CHAPTER - III

TRIBE-CASTE INTEGRATION AND GROWTH OF SAMBALPURI CULTURE:
A SOCIO-HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

Sambalpuri folk culture is a product of tribe-caste integration in Sambalpur area. The process of this integration is explained in terms of social processes like Sanskritization, Tribalization and Formation of states among the tribal communities as stated in Chapter - I. An interaction of all these processes has been manifested in different stages of development of the tribes in the central zone of tribal India\(^1\) (Singh, 1984:317).

Geographically also, this tribal zone constitutes a region (Johnson, 1979:47). Sambalpur has historically been a part of this zone but has been lately identified with modern Orissa.

Sambalpur area provides a fertile ground to study the history of interaction between tribal people and caste-Hindus. Since time immemorial, they have been living together in close proximity thereby influencing each other’s way of life and culture. This chapter highlights, in detail, the socio-historical process of integration between tribal people and caste-Hindus. We would examine our assumption that the roots of many existing structure of Sambalpuri culture are found in both the societies i.e. tribal as well as caste-Hindus.

Sambalpur, as has already been mentioned in Chapter - I, is not just a town or district, but a culture area too in the wider sense of the term. This culture area corresponds, more or less, to the modern western Orissa (Paschim Odisha)\(^3\) comprising
some upland districts of Orissa namely Sambalpur, Kalahandi, Bolangir, Sundergarh and Baud of Phulbani districts along with the adjacent areas of Raigarh, Raipur and Bilaspur districts of Madhya Pradesh. Thus, Sambalpur as a culture area denotes an enclosing device with the help of which a geographical area can be carved out based on some shared perceptions of distinctive cultural commonness among the people. Language, rituals and festivals which will be dealt subsequently are some of the distinctive cultural commonness among the people of this culture area.

Being under numerous political units in different stages of history, it is difficult to demarcate historically the frontiers of Sambalpur. This culture area was thereby, variously known as Āttabika Rājya, Kośala, Dakshiṇa Kośala, Trikaliṅga, Mahākāntāra, Pāṭhā Rājya, Hirākhaṇḍa Rājya and Sambalpur Gadjāt in ancient and medieval periods (Ganguly, 1975:75-9; Dash, 1980:1-2; Rath, 1947: 41; Pandey, 1937:25-33; Walter, 1961:202; Beals, 1969:209). Thus, evaluation of the recorded history, inscriptions, literary works, travellers' accounts and punch-marked coins reveal that the history of Sambalpur dates back to antiquity for thousands of years. Due to inadequate work in this field, the pre-historicity of this area has not been properly constructed. However, in this Chapter an attempt has been made at a close look at the variety of political units in different points of time and space to provide a systematic social history of this area. It will help us to understand the relationship between tribals and non-tribals in this area.
Explorations made in various parts of Sambalpur area have brought to light a large number of sites inhabited by early men from a remote past. It has been found that the river Mahanadi and its important tributaries such as the Tel, the Suketl, the Sunagad, the Lanth, the lb, the Jira and the Ang (Ang) of western Orissa have yielded evidences of different typologies of lithic cultural remains. One finds pre-historical and historical antiquities in Vikramkhol, Ulāpgarh, Jogimath, Mānikmoda, Ushākoṭhi, Guḍahāṇḍi, Ramgarh, Sinhāspur, etc. The pictograph writing on the wall of a cave at Vikramkhol has not yet been deciphered. It indicates signs of habitation. The list of these antiquities, though not exhaustive, is enough to establish the pre-historic background of Sambalpur. In view of such account one may suggest its antiquity dated earlier than those of Harappa and Mohenjodaro (Jaiswal, 1933:58-60;1971:551-4;Mishra,1988:5).

The pre-Gupta period in Sambalpur area is represented by the references to the south Kosala in the sacred books such as the Ramayana and Puranas. Scholars have identified western Orissa as Dakshina Kosala that existed in ancient and medieval periods. Dakshina or South Kosala roughly comprised of the modern districts of Sambalpur, Bolangir, Kalahandi and Sundargarh of Orissa and Raipur, Bilaspur and Durg in Madhya Pradesh (Sahu,1971:9-23;Sircar,1960:270;Behera,1971:24-30; Ganguli, 1975:75-9;Nema, 1978:14-7;Das,1980:1-2). Many stories and legends about Dakshina Kosala are treasured by the people of Sambalpur. Therefore, mythfication of history has provided numerous versions on the origin of the name of Dakshina Kosala.
In the pre-Maurya period the modern Bolangir district constituted the ancient Taitalaka Janapada which was a part of the empire of Mahapadmananda in the 4th century B.C. Very likely, modern Sambalpur was also under the rule of Mahapadmananda by that time (Senapati and Mahanti, 1971:52; Das, 1977:93). During the 3rd century B.C. there were some forest kingdoms known as Attabika Rajya and Mahakantara or Mahabana in western Orissa under the rulership of a Vyaghra Raja. The terms Mahakantara and Mahabana signify the wild character of the tract. Further, the word Vyaghra-Raja refers to a Gond ruler, because "one section of the Gonds even today regard tiger as the emblem of royalty" (Mazumdar 1925:65-6). Thus, those forest kingdoms situated in the Sambalpur area were ruled by tribal chiefs who belonged to Gond and Kandha communities (Das, 1962:179).

In 261 B.C. king Ashoka conquered Kalinga. Although Sambalpur area came under his empire, he did not move to this tribal kingdom situated in the dense forest and wild uplands (Das, 1962, 1962:179; Sahu, 1964:248). Nonetheless, the Kalinga Rock edict II of Ashoka indicates that he had shown a liberal and friendly attitude towards them (Sahu, 1964:248; Panigrahi, 1981:14-5). He ordered his administrators to administer the jungle folk, with sympathy and compassion, according to their customs and traditions (Das, 1972:186). Thus, these small kingdoms appear to receive special attention by king Ashoka. In the second century AD Ptolemy also described Sambalpur (Sambalaka) as the land of Sabara and Munda. This means the tribal population to be the earliest inhabitants of this area since the pre-Christian era.
(Mahapatra, 1987c:10). During the post Maurya period Dakshina Kosala appears to be under the rule of the Chedis and it was sometime known as Chedi Rashtra. The ancestor of Kharavela came to Kalinga from this area and founded a new kingdom. He was of Dravidian origin (Mazumdar, 1925:58). Kharavela was proved to be the greatest ancient Orissa emperor assuming the title of Mahameghabhishana in the first century B.C. It is believed that Dakshina Kosala was a part of Kharavela's empire (Senapati and Mahanti, 1971:53). During his reign the inhabitants of this region were known as Vidya-puras. Kharavela had to strengthen his martial power by incorporating them into his military force (Senapati, 1980:89-90). In the second century AD, Sambalpur was conquered by Pulumabi, a king of the Satavahana dynasty. His father Satakarni "had constructed a Buddhist vihar at Parimal Giri in Kosala, which is supposed to be the famous Gandhamardan Giri or Gandha Giri on the borders of Bolangir and Sambalpur districts of today" (Mahapatra 1987c:11). A beneficial consequence of this development was, most probably, the deep socio-cultural interaction between the tribals and non-tribals. It had one good effect in that, i.e., the sense of self-government of the tribal people was developed. Later on, it might have encouraged state-formation among the tribals in western Orissa.

Allahabad pillar inscription of Samudragupta is considered to be the first epigraphic reference on the Dakshina Kosala. It highlighted his military campaign against south India in the middle of the 4th century A.D. Samudragupta had to defeat three chiefs on his way to south India. They were Mahendra of Dakshina
Kosala, Vyaghraraja of Mahakantara and Mantaraja of Kaurala (Ganguli, 1975:156-58; Kulke, 1982:256). They were small principalities. Senapati and Mahant (1971:53) write: "Kosala by that time is said to have comprised the present districts of Raipur, Bilaspur and Sambalpur, and a part of Bolangir constituted the kingdom of Koral or Kaurala, while Mahakantara extended over the modern Kalahandi-Koraput region." Vyaghraraja who ruled over Mahakantara seems to be a tribal king. Very likely this area was predominantly tribal and inaccessible. It is learnt that although Samudragupta defeated these chiefs like king Ashoka, he also did not annex their territories to his empire. Rather, the tribal chiefs were allowed to continue to rule in their respective areas as semi-independent rulers (Das, 1977:93; Das, 1980:5). Davies (1949:19) has identified the route of Samudra Gupta's southern campaign. The route clearly indicates that Samudra Gupta had passed through modern Sambalpur, Binka and Sonepur.

Following the disintegration of the Gupta empire the subordinate rulers of various areas assumed independence. During this period mountainous regions of north and central India also witnessed a very intensive process of state formation at local, sub-regional levels (see foot note 1).

In western Orissa and eastern Madhya Pradesh this period coincided with the emergence of political power led by autochthonous chief and in some cases by chiefs of obscure origin (Kulke, 1978:104-14; Sinha, 1962:35-80). These small kingdoms were established in the riverine basins and there was widespread influence of
Brahmanism in these kingdoms. It seems that the chieftains of obscure origin of these small principalities were champions of Brahmanism (Kulke, 1978:106; Tiwari, 1985:35). In course of time, these kingdoms became the 'nuclear areas' as most of the rulers of these nuclear areas were tribal by origin, they followed a policy of compromise with the local inhabitants i.e. integration of these aboriginals as well as the spread of Hindu culture. In order to strengthen their rule and to maintain their supremacy over their respective territories they sought the loyalty of the local tribes who were numerically very strong. So, the important aspect of the formation of kingdoms in the tribal dominated western Orissa was marked by the acculturation of tribes. It resulted in a gradual transformation of tribals mostly into peasant and other occupational castes so as to be incorporated into the larger Hindu society (Sahu, 1983:133-34; Sahu, 1984:148-60).

The extension of cultivation through a network of irrigation scheme is attested not only by the finding of a lac bridge, a type of ancient bandh in Giribara stream (a tributary of river Jonk) but also by Raital Sagar in Maraguda valley and Asurgarh in Sunder valley (Deo, 1983:6; Sahu, 1983:VI-IX). Settled agriculture helped in the growth of prosperous villages and towns. This, perhaps, attracted Jains and Buddhist monks to set up innumerable centres in this area in ancient period10 (Sahu, 1983: IX). Today, most of the ruins are found in the forest and hill tops which are inaccessible and richly inhabited by tribals.

The foregoing analysis goes against the general view that western
Orissa was one of the latest areas to be colonised by the Hindus (Mazumdar, 1925:63-97; Grant, 1984:3; Agnew, 1922:1). This does not mean that the tribals were incapable to construct a fort; but it is an established fact that the tribal mode of production cannot establish a kingdom and sustain big forts and towns. What is suggested here is that both the tribal as well as non-tribal elements co-existed for centuries in this area.

STATE FORMATION IN POST-GUPTA PERIOD:

The post-Gupta period saw the process of tribal and caste-Hindu integration in western Orissa. During this time one finds the growth of various religious traditions such as Saivism, Vaishnavism, and saktism in this area. These had tremendous impact on the life and culture of local tribes. The development of religious traditions was closely linked with the political development in this area. The history of ruling dynasties like Saravapuria, Somavansi, Gangavamsi, and Chauhan of Sambalpur area highlights the process of Sanskritization i.e. Rajputization/Kshatriyaization, meaning how a chief of obscure origin could manage to establish a kingdom in Sambalpur area and became known as Kshatriya. On the other hand, the history of Sambalpur area also highlights the process of tribalization i.e. incorporation of tribal elements in Hindu tradition. Thus, the history of Sambalpur area was marked by integration of tribal elements, or more correctly, the synthesis of tribal as well as Hindu elements.

The decline and downfall of the Gupta empire created political
instability in Dakshina Kosala. The result was the confrontation between the Nalas and Vakatakas of southern India to prove their supremacy and to extend their territories over south Kosala (Nema, 1978:21-30). A considerable part of modern western Orissa was under the south Kosala. Needless to say, in such a situation of political crisis as well as inter-group rivalry from outside, the local chiefs got the opportunity to strengthen their positions in their respective areas. This finally resulted in the emergence of powers like Saravapuria, Panduvamsi, and Parvatadwaraka in south Kosala (Tiwari, 1985:10).

SARVAPURIA:

The late 5th and early 6th century A.D. witnessed the rise and growth of Saravapuria kingdom in western Orissa. The kings claim their descent from Sarava, the first Saravapuria ruler. But historians differ in identifying the Sarava as some believe that the Sarava means a fabulous animal having eight legs and being stronger than a lion (Tiwari, 1985:26). Hence they suggested the tribal origin of Saravapurias (Tiwari, 1985:35; Sahu, 1971:15; Sah, 1973:125-29). Whatever the case may be, it is clear that the origin of the Saravapurias is obscure and the early rulers were sub-ordinated to some other ruling families. The later rulers, however, were able to establish a kingdom and claimed independent status. Then, they patronised the Brahmins in order to legitimise their claim of higher status and to overcome their obscure origin. Another important development in their claim for superior status was the claim of Amararyakula and Amarajakula by the later rulers. For instance, Prasannamatra and Jayaraja issued
coins, settled Brahmins in their kingdoms and extended royal patronage to Vaisnavism. The rulers called themselves as Parama Bhagavata (Nema, 1978:35-6).

The rulers of obscure origin had a definite objective while patronising the Brahmanas. It is widely believed that after the downfall of the Gupta empire the Brahmanas of northern India were in search of patrons (Nandi, 1979:82-91). On the other hand, the newly emerging chiefs of western Orissa wanted the services of the Brahmanas with a view to legitimise their social origin (Tiwari, 1985:35). Together, they provided the arrangements for the acculturation of the autochthonous groups. Vaishnavism became the vehicle to integrate them easily in one fold (Sahu, 1974:4-18; Tiwari, 1985). In this process the Saravapurias achieved the Kshatriya raja status of Aryan heritage.

PANDUVAMSI:

When Saravapurias established their kingdom, another chief of obscure origin gradually rose into power and became prominent in Mekala area. Most probably, he was a Savara chief named Udayana (Mishra, 1971:8). Indrabala and his son Nannadeva were the successor of this new chief (Rajguru, 1966:104-7). They established matrimonial alliances with Saravapuria. In the beginning they enjoyed the status of Samanta and later held the post of Mahasamanta. Most likely, they also held the office of the Chief Minister of the Saravapuria (Sircar, 1970:221; Rajguru, 1966:1-7). In course of time they became so powerful that they captured the Saravapuria kingdom and also annexed their territory (Nema, 1978:61-2). Perhaps, Trivaradeva was the first independent
ruler of this line. He used the title Parama Vaisnava and donated a village named Pimpani Padraka in favour of two Brahmins. In the land grant he linked the genealogy of his predecessors, Nammadeva and Indrabala, to the lineage of Puranic Pandu. Thus, he claimed to be a Panduvamsi and established their genealogy as a Lunar race (Rajguru, 1966:24-30). It may be viewed that Nammadeva manufactured a mythical origin of his genealogy. It was a step further than the Saravapuriyas in establishing their legitimacy. The Saravapuriyas never claimed any divine origin. Their claim was through patronising Brahmins and temples.

The Dakshina Kosala of the Panduvamsi kings (7th to 8th century A.D.) had their political headquarters at Sirpur near Raipur. They substantially contributed to the growth of Saivism in the Raipur and Bilaspur districts of Madhya Pradesh, and Sambalpur and Bolangir districts of Orissa (Panda, 1985:78-99). In sum, the Panduvamis claimed their divine origin in addition to land grants to Brahmins and temples. Singh (1984:331) writes, "The manufacture of a spurious genealogy involving the conferment of the status of Kshatriya is an important indication of the brahmanization of the tribes."

During the rule of Mahasivagupta Balarjuna Tantric-Saivism flourished (Nema, 1978:135). There was special grant for the rituals of a Siva temple called Gandheswara of Siripur. Another village was granted to the temple of Siva Isaneswara in the Pattana Khadirapadratala identified as Baidpali village of Sambalpur district of Orissa. In this period Siva was most probably considered to be identified with the tribal deities.
Since the shape of Siva Linga has few similarities with that of some tribal deities, iconographically it was very easy to transform the tribal goddess to Siva Linga. The temple of Boinde is an example where the Siva worship has come to supersede that of the mother worship. There are other instances too. For example, the stone pillars in some villages in Phulbani district in Orissa which once stood for goddess (Pitabali and Khambeswari) are considered by the people as Linga (Eschemann, 1978:95-6). In many places of Sambalpur area the tribal deities are worshipped as Budharaja and Budhasiva by both the tribals as well as caste Hindus (Shah, 1976:138).

**KALACHURI**

In the 9th century A.D. another dynasty of obscure origin formed a kingdom in Dahala Mandala. They attacked the western part of Dakshina Kosala and expanded their territory up to Sripura. In the 10th century A.D. they also annexed Bilaspur district into their kingdom and claimed to be the Lord of Kosala (Kosalendra). The new dynasty came to be known as the Kalachuri or Haihaia (Roy, 1931:758).

About the time the Sambalpur tract was conquered by Kalachuri Jajalladeva, a branch of the Rashtrakuta family got possession of the Bargarh region and ruled as feudatory of the Kalachuris. Rulers of this family professed Saivism but had the figure of Garuda (Vishnu's vehicle) on their local seals (Senapati and Mahanti, 1971:59). However, the Kalachuris were again pushed back to Sripura region by some local powers of western Orissa. We are not sure whether they were driven away by the Somavamsis of...
Suvarnapura or by some other powers. But as the Somavamsis succeeded them it is generally believed that the Somavamsis were responsible for the withdrawal of Kalachuris authority over this region. They again appeared in western Orissa in the 12th century A.D. after the decline of the Somavamsis. These rulers very likely patronised Saivism and constructed a number of Siva temples in this area. This is evident from the Siva temples of Nawapara, most of which were constructed during the time of Kalachuris (Devi, 1983:89). The construction of Siva temples in the tribal regions further strengthened the influence of Saivism on the tribal life and culture.

**SOMABANIS**: 

Another indigenous power known as Somavamsi rose in Binka-Sonpur area of western Orissa towards the end of ninth century AD. They established their capital at Suvarnapura (modern Sonpur) and Vinitapura (modern Binka) in western Orissa. From this area they patronised the Brahmins and granted lands and villages to them. They started ruling over western Orissa and a part of eastern Madhya Pradesh as independent rulers (Sharma, 1983:17-8; Panigrahi, 1981:93-4; Kulke, 1982:257; Panda, 1985:77-99).

From the very beginning of ninth century, Somavamsis entered into marriage alliance with the Bhaumakaras, the then rulers of coastal Orissa (Panigrahi, 1981:84-5). Prithvimahadevi, the daughter of a Somavamsi king of Dakshina Koshala, became the ruler of the Bhaumakara kingdom in coastal Orissa, after the death of her husband. She inherited deepest devotion for Lord Siva from her father. This matrimonial relationship greatly
influenced the Bhaumakara rulers to embrace Saivism. Prithvimahadevi patronised the cause of Saivism in the Bhauma territory. From her Baud plate, it is known that in 894 AD she donated villages for perpetual offering of ablution, Sandal paste, etc. to the deity Uma-Mahesvari installed in a temple. As she had no heir, she sought the help of her paternal king (Somavamsis) in order to administer the kingdom (Ganguli,1975:203). In other words, the management and the administration of coastal Orissa fell into the hands of the Somavamsis. After the death of Prithvimahadevi, the coastal Orissa came under their direct control. Finally, the kingdom of Bhaumakaras merged with Dakshina Kosala in the middle of the tenth century (Panigrahi,1981:99;Panda,1985:64;Das,1977:95-6). Thus, Somavamsi which emerged in western Orissa could prove their supremacy over eastern Orissa too and formed the first regional kingdom in Orissa (Kulke,1982:258-9;Das,1962:13).

Somavamsi shifted their capital from Suvarnapura in western Orissa to Jajatinagara in coastal Orissa. The western Orissa was then left in charge of a Mandalesvara named Abhimanyu. He was perhaps the younger brother of the Somavamsi king (Panigrahi,1981:106). After the transfer of the centre to coastal Orissa, the western Orissa remained as a peripheral area. Since this region was out of the direct control and supervision of the central authority, probably, in the 11th century A.D., the younger Somavamsi branch of western Orissa declared its independence (Panigrahi,1981:117). It was the beginning of the downfall and disintegration of Somavamsi authority in western Orissa.
By the end of the 11th century A.D. western Orissa became an uncertain frontier zone between Orissa and Ratanpur. It was liable to attack and conquest from several directions. Such an uncertainty of political control continued till the 12th century. During this period the Bhanjas captured Suvarnapura (Panigrahi, 1981:38) followed by Nagas (Rath, 1983:86). Thereafter, the area was under the Telugu Chodas for sometimes during 1090 AD to 1119 A.D. It is learnt that the Telugu Choda governor of western Orissa was defeated by the Kalachuri king of Ratanpur Rajaladeva I in 1119 A.D. Since then western Orissa remained under the Kalachuri empire for nearly one hundred years as discussed earlier (Panigrahi, 1981:117-20).

In the beginning of the 12th century AD while Kalachuris were ruling over this area, the Somavamsi rule in eastern Orissa got weakened. A new dynasty called Ganga from southern Orissa rose into power and captured eastern Orissa in 1110 AD (Nema, 1978:185). The new ruler Chodaganga tried to conquer western Orissa from the Kalachuris but could not succeed. Finally, western Orissa was annexed in the early period of 13th century A.D. by the Ganga ruler Anangabhimadeva III (1211-38). He was able to drive out the Kalachuris from western Orissa in 1211 and appointed Governor (Mandalesvara) at Suvarnapura for the convenience of administration of this area. They also donated villages to the Brahmins in this tribal dominated forest land beyond the reach of provincial headquarters (Senapati and Mahanti, 1971:60; Panigrahi, 1981:161-62). It seems that western Orissa was never under the direct control of Gangas and had
remained a peripheral region. The Ganga rulers of eastern Orissa were threatened by the Delhi Sultan during the second half of the 13th century (Panigrahi, 1981:165; Senapati and Mahanti, 1971:60). Most probably they could not supervise the administration of western Orissa during this time and left the administration completely in the hands of the Mandaleswara. So, the Gangas' hold on western Orissa was weakened and the local tribal chiefs tried to take the advantage of this situation. "Amidst chaos and confusion which prevailed in that region, one Ramai Dev, a Chauhan Rajput, laid the foundation of the Chauhan rule in western Orissa" (Senapati and Mahanti, 1971:60).

Interestingly, there is no authentic historical document about the early history of Chauhan rulers of western Orissa. Without any historical support it is difficult to accept that so called Ramai Dev was a Chauhan or Rajput by birth or even to believe the existence of such a personality named Ramai Dev though the history of Chauhan is drawn so far from the five 'Rajapuranas' available in this area. These literary sources present different versions of the origin of Chauhan rule in western Orissa but indicate that history cannot be isolated from similar texts that relate to contemporary or prevailing socio-political situations. Although we cannot know the truth, we can at least probe the facts. In this regard, it may be suggested here the politics of myth-making that projects a special relationship between the Rajapuranas and the king. However, such literary sources may be viewed as a clever device invented by the local rulers of the obscure origin in order to place themselves on the highest ladder.
of socio-political hierarchy. These types of literature, published or unpublished, cannot be treated as authentic historical data in its details. Very likely, construction or production of such literature is a way in which the ruler reinterprets his position in order to clear the way to a specific kind of future and purpose. Yet, they do highlight certain events and thereby contain some amount of truth. In other words, such Rajpuranas may be proposed as a literature in which each age gets reflected against the allure of the authentic modification (Thapar, 1990; Singh, 1984; Mahapatra, 1987c:1-50c).

Most probably, one of the tribal chiefs of the locality might have emerged most powerful and declared himself independent. Then, to legitimise his position he joined hands with the Brahmins. He donated lands and villages to Brahmins who in return manufactured a Chauhan genealogy for him. Thus, he could establish a Rajput status for his dynasty with the help and advice of the Hindu priests. The Brahmins-tribals alliance in western Orissa was helpful to form a kingdom for their mutual benefits. Whatever their intentions, reading the five literary sources or epics tells us a lot about the history of that period.

The writer of epic is expected to comprehend and justify his civilization, its history, and his own era. He is asked in the loosest sense and he is to do so in relation to the statements of earlier writers. The early historical tradition of western Orissa also highlighted the same process when the Saravapurias, having obscure origin, claimed Amara-Aryakula status and other groups of subsequent rulers, successfully established themselves as Panduvamsi and Somavamsi. In other
words, the indigenous tribal chiefs in western Orissa have had carved out their kingdoms and claimed Rajput status from time to time.

It seems that with the disintegration of the Somavamsi kingdom of Orissa in the early 12th century and when western Orissa became a zone of friction between eastern Orissa and the Ratanpur empire, the indigenous tribal chiefs taking advantage of the fluid situation joined with Brahmins to establish a kind of oligarchy. The political unrest of Orissa in the beginning of 16th century A.D. was also helpful and favourable for them to strengthen their position and status in western Orissa. The suryavamsi rule of Orissa was overthrown by the Bhois, a family of lesser origin probably, Sudra, in 1540 A.D. (Panigrahi, 1981:239). The middle of 16th century saw the end of Hindu rule in eastern Orissa. Mukunda Deva, the last Hindu ruler of Orissa was defeated by the Sultan of Bengal, Sulaiman Karrein, in 1568 A.D. Taking the advantage of this situation the feudatory rulers of western Orissa tried to consolidate their power and positions in their respective kingdoms (Panigrahi, 1981:242). Thus, decentralisation and political fragmentation began in the 15th and 16th century, after the disintegration of the Ganga empire of Orissa. This happened mainly as a result of the partition of ruling families and grants of villages given by the rulers to the local indigenous tribal chiefs who ended up as independent potentates. These new rulers tried to legitimise their positions in western Orissa.

Further, by the beginning of 17th century they extended their
sway all over western Orissa and took independent titles and ended allegiance to the rulers of eastern Orissa. They stopped paying their dues to their counterparts of Orissa (Panigrahi, 1981:239). All the same, with the end of the Hindu rule in Utkala or eastern Orissa, there was almost an end of Brahmin patronage in the region. It was a period when Brahmins felt insecure. Very likely, they had migrated from eastern Orissa to western Orissa in search of patrons in the emerging kingdoms. Such incidents had happened in the northern India after the disintegration of central power during the Gupta period.

The Brahmins who came from Utkala region, became known as Utkali Brahmins. Interestingly, Gangadhar Mishra, the author of Kosalanandam belonged to this section of Brahmins. In other words, during 17th century the end of patronage to Brahmins by the Hindu rulers in Utkal followed by the opening up of patronage to them in the tribal kingdoms of western Orissa. The Chauhans of Patnagarh expanded their control over nearby areas such as Sambalpur, Sonepur, Baud, Sakti, Surguja, Sarang Garh, and Redhakhol (Das, 1962:198). By the end of 15th century they established a vast kingdom. So, there was division of the kingdom into Patna and Sambalpur later in the early 16th century (ODGB, 1968:10,67). Again, in the last decade of 16th century Sambalpur was sub-divided into two - Sambalpur and Sonepur, and Patna was further divided into Patna and Khariar (Devi, 1983:18). Thus, the entire Chauhan kingdom was finally divided into four i.e. Sambalpur, Patnagarh, Sonepur, and Khariar. Among them Sambalpur emerged as the most powerful by the beginning of 17th century.
The rulers of Sambalpur claimed the title of Hirakhand Chhatrapati Maharaja Attharagarh Maudamani (Das, 1962:236).

From the above discussion one may arrive at a conclusion that the socio-political and cultural development of western Orissa was marked by the migration of Brahmins to the forest kingdoms of the region which were richly inhabited by the tribal peoples. Land and village grants to the Brahmins followed by the tribal-non-tribal interaction, state formation and the process of sanskritization. The state formation in tribal belt of western Orissa was mainly a process of Rajputization of the tribes as observed elsewhere in central India (Sinha, 1978:5) It may be characterised as tribal-caste continuum whereby the position of the tribe and caste remain as two ideal poles in a linear continuum. In course of historical development one finds a systematic mode of interaction between them and a gradual modifications and shift of tribes towards Hindu pole. This process has continued for centuries.

So far our historical analysis is concerned, the state formation took place twice in western Orissa: first, after the disintegration of the Gupta empire in the 5th century A.D. and secondly, after the downfall of the Somavamsi rule in the first decade of 12th century A.D. In both cases a kind of political uncertainty and instability was found in western Orissa. In the first instance Sambalpur region remained as an uncertain political zone between the Nalas and Vakatas. In the absence of a central political authority to exercise its power over the territory, the indigenous tribal chiefs of western Orissa emerged
powerful. They extended their territories and expanded their influence to larger areas. The entire process of territorial extension and integration finally gave birth to two powerful kingdoms: one was led by the so called Amararyakula of Saravapura and the other was led by the Somavamsis of Sonepur as discussed earlier. Most probably the tribal economy of western Orissa was a subsistence one, based on shifting cultivation and food gathering from the jungles. It was difficult to sustain and strengthen an emerging kingdom with the support of such a subsistence economy which hardly generated economic surplus. So, the rulers might have made all possible arrangements of agriculture. They had perhaps settled the indigenous tribes as agriculturists. They had also built reservoirs providing irrigation facility to increase the agricultural output. Finally, the surplus was extracted in the form of tax (bhoga and bhaga) to support the government machinery. At the same time, they might have faced the problem to collect tax from the indigenous people because in a tribal economy there was no regular tax-paying system. Then, they had perhaps realised the need to legitimise their claim of share (bhaga) over the produce. However, the acquisition of land territory is not by itself a significant basis for entry into high status group like ‘Kshatriya’. So, they had to justify their newly acquired position also.

In the above circumstances, it may be suggested that the system of making Khanja i.e., offering villages and land grants to Brahmins and Hindu temples during Saravapuria and Somavamsi was a
well thought out strategic move taken by the rulers in a changing economic situation. Brahmins spread Hinduism through various religious traditions such as Vaisnavism, Saivism, Bhagavatism, Saktism, etc. Their attempts were to justify the roles of a king and the duty of citizens. Thus, the rulers might have succeeded in establishing their status, position and authority in a new situation. Further, with the emergence of a new economic system and with the spread of Hinduism, changes were also taking place in the society and culture of western Orissa.

State formation took place for the second time during 12th century A.D., when political uncertainty was again created. This was the result of a series of political incidents taking place in this area. In such a critical situation a powerful local tribal chief of western Orissa might have taken the political advantage and declared himself as independent. Most probably, he joined hands with the Brahmins with whose help he could have managed to manufacture a Rajput genealogy of his own and thereby claimed Rajput/Chauhan status. From time to time, there might have been resistance from tribal side to Brahminism. Some incidents in later periods indicate this fact. But this Brahmin group most likely represented main alternative reference group/model for the tribals in Sambalpur. In view of the above discussion, it is clear that it was only through Brahmins that Hindu culture trickled into tribal areas. And it was through this channel that the tribals imbibed a number of Hindu beliefs and rituals.

**Brahmin Model:**
Acceptance of Sanskritic mores, rituals, beliefs, deities, festivals, etc. of the incoming Hindus by the local tribes has
been reported upon by the scholars as discussed earlier. Tribals have also successfully raised themselves to the status of Kshatriya or Rajput during ancient and medieval periods in Sambalpur area. In course of historical development, tribals have fissioned into various jatis (castes) defined by occupation. Singh (1985:87-8) writes that Varna system was lax and commensal norms far from rigid in tribal territories. Social anthropologists have reported selectively on tribalization in terms of the locally dominant pressure group of tribal communities. But in Sambalpur area there was an incident whereby the local Raja (King) could confer Brahmin status upon persons belonging to some tribes by conferring the sacred thread upon them. The Jhadua (Aranyaka) Brahmins of Sambalpur area are said to have tribal origin.

"Aranyaka brahmins are said to have originated in an episode of the battles that raged between the Andhras and Oriyas in the course of which the Oriya rulers facing the threat of a defeat hastily collected a bunch of local tribals, conferred the sacred threads on them as brahmins before the advancing Andhra army and thus stopped the war" (Singh, 1985:76).

The immigrants i.e. Oriya (Utkaliya) Brahmins are the highest and next to them are the Jhaduas in the caste hierarchy. Oriya Brahmins are the migrants from the coastal Orissa, mostly from the district of Puri. In the local system a Jhadua can take cooked food in the house of Oriya Brahmin but an Oriya Brahmin shall not accept cooked food from the Jhaduas. Inter-marriage between these two sub-castes is traditionally forbidden though both of them have started inter-marrying. An Oriya is never allowed to smoke with impunity. Jhaduas and Oriyas have a spirit of rivalry which is reflected in observing religious rites
particularly the 'Sitalasasthi festival (Senapati and Mahanti, 1971:111-12; Singh, 1985:76). However, it is a good example of structural mobility of caste system i.e. how an indigenous jati of 'Brahmins' could achieve high status in a local caste-system.

Historically, some of the tribes were and still are the dominant pressure groups in several parts of Sambalpur area. It has been discussed earlier in the first part of this chapter that how Sambalpur has been a tribal dominated area since time immemorial. Even modern western Orissa contains a very large and varied tribal population of Gonds, Bhuiyans, Konds, Oraons, Santhals, Savaras, etc. The larger tribes such as the Gonds and Savaras figure prominently in the epigraphic records of early and medieval periods of this area (Mazumdar, 1925:85-6; Shah, 1976:133). The tribes had since long exercised political authority in Sambalpur area. Earlier, it has been discussed how dynasties such as Sarvapuria, Panduvamsi, Somavamsi, Kalachuri and Chauhan had tribal lineages in the past. They also appear to have had formed a kingdom comprising of eight gads/garhs or forts after the disintegration of Somavamsi kingdom in the 12th century A.D. Very likely one of them could manage to crown himself as a Chauhan prince and thereafter Chauhan dynasty was established in Sambalpur region.

Distribution of tribal population in modern western Orissa highlights the concentration of a particular tribe in a particular geographical area or ecological set-up. For instance, we find the tribal concentration particularly of Sahara (Savara) in Sambalpur and Bargarh; Binjhals in Patna and Borasambhar
In medieval Sambalpur tribal concentration had been directly related to the socio-economic and political dominance which was, more or less, corresponding to a gadjat. Of the twelve gadjats attached to Sambalpur in 1861, seven had tribal chiefs. Bargarh, Raigarh, Sarangarh, Sakti, Phuljhar, and Bindra Nuagarh had Gond chiefs whereas Borasambhar Padampur had a Binjhal chief (see Table I). Due to constant inflow of non-tribals and rapid increase of caste-Hindu population in Sambalpur the numerical strength of tribal population has relatively minimized. However, the census reports still attest the numerical dominance of some tribal groups in Sambalpur (see Table II). Western Orissa together constitutes the largest tribal population in Orissa.

The tribal population in Sambalpur district constitutes 30.4 per cent of the total population and its sub-divisions like Kuchinda and Sambalpur constitute 57.47 and 37.8 percent of the tribal population respectively (see Table III). Most of them reside in the villages of Sambalpur district. According to 1981 census, 92.87 per cent of the total tribal population in Sambalpur district reside in rural areas whereas only 7.13 per cent live in urban areas. In Attabira and Rairakhol tehsils the entire tribal population is found in villages whereas in Kuchinda (96.89%), Deogarh (95.25%), Bargarh (95.79%) and Padampur (98.89%) tehsils more than 95% of them live in villages. Most of the urban tribal
### TABLE-I

**LIST OF THE GADJAT STATES ATTACHED TO SAMBALPUR IN 1861**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.N.</th>
<th>Name of the Gadjats</th>
<th>Name of the Chief</th>
<th>Social Back-ground</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Patna</td>
<td>Heera Dhur Deo</td>
<td>Chauhan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Khariar</td>
<td>Bussoon Sunder</td>
<td>do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Deo</td>
<td>Singh</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Sonepur</td>
<td>Niladri Singh</td>
<td>do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Deo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Bamra</td>
<td>Tribhuban Deo</td>
<td>do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Redhakhol</td>
<td>Bissoon Sunder</td>
<td>do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Deo</td>
<td>Jenamani</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Bindra Nuagarh</td>
<td>Omro Sai</td>
<td>Gond</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Phooljhar</td>
<td>Rajah Sai</td>
<td>do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Sakti</td>
<td>Ranjit Singh</td>
<td>do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Bargarh</td>
<td>Ghanshyam Singh</td>
<td>do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Raigarh</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Sarang garh</td>
<td>Sangram Singh</td>
<td>do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Borasambhar/Fasampur</td>
<td>Soonder Bariha</td>
<td>Binjhal/Binjwal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Computed from Senapati and Sahu (eds.), (1968), Orissa District Gazetteers, Bolangir, pp. 77-80.

### TABLE-II

**POPULATION OF SOME IMPORTANT TRIBES OF SAMBALPUR IN 1961**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.N.</th>
<th>Name of the Tribe</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Position in Terms of Numerical Strength</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Bhuyan/Bhugan</td>
<td>20,395</td>
<td>7th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Binjhal</td>
<td>46,134</td>
<td>4th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Gond/Gondo</td>
<td>93,875</td>
<td>1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Kharia/Kharian</td>
<td>19,180</td>
<td>8th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Khond/Khono/Kandha</td>
<td>23,636</td>
<td>6th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Kisan</td>
<td>66,328</td>
<td>3rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Mirdha</td>
<td>16,491</td>
<td>9th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Munda</td>
<td>35,655</td>
<td>5th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Oraon</td>
<td>12,129</td>
<td>10th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Saora/Savara/Saura</td>
<td>82,575</td>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Computed from Appendix IV provided by Senapati and Mahanti (eds.), (1971), op.cit., pp. 139-40.
### TABLE-III

**SCHEDULED TRIBE POPULATION IN DIFFERENT SUB-DIVISIONS OF SAMBALPUR DISTRICT IN 1971**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.N.</th>
<th>Name of the Sub-Division</th>
<th>ST Population</th>
<th>% to Total Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Kuchinda</td>
<td>86,773</td>
<td>57.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Sambalpur Sadar</td>
<td>1,69,684</td>
<td>38.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Bargarh</td>
<td>52,178</td>
<td>33.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Padampur</td>
<td>96,242</td>
<td>24.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Redhakhol</td>
<td>15,906</td>
<td>23.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Bargarh</td>
<td>72,672</td>
<td>17.56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sambalpur District: 5,93,455 (30.40)

*Source: District Statistical Hand Book, Sambalpur, 1980-81, pp.48-51*

### TABLE-IV

**SCHEDULED TRIBE POPULATION IN DIFFERENT TEHSILS OF SAMBALPUR DISTRICT IN 1981**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.N.</th>
<th>Name of the Tehsil</th>
<th>Scheduled Tribe Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Sambalpur</td>
<td>95,744(84.56)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Jharsuguda</td>
<td>99,712(85.57)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Kuchinda</td>
<td>101,687(96.89)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Deogarh</td>
<td>61,436(95.25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Baragarh</td>
<td>56,737(95.79)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Padampur</td>
<td>101,721(98.69)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Attabira</td>
<td>40,189(100.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Redhakhol</td>
<td>19,086(100.0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SAMBALPUR DISTRICT: 5,76,312(92.87) | 44,243(07.13) | 620,555

*Source: District Statistical Hand Book, Sambalpur, 1980-81, pp.47.*
population is concentrated in two industrialized tehsils namely Sambalpur sadar (15.44%) and Jharsuguda (14.43%) of Sambalpur district. These two tehsils together constitute 34,291 tribals out of their 44,243 population in urban areas of Sambalpur district. It means, 77.51% of the total urban tribal population in Sambalpur district is concentrated in Sambalpur Sadar and Jharsuguda tehsils (see Table IV). This is most probably due to the concentration of important urban centres and major industries in this area (see Table I and Chapter VI).

It is difficult to trace out the tribal religious traditions of ancient and medieval periods in Sambalpur area because the tribal religious tradition of the people remained unrecorded. This historical sources used in the previous part of this chapter reflect the religious tradition in relation to political power. The major religious movements such as Jainism, Buddhism, Vaishnavism, Saivism and Saktism dependent largely on the patronage they received from the rulers of Sambalpur area. The caste Hindus mainly Brahmins had been invited and established by the local Rajas of the region. The Rajas donated lands and villages to the Brahmins and temples. Thus, the chiefs of the autochthonous groups had been acting as the champions of Hinduism in Sambalpur area. Of course, these chieftains, in return, were planted as Kshatriyas by the Brahmins.

A large number of Saiva shrines found in Sambalpur district were built during the Chauhan period. The most important among them were those of the 'Asta-Sambhus' namely, (1) Bimaleswar of Huma, (2) Kedarnath of Ambabhona, (3) Viswanath of Deogan, (4)
Balunkeswar of Gaisama, (5) Maneswar of Maneswar, (6) Swapneswar of Sorna, (7) Nilakantheswar of Niljee, and (8) Bisweswar of Soranda. The Bimaleswar Siva temple, on the bank of the river Mahanadi was built by Maharaja Baliar Singh. The rest of the temples mentioned above were constructed during the reign of Ajit Singh and his son Abhay Singh (Senapati and Mahanti, 1971:51). The non-Brahmin priests known as thanapati are still commonly found in Saiva shrines of Sambalpur area. Since non-Brahmin priests are also found outside Sambalpur area (as discussed in the theoretical chapter), its occurrence in Sambalpur area may not be considered as an extraordinary one. But this point deserves proper attention in the sense that it is indicative of a trend in the Saiva religion to give special status to the non-Brahmin priests.

Siva seems to have had particularly close connections with tribal religion at certain stage in history. He was, in all probability, identified with the tribal deities. Since the shape of Siva Linga has some similarities with that of some tribal deities, iconographically it was easy to transform the tribal goddesses into a Siva Linga. In many places of Sambalpur the tribal deities such as 'Budharaja' enshrined in the Budharaja temple situated on a hill top in Sambalpur town and 'Budhasiva' are worshipped by both the tribals as well as caste-Hindus (Shah, 1976:138).

**ACCU CULTURATION AT THE LINGUISTIC LEVEL :**

The cultural influence of the aboriginal at linguistic level is great in Sambalpur area. In course of time, the caste-Hindus who
came and settled here have come under the direct influence of local tribes. They have welded into the tribal speaking people and have, thus, become tribalized in speech.

The literary evidence bearing upon the non-Aryan character of the original people of western Orissa may be supported by analysing some Sambalpuri words. Numerous place-names in Sambalpur area indicate the widespread influence of tribals in this region, as found elsewhere (See footnote 1). Notably, tribal character is highly reflected in Sambalpuri speech, rather than Oriya language. For instance, the Kandha word Jorri for a river is retained in Sambalpuri language in the name of the river Maltijor which is an off-shoot of the river Mahanadi. The non-Aryan word Kera indicating a cluster of villages, is used in Sambalpuri to signify almost the same meaning. For example, Rourkela (769001), kundekela (770019), Utkela (766011), Jamen-kera (768107), Lai-kera (768215), etc. are common village names. All these are the marks left by the aborigines on the socio-cultural life of Sambalpurias. The numerical dominance and habitation of tribal peoples in this area is further attested by these names of the places.

One could clearly find a number of non-Aryan words in use in the Sambalpuri language and also the geographical names of hills, forests, rivers and villages. Mention may be made of Bali-Munda, Munda-mal, Mundel, Uttu (Attabira (768027), Kulha-bira (768213), Karlamunda (766116), Bondamunda (770103), Kuanrmunda (770039), Melchhamunda (768035), Remunda (768103), and many other names of 'Mundari' origin. Further, many such geographical names of other
non-Aryan origin also occur throughout this tract. Some of these are: Guja (meaning hill and the name of a particular hill about 10 miles north-west of Sambalpur town), Dungri (meaning a small hill and also the name of a village), Sir-guja (the name of a former feudatory state and now a district in Madhya Pradesh), Bheden (the name of a river as well as of a zamindari in Sambalpur), Sir-girda (the name of a village), Jhar-sir-girda (modern Jharsuguda), Koirā, Loira, Loi-sing (Loisinga) of the epigraphic records, Sa-son and so forth. Many old place-names have been Hinduised, but in many cases the history of the names have not been obliterated. The non-Aryan name Samlei (the name of a goddess) has been tried to be Hinduised by the term Samaleswari (Mazumdar, 1925:81). Similarly, the non-Aryan river-goddess Binkai has lent her name to the town Binka. The word Binkai is of Savara Mundari origin, and signifies the goddess who rules over Beings or serpents in the river (Mazumdar 1925:78). Binka has been a seat of river trade since long. Being compounded with the Sanskrit word Pura it was mentioned as Vinitapura in various copper-plate grants (Mazumdar, 1925:75-6). In view of this it may be suggested here that there was the rise of a link language called Sambalpuri in Sambalpur area which served as the medium of communication between the tribals and caste-Hindus. This has been influenced by both tribal dialects such as Bhatri (Padhee, 1985, 1987) and Kisan (Patel, 1985, 1987) and the language spoken by the caste-Hindus of Sambalpur area.

Whereas there are great cultural influences of the aboriginals in western Orissa, the tribals have also adopted certain sanskritic
norms and values. For instance, the Gonds wear ceremonial threads like twice-born castes. But they denounced the Brahminical supremacy and did not appoint Brahmins as priests in their socio-religious affairs (Dash, 1962:9). All the same, it is evident that the contact of tribals in Sambalpur area with their Hindu neighbours dates back to ancient times. We cannot rule out the possibility that there might have been a number of primitive groups living in forests and hills without having more than casual interaction with the population of the open plains and centres of civilization that developed on the bank of the river Mahanadi. But over a period of time some of them have had shown common interest in social, political, religious and economic spheres of life. The caste-Hindus did not make any conscious efforts on their part nor did the tribal people to assimilate or to reform or to exchange their way of life. Interestingly enough, some tribal groups like 'Gonds' and 'Binjhal's' of Sambalpur have shown a tendency to look upon themselves as Hindus or as people very much close to Hindus. Ghurye (1963:29) has rightly pointed out:

"almost all the so-called aboriginal tribes of the region have a Hinduised section, small or large, that have been in fairly intimate contact with the Hindus for a long time, and that they have common interest with the Hindus in matter of religion and gainful occupation."

Since different tribal cultures and Hindu cultures of Sambalpur area flourished side by side in the past, there has been an obvious cultural link between the tribal and non-tribal societies in the entire region. The traditional urbanism or the way of life under the tribal influence in the then Sambalpur had its own distinctive style which was adopted by many non-tribal sections of the Hindus. This has been reflected in the style of dress,
speech, food habits, music, dance, leisure-time activities and the observations of a different set of festivals and fairs. Therefore, the Sambalpuri culture reflects a unique synthesis of a plurality of cultural strands. Despite their co-existence and continuous interaction, most of the tribals have successfully retained, till today, some of their customs, regulations and rituals and thereby their identity. In other words, they form socially and culturally distinct communities in contrast to their Hindu neighbour.

Besides being a seat of chiefs and kings and a commercial urban centre located on the bank of the river Mahanadi where jewels, wealth, silk and other articles were repleted and both inland and external trades were important activities, Sambalpur was a centre of culture. With a view to spread the Saiva and Vaisnava cults (Jagannath) in the tribal dominated Sambalpur area, construction of Jagannath temples was a major attempt made by various Hindu Rajas. As discussed earlier, a number of Siva and Jagannath temples were built in Sambalpur during the respective reigns of the Somavamsi and Chauhan rulers. But all this was done at the cost of the local religious cults. The other aspect of this continuum was the enhancement of the status of the local deities in Sambalpur area through a process of sanskritization i.e. imbibing sanskritic elements in various religious rituals, creating myths and legends in linking these deities with Durga the great Hindu goddess. For instance, the tribal goddess Samlei has become known and worshipped as Durga and is considered to be a form of Sakti, the consort of Siva.
Sambalpur during the British Period:

After the advent of the British there began an infiltration from plains, first from eastern Orissa, Bengal and southern India and later from the other distant places into tribal areas. With the opening of communication and expansion of British dominion across the hills, the plains people who were afraid of the unhealthy forests and hills started migrating there. The Marwaris from Rajasthan, Punjabis from Punjab who at present control the economy of western Orissa came to this land during the early years of this century and captured the economy within a short span of time. Since then, there developed vigorously the process of cultural contact with the tribals. The relationship of tribals and some non-tribal groups grew up in various directions (Das, 1972:187). The third and the final step of sanskritization came in vogue during this period with the simple claim of the ruling tribal chiefs as being members of the Rajput community and, thereby, of the greater Hindu society.

During the 18th century fourteen garhs had Gond chiefs and four had others in Sambalpur. According to Wills (1919:255), the Rajput system was super-imposed on a tribal base. But it seems that because of the numerical dominance of the tribal people, the so called Chauhan Rajputs had only a nominal position, and that they accepted it. Lingo was a legendary hero who saved his twelve brothers and taught them different techniques of survival on this earth. He is said to be the son of Siva and Parvati. This is certainly in advance Hindu interpolation in the original Gond
tradition (Russel, 1916:47-9). The Sabaras/Saoras/Sauras had the following account of the legends relating to the origin of the tribe. The local tradition traces their origin to the celebrated Sabari of the Ramayana who is supposed to have lived somewhere near the present Seorinarayan in the Bilaspur district of Madhya Pradesh and to have given her name to this place (Senapati and Mahanti, 1971:116).

The Gonds have been judged to be numerically as well as historically one of the important tribal groups of India. Gonds in Sambalpur area worship some Hindu gods like ‘Raja’ and observe Hindu festivals such as Holi (Senapati and Mahanti, 1971:121). There are two main divisions—Rajgonds who form the aristocracy and Dhurgonds (dust Gonds) who are the common people. The Rajgonds may be taken to be the descendants of Gond landed proprietors who have been formed into a separate group and admitted to Hinduism with the status of a cultivating caste. Brahmins accept water from them. Many Rajgonds wear the paeta (sacred threads) like the Brahmins (Senapati and Mahanti, 1971:117). Griegson (1938:36) suggests that such names as Rajgonds arose when local primitive groups were gradually Hinduised and accepted by Hindus under new names.

The Binjhals worship the Hindu deities along with swords, spears and arrows. They do not employ Brahmins as their priests. Vaishnavas or Bairagis are taken as Mantra Guru (Senapati and Mahanti, 1971:121). The Hindu system is found in the burial system of Binjhals. If the dead body of a Binjhal is burnt, the ashes and bones are generally taken to Panch Pandava Dhar in the
stream near Narsimhanath and in some cases of rich persons even
to the Ganga (Senapati and Mahanti, 1971:122-23). The more
advanced Binjhals boast of an alliance with Rajputs and call
themselves Barihas, a title originally borne by some hill chiefs.
But the common Binjhals do not claim such Rajput descent. Some
Binjhals also work as village priests (Senapati and Mahanti,
1971:118; Das, 1961:30). The Binjhals of Padampur and Ghess,
associated with zamindars there, claim Kshatriya status. Contrary
to this, the ordinary Binjhals admit that they are the off-shoots
and accept that they are also known as Binjhwars (Das,
1961:30). Binjhals observe almost all important Hindu festivals
along with their own traditional ones (Das, 1961:36).

The tribal Hindu interaction in Sambalpur area must be seen from
two angles: accommodation and conflict. Although the two
processes of accommodation and conflict are studied by the
scholars, more importance is attached to the former. It has been
discussed earlier as how accommodation has led to acculturation
through the twin processes of sanskritization and tribalization
in Sambalpur area. Though this is partly true, this does not help
us to understand the totality of tribe-Hindu relationships in
Sambalpur. There are instances to prove sufficiently that the
emigration of Brahmins and other caste-Hindus, stimulated by
lands and village grants, to the tribal dominated Sambalpur area
was not a peaceful process. Very likely, such penetration might
have led to conflicts between the incoming Brahmins/caste-Hindus
and the indigenous people over so many socio-economic issues.
Only through a parallel and counter cultural movement, dignified
incorporation is possible. So, the objective of this part of the chapter is to study the conflicting aspect of tribe-Hindu interaction in Sambalpur area.

Although the Raj Gonds of western Orissa put on sacred threads and took names of the Brahmin gotras for themselves, they never patronised Brahmins. Rather, they developed antagonistic relationships with them. They considered Brahmins to be their enemies. According to their tradition, once upon a time they were the Rajas of Orissa. But the Brahmins conspired to oust them from office. Very likely, this attitude had arisen when the Brahmins were granted Bhogra i.e., rent-free lands and villages at the cost of the local tribals. The interest of the local people was sadly neglected with the result that they openly came out with their burning hearts. The Gonds saw the Brahmins as responsible for the loss of their traditional cultivable area. While outsiders had received special considerations in economic field, the local tribals were neglected in their own land. This antagonism was hardened by the cultural differences between the tribals and caste-Hindus, including the latter's dietary restrictions. They would not touch food cooked by Brahmins. The Gonds viewed Brahmins as dhubla buka (white he-goat). They used to sacrifice a Brahmin boy to their deity (Russel, 1916:70; Deo, 1984:92). According to the local information, up to the 1950s they used to bring, at least, one Brahmin boy from outside, at an interval of 12 years and sacrificed him to their deity Budharaja.

The transfer of control over tribal lands and villages to non-
tribals was one basic reason for the rise of the tribal peasants movements in western Orissa in the 1830s and 1840s. In this movement the Gonds played the most crucial role as, nine Jamidars had lost their jamidaris. Finally, they were successful and the Raja of Sambalpur had to restore their jamidaris to them in 1840s. The Gond jamidars were in a dominant position till the beginning of 20th century. Of the 17 jamidars in Sambalpur district alone, 11 were Gonds (Dewar, 1906:14). Further, of the twelve Gadjats attached to Sambalpur in 1861, six were ruled by the Gond chiefs (Senapati and Mahanti, 1971:77-80).

The Kandhas of western Orissa have had revolted from time to time against their exploitation and encroachment on their rights to land, forest and faith. In the 1830s they revolted against the local Raja who had encroached upon their lands; in 1840s the Kandhas of Patna revolted against the cruel Jamidars; in 1881 there was a revolt against the Brahminism and also against the restrictions imposed on the tribals and untouchables against their entering the Furi temple which will be dealt with subsequently; in 1882, the Kandhas of Kalahandi revolted against the encroachment of their land by the Raja's men.

It is said that the supremacy of Brahminism and the challenge posed by Christian missionaries to the Hindu system had brought about the birth of Mahima cult to revitalize the traditional peasant society. It was essentially a reformist movement. The simple rituals and beliefs of Mahima Dharma made it popular among the peasantry (Patra, 1970:9-11). This cult is also known as Bhima Bhoi cult, after Bhima Bhoi, a Kandha blind-poet-saint of
Mahima Dharma born in Redhakhol, who had glorified this cult through his poems. His popular Chautisa and Bhajans are of great literary and spiritual value (Jit, 1984:249-50). It had emerged as a cult of untouchables to oppose the Brahminical hegemony. This also influenced a large number of tribals in Sambalpur area (Panda, et.al., 1987:40). On 1st March 1881, a group of twelve men and three women led by Dasaram or Bhima Bhoi attacked the Jagannath temple with an intention to destroy the image of Lord Jagannath and thereby to quell the supremacy of the Jagannath cult (Mukherjee, 1977:367). They could reach the Bhoga Mandapa only from where they were driven back by the Pandas of Puri. The attempt to burn the statue of Jagannath by entering into the temple was thus foiled. The Deputy Magistrate of Puri sentenced the Alekhas, the followers of the Mahima cult, to two months of rigorous imprisonment for rioting and committing trespass into a place of worship (Eschmann, 1978:384-85).

In view of the above discussion it may be clearly said that caste-Hindus and tribals of Sambalpur area have been living together in close proximity. There are great cultural influences of the aboriginals in Sambalpur area. The tribals have also adopted certain sanskritic norms and values. Thus, they have been influencing each other's life and culture. Their relationships dates back to ancient time. So, Sambalpuri folk culture may be viewed as a product of tribe-caste integration through the twin processes of sanskritization and tribalization in this culture area. In our subsequent discussions we will examine this point with the help of empirical data collected from our field.
NOTES:

1. After the downfall of Gupta empire (4th C.AD), the chieftains of tribal communities such as Gonds and Nagabansis in Chotanagpur; the Bhumij in the jungle mahals of Bengal; Doms, Bhars and Cheros in south Bihar; Rakshels in the Chhattisgarh region of M.P. and Kharwars in the Sone-Damodar valley region filled the vaccum in the country-side in the medieval period. They founded kingdoms, claimed Rajput status, became Hinduised and acted as champions of Brahminism. Numerous place-names associated with these tribes indicate their widespread influence in the region (Singh, 1984:316-17; Sinha, 1962:36-80; 1987:IX-XXVI).

2. The name of the town Sambalpur is of ancient origin. Ptolemy, a Greek Geographer in the second century A.D., referred to a town in his classic book on Geography as Sambalaka. The town was situated on the bank of the river Manada. Sambalaka and Manada have been identified with modern Sambalpur and the river Mahanadi respectively. The earliest reference mentions the present Sambalpur as Sambalaka or Sambaraka without being compounded with the Sanskrit word Pur. Very likely, the Hinduised form of the name of the town of Sambalpur is of comparatively recent time (Senapati and Mahanti, 1971:53; Mazumdar, 1925:77).

3. The term Sambalpur is preferred to that of western Orissa in order to avoid ambiguities in the meaning given above. We are trying in this chapter to reconstruct the social history of Sambalpur as a culture-area to which Sambalpur town or Sambalpur district is but a part.

4. Gadjat refers to small kingdom.

5. There are mainly five Rajpurans (literary works) written at different points of time under different socio-political circumstances to highlight the earlier social situations in Sambalpur area. These are as follows:
   1. Kosalanandam is a sanskrit work written by Gangadhar Mishra in the first of 17th century. Mishra was the court poet of Raja Balliar Singh (1617-1657) of Sambalpur. Mishra's father was also a court poet of Sambalpur Darbar. Koshalanandam refers to the Chauhans as Chandravamsi.
   2. Jaichandrika is a Hindi work written by Prahallad Dube in the second half of 18th century. 3. Nrusingha Mahatmya was written by Rajendra Singh Bariha, Binjhal (tribe) chief in the early twentieth century. The author was the Jamidar of Borasambar Padampur. 4. Ravana Angada Ubacha was written by Shiba Narayan Deo in Sambalpuri/Koshali language. 5. Ramai Dev was written in Sonpur. We do not have detailed information exactly when those were written.

6. The Punch-marked coins have been found all over India. These are the earliest available and known system of coinage of the world. Punch-marked coins formed the most extensive
monetary system of ancient India. According to Tripathy (1986:19) there is no unanimity of opinion among the scholars on the issue as to when these were first introduced. It has been variously settled by different authorities at various dates ranging from 1000 B.C. or even earlier to the 4th Century B.C.

A large number of Punch-marked coins have been unearthed in western Orissa, which comprised within the ancient territorial unit of South Koshala. They are generally found confined within the region around Sambalpur-Bolangir districts. Tripathy (1986:2) calls these coins as local, which are also known as the Janapada coins. Local or Janapada type of coins are generally found confined within a particular area of the country. Be that as it may, the coins found in Sambalpur area "should better be designated as the Dakshina Koshala type and attributed to the coinage of Dakshina Koshala Janapada," because, these are frequently and exclusively found in the area comprising the eastern part of Madhya Pradesh and western part of Orissa i.e. Sambalpur area (Tripathy,1986:4).

A hoard of 162 coins reported to have been found in Sonpur town and Baidyanath in Bolangir district. Stray finds of them are also frequently known in the Mahanadi river valley in Bolangir and Sambalpur districts. Some of these coins reported to have been discovered in the vicinity of Sambalpur are now preserved in the Sambalpur University Museum, Burla (Tripathy, 1986:3). Two such coins are found in Sisupalgarh near Bhubaneswar i.e. coastal Orissa in 1966 (Tripathy, 1986:2). The discovery of these two coins in the coastal region of Orissa would indicate nothing but commercial linkages between the two regions (Tripathy, 1986:4-5). However, a hoard of 539 coins was found in 1965 at the old and ruined fort of Asurgarh in Kalahandi district, situated under Narla Police station (Tripathy, 1986:6).

7. From the rivers mentioned above the tools of Chopper-biface-Flake, Flake blades, Short blades and Neolithic industries have been yielded. Manmunda and Haldipali situated on the banks of the river Tel in the district of Phulbani and Bolangir respectively, Chipa of Kalahandi district, Sarsara of Sambalpur district on the river Suktel, Ghatkaintera of Bolangir district and Khemanmal of Sambalpur on the river valley of the Suktel and the Ang (Ong) are important locations for Chopper-biface-Flake, Flake-blades, Short-blades and Neolithic industries respectively. The continuity of lithic cultural phases indicates that the area was inhabited by early men from a remote past (For detail, see Tripathy 1971:45-7).

8. Senapati and Mahanti (1971:52) write: "The reference to the territory by the Grammarian Panini and the finds of punch-marked coins attributed to the pre-Mauryan period
suggest possibility of inclusion of that kingdom (Bolangir) in the empire of Mahapadmananda."

9. Sahu (1983:VI-IX) suggests the date of the civilization as 5th century A.D. Deo (1983:6) and Sahu (1983) claim the origin of this lāc bridge in 5th–6th century A.D. But it is not yet scientifically tested.

10. The Chinese pilgrim Yuan-Chuang, who visited one of the monasteries in the 7th century A.D., reports that there were one hundred Buddhist monasteries and about 10,000 Brethren, all Mahayanists (Beals, 1969:209-10; Walter, 1961:200).

11. The tribal mode of production here means the Podus or slash and burn cultivation. In other words, it refers to a subsistence economy. Such mode of production cannot generate surplus to sustain a kingdom. The production of surplus is a pre-condition for the existence of the state. Notably, there are seven constituents of the state which are regarded as the limbs (aṅgas) of the body politic. Of these, Swāmin (king) and Amāyas (ministers) constituted the central government, which exercised the sovereign powers and imparted the central unity. Rāṣṭra (territory) was considered to be an essential element of the state. Durgā (fort) and Bala (armed forces) were vitally necessary to defend the very existence of the state. Owing to the presence of the anti-social elements in the society, the government has to exercise danda (force) to maintain peace and harmony in the state. The defence of the state and the proper discharge of the constituent and ministrant functions of the state require ample resources. So Kosha (treasury) is also regarded as indispensable to the very existence of the state (Altekar, 1949:42-5).

12. Bargarh is a sub-division of modern Sambalpur district. It was also a gad out of the eighteen gads (forts/small kingdoms) that existed in western Orissa during medieval period.

13. In the temple of Boinda the worship of Siva has come to supersede that of mother worship. There are other instances too such as the stone pillars in some villages in Phulbani district which once stood for female deities (Pitābali and Khambeswari) are considered by the people as Liṅga (Eschemann, 1978:95-6).

14. An attempt has been made to give the Postal Index Numbers (PIN) of the names of the villages having non-Aryan origin. For detail, see Das (1962:169-70), Shah (1976:137-8), Senapati and Mahanti (1971:169-70), Mazumdar (1925:80-1).