

Social Life: A Recent Study on Lodhas of Mayurbhanj in Odisha, East India

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Abstract--- *The social life of Lodhas stands separate from all other tribal groups of Odisha State in Eastern India. Mayurbhanj is one of the important tribal districts of the state of Odisha. The state of Odisha is regarded as the homeland of a number of different tribes, which have been considered as Scheduled Tribe numbering sixty two. Each tribe has its specific identity and unique character in the form of social organization, culture and language. The spoken language of each tribe is distinct and different from one another. Among the total sixty two Scheduled Tribes of Odisha, there are thirteen Ethno-cultural Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs). The Lodha tribe is one of the Primitive Tribal Groups of Odisha in Eastern India. The social life style of Lodhas is an interest of the current study. For this reason, this study assess the various social life of Lodhas of Mayurbhanj in Odisha. Methodologically, both primary and secondary sources are used to assess the social way of Lodhas society. Lodhas have its own rules of economic practice that determines its people to define intra-ethnic and inter-ethnic interaction. Lodha tribe pursuit common goals and express their cultural identity and distinctiveness in their social organization, language, rituals, dress, ornaments, art and craft. Thus, the social activities of Lodhas include clanship, family, birth and death rituals, settlement, building their house, marriage system, literacy, education, food habits, social customs, dress and ornaments, work participation, dance, songs, and others.*

Keywords--- *Lodhas, tribe, Mayurbhanj, Odisha, India.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Socially and educationally the Scheduled Tribes (ST's) are among the most disadvantaged groups in Odisha of Eastern India. The state of Odisha occupies a distinct place in tribal map of India and is regarded as the homeland of a number of different types of Scheduled tribes numbering sixty two. The Lodha tribe is one of the Primitive Tribal Groups of Odisha in Eastern India. On the basis of field study made by the earlier scholars and the present authors, the Lodhas are mostly residing in the Mayurbhanj district of Odisha. Really, Mayurbhanja is a tribal dominated district of Odisha and as many as 45 Scheduled Tribes including Lodha are inhabiting in this district as per 1961 Census. The Mayurbhanj district lies between 21° 17' and 22° 34' north latitude and between 85° 40' and 87° 10' east longitude.¹ With the adoption of the Tribal Sub Plan (TSP) approach since the 5th Five Year Plan, the Central and State Governments have taken adequate steps to identify the Primitive Tribal Groups in the different parts of the country and implement special schemes and programmes for their development. In 7th Five year plan, the Lodha tribe was identified as Primitive Tribal Groups of Odisha and this tribe also included in 1985-90 year for their development. The Lodha Development Agency (The Micro Project) was established at Morada in the 7th Five Year Plan 1985-90. This agency is covering all the Lodha villages of Moroda and Suliapada Blocks of Mayurbhanja District of Odisha.²

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II. METHODOLOGY

For the collection of data, the present authors have used qualitative research method. The ethnographic, field study, personal interview, schedules and taking photographs. The extensive field survey has been undertaken for the collection of detailed information with regard to various way of social life of Lodha society of Odisha. Both the primary and secondary sources have been used in the writing of the present piece of work. The primary data have been collected from original texts, *Gazetteers*, literatures, reports, participant observation and hearsay accounts. The information obtained from both primary and secondary sources are cross-checked and the organized as per methodological analysis and interpretation.

III. DISCUSSION AND RESULTS ANALYSIS

3.1. Lodhas Clanship

The Lodhas have a clan organization known as *gotra*. The Lodha social system is characterized by its clan organization. The Lodhas have nine clans; Bhukta, Mallick, Katal, Nayak(Naik), Digar, Parmanik, Dandapat or Bag, Ari or Ahari and Bhuiya or Bhunia.³ Each clan has totem and the totemic animal objects associated with the clan or *gotra* are considered to be sacred. These clans of Lodha community are exogamous and patrilineal in nature. Each individual by his or her birth belongs to a particular clan. While clan identity remains unchanged throughout life for men, which of the women change after marriage. After marriage girls are initiated into their husband clan. Certain taboos are observed by clan members in order to pay respect to their respective totemic objects.⁴ Bhugta Bhukta or Bag clan names are found in most of the villages. Members of this clan think that 'Chirka alu' a kind of wild yam is their totem. The clan members don't consume or collect this particular variety of yam.⁵ The Bhukta clan is divided into two sub clans and within these sub-clans marriage is not possible. Malliks are distributed in almost all the villages except a few.

The clan members have adopted *makara*, a kind of shark as their totem.⁶ The people belonging to Kotal clan have adopted moon or grass hopper as their totem. When the moon disappears during 'Amabasya', members of the Kotal clan go into ceremonial pollution.⁷ Kotals enjoy higher status in the Lodha society. Nayak literally means leaders, connotes a country soldier. Members belonging to Nayak clan consider *Sal* fish as their totem. Parmanik clan has chosen 'Manik' a kind of large bird as their totem. The members of the Digar clan have adopted porpoise as their totem. They never touch or injure a porpoise. Dandapata clan considers tiger as their totem. The members of Ahari *gotra* have a kind of fish as their totem which is flat and circular in shape and silvery white colour known as *Chanda*. Bhunia clan people consider *Sal* fish as their totem.⁸

It is known from the respondents through interaction on the field that the totemic objects are respected and never consumed by the clan members in Lodha society. Most of the Lodhas especially in acculturated zones use their clan names as surnames whereas the Lodhas in the jungle areas use 'Savara' or Sabara to express their personal identity without mentioning their clan names as surnames.⁹ A few clan names have special significance identifying them with the greater regional setting. These clans are Kotal, Diger, Dandapat, Nayak, etc. associating the group with a specific type of works or assignment.¹⁰ The clan organization of Lodha community is unique in the primitive tribal society of Odisha.

3.2. Lodha Family

Family is the smallest social unit in the Lodha society (community) of Odisha. It generally consists of parents and their children. Most of the Lodha families are elementary or nuclear in type and consist of the married couple and their unmarried children.¹¹ A few examples of joint and extended families, which include old and dependent parents, unmarried, married and / or divorced brothers, sisters, sons and daughters are also found in the Lodha society. Through conjugal infidelity, there are instances of divorce and re-marriage of either of the spouses. In such cases children born in previous marriages may stay with their step father or step mother.¹² Polygamy is permitted. The Lodha family is patrilineal and patriarchal in nature. The social status and family property are inherited in the male line. The father or senior male is regarded as the family head in their hard struggle for survival, the family members act as a close knit group helping each other and contributing their share of their day to day life for the happiness of the family.¹³ Due to prolonged interaction with the local Hindus, they have been greatly influenced by the regional Hindu customs.¹⁴ Children are well cared for and are brought up with love and fondness. The best food items are served to the children first. The growing children assist their parents in domestic and outdoor activities.

According to the size of the family and their economic co-operation, Lodha families may be ground into two types i.e. nuclear and extended as stated above. Lodha families are patrilineal and patriarchal. Father is the head of the family who manages the family affairs. He allots specific duties and responsibilities to the individual member in consultation with all grow up members. After the death of father and mother, the eldest brother manages the family affairs.¹⁵ The paternal uncle is respected and his advices are sought in many social and economic matters. In case of death, near and distant relatives are informed. Co-villagers also participate in the funeral rites but only blood relatives attend purificatory ceremony.¹⁶

Grown of boys and girls help their parents in domestic as well as outdoor work. A son is usually preferred over a daughter. The mother keeps constant watch over the movements and chastity of her daughter. Role of female is comparatively more important than the male in domestic affairs. Lodha wives are expert in disposing of the theft materials. Females go for wages to support the household economy. Wives strongly support even the misdeeds of their husbands. In the absence of the husband for a longer period especially when the husbands are in jail, the wives generally take the responsibility to manage the household.¹⁷

The junior family members of Lodha tribe always respect their superiors. Like the Hindu kinship system, joking and avoidance relationships are found among certain categories of kin. A joking relationship is maintained between grandparents and grandchildren, younger brother and elder brother's wife, husband and wife's sister. The instances of the levirate i.e. the younger brother marrying the widow of his deceased elder brother, and the serrate i.e. a widower marrying the younger sister of the deceased wife are also found.¹⁸ A strict avoidance is observed between an elder brother and his younger brother wife. There is a taboo on married couples addressing each other by name, so they call each other father or mother. Sometimes, the Lodhas extend the sphere of relationship to friends and associates of their own community and other communities by forging ritual kinship bonds. These are based on a socio-economic relationship of give and take. Village is regarded as an important social unit with territorial boundary. The families of different clans extend mutual help in different socio-religious activities.¹⁹

3.3. Birth Ritual of Lodhas

From birth to death, the life of a Lodha passes through a series of rituals at different phases of life. Ceasing menstruation is regarded as an indication of pregnancy. A pregnant woman observes a number of taboos regarding her food, sex life and movements.²⁰ Goat and fowl are sacrificed and fruits offered to the local deities to bring about a smooth delivery and the well-being of mother and child. The help of a local *dhai* or midwife is summoned for the birth. Birth pollution is generally observed for 21 days, during which the mother and baby remain in confinement, and certain precautionary taboos and practices are observed.²¹ On the 21st day a purificatory ritual called *ekusia* is performed. The baby is breastfed by the mother till he or she is six months old or more. After six months, the hair cutting and rice feeding ceremonies are held on a Tuesday, which the Lodhas consider an auspicious day.²²

3.4. Marriages of Lodhas

Marriage is the most significant social event in a Lodha's life. Adult marriage and marriage by negotiation are commonly practised. Lodha boys marry usually at the age of 20-25 years and girls marry between the ages of 16 to 20 years.²³ A mediator is engaged by both the bride and groom sides to carry on negotiation and settle the bride's price. In the Lodha community, such type of marriage is locally said as 'Beha' marriage. Role of the mediator in negotiation is found to be very important. Marriage negotiation between the boys side and girls side are carried on with the help of a go-between and settled with the payment of a bride price (*kanya pana*) in cash and kind. The bride price usually consists of three clothes, a sari for the mother of the bride, a *dhoti* for the eldest brother-in-law. Apart from these terms, some cash is also paid as bride price. The bride price is received by the mother of the bride. The consent of the boy and girl is required before finalizing the marriage proposal. The wedding ceremony consists of a series of rituals. Unfaithful, idle and barren wives are usually divorced. Divorce is freely practised. A widower can marry without any problem. Marriage by payment of bride-price is the general rule among the Lodhas. The bridegroom has to pay a sum of seven rupees only at the time of marriage to the parents of the bride and her parents.

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Besides, arranged marriages, instances of other kinds of marriages, such as child marriage, love marriage, marriage by service (rare), marriage by exchange of sisters, *gharjamain* type of marriage, levirate, sororate and the remarriage of widows and divorcees are also found.²⁵ When a girl is married in her teen age a second marriage ceremony is observed in such cases.²⁶ Levirate, sororate and widow remarriages are called *sangha* and these marriages involve no payment of bride price. However, such marriages are finalized after payment of a royalty in cash called *grama manya* to the groom's village Panchayat and then formal, permission from the village headman is obtained. The bride in a *sangha* marriage is called *sangali bou* and her social status is inferior to that of a bride in a regular arranged marriage.²⁷

Lodha society also allows a man to divorce his wife for reasons of infidelity, indolence and incompatibility.²⁸ A woman cannot divorce her husband formally, but she can compel him to divorce her by deserting him and going to stay with her parents or lover.²⁹ Monogamy is the general rule of the Lodha society. In which no man may be married to more than one woman at a time. Majority of Lodhas practise monogamy. Some young Lodhas are found married with girls of other castes. In this case, the girls of other classes accept the Lodha culture. So, inter-caste

marriages are also prevalent in Lodha community. Some of the ceremonies like tying of turban, wearing of iron bangle by the bride groom, return of the bride on 8th day are the characteristic features of a Lodha marriage. There is a peculiar thing happened in the Lodha society. Though they are being considered as Hindu, but the Brahmin priest does not participate in the Lodha marriage ceremony. Mother earth (*Basumati*), the god of righteousness (*Dharma devata*) are also worshipped at the time of wedding.³⁰ A wedding feast is given to the day of marriage to which all the traditional village officials including the relatives are invited. The village priest 'Dehuri' or his assistant performs the marriage ceremony of Lodhas.

3.5. Death Rituals

The Lodhas observe elaborate death rituals in accordance with Hindu tradition. When a man dies, his kinsmen are informed and the corpse is disposed. The dead body is either buried or cremated. Mourning and death pollution are observed for ten days. On the tenth and eleventh days purificatory rituals are performed. The relatives and co-villagers are entertained with a feast. The annual *sradha* ceremony is performed every year on the last day of the month of *Chaitra* to appease the ancestral spirits.³¹ The cooked food is first offered to the spirit of the deceased and then the food is served to other members. The feast is arranged in the evening of the 11th days. There is no specific cremation ground for the Lodha community. Therefore, the Lodhas are burring or cremating the dead bodies in the appropriate places of the nearby forest.

3.6. Settlement and Housing

The Lodhas live in small and large villages belonging exclusively to them and sometimes together with other communities, which are heterogeneous in caste composition. As with other tribal settlements, the settlement pattern of Lodhas is irregular, with house here and there. The Lodhas have their own hamlets for apart from the main village, which is occupied by the Hindu caste. They prepare to construct their homes in villages inhabited by own men. The Lodhas had small straw thatched huts with an irregular ground plan and mud walls.³² Their settlements have got no definite plan and elevation. The majority of huts have all purposes single rooms with a raised platform near the hearth called *isan* or the seat of ancestral spirits. This is a trait borrowed from the caste Hindus. Goats and cattle are kept on the side barandah. Well to do cultivators have larger multi-roomed houses with specious courtyards and kitchen gardens fenced with vertical bamboo poles and twigs. The household belongings of Lodhas are scanty.

The jungle covered rugged terrain of Bengal-Jharkhand-Odisha border is now the home land of Lodhas. In spite of deforestation by felling of trees over the years, which has affected their tribal economy most of the Lodhas still cling to this ecology and environment. Over population, interethnic tensions, better opportunity of employments elsewhere with an assured livelihood however have tempted some of Lodhas to migrate into more eastward parts of the district where the land holding communities generally face acute shortage of seasonal agricultural labour and need them. Such migration, in course of time, has divided the tribe into two distinct segments such as Jungle Lodha and more or less accultured-Lodha on the basis of techno eco system.³³

The hamlets located in plains areas are found to have some access to infrastructural facilities, like dug-wells, tube wells, schools, Grama Panchayat Head Quarters, Police Station, Public Health Centre, etc. However, in case of

villages in forest and hilly belts, they are largely devoid of any amenities and infrastructure is at a very low level.³⁴ In every village there are community level landmarks, where clan deities Chandi and Sitala are enshrined under a tree located a little away from the main habitat. This tree is usually in a virgin grave or sometimes it is a huge one with extensive branches, situated very close to the village. High in the social hierarchy of the Lodha is the *Dehuri*, a religious head with magical powers. The *Dehuri* has the honour of conducting rituals for community level festivals and ceremonies. He is privileged with a very small pavilion in the back side of his house that is encircled by bamboo splits. A thatched hut is also constructed besides this structure where, *Gurias* impart training to his disciplines in the matter relating to gods and goddesses, benevolent and malevolent deities and spirits. At the end of the village are installed earthen horse and elephant representing important village deities. The villagers organize their traditional council meeting underneath a tree or a grove according to its feasibility.³⁵

All the Lodhas irrespective of their social economic status go to the forest in different seasons to collect varieties of edibles are minor forest produce. Every village has a suitable place for dance on different occasions and a play ground for boys and girls. The cremation ground is earmarked in a bushy jungle area located a little away from the village settlement.

The houses in a typical Lodha settlement are clustered in two rows in an irregular fashion. Houses in all traditional villages are situated in a dispersed manner. Thatched with mud walls they are made out of locally available materials. The living area is usually constructed in a rectangular ground plan. The walls are made of tree branches or bamboo poles placed vertically and plastered with a mixture of mud and cow dung. They use Sal poles as pillars and frame works of the house roof is made by wooden poles and bamboo splits. Houses were usually thatched with straw but the earlier thatched roof has been replaced by *khapper*, a type of locally made burnt clay tile. The Lodhas of Dhabani, Nekdagunja, Patharnesa, Chikitamatia, Handibhanga, Godigaon, Sansasole, etc. opine that the Lodha Development Agency on behalf of the Government of India and Odisha had provided financial aid for the replacing of the earlier thatched huts, for which most of the old dilapidated thatched huts have been replaced by the burnt clay tile roof, which is locally called as *khapper*.

Traditionally, Lodha homes have no windows. Door openings are narrow, although, they have bamboo shutters that can be closed. Each house has just a single room that is used for all purposes. In other words for domestic purposes from birth of a child, propitiation of the ancestral spirits, cooking or sleeping to storing household materials, etc.³⁶ Lately trends have changed so houses have more than two rooms are sufficiently wide having windows, doors and shutters. The families have an attached kitchen garden including a small courtyard, fenced with bamboo poles.

As for livestock, previously there were no sheds for cattle and goats rather they were kept in one side verandah. Now, there is a cattle shed very close to the courtyard. Mostly, costly items are kept inside the house and the agricultural implements are kept in front of verandah. The verandah is spacious at times where different activities of the family are carried on. The women remain busy in the courtyard by preparing leaf cups and leaf plates and ropes out of *sabai* grass.³⁷ The old houses of the Lodhas require periodical maintenance. They change or repair thatched roof each year. Sometimes, it may be done in the following year unfailingly. They also replace bamboo and wooden

beams and poles according to necessity. Similarly, the mud walls are patched and plastered with cow dung and earth to keep it strong and durable.

The Lodhas of Chikitmatia, Tiansi, Godigaon, Purnachandrapur, Samaidihi, Patharnesa, Dhobani, Nekdagunja and Sansasole opine that the old single roomed thatched huts of poor Lodha people are replaced by the present tile roof houses.³⁸ The Government of India has also been providing houses to the Lodha that are fire proof and having facility of windows for ventilation. These are *khapper* thatched houses. The upper storeyed houses are provided with open windows, doors and *barandah*. Gaya Mallick of Dhobani village says that the upper storey of the *khapper* thatched house is built for the purpose of storage of food grains and preservation of other objects.³⁹ Some of the Lodhas are skilled in carpentry. They make beautiful carved shutters which attract attention of outsiders. A few of Lodhas have constructed buildings made of stone and burnt bricks. Most probably, they are the rich Lodhas of that locality. One man named Purna Chandra Katual of Handibhanga is one of the rich men among the poorest Lodhas of that village.

It is certain that most of the Lodha villages are situated far away from the human reach inside the dense forest separately. However, some of them are found to be resided within multi caste villages. In such cases even they have their houses far away from the village dominated by other castes. Really, most of the Lodhas settle in village separately and some with other communities. The Lodhas build their houses here and there in scattered manner. The houses built by the Lodhas appear as a shapeless cluster. In the past the Lodhas built single roomed houses made of mud and straw thatched roof. At present by the help of Lodha Development Agency; Morada, the Lodhas are building multi roomed as well as double storeyed *khapper* thatched houses with mud walls. The Lodha families in the past did not know the use of modern utensils. Really, they were using mud pots, leaf plates and cups as their utensils. Now a days, they are using plastic bags, still dish, brazen dish and aluminium objects.

3.7. Integrated Housing Scheme (IHS)

In 1975, a severe conflict started between the Lodhas and Police men at Patharnesa village of Suliapada Block of Mayurbhanj. In this situation the district administration understood the socio-economic problems of the Lodhas of Patharnesa. The Lodhas of Patharnesa claimed that we were not criminals. Owing to poorness, they demanded for the first time financial help from the Government to make house for their permanent settlement. By realizing the financial condition of Lodhas, the Police Inspector General had inaugurated rehabilitation plan at Patharnesa village on 8.04.1976.⁴⁰ Thereafter, Lodha colonies were established in the Lodha villages of Suliapada Block. Each family of Lodha colony had got free house, for which the present mud built *khapper* thatched houses are built by the financial help of Government of India as well as Odisha. Similarly, Chikitmatia, Tiansi, Handibhanga and Bhadrasaole villages of the Morada Block of Mayurbhanj District are also attached with the Integrated Housing Scheme for the Lodha community people. In this scheme 100 Lodha families were provided with house, ox, agricultural equipment's by the Government.⁴¹ The District Administration of Mayurbhanj undertook this housing scheme through the Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA), Baripada for which 30 families of Dhobani village were provided with free houses. The earlier mud built broken thatched houses have been replaced by the present *khapper* tile roofed houses. Besides, cultivated land, ox, agricultural equipments are also provided to the

Lodha families of Dhobani. Such type of scheme of district encouraged Lodha community for their good settlement. Thereafter, large settlement of Patahrnesa village of Suliapada Block was also included with this scheme through the Integrated Tribal Development Agency, Baripada. Then Sansasole, and Nekdagunja Lodha colonies were also included in the Integrated Housing Scheme.⁴² Before the introduction of this scheme, most of the Lodhas of Morada and Suliapada Blocks were involved in the criminal activities like theft, robbery for their livelihood. After the introduction of the above scheme, the criminal activities of Lodhas are disappeared for good. Now, they are entering into the main stream of society, because free house, land, goat, hen, etc. provided by the Government of India as well as Odisha. In my observation I came to know that all the present *khapper* houses of Lodhas are provided by the Government. Due to road facility, supply of water and electricity provided to the people of Lodha community, for which they are now peacefully settling like other communities of that areas. At present, the Lodha Development Agency of Morada are trying to provide all types of aid /help, which is being sanctioned by the Ministry of the Tribal affairs of India for the better settlement of Lodhas.

3.8. Food Habits and Drinks

Rice is the staple food of the Lodhas and is supplemented by pulses, seasonal fruits, roots, and tubers and non-vegetarian items like meat, chicken, eggs, fish, etc. depending upon the family budget and their availability.⁴³ They regularly eat boiled rice soaked with water and its gruel. The vegetable items are either boiled or roasted. They normally eat food twice daily i. e. in the morning and evening. If food is available they go for a third meal at noon or in the afternoon.⁴⁴ In times of scarcity of food, they manage with one meal or starve for days together. The Lodhas are addicted to narcotics like country liquor and tobacco. They are particularly fond of *handia* (rice beer), *bidi* (local cigarettes) and *gudakhu* (tobacco paste), which they take regularly in the morning, they eat soaked water rice of the previous night. They take it with burnt potatoes and tomato with mustard oil, roasted drum stick leaf. During lunch they take boiled rice with different vegetable items sometimes, they take roasted fish with mustard oil. In the night they eat the same food prepared for the lunch. They prefer to eat vegetables, they grow from their land like potato, tomato, drum stick leaf, chilly, cauliflower, cabbage, bitter guard, ladies finger, radish, brinjal, etc. Besides, the above vegetable foods, they also eat non vegetable food like chicken, mutton, fish and dried fish. The food habits of the child and the old in Lodha society is very interesting to discuss. The old people usually avoid taking fried or spicy curry as these are not digestive. Children are given soft food like boiled rice, boiled vegetables such as potato, tomato and brinjal. The Lodhas fry drum stick leaf (*saga*) with mustard oil to feed the children and sometimes they give boiled eggs to their children. Consumption of liquor is more or less a part of their food habits. Both male and female members drink *handia* (country liquor) when they feel tired and they are habiting chewing the betel leaves along with tobacco.

3.9. Dances and Songs

Like other tribal people of Oisha, specific type of dances have been traditionally performing by Lodhas. They are *Changu*, *Tusu*, *Kathi*, *Karama*, *Chhau* and *Madala* dances. Out of these, *Changu* and *Madala* dances are found to be very important in Lodha community. The *Changu* dance is performed at the time of *Makara sankranti* and *Madala* dance is found to be performed at the time of *Karama puja*. In these two dances, some of the traditional musical

instruments are used by the Lodhas. They are *madala*, *baikundala*, *changu*, tin, *ghantas*, *chadachadi*, *mahuari*, *mridanga*, *nagara*, *jhumka*, flute, *jhanja*, etc. At the time of dance, the Lodha men wear *dhoti*, *lungi*, shirt, *ganji*, *pagadi*, flower, branches of tree, etc. The *changu* and *madala* dances are performed with some folk songs, which are *Sita chori*, *Jala keli*, *Note chori*, etc. These songs are not in the written form but they are in oral form. The *changu* dance and *madala* dance are transmitted from their ancestor through tradition.⁴⁵ Both the *changu* and *madala* dances are very popular in the Lodha society as per the opinion of the villagers of Chikitamatia. In a few places, *Sakhi* dance is also prevalent among the Lodha community.

3.10. Dress and Ornaments

There is no advance in the dress style of the Lodhas of Mayurbhanj as well as Odisha. Really, the Lodha people are financially very poor, for which they are wearing cheap and coarse type of clothes. Men use *dhotis*, *chadars*, napkins, banyans and shirts.⁵³ Women wear saris and blouses. Small children up to five years of age usually go naked. A few children of age up to 6 years wear only pant. Grown of boys and wear a thin piece of lion cloth fastened to string around the waist.⁵⁴ Girls are generally wearing frocks and skirts. Due to their poverty, they manage with just a few items of clothing and cannot afford to keep it clean. Most of the Lodhas are using *lungi* and *gamuchha*, like other tribal people of Odisha. Women adorn themselves with necklaces and bangles made of aluminium, silver, brass and glass. They also tattoo their upper arms and chest with floral designs. On the whole, Lodha women are maintaining a simple life with minimum ornaments unlike the tribal women of the undivided Koraput District. Thus, the dress style and ornaments used by the Lodhas are simple and less expensive.

3.11. Status of Woman

So far as the status of Lodha women is concerned, most of the Lodha women are respected in the Lodha community. Women are labourious and they are living equal status with the male members of that society. Although, the Lodha families are patrilineal still the status of women is slowly developed. Women of each house is always busy in household works. Most of the Lodha women go to the forest for the collection of wood, *Charukoli*, *Kuduchi*, fruits, Kendu leaves, *Sal* leaves, lacs, resin, etc. After the collection of forest products, they sell these in the local markets for their livelihood. All the Lodha women are clever, courageous, simple and innocent. Some of the Lodha women learn *mantras*, *tantras* from their *gunis* / *gurus*. Most of the Lodha women know traditional dancing with male members. The Lodha women mostly marry with their own caste, but a few women marry with other castes. The Lodha women are mostly respected by the male person, but a few are criticized in society for their belief in witchcraft. Levirate, sororate and widow remarriages are called *sangha*, which are finalised after payment of a royalty in cash called *grama manya* to the groom's village Panchayat. The bride in a *sangha* marriage is called *sangali bou* and her social status is inferior to that of a bride in a regular arranged marriage. In comparison to earlier status, the present status of Lodha women is in developed condition with political consciousness. Now, they are getting freedom and working as the Ward Member, Anganwari worker, peon, etc. in their locality.

3.12. Education

In the past, the Lodha children did not like to go to the schools, which are located in far distance areas for receiving education. In such situation, the poor Lodha children learnt some traditional learning from their own

community like, collection of dry wood, fruits, honey, tusser moth's cocoons from forests. Other tricks viz climbing, wrestling, catching fishes and tortoises, drinking *handia*, sowing paddy, cultivation of tusser, making rope, folk song and dance are received by the Lodha children from their elders /ancestors accordingly tradition. In the past, the Lodha girls also do house hold works like their mothers and grandmothers. They used to learn traditional learning from their seniors / elders, but they were not going to school like boy children of Lodha community. Now, both boys and girls children are interested to lean the modern education. In fact, the social life of the Lodhas is clearly reflected through their discouraging literacy position. The number of Graduates and Diploma holders are negligible among the Lodhas till today.⁴⁶

Education is the key to development. Unfortunately, the education scenario among the Lodhas gives a gloomy pictures. Empirical studies conducted by earlier scholars as well as by the present authors have identified a numbers factors responsible for poor educational status among the Lodhas of Odisha. Similarly, various factors have been found to be responsible for low rate of enrolment and high rate of dropouts. In the field study, the present authors have noticed that each Lodha village of Mayurbhanj has Anganwari School/Centre, and one educational complex has been established at Chikitamatia of Morada Block during the year 2008-2009 where 370 Lodha girls are reading now.⁴⁸ Recently, the Lodha families are interested to educate their children through Angan Wari, free residential school like Chikitamatia Educational Complex established by the Central Government Schemes through the Lodha Development Agency, Morada and Tribal Development Agencies of other places of Odisha. At present, Central Government of India, Sate Government of Odisha, Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS) and other Non-Governmental Organizations are trying at best for the spread of education among the Lodha children as well as children of other tribes of Odisha.

The Lodha children are basically reluctant to attend the schools. This is due to less encouragement being given to them by their parents.⁵⁰ The Lodha children roam in the jungles in search of wild fruits, small games, fishes and mollusca which they consume.⁵¹ Sometime, a grown up boy is employed as cowherd boy by a caste people to look after their cattle at a nominal wage. Really, the Lodha children are not interested in school education without any encouragement from outside. The tribal welfare Department provided some *Ashrama*/school hostels, but there is no provision for purchase of papers, books and other things meant for the student reading in these schools. Under the modified scheme, its coverage in the country includes as many as 54 identified districts where the ST population is 25% or more and ST female literacy rate is below 35% as per 2001 census.⁵² In Odisha state, the operation of the Educational Complex Scheme for tribal girls extends to the districts such as Gajapati, Kandhamala Nuapada Kalahandi, Koraput, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Balangir as well as the areas of 13 PTGs in '17' Micro projects.⁵² On the basis of Educational Complex Scheme for the tribal girls, an Educational Complex for the tribal girls is found to be established at Chikitamatia village of the Morada Block of the Mayurbhanj District. This Educational Complex is established under the supervision of Lodha Development Agency, Morada. In which the tribal Lodha girls are being taught by the Government with free of cost. This Educational Complex of Chikitamatia is providing hostel facilities to the tribal girls particularly for Lodha families/community. This scheme will promote 100% enrolment of scheduled tribe girls of primitive tribal groups of Odisha.

IV. CONCLUSION

Lodhas maintain a simple social life, which is separate as well as distinct from all other tribal groups of Odisha. As the literacy rate is concerned, the children of Lodha families are very poor due to unawareness of their parents. The Lodhas have its own system of the economy, especially trade, which helps their relationship with one another and work together. Lodha tribe have learnt to live and work together interacting in the pursuits of common goals. Lodha tribe express their cultural identity and distinctiveness in their social organization, language, rituals, dress, ornaments, art and craft. The Lodha social system is characterized by unique clan organization. They have nine clan groups, which are locally said as *gotras*. The names of nine clans of Lodha tribe are such as Bhukta, Mallik, Kotal, Nayak, Digor, Parmanik, Dandapat or Bag. Each clan has its totemic animal objects, which are associated with the clan or *gotra* considered to be sacred. All the nine clans of Lodha community are exogamous and patrilineal in nature. Each individual by his or her birth belongs to a particular clan. The totemic objects are respected and never consumed by the clan members in Lodha society. The Lodhas live in small and large villages belonging exclusively to them and sometimes together with other communities, which are heterogeneous in caste composition. The settlement pattern of Lodhas is irregular, with house here and there. The Lodhas had small straw thatched huts with an irregular ground plan and mud walls. Majority of huts have all purposes single rooms with a raised platform near the hearth called *isan* or the seat of ancestral spirits. This is a trait borrowed from the caste Hindus. Goats and cattle are kept on the side *barandah*. Well to do cultivators have larger multi-roomed houses with specious courtyards and kitchen gardens fenced with vertical bamboo poles and twigs. The houses in a typical Lodha settlement are clustered in two rows in an irregular fashion. Most of the Lodha women are respected in the community. Women are labour and they are living equal status with the male members of that society. Hence, the life style of Lodhas is an interesting aspect to know the primitive tribal society of Odisha in Eastern India.

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- [38] Sanjay Mallick, Sashi Mallick, Mangala Mallick of Nekdagunja, Gaya Mallick of Dhobani, Mahendra Mallick of Patharanesa, Raghunatha Bhakta, Jalua Bhakta, Lochana Bhakta, Rajendra Naik of Chikitamatia, Chhatish Kumar Mallick of Chandrapur and Purnachandra Katual of Handibhanga of Mayurbhanja district remarks that the Lodha Development Agency has provided 'Indira Awas' to each poor Lodha family. So their old thatched huts have been replaced by the present tile roof houses.
- [39] Gaya Mallick of Dhobani village is of the view that the double stored *khapper* thatched houses are built for the purpose of storage. The family members are not sleeping in the upper storey at the time of night.
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