CHAPTER- 4

POPULAR BELIEF AND FOLK RELIGION

4:01: Introduction:

Religion is closely associated with gods, goddesses, spirits and rituals through oral traditions like myths and legends. No people are there in this world among which some forms of religion and popular beliefs are not found. The rural people everywhere, believe in gods, goddesses and different spirits and observe certain rituals for their satisfaction. These observations pervade almost whole of their life. This is not only applicable for the general rural masses but the Oriya people, both rural and urban include in this race. The taboos, inhabitants, omens, auspicious, moments, belief in witches, sorcerers and sorceress are common to all. Offerings of sacrifices, often bloody are common practice for fulfilling of certain desires for all of them. The local god and goddess, spirits, even the priests all equally receive attention of all kind of people.

In relation to the beginning of religion there are some fascinating myths found. The hill Bondo, a tribal group of Orissa believes that human creation taken place earlier than god. In those days busy lives with household and social duties kept people annoyed things like thinking of god. They believed that gods live in fruits, flowers, air and water. Men grew rich as they did not have the business to worship god. The supreme God 'Mahāprabhu' dissatisfied and plotted a plan. He fed other gods with milk and sugar for six months and asked them to go to Sati-Sisā, the village priest. Sati-Sisā arranged different

297. op.cit., Das & Mahapatra, 1993, p.79.
places for different gods to live. The gods were no longer satisfied with the roots and fruits. They demanded for meat and grain. Supplying these items to the gods; men became poor and the Supreme God was satisfied when the men habituated with animal sacrifice out of fear for their poverty.\textsuperscript{298}

The Kuttia-Kond has also such a story of origin of the religion. According to their myth there were two Konds; Londruka and Timaka, who married Pussari and Bhandijilla and got many children. The children once fell ill, frightened they went to the Supreme goddess Nirantali who advised Londruka to be the priest and Timaka to be the Shaman. The former was also asked to sacrifice a buffalo to Dhorni Pinnu every three years and the later to look after the sick. Practice of sacrifice, origin of the priests and shamans began in this world from this time.\textsuperscript{299}

According to Elwin the hill Saora originated the cow sacrifice. Long ago the Supreme God Kittung was the special friend of the cow who was living together. One day when Kittung put his bed in the sun the cow ate it. Kittung was very angry and cursed the cow that men will eat cow. As they were friends for long time he also considered that the Shaman, who worships Kittung will not eat the cow or he will vomit and fall ill.\textsuperscript{300}

\textbf{4:02. The Deities worship by the Oriya people:}

Beside the different gods and goddesses worshipped by the rural Oriya people, there are a number of deities, who wield

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{299} ibid., 541.
\item \textsuperscript{300} ibid., 544
\end{itemize}
major influence and power, and strike awe and terror; they worship regularly during the periods which are entrusted for them. These deities are not confined with subject of petty and indifferent unlike the gods and goddesses but may be enticed, cajoled, bargained with for protection, boons or even chased away as the spirits and goddesses of diseases and epidemics. They are jealous guardians, revengeful for neglect or sacrifice, but are easily humored with offerings or vows to propitiate them in future. They help their bhaktas in the crises at home, in cultivation, at birth, marriage and funerals and on the occasion of epidemics, droughts, diseases, poisonous bite of insects and snakes, bareness of women and animals.\textsuperscript{301}

The village god or the dāngriā-bābā is offered the first fruits of the crops grown, rose or the animals reared. The household or social deities are not worshipped in the sthān regularly by the priest. But regular annual worship locally by the diāri or the priest with the laymen is compulsory or misfortune falls on the people directly. Offerings to these deities require blood of animals, fowls, sometime leaving them free in the name of the deity, which nobody dare to touch or kill. They also appear in vision or dream and demand sacrifices giving direction of the performance.\textsuperscript{302}

In the tea garden of Assam, and in every line, there are common sight, a hut with or without cover under a tree, a few earthen stupā or stone smeared with a thick layer of vermillion and a few votive around, a man passing through, bows his head or takes his hand to the forehead to show respect out of fear as if the deity sitting their in person. No human dare to spit or

\textsuperscript{301} op.cit., Das&Mahapatra, 1993. p.81.
\textsuperscript{302} Informant: Sri Bati Mahanandia (75) on 12.2.2003
urinate towards a dāngriā-bābā sthan. The Oriya people in the tea garden call it grām-pujā sthan and use the place for annual dedication with other castes and tribes in the line.\textsuperscript{303}

A special village god or goddess of the Oriya people worshipped annually is placed in the north-western corner of the line called deptā-sthān, similar to the dāngriā-sthān but the iron-nail swings, charcoal drain are general sight throughout the year and easily traceable to whom the sthān belongs. The shaman or the diāri invites the deptā on him. The invited deptā is worshipped according to the advices already passed to the dhāngrā-mājhi during the first twenty days of the month Vaisākh (April-May). This annual worship is called Chutriā or Jātrā. The depta of a certain kutumb is a particular deity accepted by all the members in the kutumb to offer sacrifices at every Chutriā occasion when he comes to the diāri. The depta accepts the sacrifices and visits every house of the kutumb, giving guidance, curing diseases and advising what to do or not in the future by the family. The depta is received in the house with incense smoke. The dedicable animal or fowl at the depta-sthān which is the common place of all sacrifices. The depta on the diāri may be called whenever needed with special preparations required for the diāri and the family to invite it.\textsuperscript{304}

The diāri or the priest some time play the role of the shaman who possess by the respective deity and through whose medium the depta or deity pronounce judgments or give directions on the existing problems faced by the village or by the particular family or person. The annual worship and dedication with sacrifices on the occasion of Chutriā or Jātrā

\textsuperscript{303} Informant: Sri Gulap Tanti (56) on 24. 6. 2006.
\textsuperscript{304} Informant: Sri Gulap Tanti (56)
becomes festive for the participation of the whole body of Oriya community and others in the surrounding. 305

There are a number of depta or devi among whom one or two may be selected by the kutumb to worship annually for the betterment of the line or village or the society. Name of such deptā or devi are dongor, dhorom, bāburāi, budhimā-gongādi, duārsani, gorhesoni etc. and the fowl to be sacrificed in the name of a particular devi or depta designated by cock or hen with colour and quality. All such directions are given by the depta possessed by the diāri also guides through him when and how the kutumb arrange for his reception. The devi or depta is worshipped by one or two selected members of the kutumb or a group of Oriya people from among them. Individual family also worships one or two such devi or deptā during their annual worship of the tutelary gods but only outside the house within the courtyard and not like the tutelary inside. 306

A family of the Oriya origin worships the tutelary gods during the nua-khai ceremony with a number of other spirits designated for the different purposes and places of sacrifice. Pre direction for the colour of the prey is also confirmed either by the old parents following from generations of finalized by inviting the depta by special arrangement. The tutelary are the pitri-purush, also called piddor are the lineage of the fathers of the family worshipped in a reserve place at the interiors out of the sight of the outsiders. Near it the mothers of the family are worshipped on the same time but in respect of mothers worship the sacrificed materials must not be touched to the fathers place. Touching or mixed-up of the sacrificed between two is a major offence and every Oriya family care for it. The reason

305. Informant: Sri Tanti.
306 Informant: Sri Tanti
behind this taboo is among the fathers there may be some elder brother whom to see or touch is taboo for the wife of a younger brother.\(^3\) The other worship made at the dharni or near one of the side of the entrance which is meant for the children in the family who might have died. The outside place of worship is meant for the village god or deity called *dangor, bāburāi* etc. both to be maintained untouched with each other. The day of *nuā-khāi* is selected so that the occasion of consuming new seeds could be shared by all in the family and the ones who have passed away. So, whatever items or delicacies is traditionally prevalent are prepared, first offered to the *dangor* or the *grām-depta*, then the *piddor* and serially one after another and only after completion food is prepared out of the offerings and peacefully consumed by the whole family. The offerings in the *piddor* are not offered to the girls in the family and the offering to the passed away mothers is not offered to the outsiders; this is strictly maintained.\(^4\)

The *nuā-khāi* or eating of the first seed, especially rice of the season is ceremonial but without festivity or participation of others. The family of the fathers only is allowed and if maternal family is present, they are allowed the general offerings only. Negligence or unintentionally done wrong results with immediate effect by some unknown disease to the children of the house or head of the house or some unusual incident like getting sudden fire, falling of heavy things, coming of unwanted beasts or some omen by birds, cows, or domestic animals. The head himself make some small sacrifices to the unsatisfied deity, if remembered the guilt and gets immediate normalcy. But the major guilty has to hire the *diari* to call the

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\(^3\) Informant: Sri Tanti.

\(^4\) Informant: Sri Rajaram Tanti, (65)
depta he possess, which takes place only on special day and hour such as the dark Tuesday evening when the cattle enters in the shed. This time is taken for the purpose and the mistake is traced. The remedies directed by the depta are followed to get rid of such unwanted happenings. The family gods, especially the tutelary is the saviour, protector and fortune maker of the family and if it is kept satisfied with the regularities followed in the family from past; success in all spheres of life is evident.309.

The depta, devi or deities are also associated with some of the materials, nature and symbols getting socialized and public worship. The dangor is associated with the hill as protection from wind and rain; the bāburāi as the gatekeeper standing at the entrance against the evil spirits in the house or in the village gets special treatment and worshipped by every house in the kutumb. They protect the village and the people in it. Among the Konds one of such devi is called dharni-pinnu also designated as earth goddess. Besides, there are a number of deities on one of the corner, preferably the north-western corner of the habitation sites, propitiated from time to time. In almost all the rural Oriya groups, one finds a column of sacred trees, originally a part of the virgin forest near the garden or line site, where the village god or ancestors are worshipped in the form of stones or the tree itself.310

In the tea garden lines, where a particular Oriya kutumb living and worshipping their special deities are yielded by immigrants, whatever their caste or tribes may be. If such immigrants surpass the population of the local community and if

309. Informant: Sri Tanti (65)
their rituals are strong and more attractive, assimilation takes place and the more distinct one is traceable as more strong or attractive. The Oriya rituals are not spared by their impacts.

4:03: Belief in Gods and Spirits:

The Oriya people in general and those who are from the tea garden are widely believed in various types of supernatural spirits. The supernatural spirits, they believe may be divided into three major categories — the family gods, those adopted by the kutumb and the unworshipped. The family spirits and the general one who are called depta may be petted for the benefit of the family and the society. The second categories are the spirits that lives outside the village and are reacted on the activities of human. The last category of evil spirit is those whose death took place in unusual mean.311.

4:03:1: The Family gods or depta:

The Oriya people believe that they are ruled by the spirits of the family members who have already died. They come to live with the family and are sometime called māsān. On the death ceremony; by midnight and in complete loneliness the spirit is invited following certain rituals called Chhāhir-ānā, Māsān-dhukwā or Jiu-dhukwā. Belief behind the ritual signifies entry of the spirit into the house and he is given a place inside. The invited māsāns are sacrificed in three sthāns for each category.312

The first category comprises the pitri-purus (tutelary) or the piddor installed at the entrance; preferably near the hearth

311. Informant: Sri Mahanandia (75)
312. Sri Gulap Tanti (56) on 24.6.2006
and out of sight of the outsiders. In this category all the married men who have died beginning from the deceased father are given a single sthān where they are dedicated annually, specially during the nuā-khāi.

The second category family māsāns are those females who had formally married to the males in the family beginning from the deceased mother. They are specially sacrificed during the nuā-khāi, keeping distance from other sthans and without touch of the piddor.313

The third category is the deceased other than the family's married men and women. In this category the deceased children in the family included those who have died during their childhood and are called chālok. The sthān for these māsāns are given at the door side and are equally remembered during the nuā-khāi occasion.

There is a fourth category also to which some families give special sthān inside and are worshipped during the nuā-khāi. Deceased unmarried young men and maternal relatives without a hair, fall in this category. They are worshipped at the interior but not with the piddor. Worshipping of the māsāns of this category is not compulsory for a family. But such māsāns, sometimes make trouble in the family, frequently comes in dream; identified by the shaman through the pet god.314

The village gods are also worshipped by individual family. The village gods are adopted by the kutumb to worship for the

313. Informant: Sri Tanti (56)
314. The piddor and the mothers' sthan are kept separate and untouched especially the sacrificing materials; because when they were alive the relation between some of them might have been younger brother's wife and elder brother.
betterment of the families and the people. They are worshipped outside the houses, but within the boundary in one of the corner of the front lawn. They are called *depta* rather than *māsān*, preferred special attention as worship them first outside and then has to proceed to the family *māsāns*. 315

4:03:2: The *kutumb* adopted god:

The Oriya people organized themselves in different social unit called *kutumb*, most of which are constituted of the same clan. Entrance of the other clan in the *kutumb* is not restricted on the condition that the existing code of ritual must be followed by the new entry. Each *kutumb* adopts one or two powerful god or gods, worship it publicly once a year during *chutriyā*. This adopted god is responsible for the family and social security and prosperity. The god is adopted through a *diari* (shaman) in the *kutumb* through whom the god interact with the *jhākor* or *pujari* selected who passes on the information to the others. This god is a well-wisher, saves every member in the *kutum*’ from the evil affects and does not allow entry of the unwanted spirits in the village or line. He himself comes once every year through his pet 'shaman' during the *chutriyā*; visits every houses in the *kutumb* to give advises, remove diseases. He is worshipped by the public in the permanent *sthān* made for him in one of the corner of the line or village, preferably in the north-western corner called *deptā* *sthān*. Spiritual showing like walking on burning coal, sitting and swinging on throne seat etc. are performed by the *deptā* through the shaman. 316

The *kutumb* god or the guardian god may be invited through the shaman on special day and on special occasion. A

315. Informant: Sri Udey Nayak (68) on 8.7.2007.
316. Informant: Sri Nayak (68)
person fallen in unknown illness, may be referred to the shaman who keeps fasting and necessary discipline to call the spirit on him. Generally on Tuesday evening, during the time when cattle enter their sheds and in dark night the depta could be invited. He stays on the shaman for the few minutes within which the head of the family members or the jhākor invited for the purpose, enquires about the problems and ask the remedies. The depta through the shaman speaks to the man, inform what has happened to the sick, and advises the remedies and leaves. He asks phul\textsuperscript{317} as his dedication. The causes and the remedies advised are of symbolic nature and the language is most ancient type that a general educated Oriya has also ceases to understand. When the depta comes on the shaman it is called depta-bhora\textsuperscript{318}.

\textbf{4:03:3: Other Spirits:}

The spirits of general category are of two types; the spirits which helps guides and stands for human benefits and those which misguide tricks and are inauspicious. They live in a tree branch, a hillock, a spared and destroyed tomb or well or pond, by the bank of a river, on a grave or a bamboo bush or in any other place which an ordinary man can not identify without taking help of a shaman. They generally harm a person if he do some mistake like; urine, extracts, spit etc, on the place he lives. The person is troubled by stomach ache, fever or any other types of sudden illness, which the shaman through his pet spirit, identity the guilt and the remedy towards the spirit. The spirit is satisfied with the offerings advised by the pet god and leaves the person. As soon as it leaves the person all of a

\textsuperscript{317} phul in general is a flower but it is the burning charcoal asked by the depta.

\textsuperscript{318} Moment of the spirit on the 'diari'.

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sudden becomes normal. Troubled by some unknown spirit is called chhāer-lāgāchhe in Oriya and chhitā-dhorehe in Sādri language. Sometimes massages by the poultice of the root of some plants and by drinking of the same by mixing with water can remove the trouble of such spirit from one’s body. The plant bosh and its root with leaves are generally used for this purpose.319

There are some spirits harmful for human as the Oriya people believe. The churgen developed from the dead parturient mother, whose identification is the hands and the legs turned backside front, hairs opened and teeth becomes larger; often ready to attack a man in loneliness, even at noon in day time; is the most dangerous among all the evil spirits. The other dangerous spirit is the young woman died without marriage becomes kuwāri-bhut; often attacks a young man, specially the teens at noon in the day time when they are alone. The witches and sorcerers prefer most the bone of this kind of kuwāri-bhut. Another bhut or spirit believed by the Oriyas is the mātiā-bhut, also called chor-deyā; a short toiling spirit strolling from one house to other at night or from one village to other with a bhār hanged on his shoulder. This bhut can be domesticated by offering murhi (dried rice) with milk at the entrance of the house during the night when all are slept. Once the spirit gets these things he begins to live in that house. The importance of this bhut is, he steals materials from other houses, brings into the house where he lives, thus making the family rich. There is another kind of bhut or spirit leaves in lonely place, misguides a man he meets on the way, field or in fishing area, sometime disguising himself as one of the neighbour or friend of the person called biqā. This spirit is

319 Children have sudden affect frequently when they are playing in the lonely places.
generally not harmful but in some cases much harmful than other spirits in relation to the family matters. There is also a very tall spirit covering white from top to bottom, called bharma-devtā, is helpful to the persons in trouble but vary harmful if caused guilt. Besides, there are many other goblins scattered everywhere, sometime harm a person if he is not guarded by his family gods. The people died by suicide are generally harmful if met on the way. They never do better to a leaving person.  

4: 04: The Offerings and Sacrifices:

Annual offering of blood of selected fowl or kid, sometimes of pig is compulsory for the general Oriya people. They observe this offering ceremony with the nuā-khāi celebration. All the known edibles are made out of the new rice, keeping fasts and only after offering the edibles to the family gods the family takes their food. The new items like chewra, kodā, two kinds of special pithās; the oḍsā and bhājā pithā, jokhā etc. are dedicated first and then taken as porshad by all the members in the family. The girls in the house prohibited to take the porshād dedicated in the piddor as they are to be accepted as members of other families after their marriage. Likewise, the dedicated materials to the parted mothers are only to be used by the males in the family only. No materials is taken outside or to offer to other families from the dedicated. The colour and sex of the fowl or kid to be sacrificed is decided through the diari by his pet god. Thus among the Kandhriās the Luhā gotra people gives red cock to their piddor, black hen to their mothers; white cock to the grām-deptā or donger etc. 

The adopted *gram-devta* by the *kutumb* is worshipped once a year during the *chutriā* or *jatra* following the last dark day of the month of Chait (March–April).322 The items of worships are pre-advised by the *deptā* on the previous day or the preceding year when some special offerings were assured against some better development in the *kutumb*. In this festival individual dedication are also made as assured in some previous family problem which is solved according to the advice of the *deptā*.

Sometimes a family god is dissatisfied and troubled the family is satisfied with extra offerings as advised by the pet god. Beside, every male of the Oriya family, specially, the head never forgets to offer the first share form his dish to the family god. The woman in the house also keeps a small share separate for the family gods before distribution of the cooked meal to the other members in the family.

4: 05: Ritual Idiom:

Religion begins with sacrifices to Gods or Goddesses. Animals, birds, fowls, sometime eggs and fishes or offerings of non-bloody oblation, for example, fruits, first crops, roots, leaves, incense, etc, constituted the most important rituals in propitiating the Gods and Goddesses or the ancestral spirits. Bloody sacrifice may include human sacrifices as well as symbolic sacrifice of artificial horses, buffaloes or elephants were practiced both by tribes and none tribes, rural or urban people. The ritual associated of with cleanliness and sacredness from body and mind of the devotees, specially the *pujāri* or the priest. Bathing, fasting, abstinence is observed as taboos from

previous or a number of days before starting the ritual. The priest or an ordinary participant must not be defiled due to a menstruation wife or because of an irregular sexual partnership. By keeping away from these physical and spiritual lapses, the participant, specially, the priest preserver the image of good life which is present and that which is yet to come. The little lapse, physical, spiritual or moral, directly affects the common well-being and the greater good of the people at large. The lapses are not personal and can not be segregated. They harm other man in society, their belongings and even gods themselves. Therefore the rituals are to be performed as perfectly as possible. The traditional wisdom born of long experience of the past generation is the guide and guarantee that the rituals are performed decorously and they achieve their goals. Any derivation may upset not only the present but also future and hence must be avoided at any cost. These approached to ritual idiom is not only present among rural people, but also among other section of both rural and urban population in general.323

Among the Oriya people, specially the rural, a good number of whom, living in the tea garden of Assam are one of the groups to follow the rituals and idiom. They have traditional shamans, a pet of the god or goddess, who fall into a trance, see vision of his master god or goddess, hear their voices and commands and talk to them or rather, convey their wishes and prayers of the devotees. The god or goddess speak through him to make people know in what way they would like to appear what things or animals they would to like to be offered and what manner the afflicted person has transgressed the rule and regulation meant to be obeyed.

The **diāri** may be also a charmer, medicine man, and astrologer. Physically and spiritual purity makes him more powerful and his charm, herbs of forecast become more fruitful. Carelessness regarding this purity may result with extinction of his extraordinary power. He should also be a person without any spot.\(^{324}\)

The charm is a glorification, remembrances, dedications, requests, promises of the Gods and Goddesses, specially referred to the master Gods or Goddesses, assuring to keep promise by proper worship with the asked sacrifice if the problems of the afflicted person are solved. It does not mean that if the problem is not solved the deity is kept aside, but the **diāri** by his astrological expertise or what the god or goddess convey dialogs impossibility or the risky price have to be paid to see the problem solved. The risky price means the high price of losing a son, daughter, wife or husband in the family make people keep distant from that gods or goddess. If the gods or goddess is Kali, Chondi, Durga Shakti, Mangla, etc, the oblation may be serious in nature. The Oriya people do not worship and invite these gods or goddess through the **diāri**, do not respect or recognize in their society.\(^{325}\)

There is a story told by one of my informers claiming to be true as it took place in his own family long before and the traces and the symbol of the incident still existing. He told me that his ancestors were entrusted by the king to supply a unspotted young girl every year to him to sacrifice before the goddess Sambaleswari, an incarnation of goddess Durga and once, when they have no girl in the family to supply inform the Raja about their inability. But sudden and unexpected arrival

\(^{325}\) ibid
and staying of a young girl with them solved the problem. There is a sign in their house got ritualized by regular worshiping once a year as advised by the deceased girl when tutelary are remembered.  

4: 06: Sorcery and witchcraft:

The Oriya people, like others strongly believe in the efficacy of sorcery and witchcraft and are afraid of them. A few of tribal groups, living with them in lines of the tea garden practice sorcery and witchcraft. The crafts are wielded by person through special training in magical and core practice. A number of people, in a way, excide evil magical power at the sight of beautiful, loveable or covetable objects, animals, crop or even presentable human beings. These occult powers are known as the evil eyes or evil touch. People, specially the children suffering from stomach or minor ailments, cattle not yielding milk, plants reduces crops or woman paying amorous attention all are cured by practitioner of magic. Very often magical means are applied against the possible harms of the evil spirits. For example a child going out of the house is anointed with paste of the sooth mixed with mastered oil, kājals, sandal paste or the dark powder of the hearth, scented charcoal in the alter to avoid evil eyes towards the child.

People believe in contagious sorcery which may be proved only by some superstitions. Collecting of one’s hair, piece of cloth or thread on body, a piece of hair, the dust of leg are disposed of very surreptitiously, as a sorcerer can do magical harm to these wasted parts of the body and thereby harm the

326. Informant: Sri Subhas Bagh (42) on 8.7.2007
327. Smt Hemo Nayak on 8.7.2007.
whole body of the concerned individual. Sometime a symbolic image of the person prepared out of the earth, placed on the magical site for regular magical harm so that the individual slowly affected by some unknown troubled in his body which no modern medicine able to cure and result is the death of the person. It is believed that if the image is perched the body of the person affected. Personally undaunted enemies are revenged if physically or other ways incapable to challenge. If the person is not a sorcerer himself he hires a sorcerer against some returns. The greedy sorcerer takes such opportunity to fulfill his objective or only to test his capacity which he has yet to test though completed the training. The diāri who worships favorable god or goddess never do this but try to save such affected person by his charms.328 The people engaged in witchcraft usually harm innocent persons or help one to take revenge on enemy to realize his own capacity or to get some parts of the dead person useful for sorcery. Torture on the image of a person by spells called bāān. It is seen in the tea garden atmosphere sometime open challenged between two sorcerers resulting identification of the more expertise and thus adorned and respected by the vanquished. Only few year back snake charmer strolling from garden to garden were challenged by local sorcerer and the competition in front of the public itself. The snake charmer capacity lies on his tumdi thus made soundless or immovable from his lip is the final attack by the local charmer and when his expertise accepted he withdraws his bāān he applied. Now a days such scene is absent as new sorcerer do not develop due to the influence of the modern life style among the new generations329 Among the Oriya people such sorcery is rarely found. The shaman, who is also a diāri,

328. op.cit., Kujur, 1989, p.139.
charmer or *guniā*, the herbal-man or the *ojhā*, never challenge but cure affected persons by the god or goddess he worships.

Witchcraft among tea garden tribal people existed and generally practiced by females. In some society like the Oraon, a girl is married only if she is trained with witchcraft. There is lore in respect of arrangement of marriage of a girl in this tribe. The boy’s parents come to the girl’s parents and made enquiry whether the girl is āruwā or *usna*. If she is *usna* which means she is trained in witchcraft the conversation continued. And if she is āruwā the talk is given up. This is the reason why witchcraft still practiced treacherously among some of the tribes. Living together and adjacent to each other the craft adopted by others for wonders, suspicions and to get rid from its evil affect. The training takes place every night in the expert’s house or a place of convenience treacherously. Complete secrecy is maintained. The woman sleeping with her husband, use some herbs by casting a spell on her sleeping husband and retreats in the dark night as her husband who might have not allowed if he was awake. Her husband would never wake up until she returns and takes her usual position. It is believe that the practice carried on in complete nude and out of sight of human being. The final test is completes with the trainee goes to the burial ground and collects a piece of human bone from the grave. The day is the dark night of the *diāli* in the month of *Kirtik* (October/November). The tea garden people widely believe about the entrance and all around the house and never allow their children to go outside during this night.

It is believed that a witch can turn into a black-cat and drinks human blood with a cotton string lay on a sleeping

331. op.cit., Das and Mahapatra, 1993. p. 89
person through the small hole she made from the roof. So, it is
taboo to sleep flat among Oriya people. Women among them
are not known about the witchcraft but sorcery and evil
activities are very often heard. A woman to harm an enemy
secretly collects waste clothes, dust of leg, hair or anything the
person use, recites some charm or some herbs, secretions of
food animal or human on burning charcoal placing it on the way
of the person secretly during the dusk which the person
unknowingly crosses or stamps is immediately affected. Such
actions are identified by the diari with the help of the god or
goddess also with the remedies. The god or goddess when on
the diāri bites on the spot affected on the body and brings out
small piece of hair, broken piece of glass, human nail, small
piece of bone etc. When he does this no affects found on the
spot, and the trouble is gone.332

4: 06: 1: Nojor (evil eye) and remedy:  

An Oriya woman cures her child from the effect of
nozor (evil eye) by drawing dry chili, mustard seed and salt
seven times from top to bottom without taking breath let it to
burn in the burning coal and immediately removes from the
house, places it on the side of a crossing road in darkness.
This performance is usually done during the evening hours and
in the dark. It is believed that the charcoal carries the epidemic
and the person, beasts or anything crosses or stamps it the
affect passes on him.333

To save one from the evil eyes of witch, sorcerer or evil
spirit a Oriya person uses a māndli or tābiz on his right arm or
on the neck or on the hip prepared by an ojhā.

332. Sri Benedict Kujur 17.8.2006  
4: 06: 02: Tābiz and māndli:

The mandli or tabiz works only if it is kept purified, without touch or reach of an unclean person or places like burial ground, latrine or in a puberty house, house where a baby is born and yet to be initiated; or the power will disappear. The adults and the children do not posses a mandli or tabiz are fastened with a piece of root of bosh on his clothe by a pin. The thread on the hip as it is out of sight save a person from such evil eyes but fatal if fallen on the hand of an enemy sorcerer. Spittle and menstruation blood having miraculous magic power which turns a girl’s mind towards the person who has applied it. The rocks, ashes, fruits, whistles, dust, lamps, rings etc. are used for magic purposes. The tiger’s claws, mustaches or even the tooth, eagle’s beak are conceived of as imparting super human power because of their magical properties. A small piece of cloth on mating snakes, if found, turns out to fortune.\(^\text{334}\)

4:06:3: Ulta bāgh:

The Oriya people believe in transform of a human into animals, birds or insects and again return to their original form. They believe that human can temporarily transform himself into a tiger, completes his desire and return to his original form.\(^\text{335}\)

4:06:4: Ojhā (Shaman):

Abhiram Tasha has described how a man takes education of spells and charms from his teacher. According to him the expert in magic and charm is called ojhā (shaman). He teaches others for the betterment of the society. The person or disciple

\[^{334}\text{Sri Niranjan Munda on 16.4.2006}\]
\[^{335}\text{op cit, Doongdoong 1981, p.117.}\]
who wishes to learn has to take oath that he will use it only for the betterment of the human society. The person generally completes learning within three months and offers a minor guru-daxinā to his teacher.336

Strict discipline is maintained during learning and practicing the performances. After completion of learning of the spells the learner has to test his power by practical activity which is very difficult for ordinary persons. Only in this test most of the learners fail and can not become a successful ojha. The learner who has failed in the practical consumes the bulk of hiju on the dark night of kālipujā in his guru’s house. He however, becomes capable to cure minor affects done by evil spirits. So vows to work for the betterment of the people, not to take revenge; try to help people in trouble etc. If he does not follow his vow his power will automatically disappear.337

4: 06: 5: Learning of Ojha:

The learner, who is brave enough to face the dangers, dedicates an earthen candle in the name of the deity of the burial ground three days before the darkest night of the month Kartik (October-November) which is the day of kāli-pujā. The articles he has to collect from the burial ground are called sādhnī. It is troublesome and danger to collect the sādhnī. The guru places a stone with spell few yards from the ground and informs his disciple that if he will be able to cross the stone when returning the danger is over. On the particular night the learner leaves for the burial ground with some dedicable materials including sufficient quantity of lia so that in his return it would be thrown on his back for the evil spirits following him.

337 ibid.
The guru binds the body of the learner with spells so that the spirits cannot touch him directly and assures him that if he will return up to the stone the rest to save him is his risk.\textsuperscript{338}

The learner becomes nude near the boundary signed by the guru and proceeds towards the grave from where he wishes to collect skull or bone. He makes a 'hearth' with three skulls if he could collect and prepare bhājni for the guarding spirit of the ground and recites some spells seeking the bone from the dead under the grave. The dead under the grave is assures to give the things he wants but in return the disciple has to give three things. The dead ask the learner, which one from the first, last and middle he is assuring to give? The learner assures to give one of the three and the dead hold on the materials asked for above the ground which the learner has to cut off by a bamboo knife. The event met with troubles made by the spirits around, to whom the learner has to offer lia by throwing. The spirits become busy collecting them when the learner with his materials proceeds as faster as possible to reach the boundary stone made by his guru. The spirits runs after him and he makes them busy collecting the lia by throwing it on their way. After successful completion of the collection he proceeds to his house washes the śādhni bone make a thick layer of vermillion, cover them with new cloth and keep it on the sthān with dedication of scented smoke.\textsuperscript{339}

After completion of learning, the disciples prepare a thāl with dhup-grass, āruwā- rice, basil leaves, a piece of copper coin and the earthen candle with other materials and make arati of the guru. After completion of the dedication they drink the

\textsuperscript{338} ibid., p. 5.
\textsuperscript{339} ibid., p. 6.
water by which they have washed the legs of the guru. The guru gives some advices on this occasion as not to take food in artificially made plate; blaming the guru is a serious sin; save people in trouble free of price; avoid unfair activities etc.  

The expertise of spelling is proved by collecting materials from seven different burial grounds on the darkest night of kali-pujā and to show to the guru and thus, he is recognized an expert.  

The sādhni bone collected by the father may be used by the son if he has learnt the spells and all other necessary dedications. Thus, some families are hierarchically following the ritual and thus recognized as family of Ojha. The family, however, has to live very carefully in following the codes of the guru or may fall in trouble.  

Learning of witchcraft has special significance. The craft is compulsory for some of the tribes for their women. No girl accepted as wife without this knowledge. Among the Oriya people the craft is practiced by the Kondh people both women and men. The learners leave the beds witout the knowledge of their husband casting a spell on their husbands, who keep sleeping undisturbed. They assemble in a forest or field using trees as their vehicles. Naked except for the bristles of broom stick, they sing and dance for the whole night with the spirits or deities and lions as their patrons. The whole affairs must be kept secret. They learn this craft only to make peopie afraid to them and do not do any harm to their family. The difference between a witch and an ojhā is that the witch makes people ill which without an ojhā is impossible to cure.  

340. ibid
341 lo.cit , Das&Mahapatra.
In relation to the creation of the witch and the ojha, there is a myth prevalent among the Santhals. According to this myth the presiding deity Marang Buru was tricked by a woman revealing the secret of witchcraft to them and not to men. The men were plagued by the witches and they approached to Marang Buru and he became so furious that he taught the men the craft of witch-doctor or ojha of the witchcrafts. The result is the ceaseless war between witches and ojhās. 342

Among the Oriya people witches are rarely found but ojha or shaman is found at least one in each kutumb who is responsible to keep the kutumb deity with him and to continue the rituals. The Oriya ojha is called guniā or diāri. A few old women, suffering from ill-health and various kinds of epidemics, too weak to move; looking someone straight at eyes for some help or consideration, are feared to be witches and there are reports in the tea gardens that witches are killed for her evil spells killing some innocent person.

The ojha sometime wrongs in mentioning the exact name of the witch of wizard as his pet god or goddess bribed by the evil spirit of the witch misguides him. Witchcraft is not inborn but acquired through rigorous training like the training of the Shaman itself. The Santhals had learnt it from the Kamru-Guru the well versed sorcerer from Kamrup. 343

4:07: Animals and Beasts in Folk belief:

Animals, beasts and fowls are also associated with the religious beliefs of the Oriya people in the tea garden. Among domestic animals first comes the bull which is believed to be

342 ibid., p. 23.
343 ibid., p. 90.
the carrier of Lord Shiva associated with Hindu mythology. The early remains of the Mohenjodaro and Harappa reveals *pashupati* like image definitely to be pre-Vedic and belong to the Austro-Dravidian origin to which the general Oriya people belong. The cow related to *gobardhan* associated with Sri Krishna, one of the incarnation of Lord Vishnu is worshiped by the Oriya people with Lord Vishnu and Lord Brahma as Trinity. For Oriya people cow is also associated with goddess Laxmi, the deity of wealth and prosperous life; very carefully follow the rituals attached to it. A number of taboos associated with cow followed by all the Hindu people in general and the Hindu Oriya people in particular in the tea garden are not spared from them. The cow dung for the Oriya people is felt sacred and used in all household ceremonies. Without wiping the house with cow dung felt unclean and unfit for dedication to their god and goddess they worship. The *sthāns* of the tutelary gods and goddesses at the interiors are marked with cow dung mixed with clay to signify the spot. Every Oriya houses, if not made of concrete, are wiped with cow dung mixed with clay both interiors and out doors a foot high on the earthen wall attached to the *pinda*. Using of the urine as one of the mixture of the *panchāmrit* is perhaps not known to the Oriya people. But in Alekha Mahima Dharma the urine of the black female calf is believe to be the most sacred item and is used to purify a person or place. The Oriya people never eat beef in the tea garden. But there are instances that a number of tribes among them who sacrifice *pod* (buffalo) eat their meat. In the tea garden such tribes are already sanskritized and given up eating beef. Unlike the cow, the kid or goat gets prominence when it is dedicated to the deities, sometime immediately killed and taken as *porshād*; but when loosen respected and felt taboo to crush it. Such goats

344 op.cit., Kurmi (Ed), 2001, p.121.
are called bhodā-chhāgli, found strolling around the garden lines and one can recognize it through the smell it extracts.  

The other important beast associated with their religion is the reptile. Snake among which cobra, ornament or necklace of Lord Shiva is not only respected but also sometime provided with milk on the way it comes. Generally no snakes are killed by the Oriya people and if killed is out of fear only. The Oriya people originally belong to the Eastern Orissa worship snake in the name of Manashā Devi individually or publicly perhaps influence of their neighbouring State Bengal. The Oriya people of the tea garden in Tinsukia district are not found worshipping of Manashā but found participating in the neighbouring celebrations. The released cover of snake, its poison, head, etc. are believed to be disease curer and fortune provider.

Tiger and lion are believed to be the carrier of goddess Mangala, one of the incarnations of goddess Durga and worshipped equally like others. But these furious animals are not respected but feared and even killed sometimes to get rid of its attack.

Elephant is felt as god Ganesha himself and respected and bowed when faced. The Oriya people feel this animal as symbol of luck and prosperity.

Birds like owl is associated with goddess Laxmi and peacock with Lord Krishna. Thus they are respected and not killed or eaten. These birds make omens of future incidents.

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345 op cit, Tasa, (ed) 2003, p. 12
347 Mice and rates are given food on special occasion in the name of Gonesh.
4:07:1: Popular belief and Superstition:

A number of animals and beasts associated with the beliefs and superstitions among the Oriya people. The *gotra* of the Oriya people is counted with the names of the animals, birds or fishes. Among them *bāgh* (tiger) *gotra* is more prominent in Tinsukia district.

Among the Oriya people influence of cat is rather greater than other animals. Cat, specially a black cat often believed to be the witch, who transformed into a cat and is feared. Crossing the road by such a cat is very bad omen of some dangerous accident. But, the Oriya people keep the placenta of a cat in their reserve grain and believe such act will keep the reserve full always. They keep cats only to get rid of the growing trouble of the rats and mice. The mice and rats are believed to be the carrier of *Lord Ganesha* and try not to harm them. The heart of the wild cat (*ud-bilāi*) is hanged on the *pujā-house* to avoid bad omens into the house.\(^{348}\)

Dogs for the Oriya people in general are not respected and reared in the house as it is believed to be unclean and invites bad omens. It is believed that sight of a urinating dog results with eye disease so immediately a hair is pulled out of the eye, spit on it and thrown as soon as possible to avoid the affect \(^{349}\)

In respect of the fox it is believed that the meat of fox can cure diseases; specially the incurable septic. Blood of fox is also used as medicines. Fox, specially the tailless one gets prominence in the lullabies called *banda-sial*.\(^{350}\)

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348. Sri Mahanandiaon 12.2.203
349. loc.cit., Tasa,

- 160 -
4:07:2: Birds:

Among the birds, the crow, dhundu, vulture and even the owl shows bad omen in the house. So except owl the others are not respected; killed and eaten. If the owl and dhundu calls like cat, it is omen of death in the house. So a piece of iron placed in fire in one breath which can stop the sound of the dhundu, the Oriya people believe.

The red crane is believed to be the tutelary spirit and is not killed or eaten. The duck is also felt such and the āmroli duck is dedicated as the propitiation of a deity. The blood of the sacrificed duck is to be spotted on forehead.

The tea garden Oriya people avoid rearing pigeons as it invites dhundu thus bad omen into the house, they believe.

Bees are felt to be goddess Lakshmi entrance of which in the house brings wealth and prosperity, they believe.

Falling of a fly on the body is an omen of immediate marriage.351

4:07:3: Belief related to Stone:

The Oriya people in the tea garden believe the katcha stone as the symbol of Lord Shiva, bring if found and worship it installing it in a sthan. They believe that the stone can grow like tree.352 Stone or the grinding stone using in marriage symbolizes strong relation between husband and wife in future.


(There is a Shiva temple in Baghjan T.E. near Doom Dooma and a myth about the linga(stone) of this temple is attended by me. The stone was
4:07:4: Belief related to Tree:

All kinds and types of trees associated with many beliefs among the Oriya people in the tea garden. There are a few trees associated with god and goddesses; worshiping of them is ancient custom. References of tree worship in the Indus Valley are historical phenomena. But with progress of time some trees, especially the large ones began to be associated with evil spirits; that they live in these trees and can harm people at any time. A number of such trees are also associated with witchcraft; that witches keep their souls inside the waste brooms and hang it untouched in somewhere in the tree. If a person suicide by hanging on the tree, the tree becomes his home is a general belief among the Oriya people. The bagri tree believed to be definite resistance from the evil spirits. No spirits can trespass a bagri branch. So a piece of the thorny branch is hanged in front of the house. The people returning from burial ground after burial of a dead places a thorny branch on the ground to cross when leaving the place which the evil spirits cannot cross. The leaves of this tree help removing affect in the eye by the evil spirit after making some spells, putting it on the charcoal and displace from home to place on a crossing road at night.

Oriya people believe that Trināth lives in pippal tree, especially on Saturday. According to them Brahma on the leaves, Vishnu on the branches and Maheswara or Shiva on its roots are the permanent abode of the Trinity. Bor tree is believed to be sacred, worshipped by earthen candle and

353 loc cit, Tasa (Ed) -found by the lawn owner Late Gopi Rajput, who was also a Sardar of the tea garden but the length of the stone began to grow. He reported it to the Manager, Naga Saheb, a British) who, after some tests built the temple there. During my childhood I have attended the digging but unable to remember what it was The-
scented smoke specially, on Saturday in the evening is a usual scene in the tea garden line having a bor tree. They worship the pippal in similar way in absence of a bor tree. But bor tree is also believed to be the homes of the evil spirits, thus pay respects when going or passing by. Another respectable tree for the Oriya people is the dumer tree. Dumer tree is fascinated as a productive woman and whenever passes by its side special respect is shown; if there is a dumer; eating brings well treatment in the destination. While crossing a dumer tree at least taking one and to, salute is a good omen. ‘Bel’ tree is recognized as sacred and the abode of Vishnu and Laxmi and pouring water to the Shiva-linga through the leaves brings more satisfaction to these deities. A bel tree in front of the house, if worshipped brings prosperity. The mango tree is one of the most important trees for the Oriya people as special recognition to the leaves is given in all the celebration from birth to death of a person in this society. The branch is as compulsory in the marriage as the bride or grooms itself. Branches, brought respectfully and with festivity and the modo fastened with it without which the ritual is felt incomplete. The belief behind it is that a mango tree never dies. Neem, haḍṭaki etc. are believed of having power to check contagious diseases. Taking drinks or food on the leaves of pāldhā checks from evil eyes. The family gods are given their food on this leaves.

354. ibid.
355. Most of the Oriya women use to say; ‘juar go-ma dumer rani’ when crossing a ‘dumer’ tree.
356. The oblation to the tutelary is offered in the ‘paldha’ leaves in the Oriya family.

-incident took place around 1960. Once, during Shiva Ratri, a dog bite me when I was on the line to worship in this ‘mandir’. After this incident a number of unwanted incidents took place in my life).
4:07:5: Belief on Minor Plants:

Unlike the trees, the minor plants like basil, jāḍā, banana, sugarcane, bosh, coconut etc. get special treatment for the beliefs behind them. Unlike other Hindu people basil is treated as sacred, pouring of water on it in the morning and candled in the evening brings peace in the family life. Jāḍā can keep away the evil spirits specially the witches at night. They hang it on their doors specially, during the Kali-puja day. They hang the leaves in front and around the house during the evening for the whole night. Banana, sugarcane and coconut are believed to be sacred; that the deities are not satisfied if any one of them is absent.

4:07:6: Other Items:

Mustard seeds and turmeric is treated as the most important items in the daily life of the Oriya people. Mustard seeds are used to frighten the evil spirits and planting around the house avoids trespassers of them. The seeds, if put on burning coal can keep away evil spirits. Mustard oil equally works in the same purpose. The lamps on earthen dia candled with the mustard oil can bring sacred light and remove minor disease. Massage by the oil regularly on the body results in keeping away from the contagious diseases. The turmeric plays a very important role in the life of the Oriya people. From birth to marriage and from marriage to death it plays a very important role. The newly born baby and the mother are saved from diseases using the pastes on their body. It works as modern soap. In Oriya marriage turmeric replaces vermillion for the bride. Girls after puberty compulsory to use turmeric during their baths.

357 Nowadays as a symbol of marriage, the married women began to use vermilion
4:08: Beliefs in relation to Agricultural activities:

The Oriya people in the tea garden were originally agrarian and many beliefs still existed among them related to the agricultural activities. The major cultivation was rice in their original states and they were habituated eating rice regularly. Rice plays a major role in their rituals from installing an earthen lamp for worship to receive different spirits on the way to the burial place. The initiation of a baby; satisfying evil spirits in passage of the puberty girl; the marriage pot at the modo and targeting to each other by the bride and bridegroom as the final ritual of the marriage, all involve āruwā rice. The traditional astrologer sees fortune by the help of it. Paste of rice is used as compulsory decoration during worship, marriage or any other ceremony in the house; it is believed to be sacred and possess the power to satisfy the gods. It can also satisfy the spirits as they get spaces to live.

The dried rice called ākhoi is necessary not only in family rituals but also to satisfy all kind of spirits. It is believed to be goddess Laxmi itself and when given to a poor beggar a little portion from it, it returns. After cooking and before eating a small portion from is to be kept aside as a share to the tutelary. The person who eats, pay respect first and on finishing never wipe out the dish. A share from the husband dish for his wife brings affection between the two. The first rice used ceremonially in nuā-khāi giving shares to the family tutelary. Oriya people avoid frying rice as goddess Laxmi is dissatisfied. Rice is one of the important items in all the feasts the Oriya people offers.358

358. Smt Nayak.
Before sowing seeds and reaping the harvests dedications with milk to the deities of the field is believed to be necessary. The first stick is carefully taken and hanged on the front door as a sign of respecting goddess Laxmi.\textsuperscript{359}

The Oriya people observe \textit{nuā-khāi} of some seeds like beans, pulses, and fruits like mango, etc. The first seed or fruit is to be offered to the god.

\textbf{4:09: Belief in relation to Metals:}

Among the Oriya people gold plays very important role in their day to day life. It is not only the sign of richness and ornamental beauty but also symbol of good omen for individual and family. Gold on the body avoids evil eyes so the newly born baby is also presented with a tiny piece of gold on his waist. Gold in marriage is compulsory as it represents vermillion like the turmeric. Initiation ceremony, puberty rites involve application of gold to satisfy unknown spirits around. To build new houses a tiny piece of gold with other materials to be dedicated to the earth god for permission.

Copper is believed to be sacred and used in the dedication to purify the materials to be used. In every ritual a piece of copper coin called \textit{tambā poisā} is necessary. Bronze is a symbol of richness and most of the ornaments of the Oriya people is made of this metal. At least a piece of gold and in its absent a piece of bronze must be on the body, especially for women symbolizes fortune.\textsuperscript{360}

Unlike other important materials brass play very important role in the Oriya society. The houses which do not

\textsuperscript{359} Smt Nayak.
\textsuperscript{360} As gold is costly perhaps copper is replaced in such rituals.
have at least a few of the utensils of brass, the house signified as poor. In marriage the bride is mostly presented with the brass utensils which felt to be a respected gift.

Iron is treated with a number of beliefs. Iron on the body or in hand avoids effects of evil spirits. Iron is used to stop wind by throwing it outside during the storm. But iron ornament on the body is felt lower strata in the society. Sometime the ojhās prescribe iron ornament for a sick person as resistance for farther attack by the evil spirits.  

The household materials of different metals are equally respected and dedicated in their traditional occasions. Tools of different kinds used in different purposes are dedicated in the Viswakarma puja occasion. The tools used for tea garden work or in the field for cultivation are equally respected. No tools of important use are stamped or crossed while walking.

4:10: Belief on Food:

The Oriya peoples chief food is rice and the secondary one are the different kind of pulses, millet, barley, gram, different kind of nuts etc. Generally they take food three times a day; once in the morning, second at noon and at night. The boiled rice prepared from the ration along with some curry of different kinds and the edibles available in the garden market. They can take two meals they have to depend upon what ever the management supply to them as work and one in the evening after their work. The morning food they take atta as roti and during the evening with the rice both supplied by the management. In between the work they take little food what ever they bring with them from the morning share.

361. Smt Hemo Nayak on 8.7.2007
362. They respect these materials as mean for occupation
What ever they take as food they strictly follow the rituals related to their food habit. Majority of the Oriya people are traditionally Hindu and they do not take the prohibited foods. The main food of rice they believe as goddess Laxmi and keep all respect when taking it. The woman in the house is responsible for cooking of the food and to distributing it for the family members. Generally others are not allowed to touch or to see the cooking pot if the woman is at home. She gives the minors first then to her husband and at last she herself takes in the same dish in which her husband has taken. The dish to her husband must be of brass. That is why her parents provide at least a pair of brass thal and bati when she comes to her husband's house. Misuse, misplace or wasting of rice is felt negligence of the deity who punishes with poverty, they believe. They generally do not take fish or meat on Thursday as they feel it as laxmi day.\textsuperscript{363}

The new seed of rice they take only after offering the same to their tutelary gods. A few of the pulses they use only after dedication to their family gods. All the foods before taking never forget to offer the small share to their forefathers. Specially, the drink they take they offer a few drops on the ground before talking. The nuā-khāi (eating of the new seed) preserves special importance to their food habit.\textsuperscript{364}

In relation to special food prepared in the house like meat or fish they never forget to offer a share to their neighbours. While giving the share a burning charcoal or red chili is placed on the curry to avoid evil eyes of the evil spirits.

\textsuperscript{363} Smt Nayak
\textsuperscript{364} Sri Rajaram Tanti on 13.9.2006.
4:11: Other Beliefs:

Crossing or walking the fire or burning charcoal during chutriā removes sins and diseases. Throwing burning coal, mustard seeds, dried rice sweeping seven times from top of the body of an affected person can cure the affects of the evil spirits. Blowing the smoke towards an affected person can cure the affects.

Earthquake is believed to be due to the changing of the shoulder by dhartimātā so they remember the supreme God calling hori-bol loudly by the males while the females make hul-huli.

Excess rainfall is stopped by burying the plough upside down by a nude orphan in one breath, they seriously believe.

The person born leg side first is capable of removing back pain or pain in the waist of a person. But these kinds of people are mostly affected by lightening, they believe.

A woman standing on the door steps during the storm stops the storm as they believe that paban-devtā do not like to face a woman, so returns back. During the storm maternal are not allowed to live together to avoid lightening on them.365

4:11: 1: Phul-bāchchā-bāchchī:

The term phul-bāchchā-bāchchī refers to formal turning to friendship. This is a special occasion for the Oriya people which rarely seen among other people. Two young boys or girls while attached to each other in such a way, that they never

365 op. cit., Tasa (Ed), 2003., p.16.
separate from each other. When their parents notice the seriousness they arrange to recognize their friendship formally and perform a minor ritual in this occasion. The friends are given two pots of water to interchange it among themselves, a pair of dress of same quality is offered to both, given food in the single dish to eat together and the people gathered announce their phul to each other and they from that occasion they call each other as phul and take vow to live and share each others joy and sorrow. The gathering sometime respected with minor reception.\textsuperscript{366}

4: 11: 2: Belief on Vow:

The Oriya people believe in vow and in some cases individual person takes vow to follow certain code of conduct to assure the persons who ceased to believe him. A pot full of water dip with the basil leafs sprinkle on himself and his house by saying 'I will not do this' or 'do this for ever' etc. are the versions of the vow in front of the people related. Such vows are taken specially, on breaking of certain social or family codes. The vows however related to certain replacement if the vow is broken. Generally a person put his hand on the head of his son or his most favorite relative and in the name of the favorite; that if he fails to follow his vow the person or he himself will decease or die etc. are the versions of the vows.\textsuperscript{367} Generally a drunker very often taking vow, not to drink again is a common scene among the Oriya people.

4:11: 3: Belief for new tooth:

Among the Oriya people there is a belief that when a child

\textsuperscript{366} loc. cit. Das&Mahapatra.
\textsuperscript{367} 'mor chokh phut-to' (my eyes will undo) if I will miss the vow; is one kind of vow.
losses his first tooth the tooth should be thrown to the roof of
the house which will result with growing of a new strong tooth.
So they ask their children to throw the tooth on the roof to
satisfy them.

4: 12: Belief and Taboos:

The general mass of the Oriya population believe in a
number of taboos. Sleeping during the dusk is inauspicious;
head towards the north or west while sleeping is not good as
only a dead man's head is placed towards the north or west
while burring; eating food facing the west direction, two
brothers shaving on the same day, etc. are the general taboos
followed by them. Similarly, boiled paddy or rice must not be
measured; ladle must not be kept in the dishes after taking out
the share of food; containers of food should not be kept open;
women should not comb her hair on the day of shradho as it
falls on the ancestors; on coming back from the burial ground
one should not say 'let us go'; as the spirit follows; a young
brother's wife should not see or touch the elder brother. Cutting
hair, nails on the day of birth, Tuesday, Saturday and Thursday
is inauspicious. Sowing of seeds should not be done on
Tuesday, Saturday and during the dark fortnight of the month;
marriges is avoided in the month of Push and Bhado and a
number of such taboos are followed by the Oriya people in their
day to day life.

Ill luck and misery comes if one has the habit of
scattering food carelessly while eating; if a girl decorates her
hair with kaniār flower she is destined to go as a second wife to
a man; a girl touches broom sticks or the grinding stone etc. is
to be insulted in that amount. A maternal uncle should not beat
his nephew as the action makes the uncle's hand tremble. A
pregnant woman should not put a brinjal in the fire hearth as it
produces ulcer on the hand of the child. Burning of the coconut shell by a pregnant woman leads her child to become bald-headed. She has to take abundant leaves in her curry or to take meat so as to grow hair of the child.\textsuperscript{368}

Some parts of the human body like eye, shoulder in the right side in case of male and left in case of female tremble is a good omen. But the opposite, signifies immediate trouble, death or loss of property. An owl on the roof or the hoot of a tree befalls with death in the house; but a lizard falling on the right side of a man and left of a woman is certain to be blessed with a son and the opposite befalls with death of some family member or loss of property. Belief concerning plants that a coconut only falls on a sinner and marrying to a tree and only after a girl can marry a boy to avoid widowing if her puberty took place on a \textit{khāt} and during the evening hours.\textsuperscript{369}

If cursed by a thorn, it is picked up and touched with the eye lashes to test whether it is an evil spirit or general thief. If the eye hair does not fall when puffed it is evil spirit and the thorn is put on the fire to punish the spirit. If one has trouble in drinking water, it is believed that unknowingly spitted on the cow dung so a few of flower dedication to the cow dung cures the trouble. Some people spit three times on a warm earthen lamp pot to remove such trouble.\textsuperscript{370}

According to Elwin, in his work; ‘\textit{Tribal Myths of Orissa}', explains the myth of the \textit{Kuttiā-Kond} about the origin of dream.

\textsuperscript{368} This belief is practiced by the other people also; so, cannot be attached to the Oriya people only.

\textsuperscript{369} op.cit. Das\&Mahapatra, 1993. pp. 92-93

\textsuperscript{370} loc.cit. Tasa.
According to this myth, Nirantali, the supreme goddess, arranged different places for the increasing number of people. To remind their relatives living far away, four goddesses made them dream, but failed. At last, advised by Nirantali, they killed a lizard, made it a man, and ultimately a ghost to take certain form in relation to the daily life of man and visit them. So the lizard takes different forms and visits men called dream.

4:13: Belief on Forecasting:

The Oriya people in the tea garden practice counting of the lunar month and their astrological activities are not by the positions of the planets and stars but with the few materials found at hand. Drawing a sketch of a rectangle or square on the ground, placing sticks on its points using the nutshell; rice, mustard seeds, etc., placing dudh grass on turmeric mixed water, etc., are the methods used to forecast or describe on matters of importance.

A child's name is selected by putting a few rice in the water in the name of his ancestors and the name is given with which the rice for him meets directly. When one is sick, starts journey to purchase or find lost cattle, to decide on marriage, or to start a new house, etc., are associated with the astrological beliefs. Besides, the shaman among the Oriya people, if a pet of some god or goddess is also capable to forecasts and even advises remedies.371

Crossing of a cat, fox, snake, mongoose, etc., on one's way is omen of good or bad. From left to right considered as auspicious and the opposite is inauspicious.

371. Ioc cit., Tasa (Ed).
Certain activities done in one breath is considered to be auspicious. Fastening knots between the bride and groom; fastening of a *tabiz*; pulling out an herb etc. are done in one breath. Such activity in one breath is believed to be symbol of purity and success.\(^{372}\)

**4:14: Belief in Life cycle:**

There are a number of beliefs followed by the Oriya people in relation to birth, puberty, marriage, death etc. which they still kept following. The beliefs however cannot be called purely of Oriya origin but a number of such beliefs are the result of adoption from other castes in the environment of their population. The tribes among them generally possess limited beliefs but the *konds* among them has a number of beliefs. It may be probably the result of the interaction with the various castes living around them. Another feature of such beliefs is, some castes or tribes observe it very seriously when others are not. Here, I am trying to explain a few of such beliefs, though the Oriya people follow seriously but cannot claim to be purely of Oriya origin.

Abusing a person in quarrel with odd language is a common scene in a tea garden line. Males quarrel meets with fighting at it extreme point; but women continues shouting with odd languages against the opposite which ends only with their calming down by other ways. The abuses are generally; ‘kālimāi khāo’, ‘mukhe kiḍā poḍo’, ‘pilā-tukilor mug khāo’ etc. Nature of a woman could be understand in her nature of abusing others.\(^{373}\)

\(^{372}\) ibid.
\(^{373}\) ibid
Birth of a child among the Oriya people associated with certain beliefs since the woman becomes pregnant. A pregnant woman should avoid complaining. Her demand for special food is to be fulfilled. She should not kill a fowl, slice meat or fish or a tree; avoid needle work etc. Generally the first child is to be born in her father's house is a custom of many castes; but among the Oriya people it is not compulsory.

After the birth the initiation ceremony is followed on the ninth day as both the mother and the child are not clean. The ceremony of the baby takes place on the ninth day after detachment of the naval string. But the mother's initiation takes place on twenty-first day. During these twenty one days she has to keep away touching or using the household materials; keep herself limited to a certain corner. Whatever essential things she need are supplied by the others in the family. The person who comes in touch with the woman becomes chhutuk, has to sprinkle with basil leaves mixed water or to take bath before come into contact with others or entry of the house. During these twenty one days the woman with the child is accompanied with knife, mustard seeds, fire in husk or fire in a broken karhai and regular massage of the child by garlic-mixed mustard oil so as to keep the evil spirits far away from them.\footnote{ibid. 374}

There are some beliefs of behaviour among the relatives. A woman should not sit on high seat in front of the elders in the family. The son of the eldest brother in the family is also felt among respectable for the younger brother's wife among the Oriya people. The names of the elders, especially of husband must not bring in the mouth.

\footnote{ibid. 374}
4:14: 2: Puberty:

During the puberty, an Oriya girl is kept as reserve as a woman during her motherhood. She is never left alone and knife, fire, mustard seeds are kept near her. During the puberty she is felt to be *chhutuk* and is kept aloof from the family rituals. Woman or girl during her menstruation are similarly felt to be unclean and kept aloof from the household materials. Entry in the kitchen or to cook is strictly prohibited during this period among the Oriya people.\(^\text{375}\)

4:14:3: Beliefs of Marriage:

During the marriage both the bride and the groom are attended with their *login* from the first ritual bath. The *login* or attendants should be unmarried and of young age who are treated like the couple themselves so that an evil eye or spirit confuse to identify the marrying couple.\(^\text{376}\)

The Oriya people who are originated from the western parts of the State Orissa do not use vermillion in their marriages. An interesting story behind this belief is as follows: “Once a girl was taken to her groom's house for marriage was stopped by a tiger. The tiger wanted to kill the girl. Her parents and relatives requested that it was her marriage day and after the marriage when she will return given to him. On coming back after the marriage, vermillion was not applied on her forehead, so the tiger could not recognize the girl from among the people and then onwards, no Oriya women use vermillion on their forehead.\(^\text{377}\)

\(^{375}\) Smt Hemo Nayak on 8.7.2007.
\(^{376}\) Smt Nayak.
\(^{377}\) The story was told by Smt Panpotro Tanti to the investigator.
It is the custom that the rituals related to birth, marriage and death are to be performed by maternal relatives. Among the Oriya family the brothers and paternal relatives are counted as of a single family and in birth, marriage or death occurred in any one of the families all are equally associated. So, the chhutukt or unclean of a family makes all the brothers unclean and the initiation needs other's participation. There are of course, two gotras; Mahanandia and Sona; specially signified to perform the death rituals in the Kutumb.\textsuperscript{378}

\textbf{4:14:4: Belief and Death:}

During the death of a person, few drops of water or milk in the name of the dying person are given. After death the dead is bathed, massage with mustard oil mixed with turmeric, given some rice on the mouth and after covering the whole body with new marking cloth, buried. The relatives, visiting the dead also cover with a piece of white marking cloth on the dead as showing respect. While carrying to the burial ground his khat is used upside down on which the dead is laid and after burial it is left on the buried same way. The near relative is to first pour earth or to give fire to the dead and at once leave the spot without looking back or to speak. The family avoids cooking for three days and only after the tindiniā on the third day after they are given titā-bhāt by the kutumb, can cook their food but complete vegetarian, without oil and spices. On the tenth day they are offered with āishā (āish) and only after that they began to use oil, spices and non vegetarian food. The nearest relative, who is on brat for ten days, lives an abstinence life.\textsuperscript{379}

\textsuperscript{378} Ibid
\textsuperscript{379} Sri Udey Nayak on 8.7.2007
4:15: Taboos:

A number of taboos replacing symbolic identification are believed to be appropriate to avoid unwanted incidents. During the night elephants are called *gonesh*; snakes are called *roshi* (thread or rope); tiger as *bon-rājā*; vermilion as *phul* (flower); turmeric as *rong* or colour; lime as *bogā* (white); chili as *jhāl* etc.

After dark beetle leaves, chili, needle, salt etc. are not given to take home by others and in extreme necessity it is attached with some other materials. Delicious foods like meat, special curry, cake etc. are attached with a piece of chili or burning charcoal to avoid touch of the evil spirit on the way. A tiny piece of such items is spitted and thrown outside before entry into the house.

All the eight type of marriages prescribed as Vedic rituals are followed by the Oriya people. The *rakchasa*, *pisacha*, *danava* marriages are outcaste even after the *baishi* is observed by the accused. The *gandharva*, *pranjapati* and *brahma* marriages are considered as auspicious. *Asura* marriage is socialized through *baishi*. Marriage by elopement is considered to be inauspicious and on many occasion such dragged girls are forced to become wife of a person. Sometime, an intended girl enters an unintended boy’s house and the boy has to accept her. Sometimes the parents sell a girl to be wife of a buyer. But the uninitiated pair cannot perform the rituals of childrens formal marriages. In this respect, they are to be initiated in the presence of a few relatives or *kutumb* and they are allowed to perform. Against such marriages *baishi* is demanded.\(^{380}\)

\(^{380}\) *op cit.*, Tasa (Ed) 2003, p.17.
4:16: Feasts and Belief:

In the auspicious occasion of family observations the invited people are received with some delicious food, is called khāndā. Khāndā actually means the hearth with fire which has to be prepared by the kutumb in the host’s house. Offering of khāndā to the kutumb in birth, marriage and death is compulsory. The khāndā or the kutumb’s hearth is associated with some rituals. Reception of raw edibles from the host, digging and burning of the hearth associated with some rituals. Digging of the hearth associated with permission of the earth deity whom beetle nut and scented smoke are offered with an earthen lamp; and thus during the closing. In all the rituals a few drops of native wine is necessary, which, nowadays gradually keeping aside. The first food of the birth ceremony is to be offered to the family members. The Oriya in the death ceremony of the purhuwā-po (first son of the family) offers a ‘patha’ (kid), which is nowadays replacing by fishes.

 Among most of the Oriya origin; pindo-dān of the Vedic ritual replaces chhāhir-ānā’ (inviting of the spirit) of the dead to live in the family and so a sthan is made for him at the interior.381

4:17: Tattooing and belief:

The famous Oriya belief about tattooing is as follows: All the ornaments in the body will be taken away on death but tattoo which is permanent decoration on the body will be with them in the next world. Tattoo also serves as the identification of the person for the deceased members in the family in the next world. These two beliefs on tattoo signify why the Oriya

381. Sri Nayak on 8.7.2007
woman decorate herself with tattoo. Interestingly, decoration of varieties of artifacts like feathers, twigs, flowers, birds etc. are believed as symbol of beauty which are decorated on arms, feet, hands etc. But necklace like symbol decorated on the chest symbolize odd than beauty. The tribal kondh women decorate their cheeks, scalp, nose, chin etc. giving them a complete ugly look signifies that tattooing is not for decoration for beauty of the body but there are certain beliefs behind this. The kondhs on the hills use to tattoo their young girls to save them from the evil eyes of the foreigners.  

For tattooing, an iron instrument with two or three teeth is used. The soot around the regular hearth mixed with mustard oil is rubbed on the affected part and the tattoo is complete. To avoid affect of nozor (evil eye) inauspicious persons are not allowed to attend tattooing.

For the Oriya male tattooing is not a custom but sometime they tattoo their name on the fore arms or art hanumān or nāg on it.

**4:18: Belief in Creation:**

Belief related to the origin of universe among the Oriya people is based on puranic myths. The myths about the sun and moon among the general population as well as the tribes are same all over India. Beliefs about eclipses are same, the motif of which is the moon tricking the sun into eating his children. The kondhria Oriya people belief about the daughter of the moon sent to ask for some salt from her uncle sun but she was eaten by rāhu on her way and the eclipse occures. After some

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moment her parents go in search of her, cut the rāhu into two pieces and the girl comes out. The former is about the stars and the later is about the moon. In relation to solar eclipse the puranic myth about the rāhu and ketu is believed.\textsuperscript{384}

The story about creation among the tribes involves boar or other animals, long pennies etc. associated with tribal beliefs and are of little difference. Among the general Hindu population it is puranic and common to all. Among the tribes the konds are most primitive group in Orissa. The story of creation believed by all the clans among them is also of not much difference. One of such story of the hill bondo of Koraput district is as follows: "Two bondo men and their wives and their adoption of a little orphan. One day one of the wives discovered that the orphan boy had a very long penis and she desired to have sex with the boy. They did and the woman died. When the men knew it they killed the boy and out of his hands and feet; plants came out, from his bones the rocks, from his blood the earth and from his head a coconut tree.\textsuperscript{385}

The stories of the tribes are less affected by the Hindu myths. So two parallel beliefs, one is of the tribes and the other if of the Hindu general population exist among the indigenous population.

One of the myths of creation of the Hindu sobors, which discerned from the indigenous version with the sun and the moon, is antedating the creation of the earth. According to this Hindu version; out of a gourd floating in water came out kuraitusum kittung. He created some animals and the two early

\textsuperscript{384} The myth was told by Smt Panpotro Tanti to the investigator.
\textsuperscript{385} op.cit., Elwin 1954 p. 4.
men Ramana and Bimana. But most of the Hinduized people associate creation of the earth directly with the Supreme God 386

The Oriya people in the Tinsukia district are culturally related to the western parts of Orissa. Among them about all are Hinduized primitive people and their belief on creation of earth is associated with mahāprabhu or the Supreme God. They worship the sun god as dharam-deptā in their every oblation made for their tutelary. He is associated with bāsukimātā or dhortimātā and invoke in the village. But the general Oriya Hindus believe in the puranic myth of creation related to Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwar. According to the belief Brahma is the creator. Vishnu is the savior and Maheshwar is the destroyer. The Trinity widely believed among the Oriya people including the tribes. Oblation to this trinity three, five or seven times in the family believed to be bestowed with prosperous life. They also believe that the earth is being held by bāsukimātā and when changes the position earthquake occurs.

Deluge: - The Oriya Hindus also believed in the deluge that has the cyclical phenomenon. They believe that mahāprabhu sends deluges or mohā-proloi for periodical destruction of the aggravating accumulated serious lapses, evil and sins committed by the people against religious morals and social codes. According to a tribal myth the recreation of the earth after deluge is as follows: -there was a squirrel and a barking deer who already knew of the impending deluge. The deer was told by her fetus in her womb that a bondo who was waiting for her, will kill her when she will be drinking water in a stream;

386. ibid, p. 1
which would be good, for in any case during next two days she was going to be drowned. The bono heard the voice and did not kill the deer. Once, mahāprabhu after putting his favorites, pair wise in side a guard and after the deluge mahāprabhu wanted to know if any were left. He cut an earthworm and found some earth in it. He settled the gourd on it. Mahāprabhu inflicted the brother and sister with smallpox. They did not recognize each other and got married out of whom the mankind produced. Among the tribe called Didāyi such story of a boy and a girl responsible for the creation and learning of the culture by mankind. These creation myths of the tribes however do not match with the puranic myth of the cyclic deluge. The Bondo’s belief in rainfall is also attributed to Bhimai. When he rises from sleep and washes, it rains. When he put on clothes it is cold and when he goes naked it is hot.387

In relation to drought and famine there is a myth related to rainfall existed among the Hinduized Bhinyshwars of the western Orissa that there was a Karwait Raja who slept for twenty four years as big as his one ear he used as bed and another as roof. Once, when god Indra’s belly was broken and the water came out there was heavy rain inside his ears and asked men to awaken when rain needed. In the drought affected Sambalpur district still it is believed that nobody visited the Karwait Raja to awake him388

River: - On creation of river the general Oriya people believe in the Hindu myth. But there are some stories on the creation of the river among them. The kondh of Kolahandi district recounts a myth on it. Sukalabenj and Udalabenj had two children born to them. They had no water to drink or bath. They went with

387 ibid., pp. 135-136.
388 ibid., p. 141
their dog in search of water. When they grew weary sat down when the dog urinated and dug up the wet earth and found little water. The dog slept beside the water and when Sukabenj and Udalabenj were in search of the dog found it near the water and became very happy. As they did not have vessels to carry the water to home, they drew a line with the bow to carry the water through the canal. After erecting strong walls both the sides of the flow, the river is created.\textsuperscript{389}

4:19: Tobacco and Intoxication:

The Oriya people, both tribal and general; offer traditional wine to their tutelary and village god. Ganja and its associated bhang offered to Moheshwara, the one of the trinity Brahma, Vishnu and Moheshwara is compulsory in their dedication. Wine means for the spirits, while it is not necessary for the Trinity but the Supreme god, mahāprabhu or dharam-depta is offered with wine during his worship. This depta is however formless like the spirits. Bhāng is a plant associated with cultivation. The other important intoxication is the tobacco which is produced in plenty in Orissa. They prepare kāhli, by rolling the powdered tobacco in a kendu-pātā and smoke. This is like a cigar and only a habituated person can take it. The belief behind the creation of the tobacco is much different as the main story is common to all. The story is as follows: once there was a big snake living with his beautiful wife Diyamuti, who could not satisfy due to his sleeping for six months and one day awake. The mahāprabhu instigated Dayamuti to kill the snake so that he could marry her. Dayamuti asked the snake where he kept his jivon; both told each other where their souls are kept. As soon as the snake knew the soul in the pot, spoon and fan he threw them out and the woman died. He later repented, brought

\textsuperscript{389} op.cit., Das & Mahapatra 1993, p. 66.
back the objects and his wife revived. After that the snake told her that his soul is in the parrot on the crocodile in the ocean. Diyamuti told _mahāprabhu_ and the later pick up a pig threw it in the water and when the crocodile become busy eating the pig, took the parrot and killed it. The snake died immediately. _Mahāprabhu_ though took up Dayamuti could not satisfy her even after appointing an elephant for her satisfaction. Then _mahāprabhu_ killed and buried her. From her head grew a beautiful tree, the tobacco which the men eat and become intoxicated. According to the _konds_ their god Nirantali taught them to smoke the _kāhli_ made out of tobacco leaves.\(^{390}\)

_Hādziā and Māhul-sārāp_: _hādziā_ and _māhul-sārāp_ are two alcohol prepared at home and used as drinks for thirst and intoxication. _Hādziā_ the house-beer is prepared out of rice and some plants of intoxication instructed by _mahāprabhu_, first to the Bondo Porja how the plant is created, which is also used with rice made intoxicative drink. _Hadia_ or the house-beer is prepared and drunk mostly by the tribal Oriya people. The general Oriya people habituated with _māhul-sārāp_ (palm-wine). In relation to the creation of the _māhul-sārāp_ there lies a myth of the Juangs of Keonjhar district. The story as follows: Once an old man and an old woman called Malayan Burha and Burhi lived and they had a son named Cheriatoka. Once the seven sisters (pori) danced with Cheriatoka for seven days without food. But Cheriatoka secretly took some food in between, and after dance when washed, was caught. The seven sisters refused to touch him in fear of being defiled. When Cheriatoka tried to catch them they ran. On the way their ornaments fell, out of which the date palm was created; where the armlets fell the sago palm grew; out of the cowries from the hair the mahua-palm and finally out of the hair the taddy-palm was

\(^{390}\) ibid., p. 73.
The Juangs first offer the drink to women in the name of seven sisters only then the trees will yield good drinks.

In relation to the rice-beer the myth among the Bhuyans says that the Boram Burha, the cultural hero of the tribal people once went to the forest with some rice in his pot to make a plough. He found two types of *pitāru* roots which accidentally fell on the pot. He boiled the rice unknown about the roots inside. For few days the boiled rice was forgotten to eat. As he was not eating anything, on his return his wife thought, some girl must have been feeding him. Out of anger she magically made the roots bitter. The next time the Boram Burha found the roots it tasted bitter. But when he drank the water poured on the dry roots in the pot and felt drunk. He made a tambourine and went home dancing and running to his wife. The others drank on suspicion and understood the secret of the merriment. Since then the Bhuyans have been drinking rice-beer.

4:20: Belief about Day, Week, Month and Year:

It is clear that the days, weeks, months and years are reckoned according to external signs of the movements and changes of the Sun, the Moon and Seasons. But to reckon a week there is no natural external sign. The seven days in a week is man made without natural phenomena to signify it as the sun makes a day, moon regulates the month and the cycle of six principal seasons complete the year. The Bible god created the world in six days and rested on the seventh. So, people began to use the seventh day as rest day. This may be true for the Bible people, but scientifically it was not proved.

391. ibid., p.76.
392. ibid., p.77
Among the Oriya people the week is also reckoned to be of seven days in which each day having its mythological origin and associated to some god, goddess or planets. According to the Vedic tradition Sunday, directly associated to Sun, the nearest star of the earth and mythically associated with sun god with some observations. Monday as in India Som, associated with god Indra, the ruler of the devta, having some supernatural powers; the Tuesday as mongol associated with devi Mongla an incarnation of Durga and is kept as the day of Shakti oblation including the spirits; the Wednesday or Budh associated with the planetary position and god Budh who has some influence on the human existence. The most important day, among the Hindu Oriya is the Thursday or Gurubār associated with the goddess of fortune, felt sacred and most of the dedications made in this day. The day is also observed among the Oriya people as vegetarian, non killing or eating of an animal or fowl; serious cleanliness observed and no materials from the house let out during the nights. Gurubār also observed for the guru Brihaspati the guru of the gods. Likewise, Friday or Sukurbār is observed as the bar associated with guru Sukrachārya the guru of the Ashuras. Saturday, Saturn or Sani is one of the planets in the solar system, believed as one of the god of jyotiska-mandal and is responsible for various unpleasant incidents. Oriya days are called bar and associated with planets. It starts with rise of the sun and ends with the setting of it. Rest of the time till the rise of the sun is called night. A day according to the Oriya people is of twelve hours and not of twenty-four hours. The morning is called sakal or bhor; evening is called sonjh; early as bodei-bel bright night with the moon jon-udiā and without moon amash. The full moon is called as puni, thus, vaisākh-puni; kartik-puni etc.; jon-māmu as maternal uncle of the children. 393

The month according to the Oriya belief consists of two pakshiya; the jon-udiya (sukla-pakshya) and āmāsh the (krishna-pakshya) and starts from the first moon and ends with the darkest night called āmāsh. Thus the lunar circle of twenty eight days is the month. So the yearly calendar among the Oriya people is counted by lunar circle and not with the solar circle. The months are Vaisākh, Jeth, Āsāḍā, Shrāvon, Bhodo, Dāsrā, Diāl, Ponḍ, Phus, Māṅg, Phugun and Choit. Thus after the return of the month Vaisākh, the year is completes.394

The recurring of the week is readily remembered as the day is kept as holiday after six day continuous work so easily remembered in the tea gardens. Due to the holiday, weekly bazaars are located in the tea garden or neighboring locality. Oriya people are also distinctively designate five days of the week, two days earlier and two days later of the present day, i.e;

Today is āāj.
Yesterday is por- din, chār-māsiā.
Day before yesterday is por-din.
Day before yesterday is tipor- din.
Tomorrow is kālke.
Day after tomorrow is porsu.395

4:21: Beliefs on Season:

There are six seasons, names and nature of which are same with the solar calculation. Sit, Basanta, Sarat, Hemanta, Barxa and Grishma each consists two months of the year.

Basanta= Magh+Phagun (January-February-March)
Grishma=Vaisakh+Jeth (March-April-May)

394. op.cit, Das & Mahapatra, 1993, p.97. also Informant: Smt Tanti.
395 Smt Tanti.
Barsha=Jeth+Āsāḍ (May-June-July)
Sarat=Srābon-Bhoḍo (July-August-September)
Hemanta=Dāsrā-Diāl (September-October-November)
Sit=Pōḍ-Phush (November-December-January). 396

There are some proverbs associated with the nature of the seasons; thus:  "Māṅg māsor jāḍi, āatra nāi debo chhāḍi."

----don't leave the hearth during the month mang (January-February)

"Phush khus khus"—

----means disturbing cold (December-January)

"ghidi-ghāḍo chidi-chāḍo, meghara garjana"

----cloud rain with thunder and lightening in 'ashada' (June-July). 397

4:22: Belief and Counting:

Counting of the number: Like most of the tribes the Oriya people who are not educated cannot count more than a kuḍi (twenty), further they count ek kuḍi ek, ek kuḍi dui etc. and to explain an old man's age says tin kuḍi (sixty) etc. They count their earning in the tea garden the same way. The kābuli, who gives loans to them on heavy interest; extracts his return on kuḍi, thus takes away several kuḍis beyond the exact sum of money. 398

4:23: Belief on Disables:

Among the other beliefs, the Oriya people believe in the result of the guilt of the previous life; ailments from birth, like

396. Sri Bhokta.
397 Smt Tanti.
Kānā (blindness of one eye), Āndhā (complete blindness), leŋdā (lame) etc. are believed to be result of the sins in the previous life. Thus prosperous and happy life is also regarded as the result of the good deeds in the previous life. They try to live a sacred life as much as possible with belief in God.\(^{399}\)

4:24: Other Beleifs:

Among animals, a domestic animal like cow is regarded as most auspicious. The next is the elephant as the symbol of Lord Ganesh; then tiger as symbol of goddess Durga; Snake as garland of Lord Shiva etc. But do not like dog. They keep cat only to save paddy from rats. Owl among the birds is regarded as Lakshmi. Monkey and fox receive more importance than other animals in their folk tales etc. All the iron materials they regard as Viswakarma and never touch them with legs or with the secretions of the edibles or with the broom. They never broom the houses after night fall and keep the broom in one of the corner of the house.

Habits: The Oriya people, even though living in the plantation, are habituated with sleeping on a khat*(bed of rope) which they build by themselves, believing they will serve as māchā to carry their body after death. Thus the khat is felt to be permanent friend of a person even after death. To receive a guest, they let the person to sit on the khat as showing respect. But no stranger woman is given to sit on a khat. The younger brothers’ wife, paternal aunt etc. are prohibited to sit on the khat of the elder brother or nephew. After sleep, they attach the khat to the wall or bring them outside the house for the whole day.\(^{400}\)

\(^{399}\) Sri Bhokta on 16.1, 2008.
\(^{400}\) Khat is a bed of wooden-frame made with rope
Kitchen ritual: Hearth is kept at the interiors keeping away from the eyesight of visitors; felt most sacred and all the family tutelary worshipped there. Only the woman in the house and the unmarried girls are allowed to cook in this hearth. The male in the house are not allowed to cook or to see the pot with food. But in the tea garden and during the periods, if girl is not at home, males cook food. No married woman of other families or even the married daughter of the house is not allowed to cook or to go near the hearth. The woman in the house takes food only after all the family members has taken and in the same dish in which the husband had left a little portion for her. The cooking pot is never fully emptied and at least some portion of the food must be kept in the pot for untimely approaching stranger. Oriya people never fry rice with oil. They believe that on doing this Laxmi becomes dissatisfied and leaves the house.401

401. Smt Hemo Nayak on 8.7.2007