



ASECA CHANNEL

(A monthly Journal from All India ASECA)

Website: www.allindiaaseca.org

Volume: VII Issue: 6 June, 2008 Annual Subscription Rs50/- Single copy Rs5/-

Editorial

(This is in continuation to the Editorial, May 2008 issue)

In the Adivasi society also, it is noticed that the process and procedures associated with the marriage have undergone change to adjust with the changing and emerging situation. There are local as well as regional influences and as such the original process has been modified to some extent by the adopted practices. The coverage of this article is to highlight this change and the scope will be too large to analyze the consequences. The marriage in Santal community has by and large been maintained at the same level. Due to this standardization in approach, there is not much difficulty in pursuing inter State alliances. However, this inter state alliance is limited to the relatively well to do families as they are only able to make adjustments here and there through mutual adjustments.

Marriage in Santal community is a collective affair. The involvement of traditional village heads and the villagers are a common and inseparable feature. The simple but important definition of marriage can be given as solemnization of itud sindur under the guidance and witness of traditional village headmen. Their presence is a sine qua none to earn the recognition attached with the system of marriage. In other words, mutual consents of the bride and grooms or the parents of both bride and groom are not sufficient to solemnize the marriage. Many a times we come across different definitions, various forms of marriage are given in so many text books. In fact those are not the definition of marriage applicable to Santal society but only related to the different socio economic provisions to have a life partner.

When the status of every member of the society was almost at a same level, people enjoyed the events in equal terms. Over a period of time, the perception and involvement have been influenced by the level of development among people. The aspirations and expectations vary from person to person based on their uneven educational and economic status. When the social base is shared on equal terms among the members of society, the other factors come in to play in deciding the particular pattern in the society.

It has been seen in many societies that the provision of low cost marriage exists to facilitate the less privileged members (poor segment) of the society. This change has been introduced in those societies as a response to the reality so that the dignity of individual is maintained while fulfilling the obligation of the members of the society in preserving the customs and traditions of that particular society. However, the same principle is not being adopted in case of Santal community whereas the social arrangement has till now been kept as same irrespective of the educational, professional and economic development. When organizing the event becomes beyond their reach, people are forced not to follow a system. With the burgeoning cost of living with depleting resource, many members are not able perform the vital ceremony in their life. Like any other venture to find out the alternative methods to overcome the handicap, members of this society have been forced to devise their own suitable methods and practices to fulfill their social obligation. This is a fit area wherein some feasible / suitable mechanism could be thought of so as to make it a simple and affordable institution. In some areas, the traditional marriage has taken a dip slide owing to inability of the people to bear the expenses associated with the ceremony. Others are, however, leveraging their financial management skill to fund this occasion.

The instances of management of marriage by the people have been myriad. The approaches adopted by people vary from place to place. Due to this difference in approach, people prefer shortcuts to social marriages in order to avoid harassment and uncertainty. As a consequence, traditional marriage takes place only in five to ten per cent of the population. However, it is not out of place to note that in some areas community has maintained cent per cent traditional marriage in spite of problems.

Due to pressing needs, it is observed that people are devising their own systems and procedures to address the difficulties. Under this circumstances broadbase dialogues among the stake holders are needed to evolve a system which can be adequate to address different requirement of all members while keeping the option adaptable, manageable and easy to follow giving every member a feeling of oneness and part of simple but high thinking society.

Tribal Scheduled and Areas in Orissa

1. DISTRICT WISE NUMBER OF TRIBAL PEOPLE IN DESCENDING ORDER (As per Census 2001)

Sl. No.	District	Total population	Tribal population	% in the District
1	Mayurbhanj	2,223,456	1,258,459	56.60%
2	Sundargarh	1,830,673	918,903	50.19%
3	Kendujhar	1,561,990	695,141	44.50%
4	Koraput	1,180,637	585,830	49.62%
5	Nawarangpur	1,025,766	564,480	55.03%
6	Rayagada	831,109	463,418	55.76%
7	Kalahandi	1,335,494	382,573	28.65%
8	Kandhamal	648,201	336,809	51.96%
9	Sambalpur	935,613	322,770	34.50%
10	Malkangiri	504,198	289,538	57.43%
11	Balangir	1,337,194	275,822	20.63%
12	Gajapati	518,837	263,476	50.78%
13	Bargarh	1,346,336	260,691	19.36%
14	Balasore	2,024,508	228,454	11.28%
15	Nawapara	530,690	184,221	34.71%
16	Jharsuguda	509,716	159,757	31.34%
17	Dhenkanal	1,066,878	136,501	12.79%
18	Angul	1,140,003	132,994	11.67%
19	Jajpur	1,624,341	125,989	7.76%
20	Khurda	1,877,395	97,186	5.18%
21	Deogarh	274,108	92,103	33.60%
22	Ganjam	3,160,635	90,919	2.88%
23	Cuttack	2,341,094	83,591	3.57%
24	Sonepur	541,835	52,978	9.78%
25	Nayagarh	864,516	50,836	5.88%
26	Boudh	373,372	46,557	12.47%
27	Bhadrak	1,333,749	25,141	1.88%
28	Jagatsingpur	1,057,629	8,640	0.82%
29	Kendrapara	1,302,005	6,822	0.52%
30	Puri	1,502,682	4,482	0.30%

2. Administration of Tribal Scheduled and Tribal Areas

As provided in the Part X, Article 244 (1) of the Constitution, which reads as under:

“PART X - THE SCHEDULED AND TRIBAL AREAS
244. Administration of Scheduled Areas and tribal areas.—(1) The provisions of the Fifth Schedule shall apply to the administration and control of the Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes in any State other than the States of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram.”

3. Law applicable to Scheduled Areas.

- 1) Notwithstanding anything in this Constitution, the Governor may by public notification direct that any particular Act of Parliament or of the Legislature of the State shall not apply to a Scheduled Area or any part thereof in the State or shall apply to a Scheduled Area or any part thereof in the State subject to such exceptions and modifications as he may specify in the notification and any direction given under this sub-paragraph may be given so as to have retrospective effect.
- 2) The Governor may make regulations for the peace and good government of any area in a State, which is for the time being a Scheduled Area.

In particular and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing power, such regulations may—

- (a) prohibit or restrict the transfer of land by or among members of the Scheduled Tribes in such area;
 - (b) regulate the allotment of land to members of the Scheduled Tribes in such area;
 - (c) regulate the carrying on of business as money-lender by persons who lend money to members of the Scheduled Tribes in such area.
- 3) In making any such regulation as is referred to in sub-paragraph (2) of this paragraph, the Governor may repeal or amend any Act of Parliament or of the Legislature of the State or any existing law which is for the time being applicable to the area in question.
 - 4) All regulations made under this paragraph shall be submitted forthwith to the President and, until assented to by him, shall have no effect.
 - 5) No regulation shall be made under this paragraph unless the Governor making the regulation has, in the case where there is a Tribes Advisory Council for the State, consulted such Council.

(To be continued...)

Scheduled Communities: A social Development profile of SC/STs (Bihar, Jharkhand & W.B)

(Source: Planning Commission)

{Continued from May 2008 issue}

There is a distinct pattern that emerges from the analysis of livestock holdings. The Chaupal tops the list in ownership of milch cattle and rearing of goats. The Musahar is the only caste specialising in nurturing pigs, with which they are traditionally associated and for which they have been regarded as more polluting. They are also more into poultry than any other caste. The Dusadh and Chamar are significant livestock holders in milch cattle, bullock and goat. The livestock is a definite income supplement for the Scheduled Castes in Bihar, and particularly for non-landowning households.

Jharkhand

In Jharkhand, among the Scheduled Castes, out of 56 households, only 1 household possesses milch cattle, 8 possess goat, 2 households possess bullock, pig and poultry.

Table 4.22: Live stock holdings of Scheduled Castes in Jharkhand (Not reproduced)

With respect to individual castes, 3 households of Chamar and 2 households of Dom possess goats and no other livestock. This pattern reflects the constraints and requirements of the urban environment in which only the goat is both useful and can be conveniently reared.

West Bengal

In West Bengal, among the Scheduled Castes, as many as 105 households (23.7%) possess milch cows/buffaloes, 127 (28.7%) have goats, 72 (16.3%) own bullocks, 39 (8.8%) rear pigs and 94 households (21.2%) keep poultry birds. Barring milch cattle, the livestock holdings among SCs of West Bengal are higher than in Bihar.

Table 4.23: Live stock holdings of Scheduled Castes in West Bengal (Not reproduced)

The highest ownership of milch cows/buffaloes is amongst the Kami (52.2%) and Sarki (50.0%). Other castes possessing milch cows/buffaloes are the Bagdi (33.8%), Konai (33.3%), Chamar (27.1%), Mal (21.4%), Bhuiyan (16.7%), Bauri (14.9%), Dhobi

(11.8%) and Patni (10.0%). Only one household of Dom possesses milch cattle.

- As for bullock, 43.5 percent households of Kami, 43.3 percent of Bhuiyan, 40 percent of Bagdi own bullocks. As for the other castes like the Bauri, Chamar, Dom, Konai and Mal less than 15 percent households own bullock. The Patni and Sarki have bullock in one household each.

- The Sarki (66.7%) and the Bagdi (55.4%) are the largest owners of goat. Then come the Bhuiyan with 40.0 percent, Dom with 30.4 percent, Konai with 23.8 percent and Bauri with 19.1 percent. Patni and Chamar each have less than 10 percent households owning goats.

- When it comes to the largest rearers of pigs, it is the Sarki with 46.7 percent households, followed by Bauri (40.4%) and Kami with 26.1 percent. No other castes rear pigs.

- Poultry birds are owned by 73.9 percent households of Kami, 70.7 percent of Sarki, 52.0 percent of Konai, 33.3 percent of Chamar and 32.9 percent of Mal.

- On the whole, livestock holdings characterise all castes except the Dhoba and to some extent the Dom and Patni. Clearly, the Sarki, Kami, Bagdi and Konai are better livestock owners than the others.

It is worth noting that while the Chamar in Bihar are not much into poultry, their livestock holdings of bullocks and goats are distinctly greater than in West Bengal.

Scheduled Tribes

Jharkhand

In Jharkhand, out of 544 tribal households, 124 (22.8%) have milch cattle, 249 (45.8%) own bullocks, 78 (14.4%) possess goats, 75 (13.8%) rear pigs and 170 households (31.2%) keep poultry birds. We have to keep in mind that the substantial urban sample of Oran, Munda and Lohara are not much into livestock.

Table 4.24: Live stock holdings of Scheduled Tribes in Jharkhand (Not reproduced)

With respect to individual castes, as many as 35.3 percent households of Santhal, 33.0 percent of Ho,

16.7 percent of Mahali possess milch cattle. The Oraon, Munda and Lohara do not possess milch cattle in their urban setting.

- The percentage of households owning bullocks is very high among the Santhal and Ho (70% and 65.2% respectively), followed by Mahali with 47.9 percent. Oraon, Munda and Lohara do not possess bullocks.
- As for goats, 31.3 percent households among Mahali, 24.7 percent among the Santhal, 9.2 percent among the Ho possess goats. Very few households of Oraon, Munda and Lohara, as expected, do not possess goats.
- The Santhal and Mahali are the main rearers of pigs (42.7%) and 18.7% respectively).
- As for poultry birds, the Santhal and Mahali predominate (88.7% and 72.9% respectively).

It can be noted that the Santhal is best endowed with livestock of all varieties.

West Bengal

In West Bengal, out of 557 tribal households, 180 (32.3%) have milch cattle, 305 (54.7%) possess bullocks, 237 (42.5%) own goats, 107 (19.2%) rear pigs and 219 households (39.3%) keep poultry birds. Clearly, the livestock holdings of the tribal communities in West Bengal far exceeds the others.

Table 4.25: Live stock holdings of Scheduled Tribes in West Bengal (Not reproduced)

With respect to individual tribes, 41.0 percent households of Oraon, 40.9 percent of Mahali, 40.3 percent of Bhumij, 36.4 percent of Munda and 15.9 percent of Lodha possess milch cattle.

- As for bullocks, 77.8 percent of Bhumij, 69.2 percent of Oraon, 54.5 percent of both Mahali and Munda and 18.2 percent of Lodha own bullocks.
- The Bhumij are almost all into goaterly (88.9%), followed by Oraon (59.0%), Mahali (40.9%) and Santhal (35.9%). The Munda (13.6%) and Lodha (6.8%) are at the tail end.

- The percentage of households rearing pigs among the Mahali is the highest (59.1%), followed by the Oraon (47.4%), Munda (27.3%), Santhal (13.4%) and among the Lodha it is only (9.1%).
- Poultry keeping is almost universal among the Mahali (95.5%), very high among the Oraon (87.2%) and the Munda (77.3%). The percentage of households possessing poultry birds among the Santhal and Lodha are 31.2 and 9.1 respectively.
- In terms of livestock holdings, the position of Bhumij, Mahali and Oraon are amongst the best, whilst that of the Lodha is the poorest.
- The point to note that the livestock status of Santhal is better in Jharkhand.

Vehicular Asset

In our survey we have collected data on vehicles owned by households. The most common and affordable transport is the bicycle. It basically facilitates movement of those residing in rural areas where kutcha roads mostly link villages and village markets.

Any rural household, however poor, tries to acquire a bicycle. It would therefore be interesting to see how many households are able to fulfill this basic transportation need.

Those owning rickshaws are likely to be using it for economic return. Ownership of scooter/ motor cycle/ car certainly is an indicator of middle class status.

Scheduled Castes

Bihar

In Bihar, 146 Scheduled Caste households (37.2%) own bicycle and only two households own rickshaw. As many as 12 households own scooter, and two have reached the status of owning car.

(To be continued...)

FROM:

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ALL INDIA ASECA,
SFS Flat No. 326, Pocket 10,
Sector 11 (Extension), Rohini,
Delhi - 110 085.

• **Editor:** Purna Chandra Hembram • **Published and Printed** by Barisa Kisku on behalf of All India Adivasi Socio Educational and Cultural Association (Registered), New Delhi • **Printed** at S. K. Enterprises, B- 975, Mangol Puri, Delhi 110 083 and published from **SFS Flat No. 326, Pocket 10, Sector 11 (Extension), Rohini, Delhi 110 085.**