

AMONG THE GONDS OF ADILABAD

SETUMADHAVA RAO PAGDI, M. A., I. A. S.



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AMONG THE GONDS OF ADILABAD

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(Second Edition)

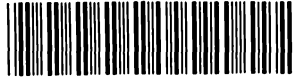


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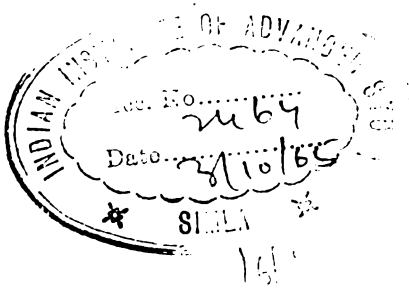


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Few subjects could be more fascinating than a study of the aboriginals of India. The Gonds being nearly three millions as they do and spread over the Central Provinces, Hyderabad and the northern parts of Madras are the most numerous of all the aboriginal tribes dwelling in India. Their social organisation, customs, traditions and history have attracted the attention of a large number of Anthropologists and administrators. Among these the names of Verrier Elwin, Grigson and Baron Haimendorf stand out prominently. So far as the Gonds of Hyderabad are concerned, Baron Haimendorf's volumes on the "Raj Gonds of Adilabad" reveal a thorough and painstaking study of Gond life and customs. His efforts in the cause of the aboriginals of Hyderabad, through the creation of the Social Service Department and initiation of anthropological studies in the local University have been appreciated throughout the country. To him must be attributed the development of a new school of Indian anthropology during recent years.

While working under his guidance as Special Officer for Tribes in the District of Adilabad, I came into contact with the Gonds, Kollams, Pradhans, Thottis and Naik-pods residing in that District. The following pages are the result of observation of tribal life from the period 1945 to 1948.

It is hoped that they will result in the stimulation of anthropological studies in Hyderabad.

SETU MADHAVA RAO

Hyderabad-Dn.
30th July, 1949.

Within the last three years since July 1949, the work of Aboriginal Uplift has made considerable progress in Hyderabad. In October, 1949, the Regulation known as Tribal Areas Regulation was promulgated. This Regulation has provided for the determination of Tribes, Notification of Tribal Areas, Appointments of Agents and Assistant Agents for the administration of these areas and the Constitution and Development of Panchayats in the Tribal Areas. The Panchayats have been authorised to deal with petty cases both in Civil and Revenue matters. The Agents for the Tribal Areas and the Assistant Agents have been vested with considerable powers of Civil and Criminal nature. Under this Regulation Criminal Jurisdiction in Tribal area in respect of certain offences in which a Tribal is involved as a party is administered by the Agent and the Assistant Agent. The Agent is authorised to delegate a Panchayat to try certain specific offences in which a Tribal is involved as party. Appeal lies against the decision of the Panchayat to the Assistant Agent from an original decision of an Assistant Agent to the Agent and to the Minister in charge of Social Service Department against sentences of three years, imprisonment and more. In other cases there is no right to appeal. The decision of the Minister is final and no appeal or revision lies against it.

Civil Jurisdiction involving the right of any Tribal in the Tribal Area is administered by the Agent, the Assistant Agent and the Panchayat subject to the condition that the Agent shall be competent to exercise the powers of any Court subordinate to the High Court. An appeal lies to the Minister in charge of the Social Service Department from an original decision of the Agent if the value of the suit exceeds Rs. 1000/- or for which suit involves the question of Tribal rights or customs or of the right to or possession of immoveable property. The decision of the Minister is final and no appeal or revision lies against it.

In Revenue Jurisdiction in cases involving the rights of any Tribal, powers vest in the Agent, Assistant Agent and the

Panchayat. The Agent shall be competent to exercise powers not higher than the Board of Revenue.

The Constitution of India provides for special attention being paid to the welfare of the Aborigines. The Scheduled Areas Part B States Order 1950, published through Notification of the Ministry of Law, Government of India dated 7th December, 1950 has declared the Aboriginal Areas as 'Scheduled Areas' and specified these areas.

The Constitution has further, through the Scheduled Tribes Order 1950, notified certain Tribes as Tribals throughout the Hyderabad State. The administration of these Scheduled Areas and the welfare of the Tribals has now become the special responsibility of the Government. Articles 46, 275(1), 330 & 332, 335, 338 and 340 provide for the safeguard, interest, reservation of the seats in the Scheduled Tribes and specific directives for their amelioration, in the Constitution of India. Tribes Advisory Councils are also to be provided in States as laid down in the 5th Schedule of the Constitution. The Members of the Scheduled Tribes have now their elected representative in the State Legislative Assembly.

In view of all these ameliorative measures, the work of Aboriginal Uplift among the Gonds is going ahead. The latest position at the end of 1951 is as follows :—

There are at present 76 Schools with 82 Teachers and 1589 Boys on the roll. Co-operative Institutions have also expanded considerably. These include Co-operative Stores, Rural Banks, Multipurpose Co-operative Societies and Grain Banks. The Cultivators have been assisted through advance of taccavi loans, agricultural implements and cattle. At present 11 Statutory Panchayats have been constituted and are working in the Tribal Area. The settlement of the Aborigines on lands is going on smoothly. There is no doubt that very soon the Aborigines of Adilabad will take their place by the side of the more progressive communities of the State.

Thanks are due to my friend Prof. A. N. Chikhalikar of the Peoples' Education Society's College, Aurangabad for

going through this Second Edition and giving valuable suggestions. It would not be too much to say that but for his assistance this Edition would not have seen the light of the day.

SETU MADHAVA RAO

25-11-1952

A-1-287,

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To
THE ABORIGINALS
Of
ADILABAD

—Author

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CHAPTER I

The Gonds in Adilabad, according to the census of 1941, number 71,874. The census also records the number of the Koyas as 7,990. The Koyas are "a teluguised tribe of Gond or of Maria Gond and speak a fundamentally Gondi dialect strongly influenced in inflexion and vocabulary by Telugu; but they retain for themselves the name Koi or Koya, by the plural form Koitor of which the Gondi speaking Gond or Maria calls himself, wherever he be found and however divergent his customs and culture from the norm of the Satpura Plateaux." (The Challenge of Backwardness, by W. V. Grigson).

In the District of Adilabad, of the Gond population, a very small number, about two to three thousand, confined to the south-east of the District in and near the Chinnur Taluka, have forgotten the Gondi language and now speak only Telugu. The distinction between the Koya and the Gond in Adilabad is to a large extent not correct. All Gonds call themselves Koitur or Koya, and if the aim of the census was to indicate by the word, Koya, a Teluguised Gond in the sense of one who speaks only Telugu, then the number of such is very small and certainly not 7,990, as shown above. There is a very homogeneous population of Gonds known as Raj Gonds, as also Raj Koiturs, who intermarry among themselves and in the border Taluks of Sirpur and Chinnur, even when one of the parties has forgotten Gondi.

The nontribal enumerator confuses between a Gond and Koya and loosely puts down one as Gond or Koya any tribal as his fancy chooses.

It may, thus, be correct to call the Gonds of Adilabad as Gonds and the Teluguised Gonds of Warangal as Koyas if only to indicate the homogeneous population of Adilabad.

About the numbers of the Gonds, the census figures appear to be not very correct. In the first place the Kolams, a tribe

distinct from the Gonds, have been put down as only 746 strong, although their number is nearly four thousand. It is apparent, then, that, many of them must have been put down as Gonds or Koyas. The number of the Pradhans has, similarly, been put as 1583. They are easily more than three thousand. The Thuttis, another subtribe of, but easily distinguishable from, the Gonds have not been mentioned at all.

The Gondi, as spoken in Kinwat, Rajura, Adilabad, and Utnur Taluks shows a strong Marathi influence. The same influence is apparent in a few villages of Both and the three river-side villages in north Sirpur Taluk. On the other hand the Gonds of Asifabad, Both Sirpur, Nirmal, Luxtipet and Chinnur are definitely under Telugu influence. It can be said that of the nearly seventy five thousand Gonds in Adilabad, more than half are under the influence of the Marathi language and ways of living. The Gond of Kinwat and Rajura knows Marathi well. He does not know Telugu. On the other hand the Gond of Asifabad, Luxtipet and Sirpur does not know Marathi but can speak Telugu well. The Gonds of Utnur can understand Telugu but they generally speak Marathi well. In the Marathi areas it is not uncommon to find names among the Gonds Castemarks applied in the Marathi fashion, and Gondi with a heavy inflex of Marathi. On the other hand in Sirpur and Asifabad, Telugu names preponderate among the Gonds, the Telugu mode of living is noticed and very often it becomes difficult to distinguish between a Telugu and Gond prosperous peasant.

The number of Gonds in Nirmal is the smallest. There they are found in only three or four villages situated on the plateaux. They are most numerous on the plateau of the hills in the centre of the Taluk, that is in Utnur, Both, and parts of Rajura Taluk. They are also found in the riverside area as also the centre of Sirpur Taluk. In this area of about three thousand square miles, the majority of the Gond population is situated. They are about sixteen thousand in Utnur, where they form two thirds of the population, about fifteen thousand in Asifabad, about twelve thousand in Rajura and fifteen thousand in Sirpur.

CHAPTER II

The Gonds trace their descent from the legendary Gond Brothers who were thrown into a cave by God Mahadeva, and were rescued by the Gond Hero, Pari Kupa Lingo, who settled them, found brides for them, and otherwise laid the foundations of Social and Political life among the Gonds. There is a difference of versions whether the Gonds rescued were four in number or twenty two.

The four Gonds were, Konyal Bapu, Gurmale Singa, Satwesura, and Lakhwen Parwa. But the number of the rescued Gonds must have been twenty-two, as otherwise the groups of four, five, six and seven Brothers, from whom the Gonds say, they are descended cannot be explained. Today the Gonds are divided into four groups. The Nalven Saga, the Siven Saga, The Sarven Saga, and the Erven Saga. The collective name of the five brother phratry, is the Rauds, meaning chiefs. They settled in Gurmesur Patera.

The collective name of the Six Brothers Phratry is Loinda Vojalir. They settled in Jamtoko Veliki Nagur.

The collective name of the seven brother Phratry is Paniyur, and they settled in Baur Machua.

The four brother phratry has no collective name. They refer to four chiefs in their legends :—1 Jangu Dev, 2 Bomre Dev, 3 Korebara, and 4 Kore sunga. From these four groups a number of Gond families have sprung up. Again there is a difference of opinion about the number of these families who took different surnames. The Gonds commonly refer to seven hundred and fifty Akharas or groups or clans. But either the number seems to have increased or the Akharas do not strictly mean clans or groups. The following are the names of the clans:

Four Brother Phratry

1 Sermaki, 2 Talande, 3 Mangam, 4 Pusam, 5 Markam, 6 Marpachi, 7 Chadda Siram, 8 Tekam, 9 Chakati, 10 Pai

Muranda Mahakati, 11 Poyam, 12 Korram, 13 Karyam, 14 Chalyam, 15 Churyam, 16 Atram, 17 Koru Katya, 18 Poru Katya, 19 Warate, 20 Tarate, 21 Tirate, 22 Bedram, 23 Adram, 24 Chikram, 25 Sudram, 26 Pusu Magre, 27 Damo Kaso Nate, 28 Naitam, 29 Paitam, 30 Chiyatam, 31 Karkate, 32 Kirkate, 33 Parkate, 34 Chilkam, 35 Palkam, 36 Chulkam, 37 Walkam, 38 Barkate, 39 Wallam, 40 Chillam, 41 Yavgam, 42 Tohogam, 43 Wettam, 44 Patana, 45 Chatana, 46 Chutana, 47 Sitam, 48 Kattam, 49 Kittam, 50 Jhalkam, 51 Jhillam, 52 Mane, 53 Hebebe, 54 Bububu, 55 Bebeke, 56 Tawalle, 57 Tuwulle, 58 Chawalle, 59 Chahake, 60 Chuhoke, 61 Utina, 62 Baulbul, 63 Utina Chulchul, 64 Balbale, 65 Watwale, 66 Kusram, 67 Yawge, 68 Gawge, 69 Giwge, 70 Kuttam, 71 Tata Tawle, 72 Kundal Kumme, 73 Hur Jupne, 74 Katwal, 75 Kutwal, 76 Natwal, 77 Parchaki, 78 Kewewe, 79 Saratyal, 80 Taratyal, 81 Tiratyal, 82 Waratyal, 83 Barkam, 84 Pharkam, 85 Charkam, 86 Mande, 87 Chinde, 88 Bande, 89 Chunde, 90 Chande, 91 Chiram, 92 Tikkam, 93 Paryam, 94 Churam, 95 Tihgam, 96 Chatam, 97 Tanem, 98 Pasnake, 99 Patwal, 100 Wandē, 101 Ishtam, 102 Neti, 103 Alangamur, 104 Mengam, 105 Kowa, 106 Reke Gawre Warputra (adopted).

Jagpatro Atram the Landlord of Lakharam near Utnur gave a rather confused account of the various Phratries. He says that the ancestor of the four Brothers were Pujawen and his wife Machhal Bhadro. From these two were descended:

1 Ahilal, 2 Mahilal, 3 Bhayalal and 4 Isargundilal. According to him, the Gonds were descended originally in the following way:

One Anbi Rajal and his wife Ganbi Devi had a daughter named Kali Kankal. She married one Tapesari Guru. The Couple had four sons:

1 Puja wen, 2 Tondyal wen, 3 Jhurtal wen, and 4 Sumras wen.

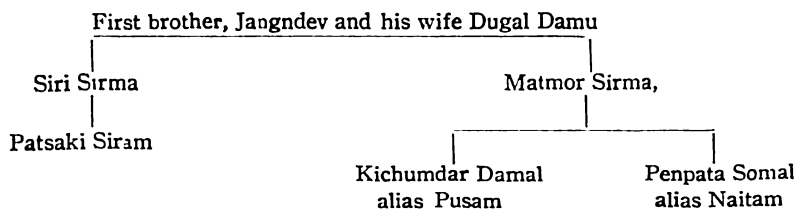
This Puja wen, according to Jagpatrao, is the father of the four brothers Ahilal and others. The second brother Tondyal wen and his wife Machhal Turpo had seven sons. Their names: 1 Male wattal, 2 Male jaital, 3 Male ghokyal, 4 Gurdal ghnme, 5 Male singal, 6 Abipasi putator Abi

ghottya Paniyor, 7 Bhui pasi Putator Bhui ghottya Paniyor. The third brother, Jhortal wen and his wife Muya Moti had the following six sons:

1 Ahi vodal, 2 Mahi vodal, 3 Apevodal, 4 Gopevodal, 5 Taima Tatal, 6 Muppai vodal alias Koinda vodal. The fourth brother, not in the serial order, Sumras wen and his wife Machhal Indo had the following five sons: 1 Ashas Raud, 2 Dushas Raud, 3 Garanges Raud, 4 Sipi Serma Don-dlya Raud, 5 Bebbes Raud.

In addition to the four brothers Pujawen and others to whom Jagpatrao referred, he gave the names of other four names, already referred to: Konyal Bapu, Gurmale singa, Satwesura and Lakhwen Parwa. Lingo, it is said fetched four girls, the daughters of Jahar Guru and married the girl Puri to Satwesura, Argi to Gurdar Malesinga, Pari to Konyal Bapu, and Parbhi to Lakhwen Parwa. We have only to presume that the brothers Pujawen and others are the same as Malesinga and the others.

According to different version given by the Pradhans the four Gond Brothers of the four brother phratry spread as follows:



From the Second Brother Bomdev are descended Cnakati and Sermaki. From the Third Brother Koderao are descended Talande and Poyam.

From the Fourth Brother, Kore Sunga and his wife Sungal Siro who was the sister of Bhandev of Pauragarh, Persor Poti and Chudur Poti were born. The elder Persor Poti had two wives one of whom was Durkal Devi. From the second wife were born Kushram Keram and Mangam.

From Chudur Poti whose wife Malial Devi was the sister of Durkal Devi were sprung the Marpachi and the Kova the youngest of the four brother Phratry.

The first brother Jangu dev is given as the Raja of Ramtek Bamni. He migrated to Sauluri. The Sirmas went to Serwai. The Pusams went to Lanjigarh.

It seems that these later descendants must be different from the first four brothers and must have been very late and recent in history. If that is so then the formation of clans must have been going on continuously and till quite recent times.

Five Brother Phratry

According to Jagpatrao, Konyak Bapu had a son Thandwan Tado who and whose wife Rupdevi were the parents of

1 Yad Raud, 2 Bhusha Raud, 3 Girmes Raud, 4 Ghatajud Raud and 5 Dhandle Raud.

Lingo is said to have found suitable Brides for them and kept them at Dhanegaon.

The children of Sumraswen given above seem to agree in their names with the Rauds given just above. It may be that they are the same.

The sons of Dondlya Raud are given below:—

1 Kursenga, 2 Soyam, 3 Anaka, 4 Kanaka, 5 Karpeta, 6 Sondhan Dhurwa, 7 Pen ghagra Pusnak, 8 Jungnak Potal pen pal am kotal, 9 Aha valka, 10 Mahavalka, 11 Bhandarwai walka, 12 Walka, 13 Paracha, 14 Aracha, 15 Karya Kopa Gaware, 16 Sarata, 17 Warata, 18 Ahchi pitura sal, 19 Kohchi pitor Kahchal, 20 Isargundi Chikram.

The original habiting place of the five brother phratry is said to be Gudmasur Pateda, supposed to be in the Chanda District.

The sons of the Serma Raud are said to be: 1 Ala, 2 Gholam, 3 Surpam, 4 Gawle, 5 Dalanje, 6 Kumra, 7 Kinaka, 8 Arka, and 9 Dhurma Gawde (9 adopted son.)

Here is another Version of the Five brother Phratry. Yad Raud and his wife Sondevi were the parents of Dondya Raud, Sipi Serma Raud, Anne Raud, Kanne Raud, and Junga Raud.

Of these, Dondya Raud was married to the famous Manko, and Yarje Sonul Turpo. From the second wife sprang the Kursenga, Pusnak and the Karpeta clans.

From the second brother Sipi Serma Raud and his wife Wal Devi, were born Garges Raud and Ganesh Raud. From Garges Raud sprang the Walkal and the Koracha clans.

From the third brother Anne Raud sprang Hati mengi and Puli Somji and from Puli Somji came the clans of Anaka and Dhurwa.

From the fourth brother Kanne Raud and his wife Sonal Parche, came the Kanaka and the Kachal clans.

From the last brother Junga Raud and his wife Kanka Devi came the clans of Thota Waghral, Tungnaka, Konda Waghral, Parata, and Iser Gondi, that is the youngest Chikram.

Jugad Raud and his wife Rupdevi had four sons, Sone-
rao, Sonepar, Tonde mugul, and Tukarum Tura. From Sone-
rao came the Ara, Susam and the Goram.

Because one Soyam took water from an Ara girl he also became one of the five brother phratry. This shows that at least some clans with obscure origin, and probably not Gond must have been adopted and absorbed into the Gond Social System.

The Dharenja, and the Kumra came from the second brother Sonepar and from the third brother Tonde mugul came the Gaure.

About the rest of the original five brothers, every thing else is obscure. The evolution of the Tribes must have spread over a fairly long period of history. Nor is it possible to say when the process came to an end.

Six Brother Phratry

My informant Kurveta Mahadu tells me that six brothers were claimed by Lingo the Gond Hero and the remaining six by Jhingu bai who helped Lingo in rescuing the Gonds from captivity.

Those who were owned by Lingo; 1 Indari jangal, 2 Indari Machhal, 3 Tarki Saral, 4 Pardi Maral, 5 Reve Sukkal and, 6 Reve Machhal.

Those who were claimed by Zingo bai: 1 Ate Wodal, 2 Yapai wodal, 3 Mahinde wodal, 4 Rewe Mangal, 5 Sande jinkal, 6 Isum Dhad Mullal.

From the above twelve sprang the following. 1 Atram, 2 Germa, 3 Kotnak, 4 Pendur, 5 Kohochada, 6 Urveta, 7 Korenga, 8 Wuika, 9 Korram, 10 Arram, 11 Bedram, 12 Adram, 13 Dhanam, 14 Duggam, 15 Yarmal, 16 Velladi, 17 Torsam, 18 Pawle, 19 Katle, 20 Ychmal, 21 Tohmal, 22 Udde, 23 Wadde, 24 Budhoal, 25 Kurmeta, the youngest and 26 the adopted son Maha Gawde.

Zingubai claimed exclusively as her own the follownig clans.

1 Tumram, 2 Rai Siram, 3 Vetti, 4 Koddapa, 5 Marapa, 6 Hire Kumra, 7 Sallam, 8 Mandari.

According to another version the following is the way the six brother Phratry spread:

Dalai Jaka was the son of a Tiger. This Dalai Jaka was the offspring of a Tiger and Raya Moti. Jhingu bai adopted the child and from the Child sprang Ajbate Sing, Gajbate Sing, Bhupati sing and Todor Mara Sing. These were married to their Cousins, Sekal Polo, Sekal Ramo, Sekal Siro, and Sekal Taro.

From Ajbate sing sprang the clans of Tumram, Rai Siram, and Koropa. From Gajbate sing came the Selam and Vetti. From Bhupati Sing came the Marapa and Hire Kumra, and from the last brother came the Tari and the Mandadi clan.

It will have been realised that among the six brother Phratry two subcommunities have been formed—the Sarpen Saga and the Pandwen Saga, based on allegiance to Jhingubai and to Lingo. The Pandwen Saga trace their descent from the six brothers who are supposed to have settled in the town of Jhamitokor Velki.

The names of these six have been given above. In the other version their names are given as:— 1 Tarima Tatral,

2 Takesara, 3 Pardi mara, 4 Indana Tungal, 5 Koinda Wojal, and 6 Isumdar Mulal. The wife of Koinda Wojal Sunghal Turpo and her son later became Deified. From the other wife Koinda Moti and the other brothers sprang the clans of Atram, Geram, Torasm Kotnaka, Korenga Aram, Korram, Dhanam, Dugam, Yermad, Toyak, Waladi, Wuika, Kurmeta, Koch. The evolution of the clans must have spread over a long distance of time. The names Ajbate sing, Gajbate sing, suggest Rajput influence, which must have been comparatively later. Again there is no clear descent from the six brothers. There must have been a spread of the phratry and later some of them must have started worshipping Jhingubai. The idea of division between the adherents of Lingo and Jhingubai came later. Or the idea of adoption and absorption of clans of Jhingubai among the Six brother Phratry cannot be ruled out, especially when we know of the use of this method in the case of other clans and communities.

Seven Brother Phratry

Jagpatrao of Lakharam gives an account, of the Phratry which is by no means clear. Besides giving the names of the seven brothers referred to above, he speaks of Male Aital, Male Jaital, and Bal suryal, and from these sprang, the Maravi, Marskolla, Pandram, Purka, Kurveta, Nerma, Mesram and Taram. But the version given by Kurveta, Mahadurao is different. He speaks of Jai kiyal and his wife Rukdevi as the father of Rai sur Kola sur. The latter had two wives Tundial Manko and Woras devi. From the first came the clans of Maravi, Kerpeta, Purka, and Marskola. The other wife had seven sons of whom six were eaten by the Chakati girl, the only remaining boy was the Isergoni Panior.

This Panior married Mechalindo.

From his second wife sprang Pandhra, Werma, and Mesram. From his third wife Kanaka Budo came the Tarams.

The mother of the Pandhrams and the Mesrams was the wife of the Dhundhya Raud who left him and became the wife of the Panor youngest brother.

Thus all the Gonds are descended from the original four or twenty two brothers or to take it further from Kankal Kali and the legendary Saint Tapesri Guru.

As will be shown later the Gonds are said to have been thrown by Mahadeva in a cave. There is thus an attempt to link Gond traditions to the figures of Hindu Mythology.

The Spread Of the Gonds In Adilabad

The Gonds, as remarked above, speak of the seven hundred and fifty Akharas. The interpretation put on the Akharas meaning the Paris or clans cannot be correct since the number of recorded Paris does not go beyond two hundred. The following Paris have been recorded in Adilabad District during the tours:

1 Soyam	25 Kohchada
2 Pendur	26 Mandadi
3 Mesram	27 Tumram
4 Kurmeta	28 Dhurwa
5 Kotnaka	29 Chikram
6 Maraskola	30 Kabaka
7 Kumra	31 Sangam
8 Atram	32 Naitam
9 Hira Kumra	33 Madapa
10 Seram	34 Parchati
11 Kanaka	35 Soyam
12 Ara	36 Kor
13 Korenga	37 Wuika
14 Posam	38 Purka
15 Kursenga	39 Chakati
16 Madavi	40 Kova
17 Urveta	41 Sermaki
18 Tekam	42 Wetti
19 Geram	43 Weddi
20 Torsam	44 Arka
21 Werma	45 Paracha
22 Jugnak	46 Kodpaka
23 Kadapa	47 Rai siram
24 Velari	48 Kusram

49	Pandhera	56	Salam
50	Dharenja	57	Supam
51	Korram	58	Katle
52	Udde	59	Marpatsi
53	Korva	60	Karpeta
54	Drungnaka	61	Para
55	Kinnaka		

It is obvious that all the Gond Paris are not represented in the District. This can be explained in two ways. Either a number of Paris have migrated from the District or a limited number of Paris have come from somewhere to this District during the periods of History. The Koyas of Warangal District should be considered as a part of the Gond Races. If that is so, then the whole province between the Krishna in the South and the upper Narmada valley in the North can be considered the home of the Gond races. Then the existence of a limited number of Paris in Adilabad can be explained on the basis of internal migrations prompted by various causes, such as the search for means of Subsistence both for man and the beast. There are instances in Gond legends, how, when famine threatened the Gond Paris, they migrated in search of pastures and virgin soil for cultivation.

Even in the District, the habitations of the Gonds are clear and demarcable.

In the centre of the District, there is a plateau, and the hills rise in some places to nearly two thousand feet above the sea level. The Taluk of Utnur is in the Centre of Adilabad. Even today half of the Taluk is covered with Forests divided into what are known as Blocks of Daboli, Utnur, and parts of Manikgarh, and Kawal and Satnala. In the 130 inhabited villages of Utnur, one hundred are purely aboriginal, that is the number of the nontribals in these villages cannot be more than fifty. The sixteen thousand Gonds in Utnur are nearly two thirds of its total population. North of Utnur sprawl the hills of Manikgarh East of Lakkadkot on the Rajura Asifabad Road, to the borders of the Adilabad Taluk. In the hills of Manikgarh, which have no nongond population there are more than five hundred families. The Taluk of Asifabad, lies to the east of Utnur. The Gonds are spread in

the foothills of Manikgarh, both north and south of it. From the Southern foothills according to a line passing just north, east, and south of the Town of Asifabad, is the tract adjoining the Utnur Taluk and covered by the Forest Blocks of Dhanora, Tilani, Chopdi and the Ralli. Like the Manikgarh hills north of Utnur and Asifabad, the Ralli Hills are to the South of Asifabad and run east to west. They are mostly situated in the Luxatipet Taluk. They approach for a considerable distance, the Nirmal Mancherial Road which runs parallel to the River Godavari. In these hills is cocentrated the Major part of the Gonds. In both Taluk adjacent to Utnur is the Gond area covered by the Sirchelma and the Gandharla and the Guptal Nagmaliyal Blocks, the last includes a few villages of the Nirmal Taluk. In this homogeneous tract there are more than fifty thousand Gonds who form a very decided majority in this part. In Kinwat they number eleven thousand. But they are in two pockets. They are roughly to be found in the centre of the Taluk bordering on the Both and Adilabad Taluks. In Both, they are not found on the banks of the Penganga, known as the Kosmet Circle; but in the centre of the Taluk within a few miles of the Town. In Adilabad Taluk they are not found near the river in great numbers but are found in the Satnala Forests adjoining Utnur and Rajura. In Rajura they are near the river to half the distance of the Taluk, but are found in sole occupation of the hills and are a majority in the foothills.

In Sirpur Taluk there are no hills except in the centre in what are known as the best Blocks of Garlapet and Karamba. The Gonds in Sirpur Taluk are spread along the river Penganga, here known as the Warda, from the place where it takes a curve to the south and in the forests of the centre. There are no Gonds along the river till it turns to the south.

South, in Chinnur they are not more than three to four thousand and are concentrated mainly in the tracts adjacent to Sirpur and along the river till it reaches the Godawari. There are no Gonds along the Godawari in Chinnur Taluk, or for the matter of that, there are very few along the Godawari, except in places in Luxatipet Taluk where the hills almost come to the river.

If the Gonds have been pushed from the river Penganga in the north and the Godavari in the South it must have been long long ago.

The spread of the Gonds can be estimated in another way. Gond villages are small, on an average not more than twenty five houses. But the following villages have a fairly big population:—

Kinwat Taluk, Chikhli, Budhwarpet. It possesses nearly eighty houses and is the centre of a major Gond Tract in the vicinity.

In Utnur Taluk, Narsapur, Wargaon, and Usegaon are the three big villages, which contain nearly one hundred families each.

In Rajura Taluk, the village of Mangi today contains one hundred families. It is at the foot of the Manikgarh hills. The village of Dewara, a few miles away, today owned by a big nontribal landlord, was once the home of nearly five hundred Gond families, today dwindled to two hundred families.

In Asifabad Taluk, the villages of Rompalli and Madra contain each more than a hundred families. Both are situated in the heart of the Forest Blocks of Ralli, and Tilani.

In Sirpur, the village of Ootsurang palli, in the midst of the Bijjur Block contains one hundred and twenty five families. The river coast villages of Somni and Mugvelli contain hundred families each. There are no big villages containing more than hundred families except the above mentioned. These, as seen above, are most of them situated in the forests. It appears that the Gonds in their wanderings, preferred the virgin soil of the forests to the developed plains. The geographical situation of the above villages well marks the limits of Gond habitations in the District. It is doubtful if the plains of Chinnur, Luxatipet, and Nirmal in the South and the plains of Kinwat, Adilabad Rajura and Sirpur, immediately adjoining the Penganga in the north were under Gond influence at any time in History.

CHAPTER III

GOND RULE IN ADILABAD

It is commonly supposed that the Gonds ruled in Adilabad for a fairly long period. This statement requires examination.

A part of the District was included in the Berars even in the twelfth century. Mahur figures in the Mahanubhava literature as an important place. The fort is supposed to have been built, or at least repaired by the last Yadava Ruler, Ramdev at the end of the 13th century.

The temple of Honakdev or Honakeshwar, near the hot water springs twenty five miles east of Mahur, on the Penganga dates from the Yadava times. The inscription on the temple, besides dating from the last quarter of the thirteenth century, has the additional distinction of being one of the earliest Marathi inscriptions on record. Further east at the old town of Jainat, which contains quite a few temples, the inscription at the Narayan Swamy temple, dates from the Yadava times. At Chandur at the foothills of the Manikgarh hills, there are remains of old temples. At Rajura, south of Balhar shah, there is old temple of Someshwar. It thus appears that the influence of the Yadava Rulers of Devagiri, extended south of the Penganga from Mahur, to a distance of one hundred miles from west to east and about thirty miles south of the Penganga.

If they may have extended further, in the hills. Utnur is situated in the heart of the Tribal country, almost halfway between the rivers Godawary and the Penganga. The tradition is that the old name of Utnur was Vithalnagar, from the deity Vishnu or Vithala. It is well known that Vishnu was the patron Deity of the Yadava Rulers of Devagiri. There is an old ruined temple of Vishnu at Utnur which points to the political and cultural influence of the Yadavas. The Berars probably extended over the hills of Utnur Both, and Manik-

garh corresponding roughly to the present Taluks of Kinwat, Both, Utnur, Adilabad and Rajura. With the advent of Khiljis, in the Deccan, the Berars passed under the Khiljis, Tugluks and later the Bahmani Sultans of the Deccan.

After the fall of the Imad Shahi dynasty of Berar, the Nizam Shahi rulers of Ahmadnagar, became the successors. From them, the Berars passed over to the Moguls in 1592 A. D. In the Persian Documents found with the Gond families of Sirpur in Utnur Taluk, Utnur is referred to as Sarkar Nabinagar, forming a part of the Suba Berar Balaghat. The date corresponds to 1612 A. D. By the year 1630 Bidar had fallen to the Mogul Arms, and a new Suba, the Bidar was constituted by them. The Sarkar of District of Utnur, that is Nabinagar, now became part of Bidar Suba.

The Taluks of Sirpur, Asifabad, Chinnur, Nirmal and Luxatipet, were never part of the Berars. Sirpur is looked upon by the Gonds as the early capital of the Gond Rajas of Chanda. It is difficult to say, when precisely Sirpur formed the capital of the Gonds. In 1309 A. D. when Malik Kafur, the General of Allauddin Khilji, invaded Warangal, Sirpur formed the frontier town of the Kakatiyas. Malik Kafur, made a dash across the River Penganga, from his base at Vairagarh, to Sirpur and after brief but sharp siege, stormed it. The brother of the commandant of the fort was handed over the charge of the fort, on condition of remaining loyal to the conquerers. The Khilji army then continued its march to Warangal. In the Persian contemporary records, Sirpur is referred to as Sirpur.

But nowhere is there any mention of the Gonds as the Rulers of Sirpur. The Gond traditions say that one Bhim Ballal Singh organised the Gonds and established his rule in Sirpur. He is supposed to have ruled in 895 A. D. The legends then speak of a number of rulers, Hira Singh, Kesar Singh, Dinkar Shah, Ramsing, and Suraj Ballal Shah. There is a fanciful story of how Suraj Ballal Shah served the Emperor of Delhi and how he received the title of Shersah and the gift of Gondwana from Mandla southwards. Suraj Ballal Shah was succeeded by his son Khandkya Ballal Shah. He transferred his capital from Sirpur to the present Ballar Shah

and then to Chanda. We hear the names of Hir Shah, Ram Shah, Kondi Shah and his son Babaji. Babaji is mentioned in Ain-I-Akbari as having ten thousand horses and forty thousand infantry. The Diamond mines of Wairagarh in Chanda District were in his possession. If we take the date of Babaji as about 1600 A. D. Khandkya Bailalshah stands at the beginning of the 16th Century and the transfer of the Capital from Sirpur to Chanda should be put to the same time.

Judging from the list of the Gond Rulers, and their probable periods of reign, it can be concluded that the Gonds must have established their rule in the middle of the fourteenth century, after the collapse of the kingdom of Warangal in 1323 A. D. It is well known that the following the fall of Warangal whose rule extended to Sirpur in the north, for two decades confusion reigned in Warangal until Malik Maqbul the Governor was driven out and the dynasty of Kanhaya dev came to power. Somewhere about 1350 A. D., the Gonds seized power and established a kingdom at Sirpur, whence they must have overflowed into the present District of Chanda. For, it must be remembered that the rule of the Yadavas of Devagiri, extended upto Ramtek, near Nagpur. Inscriptions have been found in Ramtek, which mention the names of Ramdeva, and Singhana. Such inscriptions have been found even in Lanji. It is thus possible to presume that the rule of the Yadavas must have extended over a major part of the present Nagpur, Wardha and Chanda Districts. The Mahanubhavas, who played a prominent part in the later days of the Yadava Rule, seem to have contacts with the Gondwana, and refer to it as the Jhari Mandal. Chakradhar, the founder of the Mahanubhava Sect, in his autobiography, a work written about 1275 A. D. refers to his visits to the Gonds and points to their queer practices of boiling rice and other grain.

We have thus to assume the rise of the kingdom of Chanda both north and south of the Penganga, to date from the middle of the fourteenth century. The next question that arises is, how far the Rulers of Chanda were independent and to what extent their rule extended in the present District of Adilabad.

There is no evidence that the Gonds replaced the Yadavas in those parts of Adilabad, which were included in the Berars,

namely the Taluks of Rajura, Adilabad, Kinwat, Both and Unur, and which passed to the Bahamanis and their successors, the Nizamshahis. The Taluks of Chinnur, Luxatipet and Nirmal were under the Rajas of Warangal. It was in Sirpur and Chanda that the Gonds displaced the previous dynasties. On the outskirts of Berar and Gondwana, Gond Rajas of Kherla near Betul, still ruled and played a notable part in the History of the Deccan. The following references from the histories of the Deccan, will shed important light on the role which the Gond rulers played in the History of the Deccan.

In the history of the Deccan we hear of Raja Narsing of Kherla and Gondwana. Kherla is, of course, near Betul. It is difficult to trace the exact boundaries of Narsing's kingdom, and also to know whether he was a Gond or some other chieftain. Firozshah Bahmani marched on him in 802 Hijri and captured the fort of Kherla. Narsing had to wield and accept the suzerainty of Firoz. The Gonds seem to have been employed as soldiers in the army of the Bahmanis. We hear that they were to be found in the army of Mahmudshah Bahmani.

In 815 Hijri, the historian records, that Firozshah, marched on Gondwana, pretending to go hunting. His army spread ruin and desolation everywhere. The Raja of Gondwana, handed three hundred elephants and became a tributary of the Bahmani Sultan. This event must be put down to about 1412 A. D. Judging from the proximity of the kingdom of Chanda to Deccan, it can be presumed that this Gond Kingdom became tributary to the Bahamanis at this time.

Thus Chanda must have enjoyed independence for about less than a century, if we take 1350 as its date of establishment. The Raja of the Gond area of Betul, was already a feudatory of the Bahmanis.

Ferishta writes that Ahmed Shah Bahmani attacked the fort of Mahur in 1421 A. D. and brutally put the garrison of five thousands to sword. He further took the town of Kalam in his possession. Ferishta writes that, there were Diamond Mines in Kalam, and that they belonged to the Raja of Gondwana. The author of the Tarikh-Mahmud Shahi speaks of Diamond Mines in Mahur and Kalam. In the first place, we do not know when Mahur, which formerly belonged to the

Bahmanis, passed to an independent chief, and further, if that chief was a Gond, or feudatory of the Gond Ruler of Chanda. This presupposes the subordination of at least part of Berar to the Gonds. At Mahur itself, there is the tradition of a Raja named Jamraja, in whose honour annual ceremonies are held. But who he was and when he ruled in Mahur it is difficult to say. The many Jain images found in Mahur point to the rule of a Jain Ruler or a prosperous Jain Culture, but this must be before the advent of the Khiljis. At Mahur, the Gosai Mahant of the famous Shikhar Jagir, spoke of the kindness shown by a Gond Rani to the founder of the Math. He could not say, when it happened, but going through the list of the Mahants of the Shikhar, it seems that the founder was reputed to have lived for five hundred years. The date of his death, judging from the number of the Mahants of the Math and the period of their tenure, seems to be approximated to the early fifteenth century. All said, the statement of Ferishta that the diamond mines of Kalam, belonged to the Raja of Gondwana and that Ahmed shah captured it along with the fort of Mahur is highly interesting.

In 1431 A. D. Narsing was suddenly attacked and killed. Kherla passed into the hands of the Sultan of Malha. We next hear that during the time of Allaudin, son of Ahmed shah, the Sultan of Khandesh attacked the Bahamani Sultan in 841 Hijri. The Raja of Gondwana, assisted the Sultan of Khandesh, Nasir Khan. The Khandesh Ruler, subjugated Berar and laid siege to the fort of Narnala, where the Bahmani Governor of Berar Khawja Jehan had taken refuge. The Bahmani Commander, Khalaf Hasan Basri marched to Berar. Khawja Jehan, who had, in the meanwhile escaped from Narnala, now joined Khalaf Hasan. Khawja Jehan was asked to ensure that the Raja of Gondwana would not join his forces with the Ruler of Khandesh. He carried out his task successfully and Khalaf Hasan attacked the isolated forces of Khandesh and put them to flight. We do not know the name of the Gondwana Ruler, but he must have been, doubtless, the Raja of Chanda. This event happened in 1430 A. D.

The Raja of Gondwana figures again during the period of Mahmud Gawan's regency, when the Sultan Nizam Shah

Bahmani, the son of Humayun Bahmani, and the grandson of Alladin Bahmani, was a minor, and the Sultan of Malwa attacked the Deccan. We are told that the Raja of Gondwana was with him. The Sultan of Malwa, Mahmud Shah Khilji had to retire after a hard campaign. The Deccani forces, who had received substantial help from the Ruler of Gujerat closed the route to Malwa through Berar. The Sultan requested the Raja of Gondwana, to take him by a safe path to Malwa. The Rajah who was secretly against the Sultan took him by a path which was waterless and arid. Ferishta suggests that the route lay from Elichpur and Ankot. Probably the army must have returned through the Melghat hills. The army, we are told, suffered through scarcity of water terribly. Five to six thousand troops died of thirst and heat. The next day the Gonds descended from the hills and attacked them and killed hundreds. On the third day Sultan Mahmud emerged from the ordeal. As a revenge, he ordered the Gond Guide to be put to death. The historian records that the Guide replied that now that he had wreaked vengeance and caused the death of thousands, he would not mind being put to death, and that he would be born again. The Historian records that it appears from the incident that the Gonds believed in rebirth. This campaign took place in 866 Hijri that is about 1461 A. D.

The Sultan of Malwa invaded the Deccan again next year, but on hearing that the Sultan of Gujerat was attacking Malwa returned to his kingdom by way of Gondwana.

Judging from the independence which the Rajah of Chanda exercised in allying himself with the Sultan of Malwa, twice and with the Ruler of Khandesh once during the fifteenth century, and the ease with which he betrayed the Sultan of Malwa, it does not appear that he was much of a feudatory to the Bahmani Sultan in the real sense of the term. The same position seems to have been maintained by him during the Imad Shahi and the Nizamshahi rule in the Deccan. The extent of his rule, so far as the District of Adilabad is concerned, seems to have been confined to the Taluks of Sirpur, Asifabad and part of Chinnur. It cannot be said with certainty

whether the fort of Manikgarh was held by the Rajah of Chanda and if so when and how long. During the Bahmani period, we often hear of the Fort of Mahur, but never of Manikgarh. It does not appear to have been held by the Bahmanis who were keen to fortify the forts of Berar against the ever present danger of invasions from Malwa, Khandesh and Gujerat. There was no danger to the Bahmanis from their north eastern frontiers, namely Chanda although the Chanda-Malwa alliance must have proved disconcerting to the Sultans of the Deccan. As is well known, the Bahmanis had Vijayanagar to contend with in the South. The allies of the Vijayanagar in the Deccan were the kingdoms of Warangal and Devarkonda, thorns in the side of the Bahmanis. They also drew help from the Rayas of Orrissa, who never lost a single opportunity of attacking the Deccan, and always helped Devarkonda and Warangal. Further, the Sultan of Malwa was a persistent danger to the Deccan. It was in the Malwa Deccan dispute that the Gond Rajas played a not inconsiderable part. Even if the value of the military assistance they rendered, cannot be judged fully due to paucity of records, they did allow the enemy to pass through their territories. In bringing disaster to the Sultan of Malwa, the Rajah of Chanda, removed for a considerable time the danger of an invasion from Malwa to Deccan.

The fort of Manikgarh, thus, seems to have been in the possession of the Rajahs of Chanda throughout the fifteenth century. In the sixteenth century, the Imad Shahi Sultans of Berar had a hard time against Nizam Shahi Kings of Ahmednagar to whom they finally succumbed. The hold of the Nizamshahi over Berar did not last long. Within thirty years the Mogul Emperor Akbar had annexed Berar in 1598 A. D. to the Mogul Empire. We hear of the new Suba of Berar and the fort of Manikgarh included in it. The Rajah of Chanda, Babaji, became a feudatory of the Moguls. Whether he held the fort of Manikgarh on behalf of the Moguls, or it was administered by them directly cannot be known. The Rajahs of Chanda henceforward were tributaries of the Moguls and seem to have been treated as such.

It has been already remarked above that Utnur passed to the Moguls as a part of the Berar, and was the seat of a

Sarkar, or a subdistrict during the Mogul Period. It was then known as Nabinagar. It has been generally assumed that non-aboriginals began to infiltrate into the Tribal area — of which Utnur is the heart — only late in the nineteenth century. This is not correct.

Manikgarh has been put down as the seat of a Sarkar. (vide the map of India, Dr. Parmatma Saran's Provincial Government of the Moguls,) Utnur was earlier included in Berar, but appears to have been transferred to the Subah of Bidar, later. It is impossible that with Utnur, the centre of Tribal area as the headquarters of the District, infiltration could be avoided. Documents recording the grant of land to Gonds have been discovered in Utnur Taluk. They suggest intimate contact of the Gond chiefs with the Mogul Administrators.

The following note on the Persian Documents will throw light on the relations of local Gonds with Administrators.

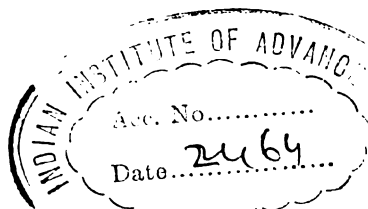
THE RAJAS OF SIRPUR, UTNUR TALUK

Four Persian Documents were available in the family of Atram Gangaram, teacher of Sirpur, in Utnur Taluk.

DOCUMENT NO. ONE

Addressed to the Patels, Kulkarnis, Deshmukhs, Sardeshpandes and Deshpahndes, of Taluk Utnur otherwise known as Sarkar Nabinagar Suba Muhamadabad Bidar. The document is dated 15 Rajab 1055 Hejiri. This corresponds to the reign of Shahjehan 1627 to 1658 A. D.

Rights of Zamindari three hundred and five Rupees and annas eight, in the villages of Gondwada along with the Taluka and two Makta villages and two villages of Patelki and 103 Bighas of land, with the exemption of excise dues, and right to the Mamuls of Pancha and Marriages and prē-eminence on Dasehra and Pola with a right to one goat and a piece of cloth for flags and Gulmoha rights Sardarakhti on Thursdays along with the observances, that is Rusums and other items pertaining to Zamindari Inam granted in the name Govind Rao, son of Raja Narsing Rao, Sardesmukh of the Ilaqua of Birshah and Raja Ballalshah Rajgond, and Zamindari Rights of Taraf Sirpur with Taluk Utnur etc. villages of the said Sarkar detailed as follows:



Mukaddami: that is Patelki in Sirpur Taraf in two villages.

Kowthari : Rabi Kharif 50 Bighas, Pangari Rabi Kharif 55 Bighas, Maktas of two villages of 103 Rupees

Netnur : 65 Rupees Inam, 12 bighas Rabi Kharif

Jainur : 65 Rupees Inam, 12 Bighas Rabi Kharif

Sirpur is referred to as Pargana in Utnur Taluk. The above officials that is the Deshmukhs and Deshpandes and others are instructed not to interfere with these Rights as the grantee is a wellwisher of the Sarkar and has been given the grant on condition of populating the Taluk.

The document bears the Seal of Baqar as Murid Baqar of Shah Alamgir.

DOCUMENT NO. TWO

The subject is the same. The Seal is clear. The date not so clear on the Seal.

DOCUMENT NO. THREE

The date is not clear. But the Sanad bears the name of the same Nawab Baqar Quli Khan who describes himself as the Vazir Azam of Badshah Alamgir. The intervening sentences are not clear. But this Sanad confers the Mukaddami that is Patelki of Marlawai and Jainur with 50 Bighas and two villages of Makta Mahagaon and Kanchanpalli. The areas of lands given are obliterated and hence could not be read. The wording of the Document is slightly different.

DOCUMENT NO. FOUR

This is a copy of some original Document. It is a Parwana while the others are described as Sanads. The same Nawab Baqar Quli Khan Bahadur Vazir Azam of Badshah Alamgir figures here. The date is 7 Shawal 1024 Hejiri. The wording is different. The date corresponds to the period of Emperor Jahangir 1605 to 1627 A. D. Some words are effaced Govind Rao is described as belonging to the land Ilaqa of Raja Bir Shah and Raja Ballal Shah. Utnur it appears was then attached to Suba Berar Balaghat while in the subsequent dates

it became a part of Suba Muhamadabad Bidar. In this Parwana the grant is mentioned of Zamindari Rights of Rs. 305 8 As. and also Jagir of five villages with their income of Rs. 1108 Berari. The Jagir villages are Sirpur, Pangri, Kanchanpalli, Jainur and Chorpalli. The Parwana refers that the above rights of Zamindari and Jagir are on the basis of old Sanads and Bhagota that is enjoyment is continuing from generations. They are renewed on condition of populating the Paragana.

Remarks :

Utnur was included in the Berars in the time of Jahangir. It, later on, after the conquest of Bidar by the Moguls became a part of the Bidar Suba. About 1630 A. D. Sirpur seems to be the seat of a pargana. Third, the family seems to have been enjoying the Jagirs and other Rights from before. They were renewed by the Moguls. The family is described as belonging to the Ilaqa of Raja Bir Shah and Ballal Shah. This may mean that the family was either under the patronage of Gond Rajas or held lands from them originally. Baqar Quli Khan's name occurs in all these documents from 1024 H. 1055 H. that is, roughly from 1612 A. D. to 1642 A. D. The Emperor Alamgir came to the throne in 1658 A. D. Whether the name on the seal is that of Alamgir Aurangzeb or of somebody else requires clearing up. Baqar Quli Khan also requires tracing up.

Govind Rao is described as Sardeshmukh of the Ilaqa of Raja Bir Shah and Raja Ballal Shah. Were the family of Govind Rao hereditary collectors of revenue that is Sardeshmukhs of the Gond Rajas here in these parts before the Moguls came? When the Sanads were issued was the territory still under the direct jurisdiction of Gond Rajas? The name Sardeshmukh seems to have applied to the family before the Moguls came. Why are the Rajas Bir Shah and Ballal Shah mentioned together? Were they joint administrators of the Gond Kingdom? They seem to have been feudatories of the Moguls by this time. Why the Jagir was granted and renewed in 1612 A. D. on old use is not mentioned in the documents of 1640. How the family lost it is not known.

The conclusion seems to be the Atram Rajas of Sirpur were related to the Gond Rajas of Chanda, and were their Sardeshmukhs and enjoyed Jagirs in these parts before the Moguls came. The area was a part of Berar at that time. The grant seems to have been renewed by the Moguls. It is said that the Makta was lost only 70 years ago. This requires investigation. I am told that the Lakharam Rajas were formerly subordinate to the Sirpur Rajas and then as agents made false representations to the authorities and got the Makhtas confiscated.

I am also of the opinion that Utnur was not a part of Golkonda at any time; but passed to the Moguls either as part of Berar or was a part of the Gond kingdom, the Rajas of which acknowledged the supremacy of the Moguls from the time of Akbar, that is 1592 A. D.

THE RAJAS OF SIRPUR

SRI RAO	GOVIND RAO
MAKTUR SHAH	SURYA RAO
RAJA BHUJANG RAO	JAGGA RAO
DHUVI RAO	BIR SHAH
GANGAI BIR SHAH	BHIM RAO
YAMNAI NARSING RAO	JAYAWANT RAO
JAKAI GOVIND RAO	MANIK RAO
CHATUR SHAH	BHIM RAO (present holder)

In the legends and traditions of the Gonds as recorded in their folktales, songs and semi-religious stories of migrations of Gond Chiefs, we again and again hear of two figures, Aurangzeb and Abul Hasan Tana Shah, the last Ruler of Golkonda. These two personalities have impressed upon the Gond traditions to such an extent that the Gond refuses to see any anachronism in the legends either of time or of place about them. How the Golkonda ruler came to figure in Gond legends, can be explained by the advance of the Kutubshahi Rulers north of the Godawari. In the middle of the Sixteenth century, about 1550 A. D. the Golkonda Rulers held the country from Chinnur to Nirmal upto the mountains. Early in the seventeenth century, Muhammad Quli Qutub Shah had come into

conflict with the Rajah of Bastar State. We do not know how effectively the conflict was resolved, but the fight presupposes continuous boundaries. The Gond legends, speak of the migration of Tribes in search of virgin soil, and how the agents of the King demanded a higher rent, and how the grievances of the settlers were redressed by a direct reference to the King.

In the legend of Chanda Akbar Shah, which is sung in Telugu in Asifabad to this day, and which deals with the adventures of the Gond Chief of Asifabad, then known as Jangaon; the Chanda Akbar Shah, also known as Ankum Raj, the story is told that Chanda Akbar Shah quarrelled with his father in Chanda and came to Jangaon where he got the chieftainship from Golkonda Kings and ruled for a long time. Some merchant from Utnur, a Komti, complained of arrears due from the Chanda Ruler as tribute to the Qutub Shah. Chanda Akbar Shah rebuked his father for the arrears and received very shabby treatment from him in return. It appears that, whereas the region round Manikgarh and the strip of territory south of Penganga including Utnur was under the Moguls, the region north of the Godawari to the hills including Asifabad was under Golkonda. The authority of the Rulers of Chanda, slowly faded from the region south of the Penganga, and the Gond Rajahs, became more the heads of the Gonds in Religious and Social Matters rather than wielders of political authority.

Golkonda fell in 1687 A. D. and the kingdom was annexed to the Mogul Empire. At this time an attempt seems to have been made to capture the fort of Manikgarh by the Gonds. One Madavi Manikrao forcibly occupied the fort and held it for some time. Wild legends are said of him. He was, it is said, formerly an orphan from the village of Kerimeri in Asifabad Taluk, who sought service with a rich Komti merchant of the village of Nagrala at the foot of the fort. He came across a stone at whose touch everything turned into gold. He equipped himself with men and money and seized the fort. The news was carried to the Emperor at Delhi who sent troops to recover the Fort. After a bitter fight, Manik had to flee from the fort by a subterranean passage and the Gonds lost Manikgarh for ever. This in brief is the ballad of

the Fort of Manikgarh sung in the Gond country. It has nothing to do with the origin of the fort.

The Marathas now appeared on the scene early in the 18th century. The Gond Kingdom of Devgarh, had long become tributary to the Moguls and had been reduced to utter poverty during the reigns of Shah Jehan and Aurangzeb. Its Ruler Bakhtabuland had accepted Islam to recover his throne from his brothers. He died in 1706 and was succeeded by his son Chanda Sultan. He extended his rule further south and even wrested the Military Outpost of Paunar near Wardha from the Moguls. After his death in 1738, struggle began between his illegitimate son Vali Shah and the legitimate sons Bahadur Shah, Akbar Shah, and Burhan Shah. Bahadur Shah was killed by Vali Shah who in turn was imprisoned by the Marathas under Raghuji Bhonsle. Akbar Shah was poisoned, and Burhan Shah abdicated in favour of the Marathas. That was the end of the Gonds in Nagpur in 1748 A. D.

The turn of Chanda came next. In 1751 Raghuji marched against Chanda and dethroned Nilkanth Shah. Chanda was annexed to the Maratha Kingdom. The same year Raghuji captured the fort of Manikgarh and the surrounding territory. The Maratha Rule thus extended south of the Penganga. At one time it touched the Godawari. But in 1773 A. D. Mudhoji Bhosle, entered into an agreement with the Nizam by which Manikgarh with the surrounding territory was handed over to the Nizam in return for the forts of Gawilgarh and Narnala in Berar. Maratha Rule in East Adilabad District thus at the most lasted for less than fifty years.

Many Deshmukhs and Deshpandes and the Gond Mokashis trace the origin of their Watans to this later half of the 18th century.

We are now in a position to judge the extent and duration of Gond Rule in the present Adilabad District. The Taluks of Adilabad, Kinwat, Both, and parts of Rajura and Utnur were included in the Berars and formed part of the Yadavas, and later the Bahmanis, Imad shahis, Nizamshahis and lastly the Moguls. The Taluks of Chinnur, Luxatipet and Nirmal, first belonged to the Rajahs of Warangal and then passed

to the Bahmanis and later the kings of Golkonda. Sirpur, Asifabad and parts of Rajura, remained with the Rajahs of Chanda who were more or less independent till the arrival of the Moguls in 1595, when the Chanda rulers became tributary to the Moguls. Manikgarh became the seat of a Sarkar, as also Utnur, a fact which did not allow Chanda any great initiative in its policies. The situation continued thus till in 1751 the Marathas replaced the Gonds both north and south of Chanda.

It would thus be correct to say that the Gonds ruled only in the eastern parts of Adilabad first as independent rulers from 1350 till 1600 and as tributaries till 1751 A. D. The theory of Gonds ruling extensive territories in Adilabad for quite a long period until they were subordinated is incorrect and wrong. We can now consider the social and socio-judicial and religious functions of Rajahs and Mokashis among the Gonds and their relations with the Political authorities on this background.

CHAPTER IV

It is only possible to guess the nature of Gond Rule in areas directly under the Rajahs of Chanda.

Baron Haimendorf in his, "Tribal Hyderabad" Four Reports, published by the Revenue Department Government of H. E. H. Nizam, Hyderabad, 1945 writes as follows :

"Long before the rise of Maratha Power, Gond Rajahs were established in the area, and the present Gond Rajah of Utnur claims that approximately fifteen generations ago his ancestors, who are believed to have come from Berar, built the fort of Wodur Wakrion the Nirmal Adilabad Road. The ancestors of the Rajas of Utnur and Chanda, who are both of Atram Clan which belongs to six God Phratry may have come from the Central provinces, but descendants of other Gond Rajas of different clans and Phratrics can still be traced, and we can therefore assume that the Gonds of Adilabad lived under petty chieftains who each dominated only few groups of villages before more affluent and ambitious Rajas built the forts whose ruins are still standing at various points of the country.

"These Gond Forts, and particularly the magnificently built Manikgarh Fort, suggest that the Gonds of those times did not live like so many aboriginal Tribes in virtual seclusion, but entertained manifold relations with other populations. For the forts with their carved reliefs and stucco ceilings are evidently built by expert craftsmen who must have sought employment with the Gond Rajas. Similarly blacksmiths and brassfounders of non aboriginal stock who are still found in Gond villages and who have adopted the Gond, social Organisation and are, like Pradhans, conversant with Gondi, have probably been for many generations a permanent feature of the local culture pattern, and it is more than probable that traders from lowlands regularly visited the Court of the Gond Chieftains. As long as the Gonds remained the ruling race, their standard of living and their material culture seems to have been by no means low, and there can be little doubt that,

relative to the general standards of yesterday, it was higher than it is today.

“Even as late as seventy or eighty years ago, some of the Gond Rajas seem to have still been able to maintain a style commensurate with their position within the Tribe. At that time, a member of the family of the present Utnur Raja held a Maqta for the Praganas Haveli that is Utnur, Sirpur and Inderveli paying an annual revenue of Rs. 600. His jurisdiction in tribal matters extended over an area which comprises now Utnur Taluk and part of the Adilabad and Lakshetipet Taluks, whereas the Rajura and Asifabad Taluks stood under the Tribal Jurisdiction of the Chanda Raja. Each Raja directly administered the area nearest his residence, but the rest of his territory was divided among hereditary Mokashis and Deshmukhs who held estates of from ten to forty villages. A few of the Mokashis still hold their estates as Maqta and the Bambara Mokashi has succeeded in retaining his Jagir, but most have lost their right in the land and today they act only as tribal headmen. The Utnur Raja, unlike his prosperous relatives, the Chanda Raja and the Ahiri Zamindars, has also lost his estate. For the Maqta of the Utnur, Sirpur and Indesveli Parganas last held by Raja Isru Jangu was confiscated by Government in 1272 Fasli (about 1862 A. D.) Some years later the father of the present Raja, Lingai Hanumant Rao, was granted the five villages, Lakkaram, Gangapet, Koinur, Pamalwada and Janaram as Maqta for a period of 30 years. But his son Jagpat Rao holds only the village of Lakkaram as Maqta and has watan rights in Jannaram. He still enjoys great prestige among the Gonds and many important Panchayats are still conducted by him. The Gonds of Rajura and parts of Asifabad Taluqs, on the other hand, recognise in tribal matters the authority of the Gond Raja of Chanda who visits the area occasionally. It thus seems that until recently a feudal system prevailed among the Gonds of Adilabad District, who while recognising the sovereignty of H. E. H. the Nizam, lived to all practical purposes under the jurisdiction of their tribal heads. At that time they were not only the ruling race, but the principal holders and cultivators of the land and such men of different stock, as lived amongst the mere craftsmen and perhaps a small number of traders. Although the military

power of the Gond (Rajas seems to have been broken a considerable time ago, the administration established by the Nizam's Government did not at first affect conditions among the bulk of the aboriginal population."

It has been seen how the part of Adilabad District directly under Gond Rule was confined mainly to what are now known as the Taluks of Sirpur, Asifabad and parts of Rajura and Utnur, and that here too Gond rule came to an end in 1751 with the annexation of Chanda by the Marathas of Nagpur.

In their days of political rule, two hundred years ago, Gond rule seems to have been based on feudal chiefs, the Rajas who owed allegiance to the Raja of Chanda, and in their jurisdiction were helped by village headmen and Mokashis. After 1751 The Marathas who ruled Adilabad upto twenty miles north of Godawari created Deshmukhs and Deshpandes. The families of the Deshmukhs and Deshpandes of Tandur and Rajura came to prominence during the time of the Bhoslas of Nagpur. They received the Watans of Patel and Patwari for hundreds of purely tribal villages in Sirpur, Rajura, and Asifabad. The Gonds also received Watans but they were nothing as compared to the nontribal Watandars.

The Maqtedar of Chinai Barsa in Rajura Taluk is a Gond. In making inquiries about his origin, I was shown a document in Marathi, which seems to have been a copy of some original paper, which, I was told, was attached to the files in succession cases and thus lost. The document is dated the period of Janoji Bhosle, the son and successor of Raghoji First, the founder of the dynasty. Raghoji died in 1755 and was succeeded by his eldest son Janoji. A civil war broke out between Janoji and his brother Mudhoji which lasted for a long time. After the death of Janoji in 1772, Mudhoji had to continue the fight with his other brother Sabaji, and during that conflict he had to cede, Manikgarh and the surrounding territory south of the Penganga to the Nizam (Sept. 1773). The gift to the Maqtedar of Chinai, is within the period between 1755 and 1773. The Mokasa for the twelve villages was conferred on this Gond family, and in return the family was asked to render services in the fort of Manikgarh.

It is well known that the Bhosles sent their family and treasure to Manikgarh in times of danger.

Mokashi and Mokasa

It is difficult to see what precisely is the origin of the term Mokasa or Mokashi. The Marathi Standard Dictionary The 'Maharashtra Shabda Kosha' describes the term as follows in volume sixth page 2535

Mokashi : One who enjoys the right of Mokasa, Farmer collector of the State dues or dues of a similar person (A Right holder,)

One who holds villages and other gifts as an Inam, or has received them for Services.

Mokasa

1. Land given as Inam, or a village given for services to the government, Villages or other lands given on condition of Military Services.
2. Share in Village dues or in village administration.
3. Share in Chauthai or (one fourth of Revenue) after deducting the King's share, One third or three annas in a rupee share out of the Chauth.
4. The term Mokasa is also applied to Khoti or villages taken on contract.
5. Inam given on condition of protecting the property of travellers; Right to a share in the revenue collections.

Wilson's "Glossary of judicial and Revenue terms" has the following for the word,

Mukhasa, corruptly, Mocassa, Mokassa, Mocasan, irregularly derived from a word meaning to have as one's own, (see Khas) Mukasa.

A village or land assigned to an individual either rent free or at a low quit rent, on condition of service, or a village held Khas by the State, the revenue being paid to the Government direct, or the share of the Government in a village, or in the

revenue paid by it. The term as current among the Marathas especially is somewhat differently explained by different authorities. According to one Statement, it was applied to the remaining portion of the Chauth, or fourth of the revenue of tributary countries, after the fourth set apart for the Rajah had been deducted, from this, again, a further portion, or six percent on the chauth being set apart for certain officers of the State, the remainder termed 'Ain Mokasa,' or simple assignment, was distributed amongst the military chiefs in requital of their services. According to a different account the mokasa was the remainder of the whole revenue after a fourth had been set aside, this remainder or three fourths of the whole was subject to the deduction of six percent upon it termed Sahotra and to two percent termed Nar Gaud, the former of which was appropriated to the Pant Sachiv, the latter, to the different subordinate functionaries. The several designations preserved after the lands or villages on which the Chauth had been levied as a tribute were incorporated with those of the Maratha Principality. The term although supposed to be of Hindustani derivation is not familiarly used in upper India and is chiefly current in its vernacular forms in the south.

Mukhasa, Mokhasa, or Mokasadar, from Persian Dar who has, the holder of a village, or of lands at a quit rent or rent free, on condition of service. Under the Maratha Government the Mokasadar had much the same powers as the Mamlatdar.

Mokasi, the holder of an assignment, the farmer of a certain portion of the revenue of a village either on the part of the State, or an individual.

The Mintahul Arab (Matba Islamia Lahore, 1926) gives the meaning of the word Makas, as, the One tenth tribute or due collected from the purchaser in a Bazar. In pre Islamic Arabia the Amil used to take the share of the offering to the Deity, this share being known as Makas.

The Azamul Atiyat, Hyderabad-Deccan, defines Mokasa as follows:

In any village or land, of which, half, or one third, or two thirds, or three fourths, has been given as a Jagir, and the rest of the revenue whereof is accounted to the State, the rent due

to the State is called Mukasa or Judi Jagir. If Government due is fixed on the fourth of the revenue, the one fourth of the revenue is known as the Chauth. In some Jagirs the State has assigned its share of the Chauth or Mukasa to others as Jagir.

The Majmua Qavanin Malgujari, Hyderabad-Deccan volume fifth says:

Makas is an Arabic word meaning one tenth, and Makasa means a land one tenth of the revenue whereof is taken as a tribute. In the Deccan Mukasa is the name of the sum taken from the Jagir as State Due, not necessarily one tenth. If it is one fourth, it is known as Chauth, and if less or more, then it is known as Mukasa, or Mukasa Jagir, and this Mukasa Jagir can be assigned to any person as a Jagir.

This is what the late Mr. Y. M. Kale, the historian of Nagpur says about the system of Mokasi in his book on the History of Nagpur :

Mokasi "In the Maratha Kingdom, the area directly under the rule of the Marathas was known as the Swarajya. The King was entitled to one fourth share of the revenue. This share was known as Raj Babat, or the King's Share. The remaining three fourth of the revenue, which was the income of the State, was known as the Mokasa. Even in this, the King was entitled to nine percent. Of this nine percent the Maratha King Shahu of Satara, had handed over six percent to the minister known as the Pant Sachiv. This was hereditary in the family of the Pant Sachiv. The remaining three percent was reserved by the King to be given to any one within his discretion. These three percent were known as Nad Gouda. The remaining net State Income was known as Mokasa. Parsoji Bhosle received the nine rupees eleven annas percent of Mokasa for the Six Sarkars of Gawel, Narnala, Mahur, Kherla, Paunar, and Kalam. The above percentage refers to the right of the king in the State income, and hence the word Mokasa is used for this portion, although as seen above the State Income after deducting the one fourth King's share, was known as Mokasa."

It thus appears that, a Mokasdar was asked to render certain service to the State, and was in return entitled to a share

in the revenue of the villages handed over to him. The Mokasa given to the Bhosles of Nagpur by the Maratha King was meant for service to be rendered. This aspect was understood well. We find the Raja of Nagpur, referred to in the Persian Documents of the time as the Mokasdar of Berar.

We have thus to identify a Mokasi with one who was entitled to draw a certain share of the State Income. The Mokasi of Chinai had the duty of rendering watch in the fort of Manikgarh, as also of serving the State faithfully. The Mokasi further seems to have been superimposed on the village officials.

In the Gond social and political system, the duties of a Mokashi are different from what the duties of a Mokashi were supposed to be under the Marathas. In not a few places the Mokashi stood above the village officials and was responsible for the collection of the State dues. What his relations were with the Deshmukhs and Deshpandes is not clear, but since he held his Mokasa from the Ruler and not these hereditary farmers and collectors of revenue, he does not seem to be subordinate to the Deshmukh. Since the Gonds had to make way for the Marathas after losing political power, it appears that the Gond Mokasis were created by the Marathas, as in the case of the Mokasis of Chinai and Bhombara, the later in Asifabad Taluk. Gonds who were previously responsible for the collection of revenue came to be called the Gond Mokashis, even when they had lost the duties of revenue collection, in view of the social status attached to the term Mokashi, even as the term Patil is liked by the Gonds, as indicating a higher status.

During the tour of Rompalli, Pandhra Pandu Mokashi of that village informed me that his family had migrated from beyond Chanda six generations ago. According to him, elephants belonging to the Rajas of Nagpur were maintained in the neighbourhood of Rompalli. One of them ran amock. The ancestor of Pandu and a Kollam, whose descendants are still living in Islapur nearly, succeeded in killing the animal and took the head to the Raja. In return the Raja granted the Mokasa for twelve villages to the family of Pandu. The villages, Rompalli, Mankapur, Kottapet, Dondla, Gundala,

Kurregarh, and others are all near each other. A few of them are today deserted.

When the Deshmukhs and Deshpandes were created late in the 18th and early 19th century, a great injustice was done to the Gond Mokashis. If only the Mokashis had been recognised as hereditary Patels and Patwaris of which they were Mokashis, a socially leading class among the Gonds would have ensured a continuity and would have been the means of avoiding loss of nerve. What seems to have happened is this : In the purely tribal area heading Gonds did perform the function of revenue collection. They were in addition, social and quasi-religious heads of their villages, and in that capacity, decided disputes among the Gonds according to customary law of the Gonds. They were entitled to fees from the Gonds, either in cash or kind for their duties. It consisted of small fees for every marriage performed in their jurisdiction, the right of priority in hoisting the flag on the Dasherā day, six seers of jawar from every cultivating Gond family per year and four seers from non-cultivators. in addition to charges for deciding disputes. The Gond Mokashis, did collect revenue, by whatever name they were called before the Marathas coined the term Mokashi. During the Mogul and Maratha Rule, The Deshmukhs were entrusted with the work of collecting revenue from a group of villages known as Parganas, and the Deshpandes were asked to keep accounts of the same. As an additional incentive the Deshmukhs and Deshpandes were given the Watans of Patel or Patwari for at least some of the villages under their jurisdiction. It was thus common for a Deshmukh or Deshpande to be also the Patel or Patwari for a number of villages in his charge.

In the District of Adilabad, we find that the Deshmukh of Sirpur holds the Watans of Patel and Patwari for hundreds of villages, where the whole population is Gond. The Gond Mokashis were simply, not recognised as hereditary Watan-dars, and although the Deshmukhs and Deshpandes made use of them for the collection of revenue, as the nontribal Patels and Patwaris still do today, the Watans passed over to the nontribal, and the Gond was left over with the semi-religious

and social functions. In Utnur one family holds the Patwari Watan for nearly seventy villages, all of them tribal. It was only where due to administrative difficulties, or lack of care on the part of the newly created Deshmukhs and Deshpandes to get Watans in their names that a number of villages in the Tribal Area remained without any Watan or Watandar. Thus more than hundred villages had no hereditary Patel. It was thus possible to create Gond Patels for life time in these villages without uprooting the Watandari system.

On the other hand, the Zamindars of Sirpur, Tandur took good care to see that they received the Watans in the Tribal area under their charge. The Mokashis were quietly swept away. In these parts known as the Tilani, Ralli and Tandur Pattis, as also in Sirpur Taluk hundreds of villages are held by the Deshmukh of Tandur. How careful he is to exercise his rights in this matter will be clear from the following example :

The Mokashi of Rompalli, has been also carrying on the duties of a Patel since a long time. He complained that the Zamindar of Tandur has been claiming the right of Watan to that village and had even patronisingly suggested to Pandu to agree to become his Gumashta or Agent of the Zamindar. It was through the sheer obstinacy of Pandu that, the Zamindar had to desist. It is thus clear that the Mokashis of the Gonds faded out of the picture when the nontribals were imposed on them and the Mokashis were not recognised as Patels and Patwaris.

Time had its revenge on these Deshmukhs and Deshpandes when they were deprived of their main duties of collection of revenue and the Tahsildars and other Government Officials took over from them and left them without any authority. The Watandari System of Patels and Patwaris is also nearing its end.

The duties of Mokashis today are social, and religious. I was surprised to find a Gond telling me that the Mokashis were like the Kazis of the Moslems. He was pointing out how the Mokashis were entitled to Marriage fees and also decided petty cases of a religious and social nature. It is well-known

that the Kazis, in old days were in addition to their religious duties, magistrates as well. The Mokashis had also similar functions during the days of Gond Freedom, or Autonomy.

Many of the Mokashis have today fallen on evil days. I found very few of them in good circumstances. Pandu Mokashi of Rampalli, Madavi Narasingrao of Tilani, The Mokashis of Chinai, and Bhombara, Injapur, still maintain a sort of influence over the Gonds. But most of the rest are in very bad circumstances.

Nor do these Mokashis wield much influence with their Gond Brothren. The decisions of Mokashis, whatever and whenever given, lacking sanctions are not much obeyed and the authority of these Mokashis is weakening day by day. It can without exaggeration be said that the Mokashi system has practically broken down.

In Pippalgaon in Kinwat Taluk and in Merkalmetta in Rajura I found the Mokashis literally reduced to beggary.

In at least one case, that of Tilani, I saw that the Zamindar of Tandur had conferred the Mokasigiri on the ancestor of Govind Rao and Narsing Rao the present Mokashis. The document is both in Urdu and Telugu and speaks of the days of the Nizam Nasir-ud-dowla, 1829 to 1853 when one Bajirao Gond, defeated the Velema rebels known as the Gandewals. In return for these services, the Madavi Bajirao, was given the right of collecting fees from the Gonds at marriage, and of being given honour at Dasehra and other festivals, of taking dues from Gond cultivators and non cultivators at the rate of six seers and four seers of jawar respectively per annum and render loyalty to the Zamindar. The Telugu paper gives the date as the Sadharan Samvatsar, that is about 1850 A. D. It must, however be understood that, the papers I could see were not original, but were copies. The original papers were in this as in other Gond families lost or misplaced.

I did not come across Mokashis in Sirpur Taluk, and also the western parts of Kinwat. It must either be due to Sirpur being under the direct jurisdiction of Chanda Rajas or the

Zamindars of Ahiri. The Gonds of Sirpur told me that they usually went to the Raja of Ahiri for the settlement of their disputes and that there were no Mokashis among them. The Patel and Patwari Watans of Sirpur Taluk are mostly in the hands of the Zamindar of Tandur. It can only be supposed that there was no institution of Mokashi in Sirpur and that prior to the acquisition of Watans by the Deshmukh of Tandur, the area was managed by the Raja of Chanda or Ahiri directly.

The Gond Dignitaries are referred to as Mokashis, Rajas, and Deshmukhs.

The Rajas seem to have been early in Gond History, minor chiefs, who were responsible for the administration of the country to the Raja of Chanda and had under them a number of Mokashis to collect revenue and decide cases. Even now, parties which disagree with the decisions of the Mokashis, approach the Rajas in appeal. The Rajas are also entitled to the dues fixed by custom. But whether all those who are called Rajas among the Gonds today were all functionaries in the days of Gond Rule or are honorary titleholders is a moot question. In this as in the matter of Mokashis the Gond custom of, calling socially superior persons as Mokashis, Rajas, or Patels adds but to the confusion.

The Raja family of Sirpur in Utnur Taluk can be traced to the early seventeenth century. The Inam grant is to Govind Rao, son of Raja Narsing Rao. In the Document which has been already referred to above, it has been mentioned that the rights of Zamindari and Jagir were on the basis of old Sanads and Bhagota and they were renewed on condition of populating the Pargana. The family received the rights of Zamindari in the villages of Gondwada along with the Taluk and two Makta villages and two villages of Patelki and one hundred and three bighas of land with the exemption of excise dues and right to the Mamuls of Panch and marriages and pre-eminence on Dasehra and Pola with a right to one goat and a piece of cloth for flags on those days along with the observances and Gul moha rights of sardarakhti. The Deshmukhs and Deshpandes are instructed not to interfere with these rights:

as the grantee was a well wisher of the Sarkar and has been given the grant on condition of populating the Taluk.

Now, judging from the contents of the above grant, it appears that the family was given *Maktas*, or *Jagirs*, and was allowed to collect dues from the *Gonds* on ceremonial occasions. The conditions of grant were loyalty to the State and efforts to populate the *Pargana*. We do not hear anywhere of the duties normally expected from the *Deshmukhs* and *Deshpandes*, namely, those of collecting revenue and maintaining peace. There is no reason to suppose that the duties of *Gond Rajas* were different under nontribal Rule. They might have exercised revenue and magisterial function in addition to their religious and social duties when the *Gonds* were rulers but the *Rajas* were neglected with the advent of foreign rule, and either the Government official or the newly created *Deshmukhs* and *Deshpandes* replaced them.

The *Rajas* of *Sirpur* were, thus, only *Jagirdars* entitled to certain concessions, and were called by the honorary title of *Raja*.

Similar seems to be the case with the *Raja* of *Utnur*. The family of the *Atram Rajas* seems to have migrated to *Utnur*, as is supposed, about a couple of hundred years ago. We do not know what their status then was. Seventy or eighty years ago, *Baron Haimendorf* writes in his 'Tribal Hyderabad,' "a member of the family of the present *Raja* of *Utnur* held a *Maqta* for the *Parganas Haveli* that is *Utnur*, *Sirpur* and *In-draveli*, paying an annual revenue of six hundred rupees—— The *Maqta* last held by *Raja Isru Jangu* was confiscated by Government in 1272 *Fasli* (1862 A. D.) Some years later the father of the present *Raja*, *Lingai Hanumant Rao*, was granted the five villages as *Maqta* for a period of thirty years. But his son *Jagpatrao* holds only the village of *Lakkaram* as *Maqta* and has *Watan* rights in *Jannaram*."

Now, the *Maqtas* are of different kinds. A *Maqta* which is a gift and which entails a payment of no due or a fixed due to the Government is hardly to be distinguished from a *Jagir*. On the other hand *Maqta* of villages for a period of say thirty years are although called in common parlance, *Bil Maqta* or

simply Maqta, is not a grant or a gift and a bil maqtedar is really no better than a big farmer who has been given the task of bringing lands under cultivation and populating villages on the promise of getting lands for half the rent and the Watan of the village. During the earlier half of the 18th century there grew up a system of Sarbasta, or letting out Taluks by auction and contract, by which adventurers held whole districts by contract until it was put an end to during the time of the Great Salar Jung. It cannot be ascertained whether the Maqtas held by the Atram family of Utnur were contracts, or only villages given for a few years. And since the Maqtedar was to pay a revenue of six hundred every year, it appears to be in the nature of the farming of revenue.

We do not know when this Maqta was given to this family. Whether this was the means of increased status for the family or it was a recognition of a high social status enjoyed by the family already at the time of the conferment of the Maqta. The tradition is that the ancestors of this family were first servants of the Rajas of Sirpur. They carried the tale that the Rajas were holding Maqtas without proper authority and were thus instrumental in getting the Rajas deprived of their estates, and as a reward got some estates in return only to be lost by themselves. If this tradition is correct, it would appear that the Raja family of Sirpur must be supposed to be the earlier Maqtedars. The tradition in Utnur is that the Rajas of Sirpur were Maqtedars like the Maqtedars of Bhombara and Chinai and that they lost it only fifty years ago. Today the term Raja given to the Atram Jagpat Rao of Lakharam near Utnur is purely honorary and lacks sanction.

We hear the term Deshmukh used about a few Gond families. There is for example the Durwa family of Karatwada near Both who are known as Deshmukhs. I was unable to trace any emoluments as Rusoom, that is money sanctioned as commission for the collection of revenue. The family of which Yeshwantrao is the head today has Karatwada as its headquarters. He told me that his family owned the small fort of Both known as the Garhi about thirty years ago and that his grandmother Tekabai possessed it last. Yesh-

want Rao possesses today Patelki for twenty five villages and two hundred acres of lands both Inam and otherwise. A note on this family as also the Mokashis of Pippalgaon will give an idea of the status of these families.

We also hear of the Geram Deshmukhs of Kinwat. Here again, it was not possible to find out the details of the Watan of the Deshmukhi, in the absence of any Rusoom to which the family was entitled. There is, further, no tradition among the nontribal Deshmukhs and Deshpandes of Adilabad of any Gond family of Deshmukhs. We have Maratha and Brahmin Deshmukhs and Deshpandes, the Deshmukhs of Umlam, Rajura, Tandur and the Deshpandes of Adilabad, Bela, and Rajura, who still draw Rusooms. But there is no Gond Deshmukh. It is doubtful whether the Deshmukhs of Karatwada or Chikhli or Kinwat, are not called Deshmukhs by courtsey only. That they wielded some power is apparent from the Inam lands and Watans they still possess. If at all they held Deshmukhi they must have been dispossessed of it long ago.

The following list of Mokashis, Deshmukhs and Rajas will give an idea of their places of residence and their spheres of influence.

1. Injapur in Rojura Taluk. Salam Mokashis today hold extensive land in Injapur. Formerly it was confined to a few acres in Injapur ; but now the lands have been extended to the present hamlets of Durgaiguda and Nizamgondi. The tradition is that the Salams were formerly in Tilani, but were ousted from that place by the Madavis who now hold the Mokashi Watan of Tilani.

2. The Supam Mokashi of Malni has the Watan for the villages of 1 Sirsi, 2 Keljhari, 3 Dongargaon, 4 Lakkadkot, 5 Ghotta, 6 Kothala, 7 Tatakohad and 8 Punaguda in Rajura Taluk and 9 Swati, 10 Dhaba, 11. Chopanguda, 12 Bandakasa, 13 Chinchpalli, 14 Nowdhari, 15 Nimgohan, 16 Goigaon, 17 Sonapur, and 18 Chichpalli, in Asifabad Taluk. The Mokashi is said to have possessed Maqta for Malni, but is said to have lost it. He is now in ordinary circumstances, and his lands included in the forests, the village itself being

situated in Asifabad Taluk. My notes tell me that his wife is a Maraskola from Yempally in Sirpur Taluk and his mother an Atram from Venkatapur in Laxatipet Taluk.

3. Kotnaka Mokashi of Bhombara. Most of his villages are in Rajura Taluk. The family holds a Maqta, for a number of villages. The family as the documents in the possession of the family show seems to have come into prominence during the time of the Bhonsla Rajas of Nagpur. The present holder Devrao and his brother Ramrao are in good circumstances.

4. The Pundur Mokashi of Markalmetta in Rajura Taluk. I found him literally reduced to beggary. At one time his jurisdiction extended to the villages of.

1 Deoti, 2 Aesapur, 3 Garpana, 4 Kodapur, 5 Yallapur, 6 Pandarvani, 7 Servai, 8 Nokewara, 9 Parandoli, 10 Tuma-guda, 11 Kela Devapur, Kelakerjir, 13 Moda and 14 Mesapur. All these villages are situated in the Manikgarh hills. Some of them were deserted long ago. My notes tell me that the Mokashi is related to the Kumras of Nagalkonda in Utnur Taluk by marriage. He is also related to the Mokashis of Chinai.

5. The Kumra Mokashi of Chinai in Rajura Taluk. Reference has already been made to this family which received the Mokashi during the time of the Bhosle Rajas of Nagpur. Formerly the family held Maqta without payment of any dues, but it appears, during the course of litigation, the Maqta was handed over to the family with Government claiming one fourth shares in the Maqta. This family was given the duty of maintaining watch in the fort of Manikgarh. We have then the Kinnaka Mokashi in Sengaon, and Kursesga Mokashi in Temburvai, both in Rajura Taluk.

We have, thus in Rajura Taluk the following old Gond families of importance.

- 1 Salam Mokashi of Injapur
- 2 Kumra Mokashis of Chinai

- 3 Kursenga Mokashis of Temburvai
- 4 Kinnaka Mokashis of Sengaon
- 5 Supam Mokashis of Malni
- 6 Kotnak Mokashis of Bhombara
- 7 Pendur Mokashi of Merkalmetta.

ASIFABAD TALUK

1. Korenga Mokashi of which Birshah is the present holder. His jurisdiction extends to the villages of Moar, Sirian Moar, Venkatapur, Balapur, Gondiguda, Waunda, Chalbari, Jodeghat, Babejhari, Kamtaguda, and Ankasapur.

2. Kotnak Mokashi of Sangwi Indhani.

3. Madavi Mokashi of Tilani, reference has been made to this family already. The present holder Narsingrao lives in Tilani.

The cousin of Narsingrao, Govindrao lives in Guripet, and claims the Watan of Mokashi. Narsing rao whom I found to be a mild old fellow, broken down by grievances, real imaginary, complains of the loss of his Watan. The small Garhi at Tilani has been abandoned long ago and Narsingrao has moved to a new house. The Madavis dispossessed the Salams long ago, who have moved to Injapur in Rajura Taluk.

4. The Pandhra Mokashi of Rompalli, to whom reference has already been made.

5. We have another office holder, the Poi Patel of Mangi, in Asifabad Taluk, a Rai Seram. Poi Patel is the same as the Mali and Police Patels. The Rai Serams are supposed to be priests and have the function of purifying Rajas and Mokashis. They must also be taken to be Mokashis as their jurisdiction covers Mangi, Bhimpur, Bhimrelli, Boram gutta, Moinda, Gopera, Dampur, Degangutta and other villages, all in the Tilani Block. At least some of these villages are in the Mokashi of the Tilani Madavi. We can only conclude that the Poi Patel was really subordinate to the

Mokashi, although, due to his functions of purification, he was given greater honour than the Mokashis.

Utnur Taluk

1. Kumra Lalshah Mokashi of Dongargaon. His jurisdiction extends to the villages of Admia, Siwnara, Kottaypalli, Kolama, Arjuni, Gadigura, Pipri and Chitagura.

2. Mesram Keshavrao Mokashi of Dhaba, whose jurisdiction extends to the villages of Sawri, Jherri, Punagura and Dhaba Khurd and Kalan.

3. The Kumra Jangu Deshmukh of Dewapur. He holds a number of villages in central Utnur. Some of these are ; Mankapur, Nagalkunda, Yempalli, Babejhari, Kotepalli, Ganeshpur Sangwi, Khair Datwa, Lokari, Narasapur, Gunjala, Narnur, and Gundala.

4. The Tehakati Raja Hanmant Rao of Indervelli. He is a man nearing fifty and holds a few acres in the village of Indervelli in Utnur Taluk. A girl from the Tchakati family, Chitke Rani married the Sitagondi Raja's brother Polbarao. The girl poisoned her husband's brother Manikrao, and then the family declined. The Tchakati family has another branch at Tankoli Ankoli in Adilabad Taluk.

5. The Rajas of Lakharam near Utnur. Reference has already been made to Raja Atram Jagpatrao of Lakharam. It was formerly supposed that the old Garhi at Utnur was built by the family. But this does not appear to be correct. Utnur was the seat of a Sarkar that is a District, and the Garhi seems to date to the old times when the Government Officials had their seats in the Garhi. It appears that Raja Jagpatrao's father had his residence in the Garhi, but after his death the fortunes of the family declined and Jagpatrao had to move to Lakharam.

6. The Rajas of Sirpur and Kanchanpalli. This family has been, already described before. This family seems to be more ancient than the Lakharam Rajas. Indeed the tradition is that the Rajas of Lakharam were the agents of the Rajas of Sirpur. There can also be no doubts that the Rajas

of Sirpur must also have held the Maqta for a number of villages before they were resumed. Today Atram Bhimrao represents the family.

Here is what Atram Bhimrao of the Raja family of Sirpur told Baron Haimeudorf.

“My grandfather was still a rich man with a big house and hundreds of head of cattle, at the great feasts Gonds and Kollams from the whole Sirpur Patti assembled and he feasted two and three hundred men at a time. But I am so poor that I can only just provide a goat and some Jawari, so only a few people from the nearest villages come to me. I have still seen something of the old times and know what my father told me. But soon all this will be forgotten.”

7. Jangu Mokashi formerly of Tosham. He is a successful farmer. He was formerly in Tosham, but had to leave the village when the big landlord of the village Muhummad Khan, imported Lambaras to till lands. Jangu Mokashi's jurisdiction could not be known. He has now migrated to Pochampalli and has established himself successfully. He maintains good cattle and is a bit of a capitalist too.

Both Taluk

1. Siram Mokashi of Dupparpalli or Duparpet near Ichora. The jurisdiction of these Mokashis was once upto the Kadam river. The Mokashi is in very poor circumstances.

2. The Poi Patel of Geram Kanaka Jaggarao. The family must have been the head of the village. I could not find out his jurisdiction. Jaggarao is a successful farmer. I noticed that he has a well laid out fruit garden of oranges and citrus trees. It is a rare sight among the Gonds. I consider him to be one of the most prosperous and influential Gonds.

3. Karatwada, the seat of Durwa Yeshwantrao Deshmukh and Inamdar. Reference has been made to this family already. Yeshwantrao told me that he had lost the relevant documents to an old agent in Nirmal. It could not for that reason be known how the family came to acquire the Watan of Deshmukh. Today the family is influential among the Gonds and ranks second to the Atram Raja of Lakhram, to whom Yashwant rao is related by ties of marriage. Yeshwantrao is now

Patel for twentifive villages and was supposed to be Deshmukh for seventy two villages.

The following is the note written about the Durwa Deshmukhs of Karatwada, during a tour of Both.

THE DURWA DESHMUKHS OF KARATWADA

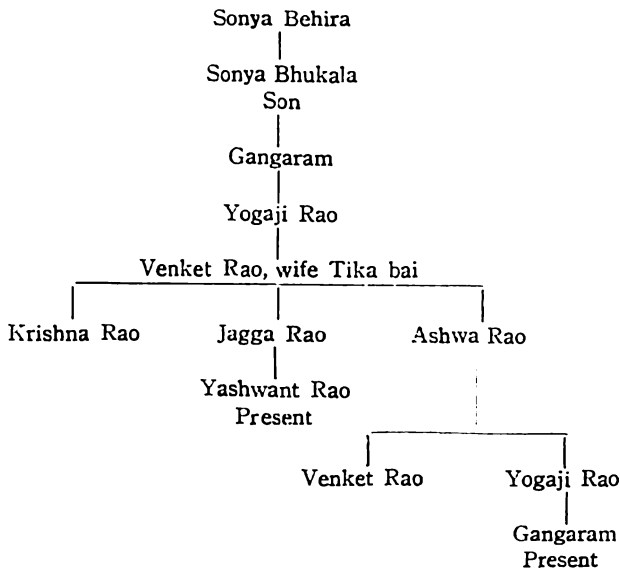
The Durwa family seems to have originally belonged to Moar in Asifabad Taluk. The ancestor of the family was one Sonya Behira who owned considerable lands and cattle in that valley. It appears that a buffalo owned by Sonya Behira had become a great source of trouble and annoyance to the people of the surrounding area. At that time, the chief of Jangaon, now Asifabad, known as Chandra Akbar Shah alias Ankulraj, was overlord for this area on behalf of the Rajas of Chanda. He wanted to put down the Durwas and proclaimed that any one who would kill the buffalo would receive Mokashi Watan for seven villages.

Two persons, one belonging to the Purka clan of Baihar Shah, and the other of the Atram clan took up the challenge. The buffalo was hit by an arrow from the bow of the Purkas but it went and died in the village of Venkatapur, where its head was severed and brought by the Atrams to Chandra Akbar Shah of Jangaon, who gave the promised villages as Mokashi to the Atrams.

Meanwhile the Durwas were forced to leave Moar. They first migrated to Digras in Kinwat and then came to Karathwada in Both.

Friction arose between the Geram Deshmukhs of Kinwat, who had recently migrated from Chanda. The Durwas carried away a girl from the Gerams. A struggle followed and in the fight the Gerams were routed. After the defeat, Sonya Behira was killed treacherously while he was supervising the digging of a well. The arrows struck him in the sides and legs. Sonya Behira retired to Rajulgutta near Karetwada, where he died and lies buried. He is worshipped by the Durwa clan to this day. The period of Sonya Behira migration could have occurred in the

early 18th century. The following geneology may be of use in fixing the period.

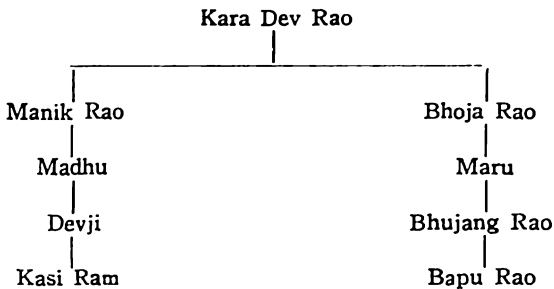


The geneology thus gives seven generations which can be taken to cover two hundred years. The migration of the Durwas can be put at about 1750 A. D. This by the way gives us the date of Chandra Akbar Shah who forced the Durwas to migrate from the Moar valley. The Durwas in Both came into conflict with Gerams of Kinwat whose geneology also helps us to find out the period of Sonya Behira.

Two Geram brothers migrated from Manikgarh and came to Kinwat. They were Babu Rao and Bhujang Rao. From these came three brothers, Keshav Rao, Deva Rao, and Kara Deva Rao. Deva Rao's son Bhujang Rao did not leave any issue. Keshav Rao's son Bhale Rao who lived in Ambari had two daughters one of whom Radhabai was married to one Mesram Deva-rao and left two daughters, Lakshmibai, and Dwarkabai. Dwarkabai was married to Atram Govind Rao of Chanda and left no children. The elder Lakshmibai married to Atram Govind Rao of Chanda, had a son Dinkar Rao whose son

Yadav Shah at present holds the Watans of Patelki of Malkapur, Khelda and Ambari, which formerly belonged to the Gerams but passed to the Atrams through female line.

The third brother Kara Dev Rao had male issues and the present Geram Deshmukhs are descended from him.



This gives us six generations. It would thus appear that the Gerams must have come almost at the same time to Kinwat as the Durwas came to Both.

The Geram Deshmukhs, divided in two branches now live in Khelda near Malkapur and in Met, both in Kinwat Taluk.

KINWAT TALUK

There were no Gond Deshmukhs towards Mahur and Sindkhed. The Raja Udaram of Mahur told me that Mahur never formed part of the Gondwana, but was a part of the Berars. The Mahant of Sikhar Jagir of Mahur told me that long ago the Mahants had received concessions from the Gond Rani of those parts. I could not get further details about the Rani mentioned by the Mahant. The founder of the Sikhar order of the Gosais, is supposed to have lived for five hundred years. But judging from the number of the Mahants who reigned at Sikhar and their individual period of rule, I am inclined to put the date of the founder in the fifteenth century.

If at all the Gonds had any influence in these parts it must have been long ago. The tradition that there was a Kumra Gond Raja at Mahur, who was killed at Mahur at the hands of a Muslim Ruler, prevails in these parts.

His son migrating to Utnur, swore never again to visit Mahur. It is doubtful whether any Gond Chief held the fort of Mahur. It is wellknown that the Yadavas held Mahur till the

beginning of the fourteenth century. The Bahmanis held it for some time, but according to Ferishta, the Deccan Historian, it passed to a local chief who held it till 1421 A. D. Ahmad Shah Bahmani marched against the fort, captured it and put the whole garrison to sword. There is no material to presume that the chief was a Gond. It is quite possible that the Kumra clan might have some duties assigned to it in the fort and that it might have shared the fate of extermination along with the rest. Raja Jagpatrao of Utnur told me that the migration of the Kumra clan took place recently and within living memory. The massacre and the migration story are highly exaggerated. It was a purely local affair in which the Gelrams of Kinwat and other clans were involved. Be that as it may the Kumras migrated from near Mahur as a result of some upheaval, which made it impossible for them to remain at Mahur. Mahur was first held by the son of Aijuddowla, a nephew of the first Nizam till 1755. It then passed to one Safshikan Khan. In the 18th century, a Rajput family held the fort. The family still has Jagirs near Mahur. It is possible too, that the Kumras must have come into conflict with the commandants of the fort and having suffered, migrated from Mahur to Utnur.

This is what Baron Haimendorf says of the Geram Deshmukhs of Kinwat.

"Late last night the Deshmukh arrived at last. He is a small very old man, who looks like any other rather dignified village Patel. The times when the Geram Deshmukhs and Rajas had influence in these parts are obviously long past, and since the Watan rights of the Patelkis of Ambari, Khelda and Malkapur as well as most of the remaining lands have passed through the female line to an Atram relation of Akbar Shah of Chanda, the Geram man who carries on as Deshmukh in tribal matters has very little importance."

It is said that Ambari was once a Jheri of the Berams, but even if this were true, the Jagir has been resumed long since.

2. The Pendur Mokashis of Jheri. Pendur Ganga son of Chikram is the present holder. He has abandoned his vil'age

and now lives in Girjai. He is distantly related to the Pendurs of Bhilgaon. Gangu is now in very poor circumstances.

3. Kanaka Mokashi of Palsi. The present holder is Kodu and his residence is Palsi. My notes tell me that his family had the following villages under his jurisdiction.

1 Jawarla, 2 Patoda, 3 Mandwi, 4 Bhilgaon, 5 Kanki, 6 Dongargaon, 7 Jerur, 8 Palsi, 9 Hirapur, 10 Ganeshpur, 11 Sirpur, and 12 Nagapur. When I saw him he was working as Kotwal, that is village watchman and owned twenty acres of Inam lands. His relations from his wife were the Kurmeta Deshmukh of Patanbori in Berars, and from his mother, Kurmeta Dhondba Deshmukh from Kair village in Berar. Today the family is in poor circumstances.

4. The Pendurs of Bhilgaon, Kinwat Taluk.

The note on the Pendurs is as follows :

The present holder is Pendur Jaitu, who lives in Pippalgaon in Kinwat Taluk. There is a small fortress in the village which is claimed by Jaitu as belonging to his family.

It appears that the family originally belonged to Gad Bori in the Berars. They are still known as the Gad Borikars and are to be distinguished from the Pendur Mokashis of Jhari who are known as Jharikers. The ancestor of Pendur Jaitu was one Manko who with his brother Nima Nayak, migrated from Gad Bori where the other two brothers who were Deshmukhs stayed on. Manko and Nima Nayak established themselves at Pippalgaon where they seem to have constructed a Garhi, the ruins of which can still be seen.

The two brothers soon came into conflict with the Gond Geram Deshmukhs of Chikhli nearby. Manko was killed in a battle with the Deshmukhs. Manko's wife fled to Utnur, where she brought up her two sons, Mohnya and Jhulpaji. Nima Nayak had died without leaving any issue.

The boys Mohnya and Jhulpaji grew up in Utnur. Mohnya had a son. It appears that there was some dispute between the two brothers and that during the dispute, while under the influence, they killed each other.

Mohnya's son came back to Pippalgaon and settled there. Of his two sons Ramji had three sons, Yeshwant Rao who died without any male issue, Polla, the father of the present holder Jaitu and his brother Mohnya, and Madhav Rao the father of Ramji Junior who now lives at Ambdi. This Ramji has brother's grandsons Vaijya, Bhima and Mohnya, living at Ambdi in good circumstances. Pendur Jaitus Persa Pen is in Salewad village, Utnur Taluk which points to this family's connection with Utnur.

Although Jaitu claims that his family were Deshmukhs for Pippalgaon, the fact seems to be that they were Deshmukhs for Garh Bori in Berar, from where they migrated. They must have come into conflict with the Gond Deshmukhs of Chikhli due to their pretensions.

These Pendurs are different from the Pendurs of Jhari near Dehigaon. As a matter of fact each of the two sisters were married in these two different families and hence the idea rose that they were cousins and so belonged to the same family.

The migrations of the Pendur brothers from Gar Bori must be put at the beginning of the 19th century.

5. Verma Mahadal Mokashi of Minki. He is the son of Mara and his residence is in Minki. His jurisdiction extends to Shamupr, Talaiguda, Pippalgaon and Minki. His Persa pen is in Pippalgaon. And so are his Satik.

ADILABAD TALUK

1. Maraskola Mokashi of Pipri. The present holder is Lachu. The jurisdiction of this family extended to the Adilabad Patti upto the river Penganga. This included the town of Adilabad.

2. The Tchakati Rajas of Ankoli. They belong to the same family as the Tchakatis of Indervelli in Utnur. To what poor circumstances the family is now reduced is described by Baron Haimendorf as follows:

"A ruined building, built like an old temple, of large hewn stones, was pointed out to me as the Gadi of the Tsakati Rajas. The Raja's family still lives in the village, but in

quite an ordinary thrached Gond house. All that remains of the Raja's former Estate is the Patelki of three villages, namely, Ankoli, Mavala and Yapalguda. Until some twentyfive years ago the Tsakati Raja had also Watan rights in Tankoli, but he appointed a Muslim Gumashta, and the latter soon appropriated both Watan rights and the Raja's land, and his son is now a substantial landowner who lives in Adilabad. The Raja family has only two fields of Rs. thirty revenue in Ankoli, and these are in the name of Gaurubi, the widow of the late Raja Hanumant Rao. The police patelki has gone to the late Raja's brother's son, Kasi Ram who lives in the village".

The jurisdiction of Tchakati Rajas extended to the villages of Indraveli, Tosham, Pipri, Devapur, Mutnur, Gintera all in Utnur Taluk and in Adilabad up to Adilabad.

3. Pendur Rajas of Karra Kampa. The family migrated from Gar Bori in the Berars. They must be related to the Pendurs of Bhilgaon who also are emigrants from the Berars. The ancestor of this family Pendur Jeti Mangra is said to have been the Raja for 125 villages. The Rajas of Karra Kampa are the descendants of the eldest son Hanmant Rao. I again quote Baron Haimendorf, than whom there is no better authority on the Gonds:

"Kampa is the old seat of the Gond Rajas of the Pendur Pari and there are still the remains of an old fort which encloses an area of several acres. This fort seems to have consisted only of roughly built stone walls and to have had none of the gateways and battlements in Muslim style such as the Manikgarh fort. But there are still a few sculptures superior to those found in ordinary Gond villages. e.g. the relief of Maheshwara treading on a demon, now no longer understood, but revered as Hanuman. Several gates are still pointed out and also the place where the bazar was held. Near one gate is the village Aural with a stone sculpture and two newly carved posts with human faces. In the old times the village extended to all sides of the fort and across the river, and seems to have had the size of a small town. This is all the more probable as the Pendur Rajas ruled over a very considerable

territory in which members of their family were established as Mokashis.

“But today Kampa comprises only four houses, ordinary small Gond houses standing in the centre of the fort whose ground has been turned into a field. Not far from the village is the shrine of the Pendur Persa Pen, which contains also the Raja’s Gadi, a rather pathetic wooden stool on which he sits at Dassera.

“The Raja, now usually referred to as Mokashi Pendur Bhimn, is quite as poor as any ordinary Gond, but not without any dignity. In the old times, the Watan of Kara Kampa alone included twelve villages with their subsettlements, and while the Raja ruled immediately over these, his relation managed the large Watan of Yesapur Barisa in Rajura Taluk, Pippalgaon with its forts in Kinwat and Jari with a group of villages in Both Taluk.

“Of his large estate nowadays only two inferior fields one of them inside the fort, are left to the Pendur Raja and their revenue is altogether rupees twelve.”

4. Korenga Mokashi of Chandpalli. Their jurisdiction extends to the villages of :

1 Chandpalli, 2 Sardapur, 3 Karki, 4 Chapri, 5 Ponar, 6 Runkum, 7 Patan, 8 Sonkasa, 9 Pithgaon, 10 Jinoli, 11 Karoni, and 12 Warur. The present holder Yeshwant Rao now holds hardly more than twenty acres of land.

5. Drungnaka Mokashis of Badi. Their jurisdiction extends to the villages of Saidpur, Borgaon, Pataguda, Sangwi, Gharkaguda and Jamni.

6. Kowa Mokashi of Jainath. The present holder Korwa Mahdu lives in Kaparda near Dorli in Kinwat Taluk. His jurisdiction was near the Watans of Kampa and Badi.

7. Soyam Poi Patel of Adilabad. Their jurisdiction was supposed to extend to the villages of :

1 Lakshmanpur, 2 Pipalgaon, 3 Makera, 4 Belgaon, 5 Muktapur, Khapri, 6 Avalpur, 7 Pardi, 8 Damapuram, 9 Sheoghat, 10 Kamte, 11 Ada, 12 Arli and 13 Lad Sangwi.

The family seems to have migrated from Manikgarh hills. It also appears that Poi Patels had more than one village under their jurisdiction

Luxtipet Taluk and the Paiga Taluk of Narsapur :

1. The Atram Rajas of Venkatrapet belong to the Atram family of Sitagondi, which has been mentioned so prominently in Gond stories of the 18th century. The family has jurisdiction over the present Ralli Block and other villages of Luxatipet Taluk.

2. Korwa Mokashis of Talaiptet : The Korwa Mokashis have jurisdiction in the country roughly between the Godawari, and the hills upto Udampur on the way to Utnur from the south.

3. The Kumra Rajas of Murmargy : The Kumra Rajas have jurisdiction in the Kawal Patti. This roughly covers the area north of Jannaram and eastwards the Paigah forest area.

4. The Chikram Mokashis of Yapaguda : Their jurisdiction is to the west of the Korwas.

The above list, though extensive, does not exhaust the list of the Rajas, Deshmukhs, Mokashis and Poi Patels. There may be a few more ancient families who wielded power and prestige, but are now unknown. To give the list again :

1. SIRPUR TALUK

No Mokashi. The whole Taluk was probably under the Rajas of Chanda directly.

2. CHINNUR TALUK

No Mokashis in this Taluk. Only the Maraskola Patels of Yempali are slightly important.

3. NIRMAL TALUK

There are only three villages of Gonds in this Taluk and they too are situated in the hills.

4. RAJURA TALUK

1. Salam Mokashis of Injapur, six Brother Phratry Migrants from Tilani.

2. Kumara Mokashis of Chinai : Five Brother Phratry.
3. Kursenga Mokashis of Temburvai : Five Brother Phratry.
4. Kinnaka Mokashis of Sengaon : Five Brother Phratry.
5. Supam Mokashis of Malni : Five Brother Phratry.
6. Kotnak Mokashis of Bhombara : Six Brother Phratry.
7. Pendur Mokashis of Markalmetta : Six Brothers Phratry : Asifabad Taluk : migrants from Gad Bori.

5. ASIFABAD TALUK

8. Korenga Mokashis of Mosa : Six Brother Phratry.
9. Kotnak Mokashis of Sangwi Indhani : Six Brother Phratry.
10. Madavi Mokashi of Tilani : Seven Brother Phratry, emigrated from Devgar in C. P.
11. Pendhra Mokashis of Rompalli : migrants from Devgarh in C. P. : Seven Brother Phratry.
12. Rai Siram Poi Patels of Mangi : Six Brother Phratry.

6. UTNUR TALUK

13. Atram Rajas of Lakharam : Six Brother Phratry migrants from Chanda
14. Atram Rajas of Sirpur Kanchanpalli : Six Brother Phratry.
15. Kumra Lal Shah Mokashi of Dongargaon : Five Brother Phratry.
16. Kumra Jangu Deshmukh of Dewapur : Five Brother Phratry
17. Tchakati Raja of Indervelli : Four Brother Phratry.
18. Mesram Mokashi of Dabba : Seven Brother Phratry.

7. BOTH TALUK

19. Siram Mokashis of Duparpet : Four Brother Phratry.
20. Kanaka Poi Patel of Germa : Five Brother Phratry.
21. Durwa Deshmukhs of Karatwada : Five Brother Phratry.

8. KINWAT TALUK

22. Geram Deshmukhs of Kinwat : Six Brother Phratry.
23. The Pendur Mokashis of Jhari : Six Brother Phratry.

24. Penur Rajas of Bhilgaon : Deshmukhs, migrants from Gad Bori in the Berars.
25. Kanaka Mokashis of Palshi : Five Brother Phratry.
26. Verma Mokashis of Miniki : Seven Brother Phratry.

9. ADILABAD TALUK

27. Maraskola Mokashi of Pipri : Seven Brother Phratry.
28. Tchakati Rajas of Ankoli : Four Brother Phratry.
29. Pendurs of Karra Kampa : Six Brother Phratry : migrants from Gad Bori in the Berars.
30. Korenga Mokashi of Chandpalli : Six Brother Phratry.
31. Korwa Mokashi of Jainath : Korwa Mokashis : Four Brother Phratry.
32. Soyam Poi Patel of Adilabad

10. LUXTIPET TALUK

33. Drungnaka Mokashis of Badi : Luxtipet Taluk and Paiga Taluk of Narapur.
34. The Atram Rajas of Venkatrapet : Six Brother Phratry.
35. Korwa Mokashi of Talaipet : Four Brother Phratry.
36. The Kumra Rajas of Kawal Patti : Five Brother Phratry.
37. The Chikram Mokashis of Yapa Gudia.

The Mokashi system among the Gonds has been dealt with at some length. The problem can be approached in another way.

Not a few of the Mokashi families are of recent origin and are migrants to Adilabad from the C. P. The Atrams of Lakharam, are from Chanda. The Madavis of Tilani are from Devgarh. The Pandhras of Rompalli are from beyond Chanda. The Pendurs are from Gad Bori. Even in the case of others, migration from one Taluk to the other has taken place. The Durwas of Both are from the valley of Moar in Asifabad Taluk. The Gerams of Kinwat are from Manikgarh. The Atrams of Venkatrapet in Luxtipet are from Sitagond in Utnur Taluk, and the Tchakatis of Indervelli are from Ankoli in Adilabad Taluk.

The dates of a few of these families can be fixed with tolerable certainty. The Durwas migrated to Both about 1750 A. D. The Gerams must have preceded them slightly earlier.

This incidentally fixes the date of Chandra Akbar Shah, the Gond governor of Jangaon, now Asifabad, which must be about 1750 A. D. The Kingdom of Chanda was annexed soon after. The Deshmukhs of Sirpur Tandur, who are Brahmins and today own most of the Watans in the Taluks of Sirpur and Asifabad in the purely Tribal Zone, came originally from Mahur. They seem to have displaced the previous Gond officials and taken over the watans from the Gonds.

The Pandhras of Rompalli came to the Ralli Block between 1750 and 1775, since they received concessions from the Bhosle Rajas of Nagpur who ruled in East Adilabad during this period.

The Kumras of Chinai and the Kotnaks of Bhombara rose to power during this period. The Pendurs of Kara-Karnpa, Jhari, Bhilgaon and Yesapur, can all be put down at the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century. The Madavis of Tilani must have migrated at this time, since the Chandra Akbar Shah figures in the story of the migration of Madavi Baji Rao to Tilani. We also hear of Bir Shah of Chanda who lived in that period. If that is correct then the document with the Madavis relates to a Bajirao who lived in 1850 A. D. and received concessions from the Zamindars of Tandur.

We must always bear in mind the fact that the Rajas of Chanda, directly ruled the territories under them until 1751 A. D., as feudatories of the Moguls or Marathas. This territory comprised not more than the present Taluks of Adilabad, Sirpur and small parts of Rajura Taluks. In the rest of the Adilabad District the Moguls and their successors the Nizams ruled. After 1751, the Gond Taluks of Sirpur and Asifabad passed under the Marathas who held them till 1773 when they passed to the Nizam.

It is curious that none of the Mokashi families goes beyond 1750 A. D. and that in the whole of Sirpur Taluk there

are no Mokashis. Even in Asifabad, the Madavis, the Pandh-ras, and others do not go beyond 1750. It is clear that the institution of the Mokashis originated among the Gonds later. In Sirpur and Asifabad the Rajas directly administered the territories under them.

The western part of Adilabad as also the centre was a part of the Berars for a long time and was administered like any other Mogul Territory. The Deshmukhs and Deshpandes of Adilabad are referred to in the Persian Documents of 1720 A. D. The Udaram Rajas of Mahur who were also Deshmukhs of Mahur rose to power and influence in 1590.

The Deshmukhs and Deshpandes of Rajura and Tandur, of course came later. It is these who displaced Gond Rule and seized power. They not only exercised the functions of Deshmukhs and Deshpandes but also became Patels and Patwaris themselves, denying the Gonds legal rights of collecting revenue like other village officials. Who among the Gonds collected revenue and which of these families have survived, under what name, it is difficult to say. It is even difficult to think of officials of individual villages, since the Mokashis of later days and even Patels and Patwaris of today, have seldom less than ten to twelve villages to manage.

Even the Brahmin Patwaris of Utnur do not go beyond the early 19th century, and to this day as is well known, most of the villages in Utnur are without hereditary Patels. There is evidence that in Utnur and other tribal areas of Both, Kinwat and Adilabad, Gond village headmen were asked to collect revenues and were given hereditary posts. Due to scarcity of population and wild nature of the country they restricted to themselves the duties of revenue collection.

Even where the Gond headmen were collecting revenue they were made use of by the nontribal Deshmukhs without being given official sanction and hereditary recognition. The process is followed even to this day. During the tours of Utnur and Both, I found that nontribal Patels and Patwaris themselves remained absent from the villages for months together and made full use of the Gond headmen in the collec-

tion of revenue and other work without the latter getting any official recognition.

The Raja of Lakharam was a big Zamindar at one time and wielded considerable influence among the Gonds. But there is no evidence that he wielded magisterial powers in the area over tribals and nontribals alike and that his decisions, among the Gonds, had the sanction of the nontribal authorities. The same can be said to the Atram Rajas of Kanchanpalli and Sirpur, who had received Jagirs and certain other honours.

These families and other headmen were made use of by the authorities for their work without being given powers or authority. The result of all this was that all villages are today without hereditary Patels or Patwaris outside the area under the Zamindars of Tandur.

Some of the Mokashis were the creation of the Tandur Zamindar. The document in the possession of the Madavis of Tilani proves this. There is no mention of the duty of the collection of Government dues. The only thing demanded of them is loyalty. Nor have they been given any share in the revenue or any assignment on the revenue. The Mokashis have been given the right of collecting a fixed amount from the Gonds in cash and kind every year, a fee for marriages among the Gonds and certain honours at the time of Dasehra and other Gond Festivals. There is no mention of the duty of collection of revenue. The Mokashis of Chinai Barsa in Rajura Taluk, were asked to perform certain duties in the fort Manikgarh, and to be loyal to the State for which they received the Mokasa of the twelve villages round Chinai. It could thus appear that the Mokashis were given certain duties to perform, in return for which they were given certain villages or lands, but were not turned into revenue collectors or village officials.

It has been noticed above that the term Mokasa came to mean any reward by the Government for a duty assigned. The return was in the shape of rent-free villages or in any other form, which was immaterial. The main thing to note is that a Mokasi was one who received a gift in land or any other

right for certain duties. It must further be noted that the Mokasa did not include necessarily the Watans of village Patelki or Patwari. It would be wrong to think of a Mokashi as also the village hereditary official.

In the case of Gond Mokashis, considering the origin of most of them in the late 18th century, it appears that they were recognised as Mokashis and were assigned the duties of maintaining peace in the villages under their charge. One of the duties of the Mokashi was to protect the person and property of the travellers. It was more natural, then, that prominent Gonds should be asked to keep a watch on the villages under their charge and also to maintain peace. In return they were given certain powers of decision and execution among the Gonds. The same can be said of the Rajas. The present Raja families of Lakharam, Venkatapur, Tchakati, and Sirpur Kanchanpalli, are in places where the Gonds did not exercise ruling powers for centuries together, and the history of these families, or at least some of them, does not go beyond three centuries.

But one thing is certain. These families of Rajas and Mokashis did wield great influence in tribal matters, and were recognised as important by the Mogul and Maratha authorities who gave them the task of protecting the travellers, maintaining peace in the area under them, gave them a status among the Gonds and entitled them to certain rights and honours among them to give them an increased status. The Deshmukhs and Deshpandes in Rajura and Sirpur and Asifabad and the nontribal Patels and Patwaris in the other Taluks carried on the work of revenue collection and other allied duties. It was in this context, namely, the duty of policing and protection in the tribal area that the term Mokashi came to be used in respect of the Gond Mokashis.

It is a thousand pities that the Mokashi system has declined due to the families being ignored and what would have assured a continuity of leadership among the Gonds until new leaders could arise, has disappeared. It is pathetic to see the old Mokashis working as village-watchmen on four rupees a month with memories of the old importance still in them.

CONCLUSION

1. The Mokashis of Adilabad District rose mostly in the later half of the 18th century, when Gond rule even in the remaining Taluks of Sirpur and Asifabad disappeared in 1751 A. D.

2. Their duties were that of maintaining peace in the tribal areas and protecting the person and property of the strangers in their jurisdiction.

3. They were, in return recognised as important leaders of Gonds and allowed to decide cases of religious and semi-religious nature among the Gonds. They were allowed to collect fees from the Gonds on certain occasions like marriage, fixed dues in cash and kind every year and were allowed certain honours at festivals like Dasehra. In certain cases they were given assignments on revenue like Maqta and also Inam lands.

4. They were not recognised as revenue collectors. The theory that some of them were Deshmukhs is doubtful. No evidence to that effect is forthcoming.

5. There is no evidence that the system of Mokashis existed during the days of Gond Rule, since we do not hear of Mokashis in Sirpur, where Gonds ruled longest. In Asifabad we know precisely when the Mokashi families came to prominence.

6. The decline of the Mokashi system is to be regretted, as it removed a class which while assuring continuity of leadership to Gonds would have checked to some extent at least the process of exploitation of the tribals by the nontribals.

CHAPTER V

GOND NAMES

Names occurring among the Gonds of Adilabad display some curious features.

1. Names occurring in Gond Myths and Stories are given to the children.
2. Names of Hindu Mythology and other Folklore are given.
3. Names occurring in the neighbouring Telugu and Maratha population, are borrowed freely.
4. Names remembered by the Gonds in their relations with the Moguls and other Muslim Rulers.
5. Names of other categories.

Following are some of the names met with among the Gonds:

- | | |
|---------------|----------------|
| 1. Lachu | 20. Mahadu |
| 2. Maru | 21. Govinda |
| 3. Bhimu | 22. Bhiku |
| 4. Godi | 23. Kesu |
| 5. Chitru | 24. Devji |
| 6. Keshav Rao | 25. Samu |
| 7. Mahadu | 26. Tukaram |
| 8. Jangu | 27. Hiru |
| 9. Manku | 28. Lakku |
| 10. Shankru | 29. Sakharam |
| 11. Isru | 30. Seku |
| 12. Paiku | 31. Ghagru |
| 13. Gangu | 32. Malku |
| 14. Ramu | 33. Godru |
| 15. Dhumaji | 34. Sirmu |
| 16. Dharmu | 35. Bhoju |
| 17. Raghu | 36. Jambi Rao |
| 18. Somu | 37. Telang Rao |
| 19. Polu | 38. Hannu |

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------|
| 39. Jalpatrao | 76. Sitru |
| 40. Nagu | 77. Paspu |
| 41. Raju | 78. Istari |
| 42. Sungu | 79. Sham Rao |
| 43. Moti | 80. Supari |
| 44. Narsing Rao | 81. Mani |
| 45. Devu | 82. Barik Rao |
| 46. Hanmant Rao | 83. Arjun Rao |
| 47. Yashwant Rao | 84. Dongru |
| 48. Karnu | 85. Jagga Rao |
| 49. Siddu | 86. Sanyasi |
| 50. Ganpati | 87. Bakku |
| 51. Lingu | 88. Babu Rao |
| 52. Vithu | 89. Bapu Rao |
| 53. Lakhmaji | 90. Kasi Ram |
| 54. Pallu | 91. Pandu |
| 55. Kisan | 92. Ganga Rao |
| 56. Chandu | 93. Nana |
| 57. Issu | 94. Yogaji Rao |
| 58. Chalpa | 95. Venkat Rao |
| 59. Jogu | 96. Ashwa Rao |
| 60. Jaitu | 97. Krishna Rao |
| 61. Mutta | 98. Mohnya |
| 62. Bhujang Rao | 99. Vaijya |
| 63. Sambhu | 100. Nima Nayak |
| 64. Dhanu | 101. Ram Shah |
| 65. Kosu | 102. Akbar Shah |
| 66. Sukku | 103. Burhan Shah |
| 67. Badi | 104. Chandan Shah |
| 68. Tanu | 105. Lal Shah |
| 69. Nimu | 106. Nizam Shah |
| 70. Moti Ram | 107. Shahin Shah |
| 71. Baji Rao | 108. Sone Shah |
| 72. Suddu | 109. Dindar Khan |
| 73. Kuddu | 110. Bir Shah |
| 74. Sadu | 111. Ballal Shah |
| 75. Kanu | |

In the Western parts of Adilabad, where the Gonds come in contact with the Marathas, they always show a tendency to borrow Marathi names. Thus we find names as Hanmant

Rao, Baji Rao, Mahipat Rao, Jalpat Rao, Keshav Rao, Yashwant Rao, Madhav Rao, Narsing Rao, Ramji, Somji Nana, Babu Rao, Dongru, Bhiku, Pandu, Tukaram, Ganga Ram, Kasi Ram and so on. Often a name like Hannu is found, but as soon as the person feels grown up in importance, he changes it to Hanmant Rao.

In the Telugu parts the Gonds are freely borrowing the names of their neighbours like, Ramiah, Bakkodu, Sanyasi, Lachhu, and so on.

Moslem influence has crept in, and the Gonds like using the word Shah with their names, such as Telang Shah, Ram Shah and so on. Even Moslem names are used although in a restricted manner. In the 15th century the Gonds came in contact with the Muslim Rulers, and were impressed with their names and borrowed them freely.

Akbar Shah, Burhan Shah, Lal Shah, Nizam Shah, Chandan Shah are some of the names to be met with among the Gonds although they are not common. While on tour of the Tilani Block, I was surprised to find that Madavi Narsing Rao has named his son Dindar Khan. On inquiry, he said, that he was proud of a Madavi ancestor the ruler of the Kingdom of Devgarh who helped the Emperor Alamgir. Of course there is the story of Madavi Ruler of Devgarh turning a Moslem and securing the throne for himself from the ruler, Bakht Buland Shah. Madavi Narsing Rao thinks that another Madavi Dindar Khan was also a brave soul and thus he was proud to name his son Dindar Khan.

The Gond names Manku, Jangu, Lingu, Jaitu, are a part of Gond Mythology. Lingo or Lingu is the hero of many a tale among the Gonds. He it was, who rescued the Gond brothers from their prison, settled them and taught the Gonds methods of worship.

Seku is the Divine Serpant the Deity of the Mesrams worshipped at Keslapur. Manku is the heroine, who is worshipped along with her son Jaitu is another pure Gond Deity.

In Gond mythical stories, the Gond Sambhu Mahadeva, figures prominently. And so we hear the names of Sambhu, Mahadev and Isru occurring among the Gonds. The Maha-

bharata heroes Bhima, Arjuna and Dharma are also popular among the Gonds. Krishna occurs less frequently, and is found only among the socially advanced Gonds. Pandu, Vithu, and Karnu are some of the other names borrowed from the Hindu neighbours. Ramu, Lakhmaji, are from the Ramayana.

The tendency for the socially advanced Gonds to reform their names is apparent. We thus hear of Yashwant Rao, Jalpat Rao, Narsing Rao, Hanmant Rao, Bhim Rao, Telang Rao. Commonly the names would be known among the Gonds such as, Yesunda, Narsu, Jalpati, Hannu, and Bhimji. Mahadu becomes Madhav Rao. Similar examples could be multiplied easily.

What strikes one is the limited number of names found among the Gonds. There are at least ten thousand males among the Gonds but the list of 115 names is fairly exhaustive. On the whole Hindu Mythical names are not found to the extent one would expect. Except Mahadu, Bhima, Sambhu, Hannu, Ramu, Lachu, which are fairly common we hear of other Mythical names less frequently. Arjuna, I found only among half a dozen people. Krishna only among two or three persons. Govinda Rao, half a dozen times. Pandu and Vithu among very few. We do not hear much of the common names of Narayan, Gopal, Keshava, Gyanba, Namdev and others met with among the Hindu neighbours. This shows how little the great Mythologies, Ramayana, Mahabharata and other puranas have a direct influence among the Gonds. Some of these have found their way through the stories preserved by the Pradhans and the names brought by them have found their way among the Gonds.

CHAPTER VI

VILLAGE NAMES AMONG THE GONDS

One way to find out the area where the Gonds are or were spread is to inspect the names of the villages and see whether they bear any Gond influence. In the District of Adilabad there are nearly five hundred Gond villages.

The following are names from the Trees and Fruits and Vegetables.

1. Mangi—Terminalia Arjuna-Koña tree
2. Keslapur—Grewia Tilleefolia-Dhaman tree
3. Keslaguda— " "
4. Harkapur—From the Gulmoha tree—Bassia Latifolia
5. Salewada—Teak
6. Marka Gondi—from the mango tree
7. Markal metta— " "
8. Irkepalli—From the Gulmoha tree-Bassia Latifolia
9. Ghotti—Zizyphus Xylopyra-Ghont tree
10. Arjuni—Terminalia Arjuna
11. Dorli—A wild fruit
12. Ullipetta—Onion
13. Jamuldhara—The Jamul fruit
14. Serwai—From a kind of grass
15. Renganguda—from Renga Plums Zizyphus Jubosa
16. Belgaon—Aegle marmelos Mahka Mara in pure Gondi
17. Maralwai—probably from Mara, tree
18. Chintepalli—Tamarind tree-Tamarindus Indica
19. Chilatiguda—A thorny plant
20. Pipri—Ficus religiosa also Ali Mara in Gondi
21. Kampa—A thorny plant
22. Ichlapur—Tamarind tree
23. Kadodi—Bauhinea purpurea Kachnar tree

Marathi and Telugu influence can be traced in the names of many Gond villages. A few of the purely tribal villages

where there is no non-Gond element will show how the Gonds have used Marathi and Telugu names in their villages.

Utnur Taluk : Dongargaon, Wargaon, Narsapur, Mahagaon, Rampur, Gangapur, Bhimpur, Sawri, Jhari, Dhaba, Lokari, Mallapur. Telugu influence can be seen in the following names: Kachanpalli, Dantanpalli, Netnur, Punaguda, Soinur, Jangaon, Waipet, Walgonda, Hirapur, Pochampalli, Kottapalli, Gadiguda.

In Rajura Taluk we meet more Marathi names. Sonpur, Patan, Diwiti, Injapur, Khirdi, Irgohan, Sengaon, Palejhari, Belgaon, Jhulbardi, Jamni, Nokari.

In Asifabad we meet names as Dhanora, Jhari, Rompalli, Dantanpalli, Dewaiguda, Chintalmadra, Pangadimadra, Tiriyan, Durgapur, Borjam, Ginnedhari, Moindagudipet, Swati, Phulhaba, Goigaon, Rewalguda, Hirdepalli.

In Both Taluk the names of the villages are, Dhuparpur, Mankapur, Gayatpali, Pardi, Patnapur, Karatwada, Andur, Nawegaon, Salyada, Puna, Harkapur, Shantapur, Bilori, Kokasmanur, Girijam, Kupti, Harkai, Wakdi, Morkhirdi.

Kinwat Taluk : Chikhli, Budhwarpet, Ghotti, Markaguda, Umri, Sarmati, Pippalgaon Talaiguda, Salaiguda, Nagjhari, Malkapur, Khelda, Jhari, Pendur, Bhilgaon, Kamthala, Ganeshpur, Dhamandari, Ambari, Malkaguda, Jorla, Lalgari.

Adilabad Taluk : Kampa, Khanapur, Saidpur, Chenchughat, Chinpalli, Dubbagudem Toyaguda, Garkaguda, Mangorla, Chidhari, Khandala, Pataguda, Chapri, Ponar, Runkum, Patan, Sonkas, Pithgaon, Jinoli, Karoni and Warur.

Sirpur Taluk : Utsurangpalli, Mugvelli, Somni, Tilai, Ambaghat, Gubbai, Susmir, Chitam, Ketni, Tumdihatti, Bhurepalli, Sewpalli, Kukudhatti, Rudrapur, Nagepalli, Kottepalli.

Laxatipet Taluk : Islapur, Mankapur, Dewapur, Peddapur, Sonapur, Gatlerapalli, Gundal, Gadpur, Talmala.

There are very few villages belonging to Gonds in Nirmal and Chinnur Taluks.

The villages given above are only a few of the total number of Gond villages and have been given to illustrate the Marathi or Telugu influence on Gond colonies. Incidentally they also demarcate the extent of Gond influence.

In Nirmal, Laxatipet and Chinnur Taluks there are few Gond colonies excepting in the hills. If ever there was Gond influence in these parts just north of the Godawari it must have disappeared long ago. Similarly, the Gonds have been pushed from the banks of the Penganga towards the hills of the centre long ago.

Trees and fruits and plants seem to be generally preferred by the Gonds in naming their villages. Birds also come in though not often. Pitteguda is one example, Pitte meaning a sparrow. Khedda, meaning forest also finds a place in village names. A very small number of names come from the clans. Darwenguda is one of them taking from the Darwe Gonds. Kolama is another village from the Kolams. Koyepalli, Koyeguda, are villages meaning colonies of Gonds. Koinur, Shivpalli, Mankapur, Dewada, Dewapur, are names from the Gonds and Mythical characters.

Hills, mountains and plateaus are represented by names as Rasimetta, Bhusimetta, that is small hills. Merkalmetta, Yallapathar, Panapathar represent Plateaus. Loddiguda, Sita-gondi, Markagondi, Myakalgondi, refer to valleys and passes. Nokewari, Nokari, mean hill points.

Barsa means a group of twelve villages. We thus have the villages of Bhombara Barsa, Chinai Barsa and others. Parandoli also means a centre of twelve villages from Paranda: twelve.

Rivers and streams come in the following villages, Jhari, Nagjhari, Ginnejhari, Palejhari, and others.

We thus see that Gond villages are generally named on Telugu and Marathi lines. The village names ending with: Pur, Ur, Palli, and Guda being found in great numbers. Pure Gondi names of trees, streams, hills, points, fruits, willows, and vegetables are found. Gonds, clans, and the tribes also find a place in village names. They thus give an indication of the extent of Gond influence and help us to locate the habitations of the aborigines in Adilabad District.

CHAPTER VII

THE PRADHANS

The Pradhans play an important and necessary part in the Gond Social system. For one, leaving aside the very small number of Thott, who speak Gondi among themselves and sing Gondi Songs and Myths, the Pradhans are the only people who have preserved through their songs the memory of the Gond Heroes and Heroines, the story of the origin of the Gond Race, its wanderings and its woes and triumphs. Very few Gonds know these songs and it is customary to call in the Pradhans on select occasions when the villagers gather to hear the Pradhans sing on their Kikri, a musical instrument. These recitations often last till the early hours of the morning and are thoroughly enjoyed by the Gonds and other tribals. Were the Pradhans to give up this profession of bardship, a whole world of Gond Myths and stories would disappear and the Gond Race would be without its history and mythology.

Who are these Pradhans and how did they happen to be attached to the Gonds? For long it was thought that the Pradhans were the hereditary priests of the Gonds and presided over the latter's religious ceremonies. It is now realised that the Pradhans have nothing to do with the religious ceremonies. They seem to have been looked upon by the Gonds as shrewd fellows, whose work was to act as general advisers to them in all matters, to act as messengers and negotiators in marriages and other affairs and sing ballads and other songs. They were thus bards, advisers and in general, companions who were admired for their shrewdness by the Gond Chiefs. Socially they were and are regarded as inferior to the Gonds by the Gonds themselves, who consider themselves to be the patrons of the Pradhans. All the Gond clans have their Pradhan Bards who are supposed to know Gond Myths in general and the history of the family of their patrons in particular.

The Pradhans preserve the memory of their great one, Hira Suka Pradhan. This person seems to have been the ad-

viser of Gond Chiefs. The Gond Heroine Manko, to escape ill-treatment at the hands of her husband, takes refuge in his house. Further when she wanders in wilderness, Hira Suka is sent to bring her back. The Gonds, it thus appears, could not think of their affairs without their Pradhans. If the Gond desired to marry a girl, he would send his Pradhan to the house of the father of the girl. The Pradhan would then start negotiations. If the father proved adamant the Pradhan sets up his stick, the Gorka in the courtyard of the house and dares the father to take out the Gorka or consent to the match. The negotiations invariably succeed. The father dares not show himself against the people by throwing out the Gorka. The Pradhans thus have made themselves necessary to the Gonds without becoming their priests.

Dr. Hiwale, in his work on the Pradhans of the northern Narmada Valley, has dealt with the numerous versions of the origin of the Pradhans. He has also described the social position they hold in the various Districts of the C. P. and Berar.

The Pradhans in Adilabad speak Marathi as their mother tongue. Even in the Telugu part of Laxatipet Taluk I came across Pradhans who among themselves spoke corrupt Marathi. Throughout my three years' stay among the Gonds I did not come across any Pradhan whose mother tongue was Gondi. Only one conclusion is possible under these circumstances and it is that the Pradhans came into contact with and allied themselves to, the Gonds late in the day. Originally, they seem to have been professional bards of the Rajput Kings and chiefs of the Central Provinces. With the decline of these chiefs, the bards must have lost their means of subsistence and with it their social status with the rise of the Gond Chiefs, who must have been looked down upon by the Rajput Families. The Pradhans found it economically advantageous to themselves to seek service with the Gonds. But mixing with beef-eating Gonds must have meant their excommunication and thus in course of time the Pradhans lost all status among the caste people and became a part of the Gond institutions. That the Pradhans were at one time or other connected with the Hindu Social System is apparent from the fact that whereas the Hindus, at least in Adilabad, (and I speak from my experience

of Adilabad alone) look upon the Gonds as outside their systems, and hence have not thought about the place of the Gonds in Hindu social structure. They have likened the Pradhans to the depressed and untouchable castes. It is well known that in many parts of Adilabad the Mahars are referred to as Inkars, probably from the presence of a weaving class among them. Now, when, during my tours in the interior I inquired for whom a certain well was meant, I was told that it was reserved for the Inkars and the Pradhans. Why Pradhans, I inquired, and the people told me that the Pradhans were untouchables like the Inkars. They seemed surprised at my astonishment. It was all so natural to them.

It thus seemed that there was nothing to prevent the Pradhans from being punished for beef-eating and mixing with Gonds by being degraded to the position of untouchables. Fortunately, the Pradhans have been declared to be one of the tribes to benefit from the tribal uplift scheme. The result is that like the Gonds their social position has improved almost over night. Once the Pradhans, like the Gonds are considered to be outside the pale of the Hindu caste system, they cannot be treated as a caste among the Hindus and the Caste Hindu becomes indifferent to them whether they draw water from the caste well; and so is, almost unconsciously, the Tribal Department in the means of bringing up the Pradhans.

The Pradhans bear the same clan names as the Gonds. They number about three to four thousand in Adilabad District. In the Telugu Parts their numbers grow less and less. In central and southern parts of Sirpur Taluk I did not meet any Pradhans. In Somni, I was told, there were only two Pradhan families and when I visited that village, even they were out towards Ahiri. In Chinnur there were practically no Pradhans. In Sirpur Taluk there are a few Pradhan families in Makodi, bordering on Rajura Taluk. In Adilabad Taluk, in the village of Jainath, I found more than forty Pradhan families. There were an equal number in Kinwat Taluk near Mandwi. There were more than twentyfive families in Indervelli in Utnur Taluk. The Pradhans seem on the whole to feel at home in Marathi areas.

Though a number of Pradhan families still carry on their traditions of singing at Gond gatherings, more and more are giving up this profession and are taking to agriculture and other avocations. What is more, many have forgotten Gondi and now do not feel easy with the Gonds.

Baron Haimendorf has remarked how in Kinwat Taluk, "The cultural unity between Gonds and Pradhans has almost completely broken up. Most Pradhans live on daily labour and have forgotten the old Gond Myths and how to play the Kingri, their traditional string instrument. Consequently the Gonds, too, are gradually forgetting their traditions and have become slack in the cult of their clan deities. Many of the Pradhans do not even know Gondi any longer, and converse with the Gonds in Marathi, which is rapidly becoming the Gond's second language".

Baron Haimendorf found eleven Pradhan families in Geram, in Both Taluk. In Pardi Buzurg, in the same Taluk he found some Pradhans who knew nothing and did not play the Kingri, but only trumpets at weddings and funerals and act as assistance to other Pradhans. The Baron noted that the Pradhans were making the most of the large caste villages such as Sonala, where they seemed to be taking the place of the 'depressed classes, who under the influence of the Mission, were relinquishing their traditional occupation of music makers at rural ceremonies.

The following extracts from the Baron's tour Diaries relating to the Pradhans will show how slowly the Pradhans are giving up their traditional occupations.

"There is a Geram Pradhan living in the village (Malkapur, Kinwat Taluk) but he knows neither how to sing nor how to play the Kingri. He even confessed that he could not speak Gondi properly and talked to the Gonds in Marathi. He does only the fieldwork and does not play the trumpet. If there is a wedding, Pradhans from Ambari are called, and at the Persa Penpuja a Geram Pradhan of Ippaguda near Patoda plays the Kingri and sings. It seems that the whole Pradhan is here definitely in a state of decline. An old man who used to live in British India north of the river admitted too

that he never learnt to play the Kingri and with the loss of this the old myths die too”.

“The three Pradhans living in the village (of Jorla) no longer play the Kingri, but do field work, one of them works as a carpenter”.

“Late in the afternoon we left Mandwi and rode to Patoda. We had heard that a Pradhan Sadhu was living there and that he had a considerable following among the local Pradhan. The Sadhu Wika Deoba, was not there but on a tour attending some feast. His Guru, however, Mesram Madu, was in the village. He came and told us that he was the follower of a Pradhan Guru of British India, who used to visit Patoda occasionally, and that he later became a Guru himself. He gave up the association with Gonds and many of the old customs. He himself does not however do much teaching but his disciple the Sadhu goes from place to place and preaches. For many years he has tried to persuade the Gonds not to sacrifice cows and for this purpose went to places like the Keslapur Jatra, but without much success. Many Pradhans, on the other hand, adopted his teaching, they don't beg anymore from Gonds and don't attend Gond Puja. He and his followers pray only to one God, Bhagavan and to none of the Gond Gods and in the name of Bhagavan he makes Puja at the Tulsi Plant in front of his house.”

“Many Pradhans seem to follow his example, probably mainly in order to raise their social status. In this large village with many Hindu castes they must be conscious of their low status as long as they remain the bards of the Gonds and eaters of beef and moreover the Gonds are probably themselves too poor to support them as of old, so the Pradhans, none of whom own land, have had to take to daily labour and some to the renting of fields, and at the same time they are trying to conform more closely to the Hindu pattern. Not all have completely given up the Kingri, but the art is on the decline and is looked down upon by most of their local castemen.”

The above observations represent the position of the Pradhans very correctly.

Fortunately, the Pradhans have been declared a tribe entitled to all the protection afforded under the tribal scheme and thus saved from a degrading fate. I found their numbers rather large in the villages of Jainath in Adilabad Taluk, Indervelli in Utnur Taluk, Patoda in Kinwat Taluk, and Mandwi in Rajura Taluk. In these villages their number is more than one hundred and fifty families. Baron Haimendorf, during his tours in Kinwat, Both and Adilabad came across more than one hundred families. Further, Pradhan families are found in Keslapur, in Utnur Taluk, Deoti in Rajura Taluk, Makodi in Sirpur Taluk, and Hajipur in Luxtipet Taluk. All told the total number of Pradhan families throughout Adilabad must be about one thousand and their number between three to four thousands.

The Pradhans, as seen above, are the bards of the Gonds. I had occasion to hear their songs in Marlawai, Rasimetta, Keslapur, in Utnur Taluk, and Deoti in Rajura Taluk. At Deoti I heard the Manikgarh legend recited. In Marlawai the story of Gopichand and Taramati was recited. I also heard the myths of the origin of the world and the Gond at Marlawai and Keslapur. At Tosham, in Utnur Taluk, the Thottis recited the same story of the origin of the Gond race. I felt that the language used by the Pradhans contained an unnecessarily large number of Marathi words. Whereas the Thottis were sparing in the use of Marathi. This must be due to the fact that the Pradhans use Marathi amongst themselves and use Gondi only when they talk to the Gonds. The Thottis on the other hand speak Gondi as their mother tongue and hence use less Marathi words in their songs. The Thottis have comparatively less influence among the Gonds as compared with the Pradhans. I heard Ramchandra Maravi of Patan in Rajura Taluk saying that the Thottis were lowclass bards, lower than the Pradhans. Now that the Pradhans are losing touch with the Gonds, it would be worthwhile collecting the songs of the Thottis and studying them for genuine Gondi words. The Pradhans, thus, are responsible for an inordinately large number of Marathi words finding their way in Gondi. In the legend of Manikgarh recited at Deoti in Rajura Taluk, I heard Marathi sentences included fully in the songs.

This is one aspect of the Pradhan element. The other is more important. It has now become difficult to find out in the Gond myths that which is genuinely Gond and that which has crept in through the Pradhans. The story of Sambhu Mahadeva, gaining the chiefship of the Gods, and his wife Parvati-Girija, adopting Gond Gods and later, their imprisonment at the hands of Mahadeva, before their release through the efforts of Lingo seem to be mostly later additions. The whole story of non-Gond Gods seem to have come into the Gond myths mainly through the Pradhans and that too very late. The Pradhans can thus also be described as carriers of Hindu culture to the Gonds.

The Myths sung by the Pradhans have influenced the Gonds in the following ways :—

1. The Gonds have become familiar with Hindu Gods and mythical characters through these songs. Garbled and very incorrect versions of the Ramayana and Mahabharata have found their way through the Pradhans, into Gond consciousness. In Adilabad District I found that many young Gonds were conversant with the heroes of Mahabharata and other Myths at least to some extent. Their approach, thus to Hindu Gods and Goddesses was not of utter strangers. In one legend of the origin of the World I came across the following names of interest to Hindu students of Mythology :

Andhal Guru: he is supposed to reside in the Patala or the netherworld. He is also known by the names of Niranjān Guru, and Dhundmund Guru. Now this refers to the God in the Hindu conception, who is supposed to be Nirakara, that is, without form and who cannot be seen by the eyes. The following names among the Gonds reveal direct influence of the Hindu Mythical characters as imparted by the Pradhans through their songs :

Arjun Rao, Bhima, Dharmaji, Krishnaji, Keshav Rao, Ramu, Lachu, Lakhmaji, Pandu, Mahadu, Sambhu, Sakharam, Tuka Ram, Narsing Rao, Govind Rao, Madhav Rao, Hanmant Rao, Ragho Rao, Ganpat Rao, Karnaji, Shanker, Somji, Ganga Ram, Venkat Rao, Dewji, Yogaji Rao, Ashwa

Rao, Kashi Ram, Bhujang Rao, Surya Rao, Jayawant Rao, Yeshwant Rao, Sanyasi Rao, Nago Rao.

The above list is not exhaustive. To every visitor to Gond areas in Adilabad it is apparent that in the purely Gond villages there are very few temples of Hindu Gods. In Utnur Taluk in the Gond villages I came across the Mahadeva temple only in one place, namely at Raghapur. In another village there was a temple of Hanuman in the village of Pipri where I found a Gond with castemarks. The Siva temple may be explained as a remnant of Hindu influence. But on the whole the Gond areas are singularly free from Hindu Temples, say, of Mahadeva, Vishnu, Hanuman, or the Goddess Amba Bai. It is apparent that the Hindu religious form of worship does not enter the Gond religious system, even remotely. The stories of the Pandawas, and Siva, Vishnu, and others touch the Gonds only through the songs of the Pradhans and have affected them not so much in the religious as in the social sphere. The Gonds greet each other with Ram, Ram; when they are supposed to pray for somebody, they formally call on Sambhu Mahadewa, to protect the person or persons. In the Telgu area the word Bhagwantudu is used. Knowing the Gonds for the last three years, intimately, I feel that the Gond has next to no idea when he speaks of Sambhu Mahadewa. In speaking of Bhagwantudu he only confirms to the practice prevailing among the Telugu peasants and other classes. In fact I have never heard a Gond in times of difficulty invoking Sambhu Mahadewa. At the gathering in Keslapur (where a resolution was to be moved for the long life and prosperity of the Ruler, the choice had to be made between Sambhu Mahadewa and Bhagwantudu, both of whom were familiar to the Gonds, but none of whom was called upon or invoked in prayers in the way other Hindu communities do. The Gond habit is to sacrifice something to some deity or other at the appropriate season. The idea of prayer in the way the others do is foreign to the Gonds in Adilabad District.

But there can be no doubt that whatever familiarity the Gonds show with Hindu Mythology and Mythical characters is due mainly to the work done by the Pradhans among them. They are the link between the Hindus and the Gonds.

Of course, corrupt and distorted versions of the Mahabharata and other stories have found their way among the Gonds. This must be due to one of the two reasons. The Pradhans, were in the Hindu social system, men of little learning and less culture. They gathered of Hindu Mythology what trickled to them from above and passed it on to the Gonds.

The Gonds rose to power in the C. P. sometimes in the fifteenth century. The Pradhans seem to have come into contact with them soon after. The Pradhans are also called Patadis, that is singers. The name Pradhans, that is Ministers, must have been given to them by the Gonds, in imitation of the other Rajput ruling classes, much like the fashion of calling a small estate, or a temple with small income Samsthan, or a Zamindar calling his Secretary, a Diwan, and himself a Raja or Prince. The Gond chiefs must have found it very gratifying to themselves to look upon the Patadis as their Pradhans, that is assistants, advisers, and negotiators, in addition to their function as the preservers of Gond religious and social lore. Even now it is amusing to see with what patronising air the poorest of the Gonds asks the Pradhan to call people to the Panchayat, or to start negotiations with some family, and how familiarly and humbly the Pradhan greets the Gonds.

The Gonds do not, of course, leave the Pradhan in doubt about his social position. When some Pradhans were trained to be village accountants that is Patwaris, the problem cropped up as to what could be the reaction of the Gonds. A Pradhan is expected to greet the Gond first when the both meet. How could the Gonds greet him first when the Pradhan would become the Patwari. How would they do minor work for him, such as getting cots to the Chawdi, or carrying water to him and do sundry other work. Wisely it was decided to get some other work for the Pradhan such as a clerk or accountant in some other store. The Pradhan, thus, suffers both ways. He is depressed in the Hindu social system, as he associates with the Gonds and is a beef-eater. He is taken to be socially inferior, though a necessary and indispensable part of the Gond's social system. But there is no doubt that he is better off with the

Gonds than with the caste Hindus. In raising him socially, the sociologist administrator, will have to raise him economically among the Gonds and make him sufficiently independent of the Gonds, so that the Gonds could slowly learn to look upon him more as their Pradhan or adviser, and in the relations of the Pradhan with the Hindus, to insist that he is a part of the Gond system and thus outside the pale of untouchability. This danger has to be guarded against because the Pradhans are slowly cutting themselves adrift of the Gonds, in villages of mixed localities, where the caste Hindus, are not forgetful of their old associations.

CHAPTER VIII

THE KOLAMS

The Kolams are an aboriginal tribe mainly inhabiting the Central Provinces and Berar. According to the statistics of 1931, their number was 31,713. Of these, in Berar alone, they number, 29,515. Even in Berar, they are mostly concentrated in the District of Yeotmal, where according to the statistics of 1931, 25,647 persons spoke Kolami as their mother tongue. ('The Aboriginal Problem in the Central Provinces and Berar,' W. V. Grigson).

In Adilabad District, the Kolams, according to the census of 1941, numbered 746. But this figure is incorrect. In one Taluk alone, namely Sirpur, of Adilabad District, I counted, during my tour, nearly four hundred Kolam families, or nearly two thousand persons. The number of the Kolams in the District is at least, if not more than, five thousand. During the tour of Utnur Taluk, the number of Kolams assigned Pattas, or grants of land under Laoni Khas, was found to be about two hundred and fifty. In Asifabad, the Kolams are found in the Settlements of Devdurg, Dantanpalli, Jharri, Kerimeri, and Loddigura. Their numbers in that Taluk are about 150 families. In Luxtipet Taluk, in the village of Islapur there were more than thirty families. Including the other settlements there are at least fifty families in Luxtipet Taluk. In Rajura, they have a big colony, in Merkalmetta, in the Manikgarh hills, with more than thirty families, rather an unusual thing, for the Kolam villages are hardly more than ten or twelve huts. Another Kolam settlement in Rajura is Lendhigura near the historic fort of Manikgarh. The Kolams might easily number two hundred families in Rajura. There are no Kolams in Nirmal. In Chinnur where they generally speak Telugu there are nearly one hundred families in villages adjacent to Sirpur. In Adilabad, Both and Kinwat, all told they number three to four hundred families. The Kolams call themselves Kolawars. The Gonds call them Pujaris, and in

the village of Korsni in Sirpur, I heard a Gond refer to them as Bhumakas. The Telugu people of Adilabad District, refer to the Kolams as Mannyods. The term Kolam is rarely used by them. This must be the reason why so few persons have been confused with the Gonds, by the Census Officials. Besides, many Kolams in Sirpur and Chinnur have given up speaking Kolami and have taken to Telugu as their mother tongue. They refer to themselves as Mannyods. They were classed as Telugu peasants, and were further put down as Manne pods—Telugu peasants—who are different from the Mannyods.

The Kolams are as a race, coarser and rougher than the Gonds. They seem to have racial affinity to the Naikpods who call themselves Kolawars and, some of whom at least speak a dialect, akin to Kolami, although most of them speak Telugu. ("Tribal Hyderabad," Four Reports, by Baron Haimendorf, pp. 159). Some Naikpods in Kinwat speak Marathi. In the Berar they are known as Naikdas, where most of them speak Marathi as their mother tongue. The Naikpods are to be found in Bombay Presidency judging by the census figures. The Gonds refer to the Naikpods, as the Matsyalis, or the Fisher folk. If they are a branch of the Kolis who are or were professionally fishermen, then a most interesting subject for study would be to link the Kolams, Naikpods, and the Kolis as part of one community.

In Utnur, where I first heard of the Kolams, I found them to be good basket-weavers. The Kolams of Indervelli village brought Bamboos from the forests and wove them into baskets and mats. This seems to be the main side industry of the Kolams. The traditional method of cultivation practised by the Kolams in shifting cultivation known as the Podu, on hillslopes by means of digging sticks and hoes. This is what Baron Haimendorf says of the Kolams in his 'Tribal Hyderabad,' Four Reports, published by the Revenue Department, Government of H. E. H. the Nizam :

"The Kolams are a tribe of primitive shifting cultivators, who possessed until recently neither ploughs nor cattle, even today many of them subsist by hoe cultivation of hillslopes."

“Except for a few Kolams and Naikpods who have taken to independent plough cultivation, the members of these tribes have no cattle and as a rule not even goats, sheep or pigs; chickens and dogs being their only domestic animals. A Kolam or Naikpod is in contrast extraordinarily simple minded and limited in his outlook, he may have lived for several years in a locality and may yet be unable to give the name of more than the immediately adjacent villages, is incapable of describing the relative position of his own hamlet with the help of stones or sand drawing, has practically no idea of the circumstances of the peoples in the neighbouring villages, is entirely vague in regard to such matters as, Kharijkhata, Parampok, Patta land and reserved forests, and his reaction to any kind of difficulty is either flight or submission. Whereas most Gonds know their kinsmen upto the third degree and are able to say where they live, Kolams of a disbanded village, whose inhabitants were scattered, easily lose all contact with each other, and profess ignorance as to the whereabouts of their nearest relations.”

“Their standard of life is much lower than that of the Gonds and their settlements are much smaller. Even today these seldom consist of more than about twelve houses on one site, while in the old days before Forest Reservation hamlets of only three and four houses were scattered over the hills at points convenient for podu. The Kolams and Naikpods shifted their houses as often as they shifted their fields, their houses are much smaller than Gond houses, often containing only one room, and so, to rebuild was no great matter. The economic resources of the podu cutting cultivator are also meagre. The area of steep hillside which can be cultivated by one family with hoe and digging stick can in no way be compared to the area a Gond shifting cultivator with plough and bullocks to help him could till, and the crops sown and reaped, consisting mainly small millets, jawari and maize and certain vegetables, such as beans taro and marrows provide a family with sustenance only for about seven or eight months of the year, while for the other months, wild fruits and roots form the mainstay of diet. Thus the Kolams and Naikpods grow no crops for sale such as cotton and oilseed and for their cash requirements they

depend on the sale of jungle-produce and baskets, in whose manufacture they are expert."

The practice of podu cultivation, is now, among the Kolams getting lesser and lesser. In Tirpur Taluk, I had the opportunity to visit the following villages, with Kolam houses :

Lonvelli, seven Kolam families ; Sandgaon, eight Kolam families ; Tumrihatti, twelve families ; Gundibora, twelve families ; Babapur, twelve ; Kanki and Kowthara, twenty families each ; Ankhora, six families ; Gulla Talodi, sixty families ; Chintalmanepalli, fifty families ; Dabba and Babasagar, twenty five families each ; Korsini and Bhurepalli, six families each. But among these two hundred & sixty families I did not find any one practising the podu cultivation. It might be that because there are no hills in Sirpur worth the name and the Kolams have found it easier to work as agricultural tenants. I found the Kolams almost all of them good peasants some of whom at least possessed their own cattle.

In Luxtipet Taluk in the village of Islapur which contains more than twenty families of the Kolams, I did not notice any practice of the podu cultivation. On the other hand, the Kolam village of Markalmett, in the Manikgarh hills, practises podu cultivation extensively.

In the hills of Dhanora and Tilani, in Asifabad Taluk, some Kolam families still follow the podu. In Utnur, I found the practice of podu in the north, near the village of Dhaba. My Kolam informant, who belonged to Adilabad, told me that they did not have this practice in Kinwat or Adilabad.

It thus appears that only a limited number of the Kolams still follow the tradition of podu. That only these who are near the hills practise it. That poverty is responsible for this practice and not any sentimental attachment to this method of cultivation. That with increased facilities of improved methods of agriculture, the Kolam is giving up readily the method of the podu.

The Kolam of Sirpur now does not manufacture baskets and mats. The practice of honey-gathering is also not much in vogue in Sirpur. The character of the locality is affecting the Kolam economy differently. The Kolam of the Kinwat

and Both plains is reacting differently than the hard living hill Kolam of the Manikgarh hills, and the prosperous Kolam peasant of Sirpur with his womenfolk wearing Telugu dress and himself appearing like a Telugu peasant is different from his brother of the hills. In fact he refers to the hill folk as the Gutta Manyod. Further the Telugu speaking Manyod Kolam, is now tending to marry among his Telugu speaking brethren, and tends to draw apart from the Kolami speaking Kolams.

The Gonds and the Kolams seem to have lived together, and in each other's vicinity for quite a long time. In the District of Yeotmal, where there are 25,647 Kolams we find 69,013 Gonds. But the absence or the very small numbers of the Kolams in other parts of the C. P. and Berar, cannot be explained. It is possible that the Kolams, might have been all over at least in Berar but were slowly driven to concentrate in Yeotmal, which was till recently less developed than the other parts of Berar. In Adilabad, for 71,874 Gonds we find about 5000 Kolams. Considering the low level of agricultural development among the Kolams, as compared to the Gonds, the Kolams seem to have been earlier arrivals in Adilabad than the Gonds. Wherever both the communities came together, the Kolams seem to have become a subordinate but essential part of the economy of the Gonds. In the hilly parts of the District, where the Gond occupied the foothills, the Kolam occupied the ridges and cultivated the hill slopes. His settlements were smaller, but never very far from those of the Gonds. For the Gonds he must have been an useful asset. The Kolam, living in remote and dangerous hills, completes a certain amount of admiration from the Gond. During the tour of the Bhimpur valley in Utnur, referring to a particular inaccessible part of the tract, my Gond guides remarked that only Kolams could live in them. The Kolam is as remarked above, known as the Pujari, the priest, and this term might have been applied not only due to the well marked abodes of Kolam worship but also due to the belief that the Kolams know charms and secret lores. This is the belief even of the nontribals. During a tour of the Manikgarh Hills, the Forest Guard suddenly developed a pain in the stomach. On my anxious enquiries, I was told that the Kolam guide was uttering some incantations and that everything would be all right. The Kolams

are regarded, even among the Gonds, as bold and fearless, in the jungles. They also supplied the Gonds with their wants, minor jungle produce, and necessities such as mats, baskets and other sundries. Their hard life, and the consequent poverty were also known to the Gonds. The Gond Heroine, Manko, was discovered, by the Pradhan, Hira Suka, to be leading a life, as poor as that of a Kolam. The Kolams must have been employed, as casual labourers, by the Gonds, to whom, it must have been a welcome help.

The Paris, or clan names of the Kolams, are the same as those of the Gonds. We hear of Atrams, and the Madavis and others among the Kolams. Some Gonds think of the Kolams as a part of the Gond race. But it appears to be more the case of Kolams taking over the names of their patrons. Cases of Gonds interfering with Kolam women are not quite unknown. The Madavi Bajirao on his way from Devgarh to Tilani, is said to have spent a night with a Kolam girl, and the progeny took on the name of the Madavi Kolams. But this could not have been a general rule. Economic relations rather than racial affinities seem to have decided the attitude of the Gonds to the Kolam. The attitude of the Gonds to the Kolams is slightly that of the patrons, but the Kolams do not think so although in a number of ways the dependence of the Kolams becomes manifest.

Almost all the Kolams in Adilabad, excepting the Taluks of Sirpur and Chinnur know Gondi. On the other hand very few Gonds know Kolami. When I enquired, from my Kolam informant, whether the Kolams possessed any songs he replied in the negative, saying that Kolam women sang Gondi songs, in their everyday life. I had to modify this view when, I received reliable information that the Kolams did have songs of their own.

The Kolams have a separate Deity of their own, the Bhimana, whom they also call the Ayyak, the father. The Goddess they call the Awal. Now this Bhimana has been incorporated among the Gond Pantheon, and now has become an useful and essential figure in Gond religious observances. The Kolams, on the other hand participate in all Gond religious.

festivals. They attend the annual Keslapur fair and look upon all Gond ceremonies as their own.

The Kolam tribal system is modelled on the Gond system. They have the same Four, Five, Six and Seven brother Phratries, and the same Paris or clans. But ask them who their God is, they would quickly say, Bhimana.

Gond priests do not officiate at the ceremonies of the Kolams.

As remarked above, the Kolams, in some places, are termed by the Gonds, Bhumakas. Now this term is applied to a person who performs semi-religious and social functions connected with the village and not with the religious group. If this view is correct it lends credence to the opinion, that in some places at least, the Kolama must have been earlier arrivals than the Gonds, and different from them.

In Sirpur however, it is possible to study the effect of economic changes in the Gond Kolam relations. There, the Kolams do not know Gondi. The Gonds have, everywhere rarely spoken Kolami. The result is that, the Gonds and Kolams converse with each other in Telugu in Sirpur Taluk. And where both Kolams and Gonds have forgotten their languages Telugu is the only medium of converse among them. This fact has tended to pull the two apart. In the hills, both had to receive help from each other and were thus indispensable to each other. But in the plains, the Kolam has taken to agricultural pursuits and has proved equally, if not more, successful than the Gond. It is no longer a hard life where the Kolam and the Gond have been thrown together and become a part of the same system. I was surprised to find how separate the Gonds and Kolam feel to be from each other. They do not live near each other; Wirdandi, Somni, Mugvelli, Amba-ghat, Sewpalli, and Oot Surangpalli, are pure Gond colonies. The Kolams do not live in these villages. On the other hand, in Gulla Talodi, Chintaumanepalli, Kowthara, Kanki, Babasagar, and Dabba, very few Gonds are found. No doubt the Kolams have a remembrance of the fact that their and Gond's Gods are the same, but this is tending to be dimly realised. The Kolams are rapidly sinking into one of the Telugu castes,

where their Gods are becoming only customary and Titulary Deities. With the barrier of the language, standing between the two, the Kolams are giving up using even the Paris or clan names of the Gonds and are using the family names in Telugu fashion. The process of detribalisation, is going on rapidly among the Kolams of the Sirpur Taluk, and it is only a question of time before the Manyods, become a caste among the Telugu peasant classes.

How difficult it becomes, with language barriers, was realised by me when I inspected the Gond School in Garelpalli in Asifabad Taluk. In that heavy Telugu area, the Kolam boys were finding it difficult to pick up Gondi, and the Gond Teacher was not conversant with Kolam in language. I could see how their faces lit up with pleasure, when I spoke to them in Kolami. This is not the case in the western parts where every Kolam knows Gondi well. In Sirpur and Chinnur, where the Kolams either talk Telugu, or Teluguised Kolami, the medium of instruction will have to be Telugu. Of course separate text books containing lessons on Kolam religious observances and traditions will have to be prepared to enable them to preserve memories of their customs. The Kolams of Utnur, Rajura, Adilabad and Kinwat numbering nearly a thousand families, can receive education along with the Gonds, until the time it is possible to have separate Kolami text books prepared for them.

The possession of a separate language, by the Kolams, is one more proof of a distinct group. The two communities Gond and Kolam do not seem to be of the same stock, although, as marked above, there are instances of Gond men mingling with Kolam women. The Kolams themselves do not seem to be a homogeneous group either. While the Kolam is rough and coarse, in Sirpur, I found Kolam families, fair and well proportioned, who could easily pass off as handsome nontribals. This can only be explained as the mixture of different groups.

The language of the Kolams is distinct from that of the Gonds. Mr. Grigson, in his "The challenge of Backwards" remarks as follows: "The Kolam cultivators are physically very like Maria Gond, while their language is a Dravidian dialect

with resemblances to Gondi, Telugu and Canarese. The account of them in Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces speaks also of certain affinities to the Toda dialect."

Excepting the Kolams of Sirpur and Chinnur those living in the other Taluks of Adilabad, speak a fairly uniform Kolami language. The Kolami spoken in Sirpur struck me as too much influenced by Telugu to be understandable to the Kolams of the West. To give one example, the words used for : 'What do you want', in the west are, 'Taned Pahije', while in Sirpur they say : 'Tandwa Gawal.' When I spoke in Utnur Kolami to the Sirpur Kolams, they could understand only a few words. The tendency to use Telugu even in conversation amongst themselves is on the increase among the Sirpur Kolams. They also seemed vastly impressed at what they thought to be the standard Kolami which I was using.

It can be said that more than three-fourths of the Kolams speak the language, which has been described in the following pages, and since the majority of the Kolams are to be found in the adjoining District of Yeotmal, and speak the dialect used by the West Adilabad Kolams, this dialect can be taken to be the representative Kolami.

To a student of Kolami, the thing that strikes most is the limited vocabulary of the language. There are hardly more than eight hundred words in the Kolami Tongue. The number of the verbs is not more than one hundred and twenty five. There is an amusing legend among the Kolams, that, when God was busy distributing the languages to the people of the earth, the Kolams tarried on the way and were the last to arrive, when there were no languages left to distribute. They were asked to shift for themselves as best as they could, by borrowing from the other languages, which explains the limited nature of the language.

CHAPTER IX
ON THE MYTHS AND TRADITIONS
OF THE GONDS

The Creation Myth, as sung by the Pradhans, is known among the Gonds as the Mulkhand. As it contains many characters occurring in the Puranas, and other Hindu Scriptures, it is obvious that the Mulkhand in its present form must have been composed very late in the history of the Gonds. It is further apparent that the Pradhans, who have been the Bards of the Gonds, have incorporated many Pauranic Elements in the Mulkhand, and have given it the present form. At this stage it is difficult to know what the ideas of the Gonds were on the creation of the world in the early stages. The Myth, which is being published by Baron Haimendorf in his forthcoming book on the Rajgonds of Adilabad, is in brief as follows. I heard it from the Pradhans in Utnur Taluk. It differs slightly from the version current in the Central Provinces.

In the beginning there was all Shunya (nothing). In the island of Shunya, Sunnum Dip, the Sun Guru was born. Then, Prabhu Niranjan was born of his own accord. He had a golden throne in the Sun Dip where he resided.

And then, the seven waters were born to Zhara guru and the Mother Kankani. The waters known as Asi jal, Masi jal, Mahi jal, Ahi jal, Panya jal, Vanjal jal, began to spread due to Andhakar Guru (Darkness), Dhundhukar Guru (Mist), and the boy, Wavi Chakkar Guru (Wind). Wavi Chakkar burst his bounds. Storms broke out. Lightning flashed. The waters spread. They boasted that there was none greater than they. Things lasted thus for twelve years. Then over these waters Japidev (moss) was born. He spread over the waters and covered them. Then who should be born but the Povun Guru (Leafy moss)? The waters at this time attained youth. Out of the union of the waters and the Povun Guru, four flowers were born. They grew up into four fruits. Of these, the Jal

Japi fruit burst and out of it Raja Seka (Shesa, the Divine Serpent) was born. The Jal Kapli Fruit burst and the Kamdhenu, (the Divine Cow) known as the Kamdham Kasturi was born.

The Jal Povun fruit burst and the Dhund Mund Guru was born. The word Dhund Mund means one who is shapeless, and is probably a crude conception based on the Hindu ideas of Gond as the Formless One.

With the birth of the Dhund Mund Guru, the Cow, Kamdham Kasturi, got frightened and let fall three and half yard high of dung. From this a golden castle was created and the Dhund Mund Guru went and resided in it.

From the Jal Jakat Fruit, which burst, the Meho Shakti (Maha Shakti) was born. She had wings of diamonds, a mouth of pearls, and feet of gold. There were heavy storms, it was all dark, and there was water everywhere. The Meho Shakti flapped her wings and looked about her. She had no place to stand on. She rose and flew. On and on she went for a period of six months. She spotted the golden castle and sat down on it to rest awhile. The castle walls trembled. The Dhund Mund Guru who was inside, spoke, "who is there stronger than me?" The Meho Shakti saw him and was afraid. He asked her to get away from the castle. At that moment the Meho Shakti conceived. She left the place and returned to her place, heavy in limb and body, at the end of nine months, there she laid an egg, three and half yards long. It was hatched for nine months, nine days and nine hours. The egg burst and the Vayu (Wind God) blew away the upper crust from which the twentyone Heavens were formed.

Then the Mountain Navkot Dhawragiri came into existence. (It may refer to the Mount Kailasa, also known as Dhawalgiri, the white mountain, the abode of Siva). There was a Golden Throne. And Yavdhan Guru was born on the Throne. He had the Sacred Thread of the twelve Suns, Dress made of Twelve Moons, Plume made of the Seven Stars, Four Lamps (Eyes). The whole Universe was illuminated by the light of the Suns, Moons, and the Stars. The Rice Corn was born along with the Yavdhan Guru.

And then the Goddess Satwi and the Brahma were born. And then the Ninety Million Gods were born.

And then the Gods Sri Ishtu (Vishnu), Sri Krishtu (Krishna), Sri Apdev, and Sri Gopdev were born. They stayed in Bhagwan Dip.

Then, Navardev and Goverdev were born. They resided in the Bhandara Dip (Dwip, an island).

Yavdhan Guru was on the Dhawragiri mountain. The waters planned to submerge the Mount. The Mountain began to shake and swerve.

The Gods were starving. Gods living in the upper seven heavens and the lower seven heavens were starving. The Gods Sri Istu and Kishtu, Apdev, Gopdev and Mahadu (Mahadev) thought and decided to go to Dhawragiri where rice was available.

Ishtu first went to Dhawragiri. He told Yavdhan Guru that he had gone there in search of food and would readily serve the Guru. Then Kishtu, Apdev, Gopdev and lastly Mahadu followed each other. When Mahadu began to cry, Yavdhan Guru promised to allow him meals in his own company, and assigned him the task of filling his smoke pipe.

Yavdhan Guru laid a wager. He wanted that the foundations of the Patala, the nether world should be discovered. He who would discover it could get the kingdom of Dhawragiri. All the Gods refused, saying that the task was impossible. The ninety million Gods acknowledged their inability. The Sages and Demons, the Ag Rishi, the Bag rishi, the Anta Rishi, the Danta Rishi, The three hundred Munesurs, The seven hundred Dhadasurs, all refused to accept the wager. The Goddess Satwi also refused. The God Bramha accepted the wager. He jumped into the waters.

He came to the Kamsham Dip where he found the Kamdhenu, the Heavenly cow, and told her that he was out to discover the foundations of the Nether world.

The Cow said, "Do not make the attempt. It contains of seven outer walls, each guarded by a Guru, whose one look

was sufficient to burn one to ashes. It was further guarded by seven inner walls, each guarded by a Guru. Give up the attempt."

But Brahma would not listen. He persuaded the cow to accompany him and bear false witness. The Yavdhan saw through the game, and in wrath at the cow telling a lie, smashed the upper teeth out of her and struck her dumb. The cow retired to her abode.

Meanwhile, the waters were advancing, threatening to submerge the Dhawragiri. Yavdhan Guru asked the Gods again about the danger. He tasked the Mahadu, the youngest of the Gods. Mahadu accepted the wager. He asked the Yavdhan Guru to descend from the throne. Mahadu then ascended the throne himself. He called upon all the Gods to hail him as the ruler of Dhawragiri and call him Sri Shambu Mahadeva. This being done, he descended from the throne and saluting all, left on the quest.

The waters made way for him. He first came to the Kamsham Dip where the Kamdhenu - the Cow resided. He then went to the Shankhanath Guru, who was performing penance on the Golden Throne.

Taking leave of him, he went to the Kasonath Guru. He then went to the following Rishis who were guiding the way to the Nether world one by one, and greeted them. The Rishis were, including the above, 1 Shankhanath, 2 Kasonath Guru, 3 Vishwanath Guru, 4 Jagannath Guru, 5 Vyasa Guru, 6 Vigna Guru, 7 Agni Guru, 8 Girda Bamna Guru, 9 Gauta Muni, 10 Jagta Guru, 11 Gandesur Guru, 12 Shirma Guru, 13 Girdha Bhan Guru.

When these Rishis found that their glances would not burn Mahadeva, they pronounced him as the Pure and possessed of Powers of Satya Yogi and allowed him to proceed further on his quest. Mahadu at last came to the Navkhand Patal Dip. There he found the Niranjana Guru fast asleep on a golden throne. He would sleep for six months and wake for six months by turns. Mahadu fell on the feet of the Guru and remained licking the Guru's feet. When the Guru woke up

he asked of Mahadu who he was and what made him come to the Patala. When he told that he had come to find the foundations of the Patala, the Guru advised Mahadu that the task was impossible and it would be better for Mahadu to go back and tell a lie to the Yavdhan Guru. Mahadu refused to do so.

The Guru then, in order to test him, felled Mahadu and using him for a stool sat on him for full six months. At the end of six months the Guru asked Mahadu to return to his home. Mahadu refused, whereupon the Guru folded him like a pillow and used him for further six months. He again asked Mahadu to abandon his quest at the end of six months and met a similar refusal. He then put Mahadu in boiling oil for six months. Mahadu successfully withstood the test. He then put him on a burning alter. Mahadu was unhurt.

When the Fire was lit, the seven daughters of Girdha Bhan Guru came to play near that place. The Guru then said to Mahadu, "The girls have laid aside their garments in charge of their servant Kakesur. You make an offer of rice and curds to the Kakesur and unseen by the girls, steal the garment of one of them. Even if you are asked by any to turn or look back, do not listen to any."

Mahadu did as he was told. When Kakesur raised a hue and cry, the girls hurried to the spot and found one garment missing. They called Mahadu to turn back. He did so and was burnt to ashes. The Niranjan Guru revived him and asked him why he had disobeyed his instructions and looked back. Mahadu replied that so long as the Guru was there to protect him he had none to fear, and nothing to be afraid of.

Next day the same story was repeated with the difference that Mahadu did not look back this time. He stole the garment of the youngest of the sisters and came running to the Guru. The Guru hid him. The youngest of the girls, Girija (Parvati) came in a nude condition and asked for her garments. Mahadu then advanced and caught hold of Girja's hand. Then Niranjan Prabhu arranged the marriage of Mahadu and Girija. The Gods made all the arrangements. Seka, the Divine Serpent erected the Pandal. Bhagwant offered fine cloths, Beads, Ear rings, Crown, begging bag, Conch, bell, shoes, the seven

nectar bowls, seven firebowls, and seven bowls (Kund) to hold the sinful. The Bhagwant further handed over to him the Golden plume, the silver cane, and the registers to record the births and deaths of the beings. The Sacred White Bull Bhalwal Nandi (The Nandi of Hindu Mythology) with golden saddle, and bells was handed over to Mahadu. The couple then ascended the Bull and requested Yavdhan Guru to appear and give his blessings. Yavdhan Guru now appeared and with a sprinkle of rice blessed them. He offered a necklace of jewels to Girija. The marriage was then performed. Yavdhan Guru then asked Mahadu to look in the sky. Mahadu saw glittering in the sky five Lingas. He saw the feet in the Patala. In his front he saw two lamps, a golden shifting basket, silver basket, ten doors, thirty two pegs. He saw golden Bars behind him.

Then Yavdhan Guru said to Mahadu, "so far you were plain and simple Mahadu. But from now on you will be called Sri Shambhu, and Girija, Parwati." He further entrusted them with the Kingdom of Dhawragiri, with powers to raise or lower the status of the Gods.

Girija then asked for a Golden Ladder, Golden Ropes, from Yavdhan Guru. She borrowed the Servant Kakesur from her father.

Then the pair started towards Dhawragiri. The bells of Nandi began to ring through the Universe. The pair met the Fourteen Rishis on the way. They also met the Kamdham Kasturi, the Cow on the way. When at last they reached Dhawragiri, the Navkot, Ninety million Gods stood up to salute them. Yavdhan Guru left the throne and Mahadeva ascended it with Parvati by his side.

Still the waters would not subside. The Dhawragiri was still moving from side to side. Sambhu then laid a wager. All the Gods refused to accept it.

Sambhu then created an eagle, the Garka Mantur from the dust of his thighs, and sent him to discover Dharitri, Earth. The Eagle flew on and on for six months. He lost his wings. He returned to Dhawragiri without success. Sambhu then blessed him and said that when the Oceans and the Seas would

be created, the Eagle would be given a place of abode on the shores. Sambhu then, created as before, the Kakesur (Crow). He had wings of diamonds and mouth of pearls, and legs of gold. He was sent on the same errand. For twelve years he was on his wings without any success attending his efforts.

At last he spotted the tail of a crab—the Balesur jutting above the surface of the sea. Out of sheer fatigue, the Crow rested on it. The Crab was sinking away when he heard the Crow protesting. On learning that the Crow was on an errand from the Sambhu, the Crab listened to the Crow. On a promise from the Crow that he would be favourably treated by the Sambhu Mahadeva, the Crab descended to the bottom of the sea in search of the earth. He went to the Island known as the Gandesur Dip.

The Dharitri (Earth) were seven sisters, the Dark Dharitri, the Blue Dharitri, the Mossy Dharitri, the Diamond Dharitri, the Golden Dharitri and the Copper Dharitri. The youngest was the Balkuwar Dharitri. They were the daughters of father Bhitkhand and the mother Pakan Bhed. They, the parents used to count the Dharitri every hour. The Balesur the Crab, stole seven tolas of earth. When the father saw that the earth weighed less he got angry and sent a weapon after the Crab. The Balesur lost his eyes, but since he was of supernatural powers he got recovered his eyes in his shoulders. Balesur then brought the earth and handed it over to the Kakesur. Kakesur said to Balesur. "In future ages a people will come to existence—the Mada people. They will cremate their dead, but before they do so they will offer the hearts of the deceased to you as their offering".

The Kakesur then departed for Dhawragiri. He was very hungry when he reached the mount and without waiting he fed on the remains of the lunch of the Gods. The Sambhu was very much annoyed. He cursed him for having fed on the remains and said, "You are condemned to eat the remains of food for ever. You will also have to eat the food meant for the departed ancestors. Your golden legs and mouth of pearls will turn into one of dark steel.

Having secured a portion of earth, the problem of making it stable now confronted Sambhu. Parvati used the Golden

Ladder and the Golden ropes. When she churned the earth, it began to spread.

At that time the two Gods, Navardev, and Goverdev, were residing in the Bhandara Dip. They opened the boxes thus releasing the waters. The waters then became restless and the earth began to go down.

Sambhu then asked Yavdhan Guru to help him. On his suggestion Vyasa Guru was called in to help him. Vyasa Guru asked Sambhu to go to the Jamba Guru residing in the Jambu Dip to fetch tools. Sambhu went to the Jamba guru as told. Jamba guru's son Chinaya Bal was sleeping in the cradle. The father called him and created tools out of his body. He made a Bhatti-Furnace blower out of his body, pincers from his hands and hammer out of his legs. With these tools the Vyasa Guru set to his work.

The Naverdev and Goverdev were brought from the Bhandara Dip and offered as sacrifice to the Furnace. In return the two received assurances that in future the two would be worshipped at the beginning of marriages.

The two cursed Vyasa Guru, the Blacksmith for sacrificing them saying, whatsoever quantity of coal you would put in the Furnace, there would be nothing left except a handful of ashes. You will always be in poverty and depend upon whatever small amounts of grain the cultivator would chose to give."

Meanwhile Girija continued to churn. Vyasa constructed a pillar to support the Dhawragiri. Still the Earth would not remain firm and stable. Sambhu then went to the Cow the Kamdhenu and asked her to help him. He then went to Seka, The Divine Serpent and requested his help, saying, "The Cow has agreed to help me." Allow her to put her foot upon you while she holds and maintains the earth on her horns. The Seka, with seven tails and fourteen heads, agreed. In return the Sambhu Mahadeva blessed him, saying that he would be worshipped invariably on the Nagapanchami Day, dedicated to the worship of the snakes.

It was now the turn of the Cow to ask for concessions for herself. She was told that in future, the cow would be worshipped on the dark night of the Diwali as the source of wealth.

Hence the custom among the Gonds to worship the cow during the Diwali.

The Cow then supported the Earth on her horns. She asked Sambhu, how long she was to remain in that position. Sambhu told her that if and when the noise of the Universe ceased, she could give up the earth. He then created the birds and flies who hum incessantly at night. So that, the cow has been waiting since eternity with the earth on her horns, for, the noise of the universe never ceases day and night.

The earth was then stabilised, but in that process, the mountains were created. Yerugiri, Merugiri, Navkot Dhawragiri, Kailas, Dronagiri, Mahadev Parwat and other mountains came into existence. The four oceans, the four rivers, the lowlands and uplands, the misty land, the lightening castle, came into existence. The garden of Sambhu, the Nectar tree, the Golden Pippal tree, the silvery Banyan tree, the mace costing eighty lakhs, the disc costing nine lakhs, the weapon weighing five maunds, the club to smash the devils, and the one to beat the human beings, the fiery arrow, the nectary arrow, the four spear shafts of the four phraries, constructed from lightning were all created. All these were constructed by Vyas Guru.

Sambhu now saw that the earth was barren. He scattered the seeds of trees and grass and lo! the earth looked green and fresh.

Who should rule over the Heaven? Twentyfour palaces were built, twelve for the Suns and Twelve for the Moons and they were asked to rule the Swarga. The Suns received the names of the days of the week. And the full moon and dark night, the Purnima and Amavasya were given to the Moons. Sambhu told them, "The suns will be worshipped as God, (Pen) and the Moons will be worshipped on the Twelve full moon and twelve dark nights. At the rate one sun and one moon for one month, twelve should rise in one year. The Sun should keep a record of the virtues and sins of the people by day and the Moon by night.

Sambhu, then, out to create men, first created mud statues. When they were kept for being dried in the night Indra's horse

would destroy them. Sambhu then created a dog to keep watch, and other watches with drawn swords. A curtain was drawn round the statues. When the horse appeared during the night, the dog raised the alarm and the watches cut off the wings of the horse.

The Sambhu Mahadeva now poured nectar into those forms, but they would not come to life. Sambhu, on the advice of the Guru, went to Sirma Guru. He brought forth his daughter and from her they created the veins out of her. Then Goddess Shakti was asked to enter the veins, and bring life to the body. Then the Forms became alive.

The beings were, in the first experiment very diminutive. The bullocks were of the size of rats, and men were no better in proportion. Parwati disapproved of it. Sambhu then created huge beings. Men, sixteen feet tall, women twelve feet high. Parwati disapproved too. Then the world as we see now came into existence.

Sambhu, then sowed the seeds of the Melon Pumpkin. When the Pumpkin ripened, it burst, and out of it came the man and woman. When the man was asked who the one was standing near him. He replied that it was his sister. Then Sambhu, threw his Maya, power of creating illusions on the man and again asked. This time the man replied that it was his wife. The couple then asked him why they were created. Sambhu replied "I have created this world. Labour in the world and live." They asked, "Wherewith shall we labour?" Shambhu then handed over the Bull to man and asked him to take his help. The Dog, the Bull and the Vulture then accompanied the man. They all had a life of only forty years. But when man protested, the Bull, the Dog and the Vulture each parted with half their life and thus enabled man to live for hundred years. Thus they all lived in the world. At the end of their allotted term of life, Sambhu used to call them to his abode. There was no death in those days.

It then so came to pass that, there were two carpenters who were to be taken away by Sambhu on a certain day. When the attendants of Sambhu came to take them away the carpenters carved a hole in a tree and making the attendants be-

lieve it to be the shortest cut to Heaven, shut them up in the tree. Sambhu was worried at the prolonged absence of his attendants and set out to see what the matter was. Sambhu Mahadev in the guise of a wineseller, found out the mischief played by the carpenters. He now, created an owl with twenty fingers. He gave a coat of steel and a pike to the Yama, the lord of death. He further created three hundred and sixty diseases and let them loose on the earth. The carpenters were afflicted with disease. Yama approached in his black dress, so as not to be seen. The souls of these were dragged and brought before Sambhu while the body made of earth remained on the earth. When the carpenters pleaded the love of their children and life for the tricks they had played with Sambhu's attendants he took pity on them and decreed that they would be born again in their families. Since then the cycle of birth and death has started !”

Such is the delightful tale of the birth of the world as the Gond understands it. I heard this tale at Marlawai, through the help of Mr. Jogalkar, Social Service Inspector, Mariawai.

In another story (Hyderabad Gondi Literature, edited by Haimendrof and Jogalkar, Government, Gond education, Hyderabad Deccan, 1946) we are given the details of Sambhu's journey in the world. Sambhu left Dhawragiri to have a look at the world. He went to Gandhari and Kotuma, Kunti, and blessed them, with five grains of rice. He handed these to Kotuma, when Gandhari went to fetch water from the river Ganga, Kotuma gave half of these grains to Gandhari. After using them, in course of time Gandhari had twenty one Duryodhanas born to her, and Kotuma, five Pandawas.

Sambhu now wanted to give over the kingdom of the world to some one most fitted. He laid a wager and called the rulers of earth in great numbers. A club of eighty lakhs and a race of nine lakhs had to be wielded by the aspirant for world rule. Bhima won the wager and got from Sambhu the kingdom of the earth. The Duryodhanas were angry.

We see Sambhu treated by the Gonds in a way which is perfectly human. There is very little that is supernatural about him. In the creation of the world he has his difficulties

and is helped by various persons including his wife the Parvati. In the legend of the birth of the Gond Gods it has been related how Sambhu and Parvati in their wanderings in the face of earth found children abandoned by the Mother Kankal Kali and brought them up. From these children came the Gond Gods, who were later to displease the Sambhu and be thrown in a cave whence they were rescued by the Gond Hero Lingo. The severity of Lingo's penance to gain the favour of Sambhu, when

"The great God Mahadeva
felt his seat begin to tremble
felt his golden stool all shaking
from the penance of our Lingo
felt and wondered who on earth
this devotee was that was fasting
till his golden stool was shaking."

is an echo of many a Hindu devotee's austere penance disturbing the peace of the Gods.

Sambhu Mahadeva helped Lingo in finding food for the Gond Gods. He appears in the legend of the Anna Rani, the corn queen, as the benevolent God anxious for the welfare of his people. He invited the Gonds who had picked up the art of dancing to perform before him and on their doing so entertained them lavishly Chutta Biri (Smokes) not excepted. In the legend of the search for the Ghedda flower, when Arjuna threatened him with life for failure to reveal the whereabouts of the flower, Parvati came down from her abode and forced Mahadeva to reveal the secret. Thus we see Sambhu Mahadeva, the youngest of the Gods, born of Meho Sakti, and beloved of Yavadhan Guru start on his journeys in search of the Patala, the nether world, passing through severe ordeals, set up by Dhund Mund Guru, also known as Niranjān Guru, and finally come out successful. He won the hand of Parvati and also the kingdom of Dhawragiri. It was he who breathed life in man, who laid down the order of the stars, and suns

1. Story heard at Marlavai through the efforts of Mr. Jogalker.

and moons, who evolved cosmos out of the swelling waters, who called forth and secured the help of others in his work, who created the God of Death, through whom he could draw the souls of men. But even he could not withstand the severe penances of Lingo, and getting over his annoyance, helped Lingo in organising the Gond world. He appears as a Gosain, now testing the Gonds, now witnessing their funs and frolics, now helping them in their difficulties, and undertaking periodic journeys to the world to see it was taking shape. After all it is not the picture of a God, the self-born, the Omnipotent, a Lord to be appeased and pleased, playing with human destiny, the all destroyer and all preserver, but an architect of the Universe himself leading the life of a householder and sharing the joys and sorrows of his people. It is on the whole a homely picture suited to the genius of a simple and cheerful people.

Strangely enough the stories of Mahabharata and Ramayana are not very current among the Gonds. It is all the more extraordinary when we see that, the common greeting among the Gonds is Ram, Ram. As for the Mahabharata their impressions of the Pandava Heroes are as follows :

The five Pandavas were born to Kotuma, due to the blessings of Sambhu. Their names and the names of their spouses and children are given thus :

1. Saha Jyoti Dharma Raj and his wife Draupadi had a daughter Janakama, and a son Mutela Muga Rao.
2. Bhima married Hidimal Devi and their son was Ghatkate Putter Gatne Saral.
3. Arjuna married Subhadra and their son was Abhiman Kural.
4. Nakul known as Lakhudas Lakhmal married Babur Devi and their son was Raja Ram Balkur.
5. Sahadeva married Ponal Devi and their son was Sarang Bhalud.

Bhima is supposed to be the youngest. He is also known as the Bali Joda, the mighty, and Mayavi, endowed with supernatural powers. He is liked by Sambhu who has given him the earth to rule. In the myth of Manko, it is related that Dirmesur Rakas, the Rakshasa, had seven daughters. He

was a cannibal and ate unsuspecting wayfarers. He was residing in the Sita Ghat. The Pandawas were wandering on the earth. They came to Sita Ghat although they had been warned not to go to the southern region. Here Bhima killed the Dhirmesur Rakshas.

The God Bhimana is worshipped by the Kolams and the Naikpods. He also finds a place in the Deities worshipped by the Gonds.

In the legend of the origin of the Gond Dancing the Dandari, a list of places where the Gonds went and performed, is given. The Pandawas, therein are shown as ruling at Varnawati, while the Kaurawas are at Hastinapur. The Gonds further performed at Dwarka, before the Kanoba and Krishna Swami at Nandagiri. Krishna is also referred to as Sri Kishtu among the Gonds who waited on Sambhu Mahadeva. Ayodhya is referred to as Avadhपुरi, and Dasharatha is said to be ruling there. He is known among the Gonds as Daserwal his wife Kavasalya Devi as Vasa Devi, Kaikeyi as Kego Kamjuli, Rama Lakshmana as Ramalakshmi born of Kaikeyi.

The Gond dancers went to Tuljapur where they gave a display of their art before the Amba Bhavani. She had a daughter by the name of Tulja-Bhavani who wandered about without any covering for her body. When the Gonds had finished dancing Amba Bhavani came out to offer them presents. Tulja Bhavani followed her as usual without any dress. The Gonds burst into derisive laughter. Amba Bhavani retired to her apartments and seizing a cane, thrashed Tulja Bhavani soundly, until the latter promised to have a good bath and wear good apparel and also have the Ghegda flower in her hair. The latter the Tulja Bhavani could not find and in despair was preparing to immolate herself on a burning pyre when Arjuna known as Bana Harjuna appeared on the scene. On the request of Tulja Bhavani, he descended into the Patala and succeeded not only in getting the Ghegda flower but also marrying Karyal the daughter of Seka.

We thus find Gond stories influenced by Hindu mythology. The garb in which the Hindu Gods and Goddesses found their way into Gond stories must be due to the imperfect

knowledge of the myths and the Gond desire to approximate the Hindu legends and stories to their pattern. By linking Sambhu and Parvati with their stories of creation of the world and the rise of the Gonds, they have ensured a certain familiarity with Hindu thought on the subject.

Regarding stories which are purely Gond, such as the myth of Manko, Sunghal Turpo, Zingubai and others, they are being studied and published under the Gond Education Scheme, and promise to be a valuable addition to aboriginal literature.

CHAPTER X
LAND PROBLEMS OF ADILABAD
ABORIGINALS

The district of Adilabad in Hyderabad State is the home of a large and solid block of aboriginal population of about 1,10,000, out of a total Gond population of 1,14,228 residing in the State, 71,874 are to be found in Adilabad district alone. An overwhelmingly large number speaks Gondi, and are known as Raj Gonds. In the eastern parts of the district another community known as Darve Gonds are found. They do not have any matrimonial relations with Raj Gonds and form a small endogamous community by themselves. Distinct from these are the Telugu speaking Gonds found in the south-eastern part of the district, and known as Munne Gonds. Their community also is small in number. Besides the Gonds referred to above are the Kolams, primitive and more depressed than the Gonds. They number between 3 to 4 thousand, and excepting for the Telugu Kolams near Asifabad who speak the Telugu language and are known as Mannyods, they speak their own Kolam language. These comprise a tribe inhabiting mainly the jungle tracts and cultivate hill slopes by means of a small hoe affixed to a knee shaped haft. The Naikpods come next. Barring a few in Kinwat, where a Naikpodi dialect is spoken, the Naikpods speak Telugu, and are divided into plain Naikpods and hill Naikpods, referred to as Telugu Naikpods and Gutta Naikpods. The latter are also known among the Gonds as Matsyalis. The Thoties speak Gondi as their mother tongue and the Pradhans speak Marathi but are fluent in Gondi and recite Gond epics and songs in Gond ceremonies and festivities. They are the professional bards and musicians of the Gonds and number about 3,000 in the district.

GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND:— Before discussing the land problem, as it affects the aboriginals, it will be

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necessary to describe the physical features of the districts to elucidate a correlation between the physical environment and tribal settlements. The district of Adilabad is situated between the rivers Pen Ganga & Godavari. The hills at Adilabad, situated in the heart of the district, form an upland, extending from the west of Both & Kinwat taluqs to the hills just west of a line from Rajura through Asifabad to a point about half way between Manchiryal and Luxatipet, (excluding the actual Godavari plain) which may be considered the zone of concentration for the tribal settlements.

These hills touch the rivers at a few places but otherwise the Pen Ganga plains in Rajura, Adilabad and Kinwat taluqs stretch from ten to twenty miles on an average before they reach the hills of the central plateau. Similarly in the south, comprising the taluqs of Chinnur, Luxatipet and Nirmal the plains between the Godavari and the hills cover a similar area. Of the 71,874 Gonds in the district more than three-fourths are found in the plateau region. There is, however, ample evidence that the Gonds in the past were found all over the district, both in the plains and on the hills, and it is only recently that the aboriginals have been slowly driven away from the plains and pushed to the foot-hills and higher altitudes.

HISTORICAL SIDELIGHTS ON TENANCY AND PROPRIETORSHIP

The nature of Gond rule in Adilabad cannot be very clearly ascertained. It seems fairly certain that since at least seven centuries the plains south of the Pen Ganga from Mahur to Bela have been a part of the Berars. Similarly the plains north of the Godavari from Nirmal to Chinnur do not seem to have been under Gond rule at any time. Excepting these parts major portions of the central plateau and parts of the Rajura, Sirpur and Asifabad plains were undoubtedly under Gond influence in one form or other from very early times. The various Gond tribes seem to have been in occupation of lands in Adilabad when the system of clans following their leaders in search of lands and means of subsistence gave place to the territorial conception of a feudal lord exercising mild authority over various clans residing in a particular area.

This transition could not have been remoter than the fifteenth century, when we first find references to the Raja of Gondvana. The Atram Rajas of Chanda seem to have exercised sway over portions of Adilabad through their feudatory Rajas, belonging to the Atram, the Salams, the Gerams, the Madavis, the Durvas, and other clans. The feudal system persisted even after the Moghals had subjugated Rajas of Chanda in 1592 A. D. and helped a number of prominent Gond families to settle as land holders in Utnur and other taluqs of the district. We begin to hear of Gond chiefs receiving rent free inam lands and makhtas at the hands of the new sovereign. The subordinate Rajas exercised secular and pseudo religious jurisdictions among the tribes living under them. This was done through officials of a group of villages, who were known as Mokashis.

What was the nature of land ownership in this area before the rise of the feudal Rajas of Chanda and those holding land from the Moguls and their immediate predecessors, the rulers of Ahmednagar and Golconda? A confused picture emerges from a welter of tribal legends and myths. We see the migration of tribes from place to place, in search of virgin soil, and well watered pastures for their cattle. Each clan settled wherever it found it convenient to do so, and took possession of land. It paid whatever mild rents were demanded of it by the owners. Such clans, purely engaged in agricultural pursuits, were not many. The Gonds seem to have a preference for the cultivation of light soil on the plateau lands, confining themselves mainly to the first crop after the advent of rains, JAWAR, SAMA, KORA, the pulses and TIL. That they generally shifted their fields every two or three years, when the soil was exhausted, shows that they had not the means to take to intensive cultivation of heavy black cotton soils in the cold weather except in small patches round their villages. We sometimes hear of clans settling in new areas, and protesting against exorbitant rents to the officials. Possession of land in those days was based on the simple and understandable right of actual cultivation of the soil, and the labour spent in clearing the forest vegetation. Even now, a Gond will claim a land as his own, on the natural

plea of utility that he had cleared the tract and made it cultivable. He is learning only now to realize that rights in lands can also rest on considerations different from the labour and energy spent in preparing the soil, but this realisation has come only after he had lost thousands of acres to the shrewd and clever non-tribal elements from outside. Under the feudal Rajas of Chanda, life does not seem to have changed much, except that the conception of clans following their leaders and obeying them slowly gave place to the territorial conception of a feudal lord exacting obedience from the various clans. The Mokashis for groups of villages, under the Raja, collected pre-dial dues, known as Toram Patti and Poi Patti, and remitted it to the Raja. They also settled religious and social disputes among the tribal factions, and charged customary fees for their duties. The Gond did not understand any right other than the actual possession arising out of the clearance of the soil. He also did not have any conception of communal ownership of land. For him the right to his land lasted till the duration of its possession, and this seems to have been recognized by general tribal opinion.

It was when prominent Gond families acquired rights in lands in the nature of Inams, Jagirs and Maktas, in the tribal area, that the Gonds of the upper class began to be accustomed to the various rights and Watans, and yet, the Gond economy was not disturbed much. After all, the Gond was under his own Raja or leaders with whom he felt at home, and who knew how to deal with him. Life must have been fairly easy in those days, relative to the then prevailing standards of living. Land was available for the asking. Shifting cultivation had not been discouraged, and temporary migrations within the tribal belt did not materially dislocate Gond economy. The demands of authority were few and mild. Above all, the Gond felt a sense of security in that he had his own men to exercise authority over him, men who were a part of his social and religious life.

LAND ECONOMY IN TRANSITION:— From the beginning of the 17th century, this order of things begins to change. We first hear of Watans of Deshmukhi and Deshpande being conferred on non-aboriginals, in the tribal area. The Udaram

family of Mahur secured rights in tribal villages now in Kinwat Taluk of Adilabad. Early in the 18th century, the Deshmukhs, Deshpandes and Sarpatwars became prominent in Adilabad and Both Taluks in the tribal villages. Utnur, in the heart of the tribal country, became, from early times, in fact from the beginning of the 17th century, the seat of a Sarkar, that is the sub-division of a district. And this contributed, in no small measure, to an infiltration of non-tribal elements. The Deshmukhs and Deshpandes mainly from the non-tribal class came up as farmers and collectors of revenue and slowly acquired importance at the expense of Gond feudal families. This influx became more pronounced during the latter part of the 18th century. The Bhonsala Rajas of Nagpur extended their sway south of the Pen Ganga river in 1755 A. D., and held the eastern and central parts of the district for a brief period of twenty years. The Deshpandes of Rajura, who today hold most of the tribal villages of Rajura Taluk as Patwaris, and the Makhtedars of Tandur, who are Patwaris for most of the tribal villages in Asifabad and Sirpur Taluks came to prominence during the Bhonsla regime. We also notice the decline of Gond feudal Rajas in power, prestige and influence during this period. The Gond legends are full of fighting between the invaders and the Gond overlords, generally an unequal combat, which ended in the ruin of the Gond families. A few Gonds succeeded in securing rights from the Marathas. The Gond Makhtedars of Chinai and Bhombara Barsa in Rajura date their rise from this period. But these were very few in number. To this influx of new watandars, more than anything else, can be traced the decline in Gond feudal structure and the subsequent dislocation of Gond economy. For, the new Watandars secured Inam Lands in most of the villages. These paved the way for the further acquisition of lands in the tribal area. Most of the Watans now existing can be traced to the early nineteenth century. This is a period of progressive decline of the Gond feudal system. Even the Gond farmers and collectors of revenue, the Makhtedars and Jagirdars (we do not hear of Gond Deshmukhs or Deshpandes) began to lose ground. One example of their decline would suffice. The Gond Raja of Utnur at one time held a Makhta for the Parganas of Utnur, Sirpur, and Indarvelli. He lost

his estate in 1862 A. D. presumably because his rights to the estates were rather shaky. A few years later the Raja received five villages as Makta for a period of thirty years. But to-day the present Raja has about 300 acres as Bil-Makta, that is one half rent and Watan rights in one village. The estates of another Makhtedar namely the Raja of Sirpur also seem to have been resumed late in the nineteenth century. This seems to have been in conformity with the measures taken in those days to resume estates held under the farming of revenue other than the hereditary Inams and Jagirs. This also shows how the Gond chiefs suffered due to their authority based more on customs than on any grants or Sanads.

In the middle of the nineteenth century the district began to witness a slow influx of non-aboriginal cultivators mainly in the plains and foot hills of the districts. Cultivators of non-tribal stock were settled since many generations to the immediate south of the Pen Ganga and the north of the Godavari rivers. Non-aboriginal colonies were to be found since early times in Luxatipet, Asifabad, Rajura, Nirmal Adilabad, Bela, Mahur. In fact these were the places of communication in the district in those days. And as communications improved between Nirmal and Adilabad, Manchirial, and Rajura, the Telugu Kapus from the south and the Maratha and other Kunbies from the north began to immigrate in numbers and to settle in the district. The district contains a very large area under the forests. In fact the proportion of the forest to the total area of the district is about 40 per cent. The population is also sparse, giving about 100 persons a square mile. In Utnur Taluk the figures are lower still, i.e. about 40 persons a square mile. Thus it was that the Government pursued a policy of developing the district and raising its income. Thousands of cultivators were encouraged to immigrate and settle in the district. Under this policy Hutkars and Marathas from Nanded and Parbhani, Marathas and Banjaras from Berar and, Marar Kunbies from C. P. and Telugu cultivators from Karimnagar entered the district and acquired rights in the land. Many persons were encouraged to settle in villages and cultivate lands on Kaul on contract of thirty years' freedom from rent, and subsequent concession of half

rents and acquisition of Patel and Patwarigiri rights. Hundreds of new Watans were acquired in this way by the newcomers. Land in those days was to be had merely for the asking, and Watans were conferred with surprising ease and alacrity. In fact, if any new Watandar failed either to realize the rents or to pay his own dues, he was deprived of his Watans which were practically purchased by other aspirants on payment of the dues. And in this process the Gond had no share whatsoever. The old Rajas fell into discredit, the Mokashis degenerated into insignificance the Poi-Fatils existed only on sufferance, and the country side was filled with Marathas, Welma, Muslim and others scrambling for lands and Watans.

Where land outside the forests was vacant it was readily granted on Patta to the non-tribals. The Gonds too had an opportunity of acquiring Patta rights in the land, but they were slow to understand that they would suffer if they did not take advantage of these concessions. The new Watandars made a subtle use of their office as village head-men to evict the original possessors, or take lands vacated by them for themselves.

From Peasant Proprietary to Peasant Proletariat:— In the beginning of the 20th century, cultivators who vacated their lands for some reason or the other were shown by these Patwari Watandars as having relinquished the land to the Government, in fact giving a Rajinama for it. The Patwari promptly applied for that land himself and got his rights as Pattadar or the rightful owner recognized by the revenue Officer, the Nazim Jamabandi. In this way hundreds of tribals who wanted to come back to their lands suddenly found them in the possession of non-tribal Watandars. To give one typical instance, a tribal of Dugapur in Asifabad Taluk was in possession of a land for years. Due to the depredations caused by tigers in those parts the family went to live in a neighbouring village. When they returned after a few years they found that the land had been secured on Patta by the landlord of a neighbouring village.

Yet another process of the acquisition of these rights can be instanced below. Right of ownership to a land is known as Patta. This must be first recognised by the authorities and

the name of the Pattadar entered in the village registers before it is considered as legal. The claims of a possessor of land where they are not based on Patta or some contract as mortgaged or sale deeds from the rightful Pattadars are legally weak and uncertain. In the district, as has been remarked above, many cultivators came and settled in the countryside. Either due to their negligence or the slackness of the subordinate officials, many of them failed to get their names written as Pattadars. The result was that even after many years they were supposed to be wrongfully cultivating land without any right and the rent they were asked to pay was known as Sivaijamabandi. A cultivator who held land on the Sivaijamabandi tenure was liable to eviction any time. This was the case with many tribal cultivators as well. Unscrupulous persons, manoeuvred to get Patta rights in the Sivaijamabandi land held by the Gonds in their name on payments of a nominal sum and then began to treat the actual possessors as agricultural tenants, liable to eviction at the whim and fancy of the new Pattadar. The Gond habit of resigning Patta rights on a particular piece of land and occupation of vacant land of equal size on payment of the same revenue as his custom of shifting cultivation was also made use of by the immigrants.

They turned the relinquished Patta lands to Government lands and got Pattas in their own name, and claimed the tribal occupation of new land as Sivaijamabandi and either got the tribal evicted or secured Patta right in their own name and turned him into an agricultural tenant. In this way thousands of acres passed out of the hands of the Gond into the hands of the new settlers. And the Gond degenerated from peasant proprietorship to that of a non-occupancy tenant or a landless serf. The Velma landlord of Mandamarri emigrated from Karimnagar about forty years ago. He then possessed only a few acres of land. Today he is the owner of 8,000 acres mostly in the tribal belt, and has also purchased the Watans of nine villages.

He could secure these lands mostly through the influence he possessed as a Watandar, and the lands he has as Pattadar are now mostly tilled by the tribals as his tenants, men who

should have had the first claim to the right in land. A number of these tribal villages have thus been acquired, and colonized by the non-tribals. Many of them have developed into absentee landlords letting out lands to the tribals on rents mostly beyond the capacity of those people. Some have imported other cultivators and this has resulted in the tribals being ousted from their homes.

During a recent survey of the tribal villages at the foothills of the Manikgarh hills, it was found that ten non-tribal families owned more than ten-thousand acres of which hardly one-third were under actual cultivation. In a certain village which is purely aboriginal one, a certain person has acquired Patta rights in seven hundred acres without much cost. He has not even visited his estates within the last five years, since he acquired the lands. The original Gond cultivators are now his tenants and the Patwari has been instructed to realise from these tenants rents due from the new owner. If these people go to some other government land and cultivate it on Sivai-jamabandi tenure, prompt comes some other shrewd fellow and cleverly manages to get land registered in his name. It has thus come about that the newcomers even keep quiet for some time till the Gonds have cleared the land and started cultivating it. Then suddenly they tell them that they have acquired Patta rights and the Gonds should either vacate the lands or pay rent as the tenants of the new Pattadar. The Gonds have no choice left. They either accept their changed position as tenants at will or leave the village. Many villages which were once purely tribal have today hardly any tribal population left. Indervelli was once the seat of the Chakati clan. Today only thirty houses of tribals are left in this village of nearly four hundred families. The Marathas from Berar have acquired both lands and Watans in this village. Kerimeri had once more than one hundred tribal families. Today there are hardly twenty, and the village is full of Marar Kunbis, imported by the Muslim landlord of the village. In fact, acquiring a village and forcing the tribals to be tenants at will, became almost a fashion. Every one, the prosperous lawyer, the rich merchant, the well-to-do official, the ambitious cultivator, all had a hand in the game. And the poor tribal pushed slowly from his lands and homes had to retire to the hills,

where the non-tribals could not penetrate, and where there was a welcome awaiting and some land still left to till.

FOREST POLICY AND AGRARIAN DECLINE:—Equally disastrous has been the effect of forest reservation on the aboriginal occupation of land. As has been remarked above, there is a large proportion of forest area in Adilabad. The forests are spread over practically every part of the district. They range from blocks of more than 1,00,000 acres like the Manikgarh, Satnala, Daboli, Tilani, Ralli and Kawal to a few hundred acres. Now in precisely those parts, namely Rajura, Asifabad, Utnur and Adilabad, where the tribals are concentrated, these blocks are to be found. Of the one hundred and sixty villages of Utnur there is hardly a village which is not partly or wholly included in the forests. The whole of the Manikgarh hills which are purely tribal are in the forests. The Setnala forests are in a similar position. And so it has happened that the tribals are found in great numbers exactly where the reserved forests are found.

When the forest lines were first demarcated, the peculiarities of the tribal area were not taken into consideration. In the first place, enclosure lines were drawn round those villages, situated within the forests, which had a considerable population, and then too, only round the lands which had legal and rightful owners. Lands which were held on Sivaijamabandi were not taken into consideration at all and were included in the forests as being Government lands held illegally. The tendency, further, was to have as few enclosures as possible in a particular block mainly with a view to introducing better management of the forests. As a result, small villages and hamlets were wholly included in the forests.

Now, a Gond village is not a big affair. The average Gond village does not consist of more than thirty to forty huts and hamlets. Kolam settlements are even smaller. Even in a village, Gonds tend to live in smaller groups in hamlets known as Gonds. It has also been noticed how very few tribals possessed legal rights in lands which they were cultivating for generation. They were told that they must move somewhere else

as their villages were too small to have separate enclosures, and they were not entitled to have compensation as their possession of land was not legal. The result of this measure, strictly followed proved more disastrous to the aboriginals than the exploitation by the men from outside. Records of the revenue offices in the various Tahsils of Adilabad district are full of villages now marked as deserted. In some places the maps only show blocks of deserted villages. These have mostly been included in the forests. The small number of enclosures in each block is a proof, if proof were needed, of the thoroughness with which the villages were unsettled and included in the forests. Even where villages were put in enclosures, the forest boundary lines ran so close to the villages as to leave hardly any room for future development. For instance, a certain tribal village with a population of two hundred was supposed to manage within seventy acres. In not a few villages, the lines ran right behind the village Chawadi, thus cramping the future village development to an intolerable degree. Of course, in a few cases, the villages were petty affairs when the lines were drawn, but it can be remarked with equal truth that future development was not foreseen, nor the difficulties of the tribals understood.

The results were appalling. In many cases the villages overflowed the lines and either through sufferance or slackness remained in technical breach of the law. Very few attempts were made to adjust lines to the new conditions and thus they still remain, the villagers apprehensive of every passing forest subordinate.

Thus the aboriginal was caught in a terrible dilemma. He could not hold his own, with the settlers from the plains and retired to the hills secure in the belief that at least there he would not be disturbed. But to his dismay he found that he was not wanted there as well. Go wherever he will, the forest was there, telling him that this area was reserved, that was protected and that the very place he was standing on, was in the forest reserve. The records are full of the distress in which the tribals found themselves at this state of affairs. And in the tribal area, you may go any where and enquire, you will

be told that most of the lands under non-tribal cultivation were cleared of the forests by the Gond, for the Gond is, no where more at home than when he wields his axe and clears a forest, for his blade is keen and his heart is in the job. What might be his feelings to see his fields under alien possession, and the fruits of his labour enjoyed by others? To quote a verse used in Mr. Grigson's Work, "THE ABORIGINAL PROBLEM IN THE C. P. AND BERAR :"

I heard the crane cry unto men his greeting
 To tell them it was time to drive the plough
 Ah friend, he set my sorry heart a beating
 For others have my fertile acres now."

And again,

"He is sowing seed in a hard land,
 Where the plough breaks and has to make it new.
 He drives the plough and scatters seed.
 But there is no harvest of his toil."

The more depressed Kolams with their primitive methods of shifting cultivation or Podu on hill slopes, with the help of digging sticks and primitive hoes, suffered equally with the Gonds. Their methods are more primitive. They do not cultivate more than three to four acres at one time. They do not possess agricultural cattle, nor other necessary implements. Their poverty is proverbial even among the poor Gonds. They live in hamlets of four or five, away from the villages. They shift their houses with their fields, that is every two or three years. They generally prefer cultivation on hill-slopes to that on depressions. It can thus be easily imagined how the Kolams, and the other no better tribals, the Naikpods, were hard hit. Their tiny hamlets were dispersed as of no account and they were driven to give up their cultivation, and had to work as labourers and do basket-making, their principal side industry.

The auctioning of the forest produce, which was one of the means of tribal subsistence, began by the Forest Department also, hit them hard. The Excise also began the auctioning of the Mohua flower, which is used by the Gonds in their diet, during times of necessity. These auctions opened the flood-gates for non-tribal exploiters who had neither the means

nor the wish to export these Mohua, Chironji, bamboo, or even the grass required for thatching of the huts. The aim was only to impose levy from the aboriginals and make money at their expense.

Present Position:—As a result of these dispersals and evictions, levies and petty exactions, the aboriginal reached a desperate state of mind. In 1942, the number of aboriginal Pattadars was hardly one-fifth of their total population. Thus of a total number of 3,300 families in Utnur, these were only 471 Pattadars. And many of these had lost their rights in the land through sale deeds or mortgages, and were Pattadars only in name. This was in a Taluk which was the heart of the tribal country. In Asifabad, of a total number of 2,400 families, about 900 were Pattadars. In Rajura out of a total number of 3,170 families only 678 were Pattadars.

Most of these were petty cultivators, hardly owning more than five to six acres. Thus eighty percent of the total tribal population found themselves without a means of livelihood, with precarious existence and with homes liable to dispersal at any moment, subject to the whims, fancies and petty exactions of menial officials at any time.

The land hunger of the Gonds now became very serious. The bitterness engendered by the expulsion from lands and villages led to a serious clash between the aboriginals and the authorities. As a result of firing by the police, twelve Gonds were killed and a number were wounded. A feeling of frustration came over the dispossessed Gonds, who had no means of redress left to them.

“The Government has a lot of land,” they said, to quote Baron Haimendorf’s Tribal Hyderabad, “but they don’t give it to us. However often we may go to Asifabad it is of no use, no officer ever listens to us, even if we took a stone and hit his head he would not take any notice of us. But rich men like Velema Doras get all the land they want. Today this village is given to a Brahmin, tomorrow that village to a muslim. There is land for all of them, only not for us.”

To quote Mr. Grigson, one of the greatest living authorities the administration of aboriginal races, “In its essentials the

Gond problem is the same in Hyderabad as the aboriginal problem in the Central Provinces or other parts of India, though more acute because of the greater neglect and the lower district administrative standards, of the part, which have left the Hyderabad aboriginal entirely at the mercy of the exploiter, whether he be the land hungry Kunbi and Kapu, the Arah and Pathan Shylock, the Hindu moneylender, the forest or excise contractor, the poor Moslem coining a term on the analogy of the poor white of South Africa, or the unscrupulous official. We have to restore and foster the aboriginal's self-respect, by protecting him from the loss of land, bond service, debt and oppression, to shield him from malaria, yaws and other sickness, to teach him an agriculture and an economic organization suited to his habits and mentality, and to educate him not only to retain and value his own tribal culutral life of modern India."

State Policy in Aboriginal Rehabilitation:— To remedy this state of affairs, the Government formulated a new policy regarding the aboriginal. A special Aboriginal Tribal Officer was appointed, to look into their grievances, to find land for them, to secure continued possession of land already in their hands, regularisation of Sivaijamabandi possession held by them, and protect them from the exactions of the exploiters and to appoint village officials and headmen from among the tribals. The main feature of the rehabilitation measures was the grant of land to the aboriginals under special Loani, grant of Patta rights free of premium. Allotment of and under these Loani Khas rules became the primary task of the Special Officer. The Central plateau of Adilabad district comprises the whole of Utnur Taluk, nearly half of Adilabad and Rajura Taluks. Besides, there are about seventy villages in each of the three taluqs of Both, Adilabad and Kinwat, and fifteen villages in Luxatipet taluq. This area contains a compact aboriginal population. It was notified as tribal area, and the allotment of land under special Loani was confined to the aboriginals for a period of ten years. Outside the tribal area there are villages with a considerable tribal population. It was also proposed to restrict special Loani to the aboriginals in these villages where the tribal population, is forty per cent of the total.

Once this was decided upon, the work of Loani started rapidly. It has been remarked already how in many places the aboriginal held land on what is commonly known as Sivaijamabandi tenure. This Sivaijamabandi possessions were regularised by the occupants being given Patta rights in the land. A village to village survey was undertaken by the Special Officer to find out the availability of land. In each village in the tribal area where vacant land was available was assigned to the aboriginals on the basis of an economic holding of sixteen to twenty-four acres. In areas where big non-aboriginal Pattadars held Government lands on Sivaijamabandi, that is illegally, these lands were allotted to the aboriginals. Of course those non-aboriginal cultivators who were holders of only a few acres of Sivaijamabandi, or had small plots of Patta lands besides were not disturbed.

It was soon noticed that there was not enough land available to accommodate all the tribals residing in the area. Especially was this the case in Kinwat and Both where most of the land had already come under the possession of non-aboriginal immigrants from across the river. In Utnur, Asifabad and Rajura, very little land was available outside the forests which were spread over a major portion of the taluqs. It was decided that the various forest blocks should be surveyed to see how much area could be required to be excised and what adjustments were to be made in the boundary lines, so as to leave a reasonable area for the future development of the village. The Daboli forest block in Umur taluq, the Tilani block in Asifabad taluq, and the Manikgarh block in the Rajura taluq, are the homes of more than four thousand aboriginal families. These were taken up one by one and intensively surveyed so that while the aboriginals were to be provided on the one hand, no valuable forests should be lost to the country on the other. As a result, in the Daboli block about 47,000 acres were made available for assignment on Patta to the aboriginals. In the Tilani block, 23,000 acres were made available and in the Manikgarh block 30,000 acres were released for Pattas. A programme of a survey of all the important blocks was drawn up with this view only. Pending the completion of these surveys, Pattas have also been assigned in the tribal zone

in lands still available for Patta in a planned way. And now more than 10,000 families of the aboriginals, of the 23,000 total number of the aboriginal families in the district, hold Patta lands of 1,60,000 acres. There is every reason to believe that in a short time the remaining families will also be provided with land.

After lands were provided in the Daboli block a settlement party was sent to measure out and map the fields, so that the new cultivators could receive certificates of their Patta holdings and the rent they were expected to pay. It has completed its work, and other areas will also be settled soon.

The new cultivators had to make a start from the beginning, and naturally they possessed few means of carrying on agriculture successfully. First, the forest standing on the land had to be cleared. It was decided that the cultivator could take as much timber from the field as was necessary for the construction of huts and other domestic and agricultural needs. The rest was to be auctioned by the Forest Department. The new cultivator was also excused rent on the land until he had got his field cleared and started actual cultivation. It has to be remembered that the assignments of the land started in the closing months of 1944 so that only three years have elapsed since the work began. The assignments in Daboli began first and still continue. In Tilani the assignments were made in the hot season of 1947 and those in the Manikgarh block in the summer of 1947.

The area thus actually brought under the plough has varied from block to block, and on what was already under the unauthorised Sivaijamabandi treasure before it was regularized. So in considering the rehabilitation of the aboriginals, the development in the Daboli block of Utnur taluq affords the best example since it was there that work was first started. The Daboli block of forest covered wholly or in part fifty-seven villages of Utnur taluq. As soon as the excision of a considerable area was decided upon, the work of assignment was started. Sixteen villages had been totally made over for assignment to the revenue authorities. As has been already alluded to above, more than 46,000 acres were excised in the block for

assignment. During the last three years 1,500 families have received assignments of nearly 22,000 acres in the area under question.

It was soon felt that the new Pattadars were in need of substantial help before they could be set on their feet. In 1945 the Government sanctioned Taccavi loan to the aboriginals to be recovered in five easy instalments. In Utnur taluq and mainly in the Daboli villages, a sum of Rs. 19,000 was distributed as Taccavi to the Pattadars, to help them in clearing the fields of forests and other growth. A further sum of Rs. 5,000 was similarly advanced in the following year on the same lines.

A survey of the indebtedness among the Gonds shows that the average debt of a Gond did not exceed fifteen rupees per head, probably in view of the low credit due to their meagre resources. The practice was for the agriculturists among the Gonds to borrow money from the money lenders to be returned at the harvesting time mainly in kind. The cultivators hardly possessed any bullocks, and money lenders and other substantial agriculturists of Utnur and Asifabad taluqs lent bullocks for this purpose on hire. The terms were that the cultivator was to return about six maunds of jowar or other grain to the lender for each pair. This proved extremely lucrative to the lenders, who developed other business relations with the debtors. They would get other things from them such as honey, chironji, or other crops such as mung, urid & other pulses, and castor and til either in lieu of their debts or at very cheap prices, and sell them in the nearby markets at a handsome profit. It was necessary to remove the grip of the money-lenders to the utmost possible extent, if rehabilitation was to be a success.

It was decided to start co-operative activities in the tribal zone. Marlawai, a village nine miles to the south-east of Utnur, in the heart of the tribal country, has since the hot weather of 1943 become the centre of educational and other cultural activities among the aboriginals. A teachers' training centre has been started which is providing Gond teachers for the Gond village schools and the posts of village Officials and

other subordinate posts. By the end of 1945 when the co-operative activities were started in Marlawai, already thirty schools had started functioning. Today the training centre has trained one hundred aboriginals to the middle school standard, provided fifty teachers, and ten assistant teachers, fifteen village officials, one food inspector, two clerks and few forest guards. It has become the real centre of all tribal activities. It was felt that a rural bank could be started on Marlawai. Accordingly, this was done and the bank was allowed to carry in its activities in forty villages round Marlawai. Within these last two years, it has enlisted 826 shareholders, sold shares to the value Rs. 10,260/-. Of these half the sum has been collected. It has to be remembered that in view of the low economic power of the aboriginals, the prices of shares are being recovered from them in four annual instalments. The co-operative authorities also advanced a sum of Rs. 10,000/- to the union to help in its activities.

In the very beginning, that is during the monsoon of 1945 the union advanced jowar to its members, to help them tide over the lean period till the harvest. It also started a provision shop to supply the day-to-day necessities of the tribals. Later it obtained small quotas of articles such as kerosene, sugar and cloth from the supply authorities. Today it is being run successfully. Its business out-turn extended from Rs. 7,000 in 1946 to Rs. 17,000 in 1947. The Union and the store have become centres where the aboriginals come confidently today to make their purchases, ask for small loans either in money or in kind, bring their marketable produce for sale. The merchants from the low lands no longer find it worth their while bargain with the simple folk who are beginning to understand their losses and gains. By giving them their needs, the union has made the aboriginals more and more independent of the moneylender. Grain banks are another development in this connection. The idea was to make available to the villager grain for seed and other purposes in their villages. Shares were recovered in the form of grain only. Today 79 grain banks are functioning in Utnur taluq alone.

With the experience of Marlawai co-operative activities it was decided to extend the programme. Rural banks at Man-

kapur in the northern part of Utnur and at Keslapur, the seat of a big Gond fair every cold weather, in the eastern part of the taluq, were started in 1946. Til is the main produce in the northern light loams of Utnur. Merchants of Adilabad usually buy it up at cheap rates. When they heard that a new rural Union at Mankapur was preparing to purchase til from profit. It was necessary to remove the grip of the money the aboriginals and arrange for its disposal on a co-operative basis, they wanted to give half their profits if only the union would leave them alone in their activities. This shows the real services these unions are rendering in the tribal area. There is a tendency in some quarters to regard rural banks as of little use. But experience in the tribal belt has proved their merit and usefulness.

Another difficulty the new settlers experienced was regarding the supply of bullocks. In the first place, the Pattadars found lenders both unable and unwilling to lend bullocks to those who had no credit. Their rates were also high. It was felt that if the Government could arrange for the supply of plough bullocks on a generous basis, it would not only be of real help to the needy, but also it would tend to bring down the rates on which bullocks were hired out. Thus Government in 1946 sanctioned a sum of Rs. 50,000 from the Rural Welfare Trust Fund for purchase of plough bullocks and supply. The money was to be recovered from the owners in five annual instalments with a small sum of Rs. 15/- per year in addition. Accordingly, one hundred and sixty pairs of bullocks have been purchased and given out to the new aboriginal Pattadars. An equal amount has been sanctioned for this year as well on the same terms. These supplies have brought down the prevailing rates. They have further been of real help. For example, aboriginal settlers from the taluq of Kinwat came and settled down in the semi-deserted village of Mahagon. They numbered 46 families. They received 608 acres of land of Patta last year. They possessed twelve pairs of bullocks when they arrived. They have been helped through loans in cash and kind and a few pairs of bullocks. During the last year, they have succeeded in clearing the fields of forest, and have brought more than a hundred acres under the first

Kharif crop. They hope to bring at least two hundred acres under the winter crop this year. There is no doubt that the whole land assigned to them will be brought under the plough within a year or two. In other places the results have been slightly less rapid. But taking the fifty-seven villages in the Daboli forest block on the whole, the aboriginals have brought 5,000 acres under the plough for the Kharif crop of 1948. It is expected that at least 3,000 acres will be brought under the winter crop.

The agricultural farm attached to the training centre trains teacher candidates. Improved strains of jowar have been imported by the farm and have been distributed to the neighbouring cultivators. The Agricultural Department is arranging for a small museum at Marlawai where agricultural implements and seeds will be exhibited.

Thus we notice that the aboriginal, under encouragement, is slowly picking up. He has always felt best under his own leaders. Formerly, they were the Rajas and the Mokashis. Now he has his own village officials, and headmen. The Panchayat, now being organized on the basis of group of villages and consisting of his own prominent men, is slowly establishing itself as an institution where he can bring his social and religious disputes for decision according to customary law. The medical unit posted at Marlawai is looking after his health and battling with that scourge of the hill tribes, the yaws, and that common enemy of all, the malaria. No longer does he feel a terror of subordinate officials. Nor does he feel a sense of frustration and a consequent mood of fatalism. He knows that he is being helped sincerely, by men in authority, whose only desire is that he should be developed into a cheerful and prosperous peasant and develop his culture in his native surroundings. The emancipation of the aboriginals of Adilabad from the age-long bondage of custom and superstition, and their economic amelioration with a view to making them peasant proprietors and prosperous yeomanry of the district, will depend on the degree to which the resources of the State can be effectively mobilized for this purpose.

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