

# **Tribe, Caste and Religion: A Study of Kandha-Pano Relations in Kandhamal, Odisha**

**A thesis submitted during 2016 to the University of Hyderabad in partial fulfilment of  
the award of a Ph.D. degree in Department of Sociology.**

**By**

**Ganesh Digal**

**08SSPH09**

**Supervised by**

**Dr. Nagaraju Gundemeda**



**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY  
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES  
UNIVERSITY of HYDERBAD  
HYDERABAD-500046  
TELANGANA  
INDIA**



**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY  
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES  
UNIVERSITY OF HYDERABAD  
HYDERABAD-500046**

## **DECLARATION**

I Ganesh Digal, hereby declare that this thesis, entitled **Tribe, Caste and Religion: A Study of Kandha-Pano Relations in Kandhamal, Odisha** submitted by me under the guidance and supervision of Dr. Nagaraju Gundemeda is a bonafide research work which is also free from plagiarism. I also declare that it has not been submitted previously in part or in full to this University or any other University or Institution for the award of any degree or diploma. I hereby agree that my thesis can be deposited in Shodhganga/INFLIBNET.

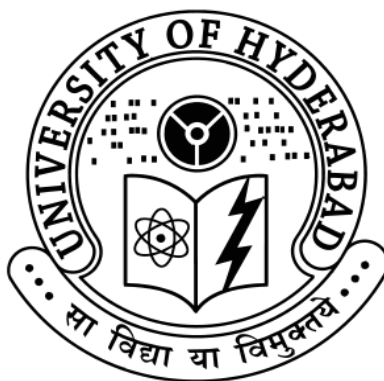
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HYDERABAD-500046**

## **CERTIFICATE**

There is to certify that the thesis entitled **Tribe, Caste and Religion: A Study of Kandha-Pano Relations in Kandhamal, Odisha** submitted by Ganesh Digal bearing Regd. No. 08SSPHO9 in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology is a bonafide work carried out by him under my supervision and guidance which is a plagiarism free thesis. The thesis has not been submitted previously in part or in full to this or any other university or institution for the award of any degree or diploma

Place: Hyderabad

Date:

Dr. Nagaraju Gundemeda  
Supervisor

Prof. Aparna Rayaprol  
Head  
Department of Sociology  
University of Hyderabad

Prof. Kamalkanta Mishra  
Dean  
School of Social Sciences  
University of Hyderabad

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## **Abbreviations**

BA: Bachelor of Arts

BJD: Biju Janata Dal

BJP: Bharatiya Janata Party

EPW: Economic and Political Weekly

GP: Gram Panchayat

IAS: Indian Administrative Service

I.T.I: Industrial Training Institute

INS: Indian National Congress

KSSS: Kui Samaj Samanaya Samiti

KVP: Kandhamal Vikas Parishada

MA: Masters of Arts

MLA: Member of Legislative Assembly

MP: Member of Parliament

NGOs: Non-Government Organizations

OAS: Odisha Administrative Service

OBCs: Other Backward Classes

PO: Probation Officer

RSS: Ratriya swayamsevak sangha

SC: Scheduled Castes

SEBC: Socio-Economic Backward castes

ST: Scheduled Tribes

VHP: Viswa Hindu Parishad

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**“A Mother is a first Teacher, A Teacher is a second Mother”**

**Proverb**

**A sincere  
Dedication to  
all the  
Teachers!**

# **CHAPTER-I**

## **Introduction**

## CHAPTER-I

### Introduction

*“True, a small section of Panas, benefiting from the education imparted by state and the Church, entered into the bureaucracy and politics, thereby acquiring visibility and prominence in an otherwise poor district. Moreover, this elite, though primarily self-serving, occasionally takes up the issues of the community and does not shy away from showing off its clout. In the process, it has become a kind of role model for the poor Panas- arousing their consciousness, enhancing their aspirations, and giving them a sense of empowerment. The emergence of the Panas as an assertive community has become an eyesore to the upper caste Hindus, not only in Kandhamal but also in other parts of Orissa. Thus, stereotypes of the Pana as “betrayers”, “cunning”, “deceitful”, “exploiter”, etc, has entered into the caste discourse in Orissa. Upper caste Hindus find it hard to digest the growing assertion of the Panas, who were once untouchable and at the bottom of the social order. The upper and middle caste Hindus and the Sangh Parivar leaders, both being outsiders in the district, enjoy a symbiotic relationship. Both see the assertive Panas as a threat to their hegemony; they would prefer a “docile” Kandha to a “defiant” Pana any day; it is not really the latter’s religion so much, as his informed consciousness. However, religion here becomes an additional stick to beat the Dalit Panas.” (Kannugo, 2008:2).*

*“Traditionally, the Kondhs of the area were indeed the chieftains, the local rajas, who were served by the Panas. The latter group played the mediating role between the Kondhs and the outside world. This role of a linkage paid off well and made the Panas an indispensable part of the local hierarchy. In earlier times, pans were given land as a reward for their service to the Kondhs. It is likely that this subordination of the Panas without effective resistance to it offered the system some sort of stability. However, the abolition of untouchability, reservations of jobs and electoral constituencies in the post-colonial period made Panos less and less dependent on the old order. New institutions helped this caste to attain a new-found mobility. As the Kondhs, unlike pans, were tied to the privileges the old order, they were not sufficiently motivated to make use of new avenues for mobility. In recent years, the pre-eminence of Panas in the area is seen by the Kondhs as a subversion of this old order. This change is a major source of resentment as far as Kondhs in Phulbani are concerned.” (Mohapatra and Bhattacharyya, 1996:2).*

Contemporary Odisha in general and Kandhamal district in particular has witnessed a violent caste-tribe conflict ranging from the village to the inter-district level. The nature and scale of the conflict is determined by the social composition of the villages, Panchayats, blocks, and districts. A cursory look at the secondary sources reveals that there are multiple types of conflict: upper castes versus backward castes, upper castes versus dalits, backward

castes versus dalits and dalits versus tribes. There are studies focused on the nature of Hindu-Muslim and Hindu-Christian conflicts in different parts of India, but one can hardly find a study on the Dalit versus the tribal conflict through the lens of class consciousness and religious conversion. This study makes an attempt to understand the nature and structure of tribe-caste conflict in the context of Odisha in general and Kandhamal in particular. The conflict in Kandhamal is different from other traditional upper caste versus lower caste conflicts since it is a tribal-Dalit and Hindu-Christian conflict. The complex multi-cultural identities, socio-political situations, and the redefining of identities and compositions through religious faiths turned Kandhamal into a conflict-prone zone between the Kandha-Pano and Hindu-Christian groups. The multiple identities such as caste, -tribe, religion, and language have been the major points of conflict in Kandhamal.

There are numerous scholars like F.G. Bailey (1957, 1960), Barbora M Boal (1997), Felix Padel (1995, 2009), Pralay Kanungo (2008), Bishnu N. Mohapatra (1996), who have studied the tribe-caste relations focused on the Kandha<sup>1</sup> of Kandhamal. However, their studies lack adequate emphasis on the social dynamics of Kandhamal, particularly the changing socio-economic life of the Pano<sup>2</sup> caste. The Kandha and the Pano are two important communities in Kandhamal. The Kandha and Pano communities are less dynamic than other communities in Kandhamal, but this should not mean that they have absolutely no mobility. The Kandha and Pano communities are also changing with time, although the rate of change is slow. During the colonial period, the Kandha and Pano experienced a severe shock due to the British economic policies. These policies led to the loss of the traditional rights of the Kandha, while the Pano abandoned their traditional occupations and adopted modern professions. The members of Pano community thus got a chance to change their social and economic status, while the traditional power of Kandha weakened. Nowadays, the status of

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<sup>1</sup>Kandha is one of the major tribal community in Odisha.

<sup>2</sup>Pano is one of the major Dalit community in Odisha.

an individual in Kandhamal is determined not only by his/her caste/tribal identities, but also by his/her position, financial condition, educational qualification, occupation, and political affiliations. The Pano community no longer looks upon itself as subservient, impure and inferior to other communities in Kandhamal, due to constitutional provisions, and in addition with assistance from the missionaries. In the post-Independence India, Government of Odisha undertakes and implements various development schemes in Kandhamal to improve the socio-economic and educational status of the Kandha. Despite of these efforts, the Kandha continue to face problems such as massive poverty, indebtedness, low literacy rate, malnutrition, and disease. During the colonial period, the scope of education for both the Kandha and the Pano was very limited. In post-Independence India, the government established a number of Scheduled Tribe and Scheduled Caste welfare schools in Kandhamal. However, the rate of progress and success in tribal education has not been achieved as per the policy of the government. This is due to the negligence of the non-local teachers who happen to come from outside the district, because of which they take their job casually without any concern for the education and upliftment of the Kandha and Pano students.

With the passage of time, there has been a large-scale migration from other parts of the state to Kandhamal. Most of the migrants are either from upper caste or other backward class background, who happened to be on a better footing than the locals. The outsiders continue to take advantage of the available opportunities and manipulate the local disputes between Kandha and Pano. The number of contractors, moneylenders, and upper caste traders in the area have been increased considerably. In such a situation, the Kandha and the Pano are forced to compete with each other in every possible way. This competition generates a sense of insecurity and hostility in the minds of the Kandha as they are losing their age-old social status.

There is an intra-social stratification among the Kandha and Pano. Some are economically and educationally well-off whereas the poor are still struggling to improve their standard of living. The economic and educational status creates an impact on the social and cultural life of both the Kandha and Pano. Those Kandha and Pano who are economically and educationally well-off tend to behave in individualistic way, creating jealousy and conflict within the community and with the outsiders. Due to the individualistic behaviour of the middle class Pano, a sense of hostility and loss of trust has formed in the minds of the Kandha.

Traditionally, the Kandha are in constant contact with the Pano and the caste Hindus. Economically, the Kandha and the Pano are close to each other. But in a social, cultural and ritual sphere the Kandha considered the Pano as inferior, subordinate and hereditary servants. The Kandha have adopted and assimilated different traditions and customs of the caste Hindus. Many of the Kandha have left their traditional way of life and live and behave like the caste Hindus. The Kandha have shown great interest in participating and celebrating Hindu festivals and fairs. However, the Pano have also shown equal interest in observing and celebrating Hindu festivals and fairs, worshiping Hindu Gods and Goddesses, adopting caste Hindu rituals and practices and trying to raise their religious ritual status. However, the British administration and the Christian missionaries offered the local Kandha and the Pano opportunity to change.

Christian missionaries played a significant role in the Kandhamal region. The spread of education among the local Kandha and the Pano are always a top priority of Christian missionaries. The Christian missionaries have opened a number of schools for the tribal, Dalit or girl students. In addition they were provided with scholarship for their higher education. The Christian missionaries also gave proper attention to the problem of the health of locals. A number of hospitals have been opened in the area to provide free medical facilities to the

locals. Christianity has developed a sense of equality and humanity among the Pano who were suffering from the practice of untouchability. In fact, a majority of the Pano and a small number of the Kandha have converted to Christianity. Despite the change brought about by the Christian Missionaries, the Kandha tribe is reluctant to embrace Christianity. They feel proud of their social and cultural status despite their poor economical conditions. For the Kandha tribe, embracing Christianity mean degrading their social, cultural and ritual status.

### **Background of the study**

The wide range of changes in the socio-cultural, economic, educational, political and religious spheres in Kandhamal contributed to some hostile incidents and inter-community conflicts between the Kandha and the Pano, which occurs sporadically. Due to the politicization of the situation, the area has become faction-ridden. People with religious and political vested interests, played a vital role in creating socio-political conflict. In 1994, the first major violent incident was witnessed when a Pano youth entered the Shiva temple in Khudutentuli village. The surrounding Kandha villages organized an attack and indiscriminately killed some Pano and also destroyed their houses and properties.

In 2007, on Christmas Eve, another violent conflict erupted between the Kandha and the Pano (most of whom are Christians converted), when the VHP leader Swami Laxmanananda Saraswati<sup>3</sup> alleged that there is a threat to his life from Pano Christians. Since 1968, Swami Laxmanananda has been worked for the Hinduization of the Kandha and led anti-Christian and cow protection campaigns in Kandhamal. He used extremely derogatory and provocative language against the Panos and Christian Panos. For him both Pano and Christian Pano were synonyms. On the Christmas day in 2007, thousands of Christian houses were burned down and according to official data, five people were killed. On 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2008, on the eve of Shri Krishna Janmashtami, Swami Lakshamananda Saraswati along with

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<sup>3</sup>Original name is Lakshamanananda Sethy; belong to a washer man caste in Odiha caste system.

four of his followers - one of them a woman - were killed by unknown persons at his *ashram* at Jalespata, near Tumudibandh block. The killers left a note identifying themselves as Maoist<sup>4</sup>, blaming Laskhamananda Saraswati for inciting the locals, his role in the anti-tribal, anti-Dalit, and anti-Christian violence. The killing of Swami Lakshmananda Saraswati led to the worst violent conflict between the Kandha and the (mostly converted Christian) Pano.

The nature and geographical location of violent conflict between the Kandha and the Pano in 1994 are quite different from the nature and geographical location of the violent conflict in 2007 and 2008. The violent conflict between the Kandha and the Pano in 1994 was basically confined to the Phulbani subdivision and legislative assembly constituency, which was reserved for Scheduled Castes. In 1994, the Kandha mainly targeted the Pano who professed the Hindu religion and attacked their houses and properties and did not attack the Christian Panos, their houses or their Churches in this area. In 1994, while the Phulbani constituency was highly affected by the violence for nearly six months, the other two constituencies G. Udayagiri and Baliguda largely remained calm. Both constituencies were reserved for Scheduled Tribe.

In 2007 and 2008, the violent conflict largely took place in G.Udayagiri and Baliguda constituencies, consisting of the blocks of Baliguda, G.Udayagiri, K.Nuagaon, Raikia, Tikabali, Chakapada, Daringbadi, Kotagarh and Tumudibandh, where the Kandha mainly targeted the Pano who had converted to Christianity. Interestingly, this time, the Kandha did not target the Pano who professed the Hindu religion, whether in G.Udayagiri, Baliguda or Phulbani constituencies. Even in Phulbani constituency, this time, the Kandha mainly targeted the converted Christian Panos and destroyed their houses and churches.

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<sup>4</sup>Left extremist insurgent group



## Literature on the Kandha and the Pano in the context of Kandhamal

Literature on Kandhamal regarding the relationship between the Kandha and the Pano and the relationship between the Kandha and caste Hindus will be incomplete without referring to F.G Bailey's classical works - *Caste and the Economic frontier: A village in highland Orissa*<sup>5</sup>, *Tribe, Caste and Nation: A Study of political activity and political change in highland Orissa*<sup>6</sup>. He studied two villages - Bisipara and Baderi. He found a Shiva temple in the Bisipara village, of which caste Hindus and the Kandha were the custodians. The priests of the temple were Brahmins and the Panos were not allowed into the temple. In 1948 when the Panos demanded entry into the temple, the caste Hindus and Kandhas of the locality fortified the temple with weapons.<sup>7</sup>

The caste Hindus and the Kandhas threatened the Pano, that they would kill them if they tried to enter the temple. However, some educated Pano complained to the district administration and police, referring to the 'Temple entry act'. The administration failed to secure entry of the Pano into the temple. Afterwards, the caste Hindus and Kandhas of the locality decided to ostracize the Panos, and the Panos welcomed the decision of the caste Hindus and Kandhas. After that, the Panos formed a caste council, which announced a series of measures which would help improve their standard of living, educational status, social dignity and economic betterment. The caste council of Panos refused to be subservient to Kandhas and caste Hindus, and also rejected the untouchable status of the Pano. Since then, there has been a conflict between the Panos and caste Hindus as well as the Panos and the Kandhas.

The caste Hindus and Kandhas were jealous of the few educationally advanced Pano in the village, because of this marginal mobility they would often remark that the Panos were

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<sup>5</sup> Published by Manchester University Press in 1957.

<sup>6</sup> Published by Manchester University Press in 1960.

<sup>7</sup>F.G.Bailey, 1957. *Caste and the Economic Frontier: A village in highland Orissa*, P.220

forgetting their status in society and that they do not deserve to get decent human treatment. They would always use obscene language against the Pano and this often lead to caste conflicts. In the other village of Baderi, some Kandha misbehaved with the Pano at a marriage feast, and the Pano protested against this at the village council which was dominated by the Kandhas. The council accused the Pano instead, that they no longer respected the Kandhas and the caste Hindus as their masters. As punishment, the council decided to impose an economic boycott. The Pano were no longer to be employed as agricultural labour or served as clients. Land and property that were given to the Pano were invalidated. However, after some time, the caste conflict between the Kandhas and the Panos calmed down.

Mohapatra and Bhattacharya (1996) in *Tribal-Dalit Conflict: Electoral politics in Phulbani*, argue that the violent clashes between the Pano caste and the Kandha tribe in Phulbani legislative constituency (reserved for scheduled caste) in 1994 were a reaction to the entry of a Pano youth into a Shiva temple in the village of Khudutentuli on January 14, 1994. The Kandha organised to purify the temple and later attacked and damaged the houses and properties of the Pano in the same village. The Kandha objected to the cutting down and collection of bamboo by the Pano. The authors highlighted the local saying that the “Kandha is the king and the Pano is his minister”.

According to this, traditionally, the Kandhas of the area were the chieftains and served by the Panos. The Panos played the mediating role between the Kandhas and the outside world. This middleman role paid off well and the Panos were given land as a reward for their service to the Kandhas. After Independence, the constitutional provisions and safeguards, the abolition of untouchability, reservation in education, administration and electoral constituencies, made the Panos less dependent on the Kandhas. These constitutional provisions and safeguards enabled the Panos to attain a new-found mobility. However, the

Kandha were tied to the privileges of the old order and were not sufficiently motivated to make use of the new avenues for mobility. Today the mobility of the Panos in the area is being seen by the Kandha as a threat to the traditional social order. The authors claim that the mobility of the Pano and the changes in the socio-economic situation in Kandhamal are the major source of hatred as far as Kandhas in Phulbani is concerned.

Debendranath Jena (1999) in *A Critical Analysis of A Tribal Uprising In Orissa: Case Of Kandhamal*, describes that the ugly facade of political rivalry combined with intense class hatred and long-standing *jajmani* feuds, was instrumental in triggering the conflict in Kandhamal in the year 1994, which claimed twenty lives, besides rendering thousands homeless. The conflict between Kandha and Pano is deep rooted in economic scarcities and socio-cultural and political fields. Previously, the tribal uprisings used to be directed against economic exploitation, colonial administrations and towards the upholding of traditional culture.

Most feuds were agrarian in nature and were based on issues with the land tenure system. Cultural shocks, relative deprivation, domination by external forces and preservation of identity have been the other important elements in tribal revolts. But of late, these uprisings have acquired a regional or ethnic colour and have become caste and class-based. Moreover, such movements are showing the tendency to take up a distinctly political character, mainly because of the increasing involvement of organised political associations and the growing political aspirations of the potential local tribal leaders.

Pralay Kanungo (2008) in *Hindutva's Fury against Christians in Orissa*, says, that the division between the Kandha and the Pano is not of recent origin and comes from an antagonistic historical relationship. The author claims that the Kandhas were the original settlers of Kandhamal, who used to control local power and resources (land and forest) as

‘*Rajas*’ (Kings). On the other hand, the landless Panos were considered as ‘*Prajas*’ or servants. The Kandhas’ claim of superiority over the Panos deteriorated the latter’s social and cultural relations. Later, British intervention changed this scenario, in which the Kandhas were deprived of their traditional rights over the forest and land. Moreover, refusal by Kandhas to directly deal with the outside world gave opportunities to the Panos in terms of material and politics. The Kandhas used the Panos as ‘middle men’<sup>8</sup>, they, however, despised this role and literature depicted the Panos as ‘liars’, ‘cheats’ and ‘hypocrites’. This resentment among the Kandhas was due to the relative success of a few Panos improvements through obtaining petty jobs, undertaking petty trade and even acquiring land during the colonial rule. Thus, for the Kandhas, the Panos became cheaters, exploiters, and land snatchers.

In the post-independence era, this situation of the Panos was further crystallized with the help of the state as well as the church, and the cornering of maximum benefits of constitutional reservation due to relatively better educational and economic status. However, this perception is a little misplaced, since a large majority of Panos are poor and, being Dalit Christians, many Panos are constitutionally deprived of the benefits of reservation. However, the Kandhas, allege that the Panos hide their Christian identity and even claim to be Scheduled Tribes or Hindu Scheduled Castes by producing forged certificates. Also, the Kandha fears that the Pano may dominate them economically, politically and culturally in the near future.

Tina Otten and Edward Simpson (2016) in *F G Bailey’s Bisipara Revisited*, describe that the positions of ‘dominant communities’ seemed less certain with the arrival of new forms of economic opportunities and affirmative legislation. The lower castes gained confidence, wealth, and part of other assertive political projects. However, despite these

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<sup>8</sup>The Kandha used the Pano as their interpreter, messenger and communicator when dealing with outsiders.

relative changes, the echoes of older social forms continue to play a role in the affairs of the village.

The Kandha always claims the superior status and there is an unequal status relationship between the Kandha and the Pano. The Kandha claimed that the Pano have overtly benefited from the affirmative action policies of the state and selfishly exploited their positions both in government and private sectors. The Kandha also felt that the Pano have lost respect for their traditional order due to their conversion to Christianity. The politics of Kandhamal fused with caste and religion, and there are many contentious issues which are the source of the frequent dispute and communal violence between the Kandha and the Pano.

### **Research questions**

What is happening in contemporary Kandhamal? Why the Kandha and the Panos landed in such crisis? Is it a tribe-caste conflict? Is it a religious conflict? How do the Dalits and tribals perceive religious conversions? Is this happening due to the dynamics of dominance and resistance? What are the problems and questions which requires sociological explanations?

This study analysed the sources and causes of conflict - how caste, tribe, and religion played a major role in the shifting Kandha-Pano relations.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The study explores the dynamics of inter-community relationships between the Kandha and the Pano in Kandhamal. In light of the above research problem and research questions, it is important to conduct an empirical study to understand the following objectives:

- To study the ‘nature of the tribe-caste dynamics’ in Kandhamal district of Odisha.

- To analyse the role of religion and religious conversion in mediating the means of mobility and social conflict between the Pano and Kandha.
- To examine the role of reservation policy in generating conflict between the Kandha and the Pano.
- To map out the ‘claims and contestations of Kandha and Pano’ on land and livelihood, and understand the social tensions based on claims and underlying social status.

## **Methodology**

In the present study, the methodology has been developed based on the bottom-up approach, to understand how status, power, and ritual purity mediated diverse modes of conflicts in the Kandhamal society. Since the lower castes, tribal and upper castes are located in different strata of the society based on status, power and ritual purity, their world view, social, cultural, economic and political views varies from each other on the basis of their social background. Social status, everyday social realities, and experiences vary from one social group to another.

Keeping this in mind, it is a standard practice to give a clear explanation of the methodology, its use and its importance in collecting the data to meet the objectives and address the research problems. Thus, it is necessary to highlight the procedure of selection of the universe, the selection of the sample, the tools and techniques, the methods of data collection, the quality and quantity of data, incorporation of certain crucial remarks on the field problems, data analysis, findings and broad generalisations to go with it. The study takes a slight departure from the conventional approach. It intends to analyse the theoretical and conceptual frames substantiated with socio-historical evidence. This exercise was deliberately given much care in this study, as the nature of the study demanded. The study cannot make sense unless and until the dominant social structure has been thoroughly analysed in the

social and historical context. Thus keeping this and the nature of the study in mind, the researcher has taken the help of qualitative techniques for better synthesis and understanding of the existing social realities of Kandhamal.

### **The scope of the study**

The universe of the present study is Kandhamal, one of the backward, tribal-dominated districts of Odisha. The selection of Kandhamal district was not merely dictated by the fact that the researcher hails from the same district, but because of the distinctive tribe-caste relations, patterns of conflict, socio-historical processes and Kandhamal's emergence as one among the highly violent and terrifying places for Dalits and religious minorities in contemporary Odisha. There are a long-standing tribe-caste conflict, communal hostility and a series of violent incidents against Dalits and religious minorities in Kandhamal, which has the highest rate of incidence in Odisha. The caste conflicts and ethnic divisions have turned into communal violence in contemporary Kandhamal. Hindutva forces used Kandhamal as a laboratory for Hindutva politics and Hindu Nationalism in Odisha. Secondly, the various studies and reports collected on the conflict and violence against Dalits and religious minorities, point to manifold causes of conflict, as well as increasing violence against Dalits and religious minorities. The researcher eventually tried to observe and analyse how far the social circumstances of Kandhamal created inroads to turn it into a place of conflict.

### **Selections of the Village(s)**

Keeping this in view, an attempt has been made to select two villages - one village from Gudari Gram Panchayat of Khajuripada block and another village from Beheragaon Gram Panchayat in Tikabali Block (which is now in Chakapada block). These two villages have been considered here as 'representative' or 'typical', which broadly suited the purpose of the study. The major criteria for the two selected villages are their distinctiveness and

similarity. The distinctiveness is that in both the study villages, it was mainly a group of tribal women and youth that attacked and torched the houses of the Pano community of their own village in the daytime. They did not attack the homes or the people of other castes in their village. In the other surrounding villages, the Pano and the converted Christian Pano houses were attacked mainly by Kandha men with the help of the outsider men from both tribal and non-tribal communities. So the pattern of conflict in these two villages was distinctive compared to the other villages.

Regarding the social structure, socio-economic background of the village, the standard of living, occupation, social relationship and population size, both the villages have the same characteristics. 'Bastingia' is a bilingual, multi-caste, multi-religious village and a majority of its people are from the Kandha tribe. The village with a total population of 738, the male population of 435, the female population of 303 and a total 111 households, is located 37 kilometres away from Phulbani, the district headquarters. 'Dadpaju' is a monolingual, multi-caste village with a majority of people from the Kandha tribe, with a total population of 960, 120 households, and located 4 kilometres away from Phulbani.

### **Access to informants and information**

This present study is primarily based on an ethnographic account in the two villages. The ethnographic fieldwork was largely conducted in two villages over a period of ten months, between 2010 and 2012. The primary data has been generated largely through participant and non-participant observations, informal and formal discussions, focused group discussions and in-depth interviews. The secondary sources of data have been collected through government records and reports, district gazetteers, local newspapers, published journals and books. Out of the two villages, the researcher began the study with Dadpaju village. The basic reason for study and spending of time in this village is the fact that this



village was the worst affected in the 1994 Kandha-Pano conflict. It is a multi-caste, tribal dominated village where both the Kandha and Pano are practicing Hinduism and there is no problem of religious conversion or Christianity. So it was important to understand and gain a detailed first-hand knowledge and information on social relationships, social dynamics, religious beliefs and activities, education, economy and politics in such a village. Data and information collected from this village are very important for in-depth understanding and supplemented with a wide range of observations because there is no Christianity or religious conversion issue here. So, it was essential to understand what the local, social, cultural, economic, religious and political issues were, that created rifts between the Kandha and the Pano, apart from Christianity and religious conversion.

The second village, Bastingia, was among the worst affected during the 1994 Kandha-Pano conflict and the 2007 and 2008 religious conflicts. It is also a multi-caste, tribal dominated village, but with a majority of the Pano converted and practicing Christianity. The data collected from this village is more focused, precise and specific. The data has been generated through informal and formal discussions and in-depth interviews. The first village served as a foundation course for an in-depth understanding of the social order, social dynamics, shifting social relationships, social conflicts, and violence. The second village was largely used for the understanding of similarities and difference between the two villages. It was important to understand the everyday life, activities, attitudes, beliefs, values and identities of people in both the villages.

Subsequently, the researcher made visits to each of the villages and finally made certain choices based on important considerations. The immediate concern was about how the gathering of information and data collection were going to happen. Some people from these villages assured the researcher their help and cooperation for data collection. So, through regular visits, the researcher choose the key informants from both the Kandha and the Pano

communities to know about the history of the village and locality, social structure of the village, inter and intra-community relations, issues, and the problem of tribal, education, religion, socio-economic backgrounds of the Kandha, Pano and caste Hindu people, employment and occupations, exploitation, agriculture, migration, politics and political consciousness in the villages, shift in employment and social relationships. Through the key informants, the researcher familiarised with other members of the village including both men and women, as well as caste Hindus.

### **Principal Sources of Data**

The village was the unit of study for data collection and there was direct interaction with the informants as a principal source of data. Through in-depth interviews and participant observation, the researcher gathered in-depth and first-hand information about the village and village communities. Beside the participant method, group discussion with selected groups of 8-10 members, and household surveys on some select persons in the village were also undertaken. This covered information on family background, religion, landholdings, agriculture, education, employment, income, and migration. Apart from this, the households were also asked information on village history, socio-economic transformation, and inter and intra-community relations.

### **Other Primary Sources**

In addition, to strengthen the information and data gathered, the researcher made use of some unpublished material which is necessary to understand the historical context of Kandhamal. This is exercise to understand the relationship between the past and the present situations of Kandhamal. Without an analysis of the past of Kandhamal, the present situation would seem absurd.

## **Period of the field works and Data Collection**

The field work was conducted in three phases – a pilot study for two months, followed by the first phase of field study for five months and the second phase of field study for five months. The pilot study was conducted in the months of March-April 2011. The first round of field work was conducted in the months of August-December, 2011 and completed in the months of February-June, 2012. It is needless to explain the wide spectrum of problems encountered as a researcher. Upon entry into field work, the researcher visited several villages and places of Kandhamal to meet a wide range of people: community leaders, politicians, teachers, NGO workers, youth, and common people and as many people as possible in their homes, agricultural fields and public spaces. In certain places and occasions, small group discussions were arranged. The purpose was to meet different people and make them aware of the study – as something which is purely meant for academic purposes - thereby securing their confidence, and gaining necessary information and co-operation which is expected from them.

The first phase of data covered the village history, locality, caste composition, social structure, village settlement patterns, leadership and political structures, inter-community relations and social relations, fairs and festivals, rituals and ceremonial activities of different communities in the village, land holdings, agriculture, sources of irrigation, economy, occupations, education, health, poverty, employment and unemployment, economic inequality, standard of living, markets and market relations, road connection and communication, cropping patterns and production of different crops, participation of women labourers, wages with respect to gender, the method of payment, method and function of money lending and migration.

The second phase of data collection was followed by a detailed discussions on status and roles, land, property rights and distribution, caste discrimination, untouchability, social

interaction, folkways, mores, social ideals, ideology, group life, sexual relationships, activities of individuals, linguistic identities, religious identities, religious conversion, inter-caste/community marriage, corruption, criminal activities, political parties and politics, food, social mobility, social and economic changes, use of forest and government land, exploitation, aversion and hate propaganda, beliefs and attitudes, opinions, meetings, processions and slogans, indebtedness, village problems, factions and leadership, and issues which are related to conflict and violence.

Last but not the least, in many cases, the interviewees took three to four sessions to express themselves adequately, due to frequent intervention by the people around. The heads of the household, either male or female, leaders from both Kandha and Pano communities, politicians, academicians, government officials, police, activists, NGO workers, and the outsider caste Hindus (those residing in Kandhamal) were personally interacted with and interviewed at their homes and spaces, though some of them expressed agony and clumsiness in expressing fully regarding the conflict. Much of the erroneous, unreliable and cynical information on many crucial aspects such as land, income, criminal activities were corrected to a certain extent with cross examinations. Even then, some inconsistencies and disagreements obviously remained, which were neither possible to rework nor was there any indication that a recheck would help clear the imperfections. Thus all information supplied by key informants and informants here should be considered as approximate as accurate.

### **Positionality of the Researcher**

Being a Pano and conducting a study on the Kandha-Pano conflict in Kandhamal was a challenging and very complicated task since the Kandha are hostile towards the Pano. My caste identity and social background never led to any negative influences in this research. My desires for knowledge and inquisitiveness have forced me to conduct this study as a neutral researcher and observer to understand the dynamics of the Kandha-Pano conflict. I wished to

explore how both the marginal communities were fighting with each other. I also look into the core issues that led to tensions and conflicts between communities, how their inter-community relations deteriorated and the factors responsible for this. In such situation, as a researcher I acted both as an insider and an outsider during my fieldwork.

### **Experiences as Researcher**

Fieldwork and data collection for the present study is not free from challenges. There is a wide gap between the academic understanding and empirical understanding of the tribe, caste and sub-clan identities. There are certain uncomfortable situations during the interaction with the Kandha and other communities to gather the data regarding the issues that generate hostility and conflict between the Kandha and the Pano. It is difficult to ask some straightforward questions to interrogate and to understand the changing aspects of caste and religious conflict between the Kandha and the Pano.

My self-presentation is enough to add much fuel to the fire of conflict because of my identity (Pano). I have encountered difficulties in meeting and interacting with victims and perpetrators of violence regarding their experiences and situations of violence. This occurs to me risky job. It is sensitive to collect the information regarding religious and political controversies. Many locals are suspicious about my presents in the area; they are thinking whether I am police collecting information secretly. In my minute observation of the field, in both the study villages, the Kandha, Sundhi, Gauda, and Karan people practiced caste and untouchability. As a matter of fact, I was denied entry to their houses for being one of the untouchables myself. In such a situation, sometimes I have to stand in outside of their house and sat on the plastic chair. This practical situation leads me to think of maintaining distance from the Kandha and other caste communities since they have traditions and norms of the village. It is strange to see a mere touch from a Dalit defile Kandha or other caste and this can

be restored only after a bath with head wash and eating *Tulsi leafs*. Unfortunately, my caste identity never allowed me for a free talk, free movement and free interaction with Kandhas and other castes. The caste norms in the village are nothing but humiliations. I have observed many times that the Kandha or other touchable communities sprinkled cow dung immediately when a Pano caste enters and left their premises. The caste and untouchability strongly preserved and practiced by the villagers.

However, my normal interaction with people, by and large, remained friendly throughout the period. It was a very different experience and new academic socialization. Getting a room for rent in the village was very difficult for an unmarried person like me and that to Pano by caste. However, I managed to get a room in the study village.

Observing the fields and the constitutional provisions to abolished untouchability in India has far from achieving its objective. The constitutional abolition of untouchability did not transform to the ground level. However, the caste and practice of untouchability is rampant in the villages in Kandhamal. Untouchability and degraded social status are the mothers of atrocities and violence against Dalit. For a Dalit, Hinduism is a cultural slavery and caste is not only structural inequality, rather it is an agency of structural, social, cultural, religious and economic violence. Because of the caste, the Dalit faced violence in every sphere of life. The Hinduism and the category of constitutionally scheduled caste are very problematic in the context of Pano in Kandhamal. The Pano are untouchable, ritually impure, culturally degraded social status and subordinated to the Kandha.

However, the Kandha being a touchable community can avail the constitutional facilities while practicing Hinduism or Christianity, however, the Pano cannot avail the same if they practice Christianity. This is a state-sponsored social exclusion. The plight of the untouchable community cannot be solved within the framework of Hinduism or Hindu

religious philosophy. If the untouchable choose and practice another religion which preaches the philosophy of equality and humanity, then they are excluded from the constitutional provisions. It is most unfortunate that the state sponsored conspiracy against Dalit community is to make them cultural slaves of Hinduism and religious disability.

### **Framework for the Study**

“The present knowledge of history, religion, culture and society, which has been produced and disseminated, is quite one-sided.” (Dahiwale, 2005:28)

“In the case of culturally heterogeneous societies, if the constituted segments are unequal, either because they are numerically small or economically weak or culturally ‘backward’ or all of these, the tendency is to ignore them in the representation of reality. There are numerous instances when these ignored or marginalised communities demand to be represented in the process of knowledge production.” (Oommen, 2005:36)

‘Perspective from below’ or bottom-up approach on Indian society and social realities was employed for the present study. It consists of how those in the lower sections of society perceive society and social reality through their status and power. Society is a web of social relationships. Social relationships are established through mutual behaviour, social interaction and intercourse between the various members, families, groups and societies. Social relationships depend on the social interaction of the constituent members of society. It may be co-operation, competition or conflict. Conflict is universal and found in each and every part of the world and every society. However, it is not essential that violent actions should always be associated with conflict. Conflict arises due to contradictory goals, objectives and methods.

The present study is an attempt to understand the root causes of conflict and shifting tribe-caste relations, using the concepts of conflict, identity, religion, caste, tribe, social exclusion, social stratification, and social mobility, since all these concepts are related to social relationships and social conflict. Society is a system of social relationships and these

relationships represent the functional aspects of society. Social relationships involve reciprocal obligations and social interaction is the foundation stone of society. Just as there are social relations in all, not a single society is free from conflict, because, in all societies, there is inequality and differentiation in existence. These differences and inequalities lead to a clash of interests or ideas. Due to the inequalities among people, different identities, economic and political interests, conflict is inevitable in every society.

In general, conflict means a clash of interests or a direct and conscious struggle between different individuals or groups for the same interests, objectives, and goals. Conflict in Indian society and its social realities can be broadly understood through the concept of identity, religion, caste, tribe, social exclusion, social stratification, and social mobility. Under Hindu philosophy and *Chaturvarna* system, the Indian social structure and social realities are construed as consent, compromise, and harmony. However, contrary to this, there is a dialectical approach to understand the Indian social structure and social realities. In this regard, the dynamics of shifting tribe-caste relations and conflict in Kandhamal needs a distinctive consideration and comprehensive study.

### **Concept of Conflict**

“Conflict is a social process in the form of a struggle between individuals or groups. There are various approaches to understand the conflict in society. Sociological theories and perspectives on conflict focus on tension, competition, and division in societies. Conflict theory assumes that no society is devoid of conflicts of interest and that in the process of struggling for scarce and valuable resources, groups develop strategies to maximise their rewards and minimise their losses.”<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> International Encyclopedia of Sociology, volume one, S.Chand & Company Ltd. New Delhi, 2000:230



## Concept of Identity

“The concept of identity refers to the meaning of cultural traits, experiences, self-representation and social action. For Individuals and social groups, there is a plurality of identities. Identity can be thought of as the cover term for the names of humans imputed and avowed in the course of interacting with others and orienting themselves to their social worlds. There are three types of identities in social sciences: social identity, personal identity, and collective identity. Identity also is situated in terms of times and space. From sociological perspectives, social identity is the foundational concept, which is grounded in and derives from social roles.”<sup>10</sup>

## Concept of Religion

“The concept of religion refers to the meaning of beliefs, symbols, and rituals. Durkheim’s classic definition of religion is - “*A religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart, and forbidden beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community, called a church, and all those who adhere to them*”. According to him, religion is a collective or social phenomenon, which forms as a result of beliefs and actions. People of a group get organised on the basis of these beliefs and actions, and on the basis of certain moral norms. Having categorized the objects into sacred and profane, he further categorizes religion into two aspects - beliefs and rituals. According to him, beliefs are more theoretical and related to the world of thought, while rituals are more connected with action.”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Encyclopedia of Social Theory, Volume one, Sage Publications, London, 2005:390

<sup>11</sup> Encyclopedia of Social Theory, Volume two, Sage Publications, London, 2005:634

## **Concept of Caste**

‘Caste’ is a form of social stratification in Hindu Philosophy, which is referred to a hierarchical social order based on the notions of purity and pollution. Various scholars defined the concept of caste in various ways. The caste system originates from the ‘*Chaturvarna*’ system, which is based on the notion of purity and pollution. The caste based division of labour and occupation also based on the notion of purity and pollution.

## **Concept of Tribe**

The term ‘tribe’ was first used by the colonial government and ethnographers to categorize some social groups that did not fit and match with the category of ‘caste’.<sup>12</sup> In the local language, the tribes are called Adivasi. Scholars from India and abroad have produced rich ethnographic literature on the social life, culture, religion, economy, poverty, illiteracy, health, livelihood, ethnicity, struggles, and movements of tribes.

## **Social Stratification**

‘Social stratification’ refers to the structured social inequality of differentiation in the process of social interaction, whereby some people come to be ranked higher than others. Social stratification tends to perpetuate the differentiation in status and privileges. The forms of social stratification vary from society to society and are never uniform in all societies.

## **Social Mobility**

‘Social mobility’ refers to the movement of the people or groups from one social status or position to another status or position. There are two types of social mobility: Vertical social mobility and Horizontal social mobility. Vertical mobility refers to the movement of people or groups from one status to another. Vertical mobility involves a

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<sup>12</sup>The Adivasi Question: Issues of Land, Forest and Livelihood, Orient Black Swan, New Delhi, 2012:1

change in class, occupation, and power. Horizontal mobility refers to the change in position without the change in status. It indicates a change in position within the range of the same status.

### **Social exclusion**

‘Social exclusion’ is the process by which individuals or entire communities of people are systematically blocked from rights, opportunities and resources (e.g. housing, employment, healthcare, civic engagement, democratic participation and due process) that are normally available to members of society and which are key to social integration. There are various aspects and forms of social exclusion, which are experienced through Religion, race, Caste, Gender, Ethnicity, Class, Region, Culture, Language, Disability, Migration and Refugee status.

### **Significance of the Study**

The study is important from the sociological perspective, it is aimed to provide an alternative perspective in order to understand the tribe and caste identities with the substantial ethnographic material, on how some communities carry both tribe and caste-like characteristics simultaneously. The study will contribute to the pursuit of knowledge and scholarship in the sociological sense, on how Odia society in general and the tribal and non-tribal societies, in particular, are functioning. It will help in understanding the social dynamics, caste and tribe identities, shifting and restructuring inter-community relations, social conflicts and communal violence, and their impact on the social order. It will aid in the understanding of tribal and Dalit issues and will add to existing literature on their social, cultural, religious, economic, educational and political spheres. The study questions many prejudices and stereotypical cultural perceptions about Dalit life and culture. Thus, this study will be of help for sociologists, social anthropologists, and political scientists.

This study is also interrogates the existing hegemonic Brahminical knowledge systems and is a critical assessment of the sociology of knowledge of caste and tribe. Drawing from the insider/outsider debate in Indian Sociology particularly on Dalit Sociology vis-a-vis Dalit Narratives, this study assess the impact of dominant epistemology on sociological research methods and discusses how these methods ignore knowledge production, ways of knowing, selection of theories, analytical categories, analysis of data, and power relations that Indian sociology produces. The study critically evaluates the theoretical frameworks, approaches, and methods which have been adopted by many sociologists and social anthropologists in their attempts to understand the tribes and castes in Indian society.

The sociologists and anthropologists borrowed theories and methods from the west to study tribes and castes in Indian society, whereas the character of Indian society is completely different from western societies. Sociologists and anthropologists from western and non-Dalit origins never experienced or understood the experience of untouchability, humiliation, and social discrimination. The struggle and conflict in western society are basically economic and political in nature whereas the struggle and conflict in Indian society is more social and cultural.

### **Limitations of the study**

No study is free from limitations and the present study is no exception. One of the basic problems faced is the problem of identity and subjectivity. Because of the caste location of the researcher, the tribal and another caste (non-Pano), people are very much suspicious and hesitant to narrate the story of conflict and the roots of violence. The researcher had made an effort to explain the purpose of the study - the fact that it was for academic purposes only, and that no one's identities shall be revealed. Villagers, informants, and respondents

hesitated to talk or were not interested in taking on issues such as religious conversion, conflict or communal violence with the researcher. They posed a lot of questions to the researcher with regard to identity, locality, and purpose of the study. Government officials deliberately did not answer many questions put forth by the researcher. Thus, there were many challenges faced during the field work. The findings of the study cannot be generalised.

### **The structure of the thesis:**

The present study is divided into six chapters including an introduction and conclusion. The first chapter of the thesis is an introduction to the study. This chapter introduces the background of the study, research problems, research questions, and objectives of the study, a framework for the study, the significance of the study and methodology for data collection. The second chapter of the thesis is presents the themes and perspectives of social conflict in the western and Indian context. This chapter explores literature on the conflict in Indian society, on understanding caste from the Dalit perspective, on understanding tribes in India and on the debates on religious conversion in India. The third chapter of the thesis discusses the profiles of Kandhamal and deals with a brief historical background from the British period, as well as an exploration of the geographical locations, administrative units, and the demography of Kandhamal district. The fourth chapter of the thesis discusses the changing relationship between the Kandha and the Pano. The fifth chapter of the thesis discusses the nature and dynamics of conflict between the Kandha and the Pano. This chapter also explores how the changes have led to the conflict between the Kandha and the Pano in Kandhamal. The sixth chapter is the conclusion and discusses the analysis and emerging themes from the fieldwork.

# **CHAPTER-II**

## **Sociology of conflict**

## **CHAPTER-II**

### **Sociology of Conflict**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter explores and discusses the literature which helps to understand the study in a proper perspective. The chapter is divided into three sections. The first section discusses the themes and perspectives of the conflict in the sociological literature, section two explore the debates related to the conflict in Indian society and section three reviewed the existing literature on understanding caste and tribe in the context of religious conversion in India.

#### **Section one**

#### **Sociology of Conflict: Themes and Perspectives**

Sociology is the branch of discipline and knowledge which study human relations in society systematically and scientifically. No society is free from differentiation and inequality. Social inequalities and social differentiations is the inherent fature of human society. To understand tribe, caste, and religious conflicts and the phenomena of what is happening in Kandhamal from the perspectives of sociology, we must first look at the theoretical understanding of the nature of the conflict, followed by a review of the literature based on caste conflict and religious conflict.

Functionalist perspectives of sociology under emphasize the conflicting nature of the social realities. Classical sociological thinkers like Karl Marx, Max Weber, and George Simmel are decisive in the development of the theoretical and conceptual framework to understand the conflicting nature of social realities in society. Apart from them, theorists like Ralf Dahrendorf, C. Wright Mills, Lewis Coser and Randall Collins are significant in the development of various theories to understand the conflict in different societies.

Conflict is a significant fact of social reality and it has been well recognized in the discipline of sociology. Conflict theories are broadly divided into two schools of thought namely, Marxist school of thought and non-Marxist school of thought. The non-Marxist school of thought is divided into functionalist and radical conflict school of thought. The Marxist school of conflict theory is confined to the economic sphere only. But the non-Marxist school of conflict theory is more social than economic and the sources of conflict can be located in social status, traditional power, religious identities and power, political ideology and power and traditional authority. Conflict is a natural process of social relations and social realities in society. The conflict theory has both destructive and constructive aspects.

Karl Marx (1849) in *Communist Manifesto*<sup>1</sup> tried to present a scientific analysis of human history by providing an economic and material base to various historical issues and events. On the basis of economic conditions and materialistic interpretation of history, he has divided the development of society into five stages, namely the primitive age, the age of slavery, feudalism, capitalism, and socialism. In the primitive age, all the means and methods of production were controlled by society and there was no concept of private property, which is why he described it as the age of primitive communism.

The concept and institution of private property gave birth to the institution of slavery, where human beings were sold and purchased like an animals for performing certain functions. In this period, economic power and the institutions of production were concentrated in the hands of a few individuals and most of the persons were their slaves. Due to the advancement of agriculture, the land became the property. Those individuals who controlled the landed property were 'Feudal Lords' and the others were their serfs. They produced for the feudal lords and lived on bare subsistence. This system is called agricultural capitalism. Due to the development of industries, capital gained a higher place of importance

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<sup>1</sup>Karl Marx, 1848, *Communist manifesto*, Moscow: Progress Publishers, pp 3



than agriculture. As a part of this process, all the means of production were concentrated again in the hands of a few individuals while the rest earned their livelihood by working. The class that controls capital means of production and economic power is called 'Bourgeoisie' while those who are working and sell their physical and mental labour to these capitalists are referred to as 'Proletariat'. Due to this system, the means of production and economic power remain with the capitalists and the proletariat is deprived of the benefit of production (even though it is they who do the production), this leads to a class struggle between the bourgeoisie and proletariat (Marx, 1848:3).

Thus, economic and material factors are the most important factors of class differentiation and class struggle. These classes are characterized by a freeman and slave, lord and serf, oppressor and oppressed, exploiter and exploited, who stood in constant opposition to one another by antagonism. So, conflict and class struggle is a significant subject of human history, and all history is the history of class struggle. According to Marx's analysis, each and every event of human history is the result of human activities which are directly influenced by economic factors.

In order to understand class struggle, it is necessary to study and understand the economic factors that are responsible for history. He argued that the man's struggle for existence, and as a result of this struggle, social structures are formed and the social structures are the result of the efforts of certain groups which want to accumulate certain physical means for economic development. Thus, history is nothing but a story of means and methods of production. In the process of production, various individuals and groups entered into various forms of relationship, because production is not an individual effort. This relationship gives birth to various classes and the interests of all these classes are not the same. There is a class that controls the means of production and other classes have to be

subservient to them. In the due course of time, due to the economic conditions, there is a clash of interests of different classes, which ultimately leads to class struggle.

Max Weber (1947) in '*The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*'<sup>2</sup> agreed with Marx on economy playing a central role in power distinction. According to him, the class is determined by economy, the class that owns the property and the class that earns its livelihood by labour. But apart from economics, he believed in two other factors - status and party (political influence), also playing a central role in power distinction. According to him, it is the economic and social status that determines the class, and class determines power. He defined power as "the ability to impose one's will on another, even when the other objects". According to him, there are two kinds of power - economically conditioned power and power as such. The economically conditioned power is the acquisition of riches and wealth, while power as such has nothing to do with money.

A person may not be rich, but may still be having the social honour and political or economic power. According to him, power and social honour are distributed in three types of order - social order, economic order, and legal order. The social order determines and is determined by economic order. The status groups come under the social order, and social honour is a part of the social order. The economic order determines the distribution of economic opportunities. It does not necessarily carry with it the element of social honour that determines the class and economic group. The legal order is a constitutional status, equally related to the social and economic order.

Randall Collins (1975) in *Conflict sociology: A sociological classic*<sup>3</sup>, argues that conflict arises from the unequal distribution of desirables such as wealth, power, prestige and other goods. Those who have a greater share of the goods, try to consolidate their position,

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<sup>2</sup>Max Weber, 1947, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization* translated by A.M. Henderson and Talcott Parsons, New York: The Free Press, Pp;132-135

<sup>3</sup>Randal Collins, 2009, *Conflict Sociology: A Sociological Classic*, updated by Stephen K. Sanderson, London: Paradigm Publishers.

maximize their interest and dominate the structural arrangements by force. But their attempt to subjugate others is disliked by the others. As a result, conflict ensues.

### **Functionalist Perspective of Conflict**

Georg Simmel (1858-1918), in '*Conflict and the Web of Group Affiliations*', holds the view that a society with absolute harmony is non-existent. Conflict is an essential and complementary aspect of consensus or harmony in society. He believes that social interactions involve contradictory elements like harmony and conflict, attractions and repulsions, love and hatred. Some relationships of conflict may appear negative, but they have latent positive aspects in reality.

Conflict leads to unity and it encourages people of similar interests to bind together to achieve their objective. In this way, conflict keeps a society dynamic and changing. In these aspects, he disagreed with Karl Marx. He believed that conflict is a kind of integrative method and the psychologically diverse factors such as hatred, and dislikes are the roots of the conflict in a society. He holds that conflict, on the one hand, breaks certain relationships and on the other strengthens unity in society. Conflict plays a positive role in various social relationships and structures. The opposition plays an important role in establishing inner balance.

According to Simmel, conflict creates a new social structure along with other factors that lead to social unity. There are differences in power and opinion within each group. The society is the sum of individual interactions. The most important relationship is between leaders and followers, superiors and subordinates. According to him, the superordinate and subordinate have a reciprocal relationship. He believed that social action always involves harmony and conflict, love and hatred.

Lewis A. Coser (1956) in '*The Function of Social Conflict*' also speaks of the positive aspects of the conflict in society. He holds that the conflict makes room for innovation and creativity in the social system. It also allows the expression of hostility and the connection of strained relationships. It eliminates sources of conflict between the parties and enables people to resolve grievances through the establishment of new norms or the affirmation of the old ones. Conflicts not only create new norms and the institutions but also new coalitions and alliances. They bring about technological improvements, energize the economy, and make the social system run. Conflict facilitates the release of tension, frustration and enables the social system to adjust itself. He argues that the internal social conflicts which concern goals, values or interests that do not contradict the basic assumptions upon which the relationship is founded tend to be positively functional for the social structure. The internal conflicts in which the contending parties no longer share the basic values upon which the legitimacy of the social system rests, threaten to disturb the social structure.

The closer the groups, the more intense the conflict. In groups where the participation of individuals is only segmental, conflict is less likely to be disruptive. Such groups are likely to experience a multiplicity of conflicts. In a flexible social structure, multiple conflicts criss-cross each other. In loosely structured groups and open societies, conflicts which aim at a resolution of the tension between antagonists is likely to have stabilizing and integrative functions for the social relationship. Societies tolerate and institutionalize conflict through the mechanism of safety-valve institutions. The need for safety-valve institutions increases the rigidity of the social structure. He holds conflict as "a struggle over values and claims to the scarce status, power, and resources in which the aims of the opponents are to neutralize, injure, or eliminate their rivals". Conflicts between inter-groups and intra-groups are part of social life and social relationships and not necessarily a sign of instability. Conflicts serve several functions and lead to social change.

## **Radical Perspective of Conflict**

C. Wright Mills (1956) in '*The Power of Elite*', argues that American society is dominated by the power elite. Top men from the military, business corporations and politics constitute the power elite who monopolize power. They are not accountable directly for their actions. The masses are controlled by the power elites. The conflicting situation arises at two levels - first there exists a conflict between the three segments of the power elite and second, there always occurs conflict between the power elites and the masses.

## **Dialectical-Conflict Perspective**

Ralf Dahrendorf (1959) in *Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society*, holds the view that the Marxian model has become irrelevant in the post-capitalist society. He points out the shortcomings of Marxist theory. According to him, social classes are not necessarily and inevitably economic groups. Social conflict is not necessarily rooted in property relations. The policies and actions of the state are not necessarily determined by economic considerations. He holds that authority structures are an integral part of all social relations everywhere and the possibility of conflict is inherent in them.

Authority structure involves two types of relations: superordination and subordination. The former has the authority to command and the latter is subject to such command. The individuals who have similar interest by way of commanding or by way of obeying the order may be described as 'quasi-groups'. These quasi-groups have incompatible interests, from which arises conflict. The group in the position of authority is always interested in remaining in power while the subordinate group shows interest in the change of the status quo. Due to the organisational conditions such as lack of communication among groups, lack of freedom of association, limited resources and ineffective methods of recruitment and leadership, the latent groups tend to constitute themselves into manifest

groups. Thereafter, they find themselves in a constant state of conflict. These conflict groups become organised and formulate programmes to achieve their goals and develop ideologies to justify their own positions. The ruling class produces its own ideologies to justify its remaining in the authority, while the ruled class develops an ideology which proclaims that the present authority structure is unjust. In this way, the ruling and ruled class are engaged in conflict. The outcome of such conflict is either a complete victory for the class with authority or complete victory for those who have no authority. He emphasizes that class is based on authority and class conflict revolves around the struggle for authority.

The mainstream theoretical framework dwells upon the political and cultural economy of conflict in Western societies. However, the western framework of conflict needs to be re-framed to understand the conflict in Indian society. The following section elaborates on the relevant approaches to the study conflict in India.

## **Section Two**

### **Sociology of Conflict in India**

#### **Introduction**

Indian society historically engaged in a conflict between different social groups. The conflict in India is the struggle for an egalitarian social order in the society. Caste system created an unequal society based on the notion of purity and pollution. The castes in the upper strata of hierarchy controlling the power and resources and those who placed at the bottom in lower strata are victims of the system. Egalitarianism is neither alien to India nor a gift of the West (Braj Ranjan Mani, 2011). Marginal communities in India fought against the Brahminical social order and injustices perpetuated by Brahminism. The Brahminical social order is highly stratified, heterogeneous and glorifies social, cultural, ritual, economic, political, occupational purity and pollution. It perpetuates inequality and injustice for the

privileges of some groups at the expense of Dalits, peasants, and artisans. It sees society as a functional and integral social system whose different parts work together to promote solidarity and stability of the society. In the Indian context, the Brahminical social order is working like a functional framework with special privileges for one section of society at the cost of others.

Sociological theory never talks about the conflict due to ritual purity and pollution, whereas in the Indian context, the conflict takes place between the Dalits and caste Hindus primarily due to metrial and ritual notions associated with the caste. Historically the social conflict in India primarily took place in the form of caste conflict and Brahminism versus Buddhism, when two or more social groups contradicted with each other in their interest or during social interaction. Conflict is the social process and social reality. Conflict can be destructive for some groups and cohesive for some others. Social inequality, social oppression, social exploitation and social injustice are a source of conflict in Indian society. Indian society is highly stratified on the basis of caste, religion, and ethnicity. So, Indian society is not free from social conflict ideologically and functionally. There are various traditions and thought which emerged in counter to the tradition and thought of Brahminism, such as Buddhism. Anti-caste philosophers and rational-liberal thinkers from Buddha to Ambedkar struggled for social transformation with an emancipatory vision.

Gail Omvedt (2008) in *Seeking Begumpura: the social vision of anti-caste intellectuals*, explains the vision of the anti-caste intellectuals in India. The oppressed and powerless communities are struggling throughout their life for equality and dignity. The anti-caste intellectuals, through their teaching, writings, songs, poetry and prose-challenged and opposed the caste system, inequality, Brahminical supremacy and exploitation - what Omvedt calls the “Utopia” vision of society. According to her, modernity and the modern era are not a gift of colonialism but existed much earlier than the conventional scholarship. The vision of

the anti-caste intellectuals is a casteless, classless modern society. The Bhakti radical, Sant Ravidas (c.1450-1520), was the first to formulate an Indian version of utopia in his song “*Begumpura*”. *Begumpura*, the city without sorrow, is a casteless, classless and urban society in contrast to Gandhi’s village utopia of *Ram Rajya*. It describes a land with no taxes, or harassment, where there is no hierarchy and all are equal. The anti-caste intellectuals expressed their vision for society within the narratives of the development of society’s forces of production and their social organization at the time.<sup>4</sup>

Braj Ranjan Mani (2011) in *Debrahmanising History: Dominance and Resistance in Indian Society*, brought forth the ideas and philosophies of many anti-caste philosophers, who not only challenged oppressive Brahminism and the human Brahminical social order but also visualised an egalitarian social order. In this book, he starts with the historical roots of Brahminism and how the anti-caste scholars, visionaries, and philosophers opposed the system. He says “Ideology as an instrument of domination, of ensuring that the common people thought and behaved as the ruling elite want them to, finds an archetypical expression in Brahminism. Named after those at the top of the caste hierarchy, Brahminism in the form of the caste system is the main exploiting system of traditional Indian society”. He argues that “Egalitarianism is neither alien to India nor the gift of the West. Marginalised people everywhere have always aspired to build an egalitarian world. Ranged against caste and Brahminism, this rational-liberating tradition is to be found in the heterodoxies of various inclinations, particularly Buddhism, the movements of subaltern saint-poets, Sufism and Sikhism. This legacy was carried forward in modern India by Phule, Iyothee Thass, Narayan Guru, Periyar, and Ambedkar.

Basant Kumar Mallick (2011) in *Cultural and Social Radicalism in Medieval Orissa*, argues that ‘Sudramuni’ Sarala Das, through his writings protested against the caste system,

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<sup>4</sup>Gail Omvedt, 2008, *Seeking Begumpura: the social vision of anti-caste intellectuals*, New Delhi: Navayana.



untouchability, the indignity of Sudras and women, and challenged the supremacy of Brahmins, social hierarchy and all exploitative features of the Sanskritic order. He challenged Sanskrit language and strove for a new social order based on egalitarian principles. Mallick in his article says that the society, culture, and literature of medieval Orissa, can be seen as a dynamic contestation between Brahminical synthesis and non-Brahminical peripheral elements with a radical social movement and a vision of social justice and equality. Influenced by the vision and mission of Sudramuni Sarala Das, many anti-caste saint-poets of the 16<sup>th</sup> century dedicated themselves to the educational and cultural uplift of the deprived sections of Odiya society.

They all discarded and protested against the Varnashram dharma, brahminical social order, and supremacy of Brahmins, the supremacy of Sanskrit and Brahminical literature. In order to maintain social integration and to establish an egalitarian Odiya society, they all wrote and preached in the language of the common Odiya people. The nature of their social movement can be better understood in the context of socio-cultural, socio-educational, and political circumstances of that period. Through their literature, they all exposed the various socio-cultural disabilities imposed on them by Brahminical literature. They rejected and criticised the domination of Sanskrit as a sacred language and exposed how Sanskrit was the language of a minority elite group in society that monopolized education, enjoyed hierarchy of language and absolute primacy. They all appealed to the masses through their vernacular literature to reject and to break the monopoly of Sanskrit, Brahminical social order and the dominance of Brahmins in education.

Mukti Lakhi Mangharm (2011) in *Radical Religious Poetry in Colonial Orissa*, says that Bhim Bhoi, a saint-poet from the tribal community of Orissa, articulated a rationality of radical social equality and a theory of secular rationalism. He was an anti-caste and anti-idolatry saint-poet. He tried to remove the idols of Jagannath, Subhadra, and Balaram - the

state deities of Orissa, to burn them in accordance with his uncompromising stand against idolatry, sacred hierarchies and temple rituals. His songs and poems challenged the caste system and authority of Brahmin priestly and intellectual classes. In spite of his social background, Bhim Bhoi<sup>5</sup> defiantly declared that his poetry was not the result of any scriptural knowledge, but of his own experience as a tribal. Bhim Bhoi was against the socio-religious discrimination against women and argued for the equal treatment of women.

Biswomoy Pati (2010) in *Religion and Social 'Subversion: Re-examining Colonial Orissa* talks about the colonial Orissa which witnessed two major tribal resistance movements - the Mahima movement and the Munda rebellion. Both the Mahima movement and Munda rebellion strategically employed a discourse of equality to fight their immediate oppressors. The Mahima movement represented an anti-caste, monotheistic order that sought to de-legitimise the kings, the Brahmins and Brahminical Hinduism. Similarly, the Munda rebellion led by Mundas who had converted to Christianity in 1939, opposed the princely states of Ganpur and also confronted colonialism. In this article, the author questions and interrogates the elitist preoccupations of subaltern historians, who insist on marginalising the role of peasants and tribal on the basis of the rather dubious formulations of 'popular autonomy' and 'territoriality'.

Sharmila Rege (2013) in *Against the Madness of Manu* gives a critical understanding of patriarchy, gender, the pedagogy of Dalit women and gender violence which need to be understood in a proper perspective based on the realities of the situation on the ground. She argues that the axes of caste and gender intersect to constitute a system of graded inequality as well as graded violence against Dalit women. Dalit women are victims of the cruelty of the Brahminical social order. She argues that the most pernicious aspects of the caste system are

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<sup>5</sup> Kandha(tribal) saint-poet and an anti-caste philosopher of Odisha

also the most patriarchal. There is a social difference between the violence against Brahmin women and Dalit women.

Vasanth Kannabiran and Kalpana Kannabiran (1991) in *Caste and Gender: Understanding Dynamics of Power and Violence*, observes that equality of upper caste women and lower caste women and patriarchy (upper caste and lower caste) have different ideological understandings and practices. They discuss “how the caste question and women’s question are intermeshed and how each of these can be understood with reference to other.” They studied the correlation between violence against Dalits by upper castes and the filing of false cases against them that the drunken Dalit men had misbehaved with women. This happens even though the upper caste Hindus misbehave, and attack lower-caste Hindu women and parade them naked through the street of the village.

There are many lower caste women who are victims of the caste system and attacks by members of upper castes. In the study, they argue that while the upper caste woman may be a victim of the caste system if she is in a relationship with a Dalit man when it comes to the Dalit man, not only him but his family and even his relatives come under attack. These issues are causes of conflict in the traditionally oppressive relationships between upper castes and Dalits. The Kannabhirans observe that “The social relations of caste and gender are based on the exercise of power through the use of force. Gender within the caste society is thus defined and structured in such a manner that the ‘manhood’ of the caste is defined both by the degree of control men exercise over women and the degree of the passivity of the women of the caste. The demonstrating control by humiliating women of another caste is a certain way of reducing the ‘manhood’ of those castes.”

Sharmila Rege (1998) in *Dalit women Talk differently: A critique of “Difference” and towards a Dalit Feminist Standpoint position*, says that there was a significant shift in the

feminist thought of the 1980s and 1990s - which was the increasing visibility of black and third world feminist work. There has been reluctance on the part of white feminists to confront the challenges posed to them by black and third world feminism. In Indian context “The assertion of autonomous Dalit women’s organizations in the 1990s threw up several crucial theoretical and political challenges, besides underlining the Brahminism of the feminist movement and the practices of Dalit politics. She categorizes feminism and feminist politics; the non-Brahman movements, the movements by, or on behalf of women, and the difference of the historical location of these movements in the real struggles of marginalized women.

### **Conflict in Contemporary India: Ethnic, Religious & Caste Conflict**

Contemporary Indian society is in a state of change and has witnessed various kinds of conflict, including the ethnic conflict in north-eastern states, and religious and caste conflict throughout the country. The primary reasons for ethnic conflict in north-eastern states are based on linguistic and territorial integrity and cultural homogeneity. There are two types of religious conflict which contemporary Indian society witnessed, the Hindu-Muslim and Hindu-Christian conflict. The primary reasons behind the religious conflict in India are religious intolerance and religious politics.

In the post-independence period Hindu-Muslim conflict took place in all major cities, but in contemporary period the Hindu-Muslim conflict has even entered the rural areas. The Hindu-Christian conflicts also have different dimensions. In states like Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, the Hindutva forces basically target those tribes who have converted to Christianity. However, in states like Odisha the Hindutva forces have targeted the Christians from Dalit communities, by using the local tribal people against the Dalits. The Hindutva forces only targeted and attacked Dalit and Tribal Christians

only and never dared to attack any upper caste Christian converts such as those in Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, and Goa. While states like Odisha witnessed both caste and religious conflict, the nature of the conflict in Odisha significantly differed from other parts of the country. In the Kandhamal district of Odisha, the caste and religious conflict was not between upper versus lower caste but was rather all about tribes versus Dalit. To understand the nature of caste and religious conflict in Kandhamal and the realities of the situation on the ground in a proper perspective, we need to review the literature which is based on ethnic conflict, religious conflict and caste conflict in India.

### **Literature on Ethnic Conflict**

Sandhya Goswami (2001) in *Ethnic Conflict in Assam*,<sup>6</sup> attempted to analyse and explain the ethnic problem and ethnic conflict in the north-eastern part of India in general and Assam in particular. Ethnicity and ethnic identity are an important part of Indian social realities and sources of major conflict in the north-east. The ethnic communities have strong primordial values and demands for territorial autonomy. Also, there are problems with linguistic and religious issues which lead to ethnic assertion and conflict. "Ethnicity is a sense of identity or a feeling of belonging to a particular ethnic group. Ethnicity or ethnic identity also involves, in addition to subjective self-consciousness, a claim to status and recognition either as a superior group or as a group at least equal to other groups" (Brass 1991).

Ethnicity is a complex social phenomenon and is subject to change. Ethnicity is closely associated with political, religious and other social views and forms of interaction. As a result, there is sometimes political domination, economic exploitation, and psychological oppression, due to which ethnic conflict takes place. Assam is populated by many ethnic groups with strong primordial values, originating from their semi-tribal and semi-feudal base, leading to ethnic conflict with connections to issues of language and autonomy. Besides

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<sup>6</sup>Sandhya Goswami, 2001, *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, Vol.62. No.1, March, Pp.123-137.

religious and linguistic diversities, the people also divided in terms of multiple communities or sub-nationalities such as immigrant Muslims, Hindus, Nepalese, indigenous caste Hindu community and the tea garden community.

Bhagat Oinam (2003) in *Patterns of Ethnic Conflict in the North-East: A study on Manipur*, tries to explain the ethnic conflict in the north-east in general and Manipur in particular. The state of Manipur has been witnessing violent conflicts between Naga-Kuki tribes and Kuki-Paites tribes. The primary reason for ethnic conflict is the land and territory and relationships of people with the land. These ethnic communities are engaged in conflict over their land, territory, identity and fear about a loss of their identity. The ethnic conflict is widespread due to the nature of demographic composition and assertive identities as 'nation' or 'sub-nation'.

The complex nature of ethnic-demographic relationships, territorial entities having multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, multi-cultural, multi-religious, and multi-sub national identities provide situations for ethnic conflict. The majority Meitei community who mostly profess Vaishnavism is confined to the valley. Two major tribal communities, the Naga and Kuki, mostly profess Christianity but also engage in conflict for their cultural identity and territory. Even the Naga-Meitei conflict is based on territory and cultural identities and religion has no role in the Naga-Meitei conflict. The collective consciousness among the Naga and Kuki as a formation of separate political identities, in addition to their existing cultural identities based on territory, are primary reasons for ethnic conflict.

S.R. Tohring (2010) in *Violence and Identity in North-East India: Naga-Kuki Conflict*, describes how the Naga and the Kuki are two famous distinct ethnic communities in north-east India and have been co-existing for centuries. The north-east part of India is a mosaic of many ethnic communities, and among them, Naga and Kuki are two well-known

ethnic groups. In 1992, a dreadful and cruel ethnic conflict occurred between the Naga and Kuki. This violent ethnic conflict-affected many other states like Assam, Manipur, and Nagaland. The majorly affected state was Manipur. The Naga-Kuki violent conflict was not merely political but social, cultural, linguistic, territorial and economic in nature. Historically, prior to the advent of British in the north-east, the Naga and Kuki shared many similarities as well as unique identities. The Naga are the dominant ethnic group in the areas comprising the states of Nagaland and its adjoining hills in Assam and Manipur. Both the Naga and Kuki talk about their land, territory, language, culture, polity, economy, social organisation and ways of life. This implies that each ethnic group - both the Naga and the Kuki - could be considered as a nation. The ethnic identities of the Naga and the Kuki are very complicated. These two ethnic groups are found together in north-east India and Myanmar, while the Kuki are also found in Bangladesh. In some areas, the Naga are the dominant ethnic group, while in other areas the Kuki are the dominant ethnic group. However, from 1992 the ethnic conflict between the two went on for nearly a decade. More than a thousand people were killed, orphaned, widowed, and properties worth millions were destroyed.

Kipgen (2013) in *Politics of ethnic conflict in Manipur*, analyses the conflict between the Kuki and Naga ethnic groups in the state of Manipur in north-east India. According to him, the conflict between the Kuki and Naga is the consequence of a lingering identity problem, land disputes and equivocal response and attitude of the state. According to him, economic issues are not a major source of conflict between the Naga and Kuki ethnic groups. The issue that plays a significant role in causing ethnic conflict between the Naga and Kuki ethnic group is the struggle for Kuki homeland and greater Nagaland, both of which claim the

same geographical area as their own territories. This land dispute is a major issue in the Kuki-Naga ethnic conflict in Manipur<sup>7</sup>.

### **Religious Conflict in Contemporary India**

Bipin Chandra (1984) in *Communalism in Modern India* presented a historical synopsis and analysis of Hindu-Muslim conflict in modern India. He tried to present the historical, social, cultural and economic roots as well as the growth of Hindu-Muslim conflict during colonial and post-colonial period. He argued that it is the social, cultural, religious, economic and political situations which are responsible for the Hindu-Muslim conflict. The Hindu-Muslim conflict is supported, promoted and organised by certain sections of the society whose interests it served. It is not the religious identity that creates conflict, but the religious ideology that creates conflict. The Muslim communalists used Islam as an ideology and not as a religious functioning, though there are various types of religious practices among Muslims.

Similarly, though Hinduism is very heterogeneous by nature, the Hindu communalists used Hindutva ideology for Hindu cultural and political identity. Hindutva ideology defines Hindus as a homogeneous cultural community and Nation. It is the cultural and intellectual backwardness of the people, which contributed to the growth of Hindu-Muslim conflict. The ignorance of people is used by the communal leaders to misinterpret and misrepresent the social, historical and political situations for their own benefit. The colonial character of the education system has not allowed the development of critical thinking, critical consciousness and independent thought, in order to resist communal ideologies.

Ashutosh Varshney (2002) in *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life: Hindus and Muslims in India*, explains that there are master narratives in Indian politics, through which people are

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<sup>7</sup>Kipgen, 2013 'Politics of ethnic conflict in Manipur'



mobilized, and which are responsible for the Hindu-Muslim divisions and conflicts. According to him, the first master narrative of Indian politics is secular nationalism, the second master narrative is religious nationalism and the third master narrative is Bahujan nationalism or 'lower caste politics'. All three master narratives with their distinctive ideology have always produced a remarkable passion for national politics. The first narrative is secular nationalism, the official doctrine of India, and was legitimised by India's constitution after independence. According to this master narrative, the nation is a family and all religions, languages, ethnic, and caste groups have an equal place in the national family. According to the principle of the secular narrative, religions, language, ethnicity and caste - none of these will dominate in the functioning of the state. The state is not separate from religion, but will be neutral toward the religions. The second master narrative is religious nationalism or Hindutva nationalism. The basic principle of religious nationalism is that there are primarily two dominant religions in India - Hindu and Muslim. Hindutva nationalism emerged as a counter to Muslim nationalism, and the birth of Pakistan as a Muslim country. The basic argument of Muslim nationalism was that the Hindus and Muslims are not only two different religious communities and but also two distinct nations. So, Hindu nationalism is a reflection of Muslim nationalism.

According to the narratives of Hindu nationalism, the Hindu religion is a religion of the majority people of the land, Hindutva is a distinctive cultural and national identity, and people of other religious beliefs must assimilate into Hindutva identity. According to the Hindutva narrative, the people who believe in the Hindu religion should enjoy constitutional and legal primacy and also have the cultural and political primacy for the destiny of the nation. The aim of this narrative is to unite different caste groups to maintain the Brahmanical Hindu majoritarianism, which can be used in politics against Muslims and other religious

minorities. The third master narrative is Bahujan nationalism, with politics that emphasizes on the caste unity of the depressed and oppressed.

The depressed and oppressed caste talks against the inhuman, oppressive, exploitative, and the suppressive hierarchical social order of the Hindu religion where the twice-born upper castes are always in the minority and enjoy traditional and ritualistic superior privileges. Due to the caste system, the lower castes have been suffering with discrimination, humiliation and social exclusion. Bahujan nationalism primarily and in principle attacks the social hierarchy of Hinduism, Hindu nationalism and Hindutva, to restructure an egalitarian social order. Bahujan nationalism does not believe in Hindu unity, but it supports secular nationalism, that religion and caste should not determine the rights and privileges of any citizen of India. The Hindutva forces are trying to build *Bharatavarsha*, the united India, and are hinduizing the nations, where Muslims, Christians, Adivasis and Dalit are forced to assimilate and accept the political and cultural centrality of Hinduism. If the assimilation is not accepted by the Muslims, Christians, Adivasis or Dalits, then they would be treated as second class citizens of the nation. That is why the Hindutva forces are aggressively campaigning against Muslims, Christians, and assertive Dalits.

Asghar Ali Engineer (2004) in *Communal Riots, 2004*, argues that the Western zone of the country - particularly Gujarat and Maharashtra - have mostly witnessed communal violence planned with political support. He argues that the riots which took place started with a small incident but the political parties exploited them to engineer communal violence on a larger scale. In every instance, the police could effectively control the violence since they could act independently without political pressure. He argues that “it is well-known fact that the major communal riots cannot take place without planning and organised efforts”. The Gujarat carnage would not have been possible without the involvement of RSS, BJP and Gujarat governments. Communal tension has been on the rise because the RSS-VHP-BJP are

trying to project Muslims as a threat to Hinduism, prevent religious conversion by Christian missionaries and trying to establish a *Hindu Rashtra*.

Asghar Ali Engineer (2004) in *A Handy Tool for Anti-Minorities*, explains that sometimes it is the Muslim religious leaders, the *Ulema*, that provides the space and opportunity to the Hindutva forces for making anti-minority remarks and activities, by categorically opposing family planning in the name of Islam. The Hindutva forces spread propaganda that the growth of Muslim population and infiltration of Bangladeshi Muslims is a matter of serious concern, and by 2050, the Muslim population will be more than that of the Hindus and this over-population of Muslims would become a threat to the nation. Without wasting a single opportunity, the Hindutva forces spread anti-Muslim feelings among the people to create hatred against Muslims and other minorities. The Hindutva forces like Bharatiya Janata Party<sup>8</sup>, Vishwa Hindu Parishad<sup>9</sup>, Bajrang Dal<sup>10</sup> continue to instigate people to attack and kill minorities.

Surya Prakash and Rowena Robinson (2012) in *Revisiting Communalism and Fundamentalism in India*, explain that communalism and fundamentalism in India consist of various aspects and issues, which need to be understood from pre-colonial to colonial times and the post-independence period. They argue that communalism is an outcome of the competitive aspirations of domination and counter-domination that began in colonial times.

They argue that cynical distortions of the democratic process and the politicization of religion in the early period of independence intensified it. They also argue that communalism is rooted in power relations between the communities, histories of togetherness and disposition to dominate others politically, socially, economically and culturally. Further,

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<sup>8</sup>One of the major political party in India, with close ideological and organisational links with Rastriya Swayamsevak Sangha.

<sup>9</sup>One of the Hindu Nationalist organisation led by Rastriya Swayamsevak Sangh.

<sup>10</sup>Hindu organisation (youth wing) led by Rastriya Swayamsevak Sangha.

communalism's social, religious and political associations are linked to assertions for community identities that trigger communities to seek or to resist domination. Communalism is a process of the competitive aspirations of communities to dominate or resist domination of others over perceived as well as real threats, grievances, insecurities, and distrust. They argue that in the post 1980s, due to economic liberalization, the growth of opportunities and a middle class, the rise of Hindu fundamentalism and politics of cultural nationalism together further aggravated communalism.

### **Literature on Religious Conflict: Hindutva forces against Christians**

Christians in India are a very small minority religious group. The majority of Christians are converts from tribes and Dalits, though there are some upper caste converts as well. The Hindutva forces only target and attack the Christians who are converts from tribes and lower strata of the society, but never attack the Christians who are converts from the upper castes. There were a series of attacks against Christians in India. The Hindutva forces like VHP, Bajrang Dal - which are backed by RSS and BJP - vandalised the Churches, prayer halls and houses of Christians.

Lancy Lobo (2005) in *the Brahmanical Social Order and Christianity in India* explains how the Brahmanical social order and Hindutva forces perceive Christianity and Christian missionaries as a threat to the Brahminical social order and Hindu nationalism. The *Varnavyavastha* and caste system are the creation of the Brahmanical Hindu social order, supported by religious sanctions. The Varna system and Caste system are supported by the Hindu religious scriptures like Vedas and Manusmriti. The upper caste Hindus imposed their religion and hegemony on lower caste people, more particularly the Dalit communities.

The Hindu caste system has assigned every caste with a particular occupation, social status, ritual purity and behavioural code, so that there will be no harm to the stability of

Varna and caste system. The upper caste Hindus tried to maintain the stability of Varna and caste system through institutionalization of caste occupation, ritual purity and behavioural codes according to birth. There is clear-cut social demarcation between the upper castes - with hierarchy of social status, ritual purity, power, wealth, privileges - and the peasant, artisan, menial lower castes with hierarchically inferior social and ritual status.

During the Muslim and British period, the Brahminical Hindu social order has faced certain challenges. The Dalit and lower strata of society historically suffered social, religious, economic and political deprivations and they were associated with performing demeaning occupations. They were segregated, discriminated and humiliated in the village. When Christianity came to India, a large number of people from lower castes and tribes converted to Christianity. The tribes of Chhotanagpur and the north-east region of the country converted to Christianity. The Christian communities in India are not homogeneous, and belong to three social categories. The first category of Christians is the upper castes of Kerala, Mangalore, Goa, and A.P, the second category of Christians is Dalits in many parts of country, and the third category of Christians is the tribes. Though social anthropologists like C. J. Fuller (1976) made a systematic study of the caste and Christianity in Kerala but there are few sociological studies which deals with the caste/tribes with reference to Christianity<sup>11</sup>.

Among the three categories, it is the castes who converted to Christianity in large numbers to escape from tyranny of Hinduism. Both the Islam and Christianity offered Dalits a philosophy of equality and dignity. The Hindu nationalist and Hindutva forces see Christianity and religious conversions as a threat to Hindu nationalism. That is why the Hindu nationalist and Hindutva forces systematically target and attack Dalit and tribal

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<sup>11</sup> See "Kerala Christians and the Caste System", by C.J.Fuller, Man, New Series, Vol.11, No.1, (March, 1976), Pp.53-70.

Christians. There are growing atrocities against Dalit and Tribal Christians in India. The Hindutva forces never target upper caste Christians.

Peggy Froerer (2007) in *Religious Division and Social Conflict: Emergence of Hindu Nationalism in Rural India* observes that there are inter-intra-conflicts among tribes and non-tribes due to religious practices and religious identity. Both Hindu nationalist forces and Christian missionaries systematically use their resources for mobilizing the tribals in their support through religious identities. The Hindu nationalists use the tropes of nationalism and national identity, strategically trying to protect the interests of caste Hindus through propagating Hindu culture in tribal areas for their larger political agenda, while the missionaries in their civilising mission are also converting the tribals into their fold. The issues of conversion, religious beliefs and cultural practices are a point of conflict in the tribal areas and only the tribals are victims of this proxy war between the Hindu nationalists and Christian missionaries for their religious identities.

Sarbeswar Sahoo (2013) in *Tribal Identity, Religious Conversion and Violence in India: A Preliminary Note* argues that most of the violence and atrocities against Dalit and Tribal Christians have occurred in states such as Rajasthan, Gujarat, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand and Karnataka, that not only have a sizable tribal population but were also ruled by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the political outfit of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) or its political allies. This violence and atrocities against Dalit and Tribal Christians thus raised some uneasy questions about the nature of democratic politics, the relationship between the religion and politics, and the role of the state in Indian society. The central question was - why has anti-Christian and anti-Muslim violence increased in India in the 1990s as compared to previous years? Why have BJP-ruled states experienced more cases of violence than the others? How can we explain this increasing religious intolerance in India in

general and the BJP-ruled states in particular? Finally, what role has the state in India played in this direction?

### **Literature on Caste Conflict**

In India, it is a serious sociological debate as to why there is caste conflict between the Dalits versus the backward castes, Dalits versus Upper castes and Dalits versus Tribes. Why there is no conflict taking place between the backward castes and upper castes, backward castes and tribes and upper castes and tribes in India? From north to south and east to west, caste conflict is taking place only between the Dalits versus others (Upper castes, OBCs and Tribes).

Pradeep Kumar Bose (1981) in *Social Mobility and Caste Violence: A study of the Gujarat Riots*, explains how violence against Dalits is very common in various parts of India. The violence against Dalits is mainly occurring in rural areas and mostly rooted in disputes over land and wages. In these riots, caste and class converge to a certain extent. Caste riots also took place in Bihar on the issue of reservation. The immediate reason for the riots in Gujarat was the policy of reservation, which amounted to reserving 44 per cent of government jobs on the basis of caste alone.

The caste conflict in Gujarat was thus related to deep-rooted caste prejudices among the upper castes and their resentment toward the social mobility of the scheduled castes. A study of untouchability in 69 villages in Gujarat has shown that in 90 percent of the villages, entry into temples, houses and shops of the high castes was not permitted. In 64 percent of the villages, there are separate sources of water supply and in 47 percent of the villages; untouchability prevailed even in Panchayat meetings. It will be naive to assume that these prejudices are confined only to rural areas and that urban dwellers are free from them.

Historically, untouchables of north, central and south Gujarat were exposed to various welfare and progressive measures much earlier than those in peninsular Gujarat, which comprised numerous small princely states ruled by unenlightened rulers. Hence, during the post-independence era, scheduled castes belonging to these regions took advantage of various governmental and non-governmental measures to improve their lot. The caste riots are mainly confined to the areas where scheduled castes improved their condition. The disturbance and violence in these areas are related to two factors: 1) Mobility i.e., the extent of literacy of and urbanisation among scheduled castes and 2) concentration of the Scheduled Castes in these areas.<sup>12</sup>

Pradeep Kumar Bose (1985) in *Mobility and Conflict: Social roots of caste violence in Bihar*, found that the incidence of caste atrocities and caste violence is not confined to rural areas alone, but is taking place in urban areas as well. Caste atrocities and caste violence are rampant in rural areas of India, but only some places reported it while others did not. In his study on caste violence, he found that caste violence in Gujarat and Maharashtra predominantly took place in both rural areas and urban localities.

However, the caste violence in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar occurred mostly in rural areas. He found that caste violence against Dalits in Gujarat and Maharashtra was predominantly taking place due to resentment on reservations, assertiveness, and social mobility of Dalits. The caste violence against Dalits in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar was predominantly taking place in rural areas when Dalits raise their voice against the roots of exploitation, economic deprivations and other grievances. To suppress the caste mobility movements, the upper castes were brutally killing Dalit men, women and children.

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<sup>12</sup>Bose, Pradip.K.1981.Social Mobility and Caste Violence: A study of the Gujarat riots, EPW, Vol.16.No.16. April.18. Pp 713-716.



K.Balagopal (1987) in *Karamchedu: Second Anniversary* explained how the Dalit massacre took place on 17<sup>th</sup> July 1985 in Karamchedu village in Chirala taluk of Prakasham district of Andhra Pradesh. The majority of the population of the village was of the rich landlord Kamma caste. Apart from land, the Kammas are engaged in business, film-making and industry. The Madigas and Malas, both are belonging to the Dalit community were also residing in the village working as labourers. The Kamma landlords paid very low wages to the Dalit labourers and exploited the labourers who took their land on lease. The upper caste landlords not only exploited the Dalits but also physically abused, humiliated and harassed them. In the village there were two drinking water tanks, one was a well maintained tank used by upper castes and the other was a poorly maintained tank used by Dalits. On the evening of 16<sup>th</sup> July, a Kamma youth was took his buffalo for drinking and washing at the Dalit water tank. During that time a physically disabled Dalit youth questioned the Kamma youth for polluting the drinking water. Due to caste arrogance, that Kamma youth physically abused the Dalit youth. At that time, a Dalit woman came to the spot and asked the Kamma youth why he was beating up the Dalit boy. After her questioning, the Kamma youth tried to attack the Dalit woman but she resisted him. After that, the Kammas systematically attacked and brutally killed eight Dalits.

Gopal Guru (1991) in *Dalit Killings in Marathwada* explained how the Dalits in Marathwada are being killed by the upper caste people, when they protest against the oppression, exploitation and humiliation by upper castes. Due to the Indian social structure, the upper castes always prefer to see the submissive attitude of Dalits. In Marathwada region the Dalits are assertive, and consequently the upper castes suppress them in a cruellest manner. The upper castes are always against assertive Dalits and often kill Dalits. The mass killings of Dalits at Tsundur in Andhra Pradesh, Deshmukh village in Parbhani district and

Gothala village in Latur district of Marathwada are some instances of atrocities and cruelty of upper castes against Dalits.

In 1991, under the title of *Upper caste violence: Study of Chunduru carnage*, EPW reported that in Chunduru village, Tenali Mandal of Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh, thirteen Dalits were killed by dominant caste. This brutal massacre was sparked off by a very small incident at a Cinema theatre in Chunduru. It was reported that the cinema theatre had two classes of tickets - the floor class and the chair class. Due to the caste culture, the Dalit could not purchase the chair class, which was primarily meant for the upper castes only. But challenging the caste culture and dominance of upper castes, one Dalit youth, Govatota Ravi, purchased the chair class ticket, and unfortunately his leg touched an upper caste (Reddy) audience while moving to the seat. Due to the caste arrogance, sense of privilege, and intolerance, the upper castes beat the Dalit youth, who retaliated with his friends. This incident ultimately led to the killing of many innocent Dalits. The caste-arrogant upper castes demanded that the Dalit youth's family should leave the village. However, the Dalits unanimously supported the Dalit youth's family. The upper castes decided to boycott the Dalits, stop the supply of electricity and water to the *Dalitwada* (Dalit colony) that resulted in unimaginable hardship for the Dalits. After deliberate planning and the support of local police, the upper castes brutally killed Dalits near Tungabhadra canal (Economic and Political Weekly: 2079).

Arvind Sinha and Indu Sinha (1996) in *State, Class, and "Sena" Nexus: Bathani Tola Massacre*, explain how the upper caste people are suppressing the voice and struggles of underprivileged Dalits, with an upper-caste private army in alliance with upper caste state apparatus. In July 1996, twenty-one Dalits including women and children were killed by the

upper caste militia Ranveer Sena<sup>13</sup>, because the Dalit labourers requested for increased wages at Bathani Tola of Bhojpur, Bihar. Again in 1997, December, fifty eight Dalit men, including twenty-seven women and sixteen children were killed by the upper caste landed militia Ranveer Sena at Laxmanpur Bathe village of Arwal district in Bihar. The Ranveer Sena killed Dalits because they felt that that Dalits were supporters of Maoists.

Jodhka, S.S. and Murali Dhar (2003), in their article *Cow, Caste and Communal Politics: Dalit Killings in Jhajjar*, speak about the story of five Dalit killings in Haryana on the evening of October 15, 2002, which was narrated differently by different actors involved in the case and its implications being varied. The official version of the incident presented it as a case of spontaneous response of an ‘innocent crowd’ to an ‘emotive’ issue, albeit by ‘mistake’. While responding to a question in the parliament, the then union minister of state for home, stated that the five Dalits were killed “because of the mistaken impression that a cow slaughter was being committed openly”. The article discusses how the Policemen destroyed all the evidence and spread false rumours to protect the mob that killed the Dalit people on the evening of October 15, 2002.<sup>14</sup>

In 2006, under the title *After Khairalanji: Dalits and the State*, an editorial in Economic and Political Weekly discussed the massacre of four members of a Dalit family in Khairalanji village in Bhandara district of Maharashtra, which had stunned the nation. It was not the first time that such atrocities on Dalits happened in India. The incident involved the rape, torture, and murder of a mother and her three children in a sadist and ghastly way which is inhuman and barbaric.

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<sup>13</sup>A Upper caste militia group famous for Dalit massacre, formed by Bhumihar, Brahmin and Rajput landlord mainly based on Bihar

<sup>14</sup>Jodhka, S.S. and Murali Dhar, 2003, *Cow, Caste and Communal Politics: Dalit Killing in Jhajjar*, EPW.Jan-18, and Pp.174-176.

The upper caste people never considered Dalits as human beings and subject them to discrimination and humiliation. The atrocities on Dalits reflected the caste prejudice of upper castes on Dalits. The story is the same everywhere. Dalits are massacred, their huts razed and set ablaze, the women raped, and children cut to pieces. Names and numbers can change. The pattern and the power structure remains the same (EPW: 5020). Only the geographical location changes, be it Belchi, Pipra, Deoli-Sadhupur, Kilavenmani, Villupuram, Kanchikacherla, Karamchedu, Chundur, Laxmanpur-Bathe, Bathani-Tola, Jajjhar, Khairlanji, or Kambalahalli.

Ornit Shani (2007) in *Communalism, Caste and Hindu Nationalism: The Violence in Gujarat*, argues that Gujarat is one of India's most volatile states for caste and communal violence. Gujarat has become a Hindutva laboratory and a nerve centre of Hindu nationalism, communalism and violence against Dalits since the mid-1980s. The coincidence of communal violence against Muslims and caste violence against Dalits in Gujarat is due to the Hindu nationalist movement gaining power at the same time that reservation policy for backward castes in educations and government jobs began.

The upper castes violently opposed the reservations for backward castes and consolidated themselves. Instead of fighting against the backward castes, they released their anger by attacking Muslims and Dalits. While Hindutva forces promoted Hindu nationalism with a unifying cultural Hindu identity, caste violence against Dalits demonstrated deep social divisions among the Hindus. The Hindu nationalist movement was primarily led by upper caste Hindus who spread hatred against Muslims and opposed reservations for backward castes, Dalits, and tribes. Therefore, there was communal violence against Muslims and caste violence against Dalits in Gujarat.

In 2012, the Hyderabad Political Economy Group<sup>15</sup> reported in EPW under the headline '*Laxmipet Killings.*' The report described how not only the men but even the women and children from the Kapu community participated in the killing of five and seriously injuring more than twenty Dalit members of Mala community. Before that, there were many incidents of atrocities committed by the Kapus against the Dalit community. The Dalits were attacked by the Kapus but the local administration treated these cases very casually. The attacks on Dalits were well planned. Kapu community of neighbouring villages also actively participated in the killing of Dalits in Laxmipeta in Andhra Pradesh.

Anand Teltumbde (2015) in *Pathapally: Mahad of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* explained how the Madigas, a Dalit community harassed and oppressed by another lower backward caste community. The Boyas - struggling for 'Scheduled Tribe' status since 2001- were committing atrocities against the Dalits. They socially boycotted the Madigas, misbehaved and abused Dalit women. Without any fear of the local administration and in the presence of police, the Boyas attacked the Dalits. When the Dalits decided to shift to another place, the village priest and village revenue officer (VRO) incited the Boyas, saying that if the Dalits start living in the new settlement situated at the upper part of the village, then it would pollute the entire village and bring a bad omen for the village. The Boyas buried one of their elderly - Chinna Sayanna, who had died the previous night, in the middle of the Madiga settlement. In the following days, once again in the presence of police, the Boyas buried another dead body, in the middle of the Madiga settlement. Without giving the justice to the Dalits, the police took two hundred Dalits - including women - into custody, and beat them.

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<sup>15</sup>Consisting of a group of professors (Prof.K. Laxminarayana, K. Srinivaslu, Arun Kumar Patnaik, K.Y. Ratnam, and Thimma Reddy) from University of Hyderabad,

## **Understanding the Caste System from the perspectives of Dalit experiences**

The Hindu social order and caste system which has caused social, cultural and economic oppression, exploitation, exclusion and humiliation of Dalit communities still continues after 68 years of independence. The caste system in Indian society resulted in many caste conflicts and hostile and antagonistic interactions between the touchable castes and Dalits. The everyday lived experience of Dalits is very much different from other castes and communities. In the context of this study, the literature on caste focuses on lived experience, atrocities, violence, socioeconomic, political, religious, ritual, cultural and inter-community relationships with other communities from the perspective of Dalits. Mainstream sociologists and social anthropologists writing on caste employ top-down approaches, but the top-down approach is qualitatively different from the subaltern and Dalit approaches and perspectives.

Dr. Ambedkar (1916), in *Caste in India: their Mechanism, Genesis and Development*, argues that the caste problem is vast, both theoretically and practically; it is an institution that portends tremendous consequence. According to him, the superimposition of endogamy over exogamy is the main cause of formation of caste groups. Regarding endogamy, he argues that the customs of 'Sati', enforced widowhood for life and child marriage are the outcomes of endogamy. The caste system in India is an artificial division of the people into fixed and definite units which prevents each one's interaction with the others. He argues that sub-division of a society is a natural phenomenon but these groups, on the other hand, became castes through excommunication and imitation. He argues that an individual's role in society is trivial. Society is always composed of classes. Their basis may differ; they may be of an economic or intellectual class in a society, but an individual in a society is always a member of a class. He argues that the strict observance of customs and the social superiority arrogated by the priestly class in all ancient civilizations are sufficient to

prove that they were the originators of this ‘unnatural intuition’ founded and maintained through these unnatural means.

Ambedkar (1936) in *Annihilation of Caste* says that the “Hindu caste system is not a mere division of labour, but also a hierarchical division of labourers”. The caste system is graded inequality between human beings which prohibits them from free social interactions. By determining social status and occupation on the basis of birth, the caste system violated the principle of human rights. An individual cannot take an occupation if it is not a hereditary caste occupation. The social, economic, and religious exploitation of the caste system is based on the dogma of predestination. The caste system as an economic organization is a harmful institution. It involves the subordination of the individual’s natural ability and confines it to social rules. The caste system is exploitative and discriminatory; it prohibits inter-caste marriages in order to preserve the purity of race and blood. The caste system is a monster which demoralizes Dalits and treats in an inhuman way.

Joan P. Mencher (1974) in *The Caste System Upside Down, or The Not – So-Mysterious East*, says that the caste system has been viewed by lawmakers, writers, sociologists, and anthropologists with a top-down approach. However, Dr. Ambedkar, who brought forth the Indian constitution and was untouchable by caste, had a different perception about caste which is qualitatively different from that of the mainstream sociologists and anthropologists. According to Mencher, caste is a very effective system of economic exploitation that works by forming social classes. Caste is a power structure which determines the relationship and attitudes between the Dalits and upper castes. The caste system is not a system of interdependence and reciprocity but rather a system of stratification and exploitation. The Dalits are victims of economic insecurities, landlessness and low social status in the caste hierarchy.

Gail Omvedt (2006) in *Dalit Visions: the anti-caste movement and the construction of Indian identity* argue that the Dalit movement based on ex-untouchables and widening to include non-brahman castes of many southern and peripheral areas, has in recent times brought forward most strongly this ideological challenge and this contesting of Hinduism. Indeed the impetus to challenge the hegemony and validity of Hinduism is part of the very logic of Dalit politics.

She further says that it is sufficient to see Dalit politics as simply the challenge posed by militant organizations such as the Dalit panthers, the factionalised Republican Party, the rallies of the Bahujan Samaj Party or even the insurgency carried out by low-caste based Naxalite organizations. She argues that Dalit politics challenge the Brahminic hegemony and traditions. In this book, she discusses the vision of Dalit movement and its ideals, its understanding of the link between religion, culture, and power, between caste, gender, and class oppression and between language and identity.

Kancha Ilaiah (1996) in *why I am not a Hindu: A Sudra Critique of Hindutva Philosophy, Culture and Political Economy* used the concept 'Dalitbahujan' to describe the people and castes who formed the exploited and suppressed majority. He argued that there are cultural and economic commonalities as well as commonalities of productive knowledge and material culture which mesh Dalitbahujans together like threads in a cloth. He further argues that the Dalitbahujan, should emerge as a united force and launch a struggle to liberate themselves from Brahminical social order, caste exploitation and oppression, as well as from Hindutva forces. Over a period of time, the brahminical castes will become casteless and classless and an egalitarian social order will be established in India.

Surinder Singh Jodhka (2012) in *Caste*, explains the caste system from a different perspective - caste as tradition, caste as power, caste as humiliation, contesting caste and



caste today. He argues that caste is a pan-Indian social system with little or no variations across the region. There is an argument that due to the process of westernization, modernization, and secular education, caste nearly disappeared, but the essential of caste, inequality, and social exclusion largely survive.

The structures of caste have close ties with social, economic and political systems, such as kinship, power regimes, and labour relations. He also argues how discrimination exists in every sphere; even in the education sector. Dalit students are discriminated and humiliated by upper-caste teachers. The upper-caste teachers are unable to accept the idea of an 'untouchable' student. He argues that there is frequent caste violence against Dalits. He further says that viewed from 'below', the most critical feature of caste is the experience of untouchability. The experience or reality of untouchability is indeed a fact of the social life of Dalits.

Nandu Ram (2013) in *Atrocities and Segregation in an Urban Social Structure*, explains that Dalits are the biggest victims of the caste system. Atrocities, discrimination, humiliation and caste violence against Dalits are a regular feature of rural life in India. Incidents like beating, torture, arson, usurpation, molestation, rape and killing of Dalits by caste Hindus is a very common feature throughout India. Due to the violence and discrimination against Dalits, some of them forced to migrate to the nearby towns and cities in search of social security, shelter, and livelihood. However, atrocities and violence also spread to the towns and cities such as Agra, Lucknow, Muzaffarnagar in Uttar Pradesh and Amravati and Aurangabad in Maharashtra, though the magnitude of atrocities committed against Dalits is comparably lesser in urban areas than in the villages.

Anand telumbde (2010) in *The persistence of Caste: The Khairalnji Murders and India's Hidden Apartheid*, argues that sixty years of anti-caste policy and mobilization have

made little difference to the caste-profession linkages. Though there is formally some positive discrimination in favour of Dalits, to this day Dalits continue to be engaged in scavenging and sanitation work. There is a preponderance of Dalits in poorly paid unskilled manual jobs while the traditionally privileged castes dominate highly paid professions. While Brahmins still dominate policy formulation, the Bania castes dominate in business and industry. The warrior castes are still significantly found in the armed forces, and the Shudra castes whose whole traditional vocation was agriculture, still dominate the sector. Caste Hindus in the rural area never took kindly to the policies of positive discrimination that advanced Dalit interests. As a result, rampant atrocities and barbaric violence against Dalits can be found in rural areas.

Sukhadeo Thorat and Katherine Newman (2007) in *Caste and Economic Discrimination: Causes, Consequences and Remedies* found that Dalits and Muslims are victims of multiple forms of discrimination and exclusion in both government and private sector as well as labour market in Indian society. They explain that caste and caste discrimination affects individuals' economic lives and how the economic interaction with caste values, behaviour and attitudes produces inequality and deprivations for Dalits and Muslims. However, unfortunately, the issue of economic discriminations has not been central to mainstream social sciences research in India. The economic discrimination contributes to inequality in employment and wages in the modern formal sectors of Indian economy. Economic discrimination is a kind of social exclusion which can take either an active or a passive form.

Mark Juergensmeyer (2009), in *Religious Rebels in Punjab: The Adi Dharm challenge to Caste*, attempts to explain how the notion of untouchability is associated with the Dalits. The notion of untouchability determines the attitude, prejudice and certain patterns of behaviour and relationship with the Dalits. The upper castes consider the Dalits to be of

lower social status, impure and untouchable, on the basis of which they discriminate and humiliate them. Though all lower castes are not economically poor, both rich and poor Dalits experiences of untouchability, discrimination, social oppression and humiliation.

However, those Dalits having a strong awareness of caste and caste-based discrimination, violence, and atrocities revolted against untouchability on the basis of the Adi Dharm religion. Adi Dharm is organized in a way that is devoid of the basis of caste. In the manifesto of Adi Dharma, the leaders of Adi Dharm articulate with a statement that “we are the original people of this country, and our religion is Adi Dharma. The Hindu came from outside and enslaved us. We Chamar, Chuhura, Sainsi, Bhanjre, Bhil and all the untouchables are brothers; let’s struggle for freedom from Hindus. The Hindus came from Iran and destroyed us. They occupy our land and became owners, and then they called us untouchables. They destroyed our history, culture, and livelihood”.<sup>16</sup>

Chinna Rao Yagati (2003) in *Dalits’ Struggle for Identity*, deals with the familiar story of Dalits with a new perspective. Often, social scientists in general and historians, in particular, interpreted Dalit consciousness as ‘false consciousness’, which undermined their radical political self-assertion. This work mainly deals with Dalits’ political consciousness, their struggle for identity, and the manner in which they rose from a stage of being political non-entities to a stage where they could develop their own self-definition and roles within the dialectics of nationalist anti-colonial struggle. The strength of this work lies in drawing upon vernacular sources and in presenting an insider’s perspective.<sup>17</sup>

Bela Bhatia (2006) in *Dalit Rebellion against Untouchability in Chawada, Rajasthan*, presents a detailed study of Dalits’ rebellion. In this article, the author highlights the fact that,

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<sup>16</sup>Mark Jurgensmeyer 2009. Religious Rebels in Punjab: The AdDharm challenge to caste, Navayana Publication, New Delhi.

<sup>17</sup>China Rao Yagati .2003. Dalit’s Struggle for Identity, Kanishka Publishers, New Delhi.

while many humiliating practices of the past have ceased, caste discrimination continues in many forms. Caste based hierarchy and power is still at the centre of traditional social order and determines, to a large extent, the kinds of lives that people live. Further, the police, administration, and state machinery have failed to protect the constitutional rights of Dalits and often ended up aligning with the forces that suppress them. In the eyes of the law enforcing agencies, Dalits remain unequal citizens. Any attempt to challenge the traditional social order makes them vulnerable to repression and violence, and also to isolation<sup>18</sup>.

### **Tribes in India**

Theoretically, historically and culturally, the tribes are not part of the Hindu social order and no caste system exists in tribal society. But in Kandhamal, the Kandha tribes possess and carry caste-like qualities and elements. There is a substantial influence of Hinduism on the social, religious and cultural life of tribes in Kandhamal. Due to the Hindu social and religious ideology as well as consciousness, the Kandha tribe are supporting Hindutva forces and indulging in violence against Dalits and Christians. They claim that they are warrior people, expressing their Hindu identity and ideology, and abandoning many of their own belief systems and traditions. The tribes of Kandhamal are accepting the hegemony of Hinduism and the upper castes. In the context of the study, exploring the issues and questions of tribes in India is a very complex exercise, with various scholars writing about them in various ways. Scholars like G.S. Ghurye writing about tribes claimed that the tribes are backward caste Hindus. Further M.N. Srinivas claimed that the tribes were following and practicing Hindu culture and rituals. But here for this study, the researcher choose to review the literature from Tribal scholars and study how they were writing about their tribal society.

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<sup>18</sup>Bela Bhatia .2006. "Dalit Rebellion against Untouchability in Chawada, Rajasthan", Contributions to Indian Sociology, Vol. 40, No.1, Jan-April.

## Literature on tribes

There is an enormous amount of literature on tribes and much has been written on Indian tribes. All these ethnographies, studies, writings and documentation vary from perspective to perspective, theme to theme and problem to problem. All these studies are exhaustive and rich with substantial ethnographic data. Scholars from India and abroad have produced rich ethnographic data and writings on social life, culture, religion, economy, poverty, illiteracy, health, livelihood, ethnicity, struggles, movements, exploitation by money lenders and *sahukars*, and aspects of tribal insurgency and Maoism.

However, the scholars, historians, anthropologists and sociologists describe and define the concept of tribe, tribal identity and tribalism in various ways without mentioning how the tribe understands social hierarchy, social stratification, and caste characteristics. There are certain tribes, castes, and communities which possess tribe-like characteristics as well as caste-like characteristics, thus bringing up the sociological question whether they are a 'caste tribe' or a 'tribal caste', on account of their day to day life, cultural practices, and social realities. It is an ongoing academic debate to understand the complexity and complex social realities of the structural differences and stratifications of 'caste tribe' or 'tribal caste' identities.

Who are the tribes in India? The notion of the tribe itself is very ambiguous. There is a big debate going on about the identity of the tribe. Tribal society is often referred as 'Primitive society'. The concept is certainly contextual, linguistic and geography-specific. Some social groups may be considered and identify as a tribe in some geographical areas but the same social group in another geographical location may not be considered as a tribe.

In daily life, a tribal group may have many similarities with caste groups. Sometimes it is very difficult to distinguish between the tribal society and some other social group considered as a lower caste in the Hindu hierarchy when staying with tribals in tribal

dominated areas. Now some social groups considered as a lower caste in the Hindu hierarchy are demanding tribal status from the state in accordance with their affiliations with tribal language and culture. In some parts of India the tribal people and other social groups, are considered as a lower caste in Hindu hierarchy, although they are much different from the Hindu religion and live in very close relation to one another. And it is very important to understand that there is a big difference between tribal religious practices and Hindu culture and religious practices. In this backdrop, it is essential to examine the notion of the tribe.

“The term ‘tribe’ was first used by the colonial government and ethnographers to categorize some social groups which did not fit or match with the category of ‘caste’”. The colonial ethnographers observed the distinctiveness between the tribe and caste according to the geographical location, demographic size, linguistic and cultural traits, religious beliefs and practices and primitive ways of livelihood and styles of living. In the local language, the tribe are called *Adivasi* or *Vanya jati*. But the tribes in India are not a homogenous ethnographic and socio-cultural reality in India. The tribes of mainland India are not similar to the tribes of north-east region of India. Many tribes in mainland draw their ancestral roots from Rajput or Kshatriya clans. So, generalizing the nature and characteristics of tribes in a pan-Indian sense is a display of ideological blindness and bias of western and Indian-origin anthropologists. The problem starts when they define the concept of the tribe in India. Indian society, geography locations, and cultural diversity are completely different from American or European society, geographical location and culture. But when the anthropologists and sociologists define the concept of tribe, they define according to their European and American framework of the tribe.

D.D.Kosambi (1967) in *The Vedic “Five Tribes”* argues that the Rigveda refers several times to ‘five tribes’, ‘the five humans’, five nations, and five mobile peoples. The five are nowhere explicitly named in early sources. However, a set of five tribal names

occurs, such as *Yadu*, *Turvasa*, *Anu*, *Druhyu*, and *Puru*. Each of these is mentioned separately in the Rigveda. The first four appear together again in the Rigveda which led to the conjecture that the seer belonged to the fifth tribe, the Purus.

### **Isolation Perspectives on Tribe**

Verrier Elwin (1943) in *Aboriginal* argues that the tribal should not be integrated with Hindu religion and society. Accordingly, further, he argues that the tribes are not Hindu but closer to nature of caste Hindus. If the tribes assimilate themselves with Hindu religion and caste Hindus, They will lose their ethnicity and would no longer have their own identity.

### **Assimilation/ Acculturation/Integrationist Perspective on Tribe**

Ghurye (1959) in *The Aborigines: So called and their Future*, later published as *The Scheduled Tribes*, was highly critical of Elwin's isolationist approach to tribes. He argues for the progressive assimilation of tribes; that the tribes are not different from backward caste Hindus, and should be assimilated into the Hindu religion and society. He further argues that the tribes have not reached any minimum stage of development and will develop if they assimilate and integrate with Hindu society.

Beteille (1960) in *On the concept of tribe* says that the separation of caste and tribal society is evident in the Sanskrit Division between *Jati* - communities settled in towns and villages, and with the elaborate division of labour - and *Jati* who inhabit hills and forests. In his article *The Definition of Tribe*, he states that "the term tribe was taken over by the anthropologists from ordinary usage, and like all such terms it had a variety of meanings. In general, it was applied to the people who are considered primitive, lived in backward areas, and did not know the use of writing.

In India, and also to a certain extent in Africa, the situation is conspicuously different. In this country, groups which correspond closely to the anthropologist's conception of the

tribe have lived in long associations with communities of an entirely different type. Except in a few areas, it is very difficult to come across communities which retain all their pristine tribal characters. In fact, most such tribal groups show in varying degrees, elements of continuity with the larger society of India. It becomes necessary, therefore, to have a set of attributes in terms of which groups more or less corresponding to the tribe can distinguish from other communities. There are two ways of setting about in search of a definition of the term tribe. The first is to examine the existing definitions which have been worked out on general considerations. The second is to analyse the specific conditions in India and find out the attributes which are distinctive of groups conventionally regarded as tribes. According to him, “the tribe is a society having a clear linguistic boundary and generally a well-defined political boundary”.

Bailey (1961) in *Tribe and Caste in India*, questions the distinction between tribal and caste society, which is often taken as self-evident. Isolation, animistic religion, economic backwardness, language and autochthonous origins have been used implicitly or explicitly to identify tribes. But Beteille objects that the last is insufficient for a sociological formulation - not all tribal groups speak distinct languages, and the remaining three criteria are often shared by low caste groups. He suggests that tribe and caste, in fact, constitute a continuum, with individual groups' positions determined by the proportion of the population with tribe rather than mediated caste access to land.

Dumont (1962) in *Tribe and Caste in India*, says that there is no absolute dichotomy that can be drawn between tribe and caste. He suggests that it would be better to represent the complexity of the situation. Socio-economic criteria are not reliable indicators, as their significance may differ. What is central in one is marginal in the others. It is such an ideological difference which is considered to be more significant, although obviously less neatly measurable than Bailey's formulation. Dumont also points out that it is unclear



whether Bailey is comparing the tribe to Hindu society as whole or to an individual caste. This point is taken up by Beteille, remarking that the tribe, when compared to Hindu society appears very different but when compared to a particular caste shows apparent similarities.

Singh (1985) in *Tribal society in India: An anthropo-historical perspective*, argues that while Indian anthropologists have studied the hierarchy of caste in its local setting and discussed the mutual perception of castes, many of them have generally ignored the study of Varna as an ideology. The sociologists, like the anthropologists, have been concerned far more with *Jati* than *Varna*.

However, unlike many anthropologists, sociologists have not ignored Varna. Field studies have revealed the infinitely complex formations of Jati; their rankings differ from place to place, their worldviews vary. The Jatis cannot be straitjacketed into the Varna scheme; there is an obvious lack of fit between the two. These are significance for anthropologists who study the integration of tribe with caste in a contemporary setting. He argues that social anthropologists have reported selectively on tribalization in terms of acceptance by incoming communities, of the more of the locally dominant tribal communities. In fact, it seemed that the acceptance of the tribal mores was easier for the middle and lower segments of the caste hierarchical order that moved in search of land or to offer their service and for artisans who served their tribal masters.

Xaxa (1999) in *Tribe as Indigenous People of India*, observes that defining 'tribe' has conceptual as well as empirical problems for academicians. This was obvious from the use of criteria that were adopted. These ranged from such features as geographical isolation, simple technology and conditions of living and general backwardness, to the practice of animism, tribal language, physical features, etc. The problem, however, lay in the fact that they were neither clearly formulated nor systematically applied. One set of criteria was used in one

context and quite another in another context. The result is that the list includes groups and communities strikingly different from each other with respect to not only the size of the population but also the level of technology and other characteristics.

Indian anthropologists have been acutely aware of a certain lack of fit between what their discipline defines as tribes and their own observations. Yet they have continued with the existing labels. The idea of 'indigenous people' is an issue of considerable contention in India today. The identity that was forced upon them from outside precisely to mark out the difference from the dominant community has now been internalised by the people themselves. But this term of administrative convenience has now been adopted by the tribals themselves to mean the dispossessed, deprived people of a region. There is no claim of being the original inhabitants of that region, but a prior claim to the natural resources is asserted *vis-a-vis* the outsider and the dominant castes. The tribal identity now gives the marginalised peoples self-esteem and pride. The question of tribes in India is closely linked with administrative and political considerations. Hence there has been an increasing demand by groups and communities for their inclusion in the list of Scheduled Tribes of the Indian constitution.

Xaxa (1999) in *Transformation of Tribes in India: Terms of Discourse*, states that there are more than 400 tribal groups in Indian society which are officially designated as Scheduled Tribes. These groups have all been undergoing changes. The changes have been observed and described by a variety of persons for nearly 100 years. But their consequences and implications have been seriously misconstrued. The conventional wisdom among anthropologists has been that when a tribe undergoes changes through a loss of isolation and through close integration with the wider society, sooner or later, with unfailing regularity, it becomes a caste.

Xaxa (2001) in *Protective Discrimination: Why Scheduled Tribes Lag behind Scheduled Castes*, explores the reasons behind why STs are lagging behind SCs in politics, education, and services, even though both groups suffer from certain social disabilities and discrimination. It is, therefore, a comparison between STs and SCs in relation to the benefits derived by them from the facilities extended to them so far and Why SCs are faring far better than the STs. According to the author, phenomena such as demography size, literacy rate, and geographical mobility are reasons behind why STs are lagging behind SCs. The population of SCs is twice the population size of STs. The literacy rate of SCs is far better than STs. Moreover, the geographical mobility of the STs, especially the educated, is not as pronounced as that of SCs both within and outside of the states. These are precisely the differences that need to be problematized, rather than ignored or taken for granted as corollaries of reservation.

Such problems entail discussion on two aspects; both of which are intricately related to one another. One is the relative role of the two groups with respect to their general attainment, especially at the level of higher education. The other factor is their overall performance at these levels. For it is not only their enrolment in the courses offered for higher education but also the quality of performance in the duration of the course and their successful completion of the same, which is critical in assessing their eligibility for jobs/positions at different levels. The SCs are segregated from the dominant community, while the STs are isolated from the dominant community. Therefore, SCs have greater exposure to the larger society as compared to the STs. This is to say that opportunities made available to the larger society in the form knowledge, information, technology, employment, etc also in sight for the SCs. Such advantages were absent for the STs. Perhaps this is one of the reasons that SCs are better off than the STs.

Xaxa (2005) in *Politics of Language, Religion and Identity: Tribes in India*, argues that there are the certain difference which has been a hallmark of Indian society. These differences have been acquired through a long and protracted historical process. The marks of difference have been diverse and varied but the major ones have been primarily located around those of caste, language, religion and region. To these principal marks of difference, a new one, namely 'tribe', was added during the colonial period. Prior to the colonial era, the use of a generic term to describe tribal peoples was, on the whole, absent. There is no doubt that the use of the category 'tribe' to describe people so heterogeneous from each other in respect of physical and linguistic traits, demographic size, ecological conditions of living, regions inhabited, or stages of social formation and level of acculturation and development were put forward by the colonial administration. That there is the difference between tribes and the wider Indian society is largely accepted. Thus tribes have invariably been seen as lying outside the larger Indian society. To put it starkly, tribes were seen as not being a part of the civilisation and therefore outside the structure of the larger Indian society. Now in this understanding of Indian society and its social transformation, tribes as entities with a distinct language, culture, custom, tradition and above all, social organisation are at least recognised. But scholar likes G.S. Ghurye and right wing political thinkers made arguments in justification of describing the tribes as Hindu, but backward Hindu. Ghurye and the right wing thinkers argued on the grounds that there was much similarity between Hindu religion and the animistic tribal religions and that the two could not possibly be distinguished from one another.

Bhangya Bhukhya (2008) in *The Mapping of the Adivasi Social: Colonial Anthropology and Adivasis*, points out that the construction of textual knowledge about some Indian communities in the colonial milieu is nothing but a tool for legal and general administration purposes and to establish a colonial domination. These social groups lived in

the inaccessible hill and forest areas and survived from hunting and gathering, and were categorised as 'aboriginal'. They were constructed in such way as to be relevant for discussion in civilized society. These social groups were distinguished by their social structure such as clan-based systems of kinship and their animistic religious beliefs. In this way, a social category was created and a body of knowledge was produced about the so-called aboriginals. The colonial rulers know that the future of colonial power depends on the acquisition of knowledge about language, customs, traditions, feelings, religion of history of the colony.

Even the colonial rulers branded them as criminal, barbaric and tried to convert them to Christianity to liberate them from criminal activity and make them civilised. They were also successful in certain areas, notably in North-East region of India. The author of the article is also critical of Verrier Elwin's approach to Adivasis and mentions that Elwin's celebration of Adivasis' life was not the best interest of Adivasis. Even G.S. Ghurey, without understanding the Adivasi language, culture, and tradition, classified them as backward Hindus. As per Ghurey, every inhabitant of India is Hindu, because they are born on Indian soil, worshiping the same Hindu Gods, and speaking the same regional language. He even opposed the enumeration of tribals in the census under a separate category. Although he used the terms 'aboriginal' and 'Adivasis' in his book, he later rejected it and argued that such terms helped to create a communal block. Similar bias can be discerned in the writings of M.N. Srinivas.

He generalizes his theory of Sanskritization to the entire Indian subcontinent. He argues that Sanskritization is the process by which a lower caste, tribal or other group changes its customs, rituals, ideology and way of life in the direction of high caste people. The whole body of colonial anthropology thus endeavoured to homogenise and totalised Indian Adivasi communities by ignoring the historically built differences between Adivasi

communities and the inter-dependency between Adivasi and caste-Hindu society. Although this project failed in many respects, it ended up stigmatising Adivasi society as primitive, uncivilised, isolated, barbaric, and violent with human sacrifice, criminal, backward and completely distinct from that of the normal human beings in mentality and mode of livelihood. So it is important to decolonise the colonial mentality in order to provide an ideological integrity to the Adivasis.

Meena Radhakrishna (2000) in *Colonial Construction of a Criminal Tribe: Yerululas of Madras Presidency*, talks about the Yerukula community who once upon a time lived as nomadic tribes. Nomadic communities the world over have always been considered to be more criminal. Members of this community were chiefly traders in grain and salt, operating between the coastal areas of the presidency and the interior district. The famine of 1877 devastated their salt trade. A large number of their cattle died. As they were traders in cattle as well, they suffered huge losses during that the decade of the famine. Forest laws of the 1880s prevented them from collecting forest product. They were also crucially affected by the new salt policy of the government in the 1880s, which allowed larger trading companies to enter the salt trade. A large number of retail outlets were established by the government all over the presidency on railway routes, where salt was now sold through the agents of large company traders. As a result of the above factors, Yerukulas suffered a massive economic setback during the period between the 1850s and 1860s.

As they became marginalized from the main system, prejudices and myths which already existed about nomads renewed and surfaced more explicitly. There have been other charges against gypsies, migrants or nomadic people that they are always escaping from the law and simply flee from hard work of any kind. Also, in the view of agriculture-based societies, the itinerancy, and sedentary aspects are not seen as a chosen way of life for civilised people. The British administration, the police, the high caste sections and landlords

of Indian villages were prejudiced that Nomads were using their knowledge to manipulate people, were disloyal to others and considered them as a threat to the social order. Their skills of singing, dancing, rope walking, acrobatics and as fortune tellers was ignored. Unfortunately, without knowledge of this community, and through superficial observations, people began seeing them as established criminals.

Susan Abraham (1999) In *Steal or I'll call you a Thief: 'Criminal' Tribes of India*, takes up the central question of how communities of Indian society can be designated as criminal tribes by British rulers, and the consequent stigma, prejudice, and ill-treatment continues after Independence. A cruel irony is that this constant harassment actually drives some of them into crime as well. The article discusses how the police harass, torture and even kill people from communities such as Pardhis, Kheria-Sabars, Vadaris, Bhils, Bedars, Kakadis, Kanjars, Mangarudis, Nirshikaris and Tadvīs of Maharashtra, as well as many communities across India. Any member of these communities could be randomly picked up, tortured, maimed or even killed, once branded as criminal tribes and now as ex-criminal or 'de-notified' tribes. Every year, members of these tribes are either mob lynched, killed by the police or forced into criminal activities by the police. The women from these communities are often kept enslaved in the prostitution trade. Except in Maharashtra, none of the other states provide reservation facilities to these tribes. The literacy level among DNT (de-notified tribes) is very less. They are denied the right to own land and are socially and economically backward. Their history shows that their ancestors were either forest inhabitants or wandering tribes who had distinct cultural identities.

A. M. Shah (2003) in *The Tribes-So-Called-Of Gujarat: In the perspective of Time*, states that "there is a notion of the tribal people that they were free from ideas of purity and pollution found generally among the caste Hindus. This notion needs critical examination with intensive field research. First of all, ideas of purity and pollution exist in the personal

life of tribal people. For example, women in the menstrual cycle observed at least some rules of pollution. They would not approach their sacred spots in this state. Similarly, men would approach their deities only after purifying themselves by a bath. Secondly, whenever members of one tribe lived with members of another tribe their interaction in some spheres was affected by ideas of purity and pollution. A caste-like situation seems to have prevailed in the relation between various tribal groups". The tribal people were under the impact of Sanskritic Hinduism through various channels. By the time India became independent, every tribal group was internally highly differentiated on every count of technology, economy, polity, culture and religion. There was no critical examination of the changed state of economic and social life of these groups.

Shereen Ratnagar (2010) in *Being Tribal*, attempts to explain what a tribe means. According to her, the notion of tribe is certainly layered and often context-specific, if not troublesome. Nevertheless, we cannot use this as a reason to discard the term 'tribe' from history and from social sciences in general. We know that 'tribe' is an English word but as we shall see later, '*Bhil*' is also a word originating from Sanskrit literature as early as the seventh century, and was probably a term given by the people from the surrounding caste society of that area.

According to Ratnagar, the colonial governments in Africa and in South Asia exhausted efforts on delineating and delimiting various tribal cultures, but it was their pinpointing of who came under which tribal name and their identification of geographic space with particular tribal entities that is problematic, not necessarily their notion of what was entailed in being tribal.

According to her, an archaeologist is interested in the different forms of past societies and the tribe as a stage of Cultural Revolution that precedes the early state. In the later periods of history, the tribes co-existed with stratified societies ruled by monarchies, and



some peasant groups who were pushed into inhospitable fringe areas would resort to tribal ways. There were other kinds of processes as well. As state institutions and ruling elites developed, tribes also developed certain traditions and some tribal groups were transformed into *Jatis* or castes. In everyday life, a tribal society may have many features in common with the peasantry, but by definition, tribesmen are not surplus-producing peasants. It is peasants who are the subordinated givers of labour or surplus to a dominant social or political class. In contrast, the affairs of tribal people do not depend on the markets or the law and order institutions of larger society whose centres of power are located in forts or towns. Tribal households have a degree of self-sufficiency not evident among peasants.

That tribal society thus has a structure that is simpler than class or state society, need not be a pejorative understanding at all: stages of social evolution do proceed from the simple to the more complex in terms of economic activities and their connections, the number of specializations in the economy, the variety of roles in political activity and so on.

Maya Unnithan-Kumar (2001) in *Identity, Gender and Poverty: New perspectives on Caste and Tribes in Rajasthan*, says that most of the so-called tribal communities in India stress their social, economic, and political differences from communities organised on the basis of caste. According to her study and experiences with Girasia communities in Rajasthan, she questions the distinction between caste and tribe made by academics and explains that the categorisation of tribe and caste is not valid and it is the construct of outsiders and academicians.

Historical material indicates that the Girasia has been subject to a process which has marginalized them from the dominantly caste-based society of Rajasthan. Despite the Girasia claiming to belong to a Rajput caste, others regard the Girasia as tribal. Contestations and conflicts over identification are features particularly associated with the colonial and

postcolonial processes of administration in India. According to her argument, caste and tribe are constructed and represent categories which are products of historical and contemporary social, economic and political processes.

Meena Radhakrishna (2001) in *Dishonoured by History: 'Criminal Tribes' and British Colonial policy*, explains how the British social policy makers converted some nomadic communities, the Yerukulas, Koravars and Korachas while using their cheap labour on one hand and categorizing them as criminal tribes on the other hand. These were three branches of the larger Korava community operating in different regions of the presidency. The Yerukulas were itinerant traders in the Telugu districts, Koravarsa in the Tamil districts and Korachas in the ceded districts. The Yerukulas, Koravars, Korachas, Lambadis, and Brinjaras were primarily grain and salt traders. They had been carrying salt from coastal districts to inland districts and bartering it for grain or forest produce. Colonial economic policies destroyed the occupations of a number of communities. Specific policies of the administration severely affected itinerant communities involved in petty trading. The salt policy of the British government, dictated by considerations of revenue, was instrumental in destroying the trade of Koravars, Yerukulas and Korachas and even of Brinjaries and Lambadis who operated on a much larger scale across provinces.

The Korava community had been dealing in salt much before the East India Company assumed government functions in Northern Sircars, i.e. Vishakhapatnam, Ganjam, Krishna, and the Godavari. The Korava community's traditional role was as salt traders in these parts. The community is also described as traders in salt in the discussion on the history of revenue collection under the Nawabs of the Carnatic and other rulers of Southern India. Though the Korava community shared trade with Brinjaries and Lambadis, the areas of operation of these communities were almost entirely different. It is possible to understand the Korava community's gradual loss of livelihood over a period of time only in the context of British

colonial revenue policy. The most important reason responsible for the destruction of salt trade practised by the Korava community was the introduction of the railways in the 1850s.

Nandini Sundar (2009) in *Subalterns and Sovereigns: an anthropological History of Bastar (1854-2006)*, focuses on the nineteenth and twentieth-century history of Bastar, a region in central India, inhabited largely by the Gond tribe, where she tries to bring together the anthropology and history of the tribe. Colonial officials believed that the tribes are usually communities that lived in or around forested and hilly areas, were the original inhabitants of India, and had been driven into the forests by the incursions of later communities. The tribes, by this account, were autochthonous and largely isolated groups, dependent on modes of subsistence that were primitive in comparison to the castes. They practiced animist religions distinct from that of the caste Hindus. She discusses the debate on the difference between caste and tribe and categories of tribes or tribal in the Indian context. The characteristics of Indian tribes are similar to the characteristics of African tribes but the Indian tribes are further understood to be differentiated by religion and culture from the Indian castes. However, the recent works on caste and tribe are against the colonial construction of tribe and colonial understanding of tribe categories as ‘tribal’, ‘primitive’, ‘savage’ or ‘wild’.

Nandini Sundar describes how Bastar, which is termed as an isolated tribal area, consists of an incredible mosaic of people and can compare with any metropolis in terms of linguistics and cultural hybridity. Economic differentiation, migration, and ecological adaptation played a role in creating a patchwork of different groups of Adivasi and low caste peoples. Sundar mentions Grigson, according to who the so-called scheduled castes were in reality members of primitive tribes speaking their languages and only differentiated from them by occupation<sup>19</sup>.

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<sup>19</sup>Grigson(1991;37, Sundar (2009)

In the light of the above debate, discussion on the tribal identity revolves around perspectives and paradigms of the isolation, culture, and distinctiveness of tribal traits from that of the caste society, which is essentially different from tribal society. The tribal society is essentially a kinship society which is divided based on blood clans and marital clans, while caste society is hierarchical and highly stratified based on purity and pollution of the traditional occupations. Apart from the hierarchical social order and social stratification, there is one segment of people in the caste society who suffers from untouchability and leads an undignified life. Isolation and ethnicity are basic characteristics of tribal identity while purity and pollution as basic characteristics of caste identity.

### **Structure of Tribe-Caste Relations**

Sociologically it is important to understand and explore the nature of the inter-community relationship of tribal society with the power and hierarchy of caste structure of the Hindu social order in the context of Kandhamal. The most important question is the dialectical, historical, and community relationships between the tribes and Hindus. When we talk about the tribe, their nature of relationship and engagement between the social, economic and cultural sphere of Hindus needs to be understood critically. It should be explored how the tribes are accepting the dominant, exploitative and oppressive Hindu social order while ignoring their own history and social philosophy. Though, the tribes are not Hindu, their relationship with the social structures of caste Hindus needs to be understood.

It is a general perception about a tribal society that tribes do not understand the concept of caste superiority and inferiority based on purity and pollution, they do not practice caste untouchability, and they do not understand hierarchical social orders based on the notion of purity and pollution. Therefore, it is important to understand the caste behaviors of tribal communities, how the tribes negotiate with the Hindu social order and more

specifically the relationship between the tribes and caste Hindus. Also, in order to explore whether the tribes have a consciousness about the exploitation and domination of the Hindu social order and the identity, power, politics and history in relations to Hinduism and their subaltern identity.

F.G. Bailey (1960) in *Tribe, Caste and Nation: A study of political activity and political changes in highland Orissa*, explains the nature and structure of inter-community relationships between tribes with lower castes and upper castes in villages in Odisha. The Kandha treat the upper castes as their masters and lower castes as their slaves and servants. The Kandha regard the lower castes as untouchables and inferior to them but the upper caste as pure and as their masters. Though the Kandha are not treated as untouchables, the upper castes treat even them as those of lowly status and do not accept food and water from them. Some lower castes accept food and water from Kandhas but other lower castes the 'Keuta' and 'Dhoba' refuse food and water from the Kandhas in order to assert their higher social status. The Kandhas accept the caste superiority of upper castes religiously and ritually.

G.S. Aurora (1972) in *Tribe-Caste-Class Encounters: Some Aspects of Folk-Urban Relations in Alirajpur Tehsil* explains the inter-community relationship between the Bhilala tribe with Rajputs as well as other lower castes. He tries to understand the identities of Bhilala, whether the Bhilala are tribal or not and to what extent the Bhilala are different from caste Hindus in terms of their rituals, practices, culture and social structure.

In their inter-community interactions with Rajputs, the Bhilalas consider the Rajputs as superior to them in caste hierarchy but consider the lower castes like Balai as inferior to them in the social, cultural and ritual hierarchy. The Bhilalas treat the Balai and Chamar as untouchable and maintain social distance from them, especially when they are engaged in eating and drinking. The patterns of behavior of Bhilalas with Rajputs and the lower castes

are very different. They treat Rajputs as their masters but treat the lower castes as their servants. The Bhilala are a tribe but have the consciousness of Hindu caste hierarchy and treat Chamars as the lowest in social status and regard the Balai as comparably superior to the Chamars.

### **Section Three**

#### **Religious Conversion in India**

In the context of the study, it is important to understand religious conversion and the process of religious conversion in Indian society. Religious conversion, particularly from Dalits and Tribes is a vehemently debated social, religious and political issue in India. Scholars always debate about the conversion of Dalits and Tribes, but they never debate about the conversion of upper castes to other religions. The Hindutva forces, in particular, are more critical about religious conversions of Dalits and Tribes to Christianity and Islam. However, there is another trend of religious conversion taking place in the name of a Hinduization process.

Claerhout and De Roover (2005) in *The Question of Conversion in India*, argue that religious conversion has become the subject of passionate debate in contemporary India. From the early 20<sup>th</sup> century onwards, it has surfaced time and again in the political realm, in the media, and in the courts. During the last few decades, the dispute has attained new peaks in the plethora of newspapers, journals, and books whose pages have been devoted to the question of conversion.

Apparently, a large group of Indians considers this to be an issue of crucial import for the future of India. The positions in the disputes are clear. On the one hand, the Hindus plead for a ban on conversion, because it disturbs the social peace in plural India; the aversion towards the proselytising drive of Christianity and Islam is widespread among various Hindu

groups, from the radical spokesperson of the Sangh Parivar to the moderate Gandhian. On the other hand, there are those who argue that conversion is fundamental human right, which is should be protected in any democracy. The Indian constitution addressed the issue of religious conversion more than half a century ago.

In article 25 of the Indian constitution, it is stated that “all persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right to freely profess, practise and propagate religion.” But the discussion on religious conversion is still governed by feelings of mutual incomprehension, unease, and resentment. The situation is growing worse now. The encounters between the Hindu traditions and the proselytizing religions of Christianity and Islam are more explosive than ever, and the issues of religious conversion almost always become a bone of contention that leads to conflict.

### **Dalit perspective of religious conversion**

Without any doubt, BR Ambedkar is one of the greatest intellectuals from the Dalit community. He is not only an intellectual but a great thinker, philosopher, and emancipator for Dalit communities. As a Dalit, he experienced harsh realities of the Hindu system and the manner in which the Hindus and Hindu philosophy treated Dalits in a very inhuman way. As a way of emancipation from the slavery of the Hindu system, he converted to Buddhism. Through his article, *Conversion as Emancipation*, he conveyed his reasoning on why such a conversion was essential for Dalits and oppressed communities. He argued that the matter of conversion should be viewed through social, religious material and spiritual aspects. The Hindu system treated Dalits as untouchables.

As long as the Dalits remain in Hindu fold, they cannot emancipate themselves. According to him, the problem of untouchability is nothing but a matter of class struggle between Hindus and untouchables. In Hinduism, there are two classes - the touchable Hindus

and the untouchables. There is a historical class struggle going on between touchable caste-Hindus and the untouchables. This class struggle has a relation with the social status based on the notion of purity and pollution.

Untouchability is not a minor or temporary feature. It is a permanent one. So, it can be said that the struggle between the caste-Hindus and untouchables is a permanent phenomenon. Untouchables are the lowest rung of the ladder today and shall remain the lowest forever. This means the struggle between the Hindus and the untouchable shall continue forever. How should the untouchables survive through this struggle? To survive, power is necessary for the untouchables. But the question is whether the untouchables have enough power to survive this struggle. There are three types of power known to man, (1) Manpower, (2) Wealth and (3) Mental power. As far as manpower is concerned, it is clear that untouchables are a minority, that too unorganized. The situation of financial strength is similar; untouchables have no lands, no property, no trades, no business, and no service.

With regard to mental strength, the condition is even worse. For centuries, untouchables have only served the higher castes and also tolerated their insults and tyranny without grudge and complaint, which has killed any sense of revolt. So the untouchables are helpless, un-energetic and pale due to lack of confidence, vigour, and ambition. This is why conversion was seen as being necessary to gain confidence, power, and prestige.<sup>20</sup>

Aloysius (2004) in *Dalit-Subaltern Emergence in Religio-Cultural Subjectivity: Iyothee Thassar and Emancipatory Buddhism*, describes how Iyothee Thassar, pioneer of the Dravidian movement, stated that it was because of the inhuman caste/varna scheme and spirit that the Dalit-subalterns were depressed. The greatest help and support they could render now

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<sup>20</sup>Dr.B.R.Ambedkar (1990), "Conversion as Emancipation", Dr.Babasaheb Ambedkar writings and speeches, Education Department, Government of Maharashtra.



was to put an end to the devious system and thus cease to be an obstacle in the way of freedom and liberty.

He recognises, appreciates and cooperates with several 'upper caste' individuals who showed signs of renouncing caste in public life. Appeals were made to the larger society, to the leaders of other religions and opinion makers, in general, to read the signs of the times, recognise the anachronistic nature of caste discrimination, give up caste beliefs and practices and join the struggle of the emerging group of casteless Buddhists. Iyothee Thassar and his colleagues insisted on renunciation of caste as ascriptive discrimination, a life based on right mind, speech and conduct understood in a uniform sense across caste and an all-embracing egalitarian compassion as the non-negotiable of the Buddha's teaching.

Many other practitioners went on to set up counter and competing Buddhas and resuscitate alternative Buddhism which would not demand any change and sacrifice. In addition to the traditional religious practice of turning the Buddha into one of the numerous avatars of Hinduism, Iyothee Thassar had to contend with 'atheist' and 'scientific' Buddhism being propagated among the Dalit-subalterns. Iyothee Thassar time and again had to explain that Buddhism was not a religion like any other, that by subjecting himself and his message to the rational criterion, the Buddha had undercut the very principle and formation of religious orthodoxy and that the role of the *bhikkhus* was not parallel to that of the *purohits* and priests.

The Dalit-subalterns in the course of their self-emergence were also in search of a name and identity. Iyothee Thassar repeated time and again that the names given by opponents are degrading, signifying an inferior status, and that emerging groups ought to reject them. Iyothee Thassar pointed out that the new emergence from passivity to activity or

subjectivity requires the rejection of the externally imposed identity, and indicative of the newly acquired/achieved status of equal respect and dignity.<sup>21</sup>

Ambrose Pinto (2000) in *Hindutva vs Ambedkarism*, critically examines the discourse on conversions by the forces of Hindutva and the Ambedkarites subaltern perspective. The arguments of Hindutva are arguments of the dominant castes, while Ambedkar represents the oppressed and marginalised communities. He argued that the Ambedkarite perspective on conversions has not been sufficiently examined all through the debate on the issue of religious conversion. The Hindutva forces are averse to Ambedkarism. In article 25 of the Indian constitution, it clearly states “freedom of conscience and free profession and propagation of religion”, but for the Sangh Parivar conversion is anathema. Pinto argues that even the so-called progressive sections, Gandhians, and even socialists are uncomfortable with article 25. The Sangh Parivar even justified violence against the Christians on the pretext that Christians and missionaries are converting Hindus. He also argues that the Sangh Parivar forces (RSS and its allies) are communalising the whole discourse on religious conversion. They never attempted to look at the entire debate on conversions from the perspective of the subalterns. The Sangh Parivar asked questions, raised objections and carried out propaganda against the minuscule Christian minority community, complaining that the Christians are aggressively involved in acts of proselytization through bribery, coercion, force, and inducements.

Ambrose Pinto (2005) in *Conversion as Subversion of Hierarchy*, explains that Hinduism determines one’s social status in the society through the caste system. The *Varna* and caste systems, which are the backbone of Hinduism, are based on the divine sanction of the holy scriptures of Hinduism. Without the *Varna* and caste systems, Hinduism cannot exist

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<sup>21</sup>Cited from *Dalit-Subaltern emergence in religious-Cultural Subjectivity: Iyothee Thassar and emancipatory Buddhism*.

and there is nothing called Hinduism without *Varna* and caste system. The lower castes are the worst sufferers and victims of the inhuman *Varna* and caste system of Hinduism. There cannot be salvation and social dignity for lower castes in Hinduism. Hinduism and the Hindu social order justify the *Varna* and caste system, as well as the inhuman treatment meted out to Dalits. So to escape from the curse of caste, the lower caste should follow Dr. Ambedkar, as Dr. Ambedkar directed towards religious conversion as emancipation for the oppressed masses of Indian society.

S.M. Michael (2005) in *Conversion, Empowerment and Social Transformation*, discusses how the Hindutva forces oppose religious conversion in the context of Christianity and Islam only. Historically, there are many religious and cultural encounters and interactions which resulted in a social and cultural change in India. Many communities and tribes assimilated into Hinduism. The Brahminic worldview succeeded in subsuming several diverse local cults, ideas, and deities under the umbrella of *Sanatan Dharma*, which in turn distorted true history. However, the religious conversions to Buddhism, Sikhism, Islam, and Christianity by the underprivileged, exploited, oppressed and discriminated communities happened for social mobility and social transformation. Religious conversion has been a powerful religious weapon to protest and resist against inhuman caste oppression and exploitation. Due to the inhuman experience of untouchability and caste oppression, many Dalits converted to other religions for liberation, self-dignity, social mobility and a sense of universal humanity. The religious conversions provided new a sense of dignity, confidence, new institutions, lifestyles, and ideologies of equality.

S. M. Michael (2010) in *Dalit Encounter with Christianity: Change and Continuity*, argues that even after sixty years of independence, the situation of the ex-untouchable communities today popularly known as Dalits, remains pathetic. Their representation in various government and private institutions is inadequate. Social and cultural discrimination

against them still continues today. There is a persistent daily struggle among them to leave behind a life tainted and broken by others to seize the chance of a better future. Their encounter with Christianity resulted in mass movements of religious conversion, due to various social, cultural, economic, political and religious reasons. The Hindu fundamentalist organizations and their assimilation policy claim that the tribals and the Dalits is Hindu, a large number of tribals and Dalits rejected this superimposed new identity.

### **Adivasis' perspectives of religious conversion**

Virginius Xaxa (2009) in *Tribes, Conversion and the Sangh Parivar*, explains that the issue of religious conversion has been a controversial subject of debate. The world and world views of tribals are very different from Brahmins and Hindus. The traditional religious beliefs and practices of tribals are qualitatively different from caste Hindus. However, there are some tribals following Hindu ideology, beliefs and practice Hinduism, while some are embracing Christianity and some Islam. According to him, this issue has become more controversial when the tribal communities converted into the other religions. The issue of tribal religious conversion is a major controversy in India. There are many commissions set up for an inquiry into religious conversions in different states of India. Many legislations have passed in India with regards to conversion such as 'Freedom of Religion Bill'. Being a tribal himself, he tried to understand the issue of religious conversion and tribal social settings.

According to him the term 'tribe' is a colonial construct, to describe a particular section and group of people in India during the colonial rule, who were different from the mainstream society. In the 1891 census, the British used the term 'forest tribe' for those who were different from mainstream society, but not the term 'tribe'. However, after 1901, the term 'tribe' was described and identified with those communities which believed and practiced animism. There are different types of tribes such as the 'Hill tribe', 'Forest tribe',

and 'Primitive' and 'backward' tribes, and these tribes are different from the mainstream Hindu society. According to their religious beliefs and practices, the tribal are neither Hindu nor Christian or Muslim. He says that religious conversions can be understood from various perspectives and angles from everyday practices.

Religious conversion holds a different meaning to different people, but for a tribe, religious conversion means changing of one's religious beliefs and practices to another. The change of religious beliefs and practice of tribal communities has been happening continuously. In this process, many tribes assimilated into Hindu society. So, assimilation is one of the processes of religious conversion and transformation of tribal society. The conversion of tribes to Christianity started during the colonial rule. Unlike the assimilation process of tribes into Hinduism, the conversion to Christianity followed certain procedures. The interaction of tribes and Christian missionaries was through social services and development-oriented work such as education, health and medicines, legal aid, and agricultural credit, which helped tribal communities emancipate themselves from the clutches of ignorance, illiteracy, superstitions, and disease. On the level of politics and ideology, the Hindutva forces aggressively attack tribal Christians and they categorize tribal as Hindus. Due to the Hindutva forces and Hindutva ideology, some tribes socialize and declare themselves as Hindus on the ground level.

Biswamoy Pati (2001) in *Identity, Hegemony, Resistance: Conversions in Orissa, 1800-2000*, interrogates the way in which conversion has been located, and takes up the history of conversion in Orissa over the last 200 years. He argues that the subject of religious conversion is rarely studied with reference to Hinduism. The Adivasi re-conversion implies that a Hindu identity of tribal is taken for granted to justify the need of re-conversion from Christianity. He further argues that there is a contradiction that while Hinduization involves the integration of Adivasis, the Adivasis are outcastes and beyond the Hindu *Varna*

*Vyavashtha*. So, he argues that the Hinduization process of re-conversion involves hegemony and exploitation of Adivasis and outcastes. He examines the complexities of identities associated with the world of those were converted. In the name of civilising the hill people, the colonial machinery gripped with Varna logic has initiated a major offensive against them to extend its power and control the hills.

Nandini Sundar (2006) in *Adivasi vs. Vanvasi: The Politics of Conversion in Central India* says that both land and resources and religious beliefs of tribes have come under sustained attack by the forces of organised capitalism and organised religions. She describes how the RSS and Vanvasi Kalyan Ashrams are aggressively working to counter the activities of Christian missionaries among the tribals, and to promote Hindutva ideology and Hindu identity. The Arya Samaj and the RSS are conducting ‘*Shuddhi*’ (Purification) or ‘*Gharwapsi*’ (homecoming) programmes among the tribes. The Christian missionaries working day and night for the uplift and betterment of tribes, emphasise on changing the quality of life, by providing education and health services. But the Hindutva forces and Hindu nationalists portray conversion to Christianity as an anti-national act and those who have converted to Christianity as anti-nationals. Both the Hindutva forces and Christian missionaries obliterate tribal identity. As part of the Hindutva agenda, Hindutva forces are referring to Adivasis as ‘Vanvasi’, creating and narrating the myth that the Adivasis are part of great Hinduism.

Joseph Marianus Kujur (2009) in *The Hinduisation of Tribals: A special Reference to the Orans in Chhotanagpur*, argues that the tribals are different from Hinduism and have a distinct social, cultural and religious identity. The Hindutva forces are diluting and destroying tribal identity and culture. The Hindutva forces are pitched against diversity, which represents the tribal culture. The Hindutva forces are turning tribal areas into battlefields against Christian Missionaries. The Hindutva forces are enforcing assimilation of tribals with

Hindutva ideology and homogenisation by destroying the local tribal culture and rituals. They are imposing a social, religious, cultural and political consciousness which goes against tribal identity and tribal culture. The Hindutva ideology poses a multi-dimensional threat to religion, culture, politics, economy and identity of tribal society.

K. C. Chaube (1999) in *The Scheduled Tribes and Christianity in India*, argues that the tribes of India are not a homogenous group and that in fact, the word 'tribe' is not even defined properly. Since ancient times, Indian tribes have been assimilated into the Hindu society. The religious integration involved, on the part of the tribes, an adaptation of Brahminical rituals. The advent of Christianity into the tribal territories of India was late. The East-India Company did not encourage missionary activities in British India. It was after the passing of the Charter Act of 1813 that they were forced to allow Christian missionaries in their territories. Initially, the Christian missions attempted proselytization of gentlemen and not the lower class people. They did not enter any tribal territory before the administration. Their activities picked up only towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. With government support, the missionaries worked on education and welfare.<sup>22</sup> When tribals became politically important for religious identity and for religious politics, both Hindu and Christian groups competed to bring them into their own religious fold. Almost the North-East is Christian. The Christian population in central India is low due to tribal revolts and lack of Christian mission work in the earlier princely states.

### **Hindutva's perspectives of religious conversion**

The RSS and its alliance is popularly known as Sangh Parivar, ideological, socially, culturally and politically against religious conversion. Christophe Jaffrelot (2007) in '*Hindu Nationalism: A Reader*' writes that the issue of religious conversion and Hindu nationalism

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<sup>22</sup>S.K.Chaube (1999).The Scheduled Tribes and Christianity in India, EPW, Vol.34.No.9, Feb27-March 5.Pp.524-526.

are closely related. The Hindutva ideology aggressively and strongly opposes the religious conversion and activities of Christian missionaries. The Hindutva forces launched neo-Hindu movements such as Arya Samaj and socio-religious movements such as Brahmo Samaj to aggressively spread Hindutva propaganda. The Hindutva forces imitated conversion techniques of Christian Missionaries but with Hindu tradition and rituals, labelled '*Shuddhi*' or purification. Traditionally '*Shuddhi*' rituals are resorted to by upper caste Hindus when affected by a 'polluting' contact.

However, the Arya Samaj used '*Shuddhi*' rituals to re-convert the converted Christians, Muslims, Sikhs and Buddhists to purify them and reinstate them to their original caste. The RSS and its affiliates are trying to protect the Varna and caste system which are the backbone of the Hindu social order. The Hindutva forces constructed the concept of '*Pitrubhoomi*' (Fatherland) and '*Punyabhoomi*' (Holy land) for those who believed in the ideology of Hinduism and Hindutva. The country *Bharat* is fatherland as well as holy land because the sacred places of Hinduism are located inside the country. Both Christianity and Islam have come to India from Central Asia. The people who believe and practice Islam and Christianity cannot be loyal citizens, true patriots or loyal to the nation because their holy lands are situated outside the country.

Therefore, Hinduism and Hindutva are important factors for the construction of the nation, national identity, and cultural identity. Only those who believe and practice Hinduism are true patriots and those who do not believe in Hinduism and Hindutva are anti-national and should be considered as second-class citizens. The RSS affiliates oppose the Muslim, Christian, Dalit and Tribal conversions. The RSS and its alliance not only opposes religious conversions but also opposes the progressive, rational and liberal thinkers as well as assertive Dalits. The RSS and Hindutva forces have a grand design to maintain Brahminism and the Brahmanical social order. The Hindu nationalism and religious conversions are intimately



related, which is why the Hindutva forces strongly oppose the religious conversion of Dalits and Tribes.

## **Summary**

From the review of the literature, it is quite clear that the conflict is universal in nature and found in every part of the human history and society. However, the nature and dynamics of conflict vary from society to society and place to place. The nature of the conflict in western societies is different from the nature of the conflict in Indian society. The western conflict theories emphasised on the economy and the politics as the core of social conflict in society. These theories claim that a group of people dominates other by controlling the economy and political power in society. Change and conflict is inseparable and they always go together. However, conflict in Indian society is more social, cultural and religious than economic and political one.

Conflict in Indian society arises due to contradictory aims and conflicting interest of different caste, religious and ethnic groups. Indian society is a highly diverse society in terms of caste, religion, ethnic, language and the different groups having different interests and motivations. When they try to fulfill their own interest the conflicting interests leads to conflict. In this way, class, caste, religious and ethnic conflict arises anywhere in India. Class conflict arises between the different classes due to contradictory and conflicting interests.

Caste conflict always caused conflict between lower castes and higher, lower castes and other backward castes, lower castes, and tribes based on the notion of purity and pollution. The lower castes consider as impure and untouchable, whereas the higher castes, other backward castes, and tribes consider themselves as superior and these superior complex has always caused conflict between different castes and this process is still continuing. Sometimes there occurs serious religious conflict between different religious communities

based on their activities and principles. This religious conflict occurs when one religious community is intolerant about other religious community. Sometimes there occurs a serious ethnic conflict in north-east parts of India when one ethnic group tries to suppress the other ethnic group to fulfil their interest.

# **CHAPTER-III**

**Profile of the study area: Kandhamal**

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### **Profile of the Study Area: Kandhamal**

#### **Introduction**

The population of Odisha is divided into several caste and tribes. Odisha occupies a unique status in the ethnographic map of India for having the largest variety of tribal communities. There are 62 different tribal communities including 13 primitive tribal groups. As per the 2011 census, the scheduled tribe population in Odisha is 9590756 which is 22.85 percent of the total population of the Odisha and contributes 9.17 percent to the total tribal population of the country. The highest proportion scheduled tribe has been reordered in Mayurbhanja district with 58.7 percent and the lowest in Puri district with 0.4 percent. There has been a continuous process of assimilation and acculturation of tribal in Odisha.

The objective of this chapter is to introduce the geographical locations, historical background and cultural pattern of Kandhamal. Kandhamal is one of the tribal and Dalit-dominated districts which is located in central part of Odisha. The state of Odisha is one of the tribal dominated states of India which is located in the Bay of Bengal, eastern coast. Being one of the backward states in the country, Odisha characterised by the highest percentage of scheduled tribe and scheduled caste are below poverty line. Historically, in Odisha, the tribal god and goddess have emerged as Hindu god and goddess. Though there is the symbolic difference, in this process there is a reunion between the Hindu and tribal culture. Nowadays, many tribal assimilated into Hindu cultural structure (Kandhamal District Gazetteer, 1983: 68).

According to 2011 census, the scheduled caste constitutes over 17.1 percent of the total population in Odisha and divided into 93 communities. The highest proportion of scheduled caste has been recorded in Sonapur district with 25.6 percent and the lowest in

Gajapati district with 6.8 percent. The situation of the scheduled caste in Odisha are worse, they are in a vulnerable and dependent condition. The scheduled caste in Odisha lacks any control over land and forest resources. The caste hierarchy, ritual purity and pollution, and upper caste dominance in politics has blocked the articulation of caste consciousness among the scheduled caste. The caste violence, conflict, atrocities against scheduled caste significant in Odisha. There are frequent caste conflict between lower caste and upper caste, lower caste, and tribe in Odisha. Kandhamal is one of the districts in Odisha which witness the highest number of caste and religious violence.

The colonial administration made some efforts to promote education among scheduled caste and scheduled tribe in Odisha. Christian missionaries also started to promote education among scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in Odisha. After Independence, special care taken by both central and state government to improve education among scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in Odisha. Special schools were established by the government in a different area for scheduled caste and scheduled tribe students. Even after the Independence of six decades the level of education among scheduled castes and scheduled tribes is not satisfactory. As per the 2011 census, these following tables present the educational status of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in Odisha.

### **Educational Profiles of Scheduled Caste in Odisha**

<b>Table no .3.1-Education Profile of Scheduled Castes In Odisha (In number)</b>						
Gender	Literate	in %	Illiterate	in %	Total	in %
Male	2478584	57.591	1139224	39.492	3617808	50.328
Female	1825159	42.409	1745496	60.508	3570655	49.672
Total	4303743	100	2884720	100	7188463	100

Sources: District Census Handbook, Kandhamal, 2011

Table-3.1 represents the total number of Scheduled Caste population in Odisha. According to 2011 census, the total population of Scheduled Caste of Odisha is 7188463 with

male 3617808 and female 3570655. Out of 3617808 male population, 2478584 are registered as literate and 1139224 are illiterate. Out of 3570655 of the female population, 1825159 are registered as literate and 1745496 are illiterate. This table also represents the percentage of literacy rate among Scheduled Caste in Odisha. According to 2011 census, 34.48 percent male population registered as literate and 15.85 percent registered as illiterate. Among Scheduled Caste woman 25.39 percent registered as literate and 24.28 percent registered as illiterate.

<b>Table no. 3.2 Level of Education of Scheduled Caste in Odisha</b>						
Level	Male	in %	Female	in %	Total	in %
Below Primary	623535	14.52	539241	12.56	1162776	27.08
Primary	782865	18.23	608682	14.17	1391547	32.40
Middle	536510	12.49	367700	8.56	904210	21.05
Metric/Secondary	234773	5.47	141287	3.29	376060	8.76
Higher Secondary	122249	2.85	64752	1.51	187001	4.35
Non-technical Diploma	2491	0.06	574	0.01	3065	0.07
Technical Diploma	15839	0.37	3118	0.07	18957	0.44
Graduate and Above	84501	1.97	32732	0.76	117233	2.73
Literate Without educational level	70697	1.65	62969	1.47	133666	3.11
Total	2473460	57.60	1821055	42.40	4294515	100

Sources: District Census Handbook, Kandhamal, 2011

Table-3.2 represents the level of education among Scheduled Caste in Odisha. According to 2011 census, 623535 male and 539241 are below primary level education. From this data, it is clear that even after the six decades of Independence there is a very less number of Scheduled Caste representation in technical and higher education. This table also represents that even after the six decades of Independence only 1.97 percent Scheduled Caste male and 0.76 Scheduled Caste female are in higher education. Education is one of the major force for social transformation and social empowerment for Scheduled Castes but so far not

even ten percent of Scheduled Castes reached to Higher education. It is essential to pay attention to the proper education for Scheduled Castes.

Table no 3.3 Education Profile of Scheduled Tribe In Odisha (In number)						
Gender	Literate	in %	Illiterate	in %	Total	in %
Male	25,22,307	26.30	22,05,425	23.00	47,27,732	49.29
Female	16,93,323	17.66	31,69,701	33.05	48,63,024	50.71
Total	42,15,630	43.96	53,75,126	56.04	95,90,756	100

Sources: District Census Handbook, Kandhamal, 2011

Table-3.3 represents the total number of Scheduled Tribe population in Odisha. According to 2011 census, the total population of Scheduled Caste of Odisha is 9590756 with male 4727732 and female 4863024. Out of 4727732 Scheduled Tribe male populations 2522307 are registered as literate and 2205425 are illiterate. Out of 4863024 of the female population, 1693323 are registered as literate and 3169701 are illiterate. This table also represents the percentage of literacy rate among Scheduled Tribes in Odisha. According to 2011 census, 26.30 percent male population registered as literate and 23.00 percent registered as illiterate. Among the Scheduled Tribes women 17.66 percent registered as literate and 33.05 percent registered as illiterate.

Table no. 3.4. Level of education of Scheduled Tribe in Odisha						
Level	Male	in %	Female	in %	Total	in %
Below Primary	7,77,592	18.49	6,07,510	14.45	13,85,102	32.93
Primary	8,25,023	19.62	5,49,064	13.06	13,74,087	32.67
Middle	4,61,189	10.97	2,86,532	6.81	7,47,721	17.78
Metric/Secondary	1,96,653	4.68	1,04,988	2.50	3,01,641	7.17
Higher Secondary	93,434	2.22	48,633	1.16	1,42,067	3.38
Non-technical Diploma	2,113	0.05	470	0.01	2,583	0.06
Technical Diploma	13,551	0.32	2,713	0.06	16,264	0.39
Graduate and Above	45,302	1.08	19,557	0.47	64,859	1.54
Literate Without educational level	1,01,537	2.41	69,737	1.66	1,71,274	4.07
Total	25,16,394	59.83	16,89,204	40.17	42,05,598	100

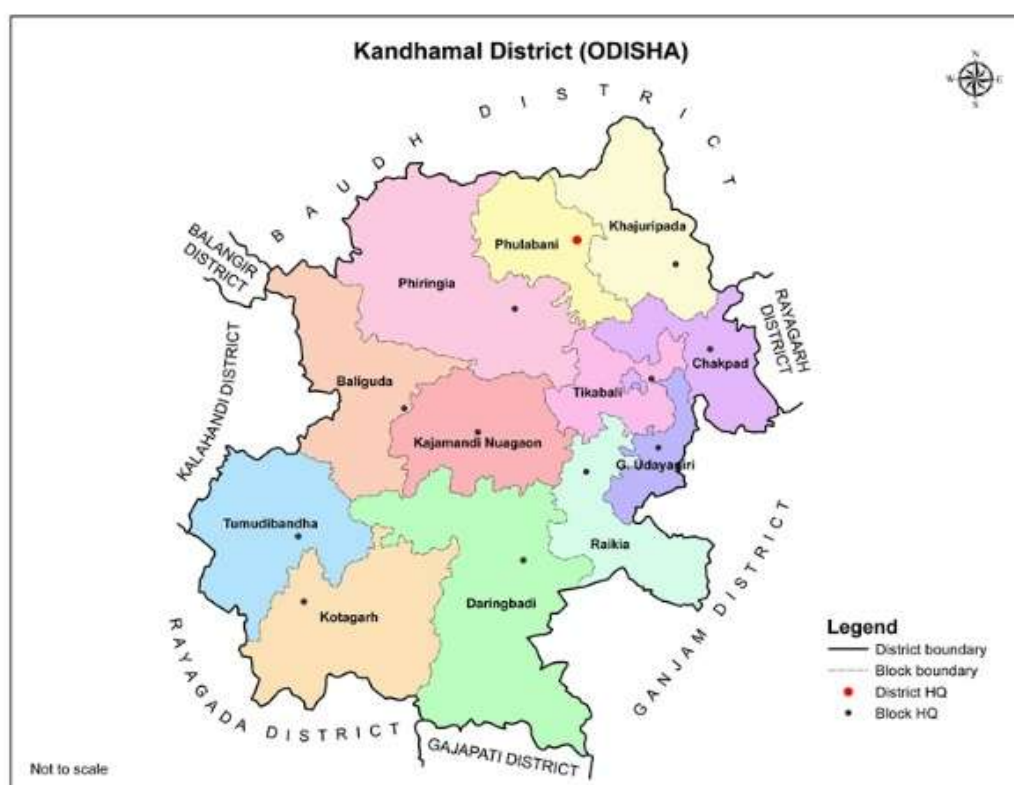
Sources: District Census Handbook, Kandhamal, 2011

Table-3.4 represents the level of education among Scheduled Tribe in Odisha. According to 2011 census, 777592 male and 607510 are below primary level education. There are 45302 Scheduled Tribe male and 19557 Scheduled Tribe female in higher education. This table also represents that even after the sixty decades of Independence only 1.08 percent Scheduled Tribe male and 0.47 percent Scheduled Tribe female are in higher education. Higher education is an extremely important factor in the development of the personality of the Scheduled Tribes and one of the major force for social transformation and social empowerment but so far ten percent of Scheduled Tribes not reached to Higher education.



## Geographical Location of Kandhamal

The district lies between 19.34 degree and 20.50 degree north latitude and 84.48-degree east longitude bounded by Boudh district in the north, Rayagada in south, Ganjam and Nayagarh in east and Kalahandi district in the west. Kandhamal district comes under district comes under the north-eastern ghat agro-climatic zone of the state and spread over by geographical area of 7654 square kilometres (7.14% of the state of Odisha). The altitudes of Kandhamal district ranges from 300 meters -1100 meters from the mean sea level. The mean maximum temperature of Kandhamal district is maximum 42.5 degree Celsius to the mean minimum minus 5 degree Celsius. The average annual rainfall in the district is 1587 millimetres in rainy days which is mostly received from June to October.



Sources: Google map

## **History of Kandhamal**

The present district Kandhamal came into existence on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1994 vide Government of Odisha notification no. DRC-218/93/56413 on date 22/12/1993, after the division of Phulbani district into Boudh and Kandhamal. Historically the Kandhamal district was known by various names likes Phulbani, Khondamal, and Boudh-Kandhamal in a different period of time. Kandhamal district is surrounded by Boudh district in the north, Rayagada district in the south, Ganjam and Nayagarh district in the east and Kalahandi district in the west.

Kandhamal district lies in high altitude zone with the inaccessible terrain of hill ranges and narrow valley tracts. The district is filled with soaring mountains and dense forest. The district is reverberating with tribal culture and rich wildlife. The district predominated by the Kandha tribe and Pano as second non-tribal majority community. The present district of Kandhamal was part and parcel of early princely states of Boudh, Ghumusar, and Sanakhemundi in past. Phulbani, Khajuripada, and Phiringia block were under Boudh, whereas Chakapada, Raikia, Tikabali, and G.Udayagiri block were under Ghumusar, Kanjamendi Nuagaon, Baliguda, Daringibadi, Tumudibandh, Kotagarh blocks were the parts of Sanakhemundi. Therefore, the history, language and culture of Kandhamal are spread and involved with culture and history of princely states Boudh, Ghumusar, and Sanakhemundi.

The British invaded to this region in 1836 despite stiff resistance by the local people. General Campbell, the first British administrator enters to this land and he named this land as Khondistan in 1855. In the year 1891, this land Khondistan was separated from Boudh and got the special status of an administrative sub-division, which was called as Kandhamal sub-division after merging with Anugul district. In the year 1936, Kandhamal sub-division was

separated from Angul district and merged with Ganjam district having same sub-divisional status. After Independence, in 1948 Kandhamal sub-division became a district with Boudh in modern states of Odisha. In the past Kandhamal was known as ‘Sata Mutharabu’ and later as ‘Domsing’ region.

According to oral account, the king of Boudh conquered the ‘Sanakhemundi’ with the help of Kandha of the ‘Sata Mutharabu’ region. After conquering Sanakhemundi, the king of Boudh, when return back to his kingdom Boudh with his army, and Kandhs, with victory celebration, during that time due to the sounds of victory music and drum beats, king of Boudh, declares this region should be known as ‘Domsing’ from this day at Maa Dwarapal ghati near Sudrukumpa village. This Domsing region was under the tribal chiefs and not under any kings. According to another oral account, the Kandha sacrificed two girls by name Phula and Bani, for their memory the region was named as Phulbani. But there are various account also, some people say due to the flora and flower in the forest it is known as Phulbani. Kandhamal is located in the heart of the modern Odisha with its natural beauties. The ninety percent of the village in a rural area named according to Kui language but there are some villages those are near to town named according to Odia language (Kandhamal District Gazetteer, 1983:374). Kandhamal district has two sub-divisions namely Phulbani and Baliguda, with twelve tahasils, and twelve community development blocks namely Phulbani, Phiringia, Khajuripada, G.Udayagiri, Tikabali, Raikia, Chakapada, Baliguda, Tumudibandha, Kotagarh, K. Nuagaon, and Daringbadi. To maintain the law and order, Kandhamal divided into seventeen Police Station namely, Gochhapada, Phulbani Sadar, Phulbani town, Khajuripada, Phiringia, G.Udayagiri, Tikabali, Raikia, Sarangagarh, Daringbadi, Chakapada, Baliguda, Tumudibandha, Belghar, Kotagarh, K. Nuagaon and Brahamhanigaon. To look after the urban development Kandhamal has two statutory towns Phulbani Municipality and G.Udayagiri, notified areas council (NAC). The district has three

legislative assembly seats namely Phulbani, G.Udayagiri and Baliguda all these are reserved for Scheduled tribe and Member of Parliament seats, Phulbani Lok Sabha is unreserved. Up to 2009 general election, Phulbani legislative assembly and Phulbani Lok Sabha seat was reserved for Scheduled Caste.

### **Demography of Kandhamal**

The total population in Kandhamal district is as per 2011 census is 7, 33,110 with male population 3, 59,945 and female population is 3, 73,165. In terms of population strength, the rank in Kandhamal district is the 23<sup>rd</sup> number in Odisha. As per the 2011 census, the scheduled tribe population in Kandhamal is 3, 92, 820 which is 53.6 percent of the total population of the Kandhamal. The Kandha are numerically largest scheduled tribe in Kandhamal. As per the 2011 census, the scheduled caste population in Kandhamal is 1, 15,544 which is 15.8 percent of the total population of the Kandhamal. In Kandhamal district, there are 38 scheduled castes. As per the 2011 census, the population of Pano in Kandhamal is 87,934 which is 76 percent of total scheduled caste population in Kandhamal. The Pano are numerically largest scheduled caste community in Kandhamal followed by Hadi, Keuta, and Dhoba.

**Table no. 3.5- Demographic composition of Kandhamal**

<b>Description</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>2011</b>
Actual Population	7,33,110	Literates	3,99,786
Male	3,59,945	Male Literates	2,33,900
Female	3,73,165	Female Literates	1,65,886
Total Child Population (0-6 Age)	1,09,709	Average Literacy	64.13
Male Population (0-6 Age)	55,915	Male Literacy	76.93
Female Population (0-6 Age)	53,794	Female Literacy	51.94
Population Growth	13.10%	Sex Ratio (Per 1000)	1037
Proportion of Orissa Population	1.75%	Child Sex Ratio (0-6 Age)	962

Sources: District Census Handbook, Kandhamal, 2011

Table-3.5 represents the demographic composition of Kandhamal. According to 2011 census, total population of Kandhamal is 7, 33,110, with male 3, 59,945 and female 3, 73,165. A total number of literates is 3, 99, 786 with males 2, 33, 900 and females 1, 65,886. The average literacy rate in Kandhamal is 64.13%. The male literacy rate is 76.93% and female literacy is 51.94%. The population of Scheduled Tribe is 3, 92,820 with males 1, 90,506 and females 2, 02, 314. The population of Scheduled Caste is 1, 15, 544 with males 56, 987 and females 58, 557. The sex ratio is 1037 female per 1000 male in the districts.

**Table no-:3.6-Religion wise Population Distribution in Kandhamal**

Religion	Number of Population	Percentage
Hindu	5, 80, 300	79.16%
Christians	1,48,895	20.31%
Islam	2138	0.29%
Sikh	82	0.01%
Buddhist	290	0.04%
Jain	47	0.01%
Others	23	0.00%
Non stated	1335	0.18%
Total	733110	100%

Sources: District Census book, Kandhamal 2011

Table-3.6 represents religion wise population distribution in Kandhamal. According to 2011 census 79.16 percent of the population registered as Hindu, 20.31 percent registered as Christian, 0.29 percent registered as Islam, 0.01 percent registered as Sikh, 0.01 percent registered as Jain and 0.18 percent as others in Kandhamal. Though Kandhamal is tribal dominated district but the majority of tribal are following Hinduism in Kandhamal.

**Table no-:3.7. Demographic profile of selected Blocks, Panchayats, and Villages**

BLOCKS	House Hold	Total Population	Male	in %	Female	in %
Khajuripada	11274	46755	23511	50.29	23244	49.71
Tikabali	11063	46688	23040	49.35	23648	50.65
Panchayat						
Gudari	865	3947	1973	49.99	1974	50.01
Beheragaon	1008	4201	2122	50.51	2079	49.49
Village						
Dadapaju (Gudari GP, Khajuripada block)	183	715	372	52.03	343	47.97
Bastiangia (Beheragaon GP, Tikabali block)	111	738	435	58.94	303	41.06

Sources: District Census book, Kandhamal 2011

Table-3.7 represents the Scheduled Tribe and Scheduled Caste population in two study blocks and Panchayats. The Scheduled Caste population in Khajuripada block is more than Scheduled Caste population of Tikabali block. The Scheduled Tribe population is more in Tikabali block than Scheduled Tribe population of Khajuripada block. The Scheduled Caste population Gudari Gram Panchayat is higher than Scheduled Caste population of Beheragaon Gram Panchayat. The Scheduled Tribe population of Beheragaon Gram Panchayat is higher than the Scheduled Tribe population of Gudari Gram Panchayat.

**Table no-:3.8. Social profile of Selected Blocks, Panchayat, and Villages**

Blocks	SC	in %	ST	in %	Others	in %
Khajuripada	14528	31.07	23554	50.38	8673	18.55
Tikabali	9815	21.02	25535	54.69	11338	24.28
Panchayats						
Gudari	1555	39.40	1840	46.62	552	13.99
Beheragaon	864	20.57	2466	58.70	871	20.73
Village						
Dadapaju (Gudari GP, Khajuripada block)	254	35.52	370	51.75	91	12.73
Bastiangia (Beheragaon GP, Tikabali block)	50	6.78	536	72.63	152	20.60

Sources: District Census book, Kandhamal 2011

Table-3.8. represents the percentage of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe population in the Study villages. In Dadpaju village the population of Scheduled Caste is 35.53 percent, the population of Scheduled Tribe is 51.75 percent and population of other castes 12.73 percent. In Bastingia village the population of Scheduled Caste is 6.77 percent, the population of Scheduled Tribe is 72.63 percent and the population of other castes 20.60 percent.

**Table no-:3.9. Demographic profile of Selected Villages**

	Literate					Illiterate				
Village	person	male	in %	female	in %	person	male	in %	female	in %
Dadapaju (Gudari GP, Khajuripada block)	449	280	62.36	169	37.64	266	92	34.59	174	65.41
Bastiangia (Beheragaon GP, Tikabali block)	509	319	62.67	190	37.33	229	116	50.66	113	49.34

Sources: District Census book, Kandhamal 2011

Table-3.9 represent the literate and illiterate population of Dadpaju and Bastingia village. Both the study village the male literacy rate is higher than female literacy rate. Both the village the percentage of male literacy rate is above sixty percent whereas the percentage of female literacy rate is above thirty-five percent.

### **Major Scheduled Tribes in Kandhamal**

#### **The Kandha**

According to social scientists, anthropologists, and sociologists, the Kandha are the tribal communities largely residing in eastern states of Odisha. In the anthropological

literature, scholar likes Bailye (1957), Boal (1982), Padel (1995), mention about the Kandha, their identity, culture and their relationship with other communities. The Kandhas are a Dravidian tribe. The word Kandha is difficult to derive. It may be derived from the Telugu word 'Konda' which means a hill, or from Odia word 'Kanda' which means an arrow. The Odias most probably have kept the word 'Konda' as it is, and called the hill people Kandha by pronouncing it.<sup>1</sup> The Kandha, they called themselves as Kui<sup>2</sup> are the largest population in the study area. There are different types of Kandha according to their culture and social practices. In the study area, the local terms use for the Kandha, Sasi Kandha or Odia Kandha and Aharia Kandha. This group comprises the great majority in the locality. Different scholars classified them as Dongria Kandha, Kutia Kandha, and the Desire Kandha. In Kandhamal the Kutia Kandhas are found mainly in Belghar, Guma, Jhiripani, Lankagarh, and Mundigarh Grampanchyata of Tumudibandha block and Ora, Gururmaha, Subarnagiri Grampanchayat of Kotogarh block of Baliguda subdivision only and Desia or Malua<sup>3</sup> Kandhas are found in almost all parts of the Kandhamal. The Dongria Kandhas are not found in the Kandhamal district, they are found Niyamgiri hill ranges of Bisamkatak block in Rayagada district only. The Kutia Kandha of the Kandhamal comes under the primitive tribal groups.

The Kandha legend tells that prior to the settlement of Kandha in this region, it was pre-occupied by the Kurmos<sup>4</sup>. When Kandha enters to this region the Kurmo were driving out from this land. The Kurmo were unable to fight with Kandha subsequently migrated to another place. After the migration of the Kurms from this land, this region became the stronghold of the Kandhas. The real inhabitant of Kandhamal is the Kandha tribe, according

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<sup>1</sup> Cited from Orissa district gazetteer: Boudha-Kandhamal, 1983.

<sup>2</sup> Language of the Kandha which also a Dravidian language

<sup>3</sup> Sub-groups of Kandha in Kandhamal.

<sup>4</sup> An agricultural community, there is an oral account that the land (Kandhamal) first belonged to them. The 'Kurmo' today no longer live in the Kandhamal. The Kandha came and drove the Kurmo out of the hills. (F.G.Bailey, 1957. Caste and the Economic Frontier: A village in highland Orissa. P.26



to their culture, everyday life, dress code and rituals they are identified as Desia Kandha or Malua Kandha, Dangaria Kandha and Kutia Kandha. The tribal are simple in living style, food, livelihood and behavior. They depend on forest and forest products for their livelihood and day to day life. They believe in nature, accept as their protector God. They are fond of music, Mahua liquor, art, dance, and festival. The Kandha are considered the Mahua<sup>5</sup> liquor as sacred and they used it in every festival, marriage and offered to their guests. Apart from the Kandh and the Pano, there are other tribal and caste groups are living in Kandhamal district which is mentioning in below.

### **Gond**

The Gond are the second largest tribal group in Kandhamal district. They are mostly found in the community block of Baliguda, Daringbadi, Phiringia, G.Udayagiri, Kotagarh, Raikia, K.Nugaon, Tumudibandh and Tikabli of Baliguda subdivision. The Gond are divided into a number of clans. They are highly Hinduized and practice Hindu rituals and beliefs. Marriage within the same clan is strictly prohibited. They celebrate all Hindu festivals.

### **Saura**

Saura or Sabar is one of the famous tribe in Odisha also found in the Kandhamal district. They are identifying themselves as Jara Sabar, Biswabasu Sabar, Patar Sabar, Ghumra Sabar and Kirat Sabar. Saura are mostly found in Raikia, Daringbadi and Phiringia community block of Kandhamal district. Saura are also Hinduized and they celebrate all Hindu festivals. The tutelary deity of the Sauras of the Kandhamal district is Barala Devi.

### **Kandha Gauda**

Kandha Gauda are the caste Hindu and comes under other backward castes in another district of Odisha except for Kandhamal. In Kandhamal, the Kandha-Gauda considered as

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<sup>5</sup> Liquor prepare from Mahua ( *Madhuca longifolia*) flower by the Kandha.

scheduled tribe, due to their close association with Kandha, though they are not tribal but they are associated with tribal. The formation of these social group culturally adopted and stays with Kandhas since generation. These Kandha Gauda always maintain distance from their real caste people. The traditional occupation of the Kandha Gauda is cattle herding of the village. The major occupation of the Kandha Gauda is cattle rearing and secondary occupation is cultivation.

Indian society is highly stratified and diverse in nature. The social system in India not only stratified but segmented also. The Hindu social system is divided into several castes and sub-castes. Each caste and sub-castes are characterized by their social and cultural status based on the notion of purity and pollution. There are various caste and sub-castes living in Kandhamal and constitute an important part of society in Kandhamal. In Kandhamal, these castes and sub-castes can be categorized as scheduled castes and other castes. The major other castes of the Kandhamal are briefly described below.

### **Caste Hindu**

#### **Bhandari**

The Bhandari are other backward castes in Odisha and they are also called as Napita or Barik. They came to Kandhamal from outside. The primary occupation of Bhandari is hair cutting, shaving and agriculture is their secondary occupation. They render their traditional service to the touchable castes and to the Kandha on the various occasions of the performance of rituals like birth, death, and marriage, except the Pano and Hadi castes in Kandhamal. The Bhandari never extend their traditional service to the Pano and Hadi caste in Kandhamal.

#### **Bhulia**

The Bhulia are other backward caste weaver caste. They are said to have emigrated from Chhatishgarh. The Bhulia of Kandhamal is came from Boudh. They occupy a higher

status than the ordinary weaver's communities. Their traditional occupation is weaving and agriculture is their secondary occupation.

### **Brahmin**

The Brahmin came to Kandhamal from different surrounding areas. They are scattered in all over Kandhamal. They are playing a vital role in politics, business, and socio-religious functions.

### **Karan**

The Karan came from outside to the Kandhamal. They are scattered in all over Kandhamal. They are playing a vital role in politics and business. They are controlling large acres of agricultural land in Kandhamal.

### **Khandayat**

The Khandayat who claimed to be warrior or Kshatriya came from outside of the Kandhamal. Now, they are scattered all over Kandhamal. Most of them depend on agriculture.

### **Lohar/Kamar**

The Lohar are other backward castes and found almost in every village in Kandhamal. There are two types of Lohar found in Kandhamal, such Odia Lohar, and Kandha Lohar. There is no matrimonial alliance is solemnized between the two community Odia lohar and Kandha Lohar. They manufacture agricultural implements like a sickle, axe, spade, crowbar etc. they are poor and their economic and educational status not good.

### **Bania**

The Bania came from outside to the Kandhamal. Traditionally they are traders by profession. They are scattered all over the district. They earn their livelihood through the means of trade in local markets and cultivation.

### **Dumal**

The Dumal came from outside to the Kandhamal. They claim to be descendants of lord Srikrishna, they called themselves Nanda Gaudas. Agriculture is their major occupation. They are one of the most backward communities in the district.

### **Gauda**

The Gaudas are called themselves as Magdha Gauda. They worship Lord Srikrishna as their principal deity. They claim themselves as the descendants of Yaduvams. Their major occupation is cattle nurture and milk products. Nowadays they abstain from their traditional occupation. Srikrishna Janmashtami and Dolapurnima are their major festival. They are one of the backward community in the district.

### **Gudia**

The Gudia are listed as other backward castes in Odisha. They came from outside to the district for the business purpose. They called themselves as ‘Madhu Vaishya’ and scattered all over the Kandhamal. They are preparing different kinds of sweets. Most of them depend on sweet business in Kandhamal.

### **Kansari**

The Kansari came to Kandhamal from outside of the district. Their traditional profession is the manufacture of the household utensils of Brass, Bell metal, and aluminum. They are listed as other backward castes in Kandhamal.

## **Kumuti**

The Kumuti migrated to Kandhamal from Ganjam. The majority of them are traders and shopkeepers. They are scattered all over the district. They prefer cross-cousin marriage. The Kumuti are speaking both Odia and Telugu language in Kandhamal.

## **Kumbar/Potter**

The Kumabar or potter man also came to Kandhamal from outside. There are two types of Kumabar such as Kandha Kumbar and Odia Kumbar. There is no inter-community dining and marriage between Odia Kumbar and Kandha Kumbar. So there is no matrimonial alliance is solemnized between the communities. The Kumbar prepare earthen pots like Handi, Mathia, Surei etc. sell these products in the weekly markets. They are found almost in every village of the district. They are poor and their economic condition is not good in the district. The Kumbar are listed as educationally and economically backward caste in Odisha.

## **Mali**

The Mali came to Kandhamal from outside of the district. Their principal occupation is sell flowers and garlands. Kandhamal district is the land of Shiva and Shakti cult. Goddess Kali and Lord Shiva is being worshiped in different places of the district. The Mali are used to worship in Lord Shiva temple. The Mali are listed as other backward castes in Odisha.

## **Sudha**

The Sudha caste came from Boudh district. They are scattered all over the district. Agriculture is their major occupation. They listed as other backward castes in Odisha but they worship Goddess Khambeswari, Baral Devi, Brahmani Devi, Pitabali and Bhairabi as a priest. Goddess Khambeswari is their tutelary deity in Kandhamal.

## **Sundhi**

The Sundhi caste came to Kandhamal from the Ganjam, Cuttack, and Puri district. They scattered all over the Kandhamal. They are money lenders, liquor distillers, and seller. Their traditional occupation money lending and sell the liquor. They have agricultural land, and most of them are rich and prosperous. Financially Sundhi are very sound and they possess the considerable size of land for cultivation but they listed as other backward castes in Odisha. They are found roadside village as well as interior remote villages in Kandhamal.

## **Teli**

The Teli basically trader caste, they came to Kandhamal from outside. They scattered all over the district. They called themselves as ‘Tailik Vaishya’. Financially Teli are very sound and they have a considerable size of land for cultivation. Teli are also listed as other backward castes in Odisha.

## **Major Scheduled Castes in Kandhamal**

### **Dombo**

The Dombo are landless and work as agricultural labour in Kandhamal. Their traditional occupation is Bamboo basket making, drum- beating, and scavenging. In Kandhamal, they are found making and selling various types of Bamboo baskets. They considered as untouchable caste in Kandhamal.

### **Dhoba**

The Dhoba or washer-man community also came from outside. They called Dhoba or Rajak in the local language. The traditional occupation of the Dhoba is to collect the unclean clothes and wash it and after washed the clothes with or without ironing they return the

clothes to the owner. Dhoba is not untouchable, caste Hindu and Kandha never practice untouchability to them.

### **Hadi**

The Hadi are untouchable caste. They are usually scavengers, sweepers, and bamboo workers. Their main occupation is swept the town/village street. They also serve as a musician and play drums during the time of marriage ceremony. Most of them are working in municipality and hospitals also they earn their livelihood as agricultural labour.

### **Keuta**

The Keuta or they called themselves as 'Kaibarta' or 'Dhiwar'. They are a fisherman community, and they earn their livelihood by fishing, and agriculture. The women of this caste prepare 'Mudhi' fried rice which they sell in local markets also they sell it by their regular move to the different villages. They are not untouchable caste. The caste Hindu and the Kandha have never practiced untouchability to them.

### **Pano**

The Pano are the second largest non-tribal community in Kandhamal. There are two types of Pano according to linguistic division such as Odia Pano and Kui Pano/Kandha Pano. The origin and meaning of Pano are very difficult to trace out. Pano are migrated from Ganjam and Boudh before British enter to this region. The Pano performed as serfs and agricultural labour of the Kandha. Some Pano of Kotagarh, Tumudibandha, Baliguda, K.Nuagaon, Phiringia, G.Udayagiri, Tikabali, Daringbadi, and Raikia regions are practicing Christianity.

### **Major Religion in Kandhamal**

As per the 2011 census, 80,300 people registered as Hindu in Kandhamal. The Hindus are found a majority in Kandhamal. As per the census 2011, the population of Christian is 1, 48,895 which is the second majority in Kandhamal. The population of Muslim in Kandhamal is 2138 according to 2011 census.

### **Famous Shiva temples of Kandhamal**

Lord Birupaksha (Shiva) is the presiding deity of the Chakapada village and its surrounding region and worshiped by both Kandha and non-Kandha communities. Apart from that, there are two temples along with Lord Birupakhya dedicated to lord Shiva, Lord Anandeswar and Lord Jogeswar. The priest of the temple belongs to Mali caste whose forefathers migrated to the place from the neighboring place. Shivaratri is the major festivals and big fair held here every year. Many people visited the temple during Kartika Purnima and Shivaratri. However, the priests of Shiva temple in Bisipada are Brahmins.

Lord Barada Balunkeswar of Khudutentuli village is another famous Shaiva Pitha of Kandhamal. Lord Barada Balunkeswar is the presiding deity of Khudutentuli and Linapara area. Many people visited the temple during Shivaratri, Kartik masa, Makar Sankranti and Maha bishuva Sankranti. The lord Barada Balunkeswar temple was the epicenter of Kandha-Pano conflict in 1994, when one Pano youth tried to enter the temple on the day of Makar Sankranti which was on 14 January 1994. Shiva temples are found many Kandha villages where 'Danda Jatra' is taking place every year. (District Gazetteer of Kandhamal, 1983:59)

### **Famous Shakti Pithas of Kandhamal**

Shakti cult and worship of mother Goddess has been a part and parcel of tribal life. Most of the deities of the Kandha are goddess; they worship everything in the form of the mother goddess. Dharani Penu (Earth Goddess) and Mountain Goddess are the two main



deities worshiped by the Kandhas. All the sources of nature are worshiped in the form of the mother goddess in Kandha societies. Each and every Kandha village some places are dedicated to mother goddess which is called by different names in different villages. The Kandha believes that these deities are the guardian and protected from the evils.

Apart from traditional tribal deities, all are worshiped as a form of mother goddess there are another two deities' names Maa Baral Devi which is worshiped in Balaskumpa village of Khajuripada block and Maa Pathakhanda which is worshiped in Mahasingi village and Balliguda town, which is mainly non-tribal in nature. These two deities have the status of regional fame and patronized by the local chiefs and worshiped by both Kandha and others. (District Gazetteer of Kandhamal, 1983:59)

### **Goddess Baral Devi**

Goddess Baral Devi is the presiding deity of the Kandhamal and worshiped in Balaskumpa village of Khajuripada block, which is about 15 KMs from Phulbani the headquarters town of Kandhamal district. There are folklore and oral history about the Goddess Baral Devi. According to the folklore, oral history, and popular beliefs, that, Mahasingi village, which is very near to Balliguda was the original place of Goddess Baral Devi and presiding deity of the king of Mahasingi which was the capital of Sanakhemundi kingdom. The king of Boudh with the help of Kandhas of Kandhamal tries to conquer but after twelve years of battle, the king of Boudh could not succeed.

Hence, the advisor of king Boudh told the king that if he prayed to Goddess Baral Devi, the presiding deity of Mahasingi, then only there is a chance to conquer the Mahasingi the capital of the Sanakhemundi. According to the advice of the priest the king of Boudh prayed Goddess Baral Devi for a long time and at last the Goddess was pleased with king's prayer and granted him a boon. The king of the Boudh prayed to the Goddess Baral Devi, that

she should come to his kingdom and protect his people and his kingdom. The Goddess replied that she would do so, only after the king would please her by human sacrifice. The king fulfilled the desires of the Goddess with certain rituals and returned to his kingdom Boudh along with Goddess Baral Devi. According to the order of Goddess, the journey to Boudh kingdom will start when the sun rises and the journey will stop when the sun sets with certain rituals unless until they reached to the kingdom of Boudh. The places where the king, his army with Goddess halted became a Pitha or worshiping place of deity. According to at Bandhagada, Menia, and Baikumpa becomes the worshiping place of deity. Then the king and his army reached Balaskumpa, where he saw a rabbit chasing a dog, then the king felt the soil of the place is auspicious and the king and his army-installed the deity.

The king employed non-Brahmin priests who are known as 'Dehury' for the worship as well as offered Puja, and rituals of Goddess Baral Devi and gave responsibility to the Kandhas for management and gave responsibilities to caste likes Gauda, Pano, and Hadi to providing necessary services to the deity. In the shrine of Maa Baral Devi at Balaskumpa, specially worshiped every year during Navaratri Durgapuja observed in the month of October (Aswina masa) from the second day to the tenth day of the bright fortnight. This is locally known as 'Khanda Basa' (Sword Puja). During that time of 'Khanda basa' common devotee or visitors are not allow to going to temple except priest (Dehury) and his assistance. On the day of Mahanavami, people gather at Balaskumpa, offered their worship to the Goddess and sacrificed goat and buffalo. After some days the king left Balaskumpa for Boudh, on the way he installed the deity at Purunakatak and named it Goddess Bhairabi and lastly, in his kingdom Boudh he installed the deity in the form of Durga.

In Balaskumpa, before the temple was built, there was a thatched hut meant for the deity. The shrine consists of some small stones and a wood pole buried in the ground. Since 1999 animal sacrifice has been stopped in the temple. Goddess Baral Devi is also worshiped

at G.Udayagiri, K.Nuagam, Mahasingi of Baliguda subdivision and Bandhagarh, Menia, Gochapada, Phulbani sahi, Ghodapathar village of Kandhamal. All the matters of the Goddess are being administrated by a committee represented by Mutha Sardar (Kandha Headman) of Sandhu Mutha, Dutu Mutha, Baka Mutha, Bidu Mutha, Grandi Mutha, Gumal Mutha Balaskumpa Mutha. (District Gazetteer of Kandhamal, 1983:59)

### **Goddess Maa Pattakhanda**

Goddess Pattakhanda is another famous Shakti Pitha in Kandhamal districts. The Goddess is represented by a piece of crude stone having no shape to any particular image or living being and a sword is placed near to the stone in the shrine which known as Pattakhanda. The word Pattakhanda literally means chief sword or main sword and it indicates worships of weapons. Goddess Pattakhanda regarded as a deity of the village as well as the Balliguda region. Non-Brahmin priest mostly from Paika caste are employed to worship the deities of Pattakhanda. There is a big temple for Goddess Pattakhanda at Balliguda but people regards Mahasingi as the first shrine of Goddess Pattakhanda, where she was worshiped by the then kings. Except for Balliguda, in other villages a curved wood pole named as 'Chhatkhamba' is put up where the sacrificial animal is tied. Nuakhai, Kandul Puja, and Dasahara festival are being observed in Pattakhanda Pitha of Baliguda.

### **Language**

There are various languages such as Kui, Odia, Urdu, Telugu, Gondi, Hindi, Boudia and Dom are spoken by the people of Kandhamal in different regions. However, the people belongs to G.Udayagiri claim that their Kui language is pure than Kui language of other areas of Kandhamal. The Pano of Katogarh and Tumudibandha area speak Dom languages.

## **Economy and important places of Kandhamal**

Agriculture is the primary sources of livelihood of local people. The majority of the population of district earn their livelihood primarily agriculture, forest produces and daily wages labour. The geography of the Kandhamal district has been changed many times before colonial period, during the colonial period and after independent of the India. The old and undivided district which was called Boudh-Kandhamal, popularly named as Phulbani is the centrally located districts of Odisha, as it surrounded by Sonepur and Angul districts on the North, Ganjam and Rayagada districts on the South, Ganjam and Nayagarh districts on the East, Rayagada, Kalahandi and Sonepur districts on the west.

## **Politics in Kandhamal**

Politics play a vital role in Kandha-Pano conflict in Kandhamal. The Kandha and the Pano are two numerically largest and politically significant communities in Kandhamal. The Kandha and the Pano are socio-culturally different communities and the relation between them is like master and servant. Traditionally, in the social status, the Pano occupy lower social status than the Kandha and the Pano are treated untouchable by the Kandha. Due to the reservation in Phulbani legislative assembly seat and Member of Parliament seat for scheduled castes since a long time only the Pano were elected as Member of the legislative assembly and Member of Parliament.

Due to the active participation of Pano in local politics, the Kandha, allege that the Pano are trying to dominate them through the political power. So, political power is one of the major bones of contention which ultimately leads to conflict between the Kandha and the Pano in Kandhamal. On April 6, 1994 nearly 5000 Kandhas led by Kandha leader submitted a memorandum to the Collector of the district, addressed to the President of India, with the demands of an immediate reservation of the Phulbani assembly and parliamentary seats for the

Scheduled Tribes( Chaudhury, 2004:158). The following table represents the election results in Kandhamal which helps to understand the Kandha and the Pano conflict in terms of politics also.

**Table no-:3.10-Political history of Kandhamal (Lok Sabha)**

Year of the Election	Name of the Candidates	SC/ST/Others	Political Party
1952	Giridhari Bhoi	General	Ganatantra Parishada
1957	P.K. Deo	General	Ganatantra Parishad
1962	Rajendra Kanhar	Kandha(ST)	Ganatantra Parishad
1967	Anirudha Dipa	Pano(SC)	Swatantra Party
1971	Bakshi Nayak	Pano (SC)	Swatantra Party
1977	Sribatsa Digal	Pano (SC)	Bharatiya Lok Dal
1980	Mrutyunjaya Nayak	Pano (SC)	Indian National Congress
1985	Radhakanta Digal	Pano(SC)	Indian National Congress
1989	Nakul Nayak	Pano(SC)	Janata Dal
1991	Mrutyunjaya Nayak	Pano(SC)	Indian National Congress
1996	Mrutyunjaya Nayak	Pano(SC)	Indian National Congress
1998	Padmanabha Behera	Pano(SC)	Biju Janata Dal
1999	Padmanabha Behera	Pano(SC)	Biju Janata Dal
2004	Sugriba Singh	Pano(SC)	Biju Janata Dal
2009	Rudramadhab Ray	General	Biju Janata Dal
2014	Hemendra Singh	General	Biju Janata Dal
2014	Pratyusha Rajeswari Singh	General	Biju Janata Dal

Sources: District Collector office

It is essential to understand the political history of Kandhamal in the context of shifting Kandha-Pano relationship and Kandha-Pano conflict in contemporary Kandhamal. In the year 1952, Sri Giridhari Bhoi of All India Ganatantra Parishad was first MP of Kandhamal. In the year 1957 general election Sri Pratap Kumar Deo of All India Ganatantra

Parishad was the second MP from Kandhamal. In the year 1962 general election Sri Rajendra Kanhar of Ganatantra Parishad was the third MP from Kandhamal and he was from the Kandha tribe. In 1967 general election Sri Aniruddha Dipa of Swatantra Party was the fourth MP of Kandhamal and he was from Pano caste. Since 1967 up to 2009 all MP came from the Pano caste only though they were represented the different political party. In 1971, Sri Bakshi Nayak of Swatantra party, in 1977 Sri Batcha Digal of Bharatiya Lok Dal, in 1980 Sri Mrutunjaya Nayak of Indian National Congress, in 1984 Sri Radhakanta Digal of Indian National Congress, in 1989, Sri Nakul Nayak of Janata Dal, in 1991 again Sri Mrutunjaya Nayak of Indian National Congress, in 1996 again Mrutunjaya Nayak of Indian National Congress, in 1998 Sri Padmanav Behera of Biju Janata Dal, in 1999 again Sri Padmanava Behera of Biju Janata Dal and in 2004 Sri Sugriba Singh of Biju Janata Dal was the MP of Kandhamal. Since 1967 up to 2009 the Pano were MP of Kandhamal and they have a big influence on local politics irrespective of their political affiliations. The long 42 years in the political history of Kandhamal the Pano were unchallenged people in politics. However, after delimitation the Lok Sabha seat of Kandhamal became general and though some Pano contested but they lost the election.

### **Political history of Phulbani Legislative Assembly**

Since Independence, there is fifteen times election held from 1951 to 2014. Since 1997 to 2004 it was reserved for Scheduled Caste, however, presently this constituency is reserved for Scheduled Tribe. Table 3.11 shows year wise elected members are on the table. For the first time, there is large-scale Kandha-Pano conflict in 1994 in this constituency. In 1994 Kandha leader Lambodar Konhar submitted a memorandum to the President of India, with the demands of reservation of the Phulbani assembly seats for the Scheduled Tribe.

**Table no-:3.11- Political history of Phulbani Legislative Assembly**

Year of the elections	Name of the MLA	SC/ST/Others	Political Party
1951	Balakrushna Mallik	Kandha (ST)	Independent
1951	Sadananda Sahu	Others	Independent
1957	Himanshu Sekhar Padhy	Others	Ganatantra Parishad
1957	Anirudha Dipa	Pano(SC)	Ganatantra Parishaad
1961	Himanshu Sekhara Padhy	Others	Congress
1967	Barada Prasanna Kanhar	Kandha (ST)	Swatantra party
1971	Jagannath Jani	Kandha (ST)	Orissa Jana Congress
1974	Chandrasekhara Behera	Pano (SC)	Congress
1977	Prahallad Behera	Pano (SC)	Janata Party
1980	Chandrasekhara Behera	Pano (SC)	Congress
1985	Abhimanyu Behera	Pano (SC)	Congress
1990	Padmanabha Behera	Pano (SC)	Janata Dal
1995	Dasarathi Behera	Dhoba (SC)	Independent(KVP )
2000	Bishnupriya Behera	Pano (SC)	Biju Janata Dal
2004	Padmanabha Behera	Pano (SC)	Biju Janata Dal
2009	Debendra Kanhar	Kandha (ST)	Biju Janata Dal
2014	Duguni Kanhar	Kandha (ST)	Biju Janata Dal

Sources: District Collector office

It is essential to understanding the local political dynamics in the context of Kandha-Pano relationship and Kandha-Pano conflict. There are three legislative assembly seats in Kandhamal, Phulbani, Baliguda and G.Udayagiri. Since 1951 there is an election for legislative assembly however since 1974 up to 2009 the Pano were elected Member of the legislative party from the Phulbani legislative assembly constituency which was reserved for SC in 1974. However, the Baliguda legislative assembly constituency was reserved for ST since 1951 and sometime Kandha and sometime Gondo tribe from various political party became Member of the legislative constituency. Since 2000 up to 2014 the Baliguda

legislative assembly constituency was the fort of Bharatiya Janata Party. G.Udayagiri legislative is reserved for ST since 1957 and since 1957 only Kandha are elected in G.Udaygiri legislative assembly constituency. Though it is a stronghold of congress however 2008 conflict Manoj Kumar Pradhan an RSS pracharak and active member of BJP elected as MLA, though he is convicted in Kandhamal riot case.

### **Political History of Baliguda Legislative Assembly**

Since Independent, there is fifteen times election held from 1951 to 2014. Presently this constituency is reserved for Scheduled Tribe. This table represented year wise elected members are on the table. Though most of the time the political power with the Kandha because the majority of the MLA elected from Kandha but still these areas remain largely underdeveloped.

**Table no-:3.12- Political history of Baliguda Legislative Assembly**

Year	Name of the MLA	SC/ST/Others	Political Party
1951	Yadaba Patra	Gando (ST)	Congress
1957	Lokanatha Patra	Gando (ST)	Ganatantra Parishada
1961	Durbar Patra	Gondo (ST)	Ganatantra Parishad
1967	Naresh Pradhan	Kandha (ST)	Swatantra Party
1971	Naresh Pradhan	Kandha (ST)	Swatantra Party
1974	Sahura Mallik	Kandha (ST)	Congress
1977	Sadananda Kanhar	Kandha (ST)	Independent
1980	Sahura Mallik	Kandha (ST)	Congress
1985	Lakshmikanta Mallik	Kandha (ST)	Congress
1990	Bhagaban Kanhar	Kandha (ST)	Janata Dal
1995	Sahura Mallik	Kandha (ST)	Congress
2000	Surendra Kanhar	Kandha (ST)	BJP
2004	Karendra Majhi	Kandha (ST)	BJP
2009	Karendra Majhi	Kandha (ST)	BJP
2014	Rajib Patra	Gond (ST)	BJD

Sources: District Collector office



### Political History of G.Udayagiri Legislative Assembly

Since Independent, there is fifteen times election held during 1951 to 2014. Presently this constituency is reserved for Scheduled Tribe. This table represented year wise elected members are on the table. Most of the MLA are elected from Kandha but still they are blaming the Pano for their underdevelopment, educational backwardness, and poverty.

**Table no-:3.13- Political History of G.Udayagiri Legislative Assembly**

Year	Name of the MLA	SC/ST/Others	Political Party
1951	Sadananda Sahu	Others	Independent
1957	Sarangadhara Pradhan	Kandha(ST)	Ganatantra Parishad
1961	Sarangadhara Pradhan	Kandha(ST)	Congress
1967	Gopal Pradhan	Kandha (ST)	Swatantra Party
1971	Gopal Pradhan	Kandha (ST)	Swatantra Party
1974	Gopal Pradhan	Kandha (ST)	Congress
1977	Ranjit Pradhan	Kandha (ST)	Janata Party
1980	Nagarjun Pradhan	Kandha (ST)	Congress
1985	Nagarjun Pradhan	Kandha(ST)	Congress
1990	Nagarjun Pradhan	Kandha(ST)	Congress
1995	Nagarjun Pradhan	Kandha (ST)	Congress
2000	Saluga Pradhan	Kandha(ST)	Biju Janata Dal
2004	Ajayanti Pradhan	Kandha(ST)	Congress
2009	Manoj Pradhan	Kandha(ST)	Bharatiya Janata Party
2014	Jacob Pradhan	Kandha(ST)	Congress

Sources: District Collector office

After the Independence both the Kandha and the Pano became a part and parcel of the larger political process in Kandhamal. For the first time, both communities enjoy the taste of political power since then they used their population to gain and control political power in Kandhamal. Earlier, the Kandha were traditionally more powerful in the village. However, after an element of democracy introduced and this democratic process created a vacuum for leadership. This democratic process motivated both Kandha and the Pano to contest elections and a new leadership emerged from both communities. Both communities always tries to capture the political power from village Panchayat to Parliament seat which created conflicting situation between the Kandha and the Pano. This conflicting situation happened

because of the politically influential family of Kandha and the Pano. And the common people were affected by these conflicts. When the politics became more competitive the Kandha and Pano conflict became more critical.

## **Summary**

Since the British period, the district has witnessed many drastic changes in terms of geography, religion, population, economy and politics. Once upon a time the predominant Kandha tribes practice human sacrifice but due to the British intervention, these cruel and inhuman practices were stopped in the district. From the census, it is clear that the district has maintained higher female sex ratio since 1901. Religion plays an important role in the socio-cultural life of the people of the district and Hindus are the majority in the district. Among the most of the people are from Kandha tribe. They have adopted Hindu customs and worship Hindu god and goddess. Side by side they worship their tribal god and goddess also. Christianity is the second largest religion in the district. Caste is another important factor which plays a significant role in the socio-economic life of the people. All the business house of the Kandhamal is controlled by upper caste groups. The people of the district observe a number of festivals throughout the year.

The district lags far behind in education when compared with the coastal district of the Odisha. The educational standard of the district is below the state average. The inaccessible hilly tracts with the vast geographical area and lack of road and communication are the main reasons of educational and economic backwardness. The democratic framework and right to vote in the election from Gram Panchayat to Parliament have resulted in tremendous social and political change in Kandhamal since independence. A Large section of Kandha and the Pano has to participate in elections. The Kandha and the Pano are given an

opportunity to stand for election and are taking part in the decision-making process for the development of their community and development of Kandhamal.

# **CHAPTER-IV**

## **Dynamics of Inter-Community Relations between the Kandha and the Pano**

## **CHAPTER-IV**

### **Dynamics of Inter-Community Relations between the Kandha and the**

### **Pano**

#### **Introduction**

Due to the greater impact of colonial administration, education, market, transport, communication, Christian missionaries and Hindu community, the relations between the Kandha and the Pano has changed to a larger extent. In the past, other communities and the Pano depended on the Kandha for their livelihood and economic activities. The Kandha also depended on other communities for their agricultural and everyday activities. However, the Kandha depended on the assistance of the Pano in larger extent compare to other communities in the village. But, nowadays, the assistance by the Pano are not forthcoming on a voluntary basis as in the past.

Due to the socio, economic and educational advancement the relations between Kandha and the Pano are gradually weakening and the Pano have become independent and very self-centric ignoring the historical relations. Nowadays, the Pano are more concerned for their individual development. In the past, for the exchange of labour the Pano are paid paddy as their remuneration for their labour but now cash payment is demanded by them. So there is no historical reciprocal assistance taken place between the Kandha and the Pano during the time of agriculture or other everyday activities.

## **Village-I: DADPAJU**

### **Geographical location**

The study village comes under the Gudari gram panchayat of Khajuripada block. Kaladi, the village of famous Kandha leader Mr. Lambodar Kanhar<sup>1</sup> also belongs to Gudari gram panchayat. The etymological meaning of the name of the village is ‘eldest brother’s village’, with ‘Dada’, meaning ‘brother’ and ‘Paju’ in Kui language meaning ‘village’. The name of the village thus comes from Kui word and not the Odia language. The study village Dadpaju is one of the oldest traditional Kandha villages and comes under *Sandumendi Mutha*. It is one of the biggest Kandha villages in the locality.

It is situated only 5 km away from the district headquarters, 5 km away from the village of Kandha leader Mr. Lambodar Kanhar, 10 km away from the village Bisipara, where F.G. Bailey carried out his work on tribe and caste in the 1950s, and 15 km away from Balaskumpa, where the presiding deity of Kandhamal, goddess Maa Barala Devi is worshipped. The highly violence affected area of Bhetkhol is at a distance of 5 km, Krandimaska at 7 km, Khajuripada at 25 km, Phiringia at 25 km, Linepada at 35 km, and Tikabali at 40 km from the village. The village is surrounded by various tribal-dominated villages such as Gudari, Gumigaon, Sakadi, Gumurukhol, Bhetkhol, Panaspadar, and Kutibari, all of which have a predominant Kandha population, followed by the Pano.

### **History of the Kandha and Historical background of the village**

Although there is no written documentation, according to the people of the village, and given the power structure of the village, the Kandha of Dedibali were the first settlers here, and their forefathers first established the village with a human sacrifice. These Kandha of Dedibali invited Kandha from other villages and *Muthas* and gave them lands for different

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<sup>1</sup>The Kandha leader of 1994 Kandha-Pano conflict in Kandhamal.

village rituals of worshipping, death and festivals. The Kandhas of Dedibali are called Raja Kandha, and the Kandha of other *Sahi* are called as their *Rayat* or *Sebakaria* (service provider) Kandhas. In the village, the importance of the Dedibali Kandha is greater than the Kandha of other *Sahi*. The major decisions of the village are primarily taken by the Kandha of Dedibali. The Kandha of Dedibali are called the '*Matiro Kandha*' - the Kandha of the land, the sons of the soil - the village, the forest, and the entire land belongs to them. The Kandha of other *Sahi* are immigrants. The Kandha of Dedibali are referred to as '*Khamanda*' (Master) or landlord and the Kandha of the other *Sahi* are called the '*Rayat*' or the workers of the landlord, by the Pano people. This is a unique relationship among the Kandha of the village which does not exist in other surrounding villages. This kind of relationship among the Kandha does not exist other areas of the Kandhamal.

The Pano of the village were the servants of the Kandha of Dedibali only. The village is one of the ancient routes and centrally located among all villages. The village is divided into eight '*Sahi*' which are Dadpaju Majhi Sahi, Dedibali, Pandali, Gaudapada, Kudia Sahi, Bara Sahi, Singalikana and Kurudi Sahi. The oral history of the village also tells another story behind the name of Dadpaju village. According to it, the Kandha of the Dedibali killed a person whose name was Dada, when they established the village. Accordingly, in his memory, the village was named Dadpaju.

### **Socio-Cultural Identity of the Kandha in Dadpaju**

The Kandhas of the village considers themselves as superior to all communities in terms of social, cultural and ritual tradition, Gods and Goddesses of the village, ownership of land, forest etc. They maintain their social, cultural and ritual status and their separate identity from the other communities. With observation, one can easily identify the differences between the Kandhas and other communities in the village, even though the Kandhas,

Kandha Gauda, Kandha Lohar and Kandha Kumbhars stay in the same locality. The Pano stay at a different location. Going by their manners, activities, and type of housing, it is difficult for a stranger to infer that they are the Pano *Sahi* and that these people are socially and culturally lower than other communities in the village.

However, there are some similarities that existed since the beginning between the Kandha and the Pano since the Pano adopted the Kandha culture of the village and locality early on. There are many folk songs and folk tales about the Kandha as the kings and Kandhamal as their kingdom, but there are variations in the folksongs and folktales about the Kandhas in different regions of Kandhamal. The Kandhas of this village and its surrounding villages are culturally and linguistically called '*Kui loku*'. In earlier days, the Kandhas of this village had hereditary chiefs, but the selection of the chiefs in people's view was democratic in nature. The chiefs of the village are mainly from the Dedibali Sahi Kandha. They are the people who established this village. Even today they are very powerful compared to the other Sahi Kandha in the matters of village decision making, fairs and festivals, and control over the forest.

In accordance with their everyday socio-cultural life and the area of habitation, the Kandha of this village celebrate both tribal and Hindu culture, Hindu lifestyles, rites and rituals, fairs and festivals, gods and goddesses, religious beliefs and ways of worship, which are largely similar to the Hindu system and religion. The village chief, who is a high school teacher in the village, says that the Kandha are nature worshipers and just as how the Vedas contain mantras praying to the earth, sun, moon, forest, trees, rivers and fire, the Kandha are also doing the same thing.

According to the Kandha of this village, before doing any ritual or worship, the Kandhas start with the prayer "*Tale Basumata*" and "*Uopre Dharma devata*" which mean "O mother earth on the ground and the sun god of the sky, you are witness for this occasion,



please bless us and kindly forgive us if we do any mistakes”. From this village, it is quite observable that the Kandha have distinctive characteristics in accordance with the theoretical tribes in anthropological literature, whether in their culture, religion or rituals followed during the marriage. The other distinctive characteristic of the Kandha in this village can be called ‘Hinduization’ or a process of Sanskritization in sociological language, or accommodation, integration, or acculturation in anthropological language. The Kandha of the village celebrate all the Kandha festivals, along with Hindu festivals like Ganesh Puja, Saraswati Puja, Durga Puja, Kartik masa brata (Panchuk), Lakshmi Puja, Sri Krishna Astami, Ram Navami, Shiva Ratri, Makar Sankranti, Chandan jatra, Danda jatra, Holi and also perform Jagynas in the village. For the Kandha of this village, Hinduism does not exist as a separate religion from their traditional culture, and just as there are many castes in the Hindu religion, they are also a separate and distinct community in Hinduism. The Kandha of the village never considers themselves as outsiders to the Hindu religion.

According to them, just like Sanskrit, the Kui language is an ancient and holy language which nature and mother earth can understand. So the Kandha of this village never considered themselves as different from the Hindu religion or inferior to any communities. The Kandha of the village highly respects Brahmins. Nowadays, they invite the Brahmins for their marriages and other rituals.

### **Changes among the Kandha**

The Kandha are the prominent community and majority population in the village. In the past, the Kandha were very powerful. However, with the passage of time and a period of change, many rich landlords Kandha became poor. Some of them are living in such a situation that they are finding it difficult to get good food and clothes. Though they have land, they do not have money to hire labour and cultivate it.

However, they continue to exercise traditional power and control all the forest and trees of the village. In the earlier days, all the Pano - both men and women were their traditional hereditary servants and working as '*Halia*' in Kandha houses. Without permission from the Kandha master, the Pano could not do anything, go anywhere or work for others. In the past, the Pano were loyal and obedient servants of the Kandha.

However, this scenario of the past has completely changed today. In today, a majority of the Kandha are economically poor, and educationally backward. So far, there is only one OAS (Odisha administrative officer), one Bank PO (SBI), ten police constables, two primary school teachers, one high school teacher and one peon from the Kandha community. There only two graduates among them, one being the OAS officer and the other being the Bank PO, but these two are no longer staying in the village.

So far, not a single Kandha girl from the village has studied graduation. The Kandha of this village are politically very active. Some of them are BJD supporters, some of them are Congress supporters and some of them support the BJP. Many of them had contested for local Sarpanch elections but not a single Kandha from this village has won so far. Unfortunately, they blame the Pano for this, that Pano does not support them, and take huge amounts of money from outsiders and support others. Only ten Kandha families have electrified Pucca houses. Only fifteen Kandha families in the village own two-wheelers.

The Kandha of the village depends on agriculture and forest produce. Due to their economic condition, a majority of poor Kandha - both men and women - work as labour in Pano houses and markets. A majority of Kandha youth work as auto drivers and daily wage labourers. The poor tribal women from this village collect woods from the forest and sell it in the markets every day.

## **Demography: Caste, Tribe, and Religious Minorities**

In the village, the Kandha are the majority population, followed by the Pano. There are six households of the milkman caste, two households of Karan caste, one household of blacksmith caste, one household of sweeper caste and one household of Keuta caste in the village. In the earlier days, a Sundhi caste family was also residing in the village, but due to conflict with the Kandha, they migrated to the nearest village called Gudari, which is 5km away from Dadpaju. However, the Sundhi family has a large share of land in the village.

In the earlier days, the Sundhi (distiller) and Karan (writer) castes sold liquor. The Hadi (sweeper) still sweep the village roads every day and remove the carcasses of animals, the Lohara (Blacksmith) make agricultural instruments and weapons. The milkmen are caretakers of the cows and goats of the Kandhas and other villagers. The Pano were the personal home servants of the Dedibali Kandhas and worked in their homes, agricultural land, markets, as their musicians during marriages and village festivals, working as their messengers, searching for brides and grooms as a negotiator, etc. For these services, the Pano were given land, Jackfruit and Mahua trees. There is one Muslim family in the village but they arrived more recently. They bought lands from the Karan family and settled in the village, but are not staying in the village, and doing business in the town.

## **Social system of the village**

The village is dominated by the Kandha. The Kandha of the village are feudal in attitude. They believe and practice caste hierarchy. The Kandhas practice untouchability against the Hadi and Pano communities of the village. The Kandha's relationships with the castes developed at two different levels. These are at the inter-personal and inter-community levels. Like other surrounding villages, this village also contains a social system and structure that ensures that the decision-making power always stays in the hands of the Kandha only.

For the smooth running and management of the village and villagers, the Kandhas appointed some blacksmith families, a cowherd family, a potter family, and a sweeper family.

### **History of the Pano in study village**

The history of the Pano in the village is different from other communities; they came later to the village after all the communities. The Pano of the study village came from a nearby village called Sinepada which is five kilometers from the study village. Long ago, the Pano migrated from the Boudh region to Kandhamal and settled in Sinepada village. During those times, their main occupation was the sale of clothes, salt, and dry fish to the Kandha people. Some of them also did cattle business for their livelihood. They usually sold clothes, salt, dry fish, cattle to the Kandha of the study village. In the course of time, they built a good relationship with the Kandha of Dedibali.

During festivals and marriage ceremonies, the Kandha of Dedibali would invite one Pano, whose name was Kesan Behera. Kesan Behera was the one of most trustworthy Pano for the Dedibali Kandha. The Kandha of Dedibali had built a special relationship with Kesan Behera and his wife. In the course of the time, Kesan Behera died, leaving behind his pregnant wife and three sons. After the death of Kesan Behera, his relatives mentally tortured his wife and threatened to kill her and her three sons if she did not leave Sinepada as soon as possible. One day, her husband's brother, after drinking liquor heavily, physically abused her, but nobody came to help the woman. Without anybody's support and help, the widowed woman, with her three young sons, travelled to her parents' home Bhaliapada, through the Dedibali village. She was pregnant and her three sons were young aged between six to ten years, and it was very difficult for her to travel quickly to reach Bhaliapada.

Dedibali was the main route from Sinepada to Bhaliapada. As she was going through Dedibali with her three sons the Kandhas of Dedibali saw her and enquired what the matter

was and why she was going to her parents' home. The widow and her late husband Kesan Behera were well-known to every Kandha of Dedibali because of their good manners and frequent visits to the village for selling clothes, salt, and dry fish, and thus had built a good relation with them. The widow narrated her story, how her husband's relative abused, tortured and threatened to kill her and her sons, and why she was going to her home.

When the then village head, Nira Dehury, heard about her problems and issues, he assured her not to worry, and as the head of the village, assured her safety and protection for her and her three sons. He then called a meeting with fellow Kandhas of Dedibali to discuss about the widow and her three sons. In that meeting, he proposed that since there were no Pano in the village to serve them, and they all knew the lady and her late husband, it was their duty to help her in her hour of need. In the future, her sons can work for them and village. The Kandhas accepted his proposal and agreed to give land to the woman and her three sons. They built a house for her. Since then, the Pano of Dadpaju has been staying in the village. The pregnant widow had given birth to another baby boy. Since her husband died before the birth of the fourth baby boy, the villagers named him 'Shunya' which meant that he came from the sky. The names of the four sons in the order of age were Jogindra Behera, Lakshindra Behera, Pakshindra Behera and the youngest, Shunya Behera.

As they grew, the four brothers worked hard for their family as well as for the Kandhas of Dedibali. After a few years, they became rich, and occupied more land with the persimmon of Kandhas and gained popularity in the locality. After coming to know of this, their father's relatives from their father's village came to Dadpaju to demand their share of land and property. When the four brothers refused to share any property or land of Dadpaju village, their cousins and relatives threatened to kill them. The four brothers informed about this to the village chief Nira Dehury, and he assured them that he would solve the problem.

The village chief asked the four brothers to change their surnames from 'Behera' to 'Digal', so that when their relatives and cousins demanded property, the villagers could question them on which basis they were demanding property and lands from these four brothers. During one Wednesday weekly market, (in Odia the weekly market is called *Hata*), people from Sinepada came to Dadpaju and started building houses in the lands of the four brothers, and when the four brothers opposed them, they were attacked by the occupiers. The four brothers requested the Kandha chiefs to protect them and solve the problem. The tribal chief and the Kandhas, armed with bows and arrows came to the scene and asked the outsiders who they were and why they had come there.

They questioned who gave them permission to build houses in the village. The intruders scared upon seeing the Kandha, claimed that they were relatives and cousins of the four brothers. The tribal chiefs then asked for their surnames, and they replied with 'Behera'. The tribal chiefs then asked the four brothers for their surname and they replied with 'Digal'. The chiefs questioned the intruders how they could be cousins and relatives when they did not share the same surname. They declared their forgiveness for the mistake of the intruders and warned them that they would kill them if the same mistake was repeated again. Since that day, the four brothers changed their surnames from 'Behera' to 'Digal'. These four brothers belonged to '*Deep Vansa*', and so for social rituals like birth, marriage, and death, they brought in Panos belonging to '*Khura vansa*' from Lambabadi village to perform the rituals. The growing families of these four brothers are today's Pano in the study village. However, in later years, the Pano from other villages also came and settled in Dadpaju.

The Kandha never invited or brought in the Pano but they let the Pano settle in the village. The Pano also have certain rules to follow, certain duties and responsibilities to perform. The Kandha village council has allocated some land to the blacksmiths, cowherds, sweepers and the Pano, for their service to the Kandha and the village.

There was a principle that as long as these service provider communities provide the services to the Kandha, follow the village rules set by the Kandha and respect Kandha women, they have the right to stay in the village. If they fail to provide services or violate the village rules and misbehave with Kandha girls or women, they will no longer have the right stay in the village. The Kandha had made it very clear that except the Kandha, other communities have no right to interfere in the village matters. The Kandha made it very clear that other communities should respect the Kandha as well as their Gods and Goddess, and also offer necessary services during the time of worship. They should cooperate, participate and provide service during the village fairs and festivals.

According to the village council, the role of the blacksmith (Lohar) is to manufacture agricultural implements like a sickle, axe, and crowbar etc. Their primary job is preparing tools that will help in agriculture, cutting down the trees, and hunting. The role of potters is to provide new pots during the fairs and festivals, but the potters are no longer doing that. The role of cowherds is to take care of and guard the cattle of the village. Their traditional occupation is to tend to cattle. The role of the sweepers or scavengers is to clean the streets of the village and remove the bodies of dead cattle and animals from the village. Sometimes they also work as drummers in social functions. The role of the Pano is to work as domestic workers for the Kandha, as messengers of the Kandha, and also procure animals for sacrifice during fairs and festivals. The Karan and Keuta caste people have no role in the village, they came as traders.

The most important characters of identities in Dadpaju village are based on socio-cultural identities, which deserve special mention. Apart from the Kandha and the Pano, there are other social groups under the identities of Kandha-Gauda, Kandha-Lohar, and Kandha-Kumbhars. These service provider groups formed due to their stay as neighbours of the Kandha from generations together. The Kandha-Gauda, Kandha-Lohar, and Kandha-

Kumabhars are mainly menial castes used to rendering services to the Kandhas of their respective occupational orientations. The Kandha-Gauda (cowherd) herds the cattle of the Kandhas. The Kandha-Lohars (blacksmith) prepare and repair iron apparatuses.

The Kandha-Kumbhars (potters) prepare and supply the earthen-ware pots to the Kandhas. These artisan groups were brought to the area and made to settle in different Kandha villages in individual households, by a tribal chief. These artisan castes used Kui as their language, observe many of the Kandha rituals, and tattoo their girls in the Kandha way. Their intimate association with the Kandha constructed a new identity and it differentiated them from their caste Hindu counterparts, with the prefix of 'Kandha' to their respective caste names, and now they are called Kandha-Gauda, Kandha-Lohar, and Kandha-Kumbhar. These groups maintain a separate socio-cultural identity and are distinct from their Odia counterparts. They prefer to marry within their own groups and follow the principle of caste endogamy. In the social and ritual hierarchy, they occupy a lower social status, lower than the Kandhas as well as the Gauda, the Lohar, and the Kumbhar castes in the locality.

The Kandha of Dadpaju used to practice human sacrifice, known as *Meriah* sacrifice. The name is derived from the man who was first sacrificed in the village. The practice of human sacrifice has been completely abolished when the British reached Kandhamal region and ruthlessly stopped it. Human sacrifices were offered for the propitiation of '*Dharani Penu*' (Earth Goddess) for good health, security and safety of the village, good rains and good crops. The Pano were always engaged in procuring the *Meriah* victims. The Kandha of Dadpaju called as Malua Kandha.

There are two types of Kandha found in Kandhamal; the Kutia and the Malua Kandhas. Among the Malua Kandhas, some Kandhas speak both Kui as well as Odia language while some Kandha only speaks in Odia. In local terms, those Malua Kandhas who speak both Kui and Odia language are called 'Aharia' Kandhas and those Malua Kandhas



who speak only Odia are called 'Odia' Kandhas. There is a regional variation in the Kui language of Kandhamal. In the village, the Kandha speak and communicate in Odia language, but during their festivals and *Puja*, they use Kui as the language of worship for their traditional tribal Gods and Goddesses.

Like the Kandhas, there are two types of Pano found in Kandhamal, according to their linguistic and cultural affinity. In local terms, those are able to speak both Kui and Odia language are called 'Kui Domanga', and those only speak Odia are called 'Sasi Domanga' or 'Odia Pano'. In Dadpaju, the Pano are Odia Pano and are called Sasi Domanga in Kui language. Apart from the Kandha and the Pano, there are other castes also living in the village.

### **The Karan caste of the village**

The Karan caste is one of the dominant communities in Odisha. A Karan family came to this village from Phulbani Sahi and settled here. Earlier, they were very rich and occupied large tracts of land in the village. They were engaged in liquor selling business in the earlier days and some people are continuing it till date. Some are working as labourers and others are doing business in the village. However, they are not economically rich now. Though they have land, they sold many of their lands to the Pano and Kandha of the village, and also sold some lands to outsiders, including one Muslim family. At present, they are economically poor, educationally backward and politically powerless in the village.

Today their women are working as labour in Pano houses, even though they consider the Pano as untouchable and ritually impure in the village as well as the market. In the earlier days, they had a big influence in the village, but in contemporary times, they lost all their power and influence in the village. Not a single member of the Karan families residing in the village hold any government job and even not a single boy or girl happens to be a graduate. However, those family members and relatives staying in the town outside the village are

holding government jobs and are also educationally advanced, but rarely come to this village.

The Karan of the village uses 'Mahanty' as their surname.

### **The Kandha-Lohar (Blacksmith) of the village**

The Blacksmith family are economically poor, educationally backward and politically powerless in the village. Not a single member of Blacksmith community from this village holds any government job, and there is no graduate among them. They work as farmers, labourers, and even their women work as labour in Pano houses and markets, though the Blacksmiths consider the Pano as being of a lower social and cultural status than them. However, due to economic conditions, they are forced to work on their agricultural land or some other odd jobs. The Blacksmiths of the village use 'Bindhani' and 'Penthe' as their surname.

### **The Kandha-Kumbhar (Potter) of the village**

The Potter family are economically very poor, educationally backward and politically powerless in the village, till date, not a single member of the Potter family from held any government job, and there are no graduates. Though they are engaged in their traditional caste occupation, they are also working as farmers and as labour for the Pano and the market. The Potters also consider the Pano as untouchable, ritually impure, and socially and culturally of a lower social status than them. The Kumbhar of the village uses 'Rana' and 'Padhan' as their surname.

### **The Kandha-Gauda (Cowherds) of the village**

The Cowherds of this village are economically very poor, educationally backward and politically powerless in the village. So far two members of this community got government peon jobs in the district collector's office. At present, one boy of this community is pursuing graduation in a government college in Phulbani, and no girl has taken up graduation so far.

The Kandha-Gauda are a caste group. They have caste characteristics and do not have any tribal characteristics. However, they are in the scheduled tribe list of Odisha and enjoying the facilities meant for scheduled tribes. The Gaudas of this village use 'Pradhan' as their surname.

### **The Keuta/Kaibarta caste of the village**

There is one Keuta/Kaibarta family in the village. They have a servicing centre, where they wash vehicles/motorbikes. Economically they are of middle income. They buy lands from the Kandha people. Educationally they are backward and not a single member of the family is a graduate. None of them hold any government job. The Keuta/Kaibarta is not untouchables but they are classified as scheduled caste in Odisha. The Kandha and other touchable castes never practice untouchability with them. The Keuta/Kaibarta practiced untouchability with the Pano and Hadi castes of the village. The Keuta/Kaibarta family are strong supporters of the BJD party and the Naveen Patnaik government. They use 'Behera' as their surname.

### **The Hadi (Sweepers) of the village**

The sweeper communities of this village are economically very poor, educationally backward, politically powerless, and considered untouchable, ritually impure, socially and culturally lower than all communities including the Pano of this village. So far, not a single member of this community obtained any government job and not a single boy or girl from this village has done graduation. The sweeper community people are engaged in their traditional occupation of sweeping in the village, as well as for the district hospitals and municipality. This is the most voiceless community in the village. Though the sweeper community is politically inactive, they nevertheless support the Congress party. The Hadi of the village use 'Mukhi', 'Nayak' and 'Behera' as their surnames.

## **The Muslims of the village**

There is one Muslim family in the village. The Muslim family is among the rich and educated families in the village, but lately, they are not staying in the village, though they have a house, land, and property in the village. They are giving their lands to other people for sharecropping. They visit the village particularly during the days of harvest. They have very less interaction with the people of the village.

## **Relation of the Kandha with the Other Communities**

### **Kandha and Other Communities (Non-Pano)**

It was quite observable from village social structure, that the Kandha had invited many artisan castes. So the Kandha were historically dependent on other artisan castes for their everyday activities, from home to agricultural field. For the smooth running of the village, the Kandhas needed some blacksmith families, cowherd families, Pano families and sweeper families. Each caste (except the Kandhas) has to serve the villagers and perform certain duties. The Pano also have certain rules to follow and certain duties and responsibilities to perform. The village council has offered land to the blacksmiths, cowherds, sweepers and the Pano for their service to the Kandha and the village. As long as they provide service to the Kandha, follow the village rules and respect the Kandha women, they have the right to stay in the village. If they fail to provide service or violate the village rules, they do not have the right to stay in the village.

The Kandha had made it very clear to the other communities that except for the Kandha, no one else has the right to interfere in village matters. They should respect the tribal gods and goddesses and offer necessary services during the time of worship. They should cooperate during the village fairs and festivals. It was an inter-community relationship of

economic dependency and service. The Kandha of the village still depend on the Blacksmiths for the renovating and polishing their iron instruments and implements. They are still today dependent on the Cowherd for the rearing of cattle in the village. They occasionally depend on the Potters during some festivals or rituals when they need earthen pots. They depend on the carpenter for the manufacture of wooden implements and the *Hadi* of the village for cleaning the streets, removal of dead animals and preparation of bamboo baskets. However, there are other 'business' castes in the village that do not provide any traditional service to the Kandha, such as the Karan, Keuta and Khadra castes.

The Kandha do not practice any untouchability with other castes in the village, except the Pano and Hadi. The Kandha and other castes stay in the same locality, while the Hadi and Pano stay separately in the village. The Kandha accept food from all other castes in the village except the Hadi and the Panos. Only the Kandha priest, *Dehury*, *Jani*, *Jhakar* and *Mati Guru* do take food from any other community. There are disputes among the Kandha and others communities at the inter-personal level, but there are no conflicts among between Kandha and other communities at inter-community level in the village.

Some Kandha shares their food and drinks with other communities of the village, except the Hadi and the Pano castes. Many Kandha are used regularly drinking liquor which is prepared by the other communities in the village. The Kandha never drink liquor which is either prepared or touched by the Hadi or Pano castes in the village. The Pano and the Hadi are not allowed to enter and sit on the *veranda* of the Kandha homes as well as those of other communities.

## Development of Kandha-Pano Relationships at Interpersonal Level

Historically, the relationship between the Kandha and the Pano began since the time they came into contact with each other in the village. As narrated above, the oral history speaks of how the Kandha gave shelter to the Pano in the village. The development of *Sahu-Paraja*<sup>2</sup> and *Sangat Maitra*<sup>3</sup> relationships is purely interpersonal, and family issues vary from individual to individual and family to family. These types of Kandha-Pano relationships are not related to the community relationship. This kind of relationship develops between individuals and families. The interpersonal family relationships between the Kandha and the Pano develop and build up in two different ways; the Sahu-Paraja relationship and Sangat-Maitra relationship. The Sahu-Paraja relationship is very much an individual and family-level relationship between the Kandha and the Pano.

After the development of an intimate relationship, the Kandha, and the Pano engage themselves in the Sahu-Paraja relationship. The Kandha hold the higher social status and exercise power in any matters related to the village or other social issues, while the Pano hold the lower social status and do not have any powers. Depending on their intimacy, some Kandha considers some Pano as their *Paraja*, and the Pano consider the Kandha as their king or Master. The Pano work for their master's agricultural land and cooperate in other family related issues. During some village festivals, the Pano are gifted some new clothes by their master. If there is any problem or conflict with others in village – whichever community they may be from - the Pano takes the help of his master to resolve the issue. The master (Kandha) protected his paraja (Pano) from all kinds of conflict.

The Sangat-Maitra relationship between the Kandha-Pano also develops an individual level. In this relationship, the Kandha and Pano become very friendly, though they maintain a

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<sup>2</sup>Master and client relationship between the Kandha and Pano

<sup>3</sup>Friendship relationship between the Kandha and the Pano

certain social distance. This kind of relationship is unique among them and it's not like the master-servant relation of a sahu-paraja bond. In this relationship, both the Kandha and the Pano address each other as part of their family. In this relationship, both the Kandha and the Pano invite each other during the childbirth ceremonies, marriages and death ceremonies and also offer gifts to each other. During the marriage of a girl, they offer some gifts, and during the marriage of sons, they offer a goat and some money to each other.

### **Kandha-Pano Relationship at Inter-Community Level:**

Every tribal village has a village council and a power structure in which the decision-making power always stays in the hands of the Kandha. According to the village council, the blacksmiths (Lohars) manufacture agricultural implements like a sickle, axe, crowbar etc. Their job is to prepare tools that will help in agriculture, cutting down the trees, and hunting. The traditional role of the cowherd is to guard the cattle of the village. The role of the Hadi (sweeper) is to clean the streets of the village and remove the carcasses of cattle and animals from the village. They also work as drummers in social functions, and as scavengers.

Historically in the village, the role of the Pano was to work as domestic workers, in the farms of the Kandha, as messengers, and also to procure victims and animals for the sacrifices. They also worked as musicians and drummers in the village fairs, festivals and social functions such as marriage. The Panos' role is also to work as the village messenger which in local terms is called '*Ganda*'. The role of the messenger is to inform the village people about the village council meetings which are held to decide about the celebration of village festivals, marriages, death ceremonies and sometimes to solve the disputes of the village. The Pano should provide the service of music and drum beats without taking payment during the village festivals and marriages. The Kandhas celebrate many festivals throughout the year and the service of music and drums is very important for these festivals.

The Pano are thus expected to respect village traditions, village deities participate in this activity. During marriages in the Kandha households, the Pano are expected to provide the service of music and drum without payment. However, the respective Kandha families usually give some incentives to the Pano as per their financial strength. The Pano should offer new clothes to the tribal priest and his wife during the village festivals as a symbol of respect. They should give '*Dhupa*' (incense sticks) and '*Deep*' (earthen lamps) to the tribal gods and goddesses during annual worship and socio-religious functions. The Kandha cultivate different commercial crops like Turmeric, *Mandia*, *Mahula* and with help of Pano middlemen or brokers, they would sell the produce in different weekly markets (*Hata*).

In the past, the Pano also sold cloth, salt, and cattle to the Kandha. Some Pano also carries out some petty businesses like cattle, turmeric, *Mahua* and vegetable trading. They purchase turmeric, Mahua, jack fruit, mango, and vegetables from the Kandha and sell them in the market or weekly market. Though the Kandha are economically poor, they do not feel that poverty at heart. They celebrate childbirths, marriages, and even death ceremonies, in a very lavish way. Without bothering about their economic status or income, they spend a lot of money on these occasions. When the Kandha faces any financial crisis or any shortage of money, borrow from other rich Kandha or their closely associated Pano. A very important thing among the Kandha and the Pano was trust they had upon each other. In the past, they did not maintain any written documents as a witness for these money and land transactions. Sometimes the Kandha would take money by mortgaging their lands, and even in this situation, they did not maintain any written documents.

It was the rule that as long as the Pano obeyed these conditions they have the right to live in the village and access to the forest and other natural resources of the village. If and when they fail to fulfil these conditions, the Pano would not have the right to live in the village. The Kandha believe that they are sons of the soil and that the earth goddess gives



them everything and protects them. This is the reason why the Kandha feels superior over all others in the region. The Kandha celebrate many festivals and worship their deities. All their festivals and rituals are related to their deities. They worship many deities, in the past, the Pano participated in all these festivals and in the worship of the deities. However, it was not a relation free of conflict. Many times, the Kandhas would abuse the Panos, but the Panos would tolerate it due to their dependency and could not resist or oppose this at either the personal or the community level. However, such instances created conflicting situations in the village.

### **Incidents that changed the Kandha-Pano relationships: History of conflict in the village**

The conflicts and disputes happening between the Kandha and the Pano at the inter-personal, inter-family, and inter-community levels in the village, are not new. However, these conflicts and disputes never lead to violence since they were resolved by the traditional village council or by mutual understanding. The nature and pattern of the conflicts between the Kandha and the Pano before the British period, during the British period and the post-Independence period varies in subjects, factors, and perspectives. However, violent conflicts between the Kandha and the Pano are recent phenomena after the 1990s. Large scale violence occurred in the village for the first time in 1994.

### **Refusal to continue customary practices**

There was a shift in Kandha-Pano relationships after 1968. Until 11<sup>th</sup> May 1968, there was a traditional, harmonious relationship between the Kandha and the Pano in the village. On 11<sup>th</sup> May 1968, the last Buffalo sacrifice festival (*Jhagdi*) was held in Dadpaju village. It was celebrated by both the Kandha and the Pano. After the festival, there was a village feast and the Pano demanded one goat and some rice separately, because when the Kandha people cooked, they first served their own people and the Pano people had to wait for

a long time. Since they did not want to wait for the Kandhas to cook and serve their people first, the Panos wanted their share for their service from the Kandhas, according to the village rules.

However, the Kandhas rejected their demand told the Pano that if they wanted to eat, they would have to wait for the Kandha to finish their meals first, regardless of what may be given to them for their service. They insisted that the Pano were their servants (*Sevakaria*) and not their masters (*Malik*) and thus could not order them around. The Pano felt publicly humiliated by the Kandhas. After this, the Pano of the village held a meeting and decided not to continue any traditional services rendered to the Kandha at the community level. They passed a resolution that the committee was not against any inter-personal level relationship that existed between any Kandha and Pano, whether it was sangata, *maitra* or *sahu paraja*. The Pano can serve a Kandha according to his personal capacity. However, at the inter-community level, the Pano were not interested in participating and providing any kind of customary service to the Kandha in village festivals, marriages, or death ceremonies.

Since then, the Pano did not provide any customary service to the Kandha. When the Kandha came to know of the decisions made by the Pano community of the village, they asked the Pano messenger to call for a meeting about the decision of the Pano. The Pano messenger informed them about the reasons why the Panos passed such resolution to not to serve the Kandhas at the community level. At this, some Kandhas got furious and asked the Pano to leave the village, while others Kandha strongly defended the decision of the Pano and argued that the Pano had the rights to live in the village since the forefathers of the Panos had already served the Kandhas of the village, and their forefathers had given land to them in return for their service.

There were no unanimous views among the Kandhas about the Panos. This resulted in divisions among the Kandhas regarding the Panos of the village. However, the erstwhile

Kandha chiefs' families were very influential and strongly supported the Pano, and tried to exert their influence over the other Kandhas in the village. This created a conflicting situation among the Kandhas themselves.

### **Tube well water**

In June 1990, there were heavy rains, due to which the drinking water well used by the Pano damaged. Consequently, the Pano used the tube well that was located on the road near the Kandha *Sahi*. The Kandha strongly opposed the Pano using water from their tube well. One Kandha, who is now a police constable, abused a Pano woman those had come there for water and removed the handle of the tube-well so that she could not use it.

### **Paddy carrying stick (*Dhana bujha bhara* and *Bainga*) touches the Kandha woman**

In another incident, a Pano man was working for one of the Kandhas in the village and was walking to the Kandha's threshing ground (*Dhana Khola*), carrying the paddy (*Dhana Bujha*) on his shoulder. At the same time, a Kandha woman was coming his way, and the woman was slightly touched by the paddy carrying a stick. She shouted at the Pano man, asking how he dared touch her, being a Pano. Her husband rushed to the spot upon hearing her and thrashed the Pano man. It was an unfortunate incident where the Pano man was not even aware that the paddy stick had touched the woman. Such incidents created conflicting situations between the Kandha and the Pano communities.

### **School chairman post**

There is a primary school in the village, and every year, only a Kandha would become the school chairman. There was one Kandha who was continuously appointed as school chairman. The Pano opposed this and complained to the school headmaster, questioning how a person could continuously become chairman of the school, especially when none of his

children were studying in the school. They demanded that someone whose son/daughter were regular students of the school should be selected/elected as school chairman. After that, the Kandha chairman was removed from the post, a Karan caste person was appointed as chairman, and a Pano person was appointed as secretary of the school.

### **Marriage and crackers**

In January 1993, there was a Pano marriage in the village. The marriage procession was going through the Kandha *sahi*. In the middle of the Kandha *sahi*, some Pano youth burst the powerful crackers which created a massive sound. It was winter and all the people had slept early, and due to the bursting of crackers, many Kandhas were awakened. The Kandhas approached the marriage procession and told people to not burst crackers as people were sleeping. However, the Panos were in a joyful mood in the marriage procession and did not take the Kandhas seriously. The Pano continued to burst the loud crackers, and some drunken Pano youth also passed comments on the Kandha women. This angered the Kandhas and led to a confrontation and further conflicting situations between the Kandha and the Pano.

### **Dalkhai and Laxmi/Lachmipuja**

*Dalkhai* is one of the important festivals of the Kandhas. The Kandhas celebrate the festival once in a year on the last Thursday of the month of Margasira (Nov-Dec). They believe that *Dalkhai* gives them good crops. The Kandhas go to the *Lachhma Gudi*<sup>4</sup> in the forest and perform puja under the *Amla* tree located there. However, at the same time, the Pano women of the village observe the *Manabasa gurubara* in their homes. The Kandhas oppose the Pano women observing the Lakshmi Puja, which is very famous in Odisha in the name of '*Gurubar Manabasa*'.

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<sup>4</sup>According to the Kandha Goddess Lachhama is the Goddess of crops.

The argument of the Kandhas is that when the Kandha are celebrating the Dalkhai in the form of Lakshmi puja on the last Thursday '*Gurubara brata*' of the Margasir masa the Pano are worshipping and observing Lakshmi puja on all four Thursdays of the Margasir masa from the first Thursday onward. This makes Goddess Lakshmi feel unhappy with the Kandhas, due to which they do not get a good harvest in the village. There was a meeting in the village regarding this issue. The *Jhakar*<sup>5</sup> of the village raised many objections, alleging that the Pano were breaking the traditional rules of the village. The Kandha believed that it was not a good omen for the Pano to be observing Lakshmi Puja all four Thursdays of Margisir Masa. Later they asked a Brahmin for advice on this issue, and the Brahmin opined that there was no problem if the Pano women performed Lakshmi Puja. Even after this, the Kandha remained unsatisfied. The Kandha of the village believed that only the *Jhakar* had the customary rights to worship Lakshmi, and after him, only the Kandha women could perform the worship. They believed that otherwise, there will be a hazard to the village and the entire Kandha society. The Kandha blamed the Pano for their poverty, saying that that though they had the land, there was no good harvest because the Pano were worshipping Lakshmi Devi, the goddess of wealth.

### **Religious, Cultural and Ideological factor**

The village was dominated by the Kandha and Kandha culture. However, there has been a gradual change in the religious and cultural milieu of the village. With the passing of time, there was a diffusion of Kandha and Hindu culture in the village. In earlier days, the Pano of the village followed the Kandha culture. During the worship of Kandha deities, the Pano provided drum and music services, so there was no dispute or conflict on religious and cultural practices. This generated an ideological resemblance between the Kandha and the Pano, though there were superiority and inferiority between the Kandha and the Pano

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<sup>5</sup>Kandha priest

communities. The Kandha treated the Pano as an inferior community and the Pano accepted that without any resistance.

However, with the passage of time, there was a change of attitude among the Panos. They reformed their religious beliefs and practices when their standard of living and educational and economic status improved. The Pano were disassociated from the traditional socio-religious beliefs and practices of the Kandha. Some Pano individuals reacted and protested against the religious and cultural dominance after taking *diksha* from Gayatri Parivar. After that, the Pano built a '*Dharma Mandap*' where they discussed *Bhagabat Puran* every evening. They started a weekly *Trinatha mela* every Sunday in the Mandap. They started to observe the *Panchuk brata* for five days every year in the month of Kartik. The Pano were disapproving of the domination of Kandha culture and broke some laws. However, some Kandha also built a *Dhram Mandap* and started taking *Deeksha* from different Hindu *gurus*. Some of them also followed *Mahima Dharm*. The Kandha started celebrating different Hindu festivals in the village.

According to the new set of religious beliefs and practices, the attitudes of the Kandha and the Pano changed. The Kandha continued to assert their superior religious and cultural status over the Pano and Hadi communities and practiced untouchability against them in the village. Many times, there were many disputes in the village due to the practice of untouchability. However, the Kandha justified the practice of untouchability, while the Pano always tried to elevate their social status and position by imitating the ideas and practices of Hinduism and the Gayatri Parivar. They also opposed the practice of untouchability and verbal abuse by the Kandha.

### ***Mahul, Gora, Panas, and Mango are the major reasons of conflict***

In the past, when the Kandha and Pano population were very less, there were enough *Mahul*, Mango, and *Panas* trees, and the Kandha never bothered about when the Pano were collecting the Mahul, Gora, Mango and Pansa from their trees. In those times there was less population and enough trees for all in the village. As time passed, the populations of both the Kandha and the Pano increased, along with poverty in both groups. When the Pano first came to the village, they were landless and poor, but now, the Kandha themselves had become poor. So the Kandha began opposing the Pano collecting Mahul, Gora, Mango, and Panas. This situation created unintended consequences and conflicting situations at the individual and inter-family level, between the Kandha and the Pano. These unintended consequences and conflicting situations brought significant changes in the social life and interpersonal, inter-family, and inter-community level relationships.

### **Brick construction**

The Panos do various businesses for their livelihood since they are a largely landless community in the village. Brick construction is one of them. There are other communities such as the Karan caste, who are also in the brick business. The Panos and Karanas bring labour from Boudh and Sonpur districts of Odisha to make bricks and employ the village people to deliver timber for baking the bricks. Many Kandha families sell their Mahua, Jackfruit, and *Sal* trees. The Kandhas sell their trees to the Panos and Karanas and earn money for their livelihood. The Kandhas sell their trees at a rate of 5000 rupees per tree. The business communities (the Panos and Karanas) get to benefit from this business and try to live a prosperous life. This makes the Kandhas feel jealous about the lifestyle of the Panos as well as the Karanas. However, the Kandhas find it more difficult to see the Panos living a happy life, and so go against the Panos by alleging that the Panos are cutting the trees. Yet

the Kandhas do not oppose or go against the Karanas. Many times there are conflicts arising because of this issue.

### **Collection of wood from the forest**

There was an incident in which some Kandha women opposed the Pano collecting wood from the forest. The Pano are reacted sharply, saying that it was not they who were collecting wood to sell in the market, but rather, it was the Kandhas who were doing it.

### **Sarpanch elections**

The village has a history of political conflict due to the Panchayat elections. The Panchayat election provided villagers with the power to elect a person of their choice. The Panchayat elections, therefore, were an attempt to facilitate the distribution of power and responsibility amongst the villagers within the village social structure and hierarchy. However, a majority of the Sarpanches have been getting elected from the Kandhas. The Pano are ineffective in the panchayat activities. The Sarpanch seat of the Gudari Panchayat is reserved for Scheduled Tribe. Every time, two or three members contest for Sarpanch elections from the village and lose the election. So far, not a single person from Dadpaju village has won Sarpanch elections.

It is true that the candidates spend a huge amount of money. However, upon losing the elections, they blame the Pano, accusing the Pano of not supporting them despite taking their money. They have a very simple logic that it is obvious that the Kandha votes are divided because all the contesting candidates are Kandha, but the Pano are voting as a block, and securing a win for outsiders. This logic is prevalent even though it is absolutely wrong. Even in the 2009 and 2014 MLA elections, there was conflict regarding the banners. The Pano opposed to political activists using their walls to promote the elections symbols. As a



result, after elections, the opposition party targeted the Pano, accusing that they were not supporting the party.

The Kandha are actively engaged in village politics and they support a different political party. Even though there are contradictions within the Kandha, when a party loses elections, they immediately react with a scrutiny of the voting patterns of the Pano and make accusations that the Pano had not supported them. Thus, the elections and the Panchayat Raj institution entering the village power structure have increased rivalries and factional struggles. However, it has also given the Pano some kind of choice and freedom in changing the power structure through democratic mechanisms to serve their purposes in the village, though the Pano have no effective voice in Panchayat institutions. This creates a conflicting situation between the Kandha and the Pano in the village.

### **Love marriage between a Pano boy and Kandha girl**

Untouchability and casteism are among the biggest social problems in the village. The Pano and Hadi are regarded as the most inferior untouchable castes in the village. Many people believe that there are no caste characteristics, hierarchy or untouchability among the tribal people and that the tribals never practice casteism and untouchability. However, in Dadpaju and its surrounding villages, untouchability and casteism are practiced by the Kandhas, particularly against the Pano and Hadi castes. Inter-caste marriage is strictly prohibited in the village.

One Kandha, who was the first Bank P.O from the village, married a Brahmin girl, and his family members boycotted. He has not been coming to the village ever since. In the village, there were two incidents in which a Pano boy eloped with a Kandha girl. They caused anger among all the Kandhas in the village. In the surrounding villages, there are many instances of love marriage between Pano boys and Sundhi girls and Pano boys and Kandha

girls. However, there are no such instances that other caste boys marry Pano girls in the study area.

### **Vegetable business**

Vegetable business is another issue that creates conflict situations among the Kandha and Pano merchants in the village. The occupations in the village also affected the interpersonal and inter-community relationship between the Pano and the Kandha. Social and economic relations and economic activities are determined by agriculture. The Kandha are predominantly agriculturalist. They cultivate paddy and various kinds of vegetables. Some Panos of the village are engaged in vegetable business. They buy vegetables from the Kandha and sell in the market. Even other caste businessmen from the town come to the village to buy vegetables. However, the Kandha complain that the Pano are buying their vegetables at lesser prices and selling them in the market at high prices. The Pano who are engaged in the vegetable business, insist that vegetable business is a means of livelihood, and question how business and survival are possible without being able to make a profit. However, nowadays the Kandhas are also selling their own produce in the market.

### **Social behavior**

There are invariable changes taking place in the agriculture, education and economic spheres of the village. The villagers have undergone changes. Poverty is another factor which is widely spread, and influences villagers and the community life. There are also changes taking place in the cultural sphere, which includes belief systems, practices, assumptions, and values, due to the impact of Hinduism and technological factors like the entry of T.V in the villages. Both the Kandha and the Pano are influenced by tendencies of materialism. Humiliation, prejudice, and untouchability against the Pano are not new or recent phenomena.

However, while the Pano tolerated this in earlier times, after the 1980s, they began reacting sharply. Due to increasing literacy, the Pano are making all efforts to provide a good education for their children. Many Pano boys and girls from the villages are going to towns to receive higher education. The standard of living is rising among the Pano in the village. If there are any individual arguments between the Pano and the Kandha or the Pano versus other communities, the other caste people call the Pano as untouchables while the Pano call the other castes uneducated and uncivilized. After all, it is the social behavior which is the major reason behind inter-personal conflicts, and the inter-personal conflicts promote inter-community conflict between the Kandha and the Pano in the village. Due to the aspirational behavior of the Pano in the village, people of other communities often abuse them verbally, which leads to a back and forth in the public spaces of the village.

### **Impact of the 1994 conflict in the village**

After the temple entry incident on 14<sup>th</sup> January 1994, there was large-scale violence in many villages. However, it was stopped with strong police intervention and arrest of many Kandha youth who were mobilizing violence against the Pano. Also, there were festivals which the Kandha and other caste Hindus had to celebrate every year from 1<sup>st</sup> April to 14<sup>th</sup> April. So, Lambodar Kanhar, a leader of the Kandha, organized meetings in every village and incited the Kandha against the Pano. In some villages, the Kandha strongly opposed Lambodar Kanhar and in others, some Kandha others opposed his proposal. Those Kandha who supported Lambodar Kanhar opined that after the *Danda jatra* or *Meru* which is held on 14<sup>th</sup> April every year, they can get organized and attack the Pano. After this, there was a Kandha rally on 6<sup>th</sup> April 1994, led by Lambodar Kanhar.

In that rally, participants and representatives from each village expressed anguish about the situation in the village due to the Pano - how the Pano were not respecting them,

not respecting Kandha women, not performing the customary profession assigned to them, and how the Pano were becoming powerful and more vocal in the village with every passing day and thus becoming a serious threat to the Kandha people. The Pano were becoming powerful due to political power, so they felt it was the right time to dethrone the Pano from Kandhamal politics. They felt that it was time for the Kandha people to unite and teach a lesson to the Pano.

In that rally, three major demands were made – to change the name of the district from Phulbani to Kandhamal, to reserve the Phulbani legislative assembly and parliamentary seats for Scheduled Tribe (which was reserved for Scheduled Caste earlier), and review as well as revive the 1922 land settlement, to cancel the ownership land records and documents of the Pano, release all the Kandhas detained during the violence against the Pano and strong legal action against the Pano those do not respect the village rules. The major slogan in the rally was “*Pano Sasan chaliba nai, Jadi chaliba nia Jaliba, Janhi Pano tanhi hana*”. These slogans meant, “The political domination of the Pano cannot be tolerated. If the political domination of the Pano continues, there will be fire. Where ever you find a Pano kill him. Do not show any friendship and sympathy to the Pano. Rape the Pano girl and woman; give poison to the Pano child and their cattle.”

However, Lambodar Kanhar told the crowd, not to kill or harm the Pano of his own village, since they were obedient and loyal. At this point, many Kandha questioned him, asking why he did not allow the killing of the Pano of his village and why he was instigating others to kill the Pano of their village. To this he replied saying that it was up to the Kandha of a village to allow the killing of the Pano of their village, and only if they allow, will the Kandha of other villages come and kill the Pano. If any Kandha does not attend and support the action, they will be socially boycotted; nobody will give their daughter in marriage to the

family, and nobody would marry their daughter. With this, each attending Kandha family was asked to contribute ten rupees and one glass of rice for this cause.

Many Kandha of the study village attended the rally and some agreed with this while others disagreed with Lambodar Kanhar. Regarding this, there was a meeting held in the village to decide if the Pano of the village had to be attacked, since the Pano were not doing their customary profession, not giving respect to the Kandha, marrying the Kandha girls, and there were many other personal grievances against the Pano.

However, the Kandha of Dedibali strongly opposed it and declared that they will not support this cause. If at all there was some problem between the Kandha and Pano in the village, it shall be solved in the village, and solved peacefully. The Kandha of the Dedibali declared, “This is our village, our forefathers established this village, and our forefathers gave land to the Pano to live in the village. They were service providers to the forefathers, so we will not allow an attack on the Pano in the village. We are the kings of this village, we gave land to them to take care of our forest and deities, and there is no difference between you (Kandha) and the Pano of this village. Lambodar Kanhar is not our leader and we will not obey him and his order”.

Due to the strong opposition from the Dedibali Kandhas, the Kandha of the other *Sahi* became silent, but made a new plan to attack the Pano. The new plan was that the Kandha women and youth of the village together with Kandhas of the surrounding villages would attack the Pano. The Kandha of the village did not participate in this attack so that the Kandha of Dedibali would think that the attack was led by the women and youth of the village, instigated and supported by Kandhas of the surrounding village.

On 18<sup>th</sup> May 1994, Wednesday around 9a.m. in the morning, around fifteen hundred Kandha women and youth gathered in the school to attack the Pano of the village. Prior to

this, they cut eight big trees to block the road, so that police cannot enter the village during the attack. However, not all Kandha participated in the conflict. The Kandha of Dedibali strongly opposed it and informed the police that there was violence going on in the village. Police arrived and many people were injured when they lathi charged. The Pano fled to the forest, and through forest route, reached Phulbani town. They spent nearly two months in a temporary shelter in Phulbani town and returned to the village in the month of July.

## **Section-II**

### **Village- BASTINGIA**

The study village Bastingia is located on the main road that connects Chakapada and Tikabali. Chakapada village is famous for its Shiva temple and Swami Lakshamananda Saraswati's *Gurukula Ashram*. The village comes under the Beheragaon gram panchayat of Chakapada block of Kandhamal district. This village is situated at a distance of 45 km from the district headquarter. This village witnessed Kandha-Pano conflict in 1994, 2007 and 2008. The people of the village speak both Kui and Odia. This village is a multi-caste and multi-religious village. The Kandha and other communities except the Pano practice Hinduism. Many residents of this village are devotees of Swami Lakshamanananda Saraswati and active members of RSS and VHP.

#### **History of the Kandha and historical background of the village**

Historically the Kandha were the first settlers of the village. Initially, they were staying as a small '*basti*' but after the growth of their population, they spread out and established the village '*Bastingia*'. In the Kui language, the etymological meaning of the village is 'villages of Basti'. After establishing the village, the Kandha brought some Pano from the surrounding villages to work for them and in their fields. The Kandha of the village uses 'Kanhar' and 'Mallik' as their surnames. Though the Kandha of the village are economically not powerful, they possess large tracts of land and are very powerful in the decision-making process of the village. The Kandha of the village never practiced untouchability with the Sundhi, Amatya or Gauda castes.

#### **History of the Pano in the village**

The Pano of Bastingia are called Kui speaking Pano or *Kui Domanga*. Historically, they had come to Bastingia from Chakapada and from Tikabali area. They came to the village

to provide services to the Kandha. They provided drum and music service to the Kandha during their festivals and marriages. The Panos of the village use 'Digal', 'Behera' and 'Nayak' as their surname. Nowadays, a majority of the Pano in the village have embraced and practicing Christianity. The Pano of the village speaks both Kui and Odia languages. Though Christianity is present in the village, the Pano are educationally not that advanced than the Kandha. However, there is an economic disparity between the Kandha and the Pano and it is increasing day by day.

Today the Pano are in a better economic condition than the Kandha as well as some other communities in the village. Some people embraced Christianity early in the 19<sup>th</sup> century due to their fear of the 'black magic' done by the Kandha. They believed that if they converted to Christianity, then black magic done by the Kandha would not harm them. Due to Christianity the Pano are very vocal about caste discrimination and the hatred propagated against them by other communities in the village. They are able to speak out against discrimination even in the worst of situations.

After the 1994 Kandha-Pano conflict, many Pano converted to Christianity, but after 2008, the Kandha declared that the Pano should re-convert to Hinduism, failing which they should leave the village. Some Pano people began practicing Hinduism again due to fear. As a result, it has become difficult to know how many Pano are genuinely Hindu Pano and how many are genuinely Christian Pano in the village. However, the majority of the Pano are Christian.

### **Sundhi caste of Bastingia**

The Sundhi caste of Bastingia immigrated from outside Kandhamal but established themselves in Bastingia long ago. In the past, ran the liquor business in the village. The Sundhis of the village are one of the prosperous and powerful communities and they possess



large tracts of land in the village. The Sundhis use ‘Pradhan’, ‘Behera’, ‘Sahu’ and ‘Prusty’ as their surnames.

### **Amayat Caste of Bastingia**

The Amayat caste is also called ‘Chasa’ and use ‘Dandia’ as their surname. Agriculture is their traditional occupation.

### **Gauda caste of Bastingia**

In the past, the Gaudas were involved in their traditional occupation of rearing cattle, but now they have shifted to other livelihoods as well. Many of them are working as daily wage labourers. The Gauda caste uses ‘Bagarti’ as their surname in the village.

## **History of Kandha and Pano Conflict in Bastingia**

### **Refusal to carry on customary occupations**

When the Pano converted to Christianity, they felt that they were liberated from all social stigmas and untouchability. To them, Christianity taught them to learn to love each other as human beings, to stop consuming alcohol, to live a life of discipline, to live a clean life, and not continue the activities that degraded their human value. Thus the Pano decided that they should no longer remove the dead cattle from the Kandha and Sundhi houses since it degraded their human value and promoted an inferiority complex among them.

After embracing Christianity, they stopped providing drum and music services and participating in the village festivals. They boycotted all traditional religious practices of the village. The issue of not removing dead cattle and not providing drum and music services to the village festivals created anger and hatred among the Kandhas, Sundhi and other castes in the village. The Kandha called for a meeting regarding this issue and declared to the Pano

that if they do not perform the customary services to the village, they would no longer have the right to stay in the village. However, due to the impact of Christianity and education, some educated Panos asked about what kind of service the other castes provided to the Kandhas. “Is it rational that when the Pano want to live happily and live a dignified life, you people oppose us? Why do you people believe in an irrational and superstitious religion, which teaches you to hate us, practice untouchability against us, and not give us any human dignity? Is this your morality?” they questioned. This response led to further anger and the Pano were socially boycotted. They were not allowed to collect wood from the forest and the cowherd would not take the cattle of the Pano.

However, after few months, the Kandha and the Sundhi realised that they could not cultivate and harvest their crops without the help of Pano labour and the issue was slowly resolved as a result. However, there was hatred against the Pano, that because of Christianity, they were not respecting Hindu culture, Hindu traditions, Hindu rituals, Hindu values, Hindu God and Goddesses. The Kandha, the Gauda and the Sundhi deliberated that due to the Christian beliefs, the Pano were not respecting traditional relationships. Since then, the inter-community social relations between the Kandha and the Pano did not grow and inter-community relationships became harder day by day.

As a result of the Christian influence on the Pano, they were no longer doing manual labour which was reserved for them in the village. They were interested in education, self-reliance and removing the sense of untouchability so that they would never consider themselves as lower than anyone in social and cultural status. Christian influence can be seen in every sphere of Pano life and led to an improvement of the standard of living, food habits, a way of dressing, and the manner of addressing and greeting others. This often created jealousy among other communities in the village.

### **Low payment during Paddy harvesting**

The Pano worked for the Kandha and Sundhi in their agricultural farms. Both the Kandhas and Sundhi always paid lesser wages to the Pano, compared to the market wage rate. Whenever the Pano demanded an increase in wages, the Kandhas and Sundhis would abuse both Pano men and women. Nowadays, many Pano are engaged in other economic activities, due to increasing economic opportunities outside the village. They are no longer as dependent on the Kandhas or Sundhis as before. This has led to a labour crisis for the Kandhas and Sundhis, due to which many of their agricultural lands remain uncultivated. For this, both the Kandha and the Sundhi blame the Pano.

### **During Christmas**

In 1991, during the celebration of Christmas, the Pano organised a video show in their *Sahi*. When people were busy watching the movie, some Kandha youth cut the power from the substation to the Pano Sahi. When the Pano people asked the Kandha about this, the Kandha replied that the Pano should not celebrate Christmas in the village, and they would permanently cut off the power supply to the Pano Sahi if they continued to do so. The Pano youth was angered by this, thus leading to a conflict that could only be resolved after a police intervention.

### **The Pano youth and Sundhi girl issue**

In 1997, there was an incident in which one Pano youth was following a Sundhi girl every day. When the family members of the girl came to know of this, they asked the boy's father to ask his son not to do so. Even after that, the Pano youth continued it and the girl's father requested the Kandha of the village to stop him. The Kandha threatened the father of the Pano youth and his family, that if the boy continued, they would kill the family. The Kandha and the Sundhi have nothing but strong feelings of superiority and hatred against the

Pano. The Kandha try to dominate the Pano through violence and social persecution. The Kandha think they are superior and powerful and can dominate the Pano. They do not want to see the Pano on an equal footing.

### **Sharecropping**

Nowadays, many Kandhas and Sundhis prefer to give their land to the Pano for sharecropping. Both the owner of the land and the cultivator share fifty percent of the harvest. However, there is always conflict during distribution time about who will pay the labour charges. Many times the landowner refuses to pay the labour charges and claims that it is the duty of the Pano cultivator to pay the labour charges. The Pano cultivators insist that both parties should share the labour charges. Many times the Panos refuse to cultivate as sharecroppers, and they can be heard saying things like “there is no profit in agriculture, we are not your servants, and our entire families are working for your land”.

This kind of scenario creates conflicting situations between the Kandha and the Pano. In such cases, the Kandha and the Pano get polarised into two opposed rival communities. Many times the Kandha align with the Sundhi, depending on the issue. Due to the numerical strength, religious integration and external village support among the Kandha and the Sundhi, they try to obstruct and prevent the Pano from accessing resources. The Pano remain helpless and defenceless in such situations. If there is any resistance from the Pano side against this type of social persecution, exploitation and injustice, it leads to a big conflict in the village.

### **Impact of the 1994 conflict in Bastingia**

In 1994, there was an attack against the Pano in the early hours of the day. It was the month of May, and some people were sleeping outside. Suddenly, they heard the sound of bells and woke up to see hundreds of people with traditional weapons coming to their *Sahi*.

The Pano informed one another and fled to the forest, while some went to inform at the Tikabali police station. The Kandhas came and could not find any Pano, killed many goats, destroyed houses and burned down property such as bikes and cycles. The police intervened at the right time and prevented further destruction. In the presence of police, the Pano returned from the forest and fled to Berhampur, Bhubaneswar and Phulbani towns. They returned to the village after the violence subsided in July.

### **Impact of 2007 conflict in Bastingia**

In the month of January 2008, at a hotel in Bastingia village, some Kandha, and Sundhi caste people were discussing how the Pano disrespected Hinduism and were celebrating Christianity. They used abusive and derogatory language against the Pano. One Kandha has exclaimed that it was a mistake to invite and give land to the “*Choro*” Pano. At the time, two Pano men who work as labour in the Block Office were sitting there for tea, and upon hearing the conversation, objected to the abusive language being used on the Pano community. Then one Kandha remarked, “how dare to sit in front of us, didn’t you see that we are sitting here? Your bodily contact makes us impure, our food will be impure and we have to take a bath again”. Another Kandha remarked that “these days the Pano are thinking they are *Gajapati*”, which was why they were no longer respecting anybody. This led to a heated verbal exchange between the Kandha and the Pano. That night there was a meeting among the Kandha to attack the Pano, and some Kandha tried to attack the Pano *basti* at midnight. Although no one died in the attack, the Kandha destroyed some houses of the Pano.

### **Impact of 2008 conflict in Bastingia**

After the Killing of Swami Lakshamanananda Saraswati, a planned attack took place against the Pano in the month of September 2008. This time, not only the Kandha but other caste people from the village and surrounding villages participated in the attack on the Pano

in broad daylight. The Kandha women and youth-led the attack, while the Kandha men and other castes gathered in the forest and monitored if anyone retaliated against the Kandha women and youth so that they could come and kill the persons. Fortunately, this happened in daylight at about 10 am, and some Pano women taking a bath near a small stream overheard the Kandha saying “let’s kill the Pano, Pano have no right to stay in the village”. They rushed back to inform all the Pano, and all of them fled to the forest to hide and protect their life.

### **Changes Seen in the everyday Life of the Kandha**

After independence, there were visible changes in the socio-economic and religious life of both the Kandha and the Pano. Also, there were observable and drastic shifts in the Kandha-Pano relations both in the villages and their surrounding villages. Historically and traditionally, both the villages were social, culturally, economically and politically dominated by the Kandhas. However, they gradually became economically poor and politically ineffective during the colonial period and after independence. The Kandha are a very dignified tribe and very much concerned about their social prestige, status, and power. They never bow down their head before anyone expects their God, Goddesses or their leaders. However, during the British period and post-independence period, due to their poor economic status and educational backwardness, they compromised a lot in their everyday life.

Historically and traditionally, the tribal women did not work for anybody, but today, they are working as daily wage labour. The tribal women are even working for Pano houses; selling wood and leaves in the market. In recent times, they have lost their traditional power of controlling the village and maintaining their dignity. On the other hand, in their religious life, it can be observed that in both the villages the Kandha are following Hinduism as well as their traditional religious practices. They are celebrating all Hindu festivals and worship Hindu God and Goddess.

In the political sphere, during the early days of independence, only a few Kandha were participating in politics. The Kandhas generally do not show their interest in politics. However, the temple entry issue and the Kandha and Pano conflict in 1994 brought a radical change in the political life of the Kandha in both the villages. They realised the power of politics and tried to snatch it away from the Pano politicians violently. This was the motivation behind the Kandhas of the village who actively participated in the rally and mobilization during the 1994 conflict in both the villages.

After the introduction of local self-government in the form of Panchayat Raj, the Panchayat became the centre of local power. To maintain local power, there was a race between Kandha and Pano, since the seats were reserved for SCs and STs. The Kandha, who were traditionally powerful, got a big jolt due to the electoral democracy that gave a space for the Pano to participate in politics and exercise power. Compared to the Pano leaders, the Kandha leaders are still lagging behind in politics in Kandhamal, in terms of influence. Even today, the Pano leaders have a big influence on ticket distribution in Congress and BJD parties. Due to their influence in politics and education, both the Kandhas and caste Hindus started disliking the Pano. When some Kandha leader fails to get a ticket to contest elections, whether for the post of Sarpanch or MLA, they consider it a conspiracy of the Pano politicians, leading to an increase in the hatred against the Pano with every passing day.

### **Changes Seen In The Everyday Live Of Pano.**

The change in the lives of the Pano is very much visible in both villages, compared to the Kandha and other communities. They have improved their economic status, educational status, health status and their standard of living. The educated Pano of both villages are politically more aware and have realised the value of the vote and the right to vote as an essentially constitutional right. In the elections, they decide why to vote and for whom to

vote. Compared to the Kandha, the Pano were more politically active and aware about politics.

In the earlier days, the Pano suffered various types of discrimination and restrictions, though there has been a decrease in these lately. The restrictions were imposed by the Kandha of the village. However, there is cultural, economic and educational mobility which is quite observable among the Pano. Nowadays, there are changes in inter-community relations, their religious beliefs, and practices, food habits, ways of dressing and political participation. With the rise in economic status and education, the Pano are favouring the destruction of caste inequality and ritual status. The Pano are demanding to be treated at par with upper castes. When analysing the present situation of the two villages, as well as surrounding villages, it can be seen that, at the regional level, the pattern of inter-community relations have weakened and the Pano no longer preferred to continue with a lower social status in the present situation.

With the impact of modern education and politics, the Panos preferred to live like dignified human beings and not less than anybody else. With the educational advancement and economic development, the Pano are discarding their traditional untouchable status, though they are still facing the stigma of untouchability. Many of them are favouring the breaking of taboos, low social status, and the stigma of untouchability.

In earlier days, the Pano had no space to share power, but after independence, the Pano also began to influence in the local power structure. The Pano are realizing that only education and politics can help them come out of deep-rooted Kandha dominance. The Kandha were unable to cope with the changing scenario and frustrated over the behaviour and dominance of the Pano in some villages, where the Pano are influential. The changing scenario where the Pano became politically more influential has created a conflicting



situation between the Pano and Kandha. Under the security cover of democracy and constitutional safeguards, the Pano discarded the existing local traditional systems, which came as a rude shock to the Kandha and caste Hindus. The Kandha and caste Hindus feel that the Pano are challenging their social status and tradition. The Pano were always looked down upon by the Kandha and caste Hindus. Some Panos who were in trade businesses also tried to exploit and cheat Kandhas.

Historically, the Pano worked for the Kandhas. They served them in various ways like cattle herding, supplying animal sacrifice, serving at the cremation grounds, working as messengers and beating drums in the festivals and marriage ceremonies. They have now turned into a social group that is conscious and aware of its rights and dignity. The past relationship and present drastic change among the Pano led to a tremendous discontent among the Kandha. A hostile relationship emerged and the Kandha and Pano conflict have now assumed greater significance. The aggressive posturing and attitude of the Pano and their increasing presence in the spheres of politics, education, and petty business created anger and hatred, both among the Kandha and caste Hindu groups. The Pano have disowned the tribal and village traditions, and in some villages, the Pano youth are marrying girls from the Kandha as well as other castes. The Kandha are always suspicious of the Pano and in their minds, they believe that the Pano are exploiters, cheaters and exploit the tribal women. The Tribal-RSS-Trader-caste Hindu political leader nexus is very much against the Pano.

The Hinduization process in Kandhamal has a very long history, beginning much before the RSS came into the picture. There are a lot of narratives about this. There are many Hindu festivals celebrated by the local Kandhas. They are the Danda Nata, Thakurani Jatra, Shivaratri, Laxmi Puja, Durga Puja and Holi. The RSS and other soft Hindutva forces systematically spread out among the tribals and Pano in different parts of the district. The Kandha also observe and celebrate Shivaratri on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the dark fortnight in the

month of Phalgun (February-March). This festival is celebrated with great pomp and splendour in the Shiva temples at Khudutentuli, Chakapada, Dungi (Tikabali), Jalespata and many other places in Kandhamal. The Kandha also observe and celebrate *Dolo Jatra* (Holi festival) in Kandhamal.

Durga Puja/Dashahara festival is one of the major Hindu festivals celebrated by Kandhas with great pomp and splendour during the bright fortnight in the month of Aswina (September-October). The Dashahara festival held at Balaskumpa deserves special mention in Kandhamal. The Dashahara festival is also celebrated with a due ceremony at several Sakti shrines in Kandhamal, which involves the worship of the presiding deity of Kandhamal—goddess Barala Devi. According to custom, the Kandha and their *Mutha* Head present offerings to the deity. The Kandha also observe and celebrate Raksha Bandhan, which is also a Hindu festival. The Kandha were profoundly influenced and inclined towards the Hindu religion in Kandhamal. The Kandha also understand the hierarchy of caste system and adopted the casteist ideology of the Hindu religion, and believe in the concept of purity and pollution. The Kandha also observe *Kartik Purnima* and recite the Hindu religious texts like Bhagabat, the Mahabharat, the Ramayan and others *Puranas*.

With the spread of education and intellectual awakening, the traditional leadership of Kandha and Mutha heads underwent change and lost its traditional status and power. However, the Kandhas are finding it difficult to adjust to the modern ways of life. Due to the spread of education and intellectual awakening, the Pano changed their standard of living and way of life. Some Pano converted to Christianity and some are practicing Hinduism. The Pano who converted to Christianity observes Christmas, Good Friday, and Easter. The Pano are more pragmatic and realistic - it helps them change their standard of living, education, religious beliefs, practices and political participation - which have brought a lot of transformation. These changes among the Pano, directly and indirectly, affected the Kandhas

at the village level and regional level. These changes generate certain inevitable social consequences, social contacts, functions and life changes in both communities. The encroachment of Hindu religion and Christianity largely influenced and turned local disputes into religious and caste issues. The intensified polarization by the RSS of the Pano and the Kandhas, Christian Pano, Christian Kandhas and the Kandhas who practice Hindu religion, largely influenced their social relations. The RSS project the Pano, the Christian Pano, and the Christian Kandhas as exploiters and opportunists. The RSS spread false rumours that the Pano and the Christians are destroying the tribal and Hindu culture and religion, by beef eating.

The RSS has created tremendous hatred between the Kandha, the Pano, and the Christians. Further, the RSS encouraged the Kandhas to attack the Pano and the Christians and strengthened the attacks by supporting them financially. The notion that Pano are cheaters and exploiters has become more popular and the demand for power and equality has increased hatred among the Kandhas as well as other castes, against the Pano. The social relation between the Kandha and the Pano has undergone changes. The social solidarities and social integration based on their historical bonding and kinship relationship have primarily changed. The social structure of the village resulted in many negative consequences, behaviours and action between the Kandha and the Pano.

There is no doubt that the both Christianity and the RSS played a significant role in the socio-cultural and religious life of the Kandhas and the Pano. The Kandhas, some Pano, and other castes hinduized themselves and put a ban on non-vegetarian eating and alcohol consumption. The social processes of acculturation, modernization, westernization and social institutions like marriage, religion, economy, polity and education contributed a lot to the changes in the Kandha - Pano relationship. The traditional relations between the Kandha and the Pano and their social interactions have become things of the past. The traditional

privileges enjoyed by the Kandha faded out by this kind of development. The Pano are now actively participating in decision making in local politics, and at the time of elections, forming pressure groups and putting forth their demands and interests. Villages are changing with respect to economic institutions, power structures, and inter-community relationships. The social solidarities and social integration among village communities, especially the relationship between the Kandhas and the Pano, are disintegrating.

The introduction of statutory panchayats has transformed the structure of village leadership. The village is facing factions and opposite interest groups fighting with each other. There has been a break in the social and religious views of different communities. There is rising motivation for status and mobility, and competition for a share in the local power structures. The old social solidarities, economic relationships, and emotional bonds are changing. The process of modernization, Christianization, and Hinduization has brought in significant changes in political, social, economic and cultural spheres and a significant change in the Kandha- Pano relationship. Political factionalism, bitterness and hostility are also responsible for the changes in the Kandha-Pano relationship.

### **Impact of religion on Kandha and Pano relationship**

Theoretically, anthropologists and scholars very much romanticised tribes and tribal culture. However, in reality, tribes and tribal culture are very different from what scholars and anthropologists perceive and propagate. The Kandha tribe of Kandhamal district is an example of how there is disconnect in the theory and reality on the ground, about tribes. There are considerable changes that took place in the religious lives of both the Kandha and the Pano. Traditionally and theoretically, the Kandhas are not a part of the Hindu social order; they have their own priest and their Gods and Goddesses are different from the Hindu

Gods and Goddesses. However, the Kandha of Kandhamal are very much associated with Hinduism in their religious beliefs, practices, and ideology.

The Pano and Kandha who have converted to Christianity follow Christian religious beliefs and cultural practices. The Christian people are abandoning their old traditional cultural practices and cultural institutions. The Christian Pano and the Christian Kandha of the district observe Good Friday, Easter Saturday, Easter Sunday, Easter Monday and Christmas. Modernization of local culture and tradition is taking place in Kandhamal under the impact of the Christian religion. These processes taking place in Kandhamal have changed the relations between the Kandha and the Pano. The conservative and traditional Kandha are unable to accept or tolerate the changes. The conservative and traditional Kandha are thinking that Christianity is destroying the Kandha culture and tradition. They are blaming the Pano for spreading Christianity and converting the local people in Kandhamal.

### **Summary**

There is a socio-cultural difference between the Kandha and the Pano. The Kandha are the first settlers and owners of the land and controllers of the forest in Kandhamal. Though there are interpersonal and inter-community relationships between the Kandha and the Pano, the Kandha are maintained a separate identity during social intercourse. There is upward mobility among the Pano and downward mobility among the Kandha observed in both the villages. The Pano are very much influenced by Hinduism, Christianity, and modernity, while the Kandha are additionally influenced by traditional Hinduism and are conservative. The Pano and the Kandha are both influenced by Hinduism. The Pano have witnessed radical social changes. However, these changes among other backward castes have been very slow. Hindu ideology has provided the Kandha and other backward castes with norms and values of superior status to the Pano and Hadi. The method of selection of life

partners among the Kandha and the Pano are different. The Kandha have their specific festivals and dances whereas the Panos have no specific festivals or dances in Kandhamal. Thus, there are remarkable differences between the Kandha and the Pano. The relationship between the Kandha and the Pano was based on socio-economic interdependence and mutual trust, but later became associated with many socio-economic problems. The Kandha complain against the Pano about exploitation and cheating and claim that the land traditionally allotted to the Pano for their service is the communal property of the Kandha. The consumption of liquor is common among the Kandha and the Pano. Liquor is an important item in every social and religious function and the social etiquette of both the Kandha and the Pano demands that liquor is offered to the guests and visitors. The Sundhi caste people prepare liquor and sell it to the Kandha and the Panos. By selling liquor, the Sundhi and Karan castes grab the land from both the Pano and Kandha. However, the Kandha and RSS do not blame the Sundhi or Karan castes.

# **CHAPTER-V**

## **Kandha-Pano Conflict: Narratives of Two Villages**

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### **Kandha-Pano Conflict: Narratives of Two Villages**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter discusses the shifting inter-community relationships and conflicts between the Kandha and the Pano of the study villages. It also elaborates the impact on regional level conflicts, and in turn how impacted the inter-community relationships and conflicts between the Kandha and the Pano. The chapter discusses the traditional pattern of relationships, mode of social interaction and patterns of social behaviour and how they perceived each other at the personal and inter-community level.

What kind of social interaction do they have in both social and public situations? Are there casteism, humiliation, untouchability, prejudice, social discrimination and feudal structures existing in Kandhamal? What are the social spaces, social situations and social factors that count as untouchability and as a sense of superiority as perceived by the Kandha and the Pano? In the social realities and lived experiences in the villages, to what extent do social and cultural differences exist between the Kandha and the Pano? When discussing the Kandha-Pano relationship and Kandha-Pano conflict, people do not give appropriate attention to the social stigma of untouchability, social behaviours, and discrimination that exists in Kandhamal, or understand how the social stigma of untouchability has manifested itself through conflicting situations in Kandhamal.

To understand the nature of the conflict in Kandhamal, it is crucial to understand the changes in the village, the factors that lead to changes in inter-community relations, and emerging patterns of new social dynamics at the village and regional levels. Socio-economic and religious change has been a problem and a reason for conflict between the Kandha and



the Pano, particularly the phenomenon of untouchability and prejudice associated with the Kandha and Pano relationship. Thus the phenomenon of untouchability is closely associated and it is one of the major reasons for the conflict.

In this context, the present chapter deliberates with an analytical study of shifting social relations, patterns of conflict and violence from village to regional level in Kandhamal. It explores how village issues influence the regional level and how regional issues influence village life in Kandhamal. How in 1994, a local issue became a social, economic, historical, political and regional issue and how in 2007, a local issue became a regional, social and religious issue in Kandhamal. In 2008, it became a more religious, social and regional issue. In 1994, the violent conflict was against the Pano, and particularly against the Pano community of Khajuripada, Phiringia, Chakapada, Tikabali and Phulbani blocks, that was professing and practicing Hinduism. However, the violent conflicts in 2007 and 2008 were more particularly against the Pano community that embraced and practiced Christianity. The highly affected areas were Baliguda, Daringbadi, Kotogarh, Tumudibandha, G.Udayagiri, K.Nuagaon, Raikia, Tikabali, Chakapada block and the lesser affected areas were Khajuripada, Phiringia, and Phulbani blocks.

To understand nature and pattern of conflict in Kandhamal it is essential to understand the nature and pattern of change in the social, cultural, economic, religious and political lives of the Kandha and the Pano in independent India. The social, economic, cultural, educational and religious situation of the Kandha and Pano had transformed during colonial and post-colonial periods. The economic, educational and political situation of Pano has resulted in some kind of assertion in the form of a Dalit movement in the post-independence period of Kandhamal. In the post-independence period, Dalits raised their voices against various issues like untouchability, caste discrimination, and public humiliation. The Pano not only raised their voice against untouchability, caste discrimination, and public humiliation but also

wanted power in the decision-making process in the villages and panchayats, even though there was oppression and repression continuing openly and brutally against Pano in the villages of Kandhamal. In fact, the traditional rulers of Kandhamal - the Kandha - faced major challenges from the Pano in their everyday life.

Constitutional provisions, law, the abolition of untouchability and the policy of reservations have been bringing substantial changes in the social, political, religious and economic life and status of the Pano. In the process, the Pano of Kandhamal have become a politically dominant group; economically developed and educationally advanced. This has created hatred among the caste Hindus and Kandha. Modern institutions replacing the traditional intuitions from the village to the national level has had a larger impact on the social, economic, religious and political life and inter-community relationships between the Kandha and the Pano.

The modern institutions have played a substantial role in bringing economic development and independence to the Pano community. Nowadays, the Kandha are unable to force the Pano to perform certain customary occupations which they had performed during earlier days, due to the rising standard of living, educational, economic and political status of the Pano. In the past, the Kandha had socially boycotted the Pano community many times, as the Pano were dependent on the Kandha for their economic sustenance and livelihood. Due to the changing social, economic and political situation, the Pano are refusing to take up these customary occupations today. However, the Kandha are unable to compromise and tolerate the demand for equal status and value by the Pano in the villages. There is conflict, as well as many contradictions in interests and views. Thus, conflict is not new between the Kandha and the Pano. However, the nature and pattern of conflict have changed from the pre-colonial period to the post-colonial period.

The conflict between Kandha and Pano is historical due to the close association and relationship between them. There are various issues which frequently lead to conflicts at the inter-personal and inter-community levels. There are always different kinds of conflict, which were also observed in the study villages as well as the surrounding villages. In these villages, some issues are common, while others are different in the two villages.

Issues like tube well water, collection of wood from forest, school chairman post, marriage and crackers, use of ponds, refusal to continue customary practices, love marriages, non-acceptance of Panos' worship of Laxmi puja, brick business, Sarpanch elections, and social behaviors were the reasons that produced conflict in Dadpaju village. The Pano refused to continue with old customary practices, to remove dead cattle or to work with low payment. This coupled with religious conversion and changed social behavior produced conflict. It is essential to understand the existing social reality, village structure, and social status of the Kandha and Pano, as well as other local communities, from the village to the regional level. The Kandha think they are of superior status than the Pano and Hadi castes, socially, culturally and ritually. The Kandha and caste Hindus historically, culturally, socially and ritually regarded the Pano and Hadi as untouchable and inferior. There are a close association, mutual understanding and similarity of views regarding these issues and the social, cultural and ritual status of the Pano and the Hadi.

The stigmatization and stereotyping attitude of the Kandha and caste Hindus against the Pano and the Hadi are real issues of conflict. The impact of the colonial period and reservation policy has produced conflict between the Kandha and the Pano. Constitutional provisions and the policy of reservation have produced hatred against the Pano. The policy of reservation provided a ray of hope, and educational and employment benefits to the educated among both Kandha and the Pano. Though the Kandha and the Pano along with other scheduled tribes, scheduled castes, socio-economically backward classes and other backward

classes are getting the benefit of reservation to improve their standard of living, both the Lok Sabha and Legislative assembly seats of Phulbani constituency were reserved for Scheduled Castes, and the Pano became the unchallenged community irrespective of party, and ruled for more than 40 years. During these 40 years, there were remarkable changes among the Pano which created more hatred against them in the Kandha and caste Hindus. Reservation policy and political power gave more advantage to the Pano, and they became more assertive and vocal in the locality. In many villages, Pano refused to carry out traditional customary occupations and opposed their future generations carrying forward any of these occupations.

There is a visible change among the Pano and the Kandha, as well as all the other sections in Kandhamal. Particularly, there has been a great change in the socio-economic and educational spheres within the Pano community in Kandhamal. The Pano of the study villages as well as other surrounding villages are of moderately better social and economic status than other Dalit communities. Since the colonial days, the Panos have been influenced by changes that happened in their lives and villages and have taken inspiration from upper caste people as well as the Hindu and Christian religions to improve their ways and standard of living. There is economic and educational mobility among the Pano. Now they are trying to achieve an upwardly mobile status in the social hierarchy of the village.

However, in spite of their economic and educational mobility, and improvement of the standard of living, the Pano are still considered inferior, untouchable and of lower social status in the existing social structure and organization of village. The social, economic, educational and professional changes that have occurred among the Pano are primarily of horizontal mobility. The Pano are trying to achieve vertical mobility in the existing social structure of village hierarchy.

However, they are facing greater challenges and stiff resistance from the local Kandha and other caste-Hindus. The horizontal and vertical mobility of the Pano is creating insecurity and hatred among the Kandha as well as other communities, and they opposed it directly and indirectly. The Kandha, as well as other communities, are considering the Pano as a great threat to their social status, since the Pano, who are from a lower caste and were former servants, are today a sound socio-economic condition. The Kandha and other communities are suspicious of the efforts made by the Pano for achieving social and economic advancement, which helps them achieve mobility in the village social structure.

The attempt to achieve social mobility in the village social hierarchy and status created hatred and promoted hostility and conflict between the Kandha and the Pano. In this context it is essential to analyse the social mobility among the Pano and the issues that promote hostility among the Kandha, leading to Kandha-Pano conflict. It is necessary to explain why there is a conflict between the Kandha and the Pano, and the major issues and contentions between these two communities. With the changes in their community, the Pano today are no longer considering themselves as untouchables and are no longer expecting to be treated with the stigma of pollution, whether with regard to temple entry or their participation in the village panchayat. However, they are facing violent confrontations from dominant Kandha and other communities. Unfortunately, the economic and educational status of the Kandha and other backward communities has not yet changed substantially in the village, in accordance with their social status in the existing village hierarchy.

The conflict between the Kandha and the Pano has a long history. In every village, there are disputes between the two communities. The conflict between the Kandha and the Pano is more phenomenological and psychological than material because all the Pano are not rich, all the Pano are not exploiters, and all the Pano are not land grabbers. The inherent socialization and culture of the Kandha and other communities, which always considered the

Pano as exploiters and untouchables, is manifested in rude and abusive behavior against the Pano, whether in the village or beyond. This rude and abusive behavior is not due to exploitation, land grabbing or scarce resources. It is very much the anxiety and intolerance rising in the minds of the Kandha and other communities against the Pano, which leads to conflict. It is quite observable that social changes and mobility promote conflict between the Kandha and the Pano, because the Kandha and other caste Hindus have high social status, and they try to maintain it, while the Pano have low social status in the social hierarchy and tend to aim for mobility to higher social status in the village social hierarchy.

However, due to the existing social structure - whether it is economic or religious mobility - the Pano are still facing determined social resistance from the Kandha and other local communities. There are various scholars who argue in their literature that the tribal are not Hindu, and do not practice the Hindu model of untouchability and ritual impurity. However, from both the village study, it is quite observable that the Kandha believe and practice the Hindu caste system and untouchability with the lower castes. They are unable to accept any of the lower caste people attempting to achieve higher social status or vertical mobility in the village social hierarchy.

Change is the inevitable law of nature. Every society, whether primitive, agrarian, or a modern industrial society, is in a continuous process of transformation. Scientific attitude, economic development, technological development, political perceptiveness and globalization have been the roots of change from primitive to modern, from agrarian to industrial, and from backward to progressive society. The rate of change may vary from society to society. While some societies experience quick transformation, others may take noticeable time. However, contemporary Indian society is changing rapidly. Due to these changes, many social, cultural and traditional values are being questioned. There are many individuals, communities, castes and tribes that are both victims and recipients of these social

changes. Changes from feudal to democratic systems, changes in material abundance, technological development, human rights, civil rights, women rights and empowerment are appreciable, but the simultaneously increasing incidence of caste violence, caste discrimination, gender violence, religious violence and persecution of minorities are also rampant today.

The principal agents of change were the British invaders, the culture of caste Hindus, Hindu organizations, Christian missionaries, weekly markets, educational institutions, mass communication, electricity, government agencies and institutions, and non-government organizations. These agents have had decisive impacts on the socio-economic life of local people, local social systems, power structures, and culture, as well as the lives of the Kandha, the Pano, and the other castes. Hinduism, Christianity, and Hindu organizations have had a significant impact on Kandha life and culture, as well as that of the Pano. In many aspects, Kandha life, material and non-material culture, religion, economy, social structure and language have been affected by Hindu culture. The close contact and relations between the caste Hindus and Kandhas turned the Kandha into believers of Hindu culture and tradition. Hindu culture deeply penetrated each and every village in Kandhamal. During the colonial period, the British administration introduced new rules in Kandhamal.

Kandhamal was divided into various *Muthas* and each *Mutha* consisted of 10-15 villages and was headed by either a tribal chief or a caste Hindu. The heads of the *Muthas* were called *Muthadar*, *Mutha Malik* or *Mutha Sardar*, and the post of *Muthadar* was hereditary. The Muthadars had considerable influence on the Kandha and other local communities, and they were treated like kings in the locality. In Baliguda region, the Muthadars were caste Hindus. They took advantage of their position and brought many of their relatives and friends to Kandha areas. They gave land and other amenities to them, to settle in the Kandha villages. The Hindu Muthadars and their relatives had intimate

interaction with the Kandhas, and they spread Hindu culture among the Kandhas. Many Hindu customs, traditions, rituals and practices began to be observed by the Kandhas, and in the course time, they made that culture, tradition, and ritual as part of their own culture. Though the *Muthadari* system had been abolished and Muthadars had no legal or constitutional power, they continue to be obeyed and respected by the Kandhas. In the year 1855, the British took over the administration of the Kandha area.

The Kandha along with the Pano, Kandha Gauda, Kandha Lohar, Kandha Kumbar and Hadi, have been living since many generations in the study village. It is very difficult to find a Kandha village without these castes. All these caste groups are closely and intimately connected. The Kandhas and caste Hindus do not practice untouchability with the Kandha Gaudas, Kandha Lohars, or Kandha Kumbars but practice it against the Pano and Hadi people. In the past, many Panos were working as domestic servants in Kandha houses. There was popular saying that “*Kandha raja ku Pano Mantri*”, implying that the Kandha are the kings and the Pano are their ministers.

Without understanding the everyday life and changing inter-community relationships in the village, it is very difficult to understand the roots of conflict in Kandhamal. In the study villages, the Kandhas depended on other communities in their everyday life. Without the support of the other communities, the Kandha are unable to do any social, economic or agricultural activity. For their everyday living and activities, the Kandha established interdependent relationships, which were more or less similar to the *Jajmani* type of relationships with other caste groups in the village. The Jajmani system means an inter-community, socio-economic inter-dependent service relationship.

The Kandha depend on the Blacksmith (Lohar), for repairing and sharpening their iron instruments, the Potters (Kumbar) for getting earthen pots, on the Cowherds (Gauda) for



the taking care of their cattle, on the Carpenter (Bhadai) for the manufacturing or repairing of wooden implements, and the Sweepers (Hadi), for sweeping the village street, making bamboo baskets, and removing the dead animals from the village. The Kandhas depended on the Pano for their agricultural labour and marketing. In the early days, for these services, the Kandhas depended on these artisan castes and offered some lands to them for their services, apart from paying them annually after the harvest of Paddy. There was a deal that as long as the service provider castes provide service to the Kandha, they have a right to stay in the village. Otherwise, they had no right to stay in the village.

The Kandhas and other artisan castes largely depended on agriculture and forest produce. The Pano were working for the Kandha in their agricultural fields and were also engaged in some petty business. In the earlier days, the Kandhas were mainly shifting cultivators, and their socio-economic relations revolved around the shifting cultivation only. Nowadays, a majority of Kandhas are practicing settled agriculture and their socio-economic relations and productions have extended to various spheres. The Kandhas took the assistance of other communities, especially the Pano, as their agricultural labour for their agricultural production. The Kandha considered the Pano as their hereditary servants. In the earlier days, the Panos worked voluntarily, but since the last fifty years, there have been educational and economic transformations among the Pano in the village.

Due to the social, economic, political and technological changes and advancements taking place, the inter-community social and economic relationships between the Kandha and the Pano gradually weakened. The Pano became self-reliant and more assertive. The Pano became more concerned about their socio-economic and educational development and improving their standard of living. Due to educational and economic mobility, the Pano became more vocal than in the earlier days. The Pano are discarding the traditional hegemonic relationship between the Kandhas and them. Due to the reservation policy, many

Panos became teachers, clerks, and police and army men. Due to the reservation in the legislative assembly and Parliamentary seats, the Pano became politically more active and assertive compared to the Kandhas and other backward castes in Kandhamal. Due to economic self-reliance, educational advancement and political awareness, the Pano began behaving like caste-Hindus and are no longer accepting or obeying the subordination and untouchable status in the villages.

Nowadays the Pano are attempting to participate in village council meetings, which was a monopoly of Kandhas in earlier days. From school member to village council member, they want to become members and participate. Due to this behaviour, the Kandhas and other castes like Blacksmith, Keuta, Potter, Karan, Gauda and even the Scavenger castes in the study villages are reacting negatively, saying that the Pano are not humble and do not respect the traditional village system, Kandhas, and the caste Hindus.

According to the ward member, who is a Kandha, “*Agaru pano mane Kandha manako samna re muha teki katha kahu nathile, ebe sarkari paisa ru sarkari subdiha ru chakairi kari, dhan bala re amoku manu nahanti ki rasta re gala bele tike bi side heu nahanti* (in earlier days the Pano respected the Kandha and they did not dare to disobey anyone, but now due to the government facilities, they are getting jobs and money and do not respect us)”. Again he said, “*Pano mane jete tanka paile ki jete patha padhile kada heba semane kana Kandha hei paribe ki?* (Though the Pano are educated, getting employment and some of them are rich, can they become Kandhas? They are staying in our land but do not care or respect us. They do not even respect our girls and women).”

In the eyes of the Kandha and other castes, the Pano are untouchable and a symbol of ritual impurity. The way socio-economic changes occurred in lifestyles of the Pano has not been happening in the same way among the Kandhas and the other castes, particularly those

from the backward classes of the district. In the study village Dadpaju, caste Hindu, and Hindu culture have considerable influence on both the Kandha and the Pano.

Various Hindu religious groups like Gayatri Parivar, Jaya Guru, Divine Life society and caste Hindu teachers and traders are important negotiators of change in Kandha life and culture. Many Kandhas and many Panos of the village are followers of Gayatri Parivar. The Pano of the village never considers themselves as ritually impure and untouchable. Now since they are followers of Gayatri Parivar, and even the Brahmins are not supposed to practice untouchability with them, they question how the Kandha and other castes can think that they are ritually impure and untouchable. “Our houses are not unclean, our clothes are not unclean, and no pungent smell comes from our body. Then how can we be untouchable and ritually impure? The Kandhas are always thinking we (the) Pano are inferior and do not have traditional, cultural rights to become members of the village council and participate in decision-making processes. Are we (the) Pano not citizens of this village? Do not we pay our tax? Do not we vote or is the value of vote zero?” they ask.

Though the caste-Hindu money lenders and traders exploit the Kandha, Pano, Gauda, Kumbhar, Lohar and Hadi to a great extent, yet the Kandha, Gauda, Kumbar, Lohar and Hadi complain that only the Pano are the exploiters. The traders, with whom the Kandhas always have a good relationship, regularly visit the Kandha to buy vegetables and other commercial crops. There are two shops in the village - one was established by a *Patra* or *Kumuti* person and the other one by a Karan person. They started their business in a very modest way, but in the course of time, their business flourished and their small shop transformed into a larger shop.

In Kandhamal, the relations between the Kandha and the Pano are vertical in order, but the relations between the Kandha and caste Hindus are horizontal and of equal access. There are two kinds of relations existing between the Kandha and the Pano - inter-personal

and inter-community. Both interpersonal and inter-community level relations are based on power and ranked according to social inequality. The traditional relations between the Kandha and Pano are hierarchical, fixed and historically legitimized with social and cultural subordination, which is defined by social existence, local power structures, and authority to control land and forest. There is no way to change the traditional relations between the Kandha and the Pano. Over the generations, there has been a growing awareness and mobility among the Pano, and they have been trying to improve their social, economic and educational status. During the colonial period, there were major shifts in the lives of both the Kandha and the Pano. These shifts disturbed the local power structure and culture, which created opportunities for subordinated groups like the Pano to improve their social, economic and educational status and became more assertive.

Social, economic and educational improvements and political assertiveness of the Pano challenged the local dominance. The Kandha, as well as other communities, find the assertiveness of the Pano to be a major challenge to the local social structure, social status patterns, power structures, and culture. Consequently, there has been an upheaval in matters of power, status, and education between the Pano and the Kandhas, as well as other communities in the socio-historical settings of the village. Individual conflicts occurred in many parts of Kandhamal and between many communities.

The basic understanding of the social conflict and its interrelation with any form of conflict in the village is essential to understand the social stratification, economic structure, political structure, socio-religious structure and ideological structure of Kandhamal. The position of an individual within a caste society depends essentially on the position of his caste in the hierarchy. In the study village, both tribal and non-tribal practiced the caste system in a pronounced way and the caste practices depended on the actual ideas of purity and pollution.

The structure of tribal and non-tribal relationships is based on the essential economic interdependence in their socio-economic and agricultural process.

Due to the socio-economic and educational improvements among the Pano, there is no longer the reciprocity of economic interdependence and exchange of labour like in the past, between the Kandhas and the Pano. The Pano are no longer providing traditional services to the Kandhas on the occasion of a marriage, death or festival. Previously, the Pano were working in Kandha houses as a labour on the daily, weekly, monthly, or yearly basis, and were paid with paddy as remuneration for their labour.

Today, cash payment is demanded by the workers across the communities. Nowadays, the Pano are engaged in other sources of income and livelihood, or working as daily wage labourers. The interdependent economic service between the Kandhas and other artisan castes including the Pano is not continuing. In earlier days, the barter system was common among the Kandha and other artisan castes, including the Pano. Compared to the Kandhas, the other artisan castes, and the Pano are more careful about money based economy. While the Pano today are not depending on any of the artisan castes or the Kandhas in the village, the Kandhas and other artisan castes still depend on each other for their needs. The traditional relationship between the Kandha and the Pano has broken but is still continuing with other artisan castes.

Every morning, the caste Hindu traders visit the Kandha village and vegetables, agricultural produce, leaves and wood from the Kandha. Even some Pano buy the agricultural produce of the Kandhas and sell in Phulbani and other markets. Consequently, there is competition between the caste Hindu traders and Pano traders, as well as conflict among them. Due to the competition, the Pano visits more remote villages to buy produce at a lower concession rate, selling in the market at the same market prices. The caste Hindu traders

instigate the Kandhas by saying that the Pano are exploiters and cheaters, while and the Pano would abuse in return that the Kandhas are ignorant and have no knowledge of the importance of money economy – which they considered the reason why the Kandha sold their agricultural produce to caste Hindu traders instead of the Pano.

### **Narratives from Village-I**

#### **Other castes' views on the Kandha-Pano conflict**

##### **Case-I**

A Karan caste male from the study village, aged about 52 and an agriculturist by occupation, opined that *“the Kandha and Pano conflict was not new, but nevertheless a matter of concern given the recent violence. The major problem with the Pano is that nowadays, they never obey the traditional village rules and laws. There is a saying that “Pano manaka garva badhi jaichi, Indra, Chandra ku bi manunahnati (the Pano people have such an ego that they don’t respect even Indra and Chandra)”. He said, “Sabu samaj ro gote niyam achhi, parampara achhi, kana panchata anguthi sabu saman? Adivasi mane bhalo lok, tanakar jaga badi re rahi kari tankor katha manu nahnati ki sanman karu nahanti (every society has law and tradition. Now they want to be equal with all. How can this be possible? Do you think are all fingers are equal? Then how can they dare to be equal? So the Kandha are giving a lesson to them. The Adivasi are good people, but the Pano are not respecting them while staying in their land)”*.

##### **Case-II**

A Karan caste woman, a housewife aged about 47, opined that *“there is a difference between town and village. It may be that no one practices untouchability in the town, but in the village, all people are not equal. We have to respect our tradition and culture. The Pano*

*are not respecting tradition and culture, “see how the Pano are marrying upper caste girls and Kandha girls. Why do they spoil and pollute upper caste girls? How will that girl will Sharadha to her parents? Why do they always follow the upper caste girls? Is it good?”*

### **Case-III**

*A Kandha-Gauda caste man, a farmer aged about 55, said, “See, our forefathers came to this village to serve the Kandha and till today we are serving them. Even we cannot refuse to rear the village cattle and we can earn money. Some members of our community are engaged in other work, but we are still continuing with it because it is our duty and we are happy. See how the Pano do not provide any service to the Kandha or others. Because of their economic and educational status, they are only doing business and politics”.*

### **Case-IV**

*A Kandha-Gauda caste man, a farmer aged about 50 years, said that “the Kandha-Pano conflict is not new. The Pano are cheaters and exploiters. They cheated the Kandha in all possible ways, especially in the name of cow business or cattle business. The Pano are always thinking about their profit when buying the goats and hens at a very cheap rate from the Kandha, which they sell for a high price in the market. The Kandha tolerated this for a long time, and now they have run out of patience to tolerate the exploiting nature of the Pano. Living in the Kandhas’ land, they do not respect the Kandha. The Kandha do not attack any other community, whether it is the Sundhi, Gauda, Luhura, Kumbahr, Hadi or Dhoba. This is because these communities are not harming the dignity and livelihood of the Kandha.”*

### **Case-V**

A Kandha-Lohar man, a farmer aged about 57 years, said that *“The Pano criticise us, whenever they come for repairing of their instruments. They insist that their instruments should be repaired immediately even if others’ work is going on. If it sometimes gets late, they misbehave. The Kandha sometimes discuss here how some Pano cheat them while buying Mahul and Haldi (turmeric) at a very cheap rate, even though they sell in the market at a high price.”*

### **Case-VI**

A Keuta caste man, a merchant aged 36, said that *“the Pano were enjoying political power and have become MPs, MLAs and Ministers. They also control local power by holding local political positions. The Pano youth are very unruly and many times, it is they who create trouble in Dolo jatra and Meru Jatra. The Pano have a nature of show-off and never respect people. “Once, some girls from a women’s college came here to the stream behind our house for a picnic. That time, some Hadi youth from Penjisahi along with some Pano youth came to the picnic spot. The Pano youth commented on the girls and threw sand into their food. See, the Hadi and Pano youth are always playing near the Bus Stop and always making comments on girls and women. Now the Christian Panos are taking fake caste certificate claiming ‘Kui Adivasi’ status. The Christian Panos are taking both the facilities from the church and the government and changing their surnames to Kandha names to hide their Pano identity and get caste certificates to avail reservation facilities in education and employment.”*

### **Case-VII**

A Hadi (Dalit sub-caste) caste man, working as a sweeper in the district hospital and aged about 34 years, opined that *“the Pano were a very rude and taunting people, who never*



*respected anybody. Because of their numerical strength, they never care for or respect any person, whether the Kandhas or other communities. According to him, the Kandhas are good people, and they are simple and honest. Due to the behaviour of the Pano, not only the Kandhas but even other communities dislike them. “We are also untouchable but nobody wants to kill us or destroy our property. They only target the Panos because the Panos are rude, arrogant and do not behave properly with others. It is because of the behaviour and actions of the Pano that the Kandhas dislike them and the behaviour and actions of the Pano are the main reason for the conflict between the Kandhas and the Panos. The Kandhas are practicing untouchability even with us, but they are not targeting us because we are not opposing them, challenge them, or demanding to enter their temple or misbehaving with their women.”*

#### **Case-VIII**

A Hadi (Dalit sub-caste) woman working as village sweeper, around 50 years of age, said that *“some Pano were very arrogant and money minded. She narrated one incident in which a Pano asked them to remove dead cattle from their house and gave them some money for removing the cattle. Upon finding out that they were tanning the skin of the dead cow, the Pano person came to them, asking for money for the skin they were using. She insisted that this was the mentality of some Pano and it is due to this kind of behaviour that the Kandha do not like the Pano.”*

#### **Case-IX**

A Sundhi caste man from Gudari village, a farmer around 65 years of age, said that *“the major problem between the Kandha and the Pano was due to behaviour. There are some Pano who are real exploiters. With their exploitation, they are carrying a bad name for their community. “One of our relative girls was studying in college and a Pano followed and*

*married her. He spoiled her, her career and our dignity in the society. Why these Pano only target Sundhi girls and Kandha girls? In each village there cases like this”, he said. This is a major issue of conflict between the Kandha and the Pano.”*

#### **Case-X**

A Sundhi caste man from Gudari village, a farmer aged around 45 years said that *“there are various issues which lead to conflict between the Kandha and Pano. “See in the other districts how there is no conflict and how the Pano are staying silently. Only in Kandhamal the Pano are behaving in this way because they are enjoying political power here. The Pano are playing a major role in politics. Due to political power, they never respect the village traditions. In earlier days these Pano were working in our agricultural fields without demanding any increase in wages but now they are demanding more wages. There are many poor Kandha who cannot afford to pay the wages to the Pano and their land is remaining uncultivated. Traditionally these Pano came to serve the Kandhas, but nowadays they have become adamant. So the Kandha and Pano conflict was spontaneous.”*

#### **Case-XI**

A Sundhi caste man from Bastingia village, a farmer aged around 60 years, said *“that the Kandha were basically a simple and tolerable people; they tolerate the activities of Pano according to their patience. “The Pano are converting to Christianity and changing surnames. Nowadays the Pano are trying to snatch the constitutional status of the Kandha by demanding tribal status. How can these Pano claim they are Adivasis simply because they are able to speak Kui language? Even other caste people can speak in ‘Kui’ language. These are reasons why the Kandha does not want the Pano to live with them.”*

## **The Kandhas' view**

### **Case-I**

A Kandha man, retired school teacher about 72 years old, said, *“the Kandha and Pano conflict was mainly because the Kandha considered the Pano as socially and culturally inferior to them, while the Pano also considered the Kandha as socially, culturally, educationally and economically inferior to them. Sometimes Kandhas call the Pano by their caste name and the Pano also misbehaved with the Kandha since the beginning but nobody cared about all these issues. However, these issues became serious after the 1980s. During the 1980s, many Pano youth married tribal girls and this was always discussed in the Kui Samaj meetings, as well as about how the Pano in the villages did not respect or obey the village rules. Even in this village, the Pano and Kandha quarrel with each other due to personal issues like money lending, if someone's cow, buffalo or goat destroyed some one's crops, sharing of water in agriculture, and so on. However, these issues do not lead to violence because they happen within the Pano and the Kandha communities as well. The Kandha and the Pano also fight among themselves over many issues, and there are plenty of such incidents in the village.*

*However, the temple entry issue of Khudutentuli had a big impact on this village. After the entry into Khudutenuli by a Pano, the Kandha of six Muthas organised a meeting at Linepada. The Shiva temple of Khudutentuli had a special and important place in the social, religious and cultural life of the Kandhas.”The temple had been constructed on the Kandha land, and the Kandhas of six Muthas contributed to the construction of the temple. The Danda Jatra, which is celebrated in every village and is now very popular all over Kandhamal, had originated from this temple. So in comparison to other Shiva temples in the district, this temple had a greater significance.*

*When a Pano youth entered the temple, it created a spontaneous anger among the Kandha against the Pano. The village of Linepada had become a centre of power since Sri Basch Digal was elected as MP. The Pano of Linepada area were thus more headstrong and disregarded everyone, under the protection of the Pano politician. This was always discussed in the Samaj. They also discussed how some Pano were forcibly occupying the land under the control of the Kandha. Even in this village, some Pano construed their houses on the land which was controlled by the Kandha. Many Kandhas of different villages and Muthas complained that Pano did not respect the village traditions and did not respect the tribal gods and goddesses. The Pano in some villages married Kandha girls. The Pano are taking advantage of the financial problems and political helplessness of the Kandha. So the Kandha of the six Muthas, under the leadership of Lambodar Kanhar decided to purify the temple. They began stopping the Pano from taking wood and bamboo from the forest and did not allow the Pano to collect Mango, Jackfruit or Tamarind from the trees. When the Kandha of Linepada area did the same, some Pano attacked them. The Kandha of different villages informs each other about this attack by the Panos on the Kandha. The Kandha gathered and retaliated. Then Pano left the village. They went to Phulbani town to meet the collector and SP. At that time, Mrutunjaya Nayak was the MP, and he was from Linepada. Due to the political pressure exerted on him, many innocent Kandhas were arrested.*

*Following this, another Kui Samaj was convened to discuss the arrest of Kandhas. In this meeting, it was decided that there shall be a grand rally against the Pano with a demand for the unconditional release of the arrested Kandhas. The Kandha were very angry and openly declared in the meeting that the Panos must be taught a lesson. Some Kandhas agreed and some disagreed. Due to the disagreement of some Kandhas, the people decided that if the villagers or the Kandha head of the village allowed an attack on the Pano in his village, only then would the Kandhas from other villages attack that village. In between, there was Danda*

*jatra - a popular festival largely celebrated by the Kandhas and other castes - from 1<sup>st</sup> April to 14<sup>th</sup> April. So the Samaj decided that after the Danda jatra, there will be a mass attack against Pano. The plan of attack was that the Kandha of different villages will attack the Pano with the permission of the Kandhas of that village. It was instructed that the youth should participate in large numbers, and if anybody did not participate or support, then they would face a fine of one thousand rupees, along with social boycott. According to the plan, the attack on the Pano was to be carried out at midnight or early morning so that they could kill the maximum number of people. However, due to the problems with identification in the darkness, the Kandha killed one Kandha during an attack on the Pano in Lambabadi village (which comes under Dalapada gram panchayat). Then they changed their strategy and attacked Dalapada village early in the morning they could kill more people in their sleep.*

*During the attack on Dadalpada, police fired on the Kandhas and some Kandhas were killed and injured in police firing. Many outsider Kandhas and some Kandhas of the village formed a group and came to the conclusion that it was the right time to teach the Pano a lesson. However, since the Kandha chief and some other Kandhas strongly opposed this, the group in favour of the attack came up with a new strategy. They blocked the main road by cutting trees on the road and then sent their women and youth to attack the Pano. If the Pano retaliated or resisted, then the rest of the group would come in to attack. Fortunately, the police intervened at the right time. Many people were injured and arrested after the subsequent lathi charge.”*

## **Case-II**

*A Kandha man, a retired teacher aged around 67 years, claimed that “land, the village, all the forest, jackfruit and mango trees, belonged to the Kandha alone. The Pano came to the village as servants to serve the Kandha. “Initially they were living with us like brothers.*

*As educational and economic progress happened, these Pano who are living in our land began misbehaving with us and they have forgotten their past. During their worst days, the Kandha helped and protected them, but now these people are exploiting the Kandha and do not respect the Kandha women. Some Pano are marrying the Kandha girls, the some Pano are stealing the goats, hens, jackfruits and mangoes of the Kandhas. This kind of situation has created a lot of tension between the Kandha and the Pano. Kandha mane gariba hele boli kana izzat nai (yes, the Kandha are poor but they are not people without dignity)."*

### **Case-III**

A Kandha man, a farmer aged 58 years, said, *"The Kandha had lost the historical mutual confidence in the Pano after observing the change in their behaviour. Due to the improvement of education and standard of living, the Pano had become more arrogant. The Pano are disrespecting and rejecting the historical Sahu-Paraja The relationship which hurts the Kandha. The Kandha were tolerant and never questioned the Pano. However, the Pano began eloping with Kandha girls in different villages. Under the protection of the law and political power, Pano are challenging the status of the Kandhas. The behaviour of the Pano is contributing to conflict and hatred. Once the Pano were dependent upon the Kandha for their settlement, livelihood and security, but now the Pano are disrespectful and misbehave with the Kandha. Today some of the Panos are educationally and economically far advanced than the Kandha and there is a tussle between historically ascribed pride of the Kandha and achieved pride of the Pano. Today the Pano are saying that they are also citizens of India and they have equal rights to use the forest. Some Pano are demanding tribal status to snatch the constitutional rights of the Kandhas."*

#### **Case-IV**

A Kandha man, farmer and former ward member of the village aged about 42 years, said, *“These Pano are living in our land and do not care for us. The Pano are very cunning and they are exploiting the Kandhas. The Adivasis are simple and tolerant people. Taking advantage of the simplicity of the Adivasis, these Panos are destroying the economic and socio-religious life of the Kandha. These Pano are politically very active and they influence decisions in the Panchayat office. Even if the Sarpanch is Kandha, many times the Pano try to manipulate the decision in their favour, and due to their money power, the Sarpanch also listens to their requests.”*

#### **Views of the Pano**

#### **Case-I**

A Pano caste man, a sharecropping farmer around 65 years old, said, *“Not all Pano are rich, not all Pano are educated, not all Pano are businessmen, and it may be that a few Pano are criminals and exploiters. The criminal and exploiter Panos not only exploit the Kandha but are also exploiting the Pano. Nowadays, we are working hard for our livelihood and survival. Unlike the Kandha, we do not have land. The Pano are trying to improve their standard of life and educational status. Nowadays, the Pano are changing their profession. The Pano want to live a new and clean life yet sometimes the Kandha abuse the Pano calling them untouchables, thieves, and slaves. The Kandhas are jealous and intolerant about the educational and economic progress of the Panos. All Panos are not land grabbers, cheaters, exploiters and marrying or misbehaving with the Kandha women. Yes, there are a few Panos who did that and they should be punished. Why did they are targeting the whole community, destroying the property, houses and killing innocent people? Though our forefathers came from outside, we have been staying here since generations. We respect this land, and this is*

*our motherland. We cannot blame all Kandhas but the majority of the Kandhas have the feeling that the Panos are cheaters, that they are cunning and are thieves.”*

## **Case-II**

A retired army Pano man (60 years) who is running a business says, *“Still the Kandhas do not understand who are the real exploiter and the reasons for their backwardness. Instead, they are accusing the Panos for their backwardness and underdevelopment. The Pano have not prevented them from going for higher study or improve their standard of living, but when we Pano are struggling a lot day and night to improving our standard of living, education, and future of our children the Kandhas are calling uncivilised and untouchable”. “Generally, the Kandha dislike the Pano, and after they came in contact with the RSS, the Hindu Kandhas began disliking the Pano, even more, particularly those who are converting to Christianity. These issues are contributing to potential conflict situation in Kandhamal.”*

## **Narratives from Village-II**

### **The Christian Pano View**

In Bastingia village, the Pano embraced Christianity long ago. The Pano of the village informed that they were second-generation Christians. Some Panos converted after the 1994 Kandha-Pano conflict. However, after 2008, many Panos returned to Hinduism. The Kandha of the village warned that if they did not re-convert to Hinduism, then they should not return to the village. If they converted to Hinduism and lived the Hindu way of life, then there will be no violence against them in the village. Defenceless, helpless, and unable to protect their homes and property, having no other option, the Pano gave into orders of the Kandha.



Consequently, many Pano began re-practicing Hinduism, though many of them are still in Christian fold.

### **Case-I**

A Christian Pano man working as a peon at the block office, aged about 55 years, gave many interesting reasons for the conversion to Christianity. He converted to Christianity to escape from black magic, tantric spells, and ghosts. He said that in the village, *“the Kandhas are very strong in tantric spells and black magic and sometimes they killed their own brothers or sons of their brothers through black magic, to settle family disputes or land disputes. He converted to Christianity because his elder brother was killed through black magic. His elder sister also died due to black magic when she was pregnant. “Then I came in contact with a pastor who told me to trust in Jesus and that he will save me. Then I converted to Christianity. After practicing Christianity, I am now happy with my three sons and wife”, he said.*

*According to him, there is a difference between the Kandhas and the Panos. “All the Kandhas are not bad and all the Panos are not good. There are some good people and there are bad people also. There are inter-personal issues, disputes and conflicts between the Kandhas and the Panos, but these are their inter-personal issues. But these issues cannot be raked up into the violence of this scale. I am a Pano Christian, working as a peon. I am not exploiting anybody. Then why did they destroy my house? Except being a Pano and being a Christian, what is my fault? This is a well-planned and engineered violence against the Pano by the caste Hindu and RSS people. Many Kandha are working as RSS cadres and members. They are systematically creating conflict between the Kandha and the Pano for their benefit only. The caste Hindus and the RSS people fear that if the Kandha and the Pano unite against them, then that will become a major threat to their existence in Kandhamal.”*

## **Case-II**

A Pano Christian woman working as a nurse, around 45 years old, said that *“the conflict is due to the RSS people and caste Hindus, since the caste Hindus and RSS people were against the development of the Kandha and Pano people. “The Kandhas are saying that they are attacking the Panos because they are exploiters, land grabbers, and cheaters, but I am a woman, I am working as a nurse, and I am not only serving the Pano but serving the Kandha and other castes also. Then why destroy my house? Is my fault being a Pano woman and Christian?”*

## **Case-III**

A Pano Christian man working as village contractor, around 40 years old, said, *“If the Kandhas are fighting for the land, then why are they not fighting against the Sundhi caste (Odia) people who control more land? If Panos occupied/grab the Kandhas’s land, then what about the Sundhi caste? Even the caste Hindu contractors exploit the Kandha girls in workplaces. How many Panos have land, property, business and houses in Phulbani town, Baliguda town, G.Udayagiri town, and Raikia town? Why are the Kandhas not talking about these issues? If any Pano commits any mistake, punish them. But targeting whole community is inhuman. If anybody is using fake caste certificates, punish them, but why are they killing other people? They are killing poor, daily wage labourers and illiterate people, and destroying their property. These poor people are not demanding for Scheduled Tribe status and don’t even know what it means. Those Christian Pano who are demanding scheduled tribe status, punish them legally. Killing other people and destroying their property is inhuman and barbaric. According to the holy Bible, life is a divine gift of God and life is priceless. Then how can they go on killing people?”*

#### Case-IV

A Pano Christian man working as a teacher, around 40 years old, said *“birth is accidental, and if somebody is born into a Pano family, Kandha family or Sundhi family, it is not in their control. “These people are killing the Panos and Christians because we are born as Panos and Christians. What can these people blame and accuse the Pano or Christians with, except their caste or religion? The Pano are not terrorists, the Christians are not terrorists. Nowadays, which community is free from criminal elements? Are there no criminal elements in Kandha people? Are there no criminal elements in the Sundhi people, and are there no criminal elements in Brahmin people? Why is their entire community not targeted? The Pano are compelled to follow Christianity because there is no humanity in the Hindu religion. Since centuries they treated us like in human beings and less than animals. Even animal are touchable for them but not human beings. A Pano cannot live respectfully even if he works hard and earns honestly. See the violence which is most barbaric and disgraceful. They ransacked the Pano houses and burnt their property. Why are the Kandha killing the Pano and destroying their property? Are the Pano not human beings? The Pano want to live a clean and respectable life. If the Pano are practicing Christianity, how are they are breaking and spoiling the Hindu religion? How are social and inter-community relationships affected by the religious practices? Though I am a Pano, I never used Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe certificate. As a Christian, I am getting the provisions of socio-economic Backward Castes (SEBC). If this is a Kandha-Pano conflict, then why are the Hindu Kandhas attacking and destroying the homes of some Christian Kandhas? Christian Kandhas are not taking forgery certificates either, and there is no land problem and or issue with Christian Kandhas. The Christians Kandhas are targeted and attacked because they are Christian and because of their religious identity.”*

## **The Factors and Causes of the Kandha-Pano conflict**

The conflict between the Kandha and the Pano is historical and has been in existence ever since they came in contact with each other. There is always harmonious as well as a conflicted relationship between them. The underlying sources of the Kandha-Pano conflict lie deep in the basic historical, socio-cultural, economic, political, and religious factors.

### **Historical factors**

Kandhamal has a unique history, which created conditions for the Kandha-Pano conflict. The traditional society of Kandhamal is tribal-dominated. A hierarchical patron-client based social structure clearly visible in Kandhamal. The Kandha and the caste Hindus were enjoying the highest social status in the local social hierarchy. The Pano were considered as socio-culturally inferior, untouchables and second class citizens in Kandhamal.

The historical relationship between the Kandha and the Pano is based on a patron-client relationship. The Kandha are a tribe and have their own traditional social practices and culture. However, culturally and ritually they have close links with the Hindu religion and its practices. The Kandha in the study areas are celebrating and practicing Hindu rituals and festivals. There is a cultural and practical alliance between the Kandha and the caste Hindus. So the history of the Kandha and caste Hindu relationship is based on social practices and culture, with similar social status and position.

The occupations of the caste Hindus are highly respected and accepted by the Kandhas. There is no untouchability and social distance between the Kandha and the caste Hindu. The Kandha are practicing untouchability with the Pano and other lower caste communities. In Kandhamal, the Kaibarta caste which is officially considered as Scheduled Caste is not untouchable for the Kandhas and caste Hindus. The conflict is between the socially superior Kandhas and socially inferior Panos in Kandhamal. This social classification

in Kandhamal was made on an ethnic, cultural and religious basis. The differentiation between the Kandha and the Pano has manifested in a deep sense of superiority and inferiority.

The Kandha were always the majority population, and before British, they were controlling the political power, economic power and natural resources in Kandhamal. According to the village head of Dedibali-Dadpaju and according to the Kui Samaj Samanwaya Samiti leader, Mr. Lambodar Kanhar “the Kandhas are the original inhabitants of this land and the Panos and other caste people are migrants”. However, the Kandha and the Pano have been living together for centuries before the British officials and missionaries ventured into this land. The human sacrifice or *Meriah*<sup>1</sup> was practiced by the Kandha. As the Kandha never used anyone of their own community as a *Meriah*, the Pano acted as brokers who supplied the Meriah child to the Kandhas.

According to Lambodar Kanhar, general secretary of the Kui Samaj Samanwaya Samiti,<sup>2</sup> “the Kandha have lost the historical mutual confidence on the Pano after they observed the changes in the behaviour of the Pano towards the Kandhas after the improvement of their educational status, economic status and standard of living. Now the Pano are disrespectful and rejecting the historical *Sahu-Paraja*<sup>3</sup> relationship, which hurt the Kandhas and is creating hatred. Once upon a time, the Pano were dependent upon the Kandha for their settlement, livelihood and security, but now the Pano are neither respecting nor behaving well with the Kandha. Now the educationally and economically advanced Panos are behaving in a very arrogant way with the Kandhas. They are not even respecting the village traditions and laws. Many Pano after converting to Christianity, are not respecting the tribal gods and goddesses.

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<sup>1</sup>Meriah is a human sacrifice done by the Kandhas, to appease the Earth Goddess.

<sup>2</sup>Tribal organization which fights for the cause of tribal rights and dignity

<sup>3</sup>The earlier relationship between the Kandha and the Pano

## **Social factor of Conflict**

During the field work, according to many respondents from the Kandha and the Pano as well as other castes, Kandhamal has become home to caste and religious conflict.

## **Caste problem & Untouchability**

The conflict between the Kandha and the Pano is nothing but a Dalit and dominant tribe conflict. The same thing is narrated by a Pano from the same village, a retired police constable around 56 years of age. Even many Kandhas, Panos as well as cowherds, sweepers, Keutas and Kayasthas also endorsed this opinion. The Kandha look normal to outsiders, but caste hatred has remained in their minds against the Pano.

## **Identity**

Some of the Kui speaking Pano, who have converted to Christianity, are demanding for Scheduled Tribe status, on the basis of their language, culture, livelihood, tradition and customs. In Kandhamal, the Pano have no traditional right over the land. It is also true that some Christian Pano changed their surnames to Kandha surnames to hide their Pano identity and get Scheduled Tribe certificate for the purpose of availing 'reservation facilities' in education and employment. The question of 'social identity and ethnic identity' has created another point of conflict between the Kui speaking Christian Panos and the Kandhas. This issue was highly ratcheted up by the RSS and reinforced the politics of divisiveness and communal violence against the Christian Pano in Kandhamal.

## **Gender Issues**

The gender issue is another source of the conflict in Kandhamal. Some of the Pano are marrying Kandha and caste Hindu women and this has become a point of conflict. The Kandhas believe that the Kandhawoman and her body carry the traditional, cultural and

religious values of their community. Like the typical Hindu society, the patriarchal Kandha society desires to control the body of the woman through traditional, cultural and religious values. When the Pano marry tribal women, they are challenging the traditional social values and norms of the village. Women are the symbol of honour, dignity and cultural values of Kandha society. The Kandha believe that the Pano are deliberately marrying their women to destroy their dignity, honour, and cultural values. Due to the social restrictions and fear of social boycott the Kandha male fear of marrying woman from other community including the Pano.

### **Economic factor**

The Kandhas are the sons of the soil and mostly dependent upon agriculture and forest produce. While a few of them have government jobs, most of them work as daily wage labour. The Kandha are not significantly involved in doing business. Meanwhile, the Pano are landless with a few of them depending on agriculture most depending on forest produce and working as daily wage labourers for their livelihood. Some Pano are in government jobs while others are in business like cattle trade, turmeric trade and both working in and owning a brick business. Poverty is another major issue for both the Kandha and the Pano. Both the Kandha and the Pano are dependent on the forest resources for their livelihoods. Because of there, many conflicts keep happening between the Kandha and the Pano with regard to the collection of forest produce.

The Kandha believe that the Pano are criminals who economically exploit them and that the Pano are improving their standard of living at the cost of the Kandha's economic opportunities. They believe that the Pano are responsible for the poverty, backwardness, and underdevelopment of the Kandhas. The conflict between the Panos and Kandhas of Kandhamal district became stronger with widening socio – economic gap between the

communities. The Pano community is educationally and economically better off than the Kandhas because the Kandha are not interested in education. However, a few Kandhas are well educated and have placed themselves in good positions in the government machinery. Traditionally, the Pano have been in a better financial state in comparison to the Kandhas since, from the beginning, they were primarily a business community – who previously acted as agents for supplying *Meriah*, and other essential goods against a handsome return. They are the oldest business community of the district. Today they are flourishing because of their education, hard work and the desire to secure a better future for their children. However, socially, culturally and ideologically the Kandha feel that they are superior to the Pano, even though some rich Panos never consider the Kandha or any other community as superior to them. The rich Panos behave very normally with the Kandhas and other communities. This lack of subservience creates conflict and hatred between the Kandha and the Pano. The Kandha are a little superstitious about business. They feel that business is below their dignity.

### **Land and Forest**

The land is also one of the major sources of conflict. The Kandha feel that the Pano are illegally and forcibly grabbing their land. The land is a socially very important and valued asset, which is closely attached to power, social hierarchy and status. In Kandhamal, the large landowners are the Kandha, the Sundhi, the Karan and caste Hindus. But nowadays, they are economically poor and have lost their traditional power of control over the resources. The frustration stemming from this has been directed as hatred toward the Pano.

The Kandha, land, and the forest are inseparable. The Kandha are surviving because of the land and forest. Land and forest are the most important natural resources for the Kandha, with which they sustained in life. The Kandha believe that they are the sons of the soil and born out of the land and forest. From their social and religious life to their livelihood,



land and forest are part of the Kandha social system. The possession of land and forest is a symbol of security, prestige, status and power. The Kandha cannot imagine a life without the forest. For them, it is more than a mere collection of trees, and woods. It is also their greatest economic asset. The gods and goddesses of the Kandha are rooted with the land and forest. The land and forest are seen as bound with the ownership and kinship of the Kandha. Common lands are reserved for cremation grounds or dedicated to the village deity. The Kandha believes that the spoken word has power and no legal documents were considered necessary when they sold land in the past. That is one of the major reasons for conflict today in Kandhamal. The transfer of land from the Kandha to the Sundhi caste and Karan is significant in the study village.

The Kandhas are basically a laborious peasantry community depending on agriculture, forest produce and hunting to earn their livelihood, and they are financially poor. After hunting was banned and most of the forest produce came under government control, the Kandhas of the district have been transformed into labourers and made dependent on various government programmes and other work for their livelihood. Although the government at the centre and the state make big claims about the development of tribals and other Dalit communities, the visibility of the government programmes in the field is very poor. Similar is the situation in Kandhamal.

Whatever may be the implemented programmes, the benefits are yet to reach the Kandhas. The tribe-caste conflict is mainly determined by the economic gap between the two communities, with additional intervention by the RSS and Christian missionaries that result in a lot of social differences as well. With sustained conversion activities pursued by Christian Missionaries and a reactive campaign of opposition and re-conversion drives by the saffron outfits (that were led by Swami Lakshmanananda Saraswati until his death), the caste

conflict has now received a communal colour from both the religious leaderships. While many Panos have converted into Christianity, a negligible percentage of the tribal population has been influenced by the conversion drives initiated by the Churches operating in Kandhamal.

### **Religious factors**

Theoretically, the Kandha are Adivasi and animist. However, at present, the Kandha are practicing and following the traditions, customs, and rituals of Hinduism. That is why there is an influence of the concept of the caste system, purity and pollution and ideology of Hinduism on the daily life and ideology of the Kandha. Some Panos are also taking the *Diksha* (oath) of some Hindu organization like Jayaguru, Yuga Shakti Gayatri, Divya Jeevan Sangha, Om Santhi, etc., and practicing Hinduism.

Generally, while the Kandha dislikes the Pano in the present situation, the Hindu Kandhas dislike the Christian Panos even more, which is contributing to a potential conflict situation in Kandhamal. In Bastingia, Beheragaon and Tangedapathar, according to the Kandhas and the leader of the Kui Samaj Samanwaya Samiti, “the Pano are converting to Christianity and practicing Christianity, but to get government facilities and social welfare schemes they are entering their religion as Hindu. Some of them changed their surnames to Kandha surnames such as ‘Pradhan’, ‘Kanhar’ or ‘Malick’ in order to be identified as Kandhas, and avail reservation and other government facilities”. Some Kandhas and Sundi caste people of Bastingia and Beheragaon are complaining that the Pano who have converted to Christianity are mocking the Kandhas and their tradition, ritual customs and the Hindu Gods and Goddesses. However, the Christian Pano of Bastingia and Beheragaon replied that the Kandha and the Sundhi caste were jealous about the improvements in the standard of living, education, as well as cleanness of the Pano. They felt that those Panos who are

committing mistakes should be punished, and not the entire community. Not a single Christian Pano in Bastingia and Beheragaon village has changed their surname to a Kandha surname or used Scheduled Tribe certificate. The Christian Pano are proud of being Christian, but also feel that they legally deserve to get Scheduled Caste certificate since they are also victims of the caste system and untouchability as their forefathers were. However, the hegemonic state does not want the development of the untouchables and wants them to remain as cultural slaves of Hinduism.

This is why jealousy an important driver of tension and a root cause of conflict and escalation of violence. The Hindutva forces are directly and indirectly involved in the Kandha-Pano conflict. Hindutva forces supported the Kandha against the Pano morally, financially and politically in the process of conflict and violence. An active role played by the RSS fuelled the conflict spread it rapidly to others areas. Their interest is to control the market economy, cultural resources, and political systems and enjoy their superior position. So to gain dominance over the Pano, the caste Hindus, particularly the RSS-affiliated trader's community and the caste Hindu employees, provoked the Kandha against the Panos.

However, the Panos never cared about the caste Hindu dominance in the areas. Initially, when the missionaries first came to the village, the Panos became close to the Christian missionaries and got converted to Christianity. The conversion of the Panos into Christianity began due to the fear of black magic of the Kandhas, education, and continued persuasion of the missionaries. The Kandha were very traditional, staunch believers committed, and sincere to their religion. They couldn't accept the Panos who opted to take up Christianity in the village, and who disrespected traditional tribal culture and religion. So, the Kandhas who were once living together with the Panos began hating the Christian Panos and blamed them for being traitors to their old religion as well as to the whole society.

Lambodar Kanhar, the general secretary of Kui Samaj Samanwaya Samithi, claims that when Pano helplessly came and took shelter under the Kandha, the Kandha thought felt that these people were poor and that they ought to help them by providing land. In order to get land, the Pano initially helped and worked for the Kandha. However, after two or three generations, the Pano started cheating and exploiting the Kandhas. When missionaries came to the district, the Pano took up Christianity and became close to the missionaries and the British administration. Some of the educated Panos got good jobs and improved their standard of living, educational as well as economic status, and some of the Pano started grabbing the land which was owned by the Kandhas.

However, the grabbing of land by the Panos is one of the reasons of caste conflict because the Kandhas claims that the total landscape as their own. The Kandhas also claims that the land was given to the Panos to live in and supply *Meriah* as per requirement to their needs. This practice has change after independence as some of the Panos got into various government jobs because of their education through government and missionary support. The limit of Kandha tolerance was breached when some Pano youth married Kandha girls, as well as girls from other communities, did not respect the village laws and tried to enter the Shiva temple which was managed by the Kandhas. Also, some Kui speaking Christian Panos of Tikabali, Raikia, G.Udayagiri, Phiringia and Baliguda areas identified themselves as Kui tribals on linguistic basis and claimed Scheduled Tribes status. Kui is the language of the Kandhas and a group of the tribe is called Kui in the name of their language. So according to the Kandhas, the Kui speaking Christian Panos are trying to snatch away the constitutional rights of the Kandha, and they can no longer tolerate it.

The reason why the Kui speaking Christian Pano attempted to get a Scheduled Tribal status is that, as per Government of India order 1950, untouchable communities are no longer

eligible to enjoy the status of Scheduled Caste once they convert themselves into non-India religions such as Christianity or Islam, since caste is presumed to be absent outside the Hindu religious system. However, the communities like Keuta (Fisherman) and Dhoba (Washerman) are enjoying scheduled caste status in Odisha, even though they are of touchable castes. The converted Scheduled Castes can enjoy the provisions of their caste status only after they come back to the fold of Hinduism. On the other hand, the tribal can enjoy Scheduled Tribe status even after conversion, since constitutionally; they believed to be animists by practice. However, the attempt to get Scheduled Tribe status for the Kui speaking Christian Pano create more hatred against the Pano, and the Kandhas, the RSS, and their supporters openly expressed their anguish before the administration.

The study found that modern values, religious beliefs, ideologies, politics and the world views are related to, and are the consequences of the Kandha-Pano conflict. The Hinduization and Christianization among the Kandha and the Pano, the socio-cultural, economic, political changes, their customs, rituals, ideology, and ways of life also clash with each other. This is the root cause of conflict between the Kandha and the Pano. The Kandha and Pano who are practicing Hinduism think superior to each other, but the Kandha and the caste Hindus never consider the Pano as equal to them and their social status. The Kandhas and Panos practicing Hinduism dislike those practicing Christianity, and vice versa.

In the social sphere of the Panos, the influence of Christianity is comprehensively visible in their social life; it influenced the family, marriage, and modes of living in general. Due to Christianity and modern education, there has been a new awakening among the Panos. It made them self-reliant and effective competitors in all fields. It also helped them reduce their sense of untouchability and demand equal rights with the caste Hindus. Due to Christianity, social mobilization has taken place among the Panos and transformed their old

social, economic and psychological elements and transferred to new social values into their lives. With the help of Christianity, many sons and daughters of the poor, illiterate and uneducated Pano parents, are getting modern education and leading a successful and honourable life.

### **Education and Social mobility**

Education is the most important factor behind the socio-economic mobility of the Pano in Kandhamal. Through education, the Panos changed the state of their occupation, income, and wealth. The Pano are (not all) educationally advanced than the Kandha and their occupation and income is determined by the level of education, that promotes mobility. For the Pano, education is the principal channel of social mobility. Through education, the Pano are trying to achieve a higher position and standard of living. The Pano due to their hard work and struggle effectively rose from severely deprived economic conditions, to reasonable means of livelihood and attained the security of property for a better life.

The progress of the Panos is one of the major sources of the Kandha-Pano conflict. As the community moved from a state of landlessness, powerlessness, and absence of rights, to a state of success and mobility, it became an eyesore for the Kandhas and caste-Hindus. The Kandhas and caste Hindus are frustrated about the achievements and success of the Pano. The Kandha are unable to adapt to these changes and are suffering from cultural hardships, poverty, and illiteracy. The Kandha are struggling to regain their historical dominance with the help of caste Hindus. The Kandhas and the caste Hindus are frustrated with the activities and attitudes of the Panos, which they never expected or imagined from a caste which once served them. They are facing problems in social, cultural and economic adjustment. Day by day, the Pano are becoming dominant in society educationally, economically and politically. Some Panos are leading a luxurious lifestyle and the educated Pano are more conscious of

their rights. The Kandhas and the caste Hindus are finding the standard of living and the educational consciousness of the Pano to be the elements of disturbance for the Kandha and the Hindu society. With the help of constitutional status, the Pano are able to achieve their goals and fulfil their needs. The Pano want to live a life with liberty and equality, with better quality of education and standard of living. From the poor and downtrodden, the Pano today are becoming economically independent and prosperous, while the traditionally rich and prosperous Kandha has become poor in recent times. This has become a major bone of contention in the conflict.

Through violence, the Kandha aim to show the subordinate and degraded social status of the Pano and dominate them by bringing them back into the earlier social structure. The Pano believe in egalitarian concepts of society, while the Kandha and the caste Hindus are against the concept of an egalitarian society, and support the existence of a hierarchical order. There are a variety of difference in the thinking processes of the Kandha and the Pano, but a lot of similarities between the Kandhas and caste Hindus with regard to their religion and culture. There is a fusion of religious and other cultural elements of the caste Hindus, with the Kandha religion and culture. There are many Hindu religious institutions that preach against the Panos and their behaviour and term the behaviour as a feature of *Kaliyug*<sup>4</sup>. They consider the Pano as evil, which is why they are not respecting Hindu law and social order. These religious institutions, coupled with religious and cultural taboos, consider the Pano with a concept of the profane and the Kandhas with a concept of the sacred.

### **Political factors**

The politics in Kandhamal have been dominated by the Pano community since 1967. The majority of Member of Parliament and Members of the Legislative assembly from

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<sup>4</sup> According Hindu believes 'Kaliyuga' is Dark Age and associated with demons and evils.

Phulbani constituency were Pano up to 2009, irrespective of political affiliation. There are many Panos who represented as Cabinet Ministers in Council of Members in Odisha. Due to political power and political influence, there have been some Panos - those were active in politics – whose families sometimes misbehaved, not only with the Kandha and other communities but with the Pano community as well. Yet, the Kandha and other local people still complain that the Pano are arrogant due to their political influence, even though there is not a single Pano MLA from the district. However, after the 1994 Kandha-Pano conflict, for the first time, a non-Pano Scheduled Caste candidate became the MLA of Phulbani constituency. Since a long period, the Pano were active in politics and enjoyed political power.

With the establishment of Panchayat Raj system and the development of political consciousness in the village level among the Kandha and the Pano, there are often tussles during the power politics to support a particular political party. Both the Kandha and the Pano criticizing each other created disunity and factionalism within the village – something that did not happen before independence. Selfishness and individualism have increased along with different political interests. Although seats are reserved for all the Scheduled Castes at the Panchayat and Zilla Parishad level, due to their number and political influence, only the Pano were getting elected. This created an eyesore for the Kandha and caste Hindus. At the local level, the Pano were influential and controlled the businesses by directly or indirectly getting contracts and other work orders. The Kandhas and caste Hindus do not want to destroy the tradition of untouchability and do not want to see the Panos in political power. It is a matter of fact that many political and religious institutions are making tremendous efforts to create conflict and violence between the Kandha and the Pano.



## **Outsiders and their role**

The sizeable number of caste Hindu outsiders who migrated from other districts and regions, and settled all over Kandhamal as teachers, traders, contractors, political leaders; over the decades, grew into stable and strong socio-politically dominant class of people and have developed a good nexus with the RSS, VHP, and the Kandhas. They systematically cultivated and built a close rapport with Kandha and used them for their own purposes. As per their Hindu ideology and typical mindset, the Pano are untouchables and should not have social, economic, political and religious rights. The outsider caste Hindus openly say that in their area, the Pano do not dare to talk, while in Phulbani, the Pano do not care for anybody and that this was because the Kandha are not teaching the Pano the required lessons. According to them, “if the Kandha taught them a strong lesson, then the Pano would automatically behave normally.

These Pano do not respect traditional customs and values because of money and politics. If the Kandha remains silent and not react to this, then the Kandha, as well as other communities, will one day be forced to obey the orders of these untouchable Panos”. As of now, the temples and deities are controlled by the caste Hindus and Kandhas. The Kandha have control over the village deity, the village public property, forest, and land. According to the caste Hindus, “Time will come when the Pano will take control over the temple, deity, and forest. That’s why the Kandha should take proper action and decide who rules Kandhamal - the Kandha or the Pano. By converting to Christianity, and with the money of Christian missionaries both these educated and uneducated Panos are becoming notorious”. This sentiment was exploited by outsiders such as the traders, political leaders, government officials, Hindu fanatics, the RSS and the VHP. The government just politicised the situation, fearing that neglecting the Kandhas would bring them a political loss in terms of votes.

Many of the local Pano leaders endorse the view that because of social discrimination and some other reasons, the Pano have converted to Christianity. When they converted to Christianity they were regarded as General Category people and lost their reservation status and deprived of the benefits. Secondly, the government is making life hell for the Panos, by not allowing them to own any land. Even if they were enjoying land ownership after purchasing many before, their land is being taken away forcibly in the name of rules.

The Pano from the Baliguda subdivision area are by and largely Christian, and the RSS and VHP activists are opposed to them, which means that religious conflict is taking place regularly in this area. So, there is the conflict between the Kandha and Pano in reality, along with vested interests with some political goals, which are creating enmity with the help of the RSS, VHP and upper caste trader groups. This struggle for supremacy to gain power in society is the major reason caste-Hindus support the Kandhas against the Pano. In contemporary Kandhamal, due to the spread of education, reservations in education and employment, the Pano are gaining importance and influence and this makes the caste Hindus very insecure in Kandhamal.

Under threat due to the assertiveness of the Pano and Christianity, the RSS is spreading false rumours and misinformation, that the Pano are threatening the tribals and their religion. In the name of cow protection, they create conflict between the Kandha and the Pano. The RSS spearheaded rumours that the Panos are cow eaters and do not respect the cow or Hinduism, and thus the 'enemy of both the Kandhas and the Hindus'. On one side they are trying to turn the tribals into vegetarians, and on the other side, asking them to attack the Pano. The root cause lies in the fact that the Pano are not accepting the dominance of Hinduism.

The relationship between the Kandha and the Pano at the village level was shaped primarily by factors that were internal to the village. After the independence, these factors were no longer the same as in the earlier days. Now the age old traditional (Sahu-Paraja) relationship was longer active among them, and they began to frequently engage in conflict with one another.

The conflict occurs due to caste discrimination, inter-community marriages (Pano youth marrying a tribal girl), collection of wood from forest, collection of Jackfruit, Mango, *Mahua* flower, *Kendu* leaf, water sharing, marriage processions, money lending, quarrels between Pano woman and Kandha woman, land disputes, and conducting of festivals. The village level conflicts created a window for regional level conflicts after the intervention of politics and political parties. It is a conflict that is articulated in a broader sense over social values, political power, economic exploitation, and over cultural resources, to create new socio-political solidarities related to the Kandha and the Pano. This creates mass mobilisation among the Kandhas against the Pano at the village level and regional level, based on the historical roots, social status, religion, ideology, resources and language of the Pano community.

Historically, the Kandha are the original inhabitants and owners of the land. The Pano and other castes migrated from different places. From the beginning, the relationship between the Kandha and the Pano was of an antagonistic nature. Post-independence, this antagonism and the growing differences between the Kandha and the Pano entered another phase, due to the growing economic and political power of the Panos in Kandhamal. The Panos became more self-reliant due to their advancement in western education, and also due to their earlier conversion to Christianity (all are not Christian converts). Overall, they became more politically conscious than the Kandha tribe when it came to participation in political activities.

The Christians came and changed the local culture, just as the caste Hindus came and changed the local culture. The Hindus are intolerant of the food practice of locals; they dislike the Panos and get support from the Kandha due to similarities in religious practices. Social conflict between the Kandha and Pano is the struggle for interests and power in society. The Kandha-Pano conflict occurs when two or more Kandhas and Panos, or even individuals, oppose each other in a social interaction, reciprocally exerting social power. It is the close social relationship between the Kandha and the Pano which is a social relationship wherein the action is oriented intentionally for carrying out acts of their own will and with resistance from both sides, with support from other parties.

The conflict between the Kandha and the Pano is emphasized by interests, as well as norms and values. The social and cultural distance between the Kandha and the Pano creates further rifts between them. The social and cultural distance between the Pano and the Kandha gives space to the RSS and caste Hindus to fuel conflict between them. Christian missionaries are more active in Kandhamal, which in turn helps the Hindutva forces turn the tribals and other local communities into their strong ideological base. The Christian faith, practices, and religious identity have created social stratification within the Pano as well. The pursuit of interests generates various types of conflict. Thus, conflict is seen as a normal aspect of social life, but due to some social, political and religious factors, the conflict turns into violence. Competition over resources is often the cause of conflict between the Kandha and the Pano.

Kandhamal is composed of the Kandha tribe along with different types of castes and religions. In Kandhamal, there are different groups of the Pano, differentiated according to their language, culture, and religion. Among the Kandhas and the Panos, some are well educated and wealthy while most are poor, with a significant number living below the poverty line. All these different groups are competing and struggling for necessary resources.

Here, resources mean livelihoods, lands, education, and jobs. Once upon a time, the relationships were based on a sense of cooperation, but due to the continuous clash of interests and power struggles exists between them conflict is generated. The Kandha control the lands and forest, while the Pano and other caste are depending on the Kandhas for access to the lands and forest. The Kandha have used the land for their own interest and advantage in the past and even today are using these for the pursuit of their own goals, in the form of conflict.

Although the Pano are living here since centuries, they still have no right over the lands and forest. They lack control over resources and this scenario of disadvantage is also generating conflict. After independence, the scenario changed - the Pano became well aware of their rights while the Kandhas became economically poor – and as a result, both the Kandha and the Pano began struggling with each other in an attempt to gain control over the land and forest. The Kandha with the land, forest resources, and traditional power oppose and resist free access to the Pano. Through this, they are able to retain control over the resources and use them to support their interests. Another cause of conflict is the economic exploitation by some Pano petty businessmen, resulting in conflict between Kandha and Pano in the economic and social spheres.

The Kandha believe that the justice system and the laws are in favour of the Pano and that the rich and powerful Pano disrespect the Kandhas and Kandha traditions. The poor Pano are snatching their livelihoods and committing crimes against them. They also claim that in their own land and society, their women are not safe. That the poor Kandha are suffering, with their lives and livelihoods severely affected because of the presence of the Pano and their crimes. Another issue between the two is the problem of jobs and employment.

## **Sociological analysis of the tribe-caste conflict**

The most literature mentions that once upon a time, the Kandha and the Pano were living harmoniously, peacefully and complimentary to each other. However, to live in harmony with the Kandha, the Pano have sacrificed many lives and property. In reality, the historical relationship between the Kandha and the Pano was not at all harmonious or conflict free. The Pano were helpless and defenceless and many times sacrificed their own relatives for human sacrifice, whenever they were unable to provide a *Meriah*. Their everyday life and lived experience were full of abuse and humiliation.

The problem of the Pano is not understood by the state, the Kandhas, the Hindutva activists or the Christian missionaries. The nexus between the Kandha and the RSS was more harmful to the Pano either way, whether they practiced Hinduism or Christianity. The Christian missionaries never taught the Pano about Ambedkar and the Constitution. They interpreted the problem of the Pano through the philosophy of the Bible, which never solved the problem of the Pano. According to missionary theology, violence and persecution of Christian Pano is genuine, and an affirmation of authentic faith. There are many incidents of the Pano facing social boycott. Many Panos were killed in the past.

However, the first major violent conflict broke out in 1994. The five blocks - Khajuripada, Tikabali, Chakapada, Phiringia, and Phulbani - were affected in the 1994 Kandha-Pano conflict and the most affected block was Khajuripada block. Since 1994, has been conflicting and intense violence between the Kandha and the Pano. The way in which they have been treating each other for centuries has resulted in the conflict and violence today. The conflict and violence are the consequence of inequality, discrimination, mischievous behaviour, incompatible power struggles and control over natural and cultural resources.

From the strength of empirical evidence, the issues and situations between the Kandha and the Pano, their relations, and conflicts, are more or less the same in both Dadpaju and Basitingia, as well as the other surrounding villages. The presence of the ‘other’ - whether it is other communities, the RSS, or Christian Missionaries – is making the Kandha-Pano issue more complex than before. Hinduism, Christianity and the category of ‘Scheduled Caste’ are serious issues and the major reasons for conflict. The Pano who are practicing Hinduism are not allowed into temples and thus converted. Yet, not only did they lose their constitutional Scheduled Caste status, they are also being attacked by Hindu nationalists.

Caste discrimination, untouchability, communal conflict, and reservation policy have generated more hatred and conflict between the two major groups of Kandhamal - the Kandha and the Pano. The social, religious and political construction of the category of Scheduled Caste undermines the historical discriminations, deprivations, and social exclusion. It is very much unjust and problematic to exclude an individual or group from the schemes of social benefit, stating that they are not victims or subject to discrimination and caste-based violence, just because they practice a religion which theoretically does not allow caste-based discrimination and inequality. The social boundaries of the Kandha and the Pano imply that a Kandha can get Scheduled Tribe status regardless of which religion they practice.

The politics of Hindutva in tribal and backward areas like Kandhamal help the growth of communalism and militant Hinduism. This kind of situation has offered a strong base and ground for political mobilization on the basis of caste and religious identities, as a result of which Kandhamal has become a victim of caste and religious violence. The growing missionary activities and the growing Hindutva forces resulted in sporadic violence in Kandhamal. The continuous efforts of Hindutva forces to mobilise the Kandha, inviting them into the Hindutva agenda against the Pano, will lead to long-term violence in the

contemporary dynamics of society. The Kandha consider the upper castes as equal in terms of their social status and position in society and hold the opinion that since the Pano are untouchables and of lower social status, they are a threat to traditional norms and values. The Panos, particularly the Christian Panos are increasingly feeling marginalized and socially excluded, compared to the other communities in Kandhamal. Many Panos are frustrated with their social status in Hinduism. However, due to the rules of reservation, they are technically remaining in Hinduism. The fact is that being a Pano invites discrimination and violence, whether one is a Hindu or Christian. The other communities whether upper caste or lower caste it manifest a clear bias against the Pano in Kandhamal. The deepening conflict between the Kandha and the Pano is impossible to understand without reference to the history of their relationship.

### **Summary**

The conflict between the Kandha and the Pano can be described at an individual level and societal level. At the individual level, the conflict between the Kandha and the Pano is based on personal issues, and these issues are not new. These have existed ever since their relationship began. However, at the societal level, the conflict between the Kandha and Pano is based on historical, social, value-based, belief-based, political, economic and religious issues. There are disputes, competitions, and misunderstandings between the Kandha and the Pano, which gradually changed into rivalry and then into conflict. There is an economic competition, socio-cultural competition and political competition between the Kandhas and the Pano. The economic competition is the competition and rivalry between the Kandhas and the Panos in the field of economic activities. The socio-cultural competition between the Kandhas and the Panos revolves around tribal culture and Christian culture, and the attempts to get higher status in local society, for which the Kandhas and the Panos are engaged in competition and conflict. There is a political rivalry between the different political parties,



and the Kandha and Pano supporters of the different political parties are always engaged in conflict. The pattern of conflict reveals the dynamics of the interrelations between caste and tribe, and their relation to religion (both Hinduism and Christianity) and state policies. The large scale violence revealed that it was systematically organised, in the context of a struggle for traditional and political power. The RSS systematically exploited and nurtured hatred between the Kandha and the Pano, perpetuating social divisions along caste and religious lines as well as prejudice against the Pano. It should be noted that the conflict between the Kandha and the Pano is historical and existed prior to the Hindutva forces' entry into Kandhamal. It primarily started during the British period. However, since 1968, the RSS making has been making conscious efforts for Hindu Nationalism by consolidating Hindu identity through the traditions and principles of Hinduism.

# **CHAPTER-VI**

## **Conclusion**

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### **Conclusion**

The study explains the changing inter-community relationship and conflict between the Kandha and the Pano in Kandhamal district of Odisha. The previous studies have explained the historical relationship between the Kandha and the Pano and their traditional method of managing village as well as natural resources. The present study explains how the religion, politics, and the social fabric playing a major role in Kandhamal which leads to a conflict between the Kandha and the Pano. It further explains how the Kandha and the Pano negotiate with the new socioeconomic, religious and political changes in Kandhamal.

The study also focuses on the changing developmental dimensions in the context of the Kandha and the Pano in Kandhamal. How these dimensions and factors has brought about changes in their everyday lives, livelihood, religious beliefs and practices, education and political aspirations among the Kandha and the Pano. The planned developmental programmes of the Central, as well as State government, have produced adverse effects on the Kandha-Pano relationship. Nowadays, various opportunities have come up due to multiple factors, ranging from British administration to education, employment opportunities, market economy, and the introduction of the reservation policy and welfare measures by the government.

The present study has been undertaken based on the following objectives: To study the nature of tribe-caste dynamics in Kandhamal district of Odisha, to analyze the role of religion and religious conversion in mediating the means of mobility and conflict between the Kandha and the Pano, to examine the role of reservation policy in generating conflicts between the Kandha and the Pano and to map out the claims and contestations on land and livelihood, and understand the social tensions based on claims and underlying social status. To attain the objectives an attempt has been made to select two villages - one village from

Gudari Gram Panchayat of Khajuripada block and another village from Beheragaon Gram Panchayat in Tikabali Block (which is now in Chakapada block). These two villages have been considered here as ‘representative’ or ‘typical’, which broadly suited the purpose of the study. The major criteria for the two selected villages are their distinctiveness and similarities. The distinctiveness is that in both the study villages, it was mainly a group of tribal women and youth that attacked and torched the houses of the Pano community of their own village in broad daylight. They did not attack the homes or the people of other castes in their village. In the other surrounding villages, the Pano and the converted Christian Pano houses were attacked mainly by Kandha men with the help of outside men from both tribal and non-tribal communities. So the pattern of conflict in these two villages was distinctive compared to the other villages.

Regarding the social structure, socio-economic background of the village, the standard of living, occupation, social relationship and population size, both the villages have the same characteristics. Bastingia is a bilingual, multi-caste, multi-religious village and a majority of its people are from the Kandha tribe, whereas the village Dadpaju is multi-caste monolingual, mono-religious in nature.

The study began by analysing the conflict between the Kandha and the Pano in 1994, 2007 and 2008. In order to understand the conflict in Kandhamal, the study analyses the literature on various types of social conflict and discusses caste and tribe from the perspectives of Dalit and tribes. From the literature, it was clear to understand that conflict in Indian society is quite different from the conflict in other parts of the world. Conflict in Indian society is primarily due to the caste system which is based on the notion of purity and pollution, whereas conflict in other parts of the world is either religious intolerance, or ethnic difference or economic inequality. There is a close relationship with caste and religious conflict in India. Religious conflict in India primarily takes place between the Caste Hindus

and Muslim and between the Hindu and lower caste converted Christian or converted tribes. However, there is no religious conflict between caste Hindus and dominant castes those are converted to Christianity in Indian society. The primary reason for ethnic conflict is territory and relationships of people with the land. These ethnic communities are engaged in conflict over their land, territory, identity and fear about a loss of their identity. Religion and religious identities have no roles in the ethnic conflict. The ethnic communities are engaged in conflict for their cultural identity and territory.

In order to understand Indian society and the caste system, sociologists and social anthropologist have been influenced by Indological, structural-functional and Marxian approaches. However, these sociologists and social anthropologists did not give much attention to the existential realities, nature of caste-related violence, the experience of untouchability, social exclusion and segregation from the village, exploitation & oppressive nature of the caste system and lived experiences of Dalit in order to understand Indian society and the caste system. Sociologically, it is very important to understand the caste from the perspective of miserable, discriminatory, exclusionary and humiliating social status of Dalits. It is important to note that there is no conflict between the upper castes and other backward castes. However, there is always caste conflict between the upper castes and the lower castes, and the other backward castes and the lower castes in different parts of India.

There is a stereotypical understanding of tribes among sociologists and social anthropologists in the context of south Asia in general and India in particular. There is a general idea about tribes in India that they are isolated from Hindus, there are no caste-like qualities among them, and they do not practice untouchability and discrimination. However, from various studies and fieldwork, it is observed that there is caste-like qualities, the notion of purity and pollution existing among the tribes in India. The interaction of tribal and Dalit-based on the idea of purity and pollution, the tribes consider themselves as superior and Dalit

as inferior to them. The impact of religions like Hinduism have created divisive tendency among the tribes and the tribes always viewed the converted Christian in a different way.

It is very important to understand religious conversion, religious identity and the process of religious conversion in Indian society. Religious conversion, particularly from Dalits and Tribes is a vehemently debated social, religious and political issue in India. Scholars always debate about the conversion of Dalits and Tribes, but they never debate about the conversion of upper castes to other religions. The Hindutva forces, in particular, are more critical about religious conversions of Dalits and Tribals to Christianity and Islam. However, there is another trend of religious conversion taking place in the name of a Hinduization process. Historically, there are many religious and cultural encounters and interactions which resulted in a social and cultural change in India. Many communities and tribes assimilated into Hinduism.

Historically, religious conversion has been a powerful religious weapon of lower castes to protest and resist against inhuman caste oppression and exploitation. Due to the inhuman experience of untouchability and caste oppression, many Dalits converted to other religions for liberation, self-dignity, social mobility and a sense of universal humanity. The religious conversions provided a new sense of dignity, confidence, new institutions, lifestyles, and ideologies of equality. The RSS and its alliance is popularly known as Sangh Parivar, is ideological, socially, culturally, economically and politically against religious conversion. The RSS believes that Hinduism and Hindutva are important factors for the construction of the nation, national identity, and cultural identity. Only those who believe and practice Hinduism are true patriots and those do not believe in Hinduism and Hindutva are anti-national and should be considered as second-class citizens. The Hindu nationalism and religious conversions are intimately related, which is why the Hindutva forces strongly oppose the religious conversion of Dalits and Tribes.

In order to understand the relationship and conflict between the Kandha and the Pano, it is essential to understand the historical foundation of the Kandha-Pano relationship. From the study villages, it is found that the Pano are living with the Kandha since pre-colonial times and it is quite difficult to find a Kandha village in the study areas without a Pano household. The Pano are so intimately associated with the Kandha that there is popularly saying in Kandhamal that *“Kandha raja ku Pano mantri” means when the Kandha are the kings, the Pano are their minister*”.

The Pano serve the Kandha as servant, supplying them with essential things, and work for them as interpreters and interlocutors with the outside world. The Pano takes the water and boiled food from the Kandha but Kandha cannot take water and boiled food from the Kandha, as it symbolizes their traditional social and cultural status. The Pano cannot enter the house of Kandha because it is believed that the Pano are untouchable and their presence in a Kandha house would defile it and would require purification and ritual cleansing. With this everyday humiliation, the landless Pano are working for their livelihood in Kandha houses.

However, a significant change has been taken place in the life of Kandha and the Pano with the arrival of the British into Kandhamal. The British acquired political and administrative power and stopped the human sacrifice performed by the Kandha. The British clearly observed that it is the Kandha who aggressively protested against them but not the Pano. In order to watch the activities of Kandha, the British official cleverly employed the Pano as village informer and police official. The British period provided ample choices and alternative options and occupations for the Pano. During the British period, many Pano from the study village worked in the police and some other as primary school teachers. Many Pano from the study village acquired higher education too. Subsequently, after the Independence, the constitution of India provided the special provision for the development of scheduled caste and scheduled tribes, including socially and educationally backward classes to enable

them to take their rightful place as citizens of India. The principle of equality and social justice encouraged the Pano to improve their standard of living and way of thinking. Many Pano from the study village has benefited in terms of employment and education whereas the Kandha being tribal lost their traditional authority. Nevertheless, Kandha lost traditional authority over the land as the British took it from them. The opportunity served to the Panos and the loss of the authority of the Kandha.

After Independence, the educated, economically and politically influential Pano decided to change their status in the village. They requested the Kandha to treat them equally as they treat other community in the village but not as untouchable. This proposal of the Pano in the study village created a strong resentment among the Kandha. Since then the Pano decided to stop all traditional services to the Kandha. Christian Missionaries working in Kandhamal for a long time, and the influence of Christianity among the Pano in study areas. Dedication and hard work of Christian Missionaries have brought significant changes in the lifestyle, worldview and thinking process among the Pano. Inspired by the philosophy of Christianity many Pano converted as Christian in the study village. From both the study villages, it is observed that there is upward mobility among the Pano and downward mobility among the Kandha.

The conflict between the Kandha and the Pano are not new in Kandhamal. Since the early Independence, there is a conflict between the Kandha and the Pano in Kandhamal. In the early 1960s, F.G.Bailey described that the conflict between the Kandha and the Pano in Baderi and Bisipada village. In Baderi the conflict between the Kandha and the Pano was due to the resistance of a Pano due to misbehaviour of Kandha in a marriage function. The conflict in Bisipada is due to the temple entry movement by the Pano of Bisipada. The Pano in Bisipada village demanded to enter into the village temple which generated strong resentment among the Kandha and the caste Hindus. Both the Kandha and the upper caste



together violently protest against the Pano in Bisipada village. In 1994, there is another conflict between the Kandha and the Pano. In 1994, the Kandha-Pano conflict was due to the entry of a Pano youth into a Shiva temple in the village of Khudutentuli on January 14, 1994. In 2007 there was a conflict between the Kandha and the Christian Pano, the reason of the conflict was the celebration of Christmas day.

In 2008, after the assassination of Swami Laxmanada Saraswati, there was large scale violence against the Pano in Kandhamal. The study village Dadpaju was highly affected in 1994 Kandha-Pano conflict, but not affected during 2007 and 2008 conflict. Because 2007 and 2008 the Kandha are mainly targeted the Pano those are converted to Christianity and in Dadpaju both the Kandha and the Pano are practicing Hinduism. The study village Bastingia was highly affected by 1994, 2007 and 2008 Kandha-Pano conflict. The study village Bastingia was highly affected in 1994, 2007 and 2008 because in Bastingia the Pano are converted to Christianity.

Thus, the thesis argues that democratic process, social changes, economic and educational mobility challenged the traditional social status of the Kandha and the existing social order of caste Hindus. The Kandha and caste Hindus always viewed the Pano as inferior and untouchable. The policy of reservation providing benefit to the educated Pano and now-a-days many Pano are in a various prestigious position in the government sector. The educational and economic mobility of the Pano has resulted in intolerance and hatred against the Pano among the Kandha and caste Hindus in Kandhamal. The matter of the fact is that the Kandha and caste Hindus are nostalgic about their social status of the past and still they want to continue it. The nostalgia about their social status has created situations which have generated hatred against Dalits, particularly against the Pano.

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