



# Tribal Communication Technology: A Case Study of Kondhs of Kandhamal of Odisha

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## **Abstract:**

Tribal communication technology, brings with it new characteristics which often expand the horizons of information spread among the people of different tribe. As many parts of India adopt the new technologies of the information, the tribal people of Odisha do not too readily abandon their ancient and traditional communication methods, which are not necessarily anti-theatricals to the Internet. As exciting as the new technologies are, they do not always portend positive developments. The Odishan experience at adopting information and tribal communication technologies is very instructive. Over the years, we have tried several methods of technology transfer, adoption, copying and missteps from the ancient and traditional technologies. Today, it is difficult to pinpoint how far we have gone in our drive to become a technologically-developed state. Whatever stage and type of technology that is imaginable in the whole country, (the internet inclusive) is provided in Odisha. The question really is how extensive and what impact have these technologies on the tribal people and their economy? Surely our communication sector is not as coordinated and developed as it should be. But before vanishing the ancient and traditional communication technologies of it is now time to discuss and use it at the time of need to maintain a healthy society.

*Don't embrace technology for technology's sake. Use commonsense to determine when to use new media and when to use more traditional methods. It's great to have electronic relationships, but we always need old fashioned human contact.*

*-Moshe Triwaks.*

## **Introduction:**

Communication is universal to all human beings and is central to our lives. In fact, it regulates and shapes all human behaviour. Dreaming, talking with someone, arguing in a discussion, speaking in a public meeting, participating in a traditional cultural function, escape from a beast, alert to the people at time of danger, reading of a newspaper, watching television, browsing internet etc are different kinds of communication that we are

engaged in every day. It means we are constantly exchanging our thoughts, ideas and motions with someone or other either to satisfy our physical, emotional or other needs or to get work done. It is obvious that communication is an integral part of one's life. In fact, society cannot survive in the absence of communication.

Communication is more than mere transferring or transmission of ideas or thoughts. It is dynamic process of action and interaction towards a desired goal. Communication is, therefore, a process of sharing or exchange of ideas, information, knowledge, attitude or feeling among two or more persons through certain signs and symbols. Communication is vital for human existence and for the progress of humanity. No



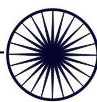
person, group or society can exist without interaction with others. Being at the heart of all social action and interaction, communication functions as a relating tool that creates understanding, facilitates work and strengthens collective living among people. Rapidly, we approach the final phase of the extensions of man—the technological simulations of consciousness, when the creative process of knowing will be collectively and corporately extended to the whole of human society. Human beings are engaged in a variety of communication process; intrapersonal, interpersonal, group and mass communication, the last one being unique in the sense that it differs somewhat from other forms of communication because of a mechanical device interposed between sender and receiver. One way to analyse communication is to present it in the form of a model. A model is nothing but the mechanistic perspective of human communication that effectively tells at a glance how it works. In a communication process there has to be a sender whose main intention is to communicate a message; what to convey is his/her thinking process; how to communicate a message is his/her choice of right means or channel; and whom to convey the message is his/her job to decide. The sender also needs to know the receiver's response to the message, whether or not it is being received as intended, Then only can the sender proceed further with the next act of communication and in this way it goes on and on. In this interaction process, there is an interdependence of relationship among the various variables of human communication. Communication programme should always be planned and based on the needs of the target audience.

### **PRIMITIVE TRIBES OF ODISHA :**

#### ***The Kondhs :***

Odisha is one of the most fascinating ethnographic states of India. The Kondhs form

numerically is the largest group among the 62 tribes of Odisha. Customarily they were once famous for their brutal acts of human sacrifice (Maria sacrifice) to achieve the end products of bumper crops and killing of infants for better yield of turmeric. There are various sections among the *Kondhs* or *Kandhas*. Each section is endogamous though originally they hail from the same *Kandha* community. The Dongria Kondh of Koraput district and *Kutia Kondh* of Belghar area of Kandhamal district represent the primitive section. The primitive sections are shifting cultivators. The *Dongria Kondhs* are expert horticulturists. Tatoo faced and Desia Kondhs are settled agriculturists. Racially the Kondhs relate more closely to the proto-Austroloid stock with considerable Mongoloid admixture. They are divided into two logistic groups i.e. *Kui* and *Kuvi*. However the primitive section of the *Kondhs* communities are found largely in the district of Kandhamal and Koraput. The dress worn by the *Kondhas* is not keeping with their environment. They use some covering on the body, of course, to withstand the cold, yet their way of life has made them conditioned to the local climate which indirectly help them maintain their traditional grab. The *Kondhs* women wear two cloths, one around the waist up to the knees and another for the upper portion of the body. The *Kutia Kondhs* men wear only loin cloth. The *Dongria* men puts on a cloth called "KODI", 16ft in length and one ft in width. The *Kondhs* women are very fond of ornaments. Among the *Dongria* Kondhs, the women beautify themselves with hair pins, ear rings, nose rings, and head necklaces. Wrist-lets and ear rings are used by the males of the primitive section of the *Kondh* communities. The males too, like to grow long hair and tie this into a knot at their nape in a traditional fashion. The *Kutia Kondhs* tatoo their faces and hands, whereas the *Dongrias* do not.



They have well developed dormitories for boys and girls among the primitive sections.

They are very fond of drinking salap palm juice and dead palm juice (Tadi). Local herbs and roots are added to the juice to increase its alcoholic contents. Sometimes *Mahua* flowers are collected and liquor is prepared to meet the requirement on special occasion. Liquor is considered as food and at the same time a ritualistic food to satisfy deities and spirits. It is considered as a social necessity by the Kondhs and therefore consumed by them irrespective of sex and age. The *Kondhs* are agriculturists. They generally produce cash crops like turmeric, ginger, mustard, Niger, black gram, arrowroot etc. The *Dongria* section of the *Kondh* communities are expert horticulturists and produce fruits like bananas, pine apple, orange, jack fruits etc. The primitive section keep buffaloes for sacrifice, but the *Desia* Kondhs mainly use the buffaloes for ploughing their field. Barter system is still the method of exchange among the *Kondhs*. The *Kondhs* believe in “*Dharani*” the earth goddess—the supreme being. She is all powerful and the highest of all deities. She is represented by a block of stone erected in a hut. She is responsible for the growth of vegetation and other produce of land. She used to be satisfied with human blood which was called “*Maria*” by the *Dongria* section and “*toki*” puja by the *Kutia* section of the *Kondh* community. This custom has been suppressed since long by the Britishers and in lieu of it buffalo is sacrificed at present. The *Kondh* worshippers of ancestors are called “*DUMBAS*”. These ancestor spirits appear in dreams when they desire to receive periodic worship. There are various deities and spirits who are different in different localities inhabited by the various sections of the *Kondhs*. Apart from these spirits they believe in the existence of ghosts. They are controlled by *shamans*. They also believe in white and black magics. They are fatalists and believe

in chance and luck. They celebrate various festivals round the year for better yield of crops. Two festivals such as Chaitra Parab are observed before sowing paddy and other millets and “*Meriah*” or “*Kedu*” festival in the month of February / March are the most important. The *Dongria* Kondhs exhibit their talents in their art and crafts.

The *Kondhs* are Dravidian people but no mythology as legend yet discovered which furnish their origin or place of descent. They believe themselves to have existed in Odisha from the beginning. Their forbears were probably driven from their homes or the richer lineal plains of eastern India during the Aryan advance, preferring hardship to loss of independence, it is through that they were forced up into the wild hill tracts of the Eastern Ghats many centuries ago. Now the *Kondh* people are spread out through eastern region. Broadly, the *Kondhs* are divided into mainly three groups depending upon their habitat. The groups are *Kutia Kondhs*, *Dongria Kondh* and *Desia Kondh*. The *Kondh* people are simple in nature and very innocent. However, they are living very simple way of life. Although few *Kondhs* claim that they belong to *Dongria* section but most of the people identify themselves as ‘*Kondhs*’ irrespective of their section i.e. *Kutia* or *Desia*. Importance has been given in this paper on *Kutia* and *Desia* Kondhs of Kandhamals of Odisha. *The Kondh* (pronounced locally as *Kandha* and spelt earlier as *Khond*, *Kond*, etc) are a population of primitive tribe of Odisha. They occupy mountainous areas of Central-Southern part of the state. The *Desia* name is assumed by those who live in the plateau, in the neighbourhood of non-tribal people who improved their economy and living condition. The *Kutia* occupies the highland; practiced shifting or hill slope cultivation in primitive method and live in poor condition. The habitat of *Kondh* people is locally known as *Kandhamal*, meaning hills of the *Kondh*.



### Area of Study:

The ancient history of Kandhamal district of may be traced back to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century B.C. It finds mention as an unconquered *Atavika* fields in the *Kalinga* Rock Edicts of the legendary Mauryan Emperor, Ashok. This mountainous *Atavika rajya* unquestionably encompassed the Kandhamal region. Some historians are of the view that Mahakantar subdued by the Gupta Emperor, Samudragupta, in the 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D., during his Dakshinapatha Campaign, included Kandhamal area and he led his victorious army to the south from *Kosala* and *Kural* through this district. He defeated some kings in Ganjam.

The present Kandhamal district is made up with some segments of three erstwhile principalities of Boudh, Ghumsar and Khemundi, reigned by the Bhanjas and the Gangas from ancient times. Their reign came to an end when the British came to this region in the nineteenth century.

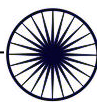
G. Udayagiri constituted the northern fringe of Ghumusara kingdom of the Bhanjas. They occupied this state in the 9<sup>th</sup> Century and continued to rule over it till 1835. The Bhanjas could not put up with their interference and aggressive attitude from the very beginning and they raised the banner of revolt frequently against the British. The *Kondhas* and the *Paikas* forming the Ghumasar army waged relentless wars under the able leadership of Dohara Bissoyi from 1815 to 1835. Deposing Dhananjay Bhanja for his habitual recalcitrance the British occupied Ghumusar on November 3, 1835. Dhananjaya Bhanja died at G.Udayagiri in December in the same year as a fugitive.

Balliguda region was under the Gangas of Kandhamal, most probably from the 10<sup>th</sup> Century and the dynasty ruled over these hilly tracts till the 19<sup>th</sup> century. British captured this area in phases from 1830 to 1880 by subjugating

some hill chiefs, who were the protégés of the Gangas. Ghumusar and Balliguda regions were under the uninterrupted reign of the Bhanjas and Gangas, respectively, for about a millennium. But the Kandhamal area, which was part of Boudh, witnessed a chequered history during the same period.

The present Kandhamal sub-division was an integral part of Boudh from time immemorial till 1855. The earliest history of this area is gleaned from a number of copper-plate inscriptions issued by the kings of the early Bhanja dynasty, that reigned over Boudh and Kandhamal in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Century. Their kingdom was known as Khinjali Mandala. From the 10<sup>th</sup> Century to the advent of British in this region, Boudh, including Kandhamal, has been governed in succession by the following royal dynasties: the Somavamsis, the Chindak Nagas/Telugu Chodas, the Kalachuris and the Bhanjas. The history of Boudh-Kandhamal for 500 years prior to the coming of the British is however, still nebulous.

The Britishers launched a vigorous campaign in these hilly tracts with the objectives of annexing the areas to their empire and suppressing the abominable practice of **human sacrifice**, then prevalent among the *Kondhas*. The Britishers encountered stiff resistance from the tribals for a prolonged period of 20 years from 1835 to 1855. As the Boudh Raja utterly failed to curb the horrendous ritual of the tribals, the British truncated a large area, where the *Kondhas* were predominant, from Boudh on February 15, 1855 and named this newly annexed territory as Kandhamal. After British conquest of Uttar Ghumasar (G.Udayagiri area) and Uttar Khemundi (Balliguda area) these territories were placed under the administration of the Collector of Ganjam district. These areas remained under the control and administration of the British until India attained her independence.



Kandhamal remained a Tahasil from 1855 to 1891 and it was administered by a Tahasildar under the direct control and supervision of the superintendent of the Tributary mahals of Cuttack. In 1891, it was upgraded to sub-division and tagged with Anugul district. When the new province of Odisha was formed in 1936, and Ganjam was merged with Odisha, from the Madras Presidency, Kandhamal became a sub-division of Ganjam. In the wake of the amalgamation of the princely states with Odisha in January 1948, Boudh and Kandhamal constituted the new district of Boudh-Kandhamal, with its headquarters at Phulbani. Balliguda sub-division was added to Boudh-Kandhamal district on 1.1.1949. With the secession of Boudh from Phulbani district as a separate district only Balliguda and Kandhamal sub-divisions remained with Phulbani district, which was later rechristened as Kandhamal in June, 1994. The district of Kandhamal ranks as one of the most backward districts of the 69 identified most backward districts of independent India. The proposed study is conducted in the Nuagaon village of Kotagarh block of Kandhamal district. Kandhamal district is stretched between 19°34' & 20°36' degree latitude in the north and 83°34' & 84°34' longitude in the east, with an area of 7649 sq. k.m. It constitutes 2 sub-divisions, 12 Community Development Blocks, 2 NACs, 153 Gram Panchayat and 2515 villages. The total population of the district is 6,48,200 out of which ST population comprises of 51.96 %. The physiography of the entire district lies with a high altitude zone with inter-spreading inaccessible terrain of hilly ranges and narrow valley tracts, which guide in general the socio-economic conditions of the people and the development of the district.

The district of Kandhamal is bestowed with the beauty of nature. It has wild life, scenic beauty, healthy climate, and serpentine ghat roads

for the tourists who need to relax and unwind. It has attractions, like panoramic coffee gardens, pine jungles, Ghat roads, hills and water falls, virgin forest and typical tribal village life. Almost 66% of the land area of the district is covered with dense forest and towering mountains which provide shelter to the inhabitants like *Kondhas*, classified under the ancient Gondid race of proto Austroloid group, rich in green meadows at the attitude of 2000 ft to 3000 ft, the terraced valleys thronged with these colorful tribals in their natural heritage, dancing and sporting has its own appeal. Kandhamal is also famous for handicrafts such as Dokra, Terra-Cotta, Cane and Bamboo works. The region is proud of its rich cultural heritage. Mauryan Emperor Ashoka mentioned in Jaugada (Ganjam) edict about the people of this hill tract as Atavikas who practised their own religion. The ghat tract of Kandhamal "Kalinga" was known to the travellers of Medieval history. The tract was used for the transportation of salt to the Central India. Again the route running through Daringibadi was known in history as Great Military road discovered by Britishers who happened to come over Daringibadi for pleasure trips to enjoy the natural beauty and cool climate during summer.

Communication techniques of Kondhs of Kandhamal can be divided into four main categories. i.e.

- (i) Ancient Communication Techniques
- (ii) Traditional Communication Techniques
- (iii) Oral Communication Techniques

#### **(i) Ancient Communication Techniques :**

##### **Better than Shouting :**

Communication begins with language, the distinctive ability which has made possible the evolution of human society. With language any message, no matter how complex, can be conveyed between people over a limited distance



- within a room or place of assembly, or across a short open space. In modern times 'town criers' hold an annual contest to discover which of them can shout a comprehensible message over the greatest distance. The world record is less than 100 metres. Already, at that short range, a more practical alternative is to run with the message. The invention of writing and in particular of alphabetic writing marked a milestone in cultural development. It provided humanity with a new means of communication that literally inscribed in stone the spoken word. Communication could now span both space and time. Space, because writing could be sent from one place to another. Time, because writing could preserve the words for generations to come. Since the art of writing was discovered, nearly every form of writing material has been used. Some were intended to ensure permanence while others were simple and inexpensive but temporary. From the wax notepad of the school boy to the grand inscriptions on monuments, almost everything we know about antiquity is derived from writings such as those written on animals, vegetables and minerals.

#### **Stone :**

Stone was mainly used for writing on permanent monuments and public buildings. The writing on stone usually requires the use of hammer and chisel. The most comfortable, accurate and hence productive manner of carving stone inscriptions is to hold the chisel in one hand and hit it with the hammer held in the other hand. Although this sounds like too simple an explanation, one must consider that as most people are right handed then there would be a tendency to cut the letters from right to left.

#### **Metal :**

Sheets of metal were rarely used for writing or are rarely found. For one, they were

expensive to manufacture and secondly, the metal was often re-smelted for use as weapons in times of war, so few sheets remain. More commonly, bronze tablets and copper sheets were used to provide semi-permanence and could be stored more easily than cumbersome rock.

#### **Wood:**

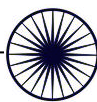
The use of wood as a writing medium was strictly confined to temporary purposes and not many such tablets have survived through antiquity, as the climate in state is not conducive to their preservation. In antiquity, wooden boards were used for displaying public announcements. They were whitened boards that could be sign written and when the message became out of date the board could easily be whitewashed and rewritten.

#### **(ii) Traditional Communication Techniques of Subsistence strategies and Settlement pattern:**

Subsistence and settlement of the Kondhs belongs to traditional communication techniques. They used different techniques to settle down in a place and searching for mode of subsistence. The subsistence economy is employed principally in connection with rural societies in technologically poorly developed countries and is often synonymous with the term subsistence farming and subsistence agriculture. In the field of Anthropology of application of the term to primitive hunting and gathering society would however also be meaningful as an economy providing bare subsistence (M.J.Herskovits, 1940). Economy as the way in which resources technology and work are combined to satisfy the material requirements of human beings and of social groups.

#### **Settlement Pattern Techniques:**

Every place there is a history of first settlers like that of nomenclature. One area became a place of habitations when a group of



people migrated from one place to some other places and settle down permanently. According to the *Kondhs* of Kandhamal district, once open a time they were living on the top of the hill. They migrated from the top of the nearby hill due to searching a new place where they lead a healthy life. The descent of the located *Kondh* villager of the area were *Kutia Kondhs*, who were living in the dense forest; but now they are identifying themselves as *Adivasi* or *Kondh*. Another reason of migration is due to poverty and their home land declared as reserve forest by the Forest Department.

### **House Pattern :**

The houses of *Kondhs* are of linear pattern and the two rows of house flanked by a wide street. The people like to live in a thatched houses. The settlement of an individual is permanent in his plot. However all the houses of the village are situated line by line facing each other. The houses are rectangular in shape. One or more double rows of attached house face each other in a rectangular space.

### **The Roof :**

The roof is made of straw. The thatched roof is constructed with a long bamboo beam at the apex of the roof. To this beam bamboo clubs are attached. These sticks are attached in vertical manner to the beam while other bamboo sticks are tied to these clubs in a horizontal manner. On such a frame of bamboo beam with a network of bamboo sticks bundles of paddy straw are spread for making the roof. The roof is made of paddy straw. The roof is culminated by two slopes or four slopes of every house.

### **Wall :**

In Nuagoan village most of the walls are mud, mud bricks and lateritic stone. It is plastered by mud, cow dung and clay. People decorate it

by different colours; especially lightly red and white. The stones are available nearer forest and they collect it by themselves. The bricks are made by them.

### **Floor :**

The floor is made of stone chips and clay like that wall. It is plain and smooth. The people of Nuagoan plaster the floor by cow dung everyday.

### **Doors and Windows :**

The door is essential to enter in a house. All most all the houses have only one in front side of the house. Some houses have doors in the inner side. The inner side door usually leads to the storage house. The doors are made of wooden planks which are prepared from teak wood and Sal wood. Some doors are made of bamboo sticks also. The windows are absent in most of the houses. But there are sky light found in each and every house. Most of the houses are divided into general room, storage room and varandah in the front side and found neat and clean.

### **Vegetational area :**

Vegetation area is located on the back side of the house. They raise boundary around the house by some bamboo sticks or sal sticks or beam and other materials. They cultivate chilly, maize, pumpkin, papaya, cucumber etc in their vegetational area.

### **Garbage :**

The people of Nuagoan use garbage. The garbage area is kept away from the house. Some are in the vegetation corner and some are nearer the field. They throw the waste materials to the garbage. They collect any types of tree leaves and throw it into the garbage. The cow dung, goat dung and pig dung are also put in the village garbage.



### **Cow Shed :**

The villagers of Nuagoan keep their cow, goat and pig in a common area. The cowshed at a little distance from each house of their habitation. The cowsheds are also situated in a linear pattern. The floor is not polished. There is not found a wall like their own house. The walls of the cowshed are made of bamboo sticks or sal sticks and the upper part of the houses are thatched by paddy straw. The floors are made of either by store or by slice wood along with mud. There are four pillars in each cowshed. As a whole the cowshed is open wall in linear pattern. But the goats and chickens are kept in the varandha. They collect the cow dung every day and clean the cowshed. There is a gate to enter into the cowshed. The common cowshed of the village is open for all. The cow shed is separated from their habitation. The cow shed is also made of in a linear pattern and a common place where the cows are living in the village.

### **Gathering of Fire Wood & other Forest Products Techniques:**

Elements of food gathering economy are still prevailing in several parts of the tribal belts of Odisha. An example of this economy is found among the *Kondhs*. Collection of firewood and forest products is an old practice and continuing till now by the people of Kandhamal. They learnt the technique of collection of firewood and forest products by their ancestors. Both male and female go to the forest for gathering purpose. In the hamlet we can see more number of female go to the forest for collection of firewood. The *Kondh* people of this district are extremely poor. When they have no work, they go for gathering of firewood and collect the jungle fruit from the nearby forest. They also depend on forest because originally they are food gatherers and hunters. For the collection of fire wood, they go

to nearby forest. They rise early in the morning and take their breakfast before 7.30 AM and set out for forest. They reach in the forest about 9.30 AM. From that time they engage themselves cutting and collecting wood up to 5 PM. They take their lunch at their during leisure hours. Cutting of fire wood is done in the forest. After cutting firewood are bound in bundles. One bundle contains nearly 15-20 pieces of wood which are brought to village on their head and shoulder. They prepare some rope from the bark of few trees for their own purpose and to sell in the local market. Generally young male and female are engaged in this work.

There are some rare roots and tubers which are not found anywhere except in forest. These are very much liked by the *Kondh* people. They collect some roots and tubers for medicinal purpose. The *Kondhs* avoid to go to the hospital. They mostly depend on medicinal herbs known to them. According to them if they will go to the hospital it will be expensive and an attendant will always be required in the hospital.

### **Hunting Techniques :**

From the ancient days till the present era hunting as an occupation is prevalent in almost all societies. The people or the group who depend solely on hunting and actively seek grain with specialized technology are called hunters. Anthropologists normally apply the term hunter only to the group who depend primarily upon hunting game for their food. Hunting was practiced as a means of livelihood since long past. Before entering into the forest the hunters divide themselves into two groups, one group possess their hunting implements and other group with some trap (*phasa*) and enter into the forest. They make different kinds of sounds. Due to the noise the big animals are compelled to run at the desired direction of the hunters and they easily kill them with the help of bow and arrow. In the second method they go to the jungle and prepare a





platform of wood on the branches of the tall trees. They call this platform as '*Mancha*'. From this *Mancha* they shoot down the animal from the height. The third method of hunting is by the help of traps. They use various types of traps for hunting different animals. Before the initiation of hunting the hunter set those trap ready. Then they go to the other part of the forest and scare the animals by showing fire, beating drums and making sounds by other methods when the animals run away from one part to another part they fall into the trap. Then they kill the animals and collect it from the trap. The fourth method of hunting is that they go to the forest at the evening. In the jungle they conceal themselves behind big rocks where water pools are there to which animals come to drink. When animals come they shoot down. All the male members of the village move for hunting expedition to the forest under the leadership of a senior person among them. According to his direction the group start intensive search of the game. After hunting is completed, the leader orders to cut the flesh of the animals and equal distribution of meat among all the participants but actual hunter of the animal gets a little more with his share. For safe hunting purpose they observe a special ritual in the name of forest deity.

### **Fishing Techniques :**

Fishing is practiced all over the tribal communities. Some people practice it for their livelihood and some have practiced it as hobby. *Kondhs* of Kandhamal practice it as their hobby. They take it as a secondary occupation. The people like to go for fishing in their leisure time. There is no particular season for their fishing purpose but they prefer specially rainy season and winter seasons. In rainy season ponds, canals and cultivated land become filled with water. It is the most suitable season for fishing. While they are ploughing their land, the water become muddy

and the fish come out from the bottom of the water. They catch these fish from the muddy water of the cultivated land which is used for their own consumption. In winter season, they go for harvesting from the cultivated land and catch the fish after harvesting the paddy. Besides fish they catch big or small tortoise and srabs for eating purpose. Fish is termed as '*Minu*' in the *Kondh* dialect.

### **Agricultural Technology:**

Technology refers to socially standardized techniques associated artifact or tools. Technology is usually restricted to the technique of manufacture, maintenance and manipulation. Some of the traditional agricultural implements still persist. They are axe, hatchet, sickle, yoke, plough, crowbar, wooden hammer, flat basket etc. They get these implements either from the nearby local market and some of the implements are also made by them. Rice being the staple food of the villagers, they take utmost care to the production of paddy. The possession of paddy land is a status symbol for the villagers. The farmers at present, are encouraged to use scientific methods of agricultural operations and trying to produce more crops from the same piece of land. Agricultural production depends upon timely rain, an adequate water management soil conservation, modern technology etc. The life style of the people of Nuagaon is agriculture based. During the harvesting season the whole village is active as even the school going children give helping hand in the harvest of crops to their family members. The cycle of agriculture among the *Kondh* is not different from that of other neighbouring communities. It starts with the processing of the field during the month of May-June just before the arrival of south-west monsoon. Sowing is usually done during June while transplantation of paddy becomes necessary at least once, during August and then they keep



vigilant watch on the field till the harvest in the month of November-December. They cultivate oil seeds and vegetable after the harvesting paddy. Few people take up summer crops and summer paddy.

There are two types of crops cultivated by them, that are Kharif and Rabi crops, mostly paddy belongs to Kharif crops & other Rabi crops consist of oil seeds, pulses, green vegetables. Rice being the staple food of the villagers, they take good care of the production of paddy.

Thus in this study, an attempt has been made for an ethnographic study of the *Kondhs* with special reference to their settlement and subsistence strategies. The agricultural activities of the *Kondhs* of Kandhamal have important implication for subsistence of Neolithic cultures. What is necessary now is to make an in-depth study of subsistence strategies of other ethnic group in various parts of Odisha for understanding the subsistence strategies of Pre-historic cultures of Odisha.

### (iii) Oral Communication Techniques:

This techniques of *Kondhs* belong to their cultural activity. The *Kondh* people express their cultural identity and distinction in their social organisation, language, rituals and festivals and also in their dress, ornament, art and craft. They have retained their own way of managing internal affairs of the village mainly through two institutions namely, the village council and the youth dormitory. They believe that their life and work are controlled by supernatural beings whose abode is around them in hills, forests, rivers and houses. It is very difficult to standardize the Gods and spirits as their composition continually changes when old ones are forgotten with the introduction of new ones. The ceremonies and festivals of the tribes can be classified into two groups, that is, those that relate to the individual

families and those that relate to the village as a whole. The ceremonies and rites relating to birth of a child, marriage, death are observed family-wise whereas those relating to various agricultural cycle, eating of new fruits, hunting, etc. are observed by the village community. The tribal art and craft display the aesthetic sensibility of the tribals. *Kondh* dance is mostly confined to unmarried boys and girls and free mixing of the youths is allowed during dancing. The dances are performed especially when the boys or girls of one village visit another village. The dance forms an item in the daily routine of the *Kondh*, when the boys and girls in their dormitories meet after the days toil. The girls dance in lines and the boys dance behind and in front of them. The girls wear sarees in two pieces and bangles on their ankles. They dance in rows, facing rows of boys who sing songs and play on hand drums. Songs play a very important part in the dance. Special dances are performed during buffalo sacrifice, called the Kedu festival. The artistic skill of the tribal people is not only manifested in their dance and music but also in their dress and ornaments, wall-paintings, wood carvings and decorations, etc. Tribal weekly market or Hat plays an important role of *Kondhs* of Kandhamal for their interaction. They go to nearby village weekly market to sell their forest produces, vegetables, rice, goat, buffalo, bullock, cow etc and buy for them necessary household materials. In the local market they meet other villagers and discuss with them about different cultural, social activities and agricultural cycle. Apart from this, now few of the villagers are engaged in modern communication techniques like uses of mobile phone, internet.

The forests, being mixed deciduous, primarily have a rich growth of Sal trees. The place takes pride in its natural panoramic view – lush green woods, cluster of hills, tranquil surroundings with a rich endowment of flora and fauna and



above all, the tribal societies dwelling in this area. The uniqueness of the state is truly retained by its tribal population. They continue to lead a rustic lifestyle in the lap of nature. These tribal societies embrace the section of people who understand the meaning of living together and join hands to work together to achieve any shared interest to cater to the benefits of their society. The tribal groups although have undertaken various forms of odd jobs at present, yet their basic livelihood depend on hunting and cultivation. In the past, the tribal land areas were never surveyed and they did not lead a settled life. Now the Kondhs have adopted a settled life with agricultural practice.

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