Map Showing the Area of Dantami Maris.
INTRODUCTION

0.1. **People and the Dialect**

This study presents a descriptive grammar of a Gondi dialect belonging to Central Dravidian, spoken by the Dandami Marias (पंडामी मायियास) of Bastar district in Madhya Pradesh. These people have also been referred as Bison-horn Marias by Grigson (1938), Mitchell (1942), Elwin (1943) and Marias and Goteewars by Glasfurd (1862). Referring about them, Glasfurd says, "Towards Dunteewara they are known as Marias, but further towards the west they are called Goteewars, and from all I have been able to gather, these classes are identical." Elwin (1943:iii) says that he never heard these people being called as Dandami Marias, but he attests that they are referred by the local people as Talaguda Marias and Sing Marias. It may be true that Dandami Maria is not a popular name of the tribe, but the Marias of Narainpur and Kondagaon Tahsils do use this name. The Abujh Marias (Hill Marias) call them दंडाकु, and the Dhurwas also known as Parjas, designate them as Boyil. This is also supported by Burrow and Bhattacharya (1953:x). In the Presidents order they have been referred as the Bison-horn Marias, as well as Dandami Marias. However, the people call themselves कोळ्योत्र, and refer to their speech as कोळ्या मायता. In some areas, they are found to call themselves Murias, and in some areas as Marias (Dubey:1968). To the Dorlas of Bastar they are known as Gotte and also as Murias. The change in such designations may be due to a acculturation.
0.2. Area and Population

In Bastar the Dandami Marias are mostly concentrated in Dantewara and the northern part of Bijapur and Konta Tahsils. They are also found in the south-west of Jagdalpur Tahsil, and adjacent Koraput district of Orissa.

It is rather difficult to give the figures of the speakers. The 1931 Census places the number of Bison-horn Marias at 1,56,000. Elwin (1943:11), who had also worked as the Census Officer for the 1941 Census, estimates their strength to be 1,75,000. The 1951 and 1961 Censuses do not give exclusive figures for this dialect. The 1951 Census Table D-I(1) given on pp. 122-124 records the number of speakers of Gondi and Maria along with others. Similarly the 1961 Census gives the figures related to Gondi, Muria and Maria speakers. In both the Censuses, Gondi includes the Dandami Maria and also other dialects of Gondi as well as Parji. The Maria includes the speakers of Abujh Maria and also the Dandami Maria. Similarly the returns for the Muria include the speakers of Muria (well-known for their Gotul dormitory), and also of the Dandami Maria (Bastar District Census Handbook, 1961: 1111).

The above handbook (p.14) itself disapproves the population figures of the Bison-horn Marias. It says, "the population of Bison-horn Marias in 1961 is found to be 10,460 which is not the true population of the tribe." The Census operations in a district like Bastar, where numerous dialects and languages are spoken, and where ethnic groups representing various distinct cultures live, need a careful handling.
0.3. Social Organization

The tribe is divided into groups called phratries (tar), which are made up of clans. The clans are patrilineal and members of one clan believe to be descendants of a common ancestor. Grigson (1938) has divided the clans into five phratries, while Dubey (1969) has modified and corrected this classification. The members of a phratry cannot intermarry. The 0:1 clan has no brother-clan and so its member can marry in any other clan. Opposite to this the Na:ykos have their own exogamous subgroups. Each phratry has a common totem which is generally a bird, an animal, or a tree. There are certain taboos related with these totems, but an unmarried girl is free from such taboos. Each clan has its original territory which is called bu:um. The clans worship different deities. For instance, the Ma:rvdi people worship Andal ko:isal, the Ko:vasi people, I:r sirimal and the Pandami:ş, ka:š po:na:.n.

0.3.1. Marriage

The regular marriage (pendul) is settled through negotiations, in which the initiative is taken by the boy’s father. In marriage by service, the prospective husband (la:mane) has to work for some years in his father-in-law’s house. In marriage by exchange, a person marries his sister to wife’s brother. Other informal marriages are: (i) marriage by elopement (ar miranad), (ii) marriage by capture (poys tatanad), and (iii) marriage by intrusion (oriya va:ynad). In the last type of marriage, the girl enters a boy’s house, and forces him to marry her. The informal marriage are found to be common, because the regular one is quite expensive. Polygamy, widow-marriage and r remarriage are permitted. The younger brother can marry the widow of his elder
brother with her consent. A person generally marries a widow of his brother-clan. The mother's brother's daughter is a preferential mate, and she is regarded as a claim. If she is married to someone else, her husband has to pay the compensation which is called *mama-som*. If a woman is divorced or turned out, her parents can claim the double bride-price (*kara*) from her husband. This fine is called *virs kadnam*. In case, a woman runs away from her husband's house, and marries somebody, her first husband can claim the bride-price from her new husband.

0.3.2. Kinship behaviour

The wife and husband do not address each other with personal name. The father-in-law addresses his son-in-law and daughter-in-law with the terms *bajnja* (mother's brother's son) and *bajnji* (mother's brother's daughter). Elder brother calls the younger brother's wife, *koriyar* (son's wife) and she calls him *daida* (elder brother). They partially avoid each other. One can call his wife's elder sister as *poidar*, or optionally as *ange* (elder brother's wife). If he prefers to call her *ange*, he can cut jokes with her, but if he addresses her with the term *poidar*, he cannot do so. Joking is permitted with one's father's brother's wife, father's mother, mother's brother's daughter, elder brother's wife, and father's sister's daughter.

0.4. Pantheon

The Marias believe in different kinds of malevolent and benevolent spirits, deities, and the supreme power. For instance, the *rav* is a malevolent spirit living in the mountains; *Sir Kanya* and *Jal ka'mini* are the spirits of water; *Ban de'vi* is
the spirit dwelling in the forest and De:ym mute (also known as Bagvan mute) is the supreme power. She creates the human beings and other creatures and takes away the soul from their bodies. Dimal is another powerful deity and is responsible for the rains. Ja:ga dev is the earth goddess; Bai:yi lives at the medicine man's house and cures the diseases; Pe:n maine lives in the jungle, and is symbolised with a pile of stones. He cures the sick children and give them names through the priest (vade).

0.5. Death

Generally the dead body is cremated. A woman dying during pregnancy, or while delivering a child is buried across the stream, so that her malevolent ghost (ondar mute) may not enter the village. The young children and the shamans are also buried. The first born child is buried in erect posture under a mahuwa (Basia latifolia) tree. Premature and sudden death is looked with suspicion. If the bones of the deceased do not burn properly in cremation, it is believed that the dead person was the victim of black magic.

A menhir (urskal) is erected in memory of the dead, and sometimes a carved wooden post (ursguta) is fixed in the ground by the roadside. Carvings on these posts, depict the various aspects of the life of the dead person and objects liked by him (Elwin:1951: 91-92). It is a common belief that the menhirs show a growth, if the spirit of the dead is contended.

0.5.1. A:na kunda

An earthen pot is kept in the seed-house (vija lono) or at a place called a:na manda in memory of the dead. The clans which
is referred as nī:y kunḍa. Because of this pot, there are certain taboos regarding the entry into the seed-house. Any man can enter the seed-house, and so the woman married in the husband's phratry. A woman, married to a person who does not belong to the phratry of the householder, is restricted from entering into the seed-house, whereas an unmarried girl of a wife-clan is not. Unmarried girls of the house, after attaining puberty, are also prohibited to enter the seed-house. Similarly a man, whose wife is in her period, is not allowed to enter the seed-house. Such a man cannot touch the dead body as well.

0.6. Murder and Suicide

The Dandami Maris are feared by others for their bad temper and sensitive nature, which results in frequent homicidal killings and suicides. A man can kill his parent, son, brother, wife or enemy, sometimes over a trifling matter, in a fit of rage. The psychosomatic and other factors working in the background of such incidents have been studied in detail in Elwin's 'Maria Murder and Suicide.' They are occasionally alleged to practice human-sacrifice to appease the deities.

0.7. Status of Dandami Maria as a Dialect

There are no problems in giving the Dandami Maria, a separate status of a dialect. Note some of the lexical, grammatical and semantic differences of Dandami Maria from Dorli, Muria and Abujh Maria dialects of Gondi spoken in Bastar District, e.g.

(A) Lexical difference

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dandami Maria</th>
<th>Dorli</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>o:r</td>
<td>onçu</td>
<td>'he'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o:r</td>
<td>o:ru</td>
<td>'they(m.)'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dendami Maria</td>
<td>Muria</td>
<td>Gloss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>guram</td>
<td>koçça</td>
<td>'horse'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pençül</td>
<td>marmin</td>
<td>'marriage'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ojal</td>
<td>hoydel</td>
<td>'hearth'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>musup</td>
<td>pir</td>
<td>'rains'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ki:ke</td>
<td>mìn</td>
<td>'fish'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neta</td>
<td>gu:q</td>
<td>'wall'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dendami Maria</th>
<th>Abujh Maria</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bo:r</td>
<td>bo:ju</td>
<td>'who(m.sg.)'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e:r</td>
<td>e:šu</td>
<td>'water'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ya:yo</td>
<td>avali</td>
<td>'mother'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>goğ</td>
<td>ko:nda</td>
<td>'cow'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bu:la</td>
<td>pe:rnka</td>
<td>'bone'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kohla</td>
<td>Ko?la</td>
<td>'millet'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(B) **Grammatical and semantic difference**:

1. **Dandami Maria**
   - titor: 'he ate'
   - Dorli: titor: 'they(m.) ate'

2. **Dandami Maria**
   - va:ța: 'keep it (imp. sg.)'
   - Muria: va:ța: 'throw it away (imp. sg.)'

3. **Dandami Maria**
   - va:țor: 'he comes/will come'
   - Abujh Maria: va:țor: 'they(m.) came'

1)/ː/ = voiced dorso-velar fricative

2)/ʔ/ = glottal stop.
0.8. Previous study of the dialect

First mention of the Maria dialect is found in Grierson's 'Linguistic Survey of India (Vol. IV)'. Another work which brought this dialect in the knowledge of the civilized world, is Mitchell's grammar (Mitchell:1942). The lexical material given in this work has been incorporated into Dravidian Etymological Dictionary (Burrow and Emeneau:1961) and its Supplement (1968). It was also a source for 'A Comparative Vocabulary of Gondi Dialects' (Burrow and Bhattacharya:1960).

A specimen of the 'so called Maria dialect' is presented on the pages 534 and 535 of the L.S.I. (Vol.IV), which is certainly not authentic. This has been attested by Sir George Grierson himself. He reports, "...specimens of all these dialects have been forwarded from the district and will be reported in what follows. They are all far from being satisfactory. The materials sent in for the use of the Survey are not originals, but copies from them and the copies have been made by people who did not know the dialect in question. They therefore abound in mistakes and I have not been able to correct all of them." (L.S.I. Vol.IV:529). The grammatical notes given on page 532 are misleading.

Mitchell's grammar is very sketchy and contains 69 pages only, out of which 13 pages have been devoted to introduction, 23 pages to grammatical description, and the rest to list of verbs, trees, vocabulary and two texts, one of which is the 'Parable of the Prodigal Son' and the other is 'Speech delivered in September, 1941 at the investiture of the Zamindar of Kutru: English and Dorla versions.'

The above grammar contains many hasty and erroneous statements as:
1. "In the Maria language nouns are not inflected and no distinction of form exists between singular and plural." (p.15)
2. "Adverbs and Adjectives are inter-changeable." (p.18)
3. "There is no inclusive form of the pronoun of the first person plural in Maria." (foot-note on p.18)
4. "These (demonstrative) pronouns do not inflect in the oblique case or the plural." (p.20)
5. "There are no reflexive pronouns in Maria." (p.21)
6. "There are no regular conjugations of the verb in Maria." (p.26)
7. "There are no verbs of two syllables." (p.26)
8. Mitchell, under the influence of English grammar tries to discover comparative and superlative forms of the adjectives. He thinks that नेलटोर is comparative and superlative form of नेल (p.18). The citations are also erroneous:
   (i) नेला अर माने तेला पोरी फेदेन
       I am taller than that man. (p.18)
   (ii) नेला नी जीसु दास्कान
         I go to your house. (p.19)

The use of Deonagri script fails to distinguish the vowel length of e and o. Reviewing this grammar, Emeneau has pointed out the problems of using Deonagri script (Emeneau: Lg. Vol.19, pp.276-278). Despite of errors and other shortcomings, credit goes to Mitchell, for throwing light on this almost unknown dialect.
At the concluding stage of my study, I came to learn that this dialect has been dealt in the thesis 'Studies in the Language and Literature of Some of the Non-Aryan Tribes of the Madhya Pradesh (Lingistic Studies of Gondi, Dhurwa and Dorli)' by Smt. Kirti Lata Dutt (1969). She has given a brief phonological and morphological account of Dandami Maria, which she has referred as Gondi(?), along with Dorli and Parji (Dhurwa). The data for this dialect were collected at the village Faraspal, which is near Dantewada. I rechecked her data partly with Kalmumi Idma (an informant of the same village, where she had worked) in my own interest and noticed the following:

1. Smt. Dutt has treated the labiodental fricative \( \digamma \) as bilabial fricative \( \upsilon \).

2. There are no dipthongs, as she mentions (pp.41-42). I observed that a glide always accrurs between the two vowels.

3. I have also not found the initial consonant clusters as noted by her (p.88), e.g.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{prista} & \quad \text{'grey haired'} \\
\text{brior} & \quad \text{'fat (mas.)'} \\
\text{triyana} & \quad \text{'to travel'} \\
\text{kriya:} & \quad \text{'parrot'}
\end{align*}
\]

Though initial consonant clusters occur in some other Dravidian languages, it has so far not been found in the dialects of Gondi.

4. Her interpretation of consonant length and nasalization is also not clear. As a result, one may find the same word transcribed in two ways, e.g.
et    ett    'winnowing fan'
ed    edd    'hot'
tala talla    'forehead'
säg    sang    'concomitative suffix'

5. She also in some places, failed to notice the contrast between e and e:, and o and o:, which resulted in wrong transcription, e.g.

- kohk    'horns' instead of ko:hk
- po:go    'tobacco'    pogo
- go:go:ʒ    'cock'    gogoř
- ʈoːɬ    'mouth'    ʈoɖ
- neskana    'breathe'    neːskana
- eɾma    'goose'    eɾma

6. The meaning given by her for many lexical items is also not accurate, as in the following instances:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Gloss(Smt.Dutt)</th>
<th>Correct gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>uika</td>
<td>'wrinkle'</td>
<td>'slough'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>toːtral</td>
<td>'dumb'</td>
<td>'stammerer'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uːje</td>
<td>'sharp'</td>
<td>'point'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ɬuŋɬul</td>
<td>'clay'</td>
<td>'dust'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ivɾɛ</td>
<td>'in'</td>
<td>'with this'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wanjo</td>
<td>'widow'</td>
<td>'barren lady'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ɬual</td>
<td>'lion'</td>
<td>'tiger'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>loːpa</td>
<td>'outside'</td>
<td>'in'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maːɬ</td>
<td>'carpenter'</td>
<td>'blacksmith'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ed</td>
<td>'warm weather,'</td>
<td>'sunshine'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'hot'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ki</td>
<td>'that'</td>
<td>'or'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jibri</td>
<td>'tears'</td>
<td>'rheum of eye'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
macum 'snow' 'dew'
gorra 'garden' 'fence round a tree'
erma 'goose' 'common whistling teal'
dorba 'bellow' 'lung'
muni 'bride' 'voc. particle'
tala/talla 'forehead' 'head'
ar 'door' 'path'
bangram 'pearl' ?

7. Smt Dutt has well recognised that "the lengthening of the final vowel is also a mode in Gondi by which nouns are made plural." But she says, "the data gives forty four stems ending in -a and eleven ending in -e, which are made plural by lengthening the final vowel." Whereas I find it a general rule of pluralization of the nonmasculine nouns ending in any vowel in addition to -a and -e. Accordingly mutte: (my transcription: mute:) will mean 'women' and not 'woman or women' as mentioned by her (p. 134).

8. She could not differentiate between the case suffix and postpositions. As such, she writes that "the suffix of dative is mayden in Gondi, which is added to the accusative case of a noun." (p. 150). In fact, mayden is a postposition, meaning 'for.' Likewise 'ság/sang is a postposition and not concomitative suffix.

9. While dealing with the verbs, she rightly classifies them into finite and nonfinite forms, but wrongly includes
a non-finite form, which she labels as "present continuous", in finite forms (p.211). She did not try to analyse many other verbal forms as optative, optative (negative), future, hortative, past habitual, causal, causal (negative), extensive, conditional, temporal (past), temporal (non-past) and temporal (negative), purposive, etc. which have been dealt in the present study. I cannot say whether this omission was due to certain scope-limit or otherwise. The noun morphology also is similarly brief.

0.9. Present Study

The field-work for the present study was carried out in the village Dhanikarka of Kuakonda block in Dantewara Tahsil during last few years. There were 656 male and female native speakers out of the total population figures 709 of the village. The informants Lakma, Monda and Hirma were teenager boys and had working knowledge of Hindi and Halbi. In the latter period of analysis Manji, another boy from the adjoining village Garhmiri, helped me in checking the whole material which I had collected previously.

The data consist of about twenty texts, four hundred isolated sentences and about two thousand words. The thesis deals with the phonology and morphology in detail with outline of syntax, text analysis, and sample texts followed by vocabulary. The vocabulary is cross indexed to DED, DE63, DEHa and CVGD which would be very useful in comparative study of this dialect with other dialects of Gondi.
0.10. Regional variations

In the course of study, I checked my data with the speakers of some other villages and noticed some local variations. For instance, the informants from Faraspal and Kameli used /-r-/ in place of /-t-/ (oblique and number suffix), e.g.

- bega-t-or  \(\Rightarrow\) bega-r-or 'man of which place'
- i:ke-t-k  \(\Rightarrow\) i:ke-r-k 'to this side'
- kel-ma-t  \(\Rightarrow\) kel-ma-r 'do not tell (2d.sg.)'

Another significant change in Faraspal and Kameli was the frequent use of /r/ where Dhanikarka people use /r/, e.g.

- tairas  \(\Rightarrow\) ta:rs 'snake'
- moros  \(\Rightarrow\) moros 'strip of bark'
- o:ra  \(\Rightarrow\) or. 'they(m.)'

Some other variations noticed at Faraspal are as follows:

- maine  \(\Rightarrow\) main 'man'
- vais-h-  \(\Rightarrow\) vais-s- 'be felt (as thirst, hunger)'
- morp-  \(\Rightarrow\) morp- 'fold'
- min-  \(\Rightarrow\) men- 'stay, exit, live, be'
- da:y muntor  \(\Rightarrow\) da:y mutor 'he is going'

At Lohandiguda I found an additional verbal form of the present durative. This form was also attested by an informant from Mavlibhata (about 15 miles from Jagdalpur).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dhanikarka</th>
<th>Lohandiguda</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>tinda muntan</td>
<td>tinda raytan</td>
<td>'I am eating'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tinda muntom</td>
<td>tinda raytom</td>
<td>'we(excl.) are eating'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tinda muntal</td>
<td>tinda raytal</td>
<td>'we(incl.) are eating'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tinda muntin</td>
<td>tinda raytin</td>
<td>'you(sg.) are eating'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tinda muntir</td>
<td>tinda raytir</td>
<td>'you(pl.) are eating'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tinda muntor</td>
<td>tinda raytor</td>
<td>'he is eating'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tinda muntor</td>
<td>tinda raytor</td>
<td>'they(m.) are eating'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tinda munta</td>
<td>tinda rayta</td>
<td>'she/it is eating'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tinda munta;</td>
<td>tinda rayta;</td>
<td>'they(n.m.) are eating'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I feel that there might be some more variations.