CONCLUSIONS

11.1 Summary discussion

Chapter-I is the introductory chapter of the thesis, which defines the kinship and identifies the problems in kinship study. Further, the chapter sets the objectives of the study and underlines the approaches to achieve the objectives. Historical review of the kinship study along with current developments has been depicted in Chapter-I. Emphasis has been laid on the tribal kinship and a vivid discussion has been made on the Saora Tribe. To supplement the above, some current developments in kinship studies like componential analysis, a new representation of the kinship network “Hammel’s principle of status bias”, and computer and kinship have been presented to focus their respective importance in the study of kinship in tribal population. The methodology adopted to carry out the study has also been spelled out.

The Saora ecology, demography and culture have been described in Chapter-II. Saora ecology includes the physical background, topography and climate. As these people are forest dwellers, their relationship with forest and with fauna and flora has been discussed. Shifting and terrace cultivation in the forest, which is the primary occupation of Saora tribe, has been described in detail.

Chapter-II presents a concise view of their house pattern and village settlement followed by their physical characteristics. The demographic study on Saora tribe reveals their population status, sex ratio, and educational, marital and occupational status, age at marriage, family type and status of religion. The rate at which the Saora people are adapting to Christian religion is alarming. Though the educational scenario is not encouraging but the sex ratio is healthy and no
.custom of child marriage is prevailing which is evident from age at marriage. However, due to fragmentation, agricultural lands are getting shared which results in low-income generation. Thus, they are engaged in secondary occupations like wage labour in road construction or house building, and a few as teachers and in others posts in various govt offices, projects etc. Saora culture in general and their food habits, house pattern, settlement pattern, dresses and ornaments, arts ad crafts (Particularly the Idital or Icon), language and daily life and Saora religion in particular are discussed along with references to the study by various authors. Thus, a holistic view of the Saora tribe is given in Chapter-II, besides depicting the developmental activities of Lanjia Saora Development Agency (LSDA) located at Putsing, Rayagada.

Chapter-III discusses the Saora social organization including distribution of Saora tribe, distribution of Brundas, distribution of kinmembers and the way the social communication is maintained. It also covers the institution of marriage, child birth and name giving ceremony and death rituals. Though other chapter covers the different aspects of kinship but here it is discussed in nutshell along with the family type. Thus, Saora social system is pictured briefly, the network of which is elaborated in the following chapters.

The Saora kinship terminology is discussed in Chapter-IV with the help of collected kin terms during fieldwork. The terms are analyzed such as terms of address, reference, denotative, descriptive and classificatory terms. Componential analysis of the Saora kinship terms has been made which helped a lot to understand the relationship network and the extent of the same such as the distinguished scenario of grand parental and grand children’s generation, the lineal and collateral such as FaBr and BrSo relationship.

Chapter-V presents an analysis of Saora descent group along with the ideology and composition. It carries the patrilineal principle in inheritance of property and succession of name.
and socio-political positions. The principle is more prominent during ritual performances, particularly the first and second death rituals. One of the interesting elements existing among these people is that the female do not change their membership of lineage (Kheja) and after death their bones and mortal remains are kept for death ritual along with other dead ancestors. The unilinear principle is also observed as the rules of residence but patrilocal residence rules are prominent. Each newly wed son is given with a new house (as far as possible) to live in. However, no of joint family is the same as nuclear families which suggests no strict rules are existing. Rules of adoption show that they prefer the child of brother and also the son of sister for adoption. Parentless child is also adopted by the nearer kin members of the same lineage. However, adoption occurs more frequently for the childless parents.

Chapter VI depicts the kingroups and kin categories. As per the rules prevailing in the Saora Society, distinction between the consanguines and affines are very much apparent. The patrilineals are categorized as ‘Kheja’ members and carry out various functions. The second important kin category is ‘Kulam’, the constellations of affines. Different degrees of relationship and accorded principle of treatment on various socio-religious ceremonies and rituals are established and obeyed. Some members of Kulam are given more weightage than the Kheja members. For example; daughter’s/sister’s or FaSi’s husband, mother’s and wife’s brother and their family members. However, both of these two important kin categories have life-long reciprocity through help, presence in different socio-economic and religious occasions and sharing of gifts. The third important categories are the residential group and non-residential group. The residential group is a basic unit of each and every socio-economic and religious function, which traps other members through relationship network. The interesting rule of building a new house in the patrilocality prevails but varies from family to family and as per...
necessity The existence of non-residential group is the ‘anseer’, which contains the representatives of each family, lineage and Kulam (if living in the village or nearby villages) The members attend the agricultural fields during busy work seasons alternatively through a much advanced planning and discussion This is a great support to them as a labour force and maintains cohesion and discipline Thus, one category is bound in the principle of consanguines and affines while the other is residence.

The appropriate behaviour and the corresponding usages are prescribed and defined through various principles in Chapter-VII The kinship usages like avoidance, joking relationships, respect and amitrate are very much prevalent among the Saora The joking relationship are of symmetrical and assymetrical types, full of amusement and fun in Saora’s life but it is compensated with the principle of avoidance which advocates for some restrictive behaviour between certain kins along with supporting incest taboo and disciplined societal behaviour The third important usage in the teckronym that restricts the spouses to speak out each other’s name but allows it in a symbolic way i.e. child’s father or mother They do it in fear of shortening the life span of the spouse Then the usage of amitrate is very much prevalent in Saora tribe Father’s sister is a must invitee in every socio-religious occasion. In case the sister is elder than brother (head of the house), her advice is also taken for property distribution and solving land disputes Thus, respect to elders is very much prevalent among Saora. However, they express it in words (Limtum) or by shaking hands rather than bowing down Now, in a changed cultural prescription, Saora respect each other by putting ‘namaskar’ or follow other prescriptions as it prevails in civilized Hindu/Christian communities Avanculate is also present among Saora The maternal uncle has an important role during the name giving ceremony, which
is also known as ‘bow and arrow’ ceremony. The distance he could make with bow and arrow is considered as an index of life span of nephew or niece.

Chapter-VIII presents the genealogies prepared from the data collected from the four villages of my study area. Genealogies give clues about the ‘Birinda’ and the actual kin categories, which are presently prevailing. A particular ‘Birinda’ does not necessarily contain the consanguines but some times it contains affines also. Thus, tracing the lineage and isolating ‘kheja’ is the only way to distinguish consanguines and affines within one ‘Birinda’. Inter-Birinda marriages are also observed in Saora society. In order to keep constant touch with the ‘kheja’ members, elder Kheja members very often meet each other in weekly market, visit each other at the time of need and are invited to various socio-religious occasions and offered gifts such as mango, jackfruit etc. This helps the Saora to maintain and manage the descent rules and marriage rules which are considered as the backbone of kinship. Tracing the genealogies also helps to understand and classify the kinship terminologies. Thus, genealogies of Saora are considered as the key investigating tools for kinship studies.

Role of kinship in social life is discussed in Chapter-IX. The primary kins along with neighbours and village members are responsible for socialization of each newly inducted Saora member into their society. From the very childhood, male and female members are assigned different tasks, which is an involuntary process of socialization in Saora Society. Members of the social group learn art, music, dance, behavioural pattern and pattern of obligations and help shape the Saora society with norms and values. Kinship in economic co-operation can be visualized from the exchange of gifts on various socio-religious occasions and from the functioning of the indigenous labour co-operative ‘Anseer’ or ‘Antera’. The disciplined structure of the labour co-operative helps the Saora to maintain their primary occupation, i.e. agriculture,
in a routine manner and to yield good crops. Further, congregation in the traditional rituals and ceremonies and exchange of gifts help the Saora to maintain their status and encourage them to work hard for the development of their society.

An attempt has been made in Chapter-X to analyse the structure and functions through which the patterned rights and obligation manifest besides depicting the inevitable changes in the Saora society. Roles of some specific kin such as father's sister, own sister, maternal uncle etc are well defined. The roles of kin's men are apparent by their presence in various ceremonies and at the time of giving gifts and gift sharing. The prevalence of invitation process during ‘Karjya’, the second burial rites is one of the best examples of obligation and mode of respect to the patterned system and kin respectively. The mode of adjustment to each other’s requirement, maintaining the economic and social status through gift giving and sharing, helping each other during cultivation, thatching and different life cycle rituals is an indigenous attempt and technique of Saora to maintain social stability and discipline. However, the Saora culture which is on the cross road of change, the above patterned rights and obligation relationships are still existent. Modern and aculturated Saora is yet to realize the uniqueness of traditional Saora culture and hence in the process of inevitable change. Some changes are very instant whereas others are very slow. Changes are very much apparent in their religious activities, use of kin terms, dress and food habits, avoidance relationship, gift sharing and gift giving, attendance in ceremonies/rituals, in the invitation process for ‘Karjya’, ‘guar’ and ‘anjiman’, the labour cooperative ‘anseer’ and above all in their cultivation, life style and language. However, rules of adoption and property inheritance are still prevailing as they were under traditional pattern. Perhaps the kinship structure of Saora is less affected as compared to other social structures in the face of modernity.
Marriage and descent are considered as the back bone of kinship structure of Saora society. The role of descent plays the crucial role in mechanizing the consanguineal, particularly the patrilineal group in Saora society. The members of the Unilineal (Patrilineal) kin group are known as “Kheja” or “Punja” and consist of all the descendants of a common ancestor, including married daughters. Due to migration, the Birnda members (also should be under “Punja”) can not find all the members residing in one village. But social interaction is maintained between all, within the village and outside the village. All these members are intertwined with the principles of incest taboo. One cannot marry within genealogically traceable members of a Birnda, which is called ‘Punja’ or ‘Sisha” or “Kheja”. The societal roles and obligations are more prominent within ‘punja’ and the members are referred to as ‘kheja’ members. The second vital determinant, marriage, binds two groups of different kin group with the affinal tie and thereby supplies a subordinate group to consanguinal group. This resulted affinal group not only serves the Saora society in recruiting members to the former, but also guarantees its stand, at the informal group. As Levi Strauss opined, “kinship groups were simply units in a system of “alliance” made or “expressed” by marriage”. Thus, marriage finds its pivotal position as an essential indicator of kinship in Saora society. The Saora’s relationship terminology amplifies the peculiarity of Saora kinship. As Paul Bohanon opined that kinship terminologies are the linguistic tag for respective roles, it reflects very much in Saora kinship terminology. A patterned kinship behaviour among the kins manifested from the classificatory kinship terminology. It not only assures regularized interpersonal relations, but also the smooth running of the cultural process in Saora society. Besides, denotative terms are also prevalent. Husband and wife often address each other tecknonymously. The kinship usages patronize the daily interaction among the kin members more systematically. The avoidance, joking and respect.
usages stabilize the Saora society and wipe away the conflicts from the very family level. Beyond own kins such as consanguinal or affinal, ritual kins also extend their helping hands at various times of need.

Coming to the comparative study of kinship structure of different Orissan tribes, Saora kinship structure shows some uncommon attributes which is evident from the writings of Karve (1968). Saora kinship system exhibits some distinguishing feature. Though Saora kinship is Patrilineal like other Orissan tribes such as Bondo, Bhunya, Juang and Santhal, it has no such system of clan organization like others. This is a rare attribute, which is also characteristic feature of Hottendote, Bushman and some of the Andaman Islander’s kinship organizations. As per the data it is attributed by the “Birinda” organization, which is nonetheless a title group but helps to some extent in tracing genealogical relationship within the same Birinda, which is called ‘Kheja’ or “Punja” or “Sisha”. Worship of “Idita” or Ikon, is the way to keep record of these genealogically traceable ancestors, who are worshiped by their descendants. However, the hierarchical structure of Birinda like Gamango, Buyya, Mandala and Raita has served the political purpose.

11.2 Conclusion

Kinship is an embellishment to the whole social system of each given society. Its characteristic features elucidate the various services it renders to a given society. Finding its growth from the basic social group i.e. family to the extended boundary of the social structure, it ensures the stability in the economic, political, and religious and other social spheres. Through these social structures, it regulates the interpersonal relationships among the kin members. Kinship abides different kin members through patterned rights and obligations. Apart from the smooth functioning of society, it ensures its probity. It stands by the needy members of its group,
and serves the sick and the old by handling the social rights and duties to posterity. It lays the rules and regulations for the smooth practice of various religious and ritual occasions. Starting from socialization of a child up to resolving inter group conflicts, kinship defends itself as a vigorous functioning organ in Saora Society. Based on the above assertions the following paragraphs elucidate the most important features of Saora kinship.

Saora tribe is characteristically distinct from other tribes in Orissa especially in terms of their social organizational system. The term “Saora” is a local derivative of the term “Savara” (a generic term for tribe). But it also signifies a particular tribe which can be distinguished from other tribes on the basis of its socio-cultural adaptations and the set ups. Different varieties of “Saoras” inhabit “Koraput”, “Gajapati” and “Rayagada” districts of Orissa. “Lanjia Saora”, well known as the hill Saora, is the most primitive type and is inhabiting the hilly tracts of Eastern Ghats mostly concentrated in Rayagada and Gajapati districts. Under the kingship of the kings of Paralakhemundi and Gunupur, Lanjia Saora tribe was categorized into different title groups. These title groups are better known as “Birunda” and consist of Gamango, Dalbehera / Mandala, Karji / Buyya and Badarata or Ratta. The title groups of Dalbehera and Karji of Puttasing area of Rayagada district are the equivalents of the title groups of “Mandala” and “Buyya” of “Serongo” area of “Gajapati” district. As per 1991 census data, Rayagada district has more tribal population than Gajapati district. The literacy rate among tribal population of Gajapati district is better than the Rayagada district. Significant growth rate of literacy rate of Saora tribe is revealed from a study by Mohanty and Nayak (2002-2003) including the women literacy rate, and number of school going children. The medium of instruction is basically Oriya in primary schools. Since many Saoras do not understand the Oriya language even today, the medium of instruction is
perhaps acting as the major hindrance for their assimilation into the mainstream of development, awareness and growth.

The objective of the present study is to take a close view of their social structure, particularly the "kinship structure". The term "Birinda" which is a local connotation for intimate group and best serves as the title group is the centre of discussion along with its importance, existence, mode of functioning and the rules inherent in it.

Formerly Birinda was used for identification of different title groups but gradually it extended its definition and spheres of functions to the lineage. The patrilineage, which is the essence of socio-cultural principle of Saora tribe, is termed as "Kheja / Punya / Sisha", which again focuses on the genealogically related male members as per the rules of descent. In other words, the patrilineal kins are grouped under 'kheja' but the married daughters do not lose the affinity to it even after their death. The dead female members are given enough space along with the male members during the second mortuary rites i.e. "karjya". It is not only a tribute to the ancestors, but also an exhibition of status and gift exchange, expenditure and large congregation of kins. Thus, the patrilineage is identified as "Kheja". As per the universal rule of lineage, no affinal relations are preferred or allowed within the members of the "Kheja".

Another principle that distinguishes "Birinda" from "Kheja" is that the same title group, for example "Dalbehera" of different villages are not necessarily related through patrilineage and the local descent group is referred to as "Birinda". This local descent group also extends its genealogical linkage to other villages, which can be grouped together under "Kheja". But the segmentation of "Kheja" (lineage) is not found throughout my study which is a common feature of clan society. This suggests that Saora tribe does not have clans and is guided by lineage principles. The relationship of members of a patrilineage is traceable up to a maximum of six to
seven generations. The kudan or Kundanboi (Shaman or Shamani) along with the elder members of the “Kheja” are the main proprietors of its functioning on different occasions by calculating the lines of generations and judging the affinal relations. Having affinal relations within “Kheja” is considered incest (Dussar) and marriage alliance has to follow the principles of community. Some examples of matrilineal cross-cousin marriages are observed which could be a recent change in Saora prescription. But cross cousin marriage is not allowed as per the Saora patrilineal rule.

The second important kin category is “Kulam”, the specific term of Saora used for the affinal relatives. The greater the economic power and socio political status, the title groups are confided to their influential role within the village or area or community. Marriage alliance is always preferred in higher or same title groups. Thus, the entire Saora system of categorizing patrilineal kins and affinal kins follows the principles inherent in the Hindu Caste system and Class structure. However, the class structure in Saora society is mostly based on their economic condition and political positions prevailing since the kingship. The political position such as village headship is mostly confined to Gamango Birinda but not limited to the specific Birinda. Freedom and the rules inherent in their social system also allow other Birandas to act in the decision-making and leadership issues by raising their positions (class based) by acquiring money or other properties. In the absence of “Gamango” other title groups like “Dalbehera” or “Badaraita” may take the charge of the village headship as instructed by the Bisoyoi under the kingship. Today, the village headship is replaced by the “Sarapanch” under the present electoral system.

The members of “Kulam” have their respective roles and responsibilities on different socio-religious and cultural functions and rituals. The principles and the disciplines inherent in
the system are reflected in the type of gifts and the exchanges of gifts, the presence and
participations of members during rituals and on different periods of cultivation following the
principles of “Anseeer”, the labour cooperative The specific role of maternal uncle and father’s
sister clearly clarifies their key roles in the kinship structure that integrates the whole network of
kins, in the affinal category

Next to ‘Kheja” and “Kulam”, Anseeer or Antera is considered as the third important
structure of Saora society. It is a labour co-operative of indigenous nature and is formed as per the
requirements of Saora tribe. The principle of recruitment to this group is the reciprocity and
intimacy. On the above basis Anseeer consists of the members of patrilineage particularly of the
one’s own village and nearby villages, neighbours and members of Kulam, ritual kins and
friends. The hardship involved in the terrace cultivation and shifting cultivation are to some
extent lessened with the help of these members. If not all, each family is obliged to send at least
one representative to the Anseeer. However, when required they hire labour in exchange of paddy
or cereals whereas members of Anseeer or Anterra exchange and reciprocate labour on similar
occasions. This labour co-operative is one of the best examples of self-management within the
Saora community. The pattern of obligation underlying the cooperative pictures the extent of
interdependency and thus provides socio-economic liberation. It is functioning beyond the
kingroups but keeping the interacting members intact irrespective of title (status) group.

Another principle of socio-cultural network is reflected through the kinship terminologies. The
analysis of kinship terms suggests that the kin terms are the carriers of role and status of that
particular kin. Thus, each kin finds the definition of his/her responsibilities from the term used
for his or her, which are again cumulative and dynamic. He or she has to perform chains of role
tagged with the terms from his or her boundary of existence and functioning. The merging of
lineal kins and collateral kins (discussed in Chapter 4) perhaps suggests the reciprocal behaviour and obligations towards each other. The analysis reveals that there is terminological merging of collateral kins with the lineal kins and also of second ascending with the third ascending and second descending with the third descending generations. There is no term of sex differentiation of grandson and granddaughter as the only term used for both is “Uleng”.

As different authorities opined it, the significance of classificatory terms integrates the relatives beyond the close or intimate group (consanguines and affines). The linguistic tags used in terminology principles are again clarified in componential analysis.

Componential analysis is one of the advanced methods of analyzing the kinship terminology. The different components of kin terms are simplified on the basis of their significance and denotation. This reflects the process of giving an individual status to each kin taking the account of age and generations. The categorization of kins on the above basis is very simple in Saora terminology, which also reflects the degree of perception of the role and status of that particular term. For example, the kinterm ‘Tata’ takes two kins of two lines of generation like ego’s FeB and ego. Therefore, it reflects the degree of reciprocity and intimacy between two kins and it is inherent in their tradition.

The kinterms are reflected in kinship usages and behaviors and both actual or normal and the normative ones can be observed in day to day life of the Saora tribe. The life cycle rituals along with religious rituals are the fields of mostly normative behaviors. As it is discussed earlier, the kind and amount of gifts, the presence of kins on the socio-religious occasions and even the time of arrival and departure of the kins are some of the real indicators of the status enjoyed by the particular kin members. It is true that the pattern of obligations, perception of each other’s role and different elements of kinship are gradually changing.
Though change of patterns is inherent in each culture, but changes are only observable along the peripheral line of the structure. The essence of kinship is maintained by the expectations and reciprocation of different roles, exchange of gift, patterns of respect, nature of avoidance etc. Change in dress pattern and terms of address are some of the minor changes observed. But changing the religion by conversion to Hinduism or Christianity is observed as an important change and has impact on their socio-economic, religious and cultural life. Based on my observations and interaction with the tribe during my field surveys, their apparent change of religion is observed to be associated with the financial burden, which they were unable to carry in their traditional Saora culture. Further, the change in their food habit and dress pattern was apparent after interacting with the people living in nearby towns and plain areas. A few changes are observed in their kinship terms. The term “nani” for elder sister and “bhai” for elder brother is now used.

Some changes in avoidance are also observed. However, despite the christianization and modernization, their traditional kinship structure remains intact, particularly the relationship under “amitate” and “joking”, ancestor worship, traditional pattern of invitation for “Karjya”, guar, anyman, serung, gift exchange etc. Rules of property inheritance and rules of adoption are still intact and the change in religion has no impact on it. The labour co-operative “Anseer” is still existent and is functioning as usual. Changes in marriage rules are very distinct. The ideal type of marriage “Panku” is a costly affair and hence marriage by capture and elopement are in highest frequency among the Saora tribe today.

Thus, Lanjia Saora, despite the pressure of time, economy, necessities and tradition, are maintaining their culture without much violation. Perhaps, the kinship structure is less affected than other parts of “Lanjia Saora” social structure.