

PART TWO

THE DESCRIPTION OF THE DANGS CULTURE

The second part of the thesis is descriptive. It consists of nine chapters ^{chapter} i.e., V to XIII, in which the patterns of the Dangs culture have been described and analysed. At a descriptive level culture has been divided by Sorokin(1) into material, behavioural and ideological cultures. The material culture refers to the products and systems devised by man in his efforts to adjust to the physical conditions. The ideological and behavioural parts refer to the non-material, psychological aspects of the culture. To this division of ^{the} patterns of culture one more can be added viz. the physical culture. Like the material equipments and social situations, the physical and climatic conditions of the land can also be treated as an aspect of culture.

(1) Sorokin, P. : Society, Culture and Personality.
New York, Harper Brothers, 1947. p. 313.

Hence, the Dangs culture is divided into

- (A) The Physical Culture
- (B) The Material Culture
- (C) The Psychological Culture.

The physical, the material and the psychological aspects of culture cannot be understood separately. Human beings do not live in a world of bare physical objects and events. The objects and events are defined and understood in a specific manner by the individuals. The cultural patterns to which the individuals are subjected define the meaning of the objects and events in the physical and material world for them. Man lives in a meaningful universe. His responses to the objects of external environment and relations with other human beings can only be understood in terms of the meaning which they have for him because of his participation in that culture. Man's actions and thoughts thus cannot be understood without a reference to the influence of the cultural meanings derived from them. The non-psychological and the psychological aspects of culture are

intimately related. The physical, the material and the psychological patterns of culture are interrelated.

"In fact, the various departments of culture are often so closely interlaced that it becomes difficult to post a particular trait under one heading or another." (2) Culture has ^a unity of its own.

The individual who is born and brought up in a particular culture develops certain typical personality traits because of his participation in that culture. While discussing and analysing the patterns of the Dangs culture suggestions have been made about the relationship between personality traits of a Dangi ^{and} ~~and~~ the Dangs culture. These suggestions have been analysed and elaborately discussed in chapter XIV. In understanding the human behaviour the role of cultural patterns assumes highest priority.

2. Bose, N. K. : ^uCultural Anthropology. Bombay, Asia Publishing House, 1961. p.16.

(A) THE PHYSICAL CULTURE

This chapter on the physical culture of the Dangs describes the geography, history and population of the Dangs. The Physical and climatic conditions, past history, the nature of the surrounding areas, density of population etc. of the Dangs district have been - described in this chapter. These factors shape the mode of life and personality of the Dangis. These factors play a great part in building up certain social and economical institutions, rituals and thought systems. "It is clear that culture (the precipitate of history) situation and the idiosyncracies of the individual (determined, in turn, by a unique combination of biological, experiential and cultural influences) are all intricately intertwined." (1), Erickson's analysis of the Yurok places considerable stress on the ecological

(1) Kluckhohn. C. - Culture and Behaviour in Lindzey C. A Handbook of Social Psychology, Vol II. p.922. Addison Wesley, 1956.

basis for personality development. "Ecology may be as important for modal personality as for technology and social structure".(2). It is true that some writers in both ancient and modern times have elaborated a theory of geographical determinism. (3). But it is too much to say that geography determines everything. The factors of geography and history operate as a limitation to people's efforts and explorations. They have an indirect effect. "The physical factors of his environment exert their influence not by affecting his body, but by entering into his mind and becoming motives of actions; and the ideas which he forms may modify, or even contravene the influence which we might expect any given factor to exercise." (4). Human geography demands understanding both of human beings and of geography as well. Hence, the following chapter discusses the geography, history and the population of the Dangs.

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- (2) Faris. R.E.L. Ecological Factors in Human Behaviour. in J. McV Hunt (ed) Personality and the Behaviour Disorders. Vo. II, p. 736-759, Ronald Press, 1944.
 - (3) Benedict. R. Patterns of Culture. London. Routledge. 1935.
 - (4) Barker E. - National Character P. 48-49. London, Methuen; 1927.

CHAPTER V

THE GEOGRAPHY, HISTORY AND POPULATION OF THE DANGS

I. THE DANGS AND THE DANGIS

The Dangs area formerly a small piece of land governed by a few petty Bhil chieftains which was after 1947 a separate district in Bombay State is now from 1st May 1960 a separate district in Gujarat State. The Dangs is known to outsiders for its forests and forest products. The inhabitants of the Dangs are called the Dangis. Because of its peculiar geographical location and unrenowned history the Dangs has so far remained unadulterated by outside people and their cultures. Its people's mode of living is still primitive and the people are a distinct type by themselves, being a typical product of the Dangs culture and environment. The Dangis

have their own Dangl culture. The Dangis can be classed as a pre-literate people - the 'Ādiwāsis' or the 'Aboriginals'.

II. LOCATION OF THE DANGS

The district of the Dangs lies on the Western slopes of the Ghats or the Sahyadri scarps sixty to seventy miles South-East of Surat. It is a forest region covering the area about 670 square miles between North latitudes 20-34' and 21.4' and East longitudes 73.28' and 73.56'. Its East-West length is forty miles and South-North length is forty miles. It is encircled by Surat District of Gujarat State and West Khandesh and Nasik districts of Maharashtra State. Geographically it is more in contiguity with Surat district, for the slopes of the mountains merge with the natural plains of Gujarat. As the Dangs is situated amidst the districts of Gujarat and Maharashtra States, it has naturally been a meeting place of the Gujarati and the Marathi cultures.

The Dangs is a forest area. For the purposes of civil administration it consists of one

taluka and one district, But from the point of view of forest administration it is divided into eight ranges, viz., Waghai, Pimpri, Ahwa, Bardipada, Menhskatri, Subir, Piplaidevi and Galkund. The Bardipada, Menhskatri and Waghai ranges are spread over the Northern, Western and South Western sides of the district, ^{cov} ~~veg~~ covering almost more than half of the circumference of the border. They touch the Songarh, Vyara, Dharmpur and Bansda talukas of Surat district. Pimpri and Ahwa ranges cover the central areas of the district. Subir and Piplaidevi ranges in the North and North Eastern direction touch the Navapur, Nandurbar and Baglan talukas of West Khandesh district. The Galkund range is in the South and South East of the district touching the Kalvan and Surgana talukas of Nasik district (See Map - Appendix II).

III. PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY

The Dangs lies on the spurs and slopes and across the valley of the areas between the plains of Surat and the scarps of the Sahyadri. The levels range from below 400 feet West of Waghai to over 3120 feet at the edge of the Ghat, South East of

Malegaon and upto 4350 feet at Laghatia hills on the border of Zari Gharkhadi (Dangs) and Golwar (West Khandesh). All country is hilly and covered with forest. In the North adjacent to the Baglan taluka of West Khandesh are situated the famous hills of Salher (5400') and Mulher which are of historical importance. Ahwa, the head quarter of the district stands on a plateau a mile and a half from East to West and a mile from South to North sloping northwards from 1700 to 1600 feet. The entire area of the Dangs is a great forest (upwards of 800 square miles) which continues into the adjacent areas to North, South and South-West. There is open country on the Deccan plateau of West Khandesh and Nasik at an elevation of 3000 feet and higher.

IV. THE FORESTS

The Dangs forests are rich in teak or sag (*sectona grandis*), blackwood or sissu (*Dalbergia sisoo*), white wood or Khandel (*Serculia ures*) including large spreads of Bamboo of great size. To the outside world the Dangs is known for its teak. Teak is useful as timber wood. Teak grows very high sometimes the height being more than 125 feet. If

the whole of the trunk is without the off-shoots or branches it can be used as a single piece. Other important trees of usefulness and value are Bil (aegle marmelos), Turan (Zigyphus ragosa), Mohwa (Bassia latifolia), Khair (Acacia catechu), Jack or Phanas (artocarpus integrifolia), Baval (acacia arabica), Pimpri (Hibiscus populnebidies), Limdo (Melia azadirachta), and many other trees yielding gum, or bark, or seeds, or fruits of medicinal value. These other species form the 40 per cent of the stock. The forest is spread over all parts, except where the ground is too steep to retain the soil, or where it has been cleared up by the natives for cultivation and building huts.

Formerly all over the Dangs the forests were thick and dense, a good dwelling place for wild animals. But during the period of British rule, late upto the end of 19th century the natives fell down the trees and ravaged the forests as a protest and warfare against the British. Slowly and gradually they were given some rights and concessions for the use of land for cultivation and forest products, and were made to protect the forests. The working plan

of the Forest Department, 1926, takes note that 'serious theft of timber is unknown and even petty pilfering is becoming uncommon. The people have too liberal privileges to want to exceed them. The Bhils are however still pretty destructive in their lopping methods'.

The whole forest area is divided into two types, the reserved forests of 346 square miles and the protected forests of 304 square miles. The reserved forests are banned for the use of its products, cultivation and residence. The natives by right are allowed to make use of the protected forests land for cultivation and residence.

There is also grass of the andropogen type which is claimed to yield Russa oil (used as adulterant for scents). The grass if it is burnt proves beneficial, since it destroys the decaying vegetable matter which poisons river water, and fertilises soil by its ash.

V. THE RIVERS

There are four main rivers flowing from the Dangs. They are the Gira, the Purna, the Khapri

and the Ambika. The Gira and the Purna are in the North while the Khapri cuts across the whole district from its centre, and meets the river Ambika which flows in the South outside the district. As the slope is Westward, the rivers flow from East to West. The Gira pours its waters into the Tapti, while the Ambika and the Purna flow directly into the Arabian Sea. The rivers are over-flooded in monsoon and retain water upto winter. Only at some places where rocks outcrop, the river beds retain more or less perennial water in other seasons. The tributaries of the rivers which are monsoon torrents cut deeply into intervening country North and South from an irregular series of ravines and parallel ridges. Since the whole land is mountainous and rocky the river beds are also rocky and not continuous, and not made of smooth fertile clay. Hence the rivers are neither navigable, nor can be used for transshipment of forest woods from the jungle to the main place. "It is claimed that some attempts have been made to render the Purna and the Khapri passable for rafts and timber but the rapids and shallows are too formidable to hope for success without considerable delay"(1)

1. Cyril Fox : Water Supply Report on the Dangs, 1949.

VI. CONFIGURATION OF THE SOIL

The soil is rocky. Hardly we dig a foot or two under the ground and find the layer of soft stone. The rocks vary in texture and hardness. They differ in composition at different places and are found in various colours. The rocks have produced soils varying from red through grey to nearly black. From the geology of the adjacent area it is evident that the Dangas valleys and slopes and plateaus show lava flows of the Deccan traps. This basaltic lava, basalt rocks and dolerite are the main constituents of the Dangas soil. As there are no fissures and cracks in the rocks, the rocks are not capable of holding water. Moreover, hardly we can find a big piece of flat land. Because of the slope the rainfall waters wash up the upper layer of the soil and the earthen clay cover slowly and gradually vanishes. So the soil of this area is not fertile, however, is sufficiently so, for large tree growth and offers the tress a good foot hold.

Geologically also the Dangas soil is not at all rich. Except the stones for buildings and roads and the lavatraps the Dangas are unlikely to yield minerals of economic value.

VII. THE CROPS

As the soil is rocky and slopy it cannot hoard and retain water if the proper precautions are not taken by building bunds. In the torrential flow of rain water, in the absence of suitable measures the upper layer of clay and fertisisers may be washed away. So the crops of the Dangs are only a few, and of low quality. The Dangis take only one crop in a year Paddy (rice), Nagli, Warai, Mug, Papdi, etc. are the monsoon crops. Gram and Khurasani are winter crops. The area under cultivation, on average comes to 50,000 to 70,000 acres depending on the rainfall and other factors. Nagli which is similar to Bajri is a staple food of the people. Paddy and gram pulse are the substitutes.

VIII. THE CLIMATE

Monsoons are severe while winter and summer are normal. Following are the tables of rainfall from 1949 to 1959 and temperature from 1957 to 1959.

TABLE I

RAINFALL

Year	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Total
1949	-	-	-	-	1.60	4.93	23.26	20.85	22.22	5.45	0.05	-	78.36
1950	-	-	-	0.07	-	0.62	64.3	7.59	22.38	2.41	-	-	97.37
1951	-	-	0.05	0.13	0.21	9.01	17.91	15.18	0.36	3.02	0.96	-	47.03
1952	-	-	-	-	-	13.66	32.22	11.53	3.84	0.24	-	-	61.49
1953	0.1	-	-	0.08	-	13.1	13.10	34.32	7.13	0.71	-	-	68.45
1954	-	0.07	0.56	-	-	8.55	20.50	12.90	43.89	0.05	-	0.22	86.74
1955	-	0.00	-	1.63	0.22	13.03	13.92	29.87	20.68	16.26	-	-	95.61
1956	0.05	-	-	0.09	4.24	3.19	59.48	22.68	10.44	7.55	0.39	0.34	108.45
1957	-	-	-	-	0.14	5.54	19.12	19.74	2.41	0.19	0.29	-	47.13
1958	0.08	-	0.34	2.75	0.20	6.72	40.93	16.24	26.63	2.36	1.78	-	98.13
1959	-	-	-	-	1.03								12

TABLE II

TEMPERATURE

	1957		1958		1959	
	Max.	Mini.	Max.	Mini.	Max.	Mini.
Janu.	80	64	80	69	81	65
Febru.	81	66	81	69	85	70
March.	87	72	92	78	95	75
April	101	80	98	81	100	84
May	106	82	107	81	103	83
June	96	80	96	77		
July	77	74	79	76		
August.	77	74	80	75		
Sept.	79	74	78	73		
Octo.	86	75	82	74		
Nove.	84	73	82	73		
Dece.	80	70	79	68		

Lowest January 1957 is 59°

Lowest January 1958 is 58°

Lowest January 1959 is 54°

Maximum 1957 108°

Maximum 1958 110°

Maximum 1959 105°

According to the data the temperature in summer varies from average maximum 102° to average minimum 78° . There are a few days in the month of May when the temperature is beyond 105° . The cold weather temperature varies from 58° to 80° . The summer season is from March to May, and the winter is from November to February. There are not as high or as low temperatures as might be expected, and are indeed should be attractive. But the atmosphere remains hot and stuffy owing to the heavy forest-clad conditions of the country. Another reason for the summer days being hot in comparison with the temperature is the nature of land. The soil being rocky, the land being mountainous studded with rocks, the tress being without leaves, the atmosphere is full of hot air waves.

The rainfall is heavy as it is quite common to hilly and forest areas. The monsoon is in full swing from July to September. But it starts earlier with a few showers sometimes in May and June. There is occasionally a wet day or two in November-January. But there are no regular mango showers. The rain fall is heavier just under the Ghat line and in the West. The East winds prevail in the cold weather and the

South-West for the rest of the year. The jungles are damp till the end of December and gradually become exceedingly dry. The villages in the upper Dangs and the villages situated very high on peaks of the hills, and more so their cattle suffer from scarcity of water during the days of March to May. In the wells and pits down in the valleys the supply of water holds out. The Ambika river pods get few and few apart in May, but the Khapri bed supplies good water to the end of ^{the} season.

The water flows of the showers of rain drain with them the dry leaves and vegetables from the jungles. Due to the vegetation, the water of the rivers becomes poisonous and unhealthy and causes diseases like fever, expansion of liver and spleen, small pox etc. Due to the decay of dry vegetation in monsoon the climate becomes notoriously malarious. However the climate is pleasant from January to March and not unbearably hot in April and May.

IX. THE ROADS AND COMMUNICATION WITH THE OUTSIDE CULTURES

The Imperial Gazetteer of India, 1885²

2. Imperial Gazetteer of India, 1885, Vol.II, p.115.

writes, "there are no roads properly so-called, but there are four principal cart tracks". Cyril Fox³ has noted in 1949 that there are 55 miles metalled roads, 24 miles murrum roads and roughly 320 miles earthen roads. Today obviously the conditions of roads and transport facilities have increased beyond the expectation of the natives. There is an all weather road from Billimora to Navapur passing through Pimpri, Ahwa, and Subir. The other bus routes are Ahwa-Nasik, Ahwa-Pipaldahad, Ahwa-Kalibel and Waghai-Nasik roads. There is a vast net work of kachha, murrum and earthen roads connecting the interior parts of the district. All roads except the Waghai-Navapur road are not used for transport in monsoon. The Ahwa-Galkund and the Waghai-Nasik roads though pakka roads, are not usable in monsoon because of the unbridged rivers on the way.

Upto 1947 the entry to the Dangas was restricted to a few jungle contractors and government servants. Since long the weekly bazaars were held at Galkund, Waghai, Ahwa, Malengaon, etc. Petty businessmen from beyond the Ghats, Sonadakh and

3. Cyril, Fox : Water Supply Report, ^{on the Dangas,} 1949.

Bansda used to come and supply the necessities like clothes, salt, fish etc. The jungle contractors and their people were mainly from Billimora and Bansda of Surat District. Thus the people of the Dangs have been more or less an isolated people. They live in the same physical and material conditions as they used to live years ago. There was little scope for contact with outsiders except on business and so culturally remained unaffected.

The peculiar geographical location of the Dangs has resulted in some differences in peoples' life in different areas. People living in vicinity of Gujarat State have more Gujarati traits in the language and living. People on the border of Nasik and West Khandesh districts are more 'Maharashtrianised' in their behaviour. There are occasional chances of give and take or exchange between adjacent border areas. But the differences between the people of one end, and the other, and those of central area are not so acute and intensive as to stamp them as different. The difference is negligible, and all are nothing else but the Dangis in their life and living. Culturally the Dangis are one people, unique

and different from the Maharashtra and Guj^arat people. And because of the government restrictions they have been able to retain their cultural independence.

X. HISTORY OF THE DANGS

Before merger to the Bombay State in 1948 the Dangs was a petty group of half independent states under the Surat political agency. From the administrative point of view and from the point of view of political relations with the native chieftains, the Dangs was controlled by the Surat political agent. But so far as the forest administration was concerned the Dangs was under the forest department with the Divisional forest office (D.F.O.) in Surat. The petty kings had no right over the forest products and forest incomes except the right for cultivation and lopping in the protected forest areas.

The Dangs chieftains were Bhils who claimed a strain of Rajput blood.⁴ The fifteen states were as under :

1. Gharvi
2. Deher

4. The Indian Antiquary, p.337.

3. Amala
4. Wasurna
5. Pimpri
6. Kirli
7. Shivbara
8. Chinchhi
9. Palasvihir
10. Pipaldevi
11. Avchar
12. Bilbari
13. Wadhiawan
14. Zari garkhadi
15. Ketak Kadupada

Out of these states fourteen were held by Bhils and one by Kunbi. The five of the petty chieftains claimed the title of Raja, one was called Pradhan and the others were Naiks. The chiefs were independent but formally owed obedience to the Gharvi chief, under whose banner the rest were bound to serve in times of war.

The name 'Dangs' has occurred often in the pages of history, but the systematic history available is only as old as the British rule in the Khandesh

district in 1818. As a result of treaty with the Holkar in this year the area of Baglan and Satana of Khandesh came under the British power. The adjacent area of the Dangs drew attention of the British for two reasons ; one the natives of the Dangs and Khandesh were a predatory people, hence were a nuisance to the neighbouring area. Secondly, the forests of the Dangs were a great economic asset.

In 1818 the Dangs came under the British rule, except the Baroda State claimed certain rights in certain villages of the Dangs. Between 1818 and 1825 the Britishers were engaged in fighting against the constant raids and plunders of the Bhil natives. For the purpose of 'setting them right into a peaceful tribe' a special Bhil corps from the Bhils of Khandesh was raised.

In 1842 the British government entered into 16 years lease of the forest rights for a yearly sum of Rs. 11,230/-. The Bhil chiefs by this agreement had no rights over the land except a few concessions for cultivation, in return of this sum. Politically the chiefs were not under the British control so far. The agreement was again revised and signed in January

1862, terminable only at the wish of ^{the} government at six months' notice, the rent being Rs. 13,039/-. This lease was extended to the whole of the Dangs in perpetuity to prevent the chiefs being oppressed by the Baroda agent and to prevent them from putting extravagant claims to rights in the Dangs. Finally, the right of Baroda State to the extent of half the land revenues of 52 co-shared villages was accepted, which upto 1948 was yearly paid to Baroda. The lease was modified in 1889 in view of the proposal to reserve some portion of the forests and the total rents were increased to Rs. 17879-6-8. In 1892, 217.12 square miles were reserved out of the total area of 650.95 square miles. But the reactions of the natives against this step of the government were violent. The chiefs and their people conceived it to be the beginning of an attempt to deprive them of all the rights. Hence they applied themselves with more vigour to cutting, burning and cultivating the so called reserves. Large tracts almost virgin forests were practically wiped out. This action of the chief was considered by the government as constituting 'a complete violation of the agreement' a point of great importance in the consideration of present

political status of the chiefs and of the government in the Dangs.

The Dangs people especially the Bhils were not only a trouble to the British rulers but they entered into and ravaged the adjacent territories of Surgana, Bansda, Bharampur and Baroda States. They were a terror to the local non-Bhil inhabitants also. Such a state of affairs lasted upto 1860. The Imperial Gazetteer(5) writes, 'Under the former native government the Bhils were the terror to the neighbouring districts and on occasions the most indiscriminate vengeance was taken on them in return of their habitual depredation. After the occupation of Khandesh by the British in 1818 anarchy was at its height. The roads were impassable, villages were plundered and daily murders were committed, the only protection the inhabitants of the plains could obtain being through regular payment of blackmail money. An expedition was sent into the Dangs country, but at the end of three months less than half the force marched back into Maligaon, the others having succumbed to the malaria of the jungle.* At that time

5. The Imperial Gazetteer, 1885, Vol.II, p.115.

* The village near which the sorps had camp~~y~~ed is known still today as 'Laskaria Amba'.

captain (afterwards Sir James) Outram came among the Bhils. First, conciliating them with feasts and prowess in tiger shooting he eventually succeeded in forming a Bhil corps that accompanied him on shooting expeditions. In 1827, the Bhil corps had reached 600 rank and file who fought boldly for the government and suppressed plundering'.

In 1879, the Dangs as a native state was put under the collector of Khandesh as a political agent, but after 25 years it came under Surat political agency. Even though brought under the direct control, the Dangs chiefs in a way had a semblance of independence. The author of Indian antiquary(6) writes, "Except their dues to the Deshmukh, the Dangs chief paid no tribute either to the British Government or to any other ruler....."

Along with the organisation of political stability government organised the forest administration also. A forest settlement Officer was appointed to inquire into the situation and as a result of his proposal in 1902 a special divisional forest officer was appointed to make the chiefs

6. The Indian Antiquary, p.337.

abide by the terms of agreement. This Officer was empowered to exercise first class magisterial powers in respect of all offences and to ~~apply~~^{en}force the spirit of the Indian forests and other acts. After this the real reservation of the reserve forests became a fact. He drew up and introduced a code of administrative standing orders, many of which were in force upto 1948. Police force was also organised and administration in general was brought ~~x~~ to an efficient state.

In 1911, 113.81 square miles were added to the reserves, thus making the total area of reserves 330.93 square miles. Subsequently in view of the higher return from the forests the subsidy paid to the chiefs was raised to Rs. 26921/- in 1933-34.

Since the administration of the forests was important the Dangs was put under the direct control of the Forest Department. The Divisional Forest Officer, Surat, was then ex-officio assistant political agent under the political agent, Surat, Superintendent of Police, Assistant Collector of Excise and a First Class Magistrate.

In practice, and by virtue of their having the power to do so, while the chiefs had proved themselves incapable of it and had violated the terms of their agreement, government virtually assumed the entire administration of the Dangs. The right to collect and enjoy the revenues of these states was given to the chiefs and Naiks. Even though enjoying the supreme power as regards revenue administration, the chiefs were not contented with it. They and with them the Bhil tribe as such, felt that they were snubbed and their rights and powers were gradually curtailed by the British Government. There were many points on which the chiefs and the government disagreed. As the result of it, the chiefs were not only at war with the government but harassed the native population also. Especially the Kunbis, a tribe given to agriculture and the major part of the population were troubled and had to succumb to the demands of the chiefs. Their property, women and cattle as well, were always in danger of being plundered. Any kind of refusal or opposition from the public against the demands of the chiefs and their attendants was meted out ^{cruelly.} ~~carefully~~. Under this reign

of terror and unhampered power the natives were always fear stricken*.

Hence, as a measure to curtail powers of the chiefs the Government appointed a Dang Dewan, a Revenue Officer who would collect the revenue on behalf of the Chiefs, which ultimately went to the Chief's treasury. By this gesture of the government the kings had whatsoever no ruling power except enjoying the revenue. Naturally this step was not accepted willingly by the chiefs. There were serious armour uprising against the government. But the British Government known for its diplomatic tactics of divide and rule, utilising all the means of bribery and persuasion, threat and punishment, temptation and fear of death, suppressed the Bhil opposition with a high hand once and for all.

The land revenue which was collected at Rs. 6-8-0 per plough was fully payable to the Chiefs and Naiks. Slowly and gradually as the more land was brought under cultivation, the revenue increased so the share of the Chiefs and Naiks also increased. The land revenue distributed in 1948 and 1949 was Rs. 16330-12-0 and Rs. 20330-7-0 respectively.

* There are a few old people who had experienced the Chief's cruelty and narrate their experiences.

In 1950 this amount was Rs. 22054-8-0 and in 1951 Rs. 24682-10-0. After the merger with the Bombay State and agreement of the chiefs with the Government now every year Rs. 1,22,000-0-0 are distributed among the Chiefs and Naiks.

XI. RIGHTS AND CONCESSIONS ENJOYED BY THE NATIVES

The only rights which existed are those of the chiefs and their dependents in protected forests. There are no rights in the reserves. The privileges of the Dangs natives in the protected forests are, use of all roads and foot-paths, cultivation of sufficient land and lopping according to the rules in force, the use of timber firewood, bamboos and minor forest produce for domestic purposes, grazing, hunting, and fishing, all the privileges being subject to certain conditions.

"Mohwra flowers may be collected and sold to the liquor contractors and not to be exported free. The people may also cut or collect and bring bamboos, certain jungle wood poles and axles, thatching grass etc. which are paid for at scheduled rates, only if removed beyond the Dangs.

In the reserve no cultivating, lopping, or timber cutting is allowed. Only grazing of horned cattle and not of goats is allowed. No new land may be cleared^{up} for cultivation till it has been seen and approved by the Government Officer.

XII. THE REFERENCE TO THE DANGS IN OLD HISTORY

The reference to the Dangs in life and literature is as old as the time of the epics of 'Ramayana'. The writers and students of 'Ramayana' identify the Dangs ^{as} with 'Dandakaranya', where Rama with Laxmana and Sita spent the major time of his exile, where he fought with and killed 'Khara and Dushana' and other monsters, from where Sita was kidnapped by Ravana. If folk tales and legendary tales are the evidence of the past history, then there may be some truth in the above belief. The story of Rama which forms an important part of the treasury of folk tales is prevalent throughout the whole of the Dangs, and is orally transmitted from generation to generation. The Dangis believe that Rama had stayed in this area. A few of the common names utilised by the Dangis are Rama, Laxu, Dashru

(male names) and Situ (female name). There is a village named 'Subir' which the people believe is after the name of 'Sabari' a Bhil woman devotee of Rama. There is another village named 'Bardipada' about ten miles North-West of Subir, which means a place rich in 'Bor trees', where Sabari used to collect the bor fruits which she offered to Rama.

The famous legendary hero 'Parsuram' viz. one who carries a hatchet (Pharsi), is said to have taken resort for a while on the hills of Salher on his way to the South.

There are casual references to the Dangs in the Moghul and Maratha history of Gujarat. The Dangs formed a part of the kingdom in the times of Siddharaj Jayasinha in 13th century A.D. for in the South his domination extended deep into Deccan, whereas Merutang related, he excited the alarm of the king of Kolhapur'. (7) The last Rajput king known as 'Karan Ghelo' being defeated by Allauddin Khilji the emperor of Delhi in 1296 A.D. took resort in the fort of Baglan, i.e. Fort of Salher.) Since then

7. Forbes, A.K. : Rasmala, ^{P.112} Ahmedabad, Gujarati Printing Vidyasabha, ~~P.112~~ Press, 1927.

the Dangs and Gujarat came under the muslim rule.

The forts of Salher and Mulher figure in the Maratha History. Shivaji brought under his control these forts in 1672, from the Moghul sardars. In the later half of 18th century Surat, Nasik and Khandesh districts came under the regime of the Gaekwars of Baroda. Gaekwar is said to have built the forts of Hathgarh in the East Dangs about 14 miles from Galkund and Rupgarh in the West Dangs, 5 miles from Kalibel. The forts of Salher and Mulher were under the Gaekwars till the merger of Baroda State in 1948.

Although the whole of the Dangs was never under any power, the Dangis were always in struggle with the outsiders. This struggle became open, and armour struggle with Gaekwars and British, ultimately resulting into a pseudo slavery of the chiefs and the people.

XIII. THE PLACE OF THE DANGIS IN THE CLASSIFICATION OF PRIMITIVE TRIBES IN OLD BOMBAY STATE AND INDIA.

The tribal population in India is the most numerous of those in Asia concerning whom more or less details are available.

The following table gives the absolute number of persons belonging to the tribal region(8).

TABLE III

Year	Number in Lakhs	Number per 10,000	Percentage of total population
1881	6,426,511	258	2.58
1891	9,112,018	323	3.23
1901	8,584,184	292	2.92
1911	10,295,165	328	3.28
1921	9,775,000	309	3.09
1931	8,280,000	236	2.36

In 1941 the system of classification for tribals was changed. Upto 1931 the classification was on the basis of religion, as well as race, caste, or tribe. In 1941 a single table was prepared under the head of 'communities'. According to this change the number of persons of tribal was 25,441,489 as against 22,615, 708 in 1931. This was growth in number of aboriginals would be 12.50 percent or slightly less than that of the total population.

8. Census of India, 1901, p.576.
 Census of India, 1921, p.110.
 Census of India, 1931, p.587.

But these reports on 'ādiwāsis' are not reliable, mainly for two reasons. Firstly, because of the difficulty of classification and secondly, because of deliberate misrepresentation, as after 1909 with the inauguration of the separate religious electorates, there had been an increasing pressure on the part of religious groups to swell their numbers in the census(9). Some writers have also doubted the census figures of 1941. Ādiwāsis as they are now called number not less than 30 millions according to the verdict of scientists at the last session of the Indian Science Congress. As the process of absorption and acculturation has gone on for centuries and census enumeration of ādiwāsis is unreliable, it would be nearer the truth to say that ethnically tribal numbers would be four times what is shown in the census(10). The 1941 census figures have proved to be rather misleading for the aboriginals were confused with the so called untouchables in certain places in census returns.(11). In 1948 the conference of social workers and anthropologists for tribal people estimated their number to about 25

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9. Mamoria, C.B. : Tribal Demography of India, Allahabad, Kitab Mahal, p.24. 1957.
 10. Singh : Development and Ādiwāsis in Asian Labour Vol.I, No.4, January 1950, p.52.
 11. Chandrashekhar, S. : India's Population - Facts and Policy, p.39. 1950.

millions of which 20 millions live in the plains and are assimilated with the rest of the people more or less, and only 5 millions may be taken as the population residing in the hills(12).

In 1951 census according to the policy of our national government the submerged population was classified under three heads, 'Scheduled caste', 'scheduled Tribes', and 'Backward Class'. Tribals were classified in the group of Scheduled tribes. Their population was as under (13):

TABLE IV

	Number in Millions	Per- centage
Scheduled Castes	20.0	5.6
Scheduled Tribes	55.0	15.3
Backward Class	35.6	9.3

Thus 110.6 million could be backward socially and educationally. Out of this the tribals are 55 millions - 15.3 percent.

12. Report of the Conference of the Social Workers and Anthropologists for Tribals in India, 1948, p.2.

13. Census of India 1951.

The Tribal population is spread over the whole of Indian sub-continent and hence the density of the tribals is more or less in different provinces. The numerical strength of a tribe ranges from a few hundreds to more than 2 millions.

XIV. THE TRIBAL POPULATION IN BOMBAY STATE :

The tribals 'ādiwāsis' are 33,59,305 in number in Bombay State which is 9.2 per cent of the total population of the State. The most prominent tribes are the Bhils, the Dublas, the Warlis, the Konkanas etc. The Dangis are not one tribe in the sense as the Bhil or the Dublas etc. are. One who is an inhabitant of the Dangs, whether a Bhil or a Warli or a Kunbi is a Dangi.

It is interesting to know that the tribes residing in the Dangs are also found in the adjacent districts, namely Surat, Nasik and West Khandesh districts. For the sake of comparison it is important to know the tribal population of these districts also.

The tribal population in the Surat District in 1941 was 40 per cent of the total population of the District. In 1951 census this percentage was 46.74 per cent. The following table shows the tribal population of Surat District:

TABLE V

1. Dublas	...	182,473
2. Chodhras	...	106,530
3. Dhotias	...	9,971
4. Naiks or Naikadas	...	47,254

The Bhils are found in West Khandesh and Nasik Districts of Maharashtra, ^{and} Broach, Panchmahals and Baroda districts of Gujarat. The strength of the Bhils is 440,493 in Gujarat and 380,215 in Maharashtra. The Bhils are found in other provinces also in greater number, especially in Rajasthan and Central India.

The Warlis one of the major tribe in the Dangs are found in good number in the North-Eastern

part of Thana District, in the Portugese territories of Daman, in Dharampur and Bansda talukas of Surat District and in the Western part of Nasik district. According to 1931 census out of the total population of 207051 of Warlis, 150586 were in Thana district, 37998 in Surat and 12658 in Nasik districts.

The Kunbis or Konkanas are in great number in the North-Western part of Nasik district and Dharampur taluks of Surat District. The population of the Kunbis according to 1931 census was 73444, and in 1941 it was 1,19,467.

XV. THE POPULATION OF THE DANGS

The Dangis according to 1951 census are returned as 47282 in number. The following table shows the strength of people during last eighty years.

TABLE VI

Year	Strength
1881	255,58
1891	32,747
1901	18,582
1911	29,345
1921	24,481
1931	33,748
1941	40,498
1951	47,282
1961	71,354

It can be seen from the table that there is a steady increase of population in the Dangs, except there is a marked decrease in the figures of 1901 and 1921. The decrease in population recorded in the census of 1901 is due to the ravage of famine and plague during the years 1900 and 1901. The decrease in the census figures of 1921 is primarily

due to the severe epidemic of influenza which swept over the country in the year 1918, and was responsible for an unusual toll of human lives.

The figures also show that there is a great increase of population from 1921. The percentage of variation of population between 1921 and 1931 is 37.8 per cent increase, that between 1931 - 1941 is 20 per cent increase, and that between 1941 - 1951 is 17.5 per cent increase.

The comparison of population figures of 1931 and 1941 shows that the growth of number of tribals would be 12.50 per cent. There is unusual increase in the Dangs during this time which is 20 per cent in 1941 and 37.8 per cent in 1931. This unexceptional increase cannot be accounted by saying that the fertility of the Dangi people is very high. The fertility among the tribals is slightly more than the fertility among the advanced groups.(14) This can be accounted only by presuming that the increase was due to the migration of the tribals living on border sides of the Dangs into the district itself.

14. Census of India, 1931, Vol.I, Part I.

The Imperial Gazetteer of India(15) observes that 'Most of them (i.e. wild tribes of Dangis) are Bhils'. 'The Tribe next in importance to the Bhil is Konkani'. But 1941 census reports show that the Kunbis during this period of fifty-five years have exceeded in number. In 1941 the number of the tribes in the Dangis was as follows :

Kunbis	...	16,772
Bhils	...	14,134
Warlis	...	5,706

In 1951 there is no classification made on the basis of community, but it can with fair judgement be said that the Kunbis are in far greater number than the Bhils.

The Bhils seem to be the oldest natives of the Dangis. The Kunbis must be residing in the Dangis from generations but are late comers. The Warlis are still later comers. The Gamits and other minorities seem to be the recent immigrants in the Dangis. For all the Dangis irrespective of their tribe are

15. Imperial Gazetteer of India, Vol.II, 1885, p.115.

culturally one, while the Gamits of the Dangs culturally are more related to the Gamits of Surat district.

XVI. WHO IS AN ĀDIWĀSĪ ?
ARE THE DANGIS ĀDIWĀSĪS ?

Various authorities have described the tribals of India by different names. Sir Herbert Risely(16), Lacey(17), Elwin(18) and Shri A. V. Thakkar(19) called them 'aboriginals'. Sir Baines(20) included them under the category of the 'Hill Tribes', Grigson called them 'Hill Tribes', or wilder aboriginals and Shoobert(21) called them the 'aboriginals'. Tallents(23), Sedgwick(24), Martin(25) and Dr. Hutton (26) regard them as 'Primitive Tribes'. Elwin(27)

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16. Risely, H. Sir : The People of India, 1904, p.218.
 17. Lacey : Census of India (Bihar & Orissa), 1931, p.238.
 18. Elwin, V. : The Loss of the Nerves, p.1.
 19. Thakkar, A. V. : The Problem of Aboriginies of India, 1941, p.1.
 20. Baines : Ethnography, p.112.
 21. Shoobert : Census of India (C.P. and Berar) Report, p.312. 1931.
 22. Tallents : Census of India (Bihar and Orissa), 1921, p.125.
 23. Sedgwick : Bombay Census Report 1921, p.67.
 24. Martin : Census of India 1921, Vol.I, p.110.
 25. Hutton : Census of India 1931, Vol.I, p.391.
 26. Elwin, V. : The Baigas, p.519.

calls the Baigas the 'original owners of the country'. Ghurye (27) calls them 'Backward Hindus'. Dr. Das and Das (28) name them as 'submerged humanity'. Indian Government has classified them as the scheduled tribes. Articles 342 of the Indian Constitution relates to a special provision in respect of scheduled tribes which are defined as the 'tribes or tribal communities or parts of or groups within tribal communities which the president may specify by public notification. The term 'Ādiwāsi' (Ādi means original, Wāsi means inhabitant) has recently become current to designate these groups.

The original tribes of India are divided into groups and subgroups all mutually exclusive, each physically, temperamentally and culturally different from the other. The common features of all these tribes are (29) :

- (1) They live away from the civilised world in the inaccessible parts lying in the forests, or hills.

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27. Ghurye, G.S. : The Aborigines - so called and their future. p.21. Poona, Gokhale Institute, 1948
 28. Das and Das : India's submerged humanity in 'Modern Review', October 1955. p.269.
 29. Report of the Commissioner for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes, 1952.

- (2) They belong either to one of the three stocks, Negritos, Austroloids or Mongol^{id}ids.
- (3) Speak the same tribal dialect.
- (4) Profess primitive religion known as 'Animism' in which the worship of ghosts and spirits is the most important element.
- (5) Follow primitive occupations such as gleaning, hunting and gathering of forest produce.
- (6) Are largely carnivorous ^{and} ~~of~~ flesh and meat eaters.
- (7) Live either naked or semi-naked using tree barks and leaves for clothing.
- (8) Have nomadic habits and love for drink and dance.

Various State Governments have given different characteristics for the people to be labelled as tribals. The Bombay State gives a simple criterion 'residence in the forests'.

The tribal Welfare Committee which met under the auspices of the Indian Conference of Social

Welfare Work at Calcutta recommended the following classification of the existing tribes :

- (1) Tribal communities are those who are still confined to the original forest habitat and follow the old pattern of life.
- (2) Semi-tribal communities or those who have more or less settled down in rural areas and have taken to agriculture and allied occupations.
- (3) Accultured tribal communities or those who have migrated to urban or semi-urban areas and are engaged in modern industries and vocations and have adopted modern cultural traits.
- (4) Totally assimilated tribals in the Indian population.

According to the criteria provided here the Dangis are the tribals - Adiwāsis in the truest sense of the term. They have been least affected by the modern culture and can be put in the first group of classification of tribals as shown up. Otherwise nomadic the Dangis have recently learnt to settle in

one place and adopt agriculture as one of the means of subsistence.

The Dangis are a distinct cultural group. They are an 'Adiwasi' tribe having its own life and culture

XVII. THE TRIBES IN ^{THE} DANGS

The 1951 census reports show that out of the total population of 47,282 in Dangs, the tribals are 39,884 in number, 113 are from scheduled castes and the rest are outsiders - the merchants, contractors, private and government employees and their families. 'The people', writes Cyril Fox in 1949, 'are the freebooters of 75 years age comprising Kunbis, Bhils and Warlis with an admixture of Chodhras and Matchis' (30). Among the tribal communities the Kunbis form a majority. In order of strength the Bhils and ^{the} Warlis come next.

The Dangis as the natives of the Dangs from one tribe, are one class of people. Instead of studying the people of the Dangs as belonging to different tribes, they should be studied as the

30. Cyril Fox : Water Supply Report on the Dangs, 1949.

'Dangis'. The physical distinction between the various tribes may be of interest to a physical anthropologist, but to a social scientist who studies the culture of the people the Dangis are 'one'. Moreover, among themselves they are not aware, nor think of them as belonging to different 'races' or 'tribes'. I asked a Bhil 'Do you know that there are Bhils staying in the neighbouring districts of West Khandesh, Broach and Panchmahals, and also in other parts of the country?' Do you also know that the other Bhils and you belong to the same race?' His reply was negative. He wondered at the idea that there are Bhils outside the Dangs also. He said, "I know only that much that in the Dangs there are other people - the Kunbis, the Warlis, the Gamits - who are not the Bhils. We sit, talk and smoke with them. But we do not intermarry". The tribes have the status more or less that of ^{the} castes in Hindu society. Culturally and socially the Dangis form one 'tribe', 'one people'.

(a) The Bhils

A legend says that the Bhils are the descendents of the God Mahadev. Mahadev had many

children by a woman whom he met in the forest. One of the ugliest among the children killed the father's bull. So he was banished to the forests. His descendents since then are called the 'Bhil' or the 'out caste'.

It is also held that the word 'Bhil' is derived from a Dravidian word 'Bil' which is the characteristic weapon of the tribe.

The writer of the Imperial Gazetteer(31) classifies the Bhils under three groups namely (1) those of the plains, (2) those of the hills and forests, and (3) the mixed tribes..... The second have their settlement in the Vindhya, the Satpuras, the Sahyadris, the Bardas and the Dangs. The Bhil form a major aboriginal tribe in Rajasthan, Panchmahals and Broach districts of Gujarat and also in Khandesh district. 'Bhils of Gujarat', says Mazmudar, 'form a connecting link between the Bhils of Khandesh, C.P., Berar and Marwar from the South East and Mewar and Rajputana in the North..... The lower castes - the Kolis, the Bhils, the Dublas and others - are dolicephalic or mesocephatic. The

31. The Imperial Gazetteer, Vol.II, 1885, p.389.

Bhils may be regarded as a hybrid group on the one hand absorbing Rajput blood and on the other representing a tribal substratum" (32).

The Bhils of the Dangs are not aware that in the other parts of the country, even near in Khandesh there are Bhils. They have no knowledge of the racial affinity with other Bhils. On the contrary they wonder that there are 'Bhils' even outside the Dangs. The most savage of the Bhil class are the Dangis, the Bhils of the Dangs (33).

(b) The Kunbis

The 'Kunbis' or the 'Konkanas' are somewhat more settled in their habits, and more inclined to agriculture.³⁴ A Kunbi is reputed to be more hard-working as compared with a Bhil. He is also more clean in his appearance and habits. The Kunbis seem to be more receptive to the outside influence, they seem to understand the advantages of education and other improved techniques of living.

32. Mazmudar, D.N. : Race Realities in Cultural Gujarat, p.23. Bombay, Gujarat Research Society, 1950.

33. Aboriginal Tribes of Bombay Presidency, p.7.

34. The Imperial Gazetteer, Vol.II, 1885, p.115.

'Kunbi' etymologically means 'one given to agriculture'. The Kunbi in the Dangs is true to its meaning. Most of the Kunbis own the land and are keen in cultivating it. So the Kunbis are economically better than others.

(c) The Warlis

Ethoven(35) has described the Warlis as a sub-division of the Bhils who are found not only in Khandesh in considerable numbers but also in the northern parts of Gujarat. It is not unlikely that the Warlis were associated sometime or other with the Bhils with whom they have many traits in common. Latham(36) also has tried to show that the Warlis at one time formed part of the Bhils.

According to Dr. Wilson 'Warlis' probably mean originally 'Waralis' or uplanders'. 'Waral' according to him means a tilled patch of land. The people who cultivated these patches, therefore, are 'Waralis' or 'Warlis'.

35. Ethoven : Tribes and Castes of Bombay Presidency, Vol.I, p.156.

36. Latham : Ethnology of India, p.306.

They are called 'Warlis' because they used to spread "Waral brushwood" in the hilly districts. The Warlis in other districts follow this profession, spreading of 'waral' for burning the land for agricultural purposes. Hence, the tribe name is a professional name.

XVIII. TRADITIONAL ACCOUNT OF THE ORIGIN OF THE TRIBES

There is a legend about the origin of the world and the origin of the tribes, prevalent in the Dangs. Their story is as follows :

Once a man of the Mahar tribe had a vision that there will be a deluge and the life on the earth will come to an end. But the God instructed him how to behave when the waters would run over the earth. He took a big gourd put his one son and one daughter and the requirements for life in it. The earth was submerged with water, everything had met its destination. But when the waters receded, the gourd landed safely. The brother and sister passed their days in an innocent manner.

But the God did not like this.. So by playing tricks he changed their minds, confused their intellect and induced them for cohabitation. As the result the earth was repopulated.

Once the husband and the wife with their sons were ploughing and tilling the land. The husband was tired so wanted to smoke. The wife continued the work. But the woman being unable to apply the pressure to the plough could not plough the land properly. So the surface of the land had no proper level and became uneven. The plain part of the land formed the region of Gujarat and the uneven part formed the hilly land of Maharashtra.

At that time one son was working with a plough drawn by bullocks. He and his descendents are called the Kunbis. A second son who was ploughing with a hand drawn plough, his descendents are the Warlis. A third son was digging the ground. He and his progeny are called the Bhils. A fourth son was carrying the earth in the baskets. He is the ancestor of the Kotwals.

This legend of the origin of the human population has much in common with such legends prevailing in other primitive tribes and religions. Its role in the life of the Dangis is discussed in the last chapter.

The story relating to the origin of the various tribes substantiates the belief of the Dangis that the Kunbis are higher in social order and the Warlis, the Bhils and the Kotwals come next in order of sequence.

XIX. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter gives a detailed account of the geography, history and population of the Dangs. The Dangis are a pre-literate people, the 'Ādiwāsis' who are still confined to the original forest habitat, and follow the old pattern of life. The Dangis are composed of many tribes, mainly the Kunbis, the Bhils, the Warlis and a few others.

The Dangs is a hilly country, a forest area in the Gujarat State but on the border line of the Maharashtra State. The rainfall is heavy but the

soil is not fertile, hence the crops are not rich. The facilities of communication and transport are very recently introduced. Hence so far the Dangs was an isolated area.

The Dangs formerly ruled by the native chieftains, was a native state under the British regime. The Bhil kings and the Bhil people were predatory people and harassed not only the British Government but also the non-Bhil public, and the residents in the adjacent states. It was with great difficulty that the British could bring the Bhil chieftains under control. The British ruled over the Dangs area high handedly.

Before one makes the study of the culture of a people, it is necessary to know what these people are, where do they live, what is their historical background etc. It has been shown in Chapter XIV, what the part the physical conditions and history have played in building up certain personality traits in the Dangis.

The mountainous terrain and the rugged nature of life have led the Dangis to live a self-reliant and individual life. As the individual has to depend on himself, there are no chances to form a rich organised group and corporate life. So the social life is self-centred. This has nurtured the traits of individuality and self-centredness in the Dangi personality. This has been strengthened by the conditions of food and water scarcity. The history can tell how, because of the terror of the native chieftains and officers in the British rule, the Dangis were forced to live an individualistic life. The historical factors also help us to understand why fear is a governing factor in their behaviour. It also explains the nature of social relations between the Bhils and the other tribes.

The material culture, the personal and domestic equipments, the daily work, food and drinks, etc. depend upon the availability of food, water, nature of land and country. In short, the physical culture is related to the material culture. Hence the next chapter is on 'The Material Culture' of the Dangis.