CHAPTER-IV

Area and the People
India, a state which is unique for its geographical heterogeneity as well as for its ethnic diversity, lies between 8° 4' 28" and 37° 17' 53" North latitudes and 68° 7' 33" and 97° 24' 47" East longitudes. India is the seventh largest country in the world with an area of 32,87,263 square kilometers extending about 3,214 kilometers from North to South and 2,933 kilometers from West to East (Map-1). It has a land frontier of 15,200 kilometers with 7,516.5 kilometers of coastline. India is the second populous country in the world with a population of 1,027,015,247 (Census of India, 2001). India, a typical example for the concept of unity in diversity with its nature and extent of biological, ethnic, linguistic and socio-cultural heterogeneity, is an ideal area for conducting a wide array of research of human population.

The republic of India is a federal state with twenty-eight states and seven union territories. The state of Orissa is a maritime state situated on the east coast of India, between the states of West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh. Its location is between 18° and 23° North latitudes and 81° and 88° East longitudes. As per the Census of India (2001), the population of Orissa was 36,706,920. The state is divided into 30 districts (Map-2) and each district is again divided into community development blocks for administrative purpose. The district Khurda, lies between 85° 37' East longitudes and 20° 11' North latitudes with an area of 2,887 kilometers (Census of India 1991). The district is surrounded by Puri, Cutack, Nayagarh, Jagatsinghpur and Ganjam districts. The total geographical area of the district is 1.85 per cent to total area of the state. The district is divided into 10 community development blocks (Map-3) and has a total of 154 Grampanchayats and 1567 villages (District Statistical Hand Book, 1997; Khurda, 2000). The population of the district is 1,874,405, of which 986,003 (52.6%) are male and 888,402 (47.4%) are female. Of the total population, 255293 (13.62%) are Scheduled Caste and 96,344 (5.14%) are Scheduled Tribe (Census of India, 2001).

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7 For the administrative purpose government has divided each Community Development Block into some Grampanchayats by combining 10-15 villages.

8 The Government of India has declared certain castes as Schedule Castes who do not fall under four varnas. They are described as Panchama and treated earlier as untouchable.

9 The Government of India has declared certain aboriginals as Schedule Tribes who do not fall under caste system and resides mostly in relatively remote areas.
The total literacy rate in the district is 80.19 per cent (88.38% among males and 71.06% among females). The rural literacy rate is 74.59 per cent (85.33% among males and 63.58% among females) (census of India, 2001).

All the 12 sample villages of the district (Table-1) are multiethnic by nature. The inhabitants of these villages belong to various castes of Hindu social order. All these caste groups are categorized according to the classical Varna system and fall under one of the four varnas, i.e. Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vysya, and Sudra. A large number of local castes belong to the category of Sudra. The fifth category, Panchama, which is outside the Varna system includes all those castes which were once considered as untouchable. Now they are referred to as Scheduled Castes.

In our sample villages, the major ethnic groups castes are Khandayat, Karan, Bauri (Scheduled Caste) and Sabara (Scheduled Tribe). Other castes found in the villages are Brahmins (Forward Caste), Teli, Gouda, Barika, Tanti and Kumbhara (all are Backward Castes). Out of 12 sample villages, village Podapada is dominated by Sabaras and Khandayats. The Kansapada village is inhabited mostly by Bauris. The occupations of the villagers are associated with their castes. People mostly depend upon agriculture and related activities like agricultural labour and marketing of agricultural products. The Bauris of Kansapada village and the Sabaras of Podapada village mainly work in stone mines. In rainy season they work as agricultural labourers. The traditional occupations of the villagers have been influenced by changes brought about by modernization and other socio-political forces. It is observed in our sample villages that the higher caste people are generally landowners and the lower

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10 Varna is a classification of Hindu population in relation to their genesis and occupation.
11 Panchama is a group of caste of Hindu people who are out of Varna system and treated as untouchable.
12 The castes included in three upper Varnas and a few peasant castes of Sudra are considered as "forward castes" meaning they are socially, economically and politically advanced.
13 The majority of the castes in Sudra Varna including servicing and occupational castes are categorized as "backward castes". Backward castes are a mixed group of artisan and servicing castes, which are about the middle level of cases hierarchy and are on the way to catch up with the so-called forward castes (uncategorized group) economically and controlling of socio-political axis.
caste people and tribal are landless tenants and agricultural labourers. The major portion of land of the sample villages belongs to Khandayat, Karana, Chasa, Teli and Brahmin. They also get the lion share of agricultural products in case of share-cultivation (bhaga chasa)\textsuperscript{15} It was found that the Sabaras of Podapada and the Bauris of Kansapada village are landless people and they do not do even share-cultivation. Due to poor economic condition they do not even possess oxen to cultivate the land. Except Brahmin all other caste people cultivate the land either on their own or with the help of agricultural labourers. The Brahmin totally depend upon agricultural labourers because land ploughing is a taboo for them. Though, the forces of modernization have drastically changed the rural life of our sample area, yet the traditional interethnic relations persist. For instance, the Bauri or the Scheduled Caste people never enter the houses of higher caste people. However, during the marriage ceremony the Bauri play a crucial role as drumbeaters and singers. For all village meetings they play the role of messengers. During a death ritual in a family belonging to the higher caste, the Barika play the role of messengers and they supply the ritual ingredients like leaves, flowers, wood, etc. The same Barika play the role of decorators during the marriage festivals of higher caste people. All the caste groups of our sample villages are endogamous by nature. Marriages between different castes are prohibited. However, the norms of anuloma (hypergamy) and pratiloma (hypogamy) of ancient law of Manu\textsuperscript{16} till persist in our sample area. Mostly, the families are patriarchal, patrilineal, patrilocal and patripotestal. However, the female also take part in some decision-making processes in the family. Mostly, nuclear families are found in the sample villages. But among the higher castes, some joint families also exist. Joint families are also found among castes like Khandayat, Tanti, Karana, Kumbhara and Brahmin. In the nuclear family the husband is treated as the head of the family and in the joint family the eldest male member is treated as head of the household. Father or husband works as bread earner and women do the domestic work. But in some

\textsuperscript{15} Bhaga Chasa is the share cultivation where the landowner and tenant combinely do cultivation and share the product.

\textsuperscript{16} Manu was the author of ancient Hindu law, Manusmriti/Manusamhita
families the female members also work in different sectors. However, the women
good do not go to agricultural field. Women take care of children. In case of
illness of members of the family, the adult female members look after the
patient and an adult male member escorts the patient to the doctor or
traditional healer.

The economy of the study area is agro-based and most of the people depend on
agriculture. Maximum people are small and marginal farmers. In recent years
the Gouda, Teli, Gudia, Dhoba and Barika have moved in to agriculture sector and
become owner cultivators or agricultural labourers in addition to their traditional
occupations. It was been found that some people of this region migrate to other
places within and outside the state in search of employment. Some of the
villagers of Badatota and Podapada have migrated to Surat of Gujurat. Similarly
some Villagers of Panichhatra and Barapada have migrated to Bhubaneswar and
Cuttack to eke out their survival. Though in these villages money is the medium
of exchange, yet the practice of kind reciprocity and labour reciprocity are also
noticed. People sell their agriculture products in the nearby towns (Khurda and
Jatni) and weekly markets. Though the higher castes people are relatively
economically better off yet there are many poor families in higher caste groups.
In the arena of business the higher caste people also occupy a pivotal place.
They do business of agricultural products by opening small shops in their
respective villages. They keep business contact in the nearby town and make
arrangements for the sale of agricultural requirements like fertilizer, pesticide,
and agricultural products like paddy, rice, pulses, oilseeds, vegetables, etc. In
Sabara hamlet of Podapada and Bauri hamlets of Kansapada and Badatota, some
people from Khandayat caste have opened up grocery shops. In none of the
sample villages, the Sabara and Bauri own any type of shop.

People cultivate different varieties of paddy. They cultivate pulses like rashi,
chana, mung, biri, kolatha and groundnut during Rabi seasons. Some villagers
grow vegetables such as tomato, brinjal, cucumber, onion, spinach, radish,
garlic, bean, pumpkin, guard, bitter guard, chilli, sweet potato, etc. People grow
many fruit bearing plants in their orchids. Plants like banana, mango, guava,
jackfruit, pineapple, etc. are plentifully available in this area. Mainly coconut, cashew nut, berry, blackberry, date palm, banyan, pipal, tamarind trees are found in the sample villages. In summer season people get enough mango, jackfruit, cashew nut, etc. from their orchids. They also grow vegetables like ladies finger, bitter guard, guard, cucumber, pumpkin, etc. in summer season. Most of the farmers sell these products in the nearby towns like Jatni and Khurda.

The patron-client relationship (jajmcni system)\textsuperscript{17} is still continuing in our study area. Though this traditional relation is somewhat flexible now-a-days, still the remnants of the system are visible. During different social functions the jajmans play their tangible roles. In the changing democratic situation all the adult villagers have equal right to cast their franchise and to elect their political representatives. At the village level, village panchayat consisting of a sarpanch\textsuperscript{18} (President) and ward members\textsuperscript{19} (representative of segments of the village) plays a crucial role in the development of the village. The sarpanch and ward members are elected democratically.

Mostly the people of our sample villages are non-vegetarians. Chicken and egg are prohibited among priestly castes. Usually they eat fish, mutton and egg as the non-vegetarian dishes. However, pork and beef are strictly prohibited. They take flaked rice (chuda), parched rice (mudhi) and chhatua (one type of powder of flaked rice) with tea as breakfast. The lunch consists of either sukha bhata (hot plain rice) or saja pakhala (hot water rice) along with dal and curries of various vegetables such as tomato, cabbage, cauliflower, potato, ladies fingers, peas, beans, brinjal, etc. Leafy vegetables like young shoots of sweet cucumber and different varieties of greens etc. are also cooked. The food is generally cooked by boiling and roasting processes. They also use onion, garlic, chillies, ginger and other spices in preparing curries. They consume plenty of local fruits like banana, mango, jack, guava, papaya, berry, black berry available in different

\textsuperscript{17} Jajmani is a system of rural India, where different caste group play patron-client relationship in a reciprocal manner.

\textsuperscript{18} Sarpanch is the elected President of Grampanchayat.

\textsuperscript{19} Ward member is the elected representative of the village or segments of the village under a Gram panchayat.
seasons. Women normally cook food in addition to performing other domestic works. Food is usually taken in plates sitting on the floor, usually men and children eat first followed by females. In special occasions and festivals they prepare different types of cakes from rice powder and coconut.

While people from rural area generally dress themselves with dothi/lungi and gamchha, women wear ordinary sari. Well-to-do-people use shirts and trousers and women from such background use blouse and petticoats along with sari. People usually use ordinary slippers as footwear. Leather and canvas shoes are rarely worn by the sample people. People generally use umbrella in rainy and summer seasons and they prefer to ride bicycle. Few well-to-do rural families of our sample villages possess motorcycle or bike. In our 12 sample villages it was observed that none has four wheeler vehicles. Majority of women use ornaments made of silver, gold and shell.

Oriya, an Indo-Aryan language, is the mother tongue of majority of the people followed by Urdu, the mother tongue of the Muslims. The Oriya of this region is treated as standard Oriya language and is used in writings for the whole of Orissa (Malley, 1929). Almost every village has its own tutelary deity known as Grama Devati20. Carved images are also worshipped in some villages. The Gram Devati is worshipped in different religious festivals and also on occasions like the outbreak of epidemics, marriage, etc. Majority of the people belong to Sudra caste (Bhandari, Mali, Rout, Dhoba, etc.) some of them are from tribal background (Saora, Sabara, Kandha, etc.). Those tribal who serve as Sevaka21 get remuneration from the villagers for their service. The village deities are worshipped as Durga and Jogini. The Gram Devati is worshiped by the villagers on the Mahastami day of Duseherra. At some places goats and fowls are sacrificed during the worship to appease the deity. In many villages, the youth worship the goddess Durga by erecting temporary decorative pandals (like tent) and idols on the eve of Mahastami in the month of October.

20 Grama Devati is represented by a piece of stone smeared with vermilion.
21 Sevaka is the service provider.
The people in our sample villages still believe in Kalasi\textsuperscript{22}. Kalasi is a man or woman who is periodically possessed by the spirit or a deity and pronounces inspired oracles. When a person is being influenced by Takurani\textsuperscript{23} (a deity), he begins to tremble with dishevelled hair. At that time he reveals the wishes of the Takurani to the public. When the spirit leaves, the person again acts as a common man or woman. During the time of calamities the people perform puja\textsuperscript{24} before the village deity. They burn incense, light wick, beat drums and offer pana (a sweet drink). This is done for causing the spirit of a deity to descend upon a person with a view to hear the deity's wishes and oracles. Having heard the news the villagers again perform ceremonies to propitiate the deity. This practice is also related to the cure of filariasis. The devotees make vows near the Takurani and try to please the Kalasi by offering coconut, fruits and pana to receive blessing for getting rid of filariasis.

The pipal (Ficus religiosa), banyan (Ficus benghalensis), bel (Aegle marmelos) and tulasi (Ocimum sanctum) trees/plant are considered to be sacred by the Hindu. In almost every Hindu family, one would find a chaura (a raised structure) where tulasi is planted and worshipped. Every evening lighted wicks are offered by the housewife before the chaura.

The people of sample villages observe a number of festivals throughout the year. They prepare different types of dishes from rice, green gram powder or black gram powder and jaggery during the festivals. Those are distributed among kinsmen, friends, neighbours and villagers as part of the celebration. People celebrate Tribeni Jatra, Magha Saptami and Makar Jatra in January. They observe Sivaratri in February. During March, they celebrate Ashokastami, Baruni Swama and Dolajatra. In the month of April Chandan Jatra, Jhamu Jatra and Rama Navami are celebrated. During June-July they observe Raja and Rathajatra. The Raja Sankaranti which is celebrated in the month of June is a typical Oriya festival. The Ratha Jatra or car festival is a major festival in a calendar year.

\textsuperscript{22} Kalasi is a man or woman who is periodically possessed by the spirit or a deity and pronounces inspired oracles.
\textsuperscript{23} Takurani is the village deity.
\textsuperscript{24} Puja is the worship of God or Goddess by offering flowers, fruits etc.
People celebrate *Jhulan jatra, Janmastami* and *Sunia* in the month of August-September. October is the month of holidays and festival. The people of our sample villages celebrate *Durga Puja* and *Dasara* in this month. Puja pandals (tents) are erected in villages for the worship of goddess *Durga*. In the month of November people worship Lord *Krishna* in the day of *Rasa Purnima*. Besides the above-mentioned festivals, people also celebrate *Laxmi Puja, Trinath Mela* and *Bhagabat mela*. All these festivals are centred around Hindu religion with special reference to Lord *Jagannath*.

The health and other infrastructure in the present study area are not up to the mark to cater to the needs of the people. The primary healthcare system is managed by a primary health centre (PHC) or community health centre (CHC). Under a PHC there are around 20 villages and the PHC is divided into 8-10 sub-centres. The sub-centres provide health facilities through the health workers and they are administratively controlled by the medical officer of the concerned PHC. In general, it is observed that the healthcare utilisation and services in the sample villages are far from satisfaction. The drainage system is extremely poor. There is no organized effort to improve the drainage system for cleaning the wastewater. The drain water flows on to the streets in rainy season. These drain pits offer breeding ground for mosquitoes. None of the sample villages has a health centre or sub-centre. In all the cases, the primary health centre is about 8-10 kilometers away from the village. The health workers of the respective villages also do not reside in the villages. For even a minor health problem, the villagers depend upon the traditional healers and quacks. When the health condition deteriorates and remains out of the control of the traditional healers, they visit the nearest PHC. None of the sample villages has a pharmacy shop. However, all the village possess small grocery shop. The villages are electrified without the provision of streetlight. The villagers depend upon common wells for drinking water. They normally do not prefer to tube well water for drinking purpose. Most of the villages have primary school and tube well. Majority of the households of the sample village are thatched and *cucchah*. But some *Khandayat*

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25 Jagannath is the Hindu God. People believe whom as the incarnation of Lord Vishnu. His main temple is situated in Puri, Orissa.
families of Badatota, Panichhatra and Barapada have pucca houses. Mostly the Bauris of Kansapada and Sabaras of Podapada possess one-room hutments.

Lymphatic Filariasis in Khurda District

The clinical manifestations of filariasis is evident from the stone carving of the famous Konark26 sun temple built in 200 AD, which is about 30 kilometers away from the study area. Areas around Konark are well known for endemicity of elephantiasis and other forms of LF. In the writings of Rai Bahadur Premananda Das, Late Civil Surgeon of Puri of early twentieth century, it is mentioned that:

"Filaria, Ankylostomiasis (hookworm) and similar infections are endemic in Puri and are responsible for the poor physique of the Oriya people, especially in the district. The incidence and intensity of these infections and their effect upon the general physique, vitality, energy and working capacity of the population is so great as to constitute a problem of great economic importance".

The clinical investigations on filariasis were initiated in 1919, and subsequently a research laboratory and hospital was opened in Puri in 1924 (Malley, 1929). The recent studies also revealed that the study area is known for its endemicity for lymphatic filariasis caused by Wuchereria bancrofti, which is mainly transmitted by Culex quinquefasciatus27 with microfilaria rate and density of 9.4 per cent and 19.2 (Dash et al., 1998). The total disease and chronic disease rate are 12.5 per cent and 7 per cent respectively (Babu et al., 2001). With the help of the Government of India, the National Filaria Control Programme was started in the state of Orissa in 1955-56. The district was brought under the programme during the following year when three filarial control units were simultaneously started in Puri, Khurda and Ranapur with population coverage of 3 lakhs each. Besides, a pilot project covering a population of one and half lakh was also started in the same year with its headquarters at Ranapur.

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26 Konark is a temple of Suna devata (Sun) situated at Konark. The temple is made up with stones with beautiful arts on stones. It is also known world wide as black pagoda.

27 Culex quinquefasciatus is a species of mosquito, which is responsible for the transmission of filariasis.
Since the year 1956-57, spray operations with high Gama were conducted in the coastal area with a view to controlling LF. However, with the instructions of the Government of India, mass Diethylcarbamazine (DEC) therapy was also undertaken from 1959-60 for controlling the filariasis infection among the population within the area of operation of the programme. This process however, continued only for three years until 1961-62, when the Government of India appointed the first assessment committee to review the progress of the scheme. As per the recommendations of the committee both the above measures were discontinued and the activities were confined to the urban areas only. The Ranapur unit was consequently shifted to Bhubaneswar in the year 1962-63 and the pilot project was closed in 1967-68. Weekly spraying over the drains, ponds and unused tanks etc. for checking mosquito breeding constituted the anti-larval measures undertaken by the units. Subsequently, surveys were conducted in order to ascertain the rate of infection in both the mosquitoes and men (Senapati and Kuanar, 1980).

The above description gives a bird's eye-view on the area and the people. The description will provide a matrix for analysing LF and its treatment in the context of rural coastal Orissa.