THE BOOK WAS DRENCHED

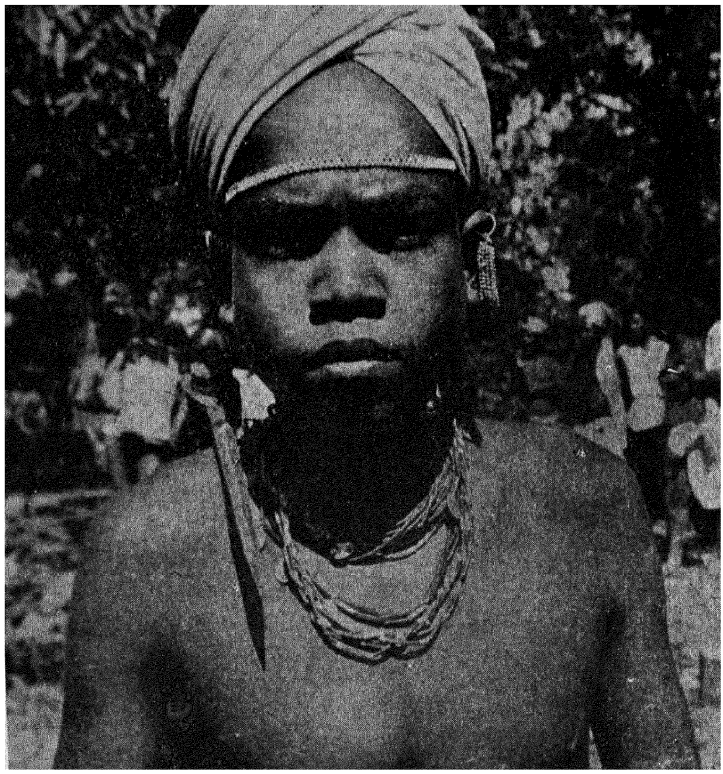
Text Lite Within The Book Only

UNIVERSAL
LIBRARY

OU_162542

UNIVERSAL
LIBRARY

THE GONDWANA AND THE GONDS
(A Study In Primitive Economics)



A Hill Maria boy

THE GONDWANA AND THE GONDS

By
INDRAJIT SINGH, M. A., LL. B., PH. D.

With a Foreword by
Prof. RADHAKAMAL MUKERJEE, M. A., Ph. D.
Head of the Department of Economics & Sociology,
Lucknow University, India.

Published by
THE UNIVERSAL PUBLISHERS LTD
THE MALL, LUCKNOW, (INDIA)

First Published in 1944

PRINTED IN INDIA
AT THE UNIVERSAL PRINTING PRESS, LUCKNOW
BY GOBIND RAM, AND PUBLISHED BY THE
UNIVERSAL PUBLISHERS LTD., THE MALL,
LUCKNOW.

Chapter. CONTENTS. Pages.

	FOREWORD AND INTRODUCTION	i—ix
One	... The Gondwana and the Gonds ...	1
Two	... Habitat and Economy of the Gonds ...	11
Three	... Seasonal Response of Economic Pursuits ...	33
Four	... Tribal Settlement and Social Stratification ..	43
Five	... The Youth House or the Gotul Institution.	59
Six	... Kinship Organisation	73
Seven	... Family and Marriage	82
Eight	... Forms of Economic Activities	96
Nine	.. Division of Labour	113
Ten	. . Economic Leadership	130
Eleven	... Magic and Gond Economics	140
Twelve	... Cultural Contacts and Acculturation ...	159
	Glossary of Vernacular Terms ...	185
	Bibliography ...	196
	Index	199

1. A Hill Maria boy.
2. A Muria youth—an attractive *chelik*.
3. Artistic Decorations—Wooden carvings.
4. Winnowing grains.
5. A scene inside a *Gotul*.
6. Ready for dance—Muria girls of Narainpur.
7. Her charm of coiffure.
8. Making Nets.
9. The Gond *perma* or religious head.
10. In a corner of the market.
11. Furniture and stores.
12. A Tili (oil presser) girl from Bastar.
13. Men and women engaged in construction work.
14. A Hill Maria girl.
15. Women and children back from work.
16. A Nawagharia Gond of Bilaspur.
17. "We have lived our life"—it had its thrills, also its vexations.
18. A Muria wife.
19. A 'Thua'.
20. A reputed Magician.
21. A much travelled Maria Gond of Bastar.
22. A part of the kitchen garden.
23. Harvesting Time.
24. A crop of wooden Menhirs.
25. A transfer from the *Gotul* fraternity to family life, is not always happy.
26. A Gond Mother at work.
27. Offering prayers to Gods.
28. A substantial Ratanpuria Gond.
29. A popular *Motiari* (a girl of a village dormitory.)
30. Wicker work and Basketry as specialised arts among the Gonds.
31. Making ropes from fibres.
32. A platform improvised in the fields to keep watch over the crops.
33. Crude but significant designs on mud walls of Gond houses.

34. A small bird cage which the Gonds often carry with them.
35. A Kurukh.
36. An unmarried Hill Maria girl with tattoo marks on her back.
37. Crudely equipped but self sufficient. Gond utensils and effects.
38. Tapping the Toddy tree.
39. More articles of domestic use.
40. Carrying bamboos.
41. Petty repairs to the house are done by the Gonds themselves.

FOREWORD

I have great pleasure in introducing this doctoral dissertation on the economic life of the Gonds by Dr. Indrajit Singh. Social Anthropology is a new and ambitious study, and not merely in India but elsewhere it has sought to embrace the entire field of primitive life and culture. There is need of specialisation in the fields of primitive economics, religion, art or law into which social anthropology should before long divide itself in order to do justice to these recognised aspects of collective life. As a pioneer work in primitive economics in India, Dr. Singh's careful and interesting survey based on field research in the Central Provinces deserves praise.

A large section of the Gonds now lives in the plains where they have learnt permanent agriculture or the arts and crafts while the Hill Gonds are trappers and hunters or practise brand tillage. It is remarkable how magic assumes a different guise as it aids economic toil in the different phases of social development. The hunting Gond would light the lamp or fire, read omens and then enter the thick jungle, the Baiga or priest divining and indicating the direction of his expedition. The agriculturist Gond would before sowing make public offerings to the village or the earth Mother, and when the rains fail would harness nude girls to the plough that they draw bleeding under the spur of the goad. In the Gond country, spirits, gods and magical rites change with economic evolution. There is logic behind the magic that is correctly applied to organise and regulate intensive economic efforts and ensure their results. Thus magic becomes an indispensable tool of economic adaptation. Hindu India has given to aboriginal India not merely superior methods of farming and arts and crafts but also faiths and observances that have provided easy economic adjustment and emotional and intellectual integration of the primitive community.

Dr. Singh has given a vivid description of the *Gotul* institution and its important role in providing opportunities for training and discipline embracing the entire

life of the Gonds. The Sirdar or captain and the Kotwar or master of ceremonies keep up the morale and the standard. The girls' *Gotul* has also similiar officers. Tribal co-operation in economic tasks,festivals and dances, courtship and marriage are all safeguarded by the *Gotul* that performs most useful social functious, and it is also significant that there is complete democratic management of their affairs by the boys and the girls in their respective *Gotuls*. On the whole tribal solidarity or disintegration is clearly indicated by the functioning of the *Gotul* in the tribal group.

The great problem of aboriginal India is to smooth and regulate its social and economic transition. In the thickness of the jungle where the Gond lived undisturbed in his clearings, British Indian law has introduced game protection and even deprived him of his bow and arrow. The timber merchant has penetrated into the wilderness and explored Gond labour while the ubiquitous shopkeeper has sold tinsel, bought grains and forest produce cheap and ensnared him in debt. In the plains, the Gond agriculturist has been unfairly exploited and expropriated by adventurers and money-lenders until the passing of the C.P. Land Alienation Act in 1916. Even now the transferability of the occupancy holding under the C. P. Tenancy Act of 1939 is working against the Gond tenant who is losing his land due to indebtedness. If forests have to be protected against felling and *Dahiya* cultivation in the interests of rainfall, agriculture and irrigation of the plains, forest areas have to be reserved for the hunting and roving agricultural groups and the interests of afforestation and tribal food-collection and hunting reconciled under careful protective administration.

Uncultivated wastes have to be reclaimed by Government in the plains in order to speed up the adoption of sedentary cultivation by the tribal groups, and some kind of collective farming may be experimented with among Gond settlers in these pioneer areas. Co-operative credit, abolition

of sub-letting non-transferability of occupancy holdings are other measures for regulating the extravagant borrowing of the Gond and giving him security in the land. Through constant fractionalisation, the land is slipping from the Gond's feet, thus some legislation preventing subdivision beyond economic limits and bringing about restripment and consolidation of holdings will be desirable. The Gond is jovial and care-free, and does not suffer, as some Indian aboriginals do from defeatism and lack of zest in life that prepare the ground for tribal extinction. But it is necessary in his case as well to bring about a smooth psychic adjustment as a prelude to economic adaptation. Education in home crafts such as spinning, weaving basket-making or mat work and in agricultural dairying, bee keeping, and fruit farming should proceed *pari pasu* with the desire for improvment of the standard of living that culture contact brings with it. An artificially bolstered up standard of living that is often the result of Christian conversion when it is unaccompanied by any attempt to renovate economic life spells social disaster.

An over-literary type of rural education unrelated to the economic needs of the primitive community destroys much more than it recreates. In the re-education of the primitive community ancient faiths and observances, festivals and ceremonies may yet play a significant reorienting role. Much may still be said in favour of India's age-long method of education and conversion through the assimilation of aboriginals into "castes" within the frame-work of Hindu society and the gradual introduction of beliefs and rites that fit in harmoniously with the tribal culture pattern. The social planning of the Indian aboriginals is an extremely delicate task. Neither segregation in special tribal areas or isolated camps that shuts out the normal expansive forces of economics and culture that sweep through the country nor *laissez faire* that throws the flood-gates open to the rising tides of tribal exploitation and expropriation, but a judicious plan-

ned protection, guided by social psychology, hold the key to cultural progress of the Indian aboriginals. There cannot be one solution, one remedy for all folks; Each folk in its particular milieu demands its own plan based as it should be on a realistic study of the whole sociological situation. That is why an investigation like this undertaken by one who lives and works among the Gonds is a valuable contribution to Indian anthropology, and is excellent augury for the welfare and administration of tribal folks in India.

RADHAKAMAL MUKERJEE.

University of Lucknow.

PREFACE.

In recent years, a number of well documented accounts of primitive life and culture of India has been written by trained field investigators which have demonstrated the importance of anthropological studies in a country like India, thirty millions of whose population may still be said to live under primitive and archaic conditions. If we add to this number those who have been gradually and imperceptibly merging into Hindu castes, the total number of primitive people in India will reach approximately forty millions, a sensational figure indeed.

The rapid advance of modern civilization has had and is still having a great influence on the life and culture of the primitive peoples everywhere, and India, although not so advanced industrially as the West has had her share of modifying influence profoundly affecting those who have somehow or other been brought into contact with this industrial and urban life. It is also significant that the mineral resources of India are located in areas inhabited by the tribal people. Any attempt to tap the unexplored mines and the virgin forests has added to the disruption of primitive tribes and engendered a keen struggle for existence among them. Where the machine has penetrated, it has displaced or dislodged, the primitive man from the once secure asylum he was wont to forage for food, or has brought far reaching changes in his otherwise simple life.

Culture contacts have of course been going on for generations, but modern mass production with its attempt at uniformity of patterns is engendering problems very much different from those that occurred in the past. It is this situation that encourages a desire to study those peoples who have either remained in their primitive state or have advanced, and to offer explanations of the apparent changes and the deep transformations in their economic behaviour. A scientific approach to the problems of primitive life and conduct is extremely helpful in the present state of society in India as it may indicate the direction of

social reform. It may not only afford materials for the social reformers to work upon, but may also enable the politically conscious to understand better their grievances and work for their redress or elimination.

Anyone who is well acquainted with the recent political uphaeval in India and knows the deep repercussions of political thought and ideas on the various sections of Indian population, will admit the importance of such studies, 'for tribal life has been stirred to a depth which was not even dreamt of before.' For example, in the tribal areas in Chota Nagpur, the various aboriginal tribes have united together under the flag of the "Adi Basi" or the children of the soil, and political rights have been claimed and to some extent wrested by them from their neighbours on the plea of their numerical strength in the total population of the area. These political movements have, no doubt, impaired efficiency but the zeal for the organisation and determination of their future has tremendously increased and their clamour for political representation has reached a high vocal pitch. The trend of events show that they are anxious to take their future into their own hands and are prepared to risk the consequences. It is here that the field anthropologist can help the people by pointing out the social and survival values of primitive traits of culture, by representing the results of his investigation in such a way that the practical man may apply them to his problems. It is with this attitude that the following account of the Gond life has been presented.

The present monograph is the outcome of a field-economic survey of the Gond group of tribes living mostly in the hills and jungles of the Central Provinces and Bastar. Of these only one tribe *viz.* the Maria Gonds of Bastar has been systematically studied by Mr. W. V. Grigson, while Verrier Elwin has intruduced two allied tribes, the Baigas and the Agharias. The entire Gond population now numbers two millions and a quarter and is distributed mostly in the Central Provinces and Bastar State. This

area has been visited by the writer in the course of his tours of investigation. The arts and methods of utilisation of natural resources by both the Hill Gonds and the Plain Gonds and also their transition from hunting and *Dahiya*, *Bewar* and *Penda* cultivation to a settled type of agriculture have been closely studied. All through it has been noticed that there is an intimate connection between the daily routine of Gond economic life on the one hand and his social organisation, and magic and religion on the other. The writer has observed how they are being profoundly modified now by contact with advanced cultures. Two major streams of culture are coming upon the Gond country, one, Marhatta with its outposts at Chanda and Chhindwara and the other, Telugu with its outpost at Bastar. 'Bundelkhandi' and 'Chhatisgarhi' influences are more prominent among the groups inhabiting Mandla which was once the seat of the ancient Gond kingdom. Cultural changes are now taking place in the economic life as well as in dress, food, language and religion of the different tribal groups. But the new influences have not been all for their good. These have produced tribal unsettlement and communal disintegration and afforded opportunities for exploitation of the primitive community by the trader, the contractor and the money-lender. It has been shown how they are sapping the strength and vitality of the Gonds.

On the other hand, it has been pointed out how such traditional and useful tribal institutions as the *Bara*, *Guree*, *Gotul*, *Bhaiband* and *Panchayat* which still survive, have yet great social and economic significance among the Gonds. The *Bara* and the *Guree* in a village are the places from where the organisation and supervision of the social, secular and religious life of the tibal groups are undertaken. The *Gotul*, the village dormitory, is indeed the pivot of social activities of the Gond village, as it is also among the Murias, an institution for sex training and trial

intimacies. The Muria *Gotul* is still an essential limb of the body politic in that it is responsible for supplying labour in the agricultural season, and helpful workers during marriage ceremonies and communal feasts and dances. Magic also plays an important role in their social and economic activities and in occupational undertakings. It serves as a protection to the primitive community on occasions of visitation of a plague or epidemic or for violation of tribal morality, taboo or observance. It thus still holds together the loosened strands of social cohesiveness amidst forces of decay and disintegration. With all their beliefs in charms and spells, witchcraft and sorcery, the Gonds have also shown some progress-mindedness and are not wholly bound by superstition, as a superficial observer may easily conclude. They are a joy-loving, robust, and hardworking folk among whom it has been a pleasure for the writer to work and live for a number of years.

The writer has been fortunate in securing the sympathetic co-operation not only of the administration wherever he has settled down for investigation, but also of a number of intelligent and well-informed Gonds whom it is difficult to mention separately but to all of whom his grateful acknowledgment is due. Most of his journeys were done by car and he had to open up new roads and diversions to reach places in the interior which were not reached by car before. The study of the cultural life of the Gonds could not be complete in a couple of hundred pages ; so only one aspect had been chosen—the economic life of the Gonds; the other aspects of life are being investigated and will form the subject matter of separate monographs.

I desire to acknowledge my deep debt of gratitude to my teacher and friend, Dr. D. N. Majumdar under whose supervision the work has been done. Dr. Majumdar had initiated me into the methods and techniques of first-hand field surveys and had accompanied me in several ethnographic tours in the Gond

country to equip me with the scientific prerequisites of intensive anthropological studies.

Prof. Radhakamal Mukerjee, Head of the Department of Economics and Sociology, Lucknow University, has helped me with advice and constant encouragement and has honoured me by writing a Foreword. I am also indebted to Mr. P. R. Roy, for helping me with photography, to Mr. E. S. Hyde, lately Dewan of Bastar State and Mr. T. C. Menon of the Bastar State Service for valuable assistance. To the Universal Publishers I am grateful for undertaking the publication of the volume.

AKALTARA,
Central Provinces, India.

I. SINGH.

CHAPTER ONE

THE GONDWANA AND THE GONDS

The land of the Gonds is known as the Gondwana an appellation given by the Mohammedan rulers of Northern India. Another name which occurs in the Ain-i-Akbari is 'Garha-Kantaka',* Gondwana properly includes the Satpura plateau and a section of the Nagpur Plain and the Narbada Valley to the south and the west. Roughly speaking, it is bounded by the Godawari in the south, Bombay Presidency and Berar in the west, while Central India up to the river Chambal lies to the north of it and the Eastern States' Agency in the east. Approximately this implies the present Central Provinces and some parts round about it. This is the tract where most of the Gonds dwell today, a part of the country which is long associated with Gond life and culture. The Gonds, as we know from various sources and accounts, were a band of hardy, chivalrous and warlike people, who, at one time, figured prominently in local history. They have been described even in Indian Chronicles as a people who earned a proud name for themselves. There is no district or state in the province where they are not found. It is both on account of their numerical strength and the fact that the Gond dynasties ruled over a great part of this vast area that the territory of the Central Provinces was formerly known as Gondwana. In 1911, the Gonds were three millions strong, in the Central Provinces alone their number being 2,300,000. In 1931 there were 2,260,000 Gonds in the Central Provinces.

During the last century the hills and forests, the favourite abodes of the Gonds, have been invaded by the plough and a net work of communications have disturbed their time old isolation. The Vindhya and the Satpura on either side of the river Narbada constitute the main ranges of mountains. The Mahadeo hills attain the height of 4100 feet and among these stands Pachmarhi, the summer residence of the Central

*Garra Kantak in Elliot's translation of the Tarikh-i-Salatin-i-Afgana Elliot, V. P. 12. The Makhzan writes Gurra Kota.

provinces' Government. The *Pandva Caves* where the Pandavas of epic fame are said to have taken refuge in their exile, are located near about Pachmarhi. Dhupgarh, picturesque in its grandeur, is the highest point of the surrounding hills and stands close to Pachmarhi. This peak forms, as it were, the top dressing of a thickly covered forest that adds to the dignity of its isolation. The Narbada, the Godavari and the Mahanadi, three of the holy rivers among the Hindus, flow through this country. These rivers have a very struggling course on account of the rocky land through which they flow. The Indrawati, a river in Bastar State, with a beautiful fall at Chitrakut, is a worthy tributary of the Godavari. There are many small rivers too, and the country, generally speaking is well watered. The Maikal, the Ajanta Hills and the Mahadeo are like the three corners of a triangle with its apex in the central part of the country. Numerous rivers flow from that apex towards the western, southern and eastern directions of the Gondwana. The country was once an interminable forest. The virgin forest, intersected by high mountain ranges, was broken only for small cultivation. The inhabitants were composed of rude and uncivilized tribes of Gonds some of whom were almost wild savages, living under extremely archaic conditions.

Gondwana has a varied climate. Though mainly temperate, it shows considerable diversity in the course of changes in the seasons and its own physical characteristics. The Tropic of Cancer passes through this region. The country lies nearly between 18° 4′ and 23° 4′ north, and between 77° to 83° east. During the winter months the temperature varies between 45° to 70° F. Most of Gondwana lies on a high plateau. A considerable portion is covered by a dense growth of tropical forest, the parts having thick forest experience severe winter. The northern districts, Mandla, Jubbalpur, Narsinghpur, Chhindwara and Betul which lie close to the Satpura range are comparatively cooler than the western or eastern districts. Some parts have

extremely severe winter, the temperature going down to 36° F, during winter months.

The summer is considerably hot. Raipur which lies in the eastern part experiences about 116°F. during the hottest summer. Even in Nagpur and Jubbalpur the temperature in May and June is well over 105° F. We might say that the climate of the region is extreme. Both summer and winter rainfall is well distributed. It lies in the Monsoon belt, and gets rain from the south west winds, i. e., from the Arabian Sea. The rain-bearing winds, commonly known as the monsoon winds, are intercepted by the high mountains and during June, July, August and part of September, the rainy months, they account for sufficient amount of precipitation. The rainfall in the northern and eastern districts varies from 40 to 60 inches, but as we go from east to west the rainfall decreases and in some parts it is as low as 30 inches.

The rainfall being moderately good, the vegetation is fairly luxuriant. The eastern and northern parts are covered with thick forests but as we go towards the west, the forests become thin and vegetation somewhat scanty. The seasons are well defined and bring about marked climatic variations. Alternation of seasons and climatic variations have considerable effect upon the life and activities of the people. The seasonal changes have also profound influence upon cultivation and food-procuring pursuits of the people.

Vegetation is characterised by a remarkable diversity both in the variety of plants and in their growth and distribution. On the mountain tops the growth is scanty and harder types of plants such as *Salia* and other sturdy trees of the kind thrive. On the hill tops and on slopes exhausted by shifting cultivation, high grass and stunted trees make the country monotonous to the eye and tiring to the traveller through lack of shade. The vast plateau in the central, northern and eastern side is of sub-tropical-rain-forest type, dim-lit, sombre, and heavygrown, the giant *Sal* trees compete as it were, in height with the neighbouring teak trees,

luxuriant creepers of trailing *Pai* and *Seer* frequently entwine the massive trunk of the bigger trees. The big trees and the shrubs and the heavy undergrowth render such parts almost inaccessible. But the moment we descend from the rocky hills and the high plateau, there is a change, the green valleys and hurrying streams, and shady *Tendu, Mahua, Char*, and other fruit-bearing trees make the country ideal for habitation and for camping ground as well.

The reserve forests of British India are well kept and maintained. The teak forests of chanda districts are a great source of income to the Central Provinces Government. There are government timber depots in Allapalli and Balharshah in Chanda district. Teak wood is exported in large quantity from this district. There is a regular tram-track in Raipur city where all valuable wood is offered for sale, the entire system being controlled by the Forest Department of the Central Provinces' Government.

Down on the plains are grass lands and some parts have thick growth of *Tendu* and *Parsa* trees. Both of these may be said to be commercial plants. Young *Tendu* leaves are collected by the local villagers for export, sometimes the leaves are locally used for the manufacture of *Biri*. *Parsa* is another valuable tree on which lac is propagated. The primitive tribe, Dhanuhar, living in Bilaspur district and some zemindars, are expert grower of lac and their skill and proficiency are very much in demand for the culture of this useful commodity, the whole country round.

Medicinal herbs, shrubs and roots which the Gonds consider to be highly efficacious for certain bodily ailments and numerous other kinds of roots and *Kands* (tubers) that figure so prominently in the menu of the Gond family, are also among the forest products of the region.

Tigers, panthers, leopards, bears and antelopes of all varieties are common in the forests of northern districts and in eastern parts. Tradition has it that once Sarguja was the home of wild elephants, and the state

used to domesticate them. Bisons and buffaloes were also common, but are fast disappearing now. Sir Richard Temple in his 'Reports on zemindars and petty chieftains of the C. P.' has mentioned that he bagged one bison in the forests of Bilaspur district. The Mandla, Chanda and Balaghat districts of the Central Provinces are even today considered to be one of the best shooting grounds of India. Both carnivorous and horned game can be had in plenty in these forests. Owing to indiscriminate shooting the animal population of the C. P. is decreasing, but still the Province is considered hunters' paradise. Ducks of all varieties from common teal to pochard are very common in winter months. There are some tanks in Sarangarh State where many kinds of migratory type of ducks are found. Snipe, rock and green pigeon, sand-grouse, wood-pecker are also common. Parrot, ringdove, cuckoo are found everywhere. The much admired Baster 'Maina', said to be one of the best singing birds, is also available in fairly good number. This little bird, it is said, can reproduce very aptly multiple notes, including the human voice. Peacock, jungle fowl, 'Titar', 'Batir' and many other kinds of birds are to be found in almost all parts of Gondwana. Altogether there are well over 200 different kinds of feathered species in this part of the country. Fish of various kinds and sizes are plentiful in tanks, rivers and streams. Most of them are used for food.

The tract is rich in the number of its deposits and the variety of its mineral resources. Iron Ore, Manganese and other metallic compounds are found in great abundance. But of these mineral resources, only iron ores of a coarse kind are smelted by a crude process in some parts of the Gond country. Tools and implements are made out of these by the local blacksmith, *Lohar*. The limited number of locally made crude implements are fast falling into disuse owing to a slow but steady introduction of finely finished tools of foreign make supplied through the agency of weekly markets and itinerant sellers who make much profit by visiting these tribes in their homes.

APPEARANCE AND PHYSIQUE

Descriptive accounts of people suffer from the personal equation of the observer, who, however he might attempt to picture them objectively, is liable to be prejudiced by his pre-conceived notions and ideas. Photographs are therefore necessary and indispensable for supporting his records of observation and they are valuable to the reader also for drawing sound conclusions. But some general remarks may be made to give an idea of the physical appearance of these people. In stature, the Gonds are just a little below the average size of the Central Provinces' caste Hindus, the average hight of a Gond being 162.06 cm. almost 5 ft. 5 inches. Tall individuals are by no means uncommon. We have tall people specially among *Ratanpuria* and *Nawagarhia* Gonds of Bilaspur district, some of whom attain a decent height of 6 feet and are fine physical specimens. There is not the least doubt that the Gonds living in the plains and those living in around the urban areas have had a large admixture of Hindu blood.

Generally, the Gonds of C. P. are dark skinned, with straight, coarse black hair. They have little or no beard and moustaches, that is, relatively speaking, they have less growth of hair usually than that of the caste people among the Hindus. Sometimes this factor is much exaggerated by writers. It is usually the young people who are deputed by the villagers as camp followers and observations are made and conclusions drawn from these specimens. We have seen that men with moustaches or small pointed beards are not uncommon. The most characteristic feature of the Gond is his heavy nose with its alae extended. Some of them have thick lips and fairly well proportioned bodies. Hislop describes the Gonds as follows:

"All are a little below the average size of European and in complexion darker than the generality of Hindus. Their bodies are well proportioned but their features rather ugly. They have roundish head, distended nostrils, wide mouth, thickish lips, straight black

hair and scanty beard and moustache."*

In this connection we shall only refer to the researches of a rather extensive kind recently carried out by eminent ethnologists. It is difficult to discuss racial traits without adequate knowledge of the subject. Only those who are trained in the science are competent to throw light on such problems.

Mr. C. S. Venkatachar in his 'Survey of Migrations of Castes and Tribes into Central India and their Distribution' in part III (Ethnographical) Census of India 1931, writes, "The Gonds may be the pre-Dravidians of the south on whom the Dravidians have imposed their language and due to some causes in the regions of north-east Madras, there must have been a large scale displacement of the tribes into the interior of the central regions".† Recent investigations into the physical features of the Gonds of different parts of the Central Provinces, including Bastar, have brought to light certain divergences in the bodily structure of the various groups, though what may be called a basic Gond or Gondide type is still discernible among all the variations. The Table given below has been taken from Dr. D. N. Majumdar's anthropometric survey of Bastar in the Central Provinces.‡ This will explain the extent of race admixture among the Gonds and will also give an idea about the racial distance of the cultural groups with respect to the indical characters (cephalic and nasal). The various branches of the Gond group of tribes are referred to in the Table below, though other sub-groups with distinct names are found in the Gond country. The Halbas and Dhakars in the Table, are not of Gond affiliation but that they have received Gond blood in course of close contacts with the Gonds can hardly be doubted.

---

* Tribes and Castes of the C. P. by Russell and Hiralal.

† Census of India 1931, Vol. 1 India. Notes by Mr. C. S. Venkatachar, Page 63.

‡ Racial Affiliation of the Gonds, J. R. A. S. B., Vol. VII, 1941, No. 1.

Name of the Group.	Cephalic Index.	Name of the Group	Nasal Index.	Order of Social precedence in Baster.
Kondagaon Murias	73.04	Kondagaon Murias	85.52	Hill Marias
Hill Marias	73.20	Bhatras	85.14	Dandami Marias
Gadabas	74.27	Gadabas	84.37	Gadabas
Narainpur Murias	74.42	Parjas	83.79	Muria Kondagaon
Muria (Female)	74.88	... ..	...	...
Dhakars	75.17	Dandami Marias	83.62	Muria Narainpur
Nawagarhia	75.31	Hill Marias	83.03	Parjas
Bhatras	75.33	Nawagarhia Gonds	81.49	Bhatras
Dandami Maria	75.96	Narainpur Murias	81.12	...
Halbas	77.75	Muria Female	80.96	...
Parjas	77.79	Halbas	79.28	Halbas
		Dhakars	77.91	Dhakars

On the basis of his field investigations, Dr. Majumdar writes as follows:

"The Parjas are the tallest among these, their complexion varies from brown to dark, the face is slightly prognathous and the chin receding with no traces of epicanthric fold. The Hill Marias are tall, handsome and graceful. Some possess a light brown complexion. The hair is plentiful on the face and scalp the limbs are well proportioned. The Murias of Kondagaon as well as Narainpur resemble the Marias but the latter are more akin to the Hill Marias than Murias

of Kondagaon. The Gonds as suggested by their physical features are a mixed people in which the aboriginal type has been considerably moulded by intermixture with a strain very much related to the Mediterranean stock of Europe".

The women among them, are shorter in stature than the men. They possess delicate physique in their youth. A few lines of Captain Forsyth, though not very accurate and appropriate with reference to Gond women as they are now, will give us some idea about them as they were about a generation ago; "The Gond women differ among themselves more than man. They are somewhat lighter in colour and less fleshy than 'kurku' women. But the Gond women of different parts of the open tracts are great robust creatures, finer animals than the men; and here Hindu blood may fairly be expected. In the interior again bevies of Gond women may be seen who are more like monkeys than human beings. The features of all are strongly marked and coarse. The girls occasionally possess such comeliness as attaches to general plumpness and a good-humoured expression of face; but when their short youth is over, all pass atonce into a hideous age. Their hard lives, sharing as they do all the labours of the men except that of hunting, suffice to account for this" †.

As we have already said, the personal equation in describing their appearance counts a great deal and the observations and accounts given by different writers are therefore not identical. If we make allowances for mutilation and tattooing, the young Gond girls are often graceful and pretty. But long journeys to markets, heavy field work, malnutrition and other hardships quickly tell on their physique. Age and child-bearing increasing worries of household responsibilities, the hard task of winning bread for the family, complete the process of entirely wrecking their system. They soon lose all their personal

† Highlands of Central India. By Captain Forsyth. Page 156.

charms and become darker and appear jaded. On the whole they possess delicate features and resemble to some extent the caste women. There may be some truth in the assertion that they owe their features to Mediterranean infusion. Their lips are usually thick, eyes in most cases black but occasionally one meets people with brown eyes too. The hair is straight and black. Young Muria girls, when they go out to dance have a beautiful way of coiffering their hair by putting up a number of combs at the back, neatly arranged according to the size of the combs. These combs are usually presents from their sweet-hearts—the Gotul boy-friends. Some girls near Narainpur have curled hair. Their teeth are very dirty and it seems they are much neglected. Dental hygiene is absent and their mouth smells foul.

The bodies of Gond men are usually well developed, upright and muscular. They have fine chest and massive shoulders. This is perhaps due to the fact that the Gonds are accustomed to carry loads by means of sticks known as *Bahinga*, which they place over their shoulders. What is most remarkable at the same time is that they do not feel the least nervousness in negotiating steep climbs and narrow mountainous paths even when they are thus saddled.

But constant manual labour with practically no rest for long stretches of time, overstraining in fishing, hunting and other pursuits of life, excessive sex indulgence and poor and low nutrition, bring untimely physical decay and death to these "children of the soil".

CHAPTER TWO.

PHYSIOGRAPHIC BASIS OF GOND ECONOMICS.

In discussing the economic life of people environmental conditions have to be studied in fuller details as they affect their mode of life and their methods of subsistence. Climate, soil, vegetation and animal resources largely govern the economic life and destiny of primitive peoples. The character of vegetation, fauna and mineral resources that are available in the region, directly govern the material culture of the people occupying that tract. Food, clothing and other primary urges of the people are invariably supplied by those materials that are easily available in the surrounding country. Fertility of the soil, availability of plants and animals as food stuff, abundance of materials to be used in building, procurability of means serviceable in agriculture, hunting and fishing, are some of the fundamental considerations that induce men to settle at a particular place. Natural resources account for the distribution of population. Perry has rightly remarked; "Social life in the Old Stone Age seems to have moved from one source of raw material to another".* And what was true of the Old Stone Age people remains true even today in case of people in the primitive stages of culture. Thus population is dense in those parts of the country that have fertile and productive soil and where food articles and other raw materials are easily and readily procured. The Gangetic plain in the United Provinces and the great deltaic area of Bengal being very fertile have an astonishingly dense population and can very well be compared with any of the thickly populated parts of the world. The converse is equally true; barren and rugged lands have sparse and scattered population, much, for example, as we find in the deserts of Rajputana and Sind. So, concentration of population and fertility of soil together with the availability of food and raw mate-

* Growth of Civilisation. By Perry. Page 33.

rials, go together. The land of the Gonds with vast stretches of primitive jungle and rugged, bare and inhospitable hill sides is sparsely populated. Villages, however, crop up wherever agriculture has evolved from hunting or intermittent cultivation, and maintain twenty to fifty families in favourable sites.

The Gonds do not like to build their habitation at cross roads or on the side ef arterial highways because their tradition is against it, they being of a very conservative disposition. Along with this the economic factor also plays its hidden but influential role. They would always prefer a large *Baree*, almost an acre in size, by their huts. In this large space of land they usually grow mustard or their supply of tobacco or vegetables which may be either for home consumption or for sale. Such facility of land adjoining their huts is not possible in crowded centres. So the Gonds have to build their huts either in remote open tracts or in forests where they can easily manage to own a fairly big plot of land for their *Baree*. The Gonds, as a rule, do not like other tribes to live in the locality which they are occupying. It is due to their once strict rule of endogamy that they prefer to have a village exclusively to themselves. They think that this is one of the safest way of keeping the purity of tribal blood. The Panchayat system and specific rules of village organisation are very rigidly followed among the Gonds. It is only the elders or the *Panchas* who have a final say in matters, social and religious. They have supreme voice too in subjects which concern the general welfare of the village and the community as a whole. It thus follows that if there are other tribes living in a village that is inhabitated by the Gonds, the scheme of the Gond Panchayat system would not function so smoothly. People belonging to other tribes would not care to obey the decisions of their Panchayats and this sort of disobedience will in the end adversely affect them and weaken the authority of their Panchyat. Proximity to some river or stream is another factor in the choice of a site for settlement, for water

is a primal necessity both for human uses and for the cattle and agriculture.

No doubt, the natural surroundings, with flora and fauna, have close relation with the social and economic life of a people but this relation merely cannot account for all the other factors that go to constitute its material culture. The Gonds mostly live in forests, eat roots and animal flesh, sow light millet, 'kodon', for example, but how can their natural environment explain their drinking habit? It is a fact that they drink wine indiscriminately during their social, religious and agricultural rites and ceremonies. And again, why does a Muria Girl decorate her hair with a number of combs? Why do the Gonds mostly favour red colour or why do the Gond girls prefer to have round beads for their necklace? The psychological factors which condition them cannot be fully explained on the basis of environmental condition. Economic life of man is a very complicated study where different factors material and psychological play their part. Every day necessities, tradition, past culture, motives and feelings, all contribute to the make-up of this complex life. Psychology, in fact, is a great factor in the life of man. Thus we find that though environmental conditions may constitute the outer circumference or act as limiting factors in man's economic life, within that circumference man may behave in varied ways for his existence. These ways, more or less determined by tradition, are not in utter discord with the natural environment. So far as the Gonds are concerned, it may very well be asserted that over and above the natural environment, which is of primary importance in their case, there are other factors that govern and shape the economic background of their life. These factors are invariably associated with their social leanings, their religious observances and linked with their past tradition and culture.

The Gonds, it seems, are quite familiar with their natural environment and also with the relation that subsists between the natural surroundings and the

economic problems of their life. In their language we have words for various plants, birds, animals and different kinds of stones. For example, there is a white stone which they call *chakmak* and use it as flint to produce fire. They have words to express tools and instruments of agriculture and implements of hunting and fishing. They have words to denote the constellations and grouping of stars and other heavenly bodies and believe vaguely in the influence of the Sun and Moon on climate and weather. They seem to possess an adequate knowledge about the objects that surround them, a rich lore about the utilisation of vegetation, animal and mineral products of their locality.

It is really interesting to find that the Gonds use a rich vocabulary in their songs, containing names of different kinds of birds, numerous classes of plants and of food materials as well. They are familiar with the nature and the growth of various trees, and often they talk of difference in sex in some forest trees. It is not uncommon to hear that a tree is menstruating. *Char,* for example, a kind of fruit-bearing tree is supposed to belong to the female group and thick, coloured sticky gum that oozes out from the trunk of this tree, is considered to be its menstruating fluid.

They have always an eye for a good site where they can settle down. The villages are generally located near about charming spots with views of undulating hills, dense with forest. Orcha for example, a village in the Abujhmar Hills in Bastar State is situated picturesquely at a fairly high level with a beautiful stream flowing by it and a high hill in front. The village boundaries in some parts of Betul district are marked by cairns of stones from the centre of which rise poles ornamented at the top with bunches of grass or feathers of peacock or jungle cock. The trees in and near about the villages are carefully preserved as they contribute to the beauty of the latter. They are not felled even though fire wood has to be fetched from the forest or from a considerable distance. This goes to show that the Gonds exercise a certain degree

of aesthetic taste in matters like selecting village sites, and in placing the boundary stones of villages.

ECONOMIC LORE.

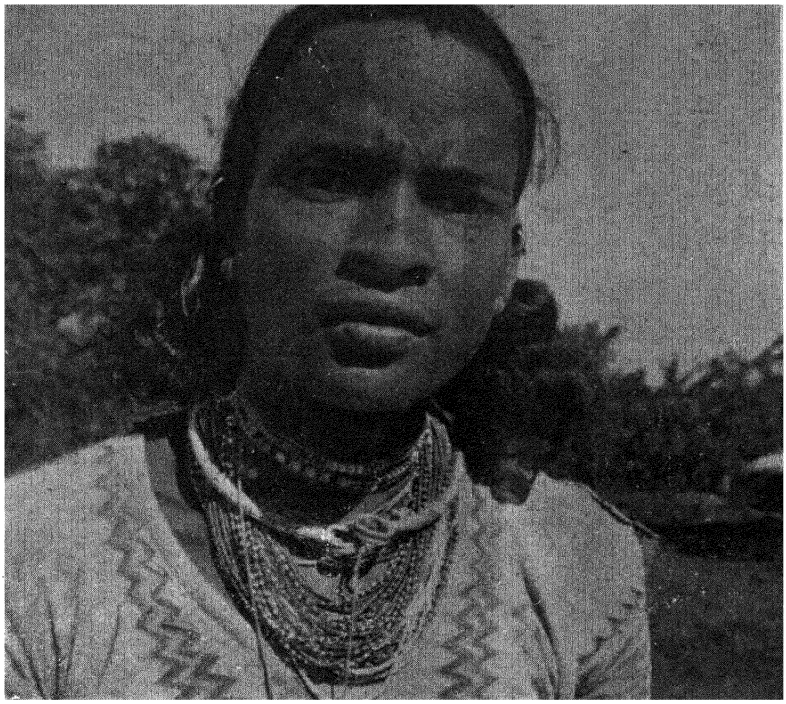
A Gond possesses a very detailed knowledge of the qualities of timber. He knows the durability and hardness of several types of wood and uses them with discrimination. The Gond always makes his stick or the handle of his axe from durable wood like, *Khamar, Khair and Karra* because all these woods are strong and tough. His acquaintance with the vegetable kingdom is so thorough that he can at once name the trees by seeing its leaf, or even the colour and grain of its timber. The nature of rock and stone, the position of the stars, the properties of nuts, berries, barks, flowers, grasses and roots the habits of birds and rats are matters with which the *Sirdar*, the grand old man, among the Gonds, is very familiar. An old Gond in a village near Pandaria, Mandla boundary, came forward and said to our surprise that he could distinguish a good many varieties of rats, and gave us as many as fifteen different names. He said there are black hairy rat, *mussa*, the black hairless ; the red, *parbat mussa*, the brown, *bijnori* the large musk rat, *ghus* and the like. He also seemed to be quite familiar with their habits and the way of trapping them. A Gond recognises many varieties of poisonous plants and roots. He uses a deadly poisonous root, black in colour, at the lower end of his arrows' tang for killing animals during his hunting excursions. A Gond is so familiar with the habits and movements of wild animals that in laying out traps for them he never fails in his object. He has several ingenious devices for trapping wild animals. It is essential for him to make a stockade round his patch cultivation in the forest, otherwise. the grain would be devoured by pig and deer. At one point of the fencing he leaves a narrow opening and in front of it, he digs a deep pit. The pit is covered with bush-wood and grass. At the main entrance some sand or powdered earth is spread. In the middle of the night he comes out to inspect. From the foot prints on the

sand he makes out what kind of animal has entered the enclosure. If it is worth catching, he and his associates raise an uproar which makes the frightened animal rush about the enclosure till it sees the opening. In trying to escape through this, it falls in the pit and is then belaboured to death.

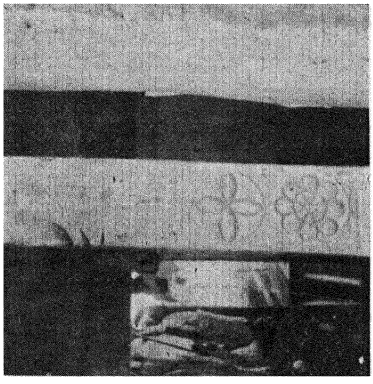
The Gonds near Sajapalli in Bilaspur district are such experts in netting green pigeon *haril*, that sometimes in one round they would collect as many as fifty birds. They manage this with the help of a wide net. It is the usual habit of the green pigeons to flock on the *pipal, ber* or *gasti* when these trees are full of ripe fruits. These birds visit a particular tree till they have practically exhausted its fruit. The Gonds who are always roving about, watch carefully the visiting birds and study the direction of their coming and going after their hearty meal. Just after sunset, when it is twilight, a net is spread at a few yards distance from the tree on which the birds are enjoying their feast. Then the drive-out begins and the birds rush pell-mell. They take a downward swing when they leave a tree. The net is arranged in such a manner that most of them only perceive it when they are already caught in it. The net is supported by big bamboo poles fixed at its two extreme ends and the men in charge of the poles place the net in that direction only which the birds are known to take in their flight.

The Gonds also know the calls, habits and food of many kinds of birds and animals of the forest. They know that earthworm is the only bait for the bird, *dahingla*, and that the hare is fond of urine. The types of snaring apparatus, they use, are too many to describe. It is enough here to observe that trapping is one of the main pastimes of the Gonds.

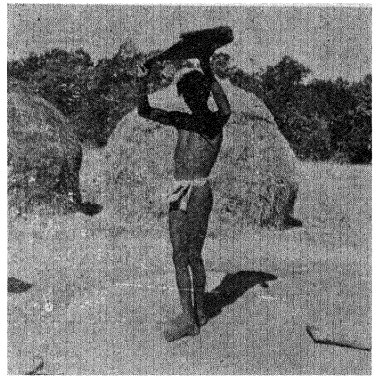
Their faculty of observation is pretty well developed, for example, the flowering of some trees like mangoes and *char* is clear proof to them that winter is on its last legs and spring is on its way. Then it is time for falling trees on the mountain slopes. In the



A Muria youth—an attractive chelik



Artistic Decorations—
Wooden carving



Winnowing grains



A scene inside a Gotul



Ready for dance—Muria girls of Narainpur

plains the cultivator starts manuring his fields because he understands that winter rains, *akras* are over. The falling of Mahua flower is a positive indication of the approaching summer and then the Gonds commence the firing of trees for *dahiya* cultivation. The nesting of the crows and cranes shows the approach of rainy season. There are certain other signs by which the Gonds ascertain the change of seasons, the productive year or the year of good rainfall and the year of drought. From the colour of the clouds and the direction of the wind the Gonds can say whether rainfall would be plentiful or poor. They have certain proverbial sayings about weather, certain sets of formula which seem to have a good deal of truth in them. These popular sayings represent results of experience, and of 'trial and error'. For instance:—

"karee ghata aya thou panie nahi sa maya"
English Translation: When there are black clouds they usually pour rain.

"bhadar bijli jab sanga ma ayah meghraj kubith bar sawaya"
English Translation: When there is heavy cloud accompanied by thunder and lightning then there would be good rain.

The Gonds of old times were clever and close observers of celestial phenomena. Their identification of Great Bear, *nagar*, Little Bear, *kutala*, the Pole star, *jagjaga* and various other constellations differ from that of the grouping of European observers. They have their own way of grouping the stars. But barring a little variation, the Gond way of grouping and that of the European can be reconciled. The appearance of the milky way, *dhud-dhar* and the rainbow indicate the approach of fair weather. Reading of omens before wedding, hunting and fishing, is a common practice among the Gonds. The crossing of the way by a cat or a jackal is taken to be a bad omen.

Taking the above into consideration, we can easily appreciate the kind of knowledge possessed by

the Gonds in such matters. The knowledge of these things has in many cases permeated through magical beliefs, folk-tales and folk-lores, although it must be noted, careful observation strengthens the experience handed down by the tribe to posterity.

The Gonds always attach a certain amount of sacredness to the forest not only because it provides the principal source of food supply to them but also because of its close connection with their gods. There is a common belief that there is a Ban-Devi (forest nymph) who presides over the forest and trees. Mahadeo and Parbati are commonly associated with the forest. The birth and history of Lingo as depicted by Russell and Hiralal is indeed interesting. They say; "The yellow flowers of the tree Pahindi were growing on Dhawalgiri. Bhagawan sent thunder and lightning and flowers conceived. In the morning the Sun came out, the flowers burst open and Lingo was born. Lingo was a perfect child. He had a diamond on his navel and a sandal wood mark on his forehead. He fell from the flower into the heap of turmeric. He played in the turmeric and slept in a swing "*. This account of their great saviour when the Gonds were confined in a cave by Mahadeo, goes to confirm the idea that there is an intimate relationship between the life of the Gonds and the vegetable world around. There is a sort of kinship between man and trees according to their belief.

Such mythological beliefs and traditions, studied from the sociological standpoint, throw ample light on the rituals, observances, magical practices and totemistic beliefs among them.

FOOD QUEST

The mode of subsistence and the manner of partaking food indicate the cultural status of people, both civilized and wild. The problem of food may thus be considered from two standpoints, first, from its nutritional and secondly, from the sociological aspect. We take food to keep us fit and going, and we share

* Tribes and castes of the C. P. Russell and Hiralal

our food with others to establish social bonds. A Gond invites friends and relatives to meals, uses food as religious offering, and observes certain taboos with regard to his food. All these factors regarding food are, therefore, worth our attention. To quote Dr. Richards; "The traditional, tribal or cultural attitudes towards food are among the most imporant cohesive forces in the community which unite its members to each other and differentiate them from surrounding tribes".* Most of the animals have either vegetable or meat diet. But man is distinguished from other creatures by a wide range of food stuff which he can consume. No other animal has such power of adapting itself to different environmental conditions, nor such a bewildering number of appetites and tastes in the matter of food.

Inspite of the fact that man has such a wide range of choice in food, there are also a number of limiting factors which determine the diet of man. The diet of man is as much limited by biological or environmental factors as it is by his traditional and social practices. Social bonds limit him where nature frees him. Thus we find primitive people refusing food of excellent dietetic value because of their innate prejudices. They think that it might bring them some calamity or expose them to some unknown danger. They accept it because it has the sanction of their society. That is how we see that social heritage has much to do with a particular group's selection of diet. In most cases appetite and taste are so conditioned from childhood that they become quite unfit for experimenting with other types of food. That is how we find a Hindu boy feeling uneasy at the mere mention of beef. But it is not so with others who are used to beef from boyhood.

Among the primitive people the question of food supply is often subject to seasonal variation. When shortage of food is experienced during the rainy months, the primitive people—the Gonds in this case

* Hunger and Work in savage Society. By Dr. Audrey Richards.

fall upon their reserves and supplement their normal food with other things like flowers, berries, leaves and roots.

The flower of Mahua tree is available both in the plains and on the hills. The women and children gather the flower on summer mornings. These are dried in the sun and then stored in bamboo wicker baskets. They are used to flavour *pej* (gruel), and are roasted and eaten raw. Tamarind is not very common in the forest but is easily available near village sites and is carefully collected and preserved; *tendu* and *char* are other important fruits that are gathered widely and used as food, among the Hill and Plain Gonds alike. *awala, jamun, dumar* and *bair* are also eaten. Mangoes are quite popular, raw and ripe both are eaten and they are also preserved in dried state, called *amchur*.

New leaves of *pipal* and *koilar* trees and various other leaves are used as vegetables by the Gonds. The soft pith of bamboo, *karil* is also eaten. In early rains, the digging of forest roots and yams is the chief occupation of the Gond women. A kind of fungus, *putu*, is relished as delicacy. Gums too from various trees are collected and used in flavouring food. These are sent to the market for sale.

The Marias of Bastar go out into the forest during the rains in search of red ants, ant-eaters, rats, squirrels and grubs, all considered as delicacies or quality-food. The Maria Gonds of Bastar are very fond of red ants and give them fried or roasted to women during confinement. White grub and certain kind of beetles, fried in oil with a little spice and chillies, are relished beyond measure.

The Gonds are expert trappers. they trap hare, deer and other animals; jungle fowl and pea-fowl and other birds are netted. In short they snare all kinds and sizes of game, horned, feathered, big and small.

Bows and arrows are used in hunting expeditions and most of the animals they kill are eaten by them. Field mice and rats are favourite food. Pigs, goats and

poultry are domesticated. Cock, hen and eggs are indispensable as offering to their gods. Goats are sacrified at the altar of their gods and the flesh eaten. Fish of various kinds are caught by net and line and eaten. Both women and men take an active part in catching fish.

The most common food of the Gonds is *pej* (gruel or small millets boiled in water), the quantity of water increasing in proportion to their poverty and the numerical strength of the members of the family. This is the cheapest kind of food. They take this *pej* several times in the day and again at night before they go to bed.

The Gonds are very fond of liquor. This excessive drinking, we might say as well, is the besetting vice of these people. They generally indulge in drinking country liquor distilled from Mahua flower. In the southern part of the Central Provinces and in Bastar State toddy-palm is very common. This is tapped and the fermented juice is known to be very intoxicating. Sago-palm is common in Bastar. This palm also is tapped and an intoxicating liquor is made out of its juice. 'Londa' or rice beer, is another kind of drink much favoured by the Parjas and Dhruwas of Bastar and the Dhur Gonds of the Central Provinces. Londa in Bastar is prepared by mixing rice or '*kutki*' with sprouted *mandia*. This mixture of rice and *mandia* is put in a *handia* (an earthen pot with narrow mouth). It is boiled and then kept in a cool place for fermentation. With the formation of a certain kind of bacteria in it, the liquid emits a foul odour and then they consider it to be in a ripe stage for drinking. This type of wine is largely used during marriage ceremonies. It is a cheaper substitute for Mahua liquor.

Thus we find that the Gonds have a varied diet. From the forest they get an unlimited supply of flowers, fruits, roots and leaves; while animals, too, both big and small, equally figure in their list of fare. The plain Gonds have taken to permanent cultivation, and so, agricultural produce forms the main source of

their subsistence. The Hill Gonds, on the other hand, even now practise shifting cultivation and produce only light millet grains. They invariably supplement their meagre agricultural yield with animal flesh and various products of the forest.

DRESS AND DECORATION.

Here we shall deal with some of the most salient features in the clothing of the Gonds of various parts of the C. P. and Bastar. In this conection we would do well to refer to some previous writers. Rowney says: "The *manjee* and *maree* Gonds live in a state of nature with their bodies covered with ashes and dirt. Clothing for decency is not understood by these savages and for warmth they do not mind it; for when the mountain wind is very keen they are content to kindle a roaring fire and sit up around it".* Sir R. Jenkins describes the Gonds of a century ago as naked savages living on roots and fruits and hunting for strangers to kill. Fifty years after that, when Hislop wrote, the Maria women of the hilly tracts were said to have only a cluster of leaves fastened with string round their waist to cover themselves. There are various other writers who have mentioned that the Hill Marias wear pieces of bark as their only dress. From the above accounts as well as looking at the Hill Marias of Bastar and Chanda as they are today, it is clear that they were all very scantily attired in the early days and their bark coat, *taghali* as Marias call it, goes to show that the Marias formerly roamed about in a state of nature and then, later on, they adopted leaves and barks as their garments.

The orthodox Gond custom is to wear as little as possible; for clothing is still regarded as an encumbrance by the wilder Gonds. Men seldom wear more than a piece of loin cloth and a small piece of fabric round their heads. Those who are more civilised, throw a sheet of cloth over the upper part of the body, in addition to these. The women wear *saree* which

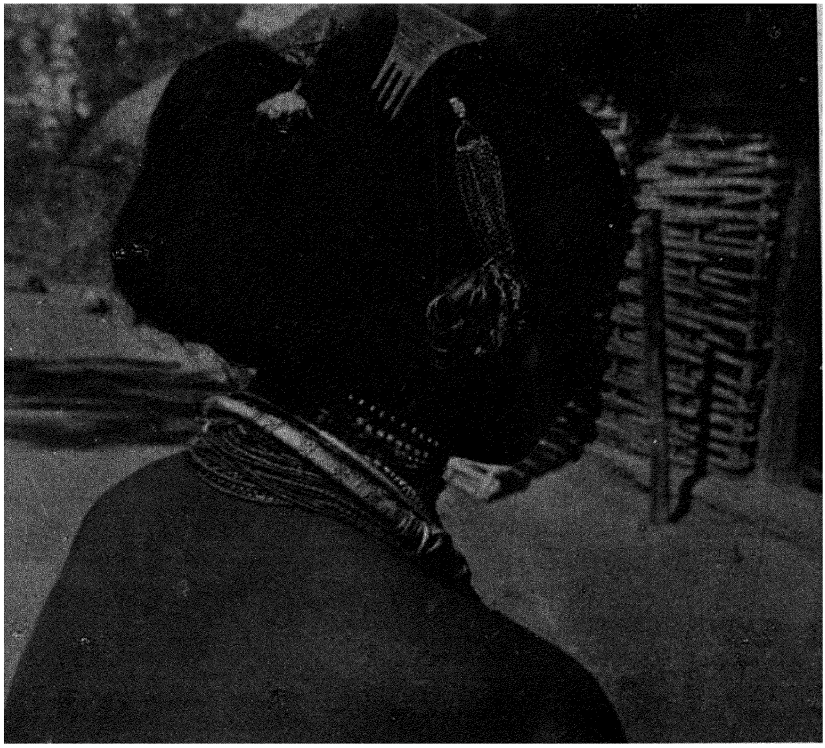
* The wild Tribes of India. H. B. Rowney (1882).

passes like a broad sash over the back and is rather liberally spread out in front upon their bosom. The Gonds of Mandla are extremely simple in their clothing, the men usually wear a *pheta* or a small piece of cloth to cover the head and a *dhoti* about four feet long and a foot and half broad, round their waist. Those who cannot even afford this, are content with a *langoti* (a scanty scrap) worn as loin-cloth. Those who can afford, wear *bandee* or waistcoat and shirt but they wear them on special occasions only; these do not form a part of their daily wardrobe; women wear a *saree* or *lugra* as they call it, of white colour, but it is just like a loin-cloth with the red border dragged up over their knees exposing the greater part of the thigh. The Gonds are not very particular about their personal appearance and exert themselves very little, it seems, to keep their bodies and garments clean. It is only when they go to market, or attend a marriage ceremony, or go to a dance, that they are well dressed. They wash and clean their clothes by boiling them in an earthen pot full of water and ashes and then rinse them and beat them well in a pool or stream. Some Gonds make a compromise between the *langoti* and *dhoti* by means of a strip of cloth wound tightly round the waist in rope-like folds and passed between the legs with the spare end hanging down in front touching the knees. Very often this garment diminishes in size till it becomes the scantiest rag. The women wear *lugra* of strong and coarse texture with a coloured border. They wear no *choli* (bodice) but their necks as in the case of their husbands are decorated with glass beads of various colours, shapes, and sizes. The mode of wearing this *lugra* is very peculiar. It barely covers the thighs. It is passed across the front of the body touching the left shoulder and then carried over the back, then passed under the right arm across the front of the body again, and tucked at the left side, a portion of the garment encircling the waist.

The Hill Maria of Bastar wears nothing but a loin

cloth of coarse cotton in winter, summer and during rains. In the severe winter months he sleeps on the ground between two fires to keep him warm. The Marias wear no cloth on their head but it seems that some of them are learning the habit of wearing an apology for a Pagree or turban, by wrapping a small rag carelessly round the head, leaving the crown generally bare as if that part requires special sunning and ventilation. The Maria women even today go about with their breasts uncovered. They have only a loin cloth wrapped round their waist with profusion of ornaments around the neck and countless strings of beads. Very old women inside the hut wear only a square piece of cloth suspended between the legs from a waistcord as their sole covering. This underwear is known as *mudang* and is worn only by the females. It is of the usual variety worn by other primitive tribes, and lies within the thin cloth worn round the waist. It is to be seen by none save the husband, except of course in case of old women and little girls. The latter wear it for the first time as the only cover on their person.

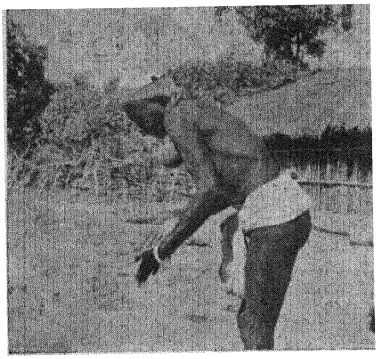
Rapid changes, however, are taking place in the dress of Gonds living in the British Indian districts, because of their close contact with their cultured neighbours. The Marhatta influence is present in the districts of Betul, Chhindwara and Balaghat which lie just adjacent to Nagpur, one of the strongholds of Marhatta culture; the Oriya country is very near the eastern districts of the C.P. and the Telugu neighbours are there in the south to exert cultural dominance over the Gonds. All these various groups are bringing about considerable changes in the garments of the Gonds residing near each of these culture zones. It would not be out of place to say that the Central Provinces, on the whole, is a meeting place of various cultures and thus contact with these cultures have deeply influenced the Gonds in the adoption and choice of their dress. It is now common to see a Gond in some parts wearing *bandee* or waistcoat like thing of white hand-spun



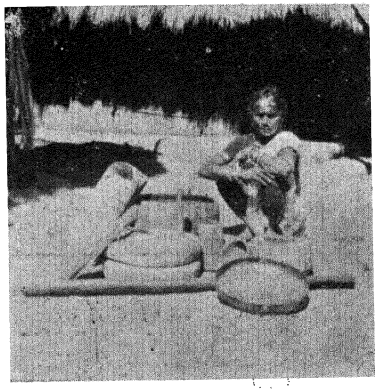
Her charm of coiffure



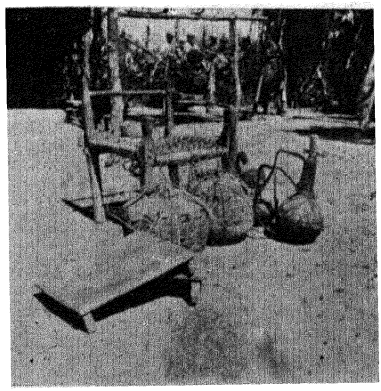
Making Nets



The Gond Perma or religious head.



In a corner of the market



Furniture and stores

cloth or cheap black, blue, red or brown Japanese cloth.

The change in dress is also visible in Bastar and even the Hill Marias who are the most primitive section of the Gonds, are gradually learning to wear more linen and realizing the purpose of properly covering their bodies. They are imitating the Murias. The latter living near about Kondagaon and Narainpur have taken to waistcoats and light-fitting shirts with half sleeves, these they call *saluka* and *bandee* respectively.

To afford protection against weather, raincaps, *chatora*, are very commonly used in the rainy season. This is a shaped bamboo frame-work, lined with leaves, either round or oblong, in the latter case with one end peaked from the head and the other spread wide to cover the back. These are most picturesque in appearance and are a substitute for umbrellas. They are specially useful when the wearer is weeding or transplanting rice in his fields. When it is raining, he has only to squat on the ground and turn his back to the rain and then, not only is he completely protected from the rain but his hands are free for work. They cost little and usually last two seasons. No doubt they serve almost equally well as protection from the sun like 'sola' hats; but they are not a very common head-wear during summer. These umbrellas are also known as *khorma* or *khumree* and are sometimes lined with Mohaline tree leaves. The *taghali*, bark rain-coat, is usually made of long thin strips of bark. They are put round the neck where each bark is twined round a thick string leaving the other end to hang loose. They are very closely knit together and completely cover the body of the wearer. The barks are softened by rolling them between the palms of the hand. This pretty piece of garment is used as rain coat by the *kutru-mar* people (Bastar). They are also widely used as protection against cold and occasionally utilised as mat for sleeping.

We shall now take up other kinds of dress which

the Gonds put on during occasions like dance or other social gatherings. It must be said that the Gonds as seen in daily routine life are entirely different men from the Gonds preparing themselves for some public function. During dance the Gonds are dressed for the occasion in their best attire, wearing on their hands weird ornaments of wicker work, with garlands of flowers round their necks and feathers artistically stuck to their hair. In some places, at dances, the men-folk wear a *kalgi* of peacock feather beautifully fixed to their coloured turban. The turban is profusely lined with cowries and bead-strings. At times the dancers wear some aluminium or brass ornaments round their necks. On their ankles they have *paijna* (anklets) with little bells. There are various sorts of jacket-like garments which complete the scheme of dressing. These are generally made of some coloured cotton of inferior and cheap variety.

In matters of dancing costume the Bison-horn Marias are a class by themselves and have a very different sort of head dress, which is unique in design and very picturesque in appearance. The head dress consists of a cap shaped like a basket. On each side of this cap, a bison horn is attached and peacock plumes or jungle fowl feathers are stuck at various points all over it. Strings of cowries and many folds of cloth of various colours are tightened round the cap. The horns are cleaned and polished. Oil is spread over them to make them shine. Some extra strings of cowrie are made to hang from the base of the cap over the face of the dancer. The Bison-horn Marias are so called because of wearing such caps with bison-horns. Frequently these dancers wear *bandee*. A heavy drum, tied to a strong string, hangs down their front.

The women have no special dancing dress but they usually put on every available ornament round their necks. This generally consists of a number of hollow and big necklets and several strings of beads of different colours and sizes hanging loosely down to their chest. The women dancers carry in their

right hands *tirdudi* or bamboo staves to which is attached a number of tiny bell-metal or brass bells. These they strike against the ground and the bells produce a rhythmic sound. This is probably a device to keep to tune with men-drummers.

The dancing dress of the Hill Maria is an interesting study. It is very much different from that of the Bison-horn Maria but is equally imposing and more elegant in taste and very much complicated in its technique. The young men wear a 'topee like thing' round shaped such as we usually see on the head of the Kachhi Memons of Bombay. This is made of straw but the Hill Maria *pagree*, as it is usually called, is a basketry work of thin bamboo strips and is coloured either red or blue. The topee is perforated on all sides and there are small holes on the sides which are stuffed with peacock and jungle fowl feathers. Generally, a long strip of cloth, blue or red, flows from the base of his topee down his back reaching sometimes to the ground. A vest of red cloth is worn in which a rib-like scheme of white cloth is prominently shown. The ribs generally are seven in number. There might be five or nine, usually the odd number is preferred. Below the waist is worn a long and loose skirt, blue or red in colour, with multicoloured border. Over the waist runs a cord in which bunch of large and small brass bells is fastened. The bunch lies at the back of the dancer. There is a big shield of basketry which he proudly holds in his left hand and with a long stick in his right, he mimicks the movements of a warrior in his dance. Each dancer makes his own dancing head-dress and shield. This shows how skilful and aesthetic these Gonds are.

The Maria maidens near Allapalli in Chanda district have very elaborate dancing costumes. The head-wear consists of two strings of cowries one on each side of the head and these strings are joined to a bunch of tiny brass bells which are attached to the hair of the dancer. The cluster of tiny bells is fixed in the middle of the head of the wearer. The neck simply

over-flows with necklets, strings of beads and other kinds of ornaments. There is a metal belt worn round the waist; this belt helps to keep the body covering in its proper position while the maidens are engaged in dancing. Blue or red *saree*, with prominent border and gaudy designs are worn to cover the body. The whole outfit taken together is loud in appearance and novel in design. The scheme helps in adding to the personal charm of the young dancers as well. This picturesque costume is only used during dances and is carefully preserved for such occasions. The head-dress, metal belt and coloured *saree* are used only by the maidens. The privilege of using these ceases with marriage. After marriage personal decorations and dancing costumes are not very much encouraged by the Gonds.

Dress made according to the availability of the raw materials in their surroundings goes to show the ingeniousness of the Gonds. But the socio-economic factors play an important part in matters of clothing. Some of the garments, as described above, are not so much to resist the elements as to fulfil social needs, The fancy dresses that are worn during dances may be said to be an economic waste and can be very easily labelled as luxury, but viewed from cultural and traditional points of view, these have great social value. The precision and the care with which these dancing costumes are worn, and the neat and clean finish that is given to the various component parts of the dancing costume are mostly prompted by the desire of achieving social applause and artistic recognition. These make the Gonds lavish in expenditure in spite of their poverty.

Again, the elaborate system of ornamentation indicates a keen desire for the satisfaction of the aesthetic sense of the wearer. A simple thing like the *khumaree*, the primary purpose of which is protection against rain, receives infinite care and the artistic touch bestowed in its production make it beautiful. The coloured border of the coarse *saree* or *lungara* worn

by the women, though simple, has always an artistic motive behind it. When the problem of the dress of the Gonds is critically examined, we notice that the clothing of these people, too, are changing very rapidly both in their character and technique. This change is mostly due to close contact with higher cultural groups *viz.* the Marhattas, the Oriyas and the Telugus, who are next door neighbours of the Gonds. It is clear, therefore, that the regional and environmental factors and artistic considerations as determined by social tradition and culture, both play an important part in their adoption and choice of clothing.

EXPLOITATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES.

We shall now discuss the question of natural surroundings from another angle and shall see how far the Gonds have succeeded in exploiting their own natural environment to satisfy their wants. We have in the first place to differentiate clearly between the two groups of Gonds, one that still remains in the jungles and build their habitation in inaccessible mountains and their fastnesses and the other group that have migrated to the plain country. We propose to distinguish between these two groups and would call them Hill Gonds and Plain Gonds according to the nature of their habitation. Living in the neighbourhood of caste Hindus, the latter have undergone some transformation in their social and economic outlook. They have, no doubt, adopted Hindu ways of living and have taken to permanent modes of cultivation but all the same it should be remembered that the original, basic Gond culture is still to be found in them. The traditional aspect of Gond life and the principal traits of their culture have not disappeared from them though they have in some parts freely mixed with the caste people. There remain many things that are even now common between the two groups.

The Hill Gonds, who even today practise the shifting type of cultivation known as 'Dippa' or 'Penda' in Bastar, indiscriminately cut the forest,

burn it and then sprinkle seeds on the ashes. To them trees having thick girth and tall trunk are of no consideration but the other group who have slowly begun to realise the value of timber do not cut the trees without discrimination. They do not burn them to ashes but use them for the purpose of timber. They invariably use the *sal* wood as house building material and in places like Chanda and Raipur we have noticed how the thick trunks of trees are sawed into planks and used for *patawa* as they call it, *i. e.*, putting planks below the roof supported by cross beams. This they do to protect themselves from the heat of summer and to secure additional space for storing grains and other domestic articles. It is only the less durable wood and smaller trees that are cut to serve the needs of fuel. Thin branches and slender trees are used for fencing the *baree*. Houses have commonly grass thatches resting on bamboos tied across the roof beams and secured against the wind by bamboo criss-crossed outside the thatch. Sometimes logs are put over the roof to protect grass from being blown off by the wind. The walls of the Hill Gonds' huts are made of pieces of *chhirra* straw, neatly arranged in lines and tied in places with strips of bark, or of split bamboo roughly intersected and tied together in the same way. These walls do not go right upto the roof of the house and thus afford very little protection from the elements. Among the Plain Gonds, mud walls are very common, they prepare a mud plaster, *mati* by mixing loose earth with *pirosee* (Paddy or Kondon chaff) and water; it is a sort of plaster which is used in the raising of walls. The plaster is put up layer on layer. When the mud dries up, a wash of cow-dung solution is used. Grass of a particular kind is used to prepare *masni* (mat). This grass is very soft and the mat prepared out of this can easily be rolled up when not in use. The Gonds sleep on these mats and frequently this is the only kind of furniture which one meets with in the Gotul (dormitory). The visitors to the Gotul are usually offered this mat to sit on.

Leaves of various trees are used for making leaf cups (*dona*) and platters (*patari*). The Gonds use leaf cups to drink their *pej* and wine. Native flax or *patuwa* is used in making strings and ropes of various sizes; this is also utilised in making fishing nets and traps, and in various other ways. Bamboo is very widely used in the construction of houses, as beams, cross-bars, etc. It is also used as a fence for the *baree* in Bastar Chanda, Chhindwara and other districts where bamboo grows in abundance. Baskets of various sizes and shapes are also made from bamboo.

Dug-out troughs of *sal* wood are kept outside the house for water and food for domestic animals, such as pigs and cows. The usual form of door is a rectangle-shaped split bamboo wicker work sliding between two pairs of upright wooden posts. In richer and more advanced villages, among the Plain Gonds, wooden doors and pad-locks are very often seen. Dyes of various kinds are manufactured from the bark and leaves of trees. Black colour from *bhilawa* and *harrah*, yellow colour from *tessu*, flower of *parsa* are greatly admired by them.

Of mineral resources only iron ore is utilised. The village blacksmith usually collects the iron ore and also manages to have a supply of the bark of *saja* tree. He first roasts the ore with the *saja* bark and then after this roasting, smelts it in a furnace with the help of *karra* wood charcoal. This type of iron smelting is more common with Maria blacksmiths in Bastar than elsewhere. The Gonds usually depend upon the village blacksmith (*lohar*) for their supply of agricultural as well as other implements The smelting of iron is not very common among the plain Gonds; usually a caste known as Agharia carries on this trade on an extensive scale in eastern districts of the C. P. and also in Sarguja, Raigarh and Sarangarh states. The Maria smith prepares axe, hoe, (*kodari*) digging iron (*pulu*) and most important of all, the Hill Maria knife. This knife, about 5 to 6 inches in length, and about 3/4th inch in breadth, is an indispensable outfit

of the Maria. He carries it pushed into his loin-cloth with or without a wooden sheath. When the wooden sheath is not available he wraps the blade with a piece of rag to prevent the sharp edge from coming in contact with his skin. The local blacksmith also manufactures the arrow tangs. Stones are commonly used to sharpen axe, knife and arrow blades. Black clay is invariably used for painting the outer walls of the village dormitory among the Murias. In the plains where mud walls are more common among the Gonds, a kind of soft white stone known as *chuhe* is used for white-washing the walls; *pilori-mati*, yellow earth, is made into solution and is also used for seasonal decoration. A red soft stone *gayru*, is powdered and mixed with water for a beautiful red colour. This colour is used for painting the doors and walls and sometimes for decorating the human body as well. There are various other clays and colour stones which yield them material for a wide range of colour-display during their festivals and dances.

Honey is collected from bee-hives and the Gonds have many uses for the *main* (bees-wax) which is also sold in markets. Skins of wild animals have but a few uses, and sometimes these are sold to strangers who want to buy them. In Dhauria market, Bastar, we saw some stag horns for sale. Goat skin is used for covering the drums and other musical instruments. Plumes of peacock and other jungle fowls are used to decorate their dancing costumes. The peacock feather fetches a good price. The fat of tiger, wild boar and bear is carefully preserved by the Gonds. They attach healing and curing poperties to these fats in cases of rheumatism, pain in joints and in certain diseases of children.

SEASONAL RESPONSE OF ECONOMIC PURSUITS.

The calendar of work given below would enable us to study the activities of the Gonds in connection with their food-producing and food-gathering activities as determined by seasonal changes. It will show, further, how each month of a particular season is connected with a specific type of work. We would study this problem from two different standpoints because we have in the Central Provinces two staple crops. These are *rabi* and *kharif*; *rabi*, is an autum crop and consists of rice and lighter kinds of millets like *kodon* and *kutki*. *kharif*, on the other hand, is the spring crop and consists of wheat, gram, *arhar* and other pulses. *Rabi* cultivation is prima-facie evidence of an inferior soil while *kharif* cultivation is a fair guide to the richness of soil.

The table given below would show the distribution of the Gonds in the various districts of the Central Provinces and the principal crops raised in those areas. The latter offers no correlation, however, with the density of population or the cultural life of the various centres.

I	II	III	IV	V
Name of the District.	Principal Crop.	Other Crops in order of importance.	Percentage of Gond population in relation to total population of the district.	Location of the district within the Province.
1. Mandla ...	Rice	Kodon, Kutki, Wheat.	59%	North
2. Seoni ...	Wheat	Kodon, Kutki, Rice.	60%	West
3. Chhindwara	Wheat	Juar, Kodon, Kutki, Rice	34%	West
4. Betul ...	Wheat	Kodon, Kutki, Rice.	29%	West
5. Chanda ...	Wheat	Rice, Cotton, Juar.	22%	South

6. Balaghat...	Rice	Kodon, Kutki, Til, Wheat.	21-7%	Central
7. Raipur ...	Rice	Wheat, Gram, Kodon.	15%	East
8. Bilaspur...	Rice	Wheat, Gram, Kodon.	14%	East
9. Jubbalpur,	Wheat	Gram, Rice, Kodon, Kutki	11-5%	North
10. Hoshang-abad.	Wheat	Gram, Kodon, Kutki, Rice.	11%	West

(Figures quoted above are taken from the Gazetteers of the various districts.)

Names of months.		Economic Calendar.	
English.	Local.	*Rabi* tract.	*Kharif* tract.
May-June.	Jeth	Burning trees in Bastar, Ploughing with *bakhar*, levelling fields. Hunting very common. Fishing at the pools since they are drying up. Repairing houses and storing of fodder.	Hunting. Fishing is very common, Repairing houses. Storing fodder for rainy season.
June-July.	Ashar	Ploughing fields sowing rice. Busiest month of year, sowing maize, bean, pumkins in *baree*. Collecting green leaves and digging out roots of trees.	Ploughing fiields sowing maize pumkins and beans in *baree* collecting green leaves and digging out roots of trees.
July-August.	Sawan	Transplantation of rice or *biasi* operation. First weeding starts. Collecting fruits and roots from the forest.	Not much work. Collecting roots and fruits from the forest
August-September.	Bhadon	Second weeding. Early variety of rice begins to ripe. The first ceremonial eating of light millets. Some agricultural festivals fall in this month.	Busy in repairing agricultural implements.

September-October.	Kunwar	Early variety of rice and millet are cut, threshed and stored.	Millets are cut, threshed and grain stored.
October-November.	Katik	Rice is cut, threshed and grain stored.	Ploughing and sowing of *kharif* crops. Busy month in *kharif* area
November-December.	Aghan	Storing of the new grain. Many festivals including 'Cherchera' dancing season fall in this month.	Many festivals including 'Cherchera', dancing season.
December-January.	Poush	Dancing season. Lighting fires for warmth.	Lighting fires for warmth. Winter festivals.
January-February.	Magh	Ploughing fields when winter rainfall makes the soil soft. Busy in visiting forest and buying timber for house building. Hunting and trapping.	Mostly watching ripening wheat and gram in the fields.
February-March.	Phagun	Fishing and hunting.	*Kharif* crop ready, cutting of the crop begins, extra time spent in trapping birds.
March-April.	Chait	Clearing ground for *jhum* cultivation. Manuring of the rice fields. Marriage season.	Busy gathering *kharif* crop, threshing, winnowing and finally storing the grain. Marriage season.
April-May.	Baisakh.	Manuring the fields. Repairing the 'bunds' and levelling the fields. Hunting by the drying pools and fishing.	Repairing the 'bunds' or fields. Hunting and fishing by the drying tanks.

The Gonds living in the plains and closely in contact with the Hindus have adopted local Hindu names for the months. There are twelve months in the year and the names of the months are as follows:—

	English months.	Months of the year as named by the Plain Gonds.
1.	January—February	Magh.
2.	February—March	Phagun.
3.	March—April	Chait.
4.	April—May	Baisakh.
5.	May—June	Jeth.
6.	June—July	Ashar.
7.	July—August	Sawan.
8.	August—September	Bhadon.
9.	September—October	Kuwar.
10.	October—November	Katik.
11.	November—December....	Aghan.
12.	December—January	Push.

The calendar is lunar and is regulated according to the Sambat year. Each month is of 30 days. Each month is divided in two equal halves, *Shuklapaksha* and *Krishnapaksha* or the light and dark fortnights of fifteen days each. The *Shuklapaksha* is the period from the new moon to the full moon, the *Krishnapaksha* is the 15 days of the waning moon. Thus it gives only 360 days ; the difference of another five is adjusted by an intercalary month in certain years which is known as *Malamash*, extra month or waste month. This is also done in Hindu calendar.

Among the Hill Murias of Bastar and the Murias of Chanda we have 12 months in a year which are named as follows :—

	English months.	Months of the year as named by the Hilll Marias.
1.	December—January	Pusi.
2.	January—February	Magh.
3.	February—March	Phagun.
4.	March—April	Chait.
5.	April—May	Mur.
6.	May—June	Na.
7.	June—July	Nai.
8.	July—August	Hagh.
9.	August—September	Eranj.
10.	September—October	Eyam.
11.	October—November	Orma.
12.	November—December	Pandi

The calendar is, of course, lunar. The word *jenj* stands for month.

Betul, Chhindwara, Hoshangabad and Seoni districts lie in the westerly direction of the C. P. and have *kharif* as the main crop. *Rabi* is the main crop in Mandla, Balaghat, Raipur and Bilaspur. *Ashar* (June-July) is the most important of the months in the rice growing areas. It is in this month that the ploughing and sowing paddy is carried on and hence the common proverb :—

Ashar ka chuka kishan, dal ka chuka bandar. It means that a cultivator who misses ploughing his fields in the month of *Ashar* is as unlucky as a monkey who misses the branch of the tree to which he is jumping. *Kartik* is the most important month in the tract where wheat and pulses are extensively cultivated. Wheat is sown in this month and so goes the popular saying: *Kartik kisan sowai, tho baris bhar rowai.* It means that if the cultivator does not do

his work promptly during the month of *Kartik*, he has to repent the whole year. Thus *Ashar* and *Kartik* are the most valuable months of the calendar when the cultivators should put forth their maximum amount of labour to earn a good harvest.

Thus we may say that in *rabi* and *kharif* tracts there are well defined economic activities; and each area has its characteristic features in the scheme of agricultural and other pursuits.

During *Holi*, the festival on the last day of *Phagun* a huge, bonfire is ceremonially practised by all the Gonds. To some groups this event is an indication of the termination of the current year. The mangoe fruits just come out of their blossoms, herald the advent of the new year. The first of *Chait* is a day of festivity. On this day mangoe, tamarind and other new fruits of the season are ceremonially eaten to signify the first day of the new year. By this time *kharif* crop has been harvested, threshing and winnowing successfully completed and the grains safely stored; *rabi* crop is already in the granary. The spring rules the season, the temperature is moderate and the natural surroundings picturesque; this is the time of plenty both in *rabi* and *kharif* tracts. All these go to make the light hearted Gond more light with his drinking bowl at this time of the year. These two months, *Chait* and *Baisakh* are replete with social activities. The Gonds utilize this part of the year in visiting friends, attending marriages and arranging betrothals *mangani*. Most of the marriages are celebrated during these months; feast and festivals, marriage parties and other social activities have assured success during this period on account of the leisure available to the people, besides, they have no important economic undertaking at this time which might require their labour. Hunting by the side of tank, where the wild animals come to quench their thirst is common pastime. Fishing in the pools which are just drying up, is a favourite pursuit undertaken both by men and women. Birds are trapped when they come to

drink water in the tanks and streams. Thus April and May are spent happily in social activities and in trapping and fishing. For the Gonds these two may be regarded as the holiday months of the year.

During *Jeth* (May—June) and *Ashar* (June—July) the ground is broken up just before the monsoon rains and before they clog the soil. *Penda* fields in Bastar are 'fired'. Just before the monsoon bursts into heavy showers, the ploughed and levelled fields are sown with paddy. When the seeds have sprouted with the coming of the rains and when sufficient water has accumulated in the fields, the *Biasi** operation is performed. With the first shower in *Ashar* (June—July) the Gonds attend to their *baree*, the garden attached to their huts. In this *baree*, the kitchen garden, they grow maize, pumkins, and beans etc., which rank as substantial supplementary crops. During *Sawan* (July—August) the women and children go about the forest and collect fruits and roots that are used as food. *Bhadon* (August—September) constitutes weeding season in which the rice fields are weeded. By the end of September and during October their *baree* is full of fruits. By that time the early varieties of millets are ready. The period between weeding and harvesting is a little trying, because, usually at this time of the year, the grains are all exhausted and the Gond labourers and cultivators are usually seen to make the best use of their *baree* produce 'to keed them going'. During *Kuwar* (September—October) early variety of rice and millet grains like *kodon* and *kutki* are cut, threshed and stored. *Kartik* (October—November) is the busiest of months in *rabi* as well as in *kharif* tract. In the *kharif* area, during this month, wheat is sown and the harvesting, threshing and winnowing of the *rabi* crop is completed. Immediately after the cutting of the *rabi* crop, rice specially—various kinds of birds such as *titar*, *batir*, *lawa*, *jhoha* are trapped

* It implies the digging up of the saplings with the plough for a time, because that makes them grow healthier in the long run. This is a crude way and a substitute for transplantation on a wide scale.

in the rice fields. Ducks and teals migrating from snowy heights of the northern mountainous regions to enjoy the moderate winter of the Indian plains are also killed at this time. The fowlers' life in these tracts, therefore, is fairly busy, in summer with the local birds, and in the winter with the migratory ones.

With the *rabi* crop stored and the sowing of *kharif* over, the favourite cold weather—*Aghan* (November—December) and *Poush* (December—January) appears; these two months may easily be taken to be a sort of off-time both in *rabi* and *kharif* areas because there is not much work in the fields till the *kharif* crop ripens when it becomes necessary to save it against the depredations of birds and beasts. Most of the festivals, therefore, take place in these two winter months and the great dancing festival *Cherchera* which includes visiting village after village with dance parties, takes place in *Poush*. During these two months the Gonds are seen in the best of their spirits. The young unmarried Muria Gonds visit village after village with their *Gotul* (dormitory) sweet-hearts who accompany them to all the places the party goes round. Here invariably the lovers grow intimate and formal friendly relation is intimately cemented, after various trials and jolly good nights, by the marriage of the pair during *Chait*, the first month of the new year. The winter months thus pass in merry-making. With its dancing carnival of *Cherchera* in *Poush* (December—January), with its various social, secular observances mixed with other casual activities, the winter probably is the best and the most romantic period of the year among the Gonds.

The spring months *Magh* (January—February) and *Phagun* (February—March) are very trying periods of the year. The fields of the *kharif* then are full and the cultivators have to watch the crops carefully and save them against all kinds of pests. *Phagun* (February—March) is given over to harvesting, threshing and winnowing and storing of the *kharif* crop.

Ten or nine months, roughly speaking, of the

year are busy months among the Gonds. The remaining, two in winter and one in the hot season are interposed with harvest festivals, rituals, feasts and dance. Needless to say that such festive relaxation effects release of tension in sex-life.

We draw some valuable conclusions from this survey of the activities of the Gonds in different parts of the year. We can very easily assume that the Gonds have a seasonal organisation of labour, a well-defined regulation of economic activities in which each of the various occupations has a well worked out scheme of duration or periodicity. The change in climate brings about corresponding changes in the vegetation of the season; and animal life does not escape the effects of this variation either. The ripening of the various crops, the maturity of the grains are easily perceived by the people whose long experience in the fields and farms have equipped them with a working knowledge of the science of soil and crops, though their methods remain as crude as ever. It is no wonder that the economic activities of the people fit in well with a scheme which they have built up largely by experience and in response to the needs of their domestic life.

Rabi and *kharif*, the autumn and spring crops, respectively, have resulted in different calendars of work in different parts of the Gond country. The Gond in the *kharif* area and in the *rabi* tract have different kinds of supplementary crops.

A third point relates to the difference in the type of food. The *rabi* area provides abundance of rice, so *pej* or gruel of rice or millets, *kodon* and *kutki* boiled in water, or *bhat*, stiff-porridge, with some vegetables, form the staple diet of the *rabi* area. In the *kharif* tract, though wheat is the main crop, it is consumed to a limited extent because it is usually exported from these areas and a grain known as *juar* is substituted for wheat. This *juar* is the chief diet for the people here. It must be pointed out, however, that light millet grains are always preferred in both the areas, and among the primitive Gonds, it

is always *pej* of *kodon* and *kutki* that constitute the main diet, supplemented either by fruits, roots or by some kind of meat or fish.

With every change of season there is thus a change in the menu. Summer is always good for fishing, so fish as food is common and taken more frequently and in ample quantity. *Mahua*, *char* and *tendu* fruits are gathered during summer months and eaten in plenty. With the coming of monsoon rains and the first heavy shower, the leaves of various trees and roots compensate to a large extent for the meat diet of the summer season. Non-vegetarian diet of the summer months is much modified by the vegetable substitutes of the early rains, when leaves, roots and shoots are to be had in plenty. Snaring of birds is rare during the rains because in the rains birds are mostly in their nests and the climate does not permit the activities of the fowler. But it is common during summer and winter when the birds are mostly moving about and also because the time then is favourable for laying out nets on dry ground.

Thus we find that seasonal and climatic variation modify the economic pursuits of the Gonds and are also responsible for the change of phases in their occupation and social habits.

CHAPTER FOUR

TRIBAL SETTLEMENTS AND SOCIAL STRATIFICATION.

The economic activities of the Gonds, as we have already seen, primarily centre round their bare subsistence. We propose to take up the economic institutions and the social structure of the Gond community, as these two are closely associated. The best way to treat the subject would be to split up the general structure of the Gond society into its component units, the various social groupings and institutions which hold the people together in the normal routine of life, and then to take up each of these separately and evaluate its economic role. Without a wide sociological point of view Gond economics cannot be seen as a functional and harmonious whole.

One of the determining factors in the formation of society is the region in which a particular society lives and grows. Most of the tribes have some peculiar notions about the proper site on which to build their settlements. The Hos of Chota Nagpur, for example, in their search for village sites take the help of the 'tasters', who taste water and soil and when these appear suitable they settle down.* The Birhors of the Ranchi district move from site to site, with the village priest at their head. This priest divines for his clients the attitude of the sylvan deities and where he feels that the spirits are favourably disposed, he instructs them to pitch their temporary settlement or *tanda*. In choosing a locality, stress is also laid on the facility of association that it provides for the members of the tribe.

In earlier days when people used to live in village communities, the *Panchayats* had considerable influence and these organisations were mostly responsible in matters of choosing village sites after a proper examination of their physical features and their surroundings. Sometimes the site chosen was one on

*Majumdar D. N, A Tribe in Transition.

the top of a high hill or on a piece of rising ground covered with thick forest. With some modification, this state of affairs has persisted even now. The population in places like these is naturally very scanty; the huts are few in number and mostly scattered. But in the plains where the soil is richer and more fertile, the population is thicker and the huts are more numerous and built very close to one another. This is purely a question of demand and supply. In the hills there is no dearth of land ; so each family can occupy as much area as it likes but in the fertile plains land is valuable, and thus the area occupied by an individual is much reduced in size. Then there comes another factor in the selection of village sites, which is connected with the security of the inhabitants. Many deserted village sites that we come across in the reserve forests of Chanda, Mandla and Betul show that once the people thought it more secure to live within thick forests than to reside in the plains and be exposed to the attacks of their enemies. In olden days when raids were more frequent, many villages were located in well fortified positions, or in places which had natural defence, for instance a hill top or a bend in a river, or the slope of a steep cliff etc. All these were then regarded as ideal, secure sites for villages.

The primitive Gond villages are frequently situated in the heart of a forest because the people prefer wild life. In dense jungles the Gond village seldom counts more than five or six huts in all, containing about a score of human beings.

A hamlet situated in the plain country consists of twenty to fifty cattle huts thatched with grass. The main street lies in the middle which is the sole thoroughfare and the only means of ingress and egress. Speaking about designs in primitive habitation, Dr. Mukerjee refers to a particular type of hamlet in which there is " arrangement of huts in parallel rows facing each other resulting in the formation of alleys or streets. This may be called the ' street or heap village."*. There might be some more streets in a *tola*

(bigger village) but this is not usual with the typical Gond village. The Gonds live in villages built on an entirely novel principle Instead of one homogeneous collection of houses, the typical Gond settlement consists of one long wide street (about 5-10 yards wide), running east and west, and the houses are built on either side of this wide street. A Gond has many prejudices as to which side of the main street he will choose to erect his house.

At present the condition of Gond villages, both in their composition and technique, have undergone some changes from the traditional type, though much of it still remains. In most of the districts of the C. P. where Gonds are numerous the village sites are selected in such a manner that they have the natural advantage of surface drainage. In Mandla, Chanda, Chhindwara and Betul districts, we find that most of the villages are situated on elevations that are either stony or covered with light *murram* soil. A slope is most essential for them for carrying off the surface drainage from the hamlets into the small back garden or *baree*, without which no Gond house is complete.

We propose here to describe a typical Gond village. As we have said above, the village is usually located on a raised piece of land having the advantage of natural drainage. Trees like Mangoe, Tamarind, Jamun, Pipal and Ber are very common in and about the villages and are carefully preserved. The *chabutra*, which is a raised platform, on which village-gods are housed and which serves as a meeting place for the villagers, is erected under the shade of such trees. The villagers sometimes assemble there, to discuss important matters concerning the village arrangement. The houses are built on either side of the main street, which runs through the middle of 'the street village'*. Somewhere to the east of the village will be the burial ground scattered all over with bits of broken bamboo biers, *arthi* (in which the dead body is carried

* Man and his Habitation by Dr. Radha Kamal Mukerjee. Page 32.

to the burial ground) and number of *gharras*, (earthen pots) lying about, brought in with the dead bodies. On the extreme eastern boundary of the village a number of long stone cairns are found, with poles, flying flags at the top fixed into the middle of heaps of stone. These are the shrines or cenotaphs of Gonds, who have died violent deaths mauled by tigers. The members of the family of the deceased visit this place and make annual offerings for the purification of their soul. Sometimes a wooden plough, with a ring of roughly carved stakes, painted with vermillion, is placed at a short distance from the village to mark the last resting place of the dead. Just outside the village, under *mahua*, *saja* or some fig tree, will be seen a small shed, about three feet high, surrounded by broken cocoanut shells and small sticks with little flags flying from their tops. This is the village shrine and the place of *khair mata*. Inside that little and rough temple is seen a smooth stone lavishly painted in red colour and an iron *trisul* (Trident) with a pierced lemon sticking to the middle prong. The whole place emits a horrible smell of country-wine, that is poured on the slab whenever some offering is made.

In most cases the Gonds prefer to drink stream-water to anything else. The most characteristic feature of a Gond village is the distillery, recognised or unrecognised, the latter being more common. Since the new system of contractor's spirit has been introduced illicit distillation is carried on by means of a crude apparatus consisting of some earthen pots and a narrow pipe, that are kept hidden in the jungle, generally, near a stream. Within a second's notice of the excise officers' visit to the village, the whole 'plant' of distillation is made to disappear. The whole village sometimes even the *mukaddam* and *kotwar*, the village headman and watchman respectively are a party to this unholy alliance. The secret is well guarded but in case it leaks out or some persons are caught

* 'Economics in primitive communities'. R. Thurnwald. Page 28.

red-handed by the authorities, the whole village subscribes to pay the fines imposed on the culprits and supports the families of those who are sent to prison.

The headmar of the village is known as *mandal* and is invariably the *mukaddam* (official headman). He is usually a substantial man having several ploughs. There is another important personality in the village—the *panda* or the village priest. He usually serves a circle of villages and lives a solitary life within a gaudily beflagged quarter. Then there is the *baiga* or medicineman, or the village leech, who sometimes plays a double role both that of a village medicineman and a village magician. Then there are other people of the artisan class, for example, the village blacksmith *lohar*, the *panka* or *mahar* who makes cloth ; the *ghasia*, who supplies ornaments and the *rawat* who takes the village cattle for grazing and serves the police as well as other executive officers when they visit the villages during their tour. This completes the list of the people with their various occupations in a Gond village. There may be a little variation in this usual composition in some places. The Gonds always like it best to have their own settlements. When they have to live among the Hindus they have their own quarters—*Gondpara* (the quarters of the Gonds) situated quite apart from those of the caste population of the village.

The village huts are usually tiled in the plains and thatched in the forest. The roof is supported by a *baderi* (roof tree) which rests on a pair of upright beams : it is built of *tatti's* with a kind of thatching grass carelessly thrown on it. The *oria* or the front eaves at the door are only about 3 to 4 feet high, so that a fully grown up person has to stoop low to enter the hut. The walls which stand on the ground without a plinth, are generally made of wattle and plastered with a thin layer of mud and then rinsed with a solution of cow-dung. One of the peculiarities of a Gond house is that admission can be gained only by one entrance leading from the high street of the village. The

entrance is closed at night by a door of bamboo *taihi* which is fixed to a *thunia* (wooden support), this can be fastened to the opposite door post by means of a string. Sometimes the *tatta* is made to hang on a bamboo which can be slid along or simply placed in front doorway. In better type of huts plank doors and padlocks are not uncommon. There are no windows but sometimes there are small openings here and there in the walls; these add to the ventilation of a room, but only to a limited extent. Behind the house in the garden or *baree* and in front of it is the *agana* (courtyard) containing the *chowra* (a lightly raised platform) used by the people for drying *mahua* and other kinds of vegetables. The cattle-shed is built at one of the sides of the *agana* but usually the calves are tied in the same hut in which they sleep. The whole area containing the hut, the *baree* and the *agana* is fenced round with bamboo poles with the only entrance on the main road. Some houses have verandahs both in the front and at the back, the one at the back being used as cattle-shed or *khota* and the other in the front serving as a second room and occasionally as a guest room. A house generally faces the north or east and in no case would it face the south, because they say *yama*, the god of death, lives in that direction. It would bring calamity if the house faces that direction. So great is their fear of *yama* that no Gond sleeps with his feet pointing to the south, only the corpses are buried in that position, with their feet towards the abode of that dreaded deity. The hut of a well-to-do Gond consists of a central room and small side rooms but generally it is a long hall partitioned by means of a row of tall baskets in which the grains are stored. Where there is more than one room, in the side rooms large bottle shaped receptacles of earth, *kothys* are placed for holding grain. When these *kothys* are filled with grain the tops are sealed with mud and holes are bored at the bottom from which the grain is allowed to flow out as required from time to time.

In Chhindwara district there are large pits dug

out for holding grain in gravel-soil. Some of the pits are so big that they can hold 300 to 400 maunds (10 to 15 tons) of grains. Linseed may be safely stored in these pits for seven to eight years. Wheat will not last for more than two or three years. At times the grains are stored in small brick receptacles above the ground covered on top with leaves and plastered with clay.

The house of the Malguzar or the Patel is called *wara* or *bara* and is built of unbaked bricks and mud. Sometimes it is a big double storied building. In Chanda the common type of the Malguzar's house is of *sondi* pattern. It consists of a strong square room, having thick clay walls without windows or any other opening. The roof is made of wooden planks over which thick clay is spread out. Over this a light second storey is erected and there are verandahs on all sides of the square room. The doorway and the only opening of the central room, called the *sondi*, projects from the wall and being small and low can be easily closed with bricks or stone slabs, shaped to fit the opening. In case of fire all valuables are hastily thrown into this room. When the small dooway is closed it is practically fire-proof. At the back of the house there is a courtyard surrounded by a high wall. Against the sides of the wall are built cattle-shed and rooms for keeping agricultural implements.

But in other parts of the province the Gond Malguzars or Patels have other types of houses with a verandah in front of the house; then there are central and side rooms with verandah at the back of the house with the *khota* and *baree* behind it. The roof and pillars of the front verandah—the *baitakhana* (sitting room), where people gather and where the Malguzar or the Patel holds the *panchayat*, are made of teak or *sal* woods. The pillars supporting the roof are sometimes finly carved. These *baras*, as they are named, are repaired annually by the villagers when the Patel's seed-bins are opened before the rains. This is the place where usually the *panchayat* take place to settle local disputes. Officials stay here; in

fact it is used for various purposes. We shall be dealing with the social function of the *bara* later on.

We shall now turn our attention from British India to Indian India. Bastar being the stronghold of the various sections of Gonds we shall describe the mode of selecting village sites and houses in this area. We shall point out only the special features and would leave out those elements which are common in British India and Bastar. The Muria and the Hill Maria of Bastar, who, even now, widely practise patch cultivation, generally have their villages on the hill slopes where enough trees are still available for firing to sow light millets like *kodon* and *kutki* on the ashes got from burning them. These Gonds are in the habit of changing their village sites now and then. The traditional arrangement of the houses on either side of the street, is fairly maintained. Among the Hill Marias, we find a village menstruation hut. It is a small hut built outside the village and the women in monthly courses occupy this hut for a week. They remain there and have ther food in it, they also sleep there and come to their residential huts after a week when they have taken a bath. The door of this cottage opens to the other side of the village so that the occupants of the room may go out to answer calls of nature, without being seen by any villager. The Hill Maria house is a simple affair having a small room with walls built of stakes cut from the nearest jungle, entwined with rude wicker-work and sometimes plastered with mud. The roof consists of a thin layer of dried grass over which leaves are spread out and poles of bamboo are fastened to prevent the leaves and grass being blown off by the wind. Except having a few earthen pots for storing water, they have no bedding, no furniture nor plates to eat from; leaves of the forest serve all purposes. The huts are so small that there is not enough accommodation for all the members of the family, and that is one of the probable reasons why the grown up unmarried people have to sleep in

the village dormitory.

If two or more persons die in a hut in one year the Maria family very often abandons it and makes a new one. When quitting the old one they bore an exit on the back wall to clear out, thus avoiding the usual exit by the front. This is generally done when death has been due to some epidemic. If the village is visited by an epidemic the whole settlement is deserted and they frequently make a new one. This is one of the reasons for abandoning village sites, no doubt, but the principal reason is the exhaustion of the site for further *penda* cultivation. It is economic necessity which makes the Marias change their habitation frequently.

The *gaitra* Gonds of Chanda make their huts in the form of two long barracks lying east and west, facing each other, with a wide street in between them. In these barracks the married people dwell while the bachelors of the tribe are removed to barracks at one end of the village. In some cases it has been seen that the unmarried young girls have barracks at the opposite end of the village; but usually they live in the house of the *gaita* or the headman or with the widows.

The Hill Marias have a dormitory where the bachelors go to sleep during the night but the unmarried girls sleep in their parents' house. Among the Murias of Kondagaon and Narainpur (Bastar) whom Grigson* calls *gotul* Murias, there is an institution known as 'Gotul'. This 'Gotul' which is a house sometimes situated in a corner of the village, is the meeting and sleeping place of the boys and girls of the tribe. We propose to discuss the social aspect of this institution when we deal with village organisations.

This in short is the picture of a Gond settlement. The economic and social factors have a great influence upon the life of the tribe and these would be examined in the pages that follow.

---

*The Maria Gonds of Bastar. Grigson. Page 46.

THE *bara* AND THE *guree*

The *bara* of the house of the resident Malguzar or the Patel (landlord) of the village is generally situated at the centre of the village. It is a place from where the organisation and supervision of the social, religious and cultural life of the community are carried on. It is here that the village elders meet in an informal council and it sometimes serves the purpose of a guest house for such travellers, officials and non-officials as may happen to claim the hospitality of the village Malguzar or the Patel. This is usually a pretty well-constructed house. The pillars of the verandah have often beautiful carvings and the roof is covered with wooden planks. The house is sometimes a double-storeyed one. In a village there is another house known as *guree* which is the recognised officials' rest-house and the meeting place of the villagers. In villages where there is a *bara*, (the residential house of the Malguzar or the Patel) this *guree* occupies an inferior place. A village may not have a *bara*, but there must be *guree* which is constructed from the funds contributed by all the villagers together. It is invariably a substantial structure and is always superior in shape and size to the average house of the village. It is usually a single roomed house with doors and windows and verandahs in front and at the back. Sometimes it is square shaped with verandahs on all the four sides. The central room or the hall is big enough to accommodate some 40 to 50 people. The size of this *guree* mostly depends upon the population of the village. The greater the population of the village the bigger the *guree*. At one corner, some horse-shoe shaped *chullas* (ovens) are seen. These are used for cooking by the occupants. Whatever may be the size of the *guree* its importance cannot be minimised because its social significance is great.

This *guree* when occupied by the officials is the place where local enquiry is held by the police, the executive or the revenue officials as the case may be. So long as it is occupied by unwelcome officials, the normal daily activities that take place in and about

the *guree* remain suspended but when non-officials or travellers are the occupants of the *guree* such activities are not very much hampered. When an official camps at the *guree*, it ceases to be a merry meeting place and is looked upon with fear and suspicion. A villager then will never visit the *guree* unless the *mukaddam* (headman) or the *kotwar* (watchman) comes and presses him to go there; *panchayats* are called and local disputes are settled here. Usually the *mandal*, the headman of the village or the official headman, the *mukaddam*, presides over the village council. He is the *sir-panch* (head of the group of the *panchas*) in the caste *panchayat*. Elderly people are usually the members of the *panchayat*. The decision arrived at by the Panchas is final and every villager has to abide by it. In a village where the Malguzar or the Patel himself resides, the *mukaddam* occupies the second position in the village cabinet and the Malguzar or the Patel acts as the *sir-panch* and the seat of *panchayat* is shifted from the *guree* to the *bara*. The *guree* is thus the centre of normal village life. It is a place where manly sports and games are exhibited, and dances are arranged in front of it. The grown up people sit there in groups in their leisure hours in the afternoon. After dinner they have various kinds of discourses and discussions here. Singing, gossiping and story telling are the most common items included in the daily programme. In odd corners people carry on such pursuits as twining rope, weaving fishing net and the like, work that can be easily performed while taking part in a conversation. Apart from its being the assembly hall of the village people, it is also the place where certain religious and magical ceremonies take place. Before and after the communal fishing, hunting and food and fruit gathering, the people of the village assemble here The place is used not only for settling their plan of operation before they begin all such ventures but also for dividing the spoils afterwards. Thus it is a scene of economic activities. Travellers and visitors are sometimes received here. The itinerant sellers of

cloth, ornaments and other wares use it as their show room; sometimes marriage and dance parties are housed in the *guree*. In a word, it is utitized in a thousand and one ways in fulfilling the demands of the society, being the nucleus of the whole village social organisation.

This is a somewhat comprehensive picture of the *guree* and the various activities that take place there. the *guree* of a Gond village is indeed associated with different kinds of activities and plays a leading role in the organisation of the village society economically, socially and culturally.

In our study of *bara* and *guree*, two Gond institutions of public importance, we have kept our attention confined to the community as a whole. The community is made of individual families which form its units. It is necessary now to analyse the different units which go to constitute the village community and to study the nature of social stratification.

The Gond village, as has been indicated, consists of a number of houses each of which is occupied by a family. Only in a few cases it has been noticed that all the brothers live together under the same roof. The husband, wife and the children form the family unit. A grown up male member of a family, as soon as he is married, shifts from the parental home and has a separate cottage for himself. The youngest brother usually stays with the old parents and occupies the old family hut but the elder brothers have new huts built separately. But though they live separately the social bond between them is not snapped.

We have already seen that the typical Gond cottage is a simple affair, having only one door in front, no windows for ventilation and the interior fittings, very humble. Sometimes among the well-to-do Plain Gonds there are cots for each grown-up member of the family; the cots are strong with ropes made either from *sun* (Hemp) or grass. The bedding consists of layers of old rags *godari* stitched together, which are seldom washed and are therefore extremely dirty. A piece of thick wooden plank *pidha* serves as a com-

fortable pillow and is also used as a seat for guests. Cooking and drinking utensils in a poor family are all made of clay. In a well-to-do family they are of brass and bell-metal. But a *lota* (drinking bowl) of either brass or bell-metal is commonly met with in every family. Aluminium utensils are coming into use and are substituting brass and bell-metal, probably due to their cheapness. Earthen pots, *handia* and *marki* are largely used for both cooking and boiling water, and storing milk, curd and *ghee*. In the middle of the hut there is a grain-bin, a large structure of mud raised above the ground and covered with mud serving also as a sort of rough partition dividing the room into two. Along the walls of the house and verandah there are numerous little shelves and recesses, *pathaira* which hold various small articles. It is almost impossible to describe fully the various articles that are to be found on the roof beams, shelves and walls of the house; *sika*, *kawar* ropes, bullocks' bells, axes, sticks, pots, baskets etc., are hung or placed about everywhere in a picturesque confusion. One corner of the room always contains the emblem of the deity *dulhadeo*, who is the household god of the Gonds. In another corner we find the *chulla*, an oven made of earth and shaped like a horse-shoe. By the side of the *chulla* there is a place called *irni* where they put the rice-pot before the gruel is drained off and poured into a flat pot, *kundera* that stands below on the floor. *Sil*, the stone slab for powdering and grinding spices and the stone roller, *lorha*, are kept near the oven. The Malguzar, the Patel, the *mukaddam* or the headman have more furniture than other people. Yet, a humble chair with a stool in most cases complete the items of a 'drawing room' outfit. A cot is a necessary piece of furniture in the house of well-to-do people. They also have ornaments of silver or gold, better clothing and large stores of grains.

There are, broadly speaking, three classes of people in the Gond society, the aristocracy, the tenantry and the labourers. To understand these

groups or divisions it requires a closer study. Men belonging to the aristocratic or ruling class are called *Raj Gonds*. 'Raja' means the noble or the ruling class. This class includes Malguzars, Patels and other proprietors of the village lands. The headman, *mandal*, *mukaddam*, *bhoi*, if he has once been a Malguzar or lessee, may be included in this class. Then comes the *dhur* or *dust* Gonds, the plebs or commoners; they constitute the peasantry. The tenants are people of low social standing due to their humble birth. But it must be mentioned that both *raj* Gond and *dhur* Gond trace their descent from the same common ancestors. There are the *pardhans* and the *ojhas* who are included among the tenantry. The *pardhans* were formerly the musicians and bards attached to Gond families of distinction. They were minstrels and genealogists who memorised the pedigrees of Gond gods and sang their praises and monstered their achievements. They are, as a class, now looked down upon by the Gonds and considered inferior because of their habit of accepting clothes of the departed at funerals. They are like the Maha Patra Brahmins amongst the Hindus who accept '*dan*' or gifts in *sradh* in which oblations are offered to the manes of the ancestors. The *ojhas* are priests and soothsayers, and in some parts they have now become professional musicians and dancers and go round begging. Only men dance in special attire and wear anklets with tiny bells. They sing songs either in praise of Gond gods or their brave ancestors. In the past these two classes were much respected but they have been degraded now for doing work which the society looks down upon. Special social status is attached to priests—*panda*, *perma*, *waddai* (the names by which they are known in different parts of the Gond country). Then there are the *baiga* the local medicineman and the *gunia*, the wizard, who practise black magic; but the status of these two depends more upon their personal skill than upon their birth. The *lohar*, (village blacksmith) the *panka* and the *mahar*,

(weaver), have gained their social position by reason of their skill and the service they render to the community.

The Raj Gonds or the proprietory section are a class apart and the superiority of their social status is never challenged because they trace their origin from the old ruling race of the land. But in the case of other classes like the tenantry and labourers, birth does not give any social prerogative. Their status is determined by the social function they perform. They have the same origin, but the profession they follow have, as it were, separated them. On the whole we may say that among the Gonds there are only two main divisions, the Raj Gonds, that is the ruling class and the *dhur* or plebeian Gonds, the ruled, who are now designated by various professional or generic names. To the former belong the big Zamindars, Malguzars, Patels, headmen and others occupying some responsible posts in the village organisation and to the *dhur* or *dust* or plebs belong the men discharging other functions in the sccial structure. The majority of the Gonds of the Central Provinces fall under these two main heads.

The difference in social status between these two classes is not marked by any extra show of respect for the higher. The lower class does not crouch or make servile obeisance to the higher but greet the superior class with such forms of salutation as are prescribed by the rules of common etiquette between the elder and younger members of a society. The Gonds are very independent in spirit. The special position of the tribal headman, *mandal* or the leader, is due to his financial stability, no doubt, but there are also other factors which count a good deal in the maintaining of his position. His skill as a speaker, his superior attainments, his knowledge of various things, and similar other qualification, all go to invest him with power and position. He must have, in addition to these, some practical and active qualities, such as foresight, managing ability and bodily strength. Nobility of birth is not the only quality or the sole passport which

makes the headman so powerful in the community. For example, we may relate the case of one Nem Singh, the headman of village Nawapara in Bilaspur district, who was a man of substance, cultivating several acres of land and employing several plough-men. He was leading a life slightly more luxurious than that of other tenants of the village and was making small advances of grain and money to the people of his own village and the neighbouring villages. His son, Parmodhi, occupied his father's *gaddi* and became the accredited headman of the village after his father's death. But it was found that he was weak and easily influenced by people and even ready to accept bribes from the parties brought before the *panchayat*. Poor Parmodhi had to vacate the headmanship. This is an example that shows that though birth and wealth may entitle one to occupy a hereditary position, yet these must be combined with practical virtues in retaining an office.

Labourers are usually those people who have not enough to support themselves. They generally work as farm hands employed by the Mandal, Malguzar or Patel and well-to-do tenants. There is no stigma attached to this profession. Both men and women and sometimes even children go to work in the fields. The relation between them and their masters is cordial and pleasant. The farm labourers engaged on yearly basis are known as *kamias*, who till the soil, plough the fields and carry on all the other operations of the field for their *kisan* master. Usually those members of the tribe who have no land or have no means to cultivate their agricultural land serve as day labourers. The labourers as a class play an important part and are responsible for the extensive cultivation of a huge tract of country. Without the co-operation and good will of these farm labourers it would have been impossible to cultivate such a vast area.

CHAPTER V.

THE YOUTH HOUSE OR THE GOTUL INSTITUTION.

The *gotul*, or the village dormitory, is an interesting and useful social institution among the Gonds. A bachelors' house or an unmarried girls' house or a common dormitory for youths of both the sexes is to be met with among the primitive people of both India and abroad. In India, bachelors' house is found among the Hos, Mundas, Oraons and other tribes of Chota Nagpur. It is also common among Konyak tribes of the Naga Hills in Assam. Such an institution is also to be found in Africa among the Masais and it is widely scattered among the primitive tribes of Melanesia, Indonesia and New Guinea.

The Mundas and the Hos call the dormitory, *gitiora* the Oraons call it, *jonkerpa*, and among the Gonds it is known as *gotul guree* or *gotul*. The Konyak Nagas of Assam call it the *morung* or men's house and they call the girls' dormitory, *yo*. A bachelors' dormitory is more common, here boys collect at night and sleep together. Sometimes there exist two separate huts in which bachelors and spinsters are segregated. Among the Konyak Nagas of Assam there are separate dormitories for unmarried boys and girls. The girls' dormitory is situated very near the boys. But in some places, the girls' dormitory *yo* and the boys' dormitory *morung* both are housed in one building. Among the *gaitra* Gonds of Chanda, we find separate barracks for bachelors and unmarried women and there is a third dormitory which is exclusively reserved for the use of the married couples of the village. Among the Hill Marias of Bastar there are dormitories which are used by the bachelors and the married men and also by the boys, but in no case are women or girls allowed to visit these houses or huts. Among the Murias living near about Kondagaon and Narainpur in Bastar there is one house, which is used as dormitory by both unmarried adolescent boys and girls.

It must be pointed out in this connection that this

kind of institution is not to be found among the Gonds of Mandla, Betul, Balaghat, Chhindwara and other districts of the Central Provinces. It is popular only in Chanda district among the *gaitra* and *maria* Gonds. In Bastar it is common among the Marias and Murias. The Muria *gotul* institution appears to have attained some degree of perfection and in many villages this institution has definitely superseded other kinds of tribal organisation; *gotuls* have also been found to exist in Kanker State which lies just adjacent to Bastar. Russell and Hiralal in 'Tribes and Castes of the CP', write thus about the *gotul*. "Many Gond villages in Chhatisgarh and the Feudatory States have what is known as *gotul ghar*. This is a large house near the village where unmarried youths and maidens collect and dance and sing together at night. Some villages have two, one for the boys and the other for the girls. In Bastar the boys have regular organisation, their captain being called Sirdar, and the master of the ceremonies, Kotwar, while they have other officials bearing the designation of the state officials."* From the above account, it is clear that the authors are of opinion that these *gotuls* are also to be found in Chhatisgarh. No doubt the authors are right in saying that they existed in Bastar and even today a good many of them are to be found in the Maria and Muria habitations of Bastar and Chanda. But it is open to question how far *gotuls* existed among the Gonds of Chhatisgarh. We have carried on thorough investigation in Raipur, Bilaspur and Durg districts which comprise Chhatisgarh, and have come to the conclusion that the *gotul* did not exist in Chhatisgarh. Raipur lies very near the Kanker State and it is just possible that the authors might have found some on Raipur Kanker border, but we venture to hold that this institution is unknown among the Gonds living in Chhatisgarh and only existed and exists among the Marias, Murias and *gaitra* Gonds who are mostly found in Bastar and Chanda district, and near about

* Tribes and caste of the C.P., Russell and Hiralal.

these places.

The *gotul* is usually situated at one extremity of a village street in small Muria villages like Palari*. In a big village like Baniagaon, 8 miles from Kondagaon, which has about 100 Muria families belonging to various totemistic clans, it is situated in a thickly shaded corner at some distance from the main settlement. In Baniagaon there are two *gotuls* one in each *para* (part of a village). Each is meant for both boys and girls.

It appears that at the beginning, the dormitories were intended to accommodate all the able-bodied male members both bachelors and married of the village, and to stand in absolute readiness to defend the village against enemies and wild beasts; the women and children living in a more secure and protected area. But in course of time very many other traits have been adopted and woven round the dormitory, and as a result of all these we have the elaborate *gotul* organisation among the Murias. Settled life and better means of food-supply do not encourage predatory habits and thus the preying of neighbouring villages and decamping with food stuffs, cattle or women, have become almost unknown. The problem of accommodation yet remains to be solved. The grown-up members find it convenient to use the dormitory for sleeping and for communal activity. With the establishment of security of person and property and growth of individualism and exclusiveness, the married couples have begun to set up separate establishments and the unmarried only are left in possession of the dormitory.

But the need of special training for each sex under different local and tribal conditions, and taboo on sexual intercourse before the communal hunt, during sowing, reaping and harvesting operations, have contributed towards keeping alive the institution of the dormitory though it originated in a period

* Palari is a village inhabited by the Murias and is about three miles from Kondagaon, Bastar State.

of struggle with the forest, wild animals and alien men. The *gotul* did not originate from a desire to effect separation of the sexes, as has often been assumed, and as might actually have been the case with the Maria *gotuls* of Bastar or the tribes of Assam. On the contrary, the Muria *gotuls* are institutions which serve to provide opportunities for young men and women to stabilize and strengthen intimacies which may be a prelude to marriage. Thus in the privacy and shelter of these bachelors' houses or dormitories *liaisons* are the rule rather than exception and obtain sanction of tribal custom. It should not be lost sight of that this sort of free mixing of young people, and of marital apprenticeship through long courtship and trial intimacies within the dormitory, serve to give the right direction to the sexual urge and lead to happy enduriug unions. In this way it affords an easy solution to the marriage problem. Young girls freely choose their husbands here. Thus the *gotul* serves a social necessity.

The Muria *gotul* is generally a long rectangular shaped house with only one big hall, the walls being made of wattle and plastered with mud and rinsed with a solution of either cowdung or coloured clay. The walls go right up to the roof leaving hardly any space between the house wall and the roofing. It is usually surrounded by bamboo wattle-work fence, about 3-4 feet high. There is a big *agana* or courtyard in front of the *gotul* between the house and the outer fence. This spacious compound is used as a playground in winter and summer and various outer games are played here. During the summer when it is very hot inside the dormitory the members sleep on the floor of the yard. There are invariably two openings in the fence, one at the back of the *gotul*, rather small and the other which is the main gate, is bigger in size. The *gotul* house has only one entrance, which is at the front. It is a door about 2½ feet square, and window-sized, like a hutch door, about 3 feet above the plinth. There are no windows,

no holes in the walls, nothing of the kind, except this little door. The Gotul house has a plinth of about 1½ feet high and round about it there is a nice arrangement for draining water by a gradual slope which inclines from the house towards the fence. The roofing is placed over bamboo work inclined from the 'roof tree.' This is supported by two main posts called *dharan.* It is usually thatched with grass and leaves. The inside of the *gotul* and its roof are all covered with soot, the result of burning fire for years inside during the winter and rainy month, to keep it lighted and warm. The small door is kept most closed and there being no other opening for the smoke to go out, the inside is simply suffocating. A few miuutes' stay in one of these *gotuls* is more than enough to make us remember what it is like all through our lives; *gotuls* of this type are found among the Murias who live near about kondagaon and Narainpur in Bastar State. It is in these *gotuls* that the unmarried boys and girls gather together during the night.

The *gaitra* Gonds of Chanda have barrack-like dormitories, one for the bachelors, another for married men and a third for unmarried girls. The married people dwell in one of the long houses of the village while the bachelors are relegated to another barrack at an extreme end of it. In some cases the unmarried girls have separate barracks at the opposite end of the village. That is how, among them, the bachelors and the unmarried girls are kept apart and quite at a respectable distance from each other. Here, there is nothing like mixed grouping of the sexes as we see among the Murias. The Hill Marias of Bastar and Chanda have a *gotul* in every village, but it is not a bachelors' house. It is a place where all the unmarried males over the age of 10 or so, sleep. It cannot be called a real dormitory and the distinctive feature of the Muria dormitory in respect of training given to both the sexes are absolutely missing here. The dormitory among the Hill Marias is not an elaborate institution where such houses exist. They

are occupied by young men on account of the limited accommodation available in their own homes. Owing to inconvenience for space the grown up male members resort to the *gotul* for the night. On certain occasions *e. g.* when the harvesting begins and the new grain is to be collected, there must be some religious ceremony. And the village-priest and others who have their respective parts to play in the celebration and must therefore stay away from their wives, sleep in the dormitory the night previous to it. Thus it is clear that the Maria dormitory is based more on an economic and religious foundation. The house is constructed to accommodate those people who have not enough room in their own homes. It is an economic consideration principally which prompts its construction. There is also the religious element which is harmoniously blended with the economic. There are various religious occasions such as the one mentioned above, when it is taboo to have sex relation, and the villager to be above suspicion, uses the dormitory as a sleeping room during such observances. Thus there is a remarkable difference between the Maria and the Muria *gotul*. The one, that is, the Muria *gotul* is a place where sex relations are frequent and openly carried on, but the Maria dormitory is a refuge from indulgence in sex-relations. Both the *gotuls,* however, are indispensable elements in their village economy and a product of joint economic enterprise.

We have already said that the Muria *gotul* is visited both by unmarried boys and girls. The *gotul* going boys are known as *chelik* and the girls as *motiari*. Usually the normal activities of the *gotul* begin when the *cheliks* and *motiaris* of the village gather together after they have finished dinner in their own homes. The parents have absolutely no objection to their sons and daughters visiting the *gotul*; as a matter of fact, it is the encouragement of the elderly people and the social sanction that the *gotul* receives, that are responsible for the success of this institution. Muria boys and girls must visit the *gotul* otherwise a fine is

imposed on them for keeping absent without reasonable grounds. No initiation ceremony takes place among the Murias when girls or boys join it. The older members simply ask the younger ones to come to the *gotul* regularly. From the Konyak Nagas of Assam about whom we have a very recent description on the *morung* system by C. Von Furer-Haimendorf, we learn that there is an elaborate initiation ceremony and it is only after going through the prescribed ceremony that the boys and girls become real members of the *morung*. The fine for keeping away from the *gotul* is nominal and usually it is either a bottle of wine or a few pieces of copper. But continued and deliberate absence amounts to breach of *gotul* rules and the offender has to pay heavier fines.

It would not be out of place to give a brief description of the organisation of the *gotul*, a peculiar institution of its kind, and existing even today with all its normal activities. The cultural development of a tribe evolves its political conciousness and exerts influence on its organisational activities. The borrowing of official titles and giving the *gotul* officials these designations after the pattern of Government or State officials, throw sufficient light on the changed mentality of the Gonds. It is probable that they have been realizing the importance of political institutions and the utility of the various offices therein.

A grown up boy is placed at the head of the *gotul* organisation. He is known as *silledar* or *chalau*, and is the supreme head of both boys and girls. He is the captain or the monitor and looks after the general management and upkeep of the *gotul*. He leads the inmates, *cheliks* and *motiaris*, when they go out to work or visit other villages with dance parties and is the final authority in settling disputes among the members of the *gotul* fraternity. Then comes the *dewan*, he is the next officer in rank after the *chalau*, and then in due succession they have the *gaita*, the *tahsildar*, the *subedar*, the *kotwar*, and a chain of other

minor officers bearing the designation of state officials. Every official has his respective duties. One of them is deputed to call the boys. One is in charge of collecting small pieces of wood for burning during the night. Similar to the bachelors, every girl in the *gotul* has her *gotul* name and an official designation like the *chalanin*, the *tahsildarin* the *kotwarin*. The '*in*' is the feminine inflection of the various masculine titles. The girls hold these various designations according to their intimacy with the corresponding male members of the *gotul*, usually the sweet heart of the *chalau* is known as *chalanin* and so on. The duties of the girl office-bearers are also well defined and consist of clearing the *gotul*, rinsing the *gotul* with cowdung solution, calling the girls to the *gotul* from the village after dinner, and various other duties. The different office-bearers are chosen by the members of the dormitory at a general meeting—the *panchayat*, which takes place in the *gotul* premises and usually the election is unanimous. It is usually the grown up *cheliks* and *motiaris* who hold responsible offices of the *gotul* fraternity. But the head of the *gotul* is always a man.

Each *chelik* has a *motiari* friend, the intimate relation of the pair is continued upto the time till either of the two leaves the *gotul* after his or her marriage. Owing to constant association and mixing in the *gotul*, it is but natural that young inmates have sex knowledge, and, as a rule, they also cohabit. It is usually not permissible according to the *gotul* discipline that a pair should cohabit inside the *gotul*; neither that there should be any sex relation with a girl and boy of the same clan. A Muria boy for example, whose *bas* (*totem*) is 'Sondee' must not cohabit with a 'Sondee' clan girl. Usually a *chelik* would prefer a *motiari* of *bas* other than his own, to whom he can be married. Exogamy being the rule of marriage, so strict is the prohibition of any sexual relations between the members of the same *bas* (clan), that a breach of this taboo is shocking and is consi-

dered to amount to incest. That is why there are very few cases in which intimacy between boys and girls of the same clan have been discovered. Youths belonging to different clans share one and the same *gotul* among the Murias. But intimacy between boys and girls belonging to the same clan is strictly tabooed.

Sexual freedom and repeated cohabitation, however, frequently lead to permanent marital unions. Marriage is usually brought about after the youngman and woman have had opportunities of knowing each other intimately for a number of years; and thus it affords scope for suitable choice of partners. After marriage the premarital *liaisons* are forgotten and the love-making of adolescence is never referred to. Pre-nuptial freedom, courting and flirtation among the Gonds aid towards eliminating cruder sexuality and establishing marriage on the foundation of choice and experience.

During the cermonial visits which the inmates of one *gotul* pay to another, there is ample opportunity for love making. The visits are, no doubt, connecting links in the chain of social reciprocity, co-operation and mutuality of obligation between two or more villages, but the fact remains, that these visits serve also the specific purpose of bringing youngmen and maidens of different totemistic groups in closer and more intimate contact with each other. Young men, finding shortage of marriageable girls in their village do not hesitate to look for mates among the girls of another village, belonging to other totemistic groups during the dance festivals. That is why there is a plethora of marriages just after the *Cherchera* festival. The strict enforcement of exogamy as prevalent among the Murias is only practicable when such opportunities are afforded by the society and free mixing of the youths of both the sexes gets tribal sanction.

After marriage neither the husband nor the wife is a member of the *gotul* nor do they pay any more visits to it. The husband may casually drop in of an evening to enjoy the dances there but under on

circumstances does the wife go to the *gotul* after marriage. In one of the *gotuls* at Baniagaon, Bastar, which we visited, we found Ghasia and Magan and other married people sitting near the fire inside the *gotul*. They admitted that they had just come to see the dance performance which was to take place on the occasion of ths *Cherchera* festival and would go away after the dance was over. On enquiry it was revealed that they all had good relations with their wives and most of them were fathers. In no case is a married man allowed to stay in the *gotul* for the night. A widower is treated just like an unmarried man, and he can be admitted in the *gotul*; as a matter of fact, we met one young widower who was the *chalau*, the chief of one of the *gotuls* near Narainpur. He was very happy and told us frankly that he would like it much better to be a chief there than to pin himself down as a husband. This shows, to some extent, that young men as well as girls prefer to be free and gay and really enjoy 'Gather ye rose-buds while ye may' sort of life. In case of pregnancy the girl names the boy who is responsible for it and they soon becomeman and wife.

The *cheliks* and the *motiaris*, on reaching the *gotul*, *salam* the chief-*chalau*. This is known as *johare* (salute). The girls then comb the hair and massage the body arms and legs of the boys. No doubt, each boy has his girl-friend and the girl her own choice; but the girl takes every care to serve as many boys as she can, and takes care not to rouse the suspicion of other boys or girls of the *gotul* about her being attached to a particular boy; so also the boy is very careful in bestowing his favour equally to all the girls of the *gotul*, and leaves no ground for suspicion about the girl he is intimately connected with. Usually the boys and girls mix with one another very freely. Each girl attends a boy in turn and manages the whole affair in such a manner that she and her lover only know each other's actual intimacy but the remaining boys and girls have little idea about the intimate relation subsisting between them. Boys, in

token of services rendered by the girls, make presents of wooden or bamboo combs to their sweet hearts. Thus we find an array of combs beautifully put together according to their size in the coiffure of the Muria damsels. Similar custom of boys presenting bamboo-combs to their sweet hearts in the *morung*, is a common feature among the Konyak Nagas of Assam. "The boy will give the girl five bamboo combs and receive in return a small blue cloth".* After the massage, oiling and rubbing there comes the dance. The dance continues till late at night and when the members show signs of fatigue, they retire quietly into the pitch darkness of the *gotul*; usually a boy and a girl share a mat (*masani*). When the weather does not permit either dance or out-door games in the courtyard of the *gotul*, *i. e.*, the fenced enclosure, they pass the time in gossiping, story telling and very many other things. The stories, very often are smutty and full of obscene references.

The love affairs and intimacy within the *gotul* should in no case be confused with promiscuity or group concubinage. There is definitely a rigid code of honour in the *gotul*. Decorum is observed and the intimacies of boys and girls though common and usually known within the *gotul*, are kept as well guarded secrets from outsiders. Members accused of divulging *gotul* secrets, are severely dealt with and are not permitted to join the dance, neither can they share other activities of the *gotul* till their fines are fully paid and the offence condoned. This is one of the reasons why the inmates will withdraw as soon as questions regarding their dormitory life are put to them. Repitition of the offence may lead to expulsion from the *gotul*. Publicity in any form of the nightly programmes would mean a bar on a member from participating in the nocturnal activities of the *gotul*. In any case the breach of established convention and tradition of the *gotul* is treated as misdeed and amounts to

* The Morung System of the Konyak Nagas, Assam. Article by Christoph Von. Furer-Haimendorf. R. A. I. Journal Vol. LXVIII, 1938.

an offence for which the offender must pay heavy penalty or adequate compensation.

Thus far, we have tried to picture, the normal life of the dormitory within the *gotul* premises, but apart from this, the *gotul* is the pivot of social activities and plays an important part in village economy. During the agricultural season when the cultivators of the village need the services of extra hands, they approach the *gotul* chief who willingly accept the 'job' and directs the *gotul* inmates to render all possible help. In case the headman of the village requires the services of the *gotul*, he has to send word to the *gotul* chief, and the help comes most willingly. Individual villagers have to pay for the services rendered by the *gotul* as agreed between them and the chief. The wages are paid collectively to the *chalau* who spends the money on feast and drink in the *gotul*. The village headman does not pay wages to the members of the *gotul* but stands sumptuous meals to them. The *gotul* inmates readily co-operate and extend their help in thatching, erecting cottage walls and in undertaking other house building works, free of cost for those people who happen to be suffering from some physical disabilities or experiencing economic handicap. Among the Marias this institution is not so well organised and this sort of collective help is not easily available. During a marriage ceremony in Muria village the boys collect fuel, and leaves* and help in all possible ways. The girls prepare rice cakes for the wedding feast and are in charge of the kitchen. The cooking, feeding and singing are done by the girls of the *gotul* and it has been found that they manage the entire show efficiently. During village festivals and tribal gatherings they dance and go to the jungle to collect fuel and leaves for use in the communal feasts. The *gotul* in this way proves a valuable institution for the training and education of the younger generation of the Muria villages, in social and economic matters.

*They use tree leaves for *patari* (Plate) and *dona* (leaf-cup)

Lessons in various agricultural operations, in hunting, in honey-gathering, fishing and other economic pursuits are imparted by the grown up members to the juniors by way of narrating their own personal experiences. Stories are graphically told in which references are made to social justice social approbation and tribal discipline.* The ceremonial dancing visits to other *gotuls* furnish a back-ground for reciprocity in social obligations. Various methods are empoyed in the dormitory to educate the inmates in sex life and to acquaint them with sex practices. Among the Oraons the common practice is to have a slit made in the central post of the dormitory and sexual acts are mimicked in the slit. In *morungs* or the men's house among the Konyak Nagas of Assam, there are wooden carvings showing the private parts of the human figure and representing coitus. In the Muria *gotul* sex training is imparted by mimicking sex acts by the movement of limbs during dances, accompanied by appropriate songs.

The casual visitors may carry away the imppession that Muria *gotuls* are nothing but shelters for *liaisons* between young men and women as is the case with the dormitories in Melanesia among the Trobriands. This, however, is by no means true of Muria *gotul*. The *gotul*, though giving opportunities of contact between youths, is seldom used as a place for cohabitation. That is positively against the *gotul* discipline. Among the Murias, it is an institution which seeks to impart education in sex, in agricultural labour and in the art of constructing houses, etc In fact it is used as a preparatory school for young men and women for training in many domestic tasks. Hospitality to guests and entertaining dance parties that visit the village during the dancing season form an indispensable part of the *gotul* training. In addition to the function of tribal schooling,

* Presidential address on Tribal cultures and Acculturation to the Twentysixth session of the Indian Science Congress, Lahore, 1939 by D. N. Majumdar, pp 21-30.

the dormitories are essential limbs of the body politic in that they are responsible for supplying labourers in agricultural season, helpful assistants during marriage ceremony and ardent workers during communal feasts and tribal dances. The introduction of dances and festivities, outdoor and indoor activities, bring this institution to the level of social organisation. The outdoor games, dance and active exercises also make the members physically strong. It is pleasing to see the fine physical build of both the Muria men and women with their muscular bodies and well proportioned and well developed limbs.

Altogether the *gotul* is an institution that has manifold uses. It teaches social habits to the youths of both the sexes. It trains them in post-marital behaviour and makes them useful members of society. It inculcates a feeling of tribal descipline, provides a focus for the sentiments of the people and prepares the younger generation to discharge those social and economic obligations without which collective life of any kind can neither grow nor thrive.

CHAPTER VI.

KINSHIP ORGANISATION

In our study of the village we have shown that common habitation or contiguity is one of the important bonds which binds the members of a community. But the ties of kinship are superior to those of contiguity. A village consists of several groups, and members of each group are linked to one another by ties of blood. The filial attachment is not impaired by merely going out of the paternal residence and establishing a separate household as is so often the case. The new establishment owes its allegiance to the parent unit, though it brings under its shelter more persons by marriage. We shall now discuss the ties of contiguity and of kinship in their proper setting and finally the tribal group itself in which the various ties merge to produce a solidarity, so characteristic of tribal societies.

A number of huts occupied by a particular group constitute a village in a quantitative sense. The composition of the group varies according to the nature of the settlement and the elements of which it is made up. Sometimes a dwelling is occupied by a man his wife and their children or it may be inhabited by a man, his wife, his unmarried brothers and sisters. Sometimes it is shared by several brothers with their wives and children, or again by a man and his wife, their sons, daughters and grand-children. This last grouping we would call the *bhaiband*. This group or the 'extended family' corresponds almost to an exogamous sept. This social unit is of great importance in matters of marriage and other sex relationships. This unit is limited and ranges only from three to four generations, but the members are closely bound together by the strongest ties of kinship. This is primarily an agnatic composition and conveys the 'unilateral' kinship group. In our enquiry, we have in very exceptional cases found that this kind of group exceeds fifty persons but usually the number is much less. This may be due to the fact that the

Gonds who are very bad in remembering things have forgotten their blood relations owing to constant division and so can name only a few of the families as their kins. The *bhaiband* functions as a unit in day-to-day social and economic affairs. Invariably the different members of this institution, hold the agricultural land in common ownership and the cultivation is carried on by the members working in a body. There is a mutual understanding among the various members of the group and there exists a sort of imperfect partition which corresponds to the arrangement of the joint Hindu family for the distribution of the crop and other produce of the common fields. The headman—*sirdar* (corresponding to the *karta* of the joint Hindu family) is the head of this institution. The members in their individual capacity carry on different pursuits like making baskets, weaving mats and similar other side occupations. The 'extended family' or the sept possesses several things in common, *e.g.* nets, traps and agricultural implements. Fishing and hunting are sometimes arranged in which all the grown up members take lively interest. The *bhaiband* group due to its close ties binds the members together. It is an ideal combination for those occupations which need concerted action and a spirit of co-operation. Hunting expeditions, fishing and agriculture are the occupations best carried out by this group, The headman acting as the chief of this organisation, is fairly self-reliant and directs other members. The head, in his own turn, consults the older generation of the villagers in matters of grave nature. For most purposes, it manages its affairs without outside interference, unless a tribal policy is at stake and its action actually involves the village as a whole.

After some generations and with the increase in the population of *bhaiband*, this institutions assumes greater economic importance and is known as *bhai-biradari*. This kind of extended kinship in due course of time adopts a particular name of its own. This is more or less like a clan. The clans are named

after animals or plants, as, for example, *nagvans* (cobra clan) or *kachehimvans* (tortoise clan) and such others. Sometimes it is named after some objects with which the ancesters of the clan may have had some connection in the remote past. Each of these totemistic exogamous groups bears the name of some animal, tree, plant or some material object which the members of that group are prohibited from killing, eating, cutting or using. There is one sept among the Gonds, for example, known as *maravi*, in Mandla district, which is sub-divided into two groups, *eti-maravi* and *padi-maravi*, named after the goat and the pig. The *eti* or goat *maravi* will not touch a goat nor sacrifice it to their tribal god, *bura-deo*. They say that once their ancestors stole a goat and were caught by the owner. To save themselves from insult and humilation they covered the goat with a basket and prayed to *bura deo* to transform it into a pig. The deity, to protect the devotees, did the miracle and they were saved from humilation. Henceforth, they sacrifice only pigs to *bura deo*.

There is a story also about the *tumreeha vika* (*tendu* tree) clan. It is said that the original ancestor of this sept was once passing with his pregnant wife by a *tendu* tree. The wife saw the beautiful *tendu* fruits and requested her husband to procure some for her. Later, the ignorant husband thought that the wife had conceived by eating the fruit of the *tendu* tree. That was how the tree came to be regarded as sacred. The members belonging to this sept do not cut the *tendu* tree nor make any use of its leaves and branches. Another sept called *gadhamar-vika* or (donkey slayer) owed its name to some ancestor who had killed a donkey. *Tekam* is another sept. The ancestor of *tekam* sept saw his god on teak tree and that is how his descendants adopted this name. The members of this sept do not cut or use the teak wood.

Thus we see that the septs owed their origin to totemistic beliefs, to some animal, plant or tree that are now regarded with respect. It is quite possible that

these myths have been invented to give religious sanction to some objects or animals to which the ancestors of the septs were indebted in some way or other. That feeling of gratitude or reverence which these ancestors felt for their benefactor could not be expected to continue with their descendants. So stories were invented to invest those objects with sacredness.

A kind of parallel to their way of grouping themselves is to be found in the Brahmanical custom of sub-dividing the members of a caste on the basis of *gotra*. The *gotra* is named after some *rishi* or inspired saint. Intermarriage among members of the same *gotra* is prohibited; this helped in the formation of the exogamous group. This kind of grouping has been taken as the mythical basis of exogomy by Risley. There may be another type of exogamous grouping and this may be characterised as the 'territorial type', after Risley* Thus among the higer castes of Bengal we have Varendra, Banjgaja, Dakshina-Rarhi, Uttara-Rarhi, all named after the localities they resided in. The territorial grouping among the Gonds is represented by the word *bas* which they are generally found to use for conveying their totemistic division. *Bas* means 'residence' and it clearly expresses a circle of agnates and their lineal descendants and seems to be based on the assumption that all the members of a clan or group residing in the same locality, must be more or less related and therefore they form one exogamous group with restriction of intermarriage between themselves.

The Raj Gonds of Mandla have a sort of complicated scheme of exogamous grouping. A primary classification has been made on the basis of the number of gods worshipsed by the group. The following table will illustrate it.

Totem groups	Number of gods worshipped.	Totem.
Kachehimvans....	4 stones representing four gods.	Tortoise.

* Compare. Tribes and castes of Bengal. Risley.

Bakulavans	....	5 stones representing five gods.	Crane.
Sondee	....	6 stones representing six gods.	Tiger.
Shahiavans.	....	7 stones representing seven gods.	Porcupine.

Each of the gods is represented by a small stone placed at one of the corners of the house. The place where this piece of stone is located is known as *pat* (residence of gods).

These are the main divisions, each of which is again sub-divided into a number of groups with a totem of its own. Marriage between the members of the same sept is prohibited.

A Gond may not marry within his own group or 'extended family' but must marry a woman belonging to a group which worships a different set of gods. In this way we find that the rules of exogamy appear to preserve traces of a system by which the whole tribe is split into two or more divisions.* This is considered by Frazer to be the beginning of exogamy by which marriage was prohibited first between brothers and sisters and then between parents and children. The children born of a marriage belongs to the father's group. The patriarchal principle is rigidly followed and the line of descent is traced from some ancestor in the male line.

It is usually seen in Bastar that in small villages the Gonds belong to one sept, but in bigger villages we find various groups like *payam, sondee, natam* and *mari* etc., all living together. Among the C.P. Gonds we usually find two main classes, the Raj Gond and the Dhur Gond. Under these two main heads there are several smaller groups, and minors septs. These two are the largest groups in the tribe and the other groups are all included in them—each minor division being able to trace back its descent either through *bhaiband* or *bhaibiradari* to the common ancestor from whom the tribe traces its origin.

*Exogamy and Totemism. By Frazer.

This idea of common descent lies at the root of the Gond society and acts as the corner stone in their communal organisation. A common historical background, a distinct type of social behaviour, a common community life and stereotyped family organisation among the various sections of the Gonds, suggest that all the groups are descended from the same common ancestors.

THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE GROUP.

So far we have been dealing chiefly with groups and economic functions of the society as a whole, the individual Gond has been kept out of the picture. The relation between the individual and the group, his social motives and behaviour inside the group are interesting aspects of social organisation and we shall proceed to describe them in the pages that follow.

To hold that the family is absorbed in the *bhaibaud* is the same thing as to say that the individual is absorbed in the group. Some people assume that in a communal body like the Gond society in which the 'Caste Panchayat' is a dominant institution, the individual could hardly be of any importance. To press this point further, they say, that the Panchayat is fully competent to decide cases of divorce, illicit connection and crimes againt society and religion. The Panchayat also formulates the policy and dictates the rules of society, the non-observance of which means that the individual should face the Panchayat, account for his crime and receive what sentence it passes with implicit obedience. But, it may be pointed out that the members of the Panchayat are elected by the villagers and is only the creation of the joint efforts of individuals. How can it then be assumed that it is only the group that exists and the individual had no importance in the clan or group? Group superiority is only possible when we regard the individual as the extremest type of savage as conceived by Durkheim or believe in the saying of Bastian who remarks; "The individual man, is nothing, at best an Idiot"*

* Outlines of Sociology (Translated by Moore).

It is worth while to quote Cooley in this connection, "Self and society are twin born, the nation of a separate and independent ego is an illusion".* It appears that if the idea of group solidarity is given a prominent place, the importance of the individual in the social life falls into the background. To say that the individual has no position in the social group is probably to say something without much meaning. MacIver and others have proved that the individual in a society has unique place and it is the sum total of the individuals that constitutes the society. The sweeping generalization that the Gonds think and act according to the whims and caprices of *bhaiband* and dance to the tune played by the tribal group, ignores the elements of personal ambition, innate differences of behaviour and personal equations which count a good deal in all matters relative to individuals in a social group. It is a fact, admitted on all hands, that the individual cannot be fully studied in complete isolation from the social group; but this does not necessarily mean that the individual completely disappears because he carries out the dictates of a group like the *bhaiband*. Personal qualities, habits and temperament indicate a definite sphere of action which is primarily motivated by individual interests, but where greater social good is the rule of life, individualism of a sort is not a menace. In Gond society, we find that the kinship group, the *bhaiband* is comprised of a group of people related by blood who are descendants of a common ancestor three or four generations distant from the youngest member of the group. This *bhaiband* group generally represents the economic unit in Gond society. The individual family exists side by side with the *bhaiband* and has its distinct identity, socially and economically. The individual family, owing to its being integrally connected with the *bhaiband*, plays but a minor role because of the wider field of actions and more dominant influence of the *bhaiband*. In individual family there exists a feelling of

* Social Organisation. Prof. Cooley.

mutual obligation and reciprocity between husband and wife in matters of food and domestic duties. The individual family comes into existence after marriage. With marriage there crop up a number of social and other obligations—giving dinners to caste people, entertaining guests etc. In household affairs the husband and wife are more or less supreme in his or her own department; but each one of them has to follow the other members of society and each one has to be prepared to contribute his or her individual mite to the collective undertakings of the community. The gain of the individual is apparently very little, but sacrifice of individual interest is indispensable in the interests of the society and redounds ultimately to the welfare of the individual family itself. The *bhaiband* maintains a common ownership of some implements, traps and fishing nets and has also common ownership of some lands and their produce. Occupations which need a small number of people of honest purpose and co-operating spirit are well suited to be undertaken by the *bhaiband*. This 'extended family' (*bhaiband*) functions as a unit in day-to-day social and economic affairs and manages its internal affairs without outside interference, so long as it does not actually go against some tribal policy involving the welfare of the entire village.

The *bhaibiradri*, which is the major and the more inclusive group has a larger sphere of activity. When an important undertaking demanding considerable labour force is requisitioned or planned, all the members of the *bhaibiradari* are summoned and they gather round under the same banner for united action. When a *nullah* nearby is to be dammed, an epidemic is to be fought, or the site of a village changed, the *bhaibiradari* as a whole meets to tackle the problem which involves the entire village or the surrounding districts. At a large tribal feast and on occasions of tribal rituals or secular observances the *bhaibiradari* is represented as an integral whole invested with a ceremonial significance. The presence of the *bhaibiradari* sanctions,

for example, the marriage tie. Marriage itself again has its definite economic aspect both in relation to the husband and the wife and in wider social spheres. We shall now examine the specific significance of family organisation and marriage in the day-to-day economic life of the Gonds.

CHAPTER VII.

FAMILY AND MARRIAGE.

If there is any fundamental social tie in human society, it is that provided by the sociological family consisting as it does, of man, wife and their immature children. The family perpetuates the race and all that culture stands for. The natural association between man and woman is the germ of all primitive society. Rivers considered that the family (in the restricted sense) was the starting point of the evolution of society among the people of Melanesia.* Modern trend of thought agrees in regarding the individual family as the unit of social organisation, of course, with certain modifications according to the nature and circumstances under which the family originated. It would be quite appropriate to quote Lowie, who, after a careful treatment of the subject, comes to the following conclusion ; " the one fact stands out beyond all others that everywhere the husband, wife aad immature children constitute a unit apart from the remainder of the community ".† Malinowski in his intensive study of the family among the Australian tribes has come to the same conclusion and points out that the individual family is the fundamental basis of society and that, individual family, though a segregated unit, has both form and function. Thus the individual family of mother father and immature children, may be said to form the basis on which society rests.

We have now to examine the Gond society and see how this basic principle of social grouping holds good in their case. The individual family exists in Gond society, but their social organisation and communistic interests were against absolute individualism in olden days, when it was almost essential for the welfare of the individual families to combine, co-operate and consolidate within the larger groups which they call

---

* History of Melanesian Society. W.H.R. Rivers.

† Primitive Society, Lowie. Page 63.
Malinowski B; Family Among Australian Aboriginese.

the *bhaiband* organisation. The basis was, no doubt, the individual family, but economic and social function, on a wider scale, were the concern of the '*bhaiband* institution', with a chief at its head. Literature worth the name of sociological enquiry regarding the family system of the Gonds is extremely inadequate and therefore individual family life can be examined only through proper fiield investigation, as we have tried to do here. We shall try to detail the social and economic aspect of the individual family on the data we have been able to collect during the course of our investigations among these tribes.

Biologically the family owes its inception to the mating of men and women, As we have already pointed out, the Gonds have a strong sense of sexual exclusiveness after the marriage. They have a regular marriage ceremony and it is an individual marriage of one man to one woman. Adultery is considered an offence against the tribe. Intercourse even with a husband inside the house is a taboo among the Hill Maria Gonds and this taboo is general and observed by most of the primitive tribes. Grigson writing about the Maria Gonds says; " the Hill Marias are still doubtful about the propriety of men sleeping in the house and regard the jungle or some place overshadowed by the thick leaves of the Siari (*Bauhinia vahilii*) creeper as the right place for intercourse between man and wife ". * Dr. Majumdar refering about this custom among the primitive tribes remarks ; " It may be either due to a belief that the god of prosperity or the ancestral spirits get annoyed or to the fact that the shades of the ancestors are usually sheltered in the house or a part of it, so that sex act performed in the house would have the same effect as doing it in the public. The sanction for this custom may be traced to the belief that such irregularities result in damage to crops by pests or in the complete loss of yield and general calamities such as excessive precipitation, inadequate rainfall, diseases of cattle and crops and the various

* The Maria Gonds of Bastar. Grigson. Page 113.

epidemics which claim their toll from the people".† The popular belief among some Hill Gonds is that if cattle are killed by a tiger it is a punishment for the adulterous character of the wife; similarly when a man sustains the loss of a few heads of cattle, he closely watches the movements of his wife and the detection of her paramour often results in the murder of both the secret lover and the guilty wife. Where pre-marital sex relations are freely allowed among the Gond it is doubtful if any girl retains her virginity up to the time of her marriage. Whatever may be the case in the pre-marital stage, the post-marital relations between the sexes are fairly right; invariably the wives are faithful after their marriage and so are the husbands. Immediately after the marriage the husband and the wife are allotted a house in or about the residential quarters to be used by the couple as their sleeping room. This sort of segregation suggests that in the germinal state the individual family was not fully absorbed in the group. There is a strict code of duty which the husband and the wife both have to perform. The woman rises early in the morning, grinds sufficient grain for the day's food, cleans the cattle-pen and deposits the manure in the back garden, *baree*, fetches water from the *nullah* and prepares the *pej* (thin *Kodon* or rice gruel) with some vegetables feeds the children and then goes to her husband with his meal to the fields where he is working. When he has finished his meal, she takes her own share and they both together work in the fields. With the approach of the evening, she leaves the field, gathering on her way home, fuel and leaves, the latter to be used as cups and plates, according to a style of their own. Immediately on reaching home, she replenishes the water vessels and commences preparing the evening meal. Her man gets up early in the morning, takes out the plough and other agricultural implements and leads his cattle to the field. Here he

† From the presidential address. Section of Anthropology, Indian Science Conress Lahore, 1939 D. N. Majumdar.

ploughs the ground till the wife reaches there with the mid-day meal which he takes and after a little rest, engages assisted by his wife, in further agricultural work. He may graze the cattle after ploughing but he must return home after sunset. The husband has also to go out in the night to watch and guard the crops against birds and beasts. Thus we find that each one has certain well defined duties to perform. It is not very uncommon to hear of a nagging and grumbling wife when her husband cannot provide her with enough food, garment or ornaments. And the wife also is not spared if she neglects her duty of preparing and cooking food. If she is found wanting in her duty to the husband the angry Gond showers rebuke in profusion and very often she has to stand physical maltreatment from her disgruntled husband. This is purely a matter concerning the individual family, the *bhaiband* having no concern in the matter. This shows the economic inter-dependence of two souls united by marriage constituting what is known as the individual family.

The attachment that exists between the parents and children is quite different from the attachment that exists among other members of the *bhaiband*. The Gonds are very fond of their children. The infants are carried by the mothers in a cloth sling. The father also takes up the charge of small children and a Gond is frequently seen carrying his child in a bamboo basket slung to the ends of carrying stick on his shoulder. Ths Gonds do not like the idea of their children being fondled or handled by others. This is a positive indication of the deep filial bond that subsists between the parents and the children and also suggests their conservative and superstitious temperament.

The relation between the mother and the child has some special features among the Gonds. The expectant mother among the Marias has to confine herself in the common menstruation but for sometime after the birth of the child and generally the child is

born in this hut or room. Among other Gonds there is particular spot where a lying-in-hut is made. The mother lies there, when the labour pain starts. She has to observe a number of taboos and prohibitions which are meant to safeguard the life of the child as well as that of her own. She is regarded 'impure' for sometime after the childbirth and so also is the father. She is not allowed to cook food and no one should touch her for a number of days—the period varies from 21 to 30 days—according to local customs. The hygienic-utilitarian aspect of the segregation lies probably in the protection of the mother from further exertions of any kind in her state of weakness consequent on childbirth. The husband takes due care to see that all the taboos are faithfully observed, the non-observance of which may bring some calamity, direct or indirect, either on the child or the family. The mother's love towards her child is proverbial and we have many stories concerning it among the Gonds. Once it is said that a mother clung to her dead son who was bitten by a snake. She kept on for a week fasting, praying and weeping. Ultimately Parvati, the wife of the great god Mahadeo, took compassion on the wailing mother and requested her lord to restore life in the boy. After some persuasion Mahadeo granted the request and the boy once again came to life owing to the sincere efforts of the devoted mother. In the Gond folklore we find various other stories of this nature, depicting the mother's affection for her child.

Affection of the father for his progeny starts from the time the child is in the mother's womb. From the very period of gestation, one might say, to the time of birth, the father takes necessary precautions for warding off all the calamities that might befall it by observing the many taboos associated with birth and infancy. He tries to procure every kind of food desired by the wife when she is in the family way. During her lying-in, the father plays the part of a nurse and cooks food and serves the mother with food and drink in the interests of the young one. This

continues as we have said, for about a month during which the father of the child is also considered polluted. He does not go to the fields, does not attend to any work, the idea behind it being, that the husband should always be available in the house during this critical period when his presence is indispensable in the interests of the baby and the mother. Later on, the father is mainly responsible for the education of the boy in teaching him the use of agricultural tools and weapons of offence and defence, and also in initiating him into their tribal customs and manners.

When the father dies the son steps into his shoes and manages the field. The unmarried daughters are under the care of the brothers and it is the duty of the brothers or the uncles, as the case may be, to arrange suitable match for them if they have not been able to help themselves. The *bhaiband* group, however, plays an important part in the development of the social life of a child. Training is imparted through the agency of the uncle or the grand-parents, but it is the father who is chiefly responsible for the upbringing of his child. The other members play as a matter of fact, a minor role in the education and the training of a child.

Thus we can say that the small group consisting of the father, mother and the children has been found to behave like a distinct economic unit. Housed in a separate hut in the village, the members of this unit are busy with their own fields and farms and remain contented with their little establishment.

This bare outline suggests therefore the existence of the individual family as a separate social unit. Lowie after his careful treatment of the subject regarding the 'family concept' among the primitive society observes. "We are justified in concluding that regardless of all other social arrangements the individual family is an omnipresent social unit".* From the treatment of this unit, we can from some

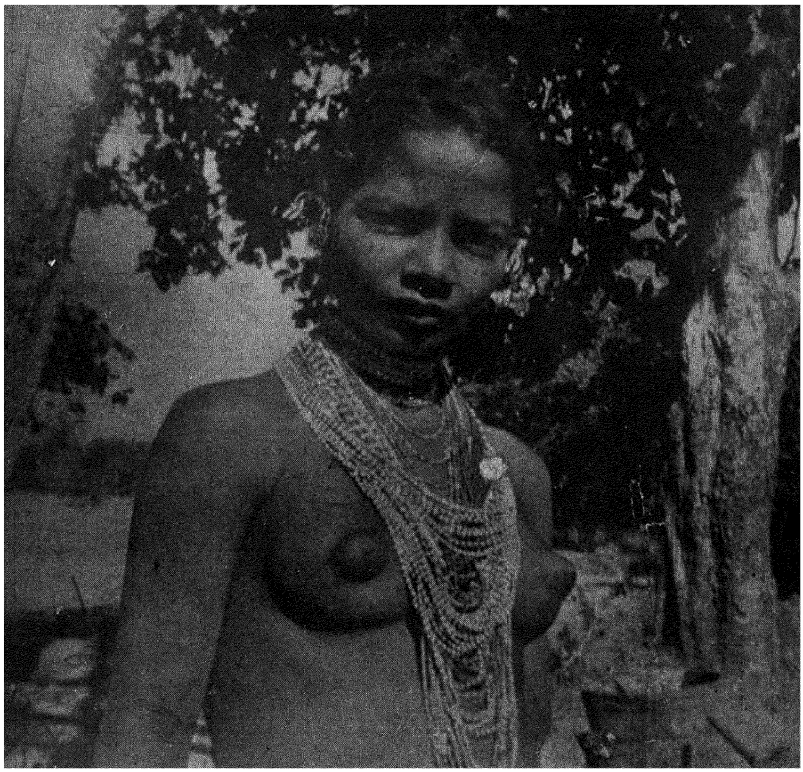
* Primitive Society. R. H. Lowie. Page 63.

idea about its status in the socio-economic structure of the Gond community. The sexual exclusiveness of the married people, their economic interdependence, the behaviour of man before and after the birth of a child, the manifestation of parental affection, the training and bringing up of the child resting mainly on the parents, all these fully establish the value of the individual family as a social unit. It retains its form and individual appearance without being absorbed in the larger groups functioning side by side in their respective spheres of activities.

MARRIAGE.

Westermarck's well-known remark is enough to convey the value of the biological aspect of human marriage. He observes. "Marriage is rooted in the family rather than the family in the marriage".* Mating and parenthood are the two pillars, on which the arch of human marriage rests, the child acting as the 'key stone' of the marital arch.. There are various forms of marital alliances, monogamy, polygyny and polyandry; martriarchal and partriarchal unions with patrilocal or matrilocal residence. With each of these types of unions there are some economic obligations which both man and wife have to fulfil. The man and wife, have certain well defined economic duties to perform. The wife is endowed by nature to bear child, nourish it and bestow all her tender cares on it. She looks also after the preparation of food, gathers fuel, and her rule in the kitchen is supreme. The husband, on the other hand, has to observe certain taboos during the birth of the child. Afterwards he has to take up his education. If it is a boy, the father is mostly responsible but in the case of a girl the mother plays the more important role. The man has also to procure food which the wife is expected to cook. The husband is the protector and on him rests the making of agricultural implements. The wife tends the cattle, cleanses the vessels and manages the hut. She receives the female guests and serves them with food

* History of the Human Marriage. Westermarck.



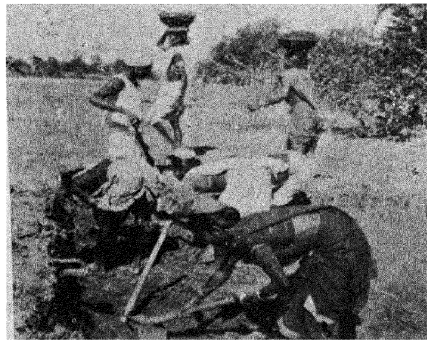
A Hill Maria girl



Women and children
back from work



A Tili (oil presser) girl from Bastar



Men and women engaged in construction work

and drink but it is the husband's duty to manage for the extra food and procure other comforts. On the whole, the husband is in charge of those duties that demand courage, presence of mind, etc., in their performance, and particularly those that require exertion of physical strength, such as felling and cutting the trees, ploughing the fields, hunting, and building a house. The wife, on the other hand, is busy with collecting fruits and berries, gathering flowers and leaves and attending to other minor agricultural operations like weeding, transplanting, etc., which though tedious, are comparatively lighter types of work.

Among the Gonds the rule of exogamy is rigidly enforced; a man must not marry a girl within his own totemistic group, nor should she be one from a group which worships the same number of gods. Intermarriage between septs which are *bhaiband* or brothers to each other is also prohibited. Cross-cousin marriage, that is, unions between a brother's daughter and a sister's son is most common. The union between brother's son and sister's daughter is also common. Thus the system of cross-cousin marriages is almost universal among the Gonds. When a Gond wishes to marry his children, he looks first to his sister's children upon whom he has the first claim. When he takes a sister's daughter as a wife to his son, such an alliance is known as *dudh-lautawa*, *i.e.*, return of the milk. Such marriages are common because it is a sort of repaying the obligation of the first generation when one family gets the daughter of the other family as wife to some male member. In the next generation the family which gives the daughter receives the daughter of the other family as the wife to a son. Apart from this kind of repayment of social obligation, such arrangements save the excessive bride-price which marriage in a new family involves. Thus, to avoid excessive bride-price and to maintain unity between the families already related by marriage, cross-cousin marriage is very widely practised among

the Gonds throughout the Central Provinces. Sometimes when the girl is grown up and no match can be arranged the father will request the girl's maternal uncle's son to take her away by surprise, the latter having a sort of prescriptive claim to receive her as his wife. It is also very common to have a second or a third co-wife from the younger sisters of the first wife. This saves the bride-price and minimises domestic quarrels that are so common among co-wives. In case the sister's daughter is married to some one else, it is not strange to hear her maternal uncle demanding some money by way of compensation for the loss of the girl as a wife for his son. This money is known as milk-money, *dudh-bunda* (compensation for milk). But this practice of *dudh-bunda* is fast disappearing.

The women amongst the Gond occupy almost an equal position with men. Child marriage being rare, the girl has every right to accept or refuse the spouse selected for her by her parents. Normally she is free to be wooed by the man of her choice and it is almost uncommon to see a Gond bride who is below fourteen or fifteen. The children of the consanguine sisters cannot marry among themselves and so also a man may not marry his wife's elder sister, any aunt or niece or his mother-in-law or her sister. These may give us some idea about the prohibited degrees of marriage relations.

Manogamy and patrilocal residence are the general rules but those Gonds who are rich enough and can afford to maintain more than one wife, generally like to marry several. Patrilocal residence being universal, the wife after her marriage dwells mostly at her husband's place. There are a few instances of matrilocal residence, but such rare cases are met with only when the bridegroom serves at his future father-in-law's place for getting his daughter as his wife and driven by sheer necessity remains with his wife's people.

There are various forms of marriages with some ceremonies that either follow the marriage or come

before it.

(*i*) *The Normal Marriage.*—or the marriage with the *marmi* ceremony. It is a simple affair, the father of the boy starts the marriage negotiations as approved between cousins. The negotiation being finally settled by the favourable opinion of the elders, the marriage procession starts from the bride's place. As compared with the Hindu ceremonial, the most distinctive feature of a Gond marriage is that the bridal procession usually starts from the house of the bride with the bride and the main ceremony takes place at the house of the bridegroom. A platform of cowdung cakes is built over which a cotton sheet is spread; the couple stand on the platform and exchange vows. The bridegroom slips an iron ring on the bride's finger and the ceremony is all complete. The bride's people, after a hearty feast and a dance, return to their village leaving behind the bride in her father-in-law's house. When the father of the bride leaves the place, he instructs his daughter to occupy the new house, to adjust herself to her changed environment as wife, to be hard working and above all never to come alone to his house without her husband's permission, because she is now married and as a responsible woman, she must look after the happiness of her husband and his children. After the marriage the couple usually betake themselves to a separate room or a new hut.

(*ii*) *Marriage by Mutual consent* :—This takes place when the girl herself plans her marriage which she is absolutely competent to do. She usually pours solution of turmeric and water on the man of her choice before some people who stand as witnesses to this ceremony. She can then be taken to the house of the man on whom she has thus bestowed her favour. This is regarded as a valid form of marriage. The elders of the caste meet and the bridegroom or his people arrange the marriage-feast which is shared by the whole caste and thus the hallmark of the valid marriags is put upon this union.

(*iii*) *Serving for wife*—this is known as *lamsena lamana* or *lamjhana* form of marriage in which the would-be-bridegroom goes to his future father-in-law's place and offers his personal services in lieu of the bride-price which he is not in a position to pay because of strained financial circumstances. He has to remain there and serve his prospective father-in-law for a number of years. It varies from two to five and at the expiry of the stipulated period, he is allowed to marry the girl without being put to further expenses. This kind of marriage by service is also insisted on by a father who has only one daughter, or if he has a large establishment and requires the help of some one to manage his property and attend on him. The young man is not supposed to have access to the girl till he has finished his term of service. The father often postpones the marriage as long as possible; but if the girl is grown up and an improper intimacy springs up between her and the serving man before regular marriage, the necessary rites needs must be performed at once. In case she has kept her virginity, the full marriage ceremony takes place, but if things have taken another turn the marriage is cemented by the *pat* ceremony (irregular marriage). In some cases, this type of union takes the form of matrilocal residence, and the husband, even after marriage, lives with his wife's people. But as we have shown, this is not the usual practice. In our investigations we have come across only a few cases in which the husband settled down finally at his wife's place. This state of living at a wife's house is known as *char-ghia*, a contemptuous term, meaning 'the creature of a father-in-law'.

(IV)*Marriage by capture*:—Marriage by capture is still to be seen, but it is falling into gradual disuse. When a girl remains unmarried and the parents are subject to taunting remarks from the caste people, they arrange with her cross-cousins to take her away. There is some hint in this system of the ancient marriage by capture. Usually in marriage by capture, the bridegroom gathers round his friends and carries

off the girl from her village when she is returning from the jungle or has gone to fill her pitcher in the *nullah*. When the party arrives at the bridegroom's place with the valuable acquisition, some turmeric water is poured over the bride and the bridegroom and they get the status of man and wife. But they are to live separately till the bride's people arrive and the full marriage ceremony takes place. It is a complicated undertaking and because of its penal nature, abduction being an offence under the Indian Penal Code—marriage by capture is rarely practised without a pre-arranged plan with the bride and the bride's father and the whole show is now a tame business and a big fun.

(V) *Irregular Marriage*:—This takes place when a Gond girl conceives before marriage. If the man with whom she has *liaison* belongs to a clan with whom she can be married without the infringement of exogamous provisions, she simply names the man before the tribal *panchayat* and the man thus named has to accept her. She then goes to his house and becomes his wife. This is called *paithu* (entering). The man has to stand a caste-dinner and has to pay something to the bride's father as bride-price.

The Gond marriage customs are so varied and so much laxity exists in them, that it is almost impossible to say exactly what is regular and approved and what is not. In short, we may say that among the Gonds consummation perfects all forms of marriage and the caste dinner ligalises all kinds of union between man and woman.

The Gonds hardly attach any religious significance to marital tie. Divorce is freely allowed on various grounds, for example, adultery, carelessness in the upkeep of the house, quarrelsome disposition, barrenness etc. Either party to a union may terminate it at any time for any reason. The lead to get a divorce among the Gonds, may be taken up by the wife also. She is equally competent to dissolve the marriage tie and go to another man. In case the

marriage tie is dissolved by the husband himself, the wife can go to any man without any liability; but in case the wife takes the initiative and deserts the husband and is accepted by another man as his wife, this man (new husband) has to pay the first husband his marriage expenses. This compensation money is known as *bunda*. The tribal *panchayat* decides the case, and fixes the amount. It may be sometimes much more than the amount actually spent in the marriage, When a man divorces his wife, he has no liability for maintaining her; on the contrary, the ornaments which were given to her during the conventure, are all taken away from her. Although there is complete freedom for both sexes in dissolving marriage and entering into new partnership, divorces are comparatively not very frequent.

Widow remarriage is widely practised. As a rule the widow of the deceased brother becomes the wife of the younger brother. Widow marriage is universally accepted as a valid form of marriage. The pair in this form of marriage stand under the eaves of the bridegroom's house, a mixture of turmeric and oil is applied to the bridegroom's forehead and the bridegroom then ties a string of beads round the woman's neck or puts some glass bangles, *churi* round her wrist or a ring on her finger and then she walks into the house of the new husband as his wife. The usual caste-dinner follows this simple ceremony and puts a legal seal on this union. It being a valid form of marriage, children born of this wedlock are all legitimate. This form of marriage is known as *churi phahinana* (putting on the bangle). The custom of the levirate being very common among the Gonds, some scholars hold it to be a reminiscence of polyandry but this conclusion seems farfetched. The primary consideration in such kind of marriage is avoidance of bride-price. Neither is there any disparity in the number of males and females in their society that might lead to what has been called polyandry in such cases. Their laxity in sex relation, divorce and above all their polygynous

character do not in any way show that the pratice of levirate is to be associated with any thing like polyandry among them.

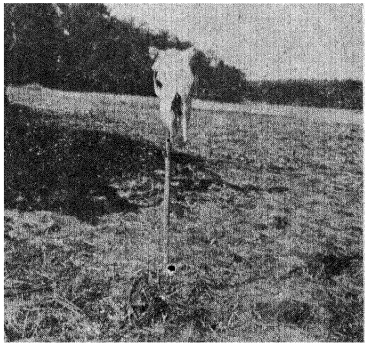
Polygyny is very frequently practised; there is no stigma attached to it. Those Gonds who can afford to maintain more than one wife, freely indulge in having as many wives as they can. "A Gond who has seven wives in Balaghat was accustomed always to take them to the bazar, walking in a line behind him".* This custom of polygyny has an economic background. It should be pointed out that a plurality of wives help substantially in the work of cultivation. They will always put forth much more labour than hired farm labourers. When a man goes in for more than one wife, he does it usually to get extra hands for work in the fields. It is also common among the Gonds to regard a man who can maintain more than one wife as wealthy. It is thus a sign of social importance with them. A man's prestige is directly enhanced by the number of wives he has. Indirectly but mainly his economic resources are enriched for the services of several wives since he employes them profitably in work. It is common for women who are generally unattractive or have lost their womanly charms to go and live as second wives. The men getting their services do not at all mind about their features or physical charms so long as they can work hard. It is convenient for a Gond to have extra women as workers. In case of several wives the first is his regular married wife; the others will be either the younger sisters or cousins of the first wife or some one else who chose to come and live under his protection or one with whom he had pre-marital sex relation, resulting in pregnancy. Sometimes the supplementary wives are women who are experts in mat-weaving and basket-making and are strong enough to carry heavy loads to bazar. It is more of economic necessity, therefore rather than anything else which lies at the root of the system of polygyny in Gond Society,

* Tribes and castes of the C. P. Russell and Hiralal.

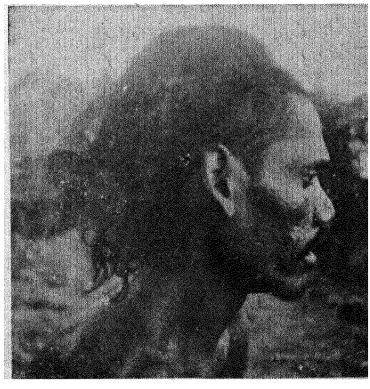
The various forms of marriages practised among the Gonds indicate their tribal consciousness and their capacity for social adaptation. Marriage by capture was once upon a time the approved form of marriage and was openly practised up to relatively recent times. With the changes brought about in the social and political conditions of the people, society has withdrawn the sanction that was accorded to marriage by capture and it is now no more practised. There are only a few communities that possess such developed and variegated marriage institutions as are to be found among the Gonds. The fact is that these primitive people have adjusted their marital customs to the exigencies of clan solidarity and economic life on the one hand and vicissitudes of love life on the other. The variations notwithstanding, the form of marriage with them is monogamy based on choice and sanctioned by the ceremonial exchange of vows and rings, together with a tribal dinner which follows every marital union. There is also freedom of divorce to an extent which will hardly be tolerable in Hindu society. *Lamsena* and the irregular forms of marriage provide for romantic consummation, nor is polygyny looked upon with disfavour. Marriage in primitive society is hardly the hard shell of custom and taboo one is familiar with in more advanced cultures There is room for variation of customs and violation of taboos in it though there is a well-recognised socially approved form of marriage at the same time.



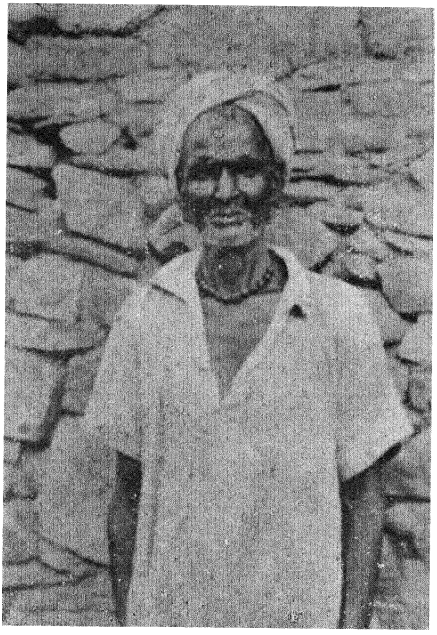
A Muria wife



A 'Thua'



A reputed Magician



A Nawagarhia Gond of Bilaspur



"We have lived our life"—it had its thrills, also its vexations

CHAPTER VIII.

FORMS OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES.

The Gond is a born worker because of his environmental conditions. Physical labour to him is the pleasure of his life and he attaches a special value to work from the social point of view. But he takes things rather easy when it concerns himself only. Probably this shows his care-free disposition. It must not be inferred that he is averse to work; on the contrary, he simply delights in hard labour. It is really creditable that among the Gonds there is no false sense of prestige. Both high and low, including the tribal headman, Mukaddam, Mandal, Malguzar and the Patel, are always prepared to work. The headman, Mukaddam Mandal or the Malguzar, who are very often men of substance, do not feel ashamed in engaging in manual labour. These men of position are always found in a jolly mood when working together with other people of lower rank in the fields. The headman leads communal hunts and figures prominently in other communal undertakings. His active participation in economic pursuits with other people of the village enhances his prestige and helps him in wielding authority and power over his people.

Industrial skill wins universal praise, so also skill in execution earns for one a position in society. The village blacksmith and the weaver are good examples of this. The Gonds are keen in admiring high standard in craftmanship. We have very nice illustration in *korbeeha loha,* (plough-share manufactured in Korba, a Zamindari in Bilaspur district). In the days of old, it is said, in Korba which lies on the border of Surguja State and British India, there lived a family of *lohars* who could temper the plough-share in such a masterly manner that the hardness of it lasted till the implement itself was worn out. This gave rise to the name *korbeeha loha.* It is also common io hear names of men who were skilful in making bows and arrows and of women who were great experts in the art of basket-making or in other crafts. The special knowledge and

technique taught by parents to children was of great help in maintaining family prestige and perpetuating a particular art. Some families, localities and districts have thus earned a reputation in various branches of work. The rain cap, or *khumaree*, of Sonthi (Bilaspur district) is notable for its durability, lightness, and for its high standord of workmanship. Similarly the Gonds of Chanda are famous for their accurate marksmanship. They can hit a running deer or a standing boar with equal confidence and accuracy.

We have already seen that physical ability is a qualification required in a wife even if she is devoid of physical charms. So is the case with men. A girl would prefer a strong man to a handsome one; men who cannot work, weaklings, and the decrepit and diseased, find it rather difficult to get girls for their wives. Physical disabilities are definitely disadvantageous in procuring a mate. The parents are also interested in getting a man who is able-bodied to be their son-in-law. Proverbs and sayings to this effect are numerous. In dance songs of the Gonds we have:

Nach kaj jhela nahai ayah,
Nagar dhahe jaun parawaya,
Douki kay men nahai bhray,
Vo douka kay sang karay.

"Who will go to a man who can neither dance nor work?
Who will marry a man,
Who dare not plough and who will mate with one
Who cannot satisfy?"

There is another saying current among the Gonds that ridicules the idle: *kam kay bera tarak tay khay ka bera hark day.*

"When he has to work, there is found no trace of him; but he punctually arrives at the time of sharing the meals".

Thus we find that the worth and dignity of labour is always recognised and idleness condemned. These sayings can easily be multiplied. Public opinion is

definitely against idleness. These pithy sayings deal mostly with the economic life of the people. They indicate that an industrious man is always praised and held in esteem but an idle man is subject to scorn and has reprobation as reward. There are many vulgar and obscene proverbs also which deprecate excessive indulgence and express coutempt for the lazy.

Innumerable proverbs exalt love of work as a supreme virtue. Admiration of skill, the wide publicity given to an expert for his special type of art and the preservation of his name and fame in the tribal memory, make us conclude that the Gonds had a strong, definite social attitude in favour of industry and its practical advantage in the economic life of the community. This kind of sympathetic feeling towards the productive urge served as a great stimulus to individuals. The encouragement and interest shown by others in their work had a healthy influence on the mind of the producers making them work hard for the elaboration of their technique and the finish of their handicraft.

We have already referred to education in dealing with the *gotul* institution and also indicated the role of the family in the training of children. These are the main sources from which a Gond child gets his education. The most essential factor in the development of a child is the treatment accorded to it by the community. The Gond, as we have seen, is a keen educator because the training of the child for its future responsibilities begins with them rather early. The first thing invariably a Gond father wants his boy to learn is the muttering of words of magical formulas or *mantras*, which serve various purposes, *e. g.* as cure for suake-bite, as protection against evil spirits, as influence in warding off evil and disease, as prevention for epidemics of cholera or smallpox and as counter-charm to an enemy's *mantra*, etc.

As the child grows older, it is allowed to accompany the relatives in their daily pursuits. Small children are found with their fathers in the tribal assembly

and it seems that the children take sufficient innocent interest in the discussions. In the *guree* where these sittings are usualy held, the small boys accompany their fathers and avail themselves of the opportunity of mixing with other children of the village and also with the elders of the village. In this manner the child is in a way initiated in tribal customs and rules of etiquette from the very beginning. The *pathari* or *pardhan* sings the songs of praise of the Gond kings to the accompaniment of his *tamura* or *bana* (musical instrument) goes begging round the village. The boys and girls flock round him and listen to him with rapt attention. This preliminary information about the tribal tradition is supplemented by detailed information about the relationship of the child's family with its glorious ancestors. Grand-fatherly old men will tell these stories and create interest in the child's mind. The children are allowed great freedom and so they often become unruly. Discipline is lax because they think it desirable that the child should be unrestrained in every thing in order to develop his growing mind unbroken to face the ordeals of later life. Love of mimicry marks all children; so the games and pursuits of their parents are imitated and receive encouragement. It also makes the children to some extent familiar with the stern nature of their physical environment. The male child is trained for agriculture and hunting or some other occupation of the family, but a female is left to follow womanly pursuits. Th boy is expected to be an expert archer and a good agriculturist and the girl must attain proficiency in basket-making and in weaving mats. Now, as boys grow up the father initiates them into the technique of the various crafts. They accompany the father to the field and sometimes the father makes the boy work and plough the fields. He also goes with his father for bird-snaring and rat-trapping. Practical lessons in archery are given to make him a good hunter. He is shown round the village boundaries and taken to different streams and pools where fish abound. He is taught to decipher the

trees on which the birds flock at night and on which he should lay out his snaring appliances Along with all these he is also given training in the economic life of the society.

A child has not only to learn the technique of work but also to acquire an insight into the cult of magic, which is indispensably necessary for his usefulness as a member of society. He learns the customs of his people, the use of weapons and tools, hunting and trapping, the use of the products of agriculture, of fruits, leaves and roots as food and makes himself familiar with the tribal lore and such other useful things. In a word, the institutions mentioned above together with the parental assistance and guidance that a child receives are the forces that mould him and prepare him for the trials of life in future.

The Gond has but a few tools and machines but though these are crude in appearance and simple in technique they are quick in producing the desired results. Iron-ores are smelted by the blacksmith, *lohar*, by primitive methods and tools are made out of them. The Gond depends mostly on the itinerant *lohar* for his timely supply of agricultural implements, weapons and tools. He uses axe for lumbering the timber. In some places *bansula*, the carpenters axe, is freely used for dressing the heavy logs and giving them the desired shape and size. For felling trees, he uses the axe *tanga* or *kulhari* with considerable skill and ease. The bow-heads are made of iron and the heads are barbed so that they may stick to the victim to enable the poison in them to work. Ususally heavy loads are carried with the help of a shoulder stick known as *bahinga*, placed on one shoulder. There is a net work of strings, *sika*, at each end of the carrying stick, this net work of strings hold the baskets etc. in position. With the help of this contrivance he transports his grain to weekly markets and uses it further in various other ways. The cord drill *bhawar* with the help of a control cap-piece is used for boring. *Kodari* or hoe is

commonly used by the Gond for weeding and digging and is an indispensable implement for his *baree* cultivation. The plough is common. It is a simple instrument no doubt but an essential one used for preparing his land for cultivation.

It is quite clear that mechanical tools are few and very simple but the skill displayed by the Gond in utilizing his slender resources in this respect, is really surprising and deserves high praise. His wide and varied knowledge about the habits of animals, his crude but ready methods in industries, his capacity for adaptation to his environmental conditions, prove but one thing—that he and his fraternity are very ingenious in their ways and are an extremely intelligent people.

In places where the Gonds have come into contact with the urban population and have opportunities for using modern tools and machinery, we find that they have handled them successfully, even sometimes with more of skill and confidence than their cultured neighbours. Such attainments are worth our admiration and point out that they have an inborn capacity to adopt and use the tools, crude or fine, entrusted to them, with great skill and freedom. Changed surroundings and new types of implements make no difference to them.

The average Gond's working day begins at cock crow. The Gond is a habitual early riser. He rises at about 4 O'clock in the morning. During the ploughing season, he gives his cattle a drink of rice gruel himself, he enjoys a pipe and then takes his agricultural implements and goes to the field and begins work. He breaks off at about 11 in the noon and takes his meal which he brings with him or the *pej* (gruel) that his wife brings for him when she comes to join her husband in his work. While the cattle graze on, he takes a little rest or nap till about 2 p. m., after his meal, and then he starts ploughing again till about 5 p. m. He then lets his cattle free and puffs at his pipe. When the end of the day draws near he leaves for

home. On reaching home he eats his dinner after a bath. But his life is less strenuous in off seasons. Then he is in no hurry. Immediately after leaving the bed he releases his cattle for grazing and then retires to the river or tank for fishing, which keeps him busy upto the middle of the day. He comes home tired, takes his food and then goes to sleep. The afternoon is sometimes devoted to bird-snaring, twining rope etc.

The wife rises earlier than her husband, cleans the hut, *agana* (courtyard) and the cow-shed, fetches water and then cooks the morning meal. She goes to the field to do her share of work in cultivation, taking her husband's food with her. She works upto about 5 p.m. and then returns home, has a bath, and then lights the oven for the evening meal and gets her husband's bath and dinner ready. Visiting the weekly *hats* or markets, chatting with her neighbours at the *nullah* or at the bathing ghat, where the women compare notes on the character of their husbands and tear to tatters the reputation of friends and acquaintances much in the fashion of the rest of their sex in all parts of the world, constitute her diversions.

Usually after dinner the Gonds have a chat and smoke with some friends or neighbours, for after-dinner amusement people repair to the homes of those in the village who can play or sing. After some tunes are played and songs are sung, the assembly disperse and retire early to bed. We might say that a Gond believes in the maxim " early to bed and early to rise"; and as a result, he is healthy, but not wealthy and probably not-very wise.

GENERAL TRAITS.

It will now be possible for us to provide a detailed account of the economic efforts of the Gonds testifying to the capacity they possess for work. Psychological data on this point are not available. The only data that are to be had are some casual remarks that have from time to time been incorporated in various reports and publications concerning them. But, on account of the diversity of point of view these remarks contain, they

do not help us much. If only we can read such remarks in the true light of Gond life and institutions, they may help us to some extent to understand his capacity for work and the methods he employes in its performance.

"Industry" in its wider sense may be taken to mean a steady application to work *i. e.*, regular labour. It has been commonly found that the primitive people are always found wanting in capacity for constant work. Some scholars have explained this as due to lack of foresight rather than to laziness. Others hold that their labour is intermittent because of their scanty necessities, or because they are compelled at times to remove themselves elsewhere, or because they require some break from the monotony of work. But there are others who say that primitive men are incapable of strenuous efforts ; they work by fits and starts and as much their routine of work is interspaced by leisure. The data that are available will be critically examined in the light of the above theories.

There are some observers who have called the Gonds an easy-going people, lazy cultivators, dishonest in their dealings, unintelligent and averse to labour. We read for example that: "they are dishonest and few of them will refuse to take another man's property when a fair occasion offers ".[1]

Bell has pointed out something about their want of intelligence when he remarks: "they are thorougly unintelligent and more inconsequent than sparrow ".[2] The following remark condemns their lazy and indolent habits but praises them for their diligence under supervision. " Lazy cultivators on their own account but good farm servants under supervision, spends his beating pay[3] in liquor for himself or sweet-meats for his children ".[4] Sir Charcles Grant is of opinion that the Gonds are satisfied with their *baree* cultivation

1 The C. P. Gazeteer, 1871, introduction page 113.
2 Settlement Report of Mandla, 1904-1910.
3 The wages paid to beaters during shikar.
4 Montgomery's Settlement Report 1891-95, Chindwara district.

and with its produce, and that's why probably they are accounted lazy.

On the other hand there is a good deal of evidence of a contrary nature which upholds the view that they are both honest and hard-working. We have Rowney remarking thus: "The Gonds are especially noted for their straightforwardness and honesty and also for their fearlessness in danger notwithstanding their extreme shyness of strangers",(1) and further: "they are assiduous too in collecting fuel, lac, unwrought iron and whatever else is to be found in their hills and forests".(2) This testifies to their deligence and capacity for hard work. We would quote Sleeman's remark in this connection: "Such is the simplicity and honesty of character of the wildest of these Gonds that when they have agreed to a '*jama*' (assessment of revenue for land) they will pay it, though they sell their children to do so; and will also pay it at the precise time that they agreed to".(3) Speaking about the Gonds in General Sir R. Temple says: The Gonds seem, without doubt, to have been one of the most powerful and important of the aboriginal races of India".(4) Sir R. Temple's remarks about the art and culture that once flourished in Gondwana when the Gond Kings ruled this part of India are worth quoting: "These ruins, surrounded by or adjacent to the waste or rocks, or the forest, fill the modern enquirer with surprise and attest the former energies of the half civilized races contending with the wildness of Nature".(5) In his preface to "The Aboriginal tribes of the C. P." by Hislop, Sir R. Temple points out also the grandeur and skill of their old tanks which even to-day serve as useful storage for supplying water to the fields of the agriculturists and are one of the chief sources of irrigation. The

(1) The Wild Tribes of India. H. B. Rowney. (1882).
(2) I bid.
(3) Notes of Sir W. Sleeman on Character of the Gonds. (Record Office of Narsinghpur).
(4) First Report of Administration of the C P. 1862 by Sir R. Temple.
(5) Preface written by Sir R. Temple to the book: The Aboriginal Trbes of the C. P. by Hislop.

works of irrigation constructed by the Gond Kings of Chanda dynasty he says: "are large indeed.... Sometimes very extensive sheets of water have been formed by damming up streams, by heavy earth work dykes, and masonry escapes and sluices and channels have also been constructed. Some of the sluices and head works for irrigation channels, present an almost elaborate apparatus creditable to the skill and ingenuity of the people".(1)

Hislop in his papers dealing with the Gonds remarks: "All are endowed with average share of intelligence and a more than ordinary degree of observation". Tawney dealing with the craftmanship of the Gonds says: "As a race they are still distinguished by their great liking for wood craft",(2)

We have quoted from the writings of administrators, missionaries and travellers. It appears that while some refer to the indolence and laziness of the Gonds as cultivators and characterise them as easy going and usually averse to labour, others have extolled their art, industry and skill and have eulogized their honesty and capacity for strenuous work. Weighing these two sets of opinions we would say that the balance swings towards the latter. The writers who have dealt with their idleness or incapacity for industry have seen them only after they had come under the dominating influence of an alien culture or when they were overrun by the Marhattas. There elaborate code of communal labour and reciprocity and mutuality of economic obligations had then suffered disintegration; the tribal 'Panchayats' which used to hold them together had then considerably lost their influence; the objects of economic interest had lost their appeal owing to changed economic life; the centre of authority had shifted from the tribal headman with the growth of individuality among the members of the village; the

(1) Preface by Sir R. Temple to the book: The Aboriginal Tribes of the C. P. Hislop.
(2) C. P. Census report 1881: Description of the Gonds by Tawney.

stringent rules of the *bhaiband* had much relaxed; most of them had altogether disappeared and those existing were much modified owing to the introduction of British rule with its elaborate system of executive, judiciary and the police. This being the state of things, it is not at all surprising to regard the Gonds under these changed conditions as idle with no power of concentration in their work but diligent only under continual supervision. The statements of responsible persons like Sir R. Temple and Sir W. Sleeman and Tawney who were in constant touch with the Gonds should not be lightly dismissed, as their statements were born of careful and sympathetic understanding of Gond life and culture.

But something more would be necessary to make our analysis convincing than mere balancing of the two sets of opinions. Some of the versions, as we have, are very vague, as for example the one which says, they are. "Lazy cultivators on their own account but good farm servants under supervision". Practical illustrations of every day occurrences and instances of hard labour need a close scrutiny in order that we may get to legitimate conclusions.

Before going any further, we must consider the qualities which are revealed by a Gond in his work and which are put to use in his economic pursuits carried on within the limited resources available to him. The finish of his dancing costume, use of timber in houses and in the construction of the plough, show his skill and dexterity in the use of the crude and limited number of tools he possesses. The carved bow and the dancing costume fashioned in intricate patterns are enough to point out his love and zeal for art. In fishing, he has to erect a big dam, sometime the running streams have to be fully dammed and their flow diverted through narrow causeways where nets are put up. Pools are drained with the help of the palms of the hand used as shallow basins. These demand arduous and constant employment of hard labour. In agriculture in which a long

chain of operations is unavoidable the Gond does not show much sign of fatigue. Clearing the ground, ploughing it under the hot sun, digging and spreading manure, hillside cultivation of *bewar* and *dahiya*, fencing the fields and *baree*, the lifting of the crops and watching and guarding them even during the night against the depredations of birds and beasts—these and other operations need solid and steady labour. As shown in the calendar of work, the Gonds have to undertake some kind of work or other throughout the year excepting a few days of leisure in it when he is busy in a round of social activities.

Examples may be multiplied to show that the Gond has capacity for work, possesses energy for industry and can labour hard and with success. The various employments that he has to undertake from time to time, ordinarily prevent anything like intervals of rest for him. So, to call him idle is rather unfair, unjust and even cruel.

The next point of consideration is whether the Gond is an irregular worker. We can say that this statement has some truth in it but we must qualify it to a certain extent. To answer definitely the questien of innate capacity of the Gond is not possible because of the tenuity of materials available. Until an extensive and careful survey of these people together with mental testing are recorded, nothing definite can be advanced about the habitual attitudes or ethos of the Gond. The casual breaks in work due to his attending some social functions cannot be held as a conclusive proof of his inborn lack of concentration in work. There are many other factors which need consideration for the proper understanding of this question. Colonel Thomson after dealing with the honesty of the Gonds remarks, "When well treated and trusted they make excellent servants for rough work."* One of the first things that strike a stranger on entering Gondwana is the physical fitness of both the males and females. The physical fitness of women

* Settlement Report of Mandla District, 1867. Colonel Thomson. Page 40.

is so remarkable that many writers have paid eloquent tributes to the elegance of form and beauty of proportions, characteristic of Gond women. This is enough for concluding that the Gonds must have worked consistently hard to acquire so fine a muscular formation of the body. There are evidence to show that they are employed as coolies in road making and have been found to be willing workers at timber cutting. Many of them are even today employed in road making as coolies and not only do they work hard but have shown sufficient amount of intelligence in making bridges. Grigson in this connection remarks. " In the spate of bridge building on the state roads is recent years they have been quick to grasp methods of sinking piles, of getting great beams into position, and have not been slow to offer suggestions that have sometimes been practicable. The newly built road bridge over the Indrawati at Jagdalpur is really built according to the same method as the bridges which even Hill Marias construct across their rivers."* This shows that the Gonds can work hard and also with intelligence.

The Gond has but few wants to attend to. A comparatively small amount of work is enough for supplying his simple wants, and this done, he is satisfied. Why should the Gond blindly imitate other people, regard work as the be-all and end-all and toil for that which he does not really want? In this respect he may bc called a sensible man because he does not exert himself to secure things for which he has not any genuine desire. The Gond, it must be remembered, does not want the necessaries of a modern civilised man. He is quite contented with the bare necessities of life, food, shelter and scanty clothing and a few more articles for his subsidiary enjoyment. Few wants have economic advantages for him. Thus the irregular way in which he works is not due to any native deficiency of character but is the outcome of his limited wants. This may appear strange fo a civilised

* The Maria Gonds of Bastar. Grigson. Page 93.

man, but not to a Gond.

With the domination of foreign and alien people they have suffered from a disintegration of the 'Panchayat', the old system of economic organisation and of tribal institutions. The authority of the tribal headman and the force of *bhaiband* have all been lost. The painful consequence of it is the rapid increase in slackness and inefficiency of the individuals which has its baneful reactions upon the race. During the regime of the *panchayat* every member of the society was responsible for a particular duty which he was obliged to discharge at all costs, and under every circumstance. The tribal headman called the *gaita* had wide powers to keep the members in check and at times he acted as the *bhumia* or religious head.* Thus the people worked under the proper direction of the *gaita* cum *bhumia*; their activities were coordinated by these two agencies which either reposed in one man or in two persons. They were backed up by the force of the *bhaiband* organisation. This organisation acted as the backbone of their society. Every individual in it had his share of the common burden which he was expected to fulfil and he did it with promptness and hope for the benefit of society. In the sphere of agriculture, industry and social activities this institution had a unique part to play.

The Gonds work hard in the agricultural seasons, in their fishing expeditions etc., and after each period of hard work they have an interval of relaxation which includes outings, attending dance parties or marriage ceremonies or going about visiting friends and relatives. This break in the continuity of the work is said to be their innate defect but it should always be borne in mind that these feasts, festivals and dances have been so arranged and planned as to fit into their scheme of work. Usually it is after harvesting or just after sowing that these people have a sort of respite to recoup their energies. Thus these

* Appendix, IX chapter on Caste, P. 239. Census report of the C. P. and Berar. 1911.

breaks and respites make them more fit for work and bring forth better economic results. There is one other factor which we have to consider here. We have already said that the Gond is more a social being than an economic man. He believes in social activities and hates to be a machine. He is trained from his childhood to think, act and behave in terms of his socicty. There is a sort of social compulsion attached to all his functions, for example, his marriage, tribal feasts, death and dance parties etc. We have also indicated how the Gond is closely attached to others of his kind by bonds of kinship. All these make it imperative for him to join these social functions. Deliberate absence from these would mean disrespect to the community. So it is social compulsion that lies at the root of his participation in feasts and festivals. Mutual obligations and reciprocity in economic life are mostly responsible for the inevitable breaks in tbe work of the Gond. It is not that he is born lazy but social obligations make him appear to be so. It must not be thought that we are making out a case for the industrial habits of the Gond. We are only trying to explain the real character of the Gond and his relation to his work. All these considerations lead us to hold that in no way can the Gond be called lazy. The various economic understandings and their successful execution prove beyond doubt that he has both capacity for hard work and determination. His breaks are due to certain impositions on him necessitating the fulfilment of his social obligations. Foreign and alien oppressions have aggravated these faults in his character. May we suggest that these peaceful hardy people should meet sympathetic treatment? It would be very useful if their old institution of *panchayat* be revived, and education with some modifications to suit the present political administration be imparted to them through the agency of this useful organisation. It will have fruitful results then in improving their agriculture, trade

and industry and will make the administration less expensive. Above all it will save this old tribe from total extermination from their old land, the Gondwana.

CHAPTER IX.

DIVISION OF LABOUR

The Gond like most primitive people do not very much concern themselves with the major problems of economics, distribution, consumption and organisation. The one problem in which they are fundamentally and keenly interested is production, and that too only to the extent of subsistence or keeping their body and soul together. Whatever little an individual produces by his rough and ready methods, he consumes within a short time. Of the technique of food storage he is quite ignorant and the natural consequence is that he has to face the crisis of food shortage now and then. He is said to fast and feast alternately. The Gond also are subject to frequent cycles of game scarcity. Climatic variation affecting environmental conditions coupled with his limited means of production, force him to live continually a precarious form of existence.

Organisation is claimed to be the corner stone of the scheme of production. Labour is one of the components in productive organisation. It is through labour that man shapes his material goods to serve useful purposes. That is how labour is an indispensable factor in turning out things useful; it creates utility. In the primitive stage of society every one was potential jack-at-all trades for his individual satisfaction, but very soon individual quest was given up and each one followed a line of work in which he gave something to others in exchange for other people's goods which he needed for his own satisfaction of wants. Different members of the community or a group of them share the gains of the joint work. Here comes the notion of division of labour which probably leads to the emergence of economic organisation.

In fact, with the establishment of well defined domestic, religious and political institutions in society, the question of division of labour begins to appeal and its necessity is felt in organisation of these matters. It is perhaps for this reason, due to the undeveloped nature of their institutions, that we find the absence of an

elaborate economic organisation in primitive society.

Organisation in work is of supreme necessity for regulating the means of production and for avoiding confusion and chaos in society. Very little attention has been paid to this problem of economic organisation among the primitive tribes in India. Malinowski's description of the 'Kula' system, Schmidt's economic analysis of primitive societies, Thurnwald's exposition of pimitive economics, Raymond Firth's treatment of Maori economics, no doubt, do full justice to the subject in its proper cultural setting but nothing of much importance is known about the economic life of the primitive people in India. The cooperation among hunting tribes in India, their shooting excursions, the united efforts employed in fishing, the distribution of the game or catch that follows, the economy of the family group, mutual obligations and reciprocity of economic transactions, all these factors constitute the economic system proper. These vital problems have however been mostly ignored in the study of economic organisation. In a primitive community it is above all essential to view economic toil and the fruits of labour in the entire social and magico-religious setting of the people.

Division of labour among the Gonds, is a simple affair. A complicated system of division of labour in the sense of specialization, localisation and co-operation in industry in many forms and under countless designations, such as we find in a civilised community, is entirely absent in their scheme of economic life because their industrial activities are of a limited type. Since they have few wants and they live a simple life they do not need variety of occupations. Individual concentration on one process only at a particular stage of production in industry is hardly known to them. But division of labour on a moderate scale in both simple and complex form is there. There are some who are of opinion that there is no division of labour among Gonds except between the sexes. But we think that this assumption is not correct. In dealing with

the formation of groups of experts among the Gonds, we shall show that not only do they have division of labour between the sexes but also among members of the same sex. We propose to take up the question of division of labour in the following order, sex, age and class, each of which we shall show has its own field of activities and an important and distinctive role to perform.

There are certain occupations in which both men and women work jointly but there are others which are done by the members of one sex only.

The table given below deals with the work performed by either sex, but it is by no means exhaustive in its scope:

Men's work.	Women's work.	Joint occupation.
Clearing the land, felling trees, cutting bamboo, ploughing	Removing and arranging the branches for firing.	
Sowing, threshing and winnowing grain.	Breaking up clods, weeding, transplantation of paddy, preparing the threshing floor.	
Watching and guarding the crops at night.		
Collecting materials for basketry or ropemaking.	Gathering fruits and roots, leaves and edible plants.	Collecting food materials from the forest.
Gathering honey.	Collecting gums.	
Collecting cocoons.	Collecting leaves for leaf-cups and platters.	
Lac propagation.		
Burning wood and making charcoal.	Tattooing.	

Men's work.	Women's work.	Joint occupation.
Collecting unwrought iron.	Mat weaving.	
Building houses and repairing them.		
Making agricultural implements, bows, arrows and other weapons.	Carrying load to Markets. Dressing & cooking, serving the food.	Basket-making.
Making big basket bins for selling. Making rain caps.	Making winnowing fans. Gathering fire-wood.	
Manufacture of musical instruments and preparing dancing costumes.	Fetching water for drinking and domestic purposes.	
Snaring birds, trapping rats and hare and other animals.	Care of the hut. Plastering the floor.	
Hunting.		
Fishing, preparing nets traps and fishing line.	Depositing cowdung in the kitchen garden, *baree*.	
Pig-rearing.	Fishing.	Fishing.
Poultry-farming.	Cleaning fish.	
Domesticating animals—goat, cow, pig.	Preserving birds and fish.	

Men's work.	Women's work.	Joint occupation.
Cattle breeding.	Tending cattle.	Domesticating.
Performance of Magic.		animals.

It is necessary to add an explanatory note by way of amplification of the table given above.

Generally in primitive economic system there is not much complexity in the process of division of labour. The work gets divided between men and women in a natural way. Such discrimination as there is, is on grounds of custom, convention, tradition and physical fitness rather than on strictly psychological or industrial principles. Men usually perform heavier, interesting and arduous works while women are put in charge of lighter tasks involving, no doubt, less physical stain but more steadiness and regularity. Some of these are also monotonous in their execution from men's point of view. Taking the question of agriculture which forms one of the primary sources of food supply, we find that men are busy with such work as require strength, for example, felling the trees or carrying heavy timber, both of which demand exertion. Women are employed only in lighter type of work, for example. gathering small plants and clearing undergrowths. Hunting, trapping the rat and hare, and building houses are men's work which need either courage, or judgment or strength, or all the three together. On the contrary, cooking, caging rats and birds, collecting fallen fruits and berries which are comparatively lighter tasks and demand no precision, courage and strength are entrusted to women. Men employ themselves in collecting materials for basketry or rope-making which provide them also with opportunity for chasing and killing animals in the forest because they have to roam about in search of raw materials there. They carry bows

and arrows with them when they go to the forest. Gathering cocoons from the tops of high trees and collecting honey are very trying and dangerous jobs and are always undertaken by men; but gleaning berries or nuts, leaves and shoots from low shrubs are left to women.

There are certain occupations which are exclusively meant for a particular sex. Thus women are not allowed to plough or participate in sowing or threshing or winnowing or watching the crops at night in the fields, Tattooing is performed on both sexes, more profusely on women; but it is always the women who are engaged as tattooers, *godanaharin.* Cooking, dressing the food, carrying water, collecting fuel and looking after the cleanliness of the hut are tasks reserved for women. The village magician or *baiga* is always a man; the *gaita* and the *bhumia* too, are men. The chief of the *gotul* must be selected from the male members of the *gotul* fraternity. In the various ceremonies connected with agriculture, that is, when the sowing starts, harvesting begins and the new eating is celebrated, it is the male expert in the role of village magician, who acts like a specialist and leads the village people in magico-religious observances.

In some occupations there is no clear cut division between members of the two sexes. According to their individual necessities, they may undertake such work. The collection of *mahua* fruit, the making of baskets, manufacture of combs, preparation of oils from animal fat and from plants, making of dyes, are some of the occupations which are performed irrespective of sex. Farming becomes interesting when joint labour is required. Among some primitive tribes only women work in the fields but with the Gonds we find that both the sexes have their respective shares in agricultural operations. There is a clear division of labour and each sex works according to its natural capacity. Clearing the land, felling trees, ploughing and similar other operations which

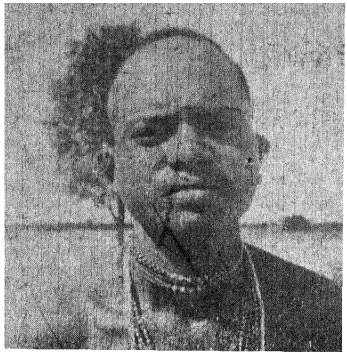
from their very nature require more physical strength are done by men. These heavier duties are supplemented by women who generally carry on lighter tasks connected with them. Sowing is always done by men because women are regarded as 'impure' and the gods might be offended if women sow the seeds. But women are freely employed in transplantation of paddy, *ropa*. This rule is strictly observed in Bastar and Chanda but in other areas in British India where Gonds have come into contact with their Hindu neighbours, sometimes even the women participate in sowing and harvesting. This restriction is much relaxed in the *baree* cultivation which is mainly the women's affair. Threshing and winnowing must in all cases be done by men only. The women have their part to play in preparing the threshing floor, a lighter task. Weeding, the most tiring and monotonous operation and demanding the least skill is always reserved for women.

Some interesting conclusions may be drawn from this survey of work performed by the respective sexes. In the first place we have to admit that the *gondin* or Gond wife is no drudge for her husband. A certain amount of equality exists between the man and his wife and there is no truth in the general notion that among the primitive tribes all the heavy menial work is, as it were, thrust upon women and men are a privileged class undertaking only some lighter tasks. The women do, no doubt, carry heavy loads to weekly markets, bring firewood on their heads from the jungle and are employed in the tedious task of weeding. But we must remember that men also have to perform heavy labour. Felling trees hewing and lumbering them, carrying grain slung on sticks through the narrow paths up hill and down dale need considerable strength and endurance. Judging all these, we may say that the division of labour is fairly equitable. In the division of labour between the sexes, customs and social traditions also play their part. In the Gond society every boy and girl

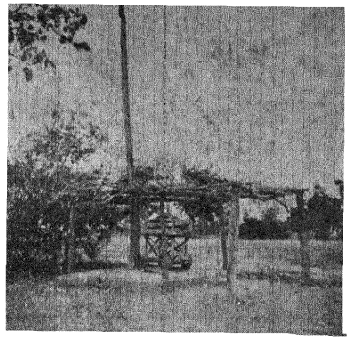
from his or her childhood has to pursue a particular line of economic career. Early training, the life in the *gotul*, training given by the parents in the fields and farms tell the same tale. The kind of labour assigned to each sex according to custom and tradition has sufficient wisdom in it. Beneath the crust of tradition there lies the basic principle of practicability and rational consideration. There is another element closely associated with the work performed, that is the amount of danger involved in a particular undertaking, the necessity for quick and sound decision and capacity for initiative are also taken into account in assigning the respective shares of the sexes.

Apart from physical capacity, mentality and tradition there is still another factor, namely, a superstitious belief in the supernatural which also acts as a determining agent in their division of work. This restricts the activities of women and excludes them from several items of work. Thus the first day sowing must be done by man only. The ceremony that precedes the sowing operation must in no case be attended by females. Threshing of grains too, is tabooed for women. The presence of women in various magico-religious ceremonies and observances is regarded as improper and is taken to be offending to the clan gods. On looking into things at closer range we find that the introduction of the supernatural element in limiting the occupations of women has its root in their natural and constitutional handicaps, like childbearing, menstruation etc.

Children and aged people are employed mostly in various minor tasks demanding less physical strain. Children are employed mostly in the way of receiving training for some technical occupation. In agriculture, the children do the work of gathering small branches and arranging them for 'firing'. In reaping and harvesting they also assist their parents. The women take out their children with them to the forests for helping them in collecting



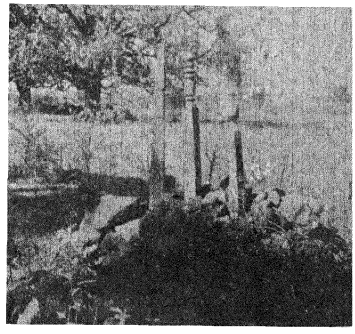
A much travelled Maria Gond of Bastar



A part of the kitchen garden



Harvesting Time



A crop of wooden Menhirs



A transfer from the Gotul fraternity to family life is not always happy



A Gond mother at work

fruits, roots and leaves. Small boys and girls are generally sent out with herds of cattle for grazing. Children being exempt from responsible work, their exact field of activity cannot be very well defined. They learn many things by imitation and soon pick up the economic routine of the tribe.

Old people are usually busy in work which does not demand much strenuous labour. Old men prefer doing those duties which need precision but little bodily effort. Thus the work of making and mending various kinds of nets, traps, snares, lines and fishing rods is best suited to them. They also manufacture ropes, *sika* (net work attached to the ends of a carrying stick) ropes for tying cattle *gerwa*, ropes used in plough to serve as neck straps *jota* for draught animals, ropes for drums and so on. They twine and cord them to be used in various ways. These are monotonous routine work but light, and can be done at leisure. If there are crops to watch in the night children over ten years of age and old men are invariably despatched to the fields where on a *mandwa* or platform, some 8 to 10 feet above the ground, they spend the night shouting aloud or singing fancy tunes to make their presence felt in the neighbourhood. Usually two persons keep watch together. Old women make baskets and mats, take care of the young children and keep watch in the house when other members of the family are busy in outdoor work and watch the crops during day time. As grannies they delight the younger generation with their interesting and funny yarns.

We have practically only two main classes among the Gonds—the Raj Gond and the Dhur Gond. The Raj Gonds are the direct descendants of those dynasties which were once rulers of this part of the country. The Dhur Gonds, who have many other subdivisions in their fold, are the plebeians or commoners. If we sub-divide the latter we find three classes viz:— artisans, cultivators and labourers. The aristocracy includes the *zamindars, malguzars, patels* and other

smaller landed proprietors. In this class we may even include the tenantry which also hold land for themselves as absolute tenants, *malikmakbusa*. The other class is that which is without land; in other words, people who do not own land themselves but are tenants at will. This class is generally employed as farm servants by those landlords who cannot by themselves cultivate the vast acreage of land they are masters of, or by other well-to-do persons who need the services of farm servants to carry on their agriculture, they being absorbed in trade or other profitable business like money-lending. The landless people are usually employed as farm servants, day-labourers and as *kabadi*. *Kabadi* system is a form of serfdom current in Bastar state and also in some form in British India.*

The *kabadi* is a kind of farm servant who works as a sort of substitute in place of his father. When the father dies without redeeming the liabilities of his creditor, usually, it is the son who inherits his assets and liabilities. When the latter has no money, as is usually the case with these poor people, to meet the obligation, he as a dutiful son repays it by personal service so that the soul of his deceased father may live in peace. If the debt is considerable, it imposes on him a life long servitude in the creditor's household. The master, usually very clever, is not slow in taking advantage of the situation and exploits him fully. He will also advance money to the *kabadi* himself whenever the latter stands in need of it, for example, during his marriage or for a tribal feast etc. Thus the debt swells and becomes so high that both for the *kabadi* and his descendants for many generations, there is no means of escape from the iron clutch of the cunning master and his family. The maltreatment meted out to the *kabadi* is proverbial and he has to bear everything patiently and cooly. So long as the debt remains unpaid, he serves

*Proceedings, Indian Science Congress, Twenty sixth Session, Presidential Address, Anthropology Section by D. N. Majumdar.

as a debtor irrespective of duration and unfavourable impositions. During the time the *kabadi* is serving his creditor, the latter has to pay him some sort of remuneration which, however, is so meagre that it does not keep the *kabadi* and his family out of starvation. The amount of remuneration widely differs according to the status of the master and the number of people in the *kabadi's* family. The *kabadi* system is one of the evils of the settled area and is only prevalent where people have taken to permanent agriculture in preference to patch or shifting cultivation such as we come across among the Hill Marias. This evil practice is mostly common in the plains where the alien element has got a firm hold upon the ignorant and the simple. The latter are indolent and pleasure-loving by temperament and so have succumbed easily to their informed, cunning and intelligent aggressors, the Hindu or the Mahomedan or even the money lenders. These alien elements find their way into the tribal country from time to time as traders, contractors and state employees or as servants of these wealthy classes of people and it is they who reduce the honest and simple Gond to the state of *kabadi*. This institution is instrumental in sealing their future progress in as much as it completely destroys the incentive of the *kabadi* for any independent occupation and gainful employment in industry. Usually the *kabadi* lives in the out-house and this is very often a pigeon hole, dilapidated, leaking badly in the rains and not at all fit for human habitation. But he calmly submits to these miseries, puts all the blame on himself and curses his *kismet* rather than raise his voice against his master for the latter's remissness. He serves as a domestic servant, goes to the fields for ploughing, sowing and weeding, collects the grain and stores them, all for his master. He is responsible for collecting faggots, for tending the cattle, for cleaning the cattle pen, for washing the cooking utensils; in a word, he has to perform all kinds of menial work. He thus lives a wretched life. Things

are rapidly improving and the state authorities concerned are taking necessary action to eradicate the evils of the *kabadi* system. Thus, in the Bastar state, it is illegal now to engage people as *kabadi* and those who do so are liable to punishment.

In British India, the farm servants who work for their masters are known as *kamia*. Those among them who get annual payment are known as *bharsia-kamia* (yearly paid farm servants), the others who receive a fixed share of the total produce of the land they cultivate are known as *soungia-kamia*. (farm servants paid in kind on a fixed percentage). These *kamias* are employed primarily for cultivation but are made to work by their masters in various other ways. They are made to share the work of the household and are sometimes assigned hard and unpleasant tasks. They have to carry water from tanks, to water the plants of their masters' garden, collect fire-wood, carry heavy loads, accompany their masters on their tours and follow them when they visit their relatives and friends in the off season. They are in charge of the agricultural operations of their *kisan* (*master*). The *kamias*, too, are no doubt kept fairly busy but the *kisans* cannot force them to perform excessive labour because the latter have always to remember that the disability or absence of the *kamias* would have adverse effect on the management of their farm. The wealthy Malguzar, Patel or the landed proprietors may have plenty of grain, yet they may starve if no *kamias* or *kamilins* (*kamia's* wife) are at hand to work for him. Hence these *kamias* have a somewhat important position in the household of their masters and are in no way absolute drudges. They are quite a different type of employees from the *kabadi*.

The economic importance of the *kamia* and *kamilin* in Gond society is indeed very great, because they are essential for carrying on agriculture for the land-owning class who hold the major portion of the land of this community. They must not be taken as slaves. They have equal status in society to that of their

masters. Further, the labourers and substantial people of these parts, both being Gonds, have common ancestors so that they are often connected by kinship ties. This occupation carries with it no stigma, neither it is regarded as low or mean in the eyes of their neighbours.

Those who are employed as labourers have generally no land of their own. They are newcomers to a village where all cultivable land have been appropriated and the newcomers have to wait until they have money enough to buy land of their own. These labourers often exhibit skill and keenness in farm work, and in general they try to make themselves indispensable as intelligent and industrious workers. By so doing they get universal praise and their market value increases in the sense that they are offered a higher percentage of total produce or an increased amount of cash remuneration.

The amount of labour which the people of the higher class do, depends much upon their temperament, taste and personal capacity. Generally speaking, the dignity of the landed aristocracy keeps them back from the most tedious and degrading occupations. But there are instances of Gond landlords participating with their *kamlas* in field work, specially in agriculture, and sometimes they even excel their paid labourers in all departments of work.

Sex, age and maturity govern the assignment of work, but social standing determines the nature of the work to be done or the occupation to be pursued by the individual in society.

Repetition and constant performance of the same work in a particular industry make one an expert in that line of work. The amount of progress a society has made determines the degree of specialisation and the specific achievements of the people. We have seen that in Gond society industries are not much developed. The wants of a Gond are few, and the ideas of exchange on which specialisation mostly depends is crude. Hence though specialisation exists among them it is in a

rudimentary form. Some people have gone to the extent of saying that specialisation was unknown in primitive society, because every one of its members had various types of work to perform and there was absolutely no possibility of engaging him in a particular process only so as to enable him to acquire specialisation. Theoretically there cannot possibly be any specialisation unless one repeats constantly the same process, which is only conceivable in a thoroughly developed industrial organization coupled with an elaborate system of exchange of products. But descending lower on the practical plane and taking things as they actually are, there does exist specialisation in some occupations in the Gond society. Among the Gonds in their hilly abodes it is not quite uncommon to come across people possessing special skill, acquired or inherited. These are called *genwaya*. They, no doubt, devote greater time to their specialised occupations but also do other kinds of work. People possessing such skill are much prized and are requisitioned by those who are less skilled, to perform such work on their behalf. Technical, magical and hereditory skill which are handed down from father to son in a closely guarded manner give rise to specialised arts.

Seasonal activities cannot be specialised in, because of their frequent breaks, as for example hare trapping, a favourite occupation of the Gonds, but it cannot be carried on all the year round. Naturally the skilful trapper has to busy himself with some other occupation in the off season to earn his livelihood. Constant employment together with continual and steady demand make for specialisation, and if the demand is not steady, it is not congenial either. People who devote the major portion of their working hours to a particular occupation and those like the *lohar, mahar, panka, godanaharin, baiga* and *bhumia* who are in constant demand, turn out to be specialists in their respective vocations. In the case of a *lohar*, we find that there is steady demand for

the manufacture of agricultural implements and weapons. It is quite possible that the *lohar* in ancient times was one of the Gond commoners but by long repeated practice he acquired special skill and then society thought it convenient to form a class of his kind. He is remunerated in kind yearly after the harvesting of the crop, the remuneration varying according to local custom. This payment is made in lieu of the services he renders to the farmers by repairing their *hasiya* (scythe) *kudari* (pickaxe) or *kulhari* (axe) all the year round.

Tattooing is very common amoug the Gonds. Women are more lavish in getting their face, forehead, arms and often breasts elaborately tattooed. It is not even uncommon to see the *baiga* or *gunia* with some tattoo marks on their persons. Russell and Hiralal have rightly remarked: "Sorcerers are tattooed with some image or symbol of their god on their chest or right shoulder and think that the god will thus remain always with them and that any magic directed against them by an enemy will fail".* Tattooers visit village after village and are employed in tattooing young Gond girls, who it seems have an inordinate craving for any amount of tattooing over their body. There is some magico-religious sanctity attached to tattooing and that is why we have in Chhatisgarh the custom of tattooing observed even by the Hindus of the lower castes like *teli*, *chamar*, *rawat* and others. The girls of these castes on their return to their parent's house after Gouna† offer themselves for customary tattooing on their arms, or for beauty spots on the face and at ankle joints.

Due to the popularity of the custom the tattooer known as *godanaharin* always gets a roaring trade. Naturally she acquires dexterity in her profession

---

*Tribes and Castes of the C. P., Russell and Hiralal.

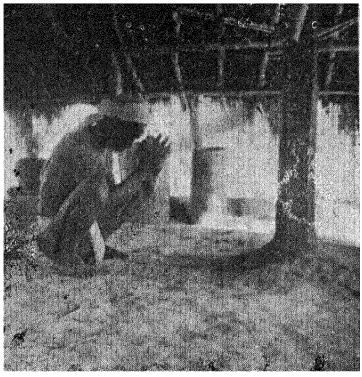
†GOUNA: This ceremony is prevalent among those castes in which child-marriage is practised. After the marriage the girl remains at her parents' house till she attains puberty. She is then sent ceremonially with her husband to her father-in-law's place for the consummation of marriage.

and becomes an expert.

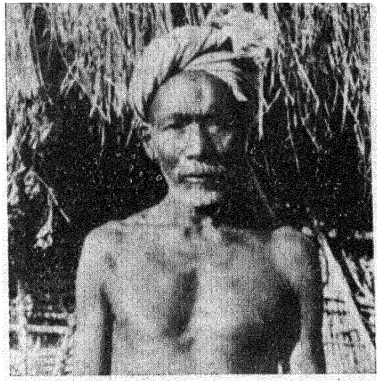
Panka or *mahar*, the village weaver, is another who specialises in the art of weaving cloth and is responsible for supplying cloth not only to his own village but to a number of villages. He introduces fanciful borders and novel patterns. He goes round a village and supplies cloth to the people. During the marriage season when the demand is very great, he works overtime to supply his customers. Clothing being indispensable, he is also regarded as an indispensable member of the society, so much so that in Bastar during the *dasserah* festival he has a very important function to perform. On the 15th day of the first half of *kuwar* (about October) a *mahar* (weaver) girl, 7 or 8 years old, fully decked with flowers, is taken to the temple of 'Kachin', very near the capital, Jagdalpur. There is a mimic fight between her and a *teli* (oil presser) in which she swoons and is laid down on a thorny bed. The Raja, who is at the temple all along, asks the priest in charge to pray to the goddess for an auspicious *dasserah* festival. This he does and the girl who has by now gently regained her consciousness seems to hear the prayer of the priest. She then slowly takes a flower garland from her neck and presents it to the Raja through the priest and predicts that the rites and ceremonies of the festival shall now proceed smoothly. The *mahar* has thus a distinctive role to play.

Baiga (magician) and *bhumia*, the religious head of a village, are supposed to be gifted with an extraordinary power of divining the will of the spirits or deities and foretelling calamity or disaster to a family or village or the community. These men are invariably consulted by the village people, individually and collectively, during marriage negotiations, religious rites and agricultural rituals. They are specialists in their own art of invoking gods, giving them offerings and appeasing their wrath.

All this special skill is carried on from generation to generation and technical knowledge is handed



Offering Prayers to Gods



A substantial Ratanpuria Gond



A popular Motiari (a girl of a village dormitory)



Wicker work and Basketry as specialised art among the Gonds



Making ropes from fibres

down from father to son. In course of time it assumes the shape of a hereditary profession and then we have such specialised classes as the *lohar* and *mahar* and also probably the *baiga* and *bhumia*. These people were of Gond extraction in remote days but owing to their attaining mastery over a particular occupation or vocation, they have adopted a generic name and represent a caste separate from their parent stock—the Gond.

It is important to note how technical ability serves as a demarcating line in the division of economic function; it offers a valuable clue to the solution of the problem of adoption of various kinds of occupation and the splitting up of these occupations into minor crafts.

CHAPTER X.

ECOMONIC LEADERSHIP

Industrial organisation includes division of functions and is closely connected with the labourer's effort. We would consider in the following pages the co-ordination of individual efforts in certain types of work. Organisation of labour, mutual understanding of common motives and excellent team work are best represented in case of the Gonds in different ways of catching fish. First of all, we should say something about the equipment as possessed either by an individual family or the *bhaiband*. Most of the families have fishing rods, lines and hooks, traps and nets of varying mesh for catching fish. Among them are found field fish trap of several types, *dandar, bisar* and *choria* all made of thin bamboo sticks twined together with cord.

In Bastar there is a tribe known as the *kuruk* who are really speaking the Maria fishing caste, living in the river valleys. The Kuruks and Hill Marias have almost the same physical appearance and have identical manners and customs. From a comparative study of the physical features of the Kuruks and the Marias from whom they are believed to have been recruited in recent times, Dr. D. N. Majumdar comes to the following conclusion: *"It appears that for all practical purposes the two samples (Kuruks and Hill Marias) may be taken to represent the same racial type". Grigson also holds the same view and remarks: "The Kuruks of the Indrawati valley from Nelashar to Bhamragarh are scarcely distinguishable from the Hill Marias in appearance and customs." ‡They are experts in fishing and are equally well-versed in the lore of nets, cages and traps. The Gonds of Bastar as well as of the Central Provinces construct various kinds of fish traps and cages with the help of reeds and bamboo sticks fastened with strings.

---

*Racial Affiliation of the Gonds by D. N. Majumdar J. R. A. S. B., Vol. VII, Science, No. 1 (1941).

‡ Tho Maria Gonds of Bastar. Grigson Page 163.

The simplest organisation for fishing is a combination of two persons, either husband and wife, or two male members of the Gond community. When they fish with the *Dandar* trap, they lay it on a platform of wicker work, the platform sloping against the streams, the small fish coming with the flow of water are unable to get through the meshes and are left dry in the trap. This sort of trap is used at the corner of rice fields where there is a fall in the level of a main irrigation current. In this simple type of fishing device there is no great room for combination and co-ordination.

In villages having channels near about, there is a typical way of fishing in which though two persons only are employed, yet each performs his assigned work with sufficient amount of skill and it is only the co-ordination and combined efforts of the two in regard to the timing of different processes that bring about a good catch. In this type of fishing one man holds a round net known as *Chapa* which is attached to the four ends of two cross poles. The point where the poles cross each other is tied with string and the 'net-man' holds the entire thing by the fingers of his right hand at the point where the poles cross each other, serving as a sort of handle and giving him a good grip. Another man who acts as his assistant, has a long pole in his hand. The man with the net is the expert who is well informed about the depth of the channel and the place where fish abound and where the net can conveniently be manipulated. The man holding the club, his assistant, is usually the net-man's grown up son or a close relative or a neighbour who knows and understands his job thoroughly well. On reaching the channel the net-man takes a position avoiding walking up the channel and so scaring away the fish, and his assistant is posted somewhere near the end of the channel. The net-man gives the signal to start the operation, the assistant then wades across the mouth of the channel, striking the surface of water, splashing it and making loud noise. All this,

he does, just to startle the fish and to dislodge them so that they are driven towards the net. The net-man is ready with his net and lowers it down on the fish that are trying to escape from the channel. Many of them are caught and are gathered. Thus the process continues till a fairly big catch is collected. This method of fishing presupposes a combination. It shows division of labour in a joint enterprise. In this kind of fishing it is necessary that each of the participants should understand the other, and although performing separate pieces of work, they must combine and co-ordinate. The net man is the leader and is usually an elderly man and upon him rests the responsibility of guiding the movements of his assistant. The 'club-man' obeys in all cases the commands of the leader. The responsibility and the activity of the leader are governed by the magnitude of work undertaken. We shall soon see that this leadership is indispensable and his functions are very wide when he leads a communal fishing on a sufficiently large scale, where he has to deal with a larger number of people of various aptitudes.

Another way of catching fish is to dam a portion of a drying pool or tank. The water of the enclosure is emptied with the help of a winnowing fan and when the encircled area becomes dry, the fish are stranded and picked up. This method of fishing is known as *chicha* (drying up.) In this there is simply co-operation on a small scale and there is no great room for either co-ordination, leadership or specialisation.

In communal fishing the members of the village assemble and go out fishing and then break up after the catch, each having received his own share after the apportionment had been made by the leader. The number of people participating in communal fishing is usually very great. On such occasions the bigger net *tawan*, which is maintained by the *bhaiband* is used. This net is fifteen to twenty yards in length and is about two to three yards in width. It is made up of stout twined string. It is sunk across the river. The bottom

of the net is weighted with pieces of stone tied to the net, the upper portion has a device that does not allow the net to sink. The two extreme ends of the net are furnished with strong ropes. The net is set in position, and some people whose sole duty is to drive the fish towards the net by splashing water and making noises are stationed at a distance of about fifty yards from the net. The cords at the two ends are entrusted to ten to fifteen people on each side who have only to draw the net. Another set of fishers stand behind the net and follow it while it is being drawn.

When all these preliminaries are carefully planned, the leader, usually an old man, issues instructions to the 'pullers' at both the extremities to draw the net slowly towards them. The men placed behind the net are all armed with a kind of trap known as *chapa* and they bring down their traps on those fish that jump clean over the big net. The two ends of the net are cautiously drawn towards dry ground on the other side and the fish are picked up when the net is hauled to dry land. The leader in such bigger tasks does not take part personally in the work but issues verbal instructions, arranges the men of the party, assigns to them positions and co-ordinates their movements. It is in these that he plays his distinctive role.

In other cases, the members of the fishing expedition consists of a number of people who voluntarily agree to combine in such an enterprise. They continue to go out from time to time. Sometimes they belong to the same social group or are neighbours to each other or may belong to the same *bhaiband*. In fishing, food gathering, agriculture and house building the *bhaiband* is generally the economic group. Among the Gonds there is a strong tie of kinship and that is how this group acts as an economic unit. This grouping has also some relation with the materials and appliances necessary for catching fish. In the *bhaiband*, as we have already pointed out, there are certain imple-

ments like big nets and traps which can be used by the members. The implements are generally possessed in common ownership because they are usually heavy and costly. One man is not competent to wield the big fishing net which is about 15 to 20 yards in length. It is beyond the economic means of an individual also to possess for himself such huge fishing tackle and keep them in a serviceable condition. Thus it may be said that these heavy gear indirectly foster group solidarity. In less costly and simpler kinds of instruments individual efforts are sufficient.

Other methods of catching fish may be called individualistic in their operation. In one of these the members of the party are all armed with *choria* traps, each using his own. This is cylindrical in shape and is made of reeds or thin bamboo sticks fastened together with wefts of cord. The wide mouth at one of the ends is fixed closely to a hole bored through the partition wall *med*, of a flooded rice field and the small fry moving with water through the hole into the trap cannot escape through the cones. In this, each one has to do his own job; only they go about in a party, but really speaking, there is nothing of combination. Each one, more or less, does the same piece of work. The Gond women also indulge in fishing and their methods are very simple. It is common for them to be collected in a party each furnished with a basket and a winnowing fan as the sole apparatus for fishing. These women visit some swampy end of a tank and make a series of mud dams, throw the water out with the winnowing fan or basket and make dry the space enclosed. They then collect the fish that are left in the mud. There is very little of combination or team work. Every one is required to do the same kind of work. Some sort of leadership is, no doubt, needed in selecting the particular part of the tank to begin the operation but usually it is done by mutual agreement.

In Bastar there is a general practice among the Bhatras, the Parjas, and the Murias who are sub-

divisions of Gonds but have in due course adopted distinct names to celebrate a ceremonial *parad* (outing) for fish on *aktai* day, the local name for the Hindu festival Akshay-Trittya, generally falling in the latter half of April. On this day all the grown up men of the village go out to the forest and gather poisonous fruits, leaves and barks of the trees and after powdering them mix it in a part of the stream or in a tank, already dammed for the ceremonial fishing. The fish, after being poisoned, begin to float on the surface of water, when they are gathered. Each family cooks its share of the fish and eats it with new mangoes. From this day onward the mangoes are eaten. Before *akati*, they say, mangoes of the season should not be eaten.

From the various methods described above we can have sufficient idea about the kind of organisation that is necessary for a successful fishing expedition. There are many points which need special reference. In some cases it has been found that the expert has a distinctive role He participates in the occupation sometimes but then he is the leader who directs the men and guides them. In larger enterprises like the communal fishing he does not himself actually work with other people, he leads them, arranges the men, and stations the beaters at their respective places; for on these preliminaries depends the success of the operation. As in fishing so also in hunting; it is the leader who guides the beaters. The stops are all fixed by him. The bow-men are assigned the different places where generally the animals cross. Before actually the beat begins, the leader of the party plans the whole beat and assigns different persons different duties. The people with spears are placed behind the *shikarees* who stand ready behind them to kill every animal that escapes the arrows of the beaters and of the main *shikarees* who are placed at favourable positions. The leader enjoys the privilege of control because of his proficiency in the art of fishing, or in the case of shooting, due to his being a

skilful marksman, or because he is braver or more fully conversant with the habits and movements of the animals. It has nothing to do with his social or economic status. But in the villages when the question of getting people together has to be tackled, the headman is usually the man who takes charge of it. He sends words through some energetic young men of the village to the headman of another village and together they, through mutual arrangement, fix the days. Time and place are fixed up for the outing subsequently. Most of the bigger enterprises are communal affairs. From the individual family it extends to the *bhaiband* and sometimes it is not uncommon to see the limit extended to the *bhai-biradari*—all working in common agreement.

When a family finds it difficult to perform some work owing either to its magnitude or want of expert knowledge, the members very freely invite their relatives and friends to help them. In a Muria village when such an opportunity arises the chief of the *gotul* is requested to send the entire strength of the boys and girls to work. In one of the villages in Bastar we found in a Dandami-Maria family the maternal nephew was called in to help his uncle in constructing a house. Experts like the *gunia*, *bhumia* or *baiga* are called by the people to help them in illness, or calamity, child-birth and on many other occasions specially when some secular or religious, magical or social rites or observances have to be performed by the individual or the tribe.

In large undertakings like the hauling of a huge tree-trunk, all the people, except the leader, are employed, the *sirdar*, that is, the leader or the conductor in such cases watching from a distance and always issuing instructions for the successful execution of the work to the men engaged. In agriculture, we have some people ploughing the field, others breaking the clods, others busy in weeding and so on. Here the economic function is sufficiently defined and each one has to do his legitimate task.

Thus we find that in work which demands co-operation and combination of labour, such as, hauling the trunk of a tree, united action and joint effort are essential for success. In such instances individual effort, however great, is wasted. In other occupations like fishing and hunting there must be some sort of mutual understanding or team work in which co-ordination and synchronization of efforts are of supreme importance. In house-building the different employees must combine with one another to bring about a particular result; though each one works separately in it, all aim at bringing about one complete thing, a concerted piece of work.

Thus leadership is one of the essential factors on which depends the successful functioning of any organisation. We have already appraised the position of the leader and the influence of his personality. In bigger enterprises we have seen that his presence is of supreme importance. His absence would mean chaos and it would not be possible to combine and carry out a task to its successful termination if he is not on the spot. In smaller undertakings the leader himself is the principal worker and he identifies himself completely with other workers, so much so, that he might not be noticed even by a casual observer. With the increase in the volume and complexity of work, important roles are assigned to him. And when the enterprise is very big, the numerical strength of the labourers great, then, on account of the magnitude and importance of the work, the leader assumes the role of the supervisor or conductor, not actually participating in the work, but guiding the workers by giving them verbal instructions. The distinctive part played by this man may well be compared to the duties discharged by 'the master-craftsman'. He is the man who brings about co-operation among a number of craftsmen following the same vocation and working under his direction.

In our tour through the Bastar state sometime in 1938 we found a band of Muria and Muria men, lifting a *sal* log to place it as a beam over the pier.

The leader who was conducting and supervising the work was a grey haired old man, on the wrong side of fifty, holding a stick in his hand and brandishing it in the air shouting *hai* and the gang at work repeating the cry and applying all their strength in lifting the log. The log rolled out a foot or so. The voice of the old man increased in volume till at last it sounded like a loud scream. In giving it, his facial expression also changed and his dancing movement was a sight not to be forgotten. The workers on their part repeated the yell in a chorus which could very easily be heard from the distance of a mile. The combined push drove the timber a few feet ahead. Repeating the process many times it was found that the voices gradually softened considerably and the leader, judging correctly that it was time to have some respite, asked the people to break up and smoke their leaf pipes, *choghi*. Thus they all rested a while to begin the task again with fresh zeal and energy. In this work we found two sets of people, one, who applied the pulling power and the other who used their stout poles as levers to dislodge the log. But every one was working in perfect co-operation with others because they knew that individual labour was all labour lost in such a heavy task.

The loud voice, the dancing movements and the brandishing of the stick of the old man, were partly meant for impressing his importance on the gang and partly for inspiring and encouraging the others in introducing a rhythmic movement in their work. All these, more or less, serve the same purpose as the baton of the band master which helps to combine and concentrate the efforts of individuals in a concert.

Where the work consists of various processes and involves a division of labour the leader must have sufficient knowledge to understand the principles of the work that he is supervising and then only his leadership can be accepted. In house-building, for example, he must be fully conversant with the different processes involved in it. In matters magical and

religious, a close acquaintance with the rites and ceremonies and the nature of the offerings to be made to the clan gods is required of the leader.

In a word, the leader must know everything of the details of the work to be done and must be well informed about all the processes of executing it. Economic leadership is very often exercised by a man, known as the *mukaddam* or *gaita*, because he is usually a man of substance and on him the people of his own village and others round about it depend for supply of grains in times of scarcity. Sometimes he owes his economic leadership to his birth and social status in the community. Above all he must also possess bodily strength and should have some distinctive mental acquisition. The headman of a village or a tribe always wields great influence in economic affairs. The problem of leadership is a momentous one even in civilized communities since leadership is essential in all undertakings big and small, communal or social, political or national. Primitive societies too, we find, know how to make their choice of a leader with discrimination and care.

CHAPTER XI.

MAGIC AND GOND ECONOMICS

Magic and religion are found side by side in all primitive societies. Magic in various forms is an indispensable economic force, while religion, through the moral integration of the group invariably provides the basis of tribal constitution. These are tools of adaptation in primitive society and their respective roles have been discussed in detail by anthropologists and sociologists. We shall confine our attention only to that aspect of magic which has direct relation to the economic activities of the Gonds. The Gond folk-lore and folk-tales are full of references to the miraculous deeds of their ancestors, kings and warriors; of wizards, diviners and soothsayers. Legends are numerous of their bravery, valour and power, their cunning and resourcefulness and their names are frequently mentioned in the recitation of charms and spells, in incantations and magical formulae.

Frazer in ' The Golden Bough ' refers to magic as ' the bastard sister of science ' as it is based on imaginary laws supposed to be operating with precision and regularity. Tylor considered magic to be a confused mass of beliefs and practices and in his view, their unity consists in the absence of ordinary nexus of natural cause and effect. Magical procedure to him was an expression of animism, he felt that magic was primitive, and its place in modern society could only be explained on the ground of its survival even in changed surroundings. Magic, in this sense, is nothing more than a part of religion and a base religion at that. Frazer saw in magic something simpler than the animism of Tylor and for its wide distribution in some form or other, all over the world, he took it to be simpler than animism. It is more or less universally believed in and thus he assumed that magic has everywhere preceded religion. Sigmund Freud in his book 'Totem and Taboo' remarks: "We can easily guess that magic is the earlier and the more important part of animistic technique, for among the means with which

spirits are to be treated there are also the magic kind, and magic is also applied where spiritualisation of nature has not yet, as it seems to us, been accomplished".* Magic, religion, animism are terms that have slowly grown; it was Tylor who gave us the term 'animism' and initiated investigations through it into the roots of religion. Frazer has given us magic in its various forms, and his practical examples are the result of extensive research in that direction.

Among a primitive people like the Gonds who are still in a lower stage of culture, it is not very easy to find terms connoting and conveying the exact sense of magic, religion and animism, terms we are so familiar with in modern cultural life. In cruder cultures, religion is regarded as the common creed of all individuals in the tribe. every member of which has implicit faith in its efficacy. Every rite, practice and observance is strictly performed according to the traditional code of the society; the individual has little option as an unit and the personality even of the chief and the warrior is suppressed by subordinating it to the interests of group solidarity and standardized behaviour-patterns. Magic is not simply a belief or something that makes us feel uncanny, but it is an art in which theory and dogma at every step are translated into action. Magic, to the Gond, is a practical affair, it comes to his rescue and releases his tension of emotions excited by emergencies and crises to which improvidence and want of foresight land him frequently. Magic has to bring rain to the crops, on it depends the getting of good game and a bumper catch, it is a protection against pests, against misfortunes, diseases or death. It is closely associated with conception, pregnancy, childbirth, initiation, marriage, dance, love and the economic undertaking of various agricultural operations such as sowing, reaping, winnowing, threshing and storing of grains. Magic has also a great part to play in the construction of houses, selection of the village-site, negotiating a difficult path

*Totem and Taboo by Sigmund Freud. (Page 127) Pelican books.

in a journey and various other items of social, economic and secular aspects of life. Thus magic, in this context is a comprehensive human art, aiding man's adjustment to life and his environment. It is, as it were, an effective means by which man feels competent to control and confront the forces of nature and can even superimpose his will and force in the world of beings and things. It is an efficient tool in safeguarding his welfare and shaping his destiny. Magic is regarded by the Gond as a potential force which helps him in his work, whatever the nature of it may be. A practical knowledge of soil and plants and other environmental conditions and raw materials are utilized as the known and calculable requirements of an industry. The Gond is fully alive to the fact that manuring, tillage, weeding and good seeds are some of the factors on which agricultural prosperity depends and that there are other natural factors which are equally essential for agriculture, for instance, rain in proper time and in adequate quantity. But he has to resort to magical practices when there is excessive or ill distributed rainfall, or when pests and insects cause damage to crops. So also in other pursuits of life, he has equally to rely on magic and its efficacy.

The primitive man, therefore, recognises both natural as well as supernatural force. The natural agencies he faces with a rational technique and empirical knowledge embodied in the crude and rudimentary card of experience shaped into customs and laws. To control the supernatural, he employs magic, spells, charms and incantations which restore his confidence and equip him with a technique the utility of which he seldom questions.

With the help of magical rites and rituals, observances and sacrifices, the primitive man deals with things which mostly depend on luck and chance, while he utilizes his rational knowledge and practical experiences in the solution of his economic and industrial problems.

The Gonds frequently build their houses in the

interior of forests as they mostly depend upon the forest produce for their subsistence. Their method of agriculture is still primitive, their implements are crude and they supplement their meagre produce from the fields by hunting and fishing. Oftener than not, they have to take recourse to magical practices for redress of their sufferings and grievances, to tide over periods of stress, strain, starvation and other kinds of difficulties, for example, the fish may not be found in parts of a river they were once abundant in, or sometimes they may fail to appear in the usual season, the fruits may not be plentiful in their due time and even the chase may fail to provide the required quota of animal food, and so ón. Nature's wrath is experienced in the scarcity of rain, in excessive precipitation, in hails, storms and even the antagonism of pests and bacterial diseases in plants. For all these the Gonds have failed to forge any efficient armour but take recourse to divination and magic which they believe to be efficacious. When the fertility of their fields or the abundance of game in the forest is affected, when acts of omission or commission of their fellow villagers bring about economic disaster, they assume a philosophical attitude, as it were, and without blaming men, their neighbours, they interpret their acts as determined by supernatural agencies over which they have little control. They realise the necessity of caution and employ preventive magic to undo the evils of their association with supernatural agents. Preventive magical rites are therefore introduced to save themselves from the effects of unseen calamities and disasters, for frustrating the evil designs of miscreants and sorcerers who are believed to manipulate the agencies of disease, epidemics, suffering and death.

In Mandla, those who take part and are accustomed to go out fishing as a communal enterprise, assemble on the bank of a river or stream, that is selected by the village headman with the help of the divination of the *gunia* (sorcerer). They all come to the

appointed place before sunrise and engage themselves in catching fish till mid-day, when their women bring them the *pej* (gruel). On returning, the women construct a mound or platform before the house of the leading man of the party. All the fish caught on the day are brought and poured on the raised ground and the leader of the fishing party distributes the catch among the members of the team, leaving one share on the spot, under cover. Next morning this share left on the raised ground. is taken away and placed on the grave of the leader's ancestor. If the catch does not come upto their expectation or if there is very little response from the fish, the women are asked not to bring food on the day following while the men continue to fish all the day in empty stomach. Even if after this precaution, there is little success, the raised platform is levelled to the ground and the next morning all the people go to another village and dance the *sela* dance before the tombs of the ancestors of that village. The headman of the village gives the party food and drink, the expenses being shared by the villagers, as such an entertainment is a link in the chain of reciprocity, co-operation and mutuality of obligations between two or more villages. Liquor is the popular item in the menu. Armed with the good will and blessings of the ancestral spirits of a neighbouring village, they return to their own village and bow to their own ancestors near the mound or platform they levelled down in disgust. Next morning they go out again fishing with greater confidence. If they are again unsuccessful, they repeat their vandalism, raze the platform or mound of the earth to the ground and exhibit their dissatisfaction with the ancestral spirits of the other village, by singing discourteous songs and calling names. Should they succeed, they praise the ancestors, offer sacrifices to them, and dance a gala dance in grateful appreciation.

In undertaking hunting expedition as well, a Gond would first light a lamp, *dia*, or if there is no oil, he will kindle a fire, read omens and then go out

into the jungle. If he gets some game, he will offer a chicken to the *bageswar*. In Mandla, the latter is supposed to preside over the forest. When a Gond goes out for hunting, he usually does not carry food with him, the idea is that the forest god, may feel pity, seeing him hungry and may crown his efforts with success. Before the beating (actual hunting) starts, the *Baiga* (village priest) is asked te divine the direction of their approach and the favourite haunt of the horned game. The *gunia* offers some sacrifice to *thakur deo*, the presiding deity of the village. All these are meant to immunize the hunting party against attacks of ferocious animals and at the same time to ensure a heavy bag. This is how the Gond secures his economic activities against unforeseen dangers and how he prevents the occurrence of failure in his undertakings.

The Gonds are a highly superstitious people and their social activities are also saturated with protective and preventive magical rites. If a woman dies during pregnancy, the mother's belly is cut open to allow the spirit of the child to escape unhurt. The body is then buried or cremated as the case may be. The spirit of such a woman is supposed to become *churel*. *Churel* is the spirit of a woman who dies at child-birth and as such is considered to be anti-social. It chastises women in the family way. It is believed to sit on the breast of a pregnant woman thereby displacing the placenta which causes death to the mother.

Even diseases and sicknesses are very commonly traced to the evil eye. At the first appearance of some trouble or sickness the *gunia* is sent for, entertained and given a goat, or a pig or a hen and some liquor with which to exorcize the evil spirit. Should any one happen to die of cholera (*dhuki*) in a village, all the inhabitants are asked to leave their houses; the *Baiga*, (village priest) is requested to supplicate to the adverse deities on behalf of the villagers or to find out the *tonhi*—the witch, usually a woman who is supposed to have invited the disease to achieve her evil ends. In Betul district it is the *devi*, the goddess, who

gives protection from epidemics. In case of cholera breaking out in a village, the local priest or *bhukma*, stays the whole day in front of the shrine of the village goddess and makes offerings of food and drink so that the goddess having obtained the *puja* (offering) may avert the disease. Sometimes a goat or a hen is set free and driven out of the village boundary. This driving out a goat with due ceremony is known as *nikasi* in Chhatisgarh. Similar practices are common among the Oraons and the Hos of Chota-Nagpur. The vicarious expulsion of a goat signifies the expulsion of the disease from the afflicted village.

Counter-magic or defensive magic is complementary in relation to magic of protection; it is therefore inevitable that it should have its place in this discussion. We would touch only the main features, i. e., the procedure and the agencies that are commonly employed in defensive magic. Defensive magic depends for its efficacy in the use of talisman, amulets and mascots. To the Gond, an amulet or a talisman is considered a boon as it protects his person, his fields, his crops and his economic resources from destruction and counteracts the effects of black-magic employed by his enemy. The fields and *baree* are protected by the *thua* which consists of a *tendu* tree post, about 3 feet in height and a worn out broom or a bundle of grass tied to its top. The purpose of this device is to secure the fertility of the land and to increase the yield thereof. This pole is cut in the jungle by the *gunia* before posting it in the field, a regular ceremony is gone through in which the *gunia* invokes the presiding spirit, chants some *mantras* and in a ceremonial manner digs a hole in the field usually at midnight, when no one is expected to see him do so. Secrecy of the function is necessary in order to guard against the evil eye or the evil mouth. The bundle of grass and the broken broom are sometimes replaced by an inverted earthen pot *dhuhana*, with marks of white and red appearing on the surface. Sometimes bones or fragments of carcass or skull are attached to

the top of the post, *thua*. The latter type of *thua* is considered extremely efficacious and powerful. Whoever may use black-magic against field or garden will first have to counteract the magic with which the *thua* is charged. It is not necessary that all fields should have this 'magic pole', for there are people, whose mode of life and activities are such as have not caused any annoyance to others and so these do not fear any harm from black-magic. But those who have a standing enmity with others, have to arm themselves against miscreants and sorcerers and the more powerful the enemy, real or imaginary, the greater the magic with which the *thua* must be charged. We were told during our investigations that *thua* of the powerful type were erected in the stream or on the banks of those parts of a river which were reserved and meant only for communal fishing. No one dares carry on individual fishing where such *thua* appears. It is in this sense that it is very much connected with the economic welfare of the society. The belief is that those who tamper with the *thua* are likely to be punished with some kind of foul disease. We did not come across a single *thua* placed in a river, or a stream, but we saw any number of them posted in the fields and in kitchen gardens (*baree*).

Thus magic of protection and prevention are intimately connected with the economic life of the Gonds, The various rites, observances and sacrifices have as their object the security of food material or the removal of disease, sickness or the evil eye. A sort of fear is sought to be created in the minds of the people concerned restricting deliberate destruction or unmindful tampering and unnecessary interference with those natural resources that are valuable and essential for the well-being of the entire community. The produce of the fields and kitchen gardens are saved because the spoiler has respect for and fear of the spell and the probable harm the *thua* may bring to him. This feeling is responsible also for protecting the *baree* produce and the field crop.

The primary motivation of all the activities of the Gonds like that of other primitive tribes, is centered round their food-procuring pursuits, agriculture being one of them. Since its produce is utilised as a means of subsistence most of the magical rites, observances and sacrifices have a sort of direct bearing upon productive operations in agriculture. Magical rites, it is firmly held, augment agricultural produce. Of the various operations connected with magical ceremonies in agriculture, we would confine our attention mainly to essential technical processes. It must be borne in mind that magical practice differs from tribe to tribe and place to place. There is a territorial distribution, as it were, of magical practices, and even within the same group of tribes viz the Murias, the Marias and the Parjas, practices differ. Even then, there is an underlying similarity of motivation and a general uniformity in essentials which would be the subject matter of our discussion.

The new year commences from *Chait* (April). *Gudhipadwa* or the new year's day is observed as a festival, and on this day mango, tamarind and other fruits are eaten for the first time in the new year. Some offering is made to the gods, and after the ceremony is over, the first fruit of the season is eaten in different families. Offerings are first made to the house gods—*Dulha Deo*. In many parts of the C.P. and in Bastar, *mahua* flowers and fruits play an important part as food stuff and as an indigenous source in supplying oil. The flower is used as a flavouring agent in *pej* and is extensively used in the manufacture of wine. The epicarp of the fruit is utilized as an article of food and oil is pressed out from the stony nut, the endocarp. A day is particularly fixed on which sacrifices are offered to the *mahua* tree. In Bastar some day in the month of Magh, (February) the *Perma* (religious head of the village) accompanied by the villagers, visit the *Mahua* tree in the *Perma's* field or near about. The *Perma* brings with him an egg, a cock and some milk and rice. He cleans a piece of land at the

foot of the tree and places the egg there, strews the rice, pours the milk down and kills the cock in the name of the village Mother. The ceremonies being over, every man of the assembly, including the *Perma* picks up the dry *mahua* leaves and places them in a basket as if he was collecting the *mahua* flower. The whole ceremony including the sacrifice is meant to stand for a magic charm for bringing about heavy crops of *mahua* flowers. It is a taboo to collect *mahua* flower before this ceremony takes place.

In Bastar before the trees are felled for *penda* cultivation, the *kasyeq-qaita*, (the village priest) with the elders of the Maria village, proceed to a part of the forest selected by the tribal *panchayat*. A small piece of ground is cleaned at the foot of a *saja* tree near about the selected area, by the *gaita* and an egg is sacrificed by the secular head to the gods. The headman then strikes a tree with his axe as an indication that that particular tree is to be cut for the *penda* cultivation. This ceremony gives the start to the villagers to prepare themselves for their own *penda* cultivation since the spirits of the forests have now been carefully propitiated by the headman, and they have nothing to fear from the destruction of the trees.

The *taj* or Akshya-Tritiya falls on the third of *Baisak* (May); this is a very auspicious day and the sowing of fields must begin on this day. The local *baiga* collects a handful of grain from every house of the village and offers the collected grain to the village goddess. In the evening every one ploughs ceremonially a little of his own field to indicate that the work of the year has commenced. The grain given by the *baiga* is mixed with other grains that are sown in the fields. The first day sowing is known as *mur* (beginning), in some parts it is also known as *mut-lena* (receiving a handful of grain). In Bastar among the Marias a day is fixed in the month of *na* (May) when a public offering is made to the village-Mother, and the people go out to sow seeds thereafter. Sowing in Bastar is usually done in the early hours of the morning. From

the night of the sowing till the germination of the seeds a man has to observe a number of taboos including sexual abstinence. The observance of the latter taboo introduces a new family arrangement because the husbands have then to sleep in the bachelors' dormitory. It is the head of the family or the principal member who should do the first day sowing. It is a taboo for women either to take part in the sowing of the first day or even to attend the rituals and ceremonies. Various other ceremonies are performed for securing copious rainfall. In the name of *Mothi-bhawani* seven stones are arranged at the foot of a *nim* tree and a dance is arranged in which small boys take part and go dancing round and round the tree. The admiring crowd throw water on the dancers. It is said that this induces the *devi* to send good rain. "Another method of obtaining rain is for two naked women to go and harness themselves to a plough at night, while a third naked woman drives the plough and pricks them with goad", *This practice cannot be very well explained on magical basis because in some parts of the Central Provinces, it is a taboo for women to touch the plough even. In this connection it is worth while to consider these lines of Elwin. "Some of the Baiga who have taken to the plough, use the method common among the Gond of taking the naked girls to the river where there is a strip of sand. They take a plough, tie them to it, and then drag it along. They use the goad till they bleed. But the girls must be careful not to touch the plough with their hands or the charm will be spoilt"@. The employment of naked females is common in various Magical rites connected with production. Haddon remarks: "In several parts of the world certain rites connected with agriculture were, or are performed by nude women". ** We have thus various instances, where the nudity of women is regarded as an effective

* Tribes and castes of the C.P. by Russell and Hiralal.

@ The Baiga. By Verrier Elwin. Page 349.

** Head Hunters. By Alfred C. Haddon.

condition precedent to magical rites for bringing about productive results.

After the sowing is over, comes the *hareli*, the time to celebrate the greenness of the fields because, by this time, with copious rainfall, the earth appears *haree* or green with grass. The Gonds then on a particular day get *bhilawa*, tree leaves and plant them in their fields, and worship *Bahisasur*, the deity believed to preside over the paddy fields. An offering of a little *ghee* and *gur* is made and burnt in fire; this sacrifice is meant for increasing the fertility of the field. *Bahisamam* is given a chicken, some grains dipped in its blood are cast into the fields with the prayer that the plants may flourish unhampered by weeds.

Then there are magical ceremonies directed to ward off insects and to secure bumper harvests. Magic is also associated with a particular ethos. During the ripening of crops it is taboo for the Gonds to have sexual intercourse or to sleep in the village. We find that men mostly live in the fields and watch the crop till it ripens and is reaped. When the harvesting begins, the head of the family plucks an ear of the corn and says " whatever god is the guardian of this place, please receive thy share and do not trouble us". The last plant in the field is sometimes sent home through a little girl and is put at the bottom of the grain-bin.

Chitkaur Devi, is the goddess of the threshing floor. Before winnowing takes place, a pig and a chicken are offered to her. The blood of the victims is sprinkled on the winnowing fans and baskets. The storing commences after a befitting sacrifice is made to the god with a suitable and appropriate magic formula to avoid grain being damaged by fire.

Careful scrutiny reveals that the various magical rites, sacrifices and series of mysterious observances are all arranged in logical sequence. The ceremonies start from the sowing of the seeds, when gods are invoked for their cooperation and active assistance in creating favourable conditions for cultivation. Then the nature

of the magic undergoes some transformation and takes a different shape and is mainly directed to induce a good rainfall, and to protect young plants from weeds and pests. As the crop begins to ripen they concentrate on a rich harvest, and a host of ceremonies are performed just to help them reap a bumper yield. The rituals connected with threshing and winnowing are rather formal affairs and exist only in the form of several taboos because they play a minor role in agricultural work. The storing of grain is another important occasion when ceremonies take place in honour of the gods so that they may guard the produce from being destroyed by eventualities like fire.

Thus we find that the magical undertakings are directly correlated with sowing, sprouting, maturity, harvesting and storage. Another important factor in the scheme of magical rites, is the change in their technique and in the role of the executants. With the growing of the plant the secular head who was only a director in the sowing stage, assumes the personality of the leader. Women who were not allowed to attend the sowing ceremony, are employed in the fields for weeding. A workable scheme, in which different sets of persons engage themselves in accordance with their importance as owners or labourers, is drawn up and executed and the various agricultural operations are co-ordinated in conformity with conventional practice. Since sowing is one man's job, and also because it is lighter type of work which suits the elderly man admirably well, the head of the family is entrusted with it. Women are introduced in the picture soon after the sowing when collective endeavour like weeding, reaping and transferring the sheaves from the field to the threshing floor are necessary and demand more of man-power for their successful and timely operation. It thus helps the primitive people to regulate and organise their economic activities and others them an opportunity to efficiently utilize the services of available hands.

The element of the supernatural is closely asso-

ciated with most of the rites of agriculture. For the proper exercise of these rites the workers have to employ their energies to the fullest. Much concentrated efforts are needed for the production of food and other vital necessities and it is for this reason that the Gond does not dissipate his energies in sexual intercourse when sowing is on, or when the fields are ripe with heavy sheaves. Hunting, fishing and other productive efforts are insured against calamities and failures by the observance of taboos. Taboos like sexual continence are non-economic in their character but these rigid prohibitions imposed upon the behaviour of the labourers result in intensive efforts and the quality of work improves thereby.

Magic is intimately associated with economic life, and indeed, with almost every phase of Gond culture. It is also an effective means of acquiring power and wealth in the society. The magician in primitive society has always occupied a place of prestige and distinction in social, secular and even in political life. As an expert he is constantly in demand and commands respect and honour in the tribal organisation. Magic as we have seen, is deemed indispensable in preventive, protective and productive activities of the Gonds, and as such, is an important factor in those enterprises in which elements of nature and natural resources have a considerable part to play. But unfortunately, man has not much control over physical nature. Disease, death, success or failure, poverty or plenty are often believed to be due to correct application of magic, under specific conditions and with appropriate rites. Magic, as pointed out by Prof. Malinowski consists of "spells and rites performed by a man who is entitled by the fulfilment of several conditions to perform".* He observes that every act of magic is characterised by things said, things done and the personality of the magician. Hence, we find that the spell, the rite and the personality of the magician, all the three are basic

*The sexual life of savages in North-western Melanesia by B. Malinowski. Page 35.

elements of magic. We shall now discuss the importance of these three elements which go to constitute magic among the Gonds and other primitive tribes.

Great efficacy is supposed to reside in the *mantra*, the magical formula uttered by the *baiga*, *gunia* or the village medicineman and the sorcerer respectively, of the Gond village. It is a popular belief that a string of words arranged in a specific manner possesses the charm and power characteristic of magical practice. Sometimes the power of these words are so much exaggerated, that the words or the formula proper, are often confused with the practice. Firth comes almost to the same conclusion while speaking about the Maoris of New Zealand. "In fact the term *karakia*, meaning strictly the formula which is uttered, is also used as a generic term for magic".@ We find almost a similar attitude among the Gonds; they do not much distinguish between the *mantra*, meaning the formula, and the magic. It is considered that these formula have, as it were, a supernatural sanction behind them and that this is responsible for their mystic potency. But then, repetition of a spell is not the only thing which imparts efficacy in magic. The mode of delivery and the physical and mental condition of the magician are also necessary factors in bringing about the desired effect. Here then, we can say that the psychic power of the performer and his superior communicative role also contribute to the success of magic. The *gunia*, the sorcerer, has thus to observe certain taboos. He fasts or drinks only liquor when he is employed in performing some important function, as for instance, driving away a disease like cholera from a village. He also avoids sex-relations on the day preceding the first sowing. These taboos are observed to give potency to the spell of the practitioner. The correct recitation of words, nay, recitation in a particular fashion, is also necessary for the proper

@Primitive Economics of the New Zealand Maori by Raymond Firth, Page 259.

and timely action of magic. Some important spell has to be recited in one breath without any break. This customary rigidity connected with the recitation is probably due to its immemorial antiquity, lest variation in the traditional method should render the magic barren. Examination of a formula also shows that words used in a spell are correlated to the ritual. The language used is invariably of archaic style and is full of suggestive metaphors of a remedial type. References to objects or actions calculated to influence the desired end are common. In case of prolonged labour pain for example, the *gunia,* uses the imagery of the swift flowing stream or the quickness of lightning to induce hypnosis in the mind of the woman. The use of myths and legends is common in spells. These provide necessary links with the past and bring to bear the weight of tradition upon the relief of an anxious situation in the present. Further, the words uttered in spells are imitated by the *gunia* in his movements. Suggestions made by oral chanting of the *mantra* are translated into dramatic action in order to make them effective.

Like the spell the rite is definitely prescribed in form and detailed in procedure. Variation or extemporization would mean inefficacy of the magic. Speaking about the tribes of the Chota Nagpur, Dr. Majumdar says: "In those cases where even after the sacrifice the disease does not take a hopeful turn, the Baiga is taken to task by the victim for he must have omitted some important rites in the course of sacrifice and the former has to undergo certain rites which are interpreted as penance for his acts of omission and commission and the victim is sure to come round".* The Gonds consider that rites if not properly performed would lead to trouble. In all cases the procedure must be carried out in strict conformity to the well established traditions.

The performer of magical rites goes by different

*Disease, death and divination in certain primitive societies in India, By D. N. Majumdar Man in India Vol. XIII, 1933, Page 129.

names among different tribes; he is called the *baiga* or *gunia* among the Gonds, *ojha* among the Korwas, *bhagat* among the Munda-Dravidian tribes of Chota Nagpur and *bharara* among the Tharus of the Tarai, in the United Provinces. The *gunia* is an expert or magic doctor in whose hand the magical procedure becomes more and more of a conscious art and assumes a sort of discipline in its character. The magician or sorcerer, well versed in his profession, is only employed in cases of graver nature and is requisitioned in serious tasks like the curing of a disease or sickness or when the *thua* has to be erected in the field or the *baree*. In lesser economic activities such as individual fishing, averting ill-luck, winnowing and threshing, where the sacrifices are either simple or unimportant, the expert is not called. An elder or the head of the *bhaibund* performs the ceremony. He is considered fully competent to deal with these lesser responsible tasks. The elders also impart instruction to their sons in the magical rites associated with day-to-day domestic functions. The first lesson the son receives from his father when he is considered fit to move about consists in the recitation of some *mantra* either to ward off evil spirits or to save himself from the danger of enemy's spell, or to cure scorpion-bite or the like.

Since magic is of supreme importance, the performer must handle it with due care and attend to all the details. He must attain a certain degree of proficiency either by his austerity or by disciplined way of living. In addition to these qualities he has to observe certain taboos. He refrains from eating certain kinds of food which may contaminate his art. When engaged in it he does not indulge in sex-relations. If he be not able to observe these customary restrictions and the client is not benefited by his nostrum, the cause of failure is invariably assigned not to the magic but to non-observance of the purificatory rites or departure from the strict letter of practice. Speaking about the magician and his taboos, Malinowski mentions: "that the human body, being the receptacle of magic and

the channel of its flow, must be submitted to various conditions. Thus the magician has to keep all sorts of taboos, or else the spell might be injured."*

Malinowski links the various elements, like the spell, the rite and the performer together when he adds that magic for him (performer) is a ritualized expression of an emotional state of desire, though he is constrained at the same time to find outlet for it in speech and gesture. In the spontaneous outburst of words and act lies the germ of spell and rite, in the illusion of subjective experience the conviction that such actions have really had their effect rests the foundation of the belief in magical efficiency.@

As we have already pointed out, taboos are essential counterparts of magic to harmonize the act and to bring about the desired results. This is the reason why the *gunia* observes the traditionally prescribed taboos, when he has to handle the major crises in man's life. When, for instance, he leads the annual hunt, he has to obey some of these taboos. Originally, a purely social gathering of the villagers was held as preliminary to an expedition to the jungle. It so happened that in the past the *gunia* divined the place, and the game, and the chase proved very successful. The annual hunt, since then, is celebrated as a rite which integrates and stabilises the emotions of the group into helpful attitudes. In the course of social development, individual emotions accordingly recede into the background and the emotions and ideas of the group gain prominence.

In course of time emotions assume stability and create an adaptive attitude in the minds of the primitive man. Fear, suspense and anxiety, before a hunting expedition starts out, are replaced by the belief in the magical efficacy of the spell under the leadership of the performer who thus engenders con-

*Science Religion and Reality, Edited by Joseph Needham, Article on Magic Science and religion. By B. Malinowski.

@Compare, Magic, Science and Religion by B. Malinowski: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 14th Edition.

fidence and courage and initiates cooperative effort. The spell and rite whose primary function lay in releasing the emotional tension of critical hours or which imparted confidence in anxious moments are elaborated and practised to bring about agreement in action and emotional and intellectual integration. The rites and observances thus become effective tools of adaptation. They foster group solidarity, bring about unity of action, and help the individual and the group to tide over the vital crises of both individual and social adjustment. In social development the role of magic gradually changes from collective appeaser and faith bringer to that of solving problems connected with individual handicap, misfortune or disease. In each case, the spell and the rite guide easy adjustment to physical and social development and thus help towards stabilization of economic mores.

CULTURAL CONTACTS AND ACCULTURATION.

Students of human geography claim that the culture of a given people is very much influenced and accordingly moulded in diverse ways by natural conditions and surroundings. Huntington and Cushing lay stress on the factors of geographical environment as determinants of culture. We shall study here the influence of geographic factors on the economic life of the Gonds.

The Gonds, in general, prefer to build their habitation in the remote mountains, where they would very much like to live in scattered dwellings. When they inhabit the villages in the plains with the Hindus and others, they segregate voluntarily and have a separate locality to themselves known as *gondpara* (the locality of the Gonds). They do not like the idea of living very near their cultured neighbours. Even where they dwell more or less isolated from others they mostly live in scattered huts, sometimes two to three families living together, and not infrequently one solitary family holding undisputed mastery over many an acre of land.

Among the physical factors, climate seems to be the most important, for directly it is climate which determines the character of the vegetable and animal resources of a particular people. Climate affects man by conditioning the available food supply and by determining the raw materials procurable for making weapons and tools. Primitive man's economic efforts are all directed towards procuring the essentials of life, shelter, clothing and food stuff. He tries to utilize the physical environment as best as he can to fulfil his primary urges but when the physical forces overawe him, he finds a new anchor in magical beliefs and rites. We have seen how the primitive Gond has adopted his mode of life to his physical environment.

Intercourse with more advanced peoples and cultures leads to the borrowing of economic tools, weapons and traditions.

Magic and ritual are used as further implements by a primitive community in adjusting itself to its environment. It is impossible now to trace the development of agriculture and use of the plough from the *jhuming* and intermittent cultivation of the old days. But new customs and ideas together with economic reciprocity between different groups have brought about significant changes in the domestic economy of these people. The Gonds of Mandla and Chanda are most primitive and have lower cultural status. They still practise *jhuming*. In Mandla the Gonds are more than half the total population of the district. When the Gonds were ruling and controlling this area, they had made the district their stronghold but now they merely cling to it. In Mandla we find two different and distinct types of cultures. In Niwas tehsil and areas near Jubbalpur and Seoni, 'Bundelkhandi' dialect and mode of dress are commonly met with. In Dinderi tehsil and the area nearing Bilaspur district, the 'Chhatisgarhi' language and mode of dress are generally prevalent among the aboriginals of Mandla district. In the southern side of Chanda, Telugu influence in cooking, dressing and wearing ornaments and Telugu speech in conversation, are usually predominant. The Marhatti tongue and culture have considerable hold on the northern parts of Chanda district and upto the river Wainganga. Mandla and Chanda can very well be characterised as the melting pot of Gond culture. People from adjoining parts of the Central Provinces, United Provinces and even from distant Punjab have come to these districts from time to time as forest contractors, traders, merchants, government officials and their servants and have been mostly found to live in concubinage with the aboriginal women. During the trying time of the Mutiny of 1857, some Brahmin officials of the army rendered valuable services and in recognition of their timely help they were granted some 'jagirs' which are still enjoyed by their descendants. "Two large estates, those of Ghugri and Singhapur, including respectively 97 and 33 villages, were

granted to officers of the native army (Brahmins) for good services in the mutiny and are held by their descendants".* The timber trade of Chanda, Mandla and other districts is mostly carried on either by the Punjabis or upcountry contractors. In Chanda we have the Punjabis and Telugu speaking forest contractors. "The timber trade is in the hands of Punjabi Mohammedans".@ The Government timber depot of Allapalli in Chanda district is mostly manned by Punjabi officials and Marhatta workers. Muslim and upcountry employees are met with in fairly good number in and around Allapalli and in many zemindaries of Chanda district.

The increasing number of primary schools opened by various local bodies and the local government is bringing about some changes in the social life of the present day generation in the tribal areas. In Mandla district the local government have recently sanctioned 40 primary schools known as *Bhumi Jan* schools in the areas mostly peopled by the aborigines. The aborigines in Mandla district, as well as in other districts of the Central Provinces, are taking but little interest in primary education. With the increase in the number of schools, no doubt, the total strength of the students is also growing. But it appears on the whole that the aborigines have not benefited much from primary education in the *Mandla District*:—

Year.	No. of Schools in Mandla.		Total number enrolled.		Number of aboriginal students.	
	Boys.	Girls.	Boys.	Girls.	Boys.	Girls.
1937–38	100	12	5783	985	1474	59
1938–39	164	13	9538	1204	3387	117
1939–40	175	13	10465	1373	3901	172

*District Gazetteer Mandla, Page 153.

@Report on Land Revenue Settlement Mandla district. 1888-90.

The following table reveals that very few students actually continue their studies so far as to take up the primary certificate examination.

Mandla district :—

Year.	Total number of Primary Passes.		Total number of Aborigines.	
	Boys.	Girls.	Boys.	Girls.
1935—36	610	34	77	...
1936—37	615	33	106	...
1937—38	641	37	121	1
1938—39	734	32	135	6
1939—40	758	32	178	2

It seems that the present day system of education does not suit their requirements and that is why the good initial response of the earlier stages has not been followed up. The education given to these backward people should be such that it answers to their economic needs and be in conformity with their customs and tribal tradition. Above all, it should have some practical utility. Exclusive literary education does not at all help them in life and that is why the aborigines do not very much interest themselves in it and do not allow their children to remain in the schools long after their enrolment. The old system of education should be modified and new practical methods of training should be introduced, like the 'Wardha Scheme'. There must be provision for carpentry, smith's work, weaving and other handicrafts. The primary school curriculum should include such courses and training as will enable them to earn their living afterwards. There is plenty of scope in the countryside for brick

making, mat weaving, basket making. ceramic, bee-keeping and a training in these will be of immense help to them.

But, as it is, the opening of these educational institutions and the introduction of a new language as the medium of instruction have tended to break down the time-old isolation of the Gonds and have disintegrated their old customs and beliefs.

The superimposition of an alien system of justice has administered a severe blow to the old *panchayat* system of the Gonds. The tribal organisation, once so popular and useful, is breaking down. The old group life is giving place to individualism.

Development in means of communication is another crucial factor which reacts upon the culture of a people. In various parts of the province, the Gonds are employed as coolies in road making and that is how they come into direct contact with other groups of fellow workers having superior cultural attainments. This kind of close association with different culture groups is bringing about considerable change in their behaviour, customs and traditions of the primitive Gonds. A common tongue, used as the medium of conversation is most powerful agency in promoting cultural change. The adoption of a foreign language leads to the assimilation of new concepts, to the propagation of new ideas, to the canalization of emotions in directions that were hitherto absolutely strange. This has happened to the Gonds. And all these combined have placed the Gonds in the cross-roads of culture to-day.

In the process of economic and cultural intercourse between the Gonds on the one hand and the Marhattas, Hindus and Mohammedans on the other, it is the former who have suffered great discomforts. The indolent and pleasure loving habits of the Gonds and their simplicity have been fully exploited by the latter people. Many Gond groups have been expropriated and have lost their villages of which they were once the proprietors having been poineers in cleaning the forests

and building on forest sites. Khan Bahadur Aulad Husain who carried out the summary settlement of Mandla district in the years 1888-90 remarks; "the large proprietors of the present day are mostly of recent days"* The Gonds are generally addicted to wine and the liquor-selling caste known as Kallar own many villages which formerly belonged to the Gonds. During the first settlement (1868) of Mandla district the Kallars were proprietors of only a few villages but the settlement report of 1888-90 shows that they own no less than 145 villages.

Taking all the villages together, the castes most numerously represented in the proprietory list are:—

2nd Settlement (1888-90).		3rd Settlement (1904-10).
Castes.	Number of villages.	Number of villages.
Brahmins	332	436
Lodhis	145	148
Kallars	145	243
Banias	132	137
Gonds	213	144

The settlement report further points out that the proprietory rights in 270 villages were transferred during 20 years following the settlement of 1868. In most cases debts have resulted from drink and improvidence and as might have been expected the Kallars (liquor sellers) have been the purchasers and the aboriginal proprietors have been the sellers. Bell's settlement figures of 1904-10 show that the Gonds are still being steadily expropriated from village landlordship

* Settlement Report of Mandla District 1888-90. Page 5.

Bell's remark in this connection is very definite: "It is a matter of no small significance that Kallars and Mussalmans who have in the past held a practical monopoly of the liquor contracts are the gainers in 109 cases of transfer, or three quarters of the number in which Gonds were the losers".

This is not the case in Mandla alone but this constant process of expropriation was universal and was common in almost all the districts of the C. P., the Gonds being the worst sufferers. "Many villages of the district were founded by the Gonds but the more energetic and business like Hindu in course of time ousted Gonds".* There is a popular saying to this effect: *sarab sahukar our sadi ini say hui gondo ki satyanasi.*

English translation: Wine, money-lenders and marriage, these are responsible for bringing about the ruin of the Gonds. These three causes have spelt economic and financial disaster to all aboriginals in general and this holds good of the Gonds in particular.

Such being the state of affairs it was contemplated that the Gonds and other aborigines should be placed under legal protection, and restrictions imposed on transfer of their lands to other groups. The Central Provinces Land Alienation Act was passed in 1916, to save them from total extinction or complete exclusion from the list of the land owning class of the C. P. This Act disallows permanent alienation either through sale, exchange, gifts or wills, of land (land meaning, site of building, shares in *mahal sir* land, and the rights enjoyed by the proprietor in the waste land or the forest produce of a *mahal*). This Act was only applicable to the aboriginal tribes of the C.P. The C.P. government declared the following tribes as aboriginals for the purpose of this Act: *Korku, Gond, Raj-Gond, Pardhan, Baiga* and *Kanwar*. The Act was extended to these tribes in Betul, Mandla, Hoshangabad, Chanda, Chhindwara, Balaghat, Seoni, Bilaspur, Jubbalpur and

* Chhindwara settlement report of Montgomery, Page 22.

Nagpur districts and other places of the C.P. where such tribes are to be found. A person belonging to such tribes has to apply to the Deputy Commissioner of the district in which he ordinarily resides, for permission to effect any permanent alienation of his land. If the alienator is not a member of an aboriginal tribe or the alienator is a member of an aboriginal tribe and the alienee is a member of the same or of a different aboriginal tribe, the sanction of the Deputy Commissioner is not needed, but in cases where the alienator is of an aboriginal tribe and the alienee is not an aboriginal, the sanction of the Deputy Commissioner is required to make the permanent alienation valid. The permission is granted after due inquiry has taken place in the matter and the Deputy Commissioner has been fully satisfied. This Act has greatly restricted the transfer of lands belonging to the Gonds and aboriginal proprietors. Thus it has proved very beneficial and has improved the economic condition of the aboriginal proprietors. Mr. Lillie, settlement officer of Mandla district, in his report of 1928-31 says: "Since the settlement, the Land Alienation Act has been passed in order to protect the aboriginal proprietors from unfair exploitation by adventurers. This Act has certainly served the purpose for which it was passed. The ground lost by aboriginals since settlement in small shares is 15 *mahals* approximately since 1916, this process by which ultimately the whole village passes to non-residents has been materially checked".*

The proprietors of lands have secured this protection but it is a matter of grave concern that the provincial government has not yet realized the necessity of extending this sort of protection to the aboriginal peasantry to save their fields from the usurious moneylenders, by introducing some clauses in the Tenancy Act which would prohibit them from transferring their agricultural holdings.

The aboriginal cultivators are becoming landless labourers by losing their agricultural holdings. In

* Lillie's Settlement Report, Mandla District, 1928-31.

Chhindwara district, in Patwari circle, numbers 28, 36 and 39 which are peopled by the aboriginals and other castes, it was found that the aborigines were fast disappearing as tenants. The figures given below would show how the aborigines are being ejected from their holdings.

Chhindwara district—Patwari Circle No. 28-36-39.

Settlement.	Total area in acres held by the tenants.	Total area in acres held by the aborigines.
1st Settlement ...	9067	3467
2nd Settlement ...	17133	5837
3rd Settlement ...	18366	4730
1939-40 ...	19860	3909

If we compare the two figures, that is, those of the 2nd settlement with the figures for 1939-40, it would be clear that the total cultivable area has increased but the holding of the aborigines has been much reduced in area. On enquiry we learnt that the number of aboriginal tenants have considerably increased in number but the area occupied by them has not increased proportionately, so that the average holding of an aboriginal tenant has fallen in size. The number of people in a tenant's family has multiplied but the area of cultivable land has been subdivided so that the holding has actually become uneconomic due to fragmentation. The cost of living and other expenses have gone up but the area of the fields which is one of the chief sources of production has invariably been reduced. This is one of the principal causes of the indebtedness and poverty of the aborigines. It is desirable that the question of moral and material elevation of the aboriginal tribes should atonce be enquired into by the

Government. In Mandla, Betul, Chanda and Balaghat where similar conditions prevail, the aborigines are leading a most miserable life. The new C.P. Tenancy Act of 1939 has been passed and enforced as law from 1st May 1941. It has introduced some revolutionary changes in the existing law. The new Act allows even the occupancy tenants to transfer their holding by sale to any person they like. It can thus be safely said that this new provision of law would further intensify the chances of the aborigines losing their land. This Act would indirectly encourage the tenants to sell their occupancy lands because the formal check in the way of securing consent of the landlord has almost been withdrawn. This will mean that the money-lending class (Sahukar) would find it much easier now than formerly to snatch away the lands from smaller tenants who are already heavily indebted and are completely at their mercy.

The Gonds are now realizing the importance of agriculture. They are now taking to permanent agriculture and are slowly adopting improved methods of farming. Cotton cultivation and cattle rearing have also been taken up by the Gonds. "Another marked feature of recent years is the increase in cultivation of cotton which has now become one of the principal crops of the Sansar tehsil. A noticeable feature in the Sansar tehsil is the high price commanded by trotting bullocks, used by the well-to-do, in their 'Chhakaras' or light carts".* It is usually hard to provide ready capital for financing various works of agriculture and it is here that the cultivators, including the Gonds have to depend mostly on the local Mahajans and Sahukars for borrowing money. "This pernicious system of borrowing has reduced them to a state of absolute and abject dependence on the Sahukars who in this part are usually Komti shop-keepers from Madras".@ The co-operative credit system is function-

* Chhindwara, District Gazetteer, report contributed by J. A. C. Skinner, Deputy Commissioner. Page 124.

@ Chanda District Gazetteer. Page 195.

ing in these tracts and is affiliated to a central bank at Sironca. This co-operative credit movement has barely touched the fringes of their economic life, but it has improved the condition of the debtors to a certain extent, no doubt.

The method practised for sowing paddy now in many parts is either *bota* broadcasting or *ropa* transplantation, both of which are new departures from *bewar* cultivation. *Nagar*, (plough) and *bakhar*, are used for sowing and levelling the fields; and the value of preserving cowdung for turning it into useful fertiliser is also being realised. Fields are made level but the agricultural implements are still simple and crude. The condition of the draught animals is far from satisfactory. "In less advanced tracts notably Raigarh, Bichchea and the Ghugri estate, cultivation is shifting and unsuitable. But in the more settled Gond tracts especially the Partabgarh, and Jubbalpur groups, the Gonds have settled down to regular and permanent cultivation of wheat and other cereals and have shown themselves though not so good cultivators as Hindus, at least able to improve".* This is enough to show that there is distinct sign of improvement in agriculture during the past decade or so. It is common in districts like Raipur, Bilaspur and Jubbalpur to find the Gond agriculturists managing their farms wonderfully well and very easily competing with their Hindu neighbours and invariably proving better in many respects.

It will be interesting to show how some of the Gonds have opened small shops in many villages in the plains and less crowded districts and are doing good business in stock commodities like match-box, *biri*, kerosene oil, edible oils, salt, cheap quality soap, sugar and other things of daily use. Thus economic development finds the Gonds as petty shopkeepers and small businessmen.

The adoption of better ways in dress and clothes

* District Gazetteer, Mandla.

points to a period of economic transition. The dress of the Gonds of the plains shows that they have taken over the custom of their neighbours. The Raj Gonds have been more influenced than others in this respect, and it is almost impossible now to distinguish the Raj Gonds from caste Hindus in the matter of customs alone. Their costume which consisted of nothing more than a loin cloth, has undergone considerable change in recent years. The women have taken to mill made *sarees* of various designs and colours. As a consequence the poor *panka* and *mahar*—the village weavers, find themselves faced with starvation. A man's dress now include *dhoti*, waistcoat and *bandee*, shirt and sometimes coat with a *pagree* (turban) or a *pheta* according to taste. The first is tied simply round and round the head, while in the latter, half the turns are at right angles to the other half.

At present among the Gonds of the plains and Raj Gonds everywhere, tiles are commonly used for roofing and it is only in the remote and wilder parts of Bastar, Chanda or Mandla that thatch alone is seen; corrugated iron sheets are also coming into use. The wicker walls, or walls of barked logs have changed and given place to mud walls. Even bricks are used for house walls by the well-to-do tenants; the houses of the *malguzar* or the *patel* are more substantial and sometimes they are huge *pucca* structures raised to two storeys. The *bara* and the *guree*, the meeting houses of the days of old, still survive in most of the villages, but though their form remains the same, they have undergone some changes for the worse and cheap substitutes in materials have marred the old time neatness and simplicity of their construction. The old type household furniture which consisted of a bedstead and the small wooden plank *pira*, earthen pots, plates and vessels and the leaf cup and leaf plates, have been widely substituted. Plates, trays and *lotas* or drinking bowls and ornaments of various shapes and description, all made of bell-metal, are now popular. The use of kerosene oil and safety matches is universal

but the small chimneyless bazar lamp of tin or clay still remains in the wilder parts and jungle areas of Bastar and Chanda where the Marias live. Hurricane lanterns have replaced the countryside *dia*. Bomboo combs, leafy rain caps are fast disappearing and their place is taken by celluloid combs and umbrellas with steel frame. Glass bangles and beads of various colours with German silver or aluminium armlets, bracelets and bell-metal anklets are coming into prominence and are much patronised by the Gond women. Soap is almost regarded as a necessity, hair oil is an item of luxury, but not uncommon in the 'toilet-outfit' of the Gond girls. Jumpers, blouses, earrings and nose-pins are worn by the Raj Gond women and by the Christian convert who are more refined in taste than others of their kind. Refined sugar is gradually superseding local *gur*. The local cigarettes *biri* are much smoked and even the use of tea is spreading among the well-to-do sections of the Gonds residing in and near the urban centres.

The unique feature of the last two to three decades among the Gonds has been their gradual adoption of at least the material aspects and culture of their neighbours the Hindus and Muslims. This change in the material aspects of life has been responsible for corresponding modification in economic organisation and in the technique of production. Assumption of individual responsibility has been more pronounced and the communal system has been pushed to the back ground. The *panchayat* system has disintegrated and tribal organisation is losing its hold on the people. With all these drastic changes in the economic and social institutions, it is but natural that the headman or the chief, as economic leader and the priest, or the *baiga* or *gunia* as economic adviser, should no longer wield the same authority that they used to in former days. Magic and spells, and their intimate relation with the economic activities of the people are disappearing. The system of communal labour and mutual distribution of the produce

of combined economic enterprise have been considerably relaxed and are now rarely undertaken or encouraged. The introduction of Law Courts, the growth of individualism in the possession of land and money economy have all contributed towards the break-down of the kinship group *bhaiband*, at one time, a unit of great social and economic importance. It still functions, though, in a limited way, when deaths occur or on some ceremonial occasions like marriage, communal dance *karma*, but it is now more of a social apparatus that has not much to do with the economic life of the people. Development of personality and growth of individualism have made big strides in the districts of the plains. And though neither communal economy has been entirely superseded nor individualistic economy completely established, every man now prefers to cultivate his own field, to sell his own agricultural produce and to spend the income on himself, his wife and children and those who are closely related to him.

The changes, we must admit, have not been all to the advantage of the Gonds. The waning of interest in common enterprises, the lack of respect for what we may call public opinion, the scant courtesy with which leaders are now treated by the people and a general distrust of the efficacy of established usages and conventions, traditions and institutions have had their cumulative adverse effect on the economic system and productive enterprises of the Gonds. Perhaps the largest amount of social and economic unsettlement is discernible in areas with a dominant Christian population due to the effects of conversion.

Christian Missions are now to be found in most of the districts of the C. P. With their elaborate schemes of uplift, general education, religious preaching, medical aid and other philanthropic works, they soon win the confidence of the simple and the poor. All these attract even the caste people, and the aboriginals including the Gonds, are naturally susceptible to them. Most of them are so enamoured of these that they have

left their society and have been willingly absorbed in the Christian fold as converts. The 'native' christian population in this way is increasing almost every day. In support of our contention we quote the following line; "Nainpur is increasing almost daily in size and the christian population is rising proportionately. The Church Missionary Society has for many years maintained a mission in the district and five churches have been built at Mandla, Patpara, Deori, Diwari and Marpha. Patpara contains a leper asylum with a score of leper inmates, an orphanage and a school. Boys are instructed upto the Middle Vernacular standard"* A new religious faith brings about changes in the manners, customs and beliefs of the people. The christian influence, we must admit, has greatly helped the aboriginals in bettering their economic conditions and social intercourse with people of higher culture and has introduced certain elements that are new to them. It has helped in broadening the outlook of the Gonds. It is a common sight now-a-days to meet a *Padree Sahib* among them preaching the ideals of christianity and appealing to the people in broken Hindustani to discard their original faith. Conversion means isolation from the community in which they are born and with which their interests are wound up. The Gonds used to think that if the worship of their gods and ancestors were not faithfully carried out, they were doomed to destruction. In case of conversion to christianity the psychic stimuli which had once governed their activities, disappear. The religious rites and ceremonies which they had performed for generations to invoke strength and success in their conflict with nature are taken away from them. The christian teaching introduces new culture traits as substitutes for the old, no doubt, but it brings tribal disintegration in its wake. However dominant they may be, the new traits introduced by an alien group, are truly adopted and properly assimilated only if they fit in with the culture-pattern of those that are converted. To the

* Mandla District Gazetteer, Page 60.

trained eye of an investigator it is apparent that the new changes introduced touch only the outer fringes of Gond-life, leaving a kind of emptiness inside where it had something positive before.

The emissaries of trade and commerce, itinerant dealers of foreign goods and agricultural produce, who mostly belong to alien culture, have also exerted their influence on them. The Gond culture of to-day is blended with those introduced from higher cultural groups. To many weekly markets and various annual fairs, like the one that is held at Hirdenagar in Mandla district, which lasts for about a month and is attended by thousands of people of the neighbouring country, the merchants bring wares from as far as Jubbalpur. These markets and fairs attract the Gonds who buy their requirements, especially fancy goods, which they need for their dancing kit. They also exchange their own forest produce with the fineries they obtain from the former. In all business transactions, expressions representative of ideas and feelings producing the proper impression desired, are in immediate demand and this gives rise to new forms of dialect. It is thus that commerce fosters bilingualism and polylingualism. This is a phenomenon which is also observable in these tribal areas now, where the Gonds are being daily put to the necessity of using a common tongue intelligible both to themselves as well as to those who carry on business with them. The adoption of this new tongue by the tribesmen is also producing its inevitable reactions in other spheres of life.

The material culture of the Gonds of old was crude and their technique of productive economy undeveloped. That is why they are called primitive by their civilized neighbours who have superior culture, advanced technique and efficient devices. It is but natural now that transformation should take place in the primitive economy of the Gonds by their association with the latter.

Primitive economics is not fundamentally different

from the economics of advanced societies. The problem of food is common to both. But the primitive people are influenced very much by geographical and environmental conditions, the nature of their habitat and the size of the social groups. The social groups that live in close association, and individual members of the same society, influence one another. The economic life of the primitive people must be considered from both these aspects, otherwise, an analysis of economic behaviour will inevitably be imperfect.

When two or more social groups having diverse traits of culture come into direct contact with one another, the one possessing a higher material outfit exerts a dominating influence on the others who are crudely equipped. The more useful, efficient and durable patterns of tools and implements gradually push out their cruder counterparts and their adoption does not necessitate any violent reaction in the society adopting them. The material aspects of life thus receive the first blow from the impact. The adoption of cord-drill and carpenters' axe (*basula*) show how the Gonds recognise their utility and efficiency. The same attitude explains the adoption of iron hooks in place of thorns or bones for fishing.

Language is an effective vehicle which goes a long way in the transmission of an alien culture. In course of time, as Chaplin remarks, it grows and becomes articulate. "The philosophical, theological, scientific vocabularies elaborate and enlarge", Social institutions, tradition and education change only with the adoption of new means of expression.

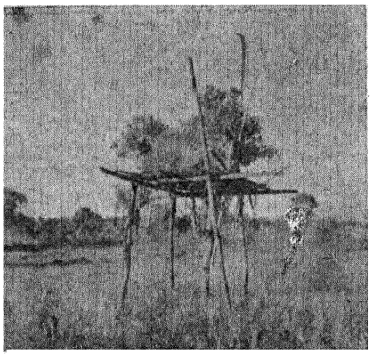
The family, the first of human institutions, consists of individuals each member of which is guided and governed by the established conventions and traditions of the tribe. At this stage of society, the individual is so much attached and absorbed in the family that he cannot break the bonds; if he does something which runs counter to the established tradition or convention, he realizes the gravity of his offence and atones for his misdeed, often he is seen to inflict punish-

ment on himself or he exposes himself for punishment by informing his people about his sins of omission and commission. So long as this attitude to tribal conduct persists, the role of society does not become active in cases of violation of established usages and conventions. With the growth of individuality in society and the development of personality, social prestige of customary conduct recedes and the headman and the tribal *panchayat* assume the guardianship of tribal code and enforce obedience to customary laws and tribal enactments.

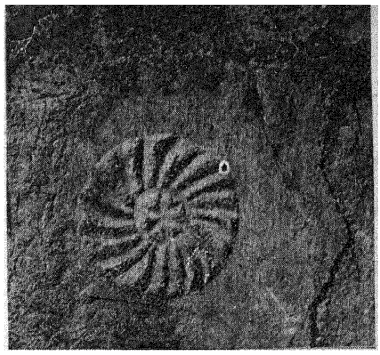
With this change in attitude, society loses its integrity and the various unfits in it begin to assume responsibilities which were at first mainly the concern of the society at large. Thus the various functions of the family arise, and the role of the family becomes more pronounced in society. In this stage, we find, among other changes, a disintegration of the tribal organisation and communal life and an emphasis on individual differences and 'personality fixation'. With the growth of individualism, people are free to move and act; each one has his own whims and fancies. Higher culture, having thus introduced the utilitarian culture traits of domestic economy, brings about another societal reaction pattern which necessitates general legislation to be enforced through the agency of some established order like the State or the Government.

So we find that the first change is in material accessories, and then come changes in technical processes. Institutional and organisational changes follow technical reorientation.

With the adoption of the material culture of the Hindus, the wants of the Gonds have considerably increased. This increase in his wants has encouraged production of wheat, cotton, and tobacco along with *kodon, kutki* and other light millet grains. This is because there is a recognition of the importance of these latter grains as food materials, and so they exist side by side with the money crops. Though the Gonds have acquired some new tastes in food due to alien in-



A platform improvised in the fields to keep watch over the crops



Crude but significant designs on mud walls of Gond houses



A small bird cage which the Gonds often carry with them



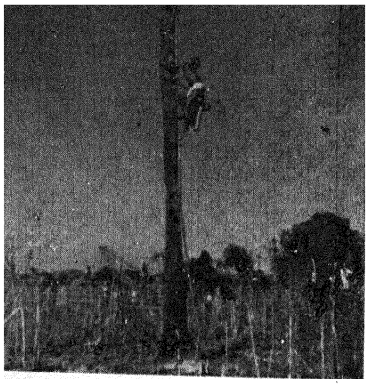
A Kurukh



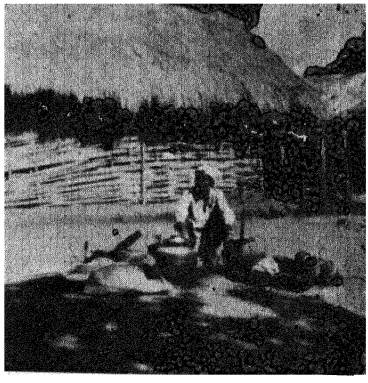
An unmarried Hill Maria girl with tattoo marks on her back



Crudely equipped but self sufficient. Gond utensils and effects



Tapping a toddy tree



More articles of domestic use



Carrying bamboos



Petty repairs to the house are done by the Gonds themselves

fluence, there has not been any thing like a total displacement of the old kinds of food crops and it may be said here, that this is one of the aspects of human nature in which the past is always more alive than in any thing else. The rapid progress in production of secondary crops or the money crops i.e., crops other than the one used as staple food by the people, is to be attributed to the fact that these secondary crops are sold and the money thus got is appropriated towards the buying of material comforts and thus fulfilling the daily needs that have multiplied in recent years with the introduction of higher culture traits.

The need for training workers and apprentices to the various occupations no longer exists as before and technical instructions are not passed from craftsman to craftsman and from father to son as they were in earlier days. The importation of foreign goods and their constant use have destroyed the self-sufficiency of villages and many of their crude industries such as making plough-shares, knives, spades and spears and even the weaving of baskets and nets have been either superseded or hold no interest for them any more. The wandering blacksmith or *lohar* still frequents the villages but his occupation has been less paying than before, and may be, it would altogether disappear in the near future.

The importation of iron and steel tools and implements has obviated the necessity of producing them by the local craftsman within the village.

The introduction of mill-made cloth and the abandonment of indigenous cloth manufactured by the *mahar* and *panka* have dispensed with as unnecessary much of the economic lore closely associated with weaving, knowledge of various kinds of fibres, ways and means of production of numerous kinds of dyes and technical operations connected with the actual weaving of cloth. In earlier days, the skilled weaver class as the producer of cloth, catering to the important requirements of the people, commanded a

arrows piled up in the Rajpur Police station house, the locality mostly inhabited by the Hill Korwas and Surgujia Gonds. This shows how the introduction of an elaborate system of law and the influence of alien rule are contributing to a dismantling of professions in primitive society.

Permanent agriculture is becoming universal every where in the Gond country. The agricultural magic so prominent in their economic life at one time is hardly necessary now. The role of the leader in agricultural pursuits is hardly visible. The headman or the chief of the village need not now be strong and powerful. Qualities which were indispensable for greatness in tribal life are no longer recognised to be so. He possesses all that the government gives merit for now-a-days—punctuality in the payment of taxes and pushing innovations that are officially recommended. He is an instrument of the government, a replica of the administrative official, and is more energetic in carrying out official programmes than extending help to his fellowmen as his forefathers used to do. A direct contact with administrative officials has taken away much of the influence of the tribal officer in his village. Constant visits to the tahsil and district headquarters have brought these poor people into close touch with touts and litigants, and this has helped them only to learn many vices. The headman has got into the habit of deliberately manipulating and concocting evidence, a method he does not hesitate to use for private gain or for fulfilling his private grudges. Constant association with people whom it is not possible for them to imitate, the expenses to maintain a high standard of living, make it almost impossible for the village officials to live within their means. The resident *malguzar* or the *mukaddam* is at times forced by the touring officials to supply them with ration free of cost. "A considerable item in a *malguzar* monthly bill is the entertaining of travellers and native officials on tour, such as police and revenue officials, expenditure on clothing and fooding has increased consider-

social prestige. But the unlimited supply of cheap mill-made cloth, through the weekly markets and the itinerant cloth sellers who make seasonal round in the villages, have made conditions altogether different, and the poor *mahar* or the *panka*, with his limited capital, has gone down in the competition, losing his former hold in trade and status in society.

Spinning, carding and knitting which usually fell to the share of nearly every woman and regarded as a part of her household duties, are now no longer seriously attempted. With the importation and use of local mill-made and foreign cloth which can be easily had in exchange for other commodities, the equilibrium of household economy and the established convention of division of labour have been disturbed. Spinning and knitting have receded to a leisure-time occupation and are now regarded only as a matter of relaxation among the women folk. But the recent movement for *khadi* by the Indian National Congress has led to the revival of spinning and weaving, and the production of hand spun cloth (*khadi*) is increasing in the villages. If adequate financial help is available and this budding industry gets the necessary encouragement and protection, it can very well rank as one of the profitable cottage industries of India and solve the burning problem of unemployment to some extent in rural and backward areas.

The employment of magic in various occupations is fast disappearing and some of these are being discouraged by the government. The imposition of restrictions by the government on hunting and bird-snaring, by way of introducing game license and Game Protection Acts, have proved to be a great set-back. Regard for magical rites and observances and recognition of the importance of the chief as the leader are decreasing. The poor *hill korwa* of Surguja state is not allowed even to possess his simple weapons of defence. His bows and arrows are confiscated and deposited in the police station house. In one of our recent tours to the Eastern States' Agency, we saw hundreds of bows and

ably of late years ".* As a result of all these, corruption and bribery are rampant among the village officials. The alien element in the population which has secured its firm hold upon the simple Gonds, propagates a spirit of discontent. These people, having some education and some elementary knowledge of law, exploit the ignorant aborigines and infuse in them the desire to evade tribal *panchayat* and approach the law courts to have their grievances redressed. They look for help now either to the agency of the executive or the revenue officials as the case may be. The results of litigation are seldom an unmixed blessing for the people. The intention of the law is, no doubt, good and pious but the inevitable result of costly legal procedure is financial ruin of both the parties. To make civil justice efficient and suited to the purse of the aboriginals, the tribal officials should be made, as before, directly responsible to the people and the throwing unnecessary administrative responsibilities on the shoulders of the *mukaddam* or official headman should be withdrawn, or at least curtailed.

There are now dispensaries and hospitals almost in every district headquarters and also in many of the tahsils, but as we have already pointed out this medical aid has not fully substituted the tribal prescription and the nostrums of the local medicineman, firstly due to the limited number of these institutions and secondly the insufficient quantity of drugs available for treatment. Another factor is the ignorance of the sufferers themselves. The medical officer-in-charge of Mandla district dispensary was of opinion that most of the patients that come to the hospital come too late for any treatment. Venereal diseases were practically unknown in the areas inhabited by the primitive people; even to-day there are only a few imported cases reported in the interior. Some of the physcians opine that venereal diseases among the Gond-women are mostly due to their association with

* Chanda District Gazetteer. Page 203.

the Punjabi timber contractors and other foreign elements visiting the area. There was no trace of these loathsome diseases so long as the premarital and post-nuptial relations were confined strictly within the males and females of the tribe, but the conditions have much changed and to-day the Gond women are seen to live with alien people and consequently receive the infection from the latter and then spread it in their own community. It is high time that better medical facilities be provided to these people by increasing the number of dispensaries in the tribal areas and equipping them adequately with qualified men and medicines. It will be highly beneficial to appoint touring medical officers wih moving dispensaries. With this arrangement it will be possible to approach these people in their villages and give them adequate medical aid and treatment. This will also give these institutions wide publicity and would make them popular.

The opening of important lines of roads has improved communications and a railway too has been introduced into the tribal areas, which, however, should not be regarded entirely as an unmixed blessing. The railway line entered Chhindwara district for the first time in 1906. The railway line touched Mandla in 1911. With the opening up of the railway, the export trade of Mandla district has considerably increased.

Names of the railway stations situated in Mandla district.	Year.	Export in maunds.		Export in tons
		Grains and pulses	Wheat.	Timber.
Mandla ...	1910	7112	31918	4620
...	1925	28673	177876	12140
Bamline ...	1910	1848	9940	1960
...	1925	5830	55976	36200
Chiradongari ...	1910	140	2212	3948
...	1925	190	2478	23183
Jamgaon ...	1910	...	...	510
...	1925	...	...	6668

The constructon of rail, trunk and feeder roads have increased the transport facilities and have improved trade and commerce. The number of bullock carts has immediately increased. In Mandla the number of carts in 1920-21 were only 2883 but in 1939-40 the number reported was 7482. In Chanda the number of carts drawn by bullocks was only 10789 in 1920-21, in 1936-37 it was 76723 but in the year 1939-40 the total number has reached to 85838. This tremendous increase in the number of bullock carts is due to the fact that grains, timber and other commodities for export are carried to the railway station or taken to markets and business centres for local sale on bullock carts, this being the cheapest means of transport.

But these facilities have also given rise to the idea of personal comforts so that it is not uncommon to find a Gond taking a bus or boarding a railway carriage to undertake a journey which, in days gone by, he would have preferred to cover on foot.

The traders and labourers near railway stations depend on the people of that locality for their supply of daily needs. This has, in a way, induced the aboriginals to flock round railway stations to supply the railway staff, the traders, workers and others with vegetable and food grain. Big number of them are also employed for the construction or the maintenance of the permanent railway track, employed as coolies in road making and as domestic servants, too. These labourers, when they come into contact with the urban people. take to many luxuries which they cannot afford and thus fall an easy victim to the local 'Mahajan'. "Even a coolie can now-a-days launch out into a number of luxuries.....and the coolie is sure to be in debt.....the great pitfall in the way of the unthrifty are drink and love of ostentatation".*

The common practice with liquor contractors who are outsiders mostly is to exploit the innocence of the tribes by selling them liquor on credit and then to charge a prohibitive rate of interest which goes on

* Chanda District Gazetteer, Page 203.

accumulating to enormous amounts in the course of a few years. The poor are thus reduced to great straits in trying to liquidate petty debts incurred in a moment of thoughtlessness.

Higher culture is, undoubtedly, a mixed blessing. Through it the Gonds are being decimated by various kinds of disease, demoralized by litigation, sub-division of inheritance and finally deprived of their own land by the new comers. The aboriginals well realize, of course, that the new comers excel them in technical skill, in tools and weapons, manners and customs and thus overwhelmed by the glamour of a superior set they fall. The new modes of life that they pick up from the stranger at their gate, throw them out of the old tribal paths which they had followed for centuries. This makes them lose that element in their life which in old days made for joy. The old life is lost and the new, though apparently charming, offers no creative or favourable motives for action. But the dark cloud has a silver lining still. The new culture has brought several benefits. Their adoption of permanent agriculture and the plantation of various supplementary crops have minimised the frequency and rigours of famine and have solved to some extent the problem of food shortage or scarcity of food supply. Permanent cultivation has caused the people to seek a fixed abode and have discouraged shifting cultivation, and in this way, the forests have been spared from indiscriminate destruction. The little of education that they receive has fostered a feeling of responsibility and kindled a desire for equality. Though the old community life has greatly disintegrated, in its place there is some growth of healthy individualism.

Cultural progress if it be real must be based on sound appreciation of the importance and merit of the traits constituting the high cultural status, for true cultural development, however, can only take place from within. It should not be an artificial or superimposed growth. The Gonds have so long followed a normal line of evolution of their own and if they are

now introduced to better ways of living and a broader outlook on life, the methods of their training should keep pace with their capacity for growth and power of proper assimilation. If we review the whole situation with regard to them, we are bound to admit that in spite of some aberrations, a basis for their development has been laid down by the various agencies and forces that are working among them for their uplift, social, economical and cultural. But the task of strengthening this basis remains a task which can be accomplished by those only who understand them sympathetically in the light of their historic past in its proper sociological setting.

GLOSSARY OF VERNACULAR TERMS.

Agana	....	A courtyard.
Akras	....	Winter rainfall.
Amchur	....	Pieces of mango preserved in dried state.
Arhar	....	A kind of pulses (*cajanus indicus*).
Arthi	....	Bier, ladder like structure, used to carry dead bodies to the graveyard.
Awala	....	A fruit tree (*phyllanthus emblica*).
Baderee	....	A 'roof tree', on this the cross beams of roof rest.
Bajeswar	....	A deity supposed to preside over the forests in Mandla district.
Bahinga	....	A shoulder stick.
Bhaisasur	....	An agricultural god presiding over the paddy fields.
Baiga	....	(i) A primitive tribe in the Central Provinces. (ii) The village medicineman.
Bair	....	A fruit bearing tree (*zizyphus jujuba*).
Baisamma	....	A female god, who when ceremonially propitiated keeps down the weeds in the fields.
Baitakhana	....	A sitting room.
Bakhar	...	An agricultural implement used for levelling fields.
Bana	....	A single wire musical instrument.
Bandee	....	A jacket with half sleeves worn by man.
Ban-Devi	....	Forest nymph.
Bansula	....	Carpenter's axe.
Bara	....	House of the resident *malguzar* or the *patel* of a village in the Central Provinces.
Baree	....	A kitchen garden usually situated behind the dwelling of a Gond.
Bas	....	Totemic groups.
Bastar	....	A feudatory state of the Eastern States Agency.

Batir .... A small bird of the partridge family.
Ber .... Banian tree (*ficus bengalensis*).
Bhagat .... Diviner among the Korwas, a primitive tribe living in Mirzapur district (United Provinces) and Surguja State.
Bhaiband .... A kinship group.
Bhaibiradari .... The community.
Bharara .... Sorcerer among the Tharus, a pre-Dravidian tribe of the Tarai, the United Provinces.
Bhat .... Boiled rice.
Bhawar .... A chord drill.
Bhilawa .... Marking nut tree (*samecarpus anacardium*).
Bhumia .... Religious head.
Bhumi Jan .... Aborigines.
Bhumka .... A village priest in Betul district.
Biasi .... Puddling of rice seedlings through plough.
Bijnori .... A species of rat.
Biri .... An indigenous cigarette.
Bisar .... A fish trap.
Bota .... Broadcasting, a mode of sowing rice.
Bund .... Embankment of paddy fields.
Bunda .... Marriage expenses which the new husband has got to pay as compensation money to the old.
Bura-Deo .... The tribal god of the Gonds.
Chabutara .... Raised platform.
Chakmak .... White stone, used as flint to produce fire.
Chalau .... Captain of the Muria *gotul* (dormitory).
Char .... A fruit tree (*buchanania latifolia*).
Chapa .... Round shaped fishing trap.
Chatora .... A kind of rain-cap.
Chelik .... Male inmates of the Muria dormitory. In Chhatisgarh, it means youngman.

Cherchera .... Winter festival.
Chhakaras .... A light bullock cart.
Chhirra .... A kind of grass.
Chicha .... A mode of fishing in which fish are stranded by draining off the water of an enclosure.
Chitaur Devi .... Goddess of the threshing floor.
Chogbi .... Smoking pipe made of leaf.
Choli .... Bodice.
Choria .... A fishing trap.
Chowra .... Slightly raised surface in the court-yard.
Chuhe .... Soft white stone, used for white washing the house walls.
Chullas .... Ovens.
Churel .... Spirit of a woman who has died in childbirth.
Churi .... Glass bangle.
Dahingla .... A bird usually nesting in gardens.
Dahiya .... A kind of cultivation in which the field is 'fired' and light millet grains are sown on the ashes.
Dan .... Gift.
Dandar .... A fish trap.
Devi .... Goddess.
Dharan .... The main post supporting the roof,
Dhoti .... Long sheet of cloth worn round the loin, by man.
Dhud-Bunda .... Compensation for milk.
Dhud-Dhar .... Milky way.
Dhud-Lautawa Return of milk.
Dhuhana .... An earthern pot.
Dhuki .... Cholera.
Dhulha-Deo .... Household god of the Gonds.
Dia .... An indigenous lamp without chimney.
Dippa .... *jhum* field: Patches of land where trees and other forest growths are burnt and on which light millet grains and rainy crops are sown.

Dona .... A leaf cup.
Dumar .... A fruit tree (*ficus hispida*).
Eti .... A goat.
Gaddi .... (i) Throne.
(ii) Installation to an office or authority.
Gadhamar-Vika Donkey slayer group.
Gaita .... The village headman in Chanda district.
Gasti .... A fruit tree (*ficus cunia*).
Gayru .... Soft stone which yields red colour.
Genwaya .... An expert in a line.
Gerwa .... Twined ropes for tying cattle.
Ghar-Ghia .... A term of contempt used to mean a son-in-law who takes to permanent residence at his father-in-law's place.
Ghasia .... An artisan class in Bastar; in Chhatisgarh, the members of this caste serve as syce.
Ghee .... Clarified butter.
Gitiora .... The dormitory, so called among the Munda and Ho of Chota Nagpur.
Godanaharin .... A tattooer.
Godari .... Old rags stitched closely layer on layer to serve as quilt.
Gondin .... A Gond woman.
Gondpara .... The Gond settlement.
Gotra .... Exogamous grouping among the Hindus.
Gotul .... The village dormitory among the Marias and Murias.
Gudhipadwa .... The new year's day celebrated as festival among some sections of the Gonds of the Central Provinces.
Gunia .... A wizard or sorcerer.
Gur .... Jaggery: unrefined sugar prepared by boiling the sugar cane juice and leaving the boiled liquid to solidify.

Curee .... Official rest-house in a village.
Handi .... An earthen pot.
Hareli .... A festival celebrated in honour of verdure.
Haril .... Green pigeon.
Harrah .... Myrobalan (*terminalia chebula*).
Hasiya .... A scythe.
Hats .... Markets.
Holi .... A festival of the Hindus observed on the last day of the month of Phagun.
Irni .... A raised surface for keeping the cooking pot before the gruel is drained off.
Jagir .... Land grant, proprietary rights bestowed on the holder by the paramount power.
Jagjaga .... The Pole Star.
Jamun .... A fruit tree (*eugenia jambolana*).
Jhoha .... A small bird of quail species.
Jhum .... Patch cultivation of shifting nature generally on hill slopes.
Johar .... A form of obeisance.
Jonkerpa .... The dormitory among the Oraons of Chota Nagpur.
Jota .... Neck-straps for beasts.
Juar .... A kind of food grain (*andropogon sorghum*).
Kabadis .... Serfs in Bastar State.
Kalgi .... A plume of feathers usually planted in the turban of the Gond dancer.
Kallar .... A liquor seller.
Kamia .... Farm servant.
Kamilin .... The wife of a Kamia.
Kands .... Tubers.
Karil .... Soft pith of bamboo.
Karma .... Communal dance.
Karta .... The head of the joint Hindu family.
Kaeeq-Gaita .... The religious head among the Marias.

Kawar .... The shoulder stick and the 'sika' (net work) taken together.
Khadi .... Hand spun cloth.
Khair .... A tree which yields catechu (*acacia catechu*).
Khair Mata .... The village goddess in some parts of the Gond country.
Kharif .... The spring crop.
Khomra .... Rain cap in Mandla district.
Khota .... A cattle shed.
Khumree .... Rain cap in Bilaspur district.
Kisan .... (i) A cultivator.
(ii) The Master of a Kamia.
Kodari .... Hoe.
Kodon .... Light millet grain (*paspalum scrobiculatum*).
Kothys .... Receptacles of clay used for storing grains.
Kotwar .... The village watchman.
Krishnapaksha. 15 days of the waning moon.
Kudari .... Pick axe.
Kulhari .... An axe.
Kundera .... A flat earthen pot.
Kutala .... The Little Bear.
Kutki .... Light millet grain (*panicum miliaceum*).
Langoti .... A scrap of cloth worn between the legs.
Lamsena .... Serving for wife in the household of would be father-in-law.
Lawa .... A small bird of the quail species.
Lenj .... Stands for month among the Hill Marias.
Lingo .... One of the gods of the Gonds.
Lonar .... Village blacksmith.
Londa .... Rice beer.
Lorha .... A stone roller.
Lota .... Drinking bowl.
Lugra .... A coarse sari.
Mahadeo .... A Hindu god.
Mahajan .... Indigenous banker.

Mahal .... Revenue unit for administrative purposes.

Mahar .... A weaver.

Mahua .... A fruit-bearing tree (*bassia latifolia*).

Main .... Bees-wax.

Maina .... A singing bird.

Malamash .... Extra or waste month, intercalary month.

Malguzar .... A village proprietor in places where Malguzari system of land settlement prevails, as in the Central Provinces.

Malikmakbuga.... Tenants who had proprietary rights over their holding.

Mangani .... Betrothal.

Mandal .... (i) A tribal headman.
(ii) A well-to-do man of a village.

Mandia .... A kind of grain (*eleusine coracana*).

Mandwa .... A platform 8—10 feet above ground for accommodating those people who are posted in fields for watching crops.

Mantras .... Magical formula.

Maravi .... A totemistic group.

Marki .... An earthen pot used for storing drinking water.

Marmi .... A ceremony in connection with marriage.

Masni .... A kind of mat made of grass.

Mati .... Mud plaster.

Med .... Partition between two fields.

Mohaline .... A tree having thick, soft and big leaves (*bauhinia rahlii*).

Morung .... Dormitory among the Konyak Nagas of Assam.

Mothibhawani.... A goddess who is believed by the Gonds to bring about rain.

Motiari .... A Gotul going girl among the Murias. In Chatisgarhi dialect it means young girl.

Mulang .... A piece of cloth worn as underwear by the Hill Maria woman.
Mukaddam .... The official headman of a village.
Mur .... The beginning.
Murrum .... Small pieces of red stones mixed with clay, Red laterite.
Mut Lena .... The ceremonial acceptance of a handful of grain from the village priest which is sown first in the fields.
Nikasi .... Driving out of a goat or a hen with due ceremony out of the village boundary.
Nagar .... (i) The Great Bear.
(ii) Plough.
Nim .... Margosa tree.
Ojhas .... A sorcerer among the Korwas.
Oria .... Eaves.
Padi .... A pig.
Padree Sahib .... A christian preacher.
Pagree .... A turban.
Pai .... A kind of creeper.
Paijan .... Anklet like ornament with tiny bells fixed.
Paithu .... Entering : in marriage it means entering the house as wife.
Panchas .... The members of the village assembly, council of elders or tribal organisation.
Panchayat .... A council of village or caste elders, traditionally consisting of five persons.
Panda .... A village priest in some parts of the Central Provinces.
Panka .... Weaver.
Para .... A part of a village.
Parad .... An outing or ceremonial hunting or fishing.
Parbati .... The wife of the god Mahadeo.
Parbat-Mussa .... A kind of rat.
Parsa .... A tree on which lac is propagated.

Pat	....	(i) An irregular form of marriage. (ii) A place where gods of the Gonds are located.
Pataiva	....	Putting planks below the roofing supported by cross beams.
Patel	....	A landlord of a village.
Patharira	....	Recesses in the house walls.
Patari	....	Platters.
Patuwa	....	Native flax (Crotalaria juncea).
Patwari	....	A village revenue officer who maintains and records the rights of the tenants and landlords in their holdings.
Pej	....	Gruel, prepared from rice or other millet grains.
Penda	....	A kind of shifting cultivation usually carried on hill slopes by the Hill Marias.
Perma	....	Village priest.
Pheta	....	Turban like headwear.
Pidha	....	A wooden seat.
Pilori Mati	....	Yellow coloured clay.
Pipal	....	A fruit bearing tree (Ficus religiosa).
Pirosee	....	Paddy or Kodon chaff.
Punja	....	An offering or worship.
Pulu	....	A digging implement.
Putu	....	A kind of fungus (mushroom).
Rabi	....	Autumn crop.
Rawat	....	Herdsman.
Rishi	....	A saint.
Ropa	....	Transplantation of paddy.
Sahukar	....	A money-lender.
Saja	....	A tree sacred to Gonds (Terminalia tomentosa).
Sal	....	A forest tree (Shorea robusta).
Salia	....	A hardy type of tree.
Saluka	....	A kind of man's wear.
Sambat	....	A Hindu calendar.
Sarangarh	....	A feudatory state in Eastern States Agency.

Saree .... Sari, a woman's garment.
Seer .... A kind of creeper.
Sela .... Dance on some particular occasion.
Shuklapaksha .... Light half of the month.
Sika .... A net work of ropes, attached to the two ends of the carrying stick.
Sil .... Stone slab for powdering spice.
Silledar .... The head of the Muria Gotul.
Sirdar .... (i) Head of the Bhaiband group.
(ii) The grand old man of a Gond village.
(iii) Leader.
Sir-land .... Home farm land of the Malguzar for which he pays rent to the government.
Sir-Panch .... Chief of the *panchayat.*
Sondi .... The only small opening in the central room of a house, after this opening the entire house is called as "Sondi type of building".
Sun .... Hemp (Canubis sativa).
Surguja .... A feudatory state in the Eastern States' Agency.
Taghali .... A bark coat.
Taihi .... Door made of bamboo poles.
Tamura .... A musical instrument.
Tanda .... Temporary settlement of the Birhors of Ranchi, Chota Nagpur.
Tanga .... An axe.
Tahsil .... A sub-division of a district.
Tatta .... A criss-cross work of bamboo strips.
Tattis .... A lattice work made of bamboo sticks.
Tawn .... A big fishing net.
Tekam .... The name of a totemic group.
Tendu .... A fruit bearing tree (Diospyros melanoxylon).
Tessu .... The flower of 'Parsa' tree.
Thakur Deo .... The presiding deity of a Gond village.
Thua .... Magic pole posted in field and kitchen garden.

Thunia .... A wooden support of door frame.
Til .... Sesame (Sesamum indicum)
Tindudi .... Bamboo staves.
Titar .... A small bird of partridge family.
Tola .... A big village.
Tonhi .... The witch.
Trisul .... Trident.
Tumreeha-Vika A totemistic group having 'Tendu' tree as their totem.
Vika .... A group.
Waddai .... A village priest.
Wara .... *See* Bara.
Yama .... The Hindu god of death.
Yo .... The dormitory of girls among the Konyak Nagas of Assam.
Zamindar .... A big landlord.
Zamindari .... The estate of a zamindar.

BIBLIOGRAPHY.

Bastian .... Outlines of Sociology, translated by Moore.

Bell .... Revenue Settlement Report of Mandla district, 1904-1910.

Benedict, Ruth, Patterns of Culture.

Central Provinces Census Report 1881. Description of the Gonds by Tawney.

Central Provinces and Berar Census Report of 1911. Chapter IX.

Central Provinces Gazetteer of 1871. Introduction.

Chaplain, F. Stuart. Culture change.

Cooley .... Social organisation.

Gazetteers of the following districts :—
Balaghat, Betul, Bhandara, Bilaspur, Chanda, Chhindwara, Hoshangabad, Jubbalpur, Mandla, Nagpur, Raipur and Seoni.

Elliot, Sir Henry M. The History of India as told by its own historians. The Muhammadan Period.

Elwin, Verrier The Baiga.

Firth, R .... Primitive Economics of the New Zealand Maori.

Forsyth .... Highlands of Central India.

Frazer, Sir J. G. Exogamy and Totemism.

Frazer, Sir J. G. The Golden Bough.

Freud, Sigmund Totem and Taboo.

Furer - Haimendorf, C. Von. The Morung system of the Konyak Nagas of Assam, Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, 1938.

Goodfellow, D.N. Principles of Economic Sociology.

Grigson, W. V. The Maria Gonds of Bastar.

Haddon, A.C...... Head Hunters.
Hislop .... Aboriginal Tribes of the Central Provinces.
Huntington and Cushing. Human Geography.
Husain, Aulad.... Report of Land Revenue Settlement, Mandla district, 1888-90.
Lillie .... Revenue Settlement Report Mandla district, 1928-31.
Lowie, R. H. .... Primitive Society.
Mair, L. P. .... An African people in the twentieth century.
Majumdar, D.N. A Tribe in Transition.
.... Racial Affiliation of the Gonds, J. R. A. S. B., 1941.
.... Disease, death and divinition in certain primitive societies in India, Man in India Vol. XIII, 1933.
... Tribal Cultures and Acculturation, Presidential address Anthropology Section, Indian Science Congress, 1939.
Malinowski, B. Article on Magic, Science and Religion in "Science Religion and Reality", edited by Joseph Needdham.
.... Article on Magic, Science and Religion, Encyclopaedia Britannica, 14th Edition.
.... Family among Australian Aborigines.
.... Primitive Economics of the Trobriand Islanders, Economic Journal, 1921.
.... The Sexual life of Savages in North-Western Melanesia.
Montgomery .... Revenue Settlement Report of Chhindwara district, 1891-95.
Mukerjee, R. K. Man and His Habitation.

Mukerjee, R. K. Theory and Art of Mysticism.
Perry .... Growth of Civilization.
Richards, A. I. Hunger and Work in Savage Society.
Risley .... Tribes and Castes of Bengal.
Rivers, W. H. R. History of Melanesian Society.
Rowney, H. B...... The Wild Tribes of India.
Russel & Hiralal Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces.
Skiner, J. A. C. Report contributed about the Gonds in Chhindwara District Gazetteer, page 124.
Sleeman, Sir W. Notes on Character of the Gonds.
Temple, Sir R...... Report on the Administration of the Central Provinces, 1862.
Preface to "The Aboriginal Tribes of the Central Provinces", by Hislop.
Reports on the Zamindaris and other petty chieftaincies in the Central Provinces, 1863.
Thompson, Col...... Revenue Settlement Report of Mandla District, 1867.
Thurnwald, R...... Economics in Primitive communities.
Venkatachar, C.S. "Survey of Migration of Castes and Tribes into Central India and their distribution". Census of India 1931. Vol. 1 Part III.
Westermarck .... History of Human Marriage.
Wissler .... Man and Culture.

A

Ajanta Hills 2.
Appearance and Physique 6.
Abujhmar Hills 14.
Attitudes toward Food 19.
Allapalli 27.
Agriculture 117, 120, 143, 179.
Animism 141.
Acculturation 159.

B

Bahinga 10.
Baree 12, 39, 49.
Bastar 20, 23, 60, 130, 134, 137.
Bison-horn Marias 26.
Birhors 43.
Bara 52, 54.
Baniagaon 61.
Bhaiband 70, 77, 78, 87, 132. 136, 172.
Bride price 89.
Basket making 100, 117.
Bewar 108.
Bhumia 100, 128.
Baiga 128, 145, 165.
Bhatras 134.
Bhagat 156.
Bhumi Jan 161.

C

Chitrakut Fall 2.
Child bearing, effect of 9.
Celestial Phenomena 17.
Chanda 22, 27, 44, 49, 63, 98 161.
Calendar of work 33.
Crops 33.
Chota Nagpur 43.
Chindwara 48, 167.
Communal Hunt 61.
Communal Fishing 132.
Cultural Contacts 159.
Church Missionary Society 173.
Cultural Progress 183.

D

Dhakars 7, 8.
Dandami Maria 8.
Dahiya Cultivation 17, 108.
Dress of the Gonds 22, 28, 170.
Decoration 22.
Dance 26, 69.
Dippa 29.
Dhauria Market 32.
Density of Population 33.
Durkheim E. 78.
Duties of women 84.
Divorce 93.
Daily Routine 102.
Division of Labour 113.
Dhur Gond 121.
Dasserah 128.
Dulha Deo 148.

E

Economic Lore 15.
Exploitation of Natural Resources 29.
Economic Calendars 34.
Excise Officers 46.
Exogamy 77, 89.
Education of Children 100.
Economic Leadership 130.
Elwin, Verrier 150.

F

Fauna 4.
Forsyth Capt. 9.
Food Quest 18.
Furer-Haimendor C. Von. 65.
Family organisation 82.
Forms of marriage 91.
Farm Servant 122.
Fishing 132.
Frazer Sir J. G. 140.
Freud Sigmund 140.
Firth, Raymond 154.

G

Gondwana, Climate of. 2.
Gonds, Numerical Strength 1.
Garra Kantak 1.
Gotul 30, 40, 59, 62, 63, 65.
Grigson, W. V. 51, 83, 109.

Guree 52, 54.
Gotul, Officers of, 65.
Gaitra 110.
Gurria 143, 155, 157.
Game Protection Acts 178.

H

Halbas 7.
Hill Marias 8, 37, 50, 59, 82, 109.
Hos 43, 144.
Haddon A. C. 150.
Husain, K. B. Aulad 164.

I

Iron Ore 5.

J

Jenkins Sir R. 22.
Jhum Cultivation 35, 160.
Joint occupation 115.

K

Kamias 58.
Konyak Nagas 59, 69.
Kanker 60.
Kinship organisation 73.
Kabadi system 122.
Kamia 124.
Kamla 125.
Kurukhs 130.
Kallars 164.

L

Love making 67.
Lessons in Agricultural operations 70, 71.
Lowie R. 82.

M

Mahadeo Hills 1.
Medicinal Herbs 4.
Manganese 5.
Majumdar D. N. 7, 83, 84, 122. 130, 155.
Murias 8, 25, 64, 67.
Mediterranean Infusion 10.
Mandla 15, 45, 143.
Marias 22.
Marhatta Influence 24.
Mukerjee R. K. 44.
Mukaddam 47, 55, 97, 139, 170.
Malguzar 49, 56, 97, 121, 179.
Mundas 59.
Morung 65.
Malinowski B. 82, 153, 157.
Motherhood 85.
Marriage 88.
Matrilocal Residence 88.
Marriage by Capture 92, 96.
Magic 140, 153.
Magical Rites 151.
Marhattas 163.

N

Nawagharia Gonds 6, 8.
Needham Joseph 157.

O

Old Stone Age 11.
Orcha 14.
Omens 17.
Ornamentation 28.
Oraons 59.

P

Pandava Caves 2.
Physical Features of the Gonds. 7.
Parjas 8, 134.
Psychologial Factors in culture 13.
Proverbial Sayings 17.
Penda 29, 39.
Panchayat 43, 49, 53, 58, 66, 163.
Patel 49. 97, 121.
Parents and children relationship 85.
Position of Women 90.
Patrilocal Residence 90.
Polygyny 95,

Panka 128, 177.
Protective Magic 197.

R

Ratanpuria Gonds 6, 8.
Race admixture 7.
Richards, Audrey 19.
Rowney H. B. 22, 105.
Raj Gonds 56, 57, 76, 77.
Risley Sir H. 76.
Rivers, W. H. R. 82.
Russell and Hiralal 95.

S

Sajapalli 16.
Seasonal organisation 41, 126.
Social Stratification 43.
Sleeman, Sir W. 107.
Sexual Division of Labour 115, 119.
Stabilisation of Economic Mores 158.
Skinner, J. A. C. 168.

T

Tattooing 9, 115, 127.
Tribal Settlements 43.
Thurnwald, R. 46.
Totemistic Beliefs 75.
Totem Groups 76.
Temple, Sir R. 105.
Thomson, Col. 108.
Tylor, Sir E. B. 140.

V

Vegetation of Gondwana 3, 11
Venkatachar C. S. 7.
Village Grouping 73, 74.

W

Westermarck, E. 88.
Widow Remarriage 94.
Wardha Scheme 162

Y

Youth House 59.