CHAPTER - I
INTRODUCTION

1.1. General.

The title of the present thesis is 'Phonology and Morphology of Gondi' (with particular reference to the Parsi Gondi of Mandla and the Gondi of Balaghat and Betul). The present work is a descriptive analysis of the phonology and morphology of the Gondi dialects of the three districts.

Gondi is a Central Dravidian language spoken by the Gond tribe, the largest tribal group of Madhya Pradesh. They mainly stay in Mandhya and Satpura mountains on either side of the river Narmada. According to 1961 Census the total population of Gond tribe in Madhya Pradesh was 31,07,225.\(^{(1)}\)

Gondi language spoken in Madhya Pradesh has many dialects, (1) Parsi dialect of Gondi spoken in Mandla, (2) Balaghat dialect of Gondi spoken in Balaghat, (3) Betul dialect of Gondi spoken in Betul, (4) Madhya dialects (Abuj madiya and Dandami madiya) of Gondi spoken in Abujmad and Kondagaon of Bastar district, (5) Muriya dialect of Gondi spoken in Narayampur tahsil of Bastar district. Gondi language has no recognized script of its own. Munsi Mangal Singh Masram prepared a script for Gondi in 1918 and which was published in 1961. It is given in appendix. Gondi is mainly written either in Devnagri or Roman script or phonetic.

\(^{(1)}\) Census of Madhya Pradesh, 1961, Govt. of India.
transcription, Gondi language has a rich stock of folk tales and folk songs at its disposal through the oral transmission from generation to generation. Due to improper care and ignorance these are decaying fast.

Different informants were selected for different dialects under study. Each dialect area was divided into four regional centres selecting one informant from each centre. Informants were selected after careful consideration by virtue of their ability and their cultural background with different age groups. Apart from the selected informants a good number of tribals having Gondi as their mother tongue were contacted in all the three dialects for the verification of the data.

Fourteen hundred lexical items divided into different sections have been elicited in all the three dialects of Gondi. A comparative list of elicited items has been given in the last chapter. Apart from this, fifty verb paradigms of each dialect were also elicited for the analysis. Different texts have been elicited in all the three dialects of Gondi under study.

In all, twelve months with different intervals were actively spent in the dialect areas of the different dialects for the collection and verification of the present data.

1.2 Scope of the work.

The present work is confined to the field of phonology and morphology of Gondi language. The syntax
part has not been covered under this study. Gondi dialects of three districts i.e. Balaghat, Betul and Mandla have been taken for analysis. The main reason to select the dialect varieties of the three districts is due to the heavy concentration of Gonds in the above said districts of Madhya Pradesh. The language spoken in each district has its own characteristics at phonological and morphological levels. In Betul dialect, the third person singular pronoun and verbal form end in /l/, e.g./vo:rl/ 'he' and /hand:to:rl/ 'goes'. Whereas those of the dialects of Balaghat and Mandla end in /r/, e.g./vo:rl/ and /hand:to:rl/. Other kinds of variation put Betul and Balaghat dialects together and Mandla dialect separate. Following examples prove the same.

**Chart No.1.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Betul dialect</th>
<th>Balaghat dialect</th>
<th>Mandla dialect</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>vara:</td>
<td>vara:</td>
<td>vara:</td>
<td>'come'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yeir</td>
<td>yeir</td>
<td>air</td>
<td>'water'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Parsi Gondi of Mandla has got many differences in lexical items, which can be seen in the comparative word-list given in chapter 4. Betul Gondi has been much influenced by the standard Hindi and Marathi at morphological level. Balaghat and Mandla dialects share some features at phonological level and Betul dialect constitutes a separate entity. On the other hand Betul and Balaghat dialects share some features at morphological level and Mandla dialect constitutes a
separate entity. Balaghat Gondi has been taken as base form, as it agrees to Parsi Gondi of Mandla at phonological level and to Betul Gondi at Morphological level. It has been illustrated as follows:

**Chart No.2.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parsi Gondi</th>
<th>Gondi</th>
<th>Gondi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mandla Dialect</td>
<td>Balaghat Dialect</td>
<td>Betul Dialect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Phonologically closer]</td>
<td>[Morphologically &amp; lexically closer]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is observed and assumed that the dialect differences within each district are quite less at phonological and morphological levels. Thus only inter-dialectal differences are observed in them. The dialects within the districts can be said as almost uniform. The Parsi dialect of Mandla has been influenced by the surrounding dialect of Hindi language i.e., Baghelkhandi. The Balaghat dialect is least affected by Hindi.

The dialect within the district is uniform in the sense that the original words of Gondi which are not affected by Hindi and other surrounding languages are fully intelligible to all within the district. Even the words which are influenced by the surrounding languages are also understood throughout the district even though few of them are not practically used in a particular region of the district. This can be taken as clue for the uniformity of the dialect within the district.

In second chapter, the segmental phonemes have been established by the method of contrast and
complementation. All the three dialect varieties have an equal number of segmental phonemes and one supra-segmental phoneme of length. Only one inventory has been prepared for all districts giving the contrasting sets separately.

In third chapter, description and distribution of segmental phonemes are given along with their allophones, in detail.

In fourth chapter, different problems have been tackled about the phonological aspects of Gondi such as aspirated consonants, clusters, gemination and suprasegmental features.

In fifth chapter, of morphophonemics different rules have been prepared for stems and suffixes.

In sixth and seventh chapters morphology of Gondi has been discussed at inflection level. Indeclinables have been listed in their respective places together with their classificatory labels in the comparative word list.

In eighth chapter, comparative word list and texts have been given. In the first part of it lexical items have been listed in all the three dialects along with their parts of speech and in the second part of this chapter the morphological analysis of one text in three versions has been given and another text in three versions has been given along with free translation.

Lastly, in the first two indices, a list of symbols used in the thesis is given. In the second index
the discovered Gondi script has been given. In the third
index short bibliography of Gondi is given.

1.3. Derivation of the 'Pârsâ Gôndî' and 'Gôndî' with
their respective etymol-

1.3.1. The name 'Gôndî' has been described by the
scholars\(^1\) to have been derived from the Telugu word
'Kônda', which means 'mountain'. Telugu is a Dravidian
language spoken in Andhra Pradesh. The sound /k/ might
have changed into its voiced counterpart. In the same
way /d/ must have undergone change into voiced
retroflex stop during the course of time. The language
spoken by the Gondi tribe is called 'Gôndî'. Thus,
Gondi denotes the language of a Hill tribe.

1.3.2. G.A. Grierson in his book 'Linguistic Survey of
India', Vol. IV\(^2\) Munda and Dravidian languages', page No.
472, has stated 'The word 'Gôndî' occurs in the works
of Sanskrit lexicographers like Hemchandra as a term
denoting a low tribe. The gonds have given their name
to the tract of Gondwana, which corresponds the greater
part what is now central provinces ........ The word
'Gôndî' is not now used by the Gonds themselves, the
national name being 'kôjî'. This name has been adopted
by European scholars as the denomination of a subtribe
of the Gonds in Chanda and Bastar and the adjoining
districts of Hyderabad and the Madras presidency. This
distinction between Gonds and Bois cannot be upheld

\(^1\) 'Tribes of Madhya Pradesh', published by the
Tribal Research Institute, Chhindwara (MP).

\(^2\) Grierson, G.A. 'Linguistic Survey of India' Vol. IV.
Munda & Dravidian Languages.'
from a philological point of view. The so-called 'kosi' is not a separate dialect, but an advanced form of Gondi with more points of analogy with Telugu than is the case in other districts. The other Gondi dialects of the same districts are of exactly the same kind, they are partly known simply as 'Gondi' and partly also distinguished by separate names. Thus the hill Gonds of Chanda are called 'Gaṭṭu or Goṭṭe' and others are known under the name of 'Masti, or Mastiya' i.e. perhaps 'Forest people'.

The Gondi dialects under study have great resemblance to the Adilabad dialect of Gondi spoken in Andhra Pradesh. Dr. P. S. Subramanyam has presented an account of the 'Adilabad and Kōya dialects' of Gondi in his book 'Descriptive Grammar of Gondi Language'.

1.3.3. R.V. Russell and Hiralal in their book 'Tribes and castes of central provinces of India, Vol. III' pages 42-43 state that 'The derivation of the word 'Gond' is uncertain. It is the name given to the tribe by the Hindus or Muhammadans, as their own name, for themselves is 'koitura' or kosi'. General Cunningham considered that the name 'goand' probably came from 'Gauḍa': the classical term for part of the united provinces and Bengal .......

The principal passage in which General Cunningham indentifies 'Gauḍa' with the Central Provinces is that in which the king of Gauḍa came to the assistance of the ruler of Malawa against the king of Kanauj, elder brother of the great Harsha Vardhana and slew the latter king.

(1) Subramanyam P.S., 'A Descriptive Grammar of Gondi', Annamal University, Annamalai Nagar, India, 1968.
in A.D. 605. But Mr. V. A. Smith holds that Gauda in this passage refers to Bengal and not to the Central provinces. Mr. Hislop considered that the name 'Gond' was a form of 'Koond' as he spelt the name of 'Koond' tribe. He pointed out that /k/ and /g/ are interchangable. General Cunningham points out that the word 'Goond' in the Central Provinces is frequently or he says usually pronounced 'Gaur', which is practically the same sound as 'God', and with a change of 'g' to 'k' would become 'Kod'. Thus, the two names 'Goond' and 'Kod' by which the Telugu people know the khonds are practically the same as the names 'Goond' and 'God' of the 'Goonds' in the Central Provinces. (I)

1.3.4. Parsi Gond of Mandla-

C. G. Chenevix Trench, I.C.S. in his book 'Grammar of Gondi' Vol. I has stated in the introductory, "It is true that every Gond as far as I am aware, can speak Hindi or Marathi and many of them both. But allow him to transact business of whatever kind, from a tiger beat to a revenue case, in his own tongue, and he will at once show not at a disadvantage as struggling to express himself in what he calls pathetic and pregnant terms, 'Mahajani Parsi' but at his best ....... the language of Money Lenders' i.e. Hindi."

(I) Russell R.V. & Hiralal. 'Tribes & Castes of Central Provinces of India Vol. III.

Some mythological reasons have been discovered for this in Mandla district. They are as follows:

1.3.5.a. Parsi in the sense of refinements:

Gondi of Mandla is called as Parsi, because it is pure as Parsi or Persian, and Sanskrit. Thus Gonds of Mandla claim that the Gondi spoken by them is a pure variety of Gondi and not the mixed variety.

If this is taken into account, it is difficult to prove that the Gondi of Mandla has been influenced by Baghel-Khandi.

1.3.5.b. Trade relation between Rani Durgavati and Moghul Kings:

During the regime of Rani Durgavati i.e. in the fifteenth century, it is believed that there were trade relations between the Moghul Kings and Rani Durgavati of Mandla. Since the Moghuls were already speaking Parsi or Persian language when they came to Mandla, they found some other language spoken in this region, which was quite different from their own. They could not identify what language it was. Thus they named the language spoken at Mandla by the tribals a variety of Parsi which they spoke.

It is difficult to believe that Moghuls did not know any other language than their own, because they ruled some other parts of the country in the north as well as south where other languages were spoken.

1.3.5.c. Sir G.A. Grierson in his book 'Linguistic Survey
of India' Vol. IV (1) Munda and Dravidian Languages' page
No. 30 (foot-note) states "The word 'Parsa' which
literally means 'Persian' is used by the speakers of
Aryan languages all over northern India to indicate a
tongue which they do not understand. For instance, it is
frequently applied to the secret argots of criminal tribes,
much as we in England talk of 'thieves' Latin'.

1.4. Brief account of the origin of the Gond Tribe:

Few legends exist regarding the origin of Gond
Tribe. The legends popular among the Gonds themselves refer
their origin to Mahadeo and Parvati, a God and Goddess of
Hindu religion. The legend narrates that the Parvati once
wished to create certain persons for her recreation and
requested Lord Shiva to create them. Lord Shiva to fulfill
her desire created few persons and named them as 'Gond'.
As the Gonds were not maintaining cleanliness and having
bad smell, Lord Shiva could not tolerate it and took all
Gonds to a cave and kept them inside the cave and sealed
the door. Latter, a pious i.e. Ralinga liberated
them from the cave and guided them to live cleanly and
made them settled and their descendents are the Gonds of
the present. (2)

C. G. Trench in his book 'Grammar of Gondi'
Vol. II narrates in the Ramcharsa story about the birth
of Gonds. The story is that in the midst of the water in

(1) Grierson, G. A. 'Linguistic Survey of India' Vol. IV
Munda & Dravidian Languages - Page 30.

(2) Russell R. V. & Hirabal ' Tribes and Castes of Central
Provinces of India' Vol. III.
the ocean, there were two Singamali birds, male and female. They gave birth for two eggs. Out of that a boy and girl were appeared. The ocean mother brought them out of the sea. The name of the boy and girl were Addi - Rawan - Pariol & Sukma - Devi - Vejar. They both lived as brother and sister. In the bathing place the green herb pokra had sprung up. Sukma Devi was prohibited to eat that herb by her brother. One day, out of anxiety she ate the herb and became pregnant and gave birth to hundred Gods, thirty six threshing floors of Nagat Gods, eighteen of Kos Gods, fourteen Gondi Gods. The population of Gond spread from the Gondi Gods.

In another story the origin of Gond is related to the story of Railinga who lived in the heaven and took birth on earth in Rani Talko, Queen of Raja Bhai. He married a girl and the generation created by them was called 'Gond'.

These are few mythological legends about the origin of Gond tribe.

C.F. Moss in his book 'An Introduction to the Grammar of Gondi Language' has stated in the Introduction: As late as 1853 this area was described in a certain Government publication as 'A Large tract of unexplored country' that formed 'Quite an Oasis on our maps'. The area is today served (though inadequately) by roads, railways and village schools. The original Gond Kingdoms had their centres in Kherla (now Betul), Deogarh (now Chhindwara), Garha (six miles from Jabalpur), Mandla and Chanda. It
appears that the Gonds were either a remnant of the original Dravidian inhabitants of these areas, left behind in their jungle fastnesses when the Aryan infiltrations in the district drove the main body of the aborigines southward into peninsular India, or that they were contingents of these aboriginal tribes men which wandered northwards again and resettled in their old country when the Hindu, i.e. Aryan encroachments had become more stabilised and the invader's forces were weakened by the difficult, malarious climate of the area, and by the in roads of the Mohammedans who in their turn were pressing upon the Aryans.

The Gonds were originally a wandering tribe of very primitive habits is suggested by the fact that their language appears to include no indigenous word for 'a well' one of the most common of all things which make up the life of any people of rural India. .......... It seems that they must have been wandering from river to river, stream to stream with shifting agriculture if any at all, until they were able to settle down in their present location, and learned the art of building wells from their more advanced Aryan neighbours. Gond Kingdoms were found established in the above mentioned places from the 14th century. In his 'Oxford History of India' Vincent A. Smith records how the emperor Akbar resolved to destroy 'The independence of Gondwana .......... then governed by the Deogar Rani Durgavati, an excellent princess with whose administration no fault could be found. She was driven to
death, her country over run and the wealth accumulated in
the course of centuries was plundered without mercy. Her
independence was her only fault.' This was about 1865. In
the Eighteenth century, the Maratha Chiefs began to plunder
the country. ......... The Gonds were driven out of their
fortresses into the surrounding jungles where they lived for
a long time as marauders and robbers, raiding the villages
of the open plains from time to time, destroying, murdering
and plundering. They finally lost all trace of civilization
and became as R.V. Russell states in his book 'Tribes and
Castes of Central Provinces', 'Treacherous Savages ...... who
plundered and murdered stragglers and small parties passing
through the hills, while from their strong holds built on
the most inaccessible spurs of the Satpura Hills, they would
make a dash into the rich plains of the Narbudda Valley or
of Berar and after looting and killing all night, return
straight across country to their jungle fortresses, guided
by the light of a bonfire on some commanding peak' ........
have become reduced to the 'Timid and inoffensive labourers
they now are'.(1)

In Madhya pradesh Gonds occupy two main tracts.
The first is the wide belt of broken hill and forest country
in the centre of the province, which forms the Satpura
pleateau and mainly comprised of Chhindwara, Betul, Seoni,
Mandla, and Balaghat districts with portions of several
others adjoining them. The second is the still wider and
more inaccessible mass of hill ranges extending south of
Chhattisgarh, South-West down of Godawari which includes

(1) Chenevix Trench C.G.1 Grammar of Gondi
Vol.II.
portions of Chhattisgarh districts, the Bastar and the Kanker states and the great part of Chhinda.

The following description is found about Gond Tribe in the book of 'Tribals of M.P.' published by the Tribal Research Institute Chhindwara, M.P. 'The Gond Tribe is the largest tribal group not only in M.P., but also in whole India. In the past a large area of the State was under the rule of some Gond dynasties and hence that territory was known as 'Gondwana'. Gonds mainly stay in Vindhyas and Satpuras on either side of river Narmada. The name 'Gond' has been derived from 'Konda' which in Telugu means 'a mountain'. The dialect spoken by the Gonds is the Gondi language, which belongs to the Central group of the Dravidian language family. The main occupation of the Gonds is cultivation. There are several groups among the Gonds such as Agariyas or Iron smelters, Ojhas or Soothsayers, Nagarchis or Musicians, Pradhans or Ministers, Solahas or Carpenters and Koila bhutiya or Dancers. Among the Gonds, there are two sub divisions (1) RajGond, (2) DhurGond. In Bastar of M.P.Madiya, Mudiya and Dorla are the three major subtribes of the Gond.'

1.5. The Data & the areas covered along with field experiences:

Most of the Gondi speaking tribals speak Hindi as their second language. During the field checking of the data for the present work, Hindi was used largely as the medium. English was also used occasionally with the educated informants. The collection of data is mainly

(1) 'The Tribes of Madhya Pradesh' published by the Tribal Research Institute, Chhindwara, M.P.
based on the exhaustive collection of the vocabulary, verb paradigms and texts. Vocabulary has been divided into different headings as follows:

Items relating to:

1. House,
2. Clothes,
3. Weapons,
4. Instruments of different professions,
5. Professions of different types,
6. Eatables and drinks,
7. Vegetables,
8. Fruits and Flowers,
9. Different types of trees,
10. Natural things,
11. Animals and birds,
12. Insects,
13. Measurements,
14. Days and time,
15. Minerals,
16. Diseases,
17. Body parts,
18. Kinship terms,
19. Numerals,
20. Pronouns,
21. Adjectives,
22. Adverbs,
23. Exclamatory words,
24. Verbs,

In all, fourteen hundred items of basic vocabulary were taken as base. Out of this four hundred
items of the vocabulary are borrowed items from Hindi or Marathi language. Fifty verb paradigms are elicited and over a dozen texts were collected.

It has been experienced during the field checking that Gonds are forgetting their mother-tongue i.e. Gondi, in a very rapid manner. This is mainly because of two reasons.

1. **Influence of the prestige language and other surrounding languages and dialects upon Gondi.**

2. **Unwillingness of tribals (Gonds) for their own tongue and improper care of parents to let their children learn the dialect.**

1. **Influence of the prestige language and other surrounding languages and dialects upon Gondi.**

Gondi spoken in Betul and Chhindwara is much influenced by the prestige language Hindi and surrounding language Marathi. The Parsi Gondi of Mandla is influenced by the surrounding dialect of Hindi i.e. Baghelkhandi and Balaghat dialect is less affected by Hindi. Hindi being an administrative language and the language of Mahajani Parsi i.e. a language of 'money lenders' has created great impression upon the tribals to such an extent that their own language has been affected. This resulted in such a manner that Gonds started speaking Hindi in all external world and the speaking variety of Gondi was limited only to its home surroundings. Gradually home surroundings also got affected and they started speaking Hindi at home and outside, but speaking Gondi whenever it was found necessary. This created loss of
many Gondi words and which were replaced easily by the Hindi words adding certain Gondi elements. Thus, gradually the percentage of loss of vocabulary increased resulting in more borrowings. If the same procedure continued, there was a danger to the very existence of Gondi language.

D.P. Mishra in his paper 'Tribal dialects of Madhya Pradesh' says that 'all the tribal languages and dialects are struggling hard for their survival. The speakers of these are in continuous contact with outsiders like officials, contractors, traders, and visitors who speak mainly Hindi. In their day to day dealings, they have to speak Hindi which naturally influences their original tongue. Lately the tribal welfare workers have made a long way in their intimate relationships with the tribals. They also speak Hindi. Thus the influence of Hindi is certainly considerable. It has given an opportunity to many of the Tribes men to become bilingual and incidentally lose a bit of their native tongue. This has been a cause of the decline and the moral of the tribes as Dr. Verrier Elwin has observed. He says that it is because with the passing of old languages there has gone a whole world of culture, and the tribes men, forced to deal in a speech not their own with officials, Landlords, Merchants and Traders find themselves at a disadvantage which constantly results in their exploitation. He further says there is a moral loss as well. He has pointed out that the Santhals always
speak the truth as long as they speak in their own language. (1)

The following few examples will show this tendency.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hindi</th>
<th>Gondi</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>गार</td>
<td>गाराल</td>
<td>crocodile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>बुरा</td>
<td>बुरो</td>
<td>bad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>जूटा</td>
<td>जूटो</td>
<td>incorrect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>कुला</td>
<td>कुलो</td>
<td>open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>साक्ष सक्ष</td>
<td>true</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. **Unwillingness of tribals (Gonds) for their own tongue and improper care of parents to let their children learn the dialect.**

It has become a sentimental sensation among all the tribes in general and Gond tribe in particular that if they speak their mother tongue outside their home that will degrade them from the social position. This is more true in the case of literates and school-going children. They prefer to speak Hindi and not their tribal dialect even among themselves. Even now there are many tribals who speak tribal language as their mother tongue, but the number is gradually decreasing resulting in the loss of vocabulary.

The data under study have been collected in Betul, Mandla and Balaghat districts. The field checking of the data covers almost all important centres of the

(1) Mishra D.P., 'Tribal dialects of M.P.'
the above said districts. In Betul district following three centres were selected for the purpose.

(1) Betul tahsil, (2) Bhainsdehi and surrounding areas like Savalmendha, Jhallar, Kothalkund, Khumai, and other interior areas, (3) Atner and surrounding areas.

In Balaghat district following centres were selected for the purpose.

(1) Waraseoni tahsil and surrounding areas.
(2) Baihar and surrounding areas.
(3) Paraswada and surrounding areas.
(4) Ukwa and surrounding areas.

In Mandla district following centres were selected for the purpose.

(1) Mandla tahsil and surrounding areas.
(2) Dindori tahsil comprising Samnapur, Mongapur, Chugri, Chabi and Bijadandi and Caurasi area.
(3) Bichiya circle and surrounding areas.
(4) Niwas tahsil and surrounding areas.

During the collection and verification of the data in the three districts under study some difficulties came on the way. Firstly, Tribal villages being in remote places, it was difficult to cover them fully. For this eight to ten miles of the interior areas were covered on foot. In rainy season it was difficult to go to the interior places hence road side villages covered. Rest of the seasons, interior areas covered. Secondly, during the collection of data it was difficult to convince the tribals
about the actual matter required for the purpose. For instance in Mandla when one tribal having Parsi Gondi as his mother tongue asked to tell a word for 'house' in his dialect, The person gave a good account of the construction, inauguration of the house etc., but could not say the actual word for 'house' in his mother tongue even after repeated requests. Thirdly, most of the tribals being poor workers used to go for their livelihood in the early morning and returned late in the evening, it had become necessary to contact them in the nights during which they are almost busy in drinking and dancing.

1.6. Number of tribals speaking Gondi:

The Gond tribe is the largest tribal group not only in M.P. but also in the whole India. In the past, a large area of the Central Provinces was under the rule of some Gond dynasties and hence the territory was known as Gondwana.

According to G.A. Grierson in his 'Linguistic Survey of India' Vol. IV(1) is that 'Gondi is the principal Dravidian language and is spoken by about one million people. According to 1901 census the population of Gonds in the following districts was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Estimated number</th>
<th>As per census of 1901</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Mandla</td>
<td>89,187</td>
<td>78,681</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Betul</td>
<td>94,000</td>
<td>81,619</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Chhindwara</td>
<td>1,23,100</td>
<td>1,04,168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Balaghat</td>
<td>76,300</td>
<td>34,168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Bastar</td>
<td>60,680</td>
<td>89,763</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

But according to 1961 Census the total population of the Gond tribe in M.P., was 31,07,225. It is also recognised that 34% of the total population of the Madhya Pradesh is of tribals.

Following is the districtwise population of the Gonds speaking Gondi language of Betul, Balaghat and Mandla districts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balaghat</td>
<td>27,496</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betul</td>
<td>1,21,150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandla</td>
<td>74,751</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following table illustrates the rural and urban population of the Gond tribe with the distinction of male and female according to the 1961 Census. These figures have been extracted from the statistics relating to 'Backward Classes of Madhya Pradesh,' part II (Scheduled tribes), issued by the Directorate of Tribal Welfare, Madhya Pradesh, 1968. 

(1) Statistics relating to 'Backward Classes of Madhya Pradesh' (Scheduled Tribes) Issued by the Directorate of Tribal Welfare, Madhya Pradesh, 1968.
Name of the Tribes.

1. Gond
2. Gond or daroi.
3. Gond including pathari.
4. Gond including other subtribes.

Other subtribes include Arakh, Agariya, Asur, Badi, Mariya, Bhatola, Bhimma, Bhuta, Koila Bhuta, Bhar, Baison-horn, Mariya, Chota-Kariya, Dandami-Hariya, Dhurwa, Dhoba, Dhuliya, Dorla, Gaiki, Gaita, Hill Mariya, Khatola, Koltor, Koiya, Nagarchi, OJha, Raj Thatiya.

Persons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>1961 Census</th>
<th>1971 Census</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>18639</td>
<td>8746</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>9376</td>
<td>8624</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Kolte, Megathat, Ojha, Raimar as per 1961 Census.
1.2. **Previous work done on the language by other scholars:**

Only a few scholars have done work on Gondi language. Most of them have done their study in general and not in particular in a sense that they were interested only in historical account of the Dravidian languages including Gondi. Some scholars were interested in re-constructing the phonemes of the proto-Dravidian phonology by the comparison of the cognates of the Dravidian languages including Gondi.

1. **R.Caldwell:** 'A Comparative grammar of the Dravidian or South Dravidian family of languages'.

2. **J. Bloch:** The Grammatical structure of Dravidian languages'.

3. **G.A. Grierson:** 'Linguistic Survey of India' Vol.IV, The Munda and Dravidian Languages'.

4. **J. Durand & Emeneau:** 'Dravidian Etymological Dictionary'.

5. **W.V. Griggson:** 'The Aboriginal Problem in the C.P. & Berar, 1944'.

6. **Bh. Krishnamurthi:** 'Telugu Verbal Basis'.

7. **R.V. Russell & Hilrajal:** 'Tribes & Castes of Central Provinces of India' Vol.III.
Following scholars have done their work on Gondi in particular either in general or in particular dialect of Gondi.

1. C.G.Chanavix Tranch, L.C.S. 'Grammar of Gōndi (as spoken in Betul district of the Central provinces of India, Vol.I & II.

2. Clement E.Moss: 'An introduction to the grammar of Gondi language'.

3. A.N.Mitchell: 'A grammar of Maḏiya Gōndi' (as spoken by the bison born or Dandami maḏiyas of Bastar state) Jagdalpur, 1942'.


5. Verrier Elwin: 'Maḏiya murder and suicide'.


II. Published by the Tribal Research Institute Chhindwara M.P.

12. Dr. B.C. Mehrotra
   "अंधुर मार्ग" ये विवेचना" अनुवाद


1.8. Brief history of the informants used for the work.

In each district four different centres were selected except Betul and one main informant was selected in all the four different centres of each district. Apart from this, few other informants were also included for the exact verification of the data. The selection of the informant was based on the merit of the person and his background of culture and education. In all the three dialects of Balaghat, Betul and Mandla, eleven main informants were selected. Most of them were either Matric
Very few informants were available in the areas who have received high education. Most of the informants were bilinguals and were speaking Gondi and Hindi. Hence in most of the cases Hindi has been used as medium for the collection and verification of data. In very few cases monolingual situations came, where it was tackled through the help of a mediator and with my little speaking knowledge.

Following list shows the history of the informants according to the different centres of each district:

1.8.1. Balaghat District:

In Balaghat district following four centres were selected.

1) Waraseoni Tahsil and surrounding areas,
2) Baihar and surrounding areas,
3) Parswada and surrounding areas,
4) Ukuva and surrounding areas,

In Waraseoni Tahsil and surrounding areas, the following is the brief history of the main informant:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(1) Name of the informant</th>
<th>C.S. Amudgare</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(2) Place</td>
<td>Pipariya, Tahsil Waraseoni Distt. Balaghat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Present address</td>
<td>Craft Instructor Re-orientation Training Centre Sijhora, Distt. Mandla, M.P.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In Bihar and surrounding areas following informant was selected:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(1) Name of the Informant.</th>
<th>Jagulal Invati.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(4) Age.</td>
<td>27.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6) Languages known.</td>
<td>Hindi, Gondi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(7) Mother tongue.</td>
<td>Gondi.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Parswada and surrounding areas the following informant was selected:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(1) Name of the Informant.</th>
<th>Jaya Singh Tekam.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(2) Place.</td>
<td>Mohgaon, Post Parswada.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Present address.</td>
<td>At Parswada.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) Age.</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) Education.</td>
<td>Matric.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(7) Mother tongue.</td>
<td>Gondi.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In Ukwa and surrounding areas following informant was selected:

(1) Name of the Informant. | Manu Singh.
(2) Place. | Gondhi, Ukwa.
(3) Present address. | Asstt. Teacher, Primary School, Gondhi.
(4) Age. | 26 years.
(5) Education. | Matric.
(7) Mother tongue. | Gondhi.

Other informants of this district are as follows:-

(1) Bhaddu Singh, Asstt. Teacher, Primary School, Gudma, Ukwa.
(2) Channal Singh, Asstt. Teacher, Middle School, Bitli, Ukwa.
(3) Jalam Singh, Kurendum, Age: 70 years.
(4) Jaysingh Teakam, Mohgaon, Parawada.
(5) Jivanlal Pundre, Parawada, Age: 40 years.
(6) Jai Singh, Baihar.
(7) Jaipal Singh, Phandiki Mohara, Post, Dora Tahsil Bhainsdehi.

1.8.2. Betul District:-

In Betul district following three centres were selected:

(1) Betul Tahsil & surrounding areas.
(2) Bhainsdehi & surrounding areas.
(3) Atnar and surrounding areas.
In Betul and surrounding areas the following informant was selected.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Informant</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Present address</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Languages known</th>
<th>Mother tongue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shamlal Kumre</td>
<td>Gandra, Post Galdbehara, Tahsil Betul</td>
<td>Asstt. Teacher, Primary School, Jhalal Tahsil Bhainsdehi</td>
<td>39 years</td>
<td>Non-Matric</td>
<td>Gondi, Hindi</td>
<td>Gondi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Bhainsdehi and surrounding areas the following informant was selected.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Informant</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Present address</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Languages known</th>
<th>Mother tongue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

In Atner and surrounding areas the following informant was selected.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Informant</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Present address</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Languages known</th>
<th>Mother tongue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jebar Singh Dhurwe</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


(2) Place. | Jangon, Post Atner Tahsil Bhainsdehi.

(3) Present address. | Jangon, Post Atner Tahsil Bhainsdehi.

(4) Age. | 19.

(5) Education. | Non-Matric.


(7) Mother tongue. | Gondi.

Other informants of this district are as follows:

(1) Babulal Ahke, Assistant Teacher, Primary School Jhallar, Tahsil, Bhainsdehi Distt. Betul.


(4) Shankar Singh Uike, Head Master, Primary School, Dhaba, Post Khumai, Tahsil Bhainsdehi Distt. Betul.

(5) G.L. Baghmare, Asstt. Teacher, Primary School, Sarni, Post SavalMendha, Tahsil Bhainsdehi Distt. Betul, M.P.

1.8.3. Mandla District:

The following centres were selected in Mandla District.

(1) Mandla Tahsil and surrounding areas.

(2) Dindori Tahsil and surrounding areas.

(3) Bichiya Circle and surrounding areas.

(4) Niwas Tahsil and surrounding areas.
In Mandla Tahsil and surrounding areas the following informant was selected.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Name of the Informant</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Todalal Tekam</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Bomni Banjar, Post Mandla Distt. Mandla</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Asstt. Teacher, Primary School, Kachari, Post, Narayanganj, Tahsil Niwas, Distt. Mandla</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>28 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Matric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Languages known</td>
<td>Gondi, Hindi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Mother tongue</td>
<td>Parsi Gondi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Dindori Tahsil and surrounding areas the following informant was selected.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Name of the Informant</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Gadalu Singh Sarote</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Asstt. Teacher, Primary School, Garakmatta, Post Karanjia Tahsil Dindori Distt. Mandla (MP)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Asstt. Teacher, Primary School, Garakmatta, Post Karanjia Tahsil Dindori Distt. Mandla (MP)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Non-Matric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Languages known</td>
<td>Hindi, Gondi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Mother tongue</td>
<td>Gondi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Dindori Tahsil and surrounding areas the following informant was selected.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Name of the Informant</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Phagu Singh</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In Bichiya circle and surrounding areas the following informant was selected:

| (1) | Name of the Informant. | Maha Singh. |
| (2) | Place. | Sarasdoli, Post Bichiya Tahsil Mandla. |
| (3) | Present address. | Sarasdoli, Post Bichiya Tahsil Mandla. |
| (4) | Age. | 17. |
| (5) | Education. | Matric. |
| (7) | Mother tongue. | Gondi. |

In Niwas and surrounding areas the following informant was selected:

| (1) | Name of the Informant. | Punnulal Sayam. |
| (2) | Place. | Chouki, Post Narayanganj Tahsil Niwas Distt. Mandla, M.P. |
| (3) | Present address. | Asstt. Teacher, Primary School, Khodrupani, Post Amarpur, Tahsil Dindori Distt. Mandla, M.P. |
| (4) | Age. | 26 years. |
| (5) | Education. | Non-Matric. |
(7) Mother tongue.  |  Condi.

Other informants of this district are as follows:

(1) Chandra Singh Kurram, Asstt. Teacher, Devarimal, Post Khudiya, Distt. Mandla, M.P.
(2) Rati Ram Parte, Khamariya, Post Padari Patkhara Tahsil Mandla.
(3) Baldev Singh Uike village Surakhi, Post Dhutka Tahsil Mandla.
(4) Domanlal, village Belkhedi, Post Lakhanpur Kalpi.
(5) Mangnu Singh, village Bravacci, Post Lakhanpur.
(6) Hammilal, village: Bijora, Mohager.
(7) Sunnulal Parte, Asstt. Teacher, Primary School, Kondra Tahsil Niwas.