Tribes of Chhattisgarh–Tribal social organization : Marriage, Family, Clan, youth dormitories.

Tribal Social Organization: Marriage, Family, Clan, Youth Dormitories

Ethnographic Profile

- Anthropologically, a tribe is a social group where members live in a common territory and possess a common dialect, uniform, social organization and maintained cultural homogeneity and a common ancestor. But as per these characteristics, it would be very difficult to locate many tribal groups in India who posses all these characteristic.
- Thus, on the basis of characteristics found among the tribes of India, their racial elements have been explained by different anthropologists.
- H. Risley recognized their principal racial types in India. They are:
    1. Dravidian
    2. Indo-Aryan
    3.

He further classified on the basis of anthropometric data into the following seven groups:

1. Turks-Iranian.
2. Indo-Aryan.
3. Scytho-Dravidian.
4. Aryo-Dravidian.
5. Mongol-Dravidian



6. Mongoloid
7. Dravidian

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- If we see the Chhattisgarh tribal groups, particularly in Bastar region, they come under the Dravidian racial group. Ethnography is an in-depth description of a culture or group of people sharing a culture.
- It is the study of people in a conduct, a detailed study of a group of people while being immersed in the culture of that group. Ethnography ('ethno', people or folk and 'graphy', to describe something) is sometimes referred to as participant observation or field research that involves the study of people or an organization through face-to-face interaction in a real life of social setting.
- There is no deductive hypothesis to follow or any statistical formula.
- Over time, this interaction yields a rich and detailed account of a culture, history, and characteristics of a social phenomenon. Ethnography expends awareness of global culture and reduces ethnocentric views and cultural idiosyncrasies.

Abhuj Maria or Hill Maria Tribe of Chhattisgarh:

- The abhuj maria are living in the unknown hills (abhuj= 'unknown' and marh= 'hill') of Bastar region. These people are one of the sub-tribe of Gond.
- The tribal people of this region are classified based on their generic name Gond and they represent certain primitive stages and levels of development of our human society. They are mostly found in Orcha block of Narayanpur tahasil in Bastar district and in some part of Dantewada district.
- They live in isolation, keeping them away from the outer world and lead a diverse life. Their traditional culture, moral living values and social security has not yet been disturbed.
- They are one of the rare tribal groups of India living in Chhattisgarh in isolation. They are the most powerful of all the wild tribes in India. It is clear that the Hill maria was different from the muria, because of their habitats and agricultural methods. They are more primitive as compared to other tribes of India.

Settlement Pattern:

- The Hill maria lives apart in a cluster of huts near the entrance to the village. These huts are also called ghotuls, the same name that the muria uses for their **youth dormitories**.
- The difference is that these ghotuls are not meant for young girls at all. This is the residence house.
- In the villages, the houses are constructed in two parallel rows with a broad space.
- In some villages, one can find that they use their own houses as dormitories. Each village has 15 to 20 houses

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Language:

- **Gondi,** is the tribal language of Gond. There are a few differences among the subtribes of Gond. Gondi has no indigenous literature in written form.
- However, researchers have divided the dialect of hill maria and bison horn maria based on their speech.

Family Structure:

- Family is the smallest unit of the hill maria society. The family occupies a single domicile. The nature of the family is conjugal for it consists of husband, wife and their children; the eldest male in a household occupies final authority in all spheres of socioeconomic life. Their clans (kata) are an unlinear descent group.
- All the members of the clan believe that they descended from a common ancestor. In each hill maria village, there is a dominant clan such as called usendi.
- A group of different clans are called bhaiband or dadabhai (brother clan).
- The marital alliances in those having bhaiband relationship are prohibited, though they practice clan exogamy.
- The hill maria gets introduced to the various stages of life cycle through rites-de-passage.

Marriage Customs:

- They are permitted to settle marriage only with a member of wife's clan called akomama. Therefore, all the clans have some bhaiband clan and some akomama clan.
- They prefer **cross cousin marriage** due to several causes like: (i) easy adjustment, (ii) easy availability of bride, and (iii) less payment towards bride price. Bride prices are paid both in cash and kind.
- **Monogamy** is their rule, but polygamy is also permitted and practiced by them. Both levirate and sorarate type of marriage are prevalent in their society. The marriage by negotiation (pendul) is the rule.
- The marriage rituals are performed by their elders. The other types of marriage are lamre (marriage by service), vitte (marriage by elopement), aeohundi (junior levirate), koheberdan (marriage by exchanges), koyeyari (sororrate) and widow re-marriage are also allowed. The date of marriage is fixed on the local market day. There is no divorce legally.

Kinship:

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- Hill maria society is patrilineal and patriarchal in nature. The classificatory system of the kinship is seen among the hill maria.
- They have different terminology to different lineal relatives. They use the following terminologies

Terminology of Relatives

English Name -----Local (Gondi)

- Father ---------Tappe
- Mother ----------Talug, awa
- Son ----------Maghi
- Daughter ----------Miari
- Elder brother ----------Dada
- Elder sister ----------Akka
- Younger brother ----------Tamoo
- Younger sister ----------Hella
- Father's father ----------Tado
- Father's mother ----------Bapi
- Mother's father ----------Ako
- Mother's mother ----------Kako
- Husband ----------Kotur
- Wife ----------Ara
- Father's brother ----------Kuchi
- Mother's brother---------- Mama

Kinship organization plays an important role in the economic structure of the village. Kin groups, both from mother and father sides, co-operate each other for various activities.

Division of Power:

- The village head man is the oldest member in the hill maria's village, who is called pargana manjhi. The headman is responsible for decision making in domestic and villager affairs. Their traditional council is prescribed by pargana manjhi.
- The village headmen used to attend the annual celebration of dussehra when essentially the worship of the goddess danteswari and mauli are practiced as patron deities of the Bastar region.

Occupation:

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- The hill maria was mainly peda (slash and burn) cultivators. They also practiced incipient form of settled cultivation.
- The kosra and kolha (a kind of millet) are the main cereals in the peda land. But in most of the regions of India plough cultivation was forced on the tribes by the government which found shifting cultivation wasteful and damaging to the forest. Rice is one of the chief cereals in their cultivation.
- The lands are owned by the individual family but the ownership pattern is typically indigenous. Some lands are sometimes given to a lineage member or to a dadabhai who actually needs.

Facilities and Amenities:

- The hill maria is very primitive when compared to other Gond tribes.
- They live in isolated places and maintain their traditional way of life and practice their tribal rituals. In the postmodern era their socio-cultural life is very poor.
- There is a scarcity of drinking water. Their place has poor road communication system. It is devoid of electricity and primary health center and they are still using the ethno-medicine, which is provided by the village gunia or baid.

Hill-Korwa (Pahari Korwa)

- **Characteristics:** They are branch of Kolarian tribe and belonging mundari language. According to Anthropological description of family they belongs to Austro-Asiatic family. The tribe has two-sub tribe known Pahari Korwa and Dihari Korwa.
- **Physical Appearance:** They are medium to short height have a dark brown or black skin.
- **Clane(Gotras):** Hill Korwa are divided into Five totamistic Edogamous clains viz. Hansadwar, samar,Edigwar, Ginnur & Renla.
    - Clan Totem

1. Hazeda -------Bamboo
2. Edigwar --------Kachmi(a creeper)
3. Samat---------- samat(a tree)
4. Madhiyar or Mudhikar-----Dohs head
5. Ginu -------Ant-hill soil

- **Villages:** The villages site is usually chosen on top of the hill or on covered with forest. Most of the families of Hill- Korwa were nuclear. The kinship system is still the basic sub-structure of them some strict relationship taboo seperate relatives.

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