

# A Study On Socio-Cultural Change Of Dudh Khadia Community In Contemporary Society

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**Abstract:** *The Khadia tribe is an indigenous ethnic group of the tribal society. There are some authors who have described the khadia tribes into many sections, but general classification of khadia tribes is three types such as Dudh, Delki and Hill khadia. The Hill khadia is recognized as Pahari kharia or Sobor khadia. Somehow the Dudh khadia are more advanced than other two types of khadia Populations. They have their own cultural identity, which is depleting from the society. They are unique in their identity, language, dresses, profession/occupations and cultural practices. In the belief system they have changed their thought and religion, which has brought great impact in their life style system. The role and impact of globalization, industrialization and westernization on khadia tribes cannot be ignored. Both internal and external factors are often responsible for the changing of khadia culture and identity. The customary law of Dudh khadia has occupied it's an important place to maintain and preservation of language, culture, tradition and their rights.*

**Keywords:** *The following key words has been taken place in the title of A study on Socio- Cultural Change of Dudh khadia community in Contemporary Society (With special reference to Dudh khadia community of Sundargarh, Sambalpur and Deogarh Districts in Odisha), they are Origin of Totem, Bhuinhar places or Muhda, khadia marriage, economy and food pattern, religion, belief and festivals, education and advancement, khadia customary Law, khadia culture and tradition, cultural change and Dudh khadia and its Association etc.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The literature on khadia (kharia) tribe is not a new description and unknown concept. The long years back since 1880 to 1903 many foreign authors such as Daltron, Hunter, Baal, Rishlay, Hisalan, Grieson started writing on khadia (kharia) language, followed by them Indian authors in the year 1937 Sarad Chandra Ray and Ramesh Chandra Ray published a book "The Khaira". In 1980, L.P Bidyarthi and B.S Upadhya wrote about Kharias' and also about kharia (khadia) grammar. But in between several other khadia writers such as Herman J. Kiro wrote kharia Baru Kayom, Fr. Anthony Dung dung S.J published "The Kharias of Chhotanagpur (1981), Fr. Mathias Dung dung S.J Presented comparative study of Hindi and Kharia (1986), Fr. Poulus Kullu S.J presented kharia grammar and short vocabulary and kharia religion and History etc, but the life style, culture and religious practice, economic position, dress and costumes, dance etc have been radically changing from its originality due to different internal and external factors.

## II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study has been conducted to fulfill the following objectives through discussion with the central committee members of Dudh khadia, households' visit and reference of literatures etc. The objectives of study are as such:

- ✓ To know the historical analysis of Dudh khadia community in Indian context.
- ✓ To understand the socio-economy status of Dudh khadia community.
- ✓ To know the practice of existing culture and tradition of the Dudh khadia community in contemporary society.
- ✓ To understand the factors responsible for changing of socio-cultural practices in Dudh khadia community of Sundargarh, Sambalpur and Deogarh districts.

### III. KHADIA CONCEPT

In the human society the khadia (kharia) are indigenous ethnic group. The term khadia is used from the word of khadi it means Doli (hindi version), which was used to carry the king by the khadia people. They were known as khad khadia. The khadia population lives in different states in the Indian nation. The majorities of khadia tribes inhabit in the states of Bihar, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Odisha and in Jharkhand. The khadia form an important position of tribal group in the society. The khadia tribes are known as caste Hindu in some states. Originally they belong to neither Hindu nor Christian from their progenitor. The khadia population speaks their own dialect which is known as Austro-Asiatic and Indo Aryan language in general context. The khadia community comprises into three categories, Dudh, Delki and Hill/ Pahari khadia. The Dudh and Delki speak Austro-Asiatic language, which is assimilated or a branch of Munda language and otherwise it is a Khemer language.

### IV. KHADIA INHABITATION

In India the khadia communities are found in the states of Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, West Bengal (Midnapur, Bankura and Purulia districts), Maharashtra, Tripura, Assam and Andaman islands. Among the khadia communities Hill/Pahari khadias' are most backward than the other two khadia groups (Dudh and Delki). They are backward and live in inaccessible forest areas. The Hill khadia are the most ancient community. The primary sources of livelihood are hunting and collection of forest products. As per the national view the Dudh khadia inhabits more numbers in the states of Jharkhand, Bihar and Odisha. In Jharkhand the Dudh khadia populations are concentrated in Gumla, Singhbhum, Ranchi and Simdega districts. Similarly in Odisha the Khadia are concentrated in Sundargarh, Sambalpur and in some parts of the Deogarh districts. The Sundargarh, Sambalpur and Deogarh districts are concentrated more by Dudh Khadia communities. The Delki khadias' inhabits in Badgaon, Kutra, Hemgir and Lephripada blocks of Sundargarh district. In Odisha the Hill khadias' inhabits in Jasipur and Karanjia Blocks of Mayurbhanj district.

### V. ARRIVAL OF KHADIA POPULATION

The history of arrival of khadia to Indian nation is mentioned differently by different authors Fr. Poulus Kullu in his book khadia religion and history described that, they came from middle of Asia continent to India through China, Tibet, Himalaya, Kullu Ghat, Turiagarh, Delhi, Ayodhya, Mohenjodaro, by crossing of Ganga river, Ruidas Patna, Chhotanagpur, Gumla, Sisai, Nao Ratangarh and finally to Odisha.

### VI. ORIGIN OF TOTEM (CLAN/GOTRA)

Long years back, there was a heavy rain which resulted a flood and took away of many lives of peoples and animals. To

save life an old man took shelter on a cave with his nine (9) sons in a mountain. After few days the flood became normal and dried and nine brothers went out in search of hunting so as to get some food. In the first day they did not find any things but in the second day fortunately they hunted a deer and shared meat equally among nine brothers. They were very thirsty and they started to find out water source. One of the brother found water source and informed to all of his brothers. All of them went to the water spot one after another and saw different things nearby the water spot. One of the brother went and saw a bird (name kerketta) flying nearby the water spot, second brother saw a long fish (name Dung dung), third person saw tortoise (kullu) etc. similarly all of them saw different things such as a bird (toppo), a tiger (kiro), paddy (baa), again another kind of bird Tetetohinz (Tete), salt (bilung) and the last person saw only stone (soreng). After drinking water all of them returned to their place of residence (cave) and opened their individual baggage in front of an old father. Surprisingly they found that their baggage was with the meat of different birds and animals what they saw nearby the water spot. An old father and all brothers surprised to see their opened baggage and named them according to their findings. They are still named as kerketta, Dung dung, kullu, toppo, baa, tete, kiro, bilung and soreng. Therefore, all Dudh khadias' give respect and protect their totemic things till today.

### VII. BHUINHAR (FIRST SETTLEMENT VILLAGE) PLACES /MUHDA OF DUDH KHADIA

The Dudh khadia is classified into nine clans namely Soreng, Kerketta, Dung dung, Kullu, Bilung, Tete, Baa, Kiro and Toppo. The division of nine clans has its own historical analysis. Initially all nine (9) brothers were living in one place in Doensa Paragana. The Bhuinhar places or first settlement villages of all clans are located in different places after escaping their life from Rani Chintamani devi who wanted to offer sacrifice by the khadia blood during worship. The nine (9) brothers scattered from Doensa Paragana and settled down in different villages in different locations. As their numbers increased again they started to migrate towards different areas to search their livelihood and gradually spread in Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and in Odisha. The table given below shows the Bhuinhar/first settlement villages of Dudh khadias after coming from Doensa Paragana. The all Bhuinhar places are located in the Gumla District of Jharkhand. The Dudh khadia has been rightly identified by their kinship to a common object known as totem. (Table:1)

| Sl. No | Clan      | Bhuinhar/first settled village | Totem            |
|--------|-----------|--------------------------------|------------------|
| 1.     | Soreng    | Semberwad                      | Stone            |
| 2.     | Kerketta  | Podha                          | One kind of bird |
| 3.     | Dung dung | Bongloya                       | Fish             |
| 4.     | Kullu     | Paderia                        | Tortoise         |
| 5.     | Bilung    | Murgu                          | Salt             |
| 6.     | Tete      | Amkuli                         | One kind of bird |
| 7.     | Kiro      | Baigma                         | Tiger            |
| 8.     | Baa       | Redwa                          | Paddy            |
| 9.     | Toppo     | Dairgaon                       | One kind of bird |

Table 1

There is a historical analysis of Dudh khadia in finding of totem among nine brothers which is mentioned above in this small piece of paper. The bhuinhar (first settlement) places of Dudh khadia are all concentrated in the Gumla district; those are within the distance of 10 to 15 kms. The Bhuinhar place (pohda) of Toppo Dairgaon is about 80 kms distance from the Gumla district head quarter. Dudh khadia protects and respects their totemic objects. The marriage is an important institute in Khadia community. Dudh Khadia tries to understand the Bhuinhar, clan and totem before they arrange marriage ceremony. Because, they get marry within nine clans, but not into the same clan. Dudh khadia prevail monogamous marriage within their nine clans.

#### VIII. KHADIA MARRIAGE

Marriage is the institution which admits men and women to family life. It is a stable relationship in which men and women are socially permitted to have children implying the right to sexual relation. Edward Westermarck defined "marriage as the more or less durable connection between male and female, lasting beyond the mere act of propagation till after the birth of offspring." The khadia populations have the culture of monogamy which means to marry one man to one wife. Under this monogamy a khadia boy can marry to one girl at a time. This is the leading form of marriage wherein children are well looked after and love and affection is given equally by the parents. The culture of marriage in khadia community goes through different basic steps. The steps are as such; finding of suitable match/partner (by relatives or mediator) and dekha darshan (the boy and girl give their consent before parents and villagers). Ghar dekhi (girl's family members with neighbors [senior citizens] will visit to boy's family), engagement at girl's house (in khadia dialect it is called Lam Lam), Barka Gotia (Second visit to boy house which is known as Danda Oeng or returning of bamboo stick or big feast), marriage at church and Barat at girl's house, and finally reception at boy's house. The culture of marriage will over after nine days of marriage that is called Bahurat with the distribution of suit rice bread. In Dudh khadia community the inter-tribes arrange marriage (among Oraon, Munda and Kisan) is not socially permitted because, each tribe has its own cultural ethics and it has to be maintained by all tribes.

#### IX. FAMILY SIZE

The family is an elementary unit of the tribal society, consisting of parent and children. Family is a group of persons whose relations to one another are based upon consanguinity (relationship from same ancestor) and who are therefore kin to one another. Dudh khadia family is based on patriarchal in nature or male dominated family. They adopt nuclear family wherein parents and children are living together. The father or husband is the central figure in the family and authority is vested in him and lineage or descendants are traced through him. The property goes to son and so on. In some family grandparent and uncle, nephew, cousins etc live together. The

housing pattern is made up by mud and tile roof. Normally two to three rooms available in their house.

#### X. KHADIA ECONOMY AND FOOD PATTERN

The primary economic activities of Dudh khadia is agriculture and collection of forest products such as kendu, char, mahua flower, siali leaves, honey and hunting etc. are secondary source of supplementing family economy. The collection of forest produces and hunting is still continued in Hill khadia community of Mayurbhanj district of Odisha. Doing job in government and private sectors companies is another subsidiary occupation of Dudh khadia populations. In case of agriculture the khadia populations cultivate varieties of crops they are paddy, arahar, kurthi (red gram), Biri (Black gram) maize, til, tisi etc. vegetable cultivation is not done by majorities of khadia populations. With regards to food eating, they eat rice with single curry, rice; dal and guna (leave powder) are the common dices of khadia population. They like to eat pork (pig meat) and use in all social ceremonies. Therefore, almost majority of khadia families keep pigsty which help them for supplementing family income and for social ceremonies. It is a good source income that doesn't require much care.

#### XI. RELIGION, BELIEF AND FESTIVALS

According to W. Green religion as "a system of beliefs and symbolic practices and objects governed by faith rather than by knowledge, which relates man to unseen supernatural realm beyond the known and beyond the controllable." Some regards religion as belief in the immortality of soul. The same belief was there in khadia community. The ancestors of khadia were animism. The animism is a belief in the spirits of the dead. Animism offers for consideration (propounds) the existence of some supra-physical being within the body of every living being. This supra-physical being is believed to survive the death of the physical body in which it is contained. Since the beginning they believed in ghost and witches, belief in good soul and also faith in dream. The spirit of accidental death is not given place at khadia families, only the spirit of normal death is given place at their home. The arrival of Britishers' and Christian missionaries to India has changed the ideology and belief system of tribal including khadia community. The Dudh khadia of Odisha, Jharkhand, and Madhya Pradesh states have somewhat professing Christian religion. Due to the Christianity the practice of ancestors' religion has been given up. The ancestors worshiped gaon debta, dharti mai, sarna puja (plant worship) and many more deities. In the present context the Dudh khadia of Sundargarh, Sambalpur and Deogarh districts are all professing Christian religion and observing two main festivals that are Nua khai (Yonz dem) and Sahroi (Bandoi) or cattle festivals in full moon day of Kartik or November month.

## XII. EDUCATION AND ADVANCEMENT

It is well known that the khadia tribes comprises in three different categories they are Dudh khadia, Delki and Hill or Pahari khadia. The Dudh khadia is advanced in social, education, economic, political and other sectors. The reason behind the advancement is the impact of Christian religion and education in the tribal dominated pockets. The life style is completely different from Delki and Hill khadia not only in Odisha state but also in the states of Jharkhand, and Madhya Pradesh. The Dudh khadia belongs to Sambalpur and Deogarh district are still backward in education and economic sectors, still they depend on the natural environment. Many khadia populations along with other tribes have not yet provided their of land records till today. The nature of Dudh khadia is simplicity and addicted in religious practice. Irrespective of types of communities; the Dudh khadia are high qualified and occupied good position in different government and Private sectors jobs. Few Dudh khadia became priest and Nuns. There is no gender discrimination in educating their children both male and female are given equal importance.

## XIII. KHADIA CUSTOMARY LAW

The tribal are indigenous ethnic group and unique in its cultural identity. All tribes have its own customary law to manage the society. The customary law is an instrument of social control in khadia community. This is supposed to be obliged and respected by the people and other communities too. The khadia customary law is pursuing from ancestors to till date based on their belief system. In the past there might be some fact, henceforth the same belief is still continued in the community. The khadia customary law covers to the following fields of culture and traditions. Those fields are birth and death rituals, arranged marriage, imposition of fine in love marriage done without prior consent from parents and society, social taboos (in marriage, and dispute), some social do and don't and its punishment, properties distribution (land, household or finance) and festivals observation (nuakhai and cattle festival/sahori) etc. in case of properties distribution the girl child/daughter has also equal rights, decided by the village community. In Dudh khadia community keeping of second wife is strictly prohibited if the first wife is alive.

## XIV. CULTURE AND TRADITION

The tribes' population is unique in their culture, tradition and dialect. They are recognized worldly due to their uniqueness in dialect, culture and tradition. Language and cultural practice are the identity of tribal. The khadia dance and songs are based on historical life of ancestors and day to day life. During the festivals and marriage they used to dance. The songs are in their own dialect and easy to understand. The girls wear adivasi costumes and dance in round circle. The boys are also allowed to dance with the girls. In seasonal dance the girls and boys form two groups and singing song in a question answer basis. This is like a two way process of communication. During socio-cultural practices the khadia

women and men sitting into two groups and enjoying by singing song (called Durang). All seasonal and cultural songs are meaningful which relates their ancestors' and day to day life. While dancing they put their footsteps as per the song and musical rhythm. In present day some of the dance steps are artificial according to the season. The traditional dress of khadia people is dhoti for men and saree for women. The influence of modernization has brought about change in the traditional dress pattern too. Mandal, drum, kartal etc are chief musical instrument of khadia populations.

## XV. SOCIO-CULTURAL CHANGE

The advent of Christian missionaries and Britishers' the social, economic and political life of khadia population underwent progressive transformed. It is also identified the differences in culture and religious practices and the dialect spoken among Delki and Dudh khadia in present context. The culture of Delki khadia is amalgamated with the caste Hindu religion, whereas the majorities Dudh khadia have adopted Christian religion, consequences of which some of the cultures of Dudh khadia has been Christianized. Delki are still living below poverty line depending on daily labour. Few Delki khadia have considered land cultivation is the primary occupation. With regards to the marriage, the Dudh khadia have the culture of giving bride price which is known as "Sukmund". The bride price is one cow and a bullock. It has been traditionally prevailing in the Dudh khadia community. Giving cash in substitute of cow/bullock is not a culture, but at present it is prevailing in some of the areas. In the mean time some of the marriage related culture has also been changed from the khadia community such as going to Barat and making day programme. The engagement program has its unique meaning to which unmarried girls are denied to go for any one's engagement programme. For the engagement of any boy's there is a tradition of going ten to fifteen persons to girl's house, because engagement is considered as hunting (in khadia version Lam Lam). The hunting is the job of male person and the girls do not go for hunting, henceforth the unmarried girls are denied to go for engagement programme. Besides some other cultural practices such as birth ritual, purification, creating tattoo in girls' forehead etc are also changed and modified as per the influence of Christian religion, advancement of modern education and changing contemporary world. The factor responsible for cultural change is high education and doing respectable jobs in government or semi-government and private sectors. It is observed that, the marriage related cultural change is seen among khadia population from such categories. As they become educated they give less importance of their culture and dialect due to the advancement of society and culture, even they keep away themselves from their dialect and cultural practices.

## XVI. DUDH KHADIA AND ITS ASSOCIATION

There has been great change taking places in the culture and social position of tribal and it influences to all society.

The tribal are no more in the position to maintain their traditional life. They are coping with the changing contemporary society. The impact of globalization has significant contribution towards the changing of world community's social, culture and economic life. The tribal are one of the victims of globalization. The influences of globalization gradually take away the tribal identity in the form of alienation. The urbanization, industrialization and westernization are the outcome of globalization by which tribal are losing its identity. To preserve the khadia language, culture and tradition, the Dudh khadia of Sundargarh and Sambalpur have formed their associations or Sabha which perform its functions as per the customary law of khadia community. The chief function of the association is review practices, protect and preserve customary law for future generation. The name of khadia sabha in Sundargarh district is Nikhil Odisha Khadia Sabha (NOKS) and the Bamra Kinir Pahto Khadia Sabha (BKPKS) in Sambalpur district. In the parish level the Dudh khadia has its sub-committees who look after the customary law and cultural practices of khadia population. The parish level sub-committee has its own executive members who play major role in grassroots level decision making. The sub-committee is known as Khunt committee. It could be worthwhile to say Jati Sabha. This is an important media by which the Dudh khadia disseminates different informations to their tribes through conducting seminars in annual assembly. The role of khadia youth is not lagging behind in assisting the central khadia committee. The seminar covers different issues for its discussion and solution. The youths are encouraged to come forward for unity of work together for society. This platform is providing significant contribution in preserving, protecting of the khadia language, culture and tradition by proper utilization of khadia customary law.

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