CHAPTER - III

LIFE STYLE OF TRIBAL POPULATION
Health status and life style are very closely interrelated with each other. They determine various personal habits, way of living as well as dietary habits of the people.

Life style is a mirror of the society. Life style implies to a certain mode of behaviour in the day-to-day activities. Socio-cultural aspect, custom, ritual, belief and surrounding physical environment have direct impact on life style of man.

Tribal communities mostly reside in isolated areas, where environmental conditions are responsible for custom, culture, beliefs, rituals as well as health and health care. Their close association with nature inspires them to lead a carefree life. They feel pleasure in roaming about hill, forest and field, where they find different medicinal plants to cure diseases. There natural environment again give birth to supernatural belief and various spirits are supposed to live in the neighbourhood creat not only a religious atmosphere but also a fearful surrounding, for the tribals as they are hunted by supernatural sections. The religious attitude put them into an atmosphere of an unknown world of spirits and for any happenings; the spirits are made responsible and hence are propitiated.

The different sanskaras, like occasion of the birth, marriage and death and many more, are also a part of tribal life. The parents, elders and friends help him in acquiring a mate and a marriage rate is performed. The marriage songs and dances inspire them to the new conjugal life. The visit of relatives on the occasion, bind them in a close kinship relation. After a time gap, when they are blessed with a child it is the good grace of the spirits and a birth rite is essential to propitiate the god and the ancestors. When the parents reach the old age and die, it is also taken as the spirits wish and the death rite becomes a must to satisfy the deceased for the benefit of the living members of the family. Thus sanskars lead to the ritualistic socialization of a tribal individual. The mythologies behind the different rites and gods; and duties give them a psychological sanction
to lend their life and behave in the manner of the members of their community. In this way a tribal grows to a man in the atmosphere of his society and acquires a distinct personality from ethnic groups are similar to that of his own tribe. No doubt tribal culture is intrinsically linked to the economic, social and environmental aspect of tribal life. There is clear evidence of changing trends in tribal art form some have retained the purity of originality mainly because of their isolated existence, but the influence of urban culture is evident in the dress, dance and social comments of many others.

The life of tribal people is simple and placid and often hard. But they hence a rich cultural legacy of their own a myriad of myths and legends which are interesting through strange. In the same manner as other communities cherish the stories of their epics or religious books, the tribal people like to relate or listen the stories of their history. They have usually emotional reactions to their environment. But to the older generation, their mythological tales appear to cover almost every aspect of their life.

According to differences in climate and vegetation which lead men to one kind of activity, type of society and even of activities, social institutions and beliefs in other region. Social change is not a mechanical addition or subtraction but the integration of the new and the old. Every advance therefore depends on the preexisting pattern and must fit into it; And in doing so an intrusive element will probably undergo change itself, so that any practice however similar in it’s general character will play different part in the general life of each separate people.

**GOND**

The Gond is one of the major tribal group of Madhya Pradesh, as well as of our country. In the past a large area of the state was under the rule of Gond dynasties and hence that territory came to be known as Gondwana. The abode of the Gonds was mainly the Vindhyan and the Satpuras, on either sides of the river Narmada. There is some confusion as regards the origin of the word Gond. It has been either derived from ‘Kond’
which in telugu means ‘a mountain’ or probably from ‘Gond’ which for merely was the name of the region spread over western Bihar and eastern Bengal (Rajjada 1984). The districts of Madhya Pradesh, have significant Gond population, the important districts are Mandla, Seoni, Chhindwara and Betul. Among the tribes of the state, the Gonds are one of the elite ethnic groups, such as Dhobas, Mawanshis etc. and other as sub tribes of Gond such as Bhata, Dhutia, Gaiki, Kalanga, Khatola, Monghye, Nagarchi, Ojha etc.

**Clans and Septs**

Each tribe, within Gond society has its legend or history and it gives information about phrotries, clan and septs and subdivision. They eventually produced household or extended to simple families that now make up Gond society. The remarkable characteristic of the small Gond clans and septs in their organisational efficiency is to perform much needed functions including, those governing the internal affairs of hamlets affecting the religious, economic, social and cultural life. The social units of Gond society are small exogamous septs, clans and the small hamlets, which have together produced, perhaps one of the largest group of tribals.

**Sub division**

Among the Gonds there are two aristocratic subdivisions, the Raj-Gonds and the Khotolas. The Raj Gonds are in may cases the descendants of alliances between Rajput adventures and Gonds. But the term practically comprises the land holding subdivision of the Gonds and any proprietor who was willing to pay for the privilege could probably get the family, admitted into the Raj-Gond group. The Raj-Gonds rank with the Hindu cultivating castes, and Brahmans will take water from them. They sometimes wear the scared thread. The Khatola Gond takes their name from the Khatola state in Bundel Khand, which is governed by a Gond ruler, but was no longer in existence.

There are several other small local sub-divisions. Other local groups are being formed, such as the Mandlaha of Mandla, the Larhia or those of Chhatisgarh, the Langhia from Langhi and Maria and Muria from Bastar and so on.
Appearance

Gonds are more strongly built, well cut features and as tall as Hindus. They have a roundish head, distended nostrils, wide mouth, thickish lips, straight black hair and scanty beard and moustache. Most Gonds have very little hair on the face. The Gond women differ among themselves more than the men. They are lighter in colour and less flashy.

Totemism

Among the Gond some kind of story or legend is invented to strengthen the totemic tradition. Some groups trace their decent from animals, plants and other objects, some other from gods, heroes and titular ancestors. Totemism establishes a relation of kinship among person who are member of the same clan and who are not related by a totem shall not inter marry. Gonds of Mandla Chhindwara, Betul, Hoshangabad and Nagpur have adopted the god-based phartry-cum-clan organisation. Many of the septs are named after animals and plants. Among the commonest in all districts are Markam- the mango tree; Tekam- the teak tree; Netam- the dog; Irapachi- the mahua tree; Tumarachi- the tendu tree; Warkara- the wild cat and so on. Generally the member of a sept do not kill or injure their totem animals, but the rule is not always observed, and in some cases they now have forgotten the meaning of the sept name, or the object after which it is named has ceased to be sacred. The meaning of the important septs names Marabi, Dhurwa and Uika has not been ascertained, and the members of the sept do not know it. In Mandla the Marabi sept are divided into the Eti Marabi and the Padi Marabi, named after the goat and pig respectively. The Eti or goat Marabi will not touch a goat nor sacrifice one to Buradeo. The Dhurwa, named after the tendu tree and the dwarf date palm. The Nabalia Dhurwas will not cut a dwarf date palm nor eat its fruit. They worship, Buradeo in this tree instead of in the Saj tree, making an iron doll to represent him and covering it with palm leaves. The Uika sept in Mandla say that they revere no animal or plant, and can eat any animal or cut down any plant except the Saj tree, which is a tree of Buradeo.
Tattooing

Both men and women were formerly much tattooed among Gonds. Sorcerers are tattooed with some image or symbol of their god on this chest or light shoulder. They think that god will thus always remain with them and that any magic directed against them by an enemy will fail. A woman should be tattooed at her father’s house, if possible, before marriage, and if it is done after marriage her parents should pay for it. The tattooing is done with indigo in black or blue, and is sometimes a vary painful process; the girl being held down by her friends, which it is carried out. In Mandla the legs are marked all the way up behind with sets of parallel lines. Perhaps their idea is to make the legs strong for climbing.

Tattooing seems to have been originally a magical means of protecting the body against real and spiritual dangers, much in the same manner as the wearing of ornaments. It is also supposed that people were tattooed with image of their totem in order to identify themselves with it.

Concept of Marriage

The couples marry under the rules of exogamy and the tradition of the clans and septs. Cross cousin marriage, marriage by exchange and marriage by services are recorded in Gonds. The practice of giving bride price prevails in Gonds. The expenses of marriage vary widely between a few hundred rupees to thousand of rupees. The Raj gond families in general are monogamous and patriarchal; only those Gonds, who can afford to have more than one wife, marry more than one woman. Polyandry is unknown. In Mandla a man thinks he has a right to his sisters daughter for his son on the ground that his family has given a girl to her husbands family and therefore they should give one back. This match is known a ‘Dudh lautava’ or brings back the milk; and if the sisters daughter marries any one else her maternal uncle sometime claims, what is known as ‘milk money’ in compensation for the loss of the girl as a wife for his son.

The practice of ‘Lamsena’, or serving for a wife, is commonly adopted by boys, which cannot afford to buy one. The bridegroom serves his prospective father in law for an agreed period, usually three to five or even
Young woman with 'Godna'

Young fisherman with net

Old woman with a child

Tribal Life
six years, and at its expiry he should be married to the girl without expense. During this time he is not supposed to have access to the girl, but frequently they become intimate, and if this happens the boy may either stay and serve his unexpired term or take his wife away at once.

Widow remarriage is common. She should marry with her husband’s younger brother, but she not marry his elder brother. In Mandla, if she will not wed with the younger brother, on the eleventh day after the husband’s death, he puts the ‘turkhi of palm leaf earrings’ in her ears, and states that if she marries anybody else he will claim ‘dawa bunda’ or compensation. In most localities the ceremony of widow remarriage is simple. Turmeric is rubbed on the bodies of the couple.

Divorce is freely allowed on various grounds as for adultery on the wife’s part, a quarrelsome disposition, carelessness in the management of household affairs or if a woman’s children continue to die, or she suspected of being a witch. There is no regular procedure for a wife divorcing her husband, but she can, if she is sufficiently young and attractive, take matters into her own hands and simply leave her husband’s house and go and live with some one else. When a man divorces his wife he has no liability for her maintenance and often takes back any ornaments he may have given her. And a man who marries a divorced woman may be expected to pay her husband the expenses of his marriage.

**Birth of Child and Ceremony**

Village midwives or Dais are usually employed at childbirth. On the same day from the fifth to the twelfth after the birth the, mother is purified and the child is named. On this day its hair are shaved by the son- in-law. The mother and child are washed and rubbed with oil and turmeric, and the house is freshly whitewashed and cleaned with cowdung. They procure a winnowing fan full of kodon and lay the child on it, and the mother ties this with a cloth under her arm.

A name is chosen and the elderly women announce it. If the child was born on a Tuesday, Friday, Sunday the name of the day is often given as Mangal, Sukhiya, Itwari, or if Chait, Jesth, Pus or Phagun the name
may be from the month Chaitu, Jetha, Puso or Phagu. Or the child may be named after any peculiarity, as Ghurman (fat), Kaluta (black), Chatua (one who kicks) and so on.

Food Habits

The Gonds eat fowls, beef pork and certain kinds of snakes. The common food of labouring Gond is gruel of rice or small millet boiled in water. The quantity of water increased in proportion to their poverty. They grow the small grass millets kondon- kutki for their subsistence selling the more valuable crop for rent and expenses. The flowers of the mahua tree are also a staple food, being largely eaten as well as made into liquor.

Concept of Health

Gonds, both men and women do not bath daily but only wash their arms and legs. They think a complete bath once a month is sufficient. Thus sometimes they suffers by various types of skin diseases. If a man gets ill, he thinks that God is angry with him for not bathing and when he recovers he goes and takes a good bath. Cholera and smallpox dieties i.e. Maraimata are worshiped when epidemic breaks out. When they think a child has been overlooked, they fetch a strip of lather from the shoemaker’s house, make it into a little bag, fill it with scrapings from a clean bit of leather, hang it round the child’s neck. If a child is ill they give tanning water from the shoemakers house to drink. If a man possessed by an evil spirit, they will take some coins, silver for performance and have them round his head with a lamp and take them out and bury them in a waste place. These are some of the traditional systems, which are followed by some of the Gonds who reside in deep forest. Many of the Gond propels, who are in touch with modern life go to the hospitals and buy the modern medicines (Allopathy medicine). But the traditional medicine system of herbs and Jhar-phook is more prevalent.

Religion

The religious practices of the Gond present much variety. The worship of ancestors is an integral part of their religion. Worship of the gods may be summarised as that of the Gonds presiding over the village destinies, the crops and the epidemic disease the spirits of their forefathers
and, the weapons and the creatures of the chase. The village gods are generally common to the Gonds and Hindus. They consist of stones or mud platforms placed at a convenient distance from the village under the shade of some appropriate tree, and often having a red or white flag, made of a piece of cloth tied to the end of a pole to indicate their position. The principal gods of Gonds are Buradeo, Nagdeo, Bhimsen, Ghoredeo and Narayandeo and Ghansiamdeo. Buradeo is their great gods in most localities, who was probably at first the Saj tree, but afterwards the whole collection of gods were some times called Buradeo. Nagdeo is worshiped in the month of Asarh. Narayandeo or the sun is also a household deity. He has a little plateform inside the threshold of the house may be worshiped every two or three years but if a snake appears in the house they perform his worship. Bhimsen is the god of strength. Ghoredeo is the horse god, and Holeradeo, who is represented by a wooden bullock's bells, is the god of the cattle. Ghansiamdeo is the god much worshiped in Mandla. Maraimata the goddess worshiped to keep off cholera epidemic.

**Dance and Festival**

Karma is the principal dance of Gonds, which is performed during Bhandon (August) in the rains. The Gonds bring a branch of the kalami or of the haldu tree, from the forest and wrap it up in new cloth and keep it in their house. They have a feast and musicians play, both men and women dance round the branch singing songs. They repeat it at intervals all through the cold weather, considering it as their great amusement.

**Language**

The language spoken by the Gonds belongs to the Dravidian family. They speak generally Gondi. It is considered to be closer to Tamil. More then half of the Gonds speak languages other than Gondi such as Hindi and other local dialects.

**Panchayat**

It is observed that the traditional panchayat among the Gonds still exercises, much influence. They settle many of the social, economic and petty crimes.
**Occupation**

Gonds mostly depends upon the forest product for their economy. They are mainly cultivators and agricultural labourers. Bewar or shifting cultivation is still being practised in certain areas of the region. Some Gonds depend on the collection of forest products, fishing, hunting etc. Cattles rearing is an important secondary occupation. The Gond uses Rice, samai from millets and ragi presently.

**Funeral rites**

The dead are usually buried with the feet pointing to the north, in opposition to the Hindu practice, and this fact has been adduced in evidence of the Gond belief that their ancestors came from the north.

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**BAIGA**

The Baiga appears to be a sub-group of the great Bhuiya tribe of Madhya Pradesh. The Baiga call themselves Bhumiara or Bhumijan. Baiga, the name, also means a sorcerer or medicine man. The name Baiga also applies to anyone who serves as a village priest in the central proviences. (Das 1989) This primitive Dravidian tribe lives in Satpura hills in the Mandla and the Dindori district.

**Sub tribes and Clans**

There are seven sub-tribes of Baigas, namely Binjhwar, Bharotia, Narotia or Nahar, Raibhaina, Kathbhaina, Kodwan or Kundi and Gondwana. Each subtribe is divided into a number of exogamous septs, the names of which are identical in many castes with those of the Gonds. The Binjhwar Baiga are the most civilized in the Hindu sense. Some of them dress like ordinary peasants use plough and observe some Hindu feasts and customs. The Muria Baiga who lives in Niwas and Mandla, distinguish from other Baiga by shaving their hair. They have been greatly influenced by the Gond among whom they live. The Bhaina Baiga are found in Bilaspur and Rewa. The Kodwan Baiga of Balaghat, eat monkey and
beef, are looked on, by other Baiga in consequences. Baiga maintain prohibition of marriage between worshipers of the same numbers of gods. But they may marry among other septs. The adaptation of Gond names and septs appears to indicate that Gonds were in former times freely admitted into the Baiga tribe and this continues to be the case at present among the lower sub tribes.

**Appearance**

In stature, the Baigas are a little taller than most other tribes and though they have a tendency to the flat nose of the Gonds, their foreheads and the general shape of their heads are of a better mould. The members of the tribe inhabiting the Maikal range in Mandla, are a much finer race than those living nearer the open country. Their figures are very nearly perfect and their wiry limbs, unburned by superfluous flesh, will carry them over very great distance and over places inaccessible to most human beings, while their compact bodies need no other nutriment than the scanty face afforded by their native forests.¹

**Tattooing**

The Baiga women are vary fond of tattooing. A girl is tattooed on the forehead at the age of five and over her whole body before she is married, both for the sake of ornaments and because the practice is considered beneficial for health. Men are seldom tattooed, but they sometimes put the chandrama (moon) on the back of hand, the bichhu (scorpion) on the forearm, sometime they tattoo themselves on the affected parts in order to cure rheumatism.

**Costume and Ornaments**

A small strip of rag, between the legs and another whisp for a head covering sufficient for the men. Though the women are decently covered from their shoulder to half way between thigh and knees. A Baiga may be known by his scanty clothing and tangled hair and his wife by the way in which her single garment is arranged so as to provide a safe sitting place in it for her child.

¹ Artical on Forest Tribe (1907) : Central Provinces Ethnological Survey III Draft, Pioneer Press, Allahbad.
Concept of Marriage

A Baiga must not take a wife from his own septs or from another one worshipping the same number of gods. But he may marry within his mother’s septs and in some localities the union of first cousin permitted. Marriage is in adult age and the proposal comes from the parents of the bride but in some places the girl is allowed to select a husband for her. The price varies from place to place and usually paid to the bride’s parents. The custom of serving for a wife is common to many castes and tribes in the Baiga country. The youth who gives his services is called the ‘Lamsena’ or ‘Gahnia’. There is no engagement but on the day he begins his work, the lamsena brings a ruppees worth of liquor to his prospective father in law and he is for merly accepted. He works for two to five years accordingly to the contract and during that time he lives as one of the family, and receives food and clothing. If he earns anything during that period, the money must be handed over to the father in law Sometimes, if the lamsena is old enough and the girl is willing, they are married first and the boy does his work latter. If the girl runs away with another man, after the lamsena has done two to three years service he should be given some money as compensation.

Widow remarriage and Divorce

The marriage of a widow is permitted, and the widow is expected, though not obliged, to wed her late husband’s younger brother, while if she takes another husband he must pay her brother-in-low a some of ruppees. The ceremony consists merely of the presentation of bangles and new clothes by the suitor, in token of her acceptance of which the widow pours some tapid water stained with turmeric-over the head.

Divorce may be affected by the husband and wife, by breaking a straw in the presence of the caste panchayat or committee. If the woman remains in the same village and does not marry again, the husband is responsible for her maintenance and that of her children while a divorced woman may not remarry without the sanction of the panchayat so long as her husband is alive and remains single. Polygamy is permitted.
**Child Birth**

A woman is unclean for a month after childbirth. At the ceremony of purification a feast is given and the child is named, often after the month or a day of its birth, as Chaitu, Phagu, Saoni and so on from the month’s of Chait, Phagun and Shrawan.

**Food Habits**

The Baiga eat three times in a day-first early in the morning about eight o’clock, meal called ‘Juara’, they usually drink ‘Pej’ of kondon, kutaki or rice. The second meal, which also consist of Pej is taken about four o’clock in the afternoon and is called ‘Marriaya’. The third meal called ‘Biyari’ is taken rather late night and may consist of kondon and dal with vegetable and sometimes roti. Pej is the foundation for other food. Baiga eat varities of Jungle leaves and herbs. First washing them and then boiling in Pej or a sour curry of gram or cutting it into pieces of curry. Among fruits the most popular is the mango. Other fruits are Jamun, bel ber, papaya and many others.

**Health and Disease**

Baiga have a wide knowledge of the medicinal properties of jungle roots and herbs and are often successful in providing cures when the regular native doctors have failed. Their village priests have a reputation as skilled sorcerers and persons conversant with the unseen world for the people have so much confidence in their powers and ceremonies that they loose half their fright at once and were consequently not so much predisposed to an attack of the disease. On such an occasion, the Baiga priest goes round the village and pulls out a little straw from each houseroof afterwards burning the whole before shrine of Khermata, the goddess of the village, to whom he also offers a chicken for each homestead. If this remedy fails because by this time the disease may be expected to have worked itself out. It is suggested that the chicken represents human victim from each house, while the straw stands for the house itself and the offering has the common idea of a substituted victim.
Religion

Buradeo is a principal deity of Baigas, who is supposed to reside in a Saj tree; he is worshiped in the month of jeth (May) when goats, fowls, coconuts and the liquor of mahua crop are offered to him. Thakur deo is the god of the village land and boundaries and is propitiated with a white goat. The Baiga who plough the fields have a care called ‘Bidai’, which is performed before the breaking of the rains. A handful of each kind of grain sown is given by each cultivator to the priest, who mixes the grains together and sows a little beneath the track where Thakurdeo lives. After this he returns a little to each cultivator and sows it in the center of the land on which the crops are to be grown while the priest keeps the remainder. This ceremony is believed to secure the success of the harvest. Dulhadeo is god who averts disease and accident and offering made to him should consist of a fowl of goat. Bhimsen is the deity of rainfall and Dhartimata or mother earth is considered to be the wife of Thakurdeo and must be propitiated for the success of the crops certain Hindu deities are also worshiped by the Baigas, not in orthodox but in fashion. The Baigas are generally the priest of the Gonds, probably because being earlier residents of the country they are considered to have more intimate acquaintance with the local deities. All the deities are in relation to man, benevolent or at least neutral. The essence of Baiga religion is to mobilise these forces of neutrality or benevolence against the forces of evil. Baiga religion is not a dogma, it is a war where the priest fights a desperate battle against the unseen powers of disaster and disease with the help of the benevolent deities.

Festival

Baiga festivals are not so much associated with their religion, as in the case with Hindus. Their festivals are in response to the harvest, season and local custom. Most of their celebration consists of offerings to gods, feasting, drinking and dancing. As the whole their festivals are more a recreation than worship. The Dassera, which falls in October, is an important festival in the Baiga villages. Its importance is mainly due to the 'Bida ceremony' associated with it. During this month rains end and the invigorating season sets in. Village parties exchange visits and organise
Karma

Sela

Rina

Folk Dance
dance performances on reciprocal basis in the hope of getting a good crop, Baigas indulge in heavy drinking Saila and Rina dances are common features of the festival. In March Phag celebrations are observed. It is not for the gods, it is for men. A Baiga will not miss the opportunity of drinking during the Phag. Hareli is observed in the early period of the rains. The goddess of the crops Kutaki Dai is worshipped on this occasion, to ensure a better harvest. Pola follows Hareli, after two months, when Baigas burn some twigs near a stream, believes that the smoke will take away disease from their village. At the end of the harvesting the 'Nawa feast' is celebrated to giving thanks. New rice is offered to Thakurdeo and some is tucked on the doors for the first time new rice is cooked in the house not by any woman but by the head of the family who has to keep fast on that day. The children have their own festivals. During the month of January children enjoy 'Chherta feast'. They put marks on themselves and dress up like sadhus and collect some grain from every house. The party orgainses a picnic at riverside where girls cook feast for them and fun is the order of the day.

Language

Baigani is a mixed form of Chhatisgarhi, a mysterious mixture of Marathi, Hindi and Gondi. Some Sanskrit words are also found in it. It is also freely mixed up with words and idioms taken from other languages, including Gondi and Bundeli. From Gondi it borrows a portion of its vocabulary and from Bundeli, the most noticeable idiom, which is borrowed the occasional use of the agent case. Baigani is a fusion of many languages and dialects there is no such thing as a standard Baigani.

Occupation

The Baigas formerly practised only shifting cultivation burring down patches of Jungle and sowing seeds on the ground fertilised by the ashes after the breaking of the rains. Now that, this method has been prohibited by the government. The man never becomes farm servants but during the cultivating season they work for rise at uprooting the rice seedlings for transplantation; they do not work for others as agricultural labours. Woman does the actual transplantation of rice and work as harvesters. The men make bamboo mats and baskets, which they sell in the village.
markets. They also collect and sell honey and other forest products and are most expert at work that can be done with an axe, making them excellent woodcutters. They proceed to make their weekly purchases, they buys tobacco, salt, chilies and other sundries besides as much of kondo kutaki or perhaps rice always leaving a trifle to be expended at the liquor shop before departing for home.

**Funeral rites**

The dead are usually buried. The bodies of the old persons being burnt with special honours and to save them, from the risk of being devoured by wild animals. Bodies are laid naked in the grave with the head pointing to the south. According to importance of a man some ruppees and tobacco are placed in the grave. In some place a ruppees is thrust into the mouth of the dying man and if his body is burnt the coin is recovered from the pure by his daughter or sister, who wears it as an amulet. Over the grave a platform is made on which a stone is placed. This is called the Bhiri of the deceased and worshiped by his relatives in time of trouble.

**KOL**

The Kol tribe is regarded as a Kolarirr or Mundari tribe. In fact, the tribe has given its name due to the Kolarian family of tribes. This tribe is concentrated principally in Jabalpur and Katni districts of the study region. The Kols are mainly labourers. There are two important divisions of the Kols known as the Rautia and Rauteles. The Rautias consider themselves to be superior then the Rauteles and practice hypergamy with the. They eat with Rauteles at wedding frats only and not on any other occasion. The other divisions are the Dashera of Rewa, the Thakuria and the Kagwaria (Raizada 1984).

**Legend of Origin**

The Kol legend of origin is that the 'Singbonga' or the sun created a boy and a girl and put them together in a cave to people the world, but finding them to be too innocent to give hope of time they had twelve sons and twelve daughters. The children were divided into pairs and Singbonga
set them various kind of food to choose for their sustenance before stepping into the world. But one pair got nothing and seeing this the Kol pair give them of their superfluity and these becomes the Ghasies who are menails in Kol villages and supported by the cultivators.

**Septs and Clans**

The Mandla Kols have a number of totemistio septs i.e. the Bargaiyan are really called after a village Baragaon, but they connect this name with the Bar or Banyan tree, the Kathotia septs is named after Kathota a bowl but they rever the tiger and Katharia septs take their name from Kathari a mattreses.

**Physical Appearance**

The men average approximate like 5 feet 6 inches and many of them are remarkably well developed and muscular. Their skin is of the dark brown, almost black in many cases, and their features coarse, with broad flat noses, low foreheads and thick lips. The women are often more pleasing the coarseness of the features being less accentuated or less noticeable on account of the extreme good nature and happy carelessness that seldom fail to mark their countenance.

**Tattooing and Ornaments**

The Kol women of the region are tattooed with the figure of a man. They are not tattooed in the face. Men are never tattooed. They are fond of ornament and a group of men and girls fully decked out for a festival makes a fine show. Every ornament is the shape of bead necklace, silver colour, bracelet, armlet and anklet would seem to have been brought out for the occasion. The chief dress is the crowning point of the turn out. The long black hair is gathered up in a big coil, most often artificially enlarged the whole being fastened at the right hand side of the back of the head just on a level with and touching the light ear. In this knot are fastened all sorts’ ornaments of brass and silver and surmounting it stuck in every available space, with the movement of the dance. The ears are distorted almost beyond recognition by huge earring that pierce the lobe and smaller once that ornament them all round.
Concept of Marriage

Marriage within the septs is prohibited but violations of this rule are not intrequent. A Bride price is paid in the study area. Simply the marriage ceremony held in three months Aghan, Magh and Phagun. The Kols of study area generally adopted the Hindu ceremony. Divorce and widow marriage are permitted. In Mandla and Jabalpur region divorce can be obtained by both parties, the person in fault having to pay a fee to the Panchayat, the woman than breaks her bangles and the divorce is complete.

Health and Disease

Generally Kol thinks that all disease in men or animal is attributed to one or two causes, the anger of some evil spirit who has to be appeased or the spell of some witch or sorcerer who should be destroyed or driven out of the land. In the latter case a sodhan0 or witch finder is employed to as certain who has cast the spell and various methods of divination are restored too.

Religion

The Singbonga or sun is the chief god. The Jabalpur and Katni Kols have entirely abandoned their tribal Gods and now worship Hindu dieties. Devi is their favorite Goddess, and they carry her iron tridents about with them wherever they go. Twice in the year when basket of wheat or Garden of Adonis are sown in the name of Devi, she descends on some of her worshipers and they become possessed and pierce their cheeks with the tridents. These Kols employ Brahmans for their ceremonies.

Dance

Dancing is the inevitable accompaniment of every gathering, and they have a great variety suitable to the special times and season. In the study area the Kol's now dance it in a more lively fashion. The steps consist simply in advancing or with drawing one foot and bringing the other up or back beside it. The men and women stand opposite to each other in two lines, holding hands, and the musician alternately face each line and advance and retreat with them. Then the lines moves round in a circle with
the musicians in the circle. The motion is slow and graceful, a monotonous
singsong being keep it up all through. The steps are in perfect time and the
action wonderfully, even and regular. This is particular noticeable in some
of the variation of the necessary acts of cultivation that each brings with it.

**Panchayat**

The head of the panchayat is known as Ganotiya, a name for a
village headman and he is always of the Bargayian sept, the office being
usually heredity. When a serious offence is committed, Ganotiya fixes a
period of six months to a year for the read mission of the culprit or the
latter begs for reinstatement when he has obtained the materials for the
penalty feast.

**PARDHAN**

Etymologically the word Pardhan means 'one who eats other peoples
rice'. The Gond calls Pardhans as a person who has preserved the memory
of the heroic past of the Gond Raja in his songs or epics. Another Gondi
word for the Pardhans is 'Pano' means Pahuna or Visitor.

**Legend of Origine**

Traditionally, Pardhans were the ministers, bards and servants of the
Gonds. It is said that amongst the Gonds an intelligent individual having
the capacity to know all the progressive professional jobs was assigned the
duty of governance of the tribal establishment by appointing him as a chief
or principal administrator and was called Pardhan which is colloquial form
of the ward Pardhan, meaning chief minister or chief administrator. The
Gonds regard the Pardhan as inferior to themselves and as outcast.

**Sub division**

This tribe has several endogamous divisions of which the principal
are the Raj Pardhans, the Gond Pardhans and the Thothia Pardhans. The
Raj Pardhans appear to be the descendents of alliancees between RajGonds and Pardhan woman.

**Septs and Clans**

The clan among them is grouped into exogenous phratries, each one being designated by the number of Gods its members are supposed to worship. The clans included in the same phratry call themselves either Bhai or Saga. The clans belonging to different phratries refer to one another as Sermi, a Sayer.

**Social Structure**

The Pardhan tribe is changing its social – structure, which has it effects on the institutions like marriage and family structure. They are gradually adopting the ways and manners of other castes. The traditional joint family system has weakened. Even marriage custom are gradually changing and also a large number of dress and manners. The tribal social organisations have and are undergoing a great change on account of the urban industrial development and this has brought about a change in the like of Pardhan community.

**Tattooing**

Every Pardhan has tattooed on his left arm near inside of the elbow, a dotted figure, which represents his totem, are the animal plant or other natural object, after which his sept is named.

**Concept of Marriage**

Marriage among Pardhans, is always arranged by the parents. The wedding is usually performed in the bridegroom’s village at a particular place known as ‘Gothan’ a place where animals assemble for rest during noontime. The customary bride price varies in different localities and places. The marriage ceremony of Pardhan community is traditionally spread over five days. A widower taking a girl bride has as rule to pay a double price. A widow is usually taken in marriage by her deceased husband’s younger brother.
Madai mela

House

Collection of Maize

Tribal Life
Distribution of Property

The family among Pardhans is partrilocal and patronymic. Property is equally distributed among the sons but the property from mothers side goes to the daughters. A person, who no shield, can adopt a son of his brother or of any other nearest relative. This ceremony is ‘Datak Ghen’ meaning adopting an heir.

Religion

The religion of the Pardhan in its orthodox from is purly animistic. They worship god as Buradeo or Badadeo or Mahadeo, who they worship as the pervading spirit of nature and the woods. A great religion meet is held in his honour and a pig is sacrificed to religious to the God. Liquor is an essential drink in all this religious ceremonies. The Pardhan have also a pantheon, which includes Dulhadeo, Narayandeo, Surajdeo, Natamai, Khairmata and Thakurdeo etc. The local deities of the Gond are also honoured. They also worship Hindu gods like Hanuman, Ram, Devi etc.

The Raj Pardhans are the bards of the Gonds and they an also officiate as priest. At every public worship or dwelling place of the Gods, there is Pardhan works as a priest. They cannot even worship their household Gods or be married without the Pardhans.

Ceremony and Festival

Their ceremonies and festivals can be classified into the major types namely- family village, tribal and caste ceremonies. Their principal festivals are Akhadi, Nagpanchami, Pola, Daserra, Diwali and Holi. The Nava (new) feast is held by them after the harvest of the new crops. Holi or Shimaga phag as they call it, represent the socio-religious. Folk life of the Pardhans very accurately and is considered to be the most important of all their festivals.

Rituals

The important rituals observed by them are birth, pre puberty rites, puberty rites, marriage and death widow remarrriages are allowed by them. They call them ‘Pat’ or ‘Mbtur’. Divorce is also allowed and can be obtained by either party for legitimate reason.
Language

Pardhans speak the Gond's language but with other they talk or converse in either regional language or Hindi.

Funeral Rites

The dead bodies are buried in North-South direction. Dancing and singing is an integral part of their life liquor, music and dance are the favourite features of all Pardhan functions.