CHAPTER - IV

TRIBE-CASTE CONTINUUM: A STUDY OF RITUALS IN SAMBALPUR

There are two different views on the issue of relationship between tribes and caste-Hindus in India. Social anthropologists and ethnologists/ethnographers (Hutton, 1955; Ghurye, 1943; Bose, 1971; Vidyarthi and Rai, 1985; Baily, 1961 and Kosambi, 1970) maintain that many cultural traditions of Hinduism have organic links with the tribal cultures. According to them, the tribals have had continuous contact with their neighbouring caste-Hindus which in turn has helped them to practise settled agriculture and to live by a number of specialized manual industries. This contact goes back, at least to the days of the epics of the Rāmāyana and the Mahābhārata when the tribal communities were referred to as Jana. Ghurye (1943) goes to the extent by saying that tribals are nothing but backward caste-Hindus. On the other hand, the colonial administrators, census commissioners and anthropologists such as Risley (1915), O’Malley, (1909, 1910), Elwin (1943) and Haimendorf (1977) hold the tribal and Hindu traditions to be separate. In their view the tribals do not have more than casual contacts with the caste-Hindus. Haimendorf (1977:1) writes:

"For thousands of years, primitive tribes persisted in forests and hills without having more than casual contacts with the population of the open plains and the centres of civilization. Now and then, a military campaign extending for a short spell into the vastness of tribal country would bring the inhabitants temporarily to the notice of Princes and chroniclers, but for long periods there was frictionless co-existence between the tribal folks and Hindu castes in the society in the truest sense of the word."
Extensive studies by scholars present varied nature of the social realities in India. Though one cannot rule out the existence of isolated tribes in India and also of those tribals and caste-Hindus who have been living side by side for centuries. Hence, it would be unwise to think that there has been no acculturation process between them. In a given empirical situation, there is every possibility of co-existence of the tribal as well as the caste characteristics. There have been instances of individuals and small tribal groups being absorbed within the Hindu caste system in India. From 1872 onwards, the successive British census Commissioners in India noted that throughout the country tribal people were being transformed into castes (Risley, 1915:72; Sinha, 1980:6). But some of them have also had formed socially and culturally distinct communities and thereby identities in contrast to their neighbouring caste-Hindus (Vidyarthi and Rai, 1985:25).

II

Study of festivals and rituals acts as a mirror which reflects the images of religion, material culture, human behaviour, value systems, morals, ethics etc. In this chapter, we attempt to examine the impact of industrial urbanization on the folk-culture in Sambalpur. It is argued here that urban centre like Sambalpur has grown over the years along with folk-culture. In other words, the folk-culture has also come up along with the changes taken place in Sambalpur due to migration of people from different areas and the aggregation of economic activities
generated by the forces of modern industrialization. This does not mean that folk-culture is totally untouched by the modern forces. It can be demonstrated that the urban society like that of Sambalpur town affected by the process of industrialization, and constitutes a distinct socio-economic and cultural environment. This is in contrast to its sub-urban villages like Kainsir or interior villages like Gainpura included in the present study. The point that we want to make here is that although the urban society like that of Sambalpur town carries with it the folk-culture of this culture area and there is a continuity between the rural and the urban centres, these continuities themselves create a chain of settings having different magnitude of folk-cultural characteristics which may form a linear increase or decrease through a series of gradual degrees. The chapter is mainly based on the field data collected during 1988-89 from Sambalpur town and the two villages: Kainsir, a sub-urban village and Gainpura, an interior village of Sambalpur district in order to draw our conclusion at the micro level.

We have chosen the ritual aspect of the folk-culture to examine the rural-urban continuum in Sambalpur which is perhaps a result of the tribe-caste continuum in the area. The study of change is however, essential because many of the tribes have been absorbed in Hindu culture and sanskritized in different degrees which forms a chain of the continuum. Our emphasis will be on this continuum to record the regularities and irregularities of
their expressions within the Sambalpuri culture. Yet, it requires cross-cultural comparisons between the tribals and Hindus and between rural and urban areas which may reveal the various levels of differences and similarities. It may help us to understand the evolution of a regional culture in Sambalpur area. It may also specify the gradual infiltration and/or accommodation of various cultural items/elements in forming and evolving a distinct regional culture in the form of Sambalpuri culture. In other words, it may be suggested that tribe-caste continuum in Sambalpur area has helped the growth of Sambalpuri culture in western Orissa.

Festival is a collective ritual of rites for public religious observance. "The express purpose of these rites is to recall the past, and in a way to make it present by means of a veritable dramatic representation" (Nagendra, 1971:49; Durkheim, 1961:419). People seek to commemorate the mythic events and recall the legends with which these festivals are identified in order to keep alive the religious traditions connected with them. Renewal of links between past and present helps to "sustain the vitality of tradition and revivify the essential elements of the collective consciousness" (Nagendra, 1971:50). Festivals also provide means of escape from the humdrum and dullness of daily life and labour. These create an opportunity for interaction with other cultural groups and people and foster co-existence, particularly in an urban centre, among people of diverse cultural regions or backgrounds. When people periodically assemble to celebrate the rites, inter-personal relations are renewed and a
new consciousness among the individuals is produced. Their common bonds are reaffirmed; their group solidarity is reinforced and thereby society is recreated (Nagendra, 1971:49; Durkheim, 1961:390). Although the primary theme of most of the festivals is religious, they have their social and psychological ends as well. Festival is essentially social in nature and symbolizes the feeling of a whole community which promotes or fosters a fellow feeling among the members of the group(s) participating in that festival. Thus, it creates group solidarity, promotes we-feeling and group or cultural identity among the members. Also, festivals provide opportunities for social groups and individuals to gain release from tensions and obtain emotional satisfaction in an atmosphere free from native cares and anxieties (Singh, 1982:3). These features are shared by the festivals irrespective of the variations in their spread. Rituals, prayers, offerings, fasting, feasting, merrymaking, etc. are some of the important but not necessarily inclusive aspects of festivals. However, the process of continuity between past and present of caste-Hindus and tribals gives rise to a continuum which reflects a gradual change or transformation in the festival itself and in the rituals—offerings, prayers, thoughts and ideas of the people associated with the festivals over the years. This change may be due to conscious efforts of the people as a result of urban-industrialization in order to change it to a different form and meaning. Also, the change may be due to the traditional social processes namely sanskritization or tribalization or both.
Different festivals are found to be associated with different places in Orissa. Some of these are the Shitalashashṭhi of Sambalpur town, Raṭha Jātrā of Puri, Durgā pujā of Cuttack and so on. These festivals attract a large number of people from the far off countryside and of different cultural regions. Some festivals like Ḍālkhaṇi and Karmā, which are confined to particular groups or small areas, attract people from the neighbouring areas only. There are festivals namely, Nuakhai, Bhāijiti, Puojiti, Puspun, Gundikhai, etc. which are celebrated throughout the culture area of Sambalpur and attract only Sambalpurias residing in distant places. The conclusion which follows is that the festivals are of various types what Srinivas (1952:214-9, 226, 247) calls of various spreads and appeal1.

According to him, "In a very broad sense it is true that as the area of spread decreases, the number of ritual and cultural forms shared in common increases. Conversely, as the area increases, the common forms decrease." (Srinivas, 1952:214-15). Srinivas has also given a two fold typology of spread, viz. horizontal spread and vertical spread. In his view Brahmins everywhere in India have much sanskritic rituals in common, irrespective of their linguistic and geographical diversities. This commonness may be called as 'horizontal spread'. Relatively speaking, a linguistic area is a culturally homogeneous one. In any linguistic area the Brahmins share some cultural and ritual forms with all castes including the lowest ones in that area, has been called as 'vertical spread' (Srinivas, 1952:215). Sambalpuri culture belongs to the second type of spread i.e., vertical spread.
The different groups of population are said to be located at center or periphery in accordance with the forms and ways in which they observe their festivals. Majumdar (1972:263) believes that

"the Hindu caste structure is a device by which the groups at the periphery of Hinduism (tribes) are accepted into the greater Hindu society. At the outset a non-Hindu group (usually a tribe) is accepted at a lower rung of the caste hierarchy with the stipulation that can claim gradually higher status by absorbing larger doses of Sanskritization."

This is perhaps possible because of the basic Hindu doctrine: God (Brahma) is omnipresent i.e., He is within everything and can appear everywhere (Eschmann, 1978:79). Similarly, it may be suggested that the Hindu religio-cultural structure is a device by which deities and festivals other than that of Hindus are accepted into the greater Hindu religion. In the case of Sambalpur the Karmā, Ḍālkāi and Nuākhāi are being accepted at a lower rung of the cultural hierarchy with a hope to gradually gain higher status by absorbing a large dose of sanskritization. It means, tribalization is followed by sanskritization. Our general assumption in this chapter is that the process of sanskritization (universalization) is ultimately linked with the process of tribalization (parochialization). In this context, these two are contrasting but complementary processes of growth of Sambalpuri culture. An element of tribal culture needs to be transformed into a regional caste culture, as an essential first step for it, to be admitted into a greater Hindu society or vice versa. Our second assumption is that
transformation or change does not necessarily mean addition of sanskritic elements and replacement of tribal elements or vice versa; rather, this means a harmonious co-existence of both tribal as well as sanskritic elements in an empirical situation. The important points to be noted here are: Why all gods and festivals are not incorporated into the Hindu fold? Why changes are needed in the process of incorporation? These problems will be dealt by taking the examples of Samaleswari, Pāṭaneswari and other deities of Sambalpur who have been worshipped by both tribals and caste-Hindus. Also, since Sambalpuri festivals namely Karmā, Dālkhāi and Nuākhāi have been observed by both tribals and caste-Hindus, there is a gradual progression of these festivals from the tribal pole to the Hindu pole. The ratio of sanskritic and tribal elements varies from deity to deity and festival to festival. Consequently, a series of gradual changes are found in the magnitude of sanskritic and tribal characteristics. They form a linear increase or decrease through a series of gradual degrees i.e., continuum. The three festivals analyzed in this chapter are: Nuākhāi, Dālkhāi and Karmā. It is necessary, at this stage, to state briefly what these festivals precisely mean.

1. **Nuākhāi**: It is a tribal festival found chiefly outside the Sambalpur culture area. In course of the cultural development in this culture area, it has developed into a regional festival and is observed throughout Sambalpur region irrespective of caste and creed. In other words, the Nuākhāi has been absorbed into regional Hindu tradition and can easily be placed closer to the ideal Hindu tradition. 2. **Dālkhāi**: It is another tribal
festival. It has been observed largely by the tribals and lower castes of Sambalpur area. It has been sanskritized to a great extent through linking of the Dalkhâi Devi with the Durgâ of Hindu pantheon and has sanskritized its rituals. It can be placed somewhere in between Karmâ tradition and Nuâkhâi tradition. 3. Karma: It is still another tribal festival where sanskritic elements are found. It is observed by both caste-Hindus as well as tribal people. it can be placed closer to the ideal tribal tradition. The incorporation of tribal deities into the Hindu fold may be viewed as tribalization. But the degree of incorporation is directly linked with the amount of sanskritic elements in these deities. Out of the above three festivals Nuâkhâi and Karmâ are widely prevalent among the tribal groups of central India but Dalkhâi festival is observed only by the tribals and low caste-Hindus of Sambalpur area. Dalkhâi can be considered as part of the Sambalpuri folk tradition, owing to the fact that it is less sanskritized and it bears greater proximity to the ideal tribal tradition. Karmâ is more a tribal festival but also is well within the fold of the Sambalpuri folk tradition. It is our endeavour to show here that the transformation of a cultural element of the tribal society occurs in the form of its absorption into the regional Hindu society. The transformed cultural item may be placed with a distinct position, in the existing cultural hierarchy. Such transformation may, however, occur without any structural change in the social status of that tribal group within the existing social structure of the region as a whole. The relations between the caste-Hindus
and tribals may remain unchanged despite the fact that caste-Hindus may celebrate tribal festivals and vice-versa. Hinduism in its codified form is different from the tribal religion in many respects. For our purpose, we have tried to define two ideal levels of cultural systems of the tribals and the caste-Hindus in terms of rituals and festivals with the help of a set of characteristics as given below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TRIBAL</th>
<th>HINDU</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Uniconical image: Deities do not have definite shape and size. They are worshipped in the form of natural objects mainly as stone and tree. Deities are not represented as anthropomorphic icons, i.e. human figure icons.</td>
<td>1. Iconical image: Deities are worshipped in the form of anthropomorphic icons. The image is generally sculptured according to the rules of the Silpa Sāstra.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Appeared in human sensitive</td>
<td>2. Appeared in knowledge of tradition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. It is a human being (male or female) through which a deity appears and can be approached by Bhaktas. Deities descend generally through the professional Baruās(spirit possessors).</td>
<td>3. Deities appear through image and can be approached by men. Theologically, the god is never entirely identified with his image. He is beyond and above. By descending or partially descending into the image, the deity voluntarily enables devotees to approach her/him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Regular worship according to rules is not compulsory. Offerings are given on particular occasions. He/she may be propitiated according to the need at any time, whenever there occur diseases, flood, famine, drought or any other natural calamities.</td>
<td>4. The real presence of the deity in her/his image is ritually ascertained by the performance of the regular puja according to rules. Daily offerings are also given.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Considered to have limited strength or power. Destroys the enemy completely. Deities are of cruel nature &amp; tend to be dangerous.</td>
<td>5. No limitation in their strength, having all powers and able to rule over the world. But they show merciness.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. The deities are usually worshipped by the tribal or non-Brahmin priests.

7. Both vegetarian and non-vegetarian offerings are made to the deities. Animals like buffalo (Pōdh), he-goat (Bukā), cock (Ganjā), and chicken (Chiān) are usually offered to the deities. The sacrifice occasionally retains the idea of human sacrifice.

8. Not universal

9. The shrines are of the rudest description. The deities are seldom installed in a temple which is called Deul. The dwelling place of the deity is commonly found under a tree or under a thatched hut or a small piece of land is marked off by lines of stones or wooden poles.

10. Popularity of the deity and festival associated with is found in the village or in the nearby villages or in a community found in a village or spreading in a large area. The deity/festival may disseminate to other area or group (caste-Hindus) with the people migrating to these areas. This may lead to some modifications and changes. Local traditions and myths are heard of the deity. Once it comes in contact with the larger tradition like Hindu tradition, new myths and traditions are created and area of popularity increases. However, the stories and the tales explain the greatness of this tradition.

11. The tribals have no definite knowledge of reckoning time for the special/annual worship/festivals associated with the deities. Festival

6. The deities are worshipped mostly by the Brahmin priests.

7. Mainly vegetarian offerings are made to the deities excepting the Sakti form of deities such as Durgā and Kāli in the Hindu pantheology.

8. Universal

9. The deities are installed in the temples. Temple is a well developed institution in the Hindu tradition.

10. Popularity of the deity is Pan-Indianness. Purāṇas explain the greatness of this tradition.

11. The Hindus have developed definite knowledge of reckoning time for the special/annual worship/festival associated with the deity.
is celebrated only by getting the permission of the deity.

12. Most deities are cruel natured and tend to be dangerous. They are propitiated rather than adored. The rituals or festivals in honour of the deity are observed because they are thought to be responsible for curing diseases, well being of the children from the stage of bearing to rearing, ensuring security in economic activities, relieving anxiety, and restoring hope and confidence among the people. Thus, special sacrifices and festivals are held in order to induce them to remove the scourge. The rituals offered to the deities are not 'end in themselves; instead, these are means to achieve an end.

13. Female deities are generally unmarried.

14. Deities are considered to living on the earth.

12. Deities are mostly soft natured. They are not only propitiated but also adored.

13. Female deities are married.

14. Deities are considered as living in the heavenly abode.

IV

We have mentioned earlier in this chapter about the three main festivals – Karmā, Pālkhai and Nuakhāi – observed in the Sambalpur culture area. Here, we shall analyze these festivals as observed in Sambalpur town and in two villages of Kāiṣir and Gaṅpurā. We shall also examine our field data by referring to a few other studies conducted outside this culture area in order to enrich our analysis.

Karmā: It is a colourful festival observed by most of the tribes in central India and western Orissa. It is also prevalent among
the lower sections of the Hindu society in Sambalpur area. Evidently, the available literature identifies a wider area of celebration of this festival. The numerous tribes of the states like Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa and West Bengal celebrate this festival with splendid display. Although the festival is generally observed in the month of Bhudo/Bhādrava (August-September) or Dasrā/Āswina (September-October), it is celebrated by some tribal groups at other times of the year also. It is interesting to point out here that the aboriginal tribes unlike Hindus did not develop any proper system of reckoning with time (Bhaduri, 1944:148). It is principally the spring dance of the Gonds, Kols and Baigas of Raipur (Verma, 1973:123). It is known as May day festival among the Oraons in Raigarh of Madhya Pradesh and is celebrated when the rice is ready for planting (Guru, 1976:101). In some tribal societies Karmā is celebrated on the eleventh day of the bright fortnight of Bhādrava which corresponds to the date fixed for Pārśva Ekādasi, the Hindu festival. Yet, this is one of the very few tribal festivals for which the people follow a definite time in some cases (Bhaduri, 1944:149). Considering the wide prevalence and popularity of this festival among the tribal people, it may be suggested that Karma is closer to the tribal pole of the tribe-caste continuum. Its fixed time of observance/celebration indicates some influence of the Hindu system of celebration of festivals.

The uniconical image of the deity is a tribal characteristic as stated earlier. The adorable deity of Karma festival is
Karamsāni. She is not worshipped in the form of an idol. The 'Devi' is represented by a branch of sāl (Shorea robusta) tree\(^2\) which is called Karam gāl. It may be noted here that Sal does not represent or symbolize Karamsani in every tribal society. The Nagesia of Chhattisgarh in Madhya Pradesh (Danda, 1984:139) and the Oraon of Chhotanagpur (Sahay, 1976:99) and the Mundas (Roy, 1944:149) and the Santal of Chhotanagpur (Culshaw, 1939:427-32) areas worship Adina cardifolia on the occasion of Karamsani puja. Further, the Oraons of Chhotanagpur worship twigs of Kend (Diospyros melanoxylon) failing that of either Sinduār (Vitex negundo) plant or a Sākhuā (Shorea robusta) tree or of the Piāl (Buchanania latifolia) shrub (Roy, 1915:144-5). It is to be noticed that the tree-worship is prevalent among the Hindus too but in their case the identification of a tree with that of a god/goddess is almost fixed.

It is, thus, clear that Karamsāni can be identified with a twig branch of different trees in the same tribal group or in different tribal groups in different places. Very likely, this variation is owing to the availability of tree and also its economic significance in a particular area. For instance, in Sambalpur it is the twig branch of Sāl tree which is worshipped during Karam puja as mentioned above. The district of Sambalpur has an area of 6767.6 square miles and the forests in the district extend over an area of about 2351 square miles. The forests are of three main types: (i) forest of the Sāl trees which is the principal species, (ii) the dry-mixed forests, and
(iii) the bamboo forest. Sāl is preponderant covering more than 70 per cent of crops (Senapati and Mahanti, 1971:3,175-6). In 1961, there were 22 Saw mills in Sambalpur district. Of these 13 were operating in Sambalpur town alone, 6 were at Bamrā and 3 at Jharsuguda where chiefly Sāl logs were sawn and exported to the industrial towns in Bihar, West Bengal and Madhya Pradesh. A considerable quantity of timber was also supplied to the Railways (Senapati and Mahanti, 1971:177). Since forest has been occupying an important place in the tribal economy, it may be suggested that Sāl, which is abundantly found and which has also great economic values, is personified as Karamsāni.

The Karamsāni in her uniconical form is worshipped on a Bedi (altar) decorated with various kinds of flowers and leaves namely Āam (mango, i.e. Mangifera indica) and Jām (Syzygium cumini). This type of personification of a branch as Devi is not surprising as trees have held a special place in the spiritual tradition of India. The Indian history and mythology evidence the fact that trees have been associated with various Debi (goddesses) and Debtā (gods) and endowed with supernatural powers to cure diseases and prevent natural calamities. Similarly, Karamsāni has been regarded as the goddess of vegetation, fertility and destiny. People believe that by worshipping Karamsāni, they would get a good crop; the childless would get a child, they would be protected from all sorts of diseases, misfortunes, natural calamities and would live/lead a very prosperous, happy and wealthy life. Above all, the puja is celebrated for general well-being of the people. Thus, the root
of this festival is to be found in the name of Karamsani as the goddess of fortune. During the actual celebration of this festival the Jhāṅkar (the tribal priest) undergoes fasting on the fasting day. Some Dhāngrās (young boys) and Dhāṅgris (young girls) also observe fasting and go to the jungle with the Jhāṅkar. There they trace out the Karam tree from where a twig branch is to be cut off. At the out set, the Jhāṅkar has to beg its pardon for the injury he is about to inflict on it. At night, he does not shake a tree because the spirit of the tree is asleep and may be disturbed. The Jhāṅkar invokes Karamsāni and then cuts a branch from the tree. The twig should have five or seven patar (leaves). It should not have touched the bhūnī (earth) or affected by insects. The Jhāṅkar winds a red or yellow thread on the twig (generally seven times). Then the people bring the twig followed by dancing and singing on their way back to the village Gaiṅpurā (interior one). The Karam āl is kept in the middle of the bedi meant for puja. At night, the Deheri (priest) starts worshipping the branch. The village folk, mainly the tribals, sit down surrounded with great enthusiasm and devotion. Most of them keep Karmā brata or religious vows. An important aspect of Karmā brata is that it is kept so that their desires are fulfilled, while in some cases the people keep religious vows to celebrate performance if their desires are fulfilled. In other words, in one case the desired effects come before the celebration while in other cases these come after the celebrations.

The Kandha priest offers aruā chāul (raw/fried rice), sindur
(vermilion), kusnā (rice-beer) and the blood of a fowl to the
Devi. The sound of hulā huli or hul huli or ulu ulu⁴ (a sound of
joy made by women with the mouth which emits a shrill sound)
leaves a magical charm to the atmosphere. The priest does not
utter or chant any mantra unlike that in the Hindu festivals.
Thus, the mode of worship is very simple. After that the priest
tells the villagers a story in the glory of Karamsāni. The songs
are sung intermittently, the dance and Mādal (one type of drum)
provides the rhythm and music. Some songs are in praise of Kāli,
Bhabāni, Rudrāṇi or Karamsāni (the terrific aspects of Sakti).
Some of these songs are in Mālashree Rāg which is mainly used in
the tantric form of the mother-worship. Very likely, this is due
to sanskritic influence. Thapar (1966:160-1) writes:

"Practising Hindus were divided into two main sects,
Vaishnavas and Shaivas, each claiming Vishnu or Shiva as the
supreme deity ... Tantric beliefs made an impression on Hindu
worship as well and in Hinduism there developed the Sakti
cult, with their basic belief that the male can be activated
only by being united with the female ... This cult appears
to have been based on the persistent worship of the mother
goddess, which has remained an enduring features of religion
in India. Since this could not be suppressed, it was given
a priestly blessing and incorporated into the regular ritual
in the guise of the Sakti cult."

The Karmā festival ends next day with the ceremonial
procession of the Devi from the place of performance. The Karmā
gāl is taken to the door of every household. It is a mark of
expiating them from all sins and sufferings and blessing them
also. Essentially, this practice creates an impact on the
villagers by/in strengthening their belief and devotion to
Karamsāni. In Sambalpur town the practice of visiting of
Karamsāni to every household does not prevail upon as it is
practically not feasible in such a big town. Besides, the low caste-Hindus and the tribal people, who constitute a considerable number of devotees of Karamsāni, doubt if the deity would get that much amount of respect and honour by visiting caste-Hindu dominated areas of Sambalpur town.

In Gańpurā, Karmā is observed on various occasions. Bahmā Karmā is held in times of crop failure and drought which are caused by Bahmā, a kind of insect which destroys the crops. It is also called Karamsāni. At this time the people collect money from each household and observe Karmā pujā to appease the deity to save their crops which is supposed to sustain their life for the next full year. The other type of celebration is meant for the release from mundane sufferings, getting offsprings and so on. Thus, Karmā pujā is celebrated in times other than the day of Bhudo/ Bhādrava (August-September) Ekādasi to get blessings of Karamsāni and to recover from untold sufferings or miseries. Little differences are, however, observed regarding the rules of worshipping the deity at particular places. The Kandhas of Gańpurā village celebrate this festival on the eleventh day of the bright fortnight of Bhudo. The Binjhāls and Kols of Kāiṅsir (sub-urban) observe this festival during the Durgā pujā also. It is said that the Binjhāls of Padampur sub-Division observe this festival in a grand way after every three years. Tribals from various parts of Sambalpur area are invited to attend the ceremony. The Badā Karmā, as it is known, is unique in being a three-day festival especially for the young. It begins on the eleventh day of the month of Bhudo. Preparation for this starts
days in advance. In keeping with age-old tradition, boys and girls dance together. A large number of spectators come from nearby villages. Sometimes, Kandhas of Gaiñpurā and the Kols of Kāīnsir also attend this ceremony. The village which takes the responsibility of the Bad Karma also takes care of all the dance troops invited on the occasion to participate in the Karmā festival. From the social point of view, it is an important occasion to settle marriage relationships and to select spouses. It is to be noted here that like other tribal groups, the rituals of the Karmā puja in Gaiñpurā is not performed by any Hindu Brahmin priest. In Gaiñpurā the Kandhas have a priestly family of their own. The head of the family performs rituals and offers sacrifices to Karamsāni devi. The tribal priest has no special sacred language or mantra to chant to invoke the deity. He employs the language of everyday life, i.e., the dialect of Kandhas to speak to Karamsāni. Very recently, a Brahmin priest has been invited to assist the Kandha priest for the puja. However, he does not perform or help in the matter of animal sacrifice to the deity but he only chants some mantras. It is a clear indication towards sanskritization. This cannot be taken as an exceptional case. In a different case study, Singh (1982:99) writes about the Korwas who also invite a Brahmin priest to tell the myth of the Karmā puja after the sacrifices and offerings made by the tribal priest.

After the ritual part is over, the festival part starts. The entire night is spent in drinking and dancing. The Kusnā is a
home-made rice beer extensively used on the occasion. The young boys and girls drink, sing and dance collectively till the dawn round the Karam dāl. This is an occasion for merry-making for the young boys and girls. It is a time which provides them ample opportunities to know and understand one another. Consequently, they are able to select their life partners. All these may appear obscene to an outsider. But the meaning and understanding of an outsider does not carry any significance for them. In the present time, dancing throughout the night is discouraged by the tribals of the sub-urban village of Kāṁśir.

As compared to the Kandhas of the interior village of Gaiṅpurā, the Kols of Kāṁśir are relatively more educated. They have also regular contacts with Sambalpur town. Traditional festivals are not the only sources of entertainment for them. They visit cinema, theatres and other fairs and festivals in the town. They also do not want their female members to dance before a large audience. Further, the girls of the sub-urban village are educated and are influenced by the urban centre. Consequently, they behave in a straight manner and do not accept all those in the name of tradition which they think to be undesirable or unnecessary for their self-respect. Most of the tribals in Sambalpur town are Christianised. Notably, the Karmā pujā is guided by the Church in the town. A lot of restrictions are imposed on them in the matters of dancing, consuming liquor and animal sacrifice. But the Scheduled Castes of Sambalpur town, who also observe this festival, have incorporated some sanskritic elements in the ritual process of the Karmā pujā. Some of the
examples of this are the construction of temple of the deity, invitation of the caste-Hindus, use of Brahmin priest and so on. Several studies, discussed below, conducted mainly in the tribal zone of central India suggest that Karna is a tribal festival. But there is no restriction on caste-Hindus to participate in the puja. They contribute subscription and offer ritual (Bhoga or Parsad) to the deity. They, however, do not participate in the Karna dance even though they watch it. It is noteworthy here that cock or chicken sacrifice is not a common practice among caste-Hindus but animals like he-goat are generally sacrificed by them on the occasion like Durgā puja. The objects of ritual offer also indicate the association of a ritual with a particular class of people in the society because of the traditional belief system like purity-impurity associated with objects. The caste-Hindus offer arua chaul (sun-dried rice) ghee, sindur, fruits, flowers, milk, etc. but not fowl and alcohol which are considered intrinsically impure and highly polluting. The operative principle which stigmatizes these food items as polluted by caste-Hindus is clearly the same as that which applies to the people who offer them during ritual ceremonies. Thus, for caste-Hindus ceremonial defilement is connected with certain types of animal sacrifice and offering of alcohol as a ritual object.

Scholars like Vidyarthi (1969:179), Roy and Roy (1937:341), Singh (1982:106-12), Sinha (1982:114-5), etc. hold the view that Karam festival is borrowed from the caste-Hindus. Others
(Bhaduri, 1944:149) opine that it is essentially tribal in origin and, over the years, the ritual part of it has been sanskritized to some extent. According to Roy (1937:341), Oraons have adopted this festival especially from their lower caste Hinduised or Hindu neighbours. He also suggests that Karmu and Dharmu the two characters of the Karmā myth, are Hindu deities who have been incorporated into the tribal world. Singh (1982:106-12) holds the opinion that the Mundas, the Oraons, the Cheros, the Korwas and the Birjia have been performing this festival which is of Hindu origin. Dalton (1872) and Elwin (1949:487) who hold similar views about the origin of Karmā festival to a passage in the Bhavisya Purāṇa. Troisi (1949:141) writes that the Karmā festival is borrowed by Santhals from their neighbours but he does not specify this neighbouring group. Furthermore, a similar observation has been made by Orans (1965:38) who opines that Santals have borrowed this festival from Dekos i.e. outsiders. According to Culshaw (1949:114), Santals have borrowed this festival from Mahatos. In this context, he refers to various heroes of the Rāmāyaṇa in Karmā songs. Nonetheless, the Karma songs of the Gonds translated and published by Hivale and Elwin (1935) attest the popularity and significance of the Karmā among the tribals. These Karmā songs were collected from the Māṅḍla, Bilāspur, Rewā and Baigā Chowk of modern Madhya Pradesh. Lack of knowledge about a proper system of reckoning time for the Karmā festival, absence of idol worship, the sacrifice of animal like cock or fowl and libations of rice-beer to the deity, and wide popularity and prevalence of the Karmā festival among the
tribal societies, etc., together prove the fact that the Karmā festival has a large amount of tribal elements. On the other hand, it could also be argued that Karamšāni is a tribalized version of a Hindu deity or god. The tribalization of the God is necessary because only then he would become acceptable to the tribal people. It may be noted here that the caste-Hindus do not propitiate any god or goddess of fortune (Karmā) as such. They do not perceive any specific god for fortune too. The general people believe that any god or goddess can change fortune of a person at his/her pleasure. It might have happened in the past that when the tribals came in contact with the caste-Hindus, they were very likely impressed and influenced by the Hindu idea of Karmā i.e. 'man is predestined by birth'. Later on, they would have conceived this idea and personified it as a 'Devi'. In Sambalpur also, Karmā is widely prevalent among the tribals. She is equated with the Hindu deity Durgā, the Divine mother who is worshipped in one form or the other throughout India. Bose (1967:202) rightly states though in a different context that "Hinduism has grown by the incorporation of many tribal cults, until it has become a kind of federation of religious beliefs and practices." In view of the above, it may be suggested that the caste-Hindus, particularly low caste people, who reside in close proximity with the tribals have shared this religious culture of Karmā from tribals at one time and have succeeded, to some extent, to sanskritize the festival. In other words, no culture is in a static order or form. It keeps adjusting with other neighbouring cultural system and at times makes fundamental changes in order.
to get acceptance in other cultural traditions. Understandably, the close contact and co-existence between tribals and caste-Hindus over the centuries have paved the way of rapid cultural interaction in Sambalpur. The economic inter-dependence and cooperation between them at various levels have also speeded the rate of cultural interaction. In a rural-urban context, changing economic relationship has made it easy for all people to exchange cultural values. Some educated tribals living in the urban area like Sambalpur have made the transition from traditionalism to modernism bypassing the Hinduization and Christianization. It may be noted here that it is usually the Hinduised or Christianised tribals who generally have migrated to Sambalpur town. But their next generation who are born and brought up there are more exposed to the urban social environment, modern ideals and values rather than the traditional ones. However, the number of such cases is very limited and is found more in the case of economically well-off class of tribal people in Sambalpur. Understandably, the process of socio-cultural interaction in an urban setting like Sambalpur has led the change whereby people of diverse socio-cultural background and faiths are drawn together. The religio-cultural relationship, taken over the years in Sambalpur, has developed into a cultural identity of the people of western Orissa. The identity has been filled with a new socio-political awareness and has become a mighty driving force of the cultural identity in Sambalpur. It has often been characterized as 'regionalism', 'chauvinism', etc. which will be dealt in the next chapter-V.
DALKHAI: Unlike Karmā, Dalkhai is a religious festival observed by the female members of Binjhāl, Saurā, Kuḍā and Mirdhā tribes during the Dasrā (September-October) which coincides with the Durga Pujā of caste-Hindus all over the country (Senapati and Mahanti, 1971:129). Dalkhai has always been a part of the tribal religious culture of Sambalpur area having a strong secular tone. The dance aspect of Dalkhai, known as Dalkhai dance, is considered to be a dominant form of entertainment for the rural as well as urban masses in Sambalpur region. As compared to Karmā festival, Dalkhai is more popular in Sambalpur and is centred more towards the Hindu pole of cultural tradition. On the occasion of Dalkhai festival, the Dalkhai devi is propitiated. Like Karmā, Dalkhai has also its roots in the mother-worship. But unlike Karmā, a series of rituals are connected with Dalkhai which continue for three days. The festival starts on the eighth day of the bright fortnight of the month of Dasrā i.e. Aswina (September-October) and concludes on the 10th day of the Sukla Pakṣha (bright fortnight) in the same month as per the Hindu astro-calendar. Very likely, this coincidence helped Dalkhai to be a form of Durgā who has numerous shrines all over the country. Each shrine has different name and is worshipped in that name. It might have also happened that after a long period of co-existence of tribals and caste-Hindus, the tribals of Sambalpur borrowed the idea of Sakti cult and tribalized it as Dalkhai form so as to incorporate in their society. According to a local source, it is the great mother Durgā who is worshipped in Her Dalkhai incarnation. This is why, Dalkhai pujā starts with Durgā pujā
among the tribals of Sambalpur. In this sense, this is tribalized version of a Hindu religious system.

Dalkhai is a ritual observed by the tribal Bahen(sisters) for the well-being of their Bhāe(brothers). They put on clothes, ornaments and amulets presented by their brothers to symbolize their wish for a happy Bhāe-Bahen(brother-sister) relationship. They worship Dalkhai offering Her sindur (vermillion), Jitiā (sacred thread is tied around one hundred one duba(Cynodon Dactylon) and the same is packed along with the same number of arua chaul i.e. sun-dried rice). Then, the same jitia is put on the head of the brother by the sister. It is called Bhāi Bandhāni. If the lady has more than one brother, she has to prepare same number of jitiā. On the previous day, i.e. on seventh day of Dasra, the sisters observe fast and on the next day i.e. on Asṭami they perform the ritual of Bhāi Bandhāni. The same ritual observed by the caste-Hindus of Sambalpur region on the same day, is called Bhāijitiā which is typically a Sambalpuri custom.

Like Karamsani, Dalkhai is also not worshipped in the form of any idol or anthropomorphic form. Instead, it is represented by a bunch of branches of Anlā (Emblica officinalis), Aam (Mangifera indica), Kendu (Diospyros melanoxylon), Chār (Buchanania latifolia), Mahul (Mudhuca latifolia) and Jām (Eugenia jambolana) etc. Thus Dalkhai signifies the goddess of the forest. Significantly, all the important forest products mentioned above are put together and offered rituals in honour of
the forest deity, i.e. Dalkhāi. From the economic point of view, both males as well as females contribute their families and societies in a tribal society. As the tribals of Sambalpur are patriarchal, patrilineal and patrilocal, it is above all the male members who dominate over social life in Sambalpur. This is why, perhaps, sisters perform this ritual to protect them against evil influences. The tribal girls worship the deity. They do not employ any Brahmin priest. There is also no temple of Dalkhāi devi, though there is a temple of Karamsāni in Sambalpur town. The deity descends through human beings and answers the questions of the devotees. One point is clear that Dalkhāi pujā is associated with jungle products and vegetation and it has some connection with the tribal economy which is based on jungle or forests.

The differences between the Dalkhāi pujā of the tribal women and that of the Bhāijitiā of caste-Hindus are that the tribal women offer rituals to Dalkhāi devi, whereas Hindu women worship Durgā. Secondly, the deity is not found descending through human beings in the case of Bhāijitiā pujā of caste-Hindus. A similar kind of festival is found widely among Hindus in the name of Rakshā Bandhan which is celebrated on the full-moon day of Bhādrava (August-September). It seems that efforts are being made to localize (Tribalize) Durgā, the Hindu deity and the ritual like Rakshā Bandhan. So, it may be suggested that the same ritual is observed by both the tribals and non-tribals of Sambalpur in two different names.
Like Karamsāni festival, Ğālkhāi can also be studied through the concept of 'spread' given by Srinivas (1952:214). The localization of a Pan-Indian festival like Rakshā Bandhan was essential with a view to make it acceptable to the local tribals, otherwise, it would have not been adopted by the local tribals of Sambalpur area. Over the years, the caste-Hindus also developed a local version of this festival what is known today as Bhāijitiā. The Ğālkhāi dance which is the secular part of this religious tradition is performed by the Scheduled Castes of today namely Gangā, Ghasiā, Pān, Keuṅt and Gaug along with the tribals of Sambalpur. The songs, which are sung at the outset, depict Ğālkhāi devi as Kāli, Rudrāni, Bhabāni, etc., all the terrific aspects of Gouri. It is a clear indication of the sanskritic influence. Pradhan (1984c:20-32) writes that Ğālkhāi has been influenced by the tantric cult. He indicates the rectangular shape of Ğālkhāi Kuṅhi which is further sub-divided into sixteen quarters having a specific deity assigned to each quarter. He also opines that there is influence of tantrism on the Ğālkhāi ritual. In this context, it may be noted that Sambalpur area was a strong-hold of tantrism before the advent of Chauhans. During the medieval period, Sambalpur was a seat of Tantric Buddhism where the Sambara Tantra was propounded by Pitopada, a famous Siddha (Senapati and Mahanti, 1971:446). Therefore, the possibility of tantric influence on Ğālkhāi ritual cannot be ruled out.

Musical instruments other than Dhol (a kind of drum) used in Ğālkhāi dance are Nisān, Timki, Muhuri and Ghuṅgru.
Understandably, these are the most popular musical instruments which are known to have been traditionally owned by the Scheduled Castes in Sambalpur. The age old norms and values attached with this section of the Hindu society have made them impure and socially disabled. The sense of impurity is so acute that the caste Hindus of Sambalpur practically look down upon even the musical instruments played by them. Significantly, the music produced by these so called untouchables from their aforesaid instruments is deemed auspicious in various social and religious functions. Moreover, caste Hindus of the interior village keep themselves aloof from these musical instruments. They believe that the contact with these instruments would pollute them. In that case they have to change their clothes. Although the caste-Hindus participate in the pujā by contributing subscription and offering rituals, they remain outside the dancing ground like that in the Karam Pujā. Very likely, they consider it socially demeaning to be a part of Ğāḷḵāī dance alongside the low castes and the tribals. Some people in the village even discourage their children from visiting the dancing ground. Parents hold the opinion that the dancers make vulgar gestures and also often sing songs of the similar types. Therefore, participation of caste-Hindus in Ğāḷḵāī dance of the interior village is limited. On the other hand, performing of Ğāḷḵāī dance has been almost stopped in the sub-urban village. Villagers do not show any interest towards the Ğāḷḵāī ritual observed mainly by some Scheduled Castes and tribes. Even though, the educated people of this village do not oppose this practice, they also do not
participate in the ritual process. They do not want to dishearten their old people; they are also sure that after them Dālkhāi ritual or community dance will lose ground in the village.

Evidently, all these feelings and attitudes are not so strong in an urban setting like Sambalpur town. During Shitala Shashṭhi, the Durgā pujā and Viswakarmā pujā processions, the crowd itself participates in the Dālkhāi dance, performed mainly by the Scheduled Caste artists on the streets. The question of pollution does not arise here. Further, girls of caste-Hindus learn various forms of Sambalpuri folk-dance in the cultural associations. They are also invited by the government, both state as well as central, to present their shows before the State's guests. They are also invited on the occasions at Delhi. They have also participated in various 'Festivals of India' abroad and 'Apnā Utsavs' in India. This is a part of urban sophistication and will be dealt in chapter VI. It may be noted here that the people of Sambalpur town in general are not aware of the basic ideal of the Dālkhāi festival. They only know the Dālkhāi dance with some vulgar elements. All these years, they have heard Dālkhāi music, played in the rural areas, either by the traditional musicians on various social occasions, or by the urban based folk artists in the auditorium or on AIR and TV stations at Sambalpur town. Traditionally, the entire dance performance was taken as a form of worship, culminating in a feeling of devotion. In due course, the sweet rhythm and music of Dālkhāi would have very likely attracted their neighbouring
 caste-Hindus. In consequence, they have incorporated it in their religio-cultural occasions like marriage, birth, initiation and religious processions. Be that as it may exist today in many forms for entertainment both in rural as well as urban Sambalpur, the Dāłkhāi ranks the foremost. It is a combination of all other forms of entertainment like music, dance and songs. The themes of Dāłkhāi songs like those of Karmā are mostly based on love and desire which is openly charged with eroticism. The love story of Rādhā and Krishna, the episodes from the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata and the description of natural scenery are represented through the songs which is followed by dance. These mythical characters of Hindu traditions are depicted as mere human beings having hope, desires and aspirations like that of a common human being. These perhaps inspire the young boys and girls. Therefore, the Dāłkhāi dance is very much secular in nature apart from its ritual aspect (Das, 1984 a: 91; Panda, 1984b: 180). According to the local source, Dāłkhāi like Bhāijitiā was celebrated throughout Sambalpur area. But today, it is restricted to a small area constituting the villages of Sambalpur and Bolangir districts only. Following reasons may be assigned for this. Firstly, the spread of education and corresponding change in the taste of the common people has affected the traditional Dāłkhāi dance. Secondly, the erotic quality of Dāłkhāi songs appears obscene to the semi-urban people or audience. And thirdly, there is external interference in this communal dance as Dāłkhāi lures some miscreants. It is, however, to be admitted that in the interior village under study.
the Ḫalkhāi dance has been reduced, just like Karmā dance, to the level where it functions only as a stimulant for passion. Since long, social estimation for the Ḫalkhāi dance had become so low that it had been preserved for a special kind of entertainer. The caste-Hindus felt at that time that it was shameless to watch Ḫalkhāi dance, for Ḫalkhāi tradition was dominated by the strong tradition of romantic-erotic love. The mythical heroes and heroines like Rādhā and Krishna were portrayed as earthly creatures with strong passion and sentiments, as mentioned above.

In a rural-urban context, the revival of Ḫalkhāi dance by urban based cultural organizations is one of the most important features of folk cultural regeneration that have taken place in Sambalpur region during the past one decade or so. It was necessary for the dance tradition which was gradually dying out.

The Ḫalkhāi music and dances performed in the urban auditoriums are now carefully composed by well-known artists so that everybody can enjoy them even in the presence of one’s family members like parents and other respectable persons. However, the artistic out-put of these urban based cultural groups reflect their constant and relentless search for the perfection of this tribal dance tradition of Sambalpur area. They are trying their best to give this art style a new dimension and a new direction towards its universalization. Modern means of entertainment like cinema, video, audio cassette, radio and television, etc. take away a large chunk of its audience. Yet, the same modern technologies have helped these art styles to reach a wider audience which was not possible in old days.

The question of
cultur-e contact and of change is of vital importance in the case of caste-tribe or tribe-caste continuum. It is clear from this discussion that Pālkhāi is a specific instance where tribal as well as caste elements co-exist. Similar to Karamsāni, the Pālkhāi can also be viewed as a tribalized version of a Hindu goddess. This way only the goddess would become acceptable to the tribals. It is how efforts are being made with the tribal elements in order to modify the Hindu deity at various levels of socio-cultural absorption. Another important point is that in this process of continuum the cultural elements are moving upward without breaking the structural barriers. In other words, the elements of tribal culture have been successfully absorbed into the Hindu culture without incorporating these tribal groups into the Hindu fold. Thus, it is essentially a process by which the festival or ritual is nativized by the Hindus so that they appear to be authentic to the local people and cease to be viewed as alien intruders.

**NUAKHAI**: The main occupation of caste-Hindus in the villages is cultivation. The great majority of tribal population also are cultivators and the rest are generally turned as farm servants and labourers. The important tribes of Sambalpur district like Saurā, Gonḍ, Binjhāl, Mirdhā, Bhumiā, etc. are now settled agriculturists (Senapati and Mahanti, 1971:116-8). The Nuākhāi is an agricultural festival of both tribals and caste-Hindus. It is observed all over the culture area of Sambalpur. The literary meaning of Nuākhāi festival is 'eating of new rice ceremony.' It is the day of rejoicing and merry-making for the people of
Sambalpur as agriculture is their main occupation. Since paddy is the staple food of Sambalpur area, the rice crops sustain their hope and determine their fate. So, a non-agriculturist is also that much concerned about this ritual as a cultivator is. It may be noted here that paddy occupies 84 per cent of the total cropped area in Sambalpur district. Regarding varieties, there is a local saying: Munusra nām jete, Dhanar nām guṭe unā tete. It means: "As many names as man has, Has paddy only one less." This saying is also quoted in the Settlement Report, 1926 of Sambalpur district. It signifies the importance and significance of rice as a crop in Sambalpur. In this context, it is also worthwhile to quote the following account of paddy varieties from King's (1932:132-3) Gazetteer: "The cultivators state that there are over 300 varieties of seed in use, and the Inspector of Agriculture, who is in charge of the agricultural farm at Sambalpur, claims to have collected 250 varieties from the villages of Attābirā, Sāson and Bargarh Thanas." Thus, the significance and utility of 'Anna' or rice in daily life of Sambalpurias is obvious. Notably, the Hindu sacred texts also identify paddy as a synonym of life itself.

"Anna Brahmeti Hyājānat
Annadeva Khalwimāni Bhutāni Jāyānte,
Annena Jatani Jibanti
Annam Prayantiabhisam Bishantiti"

(The other name of Anna is Brahma. Brahma is Iśwara, i.e. God. So, Anna is Iśwara or God. Each life is born out of Anna. Anna is the source of energy. After death, Jiva or anything having a life, transforms into Anna for others. So, the significance of
Anna is realized in every stage of life. Thus, Anna is the source of life, happiness and a part of soul)

"Ahamannā Mahamanna Mahamannam...
Ahamannādo...Ahamannado Ahamannada...
Ahamanna Manna Madantama ...Drwi...
" (God says that He is Anna. I am the only receiver of this Anna. Whoever takes Anna, I accept that Anna.)

"Annadbhabanti Bhutani Parjanyadanna Sambhabah
Yagna Dbhabanti Pajnyo Yagnakarma Samudbhaha
Karma Brahmodbhbabam Bidhi Brahmakshara Samudbhbabam
Tasmat Sarbagatam Brahma Nityam Yagne Pratishthitam"

(Animals are born out of Anna. Rain is the source of Anna. Yagna is the source of rain. Brahma is the source of 'Karma' and Brahma is the supreme reality. So, everybody depends on Yagna. What is this Yagna? The other name of Yagna is Karma. It is through Karma or labour that Anna is produced. Anna is produced through agricultural operations; and it is the Dharma or duty of human beings to produce Anna through agricultural works.)

In view of the above quotations, it may be said that it is the economy that determines the cultural life of people. The economy of Sambalpur is based on agriculture as stated earlier. It is the fruit of toil round the year that fulfills the needs of the community at large. Consequently, it is a matter of great joy for the peasants and farmers admiring the fruits of their efforts. The celebration of Nuakhai by the tribals in Sambalpur may therefore, be viewed as a tribalized version of a Hindu notion of 'Anna' or paddy.

The new rice of the harvest is regarded as sacred. It is strictly a taboo for any one to eat the new cereal until
ceremonial rituals are performed for Samaleśwari, the reigning deity of Sambalpur. She is the true mistress of their lands, according to the common people in Sambalpur. As a token of reverence and veneration to the reigning deity, the newly grown rice is first offered to Samlei i.e. Samaleśwari; then the parsād made from the new rice is taken by the people before they eat their new rice. People believe that the ceremonial rituals are an acknowledgement of the Devi’s lordship over the land and the crop. In other words, it may be said that Nuākhāi is a ritual after which the newly harvested rice gets the status of consumable item.

Nuākhāi is one of the most important annual social and religious festivals of Sambalpur area. It greatly influences the life and culture of this area. There is no fixed day for the celebration of this festival. The festival is held sometimes during the bright fort-night of the month of Bhudo, i.e. Bhādrāva (August-September). It is the time when the newly grown Kharif paddy starts ripening. Every year, the day and time of the observance is decided astrologically by Hindu priests in the name of Samlei. Brahmin priests sit together at the Brahmapurā Jagannāth temple in Sambalpur town and calculate the time. It may be noted here that observances of the day and time are not common throughout this culture area. Tithi (date) is calculated in the name of Pāṭāṇeśwari in Pāṭnāgarh and Bolangir. Sureśwari in Sonpur, Māṇikeśwari in Bhabani Patna and so on. This is why a common day of observance is hardly found in all the places,
although these places belong to one culture area. According to the local source, each deity has an area of exclusive influence which corresponds, more or less, to old gadjat boundary. This tradition has been maintained since ages by the people of this area.

In some cases, the time of celebration is fixed in the name of the local zamidar or gauntiā of the village once the day is fixed in the name of the reigning deity of that area. It shows how efforts were made in the past to localize the Nuākhāi ritual. It also reflects the traditional nature of a village society in Sambalpur, and the role and dominance of the local head-men of the villages over the people. According to the local source, such feudal hangover still exists in some villages of Sambalpur area. The incorporation of Hindu idea of astrology in the reckoning tithi or an auspicious day or time may be viewed as a later development. Most probably, when the caste-Hindus started migrating then the local tribes adopted the idea of astrological calculation of tithi for the Nuākhāi festival. Similarly, when caste-Hindus adopted Nuākhāi from the tribes, they had to put some sanskritic elements so as to make it acceptable to caste-Hindus in Sambalpur. However, there was an attempt made during 1960 to fix up a common tithi for this festival all over the Sambalpur area. Later on, the attempt was not workable. Be that as it may, fixing of the tithi for Nuākhāi is a corporate responsibility. Once it is fixed, it is the duty of the individual family to see that the festival is properly celebrated.
Nuǎkhāi is celebrated both at community as well as domestic levels. In Sambalpur town the ritual is offered first at Samlei temple. Then the individual family worships to its Kul Deōtā i.e. deity of the family and also to Laxmi. In both the interior and the sub-urban villages, people first offer rituals to the village deity. Then, they worship in their respective home and offer rituals to the domestic deity. The rituals are performed with the help of a Brahmin priest. It has to be noted here that apart from the rituals associated with Ḍālkhāi and Karmā as discussed earlier, the Hindu priest or Brahmin is not required at the time of some other rituals namely Gunḍikhāi and Puojitiā of Sambalpur area.

Nuǎkhāi has a rich and glorious tradition of its own that has been observed more or less by all the major tribes in central and eastern India, of course, with a slight difference in their nomenclature. The instance can be given of Jeṭh Nawākhāi among the Dudh Khariā and Pāhāri Khariā, Nawākhāṁī among the Oraon and Birjia (Singh, 1982:24,74), Jom Nawā among the Munda (Singh, 1982:74) and Birjia, Jânther or Baihār-Horo Nawāi by the Santhal (Singh, 1982:74), Gondli Nawākhāṁī by Christian tribals of Ranchi district, Nawā by the Birjia, Nawā Jom by the Birhor (Singh,1982:75), Dhān Nawākhāṁī by Korwa (Singh,1982:27,75) and so on. Russel and Hiralal (1975:326) have mentioned about the Nawākhāṁī festival of the Parja, a small tribe found in the Bastar region and Orissa. Gautam (1977) has also mentioned about the new corn offering and eating rice of Santhals in Santhal Pargana which they call Jom Nawā. Das Gupta (1978) has noted the Nawā ceremony of the Birjia, a section of the Asura tribe of
Chhotanagpur. Bhaduri (1944:149-50) gives a short note on the celebration of this festival known as Kawajom among the Munda. Chatterjee (1984:48) has identified this festival of Tripura known as Mikatal where Mi stands for paddy and Katal refers to new. It is celebrated in the month of Aswina (September-October). In Bengal and in the coastal districts of Orissa, this festival is called Nabanna by caste-Hindus. The main objective of this festival is to get social sanction to a new crop, and also to invoke the deities to bless the land with abundant crops. Just like Karmā and Dālkhāi rituals, the Nuakhāi can also be studied through the concept of ‘spread’ given by Srinivas (1952).

The wide prevalence and popularity of the Nuakhāi ritual among the caste-Hindus other than tribals of Sambalpur, however, indicate that it may be placed somewhere near the caste pole. The mode of its observance and the numerical dominance of the tribal people in the past in Sambalpur support the argument that Nuakhāi was basically a tribal festival and that the caste Hindus gradually incorporated it in their fold when they came in wider contact with the aboriginals of Sambalpur. The fact of a fixed time of observance decided astrologically by Hindu pundits (Senapati and Mahanti, 1971:131) also indicates strong influence of Hindu ideas in later phase to give it a sanskritic colour and image, when the festival was celebrated in a mass scale in Sambalpur. It was, perhaps, essential for them that a tribal ritual could have got a place in the Hindu religious culture in Sambalpur.
It is commonly said that originally the Hindus were celebrating the Nuakhai or Nuakhai festival. Over long period of interaction between tribals and non-tribals in Sambalpur, the tribals borrowed this trait from caste-Hindus. Be that as it may, one point is clear that it is the tribes other than the common Sambalpuria who are celebrating, at present this festival. Secondly, as it is the case with all aboriginal tribes, there is no fixed point of time for celebration in Sambalpur. Thirdly, it appears that the word Nuakhai has a lot of similarities with the names given for the same festival outside this culture area, as discussed earlier. Very likely, Sambalpuri name Nuakhai has been borrowed from the tribal names of the same ritual and given a regional content. Fourthly, during Nuakhai day people celebrate their dinner at night with non-vegetarian food. Eating of non-vegetarian food during the celebration of a Hindu religious festival is generally not permissible. There is a local saying that if a person does not eat meat on that day, he/she will be born as a 'Baka' i.e. swan in the next life. Significantly, people irrespective of their caste background eat meat on this day. Although it is ethically undesirable on the part of a Brahmin to have non-vegetarian food, he does not mind to accept it on this day. In this regard, a number of respondents contacted for the purpose of the present study hold a similar opinion that meat-eating has become a general phenomenon among the people of all castes.

The basic idea behind Nuakhai - performance of ritual ceremonies before eating new paddy - which is derived from a
Hindu tradition - was easily absorbed by the tribals because they were also settled agriculturists. It seems that the tribals started celebrating the new rice eating ceremony as usual in different names when they became settled agriculturists. This idea of ceremonial eating of new paddy was applied in other areas also. For instance, in the Gundikhāi festival held on the full moon day of the month of Phagun i.e. Phālguna (February-March), the people of Sambalpur do not eat mango before offering it ritually to the deity. In sum, efforts are made to tribalize celebrations of a number of rituals and festivals which might have been non-tribals in their origin and essence.

On the occasion of Nuākhāi ritual, caste-Hindus worship Laxmi along with their family deity. It is the house-hold dimension of this festival. An important characteristic and similarity of this ritual is the 'mother worship'. Though there is general similarity in the Nuākhāi systems of the tribals and that of the caste-Hindus of Sambalpur, what they differ in from each other is the relative importance they attend to the different supernatural powers/deities/goddesses recognized in their respective areas. Yet, Nuākhāi is not confined unlike Karmā and Pālkhāi to any particular ethnic group or community in Sambalpur. It is, above all, a mass festival in terms of its collective nature and the sincere involvement of tribals and caste-Hindus in Sambalpur, whereas, outside this culture area is not a mass based festival and is confined in many places largely to the family and group only.
**Continuum in the Folkculture in Sambalpur:**

There are two versions about folk-culture that it is (a) a whole in itself (Dundes, 1965; Islam, 1984), and (b) a part-culture (Foster, 1953; Unnithan, Singh and Dev, 1965; Oommen, 1984). The social and cultural anthropologists have been led accordingly to identify Indian traditions into tribal, folk and Hindu. For us, the Sambalpuri folk-culture is the culture of the Sambalpur area which corresponds, more or less to modern western Orissa and some eastern parts of Madhya Pradesh. As it has been discussed in the case of three ritual festivals in Sambalpur, the Sambalpuri folk-culture is not neatly identified either with the tribal or with that of Hindu type. Although it is difficult to find out the exact position, the Sambalpuri folk-culture lies somewhere along a tribe-caste axis. Due to this position of Sambalpuri culture, the tribal or Hindu type of cultural elements are common in all the individual cultural items. But the proportion or ratio of tribal elements to caste-Hindus is not equal in all the cultural elements as it has been examined in case of the three ritual festivals in Sambalpur.

Evidently, both the Karmā and Dālkhāi traditions have progressively absorbed the Hindu values and ideas through centuries. The Dālkhāi and Karmā dances are very popular in Sambalpur. But still there is a sectarian attitude about these rituals and dances. It is the secular i.e. recreational aspects of these two traditions which are capable of binding all the castes and creeds of Sambalpur. Even after conversion into Christianity, the tribals are found observing these festivals.
guided by the priest and Church. In this case, particularly the Karmā tradition has developed into an admixture of three religious cultures - tribal, Hindu and Christian - thereby has given it a unique identity. Karmā, Dālkhāi and Nuākhāi, as said above, are festivals as well as rituals and have also recreational as well as economic aspects. It is to be noted here that none of these aspects is opposite to one another, rather these are complementary to each other. Thus, ritual, economic and recreational etc., are different parts of the same structure. They jointly constitute a complete system of organization i.e., festival (Niyogi, 1987:65). Further, it is to be noted here that all the aspects of festival are not present in all the cases in all the times. Even though Niyogi (1987:65) writes in a different case study in Bengal, it is equally applicable in case of Sambalpur too. In some cases or places only the recreational aspect is given importance, in other places people show greater motivation towards the ritual part, and still other places the economic aspect is prominent in the form of melā and village market. Empirically, we have noticed that recreational aspect of Karmā and Dālkhāi are more prominent in Sambalpur town. Even in the case of Nuākhāi festival, it is the food and drinks which provide colour to this festival in Sambalpur town. On the other hand, in the village like Gainpura it is the economic aspect (see chapter VI) which gets significance apart from its ritual and recreational aspects. Furthermore, the ritual aspect of Karmā and Dālkhāi is properly maintained in this village whereas the ritual has lost its importance to some extent in the sub-urban village.
of Kainsir. In sum, a gradual change in the ritual or sacred aspect has been found when one moves from rural to urban areas. A gradual increase of secular or recreational aspect has been noticed from the rural to urban areas. Therefore, festival is a combination in different proportion of secular as well as sacredal values in Sambalpur. Considering the variations in the ratio of this combination, these festivals may be put in a rural-urban axis. In this process of continuum, Karmā occupies a place somewhere near to rural pole, Nuâkhāi near the urban pole and Dālkhāi in the middle of these two.

Karma and Dālkhāi are believed to have dual personality. On the one side, they are gracious mothers and on the other, they are ferocious powers. They are the saviours and preservers of the tribal world. They are provider of welfare and thereby are merciful towards people. But they are destroyers also if seasonal rites are not performed for them. In the interior village, to a great extent, they regard the various natural objects and phenomena as living deities and as possessing tremendous will and power. Consequently, they visualize them in various forms and worship them. They appease these deities in order to maintain the age-old social order in their society. It may be suggested here that such an imagination had, in all probability, helped tribal people to easily tribalize the Hindu ideas and consequently led to the Karmā and Dālkhāi and Nuâkhāi festivals in Sambalpur area. Since all these rituals are carried on under the supervision and guidance of elderly persons or local priests, the practices
attest their tribal origin also. The rituals are clean and are performed in a very simple and humble way which is quite natural to ordinary life. It also reflects that these rituals are far away from the complex sanskritic rituals although some attempts have been made towards the incorporation of sanskritic norms in their ritual processes as stated earlier. Though the caste Hindus in the interior as well as in the sub-urban villages find it demeaning to take part in Karmā and Ḍālkhāi dances, they do not mind to participate in the ritual aspect of these festivals through contributing subscription and offering pārsād to the deities. According to the local sources, the role of feudal chiefs in emulating the caste Hindus comes to play in many ways. When the non-Hindu kings, jamidārs and gauṁtiās embraced the Hindu way of life, in the past, their subjects also followed them. In a similar way, the Hindu subjects of the tribal chiefs had to acquire the way of life of tribals to some extent for a peaceful co-existence. The role of the Hindu pundits and Hindu religious scriptures also played a great role in attracting tribes. Now-a-days, community festivals namely 'Nām Yagha', Durgā Pujā, Ratha Jātrā and Shitala Shashthi of caste Hindus have attracted the tribals too.

Apart from all these, the various types of involvement of people in the temples like Samaleśwari, Buḍhārajā, Sāmiā and other Jagannāth temples attract not only the caste-Hindus but also the tribals of Sambalpur. Such an inter-mixture of tribe-Hindu religious faiths is very common in the sacred shrines of Sambalpur town and in the interior and sub-urban villages under
Thus, any study of sacred institutions and the patterns or processes of ritual performances will help in understanding the ratio of intermixture of tribal and Hindu elements. These may be arranged in a sequential order on the basis of their differential magnitudes.

(tribe)----Karmā-----Dālkhai-----Nuakhāi----(Hindu)
Sambalpur
Folk-culture

There are some professional artists who perform Karmā and Dālkhai dances when invited on various socio-religious occasions like marriage, birth, initiation, name-giving ceremony and so on. Over a period of co-existence and cultural interaction between tribals and caste-Hindus in Sambalpur, songs based on the themes and characters of Hindu pantheon such as Rādhā, Krishna, Gopi, Rām, Laxman, Sītā, etc. have been incorporated into the main Dālkhai and Karmā songs. Besides, many things concerning family and social life are also rendered through these songs. This depicts a vivid picture mainly of the rural life in Sambalpur which is, more or less, similar to that of the other parts of India. Now-a-days, love episodes of Rādhā and Krishna dominate the scene. When Rādhā and Krishna are appropriately portrayed on the stage, they are presented as a social couple to the audience. The portrayal becomes true to life and the two are no longer divine beings; rather, they are a pair of human lovers and are not much different from the hero and heroine of a traditional village.
In view of the above, it may be said that inspite of their origin in the precinct of religion, Ōakāhāi and Karmā have come to stay as the main entertainments of the common people in Sambalpur. The tribal thinking could perhaps, never conceive of a festival without pre-dominance of dance and music, which make the festival more effective and also serve an important aspect of human needs. However, many cultural associations in Sambalpur town, have successfully modified the Karmā and Ōakāhāi dances to suit the urban audience. Apart from having performed on the occasions of the Republic Day celebrations and International Trade Fairs at Delhi, they have gone to foreign countries in connection with the Festivals of India. They have been regularly invited by the authorities concerned to perform at the time of Apna Utsavs and Orissa Day celebrations and also to perform before the State’s guests. As a new experiment, a good number of dances ranging from the solo to the group have been performed before the urban audience by these cultural associations. There is no denying the fact that in course of time the Ōakāhāi and Karmā in Sambalpur town have moved away from their religious shackles. The forms of these dances in the rural areas have assimilated a lot of entertainments drawn from the social life. Some of the inherent aspects of life incorporate to dances are — quarrel between husband and wife, between wife and sister-in-law, between co-wives, amorous behaviour between an old man and a young wife, between brother-in-law and sister-in-law, etc. The dances are generally accompanied by humorous songs and dialogues. While Karmā and Ōakāhāi are primarily embodied with oral recitals
of composed songs, there creep in occasional comments from
amongst the audience or there is a jocular lengthy tag at the end
of a verse from within the participants. All these help the
performances to assume a magnetic charm. The folk artists
themselves produce beautiful lyrics based on the themes from
Hindu myths to express ideas and feelings. "Knowledge and
perfection in the creation of such song is a spontaneous one
which develops over a period of time in the process of continuous
participation" - replies an old man during the data collection.
What he wants to mean is that there is no formal education or
training to be acquired for an individual for the creation of
these art styles. Our respondent further adds that "each and
everybody is an artist. Consciously or unconsciously, every body
contributes towards the enrichment of folk tradition." Thus, it
may be said that the creative genius and wealth of an individual
is reflected through their spontaneous songs which are also
stimulant for passion. In contrast to this, the artists of
cultural associations in Sambalpur town work vigorously to
compose a Karmā or Ḍālkhāi song. There are also well known
lyricists in the town who opt writing as a profession. They write
for AIR and TV artists. In a cultural association, the dance
director, music director and the artists sit together and improve
the songs, dance, tune and music. It also helps in the exchange
of ideas and opinions between different minds. Make-up and
costumes play an important role in characterization and
atmosphere. Unlike a performance in the interior village, the
artists of Sambalpur town use various colour powders and
cosmetics to enhance the spectacular aspect of the show. Light and stage decorations are also properly maintained. Thus, these dance forms have become an urban sophistication in Sambalpur town.

In sum, the deviation deliberately done in an urban setting like Sambalpur is purposeful, to provide popular entertainment to urban people. There is no denying the fact that when commercial values and attitudes have crept into them, the religious values are subsided or subdued. The cheap songs based on love and sex are very common in the interior village. When these rural artists are invited to perform on the occasions of various religious procession in Sambalpur town amorous songs and gestures lure the people during the dance easily. Consequently, they earn some monetary rewards also. Thus, the primitive urge common to all human beings is reflected on such occasions. This is openly expressed in the rural areas and it is occasional in the urban areas.

The levels of cultural symbiosis existing in Sambalpur has led to a distinct type of culture and cultural identity of the people there. A tribe is generally characterized by strong in-group sentiment, viewing one's culture as autonomous with reference to other groups (Dammen, 1984; Singh, 1965). But the presence of religious rituals like Karmā, Pālkhāī and Nuṅkhāī gives us a clear idea of culture diffusion. These elements of tribal culture particularly in Sambalpur are no more autonomous as compared to caste-Hindus. It has crystallized over the long
period of time as a result of culture contact between both the tribal and caste-Hindus, when culture traits of various groups move from one social group to the other and from one social setting to the other. Therefore, one can find an exquisitely woven pattern of myriad cultural strands, vedic and non-vedic, tribal and non-tribal in Sambalpuri culture. Moreover, this culture as powerful media help today in spreading a cultural consciousness among the people of Sambalpur (see chapter V).

Since time immemorial, Sambalpur has been inhabited by different types of tribal groups. Mobility of cultural elements can neither be ruled out nor can be comprehended in one conceptual frame. Cultural elements of the types are being integrated over the centuries, depending on the dominant caste or tribe of a particular place. Besides, there are also some religious rituals confined to their respective social groups. So, very likely, both were in the past, largely in the process of integration forming a new culture, i.e. Sambalpuri, barring a few instances where the growing feeling of tribalism or Hinduism/casteism stood in the way of such mobility. This mobility in cultural line did not proceed any more at a particular point of time, and there evolved a new culture what we call today 'Sambalpuri'. At this level of cultural symbiosis in Sambalpur, the growth of a distinct culture in the name of 'Sambalpuri' has led to a distinct type of 'cultural identity' too.
It is clear from the previous discussion that non-Hindu festivals like that of Nuakhia, Dalkhai and Karmā are the tribalized versions of the Hindu values. The two processes - tribalization and sanskritization - are not opposite to each other, rather, they are complementary to each other. Consequently the regional folk cultural system in Sambalpur has been evolved. In this part we will discuss four deities of three social settings under study: Bhim and Jhāribuḍhi of the interior village of Gainpura, Kāntāharien of the sub-urban village of Kainsir, and Samaleśwari of Sambalpur town. Our general hypothesis in this context is that the process of tribalization is intimately linked with the process of transformation of tribal deity into a regional caste-Hindu deity and subsequently its acceptance by the larger community or the greater Hindu society. In the case of festivals we have seen the incorporation of Hindu values into tribal rituals and subsequently adoption of those rituals by caste-Hindus. Now, we see the gradual admission of the tribal deities such as Bhim and Jhāribuḍhi of the interior village, Kāntāharien of the sub-urban village and Samaleśwari of Sambalpur town in the folk religious system of Sambalpur. At the same time, we have also seen that the tribalized version of a Hindu idea has been essential to be acceptable to the tribes.

We should turn our attention, at the outset, towards the characteristics of the above mentioned deities. We have already seen in the previous section that the deities safeguard the interest and welfare of the people in villages as well as in
Sambalpur town. It has been found that the Samaleśwari of the Sambalpur town is commonly worshipped by all throughout this culture area. Bhim deotā and Jhāribudhi of Gainpura are worshipped in the village. People of the nearby village use to visit these deities at the time of their annual festivals. Kahtāharien of the sub-urban village is worshipped by the people of that village only. These deities are worshipped collectively. They are regarded as the guardians of their respective villages. However, Samaleśwari is the supreme deity. In any case, some of the deities are offered regular worship. The periodical rituals are also offered, on certain specific occasions, at the sacred groves of the villages and temple of Sambalpur town. Their help is sought on various occasions.

Among the folk deities of Sambalpur the Samaleśwari figures prominently in local myths and legends. She shares the fortunes of the Sambalpur and is invoked on all ceremonial occasions. There are other deities like Pātaneśwari, Budhi Mā, Sarnāṅgalā, Mahāmāyi and Baṭamaṅgalā in Sambalpur town who receive offerings together with Samaleśwari. Besides, household deities are also worshipped on the occasions particularly on Nuākhāi, Gundikhāi etc. It is known from the local source that these deities are collectively called by some people as Sāt Bahen, the seven sisters. They are thought of as a family of seven sisters and they receive prayers and offerings on all important ceremonial occasions. At the same time, they are also feared as they may cause calamities when they are displeased or dis-satisfied or not
offered rituals in time. All these deities, excepting Baṭamaṅgalā, are worshiped by non-Brahmin priests for the welfare of the villages and town and community at large. Interestingly enough, one of these non-Brahmin priests who offers rituals to Buḍhi Mā is a woman of Keuṇṭ (fisherman) caste. Before going for a proper analysis, we have attempted below to provide the characteristics of the three deities namely Samaleswari, Kantāhāren and Bhim:

Samaleswari:

1. The image of Samlei is found in the form of a large head-like stone. The deity is worshipped in the form of a natural object, i.e. a stone. She is not represented as anthropomorphic icons i.e. she is not worshipped in human form as deities of the Hindu pantheon are commonly worshipped.

2. Earlier the Samlei was descending through possessing the professional spirit. Now-a-days, this practice has been stopped. It clearly indicates ‘Her’ positional mobility to a higher status similar to that of a Hindu deity who never descends in the Hindu pantheon through human beings.

3. The deity is enshrined in the temple. This is clear indication of sanskritization as temple cult is a Hindu tradition.

4. Regular ‘puja’ is performed in the temple with the ‘Vaishnavi Mantra’.

5. Deity is worshipped by non-Brahmin priests.
6. Both vegetarian and non-vegetarian offerings are made to Samlei. Earlier, human being, buffalo, he-goat, cock and chickens were sacrificed before the deity. According to the local source, human sacrifice was prevalent till the reign of Chauhan king Madhukar Dev (1591-1617) who stopped this practice. But the buffalo sacrifice continued till 1950s. Today, only he-goat is offered to Samlei. Cock and chicken are considered as lowest category of sacrificial objects. However, the number of he goats, offered as sacrificial objects is declining and people are inclined to offer more and more vegetarian items like coconuts, etc.

7. Popularity of the deity and of associated rituals is found all over this culture area. Even people from outside this region visit this shrine.

8. She is propitiated and also adored. Some people attribute to her the reasons of disease, famine, etc.

Kantāharien :
1. The image is a stone.
2. The deity descends through male.
3. The deity is enshrined under the tree.
4. Regular puja is not performed.
5. The priest is not Brahmin. Men of all castes and tribes in the village can worship. But at the time of animal worship in the month of 'Durgā', the non-Brahmin priest offers animal sacrifice to the Devi.
6. Both vegetarian and non-vegetarian offerings are made. He-goat is usually sacrificed to her on the occasion of special sacrifice and ritual held during Dāṣrā.

7. It is a local divinity, attached to the village, and revered for that purpose.

8. She is propitiated rather than adored. Visitations of famine, disease, misery etc are usually attributed to her, so special annual puja and animal sacrifice is maintained.

Bhim:

1. The image is a wooden block or pole.

2. The deity descends through male.

3. The deity is not enshrined in the temple. The pole is placed on an open field.

4. Regular or daily puja is not performed.

5. The deity is worshipped by Kandha (tribe) priest.

6. Both vegetarian and non-vegetarian offerings are made. Both cock and he-goat are usually sacrificed to him on the occasion of special festival held in the month of 'māgh'. Significantly, 'Kusnā' i.e rice-beer is offered, which is not prevalent, in other cases.

7. It is a local (village) divinity. Popularity of the deity and of rituals is, more or less, confined to the village and revered for the reason.

8. He is propitiated rather than adored. He is cruel in nature.
Visitations of disease, famine, etc are attributed to Him; and special sacrifices and festivals are held to induce Him to remove the scourge. In Kolenda (1981:187) term, the Bhim-god complex is a local variant of the religion of attachment and retribution.6

The above presentation gives us a synoptical idea of the three deities under study. It may be noted here that the tribalization may affect more than other a particular element. However, change is not a symmetrical one in all the cases. The pattern of tribalization does not bear a definite character and order of change. A culture can be high in one aspect of tribalization and low in another. The same may be found within different parts of the structure of an organization i.e. of a deity. As it has been shown in the above presentation, a deity in Sambalpur may have more tribal elements and other may have more sanskritic elements in a given empirical situation. A detailed analysis can be made by providing a comprehensive idea of these deities.

**SAMALEŚWARI** : The Chauhan rulers in Sambalpur area accepted tribal deities as the State goddess or Eśṭa Devi. In the middle of the 16th century A.D. Balarām Dev (1540-56) exalted, following the footsteps of his fore-father Ramāl Dev, the local deity Samlei and accepted Her with his own tutelary goddess. Thus, the Chauhans made it their principle to esteem and extol the deities of the people wherever they expanded their territory (Deo, 1984:36).7
First, they adopted tribal deities and then they started sanskritizing the rituals and constructing temples for them. The temple of Samlei is a striking example of such development whereby she was enshrined as Samaleśwari Devi in that temple. In this context, Bose's (1967:202) opinion seems to be accurate when he says that, "Hinduism has grown by the incorporation of many tribal cults, until it has become a kind of federation of religious beliefs and practices... which goes by the name of Hinduism." In sum, various tribal and non-tribal elements consisting the Sambalpuri culture frequently co-mingled with each other. These have formed a kind of religio-cultural unity that has brought about, to a certain extent, an emotional integrity. Samaleśwari, the presiding deity of Sambalpur gained extraordinary fame and rose to the status of the state deity of Sambalpur kingdom just like Jagannāth of Gaṅga kingdom in the coastal Orissa (Kulke, 1978). The worship of tribal deity was adopted by various kings in Sambalpur area perhaps as a political strategy to win over the local subjects in their respective areas. In other words, the basic aim of the feudal patronage of tribal cults was to maintain political supremacy and to retain peace and stability of the kingdom. This was a well thought out plan of the Chauhan. Thus, Samaleśwari, Pāṭanēśwari, Raktāṁbāri and Sureśwari were worshipped in Sambalpur, Pātnā, Khariār and Sonpur kingdoms respectively. In Kalāhāndi kingdom which was not under the Chauhan rule but under Bhanjas, the deity of tribal origin is still worshipped as Māṅikeśwari. Throughout the medieval Sambalpur area there was a tendency to assimilate tribal
deities into the Hindu pantheon (discussed in the chapter III) by the rulers to establish their power and control and also to absorb tribal groups within the economic and social frameworks of their kingdoms. The Hindu colonization of the tribal socio-cultural life not only subjugated them both economically and politically but also took away their dominant cults with an assurance to give to their deities national statuses. They built temples for these deities. This was certainly a new dimension added to the tribal religious tradition since there was no known temple in honour of these mother goddess. Sanskritic 'mantras' were chanted (these are still chanted) while offering pujā to them. All these made them very popular among the caste-Hindus and also added, to a great extent, to the success of their long reign. These mother goddesses gained religious merit and created a lasting symbol of their own glory. The gadjāt rulers were able to broaden and enforce their customary laws and focussed themselves as the representatives of these mother goddess. By doing so, they used to say to the people that they had no control over the problems coming to the state. It was work of the Samaleśwari. If she was satisfied, she would solve the problem. The people were simply Her servants. In the name of goddesses of tribals the Chauhans thus ruled over the local subjects (Panigrahi and Panda, 1987:39). The image of Samlei enshrined in the temple is a big piece of head-like stone structure. According to the tradition, the deity was worshipped originally by the Jharā and the Savara tribes living on the bank of the river Mahanadi. The main occupation of these tribes was to collect diamonds from the river.
bed of Mahanadi. Once they found a big stone under the deep water. They brought it out with the hope to extract diamonds from it and placed it under a *Semel* (*bomax malabaricum*) tree on the bank of the river. Later on, they realized it as a goddess in the form of a stone. Thence, they started worshipping Her. Since the stone was kept under a Semel tree, the mother goddess was regarded as Samlei. Nonetheless, one point is clear that the Jharās and the Savaras originally inhabited the place and worshipped the deity under a Semel tree (Dash, 1962:227; Sae Deo, 1985:7-8; Senapati and Mahanti, 1971:546-50). Balrām Dev (1540-56), the first Chauhan ruler of Sambalpur, built the temple of Samaleśwari in Sambalpur town inside his fort. According to the local source, the present temple was built by Chhatra Sāi (1657-95) during the second half of 17th century. He also donated 40 villages for the maintenance of the temple. Names of some villages were collected from the local people. These were Jayaghanta, Kalāmāti, Āmbasadā Kaṭāpāli, Nuniā Jāmpāli, Karpula Senāpāli, Chāuhrpur, etc. Most probably, there was no such provision during the reign of Balrām Dev. Financial aid was coming from the treasury of the King. That was why, Chhatra Sāi made a permanent arrangement for the maintenance of the Samaleśwari temple. It has to be noted here that there is not a single village at the moment for the maintenance of this temple. Understandably, land grants were mutilated by the people serving in the temple and were transferred in their names (Dash, 1962:227). According to Eschmann (1978:80), temple was an important agent of Hinduization. It received royal patronage in
medieval times. Although Balrām Dev adopted the local deity, he did not exclude the traditional servants of the deity from the temple cult which was emerging as a testimony to sanskritization or Hinduization of Samlei. Balrām Dev appointed Saharā the traditional worshipper of the deity as the priest, and Jharā as the servants and holders of canopy of the deity (Sae Deo, 1985:7-8). Not only in the Samaleswari temple of Sambalpur town, but also in all the villages of Sambalpur where Samlei is worshipped, Saharās are found to be the priests of the Devi (Purohit, 1978:10; Dash, 1962:179; Senapati and Mahanti, 1971:355).

Prior to the reign of Balrām Dev, Samaleswari was known as 'Samlei'. The application of the term Samaleswari to Samlei occurred only when she was adopted and enshrined inside a temple. Thus, the term Samaleswari is of relatively late origin. By her new name Samaleswari means 'Iśwari of Sambalpur' or the presiding deity of Sambalpur. According to this name, she is the deity of all who resided in Sambalpur. Now, she represented a larger society where people of various ethnic backgrounds stayed together. She became the source of unity mainly between the tribals and caste-Hindus in Sambalpur. This way the tribal name of the deity was Hinduized. Very likely, in subsequent years Vaishnavi mantra was introduced in the daily pūjā of Samaleswari. She has been worshipped as a form of Sakti or Durgā, the consort of Siva and thereby the ritual and ceremonial processes in the temple were sanskritized to a great extent. This analysis forces us to reconsider the importance of royal patronage to local cult
like Samlei. She was raised, at her place of origin, to the level of a fully developed temple cult whose ritual was largely Hinduized. But four important aspects of the Samlei cult remained unchanged: (a) the original uniconical image of the deity, (b) the tribal priest, (c) animal sacrifice, and (d) spirit possession or descending of Samlei through human beings. In other words, positional change of Samlei has occurred over a period of four hundred years. She has been raised to a higher status and equated with the Sakti or Durgā. But a total structural transformation of the Samlei cult has not been possible even though a systematic temple tradition has been successfully introduced. We have mentioned earlier that the human and big animal sacrifices for Samaleśwari were stopped by 1950s. Now-a-days, only he-goats are offered to the deity. The number of 'bukā' brought to the temple for sacrificial purpose is also reduced to a great extent in recent years. About twenty years back, more than 30 bukās were beheaded in the temple on the day of Durgā pujā only, but it got reduced to 5 in 1988. The following story prevalent even today among the people in Sambalpur has some bearing on the dietary nature of Samlei Devi. The story is as follows: One day the priest of Samaleśwari temple was offering pujā while his daughter was standing by his side. All of a sudden he discovered the disappearance of his daughter. To his utter surprise, the priest found Samlei trying to devour the child. At once he threw the pujā thāli at the face of Samlei. As a result, the face of Samlei turned to backside. Thence, Samlei has been worshiped from her back side. A similar story with slight
variation has been recorded in the district gazetteer of Sambalpur (Senapati and Mahanti, 1971:549-50). Whatever the case may be, the story acts as a testimony to the prevalent practice of blood sacrifice before Samlei. It indicates the primitive nature of Samlei. After she received royal patronage, a sanskritic myth of the origin of Samaleswari was created, according to which once Daksha arranged a ceremony of horse-sacrifice. He invited all the gods and relatives to attend the ceremony. But he did not invite his son-in-law Siva because his daughter Sati married Siva against the wish of Daksha. Sati went to attend the ritual ceremony where she was received with disgrace. As a consequence, she protested and accused her father for his neglect and disregard shown to her husband Siva. Daksha broke into anger and cursed Siva as a beggar, ashman, yogi, king goblins, etc. Sati could not tolerate further and jumped into the Yajña Kunḍa. When Siva knew this incident, he became furious and started his Tāṇḍava Nrutya bearing the corpse of Sati on his back. It was terrible and the destruction of the entire world was imminent. So, Vishnu came out to save the mankind. He ordered his Sudarshan Chakra to cut the body of Sati into pieces. After the weight was gone and Siva became conscious, he was consoled by Vishnu; Siva retired alone to his abode Kailash. The body of Sati had been hewn into a number of pieces and wherever a fragment touched the earth a shrine of mother worship sprang up. According to the local belief, it was the head of Sati, originally found by the tribal people, which was enshrined and worshipped in the Samaleswari temple. It was very likely a later development to add
to it some more doses of sanskritic elements. The social function of the origin of this myth and religious connection of the Chauhan rulers with the tribals of the medieval Sambalpur appears to be three-fold: (a) to establish a religious link with tribals; (b) to emphasize the legitimacy of Samaleswari Devi as the goddess of the Hindu king and the state; and (c) to establish political authority and control over Sambalpur. It provides social status to those who were originally worshipping the goddess and who had acquired political power in the region. After the introduction of this myth, the cult became fused with Hindu ceremonies connected with Durga. The tribals like Binjhall, Saharā and Jharā were also given a place within the Hindu society. Since they were the original worshippers, they were regarded as Pujārī or priest. In this way, the priestly class in Sambalpur was enriched by the inclusion of some new people which may be viewed as a Hindu mode of tribal absorption (Bose, 1941). But this newly constituted priestly class did not get the status of Brahmin as there has been no established matrimonial relationship between this new priestly class and the Brahmins. Therefore, there occurred positional mobility, barring the structural mobility, in the case of the priests of Samaleswari temple. What is important here is the process and mode of incorporation. After appropriation by caste-Hindus, Samlei has become as powerful and popular as Jagannāth but ironically the priestly class of tribal origin has inferior and subordinate status. Retrospectively, the recognition of religious links of the tribals with caste Hindus through sharing the myth of origin of
Samlei or Samaleswari ultimately helped the Hindu kings to establish their political authority. These links were further received and strengthened, from time to time, through the search for actual or fabricated mythological connections. The manufacturing of a Hindu myth for tribal deities started, most probably, during the state formation in Sambalpur area by the Chauhans during the 14th and 15th century AD as stated earlier. Such a process of transformation or absorption of the tribal cult into the Hindu fold required: (a) a pre-existing idea of Sakti cult; (b) a pre-existing tribal cult of a stone deity—Samlei; and (c) a conquerer like Balrám Dev who was a powerful king and required legitimation by joining the cults. Balrám Dev extended the territory of his control through many successful campaigns against the neighbouring states like Bonai and Yamatangi (roughly modern Pal-Lahara area). He also declared himself as the lord of eighteen garhs (Senapati and Mahanti, 1971:63). However, for his military campaign, he had to seek the help and loyalty of the local tribes. It may be suggested here that the process of adoption of tribal deities by the Chauhan rulers was intended as a consolidating factor in internal politics of Sambalpur area. It is yet difficult to know how many more deities in the past were absorbed in similar fashion within the Hindu society. The little tradition of the local tribal also could absorb brahminical values of great tradition. This obviously had negative impact on the growth of little tradition in its own way. The entire process of continued absorption means a change not only in the external structure of the local religious institutions but also changes in
the social and religious attitudes and beliefs in the Sambalpuri society. In other words, changes have occurred at the intellectual, emotional and spiritual levels of the people regarding Samaleśwari Devi in Sambalpur. Even the outsiders like Marwaris, Bengalis, Gujaratis, Sikhs, etc., come with great faith to visit her.

**Deities in Sambalpur Town:**

Samaleśwari is the reigning deity of Sambalpur. From myths she appears to be a tribal deity, but it would seem that her size, shape and form is largely dependent on the interpretations of the priests. These interpretations vary in different parts of the Sambalpur region. She has been called a form of Sakti and is worshipped in the forms of Durgā, Kālī etc. It seems that she has been turned with the continued sanskritic influence, into a deity of great Hindu tradition in Sambalpur region. The seat of the deity in some villages is situated on a hill and in others it is under some bush or tree or it is a stone or log of wood, etc. She has a fixed abode in the village generally located somewhere on the outskirts of the settlement. Sometimes, the name itself signifies her location i.e. at the entrance of the town. But the location of the temple of Baṭamangalā is no more on the outskirts of the town which has physically expanded in the recent years. The village deity is usually found to be a female who is benevolent and protects the village from evil spirits, diseases and epidemics; who brings rain and abundant crops. At the time of festivals, sacrifices are offered to those deities who are conceived as the deputies or as other forms of the great Hindu
goddess Durgā by the village priests of the concerned village. Sometimes, great priests are invited from outside the village to perform rituals. Besides non-Brahmin priests, sometimes Brahmin priests also assist in performing the rituals. The meat of the animals sacrificed to the deities is distributed among the villagers. In some places, all the members of the family take the sacrificial meat whereas female members at some places are sometimes prohibited to consume. In most of the villages of Sambalpur region the cult of village deity has fallen into disuse and she generally receives no public worship. But Samlei is now regarded as more important deity. Nonetheless, in those villages where the village deities are still regarded as the foremost deities, the village priest offers her/him periodic sacrifices. Pāṭaneśwari is considered to be the most dreaded of all deities of the Sambalpur town. She is a deity inclined to evil and her wrath can only be subdued by her elder sister Samlei. Similarly, Sarmaṅgalā of Sambalpur town is also considered to be inclined to evil. But for some the two deities namely Samlei and Pāṭaneśwari are held as one and the same. At intervals which vary in different villages from three to seven years a buffalo is sacrificed to Devi, and when an epidemic breaks out in the village, the village priest makes a special offering to the deity. For example, the 'Buffalo-sacrifice' of Ghess by the Binjhāl chief, on the occasion of Durgā pujā, is very famous in this area. Of the sacrificial animals offered to this spirit every family in the village receives an equal share of the meat irrespective of the number of persons in the family. The village
priest who serves the deity enjoys the use of rentfree lands set aside for the tenders of 'village cut'. However, the communal worship of the village deities does not exhaust the villagers' expression of their ritual unity. The village community comes together at the time of numerous festivals which are distributed throughout the year. These festivals have, thus, a socio-religious function to bring all into one platform and are mostly connected with agricultural operation. They aim at securing success in the chase and bountiful harvests. These agricultural festivals observed by the villagers mark important stages in the agricultural operations and calendar. The ritual unity of the village or a pada in Sambalpur town is prominent enough when a disease or an epidemic breaks out. At this time the people approach the Baruā (diviner) of the local deity who discovers the name of the deity responsible for the calamity and prescribes the sacrifices needed to pacify it. Rituals are made and sacrifice is offered at the village level or in the pada. At the conclusion of these rites these deities are believed to clear the place of the diseases. During many tribal festivals, the caste-Hindus contribute fruits and other goods for pujā and also contribute money in the form of chāndā. They also accept prasād or the consecrated offerings at the end of the worship. Thus, there is total participation in all the festivals celebrated in the villages.

BHIM DERTĀ AND JHĀRI BUDHI:

We find that all the people in a tribal dominated village
like Gainpura combine for the performance of rites and for the worship of Bhim on a village basis. Bhim is considered to be the Iśṭadeva (reigning deity) of the village Gainpura. The economy of the Kandhas of this interior village is mainly dependent on forest. The common life and economy of this people is always thwarted by the unwanted attacks of wild animals like bears, elephants and tigers. In order to seek economic security and ensure protection of their lives, they arrange annual ritual festival in honour of Bhim devtā. Only the village with its hierarchy of secular and sacredotal functionaries decides for the enactment of seasonal rites and festivals and for the propitiation of gods and spirits and the protection of the inmates in times of danger and stress. These ritual functionaries act not in their individual capacity but as representatives of the village community. Cooperation among tribals and non-tribals has led to a certain religious unity. Most of the deities worshipped during the seasonal rites are the gods of the village. They are not personal gods of the inhabitants. It is probably on account of this that they can be worshipped through the traditional machinery operated by hereditary priests and headmen.

Another important situation which promotes meetings and visits of people from different villages is the secular part of festival like that of Ğālkhāi dance, Karmā dance and so on. Apart from its observance during the Dālkhāi pujā and Karmā pujā, these dances and songs are organised during marriage, birth and initiation as discussed earlier. Such occasions have manifold social functions. It is here that young men and women mingle with
each other and have a splendid opportunity for choosing their mates. We find absorption of sanskritic elements in the Bhim pujā. Kandha priests offer worship in the Bhim pujā, celebrated on the full moon day of the month of māgha. Since past four years Brahmin priests are invited to assist the Kandha priests during the annual festival. Bhim of the Bhim pujā is widely regarded as one of the five Pāṇḍava brothers of the Mahābhārat. We have seen earlier that Samaleśwari can be described as a full-fledged Hindu deity absorbing the maximum amount of sanskritization. Interestingly, Jhāribudhi pujā of Dhamā, performed during Dasra can be regarded as being more sanskritized than the Bhim pujā of Gainpura, occupies intermediate position. There is a Hindu priest family entrusted with the responsibility of offering pujā to Jhāribudhi in Dhamā. It is remarkable to note here that people believe Jhāribudhi to be Kunti, the mother of Pāṇḍava brothers. There is a myth associated, in the area, with the Bakāsur Badha. Bakāsur was killed by Bhima to save the only son of the Brahmin who had given shelter in his house to Kunti and her five sons. Dhamā is believed to be the village where the five Pāṇḍavas with their mother took shelter after the episode of Jatu Griha Dāha. There is a hill near the village named Asurgarh with which the episode of Bakāsura Badha is associated, i.e. where Bakāsur was supposedly slain by Bhim. However, Jhāribudhi and Bhim are regarded as Hindu deities and people regard the position of Jhāribudhi higher than that of other neighbouring sanskritized god i.e. Bhim. Also of the two, Bhim and Samlei, the former is closer to the tribal pole while Samlei is closer to the Hindu pole. The other deities namely Jhāribudhi, Buḍhi Mā, Mahāmāyī,
Sarmangalā, Kaṇṭāharien, etc. occupy intermediate positions, though the positions of these intermediate deities are not absolute. Since the elements of tribalization and sanskritization are not measurable quantities, it is not so easy to determine the exact position of a deity as compared to others in the continuum.

NOTES:
1. For the purpose of explaining types of Hinduism and its meaningful classification, with special reference to the Coorgs of South India, Srinivas (1952:214) applied the concept of "spread". According to him, Hinduism has been split into four, viz. (a) All India Hinduism, (b) Peninsular Hinduism, (c) Regional Hinduism and (d) Local Hinduism. All India Hinduism is Hinduism with an all India spread and this is mostly sanskritic in character. For instance, celebration of Durgā pujā or Holi or Dipawali or Janmāṣṭami or Rāmnavami has an all India spread which has textual sanction also. The peninsular Hinduism spreads over the entire peninsular part of India, while the regional Hinduism has a more restricted spread. Srinivas advocated that ‘region’ has to be defined in every case. For our purpose Sambalpur area is a region and Nuākhāi, Bhāijitiā, Pujojitiā, Karmā, Dālkhāi, Puspuni, etc. are the regional festivals of this region. Finally, the local Hinduism is Hinduism confined with its spread to a smaller area within a region. In this context, mention may be made of Bhim pujā and Jhāribuğhi pujā by the people of Gainpura (the interior village), annual worship to Kaṇṭāharien in Kainsir (the suburban village) and the Buğhimā pujā, Mahāmāyi pujā, Sarmangalā pujā, etc. of Sambalpur town.

2. Sāl tree is associated with the birth of Lord Buddha (563-483 B.C). According to the legend, he died in a grove of Sāl trees too. It is because of these associations that this tree is regarded as most sacred by the Buddhists. At the same time, economically Sāl tree is one of the most useful timbers used for railways sleepers, bridge construction, well construction, boat building, tent poles, furniture, carts and carriages, etc. (Sinha, 1979:28).

3. Tree worship began before the dawn of history. It was one of the earliest forms of religious life in ancient India. It was quite common even in the third or fourth millennium B.C. when there was a highly evolved Harappan culture (Sinha, 1979:32). Thus, the tree has been the best friend of human beings even in the pre-historic period. It was through the worship of the trees that both tribals and Hindus attempted to approach and propitiate god in India (Sinha, 1979:29).
Besides, trees have played a vital role in the field of human welfare and they are doing so even now. Thus, from the very beginning of life trees came to be considered as revered and absolutely necessary for human kind. With the passage of time, the idea of god associated with trees originated in the mind of man. He began to worship tree, a symbolical representation of some god or unseen power residing in it. Trees are, therefore, worshipped as symbols of gods or spirits or ghosts who cannot be seen in person but realized by heart. This is the foundation of nature of worship. The traditional ideal of India—live and let live or to co-exist, did not, however, recognize the danger in one another’s existence. Rather, the trees and the human beings sought mutual advantages in exchange of goods and services and even in religious and ceremonial performances at least at the folk level (Gupta, 1980:8).

4. Referring to 'hul huli' Ball (1985:568) in his traveller's account writes that when he and his men were passing through some of the villages (Gainslot) of Sambalpur in December 1876 "the people, more particularly, the women, cheered them, wagging their tongues from side to side of their mouths, in the same manner as some of the African tribes are said to do. I have never elsewhere met with this custom in India."

5. Scholars like Stevenson (1954:55) and Singh (1966;1969) have observed that various kinds of food items namely, pork, fowl, offal, fishes, carrion, onion, alcohol etc, are regarded as impure and highly polluting and thereby affecting the status of a jati in the Hindu caste system. The operative principle which stigmatizes these food items, as polluted by caste-Hindus, is clearly the same as that which applies to the people who offer them during ritual ceremonies. Thus, for caste-Hindus ceremonial defilement is connected with certain types of animal sacrifice and offering of alcohol as a ritual object. 6. All these three quotations are collected from Mishra (1982:275-6).

7. When the Chauhan rulers increased in number, they felt the need to expand their area of control. They moved to the interior of the kingdom and built their seats of power. This step was taken in order to avoid internal quarrels among brothers. In subsequent years, the gadjat state of western Orissa was divided into Sambalpur (mid-sixteenth century), Khariar (beginning of 17th century) and Sonpur (mid-seventeenth century) as independent units. Consequently, the deities of tribal origin namely, Samaleswari, Pâtânešwari, Rakâmbhari and Surešwari were worshipped in Sambalpur, Pâña, Khariâr and Sonpur Kingdoms respectively. In Kalâhândi kingdom which was not under the Chauhan rule but under Bhanjas, the deity of tribal origin is still worshipped as Mâpikešwari. Throughout the medieval Sambalpur area there was a tendency to assimilate tribal deities into the Hindu pantheon (discussed in chapter III).