
UNIT 1 TRIBES AND THE FOREST

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1.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit, you will be able to:

- examine the relation between forests and the tribes;
- explain about the forest laws of India; and
- discuss how tribes use the forest products for their livelihood.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Forests support the livelihood of a large section of the people, especially the tribal who depend almost entirely on this forest for their survival. Most of the tribes in and around the world are intimately associated with forest for their habitat and ecology. The tribes, who are known as forest dwellers are diligent, they depend directly on the natural produce for their survival, livelihood, occupation and employment. The relation of ecology is the relationship with the environment, the forest, the nature, because a tribe looks upon the forest as its natural environment and starts depending on it. This relationship of dependency in certain features characterises the tribal society and its economic system.

Looking at the construction of social system, now we will discuss the relation of forest and tribe. The objective of the system is to preserve, not destroy the forest. The United Nations Report on tribal development succinctly brings out the tribal economy and its relationship with forest as follows:

“Tribal people in general, derive either directly or indirectly a substantial amount of their livelihood from the forests. They subsist on edible leaves and roots, honey, wild game and fish. They build their homes with timber and bamboo and practice cottage crafts with the help of local raw materials. They use herbs and medicinal plants to cure their diseases and even their religion and folk-lore are woven round the spirits of the forest. Commercial transaction is predominantly by barter, trade being left mostly to the outsiders who control the money economy”.

Tribal people have their own system of living with nature, without harming and destroying the forest. They have their own method of conservation of soil because they are honestly concerned about preserving the forests and exemplifying the age-old pattern of co-existence between man and nature.

1.2 RELATION BETWEEN FOREST AND THE TRIBES

Tribal were the original human settlers of forests. They depended on forest as a resource for fulfilling their basic needs and to use as a balance productive ecosystem; hunting wild life, collecting wild fruits, seeds, gum, flower, fire wood, fodder and water for cattle, fishing, plantation, orchards etc., as and when they may be available. It has been noticed by the studies of prevailing resource-utilization patterns of tribal societies that most of the animal and plant species usefully utilised by them are either uneconomical or unwanted for technologically advanced societies. In fact, some of the wild plants used by tribals for the purposes of medicine, food, fiber, building materials, etc., are being progressively replaced by commercially useful and exotic, fast growing species. Following are the few basic elements of resources of tribes living in or around forest:

For hunting, tribals impose a discipline on themselves not to hunt certain kinds of birds and animals in a certain season or area. The forest offers varieties of berries, nuts, honey, fruits and roots, tribals know which are edible, where they are available and for how long, etc., For example; they know how to distinguish between a poisonous and a non-poisonous edible mushroom which grows abundantly in the rainy season.

Tribals living in interior forests use leaves, hides, skins, barks and fibers to cover their body.

The forest provides timber, wood, stones, reeds, slates, grass, poles, canes and related building materials for shelter to tribes.

The ornaments, worn by the women and also by men are made from seeds, animal bones, horns, shells and nails (these are made in the form of earrings, necklaces, bangles etc.).

The tribals have good knowledge of therapeutic (curative and preventive) value of various plants, weeds and herbs for their medicinal use.

Tribals do not commercialise the forest produce, they use them for their domestic consumption. Tribals not only use the forest as a resource for fulfilling their basic needs, but they also use it as a means of livelihood. They collect nature produce such as dry and fallen wood for fuel, small timber, bamboos, nuts, berries, bones, hide, skins and herbs etc., as a source of income. For systematic collection and sale of such minor produces, a number of co-operative societies and corporations have been formed in several states of India. Besides collection and sale of forest produce, tribals also commonly follow occupations in and around forest such as agriculture, cattle grazing, poultry farming, transport of logs and timber, collection of grass, etc. As a means of agricultural method, some tribes use “shifting cultivation” which is using lands on hills sides or lands temporarily leased to them by the forest department. In this pattern of cultivation, valuable tree growth is cut down to clear the land for growing crops. It is a state of transition from food gathering to food growing.

1.3 FOREST MANAGEMENT IN INDIA

Since the tribals are natural inhabitants of forest, they have certain legitimate rights and freedom to use the forest. The forest legislation in the form of Indian Forest Act came into force in 1873, that was 16 years after the establishment of the Department of Forest in 1861. The settlement of forest was undertaken around 1880 and it was then that the forests were classified into these categories given below.

- 1) **Reserved Forests:** These were further subdivided into Class I and Class II forests; Class I comprises of the protected forests, preserving from erosion, the crests of mountains and steep hill sides inaccessible to man; and Class II consists of the commercial forests managed by the forest department of the Government.
- 2) Protected forests and
- 3) Village forests.

1.3.1 Forest rights of the tribal

With a view to exercising closer control over the use of forest produce, the tribal were given the following privileges:

- right to take water for agriculture purposes,
- digging of wells or canals for agricultural purposes,
- free grazing in open forest (under passes),

- removal of stones and earth for domestic or agricultural use,
- removal of timber, bamboos, reeds, canes etc., for construction and repair of houses and for agricultural implements,
- collection and removal of head loads of dead wood for domestic use,
- collection of grass for cattle and for covering their huts,
- fishing and hunting excluding the protected fauna, and
- cultivation of forest lands.

1.3.2 Forest laws of India

India's forests are governed by two main laws, the Indian Forest Act, 1927 and the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972. The former empowers the government to declare any area to be a reserved forest, protected forest or village forest. The latter allows any area to be constituted as a "protected area", namely a national park, wildlife sanctuary, tiger reserve or community conservation area.

Under these laws, the rights of people living in or depending on the area to be declared as a forest or protected area are to be "settled" by a "forest settlement officer." This basically requires the officer to enquire into the claims of people to land, minor forest produce, etc., and, in the case of claims found to be valid, to allow them to continue or to extinguish them by paying adequate compensation. (Forest Rights Act (India) - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia).

1.3.3. Forest Right Acts of India

A key piece of legislation which concerns the rites of tribes and other peoples who traditionally live within forested areas is "The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006". It was passed into law in India on December 18, 2006. This particular act is known by several names, including the "Forest Rights Act", the "Tribal Rights Act", the "Tribal Bill", and the "Tribal Land Act". The law focuses on the rights of forest dwelling communities to land and other resources which have been often stolen or exploited by outside forces, using the justifications provided within colonial forest law.

Supporters of the act contend that it will redress the injustices which have been committed against forest dwellers for hundreds of years. Supporters of the law also contend that it will make process of conservation more effective and less prone to corruption. Opponents to the law contend that it will actually make the forest more likely to be devastated and exploited.

The Act was officially notified into force on December 31, 2007. However, studies indicate that the law has not had the desired benefits, as much of the surveying work has not been completed. Other studies indicate that forest dwellers have been illegally evicted, threatened, blackmailed, and forced to undergo other type of humiliation at the hands of unethical forest officers.

The Act, because of lack of clear enforcement, and the failure to follow through with the proper registration of forest dwellers has proven to be another false hope for redressing the rights abuses suffered by forest dwellers. (Forest Rights Acts (India)-Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia).

Check your progress 1

Note: 1) Your answer should be about 30 words each;
2) You can check your answers with possible answers given at the end of the Unit.

1) Write a short note on the relation between the tribes and the forest.

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2) Describe the forest laws of India.

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To understand the relationship between forest and tribe, we are going to discuss different tribes in the following case studies:

1.4. CASE STUDY: THE NICOBARESE TRIBE

The long stretch of eastern coast of the Indian Peninsula, between Sumatra and the Andaman Islands, in the Bay of Bengal, lies a chain of inhabited and uninhabited islands of various sizes, known as the Nicobar Archipelago. The inhabited of these islands are referred to as the Nicobarese. The natural setting of the Nicobarese habitat comprises the forest and the sea. The forests that abound in the Nicobar Islands are mainly tropical. The Nicobar Islands are abounded mainly by tropical forests, owing to excessive rain and proximity to the sea. The village settlements are very near from the forests and the sea. The growth of the forests is more dense and thick towards the centre of the island.

1.4.1 Food and drinks

The Nicobarese receive some of the main sources of their food items from the forest like; coconut, areca nut, pandanus, a variety of fruits and vegetables, animals and birds. A major part of the Nicobar forest is occupied by coconut trees, and is the main food for Nicobarese life. Coconut is associated with every aspect of the Nicobarese life, they eat coconut, feed it to their pigs, chicken and dogs used at the time of their canoe worship and is also offered to appease spirits. There are a number of legends, songs and tales in praise of the coconut. The Nicobarese extract toddy (local drink made from coconut) and make Copra (dry coconuts) for sale in the Panamhinengo (Co-operative Society) to earn money. The areca

nut is another cash crop for the Nicobarese, they dry the areca nut and sell them in the Panamhinengo.

1.4.2 Garden making

For the Nicobarese making a garden for growing fruits and vegetable is community work. They make their gardens (locally known as Heon) inside the forest with friends and relatives. When a particular site for the garden is selected, on a certain date after consulting the witch-doctor, all the members of the family along with their friends and relatives start the work with axes and iron scythes. In the jungle the host prepares food for all and it is mostly the women who are engaged in preparing the food. The work takes time according to the size of the plot. After a few days of clearing up, lifeless plants and trees are burned by consulting a witch-doctor. For a few days after the burning, the place is left unused so that the ashes become manure. Then fencing is done with stakes and shaped in a circular form. After its fencing, division of the area for each shareholder is made and some banana trees are planted at the centre, so that, from the centre each shareholder gets a triangular area. The plantation is done after consulting a witch-doctor and generally on the sixth day of the full moon. On the plantation day, accompanied by a witch-doctor the Nicobarese go to the garden in the morning and sacrifice a pig, blood is sprinkled at the centre and all around the garden to appease the spirits. It is believed that if the spirits are not appeased, the vegetables and fruits would not grow, death and disease would be caused in the family of the garden maker. After offering the sacrifices they start planting vegetables and fruits such as papaya, yams, pine-apple, etc. A small hut is constructed near the garden. They also keep their chickens and pigs inside the jungle. Because of this familiarity, the Nicobarese children develop a close bonding with the forest and ecological setting. Along with collecting fruits, roots, grasses, herbs etc., they also learn the names of the plants, trees and their medicinal values. For the Nicobarese the forests are the most significant factors, because it is their livelihood and culture; it provides them with raw materials for making canoes, mats, baskets, huts etc. They love the forest and sing songs in praise of the forest.

Normally, the Nicobarese keep their garden for three years, after that a new site is selected and similarly, the entire process of garden making is repeated. Thus, it shows that the Nicobarese are “shifting horticulturists”. Although the Nicobarese do not move from one place to another and dwell permanently in a village, but their garden shifts from one site to another.

1.4.3 Shelter

The Nicobarese huts are raised on wooden stilts, thatched with grass and floors are made of bamboo, popularly known as platform houses. The materials used in the construction of the houses, are wooden legs, timber, trunks or coconut or areca nut trees and leaves, bamboo and thatching grass. These huts do not have any windows, nor any artificial ventilation, but it is best suited for their environment. The floor of the huts is raised on the stilts about 6 to 8 inches from the ground level and rest on the strong post. They attach a ladder from the ground to reach the hut. It has been observed that there are four types of houses in the Nicobarese:

- dome-shaped round houses raised on stilts,

- rectangular houses with sloping wagon type raised on stilts,
- improved type of houses, raised on stilts; and
- pucca houses which are not on stilts.

The Nicobarese houses are best suited to their climate, availability, adjustment, social norms and social values. They raise their huts from the ground because of the dampness caused by the excessive rain and also due to the fear of snakes and insects. The ladder is removed in the night for safety. While constructing the huts, the Nicobarese propitiate a number of spirits by offering sacrifices of pigs and chicken. The male member of the house brings all the necessary articles needed for construction, while the female member helps in thatching and building the house.

1.4.4 Canoe making

A Nicobarese canoe is a dug-out hull of the trunk of a big tree, made in the forest. For the Nicobarese, canoes are means of transportation between islands. Canoes differ in their shape and size depending upon their use like mini, midi and maxi. The first two sizes are used both for transportation as well as for fishing and the latter one is mostly used for ceremonial voyages and racing competitions. All trade voyages are carried on in maxi canoes and these canoes can accommodate 25 to 40 persons to cover a long journey.

The people of Chowra and Kondul are the main canoe makers. To make the canoe, they first clear the jungle and make a path from the sea-shore to the tree site. It should be noted that the selection of a tree for canoe making is always done near the sea-shore. Generally, it takes a month to make a canoe and it is done manually by a group of people. When a canoe is ready, a date is fixed for its inauguration. On the inaugural day, the canoe worship is held with great pomp and show, and is followed by a canoe race in the evening.

1.4.5 Cottage Industries

There are a number of articles produced by the cottage industries in the Nicobar islands like mats, baskets, pots, etc. and these have a high potential for sale in the market. These articles are made in different places. Mats and baskets are made in Car Nicobar, Teressa, Bompoka and Nancowrie groups of islands. Mats are made of pandanus leaves and baskets are made of bamboo, there are various sizes and shapes of these articles. Pots are made exclusively in Chowra and it has a significant purpose among the Nicobarese. First it is considered to be the harbinger of fortune and prosperity; therefore, they cook their meals in it on special occasions. Secondly, it is thought that if a child is bathed in the water boiled in the Chowra pots, he/she would be immunised against black magic. Generally, people make ceremonial voyage to the island of Chowra to fetch such pots.

1.4.6 Sea as a source of livelihood

As we have mentioned in the beginning that for the Nicobarese, the forest and the sea, both are equally important. The sea plays an important role in determining the cultural and economic life in particular. The staple diet of the Nicobarese is fish and the sea provides them abundance of fish, snails, turtles, crocodiles etc. Fishing is done by all the Nicobarese of all age groups, young and old, men and women. Besides this, the sea is also a means of commuting and entertainment

for canoe race. Canoe races have a very important social and religious significance, and are organised on all kinds of occasions, happy or sad.

1.4.7 Fishing

The Nicobarese use several techniques in fishing; most common among them are hook and line. In this technique, fishing net is attached to one end of the line and bait, generally made of a small fish is attached to the hook. In the open sea, the fisherman on a canoe throws the line in the sea holding and controlling by the other end in his hand. Other techniques are using spears and iron blades. The Nicobarese fish with the help of sticks, rods and iron blades during low tide. They also go near the shore with torches of dried coconut leaves to fish in low tide. Besides these techniques, The Nicobarese now-a-days use fishing nets, but since the nets are costly, only rich Nicobarese can afford having them. The Nicobarese fish not only for food and meet to the economic demand, but often they organize communal and ceremonial fishing. (Vijoy Sahay. 1981. The Nicobarese in the book Nature-man-spirit complex in Tribal India. pp. 209-232).

1.4.8 Conclusion

The Nicobarese live in different ecological condition; but, the forest and the sea both are dominant elements of the Nicobarese eco-system .The forests provide abundant food products and the sea provides them fish. Besides giving food articles of different kinds, the sea is also the means of commuting and entertainment. The forest plays an important role in their social and cultural life, even provides ample opportunity for pre-marital and extra marital relation. Selection of spouse is done by mutual consent and done mostly in the forest or during festive occasions. For the Nicobarese, forest is not only a support for their eco-system but their entire life is dependent on the forest.

Check your progress 2

- Note:** 1) Your answer should be about 30 words each;
- 2) You can check your answers with possible answers given at the end of the Unit.
- 3) Write a short note on the rituals followed by the Nicobarese for garden making.

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- 4) Explain the importance of the sea as a source of livelihood for the Nicobarese.

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1.5 CASE STUDY: THE PANDO TRIBE

The Pando tribes reside in the hills and forest of the Central Indian state of Madhya Pradesh. This ecological setting of the Pando habitat makes a deep impact on their life which is well reflected in their economy as well as in their traditional belief system. The influence of forest is so deep-rooted in their life and culture that they cannot conceive of living away from the forest. The traditional homogeneous Pando villages are situated in the dense forest and on the foot-hills.

The Pando recognise themselves to be the descendants of the Pandavas of Mahabharata who, according to them, were forest dwellers and their main weapon was bow and arrow. In other words, the Pando refer to this phase of the Pandava life, which was spent in the forest as a consequence of being defeated by the Kauravass of Mahabharata in the game of dice and being sent into exile for fourteen long years. The Pando feel proud to be forest dwellers and having maintained the tradition of Pandava from Mahabharata. It is also frequently mentioned in the Pando folk-tales and folk songs.

1.5.1 Forest as a source of economic activity

The economic activities of the Pando are closely related to the forest, it provides them with most of their necessary requirements. Hunting, food-gathering and basket-weaving constitute the main sources of their economy. However, some life-histories of the old Pando revealed the fact that in the past, they also used to practice *lahi* (Lac) cultivation and shifting cultivation. The *lac* was raised on Bair, Chandan, Kusum, Bendo and Palash trees, then the gum was sold to the traders to earn cash money. Some of the Pando also mentioned that in the past they were leading a nomadic life, as they had to move from place to place in search of trees suited for raising *lac*. Similarly, the Pando changed their patch of forest for shifting cultivation. Even today, few Pando families are known to be in the habit of changing their village too often.

1.5.2 Forest as a source of food and shelter

Gathering food from the forest constitutes another major economic activity for the Pando, where both males and females take part. They have a good knowledge of their forest produce and things available in the forest like; edible roots, tubers, fruits, flowers, leaves, herbs, shrubs, medicinal plants, etc. They are expert in the proper utilization of the forest produce, as they know well how these articles can easily and best be fetched and processed for human consumption. They eat some roots, tubers and flowers as full meal, while some others are consumed as vegetables. Mahua (flower) is one of the important forest products with multiple economic utilization for the Pando. They consume it as breakfast as soon as it is collected, dried, steamed and fried. Mahua is consumed as a full meal and also for making liquor. They extract oil from some of the seeds of the forest produce such as *Umjeni*, *Keoti*, *Dori*, etc. Again, sweet juice is extracted from the *Dhawai* flowers and they also collect honey from the bee-hives. In the rainy season when the food supply from the forest decreases very considerably, the *fungi* (edible mushroom) substitutes as food for the Pandos.

The traditional homogenous Pando villages are situated in the dense forest and on the foot-hills. Ten to twenty households made of mud, wood, leaves; grass

and bamboo constitute the traditional Pando village. All the raw materials for hut building are collected from the forest. These hut-building materials are not only fetched for their own purpose but sometime they supply it to the neighbouring villagers against cash or foodstuff.

1.5.3 Source of entertainment

Hunting has always been an important source of collecting food for the Pando. In the earlier times, they used to organize hunting expeditions every now and then, but now, due to imposition of forest rules, the scope of hunting has been lessened. Usually, hunting is organized collectively; it may be inter-village or intra-village group. But, individual hunting with one or two persons is also in practice. While hunting, if they succeed in killing a big animal, it is shared equally among the participants. But, the head and one share of the animal will always go to the village headman.

1.5.4 Source of indigenous medicines

The Pando are aware of medicinal value of plants grown in the forest, they collect various types of roots, tubers, creepers, herbs and shrubs for curing different diseases. Apart from preparing medicine, they also collect few flowers and roots for driving away magical charms. For example; to get rid of cold and cough of children, the fruits of *bhejra* and *ban-bhanta* are tied round their neck. Similarly, to cure snake bite, the roots of *bhejri* tree is crushed to paste and applied on the part bitten by the snake.

1.5.5 Source of raw materials for handicraft

The Pundos are expert basket makers; they make baskets of different shapes and sizes. They claim basketry to be their traditional job, which as they say, they inherited from their forefathers known by the name of Pandaya-Raja of Mahabharata period. The Pondo also associate the basket making with *Churi-Path* (a supernatural power), who is believed to be responsible for any cuts and injury from the *Churi* (knife) while making the basket.

The Pondo make their basket from bamboo and the forest supplies them with immense raw materials for basketry. Basketry job is subject to traditional norms, it is strictly made by males, but it is usually sold by females. However, in special or unavoidable circumstances, males also sell or exchange them for other articles; they sell the baskets in the neighbouring non-Pondo villages or at the weekly markets. It is their important sources of earning cash money or food grains in exchange.

1.5.6 Source of material equipment

The Pundos are dependent on the forest from the cradle to their grave. For storing forest and agricultural products they construct *kotha* (granaries) made of wood and mud. It has two or three separate compartments for storing different items. They make containers out of hollow bamboo piece for storing small quantities of seeds and other commodities. These containers are also used for keeping gum paste to catch birds.

For hunting, the Pondo use all types of wood for making hunting weapons such as bow, arrow, gulel, balua etc. For fishing, they make fishing nets and traps like

kumani and *bisra*. They also collect a number of poisonous fruits, flowers, leaves and roots for poisoning the water for catching fish.

1.5.7 Belief of supernatural power

The deities associated with the forest are known as *Path* and believed to control the activities of the Pando and the forest. The *Nakava-Path* is taken to be responsible for the abundant supply of forest produce, specially the edible tubers and roots. The deity is offered rice, sarai-gum and water during the *Kuar-Dashami*. The scarcity of edible forest produce is attributed to the wrath of the *Nakava deity*, due to some negligence and the deity is appeased by making suitable offerings. Another deity *Raksha Path*, helps and protects the Pando when they are busy in forest cutting operation. Any cut or injury of *tangi* (axe) is taken as an occurrence due to the wrath of the deity. The *Raksha Path* deity is believed to be residing on the Sal, Semal or Mahua trees, he is offered twelve pairs of bread, twelve drops of Mahua liquor and a white cock. The *Churi Path* is regarded to be the master of basketry and any cut from the knife during basket making is attributed to the wrath of the deity. He is worshiped with coconut, sarai-gum, gur (molasses) and water during *Kuar-Dashami*. The *Semaria Path* is the deity, who keeps a control over the supply of game in the forest and worshiped for the abundant supply of game (mostly for deer) during hunting with coconut, rice, sarai-gum, water and hen. After hunting, the Pando also offer him blood of the shot animal on a small branch of a Sal tree. *Noni-Moshwasi* is another deity associated with hunting and regarded as the master of bow and arrow. This goddess is worshipped with thread, turmeric paste, tendu-wood, sarai-gum and a black chicken. This ritual takes place if there is any repeated failure in hunting for a considerable period, which is believed to be the result of some evil eye on their bow and arrow. (V.C. Childyal.1982. Tribe and forest in the book Economics of the tribes and their transformation).

1.5.8 Conclusion

The traditional Pando culture appears to have flourished on the lap of nature surrounded by the forest and hills. This ecological setting of the Pando habitat makes a deep impact on their life which gets adequately reflected in their economy as well as in their belief. The influence of the forest is so deep-rooted in their life and culture that they cannot conceive of living away from the forest. Because of this, the Pando look to the forest as an amicable source which provides them with shelter, food, drink, pasture land, herbs, hunting game, raw material for their crafts and other day to day requirements. They have been traditionally dependent upon the forest for their subsistence and have developed a belief system in harmony with their ecological setting.

1.6 CASE STUDY: MAJOR TRIBES OF ORISSA

In this case study, let us discuss with examples about a few important tribes of Orissa and their close associations with the forest. Forest is their way of life. There are 62 tribal communities residing in Orissa today. They are scattered to all parts of Orissa. The major tribes of the state are Kondhs, Koyas, Gadabas, Oraon, Juangs, and Santhals. According to the language, the tribes are divided into four groups, Indo-Aryan group, Dravidian group, Tibe to-Burmese group and Austric group. Tribes belonging to Tibe to Burmese group no more stay in Orissa, thus all the tribes belong to the other three groups. Tribal people of Orissa

are known to be immensely hardworking and lead a very subdued life. Various tribes engage in different occupation, but most are either into agriculture, fishing or hunting. Better settled tribes also work in mills and handicraft industries. Few tribes like Bondo and Gadaba have their own looms and make clothes for their own use.

- 1) **Sauras:** The Sauras are one of the most ancient tribes in Orissa mentioned in Hindu myths and classics, notably the puranas. Saura men are marathon walkers. They are also expert climbers and hunters, with a habit of carrying an axe on one shoulder. Saura villages are generally inaccessible, hidden in the folds of mountain and reached only by negotiating steep and zigzag path.
- 2) **Kondhs:** The Kondhs, or the Kui as they call themselves, are the largest tribal in Orissa. They have a great cultural heritage and values which respect nature. Maliah Kondhs are majority among the Kondh sub-groups. Their Kui language is Dravidian and spoken with only slight regional variations. Their height is about the average standard of the persons of the Peninsula.
- 3) **Santhals:** Makers of picturesque houses, the Santhals have an eye for beauty. They are also deeply concerned with personal hygiene and the cleanliness of their surroundings. A santhal folktale says that God places rice inside a husk so it would remain clean! Santhals adore flowers. They also collect silk cocoons from Asan trees in the forest and process
- 4) **Bondas:** The Bondas who have lived in near. isolation among the higher hills are fiercely independent, stubborn and aggressive tribe. The Bondas known themselves as Remo(men) are a small tribe of the type now often called Austro-Asiatic country.
- 5) **Bhumias:** Bhumias of Malkangiri District are also generally found in undivided Koraput, Phulbani, Ganjam and Sundergarh districts of Orissa. After Koyas, this tribes occupies the second position in population. The head of the village is called "Mukhia". One "Bhattanaik" is for 20 number of villages.
- 6) **Gonds:** The Gonds, a warrior caste and conquerors of yesteryears, are spreadout all over the hill tracts of central and south Ifdia. Before the Gonds sow a filed, some grain, fowls and pigs are sacrificed to the presiding deity. Blood from the sacrificed animals is sprinkled on the seeds which are distributed among the villagers, who in turn sow them in their fields for luck.
- 7) **Oraons:** The Oraons are one of the most progressive tribals. They make use of chemical fertilizers, pesticides, improved varieties of seeds and modern techniques of agriculture. Economically better off than most of the others, they are not shackled by debts and can afford a better quality of life with good approach.
- 8) **Koya:** The Koya are a tribe inhabiting the hills in the north of the Godaviri district and are also found in Malkangiri district. They are said to belong to the great Gond family. The Koyas have a tradition that about two hundred years ago they were driven from the plateau in the Baster country by famine and disputes.

The Koyas are a Scheduled Tribes. Koyas are found in Kalimela, Podia, Malkangiri and Korukonda area of Malkangiri District. Koyas are the largest

in population. In 1971 Koyas population was 58,730. In 1991 census their population was 1,40,000. By this time it has increased a lot. At Maithili and Manyamkonda area ancient Koyas tribes are generally found. Their village consists of 30 to 40 families. They don't settle at any place permanently because it's a belief that they may be some natural calamity or the local God will be displeased.

- 9) **Didayees:** Didayees are the important tribal race. These people have rich heritage. They said to be the progeny of Bondas. Thurston holds the view that the Didayis are part of the Paraja tribe. Dr. Elwin quoting a Bonda myth says "The eldest brother was a Bhoi Gadava, the next an Asur Gadava and the remaining ten Kondo, Bondo, Didayi etc." The relationship of the Didayis of the Bonda, Paraja and the Gadava is very intimate and matrimonial relationships between the Didayi and others, though clandestine in nature, are not found wanting. In spite of all these they maintain their distinctive identity and cannot be regarded as a part of any tribe.
- 10) **Gadava:** The Gadava are a primitive tribe classified as mundari or Kolarian on linguistic grounds. The word Gadava, Mitchell states, signifies a person who carries loads on his shoulders. The tribe call themselves Guthan. They speak a mundari dialect, called Gadava after tribal name and are one of the two-mundari tribes found so far south as Visakhapatnam. The Gadavas are a tribe of agriculturists, coolies and hunters. The Gadavas are also employed as bearers in the hills and carry palanquins.

Including Malkangiri Matias live in Dhenkanal, Bolangir and Kalahandi districts of Orissa. Matias wear cloths and lead a simple life. They cultivate Maize, tobacco leaf and vegetables. In Malkangiri Matias are treated as low among the tribes.

- 11) **Dharua:** Dharua are found in the block of Korukonda of this district. Also these people are seen in the boarding district of Madhaya Pradesh and Chattisgarh. Dharua are also called as Durua. This tribe has got their own language, culture and traditions.
- 12) **Porajas:** The Porajas or Parajas are the hill cultivators found in the district of Ganjam and undivided Koraput. There are seven classes of these Parajas, which differ from each other in points of language, customs and traditions. The Parajas seem to have inhabited this country from about the second century of the Christian era.
The servitude into which the Parajas has been reduced and the cruel treatment given to him. The Parajas seem to have inhabited this country from about the second century of the Christian era. Master made him faithless and dishonest. The Parajas are divided into 12 tribes and each tribe is called after the region in which it lives. They have been enlisted as Scheduled Tribe. Other than Malkangiri Parajas are found in un-divided Koraput, Kalahandi, Sundergarh, Dhenkanal, Phulbani, Puri, Cuttack and Maurbhanj districts of Orissa. In 1971 their number was 11,361. They occupy the third position in population in this district. They have been divided into Jhadia, Barenga, Penga and Konda.
- 13) **Bathudis:** The concentration of the Bathudis is more in the northwestern parts of the state of Orissa, particularly in the areas bordering the districts of Mayurbhanj and Keonjhar. Their settlements lie mostly on the plains in the

rural areas and many of them are at present in such living standard that to call them a hill tribe is perhaps a misnomer. They live in houses made of mud walls and thatched roofs. They love to decorate their walls with multicoloured floral designs. Their dress is scanty. A coarse cotton dhoti fulfils the requirement of a male person. The women wear sari and generally prefer orange coloured ones.

- 14) **Kolha:** Numerically, the most important tribe of Keonjhar is the Kolha. Most of them live in the Bhuyan hills and in the adjoining areas like Nayagarh and Chamakpur. They have a separate language of their own but most of them use Oriya, Hindi and English as a subsidiary language. They appear to have migrated to Keonjhar from the North east during the last century. They eat all kinds of flesh and are fond of Handia (fermented liquor) like the other tribes. The Kolhas take pleasure in shooting animals and birds with the help of bow and arrow, but are generally timid.

(Source: www.orissadiary.com/orissa_profile/tribal/index.asp)

1.7 LET US SUM UP

The relation between man and nature is unique and complex. In this Unit we have observed how tribes associate their life with the nature in all aspects of their life. Forest is home for many Indian tribes. It provides them with the basic needs like food, water, shelter etc. Therefore, we need to preserve our forest for a good environment and for the people who totally depend on nature for their livelihood.

Check your progress 3

Note: 1) Your answers should be about 30 words each;

2) You can check your answers with possible answers given at the end of the Unit.

- 5) Describe how the Pando are dependent on the forest as a source of economic activity.

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- 6) Describe about kind of belief of supernatural power among the Pondo tribe.

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1.8 ACTIVITY

We have together discussed about Tribe and their relation with the forest. Have you heard/ read about any tribe, who are totally dependent on forest as their livelihood? Try to identify their features such as region, habits or any other that you notice.

1.9 REFERENCES FOR FURTHER READINGS

- i) K.S. Singh. (ed). Economics of the tribes and their transformation. New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company. 1982.
- ii) Mann, R.S. Nature-man-spirit complex in tribal India. Delhi: Concept Publishing Company. 1981.
- iii) Forest Act Rights (India)-Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.

1.10 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: POSSIBLE ANSWERS

- 1) see section 1.2
- 2) see section 1.3.2
- 3) see section 1.4.2
- 4) see section 1.4.6
- 5) see section 1.5.1
- 6) see section 1.5.7