CHAPTER - 1

INTRODUCTION

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1.1. **INTRODUCTORY**

The word 'Bhuyan' means "the son of the soil" (Bhui means 'earth'). This is a very widespread tribe found in some parts of Orissa State.

(A) **The nature and the physical features of the tribe**: Bhuyans have a muscular body-built and their height varies from short to medium. Their hairs are black, plentiful on the head but scanty on the body. Head is mostly dolicocephalic, nose is broad and depressed at the root and lips are thick. The skin colour is mostly prognathous, the projecting cheeks and jaw-bones giving a certain squarness to the face.

Hill Bhuyans mainly depend upon the forest products and *Poru-Cas* (cultivation by burning the forest) and shifting cultivation. They cut the trees and sell wood in the near by town. Hunting is their secondary means of living.

(B) **Education**: Education and literacy is of very low percentage among the Bhuyans. The literacy among the Hill Bhuyans may not exceed five percent of the population. Very few ashram schools are found in the area and lack of road-communication is one of the causes of unsuccessful education among the Bhuyans.

(C) **Culture**: Like other tribals Bhuyans used to live a community life. 'Darbar Ghar' is the centre of their life and culture. It is a house of multipurpose activities and used for school, meeting
hall, temple, guest house and dormitory house for the unmarried boys and girls of the village. They gather here on festive occasions like Karma Parab, Debta goda, Bisri osai and Raja Parab, etc.

Among the different sections of the Bhuyans Pauri (Hill) Bhuyans who are represented as Des Bhuyans or Mal Bhuyans are most backward and they live a community life.

(D) Sections of the Bhuyan Tribe: The different sections of the Bhuyans are as follows:

1. Des Bhuyan or Mal Bhuyan represented mainly as Pauri Bhuyans
2. Parja Bhuyan or Rautali Bhuyan
3. Bathudi Bhuyan
4. Santali Bhuyan
5. Dandsena Bhuyan
6. Rajkuli or Bar Bhuyan
7. Saontia Bhuyan
8. Khandait Bhuyan or Pawanbans Bhuyan
9. Mushahar Bhuyan
10. Ghatwar Bhuyan

Among these sections of Bhuyan tribe Pauri Bhuyans, Santal Bhuyans and Saunti Bhuyans speak their (Bhuyan) dialect as their mother-tongue. There are some legends about their origin like the Pawanbans Bhuyans show their origin from Pawan (Wind God).
Food habits: Bhuyans have food habits like the tribal people in general. Rice is esteemed as their ideal food. Different kinds of fruits, roots and tubers, mushrooms and greens collected from the forest are the main part of the Bhuyan diet. Food of the Hill Bhuyans depends mainly upon the seasonal variation and availability.

Liquor has an important role among the Bhuyans. Mohua liquor is used as medicine to cure cold and headache. Besides liquor has a high social value and it is customary, because they entertain the guests and relatives by serving plenty of liquor to them on important occasions related to birth, marriage and death ceremonies. They also offer liquor to their deities. In social meetings liquor is also served. The liquor is rice-beer and prepared by themselves.

Group dance and singing with the drum called 'cangu' are the inseparable parts of their life. They dance every day in evening and night and in every festive occasion.

Marriage: Marriage is endogamous among them. 'Dharipala' (marriage by elopement) and 'Ghica' (marriage by capture) forms of marriage are most common among them. 'Mangi bibha' (marriage by negotiation) which is borrowed from the Hindus is now also acceptable by the Bhuyans.
1.2. **BHUYAN TRIBE AND IT'S MAIN LAND**

Bhuyan tribe is widespread and found in Orissa, Bihar, West Bengal and Assam States. S.C. Roy⁴ classified the tribe into two sections, the Southern and the Northern. Orissa is the centre of the Southern section and Chotanagpur is the centre of the Northern section. Among them, the Hill or Pauri (Pahar means hills) Bhuyans of Orissa are much primitive.

According to Dalton⁵ Bhuyans belong to the Southern or Dravidian race. But S.C. Roy judged them from racial and cultural affinities and classified them under Mundari group.⁶ Stirling, Russel⁷, Hutton⁸, have also classified them under the Mundari group.

Bhuyan-Pirh (Pir h means 'original dwelling place') is situated in the Keonjhar district of Orissa State. Of late, the growing population compelled them to migrate to the neighbouring districts of Sundargarh, Mayurbhanj and Dhenkanal of Orissa. They are called Hill Bhuyans or Pauri Bhuyans. The area of this section of the tribe is situated roughly between 21° to 22° North latitude and 85° to 86° East longitude. This homeland of the Pauri Bhuyans is the watershed area of Baitarani and Brahmani rivers. According to the 1981 Census, the population of Pauri Bhuyans in the Bhuyan-Pirh was 64,273 (31,634 males and 32,639 females) and all over Orissa was 2,15,463.⁹

The areas of the Bhuyans was visited for the field work which is the limitation of the present study. I have visited several times to the Bhuyan-speaking-settlements of the Orissa State. Of them
some of those places and informants are -
(1) Shrikhandi Pirh
(2) Sarakhandi Pirh
(3) Jharkhandi Pirh

Bhuyan villages near Telkoi, Suakati, and Banspal were also visited for the purpose.

My informants were of various age-groups, from 16/17 years girls to 80 years old women and from school boys to very old people of the Bhuyan villages.

But Mr. Mahendra Mahata and his friends who are of 18 to 24 years are groups and Sukhi Dehuri and her girl friends of 16 to 20 years of age groups were my principal informants. They belong to Jaldiha village of Keonjhar district in Orissa.

The main land of the Bhuyans or the 'Bhuyan Pirh' is situated mainly in Keonjhar district and their dwelling places or 'Pirh' are shown in the map attached herewith.

1.3. DEMOGRAPHIC COMPOSITION OF THE TRIBE

Bhuyan is a major tribe in many districts of Orissa. But their main dwelling place is the Bhuyan Pirh of Keonjhar district. They are also found in the districts of Mayurbhanj, Sundargarh in huge numbers. According to 1981 Census, Bhuyan population in these districts were as below :-
Map (Keonjhar District)
Study Area
SIZE DISTRIBUTION OF SETTLEMENTS OF BHUYAN PIRHS (DWELLING)

A: Charigarh Pirk
B: Shrikhandi Pirk
C: Sarakhandi Pirk
D: Panohipara Pirk
E: Jharkhandi Pirk
F: Athas Pirk
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Keonjhar</td>
<td>31,634</td>
<td>32,639</td>
<td>64,273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayurbhanj</td>
<td>20,615</td>
<td>20,905</td>
<td>41,520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sundargarh</td>
<td>33,433</td>
<td>34,084</td>
<td>67,517</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Keonjhar is highly tribal populated district where many tribes of Indo-Aryan language family and the Austric family are found. According to 1981 census the population figures of these tribes are given as below:

(A) Tribes of Indo-Aryan group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tribes</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bhuyan</td>
<td>31,634</td>
<td>32,639</td>
<td>64,273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bathuri</td>
<td>26,653</td>
<td>27,335</td>
<td>53,988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sounti</td>
<td>22,597</td>
<td>23,348</td>
<td>45,945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paroja</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(B) Tribes of Austric group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tribes</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kolha</td>
<td>61,967</td>
<td>62,505</td>
<td>1,24,472</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Munda</td>
<td>17,962</td>
<td>17,666</td>
<td>35,628</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juang</td>
<td>7,463</td>
<td>8,004</td>
<td>15,467</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oraon</td>
<td>1,852</td>
<td>1,868</td>
<td>3,720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saora'</td>
<td>3,989</td>
<td>3,940</td>
<td>7,929</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santhal</td>
<td>20,721</td>
<td>20,473</td>
<td>41,194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shabal (Lodha)</td>
<td>7,335</td>
<td>7,205</td>
<td>14,540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kond</td>
<td>647</td>
<td>567</td>
<td>1,214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gond</td>
<td>29,345</td>
<td>29,789</td>
<td>59,134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ho</td>
<td>3,837</td>
<td>3,750</td>
<td>7,587</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tribes</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kharia</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>453</td>
<td>903</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kisan</td>
<td>1,917</td>
<td>1,885</td>
<td>3,802</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pential</td>
<td>482</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mundari</td>
<td>566</td>
<td>777</td>
<td>1,343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kolaharas</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kol</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>508</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kora</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>672</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kandha Gouda</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>531</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.4. **BHUYAN DIALECT AND OTHER TRIBAL LANGUAGES IN THE AREA**

The people of Keonjhar district are a heterogeneous mixture of two ethnological groups. The Aryan and the Austric groups. The Aryan and the Austric groups of language speakers are main inhabitants of Keonjhar. They speak many languages which are mutually not intelligible to each other. In fact in this small district, as many as eighteen different languages are spoken and people living side by side in a village speak different languages. They have been listed in 1.3. earlier.

1.5. **HISTORICITY OF THE TRIBE**

The Bhuyans are not unknown to the History. Bhuyan culture is very ancient and demands a special rank as that of the Savaras. We found the first reference to the Bhuyans in the Buddhist texts. According to 'Anguttara Nikaya', Tapasu and Bhallika
who first heard the Sermons from Buddha were two Bhuyan Traders from Utkal. They met Buddha in the jungles of 'Uruvela' in their way while carrying the goods to 'Majjhimadesha'. They gave honey and cake to Buddha who had not touched food for two months just after his enlightenment. Lord Buddha got satisfied and explained his doctrines to them. Tapasu and Bhallika are respected as the first Buddhists of the world. After that, Tapasu as 'Dyochika worshipper' and Bhallika as 'arhat' made Buddhism popular in Utkal and Kalinga. Though Dr. H.K. Mahatab related Tapasu and Bhallika with the ancient 'Bhaumas' those people bearing Bhuyan title of North Orissa do not belong to Bhuyan tribe and in this respect, it requires special and deeper research.

Bhuyans are related with the prosperous and ancient war tradition of Orissa and its historical reference is found in the Madalapanji. The Gajapati king Anangabhima Dev of the Ganga dynasty of Orissa defeated the Bhuyans and got huge quantities (47,88,000 marhs) of gold as booty. He considered it as a glorious work and declared, "Kingdom like this I conquered and defeated the Bhuyans by sword, by the mercy of the lotus-feet, Lord Jagannath and the blessings of the Brahmins. I conquered from the river Kansa-Bansa to river Danaibudi and in South from the river Rusikoila to the end of the Rajamahindra-dandapat. I conquered the 'Bhuyan Puranas' by my hand and besides this the wealth brought to the royal treasury was 40 lakh marhs of gold. The original royal wealth was 7,88,000 marhs and the grand total was 47,88,000 marhs of gold. These were my earned materials."
It appears from this royal declaration of Anangabhima Dev in Madalapanji that the Bhuyans were well known and established as a brave Atavika tribe parallel to the kingdom of Orissa of the Ganga age. They had separate state of their own and were highly rich and prosperous. Hence they might have given huge quantities of gold to satisfy Anangabhim Dev or he might have looted them and got the gold.

Bhuyans are the pioneers of a rich Atavika (forest) culture and civilisation. Now if we mark them, we will see that they are living in the hilly and forest regions and they also collect their means of life from the forests. In the ancient times they had also a state and culture of their own like the Savaras. During the accession of Chandragupta Maurya in 322 B.C., Kalinga was very strong and its border was marked by the river Ganga in the North and Godavari in the South. The Western hilly region of Kalinga was known and famous for the Atavika kingdom. Though Chandragupta Maurya spread his kingdom in the North-Western region from Hindukush to Mysore in the Southern region, he did not conquer Kalinga. His grandson Ashoka had conquered Kalinga but he did not dare to conquer the Atavika kingdom, which was the Western region of Kalinga. It was outside the Maurya kingdom and was crowded by Savaras and Pulindas, who were famous and praised as a strong part of Kalinga's defence force. Many warriors and politicians of the defeated Kalinga were taken shelter in the Atavika kingdom and probably they were organising the people of that region against Magadha. Hence Ashoka's aim was to satisfy the people of that region and for this purpose only
he excavated one edict in Khapingal hills. In this edict he
addressed them as 'Anta Avijita' (undefeated border people). 13
Kharvela was also referred to them in the 'Hatigumpha' inscrip-
tion as 'aduddha Pubba' (never defeated). 14 Atavika region was
known as the 'Vidyadhara Rajya'. Dr. N.K. Sahu referred to a Jain
text named 'Jambudwip Payanti' and said, 'Astadasa Vidyadhara
Rajya', the description of which was found in Jain texts, was
nothing but the changed name of the 'Astadashatavi Kingdom'. In
some medieval inscriptions one name was used, i.e. 'Astadasha
Gondram' which was expressed as 'Atharagada' or 'Athara gadajat'
in the political tradition. 15 It was situated in the Western
hilly regions of Kalinga and according to Bhandarkar it was spread
from Kalinga to Bundel Khanda. This region was famous as the sol-
dier collection region of Kalinga.

Kalinga was famous as the dwelling place of the
Pulindas and Savaras from the age of Mahabharat. The Bhuyan tribe
of Keonjhar district of Orissa State is a very ancient tribe and
hence it is not impossible that they had a kingdom and civiliza-
tion. Similar to that of the Pulindas and Savaras. Many people
from the forest dwelling tribes were promoted to Kshatriya caste
of the Arya-Chaturvarna rites. But they were generally known as
the 'Atavikas'. 16 It appears from this that they were gradually
Aryanised. It is known from the inscriptions written below the
Nataraj statue found from the Asanpat village of Keonjhar of King
Satru Bhanja's time that the Naga kings bearing the 'Bhanja' title
were reigning in the Vindhyavati Kingdom in third century A.D. and
it was built by taking the modern Keonjhar, Mayurbhanja and
Singhbhum districts together. The undefeated defence force of Kharavela were collected mainly from this region.

As the descendants of a strong Atavikas tribe, the Bhuyans have retained their tradition till 19th century. At first Keonjhar and Mayurbhanja were ruled together under the Bhanja dynasty. The Bhuyans were very obedient to this dynasty. But it was inconvenient in the case of Bhuyans to go to the capital Mayurbhanja crossing the long dangerous hilly way through the dense forests to give taxes etc. Hence they kidnapped one royal child and made him the king of Keonjhar. At the time of accession of this royal child, some of the Bhuyans sat in different ways and made one throne by this way to fulfill the want of the royal throne. During the time of accession, the king touched the edge of the royal sword on the neck of one Bhuyan subject who sleep on the bare floor. This is the symbol of giving power to the king to punish and slay the criminals among the Bhuyans. This traditional rite of the Abhisheka is being followed by the king till now.

Bhuyans are not only the obedient subjects of the king, but they are active participants in the politics of Keonjhar. When the administration and royal accession became corrupted, they revolted against the king from time to time. During 1861-63, after the death of king Gardhadhar Narayan Bhanjadeo, there was Bhuyan revolt in Keonjhar. The Juangas of Keonjhar also cooperated with them. After the death of king Gardhadhar, his widow queen who had no son and who was alive and two sons of kept-queen of king Gardhadhar were also alive. Dhanurjaya, who was one of those two sons of kept-queen.
was made king by the Dewan of Keonjhar. But after some days, Jadunath Bhanja, the king of Mayurbhanj expressed that his grandson Brindavan was adopted by the late king Gadhadhar before his death as his successor.

Though the commissioner of Cuttack did not conceive with Jadunath Bhanja, he sent his grandson Brindavan secretly to Keonjhar and the widow queen made him the king with the help of some chiefs of the State. But the commissioner recognised Dhanurjay as the king of Keonjhar. Dhanurjay was not accepted as the king of Keonjhar by the Bhuyans as he was the son of kept-queen of Gadhadhar. Protesting on the issue of succession of Dhanurjay, the Bhuyans revolt became severe. Ratan Nayak and Nanda Nayak took the leadership of this revolt. The Bhuyans imprisoned the king and murdered the Dewan of Keonjhar. They disarmed the British soldiers and looted Keonjhar town. After this, armed British police came from Singhbhum and through Dhenkanal from Chhotanagpur. They suppressed the Bhuyan revolution and the revolutionary Bhuyan and Juanga leaders were arrested and also they surrendered in large numbers. Six leaders of the mutiny were hanged and hundreds of them were imprisoned. Being inexperienced in the British war skill, the Bhuyans were though defeated, there was a moral cause behind it. Like this, the royal successor was chosen with the help of British gun against the view of the common people. 18

Later, the severity of Bhuyan mutiny under the leadership of Bhuyan Sardar Dharanidhar was described in the autobiography of Fakir Mohan. 19 Whatever may be the root cause and the moral
background of this mutiny, it indicates the unity of the Bhuyan tribe and their boldness in expressing their views, which is the ageold and very natural characteristics of this tribal people. Dharanidhar had a dream of building a State for the Bhuyans and even now Bhuyans believe that Dharanidhar is still leaving secretly in disguise of a Sanyasi in the jungles and he will come out one day and give leadership to them.

1.6. **SCOPE AND APPROACH OF THE PRESENT STUDY**

The present study is mainly based on the principles of descriptive model and it is the study of the speech of Bhuyan people, a hill tribe of Keonjhar district of Orissa State.

The approach is solely data oriented and uses in general the neo-Bloomfieldian model.

1.7. **PREVIOUS WORK DONE ON THE RELATED SUBJECT**

Bhuyans are a very old and widespread tribe. The study on Bhuyan culture and ethnological aspect have been done by many scholars. But very little work has been done on the language of the tribe. Only some articles are published on the language of this tribe before this study. Out of them one article was published by Shri S.P. Mahapatra and two were published by the present researcher of this study. Besides some socio-cultural aspect of study of this tribe is available in a good number.
1.8. **PURPOSE AND LIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

The present study has been done to investigate on the lines of descriptive model. This will help in language teaching situation of the children of the tribe.

Today the language teaching method need this type of research work which would help the curriculum-trainers of the State.

This will also help the administration and social workers to understand the Bhuyan culture and problems. It will make their task easier to bring the tribal-folk into the main-stream civilization and more particularly to check the tree-felling and destruction of forest by shifting cultivation by Poru-cas which harms the environment considerably.

So far no work has been done on Bhuyan dialect. Therefore it will help to know the social and linguistic problems of the tribe. We may be able to record and study a language of our time which may be influenced and may change considerably in future.

1.9. **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Though Bhuyan is a major tribe spread over Orissa, Bihar, West-Bengal, Assam, I have collected the data and centered my research to the district of Keonjhar (Orissa), which is called Bhuyan Pirh (Original dwelling place of the Bhuyans). The area of my research has been shown in the map attached to this chapter.
The registers of different words have not been shown here and have to be dealt with separately in future. It has been tried to present a comprehensive study of the dialect. But I have avoided to focus on the historicity of the dialect.

1.10. METHODOLOGY AND THE FORMAT

The present study has adopted the descriptive model for the analysis of the speech of Bhuyan people mainly a hill tribe of Keonjhar district of Orissa State. The approach is completely data oriented and uses in general the neo-Bloomfieldian model. This work comprises of five chapters.

First chapter is the introductory one having the description of Bhuyan tribe and its main land. The demographic composition of the tribe has been included here to explain the main set-up of Bhuyan people. The physical make up and the culture of the tribe have been given here. The Historicity and the Bhuyan dialect area have carefully been described which gives the earlier view about the tribe. Description of other works which are related to this study and done earlier have been given here. Scope, purpose and limitation of this study have been included which reveal the reason of the present study. This study has followed some principles which are told in short so that it may be easier to the reader to understand the frame-work of this study.

Second chapter deals with the description of various pertinent sounds of this dialect. Phonemic contrasts of both vowels
and consonants and their distributions with illustrations have been given here. The allophonic distributions of both types of phonemes have been given separately with examples. Different consonant clusters which are identified in Bhuyan dialect have been shown separately. The syllabic structure of the dialect has also been discussed with illustrations.

In Chapter Three, I have discussed the word classes and base forms of Bhuyan dialect. The compound and complex word formations, nominals and their grammatical categories, Verb morphology and indicinables have been analysed and described in this chapter.

Chapter Four is devoted to sentence description of the dialect. It Presents the sentence types found in the dialect. The phrase structure and hierarchial structures of the sentences have been discussed to some extent.

Fifth Chapter includes the influence of other languages on Bhuyan dialect. Different social settings of the dialect, code mixing situations, use of idioms and proverbs of this dialect have been described in this chapter.
REFERENCES


3. Ibid.


15. Ibid, P. 7-8.


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