Chapter III
Changes in the Socio-Cultural sphere of the
Tribal life in the Damodar Valley region
The implementation of the Damodar Valley Project led to an extensive dispersal of the tribal peoples in different villages and areas of the Damodar Valley. The demographic map in the Damodar Valley has been totally changed. So far as the tribal people are concerned, their earlier settlements have been depopulated and their new colonies have been planted. The new colonies are found to be often in the periphery of non-tribal localities. The result is an exposure of the tribal peoples to non-tribal influences both in the spheres of economic and cultural activities. The dispersal effect of the development schemes envisaged in the Damodar Valley may be assumed to be of great importance, if we assess the larger dimension of eviction of the people caused by the construction of the dams and installation of various power projects at Maithon, Konar, Bokaro etc. The eviction of the tribal peoples from their original settlements created a great problem, for which the D.V.C. had to undertake various schemes of settlement, which in most cases grew up in a haphazard manner.

The extent of dispersal can be guessed if we consider the total acreage of cultivable land lost to the tribals and the number of villages directly affected due to the construction of the dams and consequential installations. According to the Annual Report of 1949-50, the acreage lost would amount to at least 70,034 acres and not less than 404 villages were intensely affected. Lakhs of tribal population were naturally displaced and for lack of proper rehabilitation, settled in the urban conglomeration or on the fringe of the non-tribal villages, beyond the focus area of the DVC projects. The non-tribal villages in different districts of Bengal and Bihar witnessed massive influx of tribal peoples whom they had to accommodate on various reasons including an interest in recruitment of labours for employment in agriculture.
The urban settlements centering round the power projects under the D.V.C. attracted also a large number of tribal people either as menial workers or as wage-earners in the various industrial units, commissioned as a result of the growth of various power projects. The tribal colonies, therefore, had to unshackle the traditional bond of their pristine state at their new settlement. The inhabitants of these settlements had to adjust with the non-tribal population invited to serve the DVC on various occasions. Tribe-non-tribe relations naturally underwent rapid transformation.

The changes that we have noticed are to be viewed from the perspective of the dispersal effects of the new systems of production ushered in due to operations of the new projects under the DVC. In this context, it would not be out of place to mention that tribes from other regions also were given an opportunity to migrate to the industrial settlements newly grown up. People from M.P., Orissa came in search of employment; even the Orissan Christian tribals and tribals of M.P. had been attracted to serve the centers at Maithon, Konar etc. The process of assimilation between different tribal groups had its beginning due to such immigration of the tribal peoples. Non-tribals, with whom the tribals have come in contact, are Hindus, Muslims and Christians. Thus, the dispersal programme undertaken by the DVC was instrumental in bringing up situation in which a new chapter was begun in the socio-cultural history of the tribal people. The change was ushered in not only by their close contact with different ethnic and cultural elements but also by their forced living in an industrialised commercial urban setting. Whether hunters like the Birhors or agriculturalists like the Santals and Oraons, the change in the way of the life of the tribals, more or less, was unavoidable.
One of the important change in the traditional form of social structure of the tribals is noticed in the advent of polarity in the social relations of the individual family and the society as a whole. The tribals employed in industrial concerns or even in the agricultural farms, now-a-days, prefer to build up a nuclear form of family, consisting of wife, husband and the children instead of a joint family comprising members of several generations. The family interests always create an atmosphere of polarity with varied social interests, as a result of which an anomie or disorganisation comes into existence, making the individual alienated from the society.

The sociologists like Tonnie and Durkheim have explained such social disintegration from the point of view of the losses of the traditional communities. Durkheim has termed such phenomenon as 'anomie'. To this was added the structural-functionalists' concern with social "strain". The concept of "strain" is defined as a discrepancy between two or more elements of the social system. This concept was developed by Talcott Parsons and Robert Merton. It grows out of this school's basic assumptions, namely, that the social system is made up of interrelated elements, and that as these are mutually compatible and fulfil positive functions for each other, the social system is relatively stable; but when two or more patterns are discrepant, or incompatible, the equilibrium of the social system is upset and this may result in social change.

The crisis in livelihood generated through modern social economy in
a semi-urbanised complex has no-doubt created a tendency of such discrepancy between the individual interest and the social interest. The primitive way of life nurtured through hunting, pastoralism or cultivation through group effort, normally went against the discrepant individual goal and up-held the corporate objective of primitive horde. "Anomie" and "Strain", in the modern concept are seen to be afflicting the tribal society with the growth of urbanisation. The collapse of the old order have led to the loss of traditional community and the weakening of commonly accepted values. The traditional values and beliefs which have directed the life of men through the ages have lost their binding power and nothing has come to take their place. This has led to unrealistic and unfulfillable desires and a state of perpetual social crisis. It has also left multitudes of individuals in a state of moral confusion, social insecurity and emotional anxiety, which prove a fertile ground for the rise of totalitarianism.

Amongst the tribals, under our study, a clear distinction may be noticed, if we make a comparative study, between the tribals of Ranchi and Hazaribagh district and the tribals of the Lower Damodar, where the impact of D.V.C. is securedly grounded. The social solidarity and the group sentiment of the tribals of the pristine state which are no doubt considered to be high watermark of primitive-hordes are tenaciously maintained in the interiors of Ranchi and Hazaribagh while the social formations among the tribals of the Lower Damodar are on disintegrating state, the individual and the family assuming the prime importance.

The lowest social grouping is of different character in the Lower Damodar. Wife, husband and the children in a small thatched house are the prime mover of the basic social formations.
The most profound is the impact of nuclear family on the structural formation of social administration. In the changing context, the traditional structure of social administration through a village-council of five-men's oligarchy is being undermined. Because, today, the economic interest of such family lies not within the community itself, but outside in the mainstream of state administration. The importance has naturally been shifted from the micro-unit of social order to the macro organisation of state order. The leadership pattern, therefore, has been devised on the basic necessity of skill in political management, which was so long beyond the capability of tribal vision. The political management or the state order, even showing indulgence to the selection of an unskilled representative, is rather harshly indifferent to the mitigation of the crying problem at the community level of the tribals. The result is negligence to the so-called backward communities, thereby, creating inhibition amongst the tribals for being identified with the mainstream of the country.

The tribals, as we have seen before, have drawn their identity from the totems of traditions. They are known as 'Hembram' (Betel-nut), 'Murmu' (Nilgai), 'Handi' (Earthen Vessel), 'Chonre' (Lizard), 'Khalko' (The fish), 'Baliso' (Tortoise), 'Hansda' (wild-goose) etc. according to their totems. But, interestingly enough, totems have not inspired them to be clinging to the totemistic group, which is known in cultural anthropology as Sept. Totem is there, but Sept. is no longer found with all its paraphernalia of sept administration; even Sept-leadership is totally absent. This is apparently unlikely from primitive viewpoint. Because, all the primitive aboriginals, like, Veddoids, Chenchu, and even the Onge still maintain the sept organisation on the basis of totemistic group. In totems the tribals, under our study are shown to be loose and so apathetic that sometimes they forget their ancestor or the totem hero. Amongst the Oraons, a single exceptional tribe, we find some elements of ancestor worship or hero cult in the rituals of 'Bir Amn'. Such ritualistic lingerings are not noticeable.
among the Santals. Sometimes, a few anthropologists cited the reverence of the Mundas or the Santals to the megalithic relics of Lohardaga as the instances of the ritualistic conservatism. Unfortunately no such instances were detected during our survey amongst the tribals of the Damodor Valley now-a-days that testify to a totemistic organisation of primitive days. S.C. Roy, in his *The Mundas and their culture* has referred to various systems of totemistic identification and religious rituals attached therewith. Those systems or rituals have radically been changed in the present day context.

The correct conception of a tribal society always visualises certain occupational groups that have been crystalised into the prototypes of castes in Hindu social hierarchy. Thus the Mahalis belonging to the same group as the Santals, are the traditional basket makers, the Karmali - the traditional iron-smith, the Chickbaraik the traditional weaver and the Lohra is the traditional iron smiths and stone-implement makers. The D.V.C. by initiating the process of industrialisation, as well as rapid agricultural transformation has brought a rapid change in tribal artisan groups. The migration of this artisan people to the high cash zone of urban or semi-urban centres has exposed the people to various influences of foreign elements. Most of the artisan people have now been identified with the traditional artisans of Hindu caste of lower Bengal. The Karmalies are identified with 'Karmaker', Chickbaraik with the 'Tanties', Mahalis with the 'Domes' and the Lohra with the Pathar Sub-group of 'Nabasak' Sept. This identification with the caste of Hindu hierarchy has gradually transformed the tribal genesis into traditional Sastrick form of caste system in India. According to M. N. Srinivasan, certain elements of Sanskritisation or Aryanisation are also noticed amongst them. In lower Bengal, the process of Sanskritisation is detected vividly when we find that Mahalies are worshipping their Katu and Ghora, on the last day of Bhadra, in association of the worship of Biswakarma of the Hindu Karmakar.
This process has ushered in an era of de-tribalisation in the lower part of the Damodar Valley. The detribalised sections no-longer attach any importance to their tribal origin and rarely adhere to the directions issued through the decisions in the tribal council (Panch Hore) of the tribal villages.

So far as tribals in agricultural pursuits are concerned, we find a rigid stratification in society in the area of root culture, that is, in the upper Damodar Valley. Among the settled agricultural groups, a tendency towards stratification along the following lines are noticed: (a) relative political supremacy of the numerically dominant clan, compared to other settlers; (b) superiority in land holding of the earlier settlers, relative to later settlers; (c) symbolic ritual superiority of one group over another due to ritual degradation of the other in traditional terms and tendency of the priest and the headman to form an endogamous class.

Secular and religious leadership are combined in one person. The headman is the chief, amongst equals with no special privilege in property. He is assisted in his work by a democratic council of village elders formed by all the adult members of village. The council's decision is final.

In the lower Damodar Valley, particularly in the area, where the D.V.C. complexes have developed, the rigidity in stratification is not at all experienced by an onlooker. The society in its inner-core appears to be egalitarian, that is equal in economic status; tribals consider themselves to be at par with each other. Even the headman, whose existence is simply ritualistic claims no superiority and never bothers if equalled with the status of a destitute. The single exception, which is found there, is about the position of a non-tribal political leader, whom they now consider to be the real controlling factor of the mundane life. The enquiry in this sphere reveals that a trade union tradition has developed in recent times.
as the key factor of this change.

A very interesting finding may be referred to in this connection. from a case-study of the village Raibandh. There is one Phulmony, a tribal lady, who is the panchayati leader of the village. Phulmony is never treated with distinction. She is considered to be at par with other women of the village, whereas Jan Alam, another panchayati leader of the same status, from a different village, is considered to be the defacto working agent of their local-self Govt. The Diku-psychology though prevailing in the mind of the tribals has never inhibited them to accept this Muslim youth as their leader. The traditional social stratification, lingering no more in the present state, is not at all significant in the network of economic transaction and production-relations built up in the area.

The final noticeable feature in the social change is in the sphere of kinship system. In the root culture, the kinship system extended to the members of the whole village, since a village is composed of persons of the same sept, but at present a limit has been set-up fixing the maximal lineage. The situation is normally tempered as classificatory in kinship system. Emphasis is now on unilineal principle, generation and age, patrilineal descent and patripotestal authority among most groups are the running of the day. Patripotestal authority now combined with a sense of democratic leadership and feudal aristocratic psychology from the top has even generated an interaction between two opposite forces centripetal and centrifugal in the social relations. The tug-of-war is won by the group or individuals who become successful to win the favour of non-tribal authority, coming from the capital township. The ideological system of social oligarchy has crumbled down with an authoritarian hegemony of the so-called "diku". We may sum up that the changing pattern of tribal society manifests less formalised stratification, more complex specialisation of social role, widening of social roles, widening of
social ties involving multi-ethnic groups, interpenetrative network of territorial structure tied to township and cities, literate and the presence of formal educational institutes - these may be considered as emergent aspects discontinuous with the age-old traditions or heritage of the tribal society.

The judicial activities of the tribals were originally carried on by the traditional village Panchayat Monrehor that inherited the customs from times immemorial, of settling the rural litigations through the direct participation of the Parganait and the Manjhi. That tradition has totally been discarded in the present context of change. Now, the small problems whether in connection with land relations, domestic affairs, dispute over the share of common vested property etc. are normally settled through the direct intervention of Panchayat leaders. A case study in this respect may be referred to indicating the nature of the newly devised system in the village, Kastabug of Panchet. The tribal representative from that village is one Parul, a tribal lady. Whenever any dispute arises in the village the matter is referred to the Panchayat office, and Panchayat arranges for the settlement of dispute through a special committee incorporating some elderly persons of the village, members of the Panchayat including Parul. The traditional village council, 'Monre-hore' is hardly invited for the purpose. The arrangement is sometimes criticised by the traditional village-leader, Manjhi. A new development in the tribal villages is noticed in the emergence of a non-traditional power group.

The village community of the tribals was traditionally a self-sufficient institution, catering to the individual needs of the villagers. This self-sufficiency has now been broken under the impact of modern economy. One sort of individualism has taken the place of a community-sense. Now, a tribal seeks for sustenance outside the village either in the corn-field of others or in the factories run by others. Some sort of cash nexus is now
regulating the individual life, in almost all walks of life. Commercial attitude, instead of co-operative attitude is gaining upper-hand. The sense of belonging to one village is slowly vanishing. Competition is taking the place of co-operation and adjustment.

According to a study, made by L.P. Vidyarthi,6 "kinship does not play much part in their (of the tribals) economic and occupational co-operation. In most cases, the Oraon people do not have to depend on their kinsmen for access to some means of earning and for that matter, each family supposed to be economically self-supporting. Even those Oraon families living at Karamtoli and Purani of Ranchi, who are engaged in agriculture as their main or secondary occupation, have to complete their major agricultural activities without the co-operation of their kinsmen, since nearly all their kinsmen living in this city depend on wage-earning and money-economy, and thus, they find no time to extend help even to their intimate kinsmen. They have to employ agricultural labourers on daily wages."

The tribal family traditionally fosters joint endeavour to socio-economic means and as such, prefer joint family. The Oraons of Dravidian linguistic stock had a close knit joint family system. But, now according to the report, in Dynamics of Education of Tribals of India by Sita Toppo 'the joint' family system is undergoing a rapid change. And with the break of the family ties mutual jealousy and heart-burning have become a predominant feature among the members of the same clan. The monotony and drudgery of a joint-family to a new bride of an educated youth is so disdainful that she prefers to flee from village with her husband and live separately even bearing the risk of being exposed to the social pollution in an urban centre.
The phenomenon of social change may well be understood from the viewpoint of the theory of proximix. With the diversification of economic activity in the Damodar Valley, the tribal people, no doubt, has to come in close proximity of the non-tribal peoples with variegated strains of culture. But coming in the closeness with outsiders does not always attract uniform influence of the non-tribals. Therefore, outside influences have not ushered in a uniform pattern of culture change. On the contrary, impact of the non-tribals may be gauged differently on different groups, clans or societies. These differences may be due to different levels of proximix.

Proximix is actually based on a theory of interpersonal relationship, which means relationship between persons with the objective of changing each other. Here, both the persons are catalyst to each other. It has been observed in the social life of mankind that two persons, even living side-by-side, in close proximity influence each other differently and the desired objective of change is not always visualised uniformly.

The phenomenon of change in the interpersonal sphere has got its paralleled in the sphere of social relation. It is not always true that two communities living side-by-side or mingling together in economic activities can change on the same time under the influence of each other. This uneven and discrepant effect of mutual catalyst is explained from the point of view of the existence of changeable factors or the inherent potency for change within the person or the community itself. The inherent potency for change is composed of various elements both internal and external, both hereditary or traditional and acquired or achieved in the process.
The tribals in the developed urban settlement, are more individualistic in their ritualistic observances. Rituals are performed at the level of their own house hold or with personal involvement. Thus, a Santal in urban conglomeration, performs the rites of birth, initiation, marriage etc. at household level. The relatives are invited only to give a touch of social sanction to the ceremony. To a tribal of a village, marriage is both a union between two individuals and two villages. But to a tribal of an urban centre, marriage is between two individuals. Some of the relatives of the society participate only to give the ceremony a look of the festival. To an urban tribal, personal engagement in respect of marriage does not require any social sanction and gets limited only to the understanding of two persons whereas to a rural tribal, personal engagement also require to be sanctioned through a ritual at the level of the society.

The attitude to the traditional ritual has radically changed amongst the people of urban complex, where the tribes are more selective in the performances or observances. Every ritual has a meaningful background. The urban rationality impels the tribes to discard the superfluous ones and they stick to the basic meaningful symbolisms. The aesthetic symbolisms are adhered to with undiluted allegiance. As for example, in the initiation of boys and girls the 'Sikah and Tattoo-marks' are carved without feeling any painful injury to the body, but are considered to be joyful marks in symbolic forms. An urban Santal has his Sikah mark on the left elbow, just of the size of a mole and the girl has a tattoo mark on her breast just as the size of a small ring with the purpose of maintaining the tribal identity. In the marriage rituals, the details of the root culture are not rehearsed but only the basic rituals like 'seven steps' and eating together etc. are practised. The disposal of dead also entails not the entire drama of traditional funeral
rites, but burning the corpse in the cremation ground and attachment with the pollution rites including the mourning. The selective approach put not only less pressure on the busy life of a productive worker but also leaves the individual less bored in the monotonous humdrum recapituation of the same system. The speedy life of an industrial tribal worker has not only made an individual more rational but also less prone to an idle adherence to age old and rotten customs. Moreover, the religious practitioners in the urban clusters have not developed on the trade of religion and specialisation of spiritual professions. There is not a class by themselves in urban areas to be called Naeky, Deasi or Deonra etc. Whenever required, religious services are sought from hired religious practitioners from rural areas. That too is expensive, which a tribal of middle income group can scarcely afford.

The changing pattern of the rites and rituals in the areas exposed to urbanism or industrialization may be discussed. The most important point in this connection to be remembered is that religion, like culture, has everywhere been undergoing a certain degree of change through a process of acculturation.

Acculturation\(^9\) includes those processes of change which result from contact conditions. One can distinguish two major types of acculturations: (i) incorporation and (ii) directed change. A process which facilitates the retention of original customs as well as the acceptance of new elements is called syncretism.

The various forms of response to directed change can be classified under three main processes-assimilation, fusion and reaction. The process of fusion, or as it is sometimes called, accommodation or reinterpretation, does not result in a complete assimilation which, in actuality, rarely takes place, since some features of the older culture always tend to survive. The
process of reinterpretation consists in reinterpreting the meaning of the pre-existing element in such a way as to suit the form of the new element that has to be accepted. The reaction process frequently takes the form of nativistic movements. The religion of tribals including all its rites and rituals has always been wandering from one place to another.

The tribals exposed to various types of Indian cultural patterns like Islam, Christainity, Hinduism etc. have demonstrated not in a uniform style, but different behaviourism. If we take into consideration the tribal contact with the developed areas predominantly inhabited by Muslim people, we observe that it has created remarkable abhorence amongst the tribals. The Mohammedans are called by Mundari people as Turuk, a term which carries a connotation of contempt. In Karma-binti, a story is related where it has been emphasised that the sojourn of the Santal ancestors in the corrupt and defiled land of the Muslims was attended with such grave harassment that contact with Muslims must be avoided. No tribal would accept any food from the Muslims, because, they believe that their benevolent spirits would be defiled and would take away all their protection. No rituals have ever been modified or transformed under the contact of Muslim fairs and festivals.

Similar situation is not found in respect of Christian impact. On the contrary, many of the tribals have embraced Christianity as their religion. But, judging from the extent of missionary work in the area under our consideration, the overall influence of Christianity may rather been called limited.

The tribals under the influence of Puritanism of Christian faith have been compelled to change their practices regarding drink and sex. The Lutherans and the CMS propagated total abstinence from rice-beer drinking and from participation in certain social dances. The use
of 'Tamak' and 'Tumdak' are discouraged and the traditional dances, songs etc. are completely declared taboo to the Puritan Christian convert. The Santal habit of 'raska', which was not to signify pleasure alone, but the social phenomenon, is gradually waning. In this connection, it may be mentioned that prohibition of 'raska' has actually cut the roots of tribal life, because the tribal exists for pleasure (raska). Pleasure means more to the tribal as a living experience, than its English equivalent can suggest.

The pleasure in tribal life means the love of life in this miserable world. In order to find love the tribals resort to rites and rituals in accompaniment with dancing, singing and eating. To them sex is also not a means of defilement, but is an impulse that leads a man to achieve perfection. The tribal ethos in the term 'raska' being marred altogether, they have become mechanical, stereotyped and colourless, only sticking to the dead crags of a moribund religion.

In the root culture of the tribals, there are rites and rituals that profusely testify to the direction of maintaining tribal solidarity, as well as establishing the tribal identity of a bright man. In the original rituals of the tribes, the life is moulded within the framework of laws and customs which regulate man's relationship with visible and invisible world. The aim of all these customs and regulations is to secure prosperity and safety, both to the individual and to the tribe as a whole. With the propagation of Christianity, particularly the Protestant religious practices have threatened to become disintegrating factors in the tribal society. The converts feel insecure, because, they are drawn out of their own milieu. It is a pathetic scene to observe a Santal youth casting a lustful eye on the neighbours absorbed in gleeful practices of Badna, Sohrae and Baha. This disquieting experience of the converts is gradually reverting them towards their own original faith in animism and ritualism, as a result of which trend towards syncretism has developed, indicating thereby persistence to the primitive
forms of ritual, as well as maintenance of Christian rituals like transsubstantiation etc.

Both Catholicism and Protestantism, like other semitic religions, are highly normative and intolerant of divided allegiance. The result is when a tribe accepts the Christian theology, he would have to reject the belief and the worship of Bongas. The Christian convert identifies the 'Marang Buru' as 'Satan', the cause of all evil and all Bongas are, in turn, thought of as demons. This sort of teaching created a tension in tribal life. The artificiality of the change, life and norms are hardly digested by the tribe. The tribal festivals as such have lost all their ardent fervour amongst the Christian converts.

The most astounding feature of the tribal tension is noticed in the sphere of marriage laws. Christian marriage law is something different from tribal marriage law. The concept of intramarriage that is, marriage within the same clan or totem group is abhored by the tribes, but it is encouraged by the Christians. Though a few individuals have ignored the rule of tribal exogamy and prefers marriage within the same sept, most of the tribes stick to the tribal exogamy, which is not always sanctioned by Christian laws. Similarly, while cross-cousin marriage is not tolerated among the non-Christians, among the Santal Christians it is not prohibited. On the other hand, there is no bar for Santal non-Christian to marry more than one wife. This practice is strictly prohibited among the Santal Christians. Similarly, divorce can be obtained by the Santal non-Christians but is completely tabooed for a Christian, which means, no Christian can get any entry in Sanga marriage or marriage between divorcees. Kirin Jawae bapla or marriage by the purchase of husband for an unmarried mother is likewise tabooed for a Santal Christian. Christians are also discouraged from marrying non-Christians unless they are willing to be baptised.
A cleavage between the converts and their community also arises as a result of the substantial changes in the rites and ceremonies which surround a Santal's life-cycle. While for the Santal non-Christian the most important birth ritual and ceremony is the Janam Chatiar, for the Christian Santal it is baptism. In the former, the child is given the protection of the tribal bonga and those of his father's, in the latter he renounces all association with the bongas. The pastor officiates during the baptism ceremony which usually occurs sometime during the child's first year and which takes place in a church and not in the child's house. In some places, most of the villagers gather for the ceremony, while in other villages only Christians take part.

The preliminaries for a Christian marriage are much akin to a Santal non-Christian marriage. The role of the 'raebaric', the exchange of presents and the payment of bride-price are usually observed in Christian families just as in non-Christian ones. The parents of Christian girls tend to demand a higher bride price than the non-Christians. The marriage ceremony, however, is shorn of the tribal rites invoking the spirits. Thus the Dak Bapla, the Ul Sakam Tol ceremonies and the sacrificial offerings at the manjhithan are not observed. The ceremony has to be conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Indian Christian Marriage Act. It is normally held in a Church and is officiated at by a pastor. While among the non-Christians, the most important part of the marriage ceremony is the 'Sindradan' or smearing of the bride's forehead with vermilion, among the Christians, the exchange of rings by bride and groom marks them as husband and wife. The applying of sindur is tabooed. The bride and groom are not dressed in saffron clothes, nor is the bride carried in a 'daura'. Similarly, while among the non-Christians the whole village is a witness to the marital contract, among the Christians, four relatives, two from the groom's party and two from the bride's party act as witnesses. In the funerary ceremonies, there is little trace of non-Christian customs and...
modes of thought. Non-Christians normally keep away from the house of
the dead person and will have nothing to do with the disposal of the dead
body of the Christians. The grave is dug lengthwise from east to west and
the head of the corpse is placed towards the west. The subsequent 'Tel-
Nahan' and 'Bhandan' ritual ceremonies are altogether absent.

The Christian converts are strictly prohibited from taking part in the
ritual offerings and ceremonies which are associated with the worship of
abge, orak and ancestral bongas or nad. The daily life of household is also
shorn of the spiritual element or the sentimental rapport with the forces
living behind the things on the earth. This situation tends to develop a
strong materialistic craving in the life-attitude. By religion a tribal convert
gets delinked with the parent's society and thereby looses the security,
the parent's society used to afford to him. The psychological traits of an
uprooted person grips the convert. To ensure his success in life, he
becomes more mobile, tries to inculcate the ideals and norms of higher
society, stimulate the behaviour of the high-ups, who mostly belong to the
non-tribal, changes occupational pattern traditionally held up and finally
attempts to build up a corporate culture with peoples, whom they come by
in the sphere of activities, outside their village or community. Sociologists
may call it a greater mobilisation or greater dynamism. But in reality what
appear to an observer is a frantic aimless attainment, as if, of a drowned
man to live by catching even a floating straw. Questions may be raised as
to the degree of the actual assimilation with different stock of people and
building up a compact corporate culture, equal to that of the one prevalent
n the traditional village of a tribe. There is also a question how far the
individual gets satisfied in such a frantic mood and whether the identity of
a man is actually established through it.

Becoming a Christian is not in itself an offence for which there is any
established penalty. But, the Christian norms of behaviour not only in the
religious sphere but also in the social and cultural spheres of Santal life, has completely alienated the converts from their village communities. In return, it is a cruel part of humanity - a convert is not permitted any entry into the intimate space of a traditional Christian individual, which the whites are.

Cutting themselves off from many aspects of their old community life, the converts find themselves members of a new community, the Christian community. This community is more than a mere aggregate of individuals and households, tied together in an ethnic bond. It possesses a social life of its own. Its corporate life manifests itself in a new symbolism and is fostered by a new ritual. In the traditional framework, a Santal village functions as an 'isolate' entity in so far as it has its own sacred places - the Jaherthan and the Manjhithan, and religious functionaries - the Naeke and Godit. The new community, however, cuts across the village boundaries entering on the Church and the Pastor.

Recently, Catholic missionaries have tried to inculcate the Christian message into the tribal milieu by blending the tribal customs with the Christian liturgical rites. An attempt is also being made to integrate a number of traditional tribal festivals connected with agricultural activities like the Baha, Karma, Erok and Hariar into the Christian annual festival cycle. In this manner, the tribal Catholics are not only allowed but encouraged to express the Christian reality through their own life and culture. This adaptation process, though still in its infancy, has met with considerable success. This can be seen from the fact that there are more Catholics amongst the tribes than Protestants. Besides, in the last few years, there has been steady flow of tribal protestants into the Catholic church. In the adaptation process followed by the Christian missionaries, tribal festivals like Karam etc, are freely encouraged within a distorted normative fold of the chapel.
Amongst the Christian tribals there are contradictory trends of inter-village conflicts, as well as intra-village fusion and cohesion. Since, churches of different pastors have developed in different areas of tribal zone, even the normative Christian rites are performed variably with manifold distortion. The different groups have as a result emerged and group conflict during festivals and on other occasions are not infrequent. Side by side with this gloomy picture, there is a tendency of inter-village cohesion and intra-village fusion, extended to Christians from other tribes of other localities. The church acts as a unitary bond, amongst different groups of the same village as well as of the localities even inhabited by other tribals of different linguistic tradition. The interaction of these two trends, though not uniform in all spheres of life, has actually initiated critical juncture in the tribal regime, if it is at all called a regime. A crisis has occurred which is yet to be resolved giving a definite shape to a tribal image in India. Being a highly nomative religion, Christianity appears to the tribals to be threatening their social and cultural autonomy and to a certain extent their tribal solidarity. As a result, it is very difficult for an individual to become a Christian.

Influence of Hinduism

Hinduism, on the other hand, as a more tolerant and less normative religion, allowed the tribals to borrow new religious ideas and practices, in such a way that the autonomous character of their religion, social, cultural institutions were not undermined. Unlike the adoption of Christian beliefs and practices, Hindu beliefs and rituals could be grafted on to the tribal religion without necessitating its assimilation or total absorption into Hinduism. Another point to be kept in mind is that 'popular Hinduism' is widely diffused and affects the tribals in numerous ways without their being conscious of it.
Impact of Hinduism on the tribals is found in the two processes: (i) de-tribalisation of the tribals and (ii) transformation of the religious rites and rituals, particularly in the worship of the deities and in the performance of manifold rituals concerning the life cycles of man. Some scholars have designated the 'Hinduisation' of the tribes as a process of 'sanskritisation'. According to them, the powerful trend in the transformation of the cultural life of Indian people is that of the spread of Aryan rites and rituals, which is more normative and which may be expressed through the term of sanskritisation. The most notable example of the sanskritisation by de-tribalising the tribal community is found in the social change of Karmali into a Hindu caste, Kamar or Karmakar. The Karmali is a tribal group of 'Iron-smiths', who have been known as kamar or karmakar in the district of Burdwan and on the other side of the Ajoy. The traditional Hindu god, Viswakarma is now the chief god of this professional group, though the concept of 'Marang buru' is not totally abandoned, now living in the form of Barapahar or great mountain. The animistic concept of spirit of equipment of the iron-smith was traditionally known as 'Katu-Bonga' which has been amalgamated in the chief god, Viswakarma, the presiding deity of workmanship. The entire ritual of the worship of Viswakarma is borrowed from the Hindus. Even a Hindu priest is invited to officiate in the worship. No fowl or pig is sacrificed. On the contrary, the relatives and friends are entertained with delicious food articles, prepared on the day previous to the worship of the deity. No cooking in the house is permitted on the occasion of the ceremony performed in honour of the deity, 'Arandhan', or non-cooking is tenaciously adhered to. Even their rice-beer or 'Hanria' is avoided on the day.

The concept of mother-earth and the spirit of vegetation is well-known in tribal religion. The Santals designate it as Jaher, which the Oraons called it Dhartiburhi. Both Jaher and Dhartiburhi have been transformed into the goddess Kali. The Oraons in the Dravidian language
entitle Kali as 'Kalopakko' or 'Black-old-lady'. And the Santals sometime call Jankhar Kali or Jhankra Kali. Jhankra indicates the bunch of fruits or leaves or anything related with vegetation. Kali is worshipped with bloody sacrifices, the main motto being to ensure productivity of the soil. That the entire ritual is linked up with fertility cult is testified by the symbolic marriage between Kali and Siva on the last day of the Bengali month of Chaitra. Siva is taken to be the personification of the forces of the sky and Kali is the deification of the earth. The experience of the agriculturist is that the rain falls from sky on the earth and makes it fertile. Therefore, to ensure fertility of the soil, marriage of sky and earth is essential. The ritual marriage is celebrated through pomp and grandeur marked with loud sounds of drums that actually stimulate the sound of cloud during rain. The concept of Kali, Siva etc. are not totally novel to a tribal mind. Amongst the Hindus also, Siva and Kali have aspects of fertility implications that fit well into the tribal psycho-frame.

Interestingly enough, a deep insight into the linguistic origin of Siva would reveal that the word has a Mundari origin. It cannot be an Indo-Aryan word. In the **Rig-Veda**, it is conspicuous by its absence. The **Śukla Yajur Veda**, first alluded to the word 'Sīva', as one of the aspects of the lord Rudra. In the Mundari philology, Siva is a compound word, the two constituents being 'si' and 'va'. 'Si' means ploughing and 'va' means clod of earth, that is, produced during harrowing. Even the small clod of earth may be called 'va' in Mundari philology. The total significance of the word 'Sīva' is the clod of earth or mud, that is produced during ploughing. The hillocks or mountains are considered to the tribals as clods of earth, produced during ploughing of the earth by the Supreme God 'Marang Buru' or Sim-Bonga, as the case may be. The hillocks or mountains are identified to be the symbols of Siva. Even though Siva is sometimes identified with the phallic emblem, the normal theological concept is that the Himalayas, the great mountain, is the original place of residence of Siva. Siva concept
therefore, befits the tribal concept of Marang buru or great mountain.

Similarly, the word 'Sati', comes from the word, 'sat' and 'ti'. In Mundari word, 'sat' means honest and 'ti' means hand. The whole meaning stands as a lady with bountiful hand. Kali is sometimes called 'Sati', because, she gives prosperity to the tribe. The Hindu legend of Sati, therefore, is not totally foreign to a tribal theology.

Kali or Sati, Siva etc. are adored in compliance with the Hindu Brahmanic rituals, which are more 'Tantrik' than Puranic. The triangular depiction on the altar of the mother goddess is sometimes interpreted by the local Hindu priests as 'Tantrik - Jantra' or symbolic representation of the female generative organ. The curled petals within the triangle resembling the lotus, according to them, represent the lotus-shaped inside of the female generative organ.

There are traits of adoption as a result of reciprocal "give and take" between the sophisticated Hindus and the tribals. According to Troisi, the word 'Thakur' ascribed on the Supreme God, Marang Buru, is definitely a loan word from the Hindus. The festivals like Chhata, Pata, Jantra etc, are believed to be of Hindu origin. As Kolean15, the noted anthropologist, remarks, "from the 'Dikus' we have from time to time, taken over many festivals, but among these, there is only one festival that the whole village celebrates, namely the Karam". Though, it is questionable, whether Karam has originated among the Hindus, it is also debatable whether the high ideal of friendship and amicability of Karam had actually taken its birth in the rude rustic mind of the tribals, who prefer to live on the sanguinary religious practices. Karam, in Hindu theology, is a sacred tree, that symbolises union between Prakriti (Nature) and Purush (the omnipotent soul) personified as Rādha and Krishna. Charulal Mukherjee has pointed
out that the Karam festival in some places or villages, inhabited by the Santals, is celebrated through a dance, known as Rinjha\(^1\), which is actually a ritual calling upon the rain. Both boys and girls take part but in segregated groups. The actions of the ploughing, sowing, lumbering earth moving and so on are imitated in the ritual dance, with their palms stretched. They beseech the god for rain and by swinging their arms they demonstrate how the tapers of rain would fall. It is quite a delightful show that according to the author has been borrowed from the Hindu rituals of praying for rain. Rinjha is sometimes held to be a synonym of the Hindu god, Barun.

In Autumn, the majority of the Santals observe Dasae parab. Dasae originally is the festive ceremony related with Ojhaism, witchcraft and magic rituals. But, at present, at common strata Dasae Parab has virtually become a synonym for Durgapuja. It is marked with big feast and dance. Following the Hindu customs, new clothes are bought for the household members and also for the servants. The tribals of different places visit various shrines of the locality, praying for peace, prosperity and strength. Moreover, the institution of the Ojha shows a great deal of Hindu influence. Most of the Saket bongas invoked by the Santal Ojhas have names of Hindu origin. The term Ojha is not a Santal word but a Hindu word. Similarly many of the mantras (magic spells) used by the ojhas are not in Santali but in a corrupt form of Hindi or Bengali. The very word ‘Mantar’ is derived from Sanskrit ‘Mantra’. The work of a Santal Ojha resembles, to a certain extent, that of his Hindu counterpart. The Hindu influence on Ojhaism is so great that Bodding and other writers have been led to believe that the Santals have borrowed the whole institution of Ojhaism from the Hindus.

Many of the marriage rituals and funerary ceremonies in the lower part of the Damodar, correspond to Hindu rituals of marriages and rituals
with regard to disposal of the dead. It is interesting to observe that no Santal marriage is consecrated before attending the rituals of Hindu festivals on the occasion of 'Siva-Ratri'. Siva-Ratri symbolises the marriage of Mahadev with Parvati and thereby unites the elements of heaven and earth. Except among Santal Christians, the occasion of this union is of great importance, because, unless this union happens, the world would remain sterile.

The Santal belief in an Orak Bonga has now been replaced by the Hindu belief in Griha-Lakshmi. Many of the households in lower Damodar have places or corners in the inner-part of the building of the house reserved for the Griha-Lakshmi. The Panchabati concept of mother-cult is also ascribed in the Jaherthan of Santal. Though there is a difference regarding the species of the trees, the sacred nature of both places and the same number of trees point to this. It has already been described that the Marang Buru represents that concept of the Hindu deity Mahadev. Ritualistic importance attached to such articles, such as cowdung, vermilion, turmeric and cowrie shells, is also shared by both groups. Hindu Sakti-cult is sometimes referred to by the Santal Naeky, while indulging in bloody sacrifice.

These similarities are sometimes explained by some scholars as borrowings by the Hindus from the tribes. But, according to Dutta-Mazumder, "the culture complex of magic (in the form of ojha-science) was lent and re-borrowed, came back where it started, but in the process of diffusion and re-diffusion it gathered new experiences and underwent novel changes."

Orans, a reputed author in the sphere of tribal culture, sees a process of emulation operating in the borrowing of Hindu words in the mantras which the Ojha uses pointing out that "it is rather a case of
 connecting status and efficacy which is expressed in the Santal reference to Hindus as 'big and knowing people."

During Santal rebellion, a concept of 'New Santal Raj', was evolved. The people of Santal Raj exhorted the worship of the Hindu deity Ram, whom they identified with the Cando-Bonga. The leaders of the movement assured the people that their original lands, which they designated as the land of Cando-bonga would be recovered, if they aspired to it through their movement. A monotheism in the worship of Ram as god was inculcated, where the primitive rituals of sacrifices etc. were ordered to be shunned, Bhagirath, the preacher of this doctrine sought to impose on the Santals the Hindu notions of ritual purity and pollution. The movement died down with the imprisonment of Bhagirath temporarily. Several babajies, ostensively Santals, held up again the flag of the movement. They claimed to have received a mandate from Ram Cando to work for the economic upliftment of the Santals. In 1880 Dubia Gosain, who came from the vicinity of Deoghar introduced the worship of the babaji in the manner of reverence paid to the Sanyasins by the Hindus. He smeared his body with ashes and kept long hair and also started taking ganja. During the Census operations of 1881, he instigated the Santals, objected to the numbering of their houses and the recording of their names. The British Government took immediate action, arresting Gosain and placing the entire area under the control of the police and the army.

Subsequently, the Kharwar movement split into three distinct sects - the Sapra Ho17, Samra and Babajiu. Even after their division the three sects retained the same practices, sharing in common the worship of Ram Cando. As a result of the Kharwar movement, especially the working of its three sects, the Santals were generally moving towards Hinduisation with increasing ambivalence. The emulation of Hindu socio-religious practices was regarded as a means of improving their economic status.
The Jharkhand movement has also a strong religious basis. While maintaining the old great traditions the movement consisted in the absorption of certain beliefs and practices, such as the introduction of Hindu beliefs in Santal pantheon. Thus, when the tribals of the region, under our reference, are still designated as tribals, with their basic faith in root culture, the socio-religious behaviour of the communities has under-gone considerable transformation by the impact of Hinduism. The marked Hindu traits are noticeable particularly among the peoples, who are working in Mines, Plantations and Railways. The D.V.C. complex has also initiated urban complex, where tribal gatherings are by no means insignificant. The interaction with the Hindus also are creating new thoughts and ritualistic behaviour which are given new dimension to the tribal culture in Eastern India.

Particular reference may be made of Oraon religious rituals, where the chief god Dharmesh stands as a monument of acculturation between the Hindus and the tribals. Dharmesh of the Oraons is a magnified form of the tribal concept of Biribelus. But what is yet to be shown is that how far Hindu religious thought has changed the various aspects of the ritual followed in the worship of Dharmesh. In addition to the adherence to some of the original primitive rites The Oraons during the worship of Dharmesh, now-a-days always resort to the calling of the Hindu priests, who are Brahmanic by caste. The Hindu priests prescribe naturally the Hindu rites and rituals. As a matter of fact, worship of Dharmesh and worship of Siva has been fused together in the religious prescription of the Brahmanic priests. Moreover, a special class of devotees are engaged. They are known as Bhagats and sometimes called Bachhidan bhagats. These bhagats came from the Hindu sect 'Baisnov Bairagi'. They are called Bachhidan, because, they accept gift of a calf by way of expiation of the devotees of the god Dharmesh for their past sins and ceremonial impurity. These Bhagats also initiate many of the Oraons. They put into their ears,
the name of the tutelary deity, who is to be the object of Bhagats' special adoration. Vishnu or Krishna and sometimes Debi Mai become the tutelary gods or goddesses of the initiates after the Kanphut or Kanphuka (whispering the name of the presiding deity).

During marriage, the medieval Hindu rites and rituals are encouraged among the people by these 'Bhaktas'. Unrestricted courtship with any girl, before and after marriage, is permitted. Polygamy becomes the main form of marriage in the belief that proliferation of soul, which is the desire of the god, Dharmesh, is not possible by a single marriage. In the new system, widowhood and divorce do not allow a woman to remain single. A single woman is unprotected, therefore, even after attaining widowhood or being divorced, she must get united with a person not only for economic sustenance, but also for protection of the soul of the woman, that may be distracted under the influence of evil spirits. The whole situation is sometimes explained on the reference of the existence of lecherous persons, within the community, who have multiplied due to the contact of the urban civilisation and so-called civilised Hindus.

The disposal of the dead has also been shorn of the meticulous ritualistic performances of tribal nature. On the contrary, burning is being encouraged, mourning for fifteen days is being observed after which the 'Sardh ceremony' on the line of Hindu customs is performed.

Among the Oraons, Kabirpanthi Bhagat movement once made late impact. The Oraons, were converted into Kabirpanthi religion. The Kabirpanthies established Math and one of the elderly persons are selected as Mohant or saheb of this 'Math'. The Mahants enjoy the authority to issue panjas or letters of authority and jurisdiction to lesser Mahants or Gurus. They have also assistants, known as Dewan, who preaches the teachings of Kabir among the tribals in exchange of gift of mundane return.
Bhajans or hymns are recited in honour of the Sat-Kabir. The eating of Pan-parban is ceremoniously observed. It is a sacramental meal meant to serve a spiritual union between the Bhagats and founder of religion.

The member of the Kabir-Panthi Bhagats among the Oraon community is very small in comparison to other Hinduised Oraons. Among the general community also Hindu gods and goddesses like Siva, Parbati, Ganesh, Laxmi etc. have great appeal. Mahadeo is called Bhagawan or the Supreme God who presides over the general well-being of all humanity. Ganesh, Kali, Sati, Manasa and even the deities that are referred to in the treatment of various diseases and mitigation of calamities. The general Oraon community in addition to their normal inclination towards Hinduism have felt the impact of a reform movement which is popularly known as Tana-Bhagat movement.

Tana Bhagat movement is considered by the Oraons to be a movement to revert to the real religion of the Kurukhs or Oraons. The originators or the followers of this movement tried to bring about a delivery from the bondage of the capricious and blood-thirsty tribal spirits with perhaps a still stronger desire for delivery from the burden of what they regard as an oppressive and inequitable land-system and land-laws. By religion, the movement stuck to the Bhakti cult. By ‘bhakti’ they meant a religion of love or devotion. The love, in their connotation meant eternal brotherhood and equality of mankind. Since all men are equal, they must enjoy equal share of property while born on the earth. No social law or existing system must debar a person to have equal share on the resources under the disposal of the community. In view of its material propoundings it is sometimes called a social reform movement, that achieved greater success than those initiated previously.

The individual, who is known to have first promulgated, the ideas of
Tana movement was one Yatra Oraon of Gumla sub-division of Ranchi district. In April, 1914, the sensitive Oraon youth proclaimed to his fellow tribesmen that in a dream Dharmesh (the Supreme God) told him to give up Matiao (Ghost-finding) and the belief in bhuts or spirits, to abjure all animal sacrifice, animal food and liquor and to give up ploughing their fields which entailed cruelty to cows and oxen but failed to save the tribe from famine and poverty and no more to work as coolies or labourers under men of other castes and tribes. He further proclaimed that he had been ordered by Dharmesh to gather together as many disciples as he could, teach them Mantras or songs and incantations (which came to him through divine inspiration) and thereby to cure fever, sore eyes and other diseases. Like Birsa Bhagawan, he gave out that he was to lead his people to the desired goal in matters, temporal and spiritual, and that those who did not join his movement, would be struck dumb. Yatra Oraon fanatically persuaded his fellows to abandon the work as coolies for the construction of a school in village Do Ko Toli. The incident created unrest and ultimately he was arrested and put into the jail to keep peace. Yatra fell to the background, but the appeal of the movement did not die down. In the later part of 1915, Tana Bhagat movement again began. The first aspect of this movement was definitely religious. The reformers insisted on the Oraons to give up primitive habits of worshipping bhuts or spirits through sanguinary rites. The second aspect of the movement was ultimately turned into a political movement. The Oraons were prohibited to work as ploughmen in the field of the rich farmers or landlords, which enraged the Zaminders as well as administrators of Bihar. Even the police had to be deployed for prevention of unrest. The Tanas invoked the beneficient powers in the form of monotheism, which they variously called. Names like Germanbaba, Chandrababa, Surajbaba etc. were applied to the beneficient Sun-god or Dharmesh. The word, Germanbaba came in, because, it was rumoured at the time, that the German people are all victorious persons in the First World War. The religious enthusiasts took Germanbaba or
German god as one more designation to their almighty being, in order to preach the overwhelming authority of the Dharmesh.

Still Tana Bhagats are existing predominantly in the upper valley of Damodar and certain amount of rationalism has imbued the entire religious doctrine. The primitive cult of spirit worship is totally abjured as irrational superstitions. Trend towards monotheism has achieved a high watermark of religious thought. The summambonum of Dharma cult is adhered to, in order to bring about the beneficiary result on the life of mankind.

□ CHANGING PATTERNS IN RELIGIOUS CONCEPT □

The tribal religion of the Lower Damodar Valley is now flourishing under the influence of the religious practices of the non-tribals, living in the neighbourhood, as a result of which many non-tribal rituals, practices as well as deities have entered into the tribal fold. Some instances of such rituals, practices and deities may be considered.

La Parab

This is a festival of medieval Budhists of Mahāyāna sect. La Parab is observed in the month of Kartik on the fullmoon day, when boats of paper are made to float on the water of ponds and river. In the early morning of the festival day, the women and the children of the village carry boats of coloured papers to the riverside or to the banks of ponds. Lamps are lit inside the boat, while, they are put on water. Sometimes, small images or
idols of certain unknown deities are also placed on the boat. This boat festival is observed both by the Hindus and the Muslims, residing on the banks of the Ajoy and the Damodar. Sometimes, the rituals of boat festival are performed in the evening with pomp and grandeur amidst sounds of crackers and fireworks. In the Mahāyāna rituals, it is clearly indicated that the image of Budha should be placed on board and made to float on the river or pond with light, in order to spread light of knowledge among the ignorant fellows.

Worship of Domna Dumni

The two deites Domna and Dumni are very much favourite to the Paharias of Santal Pargana, as well as of the Rajmahal hills. At Rajmahal, one will notice, even today, two graves are placed side-by-side on the top of the hill at Tinpaharia. These two graves are known as the graves of Domna and Dumni. The actual identity of these deities are unknown to the tribals themselves. But if we consider the folk-ritual of 'Sejuti-vrata', a popular vrata of Bengali girls, we find that on the magic picture, there is depicted the story of Domna and Dumni. A song is sung where it is told, 'Let us behead Domna, let us behead Dumni and ply on the palanquin escorted by the royal guard. Incidentally, the dress of the royal guard of Sejuti Vrata is a prototype of the royal dress of the Egyptian Pharao, who used to wear tails of monkey, as decoration in their dress. From the story we come to know that Domna and Dumni were brother and sister, wedded to each other, thereby, signifying the same meaning of two terms viz Sennet and Hemet.²¹ The issue of the religious rituals of Domna and Dumni are objects of veneration among the people of Bengal including some portions of the tribals living in the lower valley of Damodar.
The cult of Manasa

Naga Era is the tribal spirit deity of serpent. The original concept of serpent worship was amalgamated with the concept of 'Manch-Amma' of South Indian people. "Manch-Amma" is the spiritual symbolisation of the mental faculty of man for the union with the higher soul immanent in the universe. Virtually, the concept is an outcome of the effort of man to be united with higher spirit of the universe, since the curling-coil of the body of snake symbolises the union of the two opposites. 'Manch-amma' is amalgamated with the curling snakes also. Now, in Bengal, both at folk and tribal levels, 'Manch-Amna' is designated as the goddess of snake and also of the phenomenon of poison. Manch-Amma is now 'Manasa', to whom the function of controlling both of the phenomena of poison and learning has been attributed. The concept of Manasa is not at all a tribal concept but a 'Hindu concept of meditation'.

The Hindu concept of Satī

It has already been stated that Satī is the consort of Śiva. Satī, according to Hindu Puranic legend, is the wife of Mahadeva or Siva, who laid down her life to protect the honour of her husband in the great sacrifice of king Daksha. The word 'Satī' in tribal terminology indicates a lady with honest hand. The power of Satī is euologised in Hindu scriptures, where the omnipotency of female energy is upheld. It is told in Hindu scriptures, that a woman in virgin state remains dormant in her power. But when married or united with a male she becomes all powerful. In the folk-culture, a virgin is considered to be dirty, while a married woman is pure due to her devotion to her male partner. A male partner actually acts as the stimulator of the internal force latent within a female. A female when aroused can bring welfare to the mankind. Both at folk-level and also in tribal culture, girls are given in marriage in early age, because the people think that by
getting married they would be elevated to the position of Sati or the lady who brings welfare to the community. The female consort of tribals like Dharti, Kalo-Pakko or the Sati all are looked upon to be all-powerful, because getting united with their male-consort they become omnipotent.

**Dharma-Cult**

Among the Oraons the Supreme God is designated as Dharmesh. Basically, the concept of Dharmesh represents a Sun-deity. It is an elevated form of Biri Belas, the lord of the Sun. The animistic origin of the Supreme God is now shrouded in mystery and he is identified as the Supreme being controlling fertility, victory and the general welfare of the community or the people. The Sun-God is now called Dharmesh, due to profound impact of Hinduism on the tribals concerned. The very word 'Dharmesh' is a loan word from Sanskrit 'Dharma', which is again derived from the root 'Dhri' (to hold). That which can hold man (in the right track) is called Dharma. The social ethics, rituals, which are benificial to the development of the community is attributed to the contributions of the lord Dharmesh. The cult of Dharma is now one of the most popular folkcult of Bengal. In the cult, Dharma is looked upon as the Parama Brahma or the absolute being. There are stories and legends in honour of Dharma. In Bengali 'Dharma Mangal Kavya' various tenents of existing Hindu theologies have been assembled and mingled. In the Mangal Kavyas Dharma is sometimes held to be the prototype of Siva, Vishnu and also the Brahma. The female consort of Dharma is either Kali, Sitala or Manasa. The female consort is termed as Kaminya. A special group of priests, known as Dharmapandit acts as the propitiator of the lord Dharma. In Manikram Ganguli's 'Dharma Mangal', there is one character, Ranjabati who laid down everything for the appeasement of Dharma in quest of an offspring. The entire episode of Ranja ended in the victory of her son, Lausen against the local chieftain, Ichhai Ghosh.
The details of the Dharma-cult belonging to Bengali folk-culture have all been inculcated in the tribal pantheon of Dharmesh, on the midland between the Damodar and the Ajoy. Almost all tribal villages have one or two temples dedicated to the Supreme God Dharma, where in the month of either Chaitra or the full-moon day of Baishak, Dharmesh is ceremonially worshipped with the rituals of Shale-bhar, Banamo, Dadurghata etc.

The whole scenario of the present day Dharmesh worship represents a developed and philosophic Hindu ritual. Its tribal connotation, whatever that might be, is now hidden.

Siva

The most notable importation from Hindu fold is the Siva concept. The Mundari speaking people, while worshipping their Supreme God, Marang Buru depict him as lord Siva. In Hindu mythology, Siva is the prime force in the triad. The god is described to be the prime factor behind the welfare of mankind. In the struggle for existence, man wants three things (i) adequate food and shelter, (ii) sociable environment and (iii) security of the progeny. Lord Siva is considered to be the promoter of these three basic requirements, as hunter, as agriculturist and also a pastor. He is the chief agent to provide food for the mankind. As the protector from pernicious elements, Siva protects the habitations of man and ensures security for the progeny. As the destroyer and the creator he is the potent force for nourishing a sociable environment for mankind.

The Siva-concept of the Hindus has accomodated various elements and attributes. Those attributes, no doubt, encompass some spiritual essence, but basically all of these indicate the material craving of man in their struggle of existence. The Siva concept from Brahmanic
tradition is now spreading its umbrella over tribal Supreme God and thereby concealing under its shadow, the pristine sylvan reality in their background.

Of mankind, women are the aesthetic part, men represent the hard reality. The women symbolise the beauty of life, while men are working force to sustain the biological existence. The two opposite truths of human life are illustrated in the form of Siva. In his special form of ‘Ardhanariswar’, male and female are united in the same body of Siva, which tries to focus the whole man. Recently in almost all ‘Atans’ of Marang Buru, Dharme etc. images of Siva in his duality are made to be the subject of worship. Previously, whether the Mundas, the Santals, the Oraons, the devotees used to install some pieces of stone on the altar to represent the god.

The transformation of the idea of Supreme God among the tribes comprising elements of Hindu thought, no doubt, creates an environment for close interaction with the people of the neighbourhood and open an avenue before the tribals for assimilation with the main stream.

The concept of Bāneswar

Interestingly enough, the tribals, though adept in hunting do not have any special god, presiding over the phenomenon of hunting. During ‘Shakrat’ or ‘Dishamsendra’ they at best worship the spirit deity of forest praying for protection. The spirit of the forest is not actually the deity for promoting the hunting as avocation. The vacuum is now filled up with one spiritual element which is clearly imported from the Hindus. Bāneswar is a Hindu god, a form of Siva, who is adored for successful hunting. The hunting equipments, like spear, bow and arrow, axe etc. are made to be subjects of worship. In the folk-religion of Bengal, Bāneswar has Chandi
as his chief consort. In different villages on the full-moon night of the month of Phalgun or Chaitra, Baneswar along with her female consort Chanai-Chandi is appeased with sacrifice of fowl or goat. In this connection, reference may be made of the Chandi-cult in the folk-religion of Eastern India, where any sort of lesser female deities are referred to with the nomenclature of Chandi, such as, Dhelai Chandi, Nakrai Chandi, Chanai Chandi, Ratanti Chandi etc. These female spiritual components of Chandi-cult are inherited from the overwhelming impact of Chandi of the Markandeya Purāṇa, where the chief Mother Goddess of the Hindus has been enunciated as Mother Chandi.

The tribals of lower Damodar Valley, have not been able to remain aloof from the all encompassing influence of the Chandi-cult. They sometimes call all female deities by the name of Chandi. Thus, they name the Kudro as Kudro-Chandi, Janaburu as Jana-Chandi. This is a glaring example of acculturation, between the tribals and the non-tribals.

Śitalā

Among the tribals, disease is caused by supernatural agencies. These supernatural agencies are associated with various tribal theories like Tejo theory of the Santals and the Langhan theory of the Oraons. These supernatural agencies are known in folk-culture as Asura. Thus, fever is caused by Jvarasura. In folk-religion, Śitalā is considered to be the chief agent to control the disease like Cholera, Typhoid, Basanta (Pox) etc. In all the diseases fever is the common ailment. In order to control the fever, Jvarasura is to be subdued. As an aid, people worship Sitala to defeat Jvarasura. This folk-goddess, Sitala along with the relevant idols has created profound impact on the tribal mind. Whenever there is an epidemic, Sitala and Marak-Chandi, the twin sisters, are invoked amidst offerings of blood of fowl and goat, in order to get rid of the great demon of fever. The
Tajo and Langhan theory of the tribals never contradict the over-activity of
the pernicious spiritual beings as described in the songs of Sitalamangal,
composed by Hari Deb. The image of Sitala always wields broomstick in
hand to repel the spell of the diseased demon. Janaburi, the Mundari deity
with broomstick in hand, performs the same duty as that of Sitala of folk-
religion.

Kālī

In Hindu pantheon, the chief Mother-Goddess is known by various
names like, Durgā, Chandī, Kālī, Bhagavati etc. These names actually
indicate the same deity. But the names are different, because, in different
attributes the Mother-Goddess appear differently to her devotees. Thus,
Durga is the form of the Mother Goddess, who protect her devotees from
the clutches of Asura. Chandi was the form of the female energy, that was
invoked in warring situations. Kali is the form of the Mother-Goddess, who
assumed a black colour and ugly attire similar to the form of a tribal
divinity in order to re-install the glory of the women of lower castes, whose
association was considered to be efficacious to arouse the latent power of
man. In this context, the basic tenet of men and women relation in the
Hindu theology may be referred to. In Hindu scriptures, man considers
woman to be the life-partner in order to cultivate the latent power within
himself, whereas the woman considers man as the stimulator or the energy
within herself. Man looks to the woman as a destitute in cravings for her
mercy to offer fulfilment. Similarly, woman begs out of the man the wealth
of his association to bring about total perfection within herself. Both is
begger to each other and thus pray things from each other, thereby
inducting sense of perfection to make themselves complete. In
Hindu mythology Siva is depicted to beg from Sati or Bhagavati and Sati
or Bhagavati is depicted as a destitute who prays for food and shelter from Siva. The entire scenario of mutual dependence is euphorically
enunciated in the songs of Chaspala, Bolan, Gambhira etc. and even in Sivayan. The female consort, Kali in Sivayan is considered to be the chief agent to arouse the dormant Siva in a process of "an opposite ejaculation".

Kali of Hindu mythology is accepted now in tribal fold in all her aspects and attributes. Jaher of the Santals, is worshipped as Kali, Dharti of the Oraons is named as Kalo-Pakko or grand black old lady. The Malpaharias directly worship Kali in association with various Alchies. In lower Damodar and even in upper Damodar Kali images are profuse in number, whether in tribal or in non-tribal areas. In the month of Aghrayana of the day of 'Amabasya' Kali is worshipped in various tribal communities as the giver of food. The concept bears close similarity with Śākambhari.

Bhagavati is another epithet of the Mother-Goddess. The female generative organ is called 'Bhaga' in Sanskrit. The Mother-Goddess is designated as a lady with powerful generative organ, because, she is considered to be the potent energy behind all products of earth. In this context, we may recall the image of Mother-Goddess on a seal found at MohanjoDaro, where a tree sprouts from the generative part of an upturned lady.

The concept of Gosāin

The Malpaharias and the Malers apply the term 'Gosain' to indicate spiritual being or deities. The word 'Gosain' is not at all a tribal term. It is derived from Sanskrit 'Goswami' meaning Vaishnava preceptor. In Vaisnava religion, the preceptor or guru or goswami is the principal object of worship to the devotees. Unless and until a guru helps his disciple, he cannot have
any communion with the Supreme being Parama Brahma. For a close rapport with the guru, the disciple forgets to draw differences between the guru or the Parama Brahma or Supreme being. And hence, he is placed in a very high position. The spread of Vaisnavism in Radha Bengal, has not spared the tribals, living in close proximity of the Hindus. The Malpahariyas or Malers are the people, who have settled in villages predominantly inhabited by the Hindus. The spirits or deities, therefore, have been redesignated in the light of the prevailing concept of Gosain amongst the neighbours. The Gosain of Malpaharias, no doubt, are tribal gods and goddesses with full tribal characteristics of animism in their background. The word 'Gosain', added as an epithet, simply proves a trend of acculturation of the tribals with the Hindus.

Worship of Mahābīr

In many tribal villages, both in upper and lower Damodar Valley, one witnesses the worship of Hunumān or Mahabir. Both tribes and non-tribes participate in the worship. In the month of Chaitra, on the eve of Ramnabami, Mahabir is worshipped in a very elaborate way. Sacred flags are hoisted in honour of Hunumān. The flags are called Mahābīr Dhwaja. It is planted on an elevated platform and a 'Tulsi' plant is placed near the dhwaja on the platform. Ladies of the village are very particular in pouring water on Hunuman and Tulsi plant everyday after bathing. Many of the Oraon Bhagats arrange for the worship of Hunuman or Mahabir separately for the exclusive welfare of the tribals. The Bhagats themselves pour water to Tulsi plant, mantra, blow conch and offer Arti and Prasad is distributed at last. They invariably wear the sacred thread (Janeu) and are very particular in taking it in their hands with chanting of mantras and offering of Arti and Prasadi.
Jitia festival

Jitia festival is primarily a Hindu festival. It is celebrated by the tribals twelve days after Karma festival as household ritual at the family level. On the eve of Jitia, the ladies observe fast, which they believe, imparts long life to their sons. The ritual of Jitia is very difficult to perform, because it involves serious fasting almost for two days. But the ladies perform it at ease, because, they consider it to be essential for lengthening the lives of their offsprings. Oblation to their deceased ancestors also are offered. Normally, Oraon ladies perform this ritual, though, now-a-days, Santals also participate in it. The Jitia piper is planted on the courtyard and worshipped with incense and Diya of ghee. A cucumber is offered as prasadi to Jitia piper. This cucumber is the first item every lady takes at the time of breaking her fast.

Vijayā Daśami

The tribals are influenced by the Hindu Durga festival held in autumn. They scarcely avoid observation of Durga Path on the day of Vijaya Dasami. The deities like Hunuman, Chakrodhari Mahadeo are worshipped on the eve of Vijaya Dasami. The Oraons sometimes recite the Ramayana, on the day of Dandakatta. According to the report of N. Mishra, the Oraons of the village Anjan considers Sita as the wife of Dharmes.

The day is considered to be the concluding part of the great ritual of Durga worship, observed by Sri Ramchandra, after having achieved the victory over Ravana and recovery of Sita. Ramchandra, the great hero of the Ramayana, is sometimes held to be the same deity as Dharmes. Sita, the wife of Ramchandra, is thus looked upon as the wife of Dharmes also. Hanuman, the auspicious force incarnate, is worshipped along with Ramchandra or Dharmes. Ramayana Kathā, the recitation of the story of
Ramayana, is arranged in the evening, in order to bring about the heavenly bliss of Dharmes over the community. Among the Oraons, the influence of Ramayana is so profound that a story has already been manufactured depicting Ram, as their grandfather and Sita as their grand-mother. The monkey-general, Hunuman, is spoken of as their uncle. According to the story, the Oraons, consider themselves as the decendants of the 'Banaras' who acted as the army in the great Lankan war. Banaras are described as a dusky 'cloud-coloured' people with large teeth and their men and women are represented as addicted to drink and as taking a great delight in singing to the sound of Mridanga or Madal.

Dewali

Dewali, another Hindu festival is reported to be observed ceremoniously among almost all tribes, both of upper Damodar and lower Damodar. The people of Mundari group worship goddess Lakshmi along with the rituals of Dewali. In the month of Kartik on the darkest night, lamps are lit in all houses to welcome goddess Lakshmi. It is believed that unless the house is profusely lighted, Lakshmi would avoid the house, while roaming in the village during night to cast her eternal blessing. In Sanskrit, Dewali, etymologically means, garland of lamps. In Sastrik injunctions, Dewali is not to herald the oncoming of Lakshmi but an auspicious performance of some external acts with a view to repel the darkness of mind. Exclusively amongst the tribals, the Dasae initiation is completed on the day amidst lighting of lamps on the top of the hill, where the secret teaching of black arts are imparted to the disciples. To the common men, of course, it bears different connotation. It is a welcoming ceremony of the goddess of wealth or Lakshmi.
Bhaiya dooj

The term, 'Bhaiya Dooj' is a colloquial form of the great Hindu festival, Bhatri Dwitia. Normally, in tribal religion, the bond of brother and sister is not so intimate except on certain exceptional occasions. In Karma festival there are rituals of fostering Karma-tree in loving memory of a brother, who has left the village for a long time either in search of a job or for some social purpose. The ritualistic manifestation of the emotional relation between brother and sister is normally found among only the Hindus in India. The emotional relation is grounded on a philosophy of celestial bond of twin souls. The 'Bhai Dwitia' is therefore considered to be the epitome of what we find in the social as well as in the emotional partnership of brother and sister. This Hindu tradition has profoundly influenced the tribals who are living in close proximity of the Hindus. The ceremony of 'Bhai Phonta' is known among the tribals as 'Bhaiya dooj'. The meaning of the word 'dooj' is not known. The function is very small, the sister washes the feet of her brother and applies 'Tilak' on his forehead. The brother is expected to give her some money in return. The brother is then given some sweets to eat. It is believed that this Tilak applied by a sister (older or younger) guarantees long life and good health to the brother.

Holi

Among the tribals, there are Baha and Phague. Both the festivals represent the new life of spring. The month of Phalgun and Chaitra in Bengal and Bihar, mark the transition from winter to summer. This intermediary season has a natural impact on the generative function of the animal world, the adrenal is stimulated and both male and female seek new companion for procreation. Spring festival of the tribes is basically oriented to sex rituals and rites. The songs are mostly erotic in nature. The
companionship of male and female is directed towards fertility objective. Amongst the Hindus, the entire season is marked with mirth and merriment and erotic dances and songs. The climax of such behaviour is witnessed in the observance of holi, when colours are sprayed on all irrespective of castes and sects. Raga or songs are sung by the sadans. Amongst the Hindus, holi is therefore a festival of 'Raga and Rang'. In principle, the debris of the old life is burnt symbolically and young persons play among themselves with coloured water. Among the Adibasis or tribals, colour is sometimes avoided. Water and mud are thrown to each other. The ceremony of throwing mud and water starts with the 'Bhabhies' and gradually extends to all persons even including the passers-by. Mutual exchange of mud and water continues through out the day ultimately being concluded in community drinking.33

Shiva Ratri

Siva Ratri is celebrated by both tribals and non-tribals in honour of Lord Siva. It is a special festival for the Bhagats, the Oraon priests. Men and women of the tribal communities fast for the whole day of the festival. The fast is broken in the evening after a brief ritual of worship. Devotional songs are sung at night, that is, of Siva-Ratri.34

Hindu influence on the Oraon Priests, Bhagats

Among the tribals a special class has emerged, with expertise in religious performances. Recently, a cult has developed among the tribal known as Bhagat-cult.35 The study of Bhagat-cult reveals that in different areas, there are at least six categories of Bhagats.
The term 'Bhagat' is derived from sanskrit 'Bhakti' or devotion. Bhakti is defined as 'ardent and hopeful devotion to a particular deity in grateful recognition of aid received or promised'. The Hindus who believe in salvation through Bhakti Marga or the path of devotion, are also known as Bhagats. In India, there is a special class of literature, known as Bhagavata, wherein Bhakti Marga is enunciated. It is held that the path of devotion is superior to that of work (Karma) and knowledge (Jnāna). The teachings of Sri Chaitanya established Bhagavata cult in Eastern India with a firm root. The tribals have not been spared the influence of Bhakti cult and had in consequence brought forth the specialist Bhagat class among the Oraons. The three classes of Bhagats of the Oraons are designated as Kamru, Mati and Nemha. Bhagats select devotional path for dedication to Sakti (Durga and Kali). Moti Bhagats are black-magicians who worship Mahadeo. Nemha-Bhagats are ordinary Bhagats. They are worshippers of Gosain. According to S. C. Roy, Nemha Bhagats always maintain ceremonial purity in diet and habits. They abstain from eating beef and pork and the meat of fowls, but may take fish and the meat of other birds and particularly goats. They worship Lord Mahadeo and Devi Mai. It appears that among most of the Bhagats, specially among the ordinary or Nemha Bhagats, tribal ideas are generally derived from the Hindu source. In spite of that, it remains true that devotional worship among them is quite different from the Hindus.

Among the Mahalies, the traditional basket-makers of the Mundari stock, a fourth group has emerged. They are known as Vishnu Bhagats. Vishnu Bhagats consider Vishnava panth as the best of all the panthas. They abstain from killing any living creature and they do not eat flesh of any bird or animal. They offer fruits and sweets to god Vishnu. In Bihar, among the Oraons, there was a movement in the beginning of the 20th century, with regard to maintaining purity of religion among the tribal
The movement was known as Tana-Bhagat movement, which was directed towards the revival of Kurukh Dharma, the original religion of the Kurukhs or the Oraons. The Tana Bhagat movement has some impact over the tribals under our study. Six points of ideologies are emphasised among the followers of Tana Bhagats:

(i) Exorcism of evil ghosts and spirits and alien deities.

(ii) Abolition of all the following — drinking liquor, eating meat, sacrificing hens and pigs, worshipping at the sacred grove (Sarna), the carrying on of sorcery, the playing of musical instruments, dancing and festivals, the weaving of elaborate jewellery and head dress, the continuing of the customs of the premarital sex relations, the institution of Dhumkuria or dormitories for young men and women, certain kinds of ceremonial friendship and the former custom of marriage.

(iii) Return to the pre-religion of the original Oraons.

(iv) Recognition of one God, Mahadeo or Bhagwan and worship of him by Bhakti, devotion.

(v) Learning how to mediate and pray with deep concentration and conviction.

(vi) Love and goodwill towards fellowmen, kindness to all living beings, and purity in food and habits.

The Bhagat movement among the tribals is gradually driving the people towards close assimilation with the Hindu communities and actually is doing away with the tribal inhibition, enshrined in the diku concept prevailing amongst the primitive inhabitants in sylvan surroundings.
Transformation of the Tribal deities

The religious concept of the tribals of the areas covered under the development programmes initiated by the D.V.C. have underwent significant changes, both in essence and structure. While discussing the religion in the root culture of the tribals, it was noted that animism was the basic tenet in the primitive religion, the manifestations of which are perceived in the worship of manifold spirits like BuruBonga, SengelBonga, Biru Nad, Khekhel Nad etc. The spirits of natural objects and various phenomena in the environment are still lingering in the tradition of the tribal people under our study. But these spirits are not very important, though not fully meaningless. Those are propitiated not through out the year with a definite code of religious conduct, but only symbolically on the first day of the Bengali month of Magh, that is, on the day of 'Ekhsen'. These spirits are offered rice, flower and sometimes the blood of fowl or pig. Normally, Shamans, Medicinemen or Deashi, Deonra are engaged in the propitiatory right. No priests of regular cadre are employed. The worship of such a multifarious hosts of spirits are considered to be the prerequisite of the starting ceremony of the great festival Badna.

Rise of polytheism

The most significant change in the religion of the tribal is towards formation of a polytheistic belief. Various gods and goddesses have emerged under the impact of the higher cultures of the Hindus. Buru Bonga, originally a hill-spirit and also a god of rain, among the agriculturists is now identified with the Hindu god, Siva. Jaher, the female spirit deity presiding over the fertility phenomena, is now conceived as goddess Kali. Among the Dravidian groups of people it has become the Kalo Pakko or Black old lady.
The Naga Era of the Oraons, or the Bing Bonga of the Mundas are hardly maintaining their existence in the memories of the new progeny. Instead, goddess Manasa has occupied a prominent place in the cultural tradition of the tribes of lower Damodar Valley. Incidentally, it may be referred that Manasa-cult is a living socio-religious cult providing impetus towards formation of a separate group of religious mendicants, expert in composing special song-offerings for the deity. These songs are called Jhapan gan which are recited by the chanters in an ecstasy under the influence of the spirit of snake. In the popular belief of the tribes, a witch assumes the shape of a snake in order to inflict poisonous bite over the body of the victim.

**Significance of Snake cult**

The serpent cult in the Damodar Valley, if analysed in all its context, has manifold dimensions. The foundation of the cult is definitely the worship of snake, but in the philosophy of snake-cult, snake is taken to be the symbol of many things, connected with fertility, witchery and also the learning process of a pupil, for which in the popular religion, there is the goddess Saraswati. Snake is carved on the temple of Lord Shiva, where the phallic stone is installed. The snake in that context indicates the male sperm. In the Manasa-cult, snake-goddess Manasa is sometimes worshipped as Hansa-Bahini, that is the deity who has her mount of swan. In that form, she is adored as the goddess presiding over the learning of the pupil.

The Da-Bonga of the Mundari stock is now being identified with the Hindu water-god, Barun. At popular level particularly amongst the ‘Hinduised Malpaharias’, it is also propitiated during the marriage ceremony as Jalahori. Jalaswoa is an important ritual in the worship of Jalahori. The rite is the magical imitation of the effect of the physical union between a male and a female.
The jungle-deity of the Mundari stock is Bir-Bonga, the spirit of the forest. Bir-Bonga, a sexless spirit has now been equated with the female goddess Bonkumari, who is worshipped in the month of Phalgun, in various parts of Radha Bengal. Search in the Lower Damodar area will lead to the discovery of a large number of fables, stories and legends centering round the deity Bonkumari.

Instances of such transformations are many. Two processes are activating such type of transformations – firstly, the natural process of elevation of the spirit to the level of deity or theism which has occurred in all religions of the world; secondly, contact with the Hindus leading to the process of Sanskritisation or Aryanisation, elaborated by N. K. Srinivasan in his Sanskritisation on South Indian Folk Religion.

Factors behind changes

The tribes in the changing process are still identified as the aboriginal and autochthons of the territory. Their acculturation are sometimes interpreted as an attempt to make an adjustment with the people of the surroundings.

Moreover, the spread of money-economy amongst the tribals expose them to a trend of busy activities in the sphere of their occupations. The dynamism within the society assumes a different dimension through the busy behaviour of the individuals in the society. The life becomes more problematic and thereby too deterrent to concentrate intensely on the creative issues of life. In a sense, life becomes more materialistic, where the idealistic aspect is gradually minimised. The vacuum is taken advantage of by the priestly class, which aspires to build their profession...
on religious matter. Minimisation of the participation of the common people in rebuilding the religious discipline and the over activity of the priestly class in philosophising on primitive concepts have paved the path of a strong polytheism with an aroma of a Supreme God or a Goddess.

Commercialisation, as well as, urban contact opened a new vista of employment of the male-folk of the tribals. The women, who so long took an equal part with the male in argiculture, were pushed in to the household for looking after the domestic duties. This became possible, because, the participation of the men in the commercial set-up fetched more income for the family. The female ultimatley became a potent force in family life that led to devising a theory of supremacy of the female power in human affair. The Mother-Goddess of the tribes became more autocratic, wielding immense power. Importance of agriculture, close proximity with the urban centers and finally the articulations of priestly class thus helped the emergence of the cult of Mother-Goddess among the tribals.

Sometimes, some theologians have stated that the belief in the supreme female generative power has come down from the idea of a matriarchal form of society. This is not perhaps a pragmatic assumption, because, Mother-Goddess is found to be the prominent deity in the religion of the societies that are primarily patriarchal. The high exaltation of the mother-cult is definitely the outcome of the contact of tribes with the main stream of Indian life.

**Impact of class formation**

When life in primitive age was simple, the thought-process was naturally expected to be simple. An individual was content with the simple belief in spirits. But in the surplus economy with the creation of classes within the society, the life-pattern became complicated, the problems
multiplied and an individual tried to find solace in inducing thoughts otherwise unknown to a primitive man.

Rise of supreme deities

The most important and phenomenal change in the religion of the tribals is the emergence of a male supreme deity or the Supreme God, variously designated amongst various tribes. The Supreme God of the Santal is known as Marang Buru, among the Oraons he is Dharmesh, among the Malpaharias Beru Gosain and among the Koras, Lord Siva. The Marang Buru is the elevated form of the hill-spirit Buru Bonga, Dharmesh comes out of the animistic concept of Sun-spirit Biri Nad and the Beru Gossain is the epitome of the evolution of the Malpahariya Sun spirit. Kora idea of Supreme God is nothing but the result of the acculturation of the tribals with the Hindus, specially the Hindus having theological belief in the Puranic concept of Rudra or Siva. The phenomenon of Supreme God is the current outcome of a gradual and evolutionary process of change in religion through socio-economic transformation of the tribals from hill-hunting stage to hill cultivation and from hill cultivation to plain agriculture that ultimately led to urbanisation. In the phase of hill hunting civilisation, the society was simple, class-formations were not conceived of, whatever religious specialisation was thought of was in the sphere of the activities of some shamanistic groups variously designated amongst the tribes. As for example, among the Santals, the Ojha; among the Oraons, the Deashi; among the Malphariyas, the Deonra and among the Koras as Vakta. Priestly class, in the modern sense, was unknown in the simple society of hill hunting phase. The crystallization of class concept was first observed in the hill-cultivation stage, when the spirits first assume the shape of a deity with special attributes. Thus, the Buru-Bonga, originally the hill-spirit, became the god of rain in the hill-cultivation stage. The Biri Nad became Biri Belas amongst the Oraons presiding over the phenomena
of fertility and the Beru Nad became Beru Gossain among the Malpahariyas for controlling the general welfare of the community in the plain-agricultural stage, while the class-formation became prominent and the priestly class became hereditary with an economic interest in the manipulation of the spiritual ideas leading to a theology that was their monopoly and specialisation. Under these circumstances, the class, in order to have a long drawn benefit from religious activities, attributed various qualifications as well as various functions on the prevailing notions of the spirits, giving them a theistic connotation. Not only that, the privileged class had an advantage of coming in contact with the higher societies in the neighbourhood and thus exchanging the ideas of Supreme Divinity.

Concept of kingship

The societal development from primitive horde to nomadic sedentary tribe settled in villages gradually led to the emergence of the concept of tribal chief who was the prototype of the king, the head of the state. Supreme God became the synonym of the supreme authority in the society that was found in the idea of kingship. In the family also paternalism became the main criterion of family administration. Patriarchal family where the elderly male is the chief, became the prime mover of the thought in the religious fold. It is observed that each Supreme God has a consort. As for example, Marang Buru is wedded to Jaher, Dharmesh is united with Dharti and Beru Gosain is wedded with Dharti Burhi, while the Siva of the Koras is given in ritual marriage with Sati. In patriarchal society the family is ruled by the chief male members, but the family is formed only through the union with the consort who is virtually the lady of the house.

The concept of Supreme God is the effect of a conglomerate process having in the background the formation of family, emergence of priestly
class, as well as, the rise of political hegemony, through the emergence of the state-organised society. In Bihar, in the tribal areas, villages are known as Raigaon, Pashohargaon, and also Kotalgaon. Rajgaon grew out of the residential place of king, the Raja; Pasahargaon was in old days the village where the ministerial staff resided and Kotalgaon was the place, where the chief of the army staff had his office. From such relics it would not be unreasonable to assume that the tribes in the past, although they did not shake off kinship organisation, were more inclined towards territorial identity and developed a sort of civil society.

Role of Christianity

The change of the religious concept of the Christian tribals, particularly, in the sphere of a monotheism is very interesting, in the sense that it is still now maintaining a tribal stratum in the fold of Christian sophistication. The Christianised Santals designate their Marang Buru as Moses, while, the Oraons and the Malpharias designate their chief god equal to the Chief of the Bishops, who were the guiding factors behind their proselytism. The father-centred or the church-centred monotheism amongst the tribals has resulted in internal divisions among the Christian tribals, whether they are Protestants or Catholics. Various groups have been formed and internal rivalry has become the tradition of the day, thus, destroying thereby the unitary bond of Christianity. This is a new phenomenon in Christian era and has thrown a new challenge to the unity of the sons of God.

The Christian tribals, so far as religion is concerned, are half-way towards assimilation with the Indian life. They are neither fully attached with their primitive idea of spirit-god or Supreme God, nor totally adjusted with the Indian way of cosmopolitan spiritual ideas. In a hanging and unbalanced situation, they are not wholly united.
Acculturation is a process of synthesising various trends of different cultures and giving shape to a new one in which adoption of customs etc of other civilization are discernible. Normally, the entire process has five dimensions: (1) Prolonged contacts with the higher cultures cause a tribe to emulate the former's ways of life, and may further lead to an incorporation of the tribe, at least partially or a section thereof, into the social hierarchy of the group with higher culture.

Such a process of integration or partial integration gets rebuffed or hindered if the tribe in question lives specially with the aristocrats of the group with higher culture. The process gets, on the contrary, accelerated if the tribe in question, lives with lower groups of people of the community with higher culture.

(2) Despite significant changes in their social status, economic life, political system and religion, the tribe tends to preserve and maintain, most of their traditional kinship-based institutions like marriage, interpersonal relationship, family life etc. as well as the customs of rituals concerning the life-cycle of the man.

(3) In the tribal areas, there is a strong leaning towards tribal village leadership irrespective of his ethnic affiliation and/or craving for making the leadership very strong or autocratic, so that, the common people of the community may have a fearful respect for the village leader.

(4) The adoption to alien belief and rituals by a section of tribe gives rise to a new group of a puritan followers, which tend to play important role
in bringing about changes in the traditional tribal religious beliefs and rituals, on the model of the high-forms of aliens.

Reference to cases or instances

(1) There are a large number of cowherd people at the foot-hill of Panchet and Mathaburu near Bandowan who designate them as Abhir or Ahir. They trade in milk and milk-products. It is known to all that the tribals themselves do not drink milk, but maintain a large number of cattle for economic reasons. The tribals, whom we know as, Abhir or Ahir, try to establish their identity as one of the Hindu castes of Gope or Goala, but, always maintain a distance from the traditional Goala caste of the Hindu society. In this connection, it should be mentioned that the Gope and the Goalas of the Hindus are not same, though they have the same status in the caste hierarchy in the Hindu system. The Gopas are divided into four categories, according to their job's specialisation, namely, Anaj, Pather, Bhero and Konar, while the Goalas of Bengal are a mono-cultural unit, maintaining distinction from Abhir or Ahir and the Yadavs of Bihar and adjacent Bengal. The tribal Ahir or Abhir actually try to emulate the existing Hindu caste of the Hindus of Bihar, identified as a class of Sat-Sudras. The pastoralism of these tribal peoples have its replica in the profession of the Hindu caste Ahir of Abhir. According to the sociologists, the weaker section always tries to amalgamate their culture with that of the group of high-ups. With the introduction of the D.V.C., interactions between the Adivasies or tribals and the Hindus and the Christians have been going on effectively for about half a century. It is a fact that while the cultures of two peoples are identical, the customs and manners of those who live close to one another tend to have greater similarities than do the customs of those groups, who live apart. The simple facts derive from the fundamental principle that as culture invites any element in it can be taken over by any individual exposed to different ways of life. This is ideally true of the
area where D.V.C. complexes have grown up and the tribals have been living side-by-side with the Hindus and many other communities for a pretty long time, as a result of which 'borrowing and taking' between two groups have taken place on a large scale. The non-tribals with the better developed technology had more to lend than to borrow—a fact, which can be safely concluded from the discussion we have made above.

Geographically, the D.V.C. complexes are not cordoned by Nature. On the contrary, it is surrounded by the half of life in developed villages. For this reason, the service oriented conglomerates are not responsible alone for imprinting non-tribal influence over the tribal peoples. These complexes actually play the role of go-between between the tribals and the mainstream of Indian life, flowing in an outside area, where the industrial units of the D.V.C. have developed. It is therefore, not to be presumed that the influence of the D.V.C. peoples are actually changing the ways of tribals. The context of the role of the D.V.C. is something different. It has opened the vista of a new life or attitude before the so-called 'backwards', that is, the tribals, who could not see the light of the outside world in the conservative closet of their village-life. The impact of the D.V.C. is not to be judged from its own core, but from the standpoint of providing opportunities of mingling with the greater-world.

(2) There is a saying that the traditions die hard. Man may change, but the core culture of the man remains as usual. The core-culture of man involves out of the personal life, which again develops under the impact of manifold factors, biological and socio-economic. The biological factors of personal life revolves round food, shelter and multiplication. When man was not man, but was in the stage of just homo-erectus, he was in a congregational unit for seeking food, shelter and multiplication. The social relations could not be at that stage differentiated, except, the differences
of genders. The natural impulse, where more active than the impulse or rationality, man naturally became subjected to the biological instincts. With the growth of brain amongst the *homo sapiens* various new characteristics developed with new dimensions, which impelled him to act more rationally and more aesthetically. The genetical base of human character assumed a definite shape. Traditions in the life-cycles of man are actually ingrained in the genetical base and therefore it is very difficult to change. The personal life of man is simultaneously controlled by the materialistic environment, the set of which is more or less fixed. Social involvement of a person, when interpreted from the fixed set, always runs on a conservative direction altogether. It is, therefore, found that whether among tribals or non-tribals, a tradition surrounding a particular culture, continue for a long time, even prolong as continuity amidst change.

The entire matter of adherence to the rituals regarding pregnancy, birth, puberty, initiation, marriage, etc. is so devotedly clung to, even a Christian Santal will never forget to practise Sikah or tattoo or neglect offerings to the Supreme divinity praying for the better life of the individual. The day to day treatment of the crisis of life from the perspective of supernatural agencies is perceived even amongst the more industrialised or urbanised tribal groups. Exceptions are little and where these are found do not contravene the basic tenets even too.

(3) A few cases of the leadership pattern of the tribals have been tested both in urban and rural sectors. In the village, Labandhar of P.S. Ausgram II, the tribals selected as one of their representative to the village-panchayet, amongst the scheduled caste communities. The name of the representative is Sibaram Akure, who belongs to the Scheduled Caste, Dome. The selection of Sibaram Akure was no doubt made following the modern traditions of leadership of political parties, while accepting the outward hegimony of party leadership, the internal conflict between the
non-tribal leader and the traditional leader is always frequent. Another tribal leader chosen from that traditional village council has become the defacto manipulator of the economic and social life of the tribals of Labandhar. The defacto ruler is so powerful that it would be very difficult for any one to switch over to the side of Sibaram Akure disobeying the institutions of the traditional leaders. The high-handed manuovering by the tribal leader, though opposed by the Panchayat leader, is carried over by the tribal inhabitants. The same instances are available from the urban conglomeration of Burnpur industrial complexes, where a lady has been chosen as the village leader both from traditional village administrative organisation and from modern political view-point. The lady is not the ceremonial cypher head or a nincompoop, but the person controlling the fate of the community, both at mundane and spiritual levels. The autocracy of this leader or ruler, we may say, is never questioned even at a time of democratic preaching by the Trade Unionists.

(4) The tribals of the Damodar Valley are showing signs of merits of their own culture by certain reformation movements. One of such movement is the Bhagat movement, through which the Oraons are presenting to the world, the best of their culture. Interestingly, what they try to prove to be the best of their own, are actually borrowings from their neighbours. The Bhagat movement is basically based on Vaisnavism and Bhagat cult has profoundly influenced the propagator of the movement. By these efforts, they are actually coming close to the Hindu neighbours and shaking off many of their primitive habits and rituals. The Sat-Santal movement is likewise imbued with such a goal. The Santals try to prove that their Supreme God, Marang Buru is actually the Thakur Baba, who is none but the lord Siva, of the Hindus. The great social reformer Birsa Bhagawan was a protagonist of the Santal revival movement. He became bhagawan, since he was imbued with greatness of a tribal hero by the Supreme God, Siva or Bhagawan in dream. The basic tenet of the reformer was
actually upholding the normative Hinduism in the fold of a popular Hinduism. A survey by Troisi into the impact of the reform movements reveals that in spite of tribal separatism, this movement tried to wipe out the differences between the Santals and the Hindu neighbours. Some of the historians hold that the effort of Jaipal Singh for organising a Jharkhand party, incorporating the elements of the tribes, virtually brought the tribals nearer to the higher-ups in the neighbourhood. The movement of new Santal Raj endeavoured to liberate the Santal community from the oppressors by exhorting the people to worship the Hindu deity, Ram, whom they identified with the Santal Cando. The leader of the movement insisted on purifying themselves in the name of Ram-Cando who, it was revealed, would restore their ancestral land, now occupied by the non-Santals. Bhagirath, the leader, instructed the people, not to eat fowls and pigs, pollute the Burma rice and to bathe daily before cooking their food. Another leader of the movement, Dubia Gosain, introduced the worship of the Babaji in the manner of reverence paid to the sanyasis by the Hindus. In this way, whether that is Kharwar movement or new Santal Raj or any other movement of any nomenclature, the final resolution was to identify themselves with the developed communities, going to the extent of using the janeo or sacred thread, like the Hindu Brahmins. The janeo-dhari Santals regarded themselves as socially superior to those who did not wear the thread. They were reluctant to intermarry or to have social intercourse with the non-Janeo-dhari Santals. The emulation of Hindu socio-religious practice was regarded as means of improving their economic status. According to Troisi, 'as a result of Kharwar movement, especially the working of its three sects, the Santals were generally moving towards Hinduisation with increasing ambivalence.

Acculturation of the tribal peoples, under our study, has started coagulating since the last quarter of the 18th century, when tribal migration to the plain-land became frequent and pervasive after the great famine of
1770. Large tracts of lands were covered with the jungle following the desertion of villages due to epidemics and hunger. After the Permanent Settlement of 1793, these tracts were parcelled out as estate amongst the servants of the East India Company, in exchange of meagre amount of rent or revenue. Those people or the agents of the British invited the tribals from uplands for clearance of jungle and make the land cultivable. In this process, tribal villages multiplied enormously on the plain lands as enclosures amidst the non-tribal population of the area. With the passing of time, the tribals themselves felt that they were being deprived of their legitimate claims and made to serve as slaves of the non-tribal farmers. They realised the difference between slaves and masters and became restless. Many tribal revolts occurred as consequences. Most of the reform movements came in the offing of these revolts. In addition to rising up in arms the tribals tried to imprint on the mind of their companions that they were not different from their neighbours and consequent to that effort various non-tribal elements came into the tribal fold as a way of sanskritising the tribal practices and thereby obliterate the cultural difference between a Hindu and a tribe. Acculturation amongst the tribal peoples of the Damodar Valley should be interpreted in the context of the trend of mingling the tribal peoples with the non-tribals. A subterrestrial centripetal tendency may be discovered even amidst that apparent separatist uprising.

☐ SOUND-SYMBOLISM - CHANGING FEATURES ☐

The original phonetic characteristics of Mundari language reveal three stages of modulations - (i) Stage of straight pronounciation, (ii) Stage of appex or apogee in sound vibration, (iii) downward trend towards the original straight line sonic level. The three phases in literary context is commonly called 'Onometopoeia'. The original vocabulary of Mundari
group of languages cannot avoid jig-jag course of pronunciation. Under the impact of local languages, namely Bengali and Hindi, many new words have been introduced in Mundari stock, thereby facilitating the growth of compound word incorporating Bengali root. The sonic symbolism has naturally been changed, where such compound forms are found.

**Mundari**

In the science of language, such phonetic change is very meaningful, because it adds new dimension to the symbolic meaning of the sound. Evidence of fundamental links with the languages of Indo-Aryan group are many. These links have not emerged out of manner imitation, but, this actually refers to feelings and figurative expressions about objects and natural surroundings in which sounds play no part. In western countries, such type of change is euphematically described as 'Gitaigo', the terminological significance of which is to go into the heart. 'Gitai' in Gaulic vocabulary means heart and 'Go' is a English word, meaning 'enter'. The combination of French and English word is done on a simplistic form of sound change. Because, the Gaulic word 'Gitai' has a peculiar level of expression, while 'go' is a straight-line expression of English vocabulary. Examples of Mundari word of such change-situation are many. 'Sati' is a composite form of Indo-Aryan root 'Sat', meaning honest, and 'Tai', a Mundari root, meaning hand, 'Sat', is a straight line expression of a Indo-Aryan vocabulary, while 'Tai' is an expression of elevated sound moving downward. The meaning of sati is chaste-lady, not honest hand. The essence of the meaning is like touching heart of the pronouncier eulogizing a lady whom he loves. It actually speaks of the heart or the pronouncier.

**Santali**

In the Mundari language, particularly among the Santals, the sound 'a' always means forward. This indication is evident in the composition forward also. As for example, 'Sen' means 'go' when 'a' is added as prefix it becomes 'Asen', which means lead forward. 'Nu' is Santali word, meaning
'drink', when 'a' is added to it, it becomes 'Anu' which means giving forward a baby for drinking.

'K' - similarly 'K' or 'Ka' is a sound-symbol for intensivity. The 'al' means to write, when the symbol 'ka' is added to 'al', it becomes 'akal', which means writing something of intensive feeling. 'Bano' means to make. 'Bakno' is to make something with intensive thought, that means to create something artistically.

'Pa' - always indicates reciprocation. 'Dal' means to strike and Pa being added to it, it becomes 'Dapal', that is, to strike each other.

'Na' - It indicates 'Pervading'. Example 'Bur' means 'two' and when 'Na' is added with it, we have 'Banar' that means 'pervading the two', that is, both.

'Tu' - It indicates noun or a particular thing. Example - 'Num' means 'to name', 'Natum' means 'the name of an object'.

Kurukh

In Dravidian language, like that of Kurukh, a diphthong or pause between two vowels, means offering. 'Ci'inw' means 'to give up' or 'offer all to another'. 'Thi' indicates 'cluster', 'gut' means 'house', 'gutthi' means 'houses' or 'clusters of houses'.

Malto

'Ni' always indicates female, while, total stop after a letter means male. 'Mal' means 'a male', Malpaharia or hill-man. 'Malin' means 'a female', Malpaharia or hill-woman.

'Tuth' indicates 'container', or 'something to hold up'.
'Maler' means 'man'.
'Maleruth' means 'the hand of a man'.
The above examples are demonstrative of the general trend of the use of sound-symbols amongst the tribal peoples of the area, under our consideration. Since the language is a social phenomenon, the symbol is universally used. The question may be raised as to who was actually the originator of these symbolic forms. Though it is very difficult to answer, still an enquiry would reveal that the composers of the oral literature of the tribal peoples are the sources of such symbols. Amongst the Mundari group, the chanters of Karmabinti and the Dravidian group, the Dharmesh 'Gao' may be presumed to be the originator of such symbols. In colloquial languages, the sound 'chhu' 'chhu' means 'be off' or 'go outside'. In Acharangasutta we find the use of the sound-symbolism of the Mundari group to indicate the abusive behaviour of the tribals against lord Mahavira. The sound, 'Sha' indicates utterance of very sacred word in the ear of the disciple or subordinate or junior. The sound 'Hey' indicates an address to the superbeing. The sound 'chu' is both a very ugly word or very secret word, according to the activity associated with the word. As for example, 'Chu Chu me' is used in the relation of wife and husband, as well as inviting a person to a sinful physical relation beyond social laws. But in both cases, it is secretly pronounced.

From the above, it is always found that sound - symbols have great relevance in the daily colloquial transactions among the tribal people, whether they are Mundaries, Dravidians or any other group. The tendency is always towards shortening of the sound to signify bigger things. The sound symbols prevailing in all languages direct to a common conclusion, that the linguistic characteristics of all races of mankind are almost all equal. It ultimately supports the view of the sociologists like Franz Boas and Edward Sapir. 'Whatever the evolutionary co-relation may be between race and language, linguist hold all races and the languages of the speakers to be equal and there is no reason to believe that one race is by nature so much more intelligent, endeavoured with great will power or
emotionally more stable than other that the difference would materially influence its culture'. From the remarks of the sociologists, it would transpire that it is not an impossibility for a Roman-patrician to speak with Macedonian swine-herd and for a Chinese, with the hill-hunting savage of Assam.

The sound symbolism is held scientifically to be the production by the human articular apparatus, characterised by an acoustic signal and of its processing by the human auditory and cognitive systems. There are three areas in the acoustics properties of man. These are the (i) specification of acoustics properties for distinct a feature, (ii) the determination of auditory and phonological bases for categorical perception, (iii) the characterisation of segmentation and co-articulation in speech-production. Amongst the tribes under study, the three areas of sound articulation in language are almost the same and it is therefore not unnatural that we should draw the same conclusion as the great sociologists, Franz Bias and his student Edward Sapir.

Contact with non-tribal has inducted bi-lingualism in tribal dialect, which has immense significance from linguistic point of view. The bi-lingualism has introduced two types of change. Firstly, it has enabled a tribal to speak in the language of their non-tribal neighbours, whether that is Hindi or Bengali. Secondly, it has brought out certain transformation in the inner-core of linguistic formation. Under the impact of bi-lingualism, non-tribal words have penetrated into the language of the tribals, thereby, changing the very structure of a sentence of tribal language. Some instances may be cited as illustrations from the Santali language. In Bengali, the sentence, "Das taka baro anna postmasterbabu ke dis" is expressed in Santali language as, "gala taka baro anna postmaster babu do amoum". Here the three words, 'taka' 'anna' and 'babu' are from the non-tribal language of the neighbours and the word 'Postmaster' is an English
word. These words have been used in an integrated structure of tribal language, where only three words are from Mundari stock, namely, 'Gale', 'baro' and 'amoum'. In a sentence of seven words, the ratio is tribal words three in number, whereas non-tribal words four in number. Of course, the sentence itself indicates a broader sphere of socio-economic activities. It indicates that a tribal unit which was originally self-sufficient and where institutions like postal communications were unknown have been exposed in a changing situation to the trends of the mainstream of Indian life. The money-economy in the form of exchange of taka (Rupees) and an advantage of modern communication system have become marked features of the changed pattern of a tribal society.

Similar examples may be cited from sentences, which have emotional expression also. The Santal youth sometimes proposes his ladylove to go to the jungle for meeting together. The expression is like thus - "Amdo birare chalao kate bidmia". Here, the word 'birare' comes from the Bengali word 'biral', which in colloquial language indicates a lonely place. The possible argument that the word 'birar' springs from 'bir' or jungle is erroneous. Because, in that case, the word would have been formed as 'bire' not 'birare'. The next word is 'b~ia'. According to the terminological implications, the word 'Bedmia' means to examine. But, here the word signifies a potency or strength or force, signifying thereby, strongly examined, that is scanning the body of the ladylove. 'Biddom' comes from the Bengali word, 'bedam', which has the same meaning of 'bedam prahar', 'strong beating' or 'forceful beating'. The actual meaning of the bedam' is, application of strength'. The whole significance of these words, in this sentence is a strong expression of a suppressed feeling of a youth, to be united with a girl, who often eludes. This is possible because of the inner-depth of the strong feeling with a companion or life-partner. The bi-lingualism has in this way added to the flavour of expression of a tribal language, where word-formations were rather poor.
The tribals under our study have undergone rapid changes in the sphere of creative art. The changes are highly impressive in the context of modern ideas and concepts of new life-style of mankind. Though the tribals are materially backward, it is needless to point out that they had come in contact with the life-styles of the developed peoples. This contact has generated new impulses in the thought world of the tribals, the reflections of which are evident in music, dance and also in drama. Instances of the contents of modern tribal songs or Serengs would reveal that these had grown more materialistic and devoid of the spiritual elements of the past. In the root culture, the themes of the tribal songs contained both mundane and spiritual elements and there was a very rational balance between spirituality and materialism. But now, the weight on the side of materialism is heavier and sometimes has become more prosaic in presentation. Analysis of the themes of certain modern songs would certainly testify to the modern trend.

Dong sereng

Ābu desham do Bhārat desham
Dilli naqarā haren rājā tābun
Bengalpur desh tābun rājdhāni calcata
Bardhaman jilla tābun janam disham

Translation:
India is our country
Our king lives in Delhi,
Bengal is ours,
Calcutta is its capital
My birthplace is at Burdwan
This Sereng belongs to the "Dong" series, but quite different in content from the Dong Serengs of root culture. Here the singer draws allusions to modern administrative set-up of the country and refers to places associated with the administrative affairs of the state. The contents of the music or songs are not so revealing from the point of view of psychic ethos.

**Dong Sereng**: 

Ul buto khanem arkiding diku kora  
Sāmāni yug dolānq dubya kida  
Hater ghari jābe, Packeter kalam jābe  
Chokher chashmā jābe,  
Jiban chālyā rehayen dahmiki

Translation:

A youth from outside  
Caught hold of me  
Beneath the Mango tree  
Our society is really lost.  
The youth tells –  
May my wrist-watch be lost,  
May the pen in my pocket be snatched away  
May the spectacle on my eye be broken.  
Even may my life be spoilt  
Notwithstanding all losses,  
I shall not part with you.

In the root culture, similar serengs, obviously love serengs had different allusions. The lover in the root culture addressed the ladylove...
a very secluded place by the side of a pond or a forest, in order to capture
her and drag her into the forest where they could exchange ideas and
mind. Red flower was used to be offered as a symbol of offering of love
from a youth, who avowed to be a fighter for better life and if necessary
vouchsafe the life-blood for maintaining the sacred flavour of the love of the
heart. In the modern song, such ethos, very cardinal from spiritual point of
view, is absent. Here the lover is ready to vouchsafe his spectacle, watch,
pen etc. for winning the hand of his beloved. The psychic depth here is very
shallow and appears to be rather prosaic if judged from the eternal urge of
mankind for love.

Sohrae Sereng\(^5\) :

Dādā dagay dhatiyan dādā dagay darhiyan
Dādā dagay mandariyakan
Ing hago toādari kānsā kartal kiriyangme
Dādā sange ing hang chālāā
Dādā kānāi madario ing kanoi nāchonio
Baba kānāi janam karigal

Translation :

My elder-brother has worn the Dhoti
He has tied the head-dress on his head.
Brother has become the drummer
Oh mother, mother !
Let me have the cymbal
I shall accompany my brother
He would be the drummer
I would be the dancer
Mind that, our father is our progenitor.
The above Sohrae Sereng has a subject-matter which is quite unrelated with the objective of Sohrae – the cattle festival. Here simply is reflected an ambition of a younger one to be associated in the musical affair with his elder ones. The presentation of the theme is monotonous and lack the ethos of an aspirant mind for a new life.

In the root-culture, we find the use of various types of symbols and allusions. Attempt for such symbolic usages are vividly expressed in the following song in different manner.

**Dong Sereng**

Güng nai dāḥ daina sarang nai dāḥ Atu chālā dāḥ dai nā bangruora
Ābu ahormo ulbili sādājabā, dimbubāhā durio Atu chālā dāḥ dai nā bangruora
Lui abun bhuro gābun dipil lābun tārā mābun Chamke cheke cheke dāḥ
Jibi hirdan dāḥ chābun rahrā Atu chala dāḥ dai na bangruora
Khālā re ākār bāhā dāḥ dai Phunu ure ākār bāhā dāḥ dai
Gutui yalang jhanka jhokur dāḥ dai Bāhāyāfāng ladoe ladoh

**Translation:**

Oh sister, my sister ! Care –
The water of the river is flowing
The water of streamlet is gliding
The water will never turn back
Our body is like a ripe mango,
The body takes the hue of a white Jaba flower
The body stands like the flowered Dimbu stalks
The water is flowing in the river
The water is gliding in the streamlet.
It will never come back.
We shall take a small amount of water in the pitcher
We shall have it shaken and throw
Again shall we fill the pitcher with water
And take it on our head
To pass in dancing rhythm
We shall not murmur in grief
The water is flowing in river, gliding in stream
It will never come back.
Oh sister, My sister!
There is Akar flower in big pot,
There is Akar flower in small pot
We shall wear those flowers on our hair
And dance in costumes of flowers.

Here, allusions to the water, the river and the creeks indicate the passing time, which once passed, never returns in the life of a man. Life has a varied shape, varied colour and is ornamented in buds like the stick of Dimbu flower. It is better to move in a limit and attempt small things, so that these can be completed happily, bringing smile on the lips of performers. Life has charms both in smaller activities and in bigger activities. These charms can be interwoven and be worn like necklaces in order to add charms to the life. This song, of course, treads the traditional path, but the meaning of the symbols are far-fetched.

In dance, the style has deviated immensely from the original one.
As we have pointed out above, amongst the Mundari people at least four styles of dance with separate rhythm are noticeable: Lagre, Tumdun, Galwari, Chandak. Unfortunately all these styles are lost now. The vacuum has been filled up with certain elements of folk-dance, particularly from the arena of Jhumur. Where the tribals have tried to maintain their originality, the style becomes so monotonous that a viewer gets tired within a few minutes. The enchantment of the tribal dance may be enhanced if the original style is synthesised with those of various other folk-dances.

The costume and dress have undergone radical changes, because, in modern days a tribal dancer will never dispense with costly garments, particularly the females always prefer to use uniform dancing costumes, while performing in groups. The hair-dressing assume a very novel-style, completely unknown to the people of root culture. The changes in exterior appearances, though those add charms to the performance, cannot be designated as purely tribal, in so far as these were alien to the people of by-gone days.

The instruments like Tamak, Flute, Violin etc. are used in dance and musical performances. But, new instruments of modern cultural activities are also added to the company. Even synthesizer is used while arranging tribal performances in sophisticated places. The bamboo flute has lost its importance and modern flute has taken its place.

The traditional folk-designs of the tribals composing elements of totem and other sacred objects of tribal life have been replaced by certain modern designs on the walls of the tribal's hut. Replica of various types of animals, sometimes in isolation, sometimes in procession are depicted in the group. Animals unknown to the tribals have also been included, as for example, Giraffe, Zebra etc. The impact of the film 'Jurassic Park' is evident when we find replica of Dinosaur on the walls of a tribal hut.

Ancient floral designs have been replaced by the new designs of art that are normally found on the border of printed Sarees and Gownes of the females of sophisticated area.
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