

## Socio-Political Structure of Kandara Caste in Puri District.

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First of all, the word 'Kandara' is significant; it is the name of a Harijan (scheduled) caste in Orissa; secondly, it refers to a 'nerve system of human body' as it is described in etymological dictionary by Gopinath Nandasarma, On the other hand the word 'Kandara' is found in Pali language which means 'tendon'. The Kandara's are used to write their surnames as MaLiKa, Ma:ha:Lika, DaLa:i and Dasa. They live mainly in seashore and river bank area of in Orissa like Puri, Ganjam, Baleswar, Bhadrak, Denkanal, Jajpur, Jagatsingpur and Khurda districts. They speak Indo-Aryan language, Oriya and use the Oriya script for inter and intra group communication.

The patriarchal system is no exception to that of the Harijan. Father or husband is the head of the family. Family is the primary and the smallest unit in the their social setup. The Kandaras are divided into four endogamous totemic clans such as Jha:Tia:, Ma:Tia:, BeNa:Tia: and Gua:Tia: or Ka:landi particularly in Puri district whereas Ma:chua:, Sankhua:,Gokha: and Ka:landi are observed in other parts of Orissa. Those four lineages regulate marriage alliances and indicate ancestry. Their Gotra (exogamous group) is Na:ga (cobra) and Kaincha(tortoise).

There are two traditional organizations governing to the community which are

Ja:tia:Na: (caste council) and Moha:saVa (regional council). In this connection both are provided certain rules and regulation to *intra* caste people. The caste council focuses socio-cultural phenomenon within caste whereas regional council have both power to portray within caste or beyond the caste. There are following posts in organizations which are more respectable and powerful than others. The following are the status in it.

- Adhikari : the Ja.-tia.-Na head and an assistant to Mahanta
- Behera : the Moha.- Sava head.
- Badasani : head of about 7 to 14 PaDa's (villages).
- Majkuri : head of about 17 PaDa's (villages).
- Mahanta : minister of the caste.
- Muktiar : one who teaches sanctity.
- Pabansingh : boarder security man of province.
- Padhani : head of the kuTumba (family) and messenger of the Mahanta.
- Phullpala : designation of eminent person.
- Purohita : priest of the caste.

Sindura : designation of eminent person.

Sukla : barber of the caste.

The caste council is regulating within caste as well as a political organization with an emergency of Marriage, NirbanDha, Pua:ni (Bride's return day) Death, Sra:dha (ancestors annual death day celebration) and Goba:Dhya (animal hanging). All the respective designation holding persons actively perform their duty very meticulously. There are certain rules and regulations for caste people who have ceremonial work. They are bound to arrange feasts for caste people. Orphans or poor financial condition of addresser enable him to give a nominal price; which caste council fix. Those who do not obey caste council rules are automatically cut off from caste. Nobody can make any cultural relation with boycotted family when they do not made up their mind to obey the caste council.

The regional council is conducted under the condition of socio-cultural phenomenon such as divorce, intra-caste marriage, rough treatment of Priest and Mahanta and other problems of individual persons. There is a major role of regional council in favour of Chawkidar Service for increasing of their salary and fulfill of their demands.

We may assume twofold assumption about the socio-political status of Kandaras. In ethnographic point of views there are some indigenous samples which demonstrate the way they build their social set up in modern age. In other hand, poverty is no relaxation in caste council rules whatever they bound to obey choose from one that is suitable to household.

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*Shri Naveen Patnaik Hon'ble Chief Minister, Hon'ble Speaker Shri Maheswar Mohanty and other dignitaries seen at the inaugural session of the workshop on Involvement of Elected Representatives for Advocacy on population, Reproductive Health, Women Empowerment and HIV/AIDS at room No.54 of the State Assembly on 25.8.2004.*

