CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

INTRODUCTION:

The desire to change can take three different directions, a return to tradition, towards modernization or towards some kind of mixture, if not a synthesis of the elements of tradition and modernization.

Distinction between westernization and modernization is made on the basis that westernization is an empirically observable phenomenon in the behaviour and lifestyle of the people whereas modernization is an ideological concept. (Yogendra Singh – culture change in India 2000:107)

However it is not easy to spell out the characteristics of modernization an ideology. Modernization is a form of rationalization through which introduction to whole range of social and cultural changes in societies is legitimized. Social Scientist have worked out empirical indicators of modernization. No universally acceptable sets of modernization indicators exist- Even the concept of modernity is challenged.

A significant quality of social change, which relates to structure and processes in societies, is that of continuity and resistance of traditional institutions and values. The processes of westernization and modernization have both encountered the phenomenon in all societies.

Despite the overwhelming changes in structures and institutions societies do preserve many elements of their cultural styles, modes of living and the normative and cognitive patterns of thinking why is it that despite radical legislative measures to bring about change in the norms of social hierarchy, degree of empowerment of women and the extent of religious and cultural tolerance remain confounded. Culture change occurs only slowly and adaptively since culture is always integratively
constituted. Each culture has a basic theme or pattern or symbolic code and all changes in it are mediated by it.

The continuity of culture is associated with the formation of identities in the basic personality structure of the members of society, which are influenced by techno-economy, socialization process in the family particularly the role of the mother in Socialization of child and the nature of social differentiation in societies. These factors define the limits of ideology in bringing about social change.

SUMMARY:

The present work relating to a group of Gonds- both rural and urban has been conceived of as a contribution towards the general field of social structure and sociology of change. The focus of investigation has been in respect of social change pertaining has in respect of social change pertaining to some of the institutional aspects amongst this tribe in urban towns and rural villages. It is an attempt to study the impact of social change on social structure which disrupts the existing norms, values and customs to such an extent that it is obviously evident on the social structure.

This study bears some distinctive features:

The findings of this work are based on micro-level study of change in the social institutions of the Gonds living in areas where they are a minority.

It refers to a limited group of Gonds from rural and urban areas of Ballia district (6 villages and 3 urban towns)

The study tried to compare rural and urban Gonds and the influence of urbanization and modernization on the people.
The respondents belonged to multicultural areas where Gonds are in a minority with the majority community being Hindus. The influence of Hindus and Hinduism on the minority community leading to acculturation and assimilation are studied.

The study also tried to find out the continuity, identity and change among Gonds and their institutions.

Though the study is based on 6 villages and 3 towns which are interspread within the Ballia district of Uttar Pradesh and covered the entire district can be taken as a representative sample of Gonds in eastern Uttar Pradesh. It is a study of interaction and adjustment with the different factors impinging on the social institutions.

The traditional Gond society more or less tried to maintain their tribal identity by joining with the all India Gond associations in order to receive the benefits of reservation which were denied to them due to faulty enumeration of Gonds as Scheduled Castes (SC) sometimes and Other Backward Classes (OBC) other times because of a misunderstanding of enumerators due to their occupations which other OBC’s in the region pursued which are similar to that of Gonds, since Gonds do not have the traditional occupation of selling the forest produce and make a living.

The traditional Gonds retained animistic naturistic religious traditions of their tribe and at the same time claiming to be Hindus. We found both little and great traditional religious practices were observed while living along with animistic and naturistic tribal religious practices. They assimilated Hindu traditional practices by sanskritising themselves.

The Gonds left their native habitat during the Moughul and British rule in India. They were employed by the army to carry their goods and also helped them in sundry activities.

Most of the rural respondents do not remember about the migration history of their tribe, only a few respondents moved from village to village. In the first
generation of parents of urban areas – nearly 2/3 of the respondents moved from village to towns and from town to other towns, out of these migrants nearly half migrated before independence and the others after independence which is coincided as their fathers migration.

Since they could not find enough occupational avenues pull migration of the urban areas and floods in villages were the reasons of migration.

Most of the migrants felt that their social position changed for better due to migration as they could get better jobs.

Reason for migration of some of family members was for job, education and due to relatives staying in the town who would accommodate them. Since there is no opportunity in villages and towns Ballia districts family members migrated to towns.

The villages in the sample were Matuki Dilmanpur, Malera, Haldi Rampur, Palia Khas (Badaka Khet), Madhubani, Bhojapur while Belthra Road, Ballia and Baria were the towns from which the sample were chosen.

Most of the villages and towns under sample are connected by railways. Most of the sampled areas are connected by motorable roads.

Socio-economic Background :

Since we collected data from the head of the household, majority of respondents were males while a few were females.

Majority of head of household were middle aged with 25% elderly and 20% the young group.

Majority of respondents were married. The education achievement of respondents is meager with nearly half the respondents from villages and 33% from urban are barely literate.
Nearly 13% urban and 3.5% rural respondents were graduates. Majority of females (70%) respondents were illiterate while 38% of male respondents also were illiterate. Gonds in our sample are much below in education when compared with the national average.

Majority of the parents of the respondents were illiterate from rural sample while literacy rate of urban respondents father is a little better.

The education of children of respondents has improved to an extent, while more sons are educated than daughters.

Three generations comparison of occupation showed that 65.5% of rural and 47% of urban respondent fathers followed traditional occupation, while 14.5% of rural and 13% of urban respondents followed traditional occupation, while in the children generation only 2 respondents whose children followed traditional occupation.

Petti business and government services showed that 8% of rural 39% of urban fathers of respondents had petti business or government service while 27.5% of rural 58% of urban respondents had petti business and government service shows change in occupation in one generation itself is great but most of them are earning meager money.

Majority of respondents wanted government jobs for their children with a few parents who had petti business wanted their sons to take up the business.

Nearly 40% of fore fathers of rural respondents followed traditional occupation like grain parching, palanquin bearers, and water career, while majority of forefathers’ were cultivators, sharecroppers, domestic workers and stoncutters, which were traditional occupations.

The respondents mothers were mostly housewives and some were helping the male members in traditional occupation and they were not satisfied with this
occupation. They wanted training in modern methods for pursuing the traditional occupation.

Majority of respondents did not own land. Nearly 50% of rural respondents owned land, which was less than three acres, which they mostly inherited or gifted, by patrons in zamindari system. Some of the respondents cultivated land as share croppers.

Gonds basically had other traditional occupations hence there were no big farmers or agriculturists. The respondents were poor hence could not buy land which is very expensive.

Only 18.5% got enough crops and others depended on other occupations. Most of the crops grown are consumed by them.

Most of them purchased fertilizers from market and a few got them from agricultural cooperatives.

Only 18% of the respondents had more than Rs. 1000/- income from land. Which showed agricultural activity is based on subsistence economy and not for market economy.

Most of the respondents supplemented their income by occupations like agricultural labour, traditional occupation and animal breeding. Nearly 44% rural and 37% urban respondents major occupation was business or service. All most all respondents are either poor or lower middle class category.

Tribal communities normally had nuclear families. However Gonds in Eastern Uttar Pradesh had more joint family in rural urban areas under study. This is because they are having the other caste Hindus as reference group. Since villagers with agrarian occupation want more number of people to work in lands prefer joint families and also more number of children. All children are assets since they perform
agricultural work. Gonds have more joint families and preferences for sons and also more number of children.

Tribals normally had bride price at the time of marriages, because a girl after marriage makes her residence in the patriarchal family, so loss of a worker is compensated by bride price, however our respondents due to Hinduisation started taking dowery in cash and kind.

Marriage rituals are performed by Brahmin priest. Head of the household is male member even if he is younger than his widowed mother after the death of the father. Gonds are patriarchal, patrilineal and patrimonial.

Gonds in the father’s generation were in majority illiterate. while in the respondent generation it improved a bit, but in the children generation more and more people are opting for education.

In the three generational analyses it was noticed that Gonds in the parent generation in majority followed traditional occupation of parching grain. Palanquin bearer and water carrier and agricultural labour. In the respondent generation traditional occupation has lost its importance as other castes also started competing. However, in the children’s generation a very few followed the traditional occupation.

Majority of respondents did not accept family planning even though they were offered monetary incentives.

The reasons given by them are infant mortality of young children and children as social security in old age.

Majority of respondents in rural urban areas married before 18 years even though marriage before 21 is considered illegal for males.

Nearly 95% of all respondents married girls before 18 years. They believed in child marriages.
Majority of rural respondents wanted their children to marry young (less than 18 years) while there is a change in the case of ¼ respondents who did not believe in child marriage.

Majority of respondents had arranged marriages which is not a tribal custom. This change can be attributed to Hinduisation of Gonds.

Bride and groom seeing became the norm of Gond marriages.

Tribals normally had bride price, however we found dowry taking was in a small scale which increased in the case of children’s marriage of respondents.

Bride price to dowry system can be interpreted as sanskritization or Hinduisation of Gonds.

They still followed tribal endogamy and majority of respondents were against inter tribal marriages.

Their rigidity against this can be seen in their attitude to including inter-tribal married in their religious festivals. Gonds even though call Brahmin to officiate in the marriage still celebrate the marriage with song and dances and retain their tribal rituals.

Gond respondents approved of divorce which is prevalent in tribals communities even though Hindus in higher castes from divorces, while lower cases practice divorce. It may be Hinduisation and not Sanskritisation.

Majority of respondents approved widow remarriage, hence we could not find the magnitude of divorce or widow remarriage as divorced and widows remarried if they are young.

Since Gonds are not untouchables and in minority in our research area they lived in all kinds of localities of tribals, OBCs and higher castes while majority lived in tribal communities.
The respondents had some friendship with higher castes, still majority had not much friendship with higher castes because of the economic differentials between them.

We found the respondents had participated in village festivals and participated in the marriages of Hindus, but they noticed increase in casteism in the rural urban areas. Gonds had traditional right of clearing temple courtyard, as M. N. Srinivas pointed out all communities have certain rights in the performance of village deities.

Gonds are not Hindus but they are Hinduized. Majority of respondents visited both Hindu and tribals temples. Majority of respondents worshipped family/community deities on all ceremonies and season wise festivals. Majority had no particular time of visiting religious places, visited whenever possible, 1/3 respondents visited religious places on special occasions.

Fasting on particular days is a Hindu custom, majority of respondents observed fasts on Hindu and community festivals. Majority of women observed fasts. However some men also observed fasts. All age groups observed fasts. Respondents fasted on different days of week just like Hindus to propitiate certain deities of the Hindu pantheon. Majority fasted for gods blessing for the family members.

They worshiped goraliya (Village God), Mother Goddess, Goddess of small pox, Sun God, Serpents, Dihivar, Worship of spirits of the dead, Mahadeva worship, spirits etc., shows that Gonds believed in Animism, Naturism and Hinduism. So one can say Gonds retained their traditional beliefs and also worshipped the modern Hindu Gods.

They believed in Magic, Divination, Omens and also believed in the idea of fate. Synthesis is achieved between Hinduism and their Aboriginal beliefs and their Gods.

Gonds are politically active and almost all respondents participated in election by voting.
Since they had no reservation as tribals in Eastern Uttar Pradesh, they are not inducted as executive members of political parties, but they are aware of increase in prestige due to getting elected.

Participation of respondents restricted to voting and canvassing of candidates.

Majority of respondents are aware of government welfare programmes for tribal upliftment, since they are not scheduled as Scheduled Tribes, they could not avail of the facilities of tribal welfare programmes.

Majority of the respondents are members of tribal associations and a few from urban areas had executive position. However very few women are members of tribal associations.

Construction of temple was considered by majority as social activities while a few had opened schools and instituted scholarships.

Central and Governments have implemented reservation policy for more than 5 decades; majority are aware of reservation policy of government about education, for concession and concession in admission in higher educational institutions. Majority had benefited from exemption of fees and scholarships but they did not benefit reservation in higher education because they were not accepted as STS by UP Government.

An infinitely small percentage of respondents family members availed of reservation in jobs.

They were aware of reservation for STS in general elections but could not get elected to political offices. Majority wanted the reservation for SCS and STS to continue permanently since even after 55 years reservation it has not benefited the majority of SCs and STs. They felled that reservation would improve their community status.
The tribals living in non scheduled areas like Ballia district do not get the privileges like loans grants in aid and subsidy given to tribals in scheduled areas like Mirzapur district. These conditions are in relation to various schemes including agriculture, animal husbandry, education, co-operation, health industries etc., taken up for the social, economic and cultural development of the tribal population.

The most vital point causing of annoyances and disappointment among tribals is the fact that members of the same tribes (with common socio-economic background living in adjoining villages are treated differently- inhabitants of one village get the benefit and those other do not).

In mixed villages (outside compact area) the position of tribals is deteriorating. Neither much is done for them nor they have been relieved of the burden of many of the old traditions.

CONCLUSION:

India has one of the largest concentration of tribal population in the world. According to the census of 2001 out of the total population nearly 8.08% belong to the category of STs. They constitute about more than 8% of the population of the country. There are about 527 tribes and sub-tribes in different parts of India.

Among the Scheduled Tribes the most numerically populated are the Gonds of Madhya Pradesh, Chhatisgarh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Orissa. They are spread over Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Bengal, Karnataka and Tripura in North East.

The Gonds of eastern Uttar Pradesh towns and villages were chosen because no study of these Gonds were undertaken by sociologists in recent times. The uniqueness of the study is that we studied tribals who are numerically less and are staying in multica caste societies. Most of the tribal studies are about tribal villages with a miniscule number of other communities. In these villages Gond customs and traditions predominate while in the present study areas Hinduism is the major tradition.
The present work relating to a group of Gonds both rural and urban has been conceived of as a contribution towards the general field of social structure and sociology of change. The focus of investigation has been in respect of social changes pertaining to some of the institutional aspects amongst this tribe in urban towns and rural villages. It is an attempt to study the impact of change on social structure which disrupts the existing norms, values and customs to such an extent that it is obviously evident on the social structure.

**This study bears some distinctive features:**

The findings of this work are based on micro-level study of change in the social institutions of the Gonds.

It refers to a limited group of Gonds from rural and urban areas of Ballia district (6 villages and 3 urban towns).

The study tried to compare rural urban Gonds and the influence of urbanization, modernization on the people.

The respondents belonged to multicultural areas where Gonds are in a minority. The influences of Hindus and Hinduism on the minority community leading to social change has been perceived in almost all the institutions of the Gonds.

In the earlier chapters we have attempted to analyses and examine how the process of social change started in the Gond society. The changes started in Gond society when they migrated to Ballia district at the time of Mughals and the British as carriers of goods and water. This migration from hills to plains itself brought about changes in their ethos, thinking, the very philosophy and style of living.

The researcher endeavored to identify a number of factors that led to the change of this society. It is a study of interaction and adjustment with different factors impinging on the social institutions, norms, values and customs of the Gonds. The people’s desires and aspirations to accept the innovations brought change in the
structure of the society. The changing factors interacted upon the different institutions of the social structure and stimulated one another. It would be, therefore, necessary to deal with them individually. Gonds of Eastern Uttar Pradesh are acculturated in that their traditional cultures are no longer pure but have been modified through contact with the Hindu community living in Uttar Pradesh.

**Changes as perceived in the life style:**

The Gond society is undergoing a rapid change due to the impact of economic, educational and occupational, legal and cultural factors and the impact of Hinduism. These aspects laid stress on their society and their way of life are discussed in this work. From present study pertaining to social change in the Gond society, we have come to the conclusion that as a consequence of acculturation and living in the midst of majority Hindu community, the Gonds started identifying themselves as Hindus. They have accepted a sedentary life style both in rural and urban areas where they settled. The development in any sphere has impact upon the social life on another aspect of the community and these people are trying to maintain their ethnic identity inspite of the dominance of Hindus who are the original inhabitants of this region.

Since the Gonds are not agriculturists basically they are trying to seek jobs in villages and urban areas which are not the exclusive domain of the Hindus since these Gonds are not untouchables they are coming in contact with the majority community in both rural and urban areas. They came in contact with different people from different cultural areas. The impact of this contact and interaction between the groups along with different impinging factors are mainly responsible for bringing the socio-cultural change in the Gonds community. The changes have reached the inner core of the Gond tradition and induced a transition from tradition to modernity.

Thus a considerable change is perceived in the life style regarding dress, food, recreational activities, festivals, arts and crafts.
The men folk have taken to the western dress, but women wear sarees and blouses with bright colours. They do not wear the traditional dress of tribals. Most of the people wear synthetic fabric made by factories, since they do not have a culture of weaving. The daily necessities of the working people have made them depend more and more upon the retail sellers and suppliers and market economy developed in this area.

Grain parching which was their traditional occupation of Gonds is slowly disappearing as it has not much demand in rural urban areas and also machines are making the traditional parching of grains redundant. Not only this other Hindu caste communities are also adopting this profession. Earlier the Gonds received 1/10 share of the grains parched as their renumeration and depended on barter economy. This is changing to money economy, grain parching is followed by elder men and mostly women, but the younger generation has fast changed their occupation.

The Gonds used to eat sattu as a staple diet earlier now have adopted food items which are consumed by the local Hindu communities. They started drinking tea as regular item of breakfast. We found that Gonds mix more readily with neighbours and their masters and follow the same leisure and recreational activities of the main stream Hindus. They also visit relatives and friends and Hindi movies and radio are popular among Gonds.

The Gonds live in huts and hamlets, which are not different from that of the Hindus. A few urban Gond affluent families have brick and mortar houses. The huts of the Gonds do not show any tribal pattern.

Most of the Gonds do not speak gondi language which was originally a mixture of south Indian languages and Hindi. Most of the Gond respondents speak Bhojpuri which is the language of the people in Eastern Uttar Pradesh (Ballia Distirict), since they interact with the local people in all theirs day to day interaction speak in Bhojpuri and some even speak Hindi while dealing with business people. Most of the villages have water pumps, electricity and roads are accustomed to using
these. Except one village all the other villagers and urban areas are connected by railways and bus transport, Gonds came in contact with other communities extensively.

At present there is a marginal change in their occupation to skilled labour and works which were unknown to them earlier.

Since modern industrial occupation requires formal educational qualification and technical training the Gonds could not enter the government and urban occupations due to lack of education. Eastern Uttar Pradesh is not industrialized and technical educational institutions are not there in this area region. This is the even the other communities depend mostly on agriculture. Gonds were traditional non-agricultural people and land is very expensive. Only a few are dependent on agriculture.

In context with sanskriritisation and westernization, it can be stated that Gonds with cultural impact of Hindu society had adopted Hindu religious practices and claim to be Hindus. The few educated respondents are slowly westernizing in dress, media and using a few gadgets. The Gonds are getting assimilated into Hindu culture still retain some of their cultural features.

Change due to Education:

The impact of education on the Gonds is significant. Majority of respondents had illiterate parents. Nearly 50% of rural and 33% of urban respondents are illiterate or barely literate while 19% of rural and 43% of urban respondents had high school and above education which shows that education in mass scale has been introduced in recent years.

When we look at the education of sons only 3% of rural and 2% of urban respondents are illiterate or barely literate while 22% of rural and 10% of urban daughters are still illiterate shows that change in daughters education is lagging behind that of sons.
Nearly 35% of rural and 36% of urban respondents' sons had high school and above education. Still many respondents have younger children and are not going to school. Only 9 respondents had technical, post graduate, professional education.

It is seen that the respondents realized the importance of education for their sons, so that they could get occupational mobility. Since the respondents lived in villages where other communities are in greater number they have reference group of other communities, which made the parents to send their children for education.

It is also seen that the tribals who lost their traditional occupation have to rely on education for empowerment. It is very much evident in our sample. Female education in daughters' generation is also changing is seen by the fact that 14 daughters of the respondents had graduate and technical education qualification.

However the higher education perceived only among an infinitesimally small percentage of Gonds. Women lag behind in all indicators of educational achievement.

**Change in Occupation and Employment:**

We noticed a tremendous change in occupation across three generations. In the parents' generation 65.5% of rural and 47% of urban respondents pursued traditional occupation of parching grain, palanquin bearers, water carriers, and stone cutters, has changed in the respondents' generation to only 13.5% and in the children generation reached less than 1%. This shows a tremendous change in occupations which may not be any improvement in status, it is due to the collapse of these occupations in society.

In the case of service the fathers' generation only 7% rural and 18% urbanites were in service while nearly 22% of rural and 27% of urban respondents were in service. Even though a great number of respondents' children are in school we noticed nearly 11% of rural and 15% of urban respondents' sons are in service. This shows that education and awareness of economic benefits, security of service, pension and higher status as the reason for change in occupation from grand parents to grand sons. Most of the respondents are in lower income occupations.
The land cultivator of grand parents generation declined in the grandson’s generation while agricultural labour class is increased.

Business is loosing in importance due to lack of capital while service are preferred by Gonds.

There is tremendous change in attitude to government service jobs for children by the respondents. An overwhelming majority 93% of rural and 73% of town respondents wanted government jobs for their children.

Majority 82% of urban and 49% of respondents had no ownership of land while an infinstionally small 2.5% of rural and 2% of urban respondents had 5 to 10 and above acres of land while the others had a few acres of land which is not sufficient for them to depend entirely on land for their subsistence on land produce. Most of the produce is consumed. Only 18% of the rural and 6% of urban respondent farmers earned Rupees 10,000/- and above income from farming.

Majority of respondents are in lower income brackets. Since the Gonds did not get the facility of reservations, there is not much change in the economic status of the Gond respondents.

Some of the Gond respondents are becoming share croppers in order to increase their income. Gonds traditionally are not agriculturists. A small percentage of the respondents have become agriculturists and are trying to apply the modern techniques of agriculture by using fertilizers, insecticides and pesticides.

Change in Family:

Tribals generally have nuclear families whenever a son gets married, he establishes his own house, either in the same courtyard or builds his own hut somewhere. Preponderant number of respondents 52% of rural and 67% of urban respondents are living in joint families. This shows a change in family structure of
Gonds which is due to their poor economic status which makes them to live in joint family.

Nearly 59% of rural and 67% of urban respondents have more than 7-15 members in their family. Majority 74% of rural and 60% of urban families having more than 3 children while 20% of rural and 16% of urban families have 1 to 2 children. There is no rural urban differentials in case of having more than 3 children per respondent. This shows the change of small family norm is not accepted by the respondents since they think children are an asset and insurance for old age. The major reason for not accepting small family norm is because most of the respondents are in unorganised sector, petty business and lower level of government employment and no financial social security.

Respondents in majority have not accepted family planning, however 25.5% of rural and 30% of urban respondents have accepted family planning which is quite creditable as the general population of Ballia also have majority non acceptance of family planning.

Majority 90.5% of rural and 93% of urban respondents felt 1 to 2 children is the ideal size of children. This attitudinal change is a precursor of change in future.

Majority of the respondents were married before 18 years of age to women less than 18 years of age.

We noticed that out of the 35% of children of respondents who were married, shows that 40% of rural and 55% of children of respondents married later than 19 years, which shows that change in age at marriage is increasing which is a welcome change. Even though marriage of minor is an offence, still no respondent was bothered about it.

It is said Gonds have homogamous marriages earlier, now we find that almost all marriages are arranged and the change is from tribal custom to Hindu customs.
Tribal custom of bride price is slowly changing to dowry system in Gonds due to the impact of majority Hindu custom.

Divorce and remarriage are approved by Gond respondents and they are not changing in to high caste Hindu custom of disapproval of dowry and remarriage.

The Gond respondents are Hinduized without being Hindus. Since the number of Gonds in the villages under study are small we find that they have no priest of their own and they invite the Brahman priest to officiate the marriage ceremony. Gonds retained their songs and dances of their own and marriages are dominated by these.

They practice Animisism, Naturism and Hinduism. We can say that the respondents retained their tribal religious practices, side by side they are adopting Hindu religious practices, Gods and customs.

They follow mostly the little tradition of local Hindu community with a smattering of the great tradition. The great tradition gods like Shiva, Vishnu are worshiped in the pattern of little tradition.

**Migration and its impact:**

The Gonds of central provinces migrated during the Moghal and British time as carrier of goods and water for the armed forces. When the wars ended they settled at various places without going back to their original habitat. Gonds in Eastern Uttar Pradesh except Mirzapur are not enumerated as tribals because of their migration in antiquity.

Majority of the respondents could not say when their families migrated to Ballia district. However 38% of urban respondents claimed their families migrated from village to town and a few from town to town. However only 7.5% of the respondents claimed that their families migrated from other villages. Both push and pull factors and floods were the reasons for migration.
However we found 80% of rural and 96% of urban respondents had some family members migrated to towns. The reasons for migration are education, in search of job and relatives living in towns.

Every village had primary school, so migration for education is not noticed. Even colleges are in the proximity of villages and also the respondents are too poor to send the children for education out of the village. The respondents claimed since they could not get reservation and the consequent advantages, migration for education is very little.

The Gonds who migrated to the urban areas because of higher education are in the lower echelons of employment. Even the Gonds who migrated to the other states also did not get economic mobility.

We noticed some social change in almost all institutions of Gonds. However change is very slow since they did not get any reservation in jobs.

**Change in structure:**

As regards their social organization, the Gonds by and large remained to be endogamous. Marriages are allowed within the same tribal groups of the state. Exogamous marriages are strictly prohibited and punished by tribal Panchayat. However the respondents are not averse to the marriage out side theirs endogamous group. The change in this aspect is very little.

Regarding their structure of their family it may be seen that a real change has taken place. Gonds who had nuclear family now to some extend are opting for joint family system, since they are living in the villages where mainstream Hindus have joint family system.

From this it may be drawn that both traditional and modern families coexist. The Gonds have left their traditional occupation due to the redundancy of their occupations due to modernization. The Gonds are willing to take up government
employment but lack of adequate education and opportunities they are not able to move upward in their mobility because they are not given ST status in Ballia district which provided reservations in jobs.

The majority of Gonds lived in hutments. Their housing condition remained to be extremely poor and wretched. Only a few of the families had Pucca houses. Majority of the people had electricity in their houses.

Their utensils consist of pots and aluminium vessels and stainless steel vessels. Most of them take alcoholic drinks and dress like poor Hindus, cotton and nylon dresses. A few of them have small plots of land and work as labourers.

At the political level the tribal panchayat plays an active role in the case of disputes among tribals. They are also numbers of village panchayat and appeal for justice to it. This is a structural change.

Regarding their religious practices and beliefs the Gonds worship all Hindu deities specially lord Shiva. They celebrated all-important Hindu festivals such as Shivratri, Diwali, Dashhara, Chhat etc. On all important festivals days they observed all traditional rituals with religious piety. They observed fast and feast on festival days. In a way they are being slowly sanskritised into Hindu religious beliefs and rituals. These are some of the important structural changes noticed in the Gond respondents of the study.

**Acculturation and Assimilation:**

This study also tried to find out the continuity and change among Gonds and their institutions.

The study is based on 6 village and 3 towns which are interspread withing the Ballia district of Uttar Pradesh. So it can be considered as a representative sample of Gonds in Eastern Uttar Pradesh.
It is a study of interaction and adjustment of Gonds with different factors impinging on the social institutions.

The traditional Gond society more or less tried to maintain their tribal identity by joining with the All India Gond Associations in order to receive the benefits of reservation which was denied to them due to faulty remuneration of Gonds as SC sometimes and OBCs other times because of the misunderstanding in enumeration due to their occupations which the other OBCs in the region pursued. Gonds had traditional occupation similar to that of other OBCs.

The traditional Gonds retained animistic naturistic traditions of their tribe at the same time claiming to be Hindus. We found both little and great traditional religious aspects while living along with animistic religious practices.

**Continuity, Identity And Change:**

There are innumerable studies of tribes in India and many studies of Gonds who were the second largest tribes in India with all India spread. Gonds in Eastern Uttar Pradesh were migrants from Madhya Pradesh (Gondwana) during the Muslim rule earlier and later during the British rule of India. Gonds migrated during Muslim period, since they claimed as warriors who moved with the Muslims and Rajputs armies after the wars and settled in the villages and towns of Eastern Uttar Pradesh. When the British Army moved from place to place they followed the army as servants and performed sundry other activities for the army-like cooks, Water and goods carriers, Palanquin bearers and Personal attendants etc.

These Gonds did not go back to their original habitat and settled in the villages when the army did not need their services. These small groups of Gonds were not untouchables so were allowed to stay in the precents of the village. Their traditional occupation of parching grains was a welcome activity and they were encouraged to do so. The other castes/communities were not experts in the parching of grain, so there was no competition earlier and the remuneration for parching grain was 1/10 of the
grain parched with no money transaction. Since the Gonds were getting a good amount of grains they were not interested in agriculture, which would have created conflicts and dialectics between the farming class and the non tribals. They also performed as water and goods carriers and palanquin bearers. These occupations also initially had no competition.

Since their occupation had no competition or conflict they had cordial relations in the village. These Gonds were also useful as agricultural labourers when there was a need for it. So tribals in Eastern Uttar Pradesh unlike Scheduled Castes felt no isolation or discrimination in the villages.

The tribals are staying in Eastern Uttar Pradesh for more than last three to five centuries. They speak the same language as the other communities of the villages. Since there was mutual cooperation and congenial relations with the local caste/communities, Gonds had assimilated many cultural factors of the main stream Hindus and their acculturation slowly took place.

The Gonds originally had their own Bhagats who performed marriages, birth rites, death rites and other rituals. However since the number of Gonds in the villages is small in number they could not afford to maintain their Sheman as priest, so they are calling the Brahmin priest to officiate in their marriages and other rituals. Brahmins originally performed these rituals as they do for the lower castes (artisans’ etc), which was less sanskritised but were performed as mantras, slowly the Gonds due to Sanskritization started following the Hindu type of rituals.

In this there is continuity and change. Gonds are fond of their culture with their songs and dances. They have their own indigenous songs and dances, which they have retained because of oral tradition so we find Gonds, give more preference for music and dance in all their rituals even though the rituals are performed by Brahmin priests. This cross-cultural assimilation took place for more than 300 years among the Gonds.
Gonds had their own religious symbols and rituals based on animism and naturalism slowly started following the Hindu rituals. Some of the festivals of great tradition like Diwali, Chhat, Dassera are being celebrated by the Gonds. Sometimes one feels that Gonds of Ballia are nearer to Hindus then Gonds of Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra etc.

However every Gond village has its own special deity, which is the exclusive to them.

The desire to change in a society can take three different directions- “a return to tradition, towards modernization or towards some kind of a mixture if not a synthesis of the elements of tradition and modernization”. “ Distinction between westernization and modernization is made on the basis that westernization is an empirically observable phenomenon in the behaviour and life style of the people whereas modernization is an ideological concept. (Singh, Y. 2000: 107)

However it is not easy to spell out the characteristics of modernization as an ideology. Modernization is a form of rationalization through which introduction to the whole range of social and cultural changes in societies is legitimated. We have examined the cultural change in Gonds and tried to identify continuity and identity and changes in their culture.

A significant quality of social change which relates to structures and processes in societies is that of continuity and resilience of traditional institutions and values. The process of westernization and modernization of Gonds have encountered both the phenomenon in their societies.

Despite the overwhelming changes in structures and institutions which we have seen earlier, still Gond society preserved many elements of their cultural styles, modes of living and the normative and cognitive patterns of behaviour. Why is it that despite radical legislative measures to bring about change in the norms of social hierarchy, degree of empowerment and the extent of religious and cultural tolerance
remain confounded? Culture changes only slowly and adaptivity, since culture is always intergratively constituted. Each culture has a basic theme or pattern and all changes in it are mediated by it.

The continuity of culture is associated with the formation of identities in the basic personality structure of the members of society which are influenced by technology and science, socialization process in the family particularly the role of the mother in the socialization of child and the nature of social differentiation. These define the limits of ideology in bringing about social change.

Tribal Gond beliefs and rituals have altered in the face of increased contact with Hindus who are the majority community in our study villages and towns. Since these Gonds have intense contact with the Hindu majority as they perform services to them and also not untouchables, there have been various transformations. The Gonds traditionally worshipped clan gods with elaborate rites, with pradhans organizing and performing the necessary rituals. The increasing impoverishment of large sections of the Gond tribe has made it difficult, if not impossible to support the Pradhans as a class of ritual specialists. At the same time many Gonds wanted to imitate the majority Hindu community by the processes of sanskritization started by inviting the Brahmin Priests to officiate in the Hindu rituals and performed tribal rituals themselves. Gonds even felt that the tribal gods were losing their power and efficiency which lead to a widespread Hinduisation of Gond beliefs and practices. This shows change, continuity and identity of religious beliefs and rituals.

Gonds due to the influence of Hindus started adoption of Hindu practice of having costly elaborate widdings – a custom contributed to indebtedness and subjected to cash economy on the most deleterious of terms. However it was noticed that some families are adopting traditional marriage patterns of mock capturing of bride to modern conditions using the customs to avoid the costly outlays associated with a formal Hindu wedding.
Even though Gonds invite Brahmin Priest for weddings still the entire wedding is dominated by songs and dances with fun and gaiety. All Gond ceremonies are monopolized by music, songs and dances where men and women equally participate. This we can call as continuity of tradition and change due to Hinduization.

Just like caste system Gonds recognize the hegemony of Brahmin Priest. Tribal religion earlier never recognized, authority outside the tribe is changed to calling Hindu priest and accepting their authority. Even though Brahmin priest perform the marriage, the ceremony followed is that of lower caste Hindus.

Language is not always an accurate indicator of tribal status especially in the present study region with mixed population Gonds have lost their mother tongue (Gondi) and simply speak local Bhojpuri language. They speak Bhojpuri while talking with people of the village, but with outsiders they speak Hindi.

Originally Gonds belonged to central provinces and spread to Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Chhatisgarh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Assam and Orissa. All of them adopted the local language of the state in which area they settled. This shows assimilation and social change among the Gonds.

Forms of civil society brought together the Gond people from all over India and linking them in social movement for the formation of Gondwana with uniting them into All India Gond Mahashbha fighting for the rights of Gond tribals and forging an independent identity among Gonds. Unity and identity makes possible for a greater spread of benefits. This movement gathered momentum, since Gonds of Ballia are not enumerated as tribals and were not given the reservation, which is given to tribals in India. After continuous agitation the Gonds of Eastern Uttar Pradesh are scheduled in the Scheduled Tribes of Uttar Pradesh in 2002.

Divorce, widow, widower remarriage is permitted in Gonds. Both sorrorate and Levirate are accepted patterns in Gonds which is not the case with Hindu
Communities. Child marriages are prevalent among Gonds. The change noticed due to Hinduization, Gonds are changing from bride price practice to dowry system.

Gonds notionally continue the practice of grain parching and want the government to subsidize grain parching machines for them; this shows continuity and change in order to modernize.

Even though government adopted Panchayati Raj system in villages, still maintain Gond panchayat system for resolving their disputes. Some Gonds became Panchayat members. This shows continuity and change.

The Gonds believed in ghosts and ghost souls, the phenomenon of possession, Animal worship, tree worship and the rain god. The Gonds believed that the spirits controlled diseases and worshipped sacred objects. They believed that Manes worship, some sacred objects are associated with life, happiness, prosperity, creativeness while the profane are associated with death, evil, misery and sin and life after death. They propitiated the spirits by sacrifices and worshiped Bara Dev the supreme deity in Hindu pantheon the Lord Shiva.

**Temple life:**

The Gonds like all other tribes built temples which are open to sky not like Hindu temples with pucca structures with roofs. The change noticed at present in most villages shows that the Gonds started putting thatched shelters to clan gods and Shiva temples.

Some gods have entered their household. A special room is reserved to gods by well off Gonds, or a corner part is kept in the Kitchen with a platform. They keep five stones which represent their ancestors along with some Hindu deities like Shiva etc are also kept on the platform and worshiped.

These observances show that the Gonds believe in animism, naturism and also adopting Hindu gods and imitating the Hindu worship. Keeping the stones as symbols
of ancestors is not followed by Hindus. So we can say that Gonds still keep their identity in the belief of soul, malevolent and good spirits and also believe in Ancestral worship. We can say Gonds are in a stage of transition in religious beliefs.

The traditions of Gond society indicate their deep concern for moral and ethical values. The beliefs of animism are strengthened by the leadership of village elders while the teachings of Hinduism are reinforced by Hindu reformers.

The Gonds are becoming Hinduized without being Hindus. They are also keeping their tribal religious identity. This change is because they atayed for centuries in Hindu villages as minority community. Gonds also worshipped the Muslim peers sometimes just as Hindus in the village.

Some of the findings of the questions posed by us at the beginning of the study are answered here-

**Who are the Gonds who migrated to Ballia district:**

Gonds from the central provinces migrated a few centuries ago in Mughal and British period. They worked as carriers of goods for the military which fought various wars with the native kings. After the wars they settled in different villages and did not return back to their original habitat.

**In what way the Gonds social structure and social system operated:**

Gonds adopted the Hindu social structure and social system. They had patriarchal patrilineal social organization with male domination and female subordination since they lost their traditional occupation they became labourers in both rural and urban areas. Still they retained some of their cultural factors of life.

**Social change in family, marriage, education, occupation:**

The family structure is changing from nuclear to joint family. Instead of love marriage prevalent in tribals now they are having arranged marriages with dowry
instead of bride price. Eventhough they could not avail the facility of reservation, Gonds have realized the importance of education. More sons are getting education than their daughters. Gonds occupation of grain parching, palanquin bearer became redundant and they are mostly labourers in both rural and urban areas. Since Gonds did not have big land holdings, they cultivate the land and most of the produce is for self consumption. Agriculture is not a full time occupation for the respondents a small percentage of respondents are in government jobs and petti business.

**Influence of Sanskritization, Westernization and Urbanisation:**

Gond respondents are in a stage of transition and to an extent sanskritised. However they claim to be Hindus, still retained their tribal religious practices. They have adopted the modern western education and are influenced by media. Men wear western clothes (pants and shirts) while women wear sarees which typical villagers wear are gaudy.

Since the entire Ballia district was earlier connected by river transport and now are connected by road, state transport and railways, the influences of urbanization are seen even in rural villages.

**Effect of tribal Welfare Measures on Gonds:**

Since Gonds in Ballia district got scheduled only in 2002, there is no effect of tribal welfare schemes on them.

**Maintain Tribal Identity:**

Gonds are maintaing their tribal identity by their songs, dances, customs, beliefs and religion. Gonds are also having social identity movement by coming together of all people from different states.
Hinduism influence on Gonds:

Gonds claim to be Hindu, follow the Hindu religion; Hindu institutions and practices. Divorce and remarriage which are frowned by Hinduism, Gonds retained them.

Social change reduced inequalities:

Gonds are in the lower echelons of hierarchy. They are poor, less educated and are in lower status jobs, still face inequalities in education, employment and agriculture.

Political structure change:

Gonds participate in elections, but could not get elected because of no reservation of seats and because of the small number in constituencies could not get political power.

Acculturation, Assimilation and Integration:

Gonds have integrated into Hindu community. Acculturation and assimilation is taking place in the Gond society. One can say Gonds are in a state of transition but still trying to maintain their tribal identity by having an All India Gond Mahasabha, which is quite active.

FINAL CONCLUSION:

In this unique study of Gonds tribals living in majority Hindu community the following conclusions are drawn. Due to the deprivation of reservation facilities the Gonds of Ballia district have not achieved any visible development even after 57 years of independence. Whatever they have achieved is due to their hard work and perseverance. Gonds remained underdeveloped. They are poor, less educated and working in unorganized sector. They lost their traditional occupation of grain parching etc. due to modernization. In the three generational study of Gonds, they moved from
illiteracy of the parents generation to limited education in the respondents generation, moved to greater literacy in the children’s generation.

Earlier we have highlighted the structural changes by interaction with Hindu majority community. Gonds being touchable community could interact with all castes and communities. Whatever social change has occurred in Gonds is due to the influence of Hindus who were westernizing and modernizing in both rural and urban areas. The influence of science and technology is more in urban areas than in rural areas. Gonds became more Hinduized without being Hindus. They are still following cultural factors of their tribe. They practice animism, naturism side by side with Hindus. We found continuity and change in their life styles.

Gonds were spread over most of the states in India are at present trying to establish their identity as tribal community in order to fight for their rights. Gonds in Ballia joined the mainstream movement for Gondwana state and also achieved their tribal status by fighting with the state and central government. This identity formation is prominent in recent times.

Gonds did not get any political power due to their minority numbers hence remained poor, less literate and socio-economic development missed them.

Even though there were many tribal welfare programmes implemented by center and state government; Gonds could not get these because of wrong enumeration by census commission and also non inclusion in the state list of Scheduled tribes.

Since they are not well educated they could not get government service jobs still remained as labourers. They had to compete with the local population. Here we highlighted the continuity and cultural change among the Gonds of Ballia district.

The Gond women are still backward than their men folk. Some of the evils of dowry, subordination and patriarchy are still prevalent in Gond social structure. The Gonds borrowed money from money lenders at one time or other for marriages, festivals, death rites or for their occupational needs. They couldn’t get loans from
banks as they could not provide collateral to banks. Gonds couldn’t get any benefits from tribal welfare schemes.

We can conclude that Gonds of Ballia district whether rural or urban did not get the fruits of development or benefits from all the five years plans of central and state government.

**Suggestion for Improving the Condition of STs in Uttar Pradesh:**

As we have already seen the Uttar Pradesh Govt. while scheduling the STs took the definition of tribe as people living in hilly forest non-accessible region. So Gonds who were migrants were living in plains of Gangetic region were not scheduled as Gond tribals. Hence, they were deprived of the reservation and special welfare programmes also. It is suggested that there should be a survey in Uttar Pradesh to identify the number of people in all districts and provide the reservation in education and jobs.

When fresh enumeration is done the number of gonds, which was estimated by the Central Minister for Scheduled Tribes, which is, more than 5,00,000 will automatically increase their quota to 7.5%. Strict implementation of Educational reservation and employment reservation will ameliorate their situation and also reduce their exploitation and reduce their poverty. Even after 55 years, even scheduled of major tribes is not done, one wonders how many centuries it will take to bring the tribes to mainstream. So strict implementation of reservation of STs quota is to be implemented.

**Suggestion for Further Research:**

1. Comparative studies should be undertaken between Gond men and women in order to find out about their social economic situation. Whether Gond men overcame their disabilities than Gond women.

2. Comparative study should be undertaken about Gonds who were in majority like Chhattisgarh and Eastern Uttar Pradesh where they are in minority. Whether there
is any improvement of their condition when reservation is implemented and their
community had better opportunities due to reservation/

3. Since Eastern Uttar Pradesh belong to BIMARU States, one should look at
comparative picture of other communities and Gonds living in Eastern Uttar Pradesh.
Is there much difference in their life styles?

Comparative study of various tribes in UP and their development and
modernization should be studied to evolve programmes for their betterment.

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