CHAPTER-II

DESCRIPTION OF THE FIELD
The term Kiśān in Hindi means farmer.
The origin of the term may be traced to the Sanskrit root Kṛṣ which means to plough. S.C. Roy (1915) writing on the origin of the Kuruks (Crāons) connotes the tribe with the mythical king 'Karak', a name having a close resemblance to the word Kṛṣ (Das 1972: 145). Mohammad Laeequddin opines that "The name is probably derived from the Persian word 'Kiśān' which means a cultivator" (1937: 160).

The name, in any case, is believed to be acquired due to their innovation in Agriculture (Dalton 1972: 127). While Gait regards it as a synonym of the Nāgesiā tribe and as a title of the Orāons. Risley identifies it as a sub-caste of 'Kalwārs' in Bihar and a title of Khariā in Chhotnagpur (Porter 1933: 473).
Some elderly Kisans and Oraons, believe themselves to be emigrants from the same regions, viz., Chhotnagpur area, Rohtasgarh, Kuangarh, Nagpur and Dhanpur. The Kisans in Orissa claim to be the 'Ba$ Oraons' (elder-Oraons) because, they migrated to Orissa prior to the Oraons. Similarly, the Oraons say that during migration they followed the Kisans and cooked in earthen pots left out by the Kisans and that is why they consider themselves as 'Chhoṭ-Oraons' (younger-Oraons).

In Orissa, the Kisans believe that they first settled at Ved Vyas (near Rourkela, in the former princely State of Gangpur). From there, they moved on to the South-East and entered Bamra, Bonai, Pallahara and Rairakhol Princely States and other adjoining parts of Orissa. According to 1961, 1971 and 1981 Census reports their main concentration is in the adjoining Sub-divisions (viz., Kuchinda, Jharsuguda, Rairakhol and Rajgangpur of Sambalpur; Sundargarh proper and Bonai of Sundargarh and Pallahara of Dhenkanal districts.

A 'Kišān Mahāsabhā' held on 26th April 1981 at Paidamal, a village 15 Kms. from Sambalpur on N.H.6 (towards Deogarh) had representatives from the Kožas and the Mirdhās too. The Mahāsabhā proceedings recorded that the Kožas, the Mirdhās and the Kišāns were one and the same people. The view argued out unanimously at the conference traced the origin of the Mirdhās and Kišāns to the Kožas, whose principal occupation was earth digging.
Risley (1891 : 490), describes Kisan as a section of Biahut sub-caste of 'Kolvârs' of Bihar and a totemic sept of Mundâ in Chhotnagpur and a synonym for Nâgesiâ tribe.

Quoting B.C. Majumdar and Rai Bahadur Hiralal, Mohammed Laeequddin reports that "like the 'Koras' the Kisans are really the Oraons". The Oraons in Sambalpur are all known as Kisans (1937 : 160). S.C. Roy (1915 : 9) gives an identical view, quoting Grierson (Linguistic Survey of India and Bengal Census Report - 1911). He observed that "the 'Kuruk's of Saranggarh tributary State in Orissa are now, partly, known as 'Dhângars' and partly as Kisans and the later name is also partly applied to the Oraons in certain other localities such as in parts of Sambalpur district as well as in the Bomrâ, Rairakhul and Pal-lahara States in Orissa". W.G. Lacey (1933 : 272) reports that it is difficult to distinguish between Oraons and Kisans or Nâgesiâ, another Dravidian tribe found principally in the States of Bamra, Gangpur and Bonai. It is reported that in the above locality the two tribes are really one and the same. Complementing the opinion of Risley, Prasad (1961 : 246) reports that the Kisans of Sambalpur and Sundargarh are oblivious of the term Nâgeswar and Nâgesia. Kisans seem to be an off-shoot of the great Oraon tribe which belongs to the Dravidian group. Their language known as 'Kun-boli' is allied to that of Oraons and they called themselves as 'Kunhâr' (Mohanty 1964 : 179).
They were moving in groups for excavating ponds, laying roads and renovating the cultivable land of the Zamindārs and Gauntias. The head of the group was called the 'Mirdhā'.

With the growth of population resulting in inadequate employment a number of them took to agricultural wage earning and found it to be a comparatively secured means of livelihood than nomadism and earth digging. In course of time they acquired small patches of land of their own to become owner cultivators who later came to be known as Kiśāns. The group leaders also taking to agriculture continued to be known as Mirdhā and retained their separate identity from the common Kiśāns.

The Kiśān agriculturists cleared areas adjoining to their forest habitats and settled in small villages. In some villages of Gangpur, Bamra and Bonai, the Kiśāns claim to be the descendants of the Khunṭi-kaṭā-Praja or the first settlers of the village. In some villages we find Kiśān Gauntiās and in some others, stories are in vogue, how they lost their Gaunti to the affluent communities like the Goṇds, the Bhuyāns, the Agariās, the Telis, the Chaṇās, etc.

II

From a study conducted on the Kiśāns by the Department of Anthropology and Sociology, Sambalpur University, it was found that the males of the community are short to medium in stature, with an average height of 159.08 cm.
About 50% males are dolichocephalic and 25% are of mesocephalic. Almost all Kisan males possess meso to chamarrhine nose, a few (about 12%) possess hyper-chamarrhine noses. Regarding facial form about 71% are euro to mesoprosopic and a few are hyper europrosopic and hyper leptoprosopic.

The Kisan women are short and upto the average of 149 cms. in height. About 75% females are dolicho to mesocephalic. 50% of them have chamarrhine noses. 80% female faces are hyper europrosopic to europrosopic and the distribution of lepto and hyper leptoprosopic faces are comparatively less (about 8% and 3% respectively).

Among the Kisans 33% have 'O', 26.11% 'B', 24.63% 'A' and 16.11% have AB blood group.

III

Kinship is the corner-stone of the Kisan social organization. The kin based groups are the Family, the Lineage and the Clan.

THE FAMILY

The Kisan family is patriarchal and patrilocal. The Kisans prefer nuclear families. Composite families are rare. The former either consists of a man, his spouse and their children, or may contain one or both parents of the male spouse.
THE LINEAGE

The Kiśān lineage is called 'Jama'. It is patrilineal. The members of a lineage congregate during marriage, death and birth ceremonies of their members. On such occasions the seniormost member officiates as the priest to worship the ancestors.

THE CLAN

Clan, the nominal kin-group of the Kiśāns is called 'Bamsa'. These are totemic and exogamous. The Kiśāns believe that there are 550 clans. Those which the people could recount are only recorded (Appendix-I). Some clans are divided into a number of hierarchical sub-clans (Appendix-II).

Some clans are clustered on the bond of their mutual ritual relationships. Bose (1971 : 55) calls these clusters 'Bandhu' clans. The Kiśāns call them as 'Mitan bamsa'. These clusters are exogamous. Clusters that we came across during field work are recorded (Appendix-II).

INTER-CLAN RELATIONSHIP

A Kiśān is ritually polluted on the birth of a child or death of an individual in the lineage. In Kiśān tradition the purificatory rites are performed by the members of another clan. Because of this customary necessity each clan is under the clientele of persons of other clans specifically selected by the village Council. Such persons are called Jāti and their function is termed as 'Jāti Kām'.
The Jātis are expected to perform all prescribed purificatory rituals for their clients. All Kišāns of the village are normally invited to the purificatory feasts. The services of a Jāti is also needed in other functions like Kānbaru, Marriage, etc. On such occasions, however, their presence is not ritualistically significant, though socially obligatory and is important.

IV

The two other non kin-groups found among the Kišāns are Bāḏ and Pāṇṭhi.

BĀḌ

Bāḏ, stands for a group of families clustered together in a village as a unit functional in the context of certain socio-religious life of the Kišāns.

The pollution-purity syndrome is very strong among the Kišāns. An individual is polluted when he transgresses a social taboo, such as taking tabooed food or marrying a non-Kišān. A male until initiation (marked by piercing the ears called Kān-baroo) remains ritually impure and cannot worship the ancestors or Gods. A lineage is polluted following a death or birth in any family/households of the group. A village is polluted in the events of an epidemic like small pox, phātua (animal disease), etc.
In case of the first two types of pollution a series of purificatory rituals are performed in the defiled household officiated by a member of another clan. The ritual functionary is called Jāti and the work he performs is called Jāti kām.

A feast follows all social ceremonies and purificatory rituals. It involves heavy expenditure because of the obligation of inviting the Jātis and all other members of their family and affinal relatives from other villages. Often, purificatory feasts (not the ritual) are postponed to a future suitable date for want of resources.

The ritual involvement of the Jāti in social ceremonies and the social obligation to feed them, often, become too exacting. When it is a marriage or an initiation ceremony there is time to prepare. But when it is related to such unexpected events as death, expenditure turns out to be contingent and one is, often, not prepared for it.

Faced with such inconveniences and pressure on finances, the Kišāns felt the need to reduce expenditure, leading to divide the village into groups which are now called bāḍs. A bāḍ thus consists of a number of households joined together from more than one clan. The multi clan grouping facilitates the availability of a Jāti within the bāḍ to perform purificatory rituals.

A person/family expelled from a bāḍ cannot find easy entry into another bāḍ; nor can a family easily change
membership from one bad to another. In any such contingency the members and the Siāns of both the bads have to approve of the exit and entry.

The family seeking the exit and entry has to pay a penalty to its old bad and an entry fee to the new bad. At the moment it is fixed at 15 tambi (or 15 kgs.) rice each, which is used to prepare kusunā (rice beer for the bad members).

BAD IN TUREI-NIKTIMAL

Till c. 1920, the Kişāns of Turei-Niktimal formed a single unit with those of the nearby villages Kainsbahal, Kurumloī, and Damamunda. Later Turei-Niktimal broke away and established its separate unit.

Sometime during the early 30's this village further split into three bads. The new bads became coterminus with the three parās or hamlets of the village. The bads were named after the hamlets.

Sometime during the 60's the Talipara bad split into two. One numerically dominant Bar clan is called the Bar bad; and the other residing near a munda is called the Munḍā bad.

During the field investigation we located 11 bads in the village. Of the original three, except Khatkurbāhal bad, the other two seem to have split several times (Table 1).
The Bar bād split in 1977 for Magarmunda issue\(^2\) and Bala bād was formed. Similarly, Fagunu Seul joined in Nata bād (No.VI) in March 1981 following a quarrel with Judhistir, the Siān of Bar bād (Case 1).

Of the 11 bāds in the village, 4 have two clans, 2 have 3 clans and 4 have 4 clans each. The number of families vary from 3 to 18 (Appendix-III).

A bād may be named after the name of its Kālo, Siān, the dominant clan or the original or old clan, the hamlet or after a natural land mark (Appendix-III).

The priest of the bād is called Kālo. He officiates at all rituals of the bād. The secular head is called Siān who presides over all its meetings. In certain cases the Siāns combine in them the office of the Kālo also. These offices are not hereditary but the incumbents are appointed for life. They are chosen from time to time from among the affluent and influential personalities of the community.

The case material shows that a bād may split following conflicts among the members; among Siāns or members of different bāds. Thus, the emergence of a new bād need not necessarily be due to economic expediency. Thus, a bād as an organisation, is in a constant state of flux and frequent changes of membership have become very common.

Purificatory rituals, following birth and death pollution are performed by the Jāti on the 10th and 11th day in case of death, and on the 12th day in case of birth.
The ritual consists of telpāni or anointing a little oil and sprinkling turmeric water on the polluted. The polluted persons are debarred from touching the sacred objects needed for the ritual. Hence, a Jāti is required to do all preparatory works for the ritual. Starting from carrying the dead body from the house till the end of the purificatory rites, the Jāti's association is essential. The Kālo functions as the priest on all such occasions. If his (the Kālo's) lineage is polluted, somebody else of the bād, who is conversant with the rituals acts as the Kālo.

In addition to ritual functions, the bād members serve each other in the group in many areas of socio-economic activity. They act as messengers to the relatives. The members render the necessary help to organise a feast on behalf of any member. Normally all family members of Jāti work on the day of such feasts. Mutual help in securing agricultural tools and implements, seeds, and consumer goods, etc., are other intra-bad activities.

Besides, the socio-religious and economic functions, a bād, of late, has come to behave as a political faction in the village Kiṣān Council. The cases of inter or intra-family quarrels are first dealt in the bād. Now a days, the village Kiṣān Council meetings are attended only by the Siāns of the bāds and a few influential persons, even though, each family head is a member of the council. In two meetings of the village Kiṣān Council held during my field work, it was observed that out of 104 family heads only 36 and 41 were
present in the first and second meeting respectively. There were only two representatives in both the meetings from Khatkurbahal bāḍ.

During elections, the contestants approach the Sians for help instead of door to door canvassing. Candidates estimate their strength based on the support they are assured by the Sians.

"The pollution beliefs are cultural phenomena for which pollution behaviour is a protective device. They are institutions that can keep their form only by bringing pressure to bear on deviant individuals" (Sills 1968: 339-41). Such pressure, however, need to be kept at a tolerable limit under changing situations, when the people find it beyond tolerable limit society establishes new norms to protect its members.

Bad is the outcome of such an adjustment in the social economic and religious codes of conduct in the behaviour pattern among the Kisan.

Through the bāḍ, the Kisan manage to decrease the financial burden on the individual in arranging the ceremonial feasts. But it opened a frontier that encourages groupings in the homogeneous Kisan community. The voluntary group formation turned into factionalism. The obvious reason is that the concomitant mores have not yet been developed in confirmity with the one-time tribal ideals of homogeneity.
The intensity of social interaction seem to be more socio-economic than ritual. The ritual function is customary but others are spontaneous, voluntary and based on reciprocal exchange. The former are the manifest and the latter are latent functions of the bāḍ.

Paradoxically, the bāḍ has weakened the importance of Kingroups. Kingroups are breaking into small groups after the emergence of the bāḍ. The lineage and clan members are divided over a number of bāḍs which are, often, not in very good terms.

Thus close and intimate proximity among the bāḍ members connote that it is an 'in-group', characterised by voluntary and reciprocal relations.

Within the existing structural frame, functions of the bāḍ have come to occupy a significant position in the social organisation of the Kisans.

Data at my disposal are not sufficient for a complete understanding of the bāḍ. Attempt has only been made to highlight the functions of this social group in the agricultural activities of the tribe.

PĀΝṬHI

The term literally means a fund. The Kisans seem to have adopted it from the Orāon's Pachā³ (literally meaning five), similar in structure and function to pāṇṭhi. The Kisan uses the term to mean 'group-work' as well as a
fund raised by the members through contribution of their labour which is deposited in a fund to be spent each year in the Pauṣa Purnimā day (full moon day of Pauṣa-January). It appears identical to the 'Rikbo-bonām' (Co-operative Youth Organisation) of the Mishing (Bhandari 1974 : 18) or to 'Husari' of Assam (Ratha) or to the African 'neighbourhood' or to the 'Risaga' of Western Kenya or to the 'working party' in Berned (Mair 1965 : 171-72). These groups when recruited are paid no remunerations, but are entertained with local drinks and a meal and occasionally money (e.g. Rikbo-bonām) is paid which is kept in a common fund.

A Kīṣān pāṇṭhi is an organisation consisting of an adult male from each constituting household (who normally, is its functional head). Occasionally, when the elder is otherwise engaged, he may depute a younger substitute. Such substitution is allowed to a maximum of three times only.

Thus, pāṇṭhi is the informal working group in a Kīṣān village. Its activity is multifarious (both agricultural and non-agricultural) and limited to a day in a week. A particular day of the week is fixed as the 'working day' (referred as pāṇṭhi din) on which all its members work for one of them. The work of that day is referred to as pāṇṭhi work (pāṇṭhi kām). The usual working hour is from early morning to noon. The member employer contributes one rupee to the common fund and offers tobacco (bhāṅg) and local bidi (kāhālī) to the members during working hours. The group works for its members on rotation. If, on the request of the member-employer, it works till the work is completed or till
evening, the member-employer gives the day-meal and kusunā (rice beer) to the members in addition to the usual payment.

From 1971 to 1974 Fagunu Dhan, a 50 years old Kišān of Turei-Niktimal had leased in some land of Rājā buḍhā, an Orāon of Kalijharan, a neighbouring village. The non-cultivating owner Rājā buḍhā was staying at Rourkela with his daughter, whose husband was a Steel Plant employee. During this period Fagunu had enrolled himself in a Pāchā of the Orāons of Kalijharan. In the year 1974 Rājā buḍhā sold his land and Fagunu was evicted from his tenancy following which he returned to his village and organised a pānṭhi in 1976. To begin with it contained six members. During my field work in 1985, there were 10 pānṭhis among the Kišāns of Turei-Niktimal (Table 2).

74, out of 104 Kišān families of the village have formed 10 pānṭhis. The average size of a pānṭhi works out to be 7 members (Table 2). There are two pānṭhis: one in Talipara (pānṭhi No.3) and the other in Uparpara (pānṭhi No.7) having 10 members each. The smaller ones are No.5 and No.8 from Talipara and Uparpara respectively having 5 members each (Table 3).

It appears from the data that only small and marginal farmers have organized pānṭhis (Table 3 and 4). It is observed that the average land per family is about 4 acres and average annual family income is about ₹2800/-.
The average pereapita land of the ninth pāṇṭhi is slightly higher because of the inclusion of a member with 15 acres of land (Table 3). A family who on record is landless (Table 4) is in possession of around 2 acres of encroached public land.

57 (77.03%) families own land less than 5 acres and 15 (20.27%) own between 5 and 10 acres. Only two have more than 10 acres, but their operational holding is less (Table 4).

Membership in a pāṇṭhi is purely voluntary and open to all. The Orāons levy an entry fee in terms of kusunā and a cock, but the Kisans do not have any such requirements except the consent of the existing members. An expelled member or one who has once deserted a pāṇṭhi is, however, not allowed re-entry. A pāṇṭhi with large membership, often, restricts new entries. A 5 to 7 member pāṇṭhi is considered ideal.

A pāṇṭhi does not have a formal head. It is identified by its members. The fund raised by the members contribution is kept by one of them. He does not have any designation and is changed every year on the Pauṣa Pūrṇima day.

The principal motivation behind pāṇṭhi formation is to help one-another in an organised and collective way.

Agricultural activities of the pāṇṭhi include reclamation of land, repairing of dykes, harvesting, etc.
Non-agricultural ones include repairing or building a house, collection of house building material, annual rethatching of the roof, digging a well, etc.

The working hours differ from season to season. In winter members go to work around 7-7.30 A.M. and finish around 1 P.M., and during summer work starts by 5-5.30 A.M. and ends around 11 O' clock.

The Kisans learnt the functional advantages of an organisation like pāṇṭhi from the Orāons and have been successfully utilising the organisation to their benefit.

The network of reciprocal relationships for mutual advantage is the corner-stone of this organisation which satisfies the needs of the members and the community, and through which some day-to-day problems are solved and integration achieved.

Other than the bāḍ and the kin groups, the Kisans of each village have a Council of their own. This Council looks into all the socio-political and religious affairs of the tribe in the village. It has the power to punish and pardon an offender who violates the moral code of the tribe. All cases, civil and criminal, are dealt with by this Council at the first instance and an amicable settlement is attempted. The head of the Council is called
'Siān'. On the whole the Council exercises social control over the Kiṣāns living in the village.

The village, if it is multi-ethnic, has also a Panchayat. The 'Gauntiā' is its head and family/house-heads of each family/household are the members thereof. In case of a homogenous Kiṣān village the Kiṣān Council acts as village Panchayat. Often, the Kiṣān Council invites the the Gauntiā and/or some influential persons (Bhalluka) of the Panchayat to help it in arriving at a settlement.

VI

The Kiṣāns of several adjoining villages constitute 'Panchapāli Panchayat' (Panch means five and Pāli means village). But here Panchapāli does not refer to five village only. It may refer to a number of villages. Cases that cannot be settled at the village level are referred to Panchapāli Panchayat. It is the final authority to take any decision relating to the social taboos, norms and customs, etc.. This Panchayat meets once a year on the Gaṅgāpujā day held on the full moon day of Pauṣa. The effigies of the ancestors during the year after the last pujā was conducted are brought to the Gaṅgā-ghāṭ (a specific spot on the bank of a stream fixed for the emersion of the dead). This pujā is followed by a community feast, songs and dance. To participate and enjoy the occasion a large number of villagers gather there. Prior to the pujā, the Panchapāli Panchayat formally meets and discusses disputes referred to it by various villages.
Persons declared guilty are to pay a fine immediately, failing which he is either not allowed to immerse the effigy of his dead ancestor in the ghat or expelled from the community. The head of the Panchapali Panchayat is also called 'Sian'.

VII

The head of the Kisan Council is hereditary and that of the Panchapali is selected every year. The Kisan Priest is called Kalo. He is also hereditary. Each bād in the village has also a Kalo; and he is not hereditary. A person conversant with the names of the deities and with the rituals involved in different worships, is choosen as Kalo. The village Kalo, however, is still hereditary. The person who acts as the priest in Gaṅgā pujā is called Pāṅgiri. His position is hereditary.

Māṭī is the medicine man who too has the knowledge of the ways of the evil spirits and cures diseases caused by them. He is looked upon as a helpful man of the community who uses herbs, magico-religious methods to cure diseases.

VIII

The mainstay of the Kisans is agriculture. Income and occupation pattern clearly show the extent of their dependence on agriculture and its allied activities. Forest
collection, wage-earning, carpentry, domestication of birds and animals are supplementary income generating activities (Table 5).

Ironically, most Kisans have either insufficient or no land of their own. Most of them are landless or marginal and small farmers. The small land holders supplement their income either by share-cropping or by leasing in land on fixed rent (Kar or ḍhikā). The landless work as labourers either on yearly contract (guti) or on daily wage basis (bhutier) under the well-to-do households of the village. The marginal and small farmers too join the wage earners. Some of them lease out their small plots to more enterprising farmers.

The techniques of cultivation used by the Kisans may be characterised as simple plough cultivation. Bullocks and buffaloes play the most important role in the entire processess of agriculture and its allied activities. The Kisans use cow-dung and excreta of other domesticated animals, as manure. The pits of animal excreta and domestic refuses present a common scene in any Kisan village and any village in Western Orissa. The use of animal excreta as manure and aversion to chemical fertilisers encourage the Kisans and other peasants in the village towards cattle rearing.

Farming hardly feeds the Kisan for the entire year. Harvesting is followed by festivities from January to May (Pauṣa to Chaitra). All festivals and ceremonies
of the Kisans fall during these months. The marriages take place during Pausa to Chaitra. To meet the contingent expenditure certain quantity of the farm products, such as, vegetables, pulses, millets are sold away. These gradually deplete the store and push the uncalculating Kisan to day-to-day wage earning for the rest of the year. Forest collections are either exchanged for consumer goods or sold for cash to meet the daily needs.

Many Kisans waste their resources on profuse consumption of liquor. Liquor consumption is entertained at all socio-religious ceremonies. It is also offered to the ancestors, guests, Gods and benevolent as well as malevolent spirits.

PRIMARY OCCUPATIONS

53.23% households of the village have agriculture as their primary and 36.02% as secondary occupations. 58.65% of Kisan households have agriculture as their primary and 25% as their secondary occupations. They receive 57.22% of their income from this sector (Table 5). Thus, agriculture is the mainstay of the village in general and the Kisans in particular.

Landless wage earners of the village are also sustained, largely, through agricultural labour only. For 39.42% of Kisan households daily wage earning is the primary occupation. 27.88% supplement their income from it. It is the second major occupation. 29.96% of the income of
70.19% of households are either landless or marginal and small farmers who depend on it either on whole time or part-time basis (Table 6). The marginal and small farmers manage their farming by one or two adult workers particularly by the household head; and the other workers of the family are engaged in wage-earning. For example, Daya Majhi, Akhin Majhi, Gulbadan Bar, Judhistir Bar, Mansi Seul, the heads of their respective households work in their own land and the other workers of their families go out to earn their wage either as casual or contract labourers. Small landholders (less than 2 acres) like, Abhi Majhi, Bipin Majhi, Jalram Bag, Thubi Bar, who have leased out their land, work as contract labourers.

As described later (Chapter IV) wage earners can either be employed on annual contract (guti) or as casual labourers (bhutier). Another form of guti is called sāhāji.

Usually there is no migration of labourer out of the village. It was noticed only once in recent times in 1981, when a group of male labourers went out to work in the Guhira M.I.P., near Deogarh, about 150 kms. away. During the same year and in the next a group of male and female workers went out as harvesting labour to the irrigated area near Sambalpur during rabi season. Such temporary migrations are noticed during the lean agricultural season (March and May) when employment is not available in and around the village. The migrants return home before Chandan Jātrā, observed in the village on the full moon day of Baisākh.
23 adults and 10 boys work as guti. 3 boys work as gharkhia in their village.

There are five salaried employees in the village. Hari Majhi and Gopal Majhi (brothers) work as Forest Guard. Hari is in the Forest Deptt. and Gopal is in the Kendu Leaf Deptt. They are the absentee land owners. Jharu Majhi works as a casual watchman for four months in a year (March-June) in the Kalijharan cashew nut plantation about two kms. away from the village. Karuna Bar is the postal messenger in the village post office who carries postal-bags to the nearby sub-post office. The eldest son of Laxman Bar is a primary school teacher. He broke away from his family of orientation and is no longer considered a member of his father's family. Satrughan Kua, who works as the Home Guard, is in the job since October, 1981.

SECONDARY OCCUPATIONS

96.23% households earn about 6.08% of their total income (Table 8) and considerable quantity of food items from forest collections carried through for about 4 months a year (Appendix-VIII). The items of forest collections sold are mahua flowers and fruits, kendu, char, sāl seeds, dhātki flower, kendu leaves. During August and October, females and children, occasionally, collect makar kanda (a wild tuber) for self consumption. Kendu, char are only occasionally sold. Some of these items are exchanged for salt.
The unit for forest collection is the household, irrespective of sex. Only kendu leaves are collected by the female folk, but arranging and binding them into bundles for sale is a bisexual job. Girls of 12 years and above accompany their mothers to the forest.

Four households are engaged in small trade. Three of them sell liquor and the other sells ice-cream in summer. The former are Bishnu Bag from Uparpara, Nata Dan, and Bala Bar from Talipara. They get their supply from Kusumi and Turei distillery respectively. It is a round the year activity. They do not, however, consider it to be their primary occupation. The income drawn by these 4 households constitute 1.82% of the gross income of the Kišāns, and they are in the highest income group (Table 5).

On an average there are three draught animals, 2 goats and 7 or 8 hens per family among the Kišāns (Table 13). These animals and birds are the symbols of the traditional practice of animal husbandry. They are not reared for commercial purposes. Cows and buffaloes are maintained for agricultural purposes. Goats and poultry, though occasionally meet their contingencies are mostly utilised for their meat on social and religious occasions for sacrifice and feasting. Though a number of households have availed IRDP benefits of Govt. finance for goat rearing it is yet to come to the take off stage as a commercial venture. Akhin Majhi has been taken to piggery under this programme.
Twenty three households of livestock owners contribute 1.32% to the total income of the Kisans. The average income from this sector is the lowest (Table 5).

Craft in the village context refers only to carpentry as a source of income. Three Kisans, viz., Goenda, Krushna and Akhin. Goenda is reasonably skilled and prepares cots, tables, chairs, sofa, etc. They do not, however, have a regular market for their products. They work to orders. Akhin has specialised in making bullock-cart wheels. He has a better market than the other two.

Besides these three commercially oriented carpenters, there are many others who have acquired the required skill to make their own beds (khat), and agricultural implements and other household furniture. The carpenters, the commercial ones as well as the self-helpers, resort to this activity despite from agricultural activities.

Krushna, the carpenter is an IRDP beneficiary in 1981. He received a loan of Rs.5000/- and some tools.

IX

Due to long association with the neighbouring castes, the Kisans regard themselves as a Jāti excepting those who have embraced Christianity. They worship a number of Brahminical Gods and Goddesses, viz., Śiva, Jagannath, Ganeś, Laxmi, Saraswati and observe certain festivals as
Navanna, Gamhā Prunimā, Ratha and Bāhuḍā jāṭrā, Chandan jāṭrā, Durgā pujā, etc. They also observe regional ceremonies like Bhāijuntiā, Pua-juntiā. In some villages the Kisans organise Kirtan mandalies and celebrate Vaiṣṇavite Aṣṭapraharīs.

Ancestral worship is associated with all socio-religious functions. They worship the 'Sun' (regarded as Dharma Devatā), the Earth (as mother Goddess) and the Tiger (as Banarāj - lord of the forest). Besides, mountains, rivers, trees and supernatural beings (Mahāvira, Bhainsāsura), etc., are worshipped. Deities and spirits are also propitiated to cure diseases.

X

In social ranking the Kisans are considered lower than the Bhuyāns and Goṇās in the village. The Kisans themselves, however, not only avoid inter-marriage but also inter-dining with other tribes or castes. Girls after puberty and men after marriage are prohibited from eating cooked food from non-Kisans, including Brahmans. They treat the Pāṇas, Chamārs, Gaṇḍās and Ghāsīs as untouchables.

XI

Of late the elite among the Kisans are trying to bring about certain reforms against superstitious customs, beliefs and practices. They are organising Mahāsabhās to discuss these matters and to dissuade their tribemen from such practices. How far have these Mahāsabhās been successful in achieving the objectives is not yet clear.
THE VILLAGE

I

The village selected for the present study is Turei-Niktimal. It is in the Kuchinda Tahasil of the former princely state of Bamra that merged with the Sambalpur district of Orissa on 1st January, 1948.

The prefix, Turei, indicates its location near the comparatively larger village named Turei, at a distance of 2 kms. West, marked off from the two other villages of the locality namely, Thakur-Niktimal and Babu-Niktimal.

II

Turei-Niktimal is situated between 84°28' to 84°32' longitude and 21°19' to 21°21' latitude. It is on the North-Eastern boarder of Sambalpur district touching the boundary of Bonai Sub-division of Sundargarh district. Kuchinda, the Block as well as the Sub-divisional headquarters,
is 22 kms. away from the village. The Kusumi-Kuchinda metalled road is approached through a 7 kms. Kuchhā Panchayat road from the village. On the West, another Kuchhā Panchayat road touches the Kuchinda-Bamra metalled road at Paruavadi at a distance of 15 kms. Bamra, the nearest railway station on the South Eastern Railway, is about 60 kms. away.

The Panchayat headquarters, 'Kuntra' is 6 kms. away. Except Turei-Niktimal, which comes under Mahulpali Police-Station, all other villages of Kuntra Gram-Panchayat are under Kusumi Police-Station. Village Kuntra provides a number of facilities such as a Public Health Centre (PHC), Centre for Cattle care under a Livestock Inspector (LI), a High School and small College (Humanities). Kuntra and Turei are the nearest public transport points served mostly by private buses. Service of government buses is very limited in this area. There is an Upper Primary School in the village and a Middle English (M.E.) School at Turei.

III

Sambalpur district can be divided into five natural divisions, viz., the Bargarh plains, the Borasambar, Ambabana and Lakhanpur, Sambalpur Sub-division, and the hilly regions of Rairkhol, Deogarh and Kuchinda Sub-divisions.

Turei-Niktimal comes under the last division. Kuchinda Sub-division, as such, has no rich and pronounced
plains. It contains narrow valleys and plateaues where lie some patches of plain land. The total plains of Kuchinda Sub-division has only about 1409 sq. kms. of plain land mostly confined to the Central and Western parts. The hilly region lies in the North-East. The Southern part of the Sub-division, touches the boundaries of Bonai in the North, Deogarh in the East and Rairakhol in the South. The area of this hilly zone is 1036 sq. kms. (Senapati and Mohanty 1971 : 7-8). The elevation of the region is from 610 meters to 712 meters above sea level (Kuchinda ITDP Project Report 1971 : 10).

Turei-Niktimal lies in the conduction of the Central plains and North-Eastern hills. The small hills called Lamb Duṅguri, Ban Duṅguri and Pāṇḍri Duṅguri mark the Southern boarder. The plain area of the village starts from the foot of these hills upto the Siānjor, a rainfed tributary of Poḍpaḍā Nālāh (stream), encircling the village from North to South-West. A hamlet of the village called Khatkurbahal is situated beyond the Siānjor, to the North of the village. To the East of the village lies Kelo-Kunjar, a Reserve Forest under Bonai Sub-division of Sundargarh district.

The soil of Kuchinda Block is of laterite origin classified under brown forest soil. This soil has very low organic contents. It is suitable for millets, pulses and for orchards (Senapati and Mohanty 1971 : 147).
IV

The climate of Sambalpur district is characterised by a very hot and dry summer and well distributed South-West monsoon. The cold season commences from November and lasts till the end of February. The hot summer season follows thereafter and continues till the middle of June. The monsoon is from the mid-June to the end of September with July-August (Srābaṇa) receiving the maximum rain. Deogarh and Kuchinda Sub-divisions, the thickly forested hilly regions get highest rainfall in the district and average annual rainfall in the area is around 1500 mm. (Ibid. 1971 : 35-36).

The plants and trees of the locality are sāl, śāhāj, bijā, dhaurā, kendu, gahnāri, kusum, chār, anlā, mahula, śīāli, jāmbu, sisoo, āguān, hariḍā, bāhāda, śimuli, limba, karanja, buro, tentuli, khajuri, tāla, bara, bāunsa, etc. (Appendix-IV).

The two hill ranges of Kuchinda Sub-division and the Prabhasuni and Khajuria reserve forests, are inhabited by a variety of wild animals, such as the panther, tiger, elephant, leopard, jungle cat, wild dog, wolf, hyena, jackels, black bear, wild pig, spotted and barking deer, etc. Among the birds, peacock, pea fual (kochilā khāi), hornbill, cuckoo, crow, quasil (gunḍuri), sparrow, kite, lark (tihā) tattler
bird (ṭeṇṭheī), water hen (ḍāhuka), pigeon, owl, bat (bādudi), vulture, parrot, myna, etc., are seen in this region. The reptiles seen in this area are poisonous krait, cobra, banded krait, grass snake, rat snake (ḍhamaṇā), water snake (ḍhanḍa), garden lizards, guana (godhi), scorpions, frogs and rats, etc., of various types are also seen.

The tributaries of Bheden river provide some fish. Fish is also cultured in the ponds of the villages. The common varieties available are rohi, bhākura, mirikali, baliā, katraṅg, ghesedā, ṣeula, khapsā, bainri, puṭiā, jardā, kutri, māgura, māṭul, singhi, serṇā, chiṅgā (minor prawns) and minor crabs, etc.

VI

Turei-Niktimal shares the boundary with the Gurundia Block of Bonai Sub-division of Sundargarh district on the East. On its North lies village Turei and Khairabahal. Banke and Katapali are on the South-West; Phatatanagar and Kalijharan are beyond the small hills on the South of the village. A small stream, namely Siānjoy, flowing from North-East to South-West divides the village into two parts.

The total area of the village is 4,697.51 acres out of which 1,527 acres are forest and 1,114.56 and 1,663.54 acres are cultivated and cultivable-waste lands respectively. Out of the total Sadar of 2778.10 acres, revenue is being collected only from 1032.58 acres from which 16.02 acres are cultivable-waste
There are 131.11 acres of land denoted as reserve land, utilised as Village play-ground (1.86 acres), School (2.30 acres), Creamation ground (0.13 acres), Weekly market (0.65 acres), For Orissa Jawan (120.46 acres), Grampanchayat (4.41 acres) and 1.25 acres are covered by the Village roads (Hamid Settlement Record, 1946-47).

There are 2613 acres of irrigated land of which 93.31 acres are irrigated upto January by Podpada Minor Irrigation Project and the rest are irrigated by different ponds and kaṭās situated around the village.

VII

The Kuntra Gram Panchayat Road enters Turei-Niktimal from the South at the foot of Pāṇḍri duṅguri and proceeds through the middle of the village to Turei on the West via Vallukpara and Talipara. The same road touches Khatkurbahal on the East running through Uparpara.

The village has two major habitational clusters: Khatkurbahal, a hamlet, about a kilometer away and the main village itself. The clusters are separated by Siānjor and a patch of bushy land on its bank. The former contains 25 households (20 Kīsāṇ and 5 Gauḍā).

There are 162 households in the main settlement which is divided into 5 Farās (hamlets) namely, Talipara, Vallukpara, Uparpara, Chikatpara and Pāṇpara. Chikatpara
consists of only 3 scattered Kisan and a Gond household. The rest of the hamlets are not very distinct from each other. Talipara is the largest hamlet having 54 Kisan, one Gond, 5 Luhura and three Chamār households (Total 63 households). Close on the North-East lies Pānparā where 14 Pāna (Scheduled Caste) households reside. On the South of Talipara a part of Vallukpara with 11 Agariā and a Keuṭa household is situated. The other part of Vallukpara, separated by the weekly market-place lies on either side of Kuntra-Turei Panchayat road. The population of this part is multi-ethnic/caste in composition - 18 Gond (a tribe), 8 Gauḍa, 3 Keuṭa, 2 Kumbhār and one Sunḍhi households.

The Upārpara, situated on the East of the main village, is inhabited by 30 Kisan, 3 Gauḍa and two Gond households. Chikāṭpara, the latest settlement is named after its soil type, i.e. Chiktāmāti. Lately a Khajuriā (Toddy tapper) and a Kisan household have come to live on the South of the Vallukpara at a distance of quarter of a kilometer. Some other villagers have marked house-plots in this area and are planning to move to these spacious homesteads.

VIII

The village Turei-Niktimal has no history worthy of record. There is no monument or inscription or any remarkable incidence associated with the beginnings of the village.

In the available revenue records (Record of Right based on Hamid Settlement 1922-26) it has been mentioned that
Dharamsingh Patel, Fa. Fa. of Khem Prasad Patel (63) was appointed Gauntia of the village on 31.10.1913. His son received Gaunti on 18.4.41. No record before Dharamsingh Patel is available.

People of the village however say that the Gauntia was transferred from a Kisan to an Agaria Gauntia, named Sukadev Patel, father of Dharamsingh Patel, who migrated to this village from Salehdhipa (a village near Jaipurgarh) along with his two sons: Dharamsingh and Laxman. Rupananda Patel (82), the So. So. of Sukadev Patel says that Sukadev, the resident of Salehdhipa had five brothers. They had very little land and Sukadev migrated to Turei-Niktimal in search of new land. The story of transfer of Gaunti is described below.

Raja Narayan Singh had conferred the Gaunti on the Kisans who are the first inhabitants of the village. Once an Officer (probably the Dewān) on tour made a night halt at Turei-Niktimal. On such occasions it was the duty of the Gauntia to arrange a comfortable stay for the visiting dignitary and provide him with customary 'Rasad'. But the Kisan Gauntia could not arrange the Rasad. Sukadev Patel took advantage of the Kisan Gauntia's failure and arranged the Rasad successfully. The second favourable point for Sukadev was that the Kisan Gauntia was defaulter of revenue at that period. The Officer being pleased by Sukadev asked him to meet the King in Darbār and recommended his candidature
for the Gaunti of Turei-Niktimal and Khairabahal (a bordering village). Later the Gaunti of the second village was transferred to Laxman Patel, the youngest brother of Dharamsingh Patel.

All villagers agree that the Kiṣāns are the Khuṇṭi Kaṭā Praja of the village Turei-Niktimal.

IX

The total population of the village is 878,450 males and 428 females distributed over 187 households. There are seven clean castes, two scheduled castes and three tribal communities (Table 7). The Agariās top the socio-economic hierarchy.

The Gauḍas, in general, have a higher ritual status from whom the higher castes accept water. They are divided into a number of endogamous sub-castes such as Gopāpuriā, Mathuriā, Jhariā, Magdhā, Odiā, etc. The Gauḍas present in the village belong to Jhariā group who traditionally serve as Nariṇā (water carriers for domestic use of higher castes) in the village.

The Sunḍhis and the Khajuriās occupy parallel status positions. The traditional occupation of the Sunḍhi is liquor distillation and selling whereas that of the Khajuriā is toddy tapping from date palms (Khajur). But the only Sunḍhi household in the village grown rich through
agriculture claims higher social status than the Khajuriā. In practice it commends a position next to the Agariās in the village.

The Luhurās (iron melters) and the Kumbhārs (potters) belong to the service-caste groups. They occupy parallel status positions in the village.

The Keuṭās of the village prepare parched rice and sell following their traditional occupation.

All these castes, except the Luhurās have taken up agriculture as the main source of their livelihood. One Gauḍā and a Keuṭā household have started small grocery shops. The same Keuṭā runs a snacks stall in the weekly market.

The Pāṇas and the Chamārs are the two 'Scheduled Castes' in the village. The traditional occupation of the Pāṇa is weaving; and that of the Chamār is leather work. Three Pāṇa households still continue weaving. The rest have taken to agriculture, wage earning, goat raising, etc., as subsidiary sources of income. Only one Chamār is in his traditional occupation of shoe making and sells his products in the weekly markets. The other two are unskilled wage-earners.

Among the tribals, the Goṛās seem to be reasonably rich and claim Kṣatriya status in the caste hierarchy of the village. In reality, they are not much different from the Kiṣāns. The only Orāon household in the village is a Christian convert.
Though the Agāraśās dominate the socio-economic and political sphere in the village, the Kiśāns are dominant numerically, constituting 60.89% of the village population followed by the Goṇās (9.46%) (Table 7). Thus, based on population structure, Turei-Niktimal may be termed as a tribal village in general and a Kiśān village in particular.

45.22% persons of the village are married. There are quite a few divorcees and widows in the village (Table 8).

The large number of nuclear (87.7%) and vertically extended families (6.95%) indicate people's preference for nuclear family or at best include their old parents in the household (Table 9). The average family size is six.

67.71% are non-literates. More males have formal school education than the females. All the four matriculate girls come from the Agāraś caste (Table 10).

People above the age of 60 are endearingly called Buḍhā/Buḍhī in the village. Often these old persons are engaged in taking care of the youngsters of the village. There are 19 (9 male, 10 female) old persons in the village (Table 11). Children below 6 years are non-workers and are classified as "economically dependent", and the elders who supplement the contribution to the work of the adults may be called as 'intermittent' (Dasgupta 1977: 30).

The children between 6 to 15 years of age may be called child workers who are engaged both in agricultural
and non-agricultural (or domestic workers) sectors. They are the helping hands to their working parents in the family occupation and occasionally they are employed as wage-earners (Ibid : 46).

People in the age group of 15 to 60 constitute the economically active segment of the population. They constitute the highest proportion of the population and form the largest working force of the village (Table 11). The analysis of data for six Indian Agro-Economic Research Centres reveals, "among various groups men aged 15-59 (adult males) consistently head the list" (Dasgupta 1977 : 23).

X

Agriculture is the mainstay of the village. 53.23% families have agriculture as their primary occupation. 36.02% have taken to it as their secondary source of livelihood (Table 12). The Agariās and the Sunqhis have largest per capita land. All others are either marginal or small farmers or agricultural labourers (Table 14).

The Agariās have also adopted modern methods and techniques of cultivation. They use high yielding seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, tractors and motor pumps, etc. However, excepting these few, in general the methods and techniques used by the villagers may be described as Simple Plough Cultivation. The draught animals like buffaloes and bullocks play the most important role in the entire process of agriculture.
The small and marginal farmers supplement their income either by share-cropping or by leasing out lands on a fixed rent. A large number of households resort to wage earning. 38.17% in the primary category and 55.91% in the secondary category (Table 12). Wage earning in the village refers to agricultural wage, excepting a few days of working under the Block contractors for constructing a road or excavating a pond, etc. It has been observed that, some labourers migrate to the irrigated areas near Sambalpur during the harvesting of Dalu paddy (paddy grown in late winter and early summer). They return to the village prior to Chandan Jatra (full moon day of Baishakhya) which is the biggest festival of the village. Besides, some people work as guti (yearly contract labourer) or bhutier (casual labourer paid on daily basis) with the well-to-do families of in or near by villages.

Forest collection is one of the most important subsidiary occupations of the village resorted to by 87.63% families (Table 12). The collection includes items like, kendu leaves, mahua flowers and seeds (garā and tola), ūl seeds, dhātki flowers, chār and kendu, etc. People get a substantial amount either selling them for cash or by bartering in the weekly market with certain consumer-goods like, salt, kerosene, etc.

Domestication of animals and birds are the common features of tribal villages. Often, they outnumber the human population. Rearing birds and animals in Turei-Niktimal is
only a secondary occupation of 43.55% households (Table 12). Fowl is the only bird largely raised by almost all the communities (Table 13). An Agariā maintains white lagoons and sells their eggs. The fowls are largely maintained to meet the religious sacrificial needs of the households and are occasionally sold in the weekly market. There is only one Kīśān household which has recently purchased pigs under Integrated Rural Development Project.

The persons in the salaried jobs are the low-paid employees like two Forest Guard, a Home Guard, a Postal Runner (messenger who carries post-bags to the nearby sub-post office from the village post office). An Agariā is the village Postmaster in addition to his teaching job in the M.E. School at Turei.

XI

The most significant feature of land distribution in the village as indicated in Table 14 is that about 20% land belong to the Agariās who constitute only 4.79% (Table 7) of the total population and about 80% land is owned by around 95% of the population. Except the single Sunṣāhi household, the rest of the castes own even less than half an acre of percapita land. Among the tribals the position of two Orāon households is better than the Goṇḍs and the Kīśāns who own 1.37 and 1.03 acres of percapita land respectively. The Pāṇas and the Chamārs, the Scheduled Caste communities are almost landless. In all there are 31 landless households in the village.

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