

**PADHA SYSTEM: THE VILLAGE ADMINISTRATION OF ORAON TRIBE**

Dr.Anjela Swarndipika Kujur,  
Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science,  
Radha Govind University, Ramgarh, Jharkhand.

**ABSTRACT**

Tribal people are found in every parts of the world in smaller groups or bigger groups. They are nature lovers they worship nature, live in nature and nature is there identity. They lead their life in a systematic way, so in every tribal village the traditional administrative system is followed. In every tribal villages there is a headman who regulates the administrative system. So many different tribes are residing in this world and every tribals have their own way of administration. Talking about Oraon tribe of India and their way of administration, called as Padha system, is one of the redo of an administrative system.

**Keywords:** Oraon tribe, administration, padha system, villages, identity, government

**INTRODUCTION**

Tribal peoples are defined as, 'not indigenous to the region (they inhabit), but that share similar characteristics with indigenous people, such as having social, cultural and economic traditions different from sections of the national community, identifying themselves with their ancestral territories, and regulating themselves, at least partially, by their own norms, customs, and traditions'. This definition is in accordance with the provisions of Article 1.1(a) of ILO Convention No.169.

The term "Scheduled Tribes" first appeared in the constitution of India. Under Article 366(25) Scheduled tribes is defined as "such tribes or tribal communities or part of or groups within such tribes or tribal communities as are deemed under Article 342 of the Indian constitution to be Scheduled Tribes for the purpose of this constitution". In Article 342 of the Indian Constitution of India 1949, Scheduled Tribes is described by: (1) The President may with respect to any state or Union territory and where it is a state, after consultation with the governor thereof, by public notification, specify the tribes or tribal communities which shall for the purpose of this constitution be deemed to be Scheduled Tribes in relation to the State or Union territory, as the case may be. (2). Parliament may by law include in or exclude from the list of Scheduled Tribes specified in a notification issued under clause(1) any tribe or tribal community or part of or group within any tribe or tribal community, but save as aforesaid a notification issued under the said Clause shall not be varied by any subsequent notification

PART XVII OFFICIAL LANGUAGE CHAPTER 1 LANGUAGE OF THE UNION.

In India about 645 different tribes are found. The total population of the Scheduled Tribes is 10.43 crore as per Census 2011, which is 8.6% of the total population of India. In Urban areas the Population of the Scheduled Tribes is a meagre 2.8%. The Constitution of India has recognized Tribal communities in India Under 5<sup>th</sup> Schedule of the Constitution and hence the tribes recognized by the Constitution are known as "Scheduled Tribes".

The states like Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Chattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal and Karnataka are the state having larger number of Schedule Tribes. All the states accounts for 83.2% of the total Scheduled Tribe population of the country. Other States like Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Jammu & Kashmir, Tripura, Mizoram, Bihar, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, accounting for another 15.3% of the total Scheduled tribe population. The share of the remaining states/ Union territories is negligible.

The scheduled tribes in India are mostly found in the largest proportion in Lakshadweep, Mizoram, Nagaland and Meghalaya, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa also has the largest number of scheduled Tribes. In Chattisgarh, the Bastar District consists of the largest number of scheduled Tribes. States like Punjab, Delhi, Chandigarh, Pondicherry, Haryana do not have Scheduled Tribes.

In Lok Sabha, seats are reserved for Scheduled Tribes. Here the figures according to census are taken into account. Allocation of seats of Scheduled Tribes in the Lok Sabha are made on the basis of the proportion of Scheduled Tribes in the state concerned to that of the total proportion, vide provision contained in Article 330 of the Constitution of India read with Section 3 of the R.P. Act, 1950. For Scheduled Tribes, 47 seats are reserved in Lok Sabha. The 1<sup>st</sup> Schedule to R.R. Act, 1950 as amended vide Representation of the people (Amendment) Act, 2008 gives the state wise break up.

#### **Historical Background of Oraon Tribe:**

The oraons are also called as Kurukh. The Oraons are one of the five largest tribes in South Asia and also one of the largest tribal community in India. Oraon are a Dravidian ethnic group. According to Anthropological Society of India, Konkan is the original home of Oraon tribe. From Konkan they migrated to northern India and used to live a Rohtas Plateau which was called as Rohtasgarh in Bihar state. Then they were dislodged by other people and they migrated to Chotanagpur Plateau. They settled in Chotanagpur with Munda tribe. Oraon has its own language which is called as kurukh. Kurukh language belongs to the Dravidian language family. The oraons belongs to the proto-austroloid group. Traditionally, oraons depended on the forest for their livelihood and rituals. After sometime they have become mainly settled agriculturalists, oraons followed Sarna Dharma (Sarna Religion). Oraons are divided into sub-tribes and they are as follows: Ekka, Tigga, Barla, Kujur, Bara, Lakra, Tirkey, Baxla, Toppo, Kispotta, Minz & Kerketta. In India they are found in Jharkhand, West Bengal, Orissa and Chattisgarh. Their culture is related to nature, environment and accordingly they adapt their food and living habit.

#### **Parha Panchayat System (Oraon Tribe's Governance System):**

Padha Panchayat Shasan Vyavastha is also known as Oraon tribe's Governance system. This administrative system "Padha System" belongs to Oraon tribes. This administrative system was similar to or in other words it can be said it is borrowed by Munda Tribe. They settled in chotanagpur with vicinity with Munda tribe. They cleared the forest and started agricultural activities and settled a village. Oraons were the first to clear the forest and was called as

“Bhumihars’ later on they were called as “Rajats”. Bhumuhars means Lord of the land. His land was called Bhumihar Bhoomi. when the village was settled, the Oraons felt the necessity of a good administrative system to administer the village.

Then “Pahan” was appointed as an agent to manage and operate all the administrative functions and religious functions of a village. The Pahan handled both the responsibility. Later on his helpers were appointed and they were called as “ Baiga”. with the passage of time, little changes were made in this administrative system. Now the second chief was selected to assist Pahan was called Mahto. Later on this administrative system was divided into two parts, religious and administrative. Religious functions were managed by Mahto. The panchayati system was made at village level. The senior members of the village were chosen as the Panchs and Mahto was its president. This system was divided into three parts:

1. Gram Panchayat
2. Padha Panchayat
3. Inter-Padha Panchayat

### 1. Gram Panchayat

**Composition** : Gram Panchayat consists of important members, they are as follows:-

**Mahto**: Mahto is the head of the gram panchayat. His responsibility is to operate all the administrative chores. The panchayat was formed to resolve all the disputes occurred in village, in which Mahto was its president and all the senior members were Panch. The position of Mahto hereditary, the older son holds the office of Mahto after his fathers death and in case their is no heir, this position was given to any other male of that lineage.

**Pahan**: Pahan is the priest of the village. He use to perform all the religious rites and rituals in the village. He was given all the religious responsibilities. This position was not hereditary. After the end of every three years, a new Pahan was selected on the day of Sarhul.

**Bhandari**: Bhandari was called as a messenger. He was incharge of the king’s store in the village. There was no financial provision for all these posts, but land was allotted to them for maintenance and those lands were named after them, which are as follows:-

- i. Mahto Bhoomi - Land Given to Mahto.
- ii. Pahanai Land - Land Given to Pahan.
- iii. Bhandar Giri Bhandari - Land Given to Bhandari.

**Panbhra**: He was the presiding officer. He use to preside the meetings of the Gram Panchayat and took care of the meals to be served at the day of meeting.

**Kotwar**: He worked as an ambassador in village. He used to convey the message or order given by the Padha Raja to the entire village and the villages near by. The execution of punishment was also done by Kotwar. The village was named on the basis of or after the name of the Padha King and his officers where they lived, which are as follows:-



1. **Raja Gaon:-** The village in which Parha King used to reside.
2. **Diwan Gaon:-** The village in which the diwan used to reside.
3. **Paner Gaon:-** The village in which Paner used to reside.
4. **Kotwar Gaon:-** The village in which the Kotwar used to reside.
5. **Praja Gaon:-** The village in which there was no official residence.

**Inter-Parha Panchayat:** Above the Padha Panchayat was the system of Inter-Padha Panchayat. These panchayats were formed by combining several padha villages. The head of this Inter-Padha Panchayat was called Padha Diwan.

**Settlement of Internal Disputes:** All disputes and problems were first resolved at the village panchayat level, which is as follows:-

- 1) Minor disputes or cases were resolved in the village itself except murder and other serious crimes.
- 2) Development work and solving the problems of village on daily basis were taken care of.
- 3) Cases of sexual assault, prohibition violations, theft, etc, were also resolved.
- 4) Matters like family feud, cases of property divisions were also solved.
- 5) The decisions related to religious festivals like the dates of festivals were decided by the Pahan under the Chairmanship of Mahto.
- 6) Whatever decisions were given by the Padha Panchayat or Inter-Padha Panchayat were to be followed, it was complied.

If any cases or disputes were not resolved then it was taken to the Padha Panchayat. If the Padha Panchayat was not able to solve the problems or resolve any cases, then it was transferred to Inter-Padha Panchayat. The Padha Raja and Dewan cannot interfere in any of the cases without the permission of Mahto. If the crime is proved then there was a provision of penalty, like provision of giving monetary punishment in minor criminal cases, punishment of expulsion from the society and penalty of boycott from society, etc.

#### **The Failure of Tribal Administrative System:**

Before independence the condition of tribal administration was very good. The Britishers gave freedom to the tribals to live the life as they want to. Many laws were made by Britishers to protect the rights and lands of tribals. But the administrative systems after independence affected their Administrative system to a great extent. As a result, the traditional system disappeared from most Tribal areas in Jharkhand. Government's interference for development process and other constitutional activities, induced the tribals not to follow their traditional way of governance. This Governmental practice almost ended Tribal administration. But in some rural areas, people do follow the traditional way of administration.

### CONCLUSION

Tribal administrative System is no doubt is the best practice at that time to run the villages and life of people in a systematic way. All the tribal group's administrative system is similar. In some tribal villages the traditional tribal administrative system is still followed but they don't practice such activities which are against the Law or Constitution of India.

### REFERENCES

- 1) I/A Court H.R., Case of the Saramaka People V. Suriname. Preliminary objections, merits, reparations and costs. Judgement of November 28, 2007. Series C No.172, par.79.
- 2) <https://vikaspedia.in>.
- 3) [www.clearias.com/major-tribes-in-India](http://www.clearias.com/major-tribes-in-India). Last updated on June 5<sup>th</sup> ,2021.10.2021.
- 4) Nabarum, Purhayatha.(2018). "Tribe in making:a study on Oraon Tribe in Barak valley, region of Assam." Global Journal of Interdisciplinary Social Sciences. p.7.Global Institute for Research and Education.
- 5) Prasad,R.R.(1996)."Encyclopedia Profile of Indian Tribes, Volume I".[www.books.google.com](http://www.books.google.com).
- 6) Ranjan,Manish.(2021)."2021 Jharkhand General Knowledge". Prabhat Paperbacks.New Delhi.
- 7) Ibid.
- 8) <https://www.studyjharkhandpsc.com/2021/05/padha-panchayat-shasan-vyavastha.html>.
- 9) <https://www.downtoearth.org.in/blog/governance/collapse-of-ativasi-self-governance-system-in-jharkhand-need-to-implement-pesa-in-letter-and-spirit-78260>.