Durasan etc. and sacrifice birds or animals like fowl, duck, pigeon and goat to appease their deities and ancestors. Some of them also keep photos of, Siba Laxmi, Ganesh, and revere them at household level.

They worship their ancestors (Piturpursh) and a number of household deities. On the occasion of Puspunej, Nuakhai, Dasara they make offerings to their ancestors.

They take the help of Gunia / Began belonging to Kandha community for curing ailments and disturbances caused by evil spirits like *bhut*, *pret*, *dumba*, *dain* etc.

They also participate in Hindu festivals like Ram Navami, Ratha Jatra, Dol Jatra etc. observed in the area. They visit Lord Shiva temples in the locality. They have their community priest - Jani who performs household rituals.

They perform *nichabata* dance singing songs like Kangar lagani on festiva occasions.

11. Socio-Political life

The head of the community is called Badaka Kanua who handles their customary matters and resolves disputes and quarrels within the Bagua community in consultation with the elderly persons of the community. Being a very small community confined to only three villages they have no traditional community councils at the village and regional levels.

12. Inter-Community relationship

They reside in multi caste villages where their hamlets are located a little away from the wards inhabited by upper castes. They live near the Kandha hamlet. The roof of their houses do not touch the roofs of Kandha or any other community. However, in course of time for population growth their wards are expanding there by reducing the physical distance between them and other communities.

In the local social hierarchy the Kandha Bagua occupy the position lower than the communities like Gouda, Mali, Sundhi, Barika. Kandha (ST), Gond (ST) and Shabar (ST); and higher than communities like Ganda (SC) and Domb (SC). The higher ranked castes viz, Gouda, Mali, Sundhi, Barika etc. do not take cooked food and water from Kandha Bagua; and also not allow them to enter into their houses.

Tribal communities like Kandha (ST), Gond (ST) and Sabar (ST) though claim a higher position and do not take cooked food from Kandha Bagua, they take water from the latter and mix freely with the Baguas. But their women neither take cooked food and water from the Bagua. However, the tribes along with other higher ranked castes do not sit with Kandha Bagua while eating in a village feast. On the other hand Kandha Bagua also do not take cooked food and water from castes like Ganda (SC) and Domb (SC) who are ranked lower to them.

In the village meeting Bagua people sit with other castes and their opinion is also taken on different issues. They participate in the village level rituals and functions like Dharani Deota Puja, Chait Parab, Nuakhai, Dasara, Simbkhia, Nua Kandulkhia, and Aamkhia and worship of village deity which are observed by the Kandha community and offer ritual items through Kandha priests - Jani and Pujari. Now-a-days, they also participate in Rama Navami festival observed in the village or locality.

It is learnt from the key informants of different villages that they in the past were not being allowed to use the well, bathing *ghat*, pond, river and tube well used by upper castes. But now-a-days such restrictions have been relaxed to a great extent. But, they have their separate burial ground as they are not allowed to use the cremation ground of higher castes.

They do not get the services of Brahman priest, washer man and Barber for performing their life cycle and religious rituals. They manage these events with the help of their own people.

VI. SUMMARY FINDINGS

- Kandha Bagua is numerically a very small community confined to only three villages ie two villages in Kalahandi district and one village in Bolangir district all of which have been covered under our study. As per our study their total population is only 286 and their literacy rate is only 17.67 % which is much less than the literacy rate of the STs and SCs of the State that is 52.24 and 58.76 percent respectively in 2011 census. Thus **educationally they are very backward.**

- Economically they are also very backward. Their traditional subsistence is derived out of customary “dan” (gifts of food in the past and now, in cash) which is a kind of begging from their Kandha patrons on the occasions of rituals and festivals that is hardly enough to keep their body and soul together. They have no other dependable source of livelihood as most of them, as per our study findings, are landless and therefore go for wage earning. **All of them come under BPL category.**
- They have no language of their own but speak Odia in western Odisha style. In the past they were reportedly speaking “Kui”–the Kandha language and given it up in course of time.
- They have no peculiarity in their pattern of dress and ornament to distinguish themselves from other communities. They dress and adorn like the neighbouring communities.
- They live in multi caste villages where their hamlets are located a little away from the wards inhabited by the upper castes, but they live near the Kandha hamlet. They mix and mingle very freely with Kandhas in the village.
- Some tribal characteristics are evident in their life cycle rituals. After child birth they perform purificatory rites on the 7th and 21st days. Name Giving Ceremony is observed on the 21st day (*ekosia*) in which the child is named by the head of the family or the maternal uncle (*mama*). For adolescent girls they observe puberty rites.
- Strictly, they are a small endogamous community whose matrimonial alliances are confined within the three villages they inhabit. Like other tribes, though arranged marriages with initiatives taken by the groom’s side are common, other types of marriage like junior levirate, junior sororate, cross-cousin marriage, love marriage, exchange marriage are permitted. Payment of bride price is customary. Divorce and remarriages of widows, widowers and divorcees are permitted with social approval in their society.
- Traditionally, they bury the dead and observe minor purificatory rite on the 3rd day and the final rite on the 10th day. They have no tradition of performing the annual *sradha* rite.
- Their religious beliefs and practices show some tribal traits. They worship tribal deities like Dharani Deota, (Earth Goddess) – the principal deity of Kandha and twelve Barbhai Bhima deities. Besides, they have a number of household deities as well as the cult of ancestor worship. These deities are worshipped with animal sacrifices during different rituals and festivals. They also believe in evil spirits and black magic and take the help of Kandha Gunia / Began for curing ailments and disturbances caused by evil spirits. They perform *nichabata* – a dance of their own singing their songs on festive occasions.
- In the local social hierarchy the Kandha Bagua occupy the position lower than the communities like Gouda, Mali, Sundhi, Barik, Kandha (ST), Gond (ST) and Shabar (ST); and higher than SC communities like Ganda and Domb. Traditionally, the higher ranked communities maintain social distance from the Bagua in matters of acceptance of cooked food, inter-dining, house entry, use of water sources and crematoria. They do not get the services of Brahman priest, washer man and Barber for performing their life

cycle and other rituals and so they manage these events with the help of their own people. It indicates that **they suffer from the stigma of untouchability**.

VII. CONCLUSION

- The Kandha Bagua, though possess some tribal characteristics which apparently they might have acquired in course of their close cultural contact with the neighbouring tribes, especially the Kandhas, their one traditional economic practice of receiving “Dan” (customary gifts) or in other words, “begging” stands on the way of recognition of ST status. None of the STs have this tradition. Especially in case of the Kandhas, some neighbouring SC communities like Panos, Doms and Hadis receive “Dan” or collect certain items of food and other articles on specific occasions or beg from their Kandha patrons.
- On the other hand the Kandha Bagua like the neighbouring SC communities ie, Ganda and Dom suffers from the stigma of untouchability. More over they are extremely backward socially, economically and educationally and so far are not notified as OBC or SEBC. Therefore, they badly need development assistance.

Taking these facts into account their case may be considered for the status of a Scheduled Caste

(A. B. Ota)

Director & Spl. Secretary

ANNEXURE-1

DATA ON HOUSEHOLDS, LITERACY, OCCUPTION, LAND HOLDINGS, INCOME & LIVESTOCK OF Kandha Bagua HOUSEHOLDS

ABSTRACT OF KANDHA BAGUA HOUSEHOLDS

SI No	Name of the Villages	No. of Kandh Bagua House-holds (HHs)	Total Kandha Bagua Population of the village			No. of Literates			Major Occupati on	Total Annual Household Income (in Rs.)	Average Annual Household Income (in Rs.)	No. of Land less HHs	No. of Land owning HHs	Total Land Holdings of the Kandha Bagua (Ac)	Average land holding size per land owning HH (Ac)	Total No. of BPL HHs	Livestock
			M	F	T	M	F	T									
1	Sinang	32	55	50	105	13	02	15	Beggary, Daily labour.	309000	9656.25	26	06	4.390	0.73	32	Hen,
2	Chianpadar	26	56	55	111	10	09	19	Beggary, Daily labour.	323000	12423.07	26	00	00	00	26	Hen,
3	Tupaudar	23	35	35	70	06	04	10	Beggary, Daily labour.	213000	9260.86	23	00	00	00	23	Hen,
Total		81	146	140	286	29	15	44		845000	10432.09	75	06	4.390	0.73	81	

Annexure - II

Village Wise Ethnic Composition & Total Population of Study Villages including target community

District	Block	Study Villages	Ethnic Composition	Total Households of Study Village	Total population of study village	No. of Kandha Bagua Households	Kandha Bagua Population
2. Kalahandi	1.Narla	3. Sinang	Gauda, Sundhi, Kandha (ST), Gond (ST) Bagua, Domb (SC)	290	1270	32	105
		2. Chianpadar	Gauda, Kandha (ST), Shabar (ST) Bagua, Domb (SC)	120	537	26	111
4. Bolangir	1.Muribahal	2. Tupaudar	Mali, Gauda, Barika Kandha (ST), Bagua, Ganda (SC)	357	1573	23	70
Total	02	03		767	3380	81	286