That tribes have been incorporated into the Hindu caste system is an old story. One of the earliest scholars to draw our attention to this process was Sir Herbert Risley, who also offered a series of concrete propositions on the process of tribal transformation. Various scholars have subsequently been interested in this problem in different areas. But in most of the above works the emphasis has not been laid on the nature of interaction between the tribal and the Hindu socio-cultural systems. Moreover, such conversion from tribalism to castesm does not necessarily follow the same path. In order to confirm the theoretical propositions offered by Risley or to supplement those by a set of new propositions, what we require at present, is more intensive and systematic case studies on specific instances.

This study on the different processes of social integration of the Kora within the Hindu social system may offer us a new lead to our understanding of the process of caste formation through tribal absorption. The Kora who started from a tribal base, have been drawn within the Hindu social system under unique set of circumstances. With their smallness in numerical strength, very poor economical status and very little share in the regional power structure, the Kora meet the Hindu social system essentially as a minority community. Thus their position in regional economic and demographic system is different from those of some more well-known Mundari groups such as the Munda of Ranchi, the Ho of Kolhan and the Bhumij of Purulia and Singhbhum.

I became intimately familiar with the cultural configuration of Pargannah Barabhum in connection with a Research Project on State formation among the Bhumij of the Pargannah, as a member of a field-team of the Anthropological Survey of India working under the leadership of Dr. Surajit Sinha. Two monographs (Sinha, S.C., B.K. Dasgupta and H.N. Banerjee : 1961; 1966) and a number of papers have already been published based on the findings of our
field investigation. It was during this extensive socio-cultural survey of the Pargannah that I noticed the unique position of the Kora, a tribal group, who had virtually been absorbed into the regional Hindu society. My knowledge on various ethnic groups specially the Mahato, Santal, Kharia and the Pahira has helped me immensely in bringing the case of Kora transformation in a comparative perspective.

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