Chapter 3

The People
The people

The Republic of India is a country that occupies a greater part of South Asia. It has a coastline of over seven thousand kilometers (4349 miles), borders Pakistan to the west, the People's Republic of China, Nepal, and Bhutan to the north, and Bangladesh to the east. India occupies an area of 32,87,263 sq kms and is located between latitudes 8°4’ to 37°6’north and longitudes 68°7’and 97°25’east and measures ~ 3,214 km from north to south and ~ 2,933 km from east to west. Total population of India is 1,065,070,607 out of these Jharkhand covers 26.90 million population. Politically India is divided into 28 States and 6 union territories (Figure 3.1).

In the Indian Ocean, it is adjacent to the island nation of Sri Lanka. India is the seventh-largest country by geographical area and has one of the most diverse populations of wildlife.

India is residence to some of the most ancient civilization. The official name of the country, India is derived from the Old Persian version of Sindhu, the historic local appellation for the river Indus. The Constitution of India and general usage also recognizes Bharat (Hindi) which is derived from the Sanskrit name of an ancient
Hindu king. A third name, Hindustan (Hindi: land of the Hindus in Persian, has been used since Mughal times, though its contemporary use is unevenly applied due to domestic disputes over its representative as a national signifier.

3.1 Brief View of India

India has served as a major corridor for the dispersal of modern humans out of Africa (Cann 2001; Underhill et al, 2001; Cavalli - Sforza and Feldman 2003; Kivisild et al, 2003; Palanichamy et al, 2004; Cavalli- Sforza 2005). The first known permanent settlements appeared 9,000 years ago and developed into the Indus Valley Civilization, which peaked between 2600 BC and 1900 BC. It was followed by the Vedic Civilization. From around 550 BC onwards, many independent kingdoms came into being. In the north, the Maurya dynasty, which included the Buddhist king Ashoka, contributed greatly to India's cultural landscape. From 180 BC, a series of invasions from Central Asia followed, with the successive establishment in the
northern Indian subcontinent of the Indo-Greek, Indo-Scythian and Indo-Parthian kingdoms, and finally the Kushan Empire. From the 3rd century onwards the Gupta dynasty oversaw the period referred to as ancient India's "Golden Age". In the south, several dynasties including the Chalukyas, Cheras, Cholas, Kadambas, Pallavas and Pandyas prevailed during different periods. Science, art, literature, mathematics, astronomy, engineering, religion, and philosophy flourished under the patronage of these kings (Misra 2001).

The Muslim ruler in the beginning of the second millennium, much of north and central India came to be ruled by the Delhi Sultanate, and later, much of the entire subcontinent by the Mughal dynasty. Nevertheless, several indigenous kingdoms remained or rose to power, especially in the relatively sheltered south. During the middle of the second millennium, several European countries, including the Portuguese, Dutch, French, and British, who were initially interested in trade with India, took advantage of fractured kingdoms fighting each other to establish colonies in the country (Majumder 2001). The English managed to thwart the other colonisers and came to rule much of the country by 1840. After a failed insurrection in 1857 against the British East India Company, popularly known in India as the First War of Indian Independence, most of India came under the direct administrative control of the crown of the British Empire.

3.2 India a Place of diversity

Modern human evolution is punctured with migration that ultimately led our ancestors to spread over most part of the world within the past 100,000 years (Cavalli-Sforza, Mennozi and Piazza 1994; Lahr and Foley 1994), has created an extensive range of diversity in India. Geography, language, religion, and caste are major determinants of social and political organization within the highly diverse Indian population. Ethnically, Indians belongs to different races with major ethnicity being Indo-Aryan (72%) followed by the Australoids or Dravidians 25%, Mongoloid 2% and traces of Negroid (1%) found in the island regions of Andaman and Nilgiri Hills of Tamil Nadu.
Linguistically, India is residency of two major linguistic families, those of the Indo-Aryan and Dravidian-derived languages. In spite from these two linguistic families, Austro-Asiatic languages are spoken by a large number of tribal populations in India, and some groups of the north-eastern India also speak various Sino-Tibetan languaes. The Indian constitution recognises 18 official languages (Figure 3.2) with Hindi (an Indo-Aryan language) being the official language of Republic of India. Hindi is spoken all over north-central and western India. Two classical languages native to the land are Sanskrit and Tamil. Apart from the the official languages there are more than 875 dialects spoken throughout the country.

Figure 3.2: Languages spoken in different parts of India

Socially Indian society is fragmented into different groups Tribal and non-Tribal. Tribals are considered to be the original inhabitants of India with majority of them being Austro-Asiatic (Risley 1915; Thapar 1966; Pattanayak 1988). They constitute nearly 8% of total Indian Populations rest of the non-Tribal populations follows different religions where Hinduism is followed by ~75%, Muslims is (13.4
The people

%). Other smaller religious minorities include Christians (2.33%), Sikhs (1.84%), Buddhists (0.76%), Jains (0.40%), Ayyavazhi (0.12%) (Figure 3.3).

**Figure 3.3 Breakup of Indian tribes on the basis of language**
The frequency of different linguistic group which is given bellow has taken from Bhasin et al 2006.

![Diagram of Indian population breakdown by tribe](image)

**3.3 Tribal Languages**

This is still not clear that who came first in India- Austro-Asiatic, Tibeto-Burman or Dravidians. But the fact remains that all these three groups were in India when the Aryans came. Renfrew (1987, 1989) and Cavalli-Sforza et al, (1994) reported that Indian sub-continent had experienced massive gene flow from at least two Neolithic episodes of migrations. Firstly about 10-15 thousands years ago, when agriculture developed in the fertile region, a part of an eastward wave of human migration entered India and brought Dravidian languages (Renfrew 1989) mainly, Elamo-Dravidian languages (Ruhlen 1991), which may have originated in the Elam province (Zagros Mountains, Southwestern Iran) and are confined to southeastern India and to some isolated groups in Pakistan and northern India. The next was the arrival of pastoral nomads from the central Asian steppes to the Iranian plateau about 4000 years before present, brought with it the Indo-European language family which eventually replaced Dravidian languages from most of Pakistan and northern

Out of these language families, the Aryan family is numerically and culturally the most important in India. According to 1961 Census of India over 73.3 per cent of the Indian people spoke languages belonging to the Aryan family. Dravidian came next representing 24.47 per cent. There are only 1.5 per cent for the Austric languages and still less for the Tibeto-Burman languages (0.73 per cent).

(f) **Austro-Asiatic**

“Between the Austrics and Dravidians, the former possibly represent the earlier group. According to some scholars, the Austrics had their origin in Indo-China and South China; they spread east into India and south into Malaya, and then passed into the islands beyond. Another view, which is more recent is that the Austrics are a very old off-shoot of the Mediterranean people who came into India from the west, probably even before the Dravidians. Austric speech influenced Dravidian and Aryan. In the plains, Austric has been very largely suppressed by Dravidian and Aryan, but Austric languages survive in the less easily accessible hills and forests of Central and Eastern India. On the Himalayan slopes, Austric languages have deeply modified the Tibeto-Burman dialects these took over some Austric features. In Assam, one Austric language survived among the Khasis, who are largely Mongoloid in race but Austric in speech” (The Gazetteer of India 1965).

The Austro-Asiatic family is represented in India by the speakers belonging to the two main branches (a) Mon-Khmer Branch (Mon-Khmer Group) and, (b) Munda Branch

(a) **Mon-Khmer Branch**: This includes the two groups—1. Khasi group of languages of Assam and 2. Nicobarese of the Nicobar Islands.

(b) **Munda Branch**: This is represented by the speakers belonging to the Central and Eastern regions of India. This is the largest of the Austro-Asiatic family. This includes the people inhabiting mostly the hills and jungles of Bihar, Chota Nagpur, Orissa and Central India. The largest single group is that of Santhali speakers, who alone account for more than half of the total Austro-Asiatic speakers. The names of the speeches in the branch are given below:
(ii) Tibeto-Burman or Chinese

“The original Sino-Tibetan speakers appear to have become characterized with their basic language at least 4000 years before Christ in the area to the west of China, between the sources of the Yangtze and the Hwang Rivers. There they developed a language which ultimately became the source of Chinese, Tibetan, Burmese and possibly also Thai, though the genetic connection of Thai with the Sino-Tibetan family is now being questioned. The Tibeto-Burman speaking Mongoloids with yellow complexion came to be known among the Vedic Aryans as the Kiratas. The Kirata influence in the amalgam of Aryo-Dravido-Austric culture, which is Indian culture or Hindu culture, was not very far reaching. The role of the Sino-Tibetan languages and their present position also are not very significant” (The Gazetteer of India 2001). The speakers of Tibeto-Chinese family of languages are people of Mongoloid origin, who are considered to have entered the Indian frontiers much earlier than the Indo-Aryan speakers. The area of the speeches stretches right from Baltistan in the west to the north-eastern frontiers of the country and further reaching up to the southern most portions of Assam.

The speakers of Tibeto-Chinese family fall into two main sub-families—I. Siamese- Chinese Sub- Family and, II. Tibeto-Burman Sub-Family.

(i) Siamese-Chinese Sub-Family: It includes the Tai Group of languages which is distinct from Tibeto-Burman, and is represented only by one language i.e. Khamti.

(ii) Tibeto-Burman Sub-Family: The second sub-family of Tibeto-Chinese Family is divided into three branches (a) Tibeto-Himalayan Branch; (b) North-Assam Branch; and (c) Assam- Burmese Branch.

(iii) Dravidian: “The Dravidians are said to have come from Asia Minor and the Eastern Mediterranean. They were a Mediterranean people, of the same stock as the peoples of Asia Minor and Crete, and the Pre-Hellenic people of Greece (The Aegean). The Dravidians of India were thus originally a branch of the same people as the Pre-Hellenic people of Greece and Asia. The exact affiliation of Dravidian
with the language of the Eastern Mediterranean has not yet been settled. But some
common lexical elements are noticeable. Certain religious notions and ideas as well
as cults and practices among the Dravidian people of India have strong West Asian
and Mediterranean affinities. The city civilization of Sind and Punjab and other parts
of India appears to be Dravidian, and therefore connected with West Asia. The
Dravidian languages are now found in solid blocks in the Deccan and in South India,
where they have their separate existence in spite of strong inroads upon them by the
Aryan speech. There is an Austro element in the Dravidian languages, just as there
is a strong Dravidian Austro substratum in the Aryan speeches of India (The
Gazetteer of India 1973).

The language families have been broadly grouped geographically and the
relative position of particular language is discussed with reference to its situation in
three broad group areas. They are listed below:


Languages of the Dravidian family are concentrated in the plateau region and
the adjoining coastal plains. Telugu is spoken in Andhra. Tamil in Tamil Nadu, and
Kannada in Karnataka and Malayalam in Kerala. The speeches of the Dravidian
family are also spoken by a large number of tribal groups living in the eastern and
the north-eastern parts of the peninsular plateau. These groups include the Gonds of
Madhya Pradesh, Central India and the Oraon of Chota Nagpur Plateau.

(iv) Indo-European

“The Aryan speeches of India, beginning from Vedic Sanskrit, their oldest
form, have been the great intellectual and cultural heritage of India. They form our
mental and spiritual link with the European world, on the genetic side; and with the
world of South-East Asia and East Asia, on the cultural side, through Buddhism and
Brahmanism. The modern Indo-Aryan languages of India are near or distant cousins
of the Indo-European languages outside India, like Persian, Armenian, Russian and
other Slav languages: Greek, Italian, French, Spanish and other Latin languages; German, English, Norwegian and other Teutonic languages; and Welsh and Irish among Celtic languages. The Indo-European speech family is today the most important in the world. With the exception of the various languages within the orbit of Chinese (the so-called dialects of Chinese or Han), Japanese, Indonesian or Malay, and Arabic, all the main languages of the world, and the most important culturally, are Indo-European. And all these languages are descended from a common source-speech, the "Primitive Indo-European", which flourished about 5000 years ago" (The Gazetteer of India 1973).

In India this great family is represented by its sub-family of languages, which covers the widest area of the country and is spoken by the largest proportion of the Indian population.

(a) Aryan Sub-Family
The Aryan sub-family is further divided into 3 branches (a) Iranian Branch (b) Dardic (or Pisacha) Branch, and (c) Indo-Aryan Branch.
(a) Iranian Branch: It is represented by languages like Persian, Pashto and Balochi considered of foreign origin.
(b) Dardic (or Pisasha) Branch: It is represented by following groups of languages: (i) Kafir Group: Wai Ala (ii) Khowar Group: Khowar (iii) Dard Group.
(c) Indo-Aryan Branch: The coverage of the language of the Indo-Aryan Branch being much too wide, it will perhaps be convenient to restrict the brief description of the main languages and dialects of the branch through enumeration of broad groups of languages classified in their proper circles with reference to common characteristics and socio-linguistic tendencies, often not found in the other groups.
In present study we have selected four tribal population of Jharkhand, out of four two belongs to Austro-Asiatic linguistic family remaining belongs to Dravidian and Indo-Ariyan linguistic group.
The people

**Jharkhand State**

Jharkhand is a state in Eastern India. It was carved out of the southern part of Bihar state on 15 November 2000. Jharkhand is bordered by the states of Bihar to the north, Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh to the west, Orissa to the south, and West Bengal to the east (Figure 3.4).

The industrial city of Ranchi is its capital. The other major cities (all highly industrialized cities of eastern India), are Jamshedpur, Bokaro, Giridih, and Dhanbad.

Jharkhand is also popularly known as Vananchal. The word Vananchal is derived from combination of two Hindi words: Vana meaning "forests", and anchal meaning "area" – thus the word "Vananchal" denotes a land mass covered with forests.

**Figure:- 3.4 Geographical and Population Map of Jharkhand State**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ranchi</td>
<td>27,83,577</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhanbad</td>
<td>23,94,434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hazaribagh</td>
<td>22,77,108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palamu</td>
<td>20,92,004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Singhbhum</td>
<td>20,80,265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Singhbhum</td>
<td>19,78,671</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giridih</td>
<td>19,01,464</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bokaro</td>
<td>17,75,961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gumka</td>
<td>17,54,571</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gumla</td>
<td>13,45,520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deoghar</td>
<td>11,61,370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Godda</td>
<td>10,47,264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garhwa</td>
<td>10,34,151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saharsgarh</td>
<td>6,27,584</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chatra</td>
<td>7,90,680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakur</td>
<td>7,01,616</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koderma</td>
<td>4,98,683</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lohardaga</td>
<td>3,64,405</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.4 Demographic Profile of Jharkhand State

Jharkhand has a population of 26.90 million, consisting of 13.86 million males and 13.04 million females. The sex ratio is 941 males to 1000 females. The population consists of 28% tribals, 12% Scheduled Castes and 60% others. There are 274 persons for each square kilometer of land. However, the population density varies considerably from as low as 148 per square kilometer in Gumla district to as high as 1167 per square kilometer in Dhanbad district. The percentage of Schedule Castes is corporately less than Schedule Tribes in Jharkhand state and the Percentage of Literacy rate is comparatively very less than India (Table 3.1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3.1: Demographic profiles of India and Jharkhand state</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>India</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population (2004 est)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Density (Population /Km²)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex Ratio (no. of males per 1000 females)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent 0-14 Years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent 65+Years Old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Schedule Castes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Schedule Tribes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Literate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exponential Growth Rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Fertility Rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infant Mortality Rate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.5 Brief History of Jharkhand State

The demand for a separate Jharkhand state can be traced back to the early 1900s, when Jaipal Singh, the Oxford Captain of the Gold Medal winning Indian Hockey team for the 1928 Olympics, suggested the idea of a separate state consisting of the southern districts of Bihar. The idea did not become a reality, however, until
August 2nd, 2000, when the Parliament of India passed the Bihar Reorganization Bill to create the state of Jharkhand, carving 18 districts out of Bihar to form Jharkhand state on 15th November, 2000. It became the 28th state of India.

However, according to some historians there was already a distinct geopolitical, cultural position accorded to Jharkhand even before the period of Magadha Empire. According to a legend, Raja Jai Singh Deo of Orissa was accepted as the ruler of Jharkhand by its people in the 13th century. The Singh Deo's of Orissa have been very instrumental in the early history of Jharkhand. The local tribal heads had developed into barbaric dictators who could govern the province neither fairly nor justly. Consequently, the people of this state approached the more powerful rulers of Jharkhand's neighbouring states who were perceived to have a more fair and just governance. This became the turning point in the history of the region wherein rulers from Orissa moved in with their armies and created states that were governed for the benefit of the people and involved their participation, thus ending the barbarism that had marked the region for centuries. The good tribal rulers continued to thrive and were known as the Munda Raja and exist to this day. (These are regions which are still semi-autonomous, the degree of this depending on the size of each specific Munda Raja's domain.) Later, during the Mughal Empire period, the Jharkhand area was known as Kukara. After the year 1765, it came under the control of the British Empire and became formally known under its present title, "Jharkhand" - the Land of "Jungles" (forests) and "Jharis" (bushes). Actually, it would be more accurately described as a land riddled with rolling hillocks, covered with evergreen forests, and criss-crossed by innumerable fresh water springs. In some places you can find those rushing streams and waterways dropping away into majestic white water falls, that thunder down onto cool smooth rock, and perfectly rounded little pools, reminding you of some magical place found only on postcards. The sunsets here are more beautiful, the scenery and greenery more picturesque, and really it is a shame that hiking here isn't more popular, because Jharkhand is a natural gem. Located on Chhota Nagpur Plateau and Santhal Parganas, the land unfolds before the mind's eye like a haven where you can savour the simplicity, and elegance of nature to the hilt.
In the present study, we have chosen four endogamous populations from Jharkhand state which are linguistically different to each other. A brief description about these populations is discussed in this chapter.

The populations and their linguistic family included are

(i) **Munda**: Austro-Asiatic
(ii) **Birhor**: Austro-Asiatic
(ii) **Oraon**: Dravidian
(iv) **Paharia**: Indo-Aryan

(1) **The Munda**

The Munda is one of the ancient tribes and are believed to belong to the Kolarian stock. In physical features, language, social organization, social customs and religious rites, the Munda resemble the Ho very closely. The Munda is essentially agriculturist people. Initially the ownership of land was on community basis. They cleared the virgin forest for their cultivation and the land became their Khuntkattis. Such lands were rent-free. In due course, various other form of land tenure system known as "Utakar, Chattisa" etc. emerged in which the rent was paid only for the year in which the land was cultivated. With the passage of time, a number of free land holdings of the Munda came under the zamindari system. The exploitation by the zamindars gave rise to discontentment among the Munda. Despite protective land laws, the exploitation by zamindars continued which eventually resulted in Sardari movement. The Birsa movement of the late nineteenth century made the Government to review its land holding policy (Figure 3.5) and enacted the Chotanagpur Tenancy Act, 1908. It specifically protected the rights and interests of the tribals. Subsequently, for the restoration of the tribal land, Land Regulation Act of 1969 was enacted. However, due to certain loopholes and operative defects in the Act, the alienation of the tribal land to the non-tribals continues. They also agitated over the loss of their forest resources due to the nationalization of the forest produces.

The Munda believe in Sing Bonga as the supreme deity. Besides, there are ancestral spirits, which are worshipped by each family for the purposes of getting
good crops or for avoidance of sickness, calamities, etc. There are several religious functionaries. Deuari is the village priest. It is a hereditary position held generally by the eldest son. Deona is the medicine man who knows the magical techniques of treating sick persons. It is also a hereditary position. Deosi is another religious functionary who is skilled in curing people affected by witchcraft.

Figure: - 3.5 The origination point of and the forced migration path of Munda Population.

All through the year the Munda observe several festivals and rituals associated with various agricultural activities. Some of the important festivals include Garam Dharam, Maghe, and Sarhul. Halchar Parab festival is observed on the first day of the month of Magh (Jan-Feb) with the ritual of ploughing for paddy. Munda year also begins from that month. During the month of Feb-March, Garam Dharam is worshipped. The whole village community participates in it. Maghe Parab is also observed during the full moon in Magh. It is post-harvesting festival.
The festival continues for seven days, but the date of Morang- Maghe (four day) is most important. Bah also known as Sarhul, is celebrated in the month Phagun (Feb-March). It is connected with the flowering of Sal tree. The dancing is comparatively quieter than in case of Maghe-Parab and no open breach of decorum is perceptible on this occasion. Karma Puja is performed during the month of May-June and is connected with weeding of paddy. They have also practically the same annual cycle of festivals as the Ho with the difference that whereas among the latter the Maghe Parab is more important, in the case of Munda, it is Ba Parab instead. Tusu Parab is also observed with great fanfare in this area during Makar Sakranti.

The tradition panchayat, a form of self-government has been losing its importance. Ordinarily, each village has a Panchayat headed by a Pahan whose office is hereditary. Owing to the introduction of the statuary Panchayats the authority of the Pahan has been eroded to a great extent.

(i) Physical structure of the Munda

There is a similarity between the Munda and the Ho in their physical structure. They are blackish, curly haired and dwarf in size. They are very industrious but with the passage of time their physical structure underwent significant changes.

(ii) The marriage pattern of the Munda

Most of the Munda marry within their community. They marry in their teen age, just like the "Gaouri" (child hood marriage) custom of the ancient Hindus. The bride goes round the groom seven times during the marriage. They have to recite the 'mantras' (hymns). Most of the participants of wedding ceremony are women. The Morol or the Raja gives directives in the marriages. Although the married Monda women wear conch bangle now a days like the "Hindu" women, they did not wear it in ancient time.

(iii) Food of the Munda

There is a similarity between the Ho and the Munda in their way of taking foods. Like Ho, the Munda eat frogs, snakes, rats, wild animals, shells, snails and earthworm. But now a day, they have made some changes in their food items. They entertain their guests by giving them Tari (a kind of wine that is made from palm
(iv) No health awareness of the Munda

The house of the Mundas is made of mud. They live in damp and dirty environment. There is a lack of cleanliness among them. They are used to take overnight and rotten food. They give birth to a lot of children. After their birth, the children grow up in an unfavorable environment. When they become ill, they depend on exorcising of evil spirits by uttering charms rather than taking medicine. As they are unaware about nutrition, foods, pure drinking water and sanitation, their children grow up in an unhealthy environment.

(v) The Munda with manifold problems

The Mundas are facing a manifold problem. Lack of land aggravates to their already worst livelihood. Like vagabond some roams around to find a piece of land to spend the day while others lives at the mercy of land lord for whom they serve. The Mundas catch fish, work as day laborers and earth cutter and thus they pass their days. The work which is possible by the people of other community, the Mundas are not called for this work but the work which is not possible without Munda then they are called for the work and the Munda are paid a very few amount of money to do these works. The Munda are deprived of education. One of the great problems of Munda is that they do not use healthy latrine. They have no knowledge about sanitation also. They go to call of nature in the open field and any where they like. They are not aware of fresh drinking water. As they have not enough water, they drink water from ponds or rivers. The Munda are about to forget their own social and cultural customs. With the passage of time, they are mixing with the Hindus. As they are thought to be the people of low-born, they could not mix with the main stream. After the partition of India and Pakistan, a lot of Munda went to India because of adverse environment and oppression.
(vi) The present and past occupation of the Munda

During the ancient time the main occupation of Munda was to cut the jungle and to raise cultivable land. Besides, they had to make embankment to prevent the cultivated land from saline water. More over them worked as the muscle men for the local kings and landlords. Though they did hazardous works, they were ill paid. They were given a few lands for cultivation as their wages. But with the passage of time, their occupation has been changed. Now their occupations are catching fish, digging earth and farming in others' lands. They are very much skilled in this works. This tribe does many works both men and women work as day laborers in others land. Both men and women do hard work like earth cutting. They both catch fishes in rivers and ponds. They hunt birds with spars. They hunt tortoise digging the earth of bushes. Some of them collect shells and snails. Some of them also cultivate taking others land on lease. But no where they get proper wages. Recently some of them have taken training of carpeting, electrical, welding and motor mechanical course. But their member is very small.

(2) The Birhor

The term Birhor literally means peoples of jungles (Bir-jungles, Ho- men) and this in very well with wandering hunters and collector's life, which these people lead. Like other allied tribes the Birhor speak a language classed within the Mudari group in the Austro-Asiatic sub-family of language. 

(i) Ethnology

The Birhor belong to the same dark-skinned, short statured, long headed, wavy-haired and broad nosed race to which the Munda, the Santhal, the Bhumis, the Ho and other allied tribes belong.

(ii) Structure of the Birhor

The Birhor of Jharkhand broadly divides their universe into two parts rimil (sky) and the utaye (earth). They conceive the earth as a round-shaped flat surface and the sky, a hollow concave overarching it. This structure of the universe appears to be somewhat like a cone, and is similar to the structure of their leaf-huts.
Some of the Birhor, however, say that there is a world beyond the sky and another below the earth. They do not have any specific terms for these worlds, and seem to have varying notions about them. Some call the world beyond the sky *sarag* (heaven), and say that the departed souls live there. Some say that the world beyond the sky is inhabited by human beings like those on earth but the men there are all cultivators. Water of their fields permeates through the sky on earth as rain. The Birhor do not have much to tell about the world beneath the earth. They simply describe it as a dark region full of water. These ideas seem to have been taken from the neighboring Hindu peasants.

(iii) **Classification**

According to their economic habit the Birhor are classified into two groups - the wandering Birhor or Uthlus and the settled or Janghis. The Birhor of Singhbhum mostly belongs to the former class. The settlement whether permanent or temporary are known as *tandas* which consists of usually half a dozen or more huts. The huts of the Uthlus are more improvised leaf sheds (Kumha) in form of low triangular tents with conical spaces. The individual house in a Janghi *tanda* is of a permanent nature. Tanda is comparatively more commodious with rectangular ground plan and two sloped roofing.

The Uthlu Birhor do not practice any form of agriculture and are entirely dependent upon the collection of forest products for their living. Occasionally they also do a little bit of hunting with small basket traps. From the forests they collect edible roots, fruit, honey and barks of Baahinia Soondos for the manufacture of rope baskets. The Birhor is noted for their love of monkey’s flesh and skill in trapping these animals.

(iv) **The marriage pattern of the Birhor**

Marriage is considered indispensable for every Birhor. The different forms of valid marriage among Birhors are:- Nam-Napam Bapala (love Marriage), Udra-Udri Bapala (elopement marriage), Balo-Bapala (intrusion marriage), Sipundur Bapala (forcible anointment of sindur), Singha Bapala (widow re-marriage), Hirum Bapala (second marriage of man while the first wife is still alive), Kirig Javai Bapala (brought son-in-law marriage), Golhat Bapala (marriage by exchange of mates from
two families), Bing Kaihi Bapala (a marriage without payment of bride price), Sadar Bapala (a regular by negotiation between the guardians)

(v) Birhor Economy

The Birhor belong to the Mundani group of tribes and are concentrated in the central-eastern India. In Jharkhand they are found mainly in the districts of Palamau, Gumla, Koderma, Chatra and Hazaribagh. In these regions they are locally known as Mankidi, Mankria or Mankar-khia Kol because of their habit of eating and sharing monkeys. The self-ascertainment of the people is, however, Birhor, and there is no perceptible difference between them in different regions.

Though broadly branded as hunter-gatherers, the whole gamut of the Birhor economy in the above-mentioned areas of Jharkhand involves the exploitation of forest resources and the maintenance of an essential economic articulation with caste peasants and the market economy of the larger society. The Birhor collect jungle products and exchange them with the neighboring settled Hindu peasants for their day-to-day livelihood. The jungle resources mainly collected by them are from the Bauhinia creeper that grows profusely in these regions. From the barks (Chhakkam) of these creepers, various kinds of ropes and rope-products are made. Various minor forest products are also procured and exchanged in the neighboring society. Hunting of wild game is another of their economic activities. But hunting is pursued occasionally and the animals hunted are primarily used for consumption. Sometimes they also sell live monkeys and skins of langur. Though hunting does not contribute much to their economy, they keep up a spirit of hunting and continue this mode of production as a cultural norm.

In the context of their life-situation the Birhor cannot operate the clan-lineage based segmentary system of social structure, characteristic of the Mundani group of tribes. They now organize their subsistence activities, primarily in terms of two groups that are referred to by them respectively as orha (household) and tanda or tola (band). Orha serves as their basic production and consumption unit, and
The people

revolves around the nuclear family of husband, wife and unmarried children. Most of them, however, comprise of partial or broken families and show a flexible nature.

There is no central authority to regulate band-formations among the Birhor. The band has no territorial affiliation, and its formation is not seasonal. It is a regular phenomenon and the Birhor always move and live in bands of several related households. Though the Birhor bands are flexible in nature, they always comprise of marriageable groups. The role of exogamy, the principle of reciprocity as well as the autonomy of individual households to move from one band to another help maintain interaction and communication over a wider region. They divide their patrilineal clans and lineages into small operational groups and align themselves in such a way as to maintain an effective scale of society and to deal with the probable scarcity of marriageable spouses.

(3) The Paharia

The Paharia are basically shifting cultivators and live on mountain spurs in very small villages. They have a feeling of animosity toward the Santhal who live largely on the plateau and use more sophisticated tools for agriculture. They speak Indo-Aryan (Indo-European) language which belongs to the intermediate Dravidian group so widely different from the Austro-Asiatic languages.

The Paharia are dark complexioned, having coarse black and wavy hair with dark black eyes, thick lips and big none. Paharia settlements comprise ten to fifty houses. The houses are very small and rickety compared to Santhal houses. Their main occupation is slash-and-burn cultivation, known locally as kurwa. They move from field to field after a few years. They use only the digging stick for putting in the seeds. They grow maize, millets, beans and pulses. Some of these tribesmen have picked up settled cultivation if they have some plain land. The Paharia as compared to Santhal are more dependent on the forest. Earlier they used to make some money by cultivating sabai grass. But now they do not do so in a big way as its market has shrunk. The cutting down of forests and the restrictions placed on their exploitation led to a reduction of their resource base. Although the Paharia have cherished a healthy relationship between nature, man and the spirits for a long time, they are
extremely frustrated as their gods have failed to protect them from the ravages of time. Abject poverty and disease have made them panic. The steps taken by government for their welfare have largely bypassed them, and they remain one of the most backward tribal groups in the state. Paharia were formerly engaged in collection of forest produce, hunting, fishing and shifting cultivation on hill slopes for their livelihood. But now they are mainly engaged in settled cultivation. A substantial number of them are landless laborers and seasonal migration plays a dominant role in their socio-economic life. The polity of the Paharia is patriarchal. In each village there are five officials. Distinct functions are assigned to each of them. The 'headman' is known as 'jogmanjhi'. His main duty is to look after the morals of boys and girls. 'Pramanik' and 'assistant pramanik' assist him. Nayak is a village priest and Gorait, a messenger. The majhithan is the usual place for communal talks and council meetings. There used to be a Pargana Council, which had jurisdiction over a number of villages. But now, there are hereditary Parganaits for each large district who preside over the Paharia High Court. Parganaits is the highest council recognized by the Santhal. It decides almost all sorts of disputes and its decisions are strictly followed.

(4) The Oraon

The Oraon is an important Dravidian tribe of the Chota Nagpur plateau, numbering altogether about 750,000 persons, of whom 85,000 now belong to the Central Provinces, being residents of the Palamau, Giridih and Singhbhum district in Jharkhand state (Figure 3.6). They are commonly known in the Central Provinces as Dhangar or Dhangar-Oraon. In Chota Nagpur the word Dhangar means a farm servant engaged according to a special customary contract, and it has come to be applied to the Oraons. The same remark applies to 33,000 persons returned from Palamau as Kisan or cultivator, these also being members of the tribe. The name by which the Oraons know themselves is Kurukh or Kurunkh, and the designation of Oraon or Orao has been applied to them by outsiders. The meaning of both names is obscure. Dr. Halm was of the opinion that the word kurukh might be identified with the Kolarian horo, 'man'.

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According to Dr. Halm (1965) Oraon was a name coined by the Hindus, its base being *orgoran*, hawk or cunny bird, used as the name of a totemistic sept. Sir G. Grierson, however, suggested a connection with the Kaikari, *urupai*, man; Burgandi *urapo*, man; *urang*, men. The Kaikaris are a Telugu caste, and as the Oraons are believed to have come from the south of India, this derivation sounds plausible. In a similar way Sir. G. Grierson states, Kurukh may be connected with Tamil *kurugu*, an eagle, and be the name of a totemistic clan. Compare also names, such as Korava, Kurruru, a dialect of Tamil, and Kudagu. In the Nerbudda valley the farm servant who pours the seed through the tube of the sowing-plough is known as Oraya; this word is probably derived from the verb *urna* to pour, and means 'one who pours.' Since the principal characteristic of the Oraons among the Hindus is their universal employment as farm servants and labourers, it may be suggested that the name is derived from this term of the other names by which they are known to outsiders, *Dhangar* means a farm servant, *Kuda* a digger, and *Kisan* a cultivator. The name Oraon and its variant Orao is very close to Oraya, which, as already seen, means a farm servant. The nasal seems to be often added or omitted in this part of the country, as Kurukh or Kurunkh.

Figure:- 3.6 Geographical distribution of Oraon tribes in Jharkhand state.
(i) Physical Appearance of the Oraon.

"The colour of most Oraon," Sir H. Risley states, "is the darkest brown approaching to black; the hair being jet-black, coarse and rather inclined to be frizzy. Projecting jaws and teeth, thick lips, low narrow foreheads, and broad flat noses are the features characteristic of the tribe. The eyes are often bright and full, and no obliquity is observable in the opening of the eyelids." The Oraon youths," Dalton states, "though with features very far from being in accordance with the statutes of beauty, are of a singularly pleasing class, their faces beaming with animation and good humour. They are a small race, averaging 4 feet 5 inches, but there is perfect proportion in all parts models of symmetry. There is about the young Oraon a jaunty air and mirthful expression that distinguishes him from the Munda or Ho, who has more of the dignified gravity that is said to characterise the North American Indian. The Oraon is particular about his personal appearance only so long as he is unmarried, but he is no hurry to withdraw from the Dhumkuria community, and generally his first youth is passed before he resigns his decorative propensities."

He wears his hair long like a woman, gathered in a knot behind, supporting, when he is in gala costume, red instruments useful and ornamental, with numerous ornaments of brass. At the very extremity of the roll of hair gleams a small circular mirror set in brass, from which, and also from his ears, bright brass chains with spiky pendants dangle, and as he moves with the springy elastic step of youth and tosses his head like a high-mettle steed in the buoyancy of his animal spirits, he sets all his glittering ornaments in motion and displays as he laughs a row of teeth, round, white and regular, that give light and animation to his dusky features. He wears nothing in the form of a coat; his decorated neck and chest are undraped, displaying how the latter tapers to the waist, which the young dandies compress within the smallest compass. In addition to the cloth, there is always round the waist a girdle of cords made of tasar-silk or of cane. This is now a superfluity, but it is no doubt the remnant of a more primitive costume, perhaps the support of the antique fig-leaves." Out of the age of ornamentation nothing can be more untidy or more unprepossessing than the appearance of the Oraon. The ornaments are nearly all discarded, hair utterly
neglected, and for raiment any rags are used. This applies both to males and females of middle age.

(ii) Character of the Oraon.

"The Oraon," Colonel Dalton says, "if not the most virtuous, are the most cheerful of the human race. Their lot is not a particularly happy one. They submit to be told that they are especially created as a labouring class, and they have had this so often drummed into their ears that they believe and admit it. I believe they relish work if the task master be not over-exacting. Oraon sentenced to imprisonment without labour, as sometimes happens, for offences against the excise, insist on joining the working gangs, and wherever employed, if kindly treated, they work as if they felt an interest in their task. In cold weather or hot, rain or sun, they go cheerfully about it, and after some nine or ten hours of toil (seasoned with a little play and chaff among themselves) they return blithely home in flower-decked groups holding each other by the hand or round the waist and singing."

(iii) Marriage pattern of Oraon

Oraon reside in dormitory type of houses that provide the young boys and girls an opportunity to mix with one another and to choose their partners in life. Marriage rituals in the Oraon community are similar to those of Santals and Mundas. Marriages are arranged by the guardians in the family, but the opinions of the brides and bridegrooms are also respected. Child marriage is not recognised. Divorce is allowed. Divorcees, as well as widows, can remarry. Both men and women can marry more than once but men are not allowed a second marriage unless they are widowed or are divorcees.

(iv) Social Customs of the Oraon.

But more often they go on all night. Mr. Ball mentions their dance as follows: "The Oraon dance was distinct from any I had seen by the Santhal or other races. The girls, carefully arranged in lines by sizes, with the tallest at one end and the smallest at the other, firmly grasp one another's hands, and the whole movements are so perfectly in concert that they spring about with us much agility as could a single individual." Father Dehon gives the following interesting notice of their social customs: "The Oraon are very sociable beings, and like to enjoy life together. They
are paying visits or pahis to one another nearly the whole year round. In these the handia (beer-jar) always plays a great part. Any man who would presume to receive visitors without offering them a handia would be hooted and insulted by his guests, who would find a sympathising echo from all the people of the village. One may say that from the time of the new rice at the end of September to the end of the marriage feast or till March there is a continual coming and going of visitors. For a marriage feast forty handias are prepared by the groom's father, and all the people of the village who can afford it supply one also. Each handia gives about three gallons of rice-beer, so that in one day and a half, in a village of thirty houses, about 200 gallons of rice-beer are despatched. The Oraon are famous for their dances.

They delight in spending the whole night from sunset till morning in this most exciting amusement, and in the dancing season they go from village to village. They get, as it were, intoxicated with the music, and there is never any slackening of the pace. On the contrary, the evolutions seem to increase till very early in the morning, and it sometimes happens that one of the dancers shoots off rapidly from the gyrating group, and speeds away like a spent top and, whirlwind-like, disappears through paddy-fields and ditches till he falls entirely exhausted. Of course it is the devil who has taken possession of him. One can well imagine in what state the dancers are at the first crow of the cock, and when 'L'aurore avec ses doigts de rose entr'ouvre les portes de L'orient,' she finds the girls straggling home one by one, dishevelled, too tired even to enjoy the company of the boys, who remain behind in small groups, still sounding their tom-toms at intervals as if sorry that the performance was so soon over. And, wonderful to say and incredible to witness, they will go straight to the stalls, yoke their bullocks, and work the whole morning with the same spirit and cheerfulness as if they had spent the whole night in refreshing sleep. At eleven o'clock they come home, eat their meal, and stretched out in the verandah sleep like logs until two, when poked and kicked about unmercifully by the people of the house, they reluctantly get up with heavy eyes and weary limbs to resume their work."
(v) Social Rules of the Oraon.

The Oraon do not now admit outsiders into the tribe. There is no offence for which a man is permanently put out of caste, but a woman living with any man other than an Oraon is expelled. Temporary expulsion is meted out for the usual offences. The head of the caste *panchayat* is called Pannu, and when an offender is reinstated, the Panna first drinks water from his hand, and takes upon himself the burden of the erring one's transgression. For this he usually receives a fee of five rupees and in some States the appointment is in the hands of the Raja, who exacts a fine of a hundred rupees or more from a new candidate. The Oraon eat almost all kinds of food, including pork, fowls and crocodiles, but abstain from beef. Their status is very low among the Hindus; they are usually made to live in a separate corner of the village, and are sometimes not allowed to draw water from the village well. As already stated, the dress of the men consists only of a narrow wisp of cloth round the loins. Some of them say, like the Gond, that they are descended from the subjects of Rawan, demon king of Ceylon; this ancestry having no doubt in the first instance been imputed to them by the Hindus. And they explain that when Hanuman in the shape of a giant monkey came to the assistance of Rama, their king Rawan tried to destroy Hanuman by taking all the loin-cloths of his subjects and tying them soaked in oil to the monkey's tail with view to setting them on fire and burning him to death. The device was unsuccessful and Hanuman escaped, but since then the subjects of Rawan and their descendants have never had a sufficient allowance of cloth to cover them properly.