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THE ABORIGINES OF THE HIGHLANDS  
OF CENTRAL INDIA



THE ABORIGINES  
OF THE  
HIGHLANDS OF CENTRAL INDIA

BY

B. C. MAZUMDAR

ADVOCATE, CALCUTTA HIGH COURT ;

LECTURER IN CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY, CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY



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# THE ABORIGINES

## OF THE

### HIGHLANDS OF CENTRAL INDIA

#### I

#### GEOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF CENTRAL INDIA

India, we all know, has been the home of various races of Man from a very remote past. Some of them who still live almost in a state of isolation, may, in my opinion, be shown to possess some such physical characteristics and social habits as are likely to have been due to the influence of the geographical areas which they inhabit, or rather have been inhabiting since very long. Buxton has very rightly remarked in his *Peoples of Asia* that the influence of geographic environment can be very conveniently studied in India and opens a very wide field of research which has been at present but little traversed.

We know very little of the early migratory movements of man here in India but looking to the various blends of culture in the population of India—distinctly and definitely characterised by

heterogeneity, we have to admit that there must have been once in dim past incessant migrations, displacements and shuffling and re-shuffling consequent upon many tribal disintegration of numerous bands or swarms or hordes of men. We should do well, however, to resist our temptation to make some conjectural inferences relating to the ancestry of those people and should try first of all to see if we can get hold of some facts *in situ* which may disclose the originating cause of some aspects of their physical and social culture.

Leaving aside for the present the theories (however meritorious they be) regarding their origin, we proceed to study some races of a particular area to get at their history. If we know for certain that some people have been isolated for long periods in their wild home which can never have been easy to traverse, we may push our inquiry to see if they of the particular region have been long enough there to allow the local nature to impress itself upon their bodies and institutions.

The region which is taken up for investigation in this paper is the Central Indian belt mainly covered by hills and forests which stands as a partition line between Northern India which once acquired the name Aryavartta and the Peninsular India which has mainly been the region of Dravidian culture.

This central belt under consideration is a vast tract of land of the size of a continent mostly hid under indigenous forest. To give a rough idea,

this region lies almost between 24 and 19 latitude extending from the northern fringe of the Vindhyan range to the left bank of the Godavery and between 87 and 80 longitude stretching from the western frontier of Bengal to the lovely district of Jubbulpur in the Central Provinces. It is well known that this vast tract has been from a very remote past the home of some aboriginal tribes. Despite the establishment in historic times of many Aryan settlements many scattered classes of various aboriginal tribes still form an important factor in the population of the area. How long the aborigines have been in that land and which of them in early times domineered the land principally are subjects of great interest both to ethnologist and historian.

What Holdich has stated very briefly with scientific accuracy in the first volume of the Empire of India to describe the physical aspect of almost the whole of the above region is given here in his words. From the valley of the Ganges towards the south, India slopes gently upwards to a central transverse water-parting which crosses the continent from west to east about the parallel of 23 N. latitude, curving slightly where it follows the crest of the Vindhya Hills overlooking the deep narrow trough of the Nerbudda river on the west and breaking into irregularity where it parts the Ganges affluents from those of the Mahanadi on the east.....The general lie of the Vindhyan strata is so nearly horizontal that

throughout Central India there is one prevailing type of scenery.....The climate is for the most part delightful in winter and tolerable in summer.

As I have given the extension of the mid-Indian region in the south to the left bank of the Godavery I should mention here this fact that where the Godavery parts Hyderabad from British territory and commences to form the southern boundary line of the tract I have spoken of, "it receives the waters of the Indravati and the Savari and develops into a wide and important river with a broad channel and many islets." I show presently how the Indravati and the Savari are of great ethnical value to us.<sup>1</sup>

The geographical area roughly outlined above falls outside the sea-board districts of Orissa in the east, and in the west in the district of Jubbulpur its boundary line extends along the portion of the Nerbudda which lies between the scarps of the Vindhya on the north and the spurs of the Satpura Hills on the south where the Nerbudda is a rushing stream. It is of much significance to note here that the Korkus of Kolarian speech, of whom notice will be taken later on, inhabit

<sup>1</sup> A conjecture of mine relating to the Indravati and the Savari is relegated to this footnote here. These two rivers of the Bastar Feudatory State are perhaps the Tamasā and the Muralā immortalized by Bhavabhuti in his drama the Uttara Ramacharita. The Indravati flows past the Head-quarters town Jagdalpur; because of Aryan settlements on its banks this river of the Gonds (perhaps Indāru in Gondi originally) has acquired a Sanskrit name, while the Savari lying to the east still retains in the name the history that once the tract watered by it was within the range of Savara influence.

now the Satpura region and it is in the tradition of the Gonds who speak a Dravidian dialect that the Satpuras were once their original home. It is also worth taking note of that the tract of the country watered by the Indravati, which has been mentioned above as a big tributary of the Godavery, is still the abode of the Gonds of low culture. The statement of Holdich on this point as appears in the *Empire of India* (Vol. I) runs as follows: Of the minor rivers of India none is more interesting than the Indravati which traverses the most untrodden regions of the Peninsula. Here in the deepest recesses of the wild forests which cover the Mardian Hills, is the home of the Gond races—one of the aboriginal Dravidian peoples whose origin is indistinct; a people who still erect rude stone monuments and use stone implements unwitting of the processions of the centuries and the advance of civilization to their borders. *In the scale of the civilized peoples they are even lower than the Bhils of the Nerbudda basin.*

The Bhils of Dravidian reputation have been referred to in the final sentence of the previous paragraph. They are not whom I propose to take notice of in this thesis but it has to be noted that they are in the Nerbudda basin to the west of the region of Korku influence and their presence in the region covered by the Aravallis is of much significance. The Aravallis are to the west of the region which forms the subject matter of this

thesis. The Aravallis which are but the depressed and degraded relics of a far more prominent system as stood in the Palaeozoic times on the edge of the Rajputana sea, formed perhaps once the western portion of the southern boundary of Aryavartta and were in all likelihood designated by the name Paripatra mountains. Referring at the present time to the remnants of some tribes of low culture inhabiting this region we feel very strongly inclined to suggest that the Vilubars or the people noted as archers (if not also the Minabars or the people of fishing occupation) of Dravidian tradition were once the dominating people there, and the Bhils (spoken of perhaps in the Mahabharata in the story of Ekalavya, the great archer) are their representatives to-day.

I have set out the limits of the highlands of Central India which form the subject matter of my inquiry; I proceed now to consider the facts relating to the early inhabitants of the area noted in some ancient records of India. It is doubtless that some rude aboriginal tribes of very remote pre-historic days had their settled abode in the region extending from the east of the Aravallis proceeding eastwards along the Vindhyan and Kaimur ranges to Sirguja on the western border of Chutia Nagpur (now called Chota Nagpur), for in these parts remains of the most ancient human settlements have been discovered, but with whom those pre-historic people have to be identified to-day, is the question.

## II

### THE SABARAS IN OLD HINDU LITERATURE

Sabara in the Aitareya Brahmana (an early time work forming a part of the Vedic Literature) is such a definite name for an aboriginal tribe as may be unmistakably identified to-day with the name of those people of low culture who scatter about in some isolated parts of Central India, in Orissa and in the Oriya-speaking tracts of the districts of Ganjam and Vizagapatam in the presidency of Madras. Sabar, Suir, Sahara and Sabara itself are the names which the various sections of the aforesaid people bear to-day in different localities of their modern distribution.

Of other references to the Sabaras in ancient records we should mention the accounts of India by Pliny and Ptolemy, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana. Both Pliny and Ptolemy mention them by the name *Sabara* but nothing definite has been said as to their geographical distribution. Mention of them in the Mahabharata is rather rare, but where spoken of (e.g., Santiparva, Ch. 65) they have been called along with some western foreigners, wicked Dasyu, practising evil customs ; clear statement is however noticeable in the passages of the Mahabharata that they had their habitation in the wild region of Central India. The Ramayana is more explicit in its reference in the Aranya Kanda or

the third canto. Rama, in course of his vigorous search for Sita in the great forest of Central India, came upon the region of the Sabaras and met there a partly Aryanized pious Sabari woman near a lake. The scholars, I think, generally agree in fixing this locality as a portion of the modern Chhattishgarh which is in the neighbourhood of the upper stream of the Mahanadi. Kosala or Daksina Kosala became the name of the whole of the Chhattishgarh Tract when the Aryans colonized that part of the country and this old name Kosala for this tract still survives in the memory of the common people. In the J.R.A.S., 1894, p. 246 very good reasons have been adduced for placing the Panchapsaras lake in this region, where Rama spent ten years of his exile. It is in the memory of this, some say, that the old Hindu kingdom of the locality was given the name Kosala. It is of much significance to note that so late as in the 8th century A.D. Pallavamalla of South India in recording his military expedition against Udayana—the ruler of this tract, has called this country the land of the Sabaras (Sabhor).

It has been mentioned before that of the two noted streams flowing into the Godavery, the Indravati flows through the land principally occupied by the Dravidian Gonds, and the other stream, the Sabari, retains in its name the history that the Sabaras once dominated the eastern part of the Feudatory State of Bastar. It is of great

historical importance that in the Halvi dialect of Bastar both Gondi and Sabari elements are clearly discernable. I note another fact here the full significance of which will appear later : the Dravidian Gonds who predominate now all throughout the Central Provinces retain this reliable tradition that the very hilly region which is occupied to-day by the Korkus who speak Kolarian speech, constituted of the Satpuras, the Maikul Hills and the Mahadeo Hills, was the early time home of theirs. For the Mahadeo Hills the Lingo-Wangad occurs in the Gond tradition. It should be explained that merely from sound suggestion Lingo of the Gonds was made the Lingam or the phallus symbol of Mahadeva by the Hindus and thus the name Mahadeo has been substituted for Lingo-Wangad.

Of the Sabaras themselves and of their geographical distribution some Puranas give us good information, but as these Puranas are of various uncertain times (though in no case later in date than the 6th century A.D.) it is difficult to say of what time the record relating to this information is. The Puranas tell us that the Sabaras are Vindhya Maulikas, that is to say, the aborigines of the Vindhya Mountains. How far, however, the Vindhyas extended in the opinion of the Puranas cannot be very definitely said.

That the Sabaras were once rude and mighty forest people in the Vindhyan region of indefinite extent is what we read in some stories of the

poets Dandin and Banabhatta who flourished during the early part of the 7th century A.D. Kavi Vakpati who flourished during the last half of the 7th century A.D., gives us such accounts of the Sabaras in his poem Gauda Vaho, as are of ethnic interest. It is said that the hero of the poem found Vindhyachal (which is close to Mirzapur Station and is a Hindu shrine now) as a shrine of a goddess of the Sabaras where Sabara men and women who had leaves of trees for their garment, were offering human sacrifices to a goddess. It has been mentioned by the poet in this connexion that his hero, the Hindu Raja, worshipped the goddess of the Sabaras as Kali Vindhyavasini.

We have seen in the foregoing accounts that the Sabaras once had for their habitat the Vindhyan region in the neighbourhood of the districts of Mirzapore and Allahabad. In the Baghelkhand Tract (mostly taken up by the State of Rewa) which is in continuation of the forest region just named there are remnants of Kol people even to-day and General Cunningham informs us that the name Sabara for the aboriginal people is quite familiar in that locality. That there was once a principality of the Sabaras (Suiriki Raj) near Ghazipur has been proved by General Cunningham. The presence of the Sabaras in the open country of North India, quite outside the Vindhyan region, will be explained subsequently. We note here merely this fact on the

strength of the evidence adduced above that the Sabaras were once the inhabitants of the whole of the Vindhyan region and their home in the Chhatishgarh Division of the Central Provinces extended to the bank of the Godavery where it receives the waters of the Savari in the Native State of Bastar. That the Sabaras are distributed to-day widely throughout the western parts of Orissa and in the districts of Ganjam and Vizagapatam in the presidency of Madras has already been mentioned. It is notable that all throughout the area of their geographical distribution the Sabaras are the neighbours of the Kol people. What relation subsisted once between the Kols and the Sabaras should now be ascertained by referring to some facts relating to the language and social conditions of those who retain in one form or another the old name Sabara.

Poet Vakpati's account of the dress and of the religious belief and practices of the Sabaras as noted before may now be taken into consideration to see how those who retain now the name Sabara and dwell in and about the Oriya-speaking tracts, agree or differ from the Sabaras of old of the poet's description. These Sabaras or Saharas of to-day do not certainly offer any human sacrifice to any deity of theirs but the accounts published of them and of those who were supposed to be their congeners (such as the Bhuiyans) in the Feudatory Gazetteer of Orissa by Cobden-Ramsay, lead us to suspect that the horrid custom spoken

above was not an unlikely custom of the people in past time.

The Juangs who survive in small numbers in the States of Keonjhar and Mayurbhanj, and speak Kolarian speech are leaf-wearers but do not profess any faith similar to what is alluded to here. The Kandhs or Khands or more properly the Kui people of Orissa and Ganjam are notorious for their rite of human sacrifice, but their connection with the Sabaras is difficult to establish.

It is a notorious fact that the Sabaras of to-day are widely known in Orissa as adepts in the matter of charms and witchcraft; the whole system of practising magical charms by muttering *mantras* or words of magical efficacy, is called Sabaravidya in Orissa. A legend relating to the origin of the cult of Jagannath at Puri maintains that the gods now enshrined in the celebrated temple of Jagannath at Puri were originally in the custody of the Sabaras who resided in, and in the vicinity of, the State of Sonepur situate in the Sambalpur tract. It is also believed by many in Orissa that a section of the Sevayets or servants of Jagannath originates from the Sabaras.

The Sabaras could not but have been in Orissa since very long, as reference to them as inhabitants of Orissa has been in old time literature. In the *Nattyasastra* by Bharata the Sabaras as speakers of *Bibhasa* on the stage have been mentioned along with the Odras; this work on dramaturgy

s certainly not later than the 6th century A.D. It is noticeable that the Sabaras have been spoken of as charcoal-burners by Bharata and this occupation is still with the Sabaras of Sambalpur.

The Binjhals of Sambalpur area have been thoroughly Hinduized now, and those of them who have not learnt the honourable fashion of not disclosing their old tradition, confess that the name Binjhal originates from the name of their original place of residence—the Binjha or Bindhya country. It is difficult to say if Binjha is a corruption of the term Vindhya or whether the name Binjha of the aboriginal speech was adopted in the Aryan speech as Vindhya ; it is significant that Binjha is actually the clan-name of a section of the Kolarian people and it will be shown later on that all the Kolarians are but branches of the Sabara people. The Binjhal zemindar of Bora-sambar in preferring a claim of Ksatriya origin in the Nrisimha Mahatmya edited by him, admits that the remote ancestor of the Binjhals, though a Ksatriya, married a Sabara girl to become their progenitor. This fact shows that Binjha was once the name of a section of the Sabaras who came to Orissa by migrating from the Vindhyan region ; but how far the Vindhyan region extended in early times in the opinion of the rude people is not determinable.

The Sabaras and the people of their sub-sections speak Oriya but have retained in their language many words (specially those which are

used on ceremonial occasions) which are of the Kolarian language ; this fact may be very easily detected by examining the speech of the Sabaras of Ganjam. The Sabaras venerate snakes as the Naga-worshipping people of Chutia Nagpur do. The statistics which have been collected by Risley and his assistants show that the Sabaras differ only slightly in their physical characteristics from the Kol people. In the matter of head measurement and nasal index they agree both with the Bhuiyans and those who admit their Kolarian origin. Like other aboriginal tribes including the Kols maintaining their pristine purity, the Sabaras do not eat any cooked food or drink any water offered by any other people, no matter, whether the cook, or the giver of the water is a high caste Brahmin. Though in ceremonial matters the Sabaras differ much to-day from the Kol people, I am strongly inclined to hold that once there was no ethnic difference between them. There is no doubt that the Sabaras have lost their tribal language owing to their having been Hinduized a bit, and this is why some changes have been effected in their domestic ceremonies. They bury or burn their dead according to convenience, but the rude people in the wild tracts do not worship any Hindu god or goddess. They believe in spirits whom they appease by sacrificing fowls generally under the shade of a big tree. They invoke spirits and generally a woman medium becomes possessed of the

spirit, and this woman foretells many things and prescribes medicines when in a state of assumed trance. Sympathetic magic of various sorts is practised by them and male adepts (never forming a separate class) practise the magic. In these matters they do not really differ much from their neighbours, the Kol people.

As a part of their marriage ceremony the bride (no matter how big or heavy she be) is carried on the back of a male relative of her to the marriage booth. The bridegroom takes the bride home either by placing the bride behind him on a horse back or the bride is carried on a *Dola* or swing and the bridegroom walks on. This special custom is partly Hindu and is certainly a borrowed system. Drinking of wine together in the company of guests and utterance of some effective *mantras* by an elderly man are the only essential things in the marriage ceremony, and in this respect agreement with the Kol custom is quite evident.

That the Sabaras should be linked with the Kol people ethnically has been the opinion of all leading ethnologists. The noted archæologist General Cunningham suggested long ago by adverting to facts other than what have been noted above that the name Sabara in early times covered all the different divisions of the Kols. We shall refer to the Kols presently for proper consideration of the subject I have taken up for discussion, but I should simply note here that the

Korkus who live in the Jubbulpur District speak Kolarian speech, and though the Kols reside to-day principally in Chutia Nagpur and in its neighbourhood, remnants of them are still obtainable in Baghelkhand as well as in other parts of Upper India which are in, or in the vicinity of, the Vindhyan region.

Another fact regarding which there is no doubt or dispute should also be mentioned here. The Gadaba people who speak Kol language and reside far away in Peninsular India proceeded to their present habitat from the bank of the Godavery river. Now in the Kolarian language the term for river is *Gada* and that is the name which evidently the Godavery bore in remote past. We can see that the Dravidian word *Aru* which signifies river, if conjoined with *Gada*, the euphonic combination according to Dravidian grammar will be *Gada-varu*, the progenitor of the name *Godavari* in use in Aryan language. I may note that  $K\bar{a} + \bar{A}ru = Kavaru$ , is the original word for the Aryanized form *Kaveri*, the South Indian river of note.

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### III

#### SOME THEORIES CRITICALLY CONSIDERED

It is doubtless that the poets Daṇḍin, Baṇa-bhatta and Vakpati had direct and intimate information of the Sabaras and in their days during the sixth and seventh centuries A. D., the Sabaras were numerous in the Vindhyan region, the northern limit of which extended at least from the modern railway station Vindhyachal in the district of Mirzapur onward to the west along or parallel to the southern bank of the Ganges. As to the depth of this land of Sabara influence in those days, it has already been mentioned that Baghelkhand still retains some unmistakable remnants of the Sabaras of old ; it has also to be noted that archaeologists have discovered in the forest tracts extending through Rewa and Bundelkhand many ancient stone weapons and flint chips which, for very good reasons, should be associated with, or related to, the ancient artefacts of the Sabara people. The distance from Bundelkhand to Jubbulpur is not at all long ; this gives us the clue to determine the route which the Korkus might have followed in proceeding to the region covered by the Satpuras, the Maikul range and the Mahadeo Hills. The Sabaras, we now know, have disappeared from the land where they were very numerous in the sixth and seventh centuries A. D., according to the accounts of the poets of

those days. They are now with their very tribal name in the western parts of Orissa and in some hilly tracts in the northern part of the Madras Presidency, and their congeners who are known to-day as Kol people are distributed principally in Chutia Nagpur and some tracts not much removed from Chutiã Nagpur.

We do not know how and when there was displacement of the Sabaras in the Vindhyan region which falls within the United Provinces ; there is evidence, however, that various sections of them migrated to the east from time to time in successive swarms. Some sections of them residing principally in Chutia Nagpur, as will be noted presently, maintain some traditional accounts of their migratory movements which have to be subjected to critical examination. It may be presumed before noticing those accounts that the people who migrated into the forest tract (or Jharkhand) on the western frontier of Bengal and Orissa did not find the country at the time of their appearance there as *res nullius*, and the new comers must have been encouraged to come upon the new tract on account of the tract having been from before the land of their old people. This point will, however, be discussed later on.

In his admirable monograph on the Mundas Rai Bahadur Sarat Chandra Roy has offered some worth considering suggestions relating to the antiquity of these people in connexion with his able discussion regarding their early migratory

movements and geographical distribution. I direct my attention to them. The learned author has referred to several passages of the Rig-Veda-Samhita containing allusions of some non-Aryan hordes, and has attempted to identify them with some sections of the people who have been given the general name Sabara.

The difficulty of identifying the old Rig-Vedic names with the names of some modern tribes is very great, for, as far as facts have hitherto been discovered and ascertained, no old record earlier than the Aitareya Brahmana in date speaks of the Sabaras explicitly; again, in dealing with the Rig-Vedic names, distant sound suggestions have to be depended upon in most cases, and consequently our inferences become highly conjectural and unconvincing. Suggestions of Mr. Roy regarding two names only appear to me to be acceptable tentatively; they are the names Vangrida and Ongha. Vangrida stands for a short-statured non-Aryan enemy and the Bangra Kols are really short-statured people; it is for this typical shortness of stature that the word Bangra signifies dwarfish in a provincial Mundari and in this very sense the word is in use in Oriya in the district of Sambalpur which abounds with various sections of the Mundas. Ongha is also the clan name of a section of the Mundas and we know that the river Ong (which is always Ongha in old epigraphic records of the Hindus) which forms the southern boundary of the district of

Sambalpur, flows where the Kols were once numerous and ~~Sabara Binjhals~~ still live in large numbers.

In my opinion Mr. Roy has very wrongly taken the name Pulinda to be identical with the name Kol. He was evidently misled by the wrong reading of the name in a Purana as Kulinda. Pargiter in his excellent edition of the Markandeya Purana has ably shown that the reading is wrong. Moreover, the ancient reliable work, the Aitareya Brahmana states unmistakably that the Sabaras, the Pulindas and the Mutivas were quite distinct and separate aboriginal tribes. Pliny and Ptolemy also name those tribes quite separately ; the latter gives us the pronunciation Mulinda for Pulinda but that is immaterial. Mulinda has been in one or two cases reduced to Murinda, but that does not justify us in identifying Murinda with the Mundas. The name Munda must be a late time name as I shall show later on. It has been very ably shown by Pargiter and other scholars that the Pulindas were the people of Western and North-Western India while the Sabaras were the people of the Vindhyan range. Again, the town in Rohilkhand which is Mo-ti-pu-lo in Hiuen Tsang's accounts is more likely to have been a seat of the Mutiva people than of the Mundas ; the sound suggestion of the modern name is quite unsafe to follow. Some very late time Puranas have confounded the well-known Dravidian Cholas with the Kol people and

this has misled Mr. Roy in one or two cases. Like the Cholas, the Cheros are historically well-known Dravidian people and their accounts cannot be mixed up with those of the Kols. There are some remnants of the Cheros in a small number in Chutia Nagpur to-day, and it is no wonder that coming under the influence of the Kol people there, they have adopted the language of the predominant people. The example of the Oraons in this matter in Ranchi clearly shows that such adoption of new language by the Cheros could very easily be effected.

I am strongly inclined to hold that the Asuras of Chutia Nagpur who are also in small number there, do not belong to the Kol people and they have also been forced to adopt Kol speech under conditions similar to those of the Cheros. It is impossible to assert now if the Asuras of the Vedic days had many sections of theirs in past time, but references to them in the Vedic literature point to the fact that the Asuras constituted by themselves a distinct and separate mighty people. They have not been made identical with the Sabaras in the Aitareya Brahmana. The Mahabharata mentions the Sabaras quite specifically in the Vindhyan region while its numerous statements regarding the mighty Asuras are of different character. In their ignorance of detailed tribal characteristics of various aboriginal tribes including the Sabaras and in consequence of the deep impression upon them about the Asuras, the

Vedic fathers could loosely designate some hostile sections of the non-Aryan hordes by the term Asura, but we know that excepting the small section of the Asuras referred to above none else of the Sabara people acknowledges the Asura name. To do justice to Mr. Roy I should mention that in his later research he has himself brought to light some facts which tend to prove that the mighty Asuras with their knowledge of art and architecture resided once in the eastern part of the Chutia Nagpur Tract and were then no way connected with the Kols. His paper on the Asuras appeared in the first volume of the Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society.

Not only in the eastern part of Chutia Nagpur as has been noticed by Mr. Roy, the Asuras and the Mundas must have once fought out their cause against each other over a vast tract of country extending to the State of Kalahandi ; in the State of Kalahandi (which borders upon the district of Ganjam) where the Kandhs or the Kui people are most dominating of all aboriginal races, the Mundas and the Asuras once struggled against each other for supremacy, and Mundagarh and Asurgarh lying in proximity to each other in the zemindary of Kashipur in the State of Kalahandi still bear the history of that struggle in these place-names. Interpenetration of many races in later times has obliterated the history of these peoples to a considerable extent.

That the Asurās were mighty well-organised people whom the Vedic fathers had to contend with in long-standing serious conflicts, cannot be doubted. The Aryan term Asura signifies supreme God ; from the root 'As,' breath, comes the word 'Asu' (life), and this word taking the suffix 'ra' came to denote the 'Being' whose life is endless and inexhaustible. This highly honoured term for God (unchanged in meaning in Iranian) had to be forsaken by the Vedic Rishis because a mighty and hated well-known people of non-Aryan speech had the term for their tribal name. The impression of the Asuras upon their opponents was deep and abiding. Very likely they were all extirpated, for no mighty tribe survives to-day with this tribal name of unknown meaning, excepting the small number of the Asuras in Chutia Nagpur who may be a degraded and distintegrated remnants of them. What, however, we should note in this connexion, is that the Sabaras and their congeners do not appear to be identical with the noted Asuras of Hindu mythology. If they were, the Hindus of the post-Vedic days could not forget the fact of so much social importance when noting distinctly the name Sabara in a work in which reference to the Asuras abounds.

Sambara is the next name of importance referred to in the Rig-Veda as enemy of Indra who had 90, 99, or 100 forts. References to Sambara are many in different passages in the

Rig-Veda ; in one passage he is called *Dasa* and again the son of *Kulitara* and in another passage it is said that he assumed some divine character, for he has been called *Devaka*. *Divodasa* is said to have conquered him once. *Sambara* does not appear to be an individual name, for references to *Sambara* seem to relate to various times. Like other such names this name appears to represent the name of a tribe. Vedic scholars agree in holding that *Sambara* was a dweller of some mountainous region. It is difficult to hazard the opinion that *Sabara* is but a slight variation of *Sambara*, even though we discover to-day the name *Sambara* as a tribal name in connexion with some non-Aryan activities in the very region which was once the land of the *Sabaras* and where *Sabaras* and *Mundas* are met with in great number. *Sambalpur* (now a district in Western Orissa) which continued in the valley of the *Mahanadi* as a part of the old *Kosala* country (the *Chhattishgarh* Division in the Central Provinces) till October 1905, owes its name to the word *Sambara* or *Sambala*. *Pliny* calls this place *Sambalaka* without adding *pura* to it. *Sambalpur* is also the name of another place which is in the Native State of *Kanker* (in the *Chhattishgarh* area in the Central Provinces) which adjoins the State of *Bastar* in which the river *Savari* flows. There is a zemindary area in the *Sambalpur* district called *Bora-Sambar* and the zemindar family belongs to the *Binjhal* tribe originating from the

Sabaras. It was at Sambargarh in this zemindary that the ancestor of the Chohan Rajas of Sambalpur was first enthroned. The goddess of this tribe goes by the name Samlai to-day and is worshipped in the temples of the Hindus in the Sambalpur area. The goddess does not possess a human form in her Temple at Sambalpur and the time-honoured worshippers or priests of Samlai are the Thanapatis who, despite their priestly position, are regarded as Sudras and are strongly suspected to be of non-Aryan origin. It is beyond any doubt that once human sacrifice was customary at the altar of the goddess ; now when human sacrifice is prohibited a person is dressed up as a *bali* or sacrifice in the States of Sonepur and Patna and is led to the altar in night time during the Durga Pujah days where the sharp edge of the sacrificing knife is gently put upon the neck of the man and perhaps taking a drop of blood from his neck, the man is released. This reminds us strongly of the story of the Sabaras offering human sacrifices as described by poet Vakpati in the Gauda Vaho Kavya. If my suggestion be considered tentatively tenable, it is to be presumed that a particular section of the Sabaras, that is to say, the Sambaras became more advanced in civilization for in respect of the Sambaras we learn that they had forts or citadels in some mountainous region in the old Vedic days. We may or may not be justified in connecting the Vedic Sambara with the Sambaras regarding whom

good evidence is available in the district of Sambalpur; it is a fact, however, that the Sambaras of Sambalpur must be associated with some people who could not be much different from the Sabaras and the Kols.

Regarding the antiquity of the Sabaras in India we refer now to the tradition of the Mundas regarding their original home. I have said before that even though the name Sabara is retained by some aboriginal people who do not identify themselves with the Kols, Sabara was the general name of all the tribes under consideration. To study the traditional account of the Mundas aright, let me name all the tribes socially different from one another who speak what may be called to-day Kolarian speech. They are, besides the Mundas, the Birhors of Hazaribagh, the Hos of Singhbhum, the Santals of the perganas of their name, the Kodas, the Korwas, the Kharias, the Juangs, the Turis, the Bhumijas who must be connected with the Bhuiyans, some Sabaras, the Asuras, the Gadabas of the Madras Presidency and the Korkus of the district of Jubbulpur.

Of the tribes named the Juangs who reside on the western frontier of Orissa, are the only people who are leaf-wearers. The Asuras carry a vague tradition that they were formerly at the foot of the Dhawalgiri; if this Dhawalgiri be interpreted as the Mount Everest many difficulties occur, for in the first place Dhabala Giri is a name which the Asuras must have got from the

Hindus and in the second place the Aryans of India are never known to have any conflict with the people of that far off region ; either this name is for some other mountain or this is merely a vague tradition pointing to no specific geographical situation. The Korwas of the Native State of Sirguja say that their original home was in the Mahadeo Hills ; this is rather a reliable tradition, for the Mahadeo Hills of Jubbulpur are inhabited by the Korkus, and the Korwas and the Korkus belong to one and the same race. It is, however, to be noted that the Lingo-Wangad of the Gonds got the name Mahadeo when the Hindus came to dominate that part of the country. It has already been remarked that the Gadabas must have proceeded to where they are, from some place of Sabara influence near about the Godavery. Of the other tribes of the list the Mundas are most advanced and we refer now to the accounts which they give of themselves.

It should be noted first of all that the Mundas of all localities do not give one and the same story regarding their origin and some Mundas are not at all in possession of any tradition about their former residence elsewhere. Mr. Saratchandra Roy's invaluable work on the Mundas records three different traditions which are all worth referring to. The first tradition given by one section of the Mundas is that they originally were at a place characterized by 'Ekasipidi and Terasibadi' ; the words 'Ekasi' and 'Terasi' being of Hindu

vocabulary Mr. Roy has justly remarked that this tradition is of a very late time and moreover, no definite geographical situation is signified by it. The second tradition is equally vague, for it speaks of a barren forest tract by the phrase 'Seya-sandibir.' I should note that 'Sandi' to indicate barrenness, is a word borrowed from the vocabulary of the Hindus. The third traditional account enumerates many real geographical names of Upper India and as such the migratory movements described in the tradition have been much relied upon. In my opinion this account also does not speak of the events of far removed time. I show how.

It is said that the Kols were originally at Azabgarh or Azamgarh which is in the Benares Division in the United Provinces. Mr. Roy holds that Azam or Azab is not of Mohammedan origin and in his opinion the Kols rightly remember that Azabgarh is the place where they were previous to the days of Rama the hero of the Ramayana. Mr. Roy has not proved (and I fear, he cannot) that the place name Azamgarh or Azabgarh was in existence in pre-Mohammedan days, nor has he shown that the word Azab or Azam occurs anywhere in the language of the Kols.

Such a modern personal name as Asiba or Asba borne by some Mundas does not prove anything, for, neither the origin, nor the meaning of the term Asba is traceable in Munda language.

Again, the Mundas are not very particular in the matter of giving names ; they are not chary in giving foreign names to their boys and girls. Etwa (from the name of Sunday in use by the Mohammedans) is a very common name among the people. I personally know that in 1885 a Munda who was charmed with the sight of a chimney of a lamp supplied by Messrs. Osler to the Raja of Bamra, gave the name Chimney to his newly born daughter. Siba, Soma, Monglu, Budhu, Guruwari, Dasami, Chaitu, Faguni and other such names of Hindu origin are borne by lots of Munda men and women. Even names, the meaning of which the Mundas do not know but are fascinating to them for their sound, are not unusual with them to adopt.

If it be even conceded that the word Azab is of Kol origin we do not understand how the word 'Garh' of a very late time Prakrita could be a component of the word at such an early time as has been suggested. This remark applies equally to the names of other places mentioned in the tradition. Excepting the name Kalanjar, all such names are of Hindu origin as Garh Chitra, Garh Nagarwar, Garh Pali, Mandar Pahar and so forth. It is impossible to prove that these names came into existence even so late as in Maurya times to speak nothing of the Vedic or post-Vedic days. These place-names must be of very late date. It appears that some Kols (and some Kols only), when they were forced to be dispersed from their

forest home, sought to live at different places in Upper India dominated by the Hindus and the memory of this movement of not very distant time is in the memory of those whose ancestors preferred finally to live with their own kinsmen in Chutia Nagpur. It is not unlikely that the Kols once proceeded to different places in Upper India solely in quest of labour. Certainly the Kols did not establish in prehistoric time towns and villages with names not their own and it is also unimaginable that the Kols continued to keep themselves informed for many thousand years after their evacuation, how the towns and villages of their creation were changing their names with a view to commit all the latest names to memory aright.

Again, by the accounts of their early time movement, the Mundas post-date themselves in respect of their presence in the Vindhya and in Jharkhand, for it is narrated that before they reached Jharkhand proper they had a conflict with a Kharwar chief bearing such a Hindu name as Madho Das at such a place of Hindu name as Ruhidasgarh or Rotashgarh. It will be shown presently that those who must be ethnically affiliated to the Mundas, have been in the Jharkhand Tract and in the Utkala Country since a time decidedly earlier than what is suggested by the Rotashgarh incident. The fact appears to be that the Mundas came into the eastern tracts in many successive swarms during various times,

and only some incidents of comparatively late time are now remembered with some vagueness here and with some definiteness there.

The Bhuiyans who have been sufficiently Hinduized in some parts of Bihar, have been in the Utkala Country since very long, for Gotama Buddha mentions them as Bhaiyans of Ukkalabasa or Utkala Country. My article on the Buiyans which has been incorporated in the Castes and Tribes of the Central Provinces by Russell and Hiralal, and my accounts of them in my recently published work, *Orissa in the Making*, may be referred to in this connection. That the Bhuiyans are of Kol or Sabara descent and that they have been inhabiting a narrow strip of well-defined land extending from the Oriya Native State of Nilgiri to the north-western limit of the Oriya Native State of Gangpur from a time not later than the fifth century B. C., are what have been maintained in those works. That this situation necessarily implies, independent of the traditional account that the Hos or the Larka Kols of Singhbhum pushed the Bhuiyans to Utkala side, that Chutia Nagpur and its neighbourhood on the western frontier of Bengal and Orissa were fully inhabited by some tribes of Sabara origin, need not be demonstrated. I have considered critically some propositions which occur in Mr. Roy's monograph on the Mundas, but this should not create any wrong impression regarding the

merit of that work on the minds of the readers. My debt to that work is great and I consider that work highly valuable. I agree with the learned author of the Mundas that the Sabaras and their congeners, the Kols have been in the forest tracts of mid-India from prehistoric days.

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## IV

### DISPLACEMENT AND DISPERSION OF THE SABARA- KOL PEOPLE

The Korkus of the rude mountainous region of the district of Jubbulpur, who agree thoroughly with the Kol people of Chutia Nagpur and Sambalpur area in their tribal name, in language, in religious faith and in general social habits, are in a peculiarly isolated situation, being many hundred miles away from the people of their kin and being surrounded on all sides by races of men wholly dissimilar to them in race and culture. We have seen that we are justified in holding that once they were linked up and connected with the people of their race of the northern Vindhyan region of the United Provinces through Bundelkhand and Rewa, but how long ago, we do not know. We have also seen that even so late as in the 8th century A. D., when the bulk of the area of the Central Provinces became greatly Hinduized under the influence of many Hindu principalities established all over the country since long, the Chhattishgarh area forming the kingdom of Udayana was a Sabara country. We can therefore reasonably hold that a thorough-going connexion of the Korkus of Jubbulpur with the Kols of the Mahanadi Valley of the district of Sambalpur was not altogether severed in the 8th century A. D.

It is, again, a pretty well-established fact of history that despite the dominant rule of the Rajput rulers the whole of the eastern section of the Central Provinces together with a very considerable area of the Sambalpur Tract which had been the land of the Sabaras, became by about the 9th century A. D., the land of Gond influence, and the whole country as indicated above assumed the name *Gondwana*. We know that most of the Ruling Chiefs of the aforesaid area are Gonds to-day.

We learn, again, from the epigraphic records of some Sulki rulers published in the 2nd volume of the Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society that the kingdom of these Sulkis in Orissa constituted of the western tract of Dhenkanal and perhaps the whole of Pal Lahara, Bonai and Bamra together with a slice of the State of Gangpur in the north-east, was (during the 10th century and a little earlier) the land of Gond influence; *Gondamandala* and *Gondramandala* are the words which occur in the above epigraphic records to describe the country. That the forest kingdom of the Sulkis extended to that portion of the State of Gangpur where the rivers *Sankh* and *Koel* meet to give rise to the river *Brahmani* is distinctly ascertainable in the copper-plate charter of Jaystambha (J.B.O.R.S., Vol. II, p. 401) and it is also ascertainable that the grantor exercised his authority over lands falling within the circuitous bend of the Sankh river; *Sankha-Joti-balaya-pari-karita-paryanta* are the

words of the charter which I refer to. The Gonds who are mighty even to-day in the Central Provinces and are numerous with some influence in the district of Sambalpur could not certainly push on into Chutia Nagpur beyond the State of Bonai, as statistics of population in the Government Gazetteers will clearly show ; but that once they acquired much influence in the Gondamandala of the Sulki Rajas can be ascertained to-day by referring to their social status in the State of Bonai. Though the Gonds have now thinned away in the State of Bonai and the old Bhuiyans in whose country the Gonds are intruders do predominate, there are a few influential Gond houses holding *Jaigirs*, and these *Jaigirdars* have the honourable surname Mahapatra. Despite the fact that this State once came within the *Gondamandala* the superior position of the Bhuiyans appears never to have suffered any diminution. The Bhuiyans have always been the principal zemindars possessing the bulk of the land of the State and by virtue of their position as commanders of the militia of the State, claim the right of conferring the *tika* on the Chiefs at their accession to the *Gadi*. It may be mentioned that the Bhuiyans maintain the very social situation in the State of Gangpur and this was once their recognised position in the States of Mayurbhanj and Keonjhar. It should also be noted that the Bhuiyans have been the priests of the oldest temples and shrines in the State of Bonai, at

some of which human sacrifices were formerly offered in the old Sabara fashion noticed previously. For detailed accounts the readers should refer to the Feudatory Gazetteer of Orissa by Cobden Ramsay from which information relating to Bonai has been principally culled.

Unlike what has been in the district of Sambalpur, the influence of the Gonds in the land of the Bhuiyans and other Kol people in the State of Bonai and in its neighbourhood could not be of long duration. We find by referring to the undated copper-plate record of Udaya Varaha (J.B.O.R.S., 1920, p. 241) that at a time, not at all much removed from the days of Sulki supremacy a pseudo Rajput ruler, the origin of whose family is strongly suspected to have been partly Kol, came into power in Bonai. This ruler bears the surname *Varaha* which is a *kili* or *gotra* name of the Bhumijas, and after this name there is the pergana *Varahabhum* of the Bhumijas not at a much distance from Bonai. There is also this suggestion in the above record that these Varaha Rajputs had some connexion with the old-time Bhuiyans of peacock origin. That the Bhanjas of old epigraphic records were not in those days far above the social influence of the Kols, can be gathered from the fact (recorded in S. C. Roy's work on the Mundas) that a princess of the Bhanja house once fell in love with a genuine Munda. It is also a fact as has been nicely brought out by Mr. Roy, that the Kols of various

clans became Rajput rulers in the tract extending from Manbhum to Bonai.

The Gonds came into power in the Central Provinces sometime not later than the 9th century A.D., embracing some favourable opportunities (to be noted presently) which offered themselves during the rule of the country by some Hindu principalities, and by coming upon the lands previously occupied by the Kol people (or the Sabara people as some might be inclined to say) effaced the Kols or the Sabaras altogether. This is what can be inferred from the old-time ethnical accounts of the country and from the modern state of things differing from the old-time accounts. In the valley of the Mahanadi in the district of Sambalpur the Kols and the Sabaras had not been effaced by the Gonds but there is unmistakable evidence that the Gonds came upon that land from elsewhere and in many localities robbed the Kols of their land. The very geographical names Kolabira (this very name occurs for a locality in Chutia Nagpur), Kodabaga, Jojomura (spelt also as Jujumura), Atabira (originally Hatubira), Hansamura and so forth show that these localities were founded and named by the Kol people. We now know that the Kols though living in good number elsewhere in the district are unknown in the aforementioned places. Kolabira, Kodabaga and Jujumura, for instance, form three zemindary areas principally populated by the Gonds, and the zemindars of those zemindaries are

Gonds. These instances of the displacement of the Kol people by the Gonds will quite do to show how once a mighty wave of the Gonds swept the Kol people away. This wave, we have seen, did not reach any point in Chutia Nagpur beyond the river Brahmani flowing through the State of Bonai. Of the population of nearly 7 lacs of souls of Sambalpur excluding the Feudatory Areas, the pure Kol people (taking the Mundas, the Kharias, the Kodas, the Turis, etc., together) are 44;000 in number ; the Bhuiyans number 9,000 strong. The Binjhals are over 39,000 and those who retain the name Sabara are 77,000 strong. We thus get nearly 1,80,000 people who represent the old Sabaras. The Gonds have a big number of 63,000 in the district and are more influential than the Kol people, having many aristocratic houses of theirs at different places. We find to-day, that one-fourth of the whole population of the district of Sambalpur is of the Sabara-Kol stock ; we can easily imagine that when in remote past the maximum population of the district could not normally exceed one lac and a half the whole district could have been well populated with the Sabara-Kol people. A large number of place-names of Kolarian origin in the district, from the Onga in the south to Kolabira in the north, confirms this conjecture that the district was once wholly populated by the Sabara-Kol people.

To understand aright some ethnical characteristics of the Sabara-Kol people we try to ascertain

the conditions which proved favourable to the Dravidian Gonds in expanding themselves over the land of the people of Sabara-Kol descent. The Gonds, we all know, are strongly inclined like other Dravidians, to be Hinduized. The Gonds of the district of Sambalpur have altogether given up their tribal language and the number of them is small in the Central Provinces who have not adopted the Hindi language. Those who are sufficiently rich to command some respect have employed Hindu priests to officiate in all social or religious ceremonies. By thus deviating from, or forsaking their tribal custom of all sorts they do not suffer any degradation in society but do rather rise high in the estimation of many. With these tendencies in past time they were bound to be favoured by the Hindu Rajas of old. This is what I think, helped the Gonds to become powerful; they became, as Rajas or zemindars, the vassals of the Hindu rulers and helpful allies of the Hindu Rajas.

The Kols or the Sabaras have always been radically different in these matters from the Gonds. Though their number is quite small and they live in an isolated area in the district of Jubbulpur, the Korkus have retained their tribal language and tribal customs, wholly unimpaired. No section of the Sabara or Kol people anywhere in this country can be persuaded to drink a drop of water though it be offered by a high caste Brahmin. The Bhuiyans who have been a bit

Hinduized and have forgotten their tribal language have been wholly ostracised by the Kols ; the Binjhals also have been similarly disowned by the Kols. It is a wonderful fact that the Kols have retained through all times their tribal language though at most places they are surrounded by powerful Hindus who are not unfavourably disposed to them. Men of the lowest and degraded section of the Sabaras, who are called *Pab* in the district of Sambalpur, do not, though they are needy and indigent, eat any cooked food offered to them even by a man of the highest caste of the Hindu society. How difficult it has been in Chutia Nagpur to bring the Mundas under the subjection of the Raja who is a Hindu Rajput to-day to all intents and purposes and whom the Mundas regard to have originated from them, is well-known in the history of Chutia Nagpur. We can clearly see from the conduct and ideas of the Kols to-day that in past time it was impossible for the Hindu Rajas in the Central Provinces or elsewhere to give the Kols a degraded subordinate position. This is why perhaps they had to run away from west to east and had to take shelter mostly in the wild region of Chutia Nagpur and Sambalpur. They have always been keen in maintaining their pristine purity.

Pressed by the Gonds in the Central Provinces the Kol people must have proceeded to eastern lands to be settled peacefully among the people of their kin ; we have noticed before that the

Kharwars of Sirguja give us this account that they came to Sirguja by migrating from the valley of the Nerbbuda in the vicinity of which the Korkus still live. The Oraons of Chutia Nagpur and Sambalpur who should rightly be designated as *Korukhs*, give us exactly the same history of their migration. These *Korukhs* who in this tribal name of theirs and in their physical type agree fully with the Kols, speak Dravidian speech and do not in the matter of their social habits and ideas agree with any section of the Dravidian people. It is strongly suspected that a section of the Kor or Kol people akin to the Korkus of the Nerbbuda side came under the domination of the Dravidians at the time of Dravidian rising in the Central Provinces, and in their long subjugation adopted the Dravidian speech but not the Dravidian habits of life. These *Korukhs*, I suggest, because of their settled social and political notions ran away from the Nerbbuda side and settled in eastern lands as non-hostile neighbours of the Mundas. Were they genuine Dravidians they would not have been forced to run away from their original home, nor could it be possible for them to secure peaceful settlements in the neighbourhood of the Mundas. I cannot afford to discuss this proposition any further here.

I have already suggested that the Chutia Nagpur area had remained populated with the Kol people before swarms of newcomers came from elsewhere under some pressure to live in that land. A

few facts relating to it should now be stated. The Bhuiyans (or more properly the Bhaiyans of Buddhistic mention) have been in the northern part of Utkala (extending from the State of Nilgiri to the farthest limit of Gangpur) from a time not later than the 5th century B.C. These Bhuiyans (said to have been pushed away by the Hos or *Larka* Kols of Singhbhum) who are denationalized Kols, are connected in their geographical situation with the Mundas by the Bhumijas, for Colonel Dalton rightly remarks that the tableland lying between the Cossai and the Subarnarekha forms the real home of the Bhumija people. The Hinduized forms of the names Bhuiyan and Bhumija are certainly of a very late origin. Bhaiyan seems once to have been a *kili* or sept name of the Kols, for in this name the people were known in the days of Gotama Buddha; if the name were really *Bhuiyan* derived from Sanskrit *Bhumi*, such a familiar Sanskritic form would not have been disregarded in the Pali literature. It may also be noted that this is also a *kili* or sept name with a section of the Birhors of Hazaribagh. It should be noted that those who have got the name Bhumija, call themselves by the tribal name Horoh. Bhumija is an altogether Sanskritic word which is a tribal name of a distinctly Kol-speaking tribe. I have no hesitation to pronounce that the word Bhaiyan was reduced to Bhuiyan by the Hindus. Looking certainly to the fact that the Bhumijas (who

were also perhaps known once by the name Bhaiyan) were where they are from dim past, the Hindus Sanskritized their name in their fancy, to express the idea that those people were born of the very soil they live upon. Extension of the Kol people to the western limit of the district of Balasore from a remote past cannot be doubted. Various sections of the Kol people do still live in the State of Mayurbhanj. The name of the river Borabalang is Kolarian in origin ; *Bulung* means salt in the Kol language and the form of the name of the river seems originally to have been *Borabulung* ; *Nun* (vernacular form of the word Labana, salt) is actually the name of a branch of this river to-day, and it is doubtless that *Bulung* or *Nun* or *Labana* was always obtained from some parts of that river.

The Bhuiyans have been in the north of Orissa since long and their congeners the Bhumijas must have been in their neighbourhood from a remote past ; it is again a fact that the Bhuiyans are met with in the south-eastern part of Bihar and in the western frontier of Bengal in the neighbourhood of Asansol. That the rude tract of the country lying between Bihar and Orissa designated as Jharkhand in many old time works have been also from remote past the home of the congeners of the Bhuiyans and the Bhumijas, is what should be the natural inference. Though the Puranas do not inform us exactly of the Kol people residing in Jharkhand, I proceed to

consider some Pauranic statements relating to the rude people of Bengal frontier to help us in our research.

In Jaina literature the western tract of Bengal has been designated as the Ladha country inhabited by some rude tribes of wild disposition. The term Ladha is of uncertain meaning and Ladha and Radha may be safely said to be variants of Ladha. Even during the early period of the 11th century A.D., the name Lada occurs for the tract in the Tirumalai Inscriptions of Southern India though the name Radha was then fully current in Bengal. The mention in the Jaina literature as aforesaid does not enable us to fix the limits of the Radha country, but that the district of Manbhum and the Santal Perganas were included in the Radha country is pretty clear from the statement in the Acharanga Sutta in that the river Darakesvar and the temple at Baidyanath have been said to be in the Ladha or Radha country. This statement in the Jaina literature agrees with what we get in the Brahmanda section of the Bhavisya Purana.

Who those non-Aryan hordes of Radha were as mentioned in the Jaina works should be tried to be determined. In some Puranas we get the names of some tribes of the western frontier of Bengal under the name Pravangah. The names of the tribes thus mentioned are the Malas, the Manas or Manavattikas, the Mahisikas and the Marhattas. It is first to be noticed here that

though in olden times Vanga as the Samatata land lay apart from Sumbha, Radha, etc., the whole of the country could be designated by the name Vanga, for otherwise the western frontier tribes residing in and about Radha could not be called Pravangas or the people of Vanga frontier. It is next to be noticed that the Malas and the Manas are still in existence and the district of Manbhum owes its name to the Mana people. The Malas are found in the district of Bankura as well as in the hilly parts of Rajmahal; the Malas of Rajmahal are called Malpahadis and they speak Bengali now.

What is historically very much important regarding the mention of the Malas in some Puranas, should be carefully considered now. It is in the tradition of the Kols and of the Oraons that the Malas or Male people formed once a section of the Oraons or Korukhs and during the time of the migration of the Oraons the Mala people parted company with the Oraons at Rotashgarh and proceeded to get themselves settled where they are now to-day. That this happened long after the Santals had settled themselves in the *Pergana* of their present occupation, need not be pointed out. It is the tradition of the Mundas as well as of those whom we now call Santal that the Santals advanced in their migratory movement with a swarm of the Mundas, and the Santals and the Mundas parted company to follow different routes after they had all reached Omedanda;

that the Oraons are late comers in the land of the Mundas is clearly admitted by the Oraons and the Mundas. Consequently when the Puranas recorded the presence of the Mala people on Bengal frontier the Santals and the Mundas must have been where they are now, though specific mention of the rude Kol people is wanting in the Puranas. The rude people who were not very friendly to the Jaina intruders in the Jharkhand Tract, must be presumed to be the Kol people.

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THE *milieu* OF RACIAL CHARACTERISATION  
OF THE SABARA-KOLS

In all probability at a time not later than the 6th century B.C., when the Anga country (or the South-Eastern Bihar) and the province of Bengal lay outside the holy land of the people of Vedic traditions, the forest area of *Kalakavana* formed the eastern boundary of Aryyavartta. This Kalakavana obtained subsequently the designation Jharkhand, and this Jharkhand of indefinite extension lay to the south of Gaya, to the east of Shahabad, to the south of Bhagalpur and to the west of the districts of Bankura and Midnapur. Details of the geography of this wild area have been set out and discussed in my works—The History of the Bengali Language, and Orissa in the Making, and I shall merely state here that the Santal Perganas, Chutia Nagpur, the district of Sambalpur and the Native States adjoining Chutia Nagpur and Sambalpur fall within Jharkhand. It is a fact that this portion of Jharkhand is largely inhabited to-day by the people of Sabara-Kol origin, and it has been tried to be shown that these people have been in that area since long. That these people or rather the people of their kin were once numerous and influential all over the highlands of Central India as defined by me has been made pretty

clear. It has to be remembered in this connexion that the region to the east of Jharkhand, *viz.*, the open country of Bengal and the seaboard districts of Orissa were, previous to the colonization of them by the people of Aryan culture, principally the home of the Dravidian people who differ from the Kols very radically ; I refer the readers to my works named above to test the correctness of this proposition.

I now direct my attention to consider whether the highlands of Central India have all along been the area of racial characterisation of the Sabara-Kol people, or whether any proof is available relating to their coming into the highlands of Central India from elsewhere. Kol (identical with the word Kor) which runs into many such variants as Hodh, Horh, Horo and Ho, signifies undoubtedly Man ; this word having become widely popular as a tribal name, is a fitting term to-day for use as the general name for all the sections of the people under consideration in substitution for the old-time generic name Sabara. It has been well ascertained by a comparative study of the Kol dialects that the initial ' K ' of a word has been reduced to ' H ' in many cases in the Kol speech ; and it is also equally certain that either the word Kol or a variant of it as noted above is retained by each and every section of the people to signify man, and in most cases to indicate the tribal name. The Mundas have the term Hodh for man, Koda-han for child and so forth,

I refer here to the false derivation of the word Kol which has been due to vagaries of imagination. It is highly ridiculous and absurd to hold that the Hindus hunted out such a word as Kola (never in general use) from the corner of a lexicon and used that term signifying pig for the name of the people under consideration and the people themselves accepted that term for contempt for their tribal name. Examples, however, are not wanting of Hindus having coined false derivation in their fancy to give Sanskritic explanation of foreign or unfamiliar names; for instance, on the basis of the Vedic word *Saka-dhuma* (cow-dung) this amusing story was got up that the Sakas of historical fame came out of the dung of Vasistha's cow.

The term Munda signifies properly a well-to-do man of agricultural occupation and in this very sense the term is in use among the Ho people of Singhbhum who are sharply distinguished from the Mundas. In the economic administration of the people each and every country or political unit of the Kol people was formerly divided into twelve divisions with twelve headmen as Mundas and one *Manki* was appointed as the headman over the twelve Mundas. The term is in use among the Oriyas of Sambalpur in a tertiary sense; a water reservoir constructed to improve the fertility of soil is called *Munda*. Many forest areas brought under cultivation have obtained names with *mura* suffix in the district

of Sambalpur. *Munda* could not have been a tribal name to begin with.

The Kols of Dhalbhum who have been given the name *Bhumija* by the Hindus, call themselves *Horoh* people in giving accounts of themselves in an orthodox way. The Turis call themselves *Turi-Horo* and the word *Turi* is an occupational name with them. In Santali, exactly as it is in Mundari, *Hod* is a man and *Hodom* an old man. It is a fact that those who are called Santals to-day, formed at least during Mahomedan times the militia of some Hindu chiefs; very likely on account of it they were called *Samantas* or *Saunts*, and from that term the word *Saontal* has originated. The word *Bir* of the district name of Birbhum is strongly suspected to be Kolarian in origin in which *Bir* signifies a forest; my suggestion relating to the origin of the name *Bhuiyan* may be considered in determining the signification of the *Bhum* portion of the geographical name *Birbhum*. It is quite noteworthy that from *Birbhum* to *Singhbhum* a good number of geographical names occur with 'Bhum'-ending and all these places located in Jharkhand have been the lands of Kol predominance.

It is well-known that the tribal name *Korku* of the Kol people of Jubbulpur is more properly *Korko*; *Kor* means man and *Ko* is the plural-denoting suffix in the speech. Nothing peculiar or usual is disclosed by this fact of a tribe

designating itself by the term ' man ', for almost all the peoples of the world are known to have named originally their own people by the term signifying man to indicate that men of each and every tribe in their self-regarding feeling considered their own people to have been men *par excellence*. We find that Kol people of various sections not having social inter-communication with one another and in one or two cases living since remote past far away from one another, agree very wonderfully in their tribal name. They maintain different legendary accounts relating to their origin ; we shall have to see if in these accounts we can get one or two essential points wherein they all agree, for in the case of such an agreement alone historical value may be attached to tradition. Surer will be our ground if by examining the Kol language we can get facts to bear evidence to the history of the growth of the culture of the Kol people in any particular geographical area. Before, however, we push our inquiry in the proposed manner we consider the value of two theories which are now considered probable by some scholars.

Irrespective of what Mr. S. C. Roy has said in his noted work on the Mundas relating to the legend of the migratory movements of the Kols or relating to the conflict which the Kols might have encountered with the Vedic fathers, it is generally asserted by some, merely on the ground that the Kols have been in forest countries, that the Kol

people must have been forced by some conquering people to live in forest areas by forsaking the open country of Aryyavartta, for in their opinion all forest dwellers must have been pushed into their rude home by some powerful people. This is a wrong notion. It is not necessarily true that hilly or forest-covered lands have been the last refuge of the oppressed or conquered people. In the days of the early distribution of mankind over the globe many swarms of people found the hilly and forest-covered tracts more suitable for residence than the open tracts for many reasons. When men did not follow agricultural pursuits and depended for their sustenance wholly upon the forest produce, the swampy plains breeding destructive diseases were eschewed by many though the trees of the alluvial land offered many luscious fruits, and the rivers presented many advantages to life. Moreover, when men were moving on swarm after swarm in all directions in quest of fresh rich lands for their support, they alone could with much ease repel the attack of the newcomers who were well secure in their hilly forts. What are rude lands to-day, were most welcome regions once.

It is true that those who had to occupy the comparatively open countries in those early days became powerful and progressive because of their constant struggle for existence generated by the incoming of new and newer hostile races, while those who were secure in their isolated homes

and could not expand themselves by constantly coming in contact with various races of man, but the early time seekers of peaceful existence did not and could not think of the far-off future result of their selection of habitation.

It would have been quite a different thing with the Kols in their mood of mind and general social conditions if being oppressed by others they would have been forced to occupy an unwelcome region offering difficulties in life; how self-respecting and freedom-loving and non-pessimistic the Kol people are everywhere is quite well-known to those who have seen them. The low-class Hindus of various castes are their neighbours to-day all throughout Chutia Nagpur and Sambalpur, and no one can fail to notice how very depressed, void of joy in life and listless in mental habit these Hindus are, and how very lively, cheerful and active the forest-dwelling Kols are. What is called sense of humour is almost unknown among the low-class Hindus, while the Kols of both the sexes can take a joke and can sharply reply to a joke with smiling faces. It is a sight to see the Kols singing and dancing and enjoying their life. They are lovers of hills and forests and do not covet the open plain country of the Hindus. I have already remarked that there is no reliable evidence to prove that the Kols were ever settled in the open country of Aryyavartta. The internal evidence which I shall deal with presently, will clearly

show that the Kols were never the people of an open country, but the facts I have here discussed will also show to some extent that the theory I have just now discussed is not tenable.

An absolutely untenable theory about the origin of the Kols, which has acquired respectability by being associated with one or two big names should be referred to next to show how unsafe it is to indulge in a theory without duly ascertaining essential facts; I mean the theory which seeks to connect the Kols with the Mon-Khmer tribes of Further India. It is admitted by all that in physical characteristics the Kols do widely differ from the Mon-Khmer people. That the social institutions and the religious system of the Kols differ from those of the Mon-Khmer people in all essential points and in every particular, cannot for a moment be doubted. It is unusually surprising how the Kols who maintain a thoroughly patriarchal system and worship *Bongas* which are never female spirits, could be suggested to have kinship with the Khasis of Assam. There is neither any suffix nor any other grammatical device in the Kol language to form or indicate feminine forms; feminine-forming words and one feminine-forming suffix have been only recently borrowed by the Kols from Bengali and Oriya, while on the other hand, feminine forms predominate in the Khasi speech, and 'U' and 'Ka' are required invariably to be prefixed to words to indicate male and female

respectively. The dual system of the Kols is peculiar to the Kolarian speech. That in syntactical structure the two languages referred to here differ as from pole to pole, has been noted by Sir George Grierson. It can be boldly asserted that not a word of Kolarian can be equated with any Mon-Khmer word; how one letter of the Kolarian numeral-indicating 'Miad' and another letter of the numeral-indicating 'Bar' were once unsuccessfully taken up to equate with Mon-Khmer numerals, may now be left out of consideration. If remote sound suggestions are followed, many words of one language can be fancifully equated with many words of another language. The word 'Hodom,' the name of the ancestor of the Kols can be fancifully equated with Adam of Jewish tradition. Many gramophone records were taken of songs and conversations of the Mundas by some good scholars and when these records were made to give the Kol speech to the scholars of Burma, the latter unhesitatingly pronounced that neither in accent nor in any other matter the Kolarian speech agreed even distantly with the Mon-Khmer speech. To lay stress upon some forms of tombs to establish genetic affinity is highly unscientific. We know that the Khasis construct their tombs in the manner in which Europeans did the work in dim past and that the Khasis agree with the old Greeks in the matter of divination by breaking eggs open; no one, I

know, will seriously think of connecting the Greeks with the Khasis for those reasons. The Mon-Khmer theory has been very much recklessly maintained by some and it has been suggested by a scholar by giving reins to his fancy that the people of India who originally proceeded to Burma from Monghyr, got the name *Mon* and *Khmer* though the name Monghyr is only a recent name. This statement occurs at page 119 of the 11th volume of the Journal of the Burmese Research Society for 1921-22.

We proceed now in a constructive way to see what reliable facts we may get from the Kols themselves relating to their place of origin. Legendary accounts are many and some of them as are current in Chutia Nagpur are of comparatively recent origin. Mr. S. C. Roy has very rightly remarked that the story of creation and of flood at Azamgarh as narrated by some Mundas must have been adopted by them from some accounts occurring in the Hindu mythology. The legend which the Birhors give of creation is undoubtedly of Hindu origin ; it is a bad edition of the story of Brahma creating the world taking his seat upon a lotus.

The Santal story of creation recorded by the Rev. Dr. A. Campbell in the J. B. O. R. S., Vol. I, p. 16, agrees in many important particulars with what the Korkus of far-off Jubbulpur give us, what some Mundas of Sambalpur narrate and what also the Mundas of Chutia Nagpur

reveal in some accounts other than the Azamgarh legend. The first ancestor of Man is *Hodom* (*i.e.*, the oldest or eldest human being) in the accounts of the Santals and the Mundas; this *Hodom* is *Kodom* in Korku speech, and I need not point out that the two terms do not in the least differ in origin and meaning. The wife of *Hodom* has been called *Budhi* by the Santals and the Mundas who have adopted Aryan words and forms, but the Korkus who have retained the archaic form of the language, do not call their first ancestress by that Aryan word, but calls her in right Kol style the *Era* of *Hodom*. That their Adam and Eve were created on a *Marang Buru* (high mountain) and that the *Marang Buru* was appointed by the creator to be their guardian and protector, are narrated by all the people alike. Mr. S. C. Roy's later essay on the 'Divine Myths of the Mundas' corroborates this account. The significance of this statement is very great. The account of flood of Hindu origin as given by some Mundas is not in the legend of the Santals and is unknown to the Mundas of Sambalpur and to the Korkus of Jubbulpur. The story of destructive fire in the place of flood as is given by the Santals, is in the legend of the Korkus, and the Mundas of Chutia Nagpur also speak of it. That there was a great conflagration in a big forest area and many clans of the Kols were burnt down for their sins, is an important story, for destructive forest fire is a familiar phenomenon

in the highlands of Central India. As all the sections of the Kols agree in these matters relating to the origin of things, their earliest time abode in hills and forests is very strikingly suggested.

I take up now to consider what evidence we may obtain of the origin of the Kols and of their culture by examining their language which does not in the least agree either with the Aryan or with the Dravidian speech. The Kol people of Bengal and Orissa frontier or rather the Kols of Jharkhand have not only borrowed many words from the Aryan source but have adopted some Bengali and Oriya suffixes. <sup>4</sup> The Korkus as well have adopted and naturalized many Hindi words of their locality. These borrowed words and forms expressive of new and imported ideas show in many cases introduction of new culture and new methods of life previously unknown to the people/

For a people of low culture, the Kols may be said to possess rather a pretty big stock of words wholly their own. For words for all the parts of human body from head to toe, for common desires and sentiments, for all usual activities of life, for all familiar objects and striking natural phenomena and for all useful articles manufactured by them, they have words of their own ; introduction of a few new words from foreign sources which come under the above groups shows rather very clearly the original condition of the Kol society.

The value of the examples set out below to explain the old social condition of the Kols should be judged carefully.

1. *Mandi jomtana* (to eat *Mandi*) is the universal idiomatic expression for eating the *principal* meal. The staple is now rice and this rice is called *Chauli* in Jharkhand wholly in Oriya form ; only in Chutia Nagpur *Dhan* or paddy is called *Badi* and this foreign term *Badi* indicates that it is *Bada* or principle grain for consumption. The fact that outside Chutia Nagpur the word *Badi* of Aryan origin is unknown to the Kols and the name for the staple is *Chauli* in most parts of Jharkhand and is *Chamal* (Hindi) in the land of the Korkus, justifies me to hold that *Mandia* was formerly the grain which was the staple food for the Kol people. *Mandia* grain is largely cultivated in Chhattishgarh, Sambalpur and throughout the high lands of Orissa. *Mandia* gruel is a delicacy with all classes of low people from Sambalpur to Kandhmahal, and I know personally that in years of distress most people of the above area live upon *Mandia* gruel. This explains why though a man eats rice the phrase to express 'eating rice' is constituted of *Mandi* and the verb 'Jom' to eat. This points in my opinion to the fact that the region mentioned by me where *Mandia* is grown and the tracts where *Mandia* was grown formerly with the name *Mandia*, were the original places of abode of the Kol people. Other facts detailed below should

of course be taken with it to constitute cumulative evidence in support of my proposition, but I must also note here that the legend of creation recorded by the Rev. Campbell in his paper referred to above informs us that the staple food which the *Marang Bonga* first directed the first created pair to use, were 'Gundi' (*panicum miliare*) and 'Iri' (*panicum frumentaceum*) which are similar to *Mandia*; I cannot say if one of them is identical with *Mandia*, but *Mandia* comes under the same genus.

2. The animals and plants with which the Kols could be familiar in the highlands of Central India have names in Kol speech while animals and plants of other tracts of India are called by foreign names. It should be noted in this connexion that aborigines like the Lepchas are seldom met with who have named all plants and animals very accurately with almost scientific accuracy; such trees and animals as proved useful to the Kols, or such animals as could not but be dreaded and known have obtained names in the language. I mention first the Korku words for animals as real names of standard words and show how in Jharkhand there has been some deviations from the original names. (a) *Seta* (dog), *Sadom* (horse), *Merom* (goat), *Uri* (cow), *Tuyu* (fox), *Kula* (tiger), *Bing* (snake), *Haku* (fish), etc., have the same signification everywhere in all the dialects of the people; but it must be noted that in Chutia Nagpur only *Haku* has

another name and *Nag* as a species of snakes is only known to the Kols of Jharkhand. It is also to be noted that fox is either 'Tuyu' or 'Kakri' but jackal is 'Kolea' in Korku speech. This name Kolea is unknown in Chutia Nagpur, but is familiar in the Sambalpur area, where even Hindu Oriyas of all classes call a jackal or a fox a Kolea; this shows the high antiquity of the Korku word Kolea. (b) *Hela*, a bison, is not known in Jharkhand but 'Heda' and 'Hedel' for a flock of cattle is known; such other words as 'Bana' for bear, 'Koarli' for hare, 'Dhopre' for hyena, 'Senora' for leopard, 'Sara' for monkey, 'Kairea' for panther, 'Lendyle' for wolf, and 'Jekra' for porcupine, have been almost forgotten in Jharkhand. 'Jekra' for porcupine has been reduced to 'Jhinkra' as well as to 'Jhinki' in Sambalpur and Jhinki has been the Oriya name for the animal all throughout the Sambalpur tract. (c) The Korku name *Kutsar* for antelope is current in the district of Sambalpur in the form of *Kutra* and this is the name by which the Hindus of that locality also know the animal. (d) Though the ass has always been in the Aravalli region and camel has never been unknown in India the names for them are the names given to the animals by the Hindus.

3. In taking account of the names of some plants I should note the common saying of the Kols that trees are as innumerable in species as the stars, *Ipil*, over head, and so no one can know

the names of all the trees. Those they did not care to use they did not name. *Bir* and *Tharu* are rather indiscriminately used to-day to denote a forest. This word *Tharu* is unknown to-day in Jharkhand but the name *Daru* for tree in Jharkhand is in my opinion derived from *Tharu*; though *Daru* is not a genuine Aryan word, this is not the word which is in the vocabulary of the Kols in Jharkhand. The real word for tree in the language is *Sing* and this word should not be confounded with *Singi*, the sun or the first portion of the Kol word for fire. *Sing* for tree has dropped out altogether from the Jharkhand vocabulary; *Koto* is a branch, *Sekam* is a leaf, *Bah* is a flower, *Jah* is a fruit and *Buti* is a root with all the people everywhere, but flower has another new name in Chutia Nagpur and though *Buti* indicates root (as well as the navel) the word *Jadi* (a Prakrita or Apabhramsa word from 'jata') is more in use in the Jharkhand tract.

The mango tree is indigenous in some hilly parts of Central India and the name for it in Kol speech is 'Uli' and is not Aryan 'Am' or Dravidian 'Mangai.' Tamarind is *Jojosin*; 'jojo' means sour and 'sin' is the corruption of 'sing' (tree). The following Kol names of some trees have been adopted in Oriya and those names are not known elsewhere among the people of Aryan culture; they are *Char*, *Sa haj* and *Kendu*; the word 'Kendu' (*diospyros embropteris*), however, has

been used in Orissa even in Sanskrit composition and on that account this name unknown elsewhere has got a place in the Sanskrit lexicon. This tree of black wood got the name 'Kendu' as 'Kende' denotes black in Kol speech ; 'Kende' is pronounced in some places as 'Hende.' The useful 'Sal' tree (*shorea robusta*) of the forest has got the Kol name *Suriye* ; it has got another name *Sargi* in use in Chutia Nagpur. It is distinctly to be noted that trees not indigenous in the area under consideration and which have only recently been introduced in that area are known to the Kols by their Aryan names. It is worth noting that tomato which has undoubtedly been introduced only recently in the district of Sambalpur has been named *Patar ganta* by the Kols and by this name tomato is known also to the Oriyas of the locality. *Pattar* denoting morning or morning light is in full use among the Korkus and curiously enough the Oriyas of Sambalpur call daybreak by the term *Pathar phuta*. The bright red colour of ripe tomato is denoted by the newly coined word.

4. It is admitted on all hands that the Kol language though pretty rich otherwise is devoid of words of genuine high culture, of words indicative of architecture, trade, polity and so forth. That in associating the old ruins of a place in the Banka sub-division of Bhagalpur District (where on a hill a colossal figure exists) with the Kols, a confusion has been made between the

advanced Dravidian Cholas and the rude Kols, has already been suggested. No section of the Kols anywhere discloses in the least such mental culture of old days either in their language or in their deeds, as could justify one in supposing that the Kols once attained the sort of civilization indicated by the aforesaid ruins. At different places and in different times some Sabaras or Kols on being partly Hinduized might have set up some semi-Rajput principalities outside their hilly abode, but their descendants could not have been rehabilitated in their old tribal communities. The Dravidian Bhils of the Aravalli region have always been noted as archers but the Kols who have in their language a few words of some sharp iron implements, do not appear to have been the users of bow and arrow by originating those things among themselves. They are expert in the use of bow and arrow to-day but the articles bear names of Aryan vocabulary. The eyebrow is merely *Um* or *Ub* (hair) of the *Med* (eye) in Korku, while it is *Med Kandom* in Jharkhand ; I need hardly point out that *Kanda* is the borrowed word which is in use to denote a bow. It is not free from doubt if sepulchral mounds of the Jharkhand area originated with the Kols. The Jharkhand Tract lying on the east (rather to the east) of the highlands of Central India proper has no doubt been from remote past the abode of some Kol people, but this frontier land has always been traversed by many tribes of un-

known origin, as the Pauranic accounts of the land already referred to, partly show. The Kols of Chutia Nagpur speak of many conflicts which their forefathers had with other tribes. It is true that the Kol influence in Jharkhand does not commence with the ascendancy of the Kols of *Chutia* clan there though the tract bears to-day their name, for this land surrounded by the Bhuiyans had borne the name *Kokra* (formed by metathesis from *Korka*) before the Chutias and their representatives the Nagabamsi Rajas flourished ; but it cannot be denied that the land was often interpenetrated by people of other races. Neither in the main highlands of Central India nor in the district of Sambalpur extending from Kolabira in the north to the Onga in the south tomb stones of the type met with in Chutia Nagpur are familiar. Brick-making having been unknown among the Kols in all their localities, the ruins discovered near *Khunti* cannot be associated with the Mundas.

5. It is well known that cotton was once quite indigenous at several places in the highlands of Central India. The Kols have got names in their language for cotton and loom, and the cloth they wear is 'Lija' which is also a genuine word in the language for cloth. It is in the tradition of the Kols (vide Campbell's paper referred to above) that their Adam and Eve and the early descendants of the first created pair wore leaves of trees ; this leaf-wearing by all the

Sabaras has been recorded as noticed before in the Gauda Vaho. The Juangs of Keonjhar are the only leaf-wearers to-day. The time that has elapsed since the peoples' taking to weaving and wearing cloth must be very great, for the memory of the days of leaf-wearing is not preserved in any general tradition or folklore of the people. The time that took for the people to learn weaving and to get out of the use of leaves of trees for their raiment must also be measured by some hundreds of years. We can thus see for what great length of time the Kols must have been the residents of the highlands of Central India.

I proceed to adduce some linguistic evidence to disprove the proposition or rather the suggestion that the Kols in coming to Jharkhand not only passed through the open country of Bihar, but also lived at certain places of Bihar as ruling people by adopting Aryan civilization to certain extent. Some grammatical terminations which the Kols of Jharkhand have accommodated and naturalized in their language are not Hindi but are Bengali and Oriya. The Kols of Ranchi and Hazaribagh have only recently been influenced by the Hindi language ; though these Kols live in Hindi-speaking tracts to-day, they use, as I presently show, Bengali and Oriya grammatical terminations like their other people who live in closer proximity to Bengal and Orissa. This phenomenon will lead us to show that the

Hindi-speaking people have been recent intruders into the Jharkhand Tract.

In Kolarian language case-denoting suffixes have always been altogether unknown and they are not used by the Korkus of Jubbulpur. In the Jharkhand Tract various terminations have been brought into use. To denote genitive case a peculiar accent developing into 'A' is generally put upon the final syllable of the word ; the suffix 'Ra' is also added at times at many places including Ranchi. For case-denoting suffixes gestures and modulations of voice were formerly enough as now they are quite sufficient with the Korkus. The Oriya suffix 'Re' to indicate locative case and at times to indicate instrumental case is rather in universal use in Jharkhand. The suffix 'Te' of Bengali is also very generally used to denote locative and instrumental cases and it is also used in some infinite formations. *Oka* (where) is not enough in Jharkhand and it is either *Okota* or *Okote* ; this analysis will show that it is wrong to hold that Bengali *Kotha* has gone over to the Kols. *Ne* (here) and *Han* (there) are *Nete* and *Hanta* now. 'En' as demonstrative pronoun and 'Chi' (*china* as well) as interrogative pronoun are of pure Kol origin ; but the Mundari forms 'Enamente' (therefore) and 'Chinamente' (for what reason) of the Mundas of Jharkhand have evidently been coined by adopting the Oriya expressions *E-nimante* (for this reason) and *Ki-nimante* (for what reason).

I have already mentioned that difference of gender is not expressed in pure Kolarian by terminations. Females and males are, as a rule, known by their special names; *enga* (mother), *era* (wife), *missing* (sister), etc., are sufficiently feminine-indicating. To denote gender now in Jharkhand either the Aryan suffix 'i' is used as we notice in *Koda han* (male child), *Kudi han* (female child), or certain words of Bengali and Oriya origin are used as adjectives for the purpose: for instance, as in 'sandi sim' (cock), and 'enga sim' (hen). Of the last named class another example is cited: a *merom* (goat) is 'boda' when male, and 'pantia' when female. In Bengal a he-goat is 'bokapanta,' but 'boda' for 'boka' is the form in use in Oriya; 'panta' and 'panti' for he-goat and she-goat are not in use in Hindi; though 'panta' is not in use in Orissa now, the word 'penti' for she-goat is in use.

In imitation of Bengali (or may be of Oriya) a new mode of idiomatic expressions has been introduced by creating *ela* and *dala* corresponding to Bengali *esa* and *chala* (Oriya *asa* and *chala*); this *ela* and *dala* are unknown in pure Kolarian and *ela* is nearer to *esa* than to *asa* of Oriya. *Ela hijume* (in asking one to come) and *dala senabu* (to express 'let us go') are the new idiomatic forms in question.

Use of many other words and forms could be cited but I adduce here only a few examples more.

*Lekha*, to signify 'like that', 'in proportion as' or 'in the account of' agrees with old Bengali and modern Oriya use of it. 'Besati kadir lekha' etc., of Bharatchandra or 'lekha jokha nai' still in use in Bengal may be referred to; in Oriya this word is now in use exactly as it is in Kolarian. Pronunciation of many vernacular words in use in Kolarian is exactly after Oriya pronunciation of them; for instance, a tank or pond which is *pukur* in Bengal is *pukhori* in Oriya and exactly in this latter pronunciation the word is in use in Jharkhand including Ranchi, though the tract of Ranchi is rather away from the land of the Oriyas to-day. The use of *alo*, *lo* and *ga* in addressing others is also an important point to note, for the particles are not Hindi but are of Bengali or of Oriya origin. Bath towel is 'angichha' in Oriya and the Hindi word for it is almost similar; the name 'gamchha' for it is wholly and peculiarly Bengali and exactly in this form the word is in use among the Mundas of Ranchi.

I have noted in noticing several linguistic factors that many words of Kol origin are in use in Oriya; that the Kols of Jharkhand have also made some contributions to the vocabulary of the Bengali language may now be noted to show that the Kols have been the neighbours of the Bengalee people since long. (1) *Koda han*, male child and *Kudi han*, female child of the Kols have been reduced to *Kokka hadu* and *Kukki hadu* in Oraon

or Kurukh. Both these sets are in use in Bengal. It is curious that *koda* and *kudi* for male and female child respectively are in use in other parts of Bengal as *khoka* and *khuki*; again, in Eastern Bengal in addition to *koda* and *kudi* the terms *koka* and *kuki* (closely allied to the original) are in use. Retention of Kol words in purer form in Eastern Bengal proves that the borrowing took place very long ago. (2) *Salang* (tall) is in use in Eastern Bengal in the form 'sadanga' to denote a tall tree. (3) *Boda* signifies blunt in Kolarian. The very word *boda* is in Bengali in a secondary sense to signify tastelessness, while to signify bluntness the word *bhota* which is a variant of *boda* is in use. (4) *Hada* (of which *hedel* is a connected form) signifies an ox; this term was in use in Bengal as we notice in the poem of Isvar Gupta composed in 1859 wherein to speak of 'beef eating' by some renegade Hindus the poet has said 'Yader pete heda, mejaj teda,' etc. (5) *Ked*, to calf, is in Bengali in the form 'kad,' as may be noticed in such a phrase as *rakada*. It has no connection with *kada* (to snatch) which is from *akarsa*. (6) *Alang* is tongue in Kolarian; it is retained in Bengali *al jib*. (7) *Lutur* is ear; in some parts of East Bengal the lobe of the ear is called *luti* or *loti* and at times *noti*. (8) In Bengali there is the word *mot* derived from Dravidian *mota* to signify a heavy bundle of luggage. There is another non-Sanskritic word *mot* to signify 'total,' and this word seems to

have come from Kolarian source. In Kolarian to indicate a large number of things taken all together the word *mote* or its variant *mode* is in use ; when the whole series of numerals from one to hundred is divided into 5 groups of twenties and all the groups of twenty (*hisi*) are taken together to denote hundred, the expression that is used is *mote (mode) hisi*. From this mode of counting, *mote* or *moda* has come to mean hundred in Kolarian. (9) Baldness of head is denoted by *chadra* by the Kols ; the Oriya word to express the same thing is *chandia* and this word in this very sense is in use in the district of Rangpur. I could not get any Aryan word from which it can be derived. I need hardly say that the words I have cited, from (1) to (8) both inclusive have no roots in Sanskrit.

I should note another point in connexion with the influence of Oriyas upon the Kols in contrast with the influence of the Hindi-speaking people upon them. Hindi has no doubt now become the dominating Aryan vernacular in the district of Ranchi as well as in its neighbourhood, but there are facts of which two or three are noted here to show that it was not so during the early period of Hindu settlements in the Jharkhand Tract. The Hindi-speaking people of the United Provinces or of Bihar (but not the people either of Bengal or of Orissa) are still designated as foreigners by the term *Des-wali* in Ranchi and in its neighbourhood ; this is exactly the term which

the Bengalees even now in East Bengal (very far away from the Chutia Nagpur Tract) use to designate the foreigners aforesaid. Now deities to whom homage is done in Chutia Nagpur area (by the Ho people specially) and who have come over to the aboriginal people from their Hindi-speaking neighbours have acquired the distinctive name, *Deswali Thakur* or *Deswali Bonga*. Again, the Rajas and the zemindars of Ranchi, Singhbhum and Bengali-speaking Manbhum, are connected socially with the Oriya aristocratic families more, than those of other provinces : marriage alliances are made by them principally with the Oriya Rajas and zemindars. So late as in 1894 the zemindar of Biru in the district of Ranchi proceeded to Sambalpur to convene a meeting of the Oriya Brahmins for a declaration that the ancestor of the zemindar of Biru was a Hindu Rajput. It is to be noticed also that some Oriya-speaking zemindars of the district of Ganjam (the zemindar of Tarla near Palasa is one of them) assert that their place of origin was the Chutia Nagpur Tract. How the Hindi-speaking districts being very close to Hazaribagh the influence of Hindi could slowly assume proportions need not be discussed.

The Kols have been since very long on the frontiers of Bengal and Orissa and they have been in the highlands of Central India from a very remote antiquity ; this is what I have attempted to prove. In my opinion the whole evidence in

cumulative effect tends to prove that the Kols have been wholly in the geographical area of the highlands of Central India for such a very great length of time as cannot easily be measured by some centuries. Their whole racial characterisation has been due to the influence of the above area. I could say by accepting a proposition of Prof. Thompson of Aberdeen that the character of the nose of the Kols can be explained by the climatic conditions of the area aforesaid, but as I have avoided making any reference to purely physical characteristics I should not enter into any discussion about it in this thesis. I should, however, assert very distinctly that it will be very wrong to associate the Kols with those who are designated Dravidians whom the Kols have always avoided in their social or political relation.

## VI

### GENERAL SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE KOLS

The highlands of Central India lying to the south of the Aryyavartta and bounded on all other directions by the lands of the people of Dravidian culture, constituted once the home of the Kol people, though now the Kols are inhabiting the eastern borderlands and the main area is dominated by the people of Aryan culture whose progressive career under the British rule has brought a large number of towns into existence some of which are much noted for their health. Situated between the Aryans and the Dravidians in this forest-covered area the Kols developed and nurtured a culture peculiar to themselves and this culture of low grade still survives with much persistence.

The simple social life of Kols is not dominated by a well-defined system of religion and is not bound up with many domestic ceremonies. This requires explanation, for some of their institutions and practices having been wrongly interpreted in the light of Aryan and Dravidian customs, wrong notions have been formed by some scholars. In respect of one custom only it may be said that the Kol society is bound within a steel frame: to maintain their social or rather tribal existence

thoroughly distinguished from others the Kols do not allow any man or woman of theirs to eat any food of other people or to have any sexual relation with any one belonging to any other tribe or society. Now living as close neighbours of the Hindus, the rule relating to eating of food has been only very slightly relaxed : girls below the age of five (keeping down till then the growth of their hair in flowing locks on their head) and boys as long as they have not married are allowed to-day to eat food given by others. This very relaxation shows that the Kols do very strictly and jealously maintain their tribal purity. In their zeal and watchfulness to save themselves from being merged in other tribes, they have refrained from forming social alliance even with their own people who live at distant places and consequently regarding whom definite information cannot be obtained. This is how in some cases some communities have been formed who do not intermarry or interdine. Excepting this matter which touches them very vitally, there are no dogmatic articles of faith or strict social rules of life, non-observance of which involves loss of social status. Some illustrative examples are set forth below.

They believe that the Supreme *Bonga*, the originator of all things, exists ; what is the character of Him and of His existence they do not know and they do not trouble themselves to know. It is a vague and ~~impalpable idea~~ with them and

they do not worship the Supreme Diety, either in love or in fear. Their diseases and natural disasters are attributed to some formless ghostlike beings and they propitiate these mischief-makers by offering fowls and goats; say, if there is anybody among them who is of dare-devil character and does not care to make an offering of blood to the unfriendly spirits the man will not be held a delinquent liable to disciplinary punishment. In imitation of the Hindus or rather to emulate with the Hindus who are loud in proclaiming their faith by holding public religious festivals, the Kols have introduced some religious and semi-religious festivals traceable to some sections of the Hindus. These innovations should not be referred to in determining the religious notions of the people. Again, these festivals are occasions for merriments more, than for acquiring religious merit.

Witchcraft or black magic is performed by some by acquiring the art by chance, but magical practices do not form a part of a regularly organized religious system. Offering of human sacrifice in some section has been noticed before as an old time practice, but this sacrifice was made as far as can be ascertained at present by capturing men of enemy tribes whose presence in the neighbourhood was a menace to the people. No doubt some beneficial effects through magical rites were sought in this cruel act, but this inhuman practice originated in reality to secure political

ends. What is called religious fervour or devotional feelings to gods is wholly unknown among the Kols.

What this sort of religion is due to may now only be surmised by looking to the social habits of the Kols. They had never any such person as king to dominate them with his arbitrary will. A *Manki* is a tribal headman whose function is merely to arbitrate when matters of dispute are referred to him. Again, in their patriarchal system parents govern in the house only those who have not attained the age of discretion. On coming of age when young people marry they, as a rule, set up independent households for themselves. Another factor of life has to be taken into account; in the vast area in their occupation they always got enough scope to earn and to live without depending upon others. Non-existence of social tyranny must have been at the root of the religious idea of the Kols that they do not appear either before the Supreme Bonga or before the mischief-making Bongas of lower order with humiliating supplications and prayers to obtain wealth, longevity or other boons of life. They have always enjoyed their life in joy and have only propitiated the devils that they might be saved from being affected with diseases or other misfortunes. The devils or lower *Bongas* have never been regarded to be the makers of their destiny and they never think that the real boons of life are in the gift of the devils. This

religious idea as well as religious practice differs wholly from the ideas and practices of the Hindus and the Dravidians. The Kols have now changed a bit having been Hinduized during the peaceful British rule, but that should not be taken into account in analysing their habits of life.

In the matter of marriage some ceremonies have been recently introduced in the Jharkhand area by borrowing them from the Hindus ; to put a vermilion mark on the forehead or to besmear the body with turmeric paste, in right Oriya fashion, were formerly wholly unknown among the people. Young men and girls are free to choose the partners of their life and there is no need for a priest to join the hands of the bride and bridegroom in wedlock. The people of the community recognise marriage unions by coming together to a feast of food and drink, and singing and dancing is the only attending ceremony. A girl when married, goes away to live with her husband and never returns to the house of her parents. When a young man enters into wedlock he sets up a new independent household and does not as a rule live under the roof of his parents. The daughter of a man goes away to another *kili* or sept and is not entitled to inherit the property of her father under any circumstances. Usually the youngest son of a man lives with the father. While the elder sons set up separate households by taking some property of the father, if such property is available, the youngest son

lives with the parents and consequently inherits the paternal property. As the young people are free to marry according to their choice, they are free to be separated for good cause with the assent of the men of the community. On such separation or divorce men and women are free to remarry and so also a widow is always at liberty to remarry. Nothing to speak of a man, a woman is at perfect liberty to live unmarried or *dinda* all throughout her life, and there is no social odium for it.

The people are remarkable for their sexual morality. In their simple unsophisticated life men and women marry when they come of age and feel inclined to marry. They are monogamous, for their natural sentiments and condition of free living would not foster a system other than monogamy. Monogamy has always been the rule but as in other matters there has never been any strict social rule formulated in this direction, it has been possible now in some places for men to take more than one wife by imitating the Hindu custom. Marrying more than one wife is still very rare.

I should refer in this connexion to the unfounded libel that the unmarried young folk in their specially set-up dormitories are licensed to live irregular life. The wrong notion in question has been formed by some because of their misconception regarding the character of the dormitories. The thing is that the poor people in a village cannot afford to build big houses for

themselves containing many rooms and consequently they cannot maintain strict decency in living with their wives when their children grow up. All the villagers contribute to the erection of common dormitories for boys and girls separately and all the boys and girls of the village pass their nights in those houses. This simple matter has been taken undue notice of as a peculiar tribal institution though there is nothing special or peculiar about it.

The women during the whole period of gestation move about and earn their living by labour and no domestic ceremony is necessary to be performed in respect of them. I know myself lots of cases when women going out in quest of labour gave birth to children and carried the new-born babies to their home, at times unassisted. Being in dread of evil spirit they may do this or that for the safety of the children but no domestic ceremonies are in force for observance. I mention another fact which has unnecessarily been made much of by some ethnologists. A sharp-edged bamboo slit is used to cut the navel cord ; this is so done because of the purity of the instrument. This practice is in force among the Hindus of all classes in Bengal and Orissa ; my information is that the bamboo slit is preferred to an iron knife even in Bihar, Nepal and Assam. I should also mention that anybody, a friend or a relation of a family, may suggest a name for a child and the suggested name may very easily be

given to the child without much ceremony. I learn that at some places purificatory ceremony at child birth has been introduced ; no doubt this has been in imitation of Hindu customs.

Ceremonies at death seem to have been regularly formulated and observed since remote past. In the death of a person the cruel hand of an evil spirit is always suspected and something is always done that the fell hand of death may not fall upon others. They burn the dead and in doing so they believe that the spirit of the dead vanishes into thin air and cannot return to disturb the peace of the living. If the dead bodies be not fully burnt to ashes the spirit may survive and turn to the village ; the people of the sept of the deceased (generally the women who are left in the house and do not go to the cremation ground) test the non-return of dead man's spirit in a curious way. When men return from the cremation ground the women who remain inside the house by closing the doors, ask the names of the persons returning, and when the men give their names in clear voice the doors are opened, for in case the spirit would have returned the voice of the living man would have been husky and unnatural. In returning home from the cremation ground set apart for every village, no one looks behind, for it is believed that to cast a glance or a lingering look behind is to invite the surviving spirit (if the spirits survive at all) to come to the old home. This belief is, I suspect, shared by

the Hindus with the Kols, for the Hindus act similarly in returning from the cremation ground.

The ashes are collected and kept in an earthen jar and this jar is buried underground after some days. To throw away the jar containing ashes into a river is not also uncommon at some places. This custom is not at all dissimilar to what obtains among the Hindus. To place a slab of stone upon the grave or build a sepulchral mound in any other way is not universal and the custom cannot be proved to be a genuine ancient custom of the Kols. As according to notions relating to spirits the Kols might be easily led to think that a piece of stone on the grave would effectually shut the spirit underground, they could take to the method in question in imitation of others in the neighbourhood.

Belief in the rebirth of the liberated spirit of the dead is noticeable at some places among certain sections of the Kols and it is undoubted that this belief has come over to the people from the Hindus. The Santals put a silver coin between the teeth of a dead man ; this practice which indicates that the spirit is supplied with funds to render help to it in its journey to the other world, is certainly a newly borrowed one, for coin of exchange was unknown to the people formerly. The Kols in Jharkhand have been influenced by the Hindus very largely, and so in studying their genuine faith and customs a very

careful comparative study of their various sections should be diligently pursued to ascertain their original racial characteristics.

It cannot be doubted or rather I should say it is generally admitted that in the days of uninterfered Kol rule in the land of the Kols every individual was free to bring a new piece of land under cultivation and to sit upon it as absolutely his own ; neither the village *Munda* nor the *Manki* of a group of villages could stand against this right of new acquisition. The *Mundas* and *Mankis* were and have been to some extent to-day the authoritative arbiters in all matters of dispute.

If all these facts be carefully considered the Kols or the Sabara-Kol people will be found to be essentially differing from those who are called Dravidians and from the far-off Mon-Khmer people. If really there are good grounds to hold that those who are called Mon-Khmer people came once into India, their blood may be sought either in the veins of the Asuras who now only survive in a small number in Chutia Nagpur or their remains may be sought in the bones (if there be any) of some now extinct people. I have said that the sepulchral mounds of a special type are observable only in some parts of Chutia Nagpur in the neighbourhood of the iron-smelting Asuras whose old archæological remains have recently been unearthed. I should also mention that the peculiar iron implement which has been made much of to connect the Kols with some far-off

people might either belong once to the Asuras or some other tribes now extinct. In other regions of Kol influence of old time or of modern days such implements have been unknown.



## WORKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR

**1. Orissa in the Making:** With an introductory foreword by Sir Edward A. Gait, M.A., K. C. S. I., Retd. Lieut.-Governor of Bihar & Orissa. Crown 8vo. pp. 247 (1925). Rs. 4-8. Published by the Calcutta University.

This work which has no rival in the field presents a mass of new facts relating to the early history of Orissa and sets out the hitherto unnoticed course of events which culminated in the emergence of Orissa as a distinct national and linguistic unit. How the author has executed this work successfully after having been engaged for many years in his research work in Orissa, has been noticed by Sir Edward A. Gait in the introductory foreword spoken of above.

**Mr. L. E. B. Cobden-Ramsay**, C.I.E., I. C. S. (retd.), who is the noted author of the Gazetteer of the Orissa Feudatory States and is a recognised authority in the matter of history of Orissa, writes in his letter to the author: "I must apologise for my long delay in acknowledging receipt of your book 'Orissa in the Making,' but I have wanted to read it carefully before writing to you and as you will understand it is a work which merits careful reading. May I be permitted to offer you my sincere admiration of the deep scholarship and research you display in your work, the result of years of laborious research and study."

**Dr. L. D. Barnett** writes in reviewing the book in J. R. A. S., p. 156, 1926:

Mr. Bijaychandra Mazumdar's work, to which a foreword is contributed by Sir Edward Gait, is an attempt to trace the history of Orissa from the earliest times with the aid of the materials furnished by epigraphy, literature, religion, ethnology, language and geography. After emphasizing with justice the original distinction between the ancient tribes of Utkalas and Odras in the interior, he endeavours to account for the altered conditions noted by Hiuen Tsang in the seventh century, and then sketches the fortunes of the chief dynasties, which have borne rule in the country. The Sulikas, who were defeated by the Maukhari Isanavarman about the middle of the sixth century, he locates on the coast not far from Midnapur, and he then surveys the facts known about the Bhanja dynasty and its offshoots. Then comes a study of the important family of Kosala Guptas, whom he regards as the real makers of Orissa and connects with the dynasty descended from Udayana which ruled at Sripura (Sirpur) over Dakshina-Kosala; and after them come the Gangas of Mukhalingam

(1076-1484) and the solar dynasty of Kapilendra, Purusottama, and Prataparudra (1435-1540), with a final chapter on the later history of the Sambalpur tract. The work is marked by wide erudition and contains much that is instructive... We cannot withhold a tribute of admiration for the extraordinary intellectual energy with which he combats his physical disability.

**The Literary Times of London** (Sept. 16, 1926) publishes the following opinion :

In Mr. Mazumdar's scholarly treatise on the making of Orissa we are introduced to an exactly opposite tendency, the tendency, namely, of Hinduism to absorb and modify aboriginal tribes and cults without entirely obliterating them. Orissa is not known to the average reader of Indian history, though the great temple of Jagannath at Puri, on the coast, is the scene of those car festivals which gave rise to the familiar but quite inaccurate phrases now current in the English language. The geographical position of Orissa, with a chain of hills almost skirting the sea and much wild country in the hinterland, doubtless protected it from invasion; and the character of its inhabitants, coupled with their poverty, which held out little hopes of adequate plunder, offered no inducement to undergo the necessary hardships. The conquest of Kalinga by Asoka is one of the outstanding facts of early Indian history, but after that time we hear little of this tract which seems to have been left to the Hindu as a playground to fight out their quarrels and their ambitions. It was not until 1668, when the Mogul dynasty was firmly established, that Orissa fell under the sway of the Muhammadans, and even then part of it seems to have remained under Hindu princes. And since Hindus did not write history Mr. Mazumdar has been compelled to reconstruct his story from epigraphic and similar records. He has shown commendable patience in this task and has written a useful book.

**The Statesman** in its editorial notes of October 12, 1926, after speaking in praise of the good execution of the work remarks :

As Mr. Mazumdar had no predecessors, he has had to undertake an extensive original study of inscriptions and public records.

## 2. The History of the Bengali Language : Demy 8vo. pp. 318. Rs. 7/-

The book gives a sketch, in broad outline, of the origin of the Bengali Language and the various influences—linguistic, ethnic, social—that shaped and moulded its earlier history.

In reviewing this book in the *J.R.A.S.* (1928, p. 443), **Dr. L. D. Barnett** writes :

Mr. Mazumdar's work on account of its learning, vigorous style, and bold deviation from currently accepted doctrine deserves a fuller notice than can be accorded to it here. Opening with a stout denial of Sir G. Grierson's theory of the origin of Aryan vernacular, he maintains their derivation from the Vedic Language, and explains their variations as due to the influence of non-Aryan speech, mainly

Dravidian; in particular, Bengali, Oriya and Assamese are in his opinion all primarily evolved from one and the same Eastern Magadhi Prakrit and the first two have been influenced in a secondary degree by Dravidian speech. To us the most attractive Chapters are II-IV, on the names of Vanga and Banglā, the geography of ancient Banglā, with the connected regions Gauḍa, Rādha and Vanga.....VI, on Bengali phonology and VII-IX, a fine study of accent in Sanskrit and Bengali and of the Bengali metrical system, which is of especial value as the author himself has won high distinction as a poet in his native language. On the whole it may be said that the book is most stimulating and suggestive, and that it presents a remarkable mass of interesting facts relating to modern Bengali.

### **3. Typical Selections from Oriya Literature**

Introductory Essays relating to the old time poets and the language of Orissa, in three volumes.











