CHAPTER-1

INTRODUCTION

The Khasi and Kharia languages belong to the Austro-Asiatic family of languages. The Austro-Asiatic family has approximately one hundred fifty languages with fifty six million speakers. The family is divided into two important sub-families; the Munda and the Mon-Khmer. Though Khasi and Kharia belong to Austro-Asiatic family of languages, they represent different branches of family. Khasi belongs to the Mon-Khmer branch and Kharia belongs to the Munda branch. Khasi is spoken mainly in the state of Meghalaya and Kharia is chiefly spoken in Jharkhand, some parts of Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, Assam and Andaman Islands. According to Thomas and Headley (1970) Austro-Asiatic language family consists of four branches; The Munda, Mon-Khmer, Malacca and Nicobarese. Diffloth (1980) in his classification of Austro-Asiatic languages omits Malacca branch while retain the rest.

According to Grierson (1902) Khasi has four major dialects (Pnar or Jaintia, War, Bhoi, Lyngam). Khasi proper which is considered as the standard language and employed for all literary purposes is spoken in and around Cherrapunjee.
1.1. Land and the People of Khasi and Kharia:

The term ‘Khasi’ stands for both the tribe and the language. Khasi belongs to one of the five sub-groups of Mon-Khmer family of languages. It is spoken in the district of Khasi Hills in the state of Meghalaya. As per the census of India in 2011 the total population of Meghalaya is 2,964,007 of which male and female are 1,492,668 and 1,471,339 respectively with a density of 132 per sq. km which is lower than national average of 382 per sq. km. and an area of 22,429 sq. km. As per the census of India in 2001 the total population of Meghalaya was 2,318,822 in which males were 1,176,087 while females were 1,142,735 out of which 1,128,575 are Khasi speakers.

Meghalaya currently has 7 districts. These are, East Khasi Hills, West Khasi Hills, Jaintia Hills, Ri-Bhoi, South Garo Hills, East Garo Hills and West Garo Hills. The East Garo Hills district was formed in 1976 and has a population of 317,618 as per 2011 census. It covers an area of 2603 sq. km. The District Headquarters are located at Williamnagar, earlier known as Simsangiri. The East Khasi Hills district was carved out of the Khasi Hills on 28 October 1976. The district has covers an area of 2,748 sq. km. and has a population of 824,059 as per the 2011 census. The headquarters of East Khasi Hills are located in Shillong. The Jaintia Hills district was created on 22nd February 1972. It has a total geographical area of 3819 sq. km. and a
population 392,852 as per the 2011 census. The district headquarters are located at Jowai. Jaintia Hills district is the largest producer of coal in the state. The Ri-Bhoi district was formed by further division of East Khasi Hills district on 4th June 1992. It has an area of 2448 sq. km. The total population of the district was 258,380 as per 2011 census. The district headquarters are located at Nongpoh. It has a hilly terrain and a large part of the area is covered with forests. The Ri-Bhoi district is famous for its pineapples and is the largest producer of pineapples in the state. The South Garo Hills district came into existence on 18th June 1992 after the division of the West Garo Hills district. The total geographical area of the district is 1850 sq. km. As per the 2011 census the district has a population of 142,574. The district headquarters are located at Baghmara. The West Garo Hills district lies in the western part of the state and covers a geographical area of 3714 sq. km. The population of the district is 642,923 as per the 2011 census. The district headquarters are located at Tura.

The West Khasi Hills district is the largest district in the state with a geographical area of 5247 sq. km. The district was carved out of Khasi Hills District on 28th October 1976. The district headquarters are located at Nongstoin with a population of 385,601 as per 2011 census.

The Kharia is one of the Adivasi groups of the Jharkhand State. They are found in the districts of Ranchi, Gumla, Singhbhum (East and
West both), Hazaribag. As per the census of India 2011 the total population of Jharkhand is 32,966,238 with a total area of 79,714 sq. km. As per 2001 census the total population of Jharkhand is 26,909,428 out of which 293,575 are Kharia speakers. They can understand and speak Hindi and also broken form of Bengali.

The state of Jharkhand was formed with 18 districts, which were formerly part of Bihar. Some of these districts were reorganized to form four new districts, namely, Latehar, Saraikela Kharsawan, Jamtara and Sahebgunj. Presently, the state has twenty two districts; Ranchi, Lohardaga, Gumla district, Simdega, Palamu, Latehar, Garhwa, West Singhbhum, Serakela Kharsawan, East Singhbhum, Dumka, Jamtara, Sahebganj, Pakur, Godda, Hazaribagh, Chatra, Koderma, Giridih, Dhanbad, Bokaro & Deoghar, The Kharia claim that they are the descendants of the elder brother of the Munda, the Nagvanshi Raja. They do not enter in the house of Nagvanshi Raja following the avoidance rule of kinship usage. The Kharia are divided in the three sections namely Hill Kharia, Dudh Kharia and Dhelki Kharia. In the district of Ranchi, they are concentrated on the banks of the river Koel and Sankh. The Hill Kharias are most primitive community.
Broadly the entire Kharia tribe has been subdivided into three main sections on the basis of their geographical location, identity, culture and a few other important aspects of life.

(i) The Hill Kharias are the most primitive group, living under crude type of technology and very poor conditions. They are inhabitants of the eastern region.

(ii) Dhelki Kharias are a little advanced and live in the western regions.

(iii) The Dudh Kharias are the present advanced section conscious of human needs and values of the civilization. They live in the central region.

The Dhelki Kharias are found in the Central provinces of India, mostly in Gangpur district, Jaspur, Sundargarh and Rajgarh. Their highest concentration in this region is in the area of Pharasabahar in Rajgarh district of Madhya Pradesh as well as the Tapkara block. In the Sundargarh district of Odisha, also there is a considerable population of the Dhelkis from Lephriripara block and the border villages of Ranchi.
1.1.2. Geographical location:

The North-eastern region of India comprises the states of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Manipur, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura. Meghalaya is located between 25°1' N- 26°5' N latitude and 85°49 E to 92°52E longitude. To the North of Meghalaya is the state of Assam and to its south is the country Bangladesh. The state is located closer to the Tropic of Cancer. It is a small hilly state located in the North-eastern region of India. The northern boundary of the state is shared with Goalpara and Kamrup district of Assam, Goalpara and Ranjpur district in west and Mymensingh and Sylhet districts of Bangladesh in south. In east shares its boundary with Cachar and Karbi-Anglong (Assam). Meghalaya is closer to many other countries besides Bangladesh. They are Bhutan, China and Nepal.

Jharkhand is located in the eastern part of India bordering the states of Bihar, West Bengal, Orissa, and Chattisgarh. Tropic of Cancer 23° 25 N latitude and 85°19 E longitude passes through Kanke, few kilometers away from Ranchi, the capital of Jharkhand, making it the only state in India touched by Tropic of Cancer. Most of the Jharkhand region is part of Chotanagpur plateau, which also extends to some parts of West Bengal, Chattisgarh, and Odisha.
1.1.3. Education and literacy rate:

Meghalaya has an overall literacy rate of 63.31% according to the census conducted in 2001. The difference between the male literacy rate and female literacy is small with male literacy at 66.14% and female literacy at 60.41%. Jharkhand has an overall literacy rate 54.13% according to census in 2001. Jharkhand has a network of government and privately run schools, although standards of teaching vary considerably from place to place.

1.1.4. Arts and Culture:

The Khasi people of Meghalaya are famous for their weaving skills and creating cane mats, stools, and baskets. They make a special kind of cane mat called tlieng, which guarantees a good utility of around 20-30 years. Khasi people have also been involved in extracting iron ore and manufacturing domestic knives, utensils and even guns and other warfare weapons.

The Khasi are known for their diverse culture and tradition The Khasi belief and follow Christianity, though few follow Hinduism, and Buddhism. The Khasi have a matrilineal society. Descent is traced through the mother, but the father plays an important role in the material and mental life of the family. David Roy observed, 'a man is the defender of the woman, but the woman is the keeper of his trust'.

No better description of Meghalayan matrilineal society could perhaps be possible. In the Khasi society, the woman looks after home and hearth, the man find the means to support the family, and the maternal uncle settles all social and religious matters. The Khasi follow a matrilineal system of inheritance. In the Khasi society, it is only the youngest daughter or 'Ka Khadduh', who is eligible to inherit the ancestral property. If 'Ka Khadduh' dies without any daughter surviving her, her next elder sister inherits the ancestral property, and after her, the youngest daughter of that sister. Failing all daughters and their female issues, the property goes back to the mother's sister, mother's sister's daughter and so on. The Ka Khadduh's property is actually the ancestral property and so if she wants to dispose it off, she must obtain consent and approval of the uncles and brothers. Marriage within a clan is a taboo. Rings or betel-nut bags are exchanged between the bride and the bridegroom to complete the union.

The tribal people of Jharkhand have their indigenous way of living, customs and religious belief. The Kharia are known for their diverse and indigenous cultures. The Kharia belief in the Supreme Being. The tribal artwork is extremely popular that mainly includes woodworks, bamboo artworks, potteries, traditional jewelleries, weapons and metal works, the metal works are mostly used for agricultural and hunting purposes. The Kharia depend upon agriculture.
and wage earning. They are famous to labour work, practice food collection, collection of forest produce, fishing and hunting to supplement their family income. They not only differ considerably from the non-tribal population but from one another as well.

The Kharia family is patriarchal and patrilineal. The head of the family is the father. Although he is head of the family and has final say in the decision of the family, but he does not take decision without consulting his wife and young children. The decision is usually arrived by mutual consent of the husband, wife and children. In order to run the family smoothly, there is division of labour. The wife is in-charge of the food materials, cooking and other kind of household chores. The husband is in-charge of cattle, cattle shed and agricultural fields, the children assist their parents in household chores and the aged look after the house and kids when young members go to work.

The Kharia practice monogamy but in case of barrenness, impotency, widowhood and widower hood, they practice bigamy and in few cases even tri-gamy. At the time of marriage, they practice endogamy and exogamy. The marriage of a Kharia boy is held only with a Kharia girl and vice-versa. Inter-tribe marriage is taken as social offence and the offenders are ousted from the community. They are fined heavily and on the payment of fine they are included in the community. For the purpose of marriage the Kharia are divided into a
number of clans which are exogamous. Clan plays vital role in the negotiation of the marriage. The boy and the girl should not belong to the same clan because intra clan marriage is not allowed.

1.2. Organization of the study:

This present research work is organized in six chapters, excluding bibliography. The chapters are Introduction, Review of Literature, Comparative Phonology, Comparative Morphology, Comparative Vocabulary and Conclusion.

The first chapter Introduction briefly describes a general profile of Khasi and Kharia, which deals with the name and identity of the people, geographical and demographic background, education and literacy status, art and culture etc.

The second chapter Review of Literature deals with the literature review. The present review is based on a few selected books on Khasi and Kharia as no research work has been conducted on a comparative topic like this as far as our knowledge goes. Therefore, review of literature is based on independent research works done on these two languages in the past.

The third chapter comparative phonology describes the phonology of Khasi and Kharia. The phonemic inventory of Khasi
consists of eleven vocalic phonemes and six diphthongs and Kharia consists of ten vocalic phonemes and five diphthongs. The established /i/, /el/ and /al/ excluding /ul/ of Khasi can occur initially, medially and finally, whereas Kharia /i/, /el/ and /al/ and /ol/ can occur in all the positions i.e., initially, medially and finally. Khasi has corresponding long vowels to /el/, /al/ and /ol/ but not for /ul/ whereas Kharia has nasalized corresponding vowels. There are twenty four consonantal phonemes in Khasi language and thirty two consonantal phonemes in Kharia language. It is found that in Khasi the voiceless aspirated stops are /pl/, /hl/, /kl/, and in Kharia: /pl/, /h/, /k/, /g/. The interesting differences between these two languages are: absence of /g/ and retroflex sounds in Khasi. On the whole, the consonants phoneme of Kharia which are absent in Khasi are /d|, /l|, /h|, /h|, /h|, /l|, /g|, /g|, and /l|. And that of Khasi which is not found in Kharia is /d|. Interesting aspects in Kharia language is the occurrence of retroflex /d/ and stop palatal /l/ in all the position i.e. initially, medially and finally, whereas the occurrence of /l/ in Khasi is only at word initial and medial position but not finally.

Khasi and Kharia consonant combinations, in which we found that even though both the languages are rich with consonant combination, the consonant combination in initial position is much higher in Khasi than in Kharia, syllabic structure and gemination of both the languages Khasi and Kharia is taken in account.
The fourth chapter discusses about comparative morphology of Khasi and Kharia, comparison of nominals and verbals, comparison of adjectives and adverbs, comparison of numerals, comparison of compounding and reduplication. Nominals are discussed under the aspects such as structural occurrence, role of pronominal markers, formation of plural nouns, gender distinction of nouns, derivation of nouns, etc. Forms of personal pronouns and demonstratives in both the languages are studied and a comparison of the case systems is also included. Verbals of both the languages are compared under the following aspects: structure of verb; discusses about the monomorphemic verbs, derived polymorphemic (compound) verbs, reduplicated verbs and phrasal verbs followed by a study of tense and aspect, negative markers, numerals, compounding and reduplication, preposition and postposition etc.

The fifth chapter comparative vocabulary is a detailed analysis of the word used in both Khasi and Kharia languages. Khasi and Kharia vocabulary is found to have identical shape but differs in meaning from each other. The phoneme/s of the Khasi vocabulary is either present or absent when compared with the phoneme/s of Kharia or vice versa i.e., is present or absent in Kharia. It is found that Khasi and Kharia borrowed vocabulary from Indo-Aryan languages. Most of the
vocabularies of Khasi and Kharia language have identical shape and meaning only with borrowed word.

The sixth chapter is conclusion; this chapter sums up and integrated the research findings in the preceding chapters to present a comprehensive idea about the comparative study of Khasi and Kharia.