

Megalithic Culture in Chhattisgarh: Insight from Ethnographic Tradition

A thesis submitted to the University of Hyderabad in partial
fulfillment of the requirement for the award of the degree
of

Doctor of Philosophy
In
History
By
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DECLARATION

I hereby declared that the work embodied in this thesis entitled “**Megalithic Culture in Chhattisgarh: Insight from Ethnographic Tradition**” carried out under the supervision of Dr. Sanjay Subodh and co-supervisor Prof. R. L. Hangloo, Head Department of History, University of Hyderabad, is original. This thesis or as part thereof has not been submitted for any degree at this University or any other University.

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled “**Megalithic Culture in Chhattisgarh: Insight from Ethnographic Tradition**” submitted by Tirtharaj Bhoi in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in history is original and the work has been carried out under our supervision. This thesis or a part thereof has not been submitted for any other degree at this university or any other university.

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ABBREVIATIONS

A.F.S- Asian Folklore Studies.

A.I- Ancient India.

A.P.H.C-Andhra Pradesh History Congress.

A.S.I- Archaeological Survey of India.

C.U.P- Cambridge University Press.

E.I- Epigraphia Indica.

Ed. – Edited.

E.P.W- Economic and Political Weekly.

H.H- House Holds

Ibid- Ion Beam Induced Deposition (the same place).

I.H.R- Indian Historical Review.

J.R.A.I.G.B.I- The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland.

N.G.Os- Non Governmental Organizations.

O.H.R.J- Orissa Historical Research Journal.

Op.Cit- Opus Citatus/ Opera Citato.

O.U.P- Oxford University Press.

P.- Page.

Pp.- Page to Page

Pub. - Publication

Vol. - Volume.

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Introduction

Chapter-1

Geology and

Environment

Meaning and Definition

Archaeology in recent times has become a generic term that appears in different fields of enquiry ranging from the social sciences to humanities to physical sciences like geomorphology. It acts as a bridge between humanities and science insofar as it deals with all the activities of man in the past and traces his progress in fields of science, technology, religion, arts and social life. Schliemann's¹ excavation of Troy marked the beginning of Archaeology. It is said that an Archaeologist does not dig at things; he digs up man and more so his ideas which enabled him to make progress in all fields of human endeavours. Archaeology is now concerned not only with man as a social being, artist and craftsman but also as a scientist, technologist, philosopher and thinker.

The importance of archaeology in history deals not so much with invention but discovering historical evidences in different forms (artifacts, even quantitative data) so as to provide the background for making conjectures and their refutation. The debate among the Indian historians over certain disputed historical structures proves this point quite adequately. Archaeology in history, thus, involves extracting the truth from the past by carefully discovering and analyzing the historical data.²

Ethnography is literally the practice of writing about people. Often it is taken to mean our way of making sense of other people's modes of thought, since anthropologists usually study culture and tradition other than their own.³

Archaeologists attempt to understand cosmology, how various past cultures have explained their universe-how it originated and developed. Archaeologists also try to understand the past religion, the specific set of beliefs based on one's ultimate relation to the supernatural. Such religious beliefs are manifested in everyday life in a programme of ritual, a succession of discrete events such as prayer, music, feasting, sacrifice and

taboos.⁴ Research on the monuments and burials referred to as “megalith” or “pandukuls” or “pandukulis” in India was initiated in the beginning of the nineteenth century when Banbinton unearthed an interesting group of Burial monuments at Bangala Motta Paramba in the Northern part of Kerala in 1823.⁵ The term “Megalith” was originally introduced by antiquarians to describe a fairly easily definable class of monuments in Europe, consisting of huge undressed stone and termed as Celtic Dolmens, cromlechs and Menhirs.

Indian megaliths’ burials and monuments generally belong to the Iron Age and are largely sepulchral in character. However, the sepulchral aspect of this tradition was not a new feature of the Iron Age. One can find the burial practices in Mesolithic and Neolithic period as well.

The term “megalith” derives from the Greek words “*meghas*” meaning “*large*” and “*lithos*” meaning “*stone*”.⁶ In the earlier stages of research, the term ‘megalith’ was used to refer to large stone monuments. However, subsequently, in India, the term was applied to all the burial and habitation sites compliant the Pottery with black-and-red ware surface in Southern India, irrespective of their association with megalith in the early Iron Age context. Though the incompatibility of the term “megalith” has been discussed by many scholars like Childe,⁷ Deo,⁸ Ramanna,⁹ Krishna Sastry,¹⁰ Gururaja Rao,¹¹ Kantha,¹² Rao,¹³ Sundara¹⁴ it has been widely used and accepted by a large section of archaeologists and has become a well established term. The New Oxford Dictionary of English defines megaliths “a large stone that forms a prehistory monument made of standing stone or stone circle.”¹⁵ The New Standard Encyclopedia defines Megalith as “a huge, roughly hewn stone slab erected by Stone or Bronze Age people, megaliths were

used in constructing tomb in various arrangements as monuments.”¹⁶ In Southern India, the megaliths have long been known to contain a large number of structures belonging to the early Iron Age. Now one can find such monuments almost throughout whole of the Indian subcontinent. In spite of structural or regional disparities, they share a common cultural apparatus including the wide spread influence of a single technological tradition. One can find the establishment of megalithic culture in East-asian countries by the evidence of Menhirs, dolmenoid cists and capstones in South Korea, China, Malaysia, Java and Japan.¹⁷ Their striking similarities with that of their Indian counterparts point towards a cultural link in the distant past.

The first documentation of megalithic culture around Chhattisgarh is by J. D. Begler in his report on a tour in central provinces, which he undertook in 1873-74.¹⁸ He mentions, “From the village of Navapara to Majhgan runs a long stretch of broken blocks of stone lying loose on each other in irregular masses, and presenting the exact appearance of the ruins of a great fort two miles long, at intervals stand upright stones looking like Sati pillars.”¹⁹ He never imagined that, the monuments were Menhirs or Megaliths. It was in 1956-57 that a teams led by M. G. Dikshit of the Madhya Pradesh Department of Archaeology, excavations were carried out on the megalithic sites in Dhanora.²⁰

The tradition of erecting Megalithic monuments still continues amongst the various tribes of North East and central India. The tribes like *maria* Gond of Bastar region, still put up Menhirs and Dolmens in the honour of the departed souls. The Megalithic monuments of Chhattisgarh are concentrated on high rock bench areas. In Bastar region, the erection of Megalithic monuments is a living tradition, which is

discussed in the next chapter. The present work deals with megalithic culture and some ethnographical information of their present day erection of memorial memory of the departed soul. This study also deals with the various tribes such as *maria*, *muria* and *damdami* Gonds of Chhattisgarh and explores the funerary practices and beliefs toward the memorial practices.

Significance of the Study:

Chhattisgarh has already revealed its cultural potential in the form of numerous archaeological sites stretching from Paleolithic period to the late medieval period. Chhattisgarh is rich with potential archaeological sites. The inaccessible terrains along with the socio-political conditions prohibit detailed exploration and though the region is rich with archaeological sites, not much work has been carried out to study the Megalithic evidences from this region.

The sporadic studies carried out in the recent past and the reports of some of the British officers (mentioned earlier) indicate that the region has numerous Megalithic monuments like Cairn Circle, Dolmens and Menhirs. Some of these Megalithic sites have also been excavated. The antiquities recovered from these monuments reveal that the Megalithic culture in this region is coeval with similar culture in other parts of India. But, so far no comprehensive study of these archaeological sites has been carried out.

Another interesting aspect that prevails among the existing tribal groups is the practices of erecting Megalithic monuments even to the present day. My project proposes to study both the ancient Megalithic monuments as well as the present megalithic among the tribal groups in this region. In the absence of large-scale exploration/excavation of the Megalithic sites in Chhattisgarh region, their antiquity is not properly understood. The

present work makes an attempt to find out information from the ethnographical and archaeological fieldwork. The scope of the present work is an attempt for the understanding and re-writing of megalithic culture and present day erection of memorial stone in this area.

Objectives of the Present Work:

- (i) To reconstruct the history of Megalithic culture in Chhattisgarh region.
- (ii) To elaborate present mortuary (death) practices with the help of ethnographical data.
- (iii) To compare the tradition of megalithic culture with other parts of India.

Hypothesis:

Megalithic practices were prevalent in Chhattisgarh region for a long time. The present day memorial practices may have their origins in the past practices. These practices may be used to understand the belief behind some of the enigmatic aspects of the megalithic culture. The isolation of the tribal communities in the forest region helped them in preserving the ancient monuments to a large extent.

Geographical Area:

The geographical area covered in the present study are Raipur, Mahasamund, Bilaspur, Raigarh, Sarguja, Bastar, Dantewada, Durg and Rajnandgaon districts of Chhattisgarh. The regions were known as Dakshina Kosal in ancient time. Prior to that, evidences of occupation by early men right from early Stone Age to megalithic times through middle Stone Age, late Stone Age and Neolithic times are visible in this region.

The choice of the field area as “Chhattisgarh” is guided by two major factors: (1) The region is geographically very important because of its dense forest and hilly tract areas, providing scope for investigating the relationship between forest tribes and their

ways of life. (2). Archaeologically, this region has a high potential that helps us to explore and re-construct the ancient past, which in turn provides us with information, that would help us in understanding the present scenario.

Brief History of the Region:

Chhattisgarh is a state with intimate connections between various strata of civilization which has grown in course of the past thousands of years, and which has left behind various shades in its course of development, is still visible and is a matter of study for historians and anthropologists.

The name Chhattisgarh is not an ancient one, and it has come into popular usage in last few centuries. The region was originally known as *Daksina Kosala*²¹ in ancient time. It literally means the land of treasure and this has been amply proved with the discovery of diamond, iron, manganese, coal, gold, etc. The ancient Indian literature informs us that lord *Rama* and *Laxmana* saw *Jatayu* on a mountain while going to *Panchavati* via this region.

According to British chronicler J. D. Begler, “the real name is Chhattis-gharh not Chhattis-garh. There is a tradition saying that ages ago about the time of *Jarasandha*, thirty six families (Leather worker), had emigrated southwards from his kingdom and established themselves in this region, which after them is called Chhattisgarh. Another explanation he has made that it denotes the numbers of forts in this region, which are supposed to be thirty six.”²²

No sources are available now to throw light on the subsequent political history of Kusana period. The Allahabad pillar inscription of Samudragupta²³ indicates that the fourth century A.D. saw the rise of Gupta political supremacy in this region.

Samudragupta sent an expedition to Southern India through this region. The route which was followed by him was *daksinapatha*, which comes under *daksina kosala*.

One of the feudatories of the Guptas was the *nalas* and about the fifth century A.D., *daksina kosala* was under the rule of the *nalas*.²⁴ The *sarabhapurias* king established his rule in this region in sixth century A.D. The founder of the dynasty was a king named *sarabha*, who has been identified as the *sarabharaja* mentioned in the Eran inscription of *goparaja*.²⁵ After the *sarabhapuriya* the *panduvansis* ruled in this region up to the eighth century A.D. The rise of *kalachuris* of Tripuri in the middle of ninth century opened a new chapter in the history of this region. The last ruler of this dynasty was *trailokyamalk*.²⁶ In the twelfth century this region was ruled by a tribal chief and there is some information of conflict between the *kalachuri* ruler of Tripuri and the local tribal chief of Gonds.²⁷

It was in the eighteenth century that the *maratha*²⁸ started invading the Gond territory in Chhattisgarh. From this time onwards, Maratha interference in the political affairs of the Gond rule over Chhattisgarh continued till the fall of the dynasty. The intrusion of the British was resisted strongly in Chhattisgarh by the tribes. The first war of independence in 1857 A.D. was spearheaded in this region by Sonakhan²⁹ a tribal leader.

The demand for a separate Chhattisgarh was raised in 1924 by the Raipur congress unit and it was discussed in the annual session of Indian Congress at Tripuri. The congress government of Madhya Pradesh took the first legislative initiative for the creation of Chattisgarh in 1994. The separate Chhattisgarh bill was passed in the *Lok Sabha* and *Rajya Sabha*, paving the way for creation of a separate state of Chhattisgarh.

Then President of India gave his consent to Madhya Pradesh reorganization Act 2000 on the 25th of August. The government of India subsequently set the first day of November 2000 as the day on which the state of Madhya Pradesh would be bifurcated into Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh.³⁰

Review of Literature:

Here an attempt is made to give a broad review of literature that deals with the megalithic culture in Chhattisgarh region. The review is done to know what sort of important literature are available on the subject, and then to identify the gaps in order to carry out the present research.

J. D. Begler in 'Report on Tour in Central Provinces' (*ASI-report 1878*) has given information about group of Menhirs, Cairn Circle in 1873 during his archaeological tour to Chhattisgarh.

V. Elwin, in his paper 'Funerary Customs in Bastar State' (*Man in India*, 1945) produces a very detailed and descriptive account of the funerary rites and eschatological belief of the aborigines like Hill *maria*, *bison maria* and *jhoria* of Bastar. Two kinds of megalithic monuments namely *Uraskal* and *Danyakal*, were erected in honor of the dead. Small cairn and wooden posts were also erected as substitutes for lithic monuments. The aborigines considered the dead as a guard, keeping close watch upon with kith and kin. Since the dead are prone to take offence, suspicious extremely revengeful and unsympathetic, the living aborigine left no stone unturned to keep them in their place to the family. So that the dead could not find some warmth and love receive the comfort they needed.

C. Von Furer Haimendorf, in his paper 'The Problem of Megalithic Culture of Middle India' (*Man in India*, 1945) mentions that the similarity of customs and rituals are found between the middle Indian and North East Indian tribes. The megalithic culture of the South East Asiatic type is found among the Gadabas, Bondas and Bastar Gonds who came from the East with its center of diffusion in Eastern Assam or North Burma or China. It is quite likely that there was an earlier migration of Austro-Asiatic culture untouched by the Austro-asian. This megalithic culture was already developed before the commencement of the migration of Austro-asiatic races westward into peninsular India.

M. G. Dikshit in 'Excavation at Dhanora-District Durg' (*Indian archaeology-A Review*, 1956-57) deals with the excavation of a megalithic site at Dhanora. He classifies the megalithic under four types: (i) apsidal stone enclosure with a cap stone lying flush on a heap of cairn (ii) apsidal stone enclosure around Menhirs at its center (iii) alignments of apsidal stone enclosure (iv) Menhirs are often of huge proportions, kept in position by means of buttresses of large boulders. No skeleton was associated with the monuments. It probably, served only as memory of the burial.

V. Elwin *Maria Murder and Suicide*, (1977) chapter V, examine how the tribal belief and practices came to be believed in by Hindus and Muslims of the Bastar region. He also documents about the funerary rites of the *maria* Gonds and their various stages of life cycle in this region in his book.

Chandrasekhar Gupta, in his paper 'Megalithic Culture of Daksina Kosala' (*Indian Archaeology-New Perspective*, R. K. Sharma, ed., 1982) gives an information about megalithic culture in Bastar district and add that the megalithic traditions are surviving among the tribal folks there even in the present time.

Ajit Raizada *Tribal Development in Madhya Pradesh*, (1984) he survey the historical background of the Bastar region. He also examines geographical and ethnographical features of this region.

Malti. Nagar 'Living Pre History around Bhimbetka.' (V. N. Mishra., and P. Bellwood. (ed.) *Recent Advances in Indo-Pacific Prehistory*, 1985) has studied the material culture, religion and socio-economic organization of the gonds living in villages around the Stone Age site of Bhimbetka in the forest of *vindhyan* hills. Her studied revealed that Gonds in this area raise small stone in memory of their dead. The stone are installed on a stone and mud platform accompanied by elaborate ceremony. The stones called *gantha* represent the sprits of dead ancestors and are worshipped on all auspicious occasions. These ceremonies provide us insight into the mental templates behind the raising of memorial stone during the early Iron Age in central and South India. She suggests that the present pattern of tribal subsistence is in part a continuation of the prehistoric tradition.

S. C. Nanda, 'The Mesolithic Culture of Indravati Valley, Koraput District' (V. N. Mishra., and P. Bellwood. (ed.) *Recent Advances in Indo-Pacific Prehistory*, 1985) has brought to light a large number of prehistory sites. It deals with the ethnographic study of several primitive tribes such as *gadaba*, *paraja*, *saoras* and *bondas* showed the continuation of traditional method of exploiting resource and the introduction of agriculture. He has drawn broad parallels of the subsistence pattern of the above mentioned tribes.

V. D. Jha in his article 'Archaeological Remains in Bastar.' (*Prachya Prativa*, Vol-v, 1987) explores a new megalithic site in Bastar district. The Maria Gonds still practice megalithic discourses, and the study of their funerary rites shed a flood of light on the ancient megalithic culture. He highlights megalithic monuments in South Bastar at Timelwada, Handaguda and Nelakanker.

G. M. Joshi *Tribal Bastar and the British Administration*, (1990) explores both the Bastar administration and British policy in managing the state. The first chapter provides a brief account of geographical feature of the Bastar region. In this work he thoroughly described on British policies towards the tribal development. He also mentioned about tribal movement of Bastar region.

W. Grigson *The Maria Gonds of Bastar*, (1991) produces detailed information of religious ceremony of the Gonds of Bastar. In chapter XIV there is a detailed account of death and funerary practices of the Maria Gonds.

Verrier Elwin *The Muria and their Ghotul*, (1991) produces in depth depiction of *muria* life sequence and their construction of memorial stone in the name of deceased. He also had given the details information about the Ghotul system of Muria gond.

Amitab Sarkar and Samira Dasgupta, in their work *Spectram of Tribal Bastar*, (1996) attempt to understand the *Dokra* art, *Gotul* system, religious belief and practices in general, of the Bastar tribals. They also describes about the agrarian landscape and land alienation problem of the tribal.

Zarine Cooper *Prehistory of the Chitrakot Falls, Central India*, (1997) has interpreted the archaeological data with the help of ethnographic and ecological parameters. The *kuruk* fisher man, who is a sub caste of *maria* Gonds demonstrates the

coincidence of the Mesolithic sites with the settlements of fishermen. She suggests that the *kuruks* are the direct descendent of their prehistoric counterpart.

Arun. Kumar Mishra, et.al 'Understanding Iron Technology: An Ethnographic Model' (*Man and Environment*, xxii, 1997) have carried out intensive field studied among the pre-industrial iron working communities of *Agarias* in the Chhattisgarh. Their observation show that most of the pre-industrial iron workers reside in close proximity to the mineral deposits. They cover about 15 to 20 km of distances during one trip and collect approximately 45 to 60 kg of ores necessary for 3 to 4 days of smelting. Ores are mainly picked up by hand in the form of nodules from exposed surface near *nalas* or rain-gullis and sometimes also through shallow digging. These communities are experts in identifying the quality of ores.

A. K. Mishra, 'The Iron Technology in the Bastar Region: An Ethno-archaeological Study.' (*Pragdhara*, Vol-vii, 1997) has attempted to bring a parallel between the ancient iron technology of India and the iron smelting process in the living tradition in the Bastar region. This region is a part of the ancient *Dandakaranya* as mentioned in the Ramayana and has a well written history and is presently covered with dense forest and inhabited by a large number of tribal communities. The western desisted edge of Bastar plateau lying to the North of the Indravati River is marked by *abhujmar* hills which provide one of the richest iron ore deposits of India at Bailadila range.

Michel Postel and Zarine Cooper's work, *The Bastar Folk Art-Shrine, Figurines and Memorials*, (1999) deals with the exclusive and fascinating tradition of constructing memorials among the *muria* and *maria* Gonds. The upright stone, horizontal slab, carved wooden and stone pillars, painted stones are commemorate for the dead person. These

have been compared to similar tradition in South India. The memorials are decorated with intricate design and vivid colour, narrating the life of deceased.

H. L. Shukla in his work *Chhattisgarh in Making*, (1999) discussed about the historical background, the tribal ethos, ecology and development, their social problem and the *Naxalite* influence in tribal society.

A. K. Sharma's work, *The Archaeo-Anthropology of Chhattisgarh*, (2000) documents that, right from the Bastar region in Chhattisgarh to Manipur in North-east through Hazaribagh and Singhbhum district of Jharkhand, Megalithic is a living tradition of the aborigines. The tradition of erecting memorials still continues amongst various tribes in Bastar region. Memorial stones varying in size and shapes were put up in the honor of the departed soul. He also points out that the megalithic of Bastar region are concentrated on high rock bench areas and available on open hills and no need to dig out. He excavated twelve different types of Megalithic monuments at Karkhabhat in order to ascertain their sepulchral nature and to find out the difference between them. The evidences obtained from excavation clearly show this Menhirs and Cairn Circles are not associated with any sepulchral rite. They are only commemorative in nature. His study was restricted in the archaeological perspective.

Samira. Dasgupta, et.al, *Reflection of Ethno-science*, (2002) in this work they discuss reflection of ethno-science in belief and practices and indigenous health care system of *abuj maria*.

The living tribal populations of this region spreading over 50 villages are known as hill *maria*. They have been making iron using the ancient technology to prepare arrow-head, axes, hoe and needle point for tattooing. He shows that the square closed iron

smelting furnace with surrounded charcoal and iron slags practiced by present hill *urias* closely resemble the evidence reported from Sunga-Kusana level of Khariadih. The irons produced by the *urias* are not meteoric iron, which is evident in the archaeological sites at Inca of Peru, Mayas of Yucatan and Aztec of Mexico. In India, meteoric iron has not been reported in any of the archaeological sites.

Sources of the Present Work:

A social scientist is expected to understand the past in order to know the present properly and thus has the ability to predict for the future. Sources are very important in writing the history of any region. The sources available for the study of Megalithic culture in Chhattisgarh are:

1. Archaeological.
2. Ethnological.
3. Secondary sources.

Archaeology is an important source for documenting history. Finding monuments have provided to be a source of the highest value for the reconstruction of the social history of the Megalithic period. Archaeologically, we know the Megalithic culture of this area from J. D. Begler's³¹ exploration reports from central provinces in 1873-74. He identified many Megalithic sites in this region. The first recognition of Megalithic sites in this region came in 1933-34, which was described as Stone Age cemetery. It was in 1956-57 that under M. G. Dikshit of the Madhya Pradesh department of archaeology, excavation was carried out in the Megalithic area at Dhanora.³² In 1990-91, A. K. Sharma³³ excavated a megalithic site at Karkabhat in Durg District. V. D. Jha³⁴ has discovered megalithic monuments in South Bastar; he found a capstone placed on stones arranged in circular way. The above information tells us about the megalithic culture of Chhattisgarh.

The Ethnology is the highest source for writing the history of the megalithic period in this region. It is important to know the present belief and practices of the people

of the concern region. There are quite a good number of interesting traditions and legend connected with megalithic monuments. These traditions and legend vary from region to region, but majority of them are quite similar in their nature as they convey almost similar meaning. The *pandavas*, the legendary hero of traditional India, are often given the credit for the construction of megalithic monuments, especially the Dolmens and dolmenoid cists. Accordingly, these monuments are variously known as *pandavagallu*, *pandava- ramane*, *pandupare*, *pandavakulli* etc. In many parts of Andhra Pradesh, they are called *rakshasa-gullu*, or *rakasi-gudi*, the meaning of which is “temple of the demon”.³⁵ A similar tradition is found in Chhattisgarh region. From the above information we can assume that there is a megalithic culture available in the remote tribal area of Chhattisgarh.

The secondary sources of this work constitute published materials, books, records, journals and later work. The study of secondary sources helps us in understanding the present situation on the concerned subject.

Classification of Megalithic Monuments:

The classification of megalithic monuments has already been done by many scholars like K. N. Dikshit,³⁶ A. Sundara,³⁷ N. Murali,³⁸ K. P. Rao,³⁹ and V. D. Krishnaswami.⁴⁰ The megalithic monuments in different parts of India are varied in morphological forms and types of monuments are regional peculiarities.

There is some difference amongst the construction of megalithic monuments of South India, central India and other parts of the world due to geographical and technological influences. If we see the nature of megalithic monuments in India, it can be divided into two broad categories. They are (i) sepulchral monuments and (ii) non-

sepulchral monuments. The first category of monuments deal with the burials like pit burial, cists burial, urn burial and so on. The second category deals with memorials like Dolmens, Menhirs.

Sepulchral Monuments

The Pit Burials:

This is the simple type of burial mainly consisting of skeleton remains, pottery and iron objects. They can be divided in two sub-types: (i) the pit burial (elliptical): is contains a single skeleton which is established in various dimensions and depths. It is located within habitation sites. (ii) The pit burials (cylindrical): is generally secondary burial. In these burials, one can find multiple skeletons which remain surrounded by objects of pottery and iron. It is mainly located in the habitation grounds.

The Barrows:

This is a pit burial, but without a bounding circle. One can find the barrows either circular or ovaloid in plan. These types of burial are found in South India. They are sepulchral in character and found in various shapes.

The Cairn Circle:

The Cairn Circle is sepulchral in character and consists of a heap of stone rubble with-in a circle. This is a common type of megalithic monument. One can find it all over India. The aim of the erection of cairn is the fortification of the material below.

The Cist Burial:

The cist burials are like a box construction with various types of stone slabs under the surface of the earth. The stone slabs are arranged in a technique that the slabs support each other. One can find various types of cist burials depending on their constructional techniques like:

(i) Cist with Oblong:

The oblong cist has a heavy rubble packing at the ground level surrounded by a circle. In between, the rubble packing and the cist in the pit is a layer of dug out earth. The cist is divided into four compartments and carries one cap stone. In this burial ground, one can find the post-excarnate skeleton remains of two individuals, pottery and iron objects.

(ii) Rectangular and Square Cist Burials:

The cists are formed with the slabs arranged perfectly square or rectangular without any projecting orthostats. These are commonly found all over the Southern India.

(iii) Swastika Cists Burial:

The sepulchral monuments of *swastika* type are cists with there orthostats arranged in *swastika* pattern either clock wise or contra-clock wise. Four orthostats are used in these burials.

(iv) Transcepted Type Cists Burial:

This is also a sepulchral cist burial divided into two or more chambers by inclusion of dividing slabs in the cist called transepted cist. Here the transeption is provided most probably to provide a separate grave for an individual.

(v) Cist Burial Surrounded by Slab Circle:

This Cist is built with slab arranged perfectly square or rectangular without any projecting orthostats and surrounded by slab circle. One can find the slab circle in double or triple rows.

(vi) Cist Burial Surrounded by Stone Circle:

In this sepulchral burial the cist is surrounded by stone circle. There is no limitation of number of stone used in this circle.

Dolmenoid Cist Burial:

There are two types of dolmenoid cists, with porthole and without porthole. These are sepulchral monuments built of stone slabs. It is partially buried and partially exposed above the ground, capped by a stone slab. Without portholes resembling the ground topped by a cap stones but they do not possess port holes and are rarely surrounded by slab circle.

Stone Circles:

In this monument the huge dressed or undressed stones are kept on the burial in a circle. These are the most popular megalithic monuments in India. In this burial, one can find the skeleton, pottery and iron object. The Department of History, University of Hyderabad, excavated a similar kind of stone circle under the Project Director K. P. Rao in 2002 at Gachibowli, Hyderabad.

Menhirs Surrounded by Stone Circle:

These types of Menhirs sometimes appear surrounded by stone Circle generally oriented East or North-east. This type of Menhirs can be found in central India.

Sarcophagus Burial:

The sarcophagus is a casket/box for assignment of skeleton remains and other funerary materials. There are three types of sarcophagus:

- (i) Terracotta Sarcophagus.
- (ii) Stone Sarcophagus.
- (iii) Wooden Sarcophagus.

Non-Sepulchral Megalithic Monuments:
Menhirs:

The Menhirs are monolithic pillars placed vertically into the ground. These are either rudely dressed or not dressed at all and are found set up at or near a burial spot. These monuments are essentially a memorial to the deceased.

Dolmens:

In these non sepulchral monuments, the stone slabs or builders are put in a four-sided figure or rectangular plan underneath a cap stone, the whole construction being above the earth level. It is identified as dolmen. In these Dolmens no funerary material are found.

Alignments:

These are also memorial monuments and consist of equivalent lines of standing stones leaning in the cardinal orders. Sometimes, these stones are dressed, closely related to Menhirs and set up mainly in South India.

Anthropomorphic Figures:

These are memorials erected above or close to the burial ground found dressed or undressed. They may be small or extremely large in elevation and show the anthropomorphic figure. One can find similar type of arrangement at Medimalla ⁴¹ in Chittor district of Andhra Pradesh.

Avenues:

These are memorial types of monuments of two or more equivalent row of arrangement known as Avenues.

Archaeological Method:

Field archaeology is the basic discipline of archaeology in which we study an archaeological site through application of various methods of exploration and excavation.

In this present work the researcher followed the method of exploration.

Exploration is the process of discovering new archaeological sites. Archaeological sites are often found in deserted place like dense forest, near river, rock shelter etc and around modern settlements. They are also found in ploughed fields because sometimes unknowingly people level the mounds and convert them into agricultural land.

The first thing, which strikes an archaeologist while venturing into known or unknown land during exploration is raised ground or highland with cultural remains. While walking on the ground or highland we may find some potsherds or object made of bone, stone, metal etc., which the human beings had made and used at some point of time. This is the simplest method of locating an archaeological site mostly of historic, proto-historic periods, although the method remains the same even in the pre-history sites. The following are the technique of exploration which is followed by the researcher in this study:

(i) References to Local Gazette and Survey of India Map:

For finding an archaeological site in a particular area before undertaking field work of any kind, we refer to local gazette of the area, generally called District Gazetteers which may mention the mounds or else refer to maps of that area, which show such topographical sites. The survey of India has published such maps generally called one inch maps that are maps in the ratio of one miles area covered in one inch space of the map. Such maps are available in other ratio also. These maps mention villages, tanks,

temple, deserted sites etc, with names and symbols, some of which may be very useful for explorers. There are also district, taluk and village maps available in the offices of the district magistrate and collectors that give some details of known archaeological sites.

(ii) Field Walking or Pedestrian Technique:

Field walking is the simplest and primary method of exploring an archaeological site. We walked around in open areas in Chhattisgarh region to find out the megalithic sites.

(iii) Interaction with Local People:

During the exploration we interact with local people to know about megalithic site in the area. The local people may give information about the monuments along with the tales, tradition, and folklores associated with them. With such clues we have visited those places to confirm the feasibility of their information in terms of the site, leaving the truthfulness of a legend aside.

(iv) Photo Documentation:

Documentation is the processes of recording all types of structural activities as well as the monuments. We have taken the photograph of the monuments *in situ* for information. We have taken notes of the monuments such as height, weight, areas, nearest water sources, soil condition, longitude and latitude, owner of the sites, condition of the sites and so on which we have mentioned in the appendix.

(v) Methods of Drawing:

The triangulation method of drawing gives inclusive and actual shape and dimension of the monument. In this plan, three dimensions, two from known point to the third unknown point were taken to find out the location of the unknown point. Then the North point (North direction) was set by using the magnetic compass. After fixing the

North point, a line was drawn from North to South by using a thread. On this line two nails were fixed at specific distance. From this two nails one can calculate the distance of monuments. Based on the circumstances, shape, sizes and appearances of the monuments one can fix an unknown points from any two known point, thus it is possible to determine any number of unknown points from any two known points to take measurements. The measurements were used for preparing drawing in reduced scale such as 1:20, 1:10 and so on. After finishing the drawing it is reduced to smaller scale using xeroxing technique. Then it can be scanned and used in some software such as Paint, auto-CAD and Adobe Photoshop.

In elevation and plan method of drawing (Figure1-10) one can collect the perfect measurement of outer shape of the monuments. First we take the measurement of ground and top level of monuments. Then fix two measurement tapes, horizontal and vertical way on the middle of the monuments. Then we fixed some point on the tape such as 0.10 meter, 0.20 meter etc. and join two points with the help of graph paper. Attempt also has been made to draw the distribution pattern map of Kharkabhat megalithic site and here we used the reduced scale 1:500 to take measurement approximately.

Ethnological Method:

The ethnological data for the study was collected from six villages in four districts inhabited by Gonds in Chhattisgarh. Prior to the actual study, a preliminary field visit (pilot visit) was made during December-April 2004. The main field work was carried out in three phases, during December-May 2005, March-May 2007 and March-May 2008 and 2009. The village sample was selected based on the majority of the tribe in various

villages which the information was collected from the Tahasil office, Jagdalpur and Dantewada.

The case study method and interview technique-using detailed questionnaire schedule were adopted to understand the people practices and opinion regarding the megalithic culture and after death belief and practices of the tribal people.

Rapport Establishment and Interview:

The need for a good rapport with the respondents, particularly when case studies are carried out and other qualitative information were collected, is inevitable. In the initial stages of ethnological research the scholar is confronted with the problem of establishing a closer relationship with the people. The scholar was warned by both tribal and non tribal, that the Hill *maria* and *bison horn maria* are difficult people and the area they inhabit is difficult to reach by bus. They were reported as shy of outsiders and always under the influence of liquor and country beer (*tadi*). The scholar realized this problem and with the consent of the village *mukhia* took a local tribal as field assistant in concerned villages.

Standard anthropological tools and techniques have been applied for collection of empirical data. An interview schedule (appendix-ii) was designed for the collection of qualitative information from respondent and obtaining information from the Gonds people to understand their perception regarding the memorial stone, belief and practices and their death culture.

The following are the details of important villages, where the data was collected:

(Table- 1) Information of Data Collection

Sl. N.	Village	Block	District	Name of Respondent	Tribes	Age	Sex M/F
01	Chota Donger	Narayanpur	Bastar	Group	Bison Horn Maria	45-55	M-F
02	Murdanda	Bijapur	Dantewada	Dilip Talandi, Simon Talandi	Hill Maria, Muria	45-55	M-F
03	Karkabhat	Balod	Durg	Group	Muria	50-55	M- F
04	Bartia Bhata	Saraipali	Mahsamund	Bhanupratap Kadam, Itwari Sahu	Kharia, Sahu, Agaria	50-55	M-M
05	Gamewada	Dantewada	Dantewada	Group	Muria	45-55	M-F
06	Orcha	Narayanpur	Bastar	Group	Hill Maria	50-55	M-F

Scheme of the Study:

The work has been divided into four chapters. It starts with an introductory chapter that deals with idea of megalith, objective, hypothesis, significance, geographical area, review of literature, methodology and so on.

In the first chapter an attempt is made to thoroughly discuss the geology and environment of the study region.

The second chapter deals with the detailed ethnographical information about the tribals of Chhattisgarh. It also taken into account the changes that took place in their present community.

The third chapter attempts to brief the past megalithic culture in the region. It studies the excavated site of Karkhabhat which consists of both burial and the habitation site. It also deals with newly explored megalithic site by researcher and their plan and elevation drawing.

The fourth chapter relates to the living megalithic tradition amongst the tribal of the Bastar region. In this chapter an attempt has been made to discuss the origin of tribal,

their religion, belief and practices towards the death ceremony which is closely related to erection of memorial monuments. It also deals with the effect of modernization to existing culture and their changes.

I have included three appendixes which are relevant to the present study. At the end, I have included photos, elevation and plan drawing of the megalithic monuments which were explored during field study. There are also some maps which give information about the megalithic site, distribution pattern and the location of study area.

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Geology and Environment

The study of prevailing environmental set up in an area is essential to understand the earlier setting of the region. “The main natural resources attributed to a land both physical and biological are land forms, soil, climate, vegetation, animal life and water and they act as the contemporary environment in pattern up the people culture.”¹ The geological formation of an area plays a major role in shaping the landscape.

The physical features of Chhattisgarh have considerable influence on its history. There are a large number of mountains, rivers, and forests in Chhattisgarh. Early man favoured the habitation on foothills and open plateaus for raw material in order to manufacture stone tools and implements. On the river banks for availability of water and on edge of forest the edible extraction of plants and animals have been discovered at different sites in Chhattisgarh. Megalithic monuments are located in Chhattisgarh region where stones are available for construction.²

The Chattisgarh region is situated between 19°45’-23°15’ North latitude and 80°25’-84°20’ East longitudes.³ This region is bound by Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra in its West, Bihar and Jharkhand in the North, Orissa in the East and Andhra Pradesh in the South. It stretches to about 650 km East-west with the maximum North-south 433 km, covering an area of 72,940 square km. This region has an undulating topography with well-marked elevation and depression with plateaus covering a large area .The region represents typical wide forest-clad plateaus and hill tracts, dissected plateaus and hills in South. The region is characterized by two major landform types, which are the gently sloping plain and the undulating rim land .The elevation of the plain land ranges from about 250 mts. on the Eastern margin to about 330mts. in the West. The gentle gradient

of the sloping plain is largely due to its geological structure with flat to gentle dipping Cuddapah sedimentary formations. Around this plain, the land rises sloppily in about every direction except South-west where it merges gradually into the granite and gneissic Peneplain of the Northwestern area of Bastar district. In the East, the sloping plain narrow down into a corridor between Raigarh hills at the North end and the Raipur Upland on the South through which the Mahanadi River flows eastwards. The trans-Seonath River in the Northwest is far more extensive than the narrow trans-mahanadi in the South-east. The Mahanadi river system has a nearly radial pattern in the plain dividing it into a number of well-defined sectors. The interfluvial sectors are present only with slight surface undulations. The sloping plain is fringed by river basin like Korba Basin and the Raigarh Basin in the North, and the Kanker Basin in the South.

The upper Mahanadi plain is bordered on the North by a series of plateaus and hills in the Northern part of Bilaspur and Raigarh districts. The Maikal range runs along the Western border of the Rajnandagaon and Bilaspur district and rises sharply from about 450 mts. elevation at its foot near Chhuikhadan and Kawardha to about 700–900 mts. high crest line. The Arujia, distinguish the Hasdo and the Mand from West to East. The Lormi plateau, Pendra plateau, Chhuri hills and the Raigarh hills break the Northern wall of Chattisgarh basin successively. The top of these plateau and hills rise to about 700-900 mts. On the Southeast Raipur upland runs parallel to the Mahanadi end and lies close to it. This upland rises from about 300 mts. at their foot to about 400-500 mts. at the top. At the extreme Southeast, stands the escarpment of the Bastar-Orissa plateau, which rises to a height of 800-900 mts. in the source region of the Mahanadi. The Dalli-Rajhara

hills in the Southern part of the Durg district rise sharply from 450 mts. to about 600 mts.⁴

The Sarguja district also comprises Archaean and pre-cambrian rock. The rocks of the series include mica Schists, phyllites, hematite, quartzite, and basic lava flows. The Satpura belt of metamorphosed sediments and igneous materials also occur in the district. Laterite and iron-rich vesicular dark brown or brick colour mottled rock is often found capping the hills top. The granite occurring in Raigarh-Sarguja district give rise to rounded hills and domes due to spheroidal weathering. Huge blocks rounded by spheroidal are found weathering from perched blocks and balanced rocks. Spheroidal forms owe their origin to quick weathering of the corners and edge of rectangular rocks formed due to joints. The area is dotted with sandstone and shale's belonging to the upper Gondwana system of the lowered cretaceous period.⁵

The lower Indravati valley region represents typical wide forest, clad plateaus and hill tracts including highly dissected plateaus and the Abhujmar hills in the West. Right from Jaypore-Ghat, the long axis of Bastar plateau string accordingly on away for about 190 km to Keshkalghat. In the Kanker Basin it is observed the width of the plateau varies between 80 km to 130 km.

The Western dissected edge of the Bastar plateau lying to the North of Indravati is marked by the Abhujmar hills, which provide one of the richest iron ore deposits of the area at Bailadila Range, but much of the Bastar plateau is undissected, formed of the gneisses of the Dharwar and Cuddaph systems. The Bastar plateau drops on all sides except in the South-east where they are considerably eroded to form the Godavari plan. There are extensive horizontal types of gritty and conglomeratic quartzitic and fine

purplish sandstone with spots of green chlorite and pink to buff shales. The Deccan trap consists of several flows of basalts. The laterite is mainly found capping the Deccan trap.⁶

Soils Formulation:

Condition of soil has been chiefly the tropical red and yellow. The process of soil tradition in this region is latrisation. The Alluvial soils are confined to the flood plains of the large river. The parent rocks of Chhattisgarh are the Cuddapa shales and limestones as well as some sandstone in plain area, while the upland contains mostly the granite and gneisses. The red colors in the soil are due to rich iron content and formed mostly due to the weathering of granite and gneissic rocks. The uplands have poor, light coloured and thin soils while the valleys have more fertile, fine dark and deep soils.⁷

The vegetation cover being the broad-leaved desidious forests, much humus is not contributed to these soils. The soils are deficient in Calcium, Magnesium and poor in Nitrogen, Phosphorus, lime and Potash, which are more concentrated in the lower part of the soil profile. The tropical red and yellow soils or red sandy soils of the region posse's suitable textural conditions for growing rice and millet crops. Soils of Chhattisgarh region are varying according to the topographical condition. The upland has generally laterite soils, where the soils are deeply red, from which red ochre could be obtained. In certain places iron concentration is sufficient to support indigenous iron smelting industry. The fact was taken advantage of during megalithic period, when megalithic builders of the region smelted iron and prepared weapons and implements for their needs. Even today *agarias*, a branch of Gond, continue the tradition of smelting iron in this region. The common soil types are:

- *Bhata*: Sandy and gravel soil, generally occurring on the up land tops.
- *Dharsa*: A loamy soil, brownish yellow, suitable for many varieties crops.
- *Matasi*: yellow sandy soil with some admixture of clay.
- *Kanhar*: A deep and dark bluish black soil, which is generally found in low-lying areas.

Fauna and Flora:

The region is covered with mixed species like:

1. Pendra plateau (Chhuri Hills): *ebony, tendu, bijasal and sisu*.
2. Lormi plateau-North Maikal Rang: *sain and barra*.
3. South Maikal Rang: *tendu, bijasal, sisu and vakil*.
4. North Raipur upland: *bijasal* and *Terminalia* species.
5. South Raipur-Durg upland: *bijasal, tendu* and *Terminalia*.
6. SouthWest Durg upland: *Terminalia, anjan* and *Teak*.
7. Bastar and Sarguja: Major area of the forest predominates with *sal* and *Teak*.

The other species commonly found are: *mahua, barra, bahera, aonla, kusum, char, palas, tinsa, rohana, bel, ber, khair, lendia, kumhi* and Bamboo forest are found everywhere. The forest of Chhattisgarh are known for their timber of *sal*. *Tendu* provides valuable leaves for *bidi*, *sal* and *achar* produce Gums and *kalas* and *kusum* provide *lac*.

The most common animal found in Chhattisgarh are: monkey (*semnopithecus entellus-kalmuhabendra*), tiger (*felis panthora-sha,bagh*), panther (*panther pardus, tendua,chitwa*), Indian civet (*viverra malaccensis-bignaori*), mongoose (*herpestes dwards, geoffery-newara*), Indian otter (*lutra vulgaris*), Indian wolves (*canis lupus-hundra*), jackle (*Canis aureus-kolhia*), Indian wild dog (*cyon dukhunens sis-kogwa*), Indian boar (*sus*

cristatus-barha), Indian fox (*vulpes bengalensis*–khekri), Indian gabelle (*gagella bannetti*–chinkara), the filgai (*boselephus tragocamlus-rojra*), spotted deer (*axis-axis*) and sambar (*cervus unicolor*).

Among the birds, the common peafowl (*pavo cristatus*), the common jungle cock (*gallus gallus*), the common spur-fowls (*gallperdix spadicea*), the painted spur fowl (*galloperdix luna lata*), the rock and painted sandgrouse (*pteoloculurus exustus*), bush quail (*pedicula asiatica*), green pigeon (*treron phornicoptera*) are found in the jungles and rocks of the area.

Climatic condition:

The region has tropical rainy climate in dry winters. The temperature varies from 19.8° Celsius in January to 47.7° Celsius in May, the hottest month. Monsoon rains feed the area. The distribution of annual rainfall in this region is clearly influenced by Orography. During summer, while the plains are extremely hot and scorching, the plateaus and hills are pleasantly cool. During rain, while the plains are unpleasantly warm and salty, the highlands enjoy comfortable weather due to frequently blowing winds.

Drainage System:

The Mahanadi is the largest river in this region. The drainage system divides the region into Seven Physical units:

1. The Mahanadi-Seonath Doab
2. The Trans Seonath plain (south)
3. The Trans Seonath plain (north)
4. Hasdo-Mand lowland plain
5. Raigarh Basin

6. Mahanadi-Raipur uplands (south)

7. Mahanadi-Raipur upland (north)

The Indravati, a major tributary of the Godavari flows in the central part of Bastar district and Kalahandi district of Orissa. It flows Westward through Koraput and Bastar districts, turns South and joins the Godavari about 530 km from its source at an elevation of 82 mts. near Bhopalpatnam. The major tributary of the Indravati are Narangi, Kotari, Bandia and Nibra. Most of the rivers in Bastar are perennial.

Mineral Resources:

The Chhattisgarh region is very rich in various varieties of rocks and minerals such as limestone, dolomite, bauxite, coal, fire-clay, iron ore, manganese, galena lead, graphite, and quartz and diamond deposits. There are twenty kinds of major and minor mineral present in the state. Chhattisgarh is the leader in terms of minerals deposits among all the states.⁸

Enormous occurrence of limestone in Cuddapah formations is being exploited for cement making. Limestone quarries are dotted in the Chhattisgarh Plain, e.g. at Telibandha, Rawanbhata, Mahadeoghat and Khusalpur on the periphery of Raipur city and Akaltara and Jairamnagar in Bilaspur district, Nandini mines (with 21 million tonnes reserve) in Durg district, which supplies to the Bhilai Steel Plant, several places in Bastar and Sarguja districts.

Notable dolomite reserves are near Bhatapara in Raipur district; Khaira, Ramtota, Hirri, Parsoda and Bhanesa are in Bilaspur district. Bauxite occurs near Korba (50 million tonnes in Bilaspur district and Bhavi in Rajnandgaon district). Clay is found in 1.5 to 3.00 mts. thick beds in Kohniama *nala*, Motinahar, Sonumurdih, Mahuadih and

Dhajar *nala* in Bilaspur district. It also occurs in Nandini and Moradabra in Durg district and on the bank of Kharun River near the rail bridge in Raipur district. Fine clay occurs at Kharsia and Chintapanigaon near Raigarh. The richest Korba coal fields are located in the Hasdo valley in Bilaspur. It also occurs in the lower Brahmani valley of Raigarh district of Domhatea and Deoduria.

Iron Deposits:

Iron ore occurs in the Dalli-Rjhara, Jharandalli areas, south of the Chhattisgarh plain. This is the source of raw material for Bhilai steel plant. One of the richest iron-ore deposit of the country is at Bailadilla range of Dantewada district. It is 392 km South of Raipur and string subsequently on for about 48 km in length from North to South. The flat tops of the ridges are the main iron ore blocks. The iron-ores are associated with bandal haematite, quartzites and ferruginous schist of the Bailadilla iron ore series. Another laterite-capped iron ore band similar to Bailadilla known as Rowghat, lies in Narainpur *tahasil* close to Antagarh-Narainpur road. They are mainly haematite with some limonite at places and occur in the precipitous hills of 450 mts. elevation. In most places, the percentage of iron varies from 69 percentages to 66.35 percentages. Much before the discovery of these iron ore deposits by the modern geologists, they were well known to the local tribal, particularly in Bastar and around Jharan-Dalli-Rajhara, on East from the megalithic times, around 1000 B.C. as evidences from excavations at Karkabhat clearly show.⁹

The iron occurrences of laterites used for indigenous iron smelting may be mentioned at Nandinitola, Akalbari and Rajhara villages of Durg district, as well as at some places in Raipur district and Bastar district. Dalli is most advantageously situated as

regards the supply of water. There are several springs in the neighborhood yielding iron in a very pure form. The ores have been used in open furnaces by indigenous methods, being mixed with charcoal in the preparation. In the Sanjari-Balod *tahasil*, nineteen of such furnaces were in work in 1907. The metal turned out by furnaces was refined in an open hearth and made into base called *Chula*, which was sold to blacksmiths. The workers were *agarias*, a branch of Gonds. They had their own terms for iron and iron smelting. Iron was called *klachi*.

Lead and Silver:

Lead has been reported from the *Chandi Dongri* shear zone near Bemetara where a quartz vein has been traced over a kilometer. Specimen of ore yielded over nine oz. of silver pattern leads. An outcrop of quartz veins with lead and copper occurs in a country of shale's and green stone, West of Durg at Murhipar.

Gold and Ochre:

Gold is found in Khiragarh *tahasil* of Rajnandgaon district as well as in the Jonk River in Raipur district. Red ochre of the finest quality is obtained from Gandai and Thakurtola area. Yellow and brown ochreous enrichments have frequently been noticed in the ferruginous shelves of the Sanjari-Balod *tahasil*. Manganese ore are found in Bilaspur District. Inside the Chhattisgarh, the Bastar region has the separate identity. Physiographically the region is divided into following divisions:

(1). Northern lowland: The Kotri Mahanadi plain string consequently from the Northern boundary of the district for about twenty five km covering most parts of Kanker and Bhanupratappur *tahasil* and the Northern parts of Narayanpur *tahasil*. In Northward, this plain continues into the plain of Raipur and Durg. (2). Keskall Scarpment: South of

the Northern lowland, the land rises steeply for about 150 mts. to 300 mts. along the Pratappur-Kolabira-Antagarh-Kanker line. (3). Abhujmarh Hills: The land surface along the Keskalkotru is maintained at a height of 600mts. to 700mts. throughout the central part of the region. (4). Northern Plateau: The Northeastern plateau lies East of the *abhujmarh* hills and extends up to the Eastern boundary of the region. It occupies chiefly the Kondagaon and Jagdalpur tahasil and slopes gently from about 750 mts. height near Keskalk. (5). Southern Plateau: A largely lower plateau region of about 300 mts. to 600 mts. elevation extends the South-west of the Northeastern plateau, covering Dantewada tahasil and Northern part of Bijapur and Konta tahasil. (6). Southern Lowland: The Sukma lowland, with a surface height of 150 mts. to 300 mts. continues South-west as a wide strip of roughly 25 km along the district boundary to Konta.

(Table- 1) Mineral Deposits in Chhattisgarh Region

Sl. No.	Name of the Minerals	Districts/Areas
01	Iron Ore	Dantewada, Bastar, Kanker, Rajnandgaon, Raipur, Durg
02	Limestone	Janjgir, Bilaspur, Rajnandgaon, Kawardha, Sarguja, Raigarh
03	Bauxite	Kawardha, Bastar
04	Dolomite	Janjgir, Durg, Hasdeo-Arand
05	Coal	Raigarh, Raipur, Korba, sarguja
06	Tin Ore	Bastar
07	Corundum	Bastar, Dantewada
08	Gold Fluorite	Rajnandgaon, Raipur
09	Diamond	Raipur

The present state of Chhattisgarh occupies a considerable tract of land in the central part of India. It is predominantly hilly state, but in central part like Durg, Raipur, Mahasamud and Bilaspur district there is a plain area densely populated. So the

construction and the morphological feature of the memorial stone monument are based on the geographical climate of the region.

Notes and References

¹ Kroeber, A. L. "Ecological Study in Cultural Anthropology." P.V. Andrew. (ed.) *Cultural Anthropology*, New York, 1969, p. 350.

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³ Bhatt, S. C., and G.K. Bhargav. (ed.) *Land and People*, Vol.6, New Delhi, 2005, p.25.

⁴ Bhatt, S. C. (ed.), *The District Gazetteer of India*, Various Districts of Chhattisgarh, Bhopal, 1972.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Sharma, A. K., *Archaeo-Anthropology of Chhattisgarh*, New Delhi, 2000, Pp.21-28.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.* p. 61.

Chapter-2

Ethnographic Profile of Gonds

Ethnographic Profile

Anthropologically, a tribe is a social group where members live in a common territory and possess a common dialect, uniform, social organization and maintained cultural homogeneity and a common ancestor. But as per these characteristics, it would be very difficult to locate many tribal groups in India who possess all these characteristics.

Thus, on the basis of characteristics found among the tribes of India, their racial elements have been explained by different anthropologists. H. H. Risley¹ recognized their principal racial types in India. They are: (i) Dravidian (ii) Indo-Aryan (iii) Mongolian.

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

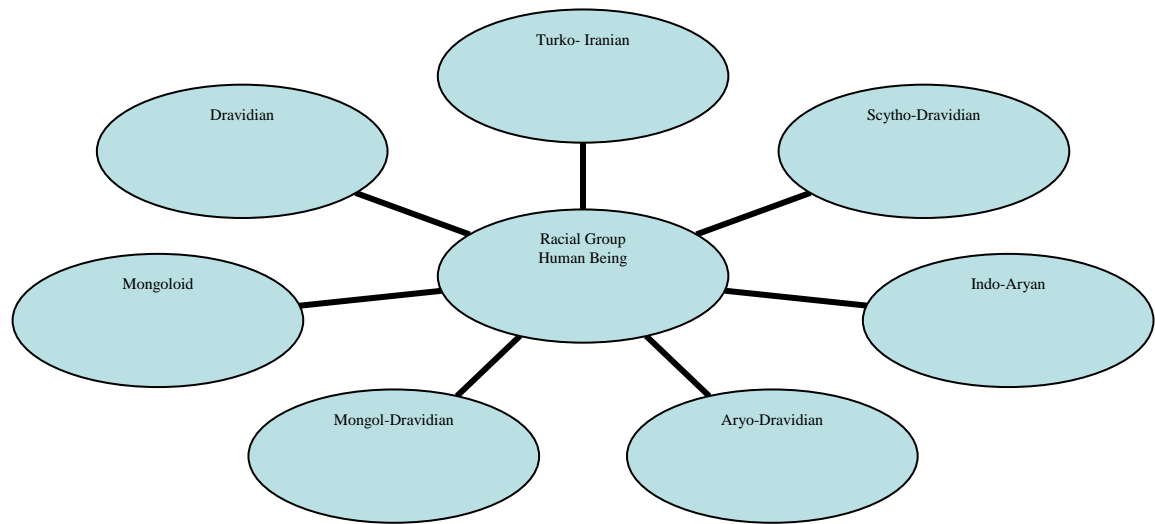
- a) Turks-Iranian.
- b) Indo-Aryan.
- c) Scytho-Dravidian.
- d) Aryo-Dravidian.
- e) Mongol-Dravidian
- f) Mongoloid
- g) Dravidian

If we see the Chhattisgarh tribal groups, particularly in Bastar region, they come under the Dravidian racial group.

Ethnography is an in-depth description of a culture or group of people sharing a culture. It is the study of people in a conduct, a detailed study of a group of people while being immersed in the culture of that group. Ethnography ('ethno', people or folk and 'graphy', to describe something)² is sometimes referred to as participant observation or field research that involves the study of people or an organization through face-to-face

interaction in a real life of social setting. There is no deductive hypothesis to follow or any statistical formula. Over time, this interaction yields a rich and detailed account of a culture, history, and characteristics of a social phenomenon. Ethnography expends awareness of global culture and reduces ethnocentric views and cultural idiosyncrasies.

The following diagram shows the division of various racial groups:



The Qualitative researchers are more interested in the detail of knowledge than breadth of knowledge. However I wish to attempt to focus on the ethnographical profile of groups of tribal people that is Gond of Chhattisgarh, where the majority of the tribes are an aborigine of this region.

Bastar region is the melting pot of cultural behaviour for a long period. The original inhabitants of the region are tribal like, the *muria*, the *abhuj maria*, the *bison-horn maria*, the *halba*, the *bhatra*, the *dhorla*, and the *dhurva* and so on. One can divide these tribal groups in their specific regions. The *abhuj maria* are settled in the Northwestern part, the *bison horn maria* are in South-central part, that is in Dantewada region, *muria* are in the North and North West, *dhorla* are in Southern part and in Bijapur

area, *dhurva* are in Southeastern part in Sukma region, *bhatra* are in Jagdalpur region and *halba* are in the North and South Bastar. Apart from them, there is a sizeable population of an immigrant who are mostly business-based community from Gujarat, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Orissa. These immigrants re-interpret several aspects of their traditional culture and adjust in the new environment. The cultural pluralism has been noticed among the immigrant subjects. When two or more cultural system are long continued, conduct having a mutual accommodation which ultimately allows each to sustain its own distinct way of life is evident from the cultural behaviour of the immigrant population of the region.

If we peep into the origin of Chhatisgarh tribe, the anthropological and historical studies have proved that today's Chhattisgarhi tribes' ancestors were the *Rg.Vedic* indigenous tribes. The Harivansa Purana states that *dasa*, *nisada* and *bhil* are a continual hereditary chain from *Rg.Veda* to the present day. *Rg.Veda*³ is the first ever literary text to depict these tribal, their historical positions, their principal points of differences, their organizations and mode of life, and their wealth and civilization.

S. W. Grigson⁴ mentions that the gond, wherever he speak his own language, from central India to the eastern ghats and Hyderabad, call himself *koi* or *koitor*. Only in Madras and Hyderabad they are called as *koyas*. All the *koitor* of Bastar region have thus been officially classified as Gond and they are divided into many sub tribes. But, if we examine the nomenclature of *koitor*, the tribal of Bastar region, even they do not know the term "Gond". It is a literary term for the intellectual and academician.

Abhuj Maria or Hill Maria:

The *abhuj maria* are living in the unknown hills (abhuj= 'unknown' and marh='hill')⁵ of Bastar region. These people are one of the sub-tribe of Gond. The tribal people

of this region are classified based on their generic name Gond and they represent certain primitive stages and levels of development of our human society. They are mostly found in Orcha block of Narayanpur tahasil in Bastar district and in some part of Dantewada district.

They live in isolation, keeping them away from the outer world and lead a diverse life. Their traditional culture, moral living values and social security has not yet been disturbed. They are one of the rare tribal groups of India living in Chhattisgarh in isolation. They are the most powerful of all the wild tribes in India. It is clear that the Hill *maria* was different from the *muria*, because of their habitats and agricultural methods. They are more primitive as compared to other tribes of India.

Settlement Pattern:

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

Language:

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

Family Structure:

Family is the smallest unit of the hill *maria* society. The family occupies a single domicile. The nature of the family is conjugal for it consists of husband, wife and their

children; the eldest male in a household occupies final authority in all spheres of socio-economic life. Their clans (*kata*) are an unilinear descent group. All the members of the clan believe that they descended from a common ancestor. In each hill *maria* village, there is a dominant clan such as called *usendi*. A group of different clans are called *bhaiband* or *dadabhai* (brother clan). The marital alliances in those having *bhaiband* relationship are prohibited, though they practice clan exogamy. The hill *maria* gets introduced to the various stages of life cycle through rites-de-passage.

Marriage Customs:

They are permitted to settle marriage only with a member of wife's clan called *akomama*. Therefore, all the clans have some *bhaiband* clan and some *akomama* clan. They prefer cross cousin marriage due to several causes like: (i) easy adjustment, (ii) easy availability of bride, and (iii) less payment towards bride price. Bride prices are paid both in cash and kind. Monogamy is their rule, but polygamy is also permitted and practiced by them. Both levirate and sororate type of marriage are prevalent in their society.

The marriage by negotiation (*pendul*) is the rule. The marriage rituals are performed by their elders. The other types of marriage are *lamre* (marriage by service), *vitte* (marriage by elopement), *aeohundi* (junior levirate), *koheberdan* (marriage by exchanges), *koyeyari* (sororate) and widow re-marriage are also allowed. The date of marriage is fixed on the local market day. There is no divorce legally.

Kinship:

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

(Table-1) Terminology of Relatives

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

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

Division of Power:

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

There are some interferences of the village *panchayat* in the matter of village administration.

Occupation:

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

There is no elaborate pattern of economic exchange among the families within a village. There are some items they need such as beads, ornaments, cloths, iron tools, salt, cooking oils, mirror, etc., and to obtain these products they take economic relationship with markets, traders, fairs and occupational specialists. They also make bamboo basket, rope, broom etc., and sell in the market. They collect the forest products for their own consumption and sell or exchange with other items in market.

Facilities and Amenities:

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

The schools in the village are run by a single teacher. The teachers in these schools are habitual absentee due to the Maoist movement. The tribal area of abhuj marh is influenced by the *maoist*. Due to this problem, the governmental initiatives are not working-out properly and NGOs are working in consonance with the local people.

Food Habits:

Both men and women dine at the same time; however children are served earlier. *mandru pej*, gruel prepared from millet (*ragi*)/ boiled rice, serves the morning breakfast, which is usually at 7.00 to 9.00 AM. Drinking sago-palm juice (*salpi*) mitigates the whole day's starvation. The meal is prepared with boiled rice and leafy vegetables. Beef is taken sometimes during the festivals. Boiled system of preparing food, with the *haldi* powder as only process of cooking. They are fond of fish, crabs and snails. Dry fish is relished with utmost satisfaction.

They make the indigenous liquor and for that they depend upon the local varieties like sago-palm (*salpi*) and date palm (*tadi*). Local herbs and roots are added to the juice to increase its alcoholic content. Sometimes, *mahua* flower is collected and liquor is prepared to meet the requirement on special occasion. It is considered as food and at the same time it is a ritualistic food to satisfy local deities and spirits. Tobacco is used as narcotics and the *tendu* leaves are dried up and put with the *ganja/bhang*.

Use of Artifacts:

Hill *maria* use varieties of artifacts for their agriculture, hunting and food gathering. They make some of the artifacts and some artifacts are bought in the market. There are also blacksmiths (*kamar*) settled in the adjacent village, where a few

agricultural implement are made. These include plough, crowbar and sickle and axes etc.

The following is a list of some important materials:

(Table-2) List of Artifacts

List of Artifacts (English)	List of Artifacts (Local)
Plough	Nungul
Bow	Villu
Arrow	Sar (kani)
Arrow head	Muni
Crowbar	Pulu
Blow	Pharsi
Spade	Gudari
Bill hock	Gagra
Hoe	Gudari
Axe	Maqsu
Bamboo basket	Bhugli
Leaf umbrella	Chhatul
Leaf basket	Bhuga
Date palm leaf mate	Mashi
Pots	Mathi

Pot and Pans:

Earthen pots (handi and lota) are made to cook rice, *dal*, and storing liquor. They use black-and-red ware pottery, black slipped ware etc., for taking water from river.

Exchange pattern:

Barter system is still the traditional method of exchange among the hill *maria*. Money exchange is the basic trait of exchange. As a result, the outside traders still take the upper hand in exploiting the primitive section. The traders are residing at weekly market and they have extended their relationship with the hill *maria* society. In fact, several steps are now being taken by the government to ameliorate the economic

condition of these primitive sections through various schemes and projects such as MNREGS, Indira Awas Yojana, Sarva Sikhya Aviyan and so on. NGOs are also working for their developmental programme.

Bison Horn Maria

The *bison horn maria* is a sub tribe of Gond. Their culture and ways of living are almost similar to the hill *maria*. They have their separate identity because of their special type of dresses. The name *bison horn maria* is not popular in common usage and has been restricted to books and printed record. The people of Bastar region call these tribes as *damdami maria*.⁶

Settlement Pattern:

They are settled in Dantewada, Bijapur, Sukma and Konta tahasil of Dantewada district. They are still in the primitive stage of civilization and development is invading them steadily. They are living mainly in the forest area. The village consists of 8 to 30 houses and each house belongs to a family. One can find a village in a distance of one to two kilometers. They depend on rivers for water. Each house stands in its own garden, which is sometimes a substantial field. The little huts stand in the woods. Each village has a hut for the accommodation of traveler. They also use these huts as a dormitory. Most houses consist of three rooms. The houses are generally clean and pleasant. Outside the house, one can find cattle shed.

Family, Clan and Marriage:

The family consists of husband, wife and their children. The head of the family is the oldest man. They are divided into number of phratries and clans, resembling those of the *maria*, *halba* and other tribes. There are different clans like *marvi*, *kurmi*, *sodi*, *markami* and *kawasi*. They are divided into a number of exogamous, totemistic clan

(katta). The main function of the clan is to regulate marriage. Among the *dada-bhai* clan, marriage is prohibited. Their arrangement of marriage is possible only in *akomama* clan.

The marriage takes place at an early age before puberty. The *magni* (engagement) takes place in the girls' home. Monogamy is the rule for marriage. However, in rare circumstances polygamy is also allowed in their society. The marriage ceremony is called *pendul*. They have a custom of payment of bride price. Divorce is permitted for both the sexes but there should be proper reasons. There are many ways of marriage, like *choudula pendul*, *mutton pendul* etc. In outskirts of the village they kept their clan god and goddess and they worship regularly. The religious head is called *sirha* and *jhankar*.

Occupation:

Their primary occupation is cultivation and occasionally they do hunting and fishing. They also collect various types of roots, fruits, tubers, flowers, seeds; woods and so on from the jungles and some of these materials are sold in the weekly market. Now, industrialization has played a vital role to change the profession of this tribe. They do jobs at the iron factory at Bailadila, as skilled and unskilled laborer. They also practice a profession of dancing. They also visit abroad to perform their traditional dances in different cultural festivals.

Village Institution:

They have their own *jati panchayat* of social control. The *jati panchayat* solves the entire dispute among the tribes of a village. The head of the *jati panchayat* is called *pedda*, assisted by *para mukhiya*. The government appoints a *kotwar* in every five to six villages. They have an inter-village organization too. The head of the inter-village organization is called *pargana manjhi*. The main function he performs is to solve the

disputes between the villages. The government *panchayat* has a role to play in the governance.

Food Habits:

They are non-vegetarian and they take beef. They usually have their breakfast after returning from field in the morning. They collect the *sal* seed for oil. They eat fruits and vegetables. Rice and *dal* is the main dish in the lunch and dinner. Majority of the men and a few women drink sago palm wine (*tadi*), home made rice beer and other alcoholic drinks. Men smoke and chew tobacco. Women consume *ghudaku* (one type of liquid tobacco).

Physical Feature and Dress:

They are Dravidians with black skin, round nose, and black hair. They wear a small piece of cloth. The men wear *lungi* in the lower part. Women cover both the upper and lower part of the body with a *saree*. Now-a-days they wear shirt and pant, girls sometimes wear a *salwar*. Hence, they do not wear their traditional dresses except on the festival days these days.

Ornaments:

Most men content themselves with one or two small bead necklaces (*mungya*) round their necks, the beads being all of one shape. They are fond of necklaces of small, brightly and the girdled bead, which they are called *mirako-mungya*. They wear one or two armlets on one arm above the elbow or a pair of bracelet on one wrist of silver, brass or aluminum. They wear a plain waist-cord instead of the cowry-cord of the hills for carrying knives and tobacco boxes. Women wear armlets and wristlets. They wear iron

neck ring, which is called *tiya*. The nose is symmetrically adorned by two gold gilt rings and a small gold ornament like a leaf pointing set in the middle.

Weapon and Tools:

The *bison horn maria* uses a long and powerful stabbing spear for killing the big game, including tiger and panther. In case of hill *maria*, the distinctive types of weapons are made by the blacksmith living in their hills and are used for hunting. The chief agricultural implements of the *bison horn maria*, with which they hack up the surface and slopes and their occasional patches of permanent cultivation, are their *kargudar* (hoe). Arrow is the most important instrument for killing. The following are the varieties of arrows:

(Table-3) Name of Arrows

Arrow Name (English)	Arrow Name (Local)
Arrow head	Kar
Barb	Kue
Shaft	Kara
Shaft-nock	Pisel
Feathering	Kar-gering
Club-arrow	Mitom-kara
Head of club arrow	Mitom

Traditional Dance:

The *bison horn maria*'s dances are quite different from the other tribes of India. They dance forming a circle with men and woman standing alternatively. They wear ceremonial head dress, which are made of a pair of bison horn and collection of cowrie-shell, beads and spike. Strings of beads are lesion all round this head-dress which partly covers their faces. Women wear their brass tiaras and the brief wraps around their waists

and stand in between the men. Men of all ages, married and unmarried, youth, boys, young wives and girls join the dance. Before dance they take *landa* or *mahua* liquor. The head-dress is passed on to the son or brother after the death of a person. Except during the rain and the sowing season, any night is good for dance and no preparatory is required. These days, the practice of dance is decreasing day by day. Some people are practicing this dance and they make this dance their profession. They perform this dance in other part of India and abroad. The dance is known as *dhemsa*.

Animism:

They worship sun or *parod*, moon or *lenj* and stars or *ukka*. The rainbow is regarded as a bow of the rain god, *bhimul*. They worship the earth goddess *bhum* who is regarded as their mother goddess and who feeds and sustains her *Maria* children.

The Muria:

The name maria has been derived from the word '*mur*', the palas tree, or from '*mur*' a root. *Mur* may also mean permanent or aboriginal of this region.⁷ They are a sub-group of *Gond* tribe. They are mainly distributed in the plain forest area of Narayanpur, Kondagaon, Sukma, Antagarh of Bastar district and Avapalli, Usoor of Dantewada district. They speak the *Gondi* dialect and also some broken Hindi.

Settlement Pattern:

The *muria* are mainly settled in the plain forest area, where the agricultural land is available. The *urias* houses are scattered; each house is surrounded by a kitchen, garden, which is again bounded by fencing. The house consists of two or three rooms and a small courtyard. It is made up of timber and bamboo, plastered with mud and has a thatched roof. These days mud bricks and burnt bricks too are in use. The unmarried boys

(*chelik*), girls (*motiari*) spend most of their times in *ghotul* or youth dormitory. There is a free sex tradition in this *ghotul*; this dormitory is totally different from the *maria ghotul*.

Family Structure and Clan:

The clan and the family dominate and control the *urias*' social life. Clan, which is unilateral group, is constituted by agnates residing in the elementary family. These elementary families lived in a number of villages. The families are mainly patriarchal. Father is the head of the family. The family consists of husband, wife and their children. One can find 10 to 20 families in a village. According to Elwin,⁸ the *maria* tribe is divided into five phratries or "*vans*". The following are the different phratries:

1. Naga vans-serpent race
2. Kachhim vans-tortoise race
3. Bakra vans-goat race
4. Bagh vans-tiger race
5. Bodmink vans-fish race

All the clan members are termed as *dada-bhai* and no marital relationship is allowed among them. Each of the clan has its own god.

Marriage System:

They practice phratry and clan exogamy as a marriage rule. Monogamy and adult marriage are the rule, but polygamy is also allowed. Marriage by negotiation (*tulkochana*) is the most preferred and cross-cousin marriage is also preferred in most of the cases. The following are the types of marriage:

- a. *Tak dayana*- Marriage rituals are performed partly at the bride's house and partly at the bridegroom's house.

- b. *Awitana*- It is marriage by elopement, without approval of the concerned parents.
- c. *Haiwark wat*- It is marriage by an intrusion where the girl reaches the boy's house that she wants to marry and forces the marriage.
- d. *Tika tasana*- It is the marriage of a widow or a divorcee.
- e. *Yee dosana marmi*- Marriage of unmarried pregnant girls with the boys who caused the pregnancy. It is called *bhul biha*.
- f. *Ostasana marmi*- It is a traditional *Gond* marriage where after anointing the girl with turmeric, she is sent to the bridegroom's house, where the marriage ritual is performed.

Village Institution or Ghotul:

The *murias* have an institution which is unique among the other tribals of India. This is the institution of *ghotul*,⁹ a dormitory for their young people. Each and every *muria* village has a *ghotul*. It traces its origin from *Lingo-Pen*, a famous cult hero of the *Gond*. There are two leaders in the *ghotul*, one is on boys' side that is known as *sirdar*, and another is on girls' side known as *belsa*. They are responsible to organize and keep discipline in the *ghotul*. There are two types of *ghotul*, the first one is the classical type where boys and girls run more or less permanent relationship which lasts till marriage and the second one is a modern one, where there is no permanent relationship and the partner must constantly be changed. But, these days most of the villages have only one *ghotul* system that is the modern one. The *muria* believe that the *ghotul* is a sacred place; there they never do any sin.

The head of the village council is called *pargana-manjhi*. He has a social responsibility of the village people. He has an assistant known as *patel*. The village

panchayat has a messenger known as *kotwal*. He deals with the laws and customs of the society. He has the right to punish a guilty person, by excommunicating or imposing fine on the person.

Socio-religious Functions of Ghotul:

- a) The house acts as a community centre for the youth.
- b) It is a meeting place for the elders where they gather both in the morning and evening to discuss local affairs. It also serves the purpose of an informal leisure centre for the males.
- c) It functions as the centre for planning and co-ordination of each and every collective activities of the community.
- d) It acts as the court house of the village elders where feuds are settled and often justice administered informally.
- e) It also acts as a communication centre for all messengers that bring news from the Gond villages.
- f) Its most important function is to provide sleeping accommodation to the youths, bachelors and widowers.
- g) ☐ It is used as a storehouse of the communal properties and a place for keeping common accounts.
- h) It is a museum of their art and craft with all its carved structures on the pillars, paintings on the walls and the musical instruments stored.
- i) It is the starting point for the ritual occasions, in each and every religious ceremony organized by the community like taking the sacred fire to kindle the first bush wood for shifting cultivation.

j) It is also used as a rest house for the guests and visitors.

Educative Functions of Ghotul:

a) ☐ The community house acts as the educational institution for both the sexes. It acts directly in educating the boys and indirectly the girls about fulfillment of responsibilities required of them.

b) The junior members are trained by the seniors to direct their energy to adjust with the people in social, economic, religious and other aspects of life. Thus it is through the senior-junior relationship, the process of socialization takes place.

c) Each and every member of the community house has to fulfill the requirements and obligations of their age set, failing which they are subjected to punishments. These obligations make them disciplined and responsible persons of the society in future.

d) Further, by association with the senior members, the juniors also learn to become a part of the village economic and social system.

Thus, the community house trains the young generation to grow conscious of their community and its need before marriage and enables them to become responsible adults. These children though spend more time with their new age group mates than with the family; the two areas of responsibilities never clash and are recognized by all. Above all, in course of the dormitory life, they learn from elders about their traditional art and craft such as wood carving, painting, different types of traditional dance and song and preparation of musical instrument. They are also acquainted with their cultural heritage through folk tales, riddles, stories, myths etc. by hearing from the elders. It is no doubt that the dormitory house serves the purpose of perpetuating the cultural heritage from generation to generation and helps in the process of socialization.

Occupation:

Their economic life is based on the forest and land. They collect roots, fruits, flowers, honey, young bamboo stick, mushroom, etc., from the forest. Most of these are among their food chart. The rest is sold in the market or exchanged with salt, oil and so on.

Their main occupation is cultivation. They do both *parka* (slash and burn) cultivation and settled cultivation. They cultivate rice, *ragi*, wheat etc. Because of modernization the *muria* have come to the main land of the civilized society and they are getting higher education too. They join many NGOs, government jobs and factory. The researcher found a boy who is studying History at post-graduate level at Pandith Ravishankar Sukla University, Raipur and belongs to the *muria* tribe of the Avapalli village of Dantewada district.

Facilities, Amenities and Food Habits:

The *murias* are more modernized if compared to the other tribes of Chhattisgarh. Health is a major problem for them. There is a lack of primary health centre for each village. Seven to fifteen villages have a primary health center. If a person is serious, they have to go to the *sadar* hospital which is far away from the village. The malaria eradication centre is available in their village. Due to Sarva Siksha Abhiyan one can find schools in their village. However, due to *naxalite* fear, teachers hardly come to schools regularly. There is no proper road communication but because of industrialization the road and other facilities are under construction. There is less electricity facility in the village. There is a scarcity of drinking water as well.

Most of the *muria* are Hinduised due to the influences of Goddess *danteswari* worshipped in the hindu festival day such as *dassera* and *diwali*. Their food habits

depend on the availability of the vegetables. Generally, they prepare rice, *dal* and leafy vegetables. Drinking sago palm juice (*salpi*) is common among the *muria* society. They are generally non vegetarian. Sometimes *mahua* flower is collected and liquor is prepared to meet the requirement on special occasions. Liquor is considered as food and at the same time a ritualistic food for deities and spirits like the hill *maria*. They also use tobacco.

Use of Artifacts:

The *muria* use a variety of artifacts. They are mainly agriculturists and they use plough (nangal), bill hock (chhuri), hoe (kurar), axe (phasa), spear (gorka), arrow (kar). They use some mats and basket of bamboo, like bamboo basket (chhachan), leaf umbrella (chhatul), leaf basket (changri), date palm leaf mats (pati). The pots are used for cooking rice (handi), *dal* (patul) and storing or bringing water (matka).

Dress and Ornaments:

The *muria* of this region follow a specific dress pattern that can be differentiated on the basis of age and sex. The older man wears *lungi* and *gancha*. The new generation youth have adapted to the pants, shirts and *lungis* as outwear. The women wear *sarees* and blouse; the younger girls have taken *salwar* and *saree* as outwear. Girls often wear rows of combs in their hair, with their bunches of cowries and balls of red and green wool. Both *chelik* and *mortiari* love to put flowers in their hair or over their ears. They wear many necklaces of red and white beads. The following are the names of some necklaces:

(Table-4) Names of Necklace

Name of Necklace (English)	Name of Necklace (Local)
Small black beads	Gar-gatti
White beads	Modi mala
Red beads	Jat mungiya
Red and white beads	Jug-jugi
Neck band	Ban suta
Black necklace	Kari

The girls wear floppy brass pair slopping down over the heels and a thick heavy brass *tin-kor* above the anklet. Behind the head, they wind it over the small wooden block which is called *kunjar balla*. They also use the cowric belt on the hips. All the girls use a hand brass ring which is called *haat bala*.

Village God and Goddesses:

There are several totems and several gods and goddesses in village. They have their own superstitions and sorcery practices. Still they use the ethno-medicine to procure their diseases. There is no functional division of barbers, cobblers, weavers, washer men etc. Among their deities, the ancestors are very important. They are regarded as their family deities. They worship their clan gods known as *angapen*, *pat deo* etc. In addition to their own deities, they also worship *danteswari mata*, *mauli mata* etc. The *muria* priest and sacred specialists are known as *kazeer*, *gaita* and *gunia*. They believe in nature and they worship the sun god, moon god, and the rain god.

The Dhorla:

The *dhorlas* are a sub tribe of the Gond. They are distributed in Konta and Bijapur tahasil of Dantewada district, Koraput district of Orissa, and in some part of Khammam district of Andhra Pradesh. They speak the *dhorla* dialect. The *dhorla* settlements are

arranged in linear fashion. The houses are two or four slopped with a kitchen, sometimes a small garden and constructed with bamboo, wood and plastered with mud and thatched with a kind of date palm leaves.

Marriage Custom:

In their marriage system, monogamy is the rule but polygamy is also allowed. Marriage by negotiation is most the popular form of marriage and sometimes cross-cousin marriage is performed. They have a custom of payment of a bride price. Widow re-marriage, levirate, sororate, marriage by elopement and exchange are also permitted. Marriage rituals take place at the bridegroom's house. A married woman wears a particular type of necklace in her finger as a symbol of the marriage. Divorce is permitted, but it is rare. They follow the Hindu way of marriage system.

Family Structure:

The family consists of husband, wife and their children. They are strictly an endogamous group and divided into some phratries (*gatta*). Each *gatta*, has several subdivisions (*intiparu*), which are equivalent to a clan. Each clan is associated with a clan god (*pen*). Marriage is not allowed among the same clan. Their family is a patrilineal. The property of a person is divided equally among his sons only. They have their own traditional council of social control headed by an elderly man.

Occupation:

They are primarily agriculturists. Cultivation is their main profession. Fishing, hunting and collecting forest goods are their secondary occupation. They also sell milk, and eggs. They also work as daily manual worker.

Food Habits:

Rice and *jawar* are their staple food. They are non-vegetarian. Pork is a delicious item for the whole family. They do not eat beef. Various types of pulses, vegetables, collected jungle products are also taken with the staple food. The *salpi* and *mahua* liquor and smoking pogo (tobacco) are their habits.

Dress and Ornaments:

The men wear loin-cloth known as *gos*; most of them wear turban (tall-gudda), and they do not cover the upper portion of their body. Women wear *saree* (gudda) and blouse or *raika*. They use blanket in winter. They use various types of ornaments. Women wear glass and silver bangles and silver anklet (*beri*). The married women wear *puste*, a type of necklace as a system of marriage. The girls and aged women wear *billa*, a necklace. Men wear bangle, armlet and silver chain around the waist. The women tattoo their faces and arms with dots and lines.

Death Ceremony:

They have faith in the existence of spirits of natural objects such as hills, jungle and water and so on and also spirit of ghosts. They also worship the souls of their dead ancestor. In case of the death occurs the *gunia* or magician ascertains the cause of death. They believe that death occurs due to some evil caused by somebody or some evil spirit. They cremate their dead except a child or death due to small pox whom they bury. They have their own cremation ground in their village. They have no custom to erect *menhir* or any memorial stone like the *muria*. The pollution period or *sudhi* continue till the performance of *dinam* or calling back of the dead man soul to the home. The performance of *sudhi* has no fixed time. It may be observed within a week or even after a few weeks.

It depends on the economic condition of the family. The family has to invite the villagers, relatives and specially those who attend funeral ceremony. The pollution period gets over when the family takes a ceremonial bath. After taking the ceremonial bath, they can work in the field or go to any sacred place or temple.

Halba:

The *halbas* are also sub-tribe of the Gond. The *halbas* are spread over Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Orissa. There are three types of *halbas* in Chhattisgarh viz. Chhattisgaria, Marathia, Bastaria and Raipuria. They are probably known as *halba*, because they use “*hal*,” that is plough. It means that they are primarily agriculturists. They speak the *halbi* and some broken Hindi and Oriya. They are settled throughout the Chhattisgarh area.

Food Habits:

Rice is their staple food. They also take *pej* (gruel) prepared from their *marua* (*mandia*). They are very fond of drinks such as *lenda*, *mahua*, *salpi* etc. They are non vegetarian but never touch beef.

Family, Clan and Marriage:

The family consists of husband, wife and their children. They claim superior status over the other tribes of Chhattisgarh. The head of the family is father. They are divided into numbers of vans or clans such as *bhartiya*, *nag*, *kachim* etc. They practise monogamy; polygamy is also permitted in their marriage system. Cross- cousin marriage is preferential the most. Child marriage is not permitted. Girls marry around 18 years, and boys around 25 years. Marriage by negotiation is common, but marriage by elopement (*pisamundi*) and marriage by service (*garjuin*) occur frequently. Bangles are the main

marriage symbol to them. Divorce is permissible among them due to barrenness, maladjustment, illegal relation with others. Mainly they follow the Hindu tradition. They are patrilocal and prefer to live in extended families, but nowadays, the numbers of nuclear families are increasing.

Dress and Ornaments:

Men wear dhoti, and shirt, while the women wear saree covering shoulders and up to the knees. The women are very much fond of wearing ornaments and wear necklace, armlets, bracelets, nose ornaments, ear top etc. Those who cannot afford gold or silver, then at least wear a bead. Girls must be tattooed before their marriage. They make dots on the left nostril, centre of the chin and three dots in a line on the right shoulder.

Village Institution:

The head of the village is called *siyana* (old man). The *naik* is the leader of the four-five villages. They deal with their cases related to their customary laws, disputes on lands, family problem, etc. In the case of inter community's disputes they appeal to the village *panchayat*. The village *panchayat* also looks after the developmental activities.

Death Ceremony:

They bury the dead body. They do not follow the erection of memorial stone for their ancestors like the primitive tribal. The dead body is carried on *tandi* (bier) to the burial ground (*marghat*). The dead body is kept with its head towards North. After burial the party takes a bath. Pollution period is observed for three days by the family members. On the third day, they observe *teejnahani* or a purificatory and offer a feast to their relatives. On the tenth day, *nahani* ritual is observed when all the clan members get purified. A feast to the community members is offered.

Bhatra:

The *Bhatra* are a sub-tribe of the Gond. One can find *bhatra* settlements in the eastern part of the Jagdalpur tahasil and in the Kondagaon tahasil of Bastar district. They are also settled in the Navrangpur and Koraput districts of Orissa. They speak *bhatri* dialect. On the basis of the economic criteria, they are divided into three groups: (i) *bad-bhatra* (ii) *majli-bhatra* (iii) *san-bbhatra*. These groups are endogamous. Each of these groups has a number of exogamous, totemistic clans like *kukar* (dog), *bag* (tiger), *kukra* (cock), *nag* (serpent), *bakra* (goat) and so on.

Food Habits:

They are fond of *pej* (rice gruel) and *mahua* liquor. They prepare rice, *dal* and cury. They prepare their food with mustard oil. They are mostly vegetarian and do not eat beef.

Family, Marriage and Kinship:

The nature of the family is nuclear and of extended type. The family consists of husband, wife and their children. The person of same lineage is known as *kinder bhai*. The affinal kins are known as *saga kutum* and the *bhatra* people are known as *saga lok*. They are monogamous but polygamy is also permitted. The marriage proposal comes from a boy's house to a girl's house. The boy's father, along with a *mahalakari* (negotiators), visits a girl's house and approaches for the marriage. Divorce is allowed. Remarriage in case of a man is permitted. A woman cannot marry twice. In case of a widow, her younger brother-in-law inherits her as wife without going through any marriage ritual. The marriage ceremony is performed at the brides house is known as *chalbiya* and if it is performed at the bridegroom's house it is known as *kaniabiya*.

Religiously, the *bhatras* are divided into two groups such as *jagaloka* and *bhogaloka*. The *jagaloka bhatra* practise their traditional customs where the *bhogaloka*, converted into the *alekh dharma*, the formless supreme authority called *alekh mahaprabhu*.

The influence of modernization has changed the present day *bhatra's* life. Now, contact with the material world and to meet their necessities, they are involved in various professions. Among the *bhatras*, we can see people getting higher education and holding jobs in NGOs and governmental organizations.

The Dhurwa/Paraja:

There are two names in Chhattisgarh, *dhurwa* and *paraja*. They have a separate identity because the *paraja* eat beef and the *dhruwa* do not. The *dhruwa* are mainly the headmen of the village and also are found in some places as landlord. They live in Bastar block and the Sukma block. One can find them in some areas of the Khammam district of Andhra Pradesh as well. They can speak Hindi.

Settlement:

They have settled in near by towns and in the forest. Their hut is rectangular in shape with two sloped roof. The principal dwelling house is consists of two inner rooms and an enclosed veranda. One can find 25 to 40 families in a village. Their construction of houses is influenced by the town people.

Family, Clan and Marriage System:

They have both joint and nuclear families. They are divided into a number of exogamous and totemistic *vansa* or clan like *bagh* (tiger), *nag* (snake), *dokda* (goat), etc. The property of a person is inherited by his son and not by his daughter. The marriage by negotiation (Mangi) is preferred. They also perform other types of marriage like elopement, junior levirate; sororate etc. Divorce is very frequent amongst them.

Dress and Ornament:

The men wear a loin cloth round the waist and remain bare for the upper part. In winter, they cover their upper portion of the body with a wrapper known as *barki*. The women wear white cotton cloth (*ganda*) and *dhoti*, which covers both the lower and upper portion of the body. Tattooing is done on the back portion of legs, upper portion of arms, almost bordering the breast, the chin, and the fingers. Young men and women wear three or four rows of multi-colored bead necklace with a glittering yellow metallic piece, which is available in the market. Finger rings or *vat* are very common among them. Women wear anklets (*pendil*) of brass, silver, multi-colored *churi* (bangle), amulets, etc.

Occupation:

Basketry is their traditional occupation. Furthermore, they cultivate. Many of them work as agricultural labourers. They also collect honeys, resin, seeds, etc from the jungle and sell them in market.

Social Institution:

The *dhruwa* have own traditional council of social control headed by a *patel* and assisted by a *kotwal*. The post of *patel* is hereditary. They also have connection with the statutory village *panchayat*. Now-a-days, the village *panchayat* takes all the responsibilities of the village.

Death Ceremony:

They believe in rebirth. When a person dies, the head of the family calls his relatives. The dead body is bathed in hot water and placed on *tulsi* water and brought to the burial ground known as *murda gatta*. After reaching there, they dig the grave and then they move with dead body for three or seven times around the grave. Then it is

placed on the grave keeping the head of the dead person towards east. Then the eldest son throws earth on it for three times. After that, the relatives fill the grave with earth.

Some personal belongings of the dead are placed in the grave. Then they return to the dead person house and take bath. The family of the dead person offers a feast in the village. Before taking the feast, some liquor is dropped on the ground, as an offering to the departed soul, known as *duma*. Their religious head is *pujhari* or *pelak*.

The Agaria:

The *agarias* are a small ethnic group of Chhattisgarh. They are concentrated in the Sarguja, Shahdol, Bilaspur, Durg and Raigarh districts and some parts of Kanker district of Chhattisgarh. They have adopted the profession of iron smelting.

Their traditional and main occupation is iron smelting. They also make a few agricultural implements. They get their ore from the Maikal range, selecting stones of dark-reddish colour. They mix 16:15 ore and charcoal in the furnace, the blast being produced by a pair of bellows worked by the feet and conveyed to the furnace through bamboo tubes. It is kept up steadily for four hours. The clay coating of the kilns is then broken down; and the ball of the molten slag and charcoal is taken out and hammered into iron. In this way, they make plough, shares, mattocks, axes, sickle etc. Now their profession is only iron smelting.

Demographic Profile:

In India, the tribal communities belong to different ethno-lingual groups and possess diverse faiths. Living at disparate level of socio-economic development, they spread along the entire spectrum of social evaluation in India ranging from the Paleolithic hunter and gathering of forest produce to industrial workers.

The population of Chhattisgarh is notable for the high proportion of scheduled tribes and specific sects primarily constituting scheduled castes of the total population. The tribal constitute at least 32.05 percentages, which is significantly high. In the last few decades, the demographic profile of tribal-dominated areas has undergone a change. This is a cause for concern, as it represents the large scale intrusion of non-tribal in tribal areas. The 12 percentages of India's forest is in Chhattisgarh and 44 percentages of the state land in under forest.

*** (Table-5) District Wise Scheduled Tribe Population Ratio, Chhattisgarh (2001)**

District	Total Population	Total %	Rural %	Urban %
Dantewada	719,487	78.52	82.41	18.58
Bastar	1,306,673	66.31	71.60	18.44
Kanker	650,934	56.08	57.76	22.94
Jaspur	743,160	63.24	64.50	37.11
Sarguja	1,972,094	54.60	57.42	16.78
Koriya	586,327	44.35	57.17	14.17
Korba	1,011,823	35.38	39.23	13.85
Raigarh	1,265,529	35.38	39.09	11.36
Mahasamund	860,257	27.03	29.45	08.09
Rajnandgaon	1,283,224	26.63	31.01	06.75
Dhamtari	706,591	26.25	28.80	09.56
Kawardha	584,552	20.86	22.08	06.23
Bilaspur	1,998,355	19.87	24.22	06.37
Durg	2,810,437	12.41	16.38	05.97
Janjgir	1,317,431	11.62	12.48	04.68
Raipur	3,016,930	12.11	15.59	04.14
Grand Total Population	20,833,803	10,474,218	10,359,585	100%

(Table-6) Gond Population Ratio in Bastar Region, Chhattisgarh (2001)*

District	Total Population	Male	Female
Dantewada	523,765	256,916	266,849
Bastar	637,769	315,391	322,378
Kanker	320,382	158,740	161,642
Grand Total	1841916	1462094	750869

(Table-7) District Wise Gond Population Ratio, Chhattisgarh (2001)*

District	Total Population	Male	Female
Dantewada	523,765	256,916	266,849
Bastar	637,769	315,391	322,378
Kanker	320,382	158,740	161,642
Koriya	163,987	83,159	80,828
Sarguja	395,752	199,199	196,553
Jaspur	59,353	29,524	29,829
Raigarh	78,149	38,660	39,489
Korba	157,122	79,161	77,961
Janjgir	65,809	32,396	33,413
Bilaspur	260,863	129,346	131,517
Kawardha	89,616	44,198	45,318
Raipur	271,906	106,770	137,136
Rajnandgaon	217,353	106,090	111,263
Durg	193,700	95,916	97,784
Mahasamund	107,709	52,790	54,919
Dhamtari	152,786	75,529	75,257
Grand Total	3,696,021	1,831,885	1,864,136

(Table-8) Distribution of Religion by Sex with % age of Total Population, Chhattisgarh.(2001)*

Religion	Rural/Urban	Person	Male	Female	% age
Hindu	Rural	16,050,183	8,008,837	8,041,346	96.41

	Urban	3,679,487	1,906,833	1,772,654	87.91
Muslim	Rural	152,167	77,204	74,963	0.91
	Urban	257,448	133,635	123,823	06.15
Christian	Rural	301,126	149,010	152,116	01.81
	Urban	99,909	49,461	50,448	02.39
Sikh	Rural	10,420	5,580	4,840	0.06
	Urban	59,201	31,082	28,119	1.41
Buddhist	Rural	24,526	12,109	12,417	0.15
	Urban	40,741	20,335	20,406	0.97
Jain	Rural	10,266	5,405	4,861	0.06
	Urban	45,837	23,781	22,056	1.10
Others	Rural	93,218	46,204	47,014	0.56
	Urban	1,969	1,051	918	0.04
Not Stated	Rural	6,150	3,094	3,056	0.04
	Urban	1,155	607	548	0.03
Grant Total	Rural	16,648,056	8,307,443	8,340,623	100
	Urban	4,185,747	2,166,775	2,018,972	100

From Grigson,¹⁰ through Sarkar¹¹ to Shukla,¹² this entire intellectual input highlights the culture of Chhattisgarh. The gradual change came to Bastar region in the course of increasing contacts of the non-tribal with the tribal. The administrative improvement, the opening up of communication links, the development of trade and commerce, the migration of people from outside, and the establishment of schools, colleges, hospitals all these areas served as the agencies of this long process of change.

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Chapter-3

Megalithic Past Tradition

Megaliths: The Past Tradition

The archaeological research on megalithic has been going on in Chhattisgarh for more than forty five years. Recent discoveries indicate some interesting results for solving some of the enigmatic problems. The region of Chhattisgarh is distinct from both geographical and physiographical aspects. Prolific social scientific investigation into the Chhattisgarh region has been conducted from the 20th century A.D. and the earliest such attempt was taken by M. G. Dikshit¹ of the Department of Archaeology, Madhya Pradesh at Dhanora. His excavation was limited. Though, he reported 500 megalithic monuments in 1956.

When the area was visited in June 2006 by the researcher, not a single monument was standing in perfect order. All the monuments were destroyed by the stone contractors for road construction. Another excavation was conducted by A. K. Sharma² in 1990 at Karkabhat of district Durg. Yet the number of megalithic sites explored in Chhattisgarh was numerically less, which their chronology and nature deserves to be thoroughly analyzed.

Typology of Megaliths in Chhattisgarh:

There is some difference amongst the construction of megaliths monuments of South India, central India and other part of the world due to geographical and technological influences. Most of Chhattisgarhi megaliths were non-sepulchral nature like Dolmen, Menhirs, etc. Here an attempt has been made to discuss the various types of megalithic monuments found during the exploration in Chhattisgarh. The following are the typology of megalithic monuments the researcher explored in Chhattisgarh:

Stone Circles: (Photo-3)

It is a non-sepulchral monument. In this monument the small dressed or undressed stone are kept on the burial in a circle. In this burial, one may find the skeleton, pottery and iron objects. One can generally find ten to fifteen stone circles in a place.

Dolmen with Two Slabs: (Photo-28)

It is also a non-sepulchral monument. The small slab boulders are put in a two-side figure or rectangular plan underneath a small flat stone. The back side of the flat stone and the flat stone is kept like a wall. The villagers call it *due pathri* in Gondi dialect.

Cap-Stone: (Photo-8, 9, 14)

There is a big flat stone lying on support of many boulders. Under the flat stone one can find many small boulders packing. There are many small boulders kept throughout the circle area. One can find merely three cap-stone in this region.

Small Boulder with Single Menhirs :(Photo-26)

This is a unique type of Menhirs in Chhattisgarh. A big stone surrounded with the small boulder. Here the area of cairn circle is very less around 2.00 mts. diameter. The similar type of Menhirs, one can also find at the University of Hyderabad campus.

Alignment: (Photo-13)

The menhirs are in the alignment consisting of a cautiously oriented row and series of standing stones in horizontal line. In Dantewada and Bastar region, one can find five to six small stones, within the line.

Pyramidal Menhir: (Photo-11)

In this monument the small boulder is kept in the same way like the pyramid. Inside the small boulder, there are menhirs. This is the common type in Dantewada

region of Chhattisgarh. This is erected for the memorial purpose in the name of their ancestor. According to ASI, Prehistory Branch, Nagpur report, the chronology of the monument goes back to third century A.D.

Twin Menhir :(Photo-1, 2, 25)

In this type one can find two menhirs within same place and there is large cairn circle around the menhirs. The villagers state that this is the double burial of men and women. The researcher was found an iron implement close to the monuments. The villager was not allowed to take the iron weapon. Hence, it is kept in the village *mukhia* house.

Anthropomorphic Menhir: (Photo-28)

This is only an anthropomorphic figure in the form of menhirs which have been reported from Karkabhat. The most amazing and important finding are the sculptured menhirs. This is the biggest menhir have been sculptured creating the profile of the head of a man. The sculptured menhirs carved out of granite have been put in the center of the heap. Above the cairn heap, the available height of the menhirs is 2.57 mts. and the width is 1.19 mt.

The following are the types of monuments at Karkabhat on the basis of morphological facial appearance. The detailed distribution pattern has been mentioned in the distribution map in the last part.

a) Stone cairn circle with loose packing and low cairn heap. (Photo-39)

b) Stone cairn circle with high cairn heap. (Photo-40)

c) Stone cairn circle with a single menhir at the centre and surrounded with heaped cairn packing. (Photo-26) d) Stone cairn circle with two Menhir erected side by side in the Northern half of the circle, surrounded with cairn heaped packing. (Photo-25)

In Dhanora,³ there was information of four types of megalithic monuments. The following are the types:

1. Apsidal stone enclosure with a cap stone lying flu's on a heap of cairn.
2. Apsidal stone enclosure around menhirs at its centre.
3. Alignment of apsidal stone enclosure.
4. Menhirs with often a huge proportion.

But when the present researcher visited the site in June 2006, at Dhanora, a single cap stone (Photo-9) was found at that place.

Explored Megalithic Site:

District-Dantewada, Gammewada: (Photo-12, 13)

Gammewada is a *muria* dominated village. It is located 12 km from the Dantewada district headquarter, on Dantewada-Bailadila road. There is a *nala* near the village. To the West of the road, we find large number of upright stones. The place is famous for the megalithic burial. In Gondi, the Megaliths are called *uraskal*. These types of grave-stone made of single block of stone are presently also erected by the *muria* Gond of the village in memory of their departed souls.

The size of the stone varies from huge to small ones measuring 1.00 mt. to 2.50 mts. There are six stone concentrate in single line. The stone are facing North-South direction. The maximum height of the menhir is 1.19 mt. The menhirs are erected in vertical or upright positions. The pyramidal menhir is a unique type in this region. Here we found huge amount of small boulders gathered like a pyramid. In between the

boulders we found a single menhir. The height of the menhir from ground level was 0.58 mt. and the monuments were fully covered with vegetation which the villager refused to clear. Some of the menhirs are datable to third and fourth century A.D.⁴ Since it is situated on the road side, it is destroyed by the road contractor for the construction of the Bailadila main road. Even the immigrants of the village use this stone for the construction of building. The main water source in this area is the Indravati River. The land where the monuments are located is forest land.

Timmelwada: (Photo-28, 41)

The village is situated in dense forest. The site is located 29 km from the Dornapal, in South of the Dantewada district. In this site the megalithic graves are in the form of cist-circle with a cap stone over it and five dolmens are there. The cap stone are located inside the forest. The three capstone (Photo-41) the stone slab is placed on the four small boulders and the remaining two slabs (Photo-28) placed on the three small boulders. The maximum length of the slab is 2.08 mts, the width is 1.25 mt and the height is 0.28 mt., the monuments are concentrated in single place. The monuments are in good condition because of the dense forest. There is no proper road communication to reach safely to the village. This village is dominated by the *muria* and *dhurwa* tribes.

Sankanpalli :(Photo-31)

The village is dominated by the *muria* tribe. Most of the villagers are immigrants from the Bhopalpatnam area. The site is located 11 km from Madded. In this site two cairn circles are in disturbed state. The cairn circle consists of about 15 to 20 small boulders placed like a circle. The monuments are in a disturbed condition and it is difficult to identify whether it is a megalithic monument or not.

Nelakanker: (*Explored by researcher*) **(Photo-33)**

The site is located 30 km from the block headquarter Usoor and 5 km from the pujharikanker. From Pujhari Kanker, on the road side, the Megalithic remains are available in the form of menhir. The monuments in this site are in good condition, there is fear of wild animals and presence of *salva judam* anti-naxalite movement. There is information about a menhir in this site. The diameter of the menhir from East-West, 4.15 mts., North-South is 3.40 mts., height of the menhir above ground level. 2.70 mts., width: left is 0.17 mt. and right is 0.54 mt., the maximum length is 2.10 mts.

Mundrapara : (*Explored by researcher*) **(Photo-42)**

The site is located 15 km from the Dantewada, on the Dantewada-Bailadila road. One can find four small menhirs as alignment positions, which are locally called the Uraskals. The size of the stone varies from huge to small ones measuring 1.00 mt. to 3.20 mts. There are four stones concentrate in single line. The stones are facing North-South direction. The maximum height of the monuments is 2.08 mt. The menhirs are erected in vertical or upright positions. The place where the monuments are placed is locally called *marghat*.

Murdanda: (*Explored by researcher*) **(Photo-34)**

The village is dominated by the *muria* tribe. The site is located 10 km from the South of Avapalli of Usoor block. On the West of the road site, we find a stone circle in disturbed condition. There are nine small boulders concentrated in a circle.

District-Bastar, Mothe: **(Photo-36)**

The village is on Dhanora-Dongar road of North of Godma. To the West of the road, we find a menhir. The following is the details of the monuments:

East-West-Diameter	4.00 mts.
North-South-Diameter	4.20 mts.
Maximum Height of the Menhirs above G.L.	2.70 mts.
Width: Left	0.17 mt.
Right	0.19 mt.
Length on G.L.	1.58 mts.
Length on Top	1.38 mts.
Area of Cairn Circle	
East – West	2.00 mts.
North – South	2.15 mts.
Maximum Height of Cairn Heap from G.L.	0.09 mt.

Parond: (Photo-37)

The site is situated in the Bisrampuri-Banskot road nearly 8 km South of Bisrampuri town. To the West of the village there is a menhir in disturbed condition. The polished side of the stone faces the South. The following is the details of the monuments:

Diameter East-West	1.45 mts.
North-South	2.15 mts.
Height of the Menhirs above G.L.	3.00 mts.
Width	0.34 mt.
Thickness	0.33 mt.
Length from G.L.	1.07 mt.
Length on Top	1.07 mts.

District-Rajnandgaon, Kalari:

A. K. Sharma⁵ and his team explored this site in 1990. The site is located 10 km South East of Dongargarh town, which is famous for the tribal goddess *bimaleswari*. On the Dongargarh-Rajnandgaon road via, Tumribod and nearly one and half km from the village Dundera and right bank of the *mula nala* the cairn circles are identified. These cairn circles are similar to the Vidarbha cairn circle. These days people are taking away all these stones for road construction.

Murhipar:

A. K. Sharma⁶ and his team was explored this site in 1990. The site is located East of Rajnandgaon and 24 km of Rajnandgaon town. To one km East of the Murhipar railway station, in the foot-hills of Chirai-Dungri hillock on the both side of Mumbai-Howrah railway line, a large number of cairn circles were present. When the researcher visited this site in May 2005 not a single monument was present there. The monuments may have been destroyed by the stone contractors.

District-Durg, Dhanora: (Photo-9)

The site is located 21 km from the Balod-Dhamtari road. In this site excavations were carried out by M. G. Dikshit in 1956-57. During the time of excavation nearly 500 megaliths monuments (cairn circle, menhirs) were located. At present there is a cap-stone present in disturbed condition. The monument had been converted in to ballast and used in pitching the recent dug canal. The details of the monuments are mentioned in the plan drawing part.

Tengna : (Photo-5, 6, 7, 43, 44)

The site is located 5 km South of Dhanora, on the right bank of *Chora-Nala*. The site consists of several type of Megalithic monuments like menhirs, cairn circles etc.

Majority of them have been destroyed for obtaining ballast. One can notice five standing menhirs. The details of the photo- 5, 6 and 7 are mentioned in the plan drawing part. The following are the details of the monuments:

Photo- 43:

The menhir is located in the agricultural land. The direction of the stone is North South.

Diameter East-West	1.50 mt.
North-South	2.00 mts.
Height of the Menhirs above G.L.	3.00 mts.
Width: Left	0.20 mt.
Right	0.25 mt.
Length from G.L.	2.10 mts.
Length on Top	1.50 mt.

Photo-44:

The menhir is located inside of the agricultural land. The direction of the stone is North South.

Diameter East-West	3.00 mts.
North-South	3.00 mts.
Height of the Menhirs above G.L.	2.50 mts.
Width: left	2.50 mts.
Right	0.33 mt.
Length from G.L.	2.20 mts.
Length on Top	2.15 mts.

Karkhabhat: (Photo-26, 29, 39, 40, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50)

The site is located 16 km from Balod on the Balod-Dhamtari road. The site is spread over both sides of the road. There are seven megalithic types and about 500 monuments such as menhirs, dolmens and cairn circle densely concentrated near the two perennial springs. The burials are located in the high rock bench and thin soil cover area in a monsoon fed laterite zone. Nearly, there are large numbers of low natural rock shelters. This site was excavated by A. K. Sharma in 1990.⁷

Photo-26

Type	Menhir with big boulder
Diameter: East-West	5.00 mts.
North-South	6.10 mts.
Height of the Menhirs above G.L.	2.10 mts.
Width: Left	0.32 mt.
Right	0.42 mt.
Length from G.L.	0.85 mt.
Length on Top	1.54 mt.
Area of Cairn Circle	
East – West	3.00 mts.
North – South	3.29 mts.
Maximum Height of Cairn Heap from G.L.	0.40 mt.

Photo-29

Type	Anthropomorphic Menhir
Diameter East-West	3.00 mts.
North-South	3.50 mts.

Height of the Menhirs above G.L.	2.45 mts.
Width: Left	0.30 mt.
Right	0.26 mt.
Length from G.L.	1.50 mt.
Length on Top	0.20 mt.
Area of Cairn Circle	
East – West	4.15 mts.
North – South	4.00 mts.
Maximum Height of Cairn Heap from G.L.	0.42 mt.

Photo-39

Type	Menhir with small boulder
Diameter East-West	4.19 mts.
North-South	4.25 mts.
Height of the Menhirs above G.L.	1.35 mts.
Width: Left	0.40 mt.
Right	0.34 mt.
Length from G.L.	0.80 mt.
Length on To	1.50 mt.
Area of Cairn Circle	
East – West	2.25 mts.
North – South	3.00 mts.
Maximum Height of Cairn Heap from G.L.	0.19 mt.

Photo-40

Type	Menhir with very small boulder
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Diameter East-West	4.50 mts.
North-South	4.00 mts.
Height of the Menhirs above G.L.	1.65 mt.
Width: Left	0.40 mt.
Right	0.45 mt.
Length from G.L.	1.20 mt.
Length on Top	0.30 mt.
Area of Cairn Circle	
East – West	2.50 mts.
North – South	2.50 mts.
Maximum Height of Cairn Heap from G.L.	0.50 mt.

Photo-45

Type	Menhir with small boulder
Diameter East-West	7.00 mts.
North-South	3.90 mts.
Height of the Menhirs above G.L.	1.65 mt.
Width: Left	0.15 mt.
Right	0.22 mt.
Length from G.L.	1.08 mt.
Length on Top	0.46 mt.
Area of Cairn Circle	
East – West	3.00 mts.
North – South	4.10 mts

Maximum Height of Cairn Heap from G.L.	0.60 mt.
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Photo-46

Type	Cap stone with small boulder
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Diameter East-West	5.00 mt.
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North-South	4.50 mts.
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Height of the Menhirs above G.L.	3.20 mts.
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Width: Left	0.32 mt.
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Right	0.29 mt.
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Length from G.L.	1.30 mt.
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Length on Top	0.50 mt.
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Area of Cairn Circle

East – West	5.00 mts.
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North – South	8.00 mts.
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Maximum Height of Cairn Heap from G.L.	0.19 mt.
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Photo-47

Type	cap stone with cairn circle
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Diameter East-West	3.00 mts.
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North-South	2.50 mts.
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Height of the Menhirs above G.L.	4.20 mts.
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Width: Left	0.60 mt.
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Right	0.50 mt.
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Length from G.L.	1.55 mt.
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Length on Top	1.00 mt.
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Area of Cairn Circle

East – West	3.00 mts.
North – South	5. 00 mts.
Maximum Height of Cairn Heap from G.L.	0.50 mt.

Photo-48

Type	Menhir with small boulder
Diameter East-West	3.50 mts.
North-South	2.90 mts.
Height of the Menhirs above G.L.	1.70 mt.
Width: Left	0.19 mt.
Right	0.21 mt.
Length from G.L.	0.70 mt.
Length on Top	0.52 mt.
Area of Cairn Circle	
East – West	3.00 mts.
North – South	3.53 mts.
Maximum Height of Cairn Heap from G.L.	0.35 mt.

Photo-49

Type	Menhir with small boulder
Diameter East-West	3.00 mts.
North-South	4.50 mts.
Height of the Menhirs above G.L.	1.45 mt.
Width: Left	0.55 mt.
Right	0.50 mt.

Length from G.L.	0.80 mt.
Length on Top	0.60 mt.
Area of Cairn Circle	
East – West	2.50 mts.
North – South	2.10 mts.
Maximum Height of Cairn Heap from G.L.	0.23 mt.

Photo-50

Type	Menhir with small boulder
Diameter East-West	5.80 mts.
North-South	6.20 mts.
Height of the Menhirs above G.L.	3.00 mts.
Width: Left	0.25 mt.
Right	0.20 mt.
Length from G.L.	1.60 mt.
Length on Top	0.55 mt.
Area of Cairn Circle	
East – West	6.15 mts.
North – South	6.50 mts.
Maximum Height of Cairn Heap from G.L.	0.42 mt.

Majgahan:

A. K. Sharma explored this site in 1990⁸. The site is located 14 km from Balod and just one km from the Karhibhadar. Here, one can find the stone circle in disturbed condition. Nearby, there are large numbers of low natural rock shelters located.

Karhibhadar: (Photo-1, 2, 3, 8)

The site is located 13 km from Balod. To the south of the village there are many menhir and cap-stone in a disturbed condition. Nearly, seven menhirs, two cap stone and two cairn circles are present. The details of the monuments are mentioned in the plan drawing part.

Chirchari:

A. K. Sharma was explored this site in 1990⁹. The site is located 12 km from Balod and the Majgahan village in nearby. He found many menhirs in disturbed condition. Now, the Megalithic monuments are totally wiped out because of the establishment of nurseries by the forest department and due to indiscriminate quarrying operation for the sake of ballast and building stone.

District-Mahasamund**Baratia Bhata: Photo-10, 37(1)**

The site is located 16 km North of Baisna on Baisna-Sagarpalli road and was visited by researcher in May 2006. A cluster of 200-300 menhirs are found located at the West of the village. As the road passes over a part of the site, a large number of Menhir cover the road. A hostel building has been constructed by the government right over a part of the menhirs.

The Menhirs are from 1.00 mt. to 2.00 mts. tall having been erected in East-West direction with the dress surface facing east. This is the total departure from the normal practicing of erecting megaliths in the North-South direction. There are no cairn heaps and circle around the menhirs. They appear to have been erected in distinct group. A number of them have been dressed in the form of anthropomorphic figures. The sources of the raw material are the twin hills known as Mama-Bhanja, located nearby 2 km North

of the village. In morphological features the cluster very much resembles to the menhirs of Nagaland and Manipur.

Photo- 37(1)

Type	Menhir
Diameter East-West	2.00 mts.
North-South	1.30 mt.
Height of the Menhirs above G.L.	1.40 mt.
Width: Left	0.40 mt.
Right	0.40 mt.
Length from G.L.	0.30 mt.
Length on Top	0.12 mt

Villagers mention that during the excavation for laying out the road and during construction of the hostel building, a large number of iron object like daggers, spearhead, knives, arrowhead, etc., were recovered from these menhirs.

District-Raipur

Aroud-Lilar-Bhawanmara: (Photo-11)

The site is located 56 km from the Raipur town and is in the Dhamtari tahasil. It is situated on the bank of the river Mahanadi. This is a nucleus area for the megalithic people of the Mahanadi valley. Due to construction of *Pandit Ravi Shankar Sukla* dam nearby, majority of the menhirs and cairn circles have been destroyed. Presently, only one menhir is available.

Type	Menhirs
Diameter East-West	1.20 mt.
North-South	1.50 mt.

Height of the Menhirs above G.L.	2.50 mts.
Width:	0.40 mt.
Right	0.58 mt.
Length from G.L.	1.40 mt.
Length on Top	1.20 mt.

Sonbira¹⁰

The site is located 40 km from Raipur. In this village one can find menhirs in disturbed condition. There are many stone hedges. Eight blocks of stones have been set up on each end. The villagers worship these stones as their symbol of village goddesses. Some stones are painted in a modern form of lord *shiva*. Even the villagers are taking these stones and converting into boulders for the construction of house.

Balapura¹¹

The village Balapur is situated 29 km East of the Bilaspur. The majority of the population of this village is gonds and they are more modernized compared to other tribes of Chhattisgarh. In this village one can find menhirs inside the agricultural land. The villagers found many iron implements such as axe and knife when they dug the land for cultivation. The iron implements show the existence of the megalithic phase in this region and its cultural links with the Vidarbha region.

The iron axe¹² is a flat wedge shaped tool having a sharper cutting edge. The butt end is slightly narrow and for fastening the axe with a handle, two rings were provided. These rings are fixed diagonally and for this reason they are known as cross-rings. This is a typical megalithic tool reported from megalithic site in Maharashtra and Karnataka.

(Table- 1) List of Megalithic Sites in Chhattisgarh

Village/Site	Block/Taluk	District	Cultural Assemblages	Location
Gammewada	Dantewada	Dantewada	Menhirs	13 km from Dantewada
Timmelwada	Sukma	Dantewada	Cap-Stone, Dolmen	10 km from Dornapal
Sankanpalli	Madded	Dantewada	Menhirs, Stone-Circle	12 km from Avapalli
Nelakanker	Usoor	Dantewada	Cairn-Circle, Menhirs	5km from Pujharikanker
Mundrapara	Dantewada	Dantewada	Menhirs	15 km from Dantewada
Murdanda	Usoor	Dantewada	Dolmen	10 km from Usoor
Mothe	Kondagaon	Bastar	Cairn-Circle	5 km from Godma
Parond	Bisrampuri	Bastar	Cairn-Circle	8 km from Bisrampuri Town
Kalari	Dongargarh	Rajnandgaon	Cairn-Circle	10 km from Dongargarh
Murhipar	Rajnandgaon	Rajnandgaon	Cairn-Circle	17km from Rajur
Dhanora	Balod	Durg	Cairn-Circle	21 km from Balod
Tengna	Balod	Durg	Menhirs, Cairn-Circle	5km from Dhanora
Karkhabhat	Balod	Durg	Cairn-Circle, Anthropomorphic Figure	16 km from Balod
Karhibhadar	Balod	Durg	Menhirs	13 km from Balod
Majgahan	Balod	Durg	Menhirs	14 km from Balod
Chirchari	Balod	Durg	Menhirs, Rock-Shelter	12 km from Balod
Baratia-Bhata	Saraipali	Mahasamund	Menhirs	5 km from Sagarpali

Aroud-Lilar-Bhawanmara	Dhamtari	Raipur	Cairn-Circle	Near P. R.S.S Dam
Sonbira	Raipur	Raipur	Menhirs	38 km from Raipur
Balapura	Bilaspur	Bilaspur	Menhirs	29 km from Bilaspur

Karkhabhat: The Memorial Sites ¹³

The Megalithic site at Karkhabhat (Latitude 20° 41'18" and Longitude 81° 19'07") are located around 16 km from Balod on Balod-Dhamtari road. The site is spread over both the sides of the road and presently there are nearly 170 monuments. This is a major burial site in the whole of Chhattisgarh. All the megalithic monuments are located on the rocky outcrops and on high area.

There are three types of Megalithic sites:

- (i) The Habitation
- (ii) The Factory
- (iii) The Memorial

It is for the first time in India, one can find that all the three types of sites have been located at one particular site, adjacent to each other.

Habitational Site:

There are two habitation areas in this site:

1. Low rock shelter area
2. The open air habitation area

In the South and SouthWest of the Megalithic area, on the Southern bank of the natural spring, there are a number of low rock shelters on a slowly-rising granite outcrops. The length and width of these rock shelters vary from 1.00 mt. to 2.00 mts. and

2.50 mts. to 3.00 mts. respectively. These rock shelters clearly show that they were under constant use.

The open air habitation is located in the village Sorar (20°41'18"North, 81°19'07"East). In this village one can find two extensive mounds rising to the height of nearly 4.50 mts. Abundance of potsherds dating back from Megalithic period to historical period lies scattered all over the two mounds. Due to availability of black-and red ware pottery (Fig-2) one can assume that probably a vast habitation of megalith time lies under these mounds.

Factory Site:

There is a rock factory area, just close to the Karkhabhat megalithic site. There is a thick deposit of uniform granite outcrops, out of which it was easy to cut out and shape menhirs. Transportation of these huge blocks was easy to the adjoining burial area. They were made of different sizes as per the requirement depending on the status of deceased. Different shapes were needed according to the month and time of the death of the deceased person.

Memorial Area:

The Karkhabhat memorial burial site is located North of the factory site, which was the source of the constant supply of water. The total area of concentration in which menhirs with cairn circles are spread over one km and now 70 Megaliths are in good condition. On the basis of morphological features of the Menhirs and their layout, seven types have been identified.

In Karkhabhat, twelve Megaliths of different shape were excavated in order to ascertain their sepulchral nature and to find out the difference among them. The

excavation report clearly shows that these menhirs and cairn circle are not associated with any sepulchral rite. They are almost invariably of granite. They have been raised in shallow pits and were propped up all-round by a ring of rubble packing.

Finding Materials: Pottery

In this Megalithic site less ritualistic offering were made by people, probably according to the status of the deceased. In this site three varieties of pottery are recovered:

- (i) all black
- (ii) black and red
- (iii) burnished and coarse red ware

The small and medium size vessels are on black and black-and-red ware, whereas generally large sizes are on red ware.

Pottery both from burial and habitation are common in type. All the ware is well turned and medium to thick in fabric. The shape ranges globular pot with flared rim, bowls, dishes, shallow bowl-cum-cover, large and deep basins with collared rim, bowls-cum-lid, large and medium vase with carinated neck, handi or cooking vessel. The lower exterior of the pot is rusticated. A few sherds with burnished have also been found. The black-and red ware , which is fine to coarse in fabric include, the hemispherical, ovaloid and sub-ovaloid bowl, dish, shallow dish-cum-basin, trough and vase. The black slipped ware, generally of fine to medium fabric and thin section, is represented by the hemispherical ovaloid and sub-ovaloid, carinated bowls, dish and basin. In some pots the black-slipped ware in general appearances is found. Though the bulk of the pottery is plain, some sherds with incised and appliqué designs are also available. Incised

decoration consists of dots. Strokes, wavy, vertical and horizontal line, criss-crosses, zigzag, thumb-nail impression forming chain or cord pattern are seen.

Iron Objects:

The megalithic people of the area had the knowledge of indigenous smelting of iron technology. Even today, the tribes like “Agaria” of Bastar, Sarguja and Durg district, smelt their own iron for their use which is of high quality. There are seventeen iron objects recovered from the excavation. These objects from the burial suggest that the Megalithic people of the area had warrior quality, which were constantly under attack from alien and animals. The large number of iron object in the Megalithic grave indicates a definite role of iron in agriculture. The placement of various objects in the burial became a part of their offence.

The iron object could be divided into two categories:

- (i) Purpose of offence.
- (ii) Purpose of agricultural and domestic use.

The objects of offence material are daggers, blades, arrow heads, spike, spear head. Those objects are very small. The agricultural implement like ploughshare, the copper object like bangles, the stone bead along with bangles are used too. There are three types of bangles viz. open end type, overlapping end type, end melting type. The other objects like two gold rings, one silver wire nose ring in three pieces; terracotta objects are recovered from the site.

Copper Objects:

Copper objects recovered are mostly in the form of rings and bangles of different sizes. They are all solid. The rings and bangles are not joined at the end but are of open

type to facilitate increase or reduction in their diameter according to the requirement. In the female burial one can find these types of ornaments.

Gold Objects:

Two rings were found in this site. One is of single coil, closed type while the other is of open end wire type spiral ear ring. They are in very pure form.

Main features:

If we see the total Menhir excavated in the Karkhabhat region, there are various shapes of Menhir. The following are the various shapes:

1. Fish shape: in this type, one end is pointed whereas the other is bifurcated in the form of tail of a fish. In case of standing menhir of this type, the bifurcated end is towards the top, whereas in case of cap-stone, it is towards the North.
2. Obliquely Pointed: the top of the menhir is obliquely pointed, with the pointed end towards East or West.
3. Conical: the top of the menhir is conical and erected in such a way that the magnetic line passes through the pointed end of the menhir.
4. Straight: the top of the menhir is horizontally straight and flat with magnetic line passing through the center of the width.

The excavation report shows that, all the cairn-circles are in the places of North-South direction, whereas all the menhirs are having their smooth surface facing North. In the entire site, the Northern fringes of the cairn circle, up to at least 1/3 of the circle is lined with bigger size of boulders. This indicates that the front of each burial was towards North and amongst the four directions North was given more importance. The presence of multiple stones circles of smaller size in the main cairn circle, with one or two stump

stone in the center. In one case, these smaller circles belonging to different phases have been noticed. From some of these smaller circle, pottery of thin grey colour ware and rough black-and red ware have been recovered. The erection of multiple menhir within one cairn circle at different time intervals is indicated by differences in the level of foundation pits and subsequent enlargement of the outer lining. The cairn circle of big boulders indicates the family burials. Moreover, separate group of offerings below the different menhir are also indicated in this direction. The evidence indicates that the offerings were normally kept inside the small stone cairn circle around one of the menhirs.

Idea towards the Direction of Monuments:

All the menhirs of this site have been so erected that the finished surface faces North and the unfinished surface is towards South. These menhirs have also been subjected to East or West dimension. They have been shaped in such a fashion that they are either conical pointing upwards or the top end is fashioned obliquely. The pointed end points either to the East or to the West. The angle of deviation from the magnetic North indicates their sense of direction and solar position. It is not necessary that these memorial menhirs were erected right away after the death of the person. They might have been erected even after a lapse of time but their position indicates the time and period of the years when the deceased left the human race.

The Chhattisgarhi Megalithic people had an advanced knowledge of erecting sepulchral architecture involving cutting, shaping, transporting and erecting huge menhirs as memorials. They transported huge quantity of boulders and arranged around the menhir in the Northern half and then at the bottom level and a distinct circle of stone was

made. In the case of single menhirs the successive larger boulders were arranged in a pyramidal fashion from another circle. In this way a number of circles were created filling the whole area. Right from the bottom the entire space around the menhirs and cap-stone was filled with boulders arranged in circle with a central stone. This is the new method, one can observe in this site. This shows that the megalithic people of this region adopted a good knowledge of architecture for creating cairn heights.

Description of Some Selected Megalithic Monuments with Plan and Elevation Drawing:

The megalithic monuments of Chhattisgarh had different feature, style of structure and placing of direction of stone. All the monuments are situated in the hilly and forest area. Nine megalithic monuments from the three sites are thoroughly studied in order to ascertain their typological nature and to find out the difference between each other. The study obtained from the explored sites show that these menhir and stone circle are not in sepulchral in nature. They are only in commemorative and it is known as secondary burial. Most of the directions of the monuments are concentrating on North-South. The monuments are focused in the similar place and distance between each other is approximately 10.00 to 20.00 mts.

All menhir has been so erected that the polished surfaces look North and the unfinished South. The outline of the menhirs is either they are conical pointing upwards or the top end is obliquely fashioned. The position of the magnetic North shows that they were consciously erected to point out the direction and solar position. The menhirs were not essentially erected immediately and they might have been erected after some break of

time. The nearest water source one can find in these sites is river Mahanadi. The detailed of the selected monuments are as follow:

Type A

Twin Menhir 1 :(Figure-1, Photo-1)

In this monument both the stone are in elliptical shape. The stones are in the refined formed facing each other. The distance between two menhirs is 8.60 mts. The diameter from North to South is 17.00 mts. and from East to West is 8.40 mts. Both the menhir is inclined to each other. A large amount of small boulders are kept throughout the circle areas. There was some big stone kept below the menhir but villagers had taken away the stone for their use. These menhirs are called as twin menhir. The direction of the menhirs shows that these might have been erected during same time and by the same family.

The maximum height of the menhirs (left) is 2.40 mts., thickness is 0.05 mt. and width is 1.17mt. The maximum height of the menhir (right) is 1.25 mt., thickness is 0.40 mt. and width is 1.00 mt. The size of the stone shows that the stone was taken from the nearby factory area and regulated in their home. Originally the stone was in straight position but due to climatic problem and soil erosion the right side of the stone is in the breaking and hanging position.

According to villagers, three generation back the monuments were worshiped by the people in every new moon (amabasya) and full moon day (purnima) day in memory of their ancestor. But nowadays due to influence of modernization they have stopped the worship. Just near the monument one can find a village goddess temple which was worshipped on every festival day. The villagers' believe that below the monuments huge amount of gold and ornaments was placed by their ancestor and the gold and ornament is

under the guidance of some devil and village goddess. To further they construct a temple near by monuments. Due to lack of conservation the monuments are partially in disturbed condition.

Twin Menhir 2 (Figure-2, Photo-2)

Within this monument both the menhirs are of elliptical shape. The stones were polished by the people. The distance between two menhirs is 6.60 mts. The diameter from North to South is 14.16 mts and from East to West is 8.00 mts. The directions of the menhirs are in North-South and are approximately same in size. The thickness of the left side menhir is 0.30 mt., the maximum height is 1.70 mts. and the width is 1.50 mt. The thickness of the right side menhir is 0.18 mt., the maximum height is 1.00 mt. and the width is 0.90 mt.

Therefore, one can say that the twin menhir 2 might have been erected in later the period after the twin menhir 1. The distance from the twin menhir 1 to 2 is nearly 10.00 mts. So, it shows that these menhirs belong to the same community or same family.

Type B

Stone Circle :(Figure-3, Photo-3)

This is the unique type of monument in this area. Here one can find stone circle with distinct cairn heap rising. The huge amounts of small boulders are kept throughout the area. The diameter of the cairn circle is 8.00 mts. There is smaller boulder around border of the circle. One can find a small stone circle consisting of seven to eight small boulder centre of the area. It shows the identification of the middle point of the circle. The whole circle looks like a moon around the stars.

The monument seems to be a secondary burial. After keeping the used material inside the circle they also keep the small boulders. The area of boulder shows the area of

the digging soil. The cairns are loosely arranged rubble covering 8.00 mts. of diameter. From the ground level the boulders slowly rise in a mound form. The maximum height of the boulder is 0.30 mt.

Type C

Menhir: (Figure-4, Photo-4)

There are four menhirs of this kind. The menhir-1 is located inside the village on the bank of the pond. The pond had been constructed in the modern time. The area of the cairn circle around the menhir from East-West is 3.05 mts. and North-South is 3.50 mts. The height of the menhir from ground level is 2.60 mts. The thickness of left side is 0.25 mt. and the right side is 0.35 mt., the width is 1.50 mt.

There were more boulders around the stone. The villagers have taken most of the boulders for their home use. The finished surface of the menhir faces North and the unfinished is South. The boulders slowly rise to the centre of the menhir in a pyramidal manner. The direction of the menhir shows that the soil is dug in East at depth of five to six feet. It seems to be a secondary burial erected in memory of their deceased. It shows that first they dug the soil, kept some material and then they placed the stone just near the dug area.

The menhir 2, 3 and 4 (Photo-5, 6 and 7) are located inside the forest area. There is a rock shelter located 6 km from the site. People seems to have taken this stone from this rock shelter. The finished side of the menhir 2 (Figure-5) is facing North. There are huge amount of boulders throughout the area. There are some big boulders kept closely to the menhir. The diameter of the cairn circle is 5.00 mts. the height of the menhir is 3.45 mts, the width is 2.10 mts, the maximum thickness is 0.50 mt. The shape of the menhir looks like an arrow head. It seems that people first decorated the stone and then placed in

the field. There is some speciality in their decoration. According to the villagers, there was some picture on the stone but some people destroyed the stone, hence the picture got damaged.

The menhir 3 (Figure-6) is located inside the forest in the plain area nearly 100 mts from the menhir No. 2. It seems that all the menhirs from this site belong to the same group of people. The sense of direction and the beautification of all the menhir are same. This menhir looks like an anthropomorphic figure like a head of human being. Though the menhir does not reveal any sexual figure, on the basis of facial expression it appears to be a man head. The menhir carved out of granite has been put in the centre of the cairn circle. It has been erected in the North position; it means the finished surface is facing the North. The diameter of the cairn circle from East-West is 10.00 mts and North-South is 9.50 mts. The height of the menhir is 3.30 mts., the length from the ground level is 2.20 mts. and the maximum thickness is 0.27 mt.

The menhir 4(Figure-7) is located inside the forest near the cultivated land. This is the big menhir from the Chhattisgarh area. This menhir was erected in the name of some respectable person. The finished surface of the menhir faces North and unfinished is on South. There are many small boulders around the stone. There were many big boulders close to the stone but the villagers have taken away for their use. Now one can find a big stone near the menhir. The diameter of the cairn circle from East-West is 2.00 mts and North-South is 2.20 mts. The height of the menhir from the ground level is 4.40 mts., the width (left) side is 0.22 mt. and the right side is 0.42 mt., the length of the menhir from the ground level is 1.80 mt. The nature of the monument shows that it is a secondary burial.

Type D

Cap-Stone:

The cap stone 1(Figure-8, Photo-8) is located in the plain area near the village. The cap stone is around the small boulders and in the centre resting over many cairns heaps. The cap-stone is oriented North-South and the border end is toward the South. The diameter of the cairn circle East-West is 5.60 mts. and the North-South is 6.40 mts. The length North-South is 2.25 mts., the width East-West is 1.30 mts., the thickness is 0.20 mt.

The cap stone 2 (Figure-9, Photo-9) is located in the plain area just on road side of the national highway. The stone is an elliptical shape. The cap stone is around the small boulders and the boulders the below the stone are not properly visible. Due to soil erosion the boulders were inside the soil. The road construction has also led people take away the boulders using them in the road. The approximate diameter North-South is 10.00 mts. and East-West is 7.00 mts. The length of the stone is 4.40 mts., the width is 1.80 mts. and the maximum thickness is 0.60 mts. The characteristic of these cap stone shows that it is a memorial stone non-sepulchral in nature.

Thus, the megalithic people of Karhibhadar, Dhanora and Tengna adopted the circle and pyramidal form for creating cairn heights, conical and oblique form of pointing for the menhirs. The similar monuments are found amongst the gonds of Bastar region who presently erect the menhirs, capstone and cairn circle at one particular place and adopt the same method. They also worship the monuments on a particular festival day. The new feature observed in these sites are raising the cairn height with circle and filling huge amount of small boulders. Consequently, it is concluded that the practice of megalithic monuments in Chhattisgarh region is still a living tradition.

The Sculptural Menhirs: (Photo-29)

The important Megalithic monuments found in Chhattisgarh are sculptured menhirs. One of the biggest menhir was found to have been sculptured creating the figure of head of a man. The sculpted menhir carved out of granite has been put in the center of the cairn heap. Above the cairn heap the available height of menhir is 2.57mts. and width is 1.19mt. It has been erected in North-South position. The masterly fondle of the sculpture has brought out a magnificent facial view of a man having a receding broad forehead with prominent glabellas point, sharp long nose, broad and prominent ridge in the upper lip below nasal spine, pronounced lower lip and protruded chin. On the Northern face, an eye has been carved out. On the top of the head, in the center there is a domical projection to show the bun or tuff of hair.

This is the only sculpted menhir in the form of a human figure, showing facial profile and giving three dimensional perspectives. It does not reveal any sexual feature and on the basis of facial expression it appears to be that of a male. This sculpted menhir is placed at the center of the area of Megalithic memorials. Such sculptured menhir is also available at Bartia-Bhata and Tengna but most of them have now been totally destroyed by stone contractors.

The anthropomorphic figures in form of Menhirs have been reported from a number of Megalithic sites in India. Mostly in South India, one can find the anthropomorphic figure. In Andhra Pradesh, one can find at Medimala¹⁴ in Chittoor district, Domada,¹⁵ Dongatogu,¹⁶ Galabha¹⁷ and Tottigutta¹⁸ in Khamman district, Kaperlaguru,¹⁹ Murgapet,²⁰ Malur²¹ and Katapur²² in Warangal district and Lingala²³ in Krishna district, Vedayapalem²⁴ and Golagamudi²⁵ in Nellor district. In Karnataka, A.

Sundara,²⁶ has reported a crude small monolithic anthropomorphic figure without arms from Rajankolur in Gulberga district, Kumali and Maribetta in Bellari district.

On the basis of the shape and figures, K. P. Rao,²⁷ classified anthropomorphic figure into five categories (plate-1)

1. A small thick rectangular stone block is carved with a small, squishy projection at top to represent the human head. The body maintains a uniform dimension up to the bottom and thus avoids suggestion of lower limbs
2. The second category looks like blocks and represent the human body. The body and the lower limbs are suggested by a uniform projection below the hands.
3. The third category has a round head and curved outward shoulders. Though, the head is clearly shown, the upper limbs are probably depicted by an outward projection from the shoulder area.
4. The fourth category displays female feature in the form of bulged breasts or they are suggested by two circles.
5. The fifth categories of anthropomorphic figures look like the copper hoard figure. These figures are usually carved out of a thick stone slab. They have like two head. There is no head in this category.

Generally, one can find the anthropomorphic figure near the megalithic monuments and some times with a part of the monuments. There are some important characteristic which one can find from the anthropomorphic figure; the figure is usually associated with the Dolmen and Dolmenod cists but in Chhattisgarh, it is associated with the menhirs with cairn circle. The upper part of the figure is looks like the human form but the lower part does not look like human form, but it can be compared with legs. The

figures are not distinctly sexually identifiable, if it is identifiable; it is only the female figure. Most of the figures are depicted in the same direction with megalithic monuments.

Survival and Settlement Pattern:

The megalithic period of Chhattisgarh represents a different culture. The megalithic farmers of Chhattisgarh shared the traits of sedentary settlement and were engaged in animal domestication, manufacture of pottery, cultivation, iron smelting etc. The agricultural implements like plough share, sickles etc, too indicate that the megalithic people of this region were mainly agriculturists.

The human groups are settled around the perennial water sources. The settlement pattern is not only based on their economy but also an important aspect of their socio-cultural life. The people generally; chose to live near the river valley in hilly terrain area, where they got natural resources like, iron ore, gold bearing reefs, granites, gneisses, copper etc. They lived in thatched houses. The floors were plastered with lime covering the stone and *murram* (one type of red sand). The houses were generally circular and oblong. They may have also used rocks like granite, gneisses, laterite, and basalt in large number.

Location:

The location of the megaliths of this region could be based on physical condition. The megaliths are concentrated on high rock-bench areas, where the large quantity of iron ore and traces of gold is available. The burials are noticed over rocky high land near the water sources. In this region they lived near by burial, where the bounties of stone were available. One can find both habitation and burial sites within a small distance. The majority of megalithic site of this region are only burial in nature.

Art and Architecture:

The Chhattisgarhi megalithic architectural constructions depend on the environmental factors. The people had advance knowledge of sepulchral architecture. With the knowledge of iron technology, quarrying of stone was a continuing activity, like cutting, shaping, transporting and erecting huge menhirs as memorial monuments. The monuments were built of locally available stone and sometimes transported from far off tracts. Granite stone was available for the composition of boulder circle. The enormous quantities of boulders were arranged around the menhir.

The stone circle was enlarged with great accuracy with the inclusion of more menhirs in course of time. Even in the case of single menhir the succeeding layers of boulders were arranged in a pyramidal manner slowly going up to the top. All the menhirs are arranged in circle with a central stone. The pyramidal and circular formation of the structure was the main aspects of the architecture of the people of this region.

Economy:

The megalithic people of this region were partly agriculturist and partly hunter as shown by the excavated evidence of iron tools and implements (plate-2). Most of the settlements are noticed close to water sources and in hilly areas. All the above evidences show that, they were primarily agrarian. Pottery was another profession they adopted. The people were expert in different profession to fulfill the demand of the whole community. Even, now-a-days, the *Agaria* community of Kanker and Bilaspur region is involved in the profession of iron smelting. They indulged in community hunting of different animals and birds as shown by the implement of offence found, like arrow-head, spearhead etc. The people were knowledgeable in iron ore smelting and in gold mining.

Tools and Weapons:

They used different type of tools and weapons for agriculture and hunting purpose. It included dagger blades, arrowhead, spikes, spearhead etc. The literary evidences bear the view that, iron was known to the people of East by early first millennium B.C. *Rg-Veda*²⁸ mentions the word 'ayas' as metal and it has been recognized as iron. The work of metal was accepted by a particular guild of 'karmaras' or blacksmith. The megalithic people of this region were technologically sophisticated is shown from the excavated monuments.

Ceramic Tradition:

The evolution of Indian ceramics began with the Harappan age and the art of shaping and baking clay articles as pottery, earthenware and porcelain has endured through the ages. Pottery was the most significant accessory in their daily life. In Chhattisgarh, Karkhabhat site comprises mainly three types of pottery- all black, black and red burnished and coarse red ware. There is evidence of pottery making, both handmade and wheel-thrown, from Karkabhat site. The most important characteristic ceramic industry of the megalithic culture is black and red ware. It is usually of fine fabric and does not contain tempering material. Very limited number of decoration is found on the Chhattisgarhi Megalithic pottery.

Food Habits:

The archaeo-botanical remains have not been recovered from the megalithic site of Chhattisgarh. The agricultural implement found in the Karkhabhat site has given in formation about their agricultural activities. It is a fine example of iron plough-share,

which was used by megalithic people. Due to the accessibility to rivers and canal they may have cultivated rice, barely etc.

We have not found any irrigation system in this area. On the basis of their economy they were primarily a pastoral community. There is an evidence of pottery making, both handmade and wheel thrown. The discovery of some pottery like bowl tells that it may have been used for cooking. The pottery bowls which were used for snacks are one-dimensional while those used for eating a full-course meal are deep with a thicker rim.

Belief System:

In every community there is a belief system behind their burial ceremony. Megaliths represent a form of ancestral worship and it seems to have been accompanied with elaborate rituals and a complex system of beliefs including the existence of soul and life after death.²⁹ These belief systems are still practiced by the Gonds of Bastar region. The megalithic people believed in rebirth “punarjanma” and post-death life. Due to this belief they placed many materials such as pottery, iron implements, foods, etc. in the burial ground for use in the life after death. If the soul (atma) is not satisfied, then it is converted into the ghost (bhut). Due to fear of ghost they provided some shelter in the shape of menhirs, dolmens etc.

In Bartia-Bhata of Mahasamund district, the people have different belief systems towards the menhirs. They believe that, thousands years ago the marriage procession (barat) of a zamindar came to this village and stayed there at night. Due to some magic all the people were converted into stone and are still lying on the floor. Whatever position

they were in that night the stone shape is adapt as the original position. The shape of the stone also has been decreasing day by day.

Now the villagers worship the stone every festival day. They believe that the village goddess (gaon devi) stays in the stone. When the present researcher tried to dig one of the stone, he found an iron implement below the stone. The stones are what their ancestor had erected as a memorial for their death ritual. The stones are preserved in this area in village mukhia's house.

Burial Practices:

The most characteristic feature of the society is the mode of burying the dead. The burial practices of the megalithic people show a wide variety. There are many type of burial one can find in Chhattisgarh, such as single, double, multiple, primary and secondary. In Chhattisgarh most of the burials are secondary where one cannot find any skeletal remains. Even *Rg-Veda* points to the two types of burial, cremation and primary burial such as *Agnidagdha* and *Aa-nagnidagdha*.³⁰ There are a few sites in South India where the burials are marked by carved monolithic known as anthropomorphic figure.

The death rituals are very important for the tribals of India of past and present. These practices are strictly followed from generation to generation, particularly in tribal society of Chhattisgarhi megalithic People. The megalithic people observed certain funerary customs such as single burials, double burials, child burial etc. The reason behind such varied practices could not be understood from the archaeological data. However in the next chapter I have discussed the ethnological perception toward the belief and practice of the tribal people what they practicing today in Bastar region. As the megalithic burials contain skeletal remains of several people, it was thought that they

represent communal burial. In such cases the erection of monuments must have been taking place at significant occasion or when skeletal remains of large number of persons are available. Similar kind of practices still exists in tribal community of Dantewada region.

Origin and Chronology:

The initial study of skeletal remains suggest that the megalithic people belong to proto-australoid, negroid and Mediterranean groups. The iron using megalithic culture was an incursion into the earlier neolithic-chalcolithic culture.³¹ The carbon dates suggest that the megalithic culture of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh had an earlier beginning than those of Kerala. The megalith of Vidarbha generally falls between 600 BC-200 AD. In the Vindhyan region, however the so-called “chalcolithic-megalithic” have been assigned to 1500BC-1000BC. At Gufkral in Kashmir, the megalithic remains are dated to mid second millennium BC.³²

Based on the method of disposing of the dead, it could be said that there are three stages of transition; burying the dead individually inside the pits with full articulation, exposure of the dead and collection of skeletal remains, cremation of the dead and collection of important bones for interring in family vaults. If we see the case of Chhattisgarh, it has not so far yielded any proper evidence of chronology as the monuments of every village under study are considered as living monuments and they are protected by the respective villagers. As such the anthropomorphic figures and sculpture menhirs can be given dates 1000 BC to 500 BC.³³

Comparison with Other Parts:

From the above information one can conclude that the megalithic culture occupied a larger area in Chhattisgarh. The similar culture spread North and Eastwards

and prospered as is evident from the occurrence of sites in Hazaribagh, Palamu and Singbhum districts in Jharkhand, Assam, Nagaland, Manipur and Meghalaya etc. If we see the monumental similarity with peninsular region, one cannot find Urn-burial, barrow and sarcophagus in this region. Another distinctive element of this pottery lies in graffiti marks, which one could not find here. There is an absence of micaceous red ware and russet coated white painted ware pottery in this region which one can find in Malabar area. The menhirs are mainly found in plain area near hill mountain area. In Malabar, one can find menhirs in sea board area. If we go to the Vidarbha region most of the monuments typologically belong to a single type that is pits bounded by a cairn circles. The megaliths appear with the end phase of the Chalcolithic painted pottery culture. The megalithic people adopted the local disposition of painting model from the existing earlier culture. The megaliths of North-East are closely related with the Chhattisgarh. All the megaliths are mostly remembrance rather than sepulchral.

The iron implement such as hoes and plough share shows that megalithic people of this region were agriculturist. Such kinds of iron implement have also been recovered from Mahurjhari,³⁴ and Ramapuram.³⁵ In the North, Burzuham³⁶ has given a megalithic phase succeeding the Neolithic without black-and-red ware.

The dissimilarity in the type of megalithic monuments is not constricted and one type is limited to one region. In comparison with other parts S. B. Deo argued that “the diversity of material culture is brought out by certain features which are peculiar to certain region. For instance, the painted black-on-red pottery which is met with the Vidarbha megaliths of Maharashtra has no parallel in megalithic in further South. Similarly, the highly glossy black-and-red wares were typical of South Indian megaliths

are rarely met with in Vidarbha megalith. The variety of funerary architecture that one comes across in the South is absent further South.”³⁷

Cultural Similarity:

The erection of memorial stone in the name of ancestor is still followed by many tribes of India. The Gonds of Bastar region, the *khasis* of Assam and Meghalaya, *nagas* of Nagaland, the *todas* of Nilgiri still erect stone monuments as a commemorative in nature. The present day gond belief and tradition of such method of erecting menhirs, their sacrificial belief and way of understanding towards life are similar with the *nagas* and *khasis* of Nagaland and Meghalaya. The accessibility of various equipments and the homogeneity of groups within the megalithic people have contributed to the uniformity in the model of production of different monuments.

The megalithic monuments are found in large numbers among the *nagas* of Manipur comprising, eleven ethnic groups, such as the *kabui*, the *kareng*, the *liangmais*, the *mao*, the *marams*, the *maring*, the *paumais*, the *thangal*, the *tangkhul* and *chakhesangs* which have been studied by P. Binodini Devi. Each group of megaliths distinguish by their distinct dialects, cultural traditions, dress and ornaments.³⁸

The megalithic types found among the *Nagas* of Manipur consists of menhir, alignments, avenues, dolmens, cairns with or without a stone-circle, capstone over the burial pit, stone-circles and stone seats raised in the memory of dead ancestors and some miscellaneous types, such as megaliths associated with head hunting, small menhir erected in alignment called lovers stone by a person or his sons in recognition of the love affairs, a person may have had during his life time.³⁹ In Nagaland, the megalith is a living tradition and among the *Nagas* it is closely related with the great social event called

‘feast-of-merit’. A person desiring to erect a monolith or menhirs is required to offer a series of feasts-of-merit in order to attain the status to quarry a stone pillar or monolith for erecting the same in memory of his dead ancestors or in the name of living husband and wife or even to commemorate some social events. The similar type of ritual we find in Dantewada region. The megalithic remain found in this area consists of menhir, alignment, avenue and miscellaneous types such as stone platform, stone-walls, stone-chamber tombs and stone gate.⁴⁰

If we see the chronology of present monuments it is yet to be dated scientifically. Based on the above information the megaliths of Chhattisgarh have specific common features, which make all of them representative of one wide-ranging cultural tradition. Consequently, it can be concluded that there are similar culture of megalithic monuments found in this region in a developed stage.

Notes and References

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² *Indian Archaeology-A Review*, 1991-92, p. 36.

³ *Indian Archaeology-A Review*, 1956-57, p. 35.

⁴ The scholar has found a board written the chronology of the menhirs. It is preserved by ASI, Prehistory Branch, Nagpur circle in the year 1991.

⁵ *Indian Archaeology-A Review*, 1991-92, Pp.36-39

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Jain, K. C. *Madhya Pradesh through the Ages from Earliest Time to 1305 A.D.* New Delhi, 1997, p. 123.

¹³ This site was excavated by A. K. Sharma and his team *Indian Archaeology-A Review*, 1991, p. 36

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¹⁷ Rao, K. P. "Understanding Megaliths Practices: an Ethnological Study." *APHC*, XVII Session, 1993, p. 19.

¹⁸ Rao, K. P. *Op.Cit*, 1988, p.26.

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³¹ Kantha, S. Usha, "Megalithic Monuments of Andhra Pradesh." *The Eastern Anthropologist*, vol. 85, 1982, p. 32.

³² Agarwal, D. P. *Bronze and Iron Age in South Asia*, New Delhi, 2003, p. 244.

³³ *Indian Archaeology-A Review*, 1991-92, p. 36.

³⁴ *Indian Archaeology- A Review*, 1963-64, p. 57.

³⁵ *Indian Archaeology- A Review*, 1980-81, Pp. 3-7.

³⁶ Sharma, A. K. *Excavation in a Cave, Cist and Church*, New Delhi, 2005, P. 36.

³⁷ Srivastav, K. M. *New Horizons of Indian Archaeology*, New Delhi, 1988, Pp. 152-163.

³⁸ Sharma, T. C. "The Living Megalithic Culture of Manipur." *Puratattva*, No. 28, 1997-98, p. 112 and P. Binodini Devi, *Investigations into the Megalithic Culture of Manipur*, Leikai, 2005, Pp. 45-218.

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Chapter-4

Megalithic Living Tradition

Megalithic Living Tradition

The present chapter takes up a study of the death practices of the Gond (maria, muria and dandami maria) their beliefs and rituals in relation to the memorial stone and how they stand up to these patterns of life even in the 21st century. The custom of erecting memorial stone in different parts of the world is prevalent on a large scale among the diverse communities from the Neolithic times. But in central India mainly in Bastar region, the erection of memorial stone in the memory of an ancestor is still in practice among different Gonds tribes.

India is a “Melting Pot” of races and tribes. It is a difficult task for the archaeologist, the pre-historian or the anthropologist to arrange the tribal people and culture of India in a chronological sequence. Therefore, it is very difficult to give a conclusion to the origin and subsequent history of numerous aboriginal tribes of India in the absence of sufficient archaeological and palaeontological data. Rituals represent configurations of symbols akin to a musical score in which the individual symbols are comparable to musical notes. The anthropologist Victor Turner describes “ritual is a stereotype sequence of activities involving gesture, words, and objects, performed in a sequestered place, and designed to influence preternatural entities or forces on behalf of the actors’ goal and interest”¹ Before going deep in to our discussion we need to clarify what we mean by a tribe? All tribes are specific to their groups and regions. They have their own traditions, beliefs, rituals that are limited to the individuals of the respective tribe. Their practices represent their identity. It is necessary to define “tribe” before exploring their ‘death’ culture. The Oxford English Dictionary mentions “a tribe is a group of people in a primitive or barbarous stage of development acknowledging the

authority of a chief and usually regarding them as having a common ancestor.”² Tribe is a group of homogeneous people that is with a common way of life having an in-group sentiment of their own and a common geographical territory with a common dialect which distinguishes them from other. They hesitate to have contact with the outsider and they have excess of personal beliefs in supernaturalism, practice simplicity in comparison to modern technology available and accept presence of hierarchic pantheon of their external space world like the earth goddess, the sun god and so on. They believe in the transmigration of soul and rebirth (*punarjanma*). The term “tribe” is nowhere clearly defined in the Indian constitution, and there is no satisfactory definition any where. In fact, the term “tribe” has been conceived differently by Indian scholars.

The tribals under the present study mostly live in hills and forest, generally in isolated, less fertile and less accessible habitat and they have developed a culture of their own apposite to their local environment. On socio-religious front of their culture, the sun, wind, the moon, stars, trees, animals, water, hills, birds and earth etc., play a vital role. The geographical or natural environment has an overall impact on the belief system of tribal in a particular place. It is observed that different tribal groups hold different belief system of their own which differ according to their local geographical environment.

Gond and Their Antiquity in this Region:

It is very difficult to say when the Paleolithic age came to an end and the Neolithic age began in this region. The fortified hill near Bade Donger must have been extremely useful for Neolithic dwellers. The variety of ground and polished tools and pottery produced by the Neolithic people are unprecedented. Many of them are

discovered from Garhdhanora, Rajpur, Garhchandela and Garhbodra of Sabari and Indravati valley.³ In fact, the domestication of animals was the first great step that people took in the conquest of nature. When the Neolithic people learnt to settle down in the grass lands they also cultivated vegetation and crop. Thus, the food gatherer became the food producer. Agriculture also developed through the time but it was not at par with the modern type. The primitive agriculture known as hoe-cultivation or burn method are called as *dippa/penda* in Gondi language.

The primitive type of cultivation is still practiced by the hill *maria* of *abhujmarh* area. Based on the above information one may state that the aboriginal tribes of this region are the direct descendents of the Neolithic age. The theory related to the migration of Indus people to this region is that, the *naga* people migrated to this region about 1700 BC,⁴ and mingled with the earlier Neolithic people of the region. This seems to suggest the emergence of a new culture of a more primitive stage. All over the *maria* Gond region, hundreds of megalithic tombs are found; and it is also the living culture to this day. The present day practices of memorial have many similarities with the practices of megalithic period. But one may not like to conclude that the present day tribal communities are the successor of megalithic period.

The antiquity of Chhattisgarh Gond tribes can be studied on the basis of archaeological and tribal oral tradition. The following evidences throw light on the life of early tribes in this region. (1) Stone tools: Many of the stone tools have been collected from upper surface of the earth from the Sabri and Indravati river valley, and the rocky and cave areas. These tools indicate the period when they were used in the matter of

hunting, skinning of animals and digging of roots. (2) Rock shelters: The rock shelters are thought to be the earliest form of house. Most of the rock shelters were painted by early tribal who used them. There are many rock shelters one can find in the Kharkabhat area. (3) Pottery and terracotta figurines: The pottery throws light on the cultural history of the contemporary people. Many neolithic and megalithic potteries are excavated from this region. Terracotta figures of animals and human beings of different period were discovered in this region. The tribal of this region still make terracotta figures which are artistically similar to the ancient period. There is a famous art called “Dokra” in this region. (4) Tribal sources: The tribal have their traditional stories of past events. Such stories are mostly in the form of songs. They are sung in ritual dances. The antiquity of the tribal may be explained to certain extent by the folklores of the tribes. (5) Totemic origin: There are numerous deities which are related to various animals. There is a deity called “Bagheswar”⁵ There are many totemic sept (gotra) such as tiger, tortoise, snake, goat, and so on.

Religious Belief: J. Troisi has written that “belief and rituals are invariant factors in all religions. Rituals are rationalized and made effective by beliefs. It is only by considering religion as a mode of action as well as a system of beliefs that the living meaning of both rituals and beliefs becomes evident”.⁶ The tribal beliefs, rituals and practices are very much associated with their life, and it is difficult even to isolate or separate those from the people. The whole religious belief system of the tribal of India may broadly be classified in the following way:

(i) Sacred Area: The sacred geographical concept, one can apply even to tribal religion in India, with their sacred groves, sacred performance and sacred ritual. In Bastar tribal villages, one can find sacred places like big grove of *sal* tree (known as *Deogudi*), *ghotul* etc. These are the places of their worship and regarded as sacred places.

(ii) Sacred Being: Amongst the Gond people of Bastar region, their deceased ancestors are believed to be their most important sacred beings. Their clan deities and totems are also important. Among their other sacred beings *dharti mata* is worshipped by all the tribal of Bastar region. *Nelharin Mata* of hill *marias* is equivalent to *sitala mata* of Hindu pantheon.

(iii) Sacred Specialist: Some are regarded as mediators between common people and the almighty. Among the Bastar tribal, the sacred specialists selected for the priest posts are on a hereditary basis. The sacred specialists are *pujhari*, *gaita*, *waddai*, *gunia*, and so on.

During various rituals especially in ancestor worship, which is closely related to the erection of Megaliths monuments, is generally performed by the male head of the family. In his absence next senior male person holds the post. In every Gond dominated villages of this region, one find the ritual or practice of erecting megalithic monuments for their ancestors.

The root concept of a memorial stone is commemorative in nature that rises in memory or honours of the deceased and do not form part of the actual practice of the disposal of the dead. But in some parts of Bastar region, the disposal of the dead and

erection of menhir are done in the same time and same day as well. All the monuments are symbolic representation of deceased dignitaries. Every monument represents an individual, group either ethnic, regional or caste basis. The Gond believe in a high god whom they call either by its Hindu name *bhagwan* or his tribal name *bara deo*. He is a personal god-eternal, forgiving and maker of the fertile earth and man. In the Gond belief system there also exists a great number of male and female gods and goddesses and spirits that represent various natural features. The hills, rivers, lakes, trees and rocks are occupied by a spirit. The earth, water and air are ruled by deities that are adored and appeased with sacrifices and offerings. These deities and spirits may be caring, but sometimes they harm human beings, especially those who break the rules of tribal culture. The ancestral spirit settled in their memorial stone looks over the strict performance of the tribal rules and if anybody disobeys the rules, he or she is punished.

In Chhattisgarh the Maria Gond celebrate many feasts connected with the agricultural seasons and with various life cycle events. All sacrifices are accompanied by appropriate ceremonies of symbolic significance. The offerings and sacrifices are mainly animal and the types of animals depend on the type of deities addressed. Death ritual is a very important life cycle ceremony performed by the Gond of this region. For this they must sacrifice an animal but it depends on the economic condition of the family.

Nature Worships:

Sun (*Porad*): The Sun god, one of the great gods in the Vedic times, is still widely worshipped by the Gond of Chhattisgarh. We find the symbol of the sun god from the sculpture of their megalithic monuments from Dhilimili. The Sun is often credited with

healing powers in all sorts of diseases and is responsible for rain. Earth (*Bhum*): The Earth is venerated as the mother of all living things and the giver of food and is regarded as a benevolent female deity. She has a name popularly known to Gond called as *dharti maet* (Mother Earth). Newly married couples of the gond tribe must sleep on the earth for the first three nights. Before cultivating they sacrifice animals or fruits to *dharti maet*. They also worship moon (*lenj*) and stars (*ukka*) in every *amabasya* and *puṇima* day. River (*dhaar*): They worship numerous rivers in Bastar region, because the river gives water throughout the year. The rivers are Indravati, Wenganga and Danteswari. Mountain (*dungri*): There are many small and big mountains in this region. Every mountain is guided by some god or goddess. Gods and goddesses such as *banjari mata*, *mauli mata* and others are worshipped. Trees (*guch*): The most sacred trees are *pippal*, *palas*, *saja*, *karanj*, *sal* and *neem*.

In this region, both tribal and non-tribal observe several rituals and festivals. Some of the festivals are performed at family level and some at community level. The tribal have a large number of deities and they believe that their deities reside in jungles, hills, lands and looming in the air. There are several temples where they have installed their deities. The deities are sometimes a piece of wood, a stone slab and a tree. The following are the gods and goddesses they worship:

Danteswari Mata: They worship several mother deities; among them *danteswari mata* is very important. She was one of the tutelary deities of *kakatiya* king of this region. The main temple is located in Dantewada town, where she stays. Her main ritual is performed during *Dussera* festival held in the month of *Aswina* (sept-oct).

Mauli Mata: Mauli Mata was also another deity of the *kakatiya* kings. Her temple is situated at Jagdalpur, in front of kings' palace. She is worshipped every day in the temple and also during the *Dussera* festival.

Kankalin Mata: The temple is situated in Jagdalpur, behind the temple of *dateswari mata*. She gives protection from cholera and other such diseases.

Sitala Devi: She is often called by people as *mata*. She gives protection from epidemics like pox, measles and so on. Her temple is in Jagdalpur. Everyday, she is worshipped in her temple. When a person suffers such type of diseases, his or her family members come to the temple with the offerings of coconut, incense stick and they bring some *neem* twigs which are touched on the feet of the deity by priest and is returned to them. They keep the *neem* twigs with the patient as a protector from all the evils. Sometimes vows are kept that after recovery they will offer the deity a red *sari*, some ornament and a goat. Generally, the priest of the deity belongs to the *dhokra* community.

Mahamai Devi: Her temples are in the villages of Bastar. She is regarded as one of the greatest mother cult of Bastar. In her ritual, sometimes even buffalo is sacrificed but now government has banned buffalo sacrifice. These days goats are sacrificed. The deity is found sitting on an elephant and the legs of the elephant are tied with an iron chain. Generally, a *halba* or *bhatra* priest preside the ritual.

Hinlagin Mata: Her temple is in the villages of this region. She is also worshipped in every household. She is frequently worshipped on Tuesday and Saturday. When the deity is worshipped in households, the male heads of the family celebrate the

rituals and when it is performed at village level, a priest from *halba* community supervises the ritual.

Pardesin Mata: Her temples are also found in the villages of Bastar region. She is worshipped in the households or collectively by the villagers. A *halba* priest takes charge of her *puja*.

Banjarin Mata: It is told that *banjarin mata* is brought by the *banjara* from Rajasthan when they migrated to Bastar region. It is believed that, she guards the *ghats* (hills) and protects the traveler from all types of dangers especially from accident.

Karitelgin Mata: It is believed that *karitelgin mata* is very short tempered. She quickly gets displeased, so people think it is better to avoid her. She is worshipped in households and mainly worshipped by the tribal. She is worshipped on the new moon and full moon of the month. On the full moon they offer her liquor, peas, flowers, betel leaf etc. and on the new moon the priest pricks a tip of his fingers by the spike of *sedabari* tree and he offers his discharged blood to the deity mixed with some sun dried rice. They believe that, if the goddess is pleased with anybody she fulfills all his/her wishes and gives plenty of wealth.

Lingo Pen: Lingo Pen is one of their most important deity who is regarded as the creator of the *ghotul* organization. He is *ghotul* deity among the *muria*.

Anga Deo and Pat Deo: These two deities are related with *muria*. But they are also worshipped by the other tribes of the Bastar region. Both deities stay in the *sirhas*

house, where they are worshipped on every Tuesday and Saturday. They are invited and propagated in various rituals and festivals such as *marai*, *diwari*, *deogudi bazar*.

Deven Dokra: Deven Dokra is commonly related to *anga deo*. He is *anga deo*'s elder brother. His habitat is in Orcha village of *abhuj marh* areas. His wife's name is *karmekola devi*. He is the clan god of the *muria* and the *maria*.

Gondin Deo: This deity is worshiped by the tribals of Bastar; especially she is regarded as the Maria deity. She is worship in every household on Tuesday and Saturday. The ritual is officiated by the male head of the family. Every year during *chait* (March-April) they sacrifice a goat or a black chicken as an offering.

Bhandarin Deo, Gobar Deo and Barasar Deo: The goddess is worshipped when people leave for hunting and for success in hunting. *Gobar jharia* is worshipped before ploughing. They consider that, if they do not worship him they will not be able to plough and the bullocks would run away. The seat of *barasar deo* is at the boundary of a village.

Mutta Lemma, Gaman, Kora, Ganganamma and Murpu: These are essential deities of the *dorla* tribes. *Murpu* is similar to the *sitala mata*. They worship the deity to get safety from pox. *Ganganamma* is recognized with the rain god *bhimul*. He is worshipped during first seed sowing in *vija pandum* festival.

Kora and Mattalem: These two deities are generally established at the outskirts of the village. They are regarded as the protector from the evils. They do not allow evil

things to enter the village. These two deities are worshipped during all the important festivals.

Hindu Festivals Celebrated by Tribal

Mati Man Teohar: It is celebrated in the latter half of the month of *chait* (March-April). They worship the earth. It is performed by the villagers collectively at the outskirts of the village, where they install a wooden pole in the name of the deity.

Ama Khani: In the month of *chait* (March-April) they perform this ritual. They offer mango and onion as new fruits of the year to the deity at their own house, after which only they are allowed to take mango and onion.

Akteyi: This is the ritual observed on any day in the latter half of the month of *vaisakha* (April-May). One day before sunrise about 3.00 am or 4.00 am, the family members go very secretly to their field and dig a corner of the field and put some paddy grain (seed). No one outside the family should come to know when a family had done this ritual.

Bij Putni: This ritual is linked to their agricultural life. On the ritual day villagers go to the field with some paddy grain and keep in *chipti* (a small box made with leaves). They give their *chipti* to the village priest. The priest holds the *chipti* one after another by his right hand, then he makes three rounds by each *chipti* in mud with chanting some *mantras* and returns to home. This is known as *bij putni* ritual.

Bali Marai: In this ritual, *bhim deo* is worshipped by the villagers in new month of *vaisakha* (April-May), when the villagers go to set up the *bhim khunt* in their village.

bhim is the rain god, in Hindu mythology, which is known as *varuna*. It is worshipped when there is no rain.

Deo Gudi Bazar: *Deo gudi* bazaar is a festival celebrated annually during the month of *asada* (June-July). In this festival they worship all the deities of the village and special importance is given to the mother deity of the village. They invite the deities by offering them a small amount of rice and a flower on a leaf plate.

Goncha: Goncha is a very most wanted festival for the Bastar tribal. During this festival they worship Lord Jagannath, Bhalabhadra and Subhadra. This is originally, the festival of Orissa, which was brought by one of the king of Bastar from Orissa.

Deo Seyani: On the eleventh day of the latter half of the month of *asada* (June-July), they perform *deo seyani*. On this day all the deities go to sleep. During these days people avoid celebrating auspicious events like marriage, construction of houses. On this day the tribals keep fast and they perform the ritual at their houses.

Hariali: In the month of *srabana* (July-August), they observe *hariali*. In the local *halbi* dialect, it is called as *amush*. On this day they worship their ancestors and deities at their houses with the offerings of coconut, flower, betel leaf etc.

Panisuna Devi Puja: On this day the tribal offer coconut, fruits and flower to *panisuna devi*. It is believed that *panisuna* stays in the water and looks like a *matshyakanya*. If she is not worshipped, their children may die drowning in water.

Naukhahani: They celebrate *nuakhahani* in the latter half of the month of *bhadrava* (Aug-Sept). On that day they bring some harvested rice plant from their field, which is known as *marag dhan*, earthen pitcher from the potter and new cloths for the family member.

Dushera: *Dushera* is the most significant festival of Bastar. It starts from the day of *kumb* (new moon) of October-November. From that day they start bringing wood for the construction of the chariot. They observe several rituals during the construction of chariot. They construct the chariot with different types of wood. They invite all the village gods and goddesses to Jagdalpur.

Marai: It is one of the most important annual festivals of this region. They worship all the deities. It begins during January to February. The *marai* varies from place to place. Generally, they keep it on the day of their weekly market. They celebrate *marai* for the welfare of the village.

The Muria: Attitude towards the Elders:

Training in the *ghotul* teaches *chelik* and *mortuary* to respect the elders and develops a sense of self respect. This approach remains with the children throughout their lives. On that basis an older man enjoys a very privileged position. Even the death ritual of the respected person of village is celebrated with dignity.

Causation of Death: Magic and Witchcraft:

The most important achievement of *sirha*, they think, in *muria* society is identifying the cause of death. (1) If a person dies from magic and witchcraft, the *sirha*

identifies the cause of death. When magic is suspected, they halt the bier before it reaches the burial ground and the *sirha* recites a series of names of suspected persons. When the name of the guilty is mentioned, the bier moves forwards ferociously of its own consensus. This is the best method in the *muria* clan to identify the cause of death. (2) The villager goes to the village boundary and puts five heaps of rice in a row, in the name of *mahapuru*, witchcraft, *dharti mata*, ancestor and village goddesses accordingly who may have been troubled. Then people sit at some distance and wait. One crow flies down and peaks at one or other of the heaps of rice, as a result the crow enlightening the cause of death. (3) The *muria* believes that the way the smoke rises from the funeral pyre indicates the kind of death the deceased has suffered. If the smoke goes straight up, it indicates a natural death.

Type of Death:

The following are the types of unintentional or abnormal death:

- (i) Death due to chronic diseases.
- (ii) Death due to bite of snake.
- (iii) Death due to killing of tiger.
- (iv) Death during pregnancy.
- (v) Death due to dissatisfaction of clan god.
- (vi) Death due to *charchar* (lighting).
- (vii) Death by magic and witchcrafts.

Death Rituals:

The Gond believes in an afterlife. They believe that each human being has two souls: the life spirit and the shadow. The shadow must be prevented from returning to its home, or it will harm the surviving relatives. The life spirit goes to *Bhagwan* or *budha deo*. The shadow stays in the village after the erection of a stone memorial. These ancestor spirits watch over the moral manners of the living Gond and punish offenders of tribal law.

The final rites of passage of the ritual are performed on the death of a person. The Hill marias are more aboriginal when compared to the *muria* and the *muria* life style influences the hill maria of Abujmarh region. The *muria* bury the body of some people such as children, the victims of small pox, those who are killed by tiger and die in lightening (Charchar). Apart from this, all others are cremated. During cremation they lay the dead body in East-west direction because they believe in the worships of the Sun god and the Sun comes from the East. The sunshine first touches the head of the deceased and the departed even worships the sun while resting peacefully in the grave forever.

When a *muria* dies, his house, *ghotul* and the village become defiled. First the relatives of the deceased preferably the son, daughter, niece or nephew inform their relatives. The *ghotul* is closed that day till the cremation is finished. The relatives and others assemble in the house and in the street. The relatives cry loudly from time to time. After arrival of the relatives the corpse is carried out on a bamboo mat into the courtyard accompanied by death songs. Women and relatives sit crying. Everybody puts some water and *haldi* powder to purify the dead body. The male members of the family take the dead body on their shoulder and go to the entrances of the village or road side of the

village which is called *marghat*. Generally, the *marghat* is located near the village in jungle or entrances of the village. The dead body is followed by the men and women. The younger sister or niece or any woman of their clan throws rice over the dead body. Women come with their *kuradi* and axe. The eldest son or brother comes to *marghat* with all the primary material which was used by deceased such as *kudhari*, pottery, arrow, bamboo stick, drum, bow etc to be put with the dead body.

After the dead body is put on the pyre, some women place a little earth and *saja* leaf at either side of the dead body. Some women take a stone and break the bracelet of the dead mans wife. They put all the material with dead body on the pyre ground and cover with *saja* leaf. They place some stone on the pyre ground to identify the place when they will again come to erect the memorial stone. One can find different kinds of practices however in the same community.

When a reputed person dies such as *gaon mukhia*, *gaita* or *waddai*, the ritual is more elaborate where the whole village gathers and the body is taken out to burial ground with singing and dancing. The *akomama* (mother side) relative beat the traditional *dhol* (drum), which is kept in ghotul to summon the relatives, and it is followed by the dance of *dhanghda* (boys) and *dhanghdi* (girls) before the dead body.

Death during Pregnancy:

Women who die during pregnancy are believed to become ghosts or *bhut* according to *muria*. The ghosts are said to live outside the village in the field, rivers, wells, trees and their *uraskal* (memorial stone). Their belief in these ghosts is that the person has missed the most delightful, excitement and interesting thing in life and

dissatisfied with relatives. Therefore, she is supposed to be anxious after death to take revenge. Due to this belief the *muria* perform a separate death ceremony to satisfy the *atma* (soul) of the deceased.

The relatives take the dead body between the point where two roads converge in the two stream of papal tree near or inside the jungle. The relatives (only male) put *haldi* and water on the bier and dry it for one or two hours. The husband of the dead calls “my darling does not come again to my family” and greets her finally. If the dead body is obliged by the husband’s word, the body burns totally; if not, it does not. For this the relatives wait to see whether the body is burning or not. If the flame does not consume the entire body then the soul of the deceased is dissatisfied. Then they leave the body there and come home. The next day they sacrifice a black hen in the name of village goddess. In this ritual there is no role of *gaita*, the ritual head. Only male members of the clan participate in it.

Death from Wild Animals:

The abnormal death from the wild animal is common in *muria*’s life due to their geographical setting or settlement pattern. Death from killing by tiger or a bear are very common. When such incident occurs, the relatives of the family first collect the remains of the body from the place of mishap. They dig up some of the blood-stained earth and make wooden image of the tiger and the dead man. They call the *gaita* and sacrifice a cock in the name of tiger and say: “Take the fresh blood and do not kill people again.” The images are burnt in-situ. In this ceremony there is no feast given to villagers, but some *salpi* party is given to some people who participate in the ceremony. The ceremony

is called *bagh-dhra* in gondi language. Only male members of the village participate in this ceremony. These days ceremony is not practiced by all the *muria* community. Those who stay in dense forest observe it. If the person is a reputed being, then they make an *uraskal* in his/her name outside the village near marghat and the monuments should have the symbolic picture of a tiger. For the purpose of satisfying the deceased, the relatives sacrifice a black cock to jungle *devi* known as *banjari* in *ambasya* or in *puṇima* day. They believe that the *banjari devi* protects human beings from being killed by the wild animals.

Jiu Uthani: The Belief towards the Soul

This ceremony is performed after twelve days from the death of a person. The relatives summon a feast. The relatives both *akomama* and *dadabhai* assemble on that day. Generally, this ceremony is performed on a weekly market day because every body comes to bazaar for their weekly ration. The *chelik* and *motiari* dance with their drum. The elders of the family put some rice in the corner of a room and stay away for some hours. When they enter the room, generally on rice they find some foot prints of animals or goddesses. They believe that the symbol of the foot print is the sign of the soul that comes via animals to home and stays in departed pots.

Another method is that the relatives go into the water and try to catch any kind of living thing. Whoever first catches is regarded as being specially loved by the dead person and rewarded with extra drinks. If they catch fish, they put the fish into one of the pots. The pot is covered with a new sari and the *akomama* relatives put some *haldi* and

oil over it. Then a woman (married) lifts the pot and puts it down near the pot of the departed. Their idea is that the soul will come back home through the fish.

The Departed Pot: (Photo-30)

The departed pot has great importance in the *muria* life. The funeral rites and erection of memorial pillar are the symbol of remembrance to ancestors. But the daily and monthly ritual inside the home is very important in their life. For the purpose of daily rituals each *muria* family keeps a pot inside the corner of the room which is called the “hanal” room. In addition to the pot there is also a hearth of the departed on which the housewife must cook new grain at each of the first eating festival called as *nuakhahani*. It is a permanent pot to which special offerings are made on all important occasions. There are various rules about this pot. Only the married women and *gaita* can remove and move toward the pot. When the newly bride comes home, it is the mother’s responsibility to introduce about the importance of the pot. The pot can be changed every year if the pot is fractured due to any cause.

Practice for Erection of Memorials:

The *muria* erect menhir and dolmen in memory and conciliator of the dead. They continue this tradition in different forms. Those who are staying inside the jungle and hills, they continue this tradition. The tradition has been abandoned in most of the areas such as Jagdalpur, Bastar town and some part of Kondagaon tahasil. The stone erected by *muria* is an upright menhir called as “uraskal” ⁷ in gondi. Some *muria* of Bailadila area believe that the size of the menhirs is based on the personality of the dead person how much he or she was reputed. If we look at the *muria* of Narayanpur and Bhopalpatnam,

they say that the size depends on the availability of suitable stone in hills. The *muria* erect menhirs for men and women, which stand in long rows by the roadside, near the village boundary or in the place of *marghat*. Stone for men and women are usually put separately. These stones are not confined to this region only. They are found extensively in almost all the inhabitant of *muria*. If anyone, who has died under suspicious circumstances his or her menhir is put in a secluded place. In the village Murdanda of Avapalli area, the *urias* erect menhirs in the name of men and dolmen in the name of women, because they believe that the men can stand more time compared to women. Therefore, all the menhirs are in standing position and the dolmens are in the sitting position.

If we see the Timelwada area of Konta tahasil the *muria* erect only dolmen (photo-14, 20) in the name of both men and women. Due to unavailability of proper height stones, now they use wood as a memorial pillar. These days *muria* generally use small stones and have to quarry them and pick them off the ground. When they go to the forest for wood or to hunt, they keep a look out for suitable surface stone and also good quality of wood. During the taking of the stone from hills, the *chelik* and *motiari* escort the menhir to its place with their drum and dances. The relatives give some drinks to their clan members who cooperate in taking stones.

Generally the stone is selected by the old man of their clan or *gaita*. It is believed that the removal of the stone must be performed by a member of such clan or *gaita*. The *gaita* makes a small hole on the stone and offer *salpi*, pulses and rice, and digs it up. If the stone does not get out of the ground, then the *gaita* declares that the soul of the dead

person may need something different. They sacrifice a black cock to the stone and then the stone is dug it. Once they get the stone out of the ground they cover it with a new cloth and take it directly to the burial ground or *marghat*. Apart from the memorial stone, another small stone is kept with the menhir. Sometimes the people put stones in the name of deceased. The wife of the dead man; and if not, the wife of brothers, takes the small stone and keeps it with the menhir. Everybody puts a mark of oil and *haldi* on the stones just like the marriage of couples in the Hindu tradition. They leave the stone near the menhir and return back home and sacrifice a cock in the name of departed pot. Next morning or any suitable day, the relatives give a feast to the entire village to satisfy the soul of the dead man. The erection of menhir is very costly and it depends on the economic condition of the family. If the family is unable to offer a feast to the entire village, they offer them drinks.

When They Worship?

There would be no value of menhirs without worship. The family has the responsibility to continue the worship of the stone. Generally, they worship the menhirs during the following day.

- (i) The day of *amabasya* and *puṇnima*
- (ii) Before going to cut the crops
- (iii) Before going to hunting
- (iv) First three days of marriage
- (v) Before going to put seed for cultivation

Wooden Memorial Pillar :(Photo-16, 21)

There are two types of memorial pillars one can find in Bastar and Dantewada region, one is made of stone and the other is wooden. Nowadays it is very difficult to get proper surface stone in hills and finding and taking a good stone is time taking. So the *muria* have taken the alternate of wood in lieu of stone. For erection of wooden memorial pillar the procedure of the menhirs, is followed. The most valuable thing is that they decorate the wood in various shapes and draw different kind of picture on it. They decorate even the stones too.

Rock and Wooden Art and Architecture: (Photo-16, 18, 19, 20)

The members of the deceased person call the carpenter to decorate the wood with pictures. The decoration is based on two things: (1) the picture should be of what the deceased person liked. (2) Picture of the nature Gods and Goddesses and also the pictures of animals such as crow, peacock, sparrow, tiger, bull, rhinoceros and fish are drawn. The nature gods and goddesses are sun, moon, stars, trees and mountains. For the decoration, the carpenter charges around 1500 to 2000 rupees. The *muria* carpenters are very advance in their art. One can find various dolls and toys of high quality in the market of Bastar and Jagdalpur. The question arises as why do they decorate? The answer may be because they believe that after the death these gods and goddesses would help the deceased.

There are some memorial pillar at Dhilimili where one can see the creativity of the *muria*. It is a fat, thick pillar, carefully squared, standing between 3.05 to 5.05 mts. with complicated carvings surrounding the base and a beautification of crocodiles and pigeons at the top. The centre is surmounted by a trident and on this again is a small bird

called *paara* and *chentia*. On the west face of the pillar, there are carvings of dancers wearing their traditional dresses and some girls who are realistically portrayed. Below them is a tiger, a crane and a peacock. On the south side is a picture of a man riding an elephant with an umbrella in his hand and a bag of some material, and five women follow him with pots of rice-beer and leaf spoons. Below them are some rats. At the bottom are men ploughing, deer and tigers. On the east side is a man riding a horse and catching fish and tortoises. To the north, there is a man and his wife with their children. Below this are two pairs of dogs. It seems as if they are copulating. At the very bottom some men are carrying a pot of rice beer. Near the pillar are grave and a modern hut built up by the *gaon mukhia* to preserve these monuments.

Beliefs towards the Memorial Pillar:

The *muria* believe that if the dead soul is satisfied with the arrangements that one made for him/her the stone grows in size. The soul of the deceased stays in the stone. When the family gets a child, the soul will come with the new child. The soul also protects the deceased family from devil. The maximum period of worshipping the stone is twenty years after that it becomes only memorial. Another theory of growing stone is, if the stone is erected in an isolated place and nobody touches and disturbs the stone then the stone may grow 1.2" every year.

The Hill Maria

According to *maria* Gond, death is a natural process. They are created by the *Pen* (God). They came here to finish their work. After they finished their work, the *mahapuru* calls them to their original place. They believe that their souls have three *atma* (*jiv*). The

first is in their chest, which makes it *dhak-dhak*. The second is in their mouth. The third is in their body. The first will go to the *mahapuru*. The second will go near by a tree and the third will be staying in the memorial stone. They worship the tree, monuments and pray to the *mahapuru* that the soul should come home and stay in the departed pots. They believe in the transmigration of the soul and rebirth “punarjanma”. After finishing their work (what *mahapuru* said them during the creation) they return to the original place. So they have to die for returning to *mahapuru* for *punarjanma*.

Apart from the calling of *mahapuru*, there are many unnatural deaths due to the dissatisfaction of *mahapuru*. The following are the causes of abnormal death:

- a) Death due to chronic diseases.
- b) Death due to killing tiger.
- c) Death during pregnancy.
- d) Death due to dissatisfaction of clan god.
- e) Death due to *charchar* (lighting).
- f) Death by witchcrafts.

Death depends on the cause. If it is a normal death, one of the family members of the deceased first informs the village *mukhia*. The *mukhia* will call the *gunia* or *waddai* to identify the cause of the death. The *gunia* or *wadai* has the autonomous power to identify the cause of death. If it is a normal death, then he asks the family to inform their relatives

to come. If it is unnatural death then the *gunia* or *wadai* decides to fire the death body outside the village or any water location. All the primary rituals depend on the cause of death.

Funeral Rites or Death Ceremony:

The ceremony of death and the soul of the dead get its place again in *marni pendul*⁸ ceremony. *Pendul* means marriage and *marni* means end of life and together it is called *marni pendul*. When a person dies in a hill maria family, the relatives first call the *waddai* to find the cause of death. The news of the dead is sent out to all the brother clan and wife clan relatives. In *ghotul*, the *chelik* and *motiari* beat the drum till the cremation. The cremation generally takes place in the evening. If it is natural death then the body is taken to the burial ground near the village or road side of the village with their relatives. This ceremony is different from the *bison horn maria*. The villagers dig the earth up to 3 to 5 ft. on the direction of east-west. First they put the saja (*patar*) leaves in the digging ground. Then the eldest son of the deceased or elders of the deceased family, with other relatives make seven or three round in the ground. In the meantime they put water and *haldi* on the body for purification. The water has an important role in the death rituals. If they place water on the dead body, the sins are purified.

The purity of the soul depends on the water and the water should be from the river or *nala*. They place the dead body in East-west direction with some used materials, like bed, earthen pots, coins, pottery, iron object, arrow, etc. The elders of the family or son offers first earth to the death body, and then others fill up the ground. They cover it up with small stones and put some bamboo stick on it for identifying the place. Unlike other

deaths, they bury the pregnant woman in a different way, with mass of female participation. There are separate places for various people to bury. They take the body to road side, near the river or *nala* and below the *mahua* tree (if not mahua, then pipal also). The women also participate in the ritual like the men. They put water and *haldi* on the body and put fire on it.

After coming from the burial ground, they take bath in the river or *nala* and take *salpi/ tadi*. On the same day they decide to give a feast. The deceased family gives the feast to the villagers and relatives. If they are unable to give on the same day, they give it after a week. It depends on the economical status of the family. If the child is below the age of 6 to 8 years, they do not give feast but they give formal drinking party for consolation. There is a particular spot in each village. The selection of spot depends on the cause of death. If it is a normal death, then the spot may change.

Departed (Hanal) Pot:

Each and every *maria* family keeps a *hanal* pot inside the room. Sacrifices and offerings in each and every ritual and function are made at this pot. No sexual intercourse is allowed in the room as it is disrespect to the ancestor. A woman in her menstrual cycle is not allowed to enter the room. Those who die abnormal deaths such as cholera, small pox, during pregnancy and killing by tiger, for them they do not put *hanal* pot.

Abnormal Death:

If the person dies from cholera or small pox he must be burned in other places. For this no menhir is erected. If a person is killed by tiger or other wild animals he must be burned, at the place where their remains are found. They must not be brought into the

village; otherwise the dead man soul (*atma*) may bring the tiger to home. No menhir or dolmen is set up for him or her. If a person dies in pregnancy, the body is taken outside the village near the *nala* and burnt with *mahua* wood. They also burn the used materials of the deceased particularly the cloth and bed.

Belief towards Cremation:

They believe that, if they cremate the body, the *atma*/soul will be sitting the ground forever and in next birth he/she will come to their family. If they bury, their *atma* will roam in the air. There is a special place for cremation. It is called *marghat or hanal gutta*. This place is prohibited for the children. They believe that the soul and ghost stay in that place. The pregnant women also are prohibited from going to this area. The child, the pregnant women, and those who are killed by tiger are cremated and all others are buried.

Idea about Direction:

The direction of head is placed in the east side because they believe that the sun rises from the side of the head of the dead body and they believe that their ancestor comes to this region from the eastern part of the world. According to villagers the eastern part is located in thousand miles from the present village; it may be identified in somewhere Andhra Pradesh most certainly Ventapuram in Khamman district. They also worshipped the sun god. So, they placed head in the east. But generally it is not the rule. Within the hill maria community at Chotadonger area they put the body in reverse as they find suitable to place it.

When they worship?

Every full moon day (purnima) and solar eclipse day (amavasya) they give some food and *salpi* to menhir. Apart from that, they worship on the day of marriage and *dassera*, *nua khahani*, and each festival day. There is also the practice of a great deal of hunting. Before preparing for hunting they worship the memorial monuments. They believe that, if the forefather's soul is dissatisfied their hunting would not be successful. Before they start cultivation and sowing the seeds, they worship the monuments with rice and *salpi*. They sacrifice the cock, hen and goat.

Ghost and Witchcraft:

They believe in Ghost. If the soul is dissatisfied with the arrangement, it becomes a ghost. For the satisfaction of ghost they sacrifice black chicken and black pig. This is one of the cause of fear, for which they worship the soul and memorial monuments.

Double Burial:

They erect monuments for a single person. If somebody in the same family dies on the same day in the same incident, they erect double burial monuments. If a man and woman die at the same time they place dead body in reverse manner. This type of burial can be found in the twin menhirs at Karhibhadar.

Erection of Monuments:

There is a difference between erection of menhir and dolmen. In some places like Avapalli, they believe that man can stand many hours, so they placed menhir in the name of man. Women cannot stand more time compared to men, so they place dolmen in the

name of woman. Generally, the dolmen is placed in a sleeping position. In some places like Kondagaon area there is no difference between the menhir and dolmen. It is a memorial to the departed.

The selection procedure of a stone depends on the economic condition of the family. If the family is rich, they buy the stone from Jagdalpur stone factory area. If the family is poor they can take it from the mountain, whatever they get from the mountain. The eldest son of the family can place the stone. The construction of monument depends on the family. If the family is rich, they place dressed or decorated stone. The decoration is done by the craftsman. It costs about Rs 2000. Those who belong to poor families place wooden pillar. They decorate the wood with various pictures such as birds, animals, fish, moon, sun etc.

Reason for Erecting Menhirs:

They erect both menhir and dolmen in the name of their ancestors. The menhirs are called *kotakal* in gondi. They believe there is continuity beyond death. The deceased wishes desire and needs, which the relatives would fulfill. They believe that the unsatisfied sprits would trouble.

There are many reasons for erecting menhir or dolmen. They are as follows: (i) After death the soul (atma) need not go anywhere, it will stay in the stone near the house. (ii) If they stay inside the stone, they must not harm the relatives. (iii) They must help in bringing rain and protect from the harmful and destructive spirit. (iv) The coming generation must remember their forefathers by seeing the Memorial stone. (v) If they erect the monuments, the soul of the departed again will come in the form of new born

children. (vi) They worship the monuments and it is their belief and tradition. (vii) They believe that they have been worshipping the monument from time immemorial. If they stop the tradition it means it is disrespect to their ancestor. (viii) It entails community participation and shows the strength and unity of the community in the village or region.

Dandami Maria (Bison-Horn Maria)

The *dandami maria* believe that there is a continuity beyond death. Among the *dandami*, death is associated with various beliefs, customs and rituals. They believe that, the hostile spirits, black magic, witchcraft or the wrath of the deities cause death. An elaborate ritual is performed to mitigate the effects of their harmful elements on the living members. The departed soul would not realize the depth of sorrow of his relatives and would grumble in the other world if they do not make crying sound until the body is taken to the cremation ground.

Death Ceremony:

When a person dies in the *dandami* family, his son-in-law first informs their relatives with beating the *dhol* (drum). The beats continue until the relatives and friends from mother clan (*akomama*) and father clan (*dadabhai*) assemble or until the dead body is taken to the cremation ground. After the arrival of the relatives the body is taken out of the house to the verandah, washed with a pot of water and massaged with *dumber* oil. They also put turmeric (*haldi*) on the body to purify and put a new cloth on it. Four men of the dead relatives carry the bier on their shoulders to the cremation ground. An elder man brings some *saja* leaves and puts it over the face of the dead body. He also brings water from the stream in *saja* leaf cup and sprinkles it on the face of the corpse. Some

young men and women beat the funeral drum in their traditional dress. The son sets fires to the pyre of the body. As soon as the pyre catches fire and burn intensely the relatives go away from the cremation ground and return home after bathing in the river. Generally, the cremation ground is situated outside the village or on the road side near the water source. Next morning the relatives go to the cremation ground to see whether the body has been completely burnt or not. If any portion of the body remains unburned, then it is a sign that the death took place due to magic or witchcrafts. They throw away the remains of ashes and bones into the river.

Erection of Menhirs:

Some days after the completion of the death ritual, (after seven days) on any festival or bazaar day they come to the pyre ground to erect the *urasgatta* (menhir). In between they collect the wood from the forest and prepare wooden pillar. These days in lieu of stone they erect a wooden pillar due to the unavailability of proper surface stone in hills. They decorate the pillar in various shapes and draw various pictures on it. The picture is based on the likes of the dead according to the instruction of the relative. After putting the *urasgatta*, they sacrifice a chicken or goat in the name of the dead soul. The relatives give a feast in the village. The major cause for not erecting stone menhir can be attributed to close contact with Hinduism and its practices. If they erect menhir they must sacrifice a buffalo or cow and the sacrifice of cow is pronounced illegal by the Chhattisgarh government.

If a reputed person dies in the village such as *gaita*, *gunia* or village *mukhia*, they erect the menhir but without sacrificing the cow. Instead of a cow they sacrifice many

goats or pigs. The stone is selected and carried from the hills to home. If they do not find any suitable stone in the hills then they go to the factory area at jagdalpur. The rituals are same with the hill *maria* but the cost of the feast is be high. They collect the feast materials more or less from each household. They put the menhirs near the village at an important place and they cover the menhirs with cement plaster.

Abnormal Death:

If a person dies an unnatural death such as cholera, small pox, killed by tiger, suicide, snake bite and women dying during pregnancy their bodies are buried in places other than the usual cremation ground. It is generally believed that people killed by tiger are transformed into tiger spirits and wander around the forest to attack people. For satisfying the soul they sacrifice a chicken in the name of jungle *devi* or village goddesses. If pregnant women die, the relatives first inform the *gunia* to find out the cause of death and give a black hen for sacrifice. The *bhut* (shadow) of the deceased goes to the near by *palas* tree. The *gunia* identifies the *palas* tree and sacrifices the hen under the tree.

Departed Pot:

The *dandami maria* keep the departed pot in their house and it is called the *hanal* room. In this room they generally keep grains and all agricultural implements. They worship the pot on every festival day and also sacrifice a cock before sowing, harvest and hunting. If a marriage takes place in the family, the pot is worshipped for the first three days. They worship the pot with country beer or liquor. The *dandami maria* have accepted most of the methods of death ritual of the *urias*. Even some *dandami maria*

tribes of Jagdalpur recognized themselves as the murias. They want to be more advanced like the muria. Now-a-days they are going to school and colleges for higher study. Their culture mingles with the Brahmanical culture. They are increasingly following the Brahmanical way of life.

Indigenous Iron Smelting:

In Chhattisgarh the old indigenous methods of smelting ore are still carried on to fulfill the day to day requirement of iron implement. The *agarias* are a small ethnic group of Chhattisgarh. They are concentrated in the Sarguja, Shadhol, Bilaspur, Durg and Raigarh districts and some parts of Kanker district of Chhattisgarh. They have adopted the profession of iron smelting. Their traditional and main occupation is iron smelting. They get their ore from the *maikal* range, selecting stones of dark-reddish colour. They mix ore and charcoal in the ratio of 16:10 in the furnace and the blast is produced by a pair of bellows worked by the feet and conveyed to the furnace through bamboo tubes. It is kept up steadily for four hours. The clay coating of the kilns is then broken down; and the ball of the molten slag and charcoal is taken out and hammered into iron. In this way, they make ploughshares, mattocks, axes, sickle and so on.

(Table-1) Materials Made by the Agaria for their Day to Day Use.

Iron Materials (Local Name)	Description
Aitwar Mundri	It is a type of twisted iron, usually made of kauri loha and worn by a lamu child as a protection against lightning
Surahi Mundri	It is an ordinary type of ring of plain iron. It is used as a guard against the diseases.
Chulmundri	It is used in the weddings by Gond. It has copper mixed with

	the iron.
Chhura	It is an anklet of plain or twisted iron, generally of kauri loha. It worn by men and women as a protection against magic.
Pidha	It is a wooden board covered with iron.
Kharaut	It is a wooden clogs covered with iron.
Gurud	It is an iron scourge. It has knobs and spikes making it a frightening weapon.
Katahi	It is a scourge and fitted with iron tips and spikes.
Hiranoti	It is a very elaborate lamp stand used in marriage.
Painari	It is used to cut grass and thorn bushes, to break off earth that has stuck to the plough to dig for rats.
Bakkhar	It is a paring harrow. It is used for rooting up stubble and breaking the clods of earth that the plough has turned up.
Kanta	It is used to dig up roots or to make holes in the ground.
Hassia	It is the sickle used to reap rice, to cut grass, to cut meat.
Gaend	It is large iron ring which is fixed round the pole in the centre of the threshing floor.
Basula	It is an adze, used for smoothing the wood of a plough or indeed for planning any kind of wood. It is sometimes also used for digging.
Tangia	It is used for cutting bamboo.
Tangi	It is used for cutting wood.
Pharsa and Pharsi	It is used for killing animals.
Sandi	It is a nail used for fishing.

(Table-2) The following table lists the local factory names and their respective description as prevalent in Bilaspur district:

Sl. No.	Local Name of Iron Ore, Metal and Slag	Description
01	Chawaria	The ore dug from pits in the Motinala Range and is considered

		as the good quality in this area.
02	Chawaria	The ore dug from the Karanjia Hill Range. Good quality.
03	Bhawaria	Dug from the Motinala Range. It is of good quality.
04	Pando	Gathered from the surface of the ground in Motinala. It is a pure heavy ore quality.
05	Katarra	Collected from the bank of the streams in Motinala. It is of poor quality.
06	Charki	Dug from the pits in Motinala. Tools made from this are said to break readily.
07	Jak-Makka	Dug from the pits in Motinala.
08	Dhidha(metal)	The ore has been extracted from the furnace after an hour and a half smelting.
09	Pajar(metal)	Dug from the pits in Motinala
10	Mail(slag)	Dug from the pits in Motinala

The Tata iron and steel company at Jamshedpur was enterprising enough to analyze the above mentioned type of Iron ore, metal and slag.

(Table-3) Percentage of Chemical in Iron Ore⁹

% of Chemical	Chawaria	Chawaria	Bhawaria	Pando	Katarra	Charki	Jak-Makka
SiO ₂	13.10	3.78	9.90	6.00	2.92	10.24	4.60
Ai ₂ O ₃	2.68	2.94	2.94	5.52	4.69	9.74	8.20
TiO ₂	0.10	0.10	Trace	0.70	0.50	1.60	0.70
FeO	Trace	Trace	Trace	0.26	1.94	0.38	1.29
Fe ₂ O ₃	69.20	80.36	70.21	79.22	77.93	70.36	73.22
MnO	0.70	1.33	1.90	0.49	0.15	0.27	0.06
P ₂ O ₂	0.120	0.460	0.220	0.192	0.925	0.215	0.765
CaO	Trace	Trace	Trace	0.30	0.40	0.20	0.20
MgO	1.15	0.72	1.44	0.22	0.52	0.23	0.28
H ₂ OI ₈ B	13.00	9.80	12.60	7.32	10.20	7.12	11.00

(Table-4) Percentage of Chemical in Slag and Metal ¹⁰

% of Chemical(Slag)	Mail	% of Chemical(Metal)	Dhidha	Pajar
SiO ₂	18.00	C	0.78	0.42
Ai ₂ O ₂	9.02	Mn	0.10	0.42
FeO	53.40	S	Trace	Trace
TiO ₂	0.30	P	0.140	0.043
Fe ₂ O ₂	10.01	Si	0.075	0.48
Met.iron	1.60			
MnO	4.75			
P ₂ O ₅	0.450			
CaO	0.40			
MgO	2.16			
Carbon	0.28			

The above chemical analysis of different specimen shows that the iron ore from the Chhattisgarh are of good quality and people easily get the ore from the nature. This is one of the cause the *agaria* took the profession of iron smelting even during present day. One can say that the origin of present smelting of iron is from the megalithic period in this region.

Type of Megalithic Monuments:

Presently, on the basis of morphological features the megalithic monuments found in different Gond inhabited areas of Bastar region are broadly divided into the following types:

(i) Menhir, Alignment, Avenue (Uraskal).

(i) Dolmen, Cap Stone (Dhanyakal).

(iii) Wooden and Stone Memorial Pillar (Urasgutta).

(iv) Stone Circle (Pathri)

Philosophy Behind the Practice of Megalithic Culture:

Megalithic practices seem to connect the entire community into oneness by traditions, which lead to unity in social and cultural spheres. The people of *muria* and *maria* gond are controlled by the rules and customs for the projected behaviour of their societies. Every village is a self ruled unit. The natural objects such as trees, forests, stones surrounded by megalithic monuments are believed to have supernatural power. The big stones and mountains are supposed to be malevolent spirits by these people. People believe that for a peaceful and wealthy life they practice this culture. The ancestor had erected such stones to perpetuate their powers and names. The practice of megalithic culture seems to carry the concept of unity and human power in the society. These memorial stones exhibit the belief of the people in supernatural powers. These stones are treasured, worshipped and honoured by the community.

Importance of Monuments in Agricultural Practices:

The megalithic monuments have a great importance in their agricultural life. The first showers begin in the month of June-July and the activity of sowing starts with vast religious rites. Ritual and sowing are always done together when they start slash and burn

(Pedda) cultivation.¹¹ The Gond believes that invoking godly power is a must to ensure good yield. On the occasion of first sowing two rites are performed, namely, a sacrifice for the *dharti maa* (mother goddess) and a sacrifice for the guardian to the family which is called the *pathri* (stone). Prior to sowing, the family is offered a black chicken, millets and seeds (various kinds) that are to be sown in the season. They sacrifice before the *pathri* focus on, good yield without any harm to the farmers from the wild animals. The entire ritual is known as *bijputna* in *abhujmarh* region.

Ritualistic Importance:

Within accumulation to the composite of memorials, commemorative or stone for social prestige and status put up by the clans, the three types of Gond erect a series of stones connected with funerary and ritualistic purpose. The funerary stones are those connected with the burial rituals including the disposal of the mortal remains of the dead. The tribes bury their dead but the place of burning differs from tribe to tribe. The tribes such as *maria*, *muria* and *damdani* practice megalithic traditions which are definitely of their own that are in tune with the ecological environment and the community vision held by them. With the arrival of modernization, the tribal society has undergone noticeable change in their cultural life. Instead of cow they sacrifice goats or pigs when they worship the stone.

Importance of Pottery in their Death Culture:

The potters work on wheels and produce for weekly market in the small towns. In the Gond community some people take the profession of making different pots. The male members of the family are engaged in cultivation and the females supply periodically a

certain number of pots for the use in religious and social occasion in the village. Every Gond family in this region has a ritual pot inside the house. Sacrifices and offering on each and every ritual function are made at this pot. They believe that the ancestral soul comes home and stays inside the pot and protects people in the time of difficulty. They generally use the pot for making the food, carrying water from the *nala* and in the various ceremonies. One can find many villages where the potters are established. Since potters are settled from a long ago in this region one can assume that this tradition continues from their ancestors.

(Table-5) Explored Villages, Presently Erecting Megalithic Monuments

Sites	Block/Taluk	Districts	Cultural Assemblages	Location
Mundrapara	Dantewada	Dantewada	Menhir	15 km from Dantewada
Jampara	Dantewada	Dantewada	Menhir	10 km from Dantewada
Dhurli	Dantewada	Dantewada	Menhir	10 km from Dantewada
Murdanda	Usoor	Dantewada	Dolmen	10 km from Avapalli
Jhaugaon	Gidam	Dantewada	Wooden pillar	15 km from Gidam
Baiguda	Gidam	Dantewada	Wooden pillar	8 km from Gidam
Suklapara	Gidam	Dantewada	Wooden pillar	13 km from Bairampur
Tumnar	Bairamgarh	Dantewada	Wooden pillar	10 km from Bairamgarh
Rompalli	Sironcha	Gadchiroli	Menhir	17 km from Sironcha
Sirkonda	Sironcha	Gadchiroli	Menhir, Wood en pillar	15 km from Sironcha
Kotapalli	Usoor	Dantewada	Menhir	9 km from Avapalli

(Table-6) Population of the Study Village above 14 years

Village/Sites	Block	District	Tribe	Male	Female	H.H	Total
Dongri	Narayanpur	Bastar	Damdami Maria	24	18	15	59
Murdanda	Bijapur	Dantewada	Hill Maria,Muria	41	32	21	86
Karkabhat	Balod	Durg	Muria(Gond)	88	79	41	219
Bartia Bhata	Saraipali	Mahasamund	Kharia, Gond	56	49	36	144
Gammewada	Dantewada	Dantewada	Muria	101	92	47	245
Orcha	Narayanpur	Bastar	Hill maria	112	87	39	234

(Table-7) Geographical Data of Study Villages

Village Primary Data	Dongri	Murdanda	Karkabhat	Bartia Bhata	Gammewada	Orcha
Household land/hect.	72	12	61	43	53	57
Irrigated land/hect.	0	0	29	203	0	0
Fertile land/hect.	0	0	27	90	0	5
Location of Village from Big Town/KM	52	108	67	32	22	47
Number of Monuments	62	9	232	431	51	43
Location-in/near Forest	In	In	Near	Near	In	In
Source of Water	Nala	Nala	River	River	Nala	Nala

Short History of the Study villages

1. Dongri: The village *dongri* has been set up by ancestors and the people have been residing in this village before king's rule. The ancestors of these people belong to the hill maria community. They are the aborigines in this village. Most of the people of this village were working in the court of the Barsur gond rajas. The raja had given the land in the name of this village. The ancestor chose this side for the village because it was located in the dense forest, hence was a suitable site for safety against the rule of the kings and later the British Empire. There is a story behind how the name of the village came into being. There is a small hill on the eastern side of the village. The small hill is known as *dungri*, so they call this village as *dongri*.

There is no proper communication to the village. One can reach this village through the main road or footpath. Tribal culture still thrives in this village. The erection of memorial to dead is common. The sacred groves are referred to as *gaon devis stal* (place). There are few *devis* (goddesses) in the village forest. The village had its own traditional form of self governance. The decision regarding village and the lives of the people were taken by the villagers themselves. Elders were given a lot of respect and they had a say in the decision. It would be a rare situation when the decision of the elders were opposed or violated. The traditional systems of governance handled all the matters of daily life, matters concerning safety and security of the village, protecting their tribal culture, interpersonal relations like marriage.

The people of the village have a very close relationship with the forest. The forest is life for them. They can never imagine the existence of life without forest. Due to the

dense forest and non interference of the government and presence of *Naxalite* they have been able to keep their culture intact and uncontaminated even in this twenty first century.

2. Murdanda: The village is dominated by the *muria* and hill *maria* population. It is situated 17 km from the avapalli police station. The village has been set up by the ancestors six generation ago. The ancestor came to this village from Venkatapuram area of Khammam district of Andhra Pradesh. First two families came to this village. Due to the suitability of forest products, they chose this village. There is a story behind how the name of the village came into being. Long ago the *mur* (peacock) used to come to the village regularly. The villagers would hunt the peacock with their bow and arrow. Once the gond raja came to this village and ate the *mur* meat. Raja did not like the killing of *mur* in large number. So he had punished (dand) some people for that. Therefore they call the village Murdanda.

In this village the tribals still preserve their traditional culture. They celebrate and sacrifice goat and cock to *danteswari mata*. *Danteswari mata* is the village goddess since medieval period. In this village we find dolmens and menhirs still erected by the *muria* in the name of deceased. There is no proper communication to the village. One can reach this village through main road or footpath. Due to *Maoist* influence now the village is looked after by CRPF. The traditional system of governance is totally disturbed by the outside interference.

3. Karkabhat: The village is situated 17 km from the Balod taluk of Durg district. The majority of the populations belong to the Gond community. Due to

industrialization there is a proper communication to this village. The village was set up around 250 years ago. The ancestors came from the Kanker area. Now in the village, the tribal culture is totally disturbed by the outsiders. Due to establishment of factory, all the menhir and dolmen are converted in to chips by the road contractor. Here one can find menhir of 20 to 25 feet. All are in disturbed condition.

4. Bartia-Bhata: The village is situated 22 km from the Saraipali of Mahasamund district. The *kharia* and *gond* are the inhabitants of this village. The *kharia* came to this village from Orissa and the *gond* from the Jagdalpur area. The village Bartia-Bhata is a historical place. The nomenclature of the village is Bartia means Barat in Hindi and *bhata* mean *maidan* in Hindi, so it is called Bartia Bhata. Long ago the *barat* of a zamindar came to this village and stayed here during night. The belief is that due to some magic all the people got converted into stones and are still lying on the floor. The stone got converted into a shape according to position they were in that night. The size of the stone has been decreasing with the passage of time.

The villagers speak about the stone in this way “if somebody takes this stone home intentionally, then he or she will face problem”. Even he would dream of the devil that would kill him in near future. Even he would vomit spirit blood.

Now the villagers worship the stone during every festival. They believe the presence of *gaon devi* in the stone. When this researcher went to the village and tried to dig one of the stones, he found an iron instrument beneath the stone. The instruments are preserved in the village *mukhia* house. Due to construction of road, the contractor

converted the stone into chips. In the village one can find nearly five hundred menhirs in disturbed condition.

5. Gamewada: This village is situated between Dantewada and Bailadila road. The murias of this village are very advanced compare to others. Here we find around 60 menhirs of older date. One of the sites of this village is preserved by Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), Prehistory Branch, Nagpur. The villagers work in Bailadila iron factory.

6. Orcha: The *abuj maria* is a primitive tribal group in chhattisgarh. The communication facility to Orcha is very poor. One can go to Abujmarh area only during a weekly market day, which is on Wednesday. The village is situated in the jungle near hills. The village is situated on the highest place in Chattisgarh. So people used to call it “uccha” which later became Orcha. The majority of the population is maria. The area they are staying is Abhujmarh hill so they called it *abhjmaria*. In this area, one finds many menhirs and wooden pillars erected in the name of their ancestors. Here the tradition still continuous without break.

Continuity and Decay of Megalithic Culture:

In this region the megalithic culture of Gond is in decay. In Pujharikanker, Avapalli and some part of Bhapalpatnam, people continue to erect the menhirs but in different forms. Nowadays, they are not following rituals strictly like before. There are many difficulties faced by the people in erecting the menhir. These days it is very difficult to find a proper surface stone in the hills. Taking big stones from hills to home is time consuming. If they erect a menhir, a great feast has to be given; one or more pigs or

many chickens must be sacrificed. They spend more money in their marriage ceremony. Another major thing is the influence of Hinduism and the ban on cow sacrifice. In these days due to interferences of political party, there is no unity in the village community like earlier.

The clan system is getting collapsed by the interference of outsiders such as *bania*, *marwadi* and *gujrati*. Similarly the cult of *danteswari* was worshipped by the Gond only, but nowadays she is worshipped in public places at Jagdalpur during *Dussera*. During *salva judum* campaign most of the forest villages are destroyed in anti Maoist campaign. This is the reason for migration on a large scale.

The industrial policy of government more or less gives opportunity to some tribals to change their profession. The murias are more advanced compare to other tribes in this region. Their children are going to school and colleges for higher study. They are eager to go to town and city for employment opportunity and never come back to their village. The death culture of the tribal is in ruin. They accept the Hindu ritual and they worship the Hindu Gods and Goddess. Due to the influence of *tantric* Buddhism and Vaishnavism in sixth century A.D.¹² this culture may be said to be amalgamated with Hinduism. They do not have any independent religion anymore.

Impact of Modernization to Megalithic Culture:

These days there is a change in the practices of Megalithic culture. Now-a-days, we find the erection of Megaliths in dense forests, in the village. The villages which are near the urban center are not erecting. Due to industrialization, most of the tribal are working in the factory as wage labourer. They have no time to spend looking for suitable

stones for menhirs. The government education policy “Sarva Sikhya Prasaran” is in full flow in the tribal area. Their belief system is in erosion. The tribal also want to come to the mainstream of the civilization. Instead of erecting stones or monuments they celebrate only the feasts like the Hindus. The tribal children are going for higher education to Jagdalpur and Raipur. The parents of the children try to earn more money to send their children to educational institution. So, they are eager to earn money and come to town in search of employment.

There is the strong influence of Hinduism on the tribal culture. Due to the liberal nature of the Hindu rituals, they believe in the Hindu way of life. The religion, like culture, has everywhere been undergoing a certain degree of change through a process of acculturation. One can distinguish two major type of acculturation: (i) incorporation (ii) directed change.¹³ On the other hand the Christian missionaries have established their churches in the dense forests and are trying to modernize them only to convert them subsequently. In large number the tribals are migrating to town, due to *salva judum*, the anti *maoist* movement.

Nobody attempts to preserve the megalithic monuments. The Megalithic monuments of this area are going to ruin due to road construction and canal construction. The stone contractor destroys the stone monuments to convert the menhir into metal chips (Photo-27). Due to construction of Pandit Ravi Sankar Sukla dam, most of the megalithic monuments at Dhamtari have been destroyed. The megalithic sites in Bastar region have not so far yielded any intrinsic evidences of chronology. It is not possible as

the megalithic fields in each village under study are painstaking as living monuments and they are protected by the villagers.

Importance in Society:

Every tradition and culture has its own significance. The study of megalithic culture in present context gives information about the death practices and belief towards the philosophy of life. One can observe the structural changes in death practice amongst the Gond. These changes are demonstrating the change of human psychology and thought prorny through the phase of history. More or less they continue to practices the aboriginal knowledge and belief towards the superstitions, which are heady constructive to presume the sense of self or soul in tribal community.

For the sake of continued existence in hilly and forest environment, even today they have not forgotten to practice their indigenous knowledge, where natural resources have great role. The deep-rooted belief on the survival of supernatural power also exists to influence each and every step of their life and this belief system gives them power to reveal fight the ravage of them. Its best suited for their existence. All tribes have their own way of doing almost everything, right from childbirth, rearing, marriage, death, etc. For instance, they are aware of a variety of herbal medication as remedies for certain ailments, which are specific to every particular tribe. They hardly share such information, which could possibly be recorded for further use.

Whatever we do with megaliths in the present that is to study them, excavate them, restore them, erect an information board and a counter next to them, is a contribution of contemporary history of culture to the monuments, present and future

lives. Remembrances of culture is the way through which a society ensures cultural continuity by preserving its communal knowledge from one generation to the next, narrate it possibly for later generations to reconstruct their cultural identities.

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² *Illustrated Oxford Dictionary*, London, 2003, p. 888.

³ Shukla, H. L. *Tribal History: A New Interpretation*, New Delhi, 1998, p. 42.

⁴ *Ibid*, p. 44.

⁵ Tiwari, S. K. *Antiquity of Indian Tribes*, New Delhi, 1998, p. 32.

⁶ Troisi, J. *Tribal Religion: Religious Beliefs and Practices among the Santals*, New Delhi, 2000, p.113.

⁷ Elwin, V. *The Muria and their Ghotul*, New Delhi, 1991 Reprint, p. 159.

⁸ Dasgupta, Samira. *The Reflection of Ethno-Science: Study of Abujmaria*, New Delhi, 2005, p. 71.

⁹ Elwin, V. *The Agaria*, Reprint, New Delhi, 1991, Pp. 274-275

¹⁰ *Ibid*.

¹¹ Bhoi, Tirtharaj. "Use of Indigenous Knowledge on Agricultural Practices: Case Study of Pedda Cultivation from Orchha Village of Chhattisgarh." S.R. and B. Padhy,(ed.) *Tribal Development in India: Cotemporary Issues and Perspective*, New Delhi, 2009, p. 153.

¹² - - - . "A Study of Jain Activity in Western Orissa, from 200 B.C to 600 A.D" *Orissa Historical Research Journal (OHRJ)*, Vol-18, No.1, 2004, p. 144.

¹³ Troisi, J. *Op.Cit.* p. 246.

Conclusion

Conclusion

This thesis carried out the study of megalithic culture among the gond of chhattisgarh. The work is mainly confined to the Bastar, Dantewada, Mahasamud, Durg, Rajnandgaon and Raipur districts.

The continuation of the tradition of megalithic culture did not die in Bastar region. Several beliefs and rituals followed by the gond people have proved useful in the study memorial stone monuments. This tradition of megalithic culture has not died because of the continuing tribal social customs and obligation and beliefs. As it is related to perpetuating the memory of a person or ancestors, the tradition has continued so far and might continue in future. The continuation of this tradition of megalithic culture faces several impediments- religious conversion by the Christian missionary is chief among them; however most of the tribal continue to perpetuate their earlier practices of the megalithic culture despite the missionary attempt to convert.

Megalithic cultures emerged in various parts of the world in different periods; however no direct connections can be seen between these cultures. The only common point in the megalithic cultures is that special care was taken to preserve the bodies buried under the stone monuments. In various parts of India people constructed monuments using huge stones, mainly for the purpose of burial and memorial.

The Chhattisgarhi Megalithic people had an advanced knowledge of erecting sepulchral architecture involving cutting, shaping, transporting and erecting huge Menhir as memorials. They transported huge quantity of boulders and arranged around the menhirs in the northern half and then at the bottom level and a distinct circle of stone was made using logs, ropes and levers. The sharp end point of the monuments show either to

the East or West. The angles of deviation from the magnetic north shows that they were deliberating, as a result erected that, indicates about the sense of direction and solar position. It is not necessary that this memorial menhir were erected right away after the death of a person. Memorial menhirs were erected even after a lapse of time, but one can see that their position indicates the time and period of the years when the deceased expired

The megalithic farmers of Chhattisgarh shared the traits of sedentary settlement. The animal domestication, manufacture of pottery, cultivation, iron smelting bear similarity with their counterparts from other areas of India such as Vidarbha and northeast (meghalaya, nagaland, manipur). The agricultural implements like plough share, sickles etc, indicate that the megalithic people of Chhattisgarh were partly agriculturists and partly hunters. Agriculture and hunting formed the main basis of their economy as attested by ploughshare. The way of subsistence pattern was based on cultivation, hunting and fishing.

The megaliths are concentrated on high rock-bench areas, where the large quantity of iron ore and traces of gold is available. The burials are noticed over rocky high land near the water sources. In this region they lived near by burial, where the bounty of stone was available. The Chhattisgarh megalithic people show an advanced knowledge of sepulchral architecture. With the knowledge of iron technology, quarrying of stone was a continuing activity, like cutting, shaping, transporting and erecting huge menhir as memorial monuments.

Very limited number of decoration is found on the Chhattisgarhi Megalithic pottery. The megalithic people believed in “punarjanma” or post-death life. Due to this

belief they placed many materials such as pottery, iron implements and foods in the burial ground for use throughout the believed life after death.

All of the burials are secondary and no skeletal remains are found. If we see the case of Chhattisgarh, on the basis of iron plough share of C 14 carbon dates and on typological basis the iron ploughshare is dated to 1000 BC. As such the anthropomorphic figures and sculpture menhir can be dated 1000 B.C to 500 B.C.

In this region the megalithic culture of gond is undergoing rapid decay. In some parts like Pujharikanker, Avapalli, Abhujmarh and some parts of Bhopalpatnam the practice of erecting menhirs, dolmen and wooden memorial pillar continue, but with moderate changes. The following are the difficulty faced by the people for not erecting megalithic monuments: lack of proper surface stone, lack of time, heavy expenditure on the feast, ban on animal sacrifices, lack of unity among the tribal, influence of Hinduism and modernity.

Many changes have occurred in the practices of Megalithic culture. One can observe the structural change of death practices amongst the gond. But we cannot say that the present tradition is continuing from the past megalithic tradition. These changes elicit the changing human psychology and thought process throughout various historical times. More or less they continue to practice the aboriginal knowledge and belief towards the superstitions and these superstitions further the tradition of menhir erection by appealing to their fear of the supernatural.

For the sake of continued existence in hilly and forest environment, even today they have not forgotten to practice their indigenous knowledge, where natural resources play a dominant role. The deep-rooted belief in the existence of a supernatural power also

exists to influence each and every step of their life and this belief system gives them the conviction for living.

Whatever we do with megaliths in the present, e.g. study them, excavate them, restore them, erect an information board and a counter next to them, is a contribution of contemporary history of culture to the monuments' present and future lives.

The tribal search for a better source of livelihood, attraction towards the 'modern' world, better employment opportunities, better healthcare, etc. have forced them to move out of location of their origin and migrate towards modern settlement areas. If this 'pro-modern' attitude continues, the doom of the megalithic belief and rituals is imminent.

In Chhattisgarh, different communities erect almost same type of memorial stone and wooden monuments as a common feature of their culture, but their way of practice and belief towards the monuments vary from place to place. It is observed that in order to reconstruct realistic models of past culture, an exclusively archaeological approach is insufficient and we need to incorporate an ethnographical approach. The ethnographical approach reconstructs models by not being limited to artifacts excavated (archaeology), but by going further and reconstructing the model from the practices prevalent in the present. The present practices of a community can be extrapolated to the past bringing forth a clearer and more sound model of the past culture.

Thus, the ethnographical approach has proved to be of the greatest importance by high caliber of its contribution to our understanding of the human being.

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Appendix-i

Archaeological Site Survey Form

Part-1

Site Name	
Location	
Nature of Site	
Excavated:	
Explored:	
Newly Explored:	
District/Tahasil/Block:	
State:	
Owner of the Site:	
Settlement Pattern:	
Condition of Site:	
Present Use:	
Type of Site:	
Type of Monuments:	
Nearest Water Source:	

Mineral Outcrop:	
Distance:	
Total Site area	
N-S:	
E-W:	
Material Finds:	
Photo No:	
Roll No:	
Site Map:	
Visited Date:	

Part-2

Opinion/remarks:

Appendix-ii

Check List and Scheduled for Layman

Ph.D, Archaeological Exploration and fieldwork/Ethnological data.
Topic: Megalithic Culture in Chhattisgarh: Insight from Ethnographic Tradition.

BY

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Interview guide for detailed interview with member of the community on "After Death/Living Tradition" of Megalithism.

Part-1: Personal Details.

1. Name:
2. Age:
3. Sex:
- 4 Categories:
5. Sub-Category:
6. Address:

Part-II, Question Pertaining to Death Ceremony.

1. What do you mean by death?
2. Why a person died?
3. Different cause of death?
4. If a person dies, what are the primary deaths rites to follow?
5. How do you cremate the body?
6. What are the Beliefs relating to cremation?
7. How do you celebrate the death rituals?

8. Do the women participate in rituals?
9. What are the ritual materials offered to the dead body and Why?
10. Where do you burry the body?
11. How do you burry?
12. Is there any distinction between burning the dead body of a person
for example female, Pregnant women, Chronic disease etc?
13. Do you provide any post funeral feast to Villager?
14. Who are cremated and are not cremated?
15. Is there difference in the death rites of
Children/adults/aged/Men/women?
16. How the spot for funeral/monuments selected?
17. What is the role of water in the death rites?
18. Which side the head is placed while cremating burning?
19. How the direction like E/W/N/S decided?
20. On what days/festival the monuments are worshipped?
21. What is the link between agriculture/Hunting and the monuments?
22. Do you belief in Ghost?
23. Where the dead person will go?
24. For how many people a monument is erected?
25. How often the monuments are constructed?

Part-III: Question Regarding Megalithic culture.

1. Do you erect a Menhir/Dolmen for your ancestors?
2. What are the belief system regarding Menhirs/Dolmens?
3. Is their any difference between Menhir and Dolmens?
4. If you erect a Menhir/Dolmen, What are the selection procedures of a
stone? Who erect the stone?
5. Do you worship the Monuments?
6. If you worship, then do you decorate the stone?
7. Since, When the practice is Exist?

Part-IV: Impact of Modernization on the practice of Megalithic culture.

1. Any changes have occurred in the practices of Megalith?
2. If, yes, what are the changes happened and Why?
3. Do you thing that, there is an impact of Urbanization in Megalithic culture?
4. Dou you belief, there is an influence of Religion?
5. Does anybody make attempt to preserve your Monuments, like Government, Non-Government and Villagers?

Part-V: Some question on Naxalism relating to tribal culture.

1. Any Naxal disturbance to your death culture.
2. Relationship of death culture with Naxal.
3. Conservation of Megalithic monument by Naxal.
4. Gonds culture and Naxalism.

Part-VI: Composition of Population.

1. Total House Hold of the Village.
2. Total population.
3. No. of Males.
4. No. of Female.
5. Types of Tribes.
6. No. of tribes:
7. History of the village.

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Appendix- iii

Glossary of Vernacular Term and their Meaning

Aeohundi- junior levirate.

Agaria- is a sub-tribe of Gonds. They have been engaged with the profession of iron smelting. They are mainly living in Chhattisgarh.

Akomama- the mother side of the gonds family is called akomama.

Angapen or Pat Deo- is a clan god of maria gonds.

Bara Deo- is a clan god of Maria Gonds.

Barki- is a cloth. The muria cover their upper portion of the body with a wrapper called Barki.

Bhaiband- marriage relation among the clan is called Bhaiband.

Bhim Khunt- Every Damdami maria family kept a wooden pole in front of the house in the name of god Bhim the Mahabharat hero.

Bhum- the earth

Bhut- the soul of the deceased.

Billa- is a necklace wore by gonds women.

Budha Deo- the tribal god.

Chelik- the young boys.

Choudula Pendul- is a marriage system.

Dadabhai- the family member of the father side.

Daksina Kosal- the Chhattisgarh region was under the rule of Kusa, the son of Lord Ram in ancient time. It was called as Daksina Kosal.

Dandakaranya- the area of study region was called Dandakaranya during the time of Samudragupta.

Danteswari- is famous goddesses of Bastar region of Chhattisgarh.

Dhak-Dhak- it refer the sound of heart bit of human being.

Dharti Maet- the earth mother.

Dinam- calling back of the dead man soul to the home.

Dokra- is a famous folk art in Bastar Region.

Due Pathri- dolmen with two slab.

Dum-Dum-Dum- the rhythm of the tribal drum sound.

Dungri- is a small hillock generally located near the village.

Gadaba, Paraja, Saoras, Bondas- these are the minority type of tribes living in Chhattisgarh.

Ganja/Bhang- is a type of tobacco used by tribals in Chhattisgarh region.

Ghotuls- socio-political institution. Every village we can find a Ghotul in Bastar region.

Gunia or Baid- village physician.

Halbas- is a sub tribe of gonds.

Handi and Lota- Earthen pots used to fetch water.

Jagannath, Bhalabhadra and Subhadra- are the deity famous in Orissa.

Jarasandha- was a king of dandakaranya during Mahabharat time.

Jati Panchayat- is an institution. The community meeting is held in this institution.

Kakatiya King- it refers to kakatiya king of wrangal.

Kamar- is a potter of the village.

Kargudar- hoe.

Koheberdan- marriage by exchanges.

Kosra and Kolha- are a

Kotwar- government appointed village guard.

Koyas- the gonds are called as Koyas in some part of Andhra Pradesh.

Koyeyari- sororrate.

Lamre- marriage by service.

Lenj- moon.

Lungi and Gancha- is a type of cloth.

Mahapuru- the god.

Mahua- is a type of liquor.

Mahua, Barra, Bahera, Aonla, Kusum, Char, Palas, Tinsa, Rohana, Bel, Ber, Khair, Lendia, Kumhi- are the various type of trees.

Marghat or Hanal Gutta-

Maria, Muria, Damdami Maria- these are the sub-tribe of gonds.

Mauli- is a village goddesses.

Mirako-Mungya- is a type of necklaces.

Mortiari- the young girls.

Murda Gatta- the burial ground of Dhurwa.

Naik- is the leader of four to five villages.

Para Mukhiya- the head of the small unit of village.

Pargana Manjhi- the head of twenty to twenty five villages.

Parka - slash and burn cultivation of Dhurwa.

Parod- sun.

Patel- head of traditional council.

Pedda- the head of the jati panchayat of a village.

Penda/dippa- the slash and burn cultivation of maria gonds.

Pendul- marriage ceremony.

Punarjanma- re-births.

Salpi- the country liquor made with sago-palm.

Salva Judum- the anti naxalite movement started by government of chhattisgarh.

Sarabhapurias- the sarabhapurias was ruled some part of the Chhattisgarh during ninth century A.D.

Sarva Sikhya Prasaran- education scheme of government.

Sirha and Jhankar- both are the village head and physician.

Teejnahani- a pacificator and offer a feast to the relatives are called teejnahani.

Tiya- iron neck ring.

Ukka- stars.

Usendi- a dominant clan among the gonds.

Vitte- marriage by elopement.

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Photos



Photo-1, Twin Menhir, Karhibhadar



Photo- 2, Twin Menhir, Karhibhadar



Photo- 3, Stone-Circle, Karhibhadar



Photo- 4, Menhir, Karhibhadar



Photo- 5, Menhir, Tengna



Photo- 6, Menhir, Tengna



Photo- 7, Menhir, Tenga



Photo- 8, Cap-Stone, Karhibhadar



Photo- 9, Cap-Stone, Dhanora



Photo- 10, General View of Bartia-Bhata Menhir Site



Photo-11, Menhir, Lilar



Photo- 12, Pyramidal Menhir, Gamewada



Photo- 13, Alignments, Gamewada



Photo- 14, Cap-Stone, Avapalli



Photo- 15, Village Goddess over the Monuments



Photo- 16, Wooden and Granite Memorial Pillar



Photo- 17, Double Menhir and Menhir with Sun Symbol, Timelwada and Dhilimili



Photo- 18, Alignment with Some Picture



Photo- 19, Granite Memorial Pillar, Gamewada and Dhilimili



Photo-20, Megalithic Rock Art, Dhilimili

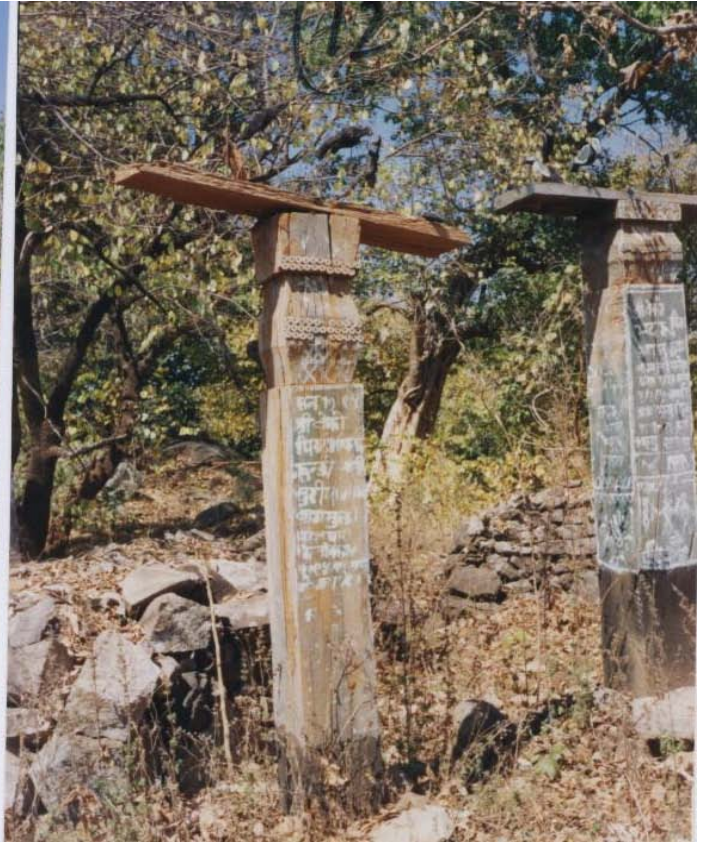


Photo- 21, Modern Burial Ground with Wooden Pillar, Jampara and Dhurli



Photo- 22, Wooden and Granite Memorial Pillar, Jhaugaon and Dhilimili



Photo- 23, Iron Smelting in Bastar Region

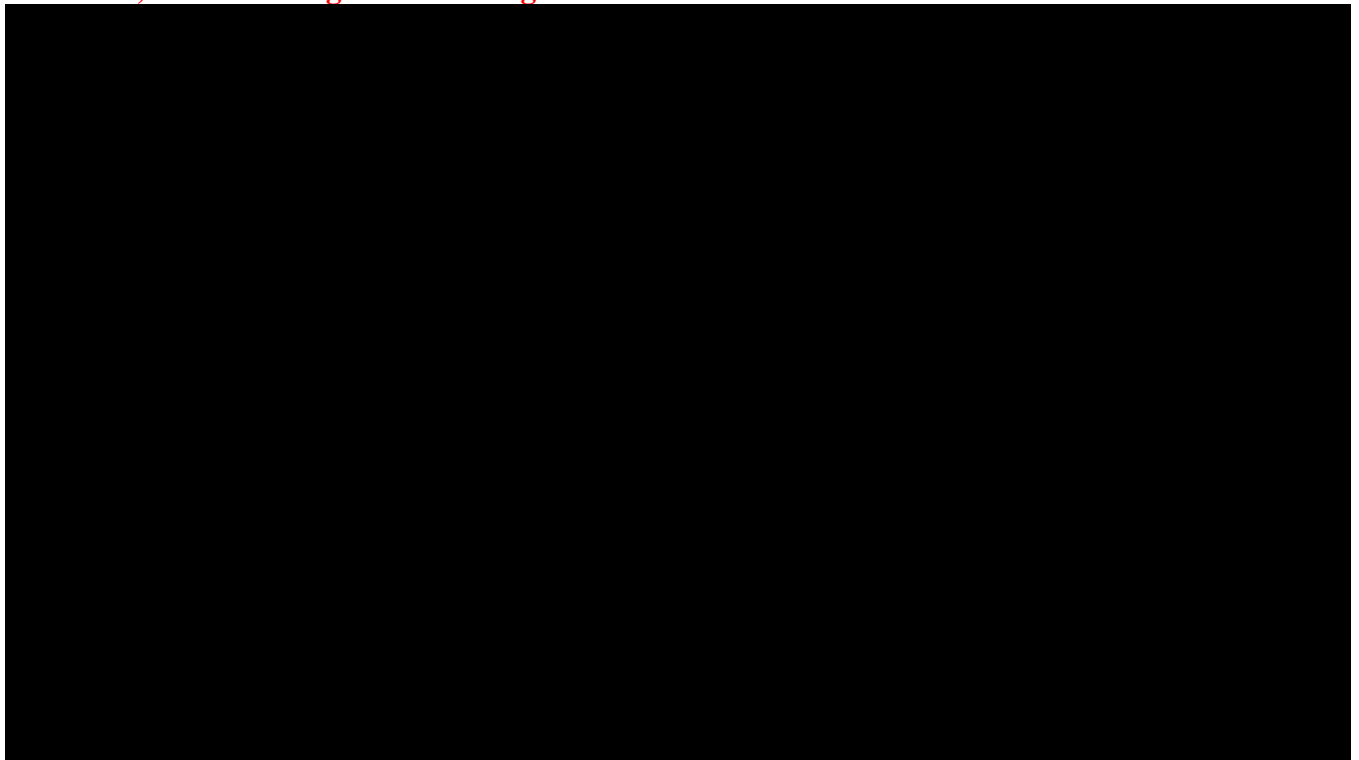


Photo- 24, Villager and Research Scholar, taking notes at Orcha village in Bastar



Photo-25, Twin Menhir, Karkabhat



Photo-26, Menhir, Karkabhat



Photo- 27, Destruction of Monuments, Tengna



Photo- 28, Dolmen, Single and Double Slab, Timmelwada



Photo-29, Anthropomorphic Figure, Karkabhat

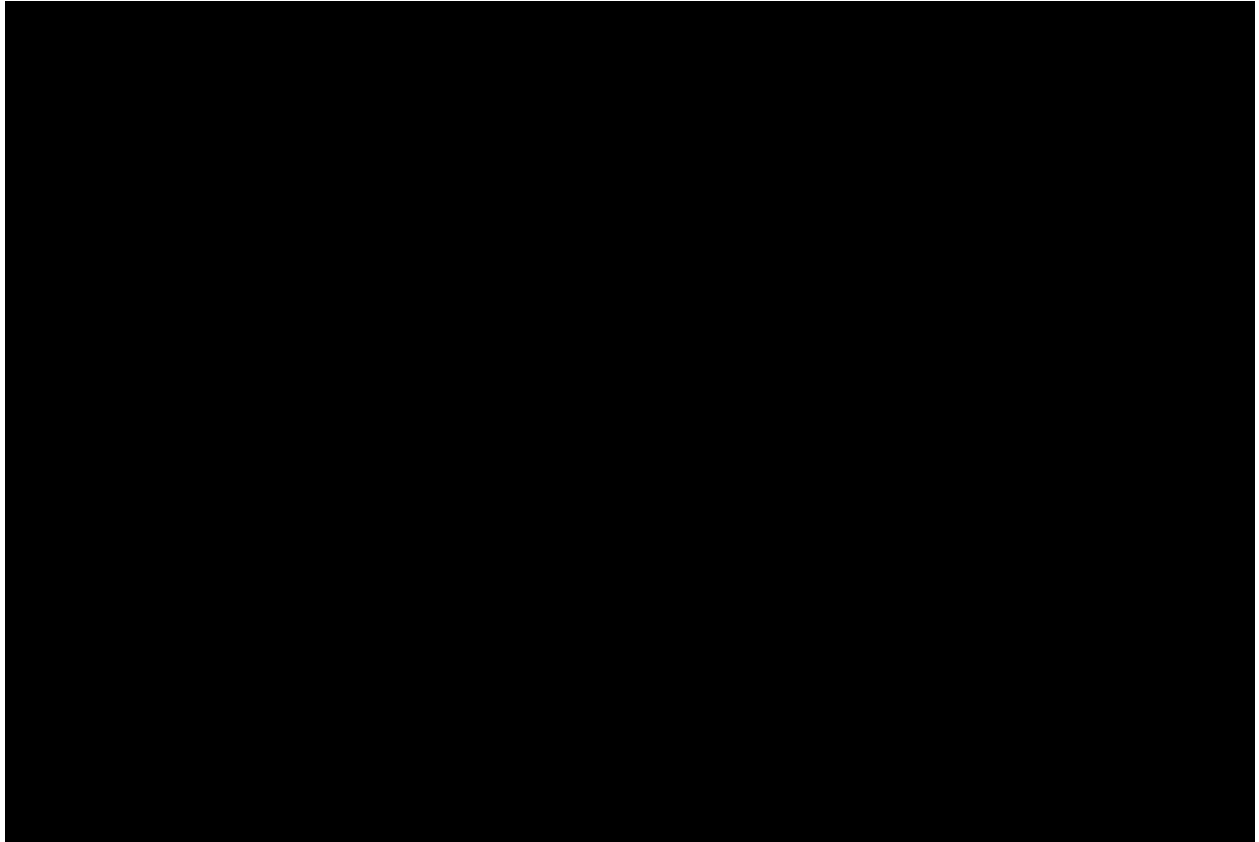


Photo- 30, Departed Pot



Photo-31, Cairn Circle, Sankanpalli



Photo-32, Cairn Circle, Nilakanker



Photo-33, Menhir, Nilakanker



Photo-34, Murdanda, Stone Circle



Photo-36, Menhir, Mothe



Photo-37, Parond, Menhir



Photo-37(1), Parond

Photo-38, Tengna, Menhir



Photo-39, Menhir with Loose Cairn Paking, Karkabhat

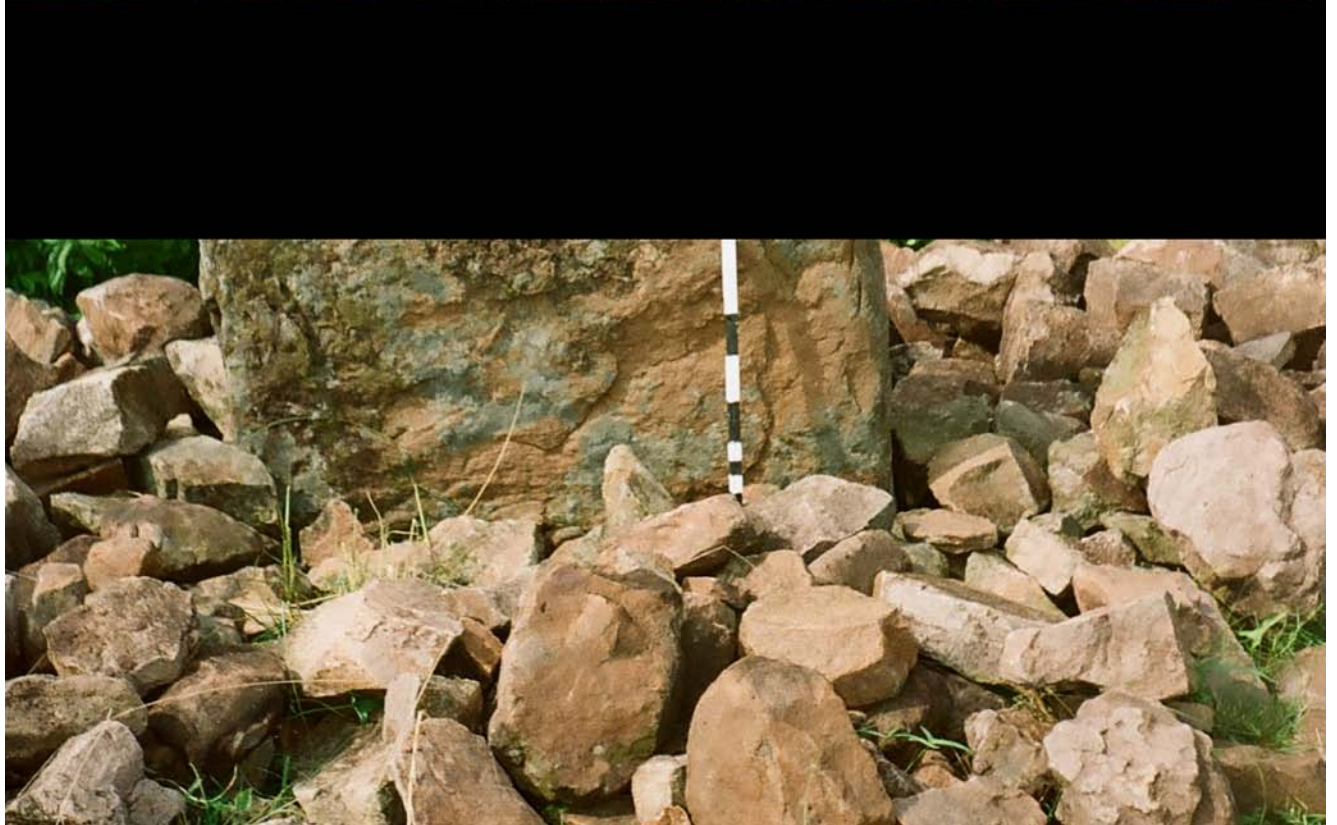


Photo-40, Menhir with High Cairn Packing, Karkhabhat



Photo-41, Dolmens, Timmelwada



Photo-42, Mundrapara, Menhir as Aligment Position



Photo-43, Menhir, Tegna



Photo-44, Menhir, Tengna



Photo-45, Menhir, Karkabhat



Photo-46, Capstone, Karkabhat



Photo-47, Capstone, Karkabhat



Photo-48, Menhir, Karkabhat



Photo-49, Menhir, Karkabhat



Photo-50, Capstone, Karkabhat



Photo-51, Cap-stone, Dhanora



Photo-52, Menhir, Tenga

Elevation and Plan Drawing

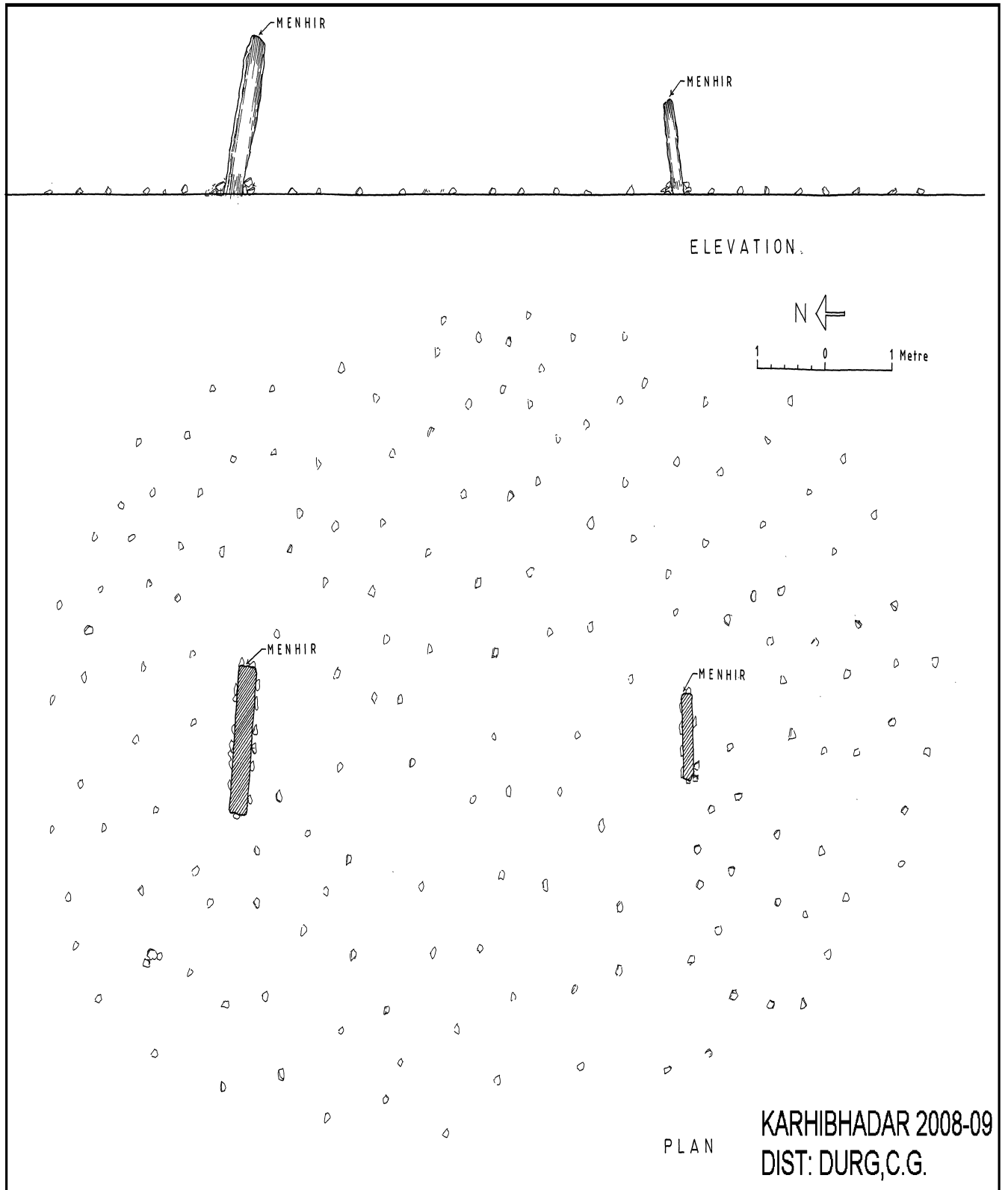


Figure-1, Twin Menhir, Karhibhadar

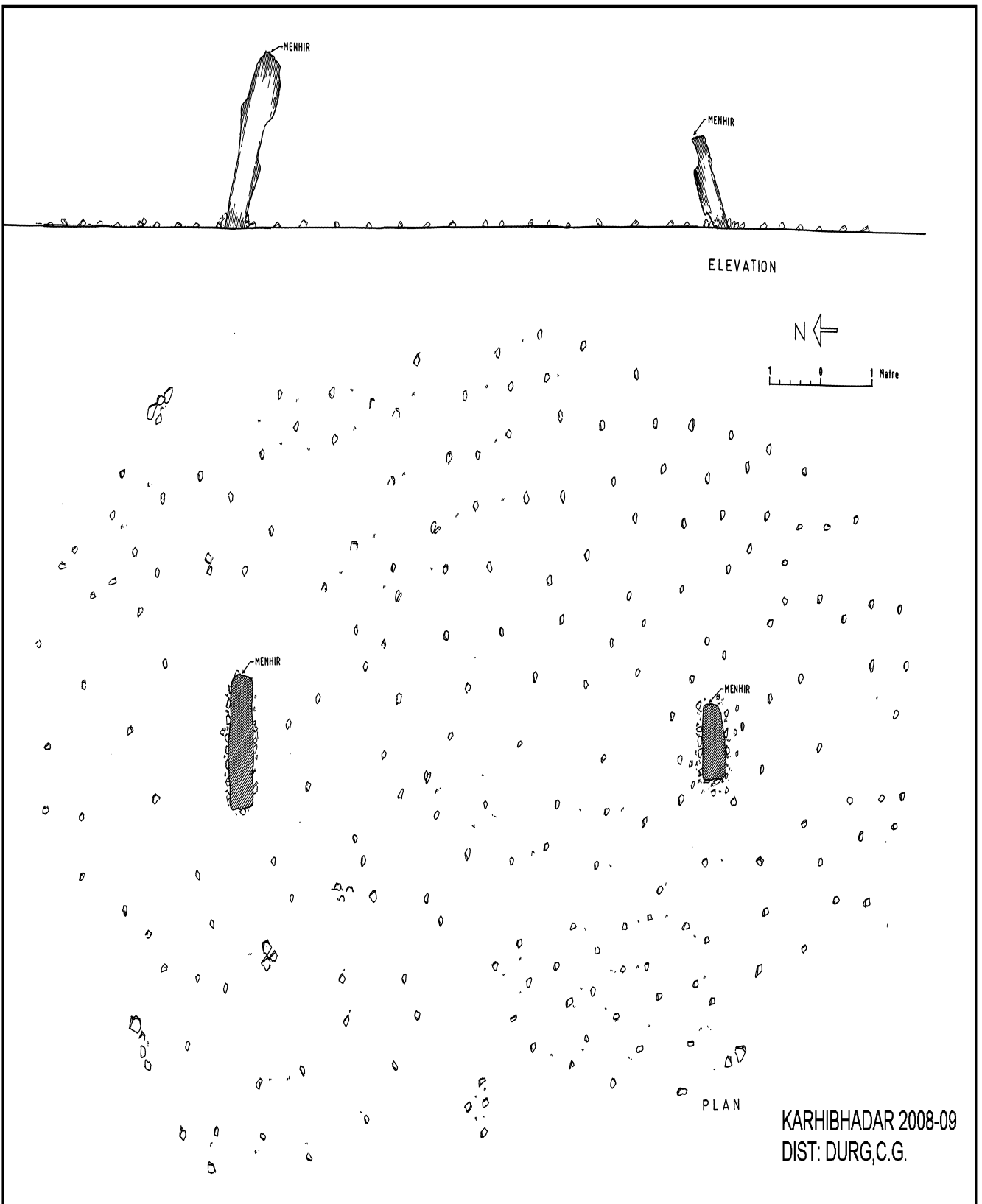


Figure-2, Twin Menhir, Karhibhadar

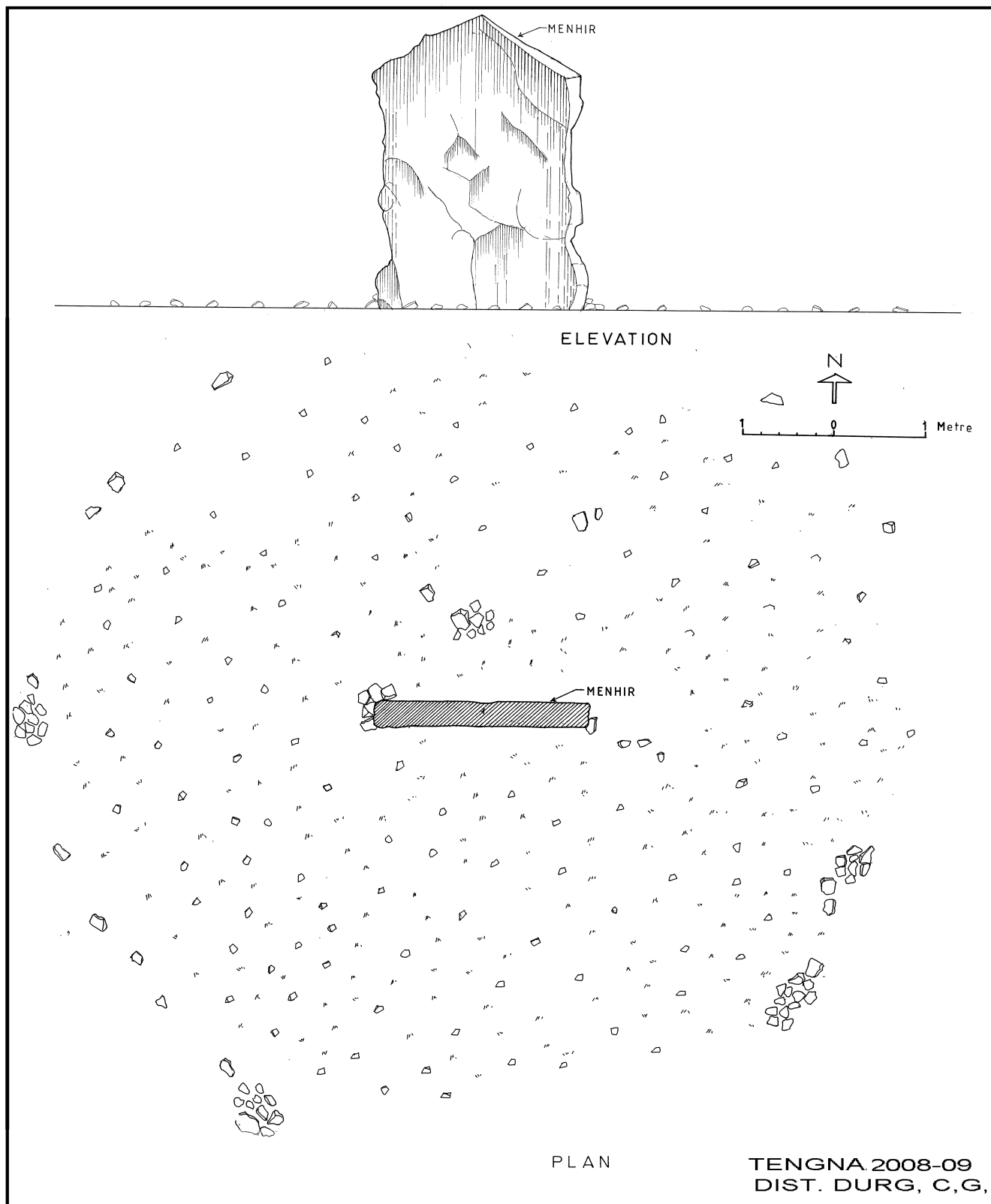


Figure-5, Menhir, Tengna

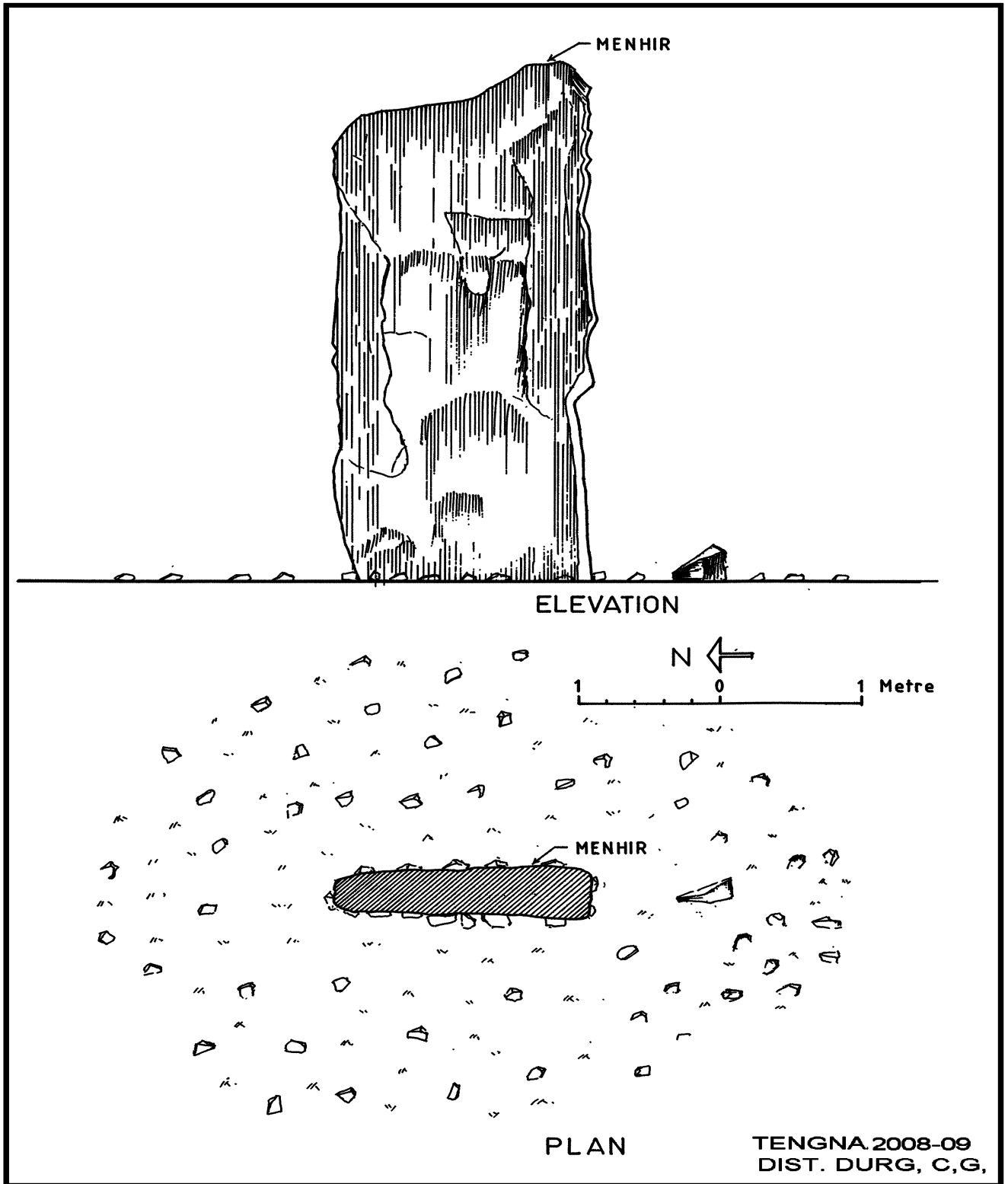


Figure-7, Menhir, Tengna

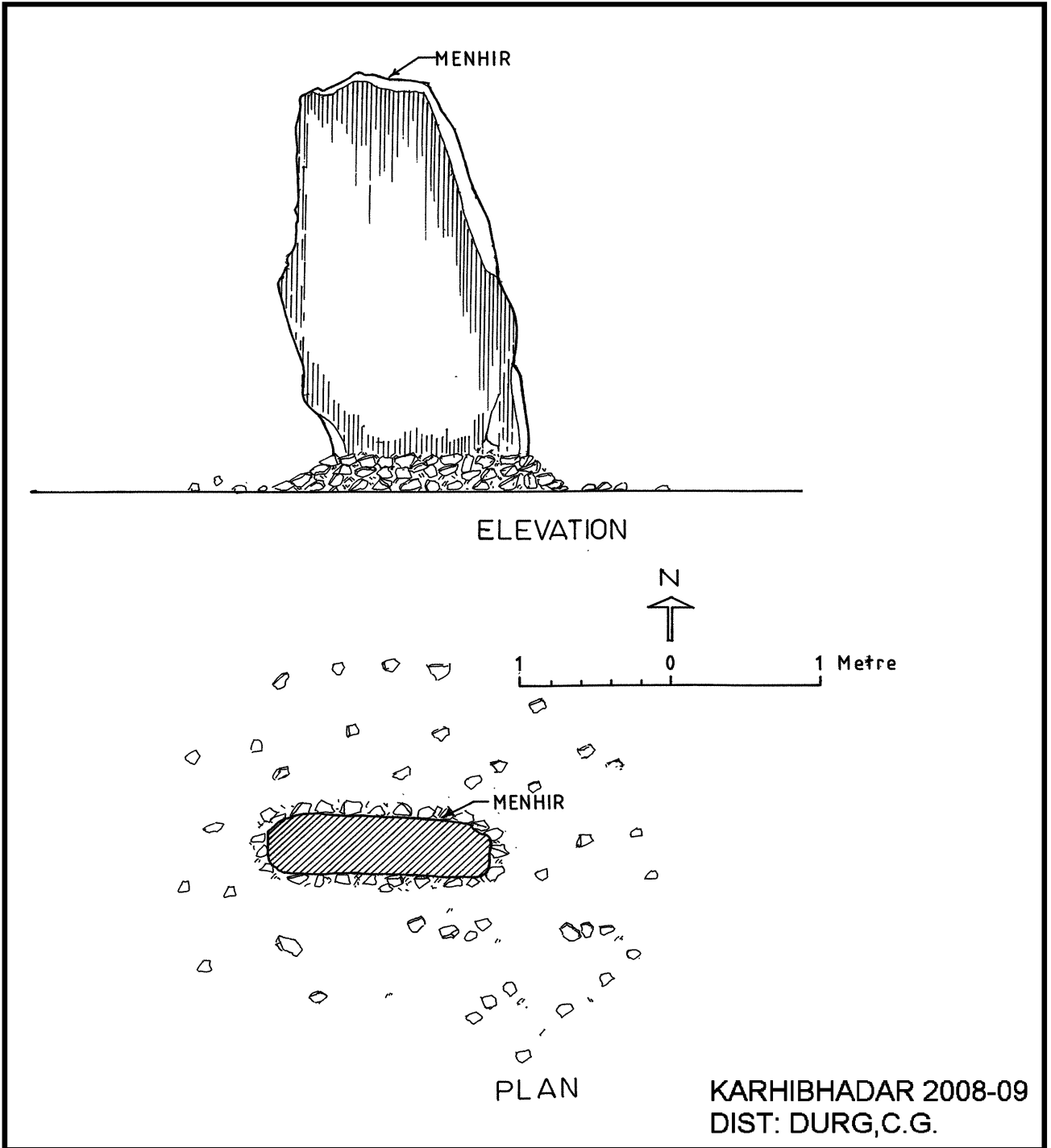


Figure-4, Menhir, Karhibhadar

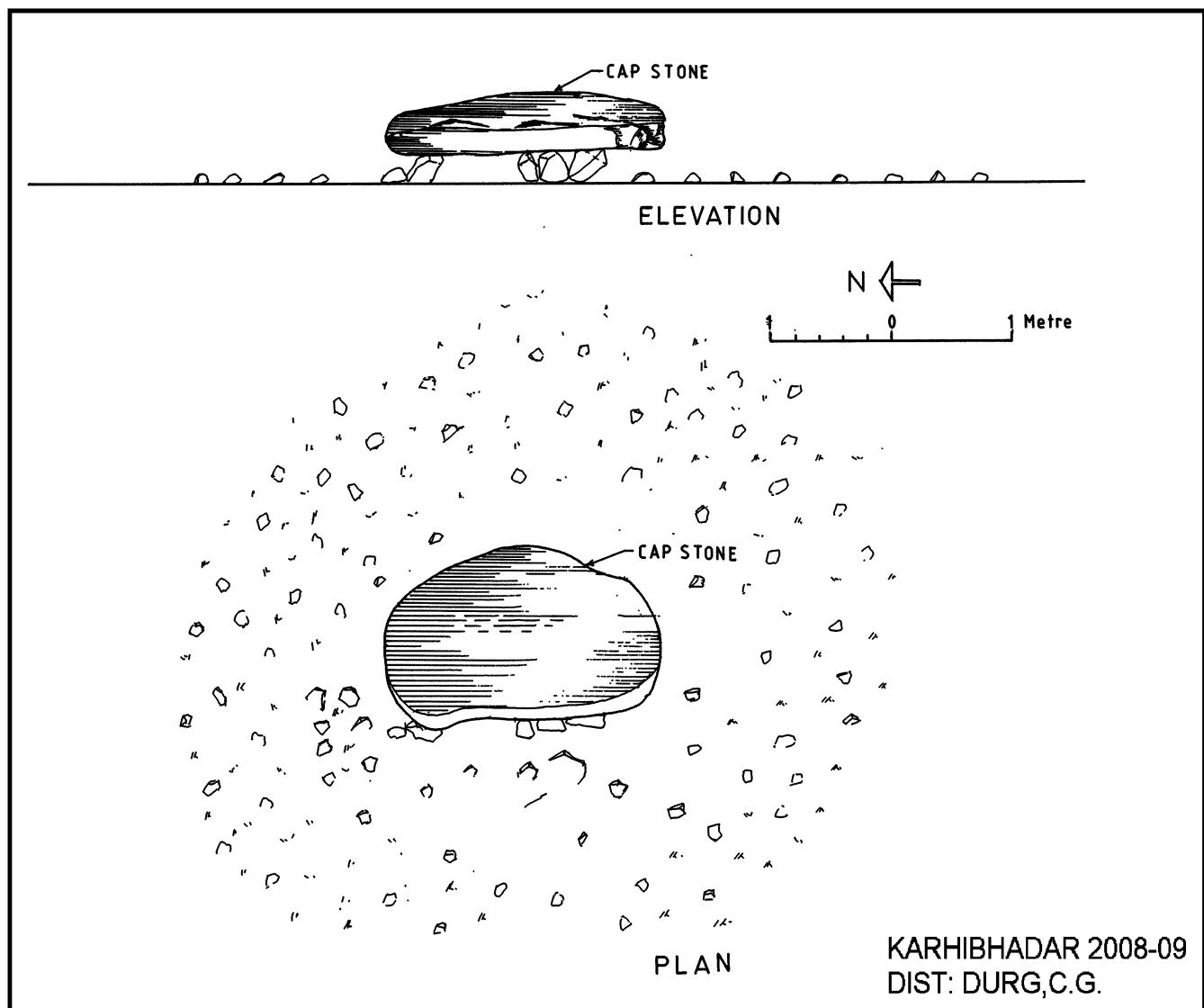


Figure-, 8, Cap-Stone, Karhibhadar

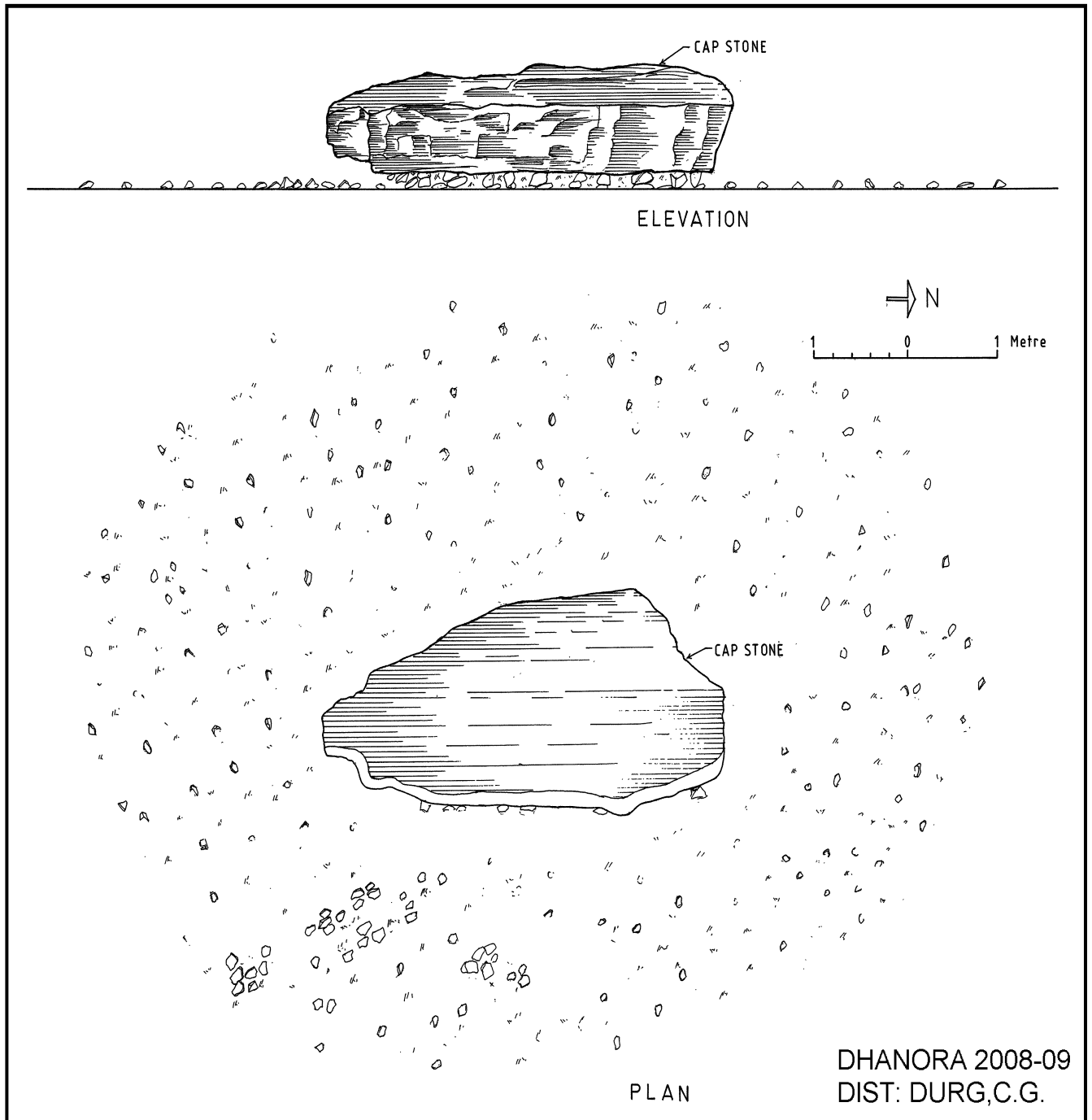


Figure-, 9, Cap-Stone, Dhanora

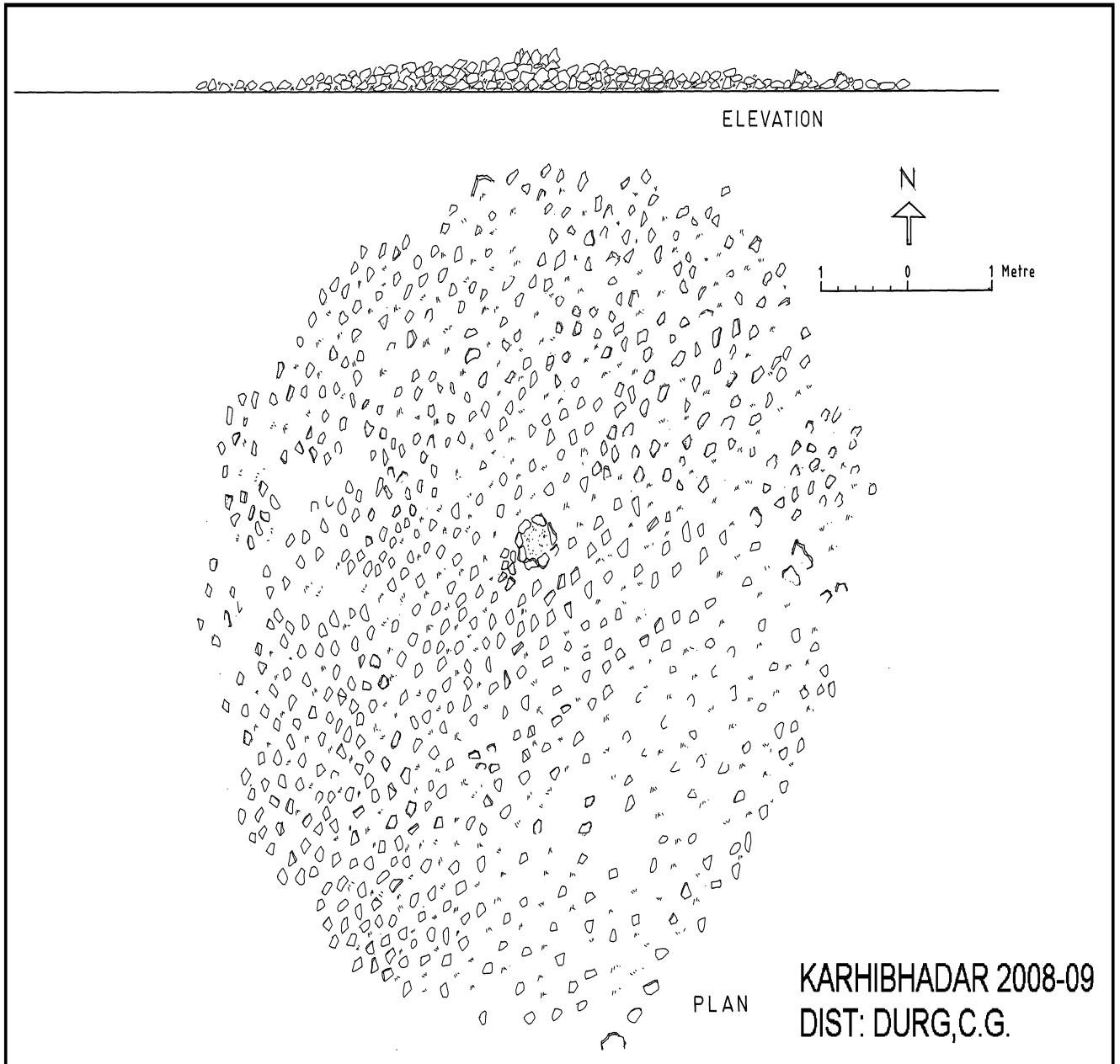


Figure-3, Stone Circle, Karhibhadar

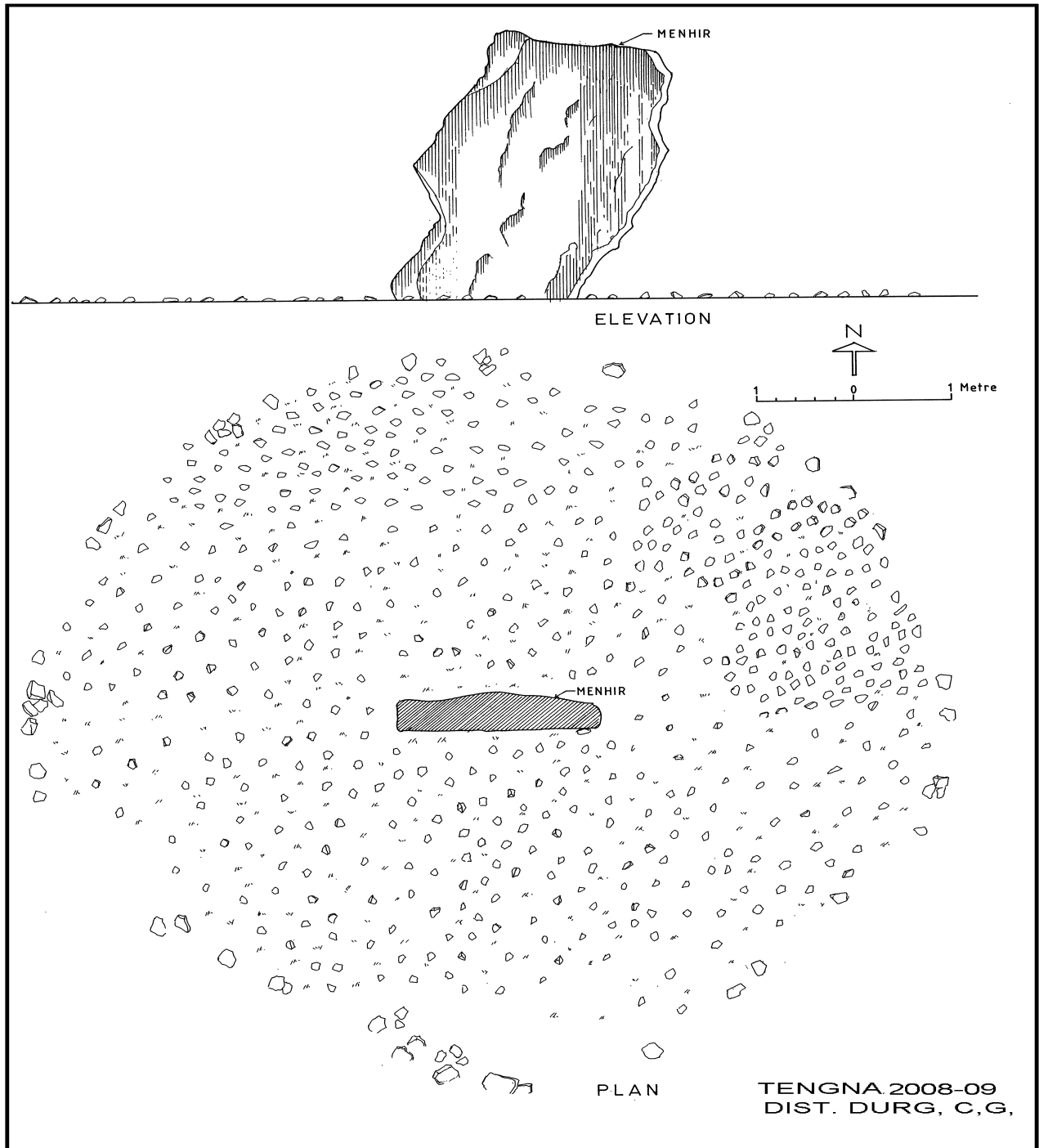


Figure-6, Menhir, Tenga

Ph.D Synopsis

Topic: Megalithic Culture in Chhattisgarh:
Insight from the Ethnographic Tradition

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Introduction

Archaeology in recent times has become a generic term that appears in different fields of enquiry ranging from the social sciences to humanities to physical sciences like geomorphology. It acts as a bridge between humanities and science insofar as it deals with all the activities of man in the past and traces his progress in fields of science, technology, religion, arts and social life. Schliemann's excavation of Troy marked the beginning of Archaeology. It is said that an Archaeologist does not dig at things; he digs up man and more so his ideas which enabled him to make progress in all fields of human endeavours. Archaeology is now concerned not only with man as a social being, artist and craftsman but also as a scientist, technologist, philosopher and thinker.

Research on the monuments and burials referred to as "megalith" or "pandukuls" or "pandukulis" in India was initiated in the beginning of the nineteenth century when Banbinton unearthed an interesting group of Burial monuments at Bangala Motta Paramba in the Northern part of Kerala in 1823. The term "Megalith" was originally introduced by antiquarians to describe a fairly easily definable class of monuments in Europe, consisting of huge undressed stone and termed as Celtic Dolmens, cromlechs and Menhirs.

Significance of the Study:

Chhattisgarh is rich with potential archaeological sites, the inaccessible terrain along with the socio-political conditions prohibit detailed exploration and though the region is rich with archaeological, not much work has been carried out to study the Megalithic evidences from this region. The antiquities recovered from these monuments reveal that the Megalithic culture in this region is coeval with similar culture in other

parts of India. But, so far no comprehensive study of these archaeological sites has been carried out.

Another interesting aspect that prevails among the existing tribal groups is the practices of erecting Megalithic monuments even to the present day. My project proposes to study both the ancient Megalithic monuments as well as the present megalithic among the tribal groups in this region. In the absence of large-scale exploration/excavation of the Megalithic sites in Chhattisgarh region, their antiquity is not properly understood. The present work makes an attempt to find out information from the ethnographical and archaeological fieldwork.

Objectives of the Present Work:

- (i) To reconstruct the history of Megalithic culture in Chhattisgarh region.
- (ii) To elaborate present mortuary (death) practices with the help of ethnographical data.
- (iii) To compare the tradition of megalithic culture with other parts of India.

Hypothesis:

Megalithic practices were prevalent in Chhattisgarh region for a long time. The present day memorial practices may have their origins in the past practices. These practices may be used to understand the belief behind some of the enigmatic aspects of the megalithic culture. The isolation of the tribal communities in the forest region helped them in preserving the ancient monuments to a large extent.

Geographical Area:

The geographical area covered in the present study are Raipur, Mahasamund, Bilaspur, Raigarh, Sarguja, Bastar, Dantewada, Durg and Rajnandgaon districts of Chhattisgarh. The regions were known as *Daksina Kosal* in ancient time. The choice of

the field area as “Chhattisgarh” is guided by two major factors: (1) The region is geographically very important because of their dense forest and hilly tract areas, providing scope for investigating the relationship between forest tribes and their ways of life. (2). Archaeologically, this region has a high potential that helps us to explore and re-construct the ancient past, which in turn provides us with information, that would help us in understanding the present scenario.

Brief History of the Region:

Chhattisgarh is a state with intimate connections between various strata of civilization which has grown in course of the past thousands of years, and which has left behind various shades in its course of development, is still visible and is a matter of study for historians and anthropologists. The attempt is been made to give the information of brief history of the Chhattisgarh.

Review of Literature:

Here an attempt is made to give a broad review of literature that deals with the megalithic culture in Chhattisgarh region. The review is done to know what sort of important literature are available on the subject, and then to identify the gaps in order to carry out the present research.

Sources of the Present Work:

A social scientist is expected to understand the past in order to know the present properly and thus has the ability to predict for the future. Sources are very important in writing the history of any region. The sources available for the study of Megalithic culture in Chhattisgarh are: Archaeological. 2. Ethnological. 3. Secondary sources.

Adopted Methods:

Field archaeology is the basic discipline of archaeology in which we study an archaeological site through application of various methods of exploration and excavation. In this present work the researcher followed the method of exploration using various techniques.

Standard anthropological tools and techniques have been applied for collection of empirical data. An interview schedules were designed for the collection of qualitative information from respondent and obtaining information from the Gonds people to understand their perception regarding the memorial stone, belief and practices and their death culture.

The first chapter deals with the geology and environment of the Chhattisgarh region. The Chattisgarh region situated between 19°45'-23°15' North latitude and 80°25'-84°20' East longitudes. When the study of a particular zone is done, its physical features have to be studied first. Because of this reason, geographical introduction has been put forth, with details of natural division, flora and fauna, soil condition, environment, mountains, rivers, and so on. The study of prevailing environmental set up in an area is essential to understand the earlier setting of the region. The geological formation of an area plays a major role in shaping the landscape. It was also the source of raw material in the manufacture of stone and iron tools in different ages.

The physical features of Chhattisgarh have considerable influence on its history. There are a large number of mountains, rivers, and forests in Chhattisgarh. Early man favored the habitation on foothills and open plateaus for raw material in order to manufacture stone tools and implements. On the river banks for availability of water and

on edge of forest for game and edible roots of animals have been discovered at different sites in Chhattisgarh. The physical features such as mountains, rivers, valley and climate are responsible for promoting regional variation in Chhattisgarh. Regionalism became the characteristics of manifold cultural diversity from time to time.

The second chapter gives information of ethnographic profile of the gonds tribe. Here an attempt is made to understand the day to life of the gonds people. Ethnography is an in-depth description of a culture or group of people sharing a culture. It is the study of people in a conduct, a detailed study of a group of people while being immersed in the culture of that group. Bastar region is the melting pot of cultural behaviors for a long period. The original inhabitants of the region are tribal like, the *muria*, the *abhuj maria*, the *bison-horn maria*, the *halba*, the *bhatra*, the *dhorla*, and the *dhurva* and so on. One can divide these tribal groups in their specific regions.

The third chapter deals with the past megalithic culture of the Chhattisgarh. The archaeological research on megalithic has been going on in Chhattisgarh for more than forty five years. Recent discoveries indicate that some interesting results for solving some of the enigmatic problems. The region of Chhattisgarh is distinct from both its of geographical and physiographical aspects. Prolific social scientific investigation into the Chhattisgarh region has been conducted from the 20th century A.D. The first documentation of megalithic culture around Chhattisgarh is by J. D. Begler in his report on a tour in central provinces, which he undertook in 1873-74. There is a detailed study of typology of megalithic monuments, their nature, characteristic, similarity with other parts of India, details of plan and elevation drawing.

The fourth chapter gives the details information on present day megalithic practices amongst the gonds tribe. This chapter takes up a study of the death practices of the Gond (maria, muria and dandami maria) their beliefs and rituals in relation to the memorial stone and how they stand up to these patterns of life even in the 21st century. The custom of erecting memorial stone in different parts of the world on a large scale among the diverse communities from the Neolithic times. But in central India mainly in Bastar region, the erection of memorial stone in the memory of an ancestor is still in practice among different Gonds tribes. One can say the living megalithic practices amongst the gonds of Bastar region.

In conclusion there is a summary of the present thesis and the bibliography brings lists of referred books and journals. At the end there are three appendixes, photos, plan and elevation drawing, figures and some maps.

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