CHAPTER-VI

SAORA KIN-GROUPS AND KIN CATEGORIES

If residence is the first great principle of group formation, the second is Kinship (Bock, 1967). In both primitive and modern societies, the vast majority of an individual’s ascribed role and group membership are limited or determined by where he is born and to whom. When membership in the group is ascribed on the basis of Kinship, we may speak of a kingroup, provided with rules of recruitment, which involve a selection criterion. The most inclusive categories are “relatives” and “non-relatives.” Within the group of relatives, descent rules may define several degrees of closeness. Associated with each group and subgroups are sets of plans for group activity and interaction, often for economic, religious, or political cooperation among group members.

6.1 Kingroups

As treated by Murdock (1960) “Social Groupings based Kinship ties are called Kingroups”. As defined by Paul Bohanan (1963) “It is a number of role bound together in socially recognized Kinship relationship and syndromes”. However, this kinship groups are distinguished under three captions such as (a) Consanguneal Kingroup, (b) Affinal Kingroup and (c) The Residential Kingroup. Figure 6.1 depicts the different kingroups such as lineals, collaterals and affinals.

The following discussion on Saora kingroup is made under consanguneal and residential kingroups.
Within the family when husband and wife are two affines through marriage, their children, through common parentage and the criterion of descent, are consanguine to each other. In a nuclear family the husband and wife are linked by the affinal and laterals and the sides form two affinal kingroups. But lineals and laterals which are related through blood constitute a larger consanguineal group. The residential kingroup exhibited in the family partly includes consanguineal kin members and partly affinal group members.

Figure 6.1: Lineals, Collaterals, and Affinals kingroups

6.1.1 Consanguineal Kingroups

A consanguineal kingroup is usually contended with the members related by blood. It is not confined to or limited within the residential group. Murdock (1960) gave importance to consanguineal kingroup and said “A person feels closer to a blood relative than the relative through marriage”. The affinal relations cannot enter this consanguineal group boundary. Thus, husband and wife, each is a member of their respective consanguineal kingroup. Brothers and sisters on the other hand are members of the same consanguineal kingroup. The members of Consanguineal kingroup are known as 'Kheja' in Saora society, which is patrilineal. All the
members under *Kheja* (patrilineage) are considered as blood relatives. The sexual relation is restricted within this group, which is considered incestuous by the Saora people. Incest taboo and their extensions in the form of exogamous rules require a person to have affinal relations outside of his/her own "Kheja" or "Punja". *Kheja* or *Punja* embraces all the members under the prevailing patrilineal rule of descent. The principal variants of this group found among Saora society are

(a) *Kheja/Punja* (Lineage like structure) and (b) *Birinda* (Local descent group)

*Punja* (Lineage like structure)

The Saora society is exclusively patrilineal in nature and is also enclosed with patrilineage. A lineage may be a larger group like local descent group or beyond that, which is in its expanded form in other villages. This lineage like structure is called "*Punja*" or "*Sisha*". This "*Punja*" or "*Sisha*" is composed of smaller segments, often dispersed in more than one village which are the part of larger groups. The members are referred as ‘*kheja*’ brothers. But the principles are same to be followed whether it is ‘*punja*’ or ‘*kheja*’. There is no clan or clan like feature among the Saora and no specific name for local descent group or *Birinda* To maintain the sanctity they remember their ‘*kheja*’ members, and their genealogy. Even the two gamango birinda of the nearer villages do not come under one ‘*punja*’ or ‘*Kheja*’.

The male members married or unmarried are compounded within the patrilineage. The Saora females after their marriage are grouped under their father’s group. As it is firmly noted by Elwin (1955), it is also found that even after their marriage female members remain intact to their father’s ‘*Kheja*’ but change their title or surname as their husband’s. All the members follow the exogamous restriction within *Punja/Kheja*. Affinal relation within this group is
considered incestuous (Yelang-bang), which is often treated with excommunication and fines. The persons who do not follow the marriage rules are termed as “DUSSAR” and has to face “Alagu” or excommunication and gives fine called “Rasaku”. Fines are paid in the form of buffalo and liquor to all the group members.

The decision of marriage among the members of “Punja” is always taken by the eldest member of the group. When a woman is widowed, she is preferred to reside outside the village. But generally, she (the widow) either marries a person selected by her or his husband’s kin members, or is accepted back to her parent’s household. If she dies, her deceased husband’s kin members perform her death rituals. However, the ash with bone is carried preferably by her brother and is used in the ‘kariya’ ceremony. Nonetheless, her consanguines, neighbours and other relatives also attend it. Similarly, in the Name giving ceremony (Anyman), Initiation (Kinkmon), Marriage (Serum) and Death (Guar) rituals, the members of “Punja” or “Sisha” are the most immediate members. They help each other by presenting in kind and doing various subsidiary works in various rituals. Besides, the members of this lineage group actively take part in the ceremonies like Amba-Nuakhia, Kandulla-Nuakhia, and dance and enjoy the liquor.

Local Descent Group (Birinda)

Local descent group, which can be discussed under the heading ‘Birinda’ has the same contents as “Punja” or “Kheja” of female (i.e., all the male descendants married or unmarried). But one village does not necessarily consist of one local descent group. Among the Saora, the villages consist of the local descent groups of different Birinda living in those villages. The members of the Birinda of one village often come under the “Punja” or “Sisha”. But the same Birinda members of two different villages are not necessarily the lineage (Punja) members. Observed Birindas such as Gamango, Dalbehera/Mandala, Buyya/Karji and Raita were the titles...
given by Bisois, the representative of Paralakhemundi King. These titles were given to the tribal villagers on the basis of their economic and political status and now serve as title groups.

The members of this local descent group are termed as "Bouamaren" who are treated as consanguines. Observance of various rites is restricted within this group. They have no rigid system of purity and pollution, but they observe certain rites on specific occasions. All the members of this group are mostly invited participants in name giving ceremony (Anjiman), Initiation (Kinkanon), Marriage (Serum) and Death (Gvar) rituals. Their function as the members of a corporate group is realized from the mortuary rites. Starting from the cremation of the dead called 'Hajep', Sicunda (the first day rite) followed by Gare (the third day rite) to Pitapam (the 10th day rite), all members of the group observe the rites without fail. The second burial ceremony called as 'Gvar' is the most interesting one. On this occasion, each member of this group enjoys. They collect buffalo, rice and jana (rice like gram) for the feast, thereby making a large congregation of relatives, neighbors and friends.

During conflicts such as village disputes, property disputes, illicit or improper sex relations and the like, the local descent group plays a vital role within its boundary. But, in case of inter Birinda conflicts, village headman has the specific role to play as a decision maker. Due to migration, some of the members of "Kheja" are residing in village other than their own village. There are various such instances in my area of study. Members residing outside the local descent group are invited on various social occasions and are treated as the "Kheja" members. Thus, the members of the local descent group function as the participant of a corporate group. This is the overall picture of Saora Consanguineal Kingroup.
6 1 2 Residential Kingroups

It is highly essential to decipher the structure and functions of residential kingroup for the proper ramification of the Consanguineal and affinal kingroups. Both the affinal and consanguineal ties, in a common residence, characterize residential kingroup. It is one of the notable kingroups, which in its content includes all types or forms of family. As defined by Murdock (1960) "It (Family) is a social group characterized by common residence, economic cooperation and reproduction."

Through marriage, husband and wife come together under common residence. Again it includes sons and daughters and accordingly brothers and sisters are also included. Thus, both affines and consanguines characterize the residential kingroups. The following features of residential kingroup will depict it more clearly

(i) The residential type is always characterized by common residence

(ii) The residential types always exclude some consanguineal relatives and include some affinal ones

(iii) The residential types often include husband and wife but not brothers and sisters

(iv) The form of residential kingroup is determined primarily by the prevailing rule of residence

Rules of Residence

For the continuation of social processes, man follows the rule of residence as the fundamental criterion for the formation of family. But again for this association, the institution of marriage always brings a man and a woman as husband and wife to form the family. By the way
of fulfilling man’s basic needs, this residential kingroup leads the social processes to continue through reproduction, procreation and enculturation.

Residences are of various types in different societies. They are, i) Patrilocal, ii) matrilocal, iii) Neolocal, iv) Avunculocal and v) Matr-Patrilocal etc. However, most popular type of residence in Saora society is Patrilocal and has been discussed below.

Patrilocal residence: The residence is prescribed in and within the father's locality and is a characteristic feature of the Saora society. It usually excludes the married daughters who reside in their husband’s house. But the daughters who marry within the village and other birinda are residing in the locality of their father i.e., in the same village. Among Saora, formation of a new family is usually followed by construction of a separate residence for it. After the marriage, the bride leaves her natal house or family of procreation and goes to her husband’s house. Usually males do not reside away from the family of orientation, though they have separate residence after marriage. In Saora society, nuclear families are preferred to joint families. A new residence is usually built after the marriage of the person or sometimes before marriage. It is built by the parent and sometimes “Kheja” members help the parents. The initiation for new residence starts with a ritual at the “Idital” or “Ikon”. On this occasion, mostly the “Kheja” members participate and sometimes the members from the groom’s family.

In the Saora term the home is called as “Seeing” or “Seeingon”. Nevertheless, this unit is the healthiest unit within other groups in Saora society in the way of meeting its social, economic and cultural pursuits. As an economic unit, it maintains the domestic economy through production, consumption and it is again channeled through sexual division of labour. Females have more things to do than the Saora males. As a cultural unit, all the norms and the values are maintained starting with this family by conducting various rituals and ceremonies. It solves its
own disputes very often within it i.e. between father-son, father-daughter, husband-wife, between co-wives etc.

Apart from common residence and close kinship ties, the members of this group are also attached through, i) Succession and inheritance of property, ii) Rules of adoption and iii) Interpersonal relations of co-wives.

Being patrilineal in nature, the succession and inheritance is restricted only to the male descent line. The inheritance of property is based on the principle of equal sharing. The rules of succession are according to the principle of primogeniture. The land and other assets of the father are equally shared among his sons. The elder "Kheja" members usually decide this. Regarding succession, the eldest son of a Gamango (village head) becomes Gamango of the village after his father and likewise the Bhunyas/Karji, Mandals/Dalbehera. But now a days only the seat of Buyya (Village priest) is facilitated with rule of succession.

In the absence of male heirs, a Saora can adopt a male child from the collateral kin, preferably from the list of parallel cousin's son in the patrilineal line. If no such heir is found, the property is equally distributed among the concerned person's brothers.

Rules of Adoption

There are two basic reasons, on the basis of which rules of adoption prevails among the Saora. Due to the incidence of orphanage, some persons like to adopt the orphans in order to alleviate their hardship as well as promote their welfare. The orphan is known as "Kundrasi" in Saora. Secondly, childless parent like to adopt a male child in order to continue their progeny. The child adopted in this case is known as "Lundraon." The non-parenthood usually provokes them to adopt. This adoption of a child is usually followed by a religious ritual at the "Idital" or
"Ikon", after which, the adopted child is incorporated into the descent group. After adoption the child is known as ‘pussidayan’

Co-wives (Bngraa)

Interpersonal relationship between two co-wives occurs in the polygynous family. Co-wives are mostly adopted by the well-to-do Saora who requires more hands to work. The elder wife co-operates with her husband in the agricultural work whereas the younger wife mostly performs the domestic work. The co-wives help their husband to a large extent on the needy occasions like plantation, harvesting, etc. It is observed that co-wives maintain harmonious relationship and good understanding in every sphere of domestic work like cooking, collecting drinking water, cleaning the house, pasting the rice and many more work. No doubt, quarrels are sometimes inevitable between them, but, in all such disputes, the husband balances their attitudes and feelings and amicably finds a solution to have a peaceful coexistence. Usually the husband builds separate house for each of his wife.

6.2 Kin Categories

According to defined roles, members of a given society are mechanized and organized to discharge their functions, which ultimately result in the smooth functioning of the concerned society. Likewise, kin members are categorized under some criteria, which are exhibited by some and by others. Thus, kin-category includes the kin members categorized on the basis of their prescribed roles and behavioral dissimilarities. In the Saora society patterned behavior is expressed through kinship usages and understood by kinship terminology. But the whole community is regulated mainly by two categories of kins such as the kin members and the
residential group. The kin members are divided into "kheja" and "kulam" while the residential group is divided into the residential and the non-residential group.

6.2.1 Kheja and Kulam

Kheja

"Kheja" includes all the male descendants of an ancestor (known) up to three to four generations, their wives and children and excludes the married daughters. Though this is an exclusive feature of the Saora society but the married daughters do not enjoy the right to property or the position held by the deceased father in the village or any type thereof. However, unmarried daughters do enjoy the rights to property but from their own earnings. "Kheja" is the most intimate group next to the family. It functions like a corporate group at various socio-religious and economic activities. At the birth of a child, the members do not observe the rites of birth pollution except the mother and the child are kept separate for six days. But all the members particularly living in the village participate in the name-giving ceremony called "Anjiman." Likewise during the initiation and marriage ceremony, they organize the whole thing. For example, in the marriage ceremony, starting from taking liquor to the bride's house, finalizing the proposals, and giving it the final color at the marriage ceremony, are the inherent responsibility of the 'kheja' members. Members of this group belonging to the bride's side collect rice and liquor to be used in the ceremony and try to give the best treatment to the groom's party. In the initiation ceremony, sons of the more than one "kheja" group are initiated. "Kheja" members are the main participants in the funeral ceremony. On the 'Guar' festival, which is the second burial rite, each family under this group has a specific contribution and most prestigious gift is a buffalo. Besides, "kheja" members manage in various festivals, like Amaba-Nuakhia, Kandula-Nuakhia etc.
At the beginning of the land cultivation every year, they worship 'Labasum' or earth Goddess in which the kheja members participate as they have their agricultural lands on one hill or two to three near by hills. The ancestors worshiped on the "Idital" contain two to three generations in common. Saora observe exogamous rule in selecting spouse. They count up to five to six generations and if remembered more than that before stepping for marital ties within the same bundryas (title groups).

The property inheritance is strictly patrilineal. The agricultural lands are equally distributed among the sons of a father. However, the fertility and the yielding capacity of the lands are taken into consideration while sharing. If there are three brothers and they have equal amount of land but yielding differently, then lands are exchanged among the brothers every year and a cycle is maintained to avoid disparity in the distribution of land. This is called 'Tinab.' In a cyclic process, they balance their productions. The 'kheja' members decide the distribution of landed property. In case of absence of male issue of a particular Saora, this group provides the requisite help through rules of adoption. Otherwise, the property is shared among the brothers of the concerned Saora. The 'kheja' members are recognized through a fraternal relation between them. After the death of 'kheja' members, they represented by long stone slabs (nenhrs-Gamuareng) at the back of the village.

Kulam

"Kulam" is a synonym for "Bandhu" or friend (affinals) group in our Hindu Society. This includes all the affinal relatives in the Saora society. Thus, "kulam" group represents the members with whom affinal alliances can be maintained, who are virtually non-agnates. Although, "kulam" group includes all the affinal relatives, but does not define all the affinals as potential spouses. Among Saora, the mother's sister's children are also extracted from marital
relationship as a cross cousin is treated as any other parallel cousin. But instances of cross cousin marriage have been observed in one of my base villages. But for such marriage, concerned families are fined.

The importance of kulam group is felt in the day-to-day dealings in their social interactions. Besides their helping hand, kulam group also plays crucial role starting from baby’s birth to the funeral ground. At the birth of a child, the members of kulam group are expected to visit the child and child’s mother. On the occasion of name giving ceremony of the child, the maternal uncle plays the important role. Uncle’s presence is a must to cut the natal hairs of the baby with a ‘kanunkii’. He moves around the village with the child. The uncle often presents gifts, which are mostly in the form of rice, goat or hen. On the initiation occasion of a male child, which is called ‘kankinon’, maternal uncle has the specific role. He covers up the whole body of his nephew with ‘Nagari’ nails called the ‘Tarubakur’. After the ritual is over he takes out the nails and cries, then only the boy is considered initiated.

During marriage, maternal uncle accompanies the groom with his father and his other kheja members. He also associates himself in his niece’s marriage occasion. Kulam members also play significant roles while deciding the bride price like the “kheja” members. On the death rituals, kulam members bring fire woods to the funeral ground. In the second burial rite “Guar” they are also invited. Apart from the above, the kulam members often represent in various village level rituals. I have observed the religious rites in Abasing village in which both kheja and kulam members are invited to kill and distribute the buffalo meat. Buffalo meat is divided into smaller packets (“puda”) consisting of 12 parts of the buffalo and are sold at Rs. 12/- per each packet. But kheja and kulam members do not pay for it. In Nua-khia occasion they help in organising feast and dance and are treated mostly with liquor.
Each family under the *kulam* is represented in their labour co-operative “*Ansee*” If not by the whole family, at least one or two members of the family joins the labour co-operative. Besides, *kulam* members also help in equal lines like any other agnates.

622 Residential and Non-residential groups

Residential group constitutes the family members. This group is determined by rules of residence, which is found in two variants such as patrilocal, and Neolocal. But the Neolocal residences are very few in number. The numbers of this group are tied almost invariably with (i) common residence and (ii) close kinship ties. Besides rules of inheritance and successions, rules of adoption and interpersonal relations of co-wives in case of polygamous families, perpetuates this group. This is the most basic functional unit of Saora in their social, economic and political lives.

The non-residential group consists of some of the lineage members, some members of affinals, neighbours and fictive kins. The members of this group are expected on each and every social occasions, though all are not compelled as the “*kheja*” members. These members extend their helping hands in “*Ansee*” or “*Antera*” which is exclusively a labour co-operative and also participate in various social and religious occasions. In the shifting cultivation (*Bagada*), five major steps are followed.

(1) *Gadangaibi* (cutting forest)

(2) *Darba* (to make all the trees together)

(3) *Sayasil* (to fire it)

(4) *Lala* (to plough) and
(5) Harvesting

Starting from the first step to the harvesting of agricultural products, the members of "Anseer" take part. They follow the principle of mutual labour exchange among the members of this group. If not the whole family, this group is represented with one or two members from each family. This group is not restricted under village boundary and includes affines and pseudo kinsmen. Thus, this group helps the Saora in their economic pursuits. However, in Saora society, residential group is based on closer kinship network than the non-residential kingroup.