

## 1. Description

### 1.1 Name(s) of society, language, and language family:

- A. Dhimal
- B. Dhimal
- C. Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Himalayish, Tibeto-Kanauri, Tibetic, Dhimal

### 1.2 ISO code (3 letter code from ethnologue.com):

- A. dhi

### 1.3 Location (latitude/longitude):

- A. "Nowadays Indian Dhimals are exclusively concentrated on Hatighisa and Maniram Gram Panchayet of Naxalbari Police Station under Darjeeling district of West Bengal, India. However sporadic occurrences of Dhimal population may have been seen outside the above said areas but within Darjeeling district of West Bengal." (1p1)

### 1.4 Brief history:

- A. "The Dhimal of North Bengal had been categorized as non-Aryan tribe by eminent scholars of pre-Independent India like Hodgson, Dalton, Hunter, Risley and O'Malley. However, several years after Independence, they have been going through a non-recognition period simply by being wiped out from Govt. census. Recently they have been classified as Other Backward Classes (OBC) of West Bengal. Even in terms of education, occupation or Social-Cultural context they are very similar to tribal communities of West Bengal even primitive one. Therefore, they (Dhimals) demand for Scheduled tribe status instead of OBCs." (1p1)

### 1.5 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors:

- A. "Now, after a transitional non-recognition period by the Govt. they have been classified as Other Backward Class (OBC) of West Bengal. The history of study (or not to study) on Dhimals of India narrates the negligence for which the once non-Aryan tribe of British India having no reservation on any field, have to compete with others (the recognition as OBC is a recent one, though they are not satisfied with present status and demand the status of Scheduled Tribe instead of OBCs). Because of the uneven competitions with dominant next door neighbours and others in respect of nation, push them much behind whether in the field of education, occupation or sociocultural context as a whole." (1p1)

### 1.6 Ecology (natural environment):

- A. "The Dhimal live to the north and east of the Kocch, between the open plains and the higher levels of the mountains (both of which they avoid); also between the rivers Konki and Dhorla, touching the Bodo districts as well as the Koch" (3p35)

### 1.7 Population size, mean village size, home range size, density

- A. "The population figure, as enumerated after an extensive field work on this region, hardly touches the number 900 even today." (India) (1p1)
- B. "Dhimal is a Tibeto-Burman (TB) language spoken natively by about 35,000 people of the same name in the lowlands of southeast Nepal (Jhapa & Morang Districts). In the areas Dhimals inhabit, they make up about 10% of the population." (2p1)
- C. "The Bodo and Dhimal are intermixed, though each population occupies separate villages. Neither do the two divisions intermarry. Of these the Dhimal is the smaller, amounting to no more than some 15,000 souls, a number that decreases rather than increases." (3p35)

## 2. Economy

### 2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s):

- A. "The Dhimals have their own food items. They steam rice and call it chichiri. They steam flour and call it bhaka. Bagiya, seli, babar, mun, lawa, kurung, kalai, sar, kurung gunda, sikauti sar, haya, bihya, sidla, chhena, sidla sar, gora, ghingsing gora, tarabamba, musar, etc are some varieties of the Dhimal food items." (5p1)

### 2.2 Main protein-lipid sources:

### 2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?:

### 2.4 Food storage:

### 2.5 Sexual division of production:

- A. ""The Dhimial women are much richer in traditional arts and crafts in weaving traditional clothes in looms...Men have arts of making ploughs, weaving and fishing nets, creels and making Dhols, a big beating drum etc."

#### 2.6 Land tenure:

- A. Dhimals are "... nomadic cultivators of wild. For ages transcending memory or tradition, they have passed beyond the savage or hunter state, and also beyond the herdsman's state, and have advanced to the third or agricultural grade of social progress, but so as to indicate a not entirely broken connection with the precedent condition of things ... They never cultivate the same field beyond the second year, or remain in the same village beyond from four to six years". (4p116)

#### 2.7 Ceramics:

#### 2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns:

#### 2.9 Food taboos:

#### 2.10 Canoes/watercraft?

### 3. Anthropometry

#### 3.1 Mean adult height (m and f):

#### 3.2 Mean adult weight (m and f):

### 4. Life History, mating, marriage

#### 4.1 Age at menarche (f):

#### 4.2 Age at first birth (m and f):

- A. "notwithstanding the current notion as to the prematurity of marriages in warm climates, that of wedlock is delayed as well : the male waits till he is twenty or twenty -five, the female till between fifteen and twenty." (4p116)

#### 4.3 Completed family size (m and f):

#### 4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f):

- A. "As long as a mother can suckle a child (or children) she continues to do so, sometimes for so long a period as three years, when the last and last but one may be seen sucking together. The period of weaning is thus delayed" (4p115)

#### 4.5 Age first marriage (m and f):

- A. "notwithstanding the current notion as to the prematurity of marriages in warm climates, that of wedlock is delayed as well : the male waits till he is twenty or twenty -five, the female till between fifteen and twenty." (4p116)

#### 4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce:

- A. "Such marriages are easily dissolved, i.e., at the option of either party." (4p116)

#### 4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously:

#### 4.8 Bride purchase (price), bride service, dowry?:

- A. "The parties least concerned are the bride and bridegroom ; the parents do the courtship. Those of the lady take a payment. This is called a Jan amongst the Bodo, and varies from ten to fifteen rupees. With the Dhimial it is a Gandi, and amounts to a higher sum, ranging from fifteen to forty-five. Failing this, service must be done by the youth ; and a wife be earned as Jacob earned Leah and Rachel. This is the Gabor of the Bodo, and the Gharjya of the Dhimial." (4p116)

#### 4.9 Inheritance patterns:

- A. "Adoption is common, concubinage rare; each being on a level with marriage in respect to the status of the children. Of these, all males inherit alike; but the rights of the female are limited." (4p116)

#### 4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict:

#### 4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals:

#### 4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy):

- A. "...mixed with the Bodo but in separate villages and without intermarriage" (1p1)

#### 4.13 What is the belief of the role of males in conception; is paternity partible? Are these "other fathers" recognized?

#### 4.14 What is the belief of the mother's role in procreation exactly? (e.g., "receptacle in which fetus grows")

- A. "As long as a mother can suckle a child (or children) she continues to do so, sometimes for so long a period as three years, when the last and last but one may be seen sucking together. The period of weaning is thus delayed" (4p115)
- 4.15 Is conception believed to be an incremental process (i.e., semen builds up over time)?
- 4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion, rape
- 4.17 Preferential category for spouse (e.g., cross cousin)
- A. Within the Dhimals, there are fourteen surnames namely: Donge, Ding, Talipa, Hardiya, Nuniya, Lengbang, Bangalaiti, Teghre, Tharu, Rathum, Later, Kashyar, Muling, Jogi and some have their sub-surnames. They do marriage within different sub-surnames but don't have marriage within the same surnames." (5p1)
- 4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms?
- A. "In case, however, of infidelity on the part of a wife having caused a divorce, the wedding-money is repaid." (4p116)
- 4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring
- A. "Adoption is common, concubinage rare; each being on a level with marriage in respect to the status of the children." (p4116)
- 4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children?
- 4.21 Adult sex ratio: number of adult males divided by number of (reproductive) females
- 4.22 Evidence for couvades
- 4.23 Different distinctions for potential fathers (e.g., lesser/younger vs. major/older)
- 4.24 Kin avoidance and respect?
- 4.24 Joking relationships?
- 4.25 Patterns of descent (e.g., bilateral, matrilineal) for certain rights, names or associations
- 4.26 Incest avoidance rules
- A. "They do marriage within different sub-surnames but don't have marriage within the same surnames." (5p1)
- 4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony?
- A. "The details of the marriage ceremony are different. The Dhmal priest propitiates Data and Bidata by invocations and offerings of betel-leaf and red-lead—Data and Bidata being the deities who preside over wedlock. This is a cheaper operation with the Bodo than with the Dhimdli; for with the Dhimal the marriage feast may be prolonged to the third day, and cost from thirty to forty rupees; whereas the Bodo ceremony may be gone through for four or six. When Data and Bidata have been invoked, the bride and groom are placed side by side, each with five pauns, with which they feed each other; the parents of the groom then cover the couple with a sheet, when the priest completes the nuptials by sprinkling them with water." (3p37)
- B. "The ceremony itself begins with a procession on the part of the bridegroom's friends to the bride's house, two females accompanying them. Of these, it is the business to put red-lead and oil on the bride's hair. A feast follows; after which the husband takes his wife home." (4p116)
- 4.28 In what way(s) does one get a name, change their name, and obtain another name?
- A. Within the Dhimals, there are fourteen surnames namely: Donge, Ding, Talipa, Hardiya, Nuniya, Lengbang, Bangalaiti, Teghre, Tharu, Rathum, Later, Kashyar, Muling, Jogi and some have their sub-surnames. They do marriage within different sub-surnames but don't have marriage within the same surnames." (5p1)
- 4.29 Is marriage usually (or preferred to be) within community or outside community? (m/f difference?)
- A. "...mixed with the Bodo but in separate villages and without intermarriage" (1p1)
- 4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin)?
- A. "The parties least concerned are the bride and bridegroom; the parents do the courtship." (4p116)
- 4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who:

### **Warfare/homicide**

- 4.31 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare:
- A. No evidence of warfare
- 4.32 Outgroup vs ingroup cause of violent death:

4.33 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing:

4.34 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations):

- A. "the Bodo and Dhimal are intermixed, though each population occupies separate villages. Neither do the two divisions intermarry." (3p350)

4.35 Cannibalism?

- A. not reported

## **5. Socio-Political organization and interaction**

5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size:

- A. "The Dhimals still love to live in traditional villages, mainly thirty to forty houses clustered together" (5p1)

5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality):

- A. Dhimals are "... nomadic cultivators of wild. For ages transcending memory or tradition, they have passed beyond the savage or hunter state, and also beyond the herdsman's state, and have advanced to the third or agricultural grade of social progress, but so as to indicate a not entirely broken connection with the precedent condition of things ... They never cultivate the same field beyond the second year, or remain in the same village beyond from four to six years" (4p116)

5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes):

- A. "He also stated that the village was headed by a headman called 'Mondal' and magico-religious practices by Dhami, Deushi and Ojha." (6p1)

5.4 Post marital residence:

5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense):

5.6 Social interaction divisions ? (age and sex):

5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships:

5.8 Village and house organization:

- A. The Dhimals still love to live in traditional villages, mainly thirty to forty houses clustered together. Though they live in thatched roofed houses, like to keep neat and well broomed on yards, clean around the houses. They love to make a garden to the south direction. (6p1)

5.9 Specialized village structures (mens' houses):

5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere?

5.11 Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc:

- A. "Regmi (1991) identified a total of 13 exogamous patrilineal clans and 11 sub-clans within the population" (5p1)

5.12 Trade:

- A. "The traditional occupations of the Dhimals are hunting, farming and fishing. They rear pigs, chicken, dogs, and cows and keep a couple of oxen for ploughing. Due to changed environment and situation, they are now involved in cash crops, animal husbandry and business, too." (5p1)

5.13 Indications of social hierarchies?

## **6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)**

6.0 Time allocation to RCR:

6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine):

- A. "He also stated that the village was headed by a headman called 'Mondal' and magico-religious practices by Dhami, Deushi and Ojha." (6p1)

6.2 Stimulants:

6.3 Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal):

- A. "The birth is attended with a minimum amount of ceremonies. Midwives there are none ; but labours are easy. Neither has the priest much to do with ushering-in the new-comer to the world. A short period of uncleanness is recognized, but it is only a short one ; the purification consisting in the acts of bathing and shaving performed by the parties themselves. Four or five days after delivery, the mother goes out into the world ; and at that time, the child is named. Any passing event determines this ; as there are no family names, and no names taken from their mythology" (4p115)

B. "Both bury their dead, and purify themselves by ablution in the nearest stream when the funeral procession is over. The family, however, of the deceased is considered as unclean for three days. A feast with sacrifices attends the purification. Before sitting down, they repair once more to the grave, and present the dead with some of the food from the banquet ; " take and eat, heretofore you have eaten and drunk with us; you can do so no more ; you were one of us, you can be so no longer ; we come no more to you ; come you not to us." After this each member of the party takes from his wrist a bracelet of thread, and throws it on the grave. A ceremonial implies a priesthood. Under this class come the Deoshi, the Dhami, the Ojha, and the Phantwal. The first of these is the village, the second the district priest. The Ojha is the village exorcist ; and the Phantwal a subordinate of the Deoshi. The influence of this clerical body, although probably higher than Mr. Hodgson places it, is, evidently, anything but exorbitant." (4p117)

#### 6.4 Other rituals:

A. "The great festivals of the year are four for the Bodo, three for the **Dhimal**." (4p119)

1. "In December or January, when the cotton-crop is ready, the Bodo hold their Shurkhar, the Dhimal their Harejata.

2. In February or March, the Bodo hold the Wagaleno.

3. In July or August, the rice comes into ear. This brings on the Bodo Phulthepno, and the Dhimal Gavipuja.

All these are celebrated out of doors, and on agricultural occasions.

4. The fourth great festival is held at home ; its time being the month of October ; its name Aihuno in Bodo, and Pochima paJca in Dhimal. Here, in the Aihuno at least, the family assembles, the priest joins it, and the Sij, or Euphorbia, represents Batho. This is placed in the middle of the room, has prayers offered to it, and a cock as a sacrifice ; whilst Mainous offering is a hog ; Agrangs a he-goat, and so on, through the whole list of the nine nooni madai, or deities thus worshipped. As for the symbols which represent them, besides the Sij, which stands for Batho, there is a bamboo post about three feet high, surmounted by a small cup of rice, denoting Mainou ; but the equivalents of the other seven are somewhat uncertain. The Wagaleno festival was witnessed by Mr. Hodgson and Dr. Campbell. The account of it is something lengthy. I mention it, however, for the sake of one of its principal actors the Deoda. This is the possessed, who, " when filled with the god, answers by inspiration to the question of the priest as to the prospects of the coming season. When we first discerned him, he was sitting on the ground, panting, and rolling his eyes so significantly that I at once conjectured his function. Shortly afterwards, the rite still proceeding, the Deoda got up, entered the circle, and commenced dancing with the rest, but more wildly. He held a short staff in his hand, with which, from time to time, he struck the bedizened poles, one by one, and lowering it as he struck. The chief dancer with the odd- shaped instrument waxed more and more vehement in his dance ; the inspired grew more and more maniacal ; the music more and more rapid; the incantation more and more solemn and earnest ; till, at last, amid a general lowering of the heads of the decked bamboo poles, so that they met and formed a canopy over him, the deoda went off in an affected fit, and the ceremony closed without any revelation." This self-excited state of ecstasy is an element of most religions in the same stage of development; and a low level it indicates. In Greece, in Africa, and in Northern Asia, we find it as regularly as we find a coarse and material creed ; and to the coarseness of the materialism of such a creed it is generally proportionate." (4p119-121)

#### 6.5 Myths (Creation):

#### 6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games):

A. "The Dhimal women are much richer in traditional arts and crafts in weaving traditional clothes in looms, such as red-striped in black ground called BONAS in Dhimal and bed sheets of cotton clothes. The Dhimal females wear bonas and cholo, tie with a white shawl on the waist. Men have arts of making ploughs, weaving and fishing nets, creels and making Dhols, a big beating drum etc." (5p1)

#### 6.7 Sex differences in RCR:

#### 6.8 Missionary effect:

A. "They follow Dhimal Dharma or 'Natural Religion' and worship the new harvested crops, new fruits of the forests , moon , Sun , rivers, jungles, stones, soil, dead spirit, Budha Thakur Warang, Laxmi Berang,

Maharaja and so on. They have different traditional beliefs. But now some peoples are Hindus and Christians, too. " (5p1)

6.9 RCR revival:

6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs:

6.11 Taboo of naming dead people?

6.12 Is there teknonymy?

6.13 Briefly describe religion (animism, ancestor worship, deism, magic, totems etc.)

A. "Diseases are attributed to supernatural agency; and the medicine-man, exorcist, or Ojha, is more priest than surgeon." (4p118)

B. Euhemerism, or the worship of dead men deified, is to be found either in its germs or its rudiments; at any rate, one of their deities bears the name of Hajo, a known historic personage. But this may be referable to Hindu influences unequivocally traceable in other parts of the Pantheon. It is the rites and ceremonies of a country that give us its religion in the concrete. All beyond is an abstraction. These, with the Bodo and Dhimal, are numerous. Invocations, deprecations, and thanksgivings are all mentioned by Mr. Hodgson; and they are all attended by offerings or sacrifices ; libations attend the sacrifices, and feasting follows the libations." (4p119)

## **7. Adornment**

7.1 Body paint:

7.2 Piercings:

7.3 Haircut:

A. "They wear traditional Dhimal ornaments and keep their own hair styles. Male's wears are Tepana, Aaskot, Ganji, Lokhan, cheuka dhari in Dhimal language." (5p1)

7.4 Scarification:

7.5 Adornment (beads, feathers, lip plates, etc.):

A. "They wear traditional Dhimal ornaments and keep their own hair styles. Male's wears are Tepana, Aaskot, Ganji, Lokhan, cheuka dhari in Dhimal language." (5p1)

7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment:

7.7 Sex differences in adornment:

A. "The Dhimal females wear bonas and cholo, tie with a white shawl on the waist.... They have typical costumes of males and females. Women wears are four types of bonas i.e. Samuthi, Patalai, Itangi and Dabona which are wrapped around the chest and extend down to the ankles." They wear traditional Dhimal ornaments and keep their own hair styles. Male's wears are Tepana, Aaskot, Ganji, Lokhan, cheuka dhari in Dhimal language." (5p1)

7.8 Missionary effect:

A. "They follow Dhimal Dharma or 'Natural Religion' and worship the new harvested crops, new fruits of the forests , moon , Sun , rivers, jungles, stones, soil, dead spirit, Budha Thakur Warang, Laxmi Berang, Maharaja and so on. They have different traditional beliefs. But now some peoples are Hindus and Christians, too. " (5p1)

7.9 Types of clothing:

A. "The Dhimal women are much richer in traditional arts and crafts in weaving traditional clothes in looms, such as red-striped in black ground called BONAS in Dhimal and bed sheets of cotton clothes.' (5p1)

## **8. Kinship systems**

8.1 Sibling classification system:

8.2 Sororate, levirate:

8.3 Other notable kinship typology, especially cross-cousin (MBD/FZD) typology (Crow/Hawaiian/Omaha etc.):

A. Within the Dhimals, there are fourteen surnames namely: Donge, Ding, Talipa, Hardiya, Nuniya, Lengbang, Bangalaiti, Teghre, Tharu, Rathum, Later, Kashyar, Muling, Jogi and some have their sub-surnames. They do marriage within different sub-surnames but don't have marriage within the same surnames." (5p1)

## **9. Other interesting cultural features (list them):**

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