INTRODUCTION

Free and independent India needs all round development of all categories of its people to keep pace with the developed countries and to maintain its entity in the world. Special attention is required in the case of development of the most backward areas and backward people, neglected in all respects since ages. India has achieved political freedom in 1947, but economically it is still lagging behind even after half a century of its freedom despite a number of efforts through various plans. Inspite of various actions taken by the State and Central Governments, the number of the people below the poverty line has not been reduced. It is still 40 percent of the population which depicts a very gloomy picture of the state of development of the country. To raise the standard of living of the people extra special and honest efforts are imperative. The task is not easy for the country where the population is very large, unemployment is great and large number of people are illiterate and ill-fed.

India next to Africa, has the largest tribal population in the world. There are 425 pockets of scheduled tribes in India\(^1\). The aggregation of the 'Scheduled Tribes' or group of 'Tribes' notified together comes to 573. Out of the 22 states and Union Territories where both—castes and tribes, have been scheduled in as many as 13, the share of the 'Scheduled Tribe' population is higher than the share of the total population in the country. Significant gap between the share of 'Scheduled tribe' population and that of total population is noticed in Madhya Pradesh where almost one-fourth (23.73 per cent) of the 'Sheduled Tribe' population of the country has been enumerated.

In 1991, out of the population of 816.17 million people in the country, excluding Assam and Jammu & Kashmir, 64.88 million or 7.95 per cent were Scheduled Tribes\(^2\). Their number, however, vary from state to
state. Among the smaller states like Manipur, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh and Tripura, tribals constitute more than 75 per cent of their population and in larger states like Madhya Pradesh and Orissa, tribals account for more than 20 per cent.

The classical classification of Adam Smith and the more recent classification of Thurnwald and Henskovits have been applied throughout the world in classifying tribes on the basis of their economic life. The scheme presented by Thurnwald is considered as the most acceptable in the Indian context.

There are various ways in which the tribals can be described. (i) by region, (ii) by language, (iii) by race, (iv) by their level of integration with rural folk to which they are connected, (v) by their economy, (vi) by their cultural pattern as a whole and (vii) by level of education.

Both geography of India and tribal demography permit a regional grouping and a zonal classification of the tribal people. Three tribal zones were demarcated by Guha (1951, 1955), which include (i) the northern and north-eastern zone, (ii) the central belt and (iii) the southern zone.

The areas of northern and north-eastern zone include Jammu & Kashmir, Himanchal Pradesh, the Tarai area of Uttar Pradesh and north-eastern region which are full of different tribes. The central or middle zone include West Bengal, Bihar, Southern Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan, Gujrat and Maharashtra. In area and number of states, it is the largest of the three tribal zones. Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu fall within the third zone. There are also tribal communities in the Nicobar and Andaman Islands which are constituents of southern zone.
In area, Madhya Pradesh is the largest state in India. About one-fourth of the tribal population of the country lives in Madhya Pradesh. According to 1991 census, the proportion of scheduled tribes to the total population of the state was 23.27 per cent. Similarly, the censuses of 1981, 1971 and 1961 have also revealed that the corresponding proportions were 22.97, 20.14 and 20.63 per cent, respectively. The 1991 Census has classified 46 scheduled tribes and a number of unspecified scheduled tribes which are scattered in different areas. Some of the major scheduled tribes of the state are Andh, Binjhwar, Baiga, Bhil, Gond, Halba, Kanwar, Oraon, Saharia etc. These tribes have their own socio-cultural, economic and political set up. Therefore, they have attracted the attention of social Scientists, particularly of the anthropologists, who have studied them with different objectives and numerous studies mainly of ethnographic nature have been undertaken on different tribes of Madhya Pradesh.

The major concentration of the scheduled tribe population in the state of Madhya Pradesh was observed in Chattishgarh region comprising of Bilaspur, Raipur and Bastar Divisions, which account for over 40 per cent of the total tribal population in the state, and Kamars are also amongst them.

The Tribal areas extend over 63,798 square miles. This has been divided into four Zones-Western, Central, Eastern and Southern, on the basis of physical features, social structure and economic needs. The Western Zone is largely populated by the Bhils and Bhilalas and the Central Zone is populated mainly by the Gonds, Baigas, Koli, Korkus and Pradhans. The Eastern Zone is inhabited mostly by the Oraons, Korwas, Gonds and Kanwars, whereas the Southern Zone includes the Halbas, Murias and other sub tribes of Gonds.
The Eastern, Southern and some parts of the Central Zones are rich in forests. The Southern and Central Zones are very rich in mineral deposits. Eastern Zone has also good potential of industrial development. Coal, Iron, Manganese and Copper mines are found in these zones. The Western Zone has little mineral deposits. The tribals of the Western Zone came in contact with outsiders long ago whereas the tribals of Central Zone have lived with outsiders for quite sometime. The tribals of the Southern and Eastern Zones have had a comparatively scheduled existence till recently.

CONCEPT OF TRIBE

A tribe consists of a group of people claiming a common ancestry, usually sharing common culture and language. In the Dictionary of Anthropology 'Tribe' is defined as "a social group usually with definite area, dialect, cultural homogeneity and unifying social organization." It may also include several subgroups. A tribe ordinarily has a leader and may have a common ancestry as well as a patron deity. The families or small communities making up the tribe are linked through economic, religious and family or blood ties. Tribals not only retain their separate ethnic and cultural identity from the non-tribal population, but each of the tribal group conserved and nurtured its distinct socio-cultural and linguistic tradition. Under the Indian Constitution "Scheduled Castes" and "Scheduled Tribes" mean such races or castes, races or tribes or parts of groups within castes, races or tribes as are declared by the President of India to be "Scheduled Castes" under Article 341 and "Scheduled Tribes" under Article 342 of the Constitution.²

The people of India include a very large number of primitive tribes who subsist on hunting, fishing or by simple forms of agriculture. The primitive tribes of India have adopted to the natural environments. Their
habitats differ as widely as hills, forests, plains, deserts, sea or their combination. Their economy, social institutions, beliefs and practices and, in fact, their entire lifestyle is an adaptation to their environment. Though less in number, they are covered by special development programmes because of their pre-agricultural level of technology, low level of literacy and their stagnant or diminishing population. The tribal India lives in the hills, forests and isolated regions. The largest concentration of tribal communities if anywhere in the world, except perhaps Africa, is in India. They are known as 'Vanyajati' (Castes of forests) 'Vanavasi' (inhabitants of forests), 'Pahari' (hill dwellers), 'Adimjati' (Original communities), 'Adivasi' (first settlers), 'Jajati' (folk people) 'Anusuchit Janjati' (Scheduled tribes) and so on.

Various authorities have described these primitive tribes by various names. Sir Herbert Risley and Lacey, Mr Elwin and Shri A.V. Thaker, called them "Aboriginals". Sir Baines included them under the category of "Hill Tribes". Mr. Grigson regards them as "Hill Tribes" or "Wilder Aboriginals", while Mr. Shoobert called them "Aboriginer". They have been regarded as "Animists" by Mr. Tallents Sedgwick and Martin. Dr. Hutton calls them as "Primitive Tribes". Mr. Baines calls them "Jungle People", Forest Tribes or folks. Mr. Elwin calls the Baigas, the "Original Owners" of the Country. The eminent Indian anthropologist and sociologist Dr. Ghurye calls them "Backward Hindus." Dr. Das and Das rename them as "Submerged Humanity." Article 342 of the Indian Constitution relates to a special provision in respect of "Scheduled Tribes" which are defined as the tribes or tribal communities or parts or groups, within tribal communities which the President may specify by public notification. The tribal groups are presumed to form the eldest ethnological sector of the national population. The term "Adivasis" (Adi = Original, Vasi = inhabitant) has recently become current to designate these groups.
There is absence of a standard definition of the term "tribe". According to L.P. Gupta, neither the ethnologists, nor the anthropologists nor the sociologists have agreed upon the precise definition and criterion of the tribe. According to the Shorter Oxford Dictionary, the meaning of the tribe is "any primitive or barbarous people under a chief." In the Encyclopedia Britannica, the families or small communities that constitute or said to trace their descent from a common ancestor are considered as tribe. The definition given in the Imperial Gazetteer of India runs thus—"a tribe is a collection of families bearing a common name, speaking a common dialect, occupying or professing to occupy a common territory and is not usually endogenous though originally it might have been so."

Rev. Fr. J.B. Hoffman, in his Encyclopedia Mundarika, writes that the tribals are "descendants of the original clearers of the soil and are in possession of a land system, based on undeniable ethical principles and most rationally regulated down to the minutest details."

It may be pointed out here that different and often contradictory criteria have been used by the administrators, the lawyers, the sociologists and the anthropologists as a basis of their definition, such as colour of the skin, language, customs tribal conditions and living standards. Every country containing a large number of such population has tackled the problem of definition in its own way, according to its own tradition, history, social organisation and policies.

Prior to 1947 during the foreign rule the philosophy in respect of tribal communities was that of the least interference and letting the tribal communities develop on their own according to their own genius. This philosophy of isolation resulted in cutting of the tribal societies from the mainstreams of national, cultural and economical developments. The policy of isolation might have been suitable in a certain context of time and
period, but it could not be suitable for all the time, particularly in a free country where efforts are being made for an all round development of the people. In place of the philosophy of "isolation", the philosophy of "assimilation" and "integration" was suggested.

The policy of assimilation in place of isolation although has various advantages, yet it is not unmixed with its own dangers. Living in the fastnesses of hills and forests these tribes have fostered their own distinctive culture for centuries and had certain very vital elements of courage, sincerity, truthfulness, love for labour cooperative and community attitude, songs and dances and finer things of life. It was apprehended that a rapid and fast change would tend to erode and even completely wash off these distinctive traits and these vital elements; the tribals could even be swept off their feet. 40 "Isolation" and "Assimilation" have their own dangers. Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India and the greatest friend of the tribals, laid down a new philosophy for the development of the tribal people—the policy of "Integration" which embraces development on the material and economic front along with conservation of the cultural and spiritual ethos of the tribal people.

The new philosophy of "Integration" was applied during all these years of planning and development for developing the people of the hills and forests. Inspite of eight Five Years Plans, the gap between the development of the tribals and that of the general population did not narrow down. It was also realised that the various tribal communities were at different stages of socio-economic development and as such they need different treatment.

The tribal communities which were still at an early stage of economic development and which stood at a lower economic stratum than their brethren elsewhere were identified and categorised as Primitive Tribal
Communities. The most important criterion for this identification was a low agricultural economy. The other criteria were the backwardness of general economy, low level of literacy, greater degree of isolation and nearly stagnant population. On the basis of these criteria seven tribal communities of Madhya Pradesh were identified as primitive tribes, for example:

1. Abujhmarias of Abujhmar,
2. Baigas of Baiga Chak,
3. Pahadi Korwa,
4. Bharias of Patalkot,
5. Sahariyas,
6. Birhors and,

Development of these tribal communities is a gigantic and tough task for which special Tribal Development Agency for each primitive community has been organised by the State Government. For the development of the Kamar tribe the "Kamar development Agency" has been organised in 1982-83, the head quarter of which is at Gariaband in Raipur district. The formulation of plans for the development of the primitive tribal communities has been entrusted to the Tribal Research Institute, Bhopal.

EARLIER WORK

Various studies have been done on the primitive tribes from regional to international levels, but pertaining to food habits there are only few studies.

A study was conducted on Kamar tribe of Raipur district for the qualitative and quantitative determinations of diets consumed by the Kamars. Deficiency of protein, fat and calories was observed in their diet.
Another work was conducted with the aim to study the diets of Kamar by Rita Saxena and S.C. Dixit. It was observed that their diets were deficient in calories, fat and protein. There are many less familiar food stuffs which have not been analysed for their nutrient contents.\textsuperscript{72}

Shri G.P. Patel\textsuperscript{73} finds in his study on "Traditional Treatment System in Baiga Tribes of Mandla district in M.P." that the Baiga tribe believes in most ancestral, racial and traditional customs of treatments like "Jadu-Tona", "Bhut-Pret", "Jantar-Mantar", "Jhad-Funk" rather than other medicines.

A diet survey was carried-out on selected Kamar population of Mainpur block in Raipur district and their diet was compared with that of other tribes in Madhya Pradesh.\textsuperscript{74} "A Pilot Survey on the Food Consumption Pattern and Nutritional Status of the Kamars" was carried out by P.V. Kumar, C.S. singhrol and M.Mitra. Protein Calorie Malnutrition, Vitamin A, Riboflavin, Vitamin C and Iron deficiencies were observed.\textsuperscript{75}

During the health and nutritional study of primitive tribes of M.P., it was observed that they mostly believe in their traditional and herbal treatment system instead of other medicines. Even in the case of infectious diseases they take help and guidance of Baiga, Gunia and Ojha. It is their belief that these diseases occur due to anger of village deity. The study also concludes that more or less the total population of M.P. is mainly suffering from the deficiency of protein, vitamins and iron.\textsuperscript{76}

A study of tribal students belonging to Bhil and Bhilalas and non-tribal student group was undertaken by Dr. Khem Raj Sharma\textsuperscript{77} to find out their attitude towards education. Nutritional survey was carried out among all the Gond Families in three villages of Bamia, Bicchuwa and Jamai
block of Chhindawara district of M.P. In this study common deficiency of fat, carbohydrates, calcium vitamin B were observed with an acute deficiency of vitamin A. Elwin Varrier describes the origin, food gathering, cultural and socio-economic condition of Maria tribes of Madhya Pradesh in his study.

Anthropological studies were performed on primitive tribes of Madhya Pradesh by K.S. Singh, S.P. Gupta has studied the tribal food selection sources and practices. The food habits are formed according to the availability and accessibility of the food products with reference to the tribal population. A micro study into socio-economic aspect of tribal farmers of Betul district of M.P. was carried out by Dr. S.K. Lal, Dr. M.M. Bhale Rao and S.B. Gupta. The fore going analysis of socio-economic structure of the tribal families indicate that the KORAKU tribe is comparatively more progressive than the GOND tribe.

A pilot study of nutritional aspect of Sahariya tribe was undertaken by RMRC for tribals (ICMR, Jabalpur in Dec. 1989) to study the dietary pattern of the tribes with special reference to vulnerable groups. As per the comparative study of literacy progress in tribal district of M.P., it was observed that according to the census the total percentage of literacy in M.P. was 35.5 per cent, whereas it was only 23 per cent in tribal districts.

A health and nutritional survey was conducted on tribals in three ecological zones of M.P., namely, Jhabua, Bastar and Sarguja. The children of Jhabua appear to be worse, followed by Bastar and Sarguja.

The National Institute of Nutrition carried out a nutrition and diet survey among the Andamanese Onges at Dugoan Greek and at south bay. Fungal and skin infections were observed in adult and pre-school children both due to vitamin deficiency.
Dr. Henry Nissen's observations lead to the data on chimpanzees' food habit in French Guenä (West Africa). In Social and anthropological study the characteristics of primitive tribes have been defined in the form of "Primary Group".

A study was undertaken to find out the nutrient composition of various foods cultivated and consumed by the food agency in blocks of Vijay Nagaram district of Andhra Pradesh. Mr. Lal repeated it in 1949 and 1950. The diet and nutrition surveys in the aboriginal tribes of Hos was originally done by Mitra in 1940-41 and found that the income of rural families had risen by 200 to 600 per cent. Consumption of foodstuffs has also gone up. Mr. Wike et al. (1979) has pointed out the ambiguity of India's official portrait of tribal people.

Sengupta (1952) observed that in the Abor Hill area of the North-Eastern frontier of India inhabited by aboriginal tribes, were found to be unacquainted to milk and its products, fat, oil, sugar and jaggery.

Smita Sarupriya and S. Mathew conducted nutritional assessment of tribal adolescents of village Gogunda of Rajasthan through food consumption, height, weight measurements and clinical deficiency symptoms. The results revealed inadequacy in all nutrients other than protein as compared to the recommended dietary allowances. The adolescents were lighter and shorter and manifested clinical nutritional deficiency symptoms.

A.P. Gore and Shobha assessed the nutritional status of the tribes in the Indravati River Basin. Deficiency of calories and proteins in the dietaries and various other deficiency diseases were observed.
A study was conducted by Arti Sankhla on tribal children situated in and around Udaipur city and their nutritional status was compared with the urban school children in Udaipur city. A comparative study of prevalence of anaemia was carried out by Sarla Kumari and K. Chettamma Rao on the tribal and non-tribals of Maredumilli Block of East Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh. Higher percentage of tribals were observed anaemic than the non-tribals.

A food habit survey was conducted by P.N. Chaudhury and Asha Mane on Gonds that is Raj Gond and Maria Gond of 50 villages in Gond—Chirauli district of Maharashtra. The Gonds consume a number of tribal recipes on festival at different occasions. No special food was recommended in different physiological conditions. The Gonds take their meals once in a day. Men and women consume "Mahua Liquor". So, it is natural that the requirement of nutrient intake does not meet the requirement of recommended allowances.

Devadas and workers developed low cost indigenous food combinations with rice and ragi as the staple and low cost indigenous but less frequently used food as enhancers of their nutritive value, for pre-school children from a tribal community of Coimbatore.

Dr. G. Eshwariah has established in his study that all Indian tribals (living in island, hills, forests and plains) eat only those food products which grow in their area including fruits, tubers, and meat of some animals also.

The studies on tribal health were undertaken by the Regional Medical Research Centre at Jabalpur, Port-Blair and Bhubaneshwar and other ICMR Institutes. The studies have indicated that the genetic disorders, communicable diseases, and nutrition disorders form the bulk of their health problems.
The micro community field study on food habits, nutrition and health status conducted in Padhigam village of Ganjam district of Orissa reveals a grim picture of the health and nutrition standard of Lanjia Saoras of the study village. Diet was deficient both in quantity and quality as compared to accepted standard. Calorie requirements were not met.\textsuperscript{98}

The study of three different tribal communities have been taken up by Sampa Sarkar, they are the Birhors of Hazaribagh district of Bihar, the Lodhas of Mindnapur district of West Bengal and the Santhals of Dumka district of Bihar. The status of women in the different communities can be understood more in the context of the socio-cultural matrix of concerned societies. It has been found that economy, ecology and ethnic environments make conspicuous differentiation on cultural features.\textsuperscript{99}

A study was carried out to assess the diet and nutritional status of the Jenu-Kurubas—a primitive tribe of Karnataka. The average level of nutrients were less than recommended daily allowance (RDA) except for calcium, thiamine and vitamin C. The protein energy malnutrition and vitamin A deficiency sign were less common.\textsuperscript{100}

A study was carried out by Dr. Aruna Palta\textsuperscript{101} on the Oraons of Jashpur Nagar State to find out their status of nutrition and food consumption pattern. Measures were also suggested to improve their diet and overall nutritional status.

The study of Dr. Aruna Palta\textsuperscript{102} reports the findings of an exploratory survey conducted among the "Bhumia Baigas" of Baiga Chak in Mandla district of M.P. In Dr. O.P. Agrawal's paper an effort has been made to analyse the changes among scheduled tribes of Madhya Pradesh and in major tribal districts of the State. The data show very low literacy level in major tribal groups and their dependency on agriculture and agricultural labour chiefly.\textsuperscript{103}
The Kamars are generally of medium stature. However, tall individuals are not uncommon. Their bodies are well built and skin colour varies from light brown to dark brown. Some amongst them possess even light black colour. Generally, they have coarse, straight and black or dark brown hair. Some amongst them have wavy and curly hair. Most of the Kamar have black or dark brown eyes. Generally young men possess strong but slim bodies. Constant use of the axe and bow and arrows in the forest gives a good shape to their muscles. The Kamar women in their youth are delicate, calmly and beautiful. However strenuous work in the field and forest and child bearing, reduce charm of their youthful bodies as they grow old.

The Kamars require very few clothes. The men generally wear small "Dhoti" or "Patuka". When they are at home generally they do not put on any other clothes above the waist. While going out some of them put on 'fatuhi' or a 'Salukha. Few amongst them have started using shirts also. Majority of the Kamars do not use shoes.

The Kamar women also do not use elaborate dress. Generally, they wear only a 'Lugda' which they tie round their waist and carry up to right shoulders across the breasts. The 'Lugda' covers only up to the knees. The lower portion of legs are left uncovered. The women do not use bodice or blouse. Both men and women generally do not have much fascination for ornaments. Some men use bracelet and rings, generally made of aluminium, copper or even of brass. However, in rare cases, rings may be of silver. It is customary for men and women to put on metal chain or head necklaces. Besides, the women put on bracelets on their wrists. Usually women wear wooden or brass khilwa in their ears. The women are tattooed and the usual
figures being peacock on the shoulders, a scorpion on the back of the hand and dots, indicating flies on the fingers. On the arms and legs they have circular lines representing the ornaments usually worn. Round the knees too they have circular dotted lines.  

KAMAR AREA

Living in the comparative seclusion of fastnesses of hills and forests of South-Eastern part of Raipur district, Kamar is a primitive tribe of M.P. In other words, the Kamar is a native community of south-eastern part of Raipur district of Madhya Pradesh, which comes under the southern zone. Previously the Kamars inhabited the hill districts of Bilaspur, Durg, Sarguja and Raipur. However, now they are mainly concentrated in the forest and hilly area of Bindranawagarh tahsil and Dhamatari tahsil (now a district), previously known as Bindranawagarh and Khariyar Zamindaries of Raipur district. In Bindranawagarh area, the Kamars are evenly distributed all over, but they reside in large numbers in the hills of 'Nawagarh' and 'Mainpur' and in the forest of the 'Chhura tract'. Hardly a few Kamars are found in the south-western areas of Saurmar and Fingeshwar also. Besides, a good number of Kamar are also found in the hills and forests of Nagri and Sihawa which lie on the Western side of Bindranawagarh.

ORIGIN OF THE KAMARS

According to Syed Ashfaq Ali, the Kamars trace their origin from the 'Kaurwas of Mahabharat'. This story of descent seems to be a myth based on the similarity of the names Kaurwas and Kamars. On the basis of this belief they consider military service as their traditional occupation, but the circumstances have forced them to depend on cultivation of land. Russell and Hiralal considered the Kamar as a small Dravidian tribe and an
offshoot of the Gonds. According to M.Amanullah, in the earlier chronicles Kamar has been referred to as a 'Jungle tribe' of Dravidian Origin. Despite Chattisgarhi influence, they still speak Kamari dialect.

The term 'Kamar' is used in Chhota Nagpur for a worker in iron. In both, Orissa and portions of West Bengal, there is a caste of brass workers who are apparently of tribal origin. They are known as 'Dhokra Kamar' in Bengal and by other names elsewhere. In Telugu region the word 'Kummala' designates the five artisan castes. In Konta tahsil of Bastar district in Madhya Pradesh, there is Dorla tribe which has an ironsmith section called 'Kammar' or 'Kammara'.

In Madhya Pradesh Kamars are purely primitive tribe having no tradition of metal work. They claim to be autochthonous like most of primitive tribes. According to Hiralal the state of the Kamars is so primitive that it does not seem possible that they could ever have been workers in iron, but they may, perhaps, like the Agharias, be a group of the Gonds who formerly quarried iron and thus obtained their distinctive name.

According to a legend, the Kamars were previously called "Gautias" or masters of the land. They were really the masters of all they surveyed. They used to earn their livelihood by carrying out shifting cultivation and hunting. According to the legend Ram and Laxman met this tribe during their exclusion life in forest. When the people of this tribe saved their lives from starvation, they were presented with bows and arrows by the princes of Ayodhya and it is since then they came to be known as 'Kamars' or the people who wield by bows and arrows. Some say that at the time of origin of this earth God Shankar gave this community axe, bow and arrows, so that they can cultivate by cutting forest and hunt animals for their livelihood. Russell and Hiralal stated that the Kamars have two
subdivisions, namely, 'Bundhrajia' and 'Makadia'. The latter are so called because they eat monkeys and are looked down on by the others. But it has also been observed that there are three territorial divisions among them, namely, the 'Paharpatiya', 'Bundhrajia' and 'Kachharpatia'.

The Kamar habitat lies in the South-Eastern part of Raipur district. Considered from the point of view of development blocks and the subplan project, the Kamar area comes under the Intergrated Tribal Development Project, Gariaband comprising the four continuous blocks of Chhura, Gariaband, Mainpur and Nagri, of which the former three are in Bindranawagarh tahsil and last is in Dhamtari district. They make a compact group. The south-eastern part of Raipur district is a home of many tribes like Bhunjias, Kawars, Halbas, Binjhwars and Gonds. The Kamars live along with these tribes. This area, in ancient Sanskrit literature, was mentioned as Mahakantar—the great forest situated in the south of this area is the mythical forest 'Dankaranya'—a part of present Bastar district. The Kamar habitat is surrounded in the east by the tribal district of Bastar and in the west by the Gond areas of Durg and Rajnandgaon districts.

**TOPOGRAPHY OF KAMAR AREA**

The abodes of the Kamar are situated in the hilly and woody tracts after the great plains of Chhattisgarh which extend beyond the river—Mahanadi and it ends in the valley of Bindranawagarh called Panduka. The hilly and wooded region starts from here and goes beyond the river Sondhur in the Nagri-Sihawa region of Dhamtari district. The main hills of this area are the Gauragarh, the Milcowa, the Ratti, the Deodongar, the Atang, the Kanda and the Sringi. Gauragarh is a long plateau which runs lengthwise on the eastern border of Bindranawagarh tahsil dividing it from Orissa. It is difficult to reach the Kamar villages of this plateau. Kandadongar (dongar
hill) is situated at the south-eastern part of the Kamar habitat and is a prominent landmark. The highest point in the Kamar area is reached in Deodongar which is 3048 feet. The highest of other hills are—Ratti hills 2488 feet, Mata hill 2472 feet, Atang hill 2068 feet and Bamhi hill 1645 feet. The main rivers of the area are the Sondhur, the Pairi, the Sukha and the Jonk. The Sondhur river cuts the Kamar area lengthwise in two parts. The Pairi river, rising from the Mainpur hills making a circuit of the Kamar tract, joins the Mahanadi at Rajim. Apart from these rivers there are a number of streams, some of which are like small rivers such as the Amanala and the Jhapan Nala.

The climate of the Kamar area is temperate. Because of good sal forest, summer is not very hot in the plains of Chhatisgarh. Even in the peak of summer, the temperature rarely goes above 110°F. Due to the unfortunate clearance of the forests, the temperature has gone higher. During winter months the temperature varies between 45°F to 70°F. Because of hills and forests the Kamar area gets a little more rainfall than the plains of Chhattisgarh. The rainy season starts from the second fortnight of June and lasts upto the end of September with one or two showers coming at the time of Dashahara festival. Winter rain occurs in the month of January-February.

FLORA

The Gariaband project area where the Kamar tribe exclusively lives, is hilly and woody. Its 40 per cent area is under forests. The largest forest area is in Gariaband block where more than half of the area is under forests. This area comes under the jurisdiction of Raipur Forest Division. The three blocks of Gariaband, Chhura and Mainpur come under the East Raipur Forest Division and the Nagri block falls under the South Raipur
Forest Division. It is a predominantly Sal forest area in which other species such as Saja, Beeja, Dhawra and Kauha are also found. About 25 years back there were thick teak trees also in this area. In the eastern part of the area Bamboo plants are found.

Fruit bearing trees namely Tendu, Char or Achar and Mahua are found in the forests of this area. The Kamars eat these fruits as a supplement of their diet. In the forest of Nagri and Mainpur Amla and Tamarind trees are found. Various kinds of edible roots, tubers and leafy vegetables are found in these forests. These are used by the Kamars as items of food. A variety of grasses also grow in these forests. The "Khadar" or "Khar grass" is used by the Kamars to thatch their roofs. The "Phool Bahari" grass is collected for making brooms. The fruits of Chind tree is used for eating purposes and its leaves are used for preparing brooms. Gums and lac are also gathered from some varieties of trees. These forests are the sources of valuable materials such as fuel, timber, bamboo and minor forest produce like Mahua, Tendu-leaf, lac, gums, grass etc. According to National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER), "much of the minor forest produce is used by tribals for domestic consumption, some of these also find their way into the market where they are bought by local shopkeepers and traders at a fraction of their standard rates."39

FAUNA

In the long past the kamar habitat was full of wild carnivorous and herbivorous animals. In Tawrenga area of Mainpur block wild buffaloes and bisons were plentiful. These wild animals of the Kamar habitat have either died or have been killed in large number and now only specimens are seen occasionally in the forest below the Gauragarh plateau. Tigers and Panthers were also once plentiful but they have also reduced
very much in number. Neelgai or the blue bull and cow, Sambhar, Cheetal, Barking Deer, Mouse Deer, Bear and Wild Boar are still found in the forests though their number has reduced very much.

A variety of fishes are found in the rivers and hilly streams and deep pools. Among the jungle birds green pigeons, peacocks, jungle fowls and partridges are found. Field rats and squirrels are rarely seen in the forests near the Kamar villages because they are very much liked by the kamar for eating purposes. Poisonous snakes like Kobra, Krait and Viper are quite common and also the huge scorpions. The non-poisonous Dhaman snake is delightfully eaten by the Kamars.

AGRICULTURE

Agricultural labour and the related work in various plantations and forest departments form the basis of economy of the greater number of tribes. Whenever possible, the tribal people supplement their income by raising poultry, weaving and gathering various forest products. (Roy and Rao, 1962; Sengupta, 1980)

The pattern of agriculture varies from one tribe to another depending partly upon the opportunities and partly upon the traditions of the people (Burling, 1965). A large part of the tribal cultivation is on hill in the form of shifting cultivation and whenever possible a nearby water source is exploited to induce artificial irrigation. This is called "Terrace Cultivation" followed mainly in cultivating rice. The tribals who live on plains or lower regions of hills practise settled and also wet cultivation depending on the irrigation sources available (Bhowmik, 1971). Among the Indian tribes, Tripura tribes (Rao, 1971) Koyas and Maria Gonds of Central India (Pingle 1973) tribes of NEFA, Gonds and Murias of M.P., Santhal tribes of Bihar (Sengupta, 1980) are reported to practise both, shifting and settled agriculture.
Some tribes outside India also practise hill or "Slash and Burn" agriculture (Horner et al., 1981). A minor flood agriculture is reported to be practised by Cocopah Indian tribes in Colorado (Calloway and Gibbs, 1976). Among the tribes who practise subsistence agriculture are Igbo tribes in the South-Eastern part of Nigeria (Onuoha, 1982), Soloman community of South Pacific Islands (Joseph, 1981), Kikuyu tribe of Kenya (Hoorweg and Niemeyer, 1980), Hopi tribe of North-East Arizona (Kuhnlein and Calloway, 1977), the Aguaruna tribe in Peru (Robson and Wodsworth, 1977), Shaumba tribe of Tanzania (Fleuret, 1979), and Miskito Indians of North-Eastern Nicaragua (Horner et al., 1977).

Traditional cultivation of the Pahariyas is Kurwa (Dr. S.P. Gupta, 1979). In Kurwa, they mainly cultivate Tonda (Maize), Tekalo (Spikled millet), Bazra (pennisetum Typhoidium), Bora (bean), Gangra (vigna catjang), Kodo (Paspalum), Khesari (Lathyrus sativus), Lahiri (rahar), Masoori (Esvum lens) and Sabai grass. Besides, they consume wild leaves, flowers and fruits and edible roots and tubers, mushrooms etc. which they are able to collect from the forest. The typical Kamar pattern of cultivation still remains to be primitive agriculture. Kamars have adopted slash and burn cultivation which is different from shifting cultivation in which cultivation is shifted from one field to another. In slash and burn system, fields remain the same and crops are rotated.

"Dahi" and "Beora" are the two types of slash and burn cultivation practised by the typical Kamar. In "Dahi" type the most suitable land is selected. On the Dahi fields mainly paddy is sown. In the month of February and March first of all branches of the trees in the field are felled and spread all over. Small trees and bushes collected from the neighbouring forest are collected and evenly spread over the field. In the month of May-June the Dahi is burnt to ashes to act as manure. The sowing of paddy in the field is done in the month of June—July after the advent of rains. The crop is harvested in the month of October. The ploughing of field
is done with the help of pickaxe and spade and the harvesting of paddy and other crops is carried out with the help of iron sickles. The field is allowed to remain fallow for one year. In the third year, the first cycle of operations is repeated and paddy is again sown, grown and harvested.

In "Beora" cultivation lands with fairly light soils not suited for paddy cultivation, are used where rain water is not retained. The methods of preparation of fields sowing and harvesting are the same. In Beora fields minor millets like "Madia" "Kosra", pulses like "Urad" and oil seeds like "Mustard" and "Till" are produced. The crop rotation cycle is followed over a period of four to five years in "Beora" field on the following pattern - first year Madia, second year Kosra, third year Urad, fourth year Till/Mustard and fifth year Madia. Thus each kamar family needs at least 4 to 5 "Beora" fields for getting all the varieties of crops, that they need over a year for their consumption.

The agricultural land with the Kamar tribe is 2596.5 hectares out of which 557.785 hectares are with Patta and the balance without ownership. Out of the total 3343 Kamar families 1555 families are landless. Amongst the landholder families, 34 per cent families have 0 to 1 hectare of land, 35 per cent families 1 to 4 hectares and 23 per cent families have 2 to 3 hectares of land. Only 8 per cent families are in possession of above 3 hectares of land. 474 Kamar families have patta of the land which covers 558 hectares. Out of 2596.5 hectares of agricultural land in possession of the tribe, SDO Gariaband has issued patta to 466 encroachers of land. Availability of land only is not enough for agricultural purposes. Along with land, seeds, bullocks, implements, fertilizers, medicines and agricultural know-how are also needed. These essential requirements are being fulfilled under the scheme. In May 1996 Shri Digvijay Singh, Chief Minister of M.P., visited Ondh village situated on the highest hill of Mainpur block. He distributed bullocks to Kamar families for cultivation of land.
The main crops grown by the Kamars are paddy, Madia, Kodon, Kutki, Sawa and Urad which are produced for home consumption only. Marketable surplus is not possible. In their 'Badis' attached with their houses they grow vegetables for their own use. The methods of cultivation and agricultural implements applied by them had been of primitive type which are gradually replaced by the modern techniques under the development schemes.62

IRRIGATION

305 Patta holder agriculturists have demanded wells for irrigation. For irrigation purposes wastage flow of rain water is checked in the main streams — "Jeewandhara Wells" are dug. Electric or diesel pumps are to be provided to 317 Kamar families.

HEALTH

The normal health of the tribal people cannot be said to be very bad, but their condition often becomes chronic after repeated infections. The tribals suffer from many chronic diseases but the most prevalent taking heavy toll of them are water-born. This is mainly due to the very poor drinking water supply, resulting into intestinal and skin diseases. Deficiency of certain minerals and other elements is also one of the reasons for the diseases.67

A study on health seeking behaviour among the various tribes revealed that tribes have a strong belief in supernatural powers, evil spirits and evil eyes. They attribute illness to these and the first level of treatment was, therefore, the traditional medico-religious system. However, if affordable the tribals approach private medical practitioners and subcentre/
primary health centre, but they prefer private practitioners, because of their easy availability, effective remedies provided and polite behaviour. Studies have shown that lack of approachability to the Public Health Centre, nonavailability of medicines at the PHC and fees charged by the PHC staff were also reasons for preferring private practitioners. The visits of the PHC staff to the areas were minimal. 68

The economic studies have highlighted that it was not true that the tribals do not have faith in modern systems of medicines, but it was their subsistance economic level which affected largely their decisions. 69

The demographic studies conducted in the various tribes indicate that fertility, in general, is low as compared to the non-tribals of the same area, and, the primitive tribes of the same area. Due to wide variations in socio-demographic indices observed in the various tribes and between the tribal and non-tribal areas, district level planning for health and family welfare for the tribals has been advocated. 70

It is often seen that in many interior areas tribals are reluctant to come forward for medical treatment because they have got their own system of diagnosis and cure. The tribals believe that disease and misfortune are caused by hostile spirits, ghost of the dead or the breach of some taboo. They have got their own witch doctors. They consult medical doctors as a last resort. Dhebar Commission comments that a pious invalid will take the help of both the priest and the physician. The priest will pray for him and the physician will give him a pill.

Another problem concerning health of the tribes is the shortage of medical personnel and qualified nurses. Doctors and nurses are generally reluctant to go to the rural and tribal areas to offer their services because of housing and education problems of their children.
The mobile dispensaries and health centres are suitable in the tribal habitations. In not easily accessible areas, the medical unit have to move on foot and perform operations in the village camps.

Another very important problem concerning health in the tribal areas is the use of highly intoxicating liquors and drinks. They themselves prepare their liquor and consume with all the family members. The distilled liquor supplied by the contractor is more harmful.

Different diseases are prevalent in them. Kamars when fall ill, or suffer from any disease, generally use certain plants and herbs as medicines.

The names of the plants/herbs and the diseases to which they are used are listed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLANTS/HERBS</th>
<th>BOTANICAL NAME</th>
<th>DISEASE OR ILLNESS</th>
<th>APPLICATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Harra</td>
<td>Terminalia chebula</td>
<td>Fever</td>
<td>Harra and behra are consumed with water.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behra</td>
<td>Terminalia belerica</td>
<td>Pains in legs or arms</td>
<td>The hot oil is applied over the affected parts of the legs and arms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tora oil or groundnut oil, mustard oil</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-do-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patkoria Kand</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Stomach pain</td>
<td>This kand is diluted in water and then consumed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mehlau fruit</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Cut/wounds</td>
<td>The paste form is applied on the cuts and wounds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bichai Dhar or Dang Kand</td>
<td>Dioscerea bulbifera</td>
<td>Snake and Scorpion bite</td>
<td>Used as a paste form and applied at the wound.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adhakaipari</td>
<td>Tribulus terrestris</td>
<td>Headache</td>
<td>This is diluted in water and applied over the aching portion of the head/forehead, a cloth is tied over it.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
They have got blind faith in their Baigas who are their doctors and are easily available near their residence. These Baigas try to cure them by "Magic" or "Mantras" which have got no connection with the illness. This results into higher percentage of death. They do not believe in modern doctors and medicines. Now gradually after coming into close contact with common people they take the help of doctors and medicines in utmost emergencies.

People, residing in extreme interior places, which are not easily approachable, do not get required medical facilities in time. Now arrangements have been made for the medical examination of all the Kamars families. Students of all the schools and Ashrams are to be examined at least once. In weekly markets mobile dispensaries will examine and distribute medicines.

In the Agency area 13 Primary Health Centres or subcenters and 14 Ayurvedic Hospitals have been established. They are supplied with required medicines and implements from time to time. For pure drinking water 53 wells have been dug and 214 handpumps have been installed in different Kamar tolas by the Agency. Kamars do not give importance to cleanliness. In the words of Russell and Hiralal, "they are of dirty habits, and seldom wash themselves."37

TRANSPORT

In the interior places of Kamar settlements even today a number of problems need to be solved. During rainy seasons, due to absence of roads and bridges, the people of these places face a lot of problems, mainly related to food and medicine. For regular availability of basic needs from the fair price shops throughout the year, it is very
changed circumstances. Thus, the Kamar, one of the identified primitive tribe, is standing on the brink to disaster. So, their food consumption pattern and analysis of rare foods consumed by them, have to be tackled on priority."

The Kamar, due to their low economical status and non availability of edible foodstuffs, some time consume some type of food items which are not generally used by other human races. These rare food items consumed by the Kamars are not very well known to people in general.

The findings reported here are a part of research undertaken to study the qualitative and quantitative determination of the rare food stuffs consumed by the Kamars only. Many a time, due to nonavailability of food, they eat certain things which are not generally consumed, that is, non poisonous serpents and non poisonous forest vegetables, tubers and roots. The analysis of such food items which are not included in the list of National Institute of Nutrition, Hyderabad, is the subject of the research work.

Food collection from the forest is a very important source of Kamar's subsistence. During the year they are forced to change their foods from season to season according to change in their seasonal availability. A large number of roots and tubers and leaves collected from jungles are eaten to supplement their diet. During the monsoon season, infact, these are the only foods upon which they depend. So the seasonal variation in the food intake is also observed for summer, monsoon and winter seasons, separately.
essential that bridges should be constructed in Kamar areas. Efforts are being made by the various agencies in this direction.

**IMPORTANCE OF THE WORK**

Over the last few decades, surveys by international teams sponsored by Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) and World Health Organisation (WHO) have clearly identified the high incidence of dietary deficiencies in developing countries.\(^{104}\) Food production and demographic data indicate low availability of many food groups, including major source of energy, that is, cereals, which only fulfills their requirement in a good crop year. This low availability of most foods is reflected through different degrees of malnutrition prevalent in the large sector of Indian population.\(^{105-106}\)

The food consumption pattern of a population group, by and large, depends on the food production or cropping pattern. Hence changes in the cropping pattern will have an indirect influence on the nutrient intake and nutritional status of the population.\(^{107}\) The typical Kamar pattern of cultivation still remains to be primitive agriculture. But no doubt, in some parts of the Kamar country, particularly in the road side villages, they have adopted settled cultivation.\(^{38}\)

Kamar is omnivorous tribe and eats almost anything which could be eaten. Their foods vary from season to season. Most of the foodstuffs they collect from the forest is consumed immediately. In the days gone by, the Kamar staple food was "Madia" a variety of coarse millet. The Kamars own only the barest equipment necessary for their primitive life. The Kamars now feel sore and sorrowful that they are not able to grow enough of madia.

Dr. Aruna Palta\(^{108}\) in her D.S.T. Project Report has remarked, "Now it appears that the entire tribe is struggling for survival under the
MEMBER OF SCHEDULED CASTES AND SCHEDULED TRIBES OR GROUPS OF CASTES AND TRIBES NOTIFIED TOGETHER FOR STATES AND UNION TERRITORIES, 1991

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indian States/Union Territories</th>
<th>No. of Scheduled casted</th>
<th>No. of scheduled tribes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>States</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Andhra Pradesh</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Arunachal Pradesh</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Assam</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Bihar</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Goa</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Gujarat</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Haryana</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Himachal Pradesh</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Jammu &amp; Kashmir</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Karnataka</td>
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<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Kerala</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>35</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Madhya Pradesh</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. Maharashtra</td>
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<td>47</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. Manipur</td>
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<td>15. Meghalaya</td>
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<tr>
<td>16. Mizoram</td>
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<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>17. Nagaland</td>
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<td>18. Orissa</td>
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<td>19. Punjab</td>
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<td>20. Rajasthan</td>
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<td>21. Sikkim</td>
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<td>22. Tamil Nadu</td>
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<tr>
<td>23. Tripura</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Uttar Pradesh</td>
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<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. West Bengal</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Union Territories</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Andaman &amp; Nicobar Islands</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>27. Chandigarh</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Dadar &amp; Nagar Haveli</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>29. Daman &amp; Diu</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Delhi</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. Lakshadweep</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. Pondicherry</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total** 1,091 573

* Inhabitants of Lakshadweep who, and both of whose parents were born in Lakshadweep have been treated as scheduled tribes.