

CHAPTER III

PEOPLE

POPULATION

According to the 1971 Census * the population of Kalahandi district was 11,63,869 of whom 5,78,929 were males and 5,84,940 females. It is divided into 3 subdivisions, 5 tahsils and 16 police stations. The population of each such administrative unit is given below.

Subdivision/ Tahsil/Police station	Males	Females	Total population
Kalahandi Subdivision:	2,03,754	2,03,999	4,07,753
Kalahandi Tahsil	1,18,436	1,17,787	2,36,223
Kalahandi Sadar P.-S.	51,858	51,118	1,02,976
Thuamul Rampur P.-S.	19,530	19,388	38,918
Lanjigarh P.-S. (Portion)	5,124	5,073	10,197
Kesinga P.-S. (Portion)	27,175	27,320	54,495
Kegaon P.-S. (Portion)	14,749	14,888	29,637
Lanjigarh Tahsil	85,318	86,212	1,71,530
Lanjigarh P.-S. (Portion)	12,226	12,251	24,477
Madanpur Rampur P.-S.	35,538	35,932	71,470
Narla P.-S.	25,056	25,375	50,431
Kesinga P.-S. (Portion)	12,498	12,654	25,152
Dharamgarh Subdivision	2,06,661	2,10,561	4,17,222
Dharamgarh Tahsil	99,881	1,01,547	2,01,428
Dharamgarh P.-S.	38,123	38,704	76,827
Kegaon P.-S. (Portion)	15,109	15,061	30,170
Junagarh P.-S. (Portion)	46,649	47,782	94,431
Jayapatna Tahsil	1,06,780	1,09,014	2,15,794
Jayapatna P.-S.	49,175	50,217	99,392
Koksara P.-S.	44,368	44,901	89,269
Junagarh P.-S. (Portion)	13,237	13,896	27,133
Nawapara Subdivision	1,68,514	1,70,380	3,38,894
Nawapara Tahsil	1,68,514	1,70,380	3,38,894
Nawapara P.-S.	25,961	26,310	52,271
Jonk P.-S.	22,901	23,332	46,233
Komna P.-S.	35,031	35,042	70,073
Khariar P.-S.	51,143	51,730	1,02,873
Sinapali P.-S.	33,478	33,966	67,444

*. Census of India, 1971, Orissa, Part II-A,
General Population Tables, pp. 47-49.

During the last seventy years the population grew from 2,24,150 in 1901 to 5,78,929 in 1971, an increase of 159.13 per cent which is much above the State average growth of 112.9 per cent during the same period. The growth of population from decade to decade is given below.*

Census Year	Males	Females	Total	Decade variation	Percentage decade variation	
1	2	3	4	5	6	
1901	..	2,24,150	2,24,987	4,49,137	..	..
1911	..	2,67,062	2,73,433	5,40,495	+91,358	+20.34
1921	..	2,71,045	2,79,313	5,50,358	+9,863	+1.82
1931	..	3,21,896	3,33,298	6,55,194	+104,836	+19.05
1941	..	3,66,250	3,79,063	7,45,313	+90,119	+13.75
1951	..	3,98,978	4,06,697	8,05,675	+60,362	+8.10
1961	..	4,68,766	4,78,108	9,46,874	+1,41,199	+17.53
1971	..	5,78,929	5,84,940	1,163,869	+2,16,995	+22.92

It is evident from the statement that the first decade of the present century was a period of general prosperity. The district was comparatively immune from the famine of 1899-1900 which severely affected Sambalpur, Patna, Sonepur and Boudh. As a result, the district showed a high rate of increase of population amounting to 20.34 per cent in the Census of 1911. The increase was partly due to the fact that there are vast areas of cultivable waste lands and the rent is low which encouraged the influx of cultivators from Madras and the Central Provinces.

The next decade (1911—21) which brought virulent types of influenza, cholera and other forms of miseries and sufferings left this district with a small increase of 1.82 per cent.

The district had a bad start during the first year of the decade 1921—31 when death rate exceeded birth rate. Although the subsequent years witnessed occasional distress caused by epidemics, the good harvests, construction of Raipur-Vizianagram Railway line which passes through this area, and the abolition of *Begari* and *Bahabandha* improved the material condition of the people as manifested in the growth of population which stood at 6,55,194 in 1931 Census, showing an increase of 19.05 per cent.

* Census of India, 1971, Orissa, Part II-A
General Population Tables, p. 109.

The decade 1931—41 was free from natural calamities except for the sporadic outbreak of epidemics which did not materially impair the population growth. The harvests were comparatively good and the population increased by 90,119 or 13.75 per cent.

The decade 1941 to 1951 witnessed partial failure of crops on account of insufficient rainfall. Kalahandi is usually a surplus district, so far food production is concerned, but the rising prices on account of war conditions and the low agricultural yields due to the vagaries of monsoon had the effect of reducing the population growth to 8.10 per cent which is low when compared with the two previous prosperous decades.

The subsequent decade (1951—61) is significant for planned development of rural economy through the introduction of Community Development and National Extension Services. Minor irrigation works with a view to provide irrigation facilities, adoption of improved methods of agriculture, opening of new dispensaries, supply of drinking water in rural areas, control programmes to prevent epidemic diseases, construction and development of road communication, and spread of education are some of the most important activities during the decade which contributed to overall prosperity. Thus, this decade is noted for satisfactory growth of population which stood at 9,46,874 in 1961, recording an increase of 17.53 per cent.

The last decade 1961—71 has recorded the highest growth of population, i. e., 22.92 per cent. But it is less than the corresponding State average growth of population. The reasons for the growth of population are generally the excess of births over deaths and the general improvement in public health and personal hygiene. Another important factor for the increase of population is the migration of a large number of persons from other districts of the State as well as from outside the State to the district. The industrial and commercial developments at Bhawanipatna, Junagarh, Kesinga, Khariar and Khariar Road have also attracted many workers to these places.

Density According to the Census of 1971 the density of 98 persons per sq. km. in the district is much below the State average which is 141 persons per sq. km. The density of 80 persons per sq. km. in 1961 was equally low compared with the then State figure of 113 persons. The small increase in density of 1971 is commensurate with the growth of population during the decade. But the district continues to be low down in density in the list for decades. The area has neither the natural advantage to sustain higher density of population nor are there industries and projects coming up to attract persons from outside. * The rural and urban densities are 94 and 710 persons respectively per sq. km.

* A portrait of population, Orissa, by B. Tripathi, 1971, p. 48

The Census also recorded in 1971 the highest density of population, i. e., 143 persons per sq. km. in Dharamgarh subdivision and the lowest (77) in Kalahandi subdivision. Further analysis revealed that Dharmgarh tahsil is the most densely inhabited area whereas Lanjigarh is the most sparsely inhabited area in the district. Among police stations, Kesinga tops the list with 384 persons per sq. km. and Thuamul-Rampur ranks last with 36. Of the five urban centres in the district, Bhawani-patna, the district headquarters, leads with an average of 1,619 persons.

The total population of 11,63,869 persons is distributed into 11,07,316 rural and 56,553 urban in the ratio of 95.14 per cent and 4.86 per cent respectively.

Rural/Urban
Distribution

In 1971, there were 2,653 inhabited and 184 uninhabited villages in the district. The total rural population of 11,07,316 persons live in these inhabited villages. The average population size per inhabited village thus comes to 417. It is less than the State average which is 428. In the following statement, the proportion of different size of villages to the total number of villages and the population of such villages to the total rural population (in percentage) is shown according to the Census of 1971.

Rural
Population

Villages with population of	No. of villages	Percentage of no. of villages to total no. of villages	Rural population	Percentage of rural population to total population of the district
Less than 200 ..	1,117	42.10	96,690	8.73
200—499 ..	733	27.63	2,45,226	22.15
500—999 ..	548	20.66	3,85,552	34.82
1,000—1,999 ..	219	8.25	2,85,751	25.80
2,000—4,999 ..	36	1.36	9,409	8.50
5,000—9,999 ..	..	..	..	..
10,000 and above ..	..	..	..	..

It is evident from the foregoing statement that the number of villages with population less than 500 is the highest in the district. These villages constitute 1,850 or 69.73 per cent of the total number of villages. Villages of this category accommodated 30.88 per cent of the total rural population of the district. These figures, though significant, have registered a fall when compared to the 1961 Census figures (73.34 per cent and 37.58 per cent respectively). Correspondingly an increase in the percentage of medium and large sized villages is noticed. The phenomenon indicates the steady progress made in the rural areas.

Urban
Population

The urban population of 56,553 (29,172 males and 27,381 females) is spread over five towns, viz., Bhawanipatna, Khariar Road, Kesinga, Junagarh and Khariar. Of these, Bhawanipatna is the only Class III town with a population of 23,264. The remaining four belong to the category of Class V towns (with a population varying from 5,000 to 9,999). The proportion of urban population to the total population of the district is 4.86 per cent. The corresponding proportion for the State is 8.41 per cent.

The number of towns has increased from one in 1901 to five in 1971. Bhawanipatna was the only town in the district from 1901 to 1951. Khariar and Khariar Road acquired urban status in 1961. Thus the Census of 1961 has recorded three towns in the district. In 1971, Kesinga and Junagarh were added to the existing three towns. As a result of this the urban population has increased from 4,400 in 1901 to 56,553 in 1971. The net variation of urban population during 70 years in the district has been 52,153, i. e. 1,185.29 per cent.

The following statement gives a picture of the growth of population in the towns of the district since 1951

Town	Population		
	1951	1961	1971
Bhawanipatna	11,807	14,300	23,264
Khariar Road	..	6,400	9,226
Khariar	..	7,873	7,651
Kesinga	8,536
Junagarh	7,876

The analysis of the statement shows that during the period 1961—71 the population of Bhawanipatna and Khariar Road grew steadily whereas the population of Khariar recorded a fall of 2.82 per cent.

In 1961 Khariar, for the first time, was treated as a town consisting of seven villages, viz., Khariar, Gadramunda, Koptipadar, Ranipur, Bijepur, Bhanpur and Padampur. But in 1971, all the villages except Khariar were treated as rural areas. Hence the decrease in the number of persons in Khariar town in 1971 is attributed to the exclusion of these six villages.

Of the five towns, Bhawanipatna, the district headquarters, has increased its population by 62.68 per cent during the last ten years. This is mainly due to the concentration of a number of Government offices, private firms, banks, educational institutions, the Industrial Training Institute, etc.

As a result of the partition of the country a large number of persons from West Pakistan (Present Pakistan) and East Pakistan (Present Bangladesh) were displaced not only geographically but also socially and economically. They were settled in different parts of the country. The total number of such migrants to the district of Kalahandi from 1946 to 1951 was 486 (254 males and 232 females) of whom 279 have settled in rural areas and 207 in urban areas.¹ For their rehabilitation Government have provided grants and loans. Of the displaced persons 272 (127 males and 145 females) were engaged in agricultural work and 214 (127 males and 84 females) in non-agricultural work in the district.

Displaced Persons

The distribution of population by age and sex according to the Census of 1971, is given below.²

Age-Groups

Age-Group	Males	Females	Total	Percentage of district population
0—14 ..	2,60,547	2,62,857	5,23,404	45.0
15—59 ..	2,92,942	2,90,468	5,83,410	50.1
60 Years and above ..	25,357	31,521	56,878	4.9

The statement shows that children below 14 years constitute 45.0 per cent of the total population while persons in the working age-group 15—59 constitute 50.1 per cent. Persons above 60 years are only 4.9 per cent of the district population. There is not much sex disparity in the age-groups 0—14 and 15—59. In the age-group of 60 years and above, greater survival of the females than males is noticed.

In 1971 the number of females per thousand males in the district was 1,010, higher than similar ratio of 988 for the State as a whole. The following statement presents the sex ratio of Kalahandi district from 1901 to 1971.³

Sex-Ratio

Census Year	No. of females per 1,000 males		
	Rural	Urban	Total
1901 ..	1,005	892	1,004
1911 ..	1,024	982	1,024
1921 ..	1,031	984	1,031
1931 ..	1,036	1,014	1,035
1941 ..	1,035	1,028	1,035
1951 ..	1,020	965	1,019
1961 ..	1,022	959	1,020
1971 ..	1,014	939	1,010

1. Census of India, 1951, Orissa, Part-II-A, Tables, p. 148

2. A Portrait of Population, Orissa, 1971, pp. 158—172

3. Census of India, Orissa, Part II-A, 1971, p. 106

The higher female ratio in rural areas is mainly due to the absence of male members who have moved out in search of livelihood to urban areas. So far as urban sex ratio is concerned Kalahandi district occupied the second highest (939) place in the State in 1971. In 1961 Census, the highest and the lowest places in urban sex ratio were respectively occupied by Kalahandi and Sundargarh district.

Migration

According to the Census of 1971 (Provisional figures), the migrants to this district constituted 4.07 per cent of the total population of whom 1.02 per cent were born outside the State. The migrants from outside the State hail from Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamilnadu, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Delhi, Manipur, Mysore. As this district is on the borders of Madhya Pradesh, the largest number (7,155) of immigrants have come from that State. The immigrants from countries like Nepal, Pakistan, Africa and elsewhere to this district numbered 485 persons. Of these 425 persons are from Pakistan. The distribution of population on the basis of place of birth is as follows :

Place of birth	Males	Females	Total	Percentage to total population
Persons born at the place of enumeration.	4,96,776	3,57,610	8,54,386	73.41
Persons born elsewhere in the district of enumeration.	59,193	2,02,950	2,62,143	22.52
Persons born in other districts of the State.	17,155	17,840	34,995	3.01
Persons born in other States in India	5,635	6,225	11,860	1.02
Persons born in country in Asia beyond India.	170	310	480	0.04
Persons born in country in Africa and elsewhere.	..	5	5	Negligible

The predominance of females in all the categories of migrants indicates that they have migrated consequent to their marriage. Participation in economic activities may be a secondary cause. Majority of males appear to have gone out for economic reasons.

LANGUAGE

According to the Census of 1971, ten languages are recorded as major mother-tongue in the district. Of these, Oriya is the predominant language and is spoken by 10,82,376 persons or 93.00 per cent of the

total population. The following statement gives the distribution of population according to language in Kalahandi district as per 1971 Census. *

Name of Mother-tongue	Number of speakers	Percentage to total population
Oriya ..	1,082,376	93.00
Hindi ..	21,102	1.81
Kui ..	18,700	1.61
Laria ..	18,162	1.56
Khond/Kondh ..	7,790	0.67
Telugu ..	3,466	0.30
Punjabi ..	3,321	0.29
Chhattisgarhi ..	2,942	0.25
Gujarati ..	1,279	0.11
Urdu ..	991	0.08
Total ..	1,160,129	99.68
Others ..	3,740	0.32

Although the variety of Oriya spoken in the Kalahandi district shares the broad features of the Sambalpuri dialect and is a part of it, the Oriya spoken in this district has certain distinct local traits. But these differences, wherever they exist, are rather formal without affecting much the syntax or meaning. The following sets of words in the Sambalpur and Kalahandi varieties and their corresponding forms in standard Oriya fairly bring out the relative differences:

Oriya spoken in Kalahandi	Oriya Spoken in Sambalpur	Standard Oriya
Jam (ଜାମ)	Maya (ମାୟା)	Pijuli (ପିକୁଳି)
Nuni (ନୁନି)	Nani (ନନା)	Jhia (ଝିଆ)
Nani (ନନା)		
Kumuda (କୁମୁଡ଼ା)	Makhan (ମାଖନ)	Kakharu (କଖାରୁ)
Korkot (କୋରକୋଟ)	Kankarlo (କଙ୍କରଲ)	Kankada (କାଙ୍କଡ଼)
Korkoti (କୋରକୋଟି)		
Tukel (ଟୁକେଲ)	Tukli (ଟୁକ୍ଲି)	Toki (ଟୋକି)
Tukil (ଟୁକିଲ)	Tukel (ଟୁକେଲ)	
Nun (ନୁନ)	Lun (ଲୁନ)	
	Nun (ନୁନ)	Luna (ଲୁଣ)

* A Portrait of Population, Orissa—B. Tripathi, Census of India, 1971, Series 16, pp. 251-252.

All these are content words. Some pronominal forms also show the differences:

Kalahandi Oriya		Sambalpur Oriya		Standard Oriya	
Make	(ମକେ)	} Mate	(ମତେ)	Mote	(ମୋତେ)
Moke	(ମୋକେ)				
Take	(ତକେ)	} Tate	(ତତେ)	Tote	(ତୋତେ)
Toke	(ତୋକେ)				
Se	(ସେ)	Apne	(ଅପ୍ନେ)	Se	(ସେ)

Similar differences can also be found in other grammatical variations:

Kalahandi Oriya		Sambalpur Oriya		Standard Oriya	
Itike	(ଇତିକେ)	} Ithanke	(ଇଠାନକେ)	Ethiki	(ଏଠିକି)
Ithanke	(ଇଠାନକେ)				
Ebe	(ଏବେ)	Echhenka	(ଏଛେନ୍‌କା)	Ebe	(ଏବେ)
Matarka	(ମାତରକ)	} Likin	(ଲିକିନ)	Kintu	(କିନ୍ତୁ)
Matar	(ମାତର)				
Matarkar	(ମାତରକର)				
Unjia	(ଉଞ୍ଜିଆ)	} Bhine	(ଭିନେ)	Bhinna	(ଭିନ)
Bhine	(ଭିନେ)				

The question particles used in Kalahandi and Sambalpur Oriya are more or less the same : Kana (କାଣା), Kenta (କେଜା), Kie (କିଏ), Ken (କେନ), Kahake (କାହାକେ), Kebe (କେବେ), Ken (କେଁ) and the like. The only possible exception is the use of *why* form :

Kalahandi Oriya	Sambalpur Oriya	Standard Oriya
Kan kaje (କାଁ କାକେ)	Kenthir lagi (କେନ୍ଧିର ଲଗି)	Keunthi pain (କେଉଁଥିପାଇଁ)
Kenta (କେଁଟା)	Kanata (କାଣାଟା)	Kanata (କେଣଟା)

The word order is the same in all the three varieties of Oriya. But in negation there is a marked difference. While the negative particle precedes the verb in Kalahandi and Sambalpur varieties, it comes after it in 'standard' Oriya. For example, *muin nain jaen* (ମୁଇଁନାହିଁ ଯାଏଁ) becomes *mun jibi*

nahin (ନୁଁ ନିବି ନାହିଁ) in Oriya. In certain cases in Sambalpur variety *nuhen* (ନୁହେଁ) is preferred to *nain* (ନାଇଁ). In Kalahandi the latter form is uniformly used in all situations:

Kalahandi Oriya	Sambalpur Oriya	Standard Oriya
Se nain asbarta	Apne nuhen asbartael	Se eparjyanta asi
(ସେ ନାଇଁ ଆସ୍‌ବାର୍ତା)	(ଆପ୍‌ନେ ନୁହେଁ ଆସ୍‌ବାର୍ତାଏଲ୍)	nahanti (ସେ ଏପର୍ଯ୍ୟାନ୍ତ ଆସି ନାହାନ୍ତି)

It may be noted that morpheme *ta* (ତା) in Kalahandi changes to *tael* (ତାଏଲ୍) in Sambalpur Oriya. It occurs in the negative context and means “not yet”. Further, the particle *na* (ନା) in Kalahandi is always realised as *na* (ନ) in Sambalpur which, in both the cases occur with verbs reinforcing the idea of completion.

Kalahandi Oriya	Sambalpur Oriya	Standard Oriya
Muin khaelina	Muin khailina	Mun khailini
(ମୁଇଁ ଖାଏଲିନା)	(ମୁଇଁ ଖାଇଲିନ)	(ମୁଁ ଖାଇଲିଣି)

Words ending with vowel *a* (ଅ) in ‘standard’ Oriya are said without the vowel in both Kalahandi and Sambalpur. This tendency to drop the vowel is even greater in Kalahandi. In certain cases the vowel *a* (ଆ) in Sambalpuri and ‘standard’ Oriya is realised as *a* (ଅ) in Kalahandi.

Kalahandi Oriya	Sambalpur Oriya	Standard Oriya
Jauchan (ଯାଉଚନ.) Jauchhan (ଯାଉଛନ.)	Jauchhan (ଯାଉଛନ.)	Jauchhanti (ଯାଉଛନ୍ତି)
Auchan (ଆଉଚନ.) Auchhan (ଆଉଛନ.) Asuchhan (ଆସୁଛନ.)		Asuchhan (ଆସୁଛନ.) Asuchhanti (ଆସୁଛନ୍ତି)
Khauchan (ଖାଉଚନ.) Khauchhan (ଖାଉଛନ.)	Khauchhan (ଖାଉଛନ.)	Khauchhanti (ଖାଉଛନ୍ତି)

When there is a *na+da* (ନା+ଡା) combination there is a tendency to drop the latter sound in Kalahandi. Thus *pana* (ପଣା) for *panda* (ପଣ୍ଡା), *kalahani* (କଳାହାଣି) for *kalahandi* (କଳାହାଣ୍ଡି), *pina* (ପିଣା) for *pinda* (ପିଣ୍ଡା) are often used. Apart from these phonological features, Sambalpuri Oriya is marked by heavy

nasalisation which is not so pronounced in the Kalahandi variety. Besides, the retroflex lateral sound (𑂣) in 'standard' Oriya is not found in Kalahandi and Sambalpur Oriya.

Kalahandi Oriya has borrowed certain expressions from Southern Oriya. For example, the phrase *tanka bandhiba* (ଟଙ୍କାବାନ୍ଧିବା) in the sense of paying a fee or making a deposit is used in Kalahandi but not in Sambalpur.

Bilingualism

Of the total population in the district, 56,365 persons or 5.57 per cent are returned as speaking a language subsidiary to their mother-tongue*. The proportion of males (36,721) is very much higher than that of the female (19,644) bilingual population.

The following statement gives the total bilingual population in the district, and also the principal subsidiary language spoken by them :

Mother-tongue	Total no. of speaker	Total no. of persons returned as speaking a language subsidiary to the mother-tongue	Principal subsidiary languages			
			Oriya	Hindi	English	Other languages
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Bengali ..	399	161	78	29	54	..
Hindi ..	13,945	2,030	1,670	..	316	44
Ho ..	59	56	56	..	..	..
Kharia ..	60	50	50	..	..	..
Khond/Kondh	22,237	21,618	21,613	5	..	..
Kui ..	68,274	17,905	17,899	6	..	..
Laria ..	22,517	1,274	525	627	54	68
Munda ..	2,567	2,001	1,998	2	1	..
Mundari ..	80	22	22	..	..	..
Oriya ..	8,73,329	9,559	..	5,762	3,318	479
Savara ..	18	..	..	..	..	..
Telugu ..	2,965	1,040	851	61	125	3
Urdu ..	1,713	649	327	276	40	6
Total ..	10,09,654	56,365	45,089	6,768	3,908	600

*Census of India, Orissa, Part II—C, 1961, pp. 126—132.

It is seen from the table that Oriya is the most important subsidiary language of all non-Oriya speakers in the district. Besides Oriya, Hindi and English are the important subsidiary speech of most of the people.

The Oriya script is in vogue all over the district. In the past people were using a kind of abstruse script in Oriya writing called *Karani*. Nowadays it has fallen into disuse. The tribals who speak their own languages prefer Oriya script while writing their dialects. Script

The people speaking other Indian languages use their respective scripts. The non-Indian national settlers use their standard scripts.

In 1971, out of the total population of the district, which was 11,63,869, the Hindus were in great majority, their total number being 11,54,885. There were 3,464 Christians. They were followed by Muslims (3,257), Jains (1,418) and Sikhs (633). The strength of the Buddhists, the followers of other religions and persuasions, and religions not stated, are negligible in the district. RELIGION

The table below illustrates the religious divisions of the people in the rural and the urban areas of the district.*

Name of the Religion	Number of followers		
	Rural	Urban	Total
Hindus ..	11,02,107	52,778	11,54,885
Muslims ..	1,601	1,656	3,257
Christians ..	3,074	390	3,464
Sikhs ..	17	616	633
Buddhists ..	7	1	8
Jain ..	277	1,111	1,418
Other religions and persuasions ..	..	1	1
Religion not stated ..	233	..	233

According to the 1971 Census, 99.23 per cent of the people in the district professed Hinduism. The preponderance of the followers of Hinduism is so high that it occupies the sixth place among the districts of India and second in the State of Orissa.** Hinduism

Among the Hindus most of the people are semi-Hinduised aboriginals. They have adopted Hindu customs and worship Hindu gods and goddesses. They claim to be orthodox Hindus, but side by side

*Census of India, 1971, Paper 2, Religion, pp. 60-61

**Ibid, p. 11.

worship their own tribal gods and sylvan deities. "Amongst the large body of semi-Hinduised races", according to Cobden-Ramsay, "found in the States the worship of the Hindu Gods proceeds side by side with that of the original Gods of these races and the blending of Hinduism and Animism is clearly observable. In such villages there is almost invariably a village priest, in addition to the Hindu priest; this village priest is a member of an indigenous or aboriginal race and is known by various terms such as *deori*, *kahu*, *jhankar*, etc. his duties are to appease the powers of evil and the sylvan deities of the tribe with sacrifices of goats and cocks and to guard the village boundaries."**

The Hindus, in general, are polytheists. Their religion is ritualistic and the worship of gods and goddesses is considered as supreme religious virtue. All over the district there is a large number of old and new temples dedicated to Lord Jagannath, Siva, Radha-Krishna; Sakti, in her various manifestations; and other deities. The people congregate near these temples on different festive occasions like Ratha jatra, Sivaratri, Dolajatra, Durgapuja, etc. Usually in a Hindu household when a child is seriously ill, the parents make religious vows to offer special *puja* before some deity for the recovery of the child and perform *puja* in the prescribed manner. In case it is not done a fresh danger of a more serious magnitude is apprehended. Women also offer a special *puja* to deities in the hope of having male issues.

The Hindus worship the Sun-god daily while bathing and a libation of water is made in his honour. Many abstain from eating fish or meat on Sunday which is ceremonially observed as it is the sacred day for Sun-god. The Earth is described as the holy Mother of all living things and the giver of all good and is regarded as a benign female deity. The people worship the Earth goddess during agricultural operations. Besides the Sun and the Earth, the planets like *Sani* and *Rahu* are also worshipped on certain occasions. *Sani* is regarded as the son of Surya Devata (Sun-God) and is supposed to be very malevolent and to have great influence over the destiny of man. It is represented on ritual occasions by an earthen pot filled with water. Thursday is considered an auspicious day of goddess Lakshmi and is observed with religious devotion mostly by the women-folk. They refrain from eating fish or meat on Thursday.

The Pipal (*Ficus religiosa*), Banyan (*Ficus bengalensis*), Bel (*Aegle marmelos*) and Tulsi (holy basil) are held sacred by the Hindus. In almost every Hindu household there is a *Chaura* or a sacred place where Tulsi is planted and worshipped. Every evening lighted wicks are offered by the housewife before the *Chaura*.

** L. E. B. Cobden—Ramsay : Feudatory States of Orissa, Reprinted, 1950, p. 41

A microscopic section among the Hindus of Kalahandi district follow the principles of the Arya Samaj. At Amsena, near Khariar Road, a Gurukula Mahavidyalaya is run by the Samaj. It is a residential institution imparting scriptural and vocational training mostly to Adivasi boys. Besides, there are a few other centres of the Arya Samaj in the district.

Arya Samaj

The followers of Mahima Dharma or Alekha Dharma are few in Kalahandi district, They are mostly found in villages under Komna, Sinapali and Jayapatna police stations. They believe in one God, i. e., Param Brahma, the Supreme Being. He is indescribable, indivisible, and invisible. He is believed to have created the universe. The founder of this cult was Mahima Gosain whose name, parentage, age, and place of birth are not known. His disciples believe that he is an incarnation of Param Brahma. He appeared at Puri in 1826 A. D. and passed away at Joranda in 1876 A. D. At present the head of the cult is Abadhuta Biswanath Baba. For a detailed account of this cult see—Orissa District Gazetteers, Dhenkanal, published in 1972.

Mahima
Dharma

Siva is the most popular among the gods in the Hindu Pantheon. Because of his benign qualities Siva became a very familiar God among the common people. The followers of Saivism worship Him in the names of Lingaraja, Lokanath, Shankar, Mahadev, Nilakantha, Rudra, etc. The Siva temples at Bhawanipatna, Dadpur, Belkhandi, Mohangiri, Budhi Komna and Deundi are known as important centres of Saivism in Kalahandi district. Besides these, Siva shrines with Siva's trident at the top adorn many villages in the district. Usually Siva is represented by the Phallic symbols, the *Linga* and the *Yoni*, enshrined in the temple. Sivaratri and Sital Sasthi are the festivals of Lord Siva. But in this district people observe Sivaratri with great pomp and splendour than Sital Sasthi. The devotees of Lord Siva use three horizontal lines of sandal wood paste on their forehead as religious mark and wear *rudraksha mala* round their neck.

Saivism

Sakti is conceived as the divine mother and the female consort of Siva, the supreme creator. In the district Sakti is worshipped in many forms of which Manikeswari at Bhawanipatna, Lankeswari at Junagarh, Raktambari at Khariar, Danteshwari at Behera and Manikeshwari at Thuamul-Rampur are important. The deities are worshipped to secure the desired result. Animal sacrifice is prevalent in the Sakti shrines of the district. These are done generally on the Mahastami day of the Durga Puja festival.

Saktism

According to the 1971 Census, the Sikhs constituted only 0.05 per cent of the total population in the district. They are immigrants from outside the State and are mainly found in the urban areas of the district.

Sikhism

They have one Gurudwar at Bhawanipatna. It is named "Gurudwar Shri Guru Singh Sabha". Gurudwar Saheb was first inaugurated temporarily near the palace of the Maharaja on the 26th May, 1931, Subsequently, land for the Gurudwar Saheb was donated by the then Maharaja of Kalahandi near Gandhi Chowk, Bhawanipatna, in 1945 and on the second day in the month of December 1947, the Granth Saheb was installed in the new Gurudwar.

Jainism

In 1971, only 1,418 persons or 0.12 per cent of the total population of the district declared themselves as followers of Jainism. They are mostly immigrants from western and northern India. Their concentration is more in Bhawanipatna, Kesinga, Khariar, Junagarh and Khariar Road.

Buddhism

The Buddhists with an aggregate population of eight in the district (1971 Census), represent a microscopic minority.

Islam

The followers of this faith numbered 3,257 (0.28 per cent of the total population) in the Census of 1971. They are mostly found in Kalahandi Sadar, Junagarh, Jayapatna, Nawapara, Jonk, Komna and Khariar police stations.

Christianity

In 1971, the Christian population was 3,464 or 0.30 per cent of the total population of the district. They are mainly divided into two denominations, viz., the Roman Catholics and the Protestants. The latter denomination includes the American Evangelical Mission which is now under the Church of North India. Of the two, the American Evangelical Mission started their missionary work first at Khariar in 1924. Since then they have spread their missionary activities to other parts of the district.

The Roman Catholics began their missionary work at Bhawanipatna in 1976.

CASTES

Caste plays an important role in the socio-economic life of the people of the district. For a detailed description of each caste, caste-wise population figures are essential. But since 1951, no enumeration in regard to different castes is made in the Censuses. In the absence of such statistics, much of the valuable information relating to the life and economy of the people could not be incorporated in the present work. However, a general discussion of the traditional social structure, customs and religious beliefs of some of the castes is given below.

Bairagi

The Bairagis are mostly found in Dharamgarh subdivision. They wear sacred thread and perform Vishnu Puja. They sing Bhajans and beg from door to door. They accept food only from the Brahmins.

The **Bangtis** earn their livelihood by catching fish. They also cultivate land. Their concentration is more in Junagarh, Bhawanipatna and Khariar police stations. Bangti

The **Bhulia** is a weaver caste and is known by the name of Bholia, Bhoriya, Bholwa, Mihir and Meher. They are said to have emigrated from Chhattishgarh. The Bhulias occupy a higher rank than ordinary weavers and assume the honorific title of Meher. The Bhulias do not establish marital relationship with Sanpara Bhulias, a degraded section of the caste, mostly found in Kalahandi district. They employ Brahmins for ceremonial purposes. Bhulia

The **Brahmins**, though not very numerous, are a very important caste of the district due to their education, social status and wealth. They are reported to have been brought from Sambalpur side during the time of Raja Udit Pratap Deo, about the year 1867, who married a daughter of the Raja of Sambalpur. The Brahmins who came thus from Sambalpur side are known as Aranyaka or Jharua. Some Brahmin families have also come from the coastal districts in general, and Ganjam district in particular. They are called Utkaliya or Oriya Brahmins. The traditional occupation of the Utkaliya Brahmins is priesthood. Marriage between the Utkaliya and the Aranyaka Brahmins was forbidden in the past. The Halua Brahmins are mostly found in Dharamgarh and Nawapara subdivisions in the district. Their main occupation is agriculture. The Danua Brahmins rank the lowest in the Brahminical hierarchy and are to be found mostly in Khariar and Nawapara subdivision. Brahmin

The Brahmins use sacred thread and observe Upanayan.

The **Dosis** or astrologers are few in the district. They are educationally backward but satisfy the superstitions of a credulous population. They wear sacred thread. Dosi

The **Gauras** are found in large numbers in Bhawanipatna, Thuamul-Rampur, Madanpur-Rampur, Dharamgarh, Sinapali, Komna, Junagarh, Koksara and Khariar police stations of the district. They are divided into four sub-castes like Magadha, Nanda, Lariha and Jharia. They are primarily cattle keepers who have settled in the district for the lure of pasture. But with the dwindling of pasture they now eke out their livelihood mostly by working as agricultural labourers. They used to discharge the duties of Narihas in some villages and enjoyed service grants for the same. At present the system has been abolished. Gaura

The Gauras worship Lord Krishna and pay special reverence to the cow. Dola Purnima (full moon day in the month of Phalgun) is their main festival.

- Karan** The Karans are known as the writer caste of Orissa. The caste fulfils the same functions in Orissa as the Kayasthas of West Bengal and Bihar. The Karans are not many in the district. Marriage in the community is performed according to the rules followed by the higher castes. Brahmins officiate at their religious functions.
- Kosta** The Kostas are weavers dealing in *Kosa* or tusser silk. They do not intermarry with the Bhulias, a weaver caste dealing in cotton.
- Kshatriya** The Kshatriyas belong to the warrior class. The Raj family of Kalahandi ex-State and the Zamindar family of Khariar ex-Zamindari belong to the Naga and the Chauhan clan of Kshatriyas respectively. Besides, the Zamindars of other ex-Zamindaris in the district are Kshatriyas and enjoyed considerable power and prestige during the State period. The Kshatriyas are scattered all over the district, but there is a larger concentration of them in Bhawanipatna, the ex-Zamindari areas, and the sites of old military encampments or *garahs*.
- The Kshatriyas observe *Upanayan* and are ranked next to the Brahmins in Hindu caste hierarchy.
- Kultha** The Kulthas predominate in the north-east section of the district. They are good agriculturists and are reported to have been brought from Sambalpur area during the time of Raja Udit Pratap Deo near about the year 1867 who married a daughter of the Raja of Sambalpur. They have excavated big tanks and improved the land considerably. Kultha Gountias are well-to-do persons of the locality and own fertile lands. The Kulthas employ Brahmins for religious ceremonies, and their social status is equal to that of other good agricultural castes.
- Kurmi** Most of the Kurmis are immigrants from Chhatisgarh and Ganjam district. They are mainly found in Nawapara, Jonk, Junagarh and Bhawanipatna police stations. They are very tenacious of their ancestral holdings. A Kurmi is rarely known to follow any other vocation but agriculture. In their society marriage is strictly confined to their caste. Cross-cousin and intercaste marriages are not allowed. Brahmins act as priest and perform all socio-religious functions in their society. They observe many festivals associated with agricultural operations.
- Mali** The Malis or gardeners are divided into two groups—Pandras and Koslas or Sagabarias. The former earn their livelihood by the sale of *chura* or parched rice, and the latter cultivate vegetable in the gardens. The Pandras and the Koslas do not intermarry.
- Paik** The Paika who constituted the feudal militia and enjoyed *Nalia Jagirs* in the ex-State are of four sub-castes, viz., Rajput, Jhankar, Desia and Banka. The Rajputs rank the highest among them. They are

found chiefly in Thuamul-Rampur, Junagarh, Madanpur-Rampur, Sinapali, Komna and Khariar police stations of the district. They have left off their ancestral callings of fighting and have taken to agriculture and service. Though economically backward, their social status is high. They worship their ancestral war weapons on the Mahastami day in the month of Aswina. This festival is called Khandabasa.

The Sampuas are mendicants who travel about the country exhibiting snakes as their name implies. They are few in number. They are believed to have migrated from Padampur (Raj-Borasambar) of Sambalpur district. Sampuas

They are the jewellers in the district. There are two categories of jewellers, such as, Desia and Dakhinia. They differ from one another in regard to food, dress and other customs and practices. Marital relationship is forbidden between the two groups. Some of the Sunaris depend upon agriculture for their livelihood. Sunari

The Sundhis are distillers of liquor and money lenders. Owing to the spread of education some of them have adopted other vocations. They are divided into six sub-castes, viz., Dakhinia Gajbhatia, Kira, Kalar, Sankulia and Badkulia. Except Dakhinia and Gajbhatia, others are of local origin. The Sundhis do not establish marital relationship among the same clan. They perform Thakurani Puja, Laxmi Puja and Kali Puja. Sundhi

The Badhei, Bhandari, Guria, Keuta, Kumbhar, Kamar or Lohara, and Teli castes are found more or less throughout the district. Many of them have taken up cultivation in addition to their own ancestral profession. Other Castes

According to the Census of 1971*, the population of scheduled castes was 199,151 (99,170 males and 99,981 females), This constituted about 17.11 per cent of the total population of the district. Of the 36 scheduled castes returned in 1971, the most numerous were Dom (1,56,687), Ganda (10,430), Chamar (6,174), Ghasi (4,272), Dhoba (3,288), Mehra (1,902), Beldar (1,215) and Panika (1,011). The above 8 scheduled castes comprised 92.8 per cent of the total population of the scheduled castes in the district. SCHEDULED
CASTES

Of the total scheduled castes, 95.36 per cent live in the rural areas. The 1971 Census also recorded the highest scheduled castes population in the Kalahandi subdivision (78,805), and the lowest in the Nawapara subdivision (49,501). Similarly the proportion was more in the police stations of Kalahandi Sadar (21,306), Junagarh (22,274), Khariar (16,597), Jayapatna (15,105), Koksara (13,383), Dharamgarh (13,549), Madanpur-Rampur (11,061) and Komna (10,732).

*Census of India, 1971, Orissa Part II-A pp. 290-298

In 1971, the literate and educated persons among the scheduled castes numbered 18,963, i. e., 9.5 per cent of their total population in the district. The analysis revealed that 20.86 per cent of males and 1.58 per cent of the females were literate. This indicated that education has spread very little among the females.

Among the scheduled castes 46.46 per cent were workers and the rest non-workers. Majority of the workers were engaged in agricultural occupations, household Industries and other services. In addition to these works, 260 persons were engaged in unwholesome activities like scavenging, tanning, currying of hides and skins.*

Examining the marital status of the scheduled castes population by their broad age-groups it is found that the number of married persons in the age-group 15—44 is the highest in both the sexes, while large number of widows are found in the age-group 45 and above. The gradual disappearance of child marriage is also noticed from the small number of married persons in the age-group 0—14.**

Beldar

Out of 1,268 Beldars in Orissa, 1,215 (606 males and 609 females) persons are found in this district. They are tank diggers and earth workers by vocation. Among them literacy is confined to 19.83 per cent.

Chamar

The strength of the Chamars, Mochis or Satnamis in the district was 6,174 (3,113 males and 3061 females), of which 8.48 per cent were literate in 1971. They reside mostly in Jonk, Nawapara, Komna, Khariar and Koksara police stations. Socially they used to be looked down upon. Traditionally they are entrusted with skinning the dead cattle which, as a vocation, is very insufficient for their numbers. They are nearly all cultivators. The creed adopted by them is the Satnami. This religion was preached between the years 1820—30 A. D. by a person named Ghasidas belonging to Chamar caste. Among Satnamis idolatry of every form is eschewed. It is not even lawful to approach the supreme being by external forms of worship except the morning and evening invocation of his holy name (Satnam).

Dhoba

In the 1971 Census, 3,288 persons were enumerated as Dhoba or Dhobi in the district of whom 18.2 per cent were described as literates. They are found more or less throughout the district.

Their traditional occupation is to wash garments. A male or female member of Dhoba's family usually collects dirty clothes from house to house. After washing they return the clean clothes

* District Census Handbook, 1961 Kalahandi, p. 17.

** Ibid p. 17

with or without ironing. For this work they get remuneration either in cash or in kind. This system is still prevalent in rural areas and to some extent in urban areas. In this changing world some of them now do not prefer to collect dirty clothes from the houses and have started laundries in urban areas. Their services are also essential for the people on ceremonial occasions.

The Doms, Dombos or Duria Doms are the predominant Scheduled Caste in Kalahandi district. Their population, according to the 1971 Census, was 1,56,687. They are found mostly in Kalahandi (Sadar), Thuamul-Rampur, Kesinga, Kegaon, Madanpur-Rampur, Narla, Dharamgarh, Junagarh, Jayapatna, Koksara, Khariar and Sinapali police stations. Dom

The Doms of this district are not as backward as their counterparts in other districts. In the areas inhabited by the aboriginals they occupy a privileged position. The Kandhas treat them as their counsellors. They are said to be very crafty and cunning. In the Dangarlas (the hilly tract) they are money-lenders and retail merchants. The village Chowkidars are appointed from among them. They are gradually abandoning their ancestral occupation of theft and robbery and are turning to agriculture and other respectable callings.

As regards education, it was found in the Census of 1971 that 9.11 per cent of the Doms were literate.

The Gandas form the second largest Scheduled Caste community in the district. They are found mostly in Jonk, Nawapara and Komna police stations of Nawapara subdivision. Ganda

There exist four subdivisions among them such as Oriya, Laria, Kandhria and Kabhria. The first two groups have marital relationship with each other but not with the Kandhrias or Kabhrias. Child marriage is prevalent among them. In their society if a girl is unmarried when she attains puberty she is married to a bow or an arrow tied to a post made of *mahua* wood.

Most of the Gandas of Kalahandi district are cultivators and agricultural labourers. They weave coarse cloth to meet the demand of the local people. They are also professional pipers, drummers and are employed as musicians in socio-religious functions. They have got close affinity with the Pans and the Pantantis of the district as well as of the State.

As regards their education it was found that 855 persons, i.e., 8.19 per cent of the total population were literate in 1971.

Ghasi

In Kalahandi district 4,272 persons were enumerated as Ghasis in the Census of 1971. They are mostly concentrated in areas under Kalahandi Sadar, Koksara, Jayapatna and Khariar police stations. Their chief means of livelihood are agriculture and household industry such as basketry, rope making, etc. They apparently belong to a sub-caste of the Haris and serve as sweepers. They used to be employed as grass-cutters to horses from which they have probably derived their caste name.

The incidence of literacy among them was confined to 17.93 per cent in 1971.

Mahar

The Census of 1971 returned 1,902 (903 males and 999 females) Mehras or Mahars in the district. They are basket makers. During the Census of 1971, 11.93 per cent of them were found to be literate.

Panika

The Panikas are mostly cultivators and agricultural labourers. In 1971, 1011 (464 males and 547 females) persons of this community were enumerated in this district of which 10.28 per cent were literate.

**SCHEDULED
TRIBES**

The population of the Scheduled Tribes in the district was 340,541 in 1971. This constituted 29.26 per cent of the total population of the district. Of the 46 Scheduled Tribes found in this district, numerically important tribes were Banjara, Bhattada, Bhunjia, Binjhal, Dal, Gond, Kandha, Mirdha, Munda, Paroja, Saora and Shabar. These 12 tribes together constituted 96.96 per cent of the total tribal population of the district.

Concentration of the Scheduled Tribes was the highest in Kalahandi subdivision (135,290) and the lowest in Dharamgarh subdivision (87,183). The police stations, such as, Kalahandi sadar (33,332), Khariar (31,702), Komna (30,335), Jayapatna (26,060), Madanpur-Rampur (22,898), Nawapara (22,759) and Junagarh (22,348) claimed comparatively more tribal population than the other police stations of the district.

The majority of the Scheduled Tribes in both the sexes are found engaged in agricultural occupations, household industries and other services.

Literacy among the Scheduled Tribes was confined to 7.71 per cent in 1971. This percentage was lower than State average of 9.5 per cent.

It is found from the Census of 1961 that the number of married persons in both the sexes is the highest in the age-group 15—44 while the maximum number of widowed persons are found in the age-group 45 and above. The small number of married persons in the age-group 0—14 indicates the existence of child marriage in the district in spite of the social reforms to eradicate it completely.

The Census report of 1961 also revealed that among the Scheduled Tribes in the district 99·06 per cent were Hindus and the rest Christians. This indicates that the Christian missionaries operating in the district could not influence the tribal people much. The Hindu tribals residing in the plains worship the Hindu gods and goddesses excepting those who have lived comparatively isolated for a long time. They usually believe in ancestral spirits and a number of malevolent spirits.

However, the spread of education, communication facilities and the implementation of various development projects have helped the Scheduled Tribes a lot to change their traditional manners and customs to some extent.

Out of 6,283 Banjara or Banjari in Orissa, 3,362 persons (1,625 males and 1,737 females) are found in Kalahandi district. They mostly reside in the rural areas of Lanjigarh, Dharamgarh, Jayapatna and Nawapara tahsils. Formerly they were migratory in their habit and sold commodities in various places moving in a large group and carrying the goods on their bullock carts. According to some, the word Banjara is derived from the Sanskrit words '*Banjya Kara*' a merchant. They still retain their business habits and sell commodities at various places. But at present most of them earn their livelihood as cultivators or agricultural labourers. In 1971, literacy among them was confined to 15·31 per cent. Banjari

Bride price system is prevalent in their society. The groom goes to the bride's house and stays there for some days after negotiation is settled. Marriage ceremonies are generally held during rainy season as during dry weather they travel from one place to another for business purpose. Widow marriage is allowed. Levirate and sororate type of marriages are also prevalent among them.

In the Census of 1961, all of them were returned under Hindu religion. Besides other Hindu gods and goddesses they also worship Banjari Devi, Mithu Bhukia and Siva Bhaia deities. They also worship cattle who provide the means of transport for their business.

In 1971, Bhattada or Dhotada numbered 3,853 (1,757 males and 2,096 females) in the district. They are mostly concentrated in the tahsil of Jayapatna. Being a tribe of proficient cultivators and farm labourers, agriculture forms the mainstay of their economy. Educationally it is a very backward tribe. Literacy is confined to 9·99 per cent among them according to the Census of 1971. Bhattada

The tribe is divided into two endogamous divisions viz., Bodo and Sano. The former claims to be of purer descent and enjoys higher social status than the other. They have a number of exogamous septs called *gotra* which are totemistic in nature. Totems are respected by the members of the respective clans.

After clan, the family is the most important social unit. Nuclear families are more in number than joint and extended ones. The Bhattadas live in villages along with other castes and tribes like Kandha, Dom, Paraja, Gond, etc. Their community functions through the community *Panchayat*. The office bearers of the *Panchayat* are the Naik, Pujari and Ganda. The first two are men of their own community whereas the Ganda belongs to the Dom community. The *Panchayat* with other important members of the village settle objectionable matters among themselves.

The women are segregated during the period of menstruation. It is believed that the violation of this causes failure of crops. Generally in marriage, they prefer uncle's daughter. Marriage by arrangement, by capture and by service are recognised in their society. Of these, marriage by arrangement is widely honoured. A priest is engaged to conduct the marriage. He is known as Disari.

The Bhattadas dispose of their dead by burial as well as by cremation. Cremation involves more expenditure and so only the old and respected Bhattadas are cremated.

In the 1961 Census, all of them have been described as Hindus. They believe in spirits and worship deities like Budhi Thakurani, Bhairabi, Basumati, Bana Durga and Surya Devata. They employ *pujari* who worships and offers fruits, sweets, fowl, goat and sheep on various occasions.

The Bhattadas celebrate a number of festivals of which Chaitra Parab, Askhya Trutiya, Sraban Amabasya, Nuakhia, Dasahara, Diwali, Pousa Purnima are important. In addition to these festivals, they participate in Holi festival in the month of Phalguna and car festival of Lord Jagannath in the month of Asadh with the neighbouring population. The Bhattadas have further introduced Laxmi Puja which is held in the month of Margasira in imitation of the other Hindu neighbours. Communal dance and music are their main items of recreation.

Bhunjia

Kalahandi district is the home of the Bhunjias. This is because 5,673 or 76.55 per cent of the total Bhunjia population of Orissa are found in this district. They mainly reside in Nawapara tahsil.

The Bhunjias belong to the Dravidian group and speak a dialect of Hindi. They are divided into two sub-tribes: Chinda Bhunjia and Chaukhtia Bhunjia.

A peculiar custom prevails among the Chaukhtia Bhunjias. If some outsider enters their kitchen-hut they dismantle it and a new one is built in a separate place. They never eat food cooked by a man who does not belong to their own community. They always arrange pre-puberty marriage for a girl. If no husband is found for her before puberty, they arrange marriage with an arrow. They considered marriage after puberty a great sin. Among the Chinda Bhunjias the bride goes away with the groom and after a few days returns to her parent's village to make offering to the deities. The Chaukhtias, on the other hand, never allow the married daughters to return to their parent's home. If a daughter comes to visit her parents after marriage she is kept in a separate house and is made to cook food for herself separately.

The Bhunjias worship Mata, the deity for cholera and smallpox, in the month of Chaitra (March—April). They also worship the Sun and pay special reverence to tortoise.

Their mainstay for livelihood is agriculture. They work as cultivators or agricultural labourers. Educationally it is a backward tribe as 94.75 per cent of them were found to be illiterate in 1971.

The Binjhals are Dravidian in origin. According to the Census of 1971 their population in Kalahandi district was 5,094. They are mostly found in the areas under the tahsils of Lanjigarh and Nawapara.

Binjhal

The Binjhals mostly live in joint family. The father is the head of the family. Birth brings pollution for seven days. On the seventh day, they cut nail, take bath and get themselves purified.

In their society marriage is not arranged between spouses having blood relationship. A Binjhal priest generally conducts the marriage.

Among the Binjhals relatives assemble on the third day after death and offer unboiled rice to the deceased on the grave. A lamp is lighted over the rice. When an insect comes they catch it and bring it home believing it to be the spirit of the deceased. They keep it in a flour cake. The morning they come to a pool and thrust it in the mud after offering rice. This is known as Kharpani. *

* Adivasi, No. 3, 1964, p. 78

The Binjhals observe Karma festival in the month of Bhadraba and Harali Parab in the month of Srabana. Of these, Karma is the most important and popular festival. Apart from these, they also observe Diwali, Nuakhia, Pousa Purnima and other Hindu festivals.

They worship gods and goddesses of the Hindu pantheon along with their own deities. Bindhya-basini is their principal goddess.

Their main occupation is agriculture. They eat rice, seasonal vegetables, meat and fish. Rice-beer and Mohua liquor are their common intoxicants.

They speak Oriya language. The incidence of literacy was confined to 5.73 per cent of their total population in 1971.

Dals

The 1971 Census enumerated 2,020 Dals in Kalahandi district of which about 6.48 per cent were literate. They are found chiefly in the rural areas of Nawapara subdivision and speak Oriya language.

The Dals are divided into a number of clans or *gotras*. Each clan is exogamous. A marriage in the same clan is considered a sin. Usually the parents arrange the marriage. The father of the groom goes with a pot of liquor and a basketful of fried rice (*bhuja*) to the bride's father's house accompanied by his relatives. If the father of the bride drinks the liquor and eats the *bhuja* the negotiation is understood to have been accepted. After this the parents with the help of a Brahmin select the auspicious day for the marriage, but they do not employ Brahmins to perform the marriage rituals. On the day of marriage ceremony the groom sits on a sacred mat and the girls of his village dance round him and the groom takes a ceremonial bath. After that the groom's party starts by evening to the bride's village where the couple is made to sit together. The women-folk of the bride's village dance round the couple and sacred rice is thrown over the couple. The groom's father gives a feast to the villagers of the bride's village on this occasion. The groom's father gives bride price to the bride's father before the marriage ceremony. The bride price generally consists of clothing for all the members of the bride's family, Rs.40.00 in cash, a goat and liquor.

The eminent persons of the locality are known as *mahamanab*. They exert immense influence with regard to the issues like divorce and disputes among the Dals. They discuss and settle the problems amicably.

Dals cultivate ragi, kodua, paddy, maize, sugercane and gurji. Among pulses they grow Kolath, Mung, Biri and oil seeds like Rasi and til. Vegetables like brinjal, tomato and chillies are also grown

by them. Tobacco is cultivated by almost all individuals. Apart from these, each Dal owns a number of Mahul trees. They exchange Mahul for other essential commodities. They are often exposed to exploitation by outsiders due to their illiteracy and poverty.

Dals worship Hindu gods and goddesses as well as tribal deities. They have separate sacred places for each deity. They observe festivals to mark first sowing, eating of new rice, eating of mango, eating of mahul and so on.

The Gonds or Gondos are the most important and numerically the most significant tribe in the district. They are mostly concentrated in the tahsils of Kalahandi, Dharamgarh, Lanjigarh, Nawapara and Jayapatna. Gond

According to the Census of 1971, the Gonds numbered 123,778 of whom 61,426 were males and 62,352 females. They spoke Gondi, a dialect belonging to the Dravidian family. At present the Gonds of the district know and speak Oriya. In the 1971 Census, 113,742 Gonds were found illiterate and 10,036 literate. The incidence of literacy is thus confined to 8.11 per cent among them.

The Gonds have usually a well developed physique with fine chest and massive shoulders, but have scantily grown beard and moustaches. They are good at negotiating steep climbs and narrow hill tracks, and carry heavy burden. They are much more industrious than the Konds and take physical labour with pleasure. *

They are divided into a number of clans. Marriage within the same clan is strictly prohibited. They follow child and adult marriage. Cross-cousin marriage, marriage by service and marriage arranged by the parents are generally practised in their society. Bride price system is prevalent among them. It is paid in the shape of food stuff, cash and ornaments, as the case may be. In marriage ceremony the more Hinduised Gonds get the services of the Brahmins who conduct the marriage. Among the primitive Gonds their religious head called Jani performs the rites. Marriage is one of the biggest items of expenditure in a man's life. As a result, most of them plunge into debt.

After child-birth the primitive Gonds observe several rites to keep the children safe from the evil spirits. Among the Hinduised Gonds all the rites are performed according to Hindu customs but they do not forget to worship the local deities.

*. Census of India, 1951, Vol. XI, Orissa, Part-I Report, p. 424

Death pollution is observed for three days. On the fourth day they perform *tel-ghar* or *chhot karam*. After an year they celebrate *bad karam*. They get the services of the Bramin, Bhandari and Dhoba on this occasion.

The Gonds are believed to have come to the ex-State of Kalahandi as a martial people and were settled on land as feudal chiefs. Bow and arrow were their traditional weapons. In course of time they have become settled cultivators. At present their main occupation is agriculture. They supplement their income by the collection of jungle products. The Hinduised Gonds have become business-minded and are doing petty business in the local markets.

The Gonds worship the deities : *Budha deo*, *Janga deo* and *Linga deo*. They also believe in some malevolent deities who bring considerable harm in the form of disease, death, loss of cattle and property. In order to appease these deities they make offerings during the festivals. Besides the tribal deities, they also worship the gods and the goddesses of the Hindu pantheon. They celebrate Pousa Purnima, Chitra Parab, Makar Jatra, Dasahara and Laxmi Puja with much pomp and show.

Dancing, singing and the use of alcoholic drinks on the occasion of marriage, fairs and festivals have been given up by the Hinduised Gonds, while the primitive Gonds still retain these customs.

Kandha

Numerically the second most important Scheduled Tribes of Kalahandi district is the Khond, Kond or Kandha. They numbered 114,644 (56,411 males and 58,233 females) according to the 1971 Census. Though found everywhere in the district, they are more concentrated in Kalahandi, Lanjigarh, Dharamgarh and Jayapatna tahsils. They live with the Doms and other castes in the plains as well as in the hilly areas. The Doms generally act as their creditors and advisors.

The Kandhas are generally dark in complexion, though, among them, some fair-skinned persons are also found. An average male Kandha is about 5 feet 4 inches in height. They are slim but muscular. The females are slim too, but of shorter stature. The Kandhas have short but broad noses and high cheek-bones.*

*. Census of India, 1961, Orissa, Lakhrish—a village of Kandhas, pp. 6-7

The Kandhas are generally simple in nature, innocent, truthful and credulous. Their behaviour is pleasant and they are extremely hospitable to guests, giving protection to enemies if they take refuge. They can be won over with good gesture and kindness. The offerings of country cheroots to men and glass beads to women are easily accepted as presents. They are generally kind and cheerful and are lovers of recreation. They were formerly addicted to human sacrifice and infanticide*.

They speak a dialect called Kui. This is their mother-tongue. But all of them know Oriya and speak with others in this language.

In Kalahandi the Kandhas occupied a privileged position in the sense that "It was the custom until recently for the Raja of Kalahandi to sit on the lap of a Kandha on the accession while he received the oaths of fidelity". It is also said that the Raja was accustomed to marry a Kandha girl as one of his wives, though he did not allow her to live in the palace. These customs have, however, been abandoned; though these may be probably interpreted as a recognition that the Rajas of Kalahandi derived their rights from the Kandha. **

The Kandha tribe has three main divisions, viz., Kutia, Dangaria and Desia. The Kutia Kandha lives in a house the floor of which is below the level of the ground around the house. The Dangaria Kandhas are also known as Malia Kandhas. They live in highland hills. The Desia Kandhas live in the plain area with other non-tribals. The tribe is divided into different septs. Marriage is not possible within the same sept. They consider Margasira, Pausha, Magh and Baisakh as auspicious months for marriage. The parents generally choose a girl with the help of a Desari who is supposed to be the agent of gods and spirits. Accordingly they start negotiation with the parents of the concerned bride. If the bride's parents accept the proposal then the question of bride price arises. In their society marriage is settled after bride price is fixed. Generally it is paid in the shape of money, ornaments and buffaloes. Generally cash of rupees 100 to 1,000 and buffalo from one to ten pairs are given as bride price. The man who is unable to pay it is asked to work under his would-be father-in-law's house until the required quantity is realised. After this marriage date is fixed. On that day the pieces of broom stick are removed from the bride's ear and she

*. Census of India, 1951, Orissa, Part-I Report, p. 422

** Quoted in the Final Report on the Survey and Settlement of the Kasipur, Karlapat, Mahulpatna and Madanpur-Rampur, ex-Zamindari in the district of Kalahandi, 1963, by S. Sundarajan, I. A. S., Settlement Officer, Sambalpur.

wears gold or brass rings. Marriage is solemnised by Jani, the village priest. The bride is then taken away by the bridegroom's party. On the way a mock fight is held between the bride's party and the bridegroom's party. The bride's party pretend to take back the bride with oral as well as physical opposition but fails to do so. Afterwards they are allowed to go peacefully. In the Kandha society customarily child marriage, divorce and widow marriage are permissible. Child marriage is rare because it is quite expensive.

In Kandha society the pollution in connection with the child birth ends on the fifth day. On that day the head of the household or the father of the new born child sacrifices a fowl to the household deity in the kitchen. Some households perform this ceremony on the seventh day. After one month the child is shaved and a feast is given to all villagers. Generally a child is named after a dead ancestor. The Kandhas do not observe any ceremony in connection with the first menstruation of a girl. No restriction is imposed on her diet and movement.

The Kandhas burn their dead in the crematorium. The bodies of small children, pregnant women and of those who die of small-pox are buried. On the third day after death they wash clothes and clean the house with cowdung. They perform *ambopani gadhua*, i.e., mango water bath on this day. The Jani officiates in this function. The Kandhas perform a funeral function called *dossa* on any day and month after a year. On this occasion they give a feast to the relatives and villagers.

The chief occupation of the Kandha is agriculture. The Dangaria Kandhas and Kutia Kandhas practise shifting cultivation on hill slopes. The Desia Kandhas learnt ploughing from the non-tribals and are doing cultivation on plain lands. The area under shifting cultivation by the Kandhas in 8 out of the 18 Community Development Blocks in the district is given below* :—

Name of the Block	Name of tribe/caste practising shifting cultivation	Area under shifting cultivation in acres
(1)	(2)	(3)
Sadar	.. Kandha, Dom, Gauda ..	887.00
Junagarh	.. Kandha ..	340.00
Koksara	.. Kandha and Sabar ..	72.00
Kalampur	.. Kandha ..	165.00
Jayapatna	.. Kandha ..	150.00
Thuamul-Rampur	.. Kandha ..	1,500.00
Madanpur-Rampur	.. Kutia Kandha ..	420.00
Lanjigarh	.. Kandha ..	150.00
	Total ..	2,884.00

* District Agricultural Officer, Bhawanipatna

The yield from shifting cultivation is less in comparison with wet land cultivation. The paddy grown are also of crude type. However, the Kandhas grow ragi, turmeric, and Kandhul on the hill slopes by burning forest growth. They spend all their income from the field within four to six months. For half of the year they live only on ragi, the powder of tamarind seeds, mango stones, edible roots and tubers. Their needs are few and they want to remain aloof from the civilised people of the plains. They utilise their leisure time in drinks and dance with their womenfolk.

The rising of the Kandhas in Kalahandi in 1882 was due to their discontentment at being ousted from their lands by the Kultas, a large number of whom were slaughtered and besieged in the rising. The oppression of the tenants by Kultha and Brahmin Gountias was a common feature in Kalahandi before, though such things are not heard of now *.

In 1961, there were 146,332 Hindus and 221 Christians among the Kandhas in Kalahandi district.** Hence, majority of the Kandhas seem to have followed Hindu customs and rites. They worship Dharani Deota, the earth god ; Grama Devati, the goddess of the village; Bima, the goddess of the household ; and other female deities such as Khandual, Sat Bhaen, Kandual Boja, Jina and Duma. Of these, their supreme god is Dharani Deota. They observe Chait Parab, Pausha Parab, Taki Parab, Rani Parab, Nuakhai and Dasahara festival.

On festive occasions the boys and girls dance and sing love, marriage and harvest songs. For this purpose they use musical instruments like *tamka* (kettle—drum), *hurudi* (bamboo flute), *dabwa* (instrument played with two small sticks), *gini* and *tal*. The last two are not tribal musical instruments. They have introduced these items recently after coming in contact with the people living in plain areas. They keep the musical instruments in *dhangora basa* where the bachelors of the village sleep at night.

The Kandhas of the district dress themselves scantily and tattoo their faces. They eat ragi, Kosala, rice, boiled green leaves and vegetables. On social and religious functions they kill goats, sheep, buffaloes and eat their meat. Fish is eaten when available. They use axe, arrows, bow and knife for hunting birds and wild animals. Both men and women consume *mohua* liquor. Their favourite alcoholic beverage is *handia*. It is generally prepared in every household.

*Final report of the Land Revenue Settlement in Kalahandi district, 1946—56, by J. Das, Page 3.

**District Census Handbook, Kalahandi, 1961, Page 228.

As regards their education, the 1971 Census has recorded 105,706 illiterates and 8,938 literates among them. The incidence of literacy is thus confined to 7.79 per cent.

Mirdha

The Mirdha is a Dravidian tribe. Their strength in the district was 1,125 (571 males and 554 females) in 1971. They are found mostly in Nawapara subdivision.

Majority of the Mirdhas are illiterate. They work as cultivators and agricultural labourers. They also earn their livelihood by digging earth and other works connected with it.

The Mirdhas have many similarities with the Kisan tribe in respect of language, social customs, religious rites and village organisation. As such, they are believed to be a section of the Kisan tribe.

Munda

In the 1971 Census, 2,695 persons (1,459 males and 1,236 females) were enumerated as Mundas, Munda-Loharas or Munda-Mahalas in Kalahandi district. They live mainly in the rural areas of the Kalahandi tahsil.

The Mundas of the district are divided into a number of exogamous clans. The clans are totemistic and derive their names from some natural objects, such as, an animal, bird, fish reptile or plant. The members of the clan are forbidden to eat the totem after which it is named. In their society marriage with Kolarian tribes, such as, the Santals, Kharia, Juang, etc., is not permitted. Their religious head is called the Pahan. He also acts as head of the village Panchayat.

The Mundas never set hands on a few old trees around their village. These trees are known as *sarna*. They believe that the village deity resides in them and they worship these old trees on festive occasions.

It is customary among the Mundas to erect big memorial stones in the burial ground after the death of a person. On the spot they sacrifice a sheep and a feast is held in which kinsmen participate.

In addition to these, every Munda village has a patch of cleared ground called the *akhra*. There men and women of the village sing and dance to the accompaniment of drums.

Other characteristic features which still exist among the Mundas is the bachelor's dormitory. It is called the *giti-ora*. They have separate dormitory for boys and girls. The unmarried boys and girls not only sleep in the *giti-ora* but also test each others wit by exchanging conundrums and learn by listening to stories of the past from the elders.

Out of 9,079 Mundas in the district in 1961, 8,973 were returned as Hindus and the rest were Christians. The Mundas observe Sarhul, Sohara, Chaitra Parab and Pousha Parab. They also celebrate Dasahara, Sivaratri and Ratha Jatra with the neighbouring Hindus.

The 1961 Census has recorded 4,544 workers and 4,535 non-workers among the Mundas. The distribution of workers according to different categories is given below :—

Category of workers (1)	Persons (2)
I Cultivator ..	863
II Agricultural labourer ..	1,151
III Mining, Quarrying, Livestock, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, Plantations, Orchards and allied activities.	8
IV Household industry ..	2,082
V Manufacturing other than Household industry ..	14
VI Construction ..	1
VII Trade and Commerce ..	10
VIII Transport, Storage and Communication ..	3
IX Other Services ..	412
Total ..	4,544

It is evident from the statement that agricultural occupation and household industries are the principal occupations of the Mundas.

Educationally the Mundas are very backward as 2,572 persons (95.44 per cent) were found illiterate among them in 1971.

The Parajas are otherwise known as Poroja, Paraja, Poroja or Parja. They inhabit mainly the Thuamul-Rampur and Jayapatna police station areas. They numbered 12,853 (6,351 males and 6,502 females) in the 1971 Census.

Paraja

There are four classes of Parajas, viz., Bada Paraja, Bareng Jodia Paraja, Penga Paraja and Kandha Paraja. The Bada Parajas distinguish themselves from others by abstaining from taking beef.

They have a number of totemistic clans such as Bagh (tiger), Kachhim (tortoise), Bokda (goat), Netam (dog), Gohi (big lizard), Pandki (dove) and so on. They neither kill nor eat totem objects. They pay special reverence to their clan totems.

Marriage is strictly prohibited in the same clan. Generally they prefer cross-cousin marriage. They have five ways of acquiring mates. These are Haribol Baha, Udlia Baha, Jhinka Utra Baha, Paisamundi Baha and Gharjwain. Of these, Haribol Baha (marriage by arrangement) is common.

The Paraja women are fond of tattoo marks and flowers. They dress very neatly in a traditional costume of white and cerise striped clothes reaching barely to the knee. The Paraja women wear a variety of ornaments on different parts of their body. Most of these are of silver, excepting the rings in the nose and the ears which are of gold or brass. Though short statured, the Paraja women appear to be healthier than the Paraja male. The Paraja men use loin cloth and wrapper and wear their hair long.

The Parajas worship many gods and goddesses of which Landi Debata is most important. They observe festivals like Laxmi Puja or Taku Parab in Asadha, Langaladhua Punei in Srabana, Nachuni Parab or Bhadra Parab in Bhadrab, Dipabali Parab in Kartika, Pousa Parab in Pousa and Chait Parab in Chaitra. They also celebrate Anaka Kora or Dabani Puja which is the festival of the Kandhas in the month of Margasira.

In addition to these, when the comet appears in the sky they perform Raji Sustha Puja. For rain and to save crops from pests they observe Indra Puja. During solar and lunar eclipses the Parajas conduct Rahu and Ketu Puja and sacrifice fowl and goat to ward off evils. When death occurs due to epidemic diseases, they offer Puja to the goddess through Desari on any Tuesday. This worship is called Baulani. On certain festive occasions they clean their houses and wear new clothes. They 'prepare special type of food on these occasions and enjoy the fairs and festivals by drinking indigenous wine. The Dhangadas (boys) and Dhangidis (girls) take part in the community dance. They use Dudunga, a kind of musical instrument, at the time of the dance. They spend lavishly on festive occasions forgetting the difficult days ahead. As a result, the Parajas suffer a lot and are compelled to borrow money from the non-tribals. Under these circumstances the non-tribals exploit them.

Majority of the Parajas are cultivators. The landless persons among them work as labourers. They collect tooth-sticks, leaves for preparing eating cups and plates, various kinds of fruits, roots,

tubers, edible leaves, bamboo, Mahua flowers and seeds, and Kusum seeds from the forests and sell them in the weekly *hats*. They also collect firewood from the forests for fuel. They make rope out of Siali creepers. Hunting of birds and animals is conducted occasionally by the Parajas.

The incidence of literacy among them was only 1.85 per cent in 1971. This indicates that they are very backward in education and in this respect lag behind the other tribes of the district.

The 1971 Census enumerated 4,148 (1,917 males and 2,231 females) Saora in Kalahandi district. They are also known as Savar, Saura or Sahara. They are found chiefly in Nawapara, Jonk, Kegaon and Jayapatna police stations. Saora

The Saoras worship innumerable malevolent and benevolent deities and deified ancestors. They observe a number of ceremonies at different stages of cultivation and perform several religious rites for curing diseases. Through the priest they offer fowl, pig, liquor and other nourishments to the deities. They enjoy the festivals by heavy drinking and dance.

In their society marriage within the village is forbidden. Polygamy is common among them. They consider more than one wife as a sign of prosperity in the field of agriculture and greater accumulation of foodgrains. This practice has changed to some extent nowadays. Their women are very hardy and industrious. As a result, the Saora women enjoy a distinct position in the society.

The main occupation of the Saoras is agriculture. They collect roots and tubers, green leaves, mushrooms from the jungles to supplement their diet. Moreover, they collect minor forest products like honey, wood, leaves and sell them in the villages and towns and thus earn money for their subsistence. In 1971, literacy was confined to 9.35 per cent among them.

With a population of 40,950 persons in 1971 Shabars or Lodhas are numerically ranked the third among the tribals in the district. They reside mainly in Kalahandi (Sadar), Jayapatna, Koksara, Komna and Khariar police stations. They have also some pockets in Kesinga, Junagarh, Dharamgarh and Nawapara police stations. Shabar

They profess Hinduism. Literacy among them was confined to 7.83 per cent in 1971. Most of the Shabars of the district earn their livelihood by cultivation and as agricultural labourers. Some of them also collect firewood, leaves, herbal plants and roots and other forest produce from the forest and sell in the neighbouring villages.

CUSTOMS AND
PRACTICES

Birth

The Hindu pregnant women observe various taboos for safe delivery and protection from attack of evil spirits. She has to observe also a number of restrictions during pregnancy. During the period of solar or lunar eclipses she is not permitted to cut anything or to see the eclipse. She is not allowed to sleep in the courtyard or under the tree. She usually wears amulets to ward off the evil eye. She is neither allowed to draw water from the well nor permitted to work on husking pedal. During this period she is kept cheerful and is generally given the types of food she wants.

When labour pain starts she is usually taken to a lying in room called *anturdisala*. A mid-wife belonging to a low caste or an old woman of her caste is called to attend her. After delivery the navel cord of the child is cut with the help of a sea-shell, blade or knife and the placenta is disposed of in a ditch made outside the house. Among the higher castes, the period of pollution lasts for a period of 21 days and among some of the lower castes it is observed for about 12 days. During this period fire is kept burning in a pot in the lying in room day and night till five days. It is believed that unless the room is kept at a high temperature the child may be a victim of cold and cough and the mother may also suffer from pneumonia. It is also believed that fire possesses magic power to save the mother and the child from the influence of evil spirits. In addition to this, hot and dry fomentations are given to the mother and the child for speedy recovery and strength. The mother is also given a concoction to drink of which the main ingredients are hot spices, such as long pepper and dry ginger. She is also given fried flattened rice (*Chura*) and fried garlic.

After the child's birth the Hindus perform a ceremony called *panchuati* and *sasthi* on the fifth and the sixth day respectively. A ceremony called *uthiary* is observed on the seventh day. On this day the newborn baby and the mother take first purificatory bath. She takes second purificatory bath on the 12th day and is allowed to change her room. The child is named on the 21st day, the ceremony being known as *ekoisa*. On this occasion Satyanarayan Puja is held amidst much rejoicing. The next important rituals among the Hindus are *mundan* or shaving of the head, ear-boring and *bidyarambha* or initiation to learning. Upanayan or sacred thread ceremony of the male child is performed in case of Brahmin and Kshatriya children in their early adolescence.

In tribal society the pregnant women observe various taboos for the safety of the child. Delivery generally takes place in a separate room where one or two elderly women of the village or family who

are familiar with the process attend her. After delivery the umbilical cord and the placenta are buried near the house. The child is bathed in tepid water. The mother cleans her clothes and washes in warm water. She does not eat or drink on the day of birth. She is not allowed to touch cooking pots or other household articles for five or seven days as she is considered defiled. Even members of her family do not touch her. If anybody accidentally touches the mother or child during these days he or she is required to take bath. After the end of birth pollution the head of the family or the father of the child worship the local deities. Generally, the child is named after a dead ancestor, but this practice is not being strictly followed nowadays.

Among the Hindus eight types of marriages are known to have been prevalent since ancient times. These are Brahma, Daiva, Arjya, Prajapatya, Asura, Gandharva, Rakshasa and Paishacha. Of these only Prajapatya type of marriage is now in vogue. Marriage

Generally, marriage is settled after the examination of the horoscope of both the bridegroom and the bride by the astrologer. He predicts whether the stars of the couple are in harmony or not. If the horoscopes of the couple are found compatible then the marriage takes place on an auspicious day according to the almanac. In a Hindu marriage the Brahmin officiates as priest.

Among the tribals marriage is usually settled by the guardians of the parties but the consent of the bridegroom or the bride is not ignored. They select a bride and fix up an auspicious day for the marriage after consulting with the Desari. Before marriage bride price is fixed. It is generally paid in cash, kind or both. In their society marriage is solemnised by the Jani, the priest of the village. Besides the marriage by arrangement, the tribals also follow marriage by elopment, capture, service and intrusion.

According to the Census of 1961,* 486,721 persons or 48.21 per cent were never married, 456,182 or 45.18 per cent were married, 60,401 or 5.95 per cent widowed and 5,938 or 0.59 per cent divorced or separated. The remaining 412 or 0.04 per cent had unspecified status. The following table shows the marital status of males and females in different age-groups classified into (a) never married, (b) married and (c) widowed, divorced/separated and unspecified status. Age and Marital status

* District Census Handbook, Kalahandi, 1961, pp. 171-172.

KALAHANDI

Age-group	Never married		Married		Widowed, divorced, separated and unspecified status		
	Percentage of males to total males	Percentage of females to total females	Percentage of males to total males	Percentage of females to total females	Percentage of males to total males	Percentage of females to total females	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
All ages	..	52.23	44.27	45.31	45.06	2.46	10.67
0—9	..	100.00	100.00	..	..	..	..
10—14	..	98.02	92.04	1.92	7.71	0.06	0.25
15—19	..	71.80	24.70	27.01	73.10	1.19	2.20
20—24	..	25.16	2.71	72.01	94.59	2.83	2.70
25—29	..	8.85	0.70	88.17	95.73	2.98	3.58
30+	..	1.33	0.49	92.81	68.53	5.86	30.98

Mortuary
Customs

In Hindu society the corpse is carried on a bier by the members of the family and the relatives of the deceased to the cremation ground. On the way to the cremation ground *khai* and *kaudi* or small coins are thrown on the road by the chief mourner or *karta*. The dead body is usually cremated on the bank of a river or tank. The dead bodies of unmarried children, lepers, persons who die of cholera, smallpox or snake bite and *sannyasis* or ascetics are usually buried. *Mukhaghi* or lighting of the funeral pyre is performed by the eldest son of the deceased, and in his absence, by another son or the nearest male member of his *kutumba*. Certain restrictions are observed by the members of the *kutumba* with regard to food.

The death pollution ends on the 10th day. This ceremony is known as *sudhi*. The shaving and nail pairing of the members of the *kutumba* are done on this day. The *karta* performs *tarpan* and *pinda* to the deceased person and the family priest utters hymns for the salvation of the deceased soul. On the 11th day food which were restricted during the period of mourning are allowed to all concerned. On this occasion all the clean castes get the services of the Brahmin, Dhoba and Bhandari. They get remuneration for their work.

Among the tribals, death brings pollution for three days. On the third day they clean their houses and clothes themselves. The Jani performs the rituals and purifies the members of the household as well as those who took part in the cremation. This function is

called *chhota karma* or *telghar*. They celebrate *bada karma* after the lapse of a year on any day and month. On this occasion they give feast to the caste people and persons belonging to other communities of the village. After this the dress, utensils and implements of the deceased are thrown away or gifted to a Dom or Ghasi.

The traditional division of Hindus into castes, though basically still intact, has lost much of its social rigidity due to the impact of western civilisation and industrialisation. The drive of Mahatma Gandhi against the social disabilities of the untouchables has broken the barrier between the high castes and the untouchables. As untouchability is now punishable under law, people of various castes do not hesitate to take food on a common table in restaurants and hotels. The change of occupations, spread of education and appointment of persons belonging to the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes in public services have shrunk the traditional differences between various castes. Intercaste marriages, though rare in the district, are now tolerated. Under these circumstances the traditional structure of the Hindu society based on caste is undergoing a steady change.

Inter-caste
Relations

The tribals of the district have preserved their individual identity based on clans and dialects, but they have cordial relationship and reciprocity among themselves. Sometimes marriage between members of two different tribes, though not socially approved, are tolerated. Although social relationship of the converted Christians is almost confined within their own group, they do not forget to participate in the social function of the tribes to which they originally belonged.

The most important religious movement of the present century in the district centres round the Arya Samaj which among other religious activities, aims at bringing the converted Christians to Hindu fold again. The organisation is also imparting spiritual and vocational training to the children belonging mostly to the Adivasi and other weaker sections of the society in Vedic Gurukula pattern. The organisation has founded a Gurukul Mahavidyalaya at Amsena, near Khariar Road, and has other centres of its religious and cultural activities in the district.

New
Religious
Movements

The law of primogeniture was in vogue in the ruling family of the Kalahandi ex-State and the Zamindar family of the Khariar ex-Zamindari. The eldest son inherited the *gadi* and other sons were only maintenance holders. Under the Durbar administration, if a Gountia died during the currency of the Gounti lease, the Gountiaship was conferred upon the eldest son and other sons usually shared the Khudkast

Property
and Inheri-
tance

lands of their father. After the abolition of the Gounti system in the district in 1956 all the sons are now getting equal shares of their father's property. The law of inheritance for the common man was the same as elsewhere in the State of Orissa. The sons inherited the property. After the enforcement of the Hindu Succession Act, the daughters are also entitled to share the property along with the sons. But in practice, such cases are rare. The Scheduled Tribes people have no definite law. They are guided by the Hindu law of inheritance.

The transfer of lands was unknown in Kalahandi during the Durbar administration. But transfers were freely made by the tenants in the guise of surrender of lands to the Gountia. The Gountia in his turn settled the surrendered land with others. This was a clandestine transfer and was even recognised by the ex-State administration. After the merger of the State with the Province of Orissa under the Orissa Merged States (Laws) Act, the tenants were given occupancy rights and they were allowed to transfer their rights freely. Since the implementation of the Land Reforms Act in 1965, restrictions have been imposed on the transfer of lands of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes.

Joint-Family

The Joint-family system was in vogue in the district. Due to pressure on purse, impact of modern civilisation and fixation of land ceilings under the Orissa Land Reforms Act, this system is gradually dying out.

Marriage and Morals

Polygamy was permissible in Hindu society, but the Government has banned this practice under the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955. The Christians are monogamous, but the Muslims follow polygamy. Among Muslims polygamy is restricted up to four wives but most of them are found to be monogamous.

In Hindu society marriage customs are found to have considerably changed with the spread of education, enactment of Acts, and pressure on purse. A number of social practices like horoscope reading of the bride and the bridegroom, consideration of *gotra* and the ceremony of *nirbandha* which were rigidly observed in the past are not strictly adhered to nowadays. The practice of child marriage has almost disappeared and the age of marriage has also increased in all caste groups.

Dowry system is in vogue among the various castes and tribes of the district. To eradicate the evils of dowry system the Government has passed the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961, and the Dowry Prohibition (Orissa Amendment) Act, 1975. Besides, these rules and regulations, the States Government is taking steps to mobilise Public opinion against dowry system.

Only 15 marriages were registered in Kalahandi district within a period of ten years, i.e., from 1966 to 1975. This indicates that the society is still predominantly tradition bound and the people are not much conscious about the procedure of marriages to be solemnised under the Special Marriage Act, 1954.

Civil Marriage

Legally there is no restriction to widow re-marriage. But customarily widow re-marriage is forbidden among the Brahmins and other high castes.

Widow Remarriage

Only one case under the Indian Divorce Act, 1869 was filed in 1966 and recorded on the first day of April, 1967. There was no other case during the period from 1966 to 1975 relating to Kalahandi district.

Divorce

Divorce depends on the personal law governing the parties to the marriage. Christians are governed by the Indian Divorce Act, 1869. The Muslims are governed by the Dissolution of Muslim Marriage Act, 1939. The Hindus are governed by the Hindu Marriage Act, 1956. When the parties belong to different religious faiths and the marriage is registered under the Special Marriage Act, the provisions of that Act apply.

Under the aforesaid Acts, the grounds of divorce are more or less the same, such as, adultery, desertion, bigamy (for Christians), failure of husband to maintain the wife for two years, conviction of husband for 7 years, failure without reasonable cause to perform marital rights, impotence and insanity of husband, cruelty by husband, conversion to another religion, unsoundness of mind, suffering from a virulent and incurable form of leprosy, venereal disease in a communicable form, and renunciation of the world, etc. (for Hindus).

The position of women was very high in the Hindu society of ancient days. It was believed that gods reside in those households where women are respected. Women were able rulers and brave fighters of which the history of Orissa bears ample testimony. A galaxy of women ruled Orissa in the 8th—10th centuries. But the status of women declined after the Muslim invasion of the country. *Pardah* or seclusion of women came into vogue as a measure of safety and protection. Among the higher castes *pardah* is still considered as a mark of social prestige, but with the spread of modern education it is fast disappearing.

The place of Women in the Society and their economic dependance.

In rural areas of Kalahandi district women of low castes, in addition to their domestic work, help their families in agricultural operations. They also earn independently by working as field labourers. Household industries like rope making, basketry and

pottery also provide employment to some. In urban areas the women are mostly dependent and do not take part in any economic activity. Out of the total number of 32,705 female workers enumerated in the district in the 1971 Census, 30,596 were from rural areas. Thus, it is evident that the females, in general, are more dependent on males in urban areas than in rural areas. Economic stress and strain of modern life have, however, forced the educated urban women to take to various professions. Many of them are now serving as teachers, doctors, nurses, mid-wives, clerks, typists, etc.

Prostitution,
Drinking
and Gamb-
ling

Prostitution has been banned by law. Hence, organised brothels, cases of prostitution and trafficking in women have not come to the notice of the authority.

Drinking has become common in the present day society and gambling is going on here and there. Adequate steps are being taken by the Police Department for the prevention of these social evils.

Home life
Type of
Dwellings

In 1971, there were 3,04,160 houses in the district, of which 2,89,825 were in rural areas and 14,335 in urban areas. The distribution of houses and the uses to which they were put in the district is given below :—

Types of Houses (1)	Number (2)
1. Houses vacant at the time of house listing	10,375
2. Occupied houses used as —	
(i) Residence	220,185
(ii) Shop-cum-residence	1,245
(iii) Workshop-cum-residence including house- hold industry	4,460
(iv) Hotels, Sarais, Dharmashalas, Tourist homes and Inspection houses	410
(v) Shop excluding eating houses	1,595
(vi) Business houses and offices	1,050
(vii) Factories, Workshops and Worksheds	1,945
(viii) Restaurants, Sweetmeat shops and eating places	165
(ix) Places of entertainment and community gathering (Panchayat Ghar) excluding places of worship	340
(x) Places of worship (e.g., Temple, Church, Mosque, Gurudwara, etc.)	3,375
(xi) Others	59,015
Total	304,160

As evident from the foregoing statement, there are as many as 220,185 dwelling houses, 210,075 of which occur in rural areas and 10,110 in the urban areas. This gives a density of about 1,860 dwelling houses per 100 square kilometre in the district.

The statement also reveals that majority of the houses are used as residence. Workshop-cum-residence including household industry constitute the second largest group and the lowest category includes restaurants, sweetmeat shops and eating places.

According to the 1971 Census, Kalahandi district has the largest proportion of houses in the State with walls made of grass, leaves, reeds or bamboo ; 23.3 per cent of these being in the rural areas and 14.8 per cent in the urban areas. In this district forest is very close to inhabited areas. Hence, the poor people prefer this inexpensive and poor quality material for walls. Though these materials for wall are available easily with no extra cost still the proportion of such houses was considerably lower in the district during the period from 1961—71. Due to urbanisation burnt brick as wall material is gaining popularity among the people. Use of cement-concrete, corrugated or galvanised iron sheets as building material is negligible in the district as most of the people are poor.

The Census of 1971 has recorded 16.9 per cent houses with thatched roofs in the rural areas and only one per cent in the urban areas. In this respect the place of Kalahandi district is next to Sundargarh in the State.

Analysis also revealed that Kalahandi district has the highest proportion (82.4 per cent in the rural areas and 86.9 per cent in the urban areas) of houses with tile, slate or shingle as roof material in the State. These percentages are higher in comparison to the 1961 Census figures. This indicates that the people are now more conscious to have tiled roof because it is durable, fire-proof and costs less than metal sheets, asbestos sheets and concrete.

People in the urban areas use various types of furniture for a comfortable living. Well-to-do families usually possess sofa sets, chairs, tables, bench, stool, almirah, bed-steads and other furniture made of wood or steel according to their need, taste, status and capacity. They also possess radio sets, transistors, wall clocks, table or ceiling fans. People belonging to the lower income group remain content with a wooden chair, table, bench, stool or cot of ordinary type. The poor families in the villages have no furniture but string cots called *Khatia*, *Charpai* or *Khatel*. The tribals also use it as furniture. The head of the house usually uses the *khatel*. It is also offered to guests for sitting. The villagers are poor and do not have

Household
Utensils,
furniture
and house
decorations

much utensils. They usually use leaf cups, big or small, for variety of purposes from drinking water and gruel to storing grain. Each household has a few earthen cooking utensils and receptacles for water. A few households also have bell-metal utensils, aluminium plates and bowls. In most of the houses one can occasionally find glass tumblers and one or two cups and saucers. The richer people have a better set of utensils. In tribal villages most of the people keep their clothes and other possessions in a bamboo basket or ordinary wooden box. Every house in the rural area has one or two kerosene tin lamps called *dibri* and lantern. In the interior, the villagers depend mainly on wood for light and heat. Rural electrification has made some progress in the district of Kalahandi, but very few villagers have the means to use electricity for domestic purposes.

Although the houses of the people are built with mud or brick walls and thatched roofs they present an aesthetic appearance. The walls of dwelling houses are smeared with cowdung and sometimes with coloured earth or paste. On socio-religious functions they decorate the walls and floor of the houses with *Jhoti* or *alpana* designs.

Dress

Generally men in rural and urban areas wear *dhoti*. Some of them also use *lungi* and *gamchha*. The tribals use *dhoti* and do not use any upper garment. In winter when they feel cold, they cover their body with a coarse cotton cloth. They usually wrap a piece of *gamchha* or towel round the head while working in the field. Due to external contact, nowadays people use western garments such as trousers, shirts, bush shirts, etc. These garments are not only found in urban areas but also have infiltrated into rural areas.

Women, irrespective of caste or social condition, wear *sari*. Women in urban areas wear *sari*, blouse and petticoat, but in rural areas only *sari* is commonly used to cover the lower as well as the upper part of the body. Married women of the district veil their head as a custom.

The people of the district purchase *dhoti*, *sari*, and cheap variety of garments from the *hats* or urban markets. It is found that mill-made clothes have to a great extent substituted the handloom clothes.

As foot-wear most of the people in the district use shoes, cheap quality hawai and plastic slippers. Tribals and Harijans usually do not use any foot-wear.

Ornaments

The men and women of the district wear a variety of ornaments on different parts of their bodies. Most of these are gold, silver, aluminium, brass, coloured glass beads and rolled golds. The

design, size, weight and contents of the ornaments have undergone changes from time to time according to the prevailing fashions and also differ from one community to another. The ornaments used in the past were generally simple in style and heavy. But those in vogue at present are much lighter, refined and sophisticated in designs. The principal ornaments used by the women in the district are Mathamani, Sebatifula, Chaurimundi, Panpatri, and Jharakathi for head; Kanthimali, Sorisia mala, chain (Hara), Suta, Khagala and Haske for neck; Fasia, ear-ring, Karna phula, Jhalaka, Khinwa, Panchia Mundi, Mandra and Nangul for ear; Notha, Guna, Dandi and Fulli for nose; Armet, Nagmori, Bahatada, Bahasuta and Panchuki for arm; Kataria, Bandaria, Khadu, Ruli and Chudi for wrist; Mudi and Mandi for finger, Antasuta, Kardhan and Kamarpata for waist; Painri, Pahuda and Malha for anklet; Bichhia, Chutki-chura and Jhuntia for toe.

The women of the upper castes and the well-to-do women usually prefer gold and silver ornaments. Some males also wear chain (Hara) or ring (Mudi). Well-to-do males also use gold or silver buttons on their shirts or *punjabis*.

Besides the metal ornaments the tribal women also use feathers, Kaincha, coloured beads, etc., to deck their body.

In recent years, the extent of the use of gold and silver ornaments has been affected by the soaring prices of these metals. Moreover, the use of gold has further been restricted by the enforcement of the Gold Control Order of 1963.

The women of the Kandha, Dom, Lohar and Ghasi communities tattoo their faces before they are married. The designs are simple and are made on the forehead, chin and legs. They comb their hair periodically after applying Mahua seed oil. The hair is parted in the middle, then combed back and tied into a bun on the neck but slightly to the right. A comb made of horn or wood is generally used to comb the hair. They also use metal or plastic hair pins on special occasions. Among the higher castes the women generally coil the plaited hair and fix hair pins.

Personal
decoration

Rice is the staple food of the people. It is taken dry or soaked in cold water. Vegetable curry, dal and occasionally non-vegetarian curry is also added to these meals. A few people use wheat. Besides rice and wheat people also take ragi, *mandia*, *kodo*, *suan*, *gurji*, *kandhamula*, mushrooms, various kinds of roots and tubers. In between principal meals people usually eat rice cakes, fried rice, parched rice, etc.

Food and
drink

During social and religious functions, in addition to normal food items, different types of cakes, sweets, rice porridge, etc., are prepared. Generally among higher castes meats of goat, sheep and fowl are taken. Some of the lower castes people eat the meat of dead cows, buffaloes, pig, pigeons, peafowl, rat, non-poisonous snakes like *dhamana* and large reptiles like *godhis*.

Cooking is mostly done in earthen pots. These are purchased from the potters. Aluminium utensils are gradually becoming more and more popular among the people. The common cooking media is groundnut oil. Some people also use mustard oil, *mahul* oil, *til* and *pesi* (linseed) oil for cooking purpose. Only on festive occasions people use cow and buffalo ghee and various brands of hydrogenated oil.

Liquor is customarily drunk by the tribals. Both men and women drink *mahua* liquor and date palm juice. Their favourite alcoholic beverage is *handia* which is prepared in almost every tribal household. Liquor is an important item at religious functions, and social etiquette demands that guests and visitors be offered liquor.

Smoking of tobacco is very common among the males. The tribals and other low class people smoke country cheroot made of raw tobacco rolled in *sal* leaf. *Bidis* and cigarettes are also widely consumed by the people. Some people are also addicted to opium, ganja and *bhanga*.

COMMUNAL
LIFE
Communal
dance

Dalkhai, Dhap, Dhangda-dhangdi, Ghoomra and Madal dances are prevalent in Kalahandi district. These are held during socio-cultural and religious functions.

Dhap dance

The Dhap dance has derived its name from the musical instrument known as *dhap* which is modelled in the shape of a *khanjani*. The dancer holds the *dhap* with his left hand and beats it with sticks in right hand. The Kandhas of the district perform this dance in which both men and women participate. Generally the men of one village dance and sing with the women of another village. In this dance unmarried men and women take active part while the experienced persons guide them. During the dance the women dancers play on *ramakathi*, a musical instrument made of two pieces of polished wood with little cymbals fitted in them. The Kandhas perform this Dhap dance on the occasion of marriage and also for the sake of recreation. The dancers do not use any special dress for the purpose. The men and women stand face to face in rows and dance. They move forward and backward and sing mostly amorous songs. Due to the impact of modern civilisation and change in the outlook of the people the

women nowadays fight shy to participate in the dance. They also do not practise the dance regularly as a result of which the standard of the dance is fast deteriorating.

The Ghumura is originally a tribal dance, which in course of time, has been adopted by others. The dance is named after a typical earthen drum called 'Ghumura'. It is like a clay pitcher with long neck and its mouth covered with the skin of *godhi* (iguana, monitor lizard). The dancers tie the Ghumuras on their shoulders and hang them tight on their chest. This is a very popular dance in the western part of Orissa including the districts of Sambalpur and Balangir, but the Ghumura dancers of Kalahandi excel all others in this particular dance art.

Ghumura
dance

The dance is performed by 15 to 20 male members. The dancers dress themselves in coloured *dhotis* and jackets. They use turban on which peacock feathers are attached. They also fasten *ghagudi* (a chain of brass bells) on their waists and *ghoonguras* (a chain of small brass bells) on their feet which produce musical sound while dancing.

During the dance the dancers sing devotional songs, Chhanda, Chaupadi and songs relating to stories from the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and the Puranas. Sometimes love and humorous songs in local dialect are also recited to amuse the audience. Generally Ghumura dancers recite different types of songs to suit different occasions.

The dance is performed during festivals like Dasahara, Pousa Purnima and Nuakhai. It is also performed during marriage ceremony and other social functions.

The Gonds of the district perform Madal dance. The male and female participants dance in circles, in half and full sitting positions. In this dance one person acts as singer while others play drums. The male dancers use turbans in which feathers of peacock are clipped. They tie *ghagarla* (a chain of bells) on their waist which produces musical sound at the time of dance. The Madal dance is usually performed during marriage and festivals. The Madal (earthen drum) is the main musical instrument. Besides that, the *nagara*, known as *tribiri*, is also used by one of the dancers. The singer holds a piece of long and flat plank called 'Katua' which he moves in a graceful manner. This produces some dramatic effect.

Madal dance

The singer sings songs which relate to love, beauty of nature and devotion to gods and goddesses. The Gonds are supposed to be comparatively more advanced than some other tribal communities.

They are gradually excluding their womenfolk from the dance. The Madal dance of the Gonds of this district has some originality of its own and is quite different from the Madal dance of the Oraons in Sundargarh district.

**Dhangda-
Dhangdi
Dance**

The Dhangda-Dhangdi dance is performed by the unmarried grown up boys and girls of the district. Mostly the Scheduled Castes people participate in this dance. Persons belonging to both the sexes sing in groups and dance after each stanza of the song. While dancing the girls play on *ramakathi* and make graceful movement of body, waist and hand. They do not dance while singing. In this dance the dancers do not use any special costume. The dance is generally performed on the occasion of marriage and other social functions.

The usual musical accompaniments to Dhangda-Dhangdi dance are *dhhol* (a two-sided drum), *changu* (one-sided flat drum), *nishan* (one-sided deep drum) and *mahuri* (the Orissan Sahani).

The Dhangda-Dhangdi dance practised by the Scheduled Castes people in Kalahandi district is different from the Dhangda-Dhangdi dance of the Kandhas of Koraput and Boudh-Khondmals districts. The Dhangda-Dhangdi dance of Kalahandi district is a peculiar mixture of the Kandha dance and the 'Dalkhai' dance of Sambalpur and Balangir districts.

Among other popular folk dances in the district mention may be made of Dalkhai dance, Chaitra Parab dance, Singa Baja Natch and Sua Natch.

**Fairs and
Festivals**

The Hindus of the district observe a number of festivals all the year round. These festivals may broadly be divided into two categories, viz., domestic festivals observed in each household and public festivals and fairs where people congregate in large numbers on some auspicious days. The domestic festivals are confined to the worship of family deities, observance of *ekadashi*, various *vratas*, etc. Public festivals are usually religious ceremonies attended by a large number of men, women and children who come for worship as well as entertainment. An account of some of the important festivals in the district is given below.

**Budharaja
Parba**

The Budharaja festival is observed just after Dasahara in the village Ampani. The village is situated at a distance of 96 km. from the district headquarters on the main road which leads to Koraput. The presiding deity of the temple is Budha Raja. It is a tribal god. People from various parts of the district as well as from the neighbouring districts attend the festival. More than 5,000 people gather on the occasion. Goats, sheep and fowl are offered as sacrifice. The festival is observed

for one day, i. e., from morning till the next morning. The shop-keepers open their shops near the temple. Women from Koraput district also come to sell fruits and other vegetables. There is a belief that on the festival day, at dead of the night, a tiger comes to the temple to partake of the Bhoga. Therefore, before dark all the shop-keepers come away to the heart of the town with their stalls. At night Ghumura dance competition is held in which competitors from nearby villages participate. Besides this, other folk-performances like Ramalila and Suanga are also held.

A few houses of Janis (priests) attend to the god. They worship the deity and work as his messenger in different villages. They perform religious rites and through the *kalsi* advise the people on the cure of diseases and offer solutions to their various problems.

Goddess Manikeswari is the prominent deity of Kalahandi district. The temple of the goddess is situated in the premises of the ex-Maharaja's palace at Bhawanipatna. The ex-Rulers of Kalahandi used to observe the Saradiya Puja of the goddess known as Chhatra Yatra with much pomp and eclact. Crowds of people gather to witness the festival and large number of animals are sacrificed before the deity. The festival reaches its peak on the Mahastami day.

Chhatra
Yatra or
Dasahara

Besides Bhawanipatna, Dasahara also forms an important festival at Khariar Road, Khariar, Sinapali, Komna, Charabeda and Salia in Jonk police station ; Jayapatna and Behera in Koksara police station and Dharamgarh.

The Khandabasa festival is observed during Dasahara in the temple of goddess Lankeswari at Junagarh, the old capital of Kalahandi ex-State. The rulers of Kalahandi used to come to Junagarh on the Mahastami day to perform the Puja. The ruler observes fasting on the day and places a sword before the goddess on an auspicious moment fixed by the astrologer. There is a widespread belief among the local people that if the sword placed by the ruler before the goddess remains straight, villagers will not face any natural calamities like drought, epidemics etc. If the sword tilts, right or left then it indicates bad omen for the State.

Khandabasa

The festival is observed for a day and a fair sits at the place on the occasion. The congregation actually lasts for about three days. On the Mahastami day goats and buffaloes are sacrificed before the goddess. Folk performances like Ghumura dance and Ramalila are usually organised at night for the entertainment of the people.

Laxmi Puja is observed in all Hindu households on every Thursday in the month of Margasira (November-December). The devout Hindu women celebrate this festival with great austerity and devotion. On the Thursdays the house and the courtyard are decorated with *alpna* designs or *jhoti* and Laxmi, the goddess of wealth and prosperity, is evoked and

Laxmi Puja

worshipped. The last Thursday of the month marks the culmination of the Puja when preparations of rice cakes and sweets are offered to the goddess.

Makara
Mela

On the day of Makara Sankranti Makara Mela is held at Kusurla village in Madanpur-Rampur police station. The Mela is held for three days near the temple of Nilakantheswar. Every year during this festive occasion large number of people from nearby villages congregate at Kusurla and worship god Nilakantheswar (Siva). Businessmen of Kalahandi as well as neighbouring Balangir district make brisk business at the fair. Mostly utensils, cloths, readymade garments, toys, sweets, etc. are brought for sale. This festival is being observed at Kusurla for last 15 years.

Nuakhai or
Nabarna

Nuakhai literally means eating of the new rice. This is an agricultural festival and is observed more or less in all the parts of Orissa. In the western districts of Orissa like Sambalpur, Balangir, Kalahandi and Sundargarh this has developed as a very important social festival. The Nuakhai ceremony generally takes place in the bright fortnight of Bhadraba (August—September) on an auspicious day fixed by the astrologer. The festival is observed in every Hindu household and preparations of the new rice are offered to gods, goddesses and ancestors after which members of the family along with friends and relatives partake of the new rice. It is a custom that the eldest member of the family distributes *payasanna*, i. e., new rice cooked with milk and sugar to the junior members of the family after offering the same to goddess Laxmi. It is an occasion for the member of the family, relatives and friends to unite and to spend the day in great rejoicing. Children and other members of the family also wear new clothes on the occasion. At places sports and cultural programmes are organised on the day.

Pousa
Purnima

The Pousa Purnima is observed in Maskapadar and Biswanathpur village of Lanjigarh police station. On this day the devotees walk on burning fire in bare foot. Thousands of people attend the festival.

Puajjuntia
and
Bhajiuntia

The Puajjuntia (ପୁଅଜିଉଁତିଆ) ceremony is celebrated on the 8th day of the dark fortnight in the month of Aswina (September-October). On this occasion all the mothers fast for the whole day and night and worship the deity called Dutibahana. The purpose of the ceremony is to wish long life and prosperity to the sons. The barren women also observe this ceremony to get a child, preferably a son.

On the 8th day of the bright fortnight of Aswina (September-October) Bhajiuntia (ଭାଇଜିଉଁତିଆ) is observed. The sisters worship goddess Durga on this occasion for long and happy life of their brothers. In return, the brothers present new clothes and sweets to their sisters.

Rama Navami is observed on the ninth day of the waxing moon in the month of Chaitra (March-April) to celebrate the birth-day of Rama, the celebrated hero of the Ramayana. It is observed with great festivity at Khariar Road and Bhawanipatna in the district. Other places in the district where this festival is observed, are Joradubra, in Madanpur-Rampur police station; Bhaleswar, in Jonk police station; and Sargiguda, in Narla police station.

Rama
Navami

The Ratha Jatra or car festival of Lord Jagannath is held on the second day of the bright fortnight in the month of Ashadha (June-July). The festival is observed at many places in the district of which mention may be made of Bhawanipatna, Khariar Road and Khariar.

Rathajatra

Sivaratri festival is observed in all the Siva shrines on the 14th day of the dark fortnight in the month of Phalguna (February-March). The devotees remain awake throughout the night and worship the Lord. At the midnight a lamp called Maha Dipa is taken to the top of the temple and is kept burning throughout the night. The devotees break their fast after seeing the Maha Dipa. This festival is observed with great pomp and splendour in the Siva temple at Dadpur, Belkhandi, Mohangiri and Khariar Road. Thousands of people congregate at these places on the occasion.

Sivaratri

At Belkhandi there is a temple of goddess Chandi near the Siva temple. According to custom, every year hundreds of goats and sheep are sacrificed before the goddess either on the day of Sivaratri or on the day following. Goats, sheep and fowl are also sacrificed at Mohangiri on the third day of the Sivaratri before the goddess whose stone images are kept under a tree near the Kapileshwar Mahadev temple.

The other name of Pousa Parba is Toki Mara Parba. It is observed on Pousa Purnima day by the tribals of Kalahandi and Dharamgarh subdivisions. In olden days the tribal chief was sacrificing his own daughter before their goddess and the dead body was being buried in the fields. It was believed that by doing so the people of the village would get bumper harvest. Nowadays instead of sacrificing a girl a sheep or a buffalo is being sacrificed. One week before the Parba, the headman of the tribe along with others moves from door to door with the beating of drums and cymbals and feed the sacrificial animal with grains given by the villagers. People enjoy these days by merrymaking and drink heavily. On the day of Pousa Purnima in the presence of a huge gathering the sacrificial animal is taken to the altar with the beating of drums and

Pousa Parba

dancing. The priest slaughters the animal. After this, attempts are usually made by different villagers to snatch away a chunk of the flesh of the sacrificed animal for planting in their own fields in the hope of getting better crops. This festival is observed after the harvest season is over. It is said that during this festivals the boys and the girls also select and marry the partners of their choice.

Other
Festivals

In addition to these fairs and festivals, the people of the district, also observe Chandan Jatra, Dola Jatra, Bali Jatra, Rani Parba, Kalipuja (Dipaballi), Chaitra Parba and Jhulan Jatra.

Festivals
among other
Communities

The Muslims, the Christians, the Sikhs, the Jains and the Buddhists of the district like their co-religionists in other parts of the country celebrate the festival enjoined by their respective religions.

Recreation

Leisure and recreation are essential for life, people usually gather in the evening at the temple or in a common place where the priest recites and explains from the religious texts like Bhagabat, Mahabharat, RamaYan and Haribansa. Singing of Bhajan or Kirtan accompanied with musical instruments like *Khanjani*, *gini*, *mrudanga* or harmonium is also another popular form of entertainment of the people. The modern ways of entertainment have not much affected this traditional pattern of folk entertainment especially in the rural areas. Occasionally acrobatic feats, monkey dance, bear dance and snake charming performed by itinerant professional groups also provide entertainment to the people.

In the tribal areas the *dhangda ghar* where the bachelors of the village sleep at night is the oldest community centre. Here they spend the evening beating drums, dancing and singing. Sometimes girls and older folk join them. The bachelors talk among themselves, exchange experiences and discuss the problems they face in their daily life. Fishing, hunting and cock fighting are also the traditional pastime of the aboriginals of the district. The festivals and other social functions round the year never leave the people in want of mirth. The rural people also enjoy folk performances like Ramalila, Ghumura dance, Suanga, etc. Radio sets supplied by the Government to different institutions of the district also provide recreation to rural folk. Cheap radio sets have nowadays become common man's possession.

In urban areas cinema is a common source of entertainment. Out of three cinema houses in the district there are two at the district headquarters, i. e., Bhawanipatna and the other at Khariar Road. Besides cinema, itinerant circus and theatre parties also provide entertainment to the people. There are 18 recreational clubs and associations functioning in the district. These are located at Bhawanipatna,

Jaganatha, Junagarh, Dharamgarh, Atigan, Kharlar Road, Kesinga, Mahasuar, Ramgar, Baluda and Narla. They provide entertainment to the people by organising various cultural programmes, sports and athletic meets. The peculiar outdoor and indoor games of the district are D.P.'s Patu stick game and Patoc gena.

There are only two parks in the district, the Mahatma Gandhi park at Nawapara and the Gandhi Prasad Udyan at Bhawanipatna. Of these, the park at Bhawanipatna attracts more people on account of its location and entertainment facilities for the children. Godhas, Chakhera and Patalganga in Nawapara subdivision and Phulbiharan, Khandhat and Aungarh in Bhawanipatna subdivision are some of the well known picnic spots in the district. A large number of students and other people go to these places for sight seeing and picnic.

Clubs and restaurants are also places for social gathering and amusements. At Bhawanipatna, Kharlar and Kharlar Road there are a few good hotels and restaurants.

From recreational, religious or commercial point of view the most important places in the district are Jaganath (Nawapara), Mahasuar, Aungarh, Bhawanipatna, Kharlar, Kote, Ampani, Junagarh, Kharlar, Kesinga, Kharlar Road and Junagarh.

There were eighteen *garhs* in the ex-State of Kalahandi which at different times constituted separate Zamindaris that were bestowed as appanages on members of the royal family. In 1949, when the present district of Kalahandi was formed comprising the ex-State of Kalahandi, the Kharlar ex-Zamindari constituting the present subdivisions of Nawapara was added to it. In these ex-State and ex-Zamindari areas there were also estate holders who were known by different names, viz. Zamindar, Khorposhilar and Gaontia. Besides commensurate with the feudal order various service tenures were also in vogue which kept the tenure holders in a state of semi-slavery. With the merger of the ex-State with the province of Orissa on the 1st day of January, 1948, and subsequent abolition of all proprietary rights on land this age old feudal system came to an end. Thus direct contact between the Government and the tenants was established. The abolition of the intermediary system has brought a rational system of land revenue collection and the cultivators are now assured of their right over the land they cultivate. This is a vital change in the socio-economic life of the people of the district in general.

Impact of the Abolition of Zamindari system on Social Life

The traditional leadership of the society usually came from the Rajas and the Zamindars, but under changed circumstances they have lost their old social prestige and status. With the spread of education and intellectual awakening, leadership is gradually passing into the hands of the common man. The tribal population are also getting accustomed to the modern ways of life.