

# FAIR AND FESTIVAL OF GONDS TRIBE IN WESTERN ODISHA : WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO JANGADEO FESTIVAL OF LOISINGHA BLOCK, DISTRICT - BALANGIR, ODISHA

Dr.Nakul Seth\*  
Panchayat College Bargarh,  
Sudam Jhankar\*  
Ph.D Research scholar  
P.G Department of History, Sambalpur University

## ABSTRACT

Among the 62 tribes in Odisha Gonds were occupied a important position due to their majority of population as compare to other tribal groups. Gonds are widely distributed in different parts of the country such as South-Central and central eastern part of India but they were highly concentrated in Bastar region, they normally use to speak in Gondi language. Gonds are divided into several subgroups like *Raj*, *Khatola*, *Madia*, *Dhur*, *Dadve*, *Mokasi*, *Gaita* and *Koyas*. Their several theory on how Gonds were migrate from other parts of India to western Odisha, but it is general believe that one they were migrate through the western part of Odisha such as Kalahandi-Nuapada region. Presently the Gond's ware widely distributed in many areas of Odisha viz., Kalahandi, Nuapada, Balangir, Samabalpur Bamanda and Banei. The Gonds were organised and celebrate different types of fair and festivals, although they were adopt many festivals have adopt from others but many time they were found to be a nature worshiper. As we know that, the study of fair and festivals help us to understand about any tribal groups and to reconstruct their own history.

However, the present paper highlights fair and festival of the Gond tribes of Western Odisha since 17<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> century in general but Jangahadeo festival in particular. Every year the Gonds of Loisingha villagers organised a festival, which is popularly known as Jangadeo or Badadeo festival.

## INTRODUCTION

Each tribal group functions in a particular environmental niche and reacts to changing circumstances accordingly. When non-tribal's made inroads into the tribal region of western Odisha, the reaction of each tribal group differed according to its ecology and its particular economic base.<sup>1</sup> Among the 62 tribes in Odisha Gonds were occupied a important position due to their majority of population as compare to other tribal groups. Gonds are widely distributed in different parts of the country such as South-Central and

central eastern part of India but they were highly concentrated in Bastar region, they normally use to speak in Gondi language.

The Gonds have been judged to be numerically as well as historically one of the important tribal groups of India. According to Grierson<sup>2</sup> their language Gondi is a Dravidian language. The Gonds of western Odisha speak Kosali or Sambalpuri and have totally forgotten their Gondi language. Many of them describe themselves as Raj Gonds as do the Gonds of many areas of Chhatisgarh and Andhra Pradesh also. Anthropologists have explained this trend amongst the Gonds in various ways. Grigsons emphasising the social aspects, suggested that such names as Raj Gond arose when local primitive groups were gradually Hinduised and accepted by Hindus under new names.<sup>3</sup>

In western Odisha, only they claim to be Raj Gonds who were once allies of ruling groups and have enjoyed privileged economic status, Zamindars, Gahatia, Gartia or Gaotia. Their poor relatives and neighbours do not claim this name or rather is not conscious of the possibility of doing so. So in the area of our study the name Raj Gond can be seen as advanced by the self conscious and economically superior Gonds who enjoy, or aspire to, high social status. The economically poor Gonds are known as Dhur (or Dharua) Gond; dhur means 'dust' indicating lowly or ordinary Gond.

The Gonds of Odisha can be divided into two entirely different groups. The Gonds of Western Odisha have been highly acculturated into Hindu society and have attained the status of a worrier caste. The Gond of a part of Kalahandi and Koraput are a hill tribe having their distinctive dress, habits and customs. The recent demographic history treats them as immigrants to Odisha. As a petty business community their nativity is traced to Madhya Pradesh. Their main occupation is agriculture or Agricultural labourer. They also go for fishing and hunting for supplementing their income. Out of that the Gonds of Loisingha they perform a ritualistic festival which is known as Janghadeo festival. From 17<sup>th</sup> to till now this festival is organised and celebrated not only the Gonds but also the villagers of Loisingha

## STUDY AREA

Loisingha is a Town in Loisinga Tehsil which is consisting of unique rural area in Balangir District of Odisha State, India. It is located 19 K.M towards North from District head quarters Balangir, it is a Tehsil head quarter. Which is situated between the two river Ong and Suktel (fig-1). From the beginning the Gonds were select a suitable place for their settlement, so they chose Loisingha because, the environment of Loisingha fulfil their all kinds of need for their livelihood.



Fig-1 Google map showing the location of Loisingha

## HISTORY

Scholars believe that Gonds ruled in Gondwana, now in eastern Madhya Pradesh and western Odisha, between the 13th and 19th centuries AD. Muslim writers described a rise of Gond state after the 14th century.

In western Odisha the first specific reference to Gond is from medieval period. The Bonai plate refers to the Tunga ruler Vinitatunga as ashtadaa-Gongamldhipatti, that is the lord of eighteen tribes known as Gonds.<sup>4</sup> The charter of Sulki ruler Kalastambhadeva addresses himself as Sakalagonda-madhinatha or Lord of all Gonds.<sup>5</sup> A.P. Sah suggests that in medieval period the Gond were quite widespread in western Odisha. According to literary sources the Gond, with the help of other tribals, Kandh and Binjhal, and a Brahma were able to form an oligarchy around 14th century and later one of the groups could form a kingdom at Patnagarh and claimed Chauhan Rajput status. Into the earlier territorial distribution of Gond people, new nodes in the form of Garh associated with Rajput polity emerged around this period. The leaders or heads of the territorial group (garb) of Gond were recognised as chieftains of twelve villages or 'Barhons'. It also helped in the emergence of the Attargarh system in western Odisha.

The Gonds occupied high positions in the estates of western Odisha. During the rule of Jayant Sai, in the 1780's, the Gond chief of Sarangarh was the dewan of Sambalpur estate.<sup>6</sup> Most Gond Zamindars of western Odisha held their Zamindari on military tenure, i.e., they did not pay any revenue or tribute to their overlord but had to extend help with men and money at times of emergency. This gave a special position to the powerful Gond chiefs. Gond dominance has not been confined to western Odisha only. Between the

fourteenth and the sixteenth centuries, four Gond kingdoms arose in Central India.<sup>7</sup> Amongst them the kingdom of Garha was most powerful. The ruler of the kingdom Sangram Shah managed to arrange the marriage of his son Dalpat with Durgabati, the daughter of a Chandela Rajput (Raja of Mahoba) in c.1550.<sup>8</sup>

Gonds are widely distributed in different parts of the country such as South-Central and central eastern part of India but they were highly concentrate in Bastar region. Their several theory on how Gonds were migrate from other parts of India to western Odisha, but it is general believe that one they were migrate through the western part of Odisha such as Kalahandi-Nuapada region. Presently the Gond tribes widely distributed in many areas of Odisha viz., Kalahandi, Nuapada, Balangir, Samabalpur, Bamanda and Banei

Gonds ruled in four kingdoms (Garha-Mandla, Deogarh, Chanda, and Kherla) in central India between the 16th and 18th centuries. They built number of forts, palaces, temples, tanks and lakes during the rule of the Gonds dynasty. The Gondwana kingdom survived until the late 16th century. They also gained control over the Malwa after the decline of the Mughals followed by the Marathas in 1690. The Maratha power swept into Gondland in the 1740s.<sup>9</sup> The Marathas overthrew the Gond Rajas (princes) and seized most of their territory, while Some Gond zamindaris (estates) survived until recently.<sup>10</sup>

According to the some legendary sources; when the ruler of Patna suffered due to some serious problem he pray to lord Jangadeo and during this time lord Jangadeo help him to revive from this situation.

Thereafter, the ruler of Patna patronised and gave 22 villages for worship lord Jangadeo. So every year Janghadeo festival are organised by the people of Loisingha.

## JANGADEO FESTIVAL

Festivals and celebrations offer possibilities for human interaction which we do not find in day to day life. It is evident that festive practices provide an indication of the vital pulse of every society. Yet festivals are not only merely an indicator but can also assume important functions for social dynamization.

After the coming of the Gonds in to the Loisingha they organised Jangahdeo festival on the order of Patna king and gave 22 village for worship lord jangadeo. Therefore every year the organiser (*Jamindar*) of this festival select a date or *Lagna* and in the month of January (*pausamasa*) the Jangadeo festival is organize in Loisingha.

The god locally known as various name such as Badadeo, Jangadeo, Manekasoda and Jogasoda. This festival is performing by the Gond society of Loisingha. But now a day this festival is not only for Gond Tribe but also the villagers of Loisingha. Besides, during the time of festivals not only Gonds community but also other people of Loisingha Block, and its adjoining area were heartily participate and organised this festivals.

On the Previous day of festival the offering goods like black till and Ghee, the priest of gond community prepare a slip and that was apply on the body of Janghadeo (Fig-2). Hole day On the day of festival lord

Janghadeo is carrying by four people who were known as *Parua* and came out from their temple and moving all around the Loisingha village. After that lord Janghadeo was firstly worship by the elder wife of Jamindar (Fig-3). Then all the villagers prepare for worship and they decorated their in front of the houses and worship lord Janghadeo (Fig-4).

The festival is continue till the next morning and after that, Jangadeo was taking a holly bath in a pond for purify. And surrounding of this pond (*Trisul Bandh*) thousand of people standing there for in seeking of blessing (Fig-6). After the holly birth lord Jangadeo came back to their temple.

## CONCLUSION

We never play with the believe, rituals, tradition and culture of any tribe or community. The study of fair and festivals help us to understand about any tribal groups and to reconstruct their own history. The Gonds were organised and celebrate different types of fair and festivals, although they were adopt many festivals have adopt from others but many time they were found to be a nature worshiper. The Gonds have been judged to be numerically as well as historically one of the important tribal groups of India. The Gonds of Loisingha village they were mainly worship and dedicated their life to Lord Janghadeo.

## REFERENCES

1. J.J.Kattakayam, 1983, *Social Structure and Change Amongst the Tribals*, D.K.Publisher, Delhi, p.31.
2. G.F.Grierson, 1967, (reprint), 'Munda and Dravidian Languages' Linguistic Survey of India,IV, Motilal Banarasidass, Delhi, p.472, (1906, Calcutta).
3. W.V.Grigson, 1938, *The Maria Gond of Bastar*, Oxford University Press, London, p.36.
4. A.P.Sah, 1976, *Life in Medieval Odisha, 600-1200* Chaukhamba OrientaliaJVaranasi, p.136; N.K.Sahu (ed) *History of Odisha*. by W.W.Hunter. A.Stirling.- J.Beams N.K.Sahu, Sushil Gupta, Calcutta, pp.351-353.
5. Ibid.
6. Jayachandrika, VI.
7. R.C.Mazumdar, et al., 1970(3rd ed. ), *An Advanced History of India*, Macmillan, London, p.441. (Macmillan, 1950, London).
8. Ibid.
9. *Deogaonkar, Shashishekhhar Gopal (23 November 2017). "The Gonds of Vidarbha". Concept Publishing Company – via Google Books.*
10. Grigson, S.W, 1999, *The Maria Gond of Bastar*, New Delhi, Pp. 35-36.



Fig-2 preparation a slip for apply on the body of Lord Janghadeo



Fig-3 lord Janghadeo carrying by four *Parua*



Fig-4 lord Jangadeo worship by the villegers



Fig- 5 Lord Janghadeo carring by four Parua and moving in Loisingha village



Fig-6 A holly bath

