

Chapter-2

Ethnographic Profile of Gonds

Ethnographic Profile

Anthropologically, a tribe is a social group where members live in a common territory and possess a common dialect, uniform, social organization and maintained cultural homogeneity and a common ancestor. But as per these characteristics, it would be very difficult to locate many tribal groups in India who possess all these characteristics.

Thus, on the basis of characteristics found among the tribes of India, their racial elements have been explained by different anthropologists. H. H. Risley¹ recognized their principal racial types in India. They are: (i) Dravidian (ii) Indo-Aryan (iii) Mongolian.

He further classified on the basis of anthropometric data into the following seven groups:

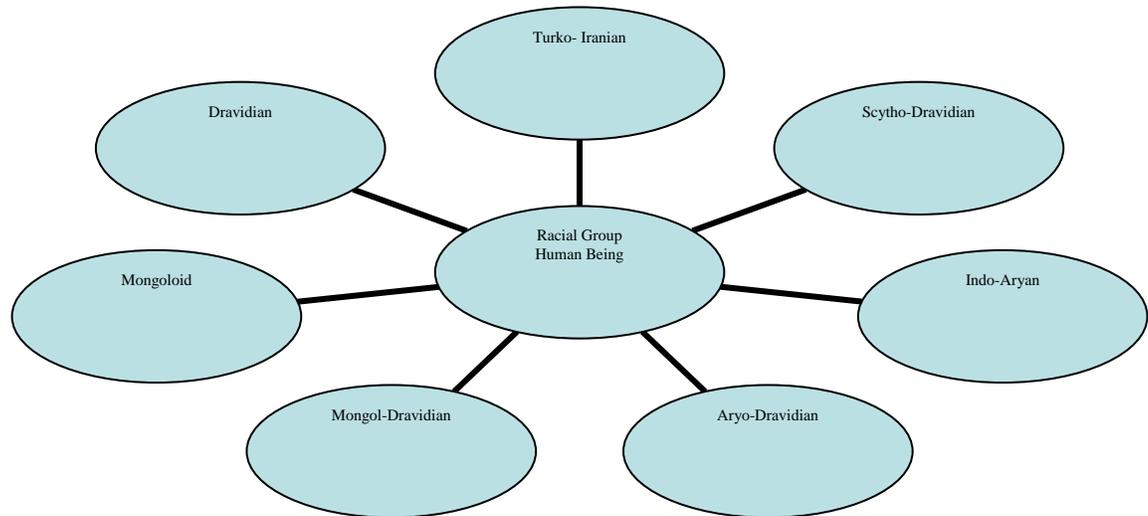
- a) Turks-Iranian.
- b) Indo-Aryan.
- c) Scytho-Dravidian.
- d) Aryo-Dravidian.
- e) Mongol-Dravidian
- f) Mongoloid
- g) Dravidian

If we see the Chhattisgarh tribal groups, particularly in Bastar region, they come under the Dravidian racial group.

Ethnography is an in-depth description of a culture or group of people sharing a culture. It is the study of people in a conduct, a detailed study of a group of people while being immersed in the culture of that group. Ethnography ('ethno', people or folk and 'graphy', to describe something)² is sometimes referred to as participant observation or field research that involves the study of people or an organization through face-to-face

interaction in a real life of social setting. There is no deductive hypothesis to follow or any statistical formula. Over time, this interaction yields a rich and detailed account of a culture, history, and characteristics of a social phenomenon. Ethnography expands awareness of global culture and reduces ethnocentric views and cultural idiosyncrasies.

The following diagram shows the division of various racial groups:



The Qualitative researchers are more interested in the detail of knowledge than breadth of knowledge. However I wish to attempt to focus on the ethnographical profile of groups of tribal people that is Gond of Chhattisgarh, where the majority of the tribes are an aborigine of this region.

Bastar region is the melting pot of cultural behaviour for a long period. The original inhabitants of the region are tribal like, the *muria*, the *abhuj maria*, the *bison-horn maria*, the *halba*, the *bhatra*, the *dhorla*, and the *dhurva* and so on. One can divide these tribal groups in their specific regions. The *abhuj maria* are settled in the Northwestern part, the *bison horn maria* are in South-central part, that is in Dantewada region, *muria* are in the North and North West, *dhorla* are in Southern part and in Bijapur

area, *dhurva* are in Southeastern part in Sukma region, *bhatra* are in Jagdalpur region and *halba* are in the North and South Bastar. Apart from them, there is a sizeable population of an immigrant who are mostly business-based community from Gujarat, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Orissa. These immigrants re-interpret several aspects of their traditional culture and adjust in the new environment. The cultural pluralism has been noticed among the immigrant subjects. When two or more cultural system are long continued, conduct having a mutual accommodation which ultimately allows each to sustain its own distinct way of life is evident from the cultural behaviour of the immigrant population of the region.

If we peep into the origin of Chhatisgarh tribe, the anthropological and historical studies have proved that today's Chhattisgarhi tribes' ancestors were the *Rg.Vedic* indigenous tribes. The Harivansa Purana states that *dasa*, *nisada* and *bhil* are a continual hereditary chain from *Rg.Veda* to the present day. *Rg.Veda*³ is the first ever literary text to depict these tribal, their historical positions, their principal points of differences, their organizations and mode of life, and their wealth and civilization.

S. W. Grigson⁴ mentions that the gond, wherever he speak his own language, from central India to the eastern ghats and Hyderabad, call himself *koi* or *koitor*. Only in Madras and Hyderabad they are called as *koyas*. All the *koitor* of Bastar region have thus been officially classified as Gond and they are divided into many sub tribes. But, if we examine the nomenclature of *koitor*, the tribal of Bastar region, even they do not know the term "Gond". It is a literary term for the intellectual and academician.

Abhuj Maria or Hill Maria:

The *abhuj maria* are living in the unknown hills (abhuj= 'unknown' and marh='hill')⁵ of Bastar region. These people are one of the sub-tribe of Gond. The tribal people

of this region are classified based on their generic name Gond and they represent certain primitive stages and levels of development of our human society. They are mostly found in Orcha block of Narayanpur tahasil in Bastar district and in some part of Dantewada district.

They live in isolation, keeping them away from the outer world and lead a diverse life. Their traditional culture, moral living values and social security has not yet been disturbed. They are one of the rare tribal groups of India living in Chhattisgarh in isolation. They are the most powerful of all the wild tribes in India. It is clear that the Hill *maria* was different from the *muria*, because of their habitats and agricultural methods. They are more primitive as compared to other tribes of India.

Settlement Pattern:

The Hill *maria* lives apart in a cluster of huts near the entrance to the village. These huts are also called *ghotuls*, the same name that the *muria* uses for their youth dormitories. The difference is that these *ghotuls* are not meant for young girls at all. This is the residence house. In the villages, the houses are constructed in two parallel rows with a broad space. In some villages, one can find that they use their own houses as dormitories. Each village has 15 to 20 houses.

Language:

Gondi, is the tribal language of Gond. There are a few differences among the sub-tribes of Gond. Gondi has no indigenous literature in written form. However, researchers have divided the dialect of hill *maria* and *bison horn maria* based on their speech.

Family Structure:

Family is the smallest unit of the hill *maria* society. The family occupies a single domicile. The nature of the family is conjugal for it consists of husband, wife and their

children; the eldest male in a household occupies final authority in all spheres of socio-economic life. Their clans (*kata*) are an unilinear descent group. All the members of the clan believe that they descended from a common ancestor. In each hill *maria* village, there is a dominant clan such as called *usendi*. A group of different clans are called *bhaiband or dadabhai* (brother clan). The marital alliances in those having *bhaiband* relationship are prohibited, though they practice clan exogamy. The hill *maria* gets introduced to the various stages of life cycle through rites-de-passage.

Marriage Customs:

They are permitted to settle marriage only with a member of wife's clan called *akomama*. Therefore, all the clans have some *bhaiband* clan and some *akomama* clan. They prefer cross cousin marriage due to several causes like: (i) easy adjustment, (ii) easy availability of bride, and (iii) less payment towards bride price. Bride prices are paid both in cash and kind. Monogamy is their rule, but polygamy is also permitted and practiced by them. Both levirate and sororate type of marriage are prevalent in their society.

The marriage by negotiation (*pendul*) is the rule. The marriage rituals are performed by their elders. The other types of marriage are *lamre* (marriage by service), *vitte* (marriage by elopement), *aeohundi* (junior levirate), *koheberdan* (marriage by exchanges), *koyeyari* (sororate) and widow re-marriage are also allowed. The date of marriage is fixed on the local market day. There is no divorce legally.

Kinship:

Hill *maria* society is patrilineal and patriarchal in nature. The classificatory system of the kinship is seen among the hill *maria*. They have different terminology to different lineal relatives. They use the following terminologies:

(Table-1) Terminology of Relatives

English Name	Local (Gondi)
Father	Tappe
Mother	Talug, awa
Son	Maghi
Daughter	Miari
Elder brother	Dada
Elder sister	Akka
Younger brother	Tamoo
Younger sister	Hella
Father's father	Tado
Father's mother	Bapi
Mother's father	Ako
Mother's mother	Kako
Husband	Kotur
Wife	Ara
Father's brother	Kuchi
Mother's brother	Mama

Kinship organization plays an important role in the economic structure of the village. Kin groups, both from mother and father sides, co-operate each other for various activities.

Division of Power:

The village head man is the oldest member in the hill *maria's* village, who is called *pargana manjhi*. The headman is responsible for decision making in domestic and villager affairs. Their traditional council is prescribed by *pargana manjhi*. The village headmen used to attend the annual celebration of *dussehra* when essentially the worship of the goddess *danteswari* and *mauli* are practiced as patron deities of the Bastar region.

There are some interferences of the village *panchayat* in the matter of village administration.

Occupation:

The hill *maria* was mainly *peda* (slash and burn) cultivators. They also practiced incipient form of settled cultivation. The *kosra* and *kolha* (a kind of millet) are the main cereals in the *peda* land. But in most of the regions of India plough cultivation was forced on the tribes by the government which found shifting cultivation wasteful and damaging to the forest. Rice is one of the chief cereals in their cultivation. The lands are owned by the individual family but the ownership pattern is typically indigenous. Some lands are sometimes given to a lineage member or to a *dadabhai* who actually needs.

There is no elaborate pattern of economic exchange among the families within a village. There are some items they need such as beads, ornaments, cloths, iron tools, salt, cooking oils, mirror, etc., and to obtain these products they take economic relationship with markets, traders, fairs and occupational specialists. They also make bamboo basket, rope, broom etc., and sell in the market. They collect the forest products for their own consumption and sell or exchange with other items in market.

Facilities and Amenities:

The hill *maria* is very primitive when compared to other Gond tribes. They live in isolated places and maintain their traditional way of life and practice their tribal rituals. In the postmodern era their socio-cultural life is very poor. There is a scarcity of drinking water. Their place has poor road communication system. It is devoid of electricity and primary health center and they are still using the ethno-medicine, which is provided by the village *gunia* or *baid*.

The schools in the village are run by a single teacher. The teachers in these schools are habitual absentee due to the Maoist movement. The tribal area of abhuj marh is influenced by the *maoist*. Due to this problem, the governmental initiatives are not working-out properly and NGOs are working in consonance with the local people.

Food Habits:

Both men and women dine at the same time; however children are served earlier. *mandru pej*, gruel prepared from millet (*ragi*)/ boiled rice, serves the morning breakfast, which is usually at 7.00 to 9.00 AM. Drinking sago-palm juice (*salpi*) mitigates the whole day's starvation. The meal is prepared with boiled rice and leafy vegetables. Beef is taken sometimes during the festivals. Boiled system of preparing food, with the *haldi* powder as only process of cooking. They are fond of fish, crabs and snails. Dry fish is relished with utmost satisfaction.

They make the indigenous liquor and for that they depend upon the local varieties like sago-palm (*salpi*) and date palm (*tadi*). Local herbs and roots are added to the juice to increase its alcoholic content. Sometimes, *mahua* flower is collected and liquor is prepared to meet the requirement on special occasion. It is considered as food and at the same time it is a ritualistic food to satisfy local deities and spirits. Tobacco is used as narcotics and the *tendu* leaves are dried up and put with the *ganja/bhang*.

Use of Artifacts:

Hill *maria* use varieties of artifacts for their agriculture, hunting and food gathering. They make some of the artifacts and some artifacts are bought in the market. There are also blacksmiths (*kamar*) settled in the adjacent village, where a few

agricultural implement are made. These include plough, crowbar and sickle and axes etc.

The following is a list of some important materials:

(Table-2) List of Artifacts

List of Artifacts (English)	List of Artifacts (Local)
Plough	Nungul
Bow	Villu
Arrow	Sar (kani)
Arrow head	Muni
Crowbar	Pulu
Blow	Pharsi
Spade	Gudari
Bill hock	Gagra
Hoe	Gudari
Axe	Maqsu
Bamboo basket	Bhugli
Leaf umbrella	Chhatul
Leaf basket	Bhuga
Date palm leaf mate	Mashi
Pots	Mathi

Pot and Pans:

Earthen pots (handi and lota) are made to cook rice, *dal*, and storing liquor. They use black-and-red ware pottery, black slipped ware etc., for taking water from river.

Exchange pattern:

Barter system is still the traditional method of exchange among the hill *maria*. Money exchange is the basic trait of exchange. As a result, the outside traders still take the upper hand in exploiting the primitive section. The traders are residing at weekly market and they have extended their relationship with the hill *maria* society. In fact, several steps are now being taken by the government to ameliorate the economic

condition of these primitive sections through various schemes and projects such as MNREGS, Indira Awas Yojana, Sarva Sikhya Aviyan and so on. NGOs are also working for their developmental programme.

Bison Horn Maria

The *bison horn maria* is a sub tribe of Gond. Their culture and ways of living are almost similar to the hill *maria*. They have their separate identity because of their special type of dresses. The name *bison horn maria* is not popular in common usage and has been restricted to books and printed record. The people of Bastar region call these tribes as *damdami maria*.⁶

Settlement Pattern:

They are settled in Dantewada, Bijapur, Sukma and Konta tahasil of Dantewada district. They are still in the primitive stage of civilization and development is invading them steadily. They are living mainly in the forest area. The village consists of 8 to 30 houses and each house belongs to a family. One can find a village in a distance of one to two kilometers. They depend on rivers for water. Each house stands in its own garden, which is sometimes a substantial field. The little huts stand in the woods. Each village has a hut for the accommodation of traveler. They also use these huts as a dormitory. Most houses consist of three rooms. The houses are generally clean and pleasant. Outside the house, one can find cattle shed.

Family, Clan and Marriage:

The family consists of husband, wife and their children. The head of the family is the oldest man. They are divided into number of phratries and clans, resembling those of the *maria*, *halba* and other tribes. There are different clans like *marvi*, *kurmi*, *sodi*, *markami* and *kawasi*. They are divided into a number of exogamous, totemistic clan

(katta). The main function of the clan is to regulate marriage. Among the *dada-bhai* clan, marriage is prohibited. Their arrangement of marriage is possible only in *akomama* clan.

The marriage takes place at an early age before puberty. The *magni* (engagement) takes place in the girls' home. Monogamy is the rule for marriage. However, in rare circumstances polygamy is also allowed in their society. The marriage ceremony is called *pendul*. They have a custom of payment of bride price. Divorce is permitted for both the sexes but there should be proper reasons. There are many ways of marriage, like *choudula pendul*, *mutton pendul* etc. In outskirts of the village they kept their clan god and goddess and they worship regularly. The religious head is called *sirha* and *jhankar*.

Occupation:

Their primary occupation is cultivation and occasionally they do hunting and fishing. They also collect various types of roots, fruits, tubers, flowers, seeds; woods and so on from the jungles and some of these materials are sold in the weekly market. Now, industrialization has played a vital role to change the profession of this tribe. They do jobs at the iron factory at Bailadila, as skilled and unskilled laborer. They also practice a profession of dancing. They also visit abroad to perform their traditional dances in different cultural festivals.

Village Institution:

They have their own *jati panchayat* of social control. The *jati panchayat* solves the entire dispute among the tribes of a village. The head of the *jati panchayat* is called *pedda*, assisted by *para mukhiya*. The government appoints a *kotwar* in every five to six villages. They have an inter-village organization too. The head of the inter-village organization is called *pargana manjhi*. The main function he performs is to solve the

disputes between the villages. The government *panchayat* has a role to play in the governance.

Food Habits:

They are non-vegetarian and they take beef. They usually have their breakfast after returning from field in the morning. They collect the *sal* seed for oil. They eat fruits and vegetables. Rice and *dal* is the main dish in the lunch and dinner. Majority of the men and a few women drink sago palm wine (*tadi*), home made rice beer and other alcoholic drinks. Men smoke and chew tobacco. Women consume *ghudaku* (one type of liquid tobacco).

Physical Feature and Dress:

They are Dravidians with black skin, round nose, and black hair. They wear a small piece of cloth. The men wear *lungi* in the lower part. Women cover both the upper and lower part of the body with a *saree*. Now-a-days they wear shirt and pant, girls sometimes wear a *salwar*. Hence, they do not wear their traditional dresses except on the festival days these days.

Ornaments:

Most men content themselves with one or two small bead necklaces (*mungya*) round their necks, the beads being all of one shape. They are fond of necklaces of small, brightly and the girdled bead, which they are called *mirako-mungya*. They wear one or two armlets on one arm above the elbow or a pair of bracelet on one wrist of silver, brass or aluminum. They wear a plain waist-cord instead of the cowry-cord of the hills for carrying knives and tobacco boxes. Women wear armlets and wristlets. They wear iron

neck ring, which is called *tiya*. The nose is symmetrically adorned by two gold gilt rings and a small gold ornament like a leaf pointing set in the middle.

Weapon and Tools:

The *bison horn maria* uses a long and powerful stabbing spear for killing the big game, including tiger and panther. In case of hill *maria*, the distinctive types of weapons are made by the blacksmith living in their hills and are used for hunting. The chief agricultural implements of the *bison horn maria*, with which they hack up the surface and slopes and their occasional patches of permanent cultivation, are their *kargudar* (hoe). Arrow is the most important instrument for killing. The following are the varieties of arrows:

(Table-3) Name of Arrows

Arrow Name (English)	Arrow Name (Local)
Arrow head	Kar
Barb	Kue
Shaft	Kara
Shaft-nock	Pisel
Feathering	Kar-gering
Club-arrow	Mitom-kara
Head of club arrow	Mitom

Traditional Dance:

The *bison horn maria*'s dances are quite different from the other tribes of India. They dance forming a circle with men and woman standing alternatively. They wear ceremonial head dress, which are made of a pair of bison horn and collection of cowrie-shell, beads and spike. Strings of beads are lesion all round this head-dress which partly covers their faces. Women wear their brass tiaras and the brief wraps around their waists

and stand in between the men. Men of all ages, married and unmarried, youth, boys, young wives and girls join the dance. Before dance they take *landa* or *mahua* liquor. The head-dress is passed on to the son or brother after the death of a person. Except during the rain and the sowing season, any night is good for dance and no preparatory is required. These days, the practice of dance is decreasing day by day. Some people are practicing this dance and they make this dance their profession. They perform this dance in other part of India and abroad. The dance is known as *dhemsa*.

Animism:

They worship sun or *parod*, moon or *lenj* and stars or *ukka*. The rainbow is regarded as a bow of the rain god, *bhimul*. They worship the earth goddess *bhum* who is regarded as their mother goddess and who feeds and sustains her *Maria* children.

The Muria:

The name maria has been derived from the word '*mur*', the palas tree, or from '*mur*' a root. *Mur* may also mean permanent or aboriginal of this region.⁷ They are a subgroup of *Gond* tribe. They are mainly distributed in the plain forest area of Narayanpur, Kondagaon, Sukma, Antagarh of Bastar district and Avapalli, Usoor of Dantewada district. They speak the *Gondi* dialect and also some broken Hindi.

Settlement Pattern:

The *muria* are mainly settled in the plain forest area, where the agricultural land is available. The *urias* houses are scattered; each house is surrounded by a kitchen, garden, which is again bounded by fencing. The house consists of two or three rooms and a small courtyard. It is made up of timber and bamboo, plastered with mud and has a thatched roof. These days mud bricks and burnt bricks too are in use. The unmarried boys

(*chelik*), girls (*motiari*) spend most of their times in *ghotul* or youth dormitory. There is a free sex tradition in this *ghotul*; this dormitory is totally different from the *maria ghotul*.

Family Structure and Clan:

The clan and the family dominate and control the *urias*' social life. Clan, which is unilateral group, is constituted by agnates residing in the elementary family. These elementary families lived in a number of villages. The families are mainly patriarchal. Father is the head of the family. The family consists of husband, wife and their children. One can find 10 to 20 families in a village. According to Elwin,⁸ the *maria* tribe is divided into five phratries or "vans". The following are the different phratries:

1. Naga vans-serpent race
2. Kachhim vans-tortoise race
3. Bakra vans-goat race
4. Bagh vans-tiger race
5. Bodmink vans-fish race

All the clan members are termed as *dada-bhai* and no marital relationship is allowed among them. Each of the clan has its own god.

Marriage System:

They practice phratry and clan exogamy as a marriage rule. Monogamy and adult marriage are the rule, but polygamy is also allowed. Marriage by negotiation (*tulkochana*) is the most preferred and cross-cousin marriage is also preferred in most of the cases. The following are the types of marriage:

- a. *Tak dayana*- Marriage rituals are performed partly at the bride's house and partly at the bridegroom's house.

- b. *Awitana*- It is marriage by elopement, without approval of the concerned parents.
- c. *Haiwark wat*- It is marriage by an intrusion where the girl reaches the boy's house that she wants to marry and forces the marriage.
- d. *Tika tasana*- It is the marriage of a widow or a divorcee.
- e. *Yee dosana marmi*- Marriage of unmarried pregnant girls with the boys who caused the pregnancy. It is called *bhul biha*.
- f. *Ostasana marmi*- It is a traditional *Gond* marriage where after anointing the girl with turmeric, she is sent to the bridegroom's house, where the marriage ritual is performed.

Village Institution or Ghotul:

The *murias* have an institution which is unique among the other tribals of India. This is the institution of *ghotul*,⁹ a dormitory for their young people. Each and every *muria* village has a *ghotul*. It traces its origin from *Lingo-Pen*, a famous cult hero of the *Gond*. There are two leaders in the *ghotul*, one is on boys' side that is known as *sirdar*, and another is on girls' side known as *belsa*. They are responsible to organize and keep discipline in the *ghotul*. There are two types of *ghotul*, the first one is the classical type where boys and girls run more or less permanent relationship which lasts till marriage and the second one is a modern one, where there is no permanent relationship and the partner must constantly be changed. But, these days most of the villages have only one *ghotul* system that is the modern one. The *muria* believe that the *ghotul* is a sacred place; there they never do any sin.

The head of the village council is called *pargana-manjhi*. He has a social responsibility of the village people. He has an assistant known as *patel*. The village

panchayat has a messenger known as *kotwal*. He deals with the laws and customs of the society. He has the right to punish a guilty person, by excommunicating or imposing fine on the person.

Socio-religious Functions of Ghotul:

- a) The house acts as a community centre for the youth.
- b) It is a meeting place for the elders where they gather both in the morning and evening to discuss local affairs. It also serves the purpose of an informal leisure centre for the males.
- c) It functions as the centre for planning and co-ordination of each and every collective activities of the community.
- d) It acts as the court house of the village elders where feuds are settled and often justice administered informally.
- e) It also acts as a communication centre for all messengers that bring news from the Gond villages.
- f) Its most important function is to provide sleeping accommodation to the youths, bachelors and widowers.
- g) It is used as a storehouse of the communal properties and a place for keeping common accounts.
- h) It is a museum of their art and craft with all its carved structures on the pillars, paintings on the walls and the musical instruments stored.
- i) It is the starting point for the ritual occasions, in each and every religious ceremony organized by the community like taking the sacred fire to kindle the first bush wood for shifting cultivation.

j) It is also used as a rest house for the guests and visitors.

Educative Functions of Ghotul:

a) The community house acts as the educational institution for both the sexes. It acts directly in educating the boys and indirectly the girls about fulfillment of responsibilities required of them.

b) The junior members are trained by the seniors to direct their energy to adjust with the people in social, economic, religious and other aspects of life. Thus it is through the senior-junior relationship, the process of socialization takes place.

c) Each and every member of the community house has to fulfill the requirements and obligations of their age set, failing which they are subjected to punishments. These obligations make them disciplined and responsible persons of the society in future.

d) Further, by association with the senior members, the juniors also learn to become a part of the village economic and social system.

Thus, the community house trains the young generation to grow conscious of their community and its need before marriage and enables them to become responsible adults. These children though spend more time with their new age group mates than with the family; the two areas of responsibilities never clash and are recognized by all. Above all, in course of the dormitory life, they learn from elders about their traditional art and craft such as wood carving, painting, different types of traditional dance and song and preparation of musical instrument. They are also acquainted with their cultural heritage through folk tales, riddles, stories, myths etc. by hearing from the elders. It is no doubt that the dormitory house serves the purpose of perpetuating the cultural heritage from generation to generation and helps in the process of socialization.

Occupation:

Their economic life is based on the forest and land. They collect roots, fruits, flowers, honey, young bamboo stick, mushroom, etc., from the forest. Most of these are among their food chart. The rest is sold in the market or exchanged with salt, oil and so on.

Their main occupation is cultivation. They do both *parka* (slash and burn) cultivation and settled cultivation. They cultivate rice, *ragi*, wheat etc. Because of modernization the *muria* have come to the main land of the civilized society and they are getting higher education too. They join many NGOs, government jobs and factory. The researcher found a boy who is studying History at post-graduate level at Pandith Ravishankar Sukla University, Raipur and belongs to the *muria* tribe of the Avapalli village of Dantewada district.

Facilities, Amenities and Food Habits:

The *murias* are more modernized if compared to the other tribes of Chhattisgarh. Health is a major problem for them. There is a lack of primary health centre for each village. Seven to fifteen villages have a primary health center. If a person is serious, they have to go to the *sadar* hospital which is far away from the village. The malaria eradication centre is available in their village. Due to Sarva Siksha Abhiyan one can find schools in their village. However, due to *naxalite* fear, teachers hardly come to schools regularly. There is no proper road communication but because of industrialization the road and other facilities are under construction. There is less electricity facility in the village. There is a scarcity of drinking water as well.

Most of the *muria* are Hinduised due to the influences of Goddess *danteswari* worshipped in the hindu festival day such as *dassera* and *diwali*. Their food habits

depend on the availability of the vegetables. Generally, they prepare rice, *dal* and leafy vegetables. Drinking sago palm juice (*salpi*) is common among the *muria* society. They are generally non vegetarian. Sometimes *mahua* flower is collected and liquor is prepared to meet the requirement on special occasions. Liquor is considered as food and at the same time a ritualistic food for deities and spirits like the hill *maria*. They also use tobacco.

Use of Artifacts:

The *muria* use a variety of artifacts. They are mainly agriculturists and they use plough (nangal), bill hock (chhuri), hoe (kurar), axe (phasa), spear (gorka), arrow (kar). They use some mats and basket of bamboo, like bamboo basket (chhachan), leaf umbrella (chhatul), leaf basket (changri), date palm leaf mats (pati). The pots are used for cooking rice (handi), *dal* (patul) and storing or bringing water (matka).

Dress and Ornaments:

The *muria* of this region follow a specific dress pattern that can be differentiated on the basis of age and sex. The older man wears *lungi* and *gancha*. The new generation youth have adapted to the pants, shirts and *lungis* as outwear. The women wear *sarees* and blouse; the younger girls have taken *salwar* and *saree* as outwear. Girls often wear rows of combs in their hair, with their bunches of cowries and balls of red and green wool. Both *chelik* and *mortiari* love to put flowers in their hair or over their ears. They wear many necklaces of red and white beads. The following are the names of some necklaces:

(Table-4) Names of Necklace

Name of Necklace (English)	Name of Necklace (Local)
Small black beads	Gar-gatti
White beads	Modi mala
Red beads	Jat mungiya
Red and white beads	Jug-jugi
Neck band	Ban suta
Black necklace	Kari

The girls wear floppy brass pair slopping down over the heels and a thick heavy brass *tin-kor* above the anklet. Behind the head, they wind it over the small wooden block which is called *kunjar balla*. They also use the cowric belt on the hips. All the girls use a hand brass ring which is called *haat bala*.

Village God and Goddesses:

There are several totems and several gods and goddesses in village. They have their own superstitions and sorcery practices. Still they use the ethno-medicine to procure their diseases. There is no functional division of barbers, cobblers, weavers, washer men etc. Among their deities, the ancestors are very important. They are regarded as their family deities. They worship their clan gods known as *angapen*, *pat deo* etc. In addition to their own deities, they also worship *danteswari mata*, *mauli mata* etc. The *muria* priest and sacred specialists are known as *kazeer*, *gaita* and *gunia*. They believe in nature and they worship the sun god, moon god, and the rain god.

The Dhorla:

The *dhorlas* are a sub tribe of the Gond. They are distributed in Konta and Bijapur tahasil of Dantewada district, Koraput district of Orissa, and in some part of Khammam district of Andhra Pradesh. They speak the *dhorla* dialect. The *dhorla* settlements are

arranged in linear fashion. The houses are two or four slopped with a kitchen, sometimes a small garden and constructed with bamboo, wood and plastered with mud and thatched with a kind of date palm leaves.

Marriage Custom:

In their marriage system, monogamy is the rule but polygamy is also allowed. Marriage by negotiation is most the popular form of marriage and sometimes cross-cousin marriage is performed .They have a custom of payment of a bride price. Widow re-marriage, levirate, sorarate, marriage by elopement and exchange are also permitted. Marriage rituals take place at the bridegroom's house. A married woman wears a particular type of necklace in her finger as a symbol of the marriage. Divorce is permitted, but it is rare. They follow the Hindu way of marriage system.

Family Structure:

The family consists of husband, wife and their children. They are strictly an endogamous group and divided into some phratries (*gatta*). Each *gatta*, has several subdivisions (*intiparu*), which are equivalent to a clan. Each clan is associated with a clan god (*pen*). Marriage is not allowed among the same clan. Their family is a patrilineal. The property of a person is divided equally among his sons only. They have their own traditional council of social control headed by an elderly man.

Occupation:

They are primarily agriculturists. Cultivation is their main profession. Fishing, hunting and collecting forest goods are their secondary occupation. They also sell milk, and eggs. They also work as daily manual worker.

Food Habits:

Rice and *jawar* are their staple food. They are non-vegetarian. Pork is a delicious item for the whole family. They do not eat beef. Various types of pulses, vegetables, collected jungle products are also taken with the staple food. The *salpi* and *mahua* liquor and smoking pogo (tobacco) are their habits.

Dress and Ornaments:

The men wear loin-cloth known as *gos*; most of them wear turban (tall-gudda), and they do not cover the upper portion of their body. Women wear *saree* (gudda) and blouse or *raika*. They use blanket in winter. They use various types of ornaments. Women wear glass and silver bangles and silver anklet (*beri*). The married women wear *puste*, a type of necklace as a system of marriage. The girls and aged women wear *billa*, a necklace. Men wear bangle, armlet and silver chain around the waist. The women tattoo their faces and arms with dots and lines.

Death Ceremony:

They have faith in the existence of spirits of natural objects such as hills, jungle and water and so on and also spirit of ghosts. They also worship the souls of their dead ancestor. In case of the death occurs the *gunia* or magician ascertains the cause of death. They believe that death occurs due to some evil caused by somebody or some evil spirit. They cremate their dead except a child or death due to small pox whom they bury. They have their own cremation ground in their village. They have no custom to erect *menhir* or any memorial stone like the *muria*. The pollution period or *sudhi* continue till the performance of *dinam* or calling back of the dead man soul to the home. The performance of *sudhi* has no fixed time. It may be observed within a week or even after a few weeks.

It depends on the economic condition of the family. The family has to invite the villagers, relatives and specially those who attend funeral ceremony. The pollution period gets over when the family takes a ceremonial bath. After taking the ceremonial bath, they can work in the field or go to any sacred place or temple.

Halba:

The *halbas* are also sub-tribe of the Gond. The *halbas* are spread over Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Orissa. There are three types of *halbas* in Chhattisgarh viz. Chhattisgaria, Marathia, Bastaria and Raipuria. They are probably known as *halba*, because they use “*hal*,” that is plough. It means that they are primarily agriculturists. They speak the *halbi* and some broken Hindi and Oriya. They are settled throughout the Chhattisgarh area.

Food Habits:

Rice is their staple food. They also take *pej* (gruel) prepared from their *marua* (*mandia*). They are very fond of drinks such as *lenda*, *mahua*, *salpi* etc. They are non vegetarian but never touch beef.

Family, Clan and Marriage:

The family consists of husband, wife and their children. They claim superior status over the other tribes of Chhattisgarh. The head of the family is father. They are divided into numbers of vans or clans such as *bhartiya*, *nag*, *kachim* etc. They practise monogamy; polygamy is also permitted in their marriage system. Cross- cousin marriage is preferential the most. Child marriage is not permitted. Girls marry around 18 years, and boys around 25 years. Marriage by negotiation is common, but marriage by elopement (*pisamundi*) and marriage by service (*garjuin*) occur frequently. Bangles are the main

marriage symbol to them. Divorce is permissible among them due to barrenness, maladjustment, illegal relation with others. Mainly they follow the Hindu tradition. They are patrilocal and prefer to live in extended families, but nowadays, the numbers of nuclear families are increasing.

Dress and Ornaments:

Men wear dhoti, and shirt, while the women wear saree covering shoulders and up to the knees. The women are very much fond of wearing ornaments and wear necklace, armlets, bracelets, nose ornaments, ear top etc. Those who cannot afford gold or silver, then at least wear a bead. Girls must be tattooed before their marriage. They make dots on the left nostril, centre of the chin and three dots in a line on the right shoulder.

Village Institution:

The head of the village is called *siyana* (old man). The *naik* is the leader of the four-five villages. They deal with their cases related to their customary laws, disputes on lands, family problem, etc. In the case of inter community's disputes they appeal to the village *panchayat*. The village *panchayat* also looks after the developmental activities.

Death Ceremony:

They bury the dead body. They do not follow the erection of memorial stone for their ancestors like the primitive tribal. The dead body is carried on *tandi* (bier) to the burial ground (*marghat*). The dead body is kept with its head towards North. After burial the party takes a bath. Pollution period is observed for three days by the family members. On the third day, they observe *teejnahani* or a puritficatory and offer a feast to their relatives. On the tenth day, *nahani* ritual is observed when all the clan members get purified. A feast to the community members is offered.

Bhatra:

The *Bhatra* are a sub-tribe of the Gond. One can find *bhatra* settlements in the eastern part of the Jagdalpur tahasil and in the Kondagaon tahasil of Bastar district. They are also settled in the Navrangpur and Koraput districts of Orissa. They speak *bhatri* dialect. On the basis of the economic criteria, they are divided into three groups: (i) *bad-bhatra* (ii) *majli-bhatra* (iii) *san-bbhatra*. These groups are endogamous. Each of these groups has a number of exogamous, totemistic clans like *kukar* (dog), *bag* (tiger), *kukra* (cock), *nag* (serpent), *bakra* (goat) and so on.

Food Habits:

They are fond of *pej* (rice gruel) and *mahua* liquor. They prepare rice, *dal* and cury. They prepare their food with mustard oil. They are mostly vegetarian and do not eat beef.

Family, Marriage and Kinship:

The nature of the family is nuclear and of extended type. The family consists of husband, wife and their children. The person of same lineage is known as *kinder bhai*. The affinal kins are known as *saga kutum* and the *bhatra* people are known as *saga lok*. They are monogamous but polygamy is also permitted. The marriage proposal comes from a boy's house to a girl's house. The boy's father, along with a *mahalakari* (negotiators), visits a girl's house and approaches for the marriage. Divorce is allowed. Remarriage in case of a man is permitted. A woman cannot marry twice. In case of a widow, her younger brother-in-law inherits her as wife without going through any marriage ritual. The marriage ceremony is performed at the brides house is known as *chalbiya* and if it is performed at the bridegroom's house it is known as *kaniabiya*.

Religiously, the *bhatras* are divided into two groups such as *jagaloka* and *bhogaloka*. The *jagaloka bhatra* practise their traditional customs where the *bhogaloka*, converted into the *alekh dharma*, the formless supreme authority called *alekh mahaprabhu*.

The influence of modernization has changed the present day *bhatra's* life. Now, contact with the material world and to meet their necessities, they are involved in various professions. Among the *bhatras*, we can see people getting higher education and holding jobs in NGOs and governmental organizations.

The Dhurwa/Paraja:

There are two names in Chhattisgarh, *dhurwa* and *paraja*. They have a separate identity because the *paraja* eat beef and the *dhruwa* do not. The *dhruwa* are mainly the headmen of the village and also are found in some places as landlord. They live in Bastar block and the Sukma block. One can find them in some areas of the Khammam district of Andhra Pradesh as well. They can speak Hindi.

Settlement:

They have settled in near by towns and in the forest. Their hut is rectangular in shape with two sloped roof. The principal dwelling house is consists of two inner rooms and an enclosed veranda. One can find 25 to 40 families in a village. Their construction of houses is influenced by the town people.

Family, Clan and Marriage System:

They have both joint and nuclear families. They are divided into a number of exogamous and totemistic *vansa* or clan like *bagh* (tiger), *nag* (snake), *dokda* (goat), etc. The property of a person is inherited by his son and not by his daughter. The marriage by negotiation (Mangi) is preferred. They also perform other types of marriage like elopement, junior levirate; sororate etc. Divorce is very frequent amongst them.

Dress and Ornament:

The men wear a loin cloth round the waist and remain bare for the upper part. In winter, they cover their upper portion of the body with a wrapper known as *barki*. The women wear white cotton cloth (*ganda*) and *dhoti*, which covers both the lower and upper portion of the body. Tattooing is done on the back portion of legs, upper portion of arms, almost bordering the breast, the chin, and the fingers. Young men and women wear three or four rows of multi-colored bead necklace with a glittering yellow metallic piece, which is available in the market. Finger rings or *vat* are very common among them. Women wear anklets (*pendil*) of brass, silver, multi-colored *churi* (bangle), amulets, etc.

Occupation:

Basketry is their traditional occupation. Furthermore, they cultivate. Many of them work as agricultural labourers. They also collect honeys, resin, seeds, etc from the jungle and sell them in market.

Social Institution:

The *dhruba* have own traditional council of social control headed by a *patel* and assisted by a *kotwal*. The post of *patel* is hereditary. They also have connection with the statutory village *panchayat*. Now-a-days, the village *panchayat* takes all the responsibilities of the village.

Death Ceremony:

They believe in rebirth. When a person dies, the head of the family calls his relatives. The dead body is bathed in hot water and placed on *tulsi* water and brought to the burial ground known as *murda gatta*. After reaching there, they dig the grave and then they move with dead body for three or seven times around the grave. Then it is

placed on the grave keeping the head of the dead person towards east. Then the eldest son throws earth on it for three times. After that, the relatives fill the grave with earth.

Some personal belongings of the dead are placed in the grave. Then they return to the dead person house and take bath. The family of the dead person offers a feast in the village. Before taking the feast, some liquor is dropped on the ground, as an offering to the departed soul, known as *duma*. Their religious head is *pujhari* or *pelak*.

The Agaria:

The *agarias* are a small ethnic group of Chhattisgarh. They are concentrated in the Sarguja, Shahdol, Bilaspur, Durg and Raigarh districts and some parts of Kanker district of Chhattisgarh. They have adopted the profession of iron smelting.

Their traditional and main occupation is iron smelting. They also make a few agricultural implements. They get their ore from the Maikal range, selecting stones of dark-reddish colour. They mix 16:15 ore and charcoal in the furnace, the blast being produced by a pair of bellows worked by the feet and conveyed to the furnace through bamboo tubes. It is kept up steadily for four hours. The clay coating of the kilns is then broken down; and the ball of the molten slag and charcoal is taken out and hammered into iron. In this way, they make plough, shares, mattocks, axes, sickle etc. Now their profession is only iron smelting.

Demographic Profile:

In India, the tribal communities belong to different ethno-lingual groups and possess diverse faiths. Living at disparate level of socio-economic development, they spread along the entire spectrum of social evaluation in India ranging from the Paleolithic hunter and gathering of forest produce to industrial workers.

The population of Chhattisgarh is notable for the high proportion of scheduled tribes and specific sects primarily constituting scheduled castes of the total population. The tribal constitute at least 32.05 percentages, which is significantly high. In the last few decades, the demographic profile of tribal-dominated areas has undergone a change. This is a cause for concern, as it represents the large scale intrusion of non-tribal in tribal areas. The 12 percentages of India's forest is in Chhattisgarh and 44 percentages of the state land in under forest.

*** (Table-5) District Wise Scheduled Tribe Population Ratio, Chhattisgarh (2001)**

District	Total Population	Total %	Rural %	Urban %
Dantewada	719,487	78.52	82.41	18.58
Bastar	1,306,673	66.31	71.60	18.44
Kanker	650,934	56.08	57.76	22.94
Jaspur	743,160	63.24	64.50	37.11
Sarguja	1,972,094	54.60	57.42	16.78
Koriya	586,327	44.35	57.17	14.17
Korba	1,011,823	35.38	39.23	13.85
Raigarh	1,265,529	35.38	39.09	11.36
Mahasamund	860,257	27.03	29.45	08.09
Rajnandgaon	1,283,224	26.63	31.01	06.75
Dhamtari	706,591	26.25	28.80	09.56
Kawardha	584,552	20.86	22.08	06.23
Bilaspur	1,998,355	19.87	24.22	06.37
Durg	2,810,437	12.41	16.38	05.97
Janjgir	1,317,431	11.62	12.48	04.68
Raipur	3,016,930	12.11	15.59	04.14
Grand Total Population	20,833,803	10,474,218	10,359,585	100%

(Table-6) Gond Population Ratio in Bastar Region, Chhattisgarh (2001)*

District	Total Population	Male	Female
Dantewada	523,765	256,916	266,849
Bastar	637,769	315,391	322,378
Kanker	320,382	158,740	161,642
Grand Total	1841916	1462094	750869

(Table-7) District Wise Gond Population Ratio, Chhattisgarh (2001)*

District	Total Population	Male	Female
Dantewada	523,765	256,916	266,849
Bastar	637,769	315,391	322,378
Kanker	320,382	158,740	161,642
Koriya	163,987	83,159	80,828
Sarguja	395,752	199,199	196,553
Jaspur	59,353	29,524	29,829
Raigarh	78,149	38,660	39,489
Korba	157,122	79,161	77,961
Janjgir	65,809	32,396	33,413
Bilaspur	260,863	129,346	131,517
Kawardha	89,616	44,198	45,318
Raipur	271,906	106,770	137,136
Rajnandgaon	217,353	106,090	111,263
Durg	193,700	95,916	97,784
Mahasamund	107,709	52,790	54,919
Dhamtari	152,786	75,529	75,257
Grand Total	3,696,021	1,831,885	1,864,136

(Table-8) Distribution of Religion by Sex with % age of Total Population, Chhattisgarh. (2001)*

Religion	Rural/Urban	Person	Male	Female	% age
Hindu	Rural	16,050,183	8,008,837	8,041,346	96.41

	Urban	3,679,487	1,906,833	1,772,654	87.91
Muslim	Rural	152,167	77,204	74,963	0.91
	Urban	257,448	133,635	123,823	06.15
Christian	Rural	301,126	149,010	152,116	01.81
	Urban	99,909	49,461	50,448	02.39
Sikh	Rural	10,420	5,580	4,840	0.06
	Urban	59,201	31,082	28,119	1.41
Buddhist	Rural	24,526	12,109	12,417	0.15
	Urban	40,741	20,335	20,406	0.97
Jain	Rural	10,266	5,405	4,861	0.06
	Urban	45,837	23,781	22,056	1.10
Others	Rural	93,218	46,204	47,014	0.56
	Urban	1,969	1,051	918	0.04
Not Stated	Rural	6,150	3,094	3,056	0.04
	Urban	1,155	607	548	0.03
Grant Total	Rural	16,648,056	8,307,443	8,340,623	100
	Urban	4,185,747	2,166,775	2,018,972	100

From Grigson,¹⁰ through Sarkar¹¹ to Shukla,¹² this entire intellectual input highlights the culture of Chhattisgarh. The gradual change came to Bastar region in the course of increasing contacts of the non-tribal with the tribal. The administrative improvement, the opening up of communication links, the development of trade and commerce, the migration of people from outside, and the establishment of schools, colleges, hospitals all these areas served as the agencies of this long process of change.

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