Chapter VIII

VILLAGE: A SOCIAL UNIT

To understand the village as a socio-political unit and its relation with a larger political unit, i.e., pargana, it will be better to understand the territorial axis of the Abujhamarhia society first.

I Territorial axis:

In the traditional setup of the Abujhamarhia, the territorial axis is considered in terms of a pattern of expansion and segmentation of a family and the creation of a residential locality. The whole Abujhamarhia community is divided into a number of sections (pargana) as mentioned earlier; each with its own name and territory, and these into villages, and again, into the smallest section Talur. The pargana and village divisions are called after the name of the clans, who are supposed to have founded them. The descendants of the founder of the whole pargana can be grouped in a single genealogical relationship.

It is a rule that people must live in the territory that is associated with their own ancestors or clan-gods. Each claiming a territory of its own, divided into patrilineal descent-groups, and each of these has its own territory in which the members of a descent group normally live together. Rights to land for cultivation still go today with membership of a descent group. These rights are very important in their economy as mentioned earlier.
Pargana land, Pargana bum

Pargana land, bum have a definite territorial foundation, conceptualized in terms of jurisdiction over areas of habitation and surrounding tracts of forests vested in the office of the Manjhi from time immemorial by virtue of ancestral occupation and referred to as the land of pargana land priest, pargana Gaita bum or Penta bum. This land is again divided into definite territories known as village land, Narbum. The right of land of these villages vested in the office of the village land priest, Nargaita. The transmission rights over these village land, is vested in the patrilineal descendants of the native lineage. The right to hunt, fish and cultivate Penda and use forest products, is fundamental and exclusive attribute of primary membership of Pargana and village respectively. The appendix of native clans shows that every clan or maximal lineage has fixed homes in a particular village or pargana. This tendency towards local domestic segment of maximal lineage (known after by a particular native clan), corresponding to the special localization of the living, even native as well as local clan still has its own clan-god shrine, Panrauer, where annual harvest thanks-giving festival is celebrated. These native clans are defined after the office of the Gaita.

The pargana Pen and Talur are not visualized as mystically persecutory agencies, but rather as just and watchful arbiters and protectors of the social order.

Their principal concern is with the corporate existence of the lineage, native or local clan as a whole,
not with its individual members. All the festivals and rituals are performed in a group. It is the native clan as a whole even the pargana as a whole, not only the wrong-doers, that will suffer disaster due to the anger of the Pargana Pen or village Talur, if any one commits an act of sacrilege such as incast or false swearing of an oath or transgression of a rule of ritual pollution.

The Talur, village-mother, and clan-god, therefore, are not appealed to, for the protection of individuals or lineage against witch-craft. These spirits are believed to be the custodians of the laws and customs of the village and pargana. They are thought to be constantly watching the moral conduct of their descendants.

The Talur worship by a Gaita in its generalized representation, is the key stone of the native clan's continuity both on the plane of religious ideology and ipso facto on that of jural relations. It is by reasons of this that the Kanjhi and the Gaita combine in their offices, priestly services of the Talur and Pargana Pen and jural authority over the living.

II Village organization :-

The Abujhmarhia village is an administrative, economic and ritual unit. This is an aggregation of homesteads into a corporate unit. Most of the villages are uniclan villages and else where are dominated by native clans because a majority of the families belong to the native clans of the village. Their kinship relationship
are usually related to territorial and residential groupings and the composition of the villages in terms of clan membership determined by the concept of native clan. Only few villages as mentioned above, such as A and B are not exclusively inhabited by one clan, but consist of families brought together by chance or linked by affinal relationship. The cohesion of families living in C or interior villages is stronger than other types of villages. Original settlers of the village who generally belong to one clan, and others comprising of later settlers are found in A type villages.

Clan exogamy is an important feature of the social organisation of the AbuJhaorhias, which sometimes functions not only as village exogamy but sometimes also as pargana exogamy. In C type villages, village exogamy results from clan exogamy. In A type villages clan exogamy may mean village endogamy.

The village, nar acts as a unit in many activities. It has already been discussed how it serves as a corporate body for many economic functions. In production and labour, for instance, each family in turn is helped by others of the village as in threshing and harvesting. The village goes as a whole for ceremonial hunt, fishing, and in Government work. When there is any ceremonial feast the entire village-folk is invited to it. They have common right over the land, official guests are the guests of the whole village so that one and all are bound to contribute something for their entertainment.
In religious and social matters too the village is important. If a marriage, Kagsar, Jatra, Koding is to be celebrated or death to be mourned, the whole village gathers. Poor families are helped, widows and orphans are looked after by the whole village.

To understand this more clearly we need to explain some other social units also which are responsible for structural relationship (i.e. patrilineage, status, role etc.) in the village community.

The household:

The household, Unnu forms the basic unit of the Abujhmarhia social structure. This is based on patrilineal link, the descendants of a couple would continue to live under the father's roof, and in this way extended (supra.35) families after consisting of several brothers and their descendants, would form a single closely knit residential and economic unit.

Sometimes in a wider social context this brotherhood which more correctly a neighbourhood, features as an important corporating residential unit called para. This comprises of households which have from common descent and which might have developed from a single household, Unnu. The common descent and close residence ties of its members promote a stronger degree of solidarity that is characteristic of the local or native clan. Where a household splits up, the original head retains authority not only over his own
household but also over that which branched off from it. He becomes the elder of the brotherhood and his senior most male descendants retain this authority. The Gaita's house is believed as a parent house from which other houses of the para and village have segmented off. The house of the Gaita is mumta undi older or senior to the houses of his lineage/native clan members.

Hamlet, Para i-

The Abujhmarhia village is thus divided into a number of hamlets scattered over a large area. These hamlets may be situated within one to four miles. The chief village and its satellite hamlets form one compact unit in ritual, political and economic matters as mentioned above.

The para is a very close collectivity of kins. The head of this corporate group known as para mukhia, hamlet head. The small scale assemblies, to discuss the domestic affairs of a para, are presided over by the para mukhia.

III The unity of the village i-

The Abujhmarhia village, a self-contained unit, is marked with many characteristics. The residence in the Abujhmarhia village confers what is to the Abujhmarhia his most precious right, a right to land. The native clan is the ultimate master of all village land and trustee. They remain in the same village more or less throughout the life. They are not only very much conscious that they belong to a particular village but to a particular pargana. The
Corporateness of the village is the permanent framework of the Abujhmarhia social structure.

The unity of this group is founded on the following basis:

1. Common residence
2. Common Talur (earth spirit)
3. Common funeral rites
4. Common burial place
5. Common administrative unit
6. Common sacred centres
7. Common youth organisation, Gotul
8. Common descent group

The village is a well-defined political and administrative unit. Its frontiers are known to every one in the village. Patriotism for one's own village is very common.

A Harhia is pride of his village. He is known by the village he comes from. If a stranger, he is asked about his pargana. There are good villages in the sense that the village has never been deserted and these villages which have, some time, been deserted mean, they are bad, Jutta villages. Whenever you visit some village-folk (in B & C type villages) first of all we are told 'our village has never been deserted.' The Sirpanch of Kohkameta told me 'most of the Harh villages are deserted but Kohkameta had never been.' It has a very powerful deity, Maybe Junca. It is the mother of the pargana clan-god. And then when I went to Kusturmata, a village in
Tulagotul pargana, the Patel of this village told me that Kohkameta and Nednar 1 (a village in Ukagotul pargana) were deserted twice but never was Kusturmeta, and from three generations they have not shifted to another site. It is also learnt from the local informants that the villages which perform all the rituals, ceremonies timely and observe all the rules and regulations of the society, reinforce the socio-religious solidarity of the village. And any breach of the moral code leads to the wrath of the ancestors, and consequently, the villages are deserted. This indicates that the officials of good village are good leaders who maintain their moral code by their jural authority in the village. Thus the village accords status not only to the heads but to their subordinates also. Being boycotted from his native village is considered a great misery that can befall on an Abujhmarihia.

A primary differentiation of function splits village affairs into secular and sacerdotal spheres of activity with a leader responsible for each. These two elements secular and sacerdotal are fundamental in the kinship as well as political relations in the Abujhmarihia community. The sacerdotal element, here is the belief that ritual powers are hereditary. We have seen, how this belief governs the office of Gaita and other ritual heads. Where both elements rest in one family or individual, the political authority is based, ideologically on his ability to preserve the prosperity of his domain by making sacrifices to the Talur, village-mother, and clan-god. He has
this ability by virtue of his descent from the original Gaita. The ritual power is inherited automatically only by the eldest son of the Gaita.

As long as the secular element is concerned it is an ability to attract and keep a following. Of course every leader has a following, in the case of Sirpanch, it is tautology to say so. The secular function of this office is to maintain the social order by the settlement of disputes. The get support in discussion about village affairs of a certain number of people who are obliged to them.

The Patel and Gaita with the help of their council of minimal lineage elders or heads make decisions and policies to see, that each family has access to land for Penda and dipha. They also make sure that certain important ceremonies are performed regularly by their village folk. They also organize the co-operative work of all the village members at the time of harvesting and threshing.

However, with respect to equilibrium, the function of this administration is to maintain the proper functioning of the village and to insure realization of the instrumental or other ends for which the organization exists. Thus the jural authority's role in maintaining or restoring equilibrium is manifested in the way it manages to coordinate village activity to further mutual satisfactions of the village members.

It may be noted as to how vital is the purpose of these observances and failure to observe them threatens misfortune. This threat helps to insure that the rituals will
be executed faithfully and contribute to the no less vital functions of reinforcing political authority. Authority should not be confused with power. Power means the ability to use physical force to compel the behaviour of others, whereas authority is jural in nature and comes from occupying the proper status and having fulfilled prescribed routine or conditions. The successor to the office of the Gaita and the Patel or the Manjhi are their eldest sons as mentioned.

So far the status is concerned it can be defined as a position held by a person in a given domain, specified by the social relations distinctive of that domain, and deployed in activities and attitudes conforming to the norms and customs and material apparatus that are distinctive of that kinship, political, economic and religious domain. Relationships and spheres of activities are not differentiated from one another. We may put it in another way, that, there is little specialization of roles.

IV The village functionaries:

In former times the political obligations of the village heads, Gaitas towards their domain zamindars and kings who were quite different from them were maintained through the office of the Manjhi. These were essentially the dues of a feudal tenant towards their kings and zamindars.

Then the land revenue system was introduced (in British colonial and Eastar State-times) the post of the Gaita was transferred to Mukaddam, but there is no evidence
that the term Mukaddam was used for the headman before this time.

After the abolition of Zamindary and Wazirzari a new term for the same office was introduced by the Government of Madhya Pradesh; all the village headmen are known as Patels since in 1951.

Now-a-days the unity and solidarity of the village as well as Parzana emerge most clearly in their relation to the Government of Madhya Pradesh through the office of Patel directly. It is an administrative mechanism which not only regulates life within the village but orders the villagers' relations with the world outside.

However, the alteration in this office by the foreign rule has left a great impact on this homogeneous community. It is already mentioned that the territorial divisions are segmental divisions. Here, again, the case study of Ader village is given to understand the significance of differentiation of offices from Sacerdotal to secular one.

The separation of office from sacerdotal to secular one can be seen in the case of Ader village. The Ader village was divided into three hamlets, paras from former times; Ader, Orchhameta and Itul. All the three hamlets were under the subordination of the Gaitsa of Ader. Due to its being under the independent Kutru zamindary, Itul itself became independent, while Ader and Orchhameta remained as one village unit. Then some of the members were asked to work as Government representatives, the younger brother of the Gaitsa was proposed to be the
Mukiya or Mukaddam, the former designation of the Patel.

Until this time the Gaita was a social, political, economic and religious head of the village. With this division of office, the office of the Gaita remained as a sacrodotal one, i.e. he had to look after only the socio-religious and economic-religious matters, while the administrative activities were looked after by the Patel. Thus the office of the Gaita (e.g. Gaita) split into two offices. When I asked Tonde (the Patel of Ader village) about the relationship between him and his village Gaita,^ he said that, he was his father's distant brother, Kaka. Then I asked him as to how he became the Patel when his Kaka was older to him. Then Hirwa replied —

"Undi lon te mantor, undi sarkar te kam keeynom
undi tala nasa keechnom; — we are from the same house, so one has to work for the Government, and one has to remain near the Talur." "Mune mune te tusala, it is arranged from the very beginning by our ancestors". The genealogical gap between Tonde and Hirwa was related to each other from a Marbia who existed eleven generations back. They told me that, if they tried to exchange their offices than the conflict may take place in the village. (The rule is that the descendent of the senior becomes the Gaita and the junior may become the Patel).

At present there are two Patels, one at Itul (as it is an independent village) and another at Ader with its Orchhama hamlet while there is one Gaita, each in all the three hamlets (i.e. Ader, Orchha and Itul). The Ader Gaita is considered as the senior-most. He is also called to settle
quarrel or whenever there is any conflict regarding village boundaries with other villages. He also performs the ritual sacrifices near the original Talur of the village with the subordination and cooperation of other Gaitas.

In B type villages the Gaita still commands great respect in socio-religious affairs in the village community in comparison to Patel who is becoming a little influential in these villages, though both have to work in cooperation with each other. The headman in those villages where the office of the Patel and the Gaita still remains in a same family, is a very powerful head in comparison to other villages (Warhapenda, Chamandi, Kusturmeta, Mitchweda, Metaweda etc.) which are C type villages. Whereas in A type villages, the Gaita remains as ritual functionary and the Patel becomes a very important and dominating in comparison to the Gaita. Thus it is learnt that there is transformation in the office of the headman in this community from sacred to secular one.

In return for his services to the Government the Patel gets commission or Rs. 35/- per annum from the Government. The economic condition of the Patel household is better than that of other village-folk. He is the man, thought, generally beyond competence. Consequently one of the best house in the village near the Gotul is his.

The son or daughter of the Patel or Gaita, generally lead the Gotul youths. The wife of the Patel is not as important as her husband in the village. Her position is derivative. All her awe and personality are derived from her
husband. Even then she has her unique share in socio-economic life of the village.

The good qualities of leadership

Besides the respect for hereditary office of the Patel and the Gaita, there is another important factor in regulation of the socio-economic life; namely the respect for social qualities. And the Patel or the Gaita who possesses these qualities, commands more respect in village in comparison to other village headmen, who are lacking these qualities. These qualities are:

1. He must be a hardworking man in comparison to a normal individual in the village;

2. He must have a great daring in hunting. He is the man who always moves ahead in hunting party. The Masa Patel (he was also the Gaita) of Warhapanda, moved in advance one year before to that site in which the village has to shift in the next year. When it inquired as why he has shifted his house in advance; he told me, "I am a Gaita and Patel both, of the village, I have to see the wish of clan-god and Talur, to get a auspicious place in a new spot. If the spirits will be angry the disaster will come to me, not to my village-folk. If the spot is alright, then the whole village will be shifted there in next year."

3. He must be generous and kind. The generosity and kindness, and freedom from bad temper, makes him very popular among his village-folk.
4 He must be honest. The honest and just Patel always commands great respect not only within his village but in the council or other villages. His opinion on any subject carries more weight than that of other members in the council of more than one village.

5 He must not be a drunkard. Mahua liquor and shafii drink are very common. But it is expected from the village officials that they have to take liquor in a restricted quantity.

6 He must be a good speaker and tactful to deal with the outsiders. The Patel who is frank and very good speaker not only commands a great regard among the village officials but sometimes he is called by the Patel of other villages also, whenever they go outside the Mark. And the Patels who are lacking these qualities always keep one or two village people with them who can talk frankly with outsiders.

7 The son of the Patel must be a good hunter and a good singer of the Kazaarpata (the song of the clan-god cult). He always moves ahead in the row of dancing youths.

However, there are certain men who have an influence over their fellows without their holding hereditary office in the village community. These men are who possess the above qualities which are described for the Patel and the Caita. The Abujhmarhins themselves do not recognize that these types of men have any authority over them, but if they may be the men of generosity and tact, the majority will always support them.
Their advice in any matters of moment will be readily listened to not by the other villages but by the village officials also. Some of these also being credited with the possession of supernatural powers.

The Patels and the Gaitas lacking these qualities are self-centered, drunkards, coward and idle, they also lose their hold and command in the village. If they try to deceive the village-folk, they are neglected and severely criticised. This type of men are known not only in their own village but in neighbouring villages also. Few exceptions sometimes inspite of having such qualities the Patels are more feared than respected if they have good contact with Government officers.

The honest and tactful leaders who always look to the welfare of their own village folk, and do justice to neighbouring villages command more respect. A good Patel is one who is tactful in his deal with Government servants, is able to send them away within a day from his village. If a Government servant stays more than one day in the village, it goes against his status and ability. There are few people such as Banja Manjhi of Biddal and Farshal parganas and Kesha Manjhi of Parmalbhatti (Maharastra - Chanda), who are very well known not only in their own parganas but all over the Marh for their tactfulness and just behaviour. The village as corporate unit has been discussed earlier and other offices are discussed further in political organization.
V Village as a unit of social control

The Abujhmarhia employs various devices to maintain the social equilibrium. Some of the general attitudes to all behaviour inimical to their social harmony and solidarity, and the machinery for enforcing conformity with their code of conduct are as follows:

From early age the Abujhmarhia youth listens to his myths and lore, he learns as he grows up, first in the family and latter in the larger circle of village and in youth dormitory and the people to acquaint himself with the social values and ethics of their life. By the time he takes his place as an effective member of the village community, he knows in general terms the conduct that is expected of him.

If he does not conform to his social norms and breaks the Marbia law or offends against customs and tradition he knows that his behaviour will not only invoke sanctions but the village Talur and village mother deity will lead him to calamities, which when set in action will work not only to his disadvantage but his lineage and clan as a whole. There are many sanctions varying in nature and degree with the wrongs they seek to right. These disapproved actions by this community are as follows:

1. Neglect of family work in the fields, idleness
2. Being very expensive, excessive shalphi or mahua liquor taking
3. Neglect of family duties and obligations
4. Desertion of dependants
5. Avoidance of or refusal for cooperative work
6 Disobedience to the Patel, Gaits, other village elder's orders or suggestions

7 Refusal to entertain guests

8 Repudiation of debt and bride price

9 Wilful destruction of other people's property

10 Theft

11 Adultery

12 Witch-craft and sorcery

13 Worshipping clan-god, other than his own.

The first six negative actions mentioned above are discussed and criticised when the village seniors gather in an informal gathering in evening round a fire at the village Gotul to watch the dancing of the village youths or to smoke and gossip or in early morning at the time of shalphi taking.

At such informal gatherings, the behaviour of individuals within the village is discussed, commented on and criticized. The moral pressure exerted by such casual criticism on individual is very great. The behaviour of every Marhia is a matter of the whole village concern and a man or woman can guage the effect of his or her behaviour by watching the reactions of the village-folk.

Thus, even without the direct exercise of social prerogative, the village community exercises a great control over village-behaviour.

But the other activities such as repudiation of debt, adultery, theft, wilful destruction of other's property, witchcraft and sorcery not only evoke social disapproval but are
punished by village authorities. Sometimes the public disapproval becomes so strong that it takes the form of a social boycott and the offender ostracised by the whole community resorts to the extreme measures of suicide. Even sometimes the offender is murdered by the aggrieved party with a pre-consent of village officials.

Some times, these types of rivalries within a native clan are inevitable in A type villages. Conflicts might also arise between a Patel and Gaith of the same clan.

In interior villages enmity is impossible. Choices are limited, without alternatives, and the choice of an Abuja-marshia may have considerable effects throughout the socio-economic structure. This brings us to the question of social cohesiveness, solidarity and equilibrium. It is difficult to generalize for degrees of social cohesiveness as, there is little variation from C and A type villages. These are rapidly affected by many factors, viz. decision making, status specialization (sacred and secular), concept of property and ownership. The introduction of plough has very serious effects throughout the boundary villages and some of the middle villages, not only economically but socio-politically. Decisions in economic, political, and legal field have pervasiveness in interior villages, which is losing down gradually from C to D and B to A. This sometimes give birth to conflict and quarrels among the members of native clans as well as affinal kin-groups. The horizons of individual choices are widening in D and A type villages.
VI Gotul, youth dormitory

Hitherto, we have considered the village as an independent entity with special mores and traditions, which is a unique corporate unity. In the socio-religious, and in socio-economic life of the AbuJhmarhia the Gotul is an important institution and an integral part of the village community. It has a definite culture, that can be defined as 'youth culture'. Eisenstadt (1964) emphatically points out that "youth group system defined as structural and functional elements are prevalent in different pre-industrial societies of the world."
The existence of youth dormitories, institutionalized norms, values and patterns of and for behaviour in the primitive communities is also evidenced by the data on Indian tribes, such as - Gonds (Grigson 1938 and Elwin 1947), Mundas (Roy 1912), Orcon (Roy 1915) and some Assam tribes, such as - Sema (Hutton 1921), Ao (Mills 1926) and others by Majumdar (1965). Gotul among the AbuJhmarhias is a focal point of their collective feelings, and a centre of their education and cultural activities from where all decisions are taken. It is also a place of social contact, from which they not only come in contact with outsiders, but with their own people. It is a place of collectivity and AbuJhmarhia sentiments in which their culture, traditions, myths are transmitted from one generation to next. It is a social process where their youngs are shaped to their ends.

However, some of the references have been made (supra) in regard to its situation in the village. Usually it is situated in the centre or middle of the line joining the streets of the whole village. It consists of a rectangular single hall. In
front of the Gotul is usually the dancing ground. Musical instruments and big size drums are also kept in the Gotul.

In most Gotuls we find a slight depression in the floor which is used as a fire place, kalunat'a banda. Fire is made to keep the hall warm in winter nights, and safe from wild animals. Big logs of wood which are used as fuel are kept in the verandah, adjoining it or outside the Gotul. The youths sleep on mats, which are brought individually by each member himself. They are rolled up and kept on one side of the wall of the Gotul. These are bisexual in the sense that boys and girls are insisted upon to come regularly, but the girls are not allowed to stay at night, they are also tabooed to pair off for sexual intercourse as it is very common among the Murias. It is an active institution.

In the Abu jumkaria community we find that there are two types of Gotul found all over the area.

1) The Gotul where they establish the shrine of Talur inside or adjacent to it;

2) The Gotul where they simply perform the worship ceremony of the Talur at the time of erecting the Gotul hut; but they never establish the shrine inside the Gotul.

The first type of Gotuls are usually found in very few parganas such as Farshal, Kutru, Bhairamgarh, and some parts of Chhotedonger pargana and in the Chanda Marhia also. These are the interior villages inhabited more or less by unilcan members. I found that in these type of Gotuls the boys and girls have no regular name and nor the girls are allowed to enter inside
the Gotul. These Gotuls are full of dust; the girls gather there only in the evenings and dance outside the Gotul till midnight only to depart to their respective homes. There is no separate Gotul name of the boys too.

The second type of Gotuls are found in most parganas like Kolar, Jatin, Nurdesh, Padaldesh, Sonpur, Riddal, Chhotemarh, Harhemarh, and in some parts of Chhotedonger pargana. The differences and similarities of these two types of Gotuls are as follows:-

Table VIII: 1

Two types of Gotuls and their functions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I</th>
<th>The Gotul where the shrine of Talur is established.</th>
<th>II</th>
<th>Where they did not establish the Shrine of Talur inside the Gotul</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Education Laya, Maiden</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Laya is tabooed to enter inside the Gotul.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Laya is allowed to enter inside the Gotul.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The question of sleeping in the Gotul does not arise.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Laya is tabooed to stay or sleep in the Gotul in the night.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Laya has no Gotul name. She is addressed by her house name.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Laya is given Gotul name after 3 years of admission. Laya can be addressed only by this name in the Gotul.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Laya is neither allowed to sweep nor to polish the floor of the Gotul.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>To sweep and polish the floor of Gotul with cowdung is the main job of Laya.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Laya sings, dances, tells stories outside the Gotul.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Laya can sit inside the Gotul where she sings, tells stories and laughed together with boys(Layor).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>If someone fails to turn up regularly, they are excused.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>They have to come regularly if they failed, they are fined by boys.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Layor, youth</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>The Layor have no Gotul names.</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>(A)</td>
<td>(B)</td>
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<tr>
<td>8 They have to sleep regularly in the Gotul, failures are not fined.</td>
<td>8 They have to sleep regularly in the Gotul, if they fail, are fined.</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Layor have to sweep and polish the floor.</td>
<td>9 It is a job of Laya only.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 There is no hierarchical administrative body of Laya and Layor.</td>
<td>10 There is an hierarchical administrative body of Laya and Layor.</td>
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<tr>
<td>II Religious</td>
<td>II In every feast and festival the Talur ceremony of Talur on such occasions in the Gotul, worshipped.</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>12 The Kasaarpata is learnt only at Gotul.</td>
<td>12 Same as A.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III Social</td>
<td>III Social</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>13 All the myths, traditions, social code of conduct are taught to younger members by their seniors through songs and stories.</td>
<td>13 Same as A.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 All the meetings are held at Gotul.</td>
<td>14 Same as A.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV Economic</td>
<td>IV Economic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 All the economic decisions in regard to co-operative work, ceremonies are taken at Gotul. The labour is organised through the Gotul.</td>
<td>15 Same as A.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| On the whole all the aspects of this institution can be put into two:
| A Social-religious functional aspects of the Gotul; |
| and B Educational aspects of the Gotul. |
There are some common functions of both types (i.e. A, B) of Gotuls mentioned below:

1. It is a common halt place for visitors from other villages and Government officials to stay.

2. All the village, Dumkal meetings are held and decisions in all walks of life are taken in the Gotul.

3. A Karha whose wife is in child-bed has to sleep inside the Gotul for a year from the day of the birth of his child.

4. The Gaota has to sleep in the Gotul before the performance of any ceremony near the Talur. All Abujmarchias participating in the communal hunt, have also to do so.

5. It is also a place to stay for every visiting affinal male relative.

6. All the correspondence in regard to Government, concerning the whole village is kept in the Gotul.

7. It is a place to get temporary shelter to all the people who are excommunicated from the society.

8. The widowers are allowed to sleep in the Gotul.

9. It is a place from which the other village people can easily recognize that this village has performed a ceremony or festivals, because a symbol of ceremony performance is always kept (for example in the Gotul at the end of the Kodini festival they fix leaves of myrobelan tree and Phulbahari in the Gotul roof).

10. Except in the Gotul of Orchha all the clan- gods and
Deities are brought to their respective Gotula on the day of Kagsar. It is believed that their clan-gods also dance in the Gotul. They make three rounds of the Gotul before the symbol of the clan-gods are kept in the Gotul.

These are the few socio-religious functions of the Gotul which are not only for the youth but for the whole village. The remaining aspects of the Gotul are totally devoted to the youth learning.

B

The Abujmarghinia youth learns not only his lore, but imbibes all the qualities which will make him a useful member of his community. First the boys and girls begin to attend the Gotul informally with their elder brothers and sisters when they are about seven years old. When they reach the age of ten years, the head of the Gotul announces the names of the boys and girls who are to be admitted. This usually takes place just after the Koding festival. This is a continuous process which goes on every year. The senior-most youths talk to them about their new responsibilities and privileges.

The Laya and Layor are divided into three age grades, each grade having clearly defined duties. They remain in each of the first two grades for a period of three and two years respectively and continue to live in the Gotul in the three grade till their marriage. In general these are the three grades found in most of the parganas.

1 The youth who have no Gotul names are usually called pilla, piki, below the age of ten years.
The newly named Gotul youths are usually called the learning group—pata emdihata peku, piki. This group generally learns the dances, the Gotulpata and Musarpata. This group usually does not participate in dances at the time of Kagsar, an inter-village gatherings. It is an inter-village dancing group. The youths usually remain for two years in this group.

The third group covers all the youths who are in their teens and beyond that. This is a teacher and guide group of the second or taught group, which is also the guide group of the first. All the members of this grade usually also in Kagsar and Jatras and in inter-village gathering of the Gotul youths. In the beginning they learn the Udalpata, the art of joking and chit-chatting, whenever there is a serial occasion of Gotul gatherings of the youths of affinal villages. These are few names of all these grades collected from the Kahchhapal Gotul.

Table VIII: 2

The names of the Gotul Laya Lavor with three grades
(Kachchapal Gotul)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>House</th>
<th>Gotul name</th>
<th>Age in years</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Married</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pandu</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Masa</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>,</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Kana</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>,</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Kosi</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Muri</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>,</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td>Additional Information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>-----</td>
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<td>------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Kusha Tilosha</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Dashri Julyaro</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Magli Malyaro</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>She is betrothed to Karl</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Dugi Sunnaro</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Chaiti Malyaro</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Rama Usser</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Warhanze Memere</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Rama Joler</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Kariya Shubedar</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Head or Kotwar of the Gotul</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Aura Bulangedar</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Head or Saita of the Gotul</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Guma Pagel</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Mahru Murlu</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Bijja Jalyo</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Chaiti Laro</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Kove Jalyaro</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Kove Shulyaro</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No Kotwar of the Gotul</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Muri Dilosha</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Gori Tusharo</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Kore Jalyaro</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Head of the Laya</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Nedo Wilosa</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A member of third grade continues to live in the Gotul till marriage. The supervision and control of the Gotul rests in the hand of this senior grade, and the head of the Gotul is a spokesman of this community. He is responsible to
manage all the affairs of the Gotul, whereas the Kotwar and Kotwarin are responsible to keep it up-to-date. They divide all the work among other members. The Layor group is responsible to collect the fuel while the Laya group is for sweeping and plastering the floor.

The first to arrive at the Gotul in the evening are the members of the Laya group, or where they are tabooed then the first grade members. They clean and sweep the floor. Then, they go back home and return after meals. By this time members of II and III age grades start arriving to the Gotul. As soon as a good number of members arrive, dancing begins. Laya Layor continue to join even after the dance has begun. After the dance, they sit together and if there is any problem to discuss together they settle it, then disperse.

The girls return to the varandah where they get a place to sleep in a group of five or six. When I asked about it e.g. why people not allow Laya to sleep in the Gotul as Murias do, the Patel told me:

"Merta humte bagan gudoem
Hat bagan gudoem nolo aveta
Mune mune te polo manta
Marta, Gaita na, Patel na duknatta
Pen Talur hong aveta,
Chalpatti te audna polta;

all over the Abujhwarh or hilly land, not a single Laya is allowed to sleep inside the Gotul. It is a taboo. It is a taboo from the very beginning. If it will be done, the clan-god and Talur will show disaster on us. The Gaita, Patel and whole
village have to suffer. It is the usual practice in revenue villages of the Muria country."

The Gotul Laya-Leyor act as a corporate body and help in the preparation for wedding or any other feast in the village. They act as cooks and look after the comforts of the visitors who are usually housed in the Gotul. The Leyor act as messengers for the meeting of the Numkal. They also carry the luggage of the Government servants from their village to another where they get only food from the head of that village.

The Laya-Leyor have an important function in cementing inter-village alliances. They visit other villages in a body and similarly receive youths from other villages on visits. They exchange greetings and feast and dance together. These are the occasions on which the sex is free. At the time of Kagsar and Jatras there are large number of Gotul youth gatherings where they dance the whole night, and fulfill their socio-psychological as well as sexual needs also. Sexual intercourse between Laya-Leyor on these occasions is tolerated.

The most important function of the Gotul is to train young men and women in singing and dancing. During the adolescent stage of life, youth indulges in the activities of the people of its own age group. Through their mutual interaction, loyalty, and understanding emerges their 'peer' culture. In the Abujhmarhia community in childhood (I) and adolescence (II), the older (III) is the guide, guardian and censor to the first and second grade youths, and there are no restraints on their conversation. This is the main cause why
they give a new name to every member in the Gotul. A frequent
topic of interest between them is their sexual life and accusa-
tions of loss of virginity in Kagaar dance. They enjoy the
Udalpata, a song of obscenity and joking relationship between
Maryor and Varandad or cross-cousins. Their inclination towards
excessive sexual activities is criticized by these activities
and laughter. The recreations in the Gotul not only satisfy
the Abujhmarhia's esthetic sense and need of entertainment
and sex, but according to Radcliffe-Brown's theory of cere-
monials, also help the collective expression of the Abujh-
marhia sentiment and its transmission from generation to
generation. The Kagaarpat is the song which gives them the
knowledge of their clan-deities and on that basis they can
recognize the members in their relation as a member of affinal
group and brother clan group. The Udalpata song gives them
the knowledge of sexual life which is an important aspect of
their life. Since these songs and dances appear to be the
chief items in the ordinary programme of their evening acti-
vities. On summer and winter nights Laya and Layor may be
seen dancing in the village Gotul's dancing grounds from
evening till mid-night. Various styles of singing and dancing
are in vogue and it is the duty of senior grade to see that
their words are well come up to the desired standard.

In the Abujhmarhia community the activities of the
Gotul manifest the feelings of cooperation, obedience, and
the dignity of labour; the youths receive training in leader-
ship and organization. The Gotul on certain occasions acts
as a corporate body for the whole village. It has a great
role to play in welding together the village youths. If a
villager is in the need of work in the field, he gets from
the Gotul youths.

During the day they are busy with family tasks; assem-
bling as an actual group only toward evening. The senior grade
members are capable of imposing fine and punishment for infra-
ction of rules and also coordinate the joint activities of the
body. Whereas Gotul serves as a place where moral and intell-
lectual training is given to the village youths. The Gotul is
a great binding force not only for the village youths but for
the youths of the intra-pargana and inter-pargana villages,
which act on behalf of the entire pargana community at the
time of clan-god cult. It is the channel through which the
culture of the Abujhmarhias is expressed in dance, song, riddle,
proverbs etc., is transmitted from generation to generation.

VII Social inter-action :-

A. Socio-political interaction :-

The political relationship between the component
villages of a village cluster is virtually homologous to the
relations that exist between the minor lineage groups of a
single village. Or the village headmen are related to one
another by ties of clanship and affinity. The headmen of the
villages within the pargana, such as Trakbhatti and Kustarmeta
(Tulagotul pargana), Jhawahi and Kohkameta (Kolar pargana)
are brother clans under the same mandla. The component villages
of a pargana are normally 'owned' by different lineages, clans,
sometimes by phratries or brother clans. Sometimes the
different parganas adjacent to each other in continuation are
owned by a particular phratry or brother clans, sometimes by
different clans or affinal clans. Thus the clan organization
is the chief feature of the Abujhmarhia social structure. The
clan is also the political unit. One of the village is nearly
always considered senior to the others, the native lineage of
the senior village can be said to 'own' all the territory of
village cluster (pargana). The head of the senior village is
then Pargana chief Manjhi of this village cluster. He is
entitled to receive, one bottle of liquor or shalji and a fowl
whenever he visits his villages in his pargana. At the time
of disputes, he is entitled to get twelve rupees locally
called manjaanamunda, the see of the Manjhi. Usually the name
of the pargana indicates the clan of the owner, e.g. Farshal
is owned by the Farshal clan, Utledonger (now known as Chhoté-
donger) is owned by Usendi clan etc. The Manjhi, pargana
Chief is their ipso facto head of the native clan or local
clan.

B. Affinal link of interaction :-

It is discussed later that most of the marriages
are materialized in inter-parganas, and the pargana territory
functions on an exogamous unit. Thus marriage is one of
the dominating factor of regional interaction, as they are
divided into two exogamous clan-groups. But there are three
zones of marriage as far the whole Abujhmarhia community is
concerned.

1 Eastern Marh (zone) includes Kutru and Dhairamgarh, they
interact as affinal groups with Chhotedonger and Parshal
parganas. Darsur and Magnar act as marriage groups with
Chhotedonger and Dhairamgarh parganas. But there is no inter-
action between Barsur and Kutru parganas.

ii Central zone: It is the largest zone of interaction which binds eastern and western zones through the marriage. It includes Diddal, Farshal, Tulagotul, Ukaotul, Sonpur and Kolar parganas. They are linked with Chhotedonger, Jatin, and some parts of Warhemarh, and some of the villages of Parmalbhatti, Maharastra (Chanda Marhia). They have no direct link with Kutru, Bhairamgarh, Barsur and Magnar parganas.

iii Western zone: Includes Nurdeesh, Padalphesh, Warhemarh, Chhotemarh, parganas. The Nurdeesh and Jatin are linked with Warhemarh and Chhotemarh. Whereas the Chhotemarh pargana is also linked in affinal relations with the Marhias of Pratappur (Revenue villages) and the Marhia of Warhemarh with the Marhia of Chanda (Maharastra). But these groups have no link with the first zone. The reason seems to me, on the basis of information gathered by the local informants is the geographical distance of these marriage zones with each other. The maximum distance of these marriage zones is about 20 to 30 miles.

C. Clan-god cult - Kagsar and Jatras

The organization of Kagsar and Jatras in different parganas is the largest unit of interaction of the Warhia youths. The youths sometimes cover more than 60 miles for Kagsar dance. Not only the youths of Kutru, but also the youths of Chanda come to Kohkameta for dance, and likewise their visits are responded by the Kohkameta youths. This is an informal gathering of the youths that starts in evening and ends at dawn. Sometimes through the marriage, or dances, they get involved in conflicts and these conflicts give place for two parganas.
Dumkal meetings or gatherings in which they settle the cases of conflicts and disputes. Here, in this reference their social interaction leads to the political interaction, in inter-parganas.

D. Interaction with larger society

There are two main market places near Abujhmargh which form two main market zones. The Marhias, reaching 60 miles distance each place, would visit it. One is Narayanpur and another is Gidam. There are other markets also such as Dhorhai Chhotedonger and Orchha (started in the year of 1969). With them the most important occasions are fairs, in which most of the Marhias gather. These places provide them a place not only to sell the forest products and purchase of their essentials, but also a meeting place with their relatives. It is also a place of contact with members of other ethnic groups. Through these interactions the Abujhmarghia emerges as a single socio-cultural entity with reference to other ethnic groups of Bastar.

After independence now some of them also go to vote for the candidates who contest assembly elections. Some of the booths are also established in Marh villages. Thus they interact at the Tahsil, District, State and pen Indian levels.
Notes

1 These two villages are very well known in their adjoining parganas, and command a good regard in their pargana villages.

2 In Chhotedonger and Parshal parganas the Gaita is called Wadde and in others he is known as Gaita.

3 The Wadde Hirna was near about 40 years old while Tonde was 26.